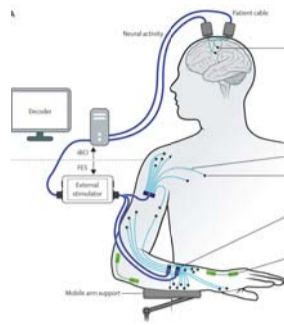




Long-operating
Shuaiba refinery
to shut down
next month



Quadriplegic
man regains
use of arm in
medical first



With Comic-Con,
monster trucks,
Saudis defy
killjoy image



Airport renamed
in Ronaldo
honor, with
'bizarre' bust



150 FILMS
NO: 17183
40 PAGES

AMIR: ARAB SPRING LED REGION TO DETERIORATION, SUFFERING

OVERCOMING DARK PERIOD TOP PRIORITY • ISRAEL AN OBSTACLE TO PEACE



Min 16°
Max 28°
High Tide 12:13
Low Tide 06:17 & 18:49

KUWAIT TIMES EXCLUSIVE

KUWAITI DIRECTOR SURPRISED AFTER FEST BANS MOVIE



By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: Award-winning Kuwaiti director and producer Farrah Al-Hashem's film 'Breakfast in Beirut' was banned from the inaugural Kuwait Film Festival held from March 24 to 28. In an exclusive interview with Kuwait Times, Hashem said she was surprised by this move, especially after she had been invited to submit her entry for the fest.

"My feature film 'Breakfast in Beirut' is a fictional documentary that depicts the lives of 13 Lebanese people who live outside their country. The film is about the Lebanese environment and life - what it's like to be outside your country; what it's like to live in another place, what is identity and what is home. It talks about finding your home," Hashem said.

Hashem was disappointed that her movie was banned because of certain scenes that had been requested to be removed by the censorship department of the ministry of information. But so far, she has received no official notice from the information ministry and was only told by an official there that the film hadn't been screened.

Notably, Farrah Al-Hashem is the daughter of controversial columnist and writer Fouad Al-Hashem and niece of outspoken MP Safaa Al-Hashem. (Full interview on Page 3)



KUWAIT: The Sheraton Hotel is lit up to celebrate its golden jubilee. —Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat (See Page 2)

SHERATON KUWAIT MARKS 50 YRS

KUWAIT: Under auspices of HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Sheraton Kuwait celebrated its 50th anniversary on Tuesday evening. The celebration was also attended by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh

Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Chairman of Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ali Thanyan Al-Ghanem and Chairman of Oriental Hotels Company Abdulaziz Al-Shaya, as well as a number senior government officials and governors. — KUNA

NEW POWER, WATER TARIFFS TO BE APPLIED FROM AUG 22

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: The ministry of electricity and water said yesterday that the new power and water charges on apartments will come into effect from Aug 22. Three

months earlier, the new rates become effective on the commercial sector. The new rates apply on government offices from late November and on the industrial and agricultural sectors in February next year. Continued on Page 13



DEAD SEA, Jordan: Arab leaders including HH the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah (center right), Jordan's King Abdullah II (center) and Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz (center left) pose for a group photo during the Arab League Summit in the Jordanian Dead Sea resort of Sweimeh yesterday. — AP (See Page 2)

DEAD SEA, Jordan: HH the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah said that the "Arab Spring" was an "illusion" that shattered security and stability and halted development in some Arab countries. The negative impact has also extended to other parts of the Arab world, causing deterioration of security conditions, as well as bitter suffering of the people, the Amir told the 28th Arab Summit in Jordan yesterday. HH Sheikh Sabah called for drawing lessons and redirecting paths to "immunize the society, enhance the cohesion of the domestic front and realize the legitimate expectations of our peoples".

The colossal challenges and risks facing the Arab world prompt the adoption of a fresh method, the Amir said, calling for the Jordan summit to be a beginning of introducing a new path of action. The Amir noted that the disagreements amongst Arabs would only lead to further disunity and weaker cohesion, and stressed the necessity of working harder to set aside these differences to achieve unity and a solid will to counter present, and future changes and challenges. The Arab world needs to overcome the dark period it is going through as a result of various challenges that have destabilized and rocked the region's security and peace, HH the Amir added.

He thanked the Jordanian Monarchy headed by King Abdullah II and the Arab League Secretary General Ahmed Abulghait for organizing the grand Arab event aimed at bolstering inter-Arab cooperation on all possible levels. Continued on Page 2

ARAB LEADERS URGE UNITY, CALL FOR PALESTINIAN STATE

DEAD SEA/AMMAN: After weeks of heightened unease over the stance of the United States under the new administration of President Donald Trump, Arab leaders reaffirmed yesterday their commitment to a two-state solution to the decades-long Arab-Israeli conflict. They called for a new round of peace talks based on a two-state solution and renewed a 2002 offer of "reconciliation" if Israel quit occupied Arab land and agreed a deal on Palestinian refugees, according to a statement read out after a summit.

Trump rattled Arab and European leaders in February by indicating he was open to a one-state solution, upending a position taken by successive administrations and the international community. Trump later told Reuters in an interview he liked the concept of a two-state solution but stopped short of reasserting a US commitment to eventual Palestinian statehood, saying he would be "satisfied with whatever makes both parties happy". Continued on Page 13

Arab leaders attending a one-day summit beside the Dead Sea did not publicly refer to Trump or his ambiguous statements, but were keen to stress their own continued backing for an independent Palestinian state and also strongly criticized the persistent building of Jewish settlements on occupied territory. The summit's host, King Abdullah of Jordan, said the creation of a Palestinian state alongside Israel remained the basis of any comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace deal.

"Israel is continuing to expand settlements and wreck chances of peace ... There is no peace or stability in the region without a just and comprehensive solution to the Palestinian cause through a two-state solution," he said. The conference venue is only a few kilometers from the occupied West Bank where Israeli settlements are clearly visible. This week, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said he was committed to working with Trump to advance peace efforts. Continued on Page 13

NO TURNING BACK: UK TRIGGERS BREXIT

SAMSUNG EYES REBOUND WITH GALAXY S8 PHONES

NEW YORK: Samsung on unveiled its new Galaxy S8 smartphones, incorporating the virtual assistant Bixby, as the market leader seeks to rebound from a chaotic handset recall and a corruption scandal. The South Korean giant's mobile chief DJ Koh told a New York event the Galaxy S8 and S8+ handsets marked "a new era of smartphone design". Fitted with screens of

5.8 and 6.2 inches, the two handsets include Samsung's upgraded digital assistant Bixby, competing in a crowded field that includes Apple's Siri, Google Assistant and Amazon Alexa.

The most striking feature of the new phones is what Samsung dubs an "infinity display" - an expanded glass screen that covers the entire front. Continued on Page 13



NEW YORK: Justin Denison, senior vice president of product strategy at Samsung, speaks about the new features of the Samsung Galaxy S8 during a launch event for the smartphone yesterday. — AFP



LONDON: Britain's Prime Minister Theresa May signs the official letter invoking Article 50 and signaling the United Kingdom's intention to leave the EU in the cabinet office inside 10 Downing Street on Tuesday. — AFP (See Pages 10 & 14)

LONDON: Britain launched the historic process of leaving the EU yesterday, but its European partners were quick to warn of the difficult path that lies ahead. Prime Minister Theresa May declared there was "no turning back" after she gave EU President Donald Tusk formal notification of Britain's intention to withdraw following last June's shock referendum. The momentous move, which comes just days after the EU celebrated its 60th birthday, leaves Britain deeply divided and has thrown a question mark over the future of the 28-nation bloc which rose from the ashes of World War II.

"This is an historic moment from which there can be no turning back," May told MPs, to cheers from members of her ruling Conservative party. British ambassador Tim Barrow handed-delivered the letter to Tusk triggering Article 50 of the EU's Lisbon Treaty, starting the two-year countdown to leaving. "We already miss you," Tusk said in Brussels. But French President Francois Hollande struck a tough tone, warning that Brexit Continued on Page 13



DEAD SEA, Jordan: (From left) Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, Jordanian King Abdullah II and His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah attend the 28th Arab Summit yesterday. — Amiri Diwan photos



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Jordanian King Abdullah II.

AMIR PRAISED FOR INITIATIVE TO BOOST NATIONS' DEVELOPMENT SHEIKH SABAH HAILED FOR HOSTING YEMENI TALKS

DEAD SEA, Jordan: The African Union Commissioner Moussa Faki hailed yesterday the initiative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on maximizing development and investment in the African continent and its people.

Faki's remarks came in a speech at the 28th Arab Summit, hosted by Jordan. The initiative was announced by His Highness the Amir during Kuwait's hosting of the Arab-African Summit in 2013, which aims at providing African countries with easy loans totaling \$1 billion over a period of five years. The goal was to fund Africa's investments in infrastructure in coordination with the World Bank and international institutions.

In terms of African-Arab relations, Faki asserted importance of strengthening the League and this process, pointing out that his attendance at the summit is an affirmation of the African commitment to the positions of solidarity and cooperation with the Arab countries. The Commissioner added that Africa ongoing support for the Palestinian issue in all of its dimensions is a top priority, including fighting terrorist groups, whatever their names is.

Meanwhile, Mauritanian President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz praised His Highness the Amir for hosting Yemeni negotiations, affirming his "strong support" for the Gulf initiative aimed at restoring security and stability in Yemen.

"The armed conflict in Yemen continues for the third year in a row, threatening regional peace and security and causing great loss of life and property, a conflict that almost destroyed the unity and harmony of Yemeni society as if there was no Arab and international efforts to address it," President Abdel Aziz said in the opening speech of the summit.

The Mauritanian leader also praised Kuwait's hospitality and patronage by Kuwait's Amir for the inter-Yemeni negotiations since launch of the conciliation process, stressing "strong" Arab support for the Gulf ini-

tiative and the United Nations initiative to reach a negotiated solution that would preserve Yemen's unity and stability.

On the Palestinian issue, Ould Abdel Aziz said the two-state solution, which was reached after tough and long negotiations with the blessing of the international community, is the only option available to achieve peace in the region and guarantee the right of Palestinian people to establish their independent state. He also pointed to many challenges in Arab countries, impeding efforts for peace, security and sustainable development, pointing out that the Arab region has been subjected to conflicts, especially in Syria, which have led to increasing complex civilians' displacements and activity by terrorist groups. The Mauritanian leader added that "Syrian parties have not engaged in with a strong will to reach a political solution that fulfills the aspirations of the Syrian people and reinforces security and stability of their country."

He called for immediate end of internal fighting to pave way for signing a comprehensive political agreement that ends blood spilling of the Syrian people and maintains Syria's unity and sovereignty throughout its territory.

On another front, he stressed on the necessity for channeling all support to Arab, African and international efforts to find a comprehensive agreement that will preserve the unity of the Libya's soil, restore stability and security to the troubled nation. He welcomed the political breakthrough in Lebanon and election of a new president to restore political stability in the country.

The Mauritanian president stressed on the need to actively involve women and youth in Arab development. He also urged for development of new mechanisms that would promote integration, economic integration and progress in exploitation of Arabs' resources and promotion of investments and development among their countries. — KUNA



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Iraqi Prime Minister Haider Al-Abadi.

AMIR: ARAB SPRING LED REGION TO DETERIORATION, SUFFERING

Continued from Page 1

The Amir also took the chance to thank Mauritania for hosting the presidency of the summit, saying that the Arab state contributed to bolstering Arab cooperation.

In his speech, HH Sheikh Sabah stressed that the region is facing grave challenges and dangers that require solidarity, unity and joint efforts among Arab countries. The Arab Summit should and must come up with mechanisms and solutions to address the numerous challenges facing the region, said Sheikh Sabah. He touched on the issue of inner conflicts in the Arab world, stressing that it was one of the most crippling problems that should be addressed collectively by participating leaders.

He added that disagreements and conflicts among Arab brothers should be set aside for leaders to achieve the aspiration of their people. The world is full of agony and mayhem due to wars, natural disasters, political conflicts and humanitarian crises which require a strong regional and international effort to end the suffering globally, said Sheikh Sabah.

He indicated that the world's inaction towards the crisis in Syria would not lead to fruitful results for the Syrian people. The international community needs a strong resolve to bring upon a political resolution to the crisis, said the Kuwaiti leader, who took the chance to laud efforts by UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres, Special Envoy to Syria Steffan De Mistura, as well as former leader of the UN Ban Ki-Moon for their efforts in this regard.

HH Sheikh Sabah thanked countries hosting the Syrian refugees - namely Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, Egypt, and Turkey - for their outstanding humanitarian efforts, affirming that they had made a difference on the ground. The Kuwaiti leader touched on the Yemeni issue, saying that his country was deeply saddened by the situation in the fellow Arab country. The Amir called on Yemenis to heed calls by the international community and the Arab world to put an end to the crisis in Yemen.

Sheikh Sabah also touched on the situations in Iraq, Libya, and Somalia, saying that the plight affecting people in the respective Arab countries required a truthful effort by Arabs to

bring security and stability to these regions. The Arab-Israeli conflict and the Middle East peace process were also mentioned by the Amir in his speech. Sheikh Sabah blamed Israel for halting efforts for attaining sustainable peace in the region.

Sheikh Sabah, in his keynote speech, said Israel has remained an obstacle in face of efforts for establishing a viable and comprehensive peace in the Middle East. He urged the international community, namely the Security Council, to "fulfill its duties and end this tragedy which constitutes core of regional hardships; namely tension and instability," praising the Security Council Resolution 2334 which called on Israel to cease settlement activities on the Palestinian territories. The Amir was alluding to protracted plight of the Palestinian people who have been suffering from Israeli occupation since middle of the past century.

On Libya, the Amir asked warring parties to listen for calls of unity and national solidarity echoed by the international community and the world, affirming that these calls will ensure the future of Libya as a nation. "We are increas-

ingly concerned about destiny of our brothers there as well as about the future of their homeland, its sanctity and territorial integrity." The Amir hoped that orchestrated national, Arab, regional and international efforts would result in maintaining Libya as a unified and stable nation, on basis of relevant UN resolution and in a manner that would enable the national concord government achieve such aspired objectives.

Regarding Iran, HH the Amir noted necessity of adherence in this respect to international laws, namely respect of states' sovereignty, non-intervention in states' domestic affairs, respecting good neighborliness ties, hoping that consultations and constructive dialogue would continue among regional states for sake of security and stability. "Although the international community has exerted enormous efforts for facing terrorism, it has remained a great challenge threatening our security and undermining our stability; thus double effort is required in coordination with the international community to face the terrorist organizations and their deviating thoughts for sake of con-

serving human race's security and stability." He lauded "achievements that have been made by our brothers in Iraq in facing the powers of darkness and we aspire to see further victories," alluding to the Iraqi government forces' liberation of several regions, controlled by the so-called Islamic State group.

HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah said that Kuwait will continue its efforts to alleviate suffering of the people hit by catastrophes and wars. The world is suffering "crises, catastrophes and interecine wars" that have cast shadow on the humanitarian conditions of several peoples, both on the regional and international scenes, the Amir told the summit. He added that Kuwait has been working with the international community to lessen the suffering of these peoples and will continue fulfilling its humanitarian responsibilities.

HH the Amir concluded his speech with calls for international cooperation and coordination to defeat terrorism in all its forms, citing the Iraqi government's successful cooperation with regional and international partners to triumph over terror in Iraq. — KUNA

SHERATON KUWAIT CELEBRATES GOLDEN JUBILEE



KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah attended a ceremony organized by Sheraton Kuwait on Tuesday evening to celebrate its 50th anniversary. Several other state officials and dignitaries attended the event. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

PSC ENDS HEALTH MINISTRY'S HOTLINE SERVICE FOR NONPAYMENT

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: The Public Services Company (PSC) yesterday decided to suspend the Ministry of Health's inquiry hotline (151) because the ministry did not renew the contract that expired in Oct 2016. According to the expired contract, PSC provides the service in return for an annual fee. However, PSC had continued providing the service until yesterday even after the contract expired, claiming Minister Jamal Al-Harbi is aware of the issue and did not react. Notably, the 151 hotline received citizens' complaints and remarks on the services provided by the health ministry. It annually received a minimum of 20,000 calls and referred them to the ministry's citizen service department.

Unemployment

The total number of citizens registered with the Manpower and Government Restructuring Program (MGRP) who have been awaiting employment for over six months is 9,284 including 58 PhD holders, 3,502 bachelor degree holders and 1,675 two-year diploma holders.

Allowances

The Ministry of Education asked the

Finance Ministry to provide it with KD 150 million to cover shortages in the allowances of students dispatched for study abroad. Notably, the total budget allocated for scholarships is KD 260 million and the education ministry had been previously accused of squandering it on students studying specialties not included in the scholarship program.

Licenses

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry is currently considering unifying the procedures of issuing company licenses and reducing issuance fees by 50 percent.

Heavy oil

Kuwait Oil Company's (KOC) Deputy CEO for Northern Kuwait Badria Abdulrahman Ali stressed that finding methods to produce heavy oil and efficiently refine it is a basic requirement to make the best use of the rich reserves in the Gulf region. Ali added that Kuwait plans to start producing heavy oil by the end of 2018 with an expected daily production of 10,000-15,000 barrels from the South Ritka field. She also predicted that production would increase to 60,000 barrels six months later.

AWARD-WINNING KUWAITI MOVIE BANNED FROM FIRST FILM FESTIVAL

HASHEM ONLY FEMALE KUWAIT FILMMAKER IN INTERNATIONAL ARENA

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: In an exclusive interview with Kuwait Times, award-winning Kuwaiti director and producer Farrah Al-Hashem said she was surprised to learn her film 'Breakfast in Beirut' was banned from the inaugural Kuwait Film Festival held from March 24 to 28, especially after she had been invited to submit her entry for the fest. "I was proud that a film festival was happening here. But I was disappointed when I heard that my movie was banned because of certain scenes that had been requested to be removed by the censorship department of the Ministry of Information," Hashem explained.

So far, she has received no official notice from the information ministry and was only told by an official there that the film had not been screened. "So I requested a clarification in an official letter from the festival's management, asking them to send a signed and sealed notice from the Ministry of Information saying that my movie was banned and the reasons for it. But I am still waiting for this letter. When I spoke with the ministry, they said they never even saw the movie. So I am still trying to figure this out," Hashem told Kuwait Times. Notably, Farrah Al-Hashem is the daughter of controversial columnist and writer Fouad Al-Hashem and niece of outspoken MP Safaa Al-Hashem.



The movie's official poster.

Festival Du Cannes, and won for best acting at the Women Independent Film Festival in Santa Monica, California and Los Angeles in 2013. I have made six other films in New York and Los Angeles, because I lived there and I was discovering life, people and stories related to New Yorkers and people living in Los Angeles. Usually, the artist depicts their own environment when they make a movie.

Awards

"I then decided to shoot my first feature film 'Breakfast in Beirut', which participated in many festivals and was awarded in Beirut. It even received financial support from the Ministry of Culture in Lebanon and from the Municipality of Treviso in Venice, Italy. This award was turned into a festival that was named after it - 'Breakfast in Beirut' - in Venice. It was screened there for three months, and was translated into various languages including English, French and Italian. The film was also nominated as the best film at the Lebanese film festival in Australia as Film of the Year, and it got a special mention from the judging committee at the Alexandria film festival in Egypt in 2015.

Limited budget

"In all its screenings, 'Breakfast in Beirut' was always sold out. I was lucky as I did not have a big budget for production, and shot it along with my mother Awatif Al-Zain, general supervisor of the film, who is a writer and journalist, and who helped me with all the preparations. This film is my little baby, and I did the montage, shooting, production, directing, casting, acting and decor, as I did not have a large enough budget to hire a team of people to work with me.

Origins of the film

"My feature film 'Breakfast in Beirut' is 72 minutes long and it is a fictional documentary that depicts the lives of 13 people. I tell my story from the point of view of Lebanese people who live outside their country. The film is about the Lebanese environment and life - what it is like to be outside your country; what it is like to live in another place, what is identity and what is home. It talks about finding your home.

The ban

"I was surprised when the censors asked me to cut a lot of scenes. I had problem with the cuts, as when I cut so many scenes from the film, it loses its value and meaning. I thought it is better if we do not screen it at all if we have to cut all the important scenes. I have no problem cutting out foul language, but how many times do we hear cusswords in Western films or songs? I do not think these words affect us as Kuwaitis, because we hear them in all movies on TV and other networks. Still, I did not have a problem with that.

Previous films

"I have made many short movies. I made a short film called '7 hours'. It was screened at the European Independent Film Festival in Paris and won four international awards including best screenplay, best performance and best short film. It was also screened in the short film corner at

Feeling sorry

"Thousands of articles were published about 'Breakfast in Beirut' in many Arab countries and even in the West. One critic in Kuwait wrote that this was the best film he had watched in the last few years. I was very happy with this comment, and I hoped that this film is screened in Kuwait to show how the Kuwaitis see Lebanon. Many Kuwaitis used to spend their summer vacations in Lebanon, and even HH the Amir did so. Many Lebanese people are in Kuwait too, so it is a beautiful exchange among the nations for the past 30 or more years. So I hoped that people see this movie from my view, as I lived in Beirut during my studies and understood the Lebanese community during the war. I'm sure if people watch the movie, they will like it.

"As a Kuwaiti, I thought that they would praise my work as the only female Kuwait filmmaker till now in the international arena. They could have put me in a separate category of the festival, even if it did not suit the other films; even if it was out of competition. Although I have been awarded internationally, it is not the same as being awarded in my home country Kuwait. I'm surprised of the ban here, as in Lebanon, the censorship department told me the movie was perfect and did not find any political or social violations.

"The film has been shown internationally including at the prestigious Lumiere International Film Festival in Rome, the Lebanese film festival in Sydney and the CultFest in Mestre, Italy. It also received critical acclaim including an honorable mention from the Lebanese Ministry of Culture and Film of the Year nomination at the Lebanese Film Festival."



KUWAIT: The long-operating Shuaiba refinery owned by the Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC). — KUNA

LONG-RUNNING SHUAIBA REFINERY SHUTS DOWN IN APRIL

KUWAIT: The long-operating Shuaiba refinery will shut down on April first after years of contributing to Kuwait's economic welfare and progress. An event, slated for today, will initiate the closure process. The refinery, owned by the Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC), is considered one of the model oil facilities in the country, the region, and the world. The shutdown was attributed to the outdated design of the facility, which was compatible with the standards in the 1960s, but now the long-serving refinery will end operations.

The refinery reached its highest production capacity of around 200,000 barrels per day (bpd) during its years of operation. The closure of the facility will pave way for the clean fuel project, which will begin next year. A number of senior oil officials will attend the ceremony initiating the closure of the facility tomorrow.

In a statement, the KNPC said that the refinery's employees would head to work in other operations owned by the company. KNPC said that several global companies

expressed interest in acquiring operating units within the soon-to-be-shutdown refinery, adding that an Italian group was brokering the selling of the units.

The refinery was established in the 1960s during the reign of then Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah who set the cornerstone of the facility. In 1968, the Shuaiba refinery began operation and started producing around 95,000 bpd.

The Shuaiba refinery went through many historical highlights during its years of operation namely in 1975 when he facility managed to increase production to around 195,000 bpd. The facility also went through horrible events especially in 1981 when a fire broke in one of the containers in Shuaiba refinery, requiring firefighting teams three days to put out the fire. The incident suspended operations for 36 days. Shuaiba refinery's biggest challenge was to overcome the destruction caused by the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990. The KNPC owned-site was restored to full operation after the liberation in 1991. — KUNA

\$3 TRILLION SPEND ON EDUCATION NEEDED ANNUALLY BY YEAR 2030

DUBAI: Ensuring every child around the world is in school and educated, is a key priority for The Honorable Julia Gillard, Chair of the Board of Directors of the Global Partnership for Education. Speaking at the fifth Global Education and Skills Forum (GESF) in Dubai, the former Australian prime minister spoke of the importance of solving the education deficit, in terms of both access and funding.

Moderated by Bobby Ghosh, Editor-In-Chief at Hindustan Times, Gillard's session looked at the global shortage of teachers, access to education and the funding needed to bridge the gap for future generations.

Part of the current issue was attributed to the lack of global emphasis placed on education until recent years, with the importance of providing children with quality schooling only recently being added to the agenda for humanitarian aid, particularly in poorer areas and areas of conflict.

Gillard said: "The problem is huge; at present, there are around 260 million children who don't have access to primary and secondary school education. We want to see every child in school and every child educated. Looking globally, the world currently spends around \$1.3 trillion on school education, but we need to be spending 3 trillion dollars annually by the year 2030."

A major barrier to progress in global education is the shortage of quality teachers across the globe, in which Gillard stated that the deficit is in the hundreds of thousands of teachers, with the challenge of training teachers being "immense."

In addressing the issue, Gillard believed that there is a strong case to be made for advocacy

and the presence of a global movement: "If you look at the world overall, many of the world's leaders are influenced by global campaigns. We want to make sure that, this year, the global campaign is around education."

Mothers were also cited as being instrumental in prompting a virtuous cycle of change; by educating mothers, they can experience the full impact that education provides in shaping the future, and use that power as a driver in the fight to ensure that their children go on to be

educated. Throughout the session, emphasis was placed on the importance of global education and ensuring that the message resonates globally through platforms such as GESF. As technology and society shifts, education continues to become increasingly important. "Education is the key to the sort of change we want to see in our planet," concluded Gillard, "the global education movement is about trying to solve that, and we need to make the case for change."



DUBAI: Former Australia Prime Minister Julia Gillard speaks at GESF 2017.

KUWAIT ANTI-CORRUPTION AUTHORITY REFERS OFFICIALS TO PROSECUTION

KUWAIT: Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority has referred six senior civil servants including government officials to the public prosecution for failing to disclose their financial statements as scheduled. The authority said in a statement yesterday, that the six citizens were referred to the prosecution for their failure to divulge their financial status to the authority within the legal time frame required.

The group submitted to the prosecution includes members of the cabinet, the parliament and board members of

cooperative societies. However, the authority indicated that these nationals had actually submitted the required statements, but they were late.

It urged concerned citizens, required to submit information about their financial status, to do so immediately and contact it on the phone number 118 for any clarifications. The authority also indicated that all personnel and ranking civil servants, subject to the system, must update the required financial data. It is unclear what, if any, legal ramifications will be taken against the six. — KUNA



MAN KILLED, CHILDREN INJURED IN ACCIDENT

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: A bedoon man was killed and three of his children were injured during a car accident on Fifth

Ring road yesterday morning. Firemen arrived to the scene shortly after the accident was reported, and were able to rescue the injured children who were handed over to paramedics and rushed to the closest

medical facility. Meanwhile, the driver's body was recovered by the coroner after paramedics pronounced him dead on the scene. A case was filed to investigate the causes of the accident.

MAN ARRESTED FOR NURSES RECRUITMENT SCAM

KUWAIT: An Indian national has been arrested for his involvement in a high profile nursing recruitment scam involving Kuwait. The man, who had fled to Abu Dhabi, was arrested at the Nedumbassery airport upon his return to India.

Originally from Kottayam, the man allegedly used his firm to charge nurses interested in working in Kuwait around KD 9,000 each for a job here - thousands more than what is allowed by law in India. The recruitment agency was reported to have recruited around 1,000 nurses in 2014-2015. He was alleged to have been working with Indian government officials to overcharge the nurses and is now facing criminal charges.

Photo

of the day



KUWAIT: A worm's eye low-angle camera shot of balloons taken inside a hospital in Kuwait. — Photo by Joseph Shagra

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• One Economy class ticket Kuwait - Dubai - Kuwait by Jazeera Airways*.

Sixth prize
• Canon Camera Dsc Ixus 310 HS + Free Bag.
• One Economy class ticket Kuwait - Dubai - Kuwait by Jazeera Airways*.

Seventh prize
• Canon Camera PSD 30 BLUE + free Bag.
• One Economy class ticket Kuwait - Dubai - Kuwait by Jazeera Airways*.

Eighth prize
• Canon Camera PSD 30 BLUE + Camera Bag.
• One Economy class ticket Kuwait - Dubai - Kuwait by Jazeera Airways*.

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

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

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AL-HASHIMI II: GIANT VESSEL THAT EVOKES KUWAITI PEARL DIVING PAST

KUWAIT: Al-Hashimi II, one of the world's largest wooden ships, evokes Kuwaiti pride in the country's pearl diving and sea sailing pasts. In 2000, then First Deputy Prime

Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and current Amir of Kuwait His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah inaugurated the vessel at ceremony in the Radisson SAS

Hotel; which has since been renamed 'Radisson Blue Hotel'. The ship took two years to construct and was a testimony to Kuwaiti creativity and artistry. —KUNA





KUWAIT: State Minister for Cabinet Affairs and Acting Information Minister Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah inaugurates the Kuwait Yacht Show.

KUWAIT YACHT SHOW RETURNS FOR 5TH EDITION

UNDER THE PRIME MINISTER'S PATRONAGE

KUWAIT: The fifth edition of the Kuwait Yacht Show (KYS), Kuwait's leading event for yacht and boat lovers, opened at Al-Kout in Fahaheel on Tuesday. The four-day event, which has moved to Marsa Al-Kout for the first time since its launch in 2013, will run from the 28th to the 31st of March, making Kuwait once again the focus of the marine world in the region.

After four years of growth, and as part of the Kuwait Yacht Show's mission to continually expand and promote the nation's marine sector, the show is being held in Marsa Al-Kout - part of Kuwait's largest waterfront leisure and retail destination. Marsa Al-Kout is a luxurious, state-of-

the-art marina and yacht club with facilities for more than 150 boats. The marina sits right next door to Souq Al-Kout - the community hub of southern Kuwait with its stunning views, and Nag'at Al-Kout, the area's traditional fishing wharf where local fishermen ply their trade. With the addition of the upcoming Al-Kout Mall and the five-star Rotana Hotel, this unique blend of traditional and modern experiences will make up the largest waterfront leisure and retail destination in Kuwait, boasting a 1.6km stretch of immaculate beachfront.

"Kuwaitis are the pioneers of the small and medium-size boat industry in the Gulf and they

are one of the largest investors in the sector," State Minister for Cabinet Affairs and Acting Information Minister Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah said.

220 exhibitors

On the sidelines of the opening of the Yacht Show, Sheikh Mohammed noted that the number of participants in the exhibition for the current year exceeded to 220 exhibitors locally, regionally and internationally. "More than 50 different brands in the show including from the Gulf, European and American, reflecting the importance of this event in these exhibitors and participants," he pointed out.

He added that the Gulf factories are testing their yacht's product in Kuwait because these manufacturers aware of the Kuwaitis love for everything related to the sea. He stressed the need to increase the investment in this industry in order to settle in the country. Sheikh Mohammed called all sea lovers to visit the exhibition and see the variety of yachts, stressing at the same time Kuwait's intention to host this exhibition in the coming years.

"This year, so many things are getting us excited," says Nouf Al-Hajeri, Operations Director of the Kuwait Yacht show organizer, PH7 Group. "Our water presentation has 2017 yacht models mostly between the sizes of 50 to 95 feet which reflects the market's needs here in Kuwait. SF Yachts are presenting Riviera 6000 and Monte Carle Yachts 86, Seas and Deserts

are having a lineup of 7 Azimuts between the sizes of 43 to 95 feet, Sunseeker represented by Powerboat center is docking 2 brand new models 68 feet and 52 feet, Bader Al-Yahya is displaying 3 Galeons and other boats by Suprema and Sealine and Alboom marine is display a collection of boats and yachts by Gulf Craft ranging between 36 and 63 feet. We also have fishing boats and jetboats for watersport lovers with brands like Robalo and Chaparral. Other Brands include Searay and Bostonwhaler by Seas and Deserts and IMG boats represented by their dealer Fahad Al-Ghareeb." "The on land display features marine equipment and supplies and boats ranging between 20 feet to 50 feet from many brands including Gulf Master, Silsan and Halul. International brands include Cigarette, Jeanneau, Bombardier Recreational products, American boat brand Axis, Mercury, Evinrude and Suzuki Engines, Kawazaki recreational products, Navigational products, fishing, diving gear and much more," she said.

"To entertain our guests, we are having on stage competitions on a fishing simulator with great prizes from some of our exhibitors. We will also give the stage to Hawana Bahry team who are organizing debates, short talks and share unique videos of sea adventures exclusively with KYS. All this and more, we are looking forward to keep growing the Kuwait Yacht Show year after year. With the guidance of the President of the International Federation of Boat Show Organizers, Goetz Jungmichel, who

also is the organizer of the Dusseldorf Boat Show, one of the largest boat shows in the world, we are surely looking forward to taking the show to the next level," she added.

Ministry's support

A private initiative by PH7 Group, The Kuwait Yacht Show (KYS), has nonetheless secured enthusiastic support from the states Ministry of Commerce and Industry - a sure sign of the value Kuwait places on the marine economy, and an official acknowledgment of the value this now well-established yacht show has imbued on the international image of the nation.

Hajeri stressed the importance of the sponsors, media supporters and Al-Kout's management "I would like to take this opportunity to thank our automotive Sponsor Ali Alghanim and Sons; our media sponsor Al-Anbaa and our partners GIG Insurance, 4 Fest Contracting, Men's Passion, Vacations and Bahri for their continued support." She continued, "Each person, organization or entity collaborating with KYS knows how vital a role they are playing in the success and continuation of the show. Every yacht owner who has agreed to free his space for KYS, every sponsor who has contributed in building KYS and every media partner who has helped in promoting the show locally, regionally or internationally has truly become a great ally and it is with honor that we thank each and every one of you."



YOUTH AND TOURISM FORUM REVIEWS SUCCESSFUL EXPERIENCES

KUWAIT: The second and final day of The first Kuwaiti Youth and Tourism featured workshops that focused on reviewing the experiences of youth and establishments in tourism-related issues. The two-day event was held under auspices of Acting Minister of Information and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Mohammed Al-Abdulla Al-Sabah at Kuwait Regency Hotel.

Speaking on a workshop titled 'Small Ideas and Initiatives for Touristic Projects', Fares Al-Enezi, the small projects' director at the Manpower and Government Restructuring Program (MGRP), stressed that funding small projects is a major investment in the field of economic infrastructure. He also called for having small touristic enterprises lead the sustainable touristic development in Kuwait. Enezi added that only 10,000 Kuwaitis have their own businesses, which is a small number considering that 450,000 expatriates work in small projects in the country.

Meanwhile, Abdul Wahab Al-Essa, social media activist and the founder of the Boutiqaat project, said that the youth are incapable of launching major touristic ventures while the state can do so and then invite the youth and small project entrepreneurs to operate them.

Also speaking, former CEO of Talabat Mohammed Jaafar called for handing over the responsibility of touristic and recreational sites to the youth. He also noted that the ability to attract investments is a source of power for any country.

In the meantime, the Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage's Advisor Dr Monther Al-Ansari talked about smart tourism applications and stressed that strong financial sectors could only be achieved through tourism. He also stressed that tourism needs certain elements such as planning, promotion, marketing, as well as developing human resources, statistics, touristic research, security, health and sustainable environments.

Ansari also stressed the significance of human resources' development and employment in convincing GCC leaders of the importance of tourism. He also stressed that the concept of 'Smart Tourism' became a must now since travel agents are the people most affected by the spread of modern communication technologies. "Video language is so important in Samrt Tourism applications," he underlined, noting that a majority of Smart phone users are of the 10-20 age group, which means that targeting them could affect decisions on selecting touristic destinations.

The last of the workshops was presented by engineer Phoebe Al-Salem, and in focused on the planning criteria and tourism in Kuwait's fourth guide plan for 2040. Speakers also included the Interior Ministry's Representative Major General Adeeb Suaidan, who talked about security as a major condition for tourism. He also talked about the facilities that his ministry provides to issuing visas.



KJA ORGANIZES ARAB CONFERENCE

KUWAIT: Kuwait Journalists Association (KJA) is currently preparing to organize the Arab Independent Media and Journalism Conference in Kuwait in the period of April 5-6, 2017, KJA Board member Duhairan Abalkhail said. The conference takes place under auspices of the Minister Of State For Cabinet Affairs And Acting Minister Of Information Sheikh Mohammed Al-Abdulla Al-Sabah, and in collaboration

with the World Union Organization for Arab Press (WUOAP), Abalkhail added.

A declaration of press freedom principles will be signed at the sidelines of the conference, as recommended by WUOAP last year in Morocco, said Abalkhail, who is also the head of the organizing committee.

He added that a number of Arab countries have already signed the declaration, which already matches article

seven of the Kuwaiti constitution that states that "justice, liberty, and equality are the pillars of society." Further, Abalkhail said that the two-day conference will include morning and evening sessions to discuss setting a regional mechanism to support the freedom of the press in the Arab World, the challenges that the Kuwaiti press faces, protecting journalists' professional and social rights, among many other issues.

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SENIOR CITIZENS TRADE CHARGES

KUWAIT: A citizen in his seventies and a woman in her sixties exchanged charges of beating and verbal insults at Jabriya police station, as each claimed to be beaten by the other.

Domestic violence

An Egyptian man sought police help to rescue him from his wife's beatings. The Egyptian, who was taken to Mubarak Hospital, went with a medical report to the police station and told them that a minor dispute occurred with his wife, so she attacked and beat him, along with verbally insulting him. He said this is not the first time she beat and humiliated him over trivial matters. Police summoned the woman for questioning.

Fight

Two sisters had a heated fight that ended up at the police station. The fight began when a woman beat the son of her elder sister, who admonished her, but she insulted her and things escalated to a fight. The younger sister lodged a complaint against the elder one. Police are investigating.

Indecency

Detectives arrested a citizen who appeared in a video clip disrobing a girl. He said in the video that he "gets" a girl every day from an educational institute. He was located and arrested by criminal detectives in Jabriya. The suspect told police about the girl who was with him, and she was brought in for questioning.

Phone theft

A thief stole the mobile phone of an Egyptian employee of Hawally residency affairs department while he was busy processing transactions. Hawally detectives are working on the case, as the victim gave a description and information related to the suspect. —Translated from the Arabic press



POLICE ARREST SORCERER WITH VIP CLIENTS

KUWAIT: Criminal detectives put an end to the activities of a Sri Lankan sorcerer, who claimed his customers were VIPs and charged KD 250 for each job. The Sri Lankan became famous and many complaints were lodged at the criminal detectives departments to stop this "evil" man who breaks up families and makes those

who deal with him believe he is able to bring lovers together and other claims. Detectives identified him and sent an undercover agent, then arrested him. A security sources said investigations showed that the sorcerer recognized the undercover source and even identified him. —Translated from the Arabic press

Al-Jarida

CUTTING DOWN TIME AND DISTANCES

By Dr Najem Abdul Kareem

The idea of this column came to me while I was on a train going from the UK to France. The train passes through an underwater tunnel and reaches its destination in less than three hours. I started to think of the various attempts to cut down long distances throughout mankind history, and ever since the very first human civilization. I found out through research that such attempts were limited at the beginning to riding animals or having them tow wheel-equipped wagons after man discovered the wheel. Man also relied on wind to steer ships in the sea. However, man's adventures to conquer distances started after the industrial revolution by inventing the air-filled wheel, which was followed by the invention of the automobile, before the Wright brothers built their own plane that flew for 20 minutes and covered a ten-mile distance. Developments continued, and advancements reached such heights as the invention of satellites and spaceships that carried man to outer space.

A very important incident attracted my attention; it happened in 1909 when the French pilot Louis Bleriot decided to conquer the English Channel (Le Manche) and cover the distance from the French port of Calais to the British port of Dover, a 40 kilometer distance, by flying. Reviewing his diary, he wrote: "The Daily Mail set a £ 25,000 prize for whoever manages to fly from Calais, France to Dover, UK. The news had a great impact on my wife who addressed me while holding the paper saying: 'Louis, are you ready?' 'What for?' I asked. 'To fly to Britain,' she replied. 'Why would I do such dangerous adventure?' 'Because I want you to,' she said. 'Hurry before you lose the chance and someone else takes it.'

Following proper preparations, Louis boarded the 'Mosquito,' the name he used for his plane before he ran into a colleague at Calais port who asked him what he was doing. 'I am going to fly to Dover,' Louis replied. Calais asked if he was out of his mind to fly from Calais to Dover across the English Channel. Thus, the Mosquito manned by Louis Bleriot became the first to fly over the English Channel. His diary also included: 'I used to look down at the sea and see a small ship sending black smoke into the air. It must be the Bride of the Manche carrying my wife and some reporters following up the first adventure to cross the Manche by air. Though I could fly at 70 kilometers per hour, I did not follow the ship. I got nervous when flying over Northern Dover rocks on remembering how Shakespeare's King Lear died there. Luckily, I landed very swiftly and after receiving the prize, my wife told me: 'You must be lucky to have married me, Louis!'

—Translated by Kuwait Times

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ZAIN PARTICIPATES IN PAAET FIRST ANNUAL CAREER FAIR

COMPANY SHOWCASED AVAILABLE VACANCIES

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading telecommunications company in Kuwait, announced its participation in the first annual career fair organized by the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET). The event, held in the PAAET Sports Complex, came under the patronage of PAAET Director-General Dr Ahmad Al-Athari.

Zain's ongoing participation in the various career fairs that are held in public and private universities all year-long is part of the company's keenness in offering job opportunities to young national talents, especially in the telecommunications industry, which is considered one of the most vital fields of the Kuwaiti private sector.

Through Zain's dedicated booth, the company's

Human Resources Division showcased the available full-time job vacancies, the company's human resources policy, Zain's working environment, the nature of work at the various departments and divisions, as well as the available vacancies for undergraduates to work in part-time jobs as part of Zain's Future University Network (FUN) program.

During the event, PAAET's graduates and undergraduates learned about Zain's leading experience in the telecommunications industry, as well as the company's strategy for developing its own human resources. Zain offers career incentives that assure the highest levels of quality and productivity, in addition to having a

focused human resources development strategy.

Zain firmly believes in the importance of educational development, as it is essential for individuals to then go-on to be successful and contributing members of society. Career fairs play a big role in exposing bright and optimistic youth who are looking for job opportunities in the various industries within the local private sector.

Zain is committed to playing an active role in the investment in the human capital of Kuwait. The company seeks to provide young and eager Kuwaitis with suitable job opportunities that allow them to apply their practical skills, achieve their potential, and fully develop their capabilities.

WARBA BANK SPONSORS INTERNATIONAL AWARENESS DAY FOR SLEEP DISORDERS



KUWAIT: Warba Bank - the best investment bank in Kuwait and the best consulting firm for companies - sponsored the International Awareness Day for Sleep Disorders, which was held at the 'Islamic Medicine Center' located in Al-Sabah Medical District.

Warba's sponsorship and participation at the event, comes as a vital part of its social responsibility strategy that prioritizes giving attention to the Kuwaiti society's health. It also reflects its commitment towards spreading health awareness and shedding light on sleep disorders and the importance of early diagnosis for sleep-related problems such as chronic insomnia that affects 30 - 45 percent of adults, especially in light of the lack of public awareness even among doctors, not to mention the limited number of doctors specialized in this field.

The inauguration ceremony was attended by Health Minister Dr Jamal Al-Harbi and a large number of doctors and consultants. The audience expressed great deal of interest in sleep disorders given the increase in the number of people suffering from these problems due to the daily life pressure, which reflects negatively on sleep quality and general productivity.

Therefore, Warba's financing solutions come as one of the best options for doctors who wish to take certificates and courses in various medical fields and increase their educational attainment. The finances offered by Warba Bank reach a maximum value of KD 15,000 distributed over a flexible repayment period.

During their presence in the international awareness day, Warba's team demonstrated the bank's financial solutions, which have recently been receiving positive feedback in the Kuwaiti society because of their compliance with the Islamic sharia, in addition to the many privileges they offer. These banking products include 'Al-Sunbula Account' that is considered the best Islamic banking solution for those looking to save and make earnings on their savings, while also having the chance to earn prizes through monthly draws. The team also answered inquiries about Warba's services and products, especially the 'Salary Account', which was re-launched this year under the slogan 'your dreams made a reality by Warba Bank'.



Red-letter day for UK man in Brussels

INDIA URGED TO ADDRESS 'RACISM AND AFRO-PHOBIA'

Page 11

Page 10



NEW DELHI: An African woman walks through one of the few neighborhoods that rents apartments to people of African origin in New Delhi, India. Mobs of Indians have repeatedly attacked African students in a New Delhi suburb in recent days after rumors that a local boy had been kidnapped by Nigerians. — AP (See Page 11)

INDIAN DAD ACCUSED OF BURYING BABY GIRL ALIVE

INCIDENT HIGHLIGHTS THE SCANDAL OF FEMALE FOETICIDE

NEW DELHI: Indian police said yesterday they have arrested a man on suspicion of burying his newborn daughter alive because he wanted a boy. Local villagers rescued the baby over the weekend after spotting her feet sticking up from a shallow sand pit in farmland in the Jajpur district of the eastern state of Odisha. Police arrested her father Ramesh Chandra for attempted manslaughter. The 35-year-old part-time taxi driver is suspected of taking the

baby from her mother soon after she was born on Saturday. "They were unable to explain about the missing child after we scanned the locality for expecting mothers," investigating officer Jyoti Prakash Pande said. He said Chandra under questioning had admitted burying the baby, saying he was too poor to raise a daughter.

Many Indian parents consider daughters to be a burden because of the huge dowries still

frequently required for marriage, while sons are expected to support them in their old age. The couple already have two daughters and a son and had aborted two earlier pregnancies, the officer said. It is unclear what will happen to the newborn, named Dharitri by staff at the hospital where she is under observation. A mobile video shot at the time of her rescue shows a villager slowly removing sand with his bare hands and gently pulling out the infant

wrapped in a blue piece of cloth. The baby suddenly cries as a large, jubilant crowd tries to arrange an ambulance.

The incident highlights the scandal of female foeticide still plaguing the world's second most populous nation, which has a skewed sex ratio of 940 females for every 1,000 males, according to the last official census in 2011. Earlier this month police recovered 19 female fetuses from a sewer in

the western state of Maharashtra and accused a doctor of illegally aborting them on behalf of parents desperate for a boy. India banned prenatal sex determination to stop its misuse, although the tests are still thought to be common, particularly in poor rural areas. A 2011 study in the British medical journal *The Lancet* found that up to 12 million girls had been aborted in the last three decades in India. — AFP

EVACUATION DEAL REACHED FOR FOUR SYRIAN TOWNS

BEIRUT: Four Syrian towns are to be evacuated under an agreement between pro-government forces and rebels, in the latest of a series of deals to end crippling years-long sieges. The agreement, brokered by rebel supporter Qatar and regime ally Iran, is expected to involve more than 30,000 people, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said. The deal reached late Tuesday involves Zabadani and Madaya, besieged by regime fighters near Damascus, and Shiite-majority Fuua and Kafraya in northwest Syria that are encircled by rebels.

Such evacuations have been touted by President Bashar Al-Assad as a way to end his country's six-year war, but his opponents say the

regime is redrawing Syria's map with forced displacement. The conflict has killed more than 320,000 people and forced millions more from their homes. In the central city of Homs, where evacuations from the last rebel-held district resumed last month, a bomb struck a bus yesterday, killing five people, state media said.

The Observatory, a British-based monitor of the war, said the residents of Zabadani, Madaya, Fuua, and Kafraya are to quit their hometowns over the course of 60 days starting next week. All of the residents of Fuua and Kafraya are expected to leave, while it was unclear if the evacuations of Madaya and Zabadani would empty the towns completely. The Yarmuk Palestinian camp south

of Damascus is also to be evacuated. "The evacuations are not expected to begin until April 4 but, as a goodwill measure, a ceasefire for the towns came into effect overnight," Observatory chief Rami Abdel Rahman. "It is calm there now," he said, adding that the truce would last nine months. Islamist rebels in the northwest province of Idlib have signed on to the deal, under which 32,000 people are expected to be evacuated, Abdel Raman said. At least 600,000 people are living under siege in Syria, according to the United Nations, with another four million people in so-called "hard-to-reach" areas.

The four towns are part of an existing deal reached in 2015 that has seen simultaneous and equal aid deliveries and evacuations-with the same number of trucks entering at the same time. They last received humanitarian aid deliveries in November.

The UN, which oversaw the initial agreement, has admitted that the "tit-for-tat arrangement" has complicated efforts to get aid in. The UN's humanitarian office in Damascus said yesterday that it "was not part of the agreement or the negotiations." The Syrian Arab Red Crescent, meanwhile, confirmed that it would take part in evacuations but could give no further details.

The new deal also stipulates that Syria's government release 1,500 prisoners held for political activism since the uprising began in 2011 but gives no time frame. The regime has been accused by rights groups of the torture and summary executions of thousands of people in its prisons and intelligence services headquarters. The UN has hosted several rounds of peace talks in Geneva to try to reach a political solution to the conflict. — AFP



This undated file image posted on a militant website shows fighters from the Islamic State group, marching in Raqqa, Syria. — AP

S KOREAN GOVT FACES DELUGE OF CRITICISM OVER FERRY 'REMAINS'

SEOUL: South Korean authorities faced a deluge of criticism yesterday for announcing that human remains had been found from the sunken Sewol ferry, only to correct themselves within hours to say they were animal bones. Newspapers said relatives of the missing had been put through "heaven and hell" and accused the maritime ministry of recklessness. Nine of the 304 people killed nearly three years ago in one of the South's worst maritime disasters have never been found.

Salvaging the wreck in one piece-finally achieved in a complex operation last week-had been a key demand of their families, who say they have been unable to mourn properly without the remains. The maritime ministry raised their hopes Tuesday when it said human remains had been found by workers and were "suspected to be one of the missing victims". Little more than five hours later it withdrew the assertion, saying the pieces had been confirmed to be seven animal bone fragments.

Citing forensic experts, Yonhap news agency said they were from pig legs-and could be immediately identified as such by any specialist. In a front-page headline Wednesday, the Hankook Ilbo declared: "Maritime ministry gives relatives double punch". "Relatives of missing people had to undergo heaven and hell in one swoop as the government recklessly went ahead with an important announcement without checking basic facts," it said. The Dong-A Ilbo daily said it had "jumped the gun", under a headline reading: "The maritime ministry goofs up, again". Animal bones and human bones are easily discernible even to the naked eye, it added. Relatives who have set up home at

a port near the accident site burst into tears when a senior official told them "human remains" had been retrieved, the paper said. They rushed to reach a semi-submersible anchored out at sea, where the wreck has been loaded and the bone fragments were found, only to be told of their animal origins. Lost for words and exhausted, they returned to their shelters in silence, according to the daily. An unidentified ministry official was quoted by the Chosun Ilbo newspaper as saying: "The bones were in muck and we were unable to take a close look at them" before forensic experts arrived. "We never imagined they could be from an animal."

Reports suggested the bones could have come from food on board the Sewol - pork from Jeju, the ship's destination, is a popular regional specialty. A forensic scientist will be stationed on board the semi-submersible Dockwise White Marlin to avoid any further misidentifications, the maritime ministry said. The vessel is expected finally to bring the Sewol to port at Mokpo in the coming days, although preparatory work for the journey was suspended on Wednesday due to bad weather, Yonhap reported.

Almost all the victims of the sinking were schoolchildren. Investigations concluded the disaster was largely man-made-the cumulative result of an illegal redesign of the ship, an overloaded cargo bay, inexperienced crew and a questionable relationship between the ship operators and state regulators. The ministry was heavily criticized over the sinking, and the Kyunghyang daily said the announcement debacle occurred because it was now overly eager to prove itself by producing results in the search for the missing. — AFP

STORM BREWS OVER PALESTINIAN PINTS IN ISRAELI PUB

HAIFA: Just when it seemed there was nothing else left to divide Israelis and Palestinians, some Jewish hardliners have found a new one: beer. The recent decision by a trendy pub in the northern Israeli city of Haifa to make Shepherds beer available sparked the controversy. The problem: Shepherds is a Palestinian beer recently launched by a brewery in the occupied West Bank. The decision by the bar, the Libira, led to drunken-sounding diatribes from some. "Traitors' bar! I call on everyone not to go there," read one of the comments on the Facebook page of the pub located at the traditional port in Haifa's Old City. "This Palestinian beer is made with Jewish blood," said another.

When he saw the insults, co-owner Erik Salarov, said he was shocked. At the bar that he opened with friends, "we don't do politics," he said. "We offer a drink with friends. We have highlighted a

Scottish beer, a beer from Tel Aviv and Taybeh beer," he added, naming the most popular Palestinian brew. For Salarov, those who call for a boycott of Libira are "a handful of racist nationalists who do not accept the idea of co-existence."

He says co-existence is a part of life in Haifa, where 10 percent of residents are Arab Israelis, or the descendants of Palestinians who remained after the creation of Israel in 1948. Salarov says that dynamic is particularly strong in the Old City. Jews and Arabs gather together-rare in Israel-at bars and restaurants in the neighborhood. He has seen hardliners seek to cause trouble before. "We've seen it several times, but they are a minority," said Salarov. "They are more bark than bite."

'We are still open'

Suheil Assad, an Arab Israeli member of the city council and former deputy mayor, said Haifa has

managed to achieve some level of co-existence better than other mixed cities. "Arabs and Jews live mixed in almost all neighborhoods," he said. Still, he said, "every right-wing attack causes tensions to rise between Jews and Arabs." "Twenty years ago, the number of right-wing militants was much less," he added. Haifa, known in particular for its Baha'i Gardens, is also a cultural centre for Israel's Arab population. The city's Krieger Centre for the arts regularly holds concerts featuring Arab music and theatres stage Arabic plays.

Jaafar Farah of Arab Israeli rights group Mossawa said sometimes it seems that "Arabs account for 50 percent of the population instead of only 10 percent." But the city's Arab cultural events have regularly come under attack from the far right. Some called for a boycott of a recent concert by Arab Israeli hip-hop artist Tamer Nafar, whose pioneering political rap group DAM has

touched a nerve with songs like "Who's the Terrorist?". Al-Midan Theatre's state subsidies were frozen for a year in 2015 after a similar campaign targeting the play "A Parallel Time", whose plot has close similarities to the life of an Arab-Israeli jailed over the kidnapping and murder of an Israeli soldier.

A year before that, then Israeli foreign minister Avigdor Lieberman called for a boycott of Arab Israeli stores because they supported a one-day strike in solidarity with Gazans during the 2014 Gaza war. Like Akko, another mixed city along the coast, Haifa has also seen demonstrations that have degenerated into violence, said Farah. "The far right wants to create clashes to then be able to show that co-existence between Jews and Arabs is impossible," he said. For Leonid Lipkin, co-owner of Libira, those efforts will fail. "We are resisting and the proof is that we are still open," he said. — AFP



MOSUL: Residents carry the body of several people killed during fighting between Iraq security forces and Islamic State militants on the west side of Mosul, Iraq. — AP

IRAQ FORCES BESIEGE LANDMARK MOSQUE

BATTLE EDGES TOWARD DENSELY POPULATED OLD MOSUL

MOSUL: Iraqi Special Forces and police fought Islamic State militants to edge closer to the Al-Nuri mosque in western Mosul yesterday, tightening their control around the landmark site in the battle to recapture Iraq's second city, military commanders said. The close-quarters fighting is focused on the Old City surrounding the mosque where Islamic State leader Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi proclaimed a caliphate nearly three years ago across territory controlled by the group in both Iraq and Syria.

Thousands of residents have fled from IS-held areas inside Mosul, the militants' biggest remaining stronghold in Iraq. But tens of thousands more are still trapped inside homes, caught in the fighting, shelling and air strikes as Iraqi forces backed by a US-led coalition advance in the west. Helicopters circling west Mosul strafed Islamic State positions beyond the city train station, the site of heavy back-and-forth fighting in recent days, and thick black smoke rose into the sky, Reuters reporters on the ground said.

Heavy sustained gunfire could be heard from the Old City area, where militants are hiding among residents and using the alleyways, traditional family homes and snaking narrow roads to their advantage, fleeing residents say. "Federal police forces have imposed full control over the Qadheeb Al-Ban area and the Al-Malab sports stadium in the western wing of Old Mosul and are besieging militants around the Al-Nuri mosque," federal police chief Lieutenant

General Raed Shaker Jawdat said in a statement. Rapid Response elite interior ministry troops were advancing on the edge of the Old City, clambering over garden walls. Islamic State responded with rocket fire, streaking the sky with white smoke plumes. "There are teams going into the Old City since yesterday," said Rapid Response official Abd Al-Amir. Iraqi troops shot down at least one suspected Islamic State drone. The militants have been using small commercial models to spy and drop munitions on Iraqi military positions.

With the battle entering the densely populated areas of western Mosul, civilian casualties are becoming more of a risk. The United Nations says several hundred civilians have been killed in the last month, and residents say Islamic State militants are using them as human shields. The senior US commander in Iraq acknowledged on Tuesday that the US-led coalition probably had a role in an explosion in Mosul believed to have killed scores of civilians, but said Islamic State could also be to blame.

As investigators probe the March 17 blast, Lieutenant General Stephen Townsend said increases in casualties were to be expected as the war against the insurgents entered its deadliest phase in the cramped, narrow streets of Mosul's Old City. Local officials and eyewitnesses say as many as 240 people may have been killed in the Al-Jadida district when a huge blast caused a building to collapse, bury-

ing families inside. Rescue workers are still pulling bodies out of the site.

Huge blast

What exactly happened on March 17 is still unclear and there have been conflicting accounts of how many people died. Iraqi military command has said one line of investigation is whether Islamic State rigged explosives that ultimately caused the blast that destroyed buildings. Iraqi military said there was no indication the building was hit directly by the strike.

Eyewitnesses have said a strike may have hit a massive truck bomb parked by the building. Others say families were either sheltering in a basement or had been forced inside. "My initial assessment is that we probably had a role in these casualties," Townsend, the senior coalition commander in Iraq, told a Pentagon news briefing. "What I don't know is were they (the civilians) gathered there by the enemy? We still have some assessments to do. ... I would say this, that it sure looks like they were." The incident has heightened fears for the safety of civilians - an important concern for Iraq's Shiite-led government as it tries to avoid alienating Mosul's mostly Sunni population. The United Nations rights chief said on Tuesday at least 307 civilians had been killed and 273 wounded in western Mosul since Feb. 17, saying Islamic State was herding residents into booby-trapped buildings as human shields and firing on those who tried to flee. — Reuters

FREED FROM ISLAMIC STATE, IRAQ'S QARAQOSH IS NOW A GHOST TOWN

QARAQOSH: In the Iraqi Christian town of Qaraqosh, time stands still. The Islamic State group was expelled in October 2016, but life has not returned to its once-vibrant and wealthy neighborhoods. It has a ghostly air: wide avenues silent but for the rattle of an empty tin can nudged by the breeze or dead leaves rustling in front gardens abandoned by residents. The town sits on a main route from the city of Arbil, so cars occasionally speed through, but few people stop any more.

AFP reporters visited the town several times in March, speaking to residents earlier in the month and returning to its empty streets in recent days. Qaraqosh was ravaged by IS jihadists, who seized it in June 2014 as they rampaged across parts of northern Iraq, capturing second city Mosul and swathes of the area known as the Nineveh Plain, home to much of the country's dwindling Christian minority. The extremists worked to erase any signs of the faith from Qaraqosh. They smashed icons, toppled church bell towers and systematically chiselled out the crucifixes that once adorned each panel of the outer wall of the Mar Bahnam wa Sara church.

House after house was torched or blown up, and the Mary Al-Tahira church was defaced with the group's flag and threats. "Without the state of Islam, there will be no safety or peace in either Iraq or Syria," read graffiti on the mottled marble of one pillar. The church's courtyard was used for target practice, and hundreds of bullet casings still sit in piles alongside sheet music for hymns. The scene was heartbreaking for Aram Sqat, 24. "My whole life was here and it was a happy life," he said. "My feelings are more than sadness, I can say I'm destroyed," he added, walking through the scorched main hall of the Mary Al-Tahira church and crossing himself at the altar. "I want to cry, honestly. When you remember the life you had, and how it is now, it's something very sad."

'Nowhere like it'

Qaraqosh, also known as Hamdaniya or Bakhdida, was once one of Iraq's most important Christian towns. But now most people on its streets are, like Sqat, members of the Nineveh Plain Protection Units (NPU), a small Christian militia charged with protecting the town. The fighters have little to do, beyond checking cars at the town's entrance and exit, as the danger posed by

IS recedes with the Iraqi government's offensive against the group in nearby Mosul. But if Qaraqosh is now safe, residents say returning remains impossible, with basic services yet to be restored and no way yet to repair their homes.

"Where could we go back to? There should be water, electricity, sewerage, safety," shouted Imama Behnan, now living in nearby Arbil with her family. "We waited for them to liberate it so we could go back, and now this is liberation," she sighed. When she left her house in 2014, she assumed the exile would be brief. "I cleaned the house... closed it up and left. We thought it would be a day or two and we'd go back. Now it's been three years," she said, weeping. Many Qaraqosh residents have given up, emigrating to Europe, the United States or Australia, but Behnan refused to join her daughter in The Netherlands. She and others like her in Arbil receive some assistance from the church, whose leadership moved to the city with its flock. But they still yearn for home. "There was nowhere like Qaraqosh-even IS said they couldn't believe it," she laughed.

'They don't want us to return'

Qaraqosh's emptiness reflects the challenge faced by Iraqi authorities in many towns and villages liberated from IS, but remain devoid of services and infrastructure and lacking reconstruction funds. But Qaraqosh residents also allege they are trapped in a political dispute between Iraq's autonomous Kurdish region and the country's federal government. They accuse Kurdish forces of preventing them from going home, and seeking to expand their control over the town.

"They don't want Christians to return here, they want to control these areas," said Jamil Salahuddin Al-Jamil, a Qaraqosh native and NPU member. "They want to take these areas because they're areas that belong to the Christians and they are strategic areas between Arbil and Mosul." Such accusations are repeated by others, who accuse Kurdish forces of even preventing burials at the local graveyard. But the deputy interior minister of the Kurdish regional government denied the charges. "We hope that the displaced will return to their homes as soon as possible, and from our side we don't put any obstacles in the way of their return," Jalal Karim said. — AFP



QARAQOSH: Photo shows a general view of the predominantly Christian Iraqi town of Qaraqosh (Hamdaniya), 30 kilometers east of the northern city of Mosul. — AFP

S AFRICAN LEADER ATTACKED AT FREEDOM ICON'S FUNERAL

JOHANNESBURG: The funeral of celebrated South African anti-apartheid activist Ahmed Kathrada yesterday was transformed into a rally against President Jacob Zuma, who had been barred from the event. The family of the African

National Congress (ANC) stalwart, one of Nelson Mandela's closest colleagues in the struggle against white minority rule who died on Tuesday aged 87, had asked Zuma to stay away. It was however attended by vice presi-

dent Cyril Ramaphosa, cabinet ministers and all of the country's living post-apartheid former presidents.

South Africa was thrown into political turmoil on Monday when Zuma ordered the respected Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan to return early from an overseas investor trip, fuelling speculation that he was preparing to replace him with a loyalist. The move sent the rand tanking and renewed investor fears that the country could be about to enter a period of economic and political uncertainty. In a fiery eulogy, former president Kgalema Motlanthe said Kathrada was "deeply disturbed by the current post-apartheid failure of politics".

"He found current leadership wanting on many fronts... and would not hesitate to call for the resignation of the president of the country with whom the buck stops," said Motlanthe. After his retirement from politics in 1999, Kathrada kept a low profile, but in recent years had spoken out against corruption and failings in the ruling ANC. He openly criticized the current government of Zuma, which has been accused of corruption, mismanagement and of failing to transform the lives of black South Africans. Quoting from a letter Kathrada wrote to Zuma a year ago calling for him to stand down, Motlanthe received long and thunderous applause from mourners-including serving ministers. — AFP



JOHANNESBURG: Men carrying a coffin of Ahmed Kathrada, during the funeral service at West Park Cemetery in Johannesburg, South Africa yesterday. — AP

GOVERNOR FIRED; VIOLENCE HITS MOROCCAN PROVINCE

RABAT: Moroccan authorities fired a provincial governor after angry protesters clashed with police leaving dozens of officers reportedly injured, an interior ministry source said. The disturbances were the latest to rock the northern province of Al-Hoceima since the death of a local fishmonger in a garbage truck last October sparked nationwide protests. The province lies in the Rif-a long neglected ethnically Berber region that was at the heart of a 2011 movement for reform that saw King Mohammed VI cede some of his powers.

Governor Mohammed Zhar was fired during a visit to Hoceima on Tuesday by Interior Minister Mohamed Hassad, the ministry source said. His dismissal was intended to "clear the air" and "meet residents' expectations for the region's development", the source added. During Sunday's disturbances, stone-throwing protesters attacked a police barracks outside Al-Hoceima then set fire to adjacent buildings. Provincial authorities said they made 14 arrests but said nothing about the

identity or motives of the protesters. Moroccan newspapers reported that several dozen police were injured, six of them seriously, after officers were trapped by the blaze and several jumped from the roof to escape the flames.

There was no official confirmation of the casualty toll. According to the Le360 news website, the disturbances began with a march by local schoolchildren protesting against the lack of teachers and school transport, which then got out of hand. On Tuesday, several hundred protesters marched into Al-Hoceima, a fishing port on the Mediterranean coast, but the demonstration passed off without incident, a community source said. There have been repeated disturbances in the province since Mouhcine Fikri, 31, was crushed to death in a garbage truck on October 28 as he tried to protest against the seizure and destruction of swordfish, which had been caught out of season. There were protests in early January and again in early February. — AFP

News

in brief

Death row inmates sue to halt execution spree

WASHINGTON: Death row inmates in Arkansas filed a lawsuit Tuesday to contest the US state's plan to end their lives over a shortened period of just 10 days. The state's Republican Governor Asa Hutchinson has stirred intense controversy since announcing the executions of eight men in 10 days, citing shortages of a drug used in lethal injections. The inmates said the accelerated schedule did not give them enough time to prepare their appeals, adding that the shortened timeframe violated Arkansas rules. "Each plaintiff named in this suit has suffered irreparable injury on account of the frantic execution schedule sought by the state," six of the eight men concerned wrote in their complaint. "Not only has Arkansas's rush to execute eight plaintiffs over the course of ten days forced the state to violate its own mandatory procedures for clemency review, but it has necessarily undermined each plaintiff's individual opportunity to advocate for mercy."

Ireland must loosen 'strict abortion laws'

DUBLIN: Ireland must loosen its strict abortion laws and replace them with a regime more respectful to women's rights, the Council of Europe's human rights commissioner said yesterday. Rules on terminating a pregnancy in once stridently Catholic Ireland are among the world's most restrictive and a referendum on widening access could be held if a citizens' assembly set up by government recommends it in a decision expected next month. At present, terminations are allowed only if a mother's life is in danger, after a total ban was lifted in 2013, a provision Commissioner Nils Muiznieks said still has a "chilling" effect on doctors who must decide who meets restrictive requirements. The Council, not part of the European Union, is a pan-European body concerned primarily with the region's human rights. "It's an unjust regime because it doesn't actually affect the number of abortions."



US President Donald Trump holds up a pen he used to sign one of various bills in the Roosevelt Room of the White House in Washington. — AP

'Sanctuary city' cuts could risk safety US police warn

WASHINGTON: Leaders of the largest police union in the United States have warned President Donald Trump that he could endanger public safety if he follows through with cuts in federal grants to immigrant "sanctuary cities," the union's director told Reuters after a White House meeting. In a move that concerned the Fraternal Order of Police, one of Trump's biggest supporters in the 2016 election campaign, US Attorney General Jeff Sessions said on Monday that the Justice Department would restrict grants to jurisdictions that do not cooperate with federal immigration authorities. Sanctuary cities, such as San Francisco and New York, refuse to cooperate sometimes by not notifying Department of Homeland Security agents when illegal immigrants are being released from incarceration. Dozens of local governments and cities have joined a "sanctuary" movement aimed at protecting immigrants.

Pakistani court bars the extradition of US citizen

ISLAMABAD: A Pakistani court has temporarily barred the extradition of a US citizen of Pakistani origin who is accused of planning a terrorist attack in New York, a lawyer said yesterday. Justice Shaukat Aziz Siddiqui of Islamabad High Court suspended the extradition order against Talha Haroon, 19, who is currently jailed in Rawalpindi pending his repatriation. Lawyer Tariq Asad, who petitioned the Islamabad High Court against the order, said he had won a stay. Siddiqui also summoned officials from the interior ministry for the next court hearing on April 11, according to an order seen by AFP. "The allegation was that he was planning an armed operation against a public place in New York with IS," Asad said, referring to the Islamic State group. He said Haroon had returned from the US to Pakistan more than a year ago.

Nigeria's president acts to fill vacant ministries

ABUJA: Nigeria's President Muhammadu Buhari has submitted the names of two ministerial nominees to the Senate, the upper house said yesterday, moving to reassert his authority after returning from seven weeks of medical leave. Buhari nominated Stephen Ocheni, of Kogi state and Suleiman Hassan from Gombe state, to fill the vacant labor and environment ministries, said the Senate on its official Twitter account. They were the first major political appointments since the ailing president returned from Britain on March 10 following medical leave for an unspecified illness. Since then, he has worked only a handful of hours each day. Nigerian law makes it mandatory for a minister to be appointed from each of the country's 36 states. The role of minister of environment was left open earlier this year after Amina Mohammed, from Gombe, became the United Nations' deputy secretary-general. The former minister of labor - James Ochoi, from Kogi - died in a car crash a year ago and the position has since remained vacant.

Philippines, China to hold direct talks amid sea row

MANILA: China and the Philippines will hold direct talks on their maritime dispute in May, Filipino officials said yesterday, as President Rodrigo Duterte seeks stronger economic ties with Beijing. Last year a United Nations-backed international tribunal rejected Beijing's claims to most of the South China Sea, including disputed areas close to the coasts of its neighbors. But Duterte, elected last year, has played down that ruling and pushed for rapprochement with China as he seeks billions of dollars in trade and investment from it. China this week offered to host a meeting in May of a "bilateral consultation mechanism" to tackle issues related to the sea row, the Philippine foreign department said. "This is a new proposal, a bilateral consultation mechanism specifically on the South China Sea," spokesman Charles Jose told reporters. China rejects the tribunal's ruling and asserts sovereignty over almost all of the South China Sea, despite partial counter-claims from Brunei, Taiwan, Malaysia, the Philippines and Vietnam.

SATIRIST SHAKES UP SERBIA PRESIDENTIAL VOTE

MLADENOVAC: He campaigns in a Borat-style white suit, sports a samurai-style ponytail and hipster beard, touts a manifesto studded with lunatic pledges and uses a made-up name that mocks politics as the circus of greed. But in his jokey bid to become Serbia's next president, Luka Maksimovic, a 25-year-old satirist, has caused many not just to laugh but also reflect on their nation's troubled political scene and generational gap. Some opinion polls even place the young showman second for Sunday's vote, ahead of a string of veteran politicians.

Maksimovic, a media and communication student, chose the name of Ljubisa Preletacevic-nicknamed "Beli" (White) — as the fictitious moniker for his candidate. Preletacevic punningly means someone who effortlessly switches loyalty-a job at the notorious fickleness of Serbian politics. His key electoral pledge is naked self-interest: "To steal for myself, but also to give something to the people."

Serbian Borat?

His campaign video-viewed more than 750,000 times in its first week-shows him dressed in white, riding a white horse and hailing fans while standing in an outdated open-top Mercedes, a posture reminiscent of Borat,



MLADENOVAC: Presidential candidate, Luka Maksimovic also known as Beli, a 25-year-old satirist, poses in front of a mural depicting himself in the Serbian town of Mladenovac. — AFP

the outrageous figure created by British comedian Sacha Baron Cohen. "We will get 16 wages, we will build three-storey houses, there will be no war," sing tight-trousered

performers. On a recent campaign appearance in Mladenovac, Maksimovic's home town outside Belgrade, "Beli" was mobbed.

"Mr President, I just want to shake your hand and say hello," a thrilled man in his 50s told the beaming candidate. "We came from Belgrade just to meet you," a middle-aged woman shouted from her car. Preletacevic went over to shake hands. "Hit it hard!" he declared, using his movement's slogan. Centre-right Prime Minister Aleksandar Vucic is the frontrunner in Sunday's vote and may win by a clear majority in the first round, surveys show. But, driven by deep-seated scorn at mainstream politics and curiosity at his tongue-in-cheek stance, many voters seem to be giving "Beli" a favourable look.

Some opinion polls place him second, ahead of former ombudsman Sasa Jankovic and ex-foreign minister Vuk Jeremic, deemed Vucic's most serious challengers. Maksimovic's foray into politics began as a joke, when he and a bunch of friends made a video mocking Serbia's politicians for corruption and greed. Last year, he led a group of fellow pranksters to a surprise success in a local election, coming second after Vucic's Serbian Progressive Party (SNS). Ten months later, they took on the biggest prize of all: the presidency. —AFP

FRENCH SOCIALIST CANDIDATE BRUISED AS EX-PM VALLS DEFECTS TO MACRON

VALLS DEFECTION ANGERS CANDIDATE HAMON

PARIS: Former French Prime Minister Manuel Valls said yesterday he would vote for Emmanuel Macron in the presidential election, the biggest Socialist Party name to date to turn his back on its official candidate and support the centrist instead. While it was not clear if the defection would benefit poll favorite Macron, who politely thanked Valls, it prompted angry responses from many Socialists and media speculation about the survival of the largest left-wing party.

Valls, whose announcement came days after veteran Socialist defense minister Jean-Yves Le Drian deserted to Macron, said he wanted to do all he could to ensure that far-right leader Marine Le Pen, second-placed in opinion polls, did not win power. "I'm not going to take any risks," Valls said, adding that he believed Le Pen's score potential was seriously underrated. "I will vote for Emmanuel Macron," he told BFM TV. French opinion polls show Macron winning the presidency in a second-round vote on May 7 where he would face off against Le Pen. They show Socialist Benoit Hamon set for a humiliating fifth place in the first round eliminator on April 23.

Hamon denounced Valls' defection and called on all left-wingers to unite behind him 25 days from round one of the election. "I urge you to sanction those who've started this morbid game...those who no longer believe in anything," he said in a statement. Valls said his choice did not mean he would campaign for 39-year-old



ALGER: File photo shows French Prime minister Manuel Valls (right) talking with his Economy and Industry Minister Emmanuel Macron during the opening of the 3rd forum on partnerships between France and Algeria in Algiers. — AFP

Macron—a fellow minister in President Francois Hollande's government from 2014, but who quit last year to prepare a presidential bid under his own political banner En Marche! (Onwards!).

Valls, who lost to radical left-winger Hamon in the Socialist primaries, is seen by political sources and experts as likely to wait in the wings and seek to build a reformist parliamentary force that would be distinct from En Marche!, but which

could get a say in its parliamentary majority should Macron become president. "I have nothing to negotiate and am not asking for anything, I'm not joining his camp," Valls said. "But nothing will be the same after this presidential election...the duty of reformists is to play their part in a governing parliamentary majority."

Macron, who has drawn support from the political right as well as left, was also quick to say he did not plan to bring Valls

into his government. "I shall be the guarantor of new faces, new ways of doing things," he said on Europe 1 Radio. The news came a day after third-placed candidate Francois Fillon, under formal judicial investigation on suspicion of financial impropriety, suffered a further blow when his British wife Penelope was put under formal investigation as well. The inquiry centers on allegations that the couple misused hundreds of thousands of euros in public funds, with him paying her a lavish tax-funded salary for minimal work as his parliamentary assistant. Francois Fillon has conceded what he called errors of judgment but denies doing anything illegal.

'No Honor'

Valls' endorsement is a mixed blessing for Macron, even though their political views are not far apart. For many Socialists, and above all candidate Hamon, Valls' decision comes from a man who represents Hollande's rightward turn during his five-year mandate towards the business-friendly reforms that upset the left and alienated core voters. The blow for Hamon clearly compounded existing left-right splits within the party. "Everybody now knows what a commitment signed by a man like Manuel Valls is worth," Arnaud Montebourg, a more hardline leftist in the Socialist Party, said on Twitter. "You don't smash the table when you have a family dispute," said Francois Kalfon, another hardliner. "Manuel Valls is digging his own grave." — Reuters

SIMILARITIES STRIKE BETWEEN TWO DEADLY OAKLAND FIRES

OAKLAND: The similarities between two deadly Oakland fires that occurred nearly four months apart are striking: Each involved a dangerously dilapidated building with an absentee landlord and renters desperate for affordable housing in the expensive San Francisco Bay Area. The fire Monday at a building for recovering addicts and people who had been homeless occurred despite promises by city officials to crack down on substandard housing after 36 partygoers died in December at a warehouse known as the Ghost Ship that had been illegally converted into live and work spaces for artists.

"Both buildings were incredibly problematic and had a lot of legal issues," Mayor Libby Schaaf said Tuesday. Four people died in the latest fire, which occurred 30 years after city building inspectors found multiple fire code violations, including inoperable sprinklers and alarms, at the building that housed about 80 people.

Officials also noted a lack of fire extinguishers and overloaded electrical cords during the inspection that was prompted by a referral from firefighters who responded to an unspecified call in February. The owner was given 30 days to correct the problems. Authorities have not determined a cause for the spectacular blaze that lit up the night sky. Firefighters made a number of dramatic rescues and initially believed only one person had perished. The number grew to four and authorities so far have identified two victims: Cassandra Robertson, 50, and Edwam Anderson, 64.

The building, where many residents did not have their own kitchens, had been the target of 20 complaints to the city building department over the past 10 years. One involved a floor that was caving in because of badly leaking pipes. Others in the last year cited broken smoke detectors and no heat. Residents described a filthy place where maintenance was neglected and trash piled up. "It was a rough place to live," said 26-year-old Ruben Deon Mitchell Jr. "There was a lot of trash and noise." Kirsten Evans, 52, said she paid \$1,100 a month for a small studio without a kitchen. She moved in three years ago after she was evicted from an apartment where her landlord planned to dramatically raise her rent. The building's owner, Keith Kim, and his attorney did not respond to repeated calls requesting comment.

Kim owns numerous properties in the San Francisco Bay Area but had largely turned over management of the building

that burned to Urojas Community Center, run by Pastor Jasper Lowery. Residents were caught in the middle of a dispute between Kim and the center after Kim sought to evict Urojas in the wake of the Ghost Ship fire. Lowery did not respond to requests for comment Tuesday. The building is supposed to be inspected annually, but the city didn't provide any documents showing whether fire marshals had been there before Friday. The East Bay Times reported that officials appear to have inspected it in 2015 with an unspecified outcome. The Ghost Ship warehouse that burned Dec. 2 also was the target of public safety warnings in the months before the fire.

City records show its residents relied on makeshift electrical hookups while visitors and neighbors lodged numerous complaints of unsafe conditions. Records showed that city inspectors had knocked on the warehouse door a few times, but none had stepped inside for at least 30 years. Days after the Ghost Ship fire, the mayor vowed to streamline communications to keep buildings such as the Ghost Ship from slipping through the cracks when problems are reported. Schaaf told The Associated Press that those internal communications appear to have improved. —AP



OAKLAND: Sheets of linen are seen tied together hanging from a window to form an escape ladder at the site of a four alarm apartment fire in Oakland, Calif. — AP



MONTEPUEZ: A geologist at the Gemfields Ruby mine performs the final stage of the sorting process in Montepuez, Mozambique. — AFP

RUBY RUSH BRINGS GANGLAND TURF WAR TO MOZAMBIQUE

MONTEPUEZ: The stakes are high in Montepuez where the discovery of rubies has led to violence among miners that has turned the northern town into what some describe as Mozambique's own version of the Wild West. Discovery of the red gemstone in 2009 sparked a "ruby rush," with thousands of miners arriving to seek their fortune, but often finding only grim conditions, conflict and danger. "We have a lot of foreigners who come from a lot of countries to look for rubies," Tania Mabota, chief medical officer of Montepuez Hospital said.

"There's conflict for territory because it's a means of subsistence for the artisanal miners," she added. "One stone is enough for a person to be attacked." The rubies attract informal-also referred to as artisanal-miners from Mozambique, Tanzania, Nigeria and other nations, whose work is illegal, unlike legitimate companies. A cohort of gem traffickers has also arrived to trade in the stones. Treating a dozen cases of injuries a month and the occasional death, the hospital finds itself on the front line of a turf war between gangs of illegal miners.

"Miners are killing one another for the gems," said Montepuez district administrator Etelvina Fevereiro. "We have organized crime, armed attacks and trafficking of all kinds of drugs from cocaine to hashish," Fevereiro said. Police in February rounded up 3,672 illegal miners, more than two-thirds of them clandestine migrants. "The operation is

very important because of the levels of disorder and anarchy," said journalist and commentator Fernando Lima. "The situation there is just like in a Wild West movie." The rush that has engulfed the remote region, 1,650 kilometers north of the capital, started six years ago.

Discovery of the century

Rubies were discovered when a local woodcutter picked up a stone, which was passed on for expert analysis. "Mozambique didn't realize it was sitting on such an amazing resource," said Pia Tonna, marketing and sales director with British firm Gemfields, the biggest of several mining companies operating in the area. Producing nearly 40 percent of rubies sold on the world market last year, Mozambique has become one of the world's leading sources. The African ruby is now seen as an alternative to the highly prized Myanmar ruby.

Gemfields says it is proud to be supplying rubies mined "responsibly" and "ethically" and to share its profits with locals. "Bringing those rubies to the market on an international platform, realizing the true value of that product, is only going to help the country," said Tonna. "It's going to help the country as a whole, that means you get more schools, more infrastructure." But some locals say they have enjoyed no benefits, believing instead that they were robbed of their livelihoods and claim they were violently removed from mining territory allocated to large operators. — AFP

BREXIT



LONDON: An arrangement of newspapers show the front pages of daily newspapers yesterday reporting on British Prime Minister Theresa May's signing of a letter to invoke the provisions laid out in Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty to begin the process of Britain's withdrawal from the European Union (EU). — AFP

BARNIER AND DAVIS FACE OFF ON BREXIT MOUNTAIN

BRITON, FRENCHMAN TO SQUARE OFF IN DIVORCE TALKS

BRUSSELS: They have much in common, in public and private life, affirm a mutual respect and will be spending plenty of time in one another's company, but Brexit negotiators David Davis and Michel Barnier are poles apart on Europe. Born into the tough postwar years, Brexit Secretary Davis in England and the European Commission's Barnier in France, they both built careers on the right of politics, but often as outsiders, priding themselves on their personal links to the common people and keeping aloof from the elite. They got to know each other quite well personally when they both sat on a panel of European affairs ministers in the mid-1990s looking at reforming the bloc.

Some personal chemistry may help to prevent the complex talks from descending into acrimony as Davis pushes to get the best divorce terms for Britain while Barnier negotiates on behalf of the 27 remaining EU states. But Barnier's career has left him a profound believer in European unity, while Davis is a eurosceptic of long standing. Barnier, 66, cherishes strong links

with his rugged homeland in the Savoy Alps, seeking energy in mountain walking, a passion he shares with the 68-year-old Davis, once an army special forces reservist who grew up in rough south London and who, like Barnier, is married with three children.

Outsiders

In France, Barnier rose young and fast in Gaullist politics after an education at a Paris business school. But while he won respect running the 1992 Winter Olympics, and as a minister for the environment and later agriculture as well as a European Commissioner, a Parisian elite coach in the prestigious ENA civil service college never took him for one of its own. It scoffed at a perceived lack of wit and brilliance during his brief tenure speaking for France as foreign minister.

Davis also went to business school, in London, after grammar school and Warwick University-like Barnier's, a CV short on the establishment glamour that Eton and Oxbridge con-

ferred on many of his rivals, including David Cameron, who in 2005 would beat Davis to the Conservative Party leadership. Davis, who won a reputation as a rough-tongued "bruiser" when shadow home affairs minister, had the last laugh, however: Cameron gambled by calling last year's Brexit referendum to try and silence Davis and other raucous eurosceptics-and lost.

While Barnier was moving almost seamlessly from education to politics, Davis had a 15-year career in business in the 1970s and 80s, at the sugar refiner Tate and Lyle, a company that took a stand last year for Brexit and, since Davis's time there, has long complained about EU tariffs hurting cane sugar imports. Barnier is "more European than French", according to one senior EU official who has worked with him. Davis makes no secret of his deep dislike of the supranational institutions. As they climb together the mountain of challenges that Brexit represents, millions of Europeans will be hoping that their shared interests can prevent them falling off a cliff-edge through a breakdown in talks. — Reuters

50 SHADES OF CONTROVERSY: A HISTORY OF EU EXIT CLAUSE

LONDON: It is a fitting quirk of history that the 264 words shaping Britain's divorce from the EU were brought to life by British representatives over the objections of federalist colleagues who warned of trouble ahead. The now-infamous Article 50 triggered by Prime Minister Theresa May came about as part of a grand convention, undertaken between 2002 and 2003, to write an overarching constitution for the EU as it prepared to enlarge deep into eastern Europe.

Looking back today, delegates to the convention recall the rancor that surrounded the very idea of an "exit clause", which was unprecedented in EU law. "Most people thought the notion that you might ever want to leave was an utter insult," said British lawmaker Gisela Stuart, who was part of the convention's 13-strong executive "praesidium". The Labor MP fought hard for the exit clause at the convention, noting that it was touch and go whether it would be retained when delegates held their final negotiating session in July 2003.

The convention ended, to the sounds of champagne corks popping and Beethoven's "Ode to Joy", with the clause intact. Stuart did not share in the joy. She went on to take a starring role in the pro-Brexit campaign that culminated in last year's referendum decision by voters to make Britain the first country to take advantage of Article 50. Her revulsion at the EU grew out of what she felt was the elitist spirit of the convention, but

was fuelled particularly by later events. The EU's enlargement did take place, in 2004, but the proposed constitution was then thrown out by French and Dutch voters in referendums.

A punishment clause

Despite that stinging electoral rebuff, EU leaders regrouped and bundled much of the legal revamp into a new treaty, signed in Lisbon. The initial text's "Article 60" lived on in the form of Article 50. Still, few involved in its evolution thought it would ever be invoked. Originally, the idea was to encourage adoption of the constitution as quickly as possible by creating a mechanism to kick out a member state if it failed to ratify the text within two years. "Everyone assumed it would be the British who would have a problem with ratifying the constitution, not the French or the Dutch. So at first it was an expulsion clause," Stuart said in a phone interview. "But neither at its inception nor in its final stage, when it became the Lisbon treaty's Article 50, did any of its draftsmen consider that it would be needed." The two-year timeframe for withdrawal lived on in the revamped treaty, but the article's designers did not spell out whether the process can be stopped once it begins. That ambiguity could become a flashpoint as opponents to Brexit fight a rearguard action to retain Britain's membership, or at least access to the EU's common market. — AFP



BRUSSELS: A picture shows a cake with decorations reading 'Art 50' during an event organized by members of the Europe and Freedom and Direct Democracy Group (EFDD) to celebrate the formal notice delivered to the European Council and launching the Brexit in Brussels. — AFP

RED-LETTER DAY FOR UK MAN IN BRUSSELS

BRUSSELS: It was Tim Barrow's big day in Brussels but first, before handing over Theresa May's Brexit trigger letter, the British ambassador to the EU had to get on with "legal highs". For Barrow's 27 peers from the other member states, it was business as usual yesterday morning with their weekly meeting at the European Council. On the agenda of the body, known by its French acronym Coreper, was a scheme to provide emergency aid during natural disasters and EU legislative proposals to control new psychoactive substances, commonly known as legal highs.

For Barrow, however, this was a day like no

other. Probably never before has a British envoy to the European Union been greeted by quite so many snapping photographers and yelling camera crews when he stepped from the ambassadorial Jaguar on to the EU's red carpet. Formerly "our man in Moscow", the 53-year-old diplomat, appointed to the Brussels Brexit hot seat in January after the dramatic resignation of his disgruntled predecessor, was saying nothing as he strode past the Union's blue and gold star flag.

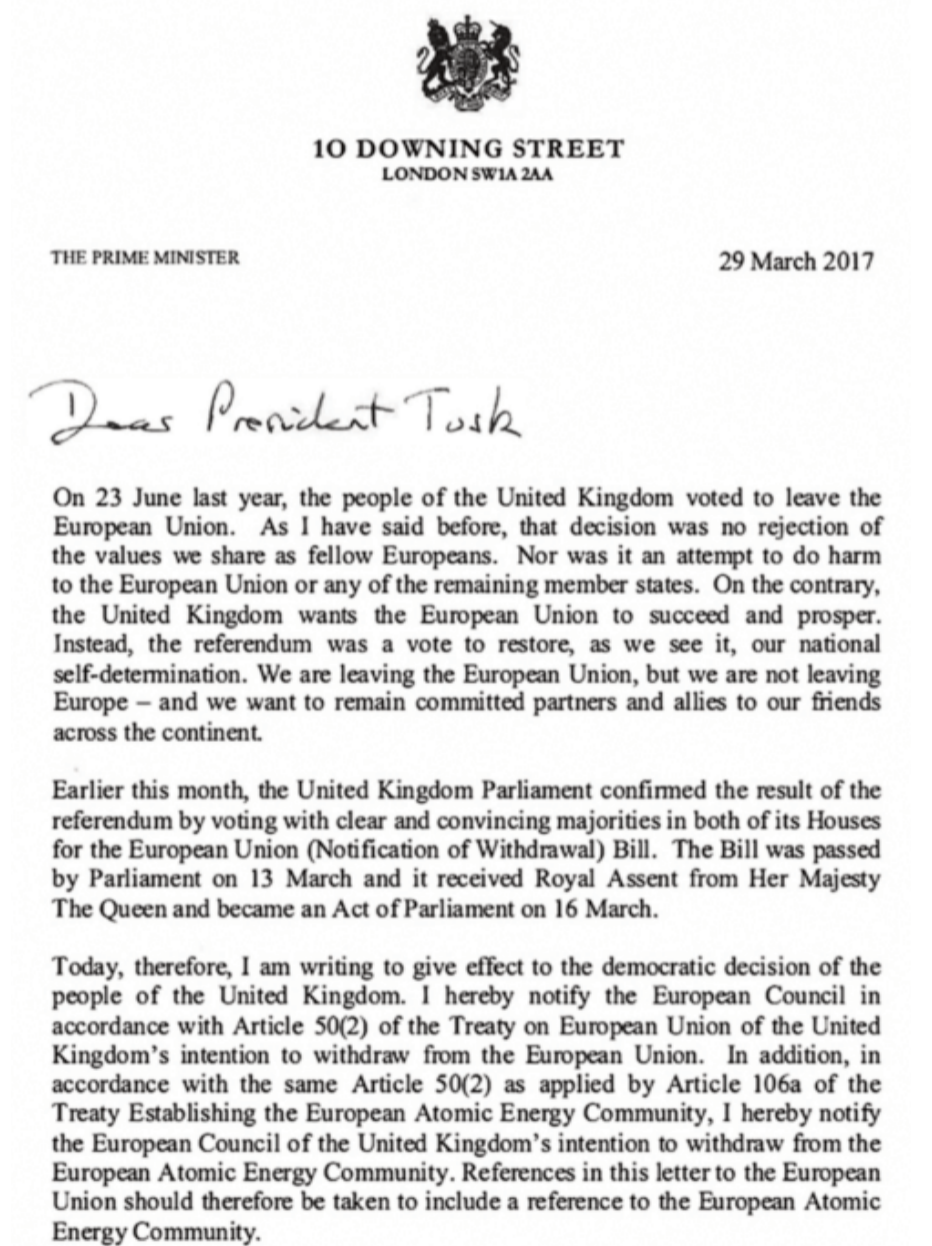
Officials would not say whether the letter from the prime minister confirming Britain's intention to quit the bloc under Article 50 of the EU treaty

was in his well-worn black briefcase. Nor would they reveal how the missive, signed by May in 10 Downing Street on Tuesday, had arrived in Brussels. After his fellow Coreper ambassadors break for lunch, Barrow has an appointment at 1:20 pm with European Council President Donald Tusk, the EU summit chair and former Polish prime minister, to make the formal delivery of the letter. That will set the clock ticking to Britain's departure, in principle on March 29, 2019, a Friday, although the precise date could be finetuned by negotiation. From now until then, Barrow will have to get used to Coreper frequently meeting without him as the EU27 takes on a legal character to exclude Britain.

Barrow's handover of the letter, which EU officials expect will offer a positive approach to negotiations and set out over several pages May's existing demands, is due to take place in Tusk's offices on the top floor of the Europa Building. Opened just this year amid criticism of its cost and garish internal color schemes, the building which senior EU officials jokingly refer to as "Tusk Tower", was planned in happier times, when the Union seemed set for ever more expansion, taking in a dozen new members, mainly in formerly Communist eastern Europe. Yesterday, it will see its first great historic occasion but hardly one its designers foresaw. Nine months after Britons shocked the bloc by voting to leave in a referendum, Barrow will launch the unprecedented shrinking of the European Union. On the other side of Brussels' Rue de la Loi (Law Street), in The Old Hack, a British-style pub, members of the European Parliament from the UK Independence Party will be celebrating. The anti-EU campaigners are throwing a "Brexit Party". — Reuters



BRUSSELS: Britain's ambassador to the EU Tim Barrow delivers British Prime Minister Theresa May's formal notice of the UK's intention to leave the bloc under Article 50 of the EU's Lisbon Treaty to European Council President Donald Tusk yesterday. — AFP



THE TWO TRIBES: BREXIT PLAYERS

BRUSSELS: The Brexit process will see senior British and European politicians battle it out over two years of tough negotiations. Here is a summary of the key players in the talks, which will be conducted on the European Union's home turf in Brussels: The Away Team -

Theresa May

Theresa May took over as prime minister and Conservative leader from David Cameron after the Brexit vote in June and, despite having campaigned to stay in the EU, is steering Britain towards a clean break with the bloc. She has promised to control EU migration, even at the cost of leaving Europe's single market, and warned that governments must pay greater heed to voter concerns about globalization. So far her party is behind her, she has a huge lead over the opposition Labor party and the economy is performing better than expected-but huge uncertainty lies ahead. The 60-year-old May is known for her attention to detail and for taking decisions herself, but has also been dubbed "Theresa Maybe" for putting off key decisions.

David Davis

One of three strongly eurosceptic ministers appointed to key posts in May's government, former sugar industry

executive David Davis leads the newly created Department for Exiting the European Union (DEXEU). Davis, 68, a former special forces reservist who has been in parliament since 1987, has a reputation for being tough, principled and sometimes reckless. Firm in his belief that Britain can thrive outside the EU, he has admitted the economy would suffer if EU migration stopped overnight and has conceded Britain could pay for continued access to the single market. He has good relations with EU negotiator Michel Barnier-whom he refers to in public as just "Michel"—having worked together as Europe ministers for their respective countries in the 1990s.

Tim Barrow

Tim Barrow was appointed permanent representative to the EU in January after predecessor Ivan Rogers unexpectedly resigned, amid claims that ministers did not like his warnings about the mood in Brussels. A career diplomat, bearded 53-year-old Barrow's most recent foreign posting was as ambassador to Moscow, although he has previously spent two stints in Brussels. He is described by colleagues as experienced and tough-necessary qualities as he goes up against what Rogers described as the European Commission's "class-act" negotiators.

Home Side - Jean-Claude Juncker

European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker is a grizzled former prime minister of Luxembourg whom the eurosceptics love to hate as a symbol of federalist overreach. Juncker now presides over the vast Brussels bureaucracy that will lead the Brexit negotiations for Europe, though EU leaders will insist on keeping a close eye on developments. At 62, fond of a drink and a smoke and with a wry sense of humor, Juncker has a deep experience of tackling major EU problems including the euro-zone and Greek debt crises.

Michel Barnier

Michel Barnier, the Commission's chief Brexit negotiator, is a former European commissioner for financial services once derided by the British media as "the most dangerous man in Europe" after he capped bonuses for bankers. Before turning to Europe, the white-haired 66-year-old Frenchman held myriad ministerial posts in France, including agriculture, foreign affairs and environment and is a respected figure in Brussels. Like his close ally Juncker, Barnier has promised a fair deal for Britain, but is not expected to grant London any special favors. Last year he denied that he had insisted the Brexit talks

be conducted in French-but said the "linguistic regime" had yet to be decided.

Donald Tusk

Once a self-confessed football "hooligan" in his native Poland, European Council President Donald Tusk is tasked with ensuring that the EU-Britain divorce doesn't turn ugly. Tusk is the first official from the former Soviet dominated eastern states to be president of the European Council, a job that involves building consensus among member states. Close to German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Tusk will be keen to rein in calls to punish Britain, as well as protect the fate of the millions of eastern Europeans resident in the UK.

Guy Verhofstadt

The European Parliament's chief Brexit negotiator, former Belgian Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt is known for his federalist views and has been a frequent critic of Brexit. His main role will be to increase the parliament's role in the talks-neither Britain, the EU member states nor the Commission want them heavily involved. But as it is MEPs who will have the final vote on ratifying any Brexit deal, parliament will have to be kept onside. — AFP

BANGLADESH POLICE RAID ISLAMIST HIDEOUTS

DHAKA: Bangladesh police came under grenade attack when they raided two suspected Islamist extremist hideouts yesterday, days after a major anti-militant drive in which 10 people were killed. Police said counter-terrorism officers raided two houses in Moulvibazar district in the northeast after receiving a tip-off that extremists were sheltering there.

A stand-off ensued, with those inside the houses throwing grenades,

local police Chief Rashedul Islam said. "In one of the houses, we suspect there are eight to nine of them," he said, adding the houses were owned by a Bangladeshi-origin British citizen. The raids came after army commandos stormed a five-storey building in the nearby city of Sylhet, triggering a violent three-day stand-off. At least four extremists died and another six people including two police officers were killed when two bombs went off on

Saturday near a crowd watching the operation.

The Islamic State group claimed the twin bomb attacks but the government has rejected the claim, instead blaming a banned homegrown Islamist organization. There has been a resurgence of extremist attacks in recent weeks in the Muslim-majority nation of 160 million after a relative lull since five IS-linked gunmen killed 22 people including 18 foreign hostages at a Dhaka cafe on

July 1. IS has also claimed at least two of three other incidents this month in which attackers blew themselves at security checkpoints, including one targeting an elite security force tasked with tackling Islamist militancy.

Analysts say Islamist militants pose a growing danger in conservative Bangladesh, where a long-running political crisis has radicalized opponents of the government. Bangladesh prides itself on being a mainly moderate

Muslim country. But that perception has been damaged by a series of gruesome killings of atheist bloggers, foreigners and religious minorities. Since the cafe attack, security forces have launched a nationwide crackdown on Islamist extremist groups, killing around 60 suspected militants. These include the founders of a new faction of the banned Jamayetul Mujahideen Bangladesh, which has been blamed by authorities for most attacks. —AFP



TEHRAN: Iranian students prepare their robots during the international robotics competition, RoboCup Iran Open 2016, in Tehran, Iran. Universities in US say President Donald Trump's revised travel ban would block hundreds of graduate students who play key roles in research. —AP

IRANIANS STUDENTS, ENGINES OF US UNIVERSITY RESEARCH, WAIT IN LIMBO

BOSTON: Hundreds of Iranian students already accepted into US graduate programs may not be able to come next fall because of the uncertainty surrounding US President Donald Trump's proposed travel ban, potentially derailing research projects and leaving some science programs scrambling to find new students. With admission season still in full swing, 25 of America's largest research universities have already sent more than 500 acceptance letters to students from the six affected countries, according to data provided by schools in response to Associated Press requests.

The vast majority of those students are from Iran, where undergraduate programs are known for their strength in engineering and computer sciences. The ban, which would suspend immigration from Iran, Sudan, Somalia, Libya, Syria and Yemen, has been blocked by federal judges. But if the court ruling is overturned or if Trump issues a new immigration ban, students would be locked out for next fall, legal experts say. "For us to not have access to that talent pool is a major, major blow. It is unimaginable in schools of engineering across the country to lose that talent," said Kazem Kazerounian, dean of the School of Engineering at the University of Connecticut, which has accepted 15 Iranian students so far.

Graduate programs

The new uncertainty has steered some students to other nations that compete with the US for top students, including Canada, Australia and Japan, officials at some schools say. Students from Iran have helped fill graduate programs at American colleges for years, especially in engineering schools. Out of 12,000 Iranian students who attended US universities last year, 77 percent were graduate students and more than half studied engineering, according to data from the State Department and the Institute of International Education, a nonprofit in Washington.

At the University of Central Florida, a third of the 115 students who have been accepted to graduate programs in civil and electrical engineering for next fall are from Iran. Iranian student Amir Soleimani, 26, has been accepted to two universities in the US, where he wants to pursue a doctorate in electrical engineering and continue his research on artificial intelligence. If he is kept out, he says, he'll likely have to begin his two years of mandatory service in Iran's military. "My future is very dependent on this ban," said Soleimani, who lives in the city of Mashhad and has a master's in electrical engineering from the University of Tehran. "We have spent lots of our time and our energy to apply to top universities, and now that we have been admitted to these universities, it is very disastrous to see we may be banned."

Once implemented, the ban would last 90 days, but even afterward it would likely be too

late for students to complete the months-long process to obtain visas. Many US universities rely on international students to work as research and teaching assistants, particularly in engineering. Americans who study engineering as undergraduates often opt for the job market instead of graduate school, experts say, leaving them to rely heavily on international students. Some schools also rely on tuition money from foreign students, who are typically charged full costs. The University of Massachusetts at Amherst has offered acceptance to 42 Iranian students in graduate programs, and their absence would interfere with the progress of research, said John McCarthy, dean of the university's graduate school. "It's not something where we can just suddenly go out in the street and grab somebody who's qualified to be a PhD student in electrical engineering," McCarthy said.

At the University of Central Florida, 30 percent of the students working at the school's Center for Research in Computer Vision are from Iran, and all of them play key roles in research, said Mubarak Shah, director of the center. Some, for example, are working on a \$1.3 million project funded by a federal grant to develop computer technology that can quickly analyze thousands of hours of surveillance footage in an effort to help speed up criminal investigations. "We are concerned that this may hurt us long-term in research," Shah said.

Numbers are pretty high

So far, Central Florida has offered admission to 87 graduate students from Iran for next fall. The university may be able to find replacements this year, but the quality of programs would likely suffer, said Dale Whittaker, the university's provost. "These numbers are pretty high," he said. "I doubt that we would be able to fill 20 spots with high-quality students in one cohort." Even if the White House does not restore the ban, many schools fear students overseas will think twice about coming to the US. At Ohio State University, total graduate applications from abroad are down 8 percent this year, including countries not affected by the ban. Numbers at Indiana University are down 11 percent.

"It's a big concern within the field, and not just at Indiana," said John Wilkerson, Indiana University's director of international affairs. Indiana and some other universities have promised to refund application fees for students if they're banned, and some schools are offering to defer admission for a year. Many Iranian students have contacted the nonprofit American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee asking for advice, but for now, experts say, there's little to give. "It's all up in limbo, even with the court orders," said Abed Ayoub, the group's legal and policy director. "If an opportunity does present itself in another country, they just may have to take that." —AP

IN GIBRALTAR, THE UNION JACK STILL FAVORED DESPITE BREXIT

GIBRALTAR: Gibraltarians voted by 96 percent to remain in the European Union but as Brexit looms, they say their attachment to the United Kingdom still prevails, unlike some in Scotland who would rather remain in the bloc. The tiny British overseas territory on Spain's southern tip has long been the subject of an acrimonious sovereignty row between London and Madrid, which wants Gibraltar back after it was ceded to Britain in 1713.

The Rock fears that Spain may try to take advantage of Britain leaving the EU, a momentous move expected to start Wednesday that will also exclude the 32,000-strong territory from the bloc. In theory, this could make it harder for people from Gibraltar to travel across their only land border to Spain, unless Madrid and London come to a bilateral agreement. The Rock, which relies on tourism, financial services, online gaming and shipping services, also fears it could harm its economy.

'Panic'

The June 2016 referendum result provoked "a total earthquake," says Damon Bossino, a 45-year-old lawyer born in Gibraltar. Of Italian descent, married to a Spaniard whose family lives on the other side of the border, he says he "felt panic" when he woke up the next day. Gibraltar, surrounded by the Mediterranean on one side and the Atlantic on the other, depends on the small land border with Spain for much of its provision of supplies and visitor flow. Some 10,000 people also make the crossing daily from Spain to work, and they fear that Madrid may make things more difficult at the frontier. Quick off the mark, Madrid has offered dual citizenship to Gibraltarians in exchange for joint sovereignty of the territory, which would allow them to remain British and in the EU. Such a proposal isn't new, though, and had already been put to a 2002 vote in Gibraltar, which rejected it outright. —AFP

INDIA URGED TO ADDRESS RACISM AND AFRO-PHOBIA

MOBS ATTACK AFRICANS IN INDIA

NEW DELHI: A Kenyan woman was attacked yesterday, Indian police said, in the same northern city where a mob had assaulted African students following the death of a local teenager from a suspected drug overdose. The woman was allegedly dragged out of a taxi and repeatedly slapped and kicked by unknown assailants as she returned to her home in Greater Noida, a satellite city outside India's capital New Delhi. "She has lodged a formal complaint and alleged that four to five men attacked her. We have launched an investigation," senior police officer Sujata Singh said. The 25-year-old student suffered bruising from the attack and was taken to hospital for treatment, Singh said.

Mobs have repeatedly attacked Africans in a New Delhi suburb in recent days after rumors that a local boy had been kidnapped by Nigerians. The surge in violence began Friday when a teenage boy disappeared in Greater Noida, outside New Delhi, and angry relatives claimed he'd been killed by Nigerians. A mob of people began searching the area for Africans, with some accusing kidnappers of eating the boy. The boy returned home Saturday morning. He died later that day, though the cause remains unclear.

The police arrested five Nigerian men and charged them with kidnapping and murder but let them go within hours, citing lack of evidence. Sujata Singh, a top local police official, told reporters over the weekend that the police simply had no evidence at all to hold the men. But mobs continued to attack Africans, the most recent attack was Wednesday, leaving at least two people with broken bones. Africans have been chased by a mob into a local mall and beaten there. There have been reports of crowds pulling African men and women out of autorickshaws and cabs and assaulting them.

The African Students' Association in the country has asked Africans across the capital to remain alert

and especially warned those living in Greater Noida from stepping out at all. "All African Students Studying in Greater Noida are hereby instructed to Stay at home as the situation remains volatile. We are advising all the student representatives from Africa to request their students to remain at home," their advisory said. It added that a clear number of attacks was impossible to know because of the sheer numbers of calls seeking help. As fears of more attacks lingered most African students and student leaders have switched off their phones or stopped answering them.

Hundreds of thousands of Africans in live and study in India, drawn by better education and work opportunities. For them rampant racism is a daily battle in a country where their dark skin places them at the lower end of a series of strictly observed social hierarchies. Indians

routinely perceive Africans as either prostitutes or drug dealers. The callous, daily racism that Africans suffer usually go unnoticed by others. In a country obsessed with fair skin and skin lightening treatments, people with dark skin draw a mixture of fear and ridicule.

Landlords shun Africans in all but the poorest neighborhoods, and in those they are charged unusually high rent. African students in the New Delhi neighborhood of Chhatrapur reported paying 15,000 rupees (\$225) a month for a single room and bathroom that would normally rent for 6,000 to 7,000 rupees. Strangers point at them and laugh or gang up and assault them. That changed in May last year when a Congolese student was fatally attacked in a dispute over hiring an autorickshaw in New Delhi.

Three men who insisted they had hired the vehicle beat him up

and hit him on the head with a rock, killing him, according to police. The death made the city's African students, diplomats and business owners rally together demanding quick justice. The African Heads of Mission in New Delhi issued a statement asking the government to address "racism and Afro-phobia" in the country.

The bad publicity from that attack made India's foreign ministry instruct the police to make sure they protected the city's African population. On Monday the Foreign Minister again tweeted that she had asked the government of Uttar Pradesh state, where Greater Noida is located, to investigate the "unfortunate incident" swiftly. On Monday the local police said they had arrested at least five people for their involvement in the attacks on Africans and were investigating the attacks further. —Agencies



NEW DELHI: An African man exits a house in one of the few neighborhoods that rents to people of African origin in New Delhi, India. Mobs of Indians have repeatedly attacked African students in a New Delhi suburb in recent days. —AP

EGYPT, SAUDI LEADERS MEET IN JORDAN AFTER TENSIONS

LEBANON PRESIDENT TAKES TUMBLE, FALLS FACE DOWN

SWEIMEH: Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi met Saudi King Salman on the sidelines of an Arab summit in Jordan yesterday to break the ice after months of apparent tensions between the allies. The meeting, in which Salman invited Sisi to visit Saudi Arabia, came days after Egypt announced Saudi energy giant Aramco resumed delivering shipments of petroleum products after abruptly suspending them last October.

Salman and Sisi are among 15 leaders attending the Arab League summit in Sweimeh on the Dead Sea coast to discuss regional conflicts.

Aramco had halted agreed monthly deliveries of 700,000 tons of petroleum products without explanation. The move was announced after Egypt voted in favor of a Russian-drafted UN Security Council resolution on Syria that Saudi Arabia strongly

opposed. An agreement to hand over to Saudi Arabia two Red Sea islands in the Straits of Tiran, signed during a visit by Salman to Cairo last April, had also foundered on a court ruling that blocked the move.

An Egyptian presidency statement said the two leaders "stressed the importance of pushing forward and developing bilateral relations in all fields" in yesterday's meeting. "King Salman invited the president to an official visit to the kingdom, which was welcomed by" Sisi, the presidency said, adding that Sisi also invited Salman to visit Cairo. Saudi Arabia supported Egypt with billions of dollars in aid after Sisi, who was the army chief, toppled Islamist president Mohamed Morsi in 2013. Saudi Arabia views the political Islamism of Morsi's Muslim Brotherhood with suspicion.

Aoun falls face down

In another development, Lebanese President Michel Aoun tripped and fell face down as Arab heads of state gathered at the start of their summit at the Dead Sea in Jordan yesterday, television footage showed. Aoun, 82, appeared to trip on a low, red-carpeted podium where flags of Arab states had been arranged. Two men in suits rushed to help him to his feet as Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi stood nearby. Aoun became head of state last year in a political deal that saw Saad Al-Hariri appointed prime minister, ending a 2-1/2 year vacuum in the presidency. Despite his fall, he later addressed the summit. En route to the same meeting, Dubai's ruler, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid, also slipped as he disembarked from a plane on arrival in Amman, stumbling as he reached the bottom of the stairs down to the runway, where a group of people was waiting to meet him. —Reuters



SWEIMEH: Egypt's President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi (left) meets with Saudi Arabia's King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud on the sidelines of the Arab League summit in the Jordanian Dead Sea resort of Sweimeh yesterday. —AFP

TELL US THE CHARGES OR FREE ACTIVIST, TAIPEI TELLS BEIJING

CASE FURTHER STRAINS BEIJING-TAIPEI TIES

TAIPEI: China must specify the charges against a detained Taiwan human rights activist or release him, his wife, ruling party lawmakers and rights groups in Taiwan said yesterday, the latest dispute between China and an island it considers its own. China confirmed that Li Ming-che, previously identified by the family name of "Lee", was in custody and being investigated on suspicion of harming national security, its first response since Li disappeared in China on March 19. Activists in Taiwan linked Li's detention to a new law targeting foreign non-governmental organizations in China, which grants broad powers to police to question NGO workers, monitor their finances and regulate their work. China's behavior was "completely detrimental to the future of exchanges between the two sides", said Chiu E-ling, an official with the Taiwan Association for Human Rights, adding that the detention would have a "chilling effect" on ties.

China must disclose Li's whereabouts, release him if it cannot explain the charges, allow his family and lawyer to visit and ensure he is not abused, she said during a joint news briefing with Li's wife, Li Ching-yu, other rights watchdogs and lawmakers from the ruling, independence-leaning Democratic Progressive Party (DPP). The case further strains ties between Taipei and Beijing, which have cooled since President Tsai Ing-wen took power in Taiwan last year because she refuses to concede that the self-ruled island is part of China. Beijing has never renounced the use of force to take what it regards as a breakaway province,



TAIPEI: Lee Ching-yu (third from right) holds up a photo of her missing husband and Taiwanese pro-democracy activist Lee Ming-che during a press conference with other representatives of non-governmental organizations calling for help to find his whereabouts in Taipei, Taiwan. —AP

while proudly democratic Taiwan has shown no interest in being run by Communist Party rulers in Beijing.

The DPP at the weekend slammed Beijing for causing "anxiety and panic" for the family by withholding information about Li. Ma Xiaoguang, spokesman for China's Taiwan Affairs Office, told reporters Li's case was being handling in accordance with the law. "According to what is understood, Taiwan resident Li

Ming-che is suspected of engaging in activities endangering national security and is being investigated by the relevant authority," Ma said. "At present his health is good." Ma said Taiwanese people coming to China for "normal" activities did not have anything to worry about and their rights would be protected.

Li, a community college worker known for supporting human rights in China, disappeared after entering China's Zhuhai city

via the Chinese territory of Macau. Li travelled to China about once a year to see friends and regularly discussed Taiwan's democratic process, Li Ching-yu said, adding that her husband regularly mailed books to China. But in August last year, one package was confiscated and his chat account in China was shut down, she said. "This (Li's) kind of behavior - based on standards of civilized countries - is innocent," Li Ching-yu said. —Reuters



Bradley Mitchell inspects the damage to his uncle's boat after it smashed against the bank at Shute Harbor, Airlie Beach, Australia yesterday. —AP

AUSTRALIAN ARMY MOBILIZES TO HELP CYCLONE-RAVAGED REGION

AYR: Towns remained cut off in northern Australia yesterday after being pummeled by a powerful cyclone that washed battered yachts ashore and ripped roofs off houses, as the military mobilized to help with the clean-up. The category four Cyclone Debbie slammed into the coast of Queensland state between Bowen and Airlie Beach on Tuesday afternoon, packing destructive winds and devastating some of the region's tourist hotspots. "It was the vibration and the hum, it was jaw-dropping, body-rocking and eyeball-popping. It was immense," Lachlan Queenan, who was sheltering in his Airlie Beach home, told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation.

Debbie has since been downgraded to a tropical low but the Bureau of Meteorology still warned of damaging wind gusts with "intense" rain, sparking flooding fears as river levels rise. "This rainfall is likely to lead to major river flooding over a broad area this week," it said. Some areas have been drenched in "a phenomenal" 1,000 millimeters of rain in just 48 hours—the equivalent of half a year's worth, according to the weather bureau. Roads to the towns of Bowen, Airlie Beach and Proserpine were inaccessible, with more than 60,000 homes without power and communications down in many areas. But no deaths were reported and only one significant injury—a man crushed by a collapsing wall.

Emergency crews began assessing the damage but blocked roads and flash flooding hampered efforts, as soldiers, military helicopters and planes started deploying to help restore infrastructure and supply emergency food, water and fuel. Queensland Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk flew by helicopter to Bowen, which bore much of the brunt, and said mass evacuations helped save lives. Tens of thousands moved to higher ground or cyclone shelters or left the region before Cyclone Debbie made landfall.

"Thankfully the extent of the damage here is not as widespread as we first anticipated," she said, but added after visiting Proserpine that a huge recovery effort was needed. "Damage to homes, damage to schools, damage to shops, fences that are

down. This is going to be a big effort. We have trees down on roads, we have power lines down," she told the ABC. "Around Proserpine itself, it was like a town that was surrounded by a sea of water. They have never seen so much water in their life."

'Worst 24 hours'

Dawn broke on scenes of devastation. Pictures posted on social media showed a light plane flipped upside down, yachts washed ashore, power poles down and trees fallen on houses. Whitsunday Regional Council mayor Andrew Willcox described Bowen as "like a war zone." "This beautiful seaside town is now half-wrecked but we will rebuild," he told Channel Nine television. In the mining town of Collinsville, residents said the storm was emotionally draining, with winds raging for hours as they covered inside. Wind gusts of up to 270 kph were reported near Debbie's broad core. On a brighter note, a baby girl was born at an ambulance station on the Whitsunday islands as the storm raged outside. "You know, out of all of this, to see a little miracle, I think brings a smile to a lot of faces," said Palaszczuk.

Debbie 'a catastrophe'

Great Barrier Reef islands popular with foreign tourists were among the worst hit. Daydream Island Resort said it sustained significant damage, including to its jetty and accommodation wings. "Conditions were extreme with heavy rainfall and strong wind gusts causing damage to the resort and surrounds," it said in a statement, adding that all guests had been accounted for but fresh water was running out. Having lived through cyclones before, many people were prepared and boarded up homes after being warned to expect the worst weather in 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 claims from the disaster to be prioritized. —AFP

WARY OF US PRESIDENT, CHINA LAUNCHES EU CHARM OFFENSIVE

BRUSSELS: China has launched a charm offensive with the European Union since US President Donald Trump took office, shifting its stance on trade negotiations and signaling closer cooperation on a range of other issues, European diplomats say. European envoys in Brussels and Beijing sense a greater urgency from China to find allies willing to stand up for globalization amid fears Trump could undermine it with his protectionist "America First" policies. "Trump is pushing China and Europe together," said one Beijing-based diplomat, citing Chinese support for trade, combating climate change and the United Nations, all areas where the new US president is seeking a change of tack.

Four senior EU diplomats and officials in close contact with the Chinese told Reuters they also see a chance for a breakthrough on business issues that have been moving slowly for years, including a special treaty to increase investment flows. EU business groups are more skeptical, expressing growing dissatisfaction, like their US counterparts, with limited market access in China and pressing for a firmer response. Diplomats say one of the clearest outward signs of a change in tone in private diplomatic meetings has been China's decision to drop its public campaign to be recognized by the European Union as an economy directed by the market, not the state.

The case is now being dealt with out of the limelight at the World Trade Organization in Geneva, in what the diplomats said was a recognition by Beijing that too much pressure could provoke a protectionist backlash in Europe. Market economy status would make it harder for the European Union to impose punitive tariffs on Chinese imports that Brussels judges as unfairly cheap. "The market economy status issue, if it is raised at all now, is being discussed at a very low working level," the diplomat said. "That is part of the charm offensive."

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said the issue was still a priority for Beijing, while also noting China's interest in having the EU as a strong partner. "We hope that the EU can genuinely place an importance on China's reasonable concerns and interests," Hua said. China has told European officials it wants to bring forward its annual summit with the European Union from its usual July date, Reuters reported in February. The diplomats said efforts to find a suitable early date were continuing. The summit is a way, they said, for China to press home President Xi Jinping's message at the World Economic

Forum in Davos in January, a vigorous defence of open trade and global ties.

Investment test

European companies doing business in China say they have yet to see the change of style translating into less protectionism from Beijing. But it contrasts sharply with a tense 2016 in which an EU-China summit, overshadowed by an international court ruling that China's claims to the South China Sea were unlawful, ended without the usual joint statement.

Trump has changed China's calculations, diplomats said. During his presidential campaign, Trump frequently accused China of keeping its currency artificially low against the dollar to make Chinese exports cheaper, "stealing" American manufacturing jobs. He also aims to reverse former President Barack Obama's anti-fossil fuel strategy that China backed as it seeks to deal with a devastating smog crisis at home. The Trump administration has said Xi is expected to meet Trump on April 6-7 at the US leader's Mar-a-Lago resort in the United States, although Beijing has not confirmed the talks. A Chinese diplomat said Beijing was looking for "predictability" from Trump.

The European Union remains cautious about the direction of its second-largest trading partner, concerned by China's massive steel exports, its militarization of islands in the South China Sea and a turn towards greater authoritarianism under Xi. But it is looking to a bilateral investment treaty to make it easier for European companies to do business in China and remove onerous rules forcing them to share know-how. Chinese direct investment in the European Union jumped by 77 percent last year to more than 35 billion euros (\$38 billion), compared to 2015, while EU acquisitions in China fell for the second consecutive year, according to the Rhodium Group.

'Too ambitious'

That illustrates the imbalance in investment between the world's two largest markets, including, on the EU side, Britain, where the government is pinning its hopes on a free trade deal with China as it splits from the rest of the bloc. An investment treaty would go some way to quiet criticism in Europe of such unequal ties but the talks, which started in 2013, require Beijing to open sensitive sectors like technology and financial services to private firms free of the state. China's central bank governor Zhou Xiaochuan indicated on Sunday a substantial number of sectors would be opened up while adding "we want China to get fair treatment overseas". —Reuters



BEIJING: A Chinese woman practices tai chi with fan underneath countries' flags on display at the Yuyuantan Park during spring festival yesterday. —AP

News

in brief

Maldives ex-leader vows a fightback after vote chaos

COLOMBO: Exiled Maldives opposition leader Mohamed Nasheed vowed yesterday to keep up the pressure on the government after it deployed troops to remove his MPs from parliament, drawing a warning from Washington. Nasheed admitted he had been unable to secure "outright victory" in his attempt to seize control of parliament by entering into a pact with the current president's half-brother, former strongman president Maumoon Abdul Gayoom. A vote of no confidence in the house speaker, intended to destabilize President Abdulla Yameen before elections next year, ended in defeat Monday when soldiers took away 13 opposition MPs and the rest walked out in protest. The scenes, captured on camera and circulated on social media, prompted the US embassy to urge Male to "restore faith in democratic processes". Nasheed, who has pledged to return to the honeymoon islands to contest the 2018 election, said the incident had exposed the government's shaky majority and strengthened his resolve to try again.

Bahrain sentences two to death on terror charges

DUBAI: A court in Bahrain has sentenced two people to death on terror charges and handed 11 others lengthy sentences, including a former member of parliament sentenced to 10 years in prison. Hassan Isa was a senior member of the main Shiite opposition Al-Wefaq group, which was dissolved last year. The other 10 received sentences ranging from 10 years to life. The Bahraini Al-Wasat news website says the case involves 24 defendants charged with establishing a terrorist cell that killed members of the police and was involved in other acts of violence. The group was also found guilty of harboring fugitives. The court yesterday ordered nine of the defendants stripped of their nationalities. Sunni-led Bahrain has jailed thousands of anti-government Shiite protesters accused of violence and terrorism.



French conservative presidential candidate Francois Fillon and his wife Penelope smile after delivering his speech during a rally in Paris. —AP

Wife of France's Fillon also charged in fake jobs affair

PARIS: The wife of France's conservative presidential candidate Francois Fillon was charged Tuesday with complicity in the abuse of public funds in a scandal that has engulfed her husband's campaign. He has already been charged in the case involving allegedly fictitious jobs as a parliamentary aide for which the Welsh-born Penelope Fillon was paid hundreds of thousands of euros. The 61-year-old Penelope was also charged over a salary she received from a literary magazine owned by a billionaire friend of her husband's, Marc Ladreit de Lacharriere. She has told police she never stepped foot in the offices of the Revue des Deux Mondes, according to a report in the Journal du Dimanche weekly. The new blow comes less than four weeks before French voters go to the polls in a two-stage election on April 23 and May 7. Francois Fillon, whose legal woes have snowballed since "Penelopegate" broke in January, once described his wife as a stalwart companion who "has been with me in political life for 30 years... but always in the shadows."

Four suspected Al-Qaeda members killed in Yemen

ADEN: At least four suspected Al-Qaeda members were killed in an apparent US drone strike on a vehicle in central Yemen, residents said yesterday, part of an escalating campaign against the Islamist militant group. They said the attack in Amqoz in the Moudiyya district of Abyan province took place around midnight on Tuesday. Their vehicle was completely burned and the four bodies inside badly charred, they added. Residents also reported hearing missile strikes on a suspected Al-Qaeda outpost in Wadi Al-Naseel area, also in Abyan province, but said the number of casualties was unknown. Abyan is one of several provinces in central and southern Yemen where Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and its local affiliate Ansar Al-Sahria operate. The United States has repeatedly attacked AQAP, the Yemeni arm of the militant group, in strikes this month from aircraft and unmanned drones in what US officials says is a campaign to degrade the group's ability to coordinate militant attacks abroad.

Thai ex-tourism chief sentenced to 50 years

BANGKOK: The former head of Thailand's tourism promotion board was sentenced on Wednesday to 50 years in prison for accepting \$1.8 million in bribes from two Hollywood producers to let them organize the Bangkok International Film Festival a decade ago. The Bangkok Criminal Court found Juthamas Sirivan guilty on 11 counts, each carrying a six year sentence, but prison sentences are capped at 50 years under Thai law. Her daughter Jittisopa, into whose accounts the money was transferred, was found guilty on 11 counts for which she received a 44-year prison sentence. Juthamas was also ordered to forfeit the bribe money. A US federal court in 2010 sentenced filmmakers Gerald and Patricia Green to six months in prison after they were convicted of conspiracy under the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, which prohibits making corrupt payments to foreign officials for business purposes. The sentence also called for three years of supervised release and the payment of \$250,000 in restitution.

ARAB LEADERS URGE UNITY...

Continued from Page 1

with the Palestinians, but he also stopped short of reiterating a commitment to a two-state solution. Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas criticized Israeli policy in his speech at yesterday's summit. "The Israeli government has since 2009 worked on wrecking the two-state solution by accelerating the tempo of settlements and the confiscation of land," Abbas told the leaders. Trump's Middle East envoy Jason Greenblatt met Abbas before yesterday's summit, the second such meeting in two weeks. Trump has also invited Abbas to the White House.

"(Greenblatt) had a lot of queries and we are answering them to complete the picture in their minds and speaking as Arabs in one language," Abbas said. He had told Greenblatt that Palestinians remained as firm as ever in their demand for an independent state, he said. The Palestinians and Arabs want Arab East Jerusalem - which Israel captured in a 1967 war and later annexed in a move not recognized internationally - as the capital of a future state encompassing the Israeli-occupied West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

King Abdullah, whose dynasty has custodianship over Muslim holy sites in Jerusalem, said any unilateral Israeli move to change the status quo in the Dome of the Rock and the Aqsa mosque would have "catastrophic" consequences for the future of the region, inflaming Muslim sentiment. UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres also endorsed a two-state solution, telling summit participants this was the "only path to ensure that Palestinians and Israelis can realize their national aspirations and live in peace, security and dignity".

At the summit of the 22-member Arab League opened in Swimeh on the Dead Sea coast, King Abdullah suggested that failing to come together would expose the region open to outside influence. "We need to take the initiative to find solutions to all the challenges we face in order to avoid foreign interference in our affairs," he said. Arab leaders have been

unable to find common ground on how to end Syria's conflict, which in six years has killed more than 320,000 people and forced millions from their homes.

Various Arab nations support different proxy forces on the ground and there is disagreement on the future of President Bashar Al-Assad, whose participation in the league has been suspended since 2011. While some say Assad must go for a peace deal, others, including Egypt's President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi, have not insisted on his departure as a condition for a political agreement. The divisions have allowed other nations including Iran, Russia and Turkey to take the diplomatic initiative.

Arab League head Ahmed Abul Gheit said he regretted the fact member states were watching "events in Syria without the possibility of intervening," calling the conflict "shameful". Visiting a refugee camp in Jordan ahead of the summit, Guterres called for differences to be set aside. "Arab unity is a very important element in order to allow this region to be stabilized and for... the Syrian refugees to find again a future that corresponds to their aspirations," he said.

Jordanian officials have stressed fighting "terrorism" as a major theme of the summit, in particular the threat from IS which is facing US-backed offensives in Iraq and Syria. "Arab and Muslim countries must unite their efforts to combat terrorism," Abdullah said in his address. Addressing the summit, Sisi said it was "regrettable that certain powers are benefiting from the unprecedented situation in the region to bolster their influence and expand their control" - an apparent reference to Iran's role in the conflicts.

Previous Arab League summits have seen little progress in overcoming divisions and analysts were expecting more of the same. "I think this summit won't be any different," said Oraib Al-Rantawi, head of the Al-Quds Centre for Political Studies.

"The Arab (political) system is weak, divided and has been plagued by defects for years," he said. "No breakthrough is expected." - Agencies

NEW POWER, WATER TARIFFS TO BE APPLIED...

Continued from Page 1

The ministry said in a statement that the new rates on shops and apartments will be 5 fils per kilowatt instead of the existing rate of 2 fils a kilowatt. The new rates have been sharply reduced following threats by lawmakers to grill the prime minister. Based on the law passed last year, the new charges for shops would have been 25 fils per kilowatt, a massive 12-fold hike. For apartments inhabited by expatriates, the charges would have reached 15 fils a kilowatt. Kuwaiti citizens are exempted from the increase.

Meanwhile, the National Assembly session yesterday was cut short for the second day in a row over heated arguments and a lack of quorum, as opposition MPs blamed the government and its lawmakers for the "deliberate" disruption. The session kicked off with an argument between Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem and Islamist opposition MP Mohammad Hayef, who blamed the speaker for deleting important words from his speech on Tuesday. The two traded strong words but the argument ended quickly.

Pro-government MP Saadoun Hammad was again involved in heated exchanges with opposition MPs that forced the speaker to adjourn the proceedings for 15 minutes to restore order. Hammad was protesting against MP Jamaan Al-Harbash, who showed a picture of Hammad sitting next to the

former undersecretary of the health ministry and signing some transactions. Hammad said Harbash was trying to protect his brother who was the head of the Kuwait medical office in Germany, "under whom some 628 million euros have disappeared". Harbash denied the accusation categorically and said Hammad was lying. Several other opposition lawmakers also called Hammad a liar who was accused of accepting bribes from the government.

At this point, the speaker adjourned the session. When the Assembly resumed its work, there was no quorum to take any decision, so the speaker decided to continue with the debate over the government's program, which was harshly criticized by a large number of lawmakers for failing to contain real development projects. During the debate, Islamist MP Waleed Al-Tabtabaei charged that the Assembly proceedings were being deliberately disrupted in a tactic hatched by the government and its supporters in the Assembly.

He reiterated a threat that he will file to grill the prime minister on April 3 if the government does not reinstate the revoked citizenships and scrap the hike in petrol prices, besides issuing a general pardon. Commenting on the committee set up by the Cabinet to study the issue of the revoked citizenships, he said the committee should submit the names of its members at the start of next week, otherwise "we will file to grill the prime minister".

NO TURNING BACK: UK TRIGGERS BREXIT

Continued from Page 1

would be "economically painful" for Britain, the first country to leave the bloc. German Chancellor Angela Merkel also rebuffed May's call for negotiations on Britain's withdrawal to run alongside talks on a future trade agreement. Trade is a key issue as Britain prepares to leave Europe's single market in order to control migration, but Merkel said the exit deal must come first. "Only when this question is dealt with, can we, hopefully soon after, begin talking about our future relationship," she said. Merkel said the other 27 EU nations were ready to negotiate in a "fair and constructive" way, and said she hoped Britain would "adopt the same spirit".

The EU is determined to preserve its unity and has said any Brexit deal must not encourage other countries to follow Britain out of the door. May's six-page letter struck a conciliatory tone and called for a "deep and special partnership" with Brussels. While the EU faces the departure of one of its largest and oldest members, May is also battling to keep her divided nation together. The Brexit vote was only won by a narrow 52-48 margin and Scotland's nationalist government is now calling for a fresh referendum on independence. "As we face the opportunities ahead of us on this momentous journey, our shared values, interests and ambitions can - and must - bring us together," May said.

Tusk is expected to issue draft guidelines for the negotiations tomorrow, but the leaders of the other 27 EU nations will not meet until April 29 to confirm their joint approach. As with many divorces, negotiations could rapidly turn nasty over money. The priority for the EU is settling Britain's outstanding bills, estimated at between €55 and €60 billion (\$59-65 billion)

- an early battle that could set the tone for the rest of the talks.

Both sides are also keen to see a reduction in tensions in Northern Ireland, which will have the UK's only hard border with the EU. Many business leaders are deeply uneasy about May's decision to leave Europe's single market, a free trade area of 500 million people that represents Britain's largest trading partner. The Brexit vote sent the pound plunging and there are concerns about economic stability if the negotiations end without a new trade agreement in place. "If there's goodwill on both sides, it would certainly be possible to say: 'We're doing the divorce and then we can negotiate the future deal alongside,'" said Catherine Barnard, professor of EU law at the University of Cambridge.

May also used her letter to repeat her desire for an early agreement over the post-Brexit status of more than three million European nationals living in Britain, and one million British expats in the EU. Nicolas Hatton, a Frenchman with a British wife who leads a grassroots campaign for EU expatriates, said he wanted a deal "so that we can get on with our lives". "We don't want to be the bargaining chips in the negotiations and today the triggering of Article 50 de facto makes us these bargaining chips," he told AFP.

Tens of thousands marched through London on Saturday demanding Britain stay in the EU, with one banner urging politicians to "stop this madness". But others were elated that Brexit was finally under way. "We'll control our own destiny instead of being governed by unelected bureaucrats in Brussels," said Martin Spearing, a 65-year-old London market seller. In Sunderland, a bastion of Brexit support in northeast England, former miner Tom Curras said: "I don't believe that we should be dominated by other countries." - AFP

SAMSUNG EYES REBOUND WITH GALAXY S8

Continued from Page 1

of the device and appears to curve seamlessly around its edges. The home button has been replaced with a pressure-sensitive section embedded under the screen. Both phones are water resistant and allow for biometric authentication with fingerprint and iris scanners.

Bixby marks a further step into services for the world's biggest smartphone vendor, allowing users to shop, search for images and get details about nearby places with image recognition technology. Samsung's services chief Sriram Thodla said Bixby would allow for better navigation of applications on the phone. "We've built intelligence into the camera," he said. "If you see something you want to buy, just point the camera at it and Bixby will find it from one of our partners." The digital assistant will also enhance the phone's capabilities as a remote control for connected home devices, Thodla said.

The South Korean electronics giant late last year bought Viv, an artificial intelligence startup with co-founders who were part of the team that built virtual assistant Siri, which Apple bought some seven years ago. As Samsung's top-line handsets, the Galaxy S8 models will challenge the latest Apple iPhones. The new phones will be available starting April 21, Samsung said. In the US market, they will be sold through major carriers and retailers, with unlocked devices priced from \$725.

The Galaxy S8 release comes after Samsung was forced to recall its Note 7 phones for catching fire due to overheating batteries. The debacle cost the South Korean company billions of dollars in lost profit and hammered its global reputation and credibility, during a torrid period that has also seen it

embroiled in a corruption scandal. Its vice-chairman Lee Jae-Yong, heir to the parent Samsung group, has been arrested and indicted for bribery, along with four other senior executives, in connection with a graft scandal that saw ex-president Park Geun-Hye impeached. Samsung apologized to consumers for the recall and was forced to postpone the S8 launch. Its investigation blamed the problems on faulty batteries. The firm later embarked on a campaign to restore its battered reputation, placing full-page advertisements in US newspapers that admitted it "fell short" on its promises. The tech giant says it has also come up with elaborate step-by-step safety verification procedures for future products to prevent similar disasters.

As part of its launch, Samsung will be including its Gear virtual reality headset to customers pre-ordering the handsets. Samsung also introduced its Dex adapter which allows the smartphones to be transformed into desktop computers. Jan Dawson of Jackdaw Research was impressed by the new devices but also noted they would be priced higher than competitors from Apple and others. "The Samsung approach is particularly clever, with its curved screen now less sharp on the edges, offering a more symmetrical and therefore more comfortable device," he said in a blog post.

"The price of the new phones is up to \$100 higher than their predecessors and almost all of the premium smartphones they'll be competing with, which feels like a big risk," Dawson said Samsung is betting "that its phones will justify a higher price, whereas it could have used these new phones as a way to drive higher sales after a couple of years of stagnation." - AFP




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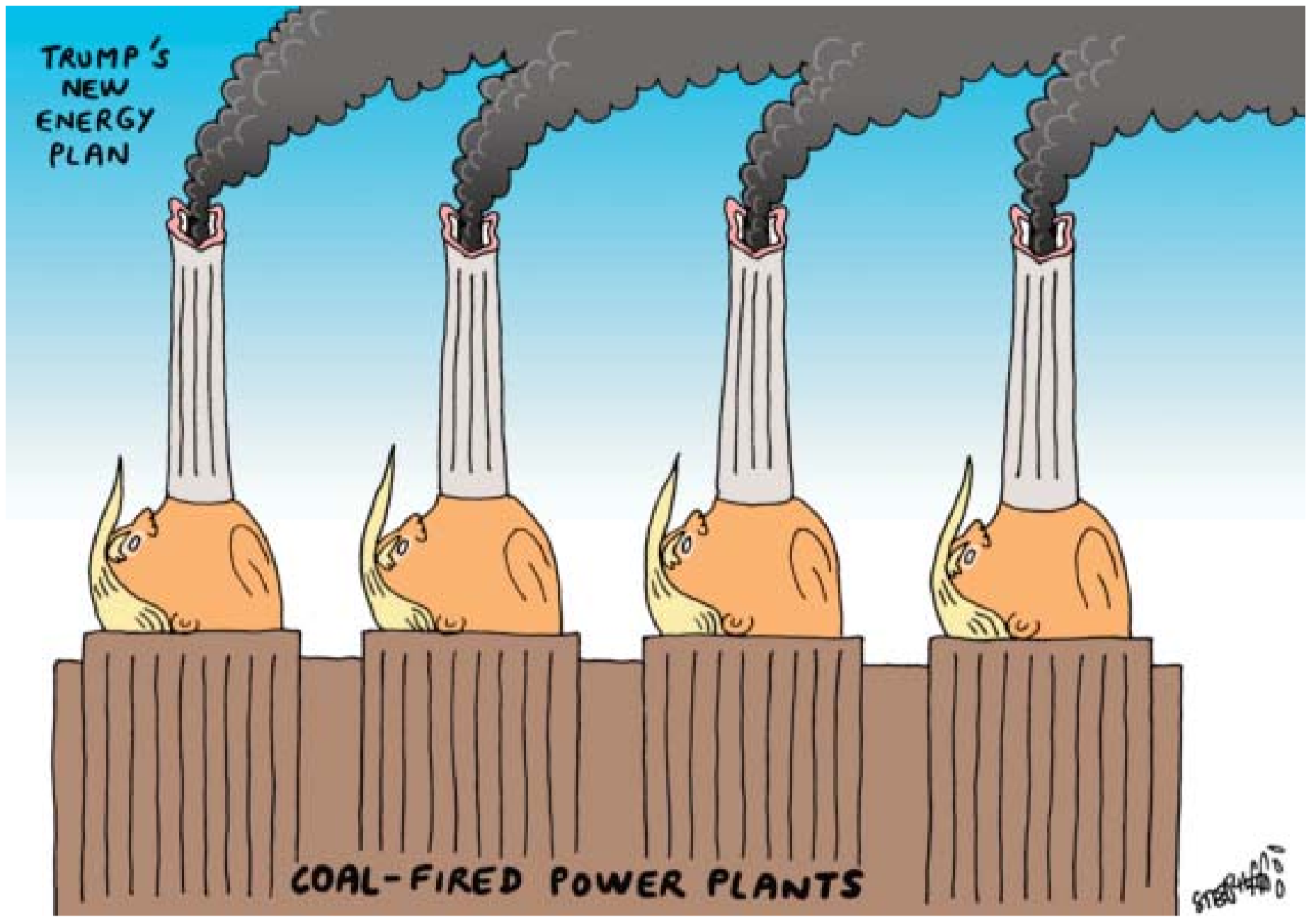
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TRUMP OFFERS FEDERAL COAL TO INDUSTRY AWASH IN RESERVES

US President Donald Trump's administration has billed his move to reopen federal lands to new coal leases as a win for miners seeking to expand production. But a review of company filings shows that coal miners with the most to gain already have enough leases in hand to last well over a decade. Trump signed a decree on Tuesday to reverse former President Barack Obama's 2016 ban on new federal coal leases, part of a wide-ranging executive order to sweep away green regulations his administration says have hobbled the drilling and mining industries.

"You know our nation can't run on pixie dust and hope, and the last eight years showed that," Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke said before Trump signed the executive order on a stage at the Environmental Protection Agency lined with coal miners. But companies focused on coal deposits below federal lands, such as Peabody Energy Corp, Arch Coal Inc, and Cloud Peak Energy Inc, have enough coal in the ground on existing leases to last an average of more than 17 years at 2015 sales levels, earnings reports show.

That suggests miners could already ramp up production levels immediately if the market demanded more coal. Energy experts say that is unlikely on a large scale due to stiff competition from cheap and abundant natural gas. "These initiatives prevent things from getting worse for coal, but they won't help much," said Charles Dayton, vice president of market analytics at Doyle Trading Consultants in Colorado, which has been tracking reserve levels on public lands. Shares of Cloud Peak closed 4.9 percent higher at \$4.51 after the executive order. Arch closed 1.8 percent higher at \$69.00 and Peabody gained 6.8 percent to end at \$2.22.

The current level of reserves appeared to be within historical norms. A decade ago, under Republican President George W Bush when there were no bans on federal coal leasing, the industry had about 18 years' worth of leases on federal lands, according to a Reuters examination of securities filings. Arch Coal and Peabody confirmed they have substantial reserves on their federal leases already, but nonetheless welcomed Trump's move.

"Peabody has a comfortable amount of reserves in the Powder River Basin, although we recognize the poor public policy represented by the leasing moratorium put into place by the prior administration," Peabody spokesman Vic Svlec told Reuters in an email. Arch Coal has "sufficient permitted reserves to sustain our operations on federal lands for a number of years to come," spokeswoman Logan Bonacorci said. "But as with all producers we will need to add reserves over time, and the ability to obtain those reserves when needed is important."

Cloud Peak spokesman Rick Curtis said his company has leases pending at all three of its mines in the Powder River Basin in the US West and welcomed Trump's rescinding of the moratorium. Another coal company, Contura Energy Inc, did not respond to requests for comment. Trump's executive order will also seek to undo Obama-era rules limiting carbon emissions. One example is the Clean Power Plan, a regulation that would have increased pressure on states to replace coal-fired power stations with ones using cleaner fuels like natural gas, wind and solar.

'Signal to Markets'

Obama's administration imposed the temporary ban on new federal coal leases in January 2016 as part of a broad environmental and economic review to ensure royalties from lease deals provide fair returns to taxpayers. It was not immediately clear whether the royalty review would continue even with the ban on leases lifted. Some analysts said this scenario could trigger a near-term land rush by companies fearing higher royalty rates in the future.

Coal accounts for about a third of US electricity production, down from about half one decade ago. About 40 percent of all US coal comes from federal lands, mainly in the Powder River Basin in Wyoming and Montana. Luke Popovich, a spokesman for the National Mining Association industry group, said he expected Trump's executive order to have symbolic impact, at least. "Lifting the moratorium would strengthen the signal to markets that the federal government is not any longer standing in the way of fossil energy," he said.

He added that reopening federal lands to new leases could also play into a production upswing if demand ultimately increases. The US Energy Information Administration has forecast a 9 percent increase in western coal production to 443.4 million short tons by 2018, driven mainly by higher natural gas prices. Others were less optimistic about the US coal industry's outlook, saying the best Trump could do is slow the sector's decline. Since 2012, coal production has plunged more than 25 percent to the lowest levels since 1978 due to falling prices. The industry has been hit with massive layoffs and bankruptcies. —Reuters

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Focus

MAY GOES INTO BREXIT TALKS WITH BIG GOALS

After nine months of preparation, bitter public argument and a battle with parliament, British Prime Minister Theresa May is launching talks with the European Union armed with a plan she hopes will secure a better divorce deal than many expect. But what is it? Although May has published a policy document outlining a 12-point approach to the talks that will reshape the future of Britain and the EU, many companies, investors and voters are not quite clear about her strategy.

The British leader has been reticent about what she hopes to achieve so as not to give her hand away. But government officials, lawmakers and analysts say privately that May believes she has some strong cards to play, while also hoping that EU officials will favor pragmatism over punishment. "Now is the time for us to come together and be united across this house and across this country to ensure that we work for the best possible deal for the United Kingdom and the best possible future for us all," May told parliament.

Earlier, her letter to European Council President Donald Tusk had triggered Article 50 of the EU's Lisbon Treaty to start up to two years of talks on Britain's departure from the bloc. May and her ministers have ambitious goals in the talks. They want "frictionless" trade, control over immigration and restoration of sovereignty while maintaining as much cooperation as possible with Britain's nearest neighbors.

But the 12 priorities she set out in January are broad enough to allow room for maneuver, and May hopes to leverage Britain's strengths in security, defense, criminal justice and international aid to help negotiate her main demand for a free trade deal, several government sources said. She is also willing to pay into EU programs that Britain may otherwise be excluded from by Brexit, has signalled that she expects some kind of transitional agreement and is preparing to copy the body of EU law over into British legislation to minimize uncertainty.

While trying to inspire goodwill before the talks, the British government will also try to exploit rifts in the European Union, making much of troop deployments on the bloc's eastern border against an increasingly assertive Russia. But while May's focus is winning what she calls the "best possible deal" for Brexit, her government is also looking beyond, courting the United States, India and China while trying to attract technology and creative industries to a country which one minister said needed to market itself. "What we are going to do is be ambitious in our negotiation," May told parliament late last year, a mantra to reassure business she would try to get the maximum possible access to the EU's single market.

Pitfalls

The message is upbeat despite May's aides saying she will not reveal any details of the government's negotiating stance before negotiations start. But behind the scenes, civil servants have been told not only to draft a plan A but also a plan B, an aide in one government department told Reuters, aware the EU is in no mood to offer generous terms that could encourage other members to bolt for the door. The aide said each department has been told to find areas where they could compromise. But any hint that May might break Brexit promises in areas such as fishing rights could turn public opinion against the prime minister and split her party.

For many veteran eurosceptics in the ruling Conservative Party, Wednesday's triggering of Article 50 is the culmination of years of lobbying against what they describe as an interfering and wasteful union. There is little chance they will allow May to backtrack on her commitment to break with the European Court of Justice and end the supremacy of EU law, possibly tying her hands over what she can or cannot compromise on.

The balancing act is perilous. With the majority of lawmakers in parliament pro-EU, May's slim majority will all but depend on the eurosceptic Conservative MPs, with additional pressure from well-financed 'leave' lobby groups and the UK Independence Party promising to be the "guard dog of Brexit". On the other side are nationalists in Scotland and Northern Ireland. The Scottish government wants a new independence referendum, encouraging calls for a similar vote in Northern Ireland, which voted to remain in the EU.

May has refused to allow Scotland a new referendum in the time scale demanded by First Minister Nicola Sturgeon and stood firm on her refusal to share her negotiating stance, which the Scottish government has described as "intransigence". On past experience, May is unlikely to give ground. The stakes are high for her personally as the success or failure of the talks will determine her political legacy and her ability to win an election.

She has been riding high in opinion polls since taking over as prime minister from David Cameron, who quit after the Brexit referendum, and the opposition Labour Party is in chaos, but she has no experience of leading her party in an election. What is as yet unclear is whether she has settled on her own list of priorities for the talks. After spending months asking companies, universities, hospitals and banks among others what they want, most have no clue whether their demands will be met. —Reuters

BREXIT: THE END OF A LOVELESS MARRIAGE

Britain's relationship with the European Union was always an awkward marriage of convenience rather than a case of love at first sight. And after 44 years - during which trade ties always took precedence for Britain over closer integration - London has filed for divorce. Anand Menon, a professor of European politics at King's College London university, said the relationship was always "transactional" and therefore the breakup is "pretty logical". "It's been a utilitarian relationship since 1973 and the emphasis was always on the economic dimension, not on the political one," said Pauline Schnapper, professor of contemporary British history at the Sorbonne University in Paris. "The sentimental dimension is near non-existent," she said.

The path towards today's European Union began after World War II as the shattered continent tried to rebuild and deepen integration as a way of bolstering the peace. The project did not immediately appeal to Britain. "I think we didn't feel vulnerable enough to join, quite simply," Menon said. Britain preferred to focus on its special relationship with the United States and the remains of its empire. London nevertheless supported the push for closer integration on the European continent: wartime prime minister Winston Churchill called for the creation of a "United States of Europe" in a 1946 Zurich speech. But in the early 1960s, Britain's fortunes changed for the worse. Its economic growth started lagging behind that of France and Germany, making the European single market on its doorstep seem an appealing option.

Club of others'

Britain yesterday began what is expected to be two years of difficult divorce negotiations with a formal notification by letter to EU President Donald Tusk. Joining the European fray in the first place was not an easy task. In 1961, France's then-president Charles de Gaulle vetoed Britain's first application, seeing it as a "Trojan Horse" for the United States and doubting Britain's European spirit. Another French veto followed in 1967 and the UK was only finally welcomed into the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1973.

Unfortunately for Britain, the first oil crisis struck that same year and so the much-hoped-for economic boost failed to materialize.

Nevertheless, 67 percent of the British people voted to remain in the EEC in a 1975 referendum. "The fact that we joined late is one of the reasons there are suspicions because obviously there is a sense that we joined a club that others had set up to suit themselves," Menon said.

Britain and the EEC soon locked horns and London began opting out of the major attempts to step up European integration. In 1979, London refused to participate in the European monetary system, defending its national and fiscal sovereignty. Six years later, it refused to ratify the Schengen Agreement - abolishing internal border checks - and in 1993, it opted out of the European single currency.

Britain's anti-federalist approach was spelled out by prime minister Margaret Thatcher during a 1988 speech at the College of Europe in Bruges. In it, she rejected the idea of a "European super-state exercising a new dominance from Brussels". Conservative MP Bill Cash, a prominent eurosceptic, said earlier this month of the Brexit trigger: "This is an historic moment for which I and my colleagues have fought for 30 years. This is the moment." "This is a vindication of the battles we fought," he said.

Not mutually beneficial

In the 1990s, Britain's defiance towards Brussels accelerated further with the creation of the UK Independence Party (UKIP), which campaigned for the country's exit from the EU. The opposition party's successes, particularly in the 2014 European Parliament elections when it topped the polls, pushed the government to harden its rhetoric. The eurozone crisis, large-scale immigration from the EU and the refugee crisis of the past few years stoked the discontent, pushing prime minister David Cameron to call the June 2016 referendum.

Patricia Hogwood, a reader in European politics at the University of Westminster, said the referendum campaign failed to show the positive side of EU membership. "This is an island mentality," she told AFP. "We were always so scared of losing our control, losing our grip, our sovereignty," Hogwood added. In the end, 52 percent of voters opted for Brexit. Neither side is likely to end up the happier after the divorce, said John Springford, director of research at the Centre for European Reform in London. —AFP

MYANMAR STUMBLES ON PATH TO DEMOCRACY

For decades Myanmar's people dreamed of democracy, but a year into office Aung San Suu Kyi's elected government is struggling to revive a sluggish economy and shake off the vestiges of the still powerful military. Swept into power on a wave of optimism and hatred of the generals who ruled for 50 years, Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) vowed to boost prosperity and end decades of bloody civil war. But while "The Lady", as she is widely known, still draws widespread personal adoration in many areas of the country, dissenting voices are rising.

Suu Kyi cuts an increasingly aloof figure, say analysts, ducking press conferences and remaining silent over a bloody army crackdown on Rohingya Muslims. Her reticence to speak out on the violence in Rakhine state is fast losing her fans among an international community that was once bedazzled by her power as a rights defender. Expectations of what the NLD could achieve in a year governing one of Southeast Asia's poorest countries were unreasonably high, according to Myanmar watchers.

But now many are questioning whether the government will ever be able to piece the country back together. "There is a growing sense among the politically engaged urban electorate that the government is not meeting their expectations," said political analyst Richard Horsey, a consultant for the International Crisis Group. "Partly, that is because those expectations were inevitably far too high... but partly it is due to government under-performance."

Most MPs have little or no political experience and many spent years languishing in jail under the former junta

that gorged itself and its cronies on Myanmar's resources and brutally suppressed dissent. The government is hobbled by a military constitution that bars Suu Kyi from the presidency and guarantees them a quarter of parliament seats - enough to block any changes. It also gives the army control over the three most important ministries: defense, borders and home affairs. A prominent NLD lawyer who was trying to scrap the charter, Ko Ni, was murdered in broad daylight at Yangon airport in a killing allegedly masterminded by a former military officer.

Debate stifled

Speaking at his funeral, Suu Kyi urged the public to be patient. "For the history of a country, for the history of a government, 10 months or one year is not much," she told the crowd. But many in Myanmar wryly joke that the NLD is just "old wine in a new bottle" - new packaging for a government that still does not listen to its people. Several of Suu Kyi's flagship policies are already faltering. Growth is slowing and foreign investment is expected to fall for the first time in four years, while double-digit inflation is eating up people's incomes. Political insiders complain Suu Kyi has concentrated too much power in her own hands and is stifling debate within the party. Prosecutions against journalists, satirists and activists under a vague online defamation law have meanwhile surged over the past year - several brought by NLD members. The Lady has also faced criticism for mishandling peace talks with ethnic insurgents in Myanmar's borderlands, where fighting is at its most

intense in decades. Analysts warn that rising anger in ethnic minority areas could see the NLD lose power to local parties in April by-elections. "There was hope that the situation would improve under a new government. But it hasn't, it's even got worse," said veteran Myanmar commentator and author Bertil Lintner. "She's become a fig leaf for continued military rule."

'Mother Suu'

Internationally, many have been shocked at Suu Kyi's silence over an army crackdown on Rohingya Muslims so brutal UN investigators believe it may amount to crimes against humanity. Last week the UN Human Rights Council agreed to dispatch a fact-finding mission to investigate whether troops had committed atrocities in the north of Rakhine State. The government has rejected the probe, saying it would only "inflamm" tensions, and lashed out at those reporting abuses.

But despite the new government's teething problems, many still revere "mother Suu" as a saint-like figure who delivered Myanmar from military oppression. "I'm not convinced public discontent is as widespread as often perceived," said Renaud Egretreau, a visiting fellow at the ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, pointing out that the NLD retains strong support in its rural heartlands. Government advisor Aung Tun The said it was too early to judge the NLD. "We can't say after a year what the government's performance has been like an exam. We can't say if they have passed or failed," he said. —AFP

ABEYLEGESSE STRIPPED OF WORLD, OLYMPIC MEDALS

PARIS: Turkish runner Elvan Abeylegesse was yesterday stripped of two Olympic silver medals and one world silver after a re-analysis of an in-competition doping test dating back to 2007. The Ethiopian-born middle and long-distance runner tested positive on August 25, 2007, after winning silver at the 2007 World Athletics Championships in Osaka. Track and field's world governing body, the IAAF, said in a statement Wednesday that her results from August 25, 2007, to August 25, 2009, have been removed, with the 34-year-old retrospectively banned from September 29, 2015, to September 28, 2017. That means Abeylegesse will be stripped not only of that world silver but also the 5000m and 10,000m silver medals she won at the 2008 Beijing Olympics. The double distance gold she won at the 2010 European championships in Barcelona still stand. —AFP

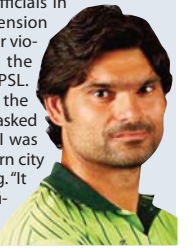


RANIERI STILL SHOCKED BY LEICESTER SACKING

LEICESTER: Former Leicester City manager Claudio Ranieri, who defied 5000-1 odds to lead the team to a fairytale Premier League title in 2016, has said he is still stunned by his sacking last month. The 65-year-old Italian lost his job after a nine-game losing streak that left the club hanging one point above the relegation zone. Since his departure, Leicester have won all four of their matches to move six points above the bottom three and reached Europe's Champions League quarter-finals. "Thinking of Leicester the first thing that comes to mind is the sense of surprise more than bitterness," British media quoted Ranieri as saying at an event in Rome on Tuesday. "The biggest thing is I'm just a coach who has had the joy of winning a championship with a fantastic adventure and then to experience the sorrow of what happened next. I had been through a lot in my long career, but never anything like this. It was a shock. Even if in the end, these things are part of football." Ranieri has rejected offers from Italian team Citta di Palermo and German side VfL Wolfsburg, as well as offers from Chinese and Dubai teams in the past few weeks, with the hopes of making a swift return to England's top-flight, according to the Times. — Reuters

PAKISTAN BOWLER IRFAN BANNED FOR A YEAR

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Cricket Board yesterday suspended Mohammad Irfan for a year and also fined the tall fast bowler one million rupees (\$9,500) for violating the sport's anti corruption code during the Pakistan Super League. The PCB's anti-corruption unit chief Mohammad Azam said Irfan admitted he was twice approached by bookmakers during the PSL, but didn't inform anti-corruption officials in time about the approach. Azam said Irfan's suspension could be reduced to six months if he doesn't further violate the anti-corruption code and also helps in the ongoing inquiry into alleged spot-fixing in the PSL. Irfan's suspension begins from March 14, when the PCB provisionally suspended the fast bowler and asked him to reply to cricket board's notice of charge. "I was twice approached," Irfan told reporters in the eastern city of Lahore, but he maintained he did nothing wrong. "It was my mistake that I didn't inform (the ACU officials) about the approaches in time.—AP



KUWAIT DISABLED ATHLETICS TEAM BAGS 32 MEDALS IN UAE

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Kuwait National Disabled Athletics team returned from the UAE with 32 medals of various colors, after participating in the Shariqa International

Championship and Fazza International Athletics tournament. Member of the Board of Kuwait Disabled Sports Club Anwar Al-Mutawa said the team won 17 medals in Shariqa and 15 in Fazza.

He added that 10 team members quali-

fied including a female qualified to the world athletics championship to be held in London next August. He said those qualified varied between running with wheel chairs, hammer and discus throw. They are Hamad Al-Adwani, Ahmad Al-Mutairi, Faisal

Al-Rajhi, Abdallah Al-Saif, Nasser Al-Saleh, Abdallah Al-Saleh, Mohammad Nasser, Abdelmohsen Al-Otaibi, Dhari Boutti in addition to the female athlete Basima Faraj.

Al-Mutawa said club president Shafi Al-Hajiri was keen on participating in both

championships to qualify the largest number of athletes to the international tournament, which is the most important this year. He said the club will participate in the Tunis International and Morocco International tournaments to qualify more athletes.

CHESS

DEFIANT WORLD CHESS HEAD SAYS 'REVOLUTION' TO OUST HIM FAILED

MOSCOW: The president of world chess's governing body said yesterday that an attempted "revolution" to oust him by falsely announcing his resignation had failed, and that he would serve out his full term and might even stand for re-election.

Russia's Kirsan Ilyumzhinov—a millionaire businessman and ex-politician who once said he had been abducted by aliens—has headed FIDE, chess's governing body, for the last 22 years, flying around the world to promote chess. But since Monday, after a weekend meeting in Greece of FIDE's presidential board, Ilyumzhinov has been embroiled in a surreal power struggle with his organisation's secretariat. A statement announcing he had resigned appeared on FIDE's website on Monday. A letter from Ilyumzhinov saying that was "untrue" appeared on the same site on Tuesday along with a separate letter from Nigel Freeman, FIDE's executive director, contradicting him and saying he had repeatedly declared he was quitting.

Chess and politics are no strangers. Cold War rivalry gave a special edge to the 1972 world championship, in which American Bobby Fischer beat Russian Boris Spassky, and the 1978 contest between Anatoly Karpov and Viktor Korchnoi pitted the golden boy of Soviet chess against a dissident who defected to the West.

In the 1990s, FIDE witnessed a major rebellion when then-champion Garry Kasparov accused it of corruption and set up a breakaway body. But even by FIDE standards, the current machinations are unusual.

Ilyumzhinov, 54, who has in the past beaten chess greats such as Karpov and Kasparov to win a slew of FIDE presidential elections, told a news conference in Moscow he had defeated an attempt at political intrigue and remained in charge of world chess.

"I didn't sign any resignation announcement or hand one over. I'm the current president," he said, adding that the matter of his possible resignation had come up in informal discussions but that he had made clear he did not think he should go unless there was proof he was at fault in some way. Ilyumzhinov, who has stirred controversy in the West by meeting strongmen leaders such as Libya's late Muammar Gaddafi, said that FIDE officials who had announced his resignation had been "economical with the truth" and likened what had happened to "a revolution to seize the telegraph office." When asked if there had been an attempted coup against him, he said: "Yes."

Freeman, FIDE's executive director, did not immediately respond to a request to respond to Ilyumzhinov's comments. In his letter on the organisation's web site he said Ilyumzhinov had definitely resigned and that an extraordinary presidential board meeting would be held on April 10 to discuss the matter.

"During the presidential board meeting in Athens, you several times threatened to resign and at the end of the meeting, three times you repeated 'I resign' before leaving the room," Freeman wrote.

Ilyumzhinov was placed under US sanctions in November 2015 after Washington accused him of helping the Syrian government. The chess enthusiast has met Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, but denies the US accusations.

He said yesterday he intended to serve out his full term as FIDE president and would decide next year whether to run for re-election in September 2018. —Reuters



Mohammed Jaffar in action

KUWAITI MOTOCROSS CHAMPION MOHAMMED JAFFAR CHALLENGES ABU DHABI'S DESERT FOR THE FIRST TIME

DUBAI: Kuwaiti motocross champion and Red Bull athlete Mohammed Jaffar will be participating for the first time in the Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge with high aims to achieve top ranks. The third round of the 2017 FIA World Cup for Cross-Country Rallies and the opening round of the FIM Cross-Country Rallies World Championship kicks off with a super special stage at the Al Forsan International Sports Resort on April 1 and runs through the deserts of the Rub Al Khali until April 6. The Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge is a round of the FIA World Cup for Cross Country Rallies and the FIM Cross Country Rallies World Championship, and is being staged in 2017 for the 27th time.

Founded by Mohammed Ben Sulayem and organized by the Automobile & Touring Club of the UAE (ATCUAE), the event was the first motorsport event to ever be staged in Abu Dhabi and the first World level motorsport event in the GCC region.

The event is held over 6 competitive days across Abu Dhabi emirate, kicking off with a spectator stage on the afternoon of April 1 at the Al-Forsan Sports Club, before heading into the desert of the Empty Quarter for five days of grueling rally stages before finishing back at the Yas Marina Circuit on April 6.

The event will feature the world's best Cross Country Drivers and Riders, including Nasser Al-Attiyah, Sh. Khalid Al-Qassimi, Mikko Hirvonen and Sam Sunderland.



Mohammed Jaffar

GYMNASTICS

PUSH FOR BILL TACKLING SEX ABUSE AFTER USA GYMNASTICS SCANDAL

WASHINGTON: Several senators and former star gymnasts pushed Tuesday for a bill that would criminalize the failure of athletics organisations to report suspected sex abuse, after a huge scandal that shook US gymnastics.

The Indianapolis Star newspaper reported late last year that 368 former gymnasts claimed to have been sexually assaulted by coaches or other adults involved in the sport over the previous two years. The scandal led Steve Penny, president of USA Gymnastics, the national governing body for the sport, to resign mid-March following allegations of turning a blind eye. A bipartisan

group of senators is now calling on Congress colleagues to pass a bill aimed at ending the "culture of silence" surrounding such crimes. Several former gymnastic stars were invited to testify before the Senate Judiciary Committee on Tuesday and at times struggled to hold back tears.

"For a lot of us, for so long we felt we had no voice," said Jeanette Antolin, a former Team USA gymnast and victim of abuse, at a news conference after the hearing. "And to have the kind of support that we do now and finally have a voice is so important." The proposed legislation would require amateur ath-

letics governing bodies like USA Gymnastics, and adults who work with young athletes, to immediately report suspected sex abuse to local or federal law enforcement agencies. Failure to report such acts would be a federal crime. "The bill is very common sense. We want to make crystal clear that national governing bodies have a responsibility to protect young athletes," said Democratic Senator Dianne Feinstein.

"The culture was money and medals. The culture wasn't about the girl."

This law, she said, would send a message to the 50,000 gyms across America:

"This is a new day." The new law aims to make it easier for victims who wish to report their attackers, in particular through a call center that would guarantee them anonymity. It would also mandate greater oversight of adults in gyms, and trainers accused of sexual abuse would be kept on record to prevent them being able to reoffend simply by changing their workplace.

'TURNING POINT'

Antolin said former USA Gymnastics team doctor Larry Nassar, who is facing dozens of allegations of sexual abuse, had "got away with what he was doing..."

It's time for that to change." Dominique Moceanu, a 1996 Olympic gold medalist and reform advocate, who was not sexually abused herself, said the legislation would mark "a positive turning point in the history of this sport."

The weekly paper that broke the scandal has since gained access to internal USA Gymnastics documents showing that coaches found guilty of sexual assault continued to work in clubs after their convictions. Democratic Senator Richard Blumenthal denounced the abuse of gymnasts who were girls at the time. "The betrayal of trust here was especially outrageous," he said. —AFP

SWIMMING

AFGHAN WOMEN SWIMMERS DEFY THREATS FOR OLYMPIC DREAM

KABUL: There are just 30 pools in Afghanistan, only one which welcomes girls and it is facing militant threats for doing so. Nevertheless a handful are diving in, pioneers racing to achieve Olympic glory in Tokyo.

The story of the 25-year-old coach and head of the newly created Women's Swimming Committee, Elena Saboori, epitomises the struggle to swim in a conservative, landlocked, conflict-plagued country that largely opposes women taking part in sports. A woman friend first took her swimming, but after that she taught herself by downloading instruction videos from the internet and practicing in the pool in Kabul. "At first I was really afraid of drowning, but that's when I thought I'd become a coach, because girls do not know how to swim here," says Saboori, an economics student.

Drowning may not be the biggest risk: at the time of her interview with AFP, Saboori had been advised to stay away from the pool after violent threats were made against it for allowing her team to train there. "We have several types of threats, but I feel that it [the security situation] is a bit better and I am not as afraid as before," she tells AFP. "But I know that I have broken a taboo. I took a big risk by launching this team."

The risks include a burgeoning Taliban insurgency that has affected much of the country. Since 2016, no region has been spared Taliban attacks, while the east and north-east are increasingly coming under fire from the Islamic State group.

But Afghanistan's patriarchal, ultra-conservative society, where many still believe women should be veiled and confined to the home, adds another layer of risk.

Saboori and members of her team cannot swim with their backs, arms or thighs exposed. The team is in touch with a Brazilian company to design appropriate swimwear. Until then, they wear tights and black, lycra, long-sleeved tops under one-piece swimsuits, with a swimming cap covering their hair. "The main obstacle for our swimmers is safety, of course," says the young president of the Afghan Federation of Swimming, Sayed Ihsan Taheri. He lauds Saboori's courage, appointing her as head of the women's committee in February with a clear ambition: "We aim to be at the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo, with a team of at least two men and one woman." That woman would be Afghanistan's first ever female Olympic swimmer.

AGAINST ISLAM?

Before then, Taheri hopes to get his young swimmers to the Central Asian Championships in Turkmenistan at the end of April. "With some support, we could certainly qualify for the title of regional champions," he believes. But the challenges of poor infrastructure and a violent patriarchal culture have been compounded by the Afghan government's lack of support for the women's team. "All Muslim countries except Afghanistan have a women's team, even the strictest," says Taheri, citing Qatar, Iran and Saudi Arabia.

"They have training sites for girls, but here there is some misunderstanding about women's sport, that it is banned by Islam." The government has even blocked the allocation of 500 Afghanis (less than \$8) paid monthly to members of national sports teams. Nevertheless, Taheri's federation is trying to revamp at least four ruined public swimming pools in Kabul, including one built in the 1970s by the Soviets on a hill overlooking the capital. —AFP



HELSINKI: Evgenia Medvedeva from Russia performs during ladies short program of ISU World Figure Skating Championships 2017 yesterday in Helsinki. — AFP

FIGURE SKATING

COOL MEDVEDEVA LEADS FIGURE SKATING WORLDS IN HELSINKI

HELSINKI: Russian starlet Evgenia Medvedeva coolly fired the first shot in her women's title defence by leading yesterday's short programme at the world figure skating championships in Helsinki.

The 17-year-old on a winning streak in nine consecutive competitions and favourite to become the first skater since Michelle Kwan in 2001 to win back-to-back world titles-stuck to her formula of racking up maximum points with a physically challenging programme with all jumps in the second half.

And it paid off once again with the European champion's score of 79.01 points just below the world record 79.21 she posted on her way to gold in the Grand Prix final in December. It put the Muscovite in pole position going into Friday's free skating final ahead of surprise Canadian duo Kaetlyn Osmond (75.98) and Gabrielle Daleman (72.19), second and third respectively.

"If you do the jumps in the second half you score more technically," explained Medvedeva matter of factly. "I've been doing it for three seasons now. At first it was difficult but now it's working out nicely, and I'm going to continue."

Medvedeva was a vision in blue as she glided across the ice to the music 'River Flows in You' by Lorenzo de Luca. She then reeled off a triple flip-triple toe loop combination, triple loop and double axel, finishing off in style with a layback spin.

"I really had fun as usual. I'm feeling confident and comfortable," she declared afterwards. "I feel the crowd's support and this really helps me. Last year I didn't quite understand what was happening because it was my first world senior championship. Now I don't feel any pressure, I feel very motivated and the support of the crowd, that they feel my programme as I feel it, they feel what I want to tell with my skating and it's really amazing."

'LOT IN THE TANK'

But the battle will be tight with Osmond, 21, and Daleman, 19, still in with a shot of a first women's gold for Canada since 1973.

And despite sitting seventh, American Ashley Wagner (69.04) feels she has not had her last word either after taking silver last year.

"I'm looking not at my place but at my score. It's really set me up for the free skate," said 26-year-old Wagner. "I'm extremely satisfied with what I put out there. I know exactly what I have to do, and I still have a lot in the tank."

In the final world championships before next year's Winter Olympics, Osmond and Daleman are also targeting three spots for Canada in Pyeongchang.

"It's been a long time since Canada had three (women's) spots at the Olympics. It would be incredible for that to happen," said Osmond. Japan are fighting to keep their three Olympic spots with Satoko Miyahara out injured.

Four Champions winner Mai Mihara fell in her programme and was sitting 15th. But teammate Wakaba Higuchi, at 16 the youngest competitor in Helsinki, was sitting ninth and Rika Hongo, replacing Miyahara, in 12th. "Of course I want to get the three places (for Japan), but I was focus-

ing more on my own performance and on having a clean programme," said Hongo. "I only had a short time to prepare for this."

To get three Olympic places the combined placement of two of the skaters must add up to 13. Meanwhile, former world champion Carolina Kostner of Italy, the 2012 world champion and 2014 Olympic bronze medalist, slipped to eighth after errors. "Of course it's not nice to be here and make a mistake, but the important thing is to be able to fight," she explained.

But her Russian coach Alexi Mishin, who has

coached stars including Yevgeny Plushenko, took her to task as she spoke to journalists in Italian, English, German and French.

"Less chatter, more skating! And more spins," barked Mishin, who started coaching the 30-year-old after she returned to competition following a ban in 2015 after being caught up in a doping scandal involving her former companion, walker Alex Schwazer.

The competition continues at the Hartwall Arena yesterday evening with the pairs short programme. — AFP

IS THERE A DOWNSIDE TO QUAD-FEST?

HELSINKI: When Evan Lysacek struck gold at the 2010 Winter Olympics without attempting a single quadruple jump, men's figure skating was at a crossroads.

His rival-in-chief - 2006 Turin Games champion Yevgeny Plushenko - screamed blue murder and accused the American of winning the title by "dancing rather than skating like a man". Lysacek had become the first man since 1994 to win the Olympic title without attempting the jump that requires four complete aerial revolutions before the touchdown on the ice.

So would the next generation follow Lysacek and opt for a low-risk strategy that rewards artistry, seamless transitions and flawless displays? Or would they push their bodies to the limit to pull off the high-risk, high-reward quad jumps?

The answers to those questions will be clearly evident in the sheer number of quads on show when Javier Fernandez, Yuzuru Hanyu and Nathan Chen begin their pursuit of the men's title at the world championships in Helsinki today.

"It's mind blowing what these guys are doing technically. We are at a point now where it's crazy," summed up Patrick Chan, who won a hat-trick of world titles before settling for Olympic silver behind Hanyu at the 2014 Sochi Games.

"I thought that Yuzu in Sochi in 2014 really had pushed the limit and was hitting that limit, but clearly that has been proven wrong by Nathan. Not only Nathan but future skaters to come."

Since the inception of the accumulative scoring system in 2004, the 'Holy Grail' of men's figure skating had been the breach of the 300-point barrier.

Japan's Hanyu smashed that mark in the 2015-16 Grand Prix Final when he amassed 330.43 points with two spellbinding skates that featured five quadruple jumps in total.

Just over a year later, Chen is blazing a trail for the 'Next-Gen' of skaters after becoming the first man to land four different types of quads and five in all-in just his free skate at

this year's U.S. Championships.

DAMAGED BODIES

The 17-year-old American, who also scored more than 300 points as he captured the Four Continents title last month, will be attempting to pull off seven quads over two programmes in Helsinki. "We are in a very exciting period in men's figure skating."

The pros of the quads being complete (as they are high scoring) but cons is the mystery of the byproduct of men technically pushing the body to the limit," said the 26-year-old Chan. "That will only be something we will find out years from now what damage, or no damage, that we are doing to our bodies."

Keeping pace with the teenage tyros, a gang that also includes China's Jin Boyang and Japan's Shoma Uno, has meant that Chan is having to re-train his body in his mid 20s. "It does get so frustrating because I am running as fast as I can but they are creeping away from me. It does not help seeing other people have success-being in the spot that I used to be in," said Chan, who has added a quad Salchow to his arsenal. "After 2014 I never thought I could add another different quad from a quad toe, let alone train it full time. I have to go with the direction that the sport is going in which is dictated by the top men's skaters."

"I am exploring the unknown, seeing how far I can take myself technically."

So, what more is possible technically? Quintuple jumps? To fit in that extra revolution, skaters would need to jump higher, spin faster and stay airborne longer than the current average of 0.7 seconds - a feat that appears beyond the human body.

For Spain's double world champion Fernandez, the only way forward is to recognise his own body's limitations.

"I am one of the oldest skaters right now with Patrick and we are competing against really young rivals who are 17 and 18 who are throwing in many quads in their programmes," the five-times European champion told Reuters. — Reuters



KABUL: In this photograph taken on March 18, 2017, Afghan swimmer and coach Elena Saboori, 25, head of the newly created Women's Swimming Committee, gestures as she speaks during an interview with AFP

RUGBY

ALL BLACKS NOT AT THEIR PEAK FOR LIONS: LEWSEY

HONG KONG: Ex-England international Josh Lewsey yesterday said the British and Irish Lions had a great chance to overturn the All Blacks this year with the rebuilding world champions not at the "peak of their powers". Lewsey, speaking at the official launch of next month's Hong Kong 10s tournament, said the timing was good for Warren Gatland's Lions as they bid for their first series win in New Zealand in 46 years.

He said the All Blacks were "on their own journey" after greats including skipper Richie McCaw and fly-half Dan Carter stepped down following the team's second successive World Cup victory in 2015.

"You can't just replace those (players) overnight, it takes a while," Lewsey said.

"That doesn't mean players coming in aren't just as exceptional, but bonding a team tends to take five, seven, eight years, for a team to really go for it." He added: "If you are going to go down there and have a result, you're not playing a New Zealand who are right at the peak of their powers, so of course it's an opportunity."

Lewsey, 40, started all three Lions Tests on their last tour of New Zealand in 2005,

when the visitors were whitewashed 3-0. He tipped Lions coach Warren Gatland to impose a cohesive style on this year's composite team drawn from England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales. "Warren will have a very clear strategy about how he wants to play, and similarly, he will pick players who are most suited to play that style," Lewsey said.

"If you've only got a group of guys for a short period of time, it's the most effective way of gelling, and to be really clear what you want to do." He added that Gatland, a New Zealander, would know all about the strengths and weaknesses of the All Blacks ahead of the tour, which gets underway in June. Lewsey joked it would hard for the 2017 team to be less successful than their predecessors 12 years ago under former England coach Clive Woodward.

"Perhaps we could have been more specific in terms of how we wanted to play," he said. "Because if you look at the teams in '05, man for man we had a fantastic group of guys, and obviously the Test series spoke for itself in terms of scoreline. "But I can't help but feel with the talent we had, we underachieved." — AFP



The All Blacks team.

MORE WHISTLEBLOWERS ARE TALKING TO WADA, SAYS REEDIE

LONDON: Several whistleblowers have approached the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) through a new programme set up after revelations of rampant state-sponsored doping in Russia, WADA President Craig Reedie said yesterday. WADA this month launched its "Speak Up" secure digital platform for athletes and others to report anti-doping violations.

"We already have a number of whistleblowers speaking to us, so I am told," said Reedie, speaking at the SportsPro Live conference. He had no

details about which sports or countries might be involved.

"The investigations people do not tell the president of the organisation what they are doing. And that's exactly the way it should be. That has to be confidential." Asked whether the world might be facing another big scandal, after Russian track and field athletes were banned from last year's Rio Olympics, Reedie said he did not know but hoped not. WADA recommended that the entire Russian team be excluded from Rio after an independent report by

Richard McLaren, published just before those Games, accused the country of widespread state-sponsored doping.

The IOC rejected a proposed blanket ban and instead let international sports federations decide which athletes should be eligible to compete. Russia has said it hopes to have the suspension of its anti-doping body RUSADA lifted in November, but Reedie said that could not be relied upon. He said a decision on Russian athletes' participation at next year's Pyeongchang Winter Olympics in South Korea needed to be made as early

as possible and they could expect an aggressive programme of targeted testing in the run-up.

"I certainly want (Russia) to be compliant as quickly as possible. Not having the biggest country in the world compliant poses problems for sport that sport is finding very, very difficult to handle," he said. "What I think is important going into Pyeongchang is that whatever else happens, there is a very rigorous pre-Games testing exercise," he added.

"I think the pre-Games testing programme, which is easier to do for a winter

Games than a summer Games because you've got fewer sports, will almost certainly be extensive and authoritative." The chances of Russian athletes competing at this year's world athletics championships in London in August remain slim. "I think it would be difficult for the IAAF to remove the suspension of Russian athletics while the Russian anti-doping agency is non-compliant," Reedie said. "My guess is that it would be a struggle to have them compliant in time to allow the IAAF to change their view." — Reuters

SHARAPOVA PROUD OF HER PASSION, INTEGRITY AS DOPING BAN ENDS

RANCHO MIRAGE: When Maria Sharapova realized her tennis career could be ended by what she claims was an accidental doping violation, the former world No. 1 decided she had to fight.

"When you love what you do, and you do it with passion and integrity ... then you know what you stand for and who you are, and that's why I fought so hard to get that back," Sharapova said. Sharapova believes she triumphed over injustice when she managed to get her doping ban reduced to 15 months last October. The five-time Slam winner plans to return to competition next month at Stuttgart. Although the Russian-born Sharapova realizes she's closer to the end of her career than the beginning, she told a women's sports conference Tuesday that she couldn't accept the initial two-year suspension levied by the International Tennis Federation. The Court of Arbitration for Sport reduced her ban.

One of the world's wealthiest and best-known female athletes has been idle since the 2016 Australian Open, where she tested positive for meldonium, an over-the-counter Latvian drug of dubious cardiac benefit. The substance was banned by the World Anti-Doping Agency earlier that year, but Sharapova claims she missed the memo instructing her to stop using it after 10 years. "You always want to end your career or a chapter in your life on your terms and in your voice," Sharapova said. "And to be in a moment where you felt like it could have ended on someone else's terms was very difficult for me to accept. That's why I fought so hard for the truth to be out. You don't realize how much you love something, how much something means to you, until you lose it for some time." Sharapova took questions only from moderator Julie Foudy at the ANA Inspiring Women in Sports Conference, a gathering of athletes and prominent professionals preceding the LPGA's first major of the season at Mission Hills Country Club. The conference was produced by IMG, the sports and entertainment conglomerate that represents Sharapova.

Despite the tightly controlled nature of Sharapova's appearance, she went into detail on many aspects of her life during her sus-

pension. While traveling extensively with friends and eating countless dinners with family, she also dabbled in university classes at Harvard and in London, and she served brief internships everywhere from Nike to the NBA, where she shadowed Commissioner Adam Silver.

"I learned that life is OK without tennis," Sharapova said. "Life can be OK, which is a scary thought, because when you've done something for so long, you always think of, 'Well, how am I going to feel when I don't have that?' It gave me a chance to realize that you're the one that creates your life, and you create your own opportunities."

Sharapova also revealed she has been training intensely for four months to get her momentum back. Tuesday was a rare day off, thanks to her trip from her beachside home near Los Angeles to the desert.

WILD CARD ENTRY

"In tennis, you lose a lot of hand-eye coordination," Sharapova said. "Practice is never the same as match play. It's really different to face someone on the other side of the net. It's a very different feeling."

Sharapova will return as a wild card entry in Stuttgart's Porsche Tennis Grand Prix, a tournament she won three consecutive times from 2012-14 before Angelique Kerber won the past two.

Sharapova's suspension ends on the third full day of play at the tournament, and she won't be allowed even to set foot in Porsche Arena before Wednesday, April 26, the day of her first match. Women's No. 1 Kerber, Dominika Cibulkova and men's No. 1 Andy Murray are among several players angered by Sharapova being allowed to resume her career in main draws without playing her way back through qualifiers.

The question will receive even more scrutiny when the French Open and possibly Wimbledon must decide whether to give a free pass to Sharapova, a former champion of both events.

Earlier this month at Indian Wells, Kerber called it "a little bit strange" for Sharapova to be allowed into Stuttgart and to start play, although that tournament typically holds a handful of first-round matches today. — AP



KEY BISCAIYNE: Roger Federer of Switzerland returns a shot to Roberto Bautista Agut of Spain during Day 9 of the Miami Open at Crandon Park Tennis Center on Tuesday in Key Biscayne, Florida. — AFP

TENNIS

FEDERER AND NADAL ADVANCE, WAWRINKA OUSTED AT MIAMI

KEY BISCAIYNE: For Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal, it was a happy anniversary. For Stan Wawrinka, it was not a happy birthday. Federer and Nadal - playing back-to-back on stadium court on the 13th anniversary of their very first match - both advanced Tuesday to the quarterfinals of the Miami Open, surviving strong tests in both cases. Wawrinka wasn't as fortunate, the No. 1 seed getting bounced on his 32nd birthday by teenager Alexander Zverev.

"Every match is going to be tough from now on," said second-seeded Kei Nishikori, who also survived a three-setter to reach the quarters. That seems to already be holding true.

The fourth-seeded Federer outlasted No. 14 Roberto Bautista Agut 7-6 (5), 7-6 (4), the fifth-seeded Nadal got past Nicolas Pietrangeli 6-4, 7-6 (4), and Nishikori - a finalist at Key Biscayne a year ago - rallied from a break down in the final set to beat Federico Delbonis 6-3, 4-6, 6-3.

Federer is 16-1 this year, matching his career-best record at this point in a season. "Is it the best I've ever played?" Federer said. "For me, it's hard to say yes to that question. ...

Maybe on the offensive side, overall, I think I'm doing definitely a few things better than I ever have. I do feel that I have improved. The game has evolved, I had to adjust, but overall I do believe I'm probably a better player than I was 10 years ago." Zverev, who turns 20 next month, downed Wawrinka 4-6, 6-2, 6-1, and showed no ill effects by playing just 24 hours after winning a three-setter over John Isner that went entirely to tiebreakers. "I played well in the second and third," Zverev said. "I turned it around a little bit. I had to be aggressive." Zverev won 26 of the 36 points played in the final set.

BIRTHDAY CAKE

"I had no more gas in the second and third sets," said Wawrinka, who smiled when a surprise birthday cake - replete with 'Stan The Man' lettering - was brought into his post-match news conference. "But at the end of the day, you have to try with what you have that day, and today was not enough." Nadal won the only break point played in his match against Marut, and it was enough. He was an up-and-coming 17-year-old when he faced Federer at what was then called the NASDAQ-100 Open in 2004, and surprised many with a straight-set win that day.

More than a decade later, they're still rolling. "It's a good start of the year, I think, for both of us," Nadal said. "Obviously, it's a little bit better for him, but at the same time I'm happy with the way that I am playing, happy with the way that I started the year after a tough second part of the year last year with injuries.

"So I think it's a positive for both of us that we can still (be) around here and be very competitive almost every week that we are playing."

Federer had a battle with Bautista Agut, and seemed to enjoy himself. He needed - and got - a break with Bautista Agut serving for the first set, and with Federer serving at 4-5 in the second they played about a half-dozen back-and-forth shots at the net in a tete-a-tete that ended with Federer winning the point.

He cracked a slight smile as the crowd roared. Federer gets Wednesday off, and will meet 10th-seeded Tomas Berdych on Thursday in the quarters. Berdych advanced with a 6-3, 7-5 win over Adrian Mannarino. "You'll always take those days off," Federer said. "They are worth gold."

Nishikori will next face unseeded Fabio Fognini of Italy, who beat Donald Young 6-0, 6-4.

Young's loss meant only one American man would reach the quarters - that being No. 13 Jack Sock, who beat Jared Donaldson 6-2, 6-1.

Karolina Pliskova, who has never found Miami exactly to her liking, got into the women's semifinals with a 6-3, 6-4 win over 26th-seeded Mirjana

Lucic-Baroni. It's the first time Pliskova has made the semifinals at Key Biscayne. Pliskova improved to 23-3 this year, the best record on the women's tour. "I'm really enjoying my tennis this year ... winning almost every match so far," said Pliskova, who took advantage of 10 double faults by Lucic-Baroni and avenged a loss to her in the Australian Open quarterfinals. — AP

PLISKOVA TO PLAY WOZNIACKI IN SEMIS

MIAMI: Czech second seed Karolina Pliskova avenged her Australian Open quarter-final loss to Mirjana Lucic-Baroni with a 6-3 6-4 win over the 26th-seeded Croatian to secure a spot in the Miami Open semi-finals on Tuesday.

After Pliskova had booked her last-four berth, Danish 12th seed Caroline Wozniacki set up a showdown against the 25-year-old with a 6-4 6-3 victory over another Czech, Lucie Safarova, to advance.

Lucic-Baroni, seeking to build on her career-reviving run in Australia, did well to neutralise Pliskova's powerful serve early in the match but was not able to back it up when it was her turn to hold.

The 35-year-old Croatian, who rolled back the years with a run to the last four in Australia, served nine double faults during the opening set-including on set point-and was broken four times to fall behind in 28 minutes.

Lucic-Baroni eventually found her serving range and built a 4-2 lead in the second set but Pliskova relied heavily on her forehand and court movement to get out of trouble, winning four consecutive games to close out the match.

"I played much better here than I was playing (in Melbourne)," Pliskova told reporters. "Also, the conditions here are different, and she was playing better tennis there because it was faster. It suited her better in Australia. "So definitely, I was feeling more confident with this match. I had a different game plan today." Lucic-Baroni acknowledged that the glaring weakness in her game on the night had been pivotal in the defeat.

"I started out great but then I couldn't find my serve. The more I was making mistakes the worse I was getting," she said.

"I was able to calm down and fix it in the second but then I just had a lot of bad luck after 4-2. But she played great, a pretty flawless match. It was still pretty close but it just didn't go my way today." Wozniacki, already a two-time finalist this year, was her typical tenacious self against Safarova, scurrying for every ball to earn another tilt at Pliskova, who won in straight sets when they met in the Doha final last month. — Reuters



KEY BISCAIYNE: Caroline Wozniacki of Denmark celebrates defeating Lucie Safarova of Czech Republic during Day 9 of the Miami Open at Crandon Park Tennis Center on Tuesday in Key Biscayne, Florida. — AFP



Maria Sharapova

USA HOCKEY, WOMEN REACH AGREEMENT, SEEKS GROWTH

NEW YORK: While the impending start of the world championships created urgency for USA Hockey and the women's national team to hammer out a deal, the agreement had everything to do with tournaments over the next four years and beyond.

The sides finalized an agreement Tuesday night that avoided what would've been a historic boycott for the defending gold medalists at the world championships on home ice. Instead, they settled on terms that could lead to players earning as much as \$129,000 in an Olympic year and also set USA Hockey on a path to grow the women's game even further.

"We didn't want to settle for something that wasn't going to push women's hockey as far as we thought it was able to go," US captain Meghan Duggan said by phone. "Really excited about what this brings for the future of women's hockey, obviously for our team right now, the way that it represents the past USA Hockey. I think it's all around an incredible deal and an incredible day and moment."

The deal means players will be on the ice Friday in Plymouth, Michigan, to begin their title defense against archrival Canada. The team is scheduled to practice Wednesday once everyone arrives for hurried preparations in advance of a tournament that will now be a celebration of USA Hockey instead of a stage for criticism for not getting a deal done. USA Hockey executive director Dave Ogrea said laying a foundation for the future of the women's game was the crux of the agreement.

"It was critical to go through this process and to get this done, and I'm pretty sure that the women are very, very satisfied with where we ended up and it puts us in a great place to all move forward in a great way," Ogrea said

by phone Tuesday night. Coming off making just \$1,000 a month for six months around the Olympics, this contract pays players roughly \$3,000 a month, with annual compensation surpassing \$70,000 when combined with contributions from the United States Olympic Committee. Players receive Olympic medal bonuses of \$20,000 for gold and \$15,000 for silver from USA Hockey and \$37,500 for gold, \$22,500 for silver and \$15,000 for bronze from the USOC, which means 2018 could be a banner year for the women's national team based on its success in Pyeongchang, South Korea.

As part of the agreement, players also received business class travel that men get for the world championships and the insurance protection they asked for.

"There was compromises on both sides, but the contract in its entirety, it's going to change the lives of the current players that are on the team right now (and also) the next generation," star forward Jocelyne Lamoureux-Davidson said by phone. "It's going to be a turning point for women's hockey in the US (and) I feel like a turning point for women's hockey in the world."

Duggan called it a "historic moment in women's sports." USA Hockey president Jim Smith said people will look back on this day "as one of the most positive in the history" of the organization. After more than a year of negotiations over wages and equitable support, players announced March 15 that they'd boycott the International Ice Hockey Federation Women's World Championship if significant progress wasn't made toward an agreement. The sides met for 10-plus hours in person last week and continued conversations before finally agreeing to a deal. — AP

SPIRITED AUSTRALIA MUST CONTINUE TO IMPROVE, SAYS BOARD

SYDNEY: Australia have done themselves proud with their spirited fight in India but must continue to improve to become the number one side across all formats, the country's cricket board said yesterday.

Last year, Australia suffered a 3-0 whitewash in Sri Lanka before Steve Smith's men were beaten at home in the first two tests by South Africa.

An overhauled side gained a consolation win against the Proteas in a day-nighter at Adelaide Oval to lose the series 2-1 and then hammered visiting Pakistan 3-0. As they headed off for the four-match series in India many, including former test off-spinner Harbhajan Singh, predicted a repeat of the 4-0 whitewash they suffered in 2013.

Smith's side, however, won the series opener in Pune before losing from a strong position in Bangalore and eking out a draw in Ranchi to set up a winner-takes-all decider in Dharamsala.

A second innings slump then helped India to a eight-wicket win for a 2-1 series triumph on Tuesday but Australia's efforts earned them widespread praise.

"As the team arrives home over the next two days, they will find that all of Australia is immensely proud of their efforts," Cricket Australia chairman David Pever said in a statement.

"Some gave them little chance of testing the world's number one team, but instead showed resilience, adaptability and a determination to

overcome the difficulties they have experienced in recent years in such conditions."

With the series loss, Australia will finish the season ranked number three behind India and South Africa in Tests. "We aspire to be number one in all formats, so while the team's efforts in India, and across the summer following the disappointment of the first two tests against South Africa, represent a significant improvement, we all know that we must continue to learn and develop our skills," Pever said.

SUPER SMITH

"We want to win major trophies, like the Ashes and the Border-Gavaskar, not just at home but overseas as well."

Australia's 333-run victory in the series opener in Pune was their first in India since 2004 and also halted the hosts' unbeaten run of 19 tests.

Smith scored a century in that match to set up the win and also finished as the highest run-getter in the series with 499 runs, including two more hundreds.

"There were many fine individual performances, but none better than those of the captain," Pever said. "Steve showed yet again what an outstanding leader he is becoming, and his honesty and gracious comments at the end demonstrated the qualities that Australians expect from their test captain." The hard-fought series also ended with plenty of acrimony on the field with India captain Virat Kohli

declaring that his friendship with Australia's cricketers was over. Kohli had criticised counterpart Smith, who acknowledged he had a 'brain fade' in the second test in Bengaluru when he gestured to the dressing room seeking guidance on whether to review an umpiring decision.

It needed a meeting between the two cricket boards to calm things down before the third test in Ranchi. "It was a tough series, as we expected and indeed welcome from our Indian hosts," Pever said. "Cricket at this level is highly competitive, and it is incumbent on all involved, players and administrators, to honour the protocols and standards of behaviour that underpin the spirit of cricket." —Reuters



HAMILTON: South Africa's captain Faf du Plessis holds the trophy after the day five of the third Test cricket match between New Zealand and South Africa was called off due to rain at Seddon Park in Hamilton yesterday. The final day of the deciding third Test between New Zealand and South Africa was abandoned because of persistent rain in Hamilton, giving the Proteas a 1-0 series victory. — AFP

CRICKET

RAINY END DAMPENED END TO A PROMISING SUMMER: WILLIAMSON

WELLINGTON: Kane Williamson felt there were numerous positives to take out of New Zealand's international season even if they were deprived of a victorious climax to it by the Hamilton rain.

South Africa clinched the three-match series 1-0 yesterday after the final day of the third Test at Seddon Park was washed out without a ball being bowled, ensuring the Proteas would hold on for a draw.

"Although it's frustrating with today and not being able to get some cricket in, on a positive note, it has been a good season," captain Williamson said after umpires Rod Tucker and Bruce Oxenford called off the match. "I still think while there have been some positives in terms of results, it's about growth with a number of transitions in personnel. There's a lot of positives. "Good to get some wins along the way but, as a unit, we have grown together and coming into this last game to perhaps play our best test match is a really good sign."

Williamson's test side is still finding its feet but beat Pakistan 2-0 in a series late last year and followed that with a victory over Bangladesh by the same margin.

While the Proteas proved altogether tougher opponents, it was the weather which had the last word on a finely-poised first test in Dunedin, with a final day washout again forcing a draw.

In the second Test in Wellington, New

Zealand suffered their only defeat of the home season. Suffering one of the mental collapses that has so often hampered their test game, New Zealand were undone by left-arm spinner Keshav Maharaj on a Basin Reserve pitch that was offering him little or no assistance and lost by eight wickets.

They had to play the third test without new ball duo Trent Boult and Tim Southee as well as batting mainstay Ross Taylor but newcomers Jeet Raval, Tom Latham and Colin de Grandhomme stepped up with the bat.

Matt Henry, so often the fourth choice seamer for a team which usually fields a three-pronged pace attack, took the new ball with relish and claimed career-best figures of 4-93 in the first innings.

"I think the pleasing thing for us was that we're showing signs of improvement with a number of experienced players out as well, the guys stepped up and contributed," Williamson added. "Someone like Jeet getting challenged by probably the best bowling attack in world cricket and fronting up game after game was outstanding, especially against the new ball. "Matt Henry, who probably deserves more opportunities through the year to see him take wickets with the new ball it's good for the depth. "I think it is a good one to build from in Test cricket." —Reuters

SCOREBOARD

HAMILTON: Final scoreboard in the third and final Test between New Zealand and South Africa at Seddon Park in Hamilton after the last day's play was washed out yesterday.

South Africa first innings 314 (Q, de Kock 90, F. du Plessis 53, H. Amla 50; Henry 4-93, Wagner 3-104)		Bowling: Philander 33-79-0 (2nb), Morkel 36.1-7-100-4, Rabada 34-3-122-4 (1w,1nb), Maharaj 50-8-118-2, Duminy 6-0-38-0, Elgar 1-0-13-0, Bavuma 2-0-7-0.	
New Zealand 1st innings		South Africa 2nd innings	
T. Latham c de Kock b Morkel	50	D. Elgar c Watling b de Grandhomme	5
J. Raval c de Kock b Morkel	88	T. de Bruyn run out (Williamson/Watling)	12
K. Williamson c Philander b Morkel	176	H. Amla c de Grandhomme b Patel	19
N. Broom lbw Rabada	12	J. Duminy b Patel	13
H. Nicholls c de Kock b Rabada	0	F. du Plessis not out	15
M. Santner c Duminy b Rabada	41	T. Bavuma c Watling b Henry	1
B. Watling b Maharaj	24	Q. de Kock not out	15
C. de Grandhomme c de Kock b Morkel	57	Extras:	0
M. Henry c Elgar b Maharaj	12	Total: (5 wickets; 39 overs)	80
J. Patel c de Kock b Rabada	5	Fall of wickets: 1-13 (Elgar), 2-25 (de Bruyn) 3-49 (Amla), 4-50 (Duminy), 5-59 (Bavuma)	
N. Wagner not out	0	Bowling: Henry 11-4-20-1, de Grandhomme 8-5-15-1, Wagner 5-0-16-0, Patel 12-2-22-2, Santner 3-0-7-0.	
Extras: (lb12, w5, nb7)	24	Result: Match drawn, South Africa win series 1-0	
Total (all out; 162.1)	489		
Fall of wickets: 1-83 (Latham), 2-273 (Raval), 3-293 (Broom), 4-293 (Nicholls), 5-381 (Williamson), 6-397 (Santner), 7-443 (Watling), 8-477 (Henry), 9-489 (Patel), 10-489 (de Grandhomme).			

NHL

OVECHKIN'S HAT TRACK HELPS CAPITALS TO 5-4 WIN OVER WILD

ST PAUL: T.J. Oshie scored his second goal of the game 1:42 into overtime to bookend Alex Ovechkin's hat trick, Braden Holtby earned his 40th win and the NHL-leading Washington Capitals beat the Minnesota Wild 5-4 on Tuesday night for their fifth straight victory. After Eric Staal's goal for the Wild tied the game with 26.6 seconds left in regulation, Oshie took a pass in the left circle from Marcus Johansson and beat struggling Wild goalie Devan Dubnyk with a wrist shot. Johansson had four assists. Martin Hanzal and Jason Pominville had a goal and an assist apiece, but the Wild lost for the eighth time in nine games and fell to 3-11-1 in March after forward Zach Parise exited early with an injury. Oshie started Washington's longest road trip in six years, five games over an eight-day span, with a first-period goal set up by Ovechkin and Nicklas Backstrom.

Holtby made 26 saves, brushing off goals by Jared Spurgeon and Staal in the final five minutes to reach 40 victories for the third consecutive season. Martin Brodeur (2005-08, New Jersey) and Evgeni Nabokov (2007-10, San Jose) are the only other goalies in NHL history to do so. Dubnyk, who stopped 15 shots, has given up 26 goals over his last eight games. Ovechkin gave him even more trouble, guiding the Capitals one step closer to the Presidents' Trophy and home-ice advantage throughout the Stanley Cup playoffs. His 17th career three-goal game came all on power plays. Ovechkin has a whopping 11 goals and six assists in six career games against Dubnyk, four of those with Minnesota.

FLYERS 3, SENATORS 2, SO

Jordan Weal scored the only shootout goal after tying the game late in the third period to lift Philadelphia over Ottawa. Brayden Schenn also scored for the Flyers, a long shot to make the playoffs with six games remaining. Philadelphia began the day six points out of a postseason spot but needing to jump four teams. The Senators, making their second stop on a five-game road trip, fell four points behind first-place Montreal in the Atlantic Division. Kyle Turris had a goal and an assist, and Erik Karlsson also scored for Ottawa. Flyers goalie Steve Mason clinched the win when he stopped Tom Pyatt on Ottawa's final shootout attempt. Turris and Bobby Ryan also failed to beat Mason in the tiebreaker.

OILERS 2, KINGS 1

Cam Talbot made 34 saves and Edmonton earned a playoff spot for the first time in 11 years by beating Los Angeles. Connor McDavid and Eric Gryba scored for the Oilers, who have won seven of eight. Edmonton last made the post-season in 2006. Jarome Iginla scored and Jonathan Quick finished with 27 saves for the Kings, who have lost four of five with their playoff hopes hanging by a thread. Anaheim and San Jose also clinched Western Conference playoff spots with Edmonton's win.

SHARKS 5, RANGERS 4, OT

Brent Burns scored a power-play goal 3:10 into overtime and San Jose snapped a six-game losing streak, rallying past New York on a night when both teams clinched a playoff berth. Chris Tierney tied the game with his second goal with 2:15 to play in regulation after San Jose had blown a 3-1 lead. Jannik Hansen added his first goal since joining the Sharks, and Melker Karlsson scored short-handed.

San Jose's postseason spot was secured midway through the game when Los Angeles lost at Edmonton. The scuffling Rangers also wrapped up a playoff trip, their seventh in a row, by earning one point. New York lost for the fourth time in five games. Burns' drive from the circle in overtime ended his 16-game goal drought. J.T. Miller scored his second goal early in the third period to put New York up 4-3. Derek Stepan and Jesper Fast also scored for the Rangers. Henrik Lundqvist made 30 saves but lost his second straight start after missing seven games with a hip injury. Martin Jones stopped 24 shots for San Jose. The Sharks remained tied for second place in the Pacific Division with the Oilers, two points behind Anaheim with six games to play.

DUCKS 4, CANUCKS 1

Corey Perry and Patrick Eaves scored 74 seconds apart early in the first period, and Anaheim cruised past Vancouver to extend its season-high winning streak to five games. Nick Ritchie, with a goal and an assist, and Brandon Montour also scored for Anaheim, which clinched a playoff spot earlier in the night when the Oilers defeated the Kings. Jonathan Bernier made 33 saves and Antoine Vermette added two assists as the Pacific Division leaders improved to 9-1-1 over their last 11 games. Bernier is 9-0-1 over his last 10 starts, including eight wins in a row. Highly touted rookie forward Brock Boeser scored in his home debut for Vancouver, and Ryan Miller stopped 35 shots in the loss. The



PHILADELPHIA: Kyle Turris #7 of the Ottawa Senators is tripped up by Pierre-Edouard Bellemare #78 of the Philadelphia Flyers during the third period at the Wells Fargo Center on Tuesday in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The Flyers defeated the Senators 3-2 in the shootout. — AFP

Canucks, already eliminated from playoff contention, are 2-7-2 over their last 11 games.

BRUINS 4, PREDATORS 1

Tuukka Rask made 24 saves in his return from a one-game absence and Boston beat Nashville to boost its playoff chances. Patrice Bergeron, David Krejci, Noel Acciari and David Backes scored for the Bruins, who moved three points ahead of idle Tampa Bay for the second Eastern Conference wild card with six games remaining. Boston remained a point behind Toronto for third place in the Atlantic Division. Rask was sidelined with a lower-body injury for Boston's 2-1 road win against the New York Islanders on Saturday. Acciari scored his first career goal in 43 NHL games, and Zdeno Chara earned his 600th point with an assist on Boston's first goal. Craig Smith scored his 10th goal for the Predators, who had their four-game winning streak snapped. Pekka Rinne made 27 saves but took his first loss in six starts. Nashville remained one point ahead of idle St. Louis for third in the Central Division.

MAPLE LEAFS 3, PANTHERS 2

Auston Matthews broke Wendel Clark's 31-year-old franchise rookie record with his 35th goal of the season in Toronto's victory over Florida. Curtis McElhinney made 25 saves for the Maple Leafs. Leo Komarov and Zach Hyman also scored for Toronto. James Reimer allowed two goals on 14 shots for Florida before he was knocked out of the game with an injury and replaced by Reto Berra, who finished with 10 saves. Reilly Smith and Jaromir Jagr scored for the Panthers.

BLUE JACKETS 3, SABRES 1

Cam Atkinson scored his team-leading 34th goal and Sergei Bobrovsky made 41 saves to power Columbus past Buffalo. Kyle Quincey also scored for Columbus, his first goal since being acquired from New Jersey on March 1. Brandon Saad added an empty-netter. The win put the Blue Jackets two points ahead of idle Pittsburgh in second place in the Metropolitan Division as they battle for home-ice advantage in the playoffs. Columbus won its second straight to improve to 7-2-1 in its last 10. Bobrovsky got his league-leading 41st win. Evan Rodrigues scored for the Sabres, and Anders Nilsson stopped 26 shots.

HURRICANES 4, RED WINGS 1

Lee Stempniak and Joakim Nordstrom scored about five minutes apart in the first period, and Carolina beat Detroit in the second meeting between the teams in two nights. Jordan Staal and Elias Lindholm also scored for Carolina, and Cam Ward stopped 21 shots. The Hurricanes have earned a point in 12 straight games (8-0-4) to move within four points of the Eastern Conference's final playoff spot. The Red Wings beat the Hurricanes on Monday in a makeup game rescheduled from Dec. 19 when a Freon leak at PNC Arena made for unplayable ice. Tuesday's contest was regularly scheduled. The postponement resulted in the Red Wings playing three games in three days. They won the first two but visibly struggled with their energy in the finale, ending a four-game point streak. Tomas Nosek scored his first NHL goal and Jimmy Howard made 28 saves for Detroit.

CANADIENS 4, STARS 1

Brendan Gallagher put Montreal ahead early in the third period against Dallas. Max Pacioretty, Artturi Lehkonen and Alexander Radulov also scored for the Canadiens, who won their second straight. Carey Price finished with 27 saves. Curtis McKenzie scored for Dallas, which ended a four-game point streak. The Stars were playing for the first time since learning they had been eliminated from playoff contention. Kari Lehtonen stopped 32 shots.

JETS 4, DEVILS 3, SO

Patrik Laine scored in the shootout and Winnipeg rallied from a two-goal deficit to beat New Jersey in the makeup of a game postponed by a snowstorm this month. Connor Hellebuyck made 20 saves and stopped all three Devils shootout attempts as the Jets climbed out of a 3-1 hole to sweep the season series. Nikolaj Ehlers, Blake Wheeler and Joel Armia scored in regulation for Winnipeg. Beau Bennett, Taylor Hall and Stefan Noesen had the goals for New Jersey, which has lost four straight and won only twice (2-12-4) in 18 games. Cory Schneider made 33 saves but was beaten between the pads by Laine, who missed Winnipeg's previous game with an illness, on the Jets' second shootout attempt. John Quenneville, Hall and Pavel Zacha were stopped by Hellebuyck. — AP

NHL results/standings

San Jose 5, NY Rangers 4 (OT); Anaheim 4, Vancouver 1; Edmonton 2, Los Angeles 1; Washington 5, Minnesota 4 (OT); Toronto 3, Florida 2; Montreal 4, Dallas 1; Winnipeg 4, New Jersey 3 (SO); Boston 4, Nashville 1; Philadelphia 3, Ottawa 2 (SO); Carolina 4, Detroit 1; Columbus 3, Buffalo 1.

Western Conference						Metropolitan Division							
	W	L	OTL	GF	GA	PTS							
Chicago	48	21	7	229	197	103	Ottawa	41	25	9	196	194	91
Minnesota	44	24	8	244	195	96	Toronto	36	24	15	230	221	87
Nashville	39	26	11	226	210	89	Boston	40	30	6	218	203	86
St. Louis	41	28	6	211	200	88	Tampa Bay	37	29	9	210	210	83
Winnipeg	35	35	7	229	244	77	Florida	33	32	11	197	216	77
Dallas	31	34	11	207	242	73	Buffalo	32	33	12	193	221	76
Colorado	20	52	3	147	253	43	Detroit	31	33	12	189	224	74
Pacific Division						Atlantic Division							
Anaheim	42	23	11	203	186	95	Washington	50	17	8	243	167	108
San Jose	43	26	7	206	186	93	Columbus	49	19	7	235	172	105
Edmonton	42	25	9	225	196	93	Pittsburgh	46	18	11	258	211	103
Calgary	43	29	4	211	204	90	NY Rangers	46	26	5	245	206	97
Los Angeles	35	33	7	181	188	77	NY Islanders	35	28	12	219	228	82
Vancouver	30	37	9	173	223	69	Carolina	34	27	14	200	213	82
Arizona	27	40	9	181	244	63	Philadelphia	36	32	8	200	222	80
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	43	24	9	208	188	95	

LOEW FRUSTRATED BY BENCH-WARMING GERMANY STARS

BERLIN: Joachim Loew says Germany duo Joshua Kimmich and Andre Schuerrle need more matches-and to spend less time on the bench-for their Bundesliga clubs ahead of next year's World Cup defence. Neither Kimmich nor Schuerrle are first-choice starters for their clubs with both facing stiff competition at Bayern Munich and Borussia Dortmund respectively.

But the pair played the full 90 minutes of Germany's 4-1 win at Azerbaijan in Sunday's World Cup qualifier, leaving Loew's men five points clear in Group C, with Kimmich at right-back and Schuerrle on the left wing. While ex-Germany captain Philipp Lahm occupies Bayern's right-back berth and with Carlo Ancelotti spoiled for choice in midfield, the Italian currently has no place for Kimmich in his preferred starting line-up. Likewise, Thomas Tuchel has Schuerrle down the pecking order at Dortmund

with Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang, Christian Pulisic, Marco Reus and Ousmane Dembele also vying for starting berths. Nevertheless Loew, Germany's World Cup-winning coach, foresees Kimmich and Schuerrle as firmly in his plans for this June's Confederations Cup and the 2018 World Cup in Russia. Schuerrle supplied the cross which Mario Goetze converted for the winning goal in the 2014 World Cup final, while Kimmich is Loew's primary option at right-back.

LIMITED CHANCES

But with Russia in mind, the Germany coach says the pair must get more game time in the Bundesliga. "Andre made a good impression with me last week, physically he is very fit and has trained well," said Loew.

"I hope the game in Azerbaijan will give him a boost for the coming weeks in Dortmund. I would wish that players like

him or Joshua Kimmich get more game time. But I can not tell the club coaches what to do." Dortmund signed Schuerrle for 30 million euros (\$32.5 million) from Wolfsburg last July.

Yet so far this season the 26-year-old has completed the full 90 minutes in just five of 25 league games. He has though flourished on the international stage and repaid the faith shown him by Loew.

"I feel really good in the national team and am very happy to get that trust again. It really does me good," said Schuerrle. Dortmund chief executive Hans-Joachim Watzke admits the club's strength in depth hamstrings Schuerrle.

"With his qualities, Andre would play from the start at any other club in the world," Watzke told German daily Bild.

"Alongside Aubameyang, Pulisic, Reus and Dembele, we have five top players for three positions-that's why it has not been easy for Andre. That will change

again, but basically it is easier to get playing time with the national team than at Bayern or Dortmund." Similarly, the 22-year-old Kimmich has played from start to finish in the league just twice since mid-October. He rocketed into Loew's plans after only making his Bayern debut in August 2015, under Ancelotti's predecessor Pep Guardiola, but nailing down a place in the Bundesliga giants' star-studded side has proved challenging.

SHOOTING STAR

Kimmich can play in either defence or midfield, but his flexibility means Ancelotti has increasingly used him off the bench this season. "To play two games over the 90 minutes was extremely important for me, because I have got the rhythm you need, simply the feeling for the game," Kimmich told Die Welt after featuring against England and Azerbaijan. "It's already something

when you are on the pitch from the start, compared to when you come on for 10, 15 minutes.

"You are more involved and, as a young player, it clearly improves me," Kimmich, at home most in defensive midfield, struggled in the first half against England as he re-adjusted to playing at right-back. "It's a position in which I haven't played or trained for the last four-and-a-half months," he admitted. Loew says Kimmich's future lies on the right side of Germany's defence and, with Lahm to retire from all football in June, he hopes Ancelotti sees things the same way-or he risks losing a prized asset. "It would be nice if Bayern could plan with him in this position," said Loew.

"At the European Championship Kimmich exploded out of nowhere and still has his whole career ahead of him, so it goes without saying that they would want to keep him." —AFP

AUSTRALIA BANK ON HOME COMFORTS FOR RUN TO RUSSIA

SYDNEY: Australia's campaign to reach a fourth straight World Cup finals received a fillip with their first win in five qualifiers on Tuesday but there is plenty yet to be done to secure a ticket to Russia.

The 2-0 victory over the United Arab Emirates in Sydney briefly put the Asian champions joint top of Group B before Japan thrashed Thailand 4-0 and Saudi Arabia edged Iraq 1-0 in later matches to re-establish their shared three point edge.

The good news for Australia in their quest to secure one of the top two spots that guarantees a place at next year's finals, and avoids the playoff route offered by a third place finish, is that two of their remaining three matches are at home.

"We always know at home we're a dominant team," coach Ange Postecoglou said after the UAE win.

"We worked awfully hard, we pressed the way we wanted to and created opportunities. And we deserved the victory."

Australia's next qualifier, the very definition of a six-pointer, is against the Saudis in Adelaide on June 8 and they follow that with a trip to Japan in August before rounding out their campaign at home to lowly Thailand in September.

Between the Saudi and Japan fixtures, Postecoglou will get a chance to gauge progress on his mission to build a side that

can not only qualify for World Cup finals, but also win matches on football's biggest stage when they get there.

The June 17-July 2 Confederations Cup in Russia is likely to offer the biggest test yet of the Postecoglou Project, with world champions Germany, South American champions Chile and African champions Cameroon all in their group.

With half an eye on that tournament, Postecoglou has abandoned a back four defence and lined his side up with wing-backs in a 3-4-3 formation for their last two qualifiers.

It worked in parts against the UAE on Tuesday, even if the wide players did not always do the best with the final delivery, the back three looked susceptible to long balls and both goals came from set pieces.

Despite a welter of media criticism, Postecoglou did not look like a man about to abandon his experiment when he spoke to reporters afterwards.

"If someone has got a system out there that stops oppositions from doing anything, it's 11 against nothing," he said.

"It's a game of football. We've got to try and score goals which we did (but) the opposition are going to create opportunities. If people want the perfect system it's probably their hot water system at home, but it ain't a football system." — Reuters



SAINT DENIS: Saint-Denis, Seine-Saint-Denis, France : TOPSHOT - France's forward Kylian Mbappe vies with Spain's midfielder Sergio Busquets and captain Sergio Ramos during their friendly football match France vs Spain at the stade de France in Saint Denis near Paris on Tuesday. —AFP

SOCCER

VIDEO REPLAY AIDS SPAIN AS SWEDEN FOIL RONALDO

PARIS: Spain twice benefited from the use of video assistance to defeat France 2-0 on Tuesday, while Sweden rallied from two goals down to beat Portugal 3-2 and spoil Cristiano Ronaldo's homecoming in Madeira.

Antoine Griezmann headed in what appeared to be the opening goal at the Stade de France shortly after half-time, but it was ruled out for offside after consultation with the video assistant referee. David Silva then converted from the penalty spot after a foul by Laurent Koscielny, and the Spaniards again profited from technology as the referee reversed an offside decision that had initially negated Gerard's Deulofeu 78th-minute effort. "The victory was not a result of the (video) refereeing but due to the excellent work and attitude of my players," said Spain coach Julen Lopetegui. "The (video) refereeing gave justice to this match, it resolved those two incidents fairly." Monaco's teenage prodigy Kylian Mbappe made his first international start and nearly struck as early as the fifth minute, with David de Gea reacting sharply to kick away the Frenchman's attempt.

Gerard Pique hooked a header from Koscielny off the line, while Andres Iniesta twice went close in the first half before video replays were used for the first time in France. Griezmann's celebrations after the break were cut short when Layvin Kurzawa was shown to be in an offside position as he set up the Atletico Madrid striker. The linesman's flag was then raised as Deulofeu tapped in Jordi Alba's left-wing cross, but replays indicated the on-loan AC Milan winger was marginally behind Samuel Umtiti as the ball was played into the box. "Playing Spain in a friendly is not a fun game, it never has been. But we need this," said France coach Didier Deschamps. Real Madrid star Ronaldo paraded the European Championship trophy before kick-off at the Maritimo Stadium as Portugal played their first match on his home island of Madeira since 2001.

Ronaldo fired the hosts ahead with 18 minutes gone against Sweden before Andreas Granqvist's own goal doubled the lead for the Euro 2016 champions. But Viktor Claesson pulled one back just before Ronaldo was withdrawn on 58 minutes, and the Krasnodar midfielder then struck an equaliser before Joao Cancelo turned into his own net in injury time as Sweden crashed the party in dramatic fashion. "We played pretty well in the first half but we weren't completely serene defensively," said Portugal coach Fernando Santos. "After the break we didn't play as well and we ended up losing a match we should never have lost."

GRIM TIMES FOR DUTCH

The Netherlands slumped to another defeat, losing 2-1 at home to Italy in the country's first game since the dismissal of head coach and former Dutch international Danny Blind.

Assistant Fred Grim replaced Blind in the dugout with the Netherlands' World Cup hopes

hanging by a thread after Saturday's 2-0 loss in Bulgaria left them fourth in their qualifying group. The Dutch grabbed a 10th-minute lead in Amsterdam when Italy defender Alessio Romagnoli diverted the ball past 18-year-old Gianluigi Donnarumma-the AC Milan goalkeeper making his first international start. But Italy hit back immediately through Eder and Leonardo Bonucci converted the winner after turning in the rebound from Marco Parolo's header on 32 minutes.

Christian Benteke scored twice for Belgium in Sochi, the stadium used for the opening and

closing ceremonies of the 2014 Winter Olympics, since converted into a football ground.

However, Russia marked the occasion of the first ever match at the Fisht Arena with a rousing comeback as the 2018 World Cup hosts recovered from 3-1 down with goals from Alexei Miranchuk and Alexander Bukharov in the final quarter hour.

Bristol City defender Hordur Magnusson curled in a first-half free-kick as Iceland downed the Republic of Ireland 1-0 in Dublin, while Marko Arnautovic scored as Austria were held to a 1-1 draw with Finland in Innsbruck. —AFP

MESSI BAN UNFAIR: BARCELONA

BARCELONA: Lionel Messi's four-match international ban for swearing at an assistant referee was "unfair and totally disproportionate", his Spanish club Barcelona said yesterday. "FC Barcelona expresses its surprise and indignation at the decision by the FIFA Disciplinary Committee to suspend Leo Messi following the FIFA World Cup qualifying fixture between Argentina and Chile," Barca said in a statement. "The club considers the four-match suspension imposed on the Argentine player to be unfair and totally disproportionate. Finally, FC Barcelona wishes to reiterate its support for Leo Messi, an exemplary player in terms of conduct,

both on and off the pitch." FIFA suspended Messi for four of Argentina's five remaining World Cup qualification matches after he was caught swearing at an official in the victory over Chile last week.

The FIFA announcement fell just hours before Messi was due to captain Argentina against Bolivia late Tuesday. Argentina went on to lose 2-0 to the Bolivians to deal a fresh blow to their 2018 World Cup qualification campaign.

Messi will also miss Argentina's qualifiers in Uruguay on August 31, at home to Venezuela on September 5 and against Peru on October 5. —AFP



PARIS: Bayern Munich's defender Verena Faisst (R) vies with Paris Saint-Germain's Spain defender Irene Paredes during the UEFA Women's Champions League quarter-final second leg football match between Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) and Bayern Munich at the Parc des Princes stadium in Paris yesterday. — AFP

DEMPSEY, PULISIC STAR AGAIN AS US TIES 1-1 AT PANAMA

PANAMA CITY: Christian Pulisic made an outstanding individual move to steal the ball, spin a defender and feed Clint Dempsey for his 56th international goal, and the United States hung on for an important 1-1 draw against Panama on Tuesday night in World Cup qualifying.

Dempsey's 39th-minute goal on a warm and humid night moved him within one of Landon Donovan's American scoring record, but the lead did not last long. Gabriel Gomez tied the score four minutes later following a throw-in.

Tim Howard thwarted Luis Tejada with a between-the-legs stop in the 59th minute, at 38 providing another top night in goal.

The U.S. was reeling after its first two games in the final round of the North and Central American and Caribbean region, 0-2 and last in the hexagonal.

Jurgen Klinsmann was fired in November and replaced by Bruce Arena, the U.S. coach from 1998-2006, and the Americans accomplished their immediate goal by getting back into contention with Friday's 6-0 home rout of Honduras and a valuable point on the road.

Mexico leads with 10 points, followed by Costa Rica with seven, Panama with five, the U.S. and Honduras with four each, and Trinidad and Tobago with three.

El Tri won 1-0 at Trinidad and Costa Rica rallied for a 1-1 tie at Honduras. The top three nations qualify for next year's World Cup in Russia, and the No. 4 team advances to a playoff against Asia's fifth-place nation.

Play resumes June 8 when the US hosts Trinidad, most likely at Commerce City, Colorado, and the Americans start the second half of their schedule three days later at Mexico.

Pulisic, an 18-year-old who made his international debut on March 29 last year, is quickly establishing himself as the top American player with rare skill. He stole the ball from Panama captain Felipe Baloy at

the edge of the penalty area and broke in on goal. He stopped, stepped on the ball with his right foot as defender Roman Torres spun, played the ball from his right foot to his left and cut it back to Dempsey.

The 34-year-old returned to the national team with a hat trick Friday after missing nine months because of an irregular heartbeat, and Pulisic assisted on two of them. The pair combined again, with Dempsey scoring with a right-footed shot from 6 yards while sliding on his backside.

Panama tied the score on Gomez's 12th international goal, the first against the U.S. in four games under Arena. Adolfo Machado's throw-in bounced off a scrum, and Gomez beat Tim Ream and Jorge Villafana to the loose ball for the open shot from 4 yards that went past Howard inside the far post.

Fans, almost all in Panama red, filled about three-quarters of 32,000-capacity Estadio Rommel Fernandez, a two-deck oval with a track. A renovation in 2009 added about 7,000 seats, luxury suites and a fan gathering area above one end.

A large red banner with white block letters was draped over the front of the stands behind a goal: "AQUI SE NOS RESPETA! (HERE WE ARE RESPECTED!)" Another banner, in Russian, fluttered atop the stadium and appeared to say: "Our dream ... to go to the championship." Next year's World Cup will be held in Russia.

Music blared for more than four hours before kickoff. Fans booted "The Star-Spangled Banner" only a little and let loose a flare during Panama's anthem that left smoke above the field when the match began. Mexico's Cesar Ramos was the referee in place of countryman Roberto Garcia, who was injured according to CONCACAF deputy general secretary Ted Howard. The temperature had cooled to 81 degrees by the 9:05 p.m. start, but humidity remained high. — AP



PANAMA CITY: USA's forward Clint Dempsey (R) and USA's midfielder Christian Pulisic (L) vie for the ball with Panama's defender Adolfo Machado during the 2018 FIFA World Cup qualifier football match in Panama City on Tuesday. — AFP

Sports

Cool Medvedeva leads figure skating worlds in Helsinki



Afghan women swimmers defy threats for Olympic dream



THURSDAY, MARCH 30, 2017

FEDERER AND NADAL ADVANCE, WAWRINKA OUSTED AT MIAMI

Page 17



SAO PAULO: Brazil's Neymar jumps over Paraguay's Paulo Da Silva during their 2018 World Cup qualifying soccer match at the Arena Corinthians Stadium in Sao Paulo, Brazil, Tuesday. —AP

BRAZIL BOOK WORLD CUP BERTH, ARGENTINA TUMBLE

MONTEVIDEO: Brazil became the first team to qualify for the World Cup on Tuesday after beating Paraguay to clinch an eighth consecutive victory as Argentina's campaign stumbled after the shock suspension of Lionel Messi.

Five-time champions Brazil had been left waiting in suspense after goals from Neymar, Philippe Coutinho and Marcelo handed them a 3-0 win over the Paraguayans at Sao Paulo's Arena Corinthians.

But Uruguay's upset 2-1 defeat to Peru in the day's final South American qualifier combined with other results meant Brazil are mathematically guaranteed a place at next year's finals in

Russia. The qualification completes an astonishing turnaround for Brazil, who less than a year ago were in crisis after taking only nine points from six games. That run of results had left the Brazilians outside the qualifying places in sixth place. The further embarrassment of a first round exit at last year's Copa America Centenario only deepened the sense of despondency. However the sacking of former coach Dunga and the appointment of former Corinthians coach Tite was the catalyst for a Brazilian resurgence. That revival saw Brazil take maximum points from their next eight qualifying games, leaving them nine points clear on

Tuesday with four games left. "When I look at my family-the players-and when we talk to the fans and see how happy they are, that's when you think 'I'm part of something very special,'" Tite said after Brazil's qualification was confirmed. Against Paraguay, Brazil were already in party mode, with Coutinho opening the scoring on 34 minutes following a deft one-two with China-based midfielder Paulinho. Neymar had a chance to make it 2-0 in the 53rd minute from the penalty spot only to see his kick saved by Anthony Silva.

On 64 minutes Neymar doubled Brazil's tally, collecting the ball deep inside his own half and

setting off on a surging run down the left flank. Neymar's dribble ended with him curling in a shot which took a slight deflection on its way into the Paraguayan goal. Real Madrid defender Marcelo added a late third to seal Brazil's win.

NO MESSI, BIG PROBLEM

While Brazil celebrated, Argentina and Messi were left digesting another stumble in their progress towards Russia as they slumped to a 2-0 defeat in La Paz.

Argentina had been rocked just hours before kick-off after confirmation Messi had been hit with a four-match ban following a ruling from

disciplinary chiefs at world governing body FIFA in Zurich. The Barcelona superstar was stunned after being suspended for four of Argentina's five remaining World Cup qualification matches for swearing at an official in a game against Chile last week. Messi's suspension left Argentina coach Edgardo Bauza forced to make a hasty reshuffle to his starting line-up, bringing in Atletico Madrid's Angel Correa in attack while leaving Manchester City's Sergio Agüero on the bench. But Argentina, clearly struggling in the thin air of La Paz, which is 3,600 metres (11,800 feet) above sea level, were well beaten at the Estadio Hernando Siles.—AFP



FUNCHAL: Portuguese footballer Cristiano Ronaldo stands past a bust presented during a ceremony where Madeira's airport in Funchal is to be renamed after Cristiano Ronaldo, on Madeira island, yesterday. —AFP

AIRPORT RENAMED IN RONALDO HONOUR

LISBON: Cristiano Ronaldo had an international airport renamed in his honour yesterday but it was a newly unveiled bust of him that soon became a major talking point. Five thousand screaming fans, the Portuguese talisman himself and the country's prime minister and the president were all in attendance at the airport of Madeira, the island where Ronaldo was born. "To see this airport bear my name is a very special thing," said Ronaldo, 32, who skipped Portugal to victory in the European championships last year.

"Everyone knows I am proud of my roots." Real Madrid star Ronaldo, speaking at a naming ceremony also attended by his family, added: "I didn't ask for this but I'm not a hypocrite and I acknowledge that it honours me, and that makes me happy."

Also presented was a grinning bust of one of the greatest footballers of all time.

But aside from the hair, which looked suit-

ably similar, social media users were quick to mock the statue as nothing like him and even horrifying. "Seriously, I look more like Cristiano Ronaldo than that bust," said the Twitter user DiscoHobbit.

The BBC called the bust "bizarre". Ronaldo already has a museum and bronze statue in his honour in his birth town of Funchal. He follows in the footsteps of Northern Ireland legend George Best, who also wore the number seven shirt in his time at Manchester United and had Belfast airport named after him.

Portugal played their first match in Madeira since 2001 on Tuesday, going down 3-2 to Sweden. Ronaldo's 71st goal for his country in the defeat saw the striker go level in third place with German Miroslav Klose in the list of Europe's all-time top international goalscorers behind Hungarian duo Sandor Kocsis and leader Ferenc Puskas. —AFP

BASKETBALL

WHITESIDE'S BUZZER-BEATING TIP-IN LIFTS HEAT PAST PISTONS

AUBURN HILLS: Hassan Whiteside scored on a tip-in just before the buzzer, giving the Miami Heat a 97-96 victory over the Detroit Pistons on Tuesday. Whiteside scored after a wild scramble during which the Heat missed two attempts on their final possession. He finished with 17 points and nine rebounds. Goran Dragic scored a game-high 28 points for the Heat. Miami scored the final five points after giving away a nine-point lead. Kentavious Caldwell-Pope's 25 points led the Pistons, who have lost eight of their last nine.

WARRIORS 113, ROCKETS 106

Stephen Curry scored a game-high 32 points and Draymond Green did a little of everything to help Golden State beat Houston. Curry drilled a three-pointer with 1:46 left to rebuild a double-digit lead for the Warriors, who stretched their winning streak to eight games. Green finished with 19 points, nine rebounds and three steals. Klay Thompson added 25 points. Houston's James Harden posted his 20th triple-double, producing 24 points, 11 rebounds and 13 assists. But he was just 5-of-20 from the field, including 1-of-9 on three-pointers.

TIMBERWOLVES 115, PACERS 114

Ricky Rubio sank three free throws with 3.4 seconds left to lift Minnesota past Indiana, whose Monta Ellis missed a three-point shot at the buzzer. Karl-Anthony Towns delivered a team-high 37 points for the Timberwolves. Rubio finished with 21 points and Gorgui Dieng added 19. Paul George had 37 points for the Pacers.

76ERS 106, NETS 101

Dario Saric scored 23 points and Philadelphia outlasted Brooklyn. Saric led the 76ers in scoring for the 17th time as the 76ers beat the Nets for the third time this sea-

son in a game that featured 21 lead changes and 12 ties. Robert Covington added 21 points and Timothe Luwawu-Cabarrot scored 17 for the Sixers, who had nine available players due to injuries. Brook Lopez led the Nets with 26 points, nine rebounds and six assists.

HAWKS 95, SUNS 91

Dennis Schroder scored 27 points and helped Atlanta recover from blowing an 18-point lead against Phoenix. The Hawks snapped a seven-game losing streak. Atlanta got a double-double from Ersan Ilyasova, who had 18 points and 12 rebounds. Taurean Price scored 15 points and Dwight Howard had 15 points and 11 rebounds. Phoenix was led by TJ Warren's 24 points and eight rebounds.

BUCKS 118, HORNETS 108

Milwaukee bounced back after a 15-point home loss to Chicago on Sunday with an emphatic victory over Charlotte. The Bucks shot 72.5 percent in the first half in rolling to a 22-point lead and then pushed the margin to 26 in the second half. Milwaukee finished at 62.2 percent. Tony Snell led the way with 26 points and Giannis Antetokounmpo added 20 points. Kemba Walker led the Hornets with 26 points.

WIZARDS 119, LAKERS 108

John Wall scored 34 points and handed out 14 assists, and Washington used a fourth-quarter rally to defeat Los Angeles. Otto Porter Jr and Bradley Beal added 16 points apiece for the Wizards, who clinched the Southeast Division with the win. Kelly Oubre Jr chipped in 14 points. D'Angelo Russell scored 20 of his 28 points in the first half for the Lakers, who lost to the Wizards for the fifth straight time on their home court. Jordan Clarkson finished with 22 points and Tyler Ennis had 11 for Los Angeles.—Reuters

NBA results/standings

Washington 119, LA Lakers 108; Portland 122, Denver 113; Golden State 113, Houston 106; Philadelphia 106, Brooklyn 101; Atlanta 95, Phoenix 91; Miami 97, Detroit 96; Milwaukee 118, Charlotte 108; Minnesota 115, Indiana 114.

Eastern Conference		PCT	GB	
Atlantic Division	L			
Boston	48	26	.649	-
Toronto	45	29	.608	3
Philadelphia	28	46	.378	20
NY Knicks	28	46	.378	20
Brooklyn	16	58	.216	32
Central Division				
Cleveland	47	26	.644	-
Milwaukee	38	36	.514	9.5
Indiana	37	37	.500	10.5
Chicago	35	39	.473	12.5
Detroit	34	41	.453	14
Southeast Division				
Washington	46	28	.622	-
Atlanta	38	36	.514	8
Miami	36	38	.486	10
Charlotte	33	41	.446	13
Orlando	27	47	.365	19
Western Conference				
Northwest Division				
Utah	45	29	.608	-
Oklahoma City	42	31	.575	2.5
Portland	36	38	.486	9
Denver	35	39	.473	10
Minnesota	29	44	.397	15.5
Pacific Division				
Golden State	60	14	.811	-
LA Clippers	44	31	.587	16.5
Sacramento	29	45	.392	31
Phoenix	22	53	.293	38.5
LA Lakers	21	53	.284	39



AUB's AGM approves 18% cash and 10% bonus shares

CHEVROLET ALGHANIM SURPASSES YOUTH'S EXPECTATIONS



KUWAIT: Burgan Bank's Chairman Majed Essa Al-Ajeel highlights the positive performance of Burgan Bank Group in 2016 during the bank's Shafafiyah Forum yesterday.

BURGAN BANK HOLDS AGM, SHAFAFIYAH FORUM BANK TO PAY 5% CASH DIVIDENDS, 5% IN BONUS SHARES

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank held its Ordinary and Extraordinary General Assembly meeting and Al-Shafafiyah Investors forum yesterday at the KIPCO Tower, wherein the Board of Directors presented the bank's financial earnings report for the year ended December 31, 2016 and agreed to pay a cash dividend of 5 percent and 5 percent in bonus shares.

The bank closed the financial year 2016 with strong results and realized a solid operating and financial performance which continued reflecting a faster than market growth almost in all indicators, mirroring the soundness of Burgan Bank's resilient business model and its strategy execution.

Shafafiyah forum

Following the Annual General Assembly Meetings, Burgan Bank held its annual Shafafiyah forum which serves as a platform for the bank's management to present the main events for 2016 as well as its outlook for 2017 to shareholders.

Excluding the discontinued operations resulting from the sale of Jordan Kuwait bank in December 2015, Burgan Bank Group reported net income of KD 68 million, up 12 percent from KD61 million reported in 2015. Earnings per share stood at 28 fils, up by 15 percent from 25 fils in 2015. Adjusted for foreign currencies devaluation, core revenues for 2016 reached KD236 million mirroring 8 percent Year-on-year growth. Loans and advances to customers grew by 7 percent reaching KD 4.3 billion.

Non-performing Assets ratio net of collateral dropped to 1 percent with coverage ratio net of collaterals reaching 407 percent up from 332 percent in 2015. Basel 3 Capital Adequacy Ratio stands at 16.7 percent at the end of December 31, 2016.

Highlighting the positive performance of Burgan Bank Group in 2016, Burgan Bank's Chairman, Majed Essa Al-Ajeel said: "The solid performance in 2016 is merely a reflection of the strong strategic intent of building throughout the last 6 years a resilient business model that has enabled Burgan Bank to respond swiftly to headwinds stemming from the volatilities of

exchange rates, financial markets and geopolitical pressures."

Eduardo Eguren, Burgan Bank's Group Chief Executive Officer noted that 2016 was a remarkable year on the strategic level for Burgan Bank and said: "The group continued to reap the benefits of its resilient business model. Our growth inertia momentum was preserved as we continued to grow faster than the market without sacrificing pricing and risk, our capital was optimized to meet regulatory requirements under Basel 3 without the need to undertake a dilutive capital hike, we identified innovative opportunities to expand our business through new platforms and hence continued to add new capabilities to our business model. We managed to expand on calculated growth plans, adapt to change, remain resilient to a less favorable operating environments and markets volatility."

The Shafafiyah Forum is an annual event that is held amongst Kuwait Projects Company's (KIPCO) subsidiaries, and reflects a strong corporate governance practice, which promotes corporate fairness, transparency and accountability. The forum provides an ideal platform to discuss financial reports and outlook as well as market predictions openly with shareholders.

Established in 1977, Burgan Bank is the youngest conventional Bank and second largest by assets in Kuwait, with a significant focus on the corporate and financial institutions sectors, as well as having a growing retail, and private bank customer base. Burgan Bank has majority owned subsidiaries in the MENAT region supported by one of the largest regional branch networks.

The Bank has continuously improved its performance over the years through an expanded revenue structure, diversified funding sources, and a strong capital base. The adoption of state-of-the-art services and technology has positioned it as a trendsetter in the domestic market and within the MENA region. Burgan Bank's brand has been created on a foundation of real values - of trust, commitment, excellence and progression, to remind us of the high standards to which we aspire. 'People come first' is the foundation on which its products and services are developed.



KUWAIT: Burgan Bank holds its annual general assembly meeting at KIPCO Tower yesterday.

KAMCO ANNOUNCES FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE YEAR 2016

KUWAIT: KAMCO Investment Company KSC (Public), a leading investment company with one of the largest AUMs in the region, announces its financial results for the year ending December 31, 2016. The Company recorded a net profit of KD 1,275,814, an increase of 144 percent compared with KD 523,688 for 2015. Revenue for the year stood at KD 8,293,232 with an increase of 13 percent as compared to KD 7,349,975 in 2015. KAMCO recorded earnings per share of KD 5.36 fils, a 144 percent increase compared with KD 2.20 fils for 2015.



KAMCO CEO Faisal Sarkhou

Commenting on the results, Faisal Sarkhou, Chief Executive Officer of KAMCO, said, "During the first half of 2016, we witnessed a wave of volatility that was followed by an upsurge in developments during the last quarter of the year. This was triggered by key global events such as Brexit and the US elections, both of which led to unexpected outcomes in the global equities market. The OPEC and non-OPEC oil producers' agreement to cut oil production further supported the GCC equity markets recovery during the last quarter, pulling the benchmark indices from the red and into the green."

Sarkhou added, "KAMCO's positive performance

was further supported by an upward trajectory in the capital markets witnessed primarily towards the end of 2016. The latter was complemented by the Company's prudent strategy to enhance the performance of its investment funds and its active role in the investment banking sector, particularly in the debt market, which further cemented our role as one of the leading investment firms." He reiterated that the Company will continue to implement its robust strategy with a focus on maximizing returns for its valued investors and shareholders through capitalizing on significant investment opportunities, diversify its investment portfolio with an emphasis on generating attractive risk adjusted returns and participate in key transactions and acquisitions.

Looking ahead, Sarkhou said that positive sentiments towards stable economic and geopolitical conditions are expected to lead to improvements in market indices. He pointed that regulatory bodies, specifically the Capital Markets Authority will play a momentous role in boosting market performance and investor confidence, whilst driving higher levels of professionalism.

Burgan Bank: Unique Growth story 2006 - 2016

- Distinguished performance during the last decade
- Strong growth in total assets
- High compounded annual growth rate in comparison with local peers
- Burgan Bank evolved from a local Kuwaiti bank to the most regionally-diversified Kuwaiti financial group

Increased value for shareholders

- Among the highest in return on tangible equity
- The highest in earnings per share growth
- Among the highest in revenue growth
- The best in operating efficiency

Key Highlights in 2016

- Continuation of capital optimization to adjust to Basel III and maintain growth inertia.
- Solid business performance with high adaptability to external pressures.
- Continuation of inter-group synergies.
- High focus on building new capabilities and platforms.
- Strong market performance in core market despite strong competition and regulatory complexities.

EGYPT CABINET OKAYS 2017/18 BUDGET, TARGETING 9.1% DEFICIT

CAIRO: Egypt's cabinet approved the 2017/18 budget yesterday, targeting a 9.1 percent deficit for the year, Finance Minister Amr El-Garhy said. The government expects the deficit for the current year, ending June 30, to be between 10.5 percent and 10.7 percent, against 12.2 percent last fiscal year. The 2017/18 budget targets 4.6 percent growth for the year and revenues are expected to reach 818 billion Egyptian pounds (\$45.17 billion), Garhy told a news conference after the cabinet meeting. Revenues from taxes are expected to reach 604 billion pounds, while other revenues will amount to 214 billion pounds. A statement from the Finance Ministry later stated that overall revenues will amount to 830 billion pounds.

Garhy also said interest on debt would reach 380 billion pounds, up from 304 billion pounds in the current year. Egypt is struggling to revive its economy since a 2011 uprising drove away tourists and foreign investors - two major sources of foreign currency. In November the central bank abandoned its currency peg of 8.8 per dollar in a move aimed to unlock foreign inflows and secure a \$12 billion three-year International Monetary Fund program to support the government's effort to reduce its budget deficit and balance Egypt's currency market.

Egypt successfully sold \$4 billion in Eurobonds in January, raising twice as much as it initially targeted and at lower yields than expected. Garhy said yesterday the country's financing plan for the coming year will include a return to international markets by the end of 2017 or early 2018. He said the budget would assume an oil price of \$55 per barrel, and an exchange rate of 16 pounds per dollar. Planning Minister Hala Al-Saeed said the budget will be sent to President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi and then to parliament by tomorrow, according to the constitution.

Parliament can either approve it or send it back to the government. If parliament approves the budget it will be signed into law by the president. —Reuters

VIETNAM ECONOMY Q1 GROWTH HITS 3-YEAR LOW

HANOI: Vietnam's economy grew at its slowest rate in three years during the first quarter, data showed yesterday, with Samsung's decision to slash output in response to its Note 7 fiasco dragging on the key electronics sector. The expansion of 5.1 percent on-year in January-March this year was the worst since 2014, according to General Statistics Office figures, and was well off the 6.7 percent in the previous three months. It also easily missed forecasts of 6.3 percent in a Bloomberg News survey.

State-run media in the communist country said the lacklustre growth was a sign of an "economic slowdown". "If there is no major breakthrough, it will be very difficult to reach the year-end target of 6.7 percent," GSO director Nguyen Bich Lam was quoted as saying by the state-controlled Saigon Times website. Lam blamed an 11.4 percent production drop in the mining industry-Vietnam has tin and coal mines-and tepid growth in other industrial sectors. Electronics manufacturers also produced fewer of the goods they pump out to global consumers from factories staffed by cheap Vietnamese labor. South Korean giant Samsung, which has invested heavily in Vietnam, was forced to scale back on production of smartphones in the country, Bloomberg News said, as it pulled the Galaxy Note 7 from shelves owing to exploding batteries and a chaotic recall that saw replacements also catching fire. The electronics giant's output in Vietnam fell 38 percent in the first quarter, hammering the broader electronics production sector-which accounts for almost a third of the nation's \$40 billion annual exports. —AFP



(Photo from Left) VIVA Chairman Dr. Mahmoud Ahmed Abdulrahman, VIVA CEO Eng. Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Badran and VIVA CFO Abdulaziz Abdullah Al-Qatie.

VIVA ANNOUNCES KD 40 MILLION NET PROFIT FOR 2016; REVENUES KD 279M

TELECOM COMPANY HOLDS AGM FOR YEAR ENDING 31 DECEMBER 2016

KUWAIT: VIVA held its Annual General Meeting (AGM) at the Regency Hotel yesterday, and the attendance represented 76.91 percent from the total shareholders.

The AGM approved the board of directors' report, the auditors' report and the sharia committee's report for the fiscal year ended 31 December 2016. In addition, the AGM approved financial statements and board of directors' recommendation to distribute cash dividends of 10 fils among the shareholders representing 10 percent of the capital for the fiscal year ended 31 December 2016 for the shareholders registered in the company's records on the date of the AGM.

The AGM approved the report of the Audit Committee provided by the board of directors, the report of remuneration and benefits for the board of directors and executive management for the year ending on 31 December 2016.

The AGM approved whole agenda's clauses including clause on addition to the requirements and procedures for the completion of corporate governance and its compliance.

Commenting on results, the Chairman of VIVA, Dr Mahmoud Ahmed Abdulrahman, said that "Despite the high competition witnessed in the Kuwaiti Telecom Market, VIVA was able to achieve growth in revenues, good profitability levels, generated positive return for shareholders and at the same time maintained the operational efficiency."

The growth witnessed in VIVA's revenues was a result of the approved business strategy which is known to be one

of the most developed strategy among telecom companies in Kuwait and in the region." He added that "VIVA has demonstrated its ability to achieve good level of profit despite the current hard economic conditions and strong competition witnessed in the year 2016. Telecom tariffs declined in 2016 and thus affected the profit margin of all telecom companies in Kuwait."

In 2016, VIVA was able to generate a net profit KD 40 million (earnings per share of 80 fils) compared to KD 43 million (earning per share 86 fils) in 2015. These results reveal the solid performance of the company's revenues and operations through the continued upward trend of financial and operational indicators. This reflected positively on shareholder equity base which reached KD 133 million with growth of 43 percent in 2016 from 93 million in 2015.

These results achieved by VIVA during 2016 reflect the efficient business strategy adopted by the company to achieve outstanding results in spite of the increasing competitiveness. Also, VIVA managed to achieve positive earnings for its shareholders as a result of the commitment to elevate the quality of customer service and improving the operational efficiency."

Eng. Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Badran, VIVA's CEO said: "Results of 2016 came in line with VIVA goals and ongoing ambitions to achieve an increase in its operational revenues and strengthen its leadership in the telecom market". Al-Badran added that "We have exerted great efforts in 2016 through our integrated team work to establish a

solid and strong base that insures the company's continuing successes in light of the strong competition in the Kuwaiti telecom market. VIVA has kept the revenues increasing and achieved good levels of profitability which improved the company's financial and operational efficiency. As a result, VIVA recorded revenues of KWD 279 million during FY 2016 and achieved net profit of KD 40 million (earnings per share of 80 fils) in 2016, whereas the operating profit has reached KD 44 million during the same year. On the other hand, VIVA customer base has reached 2.4 million at the end of December 2016.

Abdulaziz Abdullah Al-Qatie, VIVA's CFO, said that "VIVA's 2016 financial results reflected its ability to compete and achieve growth in revenues. VIVA was able to maintain its position as the second largest telecom operator in the Kuwaiti market in term of revenues in the telecom sector. The company managed to improve its leverage ratio which decreased from 0.78x in 2015 to 0.35x in 2016 due to its conservative financial policy. VIVA managed to sustain healthy profitability ratios despite intense competition. On the other side, Return on Assets (ROA) has reached 15 percent while return on shareholders' equity (ROE) has reached 30 percent in 2016. "We will continue our hard work in implementing our strategy to maintain our competitive edge and achieve further growth and success in the Kuwaiti telecom market through offering innovative products and services in line with the latest technology to meet our customers' needs" he added.

FARMERS SEEK INQUIRY INTO SIERRA LEONE PALM OIL DEAL

KOTUMA, Sierra Leone: Sierra Leonean farmer Bockarie Swaray was sitting on his porch one morning when he heard a deep whirring noise and jumped up to see a bulldozer fell his banana, oil palm and kola nut trees. "There was nothing I could do," he said, slumped on a plastic chair with a frown on his thin, lined face. "I just prayed to almighty God to help me."

Swaray said his 11 acres (4 hectares) of land, in Sierra Leone's southern Pujehun province, was taken to become part of a 45,000 acre (18,200 hectares) palm oil plantation run by international agro-investor Socfin. But Socfin, which runs rubber and oil plantations in six African countries, maintains it respected all terms of an agreement with the government of Sierra Leone, one of the world's poorest nations, and all acquisitions were above board.

The Luxembourg-registered company, part of the empire of the French tycoon Vincent Bollore, has been embroiled since 2011 in a feud with local landowners in the Malen chiefdom in Pujehun with landowners also fighting amongst themselves over the deal. Now farmers and charities are demanding an independent investigation into the claims made by landowners who say their com-

plaints and grievances were ignored. "With Socfin everything has been shrouded in secrecy from day one," said Joseph Rahall, director of environmental charity and advocacy group Green Scenery. A growing number of African land lease deals for mining and agribusiness have provoked tension and violence, with local communities claiming forcible eviction by foreign companies. Socfin's general manager in Sierra Leone, Philip Tonks, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation that 40 landowner representatives with community support signed an agreement to lease the land.

"When we first came in we began discussions with the paramount chief because he is the custodian of the land. Of course in the early days there was mistrust, people didn't know who we were. Five years down the line we've built up that trust," said Tonks.

"We're seen as land grabbers but it was actually all done through consent." Socfin has become the largest private employer in the West African country, employing more than 3,400 people from surrounding villages and providing extensive infrastructure projects and social services as well as jobs.

'Land is life'
But Swaray said all but one of his 14 children have dropped out of school since he lost his land in 2011 because he can no longer afford the fees. "For us, land is life," he said. "We are not educated but with the money from this land we were educating our children." The family now lives on 500,000 Leones (\$68) his daughter, Abi, 23, earns each month working as a laborer for Socfin. "If she doesn't work for them, then we don't eat," said Swaray, who is a member of the Malen Affected Land Owners Association (MALOA), which opposes Socfin's investment. Mineral-rich Sierra Leone, with iron ore, bauxite, diamonds and titanium ore, has attracted foreign investors since its civil war ended in 2002 but has no system of land titling, leaving land decisions open to corruption, experts say. A 2011 agreement, seen by the Thomson Reuters Foundation, shows the Malen chiefdom council, headed by Chief Braima Victor Sidi Kebbie, leased some land to the government for 50 years.

A 2013 agreement shows the government then sub-leased a slightly smaller parcel of land in the chiefdom to Socfin. But residents say Socfin's annual payment of \$5 per acre (\$12.50 per hectare) is not enough and argue they did not understand the lease agreement - or were coerced into signing.

Arrests
When Socfin came to survey the land in October 2011, Swaray was among around 40 protesters arrested for blocking the road. This was the first of six arrests of anti-Socfin protesters, who have been fined up to 20,000,000 Leones (\$2,720) each for "riotous behaviour", members of MALOA said. Dozens were injured in 2013 when police opened fire on a group of armed protesters and two Socfin staff were shot at during a protest in 2015. Six activists were jailed in 2016 for destroying trees belonging to Socfin. MALOA's leader, Shiaka Sama, an outspoken former member of parliament, spent three weeks behind bars in 2015 for cutting branches off Socfin's crops - charges he denies - and accused Socfin employees of trying to bribe him to back off.

Kebbie said he called a village meeting in 2011 in Sahn Malen, the main village of the chiefdom, to get consent from landowners' representatives before leasing the community's land.

"Everybody was very happy," he said, sitting watching CNN in the airy living room of his vast two-year-old home. "The company would create jobs and open up the chiefdom."

Seven out of 10 young people in Sierra Leone are unemployed, according to UN figures, and

more than half of Sierra Leone's seven million people do not have enough to eat with Pujehun ranked as one of the most food insecure parts. Others present at the meeting have different memories. Farmer James Blango remembers standing up and asking what happened if people did not want to lease or sell the land to Socfin and being told by Kebbie to move live elsewhere. Kebbie denied this.

"Those who leased their land signed for it," he said. As Kebbie had little money in 2011, Socfin said it helped him, recognizing his importance as the custodian of the land. "We bought him a car," said Tonks. "He had to move about and talk to people if there were any issues." Under the Socfin contract, each farmer received 1 million Leones (\$135) in compensation for the loss of their crops and \$2.50 a year for lease of each acre, said Tonks.

Another \$1 per acre goes to the chiefdom council, which is a local parliament, and to the district council, which can add up to some \$45,000 each for the whole plantation, Rahall said.

Tonks said he thought the deal was fair for the landowners. "There will always be some opposition, like Sama and his followers, but those are muddy waters because he has political motives," he said. —Reuters

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

ASIAN COUNTRIES

Japanese Yen	2.767
Indian Rupees	4.688
Pakistani Rupees	2.908
Sri Lankan 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 Transfer	Selling Rate
US Dollar	305.050
Canadian Dolla	228.661
Sterling Pound	384.957
Euro	333.164
Swiss Frank	303.987
Bahrain Dinar	809.090
UAE Dirhams	83.459
Qatari Riyals	84.677
Saudi Riyals	82.238
Jordanian Dinar	431.785
Egyptian Pound	16.945
Sri Lankan Rupees	2.009
Indian Rupees	4.701
Pakistani Rupees	2.909
Bangladesh Taka	3.827
Philippines Peso	6.074
Cyprus pound	166.022
Japanese Yen	3.736
Syrian Pound	2.423

Nepalese Rupees	3.915
Malaysian Ringgit	69.880
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	44.795
Thai Bhat	9.819
Turkish Lira	84.986

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY

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
Morocco 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

AUB APPROVES DISTRIBUTION OF 18% CASH, 10% BONUS SHARES

KUWAIT: Ahli United Bank B.S.C has yesterday held its Annual General Meeting and its Extraordinary General Meeting at the Bank's headquarters in Seef District, Kingdom of Bahrain. The meetings were presided over by AUB's Chairman Hamad Al-Humaidhi and were attended by shareholders representing 80.57 percent of Bank's shares.

The AUB AGM approved the distribution of a cash dividend of 18 percent, amounting to \$ 4.5 cents per share (similar to fiscal 2015) and totaling \$ 309.1 million, and an increased 10 percent bonus share issue (ten shares per 100 ordinary shares) to shareholders registered as of yesterday.

AUB's shareholders have also agreed the appointment of David Hodgkinson as an expert independent director to the Board. Hodgkinson enjoyed a longstanding and prestigious career in international and regional banking, mostly with the HSBC group where he held a number of senior positions; including Group Managing Director & Chief Operating Officer and Chairman & Chief Executive of HSBC Bank Middle East Limited. At their Extraordinary General Meeting held on the same day,



AUB's shareholders have voted to increase the Bank's authorized capital from \$2 billion to \$2.5 billion divided into 10 billion shares of US 25 cents par value each to provide room for future capital increases. They also resolved to extend by two years their standing authorization for the Board of Directors to decide on the timing, pricing and terms

of the issuance of up to \$ 4 billion in bonds, loans or other similar subordinated financial instruments, as necessary to support the growth plans of the Bank.

Reporting to shareholders, Chairman Al-Humaidhi said: "Despite the continuing economic and security challenges in some of our key operating markets, I am pleased to

report another excellent performance in 2016. Consolidated net profit grew by 6.2 percent to \$ 570.6 million, on the back of sustained strong and broad-based earnings momentum, with total operating income increasing by 5.2 percent to \$ 1,149.0 million for 2016."

"In March 2016, the AUB Group launched

its banking operations in the Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC), UAE through incorporating Ahli United Bank Limited (AUBL), a 100 percent subsidiary of AUB. This launch, pursuant to a Category 1 license granted by the Dubai Financial Services Authority (DFSA), enables AUB Group to offer corporate banking, private banking, wealth management, trade finance, treasury and cross-border financial products and services to clients based in the UAE as well as in the wider Middle East region. The expansion into the UAE market is in line with AUB Group's strategy to develop integrated banking presences in all the Gulf markets and to act as a preferred regional intermediary for its clients particularly in terms of arranging their cross border banking needs".

"We are also very pleased that AUB was named 'Bank of the Year, Middle East, 2016' for the second time by The Banker magazine, a subsidiary of the UK-based Financial Times Group, in recognition of the Bank's strong financials as well as of the wide range of initiatives it undertakes across the region".

OPEC COMPLIANCE WITH OIL CURBS RISES IN MARCH

LONDON/DUBAI: OPEC oil output is likely to fall for a third straight month in March, a Reuters survey found yesterday, as the United Arab Emirates made progress in trimming supplies while maintenance and unrest cut production in exempt nations Nigeria and Libya. The reduction by the UAE has helped boost OPEC compliance this month with its production-cutting deal to 95 percent, up from an initial February estimate of 94 percent and a record high, according to Reuters surveys. The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries pledged to reduce output by about 1.2 million barrels per day (bpd) from Jan. 1 - the first accord on supply curbs since 2008. Non-OPEC countries pledged to cut about half as much.

OPEC wants to end a glut that is keeping oil below \$52 a barrel, half the level of mid-2014. But stocks are still high despite strong OPEC compliance, boosting expectations that the group will seek to prolong the agreement. "OPEC is now facing the prospect of falling short of its objective," said Stephen Brennock of oil broker PVM. "Bulging global oil stockpiles will not draw down to the five-year average unless OPEC-led cuts are extended."

Compliance of 95 percent is higher than OPEC achieved in its last cut in 2009, Reuters surveys show. Analysts including those at the International Energy Agency have put adherence in 2017 even higher, with the IEA calling it a record.

March's biggest reduction came from the UAE, which was slower than Kuwait and Saudi Arabia to trim supply. Output is lower this month because more cuts have been implemented and due to planned maintenance, industry sources say. After limited reductions earlier in 2017, UAE officials and industry

sources have said the country would improve average compliance during the six-month duration of the supply cut. The Reuters survey showed Saudi Arabia's output rose slightly in March from a large reduction in February. Even with March's increase, the total curb achieved is 564,000 bpd, well above the target cut of 486,000 bpd.

As a result, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and as of this month, the UAE, compensated for the weaker adherence of other members, including Algeria, Ecuador, Gabon and Venezuela.

Iraq has boosted compliance too, the survey found, with exports from northern and southern ports falling. A supertanker collided with a berth at Basra oil terminal in late March, although this did not affect shipments significantly. Iran's production rose slightly. Tehran was allowed a small increase in output under the OPEC agreement.

Lower output in Nigeria and Libya, which are exempt from the curbs, helped bring overall OPEC production down. Nigerian production fell partly because of planned maintenance at the Bonga field. A recovery in Libya ran into a setback after armed protests blocked output from two fields. OPEC announced a production target of 32.5 million bpd at its Nov. 30 meeting, which was based on low figures for Libya and Nigeria and included Indonesia, which has since left the group.

The Libyan and Nigerian reductions mean OPEC output in March has averaged 32.01 million bpd, about 260,000 bpd above its supply target adjusted to remove Indonesia. The Reuters survey is based on shipping data provided by external sources, Thomson Reuters flows data, and information provided by sources at oil companies, OPEC and consulting firms. — Reuters



ATHRA REAL ESTATE UNVEILS BLUE WATER MALL PROJECT

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: Athra Real Estate Company held a press conference at its premises yesterday to unveil its upcoming real estate project Blue Water Mall. "The mall project is first of its kind in our business in commercial development that offers integrated services in an area of 5,000 sq meters in the Sabah Al-Ahmed Marine City. "The Blue Water Mall is situated next to numerous existing projects in the Sabah Al-Ahmed Marine City which is the first largest project being developed in the private sector."

"Inspired by the guidance of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to transform Kuwait into a financial and business hub, we are working to accelerate the growth of the economy, promote the role of the private sector in supporting economic development and achieve the goal set by the political leadership," said Executive Vice President and Spokesperson of Athra, Faisal Al-Kandari.

"The project is first of its kind in the region in terms of size of the investment, unique services of the project management and operations. Buyers can go for the ownership (freehold) of commercial units where the project will bring about an outstanding shift in real estate investment which will indeed be guaranteed and a high-yield with a secure market value that will increase over time and will be proved by the assessment of market prices in the region's real estate sector," he added.

Kandari revealed that 45 percent of the project was already sold. He added that the Blue Water Mall project costs KD 30 million. The rumor about Kuwait real estate market having no turnout is not true and is intended to promote real estate outside Kuwait. The prices will start from KD 42,000 for 30 meters which considers a reasonable price to encourage small and medium business. The commercial units within the Blue Water Mall are of an investment value for individuals and companies alike as well as for investment funds due to the virtually strategic

location of the project and its unique design. The project features commercial units of various sizes for various business activities, ensuring feasible investment returns on a continuous basis within the real estate investment market.

He noted that Sabah Al-Ahmad Maritime City is a unique achievement not only at the regional level but also at a global level. This achievement is not limited to the building of an integrated city on a land whose soil was not considered suitable

Families are going to enjoy their time at the Blue Water Mall. The basement of the commercial market has been designed to feature in the center lounge a roller-skate area which has been designed by world-class designers with state of the art safety specifications to ensure enjoyment in safety at all times. In addition, the sand playground area, with specialist medical design, is provided to develop a child's cleverness, perception and creativity. It is resistant to bacteria and



for building, for what makes it exceptional is the use of the latest in modern city building in terms of planning and construction of an all-inclusive infrastructure, facilities and services at the highest levels, and which provides unique services. "The Blue Water Mall project also aims at creating new jobs where we have now 80 percent Kuwaitis working in several positions," he added. The mall stands on two plots of land overlooking a multi-level car park. The project manager provides security and monitoring services round the clock, cleaning services for the common areas and corridors in all floors of the buildings.

does not cause leave any traces on children's clothes and bodies. It is ideal for group play and having the best of times.

Athra Real Estate is a Kuwaiti company specialized in the real estate and investment sector. It was founded in 2016. The company was founded by a group of businessmen specialized in the real estate sector with great experience in this field. The company aims on becoming a leading company at the local, regional and international levels by focusing on various investment schemes and offering innovative real estate projects that meet the aspirations of investors.

BRITAIN AT RISK OF LEAVING EU ON 'WTO TERMS'

GENEVA: Failure to strike a trade deal with the European Union by a two-year deadline would force Britain to adopt World Trade Organization arrangements, bringing with it a host of new negotiations and complications. In a nutshell, Britain would have to treat everyone the same, whether it wanted to or not, from Russian exporters to Brazilian lawyers and US advertising firms. And that includes its former colleagues, suppliers and clients in the EU.

The British government sees the WTO as a default fall-back position if it cannot forge a new deal with the EU that would allow business ties to continue. But time is short, the negotiations are complex, and British Prime Minister Theresa May has said no deal would be better than a bad deal.

Adopting WTO rules, however, would open a whole new range of complexities. For one thing, countries now at a relative distance like China, Russia and India would suddenly be able to take legal action with a threat of sanctions-should Britain allow some of its firms to keep trading with the EU as they have been.

There would be a legal free-for-all, although the open skies deals underlying aviation between Britain and the continent would have vanished, while the lawyers trying to sort it out might encounter unaccustomed restrictions on their right to work seamlessly across the European continent.

The prime reason is that without a new EU trade deal, Britain would not be allowed to be more open to the EU than it is to other World Trade Organization members. The WTO's "most favoured nation" principle means offering the same deal to all comers, not only in terms of tariffs on imported goods but also in cross-border services such as insurance, telecoms, engineering and transport.

"The UK would need to treat everybody the same," said Ingo Borchert, an economist at Sussex University's UK Trade Policy Observatory. Only a new WTO-approved trade deal would remove the requirement for "most favoured nation". "If they don't get the deal then the UK is free to implement its trade policy. Whatever that is, it could be very restricted or it could be very liberal, but whatever it is, it would need to be extended in the same way to French and American and Indian firms."

The British-or at least the Brexiters among them-are bullish about getting a deal. "As it happens we would be perfectly

okay if we weren't able to get an agreement but I'm sure that we will," Foreign Minister Boris Johnson told Britain's ITV earlier this month.

And the government says it has no intention of not getting an EU deal. "We have been clear that we will pursue a bold and ambitious trade agreement with the European Union-giving British companies the maximum freedom to trade with and operate within European markets, and letting European businesses do the same in Britain," a government spokeswoman said.

But many trade experts think the challenge of getting unanimity between the British and the other 27 members means "no deal" is the most likely outcome-especially as the Europeans want to first conclude discussions on Britain's leaving terms before they even get around to negotiating future arrangements.

"We are definitely heading towards the WTO option," Richard Baldwin, professor of international economics at Geneva's Graduate Institute and an expert on trade agreements, told an audience of academics and trade diplomats last week in Geneva.

Bold and ambitious

Britain's post-Brexit WTO membership terms have yet to be finalized because it has to agree its own "schedules", a process that may require negotiations all its out outside of the Brexit ones.

A one-size-fits-all global trade policy would be much less open than the terms of trade Britain now has within the EU-comprising around 44 percent of British exports. "No agreement means there would be no legal basis for continued preferential treatment among us," said David Hartridge, senior WTO counsellor at White & Case and a former head of the WTO's services division.

Meanwhile, some of the biggest potential shocks are in sectors that have no WTO safety net, such as aviation where Britain would have to fall back to its old pre-EU bilateral air service agreements.

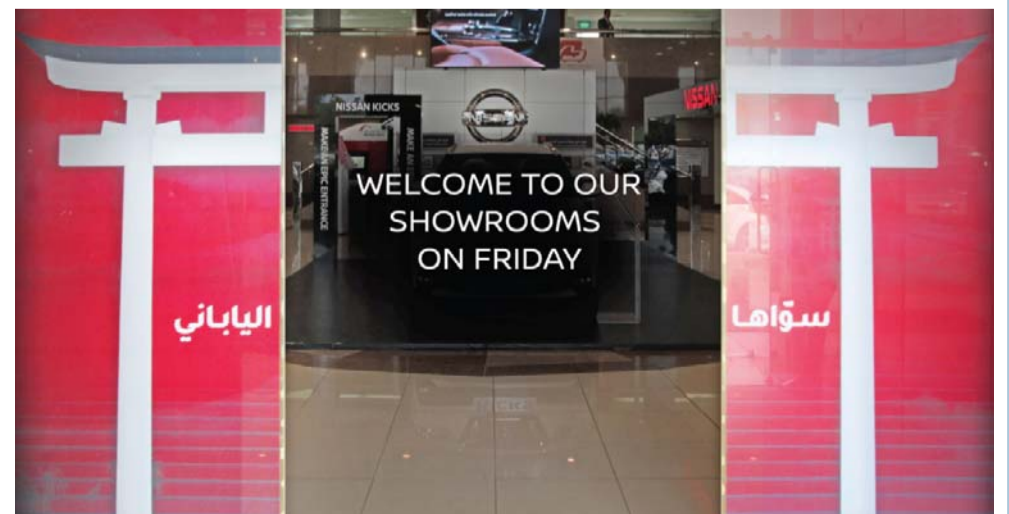
The WTO change would also not only affect Britain's trade with the EU, but also all the countries with which the EU has agreements on trade in services, such as South Korea, Mexico and Chile. Britain could continue to recognize certain EU qualifications and licenses, but it would also have to recognise equivalent standards of other WTO members. — Reuters

NISSAN AL-BABTAIN WELCOMES YOU TOMORROW

KUWAIT: Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al-Babtain Company (AABC), the authorized dealer of Nissan vehicles in the State of Kuwait is open tomorrow (31st of March 2017) so you can make use of the last day for its great Japanese prices offer.

In keeping with current demand for people's favorite designs. Nissan Al-Babtain Al-Rai Showroom welcomes customers tomorrow with special Japanese prices. The offers include Nissan Sunny starting from 3,099, Nissan Altima starting from KD 5,199, Nissan Maxima starting from KD 7,350, Nissan X-trail starting from KD 5,999, Nissan Pathfinder starting from KD 7,750 and the Patrol Platinum FES starting from KD 16,450. Nissan Al-Babtain welcomes all their customers tomorrow in their Al-Rai showroom and Al-Ahmedi Showroom from 2:00 pm till 08:00 pm.

Influenced by the brand's roots and owing to its strong heritage of masterful leadership, the brand continues to exceed customer expectations by presenting innovative opportunities to own the most universally admired brand in Kuwait. The 'way of the warrior' serves as a unique philosophy for Nissan Al-Babtain to excel with a competitive edge and drive



more customers to be part of a lasting legacy. Nissan Al-Babtain is known for its persistent creativity and immeasurable design concepts that preserve brand integrity and steer its customers towards enjoying a premium experience on every level. Intended for the people of

Kuwait to maximize on this window of opportunity, Nissan Al-Babtain urges everyone to speedily take advantage of the special prices. Visit Nissan Al-Babtain Al-Rai showroom this Friday and appreciate the world of difference of driving inside of a globally esteemed brand.

STOCKS SLIP, STERLING FLAT AS BREXIT BECOMES REAL

LONDON: European shares drifted lower yesterday, while sterling battled back from a one-week low and regained its composure amid the drama of Britain formally triggering its exit process from the European Union. The pound was the biggest loser on major currency markets as European trading got underway. But it clawed back almost all its losses after a draft EU document made no mention of the possibility that the two sides will fail to strike a deal.

"What is priced in at the moment is a hard Brexit, so if there is something being constructed by the EU that is a little softer, that would send sterling sharply higher," said Mizuho's head of hedge fund FX sales, Neil Jones. Prime Minister Theresa May will notify EU Council

President Donald Tusk in a letter that Britain really is quitting the bloc it joined in 1973, pitching the United Kingdom into the unknown and triggering years of uncertain negotiations.

The start of the formal Brexit process comes a day after the Scottish Parliament backed a bid to hold a second independence referendum that could break up the UK, adding another layer of uncertainty for investors to navigate.

The longer term picture may be a more volatile one. "Sterling will be incredibly sensitive to negotiations and will offer a clear gauge of how things are panning out. We could see it move lower still if negotiations take a sour turn - \$1.10 is feasible," said Neil Wilson, senior markets analyst at ETX Capital.

Sterling hit a one-week low of \$1.2378 earlier, but was last trading down 0.1 percent against the dollar at \$1.2432. Elsewhere in currencies, the euro was down a fifth of one percent at \$1.0793 and the dollar was down slightly against the yen at 111 yen.

The dollar bounced from 4-month lows as a top Federal Reserve official talked of more rate hikes to come. Fed Vice Chairman Stanley Fischer, one of the more influential policymakers with markets, said two more rate increases this year seemed "about right".

Wall Street recovery

In stocks the leading index of 300 European shares gave up all its early gains to trade down

0.1 percent at 1,486 points, while Germany's DAX halved its gains to trade up 0.3 percent. Britain's FTSE 100 fell 0.2 percent as sterling bounced back from its one-week low. MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan rose 0.3 percent and back toward recent 21-month peaks, while Japan's Nikkei added 0.1 percent. The Dow Jones snapped an eight-day losing streak on Tuesday, its longest run of losses since 2011, in part as a survey showed consumer confidence surged to a more than 16-year high.

S&P 500 futures pointed to a flat open on Wall Street. "Economic fundamentals still remain exceedingly sound here in 2017 and you do not need Trump's pro-

growth fiscal agenda for this to be one of the best years for growth since the recovery started," argued Tom Porcelli, chief US economist at RBC Capital Markets. "We still think tax reform happens, but you are better off thinking about the timing as an end of year event at best."

In commodity markets, oil prices gained after a severe disruption to Libyan oil supplies and as officials suggested the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and other producers could extend output cuts to the end of the year. US crude CL1 added 0.4 percent to \$48.57 a barrel, while Brent rose 0.5 percent to \$51.57. Spot gold was little changed at \$1,251 an ounce. —Reuters

Daily Kuwait Stock Exchange Report																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																						
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<td>1,791,530</td> <td>90,824</td> <td>73</td> <td>961.22</td> <td>▼ -10.14</td> </tr> <tr> <td>KFOUC</td> <td>315</td> <td>305</td> <td>41,000</td> <td>12,830</td> <td>4</td> <td>315</td> <td>▲ 0.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>BPCC</td> <td>580</td> <td>560</td> <td>156,148</td> <td>89,005</td> <td>7</td> <td>580</td> <td>▲ 10.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>ALKOUT</td> <td>0.0</td> <td>0.0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>700</td> <td>▲ 0.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>ALQURAIN</td> <td>345</td> <td>340</td> <td>198,197</td> <td>67,445</td> <td>20</td> <td>340</td> <td>▼ -5.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Basic Materials</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>396,345</td> <td>169,280</td> <td>31</td> <td>1329.00</td> <td>▼ -1.97</td> </tr> <tr> <td>KCEM</td> <td>520</td> <td>510</td> <td>30,984</td> <td>15,803</td> <td>3</td> <td>520</td> <td>▲ 10.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CABLE</td> <td>485</td> <td>475</td> <td>50,000</td> <td>24,075</td> <td>9</td> <td>485</td> <td>▲ 10.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SHIP</td> <td>222</td> <td>212</td> <td>848,230</td> <td>184,391</td> <td>65</td> <td>222</td> <td>▲ 0.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PCEM</td> <td>1,000</td> <td>990</td> <td>123,150</td> <td>122,689</td> <td>21</td> <td>990</td> <td>▼ -90.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PAPER</td> <td>405</td> <td>395</td> <td>19,500</td> <td>7,813</td> <td>6</td> <td>405</td> <td>▲ 15.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>MRC</td> <td>0.0</td> <td>0.0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>76</td> <td>▲ 0.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>ACICO</td> <td>305</td> <td>300</td> <td>284,520</td> <td>85,359</td> <td>8</td> <td>305</td> <td>▲ 0.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>HCC</td> <td>0.0</td> <td>0.0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>216</td> <td>▲ 0.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>KBMMK</td> <td>122</td> <td>102</td> <td>6,210</td> <td>699</td> <td>8</td> <td>118</td> <td>▲ 6.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>NICBM</td> <td>216</td> <td>216</td> <td>2,000</td> <td>432</td> <td>1</td> <td>216</td> <td>▲ 0.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>EQUIPMENT</td> <td>59</td> <td>56</td> <td>1,001,600</td> <td>57,229</td> <td>27</td> <td>58</td> <td>▼ -1.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>NCCI</td> <td>120</td> <td>120</td> <td>1,487</td> <td>178</td> <td>6</td> <td>120</td> <td>▲ 10.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>GYPSUM</td> <td>95</td> <td>95</td> <td>100</td> <td>10</td> <td>1</td> <td>95</td> <td>▲ 0.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SALBOOKH</td> <td>73</td> <td>67</td> <td>2,383,398</td> <td>169,782</td> <td>82</td> <td>71</td> <td>▼ -1.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>AGLTY</td> <td>650</td> <td>620</td> <td>3,875,626</td> <td>2,453,811</td> <td>76</td> <td>630</td> <td>▼ -10.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>EDU</td> <td>275</td> <td>275</td> <td>2,000</td> <td>550</td> <td>1</td> <td>275</td> <td>▼ -5.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CLEANING</td> <td>53</td> <td>51</td> <td>855,020</td> <td>44,212</td> <td>29</td> <td>51</td> <td>▲ 0.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>KGL</td> <td>70</td> <td>66</td> <td>1,017,600</td> <td>69,746</td> <td>49</td> <td>68</td> <td>▲ 1.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>KPCP</td> <td>174</td> <td>160</td> <td>37,150</td> <td>6,014</td> <td>4</td> <td>174</td> <td>▲ 10.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>HUMANSOFT</td> <td>3,100</td> <td>3,100</td> <td>63,367</td> <td>196,438</td> <td>3</td> <td>3,100</td> <td>▲ 0.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>NAFAS</td> <td>0.0</td> <td>0.0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>240</td> <td>▲ 0.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>GFC</td> <td>69</td> <td>60</td> <td>752,048</td> <td>47,077</td> <td>78</td> <td>65</td> <td>▲ 0.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>MAYADEEN</td> <td>29.5</td> <td>28.5</td> <td>649,232</td> <td>18,679</td> <td>23</td> <td>28.5</td> <td>▼ -1.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CGC</td> <td>520</td> <td>500</td> <td>553,010</td> <td>277,445</td> <td>26</td> <td>510</td> <td>▼ -10.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>MTCC</td> <td>0.0</td> <td>0.0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>56</td> <td>▲ 0.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>UPAC</td> <td>770</td> <td>770</td> <td>401</td> <td>309</td> <td>2</td> <td>770</td> <td>▼ -20.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>ALAFCO</td> <td>242</td> <td>242</td> <td>75,900</td> <td>18,368</td> <td>3</td> <td>242</td> <td>▲ 2.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>MUBARRAD</td> <td>81</td> <td>80</td> <td>2,613,227</td> <td>209,118</td> <td>69</td> <td>81</td> <td>▲ 1.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>LOGISTICS</td> <td>77</td> <td>74</td> <td>4,364,764</td> <td>330,078</td> <td>115</td> <td>75</td> <td>▲ 1.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SCEM</td> <td>90</td> <td>90</td> <td>24,820</td> <td>2,234</td> <td>2</td> <td>90</td> <td>▲ 1.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>GCEM</td> <td>88</td> <td>88</td> <td>387,100</td> <td>34,065</td> <td>16</td> <td>88</td> <td>▲ 0.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>QIC</td> <td>0.0</td> <td>0.0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>86</td> <td>▲ 0.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>FCEM</td> <td>92</td> <td>90</td> <td>160,000</td> <td>14,454</td> <td>10</td> <td>91</td> <td>▲ 1.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>RKWC</td> <td>0.0</td> <td>0.0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>190</td> <td>▲ 0.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SPEC</td> <td>91</td> <td>88</td> <td>586,839</td> <td>51,763</td> <td>36</td> <td>88</td> <td>▼ -3.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Industrials</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>20,769,283</td> <td>4,442,820</td> <td>779</td> <td>1763.88</td> <td>▲ 31.32</td> </tr> <tr> <td>KSH</td> <td>0.0</td> <td>0.0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>188</td> <td>▲ 0.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>NSH</td> <td>50</td> <td>50</td> <td>30,000</td> <td>1,500</td> <td>1</td> <td>50</td> <td>▼ -5.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PAPCO</td> <td>0.0</td> <td>0.0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>97</td> <td>▲ 0.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CATTL</td> <td>214</td> <td>214</td> <td>14,000</td> <td>2,996</td> <td>1</td> <td>214</td> <td>▼ -2.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>DANAH</td> <td>98</td> <td>96</td> <td>4,841,917</td> <td>465,762</td> <td>156</td> <td>96</td> <td>▼ -6.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>FOOD</td> <td>0.0</td> <td>0.0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>2,400</td> <td>▲ 0.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Consumer Goods</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>4,885,917</td> <td>470,258</td> <td>158</td> <td>1134.63</td> <td>▼ -17.28</td> </tr> <tr> <td>MHC</td> <td>0.0</td> <td>0.0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>370</td> <td>▲ 0.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>ATC</td> <td>970</td> <td>870</td> <td>50</td> <td>45</td> <td>4</td> <td>970</td> <td>▲ 50</td> </tr> <tr> <td>YIACO</td> <td>0.0</td> <td>0.0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>275</td> <td>▲ 0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Health Care</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>50</td> <td>45</td> <td>4</td> <td>1491.51</td> <td>▲ 21.21</td> </tr> <tr> <td>KCIN</td> <td>1,380</td> <td>1,280</td> <td>418</td> <td>535</td> <td>3</td> <td>1,380</td> <td>▲ 0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>KHOT</td> <td>0.0</td> <td>0.0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>250</td> <td>▲ 0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SULTAN</td> <td>0.0</td> <td>0.0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>67</td> <td>▲ 0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CABLETV</td> <td>0.0</td> <td>0.0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>22.5</td> <td>▲ 0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>EVAS</td> <td>395</td> <td>395</td> <td>413</td> <td>163</td> <td>1</td> <td>395</td> <td>▼ -5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>IFAHR</td> <td>0.0</td> <td>0.0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>182</td> <td>▲ 0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>OULAFUEL</td> <td>132</td> <td>128</td> <td>310,732</td> <td>40,663</td> <td>33</td> <td>132</td> <td>▲ 0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>MUNTAZAHAT</td> <td>87</td> <td>86</td> <td>115,001</td> <td>9,905</td> <td>5</td> <td>87</td> <td>▲ 1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>JAZEERA</td> <td>580</td> <td>570</td> <td>53,000</td> <td>30,260</td> <td>5</td> <td>580</td> <td>▼ -10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SOOR</td> <td>132</td> <td>130</td> <td>157,750</td> <td>20,708</td> <td>15</td> <td>130</td> <td>▲ 0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>FUTUREKID</td> <td>0.0</td> <td>0.0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>124</td> <td>▲ 0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>ALRAI</td> <td>178</td> <td>174</td> <td>380,172</td> <td>67,301</td> <td>22</td> <td>174</td> <td>▼ -6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>MZAH</td> <td>56</td> <td>54</td> <td>550,710</td> <td>30,093</td> <td>15</td> <td>55</td> <td>▼ -1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Meezan</td> <td>1,020</td> <td>1,020</td> <td>147,206</td> <td>150,150</td> <td>3</td> <td>1,020</td> <td>▲ 0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Consumer Services</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1,715,402</td> <td>349,778</td> <td>102</td> <td>935.98</td> <td>▼ -6.18</td> </tr> <tr> <td>ZAIN</td> <td>460</td> <td>445</td> <td>2,515,116</td> <td>1,137,135</td> <td>85</td> <td>450</td> <td>▼ -5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>OOREDOO</td> <td>0.0</td> <td>0.0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>1,120</td> <td>▲ 0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>HITSTELEC</td> <td>51</td> <td>47.5</td> <td>11,562,937</td> <td>564,798</td> <td>187</td> <td>47.5</td> <td>▼ -3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>VIVA</td> <td>920</td> <td>860</td> <td>252,461</td> <td>224,848</td> <td>64</td> <td>920</td> <td>▲ 30</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Telecommunications</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>14,330,514</td> <td>1,926,782</td> <td>336</td> <td>651.41</td> <td>▲ 2.57</td> </tr> <tr> <td>NBK</td> <td>670</td> <td>650</td> <td>1,378,579</td> <td>909,835</td> <td>70</td> <td>650</td> <td>▼ -20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>GBK</td> <td>250</td> <td>246</td> <td>1,046,501</td> <td>259,461</td> <td>26</td> <td>246</td> <td>▼ 4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CBK</td> <td>455</td> <td>435</td> <td>851</td> <td>374</td> <td>2</td> <td>455</td> <td>▲ 5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>ABK</td> <td>0.0</td> <td>0.0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>305</td> <td>▲ 0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>ALMUTAHED</td> <td>465</td> <td>460</td> <td>173,701</td> <td>80,613</td> <td>20</td> <td>465</td> <td>▲ 5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>KIB</td> <td>242</td> <td>236</td> <td>2,211,263</td> <td>528,960</td> <td>20</td> <td>236</td> <td>▼ -6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>BURG</td> <td>330</td> <td>325</td> <td>182,771</td> <td>60,292</td> <td>12</td> <td>330</td> <td>▼ -5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>KFIN</td> <td>600</td> <td>580</td> <td>5,468,905</td> <td>3,231,615</td> <td>154</td> <td>580</td> <td>▼ -10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>BOUYARI</td> <td>410</td> <td>405</td> <td>937,456</td> <td>379,696</td> <td>53</td> <td>410</td> <td>▲ 5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>AUB</td> <td>260</td> <td>250</td> <td>10,240,497</td> <td>2,580,482</td> <td>116</td> <td>250</td> <td>▼ -10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>ITHMR</td> <td>51</td> <td>49.0</td> <td>6,717,931</td> <td>332,781</td> <td>96</td> <td>49.0</td> <td>▼ -2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>WARBANK</td> <td>260</td> <td>255</td> <td>635,624</td> <td>165,009</td> <td>64</td> <td>255</td> <td>▼ -5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Banks</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>28,994,079</td> <td>8,529,117</td> <td>633</td> <td>948.47</td> <td>▼ -17.28</td> </tr> <tr> <td>KINS</td> <td>0.0</td> <td>0.0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>265</td> <td>▲ 0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>GINS</td> <td>0.0</td> <td>0.0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>550</td> <td>▲ 0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>AINS</td> <td>0.0</td> <td>0.0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>495</td> <td>▲ 0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>WINS</td> <td>102</td> <td>102</td> <td>20,000</td> <td>2,040</td> <td>1</td> <td>102</td> <td>▲ 2.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>KUWAITRE</td> <td>192</td> <td>192</td> <td>37</td> <td>7</td> <td>1</td> <td>192</td> <td>▲ 0.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>FTI</td> <td>62</td> <td>59</td> <td>22,142</td> <td>1,339</td> <td>12</td> <td>61</td> <td>▲ 1.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>WETHAQ</td> <td>0.0</td> <td>0.0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>85</td> <td>▲ 0.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>BKIKWT</td> <td>0.0</td> <td>0.0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>355</td> <td>▲ 0.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Insurance</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>42,179</td> <td>3,386</td> <td>14</td> <td>1089.60</td> <td>▲ 4.20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SOKOUK</td> <td>48.5</td> <td>46.0</td> <td>505,9985</td> <td>239,927</td> <td>112</td> <td>47.0</td> <td>▼ -0.5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>KRE</td> <td>69</td> <td>66</td> <td>10,371,317</td> <td>693,881</td> <td>82</td> <td>66</td> <td>▼ -3.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>URC</td> <td>100</td> <td>97</td> <td>602,834</td> <td>59,339</td> <td>22</td> <td>99</td> <td>▲ 2.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>NRE</td> <td>104</td> <td>99</td> <td>1,775,230</td> <td>182,499</td> <td>43</td> <td>102</td> <td>▼ -4.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SRE</td> <td>375</td> <td>365</td> <td>50,500</td> <td>18,438</td> <td>3</td> <td>375</td> <td>▲ 5.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TAM</td> <td>0.0</td> <td>0.0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>445</td> <td>▲ 0.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>AREEC</td> <td>0.0</td> <td>0.0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>176</td> <td>▲ 0.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>MASSALEH</td> <td>49.5</td> <td>48.0</td> <td>8,050</td> <td>386</td> <td>2</td> <td>49.5</td> <td>▼ -0.5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>ARABREC</td> <td>41.0</td> <td>39.0</td> <td>5,306,662</td> <td>210,439</td> <td>118</td> <td>39.0</td> <td>▼ -2.5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>ERESCO</td> <td>43.5</td> <td>42.5</td> <td>680,401</td> <td>28,963</td> <td>17</td> <td>43.0</td> <td>▼ -0.5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>MABANEE</td> <td>840</td> <td>830</td> <td>53,851</td> <td>44,861</td> <td>7</td> <td>840</td> <td>▲ 10.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>INJAZZAT</td> <td>95</td> <td>94</td> <td>98,000</td> <td>9,225</td> <td>7</td> <td>94</td> <td>▼ -2.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>INVESTORS</td> <td>28.5</td> <td>27.5</td> <td>3,320,795</td> <td>93,032</td> <td>66</td> <td>28.0</td> <td>▼ -0.5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>IRC</td> <td>38.5</td> <td>36.5</td> <td>617,343</td> <td>22,797</td> <td>23</td> <td>36.5</td> <td>▼ -1.5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>ALTIJARIA</td> <td>79</td> <td>79</td> <td>145,000</td> <td>11,455</td> <td>4</td> <td>79</td> <td>▼ -1.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SANAM</td> <td>57</td> <td>53</td> <td>10,001</td> <td>530</td> <td>2</td> <td>57</td> <td>▼ -1.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>AAYANRE</td> <td>94</td> <td>91</td> <td>210,531</td> <td>19,230</td> <td>8</td> <td>93</td> <td>▼ -1.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>ADAR</td> <td>0.0</td> <td>0.0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>80</td> <td>▲ 0.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>ALAGARIA</td> <td>40.0</td> <td>39.0</td> <td>255,007</td> <td>9,985</td> <td>14</td> <td>39.5</td> <td>▼ -0.5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>MAZAYA</td> <td>126</td> <td>120</td> <td>5,171,143</td> <td>630,807</td> <td>98</td> <td>120</td> <td>▼ -10.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>ADNC</td> <td>0.0</td> <td>0.0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>11.0</td> <td>▲ 0.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>THEMAR</td> <td>94</td> <td>94</td> <td>1,000</td> <td>94</td> <td>1</td> <td>94</td> <td>▲ 4.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TLIARA</td> <td>0.0</td> <td>0.0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>62</td> <td>▲ 0.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TAMEER</td> <td>28.0</td> <td>35.5</td> <td>6,550,583</td> <td>240,416</td> <td>146</td> <td>36.0</td> <td>▼ -2.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>ARKAN</td> <td>83</td> <td>83</td> <td>400,000</td> <td>33,200</td> <td>3</td> <td>83</td> <td>▲ 0.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>ARGAN</td> <td>0.0</td> <td>0.0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>182</td> <td>▲ 0.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>ABYAR</td> <td>28.5</td> <td>26.5</td> <td>17,583,822</td> <td>479,886</td> <td>225</td> <td>27.0</td> <td>▼ -1.5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>MUNSHA</td></tr></tbody></table>							Trades							Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last	Change	MARIN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	64	0.0	IPG	410	410	500	205	1	410	▲ 10.0	NAPESCO	1,220	1,200	3,335	4,026	3	1,200	▼ -20.0	ENERGYH	38.0	37.0	33,877	1,259	10	37.5	▲ 0.5	GPI	48.5	47.5	1,721,818	82,550	54	48.0	▼ -0.5	ABAR	91	86	32,000	2,784	5	86	▼ -2.0	Oil & Gas			1,791,530	90,824	73	961.22	▼ -10.14	KFOUC	315	305	41,000	12,830	4	315	▲ 0.0	BPCC	580	560	156,148	89,005	7	580	▲ 10.0	ALKOUT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	700	▲ 0.0	ALQURAIN	345	340	198,197	67,445	20	340	▼ -5.0	Basic Materials			396,345	169,280	31	1329.00	▼ -1.97	KCEM	520	510	30,984	15,803	3	520	▲ 10.0	CABLE	485	475	50,000	24,075	9	485	▲ 10.0	SHIP	222	212	848,230	184,391	65	222	▲ 0.0	PCEM	1,000	990	123,150	122,689	21	990	▼ -90.0	PAPER	405	395	19,500	7,813	6	405	▲ 15.0	MRC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	76	▲ 0.0	ACICO	305	300	284,520	85,359	8	305	▲ 0.0	HCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	216	▲ 0.0	KBMMK	122	102	6,210	699	8	118	▲ 6.0	NICBM	216	216	2,000	432	1	216	▲ 0.0	EQUIPMENT	59	56	1,001,600	57,229	27	58	▼ -1.0	NCCI	120	120	1,487	178	6	120	▲ 10.0	GYPSUM	95	95	100	10	1	95	▲ 0.0	SALBOOKH	73	67	2,383,398	169,782	82	71	▼ -1.0	AGLTY	650	620	3,875,626	2,453,811	76	630	▼ -10.0	EDU	275	275	2,000	550	1	275	▼ -5.0	CLEANING	53	51	855,020	44,212	29	51	▲ 0.0	KGL	70	66	1,017,600	69,746	49	68	▲ 1.0	KPCP	174	160	37,150	6,014	4	174	▲ 10.0	HUMANSOFT	3,100	3,100	63,367	196,438	3	3,100	▲ 0.0	NAFAS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	240	▲ 0.0	GFC	69	60	752,048	47,077	78	65	▲ 0.0	MAYADEEN	29.5	28.5	649,232	18,679	23	28.5	▼ -1.0	CGC	520	500	553,010	277,445	26	510	▼ -10.0	MTCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	56	▲ 0.0	UPAC	770	770	401	309	2	770	▼ -20.0	ALAFCO	242	242	75,900	18,368	3	242	▲ 2.0	MUBARRAD	81	80	2,613,227	209,118	69	81	▲ 1.0	LOGISTICS	77	74	4,364,764	330,078	115	75	▲ 1.0	SCEM	90	90	24,820	2,234	2	90	▲ 1.0	GCEM	88	88	387,100	34,065	16	88	▲ 0.0	QIC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	86	▲ 0.0	FCEM	92	90	160,000	14,454	10	91	▲ 1.0	RKWC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	190	▲ 0.0	SPEC	91	88	586,839	51,763	36	88	▼ -3.0	Industrials			20,769,283	4,442,820	779	1763.88	▲ 31.32	KSH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	188	▲ 0.0	NSH	50	50	30,000	1,500	1	50	▼ -5.0	PAPCO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	97	▲ 0.0	CATTL	214	214	14,000	2,996	1	214	▼ -2.0	DANAH	98	96	4,841,917	465,762	156	96	▼ -6.0	FOOD	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	2,400	▲ 0.0	Consumer Goods			4,885,917	470,258	158	1134.63	▼ -17.28	MHC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	370	▲ 0.0	ATC	970	870	50	45	4	970	▲ 50	YIACO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	275	▲ 0	Health Care			50	45	4	1491.51	▲ 21.21	KCIN	1,380	1,280	418	535	3	1,380	▲ 0	KHOT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	250	▲ 0	SULTAN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	67	▲ 0	CABLETV	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	22.5	▲ 0	EVAS	395	395	413	163	1	395	▼ -5	IFAHR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	182	▲ 0	OULAFUEL	132	128	310,732	40,663	33	132	▲ 0	MUNTAZAHAT	87	86	115,001	9,905	5	87	▲ 1	JAZEERA	580	570	53,000	30,260	5	580	▼ -10	SOOR	132	130	157,750	20,708	15	130	▲ 0	FUTUREKID	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	124	▲ 0	ALRAI	178	174	380,172	67,301	22	174	▼ -6	MZAH	56	54	550,710	30,093	15	55	▼ -1	Meezan	1,020	1,020	147,206	150,150	3	1,020	▲ 0	Consumer Services			1,715,402	349,778	102	935.98	▼ -6.18	ZAIN	460	445	2,515,116	1,137,135	85	450	▼ -5	OOREDOO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	1,120	▲ 0	HITSTELEC	51	47.5	11,562,937	564,798	187	47.5	▼ -3	VIVA	920	860	252,461	224,848	64	920	▲ 30	Telecommunications			14,330,514	1,926,782	336	651.41	▲ 2.57	NBK	670	650	1,378,579	909,835	70	650	▼ -20	GBK	250	246	1,046,501	259,461	26	246	▼ 4	CBK	455	435	851	374	2	455	▲ 5	ABK	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	305	▲ 0	ALMUTAHED	465	460	173,701	80,613	20	465	▲ 5	KIB	242	236	2,211,263	528,960	20	236	▼ -6	BURG	330	325	182,771	60,292	12	330	▼ -5	KFIN	600	580	5,468,905	3,231,615	154	580	▼ -10	BOUYARI	410	405	937,456	379,696	53	410	▲ 5	AUB	260	250	10,240,497	2,580,482	116	250	▼ -10	ITHMR	51	49.0	6,717,931	332,781	96	49.0	▼ -2	WARBANK	260	255	635,624	165,009	64	255	▼ -5	Banks			28,994,079	8,529,117	633	948.47	▼ -17.28	KINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	265	▲ 0	GINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	550	▲ 0	AINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	495	▲ 0	WINS	102	102	20,000	2,040	1	102	▲ 2.0	KUWAITRE	192	192	37	7	1	192	▲ 0.0	FTI	62	59	22,142	1,339	12	61	▲ 1.0	WETHAQ	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	85	▲ 0.0	BKIKWT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	355	▲ 0.0	Insurance			42,179	3,386	14	1089.60	▲ 4.20	SOKOUK	48.5	46.0	505,9985	239,927	112	47.0	▼ -0.5	KRE	69	66	10,371,317	693,881	82	66	▼ -3.0	URC	100	97	602,834	59,339	22	99	▲ 2.0	NRE	104	99	1,775,230	182,499	43	102	▼ -4.0	SRE	375	365	50,500	18,438	3	375	▲ 5.0	TAM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	445	▲ 0.0	AREEC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	176	▲ 0.0	MASSALEH	49.5	48.0	8,050	386	2	49.5	▼ -0.5	ARABREC	41.0	39.0	5,306,662	210,439	118	39.0	▼ -2.5	ERESCO	43.5	42.5	680,401	28,963	17	43.0	▼ -0.5	MABANEE	840	830	53,851	44,861	7	840	▲ 10.0	INJAZZAT	95	94	98,000	9,225	7	94	▼ -2.0	INVESTORS	28.5	27.5	3,320,795	93,032	66	28.0	▼ -0.5	IRC	38.5	36.5	617,343	22,797	23	36.5	▼ -1.5	ALTIJARIA	79	79	145,000	11,455	4	79	▼ -1.0	SANAM	57	53	10,001	530	2	57	▼ -1.0	AAYANRE	94	91	210,531	19,230	8	93	▼ -1.0	ADAR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	80	▲ 0.0	ALAGARIA	40.0	39.0	255,007	9,985	14	39.5	▼ -0.5	MAZAYA	126	120	5,171,143	630,807	98	120	▼ -10.0	ADNC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	11.0	▲ 0.0	THEMAR	94	94	1,000	94	1	94	▲ 4.0	TLIARA	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	62	▲ 0.0	TAMEER	28.0	35.5	6,550,583	240,416	146	36.0	▼ -2.0	ARKAN	83	83	400,000	33,200	3	83	▲ 0.0	ARGAN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	182	▲ 0.0	ABYAR	28.5	26.5	17,583,822	479,886	225	27.0	▼ -1.5	MUNSHA
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THE G 500 4x4² - THE FASHIONABLE MODEL OF MODELS

MERCEDES-BENZ CARS MIDDLE EAST SPONSORS 2017 FASHION FORWARD DUBAI

DUBAI: Expanding the brand's long association with the global fashion industry, Mercedes-Benz Cars Middle East has for the first time extended its support as an exclusive category sponsor of this year's Fashion Forward Dubai.

Fashion Forward Dubai took place at Dubai Design District from the 23rd to the 25th of March, shining a spotlight on the region's fashion designers

and showcasing the new-series Mercedes-Benz G 500 4x4². Eyes were firmly fixed on the trend-setting G 500 4x4² model, as it proudly displayed a design that pushes style boundaries to new extremes. Despite its adventurous nature, the extraordinary SUV preserves the legendary Mercedes-Benz comfort and style through its diamond-design quilting and black designo leather armrests, which perfectly comple-

ments its dazzling Electric Beam exterior. The new Mercedes-Benz G 500 4x4² offered the perfect backdrop for the region's best-dressed fashionistas who struck their own runway poses in front of the vehicle. All left with a professional picture of themselves - taking the traditional selfie to a stylish new level.

Lennart Mueller-Teut, Head of Marketing & Communications at Mercedes-Benz Cars Middle East,

commented: "Mercedes-Benz has always been a leading supporter of the fashion industry around the globe. Being a part of Fashion Forward Dubai has allowed us to have a stronger presence in the regional fashion scene and be involved in supporting and celebrating the emerging fashion talent in our region." The G 500 4x4² is available in the GCC with a starting price of \$247,300.

SHARES OF TURKEY'S HALKBANK SINK AFTER ARREST OF EXEC IN US

VIOLATION OF SANCTIONS AGAINST IRAN

ISTANBUL: Shares of Turkish state lender Halkbank were headed for their biggest ever one-day fall yesterday after US prosecutors charged a senior executive with participating in a multi-year scheme to violate sanctions against Iran.

Halkbank, Turkey's fifth-largest listed bank by assets, confirmed Deputy General Manager Mehmet Hakan Atilla had been detained in the United States and said it and the Turkish government were looking into the matter. The 47-year-old is accused of conspiring with wealthy Turkish-Iranian gold trader Reza Zarrab to conduct hundreds of millions of dollars of illegal transactions through US banks on behalf of Iran's government and other entities in that country. "Our bank and relevant state bodies are conducting the necessary work on the subject and information will be shared with the public when it is obtained," the bank said in a statement.

The arrest escalates a case that has added to tensions between the United States and Turkey. President Tayyip Erdogan has said - without elaborating - that he believed US authorities had "ulterior motives" in prosecuting Zarrab, who was arrested in March 2016 in Miami.

Zarrab has denied the charges in his case. It was unclear whether Atilla, who briefly appeared before a US magistrate at a court hearing in New York on Tuesday, had hired a lawyer or made a bail application. Halkbank said last year it had no connection with the US investigation into Zarrab. Atilla had been in New York to meet with investors as part of a marketing "road-

show" for a planned bond issue, bankers said. He was arrested at John F Kennedy International Airport.

"The first thing we are trying to understand is how far the process will extend," said one senior banker, who asked not to be identified. "We ask ourselves the same questions in the Zarrab process. Will this remain with just accusations against a few people or will the allegations be widened and have an impact on some Turkish companies or higher levels?"

Halkbank shares tumbled as much as 16 percent in early trade. At 1000 GMT, the stock was down 14.34 percent at 10.33 lira, on track for its biggest one-day fall since its May 2007 listing, according to Thomson Reuters Data.

Tillerson visit

Some industry sources said they didn't believe the arrest would impact Halkbank's expected bond issue. "I do not think there will be any problem in the roadshow," said another senior Turkish banker. "It will not create a problem among investors concerning the bank's borrowing." Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said the case would be discussed with US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson when he visits Ankara today. Cavusoglu, speaking to broadcaster TRT Haber, also called for a transparent process regarding Atilla's arrest.

Atilla was detained on the same day it was revealed that Zarrab, the gold trader, had added former New York City Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, a confidante of President Donald Trump, to his legal team. — Reuters



LONDON: The Great Clocks of the Elizabeth Tower, commonly known as the Big Ben, and part of the House of Commons, (left) is pictured in front of Westminster Abbey in central London yesterday. — AFP

UK ECONOMY SENDS MIXED SIGNALS AS BREXIT BEGINS

CAN EXPORTERS MAKE UP THE DIFFERENCE?

LONDON: Britain's economy is sending mixed signals about its readiness for Brexit just as British Prime Minister Theresa May launches the process of pulling the country out of the European Union. Economic growth was resilient in 2016, confounding forecasts of a quick and painful hit after June's Brexit vote. There have been recent signs that exporters are benefitting from the pound's fall and a pickup in the world economy.

But consumers, typically the main drivers of British growth, appear to be turning more cautious. Following is a summary of the most important measures of the British economy along with graphics.

Overall economic growth

The economy grew by 1.8 percent in 2016, second only to Germany among the Group of Seven big rich nations. In quarterly terms, growth sped up at the end of last year, prompting the Bank of England to raise its forecast for early 2017. The BoE and the government's forecasters expect growth of 2.0 percent this year. Other economists are less optimistic, forecasting growth of 1.6 percent, according to a Reuters poll. Most of the BoE's policymakers expect the

pace of growth to slow as 2017 progresses but they showed "differing degrees of confidence" about that forecast at their meeting this month when one rate-setter voted to raise borrowing costs and others said they might follow suit.

Inflation on the rise

Inflation is rising quickly in response to the sharp fall in the value of the pound since the Brexit vote and the rise in global oil prices over the past year. It jumped to 2.3 percent in February and the BoE predicts it will peak at 2.8 percent in the first half of next year, above its 2 percent target. Many economists say inflation is heading above 3 percent.

Wage growth stumbles

British workers have seen their pay eaten away by rising prices for many of the years since the financial crisis. A brief respite, caused by inflation's fall to zero in 2015, is set to end soon. Pay growth, adjusted for inflation, was the lowest since October 2014 in the most recent data. The BoE expects pay will rise 3 percent in 2017, up from the most recent reading of 2.2 percent, but its forecasts have often proven too optimistic.

Britain's shoppers proved the forecasters wrong by carrying on spending freely after the Brexit vote, helping the economy to withstand the shock. But that seems to be changing. Retail sales shrank at the fastest rate in nearly seven years during the past three months, despite a pickup in February. Data published yesterday showed growth in consumer credit in the three months to February was the weakest since July 2015, at 8.7 percent. However, consumer confidence has remained robust and house prices continue to grow, adding to the mixed picture.

Exporters are getting a boost from sterling's fall, as well as a recovery in the economies of Europe and the United States. Net trade made a rare positive contribution to economic growth in late 2016. And in the three months to January, volumes of goods exports showed their biggest increase in a decade. But there are big questions about what happens after Brexit. Britain has chosen to prioritise migration controls over access to the EU's single market which accounts for about half of Britain's exports. BoE Deputy Governor Ben Broadbent has said the current "sweet spot" for exporters might not last, given the prospect of barriers to trade with the EU or a likely appreciation of sterling if Britain secures a good deal. — Reuters



CARCOAR: This file picture taken on February 10, 2015 shows livestock agents (L) selling cattle to farmers at the weekly livestock sale near the town of Carcoar in central-west New South Wales. — AFP

AUSTRALIAN MEAT INDUSTRY LICKS LIPS AT POST-BREXIT EUROPE

SYDNEY: As Britain's divorce from the European Union began yesterday, Australia's meat industry is licking its lips at the prospect of a boost in exports as London scrambles to sign free-trade deals across the globe.

Pro-leave politicians promised before last year's referendum that an exit would allow them to hammer out a series of pacts around the world, free from what they called the shackles of EU quotas and giving the country better deals. Now, as they prepare for two years of divorce talks that could see Britain completely cut off from Europe's gigantic free-trade bloc, officials in Westminster are keen to start work on agreements elsewhere.

And that, says Josh Anderson of industry research group Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA), could be a big benefit to the meat industry Down Under, while a rotten meat crisis in Brazil might also provide an opening. "Brexit provides a unique opportunity for Australia to enhance its trading relationship with the UK," he said.

Australia and Britain will have to redefine their commercial relationship outside of the EU, with Canberra saying shortly after the Brexit referendum that it wanted a free-trade agreement with London. The biggest buyers of Australian beef are Japan, the United States, South Korea and China, with Europe trailing far behind with exports limited by quotas and taxes. Sales of beef and mutton to the EU account for just two percent of its overseas shipments-but in 2015, more than half the of those sales headed for Britain.

"We have a very limited EU access," said Geoff Pearson of the Cattle Council, which represents breeders. "If quotas and tariffs are changed, then yes, potentially, this market will be more attractive," he said, adding that it could be particularly beneficial for high-end products.

Huge potential

"Australia and the UK have a rich trading history," the MLA said in a note after June's Brexit vote. In the 1950s, between 50 and 80 percent of Australian beef and veal headed to Britain but this dropped off significantly when Britain became joined the EU's forerunner in 1973, it said. After Brexit, London vowed to boost its trade ties with the Commonwealth.

However, Australia is also hoping for better access to Britain's former European partners. "EU market potential is extremely positive," with 500 million inhabitants, said the MLA's Anderson. The European Union is a small market in terms of volume but it buys quality meat from Australia, meaning the price per tonne is nearly double that of other markets, the MLA says.

A free-trade agreement is therefore "a priority" for the organization, with Canberra and Brussels having already signed an accord agreeing to initiate a process, and with negotiations set to begin this year. Meanwhile, the huge scandal over tainted meat exports from Brazil-the main seller of beef to Europe outside European producers-has come at the right time for Australia. — AFP

AIRLINES WARN OF DISRUPTION IF NO QUICK BREXIT AVIATION DEAL

DUBLIN/BERLIN: Britain must prioritize aviation in Brexit negotiations if it is to avoid major disruption to air travel, budget carrier Ryanair warned yesterday, echoing growing concerns across the sector as Britain triggers its exit from the European Union.

Airlines based in the EU have the right to fly to, from and within any country in the bloc thanks to the single aviation market created in the 1990s, but Britain now has just two years to renegotiate access or come up with an alternative system. "There is a distinct possibility that there may be no flights between the UK and Europe for a period of time after March 2019," Ryanair's chief marketing officer Kenny Jacobs said yesterday.

UK-based low cost carriers, especially Luton-based easyJet, are among those most affected by Brexit, because they typically make more use of the EU rights to fly between other member states and not just to and from the UK. They could lose that right after Brexit. EasyJet said yesterday it was close to applying for a licence to set up an operating company within the EU to

protect its intra-EU flights. Its headquarters and listing would remain in Britain, it added.

Jacobs said there was no time to lose to strike an aviation deal between Britain and the EU, as airlines need to finalize their 2019 summer schedules in the first half of next year.

While British Prime Minister Theresa May has said no Brexit deal - and a return to World Trade Organization rules - was better than a bad deal, aviation is not covered by WTO, creating greater uncertainty over what might happen.

Since Britain's June 23 vote to leave the EU, easyJet shares are down 35 percent, Wizz Air's are down 18 percent, Ryanair's are up 4 percent and British Airways owner IAG's are up 0.7 percent. Shares in Germany's Lufthansa, meanwhile, are up 24 percent.

Push back

European airports have also called for a backup plan, saying a return to decades-old traffic rights deals should be avoided. Traffic rights between Germany and Britain could revert back to a bilateral deal from 1955.

But while some in the industry want to push aviation to the top of the negotiating list, there has been some push back. German aviation association BDL has said it supports the German government view of not allowing any cherry-picking in Brexit talks and Lufthansa CEO Carsten Spohr said he expected France and Germany would not agree to prioritizing aviation. "The UK airlines say they want a shortcut. But that's something Hollande and Merkel won't do," he said in Frankfurt earlier this week in comments confirmed by the company.

Another issue for airlines is ownership structure. Ryanair was 53.6 percent owned by EU nationals in mid-2016, including 20 percent ownership by UK nationals, meaning that following Brexit it may fall foul of rules stating that EU carriers must be majority-owned by EU investors. However, Jacobs told Reuters in a recent interview that he didn't expect that to be a problem. "If you look at our investor base, they are big international investors with offices all over Europe and could transfer the shares. So I think that will be solved," he said. — Reuters

CHEVROLET ALGHANIM SURPASSES YOUTH'S EXPECTATIONS

A CREATIVE DISPLAY AT AVENUES MALL ATTRACTING BOLD AND SLEEK TASTE OF THE YOUTH

KUWAIT: Chevrolet Alghanim displayed the new Tahoe and Silverado "Midnight" editions at the Avenues mall in an unprecedented style attracting wide public which proves once again the huge fan base those two powerful models have in the market.

Chevrolet Alghanim is dedicated to get closer to their customers by investing in such on-ground activations to raise the bar once again in pulling the crowd, and promoting vehicles in a very distinctive way to please customers. This was shown during the recent launch of its most popular specialty models that include Midnight Editions of the premium & powerful Tahoe and Silverado 2017. Chevrolet Alghanim created a very unique and appealing display at The Avenues, replicating a Midnight look and feel appealing to the youth generation. This activation was used to confirm Chevrolet Alghanim's gratitude for the youth as they are very passionate towards Chevrolet trucks & Sport cars.

Bold display

These special editions were displayed at the Avenues Mall, near the Grand Avenue entrance, that began on March 14th 2017 and extended for a period of 5 days, allowing customers enough time to get acquainted with the Midnight Edition contemporary design. Chevrolet fans and customers were invited to get a unique experience of the models, reflecting the bold character and sleek style of Chevrolet's latest editions. The models were enclosed inside a black box, allowing customers an experience like never before. The intriguing display of the Tahoe and Silverado Midnight Editions has attracted thousands of visitors from The Avenues Mall. Chevrolet Alghanim has received a very positive feedback from the youth audience on the aggressive look and feel of those models.

Tahoe and Silverado features

The Chevrolet Midnight editions boast a factory look and style, incorporating dark

visual hues that complement their striking presence on the road, both when driving and in a static state.

The latest Midnight Edition of the Tahoe and Silverado is bolder than ever before. This special visual treatment builds on the vehicles' success in the local marketplace, enabling customers to portray their unique and bold taste, standing out from the crowd. Design includes blacked out wheels, Chevrolet's signature bow tie and bold black exterior.

This local activation was launched in parallel to the regional campaign that was initiated by Chevrolet Arabia within the region. Market research reveals that SUV's are very popular vehicle choices for consumers in the Middle East. Moreover customers take



an extra step in customizing their Chevrolet vehicles to showcase their distinctive taste making them truly theirs. Customers add a considerable amount on accessories, exterior and interior design that will reflect their taste. The Midnight Edition was launched to allow customers who wish to further customize their vehicles directly from the factory, and enhance their expectations for the most iconic Chevrolet full-size SUV.

The Midnight Edition adds that special edge to the driver with black-painted wheels, black grille inserts, and black Chevrolet "bow tie" logos. All Midnight Editions are finished in black.



Latest edition Accolade

The Silverado has been recently named "The Most Selling Pick-up" in its class. In parallel, the Tahoe was named the strongest and largest SUV in the market with its

EcoTec3 5.3L V8 engine and its advanced technologies such as Active Fuel Management, Direct Injection and Variable Valve Timing.

The Midnight special edition package

allows customers to customize the following options:

- * Aluminum black wheels
- * Black door handles and mirror caps
- * Black door and window edges
- * Black bumpers and grille
- * Black Chevy bowtie emblems
- * Deep-tinted windows

Chevrolet Complete Care
All customers who purchase a Chevrolet from Yusuf Ahmed Alghanim & Sons will receive the benefits of the Chevrolet Care Program, which entails new levels of post-sale support and trust.

The Chevrolet Complete Care Program is an exceptional customer service that is based on four main pillars: competitive and transparent service costs (especially for four-wheel drive vehicles), scheduled service appointment booking with same day delivery, quality service by certified technicians and 3yr/100,000km warranty with 24x7 roadside assistance for 4 years.



GULF INSURANCE AND RE-INSURANCE PARTICIPATES IN YACHTS SHOW 2017

KUWAIT: Gulf Insurance and Re-Insurance, the subsidiary of Gulf Insurance Group the leading insurance service provider in Kuwait and Middle East, announced yesterday that it is participating in the third Kuwait Yacht Shows 2017, which is scheduled to be held from 28 until the 31 of March 2017 at Al-Kout as the official insurance partner. A wide range of boats and super yachts will be on display during the event, which will also include international brands and dealers from all over the world.

Section Head at Gulf Insurance & Re-Insurance, Aisha Al-Asfour said, "The Kuwait Yacht Show will provide an excellent opportunity for visitors to explore a variety of insurance schemes for their boats and yachts. The participation of Gulf Insurance and Re-Insurance reflects the company's efforts to provide customers with the best possible insurance solutions that accommodate their varied needs." The exhibition will provide visitors the chance to explore the latest and most modern maritime craft, check on new developments in the industry, while also enjoying fine and exclusive services.

Gulf Insurance & Reinsurance Co. (GIRI) is the largest insurance company in Kuwait in

terms of written and retained premiums, with operations in both life and non-life insurance and its activities are further supported by first class reinsurance security. GIRI has created a competitive edge in its market through the implementation of a comprehensive approach involving use of Information Technology, Product Innovation, Customer Relations Management and prudent underwriting practices.

Gulf Insurance & Reinsurance holds a Financial Strength Rating of "A" (Excellent) and issuer credit rating of "a" with a revised stable Outlook from A.M. Best Europe Rating Services Limited. Standard & Poor's has assigned its Financial Strength and counterparty credit ratings of A- with Stable outlook. Moody's Investors Service has also assigned its Insurance Financial Strength Rating (IFSR) of 'A3' with Stable outlook.

GIRI is a subsidiary of Gulf Insurance Group (gig) which is one of the largest insurance networks in the Middle East and North Africa with companies in Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, Algeria, Iraq, Bahrain, Emirates, Turkey and Kuwait. gig's reported consolidated assets stand at US\$ 1.23 billion as at 31 December 2016.

AL-DANAH'S KD 200,000 FIRST QUARTERLY DRAW TODAY



WILL YOU BE THE WINNER?

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank announced that Al-Danah's first quarterly draw for KD 200,000 will be held today (30 March 2017) and will be aired live on the Al-Dewaniya program on Marina FM 90.4, from 1 pm until 2 pm. The draw event will take place in the presence of a representative from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

Gulf Bank invites its customers to tune in to Marina FM 90.4, Al-Dewaniya program to find out who is the lucky winner of the Al-Danah KD 200,000 prize. In addition, Gulf Bank will be announcing the three monthly winners of the red account draw for an iPhone7 Plus, iPad Pro and Apple Watch.

Gulf Bank's Al-Danah 2017 draw lineup includes daily draws (two winners per working day and each receive KD 1000), Al-Danah's

second quarterly draw for the prize of KD 250,000, which will be held on 29 June and the third quarterly draw for the prize of KD 500,000 will be held on 28 September. The final Al-Danah draw for KD 1 million will be held on 11 January 2018, whereby the Al-Danah millionaire will be announced.

Five reasons why the Al-Danah account is the best:

- 1) Kuwait's single largest yearly cash prize of KD 1 million in the world, according to Guinness World Records
- 2) Kuwait's biggest quarterly cash prizes, up to KD 500,000
- 3) Two winners of KD 1,000 every working day
- 4) Offers the most opportunities to win
- 5) Only account that transfers your chances to win from the previous year onto the following year.

11 KERALITES AMONG TOP RICHEST INDIANS IN GCC

ABU DHABI: Yusuff Ali MA, Managing Director, Lulu Group International, has topped the list of 11 people from the south Indian state of Kerala included in the sixth Arabian Business Indian Rich List brought out by Arabian Business magazine.

Other eminent Keralites in the list include Dr Ravi Pillai, Chairman, RP Group, Adeb Ahmed, Managing Director, Lulu Financial Group, Sunny Varkey, Founder and Chairman, Gems Education, PNC Menon, Chairman, Shobha Group, Dr Azad Moopen, Chairman, Aster DM Healthcare, Faisal Kottikolon, Chairman, KEF Holdings, Dr Shamsheer VP, Managing Director, VPS Healthcare, Mohammed Koroth, Chairman, KM Trading, Joy Alukkas, Chairman, Joy Alukkas, K Muraleedharan, Managing Director, SFC Group.



One out of every five richest Indians on the list are Keralites and have a combined worth of more than \$20 billion, reflecting the south Indian state's growing influence in the regional economic scene.

The selection process for the annual list

included estimating the value of assets of the persons on the list, shareholdings and projected company value were it to be floated on the stock market. The team also took into consideration the value of the holdings in equities, bonds, real estate and other assets.



KIB ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF ITS FIRST 'SAVE & WIN' DRAW

KUWAIT: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) announced the winners in the first draw of its new Savings Account campaign, "Save & Win", naming Abdulrahman Theeb Al-Sha'abani as the KD 5,555 grand prize winner in the campaign's inaugural draw.

Launched this past February, the "Save & Win" campaign gives both current and new Savings Account customers the chance to enter the monthly draw, for every KD 100 deposited into their account. Through this campaign, customers are able to enter the grand prize draw, for a chance to win double the value of their investment, up to a value of KD 5,555. The campaign also offers 10 customers every month the chance to win KD 100.

This month's KD 100 winners were: Mohammad Arshad Manthour Ahmad Barodjar, Mohammad Arbeed Jelwi Arbeed, Qassem Mohammad Al-Mutlaq, Ahmad Mohammad Sameer Mohammad, Haya Mutlaq Sultan Al-Mutairi, Ahmad Bassam Abdulrahman Yaqoub, Eman Eid Sanad Al-Dhafiri, Dalal Abdulrahman Mohammad Al-Yousif, Rouqaya Saifallah Ali Wais, and Qout Rshaid Mutar Al-Harbi. Eugene Galligan, Acting General Manager of the Retail Banking Department at KIB, stated: "KIB continuously seeks to develop and enhance its products and services, to provide current and new customers with a multitude of benefits and rewards, whilst also offering them the best banking solutions to suit their individual needs. The "Save & Win" campaign simply adds to the many great benefits already provided by KIB's Savings Account, which currently offers the highest return rate of its kind in Kuwait."

Galligan further noted that the campaign's second draw is scheduled to take place on April 11th, adding that the chance is still open for customers to enter the upcoming draws. "The more money saved, the higher the chances of winning," concluded Galligan.

The "Save & Win" campaign set to continue until May 2017. To learn more about the campaign and KIB's Savings Account visit the website (www.kib.com.kw).

They can also follow the Bank's accounts on Facebook (facebook.com/alDawliBank), as well as Twitter and Instagram (@alDawliBank).

FORD SUPPLIERS SHOWCASE ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY MANUFACTURING

KUWAIT: As manufacturing continues to become greener, Ford Motor Company is going further to shrink its environmental footprint by sharing even more leading sustainability practices with its suppliers around the globe.

The Partnership for A Cleaner Environment (PACE) is part of Ford's commitment to creating a better world. While many sustainability practices already have been implemented at the company's manufacturing sites, Ford has expanded the program now to include tools that help suppliers reduce carbon-dioxide emissions and waste, as well as help make water and energy consumption more efficient.

Last year, a second select group of suppliers were invited to join the voluntary program, bringing the number of participating companies to more than 40 in two years. PACE now has the potential to impact nearly 1,100 supplier sites in more than 40 countries.

With programs like PACE showing Ford's commitment to environmental sustainability and corporate citizenship, Ethisphere Institute today named the automaker to its list of the World's Most Ethical Companies for the eighth year in a row. "As a company, it's important that we make quality products and minimize the impact on the environment by doing things the right way," said Mary Wroten, senior manager of Ford Supply Chain Sustainability. "Having suppliers that want to share that responsibility shows we can work together to reduce our collective environmental footprint, while still continuing to deliver great products."

As part of PACE, Ford offers best practices and monitoring tools to help its suppliers track and achieve their own sustainability goals. In return, the suppliers report their environmental progress and share their own best practices. Already, participating suppliers are on track to save an estimated 550 million gallons of water over the next five years - enough to fill 837 Olympic swimming pools- according to data collected in 2016. However, the fight for sustainability isn't just about water. Thanks to the current suppliers participating in PACE, carbon emissions could be reduced by nearly 500,000 metric tons worldwide during the next five years. That's equivalent to eliminating the carbon emissions of over 50,000 homes a year.

Leading practices make perfect

Recognizing sustainability is an ongoing commitment, Ford is providing suppliers with a PACE toolkit, complete with more than 350 leading practices across four categories: energy, water, air emissions and waste. While varying in effort, leading practices include optimizing cool-

ing tower operation, reducing compressed air usage in manufacturing operations and eliminating single-pass cooling systems. In addition to larger scale projects, even the simplest leading practices, such as replacing incandescent lightbulbs with LED bulbs, also will help conserve valuable resources. Also among Ford's leading practices are Energy Treasure Hunts, which allow suppliers to use experts in their own facilities to identify additional opportunities to save resources. Suppliers are encouraged to share their findings with their own supply chain and Ford.

Taking a bigger step to leave a smaller footprint

Ultimately, sharing its impact on environmental sustainability with suppliers has the potential to affect millions around the world. Operating in



38 countries alone, Ford supplier DENSO has been participating in PACE since the program began in 2014. "We are serious about protecting lives and preserving the planet, and sharing best practices with Ford helps further that mission to sustain the environment globally," said Jim Laney, DENSO senior manager of Safety, Health and Environment in North America.

So far, DENSO has set targets for carbon-dioxide reductions in its manufacturing processes. The global supplier also focuses on cutting back electricity and water use with highly efficient equipment. This has meant installing closed circuit cooling systems and replacing metal halide lights with T-8 LED lighting. PACE is just one portion of Ford's supply chain sustainability strategy, which also includes initiatives on human rights, working conditions and conflict minerals.

Ford is also the first automaker to join the Electronic Industry Citizenship Coalition - a non-profit organization dedicated to improving social, environmental and ethical conditions in their members' global supply chains.

CANON EUROPE ACQUIRES KITE.LY TO EXPAND MOBILE PRINTING CAPABILITIES

KUWAIT: Canon Europe, leader in imaging solutions, yesterday announced that it has acquired Kite.ly, the London-based mobile ecommerce platform specializing in personalized print. Kite.ly adds an important new focus area into Canon's digital services portfolio, enabling the company to offer a print ecosystem unrivalled in scope. This acquisition is in line with Canon's ambition to play a part in every image taken and to make image printing accessible to all via any device.

Alberto Spinelli, Senior Director of Digital Services at Canon Europe says: "Bringing Kite.ly into the Canon group of companies is our latest

move to expand Canon's digital services offering, by making mobile printing ubiquitous. There is a fast-growing trend of consumers who want to shop for customized products and do it in an easy way from their mobile devices. The combination of Canon's high quality printing technologies and Kite.ly's easy-to-use solutions will create an unrivalled portfolio of print products, accessible to customers everywhere through existing and new imaging apps."

Charlie Carpenter, CEO and co-founder of Kite.ly: "Today is a huge day for the Kite.ly team, reflecting the success of our relentless ambition to

deliver a mobile personalized print solution, globally. We are excited to combine our innovative technology platform with Canon's digital services portfolio to lead a new print era together. We are inspired that Canon shares our vision to become the internet's print button, embedded into any imaging app or website. Kite.ly hosts hundreds of app clients around the world and together with Canon we will be able to enhance their service, to help them generate new revenue and engage with their users in a much more meaningful way."

Kite.ly is joining Canon's group of companies and brands that offer complementary digital

services, including Lifecake and irista, helping the company create a complete imaging ecosystem for consumers - from capture, reliving, sharing and printing, via easy to use mobile apps and websites. The acquisition will also allow Canon's B2B partners and customers to explore new business opportunities, whilst retailers will be able to offer a complete end-to-end online personalized print solution to their customers, both online and in-store. Print service providers will be able to easily plug the Canon-Kite.ly solution into their existing infrastructures and gain access to new revenue streams.



BERLIN: Participants of the Daimler general meeting look at a Mercedes-Benz Vision Van on display in the CityCube exhibition in Berlin, Germany, yesterday. — AP

DAIMLER HITS ACCELERATOR ON ELECTRIC CAR PLANS

EMISSIONS-FREE DRIVING AT THE CENTRE OF STRATEGY

FRANKFURT AM MAIN: Daimler, the world's biggest luxury carmaker, said yesterday it will speed up development of electric vehicles, aiming for 10 new models within five years rather than eight. "Emissions-free driving is at the centre of our strategy. In the coming years we will spend 10 billion euros (\$10.8 billion) on building up our electric fleet," chief executive Dieter Zetsche told investors in Berlin, promising battery-powered versions of vehicles from the tiny Smart to Mercedes SUVs by 2022.

Until now, the Stuttgart-based firm had promised the expansion of its electric range would be completed by 2025, with between 15 and 25 percent of Mercedes sold being electric by that date. The carmaker will invest one billion euros in battery production, half of it going to its facility in Saxony, eastern Germany. Stuttgart-based Daimler also produces a range of plug-in hybrids-equipped with both an electric and combustion motor-and will expand its electric offering to heavier vehicles with a first all-electric truck this year.

But "no-one can say for certain how long it will take for electric cars to outnumber conventional motors on the market," Zetsche said, promising to "use all available means to reduce

carbon dioxide" emissions, including more efficient combustion engines and "modern" diesels "emitting significantly less CO2 than petrol engines".

Emissions probe

German prosecutors last week launched an investigation into Daimler for "fraud and fraudulent advertising," suspecting emissions from the manufacturer's diesel cars may be higher than allowed. Distrust of diesel technology has been stoked by the Volkswagen emissions cheating scandal which erupted in late 2015.

German regulators and the transport ministry in Berlin "have not found breaches of the law in measurements of our vehicles," Zetsche told shareholders Wednesday, calling for "clear rules and transparent testing procedures" to allay the public's concerns while promising "full cooperation" with the authorities. Like other German carmakers, Daimler was forced to recall hundreds of thousands of diesel vehicles in April 2016 after German authorities found irregularities in emissions measurements.

European manufacturers appear to have capitalized on vague EU regulations by allowing their vehicles to deactivate exhaust filtering when out-

side temperatures are low, saying that the procedure helps protect the motor. Also in April last year, Daimler opened an internal investigation headed by a law firm into how its cars' polluting emissions were certified in the US, at the request of American authorities. US drivers have accused the group of deliberately evading emissions limits and making fraudulent claims about its cars' environmental characteristics in advertising.

Looking to the future, "we are the first manufacturer to have brought diesel vehicles onto the market that already fulfill EU emissions limits planned to come into force in Sept 2017," Zetsche said. The spectacularly-mustachioed CEO prefers to emphasize Daimler's bets on a high-tech future, including autonomous driving and "mobility services" like taxi-hailing and car sharing apps-aimed at customers "who don't necessarily want to have a car of their own."

Daimler in February reported record results for 2016, booking almost 9.0 billion euros of profit on revenues of 153 billion and becoming the world's largest luxury carmaker by unit sales. But investors complain that dividend payments are not keeping pace with the carmaker's growth, as the big outlays needed to power Zetsche's futuristic schemes eat into profitability. — AFP

WARNER BROS, HTC VIVE ANNOUNCE STRATEGIC GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP

KUWAIT: HTC Vive and Warner Bros. announced a strategic partnership in which HTC Vive will be the exclusive VR partner for all content, online and offline activations for the highly anticipated theatrical and home entertainment release of Steven Spielberg's Ready Player One. Adapted from the book by Ernest Cline, Ready Player One is a sci-fi action thriller that unfolds largely within the virtual reality space. The film is slated for global theatrical release yesterday, from Warner Bros. Pictures, Amblin Partners and Village Roadshow Pictures.

Vive will produce multiple pieces of VR content tied to the world of Ready Player One. This content will be available to users through Viveport, which will distribute the content globally across all VR in-home platforms, from high-end PC based VR systems to mobile solutions. In addition, Vive plans to bring Ready Player One-inspired content to its Viveport Arcade platform for location-based entertainment as well as showcase the VR experiences and games at many of the biggest global consumer events through the year.

"The virtual reality world within Ready Player One is extremely advanced, sophisticated and engaging, and with Vive, we chose the best system to represent the future of VR. Vive is the perfect partner to bring that to life and also has the broadest reach to global markets for the use of VR in home, mobile and offline channels," said Blair Rich, Warner Bros. Pictures President, worldwide marketing. "We're delighted that HTC Vive will be partnering with Ready Player One and very excited to work with them leading up the movie's release in spring 2018."

"Ready Player One is one of the most anticipated movies in the world, and has tremendous potential to engage and entertain the worldwide market, showcasing the transformative nature of VR, and what it can and will be," said Rikard Steiber, President, Viveport. "Vive is delivering on the promise of VR and continues to be the most advanced and immersive VR experience available to consumers, and we're thrilled to be partnering with Warner Bros. to bring these experiences to consumers, on all platforms, around the globe."

US LAWMAKERS ROLL BACK PRIVACY RULES FOR INTERNET CARRIERS

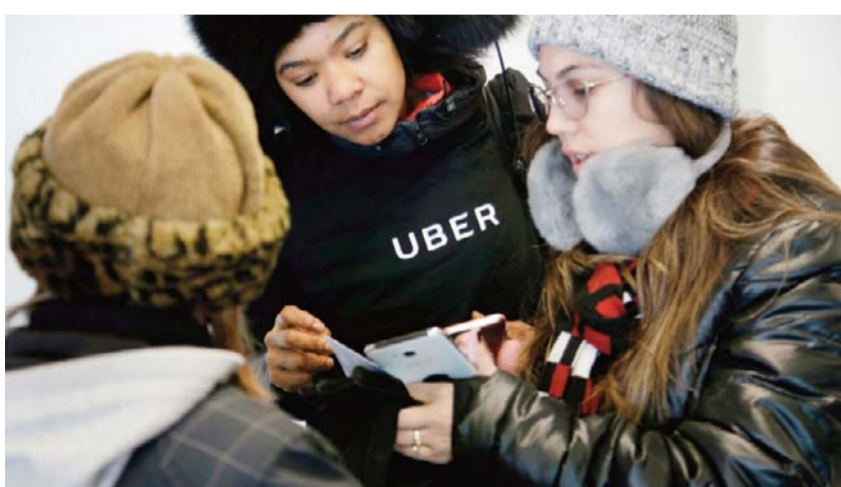
WASHINGTON: US lawmakers voted Tuesday to roll back rules that would block internet service providers from selling user data to third parties, following a heated debate over privacy protections. The House of Representatives voted 215-205 to overturn the Federal Communications Commission rule, following last week's 50-48 vote in the Senate. The move followed a fierce debate over digital privacy protections over the rule that would have required service providers to get permission before selling customer data to third parties.

Some activists say the latest vote frees major providers like Comcast and Verizon to sell sensitive private data for targeted advertising; others contend these firms will now be able to compete on an equal footing with internet giants like Google and Facebook for online marketing. The rule was passed last year by the US regulator with a majority of Democrats appointed by former president Barack Obama, a scenario that has been reversed with the election of President Donald Trump. Dallas Harris of the consumer group Public Knowledge said lawmakers "voted to strip Americans of the strongest online privacy protections to date" and added that "there will be no effective federal cop on the beat to proactively protect con-

sumer information." Democratic House leader Nancy Pelosi opposed the measure, saying "Americans shouldn't have to give up every shred of privacy when they go online." During floor debate, she said "Republicans want this (private) information to be sold without your permission."

Others said the rule passed last year imposed unnecessary regulations on carriers that already must comply with laws on consumer protection and deceptive practices. Republican Representative Greg Walden said the bill would roll back "short-sighted rules that only apply to only one part of the internet," and exempt the big online firms like Google and Facebook. The White House said it supported the move, saying "the rule departs from the technology-neutral framework for online privacy" by creating "very different regulatory regimes based on the identity of the online actor."

Ajit Pai, the Trump-appointed Federal Communications Commission chairman, said existing privacy protections would remain in place. "Moving forward, I want the American people to know that the FCC will work with the FTC to ensure that consumers' online privacy is protected through a consistent and comprehensive framework," Pai said in a statement. — AFP



NEW YORK: In this photo, an Uber representative helps travelers find rides with Uber at LaGuardia Airport in New York. — AP

UBER DIVERSITY: LOW ON WOMEN, LIKE OTHER TECH COMPANIES

NEW YORK: Uber's first report on employee diversity shows low numbers for women, especially in technical positions. In that regard, the company is similar to other Silicon Valley giants such as Google, Facebook and Apple. But Uber's report comes as pressure mounts on the company in light of sexual harassment claims by a former employee, the antics of its embattled CEO Travis Kalanick and ongoing criticisms of a boorish "brogrammer" culture. Management defections include that of the company's president, Jeff Jones, after just six months on the job.

Thirty-six percent of the company's worldwide employees are women, according to the report, which does not count drivers as employees. Google, in comparison, has 31 percent women and Apple, 32 percent. When it comes to technology jobs such as engineering, only 15 percent are women at Uber. At Google, it's 19 percent and Apple, 23 percent. As with other tech companies, Uber is making some progress in diversifying its work force. The new hires at the company show a higher

percentage of women - 41 percent - as well as more underrepresented minorities. In the US, the largest ethnic group at Uber is white and the second largest is Asian. The report also shows that nearly 9 percent of the company's US employees are black and almost 6 percent are Hispanic. At Google, a much larger company, the numbers are 2 percent and 3 percent, respectively. Uber also says 15 percent of its US employees hold work visas, and they hail from 71 countries.

Other technology companies have not been disclosing this information, but it's possible that they will follow Uber's steps - especially as the industry continues to clash heads with President Donald Trump's administration over immigration issues. Uber has about 12,000 employees worldwide, about half in the US. The San Francisco company has hired former US Attorney General Eric Holder to lead an investigation into the sexual harassment charges leveled by the former engineer, Susan Fowler. The company plans to release the findings next month. — AP

WHAT THE DEATH OF BROADBAND PRIVACY RULES MEANS?

NEW YORK: Now that both houses of Congress have voted to block Obama-era broadband privacy rules, what does that mean for you? In the short term, not so much. The rules, which would have put tough restrictions on what companies like Comcast, Verizon and AT&T can do with information such as your internet history, hadn't yet gone into effect. So if President Donald Trump signs the measure, as the White House has indicated he will, the status quo will remain.

But the absence of clear privacy rules means that the companies supplying your internet service - and who can see a great deal of what you do with it - can continue to mine that information for use in their own advertising businesses. And consumer advocates worry that the companies will be an enticing target for hackers. Here's how that could play out and what it means.

What changes now?

Not much, at least immediately. For now, phone and cable companies remain subject to federal law that imposes on broadband providers a "duty to protect the confidentiality" of customer information and restricts them from using some customer data without "approval." But it doesn't spell out how companies must get permission, how they must protect your data, or whether and how they have to tell you if it's been hacked.

What the rules would have changed

Under the Federal Communications Commission's rules, Comcast and its ilk would have needed your permission before offering marketers a wealth of information about you, including health and financial details, your geographic location and lists of websites you've visited and apps you've used. Republicans and industry officials complained that the browsing and app history restrictions would have unfairly burdened internet providers, since other companies such as Google and Facebook don't have to abide by them.

That's important because the biggest broad-

band companies want to build ad businesses to rival those tech giants. This rule would have made that more difficult. These rules also required broadband providers to take reasonable measures to protect customer information, although those weren't spelled out. They also required these companies to tell you if your information had been hacked. Yes, but it's not easy. Broadband providers today let you "opt out" of using their data, although figuring out how to do that can be difficult.

Instead, the digital rights group Electronic Frontier Foundation suggests you might pay to use a virtual private network, which funnels your internet traffic through a secure connection that your provider can't see into. But good VPNs aren't free, you have to figure out which ones you can trust, and unless you go to the trouble of setting

one up on your home router - not a straightforward task - you would need to set them up on every phone, tablet and computer in your home. The EFF and other supporters of the privacy rules also point out that in many markets consumer choices are limited when it comes to home broadband, so you often can't just switch providers if you don't like their privacy policies.

Does my state have my back?

Maybe. Many state laws bar unfair or deceptive practices, which they can use against privacy violations. Other state and federal regulations aim to protect medical and financial records, but may not apply to internet service providers. Only a few states regulate specific practices by broadband providers, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures, which tracks state laws. — AP



WASHINGTON: This file photo, shows the Federal Communications Commission building in Washington. — AP

BRAIN IMPLANT LETS PARALYZED MAN FEED HIMSELF USING HIS THOUGHTS

CHICAGO: A paralyzed man in Cleveland fed himself mashed potatoes for the first time in eight years, aided by a computer-brain interface that reads his thoughts and sends signals to move muscles in his arm, US researchers said on Tuesday. The research, published in the journal *Lancet*, is the latest from BrainGate, a consortium of researchers testing brain-computer interface technology designed to give paralyzed individuals more mobility.

Prior tests of the technology allowed paralyzed people to move a robotic arm or a cursor on a keyboard just by using their thoughts. The team

at Case Western Reserve University and the Cleveland Functional Electrical Stimulation Center used the brain-computer interface and an electrical stimulation system that allowed Bill Kochevar, 56, to control his own arm.

To achieve this, the team implanted two sensors, each about the size of a baby aspirin, loaded with 96 electrodes designed to pick up nerve activity in the movement centers of the brain. The sensors record brain signals created when Kochevar imagines moving his arm, and relay them to a computer. The computer sends the signals to the electrical stimulation system, which

directs impulses through about 30 wires implanted in muscles in Kochevar's arm and hand to produce specific movements.

Kochevar, who was paralyzed below his shoulders in a cycling accident eight years ago, first learned to use the system to move a virtual reality arm on a computer screen. He accomplished that on the first day he tried it, said Case Western's Robert Kirsch, the study's senior author. For the movement phase of the trial, Kochevar had to go through 45 weeks of rehabilitation to restore muscle tone that had atrophied over the years of inactivity. Using the brain interface system, he can

now move each joint in his right arm individually, just by thinking about it.

To accomplish tasks like drinking through a straw, or scratching his face with a dry sponge, Kochevar is aided by an arm support, a device he also controls with his thoughts. Kochevar said the chance to do simple things for him has been "better than I thought it would be." For the moment, the system is experimental only, but the study shows such a system is feasible, Kirsch said. BrainGate is funded by the National Institutes of Health and the Department of Veterans Affairs. —Reuters



WASHINGTON: In this file photo, demonstrators gather in front of the White House in Washington, during a rally against US President Donald Trump's Energy Independence Executive order. — AP

ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS VOWING TO FIGHT TRUMP CLIMATE ACTIONS

TRUMP ELIMINATES RESTRICTIONS ON FOSSIL FUEL PRODUCTION

CHICAGO: Environmental groups that have hired scores of new lawyers in recent months are prepared to go to court to fight a sweeping executive order from US President Donald Trump that eliminates many restrictions on fossil fuel production and would roll back his predecessor's plans to curb global warming. But they said they'll take their first battle to the court of public opinion.

Advocates said they plan to work together to mobilize a public backlash against an executive order signed by Trump on Tuesday that includes initiating a review of former President Barack Obama's signature plan to restrict greenhouse gas emissions from coal-fired power plants and lifting a 14-month-old moratorium on new coal leases on federal lands.

Trump, who has called global warming a "hoax" invented by the Chinese, said during his campaign that he would kill Obama's climate plans and bring back coal jobs. Even so, "this is not what most people elected Trump to do; people support climate action," said David Goldston, director of government affairs at the Natural Resources Defense Council, who said Trump's actions are short-sighted and won't bring back the jobs he promised. The White House did not immediately respond to an Associated Press email seeking comment.

While Republicans have blamed Obama-era environmental regulations for the loss of coal jobs, federal data shows that US mines have been shedding jobs for decades under presidents from

both parties because of automation and competition from natural gas and because of solar panels and wind turbines, which now can produce emissions-free electricity cheaper than burning coal. But many people in coal country are counting on the jobs that Trump has promised, and industry advocates praised his orders.

"These executive actions are a welcome departure from the previous administration's strategy of making energy more expensive through costly, job-killing regulations that choked our economy," said US Chamber of Commerce President Thomas J. Donohue. The order will also chip away at other regulations, including scrapping language on the "social cost" of greenhouse gases. It will initiate a review of efforts to reduce the emission of methane in oil and natural gas production as well as a Bureau of Land Management hydraulic fracturing rule, to determine whether those reflect the president's policy priorities.

Coal is not coming back

It also will rescind Obama-era executive orders and memoranda, including one that addressed climate change and national security and one that sought to prepare the country for the impacts of climate change. The administration is still in discussion about whether it intends to withdraw from the Paris Agreement on climate change. Environmentalists say clean energy would create thousands of new jobs and fear that Trump's actions will put the US at a competi-

tive disadvantage to other countries that are embracing it.

But they believe efforts to revive fossil fuels ultimately will fail because many states and industries already have been embracing renewable energy and natural gas. "Those decisions are being made at the state level and plant by plant," said Earthjustice President Trip Van Noppen, who said his group is "continuing to work aggressively to retire dirty coal plants."

"Coal is not coming back," Van Noppen added. "While the president is taking big splashy action, he is actually doomed to fail." A coalition of 16 states and the District of Columbia said they will oppose any effort by the Trump administration to withdraw the Clean Power Plan or seek dismissal of a pending legal case before a federal appeals court in Washington. Environmental advocates also are ready to go to court on a moment's notice, and will carefully watch the administration's actions, said the NRDC's Goldston.

"The president doesn't get to simply rewrite safeguards; they have to ... prove the changes are in line with the law and science," Goldston said. "I think that's going to be a high hurdle for them." Jeremy Symons, associate vice president at the Environmental Defense Fund, said advocates will work to build support among lawmakers along with the public. "In terms of the big picture, our strategy is simple: Shine a spotlight on what is going on and mobilize the public against these rollbacks that threaten our children's health" and the climate, he said. —AP

JAPAN SCIENTIST EYES ENERGY BURST FROM TYPHOON TURBINE

TOKYO: Most people look for a place to hide when a typhoon is on the horizon, but Atsushi Shimizu hopes that the fury of nature may one day help resource-poor Japan tackle its energy woes. As thousands of Australians seek shelter from a "monster" cyclone battering the country's northern coast, the Tokyo-based engineer believes that his bladeless wind turbine can not only stand up to the raw force of these destructive storms, but also harness that power to generate electricity.

Shimizu's egg-beater shaped creation-it has three cylinders and a central rod-responds to wind coming from any direction and doesn't use a propeller to spin. Instead it takes advantage of the Magnus effect, a force that sees air curve when passing by a spinning object, such as a football. "There are some estimates that wind power has more potential here than solar," said the 37-year-old, who quit his job at an engineering firm to launch startup Challenergy in 2014.

"But we haven't been able to turn that much of this wind power into actual energy here in Japan." Japan turned to expensive and polluting fossil-fuel options when it shut down dozens of nuclear reactors in the wake of the 2011 Fukushima accident. A quake-sparked tsunami swamped the plant in Fukushima, sparking the worst atomic disaster since Chernobyl in 1986. Six years later, a wary public is resisting government efforts to switch reactors back on-boosting interest in solar, wind and other renewable energy sources.

The amount of electricity produced by wind nearly doubled in 2016 from a year earlier, according to a recent survey by the Japan Wind Power Association. Still, the increase — 300 megawatts-can only power tens of thousands of homes in a nation of 127 million. And wind power's share of Japan's total energy mix is still less than one percent. Shimizu and others are determined

to change that. "After the Fukushima accident, I had to question myself as a Japanese person if it would be justified to continue operating nuclear plants in this country," Shimizu said.

Interesting challenge

Japan's wind patterns and hilly terrain are not conducive to using the three-blade wind turbines common in other countries. Furthermore, the threat of typhoons can turn these turbines into matchsticks, unlike Shimizu's more durable creation. Last summer, Shimizu and his staff tested a prototype of their turbine with a tiny one kilowatt capacity in southern Okinawa-it survived winds that would usually shut down a three-blade turbine. But some remain skeptical of the wind turbine's chances.

Mecaro, another firm in northern Japan, has struggled to commercialize its windmill-shaped wind turbines, which also rely on the Magnus effect, said Izumi Ushiyama, a wind energy expert at Japan's Ashikaga Institute of Technology. "A wind turbine like Challenergy's could be very durable in strong winds, but without operating it throughout the year we don't know if it could produce more power than conventional turbines," he said. "This is a very interesting challenge. It's literally a 'Challenergy,'" Ushiyama added, referring to the company's name.

The little firm hopes to start mass producing a turbine with about 10 times the capacity by 2020, when Tokyo hosts the Olympics. It's a far cry from the one million kilowatts of energy that just one of Japan's nuclear reactors could produce. Still, Shimizu has high hopes for his turbine both at home and in other nations which get hammered by wind-patched storms. "If we can invent a wind turbine that suits Japan's environment, we'll be able to build them in many other places around the world that have a similar climate," Shimizu said. "That's our dream." —AFP



TOKYO: This picture shows engineer Atsushi Shimizu, founder and CEO of the Japanese venture company Challenergy, standing next to his bladeless wind turbine in Tokyo. — AFP

SOMALIA'S DROUGHT ONCE AGAIN HAS THOUSANDS ON THE MOVE

GARASBALEY, Somalia: Tears fill Sahra Muse's eyes as she stares at her severely malnourished son, his thin arms crossed over his bloated stomach. Before he succumbed to hunger, 7-year-old Ibrahim Ali had helped his mother herd the family's 30 cows on their farm in Toratorow, a village in Lower Shabelle region. But the family lost all they had to the growing drought. The 32-year-old Muse walked for three days to reach this wind-swept camp 13 kilometers south of Somalia's capital earlier this week, leaving behind her other three children and their father.

"Life is becoming so hard. We have nothing to survive, and I don't know how long he will survive," Muse said of her son. She sat in a small hut made of

sticks. Rubbing her bloodshot eyes, she said the boy's cries had kept her awake for days. The Garasbaley camp was set up by local villagers to help the desperate but they are waiting for an international agency to provide food to help the hungry. With no food at the camp and no money for transport, Muse is preparing another day's hike to the capital, Mogadishu, to help her son.

He survived the 2011 drought that killed roughly a quarter of a million people in Somalia and she is desperate to save him again. Somalia's current drought is threatening half of the country's population, or about 6 million people, according to the United Nations. Aid agencies have scaled up efforts but say more support is urgently needed. The emergency is

joined by similar hunger crises in South Sudan, northeastern Nigeria and Yemen, which together make up what the United Nations calls the world's largest humanitarian disaster in more than 70 years.

Hunger crisis

Africa's hunger crisis strikes as US President Donald Trump's proposed budget would pull the US from its traditional role as the world's largest donor to emergencies. The crisis has once again uprooted hundreds of thousands of people across Somalia, which already has a sprawling diaspora of 2 million people after a quarter-century of conflict. Drought-stricken families are on the move, trying to reach points where international aid agencies are distributing food. The agencies cannot distribute food in areas under the control of al-Shabab, Somalia's home-grown Islamic extremist rebels who are affiliated to al-Qaida.

Somalia's fragile central government struggles to assert itself beyond the capital and other limited areas. Between November and the end of February, around 257,000 people in this Horn of Africa nation have been internally displaced because of the drought, according to the UN refugee agency. Some are moving to urban areas, others into neighboring countries. Each day, dozens of new arrivals come into this camp. Exhausted and starving women hold children crying from hunger, sheltering in huts to avoid the scorching sun. — AP



Mogadishu: In this photo, newly displaced Somalis walk through a camp in the Garasbaley area on the outskirts of Mogadishu, Somalia. — AP

BIRDS HIT BY CARS ARE, WELL, BIRD-BRAINED

PARIS: What's the difference between birds that get killed by cars, and those that don't? The dead ones tend to have smaller brains, scientists who performed 3,521 avian autopsies said yesterday. What might be called the "bird brain rule" applies to different species, depending on the ratio of grey matter to body mass, they reported in the journal *Royal Society Open Science*. Crows, for example, have big brains relative to their size, and have shown a remarkable knack for navigating oncoming traffic.

While picking at road kill on Florida highways, earlier research showed, the scavengers learned to ignore cars and trucks whizzing by them within inches, but would fly away just in time when threatened by a vehicle in their lane. "I don't know if we can say they are 'smarter,' but they do exhibit cognitive behavior that makes them likely to survive," lead author Anders Pape Moller, an evolutionary biologist at the French National Centre for Scientific Research, said. Pigeons, by contrast, appear to be less adept at avoiding collisions, a deficiency visible in compressed form on most big-city streets. Not coincidentally, they have teeny-weeny brains. More surprisingly, the relation between brain size and traffic accidents also holds within the same species, the study found. "Common European blackbirds, house sparrows and robins all show this difference in individuals that were hit by cars, and those that were not," Moller said by phone. Undamaged brains from birds killed in accidents-weighed to within a hundredth of a gram-were consistently smaller, he said.

Grim tally

At the same time, other organs-liver, heart and lungs-all had the same mass. In total, the researchers examined 251 different species. The finding raises the question of whether certain species, and certain populations within species, have evolved over the space of dozens of generations such that birds with car-dodging abilities have become more common. Moller is skeptical.

Recent research has shown that evolutionary changes

in many animals-fish and insects, in particular-are occurring in response to climate change and human encroachment on habitat far more quickly than scientists imagined possible. But given that fast-moving cars have only been on the roads for less than a century, it is unlikely that birds have adapted-as a species level-that fast. "The other problem is that total mortality due to traffic is not big enough to cause evolutionary change," Moller said.

It would take a very high death toll, in other words, to exert a strong influence on the course of evolution. Having said that, a lot of birds get killed by moving vehicles. The State of the Birds annual report estimated in 2014 that 200 million birds perish on the road every year in the United States alone. Estimates for Europe are lower, but worldwide the grim tally is certainly in the hundreds of millions.

But there are an estimated 300 billion birds in the world, so the death toll is still only a fraction of one percent. There is one threat, however, to which our feathered friends almost certainly have evolved to avoid, though with limited success. The same report estimates that 2.4 billion birds fall victim in cats every year in the United States. —AFP



MOSCOW: This file photo shows a tom tit flying towards a manger in the village of Troitskoye outside Moscow. — AFP



MOWASAT WINS THE FIRST PRIZE IN KUWAIT PRIVATE SECTOR LEVEL

KUWAIT: New Mowasat Hospital won the Golden Award for outstanding performance in the field of Health, Safety and Environment, Corporate Social Responsibility, and the first place in the level of Private Sector in Kuwait. This award is provided annually by Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC) to highlight the outstanding companies and institutions in the fields of sustainability in both Public and Private sectors in Kuwait.

"The award by KNPC aims to raise the standards of Health, Safety and Environment, as well as corporate social responsibility at the local level by encouraging community groups and various NGOs to highlight their sustainable projects," said Aliaa Al-Sayed, Business Development and Marketing Manager at the Hospital in a Press Release. She praised the wide participation and honest competition among many institutions and entities whose projects and initiatives for social responsibility were reviewed by her. She added that the report obtained by Mowasat Hospital is considered one of the highest percentages on the private level. "Our social activities are of our utmost concern and we always strive to be the best as we are always present in all different sectors such as banks, ministries, schools of all types as well as private companies." She stated that the hospital is proud of this new achievement added to its achievements and giving it the leadership and excellence at the local and regional level as an integrated hospital combining the quality of health services they put in the first concern and the social initiatives and projects they consider as an essential element of its commitment towards community.

"Our concern is patient care and safety," she said adding "among the achievements of the hospital to receive the American accreditations the Certification of the Joint Commission International (JCI) and Canadian Certification of Medical Services Quality Diamond Category, the hospital seeks to renew such accreditations. This makes it one of the most prominent and oldest hospitals in the state."

The statement pointed out the hospital's concern to ensure a safe and secure working environment as a reflection of its professional and social role and responsibilities. The hospital is keen to extend bridges of cooperation and communication with the authorities concerned with the award to establish concepts and improve performance in the areas of Health, Safety and Environment and to use all means to increase public awareness of these trends.

The statement indicated that the hospital's achievement of this award is a challenge and incentive to continue to improve the system of performance with regard to the commitment to implement health conditions and standards as an integrated package with which the hospital won many awards and global accreditations.

The new Mowasat Hospital won the Golden Award this year at the 10th edition of the HSE and CSR Excellence against a range of initiatives and sustainable projects falling under the Health, Safety and Environment sectors. As well as its tangible efforts at the level of Social Posts and Awareness aiming to improve the level and quality of health service and enhance the level of awareness.

ON SIBERIAN NATIVE LAND, OIL DOESN'T TAKE NO FOR AN ANSWER

KOGALYM, Russia: The Sopochin family has seen oil majors gradually encroach on the land in Siberia where they have herded reindeer for generations, but the latest project has made them draw the line. "All of our territory sits on top of oil," says 26-year-old Stepan Sopochin, whose family is indigenous to the Siberian Khanty-Mansi region. Two companies are keen to expand production nearby, he said. "We have Lukoil coming up from the south telling us to move north, but in the north, Gazprom Neft is expanding, telling us to go south." "They will squeeze us out," said the father of two young children. He sits in the family's traditional one-room wooden hut as several dozen reindeer roam outside, digging the snow for lichen, their main source of winter food. Every April the family moves their 250-strong herd north to a less wooded area where snow melts quicker, exposing fresh grass for calving females. But this year, their only spring pasture is busy with construction vehicles and trucks hauling road-building materials and pipes.

The flurry of activity comes as Gazprom Neft—the oil arm of state-owned energy giant Gazprom—is developing a new oil field called Otdelnoye. Sopochin is not against all oil: six oil fields already operate on his kin's land and he, himself, works as an engineer at one of them, but he said Otdelnoye is going ahead without their consent. The situation is typical for the Khanty-Mansi region, where oil production is key for the Russian economy but disrupts the traditional way of life and fragile ecosystems. Russian law gives minority indigenous groups priority over land to use for traditional purposes, but they cannot sell it and, in practice, they are powerless to stop big oil projects. Only after Moscow grants them the right to drill do companies approach locals on compensation, whose amount is rarely independently assessed, experts and locals say. "It's like the train goes first and then they lay the tracks," said Natalia Proskuryakova, a lawyer, who

advises the Sopochins and other indigenous families in the region.

Nowhere left to live

Contacted by AFP, Gazprom Neft said it had accommodated the Sopochins by "significantly changing the infrastructure plan" at the site. The company said it had gone through all necessary steps to start development. Iosif Sopochin-Stepan's 58-year-old father and head of the family-said he did not believe he was being unreasonable. "We understand we must help the government, but we're against this field because we have nowhere left to live," Iosif said. "There will be oil spills and our reindeer will stray onto production areas and roads," he warned. "There will be

poachers, fishing, hunting and killing of deer."

Twice he has declined to sign a compensation contract-required before development can start-but road construction began anyway, he said. He called the oil company's current offer — 35 million rubles (about \$612,000, 560,000 euros) shared between his family and five others to be paid out over 24 years—a "handout" that he would be ashamed to accept. In a symbolic protest, the Sopochins in February erected a traditional rawhide tent at the site, only to be called in by police to explain why they were impeding development. "You might think I'm crazy, but when I last left the pasture, I hugged the trees," Iosif said. "I said goodbye and told them that I don't think I can protect them." —AFP



RUSSIA: This picture shows Stepan Sopochin, 26, and his father Iosif Sopochin, 56, standing amidst their reindeer herd outside Kogalym in the Siberian Khanty-Mansi region. — AFP

QUADRIPLLEGIC MAN REGAINS USE OF ARM

PARIS: A decade after a bike crash that left an American man paralyzed from the shoulders down, he can again feed himself, researchers hailing a medical first reported yesterday. The remarkable advance hinges on a prosthesis which circumvents rather than repairs his spinal injury, using wires, electrodes as well as computer software to reconnect the severed link between his brain and muscles. "To our knowledge, this is the first instance in the world of a person with severe and chronic paralysis directly using their own brain activity to move their own arm and hand to perform functional movements," lead study author Bolu Ajiboye of Case Western Reserve University in the United States said. The study's only patient, 56-year-old Bill Kochevar, has two surgically-implanted clusters of electrodes—each no bigger than a baby aspirin—in his head to read his brain signals, which are interpreted by a computer.

His muscles then receive their instructions from electrodes in his arm. After around ten years of immobility, this has allowed Kochevar to sip coffee, scratch his nose and eat mashed potatoes in laboratory tests. To overcome gravity that would otherwise prevent him from raising his limb, Kochevar uses a mobile support, which is also under his brain's control, according to the study published in The Lancet medical journal. Though the prosthesis remains experimental, the researchers hope their work will one day help people with paralysis do daily tasks on their own.

Groundbreaking, but

Scientists are seeking, but have not found, a way to mend spinal cord injuries that result in paralysis. In the meantime, they are developing work-around solutions that reconnect the brain to the body's muscles. Previous efforts have also used prostheses. One reported on last year was linked to

electrodes on the skin that helped an American man, Ian Burkhart, with less severe paralysis open and close his hand, the authors said. Other methods allow participants to control a robotic arm using their thoughts.

For Kochevar the process of learning to use the prosthesis started by him practicing with a simulation of an arm that appeared on a screen. From there he quickly progressed to using his mind to direct the movements of his arm. During the training he told researchers: "I just think 'out... and it goes." But the technology has limitations, including that Kochevar needs to watch his arm at all times in order to control it. This is because he has lost his intuitive sense of his limb's movements and loca-

tion, known as proprioception, due to the paralysis, according to the scientists.

Kochevar became a quadriplegic when he crashed his bicycle into the back of a truck on a rainy day, which was about eight years before the electrodes were implanted in his brain in 2014. The hope brought by the study have had a profound impact. "For somebody who's been injured eight years and couldn't move, being able to move just that little bit is awesome to me," Kochevar said. "It's better than I thought it would be." A lot of work remains before this prosthesis could be widely used. "This study is groundbreaking," wrote Steve Perlmuter of the University of Washington in a piece commenting on the case. —AFP



PARIS: This handout image released by The Lancet journal shows 56-year-old US Bill Kochevara, paralyzed from the shoulders down, feeding himself. — AFP

INDONESIAN MAN FOUND DEAD INSIDE GIANT PYTHON

MAMUJU, Indonesia: An Indonesian farmer has been discovered inside the belly of a giant python after the swollen snake was caught near where the man vanished while harvesting his crops, an official said yesterday. The body of 25-year-old Akbar was found when local people cut open the seven meter python after it was found bloated and slithering awkwardly in the village of Salubiro, on the eastern island of Sulawesi on Monday.

"We were immediately suspicious that the snake had swallowed Akbar because around the site we found palm fruit, his harvesting tool and a boot," said Junaidi, a senior village official, who like many Indonesians goes by only one name. Worried relatives launched a search for Akbar after he failed to return home from a trip to the family's plantation on Sunday.

Junaidi said the snake had swallowed the farmer whole, adding that it was the only such fatality recorded in the region. The breed of snake, which regularly tops 20 feet, is commonly found in Indonesia and the Philippines. While the serpents have been known to attack small animals, attempts to eat people are rare. In 2013, a security guard on the tourist island of Bali was killed by a python at a luxury beachfront hotel. —AFP

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CHINESE BOY CROWNED YOUNG MUSICIAN OF THE GULF 2017

By Faten Omar

Li Haiwei, a talented 13 years old Chinese boy, from the British School of Kuwait was crowned as the "Young Musician of the Gulf 2017" at the BSME YMOG 2017 competition held at Bahrain. Haiwei is not only a pianist but also a singer, ballet dancer, gymnastic, violinist and also plays guitar. Finding time to practice is a very difficult task. "Sometimes he ate his lunch on the way home from school to save 15 minutes. He is talented and has his own schedule to balance his homework and prac-

tice," Zang Feng, Haiwei's mother, said. She added that he is learning to play a violin with Galina Bojilova in school and piano with Karol Masternak in Kuwait music academy. Haiwei was born and raised in Kuwait by a Kuwaiti family; he learned to sing Kuwaiti songs although he loves his homeland China. "I have made the best out of the nurturing and opportunities that Kuwait has offered me through classes, training, stage shows and occasions to perform and entertain the audience in Kuwait. Kuwait has given me the best opportunities to live and study happily. Kuwait is my second home-

land. My mother always taught me to love both countries and to do something for them," Haiwei said. Li was invited last year by the Kuwait embassy counselor Malik Wazan to China to perform for on the celebration of Kuwait National Day. He performed a Chinese song that was written by his mother for Kuwait and China. "The counselor was in tears on listening to the song. My mom wrote exactly what she and I felt. This was the best way to express my love for both the countries," he noted. He told Kuwait Times that his mother pushed him to study hard and be a success-

ful man in the future, not to make a fortune for himself, but to donate that money to the poor and needy. "What is the use of my talent if it isn't benefiting people around me? Just like the people helping us now, due to our bad financial condition, I should return the favor by helping more and more people. This will make the world a beautiful place. Many are proud of me, and some parents encourage their children to learn from me, that is why I want to be a real role model!" Li added, "I haven't decided what I want to become in the future, I might become a

doctor, lawyer, engineer or superstar. I am very grateful of the unique opportunities that many Embassies provided me with by inviting me to play during their activities. Every day I work hard to make sure that I live up to everyone's expectations, and more importantly, the expectation I have set for myself that is, to become a bridge that can bring more and more Chinese people to get to know the greatness of Kuwait and create awareness that China is a friendly and great nation. I have attended many competitions in Kuwait, Bahrain, Dubai, UK and won many prizes."



OOREDOO CONCLUDES ITS PARTNERSHIP WITH MUROUJ

Ooredoo, the fastest network in Kuwait, is proud to announce the conclusion of its partnership with Murouj market, a monthly weekend market that showcases local entrepreneurs and businesses. The market included local farm produce, artisanal food products and crafts, with a 'street food' section aimed at highlighting the culinary diversity of Kuwait's local food community. The market also offers a section dedicated for children's activities. The market received thousands of customers since its launch last October.



Mijbil Alayoub

Commenting on this sponsorship, Ooredoo Kuwait Senior Director of Corporate Communications Mijbil Alayoub said: "We're happy with our ongoing support for local businesses and entrepreneurs through this engaging project. This sponsorship comes in tandem with our social responsibility strategy, which in turn is based on our core values of Ooredoo, of caring, connecting and challenging. We look forward to meeting those young enthusiastic small business owners as well as our valued customers at the market today."



LOYAC ORGANIZES SPRING FESTIVAL AT SHAHEED PARK

LOYAC and LAPA have been preparing to launch the Spring Festival at Al-Shaheed Park marking the conclusion of its cultural and arts season. The festival, due to be held at the park's amphitheatre, kicks off at 8.00 pm today evening and lasts till April 8 during which local, Arab and international concerts will be presented by the Jordanian Band, Harqat Cart, Ghaliya Band, Tarab Band, LAPA Musical Band and finally, the international peace artists, Nasseer Shamma. Speaking on the occasion, Al-Shaheed Park director, Yousef Al-Bo'ajian said that the first four concerts will be free while tickets will be sold for Nasseer Shamma's concert, due to be held at Jaber Al-Ahmed Cultural Center. Al-Bo'ajian added that prior booking is a must and that tickets can be booked at: <http://www.jacc-kw.com/events>.



AL-SAYER PARTICIPATES IN EARTH HOUR 2017

As part of its ongoing efforts towards sustainability Al-Sayer Group Holding has participated in Earth Hour 2017 by switching off all non-essential lights at its offices, showrooms, service stations and warehouse in Kuwait, for an hour from 8.30 pm to 9.30 pm on Saturday 25 March.

Al-Sayer Group believes in the right of future generations to inherit a clean and healthy environment, preserving the environment will remain an established principal an integral

part of its sustainability and social responsibility policy. It is the 5th consecutive year Al-Sayer Group Holding participating in the global movement, encouraging its affiliates, employees, and supporters to act voluntarily and uphold the valuable message to protect the planet.

According to Eng. Ibrahim Al-Fouzan Business Director Group Service Division and Chairman of the CSR committee "We must anticipate several risky factors such as extreme

weather conditions, water shortages, rising air pollution. Our ultimate aim is to invite all stakeholders to take part in combating climate change and contribute to sustainable growth."

"We continue our efforts to improve sustainability performance in our business units by encouraging waste recycling as well as reducing CO2 emissions, energy consumption, and water usage," said Eng. Nehad Al-Haj Ali, Deputy Group Manager Corporate Excellence.



FOUAD ALGHANIM AND SONS AUTOMOTIVE COMPANY HOSTS ACTION-PACKED FUN DAY

Fouad Alghanim & Sons Automotive Company shone the spotlight on teamwork and togetherness during an employee family fun day. The busy fun-packed event, which was held at a private camp, brought together the employees and their families for a chance to engage and interact with colleagues and their relatives in a relaxed environment while enjoying some friendly sports and physical competitions.

Employees, alongside senior management from Fouad Alghanim and Sons Automotive Company, the exclusive representative of Audi, Lamborghini and Skoda in Kuwait, embraced the occasion and took part in a range of activities. The day witnessed some healthy sporting competition in football, volleyball, tug of

war and lots more, with the mixed teams helping to emphasize the strength of the workforce unity within the firm.

Tarek Al-Shafie, General Manager of Fouad Alghanim and Sons Automotive Company, said:

"Our employees are the key asset of our success, as they spare no effort to realize the strategies and plans of the management." "This event activates personal communication channels among employees and enables them to meet colleagues from other business units. Therefore, attending this open day is a testimony of the teamwork spirit that our excellent team has always embodied." He added. The fun day put the spotlight on the company's all-inclusive culture and foster teamwork and togetherness to drive the business forwards.

SOUTH AFRICA'S DEPUTY MINISTER OF ARTS AND CULTURE VISITS KUWAIT

The Honorable Deputy Minister of Arts and Culture, Ms Thizwilondi Rejoice Mabudafhasi will lead a delegation of young musicians from the Tshwane School of Music (TSOM) Jazz Band to Kuwait from 1 to 7 April 2017. The purpose of the visit is to strengthen arts and culture relations between South Africa and Kuwait, and to participate in the cultural program of the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters in celebration of Kuwait as the Islamic Youth Capital in 2017. The Deputy Minister's program will include bilateral meetings with her counterparts, Kuwait arts and culture institutions, and visits to cultural and historical sites.

The TSOM is a non-profit organization that

provides accredited music education to students and primary school children, music therapy, along with a variety of short courses for the professional and semi-professional community musician. Students attend an instrument class, music theory class and an ensemble class every week and all students and learners play in one of the school's twenty bands. TSOM follows the University of South Africa's jazz curriculum and is an exam centre for the University of South Africa graded instrument, theory and performance exams.

TSOM's student bands have performed at a variety of events for corporate and government entities such as the City of Tshwane, South African Reserve Bank, Pretoria University Sports

Awards, Department of Arts & Culture, National Teachers Awards, University of Pretoria's Tuks Jazz UP Festival concert, etc. TSOM has also hosted a variety of South African and international music legends in the community of Eersterust since its opening in 2013, including Mafikizolo, Moss Galane, Jonathan Butler, Gary Whittner, Kicks & Sticks, Christian Scott and Bob James.

The Tshwane Music School Jazz Band will perform at various venues in Kuwait as follows:

3 April 2017, at 19.00 pm, at the Dasma Theatre.

4 April 2017, at 11.30 pm, at the Arab Open University.

5 April 2017, at 12.50 am, at the Kuwait English School.

OSN MOVIES
ACTION

- 00:00 Everly
- 02:00 The Borderlands
- 03:45 Fury
- 06:00 I Am Number Four
- 08:00 Navy Seals: The Battle For New Orleans
- 10:00 Die Another Day
- 12:15 Escape
- 14:00 Fury
- 16:15 Blown Away
- 18:15 Bad Company
- 20:15 Ant-Man
- 22:15 Mercenaries

ANIMAL PLANET HD

- 00:15 Snake Sheila
- 00:45 Bondi Vet
- 01:40 Restoration Wild
- 02:35 Tanked
- 03:25 Orangutan Island
- 04:15 Gator Boys
- 05:02 Snake Sheila
- 05:27 Snake Sheila
- 05:49 The Pool Master
- 06:36 Gorilla School
- 07:00 Gorilla School
- 07:25 Dogs/Cats/Pets 101
- 08:15 Restoration Wild
- 09:10 Orangutan Island
- 09:35 Orangutan Island
- 10:05 Tanked
- 11:00 Dogs/Cats/Pets 101
- 11:55 Bondi Vet
- 12:50 Restoration Wild
- 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 Gangland Killers
- 18:20 Life At Vet University
- 19:15 Tanked
- 20:10 Orangutan Island
- 20:35 Orangutan Island
- 21:05 Gangland Killers
- 22:00 Life At Vet University
- 22:55 Gator Boys
- 23:50 Snake Sheila

BBC FIRST

- 00:05 Eastenders

- 03:00 What Happened Next?
- 03:25 What Happened Next?
- 03:50 Ultimate Survival
- 04:40 How It's Made
- 05:05 How It's Made
- 05:30 Dirty Jobs
- 06:20 Mythbusters
- 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 Strip The Cosmos
- 17:50 NASA's Unexplained Files
- 18:40 What Happened Next?
- 19:05 What Happened Next?
- 19:30 How It's Made
- 19:55 How It's Made
- 20:20 Mythbusters
- 21:10 Strip The Cosmos
- 22:00 NASA's Unexplained Files
- 22:50 What Happened Next?
- 23:15 What Happened Next?
- 23:40 Ultimate Survival



- 00:10 Hank Zipzer
- 00:50 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

- 05:05 Art Attack
- 05:30 Henry Hugglemonster
- 05:45 Zou
- 06:00 Art Attack
- 06:30 Henry Hugglemonster
- 06:45 Loopidoo
- 07:00 Zou
- 07:15 Calimero
- 07:30 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 Unbungleable
- 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
- 21:00 Unbungleable
- 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
- 23:55 PJ Masks



- 00:20 Street Outlaws
- 01:10 Made By Destruction
- 01:35 Made By Destruction

- 19:25 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
- 19:55 K.C. Undercover
- 20:20 Kickin' It
- 20:45 Mighty Med
- 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 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
- 00:55 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
- 01:50 E! News
- 02:50 Hollywood & Football
- 03:45 Hollywood & Football
- 04:40 Hollywood & Football
- 05:30 Celebrity Style Story
- 06:00 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
- 06:55 E! News
- 07:10 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
- 08:10 E! News
- 09:10 Rob & Chyna
- 10:05 Rob & Chyna
- 11:00 Rob & Chyna
- 12:00 E! News
- 12:15 Mariah's World
- 13:10 Mariah's World
- 14:05 Mariah's World
- 15:00 E! News
- 15:15 Mariah's World
- 16:10 Mariah's World
- 17:05 Mariah's World
- 18:05 Celebrity Style Story
- 18:30 Celebrity Style Story
- 19:00 E! News
- 20:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 21:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 22:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 23:00 E! News
- 23:15 So Cosmo



- 00:00 Chopped
- 01:00 The Great Food Truck Race
- 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: Fast Feasts
- 10:30 Siba's Table: Fast Feasts
- 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 Tia Mowry At Home
- 20:30 Tia Mowry At Home
- 21:00 Dinner At Tiffani's
- 21:30 Dinner At Tiffani's
- 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
- 02:35 Granthchester Christmas Special
- 04:45 Gino's Italian Escape
- 05:15 Home Fires
- 06:10 The Chase
- 07:05 The Jonathan Ross Show
- 08:00 Granthchester Christmas Special
- 09:20 Eggheads
- 10:00 Home Fires
- 10:55 The Chase
- 11:50 The Jonathan Ross Show
- 12:45 Emmerdale
- 13:15 Coronation Street
- 13:45 Coronation Street
- 14:15 The Chase
- 15:10 The Jonathan Ross Show
- 16:00 Don't Tell The Bride
- 17:00 5 Star Family Reunion

- 17:50 Home Fires
- 18:45 Emmerdale
- 19:15 Coronation Street
- 19:45 Coronation Street
- 20:10 The Jonathan Ross Show
- 21:00 Don't Tell The Bride
- 22:00 5 Star Family Reunion
- 22:50 Emmerdale
- 23:15 Coronation Street
- 23:40 Coronation Street



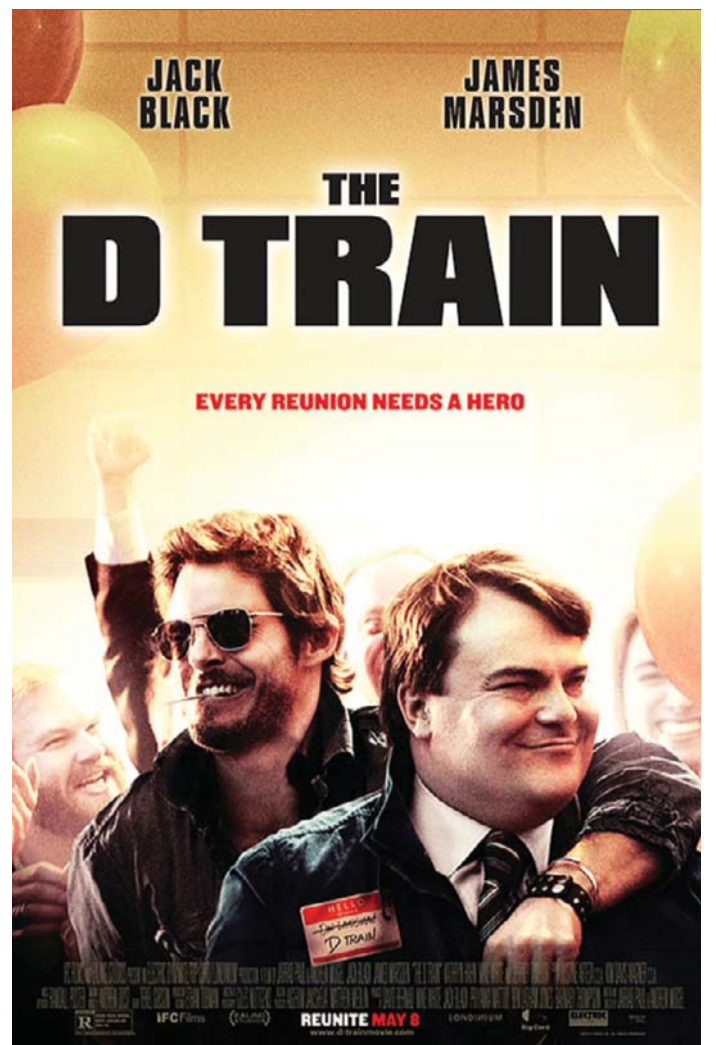
- 00:00 World War II: Lost Films
- 01:00 Cities Of The Underworld
- 02:00 America's Book Of Secrets
- 02:50 Ancient Aliens
- 03:40 Ancient Top 10
- 04:30 The Universe
- 05:20 World War II: Lost Films
- 06:10 The Universe
- 07:00 Cities Of The Underworld
- 08:00 America's Book Of Secrets
- 09:00 Ancient Aliens
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- 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 Million Dollar Genius
- 23:00 The Universe



- 00:20 Britain's Bloodiest Dynasty
- 01:10 Counting Cars
- 01:35 Car Hunters
- 02:00 Forged In Fire
- 02:50 Storage Wars
- 03:15 American Pickers
- 04:05 Pawn Stars
- 04:30 Pawn Stars
- 05:00 Mountain Men
- 06:00 American Restoration
- 06:50 Shipping Wars
- 07:15 Shipping Wars
- 07:40 Counting Cars
- 08:05 Car Hunters
- 08:30 Pawn Stars
- 09:20 Storage Wars
- 09:45 Storage Wars
- 10:10 American Pickers
- 11:00 Alone
- 11:50 Time Team
- 12:40 Swamp People
- 13:30 Ax Men
- 14:20 Mountain Men
- 15:10 Ice Road Truckers
- 16:00 Counting Cars
- 16:25 Counting Cars
- 16:50 Pawn Stars
- 17:40 Forged In Fire
- 18:30 Counting Cars
- 18:55 Car Hunters
- 19:20 Mountain Men
- 20:10 American Pickers
- 21:00 Outlaw Chronicles: Hells Angels
- 21:50 Search For The Lost Giants
- 22:40 Hunting Hitler
- 23:30 American Pickers



- 00:15 Bangkok Airport
- 01:05 The Best Job In The World
- 01:30 Dog Whisperer
- 02:20 Cool Spaces
- 03:10 Valentine Warner Eats Scandinavia
- 03:35 Maximum Foodie
- 04:00 Confucius Was A Foodie
- 04:50 Top Chef Top Table: Seoul
- 05:20 Raw Travel
- 05:45 Raw Travel
- 06:15 Restoration Man
- 07:10 The Best Job In The World
- 07:35 Dog Whisperer
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- 20:00 Confucius Was A Foodie
- 20:55 The Food Files



THE D TRAIN ON OSN MOVIES HD

- 21:20 Haw I Travel
- 21:45 Raw Travel
- 22:10 Restoration Man
- 23:00 The Best Job In The World
- 23:25 Dog Whisperer



- 00:10 Right Footed
- 01:00 Years Of Living Dangerously
- 02:00 Top Ten Natural Disasters
- 03:50 Right Footed
- 04:45 Ancient X-Files
- 05:40 Yukon Gold
- 06:35 Science Of Stupid
- 07:30 Science Of Stupid
- 07:30 Ultimate Airport Dubai
- 08:25 Mega Factories: Supercars
- 09:20 Ancient X-Files
- 10:15 Apocalypse: The Rise Of Hitler
- 11:10 Apocalypse: The Rise Of Hitler
- 12:05 Locked Up Abroad
- 13:00 Mega Factories: Supercars
- 14:00 Ultimate Airport Dubai
- 15:00 Science Of Stupid
- 15:30 Science Of Stupid
- 16:00 Hitler's Supergun
- 17:00 Nazi Sunken Sub
- 18:00 Locked Up Abroad
- 19:00 Science Of Stupid
- 19:30 Science Of Stupid
- 20:00 Hitler's Supergun
- 20:50 Nazi Sunken Sub
- 21:40 Locked Up Abroad
- 22:30 Science Of Stupid
- 22:55 Science Of Stupid
- 23:20 Yukon Gold



- 12:00 Love & Mercy
- 14:00 Young Ones
- 15:45 The Express
- 18:00 Whiplash
- 20:00 The Homesman
- 22:15 The Assassination Of Jesse James

- 01:00 Doctor Proctor's Fat Powder
- 02:45 Mamma Moo And Crow
- 04:30 Mommies And The Comet Chase
- 06:00 Doodie I'm A Zombie
- 07:30 Jungle Book: Mowgli's Adventure
- 09:15 Dixie And The Zombie Rebellion
- 10:30 Doctor Proctor's Fat Powder
- 12:45 Mamma Moo And Crow
- 14:00 Bonta
- 16:00 Dixie And The Zombie Rebellion
- 18:00 Cher Ami
- 20:00 Evolution Man
- 21:45 Bonta
- 23:15 Jungle Book: Mowgli's Adventure



- 00:15 The D Train
- 02:15 Independence Day
- 04:45 People Like Us
- 07:00 Goosebumps
- 09:15 A Lot Like Love
- 11:15 Independence Day
- 13:45 Wall Street: Money Never Sleeps
- 16:00 The Walk
- 18:15 A Civil Action
- 20:15 Unstoppable
- 22:00 Fifty Shades Of Grey



- 00:30 How Do They Do It?
- 00:55 Food Factory
- 01:20 Strip The Cosmos
- 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 Strip The Cosmos
- 06:12 How The Earth Works
- 07:00 How Do They Do It?
- 07:26 The Big Brain Theory
- 08:14 Mythbusters
- 09:02 How The Earth Works
- 09:50 How Do They Do It?
- 10:14 Food Factory
- 10:38 Sport Science
- 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 Strip The Cosmos
- 16:14 Mythbusters
- 17:02 How The Earth Works
- 17:50 The Big Brain Theory
- 18:40 Mythbusters
- 19:30 Food Factory USA
- 19:55 Food Factory USA
- 20:20 How Do They Do It?
- 20:45 Food Factory
- 21:10 How The Earth Works
- 22:00 Food Factory USA
- 22:25 Food Factory USA
- 22:50 The Big Brain Theory
- 23:40 Mythbusters



- 01:00 Confessions Of A Teenage Drama Queen
- 03:00 House Arrest
- 05:00 Toy Story 3
- 07:00 Bark Ranger
- 09:00 Pooch's Heffalump Movie
- 10:15 Lego DC Comics: Justice League Cosmic Clash
- 12:00 Toy Story 3
- 14:00 Pooch's Heffalump Movie
- 15:15 The Land Before Time: Journey Of The Brave
- 17:00 Gnomeo & Juliet
- 18:45 Hotel For Dogs
- 20:45 Santa's Little Helper
- 22:30 The Land Before Time: Journey Of The Brave



- 00:15 The To Do List
- 02:15 The Bad News Bears (2005)
- 04:15 The Final Girls
- 06:00 Love, Rosie
- 08:00 The Bad News Bears (2005)
- 10:00 The Final Girls
- 11:45 Love, Rosie
- 13:45 The Golden Child
- 15:45 Forces Of Nature
- 17:45 Paul Blart: Mall Cop 2
- 19:45 The Mexican
- 22:00 Playing It Cool



- 00:15 The Witch
- 02:00 Hidden Agenda
- 04:00 The End Of The Tour
- 06:00 Foreverland
- 07:45 No God No Master
- 09:45 Spotlight



BLOWN AWAY ON OSN MOVIES ACTION

- 00:40 Poldark
- 01:35 Last Tango In Halifax
- 02:30 DCI Banks
- 03:20 DCI Banks
- 04:05 Doctors
- 04:35 Eastenders
- 05:05 New Tricks
- 06:00 Doctors
- 06:30 Doctors
- 07:00 Holly City
- 08:00 Father Brown
- 08:45 Doctor Who
- 09:35 New Tricks
- 10:30 Doctors
- 11:00 Eastenders
- 11:35 Father Brown
- 12:25 Doctor Who
- 13:15 New Tricks
- 14:15 Doctors
- 14:45 Eastenders
- 15:20 Father Brown
- 16:10 Doctor Who
- 17:05 New Tricks
- 18:00 Doctors
- 18:30 Eastenders
- 19:05 Father Brown
- 20:00 Holly City
- 21:00 Mum
- 21:30 Uncle
- 22:00 The Detectivists
- 22:30 The Detectivists
- 23:00 Stag
- 23:55 Doctors

- 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
- 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 Ponks
- 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
- 23:00 Kirby Buckets
- 23:35 Binny And The Ghost

- 02:00 You Have Been Warned
- 02:50 Impossible Engineering
- 03:40 Fast N' Loud
- 04:30 Storage Hunters
- 05:00 How Do They Do It?
- 05:30 How Do They Do It?
- 06:00 Outback Truckers
- 06:50 Street Outlaws
- 07:40 Fast N' Loud
- 08:30 Venom Hunters
- 09:20 Storage Hunters
- 09:45 How Do They Do It?
- 10:10 How Do They Do It?
- 10:35 Made By Destruction
- 11:00 Made By Destruction
- 11:25 You Have Been Warned
- 12:15 Impossible Engineering
- 13:05 How Do They Do It?
- 13:30 Storage Hunters
- 13:55 Storage Hunters
- 14:20 Alaska: The Last Frontier
- 15:10 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 What On Earth?
- 21:50 Treasure Quest: Snake Island
- 22:40 The Wheel: Survival Games
- 23:30 Fast N' Loud



- 06:00 Gravity Falls
- 06:25 Counterfeit Cat
- 06:50 Atomic Puppet
- 07:15 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
- 11:30 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



PLAYING IT COOL ON MOVIES COMEDY HD

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KNCC PROGRAMME FROM THURSDAY TO WEDNESDAY (30/03/2017 TO 05/04/2017)

Channel	Time	Programme	Channel	Time	Programme	Channel	Time	Programme
SHARQIA-1	1:15 PM	POWER RANGERS	4:45 PM	COLLIDE	9:15 PM			
AKHER DEEK FE MASR -Arabic	3:30 PM	KONG: SKULL ISLAND	7:15 PM	COLLIDE	11:15 PM			
DAYLIGHT'S END	5:45 PM	DAYLIGHT'S END	9:45 PM	COLLIDE	1:15 AM			
AKHER DEEK FE MASR -Arabic	8:00 PM					AVENUES-2		
AKHER DEEK FE MASR -Arabic	10:15 PM					KONG: SKULL ISLAND -3D-4DX	12:15 PM	
DAYLIGHT'S END	12:30 AM					KONG: SKULL ISLAND -3D-4DX	2:45 PM	
		FANAR-3	12:45 PM			POWER RANGERS-2D-4DX	5:15 PM	
SHARQIA-2	1:00 PM	NAAM SHABANA -Hindi	3:30 PM			KONG: SKULL ISLAND -3D-4DX	7:45 PM	
SMURFS:THE LOST VILLAGE	3:00 PM	NO FRI				KONG: SKULL ISLAND -3D-4DX	10:15 PM	
SMURFS:THE LOST VILLAGE	5:00 PM	GURU -Telugu	3:30 PM			KONG: SKULL ISLAND -3D-4DX	12:45 AM	
SMURFS:THE LOST VILLAGE	7:00 PM	FRI						
SMURFS:THE LOST VILLAGE	9:00 PM	NAAM SHABANA -Hindi	6:30 PM			AVENUES-3		
KONG: SKULL ISLAND	11:00 PM	NO FRI+MON				SAFRA 5 NJOOM	12:15 PM	
		GURU -Telugu	6:30 PM			SAFRA 5 NJOOM	2:30 PM	
SHARQIA-3	12:30 PM	FRI+MON				SAFRA 5 NJOOM	4:45 PM	
GET OUT	2:45 PM	AKHER DEEK FE MASR -Arabic	9:30 PM			SAFRA 5 NJOOM	7:00 PM	
GET OUT	5:00 PM	AKHER DEEK FE MASR -Arabic	11:45 PM			SAFRA 5 NJOOM	9:15 PM	
NAAM SHABANA -Hindi	7:45 PM					SAFRA 5 NJOOM	11:30 PM	
COLLIDE	9:45 PM							
GET OUT	12:05 AM	FANAR-4	11:45 AM			AVENUES-4		
		SMURFS:THE LOST VILLAGE	1:45 PM			KONG: SKULL ISLAND	12:45 PM	
MUHALAB-1	12:15 PM	SMURFS:THE LOST VILLAGE	3:45 PM			AKHER DEEK FE MASR -Arabic	3:15 PM	
GET OUT	2:30 PM	SMURFS:THE LOST VILLAGE	5:45 PM			AKHER DEEK FE MASR -Arabic	5:45 PM	
GET OUT	5:00 PM	SMURFS:THE LOST VILLAGE	7:45 PM			NO MON		
NAAM SHABANA -Hindi	7:15 PM	SMURFS:THE LOST VILLAGE	9:45 PM			Special Show "SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE"	5:45 PM	
GET OUT	10:15 PM	COLLIDE	11:45 PM					
GET OUT	12:30 AM					AVENUES-5		
		FANAR-5	12:00 PM			SMURFS:THE LOST VILLAGE -3D	1:00 PM	
MUHALAB-2	11:30 AM	SAFRA 5 NJOOM	2:00 PM			SMURFS:THE LOST VILLAGE	3:00 PM	
SLEEPLESS	1:30 PM	SAFRA 5 NJOOM	4:00 PM			SMURFS:THE LOST VILLAGE -3D	5:00 PM	
NAAM SHABANA -Hindi	1:30 PM	SAFRA 5 NJOOM	6:00 PM			SMURFS:THE LOST VILLAGE	7:00 PM	
NO FRI		SAFRA 5 NJOOM	8:00 PM			NO TUE		
GURU -Telugu	1:30 PM	SAFRA 5 NJOOM	10:00 PM			Special Show "SLEEPLESS"	7:00 PM	
FRI		SAFRA 5 NJOOM	12:05 AM			TUE		
NAAM SHABANA -Hindi	4:30 PM					GET OUT	9:00 PM	
NO FRI		MARINA-1	1:15 PM			NO FRI		
GURU -Telugu	4:30 PM	COLLIDE	3:15 PM			Special Show "SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE"		
FRI		KONG: SKULL ISLAND	5:45 PM			FRI		
KONG: SKULL ISLAND	7:30 PM	COLLIDE	7:45 PM			GET OUT	11:15 PM	
NO FRI+SAT+MON		AKHER DEEK FE MASR -Arabic	10:15 PM					
GURU -Telugu	7:30 PM	COLLIDE	12:30 AM			AVENUES-6		
FRI+SAT+MON						GET OUT	11:30 AM	
KONG: SKULL ISLAND	10:30 PM	MARINA-2	12:45 PM			GET OUT	1:30 PM	
SLEEPLESS	1:00 AM	GET OUT	3:00 PM			GET OUT	3:45 PM	
		GET OUT	5:15 PM			GET OUT	6:00 PM	
MUHALAB-3	12:00 PM	GET OUT	7:30 PM			GET OUT	8:15 PM	
SMURFS:THE LOST VILLAGE	2:00 PM	GET OUT	9:45 PM			GET OUT	10:30 PM	
SMURFS:THE LOST VILLAGE	4:00 PM	GET OUT	12:05 AM			GET OUT	12:45 AM	
SMURFS:THE LOST VILLAGE	6:00 PM					AVENUES-7		
SMURFS:THE LOST VILLAGE	8:00 PM	MARINA-3	12:00 PM			DAYLIGHT'S END	11:45 AM	
SMURFS:THE LOST VILLAGE	10:00 PM	SMURFS:THE LOST VILLAGE	2:00 PM			DAYLIGHT'S END	2:00 PM	
COLLIDE	10:00 PM	SMURFS:THE LOST VILLAGE	4:00 PM			SLEEPLESS	4:15 PM	
COLLIDE	12:05 AM	SMURFS:THE LOST VILLAGE	6:00 PM			DAYLIGHT'S END	6:15 PM	
		NO THU				DAYLIGHT'S END	8:30 PM	
FANAR-1	1:00 PM	Special Show "SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE"	6:00 PM			DAYLIGHT'S END	10:45 PM	
GET OUT	3:15 PM	THU				DAYLIGHT'S END	1:00 AM	
GET OUT	5:45 PM	SMURFS:THE LOST VILLAGE	8:00 PM					
LIFE	8:00 PM	SMURFS:THE LOST VILLAGE	10:00 PM			AVENUES-8		
GET OUT	10:15 PM	LIFE	12:05 AM			SLEEPLESS	11:30 AM	
GET OUT	12:30 AM					KONG: SKULL ISLAND	1:30 PM	
		SMURFS:THE LOST VILLAGE- Arabic	1:15 PM			KONG: SKULL ISLAND	4:00 PM	
DAYLIGHT'S END	12:00 PM	SMURFS:THE LOST VILLAGE- Arabic	3:15 PM			HEBBULI- Kannada	6:30 PM	
KONG: SKULL ISLAND	2:15 PM	COLLIDE	7:15 PM			NAAM SHABANA -Hindi	9:30 PM	

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EMERGENCY

Automated enquiry about the Civil ID card is **1889988**

PRAYER TIMINGS

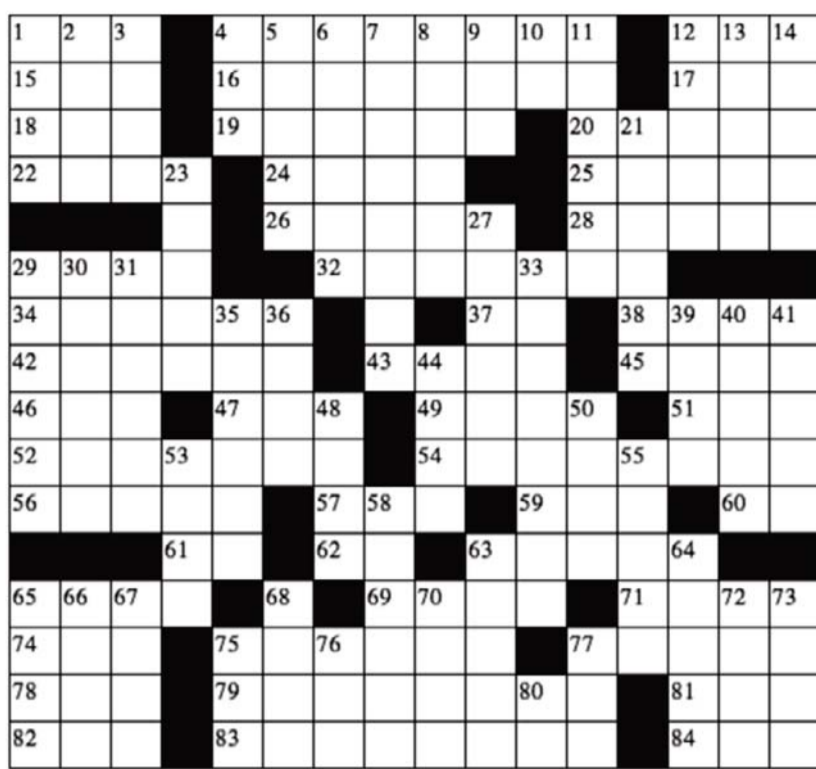
Fajr: 04:21
 Shorook: 05:41
 Duh: 11:53
 Asr: 15:23
 Maghrib: 18:04
 Isha: 19:22

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

DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Thursday 30/3/2017				Departure Flights on Thursday 30/3/2017			
Airlines	Fit	Route	Time	Airlines	Fit	Route	Time
KLM	411	Amsterdam/Dammam	00:20	FDB	076	Dubai	14:05
JZR	267	Beirut	00:30	AXB	394	Kozhikode	14:10
JZR	539	Cairo	00:40	UAE	872	Dubai	14:15
KAC	102	London	00:55	KAC	561	Amman	14:20
THY	772	Istanbul	00:55	KAC	521	Al Najaf	14:45
MSC	411	Asyut	01:00	KNE	382	Taif	14:50
RJA	642	Amman	01:05	FEG	932	Alexandria	14:55
QTR	1086	Doha	01:15	KAC	673	Dubai	15:00
SAI	441	Lahore	01:30	FDB	060	Dubai	15:10
THY	764	Istanbul	01:50	KAC	785	Jeddah	15:15
DLH	635	Doha	01:55	PAL	669	Manila	15:20
PGT	858	Istanbul	02:00	GFA	222	Bahrain	15:25
AXB	395	Kozhikode	02:00	QTR	1079	Doha	15:40
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:05	JZR	188	Dubai	15:40
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30	SWA	501	Jeddah	15:45
UAE	853	Dubai	02:30	KNE	530	Jeddah	15:55
OMA	643	Muscat	02:55	FDB	8054	Dubai	16:05
KKK	6506	Istanbul	02:55	ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
FDB	069	Dubai	03:05	KAC	357	Kochi	16:20
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:10	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:30
MSR	612	Cairo	03:10	OMA	646	Muscat	16:35
QTR	1076	Doha	03:30	SAW	706	Dammam	16:55
KAC	546	Cairo	03:55	KNE	532	Jeddah	16:55
LMU	510	Cairo	04:00	KAC	675	Dubai	7:00
MSC	501	Alexandria	04:05	JZR	266	Beirut	17:05
KAC	418	Manila	04:25	JZR	240	Amman	17:15
JZR	503	Luxor	05:10	FDB	052	Dubai	17:25
JZR	529	Asyut	05:15	KAC	615	Bahrain	17:35
KAC	354	BLR	05:20	QTR	1073	Doha	17:40
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:20	KAC	343	Chennai	17:40
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:45	UAE	858	Dubai	17:45
THY	770	Istanbul	05:55	JZR	538	Cairo	17:45
KAC	364	Colombo	06:05	RJA	641	Amman	17:55
KAC	206	Islamabad	06:20	KAC	331	Trivandrum	18:00
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	06:25	SWA	511	Riyadh	18:15
BAW	157	London	06:40	KAC	353	BLR	18:15
QTR	8511	Doha	07:00	GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
PAL	668	Manila/Dubai	07:00	KAC	283	Dhaka	18:30
KAC	204	Lahore	07:15	JZR	184	Dubai	18:40
FDB	5061	Dubai	07:15	NIA	252	Alexandria	18:55
KAC	284	Dhaka	07:35	JZR	554	Alexandria	18:55
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	FDB	064	Dubai	19:05
KAC	302	Mumbai	08:20	JZR	124	Bahrain	19:15
UAE	855	Dubai	08:40	UAE	876	Dubai	19:30
KAC	382	Delhi	08:45	MSR	621	Cairo	19:30
IRA	667	Esfahan	09:00	QTR	1081	Doha	19:50
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	09:05	ABY	124	Sharjah	20:05
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:05	GFA	218	Bahrain	20:15
KAC	352	Kochi	09:10	KAC	383	Delhi	20:30
QTR	1070	Doha	09:30	FDB	058	Dubai	20:35
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	KAC	361	Colombo	20:35
SVA	512	Riyadh	10:00	KAC	775	Riyadh	20:45
AVV	653	Sohag	10:10	KNE	232	Riyadh	20:55
IRA	673	Ahwaz	10:10	MSR	619	Alexandria	21:00
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	OMA	648	Muscat	21:10
SYR	341	Dammam	11:00	KAC	619	Doha	21:20
RBG	553	Alexandria	11:15	QTR	1089	Doha	21:35
MSC	403	Asyut	11:15	DLH	634	Doha	21:35
JZR	165	Dubai	11:30	DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50
FDK	801	Dammam	11:45	FDB	5054	Dubai	21:50
MEA	404	Beirut	11:55	KAC	351	Kochi	22:00
KAC	744	Dammam	12:10	KAC	205	Islamabad	22:00
KAC	286	Dhaka	12:25	ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	22:15
JZR	561	Sohag	12:40	MEA	403	Beirut	22:20
JZR	239	Amman	12:45	ALK	230	Colombo	22:25
FDB	075	Dubai	12:50	GFA	220	Bahrain	22:30
UAE	871	Dubai	12:50	KAC	381	Delhi	22:40
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00	KAC	301	Mumbai	22:45
AXB	393	Kozhikode	13:10	KAC	1543	Cairo	22:45
KAC	614	Bahrain	13:30	UAE	860	Dubai	22:55
				KLM	417	Dammam/Amsterdam	23:05
				ETD	310	Abu Dhabi	23:05
				NIA	152	Cairo	23:10
				QTR	1083	Doha	23:20

CROSSWORD 1563



ACROSS

1. A federal agency established to regulate the release of new foods and health-related products.
4. Dance and make rhythmic clicking sounds by means of metal plates nailed to the sole of the dance shoes.
12. (Roman mythology) Goddess of abundance and fertility.
15. A boy or man.
16. The quality of being alien.
17. A case for containing a set of articles.
18. Black tropical American cuckoo.
19. Tropical American bird resembling a blue jay and having greenish and bluish plumage.
20. A republic in southern Europe on the Italian Peninsula.
22. A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
24. Employed in accomplishing something.
25. Lap at the front of a coat.
26. A unit of elastance equal to the reciprocal of a farad.
28. Any of a class of organic compounds that contain the divalent radical -CONHCO-.
29. Type genus of the Alcidae comprising solely the razorbill.
32. A member of a North American people formerly living in the Colorado river valley in Arizona.
34. African tree having an exceedingly thick trunk and fruit that resembles a gourd and has an edible pulp called monkey bread.
37. A ductile malleable reddish-brown corrosion-resistant diamagnetic metallic element.
38. United States tennis player who was the first Black to win United States and English singles championships (1943-1993).
42. Small genus of mediterranean shrubs.
43. (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.
45. Flesh of fish found in colder waters of northern Atlantic coast of the United States.
46. Angular distance above the horizon (especially of a celestial object).
47. A gradual decline (in size or strength or power or number).
49. The content of cognition.
51. A dark-skinned member of a race of people living in Australia when Europeans arrived.
52. (biology) Belonging to or active during the day.
54. Shad-like North American marine fishes used for fish meal and oil and fertilizer.
56. (of pain or sorrow) Made easier to bear.
57. A sweetened beverage of diluted fruit juice.
59. A metric unit of volume or capacity equal to 10 liters.
60. A white soft metallic element that tarnishes readily.
61. A very poisonous metallic element that has three allotropic forms.
62. A light strong brittle gray toxic bivalent metallic element.
65. A small ball with a hole through the middle.
69. Any of numerous local fertility and nature deities worshipped by ancient Semitic peoples.
71. An anxiety disorder associated with serious traumatic events and characterized by such symptoms as guilt about surviving or reliving the trauma in dreams or numbness and lack of involvement with reality or recurrent thoughts and images.

74. A condition (mostly in boys) characterized by behavioral and learning disorders.
78. Hormone secreted by the posterior pituitary gland (trade name Pitressin) and also by nerve endings in the hypothalamus.
79. Forced or compelled or put in force.
81. A workplace for the conduct of scientific research.
82. Experiencing or showing sorrow or unhappiness.
83. Having deserted a cause or principle.
84. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.

DOWN

1. Loose or flaccid body fat.
2. (Irish) Mother of the Tuatha De Danann.
3. A nearly horizontal passage from the surface into a mine.
4. A woolen cap of Scottish origin.
5. Using the voice.
6. A large two-handed saw formerly used to cut logs into planks.
7. A light brown raw cane sugar from Guyana.
8. Of or relating to an anode.
9. A luminance unit equal to 1 candle per square meter measured perpendicular to the rays from the source.
10. A soft silver-white ductile metallic element (liquid at normal temperatures).
11. Tropical African herbs.
12. Similar to the giraffe but smaller with much shorter neck and stripe on the legs.
13. Thrown together in a pile.
14. A particular kind (as to appearance).
21. Chipmunks of eastern North America.
23. Jordan's port.
27. The face or front of a building.
30. Any of various spectacular plants of the genus Laelia having showy flowers in many colors.
31. Type genus of the Cottidae.
33. Of or relating to or near the pudendum.
35. A sum of money paid in compensation for loss or injury.
36. A small cake leavened with yeast.
39. Any of a number of fishes of the family Carangidae.
40. United States neuroscientist noted for his studies of the neural basis of vision (born in 1926).
41. (possibly Roman) Goddess of horses and mules and asses.
44. Costing 10 dollars.
48. Divulge information or secrets.
50. According to the Old Testament he was a pagan king of Israel and husband of Jezebel (9th century BC).
53. Having been read.
55. The 1st letter of the Hebrew alphabet.
58. Someone who owes money.
63. Genus of tropical plants with creeping rootstocks and small umbellate flowers.
64. An ancient upright stone slab bearing markings.
66. Tropical starchy tuberous root.
67. A condition (mostly in boys) characterized by behavioral and learning disorders.
68. Something causes misery or death.
70. A river in northern England that flows southeast through West Yorkshire.
72. Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
73. A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
75. (Irish) The sea personified.
76. A fluorocarbon with chlorine.
77. (astronomy) A measure of time defined by Earth's orbital motion.
80. Half the width of an em.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You will find this a beautiful day... One filled with granted wishes, surprise gifts and after work you may enjoy visits from people that you have not seen for some time. Today there is some thread of awareness to communicate carefully. Because you enjoy life and live life in the most positive way, you also influence others in positive ways. The people with whom you work encourage you and you encourage them. This profession is so workable that if you were to think of changing your work situation, you might not want to take any chances to leave your present situation and learn something new. What makes you think your days in a different place might not be a good change many friends want to help tonight.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

This is not perhaps a good time for you to try out new things or break away from the old routine. It is the routine of things that provides you with that all-is-right-with-the-world feeling. There is a bit of time to tend to the most urgent of work problems and then the rest of the day just seems to fall into shape. You might keep a camera at work or use your phone for pictures as you take your noon meal out-of-doors today. You could be within walking distance to some sweet places for viewing birds, shapes of buildings, tricks of light, a doggy park or perhaps, people. As your workday comes to an end, you and your friends may decide a trip home could become a skating, bicycling or some other sports equipment type of race. A home project is finally finished tonight.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Your management and directional abilities are in high focus. You do not enjoy gossip or nosy people and may have to practice some gentle aggressiveness with the offender when it concerns interruptions involving gossip. Because you value what is aboveboard and straightforward, you may also have an aversion to what is secret, intense and private. In your place of work, you make it easy for you to be original, have breakthroughs and find new solutions to old problems. A better and faster way to complete a job is just what you aim to accomplish. After work today, you may find a need to do a few chores such as mending clothes and cooking some vegetables from your garden. You enjoy growing a garden and may do a bit of weed removal.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You may be playing the role of healer, teacher or critic this morning. You will receive good news surrounding some recent work project. A subject you enjoy learning more about, and teaching the results as well, completes your day. You may find lots of questions at the presentation of this project but a great deal of satisfaction is enjoyed when you see the light-bulb effect in your interested listeners. Subjects of a spiritual or psychic nature have your attention later today and may set your imagination zooming into some fantastic storyline or art expression. One of the entertainment activities from your past comes to mind and you bring it to the attention of your family this evening. Everyone gets a turn at writing the story. Now read it back.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

You may see value in or feel respect for an older person or someone in authority. If your career progress has not been up to par, you may do a little self-talk to encourage yourself to become more deliberate and better organized at your position. It may be a good idea to have a conference with a higher-up in order to discover ways in which you might improve your work. There may be a class you can take that would help you to learn some techniques to help you better your work progress. Learning a new skill may be what is either slowing you down or helping you to move forward-all is good. You are a friendly person and enjoy adding to your friendship circle. Your co-worker friends can be helpful in allowing you to observe their work techniques.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You are brave to deal with people that seem to be consumed by frustrations but your preference is to be successful in finding the thing that will satisfy the complainer. You statistically come out ahead when it comes to wins regarding a satisfied customer. When you are privy to a new job identity you might decide more income is better. You will have the opportunity to improve, advance and grow. This afternoon there may be a doll exhibit or some special fun activity you will want to treat yourself to-take pictures. You fill your time away from work in wise and positive ways. You may find that some of your nature pictures placed around your little work space will bring many smiles to your heart while you talk to the complainant.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

In a professional meeting where everyone is invited to talk, you may be the one that keeps the time for each entry. This could be medical, legal, trucking or any sort of businesses that depends on order, timing and scheduling. You are part of the process to help business flow smoothly. This process keeps subjects moving. If a subject needs more attention there will be higher-ups to make the decision regarding the order of importance. New insight and new changes happen week to week and no matter what really happens in your place of business, you can see how importantly each individual employee contributes to the company. You may become quite proud of a new way to look at a job you thought might not be too important-it is not just a job.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You are held to your promises this day. In the future, be very careful what you promise. You will find this a great time to get much work accomplished, particularly if you are on some planning committee. Details have been decided and a signature completes the work. During lunch you may enjoy some time to yourself in the out-of-doors. A little sun and a little fresh air make the afternoon run much smoother. This afternoon you buckle down and get some projects that were previously unfinished finally finished. You and your friends may be planning a camping trip soon. You may decide to call a nearby lake or resort area to see what dates are available during the time you and your friends want to take some vacation time.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Your comprehension of issues is broadened this day. An article or the viewpoint of someone near you helps you to adopt more tolerance of dissenting views-a new viewpoint perhaps. Communicating and getting your message across to others is at a high and you enjoy the opportunity to expand your knowledge. Someone in your office makes extra money with a hobby and you might think over what you might be able to do in order to make extra money. This is a time where you will enjoy good relations with family members. You have a natural sense for communicating with others, especially those younger than yourself. Perhaps some of your young friends will help you with a garden this year.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

There are some long-range and long-distance matters in business this month that may grab your attention, particularly today. There may be a choice of who drives a car to a destination or who will fly in a plane. There are new opportunities coming your way that will help you decide your next profession or investment. An adventure is about to bring you some good insight. You are able to sit back and see things from a different perspective. At your noon break, an impromptu get-together with a few co-workers may be fun and a good way to release some anxiety. Plans with friends can be made for after the workday. A movie, a book review and other ways to become involved with your friends prove to be an enjoyable this afternoon and evening.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

You may set out to accomplish certain things today, but find that interruptions easily occur. If you cannot avoid the distractions, see them as ways to relax and observe. There is a new flow of business causing the flow of work to move a little more efficiently. Exercise care for a few more days with regard to excessive spending. Special sales and advertising can keep you a bit frustrated. However, you may be a bit too busy to be shopping at this time. A fairly new member of your workgroup may need some help. New neighbors announce themselves. You may find a great opportunity to do some sort of trade with them that will continue to work out very well in the future. Close personal ties to the young people in your life may create good opportunities.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Camping, fishing, hiking and other outdoor activities fill your thoughts this morning. You may plan to visit with someone after work that has your like interests and will camp with you. Work moves along easily and you may want to help with a few additional chores around the break room or bathrooms to clear away old food or trash-pictures may show higher-ups that someone needs to have a conversation with the cleaning staff. Being successful in life is becoming easier and easier-you have a built-in sense of how to approach and unravel even difficult situations. You also seem to have taken on that can-do attitude. The fun part of your day begins as you take pride in your accomplishments, close your office door and begin your camp plans with friends.

WORD SEARCH

Songs From the Year 2003

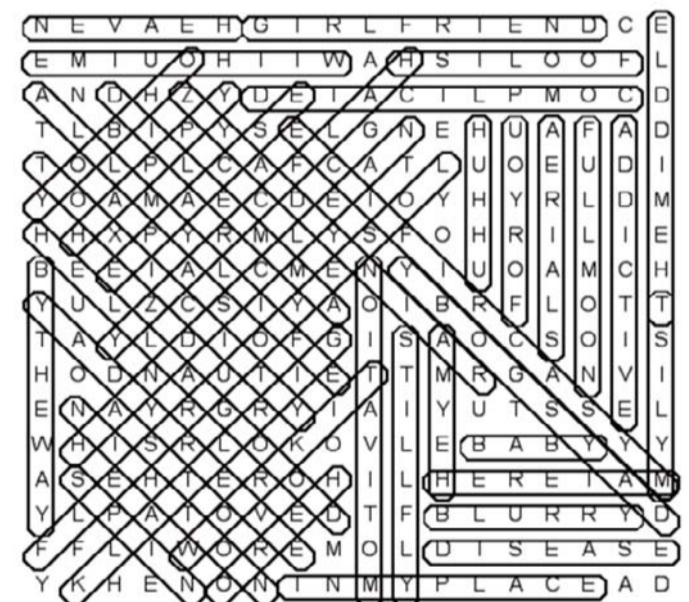
Find and circle all of the songs from 2003 that are hidden in the grid. The remaining 22 letters spell an additional song title from 2003.



- ALL I HAVE
- ANGEL
- BABY BOY
- BEAUTIFUL
- CLOCKS
- COME OVER
- DRIFT AWAY
- FIGHTER
- FRONTIN'
- GET BUSY
- GET LOW
- GOSSIP FOLKS
- HEADSTRONG
- I CAN
- I WANT YOU
- I'M WITH YOU
- IGNITION
- IN DA CLUB
- INTUITION
- LANDSLIDE
- LIKE A STONE
- LIKE GLUE
- MESMERIZE
- MISS YOU
- PICTURE
- RAIN ON ME
- RIGHT THURR
- SAY YES
- SENORITA
- SO GONE
- SOMEDAY
- STAND UP
- STUCK
- SUGA SUGA
- SUNRISE
- SUPERMAN
- TROUBLE
- UNWELL

Yesterday's Solution

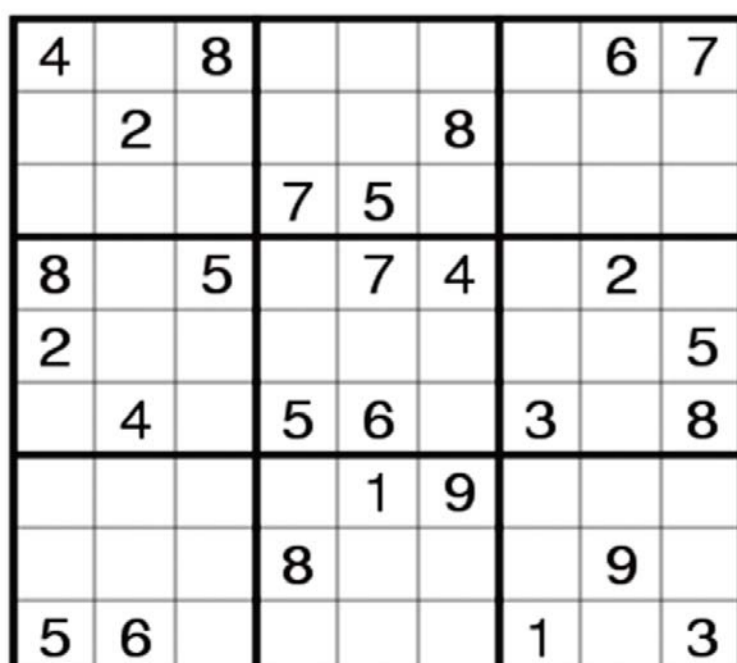
Songs From the Year 2002



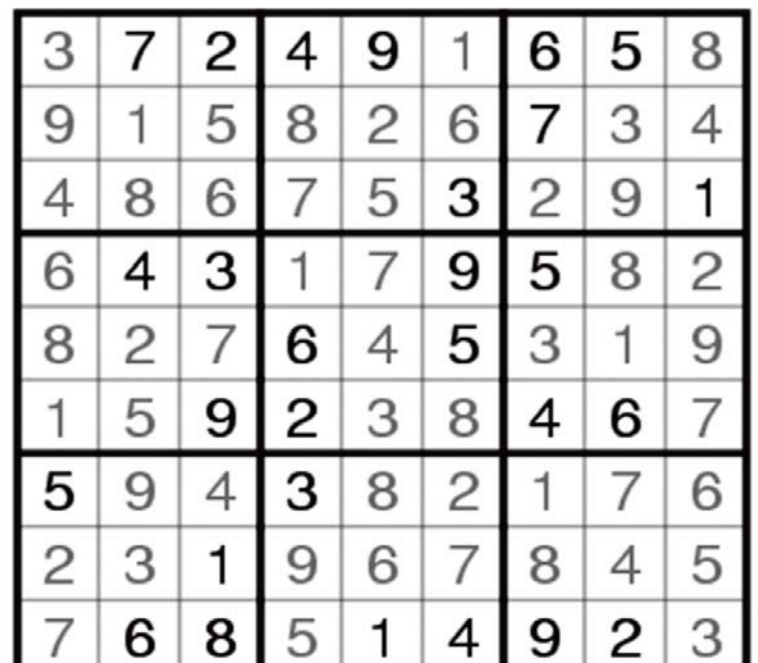
- ADDICTIVE
- AERIALS
- ALL MY LIFE
- BABY
- BLURRY
- BY THE WAY
- COMPLICATED
- DAYS GO BY
- DILEMMA
- DISEASE
- ESCAPE
- EVERYDAY
- FOOLISH
- FOR YOU
- FULL MOON
- GIRL TALK
- GIRLFRIEND
- HALFCRAZY
- HANDS CLEAN
- HAPPY
- HEAVEN
- HELLA GOOD
- HERE I AM
- HERO
- HEY MA
- IN MY PLACE
- LOSE YOURSELF
- MOTIVATION
- MY LIST
- MY SACRIFICE
- NOTHIN'
- OH BOY
- RAINY DAYZ
- SPIN
- STILL FLY
- THE MIDDLE
- TOXICITY
- UH HUH
- WITHOUT ME
- WORK IT

The hidden song title is: CAN'T GET YOU OUT OF MY HEAD

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

STATE OF KUWAIT
DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION
METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



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



Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Partly cloudy with light to moderate south easterly wind, with speed of 15 - 38 km/h with a chance for scattered rain

BY NIGHT: Partly cloudy with light to moderate south easterly to light variable wind, with speed of 08 - 28 km/h with a chance for scattered rain

STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.
KUWAIT CITY	25 °C	20 °C
KUWAIT AIRPORT	28 °C	16 °C
ABDALLY	27 °C	14 °C
BUBYAN	26 °C	18 °C
JAHRA	27 °C	17 °C
FAILAKA ISLAND	27 °C	18 °C
SALMIYAH	24 °C	20 °C
AHMADI	24 °C	20 °C
NUWAISIB	29 °C	17 °C
WAFRA	28 °C	15 °C
SALMY	27 °C	14 °C

DAY	DATE	WEATHER	MAX. TEMPERATURE	MIN. TEMPERATURE	WIND DIRECTION	WIND SPEED
Thursday	03/30	Mostly sunny	28 °C	16 °C	VRB	06 - 22 km/h
Friday	03/31	Cloudy + scattered thunder rain	25 °C	18 °C	SE	15 - 40 km/h
Saturday	04/01	Cloudy + scattered thunder rain	28 °C	19 °C	SE-S	20 - 40 km/h
Sunday	04/02	Mostly sunny	30 °C	17 °C	NW	15 - 35 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	04:21
Sunrise	05:41
Zuhr	11:53
Asr	15:23
Sunset	18:04
Isha	19:22

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	28 °C
MIN. Temp.	15 °C
MAX. RH	80 %
MIN. RH	23 %
MAX. Wind	S 46 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

PRIVATE CLINICS

Ophthalmologists	
Dr. Abdallah Al-Mansoor	25622444
Dr. Samy Al-Rabeea	25722222
Dr. Masoma Habeeb	25321171
Dr. Mubarak Al-Ajmy	25739999
Dr. Mohsen Abel	25757700
Dr. Adnan Hasan Alwayl	25732223
Dr. Abdallah Al-Baghly	25732223
Ear, Nose & Throat (ENT)	
Dr. Ahmed Fouad Mouner	24555050 Ext 510
Dr. Abdallah Al-Ali	25644660
Dr. Abd Al-Hameed Al-Taweel	25646478
Dr. Sanad Al-Fathalah	25311996
Dr. Mohammad Al-Daory	25731988
Dr. Ismail Al-Fodary	22620166
Dr. Mahmoud Al-Booz	25651426
General Practitioners	
Dr. Mohamme Y Majidi	24555050 Ext 123
Dr. Yousef Al-Omar	24719312
Dr. Tarek Al-Mikhazeem	23926920
Dr. Kathem Maarafi	25730465
Dr. Abdallah Ahmad Eyadah	25655528
Dr. Nabeel Al-Ayoubi	24577781
Dr. Dina Abdallah Al-Refae	25333501
Urologists	
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

Plastic Surgeons	
Dr. Mohammad Al-Khalaf	22547272
Dr. Abdal-Redha Lari	22617700
Dr. Abdel Quttainah	25625030/60
Family Doctor	
Dr Divya Damodar	23729596/23729581
Psychiatrists	
Dr. Esam Al-Ansari	22635047
Dr Eisa M. Al-Balhan	22613623/0
Gynaecologists & Obstetricians	
Dr Adrian arbe	23729596/23729581
Dr. Verginia s.Marin	2572-6666 ext 8321
Dr. Fozeya Ali Al-Qatan	22655539
Dr. Majeda Khalefa Aliytami	25343406
Dr. Ahmad Al-Khooly	25739272
Dr. Salem soso	22618787
General Surgeons	
Dr. Amer Zawaz Al-Amer	22610044
Dr. Mohammad Yousef Basher	25327148
Internists, Chest & Heart	
Dr. Adnan Ebil	22639939
Dr. Mousa Khadada	22666300
Dr. Latefa Al-Duweisan	25728004
Dr. Nadem Al-Ghabra	25355515
Dr. Mobarak Aldoub	24726446
Dr Nasser Behbehani	25654300/3

Paediatricians	
Dr. Khaled Hamadi	25665898
Dr. Abd Al-Aziz Al-Rashed	25340300
Dr. Zahra Qabazard	25710444
Dr. Sohail Qamar	22621099
Dr. Snaa Maarooof	25713514
Dr. Pradip Gujare	23713100
Dr. Zacharias Mathew	24334282
Dermatology	
Dr. Mohammed Salam	
Bern University	23845955
Dentists	
Dr Anil Thomas	3729596/3729581
Dr. Shamah Al-Matar	22641071/2
Dr. Anesah Al-Rasheed	22562226
Dr. Abdallah Al-Amer	22561444
Dr. Faysal Al-Fozan	22619557
Dr. Abdalateef Al-Katrah	22525888
Dr. Abdallah Al-Duweisan	25653755
Dr. Bader Al-Ansari	25620111
Neurologists	
Dr. Sohal Najem Al-Shemeri	25633324
Dr. Jasem Mola Hassan	25345875
Gastrologists	
Dr. Sami Aman	22636464
Dr. Mohammad Al-Shamaly	25322030
Dr. Foad Abdallah Al-Ali	22633135

Endocrinologist	
Dr. Abd Al-Naser Al-Othman	25339330
Dr. Ahmad Al-Ansari	25658888
Dr. Kamal Al-Shomr	25329924
Physiotherapists & VD	
Dr. Deyaa Shehab	25722291
Dr. Musaed Faraj Khamees	22666288
Rheumatologists:	
Dr. Adel Al-Awadi	25330060
Dr. Khaled Al-Jarallah	25722290
Internist, Chest & Heart	
DR.Mohammes Akkad	24555050 Ext 210
Consultant Cardiologist	
Dr. Farida Al-Habib	2611555-2622555
MD, PH.D, FACC	
Inaya German Medical Center	
Te: 2575077	
Fax: 25723123	

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	00971	Yugoslavia	00381
Liberia	00231	Zambia	00260
Libya	00218	Zimbabwe	00263
Lesotho	00266		

Psychologists
/Psychotherapists

Soor Center
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Fax: 2290 1688

info@soorcenter.com
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Kaizen center
25716707

Noor Clinic
23845955

William Schuilenberg, RPC 2290-1677
Zaina Al Zabin, M.Sc. 2290-1677

ACMs play to a loyal country audience to shore up ratings

As the television industry deals with overall declines in total viewership, organizers behind the Academy of Country Music Awards are focused on keeping the core country music audience coming back each year to watch the genre's biggest stars party in Las Vegas. The ACM Awards, airing live Sunday on CBS (8 pm Eastern), are relying on two likable co-hosts, tried and true stars of the format, cross-genre collaborations, a party vibe and new music to keep fans tuned in.

"The audience that CBS draws to it on a weekly basis is right dead smack in the wheel of country music," said Jack Sussman, the network's executive vice president of special, music and live events. "Our audience is that audience and our job is to grow that above and beyond the core whenever we can." After decades of hosting the show in Los Angeles, the ACM Awards moved to Las Vegas in 2003 and several days of concerts, pool parties and songwriter showcases lead up to the televised show, which gives it a loose, fun atmosphere that artists enjoy, said R.A. Clark, an executive producer at Dick Clark Productions. "We are the away game," he said. "It feels more like a party than an awards show."

Country fans

The awards show has had positive ratings swings in recent years. In 2013, the show was watched by 15.5

million people, according to the Nielsen company, outdrawing the rival Country Music Association Awards show held the previous November for the first time. During a special 50th anniversary show in 2015 held at a football stadium in Arlington, Texas, just under 16 million people tuned in and gave the show its best viewership in 17 years. But viewership took a steep drop last year to 11.2 million when the awards show went up against "The Walking Dead" season finale and the iHeartRadio Music Awards.

Marc Berman, editor-in-chief of the website Programming Insider, said ratings for all television, whether its awards shows or scripted series and even some sports, have been declining. The CMA Awards, the American Music Awards and the MTV Video Music Awards have been losing viewers over the past three years as viewership becomes more fragmented. But Berman said he has little concern for country music awards shows. "There is a very strong base of country fans, I think, that are just very dedicated to country music," he said. "They are always going to watch."

Entertainer of the year

This year's ACM lineup includes reigning entertainer of the year Jason Aldean, Miranda Lambert, Keith Urban, Carrie Underwood, Chris Stapleton, Little Big Town, Sam Hunt, Lady Antebellum, Rascal Flatts and Kelsea Ballerini. Luke Bryan and Dierks Bentley return

as co-hosts. The announced collaborations stay pretty squarely within the genre, such as the Backstreet Boys performing with Florida Georgia Line on a song that already has a lot of country airplay. Power couple Faith Hill and Tim McGraw will debut "Speak to a Girl" from their forthcoming duets album; Maren Morris and Thomas Rhett will debut "Craving You," a duet from two of the genre's hottest young stars; Reba McEntire will sing a song from her new gospel album with popular Christian singer Lauren Daigle; and Cole Swindell will perform with Bentley on their song "Flatliner."

"We do everything we can to keep it spontaneous, keep it exciting, keep it surprising so that people will be motivated to tell their friends about it as it's going on," said Barry Adelman, another executive producer with Dick Clark Productions. "You don't know what's going to happen, you don't know what somebody might say, you don't know what might go wrong, or happen unexpectedly. And that's what gives the show the edge." The 52nd annual ACM Awards will air from the T-Mobile Arena. Keith Urban is the top nominee with seven, including a bid for entertainer of the year, pitting him against Aldean, Underwood, Bryan and Florida Georgia Line. — AP



In this file photo, Jason Aldean performs at the 50th annual Academy of Country Music Awards at AT&T Stadium in Arlington, Texas. — AP



In this file photo, Bob Dylan performs in Los Angeles. — AP

Bob Dylan finally to receive Nobel prize in Stockholm

Music icon Bob Dylan will finally receive his Nobel Literature Prize this weekend at a meeting with the Swedish Academy in Stockholm, it announced yesterday. But no media will be allowed to cover the meeting, and the famously-reclusive Dylan will only give a lecture required of him in a taped version at a later date. The 75-year-old kept silent for weeks after he was announced as the Nobel literature laureate in October, and snubbed a ceremony in December to receive the prize. "The good news is that the Swedish Academy and Bob Dylan have decided to meet this weekend," Sara Danius, permanent secretary of the Academy, wrote in a blog post.

"The Academy will then hand over Dylan's Nobel diploma and the Nobel medal, and congratulate him on the Nobel Prize in Literature." She added: "The setting will be small and intimate, and no media will be present; only Bob Dylan and members of the Academy will attend, all according to Dylan's wishes." Dylan is set to perform concerts on Saturday and Sunday in Stockholm, the first stop on his European tour. Danius didn't specify if the meeting would be held before or after the concerts.

But Dylan, the first songwriter to win the prestigious prize, will not hold the traditional Nobel lecture during the meeting, she said. Because the lecture is the only requirement to receive the eight million kronor (839,000 euros, \$870,000) that comes with the prize, Dylan will not be handed the money during his Stockholm visit, even though he will collect the Nobel diploma and medal. The lecture can take nearly any form, including a short speech, a performance, a video broadcast or even a song, but must be held within six months of December 10, the date of the Nobel prize ceremony and the anniversary of the death of its founder Alfred Nobel. "The Academy has reason to believe that a taped version will be sent at a later point," Danius said, without specifying an exact date. Previous Nobel literature laureates have presented taped lectures, including the Canadian writer Alice Munro in 2013. Dylan, the songwriter of "Blowin' in the Wind," "Knockin' On Heaven's Door" and "Hurricane," has until June 10 to send his lecture.

'Standing on the moon'

When Dylan was asked in October why he did not respond to the Academy's calls, he told the Daily Telegraph: "Well, I'm right here." The rock enigma later snubbed the Nobel ceremony in December because of "pre-existing commitments" which he never explained. But he sent a thank-you speech that was read aloud during the ceremony in Stockholm. Maria Schottenius, a literary critic and columnist at Swedish daily Dagens Nyheter, said she believes Dylan does care about the Nobel. But she said the glitziness of the ceremony, attended by Swedish royal family and politicians, was bothersome for the media-shy and anti-establishment rock star.

"(A) prize from the king's hand, tailcoat, the world's finest party with a long lavish televised dinner... not his cup of tea," she told AFP. In a humble speech read in December, Dylan apologized for not being able to attend the ceremony and expressed surprise over being chosen as a laureate in the league of authors like Ernest Hemingway and Albert Camus. "Not once have I ever had the time to ask myself, 'Are my songs literature?'" his speech read. "If someone had ever told me that I had the slightest chance of winning the Nobel Prize, I would have to think that I'd have about the same odds as standing on the moon," it added. Several other literature prize winners have skipped the Nobel ceremony in the past for various reasons. Doris Lessing (2007) did not attend because of her advanced age, Harold Pinter (2005) because he was hospitalized and Elfriede Jelinek (2004) due to her social phobia. Each of these winners performed their lectures that were either delivered to Stockholm or read aloud abroad. — AFP

N.W.A., Bowie to be preserved by US Library of Congress

Gangsta rappers N.W.A.'s seminal debut, David Bowie's "Ziggy Stardust" album and the signature song from "The Wizard of Oz" will be preserved for posterity by the US Library of Congress. The world's largest library selected another 25 titles yesterday for its National Recording Registry, which preserves original copies of works found to have historical importance. Among the recordings was "Straight Outta Compton," the 1988 first album by California rappers N.W.A who set off a nationwide storm with their protest song "Fuck tha Police."

The Library of Congress in a statement said the album "signaled not only a seismic shift in rap from East Coast to West Coast sensibilities, but also a startling socio-political shot across the bow of the culture." Also entering the registry were two recordings of "Lift Every Voice and Sing," which in 1919 was declared the "Black National Anthem." The registry picked the 1939 single "Over the Rainbow" from "The Wizard of Oz," one of the most celebrated songs in cinema. In the song, Judy Garland, playing the girl Dorothy in drab, Dust Bowl-swept Kansas, wishes for happier times-and soon is transported in a dream sequence to Oz, a land whose magic is symbolized by the black-



This file photo shows Inductees N.W.A. members Dr Dre, Ice Cube, MC Ren, Eric "Eazy-E" Wright's mother Kathie Wright and DJ Yella in the press room during the 31st Annual Rock and Roll Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony at Barclays Center in Brooklyn, New York.

and-white film's switch to Technicolor.

The Library of Congress simultaneously selected the 1975 cast album of "The Wiz," a retelling of "The Wizard of Oz" which was one of the first African American-oriented productions on Broadway. While mostly

focused on US recordings, the registry chose late English legend Bowie's 1972 album "The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars," a path-making concept album in which the singer plays an androgynous alien rocker. Also selected

was Don McLean's 1971 folk-rock classic "American Pie," which looked at the tumult of the 1960s through nostalgia for the 1950s. McLean in a statement said he was "proud to be an American artist who has represented his country around the world for almost 50 years."

"America has a vast musical heritage which is diverse and profound. With few exceptions American music is the whole of popular music," he said. Other selections included new-wave innovators Talking Heads' 1980 album "Remain in Light," disco classic "We Are Family" by Sister Sledge, a greatest hits collection by arena-packing rockers the Eagles and Barbra Streisand's debut single "People" from the musical "Funny Girl." In opera, the Library of Congress chose leading American soprano Renee Fleming's 1997 album "Signatures." The registry also picked recordings outside of music, including the 1971 debut broadcast of "All Things Considered," the flagship news program on National Public Radio. — AFP



This file photo shows musician David Bowie speaking onstage while accepting the Webby Lifetime Achievement award at the 11th Annual Webby Awards at Chipriani Wall Street in New York. — AFP photos



This file photo shows 'The Wizard of Oz' Ruby Red Slippers worn by Judy Garland in 1939 displayed at a viewing at the Plaza Athenee in New York City.

THE PAIN AND DEFIANCE OF 'SHOAH' MAKER LANZMANN

"I am completely against death," declared Claude Lanzmann, the maker of the landmark documentary on the Holocaust, "Shoah," who lost his 23-year-old son Felix to cancer two months ago. His face wracked with grief, the former French Resistance fighter insisted that at 91 he is far from finished himself-with a film on North Korea to complete. "Why should I stop?" he told AFP in an interview at his home in Paris. "I still believe in life. I love life to distraction even if often it is not very funny. To despair of the human race means nothing to me. When I think about the thousand people who were there for the burial of my son, there is nothing to despair about," he added.



This file photo shows French writer, journalist and movie producer Claude Lanzmann posing during a photo session in Paris. — AFP

Thicket and passionate, even at his lowest ebb, Lanzmann is nothing if not a fighter. In his bestselling autobiography, "The Patagonian Hare," he recounted how a Auschwitz survivor told him he survived by wanting "to live with every fibre of my being, one minute more, one day more, one month more." Truth is the thing that keeps him going, he said-just as it did in the 11 years it took to make "Shoah," for many the most haunting film made about the murder of six million Jews during World War II. "If I am unstoppable it's because of the truth, which I believe in profoundly," he said. "When I look at what I did in my life, I believe that I came to represent the truth, I never played with it."

Truth is all

Lanzmann's extraordinary life and work is the subject of a new French book whose title translates as "A Seer in the Century." A friend of the philosophers Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir, he became her lover and still runs their legendary literary review, Les Temps Modernes. His first act of resistance as a Jewish schoolboy in wartime France was to refuse to write an essay in praise of its collaborationist leader Marshal Petain. He later took to the hills to join fighters in central France ambushing German patrols.

But it is a story against himself that Lanzmann prefers to tell, of being "too cowardly" to stand up for a red-headed Jewish boy who was being picked on in the playground by anti-Semitic bullies. Asked why he insists on doing himself down, he said: "It's the truth. If I don't say it that would falsify all the rest." Lanzmann said he was not unduly worried by rising anti-Semitism and denial of the Holocaust—"it has never gone away"—nor is he afraid that France's far-right National Front could win next month's presidential elections. The party's founder, the father of current leader Marine Le Pen, has been convicted of claiming that the gas chambers were a mere "detail" of history.

Anti-Zionism

"I think the French people are playing at scaring themselves. But I don't think that the National Front has a chance of winning the election," he said. But Lanzmann denounced growing "anti-Zionist" feeling on the left in Europe as a "mask for anti-Semitism." "To be anti-Zionist is to not want Zion to exist, to not want the Jews who live there to exist-it is to wish them death," he said. For now though he is struggling to finish his documentary on North Korea, "Napalm", in time for the Cannes film festival in May. He first visited the exclusive state in 1958 and has returned four times since. But thoughts of his son Felix, who fought the cancer that killed him for two years, are never far away.

"To have children is to condemn them to death," Lanzmann told Paris Match. "We rejoice at the primal scream of a child, but it also predicts new agony." "I clapped when I heard my son cry when he was born. I was nearly 70 at the time. I would never have thought that such a thing could happen to Felix. He gave us a lesson in courage. But I still believe in life, and in myself, pegged to this body." — AFP

Studios sprinkle stardust on CinemaCon

Some of Hollywood's biggest movie studios took center stage at the CinemaCon on Tuesday-wheeling out a vast array of stars to promote their upcoming slates of blockbusters. Historic "major" Paramount competed with new kid on the block STX for the loudest applause at the annual Las Vegas gathering for the "exhibition community" of theater operators and audio and visual tech innovators. And while Disney traditionally keeps back most of its juiciest surprises for its own D23 Expo, the studio treated delegates to a world premiere of the latest "Pirates of the Caribbean" movie, "Dead Men Tell No Tales." Hollywood decamps to the Nevada desert for four days every year, taking over the iconic Caesar's Palace hotel to show theater operators what they can expect to be making their money from over the following 12 to 24 months.

STX, in business for just two years, was first up, putting forward legendary sci-fi director Luc Besson to present footage from his latest adventure, "Valerian and the City of a Thousand Planets." The 58-year-old French auteur has made a string of hits, including "The Fifth Element," "Leon: The Professional," "Lucy" and "Nikita." But he said his upcoming movie has been a passion project since he began reading the serialized 1960s comics from Pierre Christin and Jean-Claude Mezieres on which it is based. "There was no internet, no YouTube, nothing and you had to wait a week to get two more pages," he told delegates at CinemaCon. "I got totally addicted... It was so cool at the time, really new and I never stopped thinking about it."

'Female power'

The \$180 million "Valerian"-which comes out on July 21 -- centers on a dark force threatening Alpha, a vast metropolis and home to species from a thousand planets. Blacks ops agents Valerian (Dean Cain) and Laureline (Cara Delevingne) race to identify the marauding menace and safeguard the universe. The audience was treated to a new trailer, a surreal but self-aware fever dream in vivid 3-D featuring a huge, drooling CGI dog-like monster that rips a bus apart, as well of plenty of large Zen-like aliens and desert vistas with echoes of Mad Max.

Numerous stars, including Jessica Chastain, Aaron Sorkin, Mark Wahlberg and Mila Kunis took to the stage to discuss upcoming projects in various stages of development. Wahlberg introduced action flick "Mile 22" saying he hoped it would be "the thing that defines me," while Kunis chatted about motherhood and the sequel to smash-hit "Bad Moms," due for release in November. Oscar nominee Chastain stars in "Molly's Game" as Molly Bloom, a real-life skier who lost out on her Olympic dream and became an organizer of underground poker games for the Hollywood elite.

"I like that the film explores female power and what that means in society," said Chastain, who got to meet Bloom during production. It was a busy day for Wahlberg, who was among a role call of A-listers enlisted in Paramount's afternoon presentation at a packed Coliseum theatre. The studio launched its two-hour extravaganza with Dwayne Johnson and Zac Efron fronting the segment for "Baywatch"-the upcoming big screen adaptation of the popular 1990s lifeguard show.—AFP

FEATURES



In this file photo, a visitor walks past a banner showing Latifa, Saudi super woman character, during the Saudi Comic Con (SCC) which is the first event of its kind to be held in Jiddah, Saudi Arabia. — AFP photos



File photo shows a visitor films at the Star Wars exhibition, an American epic space franchise, centered on a film series, during the Saudi Comic Con (SCC) which is the first event of its kind to be held in Jiddah, Saudi Arabia.



File photo, a visitor takes pictures at the entrance of the female section, during the Saudi Comic Con (SCC) which is the first event of its kind to be held in Jiddah, Saudi Arabia.

With monster trucks and Comic-Con, Saudis defy killjoy image

Monster trucks, hip-hop dancing and Game of Thrones all have one surprising thing in common now: Saudi Arabia. The kingdom, which bans movie theaters and other entertainment venues, is challenging its ultraconservative image and loosening the reins on fun by opening its doors to live shows, including some American ones.

Clerics and many citizens still consider it all very sinful, but the growing entertainment scene has a powerful backer - the second-in-line to the throne. Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's support is key to this cultural push, which also means the fun is tightly controlled. Still, it's a notable shift from just a few years ago, when the religious police - known as the Muttawa - would shoo women out of malls for wearing bright nail polish, insist restaurants turn off music and break up gatherings where unrelated men and women were mixing.

Last year, the Muttawa were ordered to soften their approach and their powers were curtailed. Though most Saudis voluntarily adhere to the country's Islamic mores, there are plenty who are happy to embrace reforms - or what could also be seen as a return to the more relaxed era of the 1980s, when music concerts were performed. The recent all-male concert of Saudi singer Mohammed Abdu was both nostalgic and groundbreaking. He had not performed in the Saudi capital, Riyadh, since the late 1980s. History is also being made. The first ever Comic-Con event in Saudi Arabia drew thousands of spectators in February in the Red Sea city of Jiddah.

Black veils

Fans dressed up as their favorite Marvel characters. Actors Julian Glover and Charles Dance - Grand Maester Pycelle and Tywin Lannister from HBO's Game of Thrones - made an appearance. Rock music blared in the halls. For most of the event men and women were not segregated - a surprising departure from the norm in schools, universities, mosques, restaurants and the many Starbucks and Pizza Huts across the country. Though women must dress in loosely-fitted, long robes and most cover their hair and face with black veils, there was a female-only area at Comic-Con for those dressed up in colorful superhero costumes.

Moiz Muqri has been collecting comic books since the 1990s, when there was little else to do in the kingdom. "An event like Comic-Con, I could not have imagined it happening in Saudi



File photo shows a man wears a Captain America costume representing a fictional superhero appearing in American comic books published by Marvel Comics, during the Saudi Comic Con (SCC) which is the first event of its kind to be held in Jiddah, Saudi Arabia.

Arabia five years ago," said the 37-year-old resident of Jiddah, who wore a Spiderman hoodie to the event. "It is a seismic shift what has happened in the last two, three years." The event was a step too far for some. It drew backlash from tens of thousands of Saudis on Twitter, including the prominent imam of the Prophet Muhammad's mosque in Medina.

Sheikh Hussein Al-Sheikh denounced the event for its life-size statues and its glorification of mystical superheroes, seen as a form of idolatry. He said it was "shameful that there be such events sponsored by an official entity," and called for a boycott. Within weeks his Twitter account was deleted without explanation - a reminder that speaking out against the government remains a red line. The official arm behind these events is the General Entertainment Authority, created last year as part of a wider effort by the deputy crown prince to diversify the oil-driven economy.

Saudi tourism money

A major aim is to keep some of the Saudi tourism money spent abroad each year in the country. The National Committee



File photo shows a man wearing a mask gestures during the Saudi Comic Con (SCC) which is the first event of its kind to be held in Jiddah, Saudi Arabia.

for Tourism says Saudis spent \$35 billion abroad in 2015. The Entertainment Authority wants to double what Saudi families currently spend on entertainment in the kingdom by 2030. Saudi Arabia is also in talks to open a Six Flags theme park. Another aim is to appease the country's majority youth, who - unlike older generations - have unrestricted access to the world through their smartphones. One of the first shows to perform under this new banner was iLuminate, a performance that fuses hip-hop dance with electrified glow-in-the-dark suits.

Several thousand men and women packed halls in Riyadh and Jiddah in October to watch the dancers perform to Michael Jackson, Bruno Mars and Missy Elliott hits. Egyptian-American creator Miral Kotb, a software engineer and dancer, said she was approached to bring the show to Saudi Arabia by the company Live Entertainment with support from the government. "They wanted something that would be family-friendly... so people are dancing in the dark and it is a pretty, I guess, conservative show as far as the movements," she said. There were a few women on stage, but there was no way to know who was doing what because the dancers were dressed in special suits and perform-



File photo shows a man wearing a donkey mask acts, during the Saudi Comic Con (SCC) which is the first event of its kind to be held in Jiddah, Saudi Arabia.

ing in the dark. Kotb says they took out hip movements and changed the costumes to look more conservative.

Crowds were loud and excited. "They were hungry for it," Kotb said. There are still no plans for movie theaters, but an evening with American movie star Al Pacino may take place in May, according to the Entertainment Authority's website. Also scheduled for 2017 is a performance by Blue Man group, a comedy play, a poetry recital and drag racing. Previously, Saudi Arabia hosted WWE wrestling matches for male-only crowds. This month, the all-American Monster Jam truck show roared in Riyadh. Tens of thousands showed up to watch the massive, four-meter-tall (13 feet) monster trucks fly across pits and dunes. Female drivers, mechanics and spectators were not allowed. The kingdom bars women from driving. "You respect their religion and their beliefs and they really didn't seem to have a problem with us," said Monster Jam driver Randy Brown, a native of North Carolina. "It was unbelievable how excited they were to have us here," Brown said. "It was an experience that I wouldn't trade for anything." — AP



French artist Abraham Poincheval sits on real chicken eggs until they hatch at the Palais de Tokyo yesterday in Paris. — AFP

FRENCH 'HUMAN HEN' ARTIST HAS A CRACK AT HATCHING EGGS

The French artist who recently spent a week entombed inside a rock will attempt an even more bizarre feat yesterday-sitting on a dozen eggs until they hatch. Abraham Poincheval aims to become a "human hen" by sitting and laying on the eggs inside a glass vitrine at a Paris modern art museum until the chicks emerge. The performance, called "Egg", could last three to four weeks, with the artist getting only a half-hour break every 24 hours to keep him from cracking. He will eat a special diet rich in ginger so he can keep the eggs at a minimum of 37 degrees Celsius (98.6 degrees Fahrenheit).

Poincheval, 44, made headlines earlier this month after declaring his seven days inside a rock a mind-altering "trip". This time he will wear a specially made traditional Korean cape to cover his nest and keep the eggs snug. He has also designed a special "laying table" to stop him from crushing the eggs accidentally. Poincheval said he had been inspired by a tragicomic short story by the French writer Guy de Maupassant. In "Toine", a bad-tempered farmer's wife gets revenge on her idle bon vivant husband by using his body to keep her chickens' eggs warm when he is paralyzed by a mysterious malady.

While Poincheval described his time inside the limestone rock as blissful, he acknowledged that sitting on the eggs had him worried. "I have never been so directly exposed to the public before. Usually I am inside something. But every performance is a first," he told AFP. "Being inside the rock didn't bother me at all," he added. "Normally there is a moment when your anxiety mounts, but with

the rock that didn't happen. I was almost anxious about not being anxious," he said. After talking to geologists, he put that down to the "extreme calmness" of the limestone. "I learned it had been laid down gently, layer by layer, over thousands of years, and had never been tormented."

Monkey King

Even though the rock is also egg-shaped, Poincheval said the two performances at the Palais de Tokyo museum were not directly linked. However, when he emerged from the rock, Chinese students told him the story of Sun Wukong, the Monkey King who was born from a stone egg. If he manages to stick out his latest challenge, Poincheval said the hatched chicks "will go and live with my parents" in the west of France. His father, Christian, a bowler-hatted inventor, is best known for coming up with pills that make flatulence smell of roses and even chocolate.

Often described as France's most extreme artist, Poincheval is no stranger to bizarre performances. He once spent a fortnight inside a stuffed bear eating worms and insects; was buried under a rock for eight days; and navigated France's Rhone river inside a giant corked bottle. He also spent a week last year on top of a 20-metre (65-foot) pole outside a Paris train station. His big dream, however, is to walk on the clouds.

"I have been working on it for five years, but it is not quite there yet," he said. — AFP

World Video Game Hall of Fame names 2017 finalists

The World Video Game Hall of Fame's 2017 finalists span decades and electronic platforms, from the 1981 arcade classic "Donkey Kong" that launched Mario's plumbing career to the 2006 living room hit "Wii Sports," that made gamers out of grandparents. The hall of fame at The Strong museum in Rochester said Tuesday that 12 video games are under consideration for induction in May. They also include: "Final Fantasy VII," "Halo: Combat Evolved," "Microsoft Windows Solitaire," "Mortal Kombat," "Myst," "Pokemon Red and Green," "Portal," "Resident Evil," "Street Fighter II" and "Tomb Raider."

The finalists were chosen from thousands of nominations from more than 100 countries, said museum officials, who will rely on an international committee of video game scholars and journalists to select the 2017 class. The winners will be inducted May 4. "What they all have in common is their undeniable impact on the world of gaming and popular culture," said Jon-Paul Dyson, director of The Strong's International Center for the History of Electronic Games.

The hall of fame recognizes electronic games that have achieved icon status and geographical reach, and that have influenced game design or popular culture. The class of 2017 will be the third group to go into the young hall, joining "DOOM," "Grand Theft Auto III," "The Legend of Zelda," "The Oregon Trail," "Pac-Man," "Pong," "The Sims," "Sonic the Hedgehog," "Space Invaders," Tetris, "World of Warcraft," and "Super Mario Bros.," whose title character got his start in this year's "Donkey Kong" entry. More about this year's finalists, according to The Strong:

- **"Donkey Kong" (1981):** Helped to launch the career of game designer Shigeru Miyamoto and sold an estimated 132,000 arcade cabinets.
- **"Final Fantasy VII" (1997):** The Sony Playstation's second-most popular game introduced 3-D computer graphics and full motion video, selling more than 10 million units.
- **"Halo: Combat Evolved" (2001):** A launch game for Microsoft's Xbox system, the science-fiction game sold more than 6 million copies and inspired sequels, spin-offs, nov-

els, comic books and action figures.

- **"Microsoft Windows Solitaire" (1991):** Based on a centuries-old card game, it has been installed on more than 1 billion home computers and other machines since debuting on Windows 3.0.
- **"Mortal Kombat" (1992):** The game's realistic violence was debated internationally and in Congress and was a factor in the 1994 creation of the Entertainment Software Rating Board.
- **"Myst" (1993):** The slow-paced, contempla-

breakout hit out of the four first-person shooter games it was packaged with, recognized for game mechanics that relied on portal physics.

- **"Resident Evil" (1996):** Among spin-offs of the survival horror game are movies that have grossed more than \$1.2 billion worldwide, as well as themed restaurants and novels.
- **"Street Fighter II" (1991):** One of the top-selling arcade games ever helped spark an arcade renaissance in the 1990s and inspired numerous sequels.



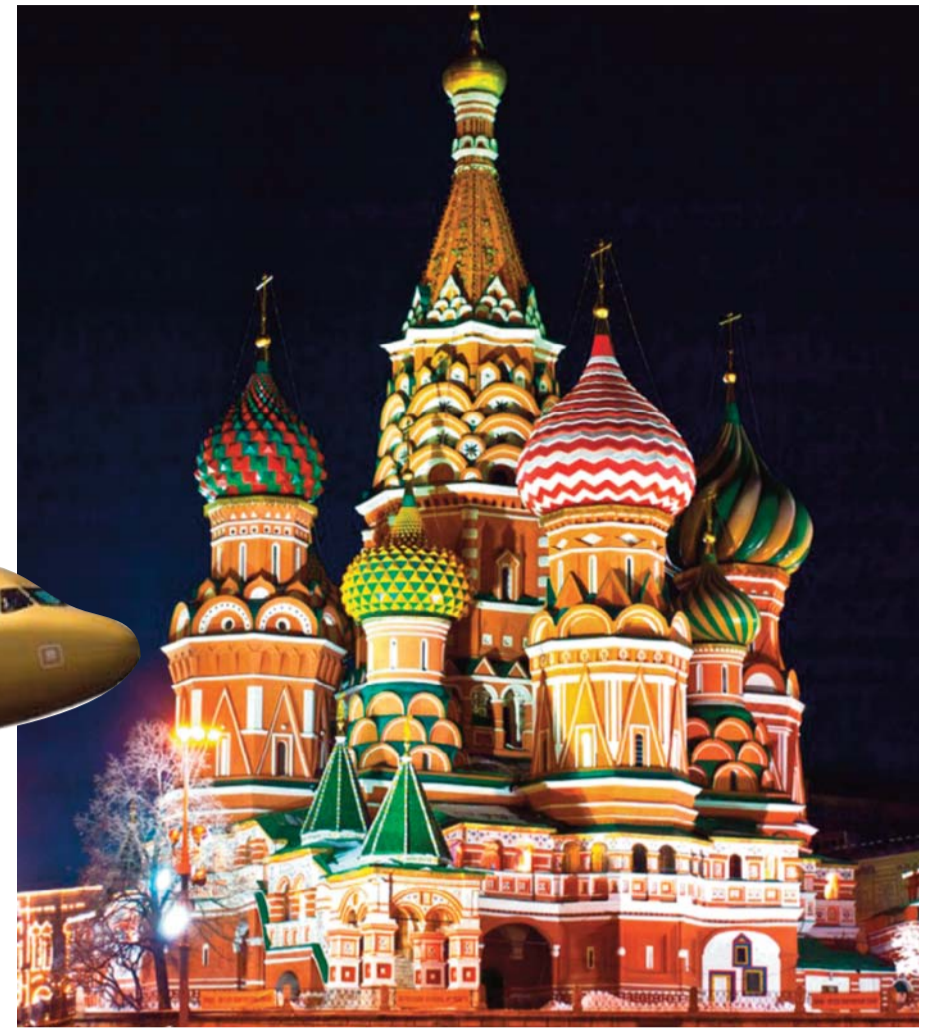
In this March 16, 2017 photo provided by The Strong museum, the 12 finalists for induction this year into The Strong museum's World Video Game Hall of Fame are pictured at the museum in Rochester, New York. — AP

- **"Tomb Raider" (1996):** Its female protagonist, Lara Croft, is the face of a franchise that has sold more than 58 million units worldwide, helped in part by actress Angelina Jolie's movie portrayal.
- **"Wii Sports" (2006):** Launched with the Nintendo Wii home video game system, its motion-control technology let gamers of any age serve a tennis ball or throw a left hook and helped push Wii console sales to more than 100 million.
- **"Portal" (2007):** The Game Developers Conference's 2008 Game of the Year was the

ive game harnessed early CD-ROM technology and became the best-selling computer game in the 1990s, selling 6 million copies.

TRAVEL

Discover the magic of Moscow through **Gulf Air**



Gulf Air, the national carrier of the Kingdom of Bahrain, is focused on offering enhanced connectivity for passenger convenience. One of the key elements of Gulf Air's double and multiple daily flight strategy, and an important factor in differentiating the airline, is the strength of its regional network. The airline boasts one of the largest networks in the Middle East, operating daily double flights to ten regional cities: Amman, Jeddah, Riyadh, Dammam, Kuwait, Doha, Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Muscat, and Cairo - in addition to selected destinations in the Indian Subcontinent and Europe, from its hub at Bahrain International Airport.

Through operating high-frequency flights, with at least a double daily service or more between Bahrain and all major regional cities, Gulf Air has created a new business proposition. The airline's flexible and convenient regional schedule makes it easier for travelers to take short vacations or work trips. Regional travelers who wish to conduct their business, whether it's shopping, visiting relatives and friends or traveling for business, and return home the same day, now can. Whether traveling for business or leisure, alone or accompanied, Gulf Air enhances the travel experience for every kind of traveler, delivering a seamless journey that epitomizes convenience, comfort and efficiency.

GCC, Russia's developing relations

Russia is after developing its relations with GCC states in various fields including attracting more Kuwaiti and GCC tourists to its cities during the summer, especially since Kuwait annually spends \$10 billion on travel and tourism and over \$1 billion on educational scholarships and overseas medical treatment, said the ambassador of the Russian Federation to the State of Kuwait, Alexey V Solomatn.

Speaking on the occasion of organizing a visit for Kuwaiti and Bahraini media ad travel agencies by Gulf Air, Solomatn also stressed how deep-rooted Russian-Kuwaiti relations were after many agreements had been signed in various fields and scores of official visits had been exchanged. The Russian consul to Kuwait, Murad Karabekov stressed that opening an office for Russian tourism in Kuwait was a major step towards enhancing bilateral relations and facilitating Kuwaiti's entry to Russia.

Karabekov added that the embassy continues to issue various types of visas, including touristic, commercial, family and business valid for up to five years for both Kuwaitis and expatriates residing. He also noted that visa issuance procedures for Kuwaitis had been limited to only submitting passports and visa fees. Meanwhile, Gulf Air stressed its keenness on playing its role in boosting Russian relations with various GCC states through providing developed air transport services represented in four weekly flights from Manamah to Moscow.

Gulf Air added that with the approach of holding the 2018 World Cup Championship in Russia, its flights to Moscow gain more importance, especially since it had been updating its feet and working on keeping regular flight schedules. The president of the National Russian Tourism Office in Kuwait, Basel Al-Aswad said that ever since its inauguration in march 2016, the office has been working on activating tourism from Kuwait through special promotional touristic programs including introductory visits for Kuwaiti media and travel agencies made in collaboration with Gulf Air, Toronto Travel and Tourism Company, YAISH Agency for Travel and Tourism and a number of



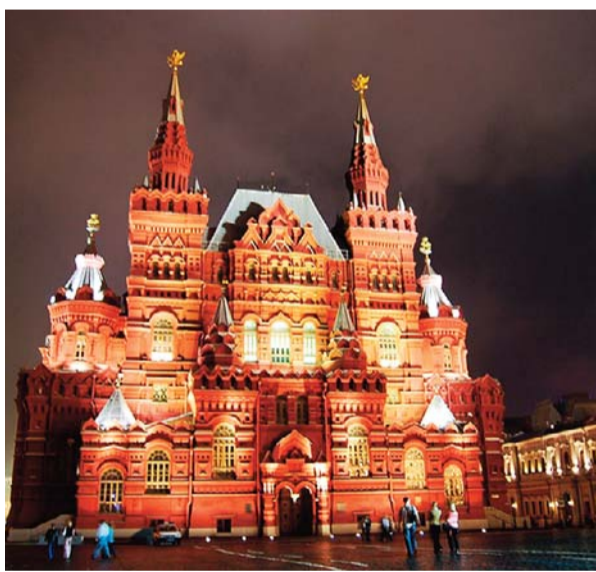
Russian bodies and hotels who have made special arrangements to receive tourists from Muslim countries.

Al-Aswad added that the office has been encouraging Kuwait travel and tourism agencies to provide special varied offers to match the growth in Kuwaiti tourists expected to travel to Russia; he also expressed hopes to fly direct flights from Kuwait. Toronto travel and Tourism Agency's business manager, Maher Samhouri, CEO of YAISH Agency for Tourism and Travel, said that Russia was a very promising touristic destination for Arabs because of attractions like the fine summer weather, low costs and the arrangements YAISH made with many hotels and airlines to get special prices.

Samhouri also expected a surge in travelers to Russia to attend the World Cup Finals in 2018. He added that Moscow can act as a starting point to head to other Russian cities, such as Saint Petersburg and Sochi (The Pearl of the Black Sea), thanks to it 12 railway stations.

A peek into Moscow

Moscow offers the inquisitive traveler much to see and do, a treasure trove of cultural artifacts and architectural masterpieces to explore and a diverse and eclectic cuisine to partake in. Gulf Air's 4 weekly flights to the Russian capital provide easy access to one of the fastest growing tourist destinations in the world. Although seeped in history, Moscow is the epitome of a modern city boasting high-end



Murad Karabekov “Opening an office for Russian tourism in Kuwait was a major step towards enhancing bilateral relations and facilitating Kuwaiti's entry to Russia.”



TRAVEL



FALCON GOLD LOUNGES

shopping and an effortless meld of historic and contemporary sights and attractions.

Transport

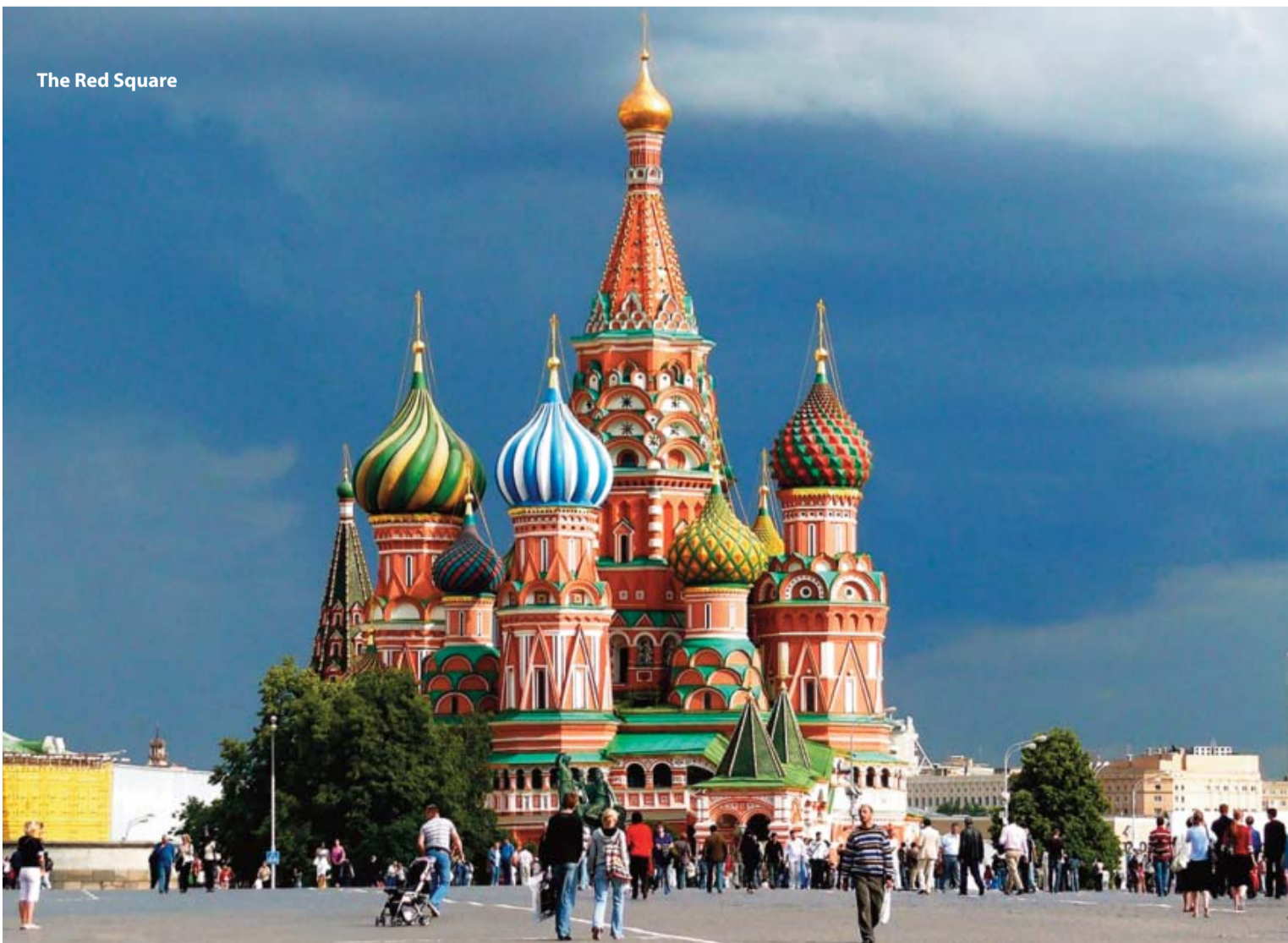
Originally built as bomb shelters, the city's elaborate but easy-to-use metro system is a masterpiece of Soviet art that is often referred to as the world's finest with each station along the much lauded 'circle line' featuring everything from ceiling mosaics to bronze plaques showcased in an elaborate architecture and design.

Historic Sights

The city's iconic Red Square holds a number of unique historic attractions. St Basil's Cathedral is an elaborately domed structure that rises from the cobblestones and is undeniably one of the most spectacular sights in the world. The Kremlin is a fortified complex dating from the 12th century, when Soviet leaders worked from what is the seat of Russian power today. The Kremlin holds museums, ancient churches, palaces and government buildings including The Armory, which is home to a collection of Tsarist artifacts, jewelry and armor. The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier is where an eternal flame burns for more than 20 million Soviets who died in World War II. Lenin's Tomb is a mausoleum holding the mummified body of Vladimir Lenin, who founded the Soviet state following the revolution and whose embalmed body has been on view, since 1924.

Cuisine

For Gulf Air's Falcon Gold travelers who enjoyed meals prepared by the airline's renowned Sky Chefs onboard from their journey to Moscow, the Russian capital has a host of world-class restaurants that offer their distinctive and unique cuisine including: Borscht - a hearty winter soup cooked with beetroot and tomato. Blini- Russian pancakes served with sour cream, jam, honey, or caviar or smoked salmon.



Gulf Air's Falcon Gold Lounges are distinct in many ways - specifically, their architectural designs combine the traditional Arabian theme with modern amenities giving guests a sense of space and freedom. With dedicated Gulf Air Falcon Gold Lounges in all of Bahrain International Airport, Concourse D, Dubai International Airport and Heathrow Terminal 4, our passengers are well taken care of with well laid-out business, dining, lounging facilities and TV areas in addition to the added facilities of the "Quiet Lounge" which holds private sleeping rooms with comfortable beds, dimming lights and the 'do not disturb' option to rest in complete privacy.

The sleeping rooms are also equipped with hi definition TVs with wireless headphones for those who want to watch their favorite programs or listen to their choice of music in private. Additional facilities include a cigar lounge and shower rooms with hotel-style towels and luxury brand toiletries and amenities. There are also separate prayer rooms and secure lockers for those who want to use these facilities while the modern, self-service buffet area offers a wide variety of snacks and meals, including an Italian coffee corner offering the world famous Lavazza brand coffee varieties.

Passengers can stay connected with free Wi-Fi throughout the lounges, discreet power sockets at every seat and a business centre that includes PCs, fax machines and printers. For families, the lounge offers a spacious family room with our SkyNannies in attendance as well as a gaming room equipped with Xbox and PlayStation units. In fact, the lounge is so appealing you may find yourself hoping for a flight delay. There's not much chance of that happening: Gulf Air's strong on-time-punctuality is becoming yet another trademark of the airline.

With an average annual on-time-performance of 82.7 percent in 2016 Gulf Air was independently ranked by UK aviation analysts OAG as the most punctual GCC airline in 2016 - further facilitating the carrier's seamless operations across its network. Gulf Air's Falcon Gold Lounges seamlessly integrate contemporary design and architecture with Arabian influences, creating an environment that combines peace and tranquility with extensive mod-

ern-day business and catering facilities for the Gulf Air Falcon Gold traveler. The lounge is freely accessible to all Black, Gold, Silver and Blue card-holding FFP members of Gulf Air and Falcon Gold class ticket holders of Gulf Air and premium class ticket holders of the carrier's code-share partner airlines.

A320 flatbed seats

Gulf Air's state-of-the-art Airbus A320 aircraft is one of the first narrow body aircraft with fully flatbed seats in its Falcon Gold (premium) class cabins. With a total of 14 flatbed seats in the Falcon Gold class, Gulf Air integrated the comments of its customers during the development stage of its A320 seats' design to ensure the product met their requirements.

Through customer interface workshops, the views of the airline's Gulf Air Falcon flyer Loyalty Program (FFP) members - were incorporated and, today, the outcome of the FFP workshops is a seat that meets most passenger requirements in terms of seating and sleeping comforts. On-board the A320 aircraft 14 Falcon Gold seats offer more personal space between seats than the airline's previous Falcon Gold Class product.

Gulf Air's A320 seats allow passengers to sit back and relax in a 22-inch wide armchair that converts easily into the passenger's desired position with 4 recline-control levels and an in-seat massage facility. Gulf Air's Falcon Gold seats recline 180-degrees into fully flatbeds, allowing passengers to sleep more comfortably while fully adjustable armrests make sleeping, dining or working significantly more comfortable.

It also consists of a significant storage space such as a shoe packing pocket and a side compartment specifically designed for laptops - further complemented by a USB port in every seat to allow passengers to easily charge electronic devices. For those seeking onboard entertainment, each Falcon Gold seat has a full Audio-Video on Demand (AVOD) feature: a selection of over 1500 movies, music, music videos, games and television programs with touch screen technology. An individual 15-inch touch screens in every seat and high quality noise cancelling headphones further enhance the viewing experience.



Lifestyle

THURSDAY, MARCH 30, 2017

With monster trucks and Comic-Con, Saudis defy killjoy image

37



Visitors enjoy the cherry blossoms at the Yuyuantan Park during spring festival in Beijing, yesterday. People started crowding the park for the popular annual Cherry Blossoms festival which has more than 2,000 cherry trees.—AP

Picasso's tragic first wife emerges from the shadows

She was Picasso's forgotten wife, written out of history as a "neurotic", snobbish depressive who was a drag on the great artist. But a new exhibition is shining a very different light on Olga Khokhlova, his first wife who he refused to divorce because he did not want to split his artworks and his vast wealth with her. Drawing on previously unseen letters, photographs and films from the Picasso family's private archives, Olga emerges as a major influence on the greatest painter of the 20th century.

Picasso fell madly in love with the beautiful Russian ballerina in 1917 after seeing her dance in "Parade" by Sergei Diaghilev, Erik Satie and Jean Cocteau for which he had designed the set and the costumes. The exhibition at the Picasso Museum in Paris—the first ever devoted to Olga—shows how she was his main model and muse throughout his classical period. First his view of her was carnal, but as time went by and his ardour cooled, he portrayed her as melancholic, often sitting or reading. Later as their marriage soured in the 1920s and 1930s, Olga is shown as "deformed" and contorted by pain and regret.

'Opens up his life'

By then Picasso was leading a double life having become infatuated with a buxom 17-year-old French girl, Marie-Therese Walter, who he picked up in the street. In one telling photo taken by Picasso in his studio, the slim and elegant Olga is shot sitting on a chair behind which looms a nude of the voluptuous Marie-Therese who—unknown to Olga—had replaced her in his bed. Olga's grandson Bernard Ruiz-Picasso told AFP that the family's letters

and photos allow a "really fascinating study of the direct links between the artist, his work and what was influencing him at the time". Picasso's friend and biographer, the British art historian Sir John Richardson—who described Olga as "rather neurotic"—has already called the trove "a revelation and absolutely astonishing. It opens up his life," he said.

Picasso has often been condemned as a macho misogynist, whose sex drive and selfishness left a trail of destruction behind him—with Marie-Therese, his second wife Jacqueline Roque and a grandson all committing suicide. But curator Emilia Philippot said the documents show a more nuanced view of his relationship with Olga, with one home movie showing her plucking daisy petals and mouthing the words, "He loves me, he loves me not."

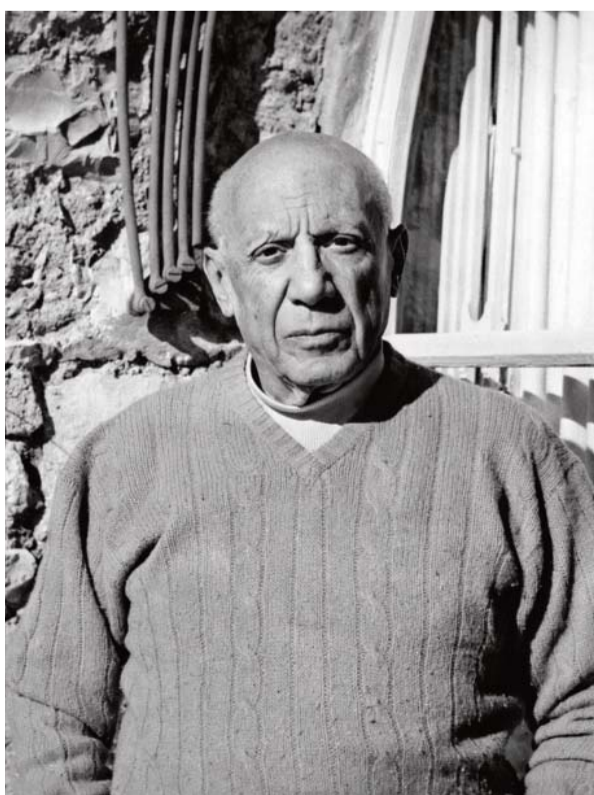
'Very mysterious woman'

"She is a very mysterious woman. In his portraits and photos of her she does not smile a lot... but when you see her in the films she is actually very joyous and girl-like. She's a dancer and she is always dressing up and being playful with the dogs." Ruiz-Picasso said it emerged from her letters that Olga had good reason to be sad and preoccupied.

Born in what is now Ukraine, her father—a colonel in the Russian imperial army—had disappeared in the chaos of the Bolshevik revolution. While she and Picasso were climbing the social ladder in Paris, her family was losing everything. Picasso idealized Olga on canvas as the model of perfect motherhood after the birth of their son Paulo in 1921, but soon the relationship began to go wrong. "She was known for her fits of jealousy and obviously there were some real tensions within the relationship," Philippot said.

"But I think Picasso had love and respect for her. He too was a prisoner of their situation, which he expressed in comparing himself to the Minotaur," the imprisoned mythological half-man half bull. The couple separated in 1935, but still financially dependent on him, "Olga had real trouble accepting the separation", Philippot added. "She was very alone and she suffered a lot. After the war when Picasso settled in the south of France, Olga followed him, going from hotel to hotel, living out of her suitcase," while Paulo became his father's chauffeur.

"She would send Picasso little cards with photographs of Paulo and the grandchildren as if they were still a family." But Picasso "never replied to her letters" and wanted nothing of the reconciliation and conventional family life that Olga craved. Dismissed as "mad" by many of Picasso's friends, she died from cancer in the French Mediterranean resort of Cannes in 1955. Four years later Picasso married Roque, who he painted obsessively until his death in 1973. The exhibition runs until September 3. — AFP



This file picture dated 3 February 1968 shows Spanish painter and sculptor Pablo Picasso. — AFP

Bizarre News

Donald Trump lollies on sale for unhappy Americans

Unhappy Americans can now get sweet revenge on President Donald Trump by purchasing Smith & Sinclair's limited edition 'Trump Sucks' lollipops on National 'Something On A Stick' Day. 500 have gone up for pre-order online for £5 each with 10 per cent of profits going to Planned Parenthood. They've gone on sale in protest to Trump's executive order to ban federal money going to international groups which perform or provide information on abortions. They came in two gruesome flavors, Butterscotch & Sea Salt and Strawberry & Mint.



Woman arrested for loudly listening to Ed Sheeran

A woman has been arrested for listening to Ed Sheeran on repeat loudly. ITV reported that Sonia Bryce from Willenhall near Walsall in the West Midlands will spend time in prison after she allegedly played his number one hit 'Shape of You' from his latest record 'Divide' extremely loudly. The woman had previously been cautioned about "creating a nuisance" in a court order from her landlords. And in December, she was arrested and accused of ignoring the order has been accused of breaching it with the flame-haired hunk's track. According to The Independent newspaper, a judge ruled that she would be "wholly unacceptable level of disturbance". She was reportedly told by the court: "You must learn that you should behave as a reasonable and responsible adult and not make life for your neighbors the misery that you have."



Driver damages car whilst trying to squeeze through a gap that is too small

A driver scraped her car after trying to squeeze it through a gap smaller than the vehicle. A video clip that has gone viral showed the driver attempting to driver her Vauxhall Corsa between two stone pillars in an attempt to get out of a car park in Gravesend in Kent. In the footage unearthed

by The Sun newspaper, the woman can be seen edging towards the gap, and even instructed the help of passers-by to direct her and at one point in a bid to shave a few centimeters off the width of her vehicle, she pushed the wing mirrors in. But as she attempted to drive through the gate for a final time, crunching can be heard, which prompted the passer-by to alert the driver to stop after she drifted too far across to the left, and ended up scraping her car on the exposed brick pillars. Other witnesses found the woman's attempt amusing before she finally gets out the car and admits defeat.



Flight attendants witness bizarre things

Flight attendants have witnessed babies poo in the aisles and couples have oral sex on aeroplanes. Staff have shared their bizarre sightings on Quora in a bid to share with the world many of the things they witness travellers do on a daily basis and still manage to cause shock. One recalled seeing a mother let her child foul in the aisle, a couple giving each other mouth sex in their seats and a parent putting their baby in the overhead cabin. Former flight attendant Heather Wilde said: "People change their babies on the snack trays in full view of everyone like it is perfectly normal behavior. Others decide it is too risky to use the lavatory to join the mile high club and just ask for a pillow - then leave it on the seat when they leave (which then goes straight into the trash)." And air hostess Olivia Roqua recalled a hair-raising experience. She said: "One lady handed me a teacup to clear, then asked me to wait while she pulled some long loose strands of hair from her head, balled them up and popped them in the teacup that was now on my tray. 'I've also seen a woman put her baby in the hat rack and had people ask where the toilet is for US passport holders.'"—Bang Showbiz

