

E-media, youth  
Major theme of  
Kuwait forum



Merkel in Saudi  
to hold talks  
on refugees



Alli, Kane earn  
Spurs stirring  
derby win



150 FILS  
NO: 17214  
40 PAGES

# KUWAITI BUSINESSMAN SHOT DEAD IN ISTANBUL

IRAN SATELLITE TV HEAD ALSO KILLED IN ARMED ATTACK

Min 29°  
Max 40°  
High Tide  
03:55 & 14:31  
Low Tide  
06:57 & 19:33

## INVESTIGATE FISH DEATH, ALLEGED FIFA BRIBES: MPS

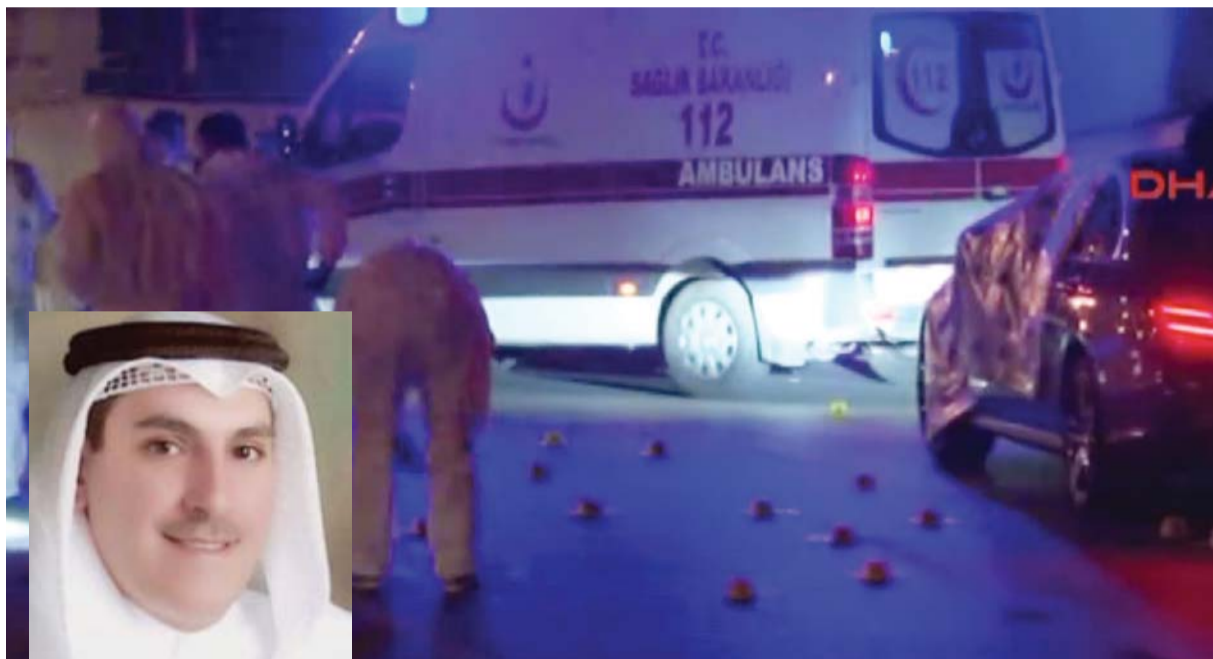
By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Three main issues dominated the local parliamentary scene yesterday with MPs demanding investigations into the mass fish death and the allegations of Kuwait Football officials' involvement in alleged graft. MPs also called on authorities to take part in investigations to uncover the killers who assassinated Kuwaiti businessman Mohammad Metab Al-Shalahi in Istanbul Saturday night along with an Iranian Dubai-based TV owner and considered an opponent to the regime in Tehran.

MP Khalil Al-Saleh said he submitted a motion calling on the National Assembly environment committee to investigate the reasons for the mass death of fish on Kuwaiti shores and into the alleged pollution of Kuwaiti environment and water.

He said the motion gives the panel one month to complete its report. The lawmaker also called on the panel to start holding meetings with the relevant authorities over the sensitive issue.

Continued on Page 13



ISTANBUL: Turkish security officials inspect the site of an armed attack in Istanbul's Maslak neighborhood in which Kuwaiti businessman Mohammad Metab Al-Shalahi (inset) and his Iranian partner were shot dead on Saturday.

KUWAIT/ISTANBUL: A Kuwaiti businessman was shot dead in Istanbul late Saturday together with his Iranian business partner. The citizen Mohammad Metab Al-Shalahi was shot dead in an armed attack on his car as he was in the company of the Iranian resident in Turkey. Kuwaiti Consul in Istanbul Mohammed Al-Mohammed confirmed the death of the citizen. In a press statement, Mohammed said that the consulate in Istanbul is closely monitoring the situation and following up investigations into the killing of the Kuwaiti citizen. It is also making necessary arrangements to repatriate his body to Kuwait.

Turkish security agencies have launched an inquiry to track down the killers and investigate the motive behind the crime. The citizen was reportedly in his four-wheel vehicle with his Iranian friend Saeed Karimian, a member of the Iranian opposition who owns TV channels and other media outlets.

According to some Kuwaiti media sources, the Turkish authorities reported 30 shots - three killed the Kuwaiti businessman and 27 targeted his Iranian friend.

According to Turkey's Dogan news agency, GEM TV founder and a British citizen of Iranian origin Saeed Karimian and Al-Shalahi were driving in Istanbul's Maslak neighborhood after 8pm (1700 GMT) on Saturday when their car was blocked by a jeep and shots were fired, Dogan said.

Continued on Page 13



DUBAI: Attendees look at computers showing the "Dubai Font", the first typeface developed by Microsoft for Dubai yesterday. — AFP

## MICROSOFT CREATES 'DUBAI FONT' TYPEFACE

DUBAI: The Dubai government yesterday announced the launch of "Dubai Font", the first typeface developed by Microsoft for a city, which will be available in 23 languages. The font was developed simultaneously in Latin and Arabic script and is available to 100 million Office 365 users around the world. Dubai Crown Prince Hamdan bin Mohammed al-Maktoum has urged all government institutions to adopt the font in official correspondence.

The Executive Council of Dubai, which manages the affairs of the city-state and is headed by Prince Hamdan, said the font reflects the United Arab Emirates' vision "to become a regional and global leader in innovation." "It is the first font to be developed by a city and to carry its name", Executive Council secretary general Abdulla Al-Shaiban told a news conference.

Home to the world's tallest tower and the largest shopping mall in the Middle East, image-conscious Dubai has pushed in recent years to broaden its appeal by investing in its technology and culture. The emirate also aims to emerge as the world's happiest city, and last year appointed a happiness minister. In 2016, some 14.9 million tourists visited Dubai, the most liberal of the UAE's seven emirates and its least dependent on oil revenues. Dubai will host the six-month Expo 2020 under the themes of sustainability and mobility. — AFP

## SAUDI ARRESTS 46 SUSPECTS OVER 2016 MADINA ATTACK

DUBAI: Saudi Arabia said yesterday it had arrested 46 members of a militant cell responsible for a deadly suicide bombing attack on the Prophet's Mosque in the holy city of Madina last summer that was blamed on Islamic State.

The suspects, which included foreign and Saudi citizens, were detained in the Western port city of Jeddah, state news agency SPA quoted the interior ministry as saying. Three suicide bombers and two members of the security forces were killed in the unprecedented attack on the mosque and tomb of Islam's Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) that is one of the religion's holiest sites.

There was no claim of responsibility for the attack nor did the interior ministry statement blame a specific group. Islamic State, based in Iraq and Syria, has carried out a series of bombings and shootings in Saudi Arabia since mid-2014 killing scores of people. — Reuters

## SHEIKH AHMAD QUILTS FIFA COUNCIL

GENEVA: FIFA Council member Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad Al-Sabah is resigning from his soccer roles under pressure from allegations in an American federal court that he bribed Asian officials. Sheikh Ahmad said yesterday in a statement he will withdraw from a May 8 election in Bahrain for the FIFA seat representing Asia, which he currently holds.

"I do not want these allegations to create divisions or distract attention from the upcoming AFC (Asian Football Confederation) and FIFA Congresses," said the Kuwaiti royal, who denies any wrongdoing.

"Therefore, after careful consideration, I have decided it is in the best interests of FIFA and the AFC, for me to withdraw my candidacy for the FIFA Council and resign from my current football positions," he said. The long-time Olympic Council of Asia president contacted the ethics panels of FIFA and the IOC after the allegations were made in Brooklyn federal courthouse on Thursday.

FIFA President Gianni Infantino said he had "taken note" of Sheikh Ahmad's move, adding in a brief statement that "I want to thank him for taking this decision which certainly was not easy to take but is in the best

interest for FIFA." FIFA audit committee member Richard Lai, an American citizen from Guam, pleaded guilty to wire fraud conspiracy charges related to taking around \$1 million in bribes, including from Kuwaiti officials. The cash was to buy influence and help recruit other Asian soccer officials prepared to take bribes, Lai said in court.

Sheikh Ahmad resigned his candidacy ahead of a FIFA panel deciding whether to remove him on ethical grounds. The FIFA Review Committee, which rules on the integrity of people seeking senior FIFA positions, has been studying Sheikh Ahmad's candidacy since the allegations emerged, The Associated Press reported on Saturday.

The FIFA ethics committee is making a separate assessment of whether to provisionally suspend the sheikh, a long-time leader of Kuwait's soccer federation who was elected to FIFA's ruling committee in 2015. Resigning from his soccer positions does not necessarily put Sheikh Ahmad out of reach of FIFA ethics prosecutors and judges if any action was taken.

Continued on Page 13



In this Oct 26, 2015 file photo, Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad Al-Sabah speaks during an interview with the AP at the Washington Hilton, in Washington. — AP

# FISHERMAN RETURNS



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TERMINATION BECAUSE OF BANKRUPTCY

By Attorney Fajer Ahmed

The Kuwaiti economy, much like the case in the rest of the world, is currently going through a shift for many different reasons that I will not get into as it is not part of my specialty. But for once, the government is trying to move away from focusing its revenues solely on oil production, and instead started supporting local businesses, in addition to other factors that are causing this shift. As a result, some companies and corporations are finding financial difficulties this year, causing many to file for bankruptcy or show signs of troubled balance sheets including delayed salaries.

In Kuwait, we have a larger number of expat workers, and therefore I would like to discuss what this means for them, as I have been seeing many clients at the firm lately with issues regarding their companies' bankruptcy. Can expats leave Kuwait if they are not receiving any salaries? As well as other questions and advices I would like to provide.

As I have said before, I will be answering questions in simple terms that are understandable to all, and this means that I will not be using correct legal words, but instead words that are easy for everyone to understand.

Benefits

**QUESTION:** Do I still receive my benefits even though the company is being liquidated?

**FAJER:** Yes. When a company is liquidated by law, employment rights are the first debt to be settled.

**QUESTION:** I have not been paid for a few months. I hope things turn around, but I am worried they would not. What should I do?

**FAJER:** Initially, it is important to have this documented, if you are or were being paid by bank, then you would already have this documented. If you are getting paid by cash or worse, if your company has a bank account in your name that you do not have access to, then please do have this documented.

You will need to go to shoon (the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor) and file a complaint. Filing a complaint for not being paid is separate than canceling your visa or resigning, and the two do not have to be done together. I have written other articles recently with more details about the specifics of filing a complaint. Please refer to them for further information.

Leaving Kuwait

**QUESTION:** Since I am an expat in Kuwait and I have not been receiving my salary, can I leave Kuwait? Do I have to cancel my residency? Do you suggest I resign? What advice do you have?

**FAJER:** Yes you can but there is a process that you have to follow, especially if you want your monetary benefits and other rights and if you would like to come back and work in Kuwait. I highly suggest that you cancel your visa, because the last thing you want is for an absconding case to be filed against you while you are out of Kuwait, making it hard for you to defend yourself or find a lawyer that will defend you.

You will need to file for visa cancellation at shoon and you will need a valid reason, such as your contract ending or a termination/resignation letter that is clear and signed or stamped by the parties. I also highly suggest that you give a POA (power of attorney) to a lawyer that you trust before leaving the country so should anything arise you have someone to defend you. I hope the above helps. I know this is a difficult situation to be in so please weigh in your options.

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

KUWAIT MARKS LABOR DAY

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait marks today the international Labor Day, which is an annual global occasion celebrating laborers and workers achievements. As part of the celebrations, the Kuwaiti workers and laborers movements will highlight the long history of labor accomplishments in the country. Speaking on the occasion, chairman of Kuwait Trade Union Federation (KTUF) Salem Al-Ajmi said that the workers and laborers' movements in the country had always been on the forefront of supporting national causes.

KTUF, along with other unions, federations, and organizations, will stand with the rights of workers and laborers in Kuwait, stressed Ajmi who indicated that the federation - during its long illustrious years of operations since the early 1960s - has supported regulations in favor of workers.

About the history of workers in Kuwait, the official revealed that there was a sort of proto regulation issued to protect the rights of pearl divers and people working at the sea back in the 1940s. He added that throughout the modern age, the Kuwaiti constitution came out with several public and private sectors regulations aimed at protecting the rights and wellbeing of laborers in Kuwait.

The first labor unions were established in 1964 and they were dedicated to the protection and promotion of workers in the health and municipality sectors, said Ajmi who pointed out that nowadays there were around 80 labor and workers unions in the country operating under the umbrella of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs.

The first international workers day was celebrated in the late 1800s in reaction to the hay market affair, an insidious bomb attack at labor rally in Chicago, which occurred in 1886, sparking a global movement aimed at protecting laborers' rights and welfare. —KUNA

UNHCR-KUWAIT QUASHES REPORTS ON SYRIANS' RESIDENCE

**KUWAIT:** The UN refugee agency (UNHCR) yesterday rejected social media reports that it took procedures for providing or renewing residences for Syrians in the country. The UNHCR-Kuwait said that 'misinformation' was circulated on the powers of the agency and its services regarding renewing residences of Syrians in Kuwait, and lifting fines due on some of them. This has left a 'wrong impression' among the Syrian community in Kuwait, the agency noted. The UNHCR termed as false news an invitation for Syrians to have their transactions completed at the agency's office on May 3. The office emphasized that the agency has no power to intervene in the Kuwaiti official bodies or the sovereign decisions in the State of Kuwait. The Kuwaiti executive power issues and extends residences, the agency stressed. —KUNA



E-MEDIA, YOUTH MAJOR THEME OF KUWAIT FORUM

**KUWAIT:** The Kuwaiti Media Forum kicked off its fourth session yesterday, which was themed 'priority of modern e-media'. The event is sponsored by the Ministry of Information and Ministry of State for Youth Affairs.

The event aims to prepare youth to assume the responsibility of promoting media in the future, presenting them with the requirements of the age of information revolution, Secretary General of the Arab Media Forum (AMF) Madhi Al-Khamis. This will contribute to building up their capabilities, which will be positively reflected on the media and the entire society, he added. Since the AMF was established, it has been working in line with a certain strategy and goals for enhancing cooperation among the Arab countries, developing a favorable atmosphere for the exchange of expertise, as well as organizing specialized events. Youth are the backbone of the society, Khamis said, adding that the Kuwait forum is keen on listening to their ideas and

views, and learning about their expectations, in addition to offering answers to their inquiries. Thus, the two-day forum will play a strategic role for empowering youth in the media.

Meanwhile, director of the information department at the State Ministry for Youth Affairs thanked the AMF for adopting the youth forum, and putting forward the ideas that are likely to help them make their way in the field. This media forum is a positive initiative covers issues of great interest for youth, Ooredoo's Senior Manager, Social Media, Corporate Social Responsibility Khalid Al-Shallal told the forum. This is part of Ooredoo's strategy to support young people's talents, gaining the experience to be efficient and effective in the society, he added. Head of the training department of institutions at the Australian College of Kuwait said that they were proud to host the forum as part of the efforts to support all youth activities and events. — KUNA



**KUWAIT:** Secretary General of the Arab Media Forum (AMF) Madhi Al-Khamis speaks during the session.

COUNCILORS CRITICIZE AUTHORITIES FOR FAILURE TO ADDRESS FISH DEATHS

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

**KUWAIT:** Municipal Council member and chairman of the technical committee Fahad Al-Sane criticized the reluctance of relevant authorities to reveal the true cause behind the 'seasonal fish death phenomenon'. He further criticized them for 'keeping silent' and for failure to identify those responsible and hold them accountable. Sane expressed displeasure towards exchanged accusations by concerned authorities over this phenomenon without questioning those who caused it.

Meanwhile, former Municipal Council member Ashwaq Al-Mudhaf criticized the Ministry of Public Works for releasing 'strange' results which indicated that no pollution has been detected in Kuwait Bay. Mudhaf said that several ministries testified that the waters are polluted, including the Ministry of Electricity and Water (MEW) whose undersecretary Mohammad Bushehri ordered an investigations into the matter. "There must be a neutral committee to reveal

the size of this environmental catastrophe that led to the death of fish," she said. Furthermore, Mudhaf said that she had previously warned about the issue, and went and longed a complaint with the public prosecution against the government because of what she described as the negative environmental impact of ongoing constructions at the Jaber Causeway project.

PM's support

Chairman of the Structural Planning Committee at the Municipal Council Engineer Ali Al-Mousa appreciated the support of His Highness Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah to the chairman and members of the Municipal Council "as they continue their efforts to realize various achievements." Mousa said in a statement to the press yesterday that members will continue their efforts during the current term which ends in October, as the remaining members will hold extraordinary meetings to process transactions that were deliber-

ated by various committees. The Municipal Council has failed to convene since the beginning of the year due to lack of quorum after several members had resigned to contest in parliamentary elections.

Shelter

The Higher Family Affairs Council held its sixth meeting headed by Minister of Social Affairs and Labor, State Minister of Economic Affairs Hind Al-Sabeeh. The meeting was attended by a large number of members from various ministers in addition to members of five teams that are formed to back up the cabinet's role in service of the Kuwait family. Sabeeh said that a decision was made to build a shelter for those suffering from family violence in Ahmadi. The shelter will receive children, women and the elderly who will be provided with sheltering, psychological, health and social services. If this center is successful, new centers will be built in other governorates to expand the service's coverage around Kuwait, she added.

INTERIOR MINISTER MEETS PALESTINIAN AMBASSADOR

**KUWAIT:** Kuwaiti Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah met yesterday with Palestinian Ambassador to Kuwait Rami Tahboub on bilateral cooperation. During the meeting, they also discussed several issues of mutual

interest and the conditions of the Palestinian community in Kuwait, the Interior Ministry's information office said in a statement. The Palestinian ambassador appreciated Kuwait's care and support to Palestinians living on its soil, it added. — KUNA



**KUWAIT:** Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah meets with Palestinian Ambassador to Kuwait Rami Tahboub. — Interior Ministry photo



**Kuwaiti ophthalmologist Khalid Al-Sabti (right).**

KUWAITI OPHTHALMOLOGIST PERFORMS RARE SURGERY IN ITALY

**FLORENCE:** Kuwaiti leading ophthalmologist Khalid Al-Sabti has performed a successful rare eye surgery for an Italian old man who suffered a retinal detachment due to fibrosis resulting from diabetes. The medical procedure was aired live on screens for specialists attending the Floretina 2017, an international retinal meeting held in Florence, Italy, April 27-30. The event, which wrapped up sessions earlier today, was attended by some 2,400 retina specialists from around the globe.

Organizers selected Sabti among 16 ophthalmologists to show his technique in conducting the medical process, with direct interaction with participants in the conference, he said yesterday. Sabti expressed pride of being the first Kuwaiti and Gulf ophthalmologist "chosen among the elite senior specialists in the scientific gathering," to offer their techniques in treating the retina. The operations performed at the conference were preceded by preparations for months, he added, voicing pleasure for the success of the procedure with his assistant team from the Careggi University Hospital. —KUNA



**KUWAIT:** Dusty weather continued to cloud over Kuwait for the second consecutive day yesterday, and the dust storm is expected to remain today before it subdues tomorrow. The current unstable weather - which is also expected to bring some rain showers on Wednesday - is caused by the Sarayat season which ends mid-May. — Photos by Joseph Shagra

# LG DUAL Inverter is the way forward with innovative air conditioning solutions for the home

In an interview with Mr. Changho Lee, the General Manager of the RAC Sales Division at LG Electronics Gulf, we had the opportunity to learn about LG's latest and most cutting-edge technology in residential air conditioning.



**Q1. What is the latest and most innovative technology in residential air conditioning?**

Inverter technology is the latest innovation in conditioning, known for its low energy consumption, saving the consumer money, and reducing environmental impact. This innovative technology can reduce energy consumption significantly compared with non-inverter models. Conventional air conditioning systems only have two power stages: "on", with 100% performance, and "off", with 0% performance. This is not the case with full inverter air conditioning systems.

**Q2. What is LG's latest residential air conditioning line-up equipped with inverter technology and what was the thinking process behind its development?**

LG's newest residential air conditioning solution is the LG DUAL Inverter. During the development process, LG always thinks of solutions with innovative technology at the core, technology that is carefully crafted and developed for what matters most - the family.

**Q3. What are LG's DUAL Inverter key features?**

The LG DUAL Inverter air conditioner works even up to 65°C, thanks to its Dual Inverter Compressor on which LG offers a 10-year warranty. In terms of performance and efficiency, the LG DUAL Inverter air conditioner maximizes cooling performance, providing 60% faster cooling and 20% more cooling. The LG DUAL Inverter air conditioner saves energy up to 65% as compared to conventional air conditioners.

Additionally, LG DUAL Inverter air conditioner includes LG's exclusive Gold Fin™ coating, which forms a protective shield on the surface of the heat exchanger, making the surface more resistant to corrosion while improving the overall durability of the heat exchanger. Other key features include: Comfort Sleep, Comfort Air, Dual Protection Filter, Quiet Cooling, Auto Cleaning, Smart Diagnosis and Smart Display, whereby users can check the status of the air conditioner more easily.

**Q4. Where can the LG DUAL Inverter air conditioner be purchased?**

LG DUAL Inverter air conditioner is now available at all leading retail showrooms and leading hypermarkets across Kuwait.

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## ZAIN AWARDS WINNERS OF KUWAIT TIMES PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION COMPANY MAIN SPONSOR OF THE EVENT DURING THE PAST YEARS

**KUWAIT:** Zain, the leading telecommunications company in Kuwait, awarded the winners of the annual photography competition organized by Kuwait Times. The competition, sponsored by Zain, held its conclusion ceremony at Holiday Inn Hotel - Salmiya.

Zain's sponsorship of this competition during the past years came in line with its Corporate Sustainability and Social Responsibility strategy, which closely focuses on supporting and encouraging efforts that contribute to offering the proper environment for the youth to unleash their creativity. As Zain is considered a leading private sector organization in Kuwait, the company has a huge responsibility to support innovation within all age groups, especially the youth.

The competition witnessed the submission of over 1,600 photographs taken by over 500 participants, who captured the beauty of

various natural scenes in Kuwait. During the conclusion ceremony, Zain awarded the top winners and stressed its continuous support for Kuwait's talented youth to be identified and celebrated.

Zain is proud to support this event that highlights the skills and creativity of talented photographers in Kuwait, especially that photography is developing to become a well-recognized hobby within the youth in the country during the past years. The company will continue to support all the innovative ideas that further develop young talents.

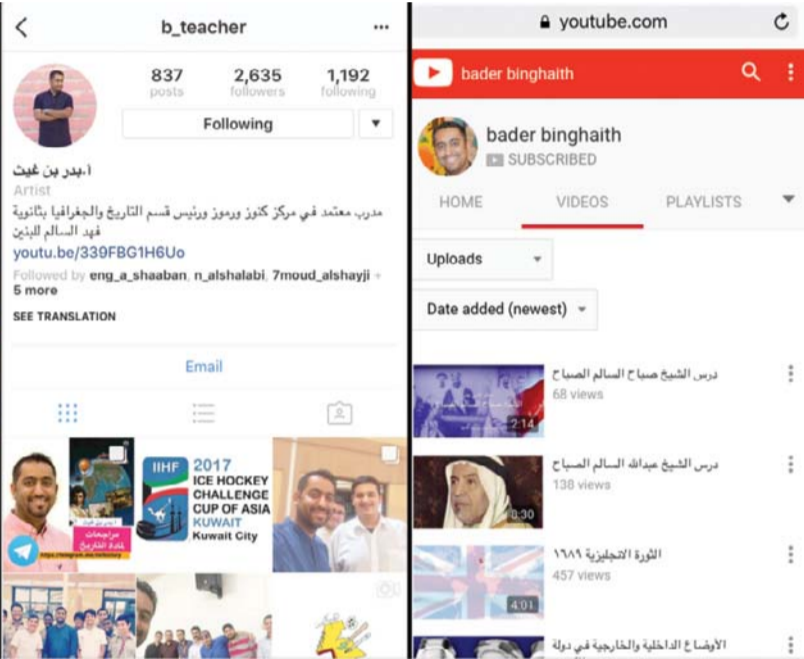
Zain is keen on supporting and fostering initiatives that offer the next generations an opportunity to unleash their creativity. The company will continue to foster young talents, believing that the current generation of youngsters holds the keys to the future development of Kuwait.



**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Times Editor-in-Chief Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan honors Zain during the conclusion ceremony.



Treasures of valuable information could be found on the social media accounts of history teacher Bader bin Ghaith.



### TOP POSTS



### MOST RECENT

50 public posts



Photos with the "These are my students" hashtag created by Bin Ghaith to document students' achievements.

## CREATIVE KUWAITI TEACHERS PAVING WAY FOR BRIGHT FUTURE

**KUWAIT:** It is not a secret that teaching is one of the most physically and mentally demanding careers that helps to shape how countries grow and develop. Bearing that in mind, a new 'class' of creative Kuwaiti teachers took it upon themselves to utilize whatever was offered in terms of modern technology and innovative ways to help cultivate students' talents and skills as part of an effort to usher in a new age of enlightenment and progress in the country. Unconditional trust in the capabilities and skills of teachers will do wonders to education in the country, Bader bin Ghaith, a high school history teacher, said in an interview.

Bin Ghaith made a name for himself on the national educational scene due to his unconventional teaching tools, which included the use of social media applications and persuasive methods that won students' hearts and minds. "Students have a hunger for knowledge and a nation like Kuwait has a lot to offer in terms of education, so give teachers a chance to innovate and they will deliver," said the teacher. Since beginning his career in 2005, bin Ghaith made it his mission to bring to the table a different brand of teaching that in some extent did stick to the curriculum, but was not limited by it.

When teaching students important values,

it will not be a waste of time to do extracurricular activities to obtain pieces of information, said bin Ghaith, who affirmed that a mere school trip, a simple internet search, or other unconventional means will offer students' knowledge beyond the confound of classrooms. "We live in a different age that requires a different kind of education," said bin Ghaith, pointing out that he always puts himself in the shoes of his students, asking himself what they were in need of and how he could deliver in terms of content. Disregarding what modern technology could offer would hinder teachers' abilities to perform especially nowadays, bin Ghaith indicated, adding that he began to explore what social media and other technological tools could offer. Bin Ghaith opened accounts on Instagram, YouTube, Telegram messenger, and other applications to lure the current generation of tech-savvy students. "It was a hit that garnered the attention of students and the public alike," he affirmed, adding that he started to give his students assignments that did not necessary have anything to do with the textbook.

### Unique skills

On the other hand, encouraging students



Passing the baton: Teachers inspiring generations to follow their path.

to find their own strengths is not necessary a bad thing because each person has a unique set of skills that could be applied in countless and multiple ways to serve the final goal of obtaining knowledge or overcoming obstacles, he noted.

If students have artistic tendencies, let them use these skills to write a screenplay about certain historical events for example, or encourage them to illustrate important figures as part of the educational process, said bin Ghaith, adding that suppressing talents will lead to disastrous consequences.

Bin Ghaith affirmed that he always supported his students to follow their dreams and passions, saying that his role as an educator was not meant to downplay the next generations' ambitions, but nurture the belief in a better future. In this spirit, the Kuwaiti educator started the hashtag "those are my students" on Instagram and other applications to document and prove that Kuwait was "in good hands."

Bin Ghaith is not alone in his quest; elementary English schoolteacher Ali Al-Mahdi also joins the cause through teaching young children valuable life lessons. Entering Mahdi's classroom might be a bit of a confusing experience for an outsider, especially if the teacher was directing students to shoot a video. "I do not just teach students the English language, I like to give them life lessons," Mahdi commented about his peculiar hobby that he shares with his students. Through this mutual activity, the videos are edited into comedic skits, with a life-lesson undertone, that then will be uploaded on the Instagram account, the enthusiastic teacher elaborated on the creative process.

Mahdi said that this activity was meant as a reward to his students who seem to enjoy taking videos and are keen on being featured in this activity, with their parents' consent. "Respect stemming out of love is far different from the one originating from fearing teachers," said Mahdi, adding that he likes to treat students as men worthy of admiration and esteem.

The result of this treatment made several students seek his guidance on matters not

only pertaining to their studies, but personal issues and problems. "When a student wants to be an educator because a certain individual inspired him or her to be one... that is the ultimate goal for any teacher," said Mahdi, who pointed out that he was inspired to choose this career by his own intermediate school's English teacher.

### An inspiration

Being inspired by your own teacher in school is one matter, but choosing a career based on the good reputation and word-of-mouth regarding a teacher that one has never met is just simply phenomenal. Prior to his career as a history teacher, Radhan Al-Radhan was one of many students who have heard about Bader bin Ghaith. His passion for teaching

was ignited as a result. "One day I happened to be at my friend's high school in which bin Ghaith was teaching," said Radhan, affirming bin Ghaith's innovative ways inspired him to choose history as his major in college.

Radhan, who is entering his third year as a teacher, indicated that he followed bin Ghaith on his social media accounts, adding that the material that the educator puts online was valuable and more importantly, these lessons were available at all times at a click of a mousepad and swipe of a screen.

Teachers such as bin Ghaith, Mahdi, and more recently Radhan are now paving the way for students in Kuwait to look forward to the future and with their efforts; the country will start to develop in line with what the people and leadership desire. — KUNA



Bin Ghaith comes up with another creative way to teach students history.



Ali Al-Mahdi and students during the creative teaching process.

In Brief

AMIR OFFERS CONDOLENCES

**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of condolences yesterday to Cuban President Raul Castro over the victims of a Cuban plane crash. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent the Cuban president two cables of similar sentiments. —KUNA



AID TO 400 YEMENI FAMILIES

**RIYADH:** Kuwait has distributed the second and final batch of shelter aid to the directorate of Usaylan district of Shabwah Governorate, south-central Yemen, for 400 families from the district. The aid is part of the ongoing 'Kuwait is by your side' campaign in Yemen and includes house furniture, cooking gas cylinders, cooking tools, blankets, and other necessary supplies for families, Mohsen Al-Qaranaa, the campaign's coordinator in Usaylan, said yesterday. —KUNA



EMBASSY HOSTS PHOTO FAIR

**ANKARA:** Kuwait Embassy in Turkey hosted a photography exhibition on 'Humanitarian Diplomacy' in the capital Ankara late Saturday. In his opening speech, Kuwaiti Ambassador to Turkey Ghassan Al-Zawawi said the two-day fair aims to showcase Kuwait's humanitarian role around the world. Speaking about Kuwait's continuous humanitarian efforts, he noted that he took part in the inauguration of the Kuwait Medical Center for Prosthesis in Istanbul and Sabah Al-Ahmad village for sheltering Syrian refugees in Kilis last week. —KUNA



Photo

of the day



KUWAIT: A hand-written copy of the Holy Quran that dates back to the Hijri year 1298 (circa 1880) put in display at the National Library of Kuwait. —Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

'PROGRAM AIMS TO EMPOWER YOUTH'

**KUWAIT:** The Public Authority for Youth (PAY) said yesterday that the national Muthmer (Fruitful) program goes in line with its vision and goals for empowering youth in all fields. The program mainly depends on participation and sustainable institutional field work. PAY's representative Dr Fawaz Al-Ajmi told the opening session of a forum on the program the authority launched on Sunday with a host of youth-sponsoring official bodies.



PAY's representative Dr Fawaz Al-Ajmi



Member of 'Muthmer' program's higher committee and head of its executive bureau Rasha Al-Fares.

The three-day forum, patronized by Minister of Commerce and Industry and Acting Minister of State for Youth Affairs Khaled Al-Roudhan, aims to instill, and enhance, moral values in students of public schools, he added. The program seeks to encourage youth to create and innovate, unleashing their talents and hidden powers.

In this program, PAY is cooperating with the Ministry of Education, the Interior Ministry, and the Supreme Advisory Committee for the Completion of the Implementation of sharia (Islamic jurisprudence) at the Amiri Diwan, Ajmi noted. This first session of the forum, themed 'confer

with me on my thoughts,' aims to disseminate the culture of the program among school students, said member of Muthmer higher committee and head of its executive bureau, Rasha Al-Fares. Each participant school chooses one of the program's 10 projects to carry out, according to its capabilities, she added.

It has to be implemented through collective work for distinct outcome by the end of the academic year, she added. Up to 80 schools are taking part in the program. The forum includes training workshops to prepare schools' operational plans for the next academic year. —KUNA

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**condolences**

The Management and Staff of EQUATE Petrochemical Company wish to offer their heartfelt condolences to

**Mr. Mohammed Nadeem Musafar**  
(Integrated Supply Chain Department)  
On the sad demise of his

**Mother**

May his soul rest in peace and may God grant comfort and strength to the bereaved family members during this time

NCCAL PROMOTES KUWAITI PUBLICATIONS

**ABU DHABI:** Deputy Director of Kuwait International Book Fair and representative of Kuwait National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL) Khalifa Al-Rubah yesterday expressed keenness of the NCCAL to take part in Arab and International book fairs to highlight Kuwait's cultural role and its intellectual and literary publications.

This came in a statement that Rubah made on the sidelines of the 27th round of Abu Dhabi International Book Fair in which some 1,320 exhibitors representing 65 countries took part. Rubah said that the NCCAL's participation in the book fair this year showcases new publications of various disciplines. The 27th round of Abu Dhabi International Book Fair kicked off April 26th and will last to May 2nd. It includes 500,000 titles in more than 30 languages as well as 800 workshops and dialogue sessions. —KUNA

News

in brief

SISI VISITS KUWAIT

**KUWAIT:** Egyptian President Abdul-Fattah Al-Sisi begins tomorrow an official visit to Kuwait; the first leg of a regional tour that includes other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. The tour comes in continuation of discussions that took place during the recent Arab Summit and Sisi's subsequent visit to Riyadh, a diplomatic source said, adding that talks are set to focus on reaching agreements with regards to dealing with current Arab crises. — Al-Rai

Charging visitors

**KUWAIT:** MP Khalil Al-Saleh announced that he submitted an official request to the National Assembly in order to discuss a report that recommends charging visitors for medical services at public medical facilities as soon as possible. The recommendation was approved by the parliament's health committee and was supported by the government "which believes that it can help reduce pressure on public hospitals and stop medications' squandering," Saleh said. — Al-Rai

KD 100 million revenues

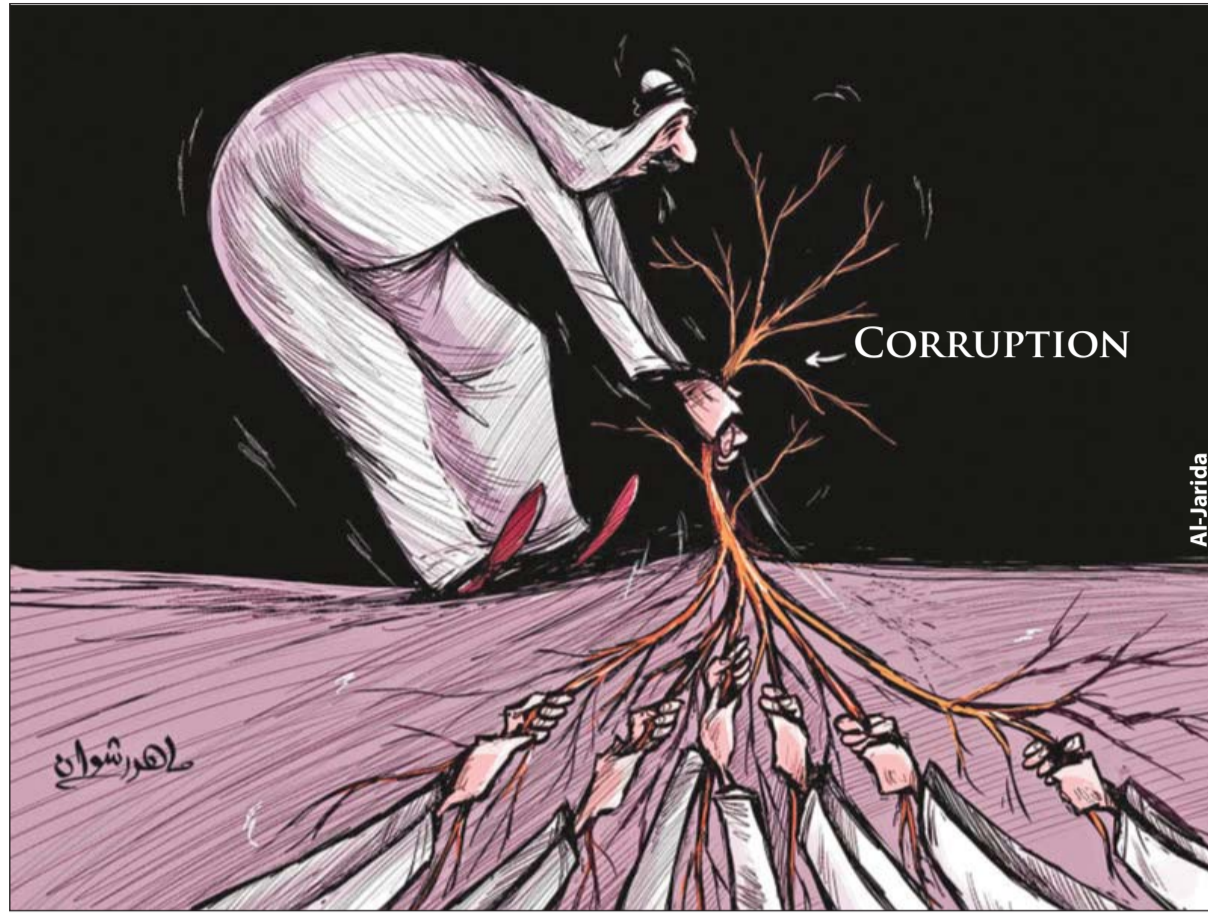
**KUWAIT:** The Ministry of Electricity and Water (MEW) expects to generate KD 100 million in additional earnings during the first year after applying the new energy tariffs starting from May 22, 2017. The added revenues will help finance the ministry's maintenance and expansion projects, while the increased fees will at the same time help drive consumers to cut their consumption rates to avoid paying high bills, a ministry source said. — Al-Qabas

Int'l investors' concerns

**KUWAIT:** International investors sent a number of inquiries to the Ministry of Finance after investing in \$8 billion bonds that Kuwait issued recently to cover its projected budget deficit. Those inquiries focused on Kuwait's long-term plans to diversify sources of income and when those plans are projected to bear fruit, in addition to the state's plans to curb spending on the public sector's payroll and on subsidies, as well as measures to cut general spending and whether state departments are cooperating in terms of the reform agenda. — Al-Qabas

Workers demonstrate unpaid wages

**KUWAIT:** A number of workers demonstrated outside two locations belonging to their company and damaged some properties in protest of their unpaid wages. Police had headed to a shopping mall under construction in Farwaniya following a report about a demonstration of nearly 500 workers. Police cordoned the area and summoned officers from the Manpower Public Authority to speak with the workers who said that they were not paid for four months. A similar scene happened near the company's head office in Kuwait City where nearly 700 workers demonstrated for the same reason. Manpower authority officers spoke with officials from the company who promised to pay the due salaries on Saturday, according to a security source. — Al-Jarida



Crime

Report

JAHRA ARSONIST STILL AT LARGE

**KUWAIT:** Police are still looking for an arsonist who set fire in a large number of garbage containers in Jahra. The most recent reports came from near a cooking gas cylinders' shop and a police station in the area, raising the number of fires committed by the unknown arsonist to 59 in three days.

Forgery

A female citizen was arrested over 14 charges of forgery and swindling as she took advantage of the fact that her appearance resembles that of another woman who had lost her civil ID. The forger reportedly used the ID that she found to obtain a visa card from a local bank, which she used to make several purchases. Furthermore, she used the ID to purchase four smart-phone plans, then sold the devices for money. The ID's owner had reported to police that she lost her civil ID card, and was told to wait until a replacement is issued. In the meantime, she received calls from cell phone service providers asking her for due payments, and later discovered that large amounts were deducted from her salary because of the visa that was issued by her name without her knowledge. Detectives worked on the case and discovered that someone used the woman's ID to commit 14 forgeries and purchased electronics, rented three cars, in addition to buying the phone plans and obtaining the credit card. Detectives were able to identify a suspect who looks like the victim. She was arrested and confessed to all charges. In a separate case, an Egyptian man was arrested for forging an old stamp on his passport in an attempt to bypass a travel ban and leave the country. Officers handed the suspect over along with his friend to criminal detectives.



Hit-and-run

A traffic policeman was rushed to Mubarak Hospital for treatment from injuries sustained when he was run over by a vehicle whose driver fled the scene. Several passersby reported the accident to police, and paramedics soon arrived then rushed the officer to hospital. Detectives are looking for the culprit.

FORBIDDEN TALK

Al-Anbaa

By Saleh Al-Shayjei

**W**e come across many people in this life, including relatives, acquaintances or colleagues, who possess a trait I myself consider so bad. Unfortunately, very few people share this opinion with me. This trait has never caught their attention and it has never been rejected or criticized.

That horrible trait is sudden interruption of an interlocutor, stopping his or her words before they could even complete the sentence they were about to say. It is a habit that is so hateful and has so many negative indications.

On the one hand, it indicates lack of respect to the person we interrupt because someone's talk is part of their personality. When we insult someone's words, it is just as if we are insulting them in person.

On the other hand, such interruption indicates lack of understanding of what is being said. It indicates that such a person had not been listening in the first place, and that is why the interruption is so sudden and out of context. This means that the people who make the interruption either did not understand or did not even bother to listen to what was being said.

In addition, those who interrupt others are incapable of listening and comprehending what they listen to. They usually get detached during the conversation and move their eyes around the place to avoid looking the speaker in the eye. I am not claiming that this is a curable disease, but it is rather a detested habit that is practiced by some people with very limited comprehension abilities.

Among the negative impacts that interruption leave is that it causes the speaker to lose focus of facts and ideas that they never get the chance to eventually complete or explain. But despite that, this 'plague' has unfortunately hit so many radio and TV channels that had been recently invaded by endless numbers of irresponsible and underage people who lack the blessing of knowledge, science and perception. They would suddenly and rudely interrupt in a way that indicates they had not been listening and are incapable of perceiving what is being said, at the very same time when viewers or listeners are carefully listening. Listening is a skill only mastered by those with wise and highly educated minds.

— Translated by Kuwait Times

KD 8 BILLION PROJECTED BUDGET DEFICIT

**KUWAIT:** The drop in the state's general reserves has reached around KD 12 billion over the past two years; that is since the oil prices started falling, according to well-informed sources. Around KD 5.95 billion had been withdrawn from the general reserves in 2015, the sources indicated, adding that the number jumped to KD 6 billion in 2016 to cover the budget deficit, whereas only a part of those amounts was returned to the future generations' fund. Moreover, the sources expected that the budget deficit would reach KD 6 billion by the end of the fiscal year 2016-2017, especially since it has already reached KD 5 billion by the end of January.

Meanwhile, official sources said that in case the parliament passes a bill to increase the allocations for the government's treatment overseas program, the 2016-2017 budget might suffer an extra KD 500 million deficit, which would increase the estimated total deficit to KD 8 billion. Notably, Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Anas Al-Saleh had stated last July that the 2016-2017 fiscal year's deficit is expected to reach KD 9.9 billion, but actual figures seem to have come less than he expected. — Al-Rai



Work mishap

An Asian man died after he was injured by a nail gun while doing decoration works at a house. The man was rushed to the Amiri Hospital with a severe chest wound inflicted by a direct shot from the gun, but he succumbed to his injuries moments later. Preliminary investigations indicate that the case was an accident. A case was filed for further investigations.

Ministry sued

A citizen who owns a beauty salon said she will sue the Interior Ministry because according to her, the Criminal Investigations Department released three expatriates she had earlier reported absconding, which caused her a lot of damage as she claims. The woman explained that three Filipina women who used to work for her escaped in May of last year, and were arrested a month ago, but they were released on a KD 1,500 bail instead of being deported, which is the common practice in absconding cases.

— Translated from the Arabic press

SERIOUS EFFORTS TO PROTECT CITIZENS IN PRIVATE SECTOR

**KUWAIT:** Minister of Social Affairs and Labor and Minister of State for Economic Affairs Hind Al-Sabeeh stressed that the government is serious in protecting citizens who were laid off from private companies, and stressed that legislations are being made to have those citizens appointed in various ministries without having to wait. This will be done by having the Civil Service Commission (CSC) give them priority in nomination for various jobs.



Minister Hind Al-Sabeeh

Sabeeh made her statements in a letter sent to the National Assembly in response to a parliamentary inquiry about the measures taken by the government to avoid a new episode of laying off Kuwaiti employees working for the private sector, similar to what happened a few years ago. The letter which was made available to the press quotes the minister as saying that labor law in the private sector (law number 6/2010) regulates work in the private sector and protects employees' rights.

Sabeeh added that measures taken by the government include encouraging employers to hire more citizens by giving them more incentives in order to annually provide around 10,000 job opportunities, and subjecting citizens already working for the private sector to special periodic training courses to help them keep their jobs. Furthermore, the measures include prioritizing the appointment of laid off citizens in various government bodies within a month after nomination, and launching nine awareness campaigns to change citizens' perception of work and its values to encourage more Kuwaitis to seek private sector jobs. Finally, Sabeeh stressed that the total number of citizens appointed in the private sector has remarkably increased from only 1,627 in 2001 to 25,883 in 2015. — Al-Jarida



**KUWAIT:** The Interior Ministry's Acting Assistant Undersecretary for General Security Major General Ibrahim Al-Tarrah honored a number of Jahra police officers for their hard work and dedication in maintaining security throughout the governorate.



**KUWAIT:** The Interior Ministry's Undersecretary Lieutenant General Mahmoud Al-Dousary received at his office yesterday a number of police officers who presented him copies of their respective PhD theses on security-related matters.



**Merkel to press Saudi Arabia on refugees, rights**



WASHINGTON: In this April 25, 2017 photo, President Donald Trump speaks on Capitol Hill in Washington. —AP

# TRUMP HAILS FIRST 100 DAYS IN OFFICE

PRESIDENT SAYS 'GREAT BATTLES' AHEAD WOULD BE WON

**HARRISBURG:** Donald Trump hailed a "very productive" first 100 days as America's president on Saturday, telling a roaring crowd of supporters other "great battles" ahead would be won.

In an hour-long speech Trump lambasted the media and predecessor Barack Obama, boasted of his support for US industry and the military, and vaunted his foreign policy positions including on confronting North Korea, earning cheers from the crowd in Pennsylvania.

The president held the campaign-style rally in a state that helped tip the election in his favor while snubbing a traditional White House correspondents' dinner taking place late Saturday, where he had risked being roasted by comedians. Declaring himself "thrilled" to be far from "the Washington swamp" and the "very boring" dinner, the president sneered at "fake news" CNN and the "failing" New York Times.

"They are a disgrace," he said. The black-tie affair in Washington was headlined by veteran investigative journalists Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein, who gained fame in the Watergate scandal that prompted the resignation of former President Richard Nixon.

Woodward rebuffed the president's relentless barbs against news outlets. "Mr President, the media is not fake news-let's take that off the table as we proceed," he said. "Whatever the climate, whether the media is revered or reviled, we should and must persist and I believe we will."

**'Keeping promises'**

Some of Trump's animosity stemmed from US media evaluating his 100-day record as meager and mixed. They have noted embarrassing setbacks for the Republican on health care and a travel ban, and reversals on China and NATO while also recognizing campaign pledges he has met, like appointing a conservative Supreme Court judge and pulling the country out of the Trans Pacific Partnership trade agreement. In his speech Trump presented his record so far including the signing of many executive orders as "very exciting and very productive," despite what he described as the "mess" left by Obama's administration.

"We are keeping one promise after another," he asserted, adding that he was preparing for "the great, great battles to come and that we will win in every case." Trump also highlighted his tough approach to immigration. Stepped-up law enforcement was removing "drug dealers, gang members and killers" from the country, he said, while reinforced vetting was keeping America "safe from terrorism."

"We are going to keep radical Islamic terrorists the hell out of our country," he said to applause and cheers of "USA! USA!"

He did not acknowledge the difficulty he has had in finding the money to start work on the wall he vowed would be built on the Mexican border. Instead he insisted that "we need the wall to stop the drugs and the human trafficking" and "we'll have the wall-don't worry about it."

**China and North Korea**

On foreign policy, he admitted he had backed down on a vow to label China a currency manipulator, but said "flexibility" was needed because Chinese President Xi Jinping was a "good man" who was trying to help Trump rein in North Korea. Later Saturday the White House announced that Trump in a "friendly" call invited Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte—who has drawn international condemnation for his deadly drug war—to Washington.

The leaders discussed the "threat" of North Korea, the White House said, as well as "the fact that the Philippine government is fighting very hard to rid its country of drugs."

At his rally Trump also said the US economy had surged since he took office, reinvigorating America's construction, manufacturing and energy sectors, as well as its declining coal and steel industries—a key message for the crowd in Pennsylvania, a rust-belt state. On the North American Free Trade Agreement, which he has vowed to renegotiate, he said "if we can't make a fair deal for our companies and our workers we will terminate NAFTA."

Other trade deals allowing nations such as China, Russia and India to contribute to "the theft and plunder of American wealth" were being torn up, Trump said.

He said he would be making a decision on the "one-sided Paris climate accord" in the next two weeks. He described the pact, meant to curb global warming, as an impediment to US economic growth.

**'Snake' poem**

He spoke of his plans to reform US taxes and swore that health care legislation brought in by Obama that gives greater medical access to Americans was "dying" and would be repealed—despite a signal failure by Republicans in Congress to do so in March. Trump also read a poem called "The Snake," from the lyrics of a 1968 song recorded by American soul singer Al Wilson—that reworks a fable about a maiden who saves a half-frozen serpent but who is then killed by its bite, as it stays true to its nature.

"You knew damn well I was a snake before you took me in!" Trump intoned, dedicating the reading to the border patrol service for "keeping America safe." —AFP

## IRAQ ARMY CHIEF SAYS MOSUL BATTLE TO TAKE 3 MORE WEEKS

**BAGHDAD:** An Iraqi commander expects to dislodge Islamic State from Mosul in May despite resistance from militants in the densely populated Old City district. The battle should be completed "in a maximum of three weeks," the Iraqi army's chief of staff, Lieutenant General Othman Al-Ghanmi, was quoted as saying by state-run newspaper Al-Sabah yesterday.

A US-led international coalition is providing air and ground support for the offensive in Mosul, the largest city in northern Iraq, which fell to hardline Sunni Muslim fighters in June 2014. Islamic State has lost most of the city's districts since the offensive began in October and is now surrounded in the northwestern districts, including the historic Old City centre.

The United Nations believes up to half a million people remain in the area controlled by the militants, 400,000 of whom are in the Old City with little food and water and no access to hospitals. The militants have dug in between the civilians, often launching deadly counter-attacks to repel forces closing in on the Old City's Grand Al-Nouri Mosque, from where Islamic State leader Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi declared a caliphate over parts of Iraq and Syria.

**Slavery**

A group of 36 Yazidi survivors had been rescued after three years of "slavery" under Islamic State's rule, the United Nations said yesterday. Since Friday, the women and girls from the group had been receiving

lodging, clothing, medical and psychological aid in Duhok, a Kurdish city north of Mosul, said a statement from U.N. Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq Lise Grande. The Yazidis, whose beliefs combine elements from several Middle Eastern religions, were the most persecuted community under Islamic State which considered them devil-worshippers. The UN estimates that up to 1,500 Yazidi women and girls remain in captivity, suffering abuse. Iraqi forces estimate the number of Islamic State fighters still in Mosul at 200 to 300, mostly foreigners, down from nearly 6,000 when the offensive started but they are still capable of deadly counter-attacks on the tens of thousands of soldiers and paramilitary groups arrayed against them. —Reuters




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## ERDOGAN SAYS 'SADDENED' BY US FLAGS WITH SYRIAN YPG

**ISTANBUL:** President Recep Tayyip Erdogan yesterday said Ankara was "seriously saddened" by footage showing American military vehicles operating close to the border with Syrian Kurdish fighters Turkey sees as a terror group. The Syrian Kurdish Peoples' Protection Units (YPG) are seen by Washington as the most effective fighting force in the battle against jihadists in Syria.

Ankara says the fighters of the YPG are merely the Syrian branch of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), who have waged an insurgency since 1984 inside Turkey that has left tens of thousands dead.

Turkish forces last week carried out air strikes on YPG positions in Syria, angering the United States and sparking days of border clashes with the Kurdish fighters. The US sent military vehicles with American flags to the Syrian side of the frontier accompanied by YPG fighters to carry out patrols, in an apparent bid to prevent further fighting.

"Unfortunately... the presence of an American flag along with the (insignia) of a terror organization called YPG in a convoy has seriously saddened us," Erdogan told reporters in Istanbul before heading on a trip to India. The difference of opinion over the YPG has cast a shadow over US-Turkish relations for some time and Erdogan is hoping for a drastic change in

US policy when he meets President Donald Trump next month. "We will bring this up when we meet Mr President on May 16," said Erdogan. He expressed regret that the US-YPG cooperation—which began under the former Barack Obama administration—was being continued under the new president. "This needs to be stopped right now," said Erdogan. "Otherwise it will continue to be a bother in the region and for us."

"It will also bother us as two NATO countries and strategic partners," he said. Erdogan reaffirmed that Turkey could again bomb the YPG positions at any time it wanted. "I said yesterday: 'We can come unexpectedly in the night'. I really meant that. We are not going to tip off the terror groups and the Turkish Armed Forces could come at any moment."

### Further strikes

Erdogan said his country may take further action against Kurdish militants in Iraq and Syria and insisted US support for such groups "must come to an end." The US moved troops and armored vehicles through several Syrian cities and towns on Friday and Saturday in a show of force apparently intended to dissuade Turkey and Syrian Kurdish forces from attacking each other.



**RAQA:** Members of the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), made up of an alliance of Arab and Kurdish fighters, patrol on a boat at the Lake Assad, an enormous reservoir created by the Tabqa dam, on Saturday as part of their battle for the Islamic State (IS) stronghold in nearby Raqa. — AFP

Kurdish officials described the US troop movement as a "buffer" between them and Turkey. The US has provided air cover and other support to Kurdish forces battling the Islamic State group in

Syria and Iraq. In Syria, it is working with the Syrian Democratic Forces, which is dominated by the Kurdish People's Protection Units, or YPG, but also includes Arab fighters. — Agencies



**RIYADH:** A handout picture provided by the Saudi Royal Palace yesterday shows German Chancellor Angela Merkel (left) sitting next to Saudi Arabia's King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud (right) during a meeting in Riyadh. — AFP

## MERKEL TO PRESS SAUDI ON REFUGEES AND RIGHTS

### GERMAN CHANCELLOR TO VISIT UAE TODAY

**RIYADH:** German Chancellor Angela Merkel arrived yesterday in Saudi Arabia where she is expected to press royals on a number of sensitive issues, including taking in refugees, while also boosting important business ties in her first visit to the country in seven years.

Merkel met King Salman in the Red Sea city of Jiddah and is scheduled to visit the United Arab Emirates today. Saudi Arabia and the UAE are Germany's largest trading partners in the Middle East.

During her talks with Gulf leaders, Merkel is expected to press them to do more to take in refugees and provide humanitarian relief for those fleeing conflict in Muslim-majority countries. Her country has provided refuge to hundreds of thousands of people from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan in recent years.

Merkel is also expected to raise the issue of

Saudi Arabia's funding for religious institutions including in countries such as Mali and Niger, said senior German officials who spoke on customary conditions of anonymity.

Saudi Arabia recently closed several institutional establishments in Germany following pressure from Berlin, including the private King Fahd Academy in the southern suburbs of Bonn. German authorities had previously expressed concern the school might be used to spread fundamentalist ideology.

### Niqab issue

Like other high-profile female visitors, Merkel did not cover her hair or wear a traditional flowing black robe upon arrival in the kingdom. She is expected to meet Saudi businesswomen during her two-day visit in a sign of support for women's rights. Merkel herself backs a ban in

Germany on civil servants wearing face veils and on the face cover being worn in public schools, courts and while driving. Most Saudi women wear the full face veil, known as the niqab, in line with the kingdom's conservative Wahhabi interpretation of Islam.

Merkel is traveling with a business delegation that includes CEOs of major German companies. The kingdom is seeking to attract investment and diversify its economy away from oil, the backbone of its economy.

The official Saudi Press Agency reported the two sides signed a number of memorandums to enhance cooperation in the fields of technology, energy, business and security. Despite a drop in oil prices that has forced the kingdom to curb spending, Saudi Arabia remains among the world's top spenders on defense equipment. — AP

## A WATERWAY LIFELINE FOR US-BACKED SYRIA FORCE

**LAKE ASSAD, Syria:** As US-backed fighters advance on the Islamic State group's de facto Syrian stronghold Raqa, a waterway "corridor" has become a key supply line, and an escape route for displaced civilians. An AFP team accompanied fighters from the Syrian Democratic Forces, a Kurdish-Arab alliance that is fighting to capture the strategic town of Tabqa, some 55 kilometers (35 miles) west of Raqa. Their direct land route from the territory they hold in the north is blocked by the Tabqa dam, which remains under IS control.

So instead, they are running supplies across Lake Assad, an enormous reservoir created by the dam, as well as ferrying civilians fleeing Tabqa back across to safety. The main means of transport is a makeshift ferry, made out of a piece of floating bridge that has been lashed to four small boats, two on each side. The boats, borrowed from local fishermen and attached with orange rope, drive the "ferry" and its occupants across the lake multiple times a day on an hour-long journey.

On Saturday, several dozen civilians waited on the northern side of the lake, hours after crossing to safety, as fighters loaded up the floating bridge moored near the Jaabar Castle, a local historical site.

A woman in her thirties, her face loosely wrapped in a beige headscarf, distributed bread to her children in the back of a pickup truck. Nearby, a child and his father stood by the water's edge, washing their faces after an exhausting trip. A rusty boat bobbed by them in the shallows.

Many of the arrivals looked exhausted, and some still seemed afraid, wary of their new surroundings.

### 'A water corridor'

"We were besieged in Tabqa. The humanitarian situation was really bad," said Ismail Mohamed, 39, who had arrived hours earlier with his family. "People are hungry and tired. Everyone is psychologically shattered, crushed," he told AFP. "When we got on the water, riding the boat, we truly

couldn't believe it, we were so happy."

As the arrivals waited for permission to move north into SDF-held territory, fighters loaded vehicles with food and other supplies and drove them onto the makeshift ferry. "The... dam is not safe yet, we don't control it fully, there are still some mercenaries there, so we can't move civilians through," an SDF commander told AFP, referring to IS fighters.

"So we have opened a water corridor to rescue civilians, including via small boats and this ferry," he said. Fighters offered civilians loaves of flat bread as they waited. The makeshift craft relies on local fishermen who have lent the SDF their boats.

They fish in the morning, but their boats spend the rest of the day serving as motors to get the floating bridge back and forth. The hour-long trip to the southern shore, where more civilians are waiting to escape, is a sharp contrast with the fierce fighting that awaits SDF forces in Tabqa.

The US-backed force now controls more than 50 percent of the town, but has faced fierce resistance from IS, with the jihadists deploying suicide attackers, car bombs and weaponised drones. Capturing Tabqa will be a key step towards the advance on Raqa, which the SDF is seeking to encircle before beginning a final assault.

### Sipping tea, taking photos

On the water though, there is little sound except the engines of the boats and the thump of two US-led coalition helicopters overhead, helping secure the corridor. One SDF fighter heads to the edge of the makeshift craft and closes his eyes for a moment, inhaling deeply and then sighing.

"How beautiful the water is, when you stand and look into the distance and all you see is water." As the craft moved forward, the sun began to set, with the almost-still water reflecting the orange rays. Relaxed fighters, men and women, sipped tea and took photos, some looking towards the smoke rising from Tabqa in the distance. — AFP



**A Kurdish fighter of the People's Protection Units (YPG) standing guard as US forces take up positions in the northern village of Darbasiyah, Syria. — AP**

## AFTER LONG TREK TO ARMENIA, IRAQ'S YAZIDI FAMILIES STRUGGLE TO FIT IN

**ARAKS, Armenia:** Shortly before midnight outside a poorly-lit barn in southern Armenia, Sevak Mouradyan is funneling gallons of petrol into plastic canisters and humming a traditional Yazidi anthem to himself. He pauses for a moment, squints through the darkness towards a group of men drinking tea and begins to shout orders.

His eight sons swiftly form a production line from the barn through a field. Tyres are passed methodically between them, rolled uphill and stacked in a pile at the top. "We are preparing a fire to show unity with our brothers on Mount Sinjar," said Mouradyan, hauling the fuel onto his back. "For the Yazidi people, light signifies solidarity. Maybe they will see the fire far away in the distance and know that we are thinking of them." Mouradyan is one of around 35,000 Armenian Yazidis who have been settled in Armenia in the southern Caucasus for more than a century. They have recently been joined by Yazidi families who have fled the Islamic State offensive in northern Iraq.

In August 2014, Islamic State militants began an assault on the Yazidi religious community's heartland in Sinjar, northern

Iraq, home to around 400,000 Yazidis. The insurgents systematically killed, captured and enslaved thousands of Yazidis, whose beliefs combine elements of several ancient Middle Eastern religions and are regarded by Islamic State as infidels.

UN investigators estimate more than 5,000 Yazidis have been rounded up and slaughtered and some 7,000 women and girls forced into sex slavery. Those who could fled to the refugee camps of Lebanon, Jordan and elsewhere in the region. Around 50 Yazidi families made the arduous journey by road to Armenia, seeking refuge among their fellow Yazidis in rural communities like the village of Araks.

But Armenian Yazidis believe that their ethnic kin from Sinjar have been influenced by the Islamic traditions of the Iraqi majority. "Our way of life is too different from theirs. They are all Muslims now," Mouradyan said. "We fear that they will bring instability and terror to our homes." In the village of Akna Lich, an hour's drive away, Ara, one of the new arrivals, has just returned home after a long day cultivating the land outside his home. He and his wife moved to the mostly Yazidi village late last year. — Reuters

## LIBYA SEIZES OIL TANKERS AND CREW AFTER SHOOTOUT AT SEA

**TRIPOLI:** Libya has seized two foreign-flagged oil tankers and detained their crews for allegedly smuggling fuel after an hours-long gunbattle off the west coast, authorities said. Oil is Libya's main natural resource, with reserves estimated at 48 billion barrels, the largest in Africa.

Libya had an output capacity of about 1.6 million barrels per day before the 2011 armed uprising, but production has since slumped as rival forces battle for control of its oil facilities. The coastguard spotted the vessels on Thursday night two kilometres (1.2 miles) off Sidi Said near

Zuwara, a town on the central coast, the authorities said. "The Libyan coastguard boarded the two tankers, one flying the Ukrainian flag, the Ruta, and the other, the Stark, flying the Congolese flag," said General Ayoub Qassem.

"The coastguards had monitored them from afar and waited until Friday morning to act," he told AFP. Qassem said the oil traffickers were heavily armed and were supported by small boats. They had put up fierce resistance, but the tankers were eventually seized by the Libyan authorities, "after more than three hours of exchange of fire". On several occasions, "boats with armed men were returned... and opened fire on the coastguards" using Kalashnikovs and heavy machineguns, he said.

After they were overpowered, the two tankers and their crews were taken back to the capital Tripoli. Among them were 14 Ukrainians from the Ruta and four Turks and two Georgians who were on the Stark, said Qassem. Another three crew members from the Stark were in Zuwara, he said, without giving their nationality. At the time of the seizure, the Ruta had around 3,330 tons of oil in its tanks, while the Stark, which can carry 1,236 tons, was about to be loaded with fuel when the coastguard arrived. — AFP



**TRIPOLI:** The Ruta oil tanker flying the Ukrainian flag is seen at the Tripoli seaport on Saturday after it was seized by the Libyan Navy off the coastal city of Zuwara about 160 km west of Tripoli. — AFP



## JOURNALISTS CELEBRATE PRESS FREEDOM WITHOUT TRUMP

**WASHINGTON:** Prominent Washington journalists, if not Hollywood stars, celebrated the First Amendment during the annual White House Correspondents' Dinner, an event that lacked the glitter of past years because of the absence of the president of the United States.

With President Donald Trump sending his regrets, the attention was no longer focused on an in-person roasting of the commander in chief and his humorous remarks about politics and the press. The red carpet that once featured Oscar winners, TV stars and a few major-league athletes barely turned heads. Instead, speakers at the dinner promoted press freedom and responsibility and challenged Trump's accusations of dishonest reporting. The stars of the night were Watergate reporters Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein, who recounted what they learned about journalism from their reporting for The Washington Post that helped lead to President Richard Nixon's resignation more than 40 years ago.

"Like politicians and presidents sometimes, perhaps too frequently, we make mistakes and go too far," Woodward said. "When that happens we should own up to it. But the effort today to get this best obtainable version of the truth is largely made in good faith. Mr.

President, the media is not 'fake news.'"

The evening was not without humor aimed at the press and Trump. "We've got to address the elephant that's not in the room," cracked the entertainment headliner, Hasan Minhaj of "The Daily Show" on TV's Comedy Central. "The leader of our country is not here. And that's because he lives in Moscow. It's a very long flight. As for the other guy, I think he's in Pennsylvania because he can't take a joke." Trump was indeed in Pennsylvania, having scheduled a rally in Harrisburg to mark his 100th day in office. He began his remarks with a lengthy if familiar attack on the news media while dismissing the dinner and its participants.

"A large group of Hollywood actors and Washington media are consoling each other in a hotel ballroom in our nation's capital right now," Trump said. He added: "And I could not possibly be more thrilled than to be more than 100 miles away from Washington's swamp, spending my evening with all of you and with a much, much larger crowd and much better people, right?" — AP

Trump became the first president since Ronald Reagan in 1981 to skip the event - and Reagan was recovering from an assassination attempt. The official WHCA dinner began in 1921. — AP



**BETHESDA:** In this April 22, 2017 file photo, President Donald Trump (left) points after awarding a Purple Heart to US Army Sgt 1st Class Alvaro Barrientos, with first lady Melania Trump (right) and Tammy Barrientos (second from right) at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, Md. — AP

## TRUMP INVITES DUTERTE TO WASHINGTON FOR TALKS

### LEADERS DISCUSS WAR ON DRUGS IN 'FRIENDLY CALL'

**WASHINGTON:** US President Donald Trump on Saturday invited his Philippine counterpart to Washington in a "friendly" call in which the leaders discussed Rodrigo Duterte's war on drugs and their countries' alliance, the White House said. Duterte has faced international condemnation for his brutal crackdown on crime, which has claimed thousands of lives and led to warnings from rights groups about a possible crime against humanity.

The White House said the two leaders, who were both elected to office last year, had "a very friendly conversation" that included discussion about the Philippine government's efforts to "rid its country of drugs" and the regional security threat posed by North Korea. "President Trump also invited President Duterte to the White House to discuss the importance of the United States-Philippines alliance, which is now heading in a very positive direction," the statement said.

There has been concern about Duterte's efforts to loosen the Philippines' long-standing alliance with the US as he looks to court China, whose push to control most of the disputed South China Sea has alarmed neighbors. Duterte has regularly hit out at the Philippines' one-time colonial ruler for perceived hypocrisy over human rights and last year branded then US president Barack Obama a "son of a whore" for criticizing the drug war.

The White House said Trump "enjoyed the conversation" with Duterte, and looked forward to attending the key US-ASEAN and East Asia summits in the Philippines in November. Vice President Mike Pence had announced earlier this month that Trump would attend the Asian meetings as a sign of "unwavering commitment" to the region.

Duterte's spokesman Ernesto Abella confirmed Trump's invitation, although he gave no

indication of when the visit would take place. Philippine police have reported killing 2,724 people as part of Duterte's anti-drug campaign, although authorities insist the shootings have been in self-defense.

Many thousands of others have been killed by shadowy vigilantes, according to rights groups. A Philippine lawyer last week filed a complaint at the International Criminal Court accusing Duterte of mass murder, alleging his war on drugs had led to about 8,000 deaths.

Duterte's pledge to stop the country turning into a narco-state has proved wildly popular with millions of Filipinos looking for a quick solution to crime and corruption. Over the weekend some Southeast Asian leaders attending a regional summit in Manila also expressed support for the drug war, including Brunei's Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah and Indonesia's President Joko Widodo. — AFP

## FATALITIES REPORTED AFTER TORNADO HITS EAST TEXAS

**CANTON, Texas:** Fatalities have been reported and dozens of people were taken to hospitals after a tornado hit a small city in East Texas, authorities said. Canton Fire Department Capt. Brian Horton said during a news conference late Saturday that "a number of fatalities" were reported, but that it wasn't yet clear how many, after powerful storms swept through the community earlier in the evening.

The storms left behind a trail of overturned vehicles, mangled trees and damaged homes in and around Canton, which is about 50 miles (80 kilometers) east of Dallas. ETMC Regional Healthcare Systems hospitals in the region received at least 54 patients following the storm, including one person in critical condition, spokeswoman Rebecca Berkley said. She said the other patients suffered injuries that weren't life-threatening. Horton asked that people who didn't need to be in the area to stay out, "so that our teams can do what they need to do to take

care of these people who are in need." He noted that a triage center was set up at the local high school.

The extent of the damage in the area wasn't immediately clear. But video from local television stations showed uprooted trees and overturned cars along rural, wet roadways, along with at least two flattened homes. The tornado flipped pickup trucks at a Dodge dealership in Canton and tore through the business. At least one tornado has been confirmed so far as having touched down in Canton, though several tornadoes were reported in the area, according to National Weather Service meteorologist Mark Fox.

Local resident Ernestine Cook told WFAA-TV that she rushed to a storm center just in time. "It hit so hard, so fast. It just kept moving," she said. "I've never seen anything like it after 22 years of living here." A dispatcher at the Van Zandt County Sheriff's Office said officers were chasing numerous injury reports and declined further comment. — AP

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# FRENCH ELECTION: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

**PARIS:** Pro-EU centrist Emmanuel Macron will take on far-right candidate Marine Le Pen in the second-round run-off of France's presidential election on May 7. The pair topped the polls in the first round of voting on April 23.

## Why is the election important?

France is the eurozone's second-biggest economy as well as a global military and diplomatic heavyweight, with veto power as a permanent member of the UN Security Council. The second round will come down to a battle between the pro-European, pro-globalisation vision of Macron and Le Pen's hostility to the EU and NATO. If Le Pen wins, it will further shake up the West's liberal post-war

order, already rattled by Britain's vote to leave the EU and Donald Trump's election to the White House.

## How is the president elected?

The president is elected directly in a vote of one or two rounds. If neither candidate obtains an absolute majority in the first round, a run-off is held two weeks later. Every presidential election since 1965 — the first presidential election by universal suffrage since World War II — has gone to a second round.

## Who ran in the first round?

Eleven candidates spanning the spectrum from Trotskyist left to far-right took part in Sunday's first-round vote. The main candidates were Macron, 39,

Le Pen, 48, conservative Francois Fillon, 63, and hard-left firebrand Jean-Luc Melenchon, 65. Macron finished first on 24 percent, ahead of Le Pen with 21.3 percent, Fillon with 20 percent and Melenchon with 19.6 percent.

## How does the election work?

A total of 46.9 million voters are registered to vote in the election. Turnout in the first round was 77.8 percent. The election is the first in the history of France's 59-year-old Fifth Republic to take place under a state of emergency, which was imposed after the November 2015 attacks in Paris. More than 50,000 police backed by 7,000 soldiers from the Sentinelle anti-terror operation were on patrol during the first round.

## What happens next?

The winner of the election will be sworn in by May 14 at the latest, taking over from Francois Hollande.

Hollande decided against seeking re-election after a single term marked by record low approval ratings. A two-round parliamentary election will be held on June 11 and 18. Analysts say both Le Pen's National Front and Macron's year-old En Marche (On The Move) movement would struggle to form a parliamentary majority.

This means that whoever wins the presidency will likely have to form a pact with members of the Socialist party, the conservative Republicans or both. —AFP



**GARDANNE:** French presidential election candidate for the far-right Front National (FN) party Marine Le Pen (L) speaks to journalists in front of the Alteo aluminium plant. — AFP

## POLAR OPPOSITES: THE ISSUES DIVIDING LE PEN AND MACRON

### WHERE THEY STAND ON THE KEY QUESTIONS

**PARIS:** Centrist candidate Emmanuel Macron and far-right candidate Marine Le Pen, who go head-to-head in the second round of France's presidential election on May 7, are diametrically opposed on issues ranging from immigration to Europe to gay marriage. Here is where they stand on the key questions:

#### Europe

Le Pen has insisted on the need for France to drop the euro single currency and leave Europe's Schengen visa-free travel zone. She says she will hold six months of negotiations on returning powers from Brussels to national capitals after which she will hold a "Frexit" referendum on France's membership of the European Union. She also opposes the CETA trade deal between the EU and Canada. Macron, a former banker and economy minister, has run an unabashedly pro-European campaign. He wants to bolster the eurozone by setting up a separate budget for the 19 countries that use the common currency. He also proposes giving the zone its own parliament and finance minister. Macron also wants Europe to strengthen its external borders by setting up a common border force, pool more of its defense forces and impose higher tariffs to protect European industry from unfair competition, particularly from China. He is generally supportive of international trade deals and backs the treaty with Canada.

#### Immigration

Le Pen has vowed a temporary "moratorium" on long-term legal immigration until quotas can be worked out. She wants to reduce net migration—the difference between the number of people arriving and leaving—to just 10,000 and bar illegal immigrants from gaining residency. She would make it harder to qualify for asylum and curtail policies that let migrants bring relatives to France. Foreigners convicted on terror

charges or any other crime would be automatically deported, and she would abolish a law that allows children with migrant parents who are born in France to gain French citizenship.

She would also toughen laws on conspicuous religious symbols, extending a ban on Muslim head scarves, Christian crosses, Jewish skullcaps and other symbols to all public places. She would also ban the Islamic burkini swimsuit. Macron has said he would not look to prohibit religious symbols outside of schools, nor ban the burkini. He has championed diversity and vowed to give tax breaks to companies that hire young people from tough predominantly immigrant neighbourhoods. He has pledged to speed up the review process for asylum requests to a maximum of six months, including appeals. He has praised German Chancellor Angela Merkel over her generous policy to asylum seekers that has seen more than one million new arrivals since 2015.

#### Labor and retirement

Both candidates have said they would keep France's official 35-hour work week, adopted by a Socialist government in 2000, but Macron, a liberal, has promised to give companies more freedom to negotiate working time directly with employees. Le Pen wants to lower the retirement age to 60 years old from 62, while Macron wants to unify a complex web of retirement rules for various public and private-sector employees, while maintaining the current retirement age.

He also wants to give the self-employed access to unemployment benefits but suspend benefits for qualified workers who refuse two "decent" job offers. To rein in the budget, Macron wants to cut 120,000 civil servant jobs, though hospitals would be spared, while also creating 10,000 police jobs and 4,000 to 5,000 teaching posts. Le Pen advocates more civil servant jobs at the national level and for hospitals, but fewer jobs managed by French regional

authorities. She also wants 21,000 more police and customs officials.

#### Taxes

Le Pen would impose a 35-percent tax on goods by companies that move production outside France, and also add a new tax on groups that hire foreign workers, as part of her "national preference" policy. She would cut income taxes by 10 percent for the lowest-earning households, and drop France's plan to withhold income tax from monthly earnings starting next year—currently the French pay tax on income the year after it is earned. Macron wants a three-year suspension of residents' taxes for 80 percent of French households. He also wants to turn France's so-called "solidarity" wealth tax on people claiming more than 1.3 million euros (\$1.4 million) in assets into a tax on real-estate wealth, which would exclude financial assets. Le Pen has said she would leave the wealth tax untouched.

#### Energy, education, family

Macron has pledged to cut France's reliance on nuclear energy to 50 percent of its total electricity needs by 2025, from about 75 percent now. Le Pen has been a staunch defender of nuclear power, and would halt France's efforts to develop wind power. In education, Le Pen would impose a uniform for all public school students and roll back a controversial reform meant to make French school days shorter. Macron wants to give schools more autonomy in terms of hiring and cut primary school class sizes in half in low-achieving and poor areas. He would also ban the use of cellphones in elementary schools. Le Pen wants to scrap a 2013 gay marriage law and replace it with a new form of civil partnership. She would also restrict medically assisted procreation to couples unable to have children naturally. Macron wants lesbian couples to also have access to fertility treatment. —AFP

## UKRAINE CLINGING TO NUCLEAR DESPITE CHERNOBYL TRAUMA

**KIEV:** Ukraine is still suffering from the trauma of the world's worst civil nuclear accident at Chernobyl but has nonetheless turned the hazardous fuel into the backbone of its energy portfolio. The crisis-torn country now uses atomic power for more than half of its electricity needs as it struggles through a coal shortage sparked by a three-year war against Russian-backed insurgents in the separatist east.

And that figure shot up to nearly three-quarters of all power consumed during natural gas price disputes with its eastern arch foe and energy superpower Russia from 2014 to 2016. Ukraine Wednesday marked 31 years since the disaster in which thousands died with the country extending the lifespan of its communist-era nuclear reactors and turning atomic power into a workhorse that will be around for generations to come. The Chernobyl plant's fourth reactor in the north of former Soviet Ukraine exploded in 1986 after a safety test went horribly wrong at 1:23 am on April 26. Some Ukrainians remain worried that a similar catastrophe could hit their country again.

"The main risk in using nuclear energy in Ukraine is associated with reactors that have exhausted their lifespans," says Iryna Golovko of the National Ecological Centre of Ukraine's energy projects department. "Today six of Ukraine's 15 operating reactors have surpassed their designed service lives," she told AFP. "And by 2020, there will be 12 of them."

#### Coal crunch

Ukraine enjoys abundant coal reserves that happen to lie mostly in regions controlled by Russian insurgents. Kiev spent nearly three years in the uncomfortable position of fighting the rebels while enriching them by buying their anthracite coal to keep its thermal power plants pumping. Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko bowed to public pressure and banned all trade with the separatist east on March 15.

Energy Minister Igor Nasalyk said shortly after Poroshenko's decision that nuclear power's share of total electricity production had jumped to 62 from around 55 percent. It had stood at 46 percent before Ukraine was riven by war and economic crises in 2013. The government has since allowed regional power companies to impose blackouts in case of weather-related surges

in demand. Ukraine is also negotiating a coal purchase agreement with the United States that Kiev hopes could fulfil two-thirds of its annual needs.

But energy analyst Viktor Logatskiy of the Razumkov Centre research institute still thinks that the service lives of all 15 of Ukraine's existing reactors will be extended by 2030 as a long-term power source backup.

#### Gas wars

Ukraine's Energoatom state nuclear power provider has brushed off any fears about the safety repercussions of the extra burden being put on the country's four atomic power plants—one of which is Europe's largest. Energoatom argues that times when Ukraine was either cut off from or not purchasing Russian gas because of price and geopolitical considerations saw nuclear power account for as much as 70 percent of electricity production.

It also says that reactors whose lifespans is extended are safer because they have been retrofitted with all the latest equipment and operating technologies. Logatskiy thinks that Ukraine's atomic power plants even have room to grow because they are not operating at their full capacity. "Despite heightened energy production, Ukraine's nuclear power plants are being used safely and pose no accident threat," Logatskiy said.

#### Tricky math

Yet Ukraine's official statistics on nuclear power show that actual production has risen only slightly since the year before the Russian-backed insurgency began. Energoatom data provided to AFP show it had pumped out 23.84 billion kilowatt-hours (kWh) of electricity in the first four months of the year. That figure was only 2.5 percent greater than the 23.25 billion kWh generated over the same period of 2013.

Some analysts attribute the discrepancy between the small rise in energy production and the much bigger jump in nuclear power's share of the market to two years of economic recession that have dampened industry's power demands. They also point to Russia's 2014 annexation of Ukraine's Crimea peninsula and effective loss of a part of the separatist industrial east. "Our thermal power plants that use coal are simply producing less electricity," Golovko said. —AFP



**SLAVUTYCH:** People set candles and lay flowers at the monument to Chernobyl victims in Slavutych, the city of the power station's personnel live, some 50 kilometers (30 miles) from the accident site, during a memorial ceremony early. — AFP

## VACANT APARTMENTS HELD FOR RANSOM IN BARCELONA

**BARCELONA:** A wall of bricks and cement covers the window of a brand new apartment on the ground floor of a quaint building in Barceloneta, a trendy seaside neighborhood in Barcelona. The goal? To prevent the vacant flat from being taken over by organized gangs who break into empty homes, hand them over to others for a fee who then proceed to hold the owners to ransom—a phenomenon that has homeowners and authorities concerned.

They "look for empty flats online or in public registries to break in," says Enrique Vendrell, president of Barcelona's College of Property Managers, which groups professionals in the sector. They then change the locks, hook up the property illegally to electricity, gas and water before selling the keys to squatters, which makes some cash who will demand money from the owners to leave, he adds.

#### Millions of empty properties

It is difficult to get exact figures on the extent of a relatively-new phenomenon, but the trend is seri-

ous enough to worry real estate professionals, home owners and authorities. Police in the northeastern region of Catalonia where Barcelona is located told AFP they were investigating serious cases of "criminal occupations" of flats, but refused to give further details, such as where the gangs come from.

Meanwhile AFP contacted several victims but they all declined to tell their story for fear of retaliation from the squatters, who often threaten homeowners if confronted. "Ring the doorbell again and you will regret it," squatters told an elderly woman when she confronted a group of people who were illegally occupying her apartment, her lawyer Jose Maria Aguila said.

Juan Carlos Parra, a salesman with security firm STM Seguridad which specializes in installing steel doors in buildings, says there is strong demand for "advanced security systems." "Demand has taken off in the last three years, we install around 1,500 doors a month across Spain," he adds. The problem stems in part from the collapse of a decade-long property bubble in

2008 that left thousands of buildings empty across Spain. There are 3.4 million empty properties in Spain, the equivalent of 13.7 percent of all real estate in the country, the national statistics institute says.

Many are in the hands of banks which inherited them after builders or buyers were unable to pay back their loans. Just in Catalonia alone, banks own 45,000 empty apartments, according to the regional government's housing department. These are the most sought after since lenders usually take longer to act against an occupation.

#### Former boxers, security guards

Such is the problem of squatting in vacant flats that it has given rise to a firm called Desokupa that specializes in evicting squatters. The company based in Catalonia and Madrid insists its employees carry out "respectful mediation" between the property owners and the squatters.

If that fails though, it employs burly former boxers and security guards to stand guard outside an occupied apartment to drive away

the squatters. But Vendrell says there is a difference between squatters looking for a place to live because they have fallen on hard times or who remain in their flat as they can't pay rent, and gangs who take over properties. He says these organized groups charge less than 1,000 euros (\$1,100) per apartment seized. Those who take over the flats then typically demand between 3,000 and 6,000 euros to leave. And in some cases, owners prefer to pay to save time. Antoni Garriga, a lawyer with Navarro Advocats who often deals with eviction cases, says it can take six to eight months for an eviction notice to be issued.

The process can take even longer if the illegal occupants manage to evade court notifications to leave the apartment, he adds. Barcelona mayor Ada Colau, a former anti-eviction activist, argues reducing the number of empty apartments would go a long way to solving the problem. "We need more empty homes to be offered as social rental housing," she said in a recent interview with Antena 3 television. —AFP

## PM MAY BRACES FOR BREXIT NEGOTIATIONS

**LONDON/BRUSSELS:** British Prime Minister Theresa May expects divorce talks with the European Union to be difficult, she said yesterday in response to the tough stance taken by EU leaders over the forthcoming Brexit negotiations. EU leaders endorsed stiff divorce terms for Britain at a Brussels summit on Saturday, warning Britons to have "no illusions" about swiftly securing a new relationship to retain access to EU markets and to be prepared for the complexity of issues such as residency rights for EU citizens.

"What this shows, and what some of the other comments we've seen coming from European leaders shows, is that there are going to be times when these negotiations are going to be tough," May told the BBC. Brussels is concerned about the British government's state of preparation for enormously complicated negotiations and over the degree of understanding in London of what kind of compromises it will have to make to clinch any kind of deal.

EU officials said that European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker and EU Brexit negotiator Michel

Barnier's talks with May in London on Wednesday did nothing to ease that concern. German Chancellor Angela Merkel, repeating a comment she made after Juncker's meeting with May, said she was still worried by "illusions" in Britain about the Brexit talks. May reaffirmed her position that she would be prepared to walk away from talks without a deal if she did not like what was on offer from Brussels.

#### 'Strong hand' crucial

"I wouldn't have said it if I didn't believe that," May said in a separate interview with ITV television. "What I also believe is that, with the right strong hand in negotiations, we can get a good deal for the UK." May, who came to power after Britons decided last year to leave the EU, has called a national election in an attempt to win a public mandate and a bigger majority in parliament to help to execute her plan to leave the EU's single market and pursue a free trade deal with the bloc.

Many of her European counterparts question whether May really is prepared to take Britain into legal limbo on March 30, 2019, if there is no deal. — Reuters

## US MARINES BACK IN HELMAND AS AFGHAN 'STALEMATE' CONTINUES

**CAMP SHORAB:** The US Marine Corps has returned to Helmand, the restive province in southern Afghanistan where it fought years of bloody battles with the Taliban, to help train Afghan forces struggling to contain the insurgency. Many of the 300 Marines coming to Helmand as part of the NATO-led Resolute Support training mission are veterans of previous tours in the province, where almost 1,000 coalition troops, mostly US and British, were killed fighting the Taliban.

When they left in 2014, handing over the sprawling desert base they knew as Camp Leatherneck to the Afghan army, the Marines never expected to return. The fact that they are back underlines the problems Afghan forces have faced since being left to fight alone. Despite a warning from US Defense Secretary James Mattis last week that 2017 would be a tough year, though, the tone as the deployment began was positive. "I was excited to come back," said Staff Sergeant George Caldwell, who had previously spent eight months in the far south of Helmand that mixed combat operations with training the Afghan border police. "I have a lot of time invested in Helmand province. We have many, many years of combat operations and we'd hate to see the region become unstable," he said at the margins of a

ceremony marking the Transfer of Authority for the training assignment.

### Difficult moment

Thousands of Marines served in Helmand over the years between 2009 and 2014 during some of the most intense fighting seen by foreign troops in Afghanistan. American officers at the ceremony attended by the top US commander in Afghanistan, Gen John Nicholson promised continuing commitment to helping Afghan forces but the Marines are coming back at a difficult moment.

Their mission this time is not to fight but to train and help Afghan forces, although the strong defensive measures around the base underscore the risk they face in Helmand, one of the heartlands of the Taliban insurgency. The Afghan army is still reeling from a devastating attack in the northern city of Mazar-i-Sharif this month in which Taliban suicide commandos killed 135 soldiers, according to official figures and double that number by other accounts.

Large stretches of Helmand, source of much of the world's illegal opium supply, are in the hands of the Taliban insurgents, who have steadily pushed back Afghan forces that now control less than 60 percent of the country. Corruption and poor leader-

ship are still an issue, despite efforts to stamp out problems such as bribery, troops selling weapons and ammunition or non-existent "ghost soldiers" kept on the rolls to allow their pay to be stolen.

In March, a previous commander of the Afghan army 215 Corps in Helmand was arrested, a year after he had been sent to the province root out fraud and corruption in the unit.

### Major improvements

"There's some of that," said Captain Zachary Peterson, part of the army-led Taskforce Forge handing over to the Marines of Taskforce Southwest. "But you can't let one bad apple make you be down on the group as a whole, when the majority of these guys are good people and they want to see good things for their country." He said Afghan forces had made major improvements in conducting offensive operations against the Taliban, who on Friday announced the start of their annual spring campaign, when warmer weather usually leads to heavier fighting.

"Their attitude and their op tempo right now, all the operations they're doing, are really encouraging," he said. Some 8,400 American troops are based in Afghanistan as part of Resolute Support as well as

a separate counterterrorism mission against Islamic State and Al Qaeda, but Gen Nicholson said earlier this year a few thousand more would be required to end the "stalemate" with the Taliban.

The Trump administration is currently conducting a review of US policy for Afghanistan, where American troops have now been stationed for more than 15 years. While most are no longer usually involved in combat operations, the dangers they still face were underlined last week when two army Rangers were killed in the eastern province of Nangarhar fighting Islamic State militants.

Last month, three US soldiers were wounded in Camp Shorab itself, the network of bases of which the Marines' Leatherneck facility was once a part, when an Afghan soldier opened fire on them in a so-called "green on blue" incident. The base is a dusty expanse of barbed wire fences, checkpoints, huts and blast walls with a faint smell of latrines in the air. Movement is restricted and security remains high, placing an additional strain on the troops. "This is a small, cramped position," said army Chaplain (Capt) Sidney Aaron, who helps look after morale and welfare. "My soldiers and these Marines, they go out every day, they have to be on guard, 24/7, so it is a long time." — Reuters



**LOUGHBOROUGH:** Kate and Gerry McCann, whose daughter Madeleine disappeared from a holiday flat in Portugal ten-years ago, talk during a BBC TV interview. — AP

## PARENTS OF MISSING UK GIRL HOPEFUL SHE'S 'OUT THERE'

**LONDON:** The parents of Madeleine McCann, the 3-year-old British girl who vanished during a family vacation to Portugal in 2007, say they are still hopeful they will one day be reunited with their daughter as they mark the 10th anniversary of her disappearance. In an interview with the British media released Sunday, the McCanns said they felt encouraged by the "real progress" that British police have made in the case in the past five years.

Scotland Yard said last week that, a decade later, detectives are still pursuing "critical" leads to trace Madeleine, who disappeared from a vacation home in Portugal's Algarve region on the night of May 3, 2007. Her parents had gone out to a tapas bar nearby after putting her and her twin siblings to bed. Despite an investigation costing more than 11 million pounds so far, police said there was no "definitive evidence" on whether Madeleine - who would be almost 14 now - is alive or dead. The girl was abducted from the apartment, they said, but how and why it happened is still largely a mystery.

One theory that police say hasn't been ruled out is a "burglary gone wrong." Gerry McCann, 48, acknowledged it was "devastating" not to have found her, but added: "No parent is going to give up on their child, unless they know for certain their

child is dead. And we just don't have any evidence." His wife, Kate, agreed. "My hope for Madeleine being out there is no less than it was almost 10 years ago," she said. "I never thought we'd still be in this situation, so far along the line. It's a huge amount of time ... it's a hard marker of time."

The case has sparked global interest partly because of the McCanns' campaign to publicize their case in an attempt to find Madeleine. The couple also said they planned to challenge a court ruling that cleared a former Portuguese detective of breaching libel laws after he published a book alleging they were involved in Madeleine's disappearance.

Asked how the family was coping, the McCanns said that, like other families who have suffered tragedies, they are trying to move on and focus on their 12-year-old twins. "You adapt and you have a new normality," Gerry McCann said. "At some point you've got to realize that time is not frozen." His wife said that she still buys Madeleine birthday and Christmas presents every year. "I obviously have to think about what age she is and something that, whenever we find her, will still be appropriate. So there's a lot of thought that goes into it," she said. "But I couldn't not, you know. She's still our daughter, she'll always be our daughter." — AP

## FINLAND'S HOBBY-HORSING CRAZE A MANIFESTATION OF GIRL POWER

**HELSINKI:** Sporting a black leather jacket, dyed red hair and a tattooed arm, Alisa Aarniomaki looks like she's on her way to a rock band rehearsal session. But instead of carrying a guitar, the 20-year-old Finn gently holds on to something else: a puffy stuffed horse head on a wooden stick complete with glued-on eyes, mane and reins. She's been riding real horses from the age of 10 but became instantly smitten by hobby-horsing - a sport with gymnastic elements that has spawned a social media subculture among Finnish teen girls - when she first heard about it on a web discussion forum several years ago.

"Hobby-horsing has a strong therapeutic side to it," says Aarniomaki, adding that it has helped her to deal with difficult personal issues such as her parents' divorce and bullying at school. "I've gone through lots of trouble and I'm still struggling with some issues. It has helped me a great deal that I can occasionally just go galloping into the woods with my friends. It somehow balances my mind."

Like a real horse and its rider, the hobbyhorse and its master form a team and become attached to each other. Similarly, the sports simulates traditional equestrian events including competing in dressage and show jumping, and is physically demanding. Hobby-horsing has gained momentum outside Finland because of this year's release of the documentary "Hobbyhorse Revolution" by the Finnish Oscar-nominated director Selma Vilhunen. Over a year, she followed young hobbyhorse enthusiasts and their preparations for a competition. Some actual horse riders may look down on hobby-horsing as childlike past-time not suitable for anyone aged over 10, but Fred Sundwall, the secretary general of the Equestrian Federation of Finland, disagrees. "We think it's simply wonderful that hobby-horsing has become a phenomenon and so popular," Sundwall said. "It gives a chance to those children and teens who don't own horses to interact with them also outside stables and riding schools."

### Splendid, colorful creatures

The vast majority of the hobbyhorses are homemade - splendid, colorful creatures complete with names like Chattanooga Choo Choo and Panda - exchanged and sold by owners at events and through social media. Some of them have been known to fetch up to 200 euros (\$218 dollars) at auctions. Aficionados take high



**VANTAA:** Sporting dyed red hair 20-year old Alisa Aarniomaki holds her hobby-horse, during the hobby-horsing Finnish championships. — AP

pride in the sport's do-it-yourself attitude, and very few industrially made hobbyhorses are seen at events because they are "lower-caste horses," said Venla-Maria Uutela, a spokeswoman for a registered informal hobbyhorse society in Helsinki.

About 10,000 people, nearly all of them between the ages of 10 and 18, are estimated to be involved in hobby-horsing in Finland. Its popularity is also growing steadily in the other Nordic countries and elsewhere in Europe, though the numbers are much smaller. No official statistics exist as hobby-horsing doesn't have an affiliation with Finnish sports associations and enthusiasts meet and exchange views mainly at web discussion forums and share photo material and videos through Instagram and YouTube. Regional competition events are arranged and organized by volunteers throughout Finland, culminating in national championships every year. This year's main event took place late April at a packed sports hall in the vicinity of Helsinki, attracting an estimated 1,000 spectators to watch about 200 participants competing with their hobbyhorses in several subcategories.

"It's very bizarre for other people to see, for the first time especially, this kind of stuff," said Tajja Turkki, an 18-year-old hobbyhorse coach from the southeastern town of Lappeenranta. "Because they think we think the horse is alive, which we do not. We understand that it's dead, made of fabric and all that." Lack of strict rules and pompous ceremonies, strong social media presence and female bonding are a big part of the attraction for the young women.

"Freedom to create and imagination are key aspects into why people start hobby-horsing," says Aarniomaki, a hobbyhorse veteran who doesn't compete actively anymore but is keen on organizing related events such as a recent hobbyhorse parade through the streets of Helsinki. Female empowerment and girl power are something Alisa Aarniomaki thinks are clearly attached to the sports. "I think hobby-horsing has a feministic agenda," Aarniomaki said, after having judged competitions at the national championships. "No boys are coming and saying what we need to do, or bossing around. So I think there is some sort of a (feministic) point." — AP

## UN AIRLIFTS AID IN ANGOLA FOR DRC ASYLUM SEEKERS

**LUANDA:** The United Nations' refugee agency yesterday airlifted its first batch of relief supplies to the more than 11,000 people on Angola's northern border fleeing the latest violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The UN said that more than a million civilians have been displaced inside the DRC since a brutal conflict broke out in the Kasai region in mid-2016, with about 25,000 asylum seekers crossing into Angola.

"Arrivals are in urgent need of life-saving assistance, including food, water, shelter and medical services," the UN Refugee Agency's (UNHCR) southern Africa representative, Sharon Cooper, said in a statement. A cargo aircraft carrying mosquito nets, blankets and sani-

tary items flew in from Dubai and landed near Dundo, about 100km from the Angola-DRC border, where the UNHCR has set up makeshift centers sheltering refugees, the agency said.

The UN said it would send more relief items to Angola in the coming days. The Kamuina Nsapu insurrection that erupted in the DRC's Kasai-Central province last August has become the most serious threat to President Joseph Kabila's 16-year rule, with lawlessness across Africa's second-largest country inflamed by Kabila's decision to remain in power after his mandate ran out in December. A UN team of investigators said this month that it had uncovered 40 mass grave sites and killings of more than 400 people in Kasai. — Reuters

## SRI LANKA COASTGUARD RESCUES ROHINGYAS ABOARD INDIAN BOAT

**COLOMBO:** Sri Lanka's coastguard yesterday detained an Indian boat which had illegally entered the island's territorial waters and rescued 30 Rohingya refugees including 16 children who were on board, an official said. The dhow operated by two Indians had entered Sri Lanka's northern waters after crossing the sea border, said navy spokesman Chaminda Walakuluge. "The coastguard noticed that there were very small children on board and escorted the dhow to a port and provided them with emergency assistance," Walakuluge told AFP.

He said seven men, seven women and 16 children were on board, in addition to the two-man Indian crew who had been detained pending investigations. "There was a 15-day-old baby and a four-month-old child on board," Walakuluge said. "We have taken them to port and provided food and medical attention." He said it appeared that the passengers had left India, where they had lived for about four years as refugees. They were handed over to local authorities to decide further action. Investigators sus-

pect that the crew was trying to bring the Rohingya to Sri Lanka. The Muslim Rohingya in Myanmar's western state of Rakhine is denied citizenship and face brutal discrimination in the Buddhist-majority country. Thousands have sought refuge in other countries in the region. Four years ago Sri Lanka's navy rescued 138 refugees from Bangladesh and

Myanmar whose boat had been drifting off Sri Lanka for over 10 days. The United Nations Human Rights Council last month agreed to send a fact-finding mission to Myanmar to investigate claims that police and soldiers carried out a bloody crackdown on the Rohingya in Rakhine. More than 120,000 Rohingya have languished in grim displacement camps ever since bouts of religious violence between Muslims and Buddhists ripped through the state in 2012. Most are not allowed to leave the squalid encampments, where they live in dilapidated shelters with little access to food, education and health care. — AFP



**HERAT:** Afghan couples arrive for a mass-wedding ceremony in Herat yesterday. Twenty-two couples tied the knot during the service. — AFP

## MALI EXTENDS STATE OF EMERGENCY IN BID TO QUELL ISLAMIST ATTACKS

**BAMAKO:** Mali's National Assembly has voted to extend a state of emergency by six months in a bid to quell an upsurge in attacks by Islamist militants based in the desert north of the West African country.

On Saturday, Zoumana N'dji Doumbia, president of the National Assembly's legal commis-

sion, announced Friday's vote that gives security forces extra powers of arrest and detention. It is the latest extension of an emergency first imposed in November 2015.

Deteriorating security threatens to return Mali to the chaos that nearly tore it to pieces in 2012 when Islamists hijacked an ethnic Tuareg

rebellion in the north, before French forces pushed them back the following year.

Some 11,000 UN peacekeepers and French troops are deployed in Mali but militants still launch attacks, including a suicide assault on an army base in January that killed at least 77 people. — Reuters

## AUSTRALIA PROBES 'JIHADI CHILD' VIDEO

**SYDNEY:** Police in Australia said Sunday they were investigating a report that the eight-year-old son of a notorious Islamic State fighter was filmed wearing a suicide vest and threatening to kill its nationals. The footage was allegedly of the youngest son of Khaled Sharrouf, who in February became the first Australian to be stripped of his citizenship under anti-terrorism laws.

The young boy was recently filmed holding

two guns and a knife and making threats as a voice off-camera asked him, "How do you kill an Australian?" Sydney's Sunday Telegraph reported. Sharrouf, who left Australia for Syria in 2013 with his family, made international headlines in 2014 when he posted an image on Twitter of another son holding a severed head. "The NSW Joint Counter Terrorism Team (JCTT) is aware of a video emanating from the Middle East depicting a minor making threats in the name of ISIS," New

South Wales state police said in a statement. "The JCTT is investigating the video. However, there is no specific threat.

The current national terrorism threat level remains at probable." After Sharrouf's wife Tara Nettleton reportedly died last year, there were failed efforts by her mother to bring their five children back home. Sharrouf was also believed to have been killed in a drone strike in Iraq in 2015 but media reports later cast doubt on

whether he was dead. Canberra lifted the terror threat alert level in September 2014 and introduced new national security laws amid concerns of attacks by individuals inspired by organisations such as IS. It also cracked down on Australians attempting to travel to conflict zones including Syria and Iraq. Authorities believe 110 Australians have travelled to Syria or Iraq to fight with terror groups, of which around 60 have been killed. — AFP



**HONG KONG:** In this photo taken on April 20, 2017, a man looks at a poster commemorating the 20th anniversary since the city was handed back to China by colonial ruler Britain, on a waterfront promenade. — AFP

## HK CELEBRATES BIG TO MARK 20 YEARS OF CHINESE RULE

### CRITICS SAY SHOW OUT OF STEP WITH POLITICAL TENSIONS

**HONG KONG:** A multi-million dollar program of events in Hong Kong will mark 20 years since the city was handed back to China by colonial ruler Britain, but critics say the show is out of step with political tensions. The large-scale celebrations come despite increased concerns over Beijing meddling in the semi-autonomous city and deep political divisions between Hong Kong's pro-democracy and pro-China camps.

China's President Xi Jinping is expected to visit for the July 1 anniversary, with security exercises under way in preparation. Hundreds of events, from art exhibitions to sports tournaments, will take place between now and the end of the year as part of the festivities, with the government proposing to spend HK\$640 million (\$82 million). Colored lights and rainbow posters already adorn local neighborhoods under the slogan "Together, Progress, Opportunity".

An official video of Canto pop stars performing a new song "Hong Kong, our home" is frequently broadcast on television networks. The city's unpopular outgoing leader Leung Chun-ying said the celebrations reflected the city's "vision of tomorrow", and aimed to engage all residents. "The handover to me is historically significant and worth commemorating because Hong Kong is originally a part of China," a 51-year-old resident who gave his name as Michael said. Retiree Ah Yu, 76, agreed.

"The (anniversary) is important for Hong Kong because we are all Chinese," he said. But others were skeptical. "Are we celebrating the fact that we don't have freedom and have no democracy?" 67-year-old Ales Li asked. "Why don't they use all

these resources to mend divisions?" The agreement made between Britain and China in 1997 was designed to secure Hong Kong's semi-autonomous status, protecting its freedoms and way of life for 50 years. But Beijing stands accused of undermining the deal, triggering protests and a fledgling independence movement.

Some young residents told AFP they felt the celebrations were simply a stunt. "It isn't really helpful towards anyone," said university student Miranda Yeung, 20. "It's a great publicity campaign and it looks very exciting for a tourist, but it doesn't really mean that much." Others said the amount of money being spent was a waste in a city with a yawning wealth gap.

#### Growing anger

Frustration over a lack of political reform despite mass pro-democracy protests in 2014 has led to the emergence of groups demanding self-determination for Hong Kong or even a full split from China. That has sparked a backlash from Beijing, with Chinese authorities intervening to effectively bar two democratically elected pro-independence lawmakers from taking up their parliamentary seats in Hong Kong last year.

The pair is now facing criminal charges over their behavior in parliament. There are also concerns Beijing is interfering in other areas, from media to education. Those fears were heightened by the disappearance of five Hong Kong booksellers known for publishing salacious titles about Chinese leaders in 2015. All five resurfaced on the mainland.

Some believe a visit to the city by President Xi

his first to Hong Kong since coming to power in 2012 — could be incendiary in the current climate. "The angry people will become more angry," said student Yeung. Former Chinese leader Hu Jintao came to mark the 15th handover anniversary in 2012 and swore in city leader Leung, triggering hundreds of thousands to take to the streets in protest. Hong Kong's new pro-China leader Carrie Lam-hated by the city's pro-democracy activists-will be sworn in on July 1. She has vowed to heal divisions but critics say the extensive handover festivities are unlikely to help.

#### 'Ugly scenes'

Art works from the Louvre, Egyptian mummies from the British Museum and an exhibition from Beijing's Palace Museum will be on show as part of the celebrations. Other events include jianshi tournament—a game where participants kick a shuttlecock about—and a performance by renowned Chinese pianist Lang Lang.

Authorities said government ministers would visit communities to "show care" to the vulnerable and elderly, including giving out gifts and care packages as part of the anniversary program. But political analyst Willy Lam said the festivities were a display for Beijing. Both Leung and Lam would want to give the impression that the public was "ecstatic about China's support for Hong Kong" to counteract the recent political turbulence, he said. Lam predicted a Xi visit would be a red rag to some activists. "I expect there will be ugly scenes," he said. "The police will be under heavy pressure to ensure that Xi Jinping will be out of earshot." — AFP

## ASEAN LEADER PHILIPPINES GO EASY ON CHINA OVER DISPUTES

**MANILA:** The Philippines followed up a summit of Southeast Asian leaders by releasing a final communique yesterday that removed mention of international concerns over China's "militarization" of newly built islands in the disputed South China Sea in a major concession to Beijing.

The 25-page statement issued by Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte following the daylong meeting of leaders of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations he hosted in Manila also made no direct mention of his country's landmark arbitration victory against China last year. A vague reference to the ruling was removed from a part of the communique that discussed the long-seething territorial conflicts and moved elsewhere in the document.

The changes were apparent based on a previous draft of the communique seen by The Associated Press. A foreign diplomat based in Manila told the AP that the Philippines circulated a stronger draft statement to other ASEAN member states, which was backed by countries like Vietnam. Other governments made suggestions but Duterte, as ASEAN chairman this year, could decide how to shape the language of the regional bloc's "chairman's statement," said the diplomat, who spoke on condition of anonymity because of a lack of authority to discuss the issue publicly.

#### Undersea deposits

China and ASEAN member states Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines and Vietnam, along with Taiwan, have overlapping claims to territory in the South China Sea, a strategic waterway through which billions of dollars in world trade passes each year. The waters are also important fishing grounds and are believed to have undersea deposits of oil and gas.

ASEAN, which makes decisions by consensus, has previously struggled to come up with statements on the issue, with Duterte's predecessor often pushing for a tougher tone against China and getting pushback from members, like Beijing's allies Cambodia and Laos, unwilling to upset their largest trading partner and most important economic benefactor. China has dismissed and ignored last July's arbitration ruling, which invalidated most of its historic claims to almost all of the South China Sea. China has long argued that the territorial disputes have nothing to

do with its relationship with ASEAN and should be settled through bilateral talks.

Since taking office last June, Duterte has taken a much softer stance on China and the disputes than his predecessor. That was reflected in yesterday's watered-down communique, which three Philippine officials told The AP came at the request of Chinese diplomats in Manila. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity as they were not authorized to discuss the issue with the press.

Chinese Embassy officials in Manila were not immediately available for comment. Former Philippine officials who dealt with the disputes say Duterte's concessions to China could weaken the ability of the Philippines and other ASEAN member states to seek Chinese compliance to the arbitration ruling and curb Beijing's increasingly assertive behavior in the disputed waters.

#### 'Perilous road'

"Our government, in its desire to fully and quickly accommodate our aggressive northern neighbor may have left itself negotiating a perilous road with little or no room to rely on brake power and a chance to shift gears if necessary," former Philippine Foreign Secretary Albert del Rosario said. Del Rosario, then under President Benigno Aquino III, spearheaded the filing of the arbitration complaint against China in 2013.

Duterte has said he prefers to warm once-frosty ties with and secure infrastructure funding from Beijing. Still he has said he will raise the ruling with China at some point during his six-year term. A draft of the ASEAN communique seen by the AP ahead of the summit mentioned concerns about China's "land reclamation" or construction of new islands in the South China Sea and its "militarization" of the disputed region but did not mention China by name. That has been a standard policy in previous ASEAN statements.

"Non-mention of The Hague ruling would be a diplomatic triumph for China," said former Philippine national security adviser Roilo Golez, referring to the European tribunal that issued the landmark decision. "It might embolden them to advance some more in their South China Sea master plan," said Golez, citing fears that China may also turn the disputed Scarborough Shoal off the northwestern Philippines into another island outpost. — AP



**HONG KONG:** Indonesian President Joko Widodo (C) meets workers from Indonesia at an event during his visit to Hong Kong. — AFP

## BOTH CHEERS AND PROTEST AS INDONESIAN LEADER VISITS HK

**HONG KONG:** Indonesia's President Joko Widodo was greeted by a mixture of celebration and protest in Hong Kong yesterday with calls to improve working conditions for the city's army of foreign maids. There are around 170,000 Indonesians living in Hong Kong, many of them employed as domestic helpers, and concern over exploitation is growing after a string of abuse cases.

In a rock concert atmosphere Widodo was greeted by exuberant music and dance shows, including some performances by helpers themselves, at the city's Asia World Expo yesterday. The more than 5,000-strong crowd were mainly women working as maids who said they were excited to see the leader-but also called on him to help them.

"I hope the president can make our workplace safe," one domestic helper named Miasih told AFP, saying her employer breaches her contract by making her work in two apartments. "It's the attitude-she doesn't have a lot of respect for me," she added. Some protesters gathered outside and others marched to the Indonesian consulate, calling for better migrant rights.

Widodo, who is on a two-day visit that will include meeting the city's business leaders, did not address the issue in his speech to the helpers, which instead

praised Indonesia's economy, infrastructure and diversity. "Don't let small things cause friction, clashes, division," he said. Demonstrators criticised him for failing to address working conditions. "We are already isolated because of the way we work and where we are, but the government, even when they're in front of us, does not think our voices are important," said former domestic worker Eni Lestari, now chairwoman of the International Migrants Alliance.

#### Domestic helpers

She said activists had been unable to submit petitions or meet with Widodo. There are more than 300,000 domestic helpers in Hong Kong, mostly from the Philippines and Indonesia. Their plight made world headlines in 2014 with the case of Indonesian helper Erwiana Sulistyarningsih, who was beaten and starved by her employer Law Wan-tung. Law was jailed in February 2015 for six years.

However, activists say even that case has not led to concrete long-term changes. A report last year by the Justice Centre found that one in six foreign maids in Hong Kong fell into the "forced labor" category. It defined forced labor as employment for which the worker had not been recruited freely, was not doing the job freely, or could not walk away from work. — AFP

## TRUMP SAYS CHINA PRESSURING NORTH KOREA ON MISSILE, NUKES

**SEOUL:** President Donald Trump said in a television interview to be aired Sunday that he believes China's president has been putting pressure on North Korea as it pursues its missile and nuclear weapons programs. In an interview with CBS' "Face the Nation," Trump said he won't be happy if North Korea conducts a nuclear test and that he believes Chinese President Xi Jinping won't be happy, either. Asked if that means military action, Trump responded: "I don't know. I mean, we'll see."

On Saturday, a North Korean mid-range ballistic missile apparently failed shortly after launch, the third test-fire flop this month but a clear message of defiance. North Korean bal-

listic missile tests are banned by the United Nations because they're seen as part of the North's push for a nuclear-tipped missile that can hit the US mainland. The launch comes at a point of particularly high tension in the region. Trump has sent a nuclear-powered submarine and the USS Carl Vinson aircraft supercarrier to Korean waters and North Korea last week conducted large-scale, live-fire exercises on its eastern coast.

#### Errant scuffles

Residents in the village of Seongji, where the missile defense system is being installed, scuffled with police yesterday. About 300 protesters

faced off against 800 police and succeeded in blocking two US Army oil trucks from entering the site, local media reported. A few residents were injured or fainted from the scuffle and were transported to a hospital.

The Terminal High-Altitude Area Defense system, or THAAD, remains a controversial topic in South Korea and presidential front-runner Moon Jae-in even has vowed to reconsider the deployment if he wins the May 9 election. He has said that the security benefits of THAAD would be offset by worsened relations with China, which is the country's biggest trading partner and is opposed to its deployment.

North Korea didn't immediately comment on its latest missile launch, though its state media on Saturday reiterated the country's goal of being able to strike the continental US. South Korea's Foreign Ministry denounced the launch as an "obvious" violation of United Nations resolutions and the latest display of North Korea's "belligerence and recklessness."

"We sternly warn that the North Korean government will continue to face a variety of strong punitive measures issued by the UN Security Council and others if it continues to reject denuclearization and play with fire in front of the world," the ministry said. South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said in a statement that the missile flew for several minutes and reached a maximum height of 71 kilometers (44 miles) before it apparently failed. It didn't immediately provide an estimate on how far the missile flew, but a US official, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive matters, said it was likely a medium-range KN-17 ballistic missile. It broke up a few minutes after the launch. — AP



**PYONGYANG:** In this Saturday, April 15, 2017, file photo, a North Korean national flag flutters as soldiers in tanks salute to North Korean leader Kim Jong Un during a military parade. — AP

## INVESTIGATE FISH DEATH, ALLEGED FIFA BRIBES: MPs

Continued from Page 1

Saleh said he submitted a series of questions to several ministers to uncover the truth about the death of large numbers of fish, adding that the national assembly should accord this issue top priority.

State Minister for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah however said that the death of fish in the past two weeks is within the average for this period of the year because of the change in temperature and as a result of human factors like polluting Kuwait Bay waters.

The statement, which came after an emergency meeting for Supreme Environment Council, said that more fish die in April and August due to a rise in temperature and a decrease in oxygen concentration in water.

The minister said that as many as 316 violations caught in Kuwait Bay have been referred to the public prosecutor, adding that health authorities have confirmed that local fish is fit for human consumption.

Regarding the sports issue, a number of MPs called on the National Assembly to launch an investigation into allegations that unnamed Kuwaiti football officials were involved in giving bribes over the past several

years. As a result of the allegations, Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad Al-Sabah, one of the most senior world football officials, resigned from world football and pulled out of election for the FIFA council. MP Safa Al-Hashem said she supports calls for a probe by the National Assembly although she said that she is not sure so far about Sheikh Ahmad's status.

MP Rakan Al-Nasef said an investigation must be launched by the assembly into the whole issue and particularly to explore if this issue is related in any way to the international sanctions on Kuwaiti sports.

MP Khaled Al-Shatti called on the state minister for youth and the Anti-Corruption Authority to investigate the issue and to hold to account those involved in giving or accepting bribes.

In the meantime, several MPs called on the foreign ministry to move and take part in Turkish investigation into the assassination of Kuwaiti businessman Al-Shalabi along with an Iranian TV owner.

MP Waleed Al-Tabtabai described the assassination as a "political crimes" and urged security and diplomatic authorities to move at the highest level to uncover the perpetrators.

## SHEIKH AHMAD QUILTS FIFA COUNCIL

Continued from Page 1

In 2012, former FIFA presidential candidate Mohamed bin Hammam of Qatar was banned for life by the ethics committee days after he resigned. Bin Hammam was also clearly identified in Lai's court hearing for having paid Lai a total of \$100,000 in bribes to support the Qatari's failed challenge to FIFA's then-president Sepp Blatter in 2011. Bin Hammam was removed from that election contest in a Caribbean bribery case. Sheikh Ahmad has also contacted the IOC's ethics commission about the allegations against him, the IOC said on Saturday.

As president since 2012 of the global group of national Olympic bodies, known as ANOC, Sheikh Ahmad's support has often been cited as key to winning Olympic election and hosting awards. He was widely credited for helping Thomas Bach win the IOC presidency in 2013.

Although Sheikh Ahmad was not named in Department of Justice and court documents last week, he has become one of the most significant casualties of the sprawling US federal investigation of bribery and corruption in international soccer revealed two years ago.

The sheikh could be identified in a transcript of Lai's court hearing which said "co-conspirator #2 was also the president of Olympic Council of Asia." Sheikh Ahmad has been OCA president since 1991.

Co-conspirator #3 was described as having a "high-

ranking" role at OCA, and also linked to the Kuwait Soccer Federation. According to the published transcript, Lai claimed he "received at least \$770,000 in wire transfers from accounts associated with Co-Conspirator #3 and the OCA between November of 2009 and about the fall of 2014."

"I understood that the source of this money was ultimately Co-Conspirator #2 and on some occasion Co-Conspirator #3 told me to send him an email saying that I need funds so he could show the email to Co-Conspirator #2," Lai said in court. Lai admitted that he agreed to help recruit other Asian officials that voted in FIFA elections who would help Kuwait's interests.

The Guam soccer federation leader since 2001, Lai pleaded guilty to wire fraud conspiracy charges and failing to disclose foreign bank accounts. He agreed to pay more than \$1.1 million in forfeiture and penalties, and will be sentenced at a later date. The American federal investigation of corruption linked to FIFA has indicted or taken guilty pleas from more than 40 people and marketing agencies linked to soccer in the Americas since 2015.

Lai's case marked the first major step into Asia, and suggests other soccer officials potentially recruited by the Kuwait faction could be targeted. The Asian election for FIFA seats on May 8 in Manama, Bahrain, is the same day as a FIFA Council meeting which the sheikh will not attend. The FIFA congress is held in the city three days later. —AP

## FAMED SWISS CLIMBER UELI STECK DIES ON EVEREST

KATHMANDU: Swiss climber Ueli Steck, one of the most feted mountaineers of his generation and famed for his speed ascents of iconic Alpine routes, died on Mount Everest yesterday, officials said.

"Today morning, he had an accident on the Nuptse wall and died. It seems he slipped," Ang Tsering Sherpa, head of the Nepal Mountaineering Association, told AFP. Steck, 40, was on Everest to acclimatize before attempting in May to summit the world's tallest peak followed by neighboring Lhotse, connecting a series of ridges to design a never before climbed route.

Everest and neighboring peak Nuptse share a common ridge, which is where Steck slipped and fell, according to a government official. "He skidded off about 1,000 metres from (Mt Nuptse) camp two early morning on Sunday. Other climbers ascending Everest saw him and asked for his rescue," said Dinesh Bhattarai, director general at the Department of Tourism.

Steck was climbing alone when he died. His partner, Tenji Sherpa, had sustained severe frostbite earlier and was recovering at a lower camp. His body was recovered by Nepali guides and flown by helicopter to Kathmandu. The accomplished alpinist sought to pioneer new routes throughout his career, earning the nickname "the Swiss Machine" for his record solo ascents in the Alps.

He was attempting to achieve another first this year by charting a rarely climbed route to summit both Everest and Lhotse, the world's fourth highest mountain, all without the use



This file photo shows Swiss climber Ueli Steck as he poses at Sigoyer, in the Hautes-Alpes department of southeastern France. — AFP

of supplemental oxygen.

Steck was due to summit Everest via the West Ridge—a route that has recorded more fatalities than summits-before climbing Lhotse.

In a video recorded in early April and posted on YouTube, Steck said he would judge the attempt a success regardless of whether he reached the top-as long as he returned alive. Mingma Sherpa, the first Nepali to summit all 14 of the world's peaks above 8,000 metres, said the accident—the first fatality of this year's spring climbing season on Everest—underscored the unpredictability of mountaineering. "It is very sad news, he is a very experienced climber," he said of

Steck's death. "Things can be so unpredictable in the mountains and it can be challenging even for the most seasoned climbers." Tributes poured in for Steck on social media, with British climber Kenton Cool—who has scaled Everest 12 times—describing him as "a true inspiration to all".

"A man that showed us all what was possible in the mountains and beyond," Cool tweeted.

Steck made global headlines in 2013 when he and two other Western climbers came to blows with a group of furious Nepali guides on Everest. The brawl shocked the mountaineering community, causing a damaging rift between Western climbers and the often lowly-paid Nepali guides who are essential for commercial expeditions to the crowded summit.

An angry Steck swore never to return to Everest, telling a Swiss website that his "trust (was) gone".

But he was back in the Himalayas only months later, this time to scale Mount Annapurna, the world's tenth highest peak, via its steep Southface wall, becoming the first mountaineer to complete a solo ascent of the 8,091-metre (26,545-foot) peak. Controversially, he offered no photographic proof of his accomplishment, saying an avalanche knocked his camera out of his hand. Nevertheless, he was awarded the Piolet d'Or, mountaineering's top accolade, for the 2013 climb. Born in the town of Langnau im Emmental near the Swiss capital Bern in October 1976, Steck was a devoted climber by the age of 12. — AFP

## KUWAITI BUSINESSMAN SHOT DEAD IN ISTANBUL

Continued from Page 1

Karimian was found dead by emergency services arriving at the scene, Dogan said while his Kuwaiti friend was taken to hospital but could not be revived. Two masked shooters got out of the jeep before opening fire, Hurriyet Daily added. The jeep was later found abandoned and burned. Istanbul police declined to comment on the shooting when contacted by Reuters.

Footage broadcast by another news agency showed the targeted vehicle in Maslak with at least

one bullet hole through the window. It also showed that the suspected getaway car had been turned into a burned out wreck after being left in the hard shoulder of a road and set on fire.

Dogan quoted the mayor of Istanbul's Sariyer district as saying initial police findings suggested the shooting may have prompted by a financial disagreement involving Karimian. GEM TV is known for entertainment satellite channels that dub foreign films and Western television programs into Farsi for Iranians. It also produces movies and TV series. — Agencies

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## Focus

TRUMP'S DEMAND  
ON THAAD WILL  
TEST US-KOREA TIES

By James Pearson and Ju-min Park

US President Donald Trump's suggestion that South Korea could pay for an advanced US missile defense system could test the strength of the alliance between Seoul and Washington at a time of rising tensions with North Korea, analysts said on Friday.

In an exclusive interview, Trump told Reuters on Thursday that he wants South Korea to pay for the \$1 billion Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system. The remarks come as South Korea heads into a presidential election that will likely elect liberal front-runner Moon Jae-in, who has said the next administration in Seoul should have the final say on the deployment of THAAD. Moon's campaign office said the deployment of THAAD should be immediately suspended until then.

"This almost certainly will become another self-inflicted wound for the alliance and for US foreign policy," said Daniel Pinkston, a Troy University professor and expert on North and South Korea based in Seoul. Moon, who said in a book published in January that South Korea should learn to "say no to Americans", is leading polls by a wide margin ahead of South Korea's May 9 election to replace impeached former President Park Geun-hye, whose government agreed with Washington last year to deploy THAAD. If elected, Moon would end nearly a decade of conservative rule in South Korea, which has regarded the alliance with the United States dating back to the 1950-53 Korean War as a cornerstone of its defence against the threat of North Korea.

## 'Impossible option'

Moon advocates dialogue with North Korea and has criticized the conservative government and its hawkish stance for failing to stop Pyongyang's weapons development. The Trump administration said on Wednesday it wanted to push North Korea into dismantling its nuclear and missile programs through tougher international sanctions and diplomatic pressure-but remained open to negotiations to bring that about. Kim Ki-jung, a top foreign policy adviser to Moon, said the suggestion that South Korea pay for the system was an "impossible option". "Even if we purchase THAAD, its main operation would be in the hands of the United States," said Kim. "So purchasing it would be an impossible option."

South Korea has never considered buying the system, partly because the cost involved was deemed prohibitive. Some liberal politicians have argued South Korea should develop its own indigenous missile defense system.

THAAD's job is to intercept and destroy a ballistic missile in its final phase of flight. A battery comprises four parts: the truck-mounted launcher, eight anti-missile "interceptor" missiles, a radar system and a fire control system connecting it to U.S. military commanders. Seoul said the decision to deploy THAAD was ultimately a military decision taken by the United States. "He's using THAAD as a guinea pig to test the relationship," said Kim Dong-yub, a professor at Kyungnam University's Institute of Far Eastern Studies in Seoul. "Trump seems to be testing South Korea's commitment to the Korea-US alliance. I wonder if Trump's saying this because he already thinks Moon will win," Kim added. In an interview with Reuters, Trump also said he will either renegotiate or terminate what he called a "horrible" free trade deal with South Korea.

## 'New dimension'

A second top foreign policy adviser to Moon said Trump's comments about the cost of THAAD poses fundamental questions about where the alliance may be headed. "This is a new dimension," said Chung Eui-yong, a former South Korean ambassador to Geneva who leads a team of foreign policy advisers for Moon.

"Our position has been that we should review THAAD even if we are not paying for it, but his comments on the cost have changed the fundamental aspect of this issue," Chung told Reuters. "We will have to choose what is best for our national interests." The US military started deploying THAAD in early March, despite strong opposition from China, which says the system's radar can be used to spy into its territory. The deployment also sparked protests from residents in Seonjigu in the southeast, where the system is being deployed, and prompted a North Korean warning of retaliation.

China has imposed some restrictions on South Korean companies in China, which many in South Korea perceive as retaliation for deployment of the missile system. Under the Status of Forces Agreement, which lays out conditions under which US forces are stationed in Korea, the two countries should mutually agree if South Korea wants to take back the land which has been allocated to the US military for the deployment of THAAD. South Korea said on Wednesday major elements of the system have been moved into the site and it would be fully operational by the end of this year. The top US commander in the Pacific, Admiral Harry Harris, later said the system would be operational "in coming days" and suggested Beijing should focus on influencing North Korea rather than worrying about a purely defensive system. —Reuters

TRUMP INVITES PHILIPPINES' DUTERTE TO  
WHITE HOUSE ...

## TRUMP'S 'BROMANCE' WITH CHINA'S XI

By Ben Blanchard and Philip Wen

US President Donald Trump's warm words for Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping as a "good man" will reassure Beijing that he finally understands the importance of good ties, but risks leaving America's regional allies puzzling over where they fit into the new order.

The budding "bromance" between the two leaders appeared highly unlikely when Trump was lambasting China on the campaign trail for stealing US jobs with unfair trade policies. In December, after winning office, he upended protocol by taking a call from the president of self-ruled Taiwan, which China regards as its own sacred territory. A few months on, after meeting Xi at his Florida residence earlier in April, Trump appears to have done a complete volte-face, praising Xi for trying hard to rein in nuclear-armed North Korea and rebuffing Taiwan's president's suggestion of another call.

Chinese officials will no doubt be pleased, said Jia Qingguo, a leading academic who has advised the government on foreign policy. "People will say that the only thing we know for sure about Donald Trump's administration is uncertainty and unpredictability," said Jia, dean of the School of International Studies at the elite Peking University.

"But judging from what he has been saying and doing, it's quite reassuring as far as China is concerned. Certainly I think people

have developed more positive views about the Donald Trump administration here and we have a lot of expectations that we can work together constructively."

For China's neighbors, it's a little more complicated. On one level, a healthy relationship between the world's two biggest economies suits everyone.

"It's hugely positive that there's been a reasonably constructive start to the bilateral dialogue between those two countries," Tom Lembong, Indonesia's investment chief and close aide to President Joko Widodo told Reuters. But long-time allies may also be wondering just how far Washington still has their back. Shashank Joshi, senior fellow at the Royal United Services Institute in London, said countries such as Japan and South Korea could lose influence if Trump's focus of enlisting Xi's help over North Korea creates a "sort of US-China G2".

"There are competing instincts within Trump pushing him in opposite directions," said Joshi. "His nationalism pushes him towards competition with China, but his deal-making instinct, his openness to personal influence, and his affinity for strongmen pushes him towards Xi, especially if he can show results on North Korea."

## South China Sea

Singapore-based security expert Ian Storey said he believed Trump's remarks would be closely scrutinized by Southeast Asian leaders looking for signs of an emerging Asia strategy. "Most would welcome a

calm, co-operative relationship between China and the US, but they will be deeply concerned at anything that looks like Trump will give Xi a free hand over the South China Sea dispute, or elsewhere," said Storey, who is based at the ISEAS Yusof Ishak Institute. The administration has so far sent out mixed rhetorical signals over the hotly disputed South China Sea. China's extensive claims to the vital global trade route are challenged by Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines and Vietnam, as well as Taiwan.

The US has increased naval deployments in the South China Sea in recent years amid roiling tensions and extensive island-building by China but, under Trump, its warships have yet to challenge China with a so-called freedom of navigation patrol close to disputed features. Admiral Harry Harris, the chief of the US Pacific Command, told the US Congress this week that he expected to be carrying out such patrols soon, and repeated earlier concerns at China's continued militarization of the area.

"Given Trump's newfound friendship with Xi Jinping, it might make it significantly harder for the Pacific Command to get its plans approved for the next freedom of navigation patrols," Storey said.

## Unpredictable

In Japan, often at odds with China over what Beijing views as Tokyo's failure to properly atone for World War Two, a Japanese government source sought to downplay any impact on the burgeoning

Trump-Xi friendship on Japan-US ties. "Trump's softened approach to Xi may seem to be some kind of shift in the balance of power but security cooperation between Japan and the United States is extremely stable and has been confirmed in the face of the current crisis situation in North Korea," the source told Reuters. The tricky issue of Taiwan has not gone away either, and is one of several that could upset the new-found rapprochement.

Democratic Taiwan has many friends in Washington who will not want to allow autocratic China to get its way with the island, and the United States is bound by law to provide Taiwan with the means to defend itself. Wang Dong, associate professor of international studies at Peking University, said China would remain on alert for another change of direction by Trump.

"There are reasons for optimism, but we are still being realistic. There are still issues out there, from Taiwan to the South China Sea," he said. One Beijing-based Western diplomat told Reuters that, while China might be pleased to see Trump hang ally South Korea out to dry with his criticism of their free trade deal and demand Seoul pay \$1 billion to host a US anti-missile system China has strongly opposed, China should not have any illusions.

"He's so unpredictable who knows what he'll say next week or next month?" said the diplomat, speaking on condition of anonymity. "His mood turns on a pin." —Reuters

## TRUMP CUTS SPARK FEARS OF GLOBAL TAX WAR

By Valentin Bontemps, Antonio Rodriguez

PARIS: Donald Trump's plans to slash corporate taxes in the United States have sparked concerns of a new global fiscal race to the bottom, possibly involving a wave of negative social consequences, experts say. In what Trump's economic advisor Gary Cohn described as "the most significant tax reform legislation since 1986, and one of the biggest tax cuts in American history," the White House plans to dramatically cut taxes for US businesses and individuals, slashing the corporate rate from a top rate of 35 percent to 15 percent.

The aim, according to US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, is to "bring back trillions of dollars that are offshore to be invested here in the United States" and create jobs.

Trump's goal is for the reforms to propel the US economy to three percent annual growth. But the long-anticipated overhaul-details of which remained unclear beyond a handful of headline measures-could face stiff opposition in Congress, including from some Republicans, with lawmakers sharply divided over the prospect of fuelling already-rising deficits.

## 'Enormous impact'

And the plans have also raised eyebrows at NGOs and non-profit organizations. They could accelerate "the race to tax competition on an international level and all of us will pay the price," Oxfam spokeswoman Manon Aubry told AFP.

"When the world's most powerful country decides to slash tax revenues as much as this, a number of other countries may follow suit, bringing with it imbalances that will have enormous impacts on our societies," she said. Falling tax revenues would make it harder for governments to pay for welfare, healthcare and other benefits without going too deep into the red, she said. To make up the shortfall, governments could be tempted to hike valued-added tax (VAT), often criticized for placing a disproportionate tax burden on the less well-off, Aubry said.

Jean-Pierre Lieb, a tax lawyer at consultants EY, said that "the cut in corporate taxes in the US will fuel tensions between countries". At the moment, corporate taxes in the US are the highest in the OECD countries, followed by France with a rate of 34 percent, Belgium with 33 percent and Australia with 30 percent.

The OECD average is currently around 24 percent. But in order to become more attractive, a number of countries have decided to lower their corporate tax rates.

Britain is planning to cut its rate from 20 percent to 17 percent in 2020, a decision that pre-dates Trump's move and was strongly prompted by fears that corporations may



NEW YORK: In this April 15, 2017 file photo, demonstrators participate in a march and rally in New York to demand President Donald Trump release his tax returns. —AP

find the UK a less attractive place after it leaves the European Union. There were even plans to slash the tax rate to 15 percent to help with Brexit woes, British papers have reported, but Prime Minister Theresa May appears to have ruled out such a deep cut for now.

France, meanwhile, is poised to take its corporate tax rate from 34 percent to 28 percent in 2020. Other countries, including Italy and Israel, have similar ambitions.

## 'Headlong rush'

"What we're seeing is a headlong rush" said EY's Lieb, pointing to the case of Hungary where the corporate tax rate is to be slashed from 19 percent to just nine percent. But even if Trump succeeds in pushing through his planned cuts, countries such as Ireland, which have used their low tax rates to woo foreign companies like Google and Apple, still expect to remain attractive.

Ibec, Ireland's main business lobby group, said that the latest proposals "could provide some competitiveness pressure for Ireland." "Even if the US succeeds in delivering a substantial rate cut, the proposition for US firms to invest in Ireland remains compelling," the lobby group said.

Ireland's finance ministry agreed. "Ireland's membership of the EU is, and will remain, a key factor in attracting foreign direct investment from the US and elsewhere," a ministry source told AFP.

Nevertheless, there is sufficient doubt as to whether Trump will actually be able to get the cuts past Congress. According to a US think-tank, the Tax Policy Center, Trump's plans could reduce Washington's budget by as much as \$6.2 trillion over the next decade and massively push up the US public debt by \$20 trillion by 2036. Many Republicans who are traditionally opposed to increasing public debt will be unwilling to accept such an explosion in debt. —AFP

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### SL HIRES ALLAN DONALD AS NEW BOWLING COACH

**COLOMBO:** Sri Lanka Cricket yesterday announced they had hired former South African paceman Allan Donald as temporary bowling coach ahead of the Champions Trophy in England. The 50-year-old will join as "consultant fast bowling coach" for two months in the run-up to the tournament starting on June 1, the Sri Lankan board said. "Donald will join the team in their residential training at the Pallekele International Stadium where they will be undergoing a high-intensity training and conditioning program from May 9-16," it said. The South African, who is due to take up a coaching assignment with English county Kent next year, is due in Colombo on Monday. Kent said Donald would join them in 2018 because of delays in obtaining a work permit. Last week Sri Lanka named a 15-member squad led by Angelo Mathews for the Champions Trophy. Sri Lanka Cricket said it hoped Donald would also train Sri Lankan pace bowling coaches Chaminda Vaas, Champaka Ramanayake, Ravindra Pushpakumara and Nuwan Zoysa. —AFP



### ALL BLACK WHITELOCK CITED OVER ELBOW

**JOHANNESBURG:** All Blacks lock Sam Whitelock was cited yesterday as a bitter-sweet weekend for Super Rugby leaders Canterbury Crusaders continued. A judicial hearing today will decide the fate of the New Zealander after he was yellow-carded in a 48-21 win over the Central Cheetahs in South Africa Saturday. Skipper Whitelock was sin-binned for striking a Cheetah with his elbow eight minutes from time. All Blacks captain and No 8 Kieran Read broke a thumb during the match in Bloemfontein and underwent surgery. Crusaders said in a statement that it takes about six weeks to recover from a thumb operation and the first New Zealand-British and Irish Lions Test is on June 24. The Christchurch outfit have won all nine Super Rugby matches this season, giving them a four-point lead over the Golden Lions of South Africa in the overall table. Should Crusaders top the regular season standings, the record seven-time champions will enjoy home advantage in each knockout-phase match they play. — AFP

### ENGLAND CAPTAIN ROOT BESTS BROTHER BILLY

**LONDON:** Joe Root came out on top in every sense in his first county match against younger brother Billy as Yorkshire launched their One-Day Cup campaign with a seven-wicket win away to Nottinghamshire at Trent Bridge on Saturday. England Test captain Joe Root made an unbeaten 75 as Yorkshire comfortably chased down a meagre target of 186 and he ended the match with more than 17 overs to spare by lofting part-time off-spinner Billy for six. The match also saw Joe Root in opposition to an England teammate in Nottinghamshire paceman Stuart Broad. "Broady was giving me a bit of stick but that's what you get from a top class bowler," said Joe Root, appointed as England's Test captain after long-serving skipper Alastair Cook resigned. "At the end it was difficult when I hit my brother for six-but the professional side took over," added Root, whose 80-ball innings also included seven fours. Earlier, Nottinghamshire were bowled out for a mere 185, with Billy Root managing just six against his native county before he was caught behind by England wicket-keeper Jonny Bairstow off Tim Bresnan. — AFP



NEW YORK: New York Yankees shortstop Didi Gregorius, left, slides past Baltimore Orioles catcher Caleb Joseph to score on a sacrifice fly by Austin Romine during the second inning. — AP

# YANKEES HIT 4 HRs TO ROUT ORIOLES

**NEW YORK:** Brett Gardner, Aaron Judge and the thundering New York Yankees picked up right where they left off the previous night, steamrolling past the Baltimore Orioles 12-4 on Saturday for their fourth straight victory. Gardner homered twice from the leadoff spot and had his first four RBIs of the season. Austin Romine, the No. 9 batter, also went deep and knocked in five runs. Judge, not to be outdone, clocked his latest colossal homer and scored four times as New York won its 14th in 17 games to boost the American League's best record to 15-7. Right-hander Michael Pineda (3-1) did not allow an earned run in 5 1/3 innings, striking out eight. Orioles starter Ubaldo Jimenez (1-1) got chased with one out in the fourth for the second consecutive start. The veteran right-hander was tagged for a season-high seven runs.

#### RANGERS 6, ANGELS 3

Carlos Gomez hit for the cycle for the second time and Yu Darvish pitched six effective innings, helping Texas beat the Los Angeles Angels. Darvish (3-2) allowed one earned run, struck out 10 and walked four, finishing with 125 pitches. He fell five pitches short of his major league high, thrown as

a rookie in 2013. Rowned Odor hit a tiebreaking two-run homer for Texas with two out in the fifth. Gomez needed only four at-bats for his first cycle since May 7, 2008, with the Minnesota Twins. He doubled in the first inning, singled in the third and tripled in the fifth off starter Jesse Chavez (2-4). He hit a first-pitch fastball from Jose Valdez onto the hill behind center field in the seventh for a two-run homer. Play was halted briefly in the second inning when a bad-hop single by Shin-Soo Choo struck Angels second baseman Danny Espinosa in the forehead. Espinosa stayed in the game.

#### BRAVES 11, BREWERS 3

Matt Kemp homered three times and drove in five runs, powering the Braves to their fourth straight victory. Atlanta collected a season-high 20 hits. Dansby Swanson also homered, and Jaime Garcia (1-1) pitched six innings for his first win with the Braves. Kemp connected in the fifth, seventh and eighth for his first game with three homers. He became the first Braves player to accomplish the feat since Mark Teixeira in 2008. Milwaukee right-hander Jimmy Nelson (1-2) allowed five runs and 11 hits in five innings.

#### CUBS 7, RED SOX 4

Anthony Rizzo hit a two-run homer, helping Chicago rebound from a series-opening loss at Boston. Miguel Montero and Ben Zobrist each connected for a solo shot for the Cubs, who had dropped two in a row. Kris Bryant had two hits and scored twice. Cubs right-hander John Lackey (2-3) gave up four runs in six innings, snapping his string of losses in three straight starts. He was part of Boston's 2013 World Series title team. Hanley Ramirez and Andrew Benintendi connected for the Red Sox, who have the majors' fewest homers. Steven Wright (1-3) gave up five runs and seven hits in 6 1/3 innings. Wade Davis pitched the ninth for his sixth save.

#### DODGERS 6, PHILLIES 5

Yasiel Puig, Cody Bellinger and Justin Turner hit consecutive homers off Hector Neris in the ninth, helping the Dodgers rally for the win. Los Angeles trailed 5-2 before the three straight homers. It was the first time the team had accomplished the feat since Aug. 18, 2012. Austin Barnes then singled off Neris (0-1) with one out. Joely Rodriguez came in and got Andrew Toles to fly out, but Corey Seager singled and Adrian Gonzalez drilled a ball off third baseman Maikel Franco's glove for the winning hit. Grant Dayton (1-0) pitched a scoreless inning for the win. Bellinger, one of the majors' top prospects, also hit his first career homer in the seventh. Phillies rookie Andrew Knapp also got his first career homer, going deep against Chris Hatcher in the eighth.

#### METS 5, NATIONALS 3

Michael Conforto hit two home runs and slumping Jose Reyes also connected, leading the Mets to the victory. The banged-up Mets had lost six in a row when they began this series at Nationals Park against the team with the best record in the majors. Behind their power and bullpen, the Mets beat Washington for the second straight day. Hansel Robles (4-0) came in to start the sixth and retired five of the six batters he faced, striking out four. Jerry Blevins then took over and fanned Bryce Harper. Jeury's Familia, pulled Friday night in the ninth while Washington tried to rally, retired three straight hitters to earn his first save of the

season. Washington's Stephen Strasburg (2-1) gave up three runs in seven innings. Harper was 0 for 4 with three strikeouts.

#### WHITE SOX 6, TIGERS 4, 10 INNINGS

Melky Cabrera led off the 10th inning with a homer against Justin Wilson and Avisail Garcia added an RBI triple, lifting the White Sox to their sixth straight win. Jose Abreu homered twice in his return to the lineup for Chicago. Detroit has lost four in a row. The White Sox held onto a two-run lead in the 10th with David Robertson (1-0) making the most of a chance to pitch a second inning after losing a two-run advantage in the ninth. Wilson (1-1) hadn't allowed a hit or a run in his first 11 appearances this season until Cabrera hit his first homer of the season.

#### INDIANS 4, MARINERS 3

Danny Salazar got off to a rocky start, and then combined with two Cleveland relievers to hold Seattle hitless over the final eight innings. Salazar (2-2) gave up a double to Robinson Cano in the first, followed by homers on successive pitches to Nelson Cruz and Kyle Seager. Salazar struck out six in 6 1/3 innings. Andrew Miller struck out four in 1 2/3 innings and Cody Allen pitched a perfect ninth for his sixth save. Jose Ramirez and Lonnie Chisenhall each had two RBIs in Cleveland's four-run first off Yovani Gallardo (1-3). Cleveland has won eight of 11. Seattle's three-game winning streak ended.

#### PIRATES 4, MARLINS 0

Ivan Nova pitched a three-hitter in Pittsburgh's third straight win. John Jaso homered and drove in two runs for the Pirates, and Jordy Mercer also knocked in a run. Nova (3-2) struck out seven and did not walk a batter in the 95-pitch masterpiece. He retired 11 in a row at one point. Miami has lost four in a row. Marlins right-hander Dan Straily was charged with three runs and four hits in 5 1/3 innings.

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#### BLUE JAYS 4, RAYS 1

Justin Smoak had three hits, including a two-run homer, and the Blue Jays broke a three-game losing streak. Smoak went 3 for 3 and scored twice. Toronto's Francisco Liriano (2-2) allowed one run and four hits in five-plus innings. Roberto Osuna got three outs finished for his second save. Tampa Bay right-hander Matt Andriese (1-1) gave up four runs in seven innings. Rays outfielder Steven Souza left in the seventh after being hit on the back of the left hand by a pitch. X-rays were negative and Souza is day to day.

#### ROCKIES 7, DIAMONDBACKS 6

Mark Reynolds hit a tying two-run single with two out in the ninth and Carlos Gonzalez scored the winning run on a wild pitch by Fernando Rodney, sending the Rockies to a wild comeback win. Colorado trailed by five after five, but made the most of another rough performance by Rodney (1-2). The veteran reliever walked two and threw two wild pitches in blowing his second consecutive save chance. Carlos Estevez (3-0) got the win with one scoreless inning and Greg Holland earned his 11th save for the Rockies, who have won the first two games of the three-game set between the top teams in the NL West. Brandon Drury, Jeff Mathis and Jake Lamb homered to help Arizona build a 6-1 lead. Zack Greinke struck out nine in six-plus innings. Reynolds, Trevor Story and Alexi Amarista went deep for the Rockies.

#### PADRES 12, GIANTS 4

Wil Myers capped San Diego's eight-run sixth inning with a three-run homer. Myers also singled off Chris Stratton (0-1) to start the big inning and had three hits for the game. San Diego scored 11 runs against the Giants' bullpen following five effective innings from San Francisco starter Matt Cain. Allen Cordoba added a three-run homer off Neil Ramirez in the seventh. San Diego right-hander Jhoulys Chacin (3-3) struck out six in five innings. He gave up three runs and five hits. — AP

### MLB results/standings

LA Dodgers 6, Philadelphia 5; San Diego 12, San Francisco 4; Colorado 7, Arizona 6; Texas 6, LA Angels 3; Atlanta 11, Milwaukee 3; Oakland 2, Houston 1; Pittsburgh 4, Miami 0; Cleveland 4, Seattle 3; Chicago Cubs 7, Boston 4; Chicago White Sox 6, Detroit 4 (10 innings); Toronto 4, Tampa Bay 1; NY Yankees 12, Baltimore 4; NY Mets 5, Washington 3.

American League Eastern Division					National League Eastern Division				
	W	L	PCT	GB					
NY Yankees	15	7	.682	-	Washington	16	8	.667	-
Baltimore	14	8	.636	1	Philadelphia	11	11	.500	4
Boston	12	11	.522	3.5	Atlanta	10	12	.455	5
Tampa Bay	12	13	.480	4.5	Miami	10	12	.455	5
Toronto	7	17	.292	9	NY Mets	10	13	.435	5.5
Central Division					Central Division				
Chicago White Sox	13	9	.591	-	Chicago Cubs	13	10	.565	-
Cleveland	13	10	.565	0.5	St. Louis	12	11	.522	1
Minnesota	11	11	.500	2	Milwaukee	12	13	.480	2
Detroit	11	12	.478	2.5	Pittsburgh	11	12	.478	2
Kansas City	7	15	.318	6	Cincinnati	10	13	.435	3
Western Division					Western Division				
Houston	15	9	.625	-	Colorado	16	9	.640	-
LA Angels	13	13	.500	3	Arizona	15	11	.577	1.5
Oakland	11	13	.458	4	LA Dodgers	13	12	.520	3
Texas	11	13	.458	4	San Diego	10	16	.385	6.5
Seattle	11	14	.440	4.5	San Francisco	9	16	.360	7

## THE INS AND OUTS OF HOW SOME TEAMS HANDLED 2017 NFL DRAFT

**PHILADELPHIA:** With 253 selections over three days, and a couple hundred thousand people on hand, the NFL draft seems as complex an operation as exists. Don't believe it, at least not for the teams. All the hard work had been done in the previous months. This weekend, the objective was very simple: improve. Filling holes while building a foundation is essential. Here's how some teams attempted to do that, along with some that had folks scratching their heads.

### CLEVELAND

So much of the attention has been on Cleveland's recent drafting failures, particularly at quarterback. What the Browns set out to do with a slew of picks was bring in fresh talent that, down the road, can carry them back to respectability.

We won't know for years if they did so, but with Texas A&M edge rusher Myles Garrett to kick it off, followed by Michigan safety Jabrill Peppers and Miami tight end David Njoku in the opening round alone, that talent base has increased. Of course, there are questions attached to all three of those, particularly Peppers, who must prove he can be a full-time safety in the pros after moving around for the Wolverines. And second-rounder DeShone Kizer of Notre Dame is as inconsistent a quarterback as you'll find.

### CINCINNATI

The Browns' in-state rival took a familiar route when they took Joe Mixon. The skill level of the Oklahoma running back isn't questioned. But his off-field issues caused an immediate and nasty backlash in Cincinnati. Not that Bengals owner Mike Brown ever cares, given the history his team has with reclamation projects. Cincy desperately needed wideouts who can stretch the defense, and it got two in Washington's John Ross - he of the 4.2 40 at the scouting combine - and Tennessee's Josh Malone.

### CAROLINA

To get back to Super Bowl contention after their 2016 flop, the Panthers had to find a way to take the hefty burden off Cam Newton. With do-everything weapons Christian McCaffrey of Stanford and Curtis Samuel of Ohio State, then guard Taylor Moton of Western Michigan, they probably got him some help.

### NEW ORLEANS

For pure college talent, no team bolstered itself like the Saints. Sure, they had lots of needs, but consider that they added

perhaps the best cornerback and offensive lineman in this crop with Marshon Lattimore of Ohio State and Ryan Ramczyk of Wisconsin. Two of their third-rounders, RB Alvin Kamara of Tennessee and LB Alex Anzalone of Florida, also bring terrific athleticism to a club that has had three straight losing records with Drew Brees at quarterback.

### PITTSBURGH

Although they might have reached on J.J. Watt's younger brother, linebacker T.J. of Wisconsin, and on Southern California receiver JuJu Smith-Schuster with their first two picks, the Steelers deserve kudos for what they did in the third round. Their selection of RB James Conner of Pitt, who came back from cancer to play for the Panthers, was inspirational - and wise. No one will bring more to an NFL franchise this year than Conner.

### PHILADELPHIA

The city (and the league) were thrilled by the turnout, adding countless millions of dollars to their coffers. As for the Eagles, they stayed away from any headline picks and wound up with players who should be very useful for a while. Top pick Derek Barnett of Tennessee might be the best pure pass rusher in this group. Second pick Sidney Jones would have gone in the opening round had he not torn his Achilles tendon at his pro day, so patience is needed with him. Cornerback Rasul Douglas of West Virginia, wideout Mark Hollins of North Carolina and NCAA record-setting RB Donnell Pumphrey of San Diego State fit the schemes well. Oh yeah, former Eagles star safety Brian Dawkins did a pretty fine rendition of "Fly Eagles Fly" on Saturday.

### CHICAGO

As for the head scratchers, the Bears take the prize. They so coveted North Carolina QB Mitchell Trubisky - he of the 13 career starts, although impressive ones - that they spent lavishly to move up one spot from third to second overall for him. That move came in part because GM Ryan Pace felt other teams were desperate to get up to the second spot. Some say he panicked. San Francisco took in that haul, then got the guy it wanted anyway at No. 3, Stanford DE Solomon Thomas. Chicago also took Adam Sheehan, a 6-foot-6, 278-pound tight end from Division II Ashland in the second round. He certainly is a physical specimen, but what a challenge moving up in class he faces. The Bears also took two other small college guys in the first five rounds. —AP



WASHINGTON DC: Marc-Andre Fleury #29 and Ron Hainsey #65 of the Pittsburgh Penguins guard the net as Daniel Winnik #26 of the Washington Capitals moves the puck in Game Two of the Eastern Conference Second Round during the 2017 NHL Stanley Cup Playoffs at Verizon Center. —AFP

## PENGUINS CHASE HOLTBY, BEATS CAPITALS TO WIDEN SERIES LEAD

**WASHINGTON:** When Sidney Crosby wasn't beating the Washington Capitals putting the puck through his legs, he was doing it belly down on the ice. No matter the unconventional plays or style of game, Crosby and the Pittsburgh Penguins are rolling after beating the Capitals 6-2 in Game 2 Saturday night to take a 2-0 lead in the second-round series between the NHL's top two teams. Crosby set up two goals and Phil Kessel and Jake Guentzel each scored two as Pittsburgh chased reigning Vezina Trophy winner and finalist Braden Holtby to go home in total command.

"I think we've got a gritty group out there, scrappy," coach Mike Sullivan said. "It's not perfect by any stretch out there. We're aware of that, we know that. But what I love about this group of players is that they respond the right way and they've shown an ability to do that time and time again and I think this group finds ways to have success."

Success came in the form of another brilliant outing from goaltender Marc-Andre Fleury, who stopped 34 of the 36 shots he faced, including 16 in the first period. Sullivan called Fleury the Penguins' best player, and even with Crosby's four points through two games he's not wrong. Holtby has not been on his game for the Capitals and was pulled after allowing three

goals on 14 shots. Barry Trotz could go back to Holtby in a crucial Game 3 Monday night in Pittsburgh after backup Philipp Grubauer allowed two goals on the first four shots he faced in relief.

### GAME-CHANGER

That's as big a game as Washington will face as just 18 of the previous 87 teams to lose the first two in a best-of-seven series have come back to win, according to the Elias Sports Bureau. "I thought some of the goals he wasn't as sharp as he can be for us," Trotz said of Holtby. "He's a game-changer for us. When he didn't change the game, I just looked to change the mojo a little bit there, that's all."

Fleury hasn't been the Penguins' backbone, serving as the backup to Matt Murray during their Stanley Cup run last year and splitting the duties with the young goalie this season. But the 2009 Cup winner is one of the biggest reasons they're up 2-0 as he has stopped 67 of 71 shots through two games. "I'm really enjoying this time right now," a smiling Fleury said. "I don't try to overthink stuff, just try and enjoy the game. It's fun to win."

Winning despite being outshot is becoming commonplace for the Penguins, who got opportunistic offense in the form of a short-handed

goal from Matt Cullen to open the scoring and then a tip from Evgeni Malkin in the third period that ended any thought of a Capitals comeback. Washington outshot Pittsburgh 36-21 but has nothing to show for it. The Penguins on the other hand are getting comfortable playing like this after beating the Columbus Blue Jackets in five games in the first round.

"I think that's the biggest thing for us," said Guentzel, who scored on a 2-on-1 and with an empty net and leads the playoffs with seven goals. "When we get those chances, we bear down and those are key goals for us." Crosby was a one-man goal generator in Game 2. He put the puck between his legs and drew Alex Ovechkin and two defensemen to him before feeding Kessel for his first goal, then got down to block Justin Williams' shot and advanced the puck for a 2-on-1 rush from the ice on Guentzel's goal.

While Crosby brushed that off as a "broken play," Fleury called it a great butterfly move by a guy he knows likes to play pretend goaltender. And Kessel wasn't even surprised to see Crosby make a highlight-reel play. "You watch it all year, he does that all the time," Kessel said. "You see him out there I think he's the strongest guy in the league on his skates and he knocks the guys off. You always got to be ready." —AP



PHILADELPHIA: Banners hand from the Franklin Institute during the 2017 NFL football draft. —AP

## LAST PICK FAR FROM IRRELEVANT AS CHAD KELLY GOES TO DENVER

**PHILADELPHIA:** The final day of the NFL draft began with an impromptu rendition of "Fly Eagles Fly" by former Philadelphia star safety Brian Dawkins and ended with a player who was far from irrelevant in college being picked last. Mississippi quarterback Chad Kelly, a talented player with a history of off-the-field issues and injuries, was the 253rd and final selection Saturday by the Denver Broncos. The final pick gets honored as Mr. Irrelevant, but Kelly was a player who could have been selected in the first three rounds if not for all his problems.

Kelly started his college career as a highly rated recruit at Clemson. He was dismissed from the team after being a disciplinary problem and went to junior college before landing at Ole Miss. In two seasons with the Rebels, he passed for 6,800 yards and 50 touchdowns. He also threw 21 interceptions. Last season was cut short by a torn knee ligament and then in the off-season draft process he suffered a wrist injury.

Kelly's pick was a surprising end to draft day that started with some fun. Former Eagles Troy Vincent, now in charge of the NFL's football operations, Brian Westbrook and Dawkins defended their turf. Dawkins sang, then Westbrook dared anyone representing the Cowboys to stand in front of the big crowd. "If anybody from Dallas steps to this podium in my city, we are going to give them a true Philadelphia welcome," Westbrook promised in response to former Cowboys receiver Drew Pearson taunting the fans when announcing a Dallas pick on Friday night.

### 100,000 FANS

Oh yeah, there were some selections in

between Dawkins and other former Eagles stars opening the last day of a draft in Philadelphia that drew more than 100,000 fans over three days. Actually, dozens of them, starting with a Cheesehead going to the Packers at the top of the fourth round. Green Bay stayed in-state, taking Wisconsin linebacker Vince Biegel, who comes off a season shortened by a broken foot, but was a standout for the Badgers before getting hurt. Most notable was a concentration on running backs, including Oklahoma's highly productive Samaje Perine to Washington, Utah's Joe Williams to San Francisco, NCAA record setter Donnell Pumphrey of San Diego State to Philadelphia, Wayne Gallman of national champion Clemson to the Giants and South Florida's Marlon Mack to Indianapolis.

Perine set the FBS rushing mark with 427 yards in a game against Kansas - yes, even against the awful Jayhawks it counts. Williams quit football before the 2016 season before last season. When Utah was ravaged by injuries to its runners, the coaching staff persuaded him to come back. He made the All-Pac-12 team.

Pumphrey seems like a terrific fit for the Eagles because he has similar skills to versatile Darren Sproles, soon to turn 34. The 5-foot-9 Pumphrey led FBS in rushing with 2,133 yards and also scored 17 TDs, and he can catch, too. He left college as the FBS career leader in rushing yards. "I look forward to building a relationship and looking up to him and getting different pointers on how I can get better each day," Pumphrey said of Sproles. "So, I'm excited." —AP

## CAVALIERS, WARRIORS WELL RESTED AS ROUND TWO OPENS

**WASHINGTON:** Defending champion Cleveland and season win leader Golden State, each seeking a third consecutive NBA Finals appearance, are well rested as the second round of the playoffs begins full-swing today. They were the only clubs to advance through the first round without dropping a game and are again favored in their best-of-seven second round matchups.

Cleveland superstar LeBron James, trying to reach the NBA Finals for a seventh consecutive year and eighth overall, led the NBA in minutes played while averaging 26.4 points, 8.7 assists and 8.6 rebounds. He powers the Cavaliers against Toronto, a team they beat in last year's Eastern Conference final. "Doesn't mean we're going to be able to win this year," James said. "We've got to go out and make it happen. We have to worry about game one first."

Boston faces Washington in the other East matchup, the Celtics having taken the conference top seed over the Cavs. "The sky is the limit for this team," Boston guard Avery Bradley said. "Anything can happen as long as we continue to stay positive and play as hard as we can." The Warriors, one win from back-to-back NBA titles last June before Cleveland made the greatest comeback in finals history to deny them a repeat, wait until Tuesday to open round two at home against Sunday's winner between Utah and the Los Angeles Clippers.

Golden State has been nagged by injuries, including a calf injury to star forward Kevin Durant, and health issues with coach Steve Kerr, who has missed two games and is uncertain for the remainder of the playoffs. The other Western Conference semi-final showdown matches Texas rivals San Antonio and Houston, their first playoff meeting since 1995 after a season where their four meetings all went down to the final minute.

### 'KING' OF THE ROAD

James has won at least once on the road in 27 consecutive playoff series dating to 2009 and in 35 of 38 over his 14-year career. "I just like the adversity of the road," James said. "I love the 'Tonight is not the night' LeBron slogans. I love the 'You're overrated' and all those things." He might hear it a lot. Despite 31 home wins, second best in the NBA this season, the Cavaliers won't have the home-court edge again in the playoffs if form holds.

Cleveland and Toronto each went 51-31 this season and while Cleveland went 3-1 against the Raptors to gain the home-court edge, three meetings were last year and the last had many key players sitting out to rest. The Raptors pushed Cleveland to six games last year and won't likely vanish easily this time. "I know what we have in that locker room, and that's some fighters and scrappers," Raptors coach Dwane Casey said. The Celtics, 2-2 against Washington this season, expect to have guard Isaiah Thomas

for game one after her attended his sister Chyna's funeral Saturday. She was killed in an auto accident two weeks ago, but Thomas has not missed a game.

"I don't know (how he played)," Bradley said. "It's truly amazing." Celtics coach Brad Stevens is more concerned about the man than the games. "If he decides when he gets there that it's too much, that's OK. That's fine," Stevens said. "This (grieving) is a lot more important." Thomas averaged 27.8 points a game against the Wizards this season while Washington guards John Wall and Bradley Beal together averaged almost 40 points against Boston. Washington led the NBA with 20.7 fast break points and 9.2 steals a game in round one. "It's playoff time," Beal said. "It's winning time and we're going to do whatever it takes."

### KERR STATUS STILL UNCERTAIN

While Durant has rested his calf, Kerr missed practice again Saturday as he battles nausea, headaches and neck pain related to back surgery two years ago. Warriors assistant coach Mike Brown guided Golden State in his absence and could be pressed into duty throughout the playoffs. He's a former Cleveland coach who 10 years ago guided James and the Cavs into their first NBA Finals, where they lost to San Antonio.

The Spurs are powered by Kawhi Leonard while James Harden sparks Houston. Harden averaged 29.8 points, 12.5 assists and 9.0 rebounds against the Spurs, who boast the NBA's top defense and two-time NBA Defensive Player of the Year Leonard. San Antonio was 3-1 against the Rockets but three games were decided by two points and the other by only six. —AFP



CLEVELAND: In this Dec 25, 2016, file photo, Cleveland Cavaliers' LeBron James (23) drives past Golden State Warriors' Kevin Durant (35) in the first half of an NBA basketball game. —AP





AVONDALE: Helio Castroneves (3) leads the field on the opening lap during the IndyCar auto race Saturday, April 29, 2017, at Phoenix International Raceway. — AP

## SIMON PAGENAUD WINS INDYCAR RACE AT PHOENIX

AVONDALE: Simon Pagenaud appeared to be on cruise control after taking a big lead when a caution flag caught the other leaders on pit road in the Verizon IndyCar race Saturday night at Phoenix International Raceway. The Frenchman had a different view from the cockpit as he closed in on his first oval victory.

"Those were the longest 50 laps of my life," Pagenaud said. "I have a button on my wheel that tells me how many laps were left. I kept pressing it. It was stressful. The car was phenomenal." The defending series champion grabbed the lead when Team Penske teammate Will Power pitted on the 137th lap, and the caution came out seconds later when Takuma Sato hit the wall in the fourth turn. "We were a little bit lucky there with the caution," Pagenaud said,

"But we were in that position because we were able to stretch it (fuel) out." Pagenaud not only ended up with the lead, but had lapped cars between his Chevrolet and the other four lead-lap cars. Power cut Pagenaud's lead to 3 seconds with 40 laps to go before the winner pulled away to win by over 9 seconds in front of about only 7,000 fans at the mile oval. Pagenaud took the season points lead with his 10th career victory. Penske drivers led all 250 laps - Pagenaud 116, pole-sitter Helio Castroneves 73, Power 59 and Josef Newgarden 2 - en route to the team's record-extending 189th series victory.

"This is incredible. This is my best win," Pagenaud said. "You need to be so strategic to win on an oval and today was the perfect day. I couldn't be any happier." Power had his first

podium finish of the year. "We just got caught out by a yellow," the Australian said. "We just had a wait there. It made a bad race of it." JR Hildebrand finished third in another Chevy for Ed Carpenter Racing, and Castroneves was fourth for Penske. Scott Dixon, the winner last year, was a lap down in fifth in Chip Ganassi Racing's Honda.

"Chevy had a leg up on us here and they showed that tonight," Dixon said. "We tried to keep our nose clean, but just didn't have anything for them tonight." Hildebrand returned after missing the Alabama event last week because of a broken left hand. He was hurt after late contact with Mikhail Aleshin in Long Beach, California. "At the end, we might have had the best car on the track," Hildebrand said. "It's a

great result heading into May."

### SILVER CROWN

Aleshin didn't finish a lap Saturday, losing control and spinning in the second turn to start a wreck that collected fellow Honda drivers Marco Andretti, Sebastien Bourdais, Graham Rahal and Max Chilton. "I turned and the rear just went sideways," Aleshin said. Bourdais won the opener in St. Petersburg, Florida, and took the points lead into the night. "I was just along for the ride. Nothing I could do," Bourdais said. "It's just a shame."

Bobby Santos won the USAC Silver Crown series' first race at the track since 2009. "Coming back here was a huge deal," Santos said. Santos, from Franklin, Massachusetts, started from the

pole in the DJ Racing Chevrolet and took the lead for good with eight laps left in the 100-mile race. He has seven career victories. "I had to work for this one," Santos said. "No time to sit down in the seat." Two-time series champion Kody Swanson was second, followed by David Byrne and Davey Hamilton. Only six of the 17 cars were running at the finish. Chris Windom missed a chance to become the second series driver to win four straight races, finishing 13th after blowing an engine. He drove Patrick Lawson's No. 2 car after cutting a tire and hitting the wall Friday in practice in his own Kazmark Racing machine. Windom won the season-opening race April 2 at Terre Haute Action Track after closing last year with victories at Du Quoin State Fairgrounds and Eldora Speedway. — AP

## JOSHUA STOPS KLITSCHKO IN 11TH ROUND OF HEAVYWEIGHT EPIC

LONDON: Anthony Joshua remained in the ring long after 90,000 of his supporters had filed out of Wembley Stadium, posing happily for pictures with his team and hugging just about everyone he knew. No reason to leave early when being the heavyweight champion is so much fun. "I just want to fight everyone, man," Joshua said. "I'm really loving this right now." There was a lot to love Saturday night in front of a packed crowd at England's national stadium, where Joshua got off the canvas to stop longtime champion Wladimir Klitschko in a coming out party of sorts that electrified the boxing world.

The biggest heavyweight fight in British history was also the best. There was an epic fifth round where Joshua knocked Klitschko down and then held on himself to survive, along with a knockdown a round later by Klitschko. And when Joshua had finished almost taking Klitschko's head off in the 11th round, a heavyweight division moribund for years was suddenly very much alive once again.

Just five years removed from winning an Olympic gold medal in London, Joshua stopped a fighter who dominated the heavyweight division for nearly a decade. Though the win came with some anxious moments for the hometown fans, it also established Joshua as a superstar in the making who just might be the fighter who can make boxing must-see TV once again.

### MEGAFIGHT

"Anthony was better today than I," Klitschko said. "It's really sad that I didn't make it tonight. I was planning to do it. It didn't work. But all the respect to Anthony, congratulations." A heavyweight title fight unlike any seen in the country that invented boxing didn't just end with the hometown favorite's hand aloft in victory. It ended in such spectacular fashion that Joshua can now write his own ticket in a heavyweight division long starved for star power.

That will at some point likely include a megafight with American Deontay Wilder, who owns a piece of the title and is a huge

puncher himself. It could include a rematch with Klitschko, who had it written into his contract that he would have that right should he lose. And then there's Tyson Fury, the British nomad who upset Klitschko in 2015 before being waylaid by mental and other issues. "Tyson Fury, where you're at, baby? Is that what you want to see?" Joshua asked. "Come on, we're here, man. I enjoy fighting. I love fighting. I want to give 90,000 people another chance to witness a lovely night of boxing."

The possibilities are tantalizing indeed, and so are the prospects for stardom for Joshua. Largely unknown outside Britain except by ardent boxing fans, he announced himself as the future of the division with a spectacular right hand that made Klitschko look like a very large bobblehead in the 11th round of a fight that until then was either man's to win. His knockout power is unquestioned, and after Saturday night so is his heart. In only his 19th fight, he gained invaluable experience and even more confidence in his ability to dominate any heavyweight in the ring.

### 'I'M ONLY GOING TO IMPROVE'

The crowd at Wembley was drawn by all of that, and more. Joshua has the kind of charisma that fight promoters swoon over, and is so popular at home that the Sunday Times devoted the first full three pages of its sports section to his big win. "You can hear I'm a little bit emotional because I know I've got doubters that think I can't do this and that, but I dig deep," Joshua said. "As I said, if you don't take part, you're going to fail. Just give it a go and you never know the outcome."

Wilder was at ringside to watch his new rival, as were former champions Evander Holyfield and Lennox Lewis. Wilder is also undefeated and a big puncher with a piece of the heavyweight title himself, and the two would do huge box-office business if they got together in a megafight. First, though, Joshua must come to the US and expose himself to American boxing fans in at least one fight, possibly two. —AP



SOCHI: Mercedes driver Valtteri Bottas of Finland, center, celebrates his victory at the Formula One Russian Grand Prix at the 'Sochi Autodrom' circuit, with second placed Ferrari driver Sebastian Vettel, left, of Germany and third place Ferrari driver Kimi Raikkonen of Finland. —AP

## BOTTAS CLAIMS MAIDEN WIN FOR MERCEDES IN RUSSIA GP

SOCHI: Valtteri Bottas claimed his maiden Formula One victory yesterday when he resisted intense pressure from championship leader Sebastian Vettel to triumph for Mercedes in a tense Russian Grand Prix. The Finnish driver, starting from third place on the grid, grabbed the initiative at the start by powering past both Ferraris and into the lead while his Mercedes team-mate Lewis Hamilton struggled home fourth. Four-time champion Vettel finished second ahead of Ferrari team-mate Kimi Raikkonen who claimed his first podium finish since last year's Austrian Grand Prix. The popular Bottas's first win was warmly received by his fellow drivers and the paddock, Hamilton hugging him after he had jumped into the arms of his crew and Vettel joining the reception, Russian President Vladimir Putin also present for congratulations and prize giving.

"Worth the wait!" said the unflappable Bottas in typical understated style after coming home just six-tenths of a second ahead of Vettel at the flag. Dutch teenager Max Verstappen finished fifth for Red Bull ahead of Mexican Sergio Perez and his Force India team-mate Esteban Ocon, German Nico Hulkenberg of Renault and Brazilian Felipe Massa of Williams.

The result lifted Vettel clear at the top of the drivers championship with 86 points ahead of Hamilton on 73 with Bottas up to third with 63 points. Mercedes lead the constructors title race with 136 points to Ferrari on 135 after four rounds of this year's championship. Bottas became Finland's fifth Formula One race winner following Keke Rosberg, Mika Hakkinen, Kimi Raikkonen and Heikki Kovalainen, who was the last from the Nordic country to triumph, at the 2008 Hungarian Grand Prix.

### 'THIS IS VALTTERI'S DAY'

Vettel was seemingly as pleased for Bottas as if he had won himself. "I tried everything to catch him and I thought there would be an opportunity on the back straight," the German

said. "I thought I could do it, but I wasn't sure what Felipe Massa would do and I ended up losing out. It doesn't matter though. Big congratulations to Valtteri. This is his day."

Raikkonen said: "I have had a bit of a rough start to the season, but this week has been a step forward, but we still only finished third. So, we'll keep trying." On a balmy Spring day by the Black Sea, two-time champion Fernando Alonso was an instant retirement before the start when the Spaniard abandoned his troublesome McLaren Honda. This delayed the start for an additional formation lap before Bottas made his exhilarating getaway.

Almost immediately, Frenchman Romain Grosjean of Haas collided with the Renault of Briton Jolyon Palmer at Turn Two, the cars crashing heavily to trigger a red-flagged halt and a Safety Car intervention. After a six-minute stoppage, Bottas was sharpest at the re-start when the Safety Car pulled in and he dominated,

pulling 3.1 seconds clear of Vettel by lap 10 as Hamilton, back in fourth, struggled with intermittent power and over-heating problems.

Ricciardo was another early departure after just seven laps with brake problems. By lap 18, Bottas was controlling events with a 4.5-sec lead and the top four were separated by less than 14 seconds. The leading positions remained unchanged until the pit-stops, which saw Bottas first in for super-softs followed by Raikkonen and Hamilton, Vettel leading from lap 27 until lap 34 when he finally pitted for new rubber.

This enabled Bottas to regain the initiative, but an error at Turn 13 on lap 38, when he had a serious lock-up and narrowly avoided the wall, invited Vettel, on fresher tyres, back into contention. Needing no second invitation, the German closed the gap to 1.5 seconds with 10 laps to go and set up a grandstand finish, but Bottas hung on to take his first emotional and welcome victory in his 81st Grand Prix. —AFP



LONDON: Britain's Anthony Joshua (R) throws a punch at Ukraine's Wladimir Klitschko during the fourth round of their IBF, IBO and WBA, world Heavyweight title fight at Wembley Stadium. —AFP

## MCLEOD WINS IMPOSINGLY AT RAIN-HIT DRAKE RELAYS

CHICAGO: Reigning Olympic 110-meter hurdles champion Omar McLeod of Jamaica ignored cold, wind and rain to run the fastest time in the world this year Saturday at the 108th Drake Relays. McLeod defended his title in his specialty with a meet-record 13.04 seconds at Des Moines, Iowa, as part of a series of events dubbed Rio Rematches after last year's Olympics in Brazil.

McLeod, aided by a 1.8m/sec tailwind, jumped ahead at the start and surged again in the last 40 meters to defeat Britain's Andrew Pozzi by .20 of a second and lower the meet mark he set last year by .04. "The focus was just to get out," McLeod said. "Season opener. I

did not know where I was competitively. I knew I was training consistently. "It's a great feeling. I'm kind of surprised at that time because of the weather."

American Aleec Harris was third in 13.37 with US 2012 Olympic champion and world record-holder Aries Merritt fourth in 13.44. Another reigning Olympic champion, Canadian high jumper Derek Drouin, won his specialty with a clearance of 2.30m. World 2017 bests were also set in the women's 100 and 400 hurdles, with American Kendra Harrison winning the shorter race in 12.56 and compatriot Georgeanne Moline taking the longer win in 54.66. — AFP

## UNITED TOP FOUR HOPES DEALT BLOW BY SWANSEA

 Man United	1
 Swansea	1

**MANCHESTER:** A Gylfi Sigurdsson free-kick dealt a blow to Manchester United's hopes of a top four finish whilst boosting his team Swansea's chances of escaping the drop in an entertaining 1-1 Premier League draw yesterday. Wayne Rooney had scored his first home league goal of the season, from a harsh penalty decision, in time added on of the first-half.

However, he blotted his copybook when he conceded a free-kick nearly 25 yards from goal in the 78th minute. Free-kick specialist Sigurdsson duly delivered with a superb curling effort into the top corner that left United keeper David de Gea rooted to the spot and denied Jose Mourinho a victory that would have lifted United into third place, temporarily at least.

### RASHFORD TURNS INTO DOLPHIN

Swansea, who have righted the ship a little in taking four points from their last two games after a return of just a single point in the previous six, trail fourth from bottom Hull by two points with three matches remaining. Rooney struck in first-half injury-time after a contentious penalty award by referee Neil Swarbrick who judged keeper Lukasz Fabianski had brought down Marcus Rashford when diving at his feet.

Replays suggested Swansea had been hard done-Rashford making the most out of minimal contact-but Rooney made no mistake with a clinical conversion from the resulting penalty. It was a cruel end to a strong showing by Swansea and a slow start from Mourinho's side was exacerbated by an injury after just seven minutes to England left-back Luke Shaw who

appeared to damage his ankle off the ball.

The tactical reshuffle that followed hardly helped United settle as they struggled to cope with an impressive and committed opening from the relegation-troubled visitors. Indeed, Paul Clement's side should have gone in at the half-time interval in front. On 12 minutes, Ayew's shot was blocked by Eric Bailly who blasted his clearance directly at Sigurdsson and watched, relieved, as the ricochet flew harmlessly behind. Then Fernando Llorente beat Bailly far too easily and was only denied by a flying stop from de Gea. United had given Fabianski something to think about, starting in the 16th minute when Anthony Martial picked out the well-timed run of Jesse Lingard with a pass which the youngster volleyed too close to the Swansea keeper. Martial was looking increasingly dangerous as he cut in from the left and a grateful Fabianski smothered his shot at the second attempt as Lingard was poised to net the rebound. And before United would take the lead, there was a reminder that Swansea posed a real threat as Tom Carroll found Ayew whose shot was blocked by the outstretched leg of de Gea with the loose ball flying within inches of two Swansea attackers.

Rooney should have handed United a much-needed two-goal cushion early in the second half as he exchanged passes with Ander Herrera but succeeded only in striking his effort directly into the back of Martial from eight yards. Mourinho's mounting injury list grew when the impressive Bailly limped out of the game with what looked like a hamstring problem on the hour mark.

As Clement chased the game, Swansea also ran into injury problems with substitute Jefferson Montero managing to survive just six minutes before being stretched off. Even after their equalizer, Swansea still pushed for a winner, however, and Llorente should have done better than mis-kick close to goal from another threatening Sigurdsson set-piece. — AFP



**LIVERPOOL:** Chelsea's Spanish midfielder Pedro celebrates scoring the opening goal during the English Premier League football match between Everton and Chelsea at Goodison Park.— AFP

## PEDRO GEM MOVES CLINICAL CHELSEA CLOSER TO PL TITLE

 Everton	0
 Chelsea	3

**LIVERPOOL:** Pedro's sublime strike fired Chelsea a step closer to the Premier League title as the ruthless leaders swept to a 3-0 win at Everton yesterday. Antonio Conte's side had to work hard to break down Everton's stubborn resistance, but Pedro's majestic second-half goal put Chelsea on course for a fourth win in their last five league games. Late goals from Gary Cahill and Willian wrapped up the victory as the Blues opened up a seven-point lead at the top, piling pressure on second-placed Tottenham ahead of their derby against Arsenal. Regardless of the result at White Hart Lane, Chelsea's steely display ensured the destiny of the title remains in their hands with four matches left against Middlesbrough, West Bromwich Albion, Watford and relegated Sunderland.

Chelsea need nine points to be assured of being crowned English champions in Conte's first season in charge. "We had a lot of patience for the right moment to hit. We deserved the win," Conte said. "We scored an amazing goal with Pedro. This gives us lots of confidence. "Now it is important to prepare for the final rush. We must look step by step."

After defeats against Manchester United and Crystal Palace raised questions about their ability to get over the finish line, Chelsea have been revitalised by their FA Cup semi-final win over Tottenham. They beat Southampton in midweek to re-establish control of the title race and ending Everton's eight-match winning streak at home was another significant step towards the title. Restoring Pedro to the starting line-up in place of Cesc Fabregas, Conte put the emphasis on attack, but the leaders were nearly caught cold at the back in the opening minutes.

Dominic Calvert-Lewin wriggled free for a shot from a tight angle that deflected onto a post and rebounded to Romelu Lukaku, whose close-range strike was goalbound until Cahill came to the rescue with a last-ditch block. Chelsea squandered a chance to take the lead when Diego Costa scampered away from the Everton defence and picked out Eden Hazard's run. As Hazard latched onto the pass and rounded Maarten Stekelenburg a goal seemed certain, but the Belgian's touch wasn't quite delicate enough and his shot drifted into the side-netting.

### THUNDERBOLT

Costa looked furious after a full-blooded lunge from Tom Davies left him crumpled on the turf and he had a golden opportunity to get revenge when Everton made a hash of dealing with a long pass from David Luiz. Costa won the header and was unchallenged as he spun to volley goalwards, yet the Spaniard still contrived to smash his close-range shot high over the bar.

The miss nearly came back to haunt Chelsea when Lukaku bullied his way through for a low shot that whistled just wide from the edge of the area. In need of inspiration to break down obdurate Everton, Conte's men went close early in the second half when a clever short corner routine set up Victor Moses for a shot that was deflected wide.

Enner Valencia threatened to rock the visitors as the Everton forward escaped on the touchline and tested Thibaut Courtois from an acute angle. But Chelsea kept probing and their persistence was rewarded with Pedro's thunderbolt in the

66th minute. A sustained period of Chelsea pressure pushed Everton deep into their own penalty area and when the ball was worked to Pedro in a central position the Spanish winger uncorked a fierce 20-yard strike that flashed into the roof of the net for his first goal since February. With 11 minutes left, Hazard's low free-kick was pushed out by Stekelenburg and Cahill tapped in to trigger chants of "Tottenham, we're waiting for you" from Chelsea's jubilant travelling fans. There was still time for Willian to come off the bench and apply the finishing touch to an incisive raid in the 86th minute. — AFP



**MANCHESTER:** Manchester United's Portuguese manager Jose Mourinho (R) talks with Manchester United's English striker Marcus Rashford (L) as they leave the pitch at the end of the English Premier League football match between Manchester United and Swansea City at Old Trafford.— AFP

## SHAKESPEARE SEES MORE ACTS IN LEICESTER SEASON

**WEST BROMWICH:** Craig Shakespeare insisted Leicester City's season is not at an end despite the champions reaching 40 points and so all but avoiding relegation from the Premier League. Jamie Vardy's goal secured a 1-0 win for the Foxes at West Bromwich Albion on Saturday that took them to 40 points-usually the benchmark tally for avoiding the drop from English football's top flight.

Leicester had looked in danger of the drop when former assistant manager Shakespeare took over from sacked title-winning boss Claudio Ranieri in February. But despite an impressive run of results under the Englishman's guidance, Leicester's Thai owners have still to confirm if Shakespeare will stay on as the club's manager next season. Meanwhile, the man himself was taking nothing for granted. "We are not mathematically safe," said Shakespeare, who served West Brom as both a player and a coach.



"We are delighted to have three points and this is a giant step toward that aim. But even if we had got there, we have a duty to perform in every game. "It was a scrappy

game and it felt like that. I felt the first goal was going to be important today." As for his return to The Hawthorns, Shakespeare said: "It is nice to come back. I am pleased with the warm reception I got." However, he added: "It's about the result. I wouldn't like to leave with my tail between my legs after we lost 3-0."

### VARDY AMBITION

In-form England striker Vardy scored his 10th goal in 15 games for club and country to settle Saturday's match from a pass by strike partner Shinji Okazaki. "Shinji weighted the pass terrifically," said Shakespeare. "Vardy is in that purple patch but he has got to thank the other players for the service and he will say that. "He is a striker in form, his attributes are being quick and playing on the shoulder of defenders. "I want Jamie Vardy to finish on a high. He's scored quite a few of late and I want that to continue. "It will be a difficult end to the season and we have to try and win every game we can. We showed different aspects today-it was a gutsy performance." —AFP

## JESUS SALVAGES POINT FOR MAN CITY AT BORO

 Middlesbrough	2
 Man City	2

**MIDDLESBROUGH:** Gabriel Jesus's header five minutes from time saw Manchester City to a 2-2 draw at relegation-threatened Middlesbrough on Sunday as his side stayed just ahead in the race for a Champions League spot. City twice had to come from behind against a Boro side who could be demoted to the second-tier after the next round of Premier League fixtures. But the way the northeast club rattled Pep Guardiola's men showed they were not prepared to give up their top-flight status without a fight.

Former City striker Alvaro Negredo put Boro ahead seven minutes before half-time at the Riverside, only for Sergio Agüero to convert a controversial penalty with 21 minutes remaining when Leroy Sane hit the ground after a challenge from Marten de Roon. But Middlesbrough rallied and restored the lead when Calum Chambers, on loan from Arsenal, grabbed his first goal for the club in the 77th minute.

However, there was still time for Jesus to earn City a draw that kept them in the fourth and final Champions League place on offer to English clubs, a point clear of local rivals Manchester United, who remained fifth after a 1-1 draw at home to Swansea earlier on Sunday. Both Manchester clubs have four league games left to play this season. Even though Middlesbrough boast an impressive home record against Manchester City at the top level, it was always going to be difficult given their respective positions in the Premier League.

City's only league win in 40 years on Teesside was 10 years ago, but they must have fancied their chances more given Middlesbrough's descent towards the Championship in 2017. Steve Agnew, the Middlesbrough head coach, left out Gaston Ramirez, who wanted away in January and has frus-

trated ever since, completely, while Guardiola sprang a surprise by including both Jesus and Agüero up front.

The attacking pair came within inches of combining to score an opener inside 70 seconds too. Agüero got to the byline and drilled a low cross through the six-yard area where Jesus was unable to turn beyond goalkeeper Brad Guzan. Middlesbrough, buoyed by the midweek victory over relegated local rivals Sunderland, showed a desire to attack their more illustrious opponents. Negredo dragged a half-volley across goal from an unmarked position when Fabio da Silva's cross found its way to him, while de Roon saw a long-range shot shave the side netting.

### ANNOYED GUARDIOLA

City controlled most of the possession but rarely tested Guzan and were made to pay by Boro in the 38th minute. A City attack broke down when George Friend intercepted a pass bound for Agüero. The left-back passed to De Roon, who then rolled in Stewart Downing down the left. The former England winger had loads of space and his pass found Negredo, whose first-time shot hit the inside of Willy Caballero's right-hand post before crossing the line.

City manager Guardiola was clearly annoyed and within five minutes of the restart Raheem Sterling and Sane were introduced. And with the exception of a low Adam Clayton drive that was held by Caballero, City spent almost the entire half probing the home defense, looking for an equalizer. That eventually arrived with 21 minutes remaining, even if it needed the assistance of referee Kevin Friend. He deemed that it was a penalty when Sane went to ground under a challenge from de Roon. After the protests had died down, Agüero converted. An incensed Middlesbrough, hadn't finished, though. After Adama Traore was tripped as he charged towards the box, Downing was given a chance from the dead ball. His free-kick was initially saved, only for the ball to bounce around the area where Chambers had remained to lift over the ball over Caballero and put second-bottom Boro 2-1 up. —AFP

## SHEIKH KHALIFA VISITS OLYMPIC SHOOTING COMPLEX

**KUWAIT:** President of the Asian Shooting Sport Confederation Sheikh Ali Bin Abdullah Al Khalifa made a visit to Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Olympic Shooting Complex on Saturday. The guest toured the complex ranges as well as all the supporting facilities. Sheikh Ali Al Khalifa met the honorary president of ASSC and Kuwait Shooting Sport Club Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah, he also met with President of Kuwait and Arab Shooting Federations Eng Duaij Khalaf Al-Otaibi and KSF & ASF Secretary General Obaid Munahi Al-Osaimi. Sheikh Ali Al-Khalifa congratulated Kuwait Shooting Sport Federation, HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah and Kuwait people for lifting the suspension on Kuwait shooting. Matters of mutual interest were also discussed during the meeting.



## MILAN SLIP HANDS IMPETUS TO INTER

**MILAN:** AC Milan suffered a second league setback since their takeover by a Chinese consortium to boost rivals Inter's bid for one of two Europa League spots in Italy's Serie A. Milan travelled to relegation-haunted Crotona looking to make up for a shock 2-1 San Siro defeat to struggling Empoli last week. But for the second game in succession since the Rossoneri Sport Investment Lux bought the seven-time European champions from long-time owner Silvio Berlusconi, Vincenzo Montella's side disappointed.

Marcello Trotta fired Crotona into an eighth-minute lead at their Ezio Scida stadium and it took until the 50th minute for Milan to level, veteran defender Gabriel Paletta bundling home a messy goal from close range. Milan pushed for a late winner but the Serie A giants, who saw Juraj Kucka sent off six minutes into second-half stoppage time for a second bookable offence, were forced to settle for a point.

"We should be disappointed and angry for the result," Milan coach Montella told Mediaset Premium. "We've found out to our cost that we can also drop points to teams much lower down in the table. We're going home with a point, and somewhat angry." Milan remain sixth, five points adrift of Atalanta in the final Europa League spot, but for Montella-given backing by the club's new owners last week-a Europa League spot remains reachable,

especially as the sixth-placed league finisher could be handed the spot allocated to the Cup winners.

In the June 2 Cup final, Juventus, set for a Champions League spot, face Lazio-who look set to finish fourth and book a spot in Europe's second tier club competition. "We still believe we can reach the Europa League," added Montella. "We've still to face Atalanta and sixth place still offers a way in." Inter, enduring an equally tough season under new Chinese owners Suning, host Napoli in Sunday's late game looking for their first win in six outings.

A home win at the San Siro would pull Stefano Pioli's men level on points with Milan (59). Roma's 3-1 derby defeat to Lazio earlier yesterday left them in second place at nine points behind runaway leaders Juve, but only four points ahead of Napoli, as they chase the second automatic Champions League qualifying place.

A point from their draw with Milan left Crotona third from bottom but now just four points behind Empoli. But Crotona coach Davide Nicola remains unconvinced, saying: "We're neither closer, nor further away (from safety)." Palermo saw goals from Alessandro Diamanti and Haitam Aleesami, at the death, secure a 2-0 home win over 10-man Fiorentina-only their fourth of the season. It left the Sicilians second from bottom and 10 points behind Empoli with four games remaining. — AFP



**WOLFSBURG:** Bayern Munich's Dutch midfielder Arjen Robben celebrates scoring the 4:0 during the German first division Bundesliga football match between VfL Wolfsburg and Bayern Munich. — AFP

## TOPS AND FLOPS OF BAYERN'S 5TH STRAIGHT BUNDESLIGA TITLE

**BERLIN:** Bayern Munich won a fifth-straight German league title on Saturday with a 6-0 win at Wolfsburg. Bayern are German champions for the 27th time, but are still smarting from their German Cup semi-final defeat and Champions League quarter-final exit inside eight days. Take a look at the top and flops at Bayern in winning the 2016/17 Bundesliga title:

### THE TOPS ROBERT LEWANDOWSKI

The Polish hot-shot's performances have lived up to his salary, estimated to be 15 million euros (\$16.3m). His two goals in the Wolfsburg rout means he has netted 28 times in the league this season, one ahead of Dortmund's Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang in the race to be the Bundesliga's top-scorer. Lewandowski has scored 41 times in all competitions this season. Without his finishing, Bayern were nowhere near as dangerous in their 2-1 first-leg defeat to Real Madrid in the Champions League's quarter-finals when he had a shoulder injury.

### THE VETERANS

The members of Bayern's squad over 30 have been a big plus this season, but Carlo Ancelotti will lose Philipp Lahm and Xabi Alonso's experience next season. Bayern's captain Lahm, 34, has been faultless at right-back or in midfield, while Alonso has been Mr Reliable in the defensive midfield. The pair will hang up their boots at the end of the season and are hard to replace. Franck Ribery, 33, and Arjen Robben, 34, have had a new lease of life under Ancelotti and have a year left on their contracts. Germany's goalkeeper Manuel Neuer, 31, has been rock-solid reliable between the posts. It is no coincidence that Bayern's five-match winless streak this month coincided with Neuer sidelined. A fractured foot has ruled him out for the rest of the season, but he is set to succeed Lahm as captain next season.

### THE FLOPS THE YOUNG GUNS

The youngsters in Bayern's squad have struggled. Joshua Kimmich, 22, returned from Euro 2016 as Germany's first-choice right-back, then spent a frustrating season mainly on Bayern's bench. With Lahm at right-back, Kimmich is down the pecking order in Bayern's defensive midfield behind Alonso, Arturo Vidal and Javi Martinez. Injury restricted France winger Kingsley Coman, 20, to just two appearances over 90 minutes in the league this season. Renato Sanchez, 19, arrived in Munich after winning Euro 2016 with Portugal, but failed to impose himself. He has started just five league games this season, was awful in Bayern's 1-0 defeat at Hoffenheim earlier this month. None of his 16 league appearances have been over the 90 minutes.

### CARLO ANCELOTTI

It seems harsh to rate the Italian as 'a flop' after winning the Bundesliga in his first season, but one title per season is a poor return by Bayern's standards. Munich collapsed in April with four defeats to exit both the Champions League and German Cup. When the pressure came on, Ancelotti's team was found wanting at home in both competitions.

Cristiano Ronaldo scored twice in Real's 2-1 first-leg win in Munich in the Champions League while Dortmund's Ousmane Dembele sealed 3-2 German Cup semi-final win. Bayern threw away the lead on both occasions-unheard of at the Allianz Arena. Rummenigge blamed Bayern's 4-2 quarter-final, second-leg defeat in Madrid on poor refereeing-"we were shafted"-after Arturo Vidal was sent off for a second booking.

Refereeing decisions and injury aside,

Ancelotti's first season makes poor reading compared to predecessor Pep Guardiola. The Catalan signed off his three seasons with the league and cup double. He led Bayern to the Champions League's semi-finals for three years running, so

Ancelotti's quarter-final exit is a step down. The Italian has already been given a vote of confidence by Rummenigge, but Bayern's bosses will not tolerate a repeat of the disappointments witnessed this April. —AFP

## BALDE BRACE RUINS TOTTI'S FINAL DERBY

**MILAN:** Keita Balde struck twice as Lazio ruined Francesco Totti's final derby as a Lazio yesterday with a thrilling 3-1 win over Roma that could also jeopardise their push for a top-two finish in Serie A. Roma hosted their city rivals looking to maintain their fading title challenge to leaders Juventus after a 2-2 at Atalanta Saturday took their lead to nine points with four games remaining. But Juve's slip-up wasn't enough to entice Roma on what should have been Totti's derby farewell as his final season in Italy's top flight draws to a close.

Luciano Spalletti's men physically turned up at the Stadio Olimpico, but mentally looked elsewhere as they struggled to impose their usual, fast-flowing game against a Lazio side battling for a place in Europe. Roma remain nine points behind Juventus but if Napoli beat Inter Milan at the San Siro later Sunday, the gap to third will be just one point. Spalletti said Roma "lacked lucidity" but said his men ultimately had to "keep quiet and accept the flak".

"We made some wrong decisions. We should have had more ball possession, but we struggled to respond when they went on the counter," Lazio midfielder Lucas Biglia said they had been determined to cause an upset. "We deserved the win, but the coach has been trying to drill into us since Monday that we could beat Roma," said Biglia, who swapped shirts with Totti at the final whistle. "For me, he's one of football's icons so to go home with his shirt is great gift for me."

### STUNNED INTO SILENCE

Roma enjoyed a bright start, Edin Dzeko notably firing over while under pressure from six yards out. But the red and yellow half of the Stadio Olimpico was stunned into silence before the quarter-hour when Balde collected a perfect through ball from deep in midfield to sidestep two defenders and fire through the legs of Emerson Palmieri to wrong-foot Wojciech

Szczesny in the Roma net.

Lazio were denied a penalty when Jordan Lukaku was brought down by Fazio after he powered his way into the area from the left. Over-run in midfield and struggling for solutions in the final third, Spalletti turned to the Roma fans, gesturing for their vocal support as his side failed to fire. But on 36 minutes Lazio almost had their second, Marco Parolo forcing Szczesny to parry down low after he ran on to a loose ball following another Balde incursion.

Dzeko had a previous claims for a penalty waved away but Roma's luck changed in dramatic fashion when Kevin Strootman came down following a swipe at his feet by Lazio defender Wallace. Television pictures suggested no contact had been made on the Dutchman, but the decision stood and Daniele De Rossi stepped up to roll a cheeky low shot inside Thomas Strakosha's near post to level on the stroke of half-time. But Lazio resumed in positive fashion, Balde breaking down the left to cut back for Parolo, before he was dispossessed.

And although Dzeko flashed a drive off the post from Salah's smart delivery, Roma's defence stood back moments later at the other end to allow Dusan Basta a free shot on goal, and paid the price. His effort deflected off a Roma defender before creeping past Szczesny and inside the near post. Totti, who has enjoyed only a handful of cameo appearances this season, replaced De Rossi for the final 17 minutes.

On one of his first touches, the 40-year-old was dispossessed by Biglia, who set up Felipe Anderson for a counter that saw Szczesny thwart the Brazilian with his trailing leg. But Lazio weren't to be denied. On another counter Senad Lulic was allowed to run half the length of the pitch before finding Balde with a precision pass inside the area for the striker to slot past Szczesny five minutes from the end. —AFP



**ROME:** Roma's forward from Italy Francesco Totti looks on during the Italian Serie A football match Roma vs Lazio at the Olympic Stadium. —AFP



**CROTONE:** Crotona's Noe Dussenne, right, challenges AC Milan's Mati Fernandez during a Serie A soccer match, at the Ezio Scida stadium. — AP

## KLOPP URGES LIVERPOOL TO TAKE PRIDE IN BATTLE

**LONDON:** Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp has encouraged his team to relish the battle for Champions League qualification as they look to preserve their top-four place at Watford today. Liverpool topped the Premier League table in November and looked poised to mount a title tilt, but a top-four finish is now the only thing they can now hope to salvage from their season.

While they could be out of the top four by kick-off at Vicarage Road today, Klopp wants his players to remain mindful of how privileged their position is. "When we were first or second in the table and all that stuff, I said the only thing we can do is to be in the battle for the interesting positions at the end of the season," he said. "The end of the season is now, of course. It is the last month of the season and we are in the battle. So what else do we want? "Yes, it would be nice if we had 10 points more and fight with Chelsea for the title, but that's not for us obviously in this moment. "So we have to fight for what we can fight for and that's a Champions League place. That's really, really interesting, to be honest."

Liverpool saw a seven-game unbeaten run ended by an unexpected 2-1 home defeat by Crystal Palace last weekend. They remain third in the table going into the weekend, but will slip to fifth if fourth-place Manchester City win at Middlesbrough on Sunday and fifth-place Manchester United prevail at home to Swansea City. Klopp hopes to be able to call upon England pair Adam Lallana and Daniel Sturridge, both of whom resumed training with the first team on Friday. Midfielder Lallana has been out for over a month with a groin injury, while striker Sturridge sat out the loss to Palace due to

a sore hip. Captain Jordan Henderson remains sidelined with an ongoing foot issue, along with Sadio Mane, Ragnar Klavan and Danny Ings.

### MAZZARRI WANTS 'ANGRY' WATFORD

"Adam is back in team training for the first time, which is very, very good news," Klopp said. "Hendo is not on the pitch so far and there's nothing new to say about (him). Daniel is in team training again, too, and that's good. "Now we have to train with the boys to see how they are, what shape they are in and then see what we can do with them."

Liverpool last won at Watford in January 2007, having been condemned to a 3-0 defeat on their most recent trip to Vicarage Road in December 2015. Watford slipped to a 2-0 defeat at struggling Hull City last time out, but they have won their last three home games and have lost only one of their last seven matches on home turf. Watford sit 10th in the table and have reached the 40-point mark that is traditionally synonymous with survival.

But head coach Walter Mazzarri says his side should be motivated by a desire to avenge their one-sided 6-1 defeat at Anfield in November, in which Liverpool went 5-0 up inside an hour. "Liverpool will be angry after losing at home (to Palace), but I hope my players will be more angry as we lost at Hull and conceded six goals at Anfield," said the Italian. "I want them to fight for every ball and be really concentrated." Watford centre-back Craig Cathcart is doubtful due to a knee injury, while Valon Behrami is being monitored following a spell on the sidelines with a hamstring problem. Younes Kaboul, Roberto Pereyra and Mauro Zarate are long-term absentees. —AFP



**BARCELONA:** Spanish tennis player Rafael Nadal celebrates with his trophy after winning Austrian tennis player Dominic Thiem at the end of the ATP Barcelona Open "Conde de Godo" tennis tournament final. —AFP

## NADAL WINS 'DREAM' 10TH BARCELONA OPEN

**BARCELONA:** Rafael Nadal hailed a "dream start" to his clay court season after romping to his 10th Barcelona Open yesterday after sweeping aside Austria's Dominic Thiem 6-4, 6-1. The Spaniard also claimed his 10th title at the Monte Carlo Masters last week as he gears up for to go for his 10th French Open title next month.

"It is two consecutive weeks winning, in Monte Carlo and here, two special tournaments for me, it is a dream start on clay," said Nadal. "It means a lot for me to reach number 10 here in Barcelona, in front of the people of my club, I am very happy and emotional." Nadal won in Barcelona between 2005-2009, 2011-13 and now in

the last two years. The 14-time Grand Slam champion also looks like the man to beat at Roland Garros after winning on a Barcelona court named after him and where he didn't drop a set all week. Thiem had shocked world number one Andy Murray in Saturday's semi-finals and showed some early resistance. The world number nine even had his only break point of the match in the first game.

But Nadal, returning to top form at age 30, upped his intensity at the crucial moment and took the set with the only break in the 10th game. "The first set was vitally important," added Nadal. "It was hard. I was having a few more chances than him

but it was very even and that is why I celebrated with so much energy at the end." The second set was a procession as Thiem's frustration at his inability to break through Nadal's defences saw him consistently fire long. Thiem held off three break points in his opening service game, but was powerless to stop Nadal thereafter as he won the last five games to seal victory in just over 90 minutes on court. However, Thiem wasn't too disheartened after losing out to the king of clay after what had been a productive week. "I really enjoyed the week in Barcelona," he said. "There are worse things than to lose against the greatest player on clay ever." — AFP

# Sports

Clinical Chelsea moves closer to PL title

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BOTTAS CLAIMS MAIDEN WIN FOR MERCEDES IN RUSSIA GP

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LONDON: Tottenham Hotspur's Harry Kane, front, celebrates with Dele Alli after scoring a penalty during the English Premier League soccer match between Tottenham Hotspur and Arsenal at White Hart Lane. —AP

## ALLI, KANE EARN SPURS STIRRING DERBY WIN

**LONDON:** Dele Alli and Harry Kane kept Tottenham Hotspur in the Premier League title hunt as their side torpedoed Arsenal 2-0 in White Hart Lane's last north London derby yesterday. Leaders Chelsea extended their advantage to seven points by winning 3-0 at Everton earlier in the day, but Mauricio Pochettino's Spurs cut the gap back to four points with a thrilling display.

The two goals arrived within 146 seconds of each other in the second half, Alli polishing off a rebound and Kane netting a penalty to take their respective goal tallies to 17 and 21 for the campaign. Spurs will finish above Arsenal for the first time since 1995, ending 22 years of "St Totteringham's Day"—the day marked by Arsenal fans when their team can no longer be overtaken by their local rivals.

Spurs will play at Wembley next season before moving into their new stadium which is being built on the site of their current home—in August 2018. They have now won nine league games in succession and prevailed in 13 successive league matches at home within the same season for the first time. Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger's 50th north London derby ended in a fifth defeat in six away games, leaving his side six points off the Champions League slots in sixth place.

Arsenal retain a game in hand, however, and their disappointment was mitigated by the fact top-four rivals Manchester City and Manchester United both dropped points earlier in the day. Laurent Koscielny shook off a knee injury to take his place in an Arsenal back three that swiftly found itself under examination. It took the hosts less than a minute to register a shot on target, Kane working Arsenal goalkeeper Petr Cech at his near post after Alli hooked the ball on.

Toby Alderweireld headed wide from an Christian Eriksen corner and Ben Davies saw a cross deflected into the side-netting by Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain before Alli spurned a gilt-edged chance. Kane's shot from the right flicked up off Koscielny and looped towards the back post, but with the goal at his mercy-

and under pressure from Oxlade-Chamberlain-Alli nodded wide from point-blank range.

### CECH ACROBATICS

Three minutes later another chance went begging. After nutmegging Oxlade-Chamberlain, Son Heung-Min dispatched a shot that fell kindly for Eriksen, but from seven yards out and with the net gaping, his left-volley clipped the crossbar. The half ended with Cech scrambling to turn a low Jan Vertonghen effort behind, but prior to that Arsenal had threatened to land a sucker-punch. Aaron Ramsey obliged Spurs goalkeeper Hugo Lloris to palm a curling attempt wide, while Kieran Gibbs slashed over and Alexis Sanchez billowed an effort off-target.

The pattern continued in the second half, Cech saving from Victor Wanyama and Kane and Son hitting the side-netting from the corner that followed Wanyama's effort. Olivier Giroud provided a moment of alarm by volleying over at an Arsenal corner, but in the 55th minute Spurs' pressure told. After jinking into the six-yard box, Eriksen was thwarted by Cech, but Alli followed up to slide in the rebound, with Oxlade-Chamberlain completely miscuing an attempted goal-line clearance.

The Lane was rocking and three minutes later the home fans had a second goal to cherish. Kane drew a clumsy swipe from Gabriel and then wrong-footed Cech with an emphatic, drilled penalty into the bottom-left corner. Arsenal looked to respond, Giroud and Sanchez shooting tamely at Lloris, before Danny Welbeck and Hector Bellerin were pitched into the fray from the bench. But Spurs continued to look the more likely scorers and it was only because of Cech's acrobatics that they failed to run away with the game. The former Chelsea goalkeeper produced flying saves to deny Vertonghen and Alderweireld and raced out smartly to thwart Kane, who also headed into the side-netting. —AFP



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# Kuwait Times 55th Anniversary

# BUSINESS

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ALLAHABAD, India: An Indian laborer works at a brick factory near Allahabad on the eve of International Labor Day. — AFP

## GULF BANK RECORDS AN INCREASE OF 7% IN NET PROFIT IN Q1 2017

GULF BANK AWARDED AS BEST DIGITAL BANK, KUWAIT



Omar Kutayba Alghanim

**KUWAIT:** Gulf Bank KSCP announced yesterday its financial results for the first quarter of 2017. The Bank recorded a net profit of KD 9.4 million, an increase of 7 percent over the same period in 2016. Operating profit reached KD 29.9 million, 5 percent higher than Q1 of the previous year and 20 percent higher than the previous quarter. This was the Bank's highest first quarter operating profit since 2010. Total general provisions on the balance sheet stood at KD 219 million, representing nearly 40 percent of shareholders equity, a resilient cushion on top of a very healthy capital adequacy ratio of 18.4 percent, while total assets reached KD 5.6 billion.

Omar Kutayba Alghanim, Gulf Bank's Chairman said, "I am pleased to announce that the Bank started the year positively with an increase of 7 percent in our first quarter net profit compared to the same period of last year. The capital adequacy of the Bank remains strong at 18.4 percent, well above the regulatory requirement. These good results highlight the bank's progress quarter after quarter, and confirm that we are on the right track in delivering sustainable results."

During the first quarter of the 2017, Gulf Bank held its Annual General Meeting for the fiscal year 2016. During the meeting, the

shareholders approved a cash dividend of 7 fils per share, an increase of 75 percent compared with 4 fils per share in the prior year. Gulf Bank continued to be strongly recognized internationally and locally. In the first quarter of 2017, the Bank set a Guinness World Record for the 'largest prize linked to a bank account payout in the world' with its Al Danah account prize of KD 1 Million. In addition, World Finance Magazine awarded Gulf Bank with 'Best Mobile Banking Application - Kuwait' and 'Best Digital Bank - Kuwait'.

Gulf Bank received the "Best Training Plan" from the Manpower and Government Restructuring Program for its employee train-

ing programs, surpassing all other private sector companies in Kuwait. The Bank was also honored with an 'Excellence in VIP Customer Service' award at the Kuwait Public Relations and Customer Service Awards.

Alghanim concluded his remarks by saying, "I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to these good results. I appreciate the dedication of our management and staff, commitment of our Board of Directors and shareholders, and the support from the Central Bank of Kuwait. I also want to thank our customers for their support and for choosing Gulf Bank for their financial services."



## JAZEERA AIRWAYS HOLDS 15TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF SHAREHOLDERS

**KUWAIT:** Jazeera Airways shareholders yesterday approved a board recommendation to distribute a cash dividend of KD 7 million, equivalent to 35 percent of the share's nominal value, for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2016 during the company's 15th Annual General Meeting of Shareholders that was held at the company's headquarters. Jazeera Airways had registered a net profit of KD 10.8 million for 2016, an operating profit of KD 8.8 million, and an operating revenue of KD 52.8 million. Operationally, the company saw a 0.3 percent increase in passengers and earned an on-time performance of 94 percent.

Jazeera Airways Board Member Marzouq Jassim Boodai said, "I am pleased to share with our shareholders that we closed 2016, which was our sixth year of consecutive profitability, with a strong and healthy balance sheet that is cash-rich and practically debt-free. However, that is not to say 2016 was free of challenges. In the wake of a slowing macroeconomic environ-

ment and the continued oversupply of seats on our routes we saw pressure on our yields while demand remained buoyant."

"Looking forward, we believe that with the product differentiation initiatives we launched in the second half of 2016, along with our new terminal that is due to start welcoming travelers by early 2018, we will continue to strengthen our product offering and gradually help counter the market pressure on our yields." Shareholders also approved a recommendation by the Board of Directors to not pay a bonus to the board members for the fiscal year ended Dec 31, 2016.

Shareholders elected the new Board of Directors with three-year terms. The company's shareholders voted in a new board of directors for a three-year term including Chairman Marwan Marzouq Boodai, Vice Chairman Marzooq Jassim Boodai, and members of the Board Ahmad Abdalla, Hany Shawky, and Suhail Homsy.





# Nissan Patrol – A never ending story



The story of Patrol in the Gulf region dates back to the very first iteration of this legendary 4WD when the first example appeared in Kuwait. It was the start of a love affair between the desert people of the Arabian Peninsula and the Patrol that continues to this day.

But the story of Patrol itself began in 1951 when the 4W60 was introduced with a 75 hp 3.7L engine which was replaced by the 4W66 featuring the 4.0 L Nissan P-series engine making it even more useable in the desert.

In 1957 the first Nissan vehicle entered the Middle East marketplace where right after the Patrol became central to its offering given the region's undeveloped road infrastructure at this time. Instantly too, Patrol struck a chord with people in the region who were hungry for a solid, reliable, affordable mode of personal transport that would expand their horizons yet keep them close to their desert roots. The special relationship between Patrol and the desert people had begun!

In 1959 the second generation, 60-series Patrol was introduced and continued to build on the reputation that was then well established of a vehicle that was a benchmark for rugged durability.

The 60-series Patrol received various updates over the two decades it was in production with each version endearing it more and more to the ever-growing ranks of devotees in the gulf who recognised its uncommon prowess in desert terrain and its ability to cope with the region's harsh climate. The special relationship was by now firmly established between people from this region and the Patrol, as vehicles would be handed down from generation to generation, lovingly maintained and effectively treated as part of the family.

The third generation, known as MQ or 160 arrived in 1980. This was the iteration which saw the addition of features which would make Patrol more of an option for on-road motorists as well as keeping the model's off-road fans happy. Long trips across the deserts could be taken in greater comfort and the sight of families of the Gulf in fully laden Patrols with smiling children on the rear seats and luggage on the roof became commonplace.

In 1987, the fourth generation Patrol was announced, known as the Y60. This vehicle was a massive success in the Gulf as it was not only a great leap forward in terms of technical sophistication but it featured enhanced levels of comfort which appealed greatly to owners. A rear differential lock, live rear axle and rear disc brakes were among the technical upgrades and as a package the vehicle hit a sweet spot in the region with its amazing off road ability and superior levels of comfort.

In 1997 the fifth generation, Y61 Patrol appeared, bringing the vehicle into the modern age of motor-ing. Buyers in the Gulf now demanded ever great levels of both comfort and off-road performance and Nissan was more than prepared to deliver. The motor-ing community in the Gulf loved the enhanced styling, greater luxury and increased levels of technical sophistication which allowed them to take the vehicle where others simply would not dare follow. With its heavy-duty suspension, robust wheels and tough tyres the Patrol Safari was and is more than equipped for the dunes and the strong differential,

robust transmission and powerful engines have proved themselves time and again in the hands of skilled and demanding drivers.

In 2010 the sixth generation Y62 Patrol had its World Premiere in the Gulf region. A breath-taking technological *tour de force*, it instantly captured the imagination of those who crave cutting edge technology, seductive styling and levels of prestige and comfort previously unseen in this class of vehicle. If ever a vehicle was designed to make a whole new generation of drivers in the Gulf fall in love with effortless and luxurious desert and on-road driving, this was it. With a choice of 275 hp in a 4.0L V6 engine or up to 400hp in a 5.6L V8 engine, mated to a 7-speed automatic transmission with manual mode or a 6-speed manual, desert driving has never been so much fun and cross country trips have never been completed with such ease or in such a pleasant environment. Since its intro-

duction, the Y62 broke two Guinness records, one by pulling 3 Ton Cargo Plane in 2013, and one by ascending 100m sand dune in 4.9 secs in 2015.

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Equally, for those who seek style and performance on the tarmac, Patrol has been given the full NISMO treatment. The NISMO variant ups the engine output to 428hp thanks to the famed Takumi engineers, who also increase the unit's torque to over 70% of the rev range. Bilstein shock absorbers give improved handling and ride comfort and added styling features include 22" forged alloy wheels, a Zero-Lift aerodynamic body kit.

Patrol was clearly a winner right from the start of its introduction into the Gulf region and it was therefore inevitable that the motorsport community would adopt it as one of their own and use it for competition purposes. And what success it has had in the hands of the region's rally drivers. Indeed, it is fair to say that Patrol dominates the off-road motorsport scene in the Gulf region like no other vehicle, demonstrating a winning combination of blinding speed, supreme reliability and colossal levels of endurance in the recent

stay. The GCC and Nissan Patrol are synonymous with each other, inseparable and always looking to the future together, developing, improving and making life better for everyone.

Samir Cherfan, Managing Director of Nissan Middle East: "Since we came to the region, Nissan has been building a strong and mature automotive brand, well known for exceptional quality, performance, innovation and reliability. The Patrol is a highly valuable, credible and desirable car in the Gulf region and we are honoured to bring the brand here where it is most appreciated by the desert riders. There's a never-ending love story between owners from the Gulf region and the Patrol brand, and the best love stories tend to run and run. That's how we see the future for Patrol in the GCC."

Indeed such is the affection in which Patrol is held by the people of the Gulf that they have been known



to express their feelings for this incomparable vehicle in poetry, an art form for which the desert people have long been famed. But their affection is by no means illogical, and in poetry they find ways to praise the very features and functionality which have endeared the machine to them and which have allowed Patrol to contribute so greatly to their quality of life. The Patrol as family heirloom is a reality for many families from this region and that is why so many examples from previous decades remain on the roads, lovingly maintained to this day. As a story of a remarkable people and a very special automobile, the continuing narrative of the people of the Gulf and their beloved Patrol is as inspiring as it is unique.

So, continuing to conquer the motorsports podium, being a hit with consumers who value both its power and prestige in urban environments and its unmatched prowess in the desert, what lies ahead for Patrol in the region? It is clear that Patrol is here to

Nissan Jeddah Rally, for example, drivers in Nissan cars dominated the list of winners in various categories; Nissan Patrol took the first and third spots in the T1-category, and all top three spots in the T2-category. Furthermore, the Qatari Rally Champ Adel Hussein Abdulla was crowned the FIA 2016 T2 World championship with Nissan's rugged Patrol on top of the championship for the second successive year, after Denis Berezovskiy's victory in 2015.

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'TONTINE' MICROCREDIT HELPS SENEGAL WOMEN DO BUSINESS

TONTINE HELPS BORROWERS AVOID HIGH INTEREST RATES

GRAND-MBAO, Senegal: After months of waiting, 50-year-old Ndeye Khari Pouye has finally won the "cagnotte de la tontine", a precious jackpot to help feed her chickens and maintain her livelihood.

organized among locals in the Medina area of Grand-Mbao, a neighborhood on the tip of Africa's west coast on the outskirts of the capital Dakar.

A common practice throughout Africa, many Senegalese take part in centuries-old microcredit schemes called "tontines" to finance their projects. The name comes from Lorenzo de Tonti, an Italian exiled in France in the 17th century seeking solutions to shore up the French treasury.

arrangement, participants contribute sums of money and take turns collecting the prize. The system helps borrowers overcome difficulties accessing credit as well as avoid prohibitively high interest rates.

"The tontine is the only way for me to save money. Interest rates from the bank are too high," says Ndeye Binta Ndoeye, who takes part in four different tontine schemes, including one run by "Aunt Fatou" in another part of Grand-Mbao.

don't understand. It's too complicated for someone like me who can't read," adds the hairdresser, who did not go to school. A family atmosphere reigns as different generations mix at the gathering.

new projects but also to keep struggling businesses afloat, like a poultry venture run by Mame Ngone Cisse. "At the beginning of my project I had huge losses.

But thanks to money from the tontine, I was able to restart my business. Thanks to God it's going well," she says. The tontines are led by a committee of five to eight people who can read and write, while many of the participants are illiterate.

'Women are more ambitious'

"Each member contributes 2,000 CFA francs (around 3 euros). That makes a total jackpot of 500,000 CFA francs (around 760 euros) which is given to the day's winner," explains "Aunt Fatou", whose real name is Fatou Cisse. She manages the tontine, which counts 250 members and lasts for five years.

"I am the first wife in a polygamous household. My husband started building the house but had financial difficulties. He asked us-my co-wife and me-to finish the work, she says. "Thanks to the tontine, I was able to build three bedrooms and a living room. I am waiting to win another jackpot to build the rest. If this system of tontines did not exist, I would have to seek credit from a bank."

Fines, social pressure

The tontine serves not only to launch

Mane Niang, whose education ended with middle school and has no formal accounting training, has the critical task of counting and recounting the cash in the tontine in the Medina area of Grand-Mbao. "I almost never make a mistake in counting the money. There are two of us to do it. I call out someone's name and she comes and drops her money in the bowl. Then we calculate the total. We always double-check with a calculator," she says. Specific measures are taken to instill confidence and ensure transparency.

Whoever holds the pot of money does not live with the person who has the key to it, for example. There is also a system of fines and symbolic punishment to encourage members to contribute regularly. "Anyone accused of being late pays a fine of 200 CFA francs (less than a euro). If they continue to be late, the person gets pushed down the list of future winners. Sometimes we won't even grant the loan until the person's contributions get back on track," says Niang.

But social pressure remains the leading sanction for anyone failing to meet the commitments. "Culturally speaking, dignity and our image in society count for a lot to us women," says Awa Cisse, who takes part in Aunt Fatou's tontine. "We wouldn't dare burn up the money from the tontines without contributing: you'd get an earful-even your grandkids will still be hearing about it!"—AFP



SENEGAL: Binta Ndoeye sits on a mat in a home in Grand-Mbao, as she counts the money for a 'cagnotte de la tontine' scheme, as members look on.—AFP

SWISS SPY IN GERMANY ARRESTED FOR WATCHING TAX INVESTIGATORS

BERLIN: A suspected Swiss spy arrested in Germany was allegedly surveilling finance investigators involved in the purchase of data CDs on tax cheats in Switzerland, a newspaper reported yesterday. German prosecutors said Friday police had arrested a Swiss man they identified only as Daniel M, 54, who was suspected of espionage activities since early 2012.

information with several Swiss and Liechtenstein banks. Daniel M was thought to have worked for the Swiss intelligence service NDB in the German finance and banking sector, the report said.

German tax investigators started a major crackdown in 2010 when they got their hands on data CDs with lists of bank account holders in foreign tax havens. Many of Germany's rich, powerful and famous have as a result had to issue public apologies for stashing away their wealth abroad.

Now Die Welt daily has reported that the man's alleged mission was to identify German tax investigators involved in the purchase of "tax cheat" CDs, which have upset German-Swiss relations in the past. Several German states have since 2006 paid millions to unknown sources for the CDs,

The threat of dawn raids compelled thousands of other German tax cheats to come forward and report their accounts abroad, and pay back taxes on the interest earned plus a fine.—AFP

CHINA SAYS FACTORY ACTIVITY EXPANDS AT SLOWER PACE

BEIJING: China's factory activity continued to expand in April, albeit at a slower-than-expected pace, official data showed yesterday, adding to signs of stabilization in the world's second largest economy. The purchasing manager's index (PMI), which gauges conditions at factories and mines, stood at 51.2 in April, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) said, down from a near five-year high of 51.8 in March.

"The still-high output and new orders sub-indices suggest growth momentum likely remained resilient in April, albeit slower than in a strong March," Zhao Yang of Nomura said in a note. "Looking ahead, we see downside pressures looming and maintain our call for a shallow slowdown through the course of this year." Betty Wang of ANZ Research wrote in a note that the April data "suggests that China's manufacturing activity might have retreated from its peak" in the first quarter.

An acceleration in China's GDP growth in the first three months of 2017 as well as a rebound in retail spending and robust trade data have eased concerns about the strength of the Asian giant's economy following last year's slowdown. Beijing has said it wants to reorient the economy away from relying on debt-fuelled investment and towards a consumer-driven model, but the transition has proven challenging, leading to slower growth readings in recent years.—AFP

Daily Kuwait Stock Exchange Report. Sunday 30 April 2017. Includes tables for Index, Trades, and various stock categories like Oil & Gas, Basic Materials, Industrials, Consumer Goods, Health Care, Technology, Financial Services, and Investment Instruments.



## ABK REPORTS FIRST QUARTER NET PROFIT OF KD 8.5M

**KUWAIT:** Highlighting its positive performance in the first quarter of 2017, Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait yesterday announced a net profit of KD 8.5 million for the first quarter ended 31st March 2017, representing a 10 percent growth as compared to KD 7.8 million in the previous year. Operating profits also grew by 7.3 percent to KD 23.7 million compared to KD 22.1 million in the first quarter of 2016. Total assets and the loans portfolio remained stable at KD 4.3 billion and KD 3.05 billion levels. Shareholders' equity stood at KD 549.5 million and Earnings per Share at 5 fils. Capital adequacy ratio was robust at 17.06 percent.

Chairman of Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait, Talal Mohammed Reza Behbehani said, "We have made good progress since the beginning of this year and the positive results are an indication of our steady and confident management approach. The external



**Talal Mohammed Reza Behbehani**



**Michel Accad**

environment may get more challenging however; we will continue to strengthen the position of the Bank among our peers, operate more efficiently

across divisions and invest in our future. We are optimistic about this forthcoming year and we will be in a strong position to capture significant underlying opportunities as they arise."

Michel Accad, Chief Executive Officer, said, "We have made a very solid start to the year and marked two major milestones for ABK during the first quarter. The first is the launch of our core banking system where we have developed a powerful infrastructure framework and entirely transformed our existing IT infrastructure and operating systems. This has already been successfully deployed across our UAE operations and Kuwait is scheduled for completion later this year.

The second is the successful debut issue from our recently established US\$1.5 billion Euro Medium-Term Note (EMTN) program. Not only is it the first

bond issue for the Bank but we are also the first Kuwaiti issuer to launch a bond following Kuwait's recent successful debut sovereign bond. This ABK bond will serve as a benchmark for future Kuwaiti and GCC issuers.

"More importantly, by pursuing our Simpler Banking strategy, which remains at the heart of all we do, we will continue to capture strategic opportunities in our markets that will serve the Bank's operational growth." ABK was recently awarded the 'Best Retail Bank in Kuwait' for 2017 from the Asian Banker, for the second consecutive year and 'Best Retail Bank' from The European, a Thomson Reuters affiliate. These awards underpin the Bank's diligence and commitment to better serving the needs of its clients and delivering long-term sustainable value to all of its stakeholders.

## OMAN MINISTRY OF TOURISM SIGNS DEAL TO DEVELOP AL-NAKHEEL ITC

**KUWAIT:** ALARGAN TOWELL, the Omani Associate of ALARGAN International Real Estate Company, has signed an agreement with the Ministry of Tourism of Oman to develop the Al-Nakheel Integrated Tourism Complex project in the Barka area, as the primary investor of the project. The signing was attended by HE Ahmed bin Nasser bin Hamad al Mehrzi, Minister of Tourism, Mr Hussain Jawad, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Palm's Beach Company and ALARGAN TOWELL Investment Company, and Engineer Khaled Al-Mashaan, CEO and Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors of ALARGAN International Real Estate Company.

Once completed, the Al-Nakheel project will be categorized under the Integrated Tourism Complex (ITC) in Oman. The project will cover a total area of 500,000 square meters in the Al-Rumais coastal area in the Wilayat of Barka, in the Al Batinah governorate. Valued at OMR256 million, the project will comprise hotels and hotel apartments with a capacity of 670 rooms, 1,436 residential apartments and villas that will be available for sale for citizens and residents, in addition to a shopping mall, traditional souk, a school, restaurants, a water garden, the artificial Crystal Lagoon, a promenade covering an area of 51,000 square meters and other entertainment and service facilities.

HE Ahmed bin Nasser Al-Mehrzi, said, "Today we have signed yet another agreement, this time to develop the Al-Nakheel project in the Wilayat of Barka; which is directly in line with our objective of having the private sector play a greater role in the implementation of the Sultanate's tourism strategy of 2040. The project will add significant value to the Wilayat of Barka as a tourism destination; one that

already attracts a number of tourists from the capital Muscat. At the same time the development is directly linked to the Al-Batinah Coastal Road, which is easily accessible to travelers from any of the other governorates."

Al-Nakheel project has received numerous recognitions as a mixed-use project for its innovative design and outstanding location, and aims to strengthen the infrastructure of the tourism sector, increase the numbers of hotel rooms, create employment opportunities for Omanis, add value to the society, and support the development of the tourism sector in the Sultanate in line with the country's tourism strategy for 2040. The project will be developed in three phases, and is scheduled to begin in 2018.

On his behalf, Engineer Khaled Al-Mashaan said: "The Sultanate is rapidly becoming known for great opportunities for investors, especially in the tourism sector; which we expect will be one of the most prominent economic sectors for the country over the coming years. ALARGAN International was one of the first investors in the Omani real estate sector and we've had many success stories across the various governorates of the Sultanate.

Today, we are to the brink of achieving yet another success story in the real estate development sector with Al-Nakheel, a project that will be made affordable for both citizens and residents alike. We are confident that the Al-Nakheel project will be one of the most prominent tourism and real estate projects in the region, attracting those looking for suitable high-quality homes in the area in addition to a valuable development to Wilayat of Barka, its surrounding areas, and the nearby capital city of Muscat."



**GREENCASLE, Ireland:** In this photograph oysters are displayed as an oyster farmer works at Culmore Point on Lough Foyle, at the border between Londonderry in Northern Ireland and Donegal in the Republic of Ireland. — AFP

## BREXIT OFFERS HOPE FOR IRISH OYSTER FARMERS

### UNAUTHORIZED CULTIVATION THREATENS EXPORT INDUSTRY

**GREENCASLE, Ireland:** For many on the oyster-rich shores of the River Foyle estuary on the northern tip of Ireland, Britain's departure from the European Union cannot come soon enough. The hope is that Brexit will solve a decades-old sovereignty dispute over the waterway between British-ruled Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. The stand-off has led to a boom in the unauthorized cultivation of oysters on Lough Foyle, which licensed Irish oyster farmers say threatens their lucrative export industry.

"After almost 100 years of failing to deal with the issue, Brexit will now force the two sides to settle the issue once and for all," said Seamus Bovaird, a former manager of the Lough Foyle Fishermen's Co-Op. When Ireland was partitioned in 1921 the main focus was on establishing peace after a bruising war of independence that led to the creation of two states on the island. Whether by accident or willful neglect, the British government and the newly-created Irish Free State left the ownership of Lough Foyle out of the terms of the negotiated settlement.

#### A marine gold rush

Elsewhere along the open border between Ireland and Northern Ireland, residents and businesses are concerned that new customs

checks will be imposed once Britain is out of the EU. But on Lough Foyle, Brexit spells greater legal certainty, according to Enda Craig, a member of the Loughs Agency, a cross-border body that supervises the waters but has no powers over aquaculture.

"When Brexit comes in it will force the hand of the Irish government because...the EU will have to ask it where its borders lie and then regulation can be enforced," Craig said. Four years ago there were 2,000 oyster beds, now the Loughs Agency estimates there are around 30,000. Only a small fraction has official licenses. With few employment prospects in the area, many have seized the opportunity created by the territorial spat. These oyster farmers consider themselves unlicensed rather than illegal but they still shy away from publicity and have consistently refused interviews.

Craig compared the proliferation to the Klondike gold boom in Canada at the end of the 19th century. "This is the Irish equivalent of the Klondike—a marine gold rush with no enforcement, no guaranteed health and safety supervision or environmental controls," he said. Lough Foyle has strategic status too, providing access for the busy port of Derry in Northern Ireland. Once Britain leaves the bloc, this could mean British shipping having to use EU waters.

#### A no-man's land

The majority of the oysters are believed to be exported to France—by far the biggest market for the lucrative shellfish. This is a grey area as oysters farmed by unlicensed operators risk being mixed with legitimate ones once they are in the hands of intermediaries. In December last year, then Northern Ireland Fisheries Minister Michelle McIlveen warned that authorities were powerless to act.

The increase in unregulated oyster trestles "is causing a navigation issue... and a general health and safety hazard," she said. Bovaird said squabbling over jurisdiction could have serious consequences for Ireland's 58-million euro (\$61.5-million) licensed oyster export market. "This is a no-man's land and it has the potential to destroy the Irish oyster industry," he said.

"As sure as night follows day someone on the continent will be hospitalized from food poisoning and it will blacken the reputation of Irish oysters in general," he said. Richie Flynn, aquaculture executive at the Irish Shellfish Association, worries the lack of traceability "could cause untold reputational damage to our members." "You are dealing with a sensitive product that looks and tastes perfect but you don't feel very perfect if you consume something that's not been looked after properly." —AFP



## BURGAN BANK ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF YAWMI DRAW

**KUWAIT:** Burgan Bank, the second largest in terms of assets, announced today the names of the daily draw winners of its Yawmi account draw, each taking home a cash-prize of KD 5,000. The lucky winners are: Abdulrahman Essa Al-Matrouk, Nawal Mohammad Al-Sabah, Hanaa Abdullateef Saif and Ahmad Abdullah Al-Faylakawi

In addition to the daily draw, Burgan Bank also offers a quarterly draw with more chances to win higher rewards, offering the chance to one lucky customer to win KD 125,000 every three months. The Yawmi account offers daily and quarterly draws, wherein the quar-

terly draw requires customers to maintain a minimum amount of KD 500 in their account for two months prior to the draw date.

Additionally, every KD 10 in the account will entitle customers to one chance of winning. If the account balance is KD 500 and above, the account holder will be qualified for both quarterly and daily draws. Burgan Bank encourages everyone to open a Yawmi account and/or increase their deposit to maximize their chances of becoming a winner. The higher the level of the deposit, the higher is the likelihood to win.

**مبروك اليوم يومك! Congratulations today is your day!**

**5000 KD**

The winners for this week:

- Sunday 23/4/2017: Abdulrahman Essa Al Matrouk
- Monday 24/4/2017: St. Nawal Mohammad Al Sabah
- Tuesday 25/4/2017: Hanaa Abdullateef Saif
- Wednesday 26/4/2017: Ahmad Abdullah Al Faylakawi

بنك بروغان BURGAN BANK  
أنت دافعين driven by you 40



## CHEVROLET ALGHANIM REVEALS THE GS Z25; LAUNCHES CORVETTE BOOK

**KUWAIT:** In the seasonal gathering of the Kuwait Corvette Club, Chevrolet Alghanim revealed the all-new 2017 Corvette Grand Sport Collector's Edition, the GS Z25, showing Corvette owners and sports cars enthusiasts the pure expression of motorsports and its unique features that are replicated in only 1000 produced in the world, with only 30 made available for the Middle East

Ensuring a spectacular and unforgettable event as well as supporting sports cars enthusiasts, Chevrolet Alghanim sponsored the gathering, which was as well the platform to launch the first ever Corvette book in the Arabic language, illustrating the famed brand's history and flagship cars that remain among the most sought after vehicles in the world. Chevrolet Alghanim also awarded members for their active participation in the Club, cultivating a strong bond between members and their passion for Corvettes.



## US EMBASSY RECRUITING DELEGATION TO SELECTUSA INVESTMENT SUMMIT

The US Embassy is leading a delegation from Kuwait to the SelectUSA Investment Summit June 18 to 20 in Washington, DC. The Summit is a high profile event that connects international companies and US economic development organizations (EDOs) facilitating business investment in the United States. "We are entering a new period of economic revival in the United States," said US Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross. "This is an

exciting time for global companies to explore the US market and find partners that can help them create a footprint, expand operations, and achieve growth. There is no better place to make those connections than this Summit."

The three day event will include dozens of seminar sessions on different aspects of investment, an exhibition hall full of economic development organizations and service providers that support investors, and

an online matchmaking tool to facilitate new business connections. There will also be ample opportunity for networking. "There is no other place where you can gather so much information, in such a short amount of time, about investing in the United States," said US Ambassador to Kuwait Lawrence R Silverman.

"The Summit is a great place to develop the contacts and knowledge needed to identify potential opportunities and build successful invest-

ment strategies for the United States." With over three trillion dollars of investment, the United States is the largest recipient of foreign direct investment (FDI) in the world. Foreign companies are attracted to the United States due to its large consumer market; a stable, transparent, and fair business environment; strong intellectual property rights; and its educated workforce. The United States is a global leader in innovation and research and

development. The US Embassy's Commercial Section here in Kuwait can help you explore and understand the US business environment. Our team provides expert guidance for those looking to invest in the United States. For example, before investing, it is important to understand American business culture, which can be very different than that in Kuwait. It is also important to remember that the United States is a large and diverse country.

Each state has unique policies, including different laws, taxes, and incentives for investors. Identifying and working with experts in the field can help you decide where to invest and to understand the legal and tax implications of different locations. If you are considering investing in the United States, the US Embassy Commercial Section is a great place to start and the SelectUSA Summit offers an unparalleled opportunity to learn more.



## 'PIXEL' BY HIROTO YOSHIZOE WINS THE LEXUS DESIGN AWARD 2017

Lexus International has recently announced the Grand Prix winner of the Lexus Design Award 2017 PIXEL by Hiroto Yoshizoe, leading this prestigious international event to a peak of excitement. Lexus Design Award 2017 drew 1,152 entries from 63 countries under the theme of "Yet." The Lexus Design Award always presents a fascinating survey of the issues currently engaging young designers, and what they consider to be the most important challenges and compelling opportunities for design today.

"The quality and scale of ambition of the submissions to this year's award program was truly exceptional. It was very difficult for us to whittle them all down to 12 finalists, then four prototype winners and finally to the Grand Prix winner, although every stage of the process generated a feisty and enjoyable debate," said Alice Rawsthorn, well-known design commentator and Lexus Design Award 2017 Judge.

Congratulating Hiroto Yoshizoe on his winning project, Takayuki Yoshitsugu, Chief Representative, Middle East and North Africa Representative Office, Toyota Motor

Corporation, said, "The Lexus Design Award was created with the aim of fostering the growth of ideas that contribute to society by supporting designers and creators whose works can help to shape a better future. This year's winner - Hiroto Yoshizoe's PIXEL - is a work of tremendous imagination and creativity that captures the essence of what the Lexus Design Award stands for."

Yoshitsugu continued, "Design and craftsmanship have always been a fundamental part of the Lexus brand, and the Lexus Design Award attempts to extend this tradition to an exciting new direction. I would like to acknowledge the support we have received from our customers in the Middle East for our efforts towards shaping the future of design and using the power of creativity to build a better world."

Hiroto Yoshizoe commented, "I'm so surprised and honored to receive this prize from Lexus Design Award. I would like to thank Alex and Daniel of Snarkitecture for all their mentorship. I also offer my sincere thanks to all the people who have supported me on this project, and of course to Lexus for giving me this amazing

opportunity." First launched in 2013 to stimulate ideas for a better tomorrow, Lexus is celebrating the 5th anniversary of this international design competition which supports up-and-coming designers and creators worldwide. The Grand Prix winner was chosen by an elite global creative design panel after presentations by the four prototype finalists. The works of all 12 finalists were on display at the Lexus 'Yet' pavilion and revealed how they would apply the 'Yet' philosophy in original and innovative ways.

Lexus 'Yet' took place from April 4th through April 9th at the La Triennale di Milano, the Design and Art Museum in Parco Sempione, Milan, central to Milan Design Week, the World's largest design exhibition, also known as Salone Del Mobile. In addition to the Lexus Design Award 2017 display, the Lexus 'Yet' exhibition was composed of the three following areas where visitors experienced the exciting and infinite potential of 'Yet' through immersive and engaging installations.

## AL-TIJARI ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF AL-NAJMA ACCOUNT DRAW

KUWAIT: Commercial Bank of Kuwait held the Al Najma Account daily draw yesterday. The draw was held under the supervision of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry represented by Abdulaziz Al Ashkanani. The winners of the Al Najma Daily Draw are: Montaha Hussain Al Mehrej, Mahroos Yousef Othman Mohammed, Hazem Saleem Mohammad Abdulkareem, Bimla Sethi and Kanwar Jit Sethi.

With the revamped Al Najma account, all your dreams will be turned to reality. On top of offering the highest daily prize in Kuwait for KD 7,000, now our mega prize

draws got bigger to reach KD 250,000. Quarterly draws to win great prizes that will start from KD 100,000 to KD 250,000.

With Al Najma you have more chances to win greater prizes. Each KD 25 kept in your account gives you one chance to win. Each KD 25 kept in your account for one week will give you a chance to enter the daily draw. Each KD 25 kept in your account for 3 months will give you chance to enter the quarterly draw. Additional features: ATM card, issue a credit card against your account and obtain all CBK banking services.

## CHEVROLET ALGHANIM SIGNS NEW DEAL WITH AUTOMAK

KUWAIT: Yusuf A Alghanim and Sons Automotive (Chevrolet Alghanim), the exclusive distributor of Chevrolet vehicles in Kuwait, yesterday announced a new partnership with Automak Automotive Company, one of the few major players in the vehicles rental and leasing business in Kuwait, in which Chevrolet Alghanim provides Automak with the new 2017 Suburban vehicles that will be offered for lease.

Available at competitive prices, customers are provided with flexible leasing plans to take advantage of the latest models of the popular suburban which is considered one of the best performing cars in technology and safety features, positioning itself as the ideal car for large families and heavy duty use. The new partnership comes in line with Chevrolet Alghanim's commitment to providing its customers and drivers in generable with a range of services and alternatives and in specific in the growing individual and fleet leasing business.

The new Suburban is now available for lease provides customers with the great performance through its 5.3L Eco Tec3 V8 engine with active fuel management, 355HP@ 5600 rpm, and 383 lb-ft @4100 rpm, a six-speed auto transmitter, six air

bags to ensure safety at all times, climate control thanks to the Trizone automatic, the Chevrolet MyLink Radio, AM/FM stereo with CD player which includes three USB ports and an auxiliary jack, six speakers, a driver information centre color display, the latest remote keyless entry and remote vehicle starter, LED head and tail lamps projectors, as well as fog lamps, front and rear park assist as well as the Rear View Camera and 18" aluminum wheels.

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



## AHLI UNITED BANK ANNOUNCES AL-HASSAD ISLAMIC DRAW WINNERS

KUWAIT: Ahli United Bank recently conducted its Al-Hassad Islamic account weekly draw, Kuwait's leading Shari'ah compliant rewards program that offers a broad range of prizes to the largest number of winners, on the 26th April. The account provides 26 weekly prizes that are comprised of KD 25,000 as a grand prize and 25 other prizes valued at KD 1,000 each.

AUB also offers four quarterly prizes that are valued at KD 250,000 to each winner allowing them to achieve their dreams of travelling, studying abroad, or owning their dream home or car. On this occasion Ahli United Bank announced, "With this draw, we are adding 26 new winners and prizes to the Al-Hassad Islamic account whereby, the total number of winners annually will include more than 1300.

The weekly grand prize winner of KD 25,000 is Soubhi Mohd Alhadi. 25 other winners won prizes of KD 1,000 and are as follows: Hayat Yousef Hasan Al-Yousef, Lafi S M Al-Mutairi, Baqer Al-Husaini, Tarek Ali Medhat, Khalifa Hamad Jassim Al-Dabous, Zakaia Mahmoud Husain Gholom Taqi, Khaled Ali Mohammad Al-Otaibi, Fatemah Abbas Reda Mourad, MUSAED FARAJ KHAMEES AL-SAEED, HUDA MOHAMMAD OMAR.

Mansourah Jawad Mohd, Muna Al-Matroud, Nawaf Sulaman Dawoud, Sawan Abualhasan Mohamed, Khalid



Adam Isa, Mohamed Wael Mohamed, Fatima Sayed Fakhruddin, Salwa Latif Shukr, Kalthoum Mohamed Ameen, Mudhaffar Jameel Haider, A Shaheed Hussain Ahmed, Fadhel Abdulla Ali, Ali Habib Ahmed, Ali Mohammed Redha, Basemah A Ali Hameed.

Ahli United Bank added, "There are increased opportunities that await our current customers and those who are interested in opening an Al-Hassad Islamic account to benefit from the wide range of prizes and opportunities offered this year." Individual customers can open their accounts with a minimum deposit of KD 100, qualifying them to enter the draw.

For every KD 50 deposited in the account, customers are given one chance to enter the quarterly draw. They must have held the minimum deposit requirement for at least two weeks prior to the draw date. The more deposits made, the higher the chances of winning on a weekly basis Al-Hassad Islamic account's customers in Kuwait and Bahrain are eligible to participate in the draw in line with the program's terms and conditions

## SURGE IN EXPORTS MAKES FORD MUSTANG BEST-SELLING SPORTS CAR ON THE PLANET

KUWAIT CITY: Ford Mustang has been the best-selling sports car in the United States over the last 50 years, and now, thanks to growth in international markets, the iconic pony car is the most popular sports car in the world, according to Ford analysis of IHS Markit new vehicle registration data in the sports car segment. Mustang expanded its sales lead in 2016 as the world's best-selling sports car with more than 150,000 Mustangs sold, according to IHS Markit new vehicle registration data.

Overall global sales increased six percent over 2015, fuelled by international market growth up 101 percent with almost 45,000 Mustang vehicles sold outside the United States. Mustang's ascension to best-selling sports car in the world in 2016 was driven largely by continued global rollout that saw big sales gains in Germany and China,

as well as the car's introduction to smaller nations such as New Caledonia, Gibraltar and Bonaire. Since launching in China in 2015, Mustang has become the best-selling sports car in the world's biggest auto market.

Sales in 2016 were up 74 percent over 2015, according to IHS Markit new vehicle registrations. "The legacy of Mustang continues

to grow, and in places it never reached before," said Mark Schaller, Ford Mustang marketing manager. "We continue to make it available in new markets, and drivers in those markets continue to respond with resounding approval." For decades many global Mustang enthusiasts went to great lengths to get their hands on Ford's fast, fun and affordable sports car.

Recognizing this passion, Ford decided that in 2015 it would take its iconic Mustang to markets across the world. Ford's data shows more than 395,000 sixth-generation Mustangs have been produced at Flat Rock Assembly Plant since 2015 and of that, 98,000 have been shipped to customers outside of the United States. From 2015 to 2016, Ford doubled the percentage of exports to 17.5 percent and the company expects export growth to continue, reaching 30 percent for the 2017 Mustang. Mustang - with more than 8.4 million likes - is the most-liked vehicle on Facebook. It is now available in 140 countries across all continents other than Antarctica. This year, availability of the 2018 Mustang will expand to six new countries, including Brazil, the Palau Islands and the Ivory Coast, with three additional markets announced later.



## QATAR AIRWAYS LAUNCHES GLOBAL SALES CAMPAIGN

KUWAIT: Qatar Airways invites passengers to start planning their next trip with amazing discounts on flights across all cabin classes. With the airline's Global Sales Campaign, which starts 26 April and lasts through 4 May, families, friends and couples can book flights to any destination across the airline's award-winning network of more than 150 destinations across the globe, with validity to travel until 21 June 2017. Travelers can now easily decide where to go next with fantastic fares to Bangkok (starting from 104 KD), London (starting from 138 KD), Kuala Lumpur (starting from 147 KD) and New York (starting from 220 KD).

To take advantage of these offers, travelers should visit qatarairways.com or their preferred travel agent. Qatar Airways Chief Commercial

Officer Ehab Amin said: "We are delighted to be able to offer our passengers such a wide variety of choice in choosing a destination. With this new promotion, passengers can easily choose where to go next with amazing offers across all of our cabin classes. Travelers are truly spoilt for choice with Qatar Airways' extended network of more than 150 destinations."

Recently the airline revealed its latest premium class product "Qsuite," a fully transformable suite of seats that allows parties of two, three or four to create their own unique space within the Business Class cabin.

This game-changing patented design is set to transform the face of aviation and Business Class travel by bringing a First Class product to the Business Class cabin. Qsuite also features the

first ever double bed in Business Class, another ground-breaking innovation brought to passengers by Qatar Airways.

The airline was named the World's Best Business Class by Skytrax in 2016, and its home hub, Hamad International Airport, was also recently given five stars at the Skytrax World Airport Awards, as well as being named the World's Sixth Best Airport.

Qatar Airways is one of the world's fastest growing airlines, with a network of more than 150 destinations. The airline will add a number of exciting new destinations to its growing network in 2017, including Chiang Mai, Yanbu, Dublin, Nice, Skopje and many more, flying passengers on board its modern fleet of 195 aircraft.



This photo shows Kaspersky experts with media delegations.

# KASPERSKY LAB PRESENTS CYBERSECURITY TRENDS

By Islam Al-Sharaa

VIENNA, Austria: Kaspersky Lab brought together company experts, journalists and business guests from the Middle East, Turkey and Africa for its annual Cyber Security Weekend that took place on April 26-29 in Vienna. The company's experts gave an overview of global and regional cyber threats and security trends, discussed the main threat vectors affecting businesses in the region, particularly organizations from industrial and financial sectors. Special attention was paid to protection of connected devices used by individuals, businesses and governments as part of smart cities.

"In the first quarter of 2017 we saw threat actors turning their attention to wipers, as well as financial crime. Fileless malware has been used in attacks by both targeted threat actors and cyber criminals in general - helping them to avoid detection and make forensic investigations harder. At the event we gave an example of the 'invisible' attacks used in the ATMitch campaign, which once again proves the importance of proper security solutions, security intelligence and carefully directed incident response," said Ghareeb Saad, Senior Security Researcher, Global Research and Analysis Team, Kaspersky Lab.

At the event Kaspersky Lab also announced the renewed Kaspersky Anti Targeted Attack Platform, a solution to detect advanced threats and targeted attacks for enterprises. It blends advanced machine learning algorithms, actionable worldwide threat intelligence and adaptively to customer infrastructure, to help large businesses uncover the most sophisticated and damaging attacks at any stage of their development.

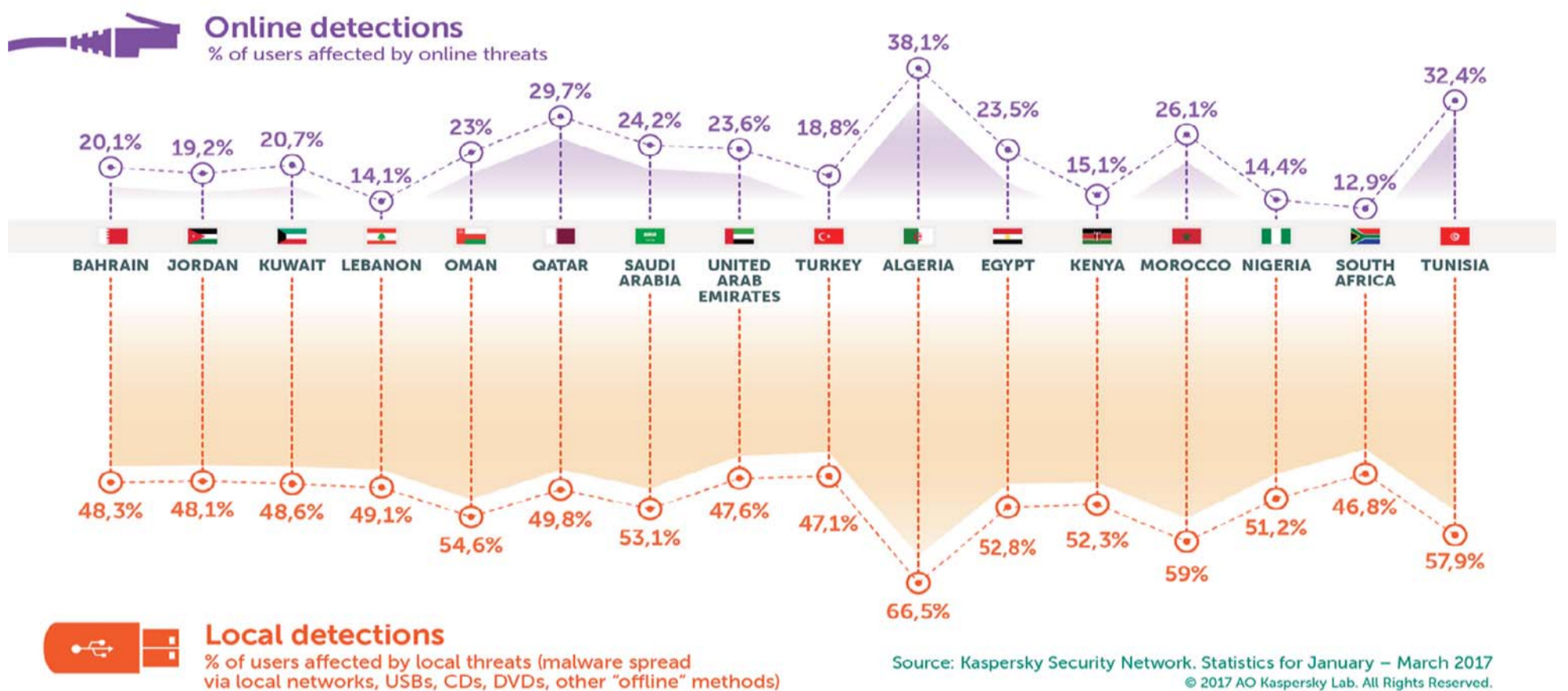
Kaspersky Security Network (KSN) statistics for the first quarter of 2017 were revealed at the conference showing that Algeria had the highest number of users (66.5 percent) affected by local threats (malware spread in local networks, by USBs, CDs, DVDs), followed by Morocco (59 percent), Tunisia (57.9 percent), and Egypt (52.8 percent). In the Middle East, users in Oman (54.6 percent) were the worst affected, followed by those in Saudi Arabia (53.1 percent) and Qatar (49.8 percent).

In January-March 2017, the highest numbers of web threat incidents were reported in the same countries in Africa - Algeria (38.1 percent of KSN users), Tunisia (32.4 percent) and Morocco (26.1 percent), followed by Egypt (23.5 percent). In the Middle East the countries experiencing most threats were Qatar (29.7 percent), Saudi Arabia (24.2 percent), and the UAE (23.6 percent). South Africa had some of the lowest numbers of affected users in the META region (46.8 percent for local and 12.9 percent for web threats). In Turkey 18.8 percent of KSN users were affected by web threats and 47.1 percent by incidents related to local threats.

The number of ransomware notifications in the region increased 36 percent compared to the first quarter of last year, and according to Kaspersky Lab experts will continue to grow due to the increased availability in the cyber-criminal ecosystem of ransomware as a service. Kaspersky Security Network registered over two times more banking Trojans (121 percent increase) than it did in the same period of 2016, while the amount of mobile infection

## Cybersecurity threats

In the countries of the Middle East, Africa and Turkey



attempts stopped by Kaspersky Lab's products increased 1.5 times.

Shehab Najjar, Head of Cyber Counter Terrorism Unit, CYBERPOL, who was a special guest at the event and gave a keynote presentation, commented: "Legislation on cyber-crime is still being developed globally and in META. At the same time, with the advance of information technologies there appear more threat vectors both for home users and organizations. For that reason, raising cybersecurity awareness by giving overviews and advice, such as that given at Kaspersky Cyber Security Weekend, plays an important part in securing the Internet."

### Experts reconstruct ATMitch case

One day bank employees discovered an empty ATM: There was no money, no traces of physical interaction with the machine, and no malware. After Kaspersky Lab experts spent time unwinding this mysterious case, they were able to not only understand the cyber-criminal tools used in the robbery, but also reproduce the attack themselves, discovering a security breach at the bank.

In February 2017 Kaspersky Lab published the investigation into mysterious fileless attacks against banks: Criminals were using in-memory malware to infect banking networks. But why were they doing this? The ATMitch case has given us the whole picture.

"Kaspersky Lab has registered that attacks hit more than 140 enterprise networks in a

range of business sectors. In total, infections have been registered in 40 countries, including in the META region: In Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Libya, Pakistan, Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt, Kenya, Uganda, Congo, Tanzania. ATMitch cases were reported in just two countries up to now, but the attackers might still be active.

We advise organizations to check their systems, keeping in mind that detection of such an attack is possible only in RAM, the network and registry - and that, in such instances, the use of Yara rules based on a scan of malicious files are of no use. To prevent such attacks comprehensive security software is advised. Kaspersky Lab products successfully detect operations using tactics of this kind", said Amin Hasbini, Senior Security Researcher at Kaspersky Lab.

The investigation started after the bank's forensics specialists recovered and shared two files containing malware logs from the ATM's hard drive (kl.txt and logfile.txt) with Kaspersky Lab. These were the only files left after the attack: it was not possible to recover the malicious executables because after the robbery cybercriminals had wiped the malware. But even this tiny amount of data can be enough for Kaspersky Lab to run a successful investigation.

### Erase / rewind

Within the log files, Kaspersky Lab experts were able to identify pieces of information in

plaintext that helped them to create a YARA rule for public malware repositories and to find a sample. YARA rules-basically search strings-help analysts to find, group, and categorize related malware samples and draw connections between them based on patterns of suspicious activity on systems or networks that share similarities.

After a day of waiting, experts found a wanted malware sample - "tv.dll", or 'ATMitch' as it was later dubbed. It was spotted in the wild twice: once from Kazakhstan, and once from Russia.

This malware is remotely installed and executed on an ATM from within the target bank: through the remote administration of ATM machines. After it's installed and connected to the ATM, the ATMitch malware communicates with the ATM as if it is legitimate software. It makes it possible for attackers to conduct a list of commands - such as collecting information about the number of banknotes in the ATM's cassettes. What's more; it provides criminals with the ability to dispense money at any time, at the touch of a button.

Usually criminals start by getting information on the amount of money a dispenser has. After that, a criminal can send a command to dispense any number of banknotes from any cassette. After withdrawing money in this curious way, criminals only need to grab the money and go. An ATM robbery like this takes just seconds! Once an ATM is robbed, the malware deletes its traces.

### Who's there?

It is still not known who is behind the attacks. The use of open source exploit code, common Windows utilities and unknown domains during the first stage of the operation makes it almost impossible to determine the group responsible. However, "tv.dll", used in the ATM stage of the attack contains a Russian language resource, and known groups that could fit into this profile are GCMAN and Carbanak. "Combating these kinds of attacks requires a specific set of skills from the security specialist guarding the targeted organization. The successful breach and infiltration of data from a network can only be conducted with common and legitimate tools; after the attack, criminals may wipe all the data that could lead to their detection leaving no traces, nothing."

To address these issues, memory forensics is becoming critical to the analysis of malware and its functions. And as our case proves, a carefully directed incident response can help solve even the perfectly prepared cybercrime," said Sergey Golovanov, Principal Security Researcher at Kaspersky Lab.

Kaspersky Lab products successfully detect operations using the above tactics, techniques and procedures. Further information on this story and Yara rules for forensic analysis of the fileless attacks can be found in the two blogs on Securelist.com: first and second. Technical details, including Indicators of Compromise were also provided to customers of Kaspersky Intelligence Services.



Shehab Najjar, Head of Cyber Counter Terrorism Unit, CYBERPOL.



Andrey Nikishin, Head of Future Technologies Projects, Kaspersky Lab.



Mohammad Amin Hasbini, Senior Security Researcher in Global Research & Analysis Team at Kaspersky Lab.

# URBAN FARMING FLOURISHES IN NEW YORK



NEW YORK: Some of the crops are available to taste and buy during a tour at Square Roots Urban Growers in New York. —AFP

**NEW YORK:** The urban farm craze is finding fertile ground in New York, where 10 young entrepreneurs are learning to grow greens and herbs without soil, bathed in an indoor, psychedelic light. In a "hot-house" of invention in a Brooklyn car park, each farms a container, growing plants and vying for local clients in the heady atmosphere of a start-up, fighting against industrially grown food, shipped over thousands of miles.

Meet the farmer-entrepreneurs at Square Roots, a young company with a sharp eye for the kind of marketing that helps make Brooklyn a center of innovation well-equipped to ride the wave of new trends. "It is not just another Brooklyn hipster thing. There is no doubt the local real food movement is a mega-trend," says Tobias Peggs, one of the co-founders, a 45-year-old from Britain who previously worked in software.

"If you are 20 today, food is bigger than the internet was 20 years ago when we got on it," he adds. "Consumers want trust, they want to know their farmers." He set up Square Roots with Kimbal Musk, brother of Tesla Motors billionaire Elon, and they have been training 10 recruits since November. Already well-established in parts of Europe the Netherlands in particular—the technology is still being pioneered in the United States.

The greens are reared in an entirely

closed and artificial environment that can be completely controlled, grown vertically and irrigated by a hydroponic system that feeds them water mixed with minerals and nutrients. Wylie Goodman, a graduate student finishing a dissertation on urban farming at Cornell University, says the US financial capital was a captive market for the innovations. "It makes total sense," she said.

"You've got a well-educated and wealthy population willing to pay a lot for good local food"—in this case \$7 per single pack of fresh greens delivered to your door. New York and its environs have seen constant innovation in urban agriculture from rooftop gardens to the huge AeroFarm complex in neighboring Newark and Gotham Greens, which grows greens and herbs in ultra-modern rooftop greenhouses that can be harvested before breakfast and on a New York plate for lunch.

## Glowing environment

Halfway through his year-long apprenticeship, Peggs says the 10 young entrepreneurs have already learned how to grow food customers want to buy. The next stage will begin within a year, he says, with the creation of "campuses" capable of producing greens similar to the one in Brooklyn in other large US cities before the initiative rolls out "everywhere." His enthusiasm is contagious. Around 100 people who took

part in a guided tour of the farm this week, were for the most part not only willing to shop the greens but also appeared to be mulling over setting up something similar.

But there are downsides to the business model. If indoor farms can be adapted to grow strawberries and blueberries, "no one with a background in agriculture" thinks they will replace traditional, soil-based farms, Goodman says. Moreover, products with a denser biomass, such as cereals or beets, are out of reach for the moment. "If I grew beets, I would have to sell it for \$50 a head," Peggs joked. "Do you really want to work in an enclosed, glowing environment?" Goodman asks. Besides, the lighting is too expensive and cultivation spaces at reasonable cost too few, at least for now. Those questions are already being addressed by some apprentice entrepreneur-farmers at Square Roots. Electra Jarvis, 27, joined program after earning a master's degree in environmental sustainability despite having "never grown a plant before."

In just a few months, she mastered the process, and already has 20 clients for her bags of salad leaves, tagged "Grown with love by Electra Jarvis." But if she's happy to learn how to turn "dead space" into "a productive green space," she's not sure it's really for her. "I miss the nature," she said. "I prefer to be able to grow outdoors." —AFP

# THOUSANDS BRAVE WEATHER TO PROTEST TRUMP CLIMATE POLICIES

## RAIN-SOAKED CROWD HEAD TOWARDS TRUMP TOWER

**SEATTLE:** Thousands of people across the US marched in rain, snow and sweltering heat Saturday to demand action on climate change - mass protests that coincided with President Donald Trump's 100th day in office and took aim at his agenda for rolling back environmental protections. At

A wet spring snow fell in Denver, where several hundred activists posed in the shape of a giant thermometer for a photograph and a dozen people rode stationary bikes to power the loudspeakers. In Chicago, a rain-soaked crowd of thousands headed from the city's federal plaza to Trump Tower. "We

Participants Saturday said they object to Trump's rollback of restrictions on mining, oil drilling and greenhouse gas emissions at coal-fired power plants, among other things. Trump has called climate change a hoax, disputing the overwhelming consensus of scientists that the world is warming and

Employees Council 238, called the march "a chance to speak out in unity against this administration" and its "ridiculous gutting of the EPA budget and staffing." More than 2,000 people gathered at the Maine State House in Augusta. Speakers included a lobsterman, a solar company owner and members of the Penobscot Nation tribe.

"I've seen firsthand the impacts of climate change to not only the Gulf of Maine, but also to our evolving fisheries, and to the coastal communities that depend upon them," said lobsterman Richard Nelson of Friendship, Maine. People in the crowd spoke about the importance of addressing climate change to industries such as renewable energy, forestry, farming and seafood. Saharlah Farah, a 16-year-old immigrant from Somalia who lives in Portland, talked about how climate change could have a bigger toll on marginalized groups that have less financial resources. "But I see untapped power here today," she said.

A demonstration stretched for several blocks in downtown Tampa, Florida, where marchers said they were concerned about the threat rising seas pose to the city. People gathered on the Boston Common carried signs with slogans such as "Dump Trump." Handmade signs at Seattle's march included the general - "Love Life" - and the specific - "Don't Kill Otters." Some of the marches drew big-name attendees, including former Vice President Al Gore and actor Leonardo DiCaprio in the nation's capital. In Montpelier, Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders called the marches part of a fight for the future of the planet. "Honored to join Indigenous leaders and native peoples as they fight for climate justice," DiCaprio tweeted. —AP



WASHINGTON: A protestor wears a mask of US President Donald Trump in front of the White House during the People's Climate March in Washington, DC. —AFP

the marquee event, the Peoples Climate March in Washington, DC, tens of thousands of demonstrators made their way down Pennsylvania Avenue on their way to encircle the White House as temperatures soared into the 90s.

Organizers said about 300 sister marches or rallies were being held around the country, including in Seattle, Boston and San Francisco.

are here because there is no Planet B," the Rev. Mariama White-Hammond of Bethel AME Church told a rally in Boston.

The demonstrations came one week after supporters of science gathered in 600 cities around the globe, alarmed by political and public rejection of established research on topics including climate change and the safety of vac-

that man-made carbon emissions are primarily to blame.

Among those attending the Chicago rally were members of the union representing Environmental Protection Agency employees. Trump has proposed cutting the EPA's budget by almost one-third, eliminating more than 3,000 jobs. John O'Grady, president of the American Federation of Government



ANTARTICA: In this file photo, German scientist Andreas Beck takes notes in Robert Island, in the South Shetland Islands archipelago, Antarctica. —AP

# CALIFORNIA SAYS OCEANS COULD RISE HIGHER THAN THOUGHT

**SAN FRANCISCO:** New climate-change findings mean the Pacific Ocean off California may rise higher, and storms and high tides hit harder, than previously thought, officials said. The state's Ocean Protection Council on Wednesday revised upward its predictions for how much water off California will rise as the climate warms. The forecast helps agencies in the nation's most populous state plan for climate change as rising water seeps toward low-lying airports, highways and communities, especially in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Discoveries that ice sheets are melting increasingly fast in Antarctica, which holds nearly 90 percent of the world's ice, largely spurred the change. As fossil-fuel emissions warm the Earth's atmosphere, melting Antarctic ice is expected to raise the water off California's 1,100 miles of coastline even more than for the world as a whole. "Emerging science is showing us a lot more than even five years ago," council deputy director Jenn Eckerle said Thursday.

Gov. Jerry Brown has mandated that state agencies take climate change into

account in planning and budgeting. The council's projections will guide everything from local decisions on zoning to state action on whether to elevate or abandon buildings near the coast and bays. In the best-case scenario, waters in the vulnerable San Francisco Bay, for example, likely would rise between 1 foot and 2.4 feet (one-third to three-fourths of a meter) by the end of this century, the ocean council said.

However, that's only if the world cracks down on climate-changing fossil-fuel emissions far more than it is now. The worst-case scenario entails an even faster melting of Antarctic ice, which could raise ocean levels off California a devastating 10 feet by the end of this century, the state says. That's at least 30 times faster than the rate over the last 100 years. Scientists say rising water from climate change already is playing a role in extreme winters such as this past one in California, contributing to flooding of some highways and helping crumble cliffs beneath some oceanfront homes. —AP

# CITIES BRACE FOR CLIMATE CHALLENGES

**VIENNA:** Faced with exploding populations and steadily rising temperatures worldwide, cities must make haste in reinforcing defenses against climate change-induced flooding and heat waves, experts warned this week. City temperatures are forecast to shoot up in the coming years, exposing inhabitants to killer heat spikes, while rising sea levels and river flooding threaten homes, drinking water, and transport and electricity infrastructure.

Cities are vulnerable to a unique risk called the "urban heat island" (UHI) effect—their concrete surfaces retain more of the sun's heat than undeveloped areas, scientists explained at a meeting of the European Geosciences Union (EGU) in Vienna. By midcentury, if planet-warming fossil fuel emissions continue unabated, city temperatures in Belgium could exceed today's heat-alert levels by as much as 10 degrees Celsius for 25 days each summer, according to one research paper. Another study showed that heat waves will become a frequent challenge for European cities—more numerous in the south of the continent, more intense in the north.

And floods, a major risk to Europe's dense urban settlements, will become more common because of an increase in freak rainstorms, as well as sea-level increases caused by polar ice melt and warmer ocean water expanding. In flood-prone southeast Asia, precipitation is set to increase by 20 percent this century, one researcher said in Vienna. The stakes are especially high given the projections for expansion of urban areas, which are often ill equipped to deal with nature's vengeance.

## High stakes

Already, more than half the world's population lives in cities. By 2050, 80 percent of people in rich nations, and 60 percent in developing states, will be concentrated in built-up areas, according to recent calculations. This corresponds to the appearance of a settlement of a million inhabitants somewhere on the globe every week for the next 40 years. Occupying only a small portion of Earth's available land, cities are responsible for 80 percent of all energy consumed and generate over 60 percent of the planet-warming greenhouse gases emitted when humans burn fossil fuel for heating, power and transportation.

In spite of efforts to curb emissions, the planet has already warmed about one degree Celsius on average from pre-Industrial Revolution levels. Many scientists say the planet may be on track for three degrees Celsius of warming or more, exceeding the two-degree cap politicians set in Paris in 2015. This means cities must act now to shore up their defenses against impacts that can no longer be avoided, French climatologist Herve le Treut warned at the annual EGU gathering.

"It's already happening," Le Treut said of climate change impacts. "We have to start structural action quickly: transportation, houses... mainly in the cities, especially in vulnerable places." Most of the infrastructure constructed by humanity is an urban zones. "The ways cities are built is not optimal" for today's climate reality, said Daniel Schertzer, a hydro meteorologist at the engineering school Ecole des Ponts ParisTech. —AFP

# SCIENTISTS FIND LARGE NUMBER OF HUMPBACK WHALE DEATHS

**PORTLAND, Maine:** Government scientists launched an investigation Thursday into an unusually large number of humpback whale deaths from North Carolina to Maine, the first such "unusual mortality event" declaration in a decade. Forty-one whales died in the region in 2016 and so far in 2017, far exceeding the average of about 14 per year, said Deborah Fauquier, a veterinary medical officer with National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Marine Fisheries.

Ten of the 20 whales that have been examined so far were killed by collisions with boats, something scientists are currently at a loss to explain because there's been no corresponding spike in ship traffic. The investigation will focus on possible common threads like toxins and illness, prey movement that could bring whales into shipping lanes, or other factors, officials said. Humpbacks can grow to 60 feet long and are found in oceans around the world. They're popular with whale watchers because of the dramatic way they breach the ocean's surface, then flop back into the water.

"The humpback is generally people's favorite because they're so animated. They're the ones that like to jump out of the ocean completely," said Zack Klyver, a naturalist with Bar Harbor Whale Watch Company. The humpback whale population that feeds in North Atlantic waters each summer was removed from the Endangered Species Act last year when NOAA divided humpback populations into 14 distinct population segments around the world. There are currently about 10,500 in the population that visits North Atlantic waters, scientists say.

While they're not threatened, federal scien-

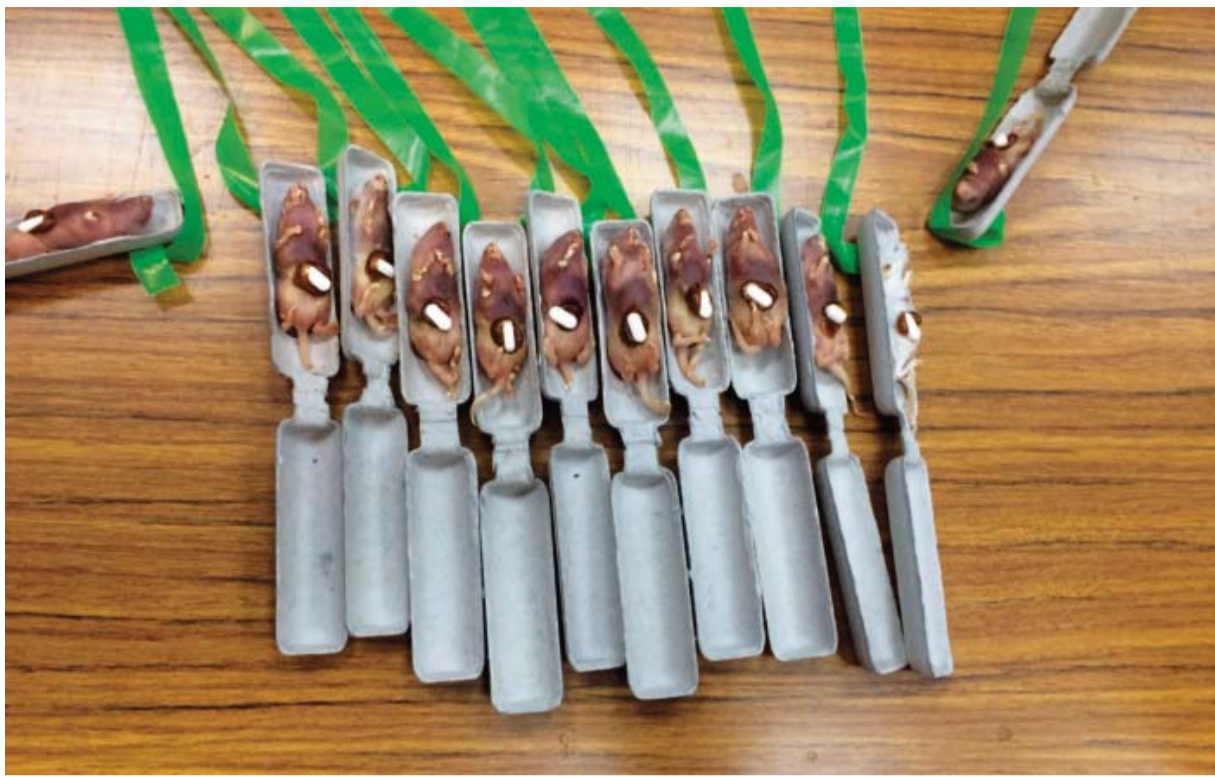
tists are nonetheless keeping close tabs on the whales, said NOAA spokeswoman Kate Brogan. The humpback whale deaths that prompted the "unusual mortality event" designation break down to 26 last year and 15 to date this year. NOAA also declared "unusual mortality events" involving humpbacks in 2003, 2005 and 2006, Fauquier said. No conclusive cause of the deaths was determined in those investigations, she said. The 10 confirmed fatal boat strikes far exceeds the annual average of fewer than two per year attributed to boat collisions, officials said.

Whales tend to be somewhat oblivious to

boats when they're feeding or socializing, said Gregory Silber, coordinator of recovery activities for large whales in NOAA's Office of Protected Resources. "A vessel of any size can harm a whale. In smaller vessels they tend to be propeller strikes. And in larger vessels they appear to be in the form of blunt trauma, hemorrhaging or broken bones," he said. Klyver said any whale death is upsetting. Scientists and whale watchers know many of the whales that visit each summer. "Each whale has its own personality," he said. "We are connected to so many of them as individuals that we hate to see any of them perish." —AP



DELAWARE: This photo provided by MERR Institute, Inc shows a dead humpback whale at Port Mahon, Delaware. —AP



WASHINGTON: In this photo provided by the USDA/APHIS Wildlife Services, newly designed aerial bait cartridges consist of dead mice with 80-mg acetaminophen tablets and a biodegradable streamer-like cartridge. —AP photos



ILLINOIS: In this file photo, Asian carp, jolted by an electric current from a research boat, jump from the Illinois River near Havana, Illinois.

# ROBOTS, HIGH-TECH TOOLS JOIN BATTLE AGAINST INVASIVE SPECIES

WASHINGTON: A robot zaps and vacuums up venomous lionfish in Bermuda. A helicopter pelts Guam's trees with poison-baited dead mice to fight the voracious brown tree snake. A special boat with giant winglike nets stuns and catches Asian carp in the US Midwest. In the fight against alien animals that invade and overrun native species, the weird and wired wins. "Critters are smart - they survive," said biologist Rob "Goose" Gosnell, head of US Department of Agriculture's wildlife services in Guam, where brown tree snakes have gobbled up nearly all the native birds. "Trying to outsmart them is hard to do."

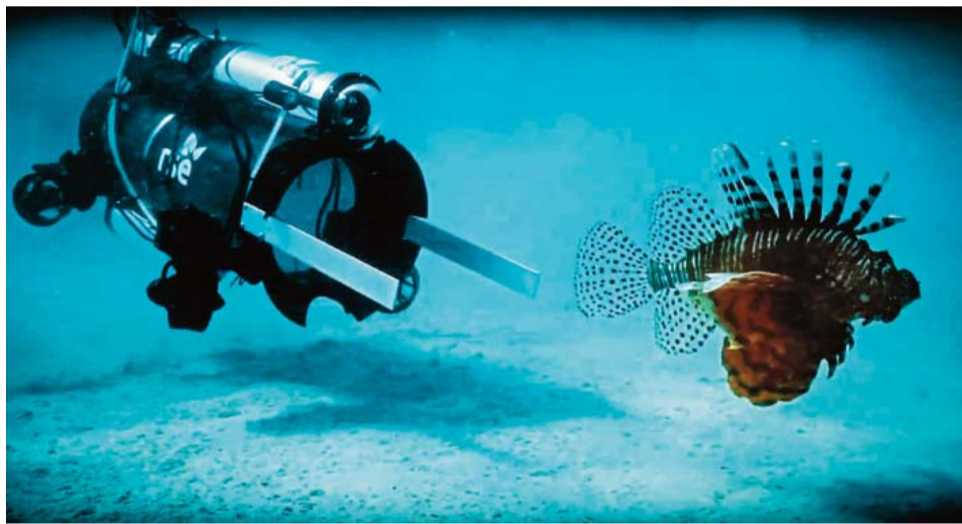
Invasive species are plants and animals that thrive in areas where they don't naturally live, usually brought there by humans, either accidentally or intentionally. Sometimes, with no natural predators, they multiply and take over, crowding out and at times killing native species. Now, new technology is being combined with the old methods - weed pulling, trapping and pesticides. Finding new weapons is crucial because invasive species are costly - \$314 billion per year in damages in just the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, South Africa, India and Brazil.

It's also one of the leading causes of extinction on islands, such as Guam, according to Piero Genovesi, an Italian scientist who chairs the invasive species task force for an international organization. "We have totally new tools that were just unthinkable a few years ago," Genovesi said. Case in point: There are companies that now market traps for wild pigs that are triggered by cellphones. "There's enough activity that there's starting to be an industry," said University of California, Santa Cruz research biologist Bernie Tershy.

### Lionfish

A new underwater robot is targeting the stunning but dangerous lionfish, which has spread over the Caribbean, the Gulf of Mexico and up the US East Coast as far north as New York's Long Island, with its venomous spines that are dangerous to touch. With no natural predator in the Atlantic, the voracious aquarium fish devour large amounts of other fish including key commercial fish species such as snapper and grouper.

The robot is the creation of Colin Angle, chief executive officer of iRobot, which makes the Roomba vacuum cleaner. Along with his wife, Erika, and colleagues, he created a new nonprofit to turn automation into environmental tools. The robot,



BERMUDA: In this artist photo provided by Robots in Service of the Environment shows, the first day a new robot was used to hunt dangerous and invasive lionfish in Bermuda.

called Guardian LF1, uses what Angle says is a gentle shock to immobilize the lionfish before they are sucked alive into a tube.

In its first public outing this month, the robot caught 15 lionfish during two days of testing in Bermuda. Top chefs competed in a cook-off of the captured lionfish. Lionfish go for nearly \$10 a pound and Angle is hoping to get the price of the robot down from tens of thousands of dollars to about \$500. "What's next?" Angle said. "Our ambition is much larger than lionfish."

### Brown tree snakes

A few decades ago, native birds started disappearing from the Pacific island of Guam, baffling scientists until they found that non-native brown tree snakes were eating all the birds and their eggs. The snakes, which live in the trees, had no natural enemies and just trapping them wasn't working, Gosnell said. The snakes did prove to have one enemy: the painkiller acetaminophen, a generic form of Tylenol. So biologists came up with a plan: Use a painkiller pill glued to dead fetal mice as bait. The mice are put in tubes, and dropped by helicopter in batches of 3,000.

The mice pop out, and the whole contraption

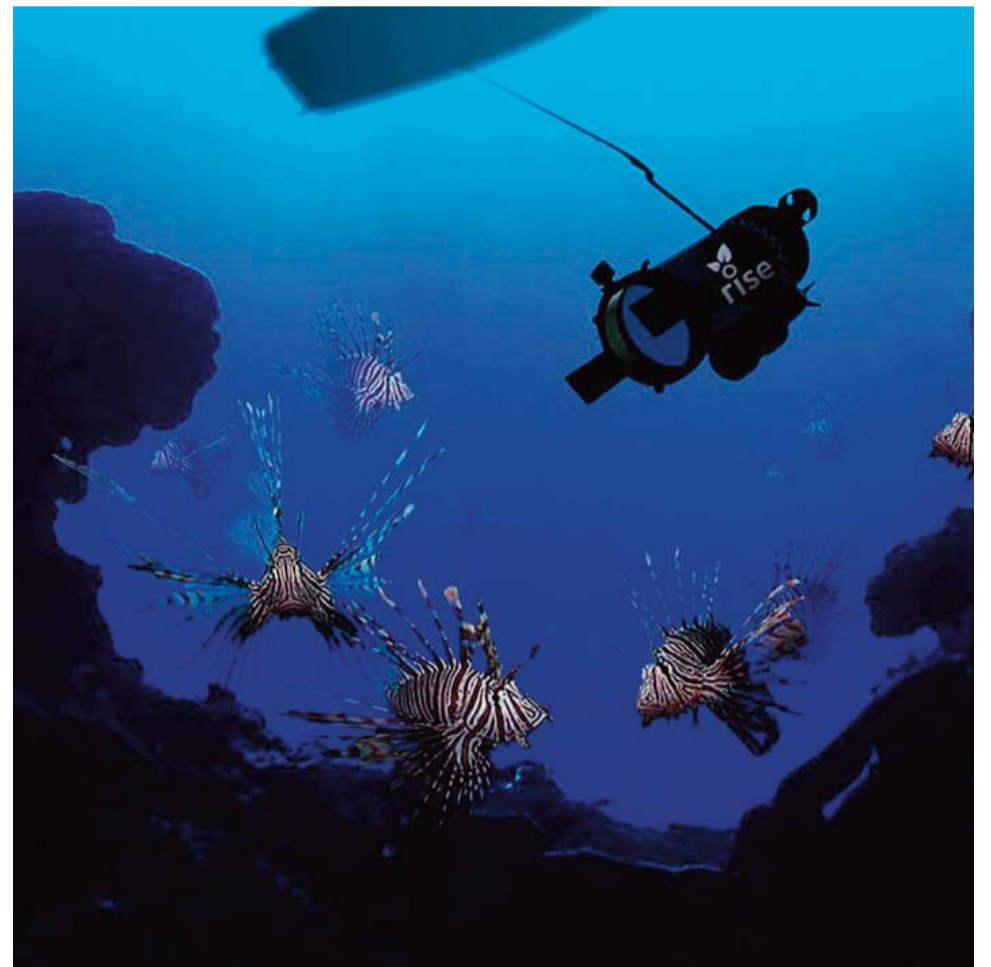
dangles in the trees. It's still experimental but it will soon go to more regular use. There is one problem. Using dead fetal mice as bait is expensive and they have to be kept cold. But biologists are working on a solution: mouse butter. A new bait mixture smells like mice to snakes, but minus the expense and logistical problems.

### Asian carp

US Fish and Wildlife officials are using souped-up old technology to catch Asian carp, a fish that's taken over rivers and lakes in the Midwest. They use a specialized boat - the Magna Carpa - with giant wing like nets that essentially uses electric current as an underwater stun gun to shock the fish, said biologist Emily Pherigo. At higher doses, the fish are killed and float to the surface. In just five minutes, they can collect 500 fish, and later turn them into fertilizer. Using electrofishing was written about as a possible conservation technique back in 1933, said biologist Wyatt Doyle.

### Wild goats

On the Galapagos islands, wild goats were a major problem. In less than five years, scientists wiped out tens of thousands with sterile "Mata Hari"



BERMUDA: In this artist rendering provided by Robots in Service of the Environment, a new robot that hunts the dangerous and invasive lionfish made its debut in Bermuda.

females. Biologist Karl Campbell of the nonprofit Island Conservation introduced specialized female goats that researchers sterilized and chemically altered into a permanent state of heat, to lure the male goats into fruitless goat sex. Santiago Island, once home to 80,000 goats, is now goat free and larger Isabella Island is getting close, he said.

And now, Campbell and others are going one step further: Tinkering with the genes of mosquitoes and mice to make them sterile or only have male offspring. That would eventually cause a species to die off on an island because of lack of females to mate with. There are worries about regulating and controlling this technology, along with actually being able to get it done, so it years away, Campbell said.—AP

# CLINIC PAGE



Kuwait Times  
248 33 199





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# UNFORGETTABLE FAMILY MEMORIES ARE AT THE HEART OF MOVENPICK HOTELS AND RESORTS' NEW GLOBAL PROGRAM

**M**ovenpick Hotels and Resorts has launched 'Movenpick Family,' a new global program designed to take all the stress - and sometimes distress - out of holidays, leaving parents to focus on what really matters - creating family memories that will last a lifetime.

The new family program available in all Movenpick properties worldwide focuses on what is really important for parents - providing baby essentials on demand; ensuring there are fun healthy menus for children; offering family services such as kids' TV channels or babysitters; providing opportunities to share unique local activities and enjoying special family room discounts.

So, how does this work in practice? First, every Movenpick hotel provides a complimentary 'On-demand baby essentials' service which means

strollers, bottle warmers, baby baths, toilet rings, portable cots, child-proof electric plugs - and everything in between - are just a click, tap or swipe away before arrival.

Secondly, no parent wants to worry about whether changing tables, babysitting services or kids' TV channels are available at their holiday destination. At Movenpick Hotels and Resorts, every family service and amenity is covered.

Thirdly, Movenpick's popular 'Power Bites' dishes offer healthy and nutritious menus that are designed to inspire fun food experiences - from tomato caterpillars and fresh fruit snakes to rice-faced lions.

Next, great family holidays are built on great times shared together. That is why the new Little Birds Clubs for children aged between 2 and 12 are all tailor-made to offer cooking

classes, environmentally-friendly experiences and cultural activities that reflect wonderful local cultures. More importantly, the clubs provide plenty of opportunities to share the fun with parents.

And finally, the most important thing of all? Simply being together. Movenpick's 'Happiest Offer' ensures that when it comes to booking family accommodation everyone stays together. Guaranteed. There are even special room discounts - and the young ones eat for free.

Paul Mulcahy, Senior Vice President Commercial, Movenpick Hotels and Resorts, and a father of two, said: "Our new global program is driven by a simple aim. We have every family amenity and service covered so that parents can relax and concentrate on spending quality holiday time together."



## RUSSIAN EMBASSY HOSTS ART EXHIBITION

**T**he Russian Embassy in Kuwait opened a fine art exhibition in the embassy headquarters this past Wednesday. More than 100 artworks were displayed. All artists featured are members of the famous Union of Russian artists, which was founded back in 1903. The displayed artworks represent different art styles, from watercolors to oil. — Photos by Joseph Shagra



### Greetings



**C**ongratulations to Alexis De Leon, Iver Bautista and Rob Asumen on their first Holy Communion. May this sacred occasion bring more blessings and much happiness to all of you. Love always, mom and dad, family and friends.



Participants looking at judge B-Boy Menno performing before the competition.

# Dreams Do Come True...

B-Boy Tailz Wins Red Bull BC One Cypher Kuwait 2017



Judges, B-Boy Menno, B-Boy Poe One and B-Boy C-Sick.



Winner of Red Bull BC One Cypher Celebrating.

It was a tough battle on Friday April 28 at ARGAN Square in Salmiya where 16 of the best B-Boys in Kuwait competed for the 2017 Red Bull BC One Kuwait Final, in partnership with ARGAN Square, Rock House Sliders, The Athlete's Foot and City Pages magazine. There could only be one winner – Pierre Al Khoury Aka B-Boy Tailz, who will be going to Amsterdam for a chance to win the Red Bull BC One World Final in November. All-Stars B-Boy Menno (Netherlands), B-Boy

Poe One (USA) and Kuwait's three-time winner B-Boy C-Sick, judged the participants' performance.

Held in Salmiya at ARGAN Square and amongst a large crowd of spectators, the final competition was fierce and fun at the same time. All eyes were on the young yet highly impressive talent that stood out all the way, the champion of the 2017 Red Bull BC One Kuwait Final who is only sixteen, was keen on participating in Red Bull BC One since 2014 and made his

dreams come true. This is only a true testament that one ought to keep believing and that talent can be given wings!

B-Boy Tailz came through very challenging battles with other B-Boys, and won the title on his opponent B-Boy Bonny, who also displayed an outstanding performance. In addition, there were magnificent, mind-blowingly major moves made by b-boys Tails, Bonny, Slash, Primo, Reo, Myno, Lazer, Ant, Crush, Denken,

Neo, Ace, K-Flex, Zipper, Crimson and B-Girl Zoey, however, one B-Boy stood above the rest and, for the first time, it was B-Boy Tailz.

The winner was speechless until encouraged to talk about how it felt to win. "I'm super excited. I can't believe I actually made it to the World Final in Amsterdam. This is like a dream come true," said B-Boy Tailz who is focused on training for the 2017 Red Bull BC One World Final Championship.



Winner during a performance.



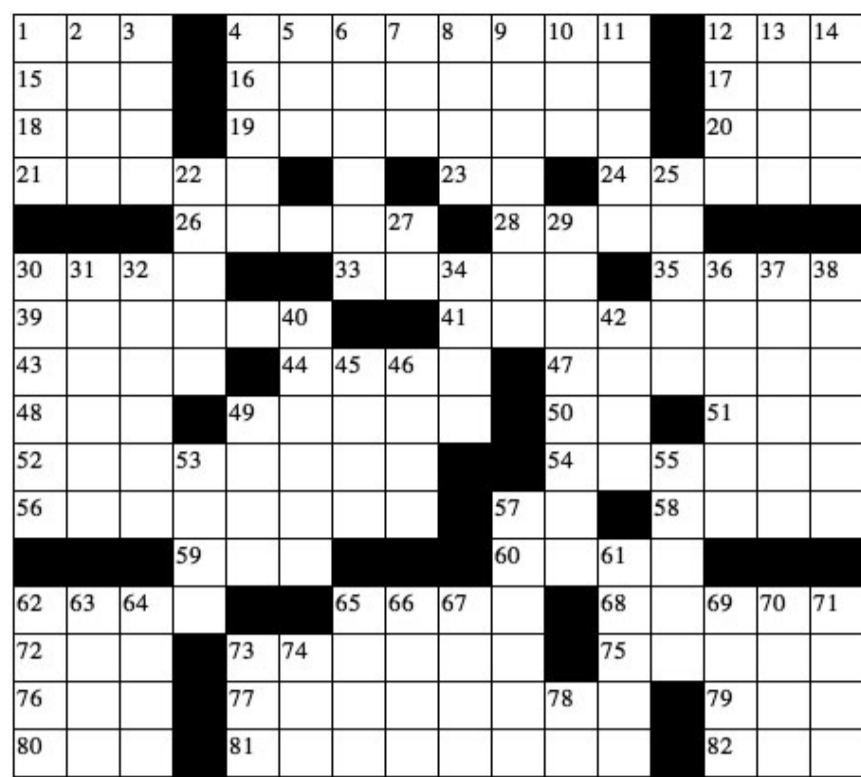
The announcement of the winner .







CROSSWORD 1594



ACROSS

- 1. A rapid bustling commotion.
4. Used especially of front teeth.
12. A master's degree in library science.
15. A conspicuous disparity or difference as between two figures.
16. A heavy curtain hung across a doorway.
17. A former agency (from 1946 to 1974) that was responsible for research into atomic energy and its peacetime uses in the United States.
18. (informal) Of the highest quality.
19. (statistics) Having a single mode.
20. A nucleic acid that transmits genetic information from DNA to the cytoplasm.
21. A summary that repeats the substance of a longer discussion.
23. A hard malleable ductile silvery metallic element that is resistant to corrosion.
24. A city of central China.
26. Of or relating to or containing barium.
28. Elegant and stylish.
30. The capital and largest city of Yemen.
33. Tropical American tree producing cacao beans.
35. Essential oil or perfume obtained from flowers.
39. Inability to walk.
41. Perfect or complete or pure.
43. A strong positive emotion of regard and affection.
44. (pathology) An elevation of the skin filled with serous fluid.
47. A minor match preceding the main event.
48. A self-funded retirement plan that allows you to contribute a limited yearly sum toward your retirement.
50. Being nine more than ninety.
51. Any of various coarse shrubby plants of the genus Iva with small greenish flowers.
52. Eurasian lapwings.
54. United States abolitionist (1786-1865).
56. The state capital of South Australia.
58. The (prehensile) extremity of the superior limb.
59. An agency of the United Nations affiliated with the World Bank.
60. In addition.
62. A small cake leavened with yeast.
68. (of complexion) Blemished by imperfections of the skin.
72. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
75. The basic unit of money in Nigeria.
76. Being one more than nine.
77. Oldest known reptiles.
79. Being two more than fifty.
80. A condition (mostly in boys) characterized by behavioral and learning disorders.
81. A great raja.
82. The fatty flesh of eel.

DOWN

- 1. Any culture medium that uses agar as the gelling agent.
2. Small European freshwater fish with a slender bluish-green body.
3. An organization of countries formed in

- 1961 to agree on a common policy for the sale of petroleum.
4. Type genus of the Upupidae.
5. (prefix) Reverse of or absence of.
6. A person who is professionally engaged in the analysis and interpretation of works of art.
7. A unit of pressure.
8. A meson produced as the result of high-energy particle collision.
9. A tricycle (usually propelled by pedalling).
10. A period marked by distinctive character or reckoned from a fixed point or event.
11. A city in north-central India.
12. A member of a rural Finnish people living in eastern Russia.
13. A Russian river.
14. The act of scanning.
22. Lower in esteem.
25. An ordered reference standard.
27. A white metallic element that burns with a brilliant light.
29. A health facility where patients receive treatment.
31. Away from the mouth or oral region.
32. A tranquilizer (trade name Navane) used to treat schizophrenia.
34. Open-heart surgery in which the rib cage is opened and a section of a blood vessel is grafted from the aorta to the coronary artery to bypass the blocked section of the coronary artery and improve the blood supply to the heart.
36. Eurasian perennial bulbous herbs.
37. Tranquilizer (trade name Ativan) used to treat anxiety and tension and insomnia.
38. The act of sending an accused person back into custody to await trial (or the continuation of the trial) v 1.
40. A loss of will power.
42. Predatory black-and-white toothed whale with large dorsal fin.
45. (Welsh) A warrior god.
46. Freedom from difficulty or hardship or effort.
49. Showing or causing joy and pleasure.
53. English essayist (1775-1834).
55. Type genus of the Phocidae.
57. Summer cypress.
61. The capital and largest city of Yemen.
63. In bed.
64. An unofficial association of people or groups.
65. A woman hired to suckle a child of someone else.
66. An informal term for a father.
67. A former communist country in eastern Europe and northern Asia.
69. World's longest river (4187 miles).
70. A member of an Iroquoian people formerly living on the south shore of Lake Erie in northern Ohio and northwest Pennsylvania and western New York.
71. The lower house of the parliament of the Republic of Ireland.
73. A rotating disk shaped to convert circular into linear motion.
74. (Irish) Mother of the ancient Irish gods.
78. A person who announces and plays popular recorded music.

Yesterday's Solution

Grid showing the solution to yesterday's crossword puzzle with words like MAT, ALI, SABBA, AVOW, ELAVIL, ARTS, LAC, SLICKED, EMU, TACOMA, SULLA, TABARD, NEAP, SEEN, ADAPA, FICA, ICC, MALAYA, ARRANTE, WASH, TUB, IAPETUS, ALCEA, OMANI, RALE, GCA, PEDICA, ERNE, EAR, AMEN, TIA, APAR.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Be very careful in what you try to bring into your own life for now-you may be stuck with what you take on for quite some time. Ambitious schemes and the pursuit of success and status take on a high priority. You might set aside some time to update your resume or send out your resume to potential businesses.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

It is important to keep a perspective, particularly today. There is a great quantity of high energy during the day and it would be good to pace yourself in everything you do so as not to overtax those energies; relax. Sometimes during your relaxed moments, you may have sudden insights that are sensitive and create an opportunity for "aha" times that bring about a new understanding.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You may enjoy the opportunities to express your independence. This may mean times that you can show off your talents and perhaps teach others a new talent. You do not intimidate others and you do not like others to intimidate you; however, today will open up opportunities to judge and it is okay for others to be their own judge.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You should be able to get your ideas across with ease. This is the beginning of a bright and witty day. Your communication skills are at a high-water mark. Through new studies you will make great leaps forward in your studies or perhaps a current research. You are just beginning to realize how much you can do to make a positive difference in other people's lives and seek out ways to accomplish this.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

It may be another person's turn to lead a group that is usually in your charge. This may become a great provisional support from time to time. This activity is fun and you are confident you will be free to go on a holiday from time to time.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Intuitive insights are strong today and make for speedy insights. Welcome the trials and oppositions that occur with your finances now because these trials will let you know whether you might continue to use your current money-making methods.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

New ways to communicate or an easy manner will make conversations go well this day. You may find yourself more talkative than usual. Higher education and foreign travel may be your dream and may be part of your life plans that are gradually unfolding.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Today, you may need to lean on your own self for support. In order to make a point today, you will probably find a clever way of expressing yourself. Others discover that many people listen to you and your following will expand.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

You are against any sort of change but a change may be brewing in the employment sector. Think your plans through before acting them out now. Do not burn any bridges behind you. A reference is always welcomed.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

There are corrections and improvements in the way you view your professional life. There are gains and profits now through June. One of the best financial benefits for you will be during an upcoming trip.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

You manage to express your opinion or ideas today in a group or collective context. You integrate your own goals and will also put up with a certain amount of what you perceive to be puzzling information from others.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

An instinctive urge to get serious about taking care of you at many levels is emphasized now. Diet, exercise, and work somehow mean more to you.

Wordsearch Puzzle

80's Songs

Find and circle all of the 1980's song titles that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell the title of a U2 song.

Wordsearch grid containing hidden 80's song titles like DRIVE, LONGER, SARA, SMALL TOWN, SWEET DREAMS, TAINTED LOVE, MR. ROBOT, UPTOWN GIRL, NIGHTSHIFT, VALERIE, VENUS, YOU ARE, YOUNG TURKS.

Yesterday's Solution

80's Radio Hitmakers

Grid for 80's Radio Hitmakers containing names like ASIA, BANGLES, BERLIN, BILLY JOEL, BILLY OCEAN, BLONDIE, BON JOVI, CHICAGO, DAVID BOWIE, DEBARGE, DURAN DURAN, ERASURE, EURYTHMICS, FALCO, FOREIGNER, GENESIS, HEART, INXS, JOURNEY, KAJAGOOGOO, MADNESS, MADONNA, NENA, NEW ORDER, PRINCE, QUEEN, QUIET RIOT, SCAXELLE, SOFT CELL, TALK TALK, TEARS FOR FEARS, THE CARS, THE FIXX, THE MOTELS, THE POLICE, TIFFANY, TOM PETTY, TONI BASIL, TOTO, VAN HALEN, WANG CHUNG, WHAMI.

The hidden song title is: WALK LIKE AN EGYPTIAN

Daily SuDoku

5x5 grid for Daily SuDoku with numbers 1-5 and empty cells for solving.

Yesterday's Solution

5x5 grid showing the solution to yesterday's SuDoku puzzle.





## Rob Kardashian, Blac Chyna are working on themselves

The former couple - who have five-month-old daughter Dream together - ended their turbulent on/off relationship two months ago, and though they have recently been seen looking more cozy on Snapchat, insiders insist the pair are not back together, but they have been hanging out as friends for the sake of their little girl. A source told E! News: "They are co-parenting and independently working on themselves but they're more cordial now than they have been,

which is why they hung out recently. But by no means are they back together." Chyna, 28, has also recently moved into a new home as she wanted a bigger space and is now closer to her Lashed Salon. The insider added: "She's really excited about this house and she's been busy nesting." But Rob, 30, still gets to see his daughter on a weekly basis and is "always so happy" to spend time with her, especially as her personality is changing and developing every day.

## Paris Jackson warns 13 Reasons Why may leave viewers in a dark place



The 'Star' actress - who has previously attempted suicide "multiple times" - thinks Netflix's controversial program has done an "amazing" job of warning bullies their actions can have serious consequences, but admitted she is also concerned it could have a triggering effect on vulnerable people. Paris shared a post warning away audiences from the show, which argued it was "incredibly irresponsibly handled and puts people in very real danger" and advised impressionable youngsters to stay away from the series. She wrote: "This is really important to spread towards people that are struggling with depression or anxi-

ety, self-harm, and or suicidal thoughts." "This show was an amazing way to get the message across to bullies that they need to stop doing what they are doing. "It really did a good job of showing how impactful words and actions can be to other human beings. You can't just do or say things to people without thinking about how it will affect them." But at the same time, it is also an extremely triggering thing to watch. "Please only watch this show with caution and keep in mind that it may put you in a dark place. If you are struggling please don't watch it. If you think you can handle it, please by all means check it out.(sic)"

## Naomi Campbell launches beauty line with Starlite Shop

The 46-year-old supermodel has teamed up with the Spanish company to produce a 14-piece nail varnish collection, and the brunette beauty is "really proud" of her creations and the brand Naomi Campbell Design. The catwalk icon shared the news of her latest venture on her social media sites. The 'Empire' actress - who portrays Camilla marks

in the popular American series - shared an image of her from the campaign on her Instagram and Twitter accounts, which she captioned: "I'm really proud to release my own brand #NaomiCampbellDesign, you will find all my designs at starliteshop.com! I'm very excited about this new adventure! @starlite\_shop (sic)." And the fashion

mogul has also thanked Antonio Banderas for "welcoming" her to the company, as the 56-year-old Spanish actor also has his own capsule collection with the e-store, which includes an extensive eyewear line, as well as a range of iPhone cases, wallets and a pen. Naomi's post continued: "Thank you for welcoming me aboard @antonibanderasoficial! (sic)."



## Selena Gomez in a really happy place



The 'Good For You' hitmaker recently took some time away from the spotlight for a few months after suffering from "anxiety, panic attacks and depression" brought on by her lupus condition but she insists she is in a great place now. She said: "13 Reasons Why" was a really big moment for me, just because we had the book for seven years and we worked so hard on it. But, everything. You know, my personal life, and my family and my friends, I'm just, I'm in a really happy place. It's been good. "I think it's empowering when you're able to do things on your own. I started [my career] when I was so young, so in a way, a lot of things were - they helped guide me, and

they helped build stuff with me. So, the older I've gotten, I've realized I don't want to be a part of something unless I'm truly passionate, I truly created it, unless I feel like it means something. So, maybe it's just getting older?" And the 24-year-old singer credits her mother Mandy Teefey for inspiring and "constantly challenging" her. Asked who inspires her, she added to Entertainment Tonight: "My mom. Yeah, she is constantly challenging me, my character. She's, you know, my morals, who I am. It's nice to have that person, that reflection, that can be there and say, 'Hey, are you good? Is this really you? Are you being authentic to yourself, and are you being good to people?'"

## Scott Disick once proposed to Kourtney Kardashian

The 'Keeping Up With The Kardashians' star was in a relationship with the 38-year-old television personality for nine years before they decided to call time on their romance and Scott has now revealed he once got down on one knee for his ex-girlfriend. Speaking on the family's E! reality show, he said: "It was really weird. I don't think we told anybody actually. "It was somewhat cute and then we just got scared about like media and this and that. And we were like, 'Let's just put the ring aside and we'll talk about it another day.' Never spoke about it again." It comes after Kourtney urged Scott - with whom she shares Mason, seven, Penelope, four, and Reign, two - to be "consistent" before she agrees to give their romance another try. She said: "I've told him, I'm living my life and you're working on you. You've never been better, but you're so inconsistent. I need to see if you can be consistent." And Scott admitted he is still very much in love with Kourtney. He shared: "I feel like I will never be over her. She's the love of my life, but I just try to do everything to be there for her, but there's literally no appreciation for anything ever." Scott's party-loving lifestyle led to the collapse of his relationship with Kourtney and whilst he acknowledges that he was a large part of the couple's break-up, he is eager to see his family reunited. He explained: "I definitely realize that a lot of things truly are my fault and I'm happy taking ownership for all that ... "I just hope that one day she understands that I would never want to be with anybody but her."



## Emma Watson avoids social media for sanity

The 'Beauty and the Beast' star thinks "technology can dehumanize" and tries to stay off sites like Facebook and Twitter as much as they can. She told E! News: "For my sanity, I cannot even go there [and read comments on Instagram]. I have to create some distance because I'm human, you know? "I think there is this way that, sometimes, technology can dehumanize and it's like they're saying something about someone that isn't there, but I am there and I am real. So yeah, I have to create some distance for sure. I think it's really important to be mindful. Retaining your sanity in this industry is everything! So, yeah, I care about it a lot." Meanwhile, the 27-year-old actress previously revealed she is "passionate about having a private identity." She said: "It's one of the things that I struggle with because of the three of us - Dan [Radcliffe], Rupert [Grint], and I - were kids when we got cast in this fairytale series, and what happened to us was kind of a fantasy story in itself. Outside of the movies. So the story of my life has been of public interest, which is why I've been so passionate about having a private identity. "When I step into a character, people have to be able to suspend their disbelief; they have to be able to divorce me from that girl. And not having every one know every single intimate detail of my entire life is part of me trying to protect my ability to do my job well. Generally, I've been fortunate, like when Sofia Coppola offered me a role in The Bling Ring, which was so wonderfully different. Artists have given me a lot of freedom - have been able to imagine me in other ways - but it's something I am aware of, for sure."



## Christian Louboutin's new beauty line was inspired by Indian dance

The 54-year-old fashion designer joined forces with Batallure Beauty LLC in 2012 to launch his eponymous cosmetics collection, which he has since expanded to include a lipstick, nail polish as well as an eye make-up range, and the mogul has revealed the native form of performance, called Kathakali, has largely influenced him. The creative mastermind said: "I love all aspects of Indian culture. In fact my new eye [make-up] collection was inspired by the Indian dance, Kathakali." And the shoe creator - who is known for designing footwear with the signature red sole - has revealed he is currently working on a new project in Mumbai, India, with fellow designer Sabyasachi Mukherjee. Speaking about his latest venture, the French-born entrepreneur said: "I'm in Mumbai, where I have been working on a project with a great friend of mine, couture designer Sabyasachi Mukherjee." Although Christian has sort advice from his parent, he has admitted his biggest "hero" is 'The Muppets' star Miss Piggy. When asked about his all-time favorite icon, he said: "Miss Piggy." Although the businessman has credited the character as his idol, he regularly calls on the 31-year-old actress Gemma Arterton when he wants company because she is "a lot of fun" to be around. He told ES magazine: "Gemma Arterton. She's a lot of fun to hang out with and knows where to take me."

## Kim Kardashian West doesn't respect the character Caitlyn Jenner is showing

The 'Keeping Up With The Kardashians' star thinks her stepdad - who was known as Bruce Jenner before undergoing a gender transition - was wrong to include details about her relationship with Kris Jenner in a memoir about her life as she thinks "bashing other people" is distasteful. She said: "That was my stepdad for so many years. She taught me

about character and so much growing up, and I just feel like I don't respect the character that she's showing now ... like there's no need for a book. Tell your story, but just don't bash other people I just think it's not tasteful." And the 36-year-old television personality's "heart breaks" for her mother Kris, who has to hear all these "untruthful" things. Speaking on The Ellen DeGeneres Show, she added: "My heart breaks for my mom because I feel like she's been

through so much. Caitlyn's promoting this book and she's saying all these things. And I just don't think it's necessary. I just feel like it's unfair, things aren't truthful. "I feel like it's taken her a really long time to be honest with herself, so I don't expect her to be honest about my mom now ... But it's just so hurtful. I wish her all the success in the world, but not at our expense." It comes after Caitlyn claimed she gave Kris and Kim an advance copy of her memoir. — Bang Showbiz





File photo, shows the August Wilson Center for African American Culture in downtown Pittsburgh built to honor Pittsburgh born playwright August Wilson.

# In Pittsburgh, 'Fences' and August Wilson's Hill District



File photo, shows the home at 809 Anaheim Street in the Hill District of Pittsburgh that was used in the filming of 'Fences,' the film directed by and starring Denzel Washington in the adaptation of a Pulitzer Prize winning play by Pittsburgh born playwright August Wilson. — AP photos



File photo, shows the birthplace of playwright August Wilson at 1727 Bedford Ave in the Hill District of Pittsburgh.



Photo shows a colorful mural in the Hill District of Pittsburgh honoring playwright August Wilson and his work.

Fans of "Fences" may be disappointed that the film won just one of its four Oscar nominations. But a pilgrimage to playwright August Wilson's hometown, Pittsburgh, might offer some consolation. "Fences" is one of 10 plays that Wilson wrote chronicling African-American life. Nine of the plays are set in Pittsburgh and each play depicts a different decade. The city's Hill District, where Wilson grew up, offers a rich map of places connected to him.

1958. Their two-room, cold-water flat was upstairs and around the back from a grocery store, Bella's Market.

In "Fences," Troy says he'd rather shop at Bella's than at a supermarket because the folks there treated him right. The building is now called the August Wilson House. It's under renovation and expected to open in April 2018, according to Paul Ellis, the project's executive director and Wilson's nephew. Ellis' mother Freda was Wilson's sister.

Wilson's play "Seven Guitars" is set in the building's backyard. Photos from a production staged there last year can be seen in the home's rear windows. Freda's daughter and Paul Ellis' sister Kimberly Ellis, founder of the Historic Hill Institute and digital director of the August Wilson House, offers customized tours of the neighborhood.

She describes herself as "a Wilson scholar who happens to be his niece." A recent drive with her around the neighborhood included stops at Freedom Corner, an outdoor gathering site for civil rights activists; a school at 2250 Centre Ave. that once housed performances by the Black Horizon Theater, which Wilson helped found; and a former butcher shop at 2145 Centre Ave. adorned by the name "LUTZ." In Wilson's "Two Trains Running," a character is cheated by a man named Lutz.



File photo, daffodils grow on Mount Washington overlooking the skyline of downtown Pittsburgh, at the confluence of the Monongahela River, right, Allegheny River, left, to form the Ohio River.



Photo shows St Benedict the Moor Church with a black figure of the saint, arms outstretched, atop the church in the Hill District of Pittsburgh.

"I left Pittsburgh but Pittsburgh never left me," he once said. "I have a fierce affection for the Hill District and the people who raised me, who have sanctioned my life and ultimately provided it with meaning." Denzel Washington, who directed "Fences," filmed the movie in Pittsburgh and plans to film other Wilson plays. Washington, who portrayed "Fences" protagonist Troy Maxson, didn't win the Oscar for best actor. But co-star Viola Davis won best supporting actress for a dignified portrayal of Troy's wife Rose.

"Here's to August Wilson who exhumed and exalted the ordinary people," Davis said in accepting the Oscar yesterday night. Wilson lived with his mother Daisy and six siblings at 1727 Bedford Ave. from his birth in 1945 until



File photo shows a student walks past 'Dippy the Dinosaur,' a life-size statue of the Carnegie Museum of Natural History's first dinosaur find, a *Diplodocus carnegii*, in the Oakland section of Pittsburgh.

#### Local arts program

A colorful mural at 2037 Centre Ave. depicts Wilson and scenes from his plays. Kyle Holbrook created the mural with children from a local arts program. Holbrook says he could hear chatter from a nearby jitney station as he painted, "like a constant scene of one of August Wilson's plays as stories are told." Wilson's play "Jitney" is currently on Broadway in New York.

Wilson attended Catholic schools. The Hill District's Catholic church, St Benedict the Moor, is topped by a black figure of the saint with outstretched arms facing downtown. Kimberly Ellis says Wilson was among those who wondered whether the saint's arms were "welcoming, or does St Benedict have his back to the Hill?" No building exists at 1839 Wylie Ave., but the address appears in several plays as the location of Aunt Ester's house. The number 1839 is significant as the year Africans mutinied aboard the slave ship Amistad.

#### Further deterioration

A historical marker at a local baseball field honors Josh Gibson, the Negro Leagues player

mentioned in "Fences." Gibson, one of the greatest hitters of all time, was the second Negro Leagues player inducted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame. Troy's character in "Fences," also a former Negro Leagues player, is bitter that he, Gibson and other League stars ended up, as the play says, "without a pot to piss in or a window to throw it out" after the integration of Major League Baseball led to the Negro Leagues' shutdown.

The Hill District is dotted by modest, well-tended homes, but there are also plenty of vacant lots and boarded-up buildings. It's a legacy of an urban renewal program that tore down the neighborhood's commercial heart in the 1950s. Promises of redevelopment never materialized. Riots following the Rev. Martin Luther King's 1968 assassination led to further deterioration. The destruction unleashed by urban renewal is a theme of Wilson's play "Jitney," when the car service owner tells drivers the city plans to demolish their building. Eddie's Restaurant, where Wilson would sit, write and nurse a cup of coffee for hours after moving back to the neighborhood as a young man, no longer exists. — AP



Photo shows Britany Spears (first right) on stage. — Ap photos



Patrick Monahan of Train and family.

# 2017 Radio Disney Music Awards



Constance Marie and her daughter.



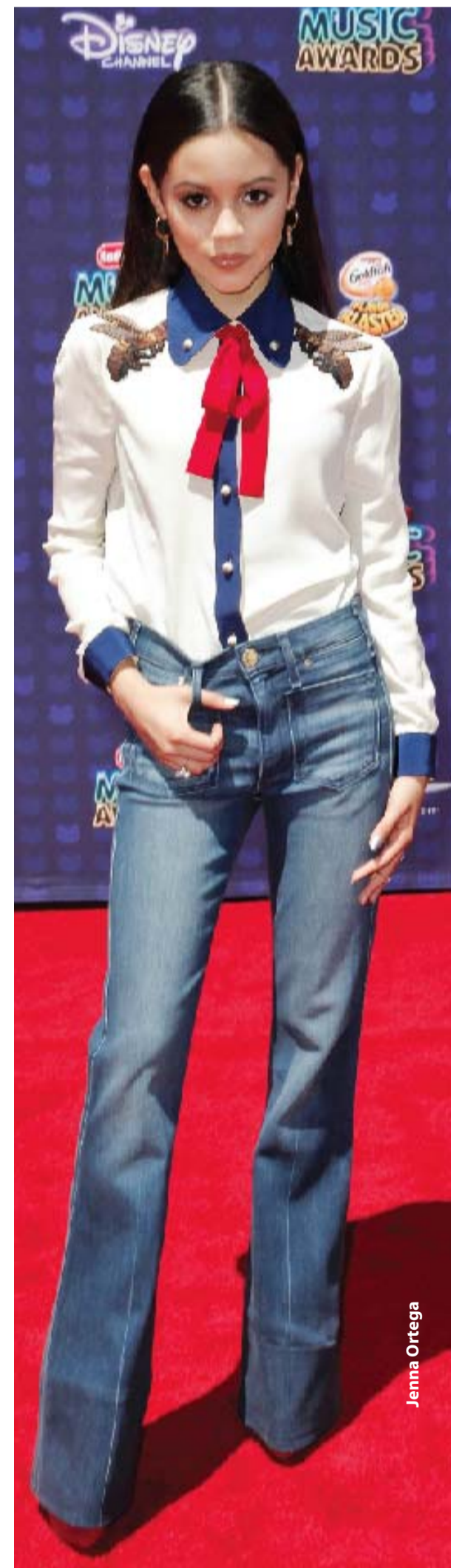
Nick Jonas arrives for the Radio Disney Music Awards at the Microsoft Theatre in Los Angeles.



China Anne McClain and Lauryn McClain.



Lindsey Stirling



Jenna Ortega



Laurie Hernandez



Raven-Symone



Skylar Stecker



Auli'i Cravalho



Kelsea Ballerini

**Winner List**

- Icon Award**  
Britney Spears
- Hero Award**  
Nick Jonas
- She's the One - Best Female Artist**  
Ariana Grande
- He's the One - Best Male Artist**  
Niall Horan
- You Know You Love Them - Best Group**  
Fifth Harmony
- The Bestest - Song of the Year**  
"Treat You Better" - Shawn Mendes
- The Buzz - Breakout Artist of the Year**  
Alessia Cara
- The Freshest - Best New Artist**  
Grace Vanderwaal
- Mashup - Best Collaboration**  
"Bad Things" - Machine Gun Kelly and Camila Cabello
- XOXO - Best Crush Song**  
"Let Me Love You" - DJ Snake feat. Justin Bieber
- #SquadGoals - Fiercest Fans**  
Harmonizers (Fifth Harmony)
- So Happy - Best Song That Makes You Smile**  
"24K Magic" - Bruno Mars
- Stuck in Our Heads - Best Song to Lip Sync To**  
"Work" - Rihanna feat. Drake
- When the Beat Drops - Best Dance Track**  
"Cold Water" - Major Lazer featuring Justin Bieber and M?
- Future Now Tour** - Demi Lovato and Nick Jonas
- Revival Tour** - Selena Gomez
- The Bestest - Radio Disney Country Favorite Artist**  
Kelsea Ballerini
- The Freshest - Radio Disney Country Best New Artist**  
Maren Morris
- Play It Again - Radio Disney Country Favorite Song**  
Peter Pan - Kelsea Ballerini
- #Trending** - Favorite Social Media Star  
Jake Paul



Nick Jonas (center) and guests attend the Radio Disney Music Awards (RDMAs).



Sabrina Carpenter



Madison Pettis



Noah Cyrus



Miles Brown

## Chaos-hit luxury festival promises refunds-and comeback

Organizers of a music festival in The Bahamas that was billed as a luxury getaway but collapsed in chaos promised refunds Saturday-and said they would try again next year. The Fyre Festival was abruptly aborted Friday after hundreds of party-goers who had paid for tickets costing up to \$12,000 and VIP packages that rose to \$250,000 — arrived only to be welcomed by relief-camp style tents and rudimentary sandwiches rather than the promised lavish experience. The festival, led by New York rapper Ja Rule and tech entrepreneur Billy McFarland, one day later apologized and said all festival goers would be refunded. "Also, all guests from this year will have free VIP passes to next year's festival," said a statement on its website.

The 2018 festival, it said, would take place on a beach destination in the United States. While thanking the government of The Bahamas, the organizers said they had tried to create a festival on a private island where there was insufficient infrastructure. "The team was overwhelmed. The airport was jam-packed. The buses couldn't handle the load," the statement said. "This is an unacceptable guest experience and the Fyre team takes full responsibility for the issues that occurred," it said. Such problems were fully apparent to guests who had made it to the island on the VIP packages that were supposed to feature exclusive villas as well as chartered planes from Miami.

Numerous festival-goers posted pictures of shambolic scenes as they arrived and quickly turned around-setting off mockery in corners of the internet over

the high prices many had handed over. The government of The Bahamas, a country of more than 700 islands and cays where tourism is the largest industry, also apologized and assisted in evacuations-but stressed it was not involved directly in the event. The Fyre Festival was one of the biggest disasters amid a boom in music events across the world and particularly the United States, where festivals have become a rite of passage for millennials of sufficient means. — AFP



This photo provided by Jake Strang shows mattress and tents set up for attendees of the Fyre Festival, Friday in the Exuma islands, Bahamas. — AP



A woman looks at an art work called "Papillon Monarque-Migration is Beautiful" by US artist Andrea Bowers, as part of the exhibition "La Terra Inquieta" (The Restless Earth) on migrants odyssey organized by the Trussardi foundation during La Triennale di Milano on April 29, 2017. — AFP

## Iranian filmmaker imprisoned over his work released early



Iranian filmmaker Keywan Karimi.

An award-winning Iranian filmmaker imprisoned over his work has been released after serving about five months of his yearlong sentence, though he doesn't know whether he'll make movies again in the Islamic Republic. Keywan Karimi told The Associated Press yesterday that he credited international pressure for his early release, as well as escaping the 223 lashes that were part of his sentence. Others, however, remain imprisoned in the Islamic Republic as part of a hard-line crackdown amid President Hassan Rouhani's outreach to the wider world through the nuclear deal.

Karimi said in an interview over Skype that he served his sentence in Tehran's Evin prison, which holds political prisoners and dual nationals detained by the security services. He described

spending his first month in solitary confinement, a place he described as "very dirty, very cold." He said he suffered pain in his stomach and leg, but ultimately recovered. He later was put into the general prison population, sharing a room with 20 other prisoners. "You're far away from freedom, far away from something you love," Karimi said.

Karimi was convicted of "insulting sanctities" in Iran, whose government is ultimately overseen by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. The case involved footage from both a "video clip" and a film he directed called "Writing on the City," which focuses on political graffiti in Iran from its 1979 Islamic Revolution to its contested 2009 election. Karimi is perhaps best known by international film critics for his 2013 black-and-white minimalist film, "The Adventure of the Married

Couple." The short film, based on a story by Italian writer Italo Calvino, follows the grinding routine of a husband and wife working opposite shifts, she in a bottle factory and he at a mannequin store. Neither speaks, the only noise is the hum of the city they live in.

The film played in some 40 film festivals and won prizes in Spain and Colombia. Karimi is one of several artists, poets, journalists, models and activists arrested in a crackdown on expression led by hard-liners who oppose Rouhani. His release comes ahead of Iran's May presidential election, in which Rouhani is seeking re-election. For now, Karimi said he was grateful to be out of prison, though he felt alienated from Iran and its people. "I want to continue filmmaking, but I don't know how and in which country," Karimi said. — AP

## Coppola and 'Godfather' cast reunite at Tribeca Film Fest

Debilitating studio battles. One miraculously still cat. Mooning contests between James Caan and Marlon Brando. These were the memories shared, 45 years later, on the making of "The Godfather" in a rare reunion of the film's cast and director Francis Ford Coppola at Radio City Music Hall. With the stage decorated to resemble the library of Brando's Don Corleone, and a portrait of the actor hanging above, Coppola and cast members Al Pacino, Robert De Niro, Robert Duvall, James Caan, Diane Keaton and Talia Shire, gathered together once again on Saturday. The night was organized by De Niro as the closing evening of his Tribeca Film Festival, which preceded the affair with a grand double feature of "The Godfather," parts one and two.

That made for a long day - the event spanned nearly nine hours - but one of giddy delight for devotees of Coppola's masterpieces. While both films are widely viewed as among the finest ever made, Coppola and cast spoke again and again about the films' humble origins, when Coppola was a young, untested director, Pacino was an unknown theater actor who the studio, Paramount, was loathe to cast, and few thought the source material - Mario Puzo's best-seller - was the stuff of great cinema. Even Coppola, himself.

"I was disappointed in the book when I first read it because it's very long," said Coppola, who called Puzo's book "a bit of a potboiler." "Much of the book - about a third - is about Lucy Mancini's anatomy," he said. Coppola's battles over casting Pacino as Michael Corleone have long been Hollywood legend. To help convince the wary studio, Pacino said he did more screen tests - including after he actually got the part - than he could remember. Pacino even suggested Coppola shouldn't fight so hard for him, telling him, "It's OK. We'll work again. There are other things to do." But Coppola was enamored with Pacino. After meeting him in San Francisco, he couldn't shake the image of Pacino as Corleone. "I just saw his face," said Coppola. "Everywhere we went, all the girls lit up for Al, for some reason."

### "To get your chops together"

Still, Pacino was skeptical. "I thought, 'Gee, it's not a really good role,'" said the now 77-year-old actor of the part that earned him two Oscar nods and made him a movie star. "Sonny is the part I can play," he said, referring to the hot-headed Sonny Corleone, played by Caan. (De Niro, who ended up playing young Don Vito Corleone in Part II, also auditioned for the part of Sonny.) When the shoot got off to a rocky start, Pacino lost his already shaky faith. "It's over," he remembered thinking. "This is the

worst film ever made!" But Pacino said he was straightened out after a pep talk from Coppola, who showed him early footage of his performance and told the struggling Pacino "to get your chops together." There were many such stories shared Saturday. All marveled at the cat, roaming nearby, that was thrust into one scene where it calmly burrowed in Brando's lap. After the lengthy wedding scene, Pacino said, he and Keaton "got so loaded, we were on the floor." During the same scene, Duvall said, "We were all mooning each other and Brando took it very seriously."



In this file photo, director Francis Ford Coppola poses for photographers as he arrives for the premiere of Verdi's "La Traviata" at the Rome Opera House, in Rome. — AP

Brando, of course, wasn't the only one missing Saturday. John Cazale (Fredo) was spoken of frequently, as was cinematographer Gordon Willis. The event was moderated by Taylor Hackford and live streamed on Facebook. The conversation sometimes got bogged down and some on the panel hardly spoke, as many watching grumbled. De Niro said little until nearly an hour in. But if it was an imperfect evening, it only highlighted the almost inhumane perfection of the movies Coppola et al produced. Having recently watched the films for the first time in decades, Keaton could hardly contain her amazement. "Every choice you made was so authentically brilliant," she exclaimed to Coppola. "It's so unusual!"

With time running out, Coppola tried to take questions from the audience, asking for the house lights to be raised and urging audience members to holler out. But after a few questions, a voice announced over the speakers that the night was over and "The Godfather" got the hook. Coppola and the group gathered together on stage to embrace each other while the crowd, eager for more, took pictures of the legendary "Godfather" team, draped arm in arm. — AP



A metal music band performs on stage of the Opera du Rhin during the 'Metal Oper'Art' festival in Strasbourg, eastern France, on April 29, 2017. — AFP