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clarinet player
wows Arabs
Got Talent**



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on home court
to take series lead**

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FIFA confirms Kuwait football suspension

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In my view

THE NEW FACE OF KUWAIT

By Sana Kalim

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Children born in the early 2000s are teenagers now. The Gen 'Z', 'Home Generation', Post-Millennials or whatever strange label they wear, are trying to find themselves in this morphing world we live in. They are looked upon as being more open minded - accepting other cultures a lot more readily (thanks to the Internet).

These children are building upon the foundation of the previous generations, eyeing the world through a very unique perspective - they understand that the only way the world can become better is when we realize that we all want to live by each other's happiness - not by each other's misery. Moreover, learning from the previous generation with their 'can do' attitude, they are the people that will take the first steps down a new road, armed with controversial thinking and beaming intelligence. If you are ever against this force which typhoons are named after, just stop and think - who has really raised them?

This generation will suffer, just like the ones before them. With the rise of IS, global tensions and global warming, a united generation is needed. We have to prepare them for problems never thought of before,

This generation has been predicted to house the highest number of volunteer workers and entrepreneurs of any generation.

for fights on a scale never done before. This is Generation Z.

Probably one of the greatest struggles for Generation Z would stem from identity. Being scolded day after day into old-age thinking of being segregated from one another: 'We are not like them', which ultimately stems from colonialist attitudes and old-age struggles. Generation Z must learn to fight onwards, away from this tragedy, despite the eventual hardships it may bring.

Global warming is a topic they have grown up with. They know the importance of acting upon this change, and they will. This generation has been predicted to house the highest number of volunteer workers and entrepreneurs of any generation. As to the numerous conflicts worldwide, only time will tell us of the consequences.

To conclude, hard times are approaching, and we are within them already - some were born into conflict. So remember, your worth as a person is determined by how you cope during times of conflict, not by how you act in times of peace. To all the students taking their external exams, I wish you all the best!

Photo of the day



Yarnbombing - the art of covering public spaces with knitted or crocheted textiles - at a local community garden in this 2015 file photo. The Secret Garden in Salmiya, Baghdad street, provides an open community space for local gardeners, crafters and others interested in community space. — Photo by Jamie Etheridge

IN MY VIEW

LAUGHTER, DECIPHERED!



By Jeri Al-Jeri

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Forever, laughter is the most raw and uncanny of all human emotions that can only be compared to its polar opposite. Sometimes it can be hurtfully honest, and at times it is the best medicine. But what made some Arabian tribes consider it to be a bad omen? Is it a sign of unprofessionalism? What do scientists and wise men and women think about our daily giggles?

Pr. Sophie Scott of UCL, shared her thoughts about laughter. Her years spent in the discipline of neurology have led her to conclude that laughter is very simple and most sophisticated at the same time, because it is always chained with a plethora of social signals. It can be read as affiliation affirmation or an evil form of humiliation. She also stresses that toddlers acquire the skill of spontaneous chuckle to "kick-start" a seemingly endless cycle of pleasurable action and reaction between the child and her caregivers. Nonetheless, it is debatable to label this explosive and uncontrollable expression of amusement to be a "skill" that can be perfectly implemented. The older we get, the more complicated and cerebral this relationship gets.

Our hardwired brains are programmed to release these temporary cardiovascular efforts and noticeable phonological articulations to express laughter.

Salam will seem "crazy" if his face strangely morphs while his belly vibrates like a cell phone! And Samira will not get the "treatment" she desires from her peers and colleagues if she shrills like a cat in an untimely manner. They will both suffer from the anxiety of calculating the chances of being excluded, even if their brain secreted painkiller hormones called endorphins during their laughter.

What appears to be a normal everyday light hearted trait can get even more complex when scientists admit how easily we can both simulate laughter and scan the sincerity of it.

Due to this, highly sensitive social integration of tribal members, humor cannot easily be welcomed for its potential awkwardness. Therefore, any attempt to be "funny" without validation is considered unpleasant. Due to this scenario, an un-Islamic myth found its way in the hearts and minds of Arabian households. Fortunately for comedy, the more independent a modern day individual get the less tribal-dependent he gets, causing laughter to be "cheaper" by the minute.

With a warm smile we can quote Milton Berle "Laughter is an instant vocation". While others quote "Laughter is the best medicine. But if you laugh without a reason, then you need a doctor."

Local Spotlight

KUWAIT AND SPORTS



By Muna Al-Fuzai

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Kuwait is an independent state and we have a glorious history in sports for over 40 years. Sport is also a human right, so why are we deprived of participation in international sporting events? This may seem like a simple question, but unfortunately, the answer is very complex and incomprehensible to many of us. I am a Kuwaiti citizen and not a politician or a detective, so I do not want to know the details of the subject behind closed doors or who caused the suspension. I only care to see my fellow citizens exercising their sporting rights.

Participation means that no one can deny the will of a nation and a young generation that wishes to have sports representation at all levels and not being subjected to the choices of anyone. The 27th assembly of the Asian Football Confederation (AFC), which was held in the Bahraini capital Manama on Monday, rejected voting on the 8th article of the agenda for lifting the suspension of member associations, which includes Kuwait. It was bad news indeed for many Kuwaitis.

AFC Secretary-General Dato John said the eighth item was currently not open for voting and the lifting of Kuwait's suspension is expected to move to the International Federation Congress to consider the issue. In the same gathering, Indonesia was allowed to vote on the decisions of the Asian Congress at the request of the Philippines.

It was previously said Kuwait was suspended internationally because its sports laws are not amended to comply with the Olympic Charter and the rules of international sports federations, although Kuwait has committed to abide with international laws. Kuwait was first suspended in July 2012, but another suspension in 2015 was a severe shock to the people of Kuwait.

The government's intervention to support the lifting of the suspension from Kuwait in recent years and the massive efforts made by Sheikh Salman Al-Hmoud Al-Sabah, the former minister for youth affairs, unfortunately did not lead to the desired outcome for the Kuwaiti youth.

It is clear that the Kuwaiti government is aware of the importance of lifting the suspension on sport and its impact on the reputation of Kuwait, but this does not seem important to some people! The continuation of constructive dialogue with relevant government authorities in line with the principles and laws of the Olympic Movement is required and must be taken into consideration.

Kuwait was prevented from participating in the 2016 Rio Olympics, and a small number of Kuwaiti athletes participated as independent athletes under the Olympic flag. It was a harsh and painful sight for many Kuwaitis.

It is essential to mention that Kuwait had voted at the UN General Assembly last October to adopt a unanimous resolution on the independence of the sports movement and signed the UNESCO convention in Copenhagen in 2015, which provides for sports arbitration and anti-doping measures. Does this mean anything to those who deny Kuwait's request to lift the suspension? It should.

What is happening now - a continuing suspension - is harsh on the Kuwaiti youth and harms them. It must be lifted - even temporarily - to give the Kuwaiti government the opportunity to move in the right direction.

PHOTO OF THE DAY



KUWAIT: Quail quenching its thirst in a small stream at a local Kuwait park. — Photo by Ali Al-Roumi/KUNA

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Happy reading



Al-Sawaber:

Alternative narratives by Zahra Al-Mahdi

By Athoob Al-Shuaibi

Sawaber is a story. Or rather multitudes of stories. The hope and ambition of a young country building affordable housing for its citizens. The story of its transformation from individual family residences and community into bachelor worker flats crammed with 10 to 12 people in one apartment. A story of crime and suspicion. Of urban decay. Al Sawaber is the

story of a failed social and housing experiment, a complex doomed to demolition. But also the story of a complex of unique, unusual buildings that have captured the imagination and hearts of generations of locals and residents.

One young artist, Zahra Al-Mahdi, adds another layer of story to the infamous Al-Sawaber complex. In her recent solo exhibition, Al-Mahdi explores the idea of stories without endings and the complexities of abandonment.





"I have received many analyzes from people, I respect them all, because my personal opinion is no better than the opinions of others, but I will tell you the story as I visualize it; there were two creatures in the form of human beings, they look like human females. They fell asleep into a cocoon at Sawaber. Then, three different ending scenarios emerged from the story. One, is when the towers of Sawaber suddenly multiplied in front of them. The second was when everything started to disappear around Sawaber, the stratosphere, the atmosphere, while meteorites shooting the planet. Meanwhile the third scenario shall be life on earth finished, the planet is divided into two halves and the isthmus appears. Three Different faces of abandonment," Al-Mahdi explained.

These symbolic endings raise several questions, what after and to whom? Mahdi also wanted to prove another theorem in the render-

ing of art in general, saying: "I believe that even artworks are never finished. They are simply abandoned by the artist. Sometimes when you abandoned something, someone else picks it up and gives it a new meaning," she added.

Al-Mahdi believes that there's nothing really wrong with things being demolished. From a space of hope for many families who needed a secure place to live, a decent community and a safe environment where people could hang out and the kids could play, Al-Sawaber has changed to become a place of suspicion and poor reputation.

Today, everyone cares about it, contributing new meaning and adding to its story. It's creating a strong attachment from us to Kuwait. Al-Mahdi concluded: "When it comes to memory and forgetfulness, there's so much in effect that's coming from forgetting, because it changes how evaluate the things around us."

'Imagine Team'



Local illusionists represent Kuwait in Arabs Got Talent

By Faten Omar

Abdullatif Al-Saleh and Khalid Al-Muharib hold entertaining "magic" shows, presenting sleight of hand tricks and illusions in a humorous way. The Kuwaiti duo of "Imagine Team" impressed the judges of the fifth season of Arabs Got Talent. They presented a spectacular show with dazzling magic tricks that stunned the judges and extracted three "yesses" to seal their journey to fame. Kuwait Times interviewed the "Imagine Team" to learn more about their success in Arabs Got Talent.



Kuwait Times: How did you get started in magic shows and illusion?

Abdullatif: My love for live performances made me start my journey in magic.

KT: What was the first magic trick that you did together in front of an audience?

Abdullatif: Our first trick was the trick that we did in Arabs Got Talent together that took us to the finals.

KT: Tell us about your participation in Arabs Got Talent? Why did you participate? How was your audition? Was it your first time to participate in these kinds of shows?

Abdullatif: Our participation in Arabs Got Talent was a new challenge. I wanted to challenge myself to face a bigger audience and perform live on TV with my team. The first audition was great and I can't wait for the next one to reach the finals. This is my first time to be in such a show.

KT: How do you decide what tricks you will attempt next?

Abdullatif: We choose a trick that is done with the smallest things. We want to show people our skills, not our equipment, because I believe this show is all about talent and not tools. This is why they call it Arabs Got Talent.

KT: Who taught you the most in the world of magic? How did you learn your magic tricks?

Abdullatif: I learned a lot from Steven Brundidge, but everything I learned from him I changed to our style.

KT: How do you fit in practice time with family and friends and all the appearances you do?

Abdullatif: I practice all the time with everyone - family, friends and even when I'm alone. This is what I love the most about magic - it can be done everywhere and at every time.

KT: How supportive of your goals are your parents?

Abdullatif: They don't want me to be a magician since I graduated from an engineering university and they want me to work in the engineering field. But I'll always follow my dreams, and they support the fact that I'm doing this.

KT: Do you get noticed on the street now? Any good fan stories?

Abdullatif: I face some awkward reactions from people who look at me and then start talking to each other because they are not sure that this is the same guy on TV or not. To be honest, this is because I'm serious in real life.

KT: Who is your favorite magician? What is your favorite trick that you have not done yourself?

Abdullatif: Chris Angel is my favorite magician and levitating is my favorite trick. I've done it in two different ways.

KT: What other hobbies do you have?

Abdullatif: I'm an artist and I love art.

KT: What do you find harder - having a real career or performing magic, and why?

Abdullatif: Having a real career is harder for me although it's easy, but I find it harder because I believe in "do what you love, and then you'll love what you do".

KT: Where do you hope magic will take you? Would you like your own show, your own television show or to be in a movie?

Abdullatif: Magic took me almost everywhere I dreamed of, but I want more. I hope to perform all over the world and I'm expecting this dream. I want to act in a movie, but only if the role is that of a magician.

KT: If you could guest star on any show right now, which one would it be and why?

Abdullatif: I want to have my own show. I'm working on it and it is on our YouTube channel "imagine KUW". I'd love to perform on the Ellen DeGeneres show because I love the show and the host is amazing.

KT: Let us know what we can expect from you in the future and what you have coming up?

Abdullatif: Our next step is the finals of Arabs Got Talent. I'm expecting support from all Kuwaiti and Gulf people. I hope your support will take us till the end.

Clarinet player Abdulateef Ghazi is blind. His lack of sight, however, seems to only fuel his beautiful music. His playing, along with partner guitarist Mohammed Jabbari brought tears to the eyes of the judges and the crowd and won the duo the 'Golden Buzzer'.

BLIND KUWAITI CLARINET PLAYER WOWS ARABS GOT TALENT

By Faten Omar

Kuwait was proud to see several of its best talents performing on the popular Arabs Got Talent competition this year. One young Kuwaiti musician proved not only his musical talent but the strength of those who can overcome any obstacle. Clarinet player Abdulateef Ghazi is blind. His lack of sight, however, seems to only fuel his beautiful music. His playing, along with partner guitarist Mohammed Jabbari brought tears to the eyes of the judges and the crowd and won the duo the 'Golden Buzzer'.

Kuwait Times spoke with the young musicians to learn more about their performance and their experience in the show.

Kuwait Times: Tell us more about yourselves.

Jabbari: My name is Mohammed Jabbari. I was born and raised in Bahrain. I am 27 years old. I work as a banker in the morning and as a guitarist the rest of the day.

Ghazi: I'm Abdulateef Ghazi. I'm 22 years old and a Kuwaiti. I'm a law student at London University.

KT: What drew you to audition for Arabs Got Talent?

Jabbari: It is a global program that motivates and supports all kinds of talents. It was an opportunity to get involved in it. We participated in Arabs Got Talent to give us the push to do what we love and for people to discover our talent.

KT: How was your audition?

Jabbari: It was great. We lived the moment



and played from our hearts to reach the audience.

KT: What was your feeling when you got the Golden Buzzer?

Jabbari: It was a shock to know that we touched the judges' hearts. We were very happy.

KT: How did you'll get started? How did you become friends although you are from different countries?

Jabbari: Abdulateef asked me to join him and become a team, since we play the same type of music, only on different instruments. I was in Kuwait to meet up with artist friends and they introduced me to Abdulateef. When I saw him playing, I couldn't hold back my tears, seeing how talented this guy is. He is the only musician that made me weep.

KT: What was the first musical piece that you did together in front of an audience?

Jabbari: 'Ala bali' by the great Egyptian

singer Sherine Abdulwahab. She is full of feelings when she sings.

KT: Abdulateef - how did you manage to learn how to play the clarinet?

Ghazi: I was never into music. But when I heard Turkish music, the musical instruments that they used touched my feelings. I worked hard and became professional in no time.

KT: Do you think you hear music differently because of your blindness - or do you think it is unrelated?

Ghazi: Music flows in my body through my feelings.

KT: Mohammad - when did you start playing the guitar?

Jabbari: I started playing in 2004.

KT: How did you'll learn to integrate two musical instruments in a beautiful way?

Jabbari: Talent is a gift from God that makes us both special. Plus, we feel the music we play and what comes from the heart goes to the hearts.

KT: How do you choose the best musical piece to play together?

Jabbari: Our feelings tell us what to play.

KT: How supportive of your goals are your parents?

Jabbari: Supportive all the way.

KT: What do you find harder - playing solo or together and why?

Jabbari: Both are fine - we complete each other.

KT: What is the best sound in the world to you?

Jabbari: Turkish music.

KT: What can we expect from you in the future and what are you coming up with?

Jabbari: This is a surprise that we will reveal soon - wait for it!



Abdulateef Ghazi



BRAZIL AGRICULTURE MINISTER TO VISIT KUWAIT, GCC MEAT IMPORTERS TOUGHEN CONTROLS AFTER SCANDAL

SAO PAULO: Fifty-seven meat importers in Brazil toughened controls on shipments in the wake of a food safety scandal in March but no problems with production have been found, Agriculture Minister Blairo Maggi told a congressional hearing on Wednesday. Major meat importers including China issued bans after Brazilian federal police unveiled a probe into alleged bribery of health officials by meat processors to skip inspections and ignore abuses.

Since the scandal broke, importers are inspecting 100 percent of the merchandise at destination, Maggi told an agricultural committee of Congress' lower house, saying that this helped demonstrate that Brazilian products are safe. As part of the gov-

ernment's efforts to reassure buyers of the quality of Brazilian meat, Maggi is due to travel to the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Qatar today.

The purpose of the visit "is to present explanations, in addition to those sent in writing, to ensure these markets stay open," according to a statement from the Agriculture Ministry. The Middle East countries Maggi is scheduled to visit buy most of Brazil's chicken exports, which fell 11.2 percent to \$543.1 million in April versus the year earlier period, the ministry said. The markets currently open to Brazilian meat exports are worth a combined \$13.55 billion, representing 95.3 percent of the country's total export market, the

statement said. Last week, Maggi told Reuters that 10 nations remained undecided on whether to resume purchases, but he added they represented a very small volume of Brazilian meat sales. The "Weak Flesh" investigation triggered 328 official information requests from other countries regarding the investigation.

Brazil's exports of beef, pork and poultry fell 22.1 percent last month, though a sharp rise in prices partially offset the drop in volumes, the Agricultural Ministry said in a separate statement on Wednesday. Still, April's meat exports were down 9.8 percent at \$1.08 billion from the same month a year ago, the government said. —Reuters



Researcher Bader Al-Zeir is pictured with guests at the history of education photo gallery. —KUNA photos



An old photo shows students at Al-Ahmadiya School

GALLERY DOCUMENTS HISTORY OF EDUCATION IN KUWAIT

KUWAIT: A photo gallery opened at the Avenues Mall yesterday. The gallery constitutes a significant step toward documenting the history of education in Kuwait, especially at Al-Mubarakiya and Al-Ahmadiya Schools. The three-day gallery offers a collection of old pictures and photos collected over 15 years by Bader Al-Zeir, a researcher in Kuwait's heritage and history of education. Al-Zeir found some of the pictures by chance, then launched a long search, meeting with old Kuwaitis. He also travelled to Europe and Jordan where he met with many others who were educated in Kuwait. The opening ceremony was attended by the Secretary General of the National Council of

Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL) Ali Al-Yoha, and many people concerned with the history of education in Kuwait. —KUNA



EXPAT ATTACKED

KUWAIT: An Egyptian told Maidan Hawally police a motorist beat him badly without justification for reasons related to the right of way. The Egyptian submitted a medical report stating the injuries he received. He said he was driving near a private hospital when he was involved in a verbal exchange regarding the right of way, but he was surprised with the driver of the other car coming towards him and attacking him in front of his wife. Detectives are looking for the suspect.

Student beaten

A student told Nugra police he was beaten by his physical education teacher in a school behind the disabled club. The case was sent to concerned authorities.

Leftover mine

A 35-year-old Sudanese was killed while an Asian was rushed to hospital when a leftover mine from the 1990 Iraqi invasion exploded near Al-Abraq farm in the Salmi desert.

'On wanted list'

An Indian's name was placed on the want-

ed list after his sponsor accused him of stealing the rent collection estimated at KD 4,450, although he said the money was left with another person, who denied the claim, as he is out of Kuwait now. A security source said it is not likely he left the money with his friend, and it is more likely that he fled to his country with the cash.

Expat duped

Two citizens swindled an Egyptian of KD 900, which was supposed to be a down payment to get a work visa for his nephew. The Egyptians agreed to pay KD 1,400 for the visa, but the two Kuwaitis disappeared after receiving the money.

Sexual harassment

The Ahmadi prosecutor charged a haris with sexual harassment following a complaint by a married Egyptian woman who lives in the building he works in. She said he got in the elevator when he saw her and groped her. The 52-year-old woman filed a complaint at Fintas police station, and investigations are underway. —Al-Rai and Al-Anbaa

VIOLATING SIGNS REMOVED

By Hanan Al-Saadoun, Meshal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Mubarak Al-Kabeer emergency team carried out several tours, resulting in the removal of 104 violating signs from the streets. They also cited a building for beginning construction before obtaining a license. The team also inspected cooperatives, restaurants and foodstuff factories to make sure food is safe for consumption.

Residency violators

Residency Affairs Detectives arrested 33 residency violators following tips about a residence that harbored several iqama violators, who are absconding domestic helpers. They all confessed they do not work for their sponsors, but provide daily services. They are being sent to concerned authorities.

Coordination meeting

Interior Ministry Undersecretary Lt Gen Mahmoud Al-Dousary chaired a coordination meeting with Assistant Justice Ministry Undersecretary for

Palace of Justice Affairs Omar Al-Sharqawi and Director of Judicial Fees Department Fadhel Al-Shimmari. They discussed issues of mutual concern and means of activating the mechanism of sentences implementation.

The 'Afia' festival

Health Ministry spokesman Dr Ahmad Al-Shatti called upon all beneficiaries of the retirees' health insurance project and their families to participate in the "Afia" festival that will be held on May 13 at Crowne Plaza Hotel over two days from 10 am till 10 pm. He said the event will be under the patronage of Minister Dr Jamal Al-Harby and it is an opportunity to bring service providers and recipients together. The largest possible number of health service providers will be present and retirees can choose ones that suit them. Shatti said there are plans to add homemakers and the disabled to the beneficiaries of the project, but this needs more study and preparations.

FIFA CONFIRMS KUWAIT SUSPENSION

FIFA TO RULE ON ISRAEL SETTLEMENT CLUBS BY OCTOBER

MANAMA: FIFA yesterday confirmed the suspension of both the Guatemala and Kuwait football federations at its annual Congress in Bahrain. Delegates voted overwhelmingly to retain the suspensions against both federations, which were imposed in Kuwait's case in 2015 and Guatemala in 2016. The 211 delegate nations able to vote backed by a 99 percent majority to continue to exclude the central American nation and 96 percent for the tiny Gulf state. Guatemala was suspended from international competition after it rejected a FIFA proposal to extend a "normalization committee" imposed because of its involvement in the corruption scandal that has rocked world football's governing body. Kuwait was suspended because of government interference.

Israel settlement clubs

Meanwhile, FIFA will rule on the issue of Israeli clubs playing in the West Bank by October, president Gianni Infantino said yesterday, once again delaying a decision on the contentious issue. FIFA's annual Congress voted to back-by a majority of 73 to 27 percent - a proposal that pushed football's governing body to report by March 2018, but Infantino said feedback would come before then. "We will take responsibility and we will take a decision on this matter," he said, adding FIFA would rule in October.

The Palestine Football Association (PFA) argues that the presence of six Israeli clubs on its territory is in breach



MANAMA: Chairman of the Palestinian football association, Jibril Rajoub, delivers a speech during the 67th FIFA Congress in the Bahraini capital Manama yesterday. —AFP

of FIFA statutes, which forbids another member association playing on another territory without permission. Israel argues that FIFA rules are unenforceable as there is no permanent border. The Congress heard from both the Palestinian and Israeli federations before taking the vote. Palestinian football chief Jibril Rajoub told delegates his association wanted the same rights as others. "We are not looking for suspension or expulsion but the full recognition of our right that no Israeli clubs play in our territory," he said. "None of you will accept that any clubs play in your territory."

However, Ofer Eini of the Israeli association, said the PFA was looking for a political solution. "The sole purpose is to establish the political boundaries," he told the Congress. "This is outside the authority of FIFA to establish borders. "What are you trying to stop five or six teams of children from playing football? Will that resolve the Palestinian problem?" A FIFA commission chaired by South Africa's Tokyo Sexwale has presented several potential solutions and a fresh report was handed to the FIFA Council on Wednesday, said Infantino, without giving further details. —Agencies



KUWAITI 'SAFETY BELT' INVENTION SHOWCASED AT MALAYSIA'S ITEX

KUALA LUMPUR: The 'safety belt' invented by the Kuwaiti Adel Al-Wasis is on display at the annual International Invention, Innovation and Technology Exhibition (ITEX) which kicked off in its 28th edition here yesterday. The Kuwaiti ambassador, Saad Al-Asousi, who attended inauguration of the exhibition said on the event sidelines that he was pleased with Al-Wasis's participation, presenting his innovation, "the safety belt."

The belt can be used in emergencies by fire departments, hospitals, residential buildings and other facilities, he said, hoping young Kuwaitis would be inspired by Al-Wasis's invention. The belt is worn in dangerous accidents, such as fires at buildings and skyscrapers. Individuals, trapped in upper floors during fires, can easily put it on and descend safely, explains

Al-Wasis. Idea of the invention aims at saving people without aid of firefighters or relief personnel.

The belt was developed with guidance from Sabah Al-Ahmad Center for Giftedness and Creativity, along with "the air hammer," another tool designed to smash compressed glass safely and easily. Al-Wasis has won patents for the two inventions from the United States of America, in addition to two others-an air-powered fan and an irrigation device powered by solar energy. The International Invention and Innovation Exhibition is organized by Malaysian Invention and Design Society (MINDS) under the patronage of International Federation of Inventors' Associations (IFIA). It has been held yearly since 1989. —KUNA

News

in brief

MoE's foreign deals

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Education hopes that signing international teachers will help fill in voids as the next school year fast approaches, an official said yesterday. In a statement to the press on the sidelines of a ceremony to launch an e-encyclopedia in Hawally governorate, the Ministry of Education's Undersecretary Haitham Al-Athari noted that the ministry is in the process of interviewing new recruits. On the e-encyclopedia, he said that such innovative tools will come in handy for teachers and students alike, adding that a number of similar projects are in the works. The Ministry of Education's Undersecretary also said that he was proud that such creative ideas are coming to fruition, adding that the ministry possesses the knowhow needed to provide quality education.

Arab health meeting

CAIRO: The Technical Advisory Committee of the Council of Arab Health Ministers held its third meeting in Cairo yesterday, chaired by Kuwait, to discuss a number of topics related to joint Arab action in the health field. The two-day meeting discussed the health situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, ways to back health conditions in Somalia's schools, and the council's unified statement to the forthcoming 70th World Health Assembly meeting, slated for May 22 in Geneva, Kuwaiti Health Ministry's Assistant Undersecretary for Services Affairs Dr Mahmoud Al-Abdulhadi told KUNA. The committee also approved the agenda of the council's executive bureau in Geneva on May 22, on the sidelines of the World Health Assembly, Al-Abdulhadi said. The agenda comprises issues such as the Arab strategy to combat AIDS, the Arab authority for blood transfusion, the Arab fund for health development, and forming the Council's executive office.

Housing problem

KUWAIT: MP Shuaib Al-Mowazri said that the housing problem is worsening due to the government's mistaken approach and the misleading information being offered by the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW). "PAHW claims that it offers 12,000 housing units to citizens a year, which is a fictitious claim," he said during a National Assembly session on his request to grill Minister of State for Housing Affairs and Minister of State for Services Affairs Yasser Abel. He cited his personal experience as an example of the suffering of ordinary citizens from poor housing service. He also presented photos and videos showing poor finishing of apartments offered by PAHW to citizens in northwest Al-Sulaibkhat area and other parts of the country.

E-learning system

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Public Authority for Applied Education and Training's (PAAET) Faculty of Nursing yesterday launched an e-learning system in an effort to promote further interaction between teachers and students. Speaking to the press on the sidelines of a ceremony to inaugurate the e-learning system, PAAET's Deputy Director General Dr Fatma Al-Kanderi said that it was apropos that the system was initiated in the faculty, given that department's meticulousness. She noted that the new project will prove instrumental in improving the quality of education. Meanwhile, Director of PAAET's Regional Center for Educational Development Dr Nader Marafi pointed out that cutting-edge techniques such as the e-learning system can be a solution to problems that encumber conventional education. He underscored that educational institutions in Kuwait are eager to incorporate the latest instructional methods to ensure a top-notch education for students.

The smart meters

KUWAIT: Ministry of Electricity and Water obtained the Audit Bureau's approval to award the tender for smart meters, which was won by Zain with a value of KD 22 million. The ministry is expected to reward the tender for supplying and installing power and water meters within the next two weeks.

International

FRIDAY, MAY 12, 2017

Former CIA prisoner shrugs off risk to testify at Gitmo



Somalia asks world to help stabilize ravaged nation



Wall collapse kills 24 at India wedding



FBI FIRING ROILS US CONGRESS

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump's decision to sack FBI director James Comey unnerved members of Congress, dividing Republicans and infuriating Democrats who have begun pushing back against the White House after its bombshell announcement. Comey's ouster has raised urgent questions over the future of the FBI probe into what US intelligence has called Russian meddling in the 2016 election, and possible collusion between the Kremlin and Trump's team.

With tensions running high on Capitol Hill, the Democratic opposition called for the Justice Department to appoint a so-called special counsel to oversee the investigation. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell rejected that suggestion. "Today we will no doubt hear calls for a new investigation which could only serve to impede the current work being done," McConnell told the chamber.

Comey was officially sacked for mishandling a high-stakes probe into the emails of Trump's presidential rival, Hillary Clinton. But the White House explanation was greeted with overwhelming skepticism from Democrats, and some Republicans. Top Senate Democrat Chuck Schumer, leading calls for a special counsel, said there was "little reason to think" it was the true reason Trump fired Comey. "We know director Comey was leading an investigation into whether the Trump campaign colluded with the Russians," Schumer said. "Were those investigations getting too close to home for the president?"

Republicans seeking to steady a listing ship focused on some of their more prominent priorities, notably healthcare. But the Comey crisis has rocked Capitol Hill. Newly installed acting FBI director Andrew McCabe testifies Thursday in an open hearing before the Senate Intelligence Committee, one of three Senate panels investigating the Russia allegations. And committee aides confirmed that Comey has been invited to testify Tuesday in a closed-door session.

Subpoena issued

In a sharp new development in the Russia probe, the Senate Intelligence Committee announced Wednesday it issued a subpoena to Trump's former national security adviser Michael Flynn for Russia-related documents. The committee said in a statement that it "first requested these documents in an April 28, 2017 letter to Lieutenant General Flynn, but he declined, through counsel, to cooperate." Flynn was sacked after lying to Vice President Mike Pence about his discussions with the Russian ambassador to Washington, leaving him vulnerable to leverage from Moscow.

Senate Intelligence Committee chairman



NEW YORK: Protesters gather outside of Trump Tower on Wednesday, a day after FBI Director James Comey was fired by President Donald Trump. — AFP

Richard Burr told reporters he did not feel an independent inquiry was necessary. Even though the timing and reasoning of Comey's firing "doesn't make sense to me," he said, he was proceeding with the committee probe. "I hope to do it in a bipartisan way, but the investigation will run its course," Burr said.

Schumer signaled his anger with McConnell's refusal to back an independent special prosecutor by giving the green light to a Democratic work slowdown, which drew on an obscure Senate rule that bars committee hearings from operating beyond mid-day. Democrats threw up another hurdle when Senator Ron Wyden announced a "hold" on a US Treasury nomination until the department provides documents related to Russia and its financial dealings with Trump.

Senate Democrat Richard Blumenthal suggested another far more consequential tactic, as he indicated he would vote against any new FBI director nominee "until there was support for a special prosecutor". Several Republicans meanwhile joined Democrats in expressing concern about the details of Comey's dismissal. Senate Republican John McCain said he has long-backed a "special congressional committee," while moderate Republicans Susan Collins and Lisa Murkowski said they were studying the option. — AFP

US AMBASSADOR TO QATAR SAYS NEWS FROM HOME 'INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT'

DOHA: The US ambassador to Qatar has expressed her dissatisfaction with political events back home in a decidedly undiplomatic message posted on social media. Dana Shell Smith, who has been the American envoy to the Gulf emirate since 2014, took to Twitter in the hours after the dramatic sacking of FBI director James Comey by President Donald Trump. "Increasingly difficult to wake up overseas to news from home, knowing I will spend today explaining our democracy and institutions," Shell Smith tweeted, in apparent disapproval of the move.

It was a rare public show of exasperation with political events - either in the US or Qatar - by the envoy, who was appointed by Barack Obama. The message was posted on May 9 and has been retweeted more than 2,000 times. Qatar is a key US

ally and home to Al-Udeid, the largest US airbase in the region, which houses around 10,000 troops. Last month, US Defense Secretary Jim Mattis visited Doha and met Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani.

Trade between the two countries is also growing. Last year, after Trump's election, it was announced that gas-rich Qatar's sovereign wealth fund wanted to invest \$10 billion in US infrastructure projects. There was some angry reaction to Shell Smith's tweet online, with calls for her to be sacked for her apparent criticism of the president. In a new post on Thursday morning, Shell Smith appeared to try to take the sting out of her earlier message. "Diplomats explain & defend our political system. Can be tough when partisan acrimony so high, but there is still no greater country. #USA," she tweeted. — AFP

KILLER OF TOP HAMAS COMMANDER ARRESTED

GAZA CITY: Hamas has arrested the suspected murderer of one of its key military commanders in Gaza, the Palestinian Islamist movement's leader said yesterday, while maintaining Israel was behind the March assassination. The killing of Mazen Faqha in the heart of Hamas-controlled Gaza shocked the militant movement and raised fears of a fresh conflict with Israel. "We announce that the killer and criminal that carried out the orders of the officers of the Zionist security services is in the hands of the (Hamas) security services," Ismail Haniya told journalists in Gaza City, referring to Israel. "He has confessed to the crime."

No details were provided on the suspect's identity, though Hamas has previously suggested Palestinian collaborators had worked with Israel on the assassination. "Punishment will be carried out against the murderer," Haniya added. Hamas recently executed three men it accused of collaboration with Israel. Faqha was shot dead on March 24 near his house in Gaza City. He had been in charge of forming cells for the movement's

military wing in the occupied West Bank.

Hamas, which has controlled the Gaza Strip since 2007, immediately blamed its arch-enemy Israel, with which it has fought three wars since 2008. Israel never confirmed or denied involvement in the killing. Haniya's press conference was held outside Faqha's house in Gaza City and attended by his widow and Yahya Sinwar, Hamas's Gaza chief. A Hamas source said on condition of anonymity that the suspect had "participated in the morning in a reconstruction of the crime", after numerous security forces were seen in front of Faqha's home earlier in the day.

Offer to collaborators

Immediately afterward, Hamas authorities closed the only passenger crossing into Israel, while exit by sea was also banned, effectively sealing off the enclave. Rights groups slammed the closure as collective punishment for Gaza's two million residents, with those in need of medical treatment among those prevented from leaving. The restrictions were later lifted. — AFP



GAZA CITY: Hamas Supreme Leader Ismail Haniya announces the arrest of a suspect in the March shooting death of Mazen Faqha, a top Hamas militant commander, in a hastily arranged news conference attended by Faqha's widow Nahed Asida in front of Faqha's home yesterday. — AP



AL-KARAMAH, Syria: A picture taken on Wednesday in this town 26 km from the Islamic State (IS) group bastion of Raqqa shows the insignia of the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) on a member's uniform. — AFP

FIGHTERS HUNT FOR IS HOLDOUTS IN TABQA

BEIRUT: US-backed fighters hunted for jihadist holdouts in Syria's Tabqa yesterday after overrunning the city and nearby dam in a step forward for their advance on Islamic State group stronghold Raqqa. The Syrian Democratic Forces scored one of their biggest victories against IS as controversy intensified over a US decision to arm the alliance's Kurdish component. The SDF seized Tabqa and the nearby dam on Wednesday and was conducting clearance operations on Thursday morning, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said.

"The SDF were able to deploy onto the dam itself during the night," Observatory head Rami Abdel Rahman said. "But civilians are still unable to enter some parts of Tabqa because of explosives" left by IS, he added. Situated on the Euphrates River about 55 km upstream from Raqqa, Tabqa is a key waypost in the operation to capture the jihadists' de facto Syrian capital. Operation Wrath of the Euphrates has seen the SDF capture large swathes of territory north of Raqqa and at their closest point its fighters are just eight kilometres from the city. They are now working to tighten the noose before a final assault. The offensive has been supported by bombing raids by a US-led coalition, as well as coalition military advisers on the ground.

Celebrations in Tabqa

The battle for Tabqa was marked by fears that fighting could damage the nearby dam - Syria's largest - with the potential for catastrophic flooding. Technicians fled the dam as fighting intensified in recent days, a source who works closely with them told AFP. A repair team was on standby on Thursday, awaiting permission from the SDF to enter and assess any damage to the structure. The SDF is dominated by the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG), seen by the US as an indispensable ally in the fight against IS but considered a "terrorist group" by Turkey. — AFP

FORMER CIA PRISONER SHRUGS OFF RISK TO TESTIFY AT GITMO

ZUBAYDAH A 'POTENTIAL TARGET' FOR PROSECUTION

MIAMI: A man who became the first CIA captive subjected to what the US government called "enhanced interrogation techniques" after the Sept 11 attacks is choosing to testify about conditions inside the Guantanamo Bay detention center even if it could create legal problems for him later. The lawyer for the Palestinian known as Zayne Abu Zubaydah says in a letter released yesterday that his client wants to testify at the US base in Cuba next week despite the legal risk because he believes he is innocent, wants a chance to address the public and doesn't think he would ever be charged anyway.

"Abu Zubaydah will take the stand, unafraid of the truth that will emerge, confident that the world will come to know that he has committed no crimes," lawyer Mark Denbeaux wrote in the letter, a copy of which was provided to AP. The letter was sent earlier this month by Denbeaux to James Harrington, a civilian lawyer appointed to represent Ramzi Binalshibh, one of five Guantanamo prisoners facing trial by military commission for their alleged roles planning and providing logistical support for the terror attack on Sept 11, 2001.

Binalshibh has accused guards inside Camp 7, the highest security section of Guantanamo, of causing noises and vibrations intended to disrupt his sleep and making it difficult for him to participate in his legal case, which remains bogged down in pretrial proceedings. His lawyers have called Zubaydah as a witness to support the claims, which were supported by testimony from a third prisoner, from Somalia, at a June 2016 hearing but have been rejected by the military.

Lawyers for Binalshibh asked the military judge presiding over the case to prohibit prosecutors from asking about anything unrelated to conditions in Camp 7 or to grant Zubaydah immunity. That request was denied in January. He is now scheduled to testify at the base on May 19, though it could get postponed. Prosecutors said in court papers that Zubaydah is a "potential target" for prosecution and is "rightfully concerned that his words might incriminate him of acting to do harm to the United States."

The prosecution says Zubaydah had closely held information of the inner workings of the Sept 11 plot. That included clues that helped authorities identify the self-professed mastermind, Khalid Shaikh Mohamad, who faces trial at Guantanamo with Binalshibh. Zubaydah, 46, was captured in Pakistan in March 2002 and taken to a clandestine CIA detention facility. At the time, authorities suspected he was one of the highest ranking members of Al-Qaeda, though they have more recently described him in official documents only as a "facilitator" for the terrorist organization.

Convinced he had more information than he was providing, the CIA subjected him to the "enhanced" measures

approved by the administration of President George W Bush. That included being subjected to the torment of waterboarding 83 times in Aug 2003. Intelligence officers later sent a cable to Washington seeking assurances that he would "remain in isolation and incommunicado for the remainder of his life", according to a 2014 report on the program by a Senate committee.

He has been held at Guantanamo since Sept 2006 and has not been seen except for an appearance last year before a board considering whether he should be eligible for release. He did not speak during a brief public portion of that hearing and his release was rejected. He is one of 41 prisoners at the base. Denbeaux, also a professor at Seton Hall University School of Law in New Jersey, says the government won't charge Zubaydah because it doesn't want to be forced to disclose more details about the treatment he and other prisoners endured. "The failure to charge him after 15 years of torture and detention speaks eloquently," Denbeaux said. "To charge him would be to reveal the truth about the creation of America's torture program." — AP



GUANTANAMO BAY, Cuba: This 2016 photo released by lawyer Mark Denbeaux shows his client Zayne al Abidin Muhammad Husayn, also known as Abu Zubaydah, at the detention center on the US base in a photo taken by the International Committee of the Red Cross. — AP

CDU FACES DRY RUN IN BELLWETHER STATE

HALTERN AM SEE, Germany: Germany's most populous state goes to the polls on Sunday, with Chancellor Angela Merkel's party aiming to extend a winning streak that could seriously damage her rival before national elections. One in five German voters - 13.1 million - will cast ballots in North Rhine-Westphalia, a sprawling industrial region with a big migrant population which has been a Social Democratic Party (SPD) stronghold for 17 years.

But surveys show the center-left party running neck and neck with Merkel's Christian Democratic Union (CDU), with the latest published yesterday even putting it behind the CDU, adding to indications that initial enthusiasm for new SPD leader and challenger Martin Schulz could be fizzling out. The SPD had been ailing nationwide but saw a surge in support in February when Schulz took over. That, however, failed to translate into votes

in the last two state elections, when the SPD took a hammering and the CDU won comfortably.

"In a region where the SPD should be leading the CDU by 10 points, even if we tied with the party, it would already be a clear signal before the general elections, showing that the Schulz effect is over," said Wolfgang Partfoerder, 67, a former CDU mayor. Nationwide, the SPD is also struggling to close the gap, polling says. The party is now banking its hopes on incumbent NRW state premier Hannelore Kraft, 55. "If Kraft succeeds, then the chances of the SPD's bid to take back the chancellery grow. If she loses, it would mean that the Schulz train has slammed against a wall," said Spiegel weekly.

Political analyst Oskar Niedermayer also noted NRW's significance to the SPD, saying "a defeat there would be a disastrous symbol" for the party. With

much at stake four months before national elections, both Merkel and Schulz are pounding the streets in NRW where 18 million people live, including 4.2 million of migrant origin. Speaking in the town of Haltern am See, Merkel urged voters to look at her government's economic record, noting that NRW, with 7.5 percent unemployment, lags behind national rate of 5.8 percent.

"Through intelligent policies and solid finances, and by doubling our investments in research, we have managed to reduce the number of jobless people to half that in 2005 when I became chancellor," she said, campaigning for CDU candidate Armin Laschet.

Schulz touts SPD record

Mindful that local issues can tip the balance in regional elections, Merkel has also criticized the incumbents for

"persistent traffic jams... costing commuters in NRW time that they could well use in other ways". Schulz joins Kraft on Thursday in Leverkusen, Aachen and his hometown Wuersele. But even a win may not suffice for the SPD, as the score would be measured against its 2012 polling of 39.1 percent. The CDU at that time clinched just over 26 percent. SPD supporter Guenter Kadelka, 63, said he still hopes his party will prevail, even though "the Schulz surge has faded. We don't hear about it anymore."

Schulz is talking up Kraft's record, saying NRW boasts "the lowest number of unemployed in 23 years, a budget surplus for the first time in 43 years, leads Germany in terms of social housing built and is a trailblazer against tax evasion". But the SPD-led state - it governs in coalition with the Greens - has also come under attack over its security record. —AFP



LONDON: Britain's Prime Minister Theresa May (C) attends the London Somalia Conference at Lancaster House in London yesterday. —AFP

SOMALIA ASKS WORLD TO HELP STABILIZE NATION

DROUGHT IS RAVAGED STATE'S 'MOST PRESSING PRIORITY'

LONDON: Somalia's president yesterday urged world powers to help him fight the "raging enemies" of terror, corruption and poverty, at an international conference aimed at stabilizing the crisis-ravaged country under his new leadership. Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed told the London gathering that the conflict-ravaged state could thrive on the Somali natural flair for commerce if it can hold off the threats of famine, piracy and extremism.

The one-day conference, attended by world leaders, is looking to strike a new agreement between Somalia and its international support network to speed up progress on security, development and the economy by 2020. The troubled east African country, which has frequently topped the Fragile State Index, is under a new president, prime minister and parliament this year and the conference is focused on underpinning stability in this electoral cycle.

"I will spare no effort to realize the promise of

my campaign which was to fight Somalia's three raging enemies: Terrorism, corruption and poverty," the president, widely known by his nickname Farmajo, told the conference. "I will take measurable steps to unleash the great potential of my people to develop their own country and to do what they know best: trade and commerce."

Famine threat

The conference - focused on national security, political infrastructure, economic recovery and combating drought - is being co-chaired by Farmajo, United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and British Prime Minister Theresa May. Guterres said the drought was Somalia's "most pressing priority" and appealed for an additional \$900 million by the end of the year to prevent it worsening into a famine. "Somalia has to rebuild security, foster transparency and accountability, deal with a crippling drought and avert famine," he said. "More than

six million people in Somalia need assistance, or nearly half of the population."

The UN said last week that Somalia will have 1.4 million acutely malnourished children by the end of the year, up 50 percent from late 2016. The conference is also looking to ensure Somalia can take greater responsibility for its own security from the 22,000-strong African Union troop deployment. For the last decade, the militant Islamist group Shabaab has been fighting to overthrow the Somali government.

According to a US defense official, the Pentagon currently has several hundred troops stationed in Somalia, primarily devoted to counter-terror training. US forces also assist Somali troops in operations against Shabaab, and last week a Navy SEAL was killed during a night-time raid outside Mogadishu. President Donald Trump has granted the military's Africa Command greater leeway to conduct strikes against strikes on Shabaab. —AFP

MATTIS TELLS TURKEY PM: US COMMITTED TO YOUR SECURITY

LONDON: US Defense Secretary Jim Mattis told Turkish Prime Minister Binali Yildirim yesterday that Washington was committed to protecting its NATO ally, a spokeswoman said, as Turkey fumes over a decision to arm Kurdish fighters in Syria. The roughly half-hour meeting in London appeared to be the highest level talks between the two nations since Washington announced on Tuesday plans to back the YPG militia in an assault to retake the city of Raqqa from Islamic State.

Turkey views the YPG as the Syrian extension of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), which has fought an insurgency in southeast Turkey since 1984 and is considered a terrorist group by the United States, Turkey and Europe. A US official told Reuters that the United States was looking to boost intelligence cooperation with Turkey to support its fight against the PKK. The Wall Street Journal reported the effort could end up doubling the capacity of an intelligence fusion center in Ankara. It was unclear if the effort would be enough to soothe Turkey, however.

Turkey has warned the United States that its decision to arm Kurdish forces fighting Islamic State in Syria could end up hurting Washington, and accused its NATO ally of siding with terrorists. Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan, who will meet US President Donald Trump in Washington next week, has voiced hopes Washington might reverse the decision. Pentagon spokeswoman Dana White disclosed little about Mattis' meeting with Yildirim in London, where both men were attending a conference on Somalia. "The secretary reiterated US commitment to protecting our NATO ally," she said in a statement after the talks.



LONDON: Turkey's Prime Minister Binali Yildirim (right) shakes hands with US Secretary of Defense James Mattis, ahead of the Somalia Conference yesterday. —AP

EARTHQUAKE KILLS EIGHT IN WESTERN XINJIANG REGION

BEIJING: An earthquake rocked China's western Xinjiang region yesterday, killing eight people and injuring another 23 as more than 1,500 homes crumbled, state media reported. The shallow 5.4-magnitude quake struck at 5:58 am (2158 GMT Wednesday) 213 km south-southwest of the ancient Silk Road city of Kashgar, the US

Geological Survey said. Some people were buried after their adobe homes collapsed, said Wang Fuyou, Communist Party chief of Taxkorgan county, according to the official Xinhua news agency.

Rescuers were searching for people trapped in the rubble in Quzgun, the worst-hit village, which has a population of 449,

Wang said. More than 1,500 homes collapsed in Quzgun, Xinhua said. More than 9,000 people were relocated in the region while 1,000 soldiers and 1,500 civilians were participating in rescue efforts, the agency said. Xinhua said the injured were taken to hospital. —AFP



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YEKATERINBURG: Ruslan Sokolovsky, a blogger who played Pokemon Go on his phone in a church, leaves his hearing at a court yesterday. —AFP

UKRAINE EX-REBEL LEADERS DETAIL ROLE BY PUTIN AIDE

DECISION TO SPEAK OUT REFLECTS TENSIONS WITH RUSSIA

MOSCOW: A top aide to Vladimir Putin decides how the pro-Moscow administration of eastern Ukraine is run and who gets what jobs there, three former rebel leaders said, challenging Kremlin denials that it calls the shots in the region. Their comments to Reuters shed light on the role played by the secretive Vladislav Surkov, who has long been at the Russian president's side. The Kremlin says his official role is to advise Putin on Ukraine, where the rebels are fighting government forces. The extent of his influence and powers has not been spelled out or acknowledged by the Kremlin which casts its role in the conflict as one where it has influence but is not a protagonist.

The three men who have held senior roles in the separatist movement in eastern Ukraine have explained in detail how Surkov controls the situation on the ground via handpicked proxies who give him regular situation reports, used aides to arrange elections there, and has worked to build power structures that are responsive to Moscow's wishes. "Any call from Moscow was viewed as a call from the office of Lord God himself and... was implemented immediately," recalled Alexei Alexandrov, one of the leaders of the separatist rebellion in Donetsk who has since left the area in eastern Ukraine. Two other separatists corroborated his account, but declined to be identified.

Surkov and Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov did not respond to questions about the extent of Surkov's role in Ukraine. Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko's office also declined to comment. Reuters has previously gathered evidence that Moscow sent Russian troops and irregular fighters, and weapons, to help the separatists, who tried to break away from Ukraine in 2014. A senior former separatist described last year how Russian financial support propped up the breakaway area.

The Kremlin has always rejected those accusations as part of its effort to get Western

sanctions imposed on it over Ukraine eased. Reuters was unable to independently verify the separatists' descriptions of Surkov's role, but their individual versions of events tallied with one another, with key details and dates consistent with existing open source information about Surkov.

Alexandrov and the two other officials said their willingness to speak out underscores a sense that their uprising has been hijacked by the Kremlin, which has put in place loyalists who they say do not have the region's best interests at heart. All three said Moscow had gradually forced out most of the separatists behind the original uprising by using threats of death and detention.

"At first we were a bit naive and thought that maybe our Moscow uncles simply didn't understand what was happening here, when our Moscow comrades treated us like dirt," said one of the three former separatist leaders who said he last spoke to Surkov in November. "But then I understood that they understood everything, and simply wanted us to keep our mouths shut."

Handpicked Leader

Surkov helped Putin engineer Russia's tightly controlled political system and coined the term "sovereign democracy" which the Kremlin uses to describe that system. Viewed in the West as one of the architects of Russia's annexation of the Crimea peninsula from Ukraine in 2014, Surkov was blacklisted from entering the United States and the European Union in March of that year. He told a Russian newspaper that being on Washington's blacklist was a "big honour" for him.

The separatists who came forward to describe Surkov's role say he also played a key role in the appointment of Alexander Zakharchenko as leader of the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic (DNR) in eastern Ukraine, the rebels' biggest breakaway entity by population. Zakharchenko, a former coal mine electrician from eastern

Ukraine, was the leader of an anti-Kiev militia when he was summoned to Moscow in 2014. Separatist leaders were grooming him to be defence minister in the DNR. But after he met Surkov in the Kremlin, word came back from Surkov's office that Zakharchenko was to be given the top job. A spokeswoman for Zakharchenko did not respond to written questions.

At the time, the Donetsk rebels had been led by two men who described themselves as volunteers from Russia. Far-right former journalist Alexander Borodai was the political chief, and Igor Strelkov, who said he was a former agent in Russia's federal security service (FSB), was the military commander. Moscow wanted them replaced by a local to try to show the West that the uprising was a grassroots phenomenon, Borodai told Reuters. It picked Zakharchenko, whom it viewed as easy to control, said one of the three ex-separatist sources.

After what Alexandrov described as a verbal order from Surkov's office, Borodai and Strelkov quietly stepped down so that Zakharchenko could take over. Borodai said he had been the first to suggest that Zakharchenko take over, but declined to answer detailed questions on the subject. Strelkov did not respond to a request for comment, but has previously told Reuters he left the region after coming under pressure from people he declined to name.

After Zakharchenko was made leader of the Donetsk separatists, the region held an election which confirmed him in office. A team of Russians who worked for Surkov arrived in Donetsk to help run Zakharchenko's campaign, said Alexandrov. Reuters could not independently confirm that assertion. Ukraine and its Western allies then rejected the vote. Separatists shrugged that rejection off, however, and Moscow suggested the Ukrainian government could now negotiate directly with the separatists, an offer Kiev spurned. —Reuters

RUSSIAN PLAYING POKEMON GO IN CHURCH CONVICTED

YEKATERINBURG, Russia: A Russian court yesterday convicted a video blogger of inciting hatred against believers by posting videos online showing him chasing Pokemons in a church, giving him a suspended sentence. Ruslan Sokolovsky, a militant atheist who posted the videos on his YouTube channel, was detained in August 2016 and spent nine months in jail and under house arrest. His case, heard in the Urals city of Yekaterinburg, highlighted the role of the powerful Orthodox Church and sparked comparisons with the scandalous case that saw members of the Pussy Riot punk group sent to prison for a performance critical of President Vladimir Putin in a Moscow cathedral in 2012.

Sokolovsky, who was born in 1994, was accused of "blasphemy" by the Church after he filmed himself in Yekaterinburg's famous Church on the Blood zapping Pokemons on his smartphone and swearing, as well as saying Pokemons were easier to find there than Jesus. Judge Yekaterina Shoponyak convicted him on three charges, including inciting hatred and violating believers' rights. "Aggregating all offences, the court sentences (Sokolovsky) to three years and six months of prison. The punishment is suspended, with a probationary period of three years," Shoponyak said in a packed courtroom.

The court agreed with the prosecution that a number of videos on Sokolovsky's channel hurt the feelings of religious people and incited hatred against them. His statements "confuse citizens" and are "disrespectful of society," Shoponyak said during the three-hour-long verdict. "These actions are extremist actions," she said of his video postings. The decision to give Sokolovsky a suspended sentence and free him from house arrest, where he had been currently held, was met with claps and sighs of relief in the courtroom. "I thought I would die and not see him again," his mother said after the hearing. "Thank you everybody."

'I'm not an extremist'

Sokolovsky during the trial pleaded not guilty and refused to testify. In a passionate final statement, he said he is "an atheist, a cosmopolitan and a libertarian" and did not want to prevent anyone from practicing their religion. On Thursday Sokolovsky walked out of the courthouse to greet a crowd of supporters, which included a man wearing a yellow Pokemon costume, and said that he is "very pleased to be free". He added that he will "be very calm and quiet since they can chase me down and give me a real term". "It will be a long time before a new video clip appears," he said. "I'm not an extremist, that much is certain."

EU APPROVES VISA-FREE TRAVEL FOR UKRAINIANS

BRUSSELS: The European Union approved visa-free travel for Ukrainians yesterday, fulfilling a key promise to cement ties with Kiev as it remains embroiled in a deadly conflict with pro-Russian insurgents. "YES, we did it!" Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko wrote on Facebook after the Brussels decision, which the former Soviet republic has been trying to clinch for years. "It feels like coming home after a long and exhausting journey," the pro-Western leader said, adding that Ukraine was gradually "becoming part of a common European civilization".

The European Union and Ukraine sealed a broad trade and political association agreement after the overthrow of Kiev's Russian-backed government in 2014, with Brussels aiming to bring the Soviet-era satellite into the European fold. The agreement included the offer of the removal of visa requirements, a potent symbol of the bloc's commitment to Kiev, which has fretted over repeated delays.

A statement by the European Council, which groups the 28 EU member states, said visa liberalization was "an important development which will help strengthen ties between the people of Ukraine and the EU". "It follows the completion of the necessary reforms by Ukraine in a number of areas including migration, public order and security, external relations and fundamental rights," it said. The statement noted that the decision followed an EU agreement on a suspension mechanism which allows member states to halt the scheme "if there are serious migration or security issues with Ukraine".

Under the new scheme, Ukrainians with biometric passports can travel in the EU without a visa for 90 days in any 180-day period, for tourism, business or family visits - but not to work. It does not apply to Ireland or Britain. —AFP

GOP LAWMAKER GETS DRUBBING OVER HEALTH REFORM

WILLINGBORO, New Jersey: Tirades, yells and cries of "liar" lit up a town hall meeting in New Jersey, where for five hours furious Americans tore into a Republican congressman for attempting to repeal Obamacare. Tom MacArthur came home to his swing district to face the music Wednesday after helping to write the amendment that allowed a controversial health reform bill to pass the lower house last week.

But if healthcare was the focus, the largely hostile audience vented general outrage at President Donald Trump, taking issue with his temperament, his sacking of the FBI director and investigations into whether his campaign colluded with Russia in last year's election. Hour after hour, the polarization of US politics was laid bare as the former insurance broker was harangued by a crowd of several hundred in the largely Democrat town of Willingboro, north-east of Philadelphia. "Nobody with a pre-existing condition will either be declined coverage or priced out," insisted MacArthur, defending the bill. "That is a lie," shot back a woman as the crowd groaned.



WILLINGBORO, New Jersey: US Representative Tom MacArthur speaks to constituents during a town hall meeting on Wednesday. —AFP

"Folks I didn't come here to defend a position tonight," said the congressman at one point, pleading with hecklers to keep quiet. Outside the venue dozens of protesters held up posters reading "Killer Tom" and "People without healthcare die!" near a skeleton. Inside certified medical assistant Geoff

Ginter, 47, stole the show from the front row, subjecting a red-faced MacArthur to a 10-minute monologue lashing the health bill as "immoral".

'Greatest threat'

"You have been the single greatest threat to my family in the entire world,"

he bellowed into the microphone, jabbing his finger in MacArthur's direction to cheers and applause. The father from Pine Beach said his wife lives in fear of her cancer returning and their two children have cardiac and thyroid conditions. "I will not forgive, I will not forget," he yelled, explaining that he lives in fear of losing his job and not being able to afford health coverage if the bill passes. "You are the reason I can't sleep," he added, slamming the moderate Republican for working with "an orange-haired buffoon" in the White House.

Republicans blame Obamacare for sending insurance premiums soaring while reducing options for millions. Those who passed the bill says it is a necessary reform. But Democrats say the law helped 20 million Americans gain health coverage and saved thousands of lives by barring insurers from protecting people with pre-existing conditions. "I hear people shouting out vulgarities," hit back MacArthur after being interrupted an umpteenth time. "This is part of what's wrong in America, there's no civil discourse," he added. —AFP

COMEY FIRING LEAVES RED HOT CASE TO SUCCESSOR

WHITE HOUSE CLASH WITH ANY FBI CHIEF INEVITABLE

WASHINGTON: After FBI director James Comey's firing, his successor faces a tough challenge to assert independence while pursuing a politically-charged investigation into links between Donald Trump's presidential campaign and Russia. Analysts and former agents say Comey's exit gives the Federal Bureau of Investigation much-needed space to get past accusations that he botched the probe into Hillary Clinton's email server last year, helping swing the election to Trump.

But, as FBI directors ever since the agency's creation 108 years ago have found, politics is never far away, and clashes with the occupants of the White House who select them are almost inevitable. Whoever takes the lead of the 30,000-strong investigative agency could also end up crossing swords with Trump over the probe into Russian interference in the election, which the president has repeatedly branded "fake news".

But not aggressively following that risks more accusations that the agency has given in to politics. "It is no longer possible for the FBI to conduct its investigation into the Trump campaign's involvement in Russian electoral interference in any meaningfully independent way," said Julian Sanchez, a senior fellow at the Cato Institute. "Even if the next FBI director avoids any hint of improperly seeking to influence the investigation, the damage has been done; the sight of Comey's head on a pike is influence enough."

'Closets full of skeletons'

J Edgar Hoover, who led the country's top police agency for 48 years from 1924, had a legendary upper hand over the White House thanks to secret files on politicians he amassed over decades.



LOS ANGELES: Protesters denounce the firing of FBI Director James Comey by US President Donald Trump amid investigations into possible collusion

But since then FBI chiefs serve presidents at their own peril. Hoover's successor L Patrick Gray, acting director under president Richard Nixon, was forced out after just under a year for obeying White House orders and burning Watergate-related documents.

In 1993, president Bill Clinton fired director William Sessions, who served nearly six years, citing a report about managerial abuse but also clearly seeking his own top cop. But Sessions' replacement Louis Freeh turned the tables. The former FBI agent became a constant antagonist as the Clinton White House plunged into a series of scandals, most notably the Monica Lewinsky affair that nearly saw Clinton removed from office.

But it also made Freeh look partisan, on the side of a Republican assault on

the Democratic president. Freeh was never apologetic about taking a stance against Clinton, whom he said lacked "moral compass". "His closets were full of skeletons just waiting to burst out," Freeh wrote in a 2005 tell-all book.

Reckless

Comey was well-liked by the FBI rank and file after president Barack Obama named him director in Sept 2013. The former lawyer and prosecutor paid attention to staff needs, said 25-year agency veteran Ed Shaw. But when Comey went public on July 5, 2016, to announce he would not recommend criminal charges against Clinton for mis-handling classified emails, Shaw says he and many of his colleagues were deeply disappointed. — AFP



DAYTONA BEACH, Florida: Some Bethune-Cookman University graduates turn their backs as US Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos delivers the commencement address to the graduates at the Ocean Center on Wednesday. — AP

DEVOS HECKLED AT BLACK COLLEGE

DAYTONA BEACH, Florida: Education Secretary Betsy DeVos vowed support for the students at a historically black university at their graduation ceremony, but was nearly drowned out by booing and shouts of "Liar!" Many graduating students turned their back to her in protest. DeVos sought common ground with her audience at Bethune-Cookman University on Wednesday by praising the school's founder and mission, delivering a plea to avoid the "chorus of conflict" and asking that people listen to those they may instinctively perceive as opponents.

"Let's choose to hear one another out," DeVos said, reading her prepared text in a measured tone despite continuing waves of boos, catcalls and only scattered applause. DeVos alienated many African-Americans in February when she described historically black colleges as "real pioneers when it comes to school choice". After a storm of criticism, she acknowledged that these colleges were "born, not out of mere choice, but out of necessity, in the face of racism".

In her keynote at the Daytona Beach university, DeVos repeatedly praised the school's founder, Mary McLeod Bethune, as someone who "refused to accept systemic and repulsive racism," and had "the courage to change old ideas". "I am here to demonstrate in the most direct way possible that I and the administration are fully committed to your success and to the success of every student across this great country," she said. As the crowd kept trying to shout her down, university president Edison Jackson briefly took over the microphone to sternly lecture the class of 2017. — AP

BABY DEATHS SOAR IN VENEZUELA CRISIS

CARACAS: Thousands of babies died in Venezuela last year, new official data shows, highlighting the tragic impact of the country's economic crisis as political tension heightened with deadly street clashes Wednesday. The health ministry said deaths of infants under the age of one soared by 30 percent in 2016, a year when hospitals and protesters complained of severe shortages of medical supplies. Deaths of mothers linked to childbirth soared by two-thirds meanwhile, according to the data published by the ministry - the latest such figures since 2015.

It said 11,466 babies died in 2016, up from 8,812 the year before. The report gave no comparative rate in relation to the number of births. Cases of malaria rose by 76 percent to more than 240,000. The collapse in prices for Venezuela's crucial oil exports has left it short of cash to import medicine and basic goods. The Venezuelan Medical Federation says hospitals have only three percent of the medicines and supplies that they need to operate normally. The opposition blames President



CARACAS: Opposition activists are hit by the jet of a riot police water cannon during a protest against President Nicolas Maduro on Wednesday. —AFP

Nicolas Maduro for the crisis. Deadly unrest broke out on April 1 as his opponents protested, demanding elections.

Dirty protest

In fresh troubles on Wednesday, police fired tear gas and water cannon

at protesters who tried to march to the Supreme Court in Caracas. Protesters with shields and masks responded by hurling Molotov cocktails, paint bombs and stones. A 27-year-old man was killed in the protest in Caracas after being shot, according to Nestor Reverol,

the Minister of the Interior. Another person aged 38 died two days after being shot in the head in a protest in the western city of Merida, the state prosecution service said. That brought the overall death toll from the unrest to 38.

Masked gunmen opened fire on demonstrators elsewhere in the capital but there were no injuries reported. Some demonstrators complained that police did not protect them from these pro-government forces. One National Police spokesman however said officers were guaranteeing demonstrators' right to protest.

A move by Maduro to reform the constitution has inflamed protesters, who say it is a ploy to resist calls for early elections.

Other protesters took to the streets on Wednesday armed with jars of excrement to hurl at police. "We are using those 'poopotov' bombs as we call them because they repress us with Molotov cocktails, with pellet guns and everything. And this is our only way to throw something at them," one protester told AFP. — AFP

EX-PRESIDENT LULA CALLS CORRUPTION TRIAL A 'FARCE'

LEFTIST LEADER VOWS TO SEEK THIRD TERM

CURITIBA, Brazil: Brazil's leftist former president Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva called the corruption trial threatening to end his storied career a "farce" during almost five hours of testimony Wednesday. Arguably the country's most popular and controversial politician, Lula is accused of receiving a seaside apartment as a kickback from the OAS construction company. If found guilty, he could be barred from running for office and even jailed, destroying his hopes of coming back to power in the 2018 presidential elections.

The closed hearing put Lula, 71, face-to-face with Judge Sergio Moro, a hero to many Brazilians for his relentless pursuit of senators, millionaires and other powerful figures in a graft probe called "Car Wash". Lula, whose 2003-2010 rule made him loved by the left and equally

loathed on the right, would be by far Moro's biggest scalp. However, the fiery orator - who grew up in severe poverty before becoming a metal workers' union leader, co-founder of the Workers' Party and leftist icon - was defiant.

"I consider this trial illegitimate and the accusation a farce," he told Moro at the hearing in the southern city of Curitiba, video released afterward showed. He said prosecutors were accusing him "based on allegations in the press".

As soon as he got out of court, Lula went to a campaign style rally with several thousand supporters who had bused into Curitiba earlier. "I thought after... there would at least be a document that the apartment was mine," he told them. "I want to be judged on proof."

Lula reiterated his plans to seek a third term next year. "I am preparing to

return as a candidate," he said. "I want to show that the elite is not competent to fix this country but that the steel worker... will manage." The Lula faithful, many clad in Workers' Party red, responded deliriously, cheering "Lula, warrior of the Brazilian people," and letting off fireworks. "He still has this incredible charisma, this connection," said lawyer William Bionek, 30, who was in the crowd. A much smaller group of opponents also gathered, raising an inflatable caricature of Lula dressed in prison garb.

Embezzlement, bribery

Brazil's media portrayed the court session as a showdown between two of the most powerful men in Brazil. Moro, 44, has become a national figure for his role leading the "Car Wash" probe, which revealed massive kickbacks to politicians in return for inflated contracts with state oil company Petrobras, much of it during Lula's presidency. Lula faces a total of five corruption trials. In Wednesday's case, Lula is alleged to have taken a bribe from OAS - one of the main Petrobras contractors - in the form of a seaside apartment at a posh resort near Sao Paulo.

But seated at a table with lawyers and prosecutors, Lula denied everything. "I never asked for and I never received the apartment," he said. Prosecutors have previously painted Lula as a kingpin over the wider Petrobras corruption scheme. However, in the video of the hearing Moro went out of his way to reassure Lula that he would "be treated with maximum respect, as any defendant, but also equally considering the office that he had held previously". He also stressed that Lula did not face imminent arrest. — AFP



CURITIBA, Brazil: Brazil's former president Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva is seen amid supporters as he arrives at a federal justice court for a hearing with senior "Lava Jato" (Car Wash) judge Sergio Moro on Wednesday. — AFP



NASSAU, Bahamas: Supporters celebrate the general election victory of Hubert Minnis of Free National Movement on Wednesday. —AFP

BAHAMAS ELECTS MINNIS AS PM

NASSAU, Bahamas: The Bahamas voted in a new leader Wednesday, with Hubert Minnis, who campaigned on a platform of change, beating scandal-tainted incumbent Perry Christie in general elections on the island archipelago. "My fellow Bahamians, the people have spoken," Minnis, a doctor, said in a victory rally before thousands of supporters. "We have been given a mandate for change." Christie, leader of Progressive Liberal Party, conceded defeat in a statement in which he said he had made a congratulatory telephone call to Minnis wishing the leader of the Free National Movement success.

"I understand as perhaps few others the challenges that await Dr Minnis, and I wish him only success on behalf of our nation. He has my full support for a smooth transition," he said. Christie, who was finishing his second non-consecutive term as prime minister, was dogged by scandals and double-digit unemployment. The long-delayed opening of a \$4.2 billion mega-resort called Baha Mar, and last month's spectacular failure of the Fyre music festival - which stranded partygoers who paid as much as \$100,000 to attend - were factors in the vote.

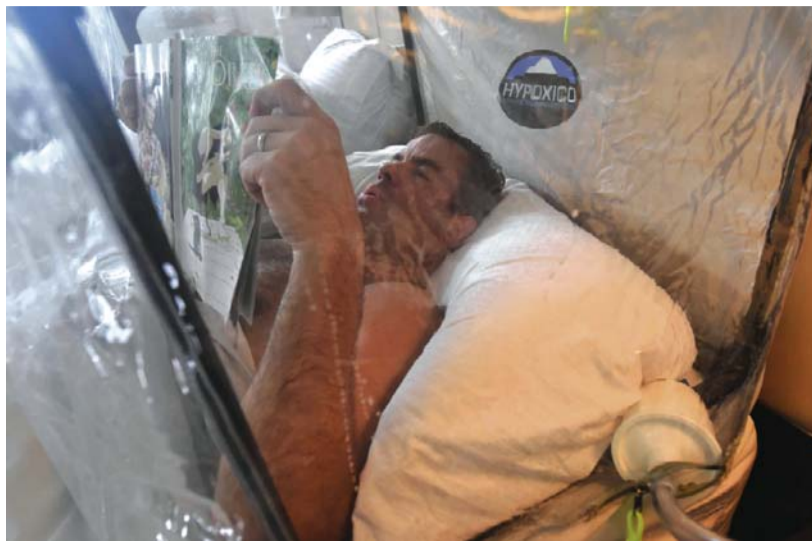
Minnis campaigned on a platform of change, seeking to implement term limits on the prime minister and promote "Bahamian ownership in the economy," according to his website. "I support the FNM 100 percent, because I feel Christie was not doing a good job in the five years we gave him," Nassau resident Jmeail Dames said of the prime minister's current term. "Dr Minnis has endured trial after trial and came out victorious. He has a task ahead of him," said FNM supporter Travis Edgecombe, 28. "But I do believe that this new administration will provide new and innovative plans to create opportunities for Bahamians." — AFP

ACCLIMATIZE IN BED, CLIMB EVEREST QUICKLY

KATHMANDU: As other Everest hopefuls were trudging up to base camp in April, Singapore-based Brooks Entwistle was at home, planning his daughter's 13th birthday party and preparing for his company's annual general meeting. But at night he would climb into a hypoxic, or low oxygen, tent meant to mimic the thin air at high altitude. Now on Everest, Entwistle, a partner with Singapore's Everstone Group, is hoping to summit the world's highest peak in just 35 days - half the time of a conventional climb.

For decades, the dream of reaching the summit of Mount Everest has required at least two months on the mountain doing a series of acclimatization rotations to get used to the harsh low-oxygen environment at the top of the world. Now pre-acclimatization, which has been at the fringes of the climbing world for several years, is gaining traction, dividing the community between those who see it as yet another tool of modern mountaineering and purists who dismiss it as a gimmick.

An increasing number of expedition organizers are offering "rapid ascent" packages that allow clients to pre-accli-



SINGAPORE: This picture taken on April 22, 2017 shows Brooks Entwistle demonstrating the use of a pre-acclimatization tent in his home as part of his training for his attempt to summit Mount Everest. — AFP

matize in a tent at home before zipping up the world's tallest peaks in just a few weeks. Entwistle and climbers with at least two other operators are attempting to summit Everest this year

after using pre-acclimatization tents, each paying between \$75,000 and \$85,000, more than double the cheapest rates to scale Everest the conventional way. Proponents of pre-acclimat-

ization say spending less time on the mountain lowers the risk of frostbite, accidents and extreme weight loss commonly associated with high-altitude mountaineering.

"We've been doing this for a few years, now we've seen other companies offering it as well... their clients are demanding it," said US-based Adrian Ballinger of Alpenglow Expeditions, who started experimenting with the tents in 2011. "People are actually healthier on the climb because they don't spend so much time on the mountain," said Ballinger, who took one client up Everest in 2013 using the system and another four in 2016.

In 2014, Entwistle had a rare nine-month break from work. He headed to Everest in early April to begin acclimatizing and planned to make a push for the summit in mid-May. But his plans were disrupted by an avalanche that killed 16 Sherpa guides and effectively shut down the climbing season. "I don't have time like that now. For me, it would be impossible to go up Everest without this method," Entwistle said. — AFP



SEOUL: South Korean President Moon Jae-In speaks on the phone with Chinese President Xi Jinping at the presidential Blue House yesterday. — AP

MOON IN CALLS WITH CHINA, JAPAN LEADERS

SEOUL: New South Korean President Moon Jae-In spoke to the leaders of China and Japan Thursday, hours after a telephone call with his US counterpart Donald Trump, officials and reports said, as he began shaping his approach to the nuclear-armed North. In a 40-minute conversation with Chinese leader Xi Jinping, the two agreed denuclearizing Pyongyang was a "common goal" between them, Moon's office said. Ties between Seoul and Beijing have soured over the South's deployment of a controversial US anti-missile system aimed at guarding against threats from the nuclear-armed North.

Moon also had a telephone call with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, Japanese news agency Jiji reported. Seoul is embroiled in a diplomatic dispute with former colonial power Japan over wartime history, but fellow US ally Tokyo is also targeted by the North. China sees the deployment of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system as a threat to its own military capability and has slapped a series of measures against South Korean businesses seen as economic retaliation.

In their first phone conversation, Moon and Xi "agreed that denuclearizing the Korean peninsula is the two countries' common goal", the South Korean president's spokesman Yoon Young-Chan told reporters. Moon, who took office on Wednesday, favors engagement with the North - whose key diplomatic backer is China - to bring it to the negotiating table over its nuclear and missile ambitions. Moon also called for "dialogue along with sanctions and pressure" on the North to push Pyongyang to talks, Yoon said. — AFP

N KOREA UNIVERSITY DRAWS US EVANGELICALS DESPITE RISKS

KOREAN AMERICAN FOURTH US CITIZEN IN CUSTODY

SEOUL: Like many other Americans who came to teach at the foreign-funded Pyongyang University of Science and Technology (PUST), Kim Hak Song was a Christian missionary who raised money from a church to come to North Korea. Kim had been running PUST's experimental farm before he was detained on Saturday, travelling by train from Pyongyang to China's border town of Dandong, PUST's chancellor and co-founder Chan-mo Park told Reuters.

The university, which is open about its Christian affiliation, says its sole mission is to help North Korea's future elite learn the skills to modernize the isolated country and engage with the outside world. Former teachers say the faculty is careful to avoid anything that looks like missionary work. The university attracts a steady stream of devout American Christians, despite North Korea's history of handing down long sentences with hard labor to missionaries accused of various transgressions.

North Korea has in the past used detainees to extract concessions, including high-profile visits from the United States, which has no formal diplomatic relations with North Korea. Chancellor Park said roughly 60 US citizens come to PUST each semester, but now "there's less than that". North Korea's official news agency KCNA said Kim was detained for "hostile acts", without elaborating. Tony Kim, another professor who worked at PUST, was arrested two weeks earlier for a similar reason. A spokesman for the university which opened in 2010, said the arrests of the two faculty members were "not connected in any way with the work of PUST".

The detentions came amid tensions on the Korean peninsula over North Korea's pursuit of nuclear weapons in

response to what it says is a threat of a US-instigated war. The White House said on Monday the latest reported detentions were "concerning" and the State Department was working with the Swedish embassy in Pyongyang to seek their release.

Setting Christian Examples

Two years before he was detained, Kim Hak Song raised money for his trip to North Korea from members of the Korean-language Sao Paulo Oriental Mission church in Brazil, according to his post on the church's website. "I've committed to devoting my last drop of blood to this work," he wrote. Kim, a Chinese-Korean and naturalized US citizen, had been doing missionary work in China before joining PUST, according to Korean-language church websites.

Kim's detention makes him the fourth American in North Korean custody. In March last year, North Korea sentenced US college student Otto Warmbier to 15 years of hard labor for the alleged theft of a propaganda poster. South Korean-born Kim Dong Chul, a naturalized US citizen, was convicted a month later and sentenced to 10 years hard labor - shortly after Washington levied more sanctions against Pyongyang in response to a missile test in February of that year.

Founded by Korean-American evangelical Christian James Kim, PUST spends roughly \$2 million annually on operating expenses, the school said in a statement. Much of it comes from the Korean diaspora in the United States, along with churches in South Korea and private foundations and philanthropists. PUST has 500 undergraduate students and 60 graduate students in mostly three departments - electronic and com-

puter engineering, international finance and management and agriculture and life sciences. The school recruits many of its teachers from Korean churches and Christian colleges in the United States. Faculty receive no income or stipends from the university, but do get housing and cafeteria meals. PUST has a sister institution across the border in northern China called the Yanbian University of Science and Technology (YUST).

Tony Kim, the first PUST faculty member to be detained, was listed as a professor of accounting at YUST on its website. He moved to PUST in 2006, four years before the university opened, to "take care of financial matters," according to the newsletter seen by Reuters, which was recruiting teachers for the school. PUST also recruits teachers via social media and at overseas universities and churches, via the YUST PUST Foundation, its US-based charity arm according to the foundation's website, and former teachers. The foundation raised just over \$1.1 million in 2015 and has brought in \$4.5 million since 2011, according to tax filings.

Opening Minds

The recent detentions are not the first time teachers from the school have attracted unwanted attention. A 2014 memoir by Korean-American Suki Kim, compiled while she was an English professor at PUST, said the faculty was constantly monitored. Former PUST teachers said her account was exaggerated. "The reality is much softer and friendlier," one said. Not all PUST teachers are religious. Will Scott, a research fellow at the University of Michigan who taught at PUST in 2013 and 2015, told Reuters he felt welcome in the community despite being an atheist. — Reuters

MODI HEADS TO LANKA AS CHINA INFLUENCE RISES

COLOMBO: India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi headed to Sri Lanka yesterday on a charm offensive as New Delhi seeks to reassert its influence on the island amid signs of a Chinese comeback. Sri Lanka's President Maithripala Sirisena came to power in Jan 2015 promising to loosen ties with China after a decade of hefty funding by Beijing under his predecessor. When Modi visited the island shortly afterwards, he promised to "script a golden chapter in the history of India-Sri Lanka relations".

Just two years later, analysts say Beijing's influence is on the rise again as Colombo struggles to find alternative sources of foreign capital. For India, which wants to keep Sri Lanka within its sphere of influence, that is a worrying sign. "For Modi to visit again so soon is clearly an expression of India's concerns about China's deepening economic roots in Sri Lanka and the potential strategic, even mili-

tary, advantages this might ultimately bring," said Alan Keenan of the International Crisis Group. Sirisena halted all Chinese-funded infrastructure projects when he swept to power in 2015, ousting the island's strongman leader Mahinda Rajapakse, who had aggressively courted Beijing. Now these projects, which included new highways, railway lines and a telecommunications tower, are back on track. A \$1.4 billion Chinese-funded land reclamation project outside Colombo harbor has also been relaunched.

New Delhi has long been nervous of a Chinese presence at the Colombo port, a key transshipment point for Indian cargo. Even more controversially, Colombo is trying to sell a controlling interest in a strategically-located deep-sea port in the south to China. Shortly after hosting Modi, Sri Lanka's Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe will travel to China, where he is expected to try to finalize that sale. — AFP



COLOMBO: India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi (center) is watched by Sri Lankan Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe (center right) as he receives betel leaves from two Sri Lankan children after arriving at Bandaranaike International Airport yesterday. — AFP



BHARATPUR, India: People look at the debris after a building wall collapsed onto guests at a wedding in this district in Rajasthan state yesterday. — AP

WALL COLLAPSE KILLS 24 AT INDIA WEDDING

POLICE DETAIN WEDDING HALL MANAGER

JAIPUR, India: A wall crashed down on an Indian wedding party during a storm killing at least 24 people including four children, police said yesterday, with one rescuer describing the scene as "horrific". Dozens more were injured when the 13-foot (four-meter) high concrete wall collapsed, trapping guests who had taken shelter from violent rain in a tin shack on Wednesday night, police superintendent Anil Tank told AFP. "We worked through the night," one rescue worker at the scene in Bharatpur, Rajasthan state, told India TV news network. "We tried to rescue as many people as possible, the scene was horrific."

Tank, a senior officer in Bharatpur, said 26 people were injured, 15 of them seriously. Television footage showed anxious relatives standing next to hospital beds. Police have launched an investigation and detained a wedding hall manager on charges of causing death by negligence. "We have registered a case and taken one of the managers of the banquet hall into custody," district magistrate Narendra Kumar Gupta told reporters. "We will investigate if the hall owners had a valid license. In case they did not have a license, appropriate action will be taken against them."

Gupta also announced compensation of 50,000 rupees (\$775) for the family of each person killed. Prime Minister Narendra Modi said the incident had pained him "beyond words". "My thoughts are with the families of the

deceased. I hope the injured recover soon," he tweeted. Indian weddings are often grandiose affairs with huge numbers of guests and lavish ceremonies that run for several days. Many families pour their life savings into them, and it is not uncommon for affluent urban families to host thousands of guests.

In 2014 one guest was killed when a floating platform carrying the bride and groom that was suspended from the end of a crane collapsed onto a wedding party. Disasters more often result from celebratory firing into the air, particularly in rural north India where gun ownership is widespread. Last year, at least three people died in such incidents, and earlier this month a 12-year-old boy died of gunshot injuries sustained at a wedding in northern Uttar Pradesh state.

Rajasthan is one of India's most arid states, but suffers frequent dust and rain storms during the hotter months. A heat-wave has swept across much of India in recent weeks, with temperatures reaching 44 degrees Celsius in the capital Delhi. Building collapses are common in India, especially during the annual monsoon season. A massive influx of people to cities in search of jobs and a shortage of low cost housing have fuelled the construction of illegal buildings across the country, often with sub-standard material. Some 1,885 people died from the collapse of various structures in India in 2015, according to the National Crimes Record Bureau. — AFP

TWO KILLED AS TROOPS TRADE FIRE IN KASHMIR

SRINAGAR: Two civilians were killed and three others injured Thursday when Indian and Pakistani soldiers traded gunfire and shelled each other's border posts in the disputed Kashmir region, officials from the two sides said. Indian army spokesman Lt Col. Manish Mehta said Pakistani soldiers attacked Indian military posts on Wednesday night with automatic weapons and mortars in Nowshera sector along the highly militarized Line of Control dividing Kashmir between the nuclear-armed rivals.

Mehta said the Pakistani army "initiated indiscriminate firing," and called it an "unprovoked" violation of a 2003 cease-fire accord. Indian police said a 35-year-old woman was killed and her husband was injured when a Pakistani shell hit their home. However, Pakistan denied that it initiated the clash and accused Indian soldiers of firing and shelling in at least in five sectors, causing the death of a civilian and injuries to two others. The Foreign Ministry said it summoned an Indian diplomat in Islamabad to register a protest and "strongly condemned the unprovoked ceasefire violations" by Indian troops.

In the past, both countries have often accused the other of initiating border skirmishes that led to the deaths of soldiers and civilians. Earlier this month, India accused Pakistani soldiers of killing two Indian soldiers and mutilating their bodies. Pakistan denied the allegation. Last year, Indian and Pakistani soldiers engaged in some of the worst fighting along the Line of Control since the two nations agreed to the cease-fire accord. India and Pakistan have a long history of bitter relations over Kashmir, a Himalayan territory claimed by both. They have fought two of their three wars over the region since they gained independence from British colonial rule in 1947. — AP



SRINAGAR: A Kashmiri student throws stones at Indian policemen yesterday. Students have been protesting since last month against a police raid in a college in southern Pulwama town in which at least 50 students were injured. — AP

FRIDAY, MAY 12, 2017

Friday Times

Lifestyle

www.kuwaittimes.net

Venice art fest a tonic for global woes

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In this photo the Fresque des Qu'Ébécois on Côte de la Montagne is shown in Old Quebec, in Quebec City. — AP



NETFLIX RAILS AT FRENCH ESTABLISHMENT AFTER CANNES BAN

Netflix boss Reed Hastings has hit out at the French cinema "establishment", which he claims wants to block the streaming giant's movies from the Cannes film festival. Hastings took to his personal Facebook account late Wednesday to claim that "the establishment is closing ranks against us", after Cannes effectively slapped a ban on future Netflix-backed movies at the world's leading film festival.

The organizers said they were forced to change their rules after the streaming giant refused to screen its two films in the running for this year's Palme d'Or top prize in French cinemas. "From now on every film wishing to be in competition at Cannes must be shown in French cinemas afterwards," they said in a statement. But Hastings-whose Silicon Valley-based operation now has 100 million subscribers-placed the blame squarely at the door of French cinemas.

He said: "See Okja (a new sci-fi thriller) on Netflix June 20th. Amazing film that theatre chains want to block us from entering into Cannes film festival competition." Okja, star-

ring Tilda Swinton, will nevertheless compete alongside another Netflix-based movie "The Meyerowitz Stories"-starring Adam Sandler and Ben Stiller-for the Palme at the festival, which starts next week. The crux of the Cannes row turns on French law, which restricts online streaming until three years after a movie is put on general release.

Change the rules

The battle prompted French directors and producers yesterday to appeal to their government to change rules. "More than ever our rules look out of date," said director Claude Lelouch, who heads the ARP film-makers' lobby group. Under the present rules, films can be bought, rented or watched on video on demand four months after they go on general release. But subscription streaming platforms have to wait 36 months to show them. The row comes as Netflix is locked in a bitter conflict with big US cinema chains.

Top Hollywood directors including director Sofia Coppola-whose new film "The Beguiled" is also competing at Cannes-have also urged



In this file photo, a yacht is seen behind a logo for the 64th international film festival, in Cannes, southern France. — AP

their fans to watch their films first on the big screen rather than stream them on tablets and phones. French cinema owners reacted furiously last month after four films distributed by streaming rivals Netflix and Amazon were chosen to run for Cannes' top prize. Festival organizers tried to negotiate a compromise, with a "limited release" of the movies in France mooted.

But faced with the possibility of a Palme d'Or-winning film being shown in only "one or two screens" in France, talks with Netflix broke down. Amazon, on the other hand, is giving its film, "The Beguiled", a proper cinematic release in France, as it did with Woody Allen's Cannes contender last year, "Cafe Society". Netflix's long-running battle with

cinema chains in the US centers on its insistence on releasing its movies online the same day as they hit theatres.

In 2015 most of the big multiplex chains refused to screen the long-awaited Netflix-made sequel to the martial arts blockbuster "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon". The film reportedly bombed, with Netflix taking the highly unusual step of not releasing its box office figures. Its online rival Amazon has taken a very different approach. Rather than confronting the cinema establishment, Amazon Studios courts Hollywood, releasing its films in theatres before they are made available to subscribers. Nineteen films are in competition for the Palme d'Or, with Nicole Kidman starring in three in the official selection. — AFP



This file photo shows Ozzy Osbourne of Black Sabbath performing at Ozzfest 2016 at San Manuel Amphitheater in Los Angeles, California. — AFP

Ozzy Osbourne to 'bark at moon' during solar eclipse

With North America readying for a major solar eclipse, Ozzy Osbourne will celebrate the exact moment by singing "Bark at the Moon" as the sun disappears. Moonstock, a new metal festival in Illinois, will take place over four days culminating on August 21 with the US-wide eclipse. Osbourne will take the stage at 1:20 (1820 GMT) and start his set with "Bark at the Moon," his 1983 song about the wrath of a werewolf-like monster.

The 68-year-old metal legend will need to be punctual as the total eclipse will last two minutes and 29 seconds. The song runs four minutes and 16 seconds on his album by the same name. The festival, which recommends that fans wear protective eyewear, will take at a vineyard near De Soto, Illinois, about 140 kilometers southeast of St. Louis-within the region that will have the best visibility of the eclipse if the weather permits. The solar eclipse-when the Moon blocks the Sun as it passes between the vital star and Earth-will be the first to be visible across the entire United States since 1918, according to NASA. The eclipse will be at least partially visible in all 50 states including Hawaii as well as in Canada. Osbourne, with lyricism that dabbles in the occult and infamous on-stage gestures such as biting the head off a bat, is one of the pioneers of heavy metal. His band Black Sabbath in February played what it said would be its last-ever concert in its native Birmingham, England, but Osbourne has several solo shows ahead. — AFP

Demi Lovato, Kate Hudson collaborate on workout clothes

Kate Hudson and Demi Lovato went from working out at the gym together to working on a fashion-line collaboration. Hudson, who co-founded active wear brand Fabletics in 2013, says she instantly hit it off with the "Confident" singer when the two ran into each other at the gym. They were celebrating together Wednesday at the Demi Lovato for Fabletics Collaboration launch event. "Because she is fierce. It was perfect," said Hudson, 38.

"Her values and what she stands for is a big part of what our brand is really pushing out there for women. Body positivity, strength, taking control of your life and things. She's been a very open communicator about things in her own life, which I think is really important for women to feel like they can come out and be really open about things that are going on in their life and finding happiness."

Lovato, 24, says she has bipolar disorder and has been an advocate for mental health awareness. The pop singer says the fashion line reflects her story. "It's come forward through the confidence that you get when you wear the clothing and the cuts are great, the compression in the pants are great. It's all about feeling comfortable while you're working out and while you are going about your day," said Lovato.

"She trains regularly with mixed martial arts fighters and says she also enjoys workouts "with weights, like strength and conditioning." The new limited-edition capsule collection is youthful with leggings in pink and yellow flowered prints, black-and-white shorts and long-sleeved gray shirts. A long, hot-pink tank top is emblazoned with "CONFIDENT" in capital letters at the bottom. Lovato says she was very hands-on during the design process, "down to color swatches, what the tag looks like."

"I didn't draw. That's the only thing that I didn't do is draw the sketches ... I love what we've come up with," she said. The athletic brand offers collections in sizes ranging from XXS to 3XL. Lovato recently announced a YouTube series and said she's planning to release a new studio album later this year.—AP



Demi Lovato, left, and Kate Hudson arrive at the launch of Demi Lovato and Fabletics Collaboration Collection in Beverly Hills, California. — AP

Yemen war threatens millennia-old mummies



A general view shows a millenia-old mummy displayed in a glass cabinet at Sanaa University, in the Yemeni capital.— AFP

Yemen's war has claimed thousands of lives and pushed millions to the brink of famine. Now the conflict threatens to erase a unique part of the country's ancient history. A collection of millennia-old mummies at Sanaa University Museum in the Yemeni capital could face destruction as a result of the fighting. With electricity intermittent at best and the country's ports under blockade, experts are fighting to save the 12 mummies in the face of heat, humidity and a lack of preservative chemicals.

Some of the remains, from pagan kingdoms that ruled the region around 400 BC, still have teeth and strands of hair. "These mummies are tangible evidence of a nation's history," said Abdulrahman Jarallah, head of the archaeology department at Sanaa University, but "even our mummies are affected by the war." "Mummies need a suitable, controlled environment and regular care, including sanitisation every six months," he said.

"Some of them have begun to decay as we cannot secure electricity and the proper preservative chemicals, and we're struggling to control the stench." "We're concerned both for the conservation of the mummies and for the health of those handling them," Jarallah said. The mummies are among a host of priceless ancient remains threatened by conflicts across the region. From Syria's Palmyra to Libya's Leptis Magna, millennia-old historical remains face looting and destruction in various parts of the Middle East.

The Islamic State group systematically demolished pre-Islamic monuments in Syria and Iraq after seizing swathes of both countries in 2014, looting and selling smaller pieces on the black market to fund their rule. Swiss authorities last year seized cultural relics looted from Yemen, Syria and Libya that had been stored in Geneva's free ports—highly secured warehouses where valuables can be stashed tax-free with few questions asked.

Supplies, experts needed

Old Sanaa, inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List since 1986, faces other dangers. Perched 2,300 meters up in Yemen's western mountains, it has been continuously inhabited for over 2,500 years and is home to some of the earliest Islamic architecture. With more than 100 mosques and 6,000 houses built before the 11th century, the old city is famed for its multi-storeyed homes of red basalt rock, with arched windows decorated with white latticework.

But months after a Saudi-led coalition intervened against Iran-backed Huthi rebels in March 2015, UNESCO added the ancient city to its List of World Heritage in Danger. In June that year, a bombing in the old city killed five people and destroyed a section including several houses and an Ottoman fort. Witnesses blamed an air strike by the Saudi-led coalition on the rebel-held capital. No party has claimed responsibility for the strike. The coalition has also imposed an air and naval blockade on Huthi-controlled Red Sea ports that are crucial entry points for food and aid. The UN estimates 60 percent of Yemen's population is at risk of famine. Yemeni archaeologists have appealed to both local authorities and international organizations to help preserve Yemen's mummies by easing the flow of supplies and personnel. "We can already see the mummies suffering the effects of a long period of not having been properly maintained," Sanaa University Museum restoration specialist Fahmi al-Ariqi said.

"We need supplies and experts in this sort of maintenance to work with us to save the 12 mummies here at the university, as well as another dozen at the National Museum in Sanaa." But while those calls have gone unanswered, Yemen's archaeologists remain confident that their heritage can be saved. "Yemen is full of archaeological sites and mummified remains that are still undiscovered," said Jarallah. "Our culture, our history, will never disappear."—AFP

Italian singer
Francesco
Gabbani
performs
during the
first semi-final
rehearsal for the
Eurovision Song
Contest in Kiev
— AFP photos



Italy's cool karma chameleon is hot Eurovision tip

With his gravelly voice, catchy choruses and chatty good nature Francesco Gabbani has already conquered Italian fans and is now chasing full-throated glory at Saturday's Eurovision Song Contest. The slicked back hair, snazzily snug outfits and a slightly Freddie Mercuryesque moustache certainly help to explain his visual appeal. But singer-songwriter Gabbani, 34, also hopes that including someone dancing next to him in an ape costume will help justify his current status as bookies' favorite to land a third title for Italy, after their 1964 and 1990 Eurovision successes.

Gabbani's slick video of his grooving "Occidental's karma" (westerners' karma) song has already soared up the continental charts and he hopes his performance in Kiev on Saturday will garner those all-important votes from the national juries and TV audiences. This year's highly original entry looks set to change the Eurovision fortunes of Italy which has skipped more than half of the previous 35 editions. But for Italians, he has already landed the top prize.

Gabbani, whose steady girlfriend of five years is a tattoo artist, landed the Italian nomination by winning the Sanremo music festival, a five-night affair which keeps Italians glued to their television screens every February. This year's Sanremo drew an average nightly audience of 10.8 million for a 50 percent national TV share-giving Gabbani, as the winner, legions of fans and plenty of popular momentum for his Eurovision assault.

Created back in 1951 in the tourist resort of San Remo, a short hop from the French Riviera, the festival has helped launch several top Italian names from Eros Ramazzotti to Andrea Bocelli. Traditionally, the festival winner earns a slot at Eurovision. Gabbani, born further along the Mediterranean coast at Carrara, famed for its marble, grew up in a musical environment—his parents running a shop selling instruments. After releasing several low key albums he burst onto the scene at the 2016 edition of San Remo, winning the accolade of best newcomer with his feel-good dance entry "Amen."

Hi-energy, perplexing lyrics

That success vaulted him into the senior competition and he promptly entered "Occidental's karma", co-written with, among others, younger brother Filippo. The sheer energy the song exudes with its Gangnamesque choreography has seduced fans across Europe, despite some rather perplexing lyrical references of an oriental, but also scientific, political and philosophical nature. "Lessons of Nirvana, there's Buddha in single line, break time for everyone, a moment of glory. The crowd shouts a mantra. Evolution stumbles. The naked ape is dancing."

So goes the refrain with offers a clear nod to British zoologist and ethnologist Desmond Morris, author of "The Naked Ape: A Zoologist's Study of the Human Animal." The song also slyly references Shakespeare, Karl Marx, Neolithic Man, as well as "intellectuals in cafes" while deriding "honorary members of the selfie-addicted anonymous." Fans keen to show their support can get the t-shirt bearing the legend "la scimmia nuda balla" (the naked ape is dancing). The song itself has already earned triple platinum status.



Estonia's Laura performs the song 'Verona' during the second semi-final dress rehearsal of the Eurovision Song Contest 2017 at the International Exhibition Centre in Kiev.

San Remo had been expected to crown veteran song queen Fiorella Mannoia, who had been the big favorite until a TV vote saw Gabbani just edge her out to become the first entrant to win both the junior and senior categories back to back. Within 24 hours of his San Remo victory, Gabbani's performance had attracted 4.3 million YouTube hits in Italy alone, a record. Total views have since mushroomed to 110 million—unheard of exposure for a Eurovision entry.

"The magic formula is not just in the song but what the song transmits. That it is being viewed abroad is proof of that. They don't understand the words—and yet you feel the vibe," says Gabbani. After Eurovision, Gabbani will go on tour across Italy—without his simian sidekick. "He's done his time. His role was to explain in as amusing a fashion as possible the point of the song. With all his fur he'll be fine in Ukraine," the singer quipped. — AFP



A picture shows the installation 'Our Naufrage' by Canadian artist Hajra Waheed, in Venice during the press preview of the 57th International Art Exhibition Biennale. — AFP photos



A picture shows the artwork 'Escalade Beyond Chromatic Lands' by US artist Sheila Hicks.



A picture shows the artwork 'Werken' by Chilean artist Bernardo Oyarzun.



Visitors walk past the artwork 'Pars pro Toto' by Polish artist Alicja Kwade.



Visitors stand next to the 'Collection de chaussures' by French artist Michel Blazy.

VENICE ART FEST

A TONIC FOR GLOBAL WOES

Weary of the modern-day "global disorder" of politics and conflicts? The 57th Biennale art festival promises to lift the spirits of those frazzled by everything from Brexit to global warming. "Viva Arte Viva", which opens Saturday in Venice, is "a passionate outcry for art" in a world "full of conflicts and shocks", curator Christine Macel said ahead of the opening. Macel, chief curator of the Pompidou Center in Paris, has brought together 120 artists from 50 countries-with the emphasis on rediscovering great artists who may have been overlooked, rather than blowing the trumpets of rising stars.

"The Biennale challenge is to give as global a picture as possible of the artistic situation" across the world, she said. Among those exhibiting are pioneering US fiber artist Sheila

Hicks, West German-born American Kiki Smith and Danish-Icelandic artist Olafur Eliasson, the man behind the vast sun at Britain's Tate Modern in 2003 and the New York waterfalls in 2008.

Music and gold

France's Loris Greaud pays homage to the city's famed glass blowers-forced by the Venetian Senate in 1291 to settle on Murano Island to protect the industry's secrets- by bringing a disused furnace back to life in "The Unplayed Notes Factory". Swiss-born Julian Charriere, perhaps best known for dyeing the feathers of live pigeons in bright colors and releasing them into Venice's Saint Mark's Square in 2015, brings visitors "Future Fossil Spaces"-towers of salt bricks extracted from deposits in Bolivia.



A picture shows the artwork 'O Swan Song: Now O' by Czech artist Jana Zelinska.



A picture shows the entrance of 'Grotta Profunda, Approfondita' an artwork by French artist Pauline Curnier Jardin.

Some exhibits are dotted around "La Serenissima", "the most serene" as Venice is known. Visitors should take to the gondolas for the best view of the glinting "Golden Tour" (1990) by US artist James Lee Byars, which stands proudly on the canal front next to the Peggy Guggenheim museum. Alongside the contemporary art exhibition, 85 countries are putting on their own national pavilions at the Biennale.

The French one will be a recording studio with classical, baroque, electronic and folk instruments, which will host over 100 professional musicians from different countries during the exposition, with visitors able to drop in on some lively jam sessions. Several countries will be showing for the first time in the north-eastern Italian city, from Antigua and Barbuda to Kazakhstan and Nigeria.

Green lights, disco beat

However it is impossible to escape the modern world's problems altogether, even at the Biennale. "The Pavilion of Joys and Fears", for example, explores "new feelings of alienation due to forced migrations or mass surveillance" in a world shaken by conflicts, wars, increasing inequality and the rise of populism.

But the topics are approached with humor or warmth, aimed at energizing those suffering from 21st century blues. "At a time of global disorder, art embraces life. Art is the last bastion," Macel says.

At the heart of her show lies Eliasson's "green light" installation, where refugees and visitors come together in a workshop to assemble lamps designed by the artist and share stories. As the worst migrant crisis since World War II rocks Europe, it represents the metaphorical green light he urges his homeland and other countries to give to taking in those fleeing conflict and persecution.

In the wake of the US presidential election, American artist Charles Atlas presents the large-screen video work "The Tyranny of Consciousness", in which drag queen Lady Bunny bemoans American politics to a disco beat. The Golden Lion for lifetime achievement goes to the pioneering US feminist performance artist Carolee Schneemann, famed for using her body to examine the role of female sensuality and the overthrow of oppressive social conventions. The Venice Biennale is held on odd-numbered years. This year's event will run until November 26. — AFP



A visitor admires the artwork 'Counterbalance: The Stone and the Mountain' made by South Korean artist Lee Wan.



Visitors admire the art work 'The horse problem' by Argentinian artist Claudia Fontes.



Visitors admire the artwork 'Theatrum Orbis' made by Russian artist Grisha Bruskin.



This file photo shows Swedish journalist and best-selling author David Lagercrantz at his apartment in Stockholm. — AFP

In new Millennium book, author steps out of Larsson's shadow

In the cult Millennium crime fiction series, Stieg Larsson created Lisbeth Salander as a tattooed hacker out to get revenge on her persecutors. But in the latest book, author David Lagercrantz appears to have put his own stamp on the invincible character, throwing her into prison. "The Girl Who Takes an Eye for an Eye", the fifth Millennium novel, is due to hit bookstores on September 7 in 26 countries, including the United States, France, Germany and Britain.

"I'm waiting for the storm," Lagercrantz said with a nervous laugh during a recent interview at his fashionable Stockholm apartment. Swedish publishing house Norstedts has gone to great lengths to keep details of the latest installment shrouded in secrecy, given what's at stake: the previous book, "The Girl in the Spider's Web" from 2015, also written by Lagercrantz, sold six million copies in 47 countries. The first three books, penned by the late Stieg Larsson, sold 80 million copies in 50 countries.

Emotional and high-strung, Lagercrantz, 54, is full of contradictions: he at once fascinates, annoys and elicits sympathy, he's fond of superlatives and gesticulates wildly when speaking. With the book's release date looming, he admits to having mixed feelings. He's relieved at having finished the manuscript, but also terrified by critics, some of whom won't forgive him for taking over the series from compatriot Larsson, who died suddenly of a heart attack at age 50 in 2004 before the series gained global fame.

"There are a lot of translators who have just received it via an encrypted link, it's all very secretive. Now we're beginning to get some feedback about the book and, fingers crossed and touch wood, it seems promising."

A heroine with problems

Very little has been revealed about the plot of the fifth book. As with the preceding tome, details are trickling out, drop by drop. "All I can say is that I started out by putting her in prison, in the worst kind of women's prison, where she immediately encounters quite a few problems," Lagercrantz says without divulging any more. In addition to Salander, readers will also reacquaint themselves with investigative journalist Mikael Blomkvist.

Lagercrantz says bringing Salander to life, with her troubled past, is a challenge for him—he would have written an entirely different leading

character. "I would have created a softer heroine, someone nicer, more delicate and sensitive than Stieg Larsson did," he admits. But he acknowledges she makes for a good read. "Lisbeth's personality, her iconic personality, needs problems. So of course I have to give her tons of problems. And in some ways she's also suited to being an underdog."

And that, he says, is what readers will see in the fifth installment, the second of three he's signed on to write. Millennium was the brainchild of Larsson, a left-wing activist from a working-class family in Sweden's far north—a sharp contrast to Lagercrantz's upbringing in Stockholm's intelligentsia. Lagercrantz, meanwhile, rose to fame in Sweden in 2011 after penning football star Zlatan Ibrahimovic's official biography.

Kill Lisbeth Salander?

After Larsson's death and the ensuing wild success of his trilogy, Norstedts decided—with the agreement of his only heirs, his father and brother—to continue the series with a new author. Lagercrantz was recruited and the fourth book was generally well-received. With the fifth one, he wants to win over those unconvinced about his worthiness. One of them is Eva Gabrielsson, Larsson's partner of 32 years until his death.

The couple was not married and Larsson left no will, so his estate went to his brother and father. Gabrielsson lost a bitter battle with them to manage his work. She has from the beginning been critical of the decision to continue the trilogy, slamming it as a purely money-making project and blasting the choice of Lagercrantz as author. "That's the only shadow over this project, which has otherwise been so enjoyable," Lagercrantz said.

"If you think of Stieg Larsson's books, I know now, in hindsight, that it was good for his body of work" to continue the series. "A whole new generation has discovered his books... and his characters," he said. And rest assured, Lisbeth Salander will live on. "She'll continue to live on in one way or another. Lisbeth Salander is not going to be killed off right away, because she's a person who somehow reaches into our hearts and souls." As for Lagercrantz, what will he do after he's written book six? "I'll move on and find a new challenge." — AFP

RENT-A-PILGRIM TO WALK TO FATIMA FOR \$2,700

Carlos Gil is a "payer-off of promises," at least that is the way the Roman Catholic refers to himself. But he is more commonly known as a "rent-a-pilgrim". The 52-year-old Portuguese national takes on pilgrimages by proxy—in the name of others—especially Catholics unable because of sickness to undertake the journey or too busy or lazy for the week-long spiritual walk to the central Portuguese town of Fatima. He can be hired for 2,500 euros (\$2,700).

Gil is one of the nearly one million Catholics who will descend at the weekend upon the town where three child shepherds reported visions of the Virgin Mary 100 years ago. Two of the children will be declared saints on May 13 during a visit by Pope Francis. But Gil almost certainly will be the only pilgrim to make the trip on foot and invoice his walk. "It's not about making money but being in the service of others," he said in an interview at his home before setting off. "It's a deal we strike with God".

The 2,500-euro price is a fixed rate—the lighting of a candle costs an additional 25 euros, while asking him to recite the rosary is another 250 euros. The rate also goes up if the client wants Gil to shuffle the last 400 meters on his knees, from the shrine's public square to the chapel where the visions are said to have taken place in 1917. A pilgrimage, made for oneself or others, can be for various reasons: to fulfil a promise to God, as a request for healing, a baby or professional success, to give thanks when a request has been granted or to atone for sins.

"For me, it's a passion. I am Catholic, but if I had been born in Saudi Arabia, I would be Muslim and would make pilgrimages to Mecca," Gil said. Staff in hand, backpack on his shoulders, Gil leaves his small white villa near the coastal town of Cascais, about 30 kilometers from the capital Lisbon. It is 7:30 am and raining but Gil wants to make it in enough time to see the pontiff, after seeing Pope Benedict XVI in Fatima in 2010. Gil's sister Maria Jose, 50, will walk with him.

Crazy idea

By taking small country lanes far removed from the main roads, Gil will arrive at the shrine six days later, the day before the papal visit. He will have walked 200 kilometers, spending nights in private homes or underneath the

stars. "I make no physical preparations before the pilgrimage," said Gil, a father of two grown sons, sporting a salt and pepper beard, who admits to being "lazy". "It's spiritual. We are in a state of grace".

Gil believes there are very few Catholics, if any at all, offering the same services in his home country, but he has attracted imitators in Germany where "rent-a-pilgrims" advertise services online. He said the "crazy idea" came to him one day in 2001, to "revive this ancient tradition from the Middle Ages" where rich noblemen lacking time or in poor physical condition hired pilgrims by proxy.

The practice remains largely secret as the Catholic Church does not condone paying people to act as a proxy pilgrim. It is much more common for the annual hajj, however. According to the Church's Message of Fatima movement, over 40,000 pilgrims are expected to make the walk to the sanctuary and to see the pope. With the visit by Francis, "a

charismatic pope close to the people," the requests for pilgrimages by proxy "came earlier than usual," Gil said.

It's a scam

He said he makes "two or three pilgrimages a year" and "each is always for one person". Clients, all Portuguese-speaking, contact him through his site peregrino.org. Once terms have been agreed upon, the client wires him the amount and he takes off. Upon completion, Gil sends a certificate with official stamps from each stop along the route. Once the owner of a small computer company, Gil now has business cards listing his occupation as a "payer-off of promises" and real estate agent.

"My colleagues know what I do, they laugh about it a lot, a real estate agent who wants to become a saint," he said. His parents had intended him for the priesthood, but his family's hurried departure from Angola, a former Portuguese colony, during the country's fight for independence in 1975 extinguished those plans. Gil's current occupation, however, has attracted "violent criticism" on social media. "People are sometimes very aggressive. They don't know me," he said.

He has also drawn the ire of Rodrigo Cerqueira, president of the Association for Friends of Walks of Fatima, who said that being a "payer-off of promises, it's a disgrace. They take advantage of people". "Given their prices, it's a scam," Cerqueira said. Gil declined to say much about who this year's pilgrimage is for, only that it is a woman who contacted him through the popular WhatsApp messaging service. "On principle, I never ask them about their reasons to avoid passing judgment," he said. — AFP



Carlos Gil starts his walk to Fatima with a backpack on his shoulders, in Cascais, outskirts of Lisbon. — AFP



Twins TK, left, and Cipriana Quann arrive together at the Dior Cruise Welcome Dinner.



Socialite Olivia Palermo, left, and actress Freida Pinto pose together at the Dior Cruise Welcome Dinner.



Chef Flynn McGarry, left, and actress Kiernan Shipka pose together at the Dior Cruise Welcome Dinner.



Actresses Jaime King, left, and Juno Temple pose together at the Dior Cruise Welcome Dinner at the Dior Surf Club in Los Angeles. — AP photos

Dior lands in LA with beachfront bash ahead of runway show

Freida Pinto is loyal to Dior, a company that took a chance on her before she was famous. During a beachside party hosted by the French fashion house Wednesday, Pinto recalled how Dior was one of the first brands to dress her while promoting her Academy Award-winning "Slumdog Millionaire" in 2008. She was relatively unknown in Hollywood and had been turned down by other designers.

"(They were) accepting and welcoming. You just feel a sense of gratitude," said the star of Showtime's

"Guerrilla." Pinto was joined by fellow fashionistas Jaime King, in a belted, wide-sleeved gown, and Kiernan Shipka of "Mad Men." Shipka said she was channeling one of her new favorite shows, Hulu's "The Handmaid's Tale," with her velvet cloak dress. "What Maria Grazia Chiuri doing is just insane," said Shipka of Dior's creative director.

"It has this backbone of just championing women and just really honoring them and creating beautiful stuff." The relaxed, sunset soiree was a held on the eve of Dior's cruise

collection show, presenting in the Los Angeles suburb of Calabasas. "What I always expect from Dior is something that will be elegant, modern, chic, useful, timeless, pushing the bar forward," said King of Thursday's runway show. "It's great that people are now bringing high fashion, important fashion and these important designers to our city."--AP

Roberto Cavalli names new creative director

The Roberto Cavalli fashion house has named British designer Paul Surridge as creative designer, making his debut with the womenswear spring-summer 2018 collection to be shown in September. Surridge said Wednesday that he is honored to have contributed "a new chapter to the Roberto Cavalli universe, which positively celebrates the beauty, sensuality and power of women."

The fashion house has been without a creative director since Peter Dundas

stepped down in October. Brand founder Roberto Cavalli gave up creative control a year and a half earlier as he sold off a majority stake. Surridge's experience is mostly in menswear, including for Acne Studios, Jil Sander under Raf Simons and Burberry alongside Christopher Bailey. He also worked at Z Zegna as creative director and at Calvin Klein in the 1990s.--AP





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Friday Times

FRIDAY, MAY 12, 2017

Kids



Color me!

Sudoku

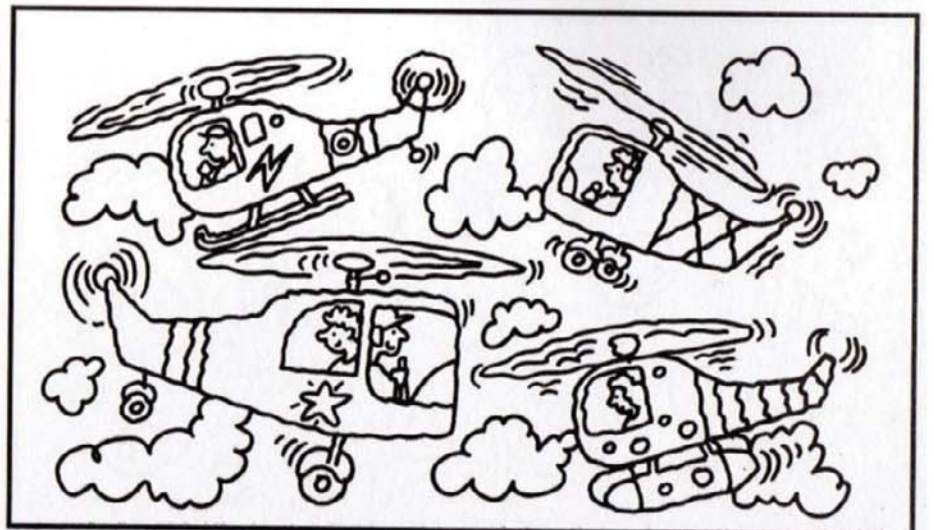
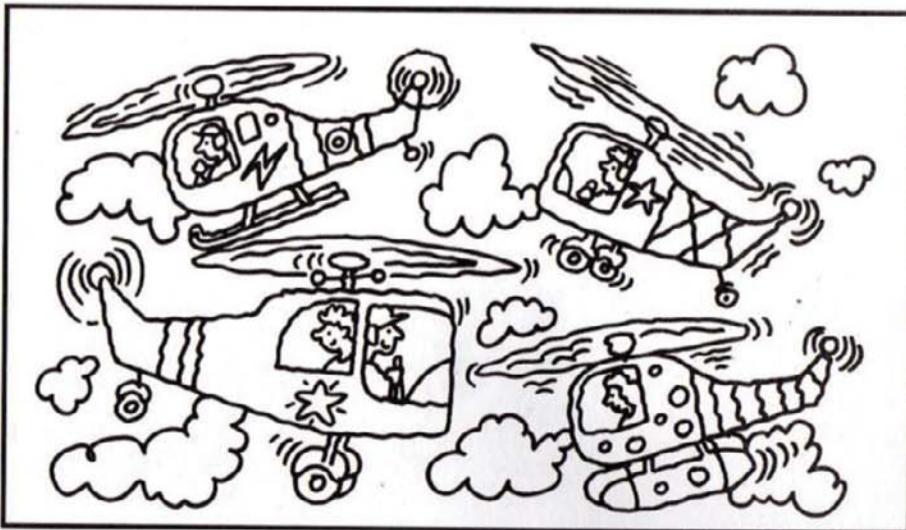
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Can you spot the 10 differences between these two pictures?





Baked Honey Mustard Chicken

Ingredients

- 6 skinless, boneless chicken breast halves
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1/2 cup honey
- 1/2 cup prepared mustard
- 1 teaspoon dried basil
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- 1/2 teaspoon dried parsley



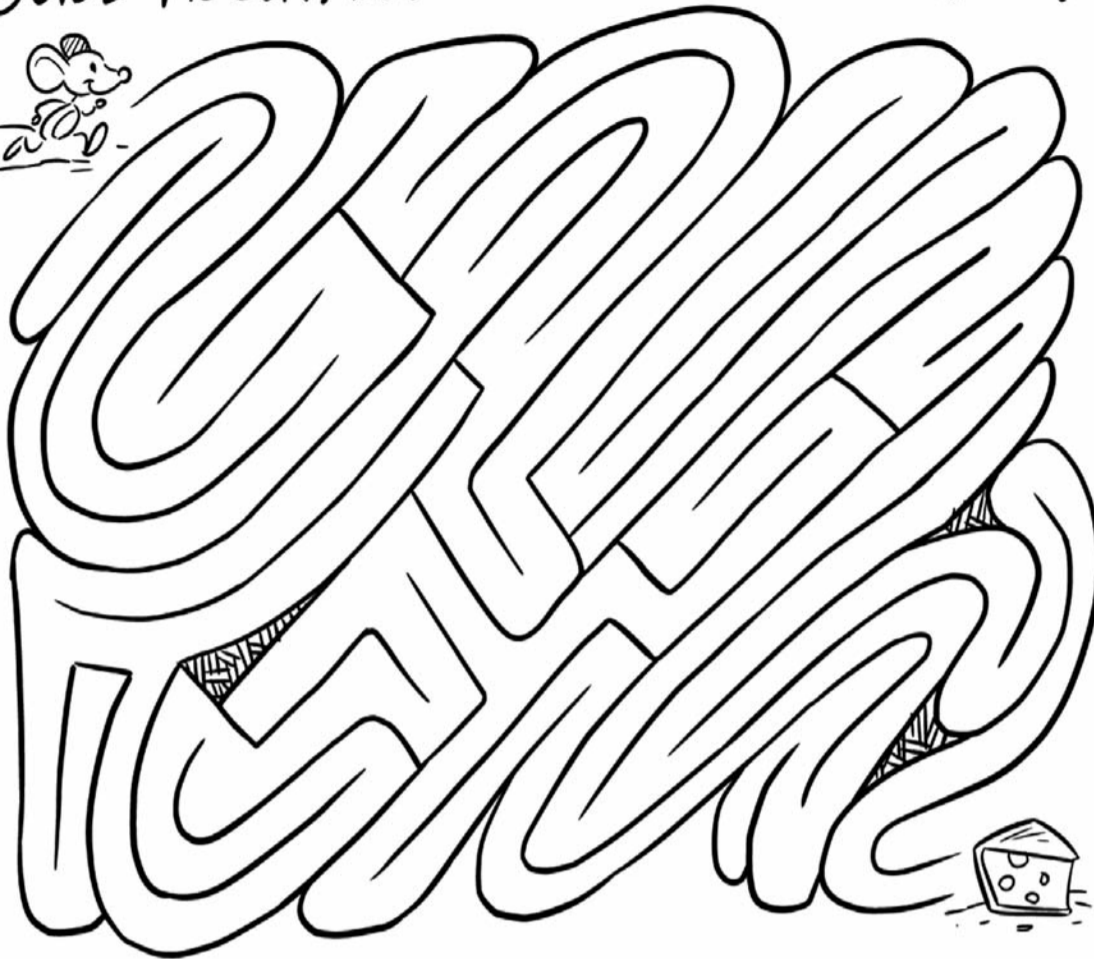
Preparation

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C).

Sprinkle chicken breasts with salt and pepper to taste, and place in a lightly greased 9x13 inch baking dish. In a small bowl, combine the honey, mustard, basil, paprika, and parsley. Mix well. Pour 1/2 of this mixture over the chicken, and brush to cover.

Bake in the preheated oven for 30 minutes. Turn chicken pieces over and brush with the remaining 1/2 of the honey mustard mixture. Bake for an additional 10 to 15 minutes, or until chicken is no longer pink and juices run clear. Let cool 10 minutes before serving.

GUIDE ROGER RODENT TO THE CHUNK OF CHEESE!



JOKES

Q: What goes up and down but does not move?
A: Stairs

Q: Where should a 500 pound alien go?
A: On a diet

Q: What did one toilet say to the other?
A: You look a bit flushed.

Q: Why did the picture go to jail?
A: Because it was framed.

Q: What did one wall say to the other wall?
A: I'll meet you at the corner.

Q: What did the paper say to the pencil?
A: Write on!

Q: What do you call a boy named Lee that no one talks to?
A: Lonely

DID YOU KNOW?

Compared to other animals, dolphins are believed to be very intelligent.

Dolphins are carnivores (meat eaters).

The Killer Whale (also known as Orca) is actually a type of dolphin.

Bottlenose dolphins are the most common and well known type of dolphin.

Female dolphins are called cows, males are called bulls and young dolphins are called calves.

Dolphins live in schools or pods of up to 12 individuals.

Dolphins often display a playful attitude which makes them popular in human culture. They can be seen jumping out of the water, riding waves, play fighting and occasionally

interacting with humans swimming in the water.

Dolphins use a blowhole on top of their heads to breathe.

Dolphins have excellent eyesight and hearing as well as the ability to use echolocation for finding the exact location of objects.

Dolphins communicate with each other by clicking, whistling and other sounds.

Some dolphin species face the threat of extinction, often directly as a result of human behavior. The Yangtze River Dolphin is an example of a dolphin species which may have recently become extinct.

Some fishing methods, such as the use of nets, kill a large number of dolphins every year.



To make heavenly BANANA BREAD, make it with vegetable oil

By Elizabeth Karmel

Everyone makes banana Bread. And most people love it. A good friend of mine always makes it with chocolate chips because her family will eat anything with chocolate in it. I grew up with my mother making banana bread with butter and pecans, and I thought it was very good until I accidentally created the world's best banana bread a few years ago.

Here is a little background: Anyone who bakes knows that there are butter cakes and oil cakes. Most of the cakes I make, I make

with butter, but my Grandmother's Apple Cake is made with vegetable oil and it is always the crowd favorite. So, when I was working on the recipes for my upcoming "Steak and Cake" cookbook, I decided to see how banana bread made with vegetable oil would taste versus my mother's butter recipe.

I was visiting my sister in Houston, and her twin daughters wanted to bake with me. To make sure that everyone had a part in making the recipe, I passed out three bowls. One for each of my nieces, and one for me. I then divided the recipe into three parts. Natalie mashed the bananas with most of the sugar

and the vanilla, Olivia measured and whisked the flour and remaining sugar with the other dry ingredients, and I blended the eggs and the vegetable oil.

We mixed the eggs and the flour together, added the completely liquefied banana-sugar mixture and added toasted walnuts for taste and texture. I decorated the tops of the loaves with walnuts and ushered the loaves into the oven.

Of course, they smelled heavenly as they baked - all banana bread smells heavenly. But once the loaves were out and cooled enough to taste, it was a whole new world.

There was even caramelization all the way through the loaf which is significant because many loaves of banana bread are darker on the bottom than the top. And, the crumb of the cake was soft and silky but very light and moist. Dry banana bread is also a common complaint and this was the opposite of dry. Best yet, the loaf stays moist and flavorful for days after you bake it.

The walnut encrusted top is both decorative and adds a welcome crunch. If I have any bread leftover, I love to toast a slice on day 3 or 4 and eat it with a thin spread of peanut butter on top - heaven.

Three Bowl Banana Bread



Ingredients

Start to finish: 1 hour, 15 minutes
Pan: 8 x 4 x 2.5 -inch loaf pans, disposable aluminum pans work very well.
3 large and very ripe, "brown" bananas (you can use 4 small bananas)
1 1/2 cups granulated white sugar, divided
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 3/4 cup all-purpose flour
1 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon cinnamon

3 large eggs
3/4 cup Crisco all-vegetable oil
1-2 cups toasted walnut halves, coarsely chopped plus more halves for decorating
Flour and Oil Baking Spray

Preparations

Toast walnuts in the oven at 250 F for about 15-20 minutes. Remove and let cool. Get oven to 325 F. Meanwhile, mash bananas with a fork and add all but 1/2 cup of the sugar. Mix

and add vanilla. Continue mixing until the mixture is completely smooth. In a separate large bowl, measure flour and stir with a whisk or fork to aerate. Place 1/2 cup of sugar in the bowl. Add baking soda, salt, cinnamon and whisk well. In a third bowl, mix eggs and oil with a blending fork until emulsified.

Using a fork, mix eggs well with the flour mixture. Add banana mixture to the egg-flour mixture and stir with a fork until completely combined. Add chopped walnuts and pour batter into prepared loaf pans, using a baking

spray so that the bread doesn't stick to the pan. Decorate the top with walnut halves. Bake for about 60 minutes or until the cake pulls away from the sides of the pan and a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Remove from oven and let sit in the pan for 5 minutes. Transfer to a cooling rack. Serve warm.

Nutrition information per serving: 513 calories; 267 calories from fat; 30 g fat (4 g saturated; 0 g trans fats); 65 mg cholesterol; 326 mg sodium; 55 g carbohydrate; 3 g fiber; 34 g sugar; 7 g protein.—AP



Sweet potato prepared two ways gives you dinner and a dessert

By Melissa d'Arabian

The kitchen is my happy place, which is a good thing, because I spend a lot of time in it. It seems I'm always either developing recipes, or cooking them for a camera. And then there's the not-so-small matter of cooking for my husband and four daughters every day. Truly, I love it. But today I'm sharing with you what I make when I'm alone; cooking for one. When I'm by myself, I like something easy to make and comforting, without being junky.

I turn to one of my favorite ingredients that falls lower on my husband's list: sweet potatoes. Sweet potatoes are full of vitamins, especially A and C, and minerals, have filling fiber and even a couple of grams of protein per medium 95-calorie spud. Before you panic about all the sugars in the sweet potato - it's right there in the title - relax a little, because that full potato has about 7 grams of sugar.

And, I'm going to make both a dinner and a dessert out of it, so personally I think those numbers make sense for sweet tooth it will satisfy.

Here's the plan, which involves very little actual cooking: Poke a few holes with a fork into a sweet potato and bake it until tender (about 50 minutes at 350 F, or 8 minutes on high in a microwave since it's just one).

Once it's cooked, slice in half, cut a slit down the center of each half, and top with just the tiniest bit of coconut oil or butter, which will melt beautifully into the hot potato flesh. (You can skip this part if you are watching fat intake, but even a smidge of coconut oil adds a ton of flavor.)

Sprinkle one side with cinnamon and top with fresh fruit and chopped nuts or seeds. Add a drizzle of maple syrup if you are feeling fancy. Sprinkle the other side with a little spice, like chipotle powder, cumin and hot paprika, or curry powder. And then top with drained canned beans, lentils, chopped left-

over chicken or shrimp and something crunchy like pepitas or cashews. Place the two halves on the same plate, and there you have: a two-course meal on one plate. Perfect for a Netflix night alone. But you can easily scale the recipe up to include friends, should you decide to invite them.

Sweet potato two ways

Ingredients

Start to finish: 1 hour, including inactive baking time
1 medium orange sweet potato
1 teaspoon coconut oil, divided

Savory:

1/4 teaspoon curry powder
1/4 teaspoon paprika
3 tablespoons cooked black beans, rinsed and drained
1 tablespoon chopped cashews
1 tablespoon chopped cilantro
1/2 cup baby spinach or other greens
Juice of 1/4 lime
Pinch of kosher salt

Sweet:

1/8 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1/4 medium banana, sliced
1 tablespoon sliced almonds
1 teaspoon maple syrup
Pinch kosher salt
Juice of 1/4 lime

Preparation

Prick the potato skin 3-4 times with a fork and bake until tender, about 50 minutes at 350 F. (Or microwave until tender, about 8 minutes, turning over halfway through cooking.) Slice the sweet potato in half lengthwise, and cut a slit in each half. Divide the coconut oil between the two potatoes and allow to melt into the flesh. Sprinkle the savory potato with the curry and paprika, and top with beans, cashews, cilantro and salt.

Place on top of the spinach and squeeze lime juice over the whole thing. For the dessert potato: sprinkle with cinnamon and top with banana slices, almonds, maple syrup, salt and lime juice. Optional: if the oven is still hot, place the dessert potato in the oven for 5 minutes, just to caramelize the bananas a little. Place next to the savory potato and enjoy your two-course meal.

Nutrition information per serving of savory option: 305 calories; 88 calories from fat; 10 g fat (3 g saturated; 0 g trans fats); 0 mg cholesterol; 567 mg sodium; 52 g carbohydrate; 19 g fiber; 11 g sugar; 12 g protein.

Nutrition information per serving of sweet option: 183 calories; 28 calories from fat; 3 g fat (0 g saturated; 0 g trans fats); 0 mg cholesterol; 282 mg sodium; 37 g carbohydrate; 5 g fiber; 15 g sugar; 4 g protein. — AP

Quebec City, the province's capital, is a three-hour drive from Montreal and a worthy side trip. Don't miss the iconic landmark Chateau Frontenac, and the Terrasse Dufferin that wraps around it.



Destination Montreal

A PERFECT FAMILY GETAWAY

MONTREAL: We were looking for a fun, short family vacation, close enough to home that we could drive there, and far enough away that we could savor a bit of a different culture. We decided to head for Montreal. I had visited once before and always wanted to go back. Our two oldest sons (a sixth grader and high school freshman) both learning French in school made it an easy decision, and our kindergartener was onboard too.

So we packed, grabbed passports and drove north from New York. In a matter of hours we saw the "Bienvenue" sign at the border. Immigration was easy and soon we were at our hotel downtown with four days to enjoy the city. Visiting Canada is especially affordable right now for US residents, with \$1 Canadian worth just 73 cents US. With all the delicious food, though — poutine and maple everything — I only wish I could have applied the same math to the calories.

A few highlights of our trip: The botanical garden and insectariums

With its Chinese, Japanese and First Nation gardens, arboretum and greenhouses, the Botanical Garden is a popular stop. Even on a rainy day, you can visit creatures — alive and dead — at the Insectarium. The kids were grossed out but loved it.

Chagall: Color and music

This remarkable show through June 11 at the Museum of Fine Arts focuses on Marc Chagall's connection to music in his life and work, through 340 works of art that include paintings, works on paper, sculptures, ceramics, stained glass and tapestries. We were particularly fascinated by his work for the stage, including over 100 costumes, masks and sets for "The Magic Flute" and the ballets "Aleko," "The Firebird" and "Daphnis and Chloe."

The science center

A highlight for the kids. From working together to solve a crime at the "CSI: The Experience" exhibit (through Sept 4) to hands-on activities at the permanent exhibitions and 3-D IMAX movies, the Science Center is a fun and cool place. Go early to make the most of it and then take the rest of the day to shop, stroll and eat in Old Montreal.

Old Montreal

Old Montreal (Vieux Montreal) is the oldest part of the city, with some remnants dating back to New France. It's charming

and full of life, with restaurants, shops, cafes and art galleries along the Rue de la Commune and beyond.

A few places to visit are Place Jacques Cartier, in front of the Montreal city hall, and Place d'Armes, surrounded by buildings that include the Notre-Dame basilica. (Recent flooding in Quebec did not affect Old Montreal or most other areas around the city frequented by tourists.)

Dinner and live jazz

We had a memorable dinner at Jardin Nelson, located at Place Jacques Cartier, where we sat in a beautiful courtyard surrounded by old stone buildings listening to live jazz. The highlight of our delicious meal was an amazing dessert, a traditional Quebecois treat with vanilla ice cream and maple syrup called pouding chomeur.

Quebec City

Quebec City, the province's capital, is a three-hour drive from Montreal and a worthy side trip. Don't miss the iconic landmark Chateau Frontenac, and the Terrasse Dufferin that wraps around it. With cannons spread along the walkway, the terrace offers beautiful views of the St. Lawrence River. The European-looking streets around boast restaurants, cafes, little shops and boutiques. Other attractions include a waterfall, Montmorency Falls, and a picturesque island, Ile d'Orleans, accessible by bridge.

Seasonal attractions

For those who can visit late winter and early spring, consider a stop at a traditional maple sugar shack called Erabliere Charbonneau, where we had a fabulous all you-can-eat lunch of pea soup, coleslaw, baked omelette, maple sausages, baked beans, meatball stew and more, served with a bottle of maple syrup and desserts that included buckwheat pancakes, maple taffy on snow and my favorite, sugar pie.

The venue has other attractions like a zipline that remain open now. Other seasonal events include the city's famous International Jazz Festival, June 29-July 8. A series of events are also taking place this year for the city's 375th anniversary and marking 50 years since Montreal hosted Expo '67, while Canada is celebrating 150 years of the country's confederation.

Those famous bagels

We couldn't have left without trying Montreal's famous bagels. A Canadian friend living in the US had told me about

the St-Viateur and Fairmount rivalry and since I wanted to bring her some of her favorites, we stopped at St-Viateur before heading back home. We ordered a dozen assorted bagels — plain, sesame, onion, whole wheat, poppy ... and they were delicious. They felt lighter than American bagels and less salty. We'll try Fairmount's on our next trip.—AP





Aries (March 21-April 19)

There could be several challenges in the workplace, both in dealing with the work at hand and in personal situations. Careful-unless you know the facts, it would be better not to become involved in any disputes. You have powerful energies spilling into your life today helping you to make a positive difference in the choices you make and guiding you in ways to help others. Independence, as well as anything unusual or different, is valued. You may enjoy getting away from routine to enjoy something completely different this afternoon. Perhaps a drive out to the country to a farmer's market type of shop would be fun-and healthy. Physical activities, like sports, among friends and family could be engaged in now. Enjoy a walk with your mate tonight.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You concentrate a great deal on what needs accomplishing today. You will be thrilled with the possibilities that this day brings; staying focused is a good practice. There is success with your concentration efforts; however, when people stop to chat, it may cause some nervousness. As a gift to yourself, a massage during the noon break would be nice. Perhaps a health store that has healthy refreshments could be worked into your lunch break. Stress is important; it gets us to the next step or speeds up our activity to complete a difficult job or project. Today, you are determined to have no stress and you enjoy your responsibilities as an honor of achievement. Friends and family members bring you lots of smiles this evening. Happy birthday!



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

There is foresight with optimism now making this an excellent time to work toward a raise or a promotion, to plan a trip or take a vacation. You are likely to hear some good news regarding something of importance to you. Your sensitivity to others is increased but there are possibilities of being deluded-so, pay close attention. You will gain great success and attention through your professional life. Being in the spotlight is common to you at this time, and you should realize that this is a good opportunity to be humble and see where work can best help others. You may also look to the social setting to improve your professional standing. Rely on your natural abilities to succeed in your affairs. There is a deepening of a love relationship now.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Your professional job may demand a bit of research time. You will be able to take your time and take clear notes. You also may expend a great deal of effort to secure finances through some investments. This may come about through associations you have with people in important positions. Besides being creative and affectionate, you are sociable and magnetic to the opposite sex. This is also a period of personal growth. You want to reshape the world and help others. Charity events are a possibility. This feeling will extend to love interests. There is deep self-understanding and this instills an element of practicality in romantic endeavors. You will not be deluded by the superficial today. Companionship with others is most rewarding.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Someone could challenge your sense of identity. This will only take a small amount of your time to decide on the steps it will take to stop the problem. Now is a good time to initiate any changes needed to create that positive atmosphere that you like so well. You have a keen interest in what makes people do the things that they do... It is the hallmark of the mental cycle that is beginning in your life. Books on psychiatry, the difficult person and perhaps suggestions on survival around difficult people would be a good step in understanding. Tonight is a time of diving into a fascinating hobby, a hobby in which you excel and attract many followers: cooking. An old recipe dressed up will create a feeling of good old memories and fine home cooking.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

With positive energy to burn this Friday, you could promote most any idea. The results and reactions of others will be positive. The changes you have been thinking of making for today, tomorrow and the next day may need to be contemplated very carefully. There are positive aspects, but if you act too quickly you could find yourself wanting to take back your choices-too late. This is the time to push for a raise, new job or any adventure you desire. Expect interruptions this afternoon. There are some teaching tools you look forward to learning, and you may find yourself listening to a lecture or sitting in on a class after work this day. You have a deep respect for wisdom and may also enjoy the company of an older person this evening.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

This is a good time to finish up any unresolved business. The longer you wait, the more things can go wrong. You are filled with an urge to work hard and get things done. Do not put off tomorrow what you can do today, for then you can be truly relaxed when it comes time to take it easy with family or friends. Additional responsibilities may be placed on you in the context of the home setting. If you open up to close relatives, you should find some emotional support. You teach through example. A home project is coming along very well; you already have more ideas on how to enlarge, build and supply shelving and storage in lots of curious and fun places. You may decide to go into business for yourself as a custom builder.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Although the workday flows easily enough, your mood may be pensive. Cleaning up your work area and organizing your thoughts may take up much of the afternoon. There is involvement in a promotion and publication of ideas among co-workers. A round table discussion may produce a creative idea for future business opportunities. You will be moving in and organizing a creative idea for profit. There are serious attitudes toward affairs of business. Be careful, you could rebel against an authority figure this afternoon. This could be a strong indication that you and others need breaks more often on stressful days. You find yourself feeling more private and in a stay-at-home mood this evening. This is a time to spend with loved ones and family.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Complete unfinished business today. You have a sharp mind and your awareness with the ability to grasp the overview of a situation is strong. You have high expectations for your future and the right amount of discipline to get you where you want to go. This is aesthetic and artistic to be sure, but it is also practical and materialistic: you develop a keen appreciation for the value of things, including the money it takes to buy them. Take the social opportunities that are open to you now and network with people that share your same job interests or talents. A love of music, an appreciation for sensual pleasures and others of the finer things in life is strong. You may find the right romantic interest now or you may find an existing romance deepens.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Consciously, give yourself extra time to stay organized with projects the rest of this month. The instinct to be powerful and in control seems quite strong. This may lead to a greater interest or experience in investing. There are all sorts of interactions today along with lecturing, teaching or learning a new technique. You seem to have a good command of the english language with the willingness to excel. You could resist someone's ideas today and it might be a good idea to look at your reasoning. This is an aesthetic and artistic time to be sure, but it is also a practical and materialistic time. A social event this evening gives you the opportunity to dress up and enjoy the different surroundings. This is not a good networking time.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Interactions with co-workers may cause you to plan a get-together at the noon meal. Discussing a situation may add heat to a problem. Continue business discussions after the meal so that your interactions with co-workers, as well as higher-ups, will be secure. Make sure there are a purpose and a positive focus before beginning a work meeting this afternoon. Perhaps listing ground rules would be wise. Merge your natural ability of taking control through your gentle persuasion techniques and you will find positive results from a somewhat explosive situation. Your management and directional abilities are good. This evening you will enjoy music and have an appreciation for sensual pleasures and the finer things in life.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You can be most helpful in sorting out the right action to take in order to turn a negative to a positive. Target the next few days for networking, conferences, etc. Keep your sense of humor and do not push your point of view too strongly. There may be some serious decisions made about the future of a project, investment or term of employment with your business at this time. You may perceive how to proceed with plans and decisions in regard to your own life situation now. With a well-defined plan, you will accomplish a great deal. Your artistic and creative side can be enjoyed this afternoon and will help you to work off any stress from the workday. Think carefully about your food choices this evening.

COUNTRY CODES

| | | | |
|--------------------------|---------|-----------------------|--------|
| Afghanistan | 0093 | Kuwait | 00965 |
| Albania | 00355 | Kyrgyzstan | 00996 |
| Algeria | 00213 | Laos | 00856 |
| Andorra | 00376 | Latvia | 00371 |
| Angola | 00244 | Lebanon | 00961 |
| Anguilla | 001264 | Liberia | 00231 |
| Antigua | 001268 | Libya | 00218 |
| Argentina | 0054 | Lithuania | 00370 |
| Armenia | 00374 | Luxembourg | 00352 |
| Australia | 0061 | Macau | 00853 |
| Austria | 0043 | Macedonia | 00389 |
| Bahamas | 001242 | Madagascar | 00261 |
| Bahrain | 00973 | Majorca | 0034 |
| Bangladesh | 00880 | Malawi | 00265 |
| Barbados | 001246 | Malaysia | 0060 |
| Belarus | 00375 | Maldives | 00960 |
| Belgium | 0032 | Mali | 00223 |
| Belize | 00501 | Malta | 00356 |
| Benin | 00229 | Marshall Islands | 00692 |
| Bermuda | 001441 | Martinique | 00596 |
| Bhutan | 00975 | Mauritania | 00222 |
| Bolivia | 00591 | Mauritius | 00230 |
| Bosnia | 00387 | Mayotte | 00269 |
| Botswana | 00267 | Mexico | 0052 |
| Brazil | 0055 | Micronesia | 00691 |
| Brunei | 00673 | Moldova | 00373 |
| Bulgaria | 00359 | Monaco | 00377 |
| Burkina | 00226 | Mongolia | 00976 |
| Burundi | 00257 | Montserrat | 001664 |
| Cambodia | 00855 | Morocco | 00212 |
| Cameroon | 00237 | Mozambique | 00258 |
| Canada | 001 | Myanmar (Burma) | 0095 |
| Cape Verde | 00238 | Namibia | 00264 |
| Cayman Islands | 001345 | Nepal | 00977 |
| Central African Republic | 00236 | Netherlands (Holland) | 0031 |
| Chad | 00235 | Netherlands Antilles | 00599 |
| Chile | 0056 | New Caledonia | 00687 |
| China | 0086 | New Zealand | 0064 |
| Colombia | 0057 | Nicaragua | 00505 |
| Comoros | 00269 | Nigar | 00227 |
| Congo | 00242 | Nigeria | 00234 |
| Cook Islands | 00682 | Niue | 00683 |
| Costa Rica | 00506 | Norfolk Island | 00672 |
| Croatia | 00385 | Northern Ireland (UK) | 0044 |
| Cuba | 0053 | North Korea | 00850 |
| Cyprus | 00357 | Norway | 0047 |
| Cyprus (Northern) | 0090392 | Oman | 00968 |
| Czech Republic | 00420 | Pakistan | 0092 |
| Denmark | 0045 | Palau | 00680 |
| Diego Garcia | 00246 | Panama | 00507 |
| Djibouti | 00253 | Papua New Guinea | 00675 |
| Dominica | 001767 | Paraguay | 00595 |
| Dominican Republic | 001809 | Peru | 0051 |
| Ecuador | 00593 | Philippines | 0063 |
| Egypt | 0020 | Poland | 0048 |
| El Salvador | 00503 | Portugal | 00351 |
| England (UK) | 0044 | Puerto Rico | 001787 |
| Equatorial Guinea | 00240 | Qatar | 00974 |
| Eritrea | 00291 | Romania | 0040 |
| Estonia | 00372 | Russian Federation | 007 |
| Ethiopia | 00251 | Rwanda | 00250 |
| Falkland Islands | 00500 | Saint Helena | 00290 |
| Faroe Islands | 00298 | Saint Kitts | 001869 |
| Fiji | 00679 | Saint Lucia | 001758 |
| Finland | 00358 | Saint Pierre | 00508 |
| France | 0033 | Saint Vincent | 001784 |
| French Guiana | 00594 | Samoa US | 00684 |
| French Polynesia | 00689 | Samoa West | 00685 |
| Gabon | 00241 | San Marino | 00378 |
| Gambia | 00220 | Sao Tome | 00239 |
| Georgia | 00995 | Saudi Arabia | 00966 |
| Germany | 0049 | Scotland (UK) | 0044 |
| Ghana | 00233 | Senegal | 00221 |
| Gibraltar | 00350 | Seychelles | 00284 |
| Greece | 0030 | Sierra Leone | 00232 |
| Greenland | 00299 | Singapore | 0065 |
| Grenada | 001473 | Slovakia | 00421 |
| Guadeloupe | 00590 | Slovenia | 00386 |
| Guam | 001671 | Solomon Islands | 00677 |
| Guatemala | 00502 | Somalia | 00252 |
| Guinea | 00224 | South Africa | 0027 |
| Guyana | 00592 | South Korea | 0082 |
| Haiti | 00509 | Spain | 0034 |
| Holland (Netherlands) | 0031 | Sri Lanka | 0094 |
| Honduras | 00504 | Sudan | 00249 |
| Hong Kong | 00852 | Suriname | 00597 |
| Hungary | 0036 | Swaziland | 00268 |
| Ibiza (Spain) | 0034 | Sweden | 0046 |
| Iceland | 00354 | Switzerland | 0041 |
| India | 0091 | Syria | 00963 |
| Indian Ocean | 00873 | Taiwan | 00886 |
| Indonesia | 0062 | Tanzania | 00255 |
| Iran | 0098 | Thailand | 0066 |
| Iraq | 00964 | Toga | 00228 |
| Ireland | 00353 | Tonga | 00676 |
| Italy | 0039 | Tokelau | 00690 |
| Ivory Coast | 00225 | Trinidad | 001868 |
| Jamaica | 001876 | Tunisia | 00216 |
| Japan | 0081 | Turkey | 0090 |
| Jordan | 00962 | Tuvalu | 00688 |
| Kazakhstan | 007 | Uganda | 00256 |
| Kenya | 00254 | Ukraine | 00380 |
| Kiribati | 00686 | United Arab Emirates | 00976 |



00:20 Street Outlaws
01:10 What On Earth?
02:00 Salvage Hunters
02:50 Todd Sampson's Body Hack
03:40 Sacred Steel Bikes
04:30 Storage Hunters UK
05:00 How Do They Do It?
05:30 How Do They Do It?
06:00 Abandoned Engineering
06:50 You Have Been Warned
07:40 Gold Rush: Parker's Trail
08:30 What On Earth?
09:20 Rebel Gold
10:10 Todd Sampson's Body Hack
11:00 Marooned With Ed Stafford
11:50 JFK: The Lost Tapes
12:40 Supertruckers
13:30 Fast N' Loud
14:20 Diesel Brothers
15:10 Harley And The Davidsons
16:00 Harley And The Davidsons
16:50 Harley And The Davidsons
17:40 Harley And The Davidsons
18:30 Harley And The Davidsons
21:00 Fast N' Loud
21:50 Diesel Brothers
22:40 Fast N' Loud: Demolition Theatre
23:30 Supertruckers



00:00 The First 48
01:00 The Jail: 60 Days In
02:00 Homicide Hunter
03:00 Cold Case Files
04:00 The First 48
05:00 The Jail: 60 Days In
06:00 My Crazy Ex
08:00 Evil Up Close
09:00 Nightmare In Suburbia
10:00 Homicide Hunter
11:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
13:00 My Crazy Ex
14:00 Evil Up Close
15:00 Homicide Hunter
16:00 Fred Dinenage: Murder Casebook
17:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
18:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
19:00 Evil Up Close
20:00 Nightmare In Suburbia
21:00 Homicide Hunter
22:00 Killer Kids
23:00 Deadly Wives



00:30 Science Of The Movies
01:20 Bad Universe
02:10 How The Universe Works
03:00 Now That's Funny
03:50 Ultimate Survival
04:40 How It's Made
05:05 How It's Made
05:30 Storm Chasers
06:20 Mythbusters
07:00 Adventure 8: Zoo Games
07:25 Kids vs Film
07:50 Bad Dog
08:40 How It's Made
09:05 How It's Made
09:30 Science Of The Movies
10:20 Mythbusters
11:10 Bad Dog
12:00 Ultimate Survival
12:50 How It's Made
13:15 How It's Made
13:40 Storm Chasers
14:30 Adventure 8: Zoo Games
14:55 Kids vs Film
15:20 Bad Dog
16:10 Science Of The Movies
17:00 Battle Bots
17:50 Don't Blink
18:15 Don't Blink
18:40 Now That's Funny
19:30 How It's Made
19:55 How It's Made
20:20 Mythbusters
21:10 Battle Bots
22:00 Don't Blink
22:25 Don't Blink
22:50 Now That's Funny
23:40 Ultimate Survival

00:00 Binny And The Ghost
00:25 Hank Zipzer
00:45 The Hive
00:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
01:40 Hank Zipzer
02:05 Binny And The Ghost
02:55 Hank Zipzer
03:15 The Hive
03:20 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
04:10 Hank Zipzer
04:35 Binny And The Ghost
05:25 Hank Zipzer
05:45 The Hive
05:50 The 7D
06:00 Jessie
06:50 Tsum Tsum Shorts
06:55 The Zhuzhus
07:20 Elena Of Avalor
07:45 Bunk'd
08:10 Stuck In The Middle
08:35 Bizaardvark
09:00 Austin & Ally
09:50 Good Luck Charlie
10:40 Dog With A Blog
11:30 Gravity Falls
11:55 Disney Mickey Mouse
12:00 Welcome To The Ronks
12:15 The Zhuzhus
12:40 Hank Zipzer
13:05 Star Darlings
13:10 Good Luck Charlie
13:35 Austin & Ally
14:00 Jessie
14:25 Binny And The Ghost
14:50 Sunny Bunnies

14:55 The Zhuzhus
15:45 Elena Of Avalor
16:10 Liv And Maddie
16:35 The Emperor's New Groove
18:05 Welcome To The Ronks
18:20 Disney Mickey Mouse
18:25 Girl Meets World
18:50 Best Friends Whenever
19:15 Tsum Tsum Shorts
19:20 Binny And The Ghost
19:45 Austin & Ally
20:10 Jessie
20:35 Cracked
19:45 Austin & Ally
20:10 Jessie
20:35 Cracked
20:40 Disney The Lodge
21:05 Bizaardvark
21:30 That's So Raven



00:00 Henry Hugglemonster
00:15 Calimero
00:30 Art Attack
00:55 Zou
01:05 Loopdidoo
01:20 Henry Hugglemonster
01:35 Calimero
01:50 Zou
02:05 Art Attack
02:30 The Hive
02:40 Loopdidoo
02:55 Henry Hugglemonster
03:10 Art Attack
03:35 Loopdidoo
03:50 Calimero
04:05 Art Attack
04:30 Henry Hugglemonster
04:45 Zou
05:00 Art Attack
05:30 Henry Hugglemonster
05:45 Loopdidoo
06:00 Zou

06:15 Calimero
06:30 Loopdidoo
06:45 Henry Hugglemonster
07:00 My Friends Tigger & Pooh
07:25 Sofia The First
07:50 The Lion Guard
08:15 PJ Masks
08:35 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
09:05 Goldie & Bear
09:35 The Lion Guard
10:05 Sofia The First
10:35 Doc McStuffins
11:05 My Friends Tigger & Pooh
11:35 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
12:05 Gummi Bears
12:35 Miles From Tomorrow
13:05 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
13:35 PJ Masks
14:00 My Friends Tigger & Pooh
14:30 The Lion Guard
15:00 Sofia The First
15:30 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
15:55 Sofia The First
16:20 My Friends Tigger & Pooh
16:50 The Adventures Of The Disney Fairies
17:15 Sofia The First
17:40 Doc McStuffins
18:05 PJ Masks
18:35 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
19:05 The Lion Guard
20:05 Goldie & Bear
20:35 My Friends Tigger & Pooh
21:00 Gummi Bears
21:25 The Adventures Of The Disney Fairies
21:50 Minnie's Bow-Toons
22:00 Doc McStuffins
22:55 PJ Masks
23:20 Henry Hugglemonster
23:35 The Hive



06:00 Gravity Falls
06:25 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
06:50 Penn Zero: Part Time Hero
07:15 Milo Murphy's Law
07:25 Danger Mouse
07:40 Supa Strikas
08:05 Two More Eggs
08:10 K.C. Undercover
08:35 Counterfeit Cat
09:00 Lab Rats Elite Force
09:25 Lab Rats Elite Force
09:50 Future-Worm!
10:20 Pair Of Kings
10:45 Pair Of Kings
11:10 Danger Mouse
11:35 Supa Strikas
12:30 Gravity Falls
12:55 Annedroids
13:20 Crash And Bernstein
13:45 Crash And Bernstein
14:10 Disney Mickey Mouse
14:15 Crash And Bernstein
14:40 Crash And Bernstein
15:05 Robin Hood
16:25 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
16:50 Walk The Prank
17:15 Mech-X4
17:40 Milo Murphy's Law
18:05 Disney Mickey Mouse
18:10 Gravity Falls
18:35 Mighty Med
19:00 Atomic Puppet
19:25 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
19:55 K.C. Undercover
20:20 Mech-X4
20:45 Mighty Med
21:10 Walk The Prank
21:35 Disney Mickey Mouse
21:40 Disney Mickey Mouse
21:45 Guardians Of The Galaxy
22:10 Ultimate Spider-Man
22:35 Booster
23:00 Programmes Start At 6:00am KSA

14:15 The Chase
15:10 Guess This House
16:00 It's Not Rocket Science
16:55 Surprise Surprise
17:50 Come Date With Me Australia
18:20 Come Date With Me Australia
18:45 Emmerdale
19:15 Emmerdale
19:45 Coronation Street
20:10 Guess This House



00:15 Access 360 World Heritage
01:10 Poh & Co.
01:40 Croatia's Finest
02:05 My Dubai
02:35 What's For Sale?
03:00 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea
03:55 Street Food Around The World
04:25 Tom's Istanbul Delight
04:50 Andy And Ben Eat Australia
05:45 Poh & Co.
06:15 Trekking The Great Wall
07:10 Croatia's Finest
07:35 My Dubai
08:05 What's For Sale?
08:30 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea
09:25 Street Food Around The World
09:55 Tom's Istanbul Delight
10:20 Andy And Ben Eat Australia
11:15 Poh & Co.
11:45 Trekking The Great Wall
12:40 Croatia's Finest
13:05 What's For Sale?
14:00 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea
14:55 Street Food Around The World
15:25 Tom's Istanbul Delight
15:50 Andy And Ben Eat Australia
16:20 Andy And Ben Eat Australia
16:45 Poh & Co.
17:15 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces
18:10 Living Free With Kimi Werner
19:05 Street Food Around The World
19:30 Tom's Istanbul Delight
20:00 Andy And Ben Eat Australia
20:30 Andy And Ben Eat Australia
21:00 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces



00:05 Mariah's World
01:50 E! News
02:50 Celebrity Style Story
03:50 WAGs
05:30 Celebrity Style Story
06:00 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
06:55 E! News
07:10 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
08:10 E! News: Daily Pop
09:10 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
15:00 E! News
15:15 E! News: Daily Pop
16:10 Botched
19:00 E! News
20:00 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
21:00 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
22:00 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
23:00 E! News
23:15 Keeping Up With The Kardashians



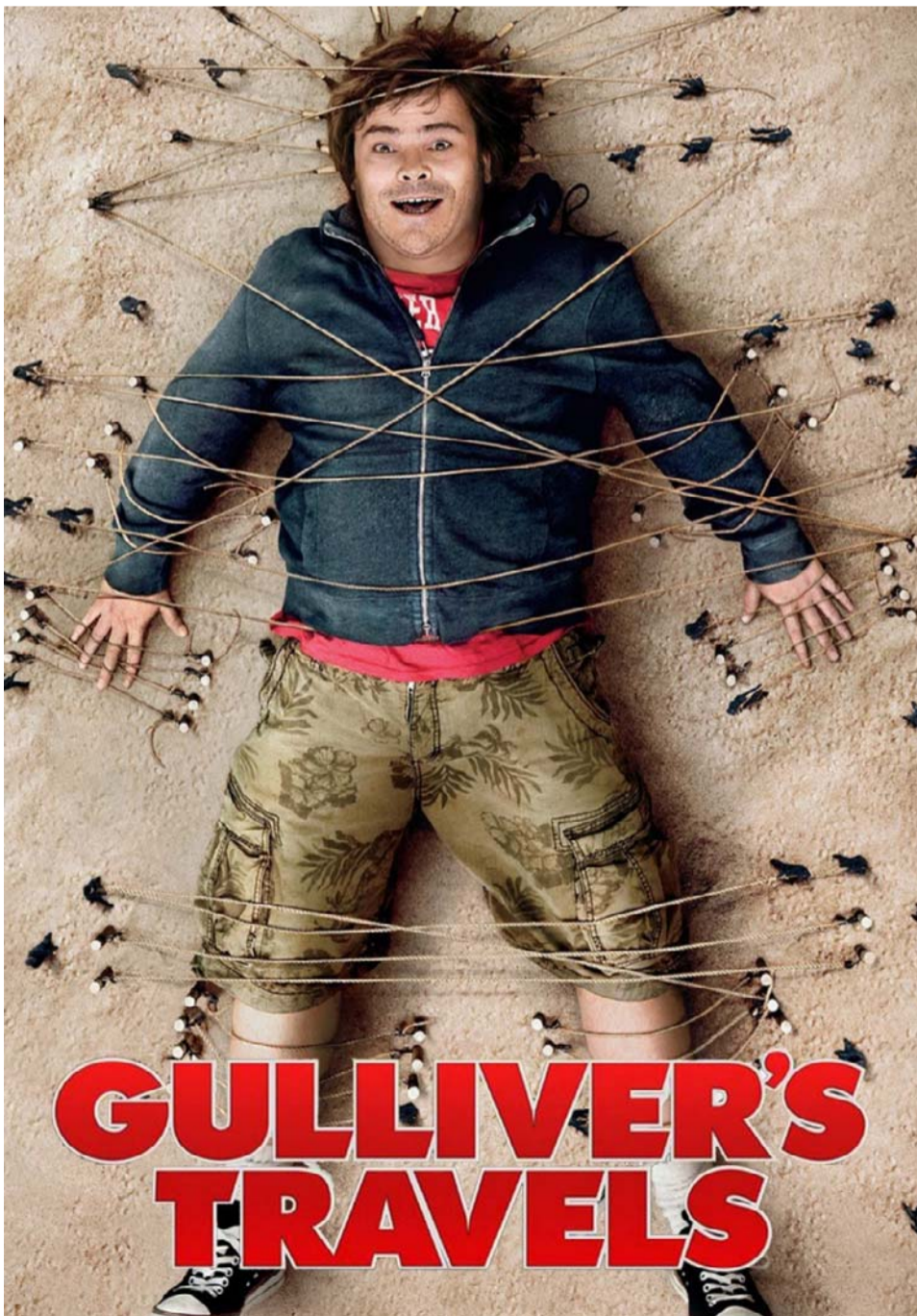
00:20 Tiger Queen
01:10 Is Your Dog A Genius: Best In Show
02:00 Puma: Lion Of The Andes
02:50 Animals Gone Wild Compilations
03:45 Animal Fight Club
04:40 Ultimate Animal Countdown
05:35 Puma: Lion Of The Andes
06:30 Animals Gone Wild Compilations
07:25 Animal Fight Club
08:20 Ultimate Animal Countdown
09:15 Python Hunters
10:10 Wild Vietnam
11:05 Operation Sumatran Rhino
12:00 Life On The Barrier Reef
12:55 Top Cats
13:50 Animals Gone Wild Compilations
14:45 Animal Fight Club
15:40 Ultimate Animal Countdown
16:35 Python Hunters
17:30 Incredible Fangs
18:25 Last Of The Longnecks
19:20 Animal Fight Club



00:10 The Chase
01:00 Emmerdale
01:30 Coronation Street
02:00 Coronation Street
02:30 Guess This House
03:25 Paul O'Grady's Animal Orphans
04:20 5 Star Family Reunion
05:15 Come Date With Me Australia
06:10 The Chase
07:05 Guess This House
08:00 Paul O'Grady's Animal Orphans
09:00 5 Star Family Reunion
10:00 Come Date With Me Australia
10:55 The Chase
11:50 Guess This House
12:45 Emmerdale
13:15 Emmerdale
13:45 Coronation Street



00:10 Origins: The Journey Of Humankind
01:00 Inside
02:00 Locked Up Abroad
03:00 Genius
04:00 Origins: The Journey Of Humankind
05:00 Street Genius
05:30 Street Genius
06:00 Helicopter Wars
07:00 Scam City
08:00 Cesar's Recruit: Asia
08:30 Danger Decoded
09:00 Street Genius
09:30 Street Genius
10:00 Locked Up Abroad
11:00 Uncensored With Michael Ware



GULLIVER'S TRAVELS

GULLIVER'S TRAVELS ON OSN MOVIES HD

- 12:00 Secrets Of The Tang Treasure Ship
- 13:00 Helicopter Wars
- 14:00 Cesar's Recruit: Asia
- 14:30 Danger Decoded
- 15:00 Scam City
- 16:00 Locked Up Abroad
- 17:00 Uncensored With Michael Ware
- 18:00 Underworld, Inc.
- 19:00 Scam City
- 20:00 Locked Up Abroad
- 20:50 Uncensored With Michael Ware



- 00:04 Max & Ruby
- 00:27 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
- 00:38 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
- 00:49 The Day Henry Met
- 00:54 The Day Henry Met
- 00:59 Blaze And The Monster Machines
- 01:22 Blaze And The Monster Machines
- 01:44 Zack & Quack
- 02:05 Team Umizoomi
- 02:27 Olive The Ostrich
- 02:33 Olive The Ostrich
- 02:38 Paw Patrol
- 03:01 Little Charmers
- 03:13 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
- 03:24 Dora The Explorer
- 03:47 Max & Ruby
- 04:09 Bubble Guppies
- 04:33 Shimmer And Shine
- 04:55 Dora And Friends
- 05:17 Zack & Quack
- 05:28 The Day Henry Met
- 05:33 The Day Henry Met
- 05:38 Blaze And The Monster Machines
- 06:00 Rusty Rivets
- 06:12 Paw Patrol
- 06:37 Dora The Explorer
- 07:00 Zack & Quack
- 07:21 Dora And Friends
- 07:44 Blaze And The Monster Machines
- 08:07 Paw Patrol
- 08:30 Shimmer And Shine
- 08:53 Dora The Explorer
- 09:15 The Day Henry Met
- 09:22 Paw Patrol
- 09:45 Rusty Rivets
- 09:57 Bubble Guppies
- 10:20 Fresh Beat Band Of Spies
- 10:40 Zack & Quack
- 10:52 Team Umizoomi
- 11:15 Shimmer And Shine
- 11:38 Louie
- 11:45 Louie
- 11:53 Olive The Ostrich
- 11:58 Olive The Ostrich
- 12:03 Max & Ruby
- 12:26 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
- 12:36 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
- 12:47 The Day Henry Met
- 12:52 The Day Henry Met
- 12:57 Blaze And The Monster Machines
- 13:19 Blaze And The Monster Machines
- 13:41 Zack & Quack
- 14:03 Team Umizoomi
- 14:25 Olive The Ostrich
- 14:30 Olive The Ostrich
- 14:35 Paw Patrol
- 14:58 Little Charmers
- 15:10 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
- 15:22 Dora The Explorer
- 15:44 Max & Ruby
- 16:07 Bubble Guppies
- 16:31 Shimmer And Shine
- 16:54 Dora And Friends
- 17:17 Zack & Quack
- 17:29 The Day Henry Met
- 17:34 The Day Henry Met
- 17:38 Blaze And The Monster Machines
- 18:00 Rusty Rivets
- 18:13 Paw Patrol
- 18:37 Dora The Explorer
- 19:00 Zack & Quack
- 19:21 Dora And Friends: Into The City!
- 19:44 Blaze And The Monster Machines
- 20:07 Paw Patrol
- 20:30 Shimmer And Shine
- 20:53 Dora The Explorer
- 21:15 The Day Henry Met
- 21:22 Paw Patrol
- 21:45 Rusty Rivets
- 21:57 Bubble Guppies
- 22:20 Fresh Beat Band Of Spies
- 22:40 Zack & Quack
- 22:52 Team Umizoomi
- 23:15 Shimmer And Shine



THE GREEN INFERNO ON OSN MOVIES ACTION HD



- 00:00 The Green Inferno
- 01:45 Batman: Bad Blood
- 03:00 Jurassic Hunters
- 04:30 Lucy
- 06:00 Seventh Son
- 08:00 Die Another Day
- 10:15 Echo Effect
- 12:00 Fast & Furious 7
- 14:30 Lucy
- 16:00 Spooks: The Greater Good
- 17:45 King Arthur
- 20:00 San Andreas



- 00:45 Sky High
- 02:30 The Muppets
- 04:15 Looney Tunes: Rabbit's Run
- 05:30 Sky High
- 07:15 Confessions Of A Teenage Drama Queen
- 08:45 Lilo & Stitch 2
- 10:00 The Muppets
- 11:45 Tuck Everlasting
- 13:15 Ratatouille
- 15:15 The Boxtrolls
- 17:00 Pirates Of The Caribbean 2: Dead Man's Chest
- 19:30 Race To Witch Mountain
- 21:15 Tuck Everlasting
- 22:45 The Boxtrolls



- 00:15 Snatch
- 02:00 Gulliver's Travels
- 03:45 The Legend Of Zorro
- 06:00 Eight Men Out
- 08:00 The Guardian
- 10:30 Hotel Transylvania 2
- 12:15 The Legend Of Zorro
- 14:30 The Walk
- 16:45 Twister
- 18:45 D-Tox
- 20:30 Rise Of The Planet Of The Apes
- 22:30 Straight Outta Compton



- 01:15 Deuce Bigalow: Male Gigolo
- 02:45 Top Five
- 04:30 Bill & Ted's Bogus Journey
- 06:15 Honeymooners
- 07:45 Life
- 09:45 Bill & Ted's Bogus Journey
- 11:30 Honeymooners

- 13:00 Life
- 15:00 Perfect Match
- 16:30 Under The Tuscan Sun
- 18:30 The Rewrite
- 20:30 No Stranger Than Love
- 22:00 Someone Marry Barry
- 23:30 Vacation



- 00:00 Two Mothers
- 02:00 Selma
- 04:15 Ordinary People
- 06:15 Fast Girls
- 07:45 The End Of The Tour
- 09:30 Manny
- 11:00 I'll See You In My Dreams
- 12:45 Selma
- 15:00 I Am Bolt
- 16:45 The Yellow Handkerchief
- 18:30 Infinitely Polar Bear
- 20:00 The Water Diviner
- 22:00 The Long Goodbye



- 00:45 Frog Kingdom
- 02:30 Daddy I'm A Zombie
- 04:00 Three Wishes
- 06:00 Lego: Scooby Doo Haunted Hollywood
- 07:30 Capture The Flag
- 09:15 Outback
- 10:45 Memory Loss
- 12:15 Frog Kingdom
- 14:00 Mamma Moo And Crow
- 15:30 Outback
- 17:15 Dixie And The Zombie Rebellion
- 18:45 The Swan Princess: Pirate Today, Princess Tomorrow
- 20:15 Mamma Moo And Crow
- 21:45 Capture The Flag
- 23:30 Dixie And The Zombie Rebellion



- 00:30 How Do They Do It?
- 00:55 Food Factory
- 01:20 Food Factory USA
- 01:45 Food Factory USA
- 02:10 Eco-Tech
- 03:00 Prototype This
- 03:48 Mythbusters
- 04:36 How Do They Do It?
- 05:00 Food Factory
- 05:24 Food Factory USA
- 05:49 Food Factory USA
- 06:12 Eco-Tech

- 07:00 How Do They Do It?
- 07:26 Prototype This
- 08:14 Mythbusters
- 09:02 Ways To Save The Planet
- 09:50 How Do They Do It?
- 10:14 Food Factory
- 10:38 Strip The Cosmos
- 11:26 Prototype This
- 12:14 Mythbusters
- 13:02 How Do They Do It?
- 13:26 Food Factory
- 13:50 Ways To Save The Planet
- 14:38 Prototype This
- 15:26 Food Factory USA
- 15:51 Food Factory USA
- 16:14 Mythbusters



- 00:20 Iyanla: Fix My Life
- 01:10 90 Days To Wed
- 02:00 My Big Fat Fabulous Life
- 02:25 Say Yes To The Dress: Bridesmaids
- 02:50 Love At First Swipe
- 03:15 Cake Boss
- 03:35 Iyanla: Fix My Life
- 04:20 Little People, Big World
- 04:45 Little People, Big World
- 05:10 Toddlers & Tiaras
- 06:00 Little People, Big World
- 06:25 Little People, Big World
- 06:50 Little People, Big World
- 07:15 Little People, Big World
- 07:40 Little People, Big World
- 08:05 Little People, Big World
- 08:30 Outdaughters: Busby Quints
- 09:20 Sister Wives
- 10:10 Say Yes To The Dress: The Big Day
- 11:00 Say Yes To The Dress: The Big Day
- 11:50 Love At First Swipe
- 12:15 Love At First Swipe
- 12:40 Love At First Swipe
- 13:05 Love At First Swipe
- 13:30 Love At First Swipe
- 13:55 Oprah: Where Are They Now?
- 14:45 Iyanla: Fix My Life
- 15:35 Cake Boss
- 16:00 Cake Boss
- 16:25 Cake Boss
- 16:50 Cake Boss
- 17:15 Cake Boss
- 17:40 Save My Style
- 18:05 Save My Style
- 18:30 Little Miss Atlanta
- 19:20 Outdaughters: Busby Quints
- 20:10 Sister Wives
- 21:00 Outdaughters: Busby Quints
- 21:50 Sister Wives
- 22:40 Too Ugly For Love?
- 23:30 Return To Amish



- 00:00 Brad Meltzer's Lost History
- 01:00 Mud Men
- 02:00 America's Book Of Secrets
- 02:50 Ancient Aliens: The Ultimate Evidence
- 03:40 Million Dollar Genius
- 04:30 The Universe
- 05:20 Brad Meltzer's Lost History
- 06:10 The Universe
- 07:00 Mud Men
- 08:00 America's Book Of Secrets
- 09:00 Ancient Aliens: The Ultimate Evidence
- 10:00 Million Dollar Genius
- 11:00 The Universe
- 12:00 Brad Meltzer's Lost History
- 13:00 Mud Men
- 14:00 America's Book Of Secrets
- 15:00 Ancient Aliens: The Ultimate Evidence
- 16:00 Million Dollar Genius

- 17:00 The Universe
- 18:00 America: The Story Of The U.S.
- 19:00 Mud Men
- 20:00 America's Book Of Secrets
- 21:00 Ancient Aliens: The Ultimate Evidence



- 00:20 Lost Worlds
- 01:10 Billion Dollar Wreck
- 02:00 Gold Hunters: Legend Of The Superstition...
- 02:50 Storage Wars
- 03:15 American Pickers
- 04:05 Pawn Stars
- 05:00 Mountain Men
- 06:00 Lost Worlds
- 06:50 Time Team
- 07:40 Battle 360
- 08:30 Ax Men
- 09:20 Ice Road Truckers
- 10:10 Swamp People
- 11:00 American Pickers
- 11:50 Big Easy Motors
- 12:40 American Restoration
- 13:30 Hunting Hitler
- 15:10 Ronnie O'Sullivan's American Hustle
- 16:00 Swamp People
- 19:20 Lost In Transmission
- 20:10 Ice Road Truckers
- 21:00 American Pickers
- 21:50 Ozzy & Jack's World Detour
- 22:40 Forged In Fire



- 00:00 Tia Mowry At Home
- 01:00 Dinner At Tiffani's
- 02:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 03:00 Man Fire Food
- 04:00 Chopped
- 05:00 Guy's Grocery Games
- 06:00 Barefoot Contessa
- 07:00 The Kitchen
- 08:00 The Pioneer Woman
- 09:00 Cooking For Real
- 10:00 Siba's Table
- 11:00 The Kitchen
- 12:00 The Pioneer Woman
- 13:00 Siba's Table
- 14:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 15:00 Chopped
- 16:00 The Kitchen
- 17:00 Cooking For Real
- 18:00 Chopped
- 19:00 Chopped Junior
- 20:00 Ching's Amazing Asia
- 21:00 Reza Spice Prince Of Vietnam
- 22:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 23:00 Guy's Grocery Games

JASON SEGEL JESSE EISENBERG

THE END OF THE TOUR

BASED ON THE BEST-SELLING BOOK



THE END OF THE TOUR ON OSN MOVIES FESTIVAL HD

Word Search Puzzles

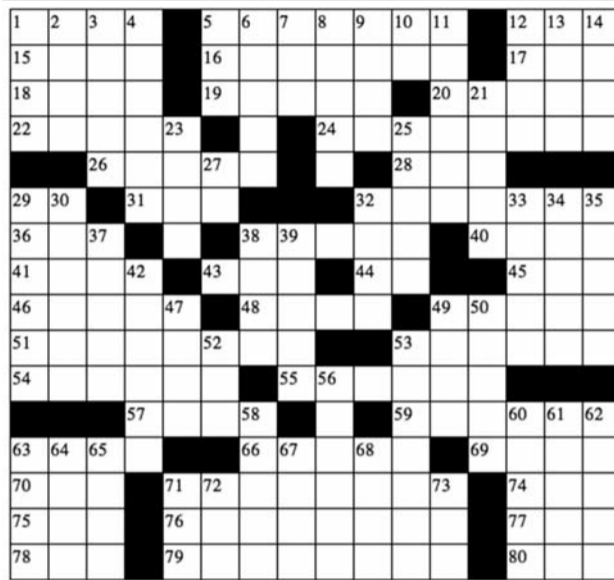
Autumn

Find and circle all of the Autumn words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a secret message - an Albert Camus quotation.

LONGERNIGHTSNAUCN
TORUESTUNYROKCIHRI
MSOAYQENISIAOTRWOK
RCYHNEUVSTERFHEOPP
CEAACGKIASNOAABRSM
KNDNDSDERNSDRNMCOU
SCYLNRLGLUOLPMKEECP
QRAKEIERETXGISVRTS
UYDTMANTSAEFNGOAOE
ADYDSIVGRTVSGINCBP
SNRNGYWEHOEENVWSET
HIELPPAESPHASIVORE
BWTYLLIHCTESP N RFLM
FTSEVRAHYELOIGREB
AAUHALLOWEENEFIGIOSE
AFLSEVAELWOLLEYSLR
LOBLWECHESTNUTSTRD

- | | | | |
|----------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| ACORN | EQUINOX | NOVEMBER | SEPTEMBER |
| APPLE | FALL | OCTOBER | SHORTER DAYS |
| BIRD MIGRATION | FARMING | ORANGE LEAVES | SQUASH |
| BLOWING LEAVES | FEAST | PIE | SWEET POTATOES |
| BLUSTERY DAY | FROST | PUMPKIN | THANKSGIVING |
| CANNING | HALLOWEEN | RAKE | TURKEY |
| CHESTNUTS | HARVEST | RED LEAVES | WINDY |
| CHILLY | HAYSTACK | SCARECROW | YELLOW LEAVES |
| COLD | HICKORY NUTS | SCHOOL | |
| CROPS | LONGER NIGHTS | SEASON | |

CROSSWORD 1605



ACROSS

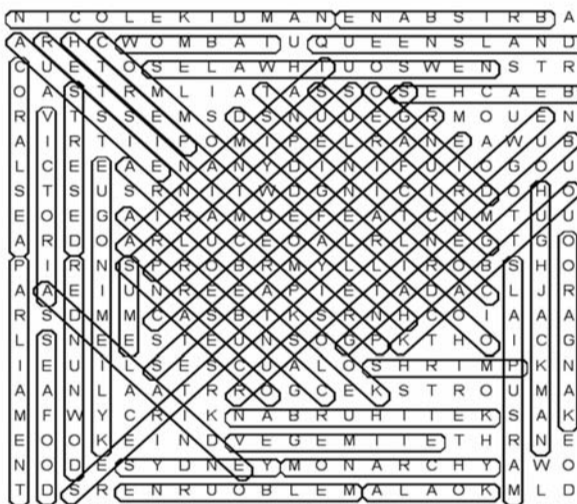
- Waterproofed canvas.
- Causing difficulty in breathing especially through lack of fresh air and presence of heat.
- A haster's degree in education.
- A translucent mineral consisting of hydrated silica of variable color.
- The capital of Sicily.
- A sweetened beverage of diluted fruit juice.
- A Hindu prince or king in India.
- Jordan's port.
- (Irish) Chief god of the Tuatha De Danann.
- (prefix) Across or crossing or on the opposite side.
- An ancient branch of the Semitic languages.
- An indehiscent fruit derived from a single ovary having one or many seeds within a fleshy wall or pericarp.
- A constellation in the southern hemisphere near Telescopium and Norma.
- Being one more than three.
- A unit of absorbed ionizing radiation equal to 100 ergs per gram of irradiated material.
- A luminance unit equal to 1 candle per square meter measured perpendicular to the rays from the source.
- A particular geographical region of indefinite boundary (usually serving some special purpose or distinguished by its people or culture or geography).
- A fraudulent business scheme.
- A compartment in front of a motor vehicle where driver sits.
- A heavy brittle diamagnetic trivalent metallic element (resembles arsenic and antimony chemically).
- Alsatian artist and poet who was cofounder of Dadaism in Zurich.
- Learns from a tutor.
- A Loloish language.
- Eruption on a mucous membrane (as the inside of the mouth) occurring as a symptom of a disease.
- A South American river.
- The basic unit of money in Macao.
- Mentally or physically infirm with age.
- The selling of something purchased.
- A very young child (birth to 1 year) who has not yet begun to walk or talk.

DOWN

- (Mexican) Ground beef and chili peppers or chili powder often with tomatoes and kidney beans.
- Mild yellow Dutch cheese made in balls.
- A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
- The executive agency that advises the President on the federal budget.
- A serve that strikes the net before falling into the receiver's court.
- Not friendly.
- Dish baked in pastry-lined pan often with a pastry top.
- An agency of the United Nations affiliated with the World Bank.
- Clothed or adorned with finery.
- A slight amount or degree of difference.
- Any wrongdoing for which an action for damages may be brought.
- South American armadillo with three bands of bony plates.
- The seventh month of the Moslem calendar.
- Involving two dimensions.
- An accountant certified by the state.
- Australian shrubs and small trees with evergreen usually spiny leaves and dense clusters of showy flowers.
- Leaf or strip from a leaf of the talipot palm used in India for writing paper.
- Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
- A republic in the Middle East in western Asia.
- A metric unit of length equal to one billionth of a meter.
- French film maker influenced by surrealism.
- (New Testament) The sages who visited Jesus and Mary and Joseph shortly after Jesus was born.
- Tropical starchy tuberous root.
- An administrator in charge of a division of a university or college.
- A city in southern Turkey on the Seyhan River.
- Any of a number of fishes of the family Carangidae.
- An island of Hawaii northwest of Oahu.
- Being one hundred more than three hundred.
- The wool of the vicuna.
- (Babylonian) God of wisdom and agriculture and patron of scribes and schools.
- Feeling or showing extreme anger.
- Of or relating to or containing cerium especially with valence 4.
- From the kapok tree.
- A member of the Mongolian people of central Asia who invaded Russia in the 13th century.
- The general activity of selling.
- A unit of current equal to 10 amperes.
- A social unit living together.
- An inactive volcano in Sicily.
- A color varying from dark purplish brown to dark red.
- Lower in esteem.
- An ugly evil-looking old woman.
- Gull family.
- Pertaining to or containing any of a group of organic compounds of nitrogen derived from ammonia.
- Strong and sharp.
- Choose and follow.
- (folklore) A corpse that rises at night to drink the blood of the living.
- To fix or set securely or deeply.
- In bed.
- A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
- A complex red organic pigment containing iron and other atoms to which oxygen binds.
- The state of needing something that is absent or unavailable.
- A person's brother or sister.
- The compass point midway between northeast and east.
- Late time of life.

Yesterday's Solution

Australia



- | | | | |
|--------------|------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| 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 |

The hidden message is:
AUSTRALIA'S MOUNT AUGUSTUS IS THE LARGEST ROCK IN THE WORLD

Daily SuDoku

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 4 | 1 | | | | 7 | | |
| | | | 1 | 8 | | | | |
| | 8 | | | | | | 3 | 6 |
| | | | | | 6 | 2 | | 1 |
| 6 | | | 9 | 2 | | | | 3 |
| 9 | | 4 | 7 | | | | | |
| 1 | 7 | | | | | | | 5 |
| | | | | 6 | 9 | | | |
| | | 3 | | | | 6 | 8 | |

Yesterday's Solution

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | 5 | 8 | 7 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 9 | 2 |
| 9 | 7 | 4 | 6 | 5 | 2 | 8 | 3 | 1 |
| 2 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 8 | 9 | 6 | 7 | 5 |
| 1 | 9 | 2 | 5 | 3 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 4 |
| 8 | 6 | 7 | 9 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 3 |
| 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 6 | 7 | 2 | 8 | 9 |
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Yesterday's Solution

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IN EUROPE, US, MODERN AIDS DRUGS ADD EXTRA 10 YEARS OF LIFE EXPECTANCY

LONDON: Life expectancy for young HIV-positive adults has risen by 10 years in the United States and Europe thanks to improvements in AIDS drugs known as anti-retroviral therapy, researchers said yesterday. This meant many patients can expect to live as long as those without HIV, according to their study published in The Lancet medical journal. The scientists said the improvements were likely to be largely due to the transition to less toxic medicine combinations, with more drug options for people infected with drug-resistant HIV strains, and better adherence to treatment.

"Our research illustrates a success story of how improved HIV treatments coupled with screening, prevention and treatment of health problems associated with HIV infection can extend the lifespan," said Adam Trickey, who led the research at Britain's University of Bristol. Antiretroviral therapy, or ART, first became widely used in the mid 1990s. It involves a combination of three or more drugs that block the HIV virus' replication. This helps prevent and repair damage to the immune system caused by the HIV, and also prevents onward spread of the disease.

The World Health Organization now recommends ART should be given as soon as possible after diagnosis to everyone with HIV. The researchers analyzed 18 European and North American studies involving 88,504 people with HIV who started ART between 1996 and 2010. Fewer people who started treatment between 2008-2010 died during their first three years of treatment than those who started treatment between 1996-2007.

Trickey's team said when they looked specifically at deaths due to AIDS, the number during treatment declined over time between 1996 and 2010, probably because more modern drugs are more effective in restoring the immune system. As a result, the researchers said that between 1996 and 2013, the life expectancy of 20-year-olds treated for HIV increased by nine years for women and 10 years for men in the European Union and North America. This suggests that life expectancy of a 20-year-old who began ART from 2008 onwards and responded well to it would get close to a life expectancy of the general population - 78 years. —Reuters

US CITIES, STATES MOBILIZE AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE WITHOUT TRUMP

WASHINGTON: Even as President Donald Trump steers the United States away from actively fighting climate change, a number of American cities and states are continuing to pursue renewable energies to reduce their carbon footprint. Around three dozen states—even some headed by Republicans—have established policies that require power companies to expand the amount of renewable energy they produce in the coming decade.

Beyond the traditional Democratic and pro-environment bastions of California and New York, even states headed by Republican governors including Illinois, Ohio, Michigan, Texas and Iowa have decided to invest massively in clean energy. "I think the surprise to me is how Republican governors appreciate there are opportunities for economic development for investment for innovation by embracing new technologies, both energy efficiency and clean energy, and in spite of the Trump administration turning their back and in fact trying to put up barriers," said Dick Munson, head of the Environmental Defense Fund's energy program in the Midwest.

In Illinois, Republican governor Bruce Rauner recently signed a law, struck with the help of the majority Democratic legislature, setting out more than \$200 million in investment annually for renewable energy. "That is probably the most extensive clean energy legislation in the country," Munson said.

Large mobilization

In Ohio, governor John Kasich, who lost his battle for the Republican party's



Donald Trump

nomination in the presidential race last year to Trump, vetoed a bill that would have weakened the state's clean energy efforts. And in the highly conservative state of Texas, former governor Rick Perry, also a Republican who became Secretary of Energy under Trump, has aggressively pursued wind energy, before saying he would advise Trump to stay in the Paris climate accord.

Texas "produces more wind power per year than every other state of the nation," said Munson, making up a quarter of US wind capacity and 12.7 percent of Texas's energy needs. With more turbines under construction, wind will soon furnish 16 percent of Texas's electricity. Wind made up 5.6 percent of US energy production last year, according to the US Energy Information Administration.

The leadership of cities and states when it comes to green energy offers "most definitely a pathway to meet our Paris commitment even if the Trump administration is uncooperative or hostile," said Mary Anne Hitt, director of the Beyond Coal Campaign at the Sierra Club.

Energy transition

"We are not building any new coal fired power plant in this country," she added. Since 2010, 175 coal plants have closed, leaving 270 in operation which produce about 30 percent of US energy.

Natural gas provides 33.8 percent of US needs, nuclear 19.7 percent and renewable energy—including wind, solar, biomass and geothermal — 15 percent.

The clean energy revolution means these methods make good business sense, she added.

And with the abundance of natural gas in the United States, coal is increasingly less competitive. Another 73 coal plants are projected to close by 2030, despite Trump's support for this polluting fossil fuel. "States and cities in the US is where we make decisions about how we get and produce our electricity," Hitt said. "Those decisions are not made in Washington and there is not a lot that Trump can do to change these decisions."

More than 200 cities and counties in the United States are now part of Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI), an UN-led network of over 1,500 cities, towns and regions committed to building a sustainable future. "The commitment of mayors and governors in the US to climate action has never been stronger than today," said Gino van Begin, secretary-general of ICLEI, on the sidelines of a conference in Bonn, Germany, to advance implementation of the 2015 Paris climate accord. The global deal signed by more than 190 countries aimed to limit global warming by reducing greenhouse gas emissions. "This is unstoppable," he added. "My understanding is that already the US economy also has started to begin to decouple from carbon." In the past decade, US gross domestic product increased 10 percent while the carbon emission decreased nine percent, he said.—AFP

CLINIC
PAGE



Kuwait Times

Dr. Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem
د. فهد علي المخيزيم
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M.B. Bch. FRCPC. FAAP. PEM

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KNCC PROGRAMME FROM THURSDAY TO WEDNESDAY (11/05/2017 TO 17/05/2017)

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Friday Times BUSINESS

FRIDAY, MAY 12, 2017

ASIAN MARKETS RALLY AS OIL PRICES BOUNCE



Snap shares
hammered

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Page 38



BEIJING: A man rides on a tricycle loaded with goods past by a fashion advertisement billboard at Ritan International Trade Center in Beijing. China has reported its exports expanded for a second straight month in April but at a slower pace while import growth also decelerated as demand cooled both at home and overseas. — AP

SAUDI DEFICIT PLUNGES AFTER CUTS

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia's budget deficit dropped by 71 percent in the first quarter of the year, the government said yesterday, after spending cuts and a major rebound in oil revenues. The world's top crude exporter has made an aggressive push to diversify its traditionally oil-dependent economy after the drop in global prices since 2014 slashed its revenues.

Finance Minister Mohammed Al-Jadaan yesterday said the deficit had dropped to 26 billion Saudi riyals (\$6.93 billion) in the first three months of the 2017 fiscal year. Saudi Arabia's budget deficit was initially projected at \$53 billion for the whole year, after an even bigger deficit last year that prompted subsidy cuts, delays in projects and a temporary government salary freeze. "This is a very encouraging figure and clearly reflects our aim to achieve a balanced budget in 2020," Jadaan said. This is the first time that Saudi Arabia has released budget figures on a quarterly basis, a measure it says is aimed

at boosting transparency. Total revenues for the first quarter were at 144.076 billion riyals (\$38.41 billion), an increase of 72 percent from the same quarter last year. Oil revenues were notably up in the first quarter at 112 billion riyals (\$29.86 billion) with a growth rate of 115 percent from the same quarter last year, driven by a hike in crude prices in international markets. Non-oil revenues for the first quarter were reported at 32 billion riyals (\$8.53 billion), a one percent increase from the same quarter last year.

Expenditure stood at 170 billion riyals (\$45.3 billion) for the first quarter of this year, down three percent from the corresponding period last year. Expenditure is projected at \$237 billion for this year, down from \$260 billion last year. The Saudi government last year announced a sweeping "Vision 2030" plan aimed at developing its industrial and investment base and boosting small- and medium-sized businesses in a bid to

create more jobs for Saudis and reduce reliance on oil revenue. The plan also aims to include more women in the workforce in Saudi Arabia, which has some of the world's tightest restrictions on women. It is the only country where women are not allowed to drive.

In September, the state froze salaries and reduced benefits for civil servants—who comprise the bulk of the workforce—as part of a package of austerity measures. King Salman revoked the measures in a royal decree last month. High on the diversification agenda is the kingdom's plan to sell some five percent of state oil giant Aramco to private owners next year. Saudi Arabia has also announced foreigners would no longer be allowed to work in Saudi Arabia's numerous shopping malls, in a measure to boost employment of Saudis. About nine million foreigners worked in the kingdom at the end of 2015, the most recent official figures available. — AFP



ATHENS: People walk past a banner calling for general strike and set up on the front of the Finance Ministry building yesterday. Members of the Communist-affiliated union PAME occupied the finance ministry building early on May 11 to draw attention to a May 17 general strike against new pension and tax break cuts promulgated by the government at the behest of Greece's EU-IMF creditors. — AFP

EURO-ZONE TO GROW 1.7%

EU SEES DROP IN UNEMPLOYMENT

BRUSSELS: Euro-zone economic growth should grow a bit faster this year than previously believed and the unemployment rate could be the lowest in a decade, the European Commission said yesterday. It also predicted low inflation, a challenge for the European Central Bank which is trying to boost it. The 19-country euro-zone is expected to expand by 1.7 percent this year and 1.8 percent in 2018, the EU executive said, slightly raising its previous estimate for euro-zone growth of 1.6 percent this year, while leaving unchanged the 2018 forecast.

The projected growth for 2017, however, remains lower than 2016 when it was

1.8 percent, and further below the 2.0 percent post-crisis high reached in 2015. The Commission's forecasts, published three times a year, predict all euro-zone countries will grow this year and next, with Germany, the bloc's largest economy, accelerating to 1.9 percent in 2018, and Spain and Portugal expanding much more than previously expected.

"Europe is entering its fifth consecutive year of growth," EU Economics Commissioner Pierre Moscovici said. "It is good news too that the high uncertainty that has characterized the past 12 months may be starting to ease," he said, noting that far-right nationalism "was defeated," a reference to far-right candidate Marine

Le Pen's loss at last week's French presidential elections.

In a further sign of a healthier economy, euro-zone unemployment is expected to go down to 9.4 percent this year from 10.0 percent in 2016, before falling further in 2018 to 8.9 percent, a bigger drop than previously estimated. If confirmed, the 2018 figure would be the lowest since the beginning of 2009, although the rate of people without jobs will remain well above the average in Italy, Spain, Cyprus and Greece, where is projected at 21.6 percent in 2018. Inflation is forecast to slow to 1.3 percent next year from a downwardly revised 1.6 percent this year, the Commission said, predicting a lower inflation than European Central Bank's estimates of a 1.7 percent rate this year.

The risks

Risks for euro-zone economic growth have decreased from previous forecasts but remain "elevated", the commission said. Greece's growth was cut to 2.1 percent this year from the 2.7 percent forecast three months ago, because of uncertainty caused by delays in its bailout program, Moscovici said. GDP growth in Greece is also set to shrink to 2.5 percent from previously estimated 3.1 percent in 2018. Outside the euro-zone, the Commission revised upward its forecast of Britain's growth to 1.8 percent this year, from a previously estimated 1.5 percent, and to 1.3 percent in 2018 from 1.2 percent, in a sign that the British economy will be hit less than expected by Britain's decision to leave the EU.

Britain's growth has however slowed down from 2.2 percent in 2015, and domestic demand is expected to weaken as inflation is projected to reach 2.6 percent this year and next, above Bank of England's target of 2 percent. Brexit remains one of the main risks for the bloc's growth in the coming months, the Commission said. The state of public finances in euro-zone countries is generally improving, as the Commission expects debts and deficits to go down as a proportion of the bloc's gross domestic product (GDP), but problems remain in some countries. — Reuters

THE WORKING POOR OF GERMANY'S RUST BELT DESPERATE FOR CHANGE

BOCHUM: Hospital cleaner Petra Vogel is exactly the kind of voter in the sights of Social Democrats determined to unseat German Chancellor Angela Merkel at legislative elections in September. The slightly-built 60-year-old with a touch of green mascara around the eyes, has spent half her life working in the clinic in her hometown of Bochum, in Germany's most populous state North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW).

Years of hard physical labor have taken their toll on Petra's back and knees, but she still frequently leaves the comfortable confines of her union representative's office to pitch in alongside colleagues—most of them also women. "I feel like I've been cheated," Petra says bluntly as she thinks of her tough working conditions and gloomy prospects for retirement. Her employer, a services firm, pays her 10.51 euros (\$11.44) gross per hour leaving her with a take-home pay packet of 1,115 euros per month after working 39 hours each week.

After rent and bills, that leaves some 350 euros per month to cover food, clothing, diabetes medications,

and an occasional ice cream treat. In five years' time, she will be able to retire after 41 years of work, leaving her with a pension of 665 euros per month. "I'd rather not think about it... I'll fall into the category of poor pensioners," she worries. "I just hope that I'll still be in good enough shape physically to keep working a 450-euro-per-month job after retirement." "Living in one of the wealthiest countries in the world and being treated like this, I can't believe it."

Battle for social justice

Millions of Germans are in a similar position to Petra, struggling to make ends meet each month and fearing the day when they finally retire. "Mini-jobs", like the one she hopes will keep money coming in, were one of the headline measures of the "Agenda 2010" labor market reforms under Social Democrat Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder in the early 2000s. The positions went hand-in-hand with the introduction of so-called "Hartz IV" unemployment benefits—a low minimum payment afforded to jobseekers after their first year out of work. — AFP

SNAPCHAT GROWTH STALLS IN FACEBOOK'S SHADOW

NEW YORK: Facebook has been bent on copying Snapchat ever since the social media giant tried unsuccessfully in 2013 to buy what was then an ephemeral photo-messaging app. Now, the company behind Snapchat is hoping to copy some of its larger rival's own practices, at least with respect to courting new users - and, with them, advertisers. But it's not going so well. On Wednesday, Snap Inc. announced a massive loss and a continued slowdown in user growth, while revenue fell below Wall Street's expectations in its first earnings report as a public company. Just a week earlier, Facebook posted double-digit revenue growth for the first quarter - much as it has consistently since its initial public offering in 2012. Snapchat reported 166 million daily active users in the latest quarter, an increase of just 36 percent from a year earlier. In its first post-IPO report in 2012, Facebook also disappointed investors when its daily user base grew by only 32 percent. But at that point, Facebook had 552 million regular users, more than three times as many as Snapchat.

Where the money went

Almost \$2 billion of Snap's \$2.2 billion loss in the January-March period involved stock compensation costs related to the company's initial offering. Facebook had similar costs of roughly \$1.3 billion. But Facebook's revenue was \$1.18 billion in its first quarter as a public company. Although Snap's revenue nearly quadrupled in the latest quarter, it only rose to \$150 million. And that still undershot the \$158 million analysts polled by FactSet had expected. Snap's stock fell \$5.50, or 24 percent, to \$17.48 in after-hours trading.

Copcats

Growth in Snapchat's user base began to slow down last year after Facebook's Instagram copied Snapchat's "stories" feature, which lets users post short video clips that disappear after 24 hours. Not to miss out on the trend, Facebook also launched disappearing stories this year. And let's not forget about WhatsApp, the Facebook-owned messaging service that came out with "status," which lets people post photos and videos that disappear after 24 hours. See a trend here?

All about messaging

Matt Britton, CEO of social media marketing company Crowdtap and an expert on millennials, believes Snapchat has "gotten ahead of itself" in pushing out new features, when what it does best - and what it's most used for - is one-on-one messaging. "If you ask any teen how they use Snapchat, (most) say they use it to text people," Britton said. He said he's seen a lot of teens replace the telephone icon at the bottom of their phones' most-used apps with the Snapchat app. Why call when you can snap, after all?

Not a social network

Snapchat's Stanford-dropout CEO, Evan Spiegel, has long insisted that his company is not a social network but a "camera company." Unlike Facebook, Twitter or Instagram, Snapchat isn't connecting networks of people. You could use it with just one other person, if you wanted. Britton sees challenges for Snapchat's non-messaging features, such as stories and a "discover" option that lets users keep up with news, sports or celebrities. These features aren't what many users go to Snapchat for. — AP



NEW YORK: Snapchat co-founders Bobby Murphy (left) and CEO Evan Spiegel ring the opening bell at the New York Stock Exchange as the company celebrates its IPO. Since it couldn't buy its smaller rival, Facebook is bent on copying Snap to death. — AP

BT GROUP TO AXE 4,000 JOBS WORLDWIDE

LONDON: Troubled British telecoms giant BT said yesterday it will axe 4,000 jobs worldwide in a new cost-cutting drive, after posting sliding profits in a "challenging" year. The positions will be cut across three divisions, which comprise global services, group functions, and technology, services and operations, BT said in its annual results statement. The group, which currently employs 102,500 staff and operates in 180 countries, will take a one-off restructuring charge of £300 million (\$388 million, 357 million euros).

Meanwhile, pre-tax profit dived by a fifth to £2.35 billion in the financial year to the end of March, hit by an Italian accounting scandal, troubles at its Openreach broadband unit, and challenging

trade both at home and abroad. "Technology trends mean that we are now less dependent on owning physical local network assets around the world, creating the opportunity to reposition Global Services as a more focused digital business," said chief executive Gavin Patterson.

The group was therefore restructuring its Global Services division and speeding up and expanding its cost transformation programs, he said. "This will help offset market and regulatory pressures and create the capacity for future investment," Patterson said. BT added yesterday that its remuneration committee has stripped Patterson of his 2016/2017 bonus, totaling £338,398, as a result of a string of problems. In

January, BT revealed news of an accounting scandal at its Italian division which cost the group £530 million. And in March, regulator Ofcom hit BT with a bill of around £350 million in fines and compensation following delays to high-speed cable installations by its Openreach broadband unit.

"The past year has been challenging," noted remuneration committee chairman Tony Ball in a separate statement. "Unfortunately our performance has been significantly affected by the accounting irregularities in our Italian business, the issues that arose in Openreach ... and the significant challenges we faced in the UK public sector and international corporate markets. — AFP

News

i n b r i e f

Norway to tap less of its sovereign wealth fund

OSLO: Norway plans to tap less of its sovereign wealth fund than anticipated now that its economy is recovering, the spring budget bill revealed yesterday. The right-wing government had in its 2017 budget bill in September predicted that it would withdraw 225.6 billion kroner (24.2 billion euros, \$26.2 billion, at current exchange rates). But that number has now been shaved down to 220.9 billion. "Unemployment is on its way down and growth is picking up," Finance Minister Siv Jensen said in a statement. The Scandinavian country, the biggest oil producer in western Europe, has suffered from the drop in oil prices since mid-2014. The economic upswing-sustained by low interest rates, a weaker krone and an expansionary budget policy-is good news for Norway's Conservative-led coalition government as it gears up for difficult legislative elections in September. Mainland gross domestic product-excluding the shipping and oil-and-gas sectors-is expected to grow by 1.6 percent this year and 2.4 percent next year, after posting meagre growth of 0.8 percent in 2016, the revised budget bill showed.

NZ holds interest rate steady at a record low

WELLINGTON: New Zealand's central bank left its base rate at a record low of 1.75 percent yesterday and signaled it would stay there "for a considerable period". In a widely anticipated move, the Reserve Bank of New Zealand said there was no need to change rates amid modest inflation and positive economic growth. "The growth outlook remains positive, supported by on-going accommodative monetary policy, strong population growth, and high levels of household spending and construction activity," central bank governor Graeme Wheeler said. The base rate has remained unchanged since November last year, when it was cut from 2.0 percent, and analysts do not expect any movement until mid-2018 at the earliest. Wheeler shrugged off higher-than-expected March quarter inflation of 1.0 percent, blaming it on temporary factors and saying annual price rises would remain in the bank's 1.0-3.0 target range. "Longer-term inflation expectations remain well-anchored at around two percent," he said.

Nissan annual profit rises on strong sales

TOKYO: Japanese automaker Nissan Motor Co's fiscal year profit has improved 27 percent to 663.5 billion yen (\$5.8 billion) as strong sales in the US, China and Europe offset damage from the strong yen. But it's forecasting a 19 percent drop in profit for the fiscal year through March 2018 at 535 billion yen (\$4.7 billion) as research investment and raw material expenses bite into bigger sales and cost cut efforts. Sales for the fiscal year ended March 2017 dipped nearly 4 percent to 11.7 trillion yen (\$103 billion). Nissan, which did not break down quarterly numbers, said Thursday that it sold 5.63 million vehicles globally for the fiscal year. It expects sales to grow to 5.83 million vehicles for the fiscal year through March 2018. Yokohama-based Nissan's US sales rose 4 percent on-year on solid demand for the Rogue and Altima sedan. Sales in China rose 8 percent, while sales in Europe excluding Russia rose 7 percent for Nissan, which is allied with Renault SA of France.



SEOUL: Newly elected South Korean President Moon Jae-in and his wife Kim Jung-suk salute to the national flag during his inauguration ceremony at the National Assembly in Seoul. — AFP

MOON AIMS TO SHINE NEW LIGHT ON SOUTH KOREAN BUSINESSES

NEW PRESIDENT BLAMES 'WEAK MOTIVATION'

SEOUL: The world's biggest smartphone maker Samsung and other conglomerates that dominate South Korea's economy are firmly in the reformist sights of new president Moon Jae-in and analysts say he could succeed where many have failed. The likes of Samsung and Hyundai, sprawling family-led empires known as "chaebols", were crucial to the South's rapid economic transformation in the 1960s and 70s from the ruins of war. Now they employ vast numbers of people in Asia's fourth-largest economy. The revenues of Samsung alone, which has activities as diverse as a fashion line and an amusement park as well as making semiconductors and televisions, are equivalent to a quarter of the country's GDP.

They have gained immense political leverage, but also turned into objects of public scorn, accused of choking off innovation and engaging in corrupt business practices to ensure the families retain control of their empires. Cosy ties with the political elite were exposed by the scandal that brought down Moon's predecessor Park Geun-Hye, and on the campaign trail he vowed to squeeze the four biggest conglomerates-Samsung, Hyundai, SK and LG-labelling them "obstacles to economic growth". "I will take the initiative in reforming conglomerates," he said in his inauguration speech.

Reform has been pledged many times before-even by Park, and by Moon's own party-without being carried out, but the new president has blamed "weak motivation" in previous governments. Analysts say there is more momentum for change now, after millions of people took to the streets to demand Park's removal, many of them also targeting the chaebols. The level of public anger means the "chances of meaningful reform are much increased", said Capital Economics analyst Gareth Leather. Several chaebols took out full-page newspa-

per advertisements Thursday to congratulate Moon-Samsung's featured a smiling girl and proclaimed that "hope for a better tomorrow has begun".

Wealth clan

The word "chaebol" originates from a combination of the characters for "wealth" and "clan". Many chaebol families retain only a small ownership stake in their companies, but maintain control through complex webs of cross-shareholdings between subsidiaries, and rapid promotions for family members.

Among the casualties in the Park scandal was Samsung heir Lee Jae-Yong, who has gone on trial for allegedly bribing Park's secret confidante in exchange for government favors-including state approval for a controversial merger of two Samsung units seen as a key step to ensure a smooth transfer of power to him. Moon has promised to promote more transparent corporate governance, aimed at breaking up the line of succession within chaebol families. Under a proposal to bring in cumulative voting for board elections, shareholders would be able to concentrate their votes on particular candidates, increasing the chances of outsiders winning seats.

The change would be a "crucial catalyst for strengthening the independence and responsibility of the board", said CW Chung, an analyst at Nomura Securities. With liberals in control of parliament as well as the presidency, the likelihood of reform was "much higher than it has been at any time in the past", he added. A new watchdog committee with members from prosecutors, police, tax authorities and the Fair Trade Commission to address unfair practices by conglomerates against smaller businesses has also been promised. — AFP

BRITISH CONSUMERS SQUEEZED BY INFLATION

LONDON: The Bank of England says a rise in inflation driven by the market turmoil over Brexit is starting to hurt consumers, weakening growth and pushing the central bank to keep its interest rates at record lows. The bank yesterday kept its main interest rate at 0.25 percent as it noted that the economy will be weaker than expected this year as Britain prepares to leave the European Union. Since the Brexit vote in June, the pound has fallen as much as a fifth in currency markets, pushing up inflation in Britain. That, in turn, is weighing on consumer spending this year. "Wages won't keep up with the price of goods and services," Bank Governor Mark Carney told a news conference as he presented new economic forecasts.

The Bank of England predicts the annual inflation rate will rise to 2.7 percent by the middle of this year, up from the current rate of 2.3 percent and pushing the official limit of close to 2 percent. It trimmed its forecast for growth to 1.9 percent from 2.0 percent previously. The combination of higher inflation and weaker growth puts the Bank

of England in a bind. Raising interest rates would help limit inflation but hurt growth by making borrowing more expensive for companies and households. The Bank of England expects wages to start picking up in 2018 and inflation to ease back down - but only assuming Britain gets a new trade deal with the EU.

Britain in March triggered two years of talks on leaving the EU and striking a new trade relationship. Carney said the central bank did not prepare any forecasts based on the assumption of no new trade deal with the EU, leaving uncertain what the economic impact would be. Yesterday, the policymakers erred on the side of caution, particularly after official figures showed economic growth more than halved to 0.3 percent in the first quarter compared with the previous three months. The Monetary Policy Committee voted 7-1 to keep rates on hold, with one member seeking a quarter point increase.

"Inflationary pressures and uncertainty around Brexit will persist and rushing into a decision now could be dangerous. The Bank of England's verdict shows

that they are mindful of the possibility of lower growth as companies put investment on hold in the face of this uncertainty," Kerim Derhalli, CEO of investment app invstr. In the minutes to

yesterday's decision, the bank said that if the economy performs as expected, its interest rates may be raised "by a somewhat greater extent" than is currently expected in financial markets.— AP



LONDON: Bank of England Governor Mark Carney (right) listens as Deputy Governor for Monetary Policy Ben Broadbent speaks during the central Bank's quarterly Inflation Report press conference at the Bank of England in the City of London yesterday. — AFP

ASIAN MARKETS RALLY AS OIL PRICES BOUNCE

ENERGY FIRMS PROVIDING STRONG SUPPORT

HONG KONG: Asian markets rose yesterday with energy firms providing strong support after a surge in oil prices, while the dollar held gains against the yen as a top Federal Reserve official reinforced expectations for further interest rate hikes. Both main crude contracts soared almost three percent Wednesday after data showed a drop in US inventories almost three times more than forecast, fanning hopes of a jump in demand as the American holiday driving season kicks off.

Traders have also been buoyed by hopes that OPEC and Russia's much-vaunted output cuts that started in January appear to be gaining traction, with the key producers also likely to extend the agreement past its end-June deadline. All of which is welcome news for oil traders after last week's plunge in prices that came on the back of worries about rising US, Nigeria and Libya output, and a slowdown in key market China.

"We saw the biggest draw in inventories for the year last week with stockpiles down more than five million barrels," said Greg McKenna, chief market strategist at AxiTrader. "And it looks like OPEC's production cut is finally biting," he added. Among Asian energy firms Hong Kong-listed CNOOC jumped 1.2 percent and PetroChina climbed 0.4 percent, while Woodside Petroleum added 0.2 percent in Sydney as Santos gained 1.5 percent. Inpex added 0.8 percent in Tokyo. Oil prices edged up yesterday.

Three more hikes?

Jeffrey Halley, senior market analyst at OANDA, added: "With the OPEC production cuts almost certain to be extended, oil may well have dodged the worst for now." However, he warned "it would be premature to call a bottom in prices as US production



NEW YORK: A trader works on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange at the closing bell of the Dow Industrial Average in New York.— AFP

continues to ramp up along with that of ... OPEC members Libya and Nigeria (who are exempted from the output cuts)". On equities markets Tokyo ended 0.3 percent higher and Hong Kong jumped 0.4 percent, a fourth-straight gain that puts it near two-year highs. Sydney added 0.1 percent, Seoul gained 1.2 percent to clock up another record high, while Singapore was 0.4 percent higher. Taipei and Manila also put on strong shows. Wellington surged 0.9 percent after the New Zealand central bank held interest rates and said it would keep them unchanged for some time as inflation was likely to ease-but this sent the country's dollar diving 1.5 percent.— AFP

UNICREDIT DOUBLES Q1 PROFIT AS OVERHAUL REAPS REWARDS

MILAN: Italian bank UniCredit said yesterday that its net profit more than doubled in the first quarter as the massive overhaul embarked upon by its new chief executive begins to pay off. UniCredit said in a statement that net profit soared to 907 million euros (\$987 million) in the period from January to March from 406 million euros a year earlier. The figure was also much higher than analysts' forecasts for net profit of around 612 million euros. The announcement sent UniCredit's shares up more than 4.3 percent on the Milan stock exchange, while the overall market was up a more modest 0.5 percent. Writedowns and non-recurring items connected with the vast restructuring program had pushed UniCredit into a massive loss of 13.6 billion euros in the fourth quarter of 2016.

"UniCredit had an encouraging first quarter with all core business lines contributing

positively to the group," said chief executive Jean-Pierre Mustier, a Frenchman who took over the reins of UniCredit last July. "These results underpin UniCredit's strengths," Mustier said. They also illustrated that the restructuring program was "already actively contributing to our performance." UniCredit said that it was sticking to its forecast for its core capital ratio—a key gauge of a bank's ability to withstand a financial crisis—to be "above 12 percent" at the end of the year. The ratio stood at 11.45 percent at the end of March.

Cutting jobs and bad debt

UniCredit, Italy's biggest bank in terms of assets, was among the worst performers in stress test results published by Europe's EBA banking regulator in July. In a bid to beef up its capital buffers, it raised 13 billion euros in fresh capital in February in a share issue that was fully taken up by investors.— AFP

DEMANDS COOL SHARPLY

HONG KONG: China's auto sales shrank in April as demand for most types of vehicles wilted, an industry group said yesterday. The China Association of Automobile Manufacturers said 1.7 million passenger cars were sold in China last month, down 3.7 percent from the same period a year ago. That's down from 1.7 percent sales growth in March. Total vehicle sales, including buses and trucks, fell 2.2 percent from a year earlier to 2.1 million.

"Car production and sales fell significantly last month," the association said in a statement. "Automotive market demand was weak." Auto demand in China has been cooling since Beijing raised a sales tax on small-engine vehicles at the start of the year, putting off drivers from buying cars. Analysts forecast the market will grow by mid-single digits this year, down from 15 percent in 2016. For the year to date, auto sales have grown a tepid 2.5 percent to 7.7 million vehicles.

Some 24.4 million vehicles were sold in China last year, more than any other country, making it the most important market for global automakers. However, this year's slowing growth does not bode well for the industry. The association said the sport utility vehicle segment was the only one that grew, with sales rising 11.1 percent over a year ago to 684,400. SUVs are popular with Chinese families who see them as safer, and their sales help automakers offset falling demand for sedans, which contracted 7.7 percent last month, and minivans, which shrank 20 percent.

Sales of Chinese-brand vehicles fell 1.9 percent to 733,000. Among foreign carmakers in China: General Motors Co. said sales of GM-brand vehicles by the company and its Chinese partners slipped 1.9 percent in April from a year earlier to 272,770. Deliveries of SUVs, minivans and luxury cars rose 14 percent. Ford Motor Co said sales grew 11 percent to almost 94,000, with sales of its luxury Lincoln brand nearly doubling to 4,500. Nissan Motor Co sales rose 9.5 percent to 105,324 vehicles.— AFP



ARLINGTON: Erick Aybar #8 of the San Diego Padres steals second base as Texas Rangers second baseman Rougned Odor #12 tries to make the catch during the fourth inning on May 10, 2017. —AFP

MARINERS HAMMER PHILLIES 11-6

PHILADELPHIA: Carlos Ruiz hit a three-run double against his old team while Robinson Cano and Danny Valencia homered as the Seattle Mariners beat the Philadelphia Phillies 11-6 Wednesday. Ruiz earned another standing ovation a day after he returned and was honored with a video tribute that highlighted his career with the Phillies. The former All-Star catcher was 3 for 30 this season before clearing the bases with a liner off the left-field wall in the seventh against Joaquin Benoit (0-2).

ROCKIES 3, CUBS 0

German Marquez (1-2) allowed three hits over eight innings, struck out eight and got his first major league hit with a two-run single in the seventh off Kyle Hendricks (2-2). Marquez had a no-hit bid until Kris Bryant's double leading off the seventh inning. Greg Holland threw a perfect ninth for his 14th save in as many chances after Ian Desmond hit a go-ahead sacrifice fly in the fourth that was set up by shortstop Javier Baez's error.

GIANTS 6, METS 5

Hunter Pence hit a tying single and Christian Arroyo had a three-run double against Jeurys Familia (1-1) in a four-run ninth as San Francisco, a major league-worst 12-23, took advantage of third baseman Wilmer Flores' error to stop a five-game losing streak. Flores nearly tied the score with two outs in the bottom of the ninth, hitting a two-run double off the top of the left-center fence for his third hit. Derek Law, subbing for injured closer Mark Melancon, retired Kevin Plawecki on a dribbler in front of home plate for his second save.

ASTROS 4, BRAVES 2

Carlos Correa had two doubles and two RBIs for Houston, off to its best 34 game start

at 23-11. Correa's fifth-inning double off Jaime Garcia (1-2) drove in two runs for a 3-2 lead. Joe Musgrove (2-3) allowed two runs and four hits in six innings and Ken Giles pitched a perfect ninth for his ninth save in 10 chances.

ATHLETICS 3, ANGELS 1

Andrew Triggs (5-2) walked his first three batters on 14 pitches and allowed Jefry Marte to hit into an RBI forceout but lasted six innings and didn't allow another run. Liam Hendriks, Ryan Madson and Santiago Casilla finished the four-hitter, with Casilla striking out his first two batters in a one-hit ninth for his sixth save. Jesse Chavez (2-5) allowed two runs and three hits over 5 2/3 innings in the first start against his former club. Chad Pinder homered for Oakland.

NATIONALS 7, ORIOLES 6

Matt Wieters hit a winning, two-run single in the bottom of the ninth inning against his former team, ending Baltimore's six-game winning streak. Washington trailed 6-2 in the seventh before coming back and was still down by two in the ninth. Jayson Werth led off the ninth with a homer and Bryce Harper doubled. With one out, an intentional walk and a single loaded the bases for Wieters, who hit a liner to right. Wieters signed with Washington in February following an eight-year run with Baltimore. Matt Albers (2-0) - another former Oriole - struck out three straight batters for the win.

BLUE JAYS 8, INDIANS 7

Ryan Goins singled home the winning run off Cody Allen (0-1) in the ninth, capping Toronto's comeback from a 7-3, third-inning deficit. Jose Bautista hit a three-run home run and Ezequiel Carrera added a tying, two-run

drive for the Blue Jays, who won consecutive series for the first time this season.

RAYS 12, ROYALS 1

Chris Archer (3-1) allowed five hits in eight shutout innings to win for the first time in five starts since April 14 and help Tampa Bay stop a three-game losing streak. Logan Morrison, Rickie Weeks Jr. and Colby Rasmus homered for the Rays; Rasmus had a grand slam off Peter Moylan in the eighth. Jason Hammel (1-4) gave up seven runs - six earned - and 13 hits in seven innings.

CARDINALS 7, MARLINS 5

Pinch-hitter Dexter Fowler, out of the starting lineup for the past six games because of a sore lat, hit a go-ahead, two-run triple in the sixth off Jarlin Garcia (0-1) as St Louis overcame a four-run deficit for the second game in a row. Fowler drove in the go-ahead run in the ninth inning Tuesday after St Louis rallied from a 5-1 eighth-inning deficit. The Cardinals went 6-0 on their swing through Atlanta and Miami. It's the first time they've gone undefeated on a trip of at least six games in their 126-year history, according to the Elias Sports Bureau. Sam Tuivailala (2-0) pitched a hitless fifth, and Seung Hwan Oh escaped a two-on, no-out situation in the ninth for his ninth save.

DODGERS 5, PIRATES 2

Kenta Maeda pitched into the ninth inning while Cody Bellinger homered and made a tumbling catch in left field as Los Angeles beat Pittsburgh to complete a three-game sweep. Maeda (3-2) got within two outs of his first career complete game. Francisco Cervelli hit a two run homer in the ninth, though, and Maeda was pulled a batter later, completing 8 1/3 innings while allowing two runs and five

hits. He struck out five and left to a rousing ovation. Bellinger hit a two-run homer in the first inning off Chad Kuhl (1-3), then robbed Gregory Polanco of a hit in the fourth inning.

DIAMONDBACKS 7, TIGERS 1

Zack Godley allowed four hits in seven innings after being called up from Triple-A in time to make his second start of the season as Arizona ended a three-game losing streak. Nick Ahmed, Yasmany Tomas and Brandon Drury homered for the Diamondbacks. Godley (1-0) allowed one run and struck out six. Tigers starter Matthew Boyd (2-2) allowed three earned runs and eight hits in six innings.

RANGERS 4, PADRES 3

Delino DeShields scored the tiebreaking run on a throwing error in the seventh, two innings after going home on a balk. DeShields drew a one-out walk from reliever Brad Hand (0-2) in the seventh before Shin-Soo Choo also walked. Elvis Andrus then hit a potential double-play grounder but second baseman Yangervis Solarte's wide throw to first went into the camera well. Jeremy Jeffress (1-2) allowed singles to the Nos. 8 and 9 hitters to start the top of the seventh after replacing Yu Darvish, but got out of the inning without allowing a run. Matt Bush worked the ninth for his second save in three chances.

BREWERS 7, RED SOX 4

Keon Broxton and Eric Thames had two hits each and set the tone in a four-run fifth inning. The Brewers won a second straight interleague slugfest in game that had 24 hits, 13 for Milwaukee. Red Sox starter Kyle Kendrick (0-2) was shelled for six runs and 10 hits in 4 1/3 innings. Brewers reliever Rob Scahill (1-1) allowed just two walks over 2 1/3 scoreless innings. —AP

INFANTINO HITS OUT AT FIFA 'BASHING AND FAKE NEWS'

FIFA ELECT SKOURIS AS HEAD OF ETHICS COMMITTEE

MANAMA: FIFA President Gianni Infantino took aim at critics of world football's governing body yesterday, saying the organization had reformed and was now a victim of "fake news" and "FIFA bashing". Speaking to the organization's 67th congress in the Bahraini capital, Infantino, who replaced Sepp Blatter as head of FIFA in 2016, said it was truly transforming itself. "We are rebuilding FIFA's reputation after all that happened. We took over the organization at its deepest point," said Infantino, adding that there was no room for anyone who wanted to enrich themselves by "abusing football". Several dozen football officials, mainly from Latin America, were indicted in the United States in 2015 on corruption-related charges, sparking the worst crisis in FIFA's history. Infantino said criticism of the organization under his leadership had not been fair, given improved transparency, controls and ethics procedures. "There is a lot of fake news and alternative facts about FIFA circulating," he said. "FIFA bashing has become a national sport in some countries".

The Swiss administrator also made some barbed comments about



MANAMA: FIFA President Gianni Infantino (left) speaks during the FIFA Congress, in Manama, Bahrain yesterday. Addressing his second congress of soccer nations as FIFA president, Infantino lambasted "fake news" following criticism of his leadership. —AP

some of his critics among governance experts after a week in which FIFA's Ethics heads were replaced. "In the past many highly-paid experts, paid millions, have been hired by FIFA to help reform FIFA. Let me ask you, what did they do? They simply rubber stamped a sick and corrupt system. "Where were all these self-proclaimed gurus and experts? They all miserably failed. I will, we will, not accept good governance lessons from any individuals who miserably failed to protect football," said Infantino. While suggesting FIFA's internal experts had failed he offered praise for outside investigations, thanking "courts all around the world" who had prosecuted corruption cases. "We need your help and we count on your help," he added, saying there was no place in his organization for any wrongdoing. "If there's anyone in this room or outside of this room who still thinks he can enrich himself, that he can abuse football, I have one clear and strong message to tell him: Leave football and leave football now. We don't want you." FIFA's budget plans for 2018 and their auditor's report and financial statements for 2016 were all voted through without any questions being raised in the congress hall.

Ethics committee

Meanwhile, Vassilios Skouris of Greece, a former president of the European Court of Justice, was elected head of FIFA's ethics committee yesterday. Taking over from German Hans-Joachim Eckert, who was instrumental in bringing down ex-FIFA president Sepp Blatter and UEFA chief Michel Platini, Skouris will serve a four-year mandate. Colombia's Maria Claudia Rojas was also elected to take over from ethics investigator Cornel Borbely. The controversial move to replace Eckert and Borbely was overwhelmingly approved by the annual FIFA Congress, meeting this year in Bahrain, with 97 percent voting for and just three percent against. Eckert was the judge who opened proceedings against Blatter and Platini in November 2015, after FIFA was engulfed by accusations of corruption. He also opened the case against Jerome Valcke, Blatter's former powerful deputy, which ended with the once all-powerful French administrator being banned from the game. The replacement of Eckert and Borbely has raised concern in some circles and critics have accused current FIFA president Gianni Infantino of having a personal motive to replace the pair, as an ethics investigation was launched against the world football's top powerbroker last year. —Agencies

Extras

Shot-shy Southampton target top-half finish

SOUTHAMPTON: Southampton are aiming for a quick turnaround to finish in the top half of the Premier League starting with a trip to relegated Middlesbrough tomorrow, manager Claude Puel said yesterday. Puel's Southampton, 10th in the table, extended their winless run to five games with a 2-0 home loss to Arsenal on Wednesday. "There's the possibility to finish in the first part of the table and that is very important to us," Puel told reporters. "If we can have a good result against Middlesbrough, we can prepare for our last two games at home with good possibilities, good intensity. "Middlesbrough have been playing just one game a week and for us, the most important thing is to put in place a team with good balance, with players who are physically fit and to give a good answer." The 55-year-old Frenchman believes he has laid a solid foundation in his first season at St Mary's but will need to boost the squad's attacking options if they are to climb higher in the league. "We put the basics of our play and our philosophy in place this season and what we want to do," he said.

Former Villarreal boss named Valencia coach

BARCELONA: Former Villarreal manager Marcelino has been named as Valencia coach for next season, the club said in a statement yesterday, as the fallen giants of La Liga plot an improvement on two disappointing campaigns. Marcelino took Villarreal from Spain's second tier to three consecutive top-six finishes and the semi-finals of last season's Europa League. He was dismissed at the start of this campaign due to differences with the board of directors. Marcelino has been out of work since, with league rules preventing a coach from working for two different top-flight clubs in the same season. He will take over from caretaker manager Voro, who has steered the six-times Liga champions into 13th in the standings since Cesare Prandelli resigned in December and will remain in charge for the final two games of the campaign.

WHAT TO WATCH IN EUROPE'S MAIN LEAGUES

BERLIN: What to watch in the leading soccer leagues in Europe this weekend:

ENGLAND

Three games left, three points needed. That's the task facing Chelsea in a Premier League title race it has dominated since November. Chelsea's first opportunity to clinch the trophy comes at West Bromwich Albion today. If Chelsea fails to win, Tottenham - seven points behind in second place - must beat Manchester United on Sunday to keep the race alive. Chelsea's other two matches are at home to Watford and Sunderland. The relegation battle could also be settled this weekend, with third-to-last Hull in danger of going down along with already-demoted Middlesbrough and Sunderland. Hull is one point behind Swansea. If Swansea beats Sunderland tomorrow, Hull must beat Crystal Palace away on Sunday to take the relegation fight to the final weekend. By Steve Douglas in Manchester, England.

ITALY

Juventus can take the first step toward a treble when it visits Roma on Sunday. A draw at the capital side would be enough to hand Juventus an unprecedented sixth successive Serie A crown, with two matches to spare. Defeat would leave it four points ahead of second-placed Roma and five ahead of Napoli if the latter wins at Torino. Since Serie A was founded in 1929, no club has won more than five straight titles. Juventus won five straight from 1931-35, Torino did it from 1943-49

(including a season that was canceled because of World War II), and Inter Milan did it from 2006-10. If Juventus fails in the capital, it is likely to secure the title next weekend, at home to relegation-threatened Crotona. Between those two matches, it faces Lazio in the Italian Cup final on Wednesday. Juventus then plays Real Madrid in the Champions League final on June 3. Elsewhere, AC Milan is still looking for its first win under its new owners and it travels to Atalanta, while Inter Milan hosts Sassuolo in its first match since sacking coach Stefano Pioli. Youth team coach Stefano Vecchi will be in charge.

SPAIN

Real Madrid has its toughest remaining challenge in the title race on Sunday when it hosts fourth-placed Sevilla for its final league game at home this season. Madrid needs a victory to keep its fate in its own hands as the side bids for its first title since 2012. Madrid and Barcelona are level on points atop the standings, with Barcelona ahead on the head-to-head tiebreaker. But Madrid still has three games to play, while Barcelona has two. Barcelona visits Las Palmas at the same time on Sunday. Barcelona's last game is at home against mid-table Eibar, while Madrid has games at Celta Vigo and Malaga. Sevilla needs at least a draw in its final two matches to secure fourth place and a qualification spot for the Champions League.

FRANCE

Although Monaco's European dream is over after losing to Juventus in the

Champions League semifinals, winning the French league seems an inevitable reality. Monaco can seal the title on Sunday if it beats Lille at home and defending champion Paris Saint-Germain fails to win at Saint-Etienne. Monaco has thrilled Europe with its attacking football, scoring 150 goals in all competitions and needing just two more to reach 100 in the league. Saint-Etienne, an industrial city with a loyal fan base of fervent supporters, is one of the toughest away trips in Ligue 1. The atmosphere at Stade Geoffroy-Guichard will be even more emotionally charged due to it being hugely popular coach Christophe Galtier's last home game in charge. Galtier is stepping down at the end of the season after nearly eight years in charge of "Les Verts" (The Greens), and would like nothing more than to bid farewell to home fans with a win against PSG.

NETHERLANDS

Feyenoord has one final chance to grab its first Eredivisie title since 1999 when it plays Heracles Almelo in Rotterdam on Sunday. Archrival Ajax could win its 34th title if Feyenoord slips up for a second weekend straight. Going into the last round, Feyenoord has a one-point lead over Ajax, which takes on Willem II in Tilburg on Sunday. Feyenoord missed the chance to secure its 15th Dutch title last Sunday in a nervy 3-0 defeat at Excelsior, disappointing tens of thousands of fans who gathered in downtown Rotterdam and at Feyenoord's home stadium, De Kuip, ready to celebrate.

GERMANY

With the title already wrapped up by Bayern Munich and the Champions League qualification places settled, excitement in the Bundesliga is at the other end of the table with six sides still fighting to avoid relegation with two rounds to go. One of Ingolstadt, Hamburger SV, Mainz, Wolfsburg, Augsburg and Bayer Leverkusen will go down automatically and one will have a playoff against the side that finishes third in the second division for a topflight place next season. Darmstadt is already relegated. Ingolstadt, which faces Freiburg away tomorrow, is the worst-placed side, four points from safety. Hamburg, in the playoff place, faces Schalke away before its potential all-or-nothing clash against Wolfsburg at home on the final weekend. Mainz, level with Hamburg on points, hosts local rival Eintracht Frankfurt, while 2009 champion Wolfsburg hosts Borussia Muenchengladbach, and Augsburg hosts Borussia Dortmund. Leverkusen faces a high-stake Rhine derby against local rival Cologne.

PORTUGAL

Benfica can win a fourth straight Portuguese league for the first time. A win tomorrow against Vitoria Guimaraes, a team it has beaten the last seven times at home, will be enough to give Benfica an unsurmountable lead ahead of the last round. Benfica is five points ahead of rival FC Porto with two matches to go. Porto hosts Pacos Ferreira on Sunday. Porto was the last team to win four consecutive titles, from 2006-09. It also won five in a row, from 1995-99. —AP

WHAT NEXT FOR ATLETICO MADRID?

MADRID: Despite a brave performance and a 2-1 second leg victory, Atletico Madrid's attempt to overturn a 3-0 first leg deficit from their Champions League semi-final against Real Madrid fell short. It is the fourth straight season Atletico have been knocked out of the competition by their local rivals. Here, AFP sports looks at five key issues facing Atletico if they are to compete once more for their first ever Champions League next season.

Smooth stadium transition

Wednesday's win was inspired by a phenomenal atmosphere for Atletico's last ever European game at the Vicente Calderon. After 50 years Atletico will swap their home by Madrid's Manzanares river just south of the city centre for the new 67,000 capacity out of town stadium to the city's north. Doubts remain over whether the Wanda Metropolitano will be ready in time for the start of next season. However, even when the bricks and mortar are in place, replacing the emotional tide with which the Calderon has carried Atletico to 18 wins in 22

Champions League games over the past four years is a different challenge. "The same people will be in the Metropolitano," said Atletico boss Diego Simeone. "Their emotion and excitement is non-negotiable. It will be their new home."

Overturn transfer ban

A smiling Simeone looked ahead to an "encouraging" future. "That final step is still a big one and we need to keep improving," he added. However, one factor that threatens to halt Atletico's progress is a ban preventing them from signing new players until January. The result of the club's appeal to reduce the ban to one already served transfer window will be known before the end of the season and will have a huge bearing on Atletico's ability to make the improvements needed to compete next season.

Keep Simeone satisfied

Simeone himself has been the key figure in Atletico's emergence from a sleeping giant to European power over the past five-and-a-half

years. One of his former clubs Inter Milan, who sacked Stefano Pioli on Tuesday, look set to launch a new offensive for the Argentine, who reduced the length of his contract from 2020 to 2018 earlier this season. Keeping Simeone this summer is an absolute must amidst the other upheaval surrounding Atletico.

Maintain young core

Retaining Simeone will also make it far easier to hold onto a host of rising young stars. Atletico are likely to be powerless over top-scorer Antoine Griezmann's ability to leave with a number of clubs willing to meet his 100 million euro (\$109 million) buyout clause. However, the Frenchman has consistently recognized his loyalty to Simeone for turning him into one of the world's best players and only he will be able to convince Griezmann into staying for another season. Generally Atletico's age profile is promising with Jan Oblak (24), Jose Maria Gimenez (22), Lucas Hernandez (21), Saul Niguez (22), Koke (25) and Yannick Carrasco (23) all with the prime years of their career to come. —AFP

CHELSEA HAIL 'THE CONFATHER' WITH TITLE IN THEIR GRASP

LONDON: How quickly affections can switch in soccer. Where once they would serenade coach Jose Mourinho at Stamford Bridge with an operatic flourish, now Chelsea fans have fallen headlong for another man driving them inexorably to the Premier League title. To the Bridge faithful, Mourinho's "not special any more" now he's pitched up at Manchester United but their embrace for coach Antonio Conte will be suffocating if he guides the Blues to a title-clinching victory at West Bromwich Albion today. As the arty canvas held by his daughter at Monday's home victory over Middlesbrough put it, the Italian is now already enshrined as "The Confather" to a happy family of ruthless operators in blue.

No wonder. Albeit a quietly charming, thoughtful figure away from the pitch, on the touchline Conte comes across as a manic, hyperactive figure making demands of his players that they dare not refuse. Win this game or else, his eyes scream. So don't expect him to stop now. Conte has spent his time since the 3-0 drubbing of Middlesbrough trotting out his familiarly cautious mantra about hard work, fight and commitment still being needed to finish their efficient job. Just a "little step", he warned softly, but "one that won't be easy". He hailed West Brom as "a really good, physical team" but, of late, the truth is that Tony Pulis's eighth-placed side have looked anything but, having lost four of their last five games. If Chelsea win, they will have an unassailable 10-point lead over Tottenham Hotspur and will become English champions for a sixth time. A defeat or draw, though, would still leave Spurs the flimsiest of lifelines as they prepare for an emotional afternoon at White Hart Lane on Sunday against Manchester United, fittingly illustrious visitors for the last match to be played at the Lilywhites' 118-year-old stadium. United may prove suitably distracted too with manager Jose Mourinho having written off their chances of a top-four finish while fluttering eyes only at the Europa League.

So, with United out of the equation, the fight for the third and fourth places to guarantee Champions League football next term reaches a critical point. Manchester City will be in the driving seat if they beat Leicester City at the Etihad on Saturday but it looks no easy task with last year's champions belatedly reprising some of their 2015-16 heroics under Craig Shakespeare's watch. Victory would give Pep Guardiola's side a two-point lead over Liverpool after 36 games with Juergen Klopp's men then having to negotiate a tricky visit to West Ham United on Sunday in their penultimate match. Arsenal, who beat Southampton 2-0 on Wednesday to move three points behind Manchester City in fifth, remain long shots in the top-four race as they face Stoke City on Saturday. At the other end of the table, Sunderland may still be licking their wounds after already being relegated but they could still have a huge say in who joins them and Middlesbrough in the second-tier Championship. With two games each left, it has come down to a three-way battle between Hull City (34 points), Swansea City (35) and Crystal Palace (38) to avoid the one remaining relegation spot. — Reuters



MEDELLIN: Colombia's Atletico Nacional players celebrate with the trophy after winning the 2017 Recopa Sudamericana final match against Brazil's Chapecoense at Atanasio Girardot stadium in Medellin, Antioquia department, Colombia on May 10, 2017. — AFP

ATLETICO LIFT SUPERCUP

MEDELLIN: Atletico Nacional lifted the South American Supercup on Wednesday after two goals each from Andres Ibarguen and Dayro Moreno gave them a 4-1 victory on the night and 5-3 aggregate win over Brazilian side Chapecoense. It was a losing return to Medellin for a club who saw many of its players and staff wiped out in a plane crash last November.

The small club from southern Brazil were to have played Atletico in the final of the Copa Sudamericana, South America's equivalent of the Europa League. However, their plane crashed on approach to the Colombian city, killing 71 of the 77 people on board, including all but three of the club's players and staff. Chapecoense were later awarded the trophy and that took them into the 2017 Recopa, or Supercup, against Copa Libertadores winners Atletico. Chapecoense won the first leg in Brazil 2-1 in April but were outclassed against a more experienced team playing at a packed home stadium on Wednesday.

"They got an early goal and that played into Atletico's hands, they had the time to play the ball about," Chapecoense coach Vagner Mancini told Fox Sports after the game. "We had

our chances to make it 2-1 but they got a third and a fourth." "But we are learning and rebuilding a given the difficulties we've been through we matched them for long parts of the match. The season is only getting started and we'll go on from here." Atletico took the lead in the first minute when keeper Artur Moraes let a shot from Moreno squirm under his body. Ibarguen doubled their lead on the half hour when he created space in a ruck of players and curled a shot into the far corner.

Chapecoense came into the game in the second half and were unlucky not to cut the lead immediately after the restart when Alexis Charales knocked a goal bound shot off the line. That miss, and another moments later from Wellington Paulista, were to prove costly when Moreno made it three after 72 minutes. Ibarguen bamboozled the defense with some tricky footwork and his cross was knocked back across goal for Moreno to head home. Ibarguen then made it four after 80 minutes when what was to be a shot turned into a perfect lob after he slipped at the moment of contact. Tulio de Melo got Chapecoense's consolation goal eight minutes from time. — Reuters



BLESSON GEORGE MEMORIAL VOLLEYBALL TOURNAMENT

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: The Fourth Blesson George Memorial Volleyball Tournament will end today. Six teams competed with Kuwaiti and Indian players participating in memory of the late Indian volleyball player. First day events were held at Al-Shabab

sports club hall. ACMR, Boubyan Strikers and APR qualified for the next round. Results of the first day were as follows; Kings of Volleyball defeated Dahom fighters 2-0; ACMA beat All Stars 2-0; Boubyan Strikers down Dahom fighters 2-0; APR defeated All Stars 2-0 while CMA beat APR 2-0. The final match was more competitive and exciting. Boubyan Strikers

defeat KOV 2-0 - with scores 21-16 and 21-17. The team's manager said his team prepared very well for this event, adding that Boubyan team is distinguished with speed and steady performance. He called upon Indians in Kuwait to attend the closing match to be held today (6pm) at the Al-Shabab Sports Club.

REAL EYEING FIRST EUROPEAN CUP-LIGA DOUBLE IN 59 YEARS

MADRID: Real Madrid, still crowing from reaching a third Champions League final in four years, will turn their focus to winning their first La Liga title since 2012 when they play Sevilla in their final home game of the season on Sunday. Real's Champions League triumphs in 2014 and 2016 have distracted from rivals Barcelona's creeping domination in the domestic league, with the Catalans winning five of the last seven titles. Even Atletico Madrid, who Zinedine Zidane's side saw off for the fourth consecutive year on the European stage on Wednesday with a 4-2 aggregate victory, have won the title more recently than Real.

In a nail-biting end to the campaign, Real and Barcelona are locked on 84 points at the top of the table. While Barca have a superior head-to-head record, Real have a game in hand, facing Celta Vigo next week before their final fixture against Malaga. Seven points out of a maximum nine will be enough to end Real's five-year run without winning the domestic title. "Now we have to go for the league title, we really want to win it, and then we'll have time to think about the final in Cardiff," said Cristiano Ronaldo.

Even though they have a record 32 Liga crowns and 11

European Cups, Real have often struggled to combine their domestic and European campaigns. They last achieved the double in 1958. Fourth-placed Sevilla look like Real's most difficult opponents in the three remaining games, though Jorge Sampaoli's team are far from the swashbuckling side that ended Real's 40-game unbeaten run in January. Sevilla have won just three of their last 12 games, stumbling towards fourth place and the final Champions League berth. Sampaoli is expected to leave the club in the summer to take up the vacant Argentina job.

Champions Barcelona, meanwhile, make the long journey to the Canary Islands to face a Las Palmas side also struggling for form, having lost seven of their last 10 games, and who the Catalans thrashed 5-0 back in January. Barca's hopes of a third successive title depend on Real Madrid slipping up, but forward Neymar said his side were only focusing on their games. "We can't be thinking about Madrid, we can only think about ourselves," the Brazilian said in an interview with BeIN Sports. "If we do what we have to, I think we can become champions. If we don't give everything then we won't win our games." —Reuters

MALAYSIA FOOTBALL CHIEF ISSUES POISON WARNING IN PYONGYANG

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia's football chief yesterday said he was worried about players being deliberately poisoned if their controversial Asian Cup qualifier goes ahead in North Korea's Pyongyang. Football Association of Malaysia (FAM) president Tunku Ismail Sultan Ibrahim called for the game to be moved to a neutral venue, saying he was concerned over player safety.

The match, which was postponed during a furious diplomatic row over the murder of the North Korean leader's half-brother in Malaysia, has been rescheduled to June 8. "Truthfully, I would like the match to be played at a neutral venue for the sake of the players' safety," Tunku Ismail posted on the FAM's Facebook page. "I'm also very concerned about the safety assurance regarding the accommodation provided and the food. According to the information I have received we need to bring our own food due to the possibility of sabotage."

The killing of Kim Jong-Nam—the estranged half-brother of North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un—in February sparked a diplomatic row which saw both countries banning each other's citizens from leaving, and withdrawing their ambassadors. South Korea accuses the North of masterminding the murder, which was carried out using a towel soaked with nerve agent at a Kuala Lumpur airport. Malaysian police have named several North Korean suspects. —AFP

TUCHEL FUTURE UNCLEAR AS DORTMUND EYE THIRD SPOT

BERLIN: When Thomas Tuchel took over at Borussia Dortmund in 2015 he was hailed as the country's top coaching talent who could carve out his own era at the Ruhr Valley club just like his predecessor, Juergen Klopp, did. Less than two seasons on, however, Tuchel's team is battling to secure an automatic Champions League group spot with two games left in the season amid an ongoing dispute between the 43-year-old coach and club bosses.

Neither the club nor the coach himself have said Tuchel would definitely be seeing out his contract to 2018 at Dortmund, who are preparing to defend third spot and their two-point

advantage over Hoffenheim with a trip to Augsburg on Saturday. "I am the head coach of Dortmund in Augsburg, that's for sure," is all Tuchel would say earlier this week when asked if he would be coach next season. The cause of the dispute between CEO Hans-Joachim Watzke and Tuchel is the decision to play last month's Champions League quarter-final first leg against AS Monaco a day after it was postponed due to a bomb attack on the team bus that injured one player.

Dortmund played the game the following day, losing 3-2, and then went out following another defeat in the away leg. Tuchel had argued at the time

the game should not have been set for the next day with his team still in shock while Watzke said there was choice given the busy match calendar towards the end of the season. "It is his right (to say it), he is the boss," Tuchel said. "I do not comment on this. We have two more games to play as well as a (German) Cup final." Club officials have tried to play down the dispute, saying disagreements were part and parcel of the daily operations at a club but have not said whether Tuchel would stay on.

"We are all working professionally and hard together, especially at this crucial phase of the season," said Dortmund sports director Michael Zorc. "We never

discuss about the coach in public. We did not do it over seven years with Juergen Klopp and not since Tuchel has been in charge either. "We will sit down together after the end of the season and analyze it and rate it." Second-placed RB Leipzig, six points clear of Dortmund and already sure of a top three finish, host champions Bayern Munich, who secured their record-extending fifth straight league crown two weeks ago. At the other end of the table, former European champions Hamburg SV, sitting in the relegation playoff spot, travel to Schalke 04 in desperate need of points to protect their unbroken 54-year Bundesliga presence.— Reuters

DUCKS AND PENGUINS WIN GAME SEVENS TO ADVANCE

ANAHEIM: Nick Ritchie scored the game winner and the Anaheim Ducks ended a game seven jinx by beating the Edmonton Oilers 2-1 Wednesday to book their spot in the NHL Conference finals. The Ducks won their first game seven after losing home deciders the last four seasons in a row. They also came back from being down 0-2 in a series for the first time in franchise history. "It was a very emotional game. Any game seven there is going to be ebbs and flows," said Ducks coach Randy Carlyle.

Anaheim advances to the Western Conference final to play the Nashville Predators. The Ducks will host game one today at the Honda Center. Elsewhere, Marc-Andre Fleury stopped 29 shots as the Pittsburgh Penguins punched their ticket to the NHL semi-finals with a 2-0 win over the Washington Capitals. John Gibson stopped 23 of 24 shots for Anaheim as the only goal he gave up came off a defensive blunder by 21-year-old rearguard Shea Theodore. Theodore had the puck and mistakenly turned into Gibson while trying to escape the forecheck of Drake Caggiula, who swatted Theodore's stick sending the puck past a surprised Gibson.

The goal gave the Oilers a 1-0 lead just over three minutes into the contest but unlike game six this time the Ducks didn't give up despite being down early. Andrew Cogliano scored halfway through the second period to tie the game 1-1. Cogliano, who was a pain in the side of the Oilers all night long, scored his first goal of the 2017 postseason. Ritchie scored the game winner at 3:21 of the third when he rifled a high shot past Oiler goalkeeper Cam Talbot from the slot. Ritchie had two earlier chances from in close in the second but failed to capitalize.

Instead of getting discouraged he said the earlier opportunities from in close helped boost his confidence. "Sometimes when you get chances like that it helps you later if you get another chance to score," Ritchie said. This was the first game seven for the Oilers franchise in more than a decade and coach Todd McLellan said he liked the way his players competed. "There is still a little bit of inconsistency in our game but we will grow up and fix that as we go along," McLellan said. "We weren't afraid of the stage. For an inexperienced team that is a good sign for us."

Crosby's bragging rights

In Washington, the Sidney Crosby-led Penguins continued their playoff domination of Alex Ovechkin's Capitals, winning the second round series in the seventh and deciding game.

Bryan Rust and Patric Hornqvist also scored goals on Wednesday for Pittsburgh who will face the Ottawa Senators in the Eastern Conference finals. Rust made it 1-0 midway through the second period, and Hornqvist doubled the lead early in the third.

"We expected them to come out hard, but we knew we had to be a little more aggressive tonight than we were in the last couple of games," Crosby said. Pittsburgh eliminated the Presidents' Trophy-winning Capitals in the second round for the second season in a row, and the Penguins have won nine of 10 postseason series between the teams. During that time, Pittsburgh is 4-0 in game sevens. The Penguins are now 3-0 against the Capitals in series played during the Crosby-Ovechkin era. The previous two times the Penguins eliminated the Capitals, they went on to win the Stanley Cup. Fleury earned his ninth career playoff shutout, while Braden Holtby stopped 26 shots for Washington.— AFP



BOSTON: Washington Wizards forward Markieff Morris (5) looks to pass as he is surrounded by Boston Celtics players during the second quarter of Game 5 of an NBA basketball second-round playoff series on Wednesday, May 10, 2017. — AP

CELTICS ROUT WIZARDS ON HOME COURT

WASHINGTON: The Boston Celtics continued their home court mastery over Washington, taking charge early and going on to beat the Wizards 123-101 Wednesday to grab a 3-2 lead in the second round series. Avery Bradley tallied a postseason career high 29 points in the blowout as Boston can now advance to meet the Cleveland Cavaliers in the next round with a victory today in Washington. "Everyone was prepared," said Bradley. "And that's what it's all about." The Celtics and Wizards have played nine times this year, and the home team has won all nine games. Boston has now won eight straight overall at the Boston Garden over Washington.

The Celtics got on an early 16-0 run and never looked back. Their first quarter burst came after the Wizards scored the first four points of the game. Bradley, who is playing with a sore hip,

scored 25 points in the first half as the Celtics compiled a 22-point halftime lead. "He put his injuries aside and laced his shoes up and played," teammate Isaiah Thomas said of Bradley. "He was the key to this game at both ends of the floor." Bradley hit his last basket with 5:55 left in the third quarter and rested in the fourth. Al Horford finished with 19 points and added seven assists and six rebounds for Boston.

Thomas and Jae Crowder both scored 18, Thomas with nine assists and Crowder with eight rebounds. Thomas scored eight consecutive points in the fourth with Bradley on the bench. Thomas said the coaching staff did a good job of getting them ready for game five. "We just wanted to impose our will," said Thomas. "The coaches kept saying that, 'Impose your will.' We were the more physical team tonight. "We took what was on the whiteboard

and we put it on the court," The Celtics went 16-for-33 from beyond the arc and became the sixth team in NBA history with at least 10 three pointers in six straight postseason. John Wall led the Wizards with 21 points, and Bradley Beal had 16 and Otto Porter added 13.

The Wizard guards combined to go just 14 of 36 from the floor, two of seven from three-point range. "When you give a very good team transition points and breakaway points with nobody guarding you ... it's going to be hard to keep up with them," Washington coach Scott Brooks said. "We had no answers for those guys. We've done a pretty good job on their best player, but not (a) good enough job on the other guys." If the Celtics win today, they would open against Cleveland on Monday. If the Boston-Washington series goes seven games, the winner meets the Cavaliers next Wednesday.— AFP



Adam Trent in Paris.

New Original Series, the Road Trick, Premieres Exclusively On Red Bull TV

Follow the adventures of American magician Adam Trent As he Explores new countries and unlocks hearts and minds with his magic

Beginning on May 11 until May 26, you can discover new sides of Europe and Morocco – and their authentic cultures – in the company of an up-and-coming American talent when all 10 episodes of *The Road Trick* premiere exclusively at redbull.tv. Your partner on this unpredictable and touching journey is the series' star Adam Trent, who is one of the hottest performers among today's new breed of magicians. Across 13 countries, he breaks through cultural barriers and gets to know the locals through the wonder of magic.

"Magic is the best ice breaker," declares Adam. In *The Road Trick*, he performs mind-blowing feats with everything from mobile phones to playing cards in order to engage the people he meets – whether they are students, shamans or supermodels. Adam opens doors to places and experiences that typical tourists never witness, granting him a unique opportunity to show us the world in a way that only a magician can.

Born in Boulder, Colorado, Adam has been passionate about magic and its ability to break barriers since he first performed birthday party shows at age 9.



Adam Trent performs in Budapest.

By 14 he started street performing, and it was while earning his college degree in Los Angeles that he found the city's music and comedy scene. "I realized that the most important element in a show is the performer's connection to the audience," he remembers.

Fresh, funny, and anything but traditional when it comes to magic, Adam has appeared on numerous television shows like *America's Got Talent* and starred in the Broadway hit *The Illusionists*. The youngest and only magician ever to win back-to-back medals in the Pro Magic Challenge – one of the most prestigious magic competitions in the world – he has earned awards for his charity work as well as his craft. It is Adam's down-to-earth approachability and genuine love for discovering fascinating people and places that set him apart and make him the perfect companion for viewers of *The Road Trick*.

Come along with Adam Trent as he "magics his way in" to make connections with the real people, places and cultures that others seldom see: *The Road Trick* premieres on demand with all episodes available

starting May 11, 2017 – streaming only on www.redbull.tv.

Red Bull TV

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Adam Trent in Marrakech



Adam Trent performs on the street for a live crowd in Vienna.



Adam Trent poses for a portrait in Budapest.

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