

Marzouq: More output cuts may be discussed at OPEC meeting



Al wins as Google beats No. 1 Go player



James Bond star Roger Moore dies aged 89



Curry, Durant shine as Warriors sweep into NBA finals



150 FILS
NO: 17237
40 PAGES

POLICE NAME SUSPECT AFTER 22 KILLED IN MANCHESTER ATTACK

KUWAIT CONDEMNS BOMBING, AMIR SENDS CONDOLENCES

Min 28°
Max 42°
High Tide 10:16 & 23:23
Low Tide 04:20 & 17:08



KUWAIT: Zain Group's Vice Chairman and CEO Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi receives a memento from Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah during a ceremony organized by Forbes Middle East on Monday night.

FORBES: ZAIN AMONG TOP INFLUENTIAL FIRMS

BADER AL-KHARAFI FEATURED PERSONALITY

KUWAIT: Forbes Middle East, a leading regional business magazine, has selected Zain Group's Vice Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi as the featured personality on the cover of its special issue to celebrate Kuwait's Success 2017 entitled "A New Vision". The new issue features and celebrates Kharafi - the scion of one of Kuwait's powerful families - for playing a key role in the charge in further expanding the country's influence across the globe.

Forbes' celebration of Kuwait's successes came for the second consecutive year, in a gala ceremony held in Kuwait on Monday night under the patronage and presence of Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and Deputy Minister of Information. The event also saw the

recognition of Zain Group as one of the top influencing companies listed in the Kuwait Stock Exchange.

Bader Al-Kharafi is one of the most active business leaders in the Middle East and North Africa region, having an exceptional record in leading business development and advisory roles within top companies as well as global institutions. Forbes describes Kharafi as one of the main supporters of youth and aspiring entrepreneurs, as well as a strong supporter and advocate of investing in education and the development of curricula. Speaking about the first and most important teacher in his life, Bader Al-Kharafi said during his Forbes ME interview: "I had the best teacher, my late father, peace be upon his soul. If I could reach only 10 percent of the successes he reached, I would be very glad". (Full report on Page 21)

MANCHESTER: Police yesterday named a young man - reportedly British-born of Libyan descent - as the suspect behind a suicide bombing that ripped into young fans at a concert in Manchester, killing 22 including an eight-year-old girl. Manchester police identified the suspect as 22-year-old Salman Abedi, but declined to give any further details. British media said he was born in the northwestern English city and that his Libyan parents had fled the regime of dictator Muammar Gaddafi.

Prime Minister Theresa May vowed "terrorists will not prevail", after the Islamic State group claimed responsibility for the attack at the conclusion of US pop star Ariana Grande's concert late Monday at the Manchester Arena, one of Europe's largest indoor venues. Threatening more attacks, IS said in a statement published on

its social media channels: "One of the caliphate's soldiers placed bombs among the crowds."

HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah yesterday sent two cables of condolences to Britain's Queen Elizabeth II and May on the victims of the Manchester explosion. In the cables, the Amir reiterated Kuwait's position

Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

Kuwait is vehemently opposed to all forms of violence and supports all measures Britain takes to uphold its security and stability, an official source at Kuwait's Foreign Ministry noted. The source also extended deepest condolences over the loss of life, wishing a speedy recovery for the wounded.

Manchester police chief constable Ian Hopkins told reporters: "The priority remains to establish whether he was acting alone or as part of a network." Witnesses described the horror when the suicide bomber blew himself up and anguished parents appealed for information on their loved ones, as Mancunians opened their

Similar cables were sent by HH the Crown

SEE PAGES 7, 10, 14 & 39



Crowds gather for a vigil in Albert Square in Manchester yesterday, a day after a suicide attack at a concert that left 22 people dead. (Inset) British Prime Minister Theresa May addresses the media outside 10 Downing Street in London yesterday. — AP photos

TRUMP PUSHES FOR MIDEAST PEACE

JERUSALEM: US President Donald Trump called on Israelis and Palestinians to make compromises for peace yesterday as he wrapped up a closely watched visit, but offered no specifics on how to resolve the conflict. In a speech before he flew to Rome for a high-profile meeting with Pope Francis, Trump offered a forceful defense of the Jewish state and pledged to protect the country from Iran. But he also vowed he was "personally committed" to helping Israel reach a deal with the Palestinians, while backtracking from previous claims that could be easier than thought to achieve.

"Making peace however will not be easy," Trump told an audience at the Israel Museum. "Both sides will face tough decisions. But with determination, compromise and the belief that peace is possible, Israelis and Palestinians can make a deal." He offered no detail and did not specifically mention the two-state solution, long

the focus of international efforts and US Middle East diplomacy.

The parts of the speech offering a robust defense of Israel drew loud applause, which seemed to energize Trump on the second leg of his first foreign trip since taking office. After mentioning threats to Israel from Hezbollah, Hamas and Iran, he said, "not with Donald J Trump," drawing enthusiastic applause. "I like you too," Trump said when the audience quietened.

Trump's speech, welcomed by Israeli right-wingers, came after he met Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas in Bethlehem in the occupied West Bank earlier in the day. On Monday, he met Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Jerusalem. Trump also laid a wreath and spoke at a ceremony at the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial in Jerusalem yesterday.



BETHLEHEM: US President Donald Trump shakes hands with Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas during a meeting at the presidential palace in this West Bank city yesterday. — AFP

News in brief

RAK officials sentenced over embezzlement case

DUBAI: Two former senior officials of the Ras Al-Khaimah Investment Authority (RAKIA) in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) have been sentenced in absentia to 15 years in prison for embezzlement, according to court documents released yesterday. Khater Massaad and Gela Mikadze were sentenced on April 26 by a court in Ras Al-Khaimah (RAK) for defrauding RAKIA of \$17.2 million in 2011. A third man, George Janashia, was also sentenced to 15 years in prison in absentia. Mikadze and Janashia were ordered to repay \$12.8 million and \$4.4 million respectively. The three defendants were also fined \$17.2 million, according to the documents which were released by the RAK government. A spokesman for Massaad's legal team said Massaad strongly denied the "trumped up charges", which relate to the 2011 sale of Georgia's Poti Sea Port and are part of a wider corruption case against Massaad, a former chief executive of RAKIA.

Egyptian first amputee to swim across Red Sea Gulf

CAIRO: An Egyptian adventurer has become the first amputee to swim from Egypt to Jordan, crossing a 20-km stretch of the Red Sea's Gulf of Aqaba last month in under nine hours. Omar Hegazy, a 26-year-old banker, lost his left leg two years ago in a motorcycle accident he said left him with an identity crisis. But Hegazy regained his strength through training and was able to take up sports he had enjoyed before his accident, including rock-climbing and snorkelling. "I used to lead a very active lifestyle... I didn't know what I was anymore or how I was going to live," he said. "I like exploring, adventuring and doing things for the first time." Hegazy raised funds for the swim through local sponsors and audiences tracked his progress across the coral-rich gulf through a Twitter hashtag he created to raise awareness about people enduring mental and physical disabilities.



GENEVA: Outgoing Director General of the World Health Organization (WHO), China's Margaret Chan, leads the new WHO Director General, Ethiopia's Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, to the podium after his election during the World Health Assembly (WHA) yesterday. — AFP

ETHIOPIA'S TEDROS ELECTED FIRST AFRICAN WHO CHIEF

GENEVA: Ethiopia's Tedros Adhanom was elected as the new head of the powerful World Health Organization yesterday, vowing to shake up an agency seen as needing major reform. The former Ethiopian health minister beat out Britain's David Nabarro and Sania Nishtar of Pakistan in the race to lead the UN's public health body. The result was confirmed in a statement by the WHO after three rounds of voting yesterday.

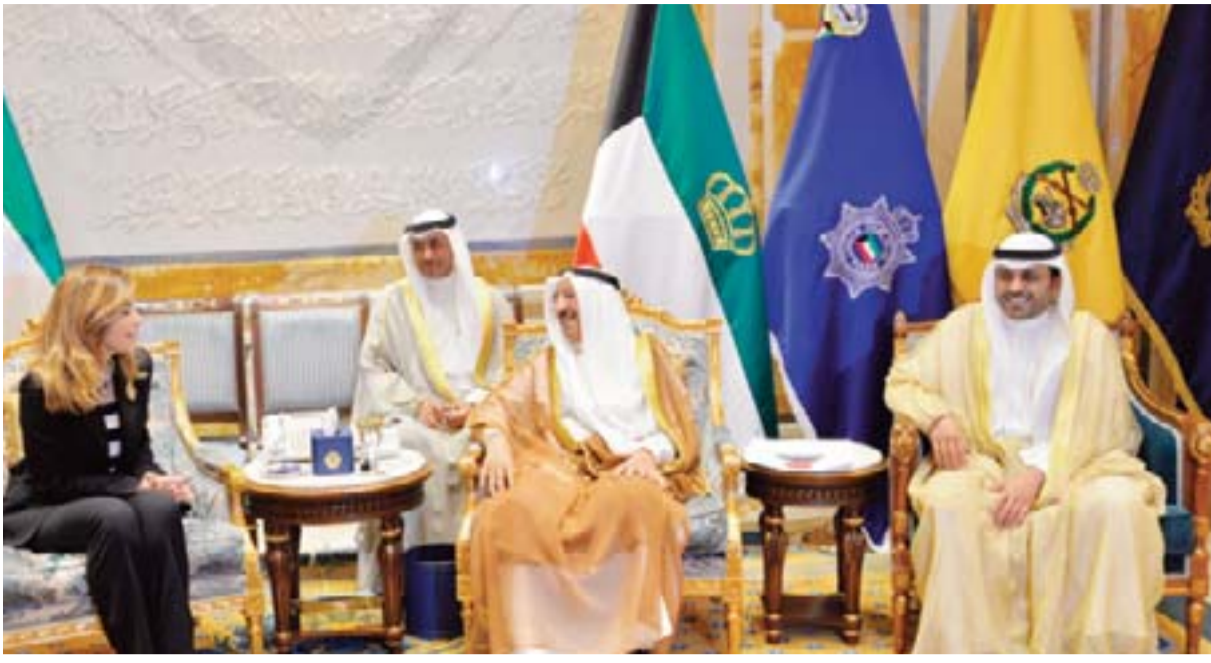
Tedros, a 52-year-old malaria specialist, will take over on July 1, succeeding Margaret Chan, a Hong Kong native whose decade-long tenure was marred by the agency's fiercely criticized response to the Ebola epidemic in west Africa. In his final pitch to member-states before ballots were cast, Tedros vowed to staff the WHO with "a world-class workforce" while introducing strict accountability measures, which critics say have been sorely lacking at the Geneva-based agency. He listed delivering universal

healthcare, especially to the world's most impoverished, as his top priority. Tedros said he refused "to accept that people should die because they are poor".

The WHO is perhaps the most influential United Nations agency, charged with emergency response and shaping baseline policies for treatment of major health challenges. The agency was broadly accused of failing the major test that followed the Dec 2013 Ebola outbreak, missing key warnings about the severity of an epidemic that ultimately killed more than 11,000 people.

Health officials, including from Washington, a key WHO donor, said the agency's new leadership needed to get emergency response right. "We know that the next health emergency is not a question of 'if' but 'when'," US health secretary Tom Price said in Geneva earlier yesterday. "When it happens the world will turn to the WHO for guidance and for

Continued on Page 13



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Jordan's King Hussein Cancer Foundation's chairperson Princess Ghaida Talal. — Amiri Diwan and KUNA photos



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Head of the Anti-Corruption Authority Adviser Abdurrahman Al-Nimash.

AMIR MEETS CHAIR OF KING HUSSEIN CANCER FOUNDATION

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday at Bayan Palace Jordan's King Hussein Cancer Foundation's chairperson Princess Ghaida Talal on the occasion of her visit to the country. Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir received Head of the Anti-Corruption Authority Adviser Abdurrahman Al-Nimash.

Separately, His Highness the Amir received His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah; who also met with His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah later yesterday. His Highness the Crown Prince also received vice chairman of the ruling family council Sheikh Dr Ibrahim Al-Duaij Al-Sabah.

In other news, Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah met with Princess Ghida, who offered him an explanation over humanitarian endeavors the charity has undertaken. Elsewhere, Sheikh Nasser Al-Sabah also met with the Chinese Ambassador to Kuwait, where talks centered on the outcome of the Belt and Road Forum, which Beijing hosted on May 14-15. — KUNA



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



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with vice chairman of the ruling family council Sheikh Dr Ibrahim Al-Duaij Al-Sabah.



KUWAIT: National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem meets with former Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) Dr Rima Khalaf. — KUNA

SPEAKER MEETS WITH FORMER UN OFFICIAL

KUWAIT: National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem received yesterday former Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) Dr Rima Khalaf. The meeting tackled the humanitarian situation in the Palestinian territories, as well as

the circumstances that led to Khalaf's resignation, when she refused to withdraw an ESCWA report accusing Israel of establishing an apartheid regime. Ghanem underscored the need to ramp up diplomatic pressure on Israel to adhere to UN conventions. —KUNA

bloomingdale's

RAMADAN OFFERS

30-50% OFF*

MAY 18 - JUNE 26, 2017

*on select merchandise



MAZAYA SUPPORTS INJAZ-KUWAIT'S HIGH SCHOOL AND UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' TRAINING PROGRAM

KUWAIT: As part of its Corporate Social Responsibility Strategy, Al-Mazaya Holding has reached a cooperation agreement with Injaz-Kuwait to provide training to 1000 high school and university students. The training, which falls within the company's support for Kuwaiti youth, will be delivered through volunteering specialists at Al-Mazaya Holding and covers government and private schools in the country. The training Program will improve the decision-making and entrepreneurship skills of students as primary tools for them to overcome future challenges. Al-Mazaya Holding takes pride in providing this flagship Program which ultimately contributes to creating a qualified generation that will prove an asset to the future of our beloved homeland, Kuwait.

Al-Mazaya Holding also participated as a jury member represented by Engineer Salwa Malhas Chief Business Development and Marketing Officer in Al-Mazaya Holding Company in Injaz's Annual Student Competition who was impressed by the students' ability to manage profitable projects in the competition's various stages. The competition hopes to boost the self-confidence of students in order for them to launch successful projects after they graduate.

Commenting on the agreement, Engineer Salwa Malhas said, the training Program is a "double-sided golden coin, providing multiple advantages for students to gain professional knowledge from qualified

experts and simultaneously, allowing volunteers to provide schools and business owners an overall view of the labor market in Kuwait. Therefore, it creates a collaborative environment between educational institutions and business owners."

She added that Al-Mazaya's volunteering initiative has already borne fruit, noting that the company's participation in Injaz's annual competition was a stepping stone in assessing the students' overall performance. "The experience was really positive and Al-Mazaya Holding is keen to maintain its support of this illustrious competition in the future."

Al-Mazaya Holding hosted a special recognition ceremony at the end of the competition Program in the presence of Board Chairman Rashid Al-Nafisi and Group CEO Ibrahim Al-Saq'abi as well as the company's senior executives. Injaz CEO Rana A Al-Nibari, and the rest of the company's executive team as well as the competition winners also attended Al-Mazaya's recognition ceremony.

During the ceremony, an inaugural speech was delivered by Al-Mazaya Chairman Rashid Al Nafisi, who congratulated the competition's winners, noting that the participating students demonstrated what they can achieve when they are provided with the right tools, a supportive environment and strong guidance. "We are very proud of the innovative ideas brought up by our students as well as their enthusiasm, skills and talents. We are looking forward to seeing more innovations in

the coming year." Meanwhile, Engineer Ibrahim Al-Soqabi the Group CEO of Al-Mazaya Holding Company said that we believe in youth development and we will be supporting such programs throughout the coming years, and we will make sure to encourage the students by volunteering our time, money and efforts to support all their innovative ideas while we can also invest in them for future results. During the ceremony, Nibari presented the nonprofit organization and shared the company's vision and mission expressing her sincere appreciation to companies who supported her program such as Al-Mazaya.

The winning projects were reviewed during the ceremony and Al-Mazaya's representatives presented the company's shields to the CEO of Injaz. The winners were rewarded with financial prizes, with the team named "Youth Creation" and "Asas" getting the Best Student Company Award and the best social impact respectively 2017 under the University Category, while "Agrivage" was the best team under the High School Category. The two teams will represent Kuwait in the Annual Regional Student Competition. Other winning teams were awarded cash prizes for their innovative achievements such like "D-stress" and "Drawil". Al-Mazaya Holding reaffirms its commitment to continuing to invest in youth-oriented educational Programs that enhance the leadership and decision-making skills of the next generation.

In my view

ON THE GEOPOLITICAL OPPORTUNITY OF KUWAIT

By Bader Al-Dihani



local@kuwaittimes.net

US President Donald J Trump, during his official visit to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, began his bilateral meeting with His Highness the Amir of Kuwait by stating: "They [Kuwaitis] buy tremendous amounts of military equipment than they invest in the United States. And that is what we like to hear." President Trump then kept reinforcing on how such purchases build job opportunities in the United States. And with that not only is the United States' presence in the Middle East changing but so should our approach to understanding how to manage international and regional relations.

President Donald J Trump, to quote former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, "is a different kind of president." And, to be as diplomatic as possible, that is what I too could say for now. But, of course, that should be a wakeup call. Depending on one global power, with changing interests of administrations once every four or eight years, is like relying on oil revenues as the only source of national income; it is too risky. Rather, like our high-valued currency, the Kuwaiti Dinar, we should diversify our basket of international alliances and strengthen relations with global powers. The future of power lays not within the limits of militarily and economically capable entities but power in the twenty-first century is rather continually diffusing through newer means. In a period where the instrument of oil - unlike that of 1973 - and the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, OPEC, plays a less important role than decades back, we should redefine our international interests and reexamine our global geopolitical strategies and tools.

Restructuring our foreign policy instruments and interests is vital today. Diplomacy is an effective instrument that we have taken advantage of and that we should continue to do so. Through its embassies, Kuwait cherishes its wide relations with nation-states across all civilized continents. Investments, too, whether through the Kuwait Investment Authority, the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development or otherwise, will concrete our economic and financial interdependencies with different nation-states. Investments create mutual interests; the latter helps bind - even, at times, incompatible - parties. The core of Kuwait's soft power throughout the entire Middle East and North Africa region (MENA) should be the vibrancy of our civil society activities. Unlike almost anywhere in MENA, numerous active unions participate in the political decision-making processes, citizens not only enjoy political freedoms but celebrate political rights and execute political positions, parliamentary relations exist and the history of such political flourishing, that dates back to 1921, is remembered. Our internationally recognized humanitarian will has throughout the years incentivized Kuwait to not only fulfill the wants and needs of different powerless peoples but also help restore relations between disputed regional nation-states.

Kuwaiti entertainment is widely followed by the populations of not only the member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), but rather more importantly throughout the Arab-speaking world. The entrepreneurial spirit of some of Kuwait's highly educated, English-speaking individuals has helped put Kuwaitis in competing positions on a global- and regional-scale. Just take a look at what and where private Kuwaitis are investing today. Attracting hearts and minds, hence utilizing the soft power of Kuwait, has never been more straightforward. Balancing between those instruments will further strengthen our geopolitical prestige.

Because the Middle East is one of the world's fastest-growing regions, Kuwait should take advantage of its foreign policy instruments to lead the building of a new regional order that would manage political and security instabilities through an adjusted balance-of-power system and "sovereign obligation" - to quote from Richard N Haass' "World Order 2.0." That is, the Jean Monnet of Kuwait should one day utilize our foreign policy instruments and thus come into existence.



KUWAIT: A medical staff member tends to a firefighter who was injured in the accident.

FIREFIGHTERS, PARAMEDICS HURT IN ELEVATOR COLLAPSE

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Three firefighters and two paramedics were injured after an elevator they were using fell in Khaitan. The team had responded to an emergency case located in an eighth floor apartment in a building in the area. They took the elevator down after they finished, but the elevator malfunctioned and collapsed. They were saved and rushed to Farwaniya Hospital for treatment. One firefighter was diagnosed with a dislocated knee, another with a meniscus tear and bruises in both knees, while the third sustained bruises across his body. Meanwhile, a paramedic sustained a broken right leg, while the other suffered a torn meniscus. A case was filed for investigations.

Separately, a fire broke out in a citizen's house in Jabriya, said security sources, noting that on rushing to the scene, firemen discovered that the fire started in a second-floor room. The blaze was contained and no casualties were reported.

Municipality campaign

As part of Kuwait Municipality's campaigns launched in preparation for Ramadan, Farwaniya municipality inspectors checked various foodstuff stores, warehouses and restaurants that resulted in arresting several roaming vendors, as well as confiscating and destroying four truckloads of foul vegetables and fruit that had been displayed for sale in the open and under the direct sun.

ASSEMBLY BEGINS DEBATING BUDGETS AMID ATTACK ON AGRICULTURE AUTHORITY
MPS VOTE TO GRANT EXCEPTIONAL PENSIONS TO EX-SERVICEMEN

KUWAIT MP Shuaib Al-Muwaizri speaks during yesterday's session.— Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: The national assembly began yesterday debating budgets of state-owned bodies as lawmakers launched a scathing attack on officials at the public authority for agricultural affairs and fisheries and the Public Institutions for Social Security.

The assembly decided to continue debating the budgets today and tomorrow as it plans to complete the debate and approvals of state budgets during the holy month of Ramadan.

Islamist MP Jamaan Al-Harbash charged that the agricultural authority was being used to buy the loyalty of politicians and tweeters as has been proved by the budgets committee. He said that a company which supplies the authority with drugs is also acting as the internal auditor for the authority which means that the company is monitoring itself. He also claimed that the social security institution is investing in 13 loss-making portfolios and that KD 7 billion of its funds are deposited at local banks, adding that banks are lending people from these funds. MP Abdulkarim Al-Kundari charged that the agricultural authority is rife with corruption and has been used to buy loyalty, adding that the authority has not achieved even seven percent of its goals. MP Safa Al-Hashem said the agricultural authority's only success was to achieve food security in egg

production despite spending over KD 71 million, adding that the authority has ignored dozens of violations cited by the Audit Bureau. MP Shuaib Al-Muwaizri attributed the cause of failure and corruption to a deliberate government policy of mismanagement and removing reformist employees. MP Omar Al-Tabtabai said the authority is not responding to anyone including the prime minister himself and approving its budget for the current fiscal year is a crime.



KUWAIT: MPs vote during a national assembly session yesterday.

MP Saadoun Hammad said that a local bank is given the lion's share of the social security deposits and banks should be treated equally. He said only one auditor is monitoring the authority's investments of over KD. 29 billion. During the session, MP Riyadh Al-Adasani submitted a letter calling on concerned government ministries to take all the necessary measures to curb price rises during Ramadan. The lawmaker questioned why the prices of goods were

rising after the drop in oil prices. The assembly also approved with an overwhelming majority a law to grant some 2,700 ex-servicemen with exceptional pensions for the period between 2008 and 2009. The cost was estimated at KD. 65 million in all. MP Nasser Al-Dossari said that he submitted a motion calling for the bedoons committee to study cases of stateless people who obtained fake passports of some Arab countries.

OUTDOOR WORK BAN STARTS JUNE 1

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: The Public Authority for Manpower authority issued its annual decision banning laborers from working in the open from 11:00 am till 4:00 pm, effective from the beginning of June till the end of August. Acting director Abdullah Al-Motoutah urged employers to observe these timings and conditions in order to avoid legal accountability.

Salwa's Church

The Municipal Council's deputy chairman Meshaal Al-Jowaisri said a church was established in a recently sold house in Salwa, and raised questions about whether it was properly licensed through the relevant state authorities. "How can a church be built in a residential area without prior permissions from relevant authorities?" he exclaimed, noting that many complaints had been filed by owners of neighboring houses.

Municipality's budget

Kuwait Municipality Director Ahmad Al-Manfouhi said that the parliamentary budgets committee had officially approved the municipality's budget in full and attributed this to full cooperation on municipality officials' side in responding to the remarks made by the Audit Bureau. Speaking at a meeting with the municipality's supreme planning committee, Manfouhi stressed this cooperation had a great impact on the monthly reports made by the Audit Bureau.

He noted that the municipality's legal affairs department recently succeeded in collecting KD 7 million after winning a case concerning a legal dispute. Separately, Chairman of the Municipal Council's environmental affairs committee Osama Al-Otaibi said discussing the establishment of a committee to be responsible for environmental issues and marine buoys under the municipality supervision was postponed until certain relevant government bodies are invited to a future meeting.

FUNERALS AT NIGHT TO COMBAT HEAT

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: The funeral services manager at the Municipality Faisal Al-Awadhi said that in view of the high temperatures in summer, burials during Ramadan will be held at 10:00 am, after Asr prayers and at 10:00 pm. He added that enough shade and illumination facilities have been prepared for this purpose.

Flooding

A committee formed to investigate the flooding of Mangaf underpass is due to hand over its final report to Minister of Public Works Abdul Rahman Al-Mutawa today. Meanwhile, Ministry of Public Works (MPW) undersecretary Awatif Al-Ghunaim issued a decision on exceptional promotions for 850 employees who met the conditions set for such promotions during the fiscal year 2016-2017. Ghunaim said that a total of KD 6.5 million would be paid to 8,500 employees in June for their outstanding performance.

Students costs

Minister of Education Mohammed Al-Fares said that the ministry is currently preparing a study about the cost of each student's education, including those in private schools. Fares added that all needed measures and procedures were followed to prevent unjustified fee increases in private schools, and some schools have been forced to refund the extra fees.

KUWAIT INVESTMENT AUTHORITY DENIES \$6 BILLION LOSSES

KUWAIT: Kuwait Investment Authority Monday dismissed as "completely untrue" press reports that KIA lost \$6 billion throughout 2016, affirming the losses were much lower than the reported digit.

The correct digit is the one mentioned during the National Assembly's June 22, 2016, session which was held to discuss the State's financial status, during which the government said KIA losses were Kuwaiti Dinars 312 million (some \$1.02 billion), KIA said in a statement. The \$1.02 billion, it added, represented 0.2 percent of total assets managed by KIA, it added.

KIA said it achieved KD 12.275 million (\$40.12 million) in net profits in fiscal year 2014-15, or 8.49 percent of total assets being managed. "It is unprofessional to judge a performance of one year, during which the market was down and is done away from international indicators," KIA said.

It affirmed that its performance for a period of 20 years was "positive" and outmatched other sovereign funds. KIA also underlined decisions taken within the authority were governed by a strict mechanism. It added that KIA rating improved among renowned international institutions, as one of the world's largest sovereign funds managers. — KUNA

CONDOLENCES

Kuwait Times Editor-in-Chief
Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan,
management and staff

convey their deepest condolences to

Al-Tawash family

on the sad demise of

Muna Ahmad Al-Dahmah

Wife of

Abdulaziz Mijbil Al-Tawash

May Allah Almighty bestow His mercy on her

In Brief

KUWAIT, MONGOLIA EYE CLOSER COOPERATION

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and Acting Minister of Information Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah received a visiting Mongolian delegation at Seif Palace yesterday. They discussed during the meeting several key issues pertinent to the promotion and development of Kuwaiti-Mongolian economic and technical relations. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah pointed to Kuwaiti willingness to bolster cooperative relations between friendly countries. — KUNA



KUWAIT, COLUMBIA SEEK CLOSER LEGAL TIES

VIENNA: Kuwait's Minister of Justice Dr Faleh Al-Azb met with his Colombian counterpart Enrique Gil Botero yesterday to examine strategies to deepen cooperation between both nations on legal and judicial affairs. Speaking on the sidelines of a session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ), Azb said that his rendezvous with the Colombian Minister of Justice provided an opportunity to exchange legal facts and information. — KUNA



NSA CHIEF MEETS AUSTRIAN ENVOY

KUWAIT: Chairman of the Kuwaiti National Security Apparatus (NSA) Sheikh Thamer Al-Ali Al-Sabah met yesterday with Austrian Ambassador to Kuwait Sigurd Pacher. During the meeting, they discussed Kuwaiti-Austrian cooperation, ways of developing bilateral relation and issues of mutual interest at both regional and international levels, the NSA said in a press release. — KUNA



Photo

of the day



KUWAIT: A man fixes a lamp on a wall in Kuwait City decorated in anticipation of Ramadan. The traditional lamp is one of the most popular decoration items associated with the holy month in the Arab World. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

ALTENBURG GERMAN FOOT CARE CLINIC OPENS AT AL-SALAM HOSPITAL

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: The Altenburg German Foot Care Clinic opened yesterday at Al-Salam Hospital, headed by Dr Andreas Appelt, a German-trained specialist orthopedic surgeon. Previously, Dr Appelt worked at Welcare Hospital, Mediclinic at Dubai Mall and The City Hospital. He has 30 years of experience in conservative and operative treatment of orthopedic conditions.

"In my field of expertise, it is not just relieving the pain of our patients, but to correct the problem as much as possible. The first step is to know what's causing the pain - the moment we find the reason, we try to solve it, not necessarily by immediate surgery, but by checking other options that will spare them from surgery. Do you know that most foot problems people experience can be treated without the use of drugs or surgery," he asked. Appelt said most foot problems only need orthotic solutions, meaning a corrector or foot support to correct the problem. "Pain in feet is mostly due to wrong posture in sitting, standing or moving around. It creates instability in the ankle, and affects the entire balance of the body," he said. Mostly, flat-footed people suffer pain, which can be corrected with orthotic shoes. "We usually recommend using good quality shoes - the inner sole is very important. Corns are connected to incorrect balance, especially if the patient is flat-footed. It can be treated by using correct inner soles," he said. "Foot corns can disappear with the use of custom-made orthotics. I



KUWAIT: Dr Andreas Appelt, a German-trained specialist orthopedic surgeon is flanked by doctors at Al-Salam Hospital yesterday as they inaugurate 'Altenburg German Foot Care Clinic.' — Photo by Joseph Shagra

don't recommend anyone who has this problem to remove any excess skin - it will not help and the corn will regrow. The answer is here in this clinic - we will check your condition and we'll recommend the use of orthotic custom-made shoes to resolve the problem," Appelt said.

The clinic also specializes in sports orthopedics and arthroscopic surgery of hip, knee, shoulder,

wrist, elbow and ankle. "I hold procedures for trauma patients, for example those who suffer from accidents. I also perform special osteoarthritis surgery on the hip, also with autogenic cartilage transplantation, re-adjustment osteotomy on the thigh, lower leg ankle and elbow, trauma surgery on extremities, pelvis and spinal column and more," he explained.

US Embassy Message

INFORMATION FOR US CITIZENS DURING THE ISLAMIC HOLY MONTH OF RAMADAN

KUWAIT: The United States embassy in Kuwait sent the following message to US citizens in Kuwait, which includes guidelines to be followed during the holy month of Ramadan:

The beginning and end of the month of Ramadan, the ninth month of the Islamic calendar, are based on actual sightings of the new moon, likely from about May 27 to June 24. The official start and end of the month will be announced by newspaper, television and radio.

During Ramadan, the US Embassy in Kuwait will continue to offer routine services for US citizens and visa applicants. Services are by appointment through our website. Appointments for US citizen services are available between 11 am and 1 pm Sunday through Wednesday. Visa applicants should review our instructions and schedule interviews via our visa website. When visiting the embassy, please bring two forms of government-issued identification with photographs, as you will need to leave one with our security guards while inside our building.

Kuwaiti government ministries and institutions will follow a reduced schedule, officially opening for business at 09:30 and closing at 14:00. Some government offices and retail businesses may not provide full staffing.

Ramadan is a time of abstinence from food, drink (including water), and physical pleasure (including smoking) during daylight hours. Expectations of conservative public behavior and dress are heightened during Ramadan. The fast is generally held to be obligatory for Muslims, unless they are old, very young,

infirm, traveling, or pregnant. The strictures are observed between dawn and sunset (roughly 04:30-18:50).

With meals taken only at night, sleep is limited. Be extra alert while driving, especially in the late afternoon when many people are returning home to break their fast.

Non-Muslims are not expected to fast, but it is against Kuwaiti law for anyone to eat, drink, or smoke in public between sunrise and sunset. Even children should be instructed not to eat or drink in public, which includes while in a vehicle on, or visible from, the street. Eating, drinking or smoking in public are grounds for arrest.

Restaurants, including cafes and fast food shops, will close during the day and reopen after sunset. Supermarkets and cooperative markets will remain open on Ramadan schedules unique to each but usually including shorter daytime hours. Retail non-food businesses will generally remain open for the entire period on reduced schedules.

Some hotels will keep one dining room open during the day (usually screened from public view) to provide meal and beverage service to non-Muslim guests. Other hotels may require non-Muslims to receive their meals in their hotel rooms during fasting hours. If you plan to travel via Kuwait International Airport, be aware that food and drink service will remain available during the day at the Dasman and Pearl Lounges, located after immigration control in the departure area. Access to these lounges is restricted and is granted for a fee.



KUWAIT: The Ambassador of the Republic of Djibouti to Kuwait Mohammad Ali Moomin hosted a reception on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the National Independence Day. Senior officials, diplomats and media personalities attended the event which took place Monday evening at Crowne Plaza Hotel. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

INCREASING OUTPUT CUT COULD BE DISCUSSED IN UPCOMING OPEC MEETING: OIL MINISTER

KUWAIT SUPPORTS EXTENDING DEAL FOR NINE MONTHS

KUWAIT: The increasing output cut is one option that could be discussed in OPEC ministerial meeting tomorrow, Minister of Oil and Minister of Electricity and Water Essam Al-Marzouq said yesterday.

"There is a consensus on the need to take all necessary measures to restore balance on the oil market," Marzouq said in an exclusive interview. "All options are on the table and could be discussed. However, any agreement should be satisfactory for all parties. And if necessity arises, we could increase the output cut. But it is premature to talk about that now." He expected that four other countries would join the output cut agreement in the coming meeting.

Egypt, Norway, Turkmenistan and Indonesia could sign the deal in the coming meeting, Marzouq said. Though they are not major producers, but their move could have psychological impact on the global oil market, he suggested, adding that "An agreement signed by 24 countries is absolutely better than one signed by 11 countries only." On December 10, 2016, OPEC and 11 non-OPEC countries signed an agreement on joint reduction of oil output, agreeing to cut their combined output in the first half of 2017 by 1.8 million barrels a day.

Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Brunei, Equatorial Guinea, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Mexico, Oman, Russia, the Republic of Sudan and South Sudan are the non-OPEC countries agreeing to cut their oil output to boost prices. He pointed out that the OPEC's oil ministers would hold their 172nd regular meeting on May 25 and would be joined later on the day by the non-OPEC states, which are participating in the output cut deal.

Reduction agreement

On the extension of the production reduction agreement, the minister said Kuwait fully supports the extension of deal for nine months and all efforts to rebalance the world oil market. "All indications so far, show that most countries, if not all, back the extension of this agreement," he said.

He stated that the main contributor to the output cut are major producers Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates, from the OPEC and Russia from outside OPEC. On the impact of the agreement on world markets since its implementation on January 1, Marzouq stressed that the agreement is successful by all standards as the commitment rate by the participating countries amounted to almost 100 percent. This is a historical commitment ratio and the participation of non-OPEC countries in this deal is historical in itself, he said.

He noted that oil prices rose immediately after the announcement of the deal in November and December 2016 by almost 20 percent. "Despite the relatively low prices in the past few weeks, prices are still better today than they were before the agreement," he said. "If this agreement was not signed, there had been a larger increase in the supplies on the market and sharper drop in prices com-

pared to current levels." He said that the agreement came into force in January 2017 after the fourth quarter of last year witnessed a significant surge in the production of OPEC and non-OPEC countries.

"This was clear in the reports of the major countries and global oil inventories during the first two months of this year. This is also coincided with the refineries' maintenance globally, which is a season when the demand usually slides," he said. "But I can say that we began to see signs of decline in commercial oil inventories in addition to the floating stock on ships," he said. He predicted that inventories would continue to decline as the output cut signatories continue to be highly committed to deal, "which will definitely restore the balance between supply and demand," he said, noting that the third quarter of the year usually sees the highest demand.

Shale oil

On the effect of the cut deal on the US shale oil production, which has increased by 10 percent since the implementation of the resolution, Marzouq said, "it is normal that US shale oil output soars in response to the rise in prices." "We still expect oil production to continue to grow during the current year, but we do not expect the current boom to be similar to that of 2012," he said. "However, shale oil is part of world oil production and the market is expected to absorb this increase in its production. The world's demand for oil increases annually by 1.3 million barrels per day."

On choosing Kuwait to preside over the committee in charge of monitoring producers; commitment by their cut obligations, Marzouq said he is proud that Kuwait was chosen for this task. "This is a clear indicative of the Kuwait's neutrality which prompted 23 countries to choose it for this task."

On the deal impact on the market shares of producing countries, Marzouq stressed that the aim of the agreement is to withdraw the surplus of the oil reserves in order to rebalance the market. "Therefore I do not think there are negative impacts on market shares of certain countries due to the production cut," he said.

He clarified that Kuwait is working as a part of a group whose members share the same goal of strike a balance between supply and demand. "I do not see any harm to Kuwait from the output cut agreement on the contrary, there is an aspired benefit from this collective action," he told KUNA, adding that the ensuing gradual improvement of oil prices would boost the State revenues.

On his projection to oil prices in the coming period, he said: "I do not expect a remarkable leap in prices by the end of the year." "As you know, I cannot predict certain price level, but I do agree with the majority of the projections which forecast that the prices would continue at a fixed level and may record a slight rise by the end of the year."

The minister expected the prices

would take an upward journey in 2018. He suggested that the fair price is the one that is accepted both by producers and consumers and ensures sustainability of the oil influx from producers to consumers. He estimated Kuwait's current production of crude oil at 2.7 million barrels a day.

On Kuwait's plans to balance between its strategic goal to surge its production to 4 million barrels a day with its commitment to cut production as per the agreement, Marzouq explained that Kuwait sets its strategy for future needs of the market and to prepare itself to meet in shortage in production. Kuwait still aims to increase its production up to 4 million barrels a day but its actual production is determined by the OPEC's quota system, he said.

Meg projects

On the progress in the mega oil sector projects, Marzouq said that 84 percent of the multi-billion clean fuel project has completed by the end of April, 2017. He expected that the project would start operation as of October 2018. As for Zour refinery project, the minister stated that only 30 percent of the project has been completed and the project would start operation by December 2019. He also noted that the ministry has signed an agreement for establishing a permanent utility for the importation of the liquefied natural gas and execution has started.

On the overseas projects of Kuwait International Petroleum Exploration Company (KUPPEC) and Kuwait Petroleum International, known as Q8, the minister stated that KUPPEC has a portfolio of 57 projects in 14 countries across the globe. He cited as the most important projects of KUPPEC, the liquefied natural gas project in Australia in which the Kuwaiti company has 13.4 percent stake and the Kaybob Duvernay gas shale Project in Canada in which the company has 30 percent share. He pointed out the liquefied natural gas project would start production in the second half of 2017 with a capacity of 66 million cubic feet per day



Minister of Oil and Minister of Electricity and Water Essam Al-Marzouq

could increase to 200 million cubic feet a day later, he said. He went on to say that "if an agreement is reached with Iraq, the project would start two years after the signing date." He added that the agreement could also be extended for 10 years or more.

On the latest developments about the suspension of production in wells in the divided zone with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the minister said that talks are still going on to find satisfactory solutions for both sides.

"We hope the production would be resumed soon," he said. On the view about the future of relying on petrochemical and transformational industries as important sources of income to Kuwait in the future, he said that the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation deeply believes in the role of the transformational industries in boosting national income and based on this belief it calls for expansion of petrochemical industries inside and outside Kuwait.

Privatization

On privatization plans, the minister pointed out that, the State development plan envisage partnership between the private and the public sectors and this could be achieved through creating real opportunities for partnership between the two sectors to make the private sector an effective partner in the development. In this regard, the KPC has implemented an ambitious and integrated program to maximize local content, he said, adding that this program aims to create opportunities for the private sector to carry out contracting and engineering works and provide supplies services for the oil sector as well as to encourage the private sector to use oil sector products to launch their enterprises.

On Q8, he said that the company is making strides in implementing its strategy to expand in the European market despite the challenges posed by the economic crisis. He added that Q8 has also entered the Asian market through the establishment of a new refinery in Vietnam.

Q8, moreover, has recently signed an agreement to set up a new refinery in the Sultanate of Oman with a capacity of 230,000 barrels a day, he said, adding that the refinery would rely on Kuwaiti crude by 65 percent.

On Kuwait purchase of natural gas from Iraq, Marzouq said that the technical committee that was formed three months ago to study the matter has not finished its work yet. Kuwait has initially demanded the purchase of 50 million cubic feet a day, an amount that

to jump to 190 million cubic feet a day in 2019 and would continue for a period of twenty years. He added that KUPPEC's share of the Kaybob Duvernay project is estimated at 523 million of equivalent oil barrels.

He said that the KPC considers that the privatization represents one of several options for partnership with the private sector. "The ministry would coordinate with the privatization apparatus to determine which activities and services would be privatized," he said. —KUNA



KUWAIT AIRWAYS CUTOVER TO AMADEUS A RESOUNDING SUCCESS

KUWAIT: Kuwait Airways, the official national airline of the State of Kuwait, announced that the cut-over to the world-leading, Amadeus Altea Suite - for its new inventory, reservations, ticketing and loyalty systems - was a resounding success. The systems migration, which took place on the night of 19-20 May, was completed in just a matter of hours.

Project Director for the Amadeus Implementation and Kuwait Airways' Director of IT, Abdulmunim Abdulsalam, praised the professionalism of his team and all of the partners involved in making the transfer to the new Amadeus Altea Suite a smooth migration, saying, "Everything went according to plan."

The cut-over to the new inventory, reservations, ticketing and loyalty system represents a major upgrade in terms of how the airline will now be able to interact and communicate with passengers and its business and travel industry partners.

"Our adoption of the Amadeus Altea Suite and its world-leading Passenger Service System (PSS) means that Kuwait Airways will be able to offer superior

online and face-to-face business transactions between Kuwait Airways and our customers, as well as being better able to personalise such technology so as to enhance our customer experience," says Abdulsalam.

The cutover on 19-20 May represents the first phase of Kuwait Airways' migration to the Amadeus' Altea Suite; the second phase - the implementation of the Departure Control System (DCS) - is set to be introduced in June of this year.

"We are very pleased to be supporting Kuwait Airways in its business transformation with Amadeus Altea cutting edge technology. The successful migration shows the professionalism and hard-work of our teams, as well as the strength of our partnership," said Maher Koubaa, Vice President, Head of Airline Group, Middle East and Africa at Amadeus.

In addition to the enhanced passenger and business partner experience, as a result of the new system Kuwait Airways can now use the Amadeus Altea Suite to optimize sales, revenue generation and growth for the airline.

iPhone for life

new
iPhone
every
year

subscribe now



iPhone 7

Postpaid

Call 102
viva.com.kw
@vivatelecom



Crime

Report

INSPECTORS FOIL BID TO SMUGGLE 91,000 PILLS

KUWAIT: Air cargo custom inspectors foiled a Syrian man's attempt to smuggle 91,000 illicit pills hidden in string lights imported from Lebanon to Kuwait, said security sources. Case papers indicate that custom inspectors suspected a parcel arriving from Lebanon and on checking it, the pills were found. Inspectors repacked the parcel and waited for the recipient to pick it up. He was arrested on collecting it.

Family wanted for forgery

An Egyptian mother and her son were arrested while the husband escaped arrest when detectives raided their apartment in Jabriya to arrest them over fraud charges, said security sources. The sources explained that a number of citizens and expats had reported being swindled by the family, as the mother claimed to be a PhD holder working for an Arab organization with many connections. The suspects used this claim to take thousands of dinars from their victims to finalize unfinished transactions. However, detectives found that the family members were in violation of residency laws. On raiding the house, the son and husband resisted them, before the father jumped from the first floor window and fled the scene. A case was filed and a search is on for the husband.

Rape

A girl told Mubarak Al-Kabeer police station officers that someone she did not know abducted her and took her to an apartment, where he raped her before letting her go, said security sources. A case was filed for investigations to verify the girl's claims then identify and arrest the suspect.

Cop faces charges

The Interior Ministry's cybercrimes department is currently examining a video that was recently posted on social media networks showing a policeman in uniform with a half-naked drunk woman, to identify him and hold him legally accountable.

Theft

A Pakistani man accused an Egyptian national he knows of withdrawing KD 6,000 from his bank account over eight months and denying it. The man explained that he had left his ATM card with the suspect, and after finding out about the missing money, he confronted him, but he denied everything and refused to give back the card. A case was filed and the suspect is being summoned.

Jewelry stolen

An Arab woman lodged a complaint with Fintas police accusing her husband of stealing her gold jewelry. A case was filed and the husband is being summoned for further investigations. — *Translated from the Arabic press*



Al-Jarida

THE PM'S INTERVIEW

By Tha'ar Al-Rasheedi

In his first lengthy televised interview, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah presented a profound image of a man in the highest executive position in the country. A full humane image that reflects the true personality of Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak as a human being, not as the controversial political leader; which was probably the reason behind criticism after the interview was aired.

Generally speaking and to be honest, 90 percent of the interview, which was conducted by Othman Al-Anjeri, focused on Sheikh Jaber as a person rather than his position. It also included documentation of some major incidents. Responding to a question about tolerating criticism, Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak stressed that those who cannot tolerate criticism better quit any public service positions and retire.

Some people might think that this was too platonic, but the truth is that Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak has always strongly believed in this principle ever since he started his political career and till he won the premiership. The man has never sued any writer, media figure, blogger or politician despite the severe criticism that sometimes went as far as personal slander. He has never filed a single case of this type.

A month ago, the opposition produced a list of what they called 'Jaber Al-Mubarak achievements', which included 25 points of criticism they saw as violations committed during his tenure. In fact, half of the points on that list were passed in parliament as bills unanimously voted upon, which mean that lawmakers were the ones who passed them even if the government made such proposals. It was the MPs we elected that were behind passing them. The funny thing is that those waving with this list were the ones who had boycotted parliamentary elections and then started criticizing the 2013 parliament. What an awkward paradox! They should have admitted that their boycotting was the main reason behind passing such laws because the parliament was born weak. To be honest, the man made remarkable achievements in a few years ever since he was appointed prime minister in 2011. — *Translated by Kuwait Times*

KIDS AND INVALIDATORS

By Saleh Al-Shayegi

I moved around various Kuwaiti schools over 14 years in the period from 1950 to 1964 before I worked as a teacher of Islamic education and Arabic for two years starting from 1971. I made this introduction to compare what we studied and taught with what our children are being taught now in primary school Islamic education.

The Islamic education subject was so easy and lovable when we were kids. It was more like an educational, cultural and guiding subject that had great impact on our souls, which remained with me personally for many years. Amongst the topics we studied during those years, I still remember the 'Prophets' Stories' by Egyptian author Abdel Hameed Gouda Al-Sahhar, which summarized the stories of each prophet in a separate booklet of no more than twenty or thirty pages, reviewing some human situations each respective prophet went through and the lesson learnt from them.

I also recall when I taught Islamic education, I chose a moderate approach that is suitable for intermediate

school pupils' minds. The curriculum was void of any complications, repellants or things that cause misunderstandings or disagreement. On the other hand, what our kids are being taught today is unbelievable as 10-year-old pupils' minds are being stuffed with information beyond what their tiny minds can perceive at such an early age. For example, those kids are being taught about Itham invalidators such as Nikah (sexual intercourse).

To those who have set this curriculum; is this logical? Why do we even teach a child who has not yet reached puberty about Hajj rituals when he is not yet asked to perform it? How do we explain the meaning of Nikah to a child (boy or girl) when he/she asks about it; and they will because they need to learn? Such curriculum does not help promote the status of religion in those kids' hearts. I believe it repels and alienates them from religion. Curriculum planners must put the moral side into consideration when planning curriculums. — *Translated by Kuwait times*

KPC ENTERS TENDER TO PURCHASE FUEL

KUWAIT: Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) took part in an international tender to purchase fuel to be delivered to Kuwait on June 12 and 14, said informed sources, expecting the price to be around \$665 per ton. The sources explained that two 25,000-ton shipments worth \$16 million each would be delivered on the above-mentioned dates. Notably, Kuwait started importing fuel after the closure of Shuaiba refinery. — *Al-Qabas*

KUWAIT ACTS AGAINST SYRIANS SEEKING TO CHANGE THEIR CITIZENSHIP STATUS

KUWAIT: Syrians will not have their citizenship status changed in the Interior Ministry's database if they obtain a different nationality, according to a new circular issued by the Interior Ministry's Residency Affairs Department.

This came after Sudanese authorities contacted their Kuwaiti counterparts about a number of Syrian nationals who have recently obtained Sudanese passports. Sudanese authorities temporarily suspended procedures to issue citizenships and passports to non-Sudanese, then informed Kuwait and other Gulf Cooperation Council countries about the situation in order to prevent activities that could potentially

pose a threat to national security, Al-Anbaa daily reported recently quoting a security source.

Based on that, the Interior Ministry informed the information systems department to avoid changing Syrian nationals' citizenship statuses to Sudanese in the database, the source said, adding that the Sudanese passports that the Syrians recently obtained are temporary and will not be renewed according to Sudanese authorities. Only 10 Syrian nationals in Kuwait have applied to change their citizenship status to Sudanese, but the number far exceeds that in other GCC countries, the source explained. — *Al-Anbaa*



OOREDOO KICKS OFF RAMADAN SEASON WITH VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES

THIRD CONSECUTIVE YEAR OF OOREDOO VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

KUWAIT: Ooredoo, Kuwait's fastest network, kicked off its Ramadan program of activities, which includes internal initiatives targeting staff members as well as external initiatives targeting different society segments. These initiatives come in line with the company's social responsibility strategy during the holy month.

Welcoming the Holy Month of Ramadan, Ooredoo is organizing a special 'Graish' meal for its staff at Ooredoo's headquarters in Al-Soor Street. The 'Graish' meal was a way to welcome the Holy Month with its employees and to revive the old Kuwaiti customs and heritage. All employees gather on this occasion to have one last meal before Ramadan together, greet each other and exchange best wishes.

Commenting on this in a statement, Ooredoo Kuwait's Senior director of Corporate Communications Mijbil Alayoub said: "We are happy to be kicking off our volunteer program during Ramadan for the third consecutive year. We're proud of all the participants and their willingness to give selflessly, especially during the holy month of Ramadan. We're also very happy to be the biggest supporter of youth volunteers in Kuwait."

Ooredoo Volunteer Program

During Ramadan, Ooredoo is relaunching its Volunteer Program, following the great success it achieved upon the official launch of the program last two year. This program was launched in cooperation with Spread the Passion, a local non-profit organization which aims at encouraging youth to be more engaged in voluntarily programs. The accompanying training program is intended to continue for a whole month and includes workshops, training camp.

Connecting with its staff, Ooredoo will also hold its Ramadan ghabga, a fun-filled event that will be attended by the Chairman and CEO of Ooredoo Group Sheikh Saud bin Nasser Al-Thani, the CEO and General Manager of Ooredoo Kuwait Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdullah Al-Thani along with executive managers and department heads.

In addition, Ooredoo will continue to distribute iftar meals during the Holy Month of Ramadan through a distribution center outside its head office and in its iftar tent, in addition to a special truck that will deliver meals to areas



Mijbil Alayoub

addition to staff from the company's different departments and divisions.

Sharing festivities

The company also aims to hold a series of Girgian celebrations to bring the joy to kids' hearts several locations, including the Guardians of the Disabled Association, Mubarakiya Souq in addition to care centers. This will be in addition to visits to pediatric hospital wards in Kuwait

populated by underserved communities. The meal distribution drive is fully operated by Ooredoo's volunteer program members, after the great success of the program in the last two years. The upper management at Ooredoo regularly participate in the activities, in

along with members of its volunteer program. Ooredoo has previously collaborated with a number of entities in Kuwait, such as Abdullah Al-Nouri institution to aid Syrian refugees in different part of the world, in addition its collaboration with the 'Kiswat Al-Khair' campaign to distribute clothes for needy families during the holy month. Also Ooredoo representatives has conducted a visit to 'Yadawi' center to give the volunteers a comprehensive idea about how to recycle waste, sort, and reuse it in manufacturing children toys to be donated to children in need. The program will include participation from similar groups.

Empowering youth is among Ooredoo's top priorities through its CSR strategy. The company has recently signed a memorandum of understanding with the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs, to support youth projects and initiatives, making it the first telecom provider in Kuwait to sign such a high-level agreement. Ooredoo is continuously working with the Ministry to enrich youth experience in a variety of fields, with a focus on volunteerism.



KUWAIT: The Commercial Bank of Kuwait (CBK) announced its social program for the holy month of Ramadan, which includes a campaign to print copies of the Holy Quran in Braille, distributing iftar and suhour meals to construction and cleaning workers, in addition to other activities and competitions.





Trump in Mideast condemns 'evil losers' behind Manchester attack

UN VOWS TO TIGHTEN SANCTIONS ON N KOREA



MANCHESTER: Catalan politics hold a minute of silences in Barcelona, Spain, yesterday for the victims of the Manchester explosion.

MANCHESTER ATTACK PROMPTS SECURITY RETHINKS WORLDWIDE

SINGAPORE: Countries from the United States to Japan and Singapore are considering tightening security ahead of major theatre and sports events following a suicide bomb attack in Britain that killed at least 22 people. Prime Minister Theresa May called an emergency meeting with intelligence chiefs on the deadliest militant assault in the country since four British Muslims killed 52 people in suicide bombings on London's transport system in July 2005.

The US Department of Homeland Security said it was closely monitoring Monday's attack, at the end of a concert by US singer Ariana Grande in Manchester, and that the US public may experience increased security at public events. Sports events organizers were also looking into security. European soccer body UEFA said there was "no specific intelligence" to suggest that Wednesday's Europa League final in Stockholm between Manchester United and Dutch side Ajax Amsterdam might be the target of any attack.

UEFA said that "a number of additional security measures were implemented" after a truck attack in central Stockholm last month. Japan said it had started gathering information. "We have strengthened our position by establishing an information-gathering unit dedicated to international terrorism," Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga told reporters. In Singapore, the organizer of Britney Spears' concerts in June said they were considering new measures.

"We are definitely looking at tightening security," Yogesh Mehta, project manager at IIME Entertainment Group, said. "All our events are licensed by the police. It is normally advised by the licensing department on what precautions

to take, how many armed guards we need. So we work closely with them."

Singapore, which hosts a security summit between June 2-4 bringing together Asia-Pacific defense and military chiefs, made amendments to the Public Order Act last month. It requires event organizers to notify the police a month beforehand if they expect more than 5,000 people to attend. And police may refuse to allow a public gathering if it has a direct political end or involves foreigners.

On alert

Hong Kong's AsiaWorld Expo, where Ariana Grande is due to hold a concert in September, said it would improve security at all concerts and events. Besides baggage inspection, there would also be metal detectors and search dogs, it said in a statement. Hong Kong is already on high alert ahead of an expected visit by Chinese President Xi Jinping to mark the 20th anniversary of the city's handover to Beijing on July 1 when the former British colony's new leader will also be sworn in.

In the Taiwan capital of Taipei, which hosts the Summer Universiade sports event in August, officials said they already have the highest levels of readiness. "We will raise them even higher as appropriate in response to overseas terrorist attacks, such as the one in Manchester," said Universiade spokesman Rony Yang. The International Cricket Council said security for the ICC Champions Trophy next month and the ICC Women's World Cup, both in Britain, was its "highest priority".

"The security situation has been very much front and centre of our preparations and we constantly review our procedures to guarantee they are as effective as possible to keep everyone safe," the ICC said. The Melbourne Cricket Ground, Australia's biggest sports arena, said it was reviewing procedures. Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull said the government was working closely with other countries on strategy.

"While the threat level in Victoria remains unchanged, and there is no known threat to the MCG, we continue to receive advice from relevant authorities and together review our security processes accordingly," the club's spokesman said, referring to the state of which Melbourne is the capital. SM investments Corp, whose Mall of Asia Arena in the Philippine capital will host Ariana Grande in August, said it would take all precautions. "Our security is always stepped up especially for big crowds like this," said SM investment relations chief Corazon Guidote. In Kolkata, the business hub for east India, police said the security drill for public gatherings would have to be reviewed. —Reuters

It's time to up your game.

VIRAT KOHLI
TISSOT BALLADE.

SILICON BALANCE SPRING

TISSOT THIS IS YOUR TIME

TISSOTWATCHES.COM

CONDOLENCE

The Chairman, Principals, Staff & Students of
**United Indian School, Kuwait,
Indian Public School, Kuwait &
Al Alia International Indian School, Riyadh, KSA**

*Mourn the demise of dear Sunnychayan,
our Guide and Mentor who encouraged us at all times*

Mr. M. Mathews
who was called to Eternal Home
on 20th May 2017.

*May the Lord Almighty comfort and strengthen
the dear and near ones to bear the irreparable loss.*

- New Street: 22453927
- Salmiya Souq: 25718224
- The Gate Mall: 22056366
- Lala Gallery: 25719780/1
- TIK TOK (SoKu, The Avenues): 22200728
- Marina Mall: 22244839, 22244882
- Souq Sharq: 22433770, 22433900
- Behbehani Complex: 22406795, 22453863
- The Avenues: 22587727, 22587728
- Alkout Mall: 23830338/9

POLICE FIRE ON PROTEST, ONE REPORTED DEAD

DUBAI: Bahraini police opened fire yesterday on a protest by supporters of a top Shiite cleric, with at least one demonstrator reported dead in the latest unrest to hit the Sunni-ruled Gulf state. The Britain-based Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy (BIRD) announced the "tragic death of a peaceful protester in the crackdown" in Diraz, the scene of a long-running sit-in outside the home of cleric Isa Qassim.

Eyewitnesses said multiple civilians were wounded when police opened fire at demonstrators throwing stones and Molotov cocktails at security forces. Police arrested several people wanted by the authorities, the interior ministry said.

Qassim is considered the spiritual leader of Bahrain's majority Shiite community. The kingdom has been rocked by unrest since 2011, when local authorities backed by a Saudi military force crushed Shiite-led protests demanding a constitutional monarchy and an elected prime minister.

Authorities have accused Qassim, sentenced Sunday to a suspended one-year jail term for illegal fundraising and money laundering, of serving "foreign interests" and promoting "sectarianism and violence". A court last year stripped him of his citizenship, sparking repeated sit-ins outside his residence in Diraz. Bahrain's interior ministry said yesterday it had "launched a security operation in the village of Diraz

to preserve security and civil order as the site is a safe haven for fugitives."

Bahraini authorities have accused Iran of fomenting unrest in the kingdom, ruled for more than two centuries by the Sunni Al-Khalifa dynasty. Tehran has consistently denied involvement. The government's clampdown on dissent has drawn harsh condemnation from international rights groups and governments.

US policy shift

The tiny Gulf state is a key regional ally of the United States and is home to its Fifth Fleet, but the administration of former president Barack Obama frequently scolded Manama over rights

concerns. In a meeting with Bahrain's King Hamad in Saudi Arabia at the weekend, US President Donald Trump made a clear break from previous US policy.

Trump told the king on Sunday it was "a great honor to be with you" and said there "has been a little strain but there won't be strain with this administration". BIRD said yesterday that Trump had "effectively (given) King Hamad a blank cheque to continue the repression of his people". It said the US had "blood on its hands" for supplying arms to Bahrain despite what it called an "intensified repressive campaign on civil society in Bahrain".

Manama has imprisoned dozens of Shiites accused of taking part in demon-

strations and stripped at least 316 Bahrainis of their nationality since 2012, according to Amnesty International. The group says Manama has escalated its repression since mid-2016. A court last year ordered the dissolution of the kingdom's main opposition group Al-Wefaq after authorities accused it of "harboring terrorism." An 18-year-old Bahraini died in March, nearly two months after he was shot in the head fleeing a raid on Qassim's house, Amnesty said. Bahrain's parliament in March voted unanimously to grant military courts the right to try civilians charged with any act of "terrorism". Rights activists fear Qassim could be among the first to face court-martial. —AFP

NATO AND EU WONDER WHICH TRUMP WILL TURN UP

BRUSSELS: A CITY TRUMP ONCE DUBBED A 'HELLHOLE'



WASHINGTON: In this file photo, the Homeland Security Department headquarters in northwest Washington.—AP

NEARLY 740,000 FOREIGNERS OVERSTAYED US VISAS LAST YEAR

SAN DIEGO: Nearly 740,000 foreigners who were supposed to leave the United States during a recent 12-month period overstayed their visas, the Homeland Security Department said Monday, detailing a crucial but often overlooked contributor to the number of people in the country illegally. President Donald Trump has proposed spending billions of dollars to erect a wall on the US border with Mexico and hire more border agents, but those measures would not address people who arrive legally and stay after their visas expire.

An estimated 40 percent of the roughly 11 million people in the country illegally stayed past their visas. There were 739,478 overstays from October 2015 through September 2016 among visitors who arrive by plane or ship - more than the population of Alaska. The total number of overstays is much larger but has not been quantified because the statistic doesn't include how many people leave by land. The cost and technological hurdles to develop a checkout system at congested land crossings are enormous because the sites are so busy.

Last year, Homeland Security tested facial scans at a San Diego border crossing but has not said if the technology works or will be expanded. Homeland Security last year published the number of overstays for the first time in at least two decades, saying 527,127 people who came by air or ship stayed past their visas from October 2014 to September 2015. This year's report

added student and foreign exchange visitors and many visa categories for temporary workers, while last year's only counted business travelers and tourists.

Homeland Security said it will make additional improvements in future reports, including more data on people who cross by land. Overstays accounted for 1.5 percent of the 50.4 million visitors who arrived by plane or ship in the latest period, Homeland Security said. Canada occupied the top slot for overstays among business travelers and tourists, followed by Mexico, Brazil, Venezuela and the United Kingdom. Germany, Colombia, China, India and Italy rounded out the top 10.

The overstay rate was much higher among students and foreign exchange visitors, with 79,818 of 1.5 million, or 5.5 percent, staying after their visas expired. China had the largest number of student overstays, followed by Saudi Arabia, South Korea, India and Brazil. Trump vowed during last year's campaign to finish building a system to record when visitors leave the country by using biometric identifiers, like facial or iris scans, but he has focused much of his attention on building a wall and hiring more border agents.

Homeland Security's internal watchdog said earlier this month that immigration agents waste their time logging in and out of archaic computer systems while trying to track down foreigners suspected of overstaying their visas only to find out later that many visa holders have left the country.—AP

BRUSSELS: Hoping for the best, fearing the worst: EU and NATO leaders are braced for their first meeting with US President Donald Trump on their home turf on Thursday. The trepidation in Brussels, a city Trump once dubbed a dangerous "hellhole," is palpable as he has up-ended one long-held certainty about US ties after another.

On the campaign trail Trump dubbed NATO—the US-led alliance credited with keeping the peace in Europe for the past 70 years—"obsolete" and unsuited to tackling the real threat of Islamist terror, while he has since accused allies of not paying their way. As for Europe, he backed Britain's shock Brexit vote, saying the European Union was a would-be superstate doomed to collapse under the weight of its own contradictions. The president has since rowed back at least in part on these positions.

But analysts say that is part of the problem. Which Trump will turn up? "I think everyone is still asking themselves what is Trump's policy on NATO and the EU," said Markus Kaim of the German Institute for International and Security Affairs in Berlin. Adding to the uncertainty, the president is embroiled in a major political scandal over his ties to Russia, having pushed hard for an improvement in relations that the Ukraine crisis plunged into a deep freeze.

EU meeting most difficult

Trump meets European Council president Donald Tusk and European Commission head Jean-Claude Juncker on Thursday morning. He then travels to the new futuristic NATO headquarters building on the Brussels outskirts for a meeting of all 28 allies, of which 22 are also EU members. Tomas Valasek, director of the Carnegie Europe think-tank in Brussels, said that of the two meetings, the one with the EU meeting had the bigger "potential to go bad".

"We have never (seen) a policy actually to undermine NATO, and the same cannot be said of the EU," Valasek said. For the NATO meeting, "the best possible result ... is (that) NATO will continue to not be obsolete and continue to be big, beautiful and important," he said. "The worst outcome is the possibility that things are said, either in the meeting or worse outside, and then there we'll need a walk back and that will fuel the doubts about the US commitment to the alliance."

A key test will be whether Trump backs NATO's core "all for one, one for all" Article 5 collective defense commitment, as all his predecessors have done. Trump caused uproar when he suggested on the campaign trail he would check first if a NATO ally was up to date with his dues before he would consider coming to its aid. "Overall, the signals since Trump took office have been more positive so there are quite high hopes. But his every word will be scrutinized under the magnifying glass by the allies," said one European diplomat who asked not to be named.

Defense spending, terrorism

The president's NATO priorities are clear. First, get the allies to share more of the burden and meet a target agreed in 2014 to allocate two percent of annual economic output to defense in response to a resurgent Russia which had just annexed Crimea. Second, he wants them to focus on the Islamist terror threat and agree to NATO formally joining the US-led anti-Islamic State coalition fighting the jihadis in Syria and Iraq.

All NATO allies have joined the coalition on an individual basis but now Washington wants the alliance itself onboard to give a powerful symbol of political support. Some member states, including France and Germany according to diplomatic sources, fear NATO could get bogged down in a ground war in one of the world's most volatile regions and compromise its standing with Arab powers. They also do not want NATO going too far beyond its current, limited training mission in Iraq and end up taking over control of the operation, as it did in Afghanistan in 2003. —AFP



WASHINGTON: In this photo, then-National Security Adviser Michael Flynn sits in the front row in the East Room of the White House, in Washington.—AP

FLYNN REJECTS TRUMP-RUSSIA PROBE SUBPOENA; DEMS SAY HE LIED

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump's former national security adviser, Michael Flynn, invoked his Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination in rebuffing a subpoena Monday in the investigation into Russia's election meddling. Then a top House Democrat cited new evidence he said appeared to show Flynn lied on a security clearance background check. With Trump himself in the Mideast on his first foreign trip as president, investigations into Russian interference in the 2016 campaign - and allegations of Trump campaign collaboration - showed no sign of slackening in Washington.

Flynn's own defensive crouch revealed the high legal stakes he faces as investigations intensify: a US counterintelligence probe of Russia, a federal investigation in Virginia and multiple congressional inquiries. As well, The Washington Post reported Monday that Trump asked two top intelligence chiefs in March to deny publicly that there had been collusion between the Russians and the Trump campaign.

Citing current and former officials, the Post said the national intelligence director, Daniel Coats, and the director of the National Security Agency, Adm. Michael S. Rogers, both refused Trump's request, judging it inappropriate.

Flynn's attorneys told the Senate intelligence committee he will not turn over personal documents sought under the congressional subpoena, citing an "escalating public frenzy." They also said earlier in the day the Justice Department's appointment of a special counsel has created a legally dangerous environment for him to cooperate with the Senate panel's investigation.

Hours later, Rep. Elijah Cummings, senior Democrat on the House oversight committee, said government documents he's reviewed showed inconsistencies in Flynn's disclosures to US investigators in early 2016 during his security clearance review. Cummings said Flynn appeared to have misled authorities about the source of a \$33,000 payment from Russia's state-sponsored television network, failed to identify foreign officials with whom he met - including Russia's President Vladimir Putin - and glossed over his firing as chief of the Defense Intelligence Agency during the Obama administration.

Cummings made his points in a letter asking the committee's chairman, Jason Chaffetz of Utah, to subpoena the White

House for documents related to Flynn. It's unclear from Cummings' letter whether Flynn would face legal jeopardy for his answers to security clearance investigators. But in an April statement Cummings warned that falsifying or concealing material facts on security clearance reviews are federal crimes and convictions could lead to fines and up to five years imprisonment.

Flynn attorney, Robert Kelner, declined to comment on the new assertions by Cummings. Trump appointed Flynn, a retired US Army lieutenant general and top military intelligence chief, as his top national security aide in January, only to fire him less than a month later. The White House has said that Flynn had misled top US officials, including Vice President Mike Pence, about his contacts with Russian officials, including Russia's ambassador to the US. Cummings and other Democrats have blasted Trump and his team for failing to more carefully check Flynn's background before they brought him to the White House, while the Trump administration has attempted to blame the Obama administration for failing to properly vet Flynn earlier.

On Monday, Cummings said Flynn provided inconsistent or misleading statements to US security clearance investigators in the first three months of 2016 during the renewal of his credentials. Cummings cited a report in March 2016 that he said showed the retired Army general telling authorities that payments he received for his 2015 trip to Moscow were paid by "US companies." In fact, the oversight committee released detailed email and payment records months ago showing that the source of Flynn's payment of more than \$33,000 was RT, the Russian state-sponsored television network that has been labeled a propaganda network by US intelligence.

The payments, which were through Flynn's US-based speakers bureau, stemmed from Flynn's trip to Moscow to appear at an RT gala, where he sat at the head table with Putin. In his letter, Cummings cited a standard security clearance question that asks respondents to disclose contacts with foreign governments or their representatives. According to Cummings, Flynn told investigators he had only "insubstantial contact" with foreign nationals over the previous seven years and he did not detail the names of any foreign officials he had met. — Reuters

LIBERATION OF MOSUL IMMINENT

IS DAYS OUTNUMBERED

UNITED NATIONS: The liberation of the northern Iraqi city of Mosul "is imminent" and the days of the Islamic State extremist group's self-declared caliphate "are numbered," the UN envoy for Iraq said Monday. But Jan Kubis told the Security Council that despite progress, fighting remains "a tremendous challenge" because IS fighters are increasingly using civilians as human shields in "a last-gasp effort that reveals little more than the inherent inhuman barbarity of the terrorists."

He paid tribute to Iraqi security forces and their coalition partners for trying to limit the impact of military operations to protect civilians, "even if that comes at the cost of prolonging a harsh, bitter campaign that continues to claim both civilian and military lives." Iraqi forces, backed by a US-led coalition, officially launched the operation to retake Mosul, the country's second-largest city, in October.

The city's east was declared "fully liberated" in January and the fight for the west was launched the following month. It has been marked by some of the most grueling and deadly combat in the fight against IS in Iraq to date. The city fell to IS fighters during a lightning charge in June 2014 that left nearly a third of Iraq in IS militants' hands and plunged the country into its most severe crisis since the US-led invasion in 2003.

The Islamic State's "caliphate," declared after the June 2014 military campaign, once stretched across northern Syria through much of northern and western Iraq. But the group, also known as ISIL and Daesh, is now under

attack in both countries and the territory it controls has shrunk. Kubis said military operations in Iraq are shifting to the remaining areas and pockets where IS extremists are still present. Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi has announced that the next steps are to secure the Iraq-Syria border and to liberate west of Ninewa and Anbar governorates, the UN envoy said.

"Although large-scale military operations against ISIL will hopefully conclude by the end of this year, the security environment will remain volatile and will be characterized by continued cowardly terrorist attacks by Daesh,

targeting civilians in many parts of the country," he said. "Whenever given the opportunity, Daesh, al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups will likely seek to tap into and deepen sectarian, tribal or ethnic divides, including by cooperating with criminal gangs," Kubis added.

To deal with these challenges, he said a long-term, comprehensive reform of the security sector "is imperative." Kubis said a dual focus must be maintained on the immediate challenges of defeating IS extremists and on preparing for the liberation, stabilization and rehabilitation of Iraq. — AP



MOSUL: Boys ride a donkey as a humvee belonging to the Iraqi Counter Terrorism Service (ICTS) passes by while on patrol in the western neighborhood of Tamuz in Mosul yesterday, after the area was retaken during the ongoing offensive against Islamic State (IS) group fighters.—AFP

HAWAII FACES MORE FLOODING WITH POSSIBLE RECORD HIGH TIDES

SEATTLE: Hawaii will likely suffer more coastal flooding this week driven by record high tides, a symptom of global warming that could become routine within decades, scientists said Monday. After a high tide in April broke a 112-year record, combining with wave action to flood low-lying coastal areas, similar tides are predicted later this week and twice more during the summer, with water likely to cover roadways and reach buildings near shore.

Water levels at or above April's record tide are now predicted for May 25-27, as well as June 23-24 and July 21-22, Mark Merrifield, a University of

Hawaii oceanographer, said in a Monday phone interview. While so far mostly a nuisance, rising global sea levels will likely drive similar flooding dozens of times per year by 2050, and could pose serious risks during storm seasons, said Chip Fletcher, a dean at the University of Hawaii's School of Ocean and Earth Science and Technology.

"First you'll see it during the highest tides of the year, then during the new moon and full moons," when peak monthly tides typically occur, Fletcher said. "And then it will start to occur at every high tide, every day." As much as 45 percent of the flood-water height during the April event was attributable

to sea level rise driven by global warming, depending on the yearly baseline used, Merrifield said.

Merrifield said his modeling predicts similar water levels occurring four times per year by 2030, 25 times yearly by 2050, and potentially 100 times or more yearly by 2070. An overwhelming majority of scientists say human activity - including the burning of oil, gas and coal - is the main driver of rising global temperatures.

While the immediate risk from such flooding is low, both Merrifield and Fletcher said the long-term risks are substantial. As record-high water levels occur more frequently, the odds of one coinciding

with a tropical storm or hurricane also increase, especially since the area tends to experience higher tides during hurricane season.

"The worst-case scenario is a tropical storm making landfall during the highest tides of the year in the Summer," Fletcher said. "What might have been minor damage from a storm, 20 or 30 years from now could cause extreme damage." The forecast comes amid growing concern for coastal regions worldwide, including in the United States, where rising seas have driven increased flooding in coastal cities like Norfolk, Virginia and Annapolis, Maryland.—Reuters



ATHENS: A young Afghan girl walks inside the disused Hellinikon airport, where refugees and migrants are temporarily housed, in Athens yesterday.—AFP

GREECE TO CLEAR MAKESHIFT REFUGEE CAMPS IN ATHENS

ATHENS: Efforts are underway to remove hundreds of refugees from an unhygienic makeshift camp at an ex-Olympics facility in greater Athens, a migration ministry source said yesterday. "We are down there today to register the refugees' needs and officially inform them that they should relocate to organized camps," the source said. Some 700 mainly Afghan refugees are living at the camp at Hellinikon which until 2001 was the Athens airport in crumbling flight lounges and abandoned sports facilities later built for the 2004 Olympics.

Rights groups have repeatedly labeled the makeshift camp on the coastal Athens front unsuitable for long-term accommodation and called on the government to find alternative arrangements for the refugees. In February, some of the refugees went on hunger strike to protest against the lack of hot water and suitable food.

The ministry source said the relocation to other facilities would be "gradual" and declined to give a timeframe. The refugees were initially deposited at Hellinikon from

late 2015 onwards as a temporary measure, as Greece's leftist government scrambled to accommodate hundreds of thousands of people of all ages landing on Europe's doorstep to escape war and poverty.

Many of them slept at the port of Piraeus, at Hellinikon and at another improvised camp on the northern Greek border for months before organized camps could be created with the help of volunteer groups and EU funds. Overall, some 60,000 people including many young Syrians, Afghans and Pakistanis, have been stuck in Greece for the past year after neighboring countries along the migrant route into Europe shut their borders.

At the start of the 2015 influx, Afghans were originally viewed as refugees and allowed to continue their journey from Greece to other countries in Europe. But many now face deportation despite growing insecurity that saw civilian casualties in Afghanistan hit a record high in 2016 after a disputed deal between EU and Kabul to send migrants back.—AFP

UKRAINE BACKS TOUGH TV LANGUAGE RULES TO LIMIT RUSSIA

KIEV: Ukraine's parliament ratcheted up its cultural war against Russia yesterday by backing television language quotas requiring major channels to broadcast at least three-quarters of their programs in the Ukrainian language. The measure was passed a week after Ukraine blocked Russia's most popular social media networks and a top internet search engine in a self-proclaimed effort to prevent Kremlin propaganda from reaching the crisis-torn former Soviet state.

Ukraine's Verkhovna Rada parliament passed the TV quotas bill by an overwhelming 269-15 margin. "Once again, the Verkhovna Rada has demonstrated that it is a Ukrainian Verkhovna Rada, one eliminating the remnants of the Soviet imperialist past," parliament speaker Andriy Parubiy said after the vote. Most people in Ukraine speak both languages but Russian is used more often in the east while Ukrainian is preferred in the west. Ukraine came under intense criticism from free speech advocates and domestic users for prohibiting the Russian equivalent of Facebook and other popular internet services and sites. But nationalists and senior politicians saw it as a

proper response to an information campaign that Russia is waging alongside the ground offensive it is backing in Ukraine's separatist east. The three-year conflict has killed more than 10,000 people and turned Moscow and Kiev into sworn foes.

Kiev has been gradually expanding its list of outlawed Russian goods and Russians barred from entering the country for either voicing support for the Kremlin's March 2014 annexation of Crimea or the self-proclaimed independence of Ukraine's separatist fiefdoms. Numerous Russian television series and movies have already been thrown off the airwaves and banned at cinemas. Ukraine has also blocked the import and sale of some books.

Ukraine's free speech and information policy committee chief Viktoriya Syumar said the bill she co-wrote was in complete agreement with existing European standards. "Such laws exist in a number of European countries," she told lawmakers. "Totalitarianism only existed when Ukrainian was banned from use in our land," she added in reference to the Soviet practise of forcing other republics to speak Russian.—AFP



LONDON: A Union flag flies at half-mast from a flagpole above the Houses of Parliament in London yesterday, as a mark of respect to those killed and injured in the terror attack at the Ariana Grande concert at the Manchester Arena in Manchester.—AFP

EVACUATIONS LIFTED AS CREWS ADVANCE ON FIRE NEAR SAN DIEGO

JAMUL, California: A criminal investigation has been launched into the origin of a brush fire that forced hundreds of people to evacuate over the weekend southeast of San Diego, authorities said. All evacuation orders were lifted early Monday and the blaze was 95 percent contained after scorching more than 3 square miles of dry brush near Jamul (HAA-mul), the state Department of Forestry and Fire Protection said.

A video posted to social media appeared to show the start of the fire in an area of US Bureau of Land Management property, Capt. Issac Sanchez told the Union-Tribune Sunday. He wouldn't say whether investigators suspected the fire sparked Saturday was intentionally set. The video showed two people standing next to a patch of smoking brush, and two others running toward it. Soon after, the smoldering vegetation caught fire, and the four

were seen walking away, the newspaper reported. Another part of the video showed a firetruck arriving. A nearby hillside was already blackened. Occupants of rural homes and the Pio Pico RV Resort and Campground were ordered to leave as flames spread rapidly amid dry, hot conditions. A rise in humidity allowed firefighters to advance on the blaze and have it nearly surrounded Monday. No injuries were reported.—AP

TRUMP IN MIDEAST CONDEMNS 'EVIL LOSERS' BEHIND MANCHESTER ATTACK

TRUMP PAYS TRIBUTE TO HOLOCAUST VICTIMS

BETHLEHEM: US President Donald Trump yesterday condemned the "evil losers" behind a bomb blast at a pop concert in Britain that killed 22 people, as the attack overshadowed his trip to Israel and the Palestinian territories. With his trademark blunt style, Trump vowed not to refer to attackers as "monsters" any longer "because they would like that term. They would think that's a great name."

"So many young, beautiful, innocent people living and enjoying their lives murdered by evil losers," Trump said after meeting Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas in Bethlehem in the occupied West Bank. "I will call them from now on losers because that's what they are. They're losers, and we'll have more of them. But they're losers—just remember that."

Children were among the at least 22 people killed and dozens injured in the suspected suicide bombing on Monday night at a pop concert by US star Ariana Grande in Britain's deadliest extremist attack in 12 years. Trump's comments came after he made the short trip from Jerusalem to Bethlehem to meet Abbas, who sought to convince the unpredictable US president to remain committed to an independent Palestinian state.

On Monday, Trump made a highly symbolic visit to the Western Wall in Jerusalem and met Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Later yesterday, Trump will return to Jerusalem to visit the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial and give a speech at the Israel Museum before wrapping up his two-day stop. Trump's visit to Israel and the Palestinian territories is part of his first trip abroad as president, and follows an initial leg in Saudi Arabia, where he urged Islamic leaders to confront extremism.

He arrived in Bethlehem by motorcade, crossing a checkpoint at Israel's controversial separation wall, and was greeted by Abbas and other dignitaries outside the city's presidential palace. Trump spoke of reviving long-stalled peace efforts between the Israelis and Palestinians, but few specifics have emerged of how he intends to do so. "I am committed to trying to achieve a peace agreement between the Israelis and the Palestinians, and I intend to do everything I can to help them achieve that goal," Trump said after his talks with Abbas.

Abbas reiterated his call for a two-state solution to the conflict, including an independent Palestinian state with east Jerusalem as its capital. "We are ready to open dialogue with our Israeli neighbors to build confidence and create a real opportunity for peace," he said.

Separation wall

Security was tight for Trump's journey to Bethlehem, a 20-minute drive from Jerusalem but located across Israel's separation wall. The wall is part of a project begun in 2002 during the second Palestinian intifada, or uprising, that is to extend some 700 kilometers once completed. It

is a stark symbol for Palestinians of Israel's 50-year occupation of the West Bank, and in Bethlehem the wall has been covered with graffiti and street art.

Bethlehem also holds deep significance as the site where Christians believe Jesus was born and welcomes thousands of pilgrims each year for Christmas. A banner hung in the city said "the city of peace welcomes the man of peace" along with photos of Abbas and Trump. Their talks came with hundreds of Palestinians in Israeli jails on hunger strike since April 17, which Abbas referred to in his remarks after meeting Trump.

On Monday, Palestinians also held a general strike in support of the prisoners. Clashes broke out near a checkpoint between Jerusalem and Ramallah involving several hundred stone-

Disputed Jerusalem

During his election campaign, Trump also advocated breaking with decades of precedent and moving the American embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, alarming Palestinians. He has since said the move was still being looked at. At the same time, he urged Israel to hold back on settlement building in the West Bank, a longstanding concern of Palestinians and much of the world. The most high-profile moment of Trump's stay in Jerusalem was his visit to the Western Wall, one of the holiest sites in Judaism.

He became the first sitting US president to visit the site in the Israeli-annexed east of the city. He was not accompanied by any Israeli leaders during the visit. Allowing them to do so



JERUSALEM: US President Donald Trump, left, walks alongside Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as he arrives to deliver a speech at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem yesterday.—AFP

throwing youths and Israeli soldiers who responded with rubber bullets and tear gas, leaving at least one wounded. On Monday night in the Gaza Strip, the Palestinian enclave run by Abbas's rivals Hamas, the Islamist movement organized a demonstration to denounce its labeling as a "terrorist" group by many Western governments, including the United States.

Trump and Abbas met earlier this month at the White House. Trump initially sparked deep concern among Palestinians when he backed away from the long US commitment to a two-state solution to the conflict. Meeting Netanyahu in Washington in February, he said he would support a single state if it led to peace, delighting Israeli right-wingers who want to see most of the West Bank annexed.

could have led to accusations that Washington was implicitly recognizing Israel's unilateral claim of sovereignty over the site, which would break with years of US and international precedent. The status of Jerusalem is ultra-sensitive and has been among the most difficult issues in Israeli-Palestinian peace talks, stalled since April 2014. Israel occupied the West Bank, including east Jerusalem, in the Six-Day War of 1967. It later annexed east Jerusalem in a move never recognized by the international community and claims the entire city as its capital. The Palestinians see east Jerusalem as the capital of their future state. After Israel and the Palestinian territories, Trump will head to the Vatican, and to Brussels and Italy for NATO and G7 meetings.—AFP

DOZENS OF BIAFRA SECESSIONIST PROTESTERS ARRESTED IN NIGERIA

ONITSHA, Nigeria: Nigeria arrested 55 members of a Biafran separatist movement on Monday during protests in the oil-rich southeast, police said. Secessionist sentiment simmered in the region since the Biafra separatist rebellion tipped the country into a 1967-70 civil war that killed an estimated 1 million people. In Enugu, a major city in the southeast, 41 members of a Biafra group were arrested, police spokesman Ebere Amarazu said.

"They were not violent per se but they conducted themselves in a manner that could breach the peace," he said. "They are still in custody and undergoing interrogation." In Bayelsa state, part of the Niger Delta, 14 Biafra movement members who had been trying to join a protest were arrested, said a police source.

Nnamdi Kanu, leader of the Indigenous People of Biafra campaign group, was released on bail on Friday after being detained for nearly two years. He has been charged with criminal conspiracy and belonging to an illegal society.—Reuters

CONDOLENCE



(Mr. M. Mathews)

KTMCC (Kuwait Town Malayalee Christian Congregation) expresses its heartfelt Condolences on the Demise of our beloved Mr. M. Mathews (Toyota Sunnychayan, 81 years).

Time to pay last respect in Kuwait will be on Wednesday 24th May 2017 between 11am to 12 pm at National Evangelical Church of Kuwait.

Funeral Service will be held at his hometown in Kumbanadu, Kerala, at 10 am on Friday 26th May 2017.

MANCHESTER TERROR ATTACK



NEW YORK: Members of the United Nations Security Council observe a moment of silence for the victims of the terrorist attack in Manchester, England, before a meeting at UN headquarters, yesterday. — AP/AFP photos



MANCHESTER: Police officers add to the flowers for the victims of Monday night pop concert explosion, in St Ann's Square yesterday.

BLOOD, HORROR AS SUICIDE BOMBER STRIKES

MANCHESTER: Teenage fans' screams have been part of the pop music soundtrack ever since The Beatles. But on this night, after an Ariana Grande concert of high-spirited fun, they became screams of sheer terror. An apparent suicide bomber detonated his explosives as the American singer wrapped up her show Monday night in Manchester for thousands of her so-called Arianators, the name adopted by fans of her high-energy candy pop. The attacker, who was killed in the blast, targeted a largely young crowd, many of them teenagers and tweens.

Police said children were among the 22 concert-goers killed. About 60 others were wounded. Witness spoke of metal nuts and bolts strewn

across the blast site, suggesting the attacker may have packed his explosive device with shrapnel - a gruesome tactic to maximize casualties that was also used by suicide bombers in the Paris attacks that killed 130 people in 2015 and repeatedly in the Middle East and elsewhere. Fans, many clutching pink plastic balloons, scrambled in panic for exits of the 21,000-capacity Manchester Arena. Some half-climbed, half-tumbled over barriers in terror.

Parents, who were waiting outside to pick up their children at the end of the show, waded into the fleeing crowds desperately hunting for loved ones. Those with no news from those inside amid the mayhem took to social media, appeal-

ing for help. The hashtag #MissingInManchester became a cry for assistance on Twitter, as family and friends hunted for loved ones. "I've called the hospitals. I've called all the places, the hotels where people said that children have been taken and I've called the police," tearful mother Charlotte Campbell told ITV television's Good Morning Britain breakfast show, as she waited at home, hoping that her 15-year-old daughter Olivia would walk through the door or call.

Olivia attended the show with a school friend who was found and being treated in a hospital. "She's not turned up," the mother said. "We can't get through to her." In targeting Manchester, the attacker also struck at one of Britain's cultural hearts. The once gritty industrial city, with London and Liverpool, has been one of the main cultural influences on modern Britain, with its iconic Manchester United soccer team, its cross-city rival Manchester City and chart-toppers Oasis, The Smiths and other globally famous bands. Oasis singer Liam Gallagher tweeted that he is "in total shock and absolutely devastated."

Former Manchester United soccer star David Beckham posted on Facebook: "As a father and a human what has happened truly saddens me. My thoughts are with all of those that have been affected by this tragedy." Hayley Lunt took her 10-year-old daughter Abigail to the show. It was her first concert. The blast, "what sounded like gunshots: 'bang, bang,'" came just as Grande left the stage: "It was almost like they waited for her to go," the mother said. "Then we just heard lots of people screaming, and we just ran," she said. "What should have been a superb evening is now just horrible." Grande was physically unhurt, but described herself as "broken."

"From the bottom of my heart, I am so, so sorry. I don't have words," she said on Twitter. Concert-goer Bethany Keeling said: "There was debris everywhere." "Everyone ran back up the stairs and we eventually got out and they told us to run. We ran out of the arena and there were bodies on the floor," said the 21-year-old from Keighley in northern England. "It was terrifying." Shaun Hunter was with his daughters, Eva, 10, and Ruby, 12, who were wearing kitten ears like the star of the show, when the house lights went on. He called the rush of concert-goers after the explosion "a stampede."

"I saw one bloke carrying his daughter. She was bleeding," Hunter told The Times of London. Andy Holey, who went to the arena to pick up his family, said the blast threw him around 30 feet through a set of doors. "When I got up and looked around there was about 30 people scattered everywhere, some of them looked dead, they might have been unconscious but there was a lot of fatalities," he said.

Elena Semino and her husband were waiting by the arena ticket office for her daughter when the explosion went off. "My husband and I were standing against the wall, luckily, and all of a sudden there was this thing," she told The Guardian. "I can't even describe it. There was this heat on my neck and when I looked up there were bodies everywhere." Despite wounds to her neck and a leg, Semino dashed into the auditorium in search of her daughter while her husband, who had only a minor injury, stayed behind to help an injured woman. She found her daughter Natalie, 17, and her friends safe.—AP

ENTERTAINMENT VENUES INCREASINGLY UNDER ATTACK

PARIS: Concert halls and clubs have become prime terror targets in the past 15 years, with the latest attack coming late Monday in Manchester. Here is a recap of the main attacks:

Manchester concert

On May 22, a powerful blast kills at least 22 people and wounds 59 at the 21,000-capacity Manchester Arena after a concert by US singer Ariana Grande. The suicide attack is deadliest in Britain in 12 years, and causes screaming fans, many of them teenagers, to flee in panic.

Carnage in Istanbul

Shortly after Turkey rings in 2017, a gunman bursts into the exclusive Reina nightclub, spraying partygoers with bullets and killing 39, mostly foreigners. Another 65 people are wounded at the venue which was packed with more than 700 people, some of whom jump into the freezing waters of the Bosphorus to escape. The gunman manages to flee the scene, with the bloodshed claimed by the Islamic State group, citing Turkey's military intervention against IS in Syria.

Florida gay club massacre

On June 12, 2016, a gunman opens fire inside Pulse, a gay nightclub in Orlando, killing 49 people and wounding more than 50 in the deadliest mass shooting in modern US history. Armed with an assault rifle and a pistol, shooter Omar Mateen, a 29-year-old American of Afghan descent, holds police at bay for three hours until they storm the building, killing him. US authorities say Mateen claimed to be an "Islamic soldier" who had pledged allegiance to IS, with the extremist group later identifying him as one of its militants.

'Dante's inferno' at the Bataclan

On November 13, 2015, three armed men

wearing explosive belts storm the Bataclan concert hall in Paris, killing 90 people during a gig by US rock group Eagles of Death Metal. One attacker is killed by a police officer, while the other two detonate their explosive belts as security forces storm the building. Survivors are forced to climb over the bodies of the dead to escape, with one police officer describing it as "Dante's Inferno." At the same time, other gunmen open fire on bars and restaurants in the city while others blow themselves up outside the Stade de France stadium. Claimed by IS, the attacks kill 130 people and wound another 350 in the worst-ever terror attacks on French soil.

Moscow rock concert

On July 5, 2003, a double suicide attack during a rock concert at the Tushino airfield near Moscow kills 15 people and wounds around 50. Two women identified by Russia as Chechen separatists mixed with around 20,000 fans who had come to hear some of Russia's top bands at the annual Krylya (Wings) festival. Almost a year earlier on October 23-26, 2002, Chechen rebels disrupt a musical in Moscow and take more than 912 people hostage. Russian special forces storm the theatre after injecting gas to subdue the gunmen and when the smoke clears, 130 hostages are dead, almost all of them because of the gas.

Bali nightclub bombings

On October 12, 2002, the Sari Club and Paddy's Bar in Bali are hit by a car bomb. Both are filled with foreign tourists who have come to enjoy the nightlife in Kuta, the biggest resort on the island, and 202 people, mostly tourists, are killed. Among the victims are 88 Australians, 38 Indonesians, 22 Britons and seven US citizens. The attack is attributed to the Jemaah Islamiyah, a south-east Asian network linked to Al-Qaeda. — AFP



MANCHESTER: Retail staff hug each other after being evacuated from the Arndale Centre shopping mall in Manchester, northwest England yesterday following a security alert the day after a deadly terror attack at the Manchester Arena.



MANCHESTER: Concert goers wait to be picked up at the scene of a suspected terrorist attack during a pop concert by US star Ariana Grande in Manchester, northwest England yesterday.



MANCHESTER: A girl wearing a T-shirt of US singer Ariana Grande carrying balloons from the Ariana Grande concert at the Manchester Arena leaves a hotel in Manchester, northwest England yesterday following a deadly terror attack at the concert at the Manchester Arena the night before.

ANGUISHED SEARCH BY FAMILIES

MANCHESTER: Parents were searching desperately yesterday for children caught up in the attack on a pop concert in the British city of Manchester, after police confirmed youngsters were among the 22 victims. Screaming fans fled the venue after the bomb blast at the end of a concert by US star Ariana Grande, who is popular among teens and pre-teens. Charlotte Campbell called hospitals, police and set up an appeal on social media before calling radio and television networks to try to find her 15-year-old daughter Olivia.

"She was with her friend Adam-Adam was found about half an hour ago, he's in hospital but Olivia has not been found yet," she told BBC radio. "Her dad is actually in Manchester looking for her. I've got friends out looking for her, I've got people I don't even know out looking for her. 'I'm just

hearing nothing-her phone's dead.' Two hotels near the Manchester Arena venue took in stranded children while residents opened their doors to stranded concert-goers after trains were cancelled.

A support centre was also set up at football club Manchester City's Etihad Stadium across the road. Many people took to social media to find their loved ones, including Dawn Finnigan, who sought help to locate her friend's 17-year-old daughter Chloe and her boyfriend Liam. "They left just before Ariana Grande's last song, according to someone behind them," she tweeted. Another Twitter user, Lauren Dale, posted: "My mum's friend Alison Howe and her friend are still missing from the MEN (Manchester Arena) attack last night. Please contact me if you hear anything." — AFP

INDIAN ARMY COMMENDS KASHMIR 'HUMAN SHIELD' OFFICER

NEW DELHI: India's army said yesterday it has commended an officer accused of tying a Kashmiri man to a jeep and using him as a human shield, sparking outrage from rights activists. Video footage showing Farooq Ahmad Dar bound to the front of an army jeep as it led a convoy in Indian-administered Kashmir caused a public outcry in the restive Himalayan region when it went viral last month. The incident came at a time of heightened tensions in the divided region, one of the world's most heavily militarized spots, where anti-India sentiment runs deep.

The army said Leetul Gogoi, who is still under investigation for the jeep incident, had been given

the award last week for his efforts in counter-insurgency. "This has been given to Major Leetul Gogoi, who has been deployed in counter-insurgency operations for more than one year," army spokesman Aman Anand said by phone. "It has been given for his sustained efforts over a period of time." The spokesman refused to address the ongoing investigation.

But an army source who asked not to be named said the probe was being finalized, adding, "Whatever indicators are emerging have been taken in consideration as well." Kashmiri human rights activist Khurram Khurram Parvez said the award showed India could behave with "absolute impunity"

in the region, where stone-throwing protesters regularly clash with troops and police. "This reward means India upholds torture as a means of saving lives and as a part of its counter-insurgency war in Kashmir," he said. "This is a signal to people in Kashmir that India can do anything here with absolute impunity."

Dar, who works as a weaver, has repeatedly said he had no involvement in anti-government protests and does not know why he was singled out. His brother Ghulam Qadir called the investigation a "mockery." "Had this kind of an incident taken place elsewhere then justice would have been done," the Indian Express daily quoted Qadir as saying.

Kashmir has been divided between India and Pakistan since the end of British rule in 1947 but both claim the territory in its entirety.

An armed insurgency has significantly weakened since its peak in the 1990s, but over the last year there has been an upsurge in civilian protests against Indian rule. Last year more than 100 people died and thousands were injured in clashes between protesters and government forces, the worst violence to hit the Himalayan region since 2010. In April, eight people were killed by police and paramilitaries during local election violence, and since then students in Indian Kashmir have held regular and at times violent protests. —AFP



NEPAL: In this file photo, Mt Everest is seen from the way to Kalapatthar in Nepal. —AP

NEPALI CLIMBERS SAY OUTCROP NEAR TOP OF EVEREST IS INTACT

KATHMANDU: Nepali climbers said yesterday that a rocky outcrop near the top of Mount Everest known as the "Hillary Step" is intact, disputing a British climber's claim the feature had collapsed. British mountaineer Tim Mosedale, who last week reached the summit of the world's highest mountain, said the outcrop had disappeared, likely because of a massive earthquake that shook Nepal in 2015. Mosedale posted on Facebook that there had been speculation last year but heavy snowfall meant the collapse couldn't be confirmed then.

"This year, however, I can report that the chunk of rock named 'The Hillary Step' is definitely not there anymore," he said. The Hillary Step is a sheer 12-meter vertical wall that is the last highly difficult section climbers must pass before reaching the summit. It is named after Sir Edmund Hillary, who made the first successful ascent of Everest with Nepalese Sherpa Tenzing Norgay in 1953. Nepal Mountaineering Association President Ang Tsering said the Hillary Step is "intact, except that there's lots more snow on it so the rock portion is not easily visible."

Nepali climber Lila Basnet, who was among the first group of climbers to reach the summit during this year's spring climbing season, said the feature appeared unchanged. "It appears there was much more snow in the area but we found nothing wrong with the Hillary Step. This is the fifth time I have climbed Everest and it all appears good," said Basnet, who runs a mountaineering expedition agency in Kathmandu.

A frequent Everest climber, Pasang Tenzing Sherpa, appeared to solve the mystery by saying that he and other lead

climbers who opened up the route to the summit in 2016, a year after the quake, had moved the route to go around the Hillary Step for safety reasons. "Last year I was the coordinator of the team that opened up the route to the summit. Since there were no climbers on the mountain in two years, it appeared like a new mountain with lots of snow," Pasang said yesterday.

"I did not see any marking of the older route. For safety reasons in the Hillary Step, I changed the route a little to the right," said Pasang, who has scaled Everest 11 times.

"We decided to follow the ridge rather than traverse or cutting through the section. That is why people are confused. There is a lot of snow and the rock is buried under the snow," he said. Pasang said the route was moved about 5 to 8 meters to the right of Hillary Step. He said Hillary Step was still there when he climbed the mountain last week.

Dinesh Bhattarai, head of the country's department of tourism, appeared to agree with the climbers. "There has been no official confirmation of reports that Hillary Step is not there anymore," Bhattarai said. "We will have a clearer picture once the climbers return." Mosedale stood by his account, telling AP that Hillary Step is "simply not there." He said its collapse would make the ascent to the summit much more dangerous. "This year and last year a snow ridge formed which we were able to ascend with relative ease. But in future years, if the ridge doesn't form, it could be a particularly difficult area to negotiate," he said in an email. "The loose debris - comprising some rocks that look to be precariously perched and ready to slide - could be very hazardous indeed," Mosedale said. —AP

MILITANT ATTACK ON AFGHAN ARMY BASE KILLS 10 SOLDIERS

ATTACK MARKS SETBACK FOR NATO-BACKED AFGHAN FORCES

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan: At least 10 Afghan soldiers were killed when militants attacked their army base in the southern province of Kandahar, the defense ministry said yesterday, in the latest attack on Western-backed forces. The assault in Shah Wali Kot district late Monday came just a day after 20 Afghan policemen were killed when Taliban fighters stormed their outposts in the neighboring province of Zabul.

No group has so far claimed responsibility for the Kandahar attack, but it comes as Taliban insurgents intensify their annual spring offensive and their strength is growing, more than 15 years after they were toppled from power in a US-led invasion. "Last night the enemies of Afghanistan attacked Achakzai camp of army corps 205 in Shah Wali Kot district," the defense ministry said in a statement, without identifying the attackers. "Ten brave army soldiers were martyred and nine others wounded. The wounded soldiers were taken to hospital and they are in stable condition."

The attack marks another setback for NATO-backed Afghan forces. It comes just a month after the Taliban killed at least 135 soldiers in the northern province of Balkh in the deadliest insurgent attack on an Afghan military base since 2001. During the Zabul attack early Sunday, local officials made desperate calls to Afghan television stations to seek attention because they were unable to contact senior authorities for help, highlighting the disarray in security ranks.

As of February only about 60 percent of Afghanistan's 407 districts were reported to be under government control, with the authorities in Kabul struggling to counter the ascendant Taliban, according to the US watchdog agency SIGAR. The battlefield losses have raised concerns about the capacity of Afghan forces, beset by unprecedented casualties and blamed for corruption, desertion and "ghost soldiers" who exist on the payroll but whose salaries are usurped by fraudulent commanders.

Even the fortified Afghan capital is gripped

by insecurity. Gunmen stormed an international guest house late Saturday that left a German aid worker and an Afghan guard dead and a Finnish woman kidnapped. Kabul police said they were investigating the incident as a "terrorist" attack, suggesting that the Taliban may have been behind it, but there has so far been no claim of responsibility. The Taliban launched their annual "spring offensive" in late April, heralding a surge in fighting as the US tries to craft a new Afghan strategy.

US Defense Secretary Jim Mattis last month warned of "another tough year" for security forces in Afghanistan. US President Donald Trump is considering sending thousands more troops to break the stalemate against the resurgent militants. US troops in Afghanistan number about 8,400 today, and there are another 5,000 from NATO allies, who serve mainly in a training and advisory capacity. The troop strengths are a far cry from the US presence of more than 100,000 six years ago. —AFP

INDONESIAN MEN CANED FOR GAY SEX BEFORE JEERING CROWD

BANDA ACEH, Indonesia: Two Indonesian men were caned yesterday in front of a jeering crowd as a punishment for gay sex, in a first for the Muslim-majority country where there is mounting hostility towards the small LGBT community. The pair received 83 strokes of the cane each after being found guilty of breaking sharia rules in conservative Aceh province, the only part of Indonesia that implements Islamic law.

The men, aged 20 and 23, were led onto a raised stage outside a mosque in front of a crowd of thousands, who jeered and booed loudly. The pair, whose identities have not been revealed, were dressed in white robes and bowed their heads as they were whipped by officials wearing brown cloaks and masks with eye slits. One of the men grimaced occasionally and the other showed little emotion. Before the caning, Abdul Gani Isa, a member of the Acehneses clerics' council, told the crowd the caning was "a lesson for the public."

"Lessons carried out with our sharia law are conducted in a very thoughtful way, are educational and do not violate human rights," he said. Their sentences, which were carried out in the provincial capital Banda Aceh, were reduced by two strokes of the cane due to time already served in detention. The gay men were caught together in March by vigilantes who burst into the house where they were staying. Shaky phone footage of the raid that circulated online showed the vigilantes kicking, slapping and insulting the men, with one of them slumped naked on the ground during the attack.

Anti-gay sentiment

Public caning has long been common for offences such as gambling and drinking in Aceh, which was given the right to implement sharia law in 2001 as part of a deal with the central government aimed at ending an insurgency. The punishment is carried out with thin rattan canes, with people still clothed while the strokes are



INDONESIA: One of two Indonesian men is publicly caned for having sex, in a first for the Muslim-majority country where there are concerns over mounting hostility towards the small gay community, in Banda Aceh yesterday. — AFP

delivered. It causes pain but does not normally inflict permanent damage, and the canings are as much about public humiliation as hurting those guilty of breaking sharia law.

Yesterday's caning was the first time such a punishment has been meted out for gay sex since a sharia regulation came into force two years ago banning the practice. Eight other men and women were publicly caned on the same day after being found guilty of breaking sharia laws. Gay sex is not illegal elsewhere in Indonesia, which has the world's biggest Muslim population. While rights groups have repeatedly expressed alarm over the strengthening of

sharia law in Aceh, many of those living in the staunchly Islamic province support the rules.

Zubaidah, a 20-year-old female college student who watched the couple being punished, said it was the first time she had witnessed a caning. "I wanted to watch it so it could serve as a lesson for me not to commit any act that violates Islamic teaching," said the student, who like many Indonesians goes by one name. "Homosexuality is a curable disease, it is very forbidden in Islam." Amnesty International was among groups that had urged authorities not to flog the men, decrying the use of caning as a "cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment". —AFP



SRINAGAR: A masked Kashmiri student protester throws stones at Indian policemen in Srinagar, Kashmir. — AP

INDIGENOUS INDIANS TO BURY DEAD MONTHS AFTER LAND RIGHTS CLASHES

MUMBAI: Indigenous activists will bury the bodies of eight fellow protesters killed 18 months ago in clashes in northeastern India after the government agreed to consult the tribes on laws impacting their land rights. Violent protests erupted in Manipur state on Aug 31, 2015, after the state government introduced three bills - including a land revenue and reforms bill - that indigenous people said were "anti-tribal" and infringing on their ownership rights.

Officials said the laws would regularize the sale and transfer of land. Nine young men were killed in Churachandpur town in ensuing clashes. The indigenous protesters refused to bury the dead until a resolution was reached on the issue. The bodies have remained in a hospital morgue since then, with one man's body claimed by his family and buried, according to local media reports.

India's president rejected one of the bills last year, while the two others - including the land reform bill - were sent back to the state for revisions. Officials this month agreed to consult tribal groups on the two bills. "Any new bill which affects the interests of the indigenous tribal people, the state government will follow due procedure as laid down in the constitution," said a govern-

ment statement. In response, the indigenous people agreed to reclaim the bodies by May 25.

"The family members will collect the bodies from the morgue ... and then decide on a date for a mass community burial after completing rituals," said Soso Samte, a protest leader. Indigenous people, who make up more than a third of Manipur's population and live in the state's hills, have traditionally been governed by customary law. Tribal councils control land and determine its sale and transfer within the community. The 2015 bill would have given the state control of tribal land and allowed people from outside the indigenous community access to their land as well, protesters say.

"The wording of the bill was ambiguous and could have made tribal people more vulnerable, but clearly land is needed more and more for building highways and dams," said Walter Fernandes, a senior fellow at the North Eastern Social Research Centre in Guwahati, the largest city in northeastern India. "Customary laws have ensured protection of tribal land, but not its development. The opposing groups must understand land as being essential to identity and employment, without interfering with ownership," he said. — Reuters

TRUMP PUSHES FOR MIDEAST PEACE

Continued from Page 1

The visit follows an initial leg in Saudi Arabia, where he urged Islamic leaders to confront extremism.

Abbas had sought to convince the unpredictable US president to remain committed to an independent Palestinian state. Trump arrived in Bethlehem by motorcade, crossing a checkpoint at Israel's controversial separation wall, and was greeted by Abbas and other dignitaries outside the city's presidential palace. Abbas reiterated his call for a two-state solution to the conflict, including a Palestinian state with east Jerusalem as its capital. "We are ready to open dialogue with our Israeli neighbors to build confidence and create a real opportunity for peace," he said after talks with Trump.

The US president used the occasion to also condemn

the "evil losers" behind a bomb blast at a pop concert in the British city of Manchester that killed 22 people. The talks came with hundreds of Palestinians in Israeli jails on hunger strike since April 17, which Abbas referred to in his remarks after meeting Trump. Palestinians staged a general strike Monday in support of the prisoners. Clashes broke out near a checkpoint between Jerusalem and Ramallah involving several hundred stone-throwing youths and Israeli soldiers who responded with rubber bullets and tear gas, leaving at least one wounded.

Trump will meet Pope Francis, with whom he has clashed repeatedly, today morning at the Vatican. He travels on to Brussels in the afternoon before flying back to Italy late tomorrow for a G7 summit on Friday and Saturday. — Agencies

POLICE NAME SUSPECT AFTER 22 KILLED...

Continued from Page 1

doors to shelter people lost in the confusion, and taxi drivers offered free rides. "There were fathers carrying their little girls in tears. People were pushing down the stairs. It was just... chaos," Sebastian Diaz, a 19-year-old from Newcastle, told AFP.

Britain's worst terror bloodshed for more than a decade came just over two weeks before the country votes in a general election, and after a series of deadly attacks across Europe. Police staged an armed raid on a Manchester address believed to be linked to Abedi, carrying out a controlled explosion to gain entry after arresting a 23-year-old man earlier yesterday in connection with the attack.

"A single terrorist detonated his improvised explosive device near one of the exits of the venue, deliberately choosing the time and place to cause maximum carnage and to kill and injure indiscriminately," May said after an emergency ministerial meeting. She said during a visit to Manchester that police would look at the security of such venues, while the government would also review police resources. But while campaigning for the June 8 election was suspended by the main parties after the attack, she insisted: "The terrorists will not prevail."

Screaming fans, many of them teenagers, fled the 21,000-capacity Manchester Arena in panic after the explosion at the end of the performance by the 23-year-old Grande, a former child television star who described herself as "broken" by the attack. US President Donald Trump and European leaders issued vows of defiance and stars from the worlds of music and football such as former Manchester United player David Beckham expressed their condolences.

Eight-year-old Saffie Rose Roussos and a teenager, Georgina Callander, were among the first of the 22 victims to be confirmed. Another 59 people were taken to hospital, many with life-threatening conditions. Police

said the blast occurred in the foyer of the arena, a covered area which links the auditorium to Victoria Station, a train and tram hub. Witnesses reported seeing bodies on the floor after the blast around 10:30 pm (2130 GMT) on Monday, and some fans were trampled as panicked crowds tried to flee the venue.

Families were separated, with dozens of young people taken to nearby hotels overnight, and some parents were still desperately searching for their children yesterday. "I'm just hearing nothing - her phone's dead," Charlotte Campbell, whose 15-year-old daughter Olivia was at the concert, told BBC radio. The attack was the deadliest in Britain since July 7, 2005 when four suicide bombers inspired by Al-Qaeda attacked London's transport system during rush hour, killing 52 people and wounding 700 more.

Queen Elizabeth II condemned the Manchester attack as an "act of barbarity" and observed a minute's silence at a Buckingham Palace garden reception. Trump said during a visit to Bethlehem: "So many young, beautiful, innocent people living and enjoying their lives murdered by evil losers." The Eiffel Tower's lights were to be turned off at midnight yesterday in homage to the victims, while the Cannes film festival also observed a minute's silence.

Britain's national terror threat level has been "severe", the second-highest of five levels meaning an attack is highly likely, since August 2014, and May said this would remain unchanged, but under review. In a city famed globally for its musical traditions and football teams, showbusiness stars and teams joined in to express their shock at the carnage. "We are deeply shocked by last night's terrible events," said Manchester United. A support center for people caught up in the attack was set up at the Etihad Stadium, the home of their rivals Manchester City. Britain's third biggest city was hit in 1996 by a massive car bomb planted at a shopping center by Irish Republican Army paramilitaries which wounded more than 200 people. — Agencies

ETHIOPIA'S TEDROS ELECTED FIRST AFRICAN...

Continued from Page 1

leadership. We need to be sure it is up to the task," he told the Swiss Press Club. Tedros vowed to lead "robust responses to the health crises to come".

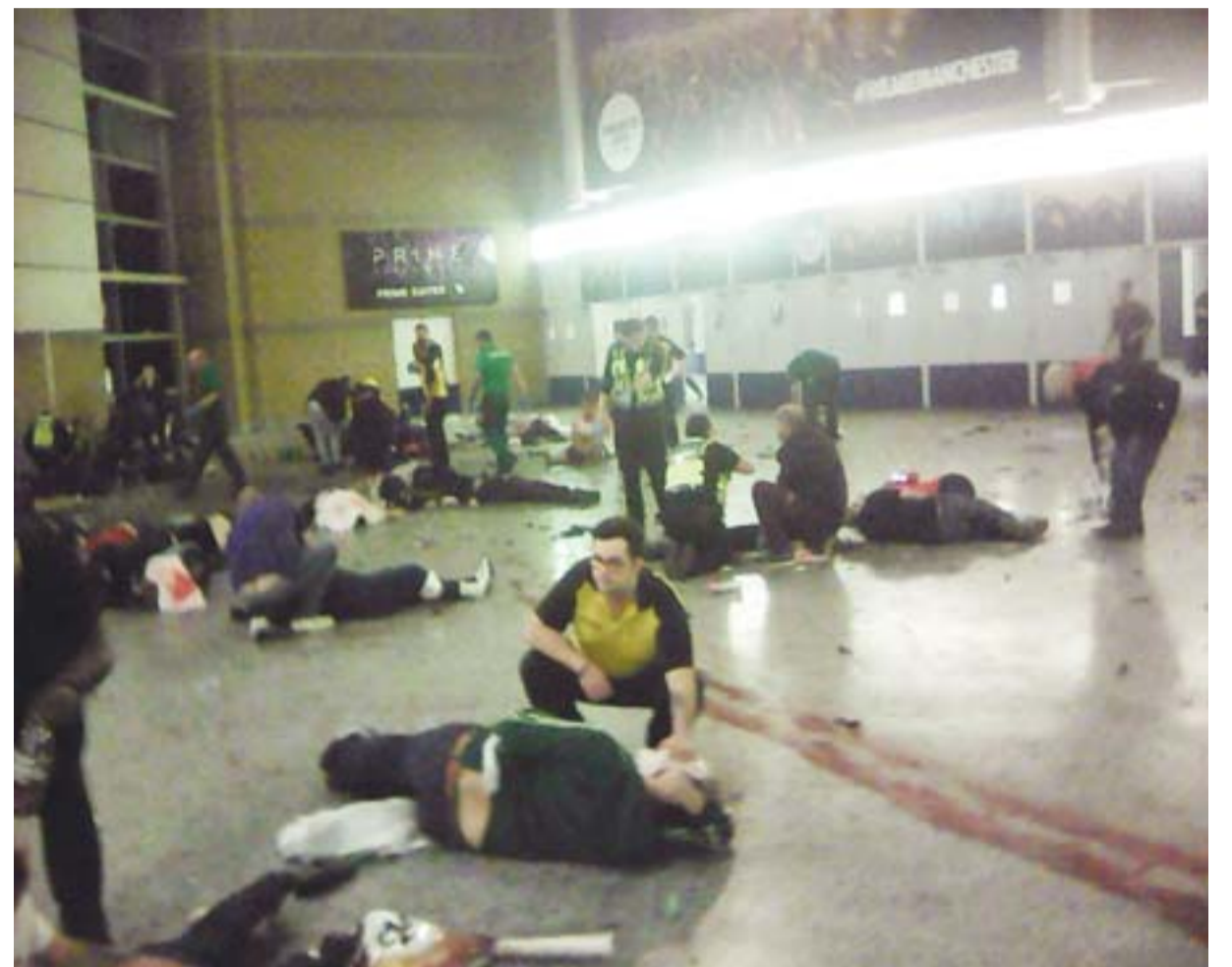
Tedros will be the first African to lead the WHO and had unanimous backing from the African Union, which claimed that the continent deserved a shot to lead the agency. Nabarro, who had strong support from his native Britain and touted his decades of experience within the UN system, ultimately failed to persuade voters that the agency needed an insider in its top job. Nishtar, a former Pakistani health minister, won praise for a strong campaign but was always viewed a long shot.

Yesterday marked the first time that the WHO's 194-member states got to choose the agency's leader. Previously the executive committee offered just one candidate for states to rubberstamp. The WHO has already initiated a range of reforms since it faced crush-

ing criticism over its response to the Ebola crisis, but experts say the new chief still faces a huge task. "We need WHO to be more effective than it is today," the director of Harvard University's Global Health Institute, Ashish Jha, said at the Swiss Press Club event.

Mark Dybul, who heads the Global Fund To Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, said that Chan had "laid the foundations" for improvements but that "big, big changes need to be made". He underscored "massive" coordination problems between regional offices and the agency's Geneva headquarters. This was identified as a significant issue in the Ebola crisis, when the African office in Brazzaville was accused of not sounding the alarm.

Tedros earned a doctorate from the University of Nottingham in Britain before being appointed Ethiopia's health minister in 2005. He oversaw a drive to expand basic healthcare by building thousands of new clinics and boosting community-based health services. "I am astonished when I think of the path my life has taken," he said before yesterday's result. — AFP



MANCHESTER: Helpers attend to injured people inside Manchester Arena after a blast late Monday.— AP

Premier Brands

To see your ad here, call:
+965 248 35 616 / 617
 E MAIL: info@kuwaittimes.net
 ads@kuwaittimes.net
 Website: www.kuwaittimes.net

Great Saving Offer

Buy and Fly

Buy Now .. Pay Later

Panasonic
F-56TZ5VBTJXH
FAN CEILING

56"

11

الآن

16

قبل

4

الآن

4

قبل

• 56"
• 3 Blades
• Base Same Colour Available

Panasonic
F-30SCZNBGSLH
STAND FAN

12"

25

الآن

29

قبل

4

الآن

4

قبل

• 12" Stand Fan
• 3 Speed Choice
& Oscillation
• 8-hour electronic timer

Panasonic
F-407YNBNHG
STAND FAN

16"

21

الآن

500

قبل

• 3 speed and off electronic control switch
• Double oscillation and freely adjustable neck
• Height adjustment: 127cm - 152 cm
• Metal blade
• 40 cm (16 inch)

Shop Online www.best.com.kw Free Delivery

1809 809

بست
AL-YOUSIFI

• Kuwait 1 (the New str.) • Kuwait 2 (Panasonic Tower) • Hawalli 1 (Tunis str.) • Hawalli 2 (Bin Khalidn str.) • Shuwaikh (4th Ring road) • Al-Rai (4th Ring road)

• Salmiya (Salem Al-Mubarak str.) • Farwaniya (Behind police Station) • Fahaheel (Opp. General Parking) • Jahra (Opp. Main Co-op.) • Airport (Departure Hall)

• Kuwait 1 (the New str.) • Kuwait 2 (Panasonic Tower) • Hawalli 1 (Tunis str.) • Hawalli 2 (Bin Khalidn str.) • Shuwaikh (4th Ring road) • Al-Rai (4th Ring road)

• Salmiya (Salem Al-Mubarak str.) • Farwaniya (Behind police Station) • Fahaheel (Opp. General Parking) • Jahra (Opp. Main Co-op.) • Airport (Departure Hall)

PEUGEOT COMMERCIAL VEHICLES .. FOR UNEXPECTED PROFITS

2760 mm

6363 mm

2050 mm

1890 mm

4959 mm

1920 mm

1805 mm

4628 mm

1810 mm

MOTION & EMOTION

الشركة الكويتية لاستيراد السيارات ذ.م.م
Kuwait Automotive Imports Co. WLL

Working Hours: From Saturday - Thursday
From: 9:00 am - 9:00 pm

Call:
6902 4458 - 6902 4472

www.kalco.net
info@kalco.net
fleet@kalco.net

Kuwait Times

THE LEADING INDEPENDENT
DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF
ESTABLISHED 1961

Founder and Publisher
YOUSUF S. AL-ALYAN

Editor-in-Chief
ABD AL-RAHMAN AL-ALYAN

EDITORIAL : 24833199-24833358-24833432
ADVERTISING : 24835616/7
FAX : 24835620/1
CIRCULATION : 24833199 Extn. 163
ACCOUNTS : 24835619
COMMERCIAL : 24835618
P.O.Box 1301 Safat, 13014 Kuwait.
E MAIL: info@kuwaittimes.net
Website: www.kuwaittimes.net

Focus

IN BOMBARDIER FIGHT, BOEING SEES GHOST OF AIRBUS ASCENT

Two words underpin Boeing's decision to launch a US trade complaint against Bombardier, which plunged it into a row with Canada last week: "Never again". Allegations that the Canadian firm dumped newly designed C-Series passenger jets in the United States at a steep loss have threatened a sale of F/A-18 warplanes to Ottawa, sending Boeing scrambling to save the deal. Some analysts say Boeing carelessly put at risk billions of dollars of defense work or pandered to growing protectionism.

But decades after Boeing failed to prevent European upstart Airbus gaining momentum with early victories in the United States, people familiar with the company say the strategic importance of defending its core passenger jet business outweighs the diplomatic storm. US industry experts say Boeing and other jetmakers at the time did not take the European consortium seriously enough and allowed their future nemesis to poach US airlines from 1978.

Again after the September 2001 attacks in the United States, when Boeing slashed production, Airbus filled the vacuum, building up market share and never looking back. For years Boeing insiders have rued that decision, even while battling Airbus at the World Trade Organization (WTO) over mutual accusations of unfair subsidies. While leading in widebody jets, it has seen the narrowbody market - where the industry makes most cash - slip away as Airbus grabbed some 60 percent of new-generation sales.

Such a significant imbalance in market share poses serious long-term risk to the loser in the Airbus-Boeing duopoly, because it creates a gap in costs that can't easily be bridged. Now, Boeing sees a second rival entering its domestic market with what it sees as low prices and is determined not to underestimate the threat again, people close to the company say. "It's a crucial entry market," said a person familiar with Boeing's strategy in taking on Bombardier. "This is the case Boeing might have brought against Airbus 40 years ago. Not taking action at the start led to consequences."

On the surface, Boeing's case is about the sale of jets to Delta Air Lines at what Boeing claims were unfairly low prices. Bombardier denies Boeing's estimates of both the price and the cost at which it is able to make its new jet, while critics say Boeing accounting rules allow it to disguise weak pricing. While the high-profile deal ignited Boeing's complaint, executives say Boeing's stance reflects a longer-term concern.

Although Bombardier's small narrowbody jet has so far barely scratched Boeing's larger 737 and has suffered a spate of financial problems, the all-new design disturbs a landscape made up mainly by makeovers of existing Airbus and Boeing models. With Airbus still well ahead on narrowbody orders even after a recent lull, Boeing can ill afford to be squeezed on two fronts. Even less so with new players like China arriving. A Boeing spokesman declined to comment.

Precision Trade Weapon

Boeing's response marries strategic worries about its narrowbody position with a legal tactic designed to exploit a vulnerability the C-Series has, but global rival Airbus did not. The 110-130 seat C-Series relies mainly for now on the regional jet market, where North America is by far the largest single component and whose airlines therefore decide its future. That hands Boeing the opportunity to make use of a domestic lawsuit ill-suited to its global confrontation with Airbus, but which if successful could deliver a hammer blow to the C-Series.

Trade sources see a second tactical motive for spurning the WTO and filing the industry's first such domestic US case. US anti-dumping cases typically take a year - versus 13 years and counting in its trench warfare against Airbus. That coincides with first delivery of a C-Series to Delta in April 2018. If Boeing succeeds, the jets could be hit from day one with extra duties, blunting Bombardier's competitiveness more quickly and more directly than normal trade sanctions.

Still, Boeing faces a headache over what to do about lost fighter sales if Canada makes good on a threat to drop a deal for F/A-18 warplanes in retaliation for Boeing's trade claim. With Boeing's future fighter production in jeopardy as sales run dry, Boeing is anxious to keep its presence in that business long enough to compete for tomorrow's military programs. But without stability in its narrowbody jetliner business, Boeing faces an even deeper concern, since this is the cash cow for many of the company's other activities.

Sources say Boeing's defense bosses signed off on bringing the trade case, highlighting the importance attached to the 737. The broader stakes raised by Bombardier's foray into the US market were underscored when China was reported to revive on-off talks to invest in Bombardier. — Reuters

All articles appearing on these pages are the personal opinion of the writers. Kuwait Times takes no responsibility for views expressed therein. Kuwait Times invites readers to voice their opinions. Please send submissions via email to: opinion@kuwait-times.net or via snail mail to PO Box 1301 Safat, Kuwait. The editor reserves the right to edit any submission as necessary.



ATTACK EXPOSES VULNERABILITY OF PUBLIC EVENTS

The suicide attack on a Manchester pop concert has sparked criticism about security, but experts said it highlighted the daunting task authorities face in neutralizing those bent on destruction. Police confirmed yesterday that youngsters were among the 22 victims killed when a suspected lone suicide bomber targeted people leaving a concert by US star Ariana Grande at the Manchester Arena in northern England. The attack raised immediate comparisons with the assault on the Bataclan theatre in Paris in November 2015 that left 90 dead, with concert-goers to Monday's event wondering why they underwent few security checks.

Witness Chris Pawley told Fox News that "I've been to concerts before and sometimes you get patted down, or have to empty your pockets. There was absolutely nothing at this concert tonight, we literally just got our ticket scanned and were straight in." Twitter user "Cellie" wrote: "security is not good at Manchester Arena, no one was checking our bags or jackets," although concert-goer James disputed the

claims to Sky News, saying "bags were checked security was really, really good."

Manchester Arena stressed the incident had taken place "outside the venue in a public place", suggesting that the attacker had exploited a weak point by targeting the venue's foyer area, which connects to the Victoria train and tram station. "Several indicators point to the fact that the attack was meticulously planned, and is likely to have involved more than one individual," said Kit Nicholl, security analyst at IHS Markit. "The positioning of the suicide bomber at the time of detonation, which maximized casualties within an enclosed space while also managing to evade security checks, suggests that a significant amount of planning had gone into the operation," she added.

Escalation in UK terror

By waiting for guests to leave through the security ring before detonating, the attacker had illustrated "the vulnerability of such mass gatherings despite security measures in place at the venues them-

selves," according to Otso Iho from Jane's Terrorism & Insurgency Centre (JTIC). Event organisers like Live Nation, which runs many venues in London, beefed up security following the Bataclan attack, but did not reveal publicly what measures had been taken.

Security providers are also wary of being too overbearing, according to Simon Battersby, director with the Showsec group which lists Manchester Arena as a client. He told the Venue Summit in March that "people want to feel confident but also relaxed" and that "it's important customers feel confident as they're coming in, but we need to do it in a friendly way." If confirmed that the attack took place in a public area, attention will likely shift to the national security services and local police.

The government's Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre (JTAC) provides general guidance by providing sites with a national threat level, which was set at "severe" - meaning an attack was highly likely. The guide helps security providers plan their response, but does not force them to

implement specific measures such as metal detectors. The use of an explosive device marks an escalation from recent attacks in Britain, which have used unsophisticated weapons such as knives and vehicles, with firearms less of a threat given the country's strict laws on gun ownership.

It will be of particular concern given that measures are already in place to prevent bomb-making, according to experts. "It is exceptionally difficult to source the materials necessary to build an improvised explosive device while managing to avoid detection," said Nicholl. "Since the 2005 London bombings, measures have been put in place to restrict the purchase of materials that can be used to make explosives." Security services are also likely to come under pressure after Prime Minister Theresa May said police already knew the attacker's identity.

Authorities believe there are around 2,000 potential terrorists in Britain, with the question of surveillance resources sure to come up as the country prepares to go the polls on June 8. — AFP

TRUMP PUSHES SHARED WORRIES OVER IRAN

As he hopscoches through the Middle East, President Donald Trump is urging Israel and its Arab neighbors to unite around a "common cause": Their deep distrust of Iran. Trump's first trip abroad has highlighted the extent to which strident opposition to Iran now serves as an organizing principle in his efforts to remake America's relationship with the Middle East. He leaned heavily on concerns over Iran's destabilizing activities in the region during his two-day visit to Saudi Arabia, Tehran's long-time foe.

During meetings Monday in Israel, which considers Iran its biggest threat, Trump said Arab nations' own worries about Tehran could ultimately lead to new regional support for a Middle East peace deal. "There is a growing realization among your Arab neighbors that they have common cause with you in the threat posed by Iran," Trump said as he opened talks with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

But it's unclear how thoroughly Trump has thought through what his anti-Iran policy will look like in practice. Will it force him to make good on his promise to unravel President Barack Obama's nuclear agreement with Iran? How will his support for anti-Iran allies in the Middle East square with his relationships with allies that also signed the deal? Does overtly siding with the Saudis over Iran mean the US will automatically take the kingdom's side in proxy Sunni-Shia battles in the Middle East?

Jon Alterman, a senior vice president at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, said Iran's willingness to meddle in the Middle East also requires Trump to consider this: "How do you escape a dynamic whereby Iran keeps doing cheap, asymmetrical things that force you to do expensive things?" When Obama grappled with these questions he landed firmly in the other camp. Obama pushed the Saudis to "share the neighborhood" rather than vie for influence in a destabilizing cycle of proxy conflicts. Pointing to wars in Syria, Iraq and Yemen, he warned that stoking the divisions could ultimately mean forcing the US to intervene.

Telling allies that Iran is the source of problems "would mean that we have to start coming in and using our military power to settle scores. And that would be in the interest neither of the United States nor of the Middle East," Obama told The Atlantic last year, explaining his policy. That approach - and the diplomacy and nuclear accord it spawned - did little to endear Obama to leaders in Israel or Saudi Arabia. Trump appeared to have learned that lesson. On Monday, he was greeted with lavish praise from Netanyahu. "I want you to know how much we appreciate the change in American policy on Iran," the prime minister said.

Yet Trump has yet to bring about the kind of change to America's Iran policy that he promised as a candidate,

when he declared that Obama's nuclear agreement was "the worst deal ever negotiated." He repeatedly promised that if elected, he would withdraw or renegotiate the deal. Four months into Trump's tenure, the nuclear deal is intact. The State Department has informed Congress that Iran is complying with the accord. And last week, the Trump administration extended all of the sanctions relief Iran received as part of the deal.

Hard Line

Trump has taken a hard line on Iran's ballistic missile program as Washington fears it could target American interests in the Middle East. On the same day Trump extended sanctions relief under the nuclear accord, he levied new penalties for the missile program. In Saudi Arabia and Israel, leaders appeared wholly unconcerned by Trump's continuation of the nuclear deal, apparently confident that the president's tough talk will ultimately be backed up with action.

The tensions with Iran that Trump is tapping into on his first foray abroad run deep. Gulf Arab countries long have

been suspicious about Iran, from the United Arab Emirates' long-running dispute over Tehran seizing several Arabian Gulf islands in 1971 to Bahrain's simmering anger over a 1981 coup attempt it blamed on the newly formed Islamic Republic. The Obama administration's nuclear negotiations further fueled Gulf nations' worries about Iran's regional intentions, especially as it backs Shiite militias fighting the Islamic State group in Iraq and supports the government of embattled Syrian President Bashar Assad.

Israel, meanwhile, has long been alarmed by Iranian calls for its destruction, Iran's development of long-range missiles capable of striking Israel and Iran's pursuit of a nuclear program. Netanyahu was among the fiercest critics of the nuclear deal, arguing that it would not prevent Iran from developing a nuclear weapons capability and ignored Tehran's other provocative behavior. Israel is especially concerned about Iran's rising influence across the Middle East, particularly its involvement in the civil war in neighboring Syria. Iran has sent troops and weapons to Syria, and its proxy militia Hezbollah has also sent forces to fight alongside Syrian government troops. — AP



US President Donald Trump (center), Israeli President Reuven Rivlin (left) and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu speak on Trump's arrival at Ben Gurion International Airport in Tel Aviv on Monday as part of his first trip overseas. — AFP

DI MARIA, PASTORE HOMES RAIDED IN PSG TAX PROBE

PARIS: Investigators raided the headquarters of Paris Saint-Germain and the homes of the club's Argentinean stars Angel Di Maria and Javier Pastore yesterday in a tax fraud probe, legal sources said. French prosecutors launched the investigation in December following revelations by the "Football Leaks" website concerning financial transactions and other details involving top football players. Di Maria and Pastore are being investigated in connection with the probe into the use of tax heavens to hide earnings from the marketing of image rights, the sources said. The leaks also targeted Real Madrid's Cristiano Ronaldo and Manchester United's Paul Pogba. The Paris head office of PSG as well as its administrative offices were raided, the source said, confirming a report by French investigative newspaper Mediapart. —AFP

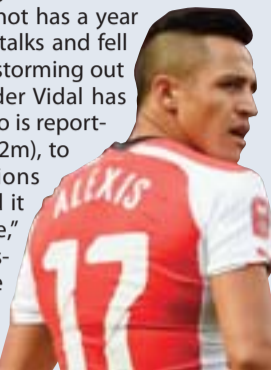


WHITELEY NAMED CAPTAIN FOR MUST-NOT-LOSE SERIES

JOHANNESBURG: Golden Lions No 8 Warren Whiteley was named the new captain of South Africa yesterday ahead of a three-Test series against France in June that coach Allister Coetzee dare not lose. The 15-cap forward won what was effectively a two-man race with another No 8, Duane Vermeulen from French outfit Toulon, to succeed retired Adriaan Strauss. "I am honored and excited," said Whiteley after a 31-man squad was named by South African Rugby president Mark Alexander at a Johannesburg TV studio. Northern Bulls hooker Strauss quit following a calamitous 2016 season in which the Springboks lost eight of 12 Tests—a calendar year record for the team. A nightmare first season in charge for Coetzee included conceding 57 points at home to New Zealand and a first loss to Italy. Amid media speculation that Coetzee will be fired if South Africa lose the France series at home, he chose four foreign-based and eight uncapped players. Vermeulen, Bordeaux prop Steven Kitshoff, Montpellier centre Francois Steyn and Worcester scrum-half Francois Hougaard are the South Africans playing abroad. —AFP

SIGN ARSENAL'S SANCHEZ, BAYERN MUNICH URGED

BERLIN: Arturo Vidal has urged Bayern Munich's bosses to sign his Chile international team-mate Alexis Sanchez from Arsenal after the Gunners missed out on a Champions League place next season. Sanchez scored 24 league goals for the Gunners in 2016/17, but it was not enough to secure Champions League qualification as Arsene Wenger's Arsenal finished fifth in the Premier League. The Chile hot-shot has a year left on his contract, but has stalled on extension talks and fell offside with Gunners' boss Wenger in March after storming out of a training session. Bayern's defensive midfielder Vidal has urged the club to splash out and lure Sanchez, who is reportedly worth around 65 million euros (\$72.9m, 56.2m), to the Bavarian giants, who booked their Champions League berth as German league winners. "I'd find it awesome if he comes, he would fit in well here," Vidal told German daily Bild. "If he wants to measure himself with the best, then he has to come here where the best play," added the self-confident Vidal. —AFP



BALTIMORE: Byron Buxton #25 of the Minnesota Twins steals second base in the sixth inning as the throw gets away from JJ Hardy #2 of the Baltimore Orioles at Oriole Park on May 22, 2017. — AFP

PANIK HOMERS AS GIANTS OVERPOWER CUBS

CHICAGO: Joe Panik hit his first career lead-off homer and doubled twice to help the San Francisco Giants beat the Chicago Cubs 6-4 on Monday. Brandon Belt also connected while Ty Blach (2-2) pitched into the eighth inning in the first meeting between the teams since San Francisco was eliminated by Chicago in the NL Division Series last year. Panik, Belt and Justin Ruggiano each had two RBIs as the Giants won for the eighth time in 10 games. Ruggiano's leadoff drive in the eighth made it 6-0 and gave San Francisco 18 straight solo homers, just three from matching its major league record of 21 set in 2011. The Cubs responded with four in the bottom half on two-run homers by Javier Baez and Ben Zobrist. But the rally stalled from there.

YANKEES 4, ROYALS 2

Didi Gregorius, Brett Gardner and Chris Carter all homered as New York beat Jason Vargas again in defeating Kansas City. A reversed call in the seventh inning kept the Yankees ahead and enabled Michael Pineda (5-2) to top Vargas for the second time in a week. The Royals, with the worst record in the AL, have lost five of seven. Vargas (5-3) began the day with a 2.03 ERA, tied for second-best in the majors. But the lefty fell to 0-7 lifetime against the Yankees when he was tagged by Gardner and Gregorius, the only left-handed

hitters in New York's lineup.

ASTROS 1, TIGERS 0

Brad Peacock and three relievers combined on a one-hitter while Jose Altuve provided the offense with an RBI double as Houston nipped Detroit. Peacock was solid moving out of the bullpen to make a spot start for injured ace Dallas Keuchel. In his first start since September, Peacock allowed the lone hit and struck out eight in 4 1/3 innings. He was lifted after walking Tyler Collins in the fifth. Chris Devenski (3-2) took over and pitched 2 2/3 innings before Will Harris worked the eighth. Ken Giles struck out two in the ninth for his 12th save, allowing the Astros to bounce back after being swept by Cleveland last weekend. Houston struck early against Michael Fulmer (5-2) when George Springer drew a leadoff walk and scored on Altuve's one-out double in the first.

TWINS 14, ORIOLES 7

Max Kepler homered and drove in four runs while Miguel Sano and Jorge Polanco each had a career-high four hits as Minnesota roared back to beat Baltimore. The Twins trailed 5-0 in the second inning and 6-2 entering the fifth before cranking up the offense against Ubaldo Jimenez and an ineffective Orioles bullpen. Tyler Wilson (2-2)

gave up six runs in 1 1/3 innings. A two-run double by Kepler helped the Twins tie the scores in the fifth. Minnesota sent 11 batters to the plate in a six-run sixth and Sano added a two-run homer in the ninth. Joe Mauer had three hits, two RBIs and scored twice for the Twins, who reached season highs in runs and hits (21).

ROCKIES 8, PHILLIES 1

Jeff Hoffman struck out seven and tossed three-hit ball over seven innings to lead Colorado over Philadelphia. Hoffman (2-0) also had his first big league hit and the National League-leading Rockies continued to cruise away from home. They are best in the majors with a 16-7 road record and are 5-2 on this 10-game trip, their longest of the season. Nolan Arenado hit a two-run homer in a four-run ninth after the Rockies scored four times off Phillies starter Jerad Eickhoff (0-5). Charlie Blackmon had a two-run double.

REDS 5, INDIANS 1

Scott Feldman struck out a season-high nine while ending Cincinnati's long stretch

of ineffective starts while Scott Schebler homered for the third straight game in leading Cincinnati past Cleveland. The Reds took the opener of the annual intrastate series. The teams play two games in Cincinnati followed by two in Cleveland. The Indians had won their last four at Great American Ball Park and six straight overall in the Ohio series. Feldman (3-4) got the first victory by a Reds starter since May 9. He gave up four hits, including Jason Kipnis' homer, while becoming the first Cincinnati starter in the last 10 games to make it through six innings. The Reds' rotation is last in the NL in ERA and innings pitched. Three relievers closed out a seven-hitter for Cincinnati's second victory in 10 games. Schebler connected against Josh Tomlin (2-6) for his third homer in a span of seven at-bats. It's the first time he's homered in three consecutive games. Zack Cozart's two-run single in the seventh off Dan Otero put Cincinnati in control.

BRAVES 5, PIRATES 2

Matt Adams hit a two-run homer in his second start since being traded to Atlanta

and Ender Inciarte had a career-high five hits as the Braves beat Gerrit Cole. Brandon Phillips also homered for the Braves, who have won eight of 11. Adams was acquired from St. Louis on Saturday as a fill-in for injured first baseman Freddie Freeman, expected to miss about 10 weeks with a broken left wrist. Adams had two hits, including his fifth-inning homer high into the right-field seats for a 5-1 lead. David Freese and Pittsburgh manager Clint Hurdle were ejected by plate umpire Phil Cuzzi in the fourth.

ANGELS 3, RAYS 2

Jeffrey Marte scored the go-ahead run on a wild pitch in the seventh inning to help Los Angeles beat Tampa Bay. The Angels, who have won six of eight, pushed across the decisive run without a hit against relievers Jumbo Diaz (0-3) and Ryne Stanek. After walking Mike Trout intentionally to load the bases with two outs, Stanek threw a ball in the dirt while facing Albert Pujols, allowing Marte to score easily. Corey Dickerson and Logan Morrison homered off Angels starter JC Ramirez (4-3). — AP

MLB results/standings

Arizona 5, Chicago White Sox 1; Houston 1, Detroit 0; San Francisco 6, Chicago Cubs 4; Atlanta 5, Pittsburgh 2; Cincinnati 5, Cleveland 1; LA Angels 3, Tampa Bay 2; Colorado 8, Philadelphia 1; NY Yankees 4, Kansas City 2; Minnesota 14, Baltimore 7.

American League				National League					
Eastern Division				Eastern Division					
	W	L	PCT	GB		W	L	PCT	GB
NY Yankees	26	16	.619	-	Washington	26	17	.605	-
Baltimore	25	18	.581	1.5	Atlanta	19	23	.452	6.5
Boston	22	21	.512	4.5	NY Mets	18	24	.429	7.5
Tampa Bay	23	24	.489	5.5	Philadelphia	15	27	.357	10.5
Toronto	19	26	.422	8.5	Miami	15	28	.349	11
Central Division				Central Division					
Minnesota	23	18	.561	-	Milwaukee	25	19	.568	-
Cleveland	23	20	.535	1	St. Louis	22	19	.537	1.5
Detroit	21	22	.488	3	Chicago Cubs	22	21	.512	2.5
Chicago White Sox	20	23	.465	4	Cincinnati	21	23	.477	4
Kansas City	18	26	.409	6.5	Pittsburgh	20	25	.444	5.5
Western Division				Western Division					
Houston	30	15	.667	-	Colorado	29	17	.630	-
Texas	24	21	.533	6	Arizona	27	19	.587	2
LA Angels	24	23	.511	7	LA Dodgers	26	19	.578	2.5
Oakland	20	24	.455	9.5	San Francisco	20	26	.435	9
Seattle	20	25	.444	10	San Diego	16	30	.348	13



HOUSTON: George Springer #4 of the Houston Astros makes a diving catch on a line drive by Dixon Machado of the Detroit Tigers in the sixth inning at Minute Maid Park on May 22, 2017. — AFP

GOLF

HORSCHELS REVEAL ANGUISH BEHIND VICTORY TEARS

LOS ANGELES: Billy Horschel paid tribute to his wife on Monday as she revealed the personal anguish that lay behind the golfer's emotional reaction after his victory in the AT&T Byron Nelson USPGA event at the weekend. Horschel broke down in tears immediately after his playoff victory over world number four Jason Day on Sunday, capturing his first win since 2014 after missing four consecutive cuts leading into the tournament. He later declined to comment directly when asked about his tearful reaction to victory. "I'm not able to talk about it right now. It's just a lot of stuff happens in the last year and this is just - this is nice," he said. But on Monday, Horschel's wife Brittany took to Twitter to reveal she had been battling alcoholism.

Her treatment included a three-month stay at a rehab center in South Florida which left her husband juggling his career on the tour while caring for the couple's infant daughter. "I write this nervously, skeptically, but also proudly because I have embraced the woman I have become over the past year," Brittany Horschel wrote in the post. "One year ago, I began a journey to a healthy me; mentally and physically. I will keep this simple, 'I am an alcoholic.' I say that now without shame.

Admitting that to myself, family and friends has saved my life and my marriage. "This weekend marked one year sober for me, but also marked a very hard fought year for Billy," she added. "He deserves to soak in the glory of his win yesterday, throw his feet up and just let out a long deep breath." Horschel, 30, praised his wife's statement in his own post on Twitter. "Proud of the journey that my wife is on!" he wrote. "She is an amazing mother and unbelievable wife!" Horschel's fourth PGA victory moves him up to 44th in the world rankings and also hands him a US Open berth after failing to qualify for last month's Masters and the 2016 US Open.—AFP



TEXAS: Billy Horschel is awarded the tournament trophy by Peggy Nelson, widow of Byron Nelson after Horschel's win in the Byron Nelson golf tournament on Sunday, May 21, 2017.—AP

ISINBAYEVA OUT, PROGRESS MADE ON SANCTIONS AT WADA MEETING

MONTREAL: Never known for haste, the World Anti-Doping Agency delivered two pieces of news Thursday that could strengthen its ability to expedite the end of the Russian doping scandal. In one move, the WADA foundation board pressed forward with a proposal to fast-track rules changes that would give it power to suspend non-compliant Olympic committees. That could prevent a repeat of last year, when the International Olympic Committee disregarded WADA's recommendation to ban Russia from the Rio Games.

And in the day's big surprise, a WADA official said pole vault champion Yelena Isinbayeva would be out as the chair of Russia's anti-doping agency (RUSADA) by the end of the month. "It's good to hear there will be change there," said Joseph de Pencier, the CEO of the Institute of National Anti-Doping Organizations. "Now, there's much more to come. We don't know who will be the new leader. There's an awful lot that's still in process."

Isinbayeva's appointment as the RUSADA chair has been widely panned by WADA, track's international federation (IAAF) and others. WADA's Dick Pound labeled it a "provocation," mainly because Isinbayeva has been a steadfast critic of WADA's investigations into her country, calling them an anti-Russian plot. WADA director general Olivier Niggli said Isinbayeva could remain on the RUSADA board. He said the move, which will place a board member who is independent of Russia's Olympic committee at the head of the agency, is important because "it's not just for one person or one situation."

It's for putting in place the safeguards we'll need for the future." Even with that expected move, there's plenty of work to do in Russia, which remains under the microscope in the wake of a report that detailed wide-scale doping corruption in the country, including switching of drug-tainted urine samples with clean ones at the Sochi Games. Investigator Richard McLaren found more than 1,000 athletes overall may have been involved or benefited from manipulations to conceal positive doping tests.

WADA's Rob Koehler revealed meager 2016 testing numbers: 2,731 tests issued - nearly 10,000 fewer than in the previous two years. The numbers are low in part because there aren't enough independent testers to traverse the country and do the work. But Russia will train more than four dozen of its own doping-control officers (who will be under supervision of international experts) and also is working with mayors of so-called "closed" cities where many athletes train but that limit access to drug testers. "The people in Russia are very aware of the challenges they face," said WADA chairman Craig Reedy.

Russia's status at the upcoming Winter Olympics was on everyone's mind. Heading into last year's Summer Games, WADA called for a blanket suspension of the entire Russian team, but the IOC disregarded that advice and put the decision in the hands of individual sports. All but one member of the track team was banned, but 271 Russians still competed. Under the proposed rules changes, the IOC, along with all WADA signatories, would have to adhere to a new system of WADA-imposed sanctions, subject to appeals.

The guidelines call for athletes from a non-compliant country to be ineligible if that country's Olympic committee or anti-doping agency make deliberate attempts to circumvent anti-doping rules. If enacted at the next board meeting, in November, the rules would go on the books during the Olympics next February, though they would come into play too late for the Pyeongchang Games. "It can get done. It's not rocket science," Pound said. WADA also took the next step toward implementing an independent testing authority, which would allow sports federations to contract out their testing duties. It was the IAAF's control of its own testing operation that furthered the Russian track scandal.

The board also heard from a committee about governance changes that would attempt to limit the influence of sports and government in its dealings.—AP



Yelena Isinbayeva

INDIA SAYS NO COMMONWEALTH SHAMBLES AT U17 WORLD CUP

CHANGSHA: India has promised that this year's U17 football World Cup will avoid the errors of New Delhi's 2010 Commonwealth Games, which were notorious for shoddy facilities and corruption. Subrata Dutta, a vice-president of the All India Football Federation, said the tournament in October-the biggest football competition ever held in India-would make the country proud. "It will be different (from the Commonwealth Games)," Dutta said at the World Football Forum in Changsha, China.

"I think it will really make us proud and we will be able to give our best." The three-week World Cup will be played in six venues-in New Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Goa,

Guwahati and Kochi-with the final in Kolkata on October 28. India's reputation as an organizer of big sports events took a dive in 2010, when incomplete infrastructure and poor conditions at the athletes' village dominated headlines. Among the worst incidents, a footbridge by the main stadium collapsed days before the opening ceremony, while the swimming competition was affected by murky water and debris falling from the roof. Chief organizer Suresh Kalmadi spent 10 months in jail after being accused of financial irregularities, in one of many corruption cases surrounding the Games.

But Dutta said the infrastructure was nearly complete for the World Cup, and

that FIFA inspectors arriving in July "will find everything in place". "We would give our best to deliver the best ever U17 World Cup. We are working on this for the past two-and-a-half years and we have nearly built up the infrastructure that is required... the finishing touches are on now," Dutta said. "Everything has been looked after by the professionals," he added. "FIFA has been guiding us at regular intervals and I'm sure that we will put up a very good show." The U17 World Cup represents a step forward for football in cricket-crazy India, which despite its 1.3 billion population lies 100th in the FIFA rankings already its highest position since 1993.

The franchise-based Indian Super

League, featuring former stars like Alessandro Del Piero and Diego Forlan, has proved a success, drawing big crowds and TV audiences since its launch in 2013. Ticket sales for the World Cup have started well, with the first phase of seats for Kolkata selling out within hours of becoming available last week, Dutta said. India has also launched a "Mission XI Million" grassroots project to bring football to 11 million children in 15,000 schools across 36 cities. Dutta said if the U17 tournament goes well, India would bid for the U20 World Cup, which is also held every two years. But he added: "I think we have to wait for a while until we're capable of a senior World Cup."—AFP

BIG LEAGUE BASEBALL 'FOUNDING DOCUMENTS' TO BE AUCTIONED

LOS ANGELES: In 1876, a group of owners and team officials gathered at a New York hotel to draft and sign the constitution that created baseball's National League and would ultimately have ramifications far beyond the diamond. The principles the document laid out, largely the work of Chicago White Stockings owner William Hulbert, would provide the basic model for every major team sports league in the world that followed. The constitution is getting a public airing for the first time in more than a century when it's put up for sale in California, starting today.

It offers a glimpse into a time when nearly half the teams in the league had "stockings" in their names, 50 cents for a ticket was considered a steep price, and getting paid to play sports was deemed dirty. "The idea that grown men would pick up a bat and ball and put on costumes was suspicious," said John Thorn, the official historian of Major League Baseball. Not to mention the "residue and foul odor of drunkenness" thought to permeate the game. Many fans were convinced the outcome of games was determined in advance. Occasionally they were correct, Thorn said.

The NL's immediate predecessor was the National Association of Professional Baseball Players, known casually as the National Association or NA. It was plagued with problems in its short life including weak central organization, teams constantly folding, and East Coast teams refusing to travel west. Players just split up the gate receipts as though they were a small-time rock band playing a nightclub. One team, the Boston Red Stockings, was utterly dominant. (The Red Stockings are not, as one might suspect, the modern Boston Red Sox, but the modern Atlanta Braves. Similarly, Hulbert's White Stockings are not the modern Chicago White Sox, but became the Chicago Cubs.)

The league's demise after the 1875 season gave Hulbert, a man of the West who did not like the dominance of East Coast teams, an opening to found something new and lasting. On Feb. 2, 1876, in a meeting at the Grand Central Hotel in New York that included other early baseball luminaries like Harry Wright and Al Spalding, the new constitution of the National League of Professional Base Ball Clubs was drafted and signed. It listed on its opening page its central principles, including: "To encourage, foster and elevate the game of base ball."

"To enact and enforce proper rules for the exhibition and conduct of the game." "To make base ball playing respectable and honorable." But it did something far more revolutionary in sports. It created a strict division between capital and labor. Owners and their officers ran the business end, and paid wages to the players. "Hulbert was a genius in the model he created with the National League," Thorn said. "It is this model that gave birth to every professional sports league that followed, from football to basketball to European football. Professional sports teams owe everything to Hulbert."

The new league had eight teams: Chicago, Boston, Philadelphia, the Cincinnati Reds, the Hartford Dark Blues, the New York Mutuals, and the St Louis Brown Stockings. The documents themselves have been held privately for decades by the family of an old National League executive that is now putting them up for sale. The auction house is not making their names public.—AP



Jang Ha-na

JANG HA-NA PUTS FAMILY FIRST AHEAD OF FAME AND FORTUNE

SEOUL: Jang Ha-na knows her decision to quit the elite US women's golf tour at the peak of her career has left people scratching their heads but the world number 10 said yesterday she had no regrets about putting family ahead of fame and fortune. Jang confirmed at a news conference in Seoul that she was rescinding her membership of the US LPGA Tour and would return to play on the domestic Korean women's circuit this season. The 25-year-old, who has had four wins on the US-based circuit since her 2015 rookie season and earned more than \$2.6 million in prize money, said being closer to her mother was the prime reason for her decision.

"I thought being world number one was the only goal in my life and that was where my happiness comes from," she said. "But I realized there are many more important things than that.

"Even though I won four times (on the LPGA Tour) I still felt empty inside. I made this decision because being with my family is more important to me than being the world's top golfer." Jang, who registered eight wins on the Korean Tour (KLPGA) and was the leading money winner in 2013, has had a tough year off the course.

She hit the headlines in March last year when a bag being carried by her father came crashing down an escalator at Singapore's Changi Airport and slammed into South Korean rival Chun In-gee, forcing her to miss the LPGA's HSBC Women's Champions tournament. Adding insult to injury for Chun and her fans, Jang won the tournament in Singapore and celebrated with a memorable 'Beyonce-style' dance, prompting a firestorm of criticism from Korean media. The controversy lingered from weeks, with

Jang reduced to tears at subsequent media conferences, and it took the South Korean another four months before she recorded a top-10 finish.

Jang said the incident and its aftermath played no part in her decision to cut short her career in the United States. "That's not why I decided to come back," she said. "I've already spoken to Chun In-gee a lot about that incident. The reason I've decided to come back is that I've found something more precious than golf." While the US Tour offers the biggest prize funds in women's golf, Jang will have plenty of opportunities to earn good money in South Korea's domestic tour. The Korean Tour, which has been making efforts to stem the annual exodus of top players to the LPGA, features more than 30 events and offers more than \$20 million in total prize money this year.—Reuters

OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS IN PARIS FOR TENNESSEE'S MR TENNYS

LONDON: Tenny Sandgren describes himself as a walking coincidence. Tenny, the pro tennis player who happens to come from - you've guessed it: Tennessee. From the moment he began swinging a racket as a four-year-old in Gallatin the significance of his moniker was not lost on him, although his ambition back then was not to match idol Andre Agassi, just not be "bad" at a sport he shares his name with. "I figured that with my name I can't be bad at the sport," he told Reuters by telephone. "I didn't think I had to be particularly good, but at least functional! "You can't be named like a sport if you suck at it. No added pressure to be sensational. But I think I've done my job."

It is hard to argue with that. Next week the 25-year-old American made his grand slam debut, having earned a wildcard for the French Open. Earned is the operative word, because this was no free meal ticket for the world number 115. Sandgren, who thought his career was over in 2013 when he needed hip surgery, came through the United States Tennis Association's (USTA) Roland Garros Wild Card Challenge - a series of Challenger level claycourt events in the US. The man and woman with the most ranking points from their best two events were rewarded with a main draw slot for the claycourt slam that begins on Sunday.

Sandgren knew he had a chance, having qualified for his first ATP Tour 250 event in Houston. A week later he reached the final of the Sarasota Challenger and, after a first-round defeat in Tallahassee, got back on a roll in Savannah, Georgia. Walking out on court against Swiss Henri Laaksonen he knew victory would seal the French Open wildcard and delivered, winning in a third-set tiebreak. "I thought it was possible going into Houston," said Sandgren, whose tennis-mad parents named him after his Swedish great grandfather. "But the results were better than expected and I was in a little of disbelief."

TENNIS UNIVERSE

The wildcard, which he says could be career-changing, is reward for a player who inhabits a different tennis universe to the game's stellar names. His experiences on the lower rungs where even winning a Futures tournament might only earn him \$1,000 and anything else leaves

him out of pocket have hardened him. "I reached a career high of 180 at the end of 2013 when I won my first Challenger, then I hurt my hip and was out for seven months," he said. "Coming back from that was difficult. "Back at the lowest level of tournaments and they're hard because everybody's good! All hungry. If you have an easy match in Futures you go home and thank your lucky stars."

With money tight, Sandgren spends much of his time on the US Challenger circuit, staying at the homes of members of local clubs to keep down costs. "Without those people I don't think I would have been able to do it," he said. He clocks up the car miles too, covering huge distances with Metallica blasting out of the stereo. "Not afraid to get in the car and haul out a long drive," he said. "I drove 13 hours on the Friday to reach Sarasota from Nashville. Then played on Monday. Wasn't feeling great Saturday."

It all paid off though, even if the celebrations after winning the Savannah title were modest. "My coach (Jim Madrigal) and I had dinner at Cracker Barrel a few hours into the drive home. Glamorous! Had cobbler for breakfast." Sandgren is warming up at an event in Lyon before heading to the French capital where he has fond memories of knocking up with claycourt king Rafael Nadal in 2009. "I hit with him twice! A crazy experience he was an awesome guy, super humble and super physical. I was a junior and remember being gassed just in a warm-up. "We played 45 minutes straight and didn't sit down once."

So how would he feel if Friday's draw paired him with the Spaniard who will be chasing a 10th Roland Garros title? "I might book my ticket home early!! It would certainly be a special experience to go against him in Paris but he's not someone I would want to see anywhere near my name. "If it happened it would be awesome and I would compete my hardest and try to give him a run for his money." Whatever happens Sandgren will make an impression in Paris even if only for the handlebar moustache he is nurturing. "I'll keep it going unless it starts to annoy me," he said. "...I've done well since I've had it so it's a no-brainer, I can't afford to shave it. Don't know what others think, but it's a solid moustache." — Reuters



Bruno Slastan

FIRST MAN ON COURT, FRENCH OPEN MANAGER KEEPS THE CLAY IN SHAPE

PARIS: Bruno Slastan has been first on court at the French Open on every day the tournament has hosted since 1989, using all his experience to prep the world's most celebrated clay surface for five hours before play starts. "We uncover the courts around 6:30 am. There is a lot of technical work to do - raking, sweeping, spraying the courts with water," Slastan, the Roland Garros courts manager who heads a team of 162, said. "We do that again quickly between each set."

We have one minute 30 seconds but we usually need (just) 1'10 to 1'20." At night, courts are watered again. Maintaining the surface though the year takes 45 tons of clay, with a further 20

tons used up during the three-week tournament, when up to 20 courts are in play. But that impression is literally skin-deep, with clay accounting for just the top 2mm (0.08 inches) of the surface. Underneath lie at least 30 cm of crushed stones, 8 cm of clinker (used as a binder in cement products) and 7 cm of ground limestone.

All of this is also sprayed with calcium chloride to maintain the courts' humidity and their characteristic red color. For the 54-year-old Slastan, the hard work starts when the process of preparing the courts get under way at the end of March. "Once we're done with this, we've only done a third of the job. The rest has to be done during the tournament," said Slastan - in

contrast to the other grand slam venues.

The US and Australian Open hardcourts need little preparation and, even on the other "live" surface at Wimbledon, "once the tournament has started and the grass has been trimmed there's not much (more) that can be done." Some might consider the rain to be Slastan's worst enemy, but he says it is actually the wind. "It sweeps the clay away, especially when it blows from North to South." When it comes to dealing with problems, there is no substitute for experience. "To become a good court man, you need five years," he said. "The technique is quite old-fashioned and you have to listen to your elders." — Reuters



Andy Murray

MUDDLED MURRAY SEEKING FOR FORM AHEAD OF FRENCH OPEN

PARIS: When the ATP Race standings were updated this week Andy Murray, the world number one, languished down at 13th. It is not a statistical anomaly either. Unlike the actual world ranking that is a rolling 12-month points total, the Race standings are a gauge of form since January when everybody starts on zero. On current form 13th is probably generous. With the French Open starting on Sunday, Murray has accrued 1,210 to the 4,915 of Rafael Nadal and looks a pale imitation of the player who won his last 24 matches of 2016 to knock Novak Djokovic off his pedestal and seize power in men's tennis.

Not since Pete Sampras in 1999 has a world number one had a worse start to a year with Murray's win percentage at a fairly modest 70.8 percent - a figure that actually disguises just how bad the slump has become of late. There was an encouraging run to the semi-finals in Barcelona where he lost to Dominic Thiem but in Madrid, where he went down with a whimper against Borna Coric, and in Rome where he was defending champion he was outclassed by Fabio Fognini. Last year, when Murray won nine titles including a second Wimbledon, a second Olympic title and the ATP Tour Finals in London, he suffered nine losses all season.

This time his win-loss record reads 16-7 and it's only May. Murray seems muddled and at a loss to explain his struggles. But with a huge haul of ranking points to defend in the next couple of months, starting at Roland Garros where he lost to Djokovic in last year's final after his best claycourt season, he needs a solution fast. "There is no reason for it from my end," Murray said. "I'm just not playing good tennis and I need to try and work out how to turn that around. Last couple of weeks have been a struggle and a long way from where I'd like to be." It is the nature of the defeats that is most surprising.

At the start of the European claycourt swing in Monte Carlo Murray lost to Spaniard Albert Ramos-Vinolas having led 4-0 in the final set. In Madrid he was bullied by the 20-year-old Coric and in Rome

he was flattered by the 6-2 6-4 scoreline against an inspired Fognini. Earlier in his career Murray was criticized for being too passive with his game - a preference for playing counter-attacking tennis based on rock-solid defense and superhuman court coverage rather than taking it on. With the help of coach Ivan Lendl, he became more forceful, leading to breakthrough titles at the 2012 US Open and Wimbledon in 2013 and Lendl's second stint as coach spurred Murray to become world number one.

However, he seems to have slipped back into lock-down mode and has paid the price especially against aggressive opponents who enjoy playing on the front foot such as Thiem and Fognini. A closer look at the data offers some clues on Murray's woes. Last year he won 85 percent of his service games compared to 79 percent this year. In 2016 he won 54 percent of points on second serve - an area of weakness he worked tirelessly to make more of a weapon. That vulnerability seems to have returned as in his last two defeats he managed to win 37 and 35 percent respectively. And his forehand, another shot that became far more potent under Lendl, seems to have lost some fizz.

Murray insists the number one ranking has not weighed him down and the fact that he has reached 30 should not be significant - as these days 30 appears to be the new 20. The bout of shingles he suffered after the Australian Open and elbow problem that flared up during a first-round defeat to Vasek Pospisil at Indian Wells have been contributory factors while there are suggestions his pre-season training block left him jaded for the battles ahead. It could all turn round at Roland Garros, where Lendl will be a reassuring presence back in his box after leaving match-day coaching duties to Jamie Delgado for most of this year. But with vulnerability having replaced the sense of invincibility Murray worked so hard to build, the vultures will be circling above him on the red Parisian clay. — Reuters

AGASSI COULD BRING 'SOMETHING SPECIAL' TO DJOKOVIC: LECONTE

LONDON: Novak Djokovic could be on the verge of "something special" after teaming up with Andre Agassi for the French Open, former Roland Garros runner-up Henri Leconte said yesterday. Serbian Djokovic, the defending French Open champion, announced on Sunday that he would have eight-times grand slam champion Agassi in his corner in Paris after parting ways with his coaching team earlier this month.

"It's brand new and good for tennis," Leconte, the last Frenchman to reach the final in 1988 said. "I really hope it works because if it does, it could be something special for Novak." Twelve-times grand slam winner Djokovic ended a three-year partnership with Boris Becker late last year when he lost his world number one status to Andy Murray. He has struggled to rediscover his best form since winning last year's French Open to complete a career grand slam and this season has seen a run of surprise losses.

Leconte says American Agassi, who came back from a career slump to win the 1999 French Open, could help the 30-year-old find the spark that appears to have been missing. "I really believe that he can help Novak find his way back to the top," Leconte, who will work as a pundit for Eurosport during the French Open, said. "Andre has the strength of personality to give Novak advice. He had the experience of coming back after injury problems and other setbacks to come back from 150 in the world to number one. "It's not about coaching. I think the likes of Novak, Roger (Federer) and Rafa (Nadal) just need something new. A brand new direction. I really hope Novak has enough strength and power to produce what he produced last year." — Reuters



US tennis legend Andre Agassi



In this file photo, Czech Republic's tennis player Petra Kvitova leaves after making a statement to the media in Prague, Czech Republic. Two-time Wimbledon champion Petra Kvitova is to decide by the week's end whether she will be available to play the French Open following a recovery from an attack by a knife-wielding intruder. — AP

PETRA KVITOVA TO MAKE 'LAST-MINUTE DECISION'

PRAGUE: Petra Kvitova will make a "last-minute decision" whether to compete in the French Open as she prepares a comeback five months after her playing hand was badly injured in a knife attack, her spokesman said yesterday. The two-time Wimbledon champion suffered career-threatening injuries to her left hand as she fought off a knife-wielding intruder at her home in the eastern Czech town of Prostějov in December.

The draw for the French Open will take place on Friday and Kvitova's spokesman Karel Tejkal said the Czech star could still make the May 28-June 11 Grand Slam. "It's not by chance that her name is still on the entry list for Roland Garros. The decision

will be taken at the last minute," Tejkal said. "We can already say it out loud - her long-term goal is to be fit enough to compete in Wimbledon."

The 27-year-old Kvitova won Wimbledon in 2011 and 2014. This year's event at the All England club starts on July 3. Doctors had said the Czech player would not be able to return to competition before the second half of the year. But Kvitova returned to training early in May and she was included on the entry list for the French Open. "This unfortunately does not mean necessarily that I will be ready to play in Paris, but that I'm doing everything possible to give myself the chance and keep a positive mindset," Kvitova said at the time. — AFP

GUANGZHOU SECURE FIRST LEG ADVANTAGE; PAULINHO SHINES

HONG KONG: Former Tottenham Hotspur midfielder Paulinho scored the only goal of the game as Guangzhou Evergrande emerged with a 1-0 win over Japan's Kashima Antlers in the first leg of their round of 16 meeting in the Asian Champions League yesterday. Guangzhou, Asian champions in 2013 and 2015, dominated the game but had to wait until the 75th minute for the Brazil international to score from close range after the Kashima defence failed to clear Yu Hanchao's corner. "Today we have achieved our target," said Guangzhou coach Luiz Felipe Scolari. "Kashima is a well-known, strong side. Probably because they were playing away, they were a bit conservative."

"It was pretty tight, however most of the time we controlled the match. We had four or five good scoring opportunities. Today we have been outstanding, both in the performance and the result. However, this round isn't finished and they still have their chance." Guangzhou were on top throughout in a game that saw the reigning Chinese and Japanese champions go head-

to-head, only for the profligacy of Scolari's frontline to deprive Evergrande of a more significant margin of victory.

Ricardo Goulart, Ricardo Goulart and Li Xuepeng all squandered scoring opportunities before Paulinho gave his team a deserved lead and a one-goal advantage ahead of the second leg next Tuesday in Japan. It was a mixed evening for Japanese clubs as Kawasaki Frontale came from going a goal behind to pick up a 3-1 away win over Thailand's Muangthong United as J.League clubs look to claim the title for the first time since Gamba Osaka's win in 2008.

Teerasil Dangda gave Muangthong the lead in first half injury time but two goals in three second-half minutes put Kawasaki in control. Kengo Nakamura rolled his effort over the line in the 66th minute before Kengo Nakamura curling volley three minutes later gave Muangthong goalkeeper Kavin Thamsatchanan a little chance, and the J.League side secured a two-goal lead and three away goals ahead of the second leg when Hirokyu Abe added a late third. — Reuters



RIO DE JANEIRO: Children play near the Olympic Park sign in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. — AP



The Olympia Park of the 2016 Olympics is seen from the air, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Almost one year after the games, Olympia Park in suburban Barra da Tijuca, which was the largest cluster of venues, is an expanse of empty arenas with clutter still remaining from the games.

SCATHING REPORT ON RIO OLYMPICS: VENUES 'WHITE ELEPHANTS'

RIO DE JANEIRO: A federal prosecutor looking into last year's Rio de Janeiro Olympics says that many of the venues "are white elephants" that were built with "no planning." The scathing report offered Monday at a public hearing confirms what The Associated Press reported several months after the games ended. Many of the venues are empty, boarded up, and have no tenants or income with the maintenance costs dumped on the federal government. "There was no planning," federal prosecutor Leandro Mitidieri told the public hearing on the Olympics. "There was no planning when they put out the bid to host the

Games. No planning. "They are white elephants today," Mitidieri added. "What we are trying to look at here is to how to turn this into something usable."

Rio de Janeiro spend about \$12 billion to organize the games, which were plagued by cost-cutting, poor attendance, and reports of bribes and corruption linked to the building of some Olympic-related facilities. The Olympic Park in suburban Barra da Tijuca, which was the largest cluster of venues, is an expanse of empty arenas with clutter still remaining from the games. The second largest cluster, in the northern area of

Deodoro, is closed despite plans to open it as a public park with swimming facilities for the mostly poor who live in the area.

Patricia Amorim, the undersecretary for sports in the city of Rio, said highly publicized plans were on hold to dismantle one arena and turn the remains into four schools. The arena was the venue for handball. "It will be dismantled," she said. "We are just waiting to know whether we will actually have resources to build these schools on other sites, or whether we will dismantle it and wait for the resources to come. Our schools need to be reformed and that's our priority, not new schools." Nine

months after the Rio Olympics ended, the local organizing committee still owes creditors about \$30 million, and 137 medals awarded during the games are rusting and need to be repaired. Former Rio de Janeiro Mayor Eduardo Paes, the moving force with the International Olympic Committee behind organizing last year's Olympics, is being investigated for allegedly accepting at least 15 million reais (\$5 million) in payments to facilitate construction projects tied to the games.

He denies any wrongdoing. Organizing committee spokesman Mario Andrada said more than 100 medals awarded at the

Olympics showed signs of rusting. He said many were bronze medals, and said many of the tarnished medals had been awarded to Americans. "Most of the problems were due to handling, poor handling," Andrada said. "Either they fell on the floor or they were touching each other so, it was a problem of handling. Whatever was the problem with the poor handling, it took the gloss off the medal and then you see rusting." He said the medals would be repaired at Brazil's mint, called the Casa da Moeda. He said more than 2,000 medals were awarded at the Olympics and said "several other games had problems with medals." —AP

A YEAR BEFORE WCUP, RUSSIAN CLUBS BATTLE FINANCIAL WOES

MOSCOW: Kuban Krasnodar's fans hoped that signing Andrei Arshavin would herald long-awaited success for their club. The local governor hoped for a pre-election boost. By July 2015, Arshavin had lost much of the pace and attacking skill which made him a star in England for Arsenal years earlier, but he was still among Russia's best-known footballers. Like most Russian top-flight clubs, Kuban had a close financial relationship with the regional government, so Arshavin flew to the southern city of Krasnodar for a much-publicized meeting with governor Veniamin Kondratyev before signing a contract.

The two posed for pictures in typical Russian official style, facing each other across a conference table with flags in the background. Two months later, Kondratyev won re-election with 83 percent of the vote. Five months after that, as the Russian economy plunged, Arshavin left Kuban amid reports the club had stopped paying his 2.5-million-euro salary (\$2.5-million). Kuban was soon relegated and is now floundering in the Russian league's second tier. Last month, local media reported it faced a lawsuit from tax authorities seeking to have the club declared bankrupt.

After years of the state bankrolling big-money transfers and foreign stars' wages, many Russian clubs are in financial trouble, even as the country prepares to host next year's World Cup. "Twenty-five percent of the clubs in the Premier League have

wages delayed, and in the second division, the FNL, it's 50 percent," says Nikolai Grammatikov, head of one of Russia's two competing players' unions. "We expect that the next year's going to be even tougher," Grammatikov adds. "I don't want to have a professional club if I am a regional governor because it's too much expense."

In an ominous sign for the legacy of next year's World Cup, just five of the 11 host cities will have a Premier League club next season, with the other six represented in the lower divisions, where financial problems are typically more severe. Regional governments and state-owned companies, like Zenit St Petersburg's owner Gazprom, own more than half of clubs in the top flight and almost all in the second tier. Several other clubs have close commercial links with government organizations. With the Russian government having slashed spending on social services recently, paying large sums to rich players is an extra burden for state officials.

It's less attractive for the state as a PR instrument, too, following recent poor results in European competitions by Russia's clubs and the national team, says Russian football writer Evgeny Dzichkovsky. "There's just no money," Dzichkovsky says. "Earlier (state officials) sometimes sacrificed other areas for football, but that's harder now because of the contrast between football clubs and the rest of society." —AP



NASHVILLE: Anaheim Ducks right wing Ondrej Kase (86), of the Czech Republic, shoots the puck past Nashville Predators defenseman Matt Irwin (52) for a goal during the second period in Game 6 of the Western Conference final in the NHL hockey Stanley Cup playoffs on Monday, May 22, 2017. — AP

PREDATORS SHOOT DOWN DUCKS TO REACH STANLEY CUP FINALS

MIAMI: Colton Sissons' third goal of the game at 14:00 of the third period broke a tie and led the Predators to a 6-3 win over the Anaheim Ducks on Monday as Nashville clinched their first trip to the Stanley Cup finals. With the score tied at 3-3, Sissons ripped home a one-timer from the left circle that was set up by Calle Jankrok, three seconds after the Predators killed off a power-play following a delay-of-game call on Roman Josi. "There was a turnover and I got lost on the back side," he said of his tie-breaking goal. "Calle made a beautiful pass, and fortunately I put it away." Filip Forsberg and Austin Watson iced the win at 17:38 and 18:26, respectively, with empty-net goals to seal the Western Conference finals series by a 4-2 margin.

Nashville will play either the Ottawa Senators or the Pittsburgh Penguins in the finals, starting May 29 in the Eastern Conference venue. The defending NHL champion Penguins lead that best-of-seven series 3-2. It is the third different team Nashville coach Peter Laviolette will take to the Cup finals. He won the title with the Carolina Hurricanes in 2006 and lost with the Philadelphia Flyers in 2010. "It probably means I got fired a lot," Laviolette joked about his accomplishment. Goalie Pekka Rinne made 38 saves for Nashville, which was outshot 41-18 as Anaheim controlled most of the last 50 minutes of action.

Despite the constant barrage of attacks, Rinne never cracked and the league's lowest playoff seed-Nashville's 94 points were the fewest of all 16 post-season participants-completed its improbable run to franchise history. "Our guys know the big picture, what we are trying to do here," Laviolette said. "But tonight, they are going to enjoy it." Ducks goalie Jonathan Bernier, making his first career playoff start with starter John Gibson (lower-body injury) scratched, stopped only 12 of the 16 shots he faced. "This is the worst feeling in hockey," Ducks captain Ryan Getzlaf said. "We worked so hard all year-and in the game- and it is incredibly frustrating." — Reuters

VUNIPOLA 'BIG LOSS' FOR LIONS

LONDON: The withdrawal of Billy Vunipola was a "big loss" to the British and Irish Lions but more injuries can be expected before the tour of New Zealand is over, Coach Warren Gatland has said. Number eight Vunipola pulled out of the 41-man squad on Monday because of an ongoing shoulder injury and was replaced by another English loose forward in James Haskell. "Any player who gets injured at this time is a big loss to the squad," Gatland told British media. "You've spent a lot of time going through the process of picking players and planning and preparing so to lose someone is disappointing."

"Given the history of the Lions we plan to lose anywhere between six and 10 players. That's just the attrition of past tours." Vunipola is one of the most damaging ball runners in world rugby and Gatland said he had tried to convince the 24-year-old to travel to New Zealand despite the injury. "I did try to persuade him to come over and be assessed and look at managing him, but he was adamant that he was not right," he added. "If someone is not 100 percent right in terms of their commitment, I fully understand and respect that decision. It was pretty tough for him."



Billy Vunipola

WORLD CUP - ASIA OVERTAKES AFRICA

CHANGSHA: Asia has overtaken Africa and now looks the more likely continent to produce a World Cup-winning team, according to the former England goalkeeper David James. Speaking at the World Football Forum in Changsha, James said Asia's financial clout and passion would propel it to the forefront of the game in the coming decades. "I genuinely think that an Asian country has got a better chance of winning the World Cup than an African one," the former Liverpool goalkeeper said.

"When I was growing up in the Nineties, it was all about how Africa was going to be the next continent to win the World Cup. I can't see it," James was referring to Brazilian legend Pele's famous prediction that an African team would win the World Cup before 2000, which turned out to be wide of the mark. No African team has made it past the quarter-finals, and although Asian sides flopped at the last World Cup in 2014, with none reaching the knock-out rounds, South Korea reached the semis on home soil in 2002. Currently, Asia's top-ranked team is Iran at 28, while South Korea, Japan and Australia are the others inside the world's top 50.

But James, whose CV includes playing for the Indian Super League's Kerala Blasters, said China and even India-ranked 81st and 100th respectively could emerge as World Cup contenders. "I think there's such fertile soil (in Asia). Maybe the financial aspects of China provide that," said James, 46, who made 53 England appearances. "But I think with the enthusiasm for football in India, plus there is obviously a financial potential to back them, I think the opportunity is massive, massive." "There's something like two-and-a-half billion people if you take the two countries,

it's a third of the world's population."

'ENTHUSIASTIC FOR ASIA'

The World Cup will return to the Asian confederation at Qatar 2022, and China is actively considering a bid to host the tournament, probably in the 2030s. China has spent hundreds of millions of dollars on foreign players and coaches after an official decree that the country hopes to host and win the World Cup. But James said he was also optimistic for India, recalling crowds of 50,000 turning up to watch Kerala Blasters.

India will also be in the limelight later this year when it hosts the U17 World Cup, its biggest football tournament to date. "There's a better infrastructure in China at the moment. India's got a bit of a way to catch up with that but it's not something that will take 30 years to achieve," James said. "The technology within football, the understanding of building pitches and training facilities, that's one thing. To compete you need these things, but to improve you need better coaching. "And it's whether or not the investment is made into the coaching side of things either in China or in India."

James said there was "no reason" why Asia's national teams wouldn't be at the same level as their European rivals 30 years from now. "With the size of the countries... somewhere you can find the perfect areas for a super camp or whatever. I'm enthusiastic for Asia," he said. But he warned: "You can't have the best national team and the best domestic league... You can't have both. "It's a difficult beast-it's almost like the dog with a bone looking at his reflection in the pond," he said, quoting one of Aesop's fables. "What do you go for?" — AFP



AMSTERDAM: Ajax's Danish forward Kasper Dolberg (left) and Dutch defender Kenny Tete take part in a training session in Amsterdam ahead of the team's Europa League final football match against Manchester United in Stockholm today. — AFP

DOLBERG LEADS IMPRESSIVE NEW AJAX GENERATION

AMSTERDAM: Teenage striker Kasper Dolberg has drawn comparisons with Zlatan Ibrahimovic and there are shades of the celebrated 1990s vintage in his youthful Ajax side that faces Manchester United in today's Europa League final. Ajax lifted the Champions League in 1995 with a sophisticated brand of football played by the likes of young stars Edgar Davids, Clarence Seedorf, Patrick Kluivert, and the De Boer brothers.

Nobody in the Dutch capital is saying that Peter Bosz's side of 2017 are up to that level yet, but some are making comparisons because his is such a young Ajax team. The coach recently named the youngest XI in the history of the Dutch league at an average age of barely 21. There has been plenty of hype surrounding the 18-year-old winger Justin Kluivert, son of Patrick, the forward who scored the only goal in the 1995 Champions League final against AC Milan. But the 19-year-old Dolberg is getting plenty of notice too—and the Dane does not have a famous name to rely on. United forward Ibrahimovic, who is out of this week's final in Stockholm with a serious knee injury, sprang to prominence as a young predator at Ajax. Dolberg does not have the Swede's hugely imposing frame, but he is no pushover either and is similarly fast making a name for himself in the Ajax red and white. It has been a swift ascent for Dolberg, who was hardly known 12 months ago and only really made headlines in Europe with his two goals in the Europa League semi-final tie against Lyon. "There are similarities with Zlatan," said Bosz. "Technically, and with his physical presence, and his ability to play with his back to goal. There is indeed some Zlatan in him."

Big-money move?

The senior Kluivert and the rest from 1995 inevitably ended up leaving Ajax for bigger clubs around Europe. The Dutch side, for so long famed for their conveyor belt of young talent, know that their best players will be picked off. If Dolberg bullies

United like Ibrahimovic has bullied defenses all over Europe during his career, the young Dane will also be off—and United have been linked with him.

Dolberg's agent Jens Steffensen says the phone never stops ringing from interested clubs. But Dolberg is under contract until 2021 and says he wants to stay in the Netherlands for another year to hone his game. An impressive showing though in Stockholm would change that. Dolberg, Kluivert and the others in this young Ajax side might however reflect they owe their coach at least another season. Last year, when Ajax sold Polish striker Arkadiusz Milik to Napoli, Bosz put his faith in Dolberg to fill the void. And Dolberg repaid his manager, hitting 16 league goals this season (22 in all competitions) and making his debut for his country.

FIVE-SECOND RULE

Bosz's commitment to youth, allied to Ajax's run in Europe, will also inevitably bring him temptations away from Amsterdam. The 53-year-old Dutchman is almost the antithesis of United opposite number Jose Mourinho, the arch pragmatist. Bosz was a gritty midfielder as a player, in a career which included lifting the Eredivisie title with Feyenoord in 1993 and saw him capped by his country.

But as a coach he says winning is not enough, he wants his team to excite the fans too. He made his name as boss at Vitesse Arnhem in 2013-2015 and has a fan in Mourinho. But while Mourinho wants to win at all costs, Bosz has embraced the Ajax way of nurturing young talent to be confident and comfortable on the ball, something akin to the Dutch "total football" philosophy. Bosz, who has a reputation as fiercely passionate and demanding, took over from Frank de Boer in 2016 and places great emphasis on recovering the ball as fast as possible—preferably within five seconds. "My players are very young and have the physical abilities to exert such pressure," he says.—AFP



CARRINGTON: Manchester United manager Jose Mourinho attends a training session at the AON Training Complex in Carrington yesterday, ahead of the Europa League Final against Ajax today. — AP

EUROPA CRUCIAL FOR MOURINHO

LONDON: Jose Mourinho's first season at Manchester United will be deemed by many as a failure unless they win today's Europa League final against Ajax Amsterdam to secure Champions League qualification. The Portuguese coach arrived at Old Trafford at the start of this campaign charged with the task of restoring United to, if not their old dominance, at least a place at the top table in the Premier League elite. But a sixth-place finish is lower than Mourinho's predecessor Louis van Gaal managed in his two seasons, which concluded with fourth and fifth places.

It is not the prestige of the Europa League title that would change the perspective on the former Chelsea and Real Madrid manager's first year at United but the place that triumph would secure in the continent's top club competition. For United, a second straight season outside the European elite would not only be a blow for the fans and the club's status but could also affect their ability to recruit the very best talent from across the globe. For Mourinho, there is also his own 'brand' to consider. The 54-year-old left Chelsea last season after a shocking campaign of under-achievement, only for largely the

same group of players to march to the Premier League title this term under his replacement Italian Antonio Conte.

The move to United offered a chance to restore Mourinho's reputation as a winner—but a season with just a League Cup triumph and no Champions League place would surely have his critics crowing again. Mourinho's tactics have been criticized as overly cautious and others have taken aim at his habit of publicly naming and shaming individual players, such as full-back Luke Shaw. On Monday, ex-France and Arsenal striker turned Sky Sports TV pundit Thierry Henry said United's biggest signing - world record 89 million pounds (\$115.62 million) purchase Paul Pogba - was underperforming due to Mourinho's tactics. "They don't use Pogba where he should be playing - he's not a holding midfielder. He likes to play higher or off the left," said Henry. But a win over Ajax would allow a greater hearing for a more generous evaluation of Mourinho's first 12 months at United. Last month's 2-0 home victory over eventual English champions Chelsea, provided indications that next season United could be both more successful and more entertaining.—Reuters

SO LONG, WAYNE? CUP FINAL MAY BE ROONEY'S LAST UNITED GAME

MANCHESTER: Wayne Rooney could finish his Manchester United career by hoisting a European trophy, surrounded by jubilant teammates and with fireworks exploding around him. Still, it wouldn't be quite the end he would have envisioned after 13 years at the English club. Rooney is set to be a substitute for United today in the Europa League final against Ajax in Stockholm, a role which the club's captain and record scorer has become increasingly accustomed to this season.

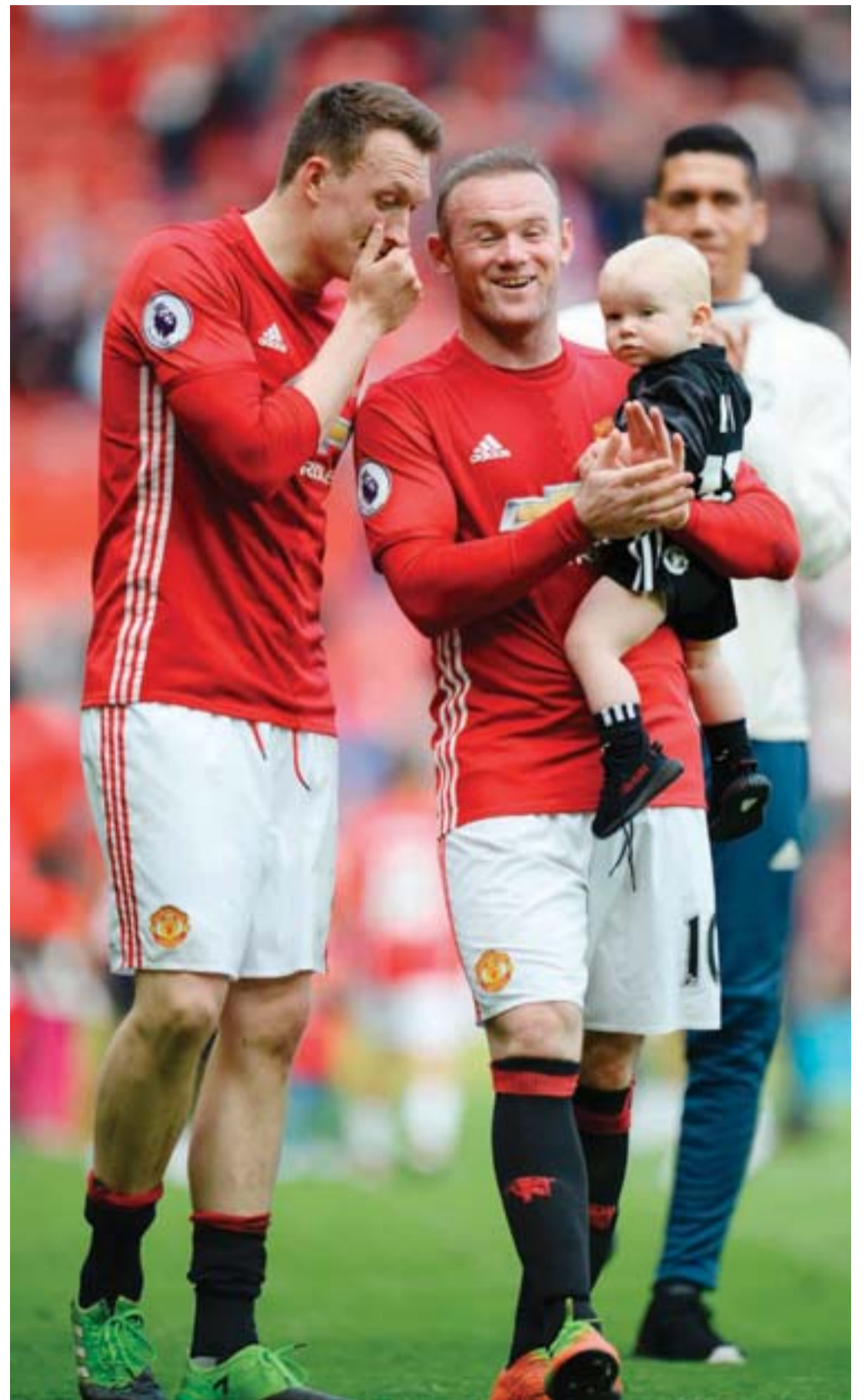
Depending on the situation in the match, he might not even come on. That's how it's been for most of this season, watching from afar at a club where he was once the main man. Talk about United's key players ahead of a final that means so much to the English club, and many would say Marcus Rashford or Paul Pogba or Henrikh Mkhitaryan. Few would say Rooney.

That's the reason why this game might be his last for United despite having two years left on his contract, why he has been linked for much of the past few months with a return to former club Everton, a move to MLS in the United States, or a short spell in the Chinese league. United is moving on under Jose Mourinho and Rooney is being left behind. Speculation grows that James Rodriguez will be moving to Old Trafford from Real Madrid, adding to the list of attackers who will be ahead of Rooney in the pecking order next season. There was a symbolic moment Sunday on the final day of the Premier League season.

Rooney was one of the few senior players picked for a virtually meaningless match against Crystal Palace - Mourinho rested most of his Europa League starters - and he was replaced in the final minutes by 16-year-old attacking midfielder Angel Gomes, who became the first player born this millennium to play in the Premier League. Rooney applauded all corners of Old Trafford and walked off with his head down. Was he saying goodbye to the stadium he has played at since 2004, when - at 18 - he made a spectacular debut by scoring a hat trick in a Champions League game against Fenerbahce?

Since then, he has racked up 253 goals for United to surpass Bobby Charlton's longstanding club record. He is also England's record scorer with 53 goals, again overtaking Charlton. He has won the Premier League title five times, the FA Cup once, the League Cup three times and the Champions League once. That last trophy came in 2008 when he was part of the famous frontline containing Cristiano Ronaldo and Carlos Tevez. Rooney is no longer the force of old, unable to influence matches in the same way or tear around the field harassing opponents. Games can pass him by and there is the fear that, after 15 years in the spotlight of the soccer world, he is simply burnt out.

In his last appearance at a news conference, prior to the second leg of the Europa League semifinals against Celta Vigo, Rooney said his priority at this stage of his career was to "play football." When asked if that meant at United, he added: "Of course." He will end this season likely having started 25 of United's 64 games. Often, he was an unused substitute. Mourinho said he would not sell Rooney against his



MANCHESTER: Manchester United's English striker Wayne Rooney walks on the pitch carrying his son Kit to applaud the fans at the end of the English Premier League football match at Old Trafford in Manchester on May 21, 2017. — AFP

wishes, so it is for the player to decide if today is the last time he dons a United jersey. Whether he actually makes it onto the field remains to be seen.—AP

LIVERPOOL EYE SILVERWARE

LIVERPOOL: Liverpool need to experience the feeling of winning trophies again to take the next step and compete with Europe's best, defender James Milner has said. Liverpool, who secured fourth spot in the Premier League with a 3-0 win over Middlesbrough on Sunday, have not won a major trophy since their League Cup triumph five years ago.

Liverpool lost out in last year's League Cup and Europa League finals and Milner, who won the FA Cup with Manchester City in 2011 before their run of two league titles in three years, said winning one trophy is a catalyst for more. "Personally the biggest thing for us at City was winning the FA Cup: getting that first trophy under our belt, winning something, giving you that belief," Milner said. "Champions League was a step along the way. Last year we came close (to a trophy) but couldn't get over the line. But playing in those sort of occasions and in those big games is important."

"Hopefully now we can stick a few trophies in the cabinet. That is the next step." Midfielder Adam Lallana also expected Liverpool to be ready to compete for silverware next season. "It has been a good season, not just myself but I think the team has come on leaps and bounds," Lallana told the club's website. (www.liverpoolfc.com) "There is still a lot of room for improvement and hopefully we can continue that in the Champions League next season. "We've got top four now... Hopefully we can add to this great squad and really compete for silverware next year."—Reuters

ENGLAND'S OWN-GOAL GIVES GUINEA 1-1 DRAW AT WCUP

SEOUL: An own-goal by England defender Fikayo Tomori handed Guinea a 1-1 draw yesterday at the Under-20 World Cup. Tomori, who is owned by Chelsea, put the ball in his own net in the 59th minute while attempting a backpass to goalkeeper Dean Henderson, who was standing outside the penalty area and tried to kick the ball clear as it passed him. Lewis Cook scored for England in the 53rd with a low shot from about 25 yards. England's players wore black armbands during the Group A match in Jeonju following the attack at a concert in Manchester.

The English have four points from two matches and will next face South Korea on Friday. Guinea, which earned its first point in the tournament, will face Argentina. In Group B, Venezuela became the first team to advance to the second round by routing Vanuatu 7-0 in Daejeon. Sixteen of the 24 teams will progress to the knockout stage, the top two teams from each of the six groups and the four best third-place finishers. The final will take place in Suwon on June 11.—AP

EX-BARCA PRESIDENT ARRESTED IN MONEY LAUNDERING PROBE

BARCELONA: Former Barcelona president Sandro Rosell was arrested yesterday in a money laundering investigation related to image rights in the Brazilian national football team, a police spokesman said. The police operation was mainly carried out in the northeastern region of Catalonia and for the moment "there are four or five detainees, including the former president of Barca, Sandro Rosell, and his wife," the police spokesman said.

The investigation focuses on "money laundering in companies linked to the image rights of the Brazilian football team," police added. Officers were searching the homes of those arrested as part of the operation as well as at several company headquarters in Barcelona, Girona and Lleida in Catalonia and in Andorra, a tiny principality wedged between Spain and France, police said.

Businessman Rosell, 53, was manager of sporting goods giants Nike in Brazil and oversaw the contract for the national team to wear the US brand, before taking over as president of Barcelona in 2010. He resigned as Barcelona president in 2014

after being charged over alleged tax fraud relating to the club's signing of Brazil striker Neymar from Santos. He was later cleared of all charges in connection with the case following an agreement with prosecutors. Rosell will nevertheless be tried for fraud and corruption relating to a parallel complaint filed by Brazilian investment company DIS, which owned 40 percent of Neymar's sporting rights at the time of his transfer.

DIS claim it was cheated out of its real share because part of the transfer fee was concealed by Barcelona, Santos and the Neymar family. A Spanish court earlier this month ordered Neymar and his parents to stand trial for alleged "business corruption" over the affair, making him the latest star from the Catalan club to have to take the stand. Five-time World Player of the Year Lionel Messi and his father were given 21-month suspended jail sentences in July 2016 for tax fraud relating to the player's image rights. Barca's Argentine defender Javier Mascherano also agreed a one-year suspended sentence with authorities for tax fraud earlier this year.—AFP



Barcelona's football club former president Sandro Rosell

Sports

Predators shoot down Ducks to reach Stanley Cup Finals

18



So long, Wayne? Cup final may be Rooney's last United game

19



WEDNESDAY, MAY 24, 2017

PANIK HOMERS AS GIANTS OVERPOWER CUBS

Page 15



SAN ANTONIO: Manu Ginobili #20 of the San Antonio Spurs shoots the ball against Draymond Green #23 of the Golden State Warriors in the second half during Game Four of the 2017 NBA Western Conference Finals at AT&T Center on May 22, 2017. —AFP

WARRIORS SWEEP INTO NBA FINALS

LOS ANGELES: Stephen Curry and Kevin Durant led the way as the Golden State Warriors sealed a clean sweep of the San Antonio Spurs to reach their third consecutive NBA Finals berth on Monday. Curry scored 36 points and Durant weighed in with 29 as the Warriors powered to a 129-115 win to complete a 4-0 victory in the best-of-seven Western Conference finals series. It was the third consecutive series sweep of the 2017 postseason for the Warriors, who are now 12-0 in the playoffs heading into the finals. Durant, who attracted controversy after his blockbuster move from Oklahoma City Thunder last year to the Warriors, was delighted to be back in the NBA Finals once again.

The 28-year-old forward, who also pulled down 12 rebounds and contributed four assists, admitted he and Curry had rediscovered their

understanding following the mid-season injury that sidelined him for around 20 games. "Our chemistry is getting better and better and we're going to need it even more whoever we play in the finals," Durant told an interviewer. "It's great to be one of the last two teams standing—we'll see what happens," he said. Curry meanwhile admitted he was relishing his partnership with Durant. "It makes the game fun," Durant said. "The way we play the game and move the ball. Watching him do what he does. It's a fun way to play and we want to keep that up. I'm having fun, enjoying what I do."

'THINGS ARE FLOWING'

"Things are flowing. It's a part of our identity to get that mojo going. I think we're prepared for pretty much anything. We're going to be confi-

dent and ready to go." Spurs fans meanwhile bade what looked like a farewell to 39-year-old Argentinian legend Manu Ginobili, who was given a rousing ovation as he left the court. "He's somebody I grew up watching," Durant said. "An amazing competitor. I got nothing but love and respect for him." Spurs coach Gregg Popovich meanwhile spoke admiringly of the Warriors. "They were fantastic. To all of them. From ownership, to the coaches, the players."

They play a great brand of basketball. Hats off to them. Great job," said Popovich, who also saluted Ginobili in what might have been his final game. Popovich said Ginobili had been handed a starting berth "out of respect." "This is a hall of fame player who allowed me to play him off the bench for the last decade or something because it would make us a bet-

ter team overall," Popovich said. "He's a big reason for our success. He deserved to have that night of respect so that he really feels that we appreciate everything he's done for us over the years. "If he decides he's going to play again that's up to him," said Popovich. "Manu is a grown man. He'll figure out what is best for him and his family."

WARRIORS DOMINATE

The depleted Spurs, missing the injured Kawhi Leonard and Tony Parker, were always chasing the game as the powerful Warriors offense dominated almost from first to last. The Warriors win keeps them on course for an unprecedented third consecutive NBA Finals meeting with the Cleveland Cavaliers, who lead their Eastern Conference finals series against

Boston 2-1. The Spurs were always struggling after an early points blitz from the Warriors that saw the visitors power into a 31-19 at the end to silence the AT&T Center crowd in Texas.

The writing was on the wall from the moment the Warriors reeled off 13 unanswered points to grab a 21-7, giving the contest an ominously familiar pattern. Thereafter the Warriors comfortably kept the Spurs at arm's length, with their multifaceted offense proving too much for San Antonio. The Warriors maintained a 14-point cushion at half-time to lead 65-51 and opened the second half with a 25-foot three-pointer from Thompson to make it 68-51. They remained 96-78 ahead at the end of the third quarter and there was only going to be one winner from there, with the Warriors keeping the score ticking over to the buzzer. —AFP

MANCHESTER CLUBS PAY TRIBUTE TO TERROR VICTIMS BECKHAM SPEAKS OF HIS 'HEARTBREAK'

MANCHESTER: Football star David Beckham spoke of his "heartbreak" as former club Manchester United and local rivals Manchester City came together yesterday to pay tribute after 22 people including children were killed in a suspected suicide bombing in the northern English city. Britain's deadliest terror attack in 12 years took place when a bomb went off shortly after the end of a concert by US pop star Ariana Grande at the Manchester Arena on Monday.

Former England captain Beckham, who made his name as a global superstar at United after coming through the club's youth system, expressed his condolences via an Instagram message, saying: "Heartbreaking news from Manchester. As a father & a human what has happened truly saddens me. My thoughts are with all of those that have been affected by this tragedy." Gary Lineker, another former England international and now a television presenter, summed up a mood of widespread revulsion when he tweeted: "To target children at a concert is beyond comprehension. Beyond lunacy. Beyond evil. Heart goes out to all those who've lost loved ones."

A help centre was opened at City's Etihad Stadium for those affected by the blast, while the United club flag at their Old Trafford ground was flown at half mast. Both Premier League clubs posted short statements yesterday on their Twitter accounts, with United saying: "We are deeply shocked by last night's terrible events at the Manchester Arena. Our thoughts and prayers go out to all those affected."

Meanwhile, City said: "It's with great sadness we hear of the terrible events at the Arena. Our hearts go out to all affected and to our city's emergency services." Current players from both clubs also sent Twitter messages of support, with City captain Vincent Kompany saying: "I would like to express my deepest condolences to the families of the victims. It's a sad day for the great city of Manchester. #Unity." United's Jesse Lingard wrote: "My thoughts and prayers are with everyone affected by last

nights attack on this beautiful city. We will stand together in this dark hour."

United were due to train yesterday at their Carrington practice ground ahead of travelling to Stockholm, where they will play Dutch side Ajax in the Europa League final today. UEFA, European football's governing body, said "tight security arrangements" had already been put in place for the final but added they had no knowledge of any direct threat to the match. "There is currently no specific intelligence which might suggest that any of the UEFA Europa League final activities in Stockholm may be the target of attacks," said a UEFA statement.

"UEFA has been closely working with local authorities and the Swedish FA (Football Association) for many months and the terrorist risk had been taken into account since the very beginning of the project. "Furthermore, a number of additional security measures were implemented following the attacks in Stockholm last April (when a hijacked truck was delib-

erately driven on to a city street killing five people)." The statement urged fans to get to the stadium as early to allow time for "detailed checks". Amsterdam club Ajax sent their own message of support, saying: "From Amsterdam with love to Manchester. Our thoughts are with the victims and the loved ones of those affected."

United were due to have a routine pre-match meeting with UEFA yesterday at which it is understood they will now ask if their players can wear black armbands in the final as a mark of respect in response to an attack that also left 59 people injured. The England Under-20s side, one of the first football teams from the country in action after the attack, confirmed they would wear black armbands in their junior World Cup clash with Guinea in Joensuu, South Korea yesterday. "Our #YoungLions will remember the victims of the attack in Manchester when we take on Guinea at the #U20WC this morning," said a message on the official England Twitter account. —AFP



MANCHESTER: Manchester United's players inspect the pitch at the Friends Arena in Solna outside Stockholm yesterday on the eve of the UEFA Europa League football final between Ajax Amsterdam and Manchester United. —AFP

TERROR ATTACK SCARS EUROPA LEAGUE FINAL

MANCHESTER: Manchester United's preparations for today's Europa League final were plunged into sadness yesterday after a bomb attack at a Manchester pop concert killed 22 people and injured dozens more. United manager Jose Mourinho led his players in a solemn minute's silence on the club's Carrington training pitches to the west of Manchester city centre. United were due to fly to Stockholm, scene of the final, later, but the club cancelled their pre-match press conference scheduled to take place at the city's Friends Arena.

"Due to the tragic events in Manchester last night and the effect that this has had on everyone here at our club and within our city, we have decided to cancel this evening's pre-match press conference in Stockholm," United said in a statement. "We are sure that, in the circumstances, you will all understand our position on this matter. "Our thoughts are with the victims at this terribly difficult time." United's opponents in the final, Dutch club Ajax, tweeted: "From Amsterdam with love to Manchester. Our thoughts are with the victims and the loved ones of those affected."

Ajax head coach Peter Bosz was scheduled to hold a pre-match conference at the Friends Arena. The suicide bomb attack in Manchester, which claimed the lives of children and also injured 59 people, struck after a concert by American pop star Ariana Grande at the Manchester Arena. It was the deadliest attack to hit Britain since the July 2005 attack on the London transport network, which left 52 people dead. European governing body UEFA said it had "no specific

intelligence" suggesting the Europa League final would be targeted by attacks. It said security arrangements had already been beefed up following last month's truck attack in the Swedish capital, which claimed five lives and injured around 15 people. UEFA urged fans to arrive at the stadium "as early as possible" on Wednesday as "detailed (security) checks will be made at the entrances".

UEFA president Aleksander Ceferin said: "I am deeply saddened by the horrible terrorist attack in Manchester last night. "It shocks me that so many innocent people lost their lives and I would like to send my condolences to the families of those affected." England's Football Association said "robust security measures" would be in place for Saturday's FA Cup final between Arsenal and Premier League champions Chelsea at London's Wembley Stadium. It comes just over a month after the team bus of German side Borussia Dortmund was targeted by three roadside bomb blasts prior to a Champions League home game with Monaco.

That attack, which left defender Marc Bartra with a fractured wrist, is believed to have been carried out by a man who hoped to profit from a fall in Dortmund's share price. United club captain Wayne Rooney expressed his shock on Twitter, writing: "Devastating news this morning. Thoughts and prayers are with all those affected." Former United player Cristiano Ronaldo published a picture of a British Union Jack flag bearing the word "MANCHESTER" on his social media accounts. "So sad to hear the news from Manchester," the Real Madrid superstar wrote on Instagram. —AFP



AUB wins 'Best Bank for Private Banking in Kuwait' award for 2017

KFH WINS 'TOP LISTED INSTITUTION IN KUWAIT 2017' AWARD



KUWAIT: Zain Group's Vice Chairman and CEO Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi receives a memento from Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah during a ceremony organized by Forbes Middle East to celebrate Kuwait's Success 2017 entitled "A New Vision" on Monday night.

AL-KHARAFI FEATURED PERSONALITY ON FORBES COVER

ZAIN RANKED AMONG TOP LISTED INFLUENTIAL COMPANIES IN KUWAIT BY FORBES MIDDLE EAST

KUWAIT: Forbes Middle East, a leading regional business magazine, has selected Zain Group's Vice Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi as the featured personality on the cover of its special issue to celebrate Kuwait's Success 2017 entitled "A New Vision". The new issue features and celebrates Al-Kharafi - the scion of one of Kuwait's powerful families - for playing a key role in the charge in further expanding the country's influence across the globe.

In its latest Middle East issue, the renowned magazine celebrated the successes witnessed by Kuwait, describing it as a country that is continuing heavy investment in infrastructure, transportation, and finance. The magazine also highlighted the role of private sector companies and their contributions in creating more diversity and achieving more wealth within the growing national economy.

Forbes' celebration of Kuwait's successes came for the second consecutive year, in a gala ceremony held in Kuwait on Monday night, under the patronage and presence of Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and Deputy Minister of Information. The event witnessed the presence of many prominent business leaders, CEOs, managing directors of private and public organizations, and heads of diplomatic entities from across Kuwait and the Arab world. The event also saw the recognition of Zain Group as one of the top influential companies listed on the Kuwait Stock Exchange.

Bader Al-Kharafi is one of the most active business leaders in the Middle East and North Africa region, having an exceptional record in leading business development and advisory roles within top companies as well as global institutions. Al-Kharafi is a head and member of many boards of industrial and banking institutions, in addition to his roles within Al-Kharafi Group; considered one of the biggest business groups across the Arab and global markets. The group operates a vast network of projects and companies in the Arabian Gulf, Middle East, Europe, Africa, and Asia, and enjoys a prosperous history in business and finance sectors. The group

operates over 135 registered companies across 28 countries, which are estimated to be valued over \$8 billion.

Youth development

Forbes describes Al-Kharafi as one of the main supporters of youth and aspiring entrepreneurs, as well as a strong supporter and advocate of investing in education and the development of curricula. Al-Kharafi believes the future is secured through building a firm foundation that is achieved by catering to education and youth development, as education is a continuous process that doesn't

stop at a certain age, and a person will still always keep learning throughout life. Speaking about the first and most important teacher in his life, Bader Al-Kharafi said during his Forbes ME interview: "I had the best teacher, my late father, peace be upon his soul. If I could reach only 10 percent of the successes he reached, I would be very glad."

Al-Kharafi - who has an MBA from London Business School - sees that education adds a lot to the professional experience, and is continuing his efforts to gain more education. Bader Al-Kharafi already started his Doctorate Degree in Finance, and he encourages business leaders and executives to continue pursuing education for its great importance in affecting management and business models. Forbes described Bader Al-Kharafi as a strong support-

er of youth development initiatives and an enthusiastic adopter of their ideas. He is the Vice Chairman of INJAZ, a non-profit organization that offers business and entrepreneurship programs through strategically partnering with education institutions and eager volunteers. INJAZ aims at eliminating financial illiteracy and inspiring the next generations through establishing business readiness within students from kindergarten all through the twelfth grade. In this regard, Al-Kharafi says: "Kuwait consists of a youthful demographic composition, and has young energies that need attention and care. We must prepare them

effects of increased and widespread competition, as well as into adopting the growing OTT solutions that are enhancing the mobile experience for customers.

Zain has identified service provision in the smart cities space and in B2B/enterprise sector as significant growth areas and has been investing accordingly. Such developments fall under the Zain Digital Frontier and Innovation (ZDFI) business strategy, a unit charged with launching Zain into the digital space with the view to growing the company through new innovative business streams, which add to its financial viability and market capitalization.

In return, Bader Al-Kharafi encourages the business environment within the Group's personnel - fondly known as Zainers, to adopt innovative ideas that carry creative solutions. He is keen on encouraging all employees of all administrative levels to introduce innovative initiatives that strengthens the strategic direction of the Group's operations, which he believes will create a sense of partnership between the Group and its employees.

Zain Group launched several transformative programs that have an impact on the several directions of the Information Technology and Telecommunications industry. The Group is aspiring to build a regional digital entity that operates within many sectors including e-commerce, digital content, advertising, gaming, and mobile app development, and smart city services through expanding its role in new business sectors that takes it beyond telecom.

Zain Digital Frontier and Innovation (ZDFI) will continue to focus on determining the opportunities in advertising, health, telecom, payment, as well as financial technology (Fin-Tech) through embracing the continuing development of apps. ZDFI's main aim is to push business towards innovation, with the recent creation of iflix Arabia and its recent commercial launch across Zain's footprint as one of many planned steps into the Group's entry and future expansion to digital entertainment and content.

Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi as the featured personality on the cover of the special issue to celebrate Kuwait's Success says: "My late father was the best teacher in my life, and I would be very glad to reach 10% of the success he achieved."

for professional life, and encourage them to engage in it without fear of what the future holds. We do not want generations that memorize without understanding and analyzing. We want to plant courage in their hearts and not fear from failing. Our next generations must know that failure is a part of the success journey."

Bader Al-Kharafi believes innovation in digital technology has and will continue to contribute to major changes in the business world, with clear effects of enormous increase in productivity within commercial and industrial sectors. He is now leading Zain Group into transforming to an integrated, innovative telecommunications provider that serves individuals and enterprises through the digital lifestyle experience. Through this direction, Al-Kharafi is pushing Zain into exceeding its performance despite the

stop at a certain age, and a person will still always keep learning throughout life. Speaking about the first and most important teacher in his life, Bader Al-Kharafi said during his Forbes ME interview: "I had the best teacher, my late father, peace be upon his soul. If I could reach only 10 percent of the successes he reached, I would be very glad."

Al-Kharafi - who has an MBA from London Business School - sees that education adds a lot to the professional experience, and is continuing his efforts to gain more education. Bader Al-Kharafi already started his Doctorate Degree in Finance, and he encourages business leaders and executives to continue pursuing education for its great importance in affecting management and business models. Forbes described Bader Al-Kharafi as a strong support-



Group photo

MADA TELECOM WINS SEVERAL ISO AWARDS

KUWAIT: The MADA Telecom Company announced being awarded the Quality Management System certificate ISO 9001:2015, the Environmental Management System certificate ISO 14001:2015 and the Occupational Health & Safety Management System certificate OHSAS 18001, which are usually awarded to companies with the highest management quality levels that match International specifications.



Saheb Saleh Khajah

sustainability while maintaining and protecting the surrounding environment. The International Occupational Health and Safety Management Standard; OHSAS 18001 is usually awarded for companies using standard related conditions.

Speaking on the occasion, MADA's board chairman and CEO, Saheb Saleh Khajah said that such achievement match the company's strategic priorities and vision based on providing customers with the latest wireless telecom services and quality broadband Internet services. Khajah added that MADA was working hard on becoming Kuwait and the Middle East's leading data communication service providers.

EUROZONE FMS FAIL TO CLINCH GREECE DEAL AMID IMF ROW

BRUSSELS: Eurozone finance ministers failed to reach a deal for fresh bailout cash for Greece on Monday, as a row with the International Monetary Fund over debt relief dragged on.

After more than eight hours of talks in Brussels, ministers from the 19-member single currency bloc could not settle deep differences on debt relief pitting Germany, the eurozone's most powerful member, against the IMF. "I think we are very close to that agreement, but tonight we were unable to close a possible gap between what could be done and what some of us had expected should be done or could be done," Eurogroup president Jeroen Dijsselbloem told a news conference.

He said talks would resume at the next meeting of finance ministers in June. "We need to close that (gap) by looking at additional options or by adjusting our expectations," Dijsselbloem said.

Hopes were high that the eurozone could agree on the debt question and unlock cash after Greek lawmakers tomorrow fulfilled the latest demands for painful austerity measures. The fresh reforms were to open the way to unlock the latest tranche of Greece's 2015 mega-bailout so that Athens can make a debt payment of 7.0 billion euros (\$7.8 billion) in July.

The IMF has made more debt relief a condition of taking part in Greece's third and latest 86-billion-euro (\$94-billion) bailout, agreed two years ago. Greece's debt mountain stands at a towering 180 percent of annual output, the legacy of a crisis that brought panic to the markets and nearly forced the country out of the

euro. The IMF remains far apart from Europe, especially headline Germany, on the level of need for debt relief measures.

'No excuse'

The new delay on fresh aid and debt relief will infuriate the Greek government, which pushed through the tough reforms to be ready for Monday's talks. Greek Finance Minister Euclid Tsakalotos said ahead of the crunch talks: "There is no excuse for further delay on the issue of the debt relief." Newly elected French President Emmanuel Macron said he backed debt relief for Greece in a phone call on Monday with Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras. Macron told Tsipras he was in favour of "finding a deal soon to alleviate the weight of Greece's debt over time," a statement from the presidency said.

But Macron's position put him at odds with Germany where Greek debt relief following three different bailouts since 2010 — is seen as a vote loser ahead of general elections in September.

'Wide apart'

Led by tough negotiator and former French finance minister Christine Lagarde, the IMF says Greece's debt is unsustainable and will be "explosive" in the long run, requiring a more ambitious plan from Europe. This would include dramatically extending grace periods and maturities on the loans far beyond what the eurozone has committed to so far. The question has served as a point of contention for months between the IMF and German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schauble. — AFP



WOODSTOCK: In this May 16, 2017 photo, a construction worker continues work on new town homes under construction in Woodstock, Ga. — AP

US NEW HOME SALES COOL IN APRIL

WASHINGTON: Sales of new US homes experienced a sharp slowdown in April after hitting a record in March, and prices also fell, the Commerce Department reported yesterday.

The supply of new homes showed signs of increasing somewhat in an otherwise tight market the has left homebuyers squeezed for choice. Sales of new single-family houses plunged 11.4 percent from March to an annual rate of 569,000, seasonally adjusted. However, sales for the prior month were revised sharply upward to 642,000 — the highest level since October 2007.

Analysts had been expecting a drop of only 5.8 percent in the latest month. The month-to-month decline was in large part driven by falling sales in the western United States, which tumbled 26.3 percent to 126,000, the lowest level for the region in 18 months. Even with the pullback, total sales still were 0.5 percent higher than the same month in 2016. The average sales price fell 4.4 percent to \$368,300 last month, after rising in the two prior months. The median price also fell

3.0 percent to \$309,200. Analysts noted that the housing figures are frequently erratic and the underlying trends still pointed upwards.

"April's monthly numbers are just barely statistically significant," Ralph McLaughlin, chief economist at the online real estate firm Trulia, wrote in a research note. He highlighted that the margin of error for the data was 10.5 percent. "So we should take them with a grain of salt." Sales have averaged 604,000 a month in 2017, up from 561,000 last year, according to Jim O'Sullivan of High Frequency Economics.

The estimated inventory of new homes for sale at the end of April stood at 268,000, matching March, the highest since July 2009. At the current sales pace, that represented a supply of 5.7 months, the highest since September 2015. That was up from 4.9 months in March, and 5.2 in January and February. The number of new homes for sale but still under construction stood at 157,000, the highest level since October 2008, the start of the global financial crisis. — AFP



KUWAIT: AUB General Manager Medhat Tawfik receiving the award.

AUB RECEIVES 'BEST BANK FOR PRIVATE BANKING IN KUWAIT' AWARD FOR 2017

KUWAIT: Ahli United Bank (AUB) has announced that it has received the award of the "Best Bank for Private Banking in Kuwait" for 2017 from the prestigious The Banker magazine. This is the second time the Bank has won this highly regarded award, having first received it in 2014.

The award was handed to Medhat Tawfik, AUB's General Manager Private Banking and Wealth Management, at the global award giving ceremony recently held in Dubai. Speaking on this occasion, Tawfik said he and his team were proud that AUB was awarded this important prize for the second time, particularly so because this prize is awarded by one of the industry's most prestigious financial magazines which selects the winning banks on the basis of performance indicators, service quality and



product range in the private banking and wealth management sector. He explained that the Bank won the award for the outstanding services it offers to Private Banking customers. Additionally, for the commitment to develop services and to ensure that customers' expectations and aspirations are satisfied, even exceeded, while keeping pace with the latest global banking standards. This is prompted by a pro-

found desire to provide an integrated range of private banking services through a team of highly competent relationship managers committed to serve customers in an outstanding, professional manner.

Tawfik went on to say that "the award came in recognition of the remarkable and unique efforts of AUB's team of Private Banking and Wealth Management Professionals. It also reflects our eagerness to retain the trust of our customers by providing them with comprehensive banking services of the highest standards".

Tawfik concluded "this award strongly motivates us to continue to maintain the prominent position we have attained by continuing to develop and enhance the services we offer to our customers".

MACRON FUELS GERMAN ECONOMIC OPTIMISM AS EURO-AXIS TONES UP

Ifo BUSINESS CLIMATE INDEX HITS POST-REUNIFICATION HIGH

BERLIN: Business morale in Germany hit its highest since reunification in May and an already rosy growth outlook brightened further, tapping into hopes that Berlin will ally with Paris in spearheading a broad-based economic revival in Europe.

France is Germany's second biggest trading partner and europhile Emmanuel Macron's presidential election win over far-right protectionist rival Marine Le Pen in early May has given fresh impetus to neighboring exporters.

That boost in confidence emerged in yesterday's Ifo business climate index, which jumped to 114.6 - the highest since its current data set began in 1991, the year after West and East Germany unified.

Klaus Wohlrabe, economist for the Munich-based Ifo institute, said the positive news of Macron's victory had provided a tailwind. "It is a signal that the European Union is not under acute pressure, as it was a year ago," he said. Neither the countdown to Britain's departure from the EU nor the "America first" policies of US President Donald Trump had succeeded in putting a brake on the German economy, he added.

Growth in the economy, Europe's largest, accelerated to 0.6 percent quarter on quarter in the first three months of 2017, separate data showed yesterday. The Federal Statistic Office cited strong exports, booming construction and higher spending by households and the state as factors. Germany has outpaced France in recent years, helped by record low unemployment as labour reforms similar to ones that Macron has said he also plans to implement kicked in. Since Macron took office, Chancellor Angela Merkel has stressed the lead role she believes a Franco-German axis should play at the heart of a Europe of strengthened economic reforms and deeper integration.

Good news for Merkel

She now looks odds-on to remain the pillar of that bilateral relationship beyond her country's national elections in September, for which earlier this year her conservatives were running neck-and-neck with their Social Democrat (SPD) rivals. "This impressive string of strong economic data is boosting Merkel's already good chances of getting re-elected even further," said Timo Klein, economist for Markit, which also published its composite Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) for May yesterday. The main question now was whether she could form a new coalition govern-



PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron welcomes Head of the French employers' union MEDEF Pierre Gattaz (left) and his advisers at the Elysee Palace in Paris yesterday. French President Emmanuel Macron meets unions and business organizations to simplifying France's labor code. — AP

ment with just the business-friendly Free Democrats (FDP) - as a poll published yesterday suggested - or if she would be forced into another 'grand coalition' with the SPD, he said.

Markit's PMI showed Germany's private sector grew at the fastest pace in more than six years due to stronger-than-expected factory activity. Yesterday's data prompted some observers to raise their economic forecasts. The DIH Chambers of Industry and Commerce raised its 2017 growth view to 1.8 percent from 1.6 percent. Unicredit economist Andreas Rees said growth could be as high as 2 percent. "Germany has become a powerful two-engine economy benefitting from strong domestic demand and surging global trade," he said. Ifo chief Clemens Fuest said the surge in business sentiment com-

bined with other key economic indicators pointed to growth of 0.6 percent in the second quarter. The Ifo report, based on a monthly survey of some 7,000 firms, showed that managers' assessments of the current business situation and their outlook for the coming six months both improved markedly. A sector breakdown showed the main boost came from improved sentiment in manufacturing while optimism in wholesaling and construction also rose.

"Today's strong German data add to the evidence that, not only the German economy, but the entire euro zone economy could become the positive growth surprise of 2017," ING bank economist Carsten Brzeski said. "With political risks now ebbing away, economics have quickly taken over." — Reuters

EUROPEAN ECONOMIC REBOUND SHOWING SURPRISING STRENGTH

BRUSSELS: Europe's economic recovery is showing surprising strength, as key surveys of business activity and optimism hit their highest levels in years. The data released yesterday hold out hope that the region is set to see a sustained and marked decline in its unemployment rate from the current 9.5 percent. And the good economic news could well add pressure on the European Central Bank to signal a withdrawal of its extraordinary stimulus measures.

One of the indicators the ECB looks at when assessing its policy stance is the monthly survey of business activity from financial information company IHS Markit. Once again, it was strong, with the purchasing managers' index - a broad gauge of economic activity - for the 19 countries that use the euro currency unchanged at a six-year high of 56.8 in May. The results are consistent with quarterly economic growth of 0.6-0.7 percent, higher than the first quarter's 0.5 percent growth. Chris Williamson, IHS Markit's chief economist, says the consensus forecast for second-quarter growth of 0.4 percent may

prove "overly pessimistic." He also noted that job creation has surged to the second-highest in nearly a decade as firms expand capacity and meet rising demand. The strong purchasing managers' survey comes on top of the 26-year high reached by Germany's Ifo monthly confidence index. It rose to 114.6 points for May from 113.0 in April. Economists had forecast that it would increase, but only to 114.1.

Ifo said that was the highest figure since 1991 and, along with other data, points to growth of 0.6 percent in the second quarter, matching the quarter-on-quarter growth figure of 0.6 percent for the January-March period.

Evidence

"Today's strong German data add to the evidence that, not only the German economy, but the entire eurozone economy could become the positive growth surprise of 2017," ING-Diba economist Carsten Brzeski said. "This sentiment is also spreading across financial markets, with many market partici-

pants now realizing that the eurozone economy had been written off too early."

The eurozone grew 0.5 percent in the first quarter compared to the quarter before, and 1.7 percent compared to the year-ago quarter. Germany has been the main engine behind the region's recovery from recession which began four years ago. It's been buoyed by strong exports of its cars and machinery. Stronger consumer confidence due to low unemployment of 3.9 percent has also supported the recovery. However, for the region to really push on growth has to come from all corners and a run of surveys are pointing to a pick-up, particularly in France, the eurozone's second-largest economy.

The strong data mean the eurozone is closer to no longer needing extraordinary stimulus provided by the European Central Bank through its 60 billion euros (\$67 billion) in monthly bond purchases. The purchases pump newly printed money into the economy in an attempt to raise inflation that

is considered too weak, and to protect the recovery from any new troubles. The bank has said it will continue the purchases at least through year end. — AP

BOAT for HIRE

LANDING CRAFT - 42 FT - 7 Ton Payload
Kuwait Territory

For enquiries please contact us at
"tankco@ivacs.com" or Whatsapp 99017297

TANKCO
 TANKCOKUWAIT
 TANKCOKUWAIT

LONDON STOCKS RISE DESPITE MANCHESTER ATTACK

LONDON: London stocks pushed higher yesterday despite sentiment dented by a deadly terror attack in Manchester...

with the Frankfurt DAX index climbing 0.4 percent and the Paris CAC rising 0.6 percent. "The DAX and the CAC are trading higher this morning after both countries revealed impressive flash services and manufacturing PMI figures..."

Eurozone motors forward

The eurozone economy grew at its fastest pace in six years in May as job creation in Europe picked up to its highest level in a decade...

investors continued to look beyond doubts about the prospects for President Donald Trump's policy agenda and focus on improving economic conditions following strong data overseas. About 10 minutes into trading, the Dow Jones Industrial Average stood at 20,927.86...

Asia slips

Asian markets mostly turned lower yesterday as profit-taking overshadowed a healthy lead from Wall Street overnight. Global stocks had rallied Monday, with energy firms benefiting from a surge in oil prices as OPEC and Russia look set to extend an output cut...

Tokyo's benchmark Nikkei 225 index eased 0.12 percent, or 24.32 points, to 19,653.96 by the break, while the Topix index of all first-section shares ticked up 0.02 percent, or 0.33 points, to 1,567.98...

York and 111.35 yen in Asia earlier Monday. The US unit was also under pressure after The Washington Post reported that US President Donald Trump had asked two top US intelligence officials in March to help push back against the FBI investigation into his campaign's possible links with Russia.

However, there was none of the turmoil that rocked markets last week on fears about Trump's economy-boosting agenda with his presidency engulfed in a crisis over his firing of FBI chief James Comey and allegations he disclosed sensitive intelligence to Russian officials.

Investors are also waiting to see details of Trump's 2018 budget, with previews showing he want to slash billions in social spending over 10 years but boost military spending. "When there's clarity on the US budget plan, it may ease concern over how the investigation over ties to Russia will impact the administration's ability to execute policies..."

Chinese restaurant chain Totenkō jumped 14.05 percent to 211 yen, after Tokyo's Uno zoo said it would take its female giant panda out of a public viewing area, fuelling hopes that she is pregnant...

Daily Kuwait Stock Exchange Report Monday 22 May 2017. Table with columns: Index, Change, Closing, Last Closing, High, Low. Includes sub-sections for Trades, Security, Volume, Value (KWD), Number of Trades, and various stock categories like Oil & Gas, Basic Materials, Industrials, Consumer Goods, Health Care, Telecommunications, Banks, Investment Instruments, Technology, Parallel Market, and Insurance.

National Bank of Kuwait Financial Markets Daily Report. Includes a line chart, Global Stock Indices table, MENA Stock Indices table, Global Currencies Exchange Rate table, MENA Currencies Exchange Rate table, Global Interest Rates table, Global Bond Yields table, and Commodities table.

KFH WINS 'TOP LISTED INSTITUTION IN KUWAIT 2017' AWARD FORBES MIDDLE EAST AWARD RECOGNIZES BANK'S ROLE IN BOOSTING GROWTH



KUWAIT: KFH Group Chief Executive Officer Mazin Saad Al-Nahedh receives the award at a ceremony from Forbes Middle East in presence of Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah.

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) won "Top Listed Institution in Kuwait 2017" award from "Forbes Middle East" magazine in an award ceremony held at J W Marriot to celebrate top institutions, businesses and individuals that represent the backbone of resilient and prosperous economy.

KFH-Group Chief Executive Officer, Mazin Saad Al-Nahedh received the award at a VIP gala dinner and ceremony from Forbes Middle East in presence of Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah and a number of dignitaries and businessmen from various sectors in Kuwait and the region.

Al-Nahedh takes pride in receiving the award, indicating that it reflects the international recognition of the bank while represents a new impetus for further achievements and leadership in the banking industry. He said that the award recognizes the bank's instrumental role in boosting economic growth in Kuwait.

Meanwhile, Forbes Middle East Magazine applauded KFH's performance and prestigious status, indicating that it is the first Islamic bank established in Kuwait in 1977. KFH has a global integrated operations leading

the Islamic finance industry globally, and offering a suite of financial Islamic services and products. KFH's group banking network spans across seven regions worldwide, with 480 branches, over 990 ATMs and approximately 15,400 employees. "Forbes" added that the award recognizes KFH's robust financial position and its contributions in the economic development. It reflects the bank's capabilities to encounter crisis and efficiently manage risk thanks to its investment diversification and geographical expansions locally, regionally and globally. The ranking of the top companies is measured based on four metrics: sales, net profits, assets and market value as of May 2017.

KFH was established in Kuwait in 1977 and is enlisted in the Kuwait Stock Exchange. KFH Group is a global pioneer in the field of Islamic banking services, where it offers a wide array of Islamic products and services, not to mention a high standard of innovation and client service. KFH manages its operations in the GCC, Asia, and Europe through over 480 branches, including KFH-Turkey, in order to offer services for the bank's clients in Turkey, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Germany, Jordan and Dubai.

INVESTORS SKEPTICAL FORD CEO CHANGE WILL REVIVE STOCK PRICE

NEW YORK: Ford Motor Co's unexpected decision to replace its chief executive officer on Monday may not be the catalyst that revives its slumping share prices.

Shares of the second-largest US automaker rose 2.1 percent Monday, a relatively muted reaction given the 0.5 percent gain in the broad Standard & Poor's 500 index. Over the last 12 months, shares of Ford are down nearly 16 percent due to concerns of declining automobile sales and the threat of autonomous vehicles to shrink future demand.

The S&P 500 index has jumped nearly 17 percent over the same time, while shares of competitor General Motors Co are up about 8 percent and shares of electronic vehicle pioneer Tesla Inc are up nearly 41 percent. "There's just nothing out there that looks like it will get the stock moving," said Gary Bradshaw, an analyst at Dallas-based Hodges Capital, who said that he attended a luncheon with outgoing CEO Mark Fields about two months ago in which Fields pressed the portfolio managers sitting around him about why they were not buying shares in the company.

The change in the company's leadership does not solve the structural problems facing the industry, said Bradshaw, who does not own shares in the company and does not plan on adding them.

"GM is in the same boat. They don't have a car out there like a Tesla that is getting people excited and saying they need to buy it," he said.

One significant auto investor who declined to be named said the CEO change would probably not be a catalyst for the stock. "The company hasn't kept pace with innovation, and the sector faces long-term problems," the person said.

At \$51 billion, the market valuation of Tesla Motors is larger than both Ford and General Motors at a time when the company is not profitable, in large part due to expectations that it has greater growth potential than its more established rivals. Ford, which announced plans to cut 1,400 white-collar positions last week, is expected to look at further significant cost cuts in the next three to six months, company officials told Reuters.

Ford's lower stock price could also be

due to far lower buy-back spending than GM's, analysts said. Ford's buy-back spending - net retirement of stock - was \$145 billion or \$2.6 billion over five years, with the bulk coming in 2014 which was a one-time buy-back to offset the dilution of both stock that was going to come onto market from an employee stock ownership plan and from convertible notes that were due to become exercisable for conversion to shares.

GM's buy-back spending was \$2.5 billion last year and \$16.8 billion over five years. Ford has a dividend yield of 5.5 percent, versus General Motors of 4.6 percent. Ford has felt less pressure from outside activists to undertake efforts to boost its share price, in large part because the Ford family, which holds nearly 40 percent of the voting power among shareholders. GM, by comparison, has fended off calls from well-known hedge funds like David Einhorn's Greenlight Capital, which has pressed the company to split the company's stock.

Ford's new chief executive, James Hackett, who had been overseeing its division focused on self-driving cars, has a reputation as a turnaround artist for guiding changes at furniture maker Steelcase Inc that helped it regain its market leading position, though those reforms did not always benefit shareholders. Over the 18 years that Hackett oversaw Steelcase as a public company, the stock fell by more than 55 percent and delivered a total return, including reinvested dividends of negative 22.3 percent, or an annualized total return under his tenure of negative 1.54 percent. By contrast, the S&P 500 generated an annualized total return over the same run of 5.62 percent.

Notably, on both a price and total return basis, Steelcase underperformed its main competitors like Herman Miller Inc and HNI Corp by substantial margins on a cumulative basis. Other management changes at the company could be coming as Hackett attempts to reposition the company for a new era of electric vehicles and autonomous driving, said Adam Jonas, an analyst at Morgan Stanley. That could mean that "the earnings situation may need to get materially worse before it gets better," he wrote in a note Monday. — Reuters



AMMAN: Shadi Zahran speaking on the panel.

KFH PARTICIPATES IN GLOBAL FORUM FOR ISLAMIC BANKING INSTITUTIONS ZAHRAN CHAIRS OPENING PANEL ON REGULATORY DEVELOPMENTS

AMMAN: Group Chief Financial Officer at Kuwait Finance House (KFH) Shadi Zahran, participated in the second Global Forum of the General Council for Islamic Banks and Financial Institutions (CIBAFI), held for two days in Amman, Jordan.

Zahran chaired the opening panel themed "Macroeconomic Outlook and Global Regulatory Developments". This panel brought together Executive Director and Head of the Middle East MSCI - UAE, Robert Ansari, Director & Senior Economist, Japan Bank for International Cooperation - Dr. Etsuaki Yoshida in addition to Special Advisor to the President, Islamic Development Bank Group - Dr. Omar Zohair Hafiz.

Speaking on the panel, Zahran said that the geopolitical instability and the increasing uncertainty makes investments decisions very hard, indicating volatility in oil prices significantly impacts the global economy, where it causes inflation, consumption and affecting demand curve, besides deteriorating oil sector while non-oil activities remain strong.

He added that the UK contributes only 3.6 percent of the world imports of merchandise

goods, and 4.1 percent commercial services, indicating the Brexit would impact Europe and would put certain investments on hold.

He discussed during the panel the concern of optimistic views in global financial markets with the fact that the value of many assets is overstated along with not considering increasing global political risks, low yield, not to mention the limited growth and cost of financing.

He discussed the regulatory and economic policies makers' response, and how that affects the banking business models. Also, the panel witnessed a discussion on topics of tighter capital & liquidity requirements, stress tests, increasing costs of control & governance, in addition to the IFRS 9 provisioning on the basis of expected loss.

The CIBAFI Global Forum brought together top notch Islamic finance experts, and diverse range of decision makers, regulatory bodies and industry leaders to discuss the most significant recent developments of Islamic finance and the major issuers in this regard. The forum was attended by over 200 participants from 30 countries.

CIBAFI is an international organization estab-

lished in 2001 and Headquartered in the Kingdom of Bahrain. CIBAFI is affiliated with the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). CIBAFI represents the Islamic financial services industry globally, defending and promoting its role, consolidating cooperation among its members, and with other institutions with similar interests and objectives. With over 120 members from over 30 jurisdictions, representing market players, international intergovernmental organizations, professional firms, and industry associations, CIBAFI is recognized as a key piece in the international architecture of Islamic finance. In its mission to support Islamic financial services industry by being the leading industry voice advocating regulatory, financial and economic policies that are in the broad interest of our members and that foster the development of the Islamic financial services industry and sound industry practice, CIBAFI is guided by its Strategic Objectives, which are Policy and Regulatory Advocacy, Research and Publications, Awareness and Information Sharing, in addition to Professional Development.

CEOs OF US COMPANIES GOT BIGGEST RAISE SINCE 2013

NEW YORK: The typical CEO at the biggest US companies got an 8.5 percent raise last year, raking in \$11.5 million in salary, stock and other compensation last year, according to a study by executive data firm Equilar for The AP. That's the biggest raise in three years.

The bump reflects how well stocks have done under these CEOs' watch. Boards of directors increasingly require that CEOs push their stock price higher to collect their maximum possible payout, and the Standard & Poor's 500 index returned 12 percent last year.

Over the last five years, median CEO pay in the survey has jumped by 19.6 percent, not accounting for inflation. That's nearly double the 10.9 percent rise in the typical weekly paycheck for full-time employees across the country.

But CEO pay did fall for one group of companies last year: those where investors complained the loudest about executive pay. Compensation dropped for nine of the 10 companies scoring the lowest on "Say on Pay" votes, where shareholders give thumbs up or down on top executives' earnings.

Other measures that would highlight the income gap between CEOs and typical workers are on the way, but governance watchdogs worry that Congress will kill or dilute their strength.

"It's all out of whack right now," said Heather Slavkin Corzo, director of the AFL-CIO Office of Investment, which says CEOs for major US companies make 347 times more than the average worker.

The top five

The highest-paid executive in the survey was Thomas Rutledge of Charter Communications, which absorbed Time Warner Cable and Bright House Networks last year to become the nation's second-largest cable operator.

His compensation totaled \$98 million, about \$88 million of that from stock and option awards included as part of a new five-year employment agreement. For Rutledge to collect the full



This photo combination of images shows the top 10 highest paid CEOs in 2016. On top row, from left: Charter Communications CEO Thomas Rutledge; CBS CEO Leslie Moonves; Walt Disney CEO Robert Iger; Discovery Communications CEO David Zaslav and Activision Blizzard CEO Robert Kotick. On bottom row, from left: Comcast CEO Brian Roberts; Time Warner CEO Jeffrey Bewkes; IBM CEO Virginia Rometty; Regeneron Pharmaceuticals CEO Leonard Schleifer and Wynn Resorts CEO Stephen Wynn. — AP

amount, Charter's share price will need to rise 155 percent over six years. CEOs typically got more than half their total compensation from stock and option grants last year.

The lesson from the rest of the top five: How lucrative the entertainment business can be. No 2 on the survey was Leslie Moonves at CBS, who made \$68.6 million. That included \$63.9 million in bonus and stock awards the company's board said he received for presiding over a 36.6 percent return for CBS shares in 2016 and for keeping CBS the top-rated network in the 2015-16 season, among other performance measures.

No. 3 was Walt Disney's Robert Iger, at \$41 million. That was 6 percent less than the year before, as slowing growth resulted in a bonus cut. Fourth-highest at \$37.2 million was David Zaslav

of Discovery Communications, whose networks include TLC and Animal Planet. Roughly 70 percent of that was from stock and option awards.

No 5 was Activision Blizzard's Robert Kotick, whose compensation surged 358 percent to \$33.1 million. That was almost entirely due to \$24.9 million in stock awards he received as part of a new five-year employment agreement. To get them, the company's earnings per share must hit a certain level, among other financial targets.

Kotick may not make the top five this year. His 2017 salary was cut by 26 percent to \$1.8 million after many shareholders said they were upset about how much Activision Blizzard executives were making. The company also eliminated his guarantee for an annual salary increase. — AP

CHINA'S IMPORTS FROM NORTH KOREA SINK AS COAL BAN BITES

BEIJING: China's imports of North Korean goods in April fell below \$100 million to the lowest in nearly three years, data showed yesterday, after China stopped buying coal from the isolated country and as calls mount for further economic sanctions.

Neighboring China is North Korea's biggest trade partner, and the data indicates that China's halt of North Korean coal imports on Feb. 26 is having an impact and curbing Pyongyang's ability to raise hard currency through exports. The world's second-largest economy bought goods worth \$99.3 million in April from North Korea, the lowest monthly tally since at least June 2014, according to Chinese customs data. Previous data was not available.

That compares with \$114.6 million in March and \$167.7 million a year earlier. A fifth of the April total was iron ore imports, which hit 285,000 tons, their highest since August 2014. That was up 10 percent from a month earlier and 2-1/2 times higher than a year earlier. US President Donald Trump has been urging China to put more pressure on North Korea to step back from its nuclear and missile programs, and lavished praise on President Xi Jinping last month for efforts to do so.

At a regular briefing yesterday, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said Beijing's actions were not aimed at proving anything to anyone else.

"This is our international obligation as a responsible member of the international community and permanent member of the UN Security Council," she said. Cho Bong-hyun, who heads research on North Korea's economy at IBK Bank in Seoul, said China's imports from North Korea were likely to continue to decline due to Pyongyang's repeated missile tests and the suspension of coal shipments to China. "This won't be disastrous for North Korea, but it will obviously hurt

North Korea because it tends to export goods to China worth around \$3 billion per year," he said.

The value of imports from North Korea has fallen month-on-month since December, the data showed.

Chinese sales down

China's exports to North Korea eased to \$288.2 million in April, down 12 percent from March. Exports for the first four months of the year were up 32 percent at \$1 billion. Diesel shipments to North Korea in April more than halved from March to 2,606 tons and gasoline sales dropped 6 percent to 13,496 tonnes. North Korea gets most of its oil needs from China.

Crude oil exports from China to North Korea have not been disclosed by customs for several years, but sources have put it at about 520,000 tons a year. Cutting off oil to North Korea for an extended period would be a crippling measure that analysts have said they don't expect China would take.

Pyeonggang does not publish economic data. North Korea fired a ballistic missile into waters off its east coast on Sunday, the second test in a week in defiance of United Nations Security Council resolutions.

In a statement posted yesterday, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi urged North Korea not to violate UN resolutions on its nuclear and missile programs. Washington has weighed tougher economic sanctions on Pyongyang, including an oil embargo, a global ban on its airline, intercepting cargo ships and punishing Chinese banks that do business with Pyongyang.

China is North Korea's chief ally but has become increasingly frustrated by Pyongyang's provocative behavior, but opposes any retaliatory action that would destabilize or threaten the regime of Kim Jong Un. — Reuters

KIPCO'S GROUP CFO RECOGNIZED BY IBPC IN KUWAIT

KUWAIT: The Indian Business and Professional Council (IBPC) in Kuwait has recognized Pinak Maitra, Group Chief Financial Officer at KIPCO - Kuwait Projects Company (Holding), for his career success and contributions to strengthening Kuwaiti-Indian business ties.

Maitra was among a number of prominent Kuwaiti and Indian personalities who were recognized for their achievements. The event was held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel.

Commenting on the award, Maitra said: "I am humbled to be receiving this award. I have long believed that belonging to a community means giving back to it, and the IBPC's efforts to foster relations between the Kuwaiti and Indian business communities is an embodiment of this. I am honored to be among

such distinguished personalities who not only have worked to strengthen our business ties, but have also made considerable social contributions to our community in Kuwait."

Maitra joined KIPCO in 1988. He was appointed Financial Controller in 1991 and Group CFO in 1996, and has since been leading the Group planning and performance analysis function. He is a Board Member of Burgan Bank, OSN and PKC Advisory. He won the MENA Private Sector CFO of the Year award in 2008. In 2011, he won the first MENA region CFO of the Year award, organized by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of England and Wales. In 2016, he was named among the 'Top Indian Business Leaders in the Arab World (Executives)' by Forbes Middle East.



KUWAIT: Pinak Maitra (right) receiving recognition from Gurvinder S Lamba of the IBPC

The IBPC is a non-profit, non-commercial platform that cultivates networks between Kuwait and India across various sectors. Its seeks to strengthen commercial, business, cultural and friendly relations between the two countries by holding seminars and inviting business delegations from India.

The KIPCO Group is one of the biggest holding companies in the Middle East and North Africa, with consolidated assets of US\$ 33 billion as at 31 March 2017. The Group has significant ownership interests in over 60 companies operating across 24 countries. The group's main business sectors are financial services, media, real estate and manufacturing. Through its core companies, subsidiaries and affiliates, KIPCO also has interests in the education and medical sectors.

KIB BAGS AWARD FOR 'BEST STRATEGIC VISION IN BANKING'

KUWAIT: As a continuation of its outstanding track record of accomplishments, Kuwait International Bank (KIB) was recently awarded 'Best Strategic Vision in Banking' at the 2017 Arab Banks Awards & Commendations of Excellence ceremony. The ceremony took place in Beirut and was organized by the World Union of Arab Bankers (WUAB).

Chairman of KIB, Sheikh Mohammed Jarrah Al-Sabah, received the award during a special ceremony organized by the WUAB; the organization which currently has more than 500 members from across the region. The ceremony was attended by a number of leaders in the banking and financial world, as well as several prominent figures, both regionally and internationally. Additionally, during the ceremony, The Banking Executive magazine, recognized and commemorated the outstanding achievements of several distinguished Arab banks.

This award serves as a testament to KIB's outstanding leadership in the local banking sector, as it continues to carve a place for itself within Kuwait's economic landscape. The Bank continues to implement a focused approach, which has positively reflected on its performance and contributed to the success of its strategic objectives. Recognizing KIB's excellence in several key areas, the award honored KIB's continuous focus on innovation; its implementation of the highest standards of professional integrity; its commitment to sustainable practices; its efforts to ensure the satisfaction of customer needs and interests; its ability to provide stand-out prod-

ucts and services; its strategic risk management; its ability to attract highly skilled talent and develop employees; as well as its sustained growth in profits, stemming from its outstanding financial performance.

On this occasion, Al-Jarrah expressed his delight at receiving the award on behalf of KIB: "I am honored to receive this prestigious award on behalf of the Bank. Through our hard work, commitment and focused vision, we have managed to come a long way since our inception. We at KIB strongly believe that our success is built upon our visionary outlook. Today, KIB is a leading Islamic bank, locally and regionally, and I am proud to say is continuously being recognized for its pioneering, forward-thinking strategy that has driven its continuous success."

Al-Jarrah pointed out that KIB's successful strategic vision stems from its belief in the importance of encompassing all aspects of performance and operations. This includes operational excellence, customer satisfaction, optimization of products and services, as well as enhanced customer service levels for both individuals and institutions.

Over the past several years, KIB has garnered a number of prestigious awards and recognitions. These accomplishments are a testament to the Bank's excellence and leading reputation within the local and regional banking industry, which is credited to its continuous focus on customer satisfaction, specialized products and services, and its commitment to maintaining the highest banking standards within all its operations.



CEO and Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors of ALARGAN International Real Estate Company Eng Khaled Al-Mashaan



Director of the Master Planning Department at Kuwait Municipality and President of the Kuwait Society of Engineers Eng Saad Muhailli

KUWAIT ON TRACK TO MEET ITS AMBITIOUS HOUSING TARGETS

KUWAIT HOUSING AND RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT FORUM MEETS

KUWAIT: Senior representatives from the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW), Supreme Council of Planning and Development (MOP), Kuwait Municipality and Ministry of Electricity and Water (MEW) have gathered yesterday for the 'Kuwait Housing and Residential Development Forum' to discuss best practice engineering, design and project planning in order to meet Kuwait's ambitious housing targets set by the PAHW.

With over 100,000 people awaiting housing by the Public Authority for Housing Welfare, the Forum has been organized to bring together key



Eng Naser Khraibut, Director of Planning at Public Authority for Housing Welfare

update provided a good opportunity for investors, developers and contractors to understand the current opportunities in the Kuwaiti residential market.

High on the agenda for discussion at the summit was an update on the Energy Conservation codes of Practice by Dr Adnan A Al-Homoud, Vice Chairman of the Code Approval Committee from MEW. The codes have been revised to ensure sustainable design initiatives are implemented across Kuwait's commercial buildings. The MEW is encouraging that similar practices are to be implemented across the residential sector. In an era of low oil prices and potential electricity subsidy cuts, it is now more important than ever for housing and residential communities to be designed sustainably.

Key to delivering ambitious housing targets and developing smart, sustainable urban communities is the adoption of PPP models.

Eng. Khaled Al-Mashaan, CEO and Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors of ALARGAN International Real Estate Company and part of the sponsor and speaker faculty of the conference, highlighted the 'need today to develop affordable communities that provide high quality residential and mixed-use spaces that ensure sustainable urban development'. He said that, 'a strategy regulated by government authorities and executed in partnership with the private

sector can deliver this said need. With our experience at ALARGAN, in building across the region (KSA, Oman, Bahrain) we have the expertise that will ensure sustainable long-term energy-efficient developments that will best serve their communities.'

The Forum provided a rare opportunity for all key government stakeholders to come together and address the challenges within the Kuwaiti housing market and network with contractors, developers and solution providers offering state-of-the-art sustainable design solutions to develop Kuwait's future cities.

IQPC provides business executives around the world with tailored practical conferences, large scale events, topical seminars and training programs, keeping them up-to-date with industry trends, technological developments and the regulatory landscape. IQPC conferences are market leading "must-attend" events for their respective industries.

IQPC produces more than 1,700 events annually around the world, and continues to grow. Founded in 1973, IQPC now has offices in major cities across six continents including: Bengaluru, Berlin, Dubai, Johannesburg, London, New York, Singapore, Sydney, Tampa, and Toronto. IQPC leverages a global research base of best practices to produce an unrivalled portfolio of conferences.



DOLLAR STRUGGLES NEAR 6-1/2 MONTH LOW

LONDON: The dollar struggled to recover ground against other major currencies yesterday as stronger German data and low 10-year US Treasury yields offset signs investors were ready to take some profit on its worst week of losses in a year.

Moves on major markets were tight, with the common denominator still a weaker greenback, down 0.1 percent against the yen, and as much as 0.7 percent against a resurgent New Zealand dollar.

But despite another strong batch of numbers from flash European purchasing manager surveys and a rise in German business morale to an all-time high, the euro was slightly lower in midday trading in Europe. "US political risk obviously has come very much to the front of market attention in the past week," said Lee Hardman, a currency economist with Japan's MUFG in London.

"But from here, to us most of the correction on the dollar has already happened. For it to extend much further we need to see further disappointing data from the United

States." By 1155 GMT, the dollar index had recovered to stand roughly flat on the day at 96.972, off a 6-1/2 month low of 96.797 hit mid-session on Monday. It traded at 111.17 yen and \$1.1216 per euro, having traded at \$1.1268 - its weakest since Donald Trump's election as US president last November. The euro was strengthened on Monday by comments from German leader Angela Merkel, who said a euro that was "too weak" was the cause of Germany's massive trade surplus.

Berlin is likely to hear more grumbling, particularly from a Washington administration that has made noises about the dollar's strength, at a meeting of Group of Seven leaders in Italy this weekend.

But it is a fall in US data and growing concern over a White House that has failed so far to deliver on grand promises on border taxes, spending and capital repatriation that have dominated the past two weeks. The dollar is now down around 7 percent for this year, handing back all of its gains after Trump's election last year. — Reuters



Dr Khaled A Al-Mahdi, Secretary General for the Supreme Council of Planning and Development

government ministries, private developers, contractors and consultants to discuss new partnerships, engineering and design strategies for the delivery of five new cities on the outskirts of Kuwait. The Forum kicked off with a keynote address from Dr Khaled A Al-Mahdi, Secretary General for the Supreme Council of Planning and Development, Kuwait. He outlined the strategy for Kuwait's National Development Plan. The plan has been branded the 'New Kuwait' and amongst a host of other aims, will build on the current momentum in the housing sector by launching more master plans for further large scale developments.

Following Dr Khaled A Mahdi, Eng Naser Khraibut, Director of Planning at PAHW, delivered an update on Kuwait's residential developments including, South Al-Mutlaa, the largest housing project in Kuwait and South Saad Al-Abdullah, a new smart city being developed in conjunction with the Korean government. The

NIGERIAN ECONOMY SHRINKS BY 0.5%

ABUJA: Nigeria's economy contracted for a fifth straight quarter, official figures showed yesterday, as low oil production dented overall output. Gross domestic product shrank by 0.5 percent in the first three months of 2017, an improvement from a 1.7 percent fall in the last quarter of 2016, said Nigeria's National Bureau of Statistics. Despite an encouraging pick-up of momentum in the non-oil sector, the latest reading disappointed expectations of a modest recovery and an exit out of a debilitating recession. "It's worse than what we'd expected," said John Ashbourne, Africa economist at London-based Capital Economics. "But if you remove oil, non-oil GDP increased. Manufacturing picked up and construction picked up," Ashbourne said, "it's a pretty positive set of figures in the sense that the contraction is easing."

As a result of attacks on oil and gas infrastructure in the oil-producing swamplands, last year production fell to a low of 1.4 million barrels per day (bpd) and Nigeria's growth contracted by 1.5 percent. "The numbers still show a contraction, although at least the hemorrhage has stopped," said Cheta Nwanze, research head at SBM Intelligence, a Lagos-based advisory firm, "I'm cautious because we are growing too slowly." Growth is likely to pick up in the next quarter if there are no new attacks on oil and gas infrastructure. Economists say a new government policy increasing the availability of foreign exchange is already yielding positive results. "Given the weak base, double-digit oil sector growth is possible going forward, even given compliance with OPEC oil production cuts which may take effect following this week's meeting," said Razia Khan, Africa economist at Standard Chartered Bank. — AFP



SSH GM Khalil Alonazi (right) with AEP GM Dr Hassan Qasem

ALTERNATIVE ENERGY PROJECTS SIGNS AGREEMENT WITH SSH

KUWAIT: Alternative Energy Projects Company - a member of the KIPCO Group - has signed an agreement with SSH, one of the leading master planning, infrastructure, building design, construction supervision and project management firms in the Middle East. As per the agreement, AEP will provide consultation on alternative energy solutions for SSH's future projects in Kuwait and the Gulf region.

On this occasion, Dr Hassan Qasem, AEP's General Manager said: "Seeking alternative ener-

gy resources and energy conservation are highly feasible today, as renewable and clean energy sources have a lower impact on the environment. As such, it is important to incorporate means to conserve energy in the preliminary designs of any project, thereby reducing the cost of implementing such systems after construction."

AEP is specialized in renewable energy systems and provides consultative services on energy conservation, thus providing innovative solutions to its customers.



TOKYO: A man looks at an electronic stock board showing Japan's Nikkei 225 index at a securities firm yesterday in Tokyo. — AP



ALGHANIM MOTORS DISPLAYS LOTUS EVORA 400

EXCLUSIVE OFFER INCLUDES 3-YEAR FREE SERVICE, FREE FULL INSURANCE FOR A YEAR

KUWAIT: Alghanim Motors, the exclusive distributor of Lotus in Kuwait, has displayed the fastest Lotus road car of the New Millennium, the Evora 400 at Salhiya from May 15th - 22nd, 2017.

Alghanim Motors gave all Lotus fans a chance to see the legendary Evora 400 up close and take advantage of a unique opportunity that offers them a peace of mind. By offering them a financial solution with an installment plan starting from KD 625, it included the following: 3-year unlimited mileage warranty that includes a 3-year free service and free full insurance for a one complete year.

There has been no better time for customers to get behind the wheel of the Evora 400.

Evora 400 Specifications

The new Lotus Evora 400 is the latest pure and focused supercar from Lotus, combining high performance with the legendary Lotus benchmark handling. With a maximum speed of 300 kilometers per hour, and an acceleration of 0-100 kilometers in 4.2 seconds, the new Evora is a more agile and involving drive that enables it to lap the challenging test track at the Lotus Headquarters in

Hethel, Norfolk at a scintillating six seconds faster than previous models.

Over two thirds of the Lotus Evora 400 is new, including its supercharged and charge-cooled mid-mounted 3.5-liter V6 engine that produces a horsepower of 400 and 410 Nm of torque. A new aluminum chassis incorporates a new interior, and the lightweight composite body has changed significantly both in the front and rear of the miracle car.

The new Evora is 22 kilograms lighter, an accomplishment that has been achieved through careful and clever design and attention to details. This weight reduction is even more

impressive considering that the supercar has more power and a higher standard specification than before.

Alghanim Motors is dedicated to providing customers with superior products, outstanding service and other features that have positioned the company as a leader in the automotive market. Add the thrill of finesse and powerful drives by visiting Alghanim Motors' Lotus showroom at Shuwaikh Industrial 1, block 1, street 11 opposite of the Historical Vintage and Classic Cars Museum on Saturday to Thursday starting from 9 am until 12.30 pm and 4.30 pm until 8.30 pm.

MANAGEENGINE MAKES PRIVILEGED ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT SIMPLE

DUBAI: ManageEngine, the real-time IT management company, yesterday announced that it is making privileged account management ridiculously simple with the new user interface for Password Manager Pro. Available immediately, the latest version of the company's privileged account management (PAM) solution features an updated user interface with dramatically improved aesthetics, usability and performance to simplify and expedite password management operations. The solution is being showcased at GISEC 2017 at the ManageEngine stand.

Most security incidents involve administrative credentials and the exploitation of privileged access, so organizations of all types and sizes are making privileged account security a priority. However, most PAM solutions are so complex and hostile to users that IT teams must hire consultants to get started and spend too much time learning and managing the solution instead of performing their IT management tasks. Password Manager Pro changes all that by bringing in consumer product design for enterprise software.



Rajesh Ganesan, director of product management at ManageEngine

"With technology in the hands of everyone in an organization, privileged access isn't just an IT concern anymore," said Rajesh Ganesan, director of product management at ManageEngine. "The complexity and boredom associated with traditional enterprise software are often barriers to enterprise-wide adoption. We have reimaged the user interface of Password Manager Pro to take it to teams beyond IT, using a contemporary design language that ensures speed, efficiency and ease of use."

Simplifying PAM

Built on a state-of-the-art JavaScript model-view-controller (MVC) platform, the new Password Manager Pro UI offers a sleek, modern look that reinforces its intuitive user experience. The new UI is optimized for large enterprises with highlights that include:

- **Faster loading:** Pages load 10 times faster, resulting in increased productivity. Even extremely complex and resource-intensive data fetching operations take no more than three seconds.
- **Smarter operations:** Admins perform fewer keystrokes and clicks to execute tasks. End users gain one-click access to

IT systems. Single window operation with minimal pop-ups keeps users focused on their tasks.

- **Quicker navigation:** Navigate between tabs quicker than ever before as data can be accessed without page reloads.

- **Informative dashboard:** A new dashboard with live feeds, reports and graphs provides a unified view of privileged accounts usage, managed IT resources and a quick overview of privileged access in the organization.

- **Consistent elements:** Consistent design elements, icons and widgets across pages create a simple, intuitive user experience of the solution.

- **Customizable columns:** Users can now control how their information is displayed in the UI. They can drag-and-drop, rearrange, collapse or expand columns to their preference.

Since its launch ten years ago, Password Manager Pro has always kept pace with the latest design trends and has consistently been recognized for ease of use while also perfectly meeting the scalability, performance, security, compliance and integration demands of large enterprises. The new UI design marks a huge leap over the solution's already best-in-class user experience. In a recent report, "The Forrester Wave(tm): Privileged Identity Management, Q3 2016," independent research firm Forrester Research Inc. indicated that ManageEngine Password Manager Pro offered the most up-to-date and intuitive user interface.

"With existing regulations like ISO and PCI and upcoming ones like GDPR, privileged account management is a critical challenge every business must address," said Alexander Phillips, head of enterprise management at MicroNova, a long-time partner of ManageEngine in Germany. "Password Manager Pro is seeing tremendous growth in the European region, and it is exciting that ManageEngine is giving this user interface an upgrade, which is game-changing in this space. This is going to drive enterprisewide adoption, which is important to ensure compliance to various regulations."

Pricing and availability

Password Manager Pro (version 9.0) is available immediately. In addition to a fully functional, free, 30-day evaluation edition, Password Manager Pro is available as Free, Standard, Premium and Enterprise editions. Standard edition prices start at \$495 per year for two administrators. Premium edition prices start at \$1,195 per year for five administrators. Enterprise edition prices start at \$2,995 per year for 10 administrators (no restrictions on the number of end users and managed passwords).

SONY CHIEF SAYS MAJOR TURNAROUND COMPLETE

TOKYO: Sony chief executive Kazuo Hirai yesterday hailed a years-long company restructuring as a success, but said struggles in its movie business remain a "pressing issue". The 56-year-old company veteran was tapped five years ago to lead a major overhaul at the once-iconic company, which was suffering from huge losses largely tied to a hard-hit consumer electronics business. After years of layoffs and asset sales, Sony is on track to report a 500 billion yen operating profit this fiscal year, its highest in two decades. "We've done significant work on downsizing or restructuring the business," Hirai told reporters at a corporate strategy briefing.

"The major downsizing is complete. The biggest factor is that our consumer electronics business, which struggled for many years, has turned into a division with stable profitability," he added. Sony's bleeding television business—which Hirai had refused to sell despite calls to dump the unit—is now back to profitability as the firm focuses on producing fewer models with an eye on the higher-end market.

South Korean and Taiwanese rivals have battered higher-cost Japanese TV makers, including Sony and Sharp. "We changed our strategy to go after profitability rather than focus on the size of the business," Hirai said, referring to the TV unit. — AFP



WUZHEN: China's 19-year-old Go player Ke Jie (left) makes a move during the first match against Google's artificial intelligence program AlphaGo in Wuzhen, east China's Zhejiang province yesterday. It's man vs machine this week from May 23 to 27 as Google's artificial intelligence program AlphaGo faces the world's top-ranked Go player in a contest expected to end in another victory for rapid advances in AI. — AFP

AI WINS AS GOOGLE ALGORITHM BEATS NUMBER 1 GO PLAYER

ADVENT OF GROUND-BREAKING NEW FORM OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

SHANGHAI: Google's computer algorithm AlphaGo narrowly beat the world's top-ranked player in the ancient Chinese board game of Go yesterday, reaffirming the arrival of what developers tout as a ground-breaking new form of artificial intelligence.

AlphaGo took the first of a scheduled three games against brash 19-year-old Chinese world number one Ke Jie, who after the match announced the programme as the new "Go god".

AlphaGo stunned the Go community and futurists a year ago when it trounced South Korean grandmaster Lee Se-Dol four games to one. That marked the first time a computer program had beaten a top player in a full contest and was hailed as a landmark for artificial intelligence (AI).

This week's match-up in the eastern Chinese city of Wuzhen, between Ke and an updated version of AlphaGo, has been highly anticipated amid speculation about whether AI could beat the world's top player. But a visibly flummoxed Ke—who last year had declared he would never lose to an AI opponent—said AlphaGo had become too strong for humans, despite the razor-thin half-point winning margin. "I feel like his game is more and more like the 'Go god'. Really, it is brilliant," he said.

Ke vowed never again to subject himself to the "horrible experience" of matching wits with the machine following this week's contests.

AlphaGo's feats have fuelled visions of a brave new world of AI that can not only drive cars and operate "smart homes", but potentially help mankind figure out some of the most complex scientific, technical and medical problems.

Computer programs have previously beaten humans in cerebral contests, starting with the victory by IBM's Deep Blue over chess grandmaster Garry Kasparov in 1997. But AlphaGo's success is considered the most significant yet for AI due to the complexity of Go, which has an incomputable number of move options and puts a premium on human-like "intuition", instinct and the ability to learn.

Go involves two players alternately laying black and white stones on a grid, seeking to seal off the most territory.

'Beautiful' game

Before AlphaGo, mechanical mastery of the

game had been perceived to be years away. Its victories have been analyzed and praised by students of the game as innovative and even "beautiful", opening up new ways of approaching strategy. AlphaGo uses two sets of "deep neural networks" containing millions of connections similar to neurons in the brain. It is partly self-taught, having played millions of games against itself following initial programming. After Lee lost to AlphaGo last year, Ke boldly declared "Bring it on!" But the writing was on the wall in January when Ke and other top Chinese

players were flattened by a mysterious competitor in online contests. That opponent was revealed afterwards to be the latest version of AlphaGo, which was being given an online test run by its developer, London-based AI company DeepMind Technologies, which Google acquired

in 2014. Ke, a phenom who went pro at age 11 and has described himself as "pretentious", has vacillated between awe and disdain for AlphaGo. He called it a "cold machine" lacking passion for the game in comments Monday night on China's Twitter-like Weibo platform.

Ke and AlphaGo will face off again tomorrow and Saturday. For some, rapid advances in AI conjure sci-fi images of a "Terminator" future in which machines "wake up" and enslave humanity. But DeepMind founder Demis Hassabis dismissed such concerns.

"This isn't about man competing with machines, but rather using them as tools to explore and discover new knowledge together," he said before yesterday's match. "Ultimately, it doesn't matter whether AlphaGo wins or loses... either way, humanity wins." — AFP

MICROSOFT SURFACE GETS BATTERY BOOST, BETTER VIEWING ANGLES

NEW YORK: Microsoft is refreshing its Surface Pro tablet with longer battery life and faster processors. The new, fifth-generation device - simply called Surface Pro - won't look or feel drastically different from its predecessor. But Microsoft is hoping its under-the-hood improvements will help it compete with newer laptop-tablet hybrids from Samsung and others. Not to mention Apple's iPad Pro.

The Redmond, Washington, company made the announcement yesterday in Shanghai, China, in its first Surface launch outside New York. It's a reflection of the company's expectations of growth among a population that prizes premium gadgets from American brands. Microsoft pioneered laptop-tablet hybrids, also known as 2-in-1s, with the original Surface in 2012. A keyboard cover turns the tablet into a laptop. But innovation has slowed down since 2014, when the Surface Pro 3 got a fully adjustable kickstand to give the screen a broader range of viewing angles, similar to real laptops. Before, the kickstand was limited to just two angles.

Meanwhile, other companies have made their own 2-in-1 devices running Microsoft's Windows 10. That success contributed to a 26 percent revenue decline in the Surface business in the most recent quarter. And competition is growing; Samsung released new Galaxy Book models this week.

Microsoft promises about 13.5 hours of battery life, or about 50 percent more than the nine hours on the previous device, the Surface Pro 4. The processors inside will be faster, and lower-end models will ditch the fan. The Surface's stylus will now mimic pencil shading when tilted, much like the Apple Pencil for iPad Pro tablets. Along with this, Microsoft plans upgrades to its popular Office software with new pencil-like features.

Microsoft will sell the stylus separately for \$100. The new Pro will start at about \$800 and will be available June 15 in about two dozen countries, including the US, China, Japan, South Korea and much of Europe. A keyboard cover starts at about \$130, or about \$170 for a version that feels like fabric rather than plastic. — AP

MERKEL VOWS TO CONVINCE CLIMATE CHANGE 'DOUBTERS'

BERLIN: German Chancellor Angela Merkel vowed yesterday to work to convince climate change "doubters" as the world waits to see whether US President Donald Trump will endorse the Paris agreement. "Protecting the climate matters to all of us," said Merkel, whose country will host a G20 summit and UN climate talks this year.

"We all feel the impacts of climate change... We are responsible for each other, we are liable for each other, we share a common destiny." Urging the international community to maintain "the spirit of Paris"—the 196-nation climate pact reached in late 2015 — she said: "I am still trying to convince the doubters." She was speaking at the annual informal "Petersberg Climate Dialogue" talks hosted by Germany, with some 30 nations taking part.

At the talks in Berlin, Germany's Environment Minister Barbara Hendricks and Chinese Special Climate Envoy Xie Zhenhua jointly urged the United States to

stay in the Paris Climate Agreement.

Trump on the campaign trail dismissed climate change a "hoax" perpetrated by China and vowed to "cancel" the international pact to curb emissions from burning oil, coal and gas. He has not yet executed his threat, but has appointed an anti-climate litigator to lead the Environmental Protection Agency, and chosen the former CEO of oil giant ExxonMobil, Rex Tillerson, as his secretary of state.

'Elephant in room'

Merkel said the "energy transition" in Germany away from nuclear power and fossil fuels and toward solar, wind and other renewables proved that "prosperity and sustainability can go hand-in-hand." "About one third of the electricity we consume in Germany comes from renewable energy, and despite the rapid growth we have maintained a stable supply," said the former environment minister. She said efficiency

gains now meant giant projects such as offshore wind farms could be built without state subsidies, but she admitted there

were new "bottlenecks," mainly in transporting and storing green energy.

Worldwide, Merkel said, China was now

the leader in renewables, India was planning 50 new solar parks, while nations from the United Arab Emirates to Morocco and Kenya were building green power megaprojects. Trump will meet other leaders of the G7 wealthy nations in Sicily, Italy on May 26-27 before Merkel hosts a G20 meeting in the northern port city of Hamburg on July 7-8. The next global meeting on the UN Convention on Climate Change will be organized by the Pacific island state of Fiji, but hosted by the German city of Bonn on November 6-17. "We must all do more to build green economies" Fiji's Prime Minister Voreqe Bainimarama said in Berlin, and urged that the "transformation we need to make must be accelerated." He pointed to "the challenge that the new administration in the US presents to the multilateral consensus on the need for climate action," calling the issue "the elephant in the room" for climate negotiators. — AFP



BERLIN: German Chancellor Angela Merkel delivers her speech yesterday in Berlin at the Petersberg Climate VIII Dialogue event. — AFP

TRUMP'S DELAYED HEALTH CARE DECISION CREATES UNCERTAINTY

WASHINGTON: Uncertainty over the future of health care is growing deeper for millions of Americans who buy their own policies. While insurers released a blueprint for stabilizing wobbly markets, the Trump administration is leaving in limbo billions of dollars in federal subsidy payments. The administration and House Republicans have asked a federal appeals court for a 90-day extension in a case that involves federal payments to reduce deductibles and copayments for people with modest incomes who buy their own policies. The fate of \$7 billion in "cost-sharing subsidies" remains under a cloud as insurers finalize their premium requests for next year. Experts say premiums could jump about 20 percent without the funding.

In requesting the extension, lawyers for the Trump administration and the House said the parties are continuing to work on measures, "including potential legislative action," to resolve the issue. Requests for extensions are usually granted routinely. But Democrats are accusing the Trump administration of a cynical ploy. Hours before the filing, a major insurer group released a framework for market stability that relies in part on a continuation of subsidies. The BlueCross BlueShield Association represents plans that are the backbone of insurance markets under the Affordable Care Act, or ACA, and would also be the mainstay with a Republican approach.

As the GOP-led Congress works on rolling back major parts of the Obama law, the BlueCross BlueShield plan called for Continued protections for people with pre-existing medical conditions and sustained federal funding to offset the cost of care for the sickest patients. More leeway for states to experiment with health insurance benefits, with a basic floor of federal standards. Preserving ACA consumer safeguards including no lifetime caps on benefits, no higher premium for women based on gender, and a requirement that insurers spend a minimum of 80 cents of every premium dollar on medical care. Penalties such as waiting periods for people who fail to maintain their coverage.

Republicans want to repeal the Obama-era



WASHINGTON: In this file photo, US President Donald Trump with Health and Human Services Secretary Tom Price are seen in the Oval Office of the White House in Washington. — AP

tax penalties on uninsured people deemed able to afford coverage. Significant federal funding to subsidize premiums and out-of-pocket costs. "There needs to be sustained federal funding," said Justine Handelman, policy chief for the insurer group. "It's critical to ensuring overall affordability." About 20 million Americans purchase individual health insurance policies, with more than half using the ACA's markets, which offer income-based subsidies for premiums and out-of-pocket costs. The Trump administration has sent mixed signals, and the White House is now saying it needs more time to decide on the cost-sharing money. Amid continuing uncertainty, another round of sharp premium increases and insurer exits seems possible.

Critical period

The cost-sharing money is embroiled in a lawsuit originally filed by House Republicans. Democrats say it's deliberate interference. "In merely delaying their suit, Republicans cynically continue to sow uncertainty in the health coverage of millions of Americans," House Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi California said in a statement. "At a critical period when insurers are deciding premiums for next year, Republicans are pouring uncertainty into the health insurance marketplaces."

The case is on appeal after a lower court ruled that the government lacks constitutional authority to make the payments because Congress failed to specifically approve them in the Obama-era health overhaul legislation. Democrats argue that is based on a faulty reading of the law.

They also say House Republicans have no legal right to even bring the case. Both the Obama and Trump administrations have kept making monthly payments while the case is pending. But President Donald Trump at times has suggested he'd stop, publicly musing that could force congressional Democrats to negotiate. "You know when people say, 'Oh, Obama care is so wonderful,' there is no Obama care, it's dead," Trump said in a recent interview with The Economist magazine. "Plus we're subsidizing it and we don't have to subsidize it. You know if I ever stop wanting to pay the subsidies, which I will!"

The cost-sharing subsidies are available to customers with incomes up to two-and-a-half times the federal poverty level, or about \$30,150 for an individual, \$61,500 for a family of four. The BlueCross BlueShield message may find a receptive home with Senate moderates in both parties, said industry analyst Sheryl Skolnick. "There is a caring aspect to this that is mutually beneficial, helps the individual and helps the company," said Skolnick, of Mizuho Securities USA LLC. "Yeah, it's about making money and providing the service, but it's also about coverage." The court case is known as House v. Price. — AP



CAPE CANAVERAL: This file photo provided by University of Yamanashi shows a white mouse foster mother with pups. — AP

MOUSE SPERM YIELDS HEALTHY MICE IN SPACE

CAPE CANAVERAL: After nine months in space, mouse sperm has yielded healthy mice, Japanese scientists reported. The freeze-dried sperm samples were launched in 2013 to the International Space Station and returned to Earth in 2014. The intense radiation of space caused slight DNA damage to the sperm. Yet, after in vitro fertilization on the ground, healthy offspring resulted. The baby mice grew into adults with normal fertility of their own.

The researchers led by Sayaka Wakayama of the University of Yamanashi said it's a step toward reproducing other mammals, even humans, using space-preserved sperm. They envision missions lasting several years or multiple generations, during which assisted reproductive technology might be used for domestic animals and people, too. The findings were pub-

lished in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. Previous developmental studies in space have involved, among other things, fish and amphibians. Mammals are more difficult to maintain and handle in space, and so testing, by comparison, has been limited. More extensive testing on sperm preservation is needed in space, according to the researchers.

Besides looking ahead to long-term space crews and societies, the researchers see other reasons for saving sperm in space, including in the event of disasters on Earth. The moon would be ideal for underground sperm storage, they noted, in particular lunar lava tubes because of "their very low temperatures, protection from space radiation by thick bedrock layers, and complete isolation from any disasters on Earth." — AP

COMBATING CLIMATE CHANGE COULD BOOST G20 ECONOMIES, OECD SAYS

BANGKOK: Tackling climate change could boost the world's 20 biggest economies by nearly 5 percent in 2050, compared to a continuation of current policies, the Paris-based OECD said yesterday. Investing \$6.9 trillion per year in clean infrastructure between 2016 and 2030 in G20 countries would help limit global temperature rise to below 2 degrees Celsius as agreed by world leaders in Paris in 2015, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) said in a report.

The additional investment cost could be offset by annual fuel savings of \$1.7 trillion from more energy-efficient technologies and infrastructure, it added. Keeping global warming below 2C would limit the worst effects of sea-level rise, Arctic sea ice melting, damage to coral reefs and acidification of oceans, according to the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

The OECD says G20 countries account for 80 percent of carbon dioxide emissions, a key contributor to climate change. "Far from being a dampener on growth, integrating climate action into

growth policies can have a positive economic impact," OECD Secretary-General Angel Gurría said in a statement. Combining climate policies, such as charging polluters, with economic policies to drive growth through more environment-friendly infrastructure could increase G20 economies' gross domestic product by up to 2.8 percent on average in 2050, the report said.

This rises to nearly 5 percent if the economic benefits of avoiding climate change impacts such as coastal flooding or storm damage are taken into account, it said. Experts say private sector financing is key to achieve these investments. The OECD report called on development banks and financial institutions to facilitate and support public and private investors.

Mitigating the impacts of climate change is "a huge economic opportunity" globally, Paul Ekins, a professor at University College London and co-director of the UK Energy Research Centre, told a news conference in Bangkok yesterday. — Reuters

CLIMATE-THREATENED BANGLADESH TO IMPOSE CARBON TAX IN JUNE

DHAKA: Bangladesh is set to impose its own carbon tax on fuel next month - despite the hugely climate-vulnerable country producing relatively tiny per capita emissions. The tax is expected to be put in place on June 1 as part of the country's annual budget and will be part of a larger bundle of "green" measures, Nojibur Rahman, chair of the National Board of Revenue, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation in a telephone interview. Many businesses and environmental groups have welcomed the plan, saying that Bangladesh - one of the countries considered most threatened by climate change impacts - needs to make a strong statement as governments like that in the United States pull back from action on climate change.

The new tax may not make any significant contribution to achieving the Paris Agreement's goal of keeping average global temperature increases below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, they said. But "when a country pollutes, the other countries are also affected. So, we need to reduce carbon emission as much as possible and imposing

a tax is only way to do it," said Abdul Matlub Ahmad, outgoing president of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

He said the tax would not only raise the price of using fossil fuels but the added income could help push more use of renewable energy. "If the government wants to cut the import duty on environment-friendly renewable energy products, it needs to charge taxes on polluters," he said in a telephone interview. Bangladesh produces about 0.44 tons of carbon dioxide per person, much lower than the United States' 16.4 tons, Australia's 16.3 tons and Qatar's whopping 40.5 tons, according to World Bank figures.

Rising risks

Carbon taxes - which raise the cost of using fossil fuels by creating a charge for the climate damage they do - are one of the simplest, most market-friendly ways of driving climate action, experts say. But they have proved politically tricky to put in place, and not just in poorer parts of the world where incomes are low and

making fuel more expensive can be politically risky. But low-lying Bangladesh, which faces huge risks from sea level rise, worsening storms, floods, droughts and other climate change impacts, has made a name for itself as an international leader in climate action, particularly in terms of innovative adaptation to climate change. "Although our contribution to climate change is very nominal, we are one of the worst victims of climate change. Aware of the problem, we have the most successful and best climate change programs the world has so far witnessed in any country," Finance Minister A.M.A. Muhith, said earlier this month at a Dhaka summit on climate change and disaster risk reduction. While it seeks international finance to help with programs to address climate change, Bangladesh also has paid for projects out of its own nationally funded climate change fund. M.A. Matin, general secretary of the Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (Bangladesh Environment Movement), said in a telephone interview that any carbon tax would need to be accompanied a "long-term carbon reduction plan" from the government. — Reuters

CHINA URGES BALANCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY IN ANTARCTICA

BEIJING: A Chinese leader yesterday urged international representatives to strike a "proper balance" between environmental and economic interests in Antarctica, as the frozen continent's vulnerability to climate change raises worries that some nations could seek to exploit its natural resources. China is seeking to carve out a greater role in determining the continent's future while hosting delegates from more than two dozen nations that have agreed to an Antarctic protection treaty. Vice Premier Zhang Gaoli who sits on the Communist Party's all-powerful, seven-member Politburo Standing Committee told participants that the fate of Antarctica's fragile environment bears on human survival. "There needs to be a proper balance between the protection and utilization of Antarctica in order to keep the environment green and sustain economic growth and cultural stability for mankind," Zhang said. His reference to economic interests fed into speculation that China and other nations are maneuvering to exploit mineral resources that could be exposed by a shrinking southern ice cap.

US delegate Kelly Falkner said that's highly unlikely under international agreements linked to the 1959 treaty. There also are practical concerns, given Antarctica's remoteness and harsh weather for much of the year. Environmental protection protocols under the Antarctic treaty are due to come up for reconsideration in 2048. But Falkner said it would require consensus among the treaty

nations to change an existing framework that includes a mining ban. A bigger worry for the US is that China could overtake it as the global leader in polar research, said Falkner, who heads the Office of Polar Programs for the National Science Foundation. Liu Zhenm in, a Chinese vice foreign

minister, said Zhang's statements about economic growth referred to rising numbers of Antarctic tourists from China and its commercial fishing vessels in the area. Liu told The Associated Press that China's interpretation of the treaty was that mining "would be prohibited forever." China acceded to the

Antarctic treaty in 1983 and has since established four research stations. It plans to start construction of an airfield later this year and a fifth research station as early as 2018. It also has a new icebreaker under construction to augment the Xue Long, a Ukrainian-built vessel currently used to service its

Antarctic missions. Yet while China has publicly emphasized its scientific ambitions, it also appears to be hedging against possible future development opportunities, said Marc Lanteigne, a senior lecturer on China and the polar regions at New Zealand's Massey University. — AP



ANTARCTICA: In this file photo a helicopter from the Chinese National Antarctic Research Expedition or CHINARE is used to evacuate passengers, who were aboard the trapped Russian vessel MV Akademik Shokalskiy, to a safe surface off the Antarctic. — AP photos



ANTARCTICA: In this file photo, members of the Chinese Antarctica Research Team wait for the arrival at the continent on board of the polar expedition ship Xuelong.

KUWAITI CHILD THANKS HER HEROES THIS INTERNATIONAL NURSES DAY

KUWAIT: This International Nurses Day, Fatemah, a 7-year old girl from Kuwait and her mum express their gratitude to the nurses at Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children (GOSH) in London for going the extra mile in making Fatemah's stay in the hospital as special as possible.



Photo shows nurse Laura Graham.

Fatemah has been at the London hospital as an inpatient since February, but has been visiting the hospital since November 2016 to receive on-going and specialised treatment for her blood disorder. "The nurses are all very good," Fatemah's mum explains. "They come and play with Fatimah. They are very friendly and kind. When I first came to GOSH, I thought that the nurses would only give out medicines, help with treatments, but our nurses come and visit Fatemah when they have free-time and play with her. I was not expecting this, but it is great."

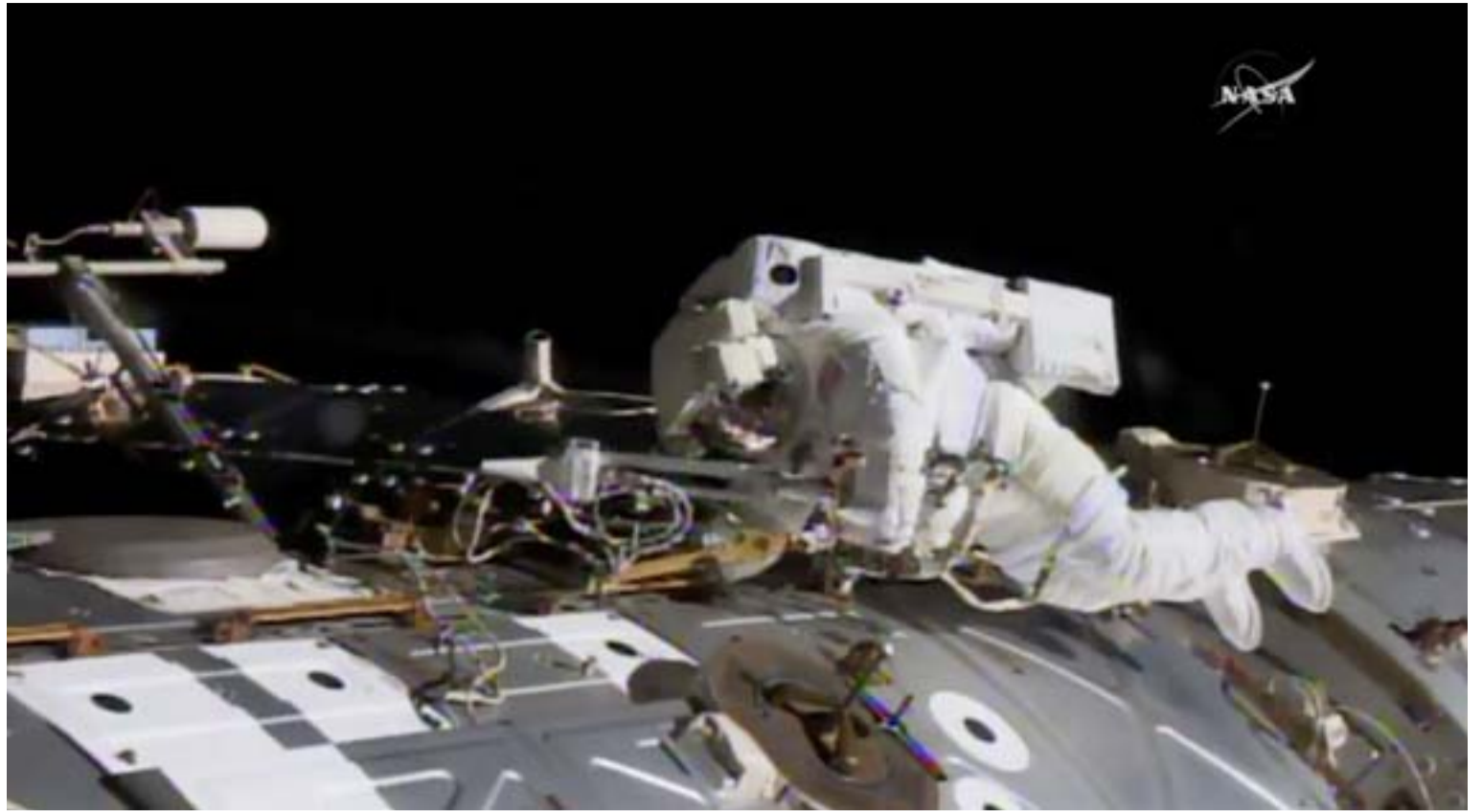
On her favourite nurse, Fatemah says she couldn't possibly compare. "I don't have a favourite nurse - I like everyone! They are very good!" Two of Fatemah's

nurses, Jessica Licorish, Healthcare Assistant (HCA) and Laura Graham, Ward Sister, say that Fatemah is a pleasure to have on the ward. "Fatemah is just a ray of sunshine, when you walk into the room and you walk out smiling. This is what I love about working on the Butterfly Ward because I am able to learn about different cultures," said Jessica.

Laura, who has known Fatemah since she was admitted to GOSH's Butterfly ward in February, said, "Fatemah is very cheerful and is always happy to chat with us. You can chat about all kinds of things with her; she loves ice cream, and when she's been out of the hospital we always talk about which flavour ice cream she has had! She lightens up my staff's day because we can talk about non-medical things with her and just have fun."

The hospital, which treats over 1,500 children from the Middle East every year, employs 4122 staff, 33 percent of which are nursing staff. In aid of International Nurses Day, the hospital is hosting an event to celebrate the 'nurse as the hero' at GOSH. "Nursing is well and truly at the heart of children's care at GOSH, and we are proud to recognise all the nurses that have helped to care for the children and families who have visited the hospital from across the world, past and present. From what we see on a daily basis, in cases such as Fatemah's, nursing is much more than a job: it is a heart-felt vocation, a highly skilled profession and advancing career."

Nurses not only provide clinical care, but also vital emotional support to the children, families and staff around them, which can be seen here by the touching bond created between Fatemah, her mum and the nurses," said Claudia Tomlin, Interim Head of Nursing for the International and Private Patient Division.



In this NASA provided frame from video, NASA astronaut Jack Fischer works to install antennas at the International Space Station while astronaut Peggy Whitson, not pictured, works on repairs yesterday. — AP

SPACEWALKING ASTRONAUTS PULL OFF URGENT STATION REPAIRS

'WHAT'S MORE AWESOME THAN BEING ON @SPACE_STATION?'

CAPE CANAVERAL, Florida: Spacewalking astronauts completed urgent repairs at the International Space Station yesterday, replacing equipment that failed three days earlier and restoring a backup for a vital data-relay system. It took commander Peggy Whitson much longer than expected to install the spare unit. Success finally came after her spacewalking partner, Jack Fischer, blasted the area with nitrogen gas to clear away flecks of metal. Mission Control noted that the failure occurred only 2 days, 21 hours, 38 minutes earlier, "and we are already back in a good position, so excellent work."

Testing confirmed the new unit worked, restoring full redundancy to the system that operates the space station's solar panels, radiators and robotic equipment. "Very good. We are really happy about that," Whitson said. Yesterday's spacewalk lasted less than three hours - exceedingly short by NASA standards. Whitson has now tied the record for most spacewalks by an American - 10 - and moved up to third place on the all-time spacewalking list. The failed data-relay unit -

recently refurbished with upgraded software - was just installed in March. Even though a second unit worked just fine after Saturday's breakdown, NASA scrambled to put together a spacewalk so there would be a backup in case that second unit failed, too, crippling the system for station cooling and solar energy production.

Whitson had no trouble removing the broken unit. But it took her two tries to install the replacement. During the first attempt, Whitson discovered what appeared to be metal shavings in the holes for the bolts. Fischer used a cleaning tool - essentially a nitrogen gas blaster - and blew away debris from the three holes. "I think all three look clean as a whistle," he reported before Whitson bolted down the spare box. The data-relay boxes are officially known as MDMs or multiplexer-demultiplexers. They're compact: Each one weighs 50 pounds (22 kilograms) and measures 14 by 8 by 13 inches (35-20-33 centimeters.)

Whitson and Fischer were just out spacewalking on May 12. That excursion was cut short by leaking station equipment, leaving two antenna

installations undone. So Fischer completed the chore yesterday. It was only the second spacewalk for Fischer, a rookie astronaut who arrived at the orbiting lab last month. He marveled at the world 250 miles (400 kilometers) below as he worked, commenting, "Oh my gosh, it's so beautiful." "What's more awesome than being on @Space_Station? Getting a call from mission control 4 another spacewalk! Dancing w/ the cosmos," he said in a tweet before going out.

Whitson, the world's most experienced female astronaut, is more than halfway through an extended 9 1/2-month mission, her third spaceflight. She's spent more time off the planet than any other American and, at age 57, is the oldest woman to ever fly in space. Tuesday's excursion gave her 60 hours out in the vacuum, behind only Russia's Anatoly Solovyev, with 78 hours over 16 spacewalks, and fellow American 10-time spacewalker Michael Lopez-Alegria, with more than 67 hours over 10 trips. The space station also is home to two Russians and a Frenchman. — AP

CHINA EATERY IN JAPAN SOARS ON PREGNANT PANDA HOPES

TOKYO: Swelling hopes for a baby panda in Tokyo have bumped up the stock price of a Chinese restaurant chain in the area, with locals setting their sights on a flurry of tourists. Eleven-year-old Shin Shin, who was brought to Ueno Zoo from China, has been showing signs of pregnancy since last



TOKYO : This handout from the Tokyo Zoological Park Society shows eleven-year-old giant panda Shin-Shin, who was brought to Ueno Zoo in Tokyo from China. — AFP

week after mating with male Ri Ri in February, according to zoo officials. Giant pandas are notoriously clumsy at mating, with males said to be bad at determining when a female is in the right frame of mind and often befuddled at knowing what to do next. In the event the animals do feel compatible, sex is frequently over too quickly to impregnate the female, who is only receptive to the proposition for two or three days a year between February and May. But as hopes grow for a birth, stocks in local businesses in the Ueno area, and in particular Chinese restaurant chain Totenko, have jumped.

Totenko's share price hit its daily limit at mid-day yesterday after the zoo Japan's oldest said it would halt viewing of Shin Shin on suspicion she may be pregnant. Locals view a new baby panda as a huge draw for tourists, with retailers and souvenir shops expected to start selling panda-related goods. The restaurant chain rose 7.02 percent to 198 yen (\$1.78). Shares have now soared more than 16 percent since last week. Seiyoken, another restaurant group specializing in Western cuisine and which also has its main outlet in Ueno, gained more than 7 percent at one point yesterday. Shin Shin gave birth to a baby in 2012, the first at the zoo in 24 years, but the cub died from pneumonia six days later. According to estimate less than 2,000 giant pandas remain in the wild, in three provinces in south-central China. — AFP

CIGARETTE FILTERS MAY INCREASE LUNG CANCER RISK

OHIO: Cigarette filters, introduced decades ago to reduce the amount of tar smokers inhale, also alter other properties of smoke and smoking in a way that raises the risk of lung cancer, researchers say. In a review of research on changes in lung cancer rates, and changes in the types of lung cancer that are most common, the study authors argue that tiny ventilation holes in virtually all cigarettes sold today are creating a new health risk.

"The design of cigarette filters that have ventilation can make the cigarettes even more dangerous, because those holes can change how the tobacco burns, allow smokers to inhale more smoke and to think that the smoke is safer because it is smoother," senior author Dr Peter D Shields from The Ohio State University's Wexner Medical Center in Columbus told Reuters Health by email. "This applies to all cigarettes, because almost all the cigarettes on the market have the holes, not just the ones that used to be called lights and ultra-lights," he noted. Although rates of lung cancer in the population have fallen with declines in smoking overall, rates of lung cancer among smokers have risen

significantly, the researchers point out. And the type of lung cancer associated with smoking has also shifted since the 1950s. Rates of adenocarcinoma of the lung, the lung cancer most associated with smoking, have more than quadrupled in men and increased eight-fold in women along with changes in the design and composition of cigarettes since the 1950s, the researchers write.

Shields and his team review the evidence linking cigarette filter ventilation to these increased rates of lung cancer in a report online May 22nd in the Journal of the National Cancer Institute. Filter ventilation reduces the amount of tar in the cigarette smoke when tested on smoking machines, but the increased ventilation and slower tobacco burn result in more puffs per cigarette and more toxic cancer-causing chemicals being inhaled by smokers, they write.

"The use of the ventilation holes yields lower tar only on a machine," Shields said. "Machines have nothing to do with actual exposures in humans. The holes let them actually inhale more smoke with more cancer-causing agents." Because of the

claims of lower tar content, though, smokers develop the false belief that a lower tar cigarette is a healthier cigarette, Shields' team writes.

Filters may be safer

Increased filter ventilation also results in smaller particle size, allowing more smoke to reach vulnerable parts of the lung. Moreover, even though machine-measured tar and nicotine levels have decreased over time, there has been no appreciable change in daily nicotine intake among smokers over the past 25 years, they write. "The evidence shows that more modern cigarettes are more risky for lung cancer," Shields said.

"There are reasons in addition to the holes that also can contribute to the increasing risk, but one does not preclude the other." Cigarette designs could and should be regulated to address all the possible reasons, Shields said. "The holes have no health benefits; they serve no health purpose," he explained. "They do not lower tar delivery to people. So, if they have the potential harm, the FDA can act, even if the science is not perfect. — Reuters

CLINIC PAGE



Kuwait Times
248 33 199

Dr. Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem
ر. فهد علي المخيزيم

استشاري أطفال
M.B. Bch. FRCPC. FAAP. PEM

Al-Jabriya - Block 1A - St. 1 - Mazaya Building - 15th Floor - Clinic B - Tel.: 22269369 - Fax: 22269368



The Medical Sciences College and Technological Sciences College at the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) hosted ceremonies recently to celebrate the conclusion of the 2016/2017 academic year. Senior PAAET officials and staff attended the events, which were held at the respective colleges' campuses in Shuwaikh.

KALA-KUWAIT 'MAYOOKHAM 2017,' AN IMPRESSIVE CULTURAL SHOW

Mayookham 2017, an impressive cultural show organized by KALA Kuwait, a variety of cultural programs and a musical show. Sreeramakrishnan, Speaker of Kerala Legislative Assembly formally inaugurated 'Mayookham-2017' at Qadsiya Sporting Club. In his address, he said today, Kerala is losing the cultural advantage it achieved following Renaissance movement and secularism is at stake in the face of growing religious and casteist tendencies.

Famous film-stage actor and cultural activist V K Sreeraman inaugurated KALA Kuwait's pioneering 'Free Malayalam Education program' for this year. In his address he described that the language should be practiced skillfully and not through its complicated grammar. Sajeev M George presented a report on the language program schedule for the current year.

Representing Indian Embassy, S. Sibi, Second Secretary (Labor) delivered a distinguished address. KALA Kuwait Gen Secretary Saji Janardhanan welcomed the gathering while President G Sugathakumar presided over the function.

Sreeramakrishnan presented the annual Ramesh Diaspora Award to E.M Kabeer, a social activist chosen from Saudi Arabia. KALA Kuwait instituted the award for honoring individuals from the Gulf region in recognition of their contributions to the society.

Praseeth Karunakaran, Joint Secretary of KALA shared the cherished memories and described wonderful contributions of late E.K Nayanar. Thereafter V.K Sriraman launched the



KALA-Film Society by releasing its logo. The prizes for the winners of literary competitions held by literary wing of KALA were distributed.

Mathews Varghese and John Mathew, industrialist and social activist, delivered felicitation speeches. Iqbal Kuttamangalam (Social Activist and Mathrubhasha Samithi Convener), KALA Treasurer Ramesh Kannapuram, C.K Noushad, Vanithavedi, Kuwait, President Shantha R Nair, Progressive Professional Forum Gen Secretary Anil Kumar and Alwina Hanna Saji, Gen Secretary Balavedi witnessed the function. The prizes for the winners of Balakalamela were distributed. Gold medals for KALA Prathibha Rohit S Nair and KALA Thialakam Nanda Prasad were distributed by



the Mathews Varghese, (Country Manager-BEC) followed by the Trophy to Overall winner for Gulf Indian School.

Mayookham-2017 started with the display of cultural art forms including dances, songs, skits and the dance items choreographed with

the theme national integration. The programs concluded with a musical show led by Rajalakashmy and Sudeep.



SPECIAL RAMADAN EXPERIENCE AT MILLENNIUM HOTEL AND CONVENTION CENTER KUWAIT

Millennium Hotel and Convention Center Kuwait is ready to welcome its guests during the holy month of Ramadan with a wide variety of menus and buffets presented during iftar, ghabka and suhour in an original Ramadan atmosphere that they can enjoy.

On this occasion, General Manager, Millennium and Copthorne Hotels - Kuwait Dani Saleh said: "Ramadan returns to gather family and friends in spiritual evenings. The holy month is distinguished with its banquets that family and friends gather around during iftar, ghabka and suhour. The Millennium Hotel and Convention Center Kuwait is specialized with these banquets during Ramadan."

Lamar Restaurant welcomes you during Ramadan to enjoy the finest dishes prepared daily from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm, in addition to Ramadan desserts and drinks. If you are looking for a private place for 25 people, Lamar

Restaurant is definitely the best place for family, friends and coworkers to gather around one luxurious table.

And for an enjoyable experience, Library Café welcomes you daily during Ramadan from 8:00 pm to 2:00 am, offering special suhour in a Ramadan atmosphere that includes main courses, desserts and drinks famous during the holy month, in addition to a wide variety of salads, offering guests a different suhour experience.

Millennium Hotel and Convention Center Kuwait is dedicating the recently opened Nara Lounge for ghabka lovers. A wide variety of Ramadan hot and cold drinks, snacks and shisha is waiting for guests who are welcome at Nara Lounge every day after iftar and until 2:00 am. And throughout the holy month, the hotel offers the takeout service that includes 4 different menus and a large variety of delicious options that were carefully selected for family and coworkers to enjoy

and have an unforgettable dining experience that reflects the original Arabic hospitality traditions.

Millennium Hotel and Convention Center Kuwait is located in a strategic place in Salmiya, overlooking the Fourth Ring Road and Fahaheel Expressway, and a few meters away from the best shopping malls, recreational sites and restaurants in Kuwait. It is considered one of the most luxurious 5-star hotels that serve businessmen and tourists, and the highest level in terms of hosting conferences and exhibitions.

Millennium Hotel and Convention Center Kuwait provides 295 rooms and suites equipped with the latest technology, including high-speed free Wi Fi, gym, pool, sauna and other premium services. It also provides an integrated business center, secretarial services and office facilities. Furthermore, it contains three restaurants and a bar by the pool.



Mohammad Khoursheed

SPECIAL RAMADAN OFFER AT AQUA PARK

Aqua Park announced a special offer during Ramadan. Throughout the holy month, two people can enter the facility using only one ticket, General Manager Mohammad Khoursheed said in a press release. Aqua Park opens every day in Ramadan from 8:00 pm to 2:00 am. Special prices are available for companies and groups, Khoursheed added.



Loyac Academy of Performing Arts (LAPA) organized a tap dance workshop with trainer Avalon Rathgeb, including a performance held at Al-Shaheed Park's multipurpose hall.

FEATURES



A worker stands next to a pile of shared bicycles at a repair center in Beijing.



Shared bicycles plate numbers and QR codes are seen at a repair center in Beijing.



A worker climbs onto a pile of Ofo shared bicycles at a repair center in Beijing.



Mobike shared bicycles are seen on a street in Beijing.



A worker repairs a shared bicycle at a repair center in Beijing. — AFP photos



A worker repairs a shared bicycle at a repair center in Beijing.



Shared bicycles are seen on a street in Beijing.

CHINA SCRAMBLES TO TAME BIKE CHAOS

A booming rental bike business has flooded China's streets with packs of cyclists, but their habit of going the wrong way and abandoning their rides anywhere is causing havoc. The authorities, scrambling to catch up, are considering new regulations to curb the chaos—from capping the number of bikes to even barring people they consider too big or too small for bicycles. Unlike the docking station systems in cities like London, Paris or New York, the bikes in China can essentially be found and left anywhere. From Beijing to Tibet, riders can grab a yellow, blue, green or orange bike by opening a smartphone app and pointing their camera at a QR code that releases a lock for as low as 1 yuan (15 US cents).

Once the ride's over, they simply park the bike and apply the lock. But many simply leave the bikes in the middle of sidewalks or abandon them haphazardly on freeways. The rules that do exist, are often ignored. This has culminated in fatal accidents in recent months, including the death of a child, spurring officials into action. In recent weeks, police around the country have impounded thousands of bikes that were discarded in piles. But companies plan to put thousands more on the streets.

Cycling boom backfires

"I like the convenience of cycling instead of taking the subway, but the system backfires when the sheer amount of bikes causes traffic jams in some areas," 21-year-old Beijing student Zhang Wei told AFP. "Many people also don't know how to bike very well and it is annoying when they swerve around or cycle in the wrong direction," said Zhang. Some 30 different providers wrestling for market share have placed more than three million bikes on streets around the country, according to state media.

There were 18.9 million users of shared bicycles nationwide

in 2016 and that number is expected to rise to 50 million by the end of this year, according to the China E-Commerce Research Center. With the patience of police and pedestrians wearing thin, some firms have appointed staff to patrol streets. Wearing armbands or neon vests, they stack bikes onto motorized trolleys to move them to places they are more likely to be used. But the startups, including leading rivals Mobike and Ofo, may soon need to comply with stricter regulations.

Beijing plans to limit the total number of shared bikes that can be on the streets. The lively Dongcheng district is aiming to create hundreds of dedicated parking spots that bike rental firms would help manage, according to the state-owned Legal Daily. The city of Shanghai is considering a more drastic approach to limit their use: Barring people authorities consider either too tall, too short or too overweight to hop on a bike due to fears they may be unstable on vehicles made for the average frame.

China's Ministry of Transport on Monday released a draft proposal on rules requiring local governments to better manage the booming bike-share industry.

It calls for the development of dedicated parking zones near major transportation hubs, shopping areas and office blocks, and advises local authorities to make some areas off-limits for bike parking. It would also forbid children under 12 from riding shared bikes. Jeffrey Towson, a professor of investing at Peking University, said good rules would "shift responsibility for handling bad behavior from the police to the bike-sharing companies themselves." "I doubt the police will continue gathering thousands of bikes and putting them in lots," Towson told AFP.

Not suitable for children

The growing scrutiny partly stems from recent accidents,

including the first fatal collision involving a rental bike in March, when an 11-year-old boy died after a bus struck his Ofo bike at a busy Shanghai intersection. A month later in southern Fuzhou, a car killed a woman with such force that her bike shattered into pieces. Road laws in China already ban children under age 12 from riding on public roads, but state media reports say children are frequently seen riding the colorful bikes to school.

An Ofo spokeswoman told AFP the company runs campaigns to encourage parents and teachers to keep children off the bikes. Mobike says it requires users to register with an identification document before they can unlock the bikes. "We were the first in the industry to work with local businesses and regulators to develop specially designated parking spaces for our bikes... We have over 10,000 of these in China now, and will roll out thousands more in the coming months," a Mobike spokeswoman told AFP.

But Zhang Wenzhong, an urban studies expert at the Chinese Academy of Sciences, said companies are not using available technology well enough. "The government should require all companies to install GPS functions on bikes in order to meet consumer demands and control random parking, vandalism and theft," Zhang told AFP. Regulators in Beijing, Chengdu and Hangzhou want GPS to be mandatory. Mobike's GPS-enabled system shows locations of idle bikes. The company has a reward system encouraging users to ride bikes from low-traffic to higher-traffic locations. This month, Ofo rolled out a similar system. — AFP

Batiste: World's No.1 dry shampoo officially launches in Middle East

Batiste, World's No. 1 dry shampoo brand, today officially launched its product line across the Middle East, offering consumers the fastest and easiest way to great looking hair with minimal effort. Joining forces with AREEN Middle East - a blue chip master distributor of multinational brands in the Middle East - Batiste unveiled five variants of its dry shampoo fragrance range: Blush, Original, Oriental, Cherry and Floral; making its product line widely available to the consumers in the Middle East.

Led by Kuwaiti celebrity beauty blogger, Fouz Al-Fahad, the launch took place at Soh Art + Beauty in Galleria Mall, Dubai, where invited guests were given an opportunity to try the product and offered instant hair make overs.

A registered trademark of Church & Dwight Co Inc, Batiste is currently one of the fastest growing shampoo brands in the UK & in the world. At the heart of all Batiste(tm) Dry Shampoos is an innovative starch based 'no water needed' formulation which helps absorb dirt, grease and product build up when massaged through dry hair. Designed for a busy lifestyle, it helps refresh hair in 1 minute without water in three easy steps: spray into roots, massage into hair, and brush to style. The entire range is specially formulated to instantly fix and revitalize greasy, dull and lifeless hair; add volume to thin, fly-away hair and add texture and body to hair required for styling.

Speaking about the brand, Fouz Al-Fahad said: "Maintaining great looking hair can be a challenging mission because of our active lifestyles. Batiste has become an essential hair

care product for me. I travel so frequently with little time to get ready or touch up my hair do, and when I need a quick fix, I can always count on Batiste to refresh and restyle my hair whenever, wherever. I truly believe that it can prove to be a life saver for women who are on the go with busy schedules."

Currently available in more than 50 countries worldwide, Batiste Dry Shampoo is World's #1 Dry Shampoo brand according to AC Nielsen 2016 and a winner of a number of titles worldwide such as: Winner of the CEW Beauty Awards, 2016 (UK), Voted best Beauty Buys By InStyle for 2016, 2015, and 2014 (UK), Winner of the Hair Awards 2015 (UK), Voted Product of the Year by the Consumer Survey at Product Innovation 2015 (UK), Winner of the Beauty Award by Women's Health for 2014 (USA), and Winner at The Beauty Awards 2013 and 2014 by Popsugar (Australia) amongst many others.

Speaking about the brand's plans in the Middle East, Shadi Khudr, and Regional Marketing Manager at AREEN Middle East said: "Batiste Dry Shampoo is an excellent addition to our product portfolio. We are confident that the brand will be received very well by this market as it instantly refreshes hair and is a perfect product to use between washes for instant gorgeous & fresh hair. In the coming months, we will be looking at making the fragrance line available to consumers as widely as possible. Additionally, we will be looking to bring more products from the other ranges offered by the Batiste brand". The Batiste Dry Shampoo range will be available in Boots across Kuwait.



Visitors are seen inside the Castle Church, where in 1517, Martin Luther nailed 95 theses which started the church reformation on its door in Lutherstadt Wittenberg ahead the church day which runs from May 24 to 28. — AFP photos



A portrait of Martin Luther is seen on the side of a giant book displaying all the pages of the bible on its back side in the Lutherstadt Wittenberg.

From rubber ducks to sausages, Luther mania sweeps German town

Carrying an armful of "Luther Brodt" gingerbread to the cashier, Mikael Byrial Jensen admits sheepishly that Martin Luther would probably not have been impressed by the flood of souvenirs bearing his name. Luther "said himself that saints are not special... but that's how it is today. We're Lutherans so it's a nice gift," said the Danish tour guide, of his purchase at a chocolaterie in eastern Germany's Wittenberg—also known as Luther town.

From burgers to rubber duckies to liquor, Wittenberg is cashing in on its 16th century resident, who changed Christendom forever. It is on a door of a church here that Luther is said to have nailed his 95 theses in 1517, leading to a split with the Roman Catholic Church and giving birth to Protestantism. As Germany commemorates the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, the seismic theological shift started by Luther, Wittenberg is decked out in full Luther regalia.

On arrival at the town's main train station, visitors are greeted with a giant rectangular block labeled "The Bible-Luther's translation". Walk a few meters and a billboard seeks to tempt the weary with a "Luther Burger". In the display windows of shops running one kilometer (0.6 mile) through the center of the old town, there is something for everyone—a toddler-sized Luther teddy bear, bags of Luther pasta and Luther tea.

Asked what Luther had to do with sausages, Uwe Bechmann, who was doing a brisk business selling them with black bread topped with mustard, said with a broad grin: "Well, Martin Luther enjoyed eating them—as you can see from his belly."

Turning point

Born in Eisleben on November 10, 1483, Luther moved to Wittenberg in 1511. It was in the eastern town where he married Katharina von Bora, became a father of six children, and

published his ideas attacking papal abuses and questioning the place of saints. The theologian, who died in 1546, argued that Christians could not buy or earn their way into heaven but only entered by the grace of God, marking a turning point in Christian thinking.

But Luther also came to be linked to Germany's darkest history, as his later sermons and writings were marked by anti-Semitism—something that the Nazis used to justify their horrific persecution of the Jews.

Yet the theologian's part in reshaping the religious order has unequivocally secured his place as one of the most important figures in European history. For the 500th Reformation anniversary, Germany has declared an exceptional public holiday on October 31. And tens of thousands of Christians from across the world are descending on the town of 47,000 inhabitants where history was made.

'They keep selling out'

The head of Wittenberg tourist office Kristin Ruske said hotel bookings and demand for guided tours had doubled for January to March, even before the Reformation fest began. Trains will leave every 10 minutes from Berlin to bring the faithful to the town in time for this coming weekend's Ascension church service. And going by the number of tourists carrying jute bags featuring Luther's image, or the steady stream of people picking up Luther cookies, it is clear that the crowd just can't get enough of the theologian. The boom in Luther souvenirs has been driven by this year's celebrations, Ruske noted.

"There are Luther noodles, Luther tomatoes, Luther chocolate and also Luther coffee. There are many great products that we sell... but there are also bizarre souvenirs. But as long as the demand is there, there'll always be offers," said Ruske. The tourism office itself has been stocking

500 Playmobil figurines of Luther every month over the past year. "But they keep selling out," she said. In fact, the 7.5 cm (3-inch) figure with a quill and a Bible "translated by Doctor Martin Luther" has become the German toymaker's bestseller of all time.

Everything is marketed

Toy store owner Kathrin Seliger, who has not sold any of the 395-euro (\$444) giant teddy bears yet, acknowledged that the "Luther spirit is somewhat lost as everything is being marketed". German retiree Renate Lukas, who was visiting on a day trip, said: "We are very happily celebrating the Reformation, but it should perhaps not be so kitschy." Where should the line be drawn? For Ruske, "it's up to the visitors to decide when it all becomes too much." "If someone wants to eat Luther, wear Luther, smell Luther or drink Luther, is that too much? If that makes the visitor happy, then... please go ahead," she said.

At the commemorative door of the Schlosskirche (Castle Church) where Luther is believed to have nailed his theses, South Korean senior pastor Lee Won Jae was explaining the significance of the site to a group of 22 fellow churchgoers. "We have visited to celebrate the 500 years of Reformation and we want to learn from the spirit of Luther," Lee said. The group was on a tour of key sites in the Reformation movement, including Luther's birthplace Eisleben and Worms, where he was summoned to appear before authorities of the Holy Roman Empire on charges of heresy. For the pastor, the souvenirs bearing Luther's image or writing serve a purpose. "Every means that makes people think of Luther is important... because they would also think of the spirit of Reformation," said Lee. — AFP

OBITUARY



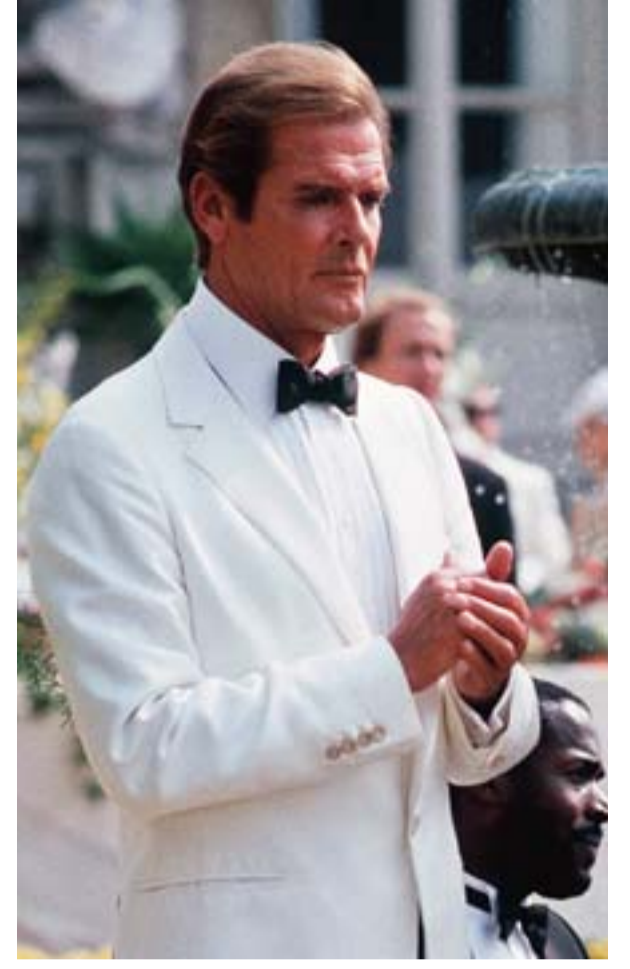
British actor Roger Moore and his new wife Italian actress Luisa Mattioli, are surrounded by the press as they dance at Caxton Hall in London following their wedding on April 12, 1969. — AP/AFP photos



Picture taken on June 25, 2013 in Aachen, western Germany, shows British actor and UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador Roger Moore and his Danish wife Kristina Tholstrup waving from a carriage as they visit the CHIO World Equestrian Festival.



This file photo taken on April 12, 2000 shows British Oscar winner Michael Caine and actor Roger Moore (left) as they pose after presenting a mini-coach to a children's charity in London.



This file photo taken on August 16, 1984 shows British actor, Roger Moore during the shooting of the film series "James Bond", "A view to kill", in Chantilly.

JAMES BOND STAR ROGER MOORE DEAD AT 89



British actor Roger Moore, playing the title role of secret service agent 007, James Bond, is shown on location in England in 1972.

British actor Roger Moore, who played James Bond over two decades with a suave wit, died yesterday aged 89, drawing tributes for his portrayal of the womanizing superspy as well as for his charity work. "It is with a heavy heart that we must announce our loving father, Sir Roger Moore, has passed away today in Switzerland after a short but brave battle with cancer," his children said in a statement published on Twitter.

"We are all devastated," Deborah, Geoffrey and Christian said, adding: "Thank you Pops for being you, and for being so very special to so many people." Moore shot to fame as the smooth-talking adventurer Simon Templar in British television show "The Saint" in the 1960s, and also starred alongside Tony Curtis in "The Persuaders" in the 1970s. But it was not until 1973, at the age of 45, that he won the role that for many fans would come to define him, as Ian Fleming's fictional secret agent James Bond.

Moore made his debut as 007 in "Live and Let Die", following it with six more films, only bowing out with 1985's "A View to a Kill". Known for his ironically raised eyebrow and deadpan quips, Moore's take on Bond was more tongue-in-cheek than that of his manly predecessor Sean Connery. "I'm not that cold-blooded killer type. Which is why I play it mostly for laughs," he once said. But with seven appearances as the character he fondly called "Jimmy Bond", he outgunned Connery and all the other actors to have played 007.

A genuine movie star

Moore was also one of the last of the old-school movie stars, who counted Frank Sinatra and David Niven among his friends and lived in luxury in Switzerland and the French Riviera. In later years he became known for his humanitarian work, notably through his activities as a UNICEF ambassador, helping raise funds for under-privileged children. "With the passing of Sir Roger Moore, the world has lost one of its great champions for children-and the entire UNICEF family has lost a great friend," said the UN agency's executive director Anthony Lake.

Moore's children said he considered the UNICEF work-for which he was awarded a knighthood in 2003 -- his "greatest achievement". "The affection our father felt whenever he walked onto a stage or in front of a camera buoyed him hugely and kept him busy working into his 90th year, through to his last appearance in November 2016 on stage at London's Royal Festival Hall," they added. "The capacity crowd cheered him on and off stage, shaking the very foundations of the building just a short distance from where he was born." They said their thoughts were with his fourth wife, Kristina, adding that there would be a private funeral in Monaco.

'My Word Is My Bond'

Born Roger George Moore, on October 14, 1927 in the London suburb of Stockwell, he was the only son of a police constable and his wife, and had a happy childhood. "I've not done badly for a boy from Stockwell, where I used to gaze at the silver screen in wonderment, little realizing I'd be a part of this magical world," he wrote in his autobiography, "My Word Is My Bond." Duran Duran, the British band that provided the eponymous theme tune for "A View to a Kill", Moore's last turn as Bond, wrote in a tweet: "#RIP Roger."

Moore had found his own humorous way to sum up his final bow as Bond, which came when he was 57 years old. "The girls were getting younger and I was just getting too old," he said at a ceremony to award him a star on Hollywood's "Walk of Fame". Paying tribute, Hollywood star Russell Crowe remarked on Twitter that at the age 10 he tried to dress like



In this May 20, 1977 file photo, actor Roger Moore, alias British secret agent James Bond, is accompanied by co-star Barbara Bach as they arrive for the screening of their latest 007 feature, "The Spy Who Loved Me," during the Cannes Film Festival at the French Riviera.

Moore's breakthrough character Simon Templar. "Roger Moore, loved him," Crowe tweeted. Pinewood Studios, the British filming location west of London for most of the Bond films, described Moore as a "force of nature", adding that "his humor and spirit will be missed by all of us". — AFP



British actor Roger Moore (left) congratulates Albert R. Broccoli, producer of the James Bond movies, after Broccoli was awarded The Erwin Thalberg Memorial Award at the 54th annual Academy Award presentations at the Hollywood Music Center in Hollywood on March 29, 1982.



This file photograph taken on October 5, 1999 shows British actor Roger Moore (center) posing with actresses Traci Bingham (left) and Eva Halina in Cannes.



This is a July 8, 1968 file photo of British actor Roger Moore as he poses with Spain's most prized award, the Don Quixote Award, which was presented to him at the Spanish Embassy in London.



In this Sunday, Nov 17, 1996 file photo, three of the actors who played James Bond, Timothy Dalton left, Roger Moore, center, and Pierce Brosnan, at a London cinema to celebrate the life of Albert R. "Cubby" Broccoli, the American film producer behind seventeen Bond movies.



This is a April 22, 1996 file photo of veteran British actor Roger Moore, poses for a portrait, in the Studio City section of Los Angeles.



This is a Saturday, July 2, 2011 file photo of British actor Sir Roger Moore as he arrives at the Monaco palace for the religious wedding ceremony of Prince Albert II of Monaco and Charlene Princess of Monaco.

MOVIES

MADDOW AND THE TRUMP EFFECT: US ANCHOR ON THE RISE



This file photo shows Rachel Maddow, host of MSNBC's "The Rachel Maddow Show," attending a luncheon hosted by US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. — AFP

Fiercely intelligent, acerbic and relentlessly liberal Rachel Maddow has defied ultra-feminine stereotypes to become the most watched news host in the United States, riding the wave of the Trump presidency and chaos at Fox News. The 44-year-old former Rhodes Scholar who has lived publicly as a lesbian since college looks like no other woman on image-obsessed US television news. Her hair cropped, she never wears earrings, dresses or necklaces, and favors sharply tailored pant suits in somber colors with a plain contrasting top. It's an image that frequently exposes Maddow to derision on social media. But if she minds, she never lets on.

"The Rachel Maddow Show" airs Monday to Friday at 9:00 pm on cable news channel MSNBC, as popular with liberal Democrats as Fox News is with Donald Trump's Republicans, and part of the Comcast group. She typically opens each program with a monologue, often as long as 20 minutes—her take on the day's events in a sweeping arc that can draw dots between events in Romania or Venezuela before returning to the US president. "What I end up doing is trying to find things that happened in our past or in other countries, or in fiction, or something that can put in context what's happening," she trailed off during a recent interview on Viceland.

If at times it's less news anchor and more professorial then it's worth noting that Maddow has a doctorate in political science from Oxford University. Republicans and conservatives attack her from the right, insulting her as "Maddow" or "Queen of Fake News." From the left, MSNBC's identification with the liberal wing of the

Democratic Party, Maddow's solemn style and her fondness for conjecture are also criticized. In mid-March, she had social media in uproar after announcing, pre-show, that she had Trump's tax returns, only to keep the country on tenterhooks as she waded through an extensive monologue before ultimately reporting little that was new. Late-night satirist Stephen Colbert lampooned Maddow, dressing up to look like her and delivering his own derisive monologue.

'Measured' partisanship

But critics aside, Maddow hosts the most watched cable news show in America, supplanting a position held for 15 years by Fox News host Bill O'Reilly, who was sacked late last month amid a blaze of sexual harassment allegations. She has crossed the threshold of three million viewers—never previously seen by MSNBC, which has traditionally trailed not only Fox but the centrist CNN. It's a remarkable achievement for a woman whose audiences were at a record low only two years ago, in early 2015. But then Trump ran for president, defeated Hillary Clinton and more than tripled her audience.

"This is a chaos presidency. So there is almost daily drama that has turned the news into a reality show. It's compelling television," said Frank Sesno, professor of media and public affairs at George Washington University. "Her calculation," he said, "is that the country needs grownups and more measured voices, even if they are partisan voices." If she has positioned herself to be a partisan voice,

then it's "a more measured voice than the Bill O'Reilly model of high volume and insult," Sesno said.

"When she's focused and she's not speculating, she can often lay out a very clear and coherent and persuasive argument with good video clips," agreed Jeff Cohen, director and associate professor at the department of journalism at Ithaca College. The change in the White House has given MSNBC a new visibility and a new direction, having been criticized during the Obama years for vigorously defending the Democratic administration. "On cable TV news, opposition helps your ratings," Cohen explained.

Besides Trump, the former radio journalist has also indirectly benefited from disarray at Fox News, even if the audience of the two channels rarely see eye to eye. In less than a year, Fox News has lost its co-founder and CEO, Roger Ailes, and star presenters O'Reilly and Megyn Kelly, beset by a blaze of alleged mismanagement, misogyny and sexual harassment lawsuits that saw Ailes and O'Reilly pay out millions. Ailes died last week at the age of 77. "There aren't going to be very many conservatives who suddenly are going to look to Rachel Maddow for their inspiration," admitted Sesno. "But over time, if she moderates her voice, she can widen her audience somehow." Another way of climbing up the visibility stakes is an interview with Trump. "I'm assuming it's going to happen eventually," she said last week on Access Hollywood. — AFP

AIDS drama, Sandler comedy among breakout hits at Cannes

A wrenching French AIDS drama, a cinematic indictment of Putin's Russia and a bittersweet Adam Sandler comedy are among the 70th Cannes film festival contenders that have captured critics' hearts. The race for the Palme d'Or top prize at the world's biggest film festival still looks wide open, with a Nicole Kidman horror movie and a new drama by two-time winner Michael Haneke earning some glowing reviews.

Ahead of awards night Sunday, when a jury led by Spanish director Pedro Almodovar and including Hollywood stars Will Smith and Jessica Chastain will pick the winners among 19 pictures, AFP spotlights the breakout hits of the festival so far:

'120 Beats Per Minute'

This docu-drama by French former activist Robin Campillo pulses with rage at official neglect of the AIDS crisis in the early 1990s, and compassion for the victims cut down in the prime of their lives. The film celebrates the rowdy band of gay radicals from ACT UP who helped shame the world into action, and tells the love story between a newcomer to the movement and an HIV-positive man (Argentine-born actor Nahuel Perez Biscayart) who refuses to die without a fight. Vanity Fair called the sexually frank picture "a vital new gay classic" while Le Monde said it "fused intimacy and politics" to induce a "river of tears" from the Cannes audience.

'Loveless'

This harrowing tale by "Leviathan" director Andrey Zvyagintsev marks his most overt attack to date on what he sees as the moral rot eating away at Russian society under President Vladimir Putin. It depicts a couple on the verge of divorce who, lured by the temptations of status and creature comforts, no longer want to raise their young son. Fearing he will be abandoned to a grim state-run home followed by the military, the boy vanishes, sending the parents on a half-hearted search with the aid of jaded and indifferent police, hospital officials and morgue workers. Guardian reviewer Peter Bradshaw gave it five out of five stars, calling the "stark, mysterious and terrifying story of spiritual catastrophe" a "masterpiece".

'The Meyerowitz Stories'

Hollywood funnyman Adam Sandler left Cannes critics agog with a soulful, restrained performance in this portrait of a dysfunctional New York family also starring Dustin Hoffman, Ben Stiller and Emma Thompson. Audiences embraced the new movie by Noah Baumbach ("While We're Young"), one of two Netflix features in competition for the first time amid a row over streaming versus cinema distribution. Sandler was tipped for a possible best actor prize, with Daily Telegraph critic Robbie Collin remarking that the "Happy Gilmore" star "has been bad in so many awful films that when he's terrific in a great one... it's a revelation".

'The Killing of Sacred Deer'

This year's reigning Queen of Cannes, Nicole Kidman, is unveiling four different projects at the French Riviera event including this audience shocker. Kidman and Irish actor Colin Farrell play a couple of married doctors facing a terrible choice in the horror movie by Greece's Yorgos Lanthimos, who wowed Cannes two years ago with dystopian love story "The Lobster". The mounting tension and bloody climax sent some audience members fleeing the cinema but many critics were in raptures. "The film's nightmarish, Old Testament horrors are unshakable. The Greek director is a true original," said Donald Clarke of the Irish Times.

'Happy End'

Austria's Haneke, who already has two Palme d'Or trophies on his mantelpiece, for "Amour" and "The White Ribbon", divided critics with his latest feature. Set in the northern French city of Calais, the site of the now-dismantled Jungle refugee camp, the film stars French legends Isabelle Huppert and Jean-Louis Trintignant as members of a callous wealthy family. It returns to familiar Haneke themes including latent racism, class divides and sexual deviance. "The film is a snapshot of a European bourgeois family," the director told reporters. "My vision of family is not despairing but rather realistic." — AFP



Actor Dustin Hoffman, left, director Noah Baumbach, actors Emma Thompson, Ben Stiller and Adam Sandler pose for photographers upon arrival at the screening of the film The Meyerowitz Stories at the 70th international film festival, Cannes, southern France. — AP



An undated handout photo released by film director Jung Byung-Gil shows an image from his latest movie 'The Villainess'. — AFP photos



Jung Byung-Gil, director of 'The Villainess', poses for a photo at a cinema in Seoul.

Why Korea's 'film noir' movies are wowing Cannes

Beyond the gleaming towers of modern high-tech Seoul, it is the dark past of South Korea's years of dictatorship, violence and upheaval that have inspired the country's staggering rise as a cinematic powerhouse. No fewer than five South Korean movies are showing in the elite selection of this year's Cannes film festival. And Bong Joon-Ho's Netflix creature feature "Okja" is one of the early favorites for its top prize, the Palme d'Or.

But two of the other Korean films in competition are crime and action thrillers typical of the booming "Korean noir" genre. Films about bloody crimes, gangsters and corruption, often with a political edge, have swept box offices and film awards, winning praise for gritty stories about the dark underbelly of society. "The Villainess" portrays a female assassin trained as a killer at a young age by a crime ring.

She seeks a new life by working for the South Korean government with a license to kill. "The Merciless" has two former prison buddies trying to climb the ladder of the gangster world, where lying, cheating, backstabbing and violence are norms. "South Korea has such a turbulent modern history riddled with violence and political, social upheavals... I think that may be why we are good at making thriller movies like this," said Jung Byung-Gil, director of "The Villainess".

"With the military dictatorship that ruled for decades and widespread corruption... reality is a fertile ground for so many interesting stories," he told AFP. The South has gone through a stunning transformation in recent decades, going from a war-ravaged backwater poorer than Ethiopia after the 1950-53 Korean War to Asia's fourth-largest economy.

Its political history is an equally hectic roller coaster. Before the democratization of the 1990s, military rule from the 1960s to the 1980s saw tens of thousands killed or tortured—all against a backdrop of perennial tension with North Korea, now nuclear-armed. At the same time its vibrant entertainment industry has taken Asia by storm, with its television dramas, movies, K-pop songs and stars enjoying loyal followings across the region and beyond.

Raw and real

Jung, 36, made his name with a series of action and thriller films, including "Confession of Murder", loosely based on a series of murders of young women in rural Hwaseong in the 1980s. The serial killer was never found, and his crimes also inspired Bong's award-winning 2003 "Memories of Murder", which highlighted the repressive social atmosphere under the army rule of the time. "The Villainess" is packed with dramatic fight and killing scenes—Jung studied at a martial arts acting school—involving knives, swords, axes, rifles and handguns. Despite South Korea's rising stature in world cinema, its directors have limited resources, forcing them to be "more creative and more spontaneous", Jung told AFP.

"We don't have huge investment or world-class technology like Hollywood. So we try to create scenes that feel more real, raw and alive than CGI-ridden US blockbusters," he said. The style first gained global traction with "Oldboy", an emblematic mystery thriller by Park Chan-Wook—a Cannes judge this year—which won the Cannes Grand Prix in 2004. The movie, about a man seeking revenge after being imprisoned by a captor for

15 years, won rave reviews for its cut-throat, unrelenting scenes of violence and sombre, bleak cinematography. Many other moviemakers followed suit with their own bloody thrillers.

Life imitating art?

Recent examples of the genre include 2015's critically-acclaimed "Inside Man", which detailed cosy and corrupt ties between the elites of Seoul's business, political, media and criminal worlds. "The King"—a recent swashbuckling political drama about corrupt, power-hungry prosecutors—features shamanistic rituals in which powerful political figures pray for the defeat of a presidential candidate. After it was shot, the real-life corruption scandal that eventually brought down president Park Geun-Hye emerged, centered on her secret confidante Choi Soon-Sil—the daughter of her shady former mentor, a seven-times-married former shaman himself.

Park was removed from power in March and is now in custody, due to go on trial Tuesday for corruption as well as abuse of power for ordering a secret "blacklist" of thousands of artists who voiced criticism of her or her policies. "One day, someone may be able to make a movie about all the turbulent, painful dramas we went through these past years," Bong—who was blacklisted himself—told AFP.

"Many say South Korean movies are so intense, dynamic and brimming with explosive energy," he added. "It may be because art mirrors reality." — AFP



Cannes mayor David Lisnard (center), General Delegate of the Cannes Film Festival Thierry Fremaux (sixth left), President of the Cannes Film Festival Pierre Lescure (eighth left), French actress Isabelle Huppert (fourth right) and staff of the festival observe a minute of silence to pay homage to the victims of the Manchester terrorist attack that occurred a day before, yesterday at the 70th edition of the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southern France. — AFP

Cannes' red carpet falls silent for Manchester victims

The famed red carpet at the Cannes film festival fell silent yesterday for victims of the pop concert suicide bombing in the British city of Manchester. The attack targeting young fans at a show by US singer Ariana Grande cast a shadow over celebrations for the 70th birthday of the world's biggest film festival, where many of the A-list elite are gathered.

A fireworks display was scheduled for last night in the southern French resort has been cancelled after Monday night's stadium attack, which left 22 dead and has been claimed by the Islamic State group. Dozens of festival staff led by director Thierry Fremaux stood on the red steps of the Palais des Festivals for a minute's silence, joined by Oscar nominee Isabelle Huppert. "The Manchester victims were doing nothing

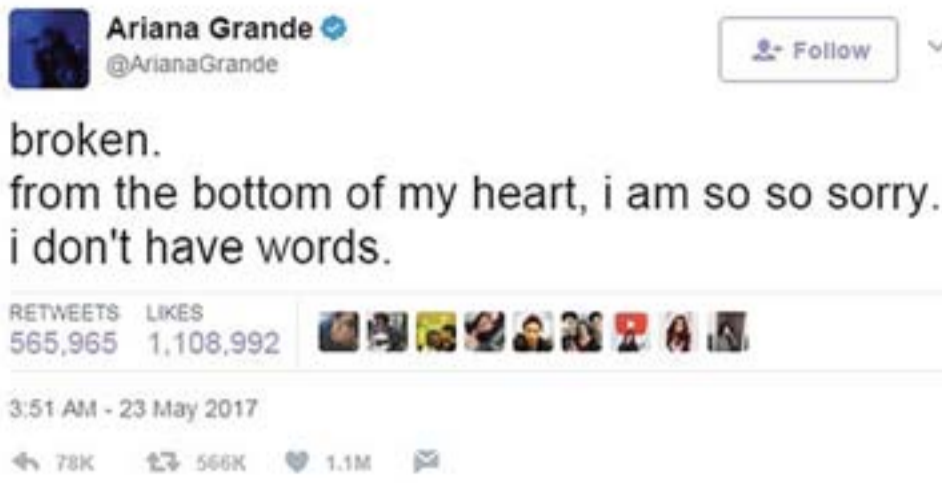
that we don't do here—being together, enjoying the freedom to love and share their passions," Fremaux said.

Beachside restaurants near the festival also turned off their music as diners fell silent. Festival organizers described the bombing as "yet another attack on culture, youth and joyfulness, on our freedom generosity and tolerance, all things that the festival and those who make it possible—the artists, professionals and spectators—hold dear." Security is tight in Cannes, just 10 months after the jihadist truck attack in nearby Nice that killed 86 people.

Unprecedented measures have been taken to protect the festival, with large concrete barriers put up in a bid to prevent another vehicle assault and snipers positioned on the roof

above sensitive sites. Cannes Mayor David Lisnard offered his "heartfelt thoughts" to the Manchester victims, saying on Twitter: "The threat is at maximum. We will stay on maximum alert to prevent it and protect everyone, residents and festival-goers, from the risk of an attack." Stars including Nicole Kidman, Will Smith, Colin Farrell and Salma Hayek joined directing giants such as Cannes jury chief Pedro Almodovar and Ken Loach earlier Tuesday for a "family photo" to mark the festival's 70th birthday—many snapping their own selfies for posterity. A host of celebrities—the guest-list is top secret—were due to attend an anniversary bash in the evening. — AFP

MUSIC



This image taken from the Twitter feed of Ariana Grande yesterday, shows the message from Ariana Grande after the fatal explosion at her concert in Manchester, England.



This image taken from the Twitter feed of Ariana Grande yesterday, shows the message from Ariana Grande after the fatal explosion at her concert in Manchester, England.



Singer Ariana Grande accepts the Artist of the Year award onstage during the 2016 American Music Awards at Microsoft Theater on November 20, 2016 in Los Angeles, California. — AP/AFP photos



Katie Walton who attended the pop concert by US star Ariana Grande poses in Manchester, northwest England yesterday.

Ariana Grande, an anodyne teen favorite hit by tragedy

Pop star Ariana Grande, whose concert was struck by one of Britain's deadliest attacks in years, is a favorite of pre-teens rarely known for causing a stir. The 23-year-old former child star called her last album "Dangerous Woman" but her controversies have been markedly low-key, with the "danger" in her lyrics more about love than anything more sinister. Grande wrote on Twitter that she felt "broken" after Monday's deadly attack, which sent screaming fans fleeing the venue after a blast in the foyer of the Manchester Arena moments after the left the stage.

"From the bottom of my heart, I am so so sorry. I don't have words," she wrote. Born in Florida, Grande showed promise from an early age in theater and by her teenage years had joined a Broadway musical, moving to New York where she sang on the side. Grande entered the public eye when she was cast on the Nickelodeon sitcom "Victorious," playing the

talented but at times aloof high school student Cat Valentine. Grande kept the feline imagery as she branched out into pop music, frequently sporting a cat-ear headband or tying her brunette hair up in pigtails.

Pre-teen audience

Over the course of her three studio albums, her look has gradually turned more sensual as she sports slinky black skirts and sings of her power over men. But unlike Miley Cyrus, a fellow onetime child star to whom she is sometimes compared, Grande never broke completely with the teenybopper image. Her "Arianator" fan base is full of young girls experiencing their first concerts. In perhaps her biggest brush with controversy, Grande in 2015 released a feminist manifesto that attacked the focus on her, and other women's, personal lives. "The double standard and misogyny are still ever present,"

Grande, who has more than 45 million followers on Twitter, said in the statement disseminated on social media. "I can't wait to live in a world where people are not valued by who they're dating / married to / attached to, having sex with (or not) / seen with ... but by their value as an individual," she said. In an interview last month with Cosmopolitan, Grande revealed that she has started running her show "from top to bottom" as she no longer felt comfortable putting her business in others' hands.

"Now I'm very much in charge, and it feels amazing," she said. As a celebrity, she has occasionally found herself in the tabloid press. In 2015 she was caught on camera with one of her back-up dancers licking the frosting off a doughnut and mumbling, "I hate America." She later clarified that she was proud to be American and was only critiquing her country's penchant for overeating.

Grande has generally stayed away from activism, other than speaking out about her vegan diet as a way to reduce suffering for animals. Raised Roman Catholic, she has said she left the church due to its position on gay rights and instead dabbles in the Kabbalah, a mystical branch of Judaism that has also drawn Madonna. An Italian American, Grande in 2015 brought along her grandmother, whom she affectionately called "my nonna," when she won a top honor at 2015's American Music Awards. — AFP



Stars from Manchester and beyond express shock at bomb attack

Entertainment and sports celebrities took to social media to express sadness and shock in the aftermath of the bomb attack in Manchester that killed at least 22 people. The attack occurred on Monday evening in the foyer of the city's Arena stadium, where US singer Ariana Grande had just finished performing a concert. Many of those in attendance were young teenagers and children.

Australian pop star Kylie Minogue posted on Twitter that she was "absolutely heartbroken for Manchester", while American singer Cher offered her prayers for the city, saying that she "had special times there from youth & beyond". Icons from Manchester's storied music scene were also quick to express their grief. Former Oasis frontman Liam Gallagher tweeted that he was "in total shock and absolutely devastated".

Johnny Marr, former guitarist in the seminal Manchester band The Smiths, wrote that the city "stands together", while Dave Haslam, a former DJ at the city's legendary but now defunct Hacienda nightclub, wrote: "You've got the wrong city if you think hate will tear us apart". Many stars from across the Atlantic, including some of Grande's friends and colleagues, also took to social media. Singer Selena Gomez tweeted that her "thoughts and prayers go out to everyone affected", while singer Katy Perry posted that she was "broken hearted for the families tonight. Broken hearted for Ari. Broken hearted for the state of this world".

Other US stars including Taylor Swift, Justin Timberlake, Missy Elliott, Pink and Bruno Mars expressed their sympathies. Also chiming in were prominent players from Manchester's two Premier League soccer teams, Manchester United and Manchester City. Wayne Rooney, the England and Manchester United forward, said news of the attack was "devastating", while Manchester City's Ivory Coast midfielder, Yaya Toure, called it "terrible". — Reuters

Spanish conquers US song chart with Fonsi's 'Despacito'

More than 20 years after the "Macarena" sensation, a Spanish-language song has again conquered the US singles chart—Puerto Rican singer Luis Fonsi's "Despacito." The song has soared to the top of the charts through an assist by pop celebrity Justin Bieber, who appears on a remix version with a breathy opening verse in English. "Despacito," which also features the Puerto Rican rapper Daddy Yankee, is a pop track driven by a reggaeton beat. The lyrics to the song, whose title means "slowly," are full of sexual innuendos.

"Despacito" on Monday came in at number one on the Billboard Hot 100 chart of top-selling US singles, the second straight week it has taken the highest spot. The song cruised to number one on the back of dominance in streaming and digital downloads, although it fared less well in airplay on US radio stations. Nearly three-quarters of sales or streams of the song were for the remix with Bieber, tracking service Nielsen Music said.

"Despacito" has ruled the US Latin chart for 16 straight weeks and has racked up more than 1.5 billion views on YouTube. The song is the first mostly Spanish-language track to top the mainstream US chart in 21 years. In 1996, "Macarena" by the Spanish duo Los del Rio conquered the United States as it set off an international dance sensation,

with the song even figuring at the Democratic Party's 1996 convention. Daddy Yankee, whose real name is Ramon Rodriguez, said that the chorus and pre-chorus of "Despacito" carried "magic, and a melody that everyone could relate to."

"This is definitely not only a big achievement for Luis Fonsi and for me, but it's a big achievement for music in general," he told Billboard magazine. "We are crossing cultural barriers and unifying the world through music," he said. Fonsi, who is better known for his ballads than his incursions into reggaeton, recently wrote on Instagram: "Music has no language. Let's keep making history."

"Despacito" has quickly in the past two weeks become a viral sensation online through a variety of video tributes on YouTube. In one clip, three Italian comedians listen to the song in a car and pretend to hate it before being won over by the rhythm. The original video, which features Puerto Rican actress and 2006 Miss Universe Zuleyka Rivera, was on Monday the 24th most-watched ever on YouTube, the highest for a 2017 release. The all-time most-watched video is "Gangnam Style" by Korean dance-pop artist Psy, another rare non-English track to become a major US hit. — AFP



Photo shows Luis Fonsi's "Despacito," left, features the Puerto Rican rapper Daddy Yankee (right). — AFP

Brazil's immortal diva Elza Soares vows to sing until end

The emaciated teenager from a Rio favela, dressed in her mother's clothes held tight by pins, showed up in 1953 at a radio studio. She wanted to sing in return for cash to buy medicine for her sick baby. "And what planet do you come from?" the program's host, famous composer Ary Barroso, asked mockingly to the audience's laughter. "From Planet Hunger," the teenager, Elza Soares, replied, bringing silence to the crowd. Minutes later, after hearing Soares sing, the astonished conductor declared the birth of a star.

"I haven't forgotten that exchange. I can't forget it," Soares, now 79, told AFP. "I felt sad. I was a poor girl who was poorly dressed. I just sang well," said Soares, her voice hollow after a life full of pain as well as success. Soares spoke by telephone before singing Friday in New York at Town Hall as part of the Red Bull Music Academy Festival. The show was based on "A Mulher do Fim Do Mundo" ("A Woman from the End of the World"), her Latin Grammy-winning 2015 album with previously unreleased tracks that offers a futuristic, even gothic, take on her samba with art-rock backdrops and electronic effects.

Dressed in black with a blonde afro that has made some call her the Brazilian Tina Turner, Soares performed sitting, as she has for some time. But she still managed to rouse the audience out of its seats as she reached into her voice's guttural depths on classics such as "Malandro" ("Hustler") and "A Carne" ("Meat"), with its line: "The cheapest meat on the market is black meat." "Black! Black! Black!" she screamed at the end, to which an audience member shouted back, "Wonderful black!"

The show culminated in calls by audience members for the impeachment of Brazil's center-right President Michel Temer in his corruption scandal. After the curtains closed, Soares shouted:

"Direct, already!" backing calls for direct elections in a country whose previous president Dilma Rousseff was impeached. After New York, Soares will perform in Barcelona, Porto and Rotterdam as well as at Denmark's Roskilde rock festival.

Garrincha 'my greatest love'

Tragedy has repeatedly hit Soares, but her resilience has only added to making her a cult heroine. Her father forced her to marry at age 12 and a year later she gave birth to a son. She would go on to have seven children with her first husband, although the first two, premature and malnourished, died when they were young. Soares, who has admitted to stealing food for her family, was already a widow at 21. She found love with football legend Garrincha, the king of the dribble nicknamed the "bent-legged angel." Their relationship was stormy and at times violent. But Soares described him as "my greatest love."

Her favorite memory of him? "Watching him play football. For me, he was Brazil's greatest player. The greatest." They were married for 17 years, but Garrincha—who showed such joy on the football field and helped lead Brazil to its triumphs at the 1958 and 1962 World Cups—was an alcoholic who died at age 49 of cirrhosis of the liver. Then their son, nicknamed Garrinchinha, died at age nine in a road accident as he was heading to his father's grave. Soares's mother was also killed in a car crash. "Yes, life has been hard on me. But I also see other worlds where life is very hard. I think life is hard for everyone," she said.

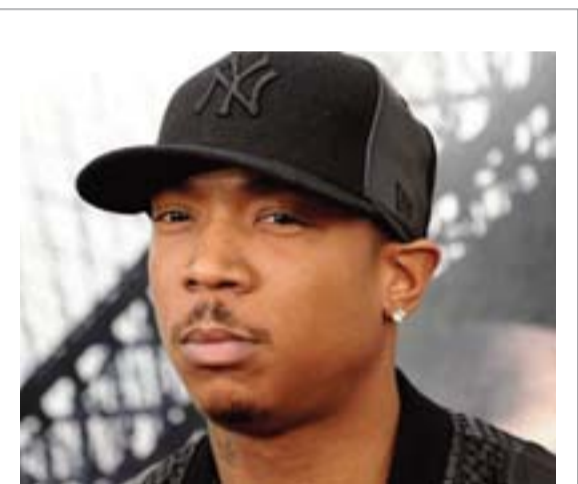
The saxophone in her throat

When she headed to Chile for the 1962 World Cup, Soares had what she described as a "magnificent encounter" with jazz giant

Louis Armstrong. With her voice's rich, brassy roots, Armstrong said Soares had a "saxophone in her throat." "I was a very young girl then and he wanted to take me to the United States to sing. I told him that I couldn't because I had children and he didn't believe me because I was so young," she said. As she did not understand English at the time, Soares repeatedly misunderstood the American. Armstrong called her "daughter" and she, confused, heard "doctor." And when he asked her to call him "my father," she thought he was uttering a vulgar sexual phrase in Portuguese. How does Soares want to be remembered? "As a normal person," she said with modesty. "I'm going to sing until the end. Singing is what I enjoy most in life." — AFP



This file photo shows Argentina's director and choreographer Claudio Segovia giving a press conference in Blagnac, southern France, with Brazilian singer Elza Soares to present his show "Brasil Brasileiro". — AFP



Ja Rule

LAWSUIT: FYRE MUSIC FEST MORE 'HUNGER GAMES' THAN COACHELLA

Litigation is piling up like bonfire kindling against organizers of the Fyre Festival that flamed out in a fiasco. Angry participants had lashed out on social media with the hashtag #fyrefraud as the music festival fell apart on an island in the Bahamas in April and fraud is the first claim in a \$100 million class-action suit. The suit filed earlier this month in federal court on behalf of a Los Angeles man said the events planned over two weekends were "nothing more than a get-rich-quick scam" akin to a Ponzi scheme that put the lives - and small fortunes - of thousands of participants in jeopardy.

"The festival's lack of adequate food, water, shelter, and medical care created a dangerous and panicked situation among attendees - suddenly finding themselves stranded on a remote island without basic provisions - that was closer to 'The Hunger Games' or 'Lord of the Flies' than Coachella," according to the suit filed by attorney Mark Geragos. The lawsuit is one of several filed in the wake of the disaster that unfolded on the island of Exuma late last month when inadequate planning and facilities led performers to bow out and organizers to cancel the show once billed as the "the cultural experience of the decade."

In an amended complaint filed in US District Court, Geragos said 300 people had contacted his offices after the initial suit was filed against organizers Billy McFarland, rapper Ja Rule, whose real name is Jeffrey Atkins, and Fyre Media Inc. Among dozens of unnamed defendants are deep-pocketed investors who provided seed money for the event. The event promoted on social media by Kendall Jenner, Bella Hadid, Emily Ratajkowski and other models and celebrities targeted well-heeled Millennials with ticket packages ranging from \$1,200 to over \$100,000 and promising five-star dining and luxury accommodations. Headliners included rockers Blink-182, hip-hop act Migos and the electronic music trio Major Lazer.

Instead of putting the tropical island on the map as the next big destination music experience, Fyre Festival only succeeded in sparking outrage. Participants arrived to find a venue partly under construction, insipid food and soggy beds under leaking tents. One photo included in the suit showed a Styrofoam container with bread, two pieces of packaged cheese, lettuce and sliced tomato. Lawsuits filed in New York and Miami federal courts made similar claims after Geragos filed the Los Angeles case. Attorney Stacey Richman, who represents Ja Rule, said he wouldn't participate in anything fraudulent.

After the event was canceled, the rapper had posted an apology online saying he was heartbroken, but that it was not a scam and it was not his fault. Efforts to reach McFarland, Fyre Media or attorneys who have responded to lawsuits on their behalf were unsuccessful. McFarland previously promised full refunds and offered his apology on the festival's website. He also said he would offer free VIP passes to next year's festival. — AP

Lifestyle

WEDNESDAY, MAY 24, 2017

Ariana Grande, an anodyne teen favorite hit by tragedy

39



Festival de Cannes laureates pose yesterday for a family photo during a photocall for the '70th Anniversary' of the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southern France. — AFP

Morocco fishermen decry 'El Negro' dolphin attacks

In Morocco's northern port city of Al-Hoceima, fishermen are clamoring for state support for a struggling sector which they say is under attack from dolphins. In the harbor, fishermen can often be seen mending nets they claim have been destroyed by a type of dolphin they have dubbed El Negro, or "the Black One" in Spanish. Named after its dark grey-almost black-skin, the bottlenose dolphin is the largest of three species found in the western Mediterranean.

"He sees us coming and knows exactly when and how to attack the fishing net," said boat-owner Said Shaib, 44. "When he attacks, we are sometimes left with only 10 to 20 sardine boxes" from a catch that can reach 400 boxes a day—and each time huge damage to the nets. "It gets very expensive," said Shaib, with fuel expenses and time wasted on shore fixing nets.

In a long-neglected region still reeling from the gruesome death of a fishmonger crushed in a rubbish truck, the dolphin attacks have fuelled long-standing grievances. Mouhcine Fikri, 31, was accidentally killed last year in Al-Hoceima as he tried to protest against authorities seizing and destroying swordfish caught out of season. His death in the Rif region sparked outrage nationwide, but also ongoing protests in his hometown, including to demand state support for an economically devastated region that has long relied on fishing for income. "In Al-Hoceima, the economy has always been based on fishing," Shaib said. "We used to coexist with the dolphin. But from 2010, attacks by El Negro soared."

'Free the sardines'

An expert on local fauna said it was not clear why bottlenose dolphins, which can measure up to four meters (13 feet) long and weigh 400 kilos (almost 900 pounds), were attacking nets. "It's a very intelligent animal. It attacks to feed itself, but possibly also to free the sardines," the expert said, asking to remain anonymous. Governor Mohamed El Yaakoubi



A picture shows a general view of Penon de Velez de la Gomera, a peninsula within Spanish territory, off the coast of Morocco's Bades beach in Al-Hoceima national park.

agreed that bottlenose dolphins are a problem. "Fishing has suffered a lot," he said. Since 2011, catches in Al-Hoceima have dropped by half from 8,972 to 4,576 tons a year, according to official figures.

But Mohamed Jabran, an official with the water and forests authority, said dolphins may not be entirely at fault. "With all the overfishing, there's less to catch and therefore more competition," he said. The crisis has led many fishermen to flee Al-Hoceima on their boats in search of better catches operating

from ports along the Atlantic coast. Many others, like Shaib, have sold their boats and nets to convert to longline fishing, as dolphins tend not to attack fishing lines.

In the harbor, fishermen complain that the state has not done enough to protect their livelihoods, including to ward off the dolphins. "The state has done nothing against El Negro," said fisherman Abdelhamid, who refused to give his second name. It's "because dolphins are good for tourism", a former sardine catcher added, also asking not to be identified. Like

many of his colleagues, he accused Rabat of wanting to "kill fishing" to build a tourist marina in the area instead.

'Sturdier French nets'

Local official Nourredine Boughdane rejected such accusations, however. "It makes no sense. The economy here is based on two sectors: fishing and tourism," he said. Governor Yaakoubi said the government would never do anything to harm the bottlenose dolphin, a species protected by a regional conservation agreement.

"Morocco scrupulously respects the protection of the species," he said. The country is signatory to the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Area, or ACCOBAMS, he said. Authorities tried to introduce ultra-sound emitting devices on fishing boats to scare away the dolphins, Yaakoubi said, but the cetaceans understood this meant fishing was under way and flocked to the nets in even greater numbers. Instead, the state is now looking into compensating fishermen for lost nets, the governor said, and a sturdier French net is being tested for possible use.

Meanwhile, drift nets have made a comeback in Al-Hoceima, despite being banned since 2010 as they endanger dolphins and other protected marine species. One activist, who asked to remain anonymous, said longline fishing boats along the coastline near Al-Hoceima were using the prohibited nets. "Everybody is buying them at the moment," the activist said, suggesting authorities may be turning a blind eye to avoid further unrest in the region. "They declare their catch as coming from longline fishing." — AFP



A beach in the area known as Bomaxod in Morocco's eastern Al-Hoceima national park.



Goats grazing in a dried-out riverbed in Morocco's eastern Al-Hoceima national park.



A general view of ruins of old buildings in Morocco's eastern Al-Hoceima national park.