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MoH: Nutrition features strongly in Kuwait's development

Gulf Cable Co supports using Kuwaiti products: Bader Al-Kharafi

Alghanim opens first Slim Chickens outside the US

Atletico comeback falls short, Real in final


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MUSLIM LEADERS INVITED TO SAUDI TRUMP SUMMIT

RIYADH: King Abdullah II of Jordan, Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika and Niger's Mahamadou Issoufou are among leaders invited by Saudi King Salman for a summit with US President Donald Trump. The Arab-Islamic-American Summit will be among a series of talks expected to be held in Riyadh on May 20-21, Saudi officials said. Trump has frequently been accused of fuelling Islamophobia but aides described his decision to visit Saudi Arabia as an effort to reset relations with the Muslim world.

There will also be a separate meeting between monarchs of the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council and Trump, as well as bilateral talks between the Saudi and US leaders, Riyadh's Foreign Minister Adel Al-Jubeir has said. In addition to heads of state from Jordan, Algeria and Niger, the official Saudi Press Agency reported that Salman asked Yemeni President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi and Morocco's King Mohammed VI to attend. The leaders of Turkey, Pakistan, Iraq and Tunisia have also received invitations, the Arab News daily reported yesterday.

Saudi Arabia - which is home to Islam's holiest sites - will be Trump's first foreign stop since becoming president in January. "It is a clear message to the world that the United States and the Arab and Islamic countries can form a partnership," Jubeir said in Washington, according to SPA. — AFP



KUWAIT: HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah (right) and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah attend a parliament session at the National Assembly yesterday. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah yesterday faced two grillings by opposition MPs in a 13-hour marathon closed debate, which ended without filing a non-cooperation motion. Opposition MPs needed the signature of 10 lawmakers to file the non-cooperation motion, which is similar to a no-confidence motion, but they could not muster the required number.

Many opposition lawmakers decided to keep the pledge they made several weeks ago not to grill the prime minister in return for the government's pledge to reinstate citizenships of several opposition figures it revoked about three years ago. At the start of the session, the government demanded that the debate be held in secret and the Assembly agreed, with 33 votes supporting and 28 opposing.

The two quizzes alleged that the government of the prime minister failed to check rampant corruption, that it has squandered public funds and raised charges on citizens after the drop in oil revenues. They also accused the premier of selectively targeting political opponents and punishing them by revoking their citizenships.

In the first grilling, MPs Saleh Ashour and Faisal Al-Kandari spoke in support of the prime minister, while MPs Jamaan Al-Harbash and Ali Al-Deqbasi spoke in support of the grilling. In the second grilling, MPs Salah Khورشid and Khalaf Dumaitheer supported the prime minister, while MPs Abdulwahab Al-Babtain and Adel Al-Damkhi supported the grilling.

At the end of the first grilling, a three-MP committee comprising of MPs Rakan Al-Nasef, Jamaan Al-Harbash and Awdah Al-Awdah was formed to investigate the allegations and issues raised by the grilling.

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This file photo taken on June 30, 2011 shows plainclothes US navy officers visiting the Puerto Princesa Subterranean River National Park on the western Philippine island of Palawan. — AFP

PHILIPPINES TOURIST SITES FACE KIDNAPPING THREAT

MANILA: Terrorists are planning to kidnap foreigners in tourist hotspots across the central and western Philippines, Western governments said yesterday following a foiled abduction attempt by Islamist militants a month ago. President Rodrigo Duterte said security had been increased on the western island of Palawan, one of the Philippines' most popular tourist destinations, after the US embassy warned of a kidnapping threat there. "The US Embassy has received credible information that terrorist groups may be planning to conduct kidnapping operations targeting foreign nationals in the areas of Palawan," it said in a travel advisory.

The embassy identified two locations - the capital city of Puerto Princesa and the nearby underground river that attracts thousands of visitors daily - as areas the kidnapers were targeting. Puerto Princesa is about 400 km northwest of southern islands that are strongholds of the Abu Sayyaf, militants who have pledged allegiance to the Islamic State group and frequently kidnap foreigners. The Abu Sayyaf last month attempted a kidnapping raid on Bohol island, a popular tourist destination in the central Philippines, but were foiled after authorities became aware of the plot.

Security forces found the militants a day after they arrived on speedboats from Bohol, which is 500 km north from the Abu Sayyaf's bases, and engaged

them in a gun battle. Nine militants, three soldiers and one policeman were killed in the clashes, according to authorities. They said another militant died in police custody. The Bohol raid occurred days after the US embassy issued a warning of potential kidnappings there and the neighboring island of Cebu, which has a major city of the same name. The Abu Sayyaf has since its founding in the 1990s kidnapped dozens of foreigners and many more locals to extract ransoms.

The militants typically raid coastal areas after sailing from their southern island strongholds on speedboats, although in recent years they have also attacked cargo and merchant ships. They beheaded two Canadians last year and an elderly German sailor in February after demands for millions of dollars were unmet. The Abu Sayyaf raided a resort in Puerto Princesa's Honda Bay in 2001, abducting three Americans and 17 Filipinos.

One of the Americans was beheaded, while one was killed in a military rescue attempt a year later. The third American was freed in the rescue effort. The Abu Sayyaf has also kidnapped people from Malaysian coastal resorts, which are a short speedboat ride from its southern Philippine bases. Still, in recent years the kidnapping threat had largely been restricted to the southern Philippine region of Mindanao.

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TRUMP DEFENDS FIRING FBI CHIEF

US PRESIDENT ASKS RUSSIA TO REIN IN ASSAD, IRAN

COMEY FIRING STIRS MEMORIES OF NIXON, WATERGATE SCANDAL

WASHINGTON: For many in Washington, US President Donald Trump's shock firing of FBI director James Comey has sparked instant comparisons to the actions of Richard Nixon and the Watergate era's infamous "Saturday Night Massacre".



James Comey

On Oct 20, 1973, Nixon crossed a fateful line by trying to rid himself of the independent special prosecutor who was investigating the Watergate scandal. The prosecutor, Archibald Cox, had issued a subpoena for copies of secret tape recordings of Nixon's Oval Office conversations. The tape recordings were key to proving Nixon's complicity in a sweeping cover-up of a break-in the year before at the Democratic National Committee offices at the Watergate, an office and residential complex on the Potomac. Stung, Nixon reacted by ordering his attorney general, Elliot Richardson, to fire Cox. Richardson refused and resigned in protest, so the president ordered the deputy attorney general, William French Smith, to do his bidding. But French Smith also resigned rather than carry out the order.

Continued on Page 13

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump yesterday defended the shock firing of FBI director James Comey, as critics slammed an apparent bid to kill off an agency investigation of his team's ties to Russia. Hours after sacking the man heading a probe into Moscow's alleged meddling in last year's US election, Trump hosted Russia's top diplomat at the White House in his highest-level Kremlin encounter since taking office.

A congressional source with knowledge of the matter said Comey told lawmakers within the past few days that he

had asked the Justice Department for more funding for the Russia probe. Comey informed lawmakers of that request after the Senate intelligence committee had asked the FBI to speed up its Russia inquiry, the source said. Seeking to contain the firestorm triggered by Comey's dismissal, Trump and his aides repeated yesterday that it was nothing to do with Russia, and motivated solely by concerns over his handling of the high-stakes probe into Hillary Clinton's emails.

Continued on Page 13



WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump shakes hands with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov in the White House yesterday. — AP



SEATTLE: Microsoft chief executive Satya Nadella opens the US technology titan's annual Build Conference yesterday with a focus on a future rich with artificial intelligence that follows people from device to device. — AFP

MICROSOFT AIMING TO MAKE ARTIFICIAL INTEL MAINSTREAM

NEED TO PREVENT '1984' FUTURE

SEATTLE: Microsoft chief executive Satya Nadella said yesterday tech developers have a responsibility to prevent a dystopian "1984" future as the US technology titan unveiled a fresh initiative to bring artificial intelligence into the mainstream. At the start of its annual Build Conference, Microsoft sought to showcase applications with artificial intelligence that could tap into services in the Internet "cloud" and even take advantage of computing power in nearby machines.

Nadella spent time on stage at the Seattle conference stressing a need to

build trust in technology, saying new applications must avoid dystopian futures feared by some. Nadella's presentation included images from George Orwell's "1984" and Aldous Huxley's "Brave New World" to underscore the issue of responsibility of those creating new technologies. "What Orwell prophesied in '1984', where technology was being used to monitor, control, dictate, or what Huxley imagined we may do just by distracting ourselves without any meaning or purpose - neither of these futures

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KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah reads a letter from Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, delivered by Saudi Minister of State, Member of the Council of Ministers Dr Essam bin Saad bin Saeed. — Amiri Diwan photos



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

SAUDI KING INVITES AMIR TO US-GCC, ARAB ISLAMIC SUMMITS AMIR CONGRATULATES SOUTH KOREA'S NEW PRESIDENT

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday a written letter from the Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, which included two separate invitations for His Highness to attend the US-GCC and the US-Arab Islamic summits which will be held in the Kingdom this month. The letter was delivered to His Highness by Saudi Minister of State, Member of the Council of Ministers Dr Essam bin Saad bin Saeed during a

reception in Bayan Palace. The meeting was attended by Deputy Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah.

Earlier yesterday, His Highness the Amir received His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. Separately, His Highness the Amir sent a cable of congratulations yesterday to President-elect Moon Jae-In on his

victory in the South Korean presidential election. In his cable, His Highness the Amir congratulated South Korea's new president on winning the trust of the Korean people, wishing him everlasting wellness as well as more progress and development for bilateral relations. His Highness the Crown Prince and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Hamad Al-Sabah both sent similar cables to President Moon Jae-In. — KUNA

ISRAEL MUST JOIN NPT: KUWAIT



Haya Al-Mansour

VIENNA: Kuwait affirmed that Israel must join the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and have all of its nuclear facilities inspected by the IAEA and other international organizations, said a Kuwaiti diplomat yesterday. Member of Kuwait's permanent delegation to international organizations' headquarters in Vienna Haya Al-Mansour delivered Kuwait's stance on the Israeli issue during a meeting of the preparative committee for the Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the NPT.

Israeli nuclear plants are old and may lack safety measures, which poses threat to the Middle East's security, said Mansour. Meanwhile, she noted that all member-states must have an equal right to own nuclear facilities for peaceful purposes, in accordance with the terms of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The NPT was adopted on June 12, 1968 as an effort to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The treaty took effect on March 5, 1970. Several review conferences were held since 1995; however, there are still countries that did not sign the NPT. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Suleiman Al-Jarallah meets with a visiting Ghanaian delegation. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Suleiman Al-Jarallah meets with a visiting official delegation from Burkina Faso.

GCC'S OIL RESERVES STOOD AT 496.5 BILLION BARRELS IN '16

KUWAIT: Oil reserves in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) amounted to 496.5 billion barrels in 2016, an Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) official said yesterday. In a panel discussion put together by the Ministry of Oil, Director General of OPEC's Economics Department Abdulfatah Dendi said that the GCC's oil reserves account for 39 percent of global supply and 70 percent of Arab oil reserves. On oil consumption in the GCC during the past year, he said it was around 3.8 million barrels per day (bpd), citing a "21 percent gap in supply and demand in 2016." Moreover, Dendi revealed that 79

percent of local oil production is exported to global markets, noting that the oil sector is the biggest source of revenue in the GCC. He also pointed out that the latest data shows that total oil production in the GCC stood at KD 485.7 billion in 2015, which makes up 60 percent of total Arab oil production. Meanwhile, the OPEC official noted that oil revenue in the GCC amounts to KD 150 billion (\$495 billion). Dendi underscored the need to have a diversified economy and warned against the perils of dependence upon one source of revenue, which encumbers sustained economic growth. — KUNA

JARALLAH MEETS GHANA, BURKINA FASO OFFICIALS

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Suleiman Al-Jarallah met yesterday with a visiting Ghanaian delegation on bilateral relations and the current regional and international situations. Jarallah also received a visiting official delegation from Burkina Faso on aspects of bilateral cooperative ties and the latest developments on both regional and international arenas. Several senior

officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs attended both meetings. Meanwhile, Jarallah met yesterday with Chairman of the Workers Union of the Oil Sector Saif Al-Qahtani and other union members. During the reception, they presented a memorial shield to the Foreign Ministry in appreciation for its efforts to support the union during its participation in international conferences. — KUNA

KUWAIT READY TO RESUME VISA WAIVER TALKS WITH EU: DIPLOMAT

KUWAIT: Kuwait is ready to resume negotiations with the European Commission on exempting Kuwaiti nationals from Schengen visa, Assistant Foreign Minister for Europe Affairs Ambassador Waleed Al-Khubaizi affirmed yesterday. The Kuwaiti government is willing to resume talks once the commission resolves the issue of influx of illegal immigrants to Europe, Khubaizi said in a press statement after meeting with Nicholas Westcott, Managing Director for Middle East and North Africa at the European External Action Service in EU. The Kuwaiti request for a Schengen visa waiver was addressed to Westcott during the meeting, he mentioned, adding consultations were also held during the meeting, discussing ways to boost bilateral ties and activating cooperation agreements signed between them last July.

Consultations also included boosting bilateral economic, energy, and humanitarian cooperation, the Kuwaiti diplomat said, adding that talks also shed light on the Kuwaiti "eminent" presence in Europe, particularly in investment and energy fields, and ways to capitalize on such distinctive bilateral ties in order to reach fur-

ther mutual understanding. The two sides also discussed the Kuwaiti-European common interests such as efforts to restore stability, boost security in the region, and strengthen human rights principles and values. They also agreed on acti-

vating cooperation between Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) and European development institutions in Third World countries, particularly the African continent, which is part of Kuwait's role in humanitarian action. — KUNA

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TWO FIREMEN HURT IN SHUWAIKH BLAZE

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Firemen battled a major blaze at a carpentry shop in Shuwaikh at dawn yesterday. Two firefighters were injured and had to be taken to hospital by paramedics. Industrial Shuwaikh, Shuhada, Subhan and backup centers responded and contained the fire to keep it from spreading to surrounding areas, then worked on tackling the flames. Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFSD) began an investigation to determine the cause of fire in the 500-sq-m facility.

Mock drill

In other news, KFSD held an exercise at Al-Kout mall in Fahaheel about a mock fire there. The scenario saw Fahaheel fire center men respond to the scene, and form rescue teams while others fought the fire. The mall was evacuated with the help of security men. The exercise was led by Fahaheel Center Chief Lt Col Tariq Al-Wuhaib.

Drug arrests

The Interior Ministry's Relations and Security Information Department was able to arrest several suspects over drugs crimes during April, as 93 various cases were registered with 130 suspects involved. It said 7.754 kg ice (methamphetamine) and 4.232



kg of heroin were found, besides 2.157 kg of chemical, 1.780 kg of hashish, 214 gm of marijuana, 2,743 illicit tablets and 24 liquor bottles. The department carried out preemptive steps to prevent the spread of drugs and arrested assistants of drug dealers.

Airport traffic

The Interior Ministry's Relations and Security Information Department said passenger traffic through the airport during April 2017 reached

941,248 passengers. The number of Gulf nationals departing and arriving was 84,239, while departing and arriving citizens numbered 310,366 passengers. The figure for other nationalities was 546,643 passengers. It said 19,440 entry visas were issued at the airport, fingerprint scans exposed 68 deportees, while nine were arrested for forgery. Travel bans were removed for 1,341 persons while 175 wanted persons were arrested. Ten people who were previously deported were allowed back in the country.



KUWAITI ARMY CHIEF MEETS BRITISH GENERAL

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Army Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Mohammad Al-Khodher met yesterday with visiting British Defense Minister's Advisor for Middle East Lieutenant General Thomas Beckett. During the meeting, both generals discussed aspects of military coop-

eration between both sides and ways of promoting and developing bilateral relations, the Defense Ministry said in a press release. The meeting was attended by the Kuwaiti Army Chief of Staff's Aide for Operations and Planning Major General Ahmad Al-Omairi. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Army Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Mohammad Al-Khodher meets with British Defense Minister's Advisor for Middle East Lieutenant General Thomas Beckett. — KUNA

FINANCIAL SUPPORT NEEDED TO PAY TEACHERS' RENT ALLOWANCE

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Director of the Ministry of Education's (MoE) financial department Bader Al-Mutawa issued an internal directive to the heads of salary departments, financial investigators and salary auditors, instructing them not to pay non-Kuwaiti female teachers' rent allowances ordered by court retroactively without direct instructions from the assistant undersecretary for financial affairs Yousef Al-Najjar. Mutawa said this step was taken after a court issued a verdict mandating MoE to pay non-Kuwaiti female teachers the sum of KD 90 a month as rent allowance difference since 2011, in addition to paying charges of KD 200. Mutawa added that MoE will not be able to pay the sum until further financial support arrives from the finance

ministry, as the total sum would exceed KD 47 million.

Drilling rigs

Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) CEO Jamal Jaafar announced that the total number of drilling rigs currently used is over 130 compared to only 97 last year. "This number is unprecedented in the company's history," he underlined, noting that work has started at the Um Naqa heavy oil production plant that was launched with a daily production capacity of 15,000 barrels of oil. Jaafar said that new discoveries of Jurassic gas (JGFI) would increase production and reserves, which would prolong the strategic life of the Burgan field for several more years. He also noted that two new oilfields were discovered in Arfajjiya to the northeast and Sokhairiyyat to the north, in addition to promising discoveries in Ratawi, Manaqeesh and Bahra.

WORKSHOP DISCUSSES 'HOW TO MANAGE SILK CITY'

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Chairman of the engineering professions committee at the Municipal Council Ahmed Al-Fadhlah said Kuwait is on the verge of local and international investments including the project to build the Silk City, which represents Kuwait's future and the manifestation of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's vision to find alternative sources of income. Speaking at a workshop the committee held under the title 'How to Manage Silk City' and attended by representatives from

various state departments, Fadhlah said development projects should be properly developed, taking into consideration various aspects such as classical and modern architectural patterns. In addition, Fadhlah stressed the need to benefit from Silk City despite previous mistakes committed in various projects in Kuwaiti and GCC cities. He also called for making Silk City a green one. Committee member Hassan Kamal said Silk City was discussed as a futuristic city to the north of Kuwait. The government has an ambitious plan to make it an integrated one.

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KUWAIT: The Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Hospital; a major health-related project of Kuwait's development plan for 2035.



The new expansion in Al-Amiri Hospital. — KUNA

NUTRITION FEATURES STRONGLY IN KUWAIT'S DEVELOPMENT AGENDA: MOH



The new outpatient clinics building in Al-Razi Hospital.



The new Ahmadi Hospital.

KUWAIT: Realizing the interrelation between healthy nutrition and the socio-economic development, the Ministry of Health (MoH) approved a set of indicators to gauge improvement in nutrition in its agenda for 2035. Based on the World Health Organization's (WHO) Global Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases for 2013-2020, previously approved by the ministry, the new indicators aim to prevent and manage the chronic diseases. One of these indicators is to raise the public awareness about the need to cut down sodium consumption to 30 percent.

The Ministry has recently reached a deal with the Kuwait Flour Mills and Bakeries Company to reduce salt in bread by 20 percent, and is working to add Vitamin D to staples ingredients. The new measures and the activation of medical protocols produced positive results as shown in the rise of age average to 79.6 years in the 2015 and decline of the mortality rate of children below five to 8.8 per 1,000 children in 2014. In its recent public health indicators, WHO recognized Kuwait's efforts to shift from the millennium development goals to the more ambitious sustainable development goals (SDGs).

Eradication of polio

Minister of Health Dr Jamal Al-Harbi said "One of the most remarkable achievements, made by the country is the eradication of polio in the recent years thanks to the expansion of vaccination coverage to 99.5 percent."

"The successes, recently made, encouraged the Ministry to shift from the stage of treating the nutrition-related chronic diseases to that of prevention through surveillance, early diagnosing and awareness campaigns," he pointed out. "The indicators of the strategy for the healthcare system also include a program for medical accreditation that aims to make sure that the national health facilities meet the global standards regarding a patient's right to safe access to decent treatment, medication and privacy.



The new Razi Hospital.

"The ministry started restructuring the healthcare system so as to provide quality service to patients, build the capacity of medical and nursing personnel, turn the primary health centers in industrial areas to specialized ones, and increase the number of internationally-accredited health cities to five each year," the minister added.

Quality service

In this context, head of the ministry's standards and indicators department Dr Malak Al-Ali said the ministry aspires to ensure provide quality and effective health service make Kuwait free of medical errors, thus saving a lot of financial resources and human effort.

"The ministry's ambitious strategy for 2035 includes, inter alia, programs for expanding the bed occupancies of hospitals, accrediting Kuwait as a regional center for disease control and prevention, the national program for accreditation of health services, and reducing the salt ratio in bread by 20

percent," she noted. "The Ministry is working to upgrade the healthcare system through combating the non-communicable diseases, training the national medical cadres, and leveraging initiative of single electronic file across 107 primary health centers, 32 specialized hospitals, six general hospitals, and 60 central directorates and offices. Its vision is in keeping with the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by world leaders in September 2015 at an historic UN Summit."

"This vision falls in five-year plans costing up to KD 3 billion (some \$9.87 billion)," Dr Ali pointed out. The ministry's strategy focuses on sound nutrition and combating chronic diseases that constitute the main cause of death and disability, given the fact that Kuwait is one of the countries that have worrying rates of obesity and diabetes.

Kuwait's rating on the global diabetes index retreated from 205 in 2013 to 207 in the following year. The number of diabetic adults in Kuwait hit 400,000 in 2015 with the rate of new cases representing 37.1 per 100,000 persons. Kuwait is world's third country in terms of ratio of diabetic to healthy children under the age of 15, according to figures of the International Diabetes Federation (IDF).

The Ministry adopted a new nutrition-based approach to treating all diseases, director of the nutrition department Dr Nawal Al-Qa'ood said. "Recent surveys showed that sound nutrition plays pivotal role in strengthening the immune system and combating epilepsy; this is why the Ministry is reducing salt and fats in staples, particularly the meals offered to patients," Dr Qa'ood added.

The national program for the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases aims to bring down by five percent the mortality rates resulting from heart diseases, diabetes, chest diseases, and common cancers such as colon, prostate, and breast cancers, she added. — KUNA



The new internal medicine clinic in Al-Adan Hospital.



The new Sharq Al-Ahmadi Clinic.



KUWAIT: Assistant Foreign Minister for European Affairs Walid Al-Khebeizi (right) and Ambassador of the Vatican to Kuwait cut the ceremony's cake. — Photo by Joseph Shagra



KUWAIT-VATICAN RELATIONS BASED ON COMMON VALUES: DIPLOMAT

KUWAIT: Assistant Foreign Minister for European Affairs Walid Al-Khebeizi said Tuesday the friendly relations with the Vatican City State stemmed from belief in shared values, tolerance and open up to religious faith. "The State of Kuwait was the first Gulf country to establish diplomatic relations with the Vatican in 1969 and since then the bilateral relations have kept growing," he told reporters after attending an annual function at the Vatican Embassy.

Ambassador Al-Khebeizi recalled the supportive stance of late Pope John Paul II during the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990. The large number of Christians living in Kuwait is indicative of the atmospheres of freedom of belief, tolerance and coexistence as well as respect for human dignity by all residents in the country, he added. — KUNA

KUWAITI RELIEF TO EAST DARFUR

KHARTOUM/IRBIL: Kuwait's ambassador to Sudan Bassam Mohammed Al-Qabandi launched yesterday the second aid convoy for the refugees who arrived in the Sudanese region of East Darfur escaping the violence in the country of South Sudan, said a statement by the Kuwaiti Embassy yesterday. The convoy was overseen by the International Islamic Charitable Organization (IICO) through its office in Sudan, the statement added.

Ambassador Qabandi expressed thanks to all those who contributed to this humanitarian effort, stressing that Kuwaiti support will continue to provide relief to those affected in South Sudan and the neighboring countries.

Meanwhile, head of the Supreme Committee for the support of refugees in South Sudan, Sowar Al-Dahab said "This convoy is an extension of the humanitarian work that has been continuing over the years from the people of Kuwait, who have always been supportive of the needy people of South Sudan and around the world. Meanwhile, Director of the IICO office in Sudan, Ahmed Al-Senoussi praised the "great" role played by the Embassy of the State of Kuwait in Khartoum in sponsoring charity and humanitarian work throughout Sudan and elsewhere. The convoy carries 100 tons of food and shelter relief supplies targeting 1,750 refugee families in the refugee camps in the state of East Darfur.

New school

In other news, Kuwait's General Consul in Irbil Dr Omar Al-Kanderi inaugurated yesterday the 'Kuwait School' for displaced Iraqis in Dohuk province. Kanderi said that the new school, financed by Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS), was part of the Kuwaiti philanthropic campaign 'Kuwait by your side.'

He added that such humanitarian aid was provided to the Iraqis according to guidelines by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. The school will cater to the needs of some 500 students, Kanderi added. Meanwhile, the authorities in Duhok expressed appreciation for Kuwait's humanitarian role towards displaced people. Kuwait recently opened several schools in Irbil and helped provide necessities to some 20,000 Iraqi students in the area. Duhok province alone hosts more than 700,000 displaced Iraqis, who have fled Mosul since an Iraqi military offensive began late 2016 against the so-called Islamic State (IS).

Food baskets

Separately, Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) distributed a total of 2,500 food baskets among the residents of liberated areas in the Iraqi city of Mosul. Kuwait's fresh relief aid is primarily intended to alleviate the sufferings of those people living in the areas that have already been retaken from IS militants, an Iraqi charity official said yesterday. As many as 15,000 people have benefitted from Kuwait's food aid, which is part of Kuwait's humanitarian aid campaign commenced since the launching of the ongoing operation to liberate Mosul, said Mohammad Bahaeddin, the Iraqi Al-Barazani Charity Foundation's humanitarian aid distribution chief. He expressed much thanks and appreciation to the State of Kuwait for its nonstop relief aid to internally displaced persons in different areas in Iraq. — KUNA

KUWAIT, MOROCCO DISCUSS BOOSTING ECONOMIC TIES

RABAT: Kuwait's Ambassador to Morocco Abdullatif Al-Yahya stressed yesterday the importance of creating an appealing investment climate in his country and the Kingdom, in addition to overcoming all obstacles and difficulties facing Kuwaiti and Moroccan investors.

Yahya made his remarks after holding talks earlier with a number of Moroccan state officials, noting that talks addressed ways to boost economic cooperation and investment opportunities between the two countries. The two sides also discussed bolstering Kuwaiti-Moroccan economic and commercial ties, and ways to enhance them through increasing investment opportunities in agriculture and marine resources.

The Kuwaiti diplomat also pointed out Kuwait's investment opportunities as part of the country's new economic plan, which aims at transforming Kuwait into a financial and business hub with highest international standards. — KUNA



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BURGAN BANK SPONSORS 'PASSPORT TO THE ARTS'

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank, one of the highest contributors to sustainability and progress in society, is sponsoring American United School's fourth Annual Art's Night themed 'Passport to the Arts, because Art has no Boundaries,' to encourage creative expression, help unleash innovative ideas among Kids and enable them to learn valuable skills in their spare time. The cultural activity will take place on May 18, 2017.

With an ever-growing involvement in the community to create positive and lasting change, Burgan Bank's latest initiative seeks to encourage arts and creative thinking, promote diverse skills and help create a culture-rich environment where children can grow and thrive. Art can also teach the Children how to preserve the environment and understand the importance of recycling of raw materials and use them to come up with innovative ideas for crafts. Fine arts also play a major role in shaping the child's personality and represent a powerful way to nurture a new generation of young artists.

Burgan Bank believes that art has a unique ability to bring people of different cultures and backgrounds together and such platforms are proven to boost children's self-confidence and expand children's view of the world, while combining talents under one roof that will garner stronger community ties with each other, each making a real impact on the children's lives. In addition, painting has a great importance in children's lives, particularly to those of a very young age or introverts, because it is a simple avenue to express their feelings and unleash their imagination. There are many & various psychology studies confirm that painting is a powerful means a child communicates with the parents, who understand their kids' moods through the arts and paintings.

Burgan Bank firmly believes that art has a powerful impact on people's lives, especially on children's, and we hope more will draw inspiration from the growing local talent. Burgan Bank also hope to inspire people to join in the movement of delivering real change through art and education."

The event will showcase the work of student artists in a variety of mediums ranging from artwork, vocal and musical performances as well as interactive art stations for all ages. The schools' families are invited to tour the galleries, which will be decorated to represent airports from all over the world while viewing the creative pieces of the internationally diverse student body.

Burgan Bank's support of this initiative falls under its dynamic full-fledged community program entitled 'ENGAGE' - Together to be the change. This program sheds light on important aspects affecting every segment of the society by promoting social welfare through educational, cultural and health driven initiatives. Burgan Bank's approach to 'ENGAGE' begins with a vital principle that as a leading Kuwaiti financial institution, its conduct and policies should be aligned with the needs and interests of the community.



النهار

Al-Anbaa

CRIMES AGAINST KUWAITI HUMANITY

By Saleh Al-Shayji

Corruption is incredibly prevailing amongst us and we have become much like old palm trunks being worn out and damaged by weevils. We have been moving from a corrupt person to a more corrupt one; from one theft to a larger one and from profiteering to taking over. We have heard enough about those corrupt thieves who are starting to shamelessly and fearlessly brag about their thefts.

Corrupt people were made. They did not willingly choose to be corrupt. Others have created them and facilitated corruption for their own benefits. The sad thing, for me and for every honest patriotic Kuwaiti, is that those corrupt people have grown less shameful. They have sold out their own reputations and became enslaved to whoever pays the highest prices. They have defamed their families.

So, how come do they face people while being fully involved in corruption? How on earth do they feel easy about stealing our funds while they are entrusted to protect, take care of, develop and increase them? Such actions are clear crimes being committed against Kuwaiti humanity and each Kuwaiti has every right to avenge

themselves from those shameless thieves. Kuwaitis used to be keen on protecting their reputations and that of all their nearest and dearest. They used to avoid suspicions and all reputation-threatening practices. During the stock exchange market crisis in the 1980s, many of the indebted bidders tried paying their millions-worth debts even if it cost them everything they owned to avoid being listed as wanted or referred to relevant authorities. Some even borrowed to pay off their debts, protect their reputations and keep their names clean. Those debts were the result of a business adventure, not of stealing public funds.

What happened then and changed Kuwaitis over those years? They do not care about their reputation or that of their families anymore. They do not care about what might happen to their children when their peers avoid them or describe them as the 'children of thieves.' We all heard what a former minister said about an office boy who used to work in his office in the 1990s and now has become a millionaire owning scores of millions and arrogantly walking around without even being asked about the source of his wealth.

—Translated by Kuwait Times

النهار

Al-Anbaa

KITCHENS OF ILLUSION

By Salah Al-Sayer

Yes, Sir. Your kitchen is fully equipped with an electric oven. Your fridge has all the ingredients needed for the dish you are about to cook, which is good, especially since you are a skilled chef who uses various ingredients properly and cooks with the most delicious flavors. However, it seems that you will have to do away with dinner and that anticipated meal.

Electric power is disconnected and your kitchen's oven will not work without it. That disconnected electric power is symbolic of the culture of democracy that is missing in our societies. Political democracy will not function without it and, even if it does, this will spoil the 'dish', something that has already happened in so many Arab 'kitchens'!

Before talking about political democracy and its tools such as parliamentary elections, ballots, devolu-

Democracy will not do us any good in societies where people are still talking about authenticity, heritage and cultural uniqueness

tion of power, public participation or elected governments, we need to talk lengthily about the culture of democracy. This is because racing to use democratic slogans while ignoring its basics is just a form of Arabic confusion that represents the absence of collective awareness in view of the opportunist domination of political Islam powers, who only use democracy and elections as foolproof vehicles to come to power, and then start burning those vehicles to prevent others' arrival.

Democracy will not do us any good in societies where people are still talking about authenticity, heritage and cultural uniqueness; societies that insist on putting horses behind wagons. For those societies, democracy can be very harmful unless we change and realize that the first road to democracy goes through spreading the culture of tolerance, respect of others' rights, accepting racial, social, religious and doctrinal pluralism, putting an end to the culture of arrogance, looking down upon others and manipulating truth; which are all hard to achieve unless government does their part in enhancing such culture. Otherwise, ballot boxes will remain as time bombs ready to explode each time they are opened.

—Translated by Kuwait Times



Group picture of Fikra's participants, mentors, and sponsors pose for a group photo during the final ceremony.

FIKRA PROGRAM CONCLUDES SECOND EDITION WITH A FINAL CEREMONY

GULF BANK AMONG SPONSORS

KUWAIT: Fikra Program held its concluding ceremony on May 9, 2017 at Dar Al-Athar Al-Islamiyyah's Yarmouk Cultural Centre. Gulf Bank was pleased to be among the sponsors of this edition of Fikra Program's entrepreneurship training program for entrepreneurs with unique business ideas.

Fikra Program aims to provide entrepreneurs with all of the tools and support they require to establish their own innovative businesses. Managed by Cubical Services Business Incubator, Fikra Program is an intensive entrepreneurship training program that provides aspiring entrepreneurs with all of the tools and support they require to establish their own innovative business. The training includes: leadership skills; comprehensive business planning; marketing; investment opportunities; navigating legal issues and contracts; and more. The program also provides one-on-one mentoring for the aspiring entrepreneurs. The first edition of the program resulted in establishing 33% of businesses, while 44% are still

in the negotiation phase with investors. There were more than 170 entrepreneurs who applied to Fikra Program's second edition. The selection process started in December 2016 where 40 shortlisted ideas pitched their business ideas to a panel of Fikra Program judges. Then, 15 innovative business ideas were selected and accepted into Fikra Program. The program was five months of intensive training and guidance, including more than 24 educational workshops. Additionally, Fikra Program worked with the Kuwait National Fund, helping the participants prepare the requirements necessary for obtaining funding. Participants also visited Dubai SME fund to understand the ecosystem and expand their businesses to the GCC.

During the concluding ceremony, the entrepreneurs pitched their ideas to an audience of more than 200 entrepreneurs, potential investors, high ranking government officials, and the key players in the startup

ecosystem. The event featured an exhibition where the 15 teams displayed their business ideas and identified collaboration opportunities.

Commenting on the success of the program for the second consecutive year, Laila Al-Qatami, Assistant General Manager of Corporate Communications at Gulf Bank said: "It was fantastic to be a part of fostering an entrepreneurial spirit in Kuwait's youth. The business plans and ideas presented were top-notch, diverse, and innovative. Gulf Bank would like to congratulate all of the participants in Fikra program and extend our best wishes to the 15 final businesses; we look forward to seeing their businesses grow and them making their mark. We were very pleased to be a sponsor of the Fikra program, the team behind it are themselves successful examples for upcoming entrepreneurs."

Mariam Hisham Al-Rayes, Fikra Program Manager at Cubical Services, expressed her sense of pride in the participants and the tremendous work that was put in by each and

every one of them to ensure that their thoughts were heard. Rayes said: "When Fikra Program was first established, it was inspired by the idea of embodying a support system for young fresh minds that have a lot to offer but lack the guidance and tools. Today, we stand tall and proud of what they have achieved and what Fikra Program was able to offer each participant. Congratulations to each of them for putting great efforts into transforming their innovative ideas into actual businesses. We look forward to the third edition of Fikra Program, and are excited to support new and innovative ideas by aspiring entrepreneurs and help them establish their businesses."

A highlight of the event was a speech given by Al-Sheikha Al-Zain Al-Sabah, Undersecretary of the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs of Kuwait, which is a strategic partner of Fikra Program. Sheikha Al-Zain said: "It is a pleasure to be part of Fikra program's first and second editions and we are proud to be a strategic



Gulf Bank representative receives the sponsorship award.

partner of such an impactful initiative. The program has witnessed great success and has attracted a large number of entrepreneurs and I believe it will continue to do so, in light of the invaluable contribution it is making to the lives of so many youth. I would like to thank the organizers, sponsors, mentors and trainers who contributed so much of their time and efforts to ensure that

Kuwait's youth are equipped with what they need to secured a bright and prosperous future."

Gulf Bank, in addition to all trainers, mentors and judges that were involved in the program, were honored for their support and efforts, and more importantly, for believing in the power of youth and what they could achieve when equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills.



KFH PARTICIPATES IN COLLEGE OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION GRADUATION CEREMONY

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) took part in the graduation ceremony of the College of Business Administration as part of its social responsibility and efforts to support the youth and the students. The ceremony was held under the patronage of the National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem and in the presence of a number of officials, VIPs, and faculty members.

KFH participation in sponsoring the graduation ceremony for the fourth consecutive year stems from its keenness to assume the social responsibility towards all segments of society, yet reflects its commitment and endeavors to support the students as they are key

pillar in achieving the comprehensive development in the country. KFH has a long track record of initiatives to support the students and sponsor their graduation projects and their various activities. This comes in line with the bank's strategy. KFH representatives at the ceremony expressed their sincere congratulations to the graduates and their parents for the great achievement.

Meanwhile, College of Business Administration praised KFH in recognition of the significant role it plays in shouldering social responsibility towards students and the educational process which reflects its prestigious status as a global leading Islamic financial institution.





Lavrov meets Tillerson ahead of Trump talks

TURKEY ASSAILS US MOVE TO ARM SYRIA KURDS AGAINST IS

MOON SWORN IN, VOWS TO ADDRESS N KOREA
 NEW S KOREAN PRESIDENT TO SOOTHE TENSIONS WITH US, CHINA

SEOUL: South Korea's new liberal President Moon Jae-in was sworn in yesterday and vowed to immediately tackle the difficult tasks of addressing North Korea's advancing nuclear ambitions and soothing tensions with the United States and China. Moon said in his first speech as president he would begin efforts to defuse security tensions on the Korean peninsula and negotiate with Washington and Beijing to ease a row over a US missile defense system being deployed in the South.

In his first key appointments, Moon named two liberal veterans with ties to the "Sunshine Policy" of engagement with North Korea from the 2000s to the posts of prime minister and spy chief.

Moon named Suh Hoon, a career spy agency official and a veteran of inter-Korea ties, as the head of the National Intelligence Service. Suh was instrumental in setting up two previous summits between the North and South.

Veteran liberal politician Lee Nak-yeon was nominated to serve as prime minister. Now a regional governor, Lee was a political ally of the two former presidents who held the summits with the North in 2000 and 2007. Lee's appointment requires parliamentary approval. Moon was expected to fill the remaining cabinet and presidential staff appointments swiftly to bring an end to a power vacuum left by the removal of Park Geun-hye in March in a corruption scandal that rocked South Korea's business and political elite.

"I will urgently try to solve the security crisis," Moon said in the domed rotunda hall of the parliament building. "If needed, I will fly straight to Washington. I will go to Beijing and Tokyo and, if the conditions are right, to Pyongyang also." Spy chief nominee Suh said Moon could go to Pyongyang if it was clear the visit would help resolve the North Korean nuclear crisis and ease military tension on the Korean peninsula. North Korea is likely to welcome Moon's election but its state media made no mention of his victory yesterday.

The deployment of the US Terminal High Altitude Area Defense System (THAAD) in the South has angered China, Seoul's major trading partner, which sees the system's powerful radar as a threat to its security. The issue has clouded efforts to rein in North Korea's nuclear and missile programs, and also led to recriminations by Beijing against South Korean companies. Moon, 64, also pledged to sever what he described as the collusive ties between business and government that have plagued many of South Korea's family-run conglomerates, known as chaebol, and vowed to be incorruptible. "I take this office empty-handed, and I will leave the office empty-handed," Moon said.

Moon met leaders of opposition parties before his simple swearing-in ceremony at parliament and promised to coordinate with them on national security. Office workers and passersby lined the streets as Moon's motorcade passed through central Seoul en route to the presidential Blue House. Moon waved to well-wishers through the sunroof of his limousine, which was flanked by police motorbikes.

Trust, understanding

Chinese President Xi Jinping and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe both congratulated Moon yesterday. Xi said China was willing to handle disputes with South Korea "appropriately" on the basis of mutual trust and understanding. Abe said in a statement he looked forward to working with Moon to improve relations, describing South Korea as one of Japan's most important neighbors.

The decision by the ousted Park's government to host the



SEOUL: South Korea's new President Moon Jae-in waves to neighborhoods and supporters with his wife Kim Jung-sook upon their arrival outside the presidential Blue House in Seoul yesterday. — AP

THAAD system has already proved a headache for Moon as Seoul tries to walk a fine line between Washington, its closest security ally, and Beijing. Moon has said the decision had been made hastily and his government should have the final say on whether to deploy it.

China hoped South Korea "pays attention to China's security concerns" and deals "appropriately" with the THAAD issue, a Chinese foreign ministry spokesman told a briefing in Beijing. As president, Moon must find a way to coax an increasingly belligerent North Korea to ease its nuclear and missile threats. It has conducted its fifth nuclear test and a series of missile launches since the start of last year, ratcheting up tension.

Washington wants to increase pressure on Pyongyang through further isolation and sanctions, in contrast to Moon's advocacy for greater engagement with the reclusive North.

In one of his first acts as president, Moon spoke by telephone with Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Lee Sun-jin. Moon's Democratic Party said he was briefed on the status of the North Korean military and South Korea's military readiness. Moon's election could add volatility to relations with Washington, given his questioning of the THAAD deployment, but it was not expected to change the alliance significantly, a US official said. The White House also congratulated Moon, saying it looked forward to working with him to strengthen their longstanding alliance.

Moon must also try to mend a society badly bruised by

the corruption scandal that doomed Park's administration. His party lacks a majority in a divided parliament. To push through major initiatives, including creating 500,000 jobs annually and reforming the chaebol, he will need to forge partnerships with some of those he fought on his path to the presidency.

Moon won with 41.1 percent of the votes but that seem-

ingly comfortable margin belied an ideological and generational divide in the country of 51 million people. Data from an exit poll conducted by South Korea's top three television networks showed that, while Moon won the majority of votes cast by those under the age of 50, conservative rival Hong Joon-pyo found strong support among voters in their 60s and 70s. — Reuters

US READY TO ADD CAPABILITIES TO DETER RUSSIA IN EUROPE: MATTIS

VILNIUS: Pentagon chief Jim Mattis yesterday said the United States and NATO are prepared to deploy any capabilities necessary to help beef up air defense systems in the Baltic region.

Mattis's remarks come amid heightened tensions with Russia, which is preparing for massive military exercises in its western military region in September, and has deployed a missile system in neighboring Kaliningrad. "We will deploy whatever capability is necessary here," Mattis said when asked about regional air defenses.

Two US defense officials earlier said the United States was considering sending a Patriot missile battery to the Baltic region for NATO air defense exercises this summer, though they stressed the move would only be temporary. Moscow last year deployed nuclear-capable Iskander missiles into

its Kaliningrad exclave, which borders Lithuania and Poland, rattling the NATO members.

Mattis blasted such moves. "Any buildup of Russian combat power in an area where they know, and we all know, they are not threatened by anything that we are doing ... is simply destabilizing," Mattis said at a press conference with Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaitė.

He however refused to discuss whether Vilnius had requested a permanent Patriot missile deployment.

"We will make those decisions in consultation with the Lithuania government," he said. The Patriot is a mobile air defense system made by Raytheon designed to intercept tactical ballistic missiles, low-flying cruise missiles and aircraft. "Everyone knows this is not an offensive capability,"

Mattis said. Moscow is holding its so-called "Zapad" drills in September that will see the Russian military showcase new hardware and upgrade existing systems in its western military region, US officials said.

German troops

Mattis later drove into the Lithuanian countryside outside Vilnius to visit a large, wooded training area about 20 kilometres (12 miles) from the border with Belarus. A German NATO battle group along with other NATO troops is operating in the area, training to better work together and improve coordination between the militaries. NATO is deploying the battalions in Poland and the Baltic states as tripwires against Russian adventurism in a region formerly under Moscow's control, spooked by its actions in Ukraine and Syria.

"The reason for the deployment you see right now is the lack of (Russian) respect for international law," Mattis told reporters after he visited US, Lithuanian and Dutch troops on a frigid training field. Mattis's trip to Lithuania is his first to eastern Europe as defense secretary and his meeting with Grybauskaitė, a very vocal critic of Russian leader Vladimir Putin, could be interpreted as a signal to Moscow. The highly militarized Russian exclave of Kaliningrad is right next door and Putin is prone to sabre rattling there.

A US-led NATO battalion that is stationed nearby in Poland and the German-led battalion Mattis visited are the first line of defense for the so-called "Suwalki Gap". NATO experts see the vulnerable stretch of territory as key to eastern flank security. The battalions will hold exercises focused on defending the Gap from June 10-24. — AFP



PABRADE: US Defense Secretary James Mattis (Front) with US troops deployed in Lithuania. — AFP

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YEMEN STRONGMAN SALEH OPEN TO TALKS WITH SAUDI

SANAA: Yemen's ex-president Ali Abdullah Saleh is open to negotiations with Saudi Arabia, two years into a deadly war between Saleh's Houthi rebel allies and the Saudi-backed government. "We have no choice but dialogue," Saleh said at a meeting of his General People's Congress party in the capital Sanaa on Tuesday.

"We are ready to go to Riyadh, Khams Mushit, Muscat or elsewhere to start dialogue and to reach an understanding," Saleh said, referring to cities in Saudi Arabia and neighboring Oman. Saleh however reiterated his rejection of the government of internationally recognized President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi and said Saudi Arabia

would have to find "new leadership". Members of Saleh's circle have been meeting unofficially with Saudi delegates for weeks in Berlin, a Yemeni government official said yesterday. The Yemeni leader also said he hoped to "form an alliance with Iran that would serve the interests of Yemen".

Shiite-dominated Iran is a key supporter of Yemen's Houthi rebels and the main regional rival of Sunni-ruled Saudi Arabia. Saleh, who survived an assassination attempt in 2011, has repeatedly said he was open to talks with Saudi Arabia. But he ruled out mediation by UN special envoy Ismail Ould Sheikh Ahmed, who aims to resume stalled peace talks by the end of May, accusing

him of bias. Government spokesman Rajeh Badi told AFP Ould Sheikh Ahmed is currently in Riyadh for talks on the Yemen crisis, which the UN estimates has killed more than 7,700 people since March 2015.

Saleh on Tuesday said 11,000 rebels had been killed and more than 25,000 injured in the past two years. While Saleh resigned under massive popular pressure in February 2012, he remains highly influential in Yemen. He was succeeded by Hadi, previously his vice-president.

Parts of the army remained loyal to Saleh after his resignation and he solidified his position as a crucial player in 2014 when he forged an alliance with

the Houthi rebels. The Houthis currently control Yemen's capital, the northern region bordering Saudi Arabia and a string of key ports along the Red Sea coast. The Hadi government is based in Aden, Yemen's second largest city. The president himself mainly resides in Saudi Arabia.

Bombing

A suspected Al-Qaeda suicide bombing yesterday killed a Yemeni soldier in the southeastern province of Hadramawt, a security official said. Six other people, including three civilians, were wounded when the assailant detonated his explosives at a checkpoint in the village of Duan, some 300 kilome-

tres (186 miles) northwest of the port city of Mukalla, the official said.

The attack comes days after government forces backed by the Saudi-led coalition mounted an operation against Al-Qaeda militants suspected of being behind the recent bombing of two abandoned police stations. Al-Qaeda extremists remain active in the vast region of Hadramawt after taking advantage of more than two years of conflict between the government and Shiite rebels.

The United States has intensified its air attacks on Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, the Yemeni branch that it considers the global terror network's most dangerous. —AFP

TURKEY ASSAILS US MOVE TO ARM SYRIA KURDS AGAINST IS

ISSUE RISKS STOKING TENSIONS BETWEEN ANKARA, WASHINGTON

ISTANBUL: Turkey yesterday slammed as unacceptable a US plan to arm Syrian Kurdish fighters whom Ankara considers terrorists, but the militia applauded a "historic" move that would hasten the extremists' defeat. The issue risks further stoking tensions between Ankara and Washington less than a week before President Recep Tayyip Erdogan heads to Washington to meet his US coun-

terpart Donald Trump in their first face-to-face encounter as heads of state. The Kurdish Peoples' Protection Units (YPG) is seen by Washington as the best ally against Islamic State (IS) jihadists in Syria and the prime attacking force in any assault on their stronghold of Raqqa.

But Ankara regards it as a terror group and the Syrian branch of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which since 1984 has waged an insurgency inside Turkey leaving

expect that this mistake is to be rectified. Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu added that "every weapon that turns up in their hands is a threat directed toward Turkey".

'Ensure clear victory'

In a surprise announcement, the Pentagon said Trump had authorized the arming of Kurdish fighters within the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) "to ensure a clear victory over ISIS in Raqqa."

The YPG hailed the move as "historic" and said it would now play "a more influential, powerful, and decisive role" in fighting IS. YPG spokesman Redur Xelil described the move as "somewhat late," but would still "provide a strong impetus" to all forces fighting IS.

The SDF, a US-backed group dominated by YPG but which also contains Arab elements, said that receiving US arms and military

work for the meeting. Canikli said Turkey would take the diplomatic initiative to convince Washington "to do what friendship requires." "The argument that a ground operation in the fight against Daesh (IS) would be successful only with YPG has nothing to do with reality," he said. Both Washington and Brussels classify the PKK as a terror group but do not regard the YPG as such. "YPG and PKK are both terror groups, there is no difference at all between them. They only have different names," Cavusoglu said in televised comments during an official visit to Montenegro.

'Graveyard for jihadists'

Turkey has said it is keen to join the battle to recapture Raqqa but on condition the offensive does not include the YPG. Last month, Erdogan said if Turkey and the United States joined forces, they could turn Raqqa into a "graveyard" for jihadists. But on April 27, Turkish warplanes struck YPG forces in Syria and also hit Kurdish forces in neighbouring Iraq in what Ankara described as "terrorist havens".

But the strikes angered Washington which accused Turkey of failing to properly coordinate its moves. Pentagon chief Jim Mattis on Tuesday took part in a summit in Copenhagen for senior leaders from the top 15 countries in the anti-IS coalition, including Turkey. Mattis, who was in Vilnius on Wednesday as part of a European tour, gave a positive assessment of the role Turkey will play in the lead up to the Raqqa fight. "Our intent is to work with the Turks, alongside one another to take Raqqa down," he said. Meanwhile, Trump was to receive Russia's top diplomat Sergei Lavrov at the White House on Wednesday to discuss a Russian plan to establish safe zones in Syria and help end the six-year conflict. Russia—the key ally of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and Turkey have been on opposite sides of the Syrian conflict but are working increasingly closely together in search of peace. —AFP



ANKARA: Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan (right) shakes hands with Kemal Kilicdaroglu left, head of the Republican People's Party (CHP), prior to a ceremony held for the 149th anniversary of Council of State in Ankara yesterday. —AP

equipment would "hasten the defeat" of the jihadists.

It remains to be seen what shadow the issue will cast over the talks between Trump and Erdogan, which have been touted as chance to forge a new partnership between the two NATO allies. A high-level Turkish delegation including Chief of Staff General Hulusi Akar, presidential spokesman Ibrahim Kalin and Turkey's spy chief Hakan Fidan had been in the US laying the ground-

FAMILIES POUR OUT OF MOSUL AS IRAQI TROOPS PUSH INTO IS AREAS

HAMMAM AL-ALIL CAMP, Iraq: Thousands more people are fleeing Mosul every day since Iraqi troops began their push into the last Islamic State-held areas of the city last week, with food and water running out and the fighting killing increasing numbers of civilians.

More than 22,000 people have fled Mosul since the US-backed forces opened a new front in the northwest of the city on May 4 to try to finally dislodge the militants, the United Nations said on Wednesday, citing Iraqi government figures. In the past two days alone, more than 11,000 people have passed through a screening site at the Hammam Al-Alil camp south of Mosul.

Islamic State fighters are shooting people who try to escape, although some men have been allowed to go in exchange for taking militants' families with them, said 40-year-old Umm Abdul Rahman, who fled the Musherfa district on Tuesday night. One man waiting to be checked by security at Hammam al Alil had streaks of blood on his clothes from carrying a woman hit by an Islamic State sniper.

They join an exodus from Mosul of more than 600,000 people in the seven months since Iraqi forces began their offensive there. Roughly 400,000 of those are from the western side of the city which is bisected by the River Tigris. The militants are now besieged in the northwestern corner, which includes the historic Old City centre, the medieval Grand al-Nuri Mosque, and its landmark leaning minaret where their black flag has been flying since June 2014.

About ten families, some forced out of other areas of Mosul as Iraqi forces advanced, were now crammed into every house in the northwest, Abdul Rahman said.

"There is no water, no food. The bombardment is continuous," she said, and the militants were setting civilian cars and trucks on fire to



MOSUL: A car bomb explodes as members of Iraq's Counter-Terrorism Services (CTS) advance towards the al-Islah Al-Zaraye neighborhood, West of Mosul yesterday during the ongoing offensive to retake the area from Islamic State (IS) group fighters. —AFP

create smokescreens. People are surviving on ground wheat boiled in water, 31-year-old Qatra Al-Nada Abdullah said, because Islamic State fighters were keeping any food or water that is left for themselves. "Even wheat is scarce," she said. Islamic State fighters are forcing people from their homes to use them as fighting positions, 62-year-old Umm Mohammed said as she clutched a packet of cigarettes forbidden under the militants' rule.

She and her family had burned everything, even their own shoes, to cook over after fuel

ran out. "We saw fear and hunger and death. I am an old woman and I have never seen anything like this." The militants seized Mosul in a shock offensive across northern and western Iraq in 2014 but have lost much of that territory to resurgent government forces in the past year. The campaign to recapture the city, Iraq's second largest, began last October.

Defeat in Mosul, the militants' last urban stronghold in the country, would still leave Islamic State in control of swathes of Syria and Iraqi territory near the Syrian border. —Reuters



DAHUK, Iraq: Akram Rasho Khalaf (10), stands with other children at the Kabarto Camp for internally displaced people in Dahuk, Iraq. Akram had been captured, trained and sold into servitude by Islamic State militants. His sleep is interrupted by the militants, who menace him in his dreams. —AP

IRAQI BOYS RECOUNT HORRORS OF CAPTIVITY, TRAINING BY IS

KABARTO CAMP, Iraq: They made the captive children, weak from hunger, fight over a single tomato. Then the Islamic State militants told them that in paradise they could eat to their hearts delight, but they could only get there by blowing themselves up. The lesson was part of the indoctrination inflicted by the militants on boys from Iraq's Yazidi religious minority after the extremist group overran the community's towns and villages in northern Iraq. The group forced hundreds of boys, some as young as 7 or 8, into training to become fighters and suicide bombers, infusing them with its murderous ideology.

Now boys who escaped captivity are living in camps for the displaced along with what is left of their families. "Even here I'm still very afraid," said 17-year-old Ahmed Ameen Koro, who spoke to The Associated Press in the sprawling Esyan Camp in northern Iraq, where he now lives with his mother, sister and a brother, the only surviving members of his family. "I can't sleep properly because I see them in my dreams." The militants stormed into the Yazidi heartland in the summer of 2014, killing tens of thousands of people and kidnapping thousands of women and girls to be used as sex slaves. The Yazidi minority's ancient faith is considered heretical by the Islamic extremists. US-backed Kurdish forces drove IS out of Sinjar in November 2015, but few Yazidis have returned, and an estimated 3,500 remain in IS captivity in Iraq and Syria, according to Human Rights Watch.

'They looked like monsters'

Ahmed's family tried to flee when the militants descended on their village, but IS fighters captured him, his 13-year-old brother Amin and four cousins. The boys were taken to the IS-held town of Tal Afar, some 30 miles (50 kilometers) away, where they were kept in a boys' school along with dozens of other boys and teens. The adult men were taken away, leaving the women and girls.

"They chose and took the girls they liked," Ahmed recalled. "I remember the girls were crying, as well as the mothers. They were dragging these girls from the arms of their mothers." "They were all very big bearded men, they looked like monsters," he said. Ahmed was among some 200 Yazidi boys sent to a two-

month training camp in Tal Afar. They studied the Quran and the militants' hard-line interpretation of Islam, and learned to shoot assault rifles and pistols. They watched videos on how to use a suicide belt, throw a grenade, or beat a person.

"They were telling us, 'You are not Yazidis anymore. You are one of us,'" Ahmed said. "When you grow up, you will blow yourself up" Akram Rasho Khalaf was only 7 when his town was overrun by the militants. His family tried to flee, but the militants opened fire and Akram suffered shrapnel and bullet wounds to his abdomen and hand. He was taken by ambulance to Mosul, seized earlier that summer by IS, where he underwent surgery. He never heard from his parents again.

Akram fidgeted as he talked about his captivity, saying he remembered being too hungry to be afraid. Eventually, he was brought to Raqqa, Syria, the IS group's self-declared capital. There the militants would throw balls at the children's heads. If anyone cried, he was beaten. Those who didn't cry were praised, and told they would one day be suicide bombers. "They were saying they are our friends, but the kids were scared to death," Akram said in Kabarto Camp, where he now lives with his uncle, two siblings and other relatives. "They were telling us, 'When you grow up, you will blow yourself up, God willing,'" he said. Training included sliding on their bellies through barricades of burning tires, jumping over obstacles and off roofs. Akram wasn't strong enough to handle a gun, so he was forced to be a servant.

Escape

Two years after Akram was taken captive, his uncle received a photo of his nephew dressed in black Islamic garb and an offer to smuggle him out of Raqqa for \$10,500 - an increasingly common practice.

The family borrowed the money from a relative in Germany, and eventually the boy was smuggled out. He was reunited with what remains of his family on Nov. 29 - two years and three months after he was seized. Ahmed escaped sooner. On May 4, 2015, nine months after their capture, Ahmed and his brother Amin sneaked away from the training camp in Tal Afar, hid in a mosque until nightfall, then fled with a small group of others on foot. —AP

TUNISIA ORDERS ARMY TO PROTECT BUSINESSES

TUNIS: Tunisia's president took the unusual step yesterday of ordering the army to protect businesses struggling because of weeks of protests over unemployment and corruption.

President Beji Caid Essebsi announced in Tunis that "the state must protect the people's resources" after protests in Tunisia's impoverished inland provinces in recent weeks. Sit-ins and other demonstrations have blocked roads and notably led to a halt in production at oil and phosphate facilities. Essebsi said this "grave but necessary decision" was made at a top-level government security meeting. He insisted on the people's freedom to demonstrate but said it must be "within the framework of the law."

After extremist attacks and political violence in recent years, Tunisia is in a prolonged state of emergency that allows authorities to take exceptional measures such as sending in the army to assure security. "The democratic process in Tunisia is seriously threatened," the president said.

He argued that the Tunisian economy has lost 5 billion dinars (\$2 billion) because of phosphate mine stoppages, worsening government debt. The protesters are desperate for job opportunities and better living conditions in regions blighted by poverty in comparison with richer coastal cities.

They are also skeptical of a government economic reconciliation plan that would allow magnates accused of corruption under the overthrown regime of President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali to resume business activities, in exchange for reimbursing the state for ill-gotten gains. Protesters say it's an effort to whitewash corruption, while the government says it's a way to boost the atrophying economy, which has yet to recover from the 2011 Arab Spring revolution that brought Tunisia democracy. The economy was further damaged by Islamic extremist attacks targeting tourists in 2015. The president, a former ally of Ben Ali, also lashed out at political parties and other groups that are encouraging civil disobedience. —AP

YALE PROFESSOR DISCUSSES BEST-SELLING BOOK 'ON TYRANNY'

NEW YORK: Timothy Snyder would have preferred a different path to the best-seller lists. The Yale University professor and scholar of European history, whose books include "Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin," was so alarmed by the election of Donald Trump last fall that soon after he posted a list on Facebook of "20 Lessons from the 20th Century on How to Survive in Trump's America." His advice ranged from "Be kind to our language" to "Believe in truth" to "Do not obey in advance."

The list went viral and the Penguin Random House imprint Tim Duggan Books released an expanded, pocket-sized edition of Snyder's warnings that quickly reached high on Amazon.com's best-seller list. With more than 100,000 copies in print, "On Tyranny: Twenty Lessons from the Twentieth Century" has become a guide for many worried about democracy under Trump's administration, a nonfiction counterpart to such dystopian best-sellers as "1984" and "The Handmaid's Tale."

During a recent interview with The Associated Press, Snyder spoke of why he posted the initial list, what concerns him now and what he'd like to see happen.

FB posting

"What I thought I should try to do as quickly as possible, and economically as possible, concisely as possible, was pass on what I think I understand about regime change, in the negative sense, from democracy to authoritarianism. And (to pass on) what I think I've learned from people who are smarter than me and who have experienced more than me, in Europe in the 20th century, about what that looks like and how it should be resisted."

"And my sense, which has been confirmed in the weeks and months that followed, is that many Americans understand something strange has happened, but don't quite know where to turn for guidance about what to do."

On democracy

"How long has America really been a democracy, in the sense of people being allowed to vote? I would say, circa 1965, Civil Rights Act? If not all of your citizens can vote you're not really a democracy. So were talking about half a century, tops. In addition to that, we're not a democracy now, in the very important sense that there are voter suppression laws, there is an electoral college, which

ON TYRANNY

TWENTY LESSONS
FROM THE
TWENTIETH CENTURY

TIMOTHY SNYDER

This image released by Tim Duggan Books shows "On Tyranny: Twenty Lessons from the Twentieth Century" by Timothy Snyder. — AP

means people's votes don't count the same as other people's votes. There is a gerrymandered system at the level of congressional districts, so that

again means people's votes don't count the same as other people's votes.

"And we have an absurd amount of money in politics, which creates a situation in which someone like Mr. Trump can say, 'Sure I'm a billionaire, but at least I'm your billionaire. You don't know what the other side's billionaires are.'"

To see change

"The things that happen here now, that so alarm us or surprise us, have generally happened in some form in some other country in the not too distant past. But we've shut ourselves out from that. We've made ourselves much more provincial than we used to be. I would think a thoughtful government, rather than attacking the press as is the case now, would incentivize young people to go into careers in journalism. A thoughtful government would find ways to support institutions of the press which actually report abroad. This may seem like a minor thing, but really it's not. Rather than thinking about the world, we just stare into the mirror 24 hours a day. And not surprisingly we don't learn anything from that." — AP

MORE INCONSISTENCIES IN FLYNN CONSULTING WORK

WASHINGTON: Targeted in widening investigations of his foreign entanglements, President Donald Trump's former national security adviser, Michael Flynn, is at odds with his former Turkish client over two unusual payments totaling \$80,000 that Flynn's firm sent back last year to the client. The disagreement points to inconsistencies in Flynn's accounts to the US government about his work for foreign interests.

Flynn's company, Flynn Intel Group, told the Justice Department in March that the two \$40,000 payments were consulting fees for unspecified work. But Turkish businessman Ekim Alptekin has told The Associated Press that the payments from Flynn's firm were refunds for unperformed lobbying.

The difference matters because Flynn's foreign business relationships and the veracity of his disclosures are under scrutiny by congressional, military and intelligence inquiries. Congressional committees and the Pentagon's inspector general are separately examining whether Flynn was fully forthcoming about his foreign contacts and earnings from organizations linked to the gov-

ernments of Russia and Turkey. His firm's Turkish work occurred while he was a top Trump campaign adviser.

On Monday, former Deputy Attorney General Sally Yates told senators that Flynn's misstatements about his contacts with Russia's ambassador to the US raised concerns that he could be targeted for blackmail. Yates also cited the possibility that Flynn could have broken federal law by operating as a paid foreign agent for the Turkish client without US government permission.

On Tuesday, Alptekin again said the payments to his firm from Flynn Intel were refunds for unperformed work. Alptekin also suggested that Flynn Intel's description of the payments as consulting fees was an accounting error. — AP

The law "says disclosure has to include material fact and makes it a crime to omit such material," said Stephen I. Vlodeck, a professor and national security law expert at the University of Texas School of Law. Flynn's foreign agent filing included only one contract signed by Flynn and Alptekin. The contract did not mention any adjustments made verbally, Alptekin's lobbying demands, arranging for allotting payments or any consulting role for Alptekin's company, Inovo BV.

Consultancy fee

In the filing, Flynn's firm said the description of each payment back to Inovo as a "consultancy fee" came from the firm's accounting records. Similar "consultancy fee" entries described payments to other members of the team hired for the work.

Asked about the discrepancies between Alptekin's statements and the filing, Flynn's attorney, Robert Kelner, said: "We'll stick with what's in the filing." Kelner declined to answer additional questions from the AP about the payment arrangement. In a brief statement Tuesday, Alptekin again said the payments to his firm from Flynn Intel were refunds for unperformed work. Alptekin also suggested that Flynn Intel's description of the payments as consulting fees was an accounting error. — AP

Foreign agent

The retired Army lieutenant general and former chief of the Defense Intelligence Agency formally told the Justice Department in March that his now-defunct Flynn Intel Group was paid \$530,000 for operating as a foreign agent for Alptekin's firm, Inovo BV, and performing work that



Then-National Security Adviser Michael Flynn. — AP



WASHINGTON DC: US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson (right) watches as Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov reacts to a reporter's question after posing for photos in the Treaty Room of the State Department in Washington, DC yesterday. — AFP

LAVROV MEETS TILLERSON AHEAD OF TRUMP TALKS

RUSSIA'S ALLEGED MEDDLING IN US ELECTION BACK IN SPOTLIGHT

WASHINGTON: Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov met yesterday with US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson ahead of rare Oval Office talks with Donald Trump, whose firing of his FBI chief again put the spotlight on Moscow's alleged meddling in last year's US election.

On Tuesday, Trump dismissed FBI Director James Comey, who was leading a probe into whether the Republican billionaire's campaign aides colluded with Russian officials to sway the November presidential election. After talks with Tillerson, Lavrov heads to the White House to meet Trump, whose shock sacking of Comey was seen by Democrats as an assault on an investigation that could have sweeping repercussions for his administration.

The uproar seemed certain to complicate Lavrov's mission in search of US support for a Russian plan to create safe zones in war-torn Syria. "I want to welcome the foreign minister to the State Department and express my appreciation for him making the trip to Washington so that we could continue our dialogue and our exchanges that began in Moscow," Tillerson told reporters.

Lavrov cracked a joke about Comey's firing, answering shouted questions from reporters by saying: "Was he fired?... You're kidding, you're kidding!"

'De-escalation zones'

The agreement calls for the creation of four "de-escalation zones" to shore up a ceasefire, ban flights and allow for deliveries of humanitarian aid. Washington has given the deal a skeptical

welcome, citing concerns about Tehran's role as a guarantor even as it expressed hope the agreement could set the stage for a later settlement.

"We will look at the proposal, see if it can work," Pentagon chief Jim Mattis said Monday. Several ceasefires have been agreed on since Syria's conflict broke out in 2011, but they have failed to permanently stem the fighting. Over the past six years, Moscow and Washington have sparred multiple times over the conflict in Syria, especially concerning Assad's fate.

Trump's arrival in power has not brought the former Cold War adversaries closer to seeing eye to eye and in early April, the US even launched direct military action against the Syrian regime in retaliation for an apparent chemical attack. Both countries have recently indicated that relations under Trump have never been so bad.

'Common position'

Russia's Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov said Monday that Moscow expected "above all coming to a common understanding on the need for de-escalation in Syria." "If we manage to find... a common position with the United States on this issue, it will be the most important result," Ryabkov said, quoted by the Interfax news agency. The US State Department said that "on Syria, the secretary intends to discuss efforts to de-escalate violence, provide humanitarian assistance to the Syrian people, and set the stage for a political settlement of the conflict." — AFP

Tense ties

In Moscow, Russian President Vladimir Putin met yesterday with his security council to discuss

POLL: HUGE PARTISAN RIFT ON US MEDIA 'WATCHDOG' ROLE

WASHINGTON: A massive partisan split has opened among Americans on the role of the news media since the election of President Donald Trump, a new poll showed yesterday. In the Pew Research Center poll, nearly nine in 10 Democrats (89 percent) said the media serves as a check against political leaders while just 42 percent of Republicans agreed with that statement.

The findings are in sharp contrast with a survey in early 2016 when nearly the same share of Democrats (74 percent) and Republicans (77 percent) supported the "watchdog" role of the press, Pew said. The gap was the widest in more than three decades of polling by Pew Research Center on the question, and comes amid tense relations between the news media and Trump, who has labeled the press as "the enemy of the people."

"While Republicans have been more likely to support a watchdog role during Democratic presidencies and vice versa, the distance between the parties has never approached the 47-point gap that exists today," the Pew report said.

Until now, the widest gap occurred during the George W. Bush administration, when Democrats were 28 percentage points more likely than Republicans to support a watchdog role. Overall, the findings show low levels of trust in the press, but with Republicans far more cir-

cumspect about the mainstream media.

In the poll of more than 4,000 adults in March, 87 percent of Republicans said news organizations "tend to favor one side" in reporting, up from 84 percent a year ago. But among Democrats, 53 percent agreed with that statement, compared with 64 percent in 2016. One in three Democrats said information from national news outlets was "very trustworthy," a rise of seven percentage points from last year.

But among Republicans, only 11 percent said they trusted these news outlets, compared with 15 percent a year earlier. The gap also widened when respondents were asked whether the national media keeps them "well informed" — 33 percent of Democrats said they agreed, compared with 18 percent of Republicans. A year earlier the gap was only four percentage points.

The survey found Americans are also paying closer attention to national news now than in 2016, with the increase driven by Democrats. Overall, 40 percent of Americans report following national news very closely, up from a third the year before. Among Democrats, the figure was 49 percent, compared with 33 percent in 2016. Pew found that 45 percent of US adults are frequently getting news on a mobile device, nine percentage points higher than last year. — AFP

PENN STATE UNIVERSITY FRAT MEMBERS APPEAR IN COURT

BELLEFONTE, Pa: Eight more members of a Penn State University fraternity made their first court appearance on Tuesday and were released on bail to await trial on charges stemming from the death of a pledge after an alcohol-fueled hazing ritual. A Pennsylvania judge arraigned the defendants and set bail at \$50,000, but they did not have to post any money.

The members of Beta Theta Pi face a range of charges. Ten other fraternity members who face more serious charges were arraigned Friday. Five of the defendants in court Tuesday are accused of evidence tampering. Two are accused of hazing, alcohol law violations and reckless endangerment. The lawyer for Joseph Ems Jr., 20, who faces only a reckless endangerment charge, called it a tragic and sad case and expressed condolences the family of victim Timothy Piazza, a 19-year-old engineering student from Lebanon, New Jersey.

"It's important to remember as tragic as this case is, my client's a wonderful young man that's never been in trouble," said Ems' attorney, William Brennan. "I think as the facts shake out, my client hopefully will be in a position to be extricated from this troubling case."

Piazza died less than two days after falling and hitting his head several times after a pledge

acceptance ceremony at the fraternity house in February. A grand jury said security camera footage captured events inside the house that night, including pledges being ordered to guzzle alcohol quickly after the ceremony. Piazza appeared to become inebriated and fell face-first down a flight of basement steps before midnight.

The footage shows that Piazza fell repeatedly as the evening progressed, the jury wrote. Fraternity brothers made half-hearted and even counterproductive efforts to help him, and when one member strongly advocated for summoning help, he was shoved into a wall and told to leave, the report said. — AP



BELLEFONTE: In this Tuesday, May 9, 2017 photo, Braxton Becker leaves the Centre County Courthouse after the preliminary arraignment in Bellefonte, Pa. — AP

SHAM MARRIAGES IN SCOTLAND REVEAL EXTENT OF SLAVERY

LONDON: Criminal gangs are tricking East Europeans into sham Scottish marriages with Asian men - selling the women for sex, labor and passports - in an expose that campaigners say reveals the extent of human slavery worldwide. The cross-border story of how destitute women are lured from Romania and Slovakia with the promise of work in Western Europe, then sold in Scotland as slaves is told in a BBC television documentary to be aired yesterday.

Anti-slavery activists said the story was no surprise, with an estimated 46 million people living in some form of modern slavery around the globe. "Sadly, the issue of

sham marriage and sexual exploitation of vulnerable women and girls is not a new phenomenon," said Justine Currell, Executive Director at Unseen, an anti-slavery group. "This story highlights the depths that these gangs will go to make a profit, regardless of the terrible consequences for the individual," she said. "We must put a stop to this horrendous practice by locking up those responsible and protecting those most at risk of exploitation."

Humans for sale

In the documentary - "Humans for Sale" - Europe's police agency Europol

said Scotland was being targeted by non-European nationals, often men from Pakistan and India, who need to marry a European national to stay in Britain. The expose showed how the women are sold to the men by East European criminal gangs, and can end up facing sexual abuse and domestic servitude.

"After the marriage, they (the women) are kept under control by the traffickers and are exploited as domestic service by the husband, but also raped and sexually exploited by fellow nationals of the traffickers," said Angelika Molnar, head of the agency's trafficking unit. British govern-

ment figures estimate between 10,000 and 13,000 people are living as slaves in Britain alone.

In 2015, it passed the Modern Slavery Act, introducing life sentences for traffickers and forcing companies to disclose efforts to make their supply chains free from slavery. Worldwide, the estimate leaps to 45.8 million, according to the Global Slavery Index, which is an annual study of slavery around the world. Women and girls are especially vulnerable, and the documentary found one Slovakian girl who had been trafficked to Glasgow on three separate occasions.

The program looked into dozens of suspicious marriages in Scotland and analyzed how many of the couples were divorced after five years - the minimum time an applicant must live in the country before applying for permanent residency. Of 70 suspicious marriages that were registered in one Glasgow district, 40 percent ended in divorce just after five years, according to the investigation. The BBC team also visited Roma communities in Slovakia where poverty and desperate living conditions make women particularly vulnerable to trafficking gangs. —Reuters

KOSOVO GOVERNMENT FALLS, SNAP ELECTION TO FOLLOW

FRESH ELECTIONS HAVE TO BE HELD WITHIN 45 DAYS

PRISTINA: Kosovo's government collapsed yesterday after it lost a confidence vote in parliament, a move expected to trigger a snap election after more than a year of political crisis in the tiny Balkan country. The ruling coalition had long been strained by growing dis-

agreement, speaker Kadri Veseli said. The main trigger for the vote was a border demarcation deal with neighboring Montenegro, the final condition for obtaining visa-free travel in the European Union. Three opposition parties strongly oppose the move, alleging that the deal

former foe Serbia in mid-2015 that envisages political autonomy for the Serb minority. The opposition also fiercely opposes this deal.

No more heroes

Thaci's PDK eventually supported the rest of the opposition to

Kosovo war. The episode could revive his popularity.

Western analysts say the PDK backing for a snap vote could reflect its desire to strengthen its popular legitimacy through electoral success, in view of progress at a new special tribunal at The Hague set up to try former leaders of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) for alleged war crimes. Thaci, a PDK founder and its longtime leader, figures among several former guerrillas cited as potential indictees.

"There are indications that people who are regarded as Kosovo heroes may soon become the opposite," LDK deputy Arben Gashi told the lawmakers during yesterday's debate, referring to the tribunal. The 1998-1999 conflict between ethnic Albanian rebels and Serb forces sent by Slobodan Milosevic, was the last of the wars that tore apart the former Yugoslavia. Of the 13,000 killed in Kosovo's conflict some 10,000 were ethnic Albanians.

The war ended after a NATO bombing campaign against Serbia, which led to the withdrawal of Serb forces from Kosovo. The territory was then put under the protection of NATO and international forces. Kosovo, home to around 1.8 million people who are mostly ethnic Albanians, unilaterally declared independence from Serbia in 2008.

The move is now recognized by more than 110 countries. But Serbia, supported by its traditional ally Russia, still rejects it. In 2011 Belgrade and Pristina began EU-brokered talks to improve their relations, but they remain tense. And the 100,000 to 150,000 Serbs who still live in the former province continue to consider themselves as citizens of Serbia, refusing to recognize Kosovo. —AFP



PRISTINA: Members of the Kosovo parliament attend a session in Pristina yesterday. —AFP

cord between its two main parties, President Hashim Thaci's centre-right PDK and the conservative LDK of Prime Minister Isa Mustafa. Under the constitution fresh elections have to be held within 45 days, and the president is expected to call them by the end of the week.

Of those present, 78 deputies in the 120-member parliament backed the no confidence motion while 34

deprives Kosovo of several thousand hectares of land.

Since the signing of the deal, the main opposition Vetevendosje (Self-Determination) party has organized violent street demonstrations and fired tear gas in parliament to prevent the text from being examined. Kosovo's political crisis has also been fuelled by another agreement, reached with

push for a snap parliamentary vote, before the scheduled date next year. The AAK party of former rebel leader and ex-premier Ramush Haradinaj has also long called for elections. Haradinaj returned to Kosovo last month after being blocked for five months in France, where he has rejected a request for his extradition to Serbia over alleged war crimes during the late 1990s

OUT WITH THE OLD: SAIGON'S DISAPPEARING ARCHITECTURE

HO CHI MINH CITY: They formed the charming backdrop to Graham Greene's sin-filled Saigon in "The Quiet American", but the colonial-era buildings of Vietnam's biggest city are fast disappearing-sparking fears it is losing its unique charm. Any visitor to Ho Chi Minh City, as Saigon is now known, cannot help but notice the construction cranes dotting an increasingly crowded skyline. They are the most visible symbols of one of Asia's fastest growing economies.

But like many locals, office worker Tran Trong Vu is dismayed the city's gleaming new look is so often at the expense of its colonial-era architecture. "They have cultural value, so we should preserve them, not replace them with high-rise buildings," he said in the bustling commercial hub. Others are concerned the demolition of its famed French architectural gems will render Ho Chi Minh City indistinguishable from other Asian megalopolis.

"In the 1960s and 1970s it was very much French, but now it's very Americanized, McDonald's on every corner," said Hiep Nguyen, born in Ho Chi Minh City and author of several books on its architectural history. "A streetscape without a story has no value," he added.

Money talks

Much of the demolition is happening in the city's rapidly-developing downtown core, to keep pace with a mushrooming young population hungry for modernity and to feed the demand for more housing and office space. But those aren't the only needs being fed, says Nguyen. "The key is money, the key is interest groups," he said from Sydney, where he now lives.

Developers with deep pockets have scooped up swathes of land in the city centre, with privately-owned old villas or historic municipal buildings replaced by sprawling construction zones. The most recent demolition to spark ire from conservationists is the Ba Son ship yard, an enormous French-built military complex on the banks of the Saigon River.

It is now being developed into a series of high-rise towers by Vincom Group, owned by the country's richest man, Pham Nhat Vuong, dubbed the "Donald Trump of Vietnam". City officials have inventoried more than 1,000 buildings constructed by the French when they ruled the country from 1887 to 1954 remain today, including the famed Opera

House, Post Office and Notre Dame Cathedral, all must-sees on city tours today.

A few of the old haunts on Rue Catinat frequented by Greene remain, but the street is now called Dong Khoi and also features Hermes and Chanel boutiques for the city's growing number of high-rollers. There is no comprehensive survey of how many buildings have been demolished. But in one central district, some 50 percent of French villas have gone down since 1993, according to Fanny Quertamp, the co-director of the urban development organization PADDI.

Heritage Go

The breakneck pace of destruction has prompted some to leap into action. Former video game developer and conservation buff Daniel Caune is creating a mobile app called "Heritage Go" for city residents and tourists. The app, which is still in development, will ask users to hold their phones up to colonial-era buildings, and aims to automatically generating images of the edifice in eras past. "It's to make people conscious of their heritage," said

Caune, who helps to run the Heritage Observatory website dedicated to archiving colonial-era buildings in Vietnam.

City officials are now writing a nine-point plan to classify buildings and mark some for protection, but admit such a huge task could take years to be implemented. "Pressure for economic development is very high," said Tuan Anh Nguyen, deputy head of the architecture research centre in Ho Chi Minh City's planning department. He said many developers who scoop up precious downtown land do not value historic buildings, adding that he would like to see the structures incorporated into development plans, as has happened in Old Montreal, for example.

The destruction in Ho Chi Minh City comes even as developers have built a replica French medieval village in the tourist hub of Danang, drawing foreign and local tourists keen for a slice of history. The city risks losing the millions of tourists that stop into the city every year to soak in its colonial charm, said architect Ngo Viet Nam Son. He said: "It's like losing the chicken that gives the golden egg." —AFP



HO CHI MINH CITY: This picture shows new high-rise buildings in the centre of Ho Chi Minh City seen from the other side of Saigon river. —AFP

FRENCH FAR RIGHT GRAPPLES WITH EXIT OF RISING STAR

PARIS: France's far-right National Front sought yesterday to paper over internal divisions exposed by the withdrawal of one of its most high-profile figures, the telegenic niece of leader Marine Le Pen.

Marion Marechal-Le Pen, 27, said she will give up her seat in parliament as well as her position as opposition leader on the council for the southern Provence-Alpes-Cote d'Azur region, a bastion of the far right. The withdrawal deals a blow to the anti-immigration party as France gears up for legislative elections next month, when the FN hopes to become the leading opposition force.

Marechal-Le Pen, the divorced mother of a toddler, said she was leaving politics indefinitely to spend more time with her family and to work in the private sector.

Marine Le Pen sought to play down the decision, tweeting: "As a political leader I deeply regret Marion's decision, but alas, as a mother, I understand." And Nicolas Bay, the party's number three, urged party stalwarts to "dispel erroneous interpretations" of Marechal-Le Pen's departure, calling the decision "above all personal", according to an internal memo seen by AFP.

The legislative elections will determine France's new political landscape after both the traditional left and right were sidelined from the presidential race and Marine Le Pen was roundly defeated by centrist Emmanuel Macron.

Marechal-Le Pen had been seen as an asset in the FN's bid to attract support from the traditional right wing whose scandal-hit candidate Francois Fillon-like her a devout Catholic-crashed out in the first round. France's youngest MP was also seen as a potential successor to her aunt as FN leader, but one with more traditional rightwing, Catholic views on social issues

such as abortion and homosexuality that played especially well in the south.

Without her, "we will lose a huge number of supporters and members who are there because of her," an FN regional councillor told AFP, calling it a "massive upheaval" inside the party.

'Desertion'

Marine Le Pen's 33.9 percent showing against Macron weakened her standing in the party, even though she racked up an historic 10.6 million votes. Social networks revealed deep anxiety among party supporters over Marechal-Le Pen's departure, with one Twitter user fretting over the FN's "new line", adding: "In my opinion there won't be many values left."

FN co-founder Jean-Marie Le Pen, Marine's estranged father and Marion's grandfather, decried what he called a "desertion" by "one of the movement's most beloved and admired stars".

Relations have long been strained between Marechal-Le Pen and her aunt, who has worked to attract a wider base by softening the party's image and jettisoning its anti-gay and anti-abortion positions. Notably, Marine Le Pen booted her xenophobic, anti-Semitic father out of the party in 2015.

She said in an interview in late March that if elected she did not foresee giving her niece a ministerial portfolio, citing her inexperience as well as her "rigidity". Marechal-Le Pen became the youngest member of France's national assembly aged just 22 in 2012. She insisted that she was not definitively turning her back on political struggle. "I shall never be able to remain indifferent to the suffering of compatriots," she wrote in a letter to the Vaucluse Matin daily in her southern fiefdom. —AFP

TRADITIONAL BRITISH NANNIES GET COUNTER-TERROR SKILLS

LONDON: Britain's prestigious Norland College, which has trained the creme de la creme of the world's nannies for over a century, has added anti-terrorism training to its curriculum. For 125 years, the college in Bath, southwest England has trained modern-day incarnations of Mary Poppins to care for the children of the global elite, including most recently Britain's Prince George. It was the world's first college to offer childcare courses but students are now taking lessons on evasive driving and cyber security provided by former intelligence officers.

The training aims to provide nannies with a "foundation to think ahead and prepare for potentially threatening changes in their environment," said Paul Gibson, former head of UK Counter Terrorism. Due to the increasing range of threats facing high net worth individ-

uals and their families, nannies are "in a unique position to both be targeted and to act as a credible obstacle to actions such as kidnap". Norland graduates, famous for their first-class training and their iconic uniforms, command the highest salaries and secure the most sought-after posts.

Prince George's Spanish nanny, Maria Teresa Turron Borrillo, is a former student. In the past few years, the college has broadened its curriculum to equip nannies with self-defense and safe-driving skills. The latest addition will show "our clients that they'll be able to have someone who will be able, we hope, to cope in most circumstances," Norland's director, Janet Rose told BBC Radio. "That's what our students have said: that they feel more aware, a lot more prepared and a lot more confident in carrying out their professional duties." —AFP

AUSTRIAN VICE CHANCELLOR QUILTS OVER PARTY IN-FIGHTING

VIENNA: Austrian Vice Chancellor Reinhold Mitterlehner, head of the conservative party in the centrist coalition government, said yesterday he was stepping down, having failed to quell in-fighting and speculation about the party's future leadership. The surprise move raises the question of whether the coalition of Mitterlehner's People's Party (ÖVP) and Chancellor Christian Kern's Social Democrats (SPÖ) will collapse. He did not say what it meant for the coalition's future.

There has been persistent speculation about whether the alliance can hold as the bickering parties have struggled to overcome a widespread perception that their government is ineffective. That has fuelled support for the far-right Freedom Party

(FPÖ), which is running first in opinion polls. Mitterlehner's resignation, which he said would take effect on May 15 as far as his posts as vice chancellor and economics minister were concerned, is likely to raise the pressure on 30-year-old Foreign Minister Sebastian Kurz to take the party's reins, as many expect him to do before the next election.

"I am not a place-holder," Mitterlehner said at a hastily convened news conference, apparently referring to speculation that Kurz might take over, even though he has no interest in the job at present. A spokesman for Kurz was not immediately available for comment. Kern called a news conference for 1.30 pm (1130 GMT). —Reuters

GERMANY TO MAKE REFORMS TO ARMY AFTER FAR RIGHT PLOT

BERLIN: German Defense Minister Ursula von der Leyen yesterday said she would respond to the discovery of far right sympathizers in the German army with reforms, including revising one of the force's post-Nazi era founding principles. German police on Tuesday detained a second soldier suspected of involvement in what prosecutors believe was a plan by a military officer and a student, both in custody, to carry out an "extremist" attack and blame it on migrants.

Von der Leyen, under fire for her handling of the growing scandal, told reporters she would on Wednesday inform a special session of the parliamentary defense committee about the investigation into the case and far right sympathies within the military. She said

the ministry would clarify its "Traditionserlass," a policy last updated in 1982 that gives a differentiated view of how troops are to treat and view the legacy of the German military.

Von der Leyen, whose post includes the role of commander in chief of Germany's armed forces, is a close ally of Chancellor Angela Merkel who is gearing up for a national election in five months' time. The military needed a faster and more efficient reporting scheme for incidents and potential threats and would need to increase the political education of troops, the minister said. "I am completely clear ... that we need a broad process in the military itself, that we must travel together - from recruits to generals, from instructors to the minister," she said. —Reuters

PAKISTAN ARMY BACKS OFF AFTER QUESTIONING PM'S AUTHORITY

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's military backed off yesterday after publicly questioning the prime minister's decision to sack an adviser over an explosive newspaper article alleging a rift between the country's civilian government and the military. Government-military relations are a sensitive topic in Pakistan, which has had a history of military coups since gaining independence from Britain in 1947.

Two weeks ago, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif fired a senior adviser over a front-page article last year in the Dawn newspaper alleging the rift. Maj. Gen. Asif Ghafoor, a military spokesman, subsequently questioned the firing in a tweet, saying it was not in line with the findings of an inquiry that was set up to determine who leaked information to journalist Cyril Almeida about a top-level securi-

ty meeting. Almeida, in a front page article in Dawn, had reported that the government asked the military's Inter-Service Intelligence spy agency to act against militants or face international isolation. The military on Wednesday released a statement saying Ghafoor's tweet had been withdrawn and that the issue had been settled. It also said the tweet was not "aimed at any government office or

person," and reaffirmed the army's commitment to uphold the constitution and support the democratic process.

Army chief Gen. Qamar Javed Bajwa met with the prime minister in Islamabad earlier in the day, apparently in an effort to defuse tensions. Ghafoor told reporters his tweet had been misinterpreted to give an impression the army and the government were not on the

same page. He also said the issue of the media leak to Dawn had been "resolved" and that the Ministry of Interior had fully "implemented recommendations" of the inquiry board in the leak to Almeida. He did not elaborate. The ministry said it had referred the matter of Almeida and Dawn to All Pakistan News Papers Society, an organization of newspaper owners, for "disciplinary action."—AP



MYANMAR: A Myanmar riot policeman sits in a truck on a street in Yangon's Mingalar Taung Nyunt township early yesterday, after scuffles broke out between Buddhist nationalists and Muslims. —AFP

POLICE FIRE SHOTS TO DISPERSE BUDDHIST, MUSLIM SCUFFLE

YANGON: Police in Myanmar fired warning shots to break up scuffles between Buddhist nationalists and Muslims in Myanmar's biggest city in the early hours of yesterday after a crowd went hunting for "illegal" Rohingyas. The incident comes as nationalists from Myanmar's Buddhist majority have become increasingly vocal in their opposition to the country's hard-pressed Muslim minority. Police in Yangon said they were forced to fire in the air to break up the confrontation between dozens of hardliners, including several monks, and local Muslims that left at least one man injured.

The Rohingyas, a group of more than a million Muslims who live mainly in western Rakhine State, are particularly maligned as illegal immigrants from Bangladesh and their movements are heavily restricted. Late on Tuesday night a group of nationalists complained to police that several Rohingyas, pejoratively known as "Bengalis," were illegally hiding in a house in Yangon's Mingalar Taung Nyunt township.

Tempers started to fray when police who had gone to investigate refused to arrest the men, saying they were local, non-Rohingya Muslims who were allowed to be there. "While they (the nationalists) were complaining to the police, Muslims

from the area gathered and the groups started quarrelling," said one officer on condition of anonymity. "Although police asked both sides to go back, they punched each other. So police fired shots in the air to disperse the groups."

Kyaw Nyein, a legal advisor to Muslim group Jamiat-Ulama-El Islam, said the incident was "heart-breaking and worrying." "It was just an attempt to incite anger without any firm evidence," he said. "They are looking for trouble." In recent months nationalists in Yangon have held protests, stopped Islamic religious ceremonies and most recently forced two schools to close temporarily over accusations they were illegally doubling up as mosques.

Thuseitta, a monk from the Yangon chapter of the Patriotic Myanmar Monks Union, accused the police of treating them "like animals" and said the Muslims had attacked them with sticks and knives in a video shared on social media. Tensions have boiled over since militants attacked police posts in northern Rakhine, sparking a brutal army crackdown that has sent more than 70,000 people fleeing to Bangladesh. UN investigators who spoke to escapees say the campaign was so brutal it may amount to crimes against humanity.—AFP

REBELS ABDUCT, KILL OFF DUTY SOLDIER IN KASHMIR

SRINAGAR: Suspected rebels in Kashmir abducted and killed a military officer who was home on leave for a wedding, the army said yesterday. Villagers found Ummer Faiyaz's body early yesterday, a day after he was snatched by unidentified men at his cousin's wedding. "Some unidentified terrorists yesterday abducted and then killed a young unarmed army officer," an army statement said.

The killing comes amid an upsurge in violence in the disputed Himalayan region, where rebels opposed to Indian rule have repeatedly attacked government forces and banks in recent weeks. Kashmir has been divided between India

and Pakistan since the end of British rule in 1947 but both claim the territory in its entirety. Around 500,000 Indian soldiers are deployed in Indian-administered Kashmir, making it one of the most heavily militarized places in the world.

Many local people deeply resent their presence. Officials say the ranks of rebel groups fighting for independence have swelled since last July when the killing of a popular rebel leader by government forces sparked months of unrest across the territory that left more than 100 people dead. Last week the Indian army launched a massive search operation in southern Kashmir to hunt for militants.—AFP

OPPOSITION PHOTOGRAPHER JAILED FOR LIFE IN BANGLADESH

DHAKA: A Bangladesh photographer aligned with the country's main opposition party has been jailed for life over a murder more than a quarter century ago, a verdict his lawyer says is politically motivated. Nooruddin Ahmed, a long-time photographer for Bangladesh's opposition leader Khaleda Zia, was among 27 people handed life sentences Tuesday by a tribunal ruling in the historic murder.

Prosecutors said the accused were all members of the Freedom Party, a militant political outfit that was accused of shooting dead a young Bangladeshi in 1990 in the northern district of Mymensingh. Ahmed was among those arrested and charged over the murder but the case languished for years before it was transferred to a speedier tribunal. "All 27 accused, including Nooruddin Ahmed, were found guilty under section 149 of the Bangladesh Penal Code and were jailed for life," prosecutor Syed Shamsul Haque said.

But Ahmed's lawyer Sanaullah Miah said his client was never a member of the organization, and was covering an event as an official photographer at the time of the murder. "He was convicted because he is the photographer of former Prime

Minister and BNP (Bangladesh Nationalist Party) leader Khaleda Zia," he said, adding Ahmed has been Zia's personal photographer since 1991. The case was "politically motivated" due to Ahmed's associations with Bangladesh's opposition, Sanaullah said, adding the prosecution lacked witnesses.

The Freedom Party was founded by retired army officers and has been linked to bombings and other violence. The group rose to notoriety after several of its members were convicted and hanged over the 1975 assassination of Bangladesh's founding leader Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, also the father of current leader Sheikh Hasina.

Ahmed's brother Mosaddek Ali Falu, a long-time political secretary of Zia, was arrested in 2015 for arson at the height of anti-government protests that gripped Bangladesh for months.

BNP officials have said tens of thousands of their activists and supporters have been arrested and prosecuted by the government since 2014, when the party boycotted a controversial general election over fears it would be rigged. Zia herself faces at least 30 cases of alleged corruption and violence, her lawyers said.—AFP

NATO ASSESSING REQUEST FOR MORE TROOPS TO AFGHANISTAN

TALIBAN INSURGENTS MAKE TERRITORIAL GAINS IN PAST YEAR

LONDON: NATO is assessing a request from the alliance's military authorities to send more troops to Afghanistan and will make a decision on the scale and scope of the mission within weeks, Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said yesterday. The request for what Stoltenberg said was "about a few thousand" more troops reflects the West's alarm about the worsening security situation in Afghanistan, territorial gains by Taliban militants and military and civilian casualties.

"We are now assessing that request. We will make decisions on the scale and scope of the mission within weeks but this is not about returning back to a combat operation in Afghanistan," he said after meeting British Prime Minister Theresa May. NATO already has some 13,450 troops in Afghanistan, including about 6,900 US military personnel, who are training the Afghan armed forces to eventually take over the country's defense and security and Stoltenberg stressed that any new arrivals would not be in a combat role.

"It will continue to be a train, assist and advise operation," he added. A decision could be taken by NATO defense ministers in June, according to an alliance official. The NATO leaders summit in Brussels on May 25 was probably too soon, the official said. Almost 16 years since the United States tried to topple Afghanistan's Taliban, who had harbored al Qaeda militants behind attacks on New York and Washington, the West remains entangled in an effort to stabilize a country facing resurgent rebels.

Facing public fatigue at the long-

running conflict, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation has sought to progressively reduce its presence in the country by building up the country's armed forces, notably creating an Afghan air force. However, loss of territory to Taliban and Islamic militants, a rise in civilian casualties and a fall in the number of Afghan security forces have led the US administration under President Donald Trump to review Afghanistan policy.

Over the past 18 months, Taliban insurgents have twice succeeded in seizing the northern town centre of Kunduz for brief periods and the latest fighting underscores the challenge Afghan forces face to quell the insurgency. According to the United Nations, 583,000 people fled their homes due to conflict in 2016, the highest number of displacements since records began in 2008.

US National Security Advisor H.R.

McMaster visited Kabul in April to assess the situation, days after the US military dropped one of the largest conventional weapons ever used in combat during an operation against Islamic State militants in eastern Afghanistan. "I strongly believe that the best answer we have to terrorism, the best weapon against terrorism, is to train local forces to fight terrorism, to stabilize their own country," Stoltenberg said.—Reuters



KUNDUZ: Afghan security personnel keep watch during fighting between Taliban militants and Afghan forces in Kunduz yesterday. —AFP

BIEBER FEVER GRIPS INDIA AHEAD OF FIRST CONCERT

MUMBAI: Justin Bieber mania swept Mumbai yesterday as the Canadian pop star hit town to give his first concert in India in front of 45,000 fans. "Beliebers" from across the nation have flocked to the commercial capital to see their idol perform hits like "Baby" and "Sorry" on the latest stop of his "Purpose World Tour". "I've been listening to his music for five years. I absolutely love him as an artist and I'm very excited to be seeing him," 18-year-old student Rahul Tiwari, who

had travelled from neighbouring Gujarat state, said. Fans who gathered outside Mumbai's airport got their first glimpse of the superstar when he touched down in the city at 1.30 am on a chartered flight from Dubai. Indian television channels aired mobile phone footage of Bieber carrying a bouquet of flowers and wearing a pink hoodie, dark shorts and white trainers as he walked from the airport to a waiting car with his entourage. The 23-year-old is to perform

to a sellout crowd at the D Y Patil Stadium, a venue more used to hosting cricket and football matches than international pop stars.

"I'm a big Belieber. He's attractive and makes peppy, catchy music for our generation," 16-year-old Rhea Asrani, who also has a ticket for the concert, said. "I have two huge posters of Justin in my bedroom and I listen to him often. I'm excited for the concert but more so just to see him live on stage," she added. The award-winning singer is to start his show at 8.00 pm and is expected to perform for around an hour and a half, according to newspaper reports.

India media have been abuzz with speculation about the singer's movements while in the country and which Bollywood celebrities may or may not attend his concert and after-party. Several newspapers reported that Bieber will avoid Mumbai's notoriously congested traffic by taking a helicopter from his hotel in the centre of the city to the concert venue.

More than 1,000 security personnel, including 500 police officers, will be at the venue while Bollywood actor Salman Khan's personal bodyguard is reported to be handling Bieber's security while he is in Mumbai. Fans' anticipation has been building since Bieber's team first confirmed the gig date back in February. Yesterday the Mumbai Mirror tabloid carried a story of 20 Bieber fans who camped outside the city's international airport for three days hoping to catch a glimpse of their idol.

They carried signs saying "We love you Justin", "Welcome to India" and "Justin Forever". "We have not slept for two nights, you never know when he will arrive," said one fan. Another added that he hadn't washed for three days.—AFP



MUMBAI: Indian security personnel stand guard at the D Y Patil stadium ahead of a concert by Canadian pop star Justin Bieber in Navi Mumbai yesterday. —AFP

MILLIONS OF PAKISTANIS RECEIVE BLASPHEMY WARNING TEXTS

ISLAMABAD: Millions of Pakistanis have been receiving text messages from the government warning them against sharing "blasphemous" content online, a move rights activists said would encourage more vigilante attacks. It comes amid a surge in mob violence linked to accusations of insulting Islam including three attacks within the past month. "Uploading & sharing of blasphemous content on Internet is a punishable offense under the law.

Such content should be reported on info@pta.gov.pk for legal action,"

read the SMS sent by the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) to all mobile phone subscribers. A similar note was posted on the agency's website in Urdu. A PTA spokesman said the agency was acting on a court order. Blasphemy is a hugely sensitive issue in conservative Muslim Pakistan, with unproven allegations leading to dozens of mob attacks or murders since 1990.

The law was originally inherited from Pakistan's former colonial masters Britain, but strengthened by for-

mer dictator Zia-ul-Haq in 1986 to include a provision for capital punishment in cases of insulting the Prophet Muhammad. Activists said the initiative would likely encourage lynchings, such as the killing of a 23-year-old student known for his liberal views at the hands of hundreds of fellow students last month. "This mass messaging will only further fuel hatred among different sects and segments of the society. It is a very very bad move," digital rights activist Shahzad Ahmad said.

"PTA's mass texting on 'blasphemy'

smacks of insincerity & political exploitation of religion; it will embolden public to greater violence," tweeted popular television anchor Moed Pirzada. Last week a 10-year-old boy was killed and five others were wounded when a mob attacked a police station in an attempt to lynch a Hindu man charged with blasphemy for allegedly posting an incendiary image on social media. Weeks earlier a mob attacked a mentally ill man claiming to be a prophet at his local mosque.—AFP

BREASTFEEDING AUSTRALIAN SENATOR IN POLITICAL FIRST



CANBERRA: Australian Greens party Sen. Larissa Waters breastfeeds her baby Alia Joy during a session in the Senate Chamber at Parliament House in Canberra, Australia. — AP

SYDNEY: A breastfeeding senator has made Australian political history by becoming the first woman to nurse her newborn baby in the nation's parliament. Greens' senator Larissa Waters returned to the upper house Senate for the first time Tuesday since giving birth to her second child, and brought her in for a feed during a vote. "So proud that my daughter Alia is the first baby to be breastfed in the federal Parliament! We need more #women & parents in Parli," she wrote on Twitter.

Being able to breastfeed in the chamber follows new rules introduced last year to create a more "family friendly" parliament in the wake of what has been described as a "baby boom" among politicians. Under previous rules, children were technically banned. "In 2003 Kirstie Marshall, a Victorian MP, was ejected from state parliament for breastfeeding her 11-day old baby girl," Waters added. "Sometimes it's difficult not to get disheartened by the sexism women still face in the workplace. But sometimes it pays to look back and see how far we have come."

Breastfeeding in public has become a hot topic in many countries, and female lawmakers have been criticized for taking their babies to parliamentary sessions. Last year, a politician in Iceland spoke in parliament while breastfeeding her baby daughter, and infants are allowed in the European and Spanish parliaments. Labor frontbencher Katy Gallagher said the moment deserved to be acknowledged. "Women have been doing it in parliaments around the world... It is great to see it is able to occur now in the Senate," she told Sky News.

"Women are going to continue to have babies and if they want to do their job and be at work and look after their baby... the reality is we are going to have to accommodate that." Waters has changed her Facebook profile to an image of herself breastfeeding in parliament, attracting dozens of mostly positive comments. "Thank you for sharing this beautiful picture and helping to normalize breastfeeding in our society!" one user wrote. Another added: "yessss, you are such a legend. thanks for being such a strong, groundbreaking woman!" —AFP

CHINA SAYS IT SUCCESSFULLY TESTS NEW TYPE OF MISSILE

THAAD SYSTEM, GUARD AGAINST NK MISSILE THREATS

BEIJING: China's defense ministry said yesterday that the military successfully test-fired a new type of missile into waters near the Korean Peninsula, an announcement that comes amid Chinese anger over the deployment in South Korea of a sophisticated US missile defense system. A brief statement on the ministry's website said the test took place recently in the Bohai Gulf and "achieved the intended result." It did not reveal the type of missile or provide other details. Both the timing and the location of the test could be significant, although the test may also have been scheduled well in advance. The Bohai Gulf lies just west of the Yellow Sea, which separates China from the Korean Peninsula. The defense ministry said last month

that it would respond to the missile defense system's deployment by continuing to test new types of weapons under conditions simulating actual combat.

Beijing opposes the system, known by its acronym, THAAD, because its radars are allegedly capable of peering deep into China, allowing the US and its allies to better detect rocket launches and aircraft movements. Washington says the system is necessary to guard against North Korean missile threats and calls China's concerns unfounded. Foreign ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said yesterday that China had no intention of softening its opposition.

"China's position on the issue of THAAD is clear and consistent. We hope South Korea can

pay high attention to China's concerns and handle the relevant issue in a proper way," Geng said. The Chinese weapon tested was likely a DF-26 intermediate range missile being developed to sink warships, including US aircraft carriers, said Song Zhongping, an expert on military affairs and commentator for Hong Kong's Phoenix TV. The Bohai Gulf is the preferred location for such tests because it is Chinese territorial waters, Song said.

However, while the DF-26 could be useful against THAAD, China also has several other missiles that are up to the task, he said. "It hasn't much to do with THAAD directly, but it is a kind of warning" to South Korea and the US, Song said. —AP



TAIPEI: This file photo shows Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen speaking to the press at the Presidential Office in Taipei. — AFP

TROUBLE AHEAD FOR TAIWAN'S TSAI AFTER ROCKY YEAR

TAIPEI: It has been a turbulent first year in power for Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen as relations with Beijing have soured and her approval ratings have plummeted. And in the face of an intransigent China and warming ties between Beijing and the United States-Taiwan's most powerful ally-observers say there is more trouble ahead. Tsai was inaugurated as the island's first female leader on May 20 last year, defeating the Beijing-friendly Kuomintang (KMT) party by a landslide.

Her victory spelled the end of eight years of cross-strait rapprochement as she refused to acknowledge the concept that Taiwan is part of "one China", unlike her predecessor Ma Ying-jeou. Beijing still sees self-ruled democratic Taiwan as a renegade province to be reunified, and is deeply suspicious of Tsai. Her Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) is traditionally pro-independence and there is little hope of finding middle ground.

Tsai has said she feels Taipei has shown "good will" towards China and she has repeatedly urged Beijing to break with its "old thinking" on cross-strait dealings. But the message has fallen on deaf ears-Beijing has cut off all official communication with Taipei and upped its military drills.

Observers say China has yet to really flex its muscles and that could happen in the year ahead. The two sides are in a tense "holding pattern", says Jonathan Sullivan, director at the University of Nottingham's China Policy Institute. Beijing is currently preoccupied with domestic issues ahead of a key Communist Party congress later this

year, which could cement President Xi Jinping's grip on power for years to come.

After that, the gloves may come off. "Given the consolidation of both Xi's position and the relationship that seems to be emerging with (US President Donald) Trump, I don't see that Beijing's own position is going to soften," Sullivan said. Jean-Pierre Cabestan, a political scientist at Hong Kong Baptist University, agrees. Beijing "will be tempted to use all sorts of ways to increase its pressure on Taiwan-economic, political, and military-to force it to give in", he said.

Trump ties

Tsai was praised for putting Taipei back on Washington's agenda in December when then president-elect Trump took a protocol-busting congratulatory phone call from her. A direct conversation between the two leaders was unprecedented-although it is Taiwan's main ally and biggest arms supplier, the US has had no official diplomatic relations with the island since switching recognition to Beijing in 1979.

The call infuriated China, but ties between Trump and Xi have since improved as Washington courts Beijing's cooperation in handling North Korea and other issues. Trump last month rebuffed Tsai's suggestion that another call could take place, in what was widely seen as a slap in the face. Washington will be "more cautious" in the year ahead to avoid rocking the boat with Xi, predicts Tang Shao-cheng, a political analyst at National Chengchi University. —AFP



JAKARTA: People attend a rally outside the police headquarter jail in Jakarta to show support for Basuki Tjahaja Purnama-known by his nickname Ahok. — AFP

INDONESIA FACES CALLS TO REPEAL BLASPHEMY LAWS

JAKARTA: Indonesia is facing renewed calls to repeal its controversial blasphemy law after the jailing of Jakarta's Christian governor, with critics pointing to a sharp increase in its use to target minorities. Basuki Tjahaja Purnama-known by his nickname Ahok-was jailed for two years Tuesday for blasphemy over comments he made about Islam while campaigning for re-

election to the capital of the Muslim-majority nation, a far harsher sentence than had been expected. Critics viewed the case as unfair and politically motivated.

The allegations were pushed by hardliners who opposed a non-Muslim as governor, and sparked a series of mass protests that dented Purnama's popularity and contributed to him losing the race

for the Jakarta governorship to a Muslim rival last month. The allegations against Purnama centered on a lighthearted remark he made about his rivals using a Koranic verse to trick people into voting against him, which judges ruled amounted to blasphemy against Islam.

The blasphemy legislation has been on the statute books since 1965 but was rarely used before 1998, when three decades of authoritarian rule under brutal dictator Suharto-who sought to run the country along largely secular lines came to an end. His downfall brought with it new democratic freedoms and increased interest in more conservative forms of Islam.

But it also gave space for the growth of hard-line Muslim groups and an increase in attacks on religious minorities, fuelling concerns that the country's inclusive brand of Islam was under threat. Activists say the growing use of the blasphemy law curbs free speech and is one example of minorities coming under increased pressure. Local rights group the Setara Institute said of the 97 blasphemy cases brought to court since the law was enacted, 89 of them were since 1998.

Inherent injustice

Phelim Kine, deputy director of Human Rights Watch's Asia Division, said Purnama's conviction made him "exhibit A of the law's danger and the urgent need for its repeal." "The blasphemy law has been used to prosecute and imprison members of religious minorities and traditional religions," he said. Champa Patel, Amnesty International's director for Southeast Asia and the Pacific, criticized the "inherent injustice of Indonesia's blasphemy law, which should be repealed immediately", while the United Nations urged a review of the legislation. —AFP

CHINA COMPLAINS TO US OVER LAWMAKERS VISIT TO DALAI LAMA

BEIJING: China said yesterday it had complained to the United States after a US Congressional delegation visited exiled Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama at his headquarters in India this week. House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi flew with a bipartisan delegation to the Himalayan hill town where the 81-year-old Buddhist leader is based, seeking to draw world attention to human rights in Tibet as President Donald Trump eyes warmer ties with China.

The meeting was always likely to upset China, which regards the Dalai Lama as a dangerous separatist. He says he simply seeks genuine autonomy for Tibet. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said the Dalai Lama is a political exile who uses the cloak of religion to engage in anti-China separatist activities.

"The visit by the relevant delegates of the US Congress to meet the Dalai Lama sent a very wrong signal to the world about Tibet independence and goes against the United

States' promises on Tibet. China firmly opposes this and has lodged solemn representations with the US," Geng told a daily news briefing.

"We urge relevant congress people in the US to carefully handle the Tibet issue stop all communications with the Dalai Lama and take immediate measures to deal with the negative impact of the visit." The US lawmakers' visit comes at an awkward time for Trump. Campaigning for election, he had cast China as a trade adversary and currency manipulator, but he now wants President Xi Jinping's support to restrain nuclear-armed North Korea.

After Trump's election last November, the Dalai Lama said he was keen to meet the incoming US leader. It now looks unlikely the Nobel peace laureate will get a White House invite - an honor accorded by recent American presidents - anytime soon. US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson last week played down the role of human rights in US foreign policy, raising fears the Dalai Lama could lose one of his last friends in the West. —Reuters

CHINA LAWYER'S WIFE SEEKS US ASYLUM AFTER BRAZEN ESCAPE

BEIJING: Chen Guiqiu fled China on foot with her two daughters, only to end up in a Thai prison until US officials helped them sneak out dramatically through a back door. Now Chen is safe in Texas with her daughters, hoping to obtain US asylum after her extraordinary caper across the world. But her husband, prominent human rights lawyer Xie Yang, is awaiting sentencing after pleading guilty to inciting subversion during a one-day trial in central China this week.

While US President Donald Trump has been accused of glossing over human rights abuses in certain countries, Chen's account shows US officials went to great lengths to help her escape China's clutches. Chen had been a vocal defender of her husband, whose case drew international concern after he accused the police of torturing him. She said that because of her activism authorities interrogated her repeatedly, harassed her family members and threatened to evict her and get her fired from her job as professor of environmental engineering at Hunan University.

She and her daughters, who are aged four and 15, first tried to take a train to Hong Kong from southern Guangdong province earlier this year. "That's when I realized we were on a travel blacklist. At the train station, they prevented us from boarding then separated me from my older daughter and detained her somewhere I couldn't see. My heart hurt, not knowing what she was feeling," Chen told AFP.

They left their home in central China again in mid-February with only bare essen-

tials in their backpacks. They spent four days walking long distances to evade border guards. On their way to Thailand, supporters escorted them on different legs of the journey, travelling by foot and car, until they arrived in a safe house in Bangkok.

A miracle

But Thai officials took them to an immigration court, which ordered them to leave the country. Chen was not worried because they had permits to travel to the US. But while they were in the immigration detention centre, Chinese agents showed up to take them away, Chen said. "I was in shock and my daughters were terrified. Inside the immigration prison, my phone was taken away and I was not expecting any rescue... I really can't thank the Americans enough," she said. The US diplomats convinced Thai officials to let the family leave the facility.

But the Chinese agents pursued them to the Bangkok airport, where the three countries' representatives engaged in a noisy argument. The incident happened on March 3 - weeks before Trump met Xi at the Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida, where their conversations seemingly had little to do with human rights. Chen said she can't say what happened after the airport standoff, because of "diplomatic sensitivities", but confirmed they arrived safely in Texas on March 17. Now, Chen and her older daughter have started the process to seek asylum in America. "We have a lawyer. ... We met with staff from the Trump administration, who were very supportive," Chen said. —AFP

TRUMP DEFENDS FIRING FBI CHIEF

Continued from Page 1

"He wasn't doing a good job, it's very simple, he was not doing a good job," Trump told reporters.

Under Comey, the FBI concluded that Russia tried to sway the election in Trump's favor through an influence and cyber-hacking campaign. The bureau has been probing whether Trump's campaign colluded with such an effort - something the president dismisses as "fake news." The president's comments came moments after he hosted Russia's Sergei Lavrov in the Oval Office, a rare honor for a foreign minister and one that threw salt in the eyes of Trump's critics.

During the meeting, Trump called on Russia to rein in Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad and his key ally Iran, as Washington and Moscow sought to boost their fragile ties with high-profile White House talks. Trump described the meeting with Lavrov, the highest-profile Kremlin official to visit the White House in years, as "very, very good." "We're going to stop the killing and the death (in Syria)," he added. Lavrov, who last set foot in Washington in Aug 2013, meanwhile dismissed all claims of election meddling as "fabrications".

The Republican leader nevertheless told Lavrov that Moscow should "rein in the Assad regime, Iran and Iranian proxies," the White House said. Lavrov, who came to Washington seeking US support for a Russian plan to create safe zones in Syria, said "concrete mechanisms that we can manage together" were discussed. "Today, we have a common understanding that, as active players in the diplomatic process regarding Syria, we are going to pursue these contacts together and with other key countries, especially those in the region," he said.

Trump's decision to terminate Comey's tenure, effective immediately, drew comparisons to the Watergate scandal that brought down Richard Nixon, and stunned Washington. By midday yesterday, hundreds of demonstrators had gathered in protest in front of the White House. Meanwhile furious Democrats demanded a special counsel be appointed by the Justice Department to look into Trump's links to Russia. They fear that current investigations in the Republican-controlled Senate and the House of Representatives, and now the FBI have been irrevocably politicized.

The White House says Comey was fired because of his handling of the investigation into the email practices of Trump's 2016 rival Clinton. Trump took to Twitter early yesterday to launch a vociferous defense of his decision to fire Comey. "Comey lost the confidence of almost everyone in Washington, Republican and Democrat alike. When things calm down, they will be thanking me!" he insisted. "James Comey will be replaced by someone who will do a far better job, bringing back the spirit and prestige of the FBI."

Before Tuesday only one FBI director had been fired in the bureau's century-long history. The post is normally considered above politics, with incumbents serving one 10-year term. "This is nothing less than Nixonian," charged Senator Patrick Leahy of Vermont, who called Trump's official justification for firing Comey "absurd." "That fig leaf explanation seeks to cover the undeniable truth: The president has removed the sitting FBI director in the midst of one of the most critical national security investigations in the history of our country - one that implicates senior officials in the Trump campaign and administration," Leahy said. — Agencies

MICROSOFT AIMING TO MAKE ARTIFICIAL INTEL...

Continued from Page 1

is something that we want," he said. "The future of computing is going to be defined by the choices that you as developers make and the impact of those choices on the world."

There is much discussion in the tech world about what AI will mean for society, especially since it is quickly driving change that could eliminate jobs, with applications such as self-driving trucks or "bots" which take over many skilled functions. "What happens to lower-level, blue-collar jobs that might be impacted?" Gartner research director of app design and development Jason Wong ask rhetorically. "That is part of the dystopia that can occur because of the abruptness of AI; in less than a generation we will be seeing things like driverless cars."

Microsoft is infusing all of its products and services with AI, and enabling those who develop on its platform to imbue creations with customized capabilities, according to executive vice president of artificial intelligence and research Harry Shum. "We've been creating the building blocks for the current wave of AI breakthroughs for more than two decades," Shum said. Microsoft research has gone deep into areas such as

machine learning, speech recognition, and enabling machines to recognize what they "see." "Now, we're in the unique position of being able to use those decades of research breakthroughs," Shum said.

Microsoft rivals including Amazon, Apple, Google and IBM have all been aggressively pursuing the promise and potential of artificial intelligence. Artificial intelligence is getting a foothold in people's homes, with personal assistants answering questions and controlling connected devices such as appliances or light bulbs. Digital assistants already boast features such as reminding people of appointments entered into calendars and chiming in with advice to set out early if traffic is challenging.

Microsoft's aim yesterday was on businesses and software developers, whether they be students building mobile games or professional technology teams. "Microsoft is trying to use AI for businesses to solve business problems and app developers to make applications better," said Moor Insights and Strategy principal analyst Patrick Moorhead. "Which is different from Amazon, Facebook, and Google whose primary business model is to mine personal information using AI to sell you things or put ads in front of you." — AFP

PHILIPPINES TOURIST SITES FACE KIDNAPPING THREAT

Continued from Page 1

Until recently, foreign governments had not warned of kidnapping threats in the central and western Philippines.

Fresh advisories from the Canadian and British embassies yesterday that backed up the American warning about Palawan also referred to tourist hotspots in the central Philippines near Bohol. These included

Dumaguete, Siquijor and Cebu. Asked in Manila about the latest travel warnings for Palawan, Duterte said he wanted the suspects dead. "My order to the security forces is shoot them on sight. Kill them," Duterte said.

Duterte last year ordered a major military offensive to extinguish the Abu Sayyaf on their southern bases, but the militant threat continued to grow. The Philippines is looking to conduct joint patrols with Indonesia and

Malaysia to stop the rising number of kidnapping raids on cargo and merchant vessels near the Abu Sayyaf's bases. Duterte yesterday repeated a warning that the Islamic State group was gaining influence in the Philippines. "We have a problem with terrorism. What looms very big ahead is the IS. They are coming in," Duterte said. The Abu Sayyaf and other militant groups have in recent years pledged allegiance to IS. — AFP

COMEY FIRING STIRS MEMORIES OF NIXON, WATERGATE...

Continued from Page 1

Both men had promised Congress that Cox would not be fired, except for just cause. That left Cox's firing to the solicitor general, Robert Bork, who was next in line as acting attorney general. Bork, who had made no promises to Congress, dismissed Cox. The episode was a political and public relations disaster for Nixon.

For the first time, polls taken after Cox's firing showed the public was shifting in favor of Nixon's impeachment. Cox was replaced by another special prosecutor, and Nixon eventually agreed to release transcripts of many of the tapes. But the momentum toward impeachment became insurmountable, and Nixon resigned on Aug 8, 1974.

Students of the era see striking similarities to Trump's firing of Comey, but also differences. "In both, an angry and besieged president acted to remove an independent figure who was aggressively investigating people

in the president's inner circle," Andrew Kent, a law professor at Fordham University in New York, told AFP. One significant difference is that the president has full authority to fire the FBI director whereas, by law, Cox could only be fired "for cause."

Yet, only one other FBI director has been fired - in 1993, then president Bill Clinton sacked William Sessions, and that was over relatively small-bore ethics infractions. FBI directors traditionally have had enormous independence, and have guarded it jealously. Democrats argue that Comey's firing underscores the need for a special counsel to investigate Russia's alleged meddling in the US election.

"Let's remember that we face a looming constitutional crisis, very much like happened in 1973, the midnight massacre. This episode has very much the feel of that chapter in our history, one that we should not repeat," Senator Richard Blumenthal, a Democrat, said on CNN. John Dean, Nixon's

former White House counsel and a central protagonist of the Watergate scandal, on the other hand, says Trump's actions don't have the same feel at all. "Archibald Cox was defying the president and taking his own course of action and making a decision that was very much placing Nixon in jeopardy," he said on PBS News Hour Tuesday.

The FBI is investigating whether Trump's campaign aides colluded with Russia to try to tilt the US election in his favor. But the Trump administration cited "serious mistakes" in the director's handling of the investigation into Hillary Clinton's email as the reason for his dismissal. "Somewhere Dick Nixon is smiling," Roger Stone, a Trump associate who once worked for Nixon, told The New York Times. "Comey's credibility was shot. The irony is that Trump watched him talk about bumbling the Hillary investigation, not the Russia investigation - and decided it was time to get rid of him." — AFP

MARATHON PREMIER GRILLINGS END...

Continued from Page 1

The panel was also asked to investigate the issues raised by the second grilling. Following the debate of the two quizzes, the grillers managed to secure the signature of only six lawmakers, four short of the required number.

But a number of opposition MPs still warned the government of more grillings if it did not reinstate the citizenships of the opposition figures. MP Abdullah Al-Fahhad said over 20 opposition lawmakers are ready to grill the prime minister again if the government fails to fulfill its promises. MP

Mohammad Hayef said that he did not sign the non-cooperation motion because of the pledge the opposition lawmakers gave to suspend grilling the prime minister in return for reinstating the citizenships. He said that some of the citizenships will be returned next week.

Following the end of the two grillings, the Assembly began just before midnight to debate in public the grilling of MP Shuaib Al-Muwaizri against State Minister for Housing Yasser Abul. The grilling accuses the minister of failing to implement the housing plan, making Kuwaiti citizens as a result wait for many years to get their homes.

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Focus

THE FIRING LINE: OUSTER OF FBI'S COMEY TESTS NEW JUSTICE APPOINTEE

The newly appointed second-in-command at the US Justice Department faced a weighty task just two weeks after taking office - writing the rationale for firing FBI Director James Comey. Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein argued the case for Comey's sacking in a three-page memo to Attorney General Jeff Sessions on Tuesday. President Donald Trump acted swiftly to dismiss the director later that day.

Rosenstein cited Comey's controversial public statements about the bureau's investigation into Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton's use of a private email server while she was secretary of state. "It is a textbook example of what federal prosecutors and agents are taught not to do," Rosenstein wrote of Comey's public comments. Spokespeople for the Department of Justice and the FBI did not return calls seeking comment late Tuesday. Comey's firing will likely be seen as further evidence of Washington's hyper-partisan upheaval. Rosenstein has drawn fire from Democrats who allege political motives in the White House decision to dismiss Comey - and particularly, its timing. "Why did it happen today?" asked Senate Democratic Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, of New York. "We know the FBI has been looking into whether the Trump campaign colluded with the Russians ... Were those investigations getting too close to home for the President?" The rationale for firing Comey, however, came from a 26-year Justice Department veteran who is widely viewed by his peers and many lawmakers as uncommonly nonpartisan. Named as Maryland's top prosecutor by President George W Bush, Rosenstein stayed in office through the Obama administration. Rosenstein was the longest-serving US attorney when he was nominated by Trump last January. When he was confirmed by the Senate, he enjoyed overwhelming bipartisan support - a 94-to-6 vote - despite the deeply divided culture of today's Washington.

Bonnie Greenberg, a federal prosecutor in Maryland told Reuters in March that Rosenstein was admired as a rare career prosecutor who could insulate himself from political pressure. "He only does something if he thinks it's right," said Greenberg, who worked with Rosenstein for 11 years. Many in the Justice Department saw Rosenstein's appointment as a counter-balance to the extreme partisanship surrounding accusations of Russian interference in last year's election. And he was immediately swept into that fray. Before Rosenstein was confirmed for the position by the US Senate, some Democratic lawmakers asked him to pledge he would appoint a special independent prosecutor to investigate allegations of collusion between the Trump campaign and Russian officials. He was easily confirmed despite rebuffing those demands.

Textbook example

Some Republicans have been angered by Comey's public statements about the FBI investigation into possible ties between the Trump campaign and Russia. But Rosenstein's criticism of Comey focused on actions seen to have damaged Democratic candidate Clinton. Rosenstein focused in particular on Comey's news conference last July, when the director announced his conclusion that Clinton should not be prosecuted - while at the same time publicly bashing her use of a private email server for sensitive US government business. That day, Rosenstein wrote, Comey usurped the authority of the US Attorney General - who has authority over whether prosecutions should proceed, based on the quality of FBI investigations. Comey also violated longstanding practice by "gratuitously" releasing damaging information about Clinton - even as he acknowledged the evidence against her was insufficient to warrant continued investigation, Rosenstein wrote. "We do not hold press conferences to release derogatory information about the subject of a declined criminal investigation," Rosenstein wrote, adding that Comey "laid out his version of the facts for the news media as if it were a closing argument, but without a trial."

A unifying issue

US Senator Mark Warner of Virginia, the top Democrat on the Senate Intelligence Committee, said the timing of Comey's firing was suspect - coming so long after the election of Trump and Comey's alleged mishandling of the case. He directly criticized Rosenstein. "I am very disappointed with this deputy attorney general, who I was told had a good reputation," he said. "But signing this letter saying that he recommends firing Comey because of Comey's actions with Hillary Clinton nine months ago, or 10 months ago? That doesn't pass any smell test." Rosenstein, in his letter, cited broad, bipartisan agreement on Comey's errors in judgment. Last summer, Comey defended his decision to speak publicly about the Clinton investigation, saying "the American people deserve those details in a case of intense public interest." Last week, before a Senate committee, Comey defended his decision in October - two weeks before the presidential election - to publicly announce the bureau had discovered new emails that might be related to the closed investigation into Clinton. "To not speak about it would require an act of concealment in my view," Comey said. —Reuters

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TRUMP THRUSTS PRESIDENCY INTO PERILOUS AREA

With his shocking dismissal of FBI Director James Comey, Donald Trump is propelling the presidency into rarely traversed territory. His surprise announcement Tuesday flouts decades of presidential deference to the nation's top law enforcement agency and its independence. It earns Trump the dubious distinction of being the first president since Richard Nixon to fire the official overseeing an investigation involving the commander in chief. And it cements a clear pattern of a man willing to challenge - in dramatic fashion - the institutions created to hold the president accountable. "That's why this is unprecedented," said Michael Beschloss, a presidential historian. "He's showed signs of not having a great deal of respect for the system by which this investigation has been operating." Sen Richard Burr, the North Carolina Republican who is overseeing one of the congressional investigations into Russia's election interference, said: "I am troubled by the timing and reasoning of Comey's termination." Sen Jeff Flake said he'd spent hours trying to find "an acceptable rationale" for Trump's decision. "I just can't do it," he said.

Trump attained his White House goal after a decades-long career in business during which he was accountable to few people other than himself. Thus, he has chafed at the constitutionally mandated constraints on the presidency. Within days of taking the oath of office, he suddenly fired acting Attorney General Sally Yates - a career Justice Department official - after she refused to defend the White House's controversial travel and immigration ban. When the federal courts blocked that measure as well, Trump aggressively castigated individual judges as political actors and challenged the court's role in curbing a president's policies. No matter which president origi-

nally appoints them - Comey was tapped by Barack Obama in 2013 - almost all FBI directors are allowed to serve out their full 10-year terms under successor commanders in chief. Bill Clinton is the only other president to fire an FBI chief, amid questions about the director's use of FBI aircraft for personal purposes. The Trump White House cited Comey's handling of last year's investigation into Hillary Clinton's email practices as the cause for the firing, and, to be sure, Comey left himself vulnerable.

He was widely criticized for heavy-handed and high-profile decisions in the case, particularly when he sent a letter to Congress 10 days before the election saying the bureau was looking at new information related to the inquiry. He said at the time that the new information related to emails found on a laptop belonging to the husband of Clinton aide Huma Abedin, the disgraced congressman Anthony Weiner. At the time, Trump praised Comey for having "guts" and doing "the right thing," statements that complicate his assertion that now, seven months later, Comey's decisions warranted firing.

Nixonian

Trump's announcement came as Comey was again facing criticism, this time for telling congressional lawmakers that Abedin had forwarded "hundreds or thousands" of emails to the laptop. On Tuesday, hours before Trump fired Comey, the FBI told lawmakers that the director was wrong, and Abedin had forwarded only a "small number" of emails. Although Democrats blame Comey for Clinton's loss, they are unlikely to accept Trump's explanation for the firing.

The explanation has repeatedly dismissed Comey's Russia investigation - as well as the congressional inquiries - as a "hoax".

He's also insisted that he is not personally under investigation - asserting Tuesday that Comey told him three times that he was not a target - though the FBI has stated unequivocally that the president's campaign and his associates are facing scrutiny. "This is Nixonian," said Sen Bob Casey.

Jimmy Gurule, a former assistant attorney general who was appointed by President George H W Bush, said Trump's decision "threatens our democracy and undermines the integrity of the FBI investigation." Gurule is now a law professor at the University of Notre Dame. Nixon's decision had a ripple effect throughout his administration, with the attorney general and deputy attorney general resigning rather than carry out the president's orders. There was no such response from Trump's White House aides and other top administration officials.

"We haven't had a voice from within the Trump administration denounce this yet," said Douglas Brinkley, a presidential historian at Rice University. "I think at this moment the question is, will leading Republicans step out of the box and become profiles of courage?" In the immediate aftermath of Trump's announcement, many Republicans appeared more inclined to back his decision, citing their own concerns with Comey's stewardship of the FBI following months of controversy.

None of the Republicans who did raise concerns were rushing to draw comparisons to Nixon, the only president to resign from office. Yet they, too, appeared troubled by Trump's decision and wary of the prospect of White House interference in an investigation involving the president. Comey's "removal at this particular time will raise questions," said Sen Bob Corker. It is essential, he said, that ongoing investigations are full "and free of political interference until their completion." —AP

UNITING S KOREANS DAUNTING JOB FOR NEW LEADER

New South Korean leaders are used to governing from the shambles of their predecessors' failed presidencies, given the country's long history of disgraced ex-leaders. No recent president-elect, however, has faced wreckage quite like this. Moon Jae-in, the liberal former human rights lawyer who took up presidential duties after being declared winner of Tuesday's special election, must lead a country still deeply divided between conservative and liberal - even as he navigates the political mess left by ousted President Park Geun-hye, the imprisoned daughter of a dictator who once jailed Moon for leading student protests.

The historical, political and personal baggage Moon inherits only adds to what's already one of Asia's toughest jobs. At home, Moon is expected to tackle festering social, political and economic anger. Then there's the existential threat that looms across the border with the world's most belligerent nuclear-armed dictatorship. The scale of the flame-out by Park, and its implications for how Moon does his job, is hard to overstate.

In just six months, Park went from the country's most powerful person to languishing in a jail cell as she awaits a corruption trial. Her fall ends a political dynasty founded by her late father, the dictator Park Chung-hee, whose economic policies helped lift South Korea from poverty even as he abused dissidents and trampled the constitution.

Her disgraceful exit does not eliminate the chasm between conservatives and liberals here. That divide has been around since the Korean Peninsula was separated into a US-backed south and Soviet-backed north at the end of World War II, and only widened during her presidency. It may have grown further during the scramble by wounded conservatives to salvage some sort of political direction after her fall.

Big break

Moon's North Korea policy, which will likely mark a big break from Park, risks alienating conservatives yet more. Moon can point to the failure on North Korea of the last decade of headline conservative leadership, including Park's truncated rule. There have been threats of war, bloodshed and a growing North Korean arsenal of nuclear-armed missiles. This won't help Moon with conservatives, many of whom look with shock at his proposals for a softer approach, including possible direct talks with dictator Kim Jong Un, and the possible return of massive inter-Korean projects. This was all tried during a decade of earlier liberal rule, part of which was overseen by Moon's mentor, late President Roh

Moo-hyun. None of it, many conservatives say, did much to check North Korea's arsenal or its bellicosity toward Seoul.

At home, fury over economic injustice, and especially the sense that big businesses have conspired with the government to fix the rules in a way that bars many regular South Koreans from prospering, drove the huge protests that felled Park. Park is accused of accepting or pushing for tens of millions of dollars from big corporations, including Samsung, whose head is now jailed on related corruption charges. She denies this.

Moon is a veteran of the fight for democracy against the dictatorships of the 70s and 80s, and his supporters believe he'll be well-placed to tackle economic injustice. But Duyeon Kim, a visiting fellow at the Korean Peninsula Future Forum in Seoul, said that "it remains to be seen whether (Moon) will be able to deliver" the economic and political reforms many South Koreans seek. "It will depend on his presidential priorities and manpower to implement the reforms needed for the kind of 'true' democracy desired by the people."

Moon must also overcome his party's lack of a majority in a bickering parliament. Despite the discord, Moon will be leading a country that can feel pride over its handling of the Park scandal. It has shown itself capable of peacefully and democratically driving a leader from office. This is a big deal in South Korea, which has a long history of military coups, bloodily suppressed democracy movements and dictatorships. "All countries have scandals; what matters is how they handle them. South Korea has proven that it can change things democratically and constitutionally," said Robert Kelly, a political science professor at Pusan National University in Busan. With only around an estimated 40 percent of the total vote, Moon's problem, Kelly says, is that he lacks a strong mandate. Moon will probably look to reverse three big Park policies: A deal to settle Japan's sexual enslavement of Korean women during World War II; the closure of the last major symbol of inter-Korean cooperation, a jointly run factory park in the North; and the deployment of a US missile defense system that infuriates China.

Despite what the election numbers suggest, Moon may actually have stronger political support because of widespread dissatisfaction with conservative rule, said John Delury, a professor at Seoul's Yonsei University. Even so, the job will not be easy. "Moon is looking straight up at a cliff that he's got to climb," Delury said. "This is a very difficult time to govern South Korea." —AP

MOON FLOATS SUMMIT; BUT WILL N KOREA BITE?

First it was an off-the-cuff offer from then-candidate Donald Trump to have hamburgers in Washington. Now, South Korea's new president says he is willing to meet with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un - if, of course, the conditions are right. The problem is, they pretty much never are. Relations between the two Koreas have deteriorated dramatically in recent years, and Pyongyang is almost certain to take whatever positions newly elected President Moon Jae-in may assume toward increased engagement with a good deal of caution.

North Korea, as of yesterday afternoon, had yet to comment officially on the election of Moon, a liberal who was deeply involved in Seoul's "sunshine policy" of increased engagement and cooperation with the North back in the 2000s. He even helped arrange a summit between his mentor, former President Roh Moo-hyun, and then-North Korean leader Kim Jong Il in 2007. That was the second Korean summit. South Korea's late President Kim Dae-jung won a Nobel Peace Prize for setting up the first one, in 2000. It was later alleged that he paid \$500 million to make it happen.

"I will quickly move to solve the crisis in national security," Moon said in his acceptance speech Wednesday. "I am willing to go anywhere for the peace of the Korean Peninsula - if needed, I will fly immediately to Washington. I will go to Beijing and I will go to Tokyo. If the conditions shape up, I will go to Pyongyang."

A lot has happened since the sunshine days, however. North Korean leader Kim Jong Un - Kim Jong Il's son - is closer than ever to having a credible nuclear deterrent to what it sees as an existential threat from Washington. And Pyongyang is buried much deeper than before in sanctions and international isolation. Those factors would cloud Moon's ability to unilaterally mend fences, if that is his intention. Moon has been a critic of the hardline stances that conservative governments in Seoul maintained against North Korea over the past decade and has called for sanctions and pressure against Pyongyang to be balanced with engagement efforts.

Along with suggesting the summit, he says he's open to the idea of holding talks with Kim Jong Un over the nuclear issue, which would

mark a sharp departure from recent South Korean policy. He also has said he supports the reopening of an industrial park in the North Korean border town of Kaesong that was jointly run by the two Koreas. The government of his impeached predecessor, who is in jail awaiting a corruption trial, closed it last year following a nuclear test and satellite launch by the North.

Some of what Moon is pitching could indeed ease tensions and potentially create the leeway both sides need to start talking to each other again. But while North Korea may welcome a controlled boost in economic ties and maybe a bilateral summit in its capital, its primary concern is always national security, or more precisely the assurance of regime survival. And on that front, Moon's options to generate big changes could be severely limited.

For one thing, Seoul has to consider its alliance with the US and whatever position toward the North President Donald Trump decides to take. The decision by Moon's predecessor, Park Geun-hye, to allow the US to base a state-of-the-art missile defense system known by the acronym THAAD in its territory is a major ongoing irritant. Moon has made it known he is no fan of THAAD, which was hurriedly deployed just before his election.

But challenging Washington on THAAD would be difficult for Moon, despite widespread opposition to it in South Korea - especially after Trump suggested South Korea should pay the roughly \$1 billion bill for it - and loud protests from China, which claims the system is a security threat. Pyongyang is also deeply alarmed by Seoul's participation in annual exercises and training with the US military to carry out precision "decapitation" strikes against Kim Jong Un and his lieutenants. This spring's exercises were the biggest ever; it's unclear whether Moon will seek to scale back them back in the future.

The North cites the war games as one justification for its continued development of nuclear weapons and long-range missiles. Its refusal to answer South Korean demands that it give up those programs will hinder any attempts at engagement. Sunshine or no, there's no reason to expect any great changes on that anytime soon. —AP

GOSWAMI BECOMES TOP WOMEN'S WICKET-TAKER

NEW DELHI: India fast bowler Jhulan Goswami has become the highest wicket-taker in women's one-day internationals after overtaking former Australia star Cathryn Fitzpatrick with her 181st dismissal. Pace spearhead Goswami achieved the feat against hosts South Africa in the 50-over quadrangular tournament in Potchefstroom on Tuesday. The 34-year-old Goswami, who took three wickets in India's victory, got past Fitzpatrick's long-standing record in her 153rd ODI. Fitzpatrick took 180 wickets in 109 matches between 1993 and 2006. The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) congratulated the former captain for her incredible service to women's cricket since making her debut as an 18-year-old in 2002. The Bengal cricketer led India in 25 ODIs from 2008-2011 and has represented the country in 10 Tests and 60 Twenty20 matches. She was named women's cricketer of the year in 2007.



3RD ASHES CRICKET TEST TO STAY AT WACA GROUND

MELBOURNE: Cricket Australia said yesterday that the third Ashes test between England and Australia, beginning on Dec 14, will be played at the traditional Perth test venue of the WACA Ground because a new Perth stadium will not be ready in time. The Western Australian government informed Cricket Australia on Tuesday that construction delays meant that the 60,000-seat stadium at Burswood, set to host the test, would not be completed. "It's good now we have some certainty around where the Perth test match is going to be played," Cricket Australia chief executive James Sutherland said in a statement. "We received advice yesterday in meetings with government." "Coming to Perth, we knew it needed to be finished ahead of time and everything needed to come together, but it's still disappointing. We were really hoping the test match could be played at this magnificent new stadium." The WACA has hosted test matches in Perth since 1970 and is known for its fast, bouncy pitches which assist fast bowlers. Its limited capacity of 24,000 has led to Cricket Australia supporting the construction of a new Perth venue. The five-test Ashes series will begin at Brisbane's Gabba ground on Nov 23.

MANOHAR TO REMAIN ICC CHAIRMAN TILL '18

NEW DELHI: India's Shashank Manohar will stay on as chairman of the International Cricket Council until the end of his elected term in June 2018, the game's world governing body said yesterday. Manohar, who resigned from his post citing "personal reasons" in March, was coaxed to stay on until the board met in April to vote on a series of major reforms. As chairman he spearheaded a broad restructuring of the body aimed at curbing the dominance of cricket's wealthiest nations - India, Australia and England - since being appointed ICC boss last year. His efforts came to fruition last month when the ICC overwhelming endorsed a plan to more equitably share revenue among all members - a decision that cost India a large chunk of its funding. The restructure - described by Manohar as "another step forward for world cricket" - was agreed in principle in February by the majority of Test playing nations, including England and Australia, but was opposed by India.



(Left) Seattle Mariners catcher Tuffy Gosewisch (right) tags out Philadelphia Phillies' Daniel Nava at home as Nava tried to score on a fly-out by Maikel Franco during the eighth inning of a baseball game on in Philadelphia. Seattle won 10-9. (Right) Pittsburgh Pirates third baseman Josh Harrison attempts to throw out Los Angeles Dodgers' Julio Urias at first during the fifth inning of a baseball game on Tuesday in Los Angeles. Urias was safe at first. — AP

WHEELER'S 2-HITTER LEADS METS OVER GIANTS

NEW YORK: Zack Wheeler pitched two-hit ball against the team that traded him, Michael Conforto homered and the New York Mets scored four times in the first inning Tuesday on the way to a 6-1 victory over the staggering San Francisco Giants. Hours after Matt Harvey returned from his three-day suspension with a string of contrite apologies, the banged-up Mets began moving on from their latest commotion. Despite all the injuries and turmoil, New York (16-16) has righted itself on the field by winning eight of 11 following a six-game slide. Jeff Samardzija (0-5) and the Giants, outthit 13-2, are headed in the opposite direction after their fifth consecutive defeat and eighth in 10 games. San Francisco, with three World Series titles and four playoff appearances since 2010, had the majors' worst record at 13-23. The team got more bad news moments before the first pitch when All-Star closer Mark Melancon was put on the disabled list - though it's not as if he has had many ninth-inning leads to protect. Wheeler (2-2) went six innings in his best start since missing two seasons while recovering from Tommy John surgery.

ORIOLES 5, NATIONALS 4, 12 INNINGS

Mark Trumbo singled in the tiebreaking run in the 12th inning, and the Orioles extended their season-best winning streak to six games. Baltimore rallied from a late three-run deficit to complete a two-game sweep of its neighbor. The interleague series shifts to Washington for two games yesterday and

today. Singles by Adam Jones and Manny Machado, along with an intentional walk to Chris Davis, loaded the bases for Trumbo against Jacob Turner (1-1). Trumbo hit the first pitch to left field, ending the game just seven minutes short of four hours. Logan Verrett (2-0) pitched three shutout innings for the Orioles, who improved to 22-10, including 13-3 at home.

REDS 5, YANKEES 3

Joey Votto singled with the bases loaded during the latest big inning off CC Sabathia, and the Reds stopped the Yankees' six-game win streak. Sabathia (2-2) struggled for the fourth consecutive start, unable to get his fastball in the right spots until Cincinnati was in control. The Reds piled up six singles - most of them grounders through the infield - while scoring five runs in the second inning. Sabathia gave up seven hits and five runs in six innings. His ERA has risen from 2.25 to 5.77 over his last four starts. Tim Lincecum (2-1), who was born in Staten Island, gave up three runs in five innings against the AL's top offense, including solo homers by Gary Sanchez and Didi Gregorius. Raisel Iglesias pitched the last two innings for his sixth save in six chances.

INDIANS 6, BLUE JAYS 0

Carlos Carrasco and two Cleveland relievers combined on a four-hitter, and Yan Gomes hit a three-run homer. Lonnie Chisenhall reached base three times for the Indians, who

scored more than three runs for the first time since a 12-4 win over Seattle on April 30. Carrasco (4-2) pitched seven innings to remain unbeaten on the road. The right-hander is 4-0 with a 1.35 ERA in four road starts this season. Andrew Miller worked the eighth and Nick Goody finished up. Blue Jays designated hitter Kendrys Morales was pulled in the seventh inning because of tightness in his left hamstring. He grounded out twice before leaving. Called up from Triple-A Buffalo to make his season debut, Blue Jays right-hander Mike Bolsinger (0-1) allowed two runs and three hits in 5 1/3 innings.

ROCKIES 10, CUBS 4, GAME 1 CUBS 8, ROCKIES 1, GAME 2

John Lackey struck out 10 over seven scoreless innings and added an RBI single, helping the Cubs stop a four-game skid in the finale of a day-night doubleheader. Chicago gave Lackey plenty of cushion with a five-run second inning against Kyle Freeland (3-2). Javier Baez added a two-run homer in the eighth and Kris Bryant tacked on a solo shot in the ninth. Lackey (3-3) allowed just four singles, a sharp contrast to his previous start at Coors Field, when he surrendered 10 runs on June 8, 2015. In the opener, Colorado scored six runs in the third inning and Mark Reynolds homered for a fourth straight game. Antonio Senzatela (5-1) pitched six innings of two-run ball. Jake Arrieta (4-2) was removed after 3 2/3 innings - his shortest stint as a Cub. He surrendered nine hits and nine runs, but just five were earned.

BREWERS 11, RED SOX 7

Eric Thames hit his 13th homer in Milwaukee's five-run first inning, helping the Brewers overcome a big night for Mookie Betts. Keon Broxton drove in four runs for Milwaukee, and Carlos Torres (2-3) pitched 1 2/3 scoreless innings for the win. Betts went 4 for 4, drove in four runs and finished a triple short of the cycle. Boston left-hander Drew Pomeranz (3-2) allowed six runs and seven hits in four innings.

ROYALS 7, RAYS 6, 12 INNINGS

Mike Moustakas homered in the 12th inning, helping the Royals to the road win. Moustakas connected against Diego Moreno (0-1), the eighth Tampa Bay pitcher, on a 1-2 pitch with one out. Moreno was promoted from Triple-A Durham before the game. Kansas City right-hander Jakob Junis (1-0), recalled from Triple-A Omaha, worked out of a two-on, one-out jam in the 11th. Kelvin Herrera got three outs for his fifth save. Salvador Perez hit a two-run homer for the Royals. The All-Star catcher went 3

for 4 and walked twice.

MARINERS 10, PHILLIES 9

Taylor Motter had the go-ahead RBI double in the ninth inning. Ben Gamel had four hits and the Mariners overcame a four-run deficit to beat the Phillies in Carlos Ruiz's return to Philadelphia. Gamel went 4 for 5 with a three-run home run, two singles and a double. The right fielder also threw out the potential go-ahead run at home in the eighth. Robinson Cano, who left the game with a quadriceps injury, also homered for the Mariners.

Michael Saunders, Tommy Joseph and Aaron Altherr also connected for the Phillies. Hector Neris (1-2) got the loss. Nick Vincent (1-0) pitched a scoreless inning, and Edwin Diaz worked the ninth for his seventh save. Ruiz, one of the key players in Philadelphia's run to consecutive World Series appearances in 2008-09, got a standing ovation when he pinch-hit in the eighth and flied out.

CARDINALS 6, MARLINS 5

Pinch hitter Dexter Fowler singled home the tiebreaking run in the ninth inning, and the Cardinals rallied from a late four-run deficit for their fifth consecutive victory. The game was tied when Magneuris Sierra reached on an infield single with one out in the ninth and continued to second on an errant throw to first by A J Ramos (1-2). Fowler, held out of the starting lineup for the previous five games because of a sore shoulder, followed with a sharp single to right field, and the speedy Sierra slid home ahead of Giancarlo Stanton's throw. Trevor Rosenthal (1-1) pitched around a leadoff walk in the eighth. Seung Hwan Oh pitched a perfect ninth for his eighth save.

ASTROS 8, BRAVES 3

Carlos Correa and Carlos Beltran hit consecutive homers off Bartolo Colon during Houston's five-run first inning. Houston led 4-0 after Correa launched a three-run shot with no outs. Beltran followed his third homer this season. Josh Reddick also connected for Houston, belting a solo shot in the fifth for his 100th career homer. Houston starter Charlie Morton (4-2) allowed three runs - one earned - in 5 2/3 innings for his third straight win. Colon (1-4) gave up eight runs and three homers, both season highs, in 5 2/3 innings.

TWINS 7, WHITE SOX 2

Hector Santiago beat his former team once again and Byron Buxton tied his career high with three hits, leading the Twins to the victory. Santiago (4-1) allowed two runs in 6 2/3 innings. The lefthander is 5-1 with a 1.59 ERA against the White Sox, who drafted him in the 30th round in 2006 and traded him in

2013 to the Los Angeles Angels. Chicago scored twice in the third inning but did not have another hit until two outs in the ninth. Tyler Duffey and Taylor Rogers closed out Minnesota's four-hitter. Kennys Vargas hit a two-run shot off Chicago's Mike Pelfrey (0-3) in the fourth inning.

RANGERS 11, PADRES 0

Rangers right-hander A J Griffin dominated his hometown Padres with a four-hitter for his second career shutout. Joey Gallo, Ryan Rua and Robinson Chirinos homered for Texas, which scored two more runs than in its previous four games combined. Gallo and Rua each drove in three runs. After splitting a two-game series, the teams head to Arlington for two more. All four hits off Griffin (4-0) were singles, and the Padres got only one runner as far as third base. San Diego right-hander Jered Weaver lasted only three innings, allowing seven runs and six hits.

ANGELS 7, ATHLETICS 3

Yunel Escobar hit a three-run homer and had four RBIs, and Albert Pujols and Ben Revere added solo shots for Los Angeles as AL MVP Mike Trout missed his fourth straight game because of a tight left hamstring. Yonder Alonso homered twice for Oakland, raising his career-best total to 11 with his second career two-homer game - four days after his first. Alex Meyer (1-1) earned his first career road victory, allowing three runs, four hits and five walks in 5 1/3 innings, and Bud Norris got three outs for his sixth save. Jharel Cotton (3-4) fell to 0-4 in night games while going 3-0 during the day. He allowed a season-high seven runs in five innings.

TIGERS 7, DIAMONDBACKS 3

Justin Upton and James McCann homered, and Mikie Mahtook singled in two runs. Justin Verlander (3-2) won his second straight start, giving up three runs, seven hits and three walks in six-plus innings. Robbie Ray (2-3) lost his third straight start, allowing five runs, five hits and five walks in five innings.

DODGERS 4, PIRATES 3

Pinch-hitter Austin Barnes doubled home the winning run with one out in the 10th against Daniel Hudson (0-2) as Los Angeles won its fourth straight. Pitcher Ross Stripling scored from first after pinch running for Yasmani Grandal, who led off the 10th with a single. Los Angeles starter Julio Urias lost a no-hit bid when Andrew McCutchen doubled leading off the seventh inning. Urias pitched a career-high 6 1/3 innings, allowing a run, one hit and two walks with five strikeouts. Kenley Jansen (2-0) pitched a scoreless 10th. —AP

MLB results/standings

LA Dodgers 4, Pittsburgh 3 (10 innings); LA Angels 7, Oakland 3; Detroit 7, Arizona 3; Chicago Cubs 8, Colorado 1; Houston 8, Atlanta 3; Minnesota 7, Chicago White Sox 2; Milwaukee 11, Boston 7; Kansas City 7, Tampa Bay 6 (12 Innings); Cincinnati 5, NY Yankees 6, San Francisco 1; St. Louis 6, Miami 5; Cleveland 6, Toronto 0; Seattle 10, Philadelphia 9; Baltimore 5, Washington 4 (12 innings); Texas 11, San Diego 0; Colorado 10, Chicago Cubs 4.

American League Eastern Division				National League Eastern Division				
W	L	PCT	GB	Washington	NY Mets	Philadelphia	Miami	
Baltimore	22	10	.688	-	18	14	.563	
NY Yankees	21	10	.677	0.5	16	16	.500	
Boston	17	15	.531	5	13	18	.419	
Tampa Bay	16	19	.457	7.5	13	19	.406	
Toronto	12	21	.364	10.5	11	19	.367	
Central Division				Central Division				
Cleveland	18	14	.563	-	18	14	.563	
Minnesota	16	14	.533	1	18	15	.545	
Detroit	16	15	.516	1.5	17	16	.515	
Chicago White Sox	15	16	.484	2.5	17	16	.515	
Kansas City	12	20	.375	6	14	19	.424	
Western Division				Western Division				
Houston	22	11	.667	-	Colorado	21	13	.618
LA Angels	17	18	.486	6	LA Dodgers	19	14	.576
Seattle	16	17	.485	6	Arizona	18	16	.529
Oakland	15	18	.455	7	San Diego	13	21	.382
Texas	14	20	.412	8.5	San Francisco	11	23	.324

LOS ANGELES, PARIS AWAIT OLYMPIC INSPECTORS

GENEVA: Los Angeles and Paris, both already seen as winning options for the 2024 Games, await their Olympic inspectors this week. The cities will host three-day visits by an International Olympic Committee panel, whose chairman has no doubt about their hosting credentials. "I think today at least you can already say, either way, we will have fantastic Olympic Games," IOC evaluation commission chairman Patrick Baumann told AP.

IOC President Thomas Bach seems so sure of the candidates' qualities that he asked his four vice presidents for advice on also bringing the 2028 Olympics into play, rewarding both cities with hosting duties. That guidance is due in July, so Baumann's 13-member group will press on with scheduled work in Los Angeles starting yesterday, then in Paris from Sunday. Each visit ends with Baumann taking questions at a news conference.

"There is no change in the scope and the role and the mandate," Baumann said of the possible dual award affecting his eventual report to IOC members. In the typically secretive world of Olympics elections, it is unclear how many voting members are swayed by the type of report they will get from Baumann's team on July 5. IOC inspections typically do not rank candidate cities, and a more flexible evaluation process introduced for the 2024 contest will look to stress the positives. The IOC says it will also publish the report on its website.

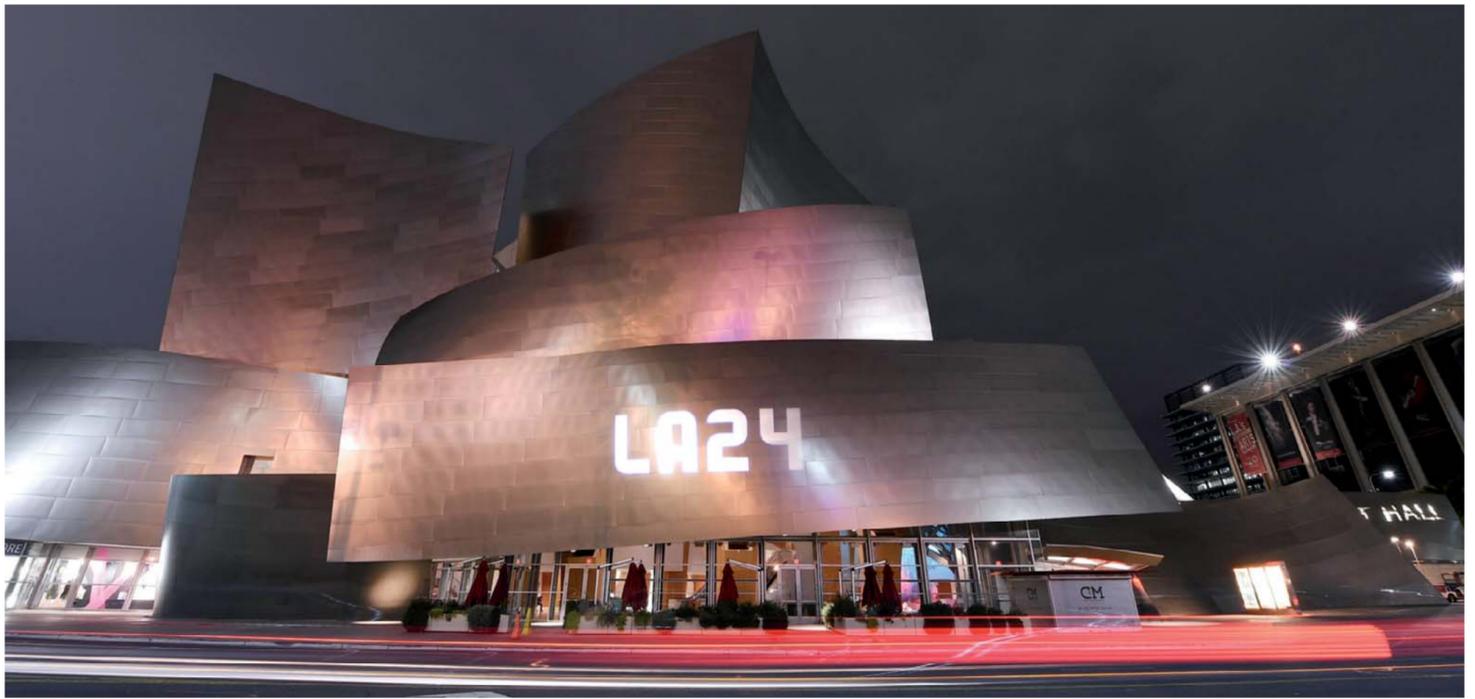
"It is not about finding the black spot," Baumann, an IOC member from Switzerland, said in a recent interview. "It is, of course, to highlight challenges if there are, but also and mainly to highlight the opportunities." Baumann acknowledged that the "differences are going to be extremely small" between two obviously world-class cities. Still, the Olympic hosting model has been burned by recent high-spending and budget-busting hosts. Baumann cautioned that "realistic financing" is a key factor to avoid an unwanted legacy of tax hikes and white elephant venues. A privately funded Los Angeles project also differs from a more European model in Paris that looks to some taxpayer money toward projected spending of 3 billion euros (\$3.2 billion) on new venues and buildings. France's President-elect, Emmanuel Macron, will be inaugurated Sunday in Paris when the IOC team starts work. Olympic bidders need federal support for security operations. Macron will take over from Francois Hollande, whose strong backing for the Paris bid included traveling to meet Bach in Lausanne, Switzerland.

Macron's election has spared Paris officials from questions about how a far-right presidency of Marine Le Pen might play with the IOC. Its global pool of members includes one from Syria, which is targeted for a travel ban from Muslim-majority countries by President Donald Trump. Still, bid cities rely more on city mayors than state presidents, and Paris has put civic leader Anne Hidalgo at the heart of its campaign.

Differences

In political terms, Baumann noted that the two bids come from countries that are "organized differently in sports terms." He pointed to his experience staging events in the United States and France as secretary general of basketball's governing body, FIBA. "That doesn't diminish in any way one bid versus the other, it's just different," the Swiss official said. "That difference is something that also the IOC membership needs to understand."

About 88 of the current 95 IOC members are entitled to choose the 2024 host in a vote scheduled for Sept. 13 in Lima, Peru. American and French members will be barred from voting, and others have recused themselves while under investigation. Plans could change during politicking from July 9-12 in Lausanne. First, a two-day meeting of the IOC executive board will hear the vice presidents' advice. Bid leaders from LA and Paris will then make separate presentations to IOC members. By the evening of July 12 it could be clear if both Los Angeles and Paris will win in a doubled-up 2024-2028 contest - though in which order may be unresolved. Neither city has offered to take the later option. For Baumann, the two cities' aims should stay the same for the next week, and next decade. "How are you going to deliver a great experience for the athletes?" Baumann said. "How are you going to deliver a great experience for the fans? And how are you going to deliver on the legacy of the promises and the ideas that the bid committee has put on paper?" —AP



LOS ANGELES: More than a dozen landmark buildings and tourist sites which includes the Disney Concert Hall illuminated in the colors of Los Angeles sunsets and the LA2024 logo to support the bid to host the 2024 Olympic games as the International Olympic Committee's Evaluation Commission arrived for three days of meetings and a tour of potential venues in Hollywood. — AFP

TOKYO URGED TO STOP USING CHEAP TIMBER IN STADIUM

LONDON: A village leader from Borneo urged Japan yesterday to stop building its Olympic stadium with cheap timber that he says is obliterating traditional life for his indigenous people. Bilong Oyo, whose Penan people live in Borneo's Malaysian rainforests, handed a petition of 140,000 signatures to Tokyo's embassy in Bern, Switzerland, demanding it halt use of deforestation-linked tropical timber in its Olympic venues.

Japan is hosting the games in 2020 with a wooden latticed stadium, now under construction, as the dramatic centerpiece. But last month, a group of charities said some timber came from a Malaysian logging giant that is accused of deforestation and human rights violations, in breach of Japan's pledge to hold a sustainable Olympics and design a truly green stadium.

Oyo told the Thomson Reuters Foundation he hoped Japanese officials would understand that by using cheap timber, they were contributing to the death of traditional life for indigenous groups in Sarawak state, on the Malaysian part of Borneo island. "We lost our livelihoods because the water is polluted by the logging. The situation is becoming worse and worse. Because of the logging it is now very difficult to hunt and fish and to survive," Oyo said by telephone. "Our wish is that this petition be accepted by Japan and that they stop importing timber from Sarawak that encroaches the land of the Penan and indigenous people," he added. Japan's Sport Council (JSC), the government body in charge of building Olympic venues, and the International Olympic Committee did not immediately respond to questions. Yesterday's petition followed an investigation

by charities in April that twice found plywood from a Borneo sawmill at the construction site of the wooden stadium. At that time, the JSC said tropical timber was being used but that it met certification standards agreed by Japan's Olympic organizers.

On April 27, Olympic authorities told a group of seven environmental and rights organizations, including Global Witness and Rainforest Action Network, that timber came from a plywood mill in Bintulu, Sarawak. The mill sources timber from areas that are subject to an ongoing lawsuit by indigenous communities over violations to their customary right to land, said the charities in their statement on Wednesday.

Penan leaders were invited to Switzerland by a Basel-based rainforest charity, Bruno Manser Fund, to raise awareness of rights abuses in Sarawak. The Olympic organizers agreed sourcing rules prior to the construction to ensure a sustainable games in 2020. But Rainforest Action Network said a provision in the code exempted certain types of cheap plywood used to shape concrete, like the timber found in the stadium site.

Rights groups have demanded an overhaul of procurement and an investigation into the legality and sustainability of tropical wood. Tokyo's Olympic stadium will be constructed around an unusual set of wooden lattices - a design conceived by architect Kengo Kuma to harmonize with a forest of oak and camphor trees surrounding the nearby Meiji shrine in the Japanese capital. Japan's government has said the wooden design was chosen over competing proposals due to its fast construction time and sensitivity to the environment. —Reuters

3 RUSSIAN OLYMPIC MEDALISTS GET DOPING CASE APPEAL DATES

LAUSANNE, Switzerland: Three Russian Olympic medalists have appeal hearings in doping cases at the Court of Arbitration for Sport this month. High jumper Anna Chicherova's appeal is set for May 30-31 to challenge the IOC stripping her of a bronze medal from the 2008 Beijing Olympics, the court said yesterday. Chicherova tested positive for the anabolic steroid turinabol in reanalysis of her urine sample eight years later. She remains the 2012

Olympic champion and a five-time world championship medalist, including the 2011 champion.

On May 15, five Russian cross-country skiers will appeal at CAS against provisional suspensions by the International Ski Federation. The suspensions were imposed after a World Anti-Doping Agency investigator detailed a state-backed conspiracy at the 2014 Sochi Olympics. The five athletes include Alexander Legkov, 50-km freestyle champion at Sochi, and Maxim Vylegzhanin, a three-time silver medalist including in the distance event.

Legkov and Vylegzhanin won their medals in a Russian podium sweep on the last day of competition and received them in the main stadium during the closing ceremony. FIS took all five cross-country skiers out of competition in December when they were identified in a report by WADA investigator Richard McLaren. The others are Alexey Petukhov, Evgenia Shapovalova and Evgeniy Belov. The skiers already had one defeat at CAS in February when their urgent request for an interim ruling letting them compete at the world championships was rejected.

Their hearings at CAS next week deal just with their current eligibility to compete and do not prosecute the doping allegations. A separate International Olympic Committee panel, chaired by Swiss lawyer Denis Oswald, is judging the doping cases along with other Russian athletes in Sochi implicated by McLaren. Verdicts in those cases are not expected before August. Legkov was among Russian Olympians accused last year of doping by the former head of the Moscow and Sochi drug-testing laboratories. Grigory Rodchenkov's interview with the New York Times prompted WADA to appoint McLaren to verify the claims.

Rodchenkov said he switched tainted urine samples for clean ones at the doping lab in Sochi, with help from people he believed to be Russian security service officers. Legkov denied the allegation, saying at news conference last May in Moscow: "You'd have to be a complete kamikaze to do that in Russia if you're an athlete representing our nation." —AP



BLESSEN GEORGE VOLLEYBALL TOURNAMENT BEGINS TODAY

By Abdellatif Al-Sharaa

KUWAIT: Four matches will be held today in the Blessen George Volleyball Tournament being held at Al-Shabab Sports Club hall instead of Fahaeel club. Six teams expressed their wish to participate in the annual event that commemorates India's national team volleyball player Blessen George. The teams were divided into two groups - the first includes ACMA, APR and the Stars, while

the second includes King of Volleyball, Boubyan and Boudham fighters.

A draw took place in the presence of three organizers as well as Kuwait Volleyball Federation President Waleed Aman, Secretary General Abdullah Kayed and Referees' Committee Rapporteur Nayef Al-Humaidan. The organizers decided to hold the matches on two courts so matches can end at the scheduled time. Matches begin at 6 pm with tomorrow being the closing day.



BEIJING: In this Aug 23, 2008 file photo Russia's Anna Chicherova reacts after making a clearance in the final of the women's high jump during the athletics competitions in the National Stadium at the Beijing 2008 Olympics. —AP

PARIS OLYMPIC BID BELIEVES MACRON WIN WILL BE A BOOST

PARIS: Paris Olympic bid leaders believe they have found a strong ally in France's new president, Emmanuel Macron. As they get ready for an International Olympic Committee inspection panel visit later this week, Paris officials think Macron's victory over populist far-right leader Marine Le Pen in the presidential runoff is giving extra guarantees to the IOC about their dossier's sturdiness. "The head of state's role is important and Emmanuel Macron is the leader we needed to embody the state's commitment," Paris bid leader Tony Estanguet said yesterday. "He is a young and dynamic leader open to the world, and he wants to make France win abroad. Those are the values we're defending. It's easy for us to ride that wave."

Currently in Los Angeles to assess the LA bid, members of the IOC will land in Paris on Saturday to inspect the city's planned venues and meet with French bid leaders. Estanguet said Macron is likely to meet with the IOC delegation at some point during the three-day visit. "The head of state told us he wanted to have a moment with the members of the evaluation commission," said Estanguet, adding that Macron has been sup-

porting the bid since he was Economy Minister from 2014-16 under President Francois Hollande.

Macron might find a slot in his busy agenda on Sunday night at a gala dinner involving athletes and IOC members, but Paris officials said the president-elect has yet to confirm the date. Macron will officially take over from Hollande on Sunday. The pro-business Macron's election could, however, have a negative impact on Paris' image if he goes ahead with his planned reform of the labor code this summer, a move likely to trigger massive street protests ahead of the IOC vote in Peru. "My role is to convince IOC members not to get involved in a debate on labor law," Estanguet said.

Los Angeles and Paris are the only two bidders left for the 2024 Games, which will be awarded in September at a meeting of Olympic leaders in Peru. The race began with five cities, but Rome, Hamburg, Germany, and Budapest, Hungary, all pulled out. With both cities boasting strong technical bids, the main discussions in recent weeks have focused on the possibility for the IOC to award the 2024 and 2028 Games - one

for each city - in Lima, in a so called "win-win" scenario. IOC President Thomas Bach has previously said he wants to avoid producing so many losers in the multi-million-dollar Olympic-bidding game. Both Paris and Los Angeles have made clear they are only interested in competing for 2024, although Paris CEO Etienne Thobois said he remains open to the discussion. "We think it's a very good initiative from the IOC," Thobois said. "We want to be IOC partners." Paris, which last staged the Olympics in 1924, is bidding on the compactness of its plans to make the difference. According to the bid dossier, 84 percent of the athletes will be able to reach their competition venues in less than 25 minutes because the Olympic Stadium and aquatics center would be within 2 km of the proposed village. More than 70 percent of the proposed venues are existing facilities, with a further 25 percent being temporary structures. The main construction requirements for the bid include an aquatics center close to the Stade de France, a new indoor arena in the southern Bercy neighborhood, the Olympic village and media center. —AP



PARIS: In this Oct 2, 2016 file photo, French President Francois Hollande (left) and International Olympic Committee President Thomas Bach hold a 1924 Olympics games flag during a meeting at the Elysee Palace. —AP

DJOKOVIC, NADAL STRUGGLE IN MADRID OPENING BOUTS

MADRID: Novak Djokovic staved off a huge upset and Rafael Nadal was made to battle in their opening matches at the Madrid Masters yesterday. In his first outing since splitting with his long-time coaching team Djokovic had to dig deep before eventually dispatching Nicolas Almagro 6-1, 4-6, 7-5 in his second round tie. Nadal was also taken to three sets before seeing off Fabio Fognini. Djokovic arrived in the Spanish capital without a coach after bringing to an end a 10-year relationship with Marian Vajda in an attempt to reverse his dramatic slump in form over the past year.

And after a blistering start, Djokovic had to battle back from 3-0 down in the deciding set to book his place in the last 16 today against Feliciano Lopez, who beat Gilles Simon 6-3, 3-6, 7-6 (7/3). The early



MADRID: Novak Djokovic of Serbia celebrates after defeating Nicolas Almagro of Spain 6-1, 4-6, 7-5 during a Madrid Open tennis tournament match yesterday. — AP

signs were positive for the 12-time Grand Slam champion as despite losing his service in the opening game, he broke straight back to start a six-game streak to romp through the first set. Almagro had taken just one set from four previous meetings with Djokovic, but willed on by a partisan home crowd, he held on to his serve

despite more pressure from the Serb in the first game of the second set. The Spaniard had to save two break points to hold for 4-3 and then took his chance to break with Djokovic serving to stay in the set.

The world number 75, who dipped down to the challenger tour after losing in the first round of the Australian Open earlier this year, then looked set for a monumental upset as he raced into a 3-0 lead in the decider. However, a mixture of Almagro nerves and Djokovic upping his intensity saw the world number two react immediately to level at 3-3. More Almagro errors flowed to give Djokovic another break for 6-5 and he served out for the match.

Djokovic could meet Nadal in the semi-finals. The home favorite needed 90 minutes to complete the opening set, finally finishing off Italian Fognini 7-6 (7/3), 3-6, 6-4 on a second match point after being broken while serving for victory. Nadal improved to 9-3 against Fognini and has now won 11 straight matches this season; he is fresh from 10th career clay titles in Monte Carlo and Barcelona. The 14-time Grand Slam champion now faces Nick Kyrgios in the third round.

Controversial Australian Kyrgios cruised past American Ryan Harrison 6-3, 6-3. Fifth seed Milos Raonic is also into the last 16 as he got the better of a battle between two big servers 6-4, 6-4 over Gilles Muller. Raonic will play Belgium's David Goffin next. Kei Nishikori recovered from a dreadful start to beat Argentine Diego Schwartzman 1-6, 6-0, 6-4. Nishikori faces David Ferrer next, who progressed as Jo-Wilfried Tsonga withdrew with a shoulder injury. In the WTA Madrid Open, holder Simona Halep advanced over 16th seed Samantha Stosur 6-4, 4-6, 6-4. Svetlana Kuznetsova remained one of only three of the top 10 seeds left in the draw with a 6-4, 7-5 win over Wang Qiang to reach the quarter-finals. Kuznetsova will face the winner of an intriguing clash between top seed Angelique Kerber and Eugenie Bouchard, who dumped out Maria Sharapova in thrilling fashion on Monday. — AFP



KYOTO: Delegates look on after drawing the teams during the draw for the pool stage of the Rugby World Cup 2019 tournament at the State Guest House yesterday. — AP

ENGLAND DRAWN IN RUGBY WORLD CUP 'DEATH GROUP'

KYOTO, Japan: England were hit with a horror World Cup draw alongside France and Argentina yesterday in a devilishly tricky bracket that French coach Guy Noves called a "death group". The 2003 champions were handed the toughest assignment of rugby's top nations, with holders New Zealand drawing South Africa and Italy in Pool B. Two-time winners Australia went into Pool D with Wales and Georgia, while Ireland will face Scotland and hosts Japan in Pool A.

Two more teams will be added to each group after qualifying, which England will now watch closely after their nightmare showing in 2015. Two years ago, England became the first World Cup hosts not to reach the knock-outs after they were grouped with Wales, Australia, Fiji and Uruguay. "No one's going to die!" insisted England coach Eddie Jones, when asked about being plunged into another so-called group of death. "It's simple - you've got to prepare well at the World Cup," added the Australian, who has led England to 17 wins in 18 games and two straight Six Nations titles. "We want to win the World Cup so the onus is on us to keep getting better." However, yesterday's draw in Kyoto could complicate Jones's oft-repeated promise to knock New Zealand's mighty All Blacks off their

perch. England have a mixed World Cup record against three-time finalists France, their last meeting a quarter-final defeat in 2011. They have won both of their World Cup games so far against Argentina, but the Pumas are much improved and reached the semi-finals in 2015.

"It's very difficult but we will try to match our rivals and to get out of the pool," said Noves, whose side also look set to play either the United States or Canada, and Fiji or Samoa. "We will look to build confidence and find the solidarity to get as close as possible to maximum strength at the World Cup." All Blacks coach Steve Hansen tried to play down the tag of heavy favorites the three-time world champions are likely to take into the Japan tournament.

KIWI DOMINANCE

"You can't control who you're going to get and I don't think it makes any difference," he said. "Any one of those top eight teams is going to be tough. Any one of a number of teams can win the World Cup." New Zealand famously lost to South Africa in the 1995 final but they have won their last two World Cup meetings, including their 2015 semi-final at Twickenham. "It's going to be one of the games of the tournament," said

Hansen, whose side will look to complete a hat-trick of World Cup victories and underline their recent dominance of the sport. "We know each other pretty well so we'll just continue to get to understand each other before we get here."

Twelve teams were included in yesterday's draw in Kyoto by virtue of finishing in the top three of their groups in 2015. Another eight sides from Oceania, Europe, the Americas and Africa will be added after qualifying to complete four groups of five. Japan coach Jamie Joseph struck an optimistic note as he looks to build on a breakthrough 2015 tournament, when the Brave Blossoms won three matches under Jones. "What we didn't have in England was 139 million people supporting us," he said, looking ahead to the first Asian World Cup. "It's our home tournament and it will be a real motivating experience for the boys." Matches will be played at 12 venues including Kamaishi in northeast Japan, which was ravaged by the 2011 earthquake, tsunami and resulting nuclear disaster. "I've never felt as fired-up as I do now about my role in selecting Japan's group," Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said before the draw. "This is even more of a thrill than when I dressed up as Super Mario at the Rio Olympics." — AFP



The peloton rides near Taormina during the 5th stage of the 100th Giro d'Italia, Tour of Italy, cycling race from Pedara to Messina on yesterday in Sicily. — AFP

PINK FOR JUNGELS AS PIBERNIK BUNGLES

MESSINA, Italy: Luxembourg's Bob Jungels kept Britain's Geraint Thomas at bay to retain the Giro d'Italia pink jersey yesterday after a "crazy" fifth stage that saw two riders celebrate victory. Jungels, who took the race lead from Quick Step teammate Fernando Gaviria after a fourth-stage finish on Mount Etna, maintained his six-second advantage on Sky rider Thomas as Gaviria snatched the stage win. But at the conclusion of an undulating ride from the foot of Mount Etna to Messina that brought an end to two stages on Sicily, the crowd was left baffled as young Slovenian Luka Pibernik starting celebrating fully 6 km from the finish.

As the peloton raced towards the finish line for the first time, signaling the start of a final, 6 km closing circuit, Pibernik launched a solo attack that held all the way to the finish line, where he sat up and spread his arms in victory. But he was celebrating alone. As thousands of puzzled fans looked on, 23-year-old Pibernik quickly realized his embarrassing gaffe before being swallowed up by the peloton as they began the final circuit.

Bahrain team leader and defending Giro champion Vincenzo Nibali later explained what had confused his young teammate. "The battery on his radio earpiece ran out. We tried calling him back to tell him, but he couldn't hear us. But he's young, things like that can happen," said Nibali. Gaviria, making his Giro and Grand Tour debut, emerged from Irishman Sam Bennett's back wheel in the final 200 m of a long and wind-hit home straight to claim his second

victory after breaking his Giro duck on stage three.

In doing so, the 22-year-old from Colombia became only the second rider this century, after former champion Damiano Cunego, to claim two stages on the race before his 23rd birthday. As the sprinters' teams battled to move their stage contenders to the front, Jungels remained alert to late attacks from his pink-jersey rivals and held off Thomas, but said the "crazy" circuit made it a nervous finale. "It was a dangerous and crazy final to be honest. I'm super happy that Fernando took the victory, but it cost me a lot of nerves here in Messina," Jungels said.

"It was amazing to see so many people on the streets, but it's also sometimes very dangerous because people want to take the pictures and selfies and whatever, and they come closer and closer to the road. When there's a bunch of 200 people (cyclists) it's dangerous, but that's cycling."

Gaviria's victory earned him the sprinter's "ciclamen" jersey for the points competition. "I'm happy with two victories, the legs are now responding the way we wanted," said Gaviria. "We wanted to take some points because we were down a few. We wanted to take this jersey, we managed to get the points we needed and we did it in the best way." Italian Jakub Mareczko finished second with Bennett third. After travelling to the mainland, the race resumes today with a 217km sixth stage from Reggio Calabria to Terme Luigiane that will offer the sprinters another chance for glory. — AFP



Bob Jungels

GRAFT FIGHT FACES 'SETBACK' BY FIFA ETHICS TEAM PURGE

MANAMA: FIFA's decision to remove its ethics team was a "setback" in the fight against corruption as "hundreds" of cases were being investigated, ousted investigator Cornel Borbely said yesterday. World football's governing body has recommended that Borbely, along with the ethics judge who helped bring down Sepp Blatter, Hans-Joachim Eckert, not be re-elected at the FIFA Congress which takes place on May 11 in Bahrain.

The decision not only threatens to overshadow the Congress, but also plunge FIFA into another high-profile corruption episode. Borbely and Eckert told a press conference in Manama that the decision was bad for football's scandal-tainted governing body and the sport itself. "The removal means nothing else but the end of the reform process," said Borbely. "The ethics commission is the key institution of the FIFA reforms."

"We could bring back some trust in FIFA - the ethics committee... was the role model for the whole sports world." "The removal of the ethics committee is not in FIFA's best interests... and it's a setback for the fight against corruption." He added: "We investigated several hundred cases and several hundred are still pending and ongoing at the moment." The dramatic recommendation was taken by the all-powerful FIFA Council on Tuesday. The decision not to re-elect Eckert and Borbely comes as they have both served their four-year terms.

The Council recommended replacing Eckert with Vassilios Skouris of Greece, a former president of the European Court of Justice. Similarly, ethics investigator Borbely is to be replaced by Colombia's Maria Claudia Rojas. The decision is set to be ratified by FIFA at its annual Congress, which convenes today.

PERSONAL MOTIVE

It is a controversial decision as critics have accused FIFA president Gianni Infantino of having a personal motive to replace Eckert and Borbely, as an ethics investigation was launched against him last year. Eckert was the judge who opened proceedings against Blatter and Michel Platini in Nov 2015. "It's not a great day for FIFA," Eckert told the same hastily-arranged press conference. "The loser is soccer, because trying to get a good, honest FIFA now it's very difficult."

The investigators said they had still not been officially told about their removal and only found out via their "mobile phones" when they landed in Bahrain on Tuesday evening. "I would like to have an explanation," said Eckert. They were set to fly out again yesterday. FIFA gave its first statement regarding the furore, almost 24 hours after Tuesday's decision, but did not mention Eckert and Borbely by name.

Instead, the statement said that all new appointees to various FIFA committees were unanimously chosen and represented greater diversity. "The decision on the final list of candidates was... agreed to unanimously by the FIFA Council," read the statement. "These individuals have been chosen because they are recognized high-profile experts in their respective fields. Moreover, they better reflect the geographic and gender that must be a part of an international organization like FIFA." The council also recommended Fiti Sunia of American Samoa serve as deputy to Skouris, while Canada's Bruno de Vita and Martin Ngoga of Rwanda will work alongside Rojas. — AFP



MANAMA: Former chairmen of the independent FIFA Ethics Committee, Hans-Joachim Eckert (left) and Cornel Borbely arrive to give a press conference after the FIFA's decision to remove its ethics team yesterday. — AFP

JOHNSON, GARCIA, NEWLYWED MCILROY HEAD PLAYERS CAST

TORONTO: World number one Dustin Johnson, newlywed Rory McIlroy and defending champion Jason Day headline a stacked field this week at The Players Championship where Sergio Garcia will compete for the first time since winning the US Masters. Johnson has struggled at the PGA Tour's flagship event - a share of 28th last year was his best result - but unlike other years the reigning US Open champion enters what is widely regarded as golf's unofficial fifth major in enviable form.

The long-hitting American had won three consecutive starts prior to a freak accident that forced him to withdraw from last month's Masters but showed no ill effects from the back injury by finishing runner-up in his return last week. He will be staring down a premier field featuring 48 of the world's top 50 golfers at the challenging TPC Sawgrass in Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, with its island green on the par-three 17th that has become one of the most recognizable holes in golf.

World number three Day, who missed the cut in his last event in New Orleans, tied the Stadium Course record here last year with an opening 63 and the Australian became the tournament's fifth wire-to-wire champion. But the former PGA Championship winner has not been at his best so far this year with just four top-25 finishes in eight events. Four-time major winner McIlroy, fresh off his honeymoon, returns to action for the first time since finishing equal seventh at the Masters and the world num-

ber two will have all new clubs after signing a deal with TaylorMade.

"I've been on Tour for 10 years, and it's very rare that you get really excited about your equipment," said McIlroy, who will be grouped with Johnson and Justin Thomas for the opening two rounds starting today. "I feel like it's a new chapter in my life with a lot of stuff going on, but I really feel with the new equipment, as well, it's hopefully going to take me to that next level."

Garcia, who triumphed here in 2008, will be well rested having not competed since claiming his first major title and will no doubt feel comfortable on a course where his eight top-15 finishes in 17 starts. "It's going to be amazing. It's one of the things I'm most looking forward to," Garcia told Golf Channel. "I think that everyone knows how much I love The Players Championship, how well I've done there, how much it means to me. To be there as Masters champion, it's going to be extra special." — Reuters



Sergio Garcia and Rory McIlroy

INDIA CAN BE THE NEXT CHINA FOR NBA: TOP OFFICIAL

NEW DELHI: While China is the National Basketball Association's biggest market outside the United States, NBA Deputy Commissioner Mark Tatum has told Reuters that India is ripe to grow the game as its changing sporting culture begins to offer its 1.3 billion people alternatives to cricket. Speaking in an interview after the launch of the NBA's first academy in India on the outskirts of Delhi, Tatum pointed to the growing popularity of kabaddi, football and basketball as examples of the changing landscape.

"Certainly cricket is by far the number one sport in India but we are seeing some rapidly growing sports now," he

said on Tuesday. "With the availability of these games and these competitions from around the world, I think more and more the sporting culture is starting to change. Now is the time for a sport like the NBA, a league like the NBA to continue to grow our business here."

Basketball goes back 100 years in China and the emergence of Yao Ming in 2002 saw the NBA's popularity soar in the world's most populous nation. India has yet to unearth a player who could galvanize such a fan base. There were big hopes for farmer's son Satnam Singh Bhamara after he became the first Indian drafted in the NBA in 2015 but his career failed to fire and he has since moved

down to the D-League where he now represents Texas Legends.

"There is a strong culture and history of playing the game of basketball in China. What we are doing now is we're establishing that here in India. We really do believe that India will be the next China for the NBA," Tatum said. "(It's because of) India's 1.3 billion people, a huge middle class population and a very young demographic, which is starting to think about other sports, like basketball."

The NBA's popularity in India is driven by digital and social media, he said, pointing to the league's seven million Facebook fans in the country. "We have partnership with Sony Six, airing 350 live

games on their platform. We have an India website now with localized content and we have extensive grassroots development programs which has reached six million kids and trained 5,000 coaches."

All India needs now is its own Yao Ming, he said. "It will happen. I remember Satnam Singh. I had the opportunity to call his name at the draft in 2015. That was a historic moment. It's only a matter of time before we get the Yao Ming of India and it's possible that Yao Ming of India is right here at our academy today," he said.

The NBA has launched three academies in China and one in Senegal. Asked

why they picked the Asian neighbors, also the world's two most populous nations, Tatum said: "We have 113 players from 41 different countries and territories and not one from China, not one from India. It's not that passion for the game is not there. In China 300 million play basketball. We thought there was an opportunity to bring NBA-style culture ... to these particular markets to make sure we could maximize the potential of the kids. Again, no inherent reason why there shouldn't be any NBA player from India or from China, none. It's just how you give them the right training, culture, development and competition." — Reuters

BOTTAS CAN TURN IT UP TO 11 IN SPAIN

BARCELONA: Valtteri Bottas can add his name to one of Formula One's longest sequences by following up his breakthrough win in Russia with another triumph when the European season starts in Spain this weekend. The Finn, fresh from his first grand prix victory with champions Mercedes, is the man most likely to become the 11th different winner in a row at Barcelona's Circuit de Catalunya. No other track on the calendar has had such a variety of winners over the past decade, an ironic fact given that it is the most familiar to drivers from winter testing and was once famed for its predictability.

Last year it was Dutch 18-year-old Max Verstappen who became the sport's youngest winner when he triumphed for Red Bull, on his team debut, after both Mercedes drivers collided at the start. In 2012, it was now-departed Venezuelan Pastor Maldonado - a one-hit wonder - who handed Williams a surprise victory that remains their most recent. Ferrari's championship leader Sebastian Vettel and Mercedes rival Lewis Hamilton, 13 points behind the German, will start as favourites and success for either could be an omen given that both went on to take the title last time they won in Spain.

But Bottas, who joined Mercedes from Williams in January as replacement for retired 2016 world champion Nico Rosberg, is the best bet to continue the streak of different winners in Spain even if he has yet to finish higher than fourth there. "Getting that first win definitely gives me a lot of confidence that I can do it, even though I always knew I had the ability," he said after Sochi. "And now it's done, I just want to do it again and again."

The only other driver from the leading trio

of teams yet to triumph in Barcelona is Verstappen's Australian team mate Daniel Ricciardo, but the Red Bull has lagged Mercedes and Ferrari on pace so far this year. That will surely change, with the flow of upgrades set to speed up now that teams are closer to their factories, and Red Bull has some big chassis modifications in the pipeline with engine improvements still to come. "I hope the upgrade will give us a chance to really fight with Mercedes and Ferrari or at least get us closer," said Ricciardo. The driver of car number 11, Force India's Mexican Sergio Perez, has racked up 14 successive points finishes and he too will have aerodynamic updates on his car. Of the current crop, only Ferrari's Kimi Raikkonen and McLaren's Fernando Alonso have won twice at the Barcelona circuit with their first victories in 2005 and 2006 respectively. Alonso will consider it a bonus to get as far as the starting grid on home soil, having failed to make it even that far in Sochi before his car broke down, in his last race before heading to the United States and the Indianapolis 500.

"I'm not sure what we can expect from this weekend," said the Spaniard. "We're expecting some various new parts...but we can't really focus too much on performance until we have solved our reliability issues." The lap times will be closely scrutinized, with Barcelona a benchmark for the 2017 regulations that aimed to make the cars five seconds quicker, thanks to wider tyres and revised aerodynamics. There will also be more of a buzz in the paddock, with teams rolling out their 'motorhomes' - palatial multi-storeyed hospitality units - for the first time this season. — Reuters



SAN ANTONIO: San Antonio Spurs' Manu Ginobili (20) of Argentina blocks Houston Rockets' James Harden three-point shot attempt in the final seconds of overtime of Game 5 in a second-round NBA basketball playoff series on Tuesday. San Antonio won 110-107. — AP

'STUD' GINOBILI THWARTS ROCKETS WITH KEY BLOCK

LOS ANGELES: Manu Ginobili pulled off an astonishing last-gasp defensive block as the San Antonio Spurs dug deep to claim a 110-107 victory over the Houston Rockets in their Western Conference playoff series on Tuesday. Kawhi Leonard - who limped off late in the game with an ankle injury - top-scored for San Antonio with 22 points as the Spurs took a 3-2 lead in their best of seven series. But it was Ginobili's heroics in overtime - athletically denying James

Harden as the Rockets star shaped for a game-tying three-pointer - that stole the show at San Antonio's AT&T Center. It was a superb clutch defensive play from the 39-year-old Argentinian, which gives the Spurs a precious lead as the series heads to Houston for Game 6 today. "Manu reached back and gave us one of his Manu performances from past years. He was a stud," Spurs coach Gregg Popovich said.

"We went to him with Kawhi off the court and asked him to make some things happen, generate some offense. He did a good job,

whether distributing or scoring - he was big for us," added Popovich, praising his team's defensive resilience after the loss of Leonard in a tense finale. "Everybody pulled together and played some good defense, especially without Kawhi being out there. The competitiveness was just off the charts. We're obviously thrilled with the victory. We would have really been in a hole. Either team could have won the game down the stretch."

But it was a frustrating night for Harden, who led the scoring for the Rockets with 33 points and a triple-double but was unable to provide his team with the breakthrough in overtime. Harden made only four of 15 attempted three-pointers and crucially coughed up nine turnovers - including three in overtime. Three other players made double figures for the Rockets with Patrick Beverley finishing with 20 points, Ryan Anderson 19 points and Eric Gordon with 11.

San Antonio's scoring was spread through-

out the team, with LaMarcus Aldridge adding 18, Danny Green 16 and Patty Mills 20. Jonathan Simmons (12) and Ginobili (12) also notched double digits. San Antonio meanwhile played the final minutes of regulation and the overtime period without Leonard, who appeared to twist his left ankle during a drive in the third quarter. Popovich declined to speculate on the seriousness of Leonard's injury. "He didn't want to come out obviously, we let him play on a little bit just to see how he went. But it was obvious he couldn't go," Popovich said.

Houston looked to have edged clear when Ryan Anderson's three-pointer put them ahead with 47.6 seconds on the clock. Danny Green then drew a foul attempting a layup to give San Antonio a 109-107 buffer, with a further free throw making it 110-107. The winner of the series will play the Golden State Warriors for a place in the NBA Finals. Golden State reached the Western Conference finals after completing a 4-0 sweep of the Utah Jazz on Monday. — AFP



NEW YORK: Jesper Fast #19 of the New York Rangers is stopped by Craig Anderson #41 of the Ottawa Senators during the second period in Game Six of the Eastern Conference Second Round during the 2017 NHL Stanley Cup Playoffs at Madison Square Garden on Tuesday. — AFP

SENATORS ADVANCE AS RANGERS DOWNED

NEW YORK: The Ottawa Senators booked their place in the Eastern Conference final yesterday after a deserved 4-2 victory over the New York Rangers in their NHL playoff battle. Mike Hoffman and Mark Stone fired Ottawa into an early lead at Madison Square Garden as the Canadian visitors got off to a dream start. Mika Zibanejad pulled a goal back for New York to give the home fans hope but Erik Karlsson got the Senators' third in the second period to make it 3-1.

A second New York goal from Chris Kreider in the third period made it 3-2 but Jean-Gabriel Pageau struck late to seal the win for Ottawa, who advance to their first conference final since 2007. Senators goaltender Craig Anderson made 37 saves between the sticks for his eighth win of the playoffs. Rangers counterpart Henrik Lundqvist made 22 saves. The win gave the Senators a 4-2 victory in the best-of-seven series. Senators coach Guy Boucher said his team had been determined to be aggressive

after being dominated in their previous two visits to New York in Games 3 and 4. "We didn't have two good games here," Boucher said. "The players reloaded emotionally, mentally and physically for (Game 5), and we wanted to do the same in this game. We wanted to be better than we were both times we played here, and that meant the first period. We wanted to come out 0-0, 1-0 or only one behind and making sure we could build our game after that. They managed it extremely well."

Rangers captain Ryan McDonagh bemoaned his team's sluggish start. "We came out slow. It's as simple as that," he said. "We were all pretty focused in here, saying the right things. But it's a difference between saying and doing, and that showed up on the ice." The Canadians will now face either the Washington Capitals or Pittsburgh Penguins in the conference final. Washington and Pittsburgh played a decisive Game 7 yesterday. — AFP

PAK FRUSTRATE WINDIES IN OPENING SESSION

ROSEAU, Dominica: Pakistan negotiated a potentially tricky first session, reaching 70 for one on the first day of the third and final Test against the West Indies at Windsor Park in Dominica yesterday. After they were put in to bat, Shan Masood was the tourists' only casualty of the morning, falling to off-spinner Roston Chase after an hour's play. Opening partner Azhar Ali (36 not out) was set to resume after the interval alongside Babar Azam (24 not out), their partnership having already produced 51 runs for the second wicket.

West Indies' faster bowlers failed to make the inroads that Jason Holder would have hoped for after he won the toss and had no hesitation in putting the opposition in to bat in heavy,

overcast conditions. While Shannon Gabriel, the destroyer of the Pakistanis on the final day of the second Test, used the new ball with accuracy and economy, Alzari Joseph lacked control, forcing the captain to introduce himself and then Chase in the quest for the breakthrough.

It came when Masood, playing his first match of the series in place of the unwell Ahmed Shehzad, reached nine off 30 deliveries and prodded indecisively at a delivery from Chase for Holder to take the straightforward catch at second slip. Having failed to score in both innings of the second Test, new batsman Azam found the bowling to be much less challenging than at Kensington Oval and settled into the promising partnership with Ali. — AFP



PARIS: France's players celebrate their victory during the IIHF Men's World Championship group B ice hockey match between Switzerland and France on Tuesday. — AFP

FRANCE KEEP WORLD BID ALIVE IN PARIS THRILLER

PARIS: France overcame continental rivals Switzerland 4-3 in a dramatic penalty shootout at the world ice hockey championships on Tuesday. A day after defeating world runners-up Finland 5-1, Stephane da Costa sealed victory for France on front of a 6,000-plus crowd at the Paris-Bercy Arena. Lausanne goaltender Cristobal Huet also pulled off three impressive saves for the French who are co-hosting the

tournament with Germany. It was the first defeat in three games for the Swiss - second in Group B behind two-time defending champions Canada - who did not play Tuesday.

France, who lost their opener to Norway, are fourth in Group B and on course to advance to the quarter-finals. Switzerland next play Belarus, who prop up the table, while France have a day off to prepare for today's clash against Canada.

In Cologne, Latvia kept top spot in Group A ahead of Russia after notching up a third consecutive win with a 2-1 victory over tailenders Italy. But the Baltic side have their work cut out as they have yet to play the group heavyweights with clashes against Russia, the United States and Sweden to come. Denmark scored their first points of the championships after a 4-3 shootout win over Slovakia. — AFP

RACISM CLOUDS ITALIAN FOOTBALL RENAISSANCE

TURIN, Italy: These should be the best of times for Italian football. Juventus reached their second Champions League final in three years on Tuesday evening, new investors are promising a revival of AC Milan and Serie A is casting off its reputation for sterile defensive fare. But the renaissance risks being clouded by reminders of football's dark ages: the specter of racism has returned to haunt the national sport. Ten days after Ghana midfielder Sulley Muntari walked off in disgust at being racially abused during a match at Cagliari, the fans responsible have not been identified. And no action has been taken against the Sardinian club.

Muntari, in contrast, was sanctioned, after failing to persuade the referee to suspend the match. Remonstrating with the fans earned him a first yellow card, walking off in frustration a while later got him a second and a sending off, leading to an automatic one-match ban. An outcry spearheaded by the international players' union and the UN human rights agency saw the ban overturned on appeal. Muntari has subsequently sought

to highlight his treatment in interviews, protesting at "being made to feel like a criminal" while the game's governing bodies sit on their hands. The spotlight on Italian football brightened after Juventus' Moroccan defender Medhi Benatia cut short a TV interview at the weekend after reportedly hearing someone involved in the production describing him in racially derogatory terms.

'RACISM NEVER PUNISHED'

Italian football cannot be blamed for that incident. But sociologist and writer Mauro Valeri believes its racism problem is only partly about sport reflecting the outside world. "What happened with Muntari is a very important episode. But only because he reacted. Sadly, this kind of thing is all too common," Valeri told AFP. "And it is not just Serie A and B. In junior football there have been 80 registered cases of black players being abused in the last two years. Usually by parents of their opponents and almost invariably nothing is done about it."

The Muntari abuse was one of a string

of recent cases of black players being verbally attacked from the stands. Serie A has sanctions procedures but the criteria for applying them (such as the whole stadium must be able to hear the abuse) means they are hardly ever used. "It is just ridiculous," according to Valeri. "The result is racism is never punished." Another problem is that although Italy has strong legislation covering racial abuse, the law requires positive identification of the individuals involved, and clubs cannot be held responsible for failing to identify perpetrators. Valeri says clubs' fear is alienating their most hardcore fans, even if they have extremist or even criminal affiliations. And broader cultural and political influences also shape attitudes.

STADIUM TO STREETS

"Within Italian football there is no anti-racism movement and other anti-racism associations don't take any interest in football," said Valeri. This leaves anyone who takes a stand isolated, as happened to the country's most promi-

nent black player, Mario Balotelli, he argued. "Balotelli had to endure endless abuse but he never had any kind of support in trying to stop it," said Valeri, noting how reluctant white Italian footballers are to join anti-racism campaigns. "In Italy anti-racism is not everyone's battle. If you say you are against racism, you risk people saying maybe you're a communist."

Mainstream Italian politicians are reluctant to take a stand for fear of being seen as not appreciating voters' worries about the arrival of more than half a million mainly African migrants in three years. "Today, talking about racism means losing votes," said Valeri. Within football, suggesting Italy could learn from neighboring countries seems to raise hackles. "I don't believe it is just an Italian problem, it's global," Juventus defender Giorgio Chiellini said ahead of Tuesday's win over Monaco. "I just hope that as soon as possible we can stop talking about racism and race and only talk about Chiellini, Benatia, Muntari, what they do on the pitch,

were they good or not so good."

Hoping the problem will go away is not enough, said Valeri. "Many sociologists talk of the phenomenon of the weekend racist - someone who goes to the stadium and shouts abuse but does not apply the same approach to people he meets during the week. Personally I think that is wrong and what is happening in the stadiums now risks being reproduced outside. If it is okay to insult black players inside a stadium, it quickly becomes normal to insult a young guy from Gambia or elsewhere that you meet in the street."

Sebastian Louis, a French expert on fan culture, said the recent incidents should not be downplayed but argues that Italy is changing. "You have to remember that in 1996, in a Verona derby, a black mannequin was brandished with a noose around its neck by two supporters wearing Ku Klux Klan hoods. Throughout the 1980s there were extreme right symbols in numerous stadiums, racist attacks outside them. The situation has evolved!" — AFP

PREVIEW

HERRERA SAYS FANS CAN FIRE MAN UTD TO FINAL

LONDON: Ander Herrera wants Manchester United's supporters to turn Old Trafford into a cauldron when his side look to complete victory over Celta Vigo in Thursday's Europa League semi-final return leg. Marcus Rashford's sweet second-half free-kick brought United a 1-0 win in last week's first leg, putting Jose Mourinho's side within touching distance of the final in Stockholm on May 24. But although United have gone 17 European home games without defeat, Celta have scored in all six of their Europa League away matches this season and Herrera says everyone in United red will have to be on their game.

"They have scored away in every game they've played in the competition so we have to be aware of that," the Spanish midfielder said. "They are a very good team, very dangerous when they play away and we will need our fans at home. I tell them we really need them to create a good atmosphere, a difficult atmosphere for the opponents, who can push us to be in the final. It's not going to be easy."

United have never won the Europa League and are bidding to reach a first continental final since their 3-1 loss to Barcelona at Wembley in the deciding match of the 2010-11 Champions League. But while success in Europe's second-tier competition will complete United's collection of trophies, what motivates them above all is the place in next season's Champions League that Europa League success will yield. Mourinho has openly abandoned United's hopes of securing the top-four finish in the Premier League that would open the door to the Champions League. He made eight changes to his starting XI for last Sunday's 2-0 defeat at Arsenal, which brought an end to United's 25-game unbeaten run in the league and left them four points below fourth-place Manchester City. Eric Bailly, Daley Blind, Antonio Valencia, Paul Pogba and Rashford are among the players expected to return for United today.

'STILL CLOSE'

Celta need not look far for inspiration, having overcome a 1-0 home defeat against Shakhtar Donetsk to prevail 2-1 on aggregate in the last 32. They can also call

upon cup pedigree that saw them overcome Real Madrid in the quarter-finals of this season's Copa del Rey, a year after they had accounted for Atletico Madrid at the same stage of the tournament. "It is still close," said Celta striker John Guidetti, who was formerly on the books of United's cross-town rivals City. "It is half-time. They are leading 1-0 and we have to go out and make the second half count. At the end of the day, if we go to Old Trafford and score the first goal, we are in the driving seat because if we score another one, they have to score two."

Celta's Europa League commitments have had a striking impact on their league form, largely due to coach Eduardo Berizzo's determination to rest players. Their 3-0 defeat at Malaga last weekend was their sixth loss in seven La Liga outings and they have won only two of their last 10 games in all competitions. Peter Bosz's dazzling young Ajax team are likely to be awaiting the victors in the final, having beat Lyon 4-1 in the home leg of their semi-final. But Lyon have averaged over four goals per game in their Europa League home matches and coach Bruno Genesio believes his side's 3-2 victory over Nantes on Sunday showed they are capable of pulling off a famous comeback. "There's an hour and a half to overcome our deficit," he said. "We'll have to create chances and take them, but also remain calm and organized when we lose the ball. "We have to remember that we scored three goals. And if we score three on Thursday, we could go through." — AFP



Matches on TV (Local Timings)

UEFA EUROPA LEAGUE

Man United v Celta de Vigo 22:05

beIN SPORTS HD 2 FR

Lyonnais v Ajax Amsterdam 22:05

beIN SPORTS HD 3



SYDNEY: Shanghai SIPG's Lyu Wenjun (right) falls over Sydney Wanderers' Vedran Janjetovic as Wanderers' Haritz Borda watches during their Asian Football Confederation Champions League match yesterday. — AP

WANDERERS DOWN HULK-LESS SIPG

SYDNEY: Western Sydney Wanderers pinched only their second win of this season's AFC Champions League with a late winner over big-spending Shanghai SIPG in their final group game in Sydney yesterday. Jaushua Sotirio had a tap-in in the 89th-minute to claim a 3-2 win for the 2014 AFC Champions League winners who grabbed a consolation win after failing to qualify for the last 16. SIPG coach Andre Villas-Boas didn't risk his star Brazilians Oscar and Hulk given his Chinese Super League giants were already safely through to the knockout stages.

Shanghai found the net after just 21 seconds through Wu Lei but Wanderers scored the next two goals through Japanese Junpei Kuskami and Steven Lustica in the space of three minutes to lead 2-1 in the sixth minute. Spanish defender Aritz Borda conceded a penalty which Brazilian Elkeson converted in the 23rd-minute penalty to equalize. The game looked like petering out to a draw in the second half before Junpei claimed another assist for Sotirio to prod home.

Shanghai SIPG finished second in Group F to Japan's Urawa Red Diamonds, who lost 1-0 to FC Seoul in Korea courtesy of Yoon Seung-Won's 38th minute goal. It means Shanghai face a mouthwatering all-China last-16 clash against Group H winners Jiangsu Suning with the first leg in two weeks' time, while Urawa will have Korean opposition in Jeju United.

Japan's Kashima Antlers ensured they would top Group E - and face a last-16 encounter against China's two-time Asian Champions Guangzhou Evergrande - thanks to a 2-1 win at home to Thailand's Muangthong United, who are also through. But Kashima needed a controversial winner from Yuma Suzuki, whose second goal of the game in the 60th minute appeared to be scored with his left arm.

Muangthong's Teerasil Dangda had earlier equalised Suzuki's 18th-minute opener with a searing strike from outside the box on the stroke of half-time. Muangthong will face Japan's Kawasaki Frontale in the knockout stages. South Korea's Ulsan Hyundai came from behind to beat Brisbane Roar 3-2 in a battle for the Group E wooden spoon in Brisbane. A-League marksman Jamie Maclaren put Roar ahead with two first-half goals after a goalkeeping howler from Jamie Young had gifted Ulsan the lead in the ninth minute.

Ulsan equalized through Nam Hee-Cheol off a misjudged backpass from Tommy Oar in the 54th minute before substitute Kim Young-Jin scored off a free kick to put them ahead. Ulsan's victory gave them third place in Group E with Roar finishing last. AFC Champions League (eastern region) knockout stage draw: Muangthong United (THA) v Kawasaki Frontale (JPN), Guangzhou Evergrande (CHN) v Kashima Antlers (JPN), Shanghai SIPG (CHN) v Jiangsu Suning (CHN), Jeju Utd (KOR) v Urawa Reds (JPN). First leg to be played May 23/24. Second leg May 30/31. — AFP

BUFFON SEEKING TO GET GLOVES ON ELUSIVE PRIZE

TURIN: Cardiff beckons for Gianluigi Buffon and an elusive Champions League winners' medal is not the only prestigious prize within the gangly reach of one of the great goalkeepers. At 39, Buffon feared his chance to win club football's biggest competition might have gone after featuring in losing Juve teams in the 2003 and 2015 finals. But the 2006 World Cup winner has never been one to let anything slip easily through his fingers.

His exemplary form this season has been a key reason for Juve's irresistible advance on the Welsh capital, where they will face Real Madrid or Atletico Madrid on June 3. And if Buffon and co. do return from Wales victorious, what price the skipper crowning a silverware-sprinkled career by becoming the first goalkeeper since Lev Yashin in 1963 to win the Ballon d'Or?

With Real Madrid the more likely opponents, shutting out Cristiano Ronaldo would inevitably bolster Buffon's prospects of ending the Portuguese striker and Lionel Messi's recent monopoly on world football's leading individual award. The notion that "Gigi" deserves nothing less is already being pushed noisily by the adoring Italian media. But the well-travelled Claudio Ranieri, whose long career included a stint managing Buffon at Juventus, says the case for Buffon is founded

on more than patriotic fervor.

'DONE NOTHING YET'

"If they win the Champions League I really think he would deserve it," the former Leicester and Chelsea boss told SkyItalia. "It is a very particular role and it is not easy. They have only given it to a goalkeeper once, with Yashin. But if you ask, who is the best footballer in the world, then yes, the answer can be Buffon." Juve booked their second final slot in three seasons on Tuesday by beating Monaco 2-1, completing an impressive 4-1 aggregate win in front of home supporters convinced this could be their year.

As a club, Turin's Old Lady has a habit of stumbling on the doorstep of glory. Eight times Juventus have reached the final match in the world's most prestigious club competition, but only twice have they brought the trophy back to Italy. "We had some tough moments," Buffon said after sending a young Monaco side packing. "And it would have been even harder if we had gone out there with our noses in the air. But we didn't, we knew we had to suffer. Now this final is here. But it counts for nothing yet."

'IMPOSSIBLE INTO REALITY'

Juventus were well beaten when they lost to Barcelona in 2015 in what was their fourth final setback since they beat Ajax in 1996. Heartbreak followed in 1997, 1998 and 2003 and many feared Juventus' days as a great force in European football were over when the club was caught up in a match-fixing scandal and relegated to Serie B following the 2006 World Cup. Buffon was among the club's leading stars who opted to stay and he has been a pillar of its rebirth as the predominant force in Italian football.

A point at direct rivals Roma on Sunday will wrap up a sixth straight Scudetto and, with a Coppa Italia final to come against Lazio on May 17, a memorable treble looks like a distinct possibility. There is little doubt about which piece of silverware counts most. "When we played in the 2015 final, everyone thought it would be my last in the Champions," Buffon said. "Even I thought it, even if underneath I kept hoping." And the sense of being on the brink of history was underlined in a tweet from Italy's most capped player yesterday. "We will be remembered for our actions," he wrote. "For our capacity to turn the impossible into reality." — AFP



Gianluigi Buffon

I'VE NOT GAMBLLED ON EUROPA LEAGUE SUCCESS: MOURINHO

MANCHESTER: Manchester United manager Jose Mourinho has not gambled with the club's season by prioritizing Europa League success over a top-four finish in the Premier League, he said yesterday. Mourinho has given up on United's hopes of securing Champions League qualification via the league and fielded a weakened team in last Sunday's 2-0 defeat at Arsenal. United are 1-0 up ahead of the home leg of their Europa League semifinal against Celta Vigo today and with victory in the tournament yielding a Champions League slot, Mourinho says his choices were entirely rational.

"The situation is simple. Seventeen matches in seven weeks with 16 players is impossible. It was not a gamble. It was a simple decision," he told reporters at Old Trafford. "It was a decision based on common sense. Seventeen matches in seven weeks, April and May. Seventeen matches with 16 players is completely impossible. We lost four players in one week, when we lost (Chris) Smalling and (Phil) Jones in the (England) national team and (Marcos) Rojo and Zlatan (Ibrahimovic) against Anderlecht (in the previous round). After that we lost boys that could be alternatives: Ashley Young, Luke Shaw, Timothy Fosu-Mensah. When we lost these players in a period of 17 matches in seven weeks, it was the impossible job. It was not a gamble, just a consequence of our situation." Mourinho has already led United to victory in the League Cup, but they lie four

points off the Champions League places with three matches of the Premier League season remaining. More accustomed to competing for Champions League titles, United are bidding to reach the final of Europe's second-tier competition for the first time in their history.

ATMOSPHERE 'NOT CONSISTENT'

Spanish side Celta have never reached a continental final of any stripe, but Mourinho says there will be no difference between the teams when it comes to their will to win. "In terms of motivation we are even," said the Portuguese, who led Porto to glory in the UEFA Cup - as the Europa League was formerly known - in 2003. "For Celta, in their words it's the most important match of their history. My feeling is also the most important match of our history. It doesn't matter what happened before, how big the matches before were. What matters is the next one and the next one is tomorrow. I don't think Celta want it more than us. So in this aspect I don't think there will be a difference between the teams."

Mourinho revealed United will be without Rojo, Shaw, Young, Fosu-Mensah and Ibrahimovic for the rest of the season, but he reported no new injury problems. Celta have scored in all six of their Europa League away games this season and with United's lead so slender, Mourinho challenged the club's supporters to provide a fitting atmosphere for the occasion. — AFP



Jose Mourinho

Sports

Djokovic, Nadal struggle in Madrid opening matches



I've not gambled on Europa League success: Mourinho



THURSDAY, MAY 11, 2017

OLYMPIC DELEGATES LAUNCH LA 2024 INSPECTION TOUR

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MADRID: Real Madrid's Brazilian defender Danilo (left) vies with Atletico Madrid's Belgian midfielder Yannick Ferreira Carrasco during the UEFA Champions League semifinal second leg football match at the Vicente Calderon stadium yesterday.— AFP

REAL IN FINAL AS ATLETICO FALL SHORT

MADRID: Real Madrid inflicted a fourth Champions League elimination on Atletico Madrid in as many years yesterday, losing their semi-final second leg 2-1 but progressing to the final 4-2 on aggregate. Atletico had threatened an incredible comeback, Saul Niguez's powerful header and Antoine Griezmann's penalty inside 16 minutes cutting Real's aggregate lead to a solitary goal. The hosts fed off a ferocious atmosphere for their final Champions League match at the Vicente Calderon before moving to the Wanda Metropolitano next season.

However, Isco's away goal just before half-time settled Real's nerves and left Atletico with too much to do to progress. Cristiano Ronaldo's first leg hat-trick ultimately proved decisive and Real will seek to become the first side to defend the trophy in the Champions League era when they face Juventus in the final in Cardiff on May 3. An

already fierce rivalry between the Spanish giants has intensified in recent years by Real's three Champions League victories over Atletico, including in the 2014 and 2016 finals.

Real fans had unfurled a huge banner that read "tell me how does it feel" ahead of the first leg. The home fans responded with their own "proud to not be like you" banner as a dig back ahead of kick-off in the return. And Atletico's players went a long way towards making amends for their meek display in the first leg eight days ago in a thrilling opening. Real goalkeeper Keylor Navas denied Koke from close range and Fernando Torres headed over, before at the other end Jan Oblak made a brilliant save from Casemiro's header.

Atletico got the goal they needed to get back into the tie 12 minutes in when Koke's outswinging corner was met powerfully by Saul for his fourth Champions League goal of the

season. Just three minutes later Atletico truly believed they could pull off the most unlikely of comebacks when Fernando Torres was upended by Raphael Varane inside the box. Griezmann had missed his previous two penalties against Real, including in last year's Champions League final. This time the French international found the net, albeit with a bit of fortune as Navas got a hand to his mishit spot-kick but couldn't keep it out.

Fierce challenges then rained in from both sides as Turkish referee Cuneyt Cakir struggled to keep control, with five players booked inside the opening 37 minutes. However, Real regained their composure to get the vital away goal they needed for some extra breathing space just before half-time. Karim Benzema somehow escaped the attention of three Atletico defenders on the by-line and cut the ball back for Toni Kroos. Oblak made another brilliant stop to deny the German,

but Isco followed up from close range to bundle the ball home. Ronaldo had scored eight times in his previous three Champions League appearances, however, the closest the World Player of the Year came to adding to his record 21 goals against Atletico was a driven free-kick at the start of the second half that was beaten away by Oblak. Atletico had their chances to put the tie back on a knife-edge as Navas produced an incredible double save from Yannick Carrasco and Kevin Gameiro.

The Costa Rican then got down low to his right to turn behind Griezmann's low volley and Gameiro failed to turn home another great opportunity from point-blank range. A torrential thunder storm disrupted the final stages, but lightning has now struck four times for Atletico against Real and Zinedine Zidane's side will head to Cardiff seeking a 12th European Cup. — AFP

SANCHEZ, GIROUD KEEP ARSENAL IN TOP-4 HUNT



SOUTHAMPTON: Alexis Sanchez hit his 20th Premier League goal of the season as Arsenal saw off Southampton to keep their Premier League top-four hopes alive. The Gunners secured a vital 2-0 win in this game in hand to leapfrog Manchester United into fifth and now sit three points adrift of fourth-placed Manchester City. Sanchez struck the opener on the hour mark at St Mary's before Olivier Giroud came off the bench to make sure of the points with a close-range header.

Under-fire Arsenal boss Arsene Wenger has constantly reiterated his side cannot put a foot wrong in their remaining games, and they were solid enough to take home victory from the south coast to keep them in the hunt for Champions League qualification. Arsenal went into this match needing a win but also having to address woeful away form that had seen them take two points from a possible 24 on the road against current top-half teams.

They were not at their best here but in truth they did not need to be - this was nothing like the 4-0 thrashing they dished out in the corresponding fixture last term. Southampton appear to be coasting to the season's end, with reported pressure on manager Claude Puel likely to ramp up after another lackluster display. Saints had their moments but looked short of ideas in attack, where out-

of-sorts forward Manolo Gabbiadini again drew a blank.

The game started with nothing of the tempo and chances from Sunday's opening exchanges from Arsenal's weekend win over Manchester United. But it was the visitors who had the first real chance as Aaron Ramsey sent an effort wide of goal following good work from Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain. The former Saints youngster was enjoying a bright spell down the right but there were no further opportunities of note in the opening half-hour. That was until the Arsenal three-man defence conspired to play both Dusan Tadic and Gabbiadini inside, with the latter seeing an effort well saved by Petr Cech.

Wenger was forced into a change as the impressive Oxlade-Chamberlain went off with what appeared to be a hamstring issue - Hector Bellerin on in his place. Gabbiadini then sent a contentious free-kick wide of Cech's goal before Arsenal's skipper for the night had to be at his best to tip a Nathan Redmond drive over the bar. Both teams started the second half looking to get on the front foot but it took until the hour for Sanchez to open the scoring for Arsenal.

The Chile forward picked up a pass inside the box from Mesut Ozil and left both Maya Yoshida and Jack Stephens on the ground as he cut back inside and finished well. The second came in the closing stages as substitute Giroud made certain of the points, heading home Ramsey's nod back across the box after more good work from Sanchez. It was a professional display from there on in from Arsenal, who recorded a first league win at Southampton since their unbeaten title-winning season of 2003/04.

This victory may not mean as much as it did during the 'Invincibles' campaign, but it could have long-lasting ramifications for both Wenger and Arsenal as the Frenchman continues to contemplate whether to sign a new deal. — AFP



SOUTHAMPTON: Southampton's English midfielder James Ward-Prowse (left) pulls back Arsenal's English striker Danny Welbeck during an English Premier League football match between Southampton and Arsenal at St Mary's Stadium yesterday.— AFP



KAMCO shareholders approve 5% cash dividends

ZAIN RECOGNIZED AS 'BEST OVERALL COMPANY IN KUWAIT'



KUWAIT: Chairman Bader Naser Al-Kharafi (third right) addresses the general assembly meeting of Gulf Cable & Electrical Industries Company yesterday.

GULF CABLE TO SUPPORT KUWAITI PRODUCTS: AL-KHARAFI COMPANY TO FOCUS ON EXPORTS, EXPAND OPERATIONS IN IRAQ

KUWAIT: Chairman of Gulf Cable & Electrical Industries Company Bader Naser Al-Kharafi said the weakness of government projects in Kuwait made the company concentrate on exports and be active in Iraq through its factory in Jordan and the UAE market. He hoped bigger projects are introduced in Kuwait, "with our company having a share in them".

Al-Kharafi, who spoke during the company's general assembly that was held with 71.94 percent of members attending, said the company's results were excellent in 2016. He expected the company to have a larger share in existing projects in the oil sector, such as the \$6.4 billion Clean Fuels project, as well as future housing projects and other projects such as the airport. He said it is necessary to support Kuwaiti products over foreign ones, but "we regretfully did not see this in the government sectors lately".

Al-Kharafi said exports have increased lately, explaining that "we cover the entire surrounding region". "The Saudi market dropped a little because competition is very tough there, so we are targeting Iraq and Syria when its market opens, especially since we are more qualified because our factory is in Mafrq in Jordan not far from Syria, but the current situation is not comforting," he said. Al-Kharafi said oil price drops negatively affected government projects and expenditure, which in turn affected projects.

Gulf Cable & Electrical Industries Company was established in 1975 with the objective of meeting growing local requirements and to provide users with quality wires and cables. The company's large and modern factory was commissioned in October 1979.



Chairman of Gulf Cable & Electrical Industries Company Bader Naser Al-Kharafi

NEW STRATEGY FOR COAST INVESTMENT: AL-KHARAFI

KUWAIT: Following tough negotiations and paying off all its debts and settling related litigations in 2016, Coast Investments & Development Company (Coast Investment) is in a healthy financial condition that will enable it to grow and regain its status in Kuwait's economy, said Chairman Anwar Jassem Al-Kharafi.

Speaking during the annual general assembly meeting held in the presence of 61.33 percent of shareholders, Al-Kharafi stressed that Coast Investment managed, for the first time, to post profits of KD 2,068,398 in 2016 with a growth rate of 123.67 percent after a KD 8.7 million loss in 2015. He added that profit per share also grew by 126.67 percent to four fils compared to a loss of 15 fils per share in 2015. In addition, the company's total assets reached KD 54.3 million and liabilities dropped from KD 4.79 million in 2015 to KD 1.86 million by the end of 2016.

Al-Kharafi said that the company aspires to accelerate the success it achieved in 2016 to further levels in 2107 through a new strategy based on offering new financial and



KUWAIT: Anwar Jassem Al-Kharafi (right) addresses the company's general assembly meeting yesterday.

investment services, including expanding into other geographic territories. Notably, the general assembly approved all the topics on its agenda including the financial and auditors' reports for transactions made during the fiscal year ending on Dec 31, 2016.

UK FUND MANAGERS WARY OF ARAMCO INVESTMENT

LONDON: While Britain's stock exchange pulls out all the stops to woo Saudi Aramco, some leading British fund managers who would be among potential investors have expressed reservations about the oil titan's corporate governance and valuation.

The Saudi government values the state firm at \$2 trillion and plans to sell a stake of around 5 percent next year in what is expected to be the largest stock market listing in history. Global financial centres from London to New York and Hong Kong are vying for a piece of the action.

Sources told Reuters last week that the London Stock Exchange (LSE) was working on a new type of listing structure that would be more attractive for Aramco by allowing it to avoid the most onerous corporate governance requirements of a primary listing, without being seen as second class.

But even should the LSE win an Aramco listing, active fund managers based in London who would be among potential buyers of shares said their participation was far from guaranteed, with many expressing concerns about the level of influence investors could command as well as corporate transparency. Trevor Green, head of UK equities at Aviva Investors, the fund arm of British insurer Aviva, cited "very big governance issues" around how much independently verified data about the company's oil reserves would be given, its board structure and the small portion of the company being listed.

"At this stage we would struggle (to take part)... governance is a key part of

our process and this is going to break it in a lot of ways," Green said. Clive Beagles, fund manager at JO Hambro, said he would likely look at the Aramco listing but doubted he would participate "because of those issues about being such a minority investor relative to people that you'd have very little influence over".

Saudi Aramco declined to comment for this story. The oil giant has brought in investment banks, auditors, lawyers and management consultants as well as investor and public relations firms to help it restructure, go over its accounts and advise on changes it needs to make to its corporate governance to become a publicly listed company.

Governance is an increasingly important issue for asset managers as investors such as pension schemes and insurance companies are increasingly pushing them to hold companies to account more and prevent bad decision-making.

Premium listing

Companies looking to list on LSE with a "premium" listing need to float at least 25 percent of their equity. A "standard" listing allows a company to list under less-strict governance rules, although it is not then eligible for inclusion in the FTSE index and is considered a second-tier listing, something that would be less attractive to Aramco. Given that, sources have told Reuters the exchange is working on a new type of listing structure to allow Aramco to float less than 25 percent without being classified as a standard listing.

British asset management industry body the Investment Association said while it wanted to see more high-quality companies brought to public markets, good governance and liquidity were "critical".

"IA members believe that 25 percent should be the minimum free float level for any premium listed company in the UK and that this should be preserved in all cases to protect the integrity and standard of the UK premium market," said Galina Dimitrova, director of capital markets.

"Saudi Aramco is no exception."

Differing valuations

Aramco is expected to list on the Riyadh exchange, the Tadawul, and at least one major international stock market. It may not need to woo thousands of investors; it is expected to appeal to so-called strategic buyers such as other oil companies or countries looking to cement ties with Riyadh, such as China, which sources have previously said has pledged to back the IPO. Buyers in London could include hedge funds and others with less onerous governance concerns, but even here there may be a serious divergence with Saudi over valuation.

Rohan Murphy, energy analyst at Allianz Global Investors, said while valuing the firm was an art and not a science, he considered the mooted figure of \$2 trillion to be too high. A survey of investors by investment bank EFG Hermes in March found most expected Aramco to be valued at between \$1-\$1.5 trillion. — Reuters



KUWAIT: Coast Investments & Development Company Chairman Anwar Jassem Al-Kharafi addresses the company's general assembly meeting.

ZAIN RECOGNIZED AS 'BEST OVERALL COMPANY IN KUWAIT'

COMPANY AWARDED AT ANNUAL ARABIAN BUSINESS ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

KUWAIT: Leading regional economic magazine Arabian Business awarded Zain the 'Best Overall Company in Kuwait' at the prestigious Achievement Awards, held in Jumeirah Hotel. The Arabian Business Kuwait Awards recognize and reward outstanding success and innovation across various industry sectors in the country.

Waleed Al-Khashti, Zain Kuwait's Corporate Communications and Relations Director, received the award on behalf of Zain. The company was singled out for this year's honor given its relentless pursuit of excellence and innovation with the aim of achieving superior digital lifestyle transformation. Zain expressed its pride and appreciation for this recognition, as well as in the interest Arabian Business shows in the achievements of Kuwaiti organizations on particular. The 2017 awards honored leading companies and institutions that have delivered

success, innovation and excellence, as well as those that have made a vital contribution to the vibrancy of business within Kuwait.

Zain is deeply invested in the fabric of the Kuwaiti society, and its corporate sustainability and social responsibility activities speak for themselves in this regard. Keen to encourage and uplift the youth, Zain has a series of initiatives and programs aimed at engaging with youth in Kuwait, and allowing them to develop their talent and find expression to their ideas.

As one of the most recognizable brands in Kuwait, Zain was recently ranked the second most powerful home-grown brand in the Middle East by London-based valuation and strategy consultancy Brand Finance. The company was also awarded the 'Best Mobile Operator' and 'Best Internet Service Provider' in Kuwait for the year 2016 from Service Hero for the fifth time.

Zain also received 6 prizes as part of the second edition of Kuwait's Public Relations and Customer Service Prize during last April. The prizes included: "Excellence in Customer Service", "Excellence in Social Awareness", "Excellence in Corporate Communications and Relations", "Excellence in Website Services", and "Excellence in Call Center." In addition, Zain Kuwait's Corporate Communications and Relations Director Waleed Al-Khashti received "PR Personality of the Year 2016".

The recognition Zain received from Arabian Business further strengthens the company's role as a leading private sector company, and reinforces Zain's commitment in maintaining the values of its brand. The company is motivated to continue its pledge in providing exclusive services to meet the needs of its customers as well as to facilitate their personal, professional, and business needs.



ABK TAKES HOME 'BANK OF YEAR' AWARD FROM ABM

THE ABK GROUP DEMONSTRATES STRENGTH ACROSS REGION

KUWAIT: Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) was named 'Bank of the Year' by Arabian Business Magazine, highlighting the Bank's series of milestones and achievements that have been recorded throughout the past year. Fawzy Al-Thunayan - General Manager Board Affairs, received the award on behalf of the Bank during an awards ceremony held at Jumeirah Messilah Hotel - Kuwait, on 9 May, 2017.

The 'Bank of the Year' award recognizes ABK's series of achievements across various areas, substantially in line with its Simpler Banking strategy, growing the Bank's operations, and demonstrating the Bank's strength across the region. In Kuwait, ABK was one of the first to launch biometric fingerprint authentication on its mobile banking system, and 'Touch ID' has now replaced mobile banking passwords. The Bank's Website and Internet Banking have been redesigned with a simpler user experience in mind, and callers to the Contact Centre are now identified by their phone numbers. The Call Centre platform has been completely replaced, improving efficiencies and reducing call duration by an average of 30 percent, whilst assigning priority queuing to Elite, VIP and International callers. The Bank has also recently refined its e-banking offering to include substantial card enhancements such as payWave for debit, credit and pre-paid cards, which incorporates revolutionary 'tap and go' technology, in addition to Verified-by-Visa (VbV) services for debit, credit and prepaid cards. This helps increase security for customers choosing to use their cards to make purchases online, in addition to several other developments. More importantly, it was the first in the region to introduce a new Quick-Read card, which is designed to make online purchases more straightforward.

ABK also recently launched a new core banking system; a powerful infrastructure framework that has transformed the Bank's existing IT infrastructure and operating systems entirely. This has already been successfully deployed across its UAE operations and will roll out in Kuwait later this year.

An additional achievement for the Bank was the successful debut issue from its recently established \$1.5 billion Euro Medium-Term Note (EMTN) program. Not only was it the first bond



issue for ABK but it was also the first Kuwaiti issuer to launch a bond following Kuwait's recent successful debut sovereign bond.

In terms of its Egypt operations, the Bank has completed the integration and rebranding across all 39 branches of 'Piraeus Bank of Egypt', which have been fully rebranded to Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait - Egypt (ABK-Egypt), along with the integration of the Bank's systems and management structure. Moreover, ABK - Egypt saw an exceptional turnaround since the acquisition with a substantial growth of 54 percent in total assets, 73 percent in loans and 42 percent in

customer deposits in record time. ABK won a number of prizes throughout the year including: 'Best Bank Transformation in the Middle East' Award from Euromoney, 'Best Commercial Bank in Kuwait' award from Banker ME, and CEO Michel Accad was named 'Banker of the Year' by Banker Middle East, 'Bank CEO of the Year' by CEO Magazine, an ITP affiliate, 'Best Retail Bank in Kuwait' 2017 award from the Asian Banker, 'Best Retail Bank' from The European, a Thomson Reuters affiliate and most recently 'Employer of the Year' by Naseba for the second consecutive year.

AMAZON TROUNCES RIVALS IN BATTLE OF SHOPPING 'BOTS'

SAN FRANCISCO: Earlier this year, engineers at Wal-Mart Stores Inc who track rivals' prices online got a rude surprise: The technology they were using to check Amazon.com several million times a day suddenly stopped working.

Losing access to Amazon.com Inc's data was no small matter. Like most big retailers, Wal-Mart relies on computer programs that scan prices on competitors' websites so it can adjust its listings accordingly. A difference of even 50 cents can mean losing a sale.

But a new tactic by Amazon to block these programs - known commonly as robots or bots - thwarted the Bentonville, Arkansas-based retailer. Its technology unit, @WalmartLabs, was unable to work around the blockade for weeks, forcing it to retrieve Amazon's data through a secondary source, according to a person familiar with the matter who was not authorized to speak publicly.

The previously unreported incident offers a case study in how Amazon's technological prowess is helping it dominate the retail competition. Now the largest online retailer in the world, Amazon is best known by consumers for its fast delivery, huge product catalog and ambitious moves into areas like original TV programming. But its mastery of the complex, behind-the-scenes technologies that power modern e-commerce is just as important to its success.

Dexterity with bots allows Amazon not only to see what its rivals are doing, but increasingly to keep them in the dark when it undercuts them on price or is quietly charging more. "Benchmarking against Amazon is going to become hard," said Guru Hariharan, a former Amazon manager who now sells pricing software to retailers as chief executive of Mountain View, California-based Boomerang Commerce.

A Wal-Mart spokesman declined to discuss the January episode but said the company improves its technology regularly and has multiple tools for tracking items. He said the company offers value not only through pricing but from discounts for in-store pickup and other benefits. A spokeswoman for Amazon said the company is aware of competitors using bots to check its listings and denied any "campaign" to stop them. "Nothing has changed recently in how we manage bots on our site," she said. Still, she said, "we prioritize humans over bots as needed."

Bots can slow down a website, a big motivator for retailers to block them. Reuters interviewed 21 people familiar with bots and how they are deployed, including current and former Wal-Mart employees, former Amazon employees and outside specialists. Many spoke only on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the issues publicly.

The company's technological edge has been good for its profit margin, and it's

proving a winning formula for investors. Shares of the internet powerhouse have risen about 15-fold since the market's bottom in March 2009, while the S&P 500 has more than tripled in value. Amazon hit \$100 billion in annual sales in 2015 - faster than any company in history, it said.

Brave new world

Bot-driven pricing has represented a massive change for the retail industry since Amazon helped pioneer the practice more than a decade ago. Traditionally, brick-and-mortar stores changed prices no more than weekly because of the time and expense needed to swap labels by hand.

In the world of e-commerce, though, retailers update prices with ease, sometimes multiple times a day, helped by algorithms that consider inventory levels, sales forecasts and rivals' pricing data. To stay in the game, companies such as online wholesaler Boxed, based in New York, depend on a variety of methods including bots to ensure they do not lag others' price moves for even 20 minutes.

"That's like a lifetime during Christmas," said Chief Executive Chieh Huang, whose company sells bulk staples like toilet paper and pet food. "If we're not decently priced, we'll see it almost immediately" in sales declines.

Disguised as humans

Using bots to view massive amounts of data on public websites - a process known as crawling or scraping - has many purposes. Alphabet Inc's Google, for example, constantly crawls the Web to gather information for its search engine results and to sell ads.

In e-commerce, though, the use of bots has developed into a cat-and-mouse game. Companies try to thwart the practice on their own websites while aiming to penetrate their competitors' defenses. Third-party services abound to help less-savvy retailers.

To protect data from rivals, some retail websites use what's known as a "CAPTCHA" - typically a distorted string of letters and numbers that humans can read but most bots can't. Amazon shies away from the practice because it annoys some customers. For merchants seeking to evade such defenses, disguising their computer programs as real shoppers is key. Some pricing technology experts have programmed computer cursors to meander through a Web page in the way a person might, instead of going directly to the prized data. Another technique is to use multiple computer addresses so that retailers cannot track a barrage of clicks to a single source.

"It is an arms race," said Keith Anderson, a senior vice president at e-commerce analytics firm Profitpro, based in Ireland. "Every week or every month, there's some new approach from both sides." —Reuters

BIG BANKS FUME OVER HEFTY NEW AUSTRALIA LEVY

SYDNEY: Australia's banking sector reacted with fury yesterday to a government plan to slug lenders with a hefty new levy, calling it a "naive" tax grab that sent the wrong signal to global financial markets.

The move to raise Aus\$6.2 billion (US\$4.5 billion) over four years through a 0.06 percent charge on the borrowings of the big five banks-ANZ,

Commonwealth, Macquarie, NAB and Westpac - was a key plank of the federal budget on Tuesday. Treasurer Scott Morrison said the lenders could afford to pay, and the cash would help with budget repair and a raft of spending on infrastructure, health and schools.

"This represents an additional and fair contribution from our major banks, is similar to measures

imposed in other advanced countries, and will even up the playing field for smaller banks," he said.

Morrison warned the banks-some of Australia's most profitable companies not to pass on the hit to customers as it did not apply to mortgage or deposit accounts. "If they do, take your money somewhere else, take your money to a regional or smaller bank," he said. —AFP

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

ASIAN COUNTRIES

Japanese Yen	2.685
Indian Rupees	4.726
Pakistani Rupees	2.913
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.999
Nepali Rupees	2.965
Singapore Dollar	217.400
Hongkong Dollar	39.237
Bangladesh Taka	3.745
Philippine Peso	6.114
Thai Baht	8.822

GCC COUNTRIES

Saudi Riyal	81.508
Qatari Riyal	83.949
Omani Riyal	793.789
Bahraini Dinar	811.610
UAE Dirham	83.218

ARAB COUNTRIES

Egyptian Pound - Cash	19.600
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	16.800
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.227
Tunisian Dinar	127.400
Jordanian Dinar	430.820
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	2.036
Syrian Lira	2.178
Morocco Dirham	31.168

EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES

US Dollar Transfer	305.450
Euro	334.160
Sterling Pound	397.390

Canadian dollar	223.610
Turkish Lira	85.200
Swiss Franc	305.140
Australian Dollar	226.340
US Dollar Buying	304.250

GOLD

20 Gram	251.030
10 Gram	128.440
5 Gram	65.060

DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

Rate for Transfer	Selling Rate
US Dollar	304.800
Canadian Dolla	226.525
Sterling Pound	392.135
Euro	328.485
Swiss Frank	305.110
Bahrain Dinar	808.430
UAE Dirhams	83.380
Qatari Riyals	84.605
Saudi Riyals	82.175
Jordanian Dinar	429.815
Egyptian Pound	16.978
Sri Lankan Rupees	2.005
Indian Rupees	4.728
Pakistani Rupees	2.907
Bangladesh Taka	3.742
Philippines Peso	6.121
Cyprus pound	168.208
Japanese Yen	3.795
Syrian Pound	2.420

Nepalese Rupees	3.950
Malaysian Ringgit	70.185
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	44.745
Thai Bhat	9.860
Turkish Lira	84.130

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
Europe		
British Pound	0.388773	0.398773
Czech Korune	0.004459	0.016459
Danish Krone	0.040595	0.045595
Euro	0.326873	0.335873
Norwegian Krone	0.031106	0.036306
Romanian Leu	0.072929	0.072929
Slovakia	0.009148	0.019148
Swedish Krona	0.030293	0.035293
Swiss Franc	0.296677	0.307677
Turkish Lira	0.080045	0.090345
Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.216570	0.228570
New Zealand Dollar	0.204521	0.214021
America		
Canadian Dollar	0.217324	0.226324
Georgina Lari	0.137958	0.137958
US Dollars	0.301350	0.305750
US Dollars Mint	0.301850	0.305750
Asia		
Bangladesh Taka	0.003416	0.004000
Chinese Yuan	0.042795	0.046295

Hong Kong Dollar	0.037143	0.039893
Indian Rupee	0.004156	0.004844
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018	0.000024
Japanese Yen	0.002598	0.002778
Kenyan Shilling	0.002954	0.002954
Korean Won	0.000259	0.000274
Malaysian Ringgit	0.066381	0.072381
Nepalese Rupee	0.003018	0.003188
Pakistan Rupee	0.002718	0.003008
Philippine Peso	0.006009	0.006309
Sierra Leone	0.000038	0.000044
Singapore Dollar	0.211104	0.221104
South African Rand	0.016452	0.024952
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001639	0.002219
Taiwan	0.009960	0.010140
Thai Baht	0.008453	0.009003

Arab		
Bahraini Dinar	0.803641	0.812141
Egyptian Pound	0.014067	0.019975
Iranian Riyal	0.000085	0.000086
Iraqi Dinar	0.000195	0.000255
Jordanian Dinar	0.425459	0.434459
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000152	0.000252
Moroccan Dirhams	0.020769	0.044769
Nigerian Naira	0.000399	0.001034
Omani Riyal	0.786956	0.792636
Qatar Riyal	0.083088	0.084538
Saudi Riyal	0.080367	0.081667
Syrian Pound	0.001295	0.001515
Tunisian Dinar	0.124131	0.132131
Turkish Lira	0.080045	0.090345
UAE Dirhams	0.081738	0.083438
Yemeni Riyal	0.000993	0.001073

EBRD SEES OIL PRICE REBOUND BOOSTING ECONOMIC GROWTH

NICOSIA: Europe's development bank predicted yesterday a pick-up in economic growth this year in most of the regions where it operates as rebounding oil prices boost Russia and other commodity exporters. The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, at its annual meeting in Cyprus, also rebuffed a push by Moscow to end a freeze in investments in Russia over the Ukraine crisis.

One weak spot in the cautiously upbeat outlook is Turkey where growth is expected to slow as political uncertainty hits the economy, the EBRD said. Average economic growth in the EBRD region—which also includes countries in eastern and central Europe, central Asia and the Mediterranean—is expected to pick up to 2.4 percent in 2017 and 2.8 percent in 2018, the EBRD said.

That would mark an improvement from growth of 1.8 percent seen in 2016. "Overall the news is good. Growth is faster... despite all the risks, all the global challenges," EBRD chief economist Sergei Guriev told a news conference. The rebound in world oil prices since the first quarter of 2016 has been positive for Russia as well as countries that rely on it

for remittances and export demand, the bank said. Russia is emerging from a two-year recession but even so the economic recovery is expected to be relatively muted with growth seen at 1.2 percent this year and 1.4 percent in 2018, the EBRD said. "Even though recession in Russia is over, we forecast only a very slow recovery and we don't see remittances going back to the peak of 2013, which means for the countries that rely on remittances from Russia this is continuing to be a difficult time," Guriev said.

'Dangerous precedent'

The London-based EBRD rejected a challenge by Moscow over the suspension of new investments in Russia that the development bank announced in 2014 as part of European action against Moscow over the Ukraine conflict. "The board of governors overwhelmingly agreed that the bank has complied with its own internal rules with respect to its engagement with the Russian Federation," EBRD president Suma Chakrabarti said.

"That is a final and binding resolution." Russian Economy Minister Maxim Oreshkin lashed out at the decision, call-



NICOSIA: Participants of the Annual meeting and business forum walk outside of the "Filoxenia" conference center in Nicosia, Cyprus, yesterday. — AP

ing it a "dangerous precedent".

Moscow has condemned the freeze as politically motivated and in breach of the mandate of the EBRD, which was founded

in 1991 to help former Soviet bloc countries switch to free-market economies.

In its forecasts, the EBRD said growth in Turkey would slow further to 2.6 percent

in 2017 from 2.9 percent in 2016 as security and political concerns hit investor sentiment and tourism. "While increased disposable income on the back of a 30-percent hike in the minimum wage in January 2016 resulted in an increase in private consumption, growth was hit by a sharp fall in tourism receipts, Russian sanctions, and geopolitical tensions in the Middle East," the bank said in its economic update.

"Weak consumer and investor sentiment following the attempted military coup in July 2016 compounded these problems." Growth in the southern and eastern Mediterranean region—which includes Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia—is projected to pick up to 3.7 percent in 2017, from 3.4 percent last year. The economies of southeast Europe are set to expand by around three percent on average both this year and in 2018, with Greece returning to growth as reforms progress and business confidence creeps back, the EBRD said. The bank announced that its board of governors had given the green light for it to engage in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip for an initial period of five years to support the Palestinian territories with investments through a trust fund. — AFP



HONG KONG: Pedestrians walk past street market stalls selling fresh produce in Hong Kong yesterday. — AFP

DRAGHI CAUTIOUSLY UPBEAT ON EUROZONE ECONOMY

ECB CHIEF SAYS TOO EARLY TO DECLARE VICTORY

THE HAGUE: It is too early for the European Central Bank to declare victory in its quest to boost euro zone inflation despite signs the bloc's economic recovery is strengthening, ECB President Mario Draghi said yesterday.

Draghi's comments confirmed he is in no rush to raise interest rates or wind down the ECB's 2.3 billion euro bond-buying program despite insistence from richer euro zone countries such as the Netherlands and Germany. But he did hint at potential changes to the ECB's ultra-loose policy message. "Incoming data confirm that the cyclical recovery of the euro area economy is becoming increasingly solid and that downside risks have further diminished," he told a hearing of the Dutch parliament.

"Nevertheless, it is too early to declare success. Underlying inflation pressures continue to remain subdued and have yet to show a convincing upward trend."

The ECB is expected to tweak its policy message next month to reflect an improved economic situation but keep policy on hold. Sources told Reuters last month some or all the references to prevailing downside risks to the outlook, to the possibility of further rate cuts or to larger asset purchases may be taken out. "Some of the elements of our forward guidance are meant to address the tail risks of ... inflation behavior," Draghi told the Dutch parliamentarians. "And to the extent that the balance of risk for growth gradually improves, also the probability of these tail risks become less and less." He added the ECB did not plan to change the rules of the bond-buying program to avoid the risk of running out of sovereign debt to buy in some



President of the European Central Bank Mario Draghi

countries, despite calls to do so by some of its policymakers. Draghi said the benefits of the ECB's monetary stimulus were outweighing its side effects, but acknowledged rising property prices and high household debt in some countries, including the Netherlands. "We do not currently see compelling evidence of overstretched asset valuations at the euro area level, but we do see that real estate dynamics or high household debt levels in some countries signal the risk of increasing imbalances," Draghi said. "Such risks also exist in the Netherlands."

Draghi was greeted by finance committee chairman Pieter Duisenberg, the son of Wim Duisenberg, the first head of the ECB when it was created in 1998 ahead of the introduction of the shared euro currency in 1999. Wim Duisenberg died in 2005. The committee, however, gave Draghi anything but a nostalgic reception. The ECB's stimulus programs have

provoked criticism in the more prosperous northern European countries such as Germany and the Netherlands. That's because the stimulus efforts to lower market interest rates are seen as hurting savers and bailing out less financially solid countries. Lawmaker Tony van Dijk told Draghi that "you're not a hero" in the Netherlands by depriving savers of returns on their holdings. Draghi responded that the stimulus had benefited the economy and ordinary people by helping boost employment. He said the policies had played a role in the creation of 4.5 million jobs over the last three years. Analysts expect the ECB to signal later this year it will taper the stimulus program in 2018.

The currency union's economy grew 0.5 percent in the first quarter and unemployment has fallen slowly to 9.5 percent, but with sharp differences between countries. Inflation, meanwhile, has risen to 1.9 percent, in line with the ECB's goal of just under 2 percent. But the bank has warned it needs to see that inflation is back on track in a sustainable way. Core inflation, which excludes volatile food and fuel prices, remains at a weak 1.2 percent. Withdrawing the stimulus will have far-reaching effects. It will mean higher interest costs for longer-term borrowers such as corporations, governments and people with house mortgages. It will make it easier to save for retirement and to fund pension plans out of current income. It could also send bond prices lower in the short terms. Over the longer term, higher rates should make conservative holdings such as savings accounts and bonds more attractive relative to riskier ones such as stocks. — Agencies

IVORY COAST TRIMS BUDGET, GROWTH FORECAST FOR 2017

ABIDJAN: Ivory Coast cuts its 2017 growth forecast and budget yesterday, as its economy seeks to weather sharp falls in the price of cocoa, its main crop. The budget will be trimmed by around 50 billion CFA francs (\$84 million), the government said yesterday, narrowing projected cuts from a previously announced 200 billion CFA francs.

Ivory Coast has emerged from a decade-long political crisis capped by a 2011 civil war as Africa's fastest growing economy. However, both revenue cuts from weaker cocoa prices and pressure from the army

for payouts are placing strain on public finances. President Alassane Ouattara said last month that falling prices for its top export meant spending plans would have to be scaled back sharply. "The socioeconomic environment has been marked by a drop of 35 percent in the price of cocoa and a rebound of oil prices," government spokeswoman Anne Ouloto told reporters after a cabinet meeting.

"It's in this context that the budget was revised," she added, without explaining why the cuts were smaller than those previously announced. — Reuters

VW HEAD DEFENDS DECISION NOT TO PUBLISH PROBE RESULTS

FRANKFURT, Germany: Volkswagen's board chairman has defended the decision not to publish results of the investigation it commissioned into its scandal over cars rigged to cheat on diesel emissions tests, saying it could expose the company to legal risks. Hans Dieter Poetsch told shareholders at the company's annual meeting yesterday that VW had given US law firm Jones Day complete independence, and that its findings were handed over and included in the guilty plea agreed with US authorities.

Poetsch told shareholders in the northern German city of Hannover that the investigation was "one of the most comprehensive in German business history," involving interviews with hundreds of witnesses.

He said he understood why some shareholders would "want still more transparency" but that disclosing further results of the Jones Day probe would expose the compa-

ny to "unacceptable legal risks." In part, he said that is because the company has agreed not to make statements that might differ with facts stated in the plea that it painstakingly negotiated with the US Justice Department.

The company also faces legal proceedings in other countries. Volkswagen pleaded guilty and agreed to pay \$4.3 billion to settle criminal charges. It has also agreed to pay at least \$16 billion euros to settle civil claims from US authorities and car buyers. Seven VW executives have been criminally charged. The company faces criminal probes in Germany and investor lawsuits there. The company has admitted installing software that sensed when the cars were on test stands and turned up the emissions controls, then turned them off during every day driving. The result was that the cars exceeded US limits for nitrous oxide, a gas which harms people's health. — AP



HANOVER: Matthias Mueller (left), CEO of German carmaker Volkswagen (VW), and Hans Dieter Poetsch (right), chairman of Volkswagen AG (VW), attend the shareholders' annual general meeting of German car maker Volkswagen yesterday. — AFP

GREEK BOND YIELD LOWEST SINCE 2012 DEBT RESTRUCTURING

LONDON: Greek government borrowing costs hit their lowest level in more than five years yesterday as Athens looked set to clinch vital bailout loans from its international lenders.

The yield on Greece's 10-year bond—an indication of the cost for the government to raise long-term cash in financial markets—hit its lowest level since the country's debt was restructured in March 2012, according to Tradeweb data. Analysts said optimism over the prospects for Greece unlocking the cash it needs to make big debt repayments this summer has even given rise to expectations that it may soon end a near three-year exile from bond markets.

Greece's finance minister and central bank governor are scheduled to speak in

Germany next week about Athens' prospects for returning to markets, although European officials have previously said this will not be until mid-2018.

"There is a relief that Greece will get its disbursements to get through the summer, and that is the main driver of the bond rally," ING's senior rates strategist Martin van Vliet said. "The Greek government is making the point that they can return to the markets now and maybe I would give them a chance but the way things are now it's going to be difficult." Greek bonds are prone to volatile price moves and trading volumes are low compared to other euro zone markets because the junk-rated debt is not widely held by international investors. — Reuters

EGYPT INFLATION HITS THREE-DECADE HIGH

CAIRO: Egypt's inflation rose to a three-decade high in April, piling pressure on the government to keep a lid on prices as it embarks on politically sensitive economic reforms likely to push them higher. Import-dependent

Egypt has been hit by soaring inflation since it floated its currency in November, allowing it to roughly halve in value. The float marked the opening salvo in a three-year, \$12 billion International Monetary Fund reform program that includes tax hikes and subsidy cuts.

Annual urban inflation rose in April to 31.5 percent from 30.9 percent in March, the official statistics agency, CAPMAS, said. That was the highest since June 30, 1986, when it reached 35.1 percent, according to Reuters data.

Core inflation, which strips out volatile items like food, decreased marginally to 32.06 percent in April from 32.25 percent in March. Rising prices present a challenge for President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi and his government, which have pledged to push ahead with sensitive austerity measures

like fuel and electricity price hikes. Food prices have spiked, rising by 43.6 percent year-on-year in April ahead of the holy month of Ramadan, when demand peaks because of heavy consumption following dawn-to-dusk fasting.

On Tuesday the government allocated 1 billion Egyptian pounds (\$55 million) in subsidies to ease Ramadan food purchases. "Everything is so expensive. We can't afford to eat. I don't know what to buy," said Baheega Mostafa, a housewife shopping for food. "I voted for Sisi. Unfortunately, I regret it very much." Though month-on-month inflation has eased in recent months, suggesting the worst of the price rises has passed, yearly inflation above 30 percent has confounded expectations and sown uncertainty into Egypt's economic reforms, analysts said. — Reuters

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MARKETS FALL; DOLLAR DOWN ON COMEY SACKING

LONDON: European shares held at 21-month highs yesterday, while the dollar fell on concerns that US President Donald Trump's dismissal of his FBI chief could make passage of his tax reform plans more difficult. Wall Street looked set to open lower, with index futures down about 0.2 percent.

Expectation-beating first-quarter company results have lifted stock markets across the globe, with European full-year earnings forecasts set to be their best since 2010. The prospect of US tax cuts has also helped push shares higher. However, Trump's abrupt sacking of FBI Director James Comey marked a fresh intrusion of politics into markets after Emmanuel Macron's weekend victory in the French presidential election had seemed to

clear the decks of major political risk, at least in Europe.

"This is a political story rather than a market story, but yet again it creates uncertainty in the market, which leaves everything the president does with a cloud floating over it," said James Hughes, chief markets analyst at GKFX in London.

The pan-European STOXX 600 index was fractionally up on the day, having traded in the red for most of the morning, weighed down by construction and materials stocks and by Italian banks. The index hit its highest since August 2015 on Tuesday. Asian shares, however, edged up for a third consecutive day. MSCI's main index of Asia-Pacific shares, excluding Japan rising 0.1 percent, having ear-

lier matched a two-year high hit last week. Twelve-month forward earnings-per-share for the index is at its highest level in more than three years. South Korean stocks led losers as investors took profits after liberal leader Moon Jae-in was elected president, while Chinese shares closed lower after factory gate prices in the world's second-biggest economy cooled more than expected in April.

Tokyo shares hit a 17-month high, up 0.3 percent on the day as a relatively weak yen outweighed concerns triggered by Trump's sacking of Comey.

The US president said he had fired Comey, who had been leading an investigation into the Trump 2016 campaign's possible collusion with Russia, over his handling of an email scandal

involving then-Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton. The dollar fell 0.1 percent against a basket of major currencies after slipping on the view that political uncertainty could derail Trump's tax reform plans.

The yen, often sought in times of market uncertainty, was last 0.2 percent higher at 113.79 to the dollar. The euro was flat at \$1.0868. The safe-haven Swiss franc also rose against the euro and dollar.

Falling yields

Falling US Treasury yields also weighed on the dollar. Ten-year yields were down 3.1 basis points at 2.38 percent after retreating from five-week highs touched on Tuesday as investors made room in their portfolios for new issuance

of government and corporate debt.

The most eye-catching move in euro zone government bond markets was a fall in Greek 10-year yields to their lowest since its debt was restructured in 2012.

Athens and its creditors reached a deal this month on reforms that could trigger the release of more rescue funds. "There is a relief that Greece will get its disbursements to get through the summer, and that is the main driver of the bond rally," ING's senior rates strategist Martin van Vliet said.

Oil prices rose after Saudi Arabia said it would cut supplies to Asia and US inventories fell more than expected. Brent crude was last up 48 cents at \$49.21 a barrel. Gold rose 0.2 percent to \$1,223 an ounce. —Reuters

Daily Kuwait Stock Exchange Report															
Wednesday 10 May 2017															
Index	Change	Closing	Last Closing	High	Low										
Price Index	▲ 57.00	6,655.97	6,596.97	6,663.20	6,599.33										
Weighted Index	▲ 2.18	399.21	397.03	400.54	397.89										
KSX 15	▲ 5.74	901.50	895.76	908.56	899.19										
Trades						Trades									
Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last	Change	Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last	Change
MARIN	62	61	82186	5,013	6	62	▲ 0.0	SOKOUK	45.0	43.5	7705873	339,341	165	44.5	▲ 1.0
IPG	410	410	396	162	2	410	▲ 15.0	KRE	56	54	4,619,192	252,224	84	54	▲ 0.0
NAPESCO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	1,460	▲ 0.0	URC	88	88	50	4	1	88	▲ 0.0
ENERGYH	43.0	40.5	74,654	3,106	28	42.5	▲ 0.5	NRE	100	98	862,892	85,591	46	100	▲ 1.0
GPI	41.0	39.0	3,221,616	129,075	82	41.0	▲ 1.5	SRE	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	370	▲ 0.0
ABAR	87	86	50,709	4,387	3	86	▼ -2.0	TAM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	420	▲ 0.0
Oil & Gas			3,429,561	141,744	121	1033.29	▲ 10.58	AREEC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	168	▲ 0.0
KFOUC	305	280	58,002	17,876	6	305	▲ 10.0	MASSALEH	44.0	41.0	15,185	850	10	43.0	▲ 1.0
BPCO	570	560	4,577	2,590	3	570	▲ 10.0	ARABREC	33.5	32.0	1,974,953	64,446	58	33.0	▲ 1.0
ALKOUT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	690	▲ 0.0	ERESCO	39.5	39.0	712,038	27,885	29	39.5	▲ 1.0
ALQURAIN	330	320	278,503	90,517	18	325	▲ 5.0	MABANEE	810	790	211,703	170,430	18	810	▲ 10.0
Basic Materials			341,082	110,783	27	1290.64	▲ 20.32	INJAZZAT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	93	▲ 0.0
KCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	495	▲ 0.0	INVESTORS	24.5	23.0	4,221,747	101,209	66	24.0	▲ 0.5
CABLE	435	420	32,093	13,678	9	435	▲ 15.0	IRC	33.0	31.5	280,568	9,062	15	33.0	▲ 1.5
SHIP	216	216	30	6	2	216	▲ 0.0	ALTLUARIA	75	72	182,367	13,462	11	74	▲ 0.0
PCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	970	▲ 0.0	SANAM	50	47.5	120	6	2	50	▲ 2.5
PAPER	290	285	20,002	5,751	3	290	▼ -5.0	AAYANRE	78	77	50,010	3,861	7	78	▲ 0.0
MRC	78	76	24,000	1,825	5	78	▲ 2.0	AQAR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	82	▲ 0.0
ACICO	285	285	10,070	2,870	2	285	▼ -5.0	ALAQARIA	35.0	32.0	805,950	27,525	19	35.0	▲ 2.0
HCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	208	▲ 0.0	MAZAYA	112	106	1,320,228	145,052	45	110	▲ 0.0
KBMMK	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	136	▲ 0.0	ADNC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	11.0	▲ 0.0
NICBM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	212	▲ 0.0	THEMAR	80	80	403,587	32,287	3	80	▲ 0.0
EQUIPMENT	59	58	1,439,639	84,106	46	58	▼ -1.0	TUJARA	58	58	26	2	1	58	▲ 1.0
NCCI	90	90	70	6	1	90	▲ 0.0	TAAAMEER	37.0	35.0	9,160,958	327,369	201	36.0	▲ 1.0
GYPNUM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	95	▲ 0.0	ARKAN	78	78	2,000	156	2	78	▼ -5.0
SALBOOKH	60	59	190,546	11,377	16	59	▼ -1.0	ARGAN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	186	▲ 0.0
AGLTY	630	610	905,474	559,705	34	620	▲ 10.0	ABYAR	24.5	23.5	5,395,209	128,889	71	24.5	▲ 1.5
EDU	300	280	70,050	19,845	14	300	▲ 5.0	MUNSHAAT	54	52	1,162,887	62,087	58	52	▼ -1.0
CLEANING	46.0	44.0	856,695	38,429	33	44.0	▼ -0.5	FIRSTDUBAI	53	51	1,054,937	54,807	36	52	▲ 1.0
KGL	59	55	223,080	12,911	21	59	▲ 2.0	KBT	51	50	1,184,021	59,285	13	51	▲ 1.0
KPCO	170	158	5,205	825	5	170	▲ 2.0	REAM	310	270	3	1	2	310	▲ 15.0
HUMANISOFT	3,880	3,860	159,978	619,725	30	3,880	▲ 20.0	MENA	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	32.0	▲ 0.0
NAFAIS	140	130	4,002	520	2	140	▲ 0.0	ALMUDON	42.5	41.0	1,733,059	71,267	62	41.5	▲ 0.5
GFC	61	56	42,730	2,465	13	61	▲ 0.0	MARAKEZ	46.0	41.0	82,032	3,372	13	43.0	▼ -0.5
MAYADEEN	27.5	26.5	596,646	15,913	12	27.0	▲ 1.0	REMAL	62	60	17,573,628	1,071,059	58	60	▼ -1.0
CGC	550	540	389,104	211,817	35	550	▲ 0.0	AWJ	80	74	283,316	21,427	15	75	▲ 0.0
MTCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	56	▲ 0.0	Real Estate			60,968,539	3,072,755	1,111	944.75	▲ 9.78
UPAC	840	770	13,684	10,770	7	840	▲ 30.0	KINV	94	94	10	1	1	94	▲ 2.0
ALAFCO	270	260	178,332	47,251	12	265	▲ 0.0	FACIL	162	160	21,206	3,395	6	162	▲ 2.0
MUBARRAD	78	77	68,960	5,319	4	77	▼ -1.0	IFA	40.0	39.0	3,362,617	132,963	82	40.0	▲ 1.0
LOGISTICS	55	53	1,700,006	91,166	74	54	▼ -1.0	NINV	104	100	3,749,480	388,376	43	104	▲ 7.0
SCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	91	▲ 0.0	KPROJ	385	380	1,325,004	503,502	14	380	▲ 5.0
GCEM	79	78	136,005	10,608	3	79	▲ 2.0	COAST	43.0	41.5	6,618,741	280,500	162	42.5	▲ 2.0
QIC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	91	▲ 0.0	SECH	43.5	42.5	2,963,122	127,442	79	43.0	▲ 0.5
FCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	86	▲ 0.0	SGC	99	95	1,943	185	5	99	▲ 0.0
RKWC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	99	▲ 0.0	ARZAN	36.5	36.0	45,678	1,645	6	36.0	▲ 0.0
SPEC	88	84	350,031	29,778	14	88	▲ 0.0	MARKAZ	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	99	▲ 0.0
Industrials			7,416,432	1,796,666	397	1786.36	▲ 9.57	KMEFIC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	28.5	▲ 0.0
KSH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	184	▲ 0.0	ALAMAN	50	46.5	35,526	1,696	9	47.0	▼ -1.5
NSH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	40.0	▲ 0.0	ALOLA	45.5	44.0	1,323,426	59,663	49	44.0	▲ 0.0
PAPCO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	110	▲ 0.0	ALMAL	19.5	18.5	13,163,735	253,052	123	19.0	▲ 0.5
CATTL	234	232	22,402	5,197	3	232	▼ -2.0	GIH	39.5	37.0	3,191,011	123,913	74	39.0	▲ 0.5
DANAH	83	81	1,173,842	96,041	37	83	▼ -1.0	AAYAN	45.0	44.0	2,477,584	110,173	63	45.0	▲ 1.0
FOOD	2,440	2,360	1,501	3,542	2	2,440	▲ 0.0	BAYANINV	49.0	47.5	918,162	44,205	35	48.0	▲ 1.0
Consumer Goods			1,197,745	104,781	42	1133.74	▼ -3.58	OSQUL	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	58	▲ 0.0
MHC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	335	▲ 0.0	KFIC	41.0	41.0	55,000	2,255	5	41.0	▲ 0.0
ATC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	1,100	▲ 0.0	KAMCO	90	85	136,167	11,633	16	86	▼ -1.0
YIACO	228	224	115,965	26,359	16	228	▲ 10.0	NIH	63	60	17,722	1,075	9	63	▲ 3.0
Health Care			115,965	26,359	16	1423.23	▲ 10.11	UNICAP	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	45.0	▲ 0.0
KCIN	1,400	1,220	6	8	2	1,220	▼ -100	MADAR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	12.5	▲ 0.0
KHOT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	250	▲ 0.0	ALDEERA	32.5	30.5	180,063	5,645	19	32.5	▲ 2.0
SULTAN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	67	▲ 0.0	ALSALAM	48.0	46.5	4,606,078	218,096	88	47.5	▲ 0.5
CABLETV	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	22.5	▲ 0.0	EKTTITAB	36.5	34.0	3,017,152	107,103	94	36.0	▲ 2.0
EYAS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	420	▲ 0.0	ALMADINA	46.5	45.0	3,804,575	165,550	88	45.0	▼ -0.5
IFAHR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	192	▲ 0.0	NOOR	50	50	461,053	23,053	13	50	▼ -1.0
QULAFJEL	124	120	116,580	14,2											



KUWAIT: KAMCO Investment Company KSC (Public) holds its annual general meeting (AGM) for the year ending December 31, 2016 and its annual Shafafiyah Investor's Forum yesterday at the Chairman's Club in KIPCO Tower.



KAMCO SHAREHOLDERS APPROVE 5% CASH DIVIDENDS COMPANY HOLDS AGM FOR 2016 AND ANNUAL SHAFAFIYAH INVESTORS FORUM

KUWAIT: KAMCO Investment Company KSC (Public), a leading investment company with one of the largest assets under management (AUM) in the region, held its annual general meeting (AGM) for the year ending December 31, 2016 and its annual Shafafiyah Investor's Forum yesterday at the Chairman's Club in KIPCO Tower.

General assembly

The Firm's shareholders approved the Board's recommendation to distribute 5% cash dividends, the equivalent of 5 fils per share of the nominal value, for the fiscal year ending in December 31, 2016, and after the deduction of treasury shares for the same year.

Shafafiyah Forum

The AGM was followed by the Company's annual Shafafiyah Forum, which serves as a platform for the Company's executive management to highlight milestones achieved during the year 2016 and present the outlook for 2017. The Forum, attended by shareholders, partners, and institutional investors, reflected KAMCO's strong commitment towards the highest international standards in transparency and corporate governance.

Maintaining a Stable Performance

During the AGM, Vice Chairman of KAMCO, Entisar Al-Suwaidi spoke briefly about the global events that directly and indirectly influenced the performance of financial markets on a local, regional and international scale during 2016. These events include falling oil prices, geopolitical instability, BREXIT and the subsequent impact of the presidential elections in the United States (US).

Al-Suwaidi said, "KAMCO recorded a revenue of KD 8.3 billion and sustained operational growth bolstered by an upsurge in investment activity across diverse markets, further asserting KAMCO's leadership position in the asset management sector."

She added, "The Company also opened its

first regional office in Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC), which was one of the highlights of 2016. The office will serve the Company's wide international client base by providing advising services on financial products and credit along with arrangements for credit or deals in investments."

Al-Suwaidi concluded the AGM saying, "Looking ahead, we embark on a new year

order to maximize our exposure and capitalize on our ever-expanding network base."

Sustaining Leadership

Also during the Shafafiyah Forum, Chief Executive Officer of KAMCO, Faisal Mansour Sarkhou presented the Company's performance during 2016, which included the results of expanding KAMCO's geographical pres-

through KAMCO's first international office in the Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC), managing Investment Banking transactions worth approximately \$1 billion, receiving the CMA's approval for the KAMCO Islamic Equity Fund, and winning 6 awards in recognition of outstanding performance during 2016 in Asset Management, Investment Banking, Alternative Investments and Wealth Management.

Sarkhou also said, "Year end, four of our funds' performances exceeded benchmarks, ranking amongst the top three performers in their relevant sectors. In addition to that, we successfully managed acquisitions and exits for clients locally, regionally and globally in the oil and gas, health, pharmaceutical, and real estate sectors."

As for the Company's operational performance, the value of assets under management stood at USD 10.4 billion as of December 31, 2016. All listed equity funds and discretionary portfolios managed to outperform their respective benchmarks.

The KAMCO Investment Fund (KIF), which invests in select companies listed on the Kuwait Stock Exchange (KSE), was the second best performing fund in Kuwait during 2016, achieving a net return of 4.75 percent in comparison to -0.42 percent of the weighted index return. KIF also registered a return of -12.27 percent over the 3-year and 0.17 percent over the 5-year periods, in comparison to the benchmark return of -16.07 percent over the 3-year and -6.29 percent over the 5-year periods.

In relation to KAMCO's future outlook, Sarkhou said that markets have stabilized after witnessing a run-up at the start of 2017, which came on the back of positive investor sentiments against a backdrop of improving oil fundamentals and positive 2016 corporate earnings.

He also said, "Near term market direction are expected to be driven by key policy changes on the fiscal and spending front,

including VAT implementation in the GCC. Oil will continue to be an underlying factor for market direction as procedures adjust their output to support prices. For 2017, corporate earnings would continue to remain a primary support for listed companies in the GCC on the back of a robust project market, as well as strong balance sheets and fundamentals for banks and companies in core sectors."

Commenting on the Company's strategy, Sarkhou assured that KAMCO intends to continue growing its AUM and client base. The Company also plans to continue exploring and expanding to new geographical locations throughout the GCC and MENA region, while launching attractive and innovative products in different asset classes.

Sarkhou emphasized that KAMCO will continue offering a wide range of investment banking services in equity, debt and advisory with increased reach and presence in the region. He also said the Company would proceed in progressively developing its offered superior and personalized client experiences by enhancing the role of our Wealth Management team and utilizing our state-of-the-art technology. In addition, to operational focus in the GCC through our KAMCO DIFC office.

KAMCO is positioned to maintain and increase growth of fee income and overall profits through diverse revenue sources to generate a predictable stream of income. The Company will also reaffirm its leadership position in the investment sector by continuing to provide premier asset management and investment banking services, increase its market share locally and regionally through IB transactions, focus on introducing innovative investment products and enhancing existing investment funds' performance, while adding value to investors by creating platforms for investment products and services that provide risk-adjusted returns through proper management, transparency, integrity and robust risk management frameworks.



with renewed vigor, an unwavering vision and a sustainable plan towards setting higher benchmarks for our company, our clients and our shareholders. We plan to accomplish our goals by utilizing our 18 years' worth of expertise in investment banking and asset management, our proven track record achieved by an ambitious team who are constantly seeking to reach new heights of success, and further consolidating our robust reputation for solidity, transparency, prudence and product innovation. In the near term, we intend to continue expanding our geographical presence by penetrating new markets in

ence, along with providing diverse investment opportunities across identified core sectors, such as capital and international real estate markets, providing sustainable returns to shareholders. He also stated that the end year results of 2016 are a sheer sign of KAMCO's relentless commitment to provide innovative revenue-generating assets that continue to add value to clients and long-term shareholders.

Sarkhou mentioned the Company's most remarkable achievements during 2016 that included growing KAMCO's income and maintaining profitability, expanding regionally

NORWAY TO BUILD FIRST SELF-SAILING ELECTRIC CARGO SHIP

OSLO: Norway plans to launch the first autonomous and fully electric cargo ship next year that the project's backers said Wednesday will save 40,000 truck journeys per year. Fertiliser company Yara International has teamed up with industrial group Kongsberg to build the Yara Birkeland, which will haul fertilisers between three ports in southern Norway.

With a range of more than 65 nautical miles, the ship will be able to haul roughly 100 containers at a speed of 12 to 15 knots, according to the project's director, Bjorn Tore Orvik.

Initially the ship will be manned, but remote operation is expected to begin

in 2019 and fully autonomous operation in 2020, the companies said. "Every day, more than 100 diesel truck journeys are needed to transport products from Yara's Porsgrunn plant to ports in Brevik and Larvik where we ship products to customers around the world," Yara's chief executive Svein Tore Holsether said in a statement.

"With this new autonomous battery-driven container vessel we move transport from road to sea and thereby reduce noise and dust emissions, improve the safety of local roads, and reduce NOx and CO2 emissions," he added. — AFP



OSLO: This computer simulation provided as handout picture released by Yara International ASA on yesterday in Oslo, shows the "Yara Birkeland" vessel, the world's first fully electric and autonomous container ship. — AFP

UKRAINE CB POST IN POLITICAL LIMBO AS GONTAREVA LEAVES

KIEV: Ukrainian Central Bank Governor Valeria Gontareva will leave her job today, leaving her deputy in charge, the central bank said, setting the stage for potentially protracted negotiations between president and parliament on her replacement.

Praised by the International Monetary Fund and some investors for her reforms of the banking system, Gontareva, a former investment banker and business partner of President Petro Poroshenko, tendered her resignation a month ago after a sustained campaign against her from protesters and lawmakers. But Poroshenko has not yet accepted her resignation or nominated a candidate to replace her. Some names have been doing the rounds and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development

has backed Volodymyr Lavrenchuk, head of Raiffeisen's Ukrainian unit, for the job.

Deputy Governor Yakiv Smolyi will take charge until a new governor is found, the central bank said in its statement. "Valeria Gontareva is ceasing all official business at the central bank and going on compulsory leave until (parliament) ... approves her resignation," it said.

"... Yakiv Smolyi will act as chairman of the National Bank of Ukraine until the appointment of a new chairman."

Parliament is in recess from April until mid-May, meaning Poroshenko has not consulted lawmakers about Gontareva's replacement, Iryna Lutsenko, a lawmaker and the president's representative in parliament, told 112TV on Tuesday. — Reuters

CHINA'S FACTORY PRICES SLOW, CONSUMER INFLATION RISES MANUFACTURING, COMMODITIES LOSE MOMENTUM

BEIJING: China's April producer price inflation cooled more than expected in a sign manufacturing activity may be losing momentum along with other sectors of the economy as domestic demand remains muted and the government cracks down on financial risks. Prices for raw materials fell in April from the previous month, pressured by fears that domestic demand will not be strong enough to absorb surging factory output that rose the most in more than two years in March.

A renaissance in China's steel industry has been a major driver of the world's second-largest economy in recent quarters, helping generate the strongest profit growth in years and adding to a refractory pulse across the global manufacturing sector.

But China's deflation cycle in producer prices has probably peaked, and will trend down further, which could drag on China's economic growth in the second half of the year, said Betty Wang, senior China economist for ANZ in Hong Kong. "The recovery momentum in the economy that emerged in the second half of last year was mainly driven by producer price inflation rather than any changes from a fundamental perspective," Wang said.

The soft April inflation data, combined with slightly slower growth in manufacturing activity, reinforces analysts' views that China's economic expansion remains solid but is starting to moderate after a surprisingly strong start to the year. First-quarter economic growth came in at a faster-than-expected 6.9 percent, which could give the economy enough of a tailwind to hit Beijing's full-year target even if growth starts to fade in coming quarters as many analysts expect.

With growth comfortably above this year's target of around 6.5 percent, Chinese policymakers have shifted focus to reining in financial risks, which ANZ's Wang said will not change based on trends in producer and consumer prices. "Deleveraging remains the policy focus, regardless of the PPI or CPI trend. We don't think PPI or CPI will have any significant impact on the current policy direction," said Wang.

The producer price index (PPI) in April rose 6.4 percent from a year earlier, the National Bureau of Statistics said yesterday - cooling for the second month in a row. It was slower than economists' expectations for a 6.9 percent rise and easing further from the previous month's gain of 7.6 percent. Analysts said the rally in producer prices may have peaked as a torrid rally in China's commodities markets showed signs of correcting.



BEIJING: A woman walks through a food market in Beijing yesterday. China's consumer price index (CPI), a main gauge of inflation, rose 1.2 percent year-on-year in April, up from a 0.9 percent gain in March, China's National Bureau of Statistics said yesterday. — AFP

Iron ore and steel hit multi-month lows on China's future markets in April amid concern over rising inventories.

Capital Economics said in a report that producer prices were set to fall again in May given that the rout in industrial commodity prices had deepened. "Further ahead, producer price inflation should continue to wane as policy tightening weighs on economic activity... hopes for a sustained deflation in China are fading."

On a month-on-month basis, producer prices fell 0.4 percent in April, the first drop since June, led by declines in iron and steel smelting and processing. Iron and steel processing prices fell 3.1 percent month-on-month in April, compared with a 2.3 percent rise in March, while oil and natural gas prices also fell after rising the previous months.

In March, China's PPI cooled for the first time in seven months as commodities prices tumbled, pressured by fears that Chinese steel production is outweighing demand and threatening a glut of the metal later this year. Factory gate prices had only turned positive on a year-on-year basis last September, after falling for nearly five years, leav-

ing many industrial firms saddled with idle capacity and less cash flow to service their debts. The consumer price index (CPI) in April rose 1.2 percent from a year earlier, the statistics bureau said, up from a 0.9 percent rise in March and slightly above analysts' forecasts.

Food prices, the biggest component of the consumer price index (CPI), fell 3.5 percent. Core inflation inched up to 2.1 percent, with costs for health care rising 5.7 percent. Analysts polled by Reuters had predicted April consumer price inflation would edge up to 1.1 percent but remain well within the central bank's comfort zone, giving it room to continue with a gradual pace of monetary policy tightening without hurting economic growth.

China's annual inflation is to average 2.1 percent in 2017 and 2.3 percent in 2018, according to a Reuters poll of over 75 economists. Beijing is targeting consumer inflation of 3 percent this year, unchanged from 2016. Chinese President Xi Jinping called last month for increased efforts to ward off systemic risks to help maintain financial security, the official Xinhua news agency reported. — Reuters

BTC WINS OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE AWARD

RECOGNITION BY ASHOK LEYLAND REFLECTS AL-SAYER GROUP'S FOCUS OF CUSTOMER FIRST



Bader MUSAED Al-Sayer, Hamza MELAKANDY with BTC team

KUWAIT: Ashok Leyland (AL) recently organized the Global Dealer Conference 2017 at Chennai, India bringing together international partners of Ashok Leyland Buses & Trucks.

increase in the sales of buses. Hamza Melakandy General Manager, BTC received the award from Dheeraj Hinduja, Chairman and Vinod Dasari, CEO / MD of Ashok Leyland respectively in the presence of the august assembly of global dealers of AL. BTC one of the Al-Sayer Group Holding Companies has

recorded overall sales growth of 72% for AL in the year 2016 vs 2015.

Consistent Team Efforts

On this momentous occasion Bader MUSAED Al-Sayer Business Director Al-Sayer Group Holding thanked all valuable cus-

Bader MUSAED Al-Sayer, Hamza MELAKANDY with BTC team

tomers for their unstinted support and complimented BTC team members on the notable achievement appreciating their hard work and sincere efforts. Commenting on the remarkable achievement Hamza Melakandy said "Given the rapid raise in the sale of AL Buses in Kuwait, it is a very well

deserved award that motivates us to further aim for a steadily ascending performance trajectory ahead. Hearty congratulations to the BTC sales, service and parts teams, for the excellent team work and concerted efforts. Our Commitment to customers and our dedication to their satisfaction have placed us at the forefront of local industry in Kuwait."



Bahrah Trading Company (BTC), one of the Al-Sayer Group Holding Companies and one of the leading AL dealers in the region was honored with the "Best Overall performance 2016 - 17" award in recognition of the outstanding results that saw a two fold



Hamza Melakandy with delegates from Ashok Leyland

Partnering for Success

For over the decades, Ashok Leyland has been the technology leader in India's commercial vehicle industry, molding the country's commercial vehicle profile by introducing technologies and product ideas that have gone on to become industry norms. "Falcon" buses have been accepted as economical means of transport with 56 Seats in AC comfort.

It's noteworthy that Ashok Leyland has recently introduced a 33 seater medium sized bus - Oyster. This model is being launched in Kuwait by BTC.

Having 33 licensed seats and spacious enough to ensure comfort, this particular model mid-size bus offer an excellent solution for economic transportation. BTC, over the past decades has evolved into a major supplier, serving a wide spectrum of clients in construction, oil and industrial sectors in Kuwait. BTC has also established a reputation for professional and reliable after sales support.



F-150, F-250 SUPER DUTY, TRANSIT, TRANSIT CONNECT, TAURUS WIN VINCENTRIC AWARDS

KUWAIT: Seven Ford Motor Company cars, trucks and vans have won recently the Vincentric Best Fleet Value in America awards for 2017. The awards recognize vehicles that provide fleet customers with the lowest total cost of ownership.

Ford's 2017 winners are proven performers that have taken home awards in prior years:

- Ford Taurus SE: Seven-time large sedan winner
- Ford F-150 XL: Five-time full-size half-ton pickup winner
- Ford F-250 Super Duty XL: Two-time full-size three-quarter-ton pickup winner
- Ford Transit Connect XLT*: Five-time small commercial passenger van winner
- Ford Transit 150 XL low-roof van: Three-time full-size half-ton passenger van winner

Two Lincoln models, Lincoln MKX Premiere and Lincoln MKZ Hybrid, also earned awards. Vincentric Best Fleet Value in America awards are based on fleet lifecycle costs in eight key areas - depreciation, fuel, insurance, financing, repairs, fees and taxes, opportunity costs and maintenance. Winning vehicles have the lowest lifecycle costs across 28 ownership and mileage scenarios - ranging from 24 months of ownership/16,000km annually to 60 months/64,000km annually. To explore the 2017 Ford F-150 and F-250 Super Duty trucks, Transit, and Taurus line up, please visit the Alghanim Auto New Vehicle Showroom in the Shuwaikh Industrial Area, opposite from the Classical Car Museum and Sirbb Circuit. Working hours are 9AM to 10PM from Saturday to Thursday and 2PM to 8PM on Fridays.

GULF BANK WINS 'BEST MOBILE BANKING EXPERIENCE IN ME'

ARABIAN BUSINESS MAGAZINE KUWAIT AWARDS

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank is proud to have won 'Best Mobile Banking Experience in the Middle East' at the Arabian Business Kuwait Awards. The ceremony took place on 7 May 2017 at the Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel.

Laila Al-Qatami, Assistant General Manager for Corporate Communications at Gulf Bank said: "Recognition of Gulf Bank's innovative and easy to use mobile banking app continues with another Middle East regional recognition, this time at the Arabian Business Magazine's Kuwait Awards. Our 'Blinking to Bank' app is the first combination fingerprint / facial recognition to be launched in the Middle East and one of the few available worldwide. This innovation underlines the Bank's strategy for moving its customer base over to digital, while also exceeding our customers mobile banking expectations."

Al-Qatami continued: "When we designed our mobile banking app, we paid great attention to simplicity and efficiency of movement coupled with world-class biometric security features. The Bank's customers can access their personal accounts and any number of services by logging into the App through one of two methods: by blinking their eyes at their smartphone



camera 'Blinking to Bank' following their fingerprint recognition (Touch ID), or through the use of a traditional password registration. The app ensures that customer is never more than 3 clicks away from their desired transaction. This combination of functionality, simplicity, and security make our mobile banking app experience unique in the Middle East region."

This year's Arabian Business Kuwait Awards had 13 award categories, but only one of which was excellence at the Middle East regional level. Winners were selected through a rigorous judging process with shortlists of nominees in each category created by the ITP Executive editorial team based on business activity over the past 12 months. This shortlist was then assessed before



Ahmed Abul, Executive Manager, Digital Banking at Gulf Bank accepting the award for 'Best Mobile Banking Experience in the Middle East' from Arabian Business.

the winners' announcement. The services included in the Mobile Banking App and Online Banking are: checking account details; making ad-hoc transfers; biometric verification for transfers; automatic IBAN data population; creating a standing order; setting future-dated transactions; and adding and managing beneficiaries. Transferring funds is also simplified since the application will populate the remaining IBAN Beneficiary Bank details automatically. Customers can also use the App to securely share information including IBAN number and account holder name sharing, IBAN certificate sharing and printing, transaction confirmation sharing, and statement sharing; and much more.

Additionally, Gulf Bank's credit card customers can check their Gulf Rewards point balances, as well as instantly redeem their Gulf Points for free travel and hotel stays. They can also pay their credit card bills; receive cash advances from credit cards; apply for new ATM and debit cards; activate new credit cards; as well as report and block stolen or lost cards

(debit and credit). Furthermore, the new App allows customers to review their Al-Danah chances, view and share their Al-Danah certificate, or even open an Al-Danah account.

Arabian Business is the Middle East's leading weekly business title - focusing on the English speaking and Arabic speaking business community. Arabian Business provides weekly in-depth analysis of the latest regional and international news and its influence on business in the Gulf. The magazine is renowned for its high profile interviews with some of the world's leading businessmen, extensive features from around the Middle East and respected commentary on the issues of the day. Arabian Business Kuwait Awards was launched in 2010 to celebrate the vibrant and highly influential Kuwait business community by recognizing accomplishments in a variety of categories. Nominations are received through the magazine's website, and the winners are selected by an independent panel of judges to ensure integrity of the awards and to acknowledge only those who truly deserve the accolade.

FOR WORLD'S SUPER-RICH, A PINK DIAMOND IS FOREVER

LONDON: For the world's super-rich, the investment of choice is increasingly a very rare naturally pink diamond, an asset class that this year has set records at auction. Tobias Kormind, managing director of 77 Diamonds, which has a shop in London's Mayfair district and sells online, says the trend for colored stones has gathered strength as the world emerged from financial crisis.

"Very savvy investors clocked on to the fact these colored stones are so incredibly rare," Kormind told Reuters Television. Naturally colored diamonds occur because of a particular lattice structure, formed when they were created at great pressure in the earth's crust, that refracts light to produce colored rather than white stones.

Depending on their exact structure, colored diamonds can be blue, yellow, red and pink, but pink is both rare and aesthetically highly prized by collectors,

analysts say. "Pink diamonds are not a bubble. There is a market. People are not just buying, but selling. There is economic sense to this," Edahn Golan, of Edahn Golan Diamond Research & Data, said.

In April a huge 59.6-carat pink diamond, the "Pink Star", sold for a record \$71.2 million in Hong Kong. The source of an estimated 90 percent of the world's pink diamonds is Rio Tinto's Argyle mine in Western Australia, which has been operating since 1983, meaning its deposits are depleted. Rio says it is due to close in 2021.

Even at the Argyle mine, Rio says less than 0.01 percent of annual production (14 million carats in 2016) comprises pink diamonds. It does not disclose how much the pink gems add to its balance sheet, but told Reuters in an email Rio Tinto's Argyle pink diamonds have averaged double-digit growth for the last decade. — Reuters

DELL TECHNOLOGIES SIMPLIFIES IOT FOR CUSTOMERS

DUBAI: Dell Technologies announces new Internet of Things (IoT) products and partnerships to help customers take the complexity out of their IoT deployments and more quickly realise digital transformation.

According to a recent Gartner report, there will be 20.4 billion connected things in use globally by 2020. Companies are looking for faster, real-time analysis of the massive amount of data produced by all of these "things" on their networks. For some, it's too expensive to move all the data from the edge of the network near the devices to the data center. Computing at the edge helps determine which data sets are interesting, relevant and need to be sent back to the data center or the cloud for further analytics and longer term storage, saving bandwidth and reducing costs and security concerns.

New IoT Products and Services

Simplified "Things" Management - The new VMware Pulse IoT Center is a secure IoT infrastructure management solution that will enable customers to have complete control of their connected things. VMware Pulse IoT Center will help customers to more efficiently manage, operate, scale and protect their IoT projects from the edge to the cloud. Dell will be offering VMware Pulse IoT Center as the preferred enterprise management and monitoring solution for Dell Edge Gateways. By plugging Pulse IoT Center into the new EdgeX Foundry, VMware will be able to offer system and device management for the EdgeX ecosystem.

IoT Advisory Services - IoT Technology Advisory Service is a new consulting offer from Dell EMC Services to help organisations determine the key capabilities and architecture required to leverage IoT data (e.g., sensors, beacons, gateways, mobile phones, wearables, connected devices). This information can be used for initiatives such as optimising key operational processes, reducing compliance and security risks, uncovering new revenue opportunities and creating more compelling customer engagements.

Open Source Framework for Interoperable Edge Computing - The Linux Foundation recently launched EdgeX Foundry, an open source software project chartered to build a common framework and surrounding reference platform for edge computing. It will drive interoperability between proprietary value-added applications and existing connectivity standards. It was started by a community of more than 50 companies such as AMD, Analog Devices, Dell EMC, Foghorn and VMware to enable an ecosystem of plug-and-play components that can be combined to quickly create secure and scalable IoT solutions.

Dell contributed more than a dozen microservices and over 125,000 lines of source code under Apache 2.0 to seed the project, additional contributions are already underway from other members. EdgeX Foundry is architected to operate on any hardware, on any operating system and with microservices developed in any application environment for maximum scale.



Carefully Curated Partnerships

Dell has carefully curated a group of IoT software and services partners through the Dell IoT Solutions Partner and Dell EMC Partner Programs. Many partners have deep, proven expertise in industry-specific IoT challenges, and can help with everything from managing multiprotocol data sources to security to analytics. New partners recently added to the program include Atos, Bosch, GreatBay Software, ForgeRock, IOTech, Mocana and Modius.

Today's key IoT partner news includes:

- Dell and Bosch have jointly developed an Industry 4.0 jump start kit to help customers implement IoT projects quickly to

realise faster ROI. The kit consists of multiple Bosch XDK sensors, a Dell Edge Gateway, ready-to-go use-cases, cloud integration and software, all preconfigured.

- Atos and Dell EMC are working together to build an IoT service management framework, Atos Codex IoT Services, to allow customers to be assured that all users can continuously create value from their connected devices.

Dell Technologies - An IoT Heavyweight

Dell Technologies is the industry's broadest Internet of Things (IoT) infrastructure solutions provider. The company offers a complete edge-to-core-to-cloud portfolio of infrastructure for IoT solutions

that includes everything from infrastructure, embedded PCs, IoT gateways, security and manageability solutions and more.

Dell Technologies' capabilities in IoT allow for fast innovation and simplified integration and include:

- More than 30 years of IT heritage, and more than 15 years of operations technology (OT) experience through the Dell EMC OEM Solutions team - deep understanding of both IT and OT, critical for successful IoT implementations
- Technology and expertise of Pivotal to rapidly develop and update cloud-native software
- Dell EMC infrastructure for storing and analysing the data that the "things" generate
- Ruggedized, purpose-built IoT hardware designed to collect data at the edge of the network including Dell Edge Gateways and Dell Embedded Box PCs
- A curated Dell IoT Solutions Partner Program with more than 70 technology and services partners
- Trusted security solutions from RSA and SecureWorks that ensure data is transferred securely and quickly
- Industry-leading global service and support and financing options
- Announced yesterday at Dell EMC World:
- VMware Unveils IoT Management Solution to Help Customers Take Control of IoT
- Atos and Dell EMC Join Forces to Address the Growing Internet of Things Market
- SDS - IoT data streaming capabilities for ECS.



TOKYO: An employee of Japanese mobile telecoms company SoftBank speaks with customers at a department store in Tokyo on May 10, 2017. Japanese mobile telecoms company SoftBank said on May 10 its full-year net profit tripled largely due to one-off gains from the sale of its stake in Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba. — AFP

SOFTBANK'S PROFIT ZOOMS ON SPRINT TURNAROUND, ALIBABA

TOKYO: Japanese internet, robot and solar company SoftBank Group is reporting a 12 fold climb in quarterly profit, as a turnaround at its US mobile unit Sprint helped it on its way to a record annual profit. Tokyo-based SoftBank reported yesterday a January-March profit of 580.5 billion yen (\$5.1 billion), up dramatically from 45.2 billion yen the same period a year earlier.

Quarterly sales rose nearly 2 percent to 2.32 trillion yen (\$20 billion). For the year through March 2017, SoftBank, which acquired Britain's ARM Holdings, an innovator in the "internet of things," last year, reported a record 1.4 trillion yen (\$12.5 billion) in profit, tripling from 474 billion yen in the last fiscal year. Much of that came from the sale of part of its stake in Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba. But cost reductions at Sprint, which had been dragging on its earnings, also helped, while a strong yen was an unfavorable factor, the company said.

SoftBank's sales at its domestic wireless carrier service and its Yahoo Japan business also thrived, it said. ARM's operations were also going strong, it said. SoftBank Chief Executive Masayoshi Son, a University of California, Berkeley graduate, drew attention for hobnobbing with President Donald Trump, late last year and promising to create jobs and invest in the US SoftBank, founded in 1981, also has within its sprawling investment empire financial-technology and ride-sharing services. It also sells the Pepper human-shaped companion robot and operates a solar power business.

Also yesterday, SoftBank, Sprint and Qualcomm Technologies, a US semiconductor and telecommunications equipment company, said they will work together to develop 5G wireless technology, with plans to offer services and devices from late 2019.

SoftBank, the first carrier to offer the Apple iPhone in Japan, set up a private fund

last year for global investments in the technology sector, called Vision Fund, with the potential to grow to as much as \$100 billion. Some media reports said the fund was being closed soon, having reached that target, but SoftBank denied the reports as speculation.

In June it also sold Finnish game-maker Supercell Oy, creator of "Clash of Clans", to Chinese internet behemoth Tencent for \$8.6 billion. SoftBank also highlighted improvements in its US subsidiary Sprint-though a strong Japanese yen offset much of the positive impact-as well as profits booked from the acquisition last year of British iPhone chip designer ARM Holdings.

Domestic operations

It also noted improved domestic telecom operations in Japan. Revenue edged up 0.2 percent to 8.90 trillion yen, the company added, citing a rise in e-commerce sales from its Yahoo Japan business and the addition of the ARM business. Overall, SoftBank benefited from yen strength as that helped it pay some of its foreign currency-denominated debt. SoftBank did not release earnings estimates for the fiscal year to March 2018.

Led by flamboyant founder Masayoshi Son, Softbank has embarked on a string of international acquisitions both big and small in recent years, while he was among the first business people to meet Donald Trump after his November election victory. Son pledged to invest \$50 billion in business and job-creation in the United States, winning open praise from the then president-elect. Son later said the money would come from the \$100 billion technology investment fund he is setting up with Saudi Arabia's sovereign wealth fund and other partners, a move announced in mid-October. The Japanese billionaire plans to use the SoftBank Vision Fund to invest heavily in the "internet of things", artificial intelligence and robotics. — Agencies

AMAZON'S NEW ALEXA SPEAKER HAS A SCREEN TOO

WASHINGTON: Amazon yesterday unveiled the latest member of its family of devices powered by its Alexa digital assistant-this one with a touch-screen. The new device called Echo Show steps up efforts by Amazon to be part of the connected home, and potentially create a market for a new kind of computing device.

The new device will sell for \$229 and ships starting June 28, according to Amazon's website. It will include the features of its other Echo devices along with video shown on a seven-inch touch-screen. "With Echo Show, customers can watch video flash briefings and YouTube, and see music lyrics, smart home cameras, photos, weather forecasts, to-do

and shopping lists, and more," said a blog post from Amazon developer and chief evangelist for Echo devices David Ibsitski.

Users will also be able to call or message others who also have an Echo or the Alexa application. Last month the US online giant began selling its Echo Look gadget, which includes the voice-activated assistant but with a camera, allowing Alexa to offer fashion advice. Amazon's latest hardware foray comes after limited success with its Kindle and Fire tablets, but also a failure for its Fire smartphones.

The new Echo Show "looks like a lot of other products that have been launched in the past," said analyst Avi Greengart of Current Analysis in a tweet. "Unlike those, it will sell." — AFP

MOBILE PHONES RING CHANGES FOR NIGERIA'S MUSIC INDUSTRY

PHIZBARZ FLOODS ALL SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES

LAGOS: Phizbarz is only 23 but hopes to become the next Nigerian Afropop star to be famous across Africa-and to get himself known and earn a living, he's using his mobile phone.

The young performer from the country's commercial and entertainment capital, Lagos, floods social networking sites Twitter, Facebook and Instagram with clips of his music.

Sometimes he appears as a baseball-capped rapper surrounded by gyrating, scantily clad dancers, sometimes as a sheikh in a pristine white dishdasha, dripping with gold. "If you want to be someone, you have to show off," he told AFP, from behind the wheel of a sparkling red Mercedes that he borrowed from his manager. In all, Phizbarz has composed about 100 songs but has never produced an album. Instead, his creations are converted into ringtones by telephone companies, who sell them individually and pay him and his label 60 percent of the profits. Phizbarz himself earns about 50,000 naira (\$164, 150 euros) a month, which he considers a "decent" wage.

In Nigeria, performing artists have long been left to their own devices because of the lack of a structured market, making them powerless against piracy that accounts for most sales. In the packed streets of Lagos-a capital of creativity and temple of resourcefulness-bootlegged copies are sold at car windows or between packets of sweets, cigarettes and recent Nollywood releases-many of which are also pirated.

Ringtone market

For the last three years, there's been a revolution in Nigeria's music industry because of digital sales and especially mobile telephones, which are bringing in increasingly more revenue. Analysts PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) estimated in a report published late last year that Nigeria's music industry was worth \$47 million in 2015 and should rise to \$86 million by 2020. "Nigeria's total music revenue is dependent on ringtones and ringback tones, with the legitimate music sector being small otherwise," it added.

Instead of hearing a beep while waiting for a caller to pick up, companies play the latest releases and offer them for download. Telephone operators, led by South African mobile giant MTN, sensed the potential of Nigeria, which is home to nearly 190 million people and where music is almost a religion.

MTN, which has 60 million subscribers in



LAGOS: Nwabia Obinna, aka Phizbarz, a 23-year-old Nigerian Afropop artist, performs during a music video at Maryland, in Lagos. — AFP

Nigeria, said it is the largest distributor of music. Ringtones are sold at 50 naira each and it also operates a download platform MTN Music Plus, which competes with world-leading online music sites such as iTunes. "There are lots of talented musicians on this market who had issues with piracy, it was difficult for them to sell their music," said MTN Nigeria's marketing director, Richard Iweanog.

"We enable them to monetize the work. Every year we pay out more money to the artists, it's really a working formula. Nigerians actually wanted to buy music, they just didn't have the means to acquire it legally."

Brand development

Wannabe megastars like Phizbarz are looking to emulate musicians such as D'banj and Davido, whose songs play in clubs from Johannesburg to Cotonou and Kinshasa. With roots on the streets of Lagos, they are now courted by major labels and record in Europe and the United States. "Superstars like Wizkid inspire millions of Nigerians," said Sam Onyemelukwe, the head of Entertainment Management Company, a part-

ner of the Trace TV music network. "There are not many jobs for them, not much to do with their lives. Everybody wants to become a singer, have a lot of girlfriends and buy a jet: it's glamorous." The law of averages suggests few will attain the dizzy heights of fame but mobile phones are one potentially lucrative way of getting noticed. According to PwC, ringtone downloads alone can earn artistes like D'banj and Davido up to \$350,000 a year.

"Anybody can record a song for a few thousands of naira and sell it online," said Onyemelukwe. "There's about one million 'artists' in Nigeria. But very few of them are successful." Phizbarz doesn't need to be told. "The music industry is very hard," he said. Posting photos and videos online, and touring the local music scene and radio stations is a way of trying to catch the attention of one of the top industry figures, he said. "You sell your brand first and then you get recognition," he said. "You have to know a lot of managers, radio presenters. Even if your beats are good, it is more about who do you know in the industry? "It's more a brand that you are developing, it's business." — AFP

SYSTEMIC CYBER ATTACKS LIKELY IN 2017: AIG STUDY

NEW YORK: Nine in 10 global cyber security and risk experts believe that cyber risk is systemic and that simultaneous attacks on multiple companies are likely in 2017, according to a study issued yesterday by American International Group, Inc.

More than half of survey respondents say a simultaneous attack on five to 10 companies is highly likely in the next year. More than one-third estimate the likelihood of a simultaneous attack on as many as 50 companies at greater than 50 percent. Twenty percent see an even greater threat, predicting a better than even chance that as many as 100 companies will be attacked. AIG's survey of cyber security and risk experts was conducted to gain a deeper understanding of the likelihood and impact of a globally systemic cyber-attack. The survey follows several high profile systemic cyber events including the Dyn Denial-of-Service (DDoS) and MongoDB ransomware attacks. Tracie Grella, Global Head of Cyber Risk Insurance, AIG said: "While data breaches and cyber related attacks have become more prevalent for individual businesses, concern about systemic cyber-attacks are on the minds of those in the very community dedicated to analyzing and preventing this threat."

The leading industries identified by experts as most likely to experience a systemic attack this year are:

- * Financial Services (19 percent)
- * Power/Energy (15 percent)

- * Telecommunications/Utilities (14 percent)
- * Healthcare (13 percent)
- * Information Technology (12 percent)

Financial networks or transaction systems, internet infrastructure, the power grid, and the healthcare system would be vulnerable in attacks on these industries. Information technology companies, including software and hardware providers that support the backbone of the digital economy, were also seen as particularly susceptible. "Our highly-networked economy relies on secure, expedient, and constant data flow and electronic communication," said Ms. Grella. "Disruptions to the flow and security of data can have cascading impacts and negatively impact institutions that rely on such data."

Asked to rank specific scenarios, respondents selected a mass distributed DDoS attack on a major cloud provider as the most likely cross-sector mega event. For data theft or destruction scenarios, flaws in hardware or software widely used by the industry are most concerning.

The top three likely scenarios selected by experts are:

- * Financial Services. 15 companies breached. Mass business interruption. Mass DDoS coordinated against financial institutions.
- * Healthcare. 10 companies breached (e.g., hospital, pharmacy, insurer). Mass data theft. Flaw in commonly used electronic medical record software.

- * Retail/Hospitality. 25 companies breached. Mass data theft. Flaw in widely used payment processing software/hardware.

The worst-case-scenarios that were of greatest concern include:

- * Cyber cat-and-mouse war games, retaliation, and escalation to conventional battle between prominent nation states.
- * A power grid attack during times of system stress with widespread impact on the population.
- * A significant attack on telecommunications and utilities infrastructure that has a widespread impact on essential services.

International Group, Inc (AIG) is a leading global insurance organization. Founded in 1919, today AIG member companies provide a wide range of property casualty insurance, life insurance, retirement products, and other financial services to customers in more than 80 countries and jurisdictions. These diverse offerings include products and services that help businesses and individuals protect their assets, manage risks and provide for retirement security. AIG's core businesses include Commercial Insurance and Consumer Insurance, as well as Other Operations. Commercial Insurance comprises two modules - Liability and Financial Lines, and Property and Special Risks. Consumer Insurance comprises four modules - Individual Retirement, Group Retirement, Life Insurance and Personal Insurance. AIG common stock is listed on the New York Stock Exchange and the Tokyo Stock Exchange. — AP

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION HOLLOWS OUT EPA SCIENCE INTEGRITY BOARD

WASHINGTON: The Trump administration will not reappoint half the expert members of a board that advises the Environmental Protection Agency on the integrity of its science, the latest in a series of moves that could benefit industries whose pollution the government regulates.

Deborah L Swackhamer, chairwoman of the Board of Scientific Counselors, confirmed Monday that nine of the 18 outside experts on her panel will not serve a second three-year term. The affected board members' terms expired April 30.

Experts are limited to serving two terms on the board, and Swackhamer said that in the past those completing their first term would typically have been reappointed. Four other board members just completed their second terms,

meaning 13 of the 18 seats on the panel are now vacant. EPA spokesman J.P. Freire said the agency's new leadership wants to consider a wider array of applicants, potentially including those who may work for chemical and fossil fuel companies. He said former board members may also be considered. "We are going to look at all applicants that come in, because this is an open and competitive process," Freire said. "EPA received hundreds of nominations to serve on the board, and we want to ensure fair consideration of all the nominees."

Swackhamer said she was not aware of how or when the "hundreds" of nominations Freire mentioned were collected. To her knowledge, there has not yet been any public call for applicants to fill the newly vacated positions. "There is hiring

freeze, so we cannot actually replace them until EPA says it is OK," said Swackhamer, who taught environmental health sciences at the University of Minnesota. "We are kind of hobbled, to say the least... They have essentially said they will look to industry scientists for much of their advice."

Members of the Board of Scientific Counselors are typically top academic experts tasked with helping ensure the agency's scientists follow well-established best practices. The positions are paid, and would be subject to the same ethics and conflict-of-interest screening as other federal appointees.

In a separate development, the Interior Department says it has launched a wide ranging review of more than 200 boards and advisory committees.

Spokeswoman Megan Bloomgren said that some of the boards being looked at had not met in years, and that no current members were being dismissed.

EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt has long been a fierce critic of the agency he now leads, saying its scientists often fail to weigh the cost of implementing new regulations on businesses. Pruitt, a lawyer who previously served as Oklahoma's elected attorney general, has moved in recent weeks to roll back Obama-era limits on toxic pollution from coal-fired power plants and countermand a push to ban a pesticide that peer-reviewed studies indicate may harm the developing brains of young children.

Pruitt also disagrees with the consensus of climate scientists that man-made carbon emissions are the primary cause

of climate change, saying that limits on burning coal costs jobs. Robert Richardson, one of the scientific counselors not reappointed to a second term, said Pruitt's public comments reflect a misunderstanding of the role of scientists, which is to impartially collect data and report what the evidence shows.

"The science will show the impact of a particular chemical or toxic substance, but we would never say it should be banned or regulated in a particular way," said Richardson, an ecological economist at Michigan State University. It is up to policy makers, Richardson said, to recommend new regulations and consider whether the benefits outweigh the costs. "The EPA's mission is to protect human health and the environment," he said. "It is not to minimize cost to industry." — AP

HOW BYRD RULE SHAPES GOP PUSH ON HEALTH CARE

WASHINGTON: The success of Republican efforts to repeal and replace Democrat Barack Obama's Affordable Care Act could depend on an obscure Senate rule that few people have heard of and even fewer understand.

It is called the Byrd rule, named for the late West Virginia Sen. Robert Byrd and designed decades ago to preserve Senate filibuster rights. What it means for health care is that many Republican ideas may be ruled ineligible.

Republicans trying to tackle health care control the Senate with only 52 votes. They cannot fully repeal the law; that would require them to match the 60-vote threshold in the 100-member body that Democrats reached when passing the Affordable Care Act seven years ago. Instead, they are hemmed in by the numbers and the rules as they use a fast-track process that requires only a simple majority.

The Byrd rule limits what can go into the filibuster-proof bill known as reconciliation. Such bills were designed to make it easier for Congress to cut the deficit. The Byrd rule blocks lawmakers from giving extraneous policy material a filibuster-free ride on such bills along with tax and spending provisions.

Here's a look at how the Byrd rule is affecting this year's Obamacare debate:

Origin of Byrd rule

The Byrd rule got its start back in 1985 when the modern budget process was still relatively new. Powerful senators had succeeded in stuffing unrelated amendments on textiles and tobacco into that year's reconciliation bill, which alarmed defenders of Senate traditions such as then-Minority Leader Byrd, who warned it was endangering the filibuster. Byrd and Majority Leader Bob Dole, R-Kan., engineered a unanimous vote to curb the ability to tuck extraneous provisions into fast-track budget legislation.

The party controlling the Senate has typically tried to stretch the Byrd rule's boundaries, however, with today's GOP-controlled Senate only the latest example. "Reconciliation has been thoroughly and totally abused over the years," said former Senate Parliamentarian Alan Frumin. "People think you can put almost anything in reconciliation."

Point of order

The Byrd rule generally blocks provisions that don't affect the federal budget - and blocks provisions whose changes to spending or taxes are "merely incidental" to a larger policy purpose. If such provisions are inserted

despite the Byrd rule, any individual senators can knock them out with a point of order.

Such "Byrdable" provisions appear to include a controversial House amendment by Rep. Tom MacArthur, R-NJ, to allow states to opt-out of Obamacare mandates and allow insurance companies to charge higher premiums to people with pre-existing conditions.

Other policies, such as mandates that individuals buy insurance or employers provide it to their workers, can't be directly repealed but can be gutted through the special budget bill by scrapping the penalties for violating the mandates. The rule also blocks other GOP ideas like allowing insurance companies to sell health care policies across state lines.

Byrd and his rule in action

Byrd himself played a big role in blocking fellow Democrats from using the budget reconciliation process in a failed 1994 health care attempt. And Democrats started out in 2009 by trying to pass the Affordable Care Act without using the reconciliation shortcut, winning a 60-39 vote on Christmas Eve Day to pass the measure.

But when Massachusetts Republican Scott Brown won a special election to claim the seat formerly held by Democratic Sen. Ted Kennedy, Democrats turned to a separate budget reconciliation measure to make modest changes to secure the law. Republicans used reconciliation to send a repeal measure to former President Barack Obama last year for his veto and are using it again now.

What happens now

The House-passed bill has plenty of Byrd rule problems. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky, is expected to start from scratch. Key staff have already been meeting with the chamber's nonpartisan parliamentarian, Elizabeth MacDonough. Once Senate Republicans release their alternative to the House bill, Democrats will give it a scrubbing - sometimes known as a "Byrd bath" - and raise points of order under the rule. If there's a final House-Senate conference report that contains offending items, they too can be stripped out on Byrd Rule points of order, which could force the House to vote again.

Some conservatives are arguing that since Republicans control the Senate, they could opt to, in essence, ignore the Byrd rule by having the presiding officer substitute his or her judgment for the parliamentarian's. There's no sign, however, that McConnell is interested in doing that. — AP



GUADALAJARA: Mexican 32-year-old Juan Pedro Franco, who weighs almost 500 kilograms (1,100 pounds) arrives at the hospital in Guadalajara, Mexico on May 05, 2017. — AFP

WORLD'S HEAVIEST MAN GOES UNDER KNIFE IN MEXICO

GUADALAJARA: The world's heaviest man, who at one point weighed almost 600 kilograms (1,300 pounds), has undergone successful gastric bypass surgery, his doctors in Mexico said. The procedure on Juan Pedro Franco is intended to reduce his weight by half, and is expected to be followed up with another operation, his surgeon Jose Castaneda said Tuesday.

"The surgery was quite successful. But now we have to wait and see how he responds to the (systemic) change. Let's hope everything goes well," Castaneda said. The procedure has left the patient "quite delicate", and he is being closely monitored, Castaneda said. Franco, who at his peak tipped the scales at 595 kilograms, was told that in order to be eligible for surgery, he had to lose a large amount of his initial bulk. He also had to get his diabetes and blood pressure under control. The operation was given the



Jose Antonio Castaneda, the doctor of Juan Pedro Franco, formerly the heaviest man in the world, answers questions during a press conference in Guadalajara, Mexico on Tuesday.

green light when doctors said they were pleased with his steady progress and motivation, which marked a change for Franco, who had spent years in bed. When the second procedure is done, likely in November, Franco's stomach size will be reduced and his intestines modified.

Most importantly, the patient has to progress on the psychological and nutritional fronts. "If that does not happen, the entire thing will fail," Castaneda warned. Mexico's Manuel Uribe, who in 2007 held the record for being the world's heaviest man at 597 kilograms, died last year.

Egyptian Eman Ahmed Abd El-Aty, who was believed to be the world's heaviest woman, recently underwent gastric bypass surgery in India. Doctors said her treatment, which also included a modified diet, helped her lose 323 kilograms in three months, to stand at around 177 kilograms. — AFP

DESCENDANTS OF SYPHILIS STUDY SUBJECTS EMERGING FROM SHADOWS

TUSKEGEE, Alabama: Decades later, it is still hard to grasp what the federal government did to hundreds of black men in rural Alabama - even if you are among their descendants, lighting candles in their memory. For 40 years starting in 1932, medical workers in the segregated South withheld treatment for unsuspecting men infected with a sexually transmitted disease simply so doctors could track the ravages of the horrid illness and dissect their bodies afterward.

Finally exposed in 1972, the study ended and the men sued, resulting in a \$9 million settlement. Twenty years ago this month, President Bill Clinton apologized for the US government. It seemed to mark the end of this ugly episode, once and for all.

Except it did not. Relatives of the men still struggle with the stigma of being linked to the experiment, commonly known today as the 'Tuskegee Syphilis Study.' For years they have met privately to share their pain and honor the victims. And, amazingly, that class-action lawsuit filed by the men in 1973 has outlived them all. The litigation continues to this day, with a federal court currently considering a request that will help determine the study's final legacy.

Based in one of Alabama's poorest counties, workers engaged in 'The Tuskegee Study of Untreated Syphilis in the Negro Male' initially recruited 600 black men, promising free medical checks and other benefits to many blacks had never even seen a doctor. The men were tested and sorted into groups - 399 with syphilis and another 201 who were not infected. The disease-free men were used as a control group. Health workers told syphilitic men they had 'bad blood.' None of the men was asked to consent to take part in a medical study. They also were not told that 'bad blood' actually was a euphemism for syphilis. Doctors never provided them with penicillin after it became the standard treatment for syphilis in the mid-1940s.

It is doubtful any of the men knew what had happened until an Associated Press story was published nationwide on July 26, 1972. The next morning, farmer and community leader

Charlie Pollard walked into attorney Fred Gray's office in Tuskegee. Pollard was among the men in the study, and his visit with Gray led to the lawsuit and the multimillion-dollar settlement reached with the government on Aug. 28, 1975. In all, Gray said in an interview, government documents showed 623 men were involved in the study.

Among the participants was Freddie Lee

Tyson. Though he displayed no symptoms, Tyson also was born with congenital syphilis inherited from his mother, said his daughter, Lille Tyson Head. "He was a wise man, very gentle. He was a disciplined man. Active in the church, loved his family and his extended family," said Head, of Wirtz, Virginia, one of the Tysons' eight children. Tyson quit the study during the 1950s after hearing rumblings that

"something was wrong," Lille Head said. Unaffected by the disease, Tyson learned the true nature of the program only when the rest of the country found out, his daughter said. His wife and children all tested negative for syphilis, but Tyson was traumatized and feared the disease would show up somewhere in his family. "He was angry and he was upset," Head said. Tyson died in 1988 at age 82 after an automobile accident. Today, the 72-year-old Head chairs Voices of our Fathers Legacy Foundation, a nonprofit organization formed in 2014 by the men's relatives to tell the story of the victims of the Tuskegee study.

Descendants began gathering a year or two after Clinton hosted five remaining test survivors in the White House. The last man involved in the syphilis study died in 2004 and this year, for the first time, relatives both allowed The Associated Press into their annual gathering and invited the public to a ceremony where they lit candles for the men.

This year's ceremony included about 110 descendants, friends, community members, a gospel choir from Tuskegee University and public officials. There were speeches by Head and attorney Gray and others. The 'community day of healing' was a big step for the families, Head said. For decades, the study has been widely blamed for distrust among US blacks toward the medical community, particularly clinical trials and other tests. In medical and public health circles, it's known as the 'Tuskegee effect.' The legal fallout from the Tuskegee syphilis study also lives on, at the federal courthouse in Montgomery. Settlement funds were used for decades to compensate study participants and more than 9,000 of their relatives. Court workers were unable to locate other descendants, and some never responded to letters from the clerk's office, which disbursed millions before the last payment was recorded in 2008.

Court officials will not say how much money is left, but documents indicate the balance is mostly interest earnings from money first paid by the government decades ago. Gray said he's heard it's less than \$100,000. — AP



TUSKEGEE, Alabama: Tabitha Julkes lights a candle during a ceremony near Tuskegee, Alabama, on Monday, April 3, 2017, to commemorate the roughly 600 men who were subjects in the Tuskegee syphilis study. — AP

PORTUGUESE DOCTORS LAUNCH TWO-DAY STRIKE

LISBON: Portuguese doctors launched a 48-hour strike yesterday to protest at working conditions and budget cuts, with only minimum healthcare being offered at public hospitals nationwide.

"All signs show strong turnout for the strike," Diana Povoas, a leader of the National Federation of Doctors said, without providing figures. "Most non-emergency surgeries and appointments are not taking place, but the atmosphere is calm in hospitals. Patients understand the reasons for the strike because they also feel a decline in services."

The public health system employs 26,000 doctors across the country. Minimum healthcare services will be ensured during the strike, which has been organized by the federation and another doctors' union known as SIM.

Doctors are seeking a reduction in work hours for emergency workers from 200 hours a year to 150.

They are also calling for the withdrawal of budget cuts decided by the former center-right government. "The government changed but the policies remain the same," said FNAM head Mario Jorge Neves.

In power since November 2015, Portugal's socialist government has scrapped some of the main austerity measures put in place between 2011 and 2014 that were part of a bailout deal with the EU and IMF, but it is still seeking to balance its budget as required by creditors.

The doctors' strike will end the day before Pope Francis starts a two-day pilgrimage from Friday to the holy site of Fatima in central Portugal. Public healthcare services will continue to function with reduced staff levels on Friday, however, because government workers are allowed to attend the pope's visit. — AFP



MIAMI, Florida: Visitors check out part of the Feathers to the Stars exhibit where the largest feathered dinosaur is seen on opening day for the Phillip and Patricia Frost Museum of Science on May 8, 2017 in Miami, Florida. The 250,000 square foot museum sits on four acres and is divided into four buildings: The Aquarium, the Frost Planetarium, and the North and West Wings, where guests get to see exhibits from the ocean to the Everglades, from the human cell to outer space, and the process of science and innovation. — AFP

GIANT BIRD-LIKE DINOSAUR SPECIES FOUND IN CHINA: STUDY

BEIJING: Researchers have discovered a new species of giant, bird-like dinosaur that made nests larger than monster truck tires in what is now central China, a study said. Measuring about eight meters (26 feet) long and weighing up to 3,000 kilograms (6,600 pounds), the Beibeilong sinensis—“baby dragon from China”—lived about 90 million years ago and is only the second known species of the giant oviraptorosaur in the world.

Darla Zelenitsky, a Canadian paleontologist who co-authored the study, said that the Beibeilong would have looked like an “overgrown cassowary,” a flightless bird resembling an emu. Likely covered in feathers, oviraptorosaurs had robust, toothless beaks and often sported a crest on the top of their heads. “It has been a big mystery for many years as to which species laid the largest-known dinosaur eggs,” Zelenitsky said.

“The identification of the baby skeleton in this study revealed that these eggs were laid by giant oviraptorosaurs, a group of dinosaurs that are very poorly known from fossil bones.” The discovery, detailed in Nature Communications journal Tuesday, was made using a dinosaur skeleton and egg fossil known as “Baby Louie.”

Baby Louie was among the thousands of dinosaur eggs excavated and collected from Cretaceous rocks by local farmers in central Henan province in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The specimen was then illegally sold and smuggled into the United States, where it was featured in National Geographic magazine and publicly exhibited at the Indianapolis Children’s Museum. Though the museum always intended to repatriate the Chinese fossil, the study noted, an agreement for its return was not reached until 2013, when Baby Louie found its final resting place at the Henan Geological Museum.

Because of legal concerns, only after Baby Louie had returned home was a team of Chinese and Canadian scientists able to start researching the specimen, which consisted of the bones of an embryo that died while hatching and 45 centimeter- (17.7 inch-) long eggs found in a ring-shaped clutch. — AFP



This handout picture released on May 10, 2017 by the University of Calgary shows a curled embryo of Beibeilong on top of the eggs (eggshell is dark grey in color).

WHO YOU GONNA CALL? DINOSAUR NAMED FOR ‘GHOSTBUSTERS’ BEAST ZUUL

WASHINGTON: It was more of a leg buster, but scientists have named a spiky, tank-like dinosaur that wielded a sledgehammer tail after the fanciful beast Zuul from the blockbuster film ‘Ghostbusters’ that menaced Bill Murray, Dan Aykroyd and friends.

The scientists on Tuesday described fossils unearthed in the northern Montana badlands of the four-legged, plant-eating dinosaur called Zuul crurivastator that was about 20 feet (6 meters) long, weighed 2-1/2 tons and lived 75 million years ago. Zuul belonged to a group of Cretaceous Period dinosaurs called ankylosaurs that were among the most heavily armored land animals ever. They were clad in bony armor from the snout to the end of the tail, often with spikes and a tail club that could be used to smash the legs of predators like the Tyrannosaurus rex cousin Gorgosaurus that lived alongside Zuul.

Zuul is one of the most complete and best-preserved ankylosaur ever found, including rare soft tissue, paleontologist Victoria Arbour of the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto said. Its fossils included skin impressions and keratinous sheaths on the tail spikes.

In the 1984 movie, Zuul (pronounced ZOO) was described as an ancient Near

East demigod and appeared as a big, horned, vaguely dog-like monster with glowing red eyes, possessing Sigourney Weaver’s body.

The dinosaur’s name was inspired by its skull similarities to the head of the ‘Ghostbusters’ monster, Royal Ontario Museum paleontologist David Evans said. “The skull of the new dinosaur has a short, rounded snout, gnarly forehead, and two sets of horns projecting backwards from behind the eyes, just like Zuul,” Evans said.

Aykroyd, the Ontario-born ‘Ghostbusters’ star and co-writer, appeared in a video released by the museum alongside the dinosaur’s skull, holding a photo of the movie beast. “We are so honored that the Royal Ontario Museum would accord the name of this magnificent creature with the appellation that we called our ‘terror dog’ in the movie, and that is Zuul, Z-U-U-L,” Aykroyd said.

The dinosaur’s tail, about 10 feet (3 meters) long, was an intimidating defensive weapon. “The menacing, spiked tail of Zuul is by far the coolest part of the animal,” Evans said. “It has a wicked series of large spikes at the base of the tail, then a series of elongated, peaked spines that run the length of the tail club, and it ends in a massive, expanded club.” — Reuters

HEALTH IMPROVING FOR RESCUED ALBINO ORANGUTAN IN INDONESIA

CENTRAL KALIMANTAN, Indonesia: The health of a rare albino orangutan saved from captivity by environmentalists less than two weeks ago is improving, said Indonesian veterinarians at the quarantine facility where the five-year-old is being kept.

The pale-haired, blue-eyed female was rescued after being held captive by local residents in Central Kalimantan, where rampant deforestation has endangered the lives and habitats of dozens of species. “We are still re-observing the condition of her skin

and eyes. Overall she has been showing good progress over the last 10 days,” veterinarian Arga Sawung Kusuma said.

Although she is not yet at an ideal weight, she has gained 4.5 kg (9.9 pounds) and is feeding on various fruits, and drinking sugar cane and milk regularly, marking a significant improvement in appetite, he said. Orangutans, considered critically endangered by the World Wildlife Fund, usually have brown or orange hair and dark eyes. They are native to Indonesia and Malaysia. — Reuters

‘PERFECT STORM’ SHIP ABOUT TO BECOME PART OF ARTIFICIAL REEF



NORTHFORD, Connecticut: In this May 30, 2000, file photo, US Coast Guard Lt William Moeller of Northford, Connecticut, poses for a photo in front of the USS Tamaroa. — AP

CAPE MAY, NJ: The ship made famous in the book and subsequent film ‘The Perfect Storm’ is about to be intentionally sunk off the New Jersey and Delaware coasts so it can become part of an artificial reef. The sinking of the Tamaroa, a 205-foot (62-meter) Coast Guard vessel, initially was scheduled to take place several months ago, but was repeatedly delayed by rough seas and other related issues.

Officials said that they planned to sink it yesterday morning, about 33 nautical miles (61 kilometers) off the coast of Cape May, New Jersey. They note that the ocean waters need to be as calm as possible so the vessel can sink straight down to the reef. Extensive work also had to be done before the ship could be sunk, including the removal of interior paneling and insulation as well as emptying and cleaning the vessel of all fuel and fluids.

A tugboat began hauling the Tamaroa from a Norfolk, Virginia, shipyard on Monday afternoon and it slowly made its way up the Eastern Seaboard on Tuesday without any issues, according to

the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection.

The Tamaroa was first commissioned by the US Navy in 1934 under the name Zuni and saw action during World War II when it helped tow damaged vessels across the war-torn Pacific Ocean. It was transferred to the Coast Guard and renamed in 1946, then continued to serve until it eventually was decommissioned in 1994.

The vessel’s most notable mission came in October 1991, when three strong storm systems came together off the New England coast, generating 40-foot (12-meter) waves and wind gusts of more than 70 mph.

The Tamaroa’s crew helped save three people aboard a sailboat that was caught in the storm. They also rescued four of five crewmen of an Air National Guard helicopter that ran out of fuel during a similar rescue mission and had to be ditched in the ocean. Both events were documented in Sebastian Junger’s 1997 book, ‘The Perfect Storm,’ and a movie of the same name starring George Clooney. — AP

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Alghanim Industries Inaugurates First Flagship Slim Chickens Restaurant Outside of the US

FRESH INGREDIENTS AND REAL SOUTHERN HOMEMADE MEALS

Alghanim Industries, one of the largest privately owned companies in the region, inaugurated the first Slim Chickens restaurant outside of the United States (US), in a grand opening held at the new stand-alone location on Blajat Street, Salmiya, and attended by Alghanim Industries Chief Executive Officer, Omar Kutayba Alghanim, the Ambassador of the United States, Lawrence Silverman, Alghanim Industries executives, Slim Chickens founders, Tom Gordon and Greg Smart. The event was also attended by food enthusiasts, bloggers and fans from across the country. Renowned as a leader in the 'better chicken' segment of fast-casual restaurants with more than 50 locations in ten States, Slim Chickens partnered with Alghanim Industries in a master franchise agreement that enables Alghanim Industries to introduce the Slim Chickens brand and dining experience across the MENA region.

During the opening, Alghanim Industries Chief Executive Officer, Omar Kutayba Alghanim, welcomed guests and introduced guests of honor, the US Ambassador to Kuwait, Lawrence R Silverman, Slim Chickens founders, Tom Gordon and Greg Smart, and Chief Operating Officer at Slim Chickens, Sam Rothschild. After thanking them for their attending the milestone opening, he went on to praise this new and exciting partnership. The opening was followed by a presentation of the wide selection of food, sauces and sides the franchise has to offer, while the Kuwaiti music band Sons of Yusuf performed for the crowd.

CEO, Omar K Alghanim stated, during the event: "It is an exciting time for Alghanim Industries, as we open the first Slim Chickens, restaurant outside of the United States. As one of the fastest growing brands in the food and beverage segment, Slim Chickens has a lot to offer the Kuwaiti customer. Alghanim Industries prides itself as an organization that knows how to relate to the customer and provide them with value propositions that really resonate.

Commenting on plans for expansion, Alghanim went on to say: "This will be one of many more restaurants to come in the Middle East, and we are enthusiastic about expanding the brand throughout the region. We see huge potential in this segment and we believe it will be hugely successful, both in and outside of Kuwait."

Founded in 2003 in Fayetteville, Arkansas, Slim Chickens is committed to providing a "Life-Changing Chicken" experience in its sector of the restaurant industry with a focus on high quality, fresh chicken. The down-home Southern brand features hand-breaded and grilled chicken tenders and wings, fresh ingredients paired with a selection of 14 handmade dipping sauces, all to render exceptional flavors that continue to earn admiration from guests and food critics in the United States.

Slim Chickens CEO and Co-Founder, Tom Gordon, said: "We are very excited to open our first international restaurant in Kuwait, where customers will indeed enjoy the real homemade taste of Slim Chickens in a truly Southern experience. We wouldn't have chosen any other than Alghanim Industries to lead in our MENA expansion and deliver real food, social meals, and commitment to local communities. The partnership will allow us to expand our vision and voice in a new and expansive capacity, and connect with valued guests throughout the MENA region."

In a southern ambience, Slim Chickens in Kuwait uses all fresh ingredients to preserve the same standards of superior quality and taste in every bite, in addition to the Southern hospitality in service and great experience.

On this occasion, the Vice President of Food and Beverage Division at Alghanim Industries, Phil Broad, said: "We are very proud to introduce one of the fastest growing brands within its



CEO Omar Alghanim and US Ambassador to Kuwait Lawrence R Silverman pose with influencers for a group photo.



CEO Omar Alghanim

segment in the United States: Slim Chickens. It is the newest addition in our Food and Beverage portfolio, which launched in 2013 and expanded its footprint in Kuwait, UAE and soon Saudi Arabia. The opening of the Slim Chickens outside its home country is proof of our commitment to spread this very distinct experience in Kuwait and across the region. We thank Tom and



Greg, who have traveled here from the US, and all our guests for joining us at the opening of the first Slim Chickens restaurant in the Middle East." Alghanim Industries is actively expanding its food and beverage (F&B) portfolio, which began in 2013 with a franchise agreement that enabled it to penetrate the coffee shop market in Kuwait. The company recently expanded further

through entering the "better chicken" segment of fast-casual restaurants, and is rapidly growing its F&B portfolio.

Customers are invited to experience the new and fresh tastes of Southern meals at Slim Chickens' stand-alone building on Blajat Street in Salmiya, serving customers for dine-in and take-away meals from 11:00 am to 1:00 am every day.





A sneak peek into Morocco's Mazagan resort

Mazagan is a unique coastal destination resort overlooking the Atlantic Ocean, located 90km south of Casablanca, in El Jadida. This previously unexplored region of Morocco benefits from a year round temperate climate. This spectacular Moroccan resort opened in October 2009.

370 million American dollars was invested for the realization of this exciting project which is part of the Plan Azur. The first phase of this titanic project, initiated by HRH Mohammed VI, King of Morocco, aims to develop the region of Mazagan into a Leading tourist destination in Morocco. After 21 months of construction, during which a team of 3800 worked continuously, Mazagan finally revealed itself. A successful project was built: 500 rooms and suites, bars and restaurants, a Spa, a nightclub, the biggest casino in North Africa, one of the Largest conference center in the region, 67 private villas for residents and a 18 holes Golf Course, designed by Gary Player.

Magical place

Mazagan encompasses a 250-hectare site boarding a 7km stretch of white sandy beach. Mazagan with its ocre walls and green tiled roofs, originally made in Fez resembles a real authentic "medina". The resort was created by Kerzner International, a leading international developer and operator of destination resorts. Designed to capture the essence of traditional Moroccan architecture, the resort incorporates modern elements associated with Kerzner's world-class resorts. Mazagan Beach Resort is located next to the traditional port town of El Jadida (UNESCO World Heritage site) where guests can discover a traditional and authentic Moroccan city. Nestled at the heart of an oasis is a five-star beach resort with 500 rooms and suites. The immensity of the ocean, endless beaches and sweet-scented gardens, golf and a beautiful beach. A truly magical destination. This is Mazagan Beach Resort. The resort is set amongst four floors: 468 guest rooms, 20 Mazagan Suites, 2 Executive Suites, 8 Ambassador Suites and 2 Royal Suites located on the 5th floor in the two extreme corners of the building with a breath taking view of the Atlantic Ocean.

Moroccan gastronomy and cuisine

Mazagan Beach and Golf Resort offer a wide range



of dining options for guests, ranging from international favorites to the finest Moroccan cuisine. Whether guests choose to eat at one of the fine dining restaurants or in a more casual atmosphere, they can enjoy the fresh, local ingredients which are used across all restaurants and choose from a range of carefully selected wines.

World-renowned tajines, seafood pastille and couscous prepared with various vegetables will no longer remain a secret for you after you have enjoyed dinner at the Moroccan restaurant & oriental lounge 'Morjana'. Enjoy traditional fine dining in a warm and innovative oriental atmosphere at Morjana with your family, friends or loved one, the different delicious dishes prepared by a real Moroccan chef: Mechoui (Lamb), briouates (Moroccan nems), harira (Moroccan soup), famous lemon chicken all accompanied by the best local wines, special Moroccan Liquors from the Atlas (Maya) as well as a variety of fruits, vegetables and spices that are grown abundantly in the region of Doukkala. The 'Market Place', located on the first floor, offers an outstanding view overlooking the courtyard gardens and swimming pool. Taking the form of sumptuous buffets, the colors and aromas of the Middle East, North Africa, India and Asia come together in perfect harmony. The cuisine is a show, centered around the traditional oven, the counter of the mezzeh and the grilled buffet, all providing a variety of flavors. Olive's is located in the heart of the resort, near the garden and swimming pool. Lunch or dinner can be enjoyed in chic and elegant surround-

ings or on the terrace. Italy and the Mediterranean are represented in all their glory, antipasti, salads, pasta, home-made lasagnas and pizzas are a sample of the Large selection of dishes available, rounded off by a selection of traditional cheeses 'Sel de Mer' offers a large variety of fresh local fish and seafood prepared on a large barbecue grill. Finally, a selection of delightful desserts made with sorbets and fruits are served up to tantalize the taste buds.

Spa on the crossroads

Nestled on a gentle slope amid the tranquility of the soft sand dunes of Mazagan beach and with stunning ocean views, the Spa at Mazagan Beach & Golf Resort is the ideal location to relax both mind and body. Escape to this retreat and let the exotic aromas and natural ingredients engage your senses as you begin your spa journey. Experience hints of ancient Morocco treatments using excellent natural local products from the brand "Les Sens de Marrakech". The Spa has 19 treatment rooms, including two double rooms and a luxury two-person suite with stunning ocean views. The suite offers couple treatments and private facilities such as a steam room and an outdoor relaxation area. There is also a 100m2 authentic Moroccan hammam made from marble and includes a cool room and two internal steam rooms.

Every treatment at the Spa is a personalized experience that begins with a private consultation to ensure that each treatment is adapted to individual needs. Guests at Mazagan can select from a range of full body massages aimed to ease stress, alleviate tension and soothe the muscles, or from intensive facials that revitalize the skin to create a glowing complexion. The advanced techniques are combined with nourishing oils from Morocco and mineral-rich mud including argan oil to create signature experiences for Mazagan Spa. Mazagan Spa combines with "Carita - Paris" to deliver the perfect beauty experience. Take a relaxing break with our newly added face treatments, for a body and mind in perfect harmony.

Attached to the Spa and with stunning views out to the ocean is a fully equipped Fitness Centre with TechnoGym equipment. Available to all guests at the resort, the fitness centre also boasts a separate Pilates as well as Kinesis machines and a free weights area.

Personal trainers are also on hand to offer advice and guidance to guests and can also be booked for private fitness sessions including Pilates, Cardio, Resistance training and yoga.

The resort that never sleeps

As the leading resort in Morocco, Mazagan Beach and Golf Resort prides itself on its ability to cater for guest requirement. This is why the evening activities at the hotel are as diverse as those available during the day. The resort boasts a nightclub, casino and an excellent line-up of events and entertainment, in addition to the various bars located throughout the hotel. Located in the heart of the resort, Alias Club is open on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights from 11.30pm into the early hours, and is the perfect place for guests to relax and let their hair down. The club, which can accommodate up to 1,000 people, is equipped with the latest technology in sound and Lighting systems aimed to deliver a first class nightlife experience unique to the resort. As Morocco's largest casino, the Mazagan Casino features over 463 slot machines and 44 gaming tables.

Open 23 hours, guests can enter the Casino throughout the day to enjoy games such as roulette, blackjack, poker, punto banco, and "Salon Privé" is available to guests with larger bets who wish to enjoy the experience of the Casino in private. Finally, for an alternative evening experience, Mazagan Resort hosts a range of traditional and modern Moroccan and Western events all year round. Events range from

Oriental nights at Morjana Restaurant to jazz concerts at the jockey club.

18 hole links course

The Par 72, 18-hole Links Golf Course at Mazagan Beach & Golf Resort is set alongside 3 km of the Atlantic Ocean, showcasing some of the best views from the resort. Designed by world-famous golfer Gary Player, the course follows the contours of the dunes and was created with a focus on respecting the environment and conserving the natural features of the land. In the spirit of conserving the environment, the dunes and valleys throughout the course have been entirely created with native sand found on site. The type of grass used, "Platinum Paspalum", was carefully chosen for its environmental friendly growing habit requiring less water, fertilizer and pesticides. Additionally, in continually respecting the agricultural region around El Jadida, 80 percent of the irrigation water used for the golf course is recycled effluent water from the hotel.

Although aspects of the course have been designed by Mr. Player to be extremely technical offering experienced golfers in his words, "heroic shots", all levels of ability have been catered for at Mazagan. The 300m-long driving range is perfect for experienced golfers who wish to practice their long drives and academy services are available for beginners looking to improve their game.

FGA introduces Mazagan Golf Academy, for beginners and professional players. The new technologies, "Gasp Systems" and "Flightscope" provide instant shots of swings and analyze the flight of the ball, which helps in offering customized training sessions. The Mazagan Club House is set on the golf course with large windows looking out onto the Atlantic Ocean offering beautiful views to enjoy after a round of golf. The bar and restaurant serves a mix of Salads, Sandwiches and Moroccan dishes either in the restaurant or out on the terrace. The Club House also offers fully equipped men's and women's locker rooms and a Pro Shop stocked with all the latest in golfing accessories.

Kidz Club

In Mazagan, the Kidz Club and Club Rush are not hard to find, all you need to do is follow the sound of the kids laughter! For children aged 3 months to 4 years, the Baby Club is available in addition to the babysitting service from 6 pm to 5 am. During a dinner alone, together or for a magical evening at the casino, baby-sitters watch over your children. The 'Baby Club' is open from 9 am to 6 pm. The Kidz Club with its swimming pool is also open from 9 am to 6 pm for kids aged 4 years to 11 years. Finally the Teens Club, called Club Rush at Mazagan is for teens from age 12 to 17 and is open at the same time as the other clubs. According to their ages and desires of the moment, educational activities and sports, games, fun, entertainment and naps are scheduled. On a daily basis, a dedicated team organizes a children's activity program, enabling kids to get the most out of the resort, the beach and the sea. Children also have their own private swimming pool and are able to go horseback riding, which is a tradition in the region of Doukkala. The range of activities for children and families across the vast resort is endless, they range from racing round the 'Ferrari Pit', swimming in the private pool, horseback riding on the beach, petting animals at The Farm and quad biking to chilled time in the computer gaming room equipped with 21-inch MAC computers and film watching on the various big screens. This allows the parents of these adorable children to fully experience the resort without having to worry about their loved ones enjoying their own experiences.

Conference center

In respect to the Plan Azur, Mazagan aims also to attract business tourism. Less than three hours away from most of the European capital cities, Mazagan Beach Resort has all the features of a major conference and event center. This unique conference center in Morocco is 2000m2 of air-conditioned rooms which can be adjusted to cater for all types of events and can welcome up to 1,300 people in theatre style and 1,100 people in banquet style. The entire resort can be reserved for exceptional private functions. The conference center is composed of 1130m2 plenary room which can be divided into three 375m2 rooms, another 277m2 plenary room which can be divided into 3,92 m2 rooms, a board room of 84 m2 and several subcommittee rooms that can hold up to 12 people. The conference center also offers a spacious lounge and immense gardens that can be used for coffee breaks or for private garden parties.



OSN MOVIES
ACTION

- 00:45 Everly
- 02:30 Mission: Impossible - Rogue Nation
- 04:45 Bermuda Tentacles
- 06:15 Rivers Nine
- 08:00 Batman: Bad Blood
- 09:30 The World Is Not Enough
- 11:45 Jurassic Hunters
- 13:30 Mission: Impossible - Rogue Nation
- 15:45 Batman: Bad Blood
- 17:00 Die Another Day
- 19:15 Seventh Son
- 21:00 Lucy
- 22:30 Fast & Furious 7

ANIMAL PLANET HD

- 00:50 Swimming With Monsters: Steve Backshall
- 01:45 Bondi Vet
- 02:40 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
- 03:35 Tanked
- 04:25 Untamed China With Nigel Marven
- 05:15 Dogs/Cats/Pets 101
- 06:02 Swimming With Monsters: Steve Backshall
- 06:49 From WAGs To Riches
- 07:36 Swamp Brothers
- 08:25 Dogs/Cats/Pets 101
- 09:15 From WAGs To Riches
- 10:10 Untamed China With Nigel Marven
- 11:05 Tanked
- 12:00 Dogs/Cats/Pets 101
- 12:55 Bondi Vet
- 13:50 From WAGs To Riches
- 14:45 Swimming With Monsters: Steve Backshall
- 15:40 Untamed China With Nigel Marven
- 16:35 Tanked
- 17:30 Swimming With Monsters: Steve Backshall
- 18:25 Speed Of Life
- 19:20 Wild Ones
- 20:15 Tanked
- 21:10 Cats 101
- 22:05 Speed Of Life
- 23:25 Wild Ones
- 23:55 Untamed China With Nigel Marven

BBC FIRST

- 00:35 Doctors
- 01:10 Eastenders
- 01:40 Benidorm
- 02:35 Sherlock

- 02:45 The Alternative Comedy Experience
- 03:10 South Park
- 03:35 South Park
- 04:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
- 04:25 Disorderly Conduct: Video On Patrol
- 05:15 Lip Sync Battle
- 05:40 Ridiculousness
- 06:05 Disaster Date
- 06:30 Lip Sync Battle
- 06:55 Lip Sync Battle
- 07:20 Frameworx
- 08:15 Disorderly Conduct: Video On Patrol
- 09:05 Disaster Date
- 09:30 Disaster Date
- 09:55 Ridiculousness
- 10:20 Key And Peele
- 10:45 Disaster Date
- 11:10 Ridiculousness
- 11:35 Impractical Jokers
- 12:00 Tattoo Disasters
- 12:25 Tattoo Disasters
- 12:50 Idiotstiller
- 13:15 Lip Sync Battle
- 13:40 Impractical Jokers
- 14:05 Disorderly Conduct: Video On Patrol
- 14:55 Ridiculousness
- 15:20 Catch A Contractor
- 16:10 Idiotstiller
- 16:35 Disaster Date
- 17:00 Disaster Date
- 17:25 Ridiculousness
- 17:50 Lip Sync Battle
- 18:15 Key And Peele
- 18:40 Frankenfood
- 19:10 Frankenfood
- 19:35 Impractical Jokers
- 20:00 Disaster Date
- 20:23 Live With Models
- 20:47 Impractical Jokers
- 21:10 Ridiculousness Arabia
- 21:35 Another Period
- 22:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
- 22:30 Key And Peele
- 23:00 The Half Hour
- 23:25 South Park
- 23:50 Broad City

Discovery Family

- 00:40 Ultimate Survival
- 01:30 Science Of The Movies
- 02:20 Dogs: The Untold Story
- 03:10 Everest: Beyond The Limit
- 04:00 Now That's Funny
- 04:50 Ultimate Survival
- 05:40 How It's Made
- 06:05 How It's Made

- 01:45 The Hive
- 01:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 02:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 02:40 Hank Zipzer
- 03:05 Binny And The Ghost
- 03:30 Binny And The Ghost
- 03:55 Hank Zipzer
- 04:15 The Hive
- 04:20 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 04:45 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 05:10 Hank Zipzer
- 05:35 Binny And The Ghost
- 06:00 Binny And The Ghost
- 06:25 Hank Zipzer
- 06:45 The Hive
- 06:50 The 7D
- 07:00 Jessie
- 07:25 Jessie
- 07:50 Tsum Tsum Shorts
- 07:55 The Zhuzhus
- 08:20 Elena Of Avalor
- 08:45 Bunk'd
- 09:10 Stuck In The Middle
- 09:35 Bizaardvark
- 10:00 Austin & Ally
- 10:25 Austin & Ally
- 10:50 Good Luck Charlie
- 11:15 Good Luck Charlie
- 11:40 Dog With A Blog
- 12:05 Dog With A Blog
- 12:30 Gravity Falls
- 12:55 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 13:00 Welcome To The Tonks
- 13:15 The Zhuzhus
- 13:40 Hank Zipzer
- 14:05 Star Darlings
- 14:10 Good Luck Charlie
- 14:35 Austin & Ally
- 15:00 Jessie
- 15:25 Binny And The Ghost
- 15:50 Sunny Bunnies
- 15:55 The Zhuzhus
- 16:45 Elena Of Avalor
- 17:10 Liv And Maddie
- 17:35 Descendants Wicked World
- 17:40 Girl Meets World
- 18:05 Stuck In The Middle
- 18:30 Bunk'd
- 18:55 Bizaardvark
- 19:20 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 19:25 Alex & Co.
- 19:50 Best Friends Whenever
- 20:15 Tsum Tsum Shorts
- 20:20 Binny And The Ghost
- 20:45 Austin & Ally
- 21:10 Jessie
- 21:35 Cracked
- 21:40 Disney The Lodge
- 22:05 Bizaardvark

- 00:00 Programmes Start At 6:00am KSA
- 07:00 Gravity Falls
- 07:25 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
- 07:50 Penn Zero: Part Time Hero
- 08:15 Milo Murphy's Law
- 08:25 Danger Mouse
- 08:40 Supa Strikas
- 09:05 Two More Eggs
- 09:10 K.C. Undercover
- 09:35 Counterfeit Cat
- 10:00 Lab Rats Elite Force
- 10:25 Lab Rats Elite Force
- 10:50 Future-Worm!
- 11:20 Pair Of Kings
- 11:45 Pair Of Kings
- 12:10 Danger Mouse
- 12:35 Supa Strikas
- 13:00 Supa Strikas
- 13:30 Gravity Falls
- 13:55 Annedroids
- 14:20 Atomic Puppet
- 14:45 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
- 15:10 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 15:15 Mighty Med
- 15:40 Kirby Buckets
- 16:05 Lab Rats
- 16:30 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
- 16:55 Right Now Kapow
- 17:25 K.C. Undercover
- 17:50 Walk The Prank
- 18:15 Mech-X4
- 18:40 Milo Murphy's Law
- 19:05 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 19:10 Gravity Falls
- 19:35 Mighty Med
- 20:00 Atomic Puppet
- 20:25 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
- 20:55 K.C. Undercover
- 21:20 Mech-X4
- 21:45 Mighty Med
- 22:10 Walk The Prank
- 22:40 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 22:45 Guardians Of The Galaxy
- 23:10 Ultimate Spider-Man
- 23:35 Boyster

Discovery Channel

- 00:30 Minnie's Bow-Toons
- 23:00 The Lion Guard
- 23:30 The Lion Guard
- 23:55 PJ Masks

Discovery Channel

- 00:30 Sacred Steel Bikes
- 01:20 Street Outlaws
- 02:10 Abandoned Engineering
- 03:00 You Have Been Warned
- 03:50 Deadliest Job Interview
- 04:40 Sacred Steel Bikes
- 05:30 Storage Hunters UK
- 06:00 How Do They Do It?
- 06:30 How Do They Do It?
- 07:00 Gold Divers
- 07:50 Street Outlaws
- 08:40 Sacred Steel Bikes
- 09:30 Treasure Quest: Snake Island
- 10:20 Storage Hunters UK
- 10:45 How Do They Do It?
- 11:10 How Do They Do It?
- 11:35 Abandoned Engineering
- 12:25 You Have Been Warned
- 13:15 Deadliest Job Interview
- 14:05 How Do They Do It?
- 14:30 Storage Hunters UK
- 14:55 Storage Hunters UK
- 15:20 Gold Rush
- 16:10 Treasure Quest: Snake Island
- 17:00 Gold Divers
- 17:50 Sacred Steel Bikes
- 18:40 Street Outlaws
- 19:30 How Do They Do It?
- 19:55 How Do They Do It?
- 20:20 Treasure Quest: Snake Island
- 21:10 Storage Hunters UK
- 21:35 Storage Hunters UK
- 22:00 What On Earth?
- 22:50 Salvage Hunters
- 23:40 Todd Sampson's Body Hack

Disney XD

- 00:00 Programmes Start At 6:00am KSA
- 07:00 Gravity Falls
- 07:25 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
- 07:50 Penn Zero: Part Time Hero
- 08:15 Milo Murphy's Law
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- 22:40 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 22:45 Guardians Of The Galaxy
- 23:10 Ultimate Spider-Man
- 23:35 Boyster

ITV HD CHOICE

- 00:15 Coronation Street
- 00:40 Coronation Street
- 01:10 The Chase
- 02:00 Emmerdale
- 02:30 Coronation Street
- 03:00 Coronation Street
- 03:30 Who's Doing The Dishes?
- 04:25 Broadchurch
- 05:20 Broadchurch
- 06:15 Coach Trip
- 06:45 Coach Trip
- 07:10 The Chase
- 08:05 Who's Doing The Dishes?
- 09:00 Broadchurch
- 10:00 Broadchurch
- 11:00 Coach Trip
- 11:30 Coach Trip
- 11:55 The Chase
- 12:50 Who's Doing The Dishes?
- 13:45 Emmerdale
- 14:15 Coronation Street
- 14:45 Coronation Street
- 15:15 The Chase
- 16:10 Who's Doing The Dishes?
- 17:00 Paul O'Grady's Animal Orphans
- 17:55 5 Star Family Reunion
- 18:50 Coach Trip
- 19:20 Coach Trip
- 19:45 Emmerdale
- 20:15 Coronation Street
- 20:45 Coronation Street
- 21:10 Who's Doing The Dishes?
- 22:00 Paul O'Grady's Animal Orphans
- 22:55 5 Star Family Reunion
- 23:50 Emmerdale

ITV HD CHOICE

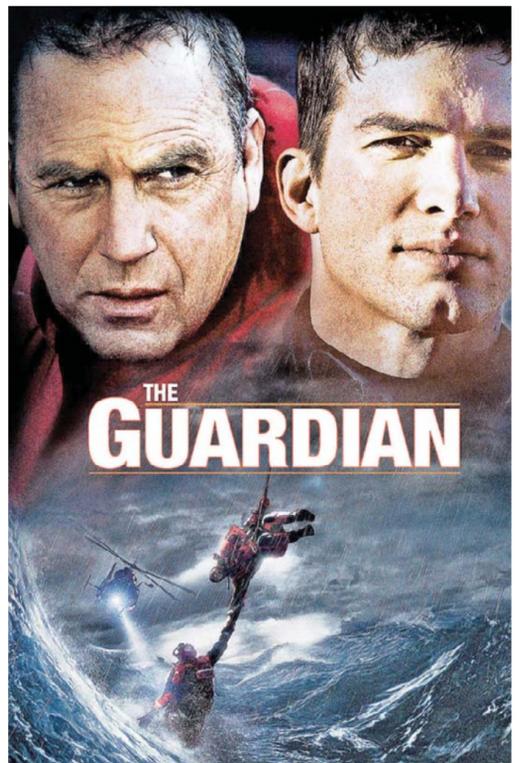
- 00:15 Coronation Street
- 00:40 Coronation Street
- 01:10 The Chase
- 02:00 Emmerdale
- 02:30 Coronation Street
- 03:00 Coronation Street
- 03:30 Who's Doing The Dishes?
- 04:25 Broadchurch
- 05:20 Broadchurch
- 06:15 Coach Trip
- 06:45 Coach Trip
- 07:10 The Chase
- 08:05 Who's Doing The Dishes?
- 09:00 Broadchurch
- 10:00 Broadchurch
- 11:00 Coach Trip
- 11:30 Coach Trip
- 11:55 The Chase
- 12:50 Who's Doing The Dishes?
- 13:45 Emmerdale
- 14:15 Coronation Street
- 14:45 Coronation Street
- 15:15 The Chase
- 16:10 Who's Doing The Dishes?
- 17:00 Paul O'Grady's Animal Orphans
- 17:55 5 Star Family Reunion
- 18:50 Coach Trip
- 19:20 Coach Trip
- 19:45 Emmerdale
- 20:15 Coronation Street
- 20:45 Coronation Street
- 21:10 Who's Doing The Dishes?
- 22:00 Paul O'Grady's Animal Orphans
- 22:55 5 Star Family Reunion
- 23:50 Emmerdale

ITV HD CHOICE

- 00:30 American Pickers
- 01:20 Britain's Bloody Crown: War Of The Roses
- 02:10 Big Easy Motors
- 02:35 Big Easy Motors
- 03:00 Forged In Fire
- 03:50 Storage Wars
- 04:15 American Pickers
- 05:05 Pawn Stars
- 05:30 Pawn Stars
- 06:00 Mountain Men
- 07:00 Ultimate Wheels
- 07:50 Duck Dynasty

ITV HD CHOICE

- 00:00 E! News
- 00:15 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
- 01:05 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
- 01:55 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
- 02:50 E! News
- 03:50 Celebrity Style Story
- 04:20 Celebrity Style Story
- 04:50 Mariah's World
- 05:40 Mariah's World
- 06:30 Celebrity Style Story
- 07:00 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
- 07:55 E! News
- 08:10 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry



THE GUARDIAN ON OSN MOVIES HD

- 08:15 Duck Dynasty
- 08:40 Counting Cars
- 09:05 Counting Cars
- 09:30 Pawn Stars
- 09:55 Pawn Stars
- 10:20 Storage Wars
- 10:45 Storage Wars
- 11:10 American Pickers
- 12:00 Alone
- 12:50 Duck Dynasty
- 13:15 Duck Dynasty
- 13:40 Swap People
- 14:30 Ax Men
- 15:20 Mountain Men
- 16:10 Ultimate Wheels
- 17:00 Storage Wars
- 17:25 Storage Wars
- 17:50 Pawn Stars
- 18:15 Pawn Stars
- 18:40 Forged In Fire
- 19:30 Big Easy Motors
- 19:55 Big Easy Motors
- 20:20 Mountain Men
- 21:10 American Pickers
- 22:00 Billion Dollar Wreck
- 22:50 Gold Hunters: Legend Of The Superstition...
- 23:40 Time Team

OSN MOVIES HD FAMILY

- 01:30 Black Beauty
- 03:00 The Amazing Wizard Of Paws
- 04:45 Chicken Little
- 06:15 Diary Of A Wimpy Kid: Rodrick Rules
- 08:00 Black Beauty
- 09:30 Chicken Little
- 11:00 Looney Tunes: Rabbit's Run
- 12:30 Stitch! The Movie
- 13:45 The Amazing Wizard Of Paws
- 15:30 Looney Tunes: Rabbit's Run
- 16:45 Lilo & Stitch 2
- 18:00 The Muppets
- 19:45 Confessions Of A Teenage Drama Queen
- 21:15 Sky High
- 23:00 Lilo & Stitch 2

OSN MOVIES HD COMEDY

- 01:00 People Places Things
- 02:30 Bill
- 04:15 All About Christmas Eve
- 05:45 Confessions Of A Shopaholic
- 07:30 It Boy
- 09:00 All About Christmas Eve
- 11:00 Confessions Of A Shopaholic
- 13:00 It Boy
- 15:00 Bill & Ted's Bogus Journey
- 17:00 Honeymooners
- 19:00 Life
- 21:00 Deuce Bigalow: Male Gigolo
- 23:00 Top Five

OSN MOVIES HD FESTIVAL

- 01:00 Suite Francaise
- 03:00 Rio, I Love You
- 04:45 Grand Central
- 06:30 2001: A Space Odyssey
- 09:00 The Girl
- 10:45 Ordinary People
- 13:00 Fast Girls
- 15:00 The End Of The Tour
- 17:00 Manny
- 18:45 Selma
- 21:00 A Little Chaos
- 23:00 Carrington

OSN MOVIES HD KIDS

- 01:00 Alpha Dogz: Pups United
- 02:30 Mune
- 04:00 Worms
- 05:30 Oops Noah Is Gone
- 07:00 Ploddy Police Car On The Case
- 08:15 Three Wishes
- 10:15 Lego: Scooby Doo Haunted Hollywood
- 11:45 Alpha Dogz: Pups United
- 13:15 Mune
- 14:45 Daddy I'm A Zombie
- 15:00 Fish Tank Kings
- 16:15 Lego: Scooby Doo Haunted Hollywood
- 17:45 Memory Loss
- 19:15 Frog Kingdom
- 20:45 Daddy I'm A Zombie
- 22:15 Three Wishes

OSN MOVIES HD

- 01:00 Swordfish
- 03:00 127 Hours
- 05:00 While You Were Sleeping
- 06:45 People Like Us
- 09:00 Sherlock Holmes
- 11:15 127 Hours
- 13:00 While You Were Sleeping
- 14:45 Eight Men Out
- 16:45 Gulliver's Travels
- 18:15 The Guardian
- 20:45 The Legend Of Zorro
- 23:00 The Walk
- Discovery Science HD
- 00:40 Mythbusters



FAST & FURIOUS ON OSN MOVIES ACTION

- 04:10 The Kettering Incident
- 05:05 Doctors
- 05:35 Eastenders
- 06:05 The Coroner
- 07:00 Death In Paradise
- 07:55 Doctors
- 08:25 Eastenders
- 08:55 Dickensian
- 09:45 The Coroner
- 10:40 Death In Paradise
- 11:35 Doctors
- 12:05 Eastenders
- 12:40 Dickensian
- 13:30 The Coroner
- 14:25 Death In Paradise
- 15:20 Doctors
- 15:50 Eastenders
- 16:20 Dickensian
- 17:15 The Coroner
- 18:10 Death In Paradise
- 19:05 Doctors
- 19:35 Eastenders
- 20:05 Dickensian
- 21:00 Holly City
- 22:00 Benidorm
- 22:50 I Want My Wife Back
- 23:20 Big School
- 23:50 Inside No. 9

crime & investigation network

- 00:00 Paranormal State
- 00:30 Paranormal State
- 01:00 Leah Remini: Scientology And The Aftermath
- 02:00 Paranormal State
- 02:30 Paranormal State
- 03:00 My Crazy Ex
- 04:00 Paranormal State
- 04:30 Paranormal State
- 05:00 Leah Remini: Scientology And The Aftermath
- 06:00 Paranormal State
- 06:30 Paranormal State
- 07:00 My Crazy Ex
- 08:00 My Crazy Ex
- 09:00 Evil Up Close
- 10:00 Nightmare In Suburbia
- 11:00 Homicide Hunter
- 12:00 The First 48
- 13:00 The First 48
- 14:00 My Crazy Ex
- 15:00 Evil Up Close
- 16:00 Homicide Hunter
- 17:00 Fritz By Fred Dinenage
- 18:00 The First 48
- 19:00 The First 48
- 20:00 Evil Up Close
- 21:00 Nightmare In Suburbia
- 22:00 Homicide Hunter
- 23:00 Homicide Hunter

COMEDY CENTRAL

- 00:15 Tosh.0
- 00:40 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
- 01:05 South Park
- 01:30 South Park
- 01:55 South Park
- 02:20 Ugly Americans

ID X

- 00:40 Your Worst Nightmare
- 01:30 True Nightmares
- 02:20 Betrayed
- 03:10 Murder Chose Me
- 04:00 Your Worst Nightmare
- 04:48 I Almost Got Away With It
- 05:36 Beauty Queen Murders
- 06:24 Swamp Murders
- 07:12 I'd Kill For You
- 08:00 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
- 08:25 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
- 08:50 I Almost Got Away With It
- 09:40 Beauty Queen Murders
- 10:30 Swamp Murders
- 11:20 I'd Kill For You
- 12:10 Killer Instinct With Chris Hansen
- 13:00 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
- 13:50 I Almost Got Away With It
- 14:40 Beauty Queen Murders
- 15:30 Swamp Murders
- 16:20 I'd Kill For You
- 17:10 Evil Online
- 18:00 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
- 18:25 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
- 18:50 I Almost Got Away With It
- 19:40 Beauty Queen Murders
- 20:30 Swamp Murders
- 21:20 I'd Kill For You
- 22:10 Murder Comes To Town
- 23:00 Murder Chose Me
- 23:50 Murder Book

Disney Channel HD

- 00:10 Hank Zipzer
- 00:35 Binny And The Ghost
- 01:00 Binny And The Ghost
- 01:25 Hank Zipzer

Disney Junior

- 00:20 Henry Hugglemonster
- 00:35 The Hive
- 04:20 Loopdidoo
- 01:00 Henry Hugglemonster
- 01:15 Calimero
- 01:30 Art Attack
- 01:55 Zou
- 02:05 Loopdidoo
- 02:20 Henry Hugglemonster
- 02:35 Calimero
- 02:50 Zou
- 03:05 Art Attack
- 03:30 The Hive
- 03:40 Loopdidoo
- 03:55 Henry Hugglemonster
- 04:10 Art Attack
- 04:35 Loopdidoo
- 04:50 Calimero
- 05:05 Art Attack
- 05:30 Henry Hugglemonster
- 05:45 Zou
- 06:00 Art Attack
- 06:30 Henry Hugglemonster
- 06:45 Loopdidoo
- 07:00 Zou
- 07:15 Calimero
- 07:30 Loopdidoo
- 07:45 Henry Hugglemonster
- 08:00 My Friends Tigger & Pooh
- 08:25 Sofia The First
- 08:50 The Lion Guard
- 09:15 PJ Masks
- 09:35 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 10:05 Goldie & Bear
- 10:35 The Lion Guard
- 11:05 Sofia The First
- 11:35 Doc McStuffins
- 12:05 My Friends Tigger & Pooh
- 12:35 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
- 13:05 Gummi Bears
- 13:35 Miles From Tomorrow
- 14:05 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
- 14:35 PJ Masks
- 15:00 My Friends Tigger & Pooh
- 15:30 The Lion Guard
- 16:00 Sofia The First
- 16:30 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 16:55 Sofia The First
- 17:20 My Friends Tigger & Pooh
- 17:50 The Adventures Of The Disney Fairies
- 18:15 Sofia The First
- 18:40 Doc McStuffins
- 19:05 PJ Masks
- 19:35 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
- 20:05 Sofia The First
- 20:35 Sofia The First
- 21:05 Goldie & Bear
- 21:35 My Friends Tigger & Pooh
- 22:00 Gummi Bears
- 22:25 The Adventures Of The Disney Fairies



FAST GIRLS ON OSN MOVIES FESTIVAL

CLASSIFIEDS

Kuwait Times
 Now you can browse
www.kuwaittimes.net
 e-mail: info@kuwaittimes.net



Kuwait CINEMA

SHARQIA-1	Time	Movie	Time	Movie
KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	11:30 AM	A FAMILY MAN	3:00 PM	A FAMILY MAN
KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	2:15 PM	A FAMILY MAN	5:15 PM	A FAMILY MAN
A FAMILY MAN	4:45 PM	A FAMILY MAN	7:30 PM	A FAMILY MAN
A FAMILY MAN	7:00 PM	A FAMILY MAN	9:45 PM	A FAMILY MAN
KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	9:15 PM	FAST & FURIOUS 8	12:05 AM	FAST & FURIOUS 8
KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	11:45 PM			
FANAR-2				
HOWARD LOVECRAFT & THE FROZEN KINGDOM	1:15 PM	HOWARD LOVECRAFT & THE FROZEN KINGDOM	3:00 PM	HOWARD LOVECRAFT & THE FROZEN KINGDOM
HOWARD LOVECRAFT & THE FROZEN KINGDOM	3:00 PM	HOWARD LOVECRAFT & THE FROZEN KINGDOM	5:00 PM	HOWARD LOVECRAFT & THE FROZEN KINGDOM
HOWARD LOVECRAFT & THE FROZEN KINGDOM	5:00 PM	HOWARD LOVECRAFT & THE FROZEN KINGDOM	7:00 PM	HOWARD LOVECRAFT & THE FROZEN KINGDOM
GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY VOL. 2	8:45 PM	GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY VOL. 2	11:15 PM	GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY VOL. 2
FANAR-3				
KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	12:30 PM	SARKAR 3 - Hindi	3:00 PM	SARKAR 3 - Hindi
SARKAR 3 - Hindi	3:00 PM	BAAHUBALI 2: The Conclusion - Hindi	5:30 PM	SARKAR 3 - Hindi
SARKAR 3 - Hindi	5:30 PM	SARKAR 3 - Hindi	8:45 PM	SARKAR 3 - Hindi
KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	11:30 PM	KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	12:30 AM	KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD
FANAR-4				
KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	12:00 PM	KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	2:30 PM	KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD
KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	2:30 PM	KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	5:00 PM	KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD
KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	5:00 PM	KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	7:30 PM	KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD
KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	7:30 PM	KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	10:00 PM	KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD
KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	10:00 PM	KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	12:30 AM	KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD
FANAR-5				
YOU MIN AL AYAM	12:00 PM	YOU MIN AL AYAM	2:00 PM	YOU MIN AL AYAM
YOU MIN AL AYAM	2:00 PM	THE BOSS BABY	4:00 PM	YOU MIN AL AYAM
THE BOSS BABY	4:00 PM	YOU MIN AL AYAM	6:00 PM	YOU MIN AL AYAM
YOU MIN AL AYAM	6:00 PM	YOU MIN AL AYAM	7:45 PM	YOU MIN AL AYAM
YOU MIN AL AYAM	7:45 PM	YOU MIN AL AYAM	9:30 PM	YOU MIN AL AYAM
YOU MIN AL AYAM	9:30 PM	YOU MIN AL AYAM	11:30 PM	YOU MIN AL AYAM
YOU MIN AL AYAM	11:30 PM	YOU MIN AL AYAM	1:15 AM	YOU MIN AL AYAM
MARINA-1				
A FAMILY MAN	11:45 AM	HOWARD LOVECRAFT & THE FROZEN KINGDOM	2:00 PM	HOWARD LOVECRAFT & THE FROZEN KINGDOM
HOWARD LOVECRAFT & THE FROZEN KINGDOM	2:00 PM	HOWARD LOVECRAFT & THE FROZEN KINGDOM	4:00 PM	HOWARD LOVECRAFT & THE FROZEN KINGDOM
HOWARD LOVECRAFT & THE FROZEN KINGDOM	4:00 PM	HOWARD LOVECRAFT & THE FROZEN KINGDOM	6:00 PM	HOWARD LOVECRAFT & THE FROZEN KINGDOM
A FAMILY MAN	6:00 PM	A FAMILY MAN	8:00 PM	A FAMILY MAN
A FAMILY MAN	8:00 PM	A FAMILY MAN	10:15 PM	A FAMILY MAN
A FAMILY MAN	10:15 PM	A FAMILY MAN	12:30 AM	A FAMILY MAN
MARINA-2				
KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	12:30 PM	KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	3:00 PM	KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD
KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	3:00 PM	THE BOSS BABY	5:30 PM	KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD
THE BOSS BABY	5:30 PM	GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY VOL. 2	7:30 PM	GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY VOL. 2
GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY VOL. 2	7:30 PM	GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY VOL. 2	10:00 PM	GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY VOL. 2
KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	10:00 PM	KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	12:30 AM	KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD
MUHALAB-1				
KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	11:30 AM	KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	2:00 PM	KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD
KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	2:00 PM	KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	4:30 PM	KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD
KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	4:30 PM	RADHA - Telugu	4:30 PM	RADHA - Telugu
RADHA - Telugu	4:30 PM	RADHA - Telugu	7:15 PM	RADHA - Telugu
SARKAR 3 - Hindi	7:15 PM	SARKAR 3 - Hindi	10:00 PM	SARKAR 3 - Hindi
RADHA - Telugu	10:00 PM	KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	10:00 PM	KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD
KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	10:00 PM	NO THU-FRI-MON	12:30 AM	KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD
KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	12:30 AM			
MUHALAB-2				
A FAMILY MAN	1:00 PM	HOWARD LOVECRAFT & THE FROZEN KINGDOM	3:15 PM	HOWARD LOVECRAFT & THE FROZEN KINGDOM
HOWARD LOVECRAFT & THE FROZEN KINGDOM	3:15 PM	HOWARD LOVECRAFT & THE FROZEN KINGDOM	5:15 PM	HOWARD LOVECRAFT & THE FROZEN KINGDOM
HOWARD LOVECRAFT & THE FROZEN KINGDOM	5:15 PM	A FAMILY MAN	7:15 PM	A FAMILY MAN
A FAMILY MAN	7:15 PM	GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY VOL. 2	9:30 PM	GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY VOL. 2
GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY VOL. 2	9:30 PM	A FAMILY MAN	12:05 AM	A FAMILY MAN
A FAMILY MAN	12:05 AM			
MUHALAB-3				
KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	1:15 PM	KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	3:45 PM	KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD
KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	3:45 PM	KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	6:30 PM	KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD
KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	6:30 PM	KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	9:00 PM	KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD
KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	9:00 PM	KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	11:30 PM	KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD
KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	11:30 PM			
FANAR-1				
A FAMILY MAN	12:45 PM			

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EMERGENCY 112

Automated enquiry about the Civil ID card is **1889988**

PRAYER TIMINGS

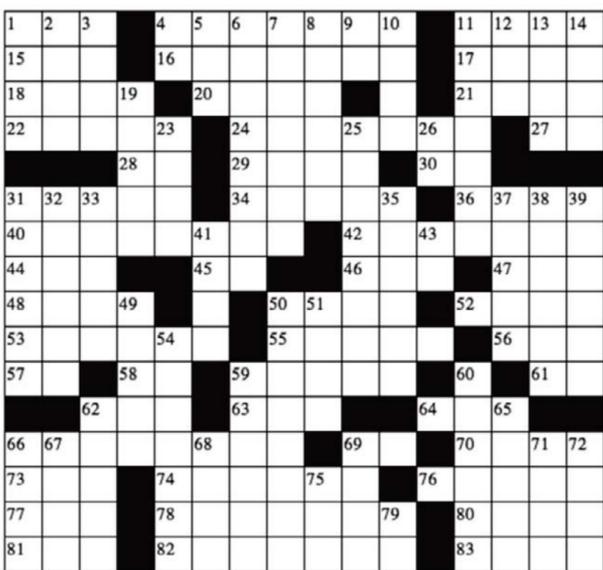
Fajr: **03:30**
Shorook: **04:59**
Duhr: **11:44**
Asr: **15:20**
Maghrib: **18:30**
Isha: **19:56**

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

Flight Schedule

Arrival Flights on Thursday 11/5/2017				Departure Flights on Thursday 11/5/2017			
Airlines	Fit	Route	Time	Airlines	Fit	Route	Time
MSC	501	Alexandria	00:05	JZR	786	Riyadh	13:10
THY	772	Istanbul	00:10	JZR	176	Dubai	13:10
JZR	553	Alexandria	00:15	SAW	708	KAC	13:30
KAC	102	London	00:15	JZR	124	Bahrain	13:30
SVA	502	Jeddah	00:20	THY	767	Istanbul	13:45
SVA	514	Riyadh	00:25	FEQ	932	Alexandria	13:55
KAC	786	Jeddah	00:30	MSR	611	Cairo	14:00
MSC	411	Asyut	00:30	KAC	413	Bangkok	14:05
JZR	267	Beirut	00:35	AXB	394	Kozhikode	14:10
KAC	504	Beirut	00:45	UAE	872	Dubai	14:15
DLH	635	Doha	01:00	KNE	382	Taif	15:00
JZR	539	Cairo	01:25	GFA	222	Bahrain	15:00
SAI	441	Lahore	01:30	KAC	673	Dubai	15:00
UAE	853	Dubai	01:40	FDB	060	Dubai	15:05
RJA	642	Amman	01:45	QTR	1079	Doha	15:15
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	01:50	KAC	563	Amman	15:40
KKK	6506	Istanbul	01:55	SVA	501	Jeddah	15:45
AXB	395	Kozhikode	02:00	JZR	188	Dubai	15:50
KLM	446	Bahrain	02:05	KAC	775	Riyadh	15:50
QTR	1086	Doha	02:05	KNE	530	Jeddah	15:55
PGT	830	Istanbul	02:10	KAC	661	Abu Dhabi	15:55
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:15	KAC	743	Dammam	16:00
KAC	418	Manila	02:50	KAC	619	Doha	16:00
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05	OMA	646	Muscat	16:10
MSR	606	Luxor	03:05	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:15
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:10	ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
KAC	382	Delhi	03:15	KAC	615	Bahrain	16:30
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	SAW	706	Damascus	16:50
FDB	069	Dubai	03:15	RJA	641	Amman	16:55
QTR	1076	Doha	03:40	KAC	675	Dubai	17:00
KAC	1544	Cairo	03:50	FDB	052	Dubai	17:05
LMU	510	Cairo	04:00	JZR	266	Beirut	17:05
UAE	873	Dubai	04:15	KAC	503	Beirut	17:15
GEO	170	Bahrain	04:35	QTR	1073	Doha	17:25
KAC	358	Kochi	04:50	KNE	532	Jeddah	17:25
FEQ	931	Alexandria	05:00	JZR	240	Amman	17:30
THY	770	Istanbul	05:05	UAE	858	Dubai	17:40
KAC	344	Chennai	05:30	KAC	357	Kochi	17:40
JZR	529	Asyut	05:35	NIA	362	Alexandria	17:50
KAC	362	Colombo	05:50	KAC	381	Delhi	17:50
BAW	157	London	06:05	JZR	512	Sharm el-Sheikh	18:00
KAC	204	Lahore	06:20	KAC	343	Chennai	18:00
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:35	KAC	283	Dhaka	18:00
QTR	8511	Doha	06:35	SVA	511	Riyadh	18:15
KAC	206	Islamabad	06:40	GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
KAC	302	Mumbai	06:55	JZR	184	Dubai	18:20
KAC	156	Istanbul	07:05	JZR	538	Cairo	18:35
JZR	503	Luxor	07:25	KAC	785	Jeddah	18:45
KAC	354	Bangalore	07:50	QTR	1081	Doha	19:15
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	JZR	552	Alexandria	19:20
KAC	384	Delhi	08:00	KAC	345	Ahmedabad	19:20
AAG	144	Sharjah	08:00	MSR	621	Cairo	19:30
KAC	332	Trivandrum	08:05	GFA	218	Bahrain	19:50
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25	FDB	064	Dubai	19:50
IRA	673	Ahwaz	08:35	ABY	124	Sharjah	20:00
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:55	FDB	058	Dubai	20:30
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	UAE	876	Dubai	20:35
IRA	667	Esfahan	09:05	JAI	571	Delhi	20:35
QTR	1070	Doha	09:20	KAC	353	Bangalore	20:55
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	DLH	634	Doha	21:00
SVA	512	Riyadh	10:00	OMA	648	Muscat	21:05
FDK	803	Damascus	10:00	KNE	232	Riyadh	21:10
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	MEA	403	Beirut	21:15
KAC	774	Riyadh	10:45	KAC	1543	Cairo	21:30
MEA	404	Beirut	10:55	KAC	301	Mumbai	21:40
PAL	668	Manila	11:00	QTR	1089	Doha	21:45
SYR	341	Damascus	11:00	KAC	203	Lahore	21:45
JZR	561	Sohag	11:10	DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50
KAC	614	Bahrain	11:15	ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	22:00
MSC	403	Asyut	11:15	KAC	155	Istanbul	22:15
RBG	553	Alexandria	11:30	ALK	230	Colombo	22:20
JZR	165	Dubai	11:50	KLM	445	Bahrain	22:25
SAW	701	Damascus	12:30	FDB	8054	Dubai	22:25
JZR	239	Amman	12:40	UAE	860	Dubai	22:35
UAE	871	Dubai	12:45	KAC	383	Delhi	22:35
THY	766	Istanbul	12:50	GFA	220	Bahrain	22:50
FEQ	933	Sohag	12:55	ETD	310	Abu Dhabi	23:00
				NIA	162	Cairo	23:10
				KAC	783	Jeddah	23:10
				QTR	1083	Doha	23:20

CROSSWORD 1604



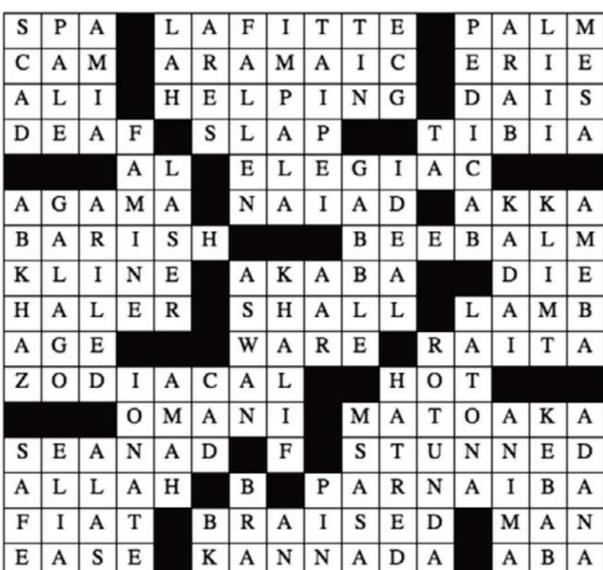
ACROSS

1. The 23rd letter of the Hebrew alphabet.
4. Any piece of work that is undertaken or attempted.
11. A metabolic acid found in yeast and liver cells.
15. A sweetened beverage of diluted fruit juice.
16. The act of competing as for profit or a prize.
17. Toward the mouth or oral region.
18. Used as a Hindi courtesy title.
20. Area around the altar of a church for the clergy and choir.
21. A island in the Netherlands Antilles that is the top of an extinct volcano.
22. A region of complete shadow resulting from total obstruction of light.
24. Relation of mutual understanding or trust and agreement between people.
27. A public promotion of some product or service.
28. A radioactive element of the actinide series.
29. A city in Tuscany.
30. The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
31. Departing or being caused to depart from the true vertical or horizontal.
34. Sour or bitter in taste.
36. A particular geographical region of indefinite boundary (usually serving some special purpose or distinguished by its people or culture or geography).
40. The capital of the Democratic Republic of the Congo on the Congo river opposite Brazzaville.
42. Continually complaining or faultfinding.
44. A periodic paperback publication.
45. A state in midwestern United States.
46. Goddess of criminal rashness and its punishment.
47. United States liquid unit equal to 4 quarts or 3.785 liters.
48. A sign of something about to happen.
52. Footwear usually with wooden soles.
53. A city in southern Texas on the Rio Grande.
55. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
56. Being two more than fifty.
57. A highly unstable radioactive element (the heaviest of the halogen series).
58. A rare polyvalent metallic element of the platinum group.
61. A white metallic element that burns with a brilliant light.
63. (Judaism) Sacred chest where the ancient Hebrews kept the two tablets containing the Ten Commandments.
64. A plant hormone promoting elongation of stems and roots.
66. A desert in southwestern Africa - largely Botswana.
70. Showing or causing joy and pleasure.
73. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
74. A port city in southwestern Iran.
76. The capital and largest city of Bangladesh.
77. (British) A waterproof raincoat made of rubberized fabric.
78. Any of various aromatic herbs of the genus Monarda.
80. One of a pair of long straps (usually connected to the bit or the headpiece) used to control a horse.
81. A unit of surface area equal to 100 square meters.
82. An annually elected magistrate of the ancient Roman Republic.
83. An informal term for a father.

DOWN

1. Forbidden to profane use especially in South Pacific islands.
2. (Old Testament) In Judeo-Christian mythology.
3. English writer and a central member of the Fabian Society (1858-1943).
4. A soft yellowish-white trivalent metallic element of the rare earth group.
5. Support resembling the rib of an animal.
6. Bridge formed by the upper level of a crossing of two highways at different levels.
7. A country on the island of Jamaica.
8. Pass by, as of time.
9. A hard brittle blue-white multivalent metallic element.
10. A mistake in printed matter resulting from mechanical failures of some kind.
11. Letter carrier's shoulder bag.
12. A constellation in the southern hemisphere near Telescopium and Norma.
13. A small cake leavened with yeast.
14. (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.
19. A mountain range in western Russia extending from the arctic to the Caspian Sea.
23. A hormone produced by the anterior pituitary gland that stimulates the adrenal cortex.
25. A river in northeastern Brazil that flows generally northward to the Atlantic Ocean.
26. An intensely radioactive metallic element that occurs in minute amounts in uranium ores.
32. (Akkadian) Mother of the gods and consort of Apsu.
33. A member of western Finnish people formerly living in the Baltic province where Saint Petersburg was built.
35. The peninsula and island in the Philippines where Japanese forces besieged American forces in World War II.
37. The brightest star in Orion.
38. Related on the mother's side.
39. (Greek mythology) One of the three Graces.
41. A town and port in northwestern Israel in the eastern Mediterranean.
43. A brittle gray crystalline element that is a semiconducting metalloid (resembling silicon) used in transistors.
49. Emperor of Rome who introduced a degree of freedom after the repressive reign of Domitian.
50. Bubble shells.
51. (often followed by 'of') A large number or amount or extent.
54. French artist who immigrated to the United States.
59. A South American river.
60. British writer noted for romantic adventure novels (1856-1925).
62. A point located with respect to surface features of some region.
65. Genus of erect herbs of the Middle East having showy flowers.
67. Any culture medium that uses agar as the gelling agent.
68. Little known Kamarupan languages.
69. (prefix) Within.
71. Harsh or corrosive in tone.
72. (Irish) Mother of the Tuatha De Danann.
75. The products of human creativity.
79. A colorless and odorless inert gas.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

New ideas and new realizations happen when you are either listening to the radio or reading the paper today; perhaps an internet site is informative. You gain an important piece of information that helps you form an opinion on where or how you form your goals. Educational projects require much study and may also involve travel. You may be experiencing a bit of a crunch as your career direction and path to success square off against your more personal interest. This may be a real test for you. Work within your limitations instead of feeling hemmed in by them. Be protective of your personal time this evening. You could need more rest than usual this week and you will be wise to just kick back and enjoy a quiet evening.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

On the way in to work this morning the weather may have your attention. Either the day is producing lots of color or the clouds gather into imagined animals... You must have spring fever. Many times you feel that weather is manipulated by some mechanical being and there are definite feelings that you could be right. During one of your breaks today, the subject is fun to deliberate. You have a good attitude in the workplace and should see some positive results from your work contribution. Advancement at work may be a bit slow but have patience because the advancements are improving for many. Consider submitting some of your creative works for others to enjoy. Perhaps a book of poems or other subjects you enjoy.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Status and security goals need rethinking in order to take advantage of changing situations in your life. Your career is a focus for this, but your personal life is also involved. Finances, purchases, investments and credit in particular could stand some clear thinking. Getting in over your head can happen before you know it, so keep an eye on the bottom line. Your mind may be very clear as your thoughts are brought to a sharp focus. It is easy to organize your thoughts, and communication of all kinds is encouraged. This is a good time to consider taking a continuing education class and encouraging others to do the same. You have a natural sense for communicating with others, especially the young. It is important for you to teach young people.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Today is a workday that calls on you to work quickly. This time there may not be a lot of accuracy but you are careful and you will probably manage to meet the difficult deadlines. Your support system-like your family, home and those who give you nourishment-becomes more secure at this time. They will encourage you in reaching your deadline. Finally, this afternoon, you concentrate on your environment. You may have insights regarding your living situation or life circumstances. Others value you for your ability to move forward with new ideas and technology. You are in top form when it comes to mental activity. Being on the go and staying aware of business trends make you feel in touch. Romance is possible this evening.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

There is an urge to probe and examine many of your goals these days and you may find yourself working through some strong internal changes. By looking at these changes one at a time, you will be able to formulate a few future plans. By trying to create change all at once, you could become too oppressive to yourself and others. Give your loved ones a chance-they want to give you encouragement. Practical ideas are the ones that make the most sense now-putting them to good use may become a new focus for you. Material things are foremost on your mind in many respects; an emphasis on the real rather than the ideal. This is a time when the new and unexpected may figure in your living situation or surroundings. Good surprises are easy to find.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Fate sends opportunity your way, especially if you listen to your instincts and give your natural sense of curiosity a free rein. Travel and education can help uncover some of the answers that will give you the advantage you seek. Mass communications can be financially rewarding in some way-think about advertising, broadcasting, publishing, etc. Decisive action is the main order of business for now. Your response to change and how you maintain your independence is a major focus. Your ability to solve problems in a relationship is highly important. A new career opportunity is possible and could come about suddenly. Outer circumstances are favorable and it should be easy for you to push forward in projects and in all aspects of your life.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

There is a heavy sense of responsibility that is a part of today and you do your best to complete all the tasks with a bit of time left over for yourself. Good eye-hand coordination and a sustained effort make almost any task run well. Although it could be easy to overdo or strain, you accomplish one thing at a time. Do not forget to look at life's little joys today and make it a point to laugh. You may feel like exercising or getting out and enjoying the out-of-doors this afternoon. Let yourself dream this evening. These days do not come too often-so do not ignore this opportunity to let your imagination loose. Perhaps a good book or movie will take on that more-than-real dimension. Music should help to lull you to sleep this evening.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Legal controversy is best avoided now, if at all possible. Educational plans may need changing. You may be thinking that these plans do not suit you as well as you would like. You may not want to be a veterinarian-perhaps you want a more people-oriented profession, like reporting. There are lots of changes you might consider now. Anything connected with publishing, advertising or broadcasting gives you the upper hand. Getting your point across to others and understanding what people really mean when they talk with you are your strong points. This is something to think about when you stop to consider future job positions. Progressive people, groups and concepts play an important role in your life now.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

This is a time to settle down to that career you really like. Your career could assume a much more determined and solid form. Your organizational abilities and sense of responsibility will be what guides you and proves successful. You are making positive progress everywhere! You will be concentrating on bringing together the gains you have made. After work this afternoon there is not only a desire for outside activities, but plenty of opportunities as well. A wonderful spring afternoon can be enjoyed while bike riding through the neighborhood. Being more closely involved with another person may well become your highest priority. Marriage, contracts and partnerships are seen as keys to happiness and there are plenty of lessons to learn as well.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Good things are attracted to you this day. Your experiences will be out of the ordinary and you will likely feel more generous than usual. Great opportunities may emerge in work affairs. This is a period when you take your work more seriously than usual. A lot of energy goes into getting things scheduled and organized. The nail that sticks up becomes secured. Your sensitivity to others tends to delude you-perhaps encouraging you to misplace your affections. A volunteer organization has your attention this afternoon. You may be giving someone your advice and counsel regarding very personal and emotional issues. You are able to cut through the red tape and get at what is beneath and behind most problems. Prop your feet up and relax.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

You can improve just about all areas of your life this month. Energies are working in your favor-this is a time for decision and action. A change in your lifestyle is likely resulting from some recent changes in your environment. You want to shape events now-not be shaped by them! The mood for the day is getting down to business, clearing away old projects and solving business problems. Fresh challenges and initiatives enhance your enthusiasm. Away with the old and on to the new-let nothing stand between you and your objective! A friend that is easy to talk with may give you a great deal of encouragement and help you gain a focus regarding a financial investment. This evening you direct your attention to pursuits that involve loved ones.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Communication levels are high and important information can be exchanged today. You may not appreciate the emotional energy of someone you meet, however. He or she could appear aggressive or pushy. You could dislike the way a situation feels at the gut level. Push forward with your own responsibilities. Real insight into your inner workings or psychology could surface-and in a manageable form. Your own resources and emotions are accentuated. You look forward to an evening with your sweetheart. Refinement and relationships are the keys to emotional satisfaction now. Harmony and beauty are deeply satisfying and you will do anything to keep it that way. Marriage and other partnerships could be a key arena for this.

WORD SEARCH

Australia

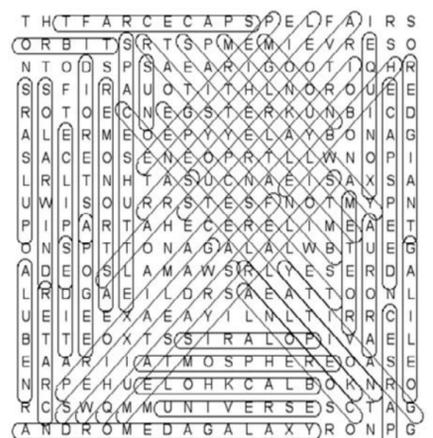
Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining 49 letters spell a secret message.



- | | | | |
|--------------|------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| ADELAIDE | DIDGERIDOO | MARSUPIALS | QUEENSLAND |
| AUSSIE | DINGO | MELBOURNE | RAINFORESTS |
| BEACHES | DOWN UNDER | MONARCHY | RUSSELL CROWE |
| BOOMERANG | EMUS | NEW SOUTH WALES | SEAFOOD |
| BRISBANE | EUCALYPTUS TREES | NICOLE KIDMAN | SHRIMP |
| CANBERRA | HUGH JACKMAN | OCEANS | SURFING |
| COMMONWEALTH | KANGAROO | OUTBACK | SYDNEY |
| CONTINENT | KEITH URBAN | PARLIAMENT | TASMANIA |
| CORAL SEA | KOALA | PERTH | VEGEMITE |
| CROCODILES | KOOKABURRA | PLATYPUS | VICTORIA |
| DESERTS | KYLIE MINOGUE | PRIME MINISTER | WOMBAT |

Yesterday's Solution

Astronomy



- | | | | |
|------------------|------------|------------------|---------------|
| ANDROMEDA GALAXY | DEEP SPACE | MOON | SOLAR SYSTEM |
| APOGEE | ECLIPSE | NEBULA | SOLAR WIND |
| ASTEROID | EQUINOX | ORBIT | SPACE SHUTTLE |
| ASTRONOMER | GALAXIES | PARSEC | SPACECRAFT |
| ATMOSPHERE | GALILEO | PERIGEE | STARS |
| AURORA | GRAVITY | POLARIS | SUN |
| BINARY STAR | HUBBLE | PROXIMA CENTAURI | SUPERNOVA |
| BLACK HOLE | KEPLER | PULSARS | TELESCOPE |
| CONSTELLATION | LIGHT YEAR | QUASARS | TIDES |
| CORONA | METEOR | RED GIANT | UNIVERSE |
| CRATER | MILKY WAY | SATELLITE | WHITE DWARF |

Hidden sentence: THE FIRST PERSON TO SET FOOT ON THE MOON WAS NEIL ARMSTRONG

Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



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

Hospitals

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

Clinics

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



PHARMACIES ON 24 HRS DUTY

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

INTERNATIONAL CALLS



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

STATE OF KUWAIT DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



Tel: (+965) 161 Ext: 2627 - 2630
Fax: (+965) 24348714
www.met.gov.kw

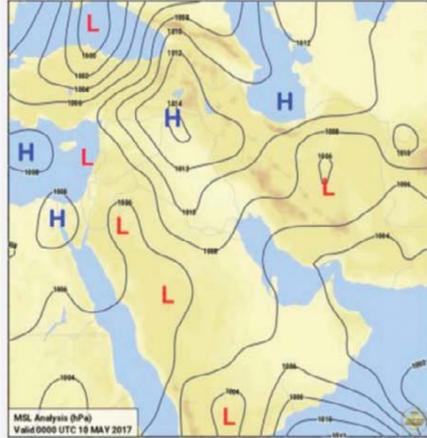
Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

Issued 10/05/2017-07:00 LT UTC +3hr

Max Temperature 42 °C

By Day : Hot with light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 15 - 38 km/h
By Night : Fair with light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 10 - 30 km/h

SFC. CHART



Four-Day Forecast

	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Expected Weather	hot	hot + clouds later+rain	hot + scattered clouds	hot
Min Temp °C	28	29	28	27
Max Temp °C	43	42	40	40
Wind Direction	north westerly to light variable	variable wind changing to light to moderate south easterly	north westerly changing to south easterly	north westerly to light variable
Wind Speed km/h	08 - 28	08 - 30	12 - 35	12 - 35

All times are local time (GMT+3) unless otherwise stated

Warnings & Weather Watches

no warnings or weather watches

Kuwait Forecast

Station	MIN °C	REC	Max °C	EXP
KUWAIT CITY	30		41	
KUWAIT AIRPORT	28		42	
ABDALLY	25		42	
BUBYAN	26		41	
JAHRA	30		42	
FAILAKA ISLAND	27		40	
SALMIYAH	29		35	
AHMADI	31		35	
JAL ALIYAH	26		42	
QAROH ISLAND	26		32	
UMM AL-MARADEM	27		32	
NUWASIB	26		37	
WAFRA	26		41	
SALMY	25		40	
MUTRIBA	26		42	

Recorded Yesterday at Kuwait Airport

Max Temp (°C)	41
Min Temp (°C)	26
Max Rel Hum (%)	64
Min Rel Hum (%)	13
Max Wind Speed (km/h) and Direction	64 N
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR	.4 mm

Sunrise	04:59
Sunset	18:30

Prayer Times

Fajr	03:31
Sunrise	04:59
Zuhr	11:44
Asr	15:20
Sunset	18:30
Isha	19:55



PRIVATE CLINICS

Ophthalmologists	
Dr. Abdallah Al-Mansoor	25622444
Dr. Samy Al-Rabeea	25752222
Dr. Masoma Habeeb	25321171
Dr. Mubarak Al-Ajmy	25739999
Dr. Mohsen Abel	25757700
Dr. Adnan Hasan Alwayl	25732223
Dr. Abdallah Al-Baghly	25732223
Ear, Nose & Throat (ENT)	
Dr. Ahmed Fouad Mouner	24555050 Ext 510
Dr. Abdallah Al-Ali	25644660
Dr. Abd Al-Hameed Al-Taweel	25646478
Dr. Sanad Al-Fathalah	25311996
Dr. Mohammad Al-Daory	25731988
Dr. Ismail Al-Fodary	22620166
Dr. Mahmoud Al-Booz	25651426
General Practitioners	
Dr. Mohammed Y Majidi	24555050 Ext 123
Dr. Yousef Al-Omar	24719312
Dr. Tarek Al-Mikhaizeem	23926920
Dr. Kathem Maarafi	25730465
Dr. Abdallah Ahmad Eyadah	25655528
Dr. Nabeel Al-Ayoobi	24577781
Dr. Dina Abdallah Al-Rfae	25333501
Urologists	
Dr. Ali Naser Al-Serfy	22641534
Dr. Fawzi Taher Abul	22639955
Dr. Khaleel Abdallah Al-Awadi	22616660
Dr. Adel Al-Hunayan FRCS (C)	25313120
Dr. Leons Joseph	66703427

Plastic Surgeons	
Dr. Mohammad Al-Khalaf	22547272
Dr. Abdal-Redha Lari	22617700
Dr. Abdel Quttainah	25625030/60
Family Doctor	
Dr Divya Damodar	23729596/23729581
Psychiatrists	
Dr. Esam Al-Ansari	22635047
Dr. Eisa M. Al-Balhan	22613623/0
Gynaecologists & Obstetricians	
Dr Adrian arbe	23729596/23729581
Dr. Verginia s.Marin	2572-6666 ext 8321
Dr. Fozeya Ali Al-Qatan	22655539
Dr. Majeda Khalefa Aliyami	25343406
Dr. Ahmad Al-Khooly	25739272
Dr. Salem soso	22618787
General Surgeons	
Dr. Amer Zawaz Al-Amer	22610044
Dr. Mohammad Yousef Basher	25327148
Internists, Chest & Heart	
Dr. Adnan Ebil	22639939
Dr. Mousa Khadada	22666300
Dr. Latefa Al-Duweisan	25728004
Dr. Nadem Al-Ghabra	25355515
Dr. Mobarak Aldoub	24726446
Dr Nasser Behbehani	25654300/3

Paediatricians	
Dr. Khaled Hamadi	25665898
Dr. Abd Al-Aziz Al-Rashed	25340300
Dr. Zahra Qabazard	25710444
Dr. Sohail Qamar	22621099
Dr. Snaa Maarouf	25713514
Dr. Pradip Gujare	23713100
Dr. Zacharias Mathew	24334282
Dermatology	
Dr. Mohammed Salam Bern University	23845955
Dentists	
Dr Anil Thomas	3729596/3729581
Dr. Shamah Al-Matar	22641071/2
Dr. Anesah Al-Rasheed	22562226
Dr. Abdallah Al-Amer	22561444
Dr. Faysal Al-Fozan	22619557
Dr. Abdallateef Al-Katrash	22525888
Dr. Abdallah Al-Duweisan	25653755
Dr. Bader Al-Ansari	25620111
Neurologists	
Dr. Sohal Najem Al-Shemeri	25633324
Dr. Jasem Mola Hassan	25345875
Gastrologists	
Dr. Sami Aman	22636464
Dr. Mohammad Al-Shamaly	25322030
Dr. Foad Abdallah Al-Ali	22633135

Endocrinologist	
Dr. Abd Al-Naser Al-Othman	25339330
Physiotherapists & VD	
Dr. Ahmad Al-Ansari	25658888
Dr. Kamal Al-Shomr	25329924
Dr. Deyaa Shehab	25722291
Dr. Mused Faraj Khamees	22666288
Rheumatologists:	
Dr. Adel Al-Awadi	25330060
Dr. Khaled Al-Jarallah	25722290
Internist, Chest & Heart	
DR.Mohammes Akkad	24555050 Ext 210
Consultant Cardiologist	
Dr. Mohammad Zubaid MB, ChB, FRCP, PACC Assistant Professor Of Medicine Head, Division of Cardiology Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital	25339667
Dr. Farida Al-Habib MD, PH.D, FACC	2611555-2622555
Inaya German Medical Center	Te: 2575077 Fax: 25723123

KUWAIT BEAUTIFUL & GREEN STUDENTS ART COMPETITION



CATEGORY 15 TO 17 YEARS



Aya Karim - Ikhlas School



Sara Khaled - Khalda Bent Al-Asoad School



Jumanna Kamal - Ikhlas School



Narjis Bin Nakhi - Al-Salmiya School



Amal Al-Ajmi - Fariaah Bent Abi Al-Saalt



Dima Al-Jasim - Al-Asmaa Bent Al-Harith School



Fatima Bader Al Azmi - Doha School



Nada Abd Al-Hakim - Al-Rawda School



Noura Al-Mutairi - Bayan School



Fatima Jawad - Fatima Al-Sarawi



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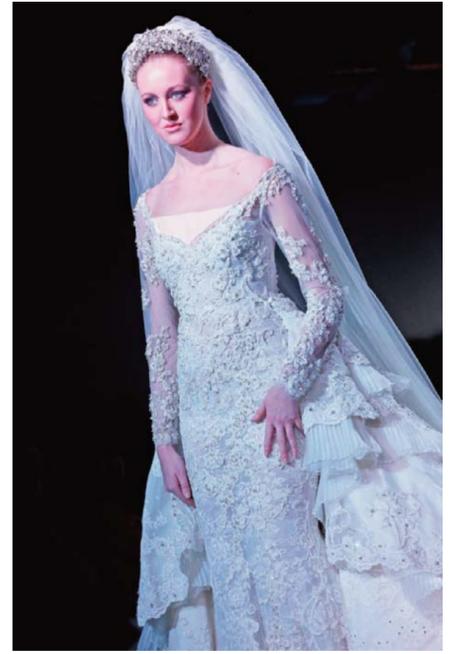


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KUWAIT INTERNATIONAL FASHION WEEK



Models wear creation by Lebanese designer Fadi Nehleh during the Kuwait international fashion week in Kuwait City on May 9, 2017. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Kuwait International fashion week concludes with a stunning collection



By Nawara Fattahova

The Kuwait International fashion week concluded on its third day at Al-Hamra Business Tower with beautiful wedding dresses, followed by different evening dresses and jewelry collection. The show concluded with a collection of Kuwaiti Abayas by Harayer. 20 international designers participated in this event that was held in collaboration with Oriental Fashion Show. It is sponsored by Maserati, Al-Hamra, Lancome, YSL, Baidoun, Al-Arbash, Bon Voyage, Noble Dental Clinic, Auguri Center, Spa & More, Nuxe, Twaag Fragrances, Diet Care and the media sponsor Kuwait Times.

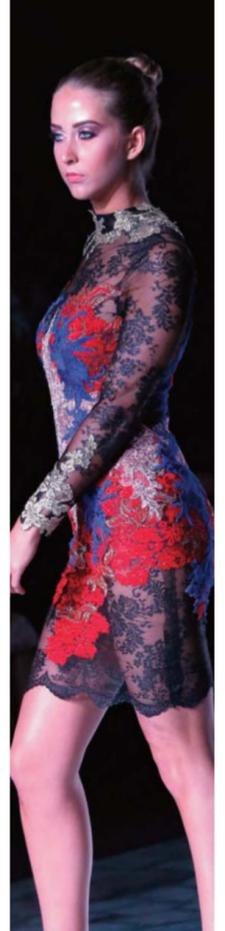
The fashion designers that participated on the third day were from Kuwait and Lebanon

were: Fadi Nehleh, Dimitri Sidawi, Haya Al-Bghaily (Sultana Couture), Zeina Slaiby in collaboration with former miss Lebanon Sandra Rizk, Ali Al-Arbash, and Harayer. In addition the showroom will be open daily from 6:00pm - 10:00pm.

At the end of the show, the owner of Auguri Center Ali Haidar awarded the CEO of Kuwait International Fashion Week Rabab Hamadi, Marketing Manager at Al Zayani Company Mouaid Wali and lifestyle and entertainment editor at Kuwait Times Sahar Moussa. Makeup was done by Lancome and YSL makeup artists: Nizar Dhayni, Sahar Al-Karim, Aseel Obaid, and Souzan Sharifa. Hairstyle was done by Mona and Joy.



Models wear a creation by Lebanese designer Dimitri Sidawi during the Kuwait international fashion week in Kuwait City on May 9, 2017.



FASHION



Models wear creation by designer Zaina Slaby during the Kuwait international fashion week in Kuwait City on May 9, 2017.



Designer Dimitri Sidawi



Designer Haya Al-Bghaily



Designer Fadi Nehle



Models wear creation by designer Zaina Slaby during the Kuwait international fashion week in Kuwait City on May 9, 2017.



Designer Zaina Slaby (L)



Former Miss Lebanon Sandra Rizk walks the ramp with a model during Kuwait International fashion week at Kuwait City on May 9, 2017.



Models showcase jewelry collection by designer Ali Al-Arbash during the Kuwait International fashion week at Kuwait City on May 9, 2017.



KUWAIT INTERNATIONAL FASHION WEEK

Models walk the ramp during the KIFW at Kuwait City on May 9, 2017. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



Mouaid Wali, Marketing manager at Al-Zayani, left, receives an award from Auguri Center's owner Ali Haidar.



Rabab Hamadi, CEO of Kuwait International fashion week, left, receives an award from Auguri Center's owner Ali Haidar.



Sahar Moussa, Lifestyle and entertainment editor at Kuwait Times, left, receives an award from Auguri Center's owner Ali Haidar.



Hind Joudar, CEO of Oriental Fashion Day



Kuwait International fashion week hairstylists Mona, left, and Joy, right, walk the ramp with CNN reporter/model Carolien Ter Linden during the KIFW at Kuwait City on May 9, 2017.



From left, Lancome make-up artists Sahar Abedal Karim, Assel Obaid, CNN reporter/model Carolien Ter Linden, Mizar Dhayni speak during the KIFW at Kuwait City on May 9, 2017.