

Customs officers foil attempt to smuggle alcohol into Kuwait



Duterte warns of martial law for all of Philippines



Tom Cruise reveals Top Gun 2 in the works



Man United outclass Ajax to win Europa League



QATAR PROBES 'SHAMEFUL' HACKING AS RIFTS REOPEN

FAKE REMARKS EXPOSE GULF TENSIONS • OUTRAGE IN UAE, SAUDI MEDIA



Min 28°
Max 41°
High Tide 10:53
Low Tide 05:12 & 18:01



LAWMAKERS REJECT PIFSS, KISR BUDGETS, APPROVE SIX OTHERS

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: The National Assembly yesterday rejected the 2017/2018 budget of the Public Institution for Social Security (PIFSS) amid strong criticism of the institution's investment policies and the many remarks made by the Audit Bureau. The house also rejected the budget and final accounts of Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research. But the Assembly approved the budgets of other authorities including the much-criticized Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources after the concerned minister pledged to take all the necessary measures to stop violations and alleged corruption.

The other budgets passed are of the Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI), Public Authority for Manpower, Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development and Kuwait Municipality. MPs continued for the second day running their strong criticism of PIFSS and PAAAFR over alleged corruption and mismanagement.

MP Abdulwahab Al-Babtain wondered how PIFSS takes its investment decisions when it has only one auditor. He said the former absconding director of the institution had formed a panel to take decisions on high-risk investments.

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KUWAIT: Firemen battle a blaze that engulfed a petrochemical plant in Rai yesterday. The Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFSD) said three firemen were injured while trying to bring the fire under control, and over 27 vehicles were damaged. Six firefighting teams immediately rushed to control the fire at the 2,000-sq-meter plant, adding the conflagration caused severe material losses. — KUNA

DOHA: Qatar launched an investigation and went into damage control mode yesterday after accusing hackers of putting what it called false remarks by the emir on state media. The four-hour cyber attack, which hit the Qatar News Agency's website and Twitter account, caused ripples in the Gulf state and across the Middle East because of the content of the stories. Among the topics supposedly addressed by Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani were the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, strategic relations with Iran, expressing understanding about Palestinian Islamist movement Hamas and Lebanon's Hezbollah, and suggesting US President Donald Trump might not last long in power.

There were also remarks about alleged "tensions" between Qatar and the Trump administration. The Twitter account carried a statement from Foreign Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani about Qatar withdrawing its ambassadors from several nearby countries. His ministry denied the story. Qatar said what occurred was a "shameful cybercrime" and that the reports were completely untrue. It added an investigation had been launched and the hackers would be "traced and prosecuted".

"QNA's website was hacked at 12:14 am on Wednesday morning, with hackers publishing false statements attributed to HH the Emir Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani," said the foreign ministry. "The official further said that it is clear this shameful cybercrime was instigated and perpetrated with malicious intent," it said in a statement.

The fake articles quoted Qatar emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani as calling Iran an "Islamic power" and saying Qatar's relations with Israel were "good" during a military ceremony.

Continued on Page 13



VATICAN CITY: Pope Francis meets US President Donald Trump and First Lady Melania Trump in a private audience at the Vatican yesterday. — AP

TRUMP VOWS PEACE PUSH AFTER MEETING WITH POPE

BRUSSELS: Donald Trump vowed yesterday to use his US presidency to promote peace around the world after what he depicted as an inspirational meeting with an initially grim-faced Pope Francis. Meeting face-to-face for the first time, the two leaders sidestepped profound differences over a string of issues ranging from the environment to the plight of migrants and the poor. And the US president emerged from a half-hour meeting at the Vatican gushing with enthusiasm about the 80-year-old pontiff, to the point of the former TV star appearing slightly star-struck.

"Honor of a lifetime to meet His Holiness Pope Francis," Trump wrote on Twitter before leaving Rome for Brussels and the next leg of his first overseas trip as president. "I leave the Vatican more determined than ever to pursue PEACE in our world." Trump later arrived in Brussels, a city he once dubbed a "hellhole", ahead of his first summits today with wary leaders of NATO and the European Union.

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BRITAIN HUNTS TERROR NETWORK

MANCHESTER: Britain yesterday to track down a network suspected of orchestrating the Manchester concert bombing, as soldiers fanned out to guard key sites under a maximum terror alert. Investigators were trying to piece together the last movements of suicide bomber Salman Abedi, a Manchester-born university dropout whose parents had reportedly fled the now fallen regime of Libyan dictator Muammar Gaddafi. A French minister said he may have been radicalized in Syria, while a brother and father of Abedi was detained by authorities in Libya.

"It's very clear that this is a network that we are investigating," Manchester police chief Ian Hopkins told reporters, with five people now under arrest. The government announced a nationwide minute's silence for Thursday morning in memory of the 22 people killed and dozens wounded in Monday night's bombing. A girl aged just eight was among the victims of the attack, which was claimed by the Islamic State group.

Officials said the 22-year-old Abedi had been on the radar of the intelligence community before the massacre at a concert by US pop star Ariana Grande, and warned another attack "may be imminent". After arresting a 23-year-old man on Tuesday, police said they had taken three more men into custody yesterday in south Manchester, where Abedi lived. A fifth man who was carrying a suspect package was then detained in Wigan, west of the city. An armed raid was also carried out in Manchester city center yesterday, during which police said a nearby railway line had to be "briefly closed".

Elders at the mosque in the Manchester area that is believed to have been frequented by



MANCHESTER: Armed police secure a street in central Manchester yesterday following the May 22 terror attack at the Manchester Arena. — AFP

Abedi insisted that his actions were wholly alien to their preaching, and pointed the finger at online radicalization. "The horrific atrocity that occurred in Manchester on Monday night shocked us all. This act of cowardice has no place in our religion," said Fawzi Haffar, a trustee at the Didsbury mosque, after he and other mosque leaders held their own minute's silence.

French Interior Minister Gerard Collomb said Abedi had "likely" been to Syria after a trip to Libya, citing information provided by British intelligence services to their counterparts in Paris. "In any case, the links with Daesh are proven," he said, using a term for the Islamic State group, as Libyan authorities announced the arrest of one of Abedi's two brothers and his father in the country. Hundreds of armed military personnel meanwhile fanned out to take up guard duties at the British parliament and Buckingham Palace - a highly unusual sight on the streets of Britain since the end of the Northern Ireland conflict in the 1990s.

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VIENNA: Saudi Energy Minister Khalid Al-Falih and Kuwaiti Minister of Oil and Electricity and Water Essam Al-Marzouq leave OPEC headquarters yesterday. — AFP

OIL PRODUCERS DEBATING 1-YR CUT EXTENSION

VIENNA: OPEC and non-member oil producers will debate today a proposal to extend output cuts by as long as 12 months in a move to help clear a global stocks overhang and prop up prices. The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries is to discuss in Vienna whether to prolong an accord reached in December in which it and 11 non-members agreed to cut oil output by about 1.8 million barrels per day in the first half of 2017.

The market sees an extension by nine months - instead of the initially suggested six months - as the base-case scenario. OPEC's de facto leader, Saudi Arabia, has said it favors such a move to speed up market rebalancing and prevent oil prices from sliding back below \$50 per barrel. Saudi ally Kuwait signaled yesterday OPEC could discuss deepening the cuts, in what would come as a positive surprise for market bulls.

But hopes quickly faded after a joint OPEC and non-OPEC committee recommended keep-

ing the curbs unchanged for nine months. Saudi Energy Minister Khalid Al-Falih gave the thumbs up when asked whether the committee had agreed on a nine-month extension, but his Russian counterpart Alexander Novak surprised later by saying a 12-month prolongation was also on the table. "The recommendation is to keep current quotas ... The duration is nine months. Tomorrow we will discuss the possibility of extending by another three months (to June 2018)," Novak said. Iraq also said the 12-month option - an unusually long duration for an OPEC cut - was on the table.

By 1715 GMT, Brent crude was trading down 0.5 percent, below \$54 a barrel. "OPEC has already achieved a lot. They stopped the oil market surplus from building even before they started cutting," said Gary Ross, head of global oil at PIRA Energy, a unit of S&P Global Platts. Amrita Sen of consultancy Energy Aspects said: "If OPEC can ease fears about 2018 balances, that will also

help the upside to prices in 2017."

Most OPEC ministers including those from Iraq and Iran had already voiced support for extending cuts by nine months. Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Zanganeh, who had clashed with Saudi Arabia in many previous OPEC meetings, said in Vienna that OPEC seemed to have built a consensus around nine months. "I would go along with the majority," Zanganeh said. Under the existing deal, Iran received an exemption slightly to raise output, which has been curtailed by years of Western sanctions. Iran's production has been stagnant in recent months, suggesting limited upside potential at least in the short term.

OPEC's cuts have helped push oil back above \$50 a barrel this year, giving a fiscal boost to producers, many of which rely heavily on energy revenues and have had to burn through foreign-currency reserves to plug holes in their budgets.

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KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Brunei's Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Lim Jock Seng. — Amiri Diwan and KUNA photos



National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem meets with Brunei's Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Lim Jock Seng.

AMIR RECEIVES BRUNEI'S FM

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday at Bayan Palace First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, accompanied by the visiting Brunei's Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Lim Jock Seng. The reception was attended by Deputy Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah.

Following the meeting, Minister Seng and Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled held follow-up discussions after His Highness the Amir's visit to Brunei last October, a statement by the Foreign Ministry noted. Moreover, talks

centered on issues of mutual concern as well as strategies to boost bilateral ties in all fields, the statement added. Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled also held a luncheon banquet in honor of the visiting Bruneian official and his accompanying delegation. Senior officials of Kuwait's Foreign Ministry attended the meeting.

The visiting minister later met with National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem, and they discussed cooperative relations between both friendly countries and ways of promoting and developing them in various fields through coordination and exchange of experience and activities.

They also addressed a number of major issues and matters that concern both sides, along with the latest regional and international developments. Minister Seng also met with His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

Amir meets officials

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir received His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. His Highness the Amir also received Ghanem and His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak. Separately, His Highness Crown Prince received Sheikh Talal Fahad Al-

Ahmad Al-Sabah, Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah, as well as Ghanem and His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak. His Highness Crown Prince also met with Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah.

Winners congratulated

In other news, His Highness the Amir sent a cable to Maali Al-Asousi, congratulating her on being the recipient of the UAE's 'Arab Hope Maker' award for her humanitar-

ian deeds. In his cable, His Highness the Amir applauded Asousi's distinctive contributions, wishing her every success. His Highness the Crown Prince and His Highness the Prime Minister sent Asousi similar cables of congratulations.

His Highness the Amir also sent a cable on Wednesday to Director General of Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) Dr Adnan Shihab-Eldin, congratulating him on receiving a French honorary order for his scientific contributions. His Highness the Crown Prince and His Highness the Prime Minister sent Shihab-Eldin similar cables. —KUNA



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with Brunei's Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Lim Jock Seng.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Sheikh Talal Fahad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.



Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with Brunei's Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Lim Jock Seng.

GHANEM MEETS CHILEAN PARLIAMENTARY OFFICIAL

KUWAIT: National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem met in his office yesterday with visiting head of Kuwaiti-Chilean parliamentary friendship committee at the Parliament of Chile Ivan Zambrana Flores and his accompanying delegation. During the meeting they discussed the bilateral relation and ways to enhance and develop it, in addition to the regional and international political situa-

tion and how to coordinate their stances at parliamentary gatherings, the National Assembly's News Network 'Al-Dustoor' reported. The meeting was attended by head of the mission of honor accompanying Flores the National Assembly's Secretary MP Dr Ouda Al-Rowaei. The visiting MP and his accompanied delegation arrived in Kuwait on Tuesday on a five-day official visit. — KUNA

FRENCH ENVOY GRANTS KFAS CHIEF HIGHEST MEDAL

KUWAIT: French Ambassador to Kuwait Christine Nakhla Tuesday honored Director of the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) Adnan Shihab-Eldin with the 'Knight of the Legion of Honor', the most prestigious decoration in the country.

Prior to an honoring ceremony, Nakhla said it is the highest medal in the world and is given to well-deserved citizens. France sought to honor Shihab-Eldin for progress and scientific contributions made by KFAS, he noted.

Meanwhile, Shihab-Eldin said the medal is based on good meanings like freedom, brotherhood, humanity and enlightened thought. He added he was proud that the last five years had been devoted to educa-

tion and science. He referred that he had an opportunity to work with senior officials and share views with them when he served as OPEC secretary general.

"The post helped me contact with French researchers and officials through signing several agreements and programs which contributed to promoting relations between the two countries in the areas of education, culture and scientific research," he said.

Established in 1802 by Napoleon Bonaparte, the 'Chevalier de la Legion d'Honneur' (Knight of the Legion of Honor) is the highest award presented to non French citizens in recognition of military, cultural, scientific, or social contributions. —KUNA



KUWAIT: People watch as the van carrying the mortal remains of M Mathews (inset) is preparing to leave the premises of the National Evangelical Church Kuwait (NECK).

THOUSANDS BID TEARFUL ADIEU TO 'SUNNYCHAYAN'

By Sajeev K Peter

KUWAIT: Thousands of people flocked to the National Evangelical Church of Kuwait (NECK) in Kuwait City yesterday to bid a tearful adieu to M Mathews, a well-regarded social leader and Indian industrialist, whose mortal remains were kept in the church hall for people to pay their last respects. Mathews, popularly known as Sunnychayan, passed away in Kuwait on May 20, 2017 following a long illness.

Church volunteers and relatives struggled to control the mourners from all walks of life as they poured into the church to have a last glimpse of Sunnychayan, who played a crucial role in the evacuation of around 170,000 Indians from Kuwait in the aftermath of Iraqi invasion of the country in 1990, which is considered to be the world's largest civilian evacuation in history.

Indian Ambassador Sunil Jain, Indian Embassy Deputy Chief of Mission Shubashis Goldar, Al-Sayer Group CEO Mubarak Al-Sayer, EMKE Group Chairman Yusuff Ali MA and NBTC Group Managing Director KG Abraham were among the dignitaries who paid tribute to Mathews. Braving the dust storm, a large number of people including top banking officials, businessmen, principals from various Indian schools and Indian community representatives also thronged the church to pay their last respects to the departed leader.

Mathews' constant communication with the United Nations and the Indian government eventually resulted in the safe evacuation of thousands of Indians who were trapped in Kuwait following the Iraqi invasion.

Mathews, son of the late A C Mathew and Aachamma of Kumbanad in Pathanamthitta,

Kerala, reached Kuwait in 1956 by ship and joined the Naser Mohammed Al-Sayer and Company in 1957. He retired from service as general manager in 1989. During his six-decades-long life, Mathews built a vast network of friends and well-wishers in Kuwait. Mathews was one of the founding members of the Indian Arts Circle (IAC) which had been the common cultural platform for Indians for many years. He was the chairman of Jabriya Indian School, and officiated as chairman of the Indian Business Council. He also played an important role in the formation of the Malayali Christian Congregation in Kuwait.

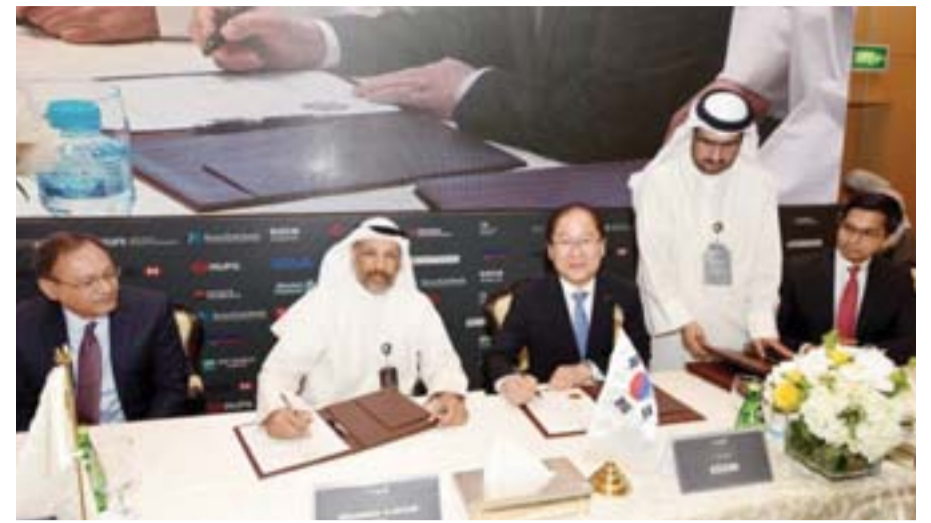
He is survived by wife Mary Mathew and children James, Annie (Delhi) and Susan (lawyer, United Nations Human Rights Commission, Geneva). His body was flown to India yesterday, where his funeral will be held at 2.30 pm tomorrow at Elim Pentecostal Church, Kumbanad, Kerala.



KUWAIT: French Ambassador to Kuwait Christine Nakhla decorates KFAS chief Adnan Shihab-Eldin with the 'Knight of the Legion of Honor'. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Officials pose for a group photo during the ceremony.



KNPC CEO Mohammad Ghazi Al-Mutairi signs a deal with KEXIM.

KNPC SIGNS \$6.245 BILLION DEALS TO FINANCE CLEAN FUELS PROJECT LARGEST ECA BACKED CORPORATE LOAN FACILITIES

KUWAIT: Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC) is pleased to announce the signing of the largest ECA backed Corporate Loan Facilities of \$6.245 billion for the financing of Clean Fuels Project.

This landmark transaction is signed with seven Export Credit Agencies (ECAs) as shown in table 1.

KNPC along with NBK Capital (the exclusive financial adviser) appointed based on merits and negotiated a club deal with 10 International banks under the Korean ECA K-Sure, the Italian ECA SACE, The Dutch ECA Atradius and the British ECA UKEF. Those banks are shown in table 2.

As for the \$500 Million NEXI facility, KNPC negotiated a club deal with four international banks, which are shown in table 3.

On the successful signing of this

ECA tranche, Mohammad Ghazi Al-Mutairi, KNPC CEO stated "We are very delighted to conclude this milestone for Kuwait's oil sector and KNPC. This is the first time that KNPC has opted for Financing from the International Market. Furthermore, this transaction marks the largest ECA borrowing in Kuwait. We would like to thank our partners as well as the Initial Mandated Lead Arrangers for a successful Partnership between Kuwait and participating Countries."

Shukri Abdul Aziz Al-Mahrous, Deputy Chief Executive Officer for Planning and Finance also stated: "This historic deal was extremely complex, and we overcame challenges through series of negotiations which ultimately lead us to a successful landmark transaction."

Table 1

Export Credit Agency	Amount	Facility Type
Korea Trade Insurance Corporation (K-SURE)	\$ 3000 MM	Covered Loan
The Export-Import Bank of Korea (KEXIM)	\$ 1000 MM	Direct Loan
SACE S.p.A. (SACE)	\$ 625 MM	Untied Covered Loan
Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) *	\$ 500 MM	Direct Loan
Nippon Export and Investment Insurance (NEXI) *	\$ 500 MM	Covered Loan
Atradius Dutch State Business N.V. (Atradius)	\$ 370 MM	Covered Loan
Her Britannic Majesty's Secretary of State acting by the Export Credits Guarantee Department (operating as UK Export Finance)	\$ 250 MM	Covered Loan

* Japanese ECAs loan agreement was signed on 30th March 2017.

Table 2

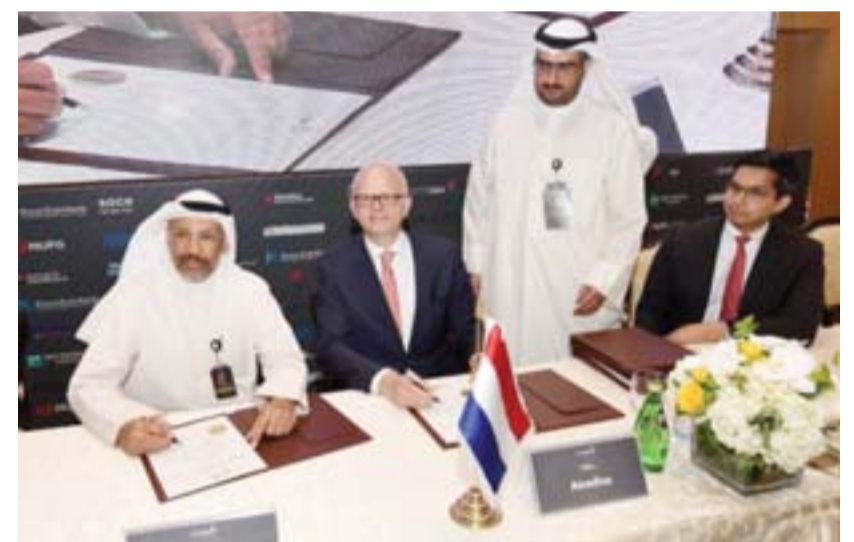
Bank	Amount	Role
The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited (HSBC)	\$ 845 MM	Documentation Bank And Coordinating Arranger
The Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi UFI, Ltd. (BTMU)	\$ 400 MM	Facility Agent For The K-Sure Facility
BNP Paribas (BNPP)/BNP Paribas Fortis (BNPP Fortis)	\$ 400 MM	Facility Agent For The UKEF Facility.
Banco Santander, S.A. (Santander)	\$ 400 MM	
Société Générale	\$ 400 MM	
Banco Bilbao Vizcaya Argentaria, S.A. (BBVA)	\$ 400 MM	Facility Agent For The SACE Facility
Natixis	\$ 400 MM	Facility Agent For The Atradius Facility
Crédit Agricole Corporate and Investment Bank (CA-CIB)	\$ 400 MM	
Mizuho Bank, Ltd. (Mizuho)	\$ 300 MM	
Standard Chartered Bank	\$ 300 MM	Global Agent And Environmental Bank

Table 3

Bank	Amount	Role
Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation (SMBC)	\$ 200 MM	Facility Agent For The NEXI Facility
The Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi UFI, Ltd. (BTMU)	\$ 125 MM	
Mizuho Bank, Ltd. (Mizuho)	\$ 100 MM	
The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited (HSBC)	\$ 75 MM	



KNPC CEO Mohammad Ghazi Al-Mutairi signs a deal with SACE.



KNPC CEO Mohammad Ghazi Al-Mutairi signs a deal with Atradius.

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KUWAIT: Kuwait was affected by a heavy sandstorm yesterday, which temporarily suspended activity at Shuwaikh Port. The storm was caused by strong winds that hit over 32 km/h, which rendered visibility levels below 800 meters. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat and Joseph Shagra

KUWAIT EYES DEVELOPING DIFFERENT TRANSPORT SECTORS

KUWAIT: Kuwait is looking forward to implementing 'Vision 2035' where government eyes development of various transport sectors, electricity and information technology. This development will be through the projects of the airport, railways, metro, bridges, seaports and desalination plants and modern networks, as part of a sophisticated infrastructure pillar.

Infrastructure is a main pillar to achieve the new vision as it has a close connection with the desire of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah aiming to transform Kuwait into an international financial and commercial hub so as to attract investments. For achieving this move, His Highness the Amir laid on May 9th the cornerstone for the new terminal at Kuwait International Airport in the presence of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

As a result, the government has prioritized the sophisticated infrastructure as part of its programs to direct big investments in this field to be in line with world-class standards in order to help Kuwait meet its future aspirations and achieve sustainable development.

The Kuwaiti government is keen on developing infrastructure, as it is the backbone of all economic and social activities in civilized societies for achieving development and welfare. Kuwait has worked on investing in the development of infrastructure to be one of the top performing countries at the economic level, as it is a key factor of attracting national and foreign direct investments. This contributes to increasing GDP by raising efficiency and productivity of capital.

Targets

The government has set out some targets to achieve the modern infrastructure represented in increasing the capacity of Kuwait International Airport, tackling traffic problem, developing the North of Kuwait as an economic and urban area and connecting it with neighboring countries, raising capacity of ports and meeting growing demands for electricity.

The infrastructure includes five programs topped with developing air transport system, which aims to speed up capacity of Kuwait International Airport through executing a new Class A passenger terminal in accordance with international standards. It accommodates for 25 million passengers upon the completion of all phases. Meanwhile, the development of the land transport system seeks to contribute to evolving North of Kuwait as an economic and urban area, linking it to roads connected with neighboring countries in order to limit traffic congestion and help the private sector participate in construction and development of projects in the State. The project aims to build a 37-km sea bridge through the Kuwait Bay. It includes the establishment of two islands containing buildings for traffic services and bridge maintenance as well as a fuel station and other services. The project will shorten the distance between Kuwait City and Sabbiya City, as well as provide other services.

Railway network

The scheme seeks to establish a railway network with a length of more than 570 km, develop the land transport sector and services, activate land connections with neighboring countries, as well as secure and facilitate the movement of passengers and goods. It aims to contribute to reducing pollution resulting from the use of vehicles and trucks, and cutting dependence on roads transport for both passengers and cargo, as part of treating traffic congestion and increasing investment rates. It also seeks to encourage the private sector to participate in construction and development projects in the country and to benefit from practical experience, which has a positive influence on local economy through transferring technology and knowledge, which enhance efficiency of employees and develop services as well as create more jobs. The project eyes activating the connection between local areas and cities, reducing users of private means of transport and thus cutting traffic congestion, in addition to providing more than 1,500 jobs.

Concerning maritime transportation system, it seeks to maximize the capacity of ports to support the transformation of Kuwait into a financial and commercial hub. The project seeks to establish a port with 24 berths and about eight million containers, reconstruct and rehabilitate the Boubyan Island, modernize an industrial zone, provide new jobs for citizens, receive large ships and promote tourism. It aims at upgrading services provided by seaports, increasing their capacity and receiving modern container vessels.

Growing demands

The fourth project is based on developing and increasing capacity of electricity production in order to meet growing demands, as well as work to raise the strategic stock of water to meet the current and future demands because of urban expansion. The project targets increasing production capacity of distillation plants and strengthening strategic water reserve, as well as producing 60 million imperial gallons of fresh water per day. It will attempt to increase the capacity of power plants and the production of electric power within 250 megawatts.

The fifth project seeks to develop infrastructure of information technology, and modernize the latest techniques as well as provide new services. The project, which covers more than 67,000 plots of land in 33 areas, aims to use the latest technology and provide new telephone services (such as Internet and video) via fiber optic cables, which are characterized by fast transmission, high quality and low prices covered in several areas. — KUNA



An artist's rendition of the Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Causeway. — KUNA photos



A new road project in Kuwait.



Construction works for a bridge connecting Boubyan Island with the mainland, built as part of the Mubarak Al-Kabeer Port mega project.



KUWAIT: Aerial view of the Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Causeway Project.



Saad Al-Jassar



Hamad Al-Khodari

CUSTOMS OFFICERS FOIL ATTEMPT TO SMUGGLE ALCOHOL INTO KUWAIT

MAN ARRESTED FOR PLANTING MARIJUANA IN HIS HOUSE

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: An Arab man was arrested after he arrived at Shuaiba Port to collect a shipment containing alcoholic drinks. Criminal investigators at the Interior Ministry coordinated with the investigations division at the Customs General Department, after receiving information about an alcoholic drinks' shipment arriving from a GCC country. An Arab representative was detained and sent for questioning after he came over to process the paperwork to receive the shipment; in which officers found cardboard boxes containing a total of 8,432 liquor bottles. The man said that he was collecting the shipment on behalf of a Georgian national who imported it. The man was also arrested and sent to the concerned authorities for further action.



KUWAIT: A picture released by the Interior Ministry yesterday showing cardboard boxes containing liquor bottles found inside a shipment that arrived to Shuaiba Port yesterday.

Marijuana

An expat was arrested in Hawally for planting marijuana in his house and selling it. Security sources said the suspect told narcotics police that he imported the seedlings and planted them. Further investigations are in progress to find out whether the suspect has any accomplices.

Fire

A fire broke out on the roof of a house in Oyoum in Jahra, said security sources, noting that firemen rushed to the scene and found that the fire had started in a room used as store for perfumes. The fire was controlled and no casualties were reported.

Crackdown

Hawally municipality inspection teams conducted a wide-scale campaign on open yards outside mosques to clear them before Ramadan. Twenty cleaners, four trucks, a loader, a forklift and a lorry were used in the campaign that resulted in removing 10 abandoned vehicles, filing six road blockage citations and removing a truck and a half load of waste.



Marijuana plants found inside a house in Hawally where a drug dealer who was arrested yesterday planted them for trade.

DEMOGRAPHICS DISCUSSED DURING GROUP DEBATE

IMMINENT CRISIS OR POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITY?

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: The Niqashna group held its third debate titled 'The Future of Kuwait', discussing Kuwait's demographics as an imminent crisis or a potential opportunity, on Tuesday at Shot Cafe at the Mayadeen Shooting Range. The debate consisted of an opening speech, panel discussion, Q & A session and closing statements. The debate was presented by two young speakers - Saad Al-Jassar, defending Kuwait's demographic makeup as a potential opportunity; and Hamad Al-Khodari, who saw it as an imminent crisis. Then the audience had a chance to comment and ask questions.

Jassar said Kuwait's demographics haven't changed since 1975. "For over 40 years, the percentage of citizens to expats in Kuwait is still the same - 30-70. The government announced earlier that it is planning to decrease the numbers of expats by two million in 10 years - from

2014-2024 - or 100,000 every year. On the other hand, the government announced 521 projects, which need 80,000 expat laborers every year. This is nonsense and bad management in the government," he said. "Kuwait is not facing any economic problems caused by expats according to Business Monitor International. Contrarily, the country can benefit economically from the huge number of expats living here. And since the demographics haven't changed since 1975, expats can't be a source of concern," Jassar argued. He provided more statistics. "Eighty percent of the public sector's employees are Kuwaitis. And out of the 20 percent expat employees, 15 percent are teachers who teach Kuwaiti students, while the remaining 5 percent work in jobs that Kuwaitis would never do, such as cleaners or security guards. Also, 93 percent of Kuwaitis refuse accepting the job offered to them as it does not match their qualifications," he pointed out.

Khodari noted that he is not against expats and

defends the Kuwaiti constitution that calls for equality between all people. But from his view, Kuwait's demographics are a source of concern. "Many categories of the population represent security concerns such as the 100,000 bedoons, 118,000 illegal residents and 20,000 unemployed citizens, along with 32 percent of expats who are unemployed. In addition to those with fake nationalities and dual nationalities," he explained.

Khodari said the country's large population is causing many problems. "Our infrastructure is not equipped for over four million people. Also, the huge population causes great pressure on the roads, hospitals, schools, electricity and others. Also, from the security aspect, we only have around 15,000 policemen, which means one policeman is protecting 296 people. Also, 7,200 crimes were committed last year, ie 19 per day, and I expect this number to grow with our present demographics," he predicted.

CEBU PACIFIC TO STOP KUWAIT FLIGHTS

KUWAIT/MANILA: Cebu Pacific Airlines will suspend flights from Kuwait from mid June, the Philippines-based airlines announced yesterday. Cebu will fly its last 4x weekly flight from Manila to Kuwait on June 13 and will fly its last return Kuwait to Manila on June 14. Passengers with flights booked after that date will have options to either rebook for an earlier flight, receive a full refund or use the ticket value to book a different flight for the future, the airline noted in a statement to the press. Flights from Doha, Qatar and Riyadh, Saudi Arabia will also be halted started in early July. Cebu will continue flying to Dubai, UAE.



has resulted in substantial oversupply of seats and fares that are so low, hence making the routes unsustainable," said JR Mantaring, Cebu Pacific Vice President for Corporate Affairs.

"We have to continuously review our routes to ensure their viability. At this point, it makes more sense for us to re-deploy the aircraft used for our Riyadh, Doha and Kuwait service to

routes where we can further stimulate demand and sustain our low fare offers," he added. National carrier, Philippines Airlines, will offer non-stop flights to Kuwait, Doha and Riyadh along with several other Middle Eastern destinations. For the first 3 months of 2017, the budget airline carried 4.8 million passengers, 1.3 million to international destinations.

EFFORTS TO PROVIDE JOBS FOR YOUTH

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Chairman of the Municipal Council's legal and financial committee Ali Al-Moussa stressed that all government bodies are currently working on providing proper job opportunities to the youth, especially since many of them no longer wish to work for the government. "Accordingly, we at the Municipal Council are working hard on having the food trailers charter approved, because many young people are waiting for it," he underlined. Moussa also urged Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Mohammed Al-Jabri and other officials to consider allocating Souq Hareem outlets and stores in Shuwaikh and Rai to the youth, so that they could display their products there in return for nominal fees.



Ali Al-Moussa

Hajj season

The hajj affairs manager at the awqaf ministry Mohammed Nasser Al-Mutairi, stressed that in preparation for the hajj season, his department had officially endorsed

a list of this year's licensed hajj convoys. Mutairi added that registration to perform hajj is open, and urged pilgrims to only register with officially licensed convoys. Mutairi warned of unlicensed and unofficial convoys, and urged pilgrims to sign contracts with the convoy owners to protect their rights. In addition, Mutairi said that registration would be done electronically, as all convoys are connected to the ministry and no paper forms will be used. "Once a pilgrim is registered, a leave note will be made and delivered to where he works," he added, noting that a special committee had already left for Makkah to examine the houses rented there for Kuwaiti pilgrims' accommodation during the hajj to make sure they match health and safety specifications. Finally, Mutairi urged all pilgrims to contact his department on Whatsapp on 99051691, hajj_kw on Twitter, hajj_kw on Instagram or hajj@awqaf.gov.kw.

Expired food

As part of efforts exerted in preparation for Ramadan, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry's (MoCI) consumer protection inspection teams raided the stores of a foodstuff company and seized expired spices, in addition to 3,500 coffee cans on which the expiry date had been changed. The consumer protection department added that the company usually distributed its 'expired' goods to co-ops in the early morning hours to avoid attracting attention.

PLAN TO 'KUWAITIZE' ADMINISTRATIVE JOBS IN PRIVATE SECTOR

By A Saleh


KUWAIT: The Manpower and Government Restructuring Program's (MGRP) Secretary General Fauzi Al-Majdali stressed that MGRP is working on 'Kuwaitizing' all administrative jobs in the private sector as part of a five-year plan, adding 166 job categories are currently held by 84,573 expats. He did not provide any explanations on how the plan will be implemented

South Mutlaa project

Planning manager at the Public Authority for Housing Welfare Nasser Khorabot said a preliminary contract was signed to build the infrastructure needed in South Mutlaa residential area by a two allied companies - Turkish and Italian - at a total value of KD 288 million. He added that another contract was signed with a Chinese company with a total value of KD 220 million.

Imams penalized

The awqaf ministry's technical affairs committee will meet next week to discuss suspending three mosque imams and a muezzin who had violated their job duties by talking about certain countries, people or political topics at their mosques. In addition, the muezzin also violated regulations when he substituted the imam when he was absent.




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Crime

Report

POLICEMEN HURT WHILE TICKETING RECKLESS DRIVER

KUWAIT: Two traffic policemen were injured when a driver they had stopped for a citation for running a red light sped off, knocking them both over. The policemen were rushed to hospital and the runaway driver was chased and arrested.

Violations

The anti-corruption authority referred an undersecretary to the public prosecution over charges of committing various financial and administrative violations in some contracts.

Forgery

A retired marine colonel was arrested over charges of forging his citizenship documents, said security sources. Case papers indicate that citizenship detectives were recently tipped off concerning a Syrian who unlawfully got Kuwaiti citizenship when a citizen added him to his file along with 13 others in return for money. The man joined the navy and climbed up the chain of command to reach a colonel's rank before he retired. The man was arrested in his house and pled guilty as charged.

Corruption

A former senior criminal security commander is currently facing charges of pocketing KD 14,000 while arresting a suspect with a large alcohol shipment in November. Security sources said the suspect's brother lodged a complaint at the Interior Ministry's inspection department, accusing the commander of taking the sum during the bust, which was confirmed by other members of the raiding force. A case was filed and further investigations are in progress.

Officer assaulted

A Central Prison guard assigned to take a prisoner to Amiri Hospital was assaulted at the hospital by two unidentified men, leaving him with a broken nose, said security sources. A case was filed and further investigations are in progress to identify the assailants and apprehend them.

Dentist offended

A Kuwaiti female dentist lodged a complaint against a Kuwaiti patient, accusing him of insulting a public servant on duty. The man was arrested for a while and then released pending further investigations and checking the clinic's CCTV cameras. Separately, a 'VIP' citizen living in Nuzha reported that an unidentified woman assaulted his 17-year-old daughter at a popular shopping mall when she refused to let her have her mobile phone. The woman tried to take it by force, said security sources. — *Translated from the Arabic press*



Al-Anbaa

Al-Anbaa

A CRIME SANS CRIMINAL

By Salah Al-Sayer

All lovers of good deeds rejoiced on hearing news about the possibility that Kuwait's public prosecution might shelve the Dow case investigation demanding to hold relevant officials accountable for costing the state \$2.5 billion, simply because acquitting people from sins or accusations is a good thing. It seems that by powers of the legal authority invested in it and following investigating the accusations pointed at certain people, the public prosecution believes that it is far much better for justice to acquit 10 possibly guilty people than to convict a single innocent one!

We are facing a crime sans criminal and a murderer sans murder

However, this welcomed shelving will not make us forget the basic story that lies in the legendary fines imposed on Kuwait and cost the treasury fortunes that were not stolen or deliberately lost as the deal had been supposedly revised and reviewed by all monitoring bodies including the Audit Bureau and the Central Tenders Committee (CTC). It is even more painful than theft, embezzling or profiteering, because it would have been more credible and logical if someone had stolen this precious treasure, as ill-conscience encourages the corrupt to manipulate public funds. However, in the Dow case, we are facing a crime sans criminal and a murderer sans murder, and here lies the wonder in the story!

It seems that chronic administrative diseases in the country have created an unprecedented state where funds are randomly wasted. So, we need to review our legislations and administrative, financial and organizations' regulations throughout the country to avoid the recurrence of such bizarre stories. We have not lost a suitcase, a mobile phone or a KD 20 note. It was billions of dollars that we lost. The problem apparently lies in decision-making mechanisms.

— *Translated by Kuwait Times*

Al-Anbaa

Al-Anbaa

KUWAIT'S AIRCRAFT CARRIER

By Saad Al-Motesh

Commercial planes of countries worldwide are named after landmarks and icons. In Kuwait, planes are named after islands, important local areas and icons like Warba, Boubayan, Failaka, Al-Jahra, Al-Fintas, Dasman, Al-Sabahiya, Al-Seif and, the most famous ever, Al-Jabriya, which was hijacked in the mid-1980s. The same naming convention often works for aircraft carriers. For instance, France has named the largest carrier in its fleet after its first president following the German occupation, Charles De Gaulle.

Several US aircraft carriers are named after American leaders, namely George Washington, Truman, Stennis and Eisenhower. We are often reminded of the US destroyer Missouri that bombed the Iraqi forces occupy-

ing Kuwait and how some people joked about the name, calling it 'Me Sorry' as if it were apologizing for bombing the enemy.

Kuwait has large oil and gas vessels named Dar Salwa, Al-Derwaza, Al-Salmi, Motreba and many others. However, HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah demonstrated during his most recent grilling's debate that we do have a senior official as big and strong as an aircraft carrier. In response to the grilling motions filed against him, the premier said we have always known him for being too firm to be affected by storms. HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah also applauded his efficiency. Long live our mighty aircraft carrier! — *Translated by Kuwait Times*



KUWAIT: Ooredoo officials and Maali Al-Asousi pose for a group photo during the ceremony.



Ooredoo's Corporate Communications Department honors MP Omar Al-Tabtabaie.

OOREDOO AWARDS VOLUNTEER ACTIVIST MAALI AL-ASOUSI

AL-THANI: A GREAT ACHIEVEMENT FOR ALL GCC WOMEN

KUWAIT: Ooredoo, Kuwait's fastest network, awarded humanitarian activist Maali Al-Asousi yesterday during the launch ceremony of the company's volunteer program for the third consecutive year. Asousi was recently recognized by Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashed Al-Maktoum as an Arab Hope Maker, a prestigious award on a regional level. Asousi has been living in war-torn Yemen for more than 10 years, after immigrating there for humanitarian aid. Commenting on this, Ooredoo Kuwait's General Manager and CEO Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdullah Al Thani underscored the importance of Asousi's achievement, saying that it's an achievement for all GCC women. He lauded her efforts in championing the underprivileged, and reiterating Ooredoo's commitment to supporting volunteerism and empowering women.

The event included a number of distinguished speakers, such as young lawmaker Omar Al-Tabtabaie, social media activist Omar Al-Othman, public relations manager at the

Ministry of State for Youth Affairs Nasser Al-Arfaj, founder of Ata Hub mobile app for volunteers Fareed Al-Fouzan, and founder of Spread the Passion non-profit organization Dr Fatemah Al-Mousawi. All guests offered motivational speeches, drawing examples from their experiences in the field. Ooredoo recently announced the kickoff of 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.

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 years. 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 accom-

panying training program is intended to continue for a whole month and includes workshops, training camp. 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 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 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, Mubarakia Souq in addition to care centers. This will be in addition to visits to pediatric



Dr Fatemah Al-Mousawi is honored by Ooredoo's Corporate Communications Department.

hospital wards in Kuwait 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.



Nasser Al-Arfaj (center) is awarded by Mijbil Alayoub (left) and Sarah Al-Qabandi from Ooredoo's Corporate Communications Department.



Social media activist Omar Al-Othman (center) is awarded by Yousuf Al-Shallal (left) and Mijbil Alayoub from Ooredoo's Corporate Communications Department.



Ooredoo Kuwait's General Manager and CEO Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdullah Al Thani honors Maali Al-Asousi.



Islamic State kills five in first suicide attack in Somalia

2 CHINESE LANGUAGE TEACHERS KIDNAPPED IN PAKISTAN

ISLAMIC STATE-LINKED MILITANTS BESIEGE PHILIPPINE CITY DUTERTE THREATENS MARTIAL LAW FOR ALL OF PHILIPPINES

MANILA: Islamic State group-linked militants swept through a southern Philippine city, beheading a police chief, burning buildings, seizing a Catholic priest and his worshippers and raising the black flag of IS, authorities said yesterday. President Rodrigo Duterte, who had declared martial law across the southern third of the nation, warned he may expand it nationwide. As details of the attack in Marawi city emerged, fears mounted that the largest Roman Catholic nation in Asia could be falling into a growing list of countries grappling with the spread of influence from the Islamic State group in Syria and Iraq.

The violence erupted Tuesday after the army raided the hideout of Isnilon Hapilon, a commander of the Abu Sayyaf militant group who has pledged allegiance to IS. He is on Washington's list of most-wanted terrorists with a \$5 million reward for information leading to his capture. The militants called for reinforcements and around 100 gunmen entered Marawi, a mostly Muslim city of 200,000 people on the southern island of Mindanao, Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said yesterday. "We are in a state of emergency," Duterte said yesterday after he cut short a trip to Moscow and flew back to Manila. "I have a serious problem in Mindanao and the ISIS footprints are everywhere."

He said a local police chief was stopped at a checkpoint and beheaded, and added that he may declare martial law nationwide if he believes the group has taken a foothold. Lorenzana, the defense secretary, said at least two soldiers and a police officer had been killed. But the numbers could change as more information comes out. Yesterday, Marawi Bishop Edwin de la Pena said the militants forced their way into the Marawi Cathedral and seized a Catholic priest, 10 worshippers and three church workers.

The priest, Father Chito, and the others had no role in the conflict, said Archbishop Socrates Villegas, president of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines. "He was not a combatant. He was not bearing arms. He was a threat to none," Villegas said of Chito. "His capture and that of his companions violates every norm of civilized conflict." Villegas said the gunmen are demanding the government recall its forces. On Tuesday evening, Duterte declared martial rule for 60 days in the entire Mindanao region home to 22 million people - and vowed to be "harsh." "I warned everybody not to force my hand into it," Duterte said on his plane en route to the Philippines. "I have to do it to preserve the republic."

Martial law allows Duterte to use the armed forces to carry out arrests, searches and detentions more rapidly. He has repeatedly threatened to place the south, the scene of decades-long Muslim separatist uprisings, under martial law. But human rights groups have expressed fears that martial law powers could further embolden Duterte, whom they have accused of allowing extrajudicial killings of thousands of people in a crackdown on illegal drugs. Details from inside Marawi were sketchy because it appeared to be sealed off and without electricity.

Hapilon, an Arabic-speaking Islamic preacher known for his expertise in commando assaults, pledged allegiance to the Islamic State group in 2014. He is a commander of the Abu Sayyaf militant group and was wounded by a military airstrike in January. Troops sealed off major entry and exit points to prevent Hapilon from escaping, military chief of staff Gen Eduardo Ano told The Associated Press late Tuesday. "We will conduct house-to-house clearing and do everything to remove the threat there. We can do that easily," Ano said, but added it was more difficult in an urban setting because of the need to avoid civilian casualties.

He said the group erected Islamic State flags at several locations. Duterte met late Tuesday with Russian President Vladimir Putin and said he is counting on Russia to supply weapons for the Philippines to fight terrorism. "Of course, our country needs modern weapons, we had orders in the United States, but now the situation there is not very smooth and in order to fight the Islamic State, with their units and factions, we need modern weapons," he said, according to Russian state news agency Tass. While pursuing peace talks with two large Muslim rebel groups in the south, Duterte has ordered the military to

destroy smaller extremist groups which have tried to align with the Islamic State group. At least one of those smaller groups, the Maute, was involved in the Marawi siege. It's one of less than a dozen new armed Muslim groups that have pledged allegiance to the Islamic State and formed a loose alliance, with Hapilon reportedly designated as the alliance's leader. Political analyst Ramon Casiple said the Maute is a clan-based group with members in Marawi who came to Hapilon's assistance, with some directly assisting in the fighting and others fanning out to different parts of the city, setting up checkpoints and burning some buildings and taking hostages from the cathedral. "It is difficult to root out because they are from there," he said. "The Mautes are embedded in the population."

The group has been blamed for a bombing that killed 15 people in southern Davao city, Duterte's hometown, last September and a number of attacks on government forces in Lanao, although it has faced setbacks from a series of military offensives. Last month, troops backed by airstrikes killed dozens of Maute militants and captured their jungle camp near Lanao del Sur's Piagapo town. Troops found homemade bombs, grenades, combat uniforms and passports of suspected Indonesian militants in the camp, the military said. —AP



MANILA: A Muslim woman passes by policemen at a checkpoint in downtown Manila, Philippines yesterday as the Philippine National Police is placed under full alert status following the declaration of martial law in Mindanao, southern Philippines. —AP

34 MIGRANTS DROWN OFF COAST OF LIBYA

ROME: At least 34 migrants, most of them toddlers, drowned yesterday, as coastguard boats and other vessels tried to save hundreds of others packed into boats off the coast of Libya, rescuers said. One of a group of boats listed suddenly, sending about 200 people tumbling into the Mediterranean, Italian Coast Guard commander Cosimo Nicastro said.

"At least 20 dead bodies were spotted in the water," he said. Rescue group MOAS said it had already recovered 34 bodies. "Most are toddlers," the group's co-founder Chris Catrambone said on Twitter. The coast guard called in more ships to help with the rescue, saying about 1,700 people were packed into about 15 vessels. More than 1,300 people have died this year on the world's most dangerous crossing for migrants fleeing poverty and war across Africa and the Middle East. In the past week, more than 7,000 migrants have been plucked from unsafe boats in international waters off the western coast of Libya, where people smugglers operate with impunity.

Despite efforts by Italy and the European Union to bolster the Tripoli-based coast guard and funnel training and equipment to fight trafficking to the UN-backed government, record numbers of migrants are coming this year. More than 50,000 migrants have been rescued at sea and brought to Italy so far, a 46 percent increase on the same period of last year, the Interior Ministry said this week. Most rescues take place just outside the 12-mile mark that separates Libyan territory from international waters.

It is a busy stretch of sea where humanitarian vessels, the Libyan Coast Guard and even scavengers hoping to recover abandoned migrant boats and their engines all operate. The Libyan Coast Guard on Tuesday fired shots at non-governmental vessels conducted rescues nearby, humanitarian group Jugend Rettet, which operates the Luventa rescue ship, said on its Facebook page. The shooting prompted about 100 migrants to jump into the water and swim toward humanitarian vessels. It was unclear if anyone had been killed or wounded. The Libyans then towed two migrant boats back to shore while humanitarian groups brought more than 1,000 on board. —Reuters

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ISRAELI JOY AT TRUMP VISIT, BUT SUBSTANCE LACKING

JERUSALEM: Israeli right-wingers celebrated US President Donald Trump's visit after he made no mention of the two-state solution, but a lack of specifics on how he would resolve the conflict with the Palestinians raised concerns. Trump visited Israel and the Palestinian territories on Monday and Tuesday, and in a closing speech talked extensively about his commitment to Israel's security.

He also called on the Israelis and Palestinians to make compromises for peace-but gave no specific details on what he meant. Israeli officials hailed the speech as a triumph for the country's right-wing government, which includes ministers opposed to the idea of an independent Palestinian state. They were particularly pleased with Trump's visit to the Western Wall, one of the holiest sites in Judaism.

He became the first sitting US president to visit the site in east Jerusalem, which Israel occupied in 1967 and later annexed in a move never recognized by the international community.

Palestinian officials stressed they believed longstanding US policy remained unchanged as president Mahmud Abbas sought to convince Trump to remain committed to a two-state solution to the decades-long conflict. But much of the intrigue over Trump's public statements during the trip revolved around what he didn't say. By not mentioning the need for an independent Palestinian state in any of

his public addresses, nor criticizing Israeli settlement building in the occupied Palestinian territories, Trump endeared himself to the Israeli right.

The so-called two-state solution-meaning an independent Palestinian state alongside Israel-has long been the basis of US policy but Trump suggested in February he was no longer wedded to it. "It was a great speech because he said the things he had to say and he did not say the things the other presidents usually took advantage of speeches to say," Tzachi Hanegbi, an Israeli minister and ally of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, told AFP after Trump's closing speech. "He didn't reprimand Israel for settlements, he didn't commit the United States to a two-state vision."

What he didn't say

Michael Oren, a former Israeli ambassador to Washington said he was glad Trump's talk of peace "didn't lock us into a specific formula," referring to the two-state solution. Far-right Education Minister Naftali Bennett and Israeli settler organizations also hailed Trump's silence on two states. In contrast, Husam Zomlot, Palestinian ambassador to the United States and a key Abbas ally, said he did not see Trump's comments as a US policy shift. The Palestinian leadership has pledged to work with Trump, hoping his unorthodox approach can lead to progress previously



JERUSALEM: US President Donald Trump signs the guest book at the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial museum, commemorating the six million Jews killed by the Nazis during World War II, on Tuesday, May 23, 2017. — AP

lacking. "The last two days was not a matter of policy. We take it that the US policy remains as is," Zomlot said. "It was a visit of intent, of his intent to reach out and help us reach a final agreement." Trump held talks with Netanyahu in Jerusalem

and with Abbas in Bethlehem in the occupied West Bank. His visit to the West Bank lasted around two hours. Trump came to power promising to be the most pro-Israel president in US history. His visit came in stark contrast to President

Barack Obama's first Middle East trip eight years ago when Israelis accused him of shunning the Jewish state as he delivered a keynote speech in Egypt. Yet critics pointed out that while the symbolism of Trump's visit was significant, there were precious few details on his plan for kickstarting negotiations.

'Credibility problem'

The peace process has been deadlocked since April 2014 when indirect negotiations led by then US secretary of state John Kerry collapsed. A commentary in Israel's centrist Yediot Aharonot newspaper said that after two days of waiting for Trump's keynote address "the only thing we could learn from that speech was how to say nothing with a whole lot of words."

Nathan Thrall from the International Crisis Group and author of a new book on past Israeli-Palestinian peace talks agreed that "there was nothing substantive in Trump's public comments." "The real question is if there is something substantive happening behind closed doors." Trump travelled to Saudi Arabia before Israel where he met King Salman.

Much discussion has focused on reviving a 2002 Saudi-led peace initiative whereby Arab states would recognize Israel in exchange for its full withdrawal from the territories it occupied in 1967 and a just settlement of the Palestinian refugee problem. — AFP



MONROVIA: Alternative National Congress of Liberia candidate for the October 2017 presidential elections Alexander Cummings speaks to supporters in Monrovia. — AFP

TYCOON, STRIKER OR BANKER: LIBERIA SEEKS NEW PRESIDENT

MONROVIA: A football superstar, a former warlord and a soft drinks millionaire have thrown their hats into the ring for the post of Liberian president as Africa's first elected female leader prepares to step down. A dizzying array of candidates have lined up for the October poll to replace Nobel Peace Prize winner Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. She leaves behind no obvious successor after serving an unbroken decade in the job, a constitutional maximum of two terms.

Her replacement will have to prove they can keep the peace in a country whose lengthy civil war ended in 2003. "It is still too early to identify a frontrunner," Raymond Gilpin and Dorina Bekoe of the Washington-based Africa Center for Strategic Studies said in a joint email. "Successful candidates will have to prove that they can succeed where many believe President Johnson Sirleaf and the Unity Party failed: tackling corruption, delivering a more robust peace dividend, rebuilding and strengthening various aspects of the security sector."

Uniquely Liberian flavor

So far 11 candidates have registered-including an ex-model, a central banker and career politicians-along with wildly popular footballer George Weah, to give the election a uniquely Liberian flavor. Also on the list is Sirleaf's vice-president Joseph Boakai, 72, although she has given him only tacit support. "I have tested the water and I know that I have a very good chance," Boakai said. "Voters know who people are. They know their past record." Boakai believes voters will make allowances for Liberia's ongoing problems given the state of the nation the government inherited from the ashes of the civil war.

"We have everything that it takes to develop this country. What we need to do is the proper management of these resources to make sure that it trickles down to its people," he added. Liberia has plentiful iron ore and palm oil reserves, but has struggled to filter the proceeds back to a desperately poor majority, for whom basic

education, electricity and running water are a rarity. The west African nation was the hardest hit by the Ebola epidemic, which savaged its finances and took the lives of many overstretched healthcare professionals before ending in early 2016.

Stuttering economy

For the stuttering economy, Liberians might look to the steady hand of former central bank governor Mills Jones, and for those seeking a long record of public service, Charles Brumskine, 66, of the opposition Liberty Party. Other Liberians hope to elect the country's second female president, but a sole woman is running this time around: MacDella Cooper, a fashion model turned philanthropist whose eponymous foundation works with disadvantaged youth. In Liberia, presidential candidates run US-style campaigns with a vice-presidential running mate. Among the more unusual combinations are footballer turned senator Weah, 50, who is running with former president Charles Taylor's estranged wife Jewel, 54, also a senator.

Weah has vowed to make education a top priority, particularly vocational training, along with addressing Liberia's wrecked post-Ebola health system. Charles Taylor, once Liberia's most feared rebel fighter, is serving a 50-year sentence in a British jail for his role in fuelling neighboring Sierra Leone's own long civil conflict. Weah lost against Sirleaf in 2005, and his choice of running mate is seen as savvy in a nation where Taylor's former acolytes still wield significant power from the sidelines. They face stiff competition from Senator Prince Johnson, a onetime rebel fighter filmed drinking beer during the notorious murder of former president Samuel Doe in 1990, who has joined forces with tycoon Benoni Urey.

Elsewhere, millionaire Coca-Cola executive Alexander Cummings, 60, is building a reputation as an outsider with much-needed expertise beyond politics, relying heavily on his corporate record. — AFP

ISLAMIC STATE KILLS 5 IN FIRST SUICIDE ATTACK IN SOMALIA

SUICIDE BOMBER DETONATES AT A CHECKPOINT

MOGADISHU: The Islamic State group has claimed its first suicide attack in Somalia that left five dead as it steps up activities in a region dominated by the Al-Qaeda-linked Shabaab. The group's self-styled news agency Amaq claimed the "martyrdom-seeking operation with an explosive vest" in a statement carried by the SITE Intelligence Group which noted it was the first suicide bombing by the militants in Somalia. The suicide bomber detonated his explosives vest at a checkpoint in the northeastern port city of Bosaso late Tuesday, situated in the semi-autonomous region of Puntland.

"Security forces stopped the suspect when he approached but he detonated himself leaving five people dead. One of the security officers and four civilians were killed in the blast," said local police official Mohamed Dahir Adan. The blast occurred near a hotel often used as a meeting place for local officials, witnesses said. "I think the bomber was trying to target the hotel but he was stopped at the checkpoint close to the hotel and he decided to detonate his explosives," said witness Awke Mohamed.

Puntland set up its own government in 1998, but unlike neighboring Somaliland, it has not declared full independence. The region has often come under attack by Al-Qaeda-linked Shabaab militants and is also home to a breakaway group of fighters who have declared allegiance to IS. However the group has so far failed to gather much support while the Shabaab has taken pains to purge those expressing pro-IS sentiment from their ranks.

Shabaab the bigger threat

The militants are led by former Shabaab cleric Abdiqadir Mumin who switched allegiance from Al-Qaeda to IS in October 2015 and was named a "global terrorist" by the US State Department in August. Aside from issuing occasional promotional videos, the group seized the small fishing town of Qandala before being ousted by Puntland forces in December. Then in February IS claimed an attack by gunmen on a hotel in Bosaso which left four security guards dead.

Rashid Abdi of the International Crisis Group, said that while Mumin's group was stepping up

its activities, the Shabaab remained the biggest threat in the region. "We should not overplay IS influence in that region," he said. "There is clearly an IS threat in Puntland, and the Mumin group is escalating its activities and attacks, but Al-Shabaab remains a much bigger threat in Puntland than IS does." He also warned that IS claims should be treated with caution as "they tend to claim everything".

IS leader a British cleric

Mumin was born in Puntland and lived in Sweden before moving to the UK in the 2000s, where he was granted British citizenship. In London and Leicester, he developed a reputation as a firebrand preacher at extremist mosques and in videos posted online. Monitored by MI5, Britain's domestic intelligence agency, Mumin is thought to have known Mohamed Emwazi, the IS executioner nick-

named 'Jihadi John', and Michael Adebolajo, one of two people convicted over the 2013 murder of British soldier Lee Rigby in London. In 2010, Mumin travelled to Somalia to join the Shabaab-which both Emwazi and Adebolajo had unsuccessfully tried to do.

He initially served as an imam and propagandist before taking control of the Puntland faction of the Shabaab and later defecting to IS with a handful of fighters-despite lacking battlefield experience. Observers say his supporters are mostly made up of members of his own Majerteen clan, and the very existence of Mumin's group is attributed to complex local clan rivalries. The International Crisis Group estimated in November that his group counted some 200 members and warned the threat of IS could not be "dismissed as insignificant". The group called for a "genuine political initiative to address local clan grievances". — AFP



MOGADISHU: Somalis carry away the dead body of a person who was killed when a car bomb detonated in Mogadishu, Somalia yesterday. — AP

SALMAN ABEDI: STUDENT DROPOUT KNOWN TO UK SECURITY SERVICES

MANCHESTER: Salman Abedi, the suicide bomber who killed 22 people in an attack in Manchester on Monday, was a university dropout with "proven" links to the Islamic State group, according to France's interior minister. Born to a devoutly Muslim Libyan family in Britain's third biggest city, officials said he was known to British security services and the Financial Times reported he had turned to radical Islam. Abedi, 22, worshipped at a mosque in a leafy Manchester suburb popular with students.

His father was reportedly a well-known figure who sometimes performed the call to prayer. Abedi "grew up in Britain and then suddenly, after a trip to

Libya and then likely to Syria, became radicalized and decided to carry out this attack", French Interior Minister Gerard Collomb told BFMTV. He said it was "possible" that Abedi had had assistance from other people, adding that his links with the Islamic State group which claimed responsibility for the carnage "are proven". Abedi was named by British police on Tuesday, a day after the attack outside a concert by US pop star Ariana Grande. "The perpetrator was Salman Ramadan Abedi, who was born and brought up in Britain," Prime Minister Theresa May said in a televised address from her Downing Street residence, condemning his actions as "callous and cowardly". Interior minister Amber Rudd said he had been known to intelligence services, without going into detail.



Salman Abedi

Suburban upbringing
Abedi's family has lived in the Fallowfield area of south Manchester for at least 10 years, according to The Daily Telegraph newspaper. Armed police raided an address in the modestly well-to-do area on Tuesday, carrying out a controlled explosion to gain entry. A 23-year-old man was also arrested in the south of the city in connection with the attack. Three more men were arrested in the area yesterday. Fallowfield resident Peter Jones, 53, described the neighborhood as "quiet and safe".

Jones said he was "shocked" and "surprised" when he heard that the suspect was from there. Media reports said Abedi's parents fled Libya to escape the regime of former dictator Muammar

Gaddafi. Around 16,000 Libyans live in Britain and Manchester is home to the largest community, according to the BBC. It was a focus of celebrations when the Gaddafi regime fell in 2011. Reports said Abedi was the second youngest of four children, including another two sons and one daughter. One member of Manchester's Libyan community told The Guardian newspaper: "He was such a quiet boy, always very respectful towards me. His brother Ismael is outgoing, but Salman was very quiet. He is such an unlikely person to have done this."

'Showing me hatred'

Abedi's family were closely linked to the Didsbury Mosque, a Victorian former Methodist chapel in a leafy suburb that was bought in 1967 by donors from the Syrian community. His father Ramadan had sometimes performed the call to prayer and his brother Ismael had been a volunteer. One senior figure from the mosque however, Mohammed Saeed, told The Guardian that when he once gave a sermon denouncing terror, Abedi stared him down. "Salman showed me a face of hate after that sermon," Mohammed Saeed said of the 2015 encounter. "He was showing me hatred."

Outside the mosque yesterday, 57-year-old worshipper Azher Mahmood said they were opposed to any kind of extremism. "They're opposite, they're against this sort of stuff. They're not radicals," he said. "How he got radicalized I don't know." Abedi began studying business and management at Salford University in Manchester in 2014, a source told the Press Association news agency, but he dropped out after two years and did not complete his degree. He did not live in university accommodation, had not been in any trouble at the university, was not on any radar for pastoral or social care and was not known to have participated in any university societies. — AFP

JAILED CHINESE LAWYER FORCE-FED MEDICATION

BEIJING: When human rights lawyer Li Heping returned to his home in Beijing after a two-year incarceration, his wife did not recognize the frail white-haired man standing in her hallway. "He is only 46 years old, but I thought he was an old man," Wang Qiaoling said. "He had lost 15 kilograms and looked completely different." Wang, speaking on Li's behalf because she said he remains under strict police control, alleges her husband was force-fed medication and sometimes chained for long periods during his detention in the neighboring city of Tianjin. Best known for defending blind lawyer Chen Guangcheng, Li also represented members of the banned Falun Gong spiritual sect, environmentalists and victims of forced eviction.

The Beijing Global Law Firm partner was detained by police during the so-called "709 crackdown" in the summer of 2015, when

some 200 legal staff and activists were rounded up. He was released earlier this month after a court handed him a three-year suspended sentence following a secret trial, convicting him of inciting subversion of state power. In a 2014 photo, Li appeared youthful with plump cheeks and jet black hair. But in a video of Li emotionally reuniting with his wife and their daughter, he looked gaunt with thinning, grey-white hair.

Shortly after his arrest, "a doctor from the police investigation team told him he needed blood pressure medicine. My husband has never had blood pressure issues and told the doctor he didn't want it, but he was forced to take the pills six days a week," Wang said. The side effects made "his muscles hurt, his vision blurred and he had trouble thinking clearly... He was kept drugged until shortly before his release," Wang said. She also claims Li's hands and feet were shackled

together for the entire month of May in 2016, with a chain so short that he could not stand up or lie down. "They tried many ways to coerce him to confess," she said.

Police in Beijing and Tianjin did not respond to requests for comment. Amnesty International has noted several cases of detainees in the 709 sweep saying they were force-fed blood pressure drugs. "It's an ill-treatment method that is difficult to investigate as the medicines would only stay in their blood for a period of time," Amnesty China researcher Patrick Poon said. Li went to a private doctor shortly after his release, who said his body was "damaged" and noted black spots on his face, Wang said. "The doctor could not confirm if he took blood pressure medicines, because it was 10 days after he was sentenced and there couldn't have been medicine left in his blood," Wang said. — AFP

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HOMOSEXUALITY: FROM THE DEATH PENALTY TO GAY MARRIAGE

TAIPEI: Same-sex marriage, which Taiwan's top court ruled in favor of yesterday, is currently legal in around 20 countries around the world, 13 of which are in pioneering Europe. Such unions are, however, still illegal in most parts of Africa and in the Middle East, where homosexuality is in some cases punishable by the death penalty.

European pioneers

The Netherlands in April 2001 became the first country in the world to allow gay and lesbian couples to marry in a civil ceremony. Twelve European countries followed: Belgium, Britain (except Northern Ireland), Denmark, Finland, France, Iceland, Ireland, Luxembourg, Norway, Portugal, Spain, and Sweden. Some European countries only allow homosexuals to enter into civil partnerships, including Austria, Croatia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy and the Czech Republic.

Estonia became in October 2014 the first former Soviet republic to authorize this kind of civil union. Many eastern European countries - including Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Slovakia - still deny homosexuals the right to marry or enter into unions. Slovenians in December 2015 voted in a referendum

against efforts by their national parliament to legalize gay marriage.

Some 15 western European countries allow same-sex couples to adopt children, whether within marriage or civil partnership. They include Belgium, Britain, Denmark, France, the Netherlands, Spain, and Sweden. Others like Finland, Germany and Slovenia allow gay people to adopt the child of their partner. Ten countries allow lesbian couples to conceive children with the help of assisted reproductive technologies (ART): Austria, Belgium, Britain, the Netherlands, Spain and the Nordic countries. Surrogacy remains restricted across most of the continent. Belgium, Britain and the Netherlands allow for volunteer surrogacy and in Greece, women can be reimbursed for the costs of carrying a child for someone else.

Progress in America

Canada led the way in North America, authorizing same-sex marriage and adoptions in June 2005. ART and surrogacy are also allowed. In the United States, with gay marriages still banned in 14 of the 50 states, a historic Supreme Court decision in June 2015 legalized gay marriage



TAIPEI: Same-sex activists hug outside the parliament in Taipei yesterday as they celebrate the landmark decision paving the way for the island to become the first place in Asia to legalize gay marriage. — AFP

nationwide. Mexico's federal capital led the way in Latin America towards civil unions in 2007 and full marriages in 2009. Same sex marriages are also legal in Argentina, Uruguay, Brazil and Colombia.

A crime in Africa

On a continent where around 30 countries ban homosexuality, only in South Africa can gays legally marry, adopt or have children by ART and surrogacy. In

Sudan, Somalia and Mauritania homosexuals face the death penalty, while only a handful of countries—Gabon, Ivory Coast, Chad, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali, and Mozambique—have decriminalized the practice.

Hostility in Middle East, Asia

Israel leads the Middle East in terms of respect for homosexual rights, and recognizes gay marriages performed elsewhere, though such marriages are not performed in Israel itself. Gay couples can jointly adopt children. Homosexuality is theoretically punishable by death in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, while Lebanon is more tolerant than other Arab countries. In Asia, after Taiwan, the taboo surrounding homosexuality is slowly eroding in Vietnam and Nepal.

Asia Pacific

The only country in the region that allows gays to marry is New Zealand, which passed a law in April 2013, 27 years after homosexuality was decriminalized. The most recent attempt to legalize gay marriage in Australia hinged on a planned referendum that was blocked in November 2016. — AFP

CHINESE LANGUAGE TEACHERS KIDNAPPED IN PAKISTAN CITY

ABDUCTORS PRETENDED TO BE POLICEMEN

QUETTA: Armed men pretending to be policemen kidnapped two Chinese language teachers in the Pakistani city of Quetta yesterday, provincial officials said, an attack likely to raise concerns in Beijing about its huge investment plans. China has pledged to invest \$57 billion in Pakistani road, rail and power infrastructure in a flagship project of its vast Belt and Road initiative

for a network of modern-day "Silk Road" routes connecting Asia with Europe and Africa. China's ambassador to Pakistan and other officials have often urged Islamabad to improve security, especially in the province of Baluchistan, where China is building a new port and funding roads to link its western regions with the Arabian Sea.

Anwar ul Haq Kakar, a Baluchistan government spokesman, said men pretending to be police officers kidnapped the Chinese teachers and wounded a passerby who tried to stop them. "A Chinese couple has been kidnapped," Kakar said, adding that officials had earlier mistaken the wounded passerby for a security guard. "(The passerby) inquired why they were doing this and they said they were from a law enforcement agency, but when he asked for their identification cards, they shot him," added Kakar.

No group has claimed responsibility for the kidnapping, but in the past Islamist militant groups have kidnapped foreigners inside Pakistan for ransom or publicity for their cause. The Chinese embassy in Islamabad confirmed two of its nationals had been kidnapped, China's state news agency Xinhua said. In Beijing, Foreign Minister Wang Yi declined to comment, when queried by Reuters at an event. China's foreign ministry did not immediately respond to a faxed request for comment sent after office hours.

Quetta police chief Razza Cheema said another Chinese woman narrowly evaded the kidnapers outside a language centre in Jinnah, near the international airport on the city's outskirts. "Armed men took the couple into custody at gunpoint when they were coming out from the centre," Cheema said. The numbers of Pakistanis studying Mandarin has skyrocketed since 2014, when President Xi Jinping signed off on the vast plans to fund power and road infrastructure. It was not immediately clear if the kidnapped Chinese workers were in Pakistan on behalf of the Chinese government or one of the many state-owned enterprises working out of Pakistan. — Reuters



ISLAMABAD: A Pakistani fruit vendor reads a newspaper as he waits for customers on a street in Islamabad yesterday. — AFP

INDONESIAN POLICE STEAMROLL ALCOHOL AHEAD OF RAMADAN

SURABAYA: Indonesian police yesterday used a steamroller to crush thousands of bottles of alcohol and torched a huge stash of seized drugs ahead of Ramadan in the world's most populous Muslim-majority country. Islam's holiest month is due to begin this weekend, with observant Muslims across the world abstaining from eating, drinking, smoking and sex between sunrise and sunset. Indonesian authorities typically make a show of seizing large quantities of drink and destroying it in the run-up to Ramadan in a reminder to Muslims to abstain from drinking alcohol, which is against Islamic law.

In the second-biggest city of Surabaya, on Java island, authorities used a steamroller to crush about 10,000 bottles of alcohol in a public display in the courtyard of a police station. The destroyed haul included many bottles of the national beer, Bintang, as well as other ales and clear plastic containers of homemade liquor, which can be dangerous as it is often mixed with toxic substances. The beer was being sold at unlicensed premises while the homemade brew was illegally produced.

Local police spokeswoman Lily Djafar said the alcohol was confiscated "in the month before Ramadan during an operation across Surabaya". Police in the city also incinerated a large quantity of seized narcotics, including thousands of ecstasy pills and 17 kilograms (37 pounds) of crystal methamphetamine. Similar operations have been carried out in other parts of Indonesia in recent days, including the capital Jakarta. About 90 percent of Indonesia's 255 million inhabitants are Muslim, and most practice a moderate form of Islam. Alcohol is available in major cities and holiday destinations and the country is home to many bars and nightclubs.

However during Ramadan, nightspots close for the whole month in many parts of Indonesia. In Jakarta they usually shut for a short period, at the start of the holy month and the end. Hardline groups such as the Islamic Defenders Front have been known to raid bars and clubs that stay open during Ramadan, although police have warned against any such vigilante activities this year. Ramadan begins when the first crescent of a new moon is sighted. It ends with the Eid Al-Fitr holiday, a major family event marked by feasting and celebration. — AFP



EAST JAVA, Indonesia: Indonesian authorities destroy thousands of bottles of alcohol ahead of the holy month of Ramadan at a police station in Surabaya yesterday. — AFP



TAIPEI: Same-sex activists hug outside the parliament in Taipei yesterday. — AFP

TAIWAN BECOMES 1ST IN ASIA TO RECOGNIZE SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

TAIPEI: In a first for Asia, Taiwan's Constitutional Court ruled in favor of same-sex marriage yesterday, punctuating a years-long campaign by advocates for gay rights in one of the continent's most liberal democracies. In its majority opinion, the court said a provision in the current civil code barring same-sex marriages violated two articles of the constitution safeguarding human dignity and equality under the law. Authorities must now either enact or amend relevant laws within two years, failing which same sex couples could have their marriages recognized by submitting a written document, the court said.

The ruling was greeted with rapturous applause outside the legislature not far from the court in the center of the capital, Taipei, where hundreds had gathered with rainbow flags and noisemakers emblazoned with slogans in favor of gay marriage. "People like me in the position of being in same-sex relationship with children, we need this law even earlier, even faster," said Jay Lin, a father of two and the founder and director of the Taiwan International Queer Film Festival.

"And so everybody here and everybody who (is) supporting this law in Taiwan and throughout the world, all be rooting for us. And we will be giving a lot of pressure to the legislators to pass this law once and for all," Lin said. Jamie, who has been in a relationship with his partner for 22 years, said the ruling was a milestone for Taiwanese society. "I am so touched. Finally we've reached this moment. This represents Taiwan's human rights. This is a step forward in human rights," said the 60-year-old retiree, who asked that only his first name be used.

A bill to enforce the ruling is already working its way through the legislature, where both the ruling and major opposi-

tion parties support legalization of same-sex marriage. Surveys show a majority of the public is also in favor, as is President Tsai Ing-wen, Taiwan's first female leader. Gays and lesbians in Taiwan have formed an effective lobby in recent years, with an annual Gay Pride march drawing tens of thousands. While some conservative religious and social groups have mobilized against same-sex marriage, their influence is much less potent than in the United States and many other parts of the world.

"The need, capability, willingness and longing, in both physical and psychological senses, for creating such permanent unions of intimate and exclusive nature are equally essential to homosexuals and heterosexuals, given the importance of the freedom of marriage to the sound development of personality and safeguarding of human dignity," the court said in its ruling. Two of the court's 15 justices filed dissenting opinions and one recused himself in the case. Despite the spread of same-sex marriage in a few regions since 2001, gay and lesbian couples had been allowed to marry in only 22 of the world's nearly 200 countries.

In Asia, Taiwan is the first government to legalize such unions, while South Africa is the only country in Africa to allow them. More than 70 countries continue to criminalize homosexual activity. Globally, the pace of civil rights victories has slowed against the background of a steady stream of reports of anti-gay violence and persecution. Recent weeks have witnessed large-scale detentions of gay men in Nigeria and Bangladesh, and accounts of roundups and torture of scores of gays in Chechnya. In Indonesia, a major police raid on a gay sauna was followed two days later by the public caning of two gay men. — AP

PHILIPPINES MARTIAL LAW

MANILA: Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte has imposed martial law on the southern region of Mindanao to combat militants who have declared allegiance to the Islamic State group. Here is what we know about his reasons and what happens next:

What happened?

Duterte acted after security forces on Tuesday battled dozens of gunmen in Marawi, a city of about 200,000 people. One policeman and two soldiers died in the fighting, authorities said. Tuesday's violence was the latest in a series of deadly clashes with militants who have pledged allegiance to the Islamic State (IS) group, and are based throughout Mindanao. Duterte's declaration fulfilled an often-repeated promise to impose martial law to combat the IS-linked militants, whom he has said are a growing threat to national security. But he has said repeatedly that martial law may be needed to solve many other problems, including illegal drugs.

Who are the militants?

Authorities said they were battling members of two of the best-known groups to have declared allegiance to IS, the Abu Sayyaf and Maute organizations. The military said it was hunting Isnilon Hapilon, an Abu Sayyaf leader who has been named the Philippine head of IS. The US government is offering a \$5-

million bounty for his capture. The Abu Sayyaf is infamous for kidnapping foreigners and killing them if ransoms are not paid. It is also blamed for the nation's worst terror attacks, including the 2004 bombing of a ferry in Manila Bay that claimed more than 100 lives.

Is martial law necessary?

Duterte has said repeatedly the growing influence of Islamic State was one of the nation's top security concerns, and martial law was necessary to stop it. However Islamist militancy is not new to the southern Philippines, where a decades-long Muslim separatist insurgency claimed more than 120,000 lives. Muslim rebels orchestrated a siege in the southern city of Zamboanga in 2013 that left more than 200 people dead, but the government of then-president Benigno Aquino did not declare martial law. Aquino also said he had considered imposing martial law just before standing down last year in Sulu, island strongholds of the Abu Sayyaf in the far south of Mindanao. But Aquino said he decided against it partly because military rule could spark resentment among local people.

Under martial law

Martial law allows the president to "call out the armed forces to prevent or suppress lawless violence, invasion or rebellion";

according to the constitution. Duterte said yesterday he would be "harsh" and his version of martial law would include warrantless arrests and searches, along with curfews in some provinces. Critics fear it will give security forces cover to carry out human rights abuses, citing the experience under dictator Ferdinand Marcos a generation ago. During the nine years of martial law under Marcos, police and troops tortured, abducted and killed thousands of people who were critical of the dictatorship, according to rights groups and historians. "Martial law of Mr Marcos was very good," Duterte said, adding military rule in Mindanao would be similar to that under the dictator.

What happens next?

The constitution limits martial law to 60 days unless congress agrees to extend it. The post-Marcos constitution also imposed safeguards on martial law, including the requirement for congress to approve its imposition and extension. The Supreme Court can also rule on its legality. But Duterte had previously said he was prepared to ignore the constitutional safeguards. He said yesterday martial law would remain until there was no more terrorist threat, and that he was prepared to expand it nationwide. "I will not hesitate to do anything and everything to protect and preserve the Filipino nation," he said. "If it means many people dying, so be it." — AFP

QATAR PROBES 'SHAMEFUL' HACKING...

Continued from Page 1

The Qatari state television's nightly newscast on Tuesday showed clips of Sheikh Tamim at the ceremony with the anchor not mentioning the comments, though a scrolling ticker at the bottom of the screen had the alleged fake remarks. They included calling Hamas "the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people," as well as saying Qatar had "strong relations" with Iran and the United States. "Iran represents a regional and Islamic power that cannot be ignored and it is unwise to face up against it," the ticker read at one point. "It is a big power in the stabilization of the region."

The hackers also purportedly took over the news agency's Twitter feed and posted alleged quotes from Qatar's foreign minister alleging a plot against the country by other Arab nations. It said the small, gas-rich nation had ordered its ambassadors from Bahrain, Egypt, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates withdrawn over the plot. The tweets were later deleted. Sheikh Saif bin Ahmed Al-Thani, the director of the Qatar's government communications office, issued a statement saying authorities had launched an investigation. "The statement published has no basis whatsoever and the competent authorities in the state of Qatar will hold all those (who) committed (this) accountable," Sheikh Saif said. The statement did not explain how the remarks made it on state television.

But Qatar was unable to contain the fallout, with media outlets taking seriously the remarks attributed to the emir and attacks on social media accounts continuing. The "false statement" was still being widely reported by broadcasters and newspapers across the region, including in the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, many hours after Doha's denial.

One analyst on the Saudi state news channel, Al-Akhbariya, called Tamim's alleged remarks "political adolescence." Twitter users swapped insults and accusations. Saudi media slammed the alleged statement describing Shiite-dominated Iran as a "stability guarantor" in the region. A page on the Al-Arabiya English website had an article entitled: "Proof that Qatar News Agency was not hacked." Saudi Arabia's Okaz daily thundered: "Qatar splits the rank, sides with the ene-

mies of the nation." Riyadh's Arab News said the comments sparked "outrage" among other Gulf states.

Authorities in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) blocked the main website of Qatar's Al Jazeera television, which Riyadh and Abu Dhabi have often seen as being critical of their governments. Al Jazeera says it is an independent news service giving a voice to everyone in the region. Qatar said it was "surprised by the stance of some media outlets and TV channels" in continuing to report the comments attributed to the emir. Some in Qatar compared those responsible for reporting the contents of the hack to Nazi Germany's propaganda minister, Joseph Goebbels.

The alleged cyber attack comes just days after Doha claimed it had been the victim of an orchestrated smear campaign over its alleged "support" for terrorism, and said it was being targeted by anti-Qatar organizations. One of those pieces, suggesting Qatar in 2006 may have let go a Qatari man who became an Al-Qaeda leader in Afghanistan, came from David A Weinberg, a senior fellow at the Washington-based Foundation for the Defense of Democracies. "The swift Saudi-Emirati response makes me think they were fishing for a confrontation or this is a convenient pretense... to address the things already bothering them," Weinberg said. "Qatar likes to write this off as a campaign based on lies and ulterior motives, but if Qatar didn't have the sort of problematic record it has, it wouldn't be the target for this."

Doha has faced criticism for its support of rebel groups fighting Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad and in recent weeks has been accused outright of funding terror in US media articles. Qatar is also home to the former leader of Hamas, Khaled Meshaal, who this month used his Doha base, where he has lived in exile for several years, to launch a new policy document. One analyst, Durham University's Dr Christopher Davidson, said the incident emphasized long-standing divisions between Qatar and other Gulf powers such as Saudi Arabia and the UAE, over issues including Doha's support for the Muslim Brotherhood. "This is still part of the serious fracture between the two different camps in the Gulf, the divisions remain about the vision for the region," he said. — Agencies

BRITAIN HUNTS TERROR NETWORK

Continued from Page 1

British Prime Minister Theresa May placed the country on its highest level of terror alert - "critical" - for the first time since June 2007, when it was sparked by an attack on Glasgow airport. The Changing of the

Guard, a military ceremony in front of Buckingham Palace popular with tourists, was cancelled yesterday and the Houses of Parliament suspended all public events. Chelsea football club said they were cancelling their Premier League victory parade on Sunday, saying it would be "inappropriate". — AFP

OIL PRODUCERS DEBATING 1-YR CUT EXTENSION

Continued from Page 1

Oil's earlier price decline, which started in 2014, forced Russia and Saudi Arabia to tighten their belts and led to unrest in some producing countries including Venezuela and Nigeria.

Surprises today are still possible. A substantial additional cut was unlikely, one OPEC delegate said, "unless Saudi Arabia initiates it with the biggest contribution and is supported by other Gulf members". The price rise this year has

spurred growth in the US shale industry, which is not participating in the output deal, thus slowing the market's rebalancing with global stocks still near record highs.

OPEC has a self-imposed goal of bringing stocks down from a record high of 3 billion barrels to their five-year average of 2.7 billion. Algerian Energy Minister Nouredine Boutarfa said he believed stocks remained stubbornly large in the first half of 2017 because of high exports from the Middle East to the United

States. "Thankfully, things are improving and we started seeing a draw in inventories in the United States," Boutarfa said, adding he believed that inventories should decline to their five-year average by the end of 2017. Exports will be a key focus on Thursday as OPEC members recognize that their own destocking has led inventories to fall less than expected, Sen of Energy Aspects said: "We believe there will be a push to stop destocking by OPEC producers and hence reduce exports." — Reuters

TRUMP VOWS PEACE PUSH AFTER MEETING WITH POPE

Continued from Page 1

Trump's declaration of intent followed a keenly-anticipated encounter between the billionaire businessman and the former Jesuit priest who has made championing the poor and the third world major themes of his papacy. In their world view and tastes, the Argentine pontiff who eschews the use of the palaces at his disposal and the luxury hotel tycoon appear worlds apart. But if there was any friction when they finally met, it occurred behind closed doors. In front of the cameras, both men were mostly all smiles, relaxed and even jovial. "He is something," Trump later said of his host. "We had a fantastic meeting."

The Vatican described the discussions as "cordial" and emphasized the two men's joint opposition to abortion and shared concern for persecuted Christians in the Middle East.

The pope had presented Trump with a medalion engraved with an olive tree, the international symbol of peace. Francis also gave Trump copies of the three major texts he has published as pope, including one on the environment which urges the industrialized world to curb carbon emissions or risk catastrophic consequences for the planet. Trump, who has threatened to ignore the Paris accords on emissions and described global warming as a hoax, vowed to read them.

A Vatican statement on the meeting highlighted "the joint commitment in favor of life, and freedom of worship and conscience". Trump told his host as he left, "Thank you. Thank you. I won't forget what you said." "I give it to you so you can be an instrument of peace," he said in Spanish. "We can use peace," Trump replied. Trump's gifts included a collection of first editions by Martin Luther King and a

bronze sculpture. Trump's administration has pleased the Church by axing rules protecting tax-funded financing of family planning clinics that offer abortions. Accompanied by his wife Melania and daughter Ivanka, Trump met Francis in the private library of the Apostolic Palace, the lavish papal residence that the current pope eschews in favor of more modest lodgings. Afterwards, the first couple was given a private tour of the Sistine Chapel and St Peter's Basilica.

While Donald dropped in on Italy's President and met Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni, Melania visited a children's hospital and Ivanka met women trafficked from Africa for the sex trade. In Brussels, Trump had a light schedule yesterday with meetings with Belgian King Philippe and Queen Mathilde and with Prime Minister Charles Michel. — Agencies

LAWMAKERS REJECT PIFSS, KISR BUDGETS, APPROVE SIX...

Continued from Page 1

He said the Assembly wants to know if these establishments and authorities are run in a professional way or are considered as the ownership of its managers.

MP Saleh Ashour criticized ministers who are not even following the debates of agencies under them, adding that ministers could face "black days" soon. He expected that the second term starting in October

could witness confrontations between the Assembly and lawmakers, adding that if the prime minister wants to cooperate with the Assembly, he should reshuffle a number of his Cabinet ministers.

MP Khalil Abul said that the Assembly should reject the budgets of authorities and agencies that do not respect themselves and the Assembly. MP Youssef Al-Fadhlah said those who manage the investments of PIFSS are expatriates who are not specialized, while

specialist Kuwaitis are jobless. State Minister for Municipality Mohammad Al-Jabri, who supervises the agricultural authority, acknowledged that the remarks and criticism of MPs against PAAAFR are correct, adding that many violations have been dealt with in the past three months. He said that important changes have been made at the authority and all the assistant undersecretaries have been retired. He said officials who committed violations have been referred to the public prosecution.

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DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF
ESTABLISHED 1961

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ABD AL-RAHMAN AL-ALYAN

EDITORIAL : 24833199-24833358-24833432
ADVERTISING : 24835616/7
FAX : 24835620/1
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Focus

ISRAEL MARKS 50 YRS
OF 'UNITED JERUSALEM'
BUT CITY STRUGGLES

A half-century after Israel captured East Jerusalem, the holy city remains deeply divided by politics, religion and ethnicity - and struggling with grim economic realities. A treasure fought over for millennia, it is also one of Israel's poorest areas. About 45 percent of Jerusalem's nearly 900,000 people live below the poverty line, compared with 20 percent of the national population. The poorer groups in Jerusalem are the fastest-growing: Ultra-Orthodox Jews, or Haredim, who make up a fifth of the population and Palestinians, who comprise more than a third.

Many young, secular and educated Jewish residents are opting to leave, alienated by the religious atmosphere and high living costs, said the Jerusalem Institute for Policy Research (JIIS) think tank. After the 1967 Middle East war, Israel annexed the Arab east of the city to the Jewish west to create what it regards as its united, eternal capital. Palestinians in East Jerusalem complain of second-class status and official neglect. "Jerusalem is a city that faces substantial challenges economically and that is partly because of the population that it houses," said Naomi Hausman, an economics professor at the Hebrew University.

Israel is this week celebrating the 50th anniversary of the capture of East Jerusalem. Its claim to the whole of the city as its indivisible capital has not won international recognition. Palestinians want East Jerusalem to be the capital of a state they seek to establish in the occupied West Bank and in Gaza. About 80 percent of Jerusalem's Palestinians and about half the Haredim live below the poverty line.

Haredi men generally dedicate themselves to religious study and few Palestinian women have jobs. Only 58 percent of Jerusalem Jews are in employment compared with 64 percent nationally, and just 40 percent of the Palestinian population work, according to Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS). Each year, about 8,000 more people leave Jerusalem than move to the city, according to CBS data, with much of the exodus made up of young Jewish people frustrated by the high cost of living and lack of job opportunities.

Ilana Butrimovitz left San Francisco for Jerusalem but spent barely a year there before moving away. "I feel more free in Tel Aviv, not to mention the night-life and the beach," said the 30-year-old chef. "The vibe is better and there are more job opportunities for young people." Jerusalem's light rail line threads its way through the city's contrasting zones - past Haredi neighborhoods where men in black garb walk the stone alleyways, by downtown cafes and pubs, alongside the walled Old City and to a sprawling new business quarter. "It's a city where everyone knows how to live together in equilibrium on a daily basis. There are also, obviously, divisions and surely the east-west division is the biggest," said Hausman.

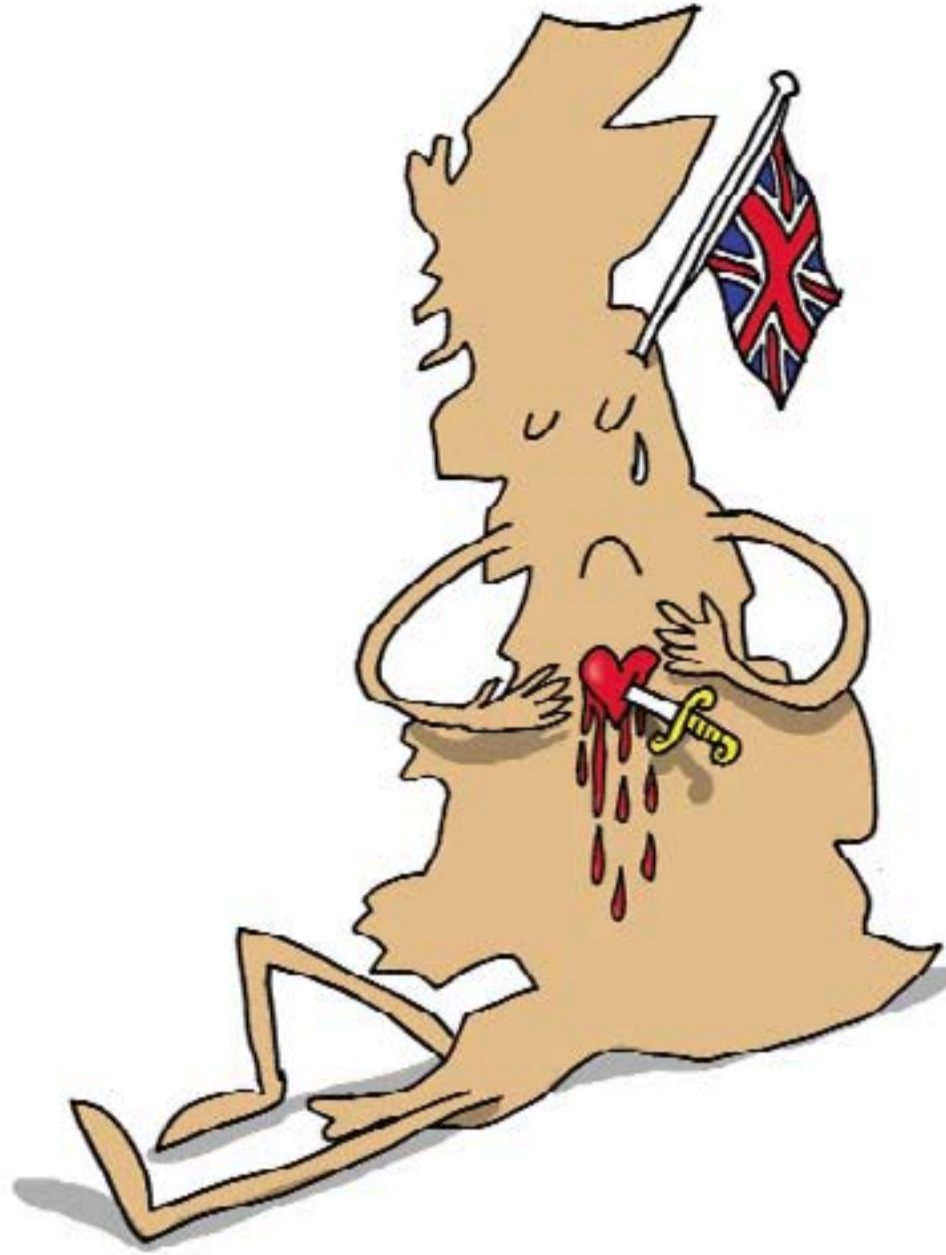
'Dead End'

Palestinian men are often employed on the bottom rungs of the labour market ladder, according to the JIIS. "It's a dead end for us," said Hussam, a 28-year-old Palestinian lawyer in East Jerusalem. "Plain and simple: no, we do not have the same opportunities as Israelis." Israeli businesses are often reluctant to employ Arabs, Hussam said, and some jobs are off limits for Jerusalem's Palestinians, who do not hold full Israeli citizenship, but are designated "permanent resident".

Some public sector jobs require full citizenship, and some employers want staff who have served in the Israeli military. "It fills one with despair, with anger, with frustration," said Hussam, adding that he planned to leave for Europe. Residential and business taxes in the city are among Israel's highest, meaning higher-earning residents are propping up the poorer ones. "Dynamically, doing this local redistribution is extremely problematic for a city, it can cause the city to attract more and more non-working and low-skill types until the city is in a poverty trap," Hausman said.

Maya Chosen, senior researcher at the JIIS, said Israeli authorities were finally acknowledging they needed to intervene. Since 2016, Israel has allocated almost a billion shekels (around \$250 million) to a five-year plan to improve the business environment and expand tourism. One goal is to boost the city's high-tech sector and entice more start-ups to move there. "They are trying to draw stronger populations, engineers, upper-middle class, to balance the weaker populations in Jerusalem," said Tzah Berki, senior vice president at Dun & Bradstreet Israel. Between 2012 and 2015, high-tech investment in Jerusalem more than quadrupled to \$243 million, according to the JIIS. The Palestinians of East Jerusalem say they have seen little of the benefits. "It's just not on the radar of East Jerusalem's residents," said Nisreen Alyan, head of the Jerusalem Programme at the Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI). — Reuters

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TARGETING CHILDREN AIMED TO CAUSE OUTRAGE

By targeting children at a pop concert in Manchester, the Islamic State group aimed to cause maximum outrage and sow divisions by turning people against Muslims, experts say. Ariana Grande, the US pop star who had just finished performing when the bomb ripped through the foyer of Manchester Arena in northwest England on Monday, is hugely popular with pre-teens and teens. The first of the 22 people killed to be named was an eight-year-old girl. The attack was the deadliest in Britain since July 7, 2005, when four suicide bombers inspired by Al-Qaeda attacked London underground trains and buses, killing 52 people and wounding 700 more.

David Videcette, a former Metropolitan Police detective who investigated the London attacks, told AFP that the militant group would have carefully chosen the target in Manchester. "I think it is a deliberate ploy on their part to gain a level of anger and disgust from the general public that would be directed towards other Muslims because that assists them in their recruitment drive," said Videcette, who now writes thrillers based on his experiences.

The Manchester bombing was also, he suspects, timed to coincide with the fourth anniversary of the hacking to death of soldier Lee Rigby by two militants in London. It also fell exactly two months after the car and knife attack near the British Houses of Parliament. The message from them is that "we can do this at will, we can do it where

we want and we can do the type of thing that we choose to do and you can't stop us," Videcette said. In a statement released through its social media channels, IS said one of its "soldiers" had carried out the bombing in which he killed himself.

'Unbearable' target

Yves Trotignon, a former agent in



Police officers yesterday patrol past a newspaper reporting about the suicide attack at a concert by Ariana Grande that killed 22 people in Manchester. — AP

France's foreign intelligence service DGSE, drew parallels between the Manchester attack and two atrocities in France last year - the lorry attack that killed 86 people on the Nice seafont and the murder of elderly priest Jacques Hamel near Rouen. "What is extremely shocking in this attack is the target," he said. "All the security services fear an attack against a

target that the public find unbearable. It's the Nice attack, with children crushed and killed. Or it's the killing of Father Hamel, which caused deep shock."

British Prime Minister Theresa May called the Manchester attack "appalling and sickening" but stressed that it must not be allowed to divide the country. After attacks using trucks in Stockholm and Berlin in the last six months, western Europe saw a return to the use of explosives to cause carnage in Manchester. The fact that it was the first large-scale bombing in Britain since the 2005 London attacks is significant, Videcette said. "It is a step change for two reasons - first it bucks the trend and second, there is the level of expertise involved in building an improvised explosive device that is viable from scratch without getting detected by any of the safeguards we have put in place since 2005," he said.

Shashank Joshi, senior research fellow at the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI), said however that while the type of attack and its target were unusual for Britain, they were unexceptional when placed in an international context. He said targeting concertgoers brought to mind the November 2015 attack on the Bataclan music hall in Paris that killed 90 people "and in that sense it represents a generic attack on a soft target of the type we have seen again and again in Europe in recent years". — AFP

TRUMP APPROACH UPENDS OBAMA VISION

US President Donald Trump's emphatic embrace of Sunni Arab regimes and his vilification of Iran mark a stark departure from the vision of his predecessor Barack Obama in the volatile region, analysts say. Pointedly delivering his first foreign speech in Riyadh on Sunday, Trump praised the six-state Gulf Cooperation Council, specifically Saudi Arabia, for efforts to cut off funding to extremists while lambasting Iran as the "spearhead of terrorism". While the unpredictable Trump completed the visit to the region without committing a major gaffe, his approach "swept away the entire Obama legacy with the wave of a hand," said Thierry Coville, an Iran expert at the French Institute for International and Strategic Affairs. "That the United States wants to restore a certain balance in its ties with Saudi Arabia, OK, but to put Iran and the IS group on the same level is false, illogical and counter-productive," Coville told AFP.

Coville said that removing human rights concerns routinely levelled at Arab states from the center of US foreign policy was "understandable". But he added: "Telling (Egypt's President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi) that he is doing a 'fantastic' job and saying that Saudi Arabia is a 'magnificent kingdom', while forgetting that in Iran people are making the effort to get out and vote, is very dangerous."

Hasni Abidi, head of the Geneva-based Study and Research Centre for the Arab and Mediterranean World (CERNAM), also spoke of a "break in US policy". Obama, whose secretary of state John Kerry helped broker the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, "banked on Iran's moderate forces, (while) Trump has chosen the Sunni camp, starting with Saudi Arabia, a country with unequalled financial means," Abidi told AFP. Washington and Riyadh agreed deals totalling some \$380 billion. "But the price of regaining the confidence of Saudi Arabia and the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council is to portray Iran as a threat," Abidi added. He noted that Washington still depends on Iran for cooperation in Iraq against IS and in Afghanistan against the Taleban, and Trump has "shown caution so far".

Coville went further, calling Trump's speech a "smoke-screen" aimed at "making people forget that he is in the process of validating the nuclear accord". He also noted that Iran Air, in Tehran's first deal with a US aviation group since the 1979 Islamic revolution, finalized in December a contract worth \$16.6 billion to purchase 80 Boeing planes. Paris-based political scientist Azadeh Kian said authorities in Tehran had not taken Trump's Riyadh speech seriously, pointing to a tweet by Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif saying that Washington was "milking" Saudi Arabia. But she said it was "worrying, especially after an election... that showed that there is a

real dynamic towards democratization and opening in Iranian society."

'More hope than experience'

Meanwhile, Trump's call for Israelis and Palestinians to "make a deal" has drawn praise mixed with a healthy dose of skepticism. Speaking in Jerusalem, the US leader offered no specifics but said he was "personally committed" to helping to resolve the decades-old conflict. "Making peace, however, will not be easy," Trump said. "But with determination, compromise and the belief that peace is possible, Israelis and Palestinians can make a deal."

The Israeli newspaper Haaretz said Trump had "succeeded in bringing peace, which in recent years had become a dirty word, back to the center of Israeli public and political dis-

course." But it added: "Trump has the will and motivation, but for now he has no plan." Former Middle East peace negotiator Aaron David Miller, writing in Politico last week, argued that "strange as it may seem, Trump actually has a Middle East strategy, or at least a reasonably coherent approach."

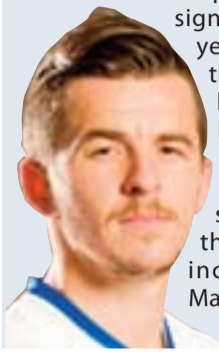
The idea is to forge a "US-Israeli-Sunni Arab entente... held together by several objectives they share in varying degrees: destroy ISIS, roll back Iranian influence, and deliver some kind of Israeli-Palestinian peace," Miller wrote. It is a "transactional deal" in which the Arab states would help Washington revive the peace process in exchange for a much tougher US policy against Iran, he said. However, he warned: "But Washington's approach seems driven more by hope than experience. Trump is likely to discover that the region... is more complicated than he thought." — AFP



(From left) Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi, Saudi King Salman, US First Lady Melania Trump and US President Donald Trump visit a new Global Center for Combating Extremist Ideology in Riyadh on May 21, 2017. — AP

BURNLEY RELEASE BANNED BARTON

LONDON: Premier League Burnley have released controversial midfielder Joey Barton, who was banned for 18 months for betting. The 34-year-old-banned in April over a Football Association charge relating to 1,260 bets he placed on matches between 2006 and 2016 — was re-signed by Burnley in January after an acrimonious and premature departure from Scottish side Rangers. Burnley had signed Barton for a second time-after an impressive year with them in the 2015/16 campaign that saw them promoted to the Premier League-even though he had the betting charge hanging over him. "Joey leaves us for the obvious reasons after he has again been a big part of what we have achieved this season," said Burnley manager Sean Dyche, whose side finished 16th in the table, six points clear of the relegation places. Barton, whose former clubs include Manchester City, Newcastle United and Marseille, has had a chequered career.—AFP



CHELSEA CANCEL VICTORY PARADE AFTER MANCHESTER BOMB ATTACK

LONDON: Champions Chelsea cancelled Sunday's Premier League victory parade saying it was "inappropriate" after the Manchester suicide bombing that left 22 dead and over 60 wounded. "Everyone associated with Chelsea Football Club offers our heartfelt condolences to those affected by Monday's terror attack in Manchester," said a statement. "Our thoughts go out to all the victims and their families and friends. "In light of these tragic events we feel it is inappropriate to go ahead with the victory parade in London on Sunday." Chelsea, who have a chance of achieving a domestic double when they take on Arsenal in the FA Cup final on Saturday, will also donate money to a fund for the victims and their families. "As a mark of respect our players will wear black armbands at the FA Cup final against Arsenal on Saturday," read the statement. The London club said that they had also taken into account other factors including the raising of the security threat by the British government to its highest level of "critical". "We strongly believe, in the interests of everyone, this is the correct course of action. We are sure our fans will understand this decision," Chelsea said. Among those killed by suicide bomber Salman Abedi at the end of Ariane Grande's pop concert was a girl aged just eight.—AFP

OLYMPIC CHAMP CHALMERS TO HAVE HEART SURGERY

SYDNEY: Australian Olympic champion Kyle Chalmers yesterday pulled out of July's world titles in Budapest to have surgery for a worsening heart condition. The Rio 100m gold medallist suffers from supraventricular tachycardia (SVT), which occasionally causes his heart to race but is not normally life threatening. It forced the teenager to miss Australia's national short course championships late last year, and his doctor and coach have now decided he needs surgery sooner rather than later to help prolong his career. "The symptoms have reached a point where I must act to ensure I am in peak physical condition for next year's Commonwealth Games trials and hopefully the Commonwealth Games," said the 18-year-old of the event on home soil at the Gold Coast. "There is never a good time for this type of procedure but given I've suffered from these symptoms during two of the past three major meets, and following my doctors advice, I have made the tough decision to withdraw (from Budapest)."—AFP



LOS ANGELES: Los Angeles Dodgers' Yasmani Grandal, upper left, hits a solo home run as St Louis Cardinals starting pitcher Lance Lynn, below, watches along with catcher Yadier Molina, right, and home plate umpire Pat Hoberg during the first inning of a baseball game, Tuesday, in Los Angeles.— AP

TWINS BEAT ORIOLES ON SANTANA'S 10TH CAREER SHUTOUT

BALTIMORE: Ervin Santana pitched a two-hitter for his 10th career shutout, Brian Dozier homered and the surging Minnesota Twins beat the Baltimore Orioles 2-0 Tuesday. After banging out 21 hits in a 14-7 win over Baltimore on Monday, the AL Central-leading Twins got exceptional pitching for their ninth victory in 13 games. Santana (7-2) struck out six, walked two and permitted only one runner past first base. It was Santana's 18th complete game, the second this season. He finished by retiring the last 14 batters. Minnesota became the first team this season to capture a series at Camden Yards (the Orioles were 7-0-0). Dylan Bundy (5-3) allowed two runs over seven innings.

his majors-leading eighth victory by giving up a run in the ninth. Randal Grichuk singled, advanced to second on a groundout then scored on a wild pitch to tie it at 1. Josh Fields (1-0) pitched the 13th for Los Angeles. Joc Pederson left the game after a frightening collision with Yasiel Puig in the 10th inning.

RED SOX 11, RANGERS 6

Xander Bogaerts had three RBIs and twice scored on wild pitches, and Dustin Pedroia hit a two-run double for Boston. Rick Porcello (3-5) won for just the second time at home despite allowing 11 hits in 6 2/3 innings. The reigning AL Cy Young Award winner gave up four earned runs. Joey Gallo hit 14th homer for Texas, which had won 11 of 12. Andrew Cashner (1-4) gave up five runs in five innings.

ANGELS 4, RAYS 0

Cameron Maybin and Mike Trout hit back-to-back home runs to begin the game and Matt Shoemaker won his third consecutive start for Los Angeles. Maybin led off by homering on a 3-1 pitch from Alex Cobb (4-4). Trout connected on the next pitch for his 15th homer, including seven in his last 11 games. Shoemaker (4-2) gave up three hits, three walks and struck out five in 6 1/3

innings. Los Angeles has won seven of nine. The Rays have lost three in a row after a season-high four-game winning streak.

ROYALS 6, YANKEES 2

Danny Duffy beat the Yankees for the second time in a week and rookie Jorge Bonifacio capped a three-run, seventh-inning rally with a go-ahead, two-run homer for Kansas City. Lorenzo Cain, Whit Merrifield and Mike Moustakas also homered late for the Royals, who went deep four times in a span of nine batters. New York rookie Jordan Montgomery took a one-hit shutout and 2-0 lead into the seventh before a solo homer by Cain, who had been hitless in 14 at-bats. Adam Warren (1-1) took the loss. Duffy (4-3) gave up two runs in seven innings.

ASTROS 6, TIGERS 2

Juan Centeno homered in his Houston debut and Yuli Gurriel also connected. Centeno, who has played for the Mets, Brewers and Twins, filled in for catcher Brian McCann, later singled and scored. Houston starter Lance McCullers (5-1) allowed one hit in five innings to extend his AL-leading streak of scoreless innings to 22. Detroit starter Jordan Zimmermann (4-3), who turned 31 on Tuesday, yielded four runs in six-plus innings.

NATIONALS 10, MARINERS 1

Anthony Rendon homered twice and drove in five runs, and Joe Ross returned from the minors to allow one run over a career high-tying eight innings for Washington. Bryce Harper hit 14th home run and Jayson Werth almost homered off Chris Bergman (1-2), who allowed all of the Nationals' runs and 14 of their 15 hits. Ross (2-0) showed no signs of the late April struggles that ended with a demotion to Triple-A. He yielded five hits and a walk while striking out six.

ROCKIES 8, PHILLIES 2

Charlie Blackmon hit a pair of two-run homers and German Marquez tossed six effective innings for Colorado. Gerardo Parra also went deep to help the NL leading-Rockies win their major league-best 17th road game. Marquez (3-2) allowed one run and seven hits, striking out six. Philadelphia is 4-19 since an 11-9 start. Zach Eflin (0-2) gave up eight runs and 10 hits in six innings.

CUBS 4, GIANTS 1

Jon Lester pitched a four-hitter and the Cubs beat Johnny Cueto and San Francisco in a rainy rematch of last year's playoff opener. Anthony Rizzo, Kyle Schwarber and Jason Heyward homered for Chicago. Lester and Cueto hooked up in a memorable pitchers' duel in Game 1 of the NL Division Series last October, with Chicago winning 1-0. Lester (3-2) outpitched Cueto (4-4).

INDIANS 8, REDS 7

Edwin Encarnacion hit two of Cleveland's four homers off rookie Amir Garrett and scored the go-ahead run on a wild pitch. The Indians split the two-game series in Cincinnati, and now the teams play twice in Cleveland. The Indians have won seven of the last eight between Ohio's teams. Andrew Miller (3-0) got help from right fielder Daniel Robertson, who threw Jose Peraza out at the plate in the eighth. Cody Allen escaped in the ninth to extend his franchise record by converting his 13th straight save try to start a season. Drew Storen (1-1) took the loss.

METS 9, PADRES 3

Michael Conforto homered twice and had a career-high four RBIs, including three on two hits during the Mets' biggest first inning in 13 years, and Matt Harvey won his first home start since getting suspended. Lucas Duda broke out of a slump with three hits and three RBIs, and manager Terry Collins earned his 500th victory with the Mets. His team got a leadoff homer and a two-run single from Conforto in a seven-run first against Jhoulys Chacin (4-4). Harvey (3-3) labored through five innings to win for the first time since April 11 at Philadelphia. The embattled former ace was 0-3 in his previous six starts and got banned three days by the Mets after skipping a home game this month following a late night on the town.

BLUE JAYS 4, BREWERS 3

Kendrys Morales hit a two-run homer to lead Toronto. Six of the first eight Blue Jays batters reached base against Jimmy Nelson (2-3). Danny Barnes (1-2) won in relief. Roberto Osuna earned his seventh save in 10 chances.

DIAMONDBACKS 5, WHITE SOX 4

Jake Lamb and Chris Herrmann homered

and Arizona held off the White Sox for the Diamondbacks' seventh win in eight games. Patrick Corbin (4-4) settled down after a tough start to get the victory. The left-hander went six innings plus one batter, allowing three runs and scattering eight hits. Chicago rookie Dylan Covey (0-4), still looking for his first big-league win after eight starts, left the game with one out in the third inning with left oblique soreness. Jose Abreu cut the lead to 5-4 with a leadoff home run of Jorge De La Rosa to start the eighth. It was his 100th career homer and all nine of them this season have come on the road. But J.J. Hoover came on with one out and the bases loaded to strikeout Kevan Smith and Yolmer Sanchez to preserve the lead. Fernando Rodney pitched a perfect ninth for his 11th save in 13 tries.

BRAVES 6, PIRATES 5

Matt Adams singled in the winning run with about 200 fans left in the stands for the ninth inning, lifting the Braves over the Pirates in a game delayed over three hours by rain. The delay started in the top of the seventh inning and ended at 12:51 a.m. The game finished just before 2 a.m. - 6 hours, 15 minutes after first pitch. After Pittsburgh scored twice in the top of the ninth, Atlanta got two runs in the bottom of the inning. Nick Markakis had an RBI double to tie it at 5, and after Matt Kemp was intentionally walked, Markakis scored from second on Adams' single to left. Pirates closer Tony Watson (2-1) faced six batters in blowing the save in the ninth. Atlanta has won nine of 12. Luke Jackson (1-0) got his first career win.

MARLINS 11, ATHLETICS 9

Justin Bour matched his career high with four hits including his fourth home run in five games to highlight Miami's best offensive game of the season, and the Marlins held off a late surge to beat the Athletics. Yonder Alonso hit his 13th home run of the season for the A's, but left with a bruised right hand after getting hit by a pitch in the sixth. Ryon Healy and Rajai Davis also homered for Oakland. Jose Urena (2-2) pitched five uneven innings for his first career interleague win in 10 appearances. Jesse Hahn (1-4) took the loss and left the game in the third inning with a triceps strain.—AP

MLB results/standings

LA Dodgers 2, St. Louis 1 (13 innings); Miami 11, Oakland 9; Arizona 5, Chicago White Sox 4; Houston 6, Detroit 2; Toronto 4, Milwaukee 3; Atlanta 6, Pittsburgh 5; LA Angels 4, Tampa Bay 0; NY Mets 9, San Diego 3; Boston 11, Texas 6; Cleveland 8, Cincinnati 7; Colorado 8, Philadelphia 2; Kansas City 6, NY Yankees 2; Washington 10, Seattle 1; Minnesota 2, Baltimore 0; Chicago Cubs 4, San Francisco 1.

American League					National League				
Eastern Division					Eastern Division				
	W	L	PCT	GB		W	L	PCT	GB
NY Yankees	26	17	.605	-	Washington	27	17	.614	-
Baltimore	25	19	.568	1.5	Atlanta	20	23	.465	6.5
Boston	23	21	.523	3.5	NY Mets	19	24	.442	7.5
Tampa Bay	23	25	.479	5.5	Miami	16	28	.364	11
Toronto	20	26	.435	7.5	Philadelphia	15	28	.349	11.5
Central Division					Central Division				
Minnesota	24	18	.571	-	Milwaukee	25	20	.556	-
Cleveland	24	20	.545	1	St. Louis	22	20	.524	1.5
Detroit	21	23	.477	4	Chicago Cubs	23	21	.523	1.5
Chicago White Sox	20	24	.455	5	Cincinnati	21	24	.467	4
Kansas City	19	26	.422	6.5	Pittsburgh	20	26	.435	5.5
Western Division					Western Division				
Houston	31	15	.674	-	Colorado	30	17	.638	-
Texas	24	22	.522	7	Arizona	28	19	.596	2
LA Angels	25	23	.521	7	LA Dodgers	27	19	.587	2.5
Oakland	20	25	.444	10.5	San Francisco	20	27	.426	10
Seattle	20	26	.435	11	San Diego	16	31	.340	14

CRICKET GREAT TENDULKAR'S LIFE BROUGHT TO SILVER SCREEN

MUMBAI: A hotly anticipated film about the life of Indian cricket legend Sachin Tendulkar hits cinemas this week but the batting great says he might find watching it an unsettling experience.

"I am used to seeing myself on a big screen inside the stadium, not inside a movie theatre," Tendulkar told AFP ahead of Friday's release of "Sachin: A Billion Dreams".

The docudrama, directed by Emmy-nominated British filmmaker James Erskine, took four years to make and traces Tendulkar's life from aspiring cricketer to arguably the greatest batsman of all time.

It features real footage, including clips from his matches and interviews with colleagues and family and present day stars including Virat Kohli and

Mahendra Singh Dhoni.

It uses actors to recreate some scenes from the 44-year-old's childhood in Mumbai. Tendulkar, who played 200 Test matches and enjoys an almost god-like status in cricket-mad India, consented to the biopic but admitted that letting the cameras into his family life didn't come naturally.

"Being a private person I always believed I should let my bat do the talking, stay focused on the game and give all my energy over there," said the "Little Master" in an interview.

"There are personal moments in the film and some family footage. I know fans want to see something more than what they have in the last 24 years. "Nobody knows what was going on in my mind at that time so we have spoken

a lot about highs and lows and the line between me, my family and fans," he added. The right-hander made his debut for India aged just 16 in 1989 and broke almost every batting record possible before retiring from professional cricket in 2013.

The former Indian captain is the only cricketer to have scored 100 international centuries and is the highest run scorer in international cricket with more than 34,000 runs.

HAGIOGRAPHY?

Tendulkar published his autobiography in 2014 and there isn't much that cricket fans don't know about him. But Erskine, who has made several acclaimed sports films, insists the docudrama will reveal new aspects about his

life. "You might know the stats, you might know how he performed in certain matches, but you don't know what happens when he goes off-stage, in his house — his private life, his hopes, dreams, his highs and sorrows," he told AFP. "You know little of his family except perhaps their names. This film really is the story of the man, and while cricket is a huge part of his life, it is just one chapter," Erskine added.

The Brit has made a number of well-received sports biopics including "The Battle of the Sexes", about a tennis match between Billie Jean King and Bobby Riggs, and "Pantani: The Accidental Death of a Cyclist", about Tour de France winner Marco Pantani.

He also made "One Night in Turin", a documentary about England's run to

the semi-finals of the 1990 football World Cup.

"Sachin: A Billion Dreams" is being produced by a company called "200 NotOut", a reference to the number of Tests Tendulkar played, leaving some movie critics wondering if the film will be little more than hagiography.

"My purpose was to make a film exploring three clear strands-how did this boy become perceived as a god, who is the real man behind the god, how was Sachin's journey (and iconic status) a result of the massive shifts in Indian culture, cricket and media over the past 30 years.

"The last of these I treat subtly and through imagery so that it's more felt than thought. And that's key to understanding the film," said Erskine. — AFP



OTTAWA: Craig Anderson #41 of the Ottawa Senators makes a save against Sidney Crosby #87 of the Pittsburgh Penguins as Kyle Turris #7 and Erik Karlsson #65 of the Senators and Chris Kunitz #14 of the Penguins react in the second period in Game Six of the Eastern Conference Final during the 2017 NHL Stanley Cup Playoffs at Canadian Tire Centre on May 23, 2017 in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. —AFP

NHL

SENATORS FORCE DECIDER AS PENGUINS DOWNED

OTTAWA: The Ottawa Senators came from behind to force a decider in their Eastern Conference final series against the Pittsburgh Penguins on Tuesday. A third period strike from Mike Hoffman completed a 2-1 win for the Senators, who rallied after falling behind to a Evgeni Malkin goal in the second period.

Bobby Ryan got Ottawa back on level terms in the second period to leave the series balanced at 3-3 heading for Game 7 in Pittsburgh on Thursday. Senators coach Guy Boucher praised the way his team had responded after a 7-0 drubbing in Game 5.

"The guys are fighters, and they choose to fight. They don't choose to bail out. They don't choose to freeze. They choose to fight," Boucher said. "That's something they've developed individually and as a team, and that's why we're still here. It's an unbelievable team on the other side, so it takes every player, everyone's character to be able to do that, and that's what our players displayed today."

Senators goalie Craig Anderson meanwhile proved one of the heroes for the Canadians, stopping 45 shots, including 22 of 23 in the second period. "I think what he's done all year, in terms of focus and rebounding and coming up with big saves, I think, is at the forefront of what these guys have been doing," Boucher said.

"It's a roller coaster all series, not just this one, but all the previous ones. And he's been terrific at reloading mentally, physically and emotionally. I think it's the measure of our team."

Hoffman's winner came at 1:34 of the third when he gathered a pass from Fredrik Claesson and blasted a slap shot past Penguins goalie Matt Murray high to the glove side. Malkin and Ryan exchanged goals in the second period. The Penguins looked to have taken a lead at 3:04 of the second, when Sidney Crosby found Trevor Daley to shoot and beat Craig Anderson with a rebound. However Daley was later adjudged to have interfered with the goaltender, denying Pittsburgh a precious score. Pittsburgh are chasing back-to-back Stanley Cup wins after their triumph in the NHL showpiece in 2016. Pittsburgh coach Mike Sullivan sounded a defiant note after the defeat, insisting his team still had all to play for.

"Obviously, we're disappointed in the result, but I don't think we can get discouraged by that," Sullivan said. "I think we've got to take the positives from it, and we've got to build on it, and we've got to become a more determined team for Game 7. "The puck didn't go in the net for us tonight, but I believe, if we stay the course there, then pucks will go in.—AFP

AUSTRALIA PLAYERS' UNION SEEKS MORE CONTROL OF IP

MELBOURNE: The Australian Cricketers' Association has set up a business to manage and market players' intellectual property should they be unable to strike a pay deal with the national cricket board.

Players have rejected a CA offer that waters down a revenue-sharing model which helped make them among the best-paid cricketers in the world over the last 20 years. CA has warned that players would not be offered alternative contracts if they failed to agree to terms by a June 30 deadline. The ACA said the launch of 'The Cricketers' Brand' would help players, broadcasters, sponsors and Cricket Australia (CA) "manage the uncertainty" of a collective bargaining agreement failing to be put in place by the deadline.

"Whilst this business will 'go live' on 1 July 2017, the ACA is finalising securing the interim IP of Australia's elite male and female cricketers pending a new MOU being agreed," the ACA said in a statement yesterday.

Tim Cruickshank, the ACA's commercial manager, has been appointed as the IP company's general manager and said it would work with players and their agents

to set up a commercial framework for their image rights.

"What this means practically for broadcasters and sponsors is that they can seek to establish a more direct relationship with the players through The Cricketers' Brand which we hope will enhance those partnerships for further mutual benefit," he added.

"This is about securing a fair share for the men and women who play the game by taking greater control of their own intellectual property."

The ACA added that players had received "approximately 0 percent" of digital media revenue earned by CA under the current CBA, which the union said ran to some A\$40 million (\$29.85 million) over five years.

"Whilst the ACA is seeking to get to the bottom of this, the players can't allow this to continue, especially given the extensive use of their attributes on CA's digital platforms," the ACA said.

A Cricket Australia spokesman said there was "no digital revenue." "CA has repeatedly explained (that) to the ACA ... and their auditors have access to CA's books on a regular basis," he said by email. — Reuters

FASTER, RUSTIER: MEDALS FROM RIO OLYMPICS DAMAGED

RIO DE JANEIRO: In Kyle Snyder made history at the Rio Olympics by becoming the youngest American wrestler to win a gold medal.

The medal will soon be history as well, to be replaced by the IOC and Rio organizers because of damage. More than 80 American athletes have sent medals they won at Rio to US Olympic Committee headquarters to be shipped to games organizers, who will replace them due to flaking, black spots and other damage, the USOC said Tuesday.

The Americans, including gold-medal wrestlers Snyder and Helen Maroulis, are among at least 100 Olympians from across the globe with defective medals.

Beach volleyball star Kerri Walsh Jennings is also in the group; she says her bronze medal is flaking and rusting, and USA Swimming spokesman Scott Leightman said some swimmers have damaged medals as well.

The USOC learned about the problems in December and reached out to all the American sports federations in January to begin the process. Rio Games spokesman Mario Andrada said officials have noted problems with the covering on 6 to 7 percent of the medals.

"The most common issue is that they were dropped or mishandled, and the varnish has come off and they've rusted or gone black in the spot where they were damaged," Andrada said. It's not uncommon for medals to be passed around at post-Games parties and handled by hundreds. But this amount of damage is unusual. Walsh Jennings, who won three golds in previous Olympics, says her medals tend to get

beaten up because she doesn't hesitate to let people touch them or try them on. But she won't consider locking them up because people are inspired by them.

"They've offered to replace them. I'm not sure if I want to swap it out," Walsh-Jennings told The Associated Press, adding the reason was "100 percent sentimental."

COST-CUTTING

USA Basketball spokesman Craig Miller said the organization reached out to its players and seven - three men and four women - reported they believe there is an issue with their medals.

Snyder, who wrestles for Ohio State, was 20 when he won his medal. He noticed an issue with the award the day after he won it.

He went to a party at the Team USA house in Rio, where he said multiple people handled the medal as they celebrated. Snyder said he later discovered a scratch on the back of it, though he added there has been no further damage.

Snyder said he has until the end of the week to return his gold medal and has no idea when



RIO DE JANEIRO: In this Aug. 18, 2016, file photo, United States' Kerri Walsh Jennings stands on the podium after winning the bronze medal in the women's beach volleyball competition of the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. More than 100 athletes from around the world say the medals they won at the Rio Olympics are damaged. The IOC and Rio organizers plan to replace them with new medals. Among those with defective medals are beach volleyball star Kerri Walsh Jennings who says her bronze medal from last summer is flaking and rusting. — AP

he'll receive his replacement. "It wasn't too big of a deal," Snyder said. "But since they're giving me a new one, it's kind of cool."

Rio de Janeiro spent 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.

Nine months later, many of the venues are empty and have no tenants or income - with the maintenance costs dumped on the federal government. In addition to the issues with the

medals, which featured the Rio and Olympic logos, the local organizing committee still owes creditors about \$30 million Greg Massialas, a national coach for the U.S. fencing team in Rio, said in a message to AP that the silver medal his son, Alex, won is damage free. He added that he hasn't heard about any issues with other American fencers.

US shooter Ginny Thrasher and boxer Claressa Shields, along with men's tennis bronze medalist Kei Nishikori of Japan, also reported that their gold medals are intact. —AP

TENNIS

NO FEDERER, SERENA, SHARAPOVA, NO PROBLEM FOR ROLAND GARROS

PARIS: Roland Garros organisers are confident that the absence from the 2017 French Open of Roger Federer, Serena Williams and Maria Sharapova will just be a footnote when the story of the second major of the season is told.

"The absence of these three stars does not weaken the tournament because Roland Garros remains an institution and the Holy Grail for a player," French tennis historian Jean-Christophe Piffaut told AFP. "The Grand Slam tournaments are anchored in the history of tennis, which is what makes them both special and prized."

With that in mind, AFP Sports looks at the storylines likely to dominate the French Open which starts on Sunday: Perfect 10 for Nadal?

This year Nadal has captured a 10th Monte Carlo Masters and 10th title in Barcelona; now the great Spaniard targets what many in the sport thought was impossible—a 10th Roland Garros. The champion in 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014, Nadal, now 30, was written off when he lost to Novak Djokovic in the 2015 quarter-finals, ending a 39-match win streak in Paris since his shock defeat to Robin Soderling in 2009.

Last year, he played two rounds before a wrist injury forced an early withdrawal. But he has been rejuvenated in 2017, reaching the Australian Open and Miami finals and winning in Madrid for a record-equalling 30th Masters title.

DJOKOVIC AND AGASSI, TARSTRUCK DOUBLE ACT

When Djokovic completed the career Grand Slam by winning his first Roland Garros title in 2016, the Serb held all four majors at the same time. But the former world number one has-by his standards-struggled since, admitting motivation has been a problem.

There were signs of life when he reached the Rome Masters final last weekend where his defeat was soon relegated in significance by his appointment of US legend Andre Agassi as his new coach. The announcement came in the wake of Djokovic parting with long-time coach Marian Vajda earlier this month, having also ended a three-year relationship with Boris Becker at the end of last season.

Eight-time major winner Agassi, who has only committed to the French Open so far, has never coached at such a level before and has been away from the sport for more than a decade since retiring in 2006.

THE OPEN FRENCH OPEN

Who will be the 2017 women's champion? Who knows? The champions from 2010 to 2015 — Serena Williams (2013 and 2015), Maria Sharapova (2012 and 2014), Li Na (2011) and Francesca Schiavone (2010) — are absent. Defending champion Garbine Muguruza of Spain picked up a neck injury in Rome and has won just two matches on clay all season. World number one Angelique Kerber's best run was a 2012 quarter-final spot. This claycourt season, the German lost first time out at Rome having retired with a back injury after two matches in Madrid. Simona Halep, the 2014 runner-up in Paris and winner in Madrid this year before being a losing finalist in Rome, looks the most likely champion-in-waiting-just.—AFP



Maria Sharapova

SOCCER

FA CUP FINAL IS ABOUT ARSENAL NOT ME: WENGER

LONDON: Arsene Wenger insists that Saturday's FA Cup final is about much more than him and his future, and revolves instead around Arsenal's drive to beat Premier League champions Chelsea and end a troubled season on a high note.

The 67-year-old Frenchman has constantly refused to give a definitive answer on whether his current contract, which expires at the end of the season, is to be renewed.

It is the issue that has divided Arsenal supporters for months, with many vociferously calling for him to end his 21-year stint. Wenger has also admitted the uncertainty contributed to the club's first finish outside the top four in two decades.

Once again he declined to clarify his

personal position to journalists Wednesday, but did make it clear that if his weekend date at Wembley did turn out to be a farewell it would be from Arsenal, not the game itself.

"This will not be my last match anyway because I will stay, no matter what happens, in football," he said. "Will this be my last match at Arsenal? I don't know. What I want is to win the next game. I love to win and what I want is to do well for my club. That's all I care about, it's not all about me." The Cup final could also be a swansong for Alexis Sanchez, whose agent is known to have spoken to German champions Bayern Munich this week.

Indeed, the forward was listed as a Bayern Munich player on a Confederations Cup squad list by his

nation, Chile, apparently by mistake. Wenger insisted it would be his decision whether Sanchez stayed.

"We have nobody at the end of their contract so that will be completely our decision," he said. "The club of course has a big job to do in summer, we want to keep players like Alexis and end all the speculation about what could happen. He is under contract until 2018."

'UNACCEPTABLE AND REALLY SAD'

Sanchez is an injury doubt for Saturday after limping off in the final Premier League game of the season, Sunday's victory over Everton, with a thigh problem.

"We will see if he can start," Wenger said. "He needs to go for some tests and we will see how well he comes out of

that. "But knowing the player, his character and his commitment to the club, which I don't question at all, he will do absolutely everything to be fit on Saturday." The Arsenal defence is Wenger's main concern as Laurent Koscielny is banned and fellow centre-back Gabriel is out injured.

Gabriel hurt a knee against Everton and Wenger confirmed he faced two months of rehabilitation. "Gabriel is out for six to eight weeks," he said. "We had a scare about his cruciate but it is only medial knee ligaments so the positive is that he avoids surgery."

Per Mertesacker will fill one of the gaps despite limited game time himself following injury.

Wenger was confident his players' preparations would not be disrupted by

the extra security measures being implemented as a result of Monday's suicide bombing at a pop concert in Manchester which killed 22 people and injured 59.

"We will have our usual security," he said. "We are in the middle of it on the day of a game or before a game but usually when you are in a competition you don't realise what's happening around you. We are a little bit in our bubble, isolated. I'm French, we've lived in an emergency state for a long time now and it not visible what the police are doing, usually. "You want people to enjoy life, it's absolutely unacceptable and really sad. I was in Paris when it happened on November 13 2015 and it's a huge shock. "Our compassion and solidarity is total with the city of Manchester." — AFP

HULK FLEXES MUSCLES IN ALL-CHINESE CLASH

SHANGHAI: Brazilian forward Hulk scored one goal and set up another as Shanghai SIPG won a megabucks all-Chinese clash 2-1 against Jiangsu Suning in the AFC Champions League's last 16 yesterday. Hulk made his muscular presence felt with a bustling performance which terrorised the Jiangsu defence and put Andre Villas-Boas's SIPG in the driving seat ahead of next week's return leg.

The 30-year-old Hulk, a 56-million-euro signing last year, was the pick of the expensively hired Brazilian talent on display, which also included Oscar, Elkeson and Jiangsu's Alex Teixeira and Ramires. However, Hulk was partly at fault for Jiangsu's opener when first he and then defender Cai Huikang lost the ball, setting up Colombian striker Roger Martinez who rifled his shot home on eight minutes. With China coach Marcello Lippi, who lifted the Asian trophy with Guangzhou Evergrande in 2013, watching from the stands, fierce tackles were flying in from both teams.

SIPG got their breakthrough when Li Ang brought down Hulk in the area and the barrel-chested Brazilian duly converted with a low shot which brushed the gloves of Jiangsu goalkeeper Zhang Sipeng.

Hulk had a fearsome volley tipped over before he created SIPG's second in first-half injury time, showing quick feet before flashing a cross which cannoned in off the

head of Uzbek midfielder Odil Ahmedov. Hulk went close with a dipping shot earlier in the second half, before Martinez held off three defenders to put a shot just wide. Hulk remained a handful but there was no further addition to the score as SIPG, currently second in the Chinese Super League, left the door open for a possible comeback from bottom-placed Jiangsu. Earlier, in South Korea, substitute Jin Seong-Uk struck in injury time as Jeju United beat Japan's Urawa Red Diamonds 2-0 to seize control of their last-16 tie.

Marcelo Toscano nodded Jeju in front on seven minutes but the hosts had to wait until the dying moments before Jin added the gloss with a fine strike on the counter. It put Jeju in prime position to oust Urawa, the 2007 champions, in next week's second leg and further extend what is already their best Asian campaign. Toscano, the mohawk-sporting Brazilian, got the opener on seven minutes when he met Hwang Il-Su's diagonal ball with a firm header. Jeju's Magno Cruz rippled the side netting, curled another shot off-target and then put a rebound from his own header wide before he was replaced by Jin on the hour-mark.

Jin had a swerving shot blocked on the line but in the second minute of injury time, he wasn't to be denied as he broke forward, checked and crashed his shot in off the left post. — AFP



DUBLIN: Bangladesh's Tamim Iqbal runs between wickets during the Tri-Series final One-Day International between Bangladesh and New Zealand at Clontarf cricket ground in Dublin yesterday. — AFP

CRICKET

BANGLADESH DOWN NEW ZEALAND TO BOOST 2019 WORLD CUP PUSH

DUBLIN: Bangladesh took a huge step towards qualifying for the 2019 World Cup with a five-wicket victory over New Zealand in the tri-series finale yesterday.

The win at Clontarf promoted Bangladesh to sixth place, above Sri Lanka in the standings, with just four months to go before the cut-off date of September 30 when the top eight are guaranteed automatic qualification for the finals in England.

An unbroken stand of 72 between Mushfiqur Rahim and Mahmudullah saw the Tigers to their victory target of 271 with 10 balls to spare.

Mushfiqur finished 45 not out at exactly a run a ball but the partnership was dominated by a superb innings from Mahmudullah who scored his 3,000th run in his 36-ball 46, with six fours and a six.

He took 14 off the 47th over, bowled by Hamish Bennett to make the last three overs a formality and fittingly Mahmudullah hit the winning boundary.

Bangladesh had the momentum going into the second innings after they had restricted the Black Caps to 270 for eight, with just 62 coming from the last 12 overs as five wickets fell.

Tamim Iqbal and Sabbir Rahman then carried it on with a second wicket stand of 136 with both batsmen dismissed for 65.

Tamim was caught at deep mid-wicket off Mitchell Santner and Sabbir run out by the length of the pitch when he found himself at the same end as Mosaddek Hossain.

But despite Shakib Al Hasan holing out to long leg with 72 still needed from 70 balls, it was to be New Zealand's last success.

Bangladesh won in spite of a desperately poor fielding performance which saw four dropped catches including man of the series Tom Latham before he had scored and again the ball after reaching his 50.

He was eventually bowled by Nasir Hossain, playing his first match of the series, for 84 from 92 balls with 11 fours.

The Black Caps also had a century second wicket stand of 133 between Latham and Neil Broom who was dropped on 56. That miss cost only seven runs as Broom swept to square leg and was well held by the captain.

Latham's dismissal still left the Black Caps well placed on 167-3 in the 31th over and on course for a total of 300 but the wicket of the dangerous Corey Anderson led to a collapse at one stage they lost three wickets for two runs in 11 balls-and it needed Ross Taylor to hold the innings together. The former captain finished 60 not out, from 56 balls with just six fours, as wickets fell around him. — AFP



DUBLIN: New Zealand's Tom Latham plays a shot during the Tri-Series one day international (ODI) cricket match between Bangladesh and New Zealand at Clontarf cricket ground in Dublin, Ireland yesterday. —AFP

SCOREBOARD

DUBLIN: Scoreboard in the final Tri-series match between New Zealand and Bangladesh in Dublin yesterday:

New Zealand		Bangladesh	
T Latham b Nasir Hossain	84	Tamim Iqbal c Bennett b Santner	65
L Ronchi c Shakib Al Hasan b Mustafizur Rahman	2	Soumya Sarkar c Anderson b Patel	0
N Broom c Mashrafe Mortaza b Nasir Hossain	63	Sabbir Rahman run out	65
R Taylor not out	60	Mosaddek Hossain lbw b Patel	10
C Anderson c Mahmudullah b Shakib Al Hasan	24	Mushfiqur Rahim not out	45
J Neesham c Mahmudullah b Mashrafe Mortaza	6	Shakib Al Hasan c Santner b Bennett	19
M Santner b Shakib Al Hasan	0	Mahmudullah not out	46
C Munro c Mushfiqur Rahim b Mashrafe Mortaza	1	Extras (2lb 19w)	21
M Henry b Rubel Hossain	5	Total (5 wkts, 48.2 overs)	271
J Patel not out	7	Did not bat: Nasir Hossain, Mashrafe Mortaza, Rubel Hossain	
Extras (14lb 4w)	18		
Total (8 wkts, 50 overs)	270		
Fall: 1-23 (Ronchi) 2-156 (Broom) 3-167 (Latham) 4-208 (Anderson) 5-224 (Neesham) 6-225 (Santner) 7-226 (Munro) 8-258 (Henry)		Fall: 1-2 (Soumya Sarkar) 2-143 (Tamim Iqbal) 3-148 (Sabbir Rahman) 4-160 (Mosaddek Hossain) 5-199 (Shakib Al Hasan)	
Bowling: Mashrafe Mortaza 10-0-52-2 (1w), Mustafizur Rahman 10-0-46-1 (1w), Rubel Hossain 10-0-56-1 (1w), Nasir Hossain 9-0-47-2 (1w), Shakib Al Hasan 8-0-41-2, Mosaddek Hossain 3-0-14-0		Bowling: J Patel 10-0-55-2 (1w), M Henry 10-0-49-0 (1w), H Bennett 9.2-0-47-1 (2w), C Anderson 5-0-37-0 (2w), M Santner 10-0-53-1 (2w), J Neesham 4-0-28-0 (3w)	
		Result: Bangladesh won by five wickets.	



SHANGHAI: Brazilian forward Hulk of China's Shanghai SIPG fights for the ball with Li Ang (bottom) of China's Jiangsu FC during their AFC Champions League round of 16 football match in Shanghai yesterday. — AFP

KOHLI SAYS CHAMPIONS TROPHY MORE COMPETITIVE THAN WC

MUMBAI: Indian skipper Virat Kohli said yesterday his side would be ruthless in defending their Champions Trophy title next month, describing the competition as tougher even than the World Cup.

India won the last Champions Trophy in 2013 and head into June's tournament in England and Wales as favourites after a hugely successful home season with 10 Test wins.

They are number one in the Test rankings after series victories over New Zealand, England, Bangladesh and Australia, and hope to carry that form into the 50-over Champions Trophy event.

"The hunger to win and ruthlessness is what we speak about all the time. In Test cricket we have done well with that mindset," Kohli told reporters in Mumbai before the squad's departure for England.

"That goes a long way in a tournament like this. If we think in that manner, we will get the results we want more often than not." India will play South Africa, Pakistan and Sri Lanka in Group B, while England, Australia, Bangladesh and New Zealand form Group A. The two top sides from each group will progress to the semi-finals.

Kohli, who was part of Mahendra Singh Dhoni's side in 2013 that claimed the Trophy, said the eight-team event offered little room for error.

"I think because the tournament is much shorter and you have got top eight teams in the world, the competitiveness is much higher from the word go," said Kohli.

"In a World Cup you have league games and you have time to get into the tournament and dominate in the later half. But in Champions Trophy you need to be on the top of your game from game one. If not, then your chances go down pretty soon."

India have retained eight members of their title-winning squad that overcame England in 2013. Kohli described wicketkeeper-batsman Dhoni and veteran batsman Yuvraj Singh as "the two pillars" of the current Indian side.

"They have so much experience that if you give them freedom to play their own game in the middle order then I am sure they are the best judge of how to win a game," said Kohli, who assumed the one-day international captaincy from Dhoni in January. India begin their Champions Trophy campaign against arch-rivals Pakistan on June 4 in Birmingham, but Kohli played down the hype surrounding the hotly-anticipated clash.

"As a cricketer you can't even think of the non-striker when you are facing a ball, so forget about things that are not in our control," Kohli said of playing Pakistan amid a tense political climate between the rivals. — AFP



MUMBAI: Indian cricket team captain Virat Kohli checks the microphone before the start of a press conference in Mumbai, India, yesterday. — AP

Sports

Twins beat Orioles on Santana's 10th career shutout



Faster, rustier: Medals from Rio Olympics damaged



THURSDAY, MAY 25, 2017

STURRIDGE STARS IN LIVERPOOL WIN IN SYDNEY

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STOCKHOLM: United's Wayne Rooney, center, lifts the trophy after winning the soccer Europa League final between Ajax Amsterdam and Manchester United at the Friends Arena in Stockholm, Sweden, yesterday.. — AP

MAN UTD OUTCLASS AJAX TO WIN EUROPA LEAGUE

STOCKHOLM: Paul Pogba propelled Manchester United towards a 2-0 victory over Ajax yesterday in a Europa League final rendered heavy with emotion by this week's terror attack in Manchester. A night that began with a moment of silence, then applause, in memory of the 22 people who died at Manchester Arena on Monday ended with United completing their trophy collection through goals from Pogba and Henrikh Mkhitaryan.

Reminders of the attack were everywhere at Stockholm's Friends Arena, from United's black armbands to the chants of "Manchester!" from their fans, while Pogba, too, was grieving, following the recent death of his father.

Victory enabled United manager Jose Mourinho, who said prior to the game that he and his players were struggling not to think about the tragedy, to bring his maiden Old Trafford season to a successful conclusion.

He had already guided United to glory in the League Cup and despite a sixth-place finish in the Premier League, success in the Europa League means his side will return to the Champions League next season.

United became only the fifth club-after Juventus, Ajax, Bayern Munich and Chelsea-to have won the Champions League, the Europa League and the now defunct European Cup Winners' Cup.

Mourinho, a UEFA Cup winner with Porto in 2003 and two-time European champion, has now won all four of the major European finals he has contested.

Ajax were appearing in their first continental showpiece match since the 1996 Champions League decider and fielded a team with an average age of 22 years and 282 days-the youngest to have ever started a major European final.

Peter Bosz's effervescent team caused United some uncomfortable moments, but without ever threatening to pull off an upset.

DEFIANT CHANTS

Denied a glorious homecoming by a serious knee injury, United's Swedish striker Zlatan Ibrahimovic was present instead as a spectator to see his current side take on the team where he made his name. Pogba put a volley fractionally wide in the first minute and in the 18th minute he found the target, albeit with a helping hand. From Marouane Fellaini's lay-off, the French midfielder let fly with a left-foot shot that flicked off Davinson Sanchez's left foot and looped past Ajax's helplessly wrong-footed goalkeeper Andre Onana.

It was the biggest return yet on United's world-record £89.3 million (\$115.8 million, 103.2 million euros) investment in Pogba, who celebrated by pointing to the sky.

Moments later, Antonio Valencia stung Onana's palms after a raid down the United right. The English side then took their foot off the pedal, enabling Ajax to start finding space in dangerous areas, but within three minutes of kick-off in the second half they had tightened their grip on the game.

Juan Mata's corner from the right was headed down by Chris Smalling and with his back to goal, Mkhitaryan held off Joel Veltman to flick the bouncing ball past Onana and claim his sixth goal in the competition.

Onana was called upon to field a header from Fellaini and United goalkeeper Sergio Romero saved from substitute Donny van de Beek. But there was little to worry United's fans, who continued to defiantly chant the name of their grief-stricken city as the final whistle neared. — AFP



SOLNA: Manchester United's English defender Chris Smalling (12) heads the ball as Manchester United's Belgian midfielder Marouane Fellaini and Ajax Dutch midfielder Davy Klaassen (3rd L) jump Manchester United's French midfielder Paul Pogba (R) looks during the UEFA Europa League final football match Ajax Amsterdam v Manchester United yesterday at the Friends Arena in Solna outside Stockholm. — AFP



CANAZEI: France's Pierre Rolland of team Cannondale-Drapac celebrates as he crosses the finish line to win the 17th stage of the 100th Giro d'Italia, Tour of Italy, cycling race from Tirano to Canazei yesterday. — AFP

FRANCE'S ROLLAND ENDS DROUGHT, DUMOULIN WAITS FOR GIRO ATTACKS

CANAZEI: France's Pierre Rolland swelled with emotion after ending a two-year victory drought with an impressive victory on the 17th stage of the Giro d'Italia yesterday. Dutchman Tom Dumoulin (Sunweb) retained the race leader's pink jersey to maintain his 31-second overall lead on Colombian Nairo Quintana (Movistar) after the pair rolled over the finish line nearly eight minutes in arrears with the main peloton.

Their battle for the maglia rosa will move up a notch on a spectacular 18th stage in the Italian Dolomites today when Dumoulin expects to "come under attack" from Quintana and fellow Italian rival Vincenzo Nibali, third at 1min 12sec.

But as the pink jersey contenders enjoyed some respite on a far easier 219km ride from Tirano to Canazei, Rolland seized the day.

Looking for his first win since securing a stage at the 2015 Tour of Castilla and Leon in Spain, Rolland kept his calm amid a tense finale to come over the finish in a mixture of disbelief and joy. "I'm just so happy. I've waited for this for so long,"

Rolland said. "In 2015 I finished second in a Tour de France stage, and last year, when I crashed twice on the Tour, was a year to forget for me. I worked so hard to prepare for the Giro - I had my eye more on a stage like yesterday's or tomorrow's. But I'm so happy with this win."

Rolland launched the first breakaway of the day, dragging Pavel Brutt (Gazprom) and Matej Mohoric (UAE) with him for company, and when a 40-man chase group caught them in the final stages he kept his cool ahead of a fraught finish.

'FULL GAS' AHEAD

With less than 8km remaining, Rolland attacked solo to build a small lead that, thanks to the cat-and-mouse tactics of his fellow companions, boosted his hopes of going all the way. With only 2.5km remaining, their deficit had grown to a virtually unassailable 26secs and Rolland, gritting his teeth, went all the way to the finish.

"I attacked from the first kilometre but when I saw only two guys coming with me I thought, 'what a long day we have

ahead of us," he added. "But after very hard stages like yesterday there are few riders motivated to get into a breakaway."

"I took the first climb easy, paced myself on the second climb then waited for the big group to catch us."

"I had my teammate Michael Woods with me for the sprint if it (the chase) came back. But with 1km to go I knew I'd won. I'm just so happy," Dumoulin almost lost the pink jersey on Tuesday due to a desperate toilet stop that slashed his overnight lead of 2:41 down to 31secs.

Ahead of a gruelling 18th stage over 137km from Moena to Ortisei/St Ulrich that features four mountain passes and an uphill finish, the big Dutchman expects another tough day in the saddle.

"It will be full gas from the start. A really hard day," Dumoulin said. "But we have to stay calm and see what happens. They will attack me. I expect Vincenzo and Nairo to make it very hard for me tomorrow." Nibali, looking to win the race for the third time on its 100th edition, said: "We have to try, because if you don't you end up left with regrets." — AFP

Kuwait Times ⁵⁵ BUSINESS

THURSDAY, MAY 25, 2017

**US home sales tumble
as tight supply
boosts prices**

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**NBK issues \$750m senior
unsecured notes**

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**KIPCO among 'Top 50
Listed Companies
in Kuwait 2017'**

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WOMEN CEOs EARNED MORE LAST YEAR, BUT FEW WERE IN TOP JOB

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BEIJING: A general view shows a congested road in Beijing yesterday. Moody's yesterday slashed China's credit rating for the first time in almost three decades citing concerns about the country's rising debt and slowing growth, but Beijing rejected the downgrade as "inappropriate". — AFP

MOODY'S CUTS CHINA'S RATING ON DEBT FEARS BEIJING REJECTS DOWNGRADE AS 'INAPPROPRIATE'

BEIJING: Moody's yesterday slashed China's credit rating for the first time in almost three decades citing concerns about the country's rising debt and slowing growth, but Beijing rejected the downgrade as "inappropriate". The move comes as China tries to clean up a toxic brew of unregulated and risky lending that for years has fuelled the economy's spectacular growth, though some analysts doubt Beijing's willingness to quit its debt addiction.

"The downgrade reflects Moody's expectation that China's financial strength will erode somewhat over the coming years, with economy-wide debt continuing to rise as potential growth slows," the agency said.

China's total outstanding credit surged to 260 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) by the end of 2016 and the International Monetary Fund has warned that a debt crisis in the country could "imperil global financial stability".

The government has trimmed its 2017 growth target to around 6.5 percent after it expanded 6.7 percent in 2016, the slowest growth rate since 1990. China's 13th Five-Year-Plan released in 2016 announced an average annual growth rate of above 6.5 percent for 2016-2020.

But Moody's said it expects China's growth potential to

decline to close to five percent over the next five years, citing diminishing investment, an accelerated fall in the working age population and a continuing dip in productivity.

'Cold water'

The finance ministry rejected the assessment, saying Moody's had used an "inappropriate" method to assess the risks facing the economy. "It over-estimated the difficulties that the Chinese economy is facing," the ministry said in a statement.

It added that the government's debt ratio in 2016 was 36.7 percent, lower than major market economies, and that the "expansion of the scale of government debt has been effectively controlled".

"The downgrade will certainly affect China negatively," Liao Qun, Hong Kong-based chief economist of Citic Bank International, told AFP. "The direct impact is that this would make China's debt financing more difficult and the financing cost would also rise. "This is like throwing cold water when everyone is optimistic about China's economy."

But Liao said the move "makes no sense" because China's growth has improved from last year and the threat

of trade protectionism from US President Donald Trump's administration has subsided.

Moody's cut the long-term local currency and foreign currency issuer ratings to A1 from Aa3, the first reduction since late 1989 as it assessed the impact of the Tiananmen Square crackdown on China's trade with the world. However, Moody's upgraded its outlook to stable from negative, where it had been since March 2016.

"The stable outlook reflects our assessment that, at the A1 rating level, risks are balanced," it said in its ratings note. "The erosion in China's credit profile will be gradual and, we expect, eventually contained as reforms deepen," Moody's said.

Crisis fears

"The strengths of its credit profile will allow the sovereign to remain resilient to negative shocks, with GDP growth likely to stay strong compared to other sovereigns, still considerable scope for policy to adapt to support the economy, and a largely closed capital account." Fears are mounting that China is flirting with a potential disaster worse than the US sub-prime collapse that sparked the

global financial crisis, and Japan's 1990s asset-bubble meltdown and resulting "lost decade".

China's banking regulator recently unveiled measures to rein in dangerous lending, tighten balance sheets and strengthen institutional transparency and chronically weak internal controls.

Moody's had estimated in October that China's "shadow banking" sector-off-balance-sheet lending that evades official risk supervision-totalled \$8.5 trillion, or nearly 80 percent of GDP.

But analysts have expressed skepticism about whether Beijing will back up its talk with real action since free-wheeling credit conditions have underpinned the growth China's Communist Party relies on for political legitimacy. "It is not going to come as any great news to the world that China has problems with a huge credit boom that, in the end, is probably going to require government intervention to bear some of the costs," Richard Jerram, chief economist at Bank of Singapore, told Bloomberg News.

Shanghai and Hong Kong stocks fell soon after the downgrade was announced but rebounded in the afternoon to end slightly higher. — AFP

OPEC STILL BATTLING OIL GLUT AFTER LONG CUTS

VIENNA: How long will it take for oil inventories to drop to normal levels? That's the question OPEC and oil markets are grappling with before today's meeting of producer countries in Vienna.

At just over 3 billion barrels, stockpiles in consumer nations are about 300 million barrels above their five-year average, little changed from levels in December when the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and its allies agreed to cut output by about 1.8 million barrels per day (bpd).

The cuts were initially agreed to run during the first half of 2017. OPEC and other producers, including Russia, are now expected to agree to extend the deal today, possibly for nine more months until March. OPEC expects inventories to return to the five-year average of 2.7 billion barrels by the end of 2017. Other experts see a longer overhang, with one institution seeing it lasting into 2019.

OPEC has repeatedly said eliminating excess stockpiles was one of its main goals but inventories remain stubbornly high. OPEC states have cut output at the wellhead, but kept exports to consumer countries high by draining their own stockpiles.

The Paris-based International Energy Agency and most other experts say global oil demand is outstripping production, so at some point stocks held in consumer states will start to drop. But making forecasts is fraught with uncertainty because it depends on assumptions about supply and demand, the rate of exports from storage from producer nations and guesswork about storage in nations such as China, which does not disclose data.

The IEA releases monthly data for inven-



VIENNA: UAE Minister of Energy Suhail Mohamed Al-Mazroui (center) speaks to journalists in his hotel in Vienna yesterday on the eve of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) meeting. — AFP

tories held by the OECD group of industrialized nations, saying stockpiles of crude, oil products and other liquids at the end of March stood at 3.025 billion barrels. But IEA inventory analyst Olivier Lejeune said this only covered 50 to 60 percent of the global picture, including inventories in Western Europe, North America, Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand.

It does not track stockpiles in China and India, the world's No. 2 and No. 3 oil consumers. The United States, an OECD member whose Energy Department releases weekly US inventory data, is the world's biggest crude consumer.

Bulls vs bears

Jeffrey Currie, head of commodities research at Goldman Sachs, is among the most bullish on the rebalancing timetable. "Do I want to be long oil? The answer is absolutely yes, because you're going into a deficit market," Currie said this month, adding the global supply deficit could be 2 million bpd by July. He did not say when inventories would return to normal.

Asset management firm AB Bernstein said in a May 16 report that OPEC cuts would "lead to accelerated inventory draw-downs in the second half of 2017, but the return to normalized inventories will ... drag

into 2018." Assuming a 1 million bpd deficit based on EIA supply and demand data, it would take 11 months to eliminate the glut, it said. "The agreement by OPEC to extend cuts into 2018 is critical," the AB Bernstein report said. Financial firm Natixis sees rebalancing extending into 2019. "Based on our current levels of withdrawals, expected at 280,000 bpd, that means at least two and half years, unless withdrawals increase rapidly," chief energy analyst Abhishek Deshpande said.

OPEC sees the market rebalancing by the end of 2017. "With the current rate of compliance we arrive at the five-year average by year-end, not 2018," an OPEC source told Reuters. Algerian Energy Minister Noureddine Boutarfa echoed that timeline. He also told Reuters that extending cuts to March 2018 aimed to take into account traditionally weak demand at the start of each year. IEA inventory data have offered little clear guidance. OECD inventories in March of 3.025 billion barrels were 32.9 million barrels lower month-on-month but were a rise of 24.1 million barrels over the quarter after a big build in January.

The first quarter rise is partly seasonal, as demand falls in the period when European and US refineries usually conduct maintenance. Stockpiles also grew after record OPEC export volumes to the OECD in the fourth quarter of 2016, the IEA said. Exports from Saudi Arabia, OPEC's biggest producer, were some 600,000 bpd higher in the fourth quarter 2016 compared with the average for January and February, according to official data the kingdom submitted to the Joint Organizations Data Initiative. OPEC's cuts came into effect on Jan 1. — Reuters

RENEWABLE ENERGY JOBS JUMP

ABU DHABI: The renewable energy sector employed 9.8 million people worldwide in 2016, marking a sharp increase from 2012, the Abu Dhabi-based International Renewable Energy Agency said yesterday. In its "Renewable Energy and Jobs - Annual Review 2017", IRENA says the sector employed seven million people five years ago.

"Falling costs and enabling policies have steadily driven up investment and employment in renewable energy worldwide since IRENA's first annual assessment in 2012, when just over seven million people were working in the sector," its director general Adnan Z. Amin said.

"In the last four years, for instance, the number of jobs in the solar and wind sectors combined has more than doubled." The review said that last year, the number of people employed in the sector, "excluding large hydropower, reached 8.3 million".

If large hydropower projects are included, the total number of global renewable-energy jobs climbs to 9.8 million. According to IRENA, the highest number of renewable energy jobs are in Brazil, China, Germany, India, Japan and the United States. Last year 3.46 million people worked in the sector in China alone, it said, a rise of 3.4 percent. It also noted that 62 percent of sector employees worldwide were in Asia where renewable energy projects were on the rise, especially in Malaysia and Thailand.

The latter, for example, has become a world leader in the manufacture of solar photovoltaic systems. "We expect that the number of people working in the renewables sector could reach 24 million by 2030, more than offsetting fossil-fuel job losses and becoming a major economic driver around the world," Amin added. —AFP

BURGAN BANK ANNOUNCES TIMINGS FOR RAMADAN

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank announced yesterday its branch timings which will be applicable throughout the Holy Month of Ramadan. All Burgan Bank branches will commence operations from Sunday till Thursday in one shift from 10:00 am to 1:30 pm, ensuring utmost convenience to its customers.

Additionally, the airport branch will be open 7 days a week in the mornings from 10:00 am to 2:30 pm and in the



evenings from 9:30 pm to 12:00 am. Moreover, customers can also contact the call center at any given time during the Holy Month for more updates on the bank's products and services. The bank takes this opportunity to extend its best wishes to everyone during this blessed month of the year.

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

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

INDIA TO PICK INDUSTRY CHAMPIONS AS DEFENSE BUYING PLAN CLEARED

NEW DELHI: India approved yesterday a long-awaited policy to boost local defense manufacturing by effectively picking industry champions that would tie up with foreign players to make submarines, fighter jets, helicopters and armored vehicles.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has vowed to end India's role as the world's largest arms importer by asking foreign firms to share technology with local players and then manufacture in India - in return for a slice of the \$250 billion analysts estimate New Delhi will spend on its military over the next decade. Under the "Strategic Partnership" model, the government will shortlist and then pick Indian companies to join forces with foreign firms. The winners will be guaranteed billions of dollars of orders to incentivize them to manufacture.

"For each platform, one private sector strategic partner will be chosen," Defence

Minister Arun Jaitley told reporters after a cabinet meeting. "You don't set up a manufacturing facility if you don't have any hope of getting orders."

Government and industry representatives have been haggling over the details of the model for more than a year, delaying discussions for tens of billions of dollars' worth of deals.

Indian defense manufacturing is small and dominated by state-run outfits, many of which have been criticized for poor performance. Private firms such as Larsen & Toubro, Mahindra Group, Tata Group and recent entrants Reliance Group and Adani Group are desperate to muscle in on their business. Foreign manufacturers such as Lockheed Martin, Boeing, BAE Systems, Airbus and Saab also see India as one of the biggest sources of future growth. — Reuters



This file photo taken on April 25, 2017 shows for sale sign in Monterey Park, California. Sales of existing homes fell in April after posting a 10-year record in March, depressed by the "stubbornly low supply" of homes in the market. — AFP

US HOME SALES TUMBLE AS TIGHT SUPPLY BOOSTS PRICES

APPLICATIONS FOR LOANS TO BUY HOMES FALL

WASHINGTON: US home resales fell more than expected in April, weighed down by a chronic shortage of houses on the market that is keeping house prices elevated and sidelining prospective buyers. The National Association of Realtors said yesterday existing home sales declined 2.3 percent to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 5.57 million units last month.

Despite the decline, April's sales pace was the fourth highest over the past 12 months. March's sales pace was revised down to 5.70 million units, which was still the highest level since February 2007, from the previously reported 5.71 million units. "Lack of supply moving through the seasonal ramp-up in sales in the spring selling season slowed sales rather than demand," said Ted Wieseman, an economist at Morgan Stanley in New York.

Economists had forecast sales falling 1.1 percent to a 5.65 million-unit rate. Sales were up 1.6 percent from April 2016, also underscoring the housing market's underlying strength. While the number of homes on the market rose 7.2 percent to 1.93 million units from March, supply was down 9.0 percent from a year ago. Housing

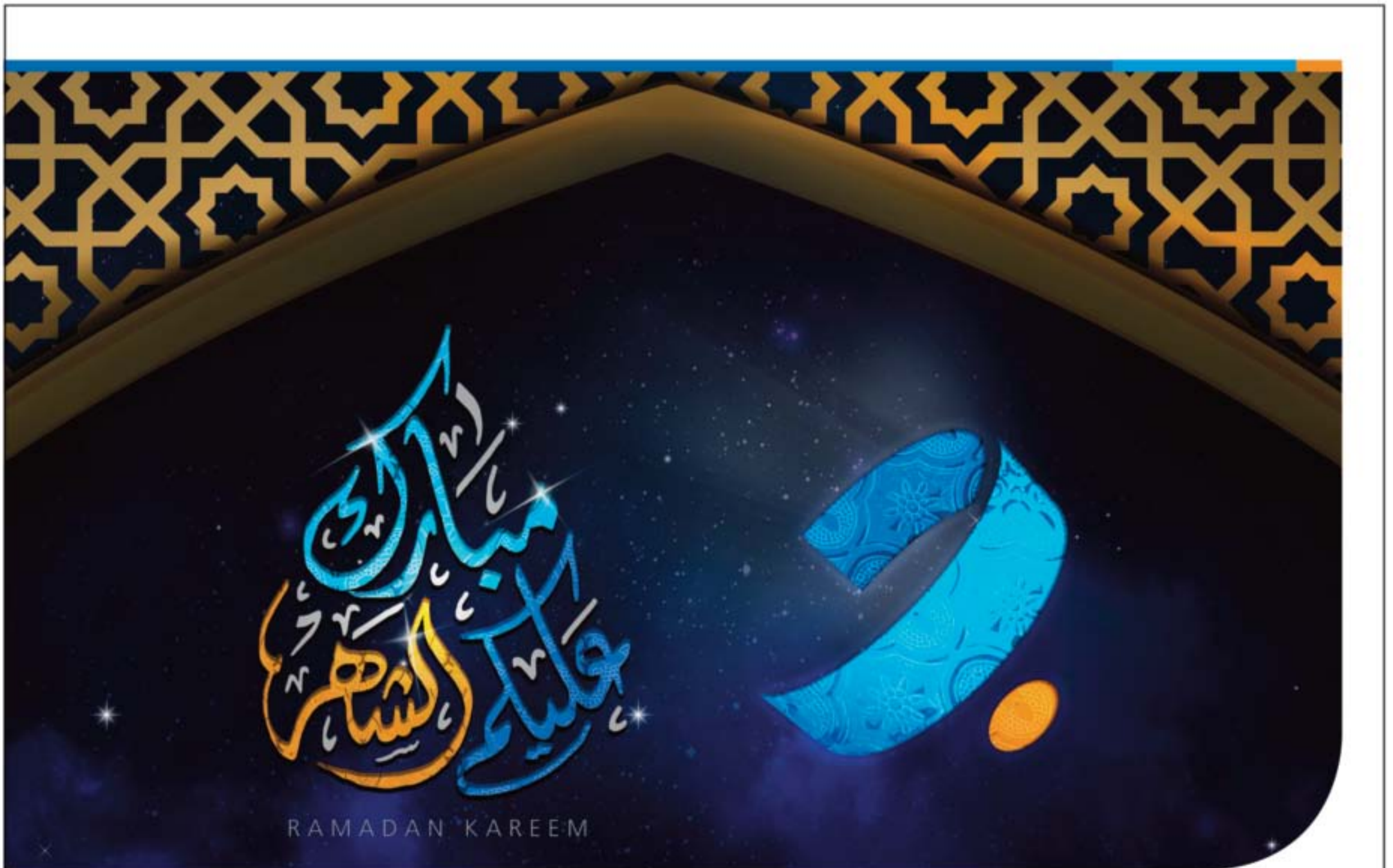
inventory has dropped for 23 straight months on a year-on-year basis. As a result, the median house price increased 6.0 percent from a year ago to \$244,800 in April, the highest level since June 2016. That was the 62nd straight month of year-on-year price gains.

With recent data showing a drop in homebuilding and a plunge in new home sales in April, weak home resales suggest residential investment will probably make a small contribution to gross domestic product in the second quarter. Residential investment added half a percentage point to the economy's 0.7 percent annualized growth pace in the first quarter.

US financial markets were little moved by the report as investors awaited minutes of the Federal Reserve's May policy meeting later yesterday. Houses typically stayed on the market for 29 days last month, the shortest period since the NAR started tracking the series in May 2011. That was down from 34 days in March and 39 days a year ago. Demand for housing is being driven by a tight labor market, marked by a 4.4 percent unemployment rate, which is boosting employment opportunities for young Americans.

The housing market also remains supported by historically low mortgage rates, with the 30-year fixed mortgage rate hovering just above 4.0 percent. But rising building material costs as well as shortages of lots and labor have left builders struggling to fill the inventory gap. The NAR estimates housing starts and completions should be in a range of 1.5 million to 1.6 million units to eliminate the persistent shortage. Housing starts are running at about a rate of 1.2 million units and completions around a pace of 1 million units.

A separate report from the Mortgage Bankers Association yesterday showed applications for loans to purchase homes fell 1.0 percent last week. Last month, sales fell in the Northeast, West and South regions, but rose in the Midwest. At April's sales pace, it would take 4.2 months to clear the stock of houses on the market, up from 3.8 months in March. A six-month supply is viewed as a healthy balance between supply and demand. First-time buyers accounted for 34 percent of transactions last month, still well below the 40 percent share that economists and realtors say is needed for a robust housing market, but up from 32 percent a year ago. — Reuters



RAMADAN KAREEM

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US STOCKS EXTEND RALLY AS TECH FIRMS RISE

NEW YORK: US stocks were up for the fifth straight day yesterday morning as materials and real estate companies move higher. Technology and industrial companies are making some of the largest gains while retailers of home improvement products, jewelry and car parts are all falling. Stocks continue to recover the steep losses they suffered one week ago.

The Standard & Poor's 500 index edged up 2 points, or 0.1 percent, to 2,400 as of 10:25 a.m. The Dow Jones industrial average gained 33 points, or 0.2 percent, to 20,970. The Nasdaq composite rose 9 points, or 0.2 per-

cent, to 6,147. The Russell 2000 index of small-company stocks picked up 3 points, or 0.2 percent, to 1,383.

Intuit, which makes accounting software like TurboTax and QuickBooks, had a stronger quarter than investors expected and Wall Street was also pleased with its forecasts. Its stock gained \$10, or 7.7 percent, to \$139.15. Hard drive maker Western Digital and chipmaker Nvidia also rose. Elsewhere, big gainers early on included trucking company Ryder System and valve maker Emerson Electric.

Home improvement retailer Lowe's stumbled after investors were unimpressed by its

profit and sales, as a hefty charge cut into its earnings in the first quarter. Lowe's shares fell \$3.50, or 4.3 percent, to \$78.84. Home Depot also slipped 70 cents to \$154.13. Lowe's stock is down 1 percent over the last 12 months while Home Depot has climbed 16 percent.

Struggling retailer Container Store Group surged after it reported solid fourth-quarter results and its outlook for the year pleased investors. The stock gained \$1.68, or 40.5 percent, to \$5.83. Container Store traded above \$40 a share in early 2014, shortly after the company's IPO, but it fell to under \$4 earlier this month. Sales for jewelry retailer Tiffany

weren't as good as expected in the first quarter. The company changed CEOs in February as it struggled with competition from online retailers and had difficulty attracting younger customers. Its stock dropped \$7.87, or 8.4 percent, to \$85.27 and competitor Signet fell \$4.76, or 8.2 percent, to \$53.62.

Chinese debt

Moody's downgraded the Chinese government's credit rating and said it expects China's financial strength to erode as debt rises. However its rating for the country is still relatively high, and there was little market reaction. European equities traded broadly flat yesterday, despite broad gains across most of Asia, as dealers waited on minutes from Federal Reserve's most recent policy meeting. London's stock market eked out a small gain of 0.4 percent, while Frankfurt and Paris slid 0.2 percent in the afternoon.

Investors hope to get a handle on the Fed's plans for interest rate rises following a number of weak indicators lately. Among the weak points is inflation, which Minneapolis Fed president Neel Kashkari described as going in the wrong

direction. Moody's ratings agency said its downgrade of the world's number-two economy was prompted by the likelihood of a "material rise" in debt throughout the economy and as potential growth slows.

Dollar rises

The dollar hovered just above 6-1/2-month lows on Wednesday, as investors' focus shifted from US politics to monetary policy ahead of the release of the minutes of the US Federal Reserve's meeting in early May. The dollar index, which tracks the greenback against six major rivals, was down 0.08 percent to 97.273.

"The dollar has taken quite a beating over the last month," said Minh Trang, senior currency trader at Silicon Valley Bank in Santa Clara, California. "You are seeing a little bit of calming down this morning as there is very little economic or headline news to really sway the market one way or other." The dollar was marginally lower against the euro, which has enjoyed a bull run this month on factors including an ebb in French political concerns and upbeat eurozone data. — Agencies

Daily Kuwait Stock Exchange Report. Wednesday 24 May 2017. Table with columns: Index, Change, Closing, Last Closing, High, Low. Includes sub-tables for Trades, Oil & Gas, Basic Materials, Industrials, Consumer Goods, Health Care, Telecommunications, Banks, Investment Instruments, Technology, Parallel Market.

National Bank of Kuwait Financial Markets Daily Report. At 02:00 PM Previous Day. Includes Global Stock Indices, MENA Stock Indices, Global Currencies Exchange Rate, MENA Currencies Exchange Rate, Global Interest Rates, and Global Bond Yields.

BRAZIL GRAFT SCANDAL PUTS ECONOMY REFORMS AT RISK

RIO DE JANEIRO: Economic austerity reforms meant to put Brazil's recession-damaged economy back on the rails are in danger now that President Michel Temer is on the verge of being ousted in a corruption scandal, analysts say. Standard & Poors, the rating agency, reflected the concern on Tuesday by warning it could further lower Brazil's credit rating due to political uncertainty.

"The economy will be very much affected by the crisis," said Gesner Oliveira at GO Associados consultants. "It could be the third consecutive year of recession." For Temer-accused of corruption and obstruction of justice just as macro-econom-

ic signs are improving-last week was simultaneously the "best and worst moment" for his government.

Inflation is steadily dropping and growth is believed to be at the start of a modest recovery, even if unemployment remains dire at nearly 14 percent. After the economy contracted 7.2 percent in 2015-16, there are hopes for a renaissance. Temer has pleaded for Congress to support him as calls for his impeachment grow. "We can't throw so much work for the benefit of the country into the garbage bin," he said.

He needs Congress to push through austerity reforms backed by economists but highly unpopular

among ordinary Brazilians. Chief among them is raising the minimum retirement age to try to reduce the unaffordable state pensions bill.

But the scandal has triggered just the kind of economic instability he says he is working to eradicate, with the Sao Paulo stock market falling 8.8 percent last Thursday and the real dropping about eight percent against the dollar.

Future without Temer

Markets want the reforms to continue with or without Temer. "Congress has to maintain continuity in the structural reforms that are fundamental for putting the country on

the right path," the influential National Confederation of Industry said in a statement on Tuesday. It made only one reference to Temer. However, Geisner Oliveira says the mess means "right now there are no chances" Congress will approve the reforms.

Go Associados projects a possible 0.6 percent growth in Gross Domestic Product this year, with 150,000 new jobs, if the reforms go ahead. Interest rates now at 11.25 percent could fall to 8.5 percent. But paralysis in Congress could cause GDP to shrink one percent instead, putting another 380,000 people out of work, with interest rates at 10 percent, the consultants said.

Economy minister for president?

The market's preferred candidate to replace Temer in case of resignation or impeachment would be the economy minister, Henrique Meirelles, according to the financial daily Valor. He heads the austerity push and was also head of the central bank during the two terms of leftist president Lula da Silva in 2003-2010, giving him broad credibility.

If pushed out, Temer—who has no vice president—would be replaced by a candidate chosen by Congress until after the next elections in October 2018. Busy trying to reassure foreign investors, Meirelles told a conference in Sao Paulo on Tuesday that current economic policies would continue "regardless of anything else." —AFP

QATAR AIRWAYS CELEBRATES INCREASED KUWAIT FREQUENCY

KUWAIT: In celebration of an additional nine weekly summer flights from Kuwait and winning the Best Rewards Program for the Middle East, Asia and Oceania region in the sixth annual FlyerTalk Awards, Qatar Airways invited Platinum members of its Privilege Club to enjoy a day of fun with their children at KidZania in Grand Avenues. The family fun day recognized the Platinum members of Qatar Airways' Frequent Flyer Program, in appreciation for their continued loyalty.

From 15 June 2017 - just in time for the summer peak travel season - Qatar Airways will introduce an additional nine weekly flights from Kuwait to Hamad International Airport, the airline's award-winning hub in Doha, Qatar. With the new frequency, Qatar Airways' weekly service from Kuwait will increase to 65 flights, giving holidaymakers even more options for making their summer travel plans.

Qatar Airways Privilege Club has delivered a number of program improvements over the last year, including the introduction of digital membership cards, enabling members to book award flights via the Qatar Airways App, and allowing last-minute upgrades using Qmiles. This among other initiatives were instrumental in getting this award based on votes by our discerning members and those from the FlyerTalk community."

Qatar Airways Vice President Middle East and Pakistan, Ish Jalal said: "With 65 flights a week between Kuwait City and Doha throughout the summer, our passengers in Kuwait will have flexibility when it comes to choosing the flights that best suit their travel needs. Qatar Airways connects travellers to almost every corner of the globe, offering award-winning service and a number of exciting travel enhancements, such as free visas to enter Qatar and the option to turn a layover into a stayover in any

number of Doha's premium hotels. We're very pleased to combine the announcement of our new Kuwait frequency with a celebration of our Platinum Privilege Club members' loyalty to Qatar Airways."

Connectivity

Qatar Airways' passengers can seamlessly connect to more than 150 destinations around the world through Hamad International Airport, the region's only five-star rated airport, and the World's Sixth Best Airport, as recently announced by Skytrax. Passengers on Qatar Airways can turn a layover in Doha into a stayover this summer with discounted fares and a free-of-charge hotel stay and transit visa. In order to benefit from this offer, bookings must be made before August 31, and all travels must be completed by September 30. For detailed information on how to book the stayover, passengers can visit qatarairways.com/plusqatar.

Qatar Airways was named the World's Best Business Class by Skytrax in 2016, prior to its launch of its premium Business Class product, Qsuite, earlier this year. Qsuite offers a fully transformable suite of seats that allows parties of two, three or four to create their own unique space within the Business Class cabin. This game-changing patented design is set to transform the face of aviation and Business Class travel by bringing a First Class product to the Business Class cabin. Qsuite also features the first ever double bed in Business Class, another ground-breaking innovation brought to passengers by Qatar Airways.

Qatar Airways is one of the world's fastest growing airlines, with a network of more than 150 destinations. The airline will add a number of exciting new destinations to its growing network in 2017, including Chiang Mai, Dublin, Nice, Skopje and many more, flying passengers on board its modern fleet of 199 aircraft.



Eman Al-Awadhi receives award on behalf of KIPCO

KIPCO AMONG 'TOP 50 LISTED COMPANIES IN KUWAIT 2017'

FORBES MIDDLE EAST'S AWARD ANNOUNCED DURING GALA EVENT

KUWAIT: KIPCO - the Kuwait Projects Company (Holding) - was recognized by Forbes Middle East as a 'Top 50 Listed Company in Kuwait 2017'. The award was announced during a gala dinner held at the J.W. Marriott in Kuwait.

The event recognizes publicly-listed companies that, through dynamic and strong leadership, are making an impact on Kuwait's economy. Companies were ranked according to their sales, net profit, assets and market value.

The awards were presented by the Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and Acting Minister of Information, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, and the President of Arab Publisher House and Publisher of Forbes Middle East, Dr Nasser Bin Aqeel Al-Tayyar. Eman Al-Awadhi, KIPCO's Group Communications Director, received the award on behalf of the company.

Faisal Al-Ayyar, KIPCO's Vice Chairman

(Executive) said: "We are delighted to be receiving this recognition from Forbes Middle East for yet another year. KIPCO's diverse business sectors across the MENA region has enabled us to help grow and develop the communities in which we operate, thereby contributing to the shaping of these economies. Prestigious recognitions and awards, such as this, underline our efforts to achieve business excellence through our successful strategies."



SINGAPORE FINES EX-TRADER OVER MALAYSIA'S 1MDB SAGA

SINGAPORE: A former stocks trader was fined in Singapore yesterday for his role in an international money-laundering scandal involving Malaysia's state fund 1MDB, the latest person to be penalized over the saga.

Singapore, a regional financial centre known for its tough stance against corruption, was the first country to hand down criminal convictions related to the 1MDB investigations. Allegations that huge sums were misappropriated from the state fund triggered a scandal that has embroiled Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak, though he has denied any wrongdoing.

Ang was slapped with a Sg\$9,000 (\$6,477) fine for bribing a research analyst to expedite a valuation report on PetroSaudi—an oil company which had dealings with the Malaysian fund.

The Riyadh-based firm entered into a \$1.0 billion joint venture with 1MDB in 2009. According to court documents, Ang acted as a middleman between Yeo Jiawei a Singaporean banker sentenced to 30 months in prison in connection with the case last December—and financial

consultants NRA Capital. Yeo told Ang in 2013 he urgently needed a valuation report to show that PetroSaudi was worth \$2.4 billion. Ang agreed on the basis that he would be paid a commission and contacted NRA.

Ang, who worked for Maybank Kim Eng Securities but whose dealings with Yeo were said to be done on the side, is among a string of people to be punished for involvement in the 1MDB scandal.

Four private bankers have been jailed so far and in March the Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS) banned a former Goldman Sachs banker from working in the city's financial industry for 10 years. MAS says it also plans to bar three others.

Ang was described by his lawyer as being at the "bottom of the echelon of people connected to this case". "His name had been tainted with the same brush and he has difficulty finding employment," said lawyer Hamidul Haq. Singapore has also closed the local branches of two Swiss private banks-BSI and Falcon Private Bank—used in the transfer of illicit funds. —AFP



ABK ANNOUNCES OFFICIAL HOURS DURING RAMADAN

KUWAIT: Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) yesterday announced its official working hours during the Holy Month of Ramadan, which will be from 9.30am to 2:30pm for all Head Office staff. Branches across Kuwait will be available to serve its customers from 10 am to 1.30 pm. On the first day following the Eid Al Fitr holiday, the Bank will resume regular working hours.

ABK's customers will have full access to the Bank's online services at www.eahli.com and the Call Center will be available 24 hours a day and can be reached by calling a customer service agent via 'Ahlan Ahli' at 1899899. ABK would like to extend its warmest wishes during this holy month to the Amir of the State of Kuwait, His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, HH the Crown Prince of Kuwait, Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and to the Kuwaiti government and its people.



CHENNAI: Indian fishermen carry out maintenance on mechanized boats in Chennai yesterday. Authorities in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu have imposed a 61 day ban on fishing to protect marine life in the Bay of Bengal. —AFP

GERMANY CALLS FOR BETTER EU MARKET ACCESS TO CHINA

BEIJING: Visiting German Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel urged China yesterday to improve market access for European Union firms seeking to invest there. He was speaking after talks with his counterpart Wang Yi, a week before an EU-China summit in Brussels. The EU has repeatedly pressed for better access to the China market. "China and the European Union should work toward agreements that would make progress on market access," Gabriel said.

"It is about equality of market access on all sides... Greater market access will bring many benefits to the lives of ordinary people." Beijing has its own concerns, saying that the EU's refusal to grant China

"market economy" status is an example of covert protectionism and double standards by the West.

But Gabriel, who was accompanied by an economic delegation, expressed optimism that China would welcome the involvement of German automakers in its electric car market.

"The treatment of German automakers is likely to become fairer here than originally planned," he told reporters earlier yesterday, adding that potential agreements have yet to be finalized. Specifically, Gabriel said he wants the Volkswagen Group to be treated as a local supplier in tenders and approvals, in the same way as Chinese companies. —AFP

NBK SUCCESSFULLY ISSUES \$750M SENIOR UNSECURED NOTES

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK), the largest and highest-rated bank in Kuwait (Aa3 by Moody's, A+ by S&P and AA- by Fitch), successfully issues \$750 million five-year Senior Unsecured securities under Rule 144A/Regulation S. This debut issue comes under NBK's new \$3.0 billion Global Medium-Term Note (GMTN) Program. The issued Notes came at a re-offer yield of 2.860 percent (mid-swap plus 100 bps). The notes are expected to carry a rating of Aa3 by Moody's and AA- by Fitch, in line with NBK's ratings, highlighting the underlying credit strength of the Bank.

The issuance will be used to further boost liquidity, diversify funding sources and increase liability durations. This is the first issue since 2009 from a Middle East bank to target the US market under Rule 144A of the US Securities Act as NBK targets a larger institutional investor base as part of its aim to diversify funding sources.

The transaction was very well received by both regional and international investors, with the Order Book peaking in excess of \$2.5 billion. The Order Book closed at \$2.2 billion after price revisions translating to around 2.9 times oversubscription for the deal. The issuance followed an extensive series of meetings with potential investors across the

Middle East, Europe and the United States.

US-based investors dominated the deal with 57% share of the issuance, followed by MENA investors at 26 percent, European investors at 13 percent and 4 percent from Asia. The strong demand along with the diversified, high-quality investor base are testimony to NBK's superior name in international markets and how it is perceived as being a top-quality bank by international investors.

Citigroup, HSBC Bank, JP Morgan and NBK Capital acted as Joint Global Coordinators while Citigroup, First Abu Dhabi Bank, HSBC Bank, JP Morgan, NBK Capital and Standard Chartered Bank acted as Joint Lead Managers on the issuance.

NBK continues to enjoy collectively one of the highest ratings among all banks in the Middle East from the three international credit-rating agencies Moody's, Fitch Ratings and Standard and Poor's. The Bank's ratings are supported by its high capitalization, prudent lending policies, and disciplined approach to risk management, in addition to its highly recognized and very stable management team. NBK has also been named among Global Finance's list of the 50 safest banks in the world for the eleventh consecutive time and won the awards of the "Best Bank in Kuwait in 2016" from the



Banker, Euromoney and Global Finance.

NBK enjoys the widest banking presence with a local and international network reaching 4 continents. NBK's international presence spans many of the world's leading financial centers including the US (New York), Europe, GCC, Middle East, Singapore as well as China (Shanghai).

NBK was founded in 1952 as the first indigenous bank and the first joint-stock company in Kuwait and the Gulf Region. NBK reported net profits of \$964.5 million (KD 295.2 million) for 2016. NBK's total assets were \$79.1 billion (KD 24.2 billion) at the end of 2016, while shareholders' equity stood at

\$8.9 billion (KD 2.7 billion).

NBK is the largest financial institution in Kuwait with effective market dominance in the commercial banking market and has been consistently awarded the highest credit rating of all banks in the region from Moody's, Standard & Poor's, and Fitch Ratings. NBK also stands out in terms of its local and international network, which includes branches, subsidiaries and representative offices in China, Geneva, London, Paris, New York, and Singapore alongside its regional presence in Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, the UAE and Turkey (Associate).



KAMCO WINS 'MIDDLE EAST SUKUK BOOKRUNNER OF THE YEAR 2017'

MERGERMARKET AWARD IN SUKUK ISSUANCE CATEGORY

KUWAIT: KAMCO Investment Company KSC (Public), a leading investment company with one of the largest AUMs in the region, won the prestigious title, "Middle East Sukuk Bookrunner of the Year 2017" by Mergermarket, the world's leading news and intelligence service for mergers & acquisitions and debt capital markets.

KAMCO received the award in the sukuk issuance category based on a number of technical parameters, which include the analysis of the overall performance of the sector and the evaluation of investment banking services provided, particularly with regard to its successful role in sukuk issuances during the last period.

During the 2017 award ceremony that was held in Dubai, KAMCO's Investment Banking Department received the Middle East Sukuk Bookrunner of the Year 2017 award for their outstanding performance in the local and regional debt markets. The ceremony also included some of the largest regional and international investment banks and financial institutions, where KAMCO, National Bank of Abu Dhabi, Emirates NBD Capital and Bank of America Merrill Lynch received awards relating to their performance on the debt capital markets. While on the mergers & acquisitions awards, the winners were Ernst & Young, Citigroup Global Markets, PwC and Rothschild.

Chief Investment Officer of KAMCO, Khaled



KAMCO MIDDLE EAST SUKUK BOOKRUNNER OF THE YEAR WINNER 2017

Fouad, expressed his sincere appreciation and gratitude towards the event organizers. He also commended all those who supported KAMCO by voting in confidence, leading to the successful outcome. Fouad also emphasized that the investment banking sector's growth potential and support towards businesses assisted KAMCO in further

strengthening its solid performance. He also added that the sector supported the Company's ongoing strategy that caters to clients' investment objectives.

Fouad said, "During the past couple of years, KAMCO's Investment Banking Department has enhanced the volume of successfully executed transactions despite market, economic and political conditions witnessed regionally and internationally. Through its vision and strategic planning, KAMCO overcame obstacles and adapted successive changes to provide various unique solutions to its clients."

Fouad concluded by saying, "Over its successful track record, KAMCO successfully completed 92 investment banking transactions worth approximately USD 14 billion, as of 31 December 2016. Having said that, we at KAMCO, have further consolidated our reputation in the market and stand by our commitment to grow operationally, while providing our clients with prudent and innovative products and services."

Mergermarket is an independent Mergers and Acquisitions (M&A) and Debt Capital Markets (DCM) intelligence service. Unlike any other service of its kind, Mergermarket specializes in providing forward-looking origination and deal flow opportunities integrated with a comprehensive deals database - resulting in real revenues for clients.

GULF BANK HOLDS ITS 5TH 2017 RED ACCOUNT DRAW FOR STUDENTS!

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank held its fifth monthly red account draw for year 2017 and three winners won valuable prizes on Monday 22 May, 2017.

The red account draw resulted in the announcement of three students who won prizes ranging from an iPhone 7 plus to an Apple Watch and they are:

- Al-Jazy MUSAED Farah Al-Farhan Al-Nawayem - iPhone 7 Plus - red product
- Malak Salamah Saod Al-Bathali - iPad Pro
- Bader Tareq Bader Fadhil - Apple Watch

Gulf Bank's red is an account for high school students, college and university students aged between 15 and 25. Eligible customers will get the chance to enter the draw automatically and on a monthly basis, upon transferring their student allowances.

Each month, an iPhone 7 plus, an iPad Pro, and an Apple Watch will be gifted to

three lucky winners until January 2018. The next draw dates are announced as follows:

- June 29, 2017
- July 24, 2017
- August 21, 2017
- September 28, 2017
- October 23, 2017
- November 20, 2017
- January 11, 2018

In addition to the Apple prizes, students will have the opportunity to win a Fiat 500c -Model 2017 at the annual car draw, upon transferring their allowance! Also, movie tickets at all Cinescape theatres will be available for only KD 2 seven days a week by simply being a red account holder; not to mention the exclusive offers from Edfa3ly, which is an international internet shopping services company.

Gulf Bank invites all students to take part in its red account draws, as they might be the lucky winners for year 2017!



BEC OPENS DOORS TO 6TH BRANCH IN MAHBOULA

KUWAIT: Bahrain Exchange Company W.L.L. (BEC), one of Kuwait's leading worldwide money transfer and foreign exchange companies, has announced yesterday the opening of its 41st retail outlet in Mahboula. Situated behind Alia Hospital, the new branch is BEC's sixth in the most populated residential area in Kuwait. Open from Saturday to Friday, 9am - 9pm the branch will cater to the many local and expatriate in the area who require money transfer and currency exchange services. Customers can expect to receive BEC's highly competitive rates on currency exchange and BEC's full suite of money transfer services, including Cash Pick-up and Credit to Account through EzRemit and MoneyGram.

To celebrate the opening and to welcome new customers to the branch, BEC gave away 500 gifts to the first 500 customers who undertook a money transfer or currency exchange transaction. Commenting on the new branch Mathews Varughese, General Manager of BEC said, "At BEC we aim to be where our customers need us, by offering conveniently situated branches to make their important money transfers back home to family and loved ones. Mahboula branch will serve as an accessible location for the many expats residing in this most populated area and will save our customers time and money travelling to further away BEC locations."

BEC currently has 41 branches conveniently located across Kuwait and specializes in sending money around the globe safely and quickly to over 46,000 locations in 30 countries through its own money transfer product - EzRemit. Its global reach is extended to over 200 countries through

its partnership with MoneyGram an international remittance company. BEC also has its own online money transfer service allowing customer to send money fast, safe and securely from the comfort off their own home or office.



INFINITI CONCLUDES 1ST REGIONAL SKILLS COMPETITION FOR SERVICE CONSULTANTS

KUWAIT: INFINITI recently concluded its first ever regional skills competition focused on regional service consultants from Aftersales as part of the INFINITI Middle East Training Academy. Held on the 5TH of April, at the Dubai Autodrome, the competition pitted the skills and knowledge of 8 service consultants from across the region with the aim to identify the top 3 best performing individuals that represent the premi-

um motoring experience that exemplifies the INFINITI brand.

The Aftersales Training Academy was launched in 2015 with the aim of providing additional training to service consultants on INFINITI's Standard Operating Processes. The Regional Skills Contest is a culmination of these trainings and will form the basis for measuring the effectiveness.

The eight finalists were selected from a pool of 72 regional consult-

ants who underwent a rigorous selection process across the regional service centres. When the finalists arrived at the Autodrome, they were subjected to a full day of activity that tested both their theoretical and practical knowledge in service operations as well as the handling skills required for INFINITI's premium customer base. "Service continues to remain a cornerstone for INFINITI in delivering our brand promise of a premium motoring experience to customers," said Juergen Schmitz, Managing Director of INFINITI Middle East. "Our Training Academy for service consultants will serve as a great platform to ensure that our regional consultants are equipped with the right knowledge tools to ensure that their skills are translated to the premium values of the INFINITI brand," added Schmitz.

The standout performer on the day was the representative from Y. K. Al-Moayyed & Sons (Bahrain) who received a first place medal, trophy and AED 15,000 in prize money. Representatives from Suhail Bahwan Automobiles LLC (Oman) and Arabian Automobiles (Dubai and Northern Emirates) rounded of the

second and third place with both contestants also receiving medals and a trophy and AED 10,000 and AED 5,000 respectively.

Awards to the champions were handed over by Juergen Schmitz, Managing Director of INFINITI Middle East and Egemen Adiyaman, General Manager Aftersales. Egemen Adiyaman, General Manager Aftersales said, "We are extremely proud to have successfully concluded the first skills competition focused on service consultants in the region. The competition helps us identify the strengths and weakness of our representatives, so that we can enhance and optimize our training programs ensuring all of our customers get the best experience from INFINITI."

INFINITI in the region has been on aggressive drive in the region focusing on enhancing their customer journey at every stage of the ownership experience. The premium brand has recently launched new IREDI centers in Jordan and Lebanon as well as the first IREDI Pre-Owned centre in Dubai. On the product front INFINITI has also introduced the Q60 - their all-new sports coupe.



MICROSOFT APPOINTS NEW GM FOR GULF REGION

KUWAIT: Microsoft yesterday announced the appointment of Sayed Hashish as the Regional General Manager for Microsoft Gulf. In his new role, Sayed will be overseeing the company's operations across the Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and the UAE, driving strategic planning and shaping growth initiatives to enable digital transformation across sectors in the region through developing youth capabilities, encouraging local innovation, furthering the Digital agenda and fostering a knowledge-based economy.

Sayed who joined Microsoft in 1998, has spent over 10 years in Dubai and held key positions in the region to drive the company's mission in empowering individuals and organisations to achieve

more. Most recently he was General Manager for Microsoft's Public Sector in Middle East and Africa. During his tenure, he led a diverse team of Microsoft employees based in 79 countries covering government, education, healthcare, public safety and national security sectors. Sayed is a multiple winner of the Microsoft Circle of Excellence award for outstanding accomplishments that contributed to the success and growth of the company.

Sayed is an ardent believer in the power of technology to serve citizens, businesses and communities around the world. He takes over the reins from Samer Abu Ltaif who held it for 6 years, and was recently appointed as President for Microsoft Middle East and Africa.

"Technology can transform education,



Sayed Hashish

nurture community innovation and create employment opportunities that fuel a sustained cycle of social and economic development," he said. "Digital transformation, applied strategically, can engage customers and citizens, empower employees, optimise operations and

transform products and services. With Gulf governments marching forward with bold economic visions, this is an exciting time for us to play an important role in progressing Microsoft's commitment to fuel growth and bring prosperity in the region by transforming businesses, societies and economies."

Sayed will continue to be based in Dubai and lead the Gulf region to drive Microsoft's ambitions through forging new partnerships. He believes that all industry sectors in the Gulf can benefit from Microsoft's holistic security platform and technologies such as cloud computing, big data, artificial intelligence, mobile enterprise apps and the Internet of Things. He is a strong advocate for digital transformation in education, as an

enabler of self-sustaining economic growth and building generations with skills for the workforce.

With over 20 years in the IT industry, Sayed has held many technical, sales and managerial roles across the Middle East and Africa. Prior to the position of MEA General Manager for Microsoft Public Sector, he was General Manager of Microsoft for North Africa, East Mediterranean and Pakistan (NEPA), driving strategy and growth initiatives for the region; turning it into one of Microsoft's fastest growing markets.

Sayed is an active member of several non-profit organisations committed to the professional development of Arab IT specialists and institutions to create an Arab Knowledge Community.



PUTRAJAYA: Malaysian manufacturer Proton's owner DRB-Hicom Group Director Khalid Abdul Rahman (left), and Chinese automaker Geely Holding Group Chief Financial Officer Daniel Li (right), exchange documents as Malaysian Second Finance Minister Johari Abdul Ghani applauds during a signing ceremony in Putrajaya yesterday.

CHINA'S GEELY BUYS STAKES IN MALAYSIA'S PROTON, LOTUS

KUALA LUMPUR: The Chinese owner of Sweden's Volvo Cars agreed yesterday to buy 49.9 percent of Malaysian automaker Proton, gaining a platform to expand into Southeast Asia. The deal gives Geely a distribution network in Southeast Asia, where non-Japanese brands have struggled. Proton gets a financially strong partner and possibly more advanced technology.

Proton Holdings Bhd. was founded in 1983 by the Malaysian government to create a domestic auto brand. It bought Lotus in 1996. But sales have suffered due to growing competition and a reputation for poor quality and bland models. The company was privatized in 2012 and continued to struggle, with its market share dwindling to 12 percent last year.

As part of the deal, Geely Holding Group Co Ltd will acquire 51 percent of British automaker Lotus from Proton for 51 million pounds (\$66.2 million), officials said. Proton is selling its stake in Lotus to cut losses. The remaining 49 percent is being purchased by Etika Automobile, which is owned by Syed Mokhtar Al-Bukhary, the tycoon who holds the controlling stake in Proton's parent company, DRB-Hicom, said DRB group managing director Syed Faisal Albar.

Restoring glory

Geely is one of China's biggest independent auto brands. Founded in 1986 as a refrigerator manufacturer, it started producing motorcycles in the 1990s and launched its first car in 2002. It bought Volvo from Ford Motor Co in 2010. "With Proton and Lotus joining the Geely Group portfolio of brands we strengthen our global footprint and develop a beachhead in Southeast Asia," said Geely executive vice president Daniel Li Donghui.

Geely plans to "restore Proton to its former glory with the support of Geely's innovative technology and management

resources," said Li. "Reflecting our experience accumulated through Volvo Car's revitalization, we also aim to unleash the full potential of Lotus cars." He said Geely's target is for Proton to produce 500,000 cars by 2020 for the Southeast Asian markets.

DRB-Hicom's controlling 50.1 percent stake means Proton will remain a Malaysian national brand, officials said. Syed Faisal said Proton will also assemble Volvo cars, and plans to launch Geely's mid-sized sports utility vehicle in the local market. Proton's 10,000 employees will not be affected by the deal, he said.

A final agreement will be signed in July, he added. Geely also owns the London Taxi Co., acquired in 2013. Last year, it launched a new brand, Lynk & Co., to be positioned in the mid-market between Geely's lower-priced vehicles and Volvo. Geely says last year's sales of its own brands rose 50 percent over 2015 to 765,851 vehicles.

The Proton tie-up gives Geely a boost in Southeast Asia, a "very difficult market" dominated by Japanese brands, according to Yale Zhang, managing director of Automotive Foresight, a research firm in Shanghai. "If you look at US or European automakers who started from scratch there, basically none of them succeeded," said Zhang. "If you want to enter and you have a well-established brand like Proton, then you get access to a relatively popular brand and also a ready distribution channel."

The deal will give Proton "a real chance of making a comeback, a huge one I hope," said Malaysia's second finance minister, Johari Abdul Ghani, who attended the signing ceremony.

Zhang suggested a possible strategy might be to manufacture Geely's latest models under the Proton name. "The current Geely models are much better than the current Proton models," said Zhang. "The Protons are basically some old Mitsubishi products, very old." —AP



KUALA LUMPUR: A man inspects Proton's model "Ertiga" displayed inside a showroom at Kepong in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. —AP Photos

AIRLINES DO LIMIT WHAT YOU CAN PHOTOGRAPH, VIDEO ON FLIGHTS

AIRLINE RULES ON PHOTOGRAPHY ARE ONLY SPORADICALLY ENFORCED

DALLAS: Without the shocking video, it's unlikely that the world would have learned or cared about the violent manhandling of a 69-year-old man on a plane last month. The outrage on social media, the mea culpa by an airline CEO, the promise to treat customers better - none of it would have happened.

The passengers who shot those videos on a United Express plane in Chicago violated United's policy on photography. By the letter of the airline's law, they too could have been ordered off the plane.

Under United's policy, customers can take pictures or videos with small cameras or cellphones "provided that the purpose is capturing personal events." Filming or photographing other customers or airline employees without their consent is prohibited. American, Delta and Southwest have similar policies.

Passengers are accustomed to using their cellphones to take photos and videos that they can upload to Facebook, Twitter or Instagram. Airline rules on photography are sporadically enforced, but passengers should read them in the in-flight magazines because there can be consequences.

This month, a United ticket agent ordered a passenger's reservation canceled as he filmed her while disputing a \$300 baggage fee in the New Orleans airport. After Navang Oza posted his video online, United apologized, saying that the video "does not reflect the positive customer experience we strive to offer."

Selfie video

In April, a JetBlue Airways crew called airport police to meet a man who they said continued to record a selfie video during a security-sensitive time in flight, while the cockpit door was opened. Michael Nissensohn insists that he wasn't recording the procedure. "I told them there is no rule against talking a selfie on a plane," Nissensohn says. He says he was ordered off the plane and held up at LaGuardia airport in New York for more than an hour before being let go without charges. JetBlue declined to

comment on the incident. A spokesman says the airline doesn't publish its photography policy for security reasons.

With airline customer service in decline, videotaping is the only way that passengers can make sure they are treated fairly, says Gary Leff, a travel blogger who has criticized the airlines over the issue.

"The TSA allows more photography at the checkpoint than the airlines allow on board their planes," he says. The Transportation Security Administration says that

private parties they are not bound by the First Amendment.

"They are within their rights to establish these rules, they are within their rights to throw you off the aircraft if you continue filming," says Joseph Larsen, a media-law attorney in Houston.

However, there is no law against taking photos or video on a plane, and it is unlikely that anyone would face legal jeopardy for taking pictures of an altercation on a plane or their own peaceful dispute with an airline employee, Larsen says.

and a mother with two young children, the airline grounded the employee. The person who shot the video violated American's policy, which prohibits "unauthorized photography or video recording" of employees or other passengers.

Privately, airline officials say it is unlikely they would take action in such cases. American is reviewing its policy because of the difficulty of enforcing it.

Even if the law is on the side of the passenger with a camera, there are practical considerations.



WASHINGTON: In this May 2, 2017 file photo, American Airlines Senior Vice President of Customer Experience Kerry Philipovitch (second from right) testifies on Capitol Hill in Washington before a House Transportation Committee oversight hearing. —AP

photography at checkpoints is fine if people don't take images of monitors or interfere with screeners. Travel bloggers say, however, that people have had run-ins with TSA officers, and you should expect to be questioned if you snap more than a casual photo of a companion. Lawyers who specialize in First Amendment or travel law say airlines generally cannot limit photography or video recording in an airport because it is a public space. But airlines have more power on planes because as

"If you see something going on that is a matter of legitimate public interest," he says, go ahead and capture it even if you don't have express permission to film another passenger. The man who was roughed up by airport officers on the United Express plane, David Dao, "has already got his settlement with United," Larsen says. "He is probably pretty happy that was documented."

After a video of a confrontation over a stroller between an American Airlines flight attendant

"Unless it's a legitimate safety issue like annoying other people, I don't see a problem with taking photos on a plane. But that's a call of the captain, and in the first instance the captain is right," says Thomas Dickerson, a retired New York state judge and author of "Travel Law."

Passengers can challenge the captain's judgment in court, and might win, Dickerson says, "but the problem for consumers is, do you really want to get thrown off the plane?" —AP

KASPERSKY RELEASES FRAUD PREVENTION CLOUD FOR ENHANCED PROTECTION

DUBAI: Kaspersky Lab has released Kaspersky Fraud Prevention Cloud, a new solution for organizations facing risks from fraudulent activity via fast-growing online services. In addition to fraud prevention solutions for endpoints and mobile devices within Kaspersky Fraud Prevention platform, the new product features a set of cloud-based technologies designed to give banks, financial institutions, loyalty schemes providers and government agencies protection against fraudsters. These include a global device reputation database, device and environmental analysis, behavioral analysis and biometrics, and clientless malware detection.

With the rise of online and mobile banking, organizations need to fight fraud and money laundering while also ensuring protection for their users. For example, according to the Financial Institutions Risks Survey 2016, conducted by B2B International and Kaspersky Lab, one in four customers of banks have been a victim of financial fraud in the last year. The new fraud prevention offering from Kaspersky Lab delivers multi-channel protection for both organizations and users, resulting in reduced losses from fraud and controlled prevention costs.

The solution incorporates advanced technologies to improve the visibility and detection of suspicious activity without undermining the user experience. Behavioral analysis and biometrics help to identify whether a person is real, without any additional actions or procedures required by the user. Behavior is analyzed through mouse

movements, clicks, scrolls, keystrokes on PCs, and accelerometer/gyroscope position and gestures (touch, swipes and etc.) on mobile devices.

Kaspersky Fraud Prevention Cloud accumulates and analyzes user behavior, device, environment and session information as anonymized and de-personalized big data in the cloud, making it available to expert forensics and automatic offline analysis. This new information feeds into an organizations internal Enterprise Fraud Management system, which enables proactive fraud detection in real time, even before a transaction occurs. This approach is based on Humachine intelligence by Kaspersky Lab - a combination of big data and threat research analysis with machine learning algorithms and the expertise of the company's best security teams.

Authentication

Risk Based Authentication (RBA) assesses the risks before a user is logged into a digital channel, providing decisions to internal back-end systems on whether to proceed, request additional authentication information or block access until further verification. This feature improves usability for "legitimate users" by decreasing the number of authentication stages, while the "unauthorized users" are detected before they commit any fraudulent activity.

Continuous Session Anomaly Detection also helps to maximize fraudulent detection by identifying account takeover, new account fraud, money laundering, automated tools or any suspicious

processes that occur during the session. As such, Kaspersky Fraud Prevention Cloud acts not only during the login process, but also during the whole session, building statistical models of various behavioral patterns with the help of machine learning technologies.

Clientless malware detection as part of Kaspersky Fraud Prevention Cloud combines direct and proactive detection techniques. The first identifies whether a customer's device is used to directly attack a particular organization's digital services. The second helps to identify malware that is not affecting the organization directly but may potentially be adapted for this purpose in the future. This helps a company to minimize risks and avoid losses of an actual attack when one occurs.

"Within our Fraud Prevention team, we have a dedicated group of experts - our Fraud Research and Analysis Group - that provides support to clients in mitigating fraud risks, conducting forensics of fraud incidents, and controlling fraud prevention costs. Relying on our expertise, we offer consulting and incident response services for highly complicated fraud attacks. This expertise feeds into our cloud solution, improving it and ensuring it is ready to help our clients fight the constantly evolving threats and fraud tactics," said Alexander Ermakov, Head of Fraud Prevention, Kaspersky Lab.

Kaspersky Fraud Prevention Cloud is available around the world. More information about the solution, pricing and contact information for potential customers is available on the website.

WHALE OF A MYSTERY SOLVED? HOW THEY GOT SO BIG

WASHINGTON: Scientists think they have answered a whale of a mystery: How the ocean creatures got so huge so quickly. A few million years ago, the largest whales, averaged maybe 15 feet long. That's big, but you could still hold a fossil skull in two hands. Then seemingly overnight, one type of whale - the toothless baleens - became huge. Modern blue whales get as big as 100 feet, the largest creatures ever on Earth. Its skull is now bigger than a minivan and could probably fit more than five people inside, researchers said. "We really are living in the time of giants," said study co-author Nicholas Pyenson of the Smithsonian Natural History Museum. "Why is that?"

And it happened "in the blink of an evolutionary eye," which makes it harder to figure out what happened, said Graham Slater at the University of Chicago, lead author of the study in Tuesday's Proceedings of the Royal Society B. Their study has proposed an answer: Ice ages in the last 3 to 5 million years started it, changing the oceans and food supply for whales. The researchers used fossil records of the smaller whales to create a family tree for baleen whales - which include blue whales, humpbacks and right whales.

Using computer simulations and knowledge about how evolution works, they started filling in the gaps between the small whales and the mod-

ern super-sized version. They keyed in on a time period when the whales got huge and smaller whale species went extinct, somewhere between a few hundred thousand years ago and 4.5 million years ago. They concluded that when the size changes started, the poles got colder, ice expanded and the water circulation in the oceans changed and winds shifted. Slater and Pyenson said cold water went deep and moved closer to the equator and then eventually bubbled back up in patches rich with the small fish and other small critters that whales eat.

Before that, whale food was spread out, relatively easy to get at. Now, they are giant buffets amid hundreds of miles of whale food deserts. That's why you can see lots of whales in the summer in California's Monterey Bay, Slater said. Baleen whales, which have no teeth, feed by gulping tremendous amount of ocean, filtering out the water and eating the critters they capture. Toothed whales, like sperm whales, hunt individual fish or squid, so the ocean changes that made food less evenly spread out didn't affect them as much. But baleen whales hunt schools of fish or swarms of krill, Pyenson said. "If you are a whale, the easiest way to take advantage of dense but sparsely available resources is to get big," Slater said. — AP



Humpback whales feed at the Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary off Cape Cod near Provincetown, Mass. A new study explains how the baleen whale family, which includes humpback whales, grew seemingly suddenly only a few million years ago from smaller creatures to the ocean giants they are now. — AP



LA ROSE CLINIC EQUIPPED WITH LATEST TECHNOLOGY



KUWAIT: Driven by its continuous commitment to provide the best health and beauty services in Kuwait, La Rose Clinic unveils equipped and latest in technology and equipment in beauty field. The opening took place in the presence of a number of social figures and media delegates in town. Situated in Al-Rawasi Center at Al-Shaab Bahri - Bock 8, La Rose Clinic offers a comprehensive suite of beauty services that match the highest international standards provided by a team of highly trained experts and consultants.

The new clinic is equipped with state-of-the-art machinery for laser therapy for hair removal, pigmentation removal, and skin rejuvenation for facial contouring; along with the latest technology for weight loss and fat reduction without the

need for surgery and non-surgical skin lifting. Not forgetting the skin peeling that rejuvenates the skin to look more glamorous and remove pigmentation. Besides, the clinic offers various anti-aging treatments, such as collagen thread lifting, which is a procedure to rejuvenate, regenerate and improve the structure and texture of the face.

La Rose Clinic offers a complete range of services that gain customers' satisfaction and loyalty. The clinic is committed to sustain its leading stand in the market by keeping pace with the latest innovation in the field of cosmetics, beauty, skin and body care. No doubt the clinic has become the first choice for customers, thanks to the dedication and commitment of its team of experts.



DISASTER EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS 'STILL MISSING' IN 100 COUNTRIES

CANCUN, Mexico: Governments of 100 countries still lacking disaster early warning systems have a duty to invest in the projects, which could save lives and property, and reap longer-term economic benefits, the UN's meteorological agency said. With vulnerable countries in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific Islands among those still without early warning systems, the WMO said better disaster preparedness could help governments improve farm outputs, boost safety in sectors such as shipping and transport, and protect people. "The money that we invest in the met (meteorological) service, you get it back tenfold in terms of economic benefits," World Meteorological Organization (WMO) Secretary-General Petteri Taalas said in the Mexican resort of Cancun at the end of a two-day conference on early warning systems. Early warning systems cost between \$10 million and \$100 million, depending on the size of the country. The Geneva-based WMO is working with organizations such as the World Bank to roll out systems, with Morocco among countries being used as a benchmark, Taalas said.

The Multi-Hazard Early Warning Conference was held ahead of a UN disaster risk reduction conference, which started yesterday and continues until tomorrow. The disaster risk reduction conference

marks the first major meeting since 2015, when the Sendai framework was hammered out in Japan, setting ambitious targets for governments to cut deaths and economic losses from disasters by 2030. The seven Sendai targets also include limiting damage to infrastructure and disruption to basic services such as health and education, and widening access to early warning systems.

Robert Glasser, head of the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), said the cost of natural disasters is skyrocketing, fuelled by increasing climate change and a lack of risk awareness in economic development, with people building in high risk areas such as flood zones. "Even though often the human impact of conflict and conflict displacement is prominently in the press, actually the displacement from natural disasters is far greater and often unreported as well," Glasser said, pointing to smaller-scale disasters that often go unnoticed by the media. Natural disasters force 26 million people into poverty each year and cost the equivalent of \$520 billion in lost consumption, according to the World Bank. The United Nations has called on governments to spend at least 1 percent of development aid by 2020 on disaster preparation, but they currently spend just half that amount. —Reuters



UPPSALA, Sweden: Photo shows a seed beetle's penis, as seen through a microscope in a laboratory at the Uppsala University. — AFP

WEAPONIZED SEX ORGAN DRIVES SEXUAL 'ARMS RACE' IN BEETLES

PARIS: Evolution works in mysterious ways, especially when it comes to sex. Behold the humble and homely seed beetle, an insect that has successfully spread to every continent on the planet except Antarctica. The male of the species, it has long been known, boasts an imposing member resembling a medieval, spike-studded ball mounted on a metal shaft. Ouch. "The penis is covered in hundreds of sharp spines which pierce the female reproductive tract during mating," explained Liam Dougherty, an evolutionary biologist at the University of Western Australia in Crawley, and lead author of a study that asks a deceptively simple question: how do females cope?

The answer-based on a decade of laboratory experiments spanning 100 seed beetle generations-reveals a remarkable story of adaptation, and an evolutionary tit-for-tat that Dougherty likens to a "sexual 'arms race'." "When males evolved to increase male harm, the females co-evolved to reduce that harm," and in more ways than one, Dougherty said. To begin with, the female tract grew thicker across generations, "making the spines less able to pierce the tissue," he explained.

Lady beetles confronted with ever more dangerous male gear also developed new immune responses, one giving them more protection against infection, and another allowing their damaged tissue to heal faster. The findings, published yesterday in the British Royal Society journal Proceedings B, provide rare evidence of how "traumatic mating," as it is sometimes called, can simultaneously drive adaptive mutations in both sexes. But this fascinating evolutionary pas-de-deux still leaves begging a fundamental

question: what is the raison d'être of a male sex organ that reduces female lifespan and perhaps reproductive output? What, in other words, would Darwin have to say? Some biologists have suggested that the weaponised genitalia reduce the chances of females coupling with other males.

Pain sex

But female seed beetles do, in fact, mate with more than one partner. More likely, says Dougherty, is that spines on the male organ changed to increase the number of eggs fertilized compared to competitors. In either case, "the female well-being is sacrificed at the expense of male fitness," he added. "Traumatic mating has evolved because it increases male fertilization success."

The scientists also speculated that deeper holes made by longer spines allow chemicals ejaculated by the male that influence female behavior, and make her more pliant, to more quickly find their way to the brain. Seed beetles are not the only creatures prone to male-on-female pain sex. The best known example is probably the bed bug.

Its penis-which looks like a hooked hypodermic needle-pierces the females abdomen, injecting sperm directly into the body cavity. Nor are females always on the receiving end. Several species of spider practice sexual cannibalism in which larger lady arachnids eat their mates-but only after the deed is done. For the seed beetle experiment, the insects were gathered from 13 locations around the world-including Benin, Brazil, California, Nigeria, South India and Yemen — and raised separately under identical laboratory conditions. — AFP

'FOOD REVOLUTION'

LONDON: Food and drink megabrands are seeing their sales chewed away by smaller, nimbler, cooler rivals. They can't beat them - so now they're joining them. Nine of the world's biggest industry players, including Danone, General Mills, Campbell Soup and Kellogg, have launched venture capital units over the past 18 months, a Reuters analysis of the sector shows. The aim of the strategy, according to interviews with executives, is to buy into - and learn from - the kind of start-up innovation that has become their nemesis, from micro-distilled spirits and cold-pressed juices to kale chips and vegan burgers.

Food and drink multinationals spend far less on R&D than their counterparts in many sectors like tech and healthcare. They have been wrongfooted over the past five years by the shifting habits of consumers who are increasingly shunning established brands in favor of small, independent names they regard as healthier, more authentic and original. This is forcing the companies to take a leaf out of Silicon Valley's venture capital playbook - and their success or failure in harnessing promising new trends at a very early stage could help determine how well they adjust to the changing landscape, and whether they ultimately emerge as winners or losers.

"It's difficult for companies to have the persistence and to replicate the energy and the passion that these early-stage entrepreneurs have," said John Haugen, head of General Mills' venture capital arm 301 Inc, adding innovation was extremely tough because of how quickly market trends were changing. "We're just a year or a little more than that into these investments," he said of 301, where his team of about 15 sits down twice a month to pass around dozens of samples from start-ups. "For me it's part of a total long-term growth strategy for our company."

In the United States - the world's biggest packaged food market - small "challenger" brands could account for 15 percent of a \$464 billion sector in a decade's time compared with 5 percent now, according to Bernstein Research. The researchers point to successful upstart brands like Chobani Greek Yogurt, which they say has stolen more than half of General Mills' market share in yogurt, and Kind Snack Bars which have taken a big bite out of Kellogg's snack bars.

'It's amazing, this switch'

The nine companies to recently launch venture capital arms also include Hain Celestial, Tyson Foods and Pernod Ricard. Typically, their funds range in size from about \$100 million to \$150 million. While it is still early days for them, the experiences of the handful of food and drink firms that have had funds for several years - Nestle, Unilever, Coca-Cola, PepsiCo and Diageo - could offer some guide to the future.

Coca-Cola, for example, has had a mixed record; its investment in Honest Tea was a success, but a fermented soda and a Japanese tea failed to take off in the United States. So far none of the companies' venture units has delivered a blockbuster brand, but they say a link to the cutting edge is worth the effort. Diageo, the world's biggest liquor maker, has invested in 14 start-ups through its venture capital arm Distill Ventures, spending about 30 million pounds over the last four years on minority stakes.

It points to last year's purchase of a 20 percent stake in Seedlip - a British start-up that says it produces the world's first non-alcoholic distilled spirit - as a prime example of how the strategy is making it more adventurous. "If we'd had our strategic areas written down four years ago what does Diageo want to go after - nowhere would we have written down, 'We think there's a big opportunity for a non-alcoholic spirit'," said James Ashall, who heads its innovation unit Diageo

Futures. "By Distill Ventures provoking our thinking about the space it allows us to stretch into an area that wouldn't have been naturally in our gift."

The company also cites learning gained from investments in craft whiskies, as it develops its own brands in that area, which include Roe & Co and Hihaven Lodge. More broadly, Diageo says the venture arm is changing its culture. The global corporation now makes its marketing managers pitch for their ad budgets, like the entrepreneurs who present at Distill Ventures' laid-back office for 20-30 minutes and get an answer on the spot. "It makes our decision-making faster and more exciting," said Diageo's chief marketing officer, Syl Saller. Seedlip founder Ben Branson and other food and drink start-ups are reveling in this surge of investment interest. "Big companies are saying, wait a minute, we used to beat these guys down," said Branson, a bearded and tattooed ex-marketing executive who grows some Seedlip ingredients - peas and hay - on his farm in eastern England, where he also dabbles in taxidermy and painting. "Now I think it's amazing that there is this switch to let's not beat them, let's join them."

R&D extension

The venture capital divisions are not only for delivering returns or swallowing start-ups, executives say, but also to act as an extension of the companies' research departments. This is of particular importance in an industry that PwC says accounted for just 3 percent of the \$680 billion spent globally on R&D last year, well behind the computing and electronics, healthcare and autos sectors, which together spent 62 percent. "This is a form of R&D for us, or access to places where the company isn't currently participating," said Simon Burton, who heads Kellogg's new venture capital arm, Eighteen94 Capital. Its first investment, announced in January, was in California-based Kuli Kuli, which makes snack bars from the moringa plant. There are more in the pipeline, he said. As the need for innovation has intensified, the strings that were typically attached to venture capital investments across all sectors - notably the right to buy out the business when it gains scale - have started to disappear in food.

Campbell Soup, Kellogg, Unilever and General Mills have largely scrapped such provisions when investing in early-stage brands because they are often a deterrent for start-up entrepreneurs who fear it will cap their fortunes by keeping other bidders away. Campbell's general counsel, Adam Ciongoli, said flexibility was needed to attract the best and brightest. "Why would they want to sign up from the get-go with the idea that they're not going to be able to maximize their economic leverage and their exit?" said Ciongoli, who sits on the investment committee of Acre Venture Partners, which Campbell set up last year to contend with the "revolution going on in food".

'New rock stars'

For investors, experimenting with venture capital is worth the relatively small spend, compared with the risk associated with larger M&A deals, which the companies are also pursuing. "Something really good might come out of it, so I don't have a problem with that," said Alan Custis, head of UK equities at Lazard Asset Management, an investor in Diageo and Unilever.

The risk of buying a successful small brand at substantial cost, rather than investing at a very early stage, is that this will rob the target of the very size and independence that made it cool. One oft-cited example is Kashi cereal, an organic food pioneer whose sales tumbled after it was swallowed by Kellogg. Olivier Garel used to run M&A for Unilever and now runs Unilever Ventures. — Reuters



Photo shows a seismic station installed at Anaktuvak Pass in Alaska's Brooks Range. — AP

AMERICA'S SHAKIEST STATE TO HAVE ITS GROUND EXAMINED

ALASKA AQUIVER: STATE HOSTS PLATE TECTONICS RESEARCH EFFORT

ANCHORAGE: Alaska averages 40,000 earthquakes per year, with more large quakes than the other 49 states combined, and America's shakiest state is about to have its ground examined like never before. A federal agency that supports basic science research is completing installation in Alaska of an array of seismometers as part of its quest to map the Earth's upper crust beneath North America. When the magnitude 9.2 Great Alaska Earthquake ripped through the state in 1964, there were two seismometers in Alaska.

At the end of this summer, there will be 260, swathing the state with instruments that record seismic waves and give geologists a picture of the upper 50 miles of the Earth. Alaska state seismologist Michael West calls it a "big freaking deal." "This footprint of instrumentation rolled across the country and is now wrapping up this grand, 15-year project" in Alaska, West said. The seismographs are deployed for the National Science Foundation by a consortium of US universities that acquires and distributes seismological data. Engineering them for Alaska was a challenge.

A helicopter flies in a lightweight drill rig to dig into bedrock or permafrost for the seismograph, said Bob Busby, transportable array manager for Incorporated Research Institutions for Seismology. Solar panels mounted on fiberglass huts must gather energy throughout summer to charge lithium iron phosphate batteries - equivalent to two or three batteries in a Prius - that power equipment through the long winter.

The array of seismometers, part of the science foundation's EarthScope project, has the ambitious goal of explaining how continents formed as well as something of more immediately interest: where dangerous earthquakes of the future may occur. It's tied to the theory of plate tectonics, which holds that Earth's rigid outer layer is broken into large, mobile plates, like pieces of shell on a hard-boiled egg, if the shell pieces moved along, over and under each other.

Tectonic plates average 50 miles thick and move only as fast as fingernails grow. But when they intersect, pressure builds until plates slip, causing earthquakes and volcanoes. "Any kind of ground shift is somehow related to the tectonic plates," said Maggie Benoit, EarthScope science program director. The study of plate tectonics is

only about 40 years old, Benoit said, and the National Science Foundation made a quarter-billion-dollar commitment to advance the field. Alaska is especially active, with 11 percent of the world's earthquakes every year, because it's located where two great plates converge, with the Pacific Plate slowly being pushed under the North American Plate. There are three big pieces to EarthScope. One is a borehole into the San Andreas Fault to understand fault structure. A second is a series of GPS stations that document plate movement. The third part is USArray, the network of hundreds of portable seismographs. The array was placed first in western states and over a decade moved east to other states. In the Pacific Northwest, the data has contributed to imaging chambers of molten rock at Mount St Helens. Scientists in California are using GPS data

to study groundwater use.

A Brown University researcher is using data to study the formation of North America in southern and eastern states. Alaska is more than twice the size of Texas but has nearly 350,000 fewer people than Rhode Island. Earthquakes that would devastate cities elsewhere often go unnoticed in Alaska because they occur in the Aleutian Islands or other sparsely inhabited areas. The 260 seismic stations in Alaska will be about 50 miles apart. For added value, many are piggybacked with equipment to monitor weather and soil temperatures. "That wasn't the original goal," West said. "But frankly, if you're going to go out and plod down a power system and real-time communications to some remote locations, you might as well hang a bunch of widgets off of it." — AP

HARD TIMES: JAPAN'S YAKUZA ACCUSED OF STEALING FOOD

TOKYO: Life as a Japanese "yakuza" mobster is getting so hard that some are resorting to shoplifting food to stay in business. Two members of an organized crime gang were arrested for allegedly trying to steal grocery items worth 76,120 yen (\$683) at a mall in the central Japanese city of Nagoya, police said yesterday. "They are members of an affiliated gang group of the Kobe Yamaguchi-gumi," a police spokesman said, referring to an organization that split off from the country's biggest yakuza crime syndicate, Yamaguchi-gumi, in 2015. The gangsters, aged 52 and 59, reportedly tried to steal 198 items including a watermelon, rice, eel, and prepared dishes, in the company of their gang boss, the Asahi and Mainichi dailies reported.

One of the men told police that "the group is so poor" members have to steal food, the Mainichi said. Japan's yakuza blossomed from the chaos of post-war Japan into

multi-billion-dollar criminal organizations involved in everything from gambling, drugs and prostitution to loan sharking, protection rackets and white-collar crime. They were long tolerated as a necessary evil for ensuring order on the streets and getting things done quickly-however dubious the means.

Unlike the Italian Mafia or Chinese triads in other countries, yakuza have long occupied a peculiar grey area in Japanese society-they are not illegal and each group has its own headquarters in full view of police. But waning social tolerance, a weak economy and steadily falling memberships have hurt their bottom line. Stiffer anti-gang regulations are also making life a struggle as regular businesses are banned from dealing with mobsters, who struggle to even open a bank account or receive mail at their office. Such factors have been cited as contributing to the high-profile split of the Yamaguchi-gumi. — AFP

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GULF BANK LAUNCHES RAMADAN ACTIVITIES

ENCOURAGING THE SPIRIT OF GIVING DURING THE HOLY MONTH

Gulf Bank is pleased to welcome the Holy Month of Ramadan with a series of Ramadan activities to engage with the people of Kuwait during this blessed month. Gulf Bank marked the start of these activities today with the launch of the Bank's annual Ramadan TV commercial. The Bank was deeply honored that leading Kuwaiti actor Saad Al-Faraj served as the narrator of the commercial this year. The commercial, which was produced by Joy Productions, can be viewed on television and also on the Bank's social media channels.

Further highlighting the Bank's activities for this year, Laila Al-Qatami, Gulf Bank Assistant General Manager of Corporate Communications said: "Gulf Bank offers its best wishes for the Holy month of Ramadan. As always, the Bank will be conducting a range of charitable activities and events during the month, which include distributing food to the needy; holding Girgian activities for children in hospitals; encouraging a healthy lifestyle through sports activities; as well as the launch of the bank's Ramadan com-

mercial which focuses on families in Kuwait. This year we are partnering with some of Kuwait's leading organizations and companies in our events. We are proud to be working with them and thank them for their partnership."

The Bank will be distributing 'Maachla' food-stuff boxes to families in need around Kuwait. This is the second year for the Bank's Ramadan partnership with Saveco, a leading mega-mart in Kuwait. The boxes will include essential non-perishable food items sufficient enough to cover a family's needs for approximately one week. A team of volunteers from Gulf Bank will be helping to pack the boxes, along with staff from Saveco. Distribution of the boxes will be carried out by the Kuwait Food Bank and LOYAC's community service program. The Kuwait Food Bank is a charity established to provide food to the needy in Kuwait and to spread awareness about the importance of reducing food waste. LOYAC is the Lothan Youth Achievement Center, a non-profit organization for empowering youth.

The Bank's staff is also planning to conduct a series of visits to hospitals over a period of five days, from 8 - 15 June, to celebrate Girgian with children. The visits to six hospitals are being carried out in cooperation with the Kuwait Association for Care of Children in Hospitals (KAACH), which was established to provide support for children in hospital and their families. The visits will include a series of fun activities and a dedicated Girgian celebration, with the aim of bringing the joy and spirit of the Holy Month to young patients.

Tapping into new health-related initiatives, Gulf Bank is pleased to be a strategic sponsor of the 'Women's Football Tournament'. The tournament encourages females to lead an active and healthy lifestyle by playing sports. The tournament will be held between 3 and 15 June, and will involve more than 200 players from Kuwait and the GCC in a total of 32 games. The tournament is being organized by Eighty Percent, a social driven sports company established by three Kuwaiti women in 2014.



MARRIOTT HOTELS IN KUWAIT CELEBRATE RAMADAN

Marriott Hotels in Kuwait welcome the Holy Month of Ramadan with a wide array of exceptional experiences. The JW Marriott Kuwait invites guests to enjoy the perfect Ramadan experience at the breathtaking 'Al-Thuraya Tent'. The tent offers traditional settings complemented by live cooking stations, scrumptious seasonal specials and breathtaking ambience. 'Al-Thuraya' embodies the special occasion, accompanied by stunning Ramadan decoration and live oud music, all combined to create the ultimate invitation into a comfortable homely setting. Guests will also stand the chance to win valuable prizes every week, including free airline tickets, free gift vouchers and a lot more.

Moreover, the Courtyard by Marriott Kuwait will be welcoming guests throughout the holy month of Ramadan at the "Atrium" Restaurant. Courtyard Kuwait will offer a generous Arabian feasts featuring delicious Ramadan dishes, live cooking stations and live music. In addition, the stunning oriental decoration and tent-like surroundings as well as the weekly raffle draw to win valuable prizes, will make "The Atrium" the perfect Ramadan venue to enjoy unforgettable time with friends and family. It will leave guests mesmerized, not only by the lavish buffets but by the warm and inviting atmosphere.

Furthermore, guests can celebrate Ramadan in style at the "Blendz" restaurant at Residence Inn by Marriott Kuwait. "Blendz" offers sumptuous Iftar and Ghabka buffets featuring a variety of oriental and international dishes.

"Arraya" Ballroom also offers a wide range of buffets for Iftar and Ghabka perfect for corporate events. George Aoun, Cluster General Manager at Marriott Hotels in Kuwait, said "on behalf of Marriott Hotels Kuwait management and associates, I would like to wish Kuwait's nationals and residents Ramadan Mubarak."

Aoun added "Marriott Hotels in Kuwait always try to offer their guests exceptional Ramadan experiences, including rich Iftar and Ghabka buffets, live entertainment and valuable prizes at competitive prices."





FERAS ABUSHAAR DELEIVERS UC BERKELEY IAS COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS

Feras Fahed Abushaar celebrated his graduation from University of California, Berkeley recently. He delivered the following speech during the graduation ceremony:

I feel extremely lucky to be graduating today... I see bans rising... borders rising... tuitions rising...

And I realize that I would not be here had it not been for a chance given to my dad as a young Syrian boy with next to nothing to break free from debilitating circumstances with an education in Germany that would in some way enable mine here-a possibility so transformative to us and to our families... and that draws people to these shores... a possibility shut out to more and more each day...

Growing up in my home in Kuwait... for as long as I can remember, the news was forever on... narrating my existence. My parents had the ingenious idea to turn CNN into our morning alarm clock.

Since the surrounding Middle East had no shortage of political crises at six in the morning, this was a sure-method of waking us up for school. And in an act of ultimate evil, my parents hid the remote control so we had no choice but to get out of bed. The sirens - so loud - they woke us from our sleeps... - and woke our consciousness to the world... and with it came a strong 'desire' to stop the sirens and change our world...

One morning, seizing machete of TV remote control in hand, I rebelliously turn off the TV... in a short-lived coup-d'etat to take control over that ceaseless narrative of cynicism killing our dreams in their sleeps! A young revolutionary, I declare from the square of our living room, to an audience... of one-my grandmother:

"I want to change things - this can't continue!"

But time progressed, and things regressed... and the tyranny of the TV prevailed...

I watched the TV screens before leaving for college... my father's Syria sinking into the sea... Seeking refuge among the refugees, I search the screens for a narrative life-line of hope to cling onto, as I watch a wave of radicalism, racism, nationalism - every-ism and its cousin - rise in the backdrop and pull our world back... As my consciousness expanded to the world, it shrank my sense of possibility... I had my purpose... I had my desire to

make a difference... but having lost two countries to war - my father's Syria and my mother's Palestine, could I affect change?

How could I? And from what platform? It's against a sea of internal doubts that I cross the Atlantic and land here with my backpack of dampened dreams...

When I arrived to Berkeley, fresh off the boat, my parents, in disbelief that I had gotten past the rigorous vetting of border control at Berkeley Admissions, snapped every possible picture of me with the Golden Bear outside of Memorial Stadium. To them, it was the Statue of Liberty, liberating them from their eternal fear for my future... There, the four-year younger version of me, a newly-arrived immigrant to Berkeley, stood in the bear's all-encompassing embrace, uncertain about the future, but pulled by possibility, as tutors waved welcome to the Land of Opportunity.

4 years of discovering this New World, I've lived and breathed and seen what pulls people to this these shores...

This place welcomed and embraced our diversity; it valued us not because we were Muslim or Christian or Jewish or Sikh - not for our caste or our creed but for our contributions - valuing us, it unleashed the best in us to enrich this community...

Meanwhile, all over the world, we see prejudice masked as patriotism... the divisive masked as the divine... provoking people to fear and hate under the guise of making countries or religions great...

Here we were empowered to think freely... and to aspire freely... with ideas that gave us the ability to transform our worlds rather than be defined by them...

Growing up I had searched the TV screens for a new narrative with which to break free from the ceaseless script of cynicism... insisting to conscript the young revolutionary in me to it! Learning how... Martin Luther King had pushed and pushed and pushed on the institutions from the outside until he reshaped them from the inside... these ideas shattered the confines of the mind and liberated us to dare to conceive of the different, to be visionary rather than to be pacifists to the present! They put that remote control back in my hands - our hands - to take control over our own narratives!

A friend of mine in a very different place had been asked to provide his opinion on an exam. He provided it, only to have his opinion

returned with a big fat X on it. "How could it be wrong if it's my opinion?" he asked. "It's your opinion, but it's not the opinion we are looking for..."

Compounded across the classrooms of a nation... across the press-rooms of a nation... in places that dictate rather than educate... that oppress the press... this takes the leadership out of leaders, the thought out of thinkers, the inventiveness out of inventors... it saps politics of pith and economies of innovation...

How different this was from my experience in International and Area Studies... How different from the environment of dynamic debate in Professor Bartu's class on the Gulf States



that engaged each opinion and its opposite with panelists from a liberal satirist to a conservative activist-an environment that stimulated lively discussion rather than silenced it; sitting there, I saw that this is where democracies are built... where free societies are built... or dictatorships... in our classrooms, before our congresses... in the smallest of crevices...

And every day, our education here created "access" to this idea of changing the world - that it was not the confine of ivory towers, or one man in power, but open to us all to make, and to participate. Every day, you showed me that we did not need big spaces to make big things happen... but like those who did on airport pavements and Washington's National Mall, you marched

into movements outside of these halls, transforming the smallest of spaces into powerful stages from which the world watched and listened... from which you shaped culture and conscience and law! Surrounded by this, I felt empowered by it. You showed me every day that powerful platforms resided IN US to change our worlds... that "We the people" were ourselves powerful platforms! Nations resided in "We the people"!

And in a world calling on our active citizenship and global responsibility... this place was awake to the world and engaged... in students who were never idle in their ideals...

You stood up and spoke up on the steps of

of our success... most at threat in the world outside today... Four years and so many uncertain citizenship exams later I was never sure I'd pass, with passports of possibility in these degrees... from uncertain immigrants... today we become citizens... of this place... of these values... And now we walk out of here and into the world... let these be the understandings with which we build our worlds!

And the challenges will be great, but we can't allow them to submerge our idealism in a sea of cynicism... When I got here, my belief in my ability to bring about change was confined and contained...

I thought I had to wait for some other country or some other time... I thought: from what platform? From the rubble and debris of what country? This education gave me a country- it created a country in me, in these ideas... on which to stand and face the challenges of the world!

This place created a powerful platform in us - it showed us to find a powerful voice inside us to transcend the borders and boundaries and countries that attempt to confine us and to reach the world with these passports of possibility... to pass through adversity... to find ways where there are walls... to build bridges over borders... to conceive of New Worlds, when old ones fail us! It gave me something so much more powerful than country - because they might have taken away countries, and shut off institutions, but they cannot take away our education - these resilient worlds on which we stand within us with which we could rebuild countries over destroyed countries and create the paths where they are shut off to us!

I stand on this stage before you today, but we are each standing on stages, in the powerful platform this education has given us to make our voices heard and impact our worlds!

Ever true to the Cal Bear's embrace, and to the spirit of this place... Let us rush to use this enormous power to empower... Let us rush to use these microphones to bring out the voices that go unheard... and let us rush to use these spotlights to cast light in darkness... that we may let there be light and create a path for so many others where there is none... that path that allowed my father to be... that allowed me to be... and that is so much a part of our collective story, these United States of Berkeley! Thank you

TAMDEEN GROUP'S 'MY BOOK MY FRIEND' READING PROGRAM SUCCESSFULLY CONCLUDES ITS FIRST SEASON

STORYTELLING SESSIONS IN 360 MALL, SOUQ AL-KOUT BECOME POPULAR EVENTS

My book my friend, the initiative under Tamdeen Group recently concluded the first season of its community initiative 'My Book My Friend' which aims to support and encourage reading and storytelling in Kuwait, and foster a community of book readers in Kuwait; both children and adults alike.

Through a series of regular events and awareness activities, the initiative has succeeded in making a positive

impact by encouraging children to discover the pleasure of books and stories as well as driving parents to spend more time reading with their children.

Since its launch in September 2016, over 400 children enjoyed storytelling sessions that were organized by 'My Book My Friend' at 360 Mall and Souq Al-Kout. Stories were read by engaging storytellers in Arabic or English followed by related activities

such as coloring, puppet shows, music and group discussions.

Muath Al-Roumi, GM Marketing, Tamdeen Group said: "We are pleased to see how 'My Book My Friend' has attracted children to the story-telling sessions every week. What is most exciting is witnessing how involved and passionate parents are too, and how they became engaged with our storytellers to learn new, educative ways to immerse their children in the

story and make it an exciting part of their daily lives."

More than just storytelling sessions, 'My Book My Friend's' bi-weekly events have succeeded in bringing together like-minded parents who are passionate about books and reading, and who have pledged to increase the time they spend reading stories and sharing the pleasure of this great activity with their children.

The first season of the initiative also included a session that was especially designed to offer tips to parents on how they can make reading more fun and an engaging activity. Through incorporating simple but powerful techniques such as visual

stimulation, play-acting and allowing children to use their creativity to complete a story in their own way, parents learnt many ways to keep their children interested and passionate about reading.

"We have much more in store for Kuwait's reading community in the upcoming season of 'My Book My Friend' and are looking forward to hosting joint sessions with some of Kuwait's leading schools and community organizations," added Roumi. "This initiative is open to ideas of partnership and contribution and we welcome any ideas from educators, child development professionals, organizations and interested individ-

uals that will help promote reading and storytelling in our community." Parents are also encouraged to take the pledge on social media pages of the initiative on Instagram and Facebook and invite their friends and family members to join in.

Season two of 'My Book My Friend' will resume after the summer holidays in September and includes more storytelling and sessions focused on language, moral development, and stories that help shape positive behavior as well as special workshops for adults to improve their storytelling skills and learn how to make story time more meaningful, engaging and exciting.



CLASSIFIEDS

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Kuwait Times

THURSDAY, MAY 25, 2017

Kuwait Times

 Now you can browse
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KNCC PROGRAMME FROM THURSDAY(25/05/2017) UPTO 1ST DAY OF RAMADAN

Program	Time	Program	Time	Program	Time
SHARQIA-1		KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	4:00 PM	AVENUES-2	
KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	1:15 PM	KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	6:30 PM	ALIEN: COVENANT-2D-4DX	11:30 AM
THE BLEEDER (CHUCK)	1:30 PM	KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	9:00 PM	ALIEN: COVENANT-2D-4DX	2:00 PM
KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	3:45 PM	KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	11:30 PM	ALIEN: COVENANT-2D-4DX	4:30 PM
THE BLEEDER (CHUCK)	6:15 PM			KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD-3D-4DX	7:00 PM
KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	8:15 PM			ALIEN: COVENANT-2D-4DX	9:30 PM
THE BLEEDER (CHUCK)	10:45 PM			ALIEN: COVENANT-2D-4DX	12:05 AM
THE BLEEDER (CHUCK)	12:45 AM				
SHARQIA-2		FANAR-3		AVENUES-3	
GIFTED	12:45 PM	ALIEN: COVENANT	12:45 PM	THE BOSS BABY	11:30 AM
GIFTED	3:00 PM	ALIEN: COVENANT	3:30 PM	THE BOSS BABY	1:45 PM
GIFTED	5:15 PM	ALIEN: COVENANT	6:30 PM	THE BOSS BABY	4:00 PM
GIFTED	7:30 PM	RARANDOI VEDUKA CHUDDAM-Telugu	9:30 PM	THE BOSS BABY	6:15 PM
GIFTED	9:45 PM	RARANDOI VEDUKA CHUDDAM-Telugu	3:30 PM	HERE ALONE	8:30 PM
GIFTED	12:05 AM	RARANDOI VEDUKA CHUDDAM-Telugu	6:30 PM	HERE ALONE	10:45 PM
		RARANDOI VEDUKA CHUDDAM-Telugu	9:30 PM	HERE ALONE	12:45 AM
		ALIEN: COVENANT	12:30 AM		
SHARQIA-3		FANAR-4		AVENUES-4	
DIARY OF A WIMPY KID: THE LONG HAUL	12:00 PM	DIARY OF A WIMPY KID: THE LONG HAUL	1:00 PM	DIARY OF A WIMPY KID: THE LONG HAUL	11:30 AM
DIARY OF A WIMPY KID: THE LONG HAUL	2:00 PM	DIARY OF A WIMPY KID: THE LONG HAUL	3:00 PM	DIARY OF A WIMPY KID: THE LONG HAUL	1:30 PM
DIARY OF A WIMPY KID: THE LONG HAUL	4:00 PM	DIARY OF A WIMPY KID: THE LONG HAUL	5:00 PM	Special Show "DIARY OF A WIMPY KID: THE LONG HAUL"	1:30 PM
DIARY OF A WIMPY KID: THE LONG HAUL	6:00 PM	DIARY OF A WIMPY KID: THE LONG HAUL	7:00 PM	DIARY OF A WIMPY KID: THE LONG HAUL	3:45 PM
DIARY OF A WIMPY KID: THE LONG HAUL	8:00 PM	DIARY OF A WIMPY KID: THE LONG HAUL	9:00 PM	DIARY OF A WIMPY KID: THE LONG HAUL	6:00 PM
ALIEN: COVENANT	10:00 PM	ALIEN: COVENANT	11:00 PM	Special Show "DIARY OF A WIMPY KID: THE LONG HAUL"	6:00 PM
ALIEN: COVENANT	12:30 AM			DIARY OF A WIMPY KID: THE LONG HAUL	8:00 PM
		FANAR-5		GIFTED	10:15 PM
MUHALAB-1		GIFTED	11:30 AM	GIFTED	12:30 AM
KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	1:30 PM	GIFTED	1:45 PM	AVENUES-5	
KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	4:00 PM	GIFTED	4:00 PM	GIFTED	12:30 PM
KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	7:00 PM	THE BOSS BABY	6:15 PM	GIFTED	2:45 PM
KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	10:00 PM	GIFTED	8:15 PM	GIFTED	5:00 PM
RARANDOI VEDUKA CHUDDAM-Telugu	4:00 PM	GIFTED	10:30 PM	GIFTED	5:00 PM
RARANDOI VEDUKA CHUDDAM-Telugu	7:00 PM	GIFTED	12:45 AM	Special Show "DIARY OF A WIMPY KID: THE LONG HAUL"	7:15 PM
RARANDOI VEDUKA CHUDDAM-Telugu	10:00 PM			KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	10:00 PM
KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	12:45 AM	MARINA-1		KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	12:45 AM
MUHALAB-2		GIFTED	12:15 PM		
GIFTED	12:30 PM	GIFTED	2:30 PM	360° 1	
GIFTED	2:30 PM	GIFTED	4:45 PM	THE BOSS BABY	11:30 AM
GIFTED	4:45 PM	GIFTED	7:00 PM	KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	1:45 PM
GIFTED	9:15 PM	GIFTED	9:30 PM	KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	4:30 PM
GIFTED	11:30 PM	GIFTED	11:45 PM	KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	7:15 PM
		MARINA-2		KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	10:00 PM
MUHALAB-3		KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	12:45 PM	KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	12:45 PM
DIARY OF A WIMPY KID: THE LONG HAUL	11:45 AM	THE BOSS BABY	3:15 PM		
DIARY OF A WIMPY KID: THE LONG HAUL	1:45 PM	KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	5:15 PM	360° 2	
DIARY OF A WIMPY KID: THE LONG HAUL	3:45 PM	KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	7:15 PM	GIFTED	1:15 PM
DIARY OF A WIMPY KID: THE LONG HAUL	5:45 PM	KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	9:45 PM	GIFTED	3:30 PM
DIARY OF A WIMPY KID: THE LONG HAUL	7:45 PM	KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	12:15 AM	MAMNO'O MIN AL EKTIRAB AW ALTASWEER	5:45 PM
DIARY OF A WIMPY KID: THE LONG HAUL	9:45 PM			MAMNO'O MIN AL EKTIRAB AW ALTASWEER	8:00 PM
ALIEN: COVENANT	11:45 PM	MARINA-3		MAMNO'O MIN AL EKTIRAB AW ALTASWEER	10:15 PM
FANAR-1		DIARY OF A WIMPY KID: THE LONG HAUL	12:00 PM	MAMNO'O MIN AL EKTIRAB AW ALTASWEER	12:30 AM
THE BLEEDER (CHUCK)	12:30 PM	DIARY OF A WIMPY KID: THE LONG HAUL	2:00 PM		
SACHIN: A BILLION DREAMS - Hindi	2:30 PM	DIARY OF A WIMPY KID: THE LONG HAUL	4:00 PM	360° 3	
SACHIN: A BILLION DREAMS - Hindi	5:15 PM	DIARY OF A WIMPY KID: THE LONG HAUL	6:00 PM	EVERYTHING, EVERYTHING	11:45 AM
SACHIN: A BILLION DREAMS - Hindi	8:00 PM	DIARY OF A WIMPY KID: THE LONG HAUL	8:00 PM	EVERYTHING, EVERYTHING	2:00 PM
THE BLEEDER (CHUCK)	10:45 PM	THE BLEEDER (CHUCK)	10:00 PM	EVERYTHING, EVERYTHING	4:15 PM
THE BLEEDER (CHUCK)	12:45 AM	THE BLEEDER (CHUCK)	12:05 AM	GODHA - Malayalam	6:30 PM
FANAR-2		AVENUES-1		THONDAN - Tamil	9:30 PM
DIARY OF A WIMPY KID: THE LONG HAUL	11:30 AM	ALIEN: COVENANT	11:30 AM	NOTHU	9:30 PM
KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD	1:30 PM	ALIEN: COVENANT	2:00 PM	GODHA - Malayalam	9:30 PM
		ALIEN: COVENANT	4:30 PM	THU	12:45 AM
		FAST & FURIOUS 8	7:00 PM	EVERYTHING, EVERYTHING	
		ALIEN: COVENANT	9:45 AM		
		ALIEN: COVENANT	12:15 AM		

WANTED

Indian Sales Men

- Minimum 6 years' experience as a sales man in Kuwait.
- full knowledge of Kuwait.
- Driving license and car.
- Salary + commission.
- Transferable Residence.

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LOST

Lost original certificate of A/SSE issued by C.B.S.E, Delhi, holding No. 8105696 of the year 2012/2014 in the name Zain Mohammad s/o Syed Zulfarnain Hailer. Founder may contact Indian Public School, Salmiya. Call: 95593976. (C 5313) 21-5-2017

ACCOMMODATION

Sharing accommodation For Filipino Bachelor ONLY Farwaniya block 1, near gulf mart. Available on June 25, Contact 94418396 or 94033908 (23-5-2016)

Automated enquiry about the Civil ID card is 1889988

PRAYER TIMINGS

Fajr:	03:19
Shorook:	04:51
Duhr:	11:45
Asr:	15:20
Maghrib:	18:39
Isha:	20:08



Directorate General of Civil Aviation Home Page (www.kuwait-airport.com.kw)



DIAL 161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
THY	772	Istanbul	00:10
KAC	102	London	00:15
JZR	553	Alexandria	00:15
SVA	502	Jeddah	00:20
SVA	514	Riyadh	00:25
KAC	786	Jeddah	00:30
MSC	411	Asyut	00:30
JZR	267	Beirut	00:35
KAC	504	Beirut	00:45
DLH	635	Doha	01:00
JZR	539	Cairo	01:25
SAI	441	Lahore	01:30
UAE	853	Dubai	01:40
RJA	642	Amman	01:45
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	01:50
KAC	358	Kochi	04:50
KAC	784	Jeddah	05:00
FEG	931	Alexandria	05:00
THY	770	Istanbul	05:05
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:10
KAC	344	Chennai	05:30
JZR	529	Asyut	05:35
KAC	362	Colombo	05:50
BAW	157	London	06:05
KAC	204	Lahore	06:20
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:35
QTR	8511	Doha	06:35
KAC	206	Islamabad	06:40
KAC	302	Mumbai	06:55
KAC	156	Istanbul	07:05
JZR	1541	Cairo	07:10
JZR	503	Luxor	07:25
KAC	524	Al Najaf	07:30
KAC	354	Bangalore	07:50
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50
KAC	384	Delhi	08:00
KAC	332	Trivandrum	08:05
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25
IRA	673	Ahwaz	08:35
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:55
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00
IRA	667	Esfahan	09:05
QTR	1070	Doha	09:20
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40
SVA	512	Riyadh	10:00
FDK	803	Damascus	10:00
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40
KAC	774	Riyadh	10:45
MEA	404	Beirut	10:55
PAL	668	Manila	11:00
SYR	341	Damascus	11:00
JZR	561	Sohag	11:10
KAC	614	Bahrain	11:15
MSC	403	Asyut	11:15
RBG	553	Alexandria	11:30
JZR	165	Dubai	11:50
SAW	701	Damascus	12:30
JZR	239	Amman	12:40
UAE	871	Dubai	12:45
THY	766	Istanbul	12:50
FEG	933	Sohag	12:55
MEA	406	Beirut	13:00
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00
KAC	514	Tehran	13:10
AXB	393	Kozhikode	13:10
KAC	522	Al Najaf	13:40
KAC	672	Dubai	13:55
KAC	792	Madinah	13:55
QTR	1078	Doha	14:05
KNE	231	Riyadh	14:10

Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
GFA	221	Bahrain	14:15
SVA	500	Jeddah	14:15
KAC	352	Kochi	14:20
KAC	618	London	14:20
FDB	059	Dubai	14:20
JZR	779	Jeddah	14:25
KAC	788	Jeddah	14:55
KAC	304	Mumbai	14:55
KNE	529	Jeddah	14:55
KAC	692	Muscat	14:55
ETD	303	Abu Dhabi	15:05
OMA	645	Muscat	15:10
KAC	562	Amman	15:10
CLX	856	Luxembourg	15:20
KAC	502	Beirut	15:25
ABY	127	Sharjah	15:35
UAE	857	Dubai	15:45
SAW	705	Damascus	15:50
RJA	640	Amman	16:00
FDB	051	Dubai	16:15
QTR	1072	Doha	16:15
JZR	535	Doha	16:20
JZR	125	Bahrain	16:25
KNE	531	Jeddah	16:35
JZR	787	Riyadh	16:35
NIA	361	Alexandria	16:50
KAC	118	New York	16:55
KAC	542	Cairo	17:05
SVA	510	Riyadh	17:15
GFA	215	Bahrain	17:30
JZR	777	Jeddah	17:35
JZR	177	Dubai	17:45
QTR	1080	Doha	18:05
MSR	620	Cairo	18:30
JZR	483	Istanbul	18:30
UAE	875	Dubai	19:05
GFA	217	Bahrain	19:05
KAC	744	Dammam	19:05
FDB	063	Dubai	19:10
ABY	123	Sharjah	19:20
KAC	154	Istanbul	19:30
KAC	674	Dubai	19:40
KAC	616	Bahrain	19:40
KAC	776	Riyadh	19:45
FDB	057	Dubai	19:50
KAC	620	Doha	19:50
OMA	647	Muscat	20:05
KNE	381	Taif	20:10
DLH	634	Frankfurt	20:15
MEA	402	Beirut	20:15
KAC	662	Abu Dhabi	20:20
JZR	189	Dubai	20:25
QTR	1088	Doha	20:35
KAC	564	Amman	21:00
KAC	168	Paris	21:05
ETD	307	Abu Dhabi	21:10
KLM	445	Amsterdam	21:15
ALK	229	Colombo	21:15
UAE	859	Dubai	21:15
FDB	8053	Dubai	21:25
KAC	676	Dubai	21:35
GFA	219	Bahrain	21:50
QTR	1082	Doha	22:00
NIA	161	Cairo	22:10
ETD	309	Abu Dhabi	22:10
AIC	981	Chennai/Ahmedabad	22:25
JZR	185	Dubai	22:55
JZR	241	Amman	22:55
JAI	574	Mumbai	23:00
MSC	405	Sohag	23:30
FDB	071	Dubai	23:35
THY	764	Istanbul	23:45

Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
AIC	976	Goa/Chennai	00:05
BBC	044	Dhaka	00:10
JZR	1540	Cairo	00:20
JAI	573	Mumbai	00:30
FDB	072	Dubai	00:30
PIA	240	Sialkot	00:40
JZR	502	Luxor	01:15
SVA	503	Jeddah	01:20
SVA	515	Riyadh	01:25
MSC	412	Asyut	01:30
THY	773	Istanbul	01:40
DLH	635	Frankfurt	02:00
SAI	442	Lahore	

CROSSWORD 1618



ACROSS

- An organization of countries formed in 1961 to agree on a common policy for the sale of petroleum.
- A hymn of praise (especially one sung in ancient Greece to invoke or thank a deity).
- Bulky grayish-brown eagle with a short wedge-shaped white tail.
- Tropical American trees.
- Gregarious burrowing rodent larger than the chinchillas.
- Assist or encourage, usually in some wrongdoing.
- Having leadership guidance.
- A period marked by distinctive character or reckoned from a fixed point or event.
- The application of tiles to cover a surface.
- Touched by rot or decay.
- Squash bugs.
- A sudden very loud noise.
- Cassava with long tuberous edible roots and soft brittle stems.
- Any of a number of fishes of the family Carangidae.
- Surpassing the ordinary especially in size or scale.
- (Greek mythology) Son of Daedalus.
- A lustrous gray strong metallic element resembling titanium.
- A city in western Germany near the Dutch and Belgian borders.
- An esoteric or occult matter that is traditionally secret.
- Annual to perennial woody herbs of temperate North America, Europe and Asia.
- A Hindu goddess who releases from sin or disease.
- English courtier (a favorite of Elizabeth I) who tried to colonize Virginia.
- The principal dish of a meal.
- A river in central Europe that arises in northwestern Czechoslovakia and flows northward through Germany to empty into the North Sea.
- Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
- English Quaker who founded the colony of Pennsylvania (1644-1718).
- A constellation in the polar region of the southern hemisphere near Octans.
- Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
- Type genus of the Anatidae.
- Being nine more than ninety.
- A horse-drawn carriage in India.
- Any of various hard resins from trees of the family Dipterocarpaceae and of the genus Agathis.
- Any of several low-growing pines of western North America.
- A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali earth group.
- A long noosed rope used to catch animals.
- A small cake leavened with yeast.
- The act of scanning.
- Edible starchy tuberous root of taro plants.
- Having any of numerous bright or strong colors reminiscent of the color of blood or cherries or tomatoes or rubies.
- Old World wild swine having a narrow body and prominent tusks from which most domestic swine come.
- A river in northern England that flows south-east through West Yorkshire.
- Aircraft landing in bad weather in which the pilot is talked down by ground control using precision approach radar.
- An associate degree in applied science.
- A member of a Mayan people of southwestern Guatemala.

DOWN

- Fast-growing herbaceous evergreen tree of South America having a dark trunk with high water content and dark green oval leaves.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You are practical and useful in all areas of the workplace. This may make you a good leader, and if you are not in a supervisory position, this year may become the beginning of your leadership years. When your expertise is requested, you will know just what to do. You may be called on to make use of your natural abilities and common sense. There may be many instances when you will have to supply a solution to a particular problem. Your energy is good. Be prepared to work hard! Luck visits you today and increases your financial situation. This evening a cycle of nostalgia and domesticity begins, emphasizing a need for security and a sense of roots. Family, home, relatives and real estate play a bigger part in your life.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

This is a good day to work and communicate with the opposite sex. Be careful of becoming jealous of other people's accomplishments during this time. A need to be respected is an emotionally charged issue in your life. You develop a knack for organizing things and people, as a sense of ambition and practicality takes hold. Work, achievement and ambition mean a lot to you. Your thoughts and energies are more focused on your work and it may not be the best time to try and shop. You may not find much support for your particular tastes. There is plenty of energy today, enabling you to work or play at an accelerated pace. Physical activity, especially sports, is a good way to channel this energy.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

While traveling today, carry a detailed map-book of your city or the area where you may be visiting. You could be in real estate and have an appointment time to meet. The viewing or the transaction that is made today seems productive to everyone involved. To learn more about what is ahead for you, consider ordering a horoscope forecast. They are fun and can answer many questions as well as give a sneak preview into many possibilities that are yours. Good things come to you all day; however, as stated earlier, being prepared is the secret to the best outcome. This afternoon you help a friend send a letter to the boss of a person that was most helpful and deserving of accolades. Celebrations are in order for you tonight.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You have a natural aptitude for describing the most sensitive areas of the human psyche; you are a practical psychologist of the first order. You can manage and work with touchy issues today that others will not attempt. You will find yourself mending fences between an irate customer and an employee or between an employee and employer. You communicate with great skill and it is stimulating just being with you. No matter how much you would rather do some fun activity, you will see your obligations through to the end this afternoon. You have a new incentive to be creative and will be able to put to use some new ideas that will help to lighten your load in the future. You will help to make an older person's life easier this evening.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Intense, passionate and very personal today, you rush past superficialities and right to the heart of most matters. You will see the results of your hard work soon. Given to clearheaded thinking and practical insight, you take a distant perspective and a cool appraisal with most opportunities. This permits you to make good choices most of the time and limits your risk taking to a minimum. You may find yourself analyzing some new projects today-take your time. Today you will be able to tackle tasks that require real discipline or organization. You will find yourself in a very practical mood and working with the day, instead of against it. You may have some serious or contemplative moments. Your confidence is high.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

If you give your best efforts at work, great strides can be taken. This is a great time to be with others in work or play. You may be asked to do a special job today that entails the need for strong concentration. Your intuition is sharp and this may lead you to new and helpful insights. Welcome the trials and opposition of a new financial venture-your ideas are working well. You have the mental sharpness to perceive an unusual opportunity. While out with your friends this afternoon-be slow to criticize. There is one who will grind on your nerves just now. Romance is available in the workplace but it would be an unacceptable choice. This evening marks a period of feeling good about yourself, in a quiet sort of way.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

You are able to handle difficult people and may be called upon to help with crowd control. You are able to cut through the red tape to get at what is beneath and behind most situations that others feel have no remedy. This is a time when you can make a real difference in the workplace and the profits of the company for which you work. There is support and recognition from your co-workers. You may find that you are able to bring more imagination to bear on your goals and ambitions. You might find your ideals taking a more spiritual turn, thus involving you more in community and religious projects. This is a time when philosophical ideas-religious and such-really hold your interest. You are able to teach, the unity that binds.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Career choices and direction seem to indicate a loss of freedom and originality on your part. You may feel stifled and forced to go along if you want to succeed. This could result in a situation building up to an explosive level. Express your creative side at home. Make it a point to set aside time each day to involve yourself with work of the creative kind and then your workdays will seem to flow along even better than they do now. Your taste in art is enhanced and you may discover a new hobby or talent. The more you involve yourself in creative activities away from the workplace, the more adaptable and capable of problem solving you become in the workplace. This may even be an occasion of intuitive tweaking. You may find yourself singing.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

You may not appreciate someone's unrealistic approach to a situation. Their general fogginess and impractical attitude may find you at odds with them. However, you have a sweetness about you and any discord is short-lived. Someone could challenge you on a very sensitive issue but you are learning to stay focused and to not allow someone to intimidate you into a distraction. You have a keen insight into what makes things tick and who or what pulls the strings. When dealing with people, you deal with creatures of emotion-not necessarily creatures of logic. Figuring out ways to make your nest egg grow can be a preoccupation this afternoon. Chatting with family members about your ideas can have noticeable results.



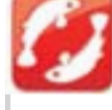
Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Make a strong effort to organize your workplace, since this temporarily unorganized area can only add confusion and delay to your good works just now. You may find your concentration is difficult but finishing your work is important in order to build self-esteem and respect from higher-ups. You could be most persuasive and know just what to say in order to gain the interest needed at this time. The situation is a natural for self-expression and lends itself to your particular ideas and thoughts. A love relationship may need some work. Concentrate on communicating to each other what you really feel so that you can bring about a better understanding of how your lives fit together. Share a poem with your loved one this evening.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

You may be glad to be in the workplace today. Repairs or refurbishing work of some sort can become rather noisy at home. Your professional routine moves along at a good pace. Creative accomplishments will also be successful. During the noon break, you and a co-worker may share a memory or two of interesting travel experiences. You are in a good position to communicate concerning groups, co-workers and society in general. This is a good time to get your own needs met as you can be most persuasive with people that you don't even know. You may find your love life a bit confusing this afternoon. This should not mean a major hassle, but it may mean a time where you will need to remove the emotions and see things from a different viewpoint.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Your attitude toward challenges is a positive and you do well in your profession. The few challenges you encounter will be handled successfully. This afternoon progress is happening in the workplace and your personal career path will seem to become cleared of any challenges. You are able to use good common sense and you can feel trends and make the right moves. You may be taking on the responsibility of a mortgage for the first time. That should work out very well for you. A child may be under pressure and this is a good time to teach some good problem-solving abilities. Your responsibilities this evening turn into a pleasant return of your efforts. There is time left this evening for all members of the family to express themselves.

WORD SEARCH

Car Parts

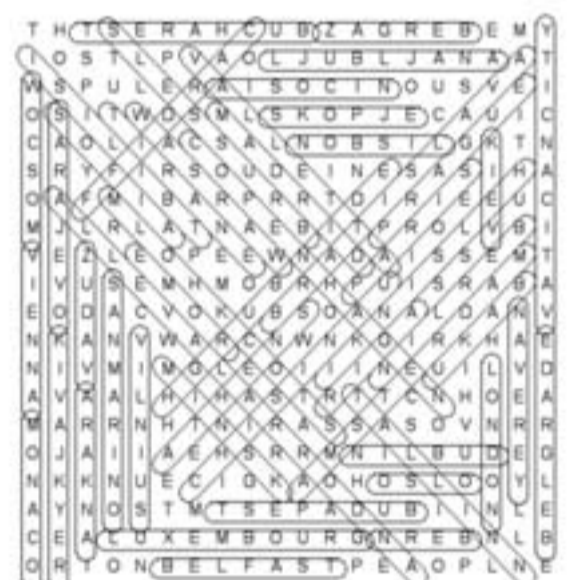
Find and circle all of the car parts that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell the name of an additional car part.



- | | | | |
|-----------------|----------------|------------------|----------------|
| AIR BAG | CLUTCH | GAS TANK | STARTER |
| AIR CONDITIONER | COOLING FAN | HEADLIGHT | STEERING WHEEL |
| ALTERNATOR | CRANKCASE | HOOD | SUSPENSION |
| AXLE | CRUISE CONTROL | HORN | TAIL LIGHT |
| BATTERY | DEFROSTER | IGNITION | TIRES |
| BODY | DOOR | MUFFLER | TRANSMISSION |
| BRAKE | DRIVE LINE | POWER WINDOW | TRUNK |
| BUMPER | DRIVESHAFT | RADIO | TURN SIGNAL |
| CAR SEAT | ENGINE | RADIATOR | WHEEL RIM |
| CARBURETOR | FRAME | REAR VIEW MIRROR | WHEELS |
| CARRIER RACK | FUSE | ROOF | WINDSHIELD |
| CHILD SEAT | | SEAT BELT | |

Yesterday's Solution

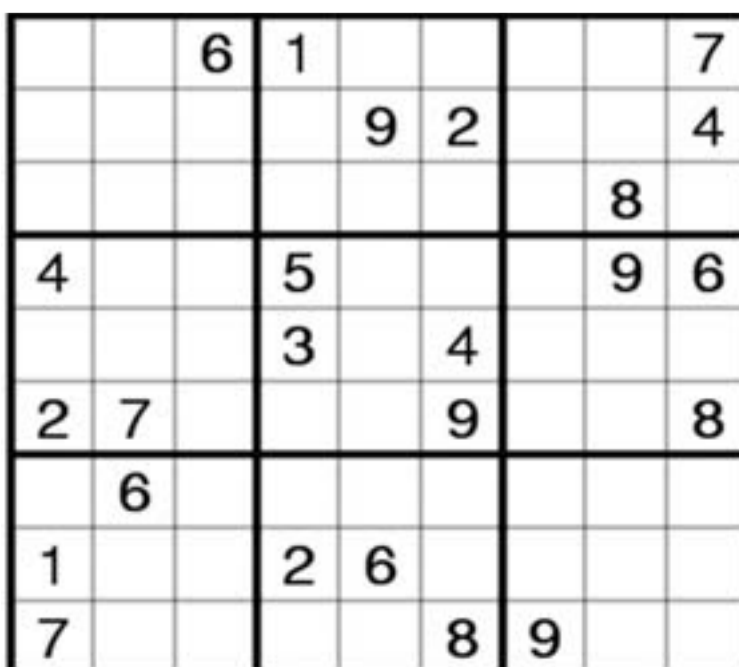
Capital Cities of Europe



- | | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| AMSTERDAM (Netherlands) | EDENBURGH (Scotland) | ROME (Italy) |
| ANDORRA LA VELLA (Andorra) | HELSINKI (Finland) | SAN MARINO (San Marino) |
| ANKARA (Turkey) | KIEV (Ukraine) | SARAJEVO (Bosnia-Herzegovina) |
| ATHENS (Greece) | LISBON (Portugal) | SKOPJE (Macedonia) |
| BAKU (Azerbaijan) | LIUBLJANA (Slovenia) | SOFIA (Bulgaria) |
| BELFAST (Northern Ireland) | LONDON (England) | STOCKHOLM (Sweden) |
| BELGRADE (Serbia/Montenegro) | LUXEMBOURG (Luxembourg) | TALLINN (Estonia) |
| BERLIN (Germany) | MADRID (Spain) | TBILISI (Georgia) |
| BERN (Switzerland) | MINSK (Belarus) | TIRANE (Albania) |
| BRATISLAVA (Slovakia) | MONACO (Monaco) | VADUZ (Liechtenstein) |
| BRUSSELS (Belgium) | MOSCOW (Russian Federation) | VALLETTA (Malta) |
| BUCHAREST (Romania) | NICOSIA (Cyprus) | VATICAN CITY (Vatican City) |
| BUDAPEST (Hungary) | OSLO (Norway) | VIENNA (Austria) |
| CARLOTT (Iceland) | PARIS (France) | VILNIUS (Lithuania) |
| CHESHINAJ (Moldova) | PRAGUE (Czech Republic) | WARSAW (Poland) |
| COPENHAGEN (Denmark) | REYKJAVIK (Iceland) | YEREVAN (Armenia) |
| DUBLIN (Ireland) | RIGA (Latvia) | ZAGREB (Croatia) |

The hidden sentence is: THE MOST POPULOUS CITY IN EUROPE IS MOSCOW WHICH HAS OVER EIGHT MILLION PEOPLE.

Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



For labor-related inquiries and complaints:
Call MSAL hotline 128

Hospitals

Sabah Hospital	24812000
Amiri Hospital	22450005
Maternity Hospital	24843100
Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital	25312700
Chest Hospital	24849400
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010
Adan Hospital	23940620
Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300
Al-Razi Hospital	24846000
Physiotherapy Hospital	24874330/9

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khalidiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadisiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401
Jabriya	25316254
Maidan Hawally	25623444
Bayan	25388462
Mishref	25381200
W Hawally	22630786
Sabah	24810221
Jahra	24770319
New Jahra	24575755
West Jahra	24772608
South Jahra	24775066
North Jahra	24775992
North Jleeb	24311795
Ardhiya	24884079
Firdous	24892674
Omariya	24719048
N Khaitan	24710044
Fintas	23900322



PHARMACIES ON 24 HRS DUTY

GOVERNORATE	PHARMACY	ADDRESS	PHONE
Ahmadi	Sama Safwan Abu Halaifa Danat Al-Sultan	Fahaee Makka St Abu Halaifa-Coastal Rd Mahboula Block 1, Coastal Rd	23915883 23715414 23726558
Jahra	Modern Jahra Madina Munawara	Jahra-Block 3 Lot 1 Jahra-Block 92	24575518 24566622
Capital	Ahlam Khalidiya Coop	Fahad Al-Salem St Khalidiya Coop	22436184 24833967
Farwaniya	New Shifa Ferdous Coop Modern Safwan	Farwaniya Block 40 Ferdous Coop Old Kheitan Block 11	24734000 24881201 24726638
Hawally	Tariq Hana Ikhlas Hawally & Rawdha Ghadeer Kindy Ibn Al-Nafis Mishrif Coop Salwa Coop	Salmiya-Hamad Mubarak St Salmiya-Amman St Hawally-Beirut St Hawally & Rawdha Coop Jabriya-Block 1A Jabriya-Block 3B Salmiya-Hamad Mubarak St Mishrif Coop Salwa Coop	25726265 25647075 22625999 22564549 25340559 25326554 25721264 25380581 25628241

INTERNATIONAL CALLS



Afghanistan	0093	Lithuania	00370
Albania	00355	Luxembourg	00352
Algeria	00213	Macao	00853
Andorra	00376	Macedonia	00389
Angola	00244	Madagascar	00261
Anguilla	001264	Majorca	0034
Antigua	001268	Malawi	00265
Argentina	0054	Malaysia	0060
Armenia	00374	Maldives	00960
Australia	0061	Mali	00223
Austria	0043	Malta	00356
Azerbaijan	00994	Marshall Islands	00692
Bahamas	001242	Martinique	00596
Bahrain	00973	Mauritania	00222
Bangladesh	00880	Mauritius	00230
Barbados	001246	Mayotte	00269
Belarus	00375	Mexico	0052
Belgium	0032	Micronesia	00691
Belize	00501	Moldova	00373
Benin	00229	Monaco	00377
Bermuda	001441	Mongolia	00976
Bhutan	00975	Montserrat	001664
Bolivia	00591	Morocco	00212
Bosnia	00387	Mozambique	00258
Botswana	00267	Myanmar (Burma)	0095
Brazil	0055	Namibia	00264
Brunei	00673	Nepal	00977
Bulgaria	00359	Netherlands	0031
Burkina	00226	Netherlands Antilles	00599
Burundi	00257	New Caledonia	00687
Cambodia	00855	New Zealand	0064
Cameroon	00237	Nicaragua	00505
Canada	001	Niger	00227
Cape Verde	00238	Nigeria	00234
Cayman Islands	001345	Niue	00683
Central African	00236	Norfolk Island	00672
Chad	00235	N. Ireland (UK)	0044
Chile	0056	North Korea	00850
China	0086	Norway	0047
Colombia	0057	Oman	00968
Comoros	00269	Pakistan	0092
Congo	00242	Palau	00680
Cook Islands	00682	Panama	00507
Costa Rica	00506	Papua New Guinea	00675
Croatia	00385	Paraguay	00595
Cuba	0053	Peru	0051
Cyprus	00357	Philippines	0063
Cyprus (Northern)	0090392	Poland	0048
Czech Republic	00420	Portugal	00351
Denmark	0045	Puerto Rico	001787
Diego Garcia	00246	Qatar	00974
Djibouti	00253	Romania	0040
Dominica	001767	Russian Federation	007
Dominican Republic	001809	Rwanda	00250
Ecuador	00593	Saint Helena	00290
Egypt	0020	Saint Kitts	001869
El Salvador	00503	Saint Lucia	001758
England (UK)	0044	Saint Pierre	00508
Equatorial Guinea	00240	Saint Vincent	001784
Eritrea	00291	Samoa US	00684
Estonia	00372	Samoa West	00685
Ethiopia	00251	San Marino	00378
Falkland Islands	00500	Sao Tome	00239
Faroe Islands	00298	Saudi Arabia	00966
Fiji	00679	Scotland (UK)	0044
Finland	00358	Senegal	00221
France	0033	Seychelles	00284
French Guiana	00594	Sierra Leone	00232
French Polynesia	00689	Singapore	0065
Gabon	00241	Slovakia	00421
Gambia	00220	Slovenia	00386
Georgia	00995	Solomon Islands	00677
Germany	0049	Somalia	00252
Ghana	00233	South Africa	0027
Gibraltar	00350	South Korea	0082
Greece	0030	Spain	0034
Greenland	00299	Sri Lanka	0094
Grenada	001473	Sudan	00249
Guadeloupe	00590	Suriname	00597
Guam	001671	Swaziland	00268
Guatemala	00502	Sweden	0046
Guinea	00224	Switzerland	0041
Guyana	00592	Syria	00963
Haiti	00509	Serbia	00381
Holland (Netherlands)	0031	Taiwan	00886
Honduras	00504	Tanzania	00255
Hong Kong	00852	Thailand	0066
Hungary	0036	Togo	00228
Ibiza (Spain)	0034	Tonga	00676
Iceland	00354	Tokelau	00690
India	0091	Trinidad	001868
Indian Ocean	00873	Tunisia	00216
Indonesia	0062	Turkey	0090
Iran	0098	Tuvalu	00688
Iraq	00964	Uganda	00256
Ireland	00353	Ukraine	00380
Italy	0039	United Arab Emirates	00976
Ivory Coast	00225	United Kingdom	0044
Jamaica	001876	Uruguay	00598
Japan	0081	USA	001
Jordan	00962	Uzbekistan	00998
Kazakhstan	007	Vanuatu	00678
Kenya	00254	Venezuela	00582
Kiribati	00686	Vietnam	0084
Kuwait	00965	Virgin Islands UK	001284
Kyrgyzstan	00996	Virgin Islands US	001340
Laos	00856	Wales (UK)	0044
Latvia	00371	Yemen	00967
Lebanon	00961	Yugoslavia	00381
Liberia	00231	Zambia	00260
Libya	00218	Zimbabwe	00263
Lesotho	00266		

STATE OF KUWAIT DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



Tel: (+965) 161 Ext: 2627 - 2630
Fax: (+965) 24348714
www.met.gov.kw

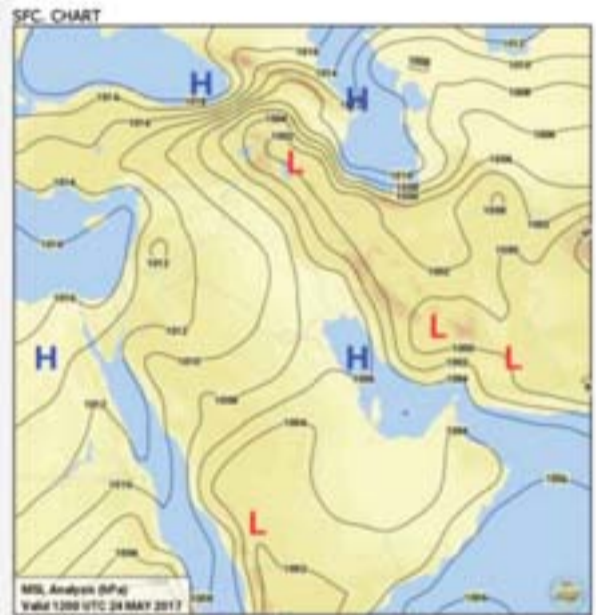


Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours Issued 24/05/2017-19:00 LT UTC +3hr

MIN Temperature 28 °C

By Night: Dust will subside gradually with moderate to fresh north westerly to northerly wind, with speed of 20 - 45 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.

By Day: Mostly sunny with moderate to fresh northerly to north westerly wind, with speed of 20 - 40 km/h causing raising dust over open areas.



Four-Day Forecast	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Expected Weather	sunny + raising dust	hot	hot + raising dust	hot + raising dust
Min Temp °C	28	26	30	27
Max Temp °C	41	44	46	44
Wind Direction	northerly to north westerly	north westerly to light variable	north westerly	north westerly
Wind Speed km/h	20 - 40	08 - 28	12 - 32	25 - 45

Warnings & Weather Watches

no warnings or weather watches

Station	MIN °C	EXP	Max °C
KUWAIT CITY	31	40	
KUWAIT AIRPORT	28	41	
ABOALY	29	41	
BUSYAN	27	42	
JAHRA	32	41	
FAILAKA ISLAND	29	41	
SALMIYAH	29	37	
AHMADI	30	36	
JAL ALYAH	30	40	
QAROH ISLAND	28	35	
UMH AL-HARADEM	27	35	
MUWASIB	28	41	
WAFRA	26	42	
SALMIY	29	38	
MUTRIBA	30	40	

Recorded Yesterday at Kuwait Airport	
Max Temp (°C)	39
Min Temp (°C)	23
Max Rel Hum (%)	37
Min Rel Hum (%)	09
Max Wind Speed (km/h) and Direction	36 NE
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR	0 mm

Sunrise	04:51
Sunset	18:38

Tomorrow Prayer Times	
Fajr	03:19
Sunrise	04:51
Zuhr	11:45
Asr	15:20
Sunset	18:38
Isha	20:07



PRIVATE CLINICS

Ophthalmologists Dr. Abdallah Al-Mansoor 25622444 Dr. Samy Al-Rabea 25752222 Dr. Masoma Hameeb 25321171 Dr. Mubarak Al-Ajmy 25739999 Dr. Mohsen Abel 25757700 Dr. Adnan Hasan Alwayl 25732223 Dr. Abdallah Al-Baghly 25732223 Ear, Nose & Throat (ENT) Dr. Ahmed Fouad Mouner 24555050 Ext 510 Dr. Abdallah Al-Ali 25644660 Dr. Abd Al-Hameed Al-Taweel 25646478 Dr. Sanad Al-Fathalah 25311996 Dr. Mohammad Al-Daory 25731988 Dr. Ismail Al-Fodary 22620166 Dr. Mahmoud Al-Booz 25651426 General Practitioners Dr. Mohammed Y Majidi 24555050 Ext 123 Dr. Yousef Al-Omar 24719312 Dr. Tarek Al-Mikhazeem 23926920 Dr. Kathem Maarafi 25730465 Dr. Abdallah Ahmad Eyadah 25655528 Dr. Nabeel Al-Ayoubi 24577781 Dr. Dina Abdallah Al-Rafea 25333501 Urologists Dr. Ali Naser Al-Serfy 22641534 Dr. Fawzi Taher Abul 22639955 Dr. Khaleel Abdallah Al-Awadi 22616660 Dr. Adel Al-Hunayan FRCS (C) 25313120 Dr. Leons Joseph 66703427	Plastic Surgeons Dr. Mohammad Al-Khalaf 22547272 Dr. Abdul-Redha Lari 22617700 Dr. Abdel Quttainah 25625030/60 Family Doctor Dr Divya Damodar 23729596/23729581 Psychiatrists Dr. Esam Al-Ansari 22635047 Dr Eisa M. Al-Balhan 22613623/0 Gynaecologists & Obstetricians Dr. Adrian arbe 23729596/23729581 Dr. Verginia s. Marin 2572-6666 ext 8321 Dr. Fozeya Ali Al-Qatan 22655539 Dr. Majeda Khalefa Aliyami 25343406 Dr. Ahmad Al-Khooly 25739272 Dr. Salem soso 22618787 General Surgeons Dr. Amer Zawaz Al-Amer 22610044 Dr. Mohammad Yousef Basher 25327148 Internists, Chest & Heart Dr. Adnan Ebil 22639939 Dr. Mousa Khadada 22666300 Dr. Latefa Al-Duweisani 25728004 Dr. Nadem Al-Ghabra 25355515 Dr. Mobarak Aldoub 24726446 Dr Nasser Behbehani 25654300/3	Paediatricians Dr. Khaled Hamadi 25665898 Dr. Abd Al-Aziz Al-Rashed 25340300 Dr. Zahra Qabazard 25710444 Dr. Sohail Qamar 22621099 Dr. Snaa Maarroof 25713514 Dr. Pradip Gupare 23713100 Dr. Zacharias Mathew 24334282 Dermatology Dr. Mohammed Salam Bern University 23845955 Dentists Dr Anil Thomas 3729596/3729581 Dr. Shamah Al-Matar 22641071/2 Dr. Anesah Al-Rasheed 22562226 Dr. Abdallah Al-Amer 22561444 Dr. Faysal Al-Fozan 22619557 Dr. Abdallateef Al-Katrash 22525888 Dr. Abdallah Al-Duweisani 25653755 Dr. Bader Al-Ansari 25620111 Neurologists Dr. Sohal Najem Al-Shemeri 25633324 Dr. Jasem Mola Hassan 25345875 Gastrologists Dr. Sami Aman 22636464 Dr. Mohammad Al-Shamaly 25322030 Dr. Foad Abdallah Al-Ali 22633135	Endocrinologist Dr. Abd Al-Naser Al-Othman 25339330 Dr. Ahmad Al-Ansari 25658888 Dr. Kamal Al-Shomr 25329924 Physiotherapists & VD Dr. Deyaa Shehab 25722291 Dr. Musaef Faraj Khamees 22666288 Rheumatologists: Dr. Adel Al-Awadi 25330060 Dr. Khaled Al-Jarallah 25722290 Internist, Chest & Heart DR.Mohammed Akkad 24555050 Ext 210 Dr. Mohammad Zubaid MB, ChB, FRCP, PACCC Assistant Professor Of Medicine Head, Division of Cardiology Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital 25339667 Consultant Cardiologist Dr. Farida Al-Habib MD, PH.D, FACC 2611555-2622555 Inaya German Medical Center Te: 2575077 Fax: 25723123
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CANNES FESTIVAL



(From left) US actress Kirsten Dunst, Australian-US actress Nicole Kidman and US actress Elle Fanning pose yesterday during a photocall for the film 'The Beguiled' at the 70th edition of the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southern France.



(From left) US actress Kirsten Dunst, Irish actor Colin Farrell, Australian actress Nicole Kidman and US actress Elle Fanning pose yesterday during a photocall for the film 'The Beguiled'.



Australian actress Nicole Kidman (left) and British model Naomi Campbell pose as they arrive for the '70th Anniversary' ceremony of the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southern France. — AFP photos

Nicole Kidman vows to support female filmmakers

Nicole Kidman criticized Hollywood's rate of hiring women directors and vowed to support female filmmakers at the Cannes Film Festival yesterday. Kidman said that women "have to support female filmmakers - that's just a given now." She was speaking on behalf of Sofia Coppola's "The Beguiled," one of three films directed by women in competition for the Palme d'Or in Cannes.

"The Beguiled" is a remake of Don Siegel's 1971 film starring Clint Eastwood, but told from a female point of view. It's a Civil War thriller in which a wounded Union soldier is taken in by an all-girls school in Virginia. Kidman noted that only 4 percent of major releases in 2016 were directed by women. Said Kidman: "Everyone keeps saying 'It's so different now. But it isn't.'" — AP

Kids are the break-out stars of Cannes film festival

Young actors are making waves at this year's Cannes film festival—often in films that are hardly suitable children's viewing. AFP takes a look at some of the kids who are making a splash:

Baby faces, dark thoughts

Starring Nicole Kidman and Colin Farrell, family horror "The Killing of a Sacred Deer" has shocked audiences at the world's biggest film festival but features a standout performance from Irish actor Barry Keoghan as obsessive teenager Martin. Best known at home for playing a cat killer in television series "Love/Hate", Keoghan is no stranger to dark roles, and Hollywood magazine Deadline said he'd tackled his latest film with "a creep factor that sends chills down your spine".

Blonde waif Fantine Harduin, 12, has meanwhile won plaudits for her chilling performance as the not-so-innocent Eve in Michael Haneke's "Happy End", set loosely against the backdrop of Europe's migrant crisis. Dark thoughts haunt this little girl, unloved in a bourgeois French household.

Rising deaf star

Todd Haynes' tender childhood mystery "Wonderstruck" follows the parallel adventures of two kids who run away to New York, one in 1927 and the other in 1977. Deaf actress Millicent Simmonds, 14, has been widely praised for her performance as Rose opposite 12-year-old Oakes Fegley as Ben, who also loses his hearing. Casting agents discovered Simmonds during an extensive search in the deaf community for the right girl to play the role. Disability is also a theme in well-reviewed French film "Ava" starring Noee Abita as a young girl who loses her sight.

Forces of nature

South Korean actress Ahn Seo-Hyun, 13, stars alongside Tilda Swinton and Jake Gyllenhaal in Netflix movie "Okja" as a little girl trying to save a genetically-modified pig giant from the clutches of a multinational corporation. Vanity Fair described her performance as Mija, forced to

abandon her home in the mountains and head to New York, as "soulful (and) winning".

Young stars also take center-stage in another film set in a rural landscape, "Sicilian Ghost Story" by Italy's Fabio Grassadonia and Antonio Piazza. It's a teenage kiss in the Sicilian forests between Gaetano Fernandez and Julia Jedikowska that launches this grim tale of a boy's kidnap by the mafia.

Girls rule

Sofia Coppola's American Civil War thriller "The Beguiled" features a cast of young girls who hold their own against stars including Kidman, Farrell and Kirsten Dunst. One stand-out was Australian Angourie Rice, 16, whose character Jane brings a wounded soldier (Farrell) back to her school to recover, setting the stage for a vicious battle of the sexes.

She told reporters after yesterday's well-received screening that the Cannes madness was "quite intimidating". As far as the shoot she said, "I loved working with all of these talented

women. And also Colin... who is very talented," she said, drawing a laugh from the audience. "Nice save," the Irish actor quipped.

Small person, big job

As an eight-year-old with no acting experience, Lise Leplat Prudhomme took on quite a challenge when she accepted the starring role in "Jeannette", a musical comedy about the childhood of French saint and folk heroine Joan of Arc.

But director Bruno Dumont said she had the "wild and impulsive" spirit to play the young Joan, who goes on to fight the English occupation of France before being burned alive at the stake in 1431. "This little girl, she gave me some of her childhood," Dumont told AFP. "I didn't know anything about the childhood of Joan of Arc, but Lise brought us that childhood." — AFP



Irish actor Barry Keoghan poses during a photocall for the film 'The Killing of a Sacred Deer'. — AFP photos



US actress Millicent Simmonds poses during photocall for the film 'Wonderstruck'.



Belgian actress Fantine Harduin poses during a photocall for the film 'Happy End'.



South Korean actress Ahn Seo-hyun poses during a photocall for the film 'Okja'.

Portrait of Myanmar's 'Buddhist Bin Laden' chills Cannes

Barbet Schroeder spent months with Ugandan dictator Idi Amin at the height of his power, when corpses would wash up every morning on the shores of Lake Victoria and Kampala was rife with rumors that he was eating his opponents. But in his decades of documenting evil, the veteran Swiss filmmaker says he has never been as scared by anyone as he was by a Burmese Buddhist monk named Wirathu.

"I am afraid to call him Wirathu because even his name scares me," the highly acclaimed director told AFP. "I just call him W." "The Venerable W", his chilling portrait of the monk who has been accused of preaching hate and inciting attacks on Myanmar's Muslim Rohingya minority, has been hailed by critics at the Cannes film festival as a "stirring documentary about ethnic cleansing in action". What dismays Schroeder is that Wirathu, whom Time magazine dubbed "The face of Buddhist terror" in a 2013 cover, is utterly unfazed by the chaos and suffering he has unleashed. Buddhism is supposed to be the philosophy of peace, enlightenment and understanding, he thought.

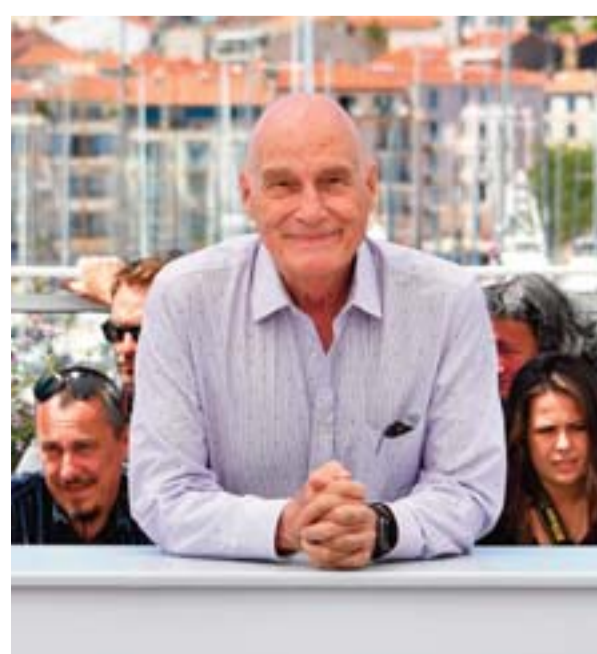
It helped center Schroeder's own life when he made a pilgrimage to India to follow on the path of the Buddha 50 years ago to "cure myself of my jealousy". But the hate speech and fake news that Wirathu spreads from his Mandalay monastery, accusing Muslims—barely four percent of the country's population of trying to outbreed the majority Burmese, made Schroeder's head spin.

'Devilishly clever'

"He is much more intelligent and in control of himself that I thought, devilishly clever in fact," said Schroeder, who shot his film secretly in Myanmar until he attracted the attention of the secret police. "It was like being faced by a good Jesuit or some very clever communist leader back in the day," he said. Rather than "question him like a journalist", Schroeder just let the monk talk as he did with the other subjects of his "Trilogy of Evil", which began with "General Idi Amin Dada" in 1974 and includes his 2007 film "Terror's Advocate" about the

French lawyer Jacques Verges, who defended Nazi war criminal Klaus Barbie and Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic.

"If you wait long enough, slowly the truth would come out," Schroeder said. "That is what I did with Idi Amin and Jacques Verges." "When he lied I'd say, 'Tell me more, how interesting... So the Rohingya burn their own houses so they can get money from the United Nations...'" "For me one of the most shocking moments is when he says they destroy their own houses, and then you see a crowd of maybe 3,000 people fleeing their burning homes. It's nightmarish." In another telling scene Wirathu, leader of the Buddhist nationalist 969 movement, is shown watching Muslims being beaten to death



in Meiktila near Mandalay in 2013, a month after he gave an anti-Muslim speech there.

Hate speech 'escalating'

Schroeder said the monk had returned "all peace and love" to the town to call for calm, "but he was at least indirectly responsible for what was happening." "Wirathu said all this happened because a monk was killed by the Muslims. But I read the pamphlet that sparked the riots and it sounded very much like his speeches and that he could have written it."

This month, Wirathu—who has been called the Buddhist Bin Laden—stirred tension by touring Muslim areas in troubled Rakhine State despite Myanmar's top Buddhist body banning him from preaching in March. Hundreds of Rohingya Muslims died in 2012 when sectarian violence ripped the state apart, and tens of thousands still languish in fetid displacement camps. More than 70,000 have fled into neighboring Bangladesh since October after the military launched a months-long crackdown that UN investigators say cost the lives of hundreds of the persecuted minority and may amount to crimes against humanity.

Last week a UN envoy criticized the government of Aung San Suu Kyi for not clamping down on "hate speech and incitement to discrimination" which she claimed "appear to be drastically escalating". In the film Schroeder, 75, seems to trace Wirathu's Islamophobia to the rape and murder of a Buddhist woman by a Muslim in his hometown of Kyaukse. But in person he is not so sure. "Another theory is that his mother left his father and married a Muslim, or because his monastery was burned when he was 14. But every time I checked I was never sure. "Why was Hitler like he was? We will never know how this garbage collected in his mind." — AFP

Swiss director Barbet Schroeder poses during a photocall for the film 'The Venerable W' (Le Venerable W) at the 70th edition of the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southern France. — AFP



Lebanese singer Haifa Wehbe poses during a photocall as she arrives to attend the De Grisogono Party on the sidelines of the 70th Cannes Film Festival, at the Cap-Eden-Roc hotel in Antibes, near Cannes, southeastern France. — AFP

FEATURES

Fans beg Justin Bieber to cancel dates as fear grips pop's youth



Justin Bieber

Fans of Justin Bieber pleaded on Tuesday for his upcoming British tour dates to be canceled, underscoring the potential repercussions to music acts with a young fan base from the suicide bombing at an Ariana Grande concert in Manchester. Canadian heartthrob Bieber, 23, is due to play an open air concert at London's Hyde Park in July. But fans flooded social media saying his appearance should be axed for the safety both of fans and the singer himself. "Cancel Justin's concert in the UK, please! We want him to be safe, please," a person using the handle marhukh wrote on the Instagram account of Bieber's manager, Scooter Braun.

Braun also manages Grande, also 23, a former Nickelodeon star whose huge female fan base, many of them tweens, were out in force for her concert in Manchester on Monday night when a suicide bombing killed 22 people and injured dozens. The "Problem" singer flew to Florida on Tuesday to spend time with her family, the Daily Mail website reported. Representatives at Grande's record company did not return calls on whether the remainder of her world tour, with stops in London and Europe, would go ahead.

Leanne Murray, 20, who lives in Ireland, has tickets to see Bieber play in Dublin next month. But she said that after

Monday's bombing she is contemplating selling them. "I just don't want what I would hope to be a great night to end in something like last night," Murray, who paid 180 Euros (\$200) each for two tickets told Reuters. "It's frightening to think that it could have been any of us and it really shows that you never know what's around the corner," Murray added.

Representatives for Bieber did not immediately respond to Reuters on the status of his upcoming performances. Touring has been one of the top sources of income for musicians in recent years. The top 10 worldwide tour acts grossed a combined \$1.67 billion in 2016, according to music industry publication Pollstar, with Bruce Springsteen bringing in \$268.3 million alone.

Pop acts like Taylor Swift, Bieber, One Direction and Grande are also among the top earners. Grande grossed more than \$25 million from touring between April 2016-April 2017, according to Pollstar figures, while Bieber grossed \$163 million in 2016. Robin Wolff, from Agoura Hills, California, said she has accompanied her 15-year-old daughter Brooke to Miley Cyrus and One Direction concerts. Her daughter has only more recently attended a couple of concerts without parental supervision. Asked if she has concerns for her children attend-

ing concerts in the wake of the Manchester attack, Wolff said, "Absolutely."

"It's scary. Especially if you're not there for them, that's even scarier. Me going with them, I'm OK with that," she said. Joe Reinartz, news editor at Pollstar, said that although he believes security is already strong at music venues and will no doubt be stepped up, parents would likely be more cautious.

"In the short term, there are going to be concerns for any large gathering where there will be young people, and that doesn't necessarily mean a Justin Bieber show. It means a high school football game, or an event at a fair ground," Reinartz said. Jim Donio, president of the Music Business Association, said he would be surprised to see musicians cancelling tours because of the attack at the Grande concert. But he said fans will be more aware and prepared. "Will parents make more informed decisions? Yes, that's possible, so there can be some impact there." — Reuters



Actors Tom Cruise, center, Russell Crowe, right, Annabelle Wallis, second right, and Sofia Boutella, second left, pose with director Alex Kurtzman, left, as they arrive for the Australian premiere of their movie *The Mummy* in Sydney. — AP

Tom Cruise reveals 'Top Gun 2' to start filming soon

The Danger Zone may have gotten old and dusty, but Tom Cruise says he's about to fly back in. The 54-year-old actor says the long-discussed sequel to "Top Gun" is a sure thing and should start shooting soon. Cruise made the announcement yesterday in response to questions from anchors on the Australian morning news show "Sunrise." The actor said filming will likely begin within the next year. He added, "It's definitely happening."

Cruise has said in similar interviews that the film was in development and a strong possibility, but has not offered such clear confirmation. The 1986 Reagan-era flyboy epic propelled Cruise to superstar status. Jerry Bruckheimer, producer of the original, had been dropping hints too. He posted a picture of himself and Cruise on Saturday's 31st anniversary of the original's release. — AP



In this file photo, actor Tom Cruise arrives for the Australian premiere of his movie *The Mummy* in Sydney, Australia. — AP

ARIANA GRANDE RETURNS TO US FOLLOWING MANCHESTER BOMBING

Ariana Grande returned to the United States on Tuesday, one day after a suicide bomber killed 22 people at the singer's concert in Manchester, England, as questions lingered over whether she would continue her European tour. Grande, 23, was seen in photographs posted on the Daily Mail website walking down the steps of a private plane at an airport in her hometown of Boca Raton, Florida, and being met by family members.

The Daily Mail images showed the diminutive pop star dressed casually in sweats and appearing downcast as she greeted her boyfriend, the rapper Mac Miller, on the tarmac and getting into a waiting car. Grande had not been seen publicly since an explosion ripped through the packed Manchester Arena at the end of her performance there. Some of the 22 people who died in the attack were teens or young girls. Grande was apparently unharmed.

British police have identified the man suspected of carrying out the massacre as 22-year-old Salman Abedi, who was born in Manchester to parents of Libyan origin. Islamic State claimed responsibility for what it called revenge against "Crusaders," but there appeared to be contradictions in its account of the operation. In her only statement so far, Grande took to Twitter some five hours after the bombing to describe herself as "broken" in the aftermath of the attack.

"from the bottom of my heart, i am so so sorry. i don't have words," she said in the tweet. Grande was performing in Manchester during the European leg of a tour to promote her third album, "Dangerous Woman," which also has her scheduled to visit London, Belgium, Poland, Germany, Switzerland and France in the coming weeks. Despite speculation that she would cancel the rest of the tour, no formal announcement had been made as of Tuesday. Grande's manager, Scooter Braun, did not respond to requests for comment by Reuters.

"We mourn the lives of children and loved ones taken by this cowardly act," Braun said in a statement posted on Twitter on Monday evening. "We ask all of you to hold the victims, their families and all those affected in your hearts and prayers." Grande, a native of Boca Raton, starred in the Broadway musical "13" and on the Nickelodeon TV series "Victorious" before releasing her solo debut album, "Yours Truly." Best known for her singles "Problem" and "Break Free," Grande is credited with having an exceptionally broad vocal range for a pop star. — Reuters



US actor Brad Pitt (left) takes a picture with a fan during the Japan premiere of his latest movie *'War Machine'* in Tokyo. — AFP

'I'd never make it in Bollywood,' says Brad Pitt

Brad Pitt told Indian actor Shah Rukh Khan that he doesn't have the moves to star in Bollywood films as he promoted his new movie "War Machine" in Mumbai yesterday. "I wouldn't make it Bollywood because I can't dance or sing," said the American actor during an event with Khan in front of journalists in India's financial capital. Bollywood Hindi language movies are renowned for elaborate dance sequences and high-energy songs and Khan responded by telling Pitt he could easily learn.

"We can make anyone dance. I just spread my arms and do nothing, that's a step," joked the actor known as "King Khan," Pitt, who recently split from Angelina Jolie, arrived in Mumbai from Japan yesterday for the latest stop on a promotional tour for Netflix movie

"War Machine." The satirical war film, in which Pitt plays a hubristic United States general, releases on the popular streaming site on Friday. Pitt, 53, was due to attend a screening of the film, directed by David Michod, in Mumbai later yesterday. It was the star's second high-profile visit to India after he accompanied ex-wife Jolie during her filming of "A Mighty Heart" in 2006. Earlier this month Pitt opened up on his divorce from Jolie, admitting that heavy drinking had contributed to the breakdown of his marriage. The Hollywood A-lister told GQ Magazine that he is now teetotal and in therapy. Jolie, 41, filed for divorce in September, citing irreconcilable differences. — AFP

\$6 bn man Michael Bay honored by Hollywood

Michael Bay sank his hands and feet into the forefront of Hollywood's TCL Chinese Theatre on Tuesday as he was honored for a money-spinning movie career that has netted almost \$6 billion. The 52-year-old Los Angeles native is known for directing some of history's biggest effects-laden blockbusters, from "Bad Boys" (1995), "Armageddon" (1998) and "Pearl Harbor" (2001) to the "Transformers" franchise. "It brings back your childhood because I remember as a kid I came here. And this is where I went to the movies with my parents, this was the place where I saw 'Raiders of the Lost Ark,' when I decided I want to become a director," he told AFP.

Bay, who now calls Miami home, worked as an intern for George Lucas's special effects company Industrial Light and Magic before kickstarting his directing career with commercials and music videos for Tina Turner, Lionel Richie and Meat Loaf. His first feature film—"Bad Boys," starring Will Smith and Martin Lawrence—marked the beginning of a string of collaborations between Bay and veteran producer Jerry Bruckheimer.

"It's bizarre as a kid to think, this was always untouchable to me, you know," he said of being honored by Hollywood. "You don't ever think that's possible, so it's kind of a bizarre thing having your hands printed here." Known for high octane action, Bay's movies

have made \$5.8 billion, allowing him to indulge a passion for aviation and motoring, according to Rolling Stone magazine, snapping up a \$50 million Gulfstream jet and a fleet of luxury and sports cars.

'They can say whatever they want'

Yet his commercial success has not protected him from the barbs of critics that accompany each new release, and he has in the past been accused of "pummeling audiences into submission" rather than entertaining them. Mark Kermode, the British film critic who came up with the phrase, wrote in a one-star review of "Transformers: Age of Extinction" in 2014 that it had all the director's hallmarks, from its ludicrous plot and incoherent action to "endless leering shots of the leading lady's butt."

Bay, who directed all five installments of the smash-hit "Transformers" franchise about huge robots that turn into cars and hit each other, said he never reads his critics. "They can say whatever they want. It's all about the fans. I think it's a real epic movie," Bay said at a preview of "Age of Extinction" in Miami. Bay's fifth installment, "Transformers: The Last Knight," is scheduled for release on June 21 and an untitled sixth movie is due 12 months later, although a director has not been announced. — AFP



iflix Kuwait team.



Group picture for Zain team and iflix Kuwait team.

iflix unveils revolutionary content for the 2017 Ramadan season

iflix, the world's leading Subscription Video on Demand (SVoD) service for emerging markets, has unveiled its fantastic new content lineup for the 2017 Ramadan season. The full catalogue was introduced at a prestigious event held at the Sky Lounge, Radisson Blu Hotel on Tuesday, May 23rd 2017. The event was hosted by the iflix Kuwait team in the presence of its strategic partner Zain Group, social media influencers and representatives of the local media.

During the event, the company unveiled its exciting Ramadan content, which features a variety of Gulf, Egyptian, Lebanese, Syrian and Bedouin TV series. The featured programming stars many of the region's most prominent actors, who are hugely popular amongst local audiences and all lovers of drama and comedy throughout the Arab world.

iflix also announced the launch of its first ever original series created for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, Waklinha Wala. The groundbreaking Egyptian comedy series, features 30 top celebrities from the region, is co-produced by Shadows (Ahmed Helmy's Production Company), Front Row and the Kuwait National Cinema Council. The plot depicts the lives of four families living in a rundown building in Cairo's renowned 5th district as they try to repair and rebuild the disintegrating building.

"The world has moved to a stage where people watch what they want, when they want and in emerging markets, people watch it in the palm of their hands—that is where we position iflix," commented Nader Sobhan, Head of iflix MENA. "More than 3 billion people will enter the middle class over the next 15 years, and they will collectively purchase 1 billion new smartphones. This increasingly affluent group will be connected, and have access to information and cultural influences on a global scale. They will want to be entertained at a world class standard. Currently, for many of these people, their only option is piracy. iflix was founded with the aim of offering consumers an alternative that is better than piracy."

Jaun-Paul MacKerlie, CEO of iflix Arabia, provided the attendees with an overview of iflix's world class service and vast library of thousands of popular TV shows, movies and more from around the world. He was followed by Bashar Al Ostad, General Manager of iflix Kuwait and iflix Bahrain, who further introduced iflix Kuwait and its local customer offering.

For new subscribers, iflix offers a complimentary one-month trial with full access to its world-class service, features and content. Go to www.iflix.com or download the app from Google Play or the Apple App Store to register.

With over 170 studio and distributor partner-

ships, iflix offers subscribers the largest selection of iconic and critically acclaimed TV series and fan-favourite films available in the region. iflix's growing library of exclusive, first run series include multi Emmy winning series Mr Robot, as well as this year's smash hits The Cardinal, Ice, Ransom, Ekhtyar Egbari, Al Raboos, Al Ab Al Rouhi and many more - all available for the first time in Egypt with local subtitles. Amongst the hundreds of top international shows also available on iflix include every episode of Friends, The Walking Dead, Mad Men, Falling Skies and Fargo, in addition to many more Lebanese, Syrian and Egyptian movies and TV series. iflix additionally offers an incredible catalogue of kids' content, including Yo Gabba Gabba, Milly Molly, Martha Speaks, Ben 10, and much more.

Now available to one billion consumers across 18 markets throughout Asia, the Middle East and North Africa, iflix offers consumers, a vast library of top Hollywood, Asian, Middle Eastern, and local TV shows and movies including many first run exclusives and award-winning programs. Each subscription allows users to access the service on up to five devices, including phones, laptops, tablets, and television sets, for viewing wherever, whenever.



Filmmaker Michael Bay poses with his 'crew' at his Hand and Foot prints ceremony in front of the TCL Chinese Theater in Hollywood, California on May 23, 2017. — AFP

FEATURES



Amateur Iraqi painter Mustafa Al-Tha'i talks to AFP in Hammam Al-Alil, south of Mosul. — AFP photos



Amateur Iraqi painter Mustafa Al-Tha'i talks to AFP.



Amateur Iraqi painter Mustafa Al-Tha'i talks to AFP.

Iraqi artist secretly chronicled IS brutality

Mustafa Al-Tha'i worked in secret at night, using his brushes and pencils to record the violence he saw during the day under the Islamic State group's brutal reign in Iraq. The bloodied body of a man suspended by a foot, another lying in a pool of blood with his severed head on his back, a woman with her face burned by acid—these are just some of the scenes captured by Tha'i. The 240 paintings and drawings—which Tha'i composed from the time IS seized his hometown of Hammam Al-Alil, south of Mosul, in 2014 until Iraqi forces recaptured it in late 2016 — are an exhibition of horror.

"IS is the enemy of the arts, the enemy of life, so I told myself that whenever I saw one of their crimes or something they did, I would relate it," he said. "There were no journalists and they did not allow photographs, so I recorded the image

in my head and at night at home, I painted," said the 58-year-old, an oven and boiler repairman by trade who has been "addicted" to drawing since childhood.

"The army is fighting against (IS) with weapons. Me, it's with my brush, my colors, my drawings, my paintings," Tha'i said as he sat cross-legged in his living room, drawing board in his lap. At a time when art was banned by the jihadists—who view depictions of people as contrary to Islam—and drawing materials could not be found, Tha'i drew from his old stocks of paints, papers and pencils to "resist." The pieces are simple and colorful, and each one tells a story. "This child is a Christian," he explained, pointing to a portrait of a weeping girl. "They took her when she was 12 years old. She was married to one of them, who left her to another, who married her—something that happened 'four or five times,' Tha'i said.

'It is my addiction'

"I met her when I was in the hospital. She was crying. She had bruises on her face, wounds on the hands and body. I took a sheet of my medical record. I drew on it." Another sketch depicts a man tied to a pole handcuffed and blindfolded. Tha'i said the man was captured after firing at the jihadists. "They tied him to an electric pole and they executed him after torturing him." Tha'i did not keep his works at home, instead leaving them with a friend who hid them behind the back seat of his car. But he believes he was denounced to IS, especially when he made sketches at work during the day. IS "came to my house several times, they found nothing," he said.

The religious police came one night: "They told me they wanted my paintings and calligraphies. They took me away to

the desert." The jihadists lashed him and tied his legs to a car and dragged him behind it. "I was reciting the Quran in a loud voice... Then, they tied my hands and my feet, brought me back and threw me in front of my house. I was found the next morning," he said. Tha'i said he was detained for a total of 45 days because of his artworks, and twice sentenced to the lash.

But each time, the grandfather of seven kept drawing. "I cannot give up drawing. It is my addiction, it calms me. I don't smoke—I draw," Tha'i said. During one stint in jail, he broke open a battery and used its contents to draw on a wall. A guard made him erase it by licking it off. Today, he keeps his artwork in boxes as testimony to what he saw, and paints "what I have in front of me, what I find beautiful." — AFP



In this file photo shows women wearing feathered hats with colorful ribbons performing the Retumbao dance during Marujada religious celebrations in honor of St Benedict in the fishing town of Braganca, Brazil.



In this file photo, girls in costume dance during Maracatu Carnival celebrations in Nazare da Mata, Pernambuco state, Brazil.



Tourists pose for a photo in front of the Sugarloaf hill in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. — AP photos



In this file photo, people watch the sun set from Arpoador beach in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.



File photo shows tourists sit in a bar at a hotel overlooking Copacabana beach, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.



File photo shows the neighborhood of Pelourinho is decorated for the World Cup in Salvador, Brazil.

Brazil packed with travel riches, so why so few tourists?

'The key is getting people there'

Brazil is home to the largest rainforest on Earth. It has miles of sandy, deserted beaches, and stunning flat-topped mountains. It invented samba and a devilish little drink called the caipirinha. It has massive reserves for native peoples and charming colonial towns built by the Portuguese. Despite the seeming abundance of riches for travelers, it has a tourism problem. Because while you may have heard about the Amazon or the stunning beaches of Rio de Janeiro, you have probably also heard that Brazil has high crime, was swept by a Zika outbreak and that its politicians have concocted the largest graft scheme in Latin American history.

Most likely you've never visited Brazil. Only 6.6 million foreigners did last year, according to the Ministry of Tourism. That's about half the number that go to the tiny city-state of Singapore, and this in a continent-sized country that the World Economic Forum ranks No. 1 in natural resources and No. 8 in cultural resources. Oh, and that hosted the 2016 Summer Olympics. "The highest gap between potential in tourism in the world and what's been realized so far is Brazil," said Vinicius Lummertz, the president of Embratur, Brazil's tourism board. "We have (everything) from Xingu (an indigenous reserve) and Indians to Oktoberfest in Santa Catarina."

Cheaper flights

In the face of a deep and protracted recession, the government is now hoping to change all that with several measures that aim to nearly double the number of foreign visitors in the next five years. But hoteliers, travel bloggers and others who work in tourism say there are many obstacles. The government plan includes a law to allow 100 percent foreign ownership of airlines, with the aim of increasing flight routes and driving down the cost of travel. Another plank will allow Americans, Canadians, Japanese and Australians — all of whom need visas to visit Brazil — to apply for visas online, instead of at a consulate.

Cheaper flights and a smoother visa process will address some tourist complaints about Brazil, but Alison McGowan says the plan ignores the most glaring problem: Nobody knows how great Brazil is in the first place. "People don't even get as far as (applying for a visa)," said McGowan, the CEO of hiddenpousadasbrazil.com, a guide to inns, boutique hotels and B&B's in Brazil. "They haven't got people wanting to go to Brazil yet."

McGowan and other tourism professionals say the government lacks a coherent campaign to promote Brazil abroad — the real country, not just the cliches of Carnival and soccer great Pele. Part of the government's plan is to beef up Embratur. Officials there said they hoped that would lead to

a doubling of investment in promotion. Last year, Embratur had a \$16 million budget — which the agency said was much less than what other South American countries spend.

McGowan and others said Brazil is particularly bad at reaching modern global travelers who research trips and make reservations online. McGowan called the country's main tourism portal for foreigners, visitbrasil.com, "a disgrace." Lummertz, the president of Embratur, says the government's plan will help promote Brazil abroad. But he says that the nation's tourist blues go beyond that. Latin America's largest nation is still struggling to overcome decades of isolation and remains the most closed of the so-called BRICS economies, he says.

That has repercussions for tourism: High import taxes and other hangovers from isolation make the country expensive for travelers and reduce the quality of goods and services. Few Brazilians speak English, partly because they are unlikely to come across global travelers here. It's impossible, of course, to gloss over Brazil's real problems. It has one of the highest homicide rates in the world. Rio's bay is polluted. And Zika is a risk. But the government and Embratur need a counter-narrative for tourists.

Capital of pickpockets

"What is the world capital of pickpockets? It's Barcelona," said Ricardo Freire, who founded the Brazilian travel blog viajenaviagem.com. "But (the residents) don't tell you not to

come there." The drawbacks of Brazil also need to be put in context. Tourists are not likely to be visiting tough urban neighborhoods where most crime happens, notes Emmanuel Rengade, the owner of the luxury, ecological hotels Pousada Picinguaba and Fazenda Catucaba. In the countryside, Rengade says he doesn't even lock his door.

As for Zika, a mosquito-borne disease that has been linked to a rare birth defect, cases this year have fallen dramatically, and the government declared the emergency over this month. Rio's bay might be polluted, but the country has more unspoiled nature to visit than any one person could hope to see in a lifetime. And contrary to Brazil's messy image, Ben Feetham says: "Everything seems to work." Feetham, who is a reviewer for i-escape.com, a site that curates a selection of boutique hotels and inns, honeymooned in Brazil in April and said he had none of the usual stress about airport transfers or bus connections. All of the fuss over reputation and promotion ignores the No. 1 thing tourists like best about Brazil in surveys: the people, known for being easygoing and welcoming. "Anybody who goes to Brazil comes back loving it," said Pauline Frommer, the co-publisher of the Frommer's guidebooks and frommers.com. "The key is getting people there." — AP



File photo shows Caipirinha vendor Vanderlei Silva Santos, who says he struggles to communicate with foreign tourists, poses for a portrait at his stand on Copacabana beach in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

FEATURE



The Breast Cancer Now Garden: Through the microscope, is seen at the 2017 Chelsea Flower Show in London.



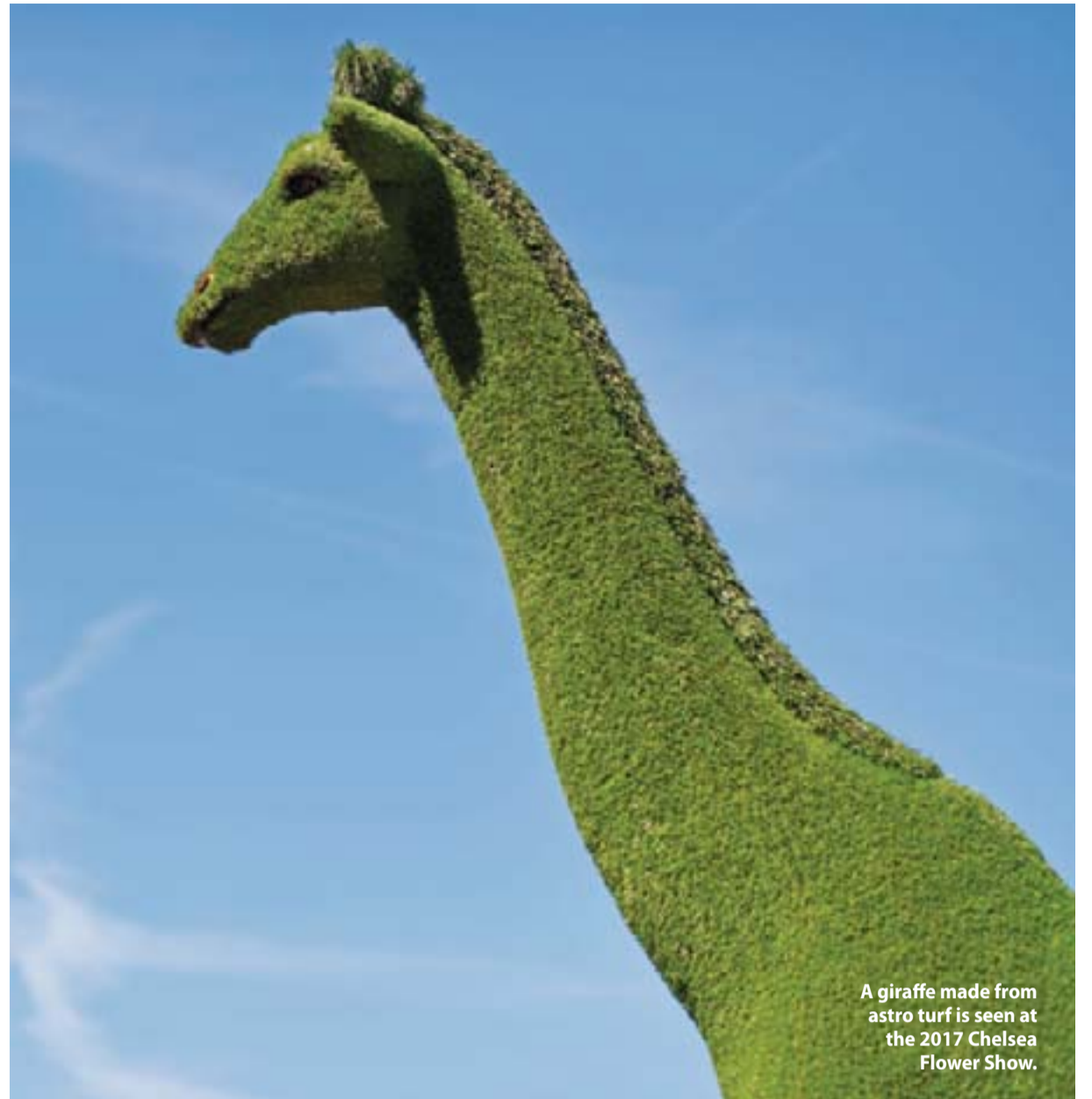
The "M&G Garden 2017" is seen at the 2017 Chelsea Flower Show in London.



The 'Welcome to the Yorkshire Garden' is seen.



A bee flies from a flower in the 'Morgan Stanley Garden'.



A giraffe made from astro turf is seen at the 2017 Chelsea Flower Show.



The 'Morgan Stanley Garden' is seen.



A man wearing a floral tie poses in front of daffodils at the 2017 Chelsea Flower Show.



A display of Hosta plants is seen.



A Sterculia mexicana is seen.

Gardening as art goes on show at famous UK festival

From the world's hottest chilli to a garden inspired by music, Britons celebrate their love for gardening this week at the Chelsea Flower Show, one of the world's biggest horticultural festivals. With the champagne already flowing at the week-long show where more than 165,000 visitors are expected, Queen Elizabeth II herself will be touring some of the hundreds of exhibitors later on Monday. And the Royal Horticultural Society denied rumors that Brexit was throwing a spanner in the works by putting off some of the festival's sponsors.

"There are only three show gardens less than last year but we have novelties like the two Feel Good gardens, which celebrate the five senses," RHS spokeswoman Alice McDermott told AFP. Visitors have to pay between 63 and 80 (70 and 88 euros, \$82 and \$104) to enter the show, set in the exclusive surroundings of the grounds of the 17th century Royal Hospital Chelsea.

For anyone who believes that plants are just plants and gardens are purely decorative, the Chelsea Flower Show offers a magnificent rebuttal. The far from ordinary gardens include some to fight against environmental threats, or improve physical and mental health, or inspire poets and musicians. Garden designer Chris Beardshaw said his exhibit was inspired by Bach and Mozart. "I'm immersing myself in the music... Trying to picture how these music elements fit," he told AFP. "It's always a challenge to be in the show, you have to be ready for a precise day," he said. On the eve of the opening, he had an unexpected surprise that will be familiar to many gardeners. "We discovered that a fox was making a nest in the centre of a herbaceous border... Quite a damage!"

'Dragon's Breath'

At a garden nearby, cabbages and salads are arranged in neat rows to "recreate the feeling when you stand too close to a speaker stack at a concert-the sensation of music reverberating through your whole body," said its designer James Alexander Sinclair. There is no sign of garden gnomes or other decorations considered an affront to good taste by the garden connoisseurs. Instead, a sculptor can be found "balancing stones" for a feature. The only concessions to common garden decorations are giant animals made out of artificial grass or the graffiti in a space entitled "Greening grey Britain".

"Gardens and plants are no longer an optional and decorative nice-to-have. They're essential," said the urban garden's

designer Nigel Dunnett. "With pollution levels dangerously high in cities and flash flooding devastating areas of the country, we need to all embrace the fact that plants help mitigate against some of the biggest environmental threats facing us today," he said. The plants in the garden absorb pollution and are resistant to a scarcity of water-a low risk in Britain-and only require intermittent care.

The show, which is open until Saturday, reserved a few surprises even for its participants. While growing a chilli pepper for the show, horticulturalist Bob Price said he had accidentally created the strongest specimen in the world. The "Dragon's Breath" scores 2.4 million on the Scoville scale-a measure of the fieriness of chilli peppers-in what Price hopes will become a new Guinness world record. — AFP



Packets of seed for sale are seen.



A bonsai tree is seen at the 2017 Chelsea Flower Show in London



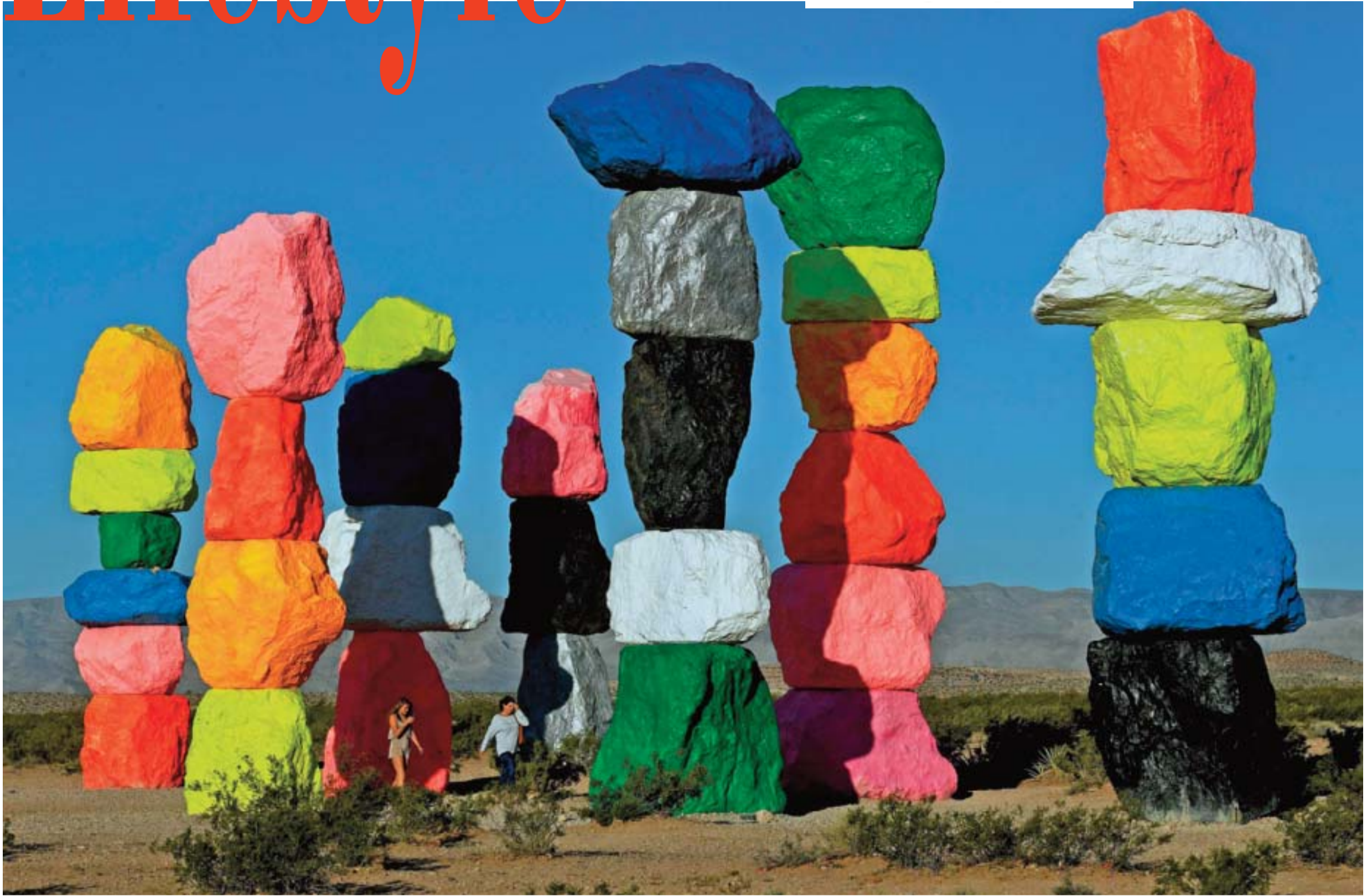
A woman looks at exhibits in front of the 'Chengdu Silk Road Garden'.



The 'Chengdu Silk Road Garden' is seen.



An allium display is seen. —AFP photos



Tourists walk amongst the 'Seven Magic Mountains' art installation by Swiss artist Ugo Rondinone in the Ivanpah Valley near Las Vegas, Nevada. — AFP

The female Muslim comic standing up to extremism



Wearing a red hijab and all-encompassing gown, Sakdiyah Maruf cuts an unusual figure in a dark, smokey Jakarta bar as she reels off taboo-breaking jokes to laughter from a rapt audience. She is a rare character in Indonesia—a female Muslim stand-up using humor to challenge prejudice against women and rising religious intolerance. Despite resistance from those who believe a woman's place is not on stage cracking jokes, even within her own family, the 34-year-old has forged ahead and is winning fans at home and abroad.

In the country with the world's biggest Muslim population, she does not shy away from sensitive subjects. Her jokes touch on topics ranging from Jakarta's recent religiously-charged election—which saw the Christian incumbent ousted by a Muslim—to sex and alcohol. "Hijab, niqab, burqa—it saves you from a bad hair day," she said to laughter from the crowd in the Indonesian capital, a typical gag that gently pokes fun at her own religious customs. Maruf jokes about how women were not allowed to attend public events in the small, conservative community on Java island where she grew up, and that she is seeking to be more progressive by trying "to have sex even though I am married".

For the slight, unassuming lady, comedy is a playful form of resistance to a creeping conservatism she believes is eroding the rights of women in her homeland. Indonesia has long been praised for its inclusive brand of Islam but this reputation has been tarnished

by a rise in attacks on minorities and the growing influence of a vocal hardline fringe. The comedian sees an alarming trend of "more rigid and conservative practices of religion" which she believes tend to marginalize women, and is particularly concerned about issues including early marriage and domestic violence. For Maruf, humor is the perfect weapon to tackle such trends. "The message can be very aggressive but it can be delivered in a very subtle way," she told AFP. "You speak to people's hearts instead of only their minds."

'Are you for real?'

Maruf comes from a traditional family in the provincial Javanese town of Pekalongan, an unlikely background for a witty, worldly-wise stand-up. She became interested in comedy at an early age by watching US sitcoms such as Roseanne and Full House, a love that she carried with her to university, where she started performing stand-up in 2009. Depending on the audience she will either perform in English—which she studied at university—or the main Indonesian language of Bahasa.

Sakdiyah Maruf still has a day job working as an interpreter at conferences, but regularly performs in comedy clubs and nights in Jakarta, where she lives. In the early days, the comic would lie to her parents when she performed at university or headed into Jakarta for shows, believing they would disapprove, but as she became successful it was far harder to conceal the truth. She says she has managed to

reach a kind of uneasy truce with her family. "We have disagreements sometimes, but they are cool with it," she explained.

But the greatest resistance has come from conservatives who don't think Muslim women should be comedians at all. "One woman came up to me after a show and said 'are you for real, are you wearing this hijab for real?'," she recalled. Still, Maruf has not been put off and her irreverent brand of humor has won her fans outside Indonesia.

In 2015 she was awarded the Vaclav Havel International Prize for Creative Dissent established by the New York-based Human Rights Foundation and last year took part in a BBC-run global stand-up jam. Her humor seems more relevant than ever as concerns escalate about declining religious freedoms in Indonesia after the jailing this month of Jakarta's Christian governor for blasphemy, a verdict that sparked criticism inside the country and abroad. But Maruf remains confident that Indonesia will remain a tolerant country not least because a devout Muslim woman like herself can still get up on stage and crack jokes. She said: "If you can write 'Indonesian conservative Muslim female stand-up' in one sentence, why be so pessimistic?" — AFP



Indonesian comedian Sakdiyah Maruf (left) performing at a bar in Jakarta. — AFP photos

Bizarre News

World's first police robot unveiled in Dubai

The world's first operational police robot has been unveiled in Dubai. Visitors to the three-day long Gulf Information Security Expo and Conference had the opportunity to meet the "world's first operational Robocop" when the machine made its debut at the event on Sunday. The robot - named Robocop after the popular movie franchise of the same name - is 5ft 5in tall and weighs 100kg, and can speak six languages as well as being able to read facial expressions. It includes a built-in tablet device so people are able to pay fines and report crimes straight from the robot itself, and it can also send and receive messages from police headquarters. Brigadier-General Khalid Nasser Al-Razzouqi, Director-General of Smart Services with the Dubai Police said in a statement: "The launch of the world's first operational Robocop is a significant milestone for the Emirate and a step towards realizing Dubai's vision to be a global leader in smart cities technology adoption. "With an aim to assist and help people in the malls or on the streets, the Robocop is the latest smart addition to the force and has been designed to help us fight crime, keep the city safe and improve happiness levels. "He can chat and interact, respond to public queries, shake hands and offer a military salute."

Penguin joins dating site

A penguin is trying to find love on an online dating site. Spruce, a one-year-old penguin who resides at Weymouth Sea Life Centre in Dorset, is so desperate to find a mate that his handlers have set him up with a profile on dating website Plenty of Fish, where his interests are listed as "seafood and swimming". His carer Sarah Everett told the Dorset Echo: "It would be nice for Spruce to have another single penguin to spend his time with, rather than his keepers. "I really want to see Spruce settle down with the right girl and after searches for potential mates at other Sea Life centers proved fruitless I thought it was time to look further afield." The decision to create a profile for the lonely penguin came after his handlers noticed all the female penguins in their enclosure were partnered up, leaving poor Spruce on his own.

Greggs make dresses out of salad

Greggs have unveiled dresses made entirely from salad. The on-the-go food retailer has teamed up with Kate Tabor - who has previously designed costumes for the likes of pop megastar Katy Perry - to create two edible dresses in order to help launch their delicious summer menu, which features six dishes under 400 calories. The dresses were made out of around 5,000 lettuce leaves, 300 onions, 150 peppers, and other ingredients including tomatoes, courgettes, chillies and limes, and took a team of four designers around 200 hours to create. Designer Kate said of her creations: "I've created costumes for Katy Perry and the Chemical Brothers to Birdy and Katy B, but I've never designed anything quite like this. Each dress is made up of over 20 individual ingredients from the Greggs salad range, with hundreds more of each making up the designs. This has definitely been my biggest challenge yet." Commissioned to celebrate the launch of Greggs' summer menu - which includes items such as the coconut, lime, and chilli chicken salad and the cheese, tomato and basil pasta salad - the idea for the dresses came following new research released by the brand which states that a whopping 61 percent of Brits say they are more health conscious now than they were five years ago. — Bang Showbiz