



2 Al-Kharafi Center honors mothers of disabled kids



6 Israel defense minister says 'no innocent people' in Gaza



32 Famed Istanbul modern art museum enters new era



16 Vettel marks 200th F1 race with thrilling Bahrain win



Outrage after chemical attack in Syria leaves dozens dead

Trump slams 'animal' Assad, warns 'big price to pay' for 'mindless' attack



DOUMA, Syria: An image grab taken from a video released by the Syrian civil defense shows an unidentified volunteer holding an oxygen mask over a child's face at a hospital following a reported chemical attack on the rebel-held town yesterday. — AFP

BEIRUT: An alleged chemical attack that left dozens dead in Syria's rebel-held town of Douma sparked international outrage yesterday, with US President Donald Trump warning there would be a "big price to pay". As international condemnation poured in, there were reports that just hours after the alleged attack rebel forces had agreed to evacuate Douma, their last holdout in the onetime opposition stronghold of Eastern Ghouta.

Trump's threat came exactly a year and a day after the US fired cruise missiles at a Syrian air base in retaliation for a deadly sarin gas attack in 2017. "Many dead, including women and children, in mindless CHEMICAL attack in Syria," Trump wrote on Twitter yesterday, lashing out at Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad and Russia's Vladimir Putin, a key ally of the regime. "President Putin, Russia and Iran are responsible for backing Animal Assad. Big price to pay," he said.

The United Nations Security Council is likely to meet today afternoon over the chemical attack at the request of the United States and several other members, diplomats said yesterday. "UK, France, US, Poland, Netherlands, Sweden, Kuwait, Peru and Cote d'Ivoire have called an emergency meeting of #UNSC to discuss reports of chemical weapons attack in #Syria. Meeting expected on Monday," the British mission to the UN tweeted.

Trump yesterday also criticized his predecessor Barack Obama for not striking after warning that the use of chemical weapons in Syria was a "red line". "If President Obama had crossed his stated Red Line in The Sand, the Syrian disaster would have ended long ago! Animal Assad would have been history!" Trump said. Asked whether the US could again respond with a missile strike, White House homeland security adviser Tom Bossert told ABC television: "I wouldn't take anything off the table."

A prominent Republican senator warned Trump that a failure to act now could leave him in a weakened posture internationally. "It's a defining moment in his presidency," Lindsey Graham said on ABC. "He has challenged Assad in the past not to use chemical weapons... If it becomes a tweet without meaning, then he has hurt himself in North Korea... (and will) look weak in the eyes of Russia and Iran." France has repeatedly said that evidence of chemical weapons use in Syria could prompt military action and said yesterday it would "do its duty" following the latest allegations. The regime, which denies all accusations of chemical weapons use, denounced the accusations as an "unconvincing broken record".

Continued on Page 11

Clashes seen over early retirement bill; Islamist MPs seek to legalize parties

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: The government appears to be headed on a collision course with the National Assembly, which is pressing to pass a law that allows Kuwaiti public sector employees to seek early retirement with full financial benefits. The Assembly's financial and economic affairs committee did not make a decision dur-

ing its meeting yesterday, as the government requested two more days to give its view on the issue.

The Public Institution for Social Security rejected the new proposals as too expensive to state coffers. A new meeting has been scheduled for tomorrow to make a final decision after taking into account the government's opinion. MP Ali Al-Deqbasi said the committee is obliged to make a decision on the issue by April 10, and called on lawmakers to remain firm on the issue.

The issue has been on the Assembly's agenda for several months, and the financial committee decided a few months ago to ask a foreign company to prepare a study on the expected financial cost of the scheme. The foreign company said if employees are allowed to retire early with full benefits, it will cost the state around KD 2 billion annually for between 25 and 35 years.

Continued on Page 11

MBS in Paris after meeting Bushes in US

PARIS: Saudi Arabia's crown prince arrived in France yesterday for the next leg of a global tour aimed at reshaping his kingdom's austere image as he pursues his drive to reform the conservative petro-state. Prince Mohammed bin Salman will hold meetings with President Emmanuel Macron during his two-day official visit starting today - his first trip to France as the heir to the Saudi throne.

Macron will walk a diplomatic tightrope with the young prince in talks set to focus on cultural ties and investments but also the war in Yemen, dubbed the world's worst humanitarian crisis, and the kingdom's arch-nemesis Iran. The 32-year-old



HOUSTON: Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (second right) poses for a group picture with former New York mayor Michael Bloomberg (right), former US President George H W Bush (center) and former US President George W Bush (second left) at the family residence on Saturday. — AFP

prince, widely known as MBS, was received at the Bourget airport near Paris yesterday morning by French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian.

The trip follows a coast-to-coast tour of the United States as well as visits to Britain and Egypt, where the prince courted a host of business

tycoons and struck multimillion-dollar deals from defense to entertainment. Around 18 memorandums of understanding in energy, agriculture, tourism and culture are set to be signed at an official Saudi-France CEO Forum tomorrow, a source close

Continued on Page 11

Crypto traders use gold to draw Islamic investors

DUBAI/SYDNEY: In Dubai's decades-old Gold Souk, customers from around the world haggle over bangles and necklaces. Elsewhere in the emirate, the region's top center for gold trade, bullion is playing a new role in financial engineering. A local start-up company founded last year, OneGram, is issuing a gold-backed cryptocurrency - part of efforts to convince Muslims that investing in cryptocurrencies complies with their faith.

The global surge of interest in bitcoin, ethereum and other cryptocurrencies extends into the Gulf and south-

east Asia, the main centers of Islamic finance. But because they are products of financial engineering and objects of speculation, cryptocurrencies sit uneasily with Islam. Sharia principles, in addition to banning interest payments, emphasize real economic activity based on physical assets and frown on pure monetary speculation.

That has triggered debate among Islamic scholars over whether cryptocurrencies are religiously permissible. Cryptocurrency companies are seeking to sway the debate by launching instruments based on physical assets and certified as valid by Islamic advisors. Each OneGram cryptocurrency unit is backed by at least a gram of physical gold stored in a vault. The idea is to limit speculation. "Gold was among the first forms of money in Islamic societies so this is appropriate," said Ibrahim Mohammed, the Briton who founded the firm with other investors last year.

Continued on Page 11

Silver is..
STABLE, TOUGH, SECURE..
A colorful life at AUK

AUK
Where University Comes to Life...

Tel: 1802040 / (+965) 2224-8399, Ext: 3148 | admissions@auk.edu.kw
www.auk.edu.kw | @AUK_Kuwait | @AUKKuwait | TheAmericanUniversityofKuwait | AUKVideo

The American University of Kuwait received its Institutional Accreditation from the Private Universities Council (PUC), Ministry of Higher Education in the State of Kuwait, and has a Memorandum of Understanding and Cooperation with Dartmouth College (Hanover, New Hampshire - USA).

Amir receives Crown Prince, top officials



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah yesterday. — KUNA



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem and the parliamentary caucus. — KUNA

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah yesterday received His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah at Sief Palace. Separately, His Highness met Acting Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. His Highness the Amir also received National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem, escorted by the parliamentary caucus that took part in the 138th Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Assembly in Geneva and the 27th meeting of Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union (AIPU) in Cairo. —KUNA



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received Acting Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah yesterday. —KUNA



News in brief

Kuwait Orphans' Forum

KUWAIT: The Kuwait Orphans' Forum is a translation of the philanthropic and humanitarian path adopted by His Highness the Amir, First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah said. Sheikh Nasser Al-Sabah addressed a ceremony held at the Army Officers Club to honor the forum's organizers, Kuwaiti charity Zakat House, a statement by the ministry said. The charity organization is set to organize the eighth version of the annual event today. Such meetings, characterized by a family spirit, are a source of comfort and delight, he said, as he offered the Zakat House employees awards and gifts in recognition of their efforts. The event, which is this year themed "Your Orphans, Our Guests," regularly coincides with Arab Orphan Day. — KUNA

Significance of Arab summit

MANAMAH: Bahraini Prime Minister Prince Khalifa Bin Salman Al-Khalifa yesterday underscored the significance of the Arab summit due to be hosted by Saudi Arabia later this month, in shadow of crucial regional developments. The official news agency, BNA, said the premier affirmed the forthcoming summit importance during a reception of Arab diplomats, led by the dean of the diplomatic corps and Kuwait Ambassador Sheikh Azzam Mubarak Al-Sabah. The Kingdom is capable of ensuring that the summit conference "attain aspirations of the regional states and peoples, with respect of security, stability and growth," he said. He expressed hope the summit would result in bolstering joint Arab action in the face of various challenges, calling for unity of the Arabs' ranks and vigilance in face of conspiracies. Meanwhile the diplomats congratulated the premier on the recent discovery of a major oil-gas field. — KUNA

'Annihilating consequences'

CAIRO: Libyan Labor Minister Al-Mehdi Al-Amin said yesterday that successive regional crises at the economic, social and political levels have led to "annihilating consequences" on Arab labor markets. Economies of Arab countries have been affected by regional crises, namely the wars in Libya, Syria and Yemen, said Al-Amin, addressing the 45th session of the Arab Labor Conference. He called on Arab states to map out future strategies to enhance capacities of productive institutions, noting that unemployment among academic-degree youth in the Arab world has remained too high. Mohammad Al-Soudani, board member of the Arab Labor Organization and Iraqi Minister of Labor and Social Affairs, said the organization is the most empowered agency in the Arab world for regulating the work market as a stimulant for the economies, backup for social stability and peaceful con-existence among the communities. — KUNA



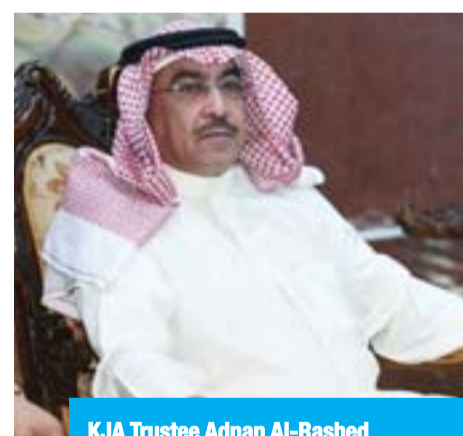
Arab Labor Organization Director General, Fayez Al-Mutairi addresses the 45th session of the Arab Labor Conference. — KUNA

Zain - Strategic partner of sixth Ideal Mother Award

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading telecommunications company in Kuwait, announced its strategic partnership of the sixth consecutive edition of the Ideal Mother Award. The event, organized by Al Kharafi Activity Kids Center, aimed at shedding light on the distinguished efforts exerted by mothers of children with mental disabilities. The event came under the patronage and attendance of Chairman of Sanad Kuwaiti Foundation for Disabled Children Sabeeka Al Jaser, as well as the attendance of Honorary President of Kuwait Disabled Sports Club Shaikha Shaikha Abdullah Al Sabah, and Award Director and President of Al Kharafi Activity Kids Center Aisha Al Salem.

Zain's strategic partnership of this annual event comes in line with its support of the various social causes that are of interest to all segments of the society, especially within the special needs sector. The company is keen on reinforcing its partnerships with the many public and private entities that cater to people with special needs and their families within the local community all year round.

The Ideal Mother Award, held for the sixth consecutive year, mainly aimed at shedding light and recognizing the most distinguished and dedicated individual efforts of mothers who care for and develop their children with mental disabilities. The organizing committee honored 18 distinguished mothers from across Kuwait, the GCC during the special event held at Jumeirah Hotel.



KJA Trustee Adnan Al-Rashed



KUWAIT: Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry's Chairman Ali Al-Ghanim meets with Iraqi Ambassador Ala Al-Hashemi. — KUNA

Kuwait-Iraq keen on boosting ties

KUWAIT: Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) yesterday affirmed keenness to boost joint economic ties with Iraq and follow latest updates on its development projects. KCCI exerts maximum efforts, in cooperation with the Iraqi embassy, to enhance investments and attain joint goals. KCCI's Chairman Ali Al-Ghanim stated while meeting with Iraqi Ambassador Ala Al-Hashemi. Development projects are attractive and promising investment opportunities in various sectors such as energy, transportation, logistic services, construction, agriculture, health, and education, he said.

Al-Ghanim pointed out the great success the (Invest in Iraq) conference achieved, which was held in Kuwait between February 12 and 14 with participation of 2,000 countries around the world. For his part, the Iraqi diplomat expressed his joy over visiting KCCI, appreciating its keenness to improve Kuwaiti-Iraqi economic relations and commercial exchange between them. KCCI constantly



Sabeeka Al Jaser honors Zain's representative in the presence of Sheikhha Sheikhha Al Abdullah and Aisha Al Salem.

Zain constantly shoulders initiatives that work towards enhancing the society's welfare, especially within the special needs sector. Zain's long-term cooperation with the various private and public entities that cater to people with special needs springs from its belief in the importance of having a positive print by supporting and launching initiatives that cater to various interests of the community. Zain dedicates a great part of its Corporate Sustainability and Social Responsibility strategy towards people with special needs.

The company recently participated in a special event

organized by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor in celebration of the Arab Day of People with Special Needs. During the event, Zain organized a number of recreational activities to share the joys of this day with special needs people and their families. The company also recently sponsored the seventh annual RunKuwait charity marathon organized by Fawzia Sultan Healthcare Network (FSHN) and aimed at supporting children with special needs in Kuwait. Zain also regularly conducts visits to social care centers during multiple seasons all year round.

Al-Kharafi Center honors mothers

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: Under the patronage of the President of the Kuwait Foundation for Disabled Children Sabeeka Al-Jasser, Al-Kharafi Center for Disabled Children's Activities held the 6th Ideal Mother Award honoring mothers of disabled children on Saturday at Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel. The ceremony honored the hard work and dedication of mothers of children with mental disabilities in the Gulf Cooperation Council countries and the wider Arab world.

In her opening speech, Aisha Al-Salem, the secretary-general of the award, said: "The award is in recognition of the generosity, sacrifices and patience of the mothers of the mentally disabled." She added that this award represents a model for what Kuwait has always sought - to unite Arab ranks and reunite and strengthen Gulf and Arab ties by involving mothers from the Gulf and the Arab world in the award ceremony.

Salem stressed the Kharafi Center is keen on the importance of honoring mothers of young and old people with disabilities in Kuwait, in order to remind them of the role of mothers and their generous gifts that fill the life of their children. She congratulated the winners from various Gulf and Arab countries, stressing the appreciation of everyone for their role, which is a motivation and encouragement for the center to care for people with mental disabilities and mothers who sacrifice for them.

The Kharafi Center honored 18 ideal mothers: From Kuwait: Munira Al-Qatami, Aisha Al-Khashman, Eman Al-Shubayki, Alia Al-Qallaf, Sawsan Al-Saleh, Khaleeda Al-Ghannam, Halima Boughith, Noir Sarhan, Nawal Al-Rashed and Hanaa Al-Kabariti. From Egypt: Nada Thabit. From Jordan: Reem Al-Dalabij. From Lebanon: Ghada Bonmar. From Saudi Arabia: Samira Al-Saud. From the UAE: Amira Al-Qabati. From Qatar: Hanadi Ali. From Bahrain: Sawsan Al-Halaqi. From Oman: Mariam Al-Siyabi.

seeks to bolster bilateral relationship with Iraq in various fields, Al-Hashemi said, pointing out the Chamber's efforts in organizing (Invest in Iraq) conference as part of Kuwait International Conference for the Reconstruction of Iraq.

Strengthening ties

Meanwhile, Iraqis have expressed a strong desire to boost ties with Kuwait during the visit of Kuwaiti media delegation to Basra, which concluded on Thursday, said Kuwait Journalists Association (KJA) yesterday. During the five-day visit, the Kuwaiti delegation met with members of Iraqi Journalists Syndicate in Basra, who said they have gained great benefit from the cultural and literary books, magazines and other items published by Kuwaiti media during the 1970s and 80s. KJA Trustee Adnan Al-Rashed said.

He added that Kuwait's Consul General in Basra Ambassador Youssef Al-Sabbagh had been exerting great efforts to bring the two nations closer and boost relations on all levels. The delegation included Al-Rashed, KUNA Deputy Director General for Editorial Affairs and Editor-in-Chief Saad Al-Ali, Editor-in-Chief of Al-Anbaa Newspaper Youssef Al-Marzouq, Editor-in-Chief of Kuwait Times Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan, Media Advisor at His Highness the Prime Minister's Diwan Hassan Al-Sayegh and others. — Agencies

Local

Amir's SMEs initiative adds 'value' to Arab economies

Initiative seeks to curb unemployment and create new jobs

CAIRO: Arab League Secretary General Ahmad Abul-Gheit yesterday praised His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's initiative establishing a fund to support small and medium size enterprise (SMEs) in the Arab world. His Highness the Amir's initiative constitutes an "added value" to the Arab economies, contributing to efforts to curb unemployment and create new jobs, Abul-Gheit told the opening session of the 45th Arab Labor Conference (ALC) in Cairo.

The five-day pan-Arab event is sponsored by Egypt's President Abdulfattah El-Sisi, and is attended by representatives of the three parties of production in the Arab countries, the government, employers and employees. The Arab nation is going through a "defining moment", changes that pose "grave challenges" to the security and stability of its countries, as well as the welfare of the people, the League's chief noted. Abul-Gheit voiced confidence that Arabs are capable of defeating the challenges and moving forward to "better prospects."

He stressed that the economic and social changes the Arab countries are experiencing prompt mustering efforts to cope with their "grave consequences." He also highlighted the role of the Arab Labor Organization (ALO) for mobilizing and coordinating Arab efforts for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the UN



CAIRO: The Kuwaiti delegation led by Minister of Social Affairs and Labor Hind Al-Sabeeh participates in the 45th Arab Labor Conference (ALC) in Cairo. — KUNA



CAIRO: Arab League Secretary General Ahmad Abul-Gheit addresses the 45th Arab Labor Conference (ALC) in Cairo. — KUNA



Al-Sabeeh stresses importance of Arab integration

2030 Agenda. The Arab Economic and Social Development Summit, Kuwait, 2009, approved an integrated program to support employment and counter unemployment in the Arab countries, and the ALO was tasked with following up the scheme, he said.

The summit issued a host of other resolutions for boosting human development and SMEs in the Arab region. As for the 45th ALC, the Secretary General said that the agenda comprises a multitude of major topics, including a report by the ALO's Director General themed "Dynamics of labor markets -transformations and tracks of progress." The report depicts an untraditional vision that forms a realistic ground of various sources for understanding the nature of the Arab labor markets, for analyzing their policies and the challenges they are facing.

In the meantime, Abul-Gheit said that achieving the Arab economic integration is "indispensable and inevitable" to cope with the regional and international changes, as giant economic blocs have come to dominate the world's economic map. The Kuwaiti delegation to the ALC is led by Minister of Social Affairs and Labor Hind Al-Sabeeh. Also attending the conference from Kuwait are Director General of the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) Rabah Al-Rabah, and chairman of Kuwait Trade Union Federation (KTUF) Mohammad Al-Hudhaina, representing organizations of employers and employees respectively.

Arab integration

Minister of Social Affairs and Labor and State Minister for Economic Affairs Hind Al-Sabeeh stressed yesterday the importance of attaining Arab integration in the labor field. Al-Sabeeh made her remarks on the sidelines of her special honoring at the 45th session of the Arab Labor Conference in Cairo. The conference brings together three main components of work production: employees, employers, and governments, noting it also sheds light on labor issues, solutions, objectives, and achievements.

Al-Sabeeh expressed hope the conference and the participants achieve tangible results in favor of all Arab people, particularly in sustainable development-related subjects. "I hope the conference's meetings highlight some issues that fall in favor of Arab people's interest," the Kuwaiti senior official said.

The conference is held regularly every year in April to prepare for the International Labor Organization meetings, she said, reiterating objective to achieve an Arab integration ahead of ILO meeting. Arab integration is essential for labor and labor opportunity fields due to its positive impact on people's life and human rights, said the Kuwaiti minister. Such an integration at international events would highlight the violations of Palestinian people's rights, especially since "we are all members in international bodies specialized in labor and human rights," said Al-Sabeeh.

On her ALO's honoring, the Kuwaiti minister dedicated the privilege to all Arab women, and said it is an implementation to one of the sustainable development's items on gender equality. "We want to prove that Arab nations appreciate any successful woman and empower her in various fields," Al-Sabeeh said. "Women in Kuwait enjoy all care and appreciation," she affirmed, noting females with high competence and educational degree could easily find their way around various businesses and positions.— Agencies



SUBSCRIBE OR RENEW

KD 25



* your subscription for one year
for only kd 25 and get
4 free tickets to
Paintball kuwait valued at kd 37





















* This campaign is limited to participants in Kuwait only. Ministries and their departments, companies and NGOs cannot enter the festival.
* Kuwait Times employees, spouses and their second-degree relatives also cannot participate.

Call now +965 248 33 199 - 248 333 58 Fax: +965 248 35 620 - 248 35 621
www.kuwaittimes.net

Local

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: Photo captures lights reflecting on the fountain at Boulevard Park in Salmiya Area.— KUNA

Asthma - wheezing monster attacking Kuwait's children

Hospitals overcrowded during dusty weather

KUWAIT: During allergy, dust and winter seasons, Kuwait's hospitals and health centers are overcrowded with children distressed with asthma attacks, carrying their sufferings between clinics and pharmacies. Asthma is one of the most common allergies in Kuwait, as statistics released by the Ministry of Health in May 2016 indicated that rates of adults with asthma in the country reached 15 percent, while children reached 18 percent.

Asthma patients regularly need preventive treatment to avoid severe attacks, as well as other medications to relieve the symptoms. Both curing methods require awareness and training of the patient on ways to administer proper dosage and timing. Asthma rates are climbing in the country namely during the humidity season, where pollen is increasing, as well as during dust storms' season. Other factors that could stimulate asthma attacks include genetic reasons and environmental pollutants.

Pediatrician at the Amiri Hospital, Dr Dana Al-Haqan, in remarks to KUNA said, "Asthma is a chronic illness that attacks airways to the lungs, resulting in narrowing them, which interrupts air flow into the alveolus, leading to repeated fits of shortness of breath, coughing and sometimes mucus." For children, asthma attacks happen by inhalation of substances that trigger allergic reactions or

irritation of the respiratory system, as these attacks vary in intensity and frequency from one child to another, considering that asthma is the most common diseases among children, she added.

As for genetic factors, some studies have shown that if one or both parents, as well as any other member of the family has asthma, eczema or nasal allergies, then the child is a strong candidate of being an asthma patient, Dr Al-Haqan pointed out.

Environmental factors are major contributors to severity of asthma, as they intensify frequency of asthma attacks. As for seasons, usually emergency rooms are packed with short-breathed patients from the beginning of October to January, with most suffering from viral diseases

and influenza as well, which increases the severity and frequency of asthma attacks, she noted.

Al-Haqan advised all asthma patients to receive the influenza vaccination at the beginning of the season, which is the beginning of October. From the end of March to May, pollen and dust spread more, causing more frequent asthma attacks, and unfortunately embarking on yet another allergy season, she added. Asthma becomes more acute when consuming food that triggers allergy in some children like eggs, nuts, some kinds of fruit and others, she said.

A special examination of various kinds of food causing allergy to the child should be taken in order to keep away from such foods, she added. Some children also have allergies against things such as chemical substances, bird feathers, animal fur, or preservatives, leading to increasing the severity of the attacks, she said. Secondhand smoking would also greatly contribute in high chest irritation, she said. The majority of

asthma-plagued children recover and the symptoms disappear between the ages 5-6, but this varies from one child to another, she added.

A child who is committed to preventive drugs and periodic visits to a pediatrician could be cured quicker, but a large percentage of children recover from this illness, she affirmed. Some of the medications prescribed to asthma patients include cortisone inhaler, or leukotriene powder or pills besides other, she pointed out. The major aim of asthma treatment in the long term is to reduce the number of asthma attacks among children, in order to allow them lead a normal life and keep going to school with less sick leaves, she said.

Dr Al-Haqan advised parents to give asthma drugs to their children before outdoor activities such as sports. As Kuwait weather, especially in the summer, witnesses waves of dust, it is not recommended to leave home unless for necessary reasons, with placing a protective mask or a wet towel on the nose and mouth area, she pointed out. Parents of asthma patient should always keep doors and windows tightly closed and use "Ventolin" medication at the beginning of the asthma attack associated with heavy coughing and breathing difficulty, as the parents should rush to the hospital when the attack intensifies, she warned.—KUNA



Rates of adults with asthma hits 15%; children 18%

KAFO, 500 Startups link Kuwait youths with Silicon Valley

KUWAIT: KAFO (Kuwait's Achievers for Future Opportunities), and 500 Startups: a global startup fund based in Silicon Valley, announced a collaboration on a number of networking opportunities to connect the youth of Kuwait with experts from Silicon Valley; learning from their experiences in growing successful technology startups. KAFO, an initiative by the Amiri Diwan, was founded to fulfill His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's vision to create a platform showcasing Kuwait's talents as one of the recommendations from the National Youth Project.

It has developed into a national platform to help people search, connect, and collaborate with achievers. "Our main objective is to help people find achievers in different fields, to exchange knowledge and allow them to work together," said Dr Youssef Al-Ibraheem, advisor in the Amiri Diwan, in a press release. "Our current platform is at its second iteration and the new version will be released in October of this year. Nevertheless, we are busy connecting people offline, as well, and using other resources to connect great minds. Having 500 Startups in Kuwait is a great opportunity for tech startups, in particular, and we are planning a few activities together.

"So follow our social media accounts on KAFO_KW to find out more, as these events will start after mid-April. We would like to thank the National Fund for Small and Medium enterprises for their collaboration and sup-



Dr Fatima Al-Moussawi, the project manager of KAFO is pictured with Hassan Haider, Partner at 500 Startups responsible for the MENA region.—KUNA

port," added Dr Fatima Al-Moussawi, the project manager of KAFO. "We at 500 Startups want to empower the startup community as we identify and support talents to help them scale up. We are happy to be here in Kuwait and look forward to establishing some strong ties to empower startups that have potential to grow in the global market," said Hassan Haider, Partner at 500 Startups responsible for the MENA region.

The 500 Startups is a venture capital firm and seed accelerator on a mission to discover and back the world's most talented entrepreneurs, help them create successful companies at scale, and build thriving global ecosystems. They are one of the most active seed stage venture capital firms in the world. Since its inception in Silicon Valley, 500 Startups has invested in over 2,000 companies in more than 60 countries via four global funds and 14 microfunds dedicated to either specific geographic markets, such as the MENA region, or verticals.

Official underscores the importance of medical conferences

KUWAIT: Farwaniya Health Zone Director Dr Humoud Al-Zoabi spoke about the importance of medical conferences organized by the Health Ministry in polishing doctors and healthcare professional experience and performance in order to enhance the healthcare system in Kuwait. Dr Humoud spoke on behalf of Health Minister Sheikh Dr Basel Al-Sabah during the opening of the "Diabetes and Endocrine Disorders for Health Professional" yesterday with Gulf and International participation.

He said the conference aims at discussions of new developments in Diabetes in the diagnosis procedures and treatment, particularly early puberty in children and repro-



Dr Humoud Al-Zoabi

ductive systems defects in newborns. Al-Zoabi said the conference being held by Kuwait Pediatrics Diabetes Society in cooperation with the Pediatrics department at Sabah hospital will include several lectures during its eight sessions by visiting doctors from United Kingdom, Saudi Arabia and Macedonia in order to share experiences.

Meanwhile head of the organizing committee, and Endocrinology consultant at Sabah Hospital Dr Zaidan Al-Mazidi said the conference will discuss problems of diabetes, its challenges and the new technology used in its treatment. Al-Mazidi said there will be 30 lectures and workshops over two days by 13 consultants.—KUNA



Dr Zaidan Al-Mazidi (left) is pictured with other health officials during the conference yesterday.

Local

New database for info about children of Kuwaiti women

Govt blocks attempts to make last 10 days of Ramadan holiday

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: CSC chief Ahmed Al-Jassar said a new database is being built to include information about Kuwaiti women's children to prioritize them in employment in the government after citizens. Responding to a question about decree number 17/2017 pertaining prioritizing the children of Kuwaiti women in employment following citizens, Jassar explained that the aforementioned decree prioritized non-Kuwaiti children of Kuwaiti women after citizens, and Arab children of Kuwaiti women came in third place. Responding to another inquiry about the number of non-Kuwaitis employed by the government since Jan 22, 2017, Jassar stressed

only 98 were hired, including 52 with specialized university degrees plus over 10 years of experience in their fields and 33 muezzins in the Awqaf Ministry, in addition to 13 others as drivers, office boys, couriers, gravediggers and female prison guards. Meanwhile, Deputy PM and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled stressed the ministry is working on assessing its employees' salaries and incentives according to regulations to update some incentives as per decree number 238/2009. He added that the ministry has contacted the CSC in this regard several times.

Last 10 days of Ramadan

In another CSC-related concern, the government blocked all parliamentary attempts

to make the last 10 days of the holy month of Ramadan an official annual holiday after both the CSC and the fatwa and legislation department rejected the proposals made by MPs Abdullah Fahhad, Majed Al-Mutairi and others.

Submitting fake receipts

MoE's Assistant Undersecretary for Financial Affairs Yousif Al-Najjar said the ministry has referred a number of school administrations to the legal affairs investigations for submitting fake receipts about how they spent school funds. Najjar added that a tripartite committee including elements from MoE, the finance ministry and CSC has been formed to follow up the use of fingerprint

systems at various schools after a KD 1 million budget was allocated for the project. He added that monitoring bodies will be accordingly contacted this month to start offering the tender for public bidding.

Six marine oilfields

KOC CEO Jamal Jaafar said KOC has extended the deadline of receiving bids to drill six marine oilfields till mid-May, to be followed by a month during which the winner will be announced to start drilling by the end of the year. Jaafar estimated the project's budget to be no more than KD 300 million. In another development, Oil Minister Bakheet Al-Rasheedi stressed that there will be no haste in implementing the recommendations

made by the KPC administration pertaining the privileges of senior oil officials. Responding to a parliamentary inquiry by MP Omar Al-Tabtabaei, Rasheedi stressed that the decision was made on the board of directors' decision number 57/2016 dated Aug 24, 2016.

E-licenses project

Minister of Commerce and Industry Khaled Al-Roudhan said a great part of the e-licenses project has been completed, so that commercial license issuance or renewal can be done swiftly online. He added that more efforts and discussions are in progress with various state bodies to boost the 'New Kuwait 2035' projects.

Gulf Bank wins award for Youth Empowerment

KUWAIT: The Arabian Society for Human Resources Management (ASHRM) has announced Gulf Bank as the winner of the 2018 Youth Empowerment Award, presented for the bank's outstanding AJYAL Development Program. ASHRM is a not-for-profit organization that aims to be the 'Regional Voice of HR'. The society hosts annual conferences, which are considered the premier thought leadership events in the GCC for business leaders, heads of HR, resourcing and talent.

The prestigious award was accepted by Gulf Bank Human Resources General Manager Salma Al Hajjaj accompanied by Assistant General Manager Jennah Al Mattar during an award ceremony held in Dubai on the 27th of March. The Award was presented by ASHRM President Abdulhadi Al-Mansouri and Chairwoman Huda Al Ghoson. On the occasion Al Hajjaj stated, "The AJYAL Development Program is the Bank's leading program for youth empowerment, and we aim to nurture young Kuwaiti talent and develop them into holistic professionals, helping mold the students of today into the leaders of tomorrow."

The Society's recognition of our efforts only goes to show how much we dedicate to the youth and their



Salma Al Hajjaj receives the award

education, one of the core pillars of the Bank's mission." Jennah Al-Mattar also added, "We are proud of the recognition bestowed upon us by the Arabian Society for Human Resources Management. Their stamp of approval indicates that Gulf Bank's efforts in youth empowerment have been not only effective but successful."

The AJYAL Development Program is an iconic initiative developed by the Bank with the aim to nurture young Kuwaiti talents early in their career, and prepare

them for future leadership positions at the Bank. The six-month, intensive training program is designed to cover every facet of banking, from the basic principles such as financial economics, banking laws and regulations, corporate and retail finance to more focused areas such as risk management, anti-money-laundering, banking ethics and customer service. For more information on Gulf Bank and the AJYAL Development Program, log on to www.gulfbank.com, or visit our social media channels.

Quran competition kicks off tomorrow

KUWAIT: Kuwait International Award for Memorizing the Quran will kick off tomorrow under the patronage of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Farid Emadi announced yesterday. The award aims to strengthen the role of Kuwait leadership in the field of Quran and to promote the role of institutions and organizations of the Holy Quran, he said. It also aims at spreading the competitive spirit among participants and encourage spending more efforts and time to increase the number of competitors.

On his part, assistant undersecretary for Quran affairs and Islamic studies at the Ministry of Awqaf Dr Waleed Al-Shuaib said the participants belong to 79 countries, 72 of them are competitors in the conservation branch, 19 in the reading and 39 in the recitation. For his part, member of the Higher Committee and Executive Chairman of the Committee for Planning and Development of the Award Nasser Al-Kandari said, the award has witnessed a remarkable development during the current year, unlike previous years.

Al-Kandari said that the award is divided into four



KUWAIT: Undersecretary of the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Farid Emadi talks during the press conference to announce Kuwait International Award for Memorizing the Quran.— KUNA

branches: memorizing the entire Quran with Tajweed, memorizing Quran with the ten readings, recitation, and finally the award of the best technical project serving of the Holy Quran. The total value of the prizes is KD 130,000, he added, praising the outstanding effort exerted by the ministry in organizing the award

until it became one of the strongest international and Islamic award. He stressed that the State of Kuwait, represented by the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, has rehabilitated and prepared its participants in the center of Abu Musa Al-Ash'ari for memorizing the Holy Quran for six months.— KUNA

ATO stresses the importance of smart electronic transformation

RABAT: Secretary-General of Arab Towns Organization (ATO) Ahmad Al-Sabeeh has affirmed the importance of smart electronic transformation to cope up with social, economic and environmental changes that contribute to improving living conditions, and providing happiness and prosperity for Arab cities' residents. Al-Sabeeh made the statement to KUNA Saturday on the sidelines of the 55th session of ATO executive board currently hosted by Rabat on April 7-8. He said that the smart transformation creates safe sustainable cities through using information technology to overcome urban challenges and provide a dignified life for residents of the Arab cities, with the guarantee of social, environmental and economic sustainability.

He urged heads of all Arab cities and municipalities to enhance the smart transformation through setting systems and mechanisms to meet requirements and address challenges associated with environment, growing population, and economic and social changes. Al-Sabeeh noted that



RABAT: Secretary-General of Arab Towns Organization Ahmad Al-Sabeeh poses for a group photo during the 55th session of Arab Towns Organization executive board.— KUNA

the most important challenges facing Arab urban centers and cities in moving to smart transformation of cities are qualified human resources and financial capabilities.

He calls on heads of Arab cities and municipalities to make concerted efforts, boost cooperation and share experiences to overcome challenges. Earlier in the day, the 55th meeting entitled "smart transforma-

tion in Arab towns" and a workshop began, with the participation of heads of Arab cities and municipalities as well as some experts in urban development and planning. The session's agenda includes some relevant meetings and the workshop on systems and mechanisms of smart transformation in Arab cities as well as other topics in this regard.—KUNA

Special section for asset accounting

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Education Minister Hamed Al-Azmi yesterday issued a ministerial resolution establishing a special section for asset accounting with the financial department. According to the resolution, the new section will be responsible for registering all asset purchase transactions, recording all transport, installation and operation costs as well as adding capital projects currently under construction to fixed assets once they are concluded. The section will also be responsible to respond to monitoring bodies' inquiries.

Kuwaiti union activist

Kuwaiti union activist Bader Khaled Al-Azzazi was elected Assistant Secretary General of the International Confederation of Arab Trade Unions during the confederation's secretariat general and executive board meeting yesterday in Cairo.

Youth Engineering Forum

Head of the International Youth Engineering Training Forum Abdullah Mubarak Al-Hadari said over 80 engineers benefited from the forum with its workshops and ample opportunities to cooperate with participating international bodies. Hadari said the forum was held under the auspices of Minister of Commerce and Industry Khaled Al-Roudhan and managed to attract six international bodies, which presented workshops on solar systems, smart solution applications, engineers' roles until 2030, building data, 3D scanning and risk management.

Inspectors raid stores

The capital municipal inspectors raided a number of stores throughout the governorate, said the municipality's auditing and follow-up manager, noting that the raid resulted in filing 24 citations for unlicensed ads as well as removing 59 ads from various streets and yards.

Suspect nabbed in 9-yr-old boy's rape

KUWAIT: Only 24 hours following the rape of a nine-year-old Egyptian boy by six men, Khaiteen detectives were able to arrest one of the culprits - a Pakistani - who confessed to committing the crime and gave the name of the other five suspects - all Pakistanis too. Detectives are working on arresting them. A security source said detectives had arrested several suspects initially, but all denied any wrongdoing. In a line-up, the victim recognized one of them several times, who confessed to committing the crime.

Dispelling magic spells

Swindlers using African phone numbers are "making attacks" on Kuwaiti numbers. Many people in Kuwait have received several calls from African countries, where the callers claim they are religious people and can dispel magic spells and bring wealth - in exchange of money.

Stolen car found

Police arrested a citizen in Sulaibkhat who was driving a car stolen from Farwaniya. A smart patrol vehicle identified a car that was reported stolen, so policemen pulled it over and arrested the suspect. He was sent to concerned authorities.

Bedoon sent to hospital

A bedoon was sent to the psychiatric hospital after he was arrested in Andalus. He was found wanted over several felonies. Police received a call about a man disturbing people in the area, so they went there and arrested him. He was also found wanted to be admitted to the psychiatric hospital.— Al-Rai/Al-Anbaa



Students, teachers rush back to class in IS-free east Syria

Rohingya refugees learn to corral elephants

Page 8

Page 9



MUNSTER: A man and children lay flowers at a makeshift memorial at the square where a man ploughed with a van into an open-air restaurant, killing two people a day earlier. —AFP

Mental illness behind van attack

Police: There are no indications of a political motive

MUNSTER: German authorities investigating a deadly van ramming attack focused yesterday on mental health problems of the driver, as the city of Muenster mourned for the two people killed on a sunny afternoon at an open-air restaurant. "There are strong indications at the moment that this was a lone perpetrator and that there were no links to the terror scene," federal Interior Minister Horst Seehofer told reporters at the site of Saturday's attacks, where local people laid flowers in memory of the victims.

Far-right opponents of Chancellor Angela Merkel's refugee policy had suggested in the immediate aftermath of the attack it might be an Islamist act of terror, while some media reported the killer had links to right-wing extremist organizations. But there are "no indications of a political motive," said Hajo Kuhlisch, chief of police in the western city where the attack took place.

Rather, he added, "the motive and origins (of the crime) lie within the perpetrator," a 48-year-old German identified as Jens R. who shot himself dead immediately after the crime. A source close to the investigation told AFP there was a record of incidents related to the perpetrator's impaired mental health since 2015, and that he had talked of suicide in late March. Prosecutors said he faced allegations of threats, property damage and fraud

in 2015 and 2016, all of which were dropped. And broadcaster NTV reported he had threatened family members with an axe in 2014 and 2015.

'No Islamist connection'

The two victims killed in Muenster were a 51-year-old woman and a 65-year-old man, both from northern Germany. As well as the dead, police said 20 were injured—some life-threateningly. The foreign ministry in the Netherlands said two of those hurt were Dutch, one of whom was in a critical condition. In the van, police found the gun used by the driver to kill himself, a blank-firing pistol and some powerful fireworks. A search of the man's Muenster apartment late Saturday turned up more fireworks and a deactivated AK47 assault rifle. Police have appealed to the public for information, setting up a website where people can upload photos and videos.

Armed police cordoned off a wide area around the

scene of the attack Saturday, urging residents to avoid the city centre to allow investigators to get to work amid initial fears the country had suffered another extremist assault. "I was on my way home through the city here and saw firefighters and ambulances everywhere. I thought something really terrible must have happened," said Hubert Reckermann, a local man in his late 60s. "It's still unbelievable for me, but these days anything can happen. You can't really defend yourself against people with psychiatric problems."

Germany has been on especially high alert for jihadist attacks after several claimed by the Islamic State group. But "we know with high probability that it was a lone perpetrator, it was a German, not a refugee," said North Rhine-Westphalia state interior minister Herbert Reul. "We know with high probability that there was no Islamist background" to the Saturday afternoon attack, inflicted as locals and tourists enjoyed a sunny spring

day, he added. "It will take a few more hours and days" until the case is cleared up, Reul added.

'Deeply shaken'

Merkel said she was "deeply shaken" by the incident and pledged that "everything possible will be done to determine what was behind this act and to help the victims". The presidents of Russia and France, Vladimir Putin and Emmanuel Macron, as well as Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy sent their condolences. The attack is the latest in a string across Europe in which vehicles have been used to attack crowds of people in public places.

In a Berlin assault in December 2016, Tunisian asylum-seeker Anis Amri hijacked a truck and murdered its Polish driver before killing another 11 people and wounding dozens more by ploughing the heavy vehicle through a Christmas market. He was shot dead by Italian police in Milan four days later while on the run. In France, the Islamic State group claimed a 2016 truck attack in Nice on its July 14 national holiday that killed 86. And in Spain, the jihadists also claimed a rampage along Barcelona's Las Ramblas boulevard in August 2017 that killed 14 and left more than 100 injured. —AFP

“ It was a German, not a refugee ”

Israel defense minister claims 'no innocent people' in Gaza Strip

JERUSALEM: Israeli Defence Minister Avigdor Lieberman said yesterday there were "no innocent people" in the Hamas-run Gaza Strip after days of protests and clashes left 30 Palestinians dead, including a journalist. "There are no innocent people in the Gaza Strip," Lieberman told Israel's public radio. "Everyone's connected to Hamas, everyone gets a salary from Hamas, and all the activists trying to challenge us and breach the border are Hamas military wing activists."

Israel has faced mounting questions over its use of live fire after 10 days of protests and clashes along the Gaza Strip border in which its forces have killed 30 Palestinians, according to Gaza's health ministry. Violence spiked again on Friday, when clashes erupted as thousands protested along the border, and nine Palestinians, including a journalist, were killed.

Lieberman seemed to suggest the journalist was using a drone when he was killed, but two people who said they were with him on Friday rejected it. "We know that in many instances Hamas has used journalists and the media and the Red Crescent and ambulances to carry out terror activities," Lieberman alleged. "Whoever flies a drone over (Israeli) forces,

over our soldiers—we won't take any chances." The journalist, Yasser Murtaja, 30, had been known to use a drone for photos and video, but two journalists who were with him said he had not been using it on Friday. Ashraf Abu Amra and Hosam Salem both said he was a couple of hundred meters from the border when he was shot. "He was using a normal video camera all day," Abu Amra said.

An AFP picture taken after he was wounded showed Murtaja wearing a press vest as he received treatment. The Palestinian Journalists' Syndicate said that a total of six journalists were hit by gunfire on Friday. Israel's army said it "does not intentionally target journalists". "The circumstances in which journalists were allegedly hit by Israeli

Defense Force fire are not familiar to the IDF, and are being looked into," it said in a statement. On March 30, Israeli forces killed 19 Palestinians as a protest by tens of thousands led to clashes and the bloodiest day since a 2014. There have been no reported Israeli casualties. Israel says it has only opened fire when necessary to stop damage to the border fence, infiltrations and attempted attacks.

It alleges Hamas, the Islamist movement that runs the Gaza Strip and with whom it has fought three wars since 2008, is seeking to use the protests as cover to carry out violence. But rights groups have harshly criticized Israeli soldiers' actions, and Palestinians say protesters are being shot while posing no threat to troops. The European Union and UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres have called for an independent investigation, which Israel has rejected. On Saturday, the European Union raised questions over whether Israeli troops engaged in "proportionate use of force". —AFP



LONDON: Protesters shout slogans and hold placards during a demonstration on Whitehall opposite Downing Street. —AFP

International

Teachers protesting across the US reflect deepening malaise

‘We’ve never seen a brushfire like this’

OKLAHOMA CITY: Recent protests by thousands of teachers in far-flung parts of the United States reflect a deepening malaise in American education after years of budget cuts and stagnant salaries that have left many instructors feeling their work is not valued. “We’ve never seen a brushfire like this,” National Education Association president Lily Eskelsen Garcia said.

In the central and southern states of Oklahoma and Kentucky, thousands of public school teachers—supported by students and their parents—have been occupying the halls of state legislatures. The last time Oklahoma saw such a teacher protest was 1990, and that lasted only four days. But now, hundreds of schools have been closed and the strikes are expected to continue into the coming week.

Teachers in the southwestern state of Arizona are expected to join the protest movement. The various protests have taken their inspiration from a similar—and successful—movement in West Virginia. School administrators and a majority of parents appear to be supporting the protests, while celebrities like singer Carrie Underwood have turned to social media to proclaim their solidarity.

“Yes, I expect we’ll see this movement spreading to other states, because the school conditions, as well as the stagnant pay, are very widespread,” said Darleen Opfer, an education analyst at the Rand Corporation think-tank. She compared it to the exasperation of teachers and high school students whose impassioned “enough is enough” calls for gun control, after the mass shooting on February 14 at a Florida high school, prompted mass demonstrations nationwide.

“We’ve been seeing conditions in schools deteriorate, stagnate or increase school violence,” Opfer said. “The conditions are widespread enough we’d consider schools being in crisis.” In several states governed by Republicans, schools have suffered serious budget cuts as politicians seek to keep electoral promises to lower taxes. The trend

grew rapidly after the 2008 financial crisis. In the United States, public schools are funded mainly by state and local governments, with the federal government offering only targeted subsidies to help, for example, with the education of handicapped children.

Vast inequalities

The schools thus reflect vast funding inequalities across the country. Affluent areas feature gleaming school buildings with all the bells and whistles, from immaculately groomed football fields with high-tech scoreboards to well-stocked libraries and amply supplied science labs. Schools in poorer regions struggle on paltry budgets, with underpaid teachers sometimes having to take second jobs to make ends meet.

A brain-drain of teachers moving from low-wage states to others where they can earn far more has left the poorer states struggling

to recruit even marginally qualified replacements. The overall result is chronic underperformance by American students on the international student assessment tests known as PISA, organized by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

American students place far behind Finland, South Korea and Estonia, among others. Nor has the veritable mania for standardized testing in American schools done much to help. Many states rely on the results of such exams—often involving the controversial use of multiple-choice questions—to weigh the work of schools and teachers, with potential consequences on pay and careers.

In the face of the public schools’ serious challenges, many parents opt to send their children to private schools—but these can cost around \$20,000 a year per student, or even more. In this country passionately attached to individualism and free choice, so-called charter schools have steadily gained popularity. These schools receive public funding and must apply local standards but generally have



OKLAHOMA CITY: Oklahoma teachers rally at the state capitol in Oklahoma City, April 4, 2018, as Oklahoma becomes the latest state to be plagued by teacher strike. —AFP

greater freedom from certain laws and regulations, and face less accountability than do public schools.

Old-style approaches

Some of these schools offer old-style approaches—requiring students to wear uniforms, applying strict discipline and employing classic methods—while others experiment with progressive teaching methods, including interdisciplinary teaching and individual projects designed to stimulate creativity. Some parents swear by these schools, but others—and the major public teachers’ unions—accuse them of siphoning off resources, and sometimes the more talented students, from public schools.

This has been a key complaint against Education Secretary Betsy DeVos, who is accused of favoring charter

and private schools to the detriment of public education. Faced with American students’ poor results on international tests, a state-based movement arose several years ago to try to raise education standards through a program known as “Common Core.”

A majority of the 50 states have now adopted Common Core standards, setting objectives for students from kindergarten through high school—a dramatic change for a country where education is highly decentralized and standards in some places have been low. But some states—notably Massachusetts and New York—already have high-performing school systems. New York offers specialized public high schools—in arts, science, politics and literature—that are highly prestigious and merit-based. And they are free. —AFP

US approves license for Taiwan submarine plan

TAIPEI: Washington has agreed to allow US defense contractors help Taiwan construct its own submarines, Taipei said, welcoming the breakthrough in long-standing ambitions to build up its fleet to counter the threat from China. Taiwan last year launched a plan to manufacture its own submarines amid deteriorating relations with China after its hopes of buying them from the US came to nothing.

The US State Department has approved granting the license necessary to sell Taiwan the technology needed for its submarine project. The approval was a “breakthrough,” Taiwan defense ministry spokesman Chen Chung-chi said yesterday. “It is part of a process. We’ll take it step by step,” he said, declining to provide further details.

The agreement is likely to anger Beijing, which regards the island as part of its territory even though the two sides have been ruled separately since the end of a civil war in 1949. Washington’s approval comes after President Donald Trump last month signed new rules allowing top-level US officials to travel to Taiwan. China has protested at the move, saying the US should stop official exchanges with Taiwan to avoid “damaging Sino-US relations”.

Washington switched diplomatic recognition from Taiwan to China in 1979 but maintains trade relations with the island and is its main arms supplier. Since coming to power in May 2016, President Tsai Ing-wen has pushed for Taiwan to develop and build more of its weapons domestically. Her office expressed thanks to Washington for the license approval.

“The US government’s decision will not only help Taiwan in raising its defense capabilities, it will also greatly benefit security and stability in the region,” it said in a statement Saturday. Taipei has long struggled to procure submarines from the US. In April 2001 then-president George W. Bush approved the sale of eight conventional submarines but there had been no progress on the deal, prompting Taipei’s decision to build its own. —AFP

4 killed in attack on Iraq party HQ

RAMADI: A suicide attack targeting a political party headquarters in western Iraq has killed four people and injured seven others, including a candidate in polls set for May, officials said yesterday. On Saturday evening “two suicide bombers disguised as soldiers entered the Al-Hal Party headquarters”, one of most prominent parties in the Sunni-majority province of Al-Anbar, a local security official told AFP on the condition of anonymity.

One of the attackers “detonated his explosive belt while political leaders held a meeting” at the campaign headquarters in the city of Hit, about 200 kilometers west of Baghdad. General Qassam Al-Mohammadi, head of army operations in the area, told AFP. “Three members of the security forces were killed and seven people, including candidate Zineb Abdel Hamid Al-Hiti, were wounded,” he said.

A municipal employee yesterday also succumbed to injuries sustained in the attack, the anonymous official said. He said the second attacker detonated his belt shortly after the first, but did not cause any casualties. Medical sources confirmed the death toll of four and said Hiti had been hospitalised with light injuries. —AFP

Lula spends first day of 12-year prison sentence

CURITIBA: Leftist icon Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva spent yesterday as Brazil’s first ex-president to be imprisoned for a common crime—and his cell was in the headquarters of the giant anti-graft probe that brought him down. The first day of Lula’s 12-year sentence marked the downfall of once one of the world’s most popular politicians.

Although Brazilian presidents of recent history have routinely ended up in trouble—impeached, brought down by a coup and even one suicide—Lula is the first to have been convicted of corruption and locked up. His new home is a roughly 160 square foot cell in the federal police headquarters in Curitiba, the southern city where the “Car Wash” probe is based.

Named after a service station where agents initially uncovered a relatively small money laundering operation, “Car Wash” has turned into one of the world’s biggest ever examples of such a probe, netting scores of top politicians, some of Brazil’s richest businessmen, and sending shock waves through Latin America. Lula was found guilty last year of taking a luxury apartment as a bribe from a construction company and is “Car Wash’s” biggest scalp—though Lula says the conviction was rigged.

Dramatic showdown

The former two-term president arrived by police helicopter on the roof of the lock-up in Curitiba late Saturday. As the helicopter landed, demonstrators outside let off volleys of fireworks, while riot police fired tear gas, filling the air with explosions and smoke. Eight people were lightly injured, including one hit by a rubber bullet, the fire department said.

It was a fittingly chaotic end to four days of intense tension as Brazil wondered whether the Workers’ Party founder would finally be put behind bars. Lula, who despite the scandal leads easily in polls ahead of October presidential elections, tried to get his sentence delayed in a marathon appeal at the Supreme Court in



SAO PAULO: Brazilian former president Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva waves from a window of the Metallurgical Union, in Sao Bernardo do Campo. —AFP

Brasilia on Wednesday. When that was turned down, he engaged in a standoff with authorities in his hometown of Sao Bernardo do Campo, outside Sao Paulo. Surrounded by thousands of supporters at the metalworkers’ union building in the suburb, he brazenly ignored an order to turn himself in by Friday.

On Saturday, he agreed to be taken into custody, only to find himself blockaded by his own supporters, with a crowd mobbing his car, shouting “Don’t surrender, stay here Lula!” At last, surrounded by bodyguards, Lula pushed through the seething throng of supporters on foot late Saturday, then got into a police vehicle and was taken to Sao Paulo airport for the flight to Curitiba. A jail cell with extremely good conditions by the standards of Brazil’s often violent, desperately overcrowded prisons—including a hot private shower and toilet—awaited him.

Fireworks and tears

After his arrest, fireworks and cheering broke out in parts of Brasilia, Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo and other cities among those who long considered Lula responsible for the tide of graft sweeping over Brazilian politics. But supporters cried openly at the exit of a man they remember for removing tens of millions of people from poverty and for connecting with voters in a way few, if any, other modern Brazilian politicians have managed. With Lula almost certainly knocked out of the presidential election, the race is likely to be thrown wide open. In polls, he currently scores more than double his nearest rivals. However, analysts say that instability in Brazil means surprises remain possible. The next potentially explosive legal development could come as early as next Wednesday, when local media report that the Supreme Court may revisit the current law on incarceration during appeals. —AFP

Migrant caravan members protest in Mexican capital

MEXICO CITY: Armed with placards blasting US President Donald Trump, some 100 members of a caravan of migrants crossing Mexico demonstrated Saturday in central Mexico City, from where some will push on to the US border. “If they kick us out, we’ll go back. No to Trump,” one of the banners read, placed on the steps of the Angel of Independence monument.

Among the migrants was Yanci Flores, 22, a Salvadoran travelling with her two-year-old son. She said her son’s father was killed by gang members. As her toddler played with a plastic pistol, Flores said her plan “is to go to the United States to be able to work, to be able to leave behind all the violence of my country. If I go back, they will kill us.”

Later, the migrants assembled in front of the US embassy nearby, displaying more anti-Trump slogans and messages hitting out at deportations from the US. The caravan, an annual event held since 2010,

assembled in Tapachula, on the border with Guatemala, on March 25. Its members—mostly from Honduras, but also from El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua—originally planned to travel en masse to the US border.

However, the caravan started breaking up on Thursday in southern Mexico after organizers said it had abandoned its goal of reaching the US border and would end its activities with the rally in Mexico City. Their initial plan had prompted fury from Trump, who renewed threats to abandon the NAFTA trade pact if Enrique Pena Nieto’s government did not act to break up the caravan, and ordered troops to be deployed to secure the southern US border with Mexico.

The US states of Texas and Arizona announced Friday they would send National Guard troops to the Mexican border—with Texas deploying 250 within 72 hours while Arizona planning to send 150 personnel next week. The measure, criticized in the US, was dismissed by Irineo Mujica, of activist group Pueblo Sin Fronteras, which organized the caravan. “(The migrants) do not represent a threat for the troops because most of them are going to request asylum ... it is pure show,” she said. —AFP



ANAPRA: A young Mexican boy is pictured peering from the Mexican side of the Border Fence. — AFP

International

Smiles and slapstick as Rohingya refugees learn to corral elephants

Dozen Rohingyas have been killed in the last year by elephants

KUTUPALONG CAMP: A trumpet fills the air as two "elephants" charge, scattering Rohingya refugee actors at a training session in a camp which cuts deep into Bangladeshi forest once reserved for the protected species. Part awareness raising, part pantomime, the scenario uses life-size puppets of elephants made from bamboo and old clothing and expertly propelled by volunteers.

Each charge - and exaggerated counter by bands of Rohingya villagers - draws squeals of delight from the children crowded around a dusty paddy field. But the purpose of the training day is sobering - a dozen Rohingyas have been killed in the last year by wild elephants whose habitat has been consumed by Kutupalong refugee camp.

With hundreds of thousands of new refugees driven over the border since last August by violence in Myanmar, the camp now seeps deeper into the forest. Refugees are stripping trees for firewood and building settlements on the bare hillocks. As a result, man and beast are increasingly coming into conflict. Training days are now being held to kindle harmony between the refugees and the estimated 35 to 45 elephants who are now their neighbors.

Older forest neighbor
"Elephants take the same migratory route, it's in their genetic memory. Now more than 600,000 Rohingyas are in the middle of that route," Raquibul Amin, country

director for the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) told AFP on Saturday at Kutupalong camp. "The aim is to demystify the elephant as an enemy... and to try to train people to deal with elephants when they encounter them," he said, of a training event held in conjunction with the UNHCR.

Rohingya volunteers show how to safely corral an elephant that strays into settled areas and use whistles and human chains to drive them away. The mock-up elephants are covered by a 'skin' made from old clothing donated and stitched by Rohingya women - part of efforts to bond the new community with their older forest neighbor. The drama plays out under a scorching sun, bringing a rare community event to people whose villages lie in ruins across the border.

Delighted by the break in the humdrum camp life, children jump up and down in real elephant prints, hardened into the abandoned paddy. Rina Aktar, 10, recalls her alarming encounter with a 'Hati' (elephant), her arms at full stretch to indicate its enormity. "I was collecting firewood in the forest when I saw it... it was so big, I just ran away." Her fears are valid.

The last death happened in late March when a bull elephant followed a path up a hillside crammed with Rohingya homes.

It adds to the tension and stress of a Muslim minority unwanted in Myanmar and forced from their homes by



The training day is sobering



UKHIA: This photo taken on April 7, 2018 shows Rohingya refugee attending a demonstration of elephant resistance arranged by the UNHCR and IUCN at the Kutupalong refugee camp. —AFP

last year's army campaign. With repatriation for now appearing a pipe dream, Rohingya communities nearest the forest are preparing for more unwelcome run-ins with elephants. But at least now some of the

refugees are equipped to deal with them. "I have handled elephants three times already since I have been here," said UNHCR elephant volunteer Nabi Hussein. "I didn't panic." —AFP

News in brief

Pope condemns chemical weapons

VATICAN CITY: Pope Francis yesterday condemned the use of chemical weapons in Syria after a suspected attack in an opposition holdout in Eastern Ghouta killed dozens of people. "Terrible news comes to us from Syria with dozens of victims, many of them women and children... so many people are struck by the effects of the chemical substances in the bombs," the pope told thousands of people gathered in St Peter's Square. "There is not a good war and a bad one, and nothing, nothing can justify the use of such devices of extermination against defenseless people and populations," he added. Renewed air strikes have hit Douma, the last rebel-held town near Damascus, where first responders accused forces loyal to President Bashar Al-Assad of using "poisonous chlorine gas" in attacks on Saturday. "Pray for political and military leaders to choose the other path, that of negotiation, the only one that can bring peace that is not that of death and destruction," the pope said. —AFP

Pakistan summons US ambassador

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan said yesterday it had summoned the US ambassador to lodge a protest over the death of a motorcyclist who was killed in a collision with a US diplomatic vehicle. A second person was injured in the accident at traffic lights in Islamabad on Saturday evening, involving two men on a motorcycle and the embassy sports utility vehicle. "The US ambassador expressed his deep sympathy and sadness over the loss of life and assured that the embassy would fully cooperate in the investigation," the foreign office said in a statement. Police said Atiq Baig, 22, died of head injuries while his cousin, who was also on the motorbike, was injured. They said the SUV was being driven by the embassy's defense and air attaché, who gave a statement at a local police station and was released. —AFP

Egypt army kills jihadists

CAIRO: Egypt's military said yesterday it has killed four jihadists in Sinai in recent days, in an ongoing campaign to quash the extremists based in the peninsula. Two suspected jihadists and 250 "wanted and suspected criminals" have been arrested, it said in a statement. More than 100 jihadists and at least 22 soldiers have been killed in the wider-ranging operation launched on February 9, according to army figures. Security forces have sought to quell attacks by an Egyptian jihadist group that later declared allegiance to the Islamic State group (IS) since the military ousted Islamist president Mohamed Morsi in 2013, following mass protests against him. The group has killed hundreds of soldiers, policemen and civilians, mainly in its North Sinai stronghold but also elsewhere in Egypt. The jihadists have also killed scores of Christians in church bombings and shootings. —AFP

Alcohol kills 24 in Indonesia

JAKARTA: Eleven Indonesians died yesterday and several others are critically ill after drinking bootleg liquor, police said, days after the death of 24 others from illicit alcohol. The latest victims were among 27 people admitted to hospital after sampling homemade alcoholic drinks in Cicalengka district in West Java province, provincial police spokesman Trunoyudo Wisnu Andiko told AFP. "We are investigating the shop that sold the illegal liquor," he said, adding no one had yet been arrested. In a separate case over the past week 24 people have died in the capital Jakarta after drinking homemade liquor sold by a herbal drink seller. The seller, who has been arrested, admitted he had mixed pure alcohol with Coca-Cola and an energy drink, police said. There have been a series of deaths from bootleg liquor in the Muslim-majority country. Police said they are chasing other sellers and distributors of homebrew. —AFP

Japan's vaunted alert system hits obstacles

TOKYO: On January 5, as Tokyo's commuters were struggling back to work after their long New Year break, blaring sirens from every phone pierced the sleepy atmosphere: "strong" earthquake coming. The message delivered via the country's alert system, part of its much-hyped J-Alert mechanism, warned of a big one directly hitting the Japanese capital - potentially on the scale of the devastating 2011 earthquake that wrought massive destruction.

Millions braced for impact... but it never came. It turned out that the system, which aims to give a precious few seconds to find shelter before a major earthquake strikes, had been tricked by an unusual seismological coincidence. Two minor tremors struck at almost exactly the same time in separate locations, making the alert system mistakenly believe a massive jolt was on its way, the meteorological agency admitted.

Even Prime Minister Shinzo Abe was caught off-guard with TV footage showing him checking his phone as alarms echoed in his office ahead of a cabinet meeting. It was not the first false alarm for the system, a major component of Japan's J-Alert launched with great fanfare in 2007 as a way to save lives in a country constantly under threat of earthquakes and - more recently - North Korean missiles.

Several countries have introduced similar early warning systems for major earthquakes, with most focused on a particular, quake-prone area. But Japan's system is unique in its breadth of coverage, said Issei Suganuma, a scientific officer at the meteorological agency. "Our system covers the entire country with some 1,000 observation points across the nation," he said proudly.

'Safety tips'

At the agency's Tokyo headquarters, at least seven uniformed officers keep watch around the clock in the earthquake observation room. Large screens hang on the walls showing real-time seismic waveform data. In the case of a cataclysmic earthquake, they detect initial minor tremors through seismometers and immediately warn local governments via J-Alert seconds before the first strong jolt is felt.

The agency also directly sends SMS messages and whooping alarms to local residents' phones. Broadcasters receive signals to flash breaking news alerts and bullet train services are immediately suspended. When the 9.0-magnitude earthquake hit Japan in 2011, the system successfully warned residents between six and 40 seconds

Runaway train rolls for miles without engine

NEW DELHI: India's railway ministry said yesterday a "ghastly" accident was narrowly avoided after 22 train coaches carrying some 1,000 passengers became detached from the engine and sped backwards for miles before being stopped. The runaway carriages in the eastern state of Odisha rolled for 12 kilometers before being brought to a shuddering halt by rocks placed on the tracks by railway staff.

A spokesman for the railway ministry's eastern division said none of about 1,000 passengers were injured in the incident Saturday night. But seven railway employees who did not follow proper procedures have been suspended and an investigation launched into how the carriages became separated during the journey from the western state of Gujarat to Odisha, said spokesman JP Mishra.

Authorities believe that brakes applied when carriages are detached or attached to the engine were either incorrectly used or overlooked altogether. "Something ghastly could have happened and it was averted by alert staff. Safety cannot be compromised," Mishra said, adding "more heads are likely to roll". "Everybody in the railways (ministry) is aghast and shocked."

Mobile footage posted on social media showed the carriages speeding past a railway platform as helpless onlookers screamed and yelled at passengers to pull the train's emergency brake. More than 22 million passengers commute daily on some 9,000 trains across India. The incident is just latest to beset the creaking rail network, which dates back to the colonial era.

Last November 13 coaches of an express train derailed in northern India, killing three and leaving nine injured. A year before that, 146 people died in a similar disaster. A 2012 government report said almost 15,000 people were killed in various ways every year on India's railways and described the loss of life as an annual "massacre". —AFP



TOKYO: This picture taken on March 9, 2018 shows residents, office and shop workers at and around the Roppongi Hills shopping complex taking part in a disaster drill. —AFP

before the first major jolt. The J-Alert system also warns of missiles, particularly relevant during a rise in tensions with North Korea last year. In the case of a missile launch, US spy satellites or Japanese Aegis ships detect the initial signals and transmit them to Japan's defense ministry. The ministry swiftly plots the course and speed of the missiles before the prime minister's office triggers the system, issuing a warning between two and five minutes before they fly over the country. With the 2020 Tokyo Olympics looming and 40 million tourists expected to visit, the government has started providing alerts in multiple languages through a "safety tips" app.

'Not good enough'

But J-Alert has also faced criticism. In addition to technical difficulties that can result in false alarms, many feel the warnings do not come soon enough. When North Korean missiles flew over Japan in August and September, residents complained there was no time to find shelter. "We were told to go inside a stable building or underground, but how can we find such places in a few minutes?" said Atsuko Koide, 64, a housewife in Akita, north-

ern Japan. "It's especially useless for elderly people who can't move quickly," Koide said.

A government survey conducted last year found just five percent of respondents actually evacuated or took protective measures in response to the missile warnings. Some respondents said they had no time or did not know where to go, while others said evacuation was pointless. "J-Alert alone is not good enough," said Mitsuru Fukuda, professor of risk management at Nihon University in Tokyo. "It is clear that there is a limit to what the country and local governments can do," Fukuda said.

Fukuda urged authorities to raise people's awareness of the measures they can take to protect themselves before government help arrives, saying: "It is individuals who decide and act after a warning." Following the false alarm earlier this year, the meteorological agency has introduced a new analysis tool to avoid mistaking multiple smaller quakes for a single big one. However, agency officer Suganuma acknowledged the system's limitations. "Since we have to issue a warning in quite a limited time, sometimes things may not go as planned... It's hard to achieve 100 percent for sure," he said. —AFP

B'desh sentences man to death for union leader murder

DHAKA: A Bangladesh court yesterday sentenced a man to death in absentia for murdering a union leader who led strikes in the powerful garment industry. A court in the northern district of Tangail ordered that factory worker Mustafizur Rahman be hanged for kidnapping and murdering high-profile unionist Aminul Islam in 2012.

Trade union groups rejected the sentence, saying Rahman was being singled out to cover up for powerful groups involved in Islam's murder.

Islam's mutilated body was found by the roadside in Tangail a few days after he disappeared from Ashulia, the major garment hub on the outskirts of Dhaka. All his toes had been broken and his legs bore serious puncture wounds. State prosecutor Multan Uddin said Islam was likely targeted as a prominent labor activist who spearheaded major strikes over wages at garment factories.

"Aminul waged a struggle for the interest

of workers. Perhaps the people whose interest was affected murdered him in a pre-planned manner," Uddin said. Police have not named any other suspects in Islam's murder. Rahman has been on the run since the killing, according to them. Bangladesh is the world's second-largest clothing manufacturer, with \$30 billion worth of garments exported in 2017 from the impoverished nation where labour is cheap.

The garment sector accounts for 80 per cent of Bangladesh's exports and is the mainstay of its emerging economy. Islam was instrumental in orchestrating major stoppages in 2006 and 2010, forcing thousands of companies to raise wages for about four million factory workers. Unions believe his murder was engineered by powerful people including members of an intelligence service and factory owners.

"We're not satisfied. We'll appeal. We've sought a fresh investigation," Bangladesh Garment and Industrial Workers Federation president Babul Akter said. The Bangladesh Centre for Worker Solidarity, a trade union, said Islam had been detained and tortured by officials from the government's labour office during the 2010 protest. —AFP

International

Students, teachers rush back to class in IS-free east Syria

‘The children are studying, so they can at least read and write’

DEIR EZZOR: Her name means “dreams” in Arabic and schoolteacher Ahlam is finally realizing hers—returning to her beloved classroom after years of jihadist rule over her eastern Syrian hometown. Perched on school benches in their bright coats, excited young boys and girls chant in unison as they count the cherries she has drawn in chalk on the blackboard.

The Islamic State group overran large swathes of Syria in 2014, with the jihadists imposing their own rigid interpretation of Islam on residents. They opened their own schools, banning music and the arts, and dispensed brutal punishments to those who did not adhere to their ultra-conservative values. Ahlam says the jihadists tried to recruit her to teach in one of their schools in her hometown of Al-Shamatiyah, near Deir Ezzor city.

She refused, opting to teach her children in secret at home and eking out a living from an orchard she tended to with her husband, an agricultural engineer. “I thought there would no longer be a future for our children—no schooling, no rights,” recalls Ahlam. “But thank God, the children are studying, so they can at least read and write,” she tells AFP, her hair covered by a blue headscarf.

Since a Syrian government offensive ousted the jihadists from Deir Ezzor city and nearby territory in late 2017, teachers and pupils alike have rushed back to the classroom. At 13, Mohammad Al-Ragheb shyly admits he does not know how to read or write, having spent the years under IS rein outside of school. “I should be in eighth grade now, but I wasn’t able to go to school,” he said. He now sits excitedly in a crisp classroom in eastern Syria, awaiting his lesson.

Returning to campus

According to Deir Ezzor’s education directorate, the

fighting in the region meant some 200,000 students went without proper schooling for five years, with around 5,000 teachers out of work. Now, the directorate says, dozens of schools have reopened and around 45,000 students are back in school. Some 6,000 students are also resuming their studies at the Euphrates University in Deir Ezzor, capital of the province of the same name.

Its main buildings lie in a western part of the city that remained under Syrian government control but was under siege for years by IS fighters holding the rest. But some of the faculties—such as those of medicine and agriculture—lie in areas that were seized by the jihadists. Student Mona Al-Nasser, now 24, was getting ready to graduate when IS swept across the desert province in 2014.

Their advance trapped her under jihadist reign in her hometown of Mayadeen, 50 kilometers away. “All I wanted to do was study. I’m so happy to be back today, and I hope

those other days never return,” says Nasser. Hanging over one lecture hall’s entrance are portraits of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and his father and predecessor, Hafez. Inside, students are silently working on an Arabic language exam. Some are hunched over their papers, writing furiously without pause. Others furrow their brows, thinking hard, before tackling the question.

Home again

Amina, 23, has travelled to her class all the way from Raqa—more than 130 kilometers to the west. Her city was the de-facto capital of IS’s brutal “caliphate,” but was captured in October by a US-backed alliance that has rivaled Russian-backed Syrian troops. “I was besieged in Raqa for three years and could not resume my studies. I was in my second year,” she said.

“It was a very difficult period. I tried as hard as I could to leave Raqa, but I needed a miracle.” Now that



DEIR EZZOR: A Syrian teacher shows letters on a board at school in the village of Al-Shamatiyah on the outskirts of Deir Ezzor. —AFP

Amina is back in school, she has picked up where she left off as a sophomore. “It feels so wonderful to be back in class, because that’s what determines your future in the end,” she says. Even as IS lost its military grip on Deir Ezzor, the jihadists left unexploded mines all across the city and its entrances, barring the way for students and residents in general.

Syrian military personnel have spent months clearing away those explosives, and displaced residents

have started to repopulate the city. After spending hours clearing their damaged home, Umm Bilal and her family take a short break in the middle of their ravaged street. They light a bonfire to stay warm and gaze quietly at the mountains of rubble and burnt car carcasses around them. Still, Umm Bilal says, home is home. “Sitting amidst the destruction is beautiful, because your house is your property. No one can make you leave,” she says. —AFP

Kremlin cracking down on Internet to muzzle critics

MOSCOW: As Vladimir Putin starts his fourth Kremlin term, authorities are turning up the heat on popular websites and apps ostensibly to fight terrorism but analysts say the real motive is to muzzle critics. A move this week to block the strongly encrypted messenger Telegram, less than a month after Putin’s crushing poll win, marks a new stage in the crackdown launched after his previous victory in 2012.

Telegram, which has 200 million users and is ironically the go-to messaging app for top Kremlin officials, was specifically designed by Russian developers to circumvent the Kremlin’s security forces. Putin has gradually brought media, primarily television, under state control since the early 2000s. Experts say the Kremlin recognizes the internet as the principal threat to its domination and one of the last refuges of free speech—especially after it helped fuel unprecedented mass demonstrations when Putin returned to the presidency six years ago after four years as prime minister.

‘Internet freedoms’

“The Kremlin got scared and responded with an attack on internet freedoms,” said Andrei Soldatov, editor-in-chief of Agentura.ru, a site monitoring the security services. In the summer of 2012, Russia created a blacklist of sites showing child pornography or drug use and also those deemed to be “extremist”—a term vague enough to include opposition activism. The professed intention of the move was to protect children from harmful content online.

Two years later, the parliament unleashed a barrage of new anti-terrorist laws, including a ruling that blogs with more than 3,000 viewers per day must face the same strict regulations as news media. Since then, Russian and foreign internet providers have been legally obliged to store the data of their Russian users in Russia.

This led to the blocking of professional networking site LinkedIn, which did not comply. Subsequently, new legislation citing terror threats has forced all “distributors of information”—including bloggers and even social media platform VK (formerly VKontakte), its owner Mail.ru, and internet giant Yandex — to retain all user data for six



MOSCOW: A photo taken on April 6, 2018 shows a view of the Kremlin towers and cathedrals. —AFP

months and provide it to the authorities on request. Under the latest measure imposed late last year, the authorities are able to ban VPN services that allow users to bypass Russian site blocks by simulating a connection from another country.

‘Spread fear’

This legislative onslaught has been widely used against the opposition, who are ignored by mainstream news media but are active online. Rights groups have also been hit hard. The blog and website of the main opposition figure, Alexei Navalny, have been blocked partially or completely several times over his calls for street protests or exposes of official corruption.

Sites used by the opposition organization of former oil tycoon Mikhail Khodorkovsky, who now lives in London,

were also blocked after they were designated “undesirable”—a new term for foreign entities that has also been used against the foundation of the US financier George Soros. “The purpose is to spread fear, (to) make people think that the state controls everything and that you can’t hide anywhere, that all data can be collected,” said Sarkis Darbinyan, a lawyer and director of a digital rights centre in Moscow.

But Russia cannot simply impose a local version of China’s “Great Firewall” cutting off all access to sites, he said. “Unlike China, where the internet was constrained since the beginning, Russian internet started off as very free,” he said. Ultimately global players like Facebook, Twitter, Google, WhatsApp and Telegram who want to operate in Russia will have to comply with state restrictions or get blocked, he said, adding it’s only “a matter of time.” —AFP

Turkey departs hundreds of Afghan migrants after influx

ISTANBUL: Turkey was yesterday deporting hundreds of Afghan migrants back home on special flights, in a major operation after thousands illegally entered the country in recent weeks. Early yesterday morning 227 Afghan migrants boarded a charter flight from Erzurum in northeastern Turkey back to Kabul, the Dogan news agency said.

It said a total of 691 Afghan migrants would be deported this week with two more flights expected from Erzurum to Kabul later. The flights are being provided by an Afghan airline. Dogan news agency quoted migration officials in Erzurum as saying Turkey planned to deport all 3,000 Afghan migrants who were currently in Erzurum. In Kabul, officials denied that the refugees were being deported, insisting they were coming back home at their own

choice. “A number of Afghan refugees are coming back to the country of their own will,” said Islamuddin Jurat, spokesman for the ministry of refugees and repatriations. “They are the ones who wanted to use Turkey as a transit route to other countries, but when they failed they decided to come back.”

‘Will come back’

Turkey is a major hub for migrants from Afghanistan and other troubled nations seeking to cross from Asia into Europe in search of better lives and work. Over a million migrants and refugees entered Europe largely through Turkey in 2015, prompting the EU to agree a deal with Ankara on curbing the migration in 2016.

There has been a major influx of migrants into Turkey from conflict-plagued Afghanistan in recent weeks, with reports saying almost 18,000 have entered the country illegally in the last three months. The Afghan migrants are believed to have crossed from Iran into Turkey’s eastern Van province and then moved—sometimes walking on highways on foot—to Erzurum, one of the major cities of Turkey’s east.

The deportations came as Turkish Prime Minister Binali Yildirim visited Kabul for talks with Afghan leaders. Yesterday, he



KABUL: Afghan Chief Executive Officer Abdullah Abdullah (R) shakes hands with Prime Minister of Turkey Binali Yildirim after a press conference at Sapedar palace. —AFP

met Afghanistan’s chief executive Abdullah Abdullah. Turkish state media quoted Yildirim as saying at a news conference with Abdullah in Kabul that Turkey was grateful for Afghanistan’s cooperation over the issue.

“There is no problem here,” said Yildirim. But Turkish television carried

interviews with some of the migrants about to be deported—many of whom spoke excellent Turkish—who insisted that they would try and come back to Turkey. “Of course (I will try to come back),” one woman, who was not named, told the CNN Turk channel. “Back home, there is unemployment and a lack of security.” —AFP

Remorseless Seselj still dreams about ‘Greater Serbia’

BELGRADE: Vojislav Seselj has no remorse over his role in the wars in the former Yugoslavia. Now 63, the ultra-nationalist Serb is again an MP in the parliament in Belgrade and has no regrets. “We will never give up the idea of a Greater Serbia,” he insists. A close ally of the late Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic, Seselj was found not guilty in 2016 of war crimes and crimes against humanity over the 1990s Balkans wars that claimed around 140,000 lives.

The radical Serbian leader had been accused of being behind the murders of scores of Croats, Muslims and other non-Serbs and Seselj’s acquittal in 2016 after an eight year trial at the Hague came as a major surprise. Croatia’s prime minister condemned the verdict as “shameful”. Two years on and UN war crimes judges will rule on Wednesday on an appeal brought by prosecutors. They allege that Seselj incited hatred through his fiery speeches on nationalism “seeking to unite all ‘Serb territories’ in a homogeneous state that he called ‘Greater Serbia’”. But in an interview with AFP, Seselj—who has always denied the charges said he will not go to the Hague for the hearing at the former International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), whose function has been taken over by the Mechanism for International Criminal Tribunals (MICT).

‘They are Serbs’

The political objective of his extreme-right Serbian Radical Party (SRS) remains “to unite within the same state all the territories where Serb people live,” he says, adding that Serbs have been divided “due to the will of big powers, Serbia’s traditional enemies”. Of course, he admits, Croats and Bosnian Muslims “are currently against” that program. “But we should continue convincing them that they are Serbs.” He states that “out of the Serbian nation’s body new nations have been formed artificially: two-thirds of today’s Croats are ancient Serbs of the Catholic faith, Croats today speak Serbian.”

And Bosnian Muslims are also of Serb origin, he claims. “They converted to Islam during the occupation of the Ottoman Empire.” In his eyes, the unification of Bosnia’s Serb-run entity Republika Srpska with Serbia is just a matter of time, because “that is the wish of the Serb people who live there”. As for Kosovo, which unilaterally declared independence in 2008, he said the former Serbian province with an ethnic Albanian majority “completely belongs to us”.

“No one in power (among Serbs) can recognize Kosovo because he would pay for it with his head,” he said. Seselj rejects the genocide label for the Srebrenica massacre, Europe’s worst atrocity since World War II when in July 1995 Bosnian Serb forces executed some 8,000 Muslim men and boys. “There was a crime, but not genocide,” he says.

The “crime”, he insists, was not committed by Serb authorities but by one man, the “Colonel Ljubisa Beara”, a former senior officer in the Bosnian Serb army, who died in detention in 2017. The Bosnian Serb wartime military chief Ratko Mladic, who was jailed for life at the Hague last year for genocide and other atrocities in the Balkan wars, including at Srebrenica, is “a hero” for Serbs, he says.

Seselj denies giving two speeches that prosecutors noted in his indictment. In one he allegedly encouraged Serbs “not to spare a person” during the 1991 siege of Vukovar in Croatia. In another a year later he described Muslims as “excrement” in the Serbian town of Mali Zvornik, according to prosecutors. “Lies,” says Seselj, who was released from ICTY detention and returned to Belgrade in 2014 to be treated for colon cancer, which he says he has beaten. —AFP

Analysis

Kuwait Times
Established 1961
The First Daily in The Arabian Gulf

THE LEADING INDEPENDENT
DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF
ESTABLISHED 1961

Founder and Publisher
YOUSUF S. AL-ALYAN

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

EDITORIAL : 24833199-24833358-24833432
ADVERTISING : 24835616/7
FAX : 24835620/1
CIRCULATION : 24833199 Extn. 163
ACCOUNTS : 24835619
COMMERCIAL : 24835618

P.O.Box 1301 Safat, 13014 Kuwait.
E MAIL: info@kuwaittimes.net
Website: www.kuwaittimes.net

Baghdad still in ruins 15 years after Saddam fell

After the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003 there were hopes its millennium-old capital Baghdad could rise again from the ashes, but construction sites have remained idle as if time stood still. For 15 years promises of rebuilding infrastructure in the second most populous Arab capital have fallen through and a multitude of projects have been shelved. Baghdad's skyline is dotted with the desolate sights of rusting cranes, while roads and bridges are gutted with potholes and craters from lack of maintenance.

Even the emblematic Fardous (paradise) Square, where a giant effigy of dictator Saddam Hussein was symbolically pulled down with the help of US Marines, remains to be revamped. Infrastructure across Baghdad, a city of 900 sq km, is in dire need of repairs. "Industry, education, health, agriculture... everything is now worse than it was during Saddam's rule," said businessman Sadeq al-Shomari.

In 2004 and again in 2007, international conferences were organized to rebuild Iraq and donors pledged massive funds for projects that have never materialized. Some of the funds allocated to rebuilding Baghdad have disappeared, according to Transparency International which ranks Iraq as the 12th most corrupt country in the world.

'40,000 thieves'

Teacher Zuheir Ouasmi blames it on corrupt officials who he says have pilfered Iraqi coffers, comparing his country's woes to the folk tale "Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves". Before 2003 "the wealth of Ali Baba was in the hands of the dictator but now 40,000 thieves have taken over Ali Baba's cave and the treasure", he said. As Baghdad's infrastructure worsens, its population has swelled mainly due to an influx of people who fled conflict zones elsewhere in Iraq to settle in the capital.

In 2003, the capital was home to 4.7 million but now the population of Baghdad is 7.2 million strong. During that same period the number of cars in the congested city also grew from 250,000 to more than two million vehicles. Daily power cuts plague the population who, in order to keep their refrigerators working and mobile phones charged, must rely on privately-owned generators.

The streets of the capital - wracked by years of sectarian violence after the US-led invasion that ousted Saddam and car bomb attacks - are some of the most congested in the world. Cement blocks have been erected to block off roads and render them more secure from 2003 onwards, and restaurants, cafes and shops have also used cement walls and sandbags as protection. Now that the violence has decreased, hundreds of streets have been reopened but roadblocks manned by security forces are still an obstacle course for motorists and pedestrians alike.

The iconic Rashid Street, which was built during World War I and until the 1970s was Baghdad's answer to the Champs-Élysées in Paris, is now dotted with "cement walls and roadblocks and rubble", bemoaned US-Iraqi architect Raya Alanie. "It is sad. Everything must be renovated," she said of Baghdad's heritage.

City within a city

Alanie recalled the heyday of the city, heart of the Abbasid Caliphate and the center of Arab and Muslim civilization for five centuries. Baghdad "was the first city to equip homes" along Abu Nawas Avenue which girds the Tigris River, "with solar energy" in the 1980s, when Saddam ruled over the country, she said. The Tigris is the city's green lung and on the other bank, behind barbed wire and cement fortifications, a small island can be seen.

There, in what is known as Baghdad's Green Zone, the grass is green and traffic along its wide avenues is rare. The fortified area houses the country's key institutions and it is where the US troops that invaded Baghdad in 2003 had set up their headquarters in Saddam's palace. The Green Zone is out of bounds for most Iraqis and only a few are privileged enough to have a pass to enter the area, which is also home to the US and British embassies. —AFP

CHEMICAL ATTACK IN SYRIA...



Signs of struggles on big US cases

Members of the US Supreme Court appeared to be struggling over how to resolve a key case recently when Justice Stephen Breyer suggested that the best course might be to put off a decision altogether. Breyer's remark, coming during a March 28 oral argument in a closely watched case involving the redrawing of electoral districts aimed at entrenching one party in power, illustrated the difficulty the nine justices seem to be having in producing rulings at their usual pace.

With five conservatives and four liberals, the court is ideologically divided, meaning common ground may be difficult to find. President Donald Trump's appointee Neil Gorsuch, who marks his first anniversary as a justice on Tuesday, restored the court's conservative majority after it was shorthanded and evenly split ideologically for 14 months. During their current term that began in October and runs through the end of June, the justices must resolve more weighty and difficult cases than usual. One of their biggest cases - deciding the legality of President Donald Trump's travel ban on several Muslim-majority countries - will not be heard until April 25.

The high court has issued only 18 rulings in cases already argued this term, lagging behind its normal pace. Numerous major cases have yet to be resolved, including one on Wisconsin electoral boundaries heard in October and the similar one heard last month involving the same practice of "partisan gerrymandering" in Maryland that prompted Breyer to suggest the justices rehear the whole matter in the future.

A divisive case pitting gay rights against religious liberty, involving a Christian baker who refused to make a wedding cake for a gay couple, was argued in December. Other major cases involve fees paid by non-members to unions representing public employees like police officers and teachers, the right of workers to

bring class-action claims against employers, the ability of police to obtain cellphone location data to tie criminal suspects to crimes and a California law regulating Christian-based anti-abortion facilities.

Supreme Court experts expect the justices to issue a larger-than-normal number of 5-4 rulings in the coming months. That would increase the chances of conservative Justice Anthony Kennedy, who sometimes sides with the court's four liberals in major cases, casting the deciding votes. "It's reasonable to suggest there are

a practice that can delay rulings. "There could just be new dynamics one way or another," said John Elwood, who has argued multiple cases before the Supreme Court.

Contentious issues

The impasse over partisan gerrymandering is first on display when the court heard arguments on Oct 3 in a challenge by Democratic voters to Republican-drawn state legislative districts in Wisconsin. Five months later, the justices appeared no closer to resolving the matter when they heard the similar Maryland dispute involving a Democratic-drawn US House of Representatives district.

The court seemed similarly divided in the worker class action case argued on Oct 2, the first day of the term. The justices will have to decide whether workers can be forced by companies to sign agreements waiving the right to bring class-action claims against their employer. Based on the Dec 5 oral argument, Kennedy will also be the deciding vote in the case of whether the Denver-area Christian baker can be penalized under a Colorado anti-discrimination law or whether the US Constitution's promise of free speech protects him.

The nine justices have not always been at odds with each other, even on contentious matters. There was no dissent when the court in February rejected Trump's bid to immediately end a program that protects hundreds of thousands of immigrants brought illegally into the United States as children. The court also showed no divisions when it declined to intervene in another electoral boundaries fight, this time in Pennsylvania. The slow pace of rulings may in part just be the result of scheduling, said Kannon Shanmugam, another regular Supreme Court lawyer. "The court has had hard, divisive cases earlier in the term," he said. "It's not surprising it might take a while." —Reuters

US Supreme Court pace slackens



going to be fewer unanimous decisions and more division," said Nicole Saharsky, a lawyer who often has argued cases before the court.

The court usually takes less time in issuing a ruling when the justices are unanimous. It has issued 11 unanimous rulings and seven with dissenting votes, including three that were 5-4. The court's most contentious rulings commonly are issued in June. Part of the slowdown in rulings may be related to the presence of Gorsuch, who has shown signs that he will be a strident conservative voice on the bench. Gorsuch also has exhibited a willingness to question the reasoning of his colleagues,

Lula behind bars: Deathblow for Latam's left?

With his ambitious social programs, his international standing and his extraordinary fate, Brazil's ex-president Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva was a potent symbol of Latin America's defiant left. Seeing him end up in jail is likely to deal a heavy blow to a generation of leaders.

Impact on Latin American left

"It is certainly a shock to see the man who, more than anyone, pioneered the 'new left' surge in Latin America, being sent to prison," said William LeoGrande, an expert in South American politics at the American University School of Public Affairs. His demise comes some two decades after Latin America was swept by the so-called "pink tide" that brought leftwing leaders to 15 of the region's countries.

"Lula is the candidate of the reformist, non-revolutionary left, more market-friendly. This more moderate left appears beaten, defeated because it bet on playing the democratic game and now it appears that these rules have harmed it," said Patricio Navia, an academic adviser at CADAL, the Center for the Opening and Development of Latin America. "And as a result, it will become more radical."

Whether it's the Odebrecht scandal, the economic downturn in Venezuela or Lula's conviction, they all point to a sim-

ilar conclusion, said Francisco Panizza, professor of Latin American politics at the London School of Economics. "These episodes reinforce the idea that the Latin American left has come to a sticky end: with these corruption scandals, leaders in jail or the economic crises in Brazil and Venezuela," he said. "It is something that (the left) will struggle to overcome."

A new martyr?

With his charisma, his trademark white beard and his crowds of adoring followers, Lula could easily continue to stir up the national and regional political scene from his cell. "Clearly, for many leftist movements, what's happened in Lula's case is political persecution in order to remove him. The problem with this argument is that it doesn't expand beyond leftist circles," said Panizza. And for many, he still remains a hero, said Peter Hakim of the Inter-American Dialogue think tank in Washington. "When Lula was president, the life and prospects for the poor - the very poor, Brazilians of color - was better than it had ever been: More jobs, higher pay, more social programs, expansion of education," he told AFP.

As the first Brazilian head of state to come from the working class, Lula combined business-friendly economic policy with social-welfare programs that helped lift tens of millions of people out of poverty. On Thursday, however, the Supreme Court rejected Lula's request to delay implementing his 12-year sentence for corruption while pursuing appeals against his 2017 conviction. If successful, it could have afforded him several more months of freedom, likely further bolstering his



Brazilian ex-president Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva is lifted by supporters after attending a Catholic Mass in memory of his late wife Marisa Leticia at the metalworkers' union building in Sao Bernardo do Campo in metropolitan Sao Paulo on Saturday. —AFP

chances in the upcoming presidential election in which he is the frontrunner. "What the court managed to do was to convert the October election into a referendum on Lula," Navia said.

The end of the left?

Hakim has little doubt that putting Lula behind bars signals the death of the left in Latin America. "The death of Fidel (Castro, Cuba's revolutionary hero), the gigantic failure of (longtime Venezuelan socialist Hugo) Chavez and (current President Nicolas) Maduro, the caudillismo of (Nicaragua's Daniel) Ortega... have together pushed the left to its weakest point in my memory," he said. "It's hard to imagine any resurgence, even recuperation."

Although there may yet be another

cycle, "it's hard to see what the left has to offer these days, unless it embraces markets, mainstream economic management and democratic government, as in Uruguay and Chile - and, to a great extent in Brazil, during the Lula presidency," Hakim added. Others are less pessimistic. "It's not the end of the left, but the end of a left - that which fought dictatorships and which benefited from the export boom" of raw materials in Latin America in the decade after the millennium, Navia said. But for LeoGrande, it is poverty that will keep the left in business. "So long as Latin American societies are marked by poverty, inequality and social exclusion, there will always be a challenge to the status quo from the left," he said. —AFP

News

Crypto traders use gold to draw...

Continued from Page 1

"We are trying to prove rules and regulations from sharia are fully compatible with digital blockchain technology."

Tens of millions of dollars worth of the currency have been issued so far. About 60 percent of the planned number of coins remains to be sold; OneGram hopes to issue them all before listing them on exchanges around end-May. OneGram obtained a ruling that its cryptocurrency conforms with Islamic principles from Dubai-based Al Maali Consulting. It is one of dozens of advisory firms around the world that offer their opinion on whether financial instruments meet sharia standards.

In Malaysia, HelloGold launched an initial offer of its gold-backed cryptocurrency in October, receiving approval from Islamic scholars at Kuala Lumpur-based Amanic Advisors. Manuel Ho, HelloGold's chief marketing officer, said its coin was Islamic as transactions occurred within a defined period, making them less volatile and addressing the issue of ambiguity of pricing. Among other experiments, United Arab Emirates-based Halal Chain conducted an initial coin offer in December which is linked to data on Islamically permissible goods.

Only around 20 to 30 percent of banking in the Gulf and southeast Asia follows Islamic principles; many Muslims use conventional finance if it offers higher returns or more convenience. But the issue of religious permissibility is influential and could determine whether Islamic funds and institutions, which are formally committed to sharia principles, deal in cryptocurrencies. "One of the biggest difficulties is that there is so much to talk about, and so little certainty in the way crypto will be playing out," said Ziyaad Mahomed of HSBC Amanah in Malaysia. He chairs its sharia committee, which oversees Islamic transactions.

National sharia authorities have not ruled on whether cryptocurrencies are permissible, and while several global bodies recommend standards for Islamic finance, none has the authority to impose them. Many govern-

ments seem ambivalent, worried about the potential for instability but unwilling to lose the chance of benefiting from new technology. The Saudi Arabian and UAE central banks warned their citizens about the risks of trading bitcoin but have not imposed outright bans. That leaves Islamic investors to choose between sometimes conflicting judgements by scholars at advisory firms, financial companies and academic institutions.

One of the earliest rulings came in 2014, when California-based academic Monzer Kahf, a prominent author of Islamic finance textbooks, deemed bitcoin a legitimate medium of exchange, though vulnerable to manipulation. Since then, Islamic jurists in South Africa have ruled in favor of cryptocurrencies, arguing they have become socially acceptable and commonly used, said Mahomed. In October, however, the Durban-based Darul Ihsan Centre refrained from endorsing them, citing concern over potential pyramid schemes. Some scholars in Turkey, India and Britain have labelled them impermissible; Egypt's Grand Mufti declared in January they should not be traded.

Complicating the debate is the fact that there are hundreds of digital coins or tokens, each with unique features related to distribution, mining and trading, said Farrukh Habib, research officer at Malaysia-based International Shariah Research Academy for Islamic Finance. "They are also very different in terms of their underlying commodities, projects or businesses, so it's not appropriate to have a blanket sharia ruling for all," said Habib. He is involved in a project to categorize cryptocurrencies based on sharia-compliance criteria. "Most of the existing sharia rulings either deal with only bitcoin, or include all types of cryptocurrencies, disregarding their peculiarities."

Another problem is that many sharia scholars have trouble understanding the complexities of digital currencies, said Harris Irfan, managing director at Cordoba Capital in London. "I would caution against accepting any fatwas from community scholars on the subject of fiqh al-mu'amalat, the jurisprudence of transactions, which is a highly complex area of sharia," Irfan chairs the UK Islamic Fintech Panel, a think tank which is drafting guidelines for accreditation of sharia-compliant fintech products including cryptocurrencies. — Reuters

Clashes seen over early retirement bill...

Continued from Page 1

The company proposed that early retirement is possible with additional costs if the financial benefits are reduced, and presented a formula for that.

Meanwhile, five Islamist lawmakers yesterday submitted a draft law calling to legalize the formation of political parties, with only Kuwaitis allowed to be members. The bill, filed by MPs Jamaan Al-Harbash, Abdullah Fahhad, Osama Al-Shaheen and Mohammad Al-Dallal - all Islamic Constitutional Movement members - and Islamist MP Adel Al-Damkhi, stipulates to allow the formation of political parties in order to

upgrade Kuwaiti democracy. Although parliamentary democracy was introduced to Kuwait back in 1962, political parties are banned, although political groups function freely as de facto parties. The draft law was filed several times in the past, but it was ever debated by Assembly panels or the National Assembly itself.

Separately, the head of the Assembly's replacement and employment committee MP Khalil Al-Saleh said the panel was informed by the restructuring program that it has created some 80,000 administrative jobs for Kuwaitis in the private sector. The lawmaker urged Kuwaitis to avail of the opportunities and called on officials to carry out their promises. Also yesterday, the Assembly's public funds committee recommended referring all those who are suspected of having illegally benefited from the Kuwait Investment Co issue to the public prosecution for investigation. The committee found that certain sides failed to provide the Audit Bureau with important documents on the issue.

MBS in Paris after meeting...

Continued from Page 1

to the crown prince's delegation told AFP. A Franco-Saudi cooperation deal to develop Al Ula, a Saudi city richly endowed with archeological remnants, is also expected to be a central highlight of the visit, the source added.

Aside from meetings with the French president, prime minister and trade officials, the prince is also considering a visit to the Paris-based tech start-up campus Station F, the Arab World Institute and a concert in the southern city of Aix-en-Provence, the source said. "This is not a traditional state visit," another source close to the Saudi delegation told AFP, without revealing the time of his arrival yesterday. "It is about forging a new partnership with France, not just shopping for deals."

Macron's office said the trip would also focus on investment in the digital economy as well as renewable energy, as the world's top crude exporter pumps billions of dollars in the sector in a bid to diversify its economy. Prince Mohammed's tour is meant to project "Saudi Arabia is open for business," Bernard Haykel, a professor at Princeton University, told AFP. "He is marketing Saudi Arabia as a strategic and business partner to the West and a force of stability in the region, as compared to rival Iran which he presents as a destabilizing force," he said.

The tour comes after a tumultuous period at home that saw a major military shake-up and a royal purge as the prince consolidates power to a degree well beyond that wielded by previous rulers. The prince has used his global tour to project his reforms - including the historic lifting of a ban on women driving, cinemas and mixed-gender concerts - as part of his pledge to return the kingdom to moderate Islam.

Backed by high-power lobbying and public relations firms, the prince is seeking to rebrand Saudi Arabia as a modernist oasis instead of an austere kingdom. Saudi officials project strong relations between Prince Mohammed and Macron, both young leaders undertaking challenging reforms to transform their countries. "Saudi Arabia is not resetting diplomatic ties with France," a source close to the Saudi government told AFP. "The leadership of both countries share much in common. They are both young, visionary and ambitious."

But the trip follows a period of underlying tensions, with Macron seeking to bolster ties with the Arab world's biggest economy while also managing other relationships with Middle Eastern nations. Macron waded into a regional crisis last November when Lebanon's Prime Minister Saad Hariri tendered his resignation on live television from Riyadh, apparently under pressure from the crown prince. Macron invited Hariri to Paris for talks and he has since rescinded his resignation, a development that analysts say exposed the limits of the prince's authority.

As US President Donald Trump threatens to tear up the 2015 nuclear cooperation deal with Iran, Macron also faces the challenge of convincing the crown prince that some agreement to curb Tehran's atomic ambitions is better than no deal at all, experts say. The crown prince, however, has emphasized closer ties with Washington just as Macron has sought to improve relations with Iran.

Macron also faces seething criticism over French

weapon exports to Saudi Arabia, including Caesar artillery guns, sniper rifles and armored vehicles, despite the kingdom's role in the Yemen crisis. Three out of four French people believe it is "unacceptable" to sell weapons to Saudi Arabia, according to a poll last month by independent research group YouGov.

Earlier, Prince Mohammed rounded off a weeks-long tour of the US with a weekend in Texas, where he met Saturday with both former president Bushes. George H W Bush, 93, tweeted a photo of the prince with his son, George W Bush. "A wonderful chance to celebrate the long-standing friendship between our two nations," George Bush Senior wrote, while the Saudi embassy in Washington described the meeting as a "reminder of the strength and breadth of the long-standing Saudi-US partnership."

The prince traveled with his plentiful entourage from the White House to Houston via Boston, New York, Seattle, Los Angeles and Silicon Valley, embarking on what one expert called a particularly well-planned public relations campaign. The Saudi regime faced little criticism along the way - although Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti expressed "concerns about human rights and the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Yemen," his office told AFP. But strengthening US-Saudi relations in the face of Iran was a priority for Trump, who hailed the nations' "great friendship" as he met with the 32-year-old prince at the Oval Office on March 20.

Since that meeting, MBS has been diligently pushing his "Saudi Vision 2030" - a plan for a Saudi economy less reliant on oil and eager to attract US investors tempted by potential diversification. The latter part of his trip saw him meet with directors of Google, Facebook and Palantir - not to mention Microsoft founder-turned-philanthropist Bill Gates and Richard Branson, with whom he talked space exploration.

The prince also enjoyed a Hollywood dinner with Rupert Murdoch, where they were joined by studio bosses and actors including Morgan Freeman, according to the Hollywood Reporter. The meeting came ahead of the opening of Saudi Arabia's first cinema - managed by American AMC Entertainment - in Riyadh on April 18. Then, it was off to Houston to meet with the Bushes, having already met Bill Clinton in New York. In fact, in terms of former presidents, only Barack Obama - whose terms in office marked strained relations with Saudi Arabia - was left off the agenda.

"In public relations for him it was incredibly successful," Simon Henderson, an expert on Saudi Arabia at the Washington Institute, told AFP of the US trip. A browse of the prince's Instagram account reveals dozens of photos of him, all smiles and often dressed down without a tie, accompanied by various business leaders. He has overcome a challenge for a Saudi royal: To appear "an ordinary sort of person (...)" by turning up in Starbucks for instance," Henderson added, referencing the prince's coffee run with former New York mayor Michael Bloomberg. "The question which I'm fascinated by is: He clearly got the PR he wanted to here, and it played well here. But how did it play at home?" Henderson said.

But while it seemed a fruitful tour in terms of diplomacy, it has yet to be seen if it will pay off economically. Indeed, it's not clear whether Prince Mohammed's pitch to invest in Saudi Arabia would convince US business leaders while his anti-corruption campaign targeted hundreds of princes, ministers and businessmen - a climate which makes identifying sustainable partners a tough task for Americans, according to Henderson. — Agencies

Outrage after chemical attack...

Continued from Page 1

The Russian foreign ministry called the latest reports a provocation and warned against them being used as a pretext for military action. "A military intervention under far-fetched and fabricated pretexts in Syria, where there are Russian soldiers at the request of the legitimate Syrian government, is absolutely unacceptable and could have the most dire consequences," it said in a statement. Regime ally Iran backed Damascus however, saying the allegations were a Western conspiracy and echoing Russia's warning against foreign military action.

Syria's White Helmets, who act as first responders in rebel-held areas of Syria, said the attack took place late on Saturday using "poisonous chlorine gas". In a joint statement with the Syrian American Medical Society (SAMS), the White Helmets said more than 500 cases were brought to medical centers "with symptoms indicative of exposure to a chemical agent". It said six people died while being treated, and rescuers found 42 more people dead in their homes with signs of similar symptoms. Footage posted online by the White Helmets, which was not possible to verify, showed victims with yellowed skin crumpled on the ground and foaming at the mouth. Other residents could be seen receiving treatment at hospitals, with shell-shocked medics holding up gas masks to motionless infants.

"The scene was horrifying. So many people were choking, so many people," White Helmets member Firas Al-Doumi told AFP from inside Douma. "Most died immediately. The majority were women and children," he said. "We only have four oxygen machines," said Mohammed, a doctor inside Douma who told AFP they were not enough to treat the dozens coming in with breathing problems. "The situation is really, really tragic. I've been working here for four years and have never seen what I saw in the last few

hours," he said.

The reports prompted widespread condemnation and calls for an investigation. UN chief Antonio Guterres said he was "particularly alarmed", adding that any confirmed use of chemical weapons would be "abhorrent". Pope Francis described the allegations as "terrible news", saying: "Nothing, nothing can justify the use of such devices of extermination against defenseless people and populations." London called for an investigation into what it said were the "deeply disturbing" reports and Ankara, which has backed rebels against Assad, said it had a "strong suspicion" he was to blame.

Douma is the last remaining opposition-held town in Ghouta, once the rebels' main bastion outside Damascus but now ravaged by a seven-week regime assault. Since Feb 18, Syrian and Russian forces have waged a fierce military onslaught and negotiated two withdrawals to retake control of 95 percent of Ghouta. The agreements, brokered by Moscow last month, saw more than 46,000 rebels and civilians bussed to the northwest opposition-held Idlib province.

It appeared Douma would follow suit, with a preliminary deal that saw hundreds of civilians and rebels from Jaish al-Islam quit the town last week. The rebels had been hoping to land a deal that would keep them in control of Douma, but Syria's government has insisted on their departure. After days of talks that brought a brief respite from the assault, the negotiations fell apart and ferocious bombing resumed.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a Britain-based monitor, said nearly 100 people were killed in air raids on Friday and Saturday. Yesterday, state media announced Damascus had reached a deal that would see rebels leave Douma within 48 hours. In exchange Jaish al-Islam would release hostages it had been holding, the source said. State news agency SANA reported dozens of buses were already entering Douma to begin the evacuations. There was no immediate confirmation of the deal from rebel sources. Ghouta was among the areas hit in a 2013 sarin gas attack that was blamed on Syria's government. — Agencies

Kuwait Times Premier Brands

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

best 1809 809

WQP6-3602F-W Dish Washer: 200kd, 175kd, 150kd, 125kd, 100kd, 25kd, 50kd, 75kd. SAVE 10. 69 to 79.

YL1536S Water Dispenser: NEW ARRIVAL. 2 Tap, Hot & Cold, Cold Water Tank 3 Liters, Hot Water Tank 1 Liters. SAVE 15. 24 to 39.

HD-333FWEN(S) Refrigerator: 11.7 Cubic feet, LED Light, Silver Color. SAVE 30. 79 to 109.

Shop Online: www.best.com.kw Free Delivery

Locations: Kuwait 1 (The New str.), Kuwait 2 (Panasonic Tower), Hawalli 1 (Tunis str.), Hawalli 2 (Bin Khalid str.), Showaikh (4th Ring road), Al-Rai (4th Ring road), Salmiya (Salem Al-Mubarak str.), Farwaniya (Behind police Station), Fahsheel (Opp. General Parking), Jahra (Opp. Main Co-op), Airport (Departure Hall).

Sports

Dodgers lose another marathon to rival Giants in 14 innings

Yankees bounce back against Orioles, win 8-3

SAN FRANCISCO: Andrew McCutchen's career-best sixth hit of the game, a three-run home run in the bottom of the 14th inning, rallied the San Francisco Giants from a 5-4 deficit and into a 7-5, walk-off win Saturday over the Los Angeles Dodgers in San Francisco. After the Dodgers had scored off Roberto Gomez (1-0), the Giants' ninth pitcher, in the top of the 14th, Kelby Tomlinson and Joe Panik led off the bottom of the inning with singles off the Dodgers' 10th pitcher, Wilmer Font (0-2). McCutchen, who earlier had stroked four singles and a double, then belted the 12th pitch of his at-bat, a 2-2 fastball, over the fence in left field for his first homer as a Giant and seventh career walk-off homer. McCutchen finished 6-for-7 after having totaled just two hits in the Giants' first six games.



Mike Leake pitched five strong innings

YANKEES 8, ORIOLES 3

David Robertson recorded key strikeouts of Manny Machado and Jonathan Schoop for the final two outs of the top of the seventh inning as host New York beat Baltimore. With runners on second and third, Robertson used his fastball to get Machado looking on a close pitch. He then quickly got ahead of Schoop and finished the inning by getting the second baseman to chase at a curveball on a 2-2 count. Robertson's latest escape act occurred after the Yankees regained the lead, 5-3, with two runs in the sixth on Miguel Andujar's sacrifice fly and Austin Romine's base hit. It also occurred before Aaron Judge ripped an RBI double and Tyler Austin added a two-run single off Jimmy Yacobonis in the seventh.



SAN FRANCISCO: Andrew McCutchen #22 of the San Francisco Giants hits a walk-off three-run homer to defeat the Los Angeles Dodgers 7-5 in the bottom of the 14th inning at AT&T Park on Saturday in San Francisco, California. — AFP

ASTROS 1, PADRES 0 (10 INNINGS)

Derek Fisher raced home from second when San Diego first baseman Eric Hosmer misplayed a two-out pop up 15 feet down the first base line with two out in the 10th to give host Houston the walk-off win. Hosmer was playing deep when Astros third baseman Alex Bregman popped up on a full-count pitch from Phil Maton to apparently send a scoreless tie into the 11th inning. But Hosmer ran past the ball as he charged in, and it fell behind him for the decisive run-scoring single. Fisher ran for Brian McCann, who opened the inning with a single, and immediately tried to steal second. He was called out, but Astros manager A.J. Hinch challenged the call, and it was reversed with Fisher staying at second with the steal.

CUBS 5, BREWERS 2

Kris Bryant had a home run and a triple, and visiting Chicago took advantage of two Milwaukee errors in the ninth inning to rally to victory. Trailing 2-1 in the top of the ninth, the Cubs got RBIs from Ben Zobrist, Ian Happ and pinch hitter Jon Lester to pull in front. Milwaukee third baseman Travis Shaw and shortstop Orlando Arcia committed errors in the ninth inning leading to two unearned runs for the Cubs. Eric Thames hit a solo home run off Yu Darvish, and Lorenzo Cain drove in a go-ahead run in the eighth inning for the Brewers. Thames hit a 3-2 slider out to right field to

PHILLIES 20, MARLINS 1

Maikel Franco and Aaron Altherr each hit a grand slam, and Philadelphia cruised past visiting Miami in a rout. The Phillies scored five runs in the first, four in the third and eight in the fourth. They compiled 20 hits, and Franco led the way with six RBIs. Eleven different Phillies had at least one hit. The last time the Phillies scored at least 20 runs came April 6, 2009 against the Cincinnati Reds. The Phillies scored more runs in this game than they did in their six other games this season combined.

RED SOX 10, RAYS 3

Xander Bogaerts clubbed a grand slam and had a career-high six RBIs to power Boston to its seventh consecutive victory with a rout of visiting Tampa Bay. It was Bogaerts' second career grand slam and the Red Sox's first since Dustin Pedroia's slam on Sept. 24, 2016 at Tampa Bay. Bogaerts (2-for-3, walk) also hit a two-run double, his major-league-leading seventh two-bagger through eight games. J.D. Martinez (1-for-2, walk) hit a solo shot for his first home run as a Red Sox and drove in two runs while Rafael Devers (2-for-3, walk) added a solo blast and had two RBIs. Boston starter Rick Porcello (2-0) allowed three runs on six hits with seven strikeouts in 7 1/3 innings.

MLB results/standings

NY Yankees 8, Baltimore 3; NY Mets 3, Washington 2; Boston 10, Tampa Bay 3; Detroit 6, Chicago White Sox 1; Seattle 11, Minnesota 4; St. Louis 5, Arizona 3; Chicago Cubs 5, Milwaukee 2; Kansas City 1, Cleveland 0; San Francisco 7, LA Dodgers 5; Philadelphia 20, Miami 1; Cincinnati 7, Pittsburgh 4; Houston 1, San Diego 0; Texas 5, Toronto 1; Colorado 3, Atlanta 2.

American League				National League				
American League - East				National League - East				
W	L	PCT	GB	W	L	PCT	GB	
Boston	7	1	.875	-	NY Mets	6	1	.857
NY Yankees	5	4	.556	2.5	Atlanta	5	3	.625
Toronto	5	4	.556	2.5	Washington	4	4	.500
Baltimore	3	6	.333	4.5	Philadelphia	3	4	.429
Tampa Bay	1	7	.125	6	Miami	2	6	.250
American League - Central				National League - Central				
Minnesota	4	3	.571	-	Pittsburgh	6	2	.750
Detroit	3	4	.429	1	Milwaukee	5	4	.556
Chicago White Sox	3	4	.429	1	St. Louis	4	4	.500
Cleveland	3	5	.375	1.5	Chicago Cubs	4	4	.500
Kansas City	2	4	.333	1.5	Cincinnati	2	5	.286
American League - West				National League - West				
Houston	7	2	.778	-	Arizona	6	2	.750
LA Angels	6	3	.667	1	San Francisco	4	3	.571
Seattle	4	3	.571	2	Colorado	5	4	.556
Oakland	4	6	.400	3.5	LA Dodgers	2	6	.250
Texas	4	6	.400	3.5	San Diego	2	7	.222

Fiji win record fourth straight HK Sevens crown

HONG KONG: Fiji won a record fourth straight Hong Kong Sevens crown yesterday with a crunching 24-12 victory over Kenya and dedicated the win to those hit by a cyclone which struck this month.

"It's great to have done this for the people of Fiji and those who have been affected by the floods in Fiji," said coach Gareth Baber. "We've talked about it all week-what we could do to lift the worries and stresses people are having in their lives-and I thought the players did admirably this weekend."

Cyclone Josie claimed a reported four lives and left thousands of dwellings flooded when it hit the island nation at high tide in early April. Fiji had come to Hong Kong looking to raise spirits back home and grab a slice of history with a fourth straight title win-and an 18th overall.

Such is the importance of the event to Fijians that they opted to send a full-strength squad to town, even though the Commonwealth Games rugby sevens tournament-one they have never won-is next weekend. It paid off after a scorching final day that saw them first pushed to the limit by a spirited and youthful South Africa in winning their semi-final 26-24. The South Africans were



HONG KONG: Collins Injera (C) of Kenya fumbles the ball while getting tackled by Amenoni Nasilasila (R) of Fiji in the Cup Final on the third day at the Hong Kong Sevens rugby tournament in Hong Kong yesterday. — AFP

among the nations to send development squads to Hong Kong and focus their more senior players on the Commonwealth Games.

Kenya came full-strength and had looked a serious threat to the Fijians' reign after winning their semi-final 21-7 over New Zealand. But two yellow cards late in the first half left them with five men, and Fiji pounced with an Amenoni Nasilasila try that made the score 17-0 at the half.

Kenya tried hard but could never really work their way back into serious contention.

"The Hong Kong Sevens is like the World Cup in Fiji and four years in a row is like winning the World Cup," said Fiji captain Jerry Tuwai. There was some consolation for the youthful South Africans as they picked up third for the tournament with a 29-7 win over New Zealand.

They also kept hold of their lead in the World Rugby Seven Series and head to Singapore from April 28-29 on 126 points to Fiji's 123, with three legs left in the series to play. — AFP

open the fourth inning and give the Brewers a 1-0 lead. It was his third home run of the season and second of the series.

METS 3, NATIONALS 2

Todd Frazier and Asdrubal Cabrera each drove in a run as New York scored twice in the top of the seventh inning and defeated host Washington. Cabrera tied the game with a run-scoring double before Frazier made it 3-2 on a groundout to second baseman Howie Kendrick. Third baseman Anthony Rendon and Washington manager Dave Martinez both were ejected at the end of the bottom of the third. Rendon flipped his bat after home plate umpire Marty Foster called him out on strikes. Foster then quickly tossed Rendon, and Martinez came out and argued before also getting ejected.

ROCKIES 3, BRAVES 2 (10 INNINGS)

Catcher Tony Wolters walked with the bases loaded to bring home Carlos Gonzalez with the winning run in the 10th inning to give Colorado a walk-off victory over visiting Atlanta. With the bases loaded, Wolters took four straight balls from Atlanta closer Arody Vizcaino (1-1). Wolters was 2-for-3 and made at least three run-saving plays behind the plate. The Braves tied the game in the ninth against Colorado closer Wade Davis, who blew his first save of the season. Davis issued a one-out walk to pinch hitter Kurt Suzuki and a single to Dansby Swanson, which sent speedy pinch runner Peter Bourjos to third. Ryan Flaherty then knocked in Bourjos with a line-drive single to center field.

MARINERS 11, TWINS 4

Mike Leake pitched five strong innings, and Kyle Seager, Ryon Healy and Guillermo Heredia provided the offense as Seattle routed host Minnesota on a chilly afternoon at Target Field. Leake (2-0) didn't have a strikeout and walked four, but allowed only two runs on three hits. Seager and Heredia each hit two-run home runs, and Healy had a bases-clearing double in a five-run eighth inning for the Mariners, who bounced back from a loss to the Twins on Friday. Minnesota's Jose

Berrios, who threw a complete-game shutout in his season debut, allowed five runs on six hits and struck out seven in 4 2/3 innings to drop to 1-1.

CARDINALS 5, DIAMONDBACKS 3

Michael Wacha (1-1) allowed two runs on four hits in five innings and Jose Martinez hit a tiebreaking three-run homer in the bottom of the third inning and added an RBI single to lift St. Louis past visiting Arizona. On an 0-2 pitch with two men on base, Martinez smashed a Zack Greinke offering over the center field fence. Tommy Pham and Marcell Ozuna also scored to give St. Louis a lead it would not relinquish. Bud Norris pitched a scoreless ninth with three strikeouts for the save. Arizona lost for just the second time this season as Greinke (0-1) had a rough outing, allowing five runs on nine hits in five innings.

ROYALS 1, INDIANS 0

Lucas Duda hit a leadoff home run in the seventh inning and Ian Kennedy struck out eight in six scoreless innings as Kansas City beat host Cleveland on a 34-degree day. Duda's homer, his second of the season, was one of three hits off Cleveland right-hander Trevor Bauer (0-1), who struck out seven over eight innings. Kennedy (1-0) gave up four hits and did not walk a batter in his second start of the season, dropping his ERA to 0.75 after giving up one run in a no-decision against the White Sox. He was removed after throwing 101 pitches.

REDS 7, PIRATES 4

Eugenio Suarez delivered a tiebreaking three-run homer and drove in five runs as Cincinnati rallied past host Pittsburgh. Suarez sent a fastball from Pirates right-hander George Kontos (0-1) over the fence in left with two outs in the eighth to give the Reds the three-run lead. The third baseman went 3-for-4 and also contributed a game-tying, two-run single in the sixth inning. Joey Volto, Tucker Barnhart and Jose Peraza had two hits apiece for the Reds, who finished with 11. Cincinnati recovered from a 4-0 deficit to improve to 2-5. — Reuters

Lion Tambwe equals Super Rugby record, Crusaders go top

Buenos Aires: Golden Lions' Madosh Tambwe scored a record-equalling four tries in a Super Rugby match Saturday and Canterbury Crusaders reclaimed top spot in the New Zealand conference. Democratic Republic of Congo-born Tambwe matched 15 other players since 1996 with Australian Joe Roff first to score four tries in a game.

The 20-year-old winger took just 54 seconds to open the scoring in a 52-31 rout of Western Stormers in Johannesburg during round 8. He completed his hat-trick within 13 minutes and added a fourth try 12 minutes into the second half of the South African derby. On a profitable day for wingers, George Bridge and Manasa Mataele scored two each for defending champions Crusaders in a 40-14 triumph over the Argentine Jaguares in Buenos Aires. In other matches, Australian sides New South Wales Waratahs and ACT Brumbies won convincingly and

Waikato Chiefs edged Auckland Blues in a New Zealand derby.

Waratahs hammered the Japanese Sunwolves 50-29 in Tokyo, Brumbies beat compatriots Queensland Reds 45-21 in Canberra and a penalty try earned Chiefs a 21-19 win over Blues in Hamilton. Tambwe is the second player to score four tries in a match this year after Ben Lam of Wellington Hurricanes. The Lions winger, who left DR Congo capital Kinshasa at an early age to be educated in Johannesburg, refused to take any credit for his achievement. "It is entirely due to my teammates that I got those try-scoring opportunities," said the man-of-the-match award winner.

"I am privileged to be part of the Golden Lions Super Rugby squad and grateful for every opportunity the coaching staff give me." Tambwe began the season as a third-choice winger, but injuries to Courtnall Skosan and Aphive Dyantyi gave him a chance. Tambwe helped the Lions lead 31-10 at half-time and they scored regularly in the second half to bounce back after three losses in their previous four matches. Lions top the South Africa conference with 25 points. Coastal Sharks have 14, Stormers 13, Northern Bulls nine and the Jaguares eight. — AFP

Sports



Australia continue medal rush in the pool, Scott upsets Chalmers

Blake qualifies first for 100m final

GOLD COAST: The Australian team, consisting of Elijah Winnington, Kyle Chalmers, Alexander Graham and Mack Horton, have won the men's 4x200m freestyle relay final in dominant fashion, setting a new Games record of seven minutes and 5.97 seconds to grab the gold.

James Guy helped England finish nearly three seconds behind the hosts to take silver while Scotland were a further second adrift in third. Scotland's Duncan Scott won his fourth medal at Gold Coast after recording a shock win over South African Chad le Clos and Australian Kyle Chalmers in the men's 100m freestyle final.

Le Clos, who won the 50m and 200m butterfly events earlier in the competition, and Olympic champion Chalmers finished joint-second with times of 48.15 seconds while Scott raced to the title in a time of 48.02 seconds. Chalmers' compatriot Cameron McEvoy finished fourth. Scotland cyclist Mark Stewart improved on his bronze medal at the World Championships by winning the gold in the men's 40km points race final. Stewart took the early lead and hold on for the win ahead of New Zealand's Campbell Stewart and England's Ethan Hayter in the final race at the velodrome.

INDIAN WOMEN STUN SINGAPORE

Two singles victories from Manika Batra helped the Indian women's team win their first ever table tennis gold medal by beating favourites Singapore 3-1 in the final. England edged out Australia for the bronze.

AUSTRALIANS SECURE ONE-TWO-THREE IN 50M BUTTERFLY

Home favourite Cate Campbell won her third gold medal at the Gold Coast Games in the women's 50m butterfly with a time of 25.59 seconds to finish ahead of compatriots Holly Barratt and Madeline Groves, who took silver and bronze respectively. Australian Mitch Larkin grabbed gold in the men's 50m backstroke at the Gold Coast Games, bettering the silver he won in Glasgow four years ago. Compatriots Benjamin Treffers, who finished just 0.6 seconds behind Larkin, and Zac Incerti completed the podium.



Cheptegei races to 5000m victory

O'CONNOR DOMINATES IN 200M MEDLEY

England's Siobhan-Marie O'Connor won gold in the women's 200m individual medley for the second consecutive Games while compatriot Aimee Willmott and Scotland's Hannah Milley both failed to add to their medals. Canadian duo Sarah Darcel and Erika Seltenreich-Hodgson won the silver and the bronze medals respectively. O'Connor was the only swimmer to clock under two minutes 10 seconds.

MORTON CHARGES TO KEIRIN GOLD

Home favourites Stephanie Morton and Kaarle McCulloch charged to an Australian one-two finish in the women's keirin with New Zealand's Natasha Hansen taking the bronze. Morton, who won gold in the team and individual sprints along with a silver in the 500m time trial, won her fourth medal of the Games after finishing 0.079 seconds ahead of McCulloch.

HOME HOPE PATTERSON WINS SCRATCH RACE

Australia put in a solid team performance to help Amy Cure win her second gold medal at this year's Games in the women's 10km scratch race. Cure, who along with her team mates won the team pursuit, finished ahead of Scotland's Neah Evans and England's Emily Kay after a close race. Individual pursuit gold medallist Katie Archibald, of Scotland, narrowly missed out on a medal.

ENGLAND'S GODLEY WINS WEIGHTLIFTING GOLD

England's weightlifter Emily Godley lifted a combined total of 222kg to win the women's 75kg final. She won by a single kg, ahead of second-placed Canadian Marie-Eve Beauchemin-Nadeau. Wales' Laura Hughes took the bronze.

PEATY FLIES INTO 50M BREASTSTROKE FINAL

World, European and Olympic champion Adam Peaty is on course for a clean sweep of gold medals after surpassing his own Games record to finish quickest in the men's 50m breaststroke semi-finals with a time of 26.49 seconds. South African Cameron van der Burgh had the second fastest time of 26.95 seconds and England's James Wilby, who won the

200m breaststroke in Peaty's absence earlier, was third in 27.41 seconds.

GLAETZER STORMS TO TIME TRIAL VICTORY

Australian cyclist Matthew Glaetzer, who is the world champion in sprint, blitzed around the track to set a new Games record time of 59.340 seconds and grab the gold medal in the men's 1000m time trial final. New Zealand's Edward Dawkins and Callum Skinner of Scotland won the silver and bronze respectively. Glaetzer, a silver medallist in the time trial at Apeldoorn, suffered a shock exit in the preliminary rounds of the sprint event but bounced back to grab gold in the men's keirin finals on Friday.

MASSE OUTCLASSES SEEBOHM

Canadian Kylie Masse led a Canadian one-two finish in the women's 200m backstroke final ahead of world champion Emily Seebohm, as the 22-year-old and compatriot Taylor Ruck won the gold and silver medals respectively. Masse, who ousted Seebohm in the 100m event on Saturday, set a new Games record of two minutes 05.98 seconds to seal the gold. Ruck, aged 17, has now won six medals at this year's Games.

WILSON HUNGRY FOR MORE AFTER RINGS SILVER

England gymnast Nile Wilson is eager to add to his tally of two gold medals and one silver when the final day of the artistic gymnastics competitions is held today. "... It's an incredible feeling to get a silver on the rings," Wilson told BBC. "But I am absolutely exhausted now. One more day to get through after an ice bath recovery tonight. We're coming out here and putting together some great routines. I'm loving it and excited to get back out there." Wilson's compatriot Courtney Tulloch, who is the rings and team all-round gold medallist, is already looking ahead to the World Championships. "I can't believe I'm a double Commonwealth champion. This is a good stepping stone towards the World Championships," Tulloch said.

BLAKE QUALIFIES FIRST FOR 100M FINAL

Jamaican sprinter Yohan Blake has qualified in first place for the men's 100m final after blazing to a time of 10.06 seconds in the semi-finals. Cayman Islands' Kemar Hyman was second fastest and finished ahead of England's Adam Gemili, the world 4x100 relay gold medallist at London. Blake, a former world champion, is among the favourites to win the event and re-establish Jamaica's dominance following the retirement of multiple Olympic gold medallist Usain Bolt.

PHILIP SECURES FIRST SPOT IN WOMEN'S 100M SEMI-FINALS

England's Asha Philip qualified fastest for the women's 100m finals with a time of 11.21 seconds in the semi-finals, narrowly ahead of Jamaican Christiania Williams, the 4x100 relay silver medallist at the Rio Olympics, who finished in 11.22 seconds. Trinidad and Tobago's Michelle-Lee Ahye was the third fastest.

FENTON ADDS TO ENGLAND MEDAL HAUL

England's 17-year-old Georgia Mae-Fenton added to the nation's medal rush in gymnastics at this year's Games by winning the gold in women's uneven bars finals with a score of 14.600. Canadian Brittany Rogers, who was part of her country's gold medal-winning squad in the team all-round event on Friday, grabbed the silver followed by Australia's Georgia Goodwin in third.

TULLOCH, WILSON SEAL ENGLAND ONE-TWO IN GYMNASTICS

England's Courtney Tulloch and Nile Wilson, both of whom were part of the team that won the all-round finals on the opening day, have won the gold and silver respectively in the men's rings final. Wilson adds to his individual all-round gold he won on Saturday. Canada's Scott Morgan rounds out the podium.

CHEPTEGEI RACES TO 5000M VICTORY

A late flourish helped Ugandan sprinter Joshua Kiprui Cheptegei clinch gold in the men's 5000m final ahead of Canadian Mohammed Ahmed. Ahmed took the early lead and after a classic chase Cheptegei, who won silver in the 10000m race at last year's world championships, raced ahead with four laps to go and held on to win. Kenyan



GOLD COAST: Athletes (L-R) Jamaica's Yohan Blake, Australia's Trae Williams, England's Adam Gemili, Canada's Gavin Smellie and Saint Kitts and Nevis' Jason Rogers compete in the athletic men's 100m semi-final during the 2018 Gold Coast Commonwealth Games. — AFP photos



GOLD COAST: Australia's Cate Campbell (C gold), Australia's Madeline Groves (L silver) and Australia's Holly Barratt (bronze) pose with their medals after the swimming women's 50m butterfly final during the 2018 Gold Coast Commonwealth Games at the Optus Aquatic Centre in the Gold Coast yesterday.

Edward Pingua Zakayo won the bronze.

McCLENAGHAN ON HIS 'HUGE' WIN OVER WHITLOCK

Northern Ireland's gold-medal winning gymnast Rhys McClenaghan believes his victory over reigning Olympic champion Max Whitlock in the men's pommel horse final puts him among the best in the sport. "Max has been my idol growing up and I've been watching him since 2010 when he was competing in the Delhi Commonwealths," the 18-year-old told BBC. "I've always felt though that one day I could be up there with the best and beating them and this is a huge result for me."

ELEFTHERIOU EDGES OUT HILL TO WIN WOMEN'S SHOOTING GOLD

Cypriot Andri Eleftheriou set a new Games record after hitting 52 of the 60 targets to grab the gold medal in the women's skeet shooting finals. England's Amber Hill, who won the gold medal in the event in the 2017 Commonwealth Championships and 2015 European Games, took silver and Eleftheriou's compatriot Panagiota Andreou won bronze.

HUDSON-SMITH DISQUALIFIED IN 400M HEATS

England sprinter Matt Hudson-Smith was disqualified from the men's 400m after stepping out of his lane in the heats. Grenada's Bralon Taplin qualified the fastest with a time of 45.11 seconds.

OLSEN LEADS CANADIAN ONE-TWO IN WOMEN'S VAULT

Shallon Olsen and Elisabeth Black won the gold and silver medals respectively in the women's vault with Australia's Emily Whitehead taking the bronze.

McCLENAGHAN PIPS WHITLOCK TO WIN NORTHERN IRELAND'S FIRST MEDAL

Reigning Olympic champion Max Whitlock suffered another blow as Rhys McClenaghan clinched Northern Ireland's first medal of this year's Games after winning

gold in the men's pommel horse final. England's Whitlock and McClenaghan both recorded a score of 15.100 in the tiebreak, with the Englishman having a higher difficulty score and the Irishman having a higher execution score, but the latter was handed the gold. Whitlock settled for silver while Canada's Zachary Clay took the bronze.

SAMPSON GRABS SHOOTING GOLD

Australian Dane Sampson won the gold in the men's 10m air rifle final after setting a new Games record score of 245.0. Bangladesh's Abdullah Hel Baki won silver while India's Ravi Kumar took the bronze.

BHAKER WINS SHOOTING GOLD

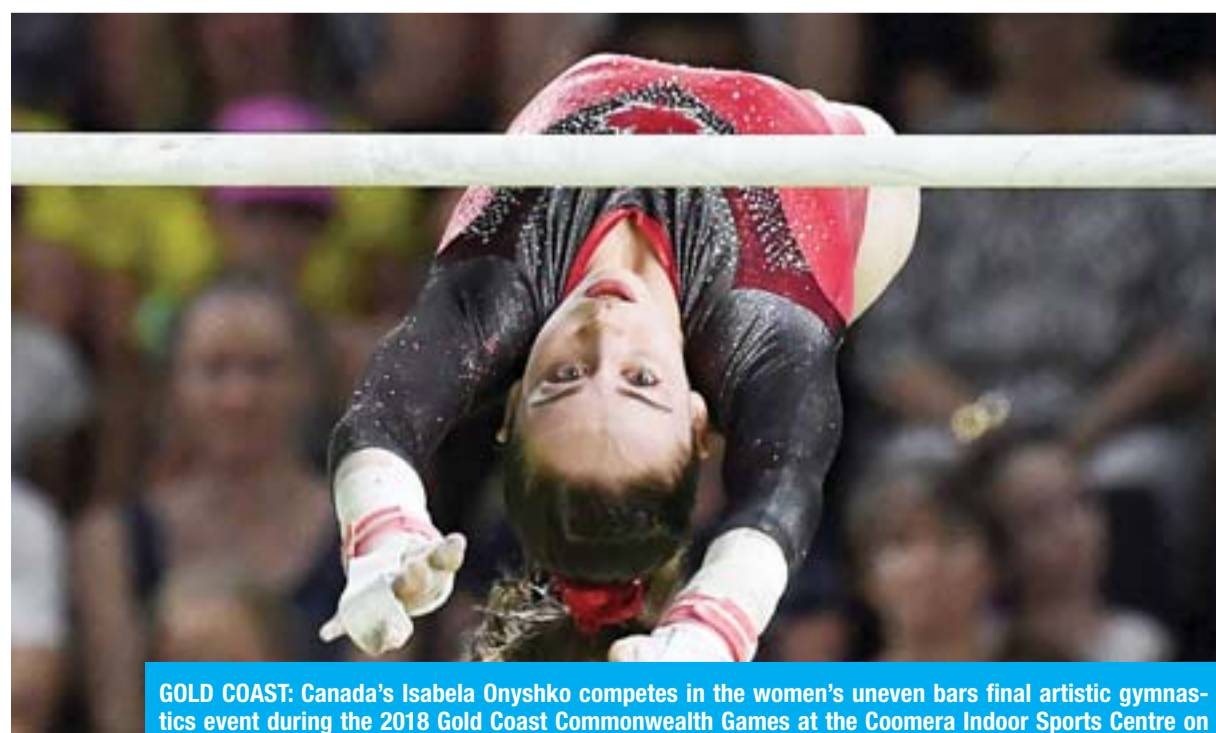
India's Manu Bhaker won her nation's sixth gold medal at this year's Games, notching a Games record score of 240.9 to win the women's 10m air pistol finals. The 16-year-old finished ahead of compatriot Heena Sidhu and Australian Elena Galabovitch.

INDIA'S YADAV WINS WEIGHTLIFTING GOLD

India's Punam Yadav claimed gold in the women's 69kg weightlifting division with a combined weight of 222kg. England's Sarah Davies took silver with 217kg after she failed to lift 128kg on her final clean and jerk. Yadav had failed with her own second lift of 122kg. The 22-year-old Yadav, however, succeeded on her third lift to clinch gold, adding to the bronze she won in the 63kg weight division four years ago in Glasgow. Fiji's Apolonia Vaivai won bronze with a combined total of 216kgs.

BIRD-SMITH WINS FIRST ATHLETICS MEDAL

Australia's Dane Bird-Smith produced a stunning burst in the final few hundred metres to win the first athletics medal at the Gold Coast Games in the men's 20km walk. England's Tom Bosworth took silver just four seconds behind the Rio Olympics bronze medallist, with Kenya's Samuel Ireri Gathimba finishing third. "The last 500m hurt so much but I had everyone behind me which made it so special," Bird-Smith said. "It was unbelievable, a bloody unreal feeling." — Reuters



GOLD COAST: Canada's Isabela Onyshko competes in the women's uneven bars final artistic gymnastics event during the 2018 Gold Coast Commonwealth Games at the Coomera Indoor Sports Centre on the Gold Coast yesterday.



(L to R) Bangladesh's Abdullah Hel Baki, Australia's Dane Sampson and India's Ravi Kumar react after the 10m air rifle men's final competition during the 2018 gold Coast Commonwealth Games at the Belmont Shooting Complex in Brisbane yesterday.

Sports

Nuggets regain control of playoff destiny, Clippers eliminated

Westbrook helps Oklahoma City post crucial victory over Houston

LOS ANGELES: Will Barton scored 31 points and Nikola Jokic added 23 points, 11 rebounds and 11 assists for his ninth triple-double of the season as the Denver Nuggets rolled past the Los Angeles Clippers 134-115 on Saturday afternoon at Staples Center in Los Angeles and remained in the hunt for the postseason. The win was the fifth straight for the Nuggets, who are still out of the playoff picture but tied, record-wise, with eighth-place Minnesota. The Timberwolves hold the head-to-head tiebreaker between the two teams, but there is still plenty to be decided between now and April 11, the final day of the NBA's regular season. The Clippers were eliminated from playoff consideration with Saturday's loss. Los Angeles (42-38) has lost four of its past five games. Denver (45-35) outscored the Clippers in every quarter and put the game away with a final decisive run in the first half of the fourth period that garnered the Nuggets a 119-101 lead.



Brooklyn rout host Chicago

Thunder 108, Rockets 102

Russell Westbrook recorded 24 points, 10 assists, seven rebounds and four steals to help Oklahoma City post a crucial victory over Houston, snapping the Rockets' 20-game home winning streak. Paul George also scored 24 points and Carmelo Anthony added 22 for the Thunder, who won for just the second time in the past six games. Steven Adams contributed 12 points and eight rebounds and Jerami Grant also scored 12 points for Oklahoma City. The victory leaves the Thunder (46-34) tied with the New Orleans Pelicans and San Antonio Spurs, who both won Saturday, for fifth place in the Western Conference playoff race. Oklahoma City needs to win one of its final two games

to clinch a playoff berth.

Pelicans 126, Warriors 120

Rajon Rondo stripped the ball from Kevin Durant and E'Twaun Moore converted the steal into a short jumper at the other end with 23.5 seconds remaining, allowing New Orleans to hold on for a key victory over host Golden State. Down 121-113 after an Anthony Davis basket with 3:22 left, Golden State scratched back within two on hoops by Durant, Draymond Green and Andre Iguodala, the latter a dunk with 1:01 to play. But with a chance to tie, Durant (41 points, 10 rebounds) had the ball knocked away by the much smaller Rondo with 31.3 seconds left, and Moore followed with his key hoop almost eight seconds later.

Spurs 116, Trail Blazers 105

LaMarcus Aldridge scored 28 points and Manu Ginobili came off the bench for 10 of his 17 points in the fourth quarter in San Antonio's win over visiting Portland. Ginobili was 7-for-7 from the field — 3-for-3 from 3-point range-in helping the Spurs claim their 10th straight win at home. Damian Lillard scored 33 points for the Trail Blazers, who lost their third straight game. Evan Turner added 18 points and CJ McCollum 17 for Portland.

Bucks 115, Knicks 102

Eric Bledsoe and Khris Middleton each had 22 points to lead all five starters in double figures as Milwaukee defeated host New York. Jarrett Jack had a team-high 18 points off the bench to lead the Knicks, who dropped their fifth game in their last six contests.



LOS ANGELES: DeAndre Jordan #6 of the LA Clippers goes to the basket against the Denver Nuggets on Saturday at STAPLES Center in Los Angeles, California. — AFP

New York (28-52) failed to score for a four-minute stretch late in the fourth quarter as the Bucks broke open the game, securing the first double-digit lead for either team. Milwaukee trailed 95-94 with 5:51 left in the game, but the Bucks used a 12-0 run to go up 11 before cruising to the win.

Nets 124, Bulls 96

Unloading a non-stop barrage of 3-pointers,

Brooklyn routed host Chicago. The Nets sank 24 of 55 attempts from behind the arc, with eight players hitting at least one 3-point and six making multiple threes. Leading a balanced attack was reserve Quincy Acy with a game-high 21 points, all but three of them on 3-pointers. Allen Crabbe added 20 while Joe Harris chipped in 16 points. In contrast to Brooklyn's assault from the perimeter, Chicago made just 6 of 29 3-point tries. — Reuters

Reed, McIlroy chase golf history, green jacket at Masters

AUGUSTA: Rory McIlroy takes aim at a career Grand Slam while leader Patrick Reed eyes Augusta National records and a first major title in yesterday's final-round showdown of the 82nd Masters. An emotional back-nine drama with golf history at stake was set to unfold in cool, overcast conditions among the Georgia pines with Reed atop the leaderboard at 14-under 202 through 54 holes and last-pair partner McIlroy three strokes adrift.

"We're both trying to do something pretty special," McIlroy said. Northern Ireland's McIlroy can capture his fifth major title and his first green jacket to complete the career Slam, at least one win in each of the four major championships.

"I want to keep the pressure on him," McIlroy said. "If I can get off to a good solid start, that will be enough to keep me hanging in there. 'If I can stay within two or three going to the back nine, that's when things can happen out there.'"

Reed could become the first player to shoot four rounds in the 60s at the Masters and has a chance to break the 72-hole course record of 18-under 270 shared by Tiger Woods and Jordan Spieth.

"I almost feel like I can kick it into another gear and go even deeper," Reed said. "If I hit that one shot, I can pump myself up and try to get going and try to flip that switch." McIlroy outscored Reed by two strokes each day when playing alongside Reed on the first two days of the 2014 Masters, but the biggest memory of them as rivals was from the 2016 Ryder Cup at Hazeltine, when US firebrand Reed edged Europe's McIlroy 1 up in an epic clash.

"It's probably one of the best matches we ever played. It was probably also one of the most exhausting matches we ever played," Reed said. "The biggest thing I was able to pull from it is I was head-to-head with Rory and able to put together a really good round. When he tried to make a counter I was able to always stay ahead and keep going." McIlroy will draw inspiration from memories of a 2011 meltdown in the final round of the Masters, when he fired an 80 to squander a potential wire-to-wire win.

"I've given myself another chance, another shot at doing something special," McIlroy said. "Seven years have gone by. To finally get the opportunity again to see if I can put all those wrongs right is something I'm looking forward to." Reed isn't the only golfer who could continue a run of first time major winners that has seen eight of them capture titles at the past nine majors. American Rickie Fowler was third, five strokes adrift on 207, with Spaniard Jon Rahm another shot back as both chase their first major crown. Sweden's Henrik Stenson, the 2016 British Open winner, was fifth on 209 with two-time Masters champion Bubba Watson and first-time major win hopefuls Marc Leishman of Australia and Tommy Fleetwood of England on 210.—AFP

Sagan seals Paris-Roubaix with epic break

ROUBAIX: World champion Peter Sagan left his rivals in the dust yesterday after a break from 55km out saw him clinch a jaw dropping victory in the 257km Paris-Roubaix classic. The 28-year-old Slovak outspurred Swiss champion Silvan Dillier, the last survivor from an earlier break, in the iconic outdoor velodrome in Roubaix after 5hrs 54mins 06sec in the saddle.

Last week's Tour of Flanders winner Niki Terpstra was third at 57sec and 2017 champion Greg Van Avermaet fourth at 1:34. Victory in the 'Hell of the North' was a second prestigious 'Monument' one-day classic success for Sagan, who won the Tour of Flanders in 2016 and has three consecutive world titles.

"I feel amazing, I'm so tired, but I was involved in no crashes, had no flat tyres and I just kept going," said Sagan, who at one point was caught on camera using an Allen key to make some on board repairs as he cycled along at more than 40km/h.

Dillier said his very participation at the race had been in doubt and said that without Sagan alongside him, he would never have secured such an impressive result. "I broke a finger recently and didn't think I'd

make Paris-Roubaix because of that," he said.

"Sagan is an angel and devil in the same person-an angel because he took me with him and a devil because I had to go man-to-man with him. "Congratulations to him." Known for his rapid finishing, Sagan has often paid for his reputation as rivals have sought to neutralise his famed kick for the line by leaving him behind with their own daring long-range bids for glory. But this time, he had no intention of playing to the sound of anyone else's drum and launched his victory bid with a blistering attack from 55km out on one of the 29 cobbled sections totalling more than 54km in length. He soon stretched out a lead of more than 30-seconds over his main rivals for victory as he bounced over the cobbles. Sagan latched onto an earlier break and soon made up a three-man group alongside Belgian Jelle Wallays and Dillier. With 20km to go Wallays had dropped off as Sagan upped the pace and the break-away duo pushed their lead out to 1:30.

Van Avermaet and Terpstra were slow to react and when they did they dragged the gap back down to under a minute with 13km to go. But the chase stalled there as Sagan and Dillier dug in to ensure they had enough leeway to contest a two-up sprint finish, that Sagan was always likely to win.

Typically, the cobbles played havoc with the peloton as a number of crashes brought down riders despite the race setting off on a glorious, dry spring morning. Belgian Michael Goolaerts was airlifted to hospital in Lille in a serious condition after being knocked unconscious in a heavy crash, according to French emergency services. — AFP



COMPIEGNE: Winner Slovakia's Peter Sagan celebrates with his trophy on the podium after the 116th edition of the Paris-Roubaix one-day classic cycling race, between Compiègne and Roubaix, yesterday in Compiègne, northern France. — AFP



The victorious Kuwait national tennis team.

Kuwait defeat Malaysia in Davis Cup

KUWAIT: Kuwait cemented its place in the second group of the men's Davis Cup

as they defeated Malaysia 2-0 in the qualifiers that were played in Vietnam with the participation of nine countries including Kuwait.

Mohammad Al-Ghareeb won the first singles match with the score of 2-0, meanwhile his colleague Abdallah Maqdis won the second singles match with the score of 2-1. This fifth win by Kuwait comes after defeating Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Qatar and finally Syria.

Nadal crushes Zverev as Spain reach Davis Cup semis

PARIS: Rafael Nadal thrashed Alexander Zverev as Spain set up a Davis Cup semi-final against holders France with a dramatic fightback against Germany in Valencia yesterday. The world number one's 6-1, 6-4, 6-4 win in Valencia drew the tie level at 2-2, before veteran David Ferrer battled to a marathon 7-6 (7/1), 3-6, 7-6 (7/4), 4-6, 7-5 victory over Philipp Kohlschreiber to finish the job.

Two breaks in each set were enough for Nadal to seal an impressively comfortable victory over world number four Zverev in what was only the 31-year-old's second outing since returning from a hip injury.

Nadal said after the match he is still regaining sharpness. "The first set was fantastic," Nadal said. "There were times when I lost a bit of control because the match was tough, I had not competed for a long time and to maintain the level of the first set was complicated for me.

"But in general it was a very important match and I am very happy." Nadal was forced to retire from his Australian Open quarter-final against Marin Cilic in January but, back on his favoured clay, the 16-time Grand Slam champion showed little sign of rust against Zverev, whom he has now

beaten four times out of four.

It was also the 24th consecutive match Nadal has won in the Davis Cup. He beat Kohlschreiber in straight sets on Friday after Zverev had overcome Ferrer. Germany then took a 2-1 lead when Tim Puetz and Jan-Lennard Struff won the doubles rubber against Feliciano and Marc Lopez.

But Nadal kept up his end of the bargain yesterday and the 36-year-old Ferrer showed all of his trademark never-say-die qualities to keep Spain's hopes of a sixth Davis Cup title alive. Kohlschreiber twice fought back from a set down, but former French Open runner-up Ferrer broke in the 11th game of the decider and held his nerve on serve after almost five hours on court.

Elsewhere, defending champions France booked a home semi-final against Spain as Lucas Pouille claimed a hard-fought win over Fabio Fognini in Genoa to give the visitors a 3-1 victory in the tie.

"I won without playing my best tennis, those are the best types of victories," Pouille said after his first Davis Cup win over a top-20 player. World number 11 Pouille, who had beaten Andreas Seppi in five sets on Friday, came from behind to see off Fognini 2-6, 6-1, 7-6 (7/3), 6-3 and send Yannick Noah's France into the semis for the third time in four years.

"18 months ago, he was playing for the first time, and now he is our leader on and off the court," captain Noah said of Pouille. Nicolas Mahut and Pierre-Hugues Herbert had cruised to a straight-sets victory over Fognini and Simone Bolelli in the doubles on Saturday to put France in control, despite Fognini's bad-tempered four-set win against Jeremy Chardy.—AFP

Sports

Ronaldo on target in derby draw as Barca stretch Liga lead

Barcelona lead the standings on 79 points

MADRID: Real Madrid forward Cristiano Ronaldo scored for the 10th game in a row in yesterday's 1-1 draw at home to Atletico Madrid but Antoine Griezmann struck back at the other end to keep his side four points ahead of their cross-city rivals.

Yet the Madrid derby draw only pushes Barcelona closer to winning the title as second-placed Atletico now trail Ernesto Valverde's runaway leaders by 11 points in the standings. Ronaldo followed his outrageous bicycle kick strike against Juventus in the Champions League on Tuesday by breaking the deadlock in an entertaining contest in the 53rd minute.



He sent a cross from Gareth Bale crashing past Jan Oblak on the volley, hitting the target for the 20th time in 10 games. Atletico quickly struck back down the other end, with Griezmann tapping into an empty net in the 57th minute to complete an excellent team move also involving Thomas Partey and Vitolo.

Barcelona lead the standings on 79 points after beating Leganes 3-1 on Saturday. Atletico have 68 while Real are third on 64 after 31 games. The Catalans will lift a 25th Liga title if they win four of their seven remaining games.

Real winger Marco Asensio and left back Marcelo both hit the crossbar in the first half while the home

side had penalty appeals waved away either side of the interval and Oblak was forced to save goal-bound shots from Dani Carvajal and Ronaldo.

Real keeper Keylor Navas beat away a low strike from Diego Costa in the first half and then kept out a powerful effort from Koke in the second while Atletico midfielder Saul Niguez struck one just wide as the visitors grew in confidence. Madrid captain Sergio Ramos almost grabbed an injury-time winner from a free kick but Oblak again came to Atletico's rescue by tipping the curling shot over the bar.

Also yesterday, Levante took a giant step towards sealing their La Liga survival by winning 2-1 in a relegation battle at home to fellow strugglers Las Palmas with a superb injury time goal by Jose Campana.

Spanish midfielder Campana cut inside from the left wing on the counterattack and coolly curled the ball into the far corner, sparking jubilant scenes at the packed Ciutat de Valencia stadium after Las Palmas captain David Garcia had cancelled out Coke's opening goal. The win takes Levante, who finished the game with 10 men, eight points clear of the relegation zone and 18th placed Deportivo La Coruna with seven games remaining. Las Palmas are 10 points adrift in 19th. — Reuters



MADRID: Real Madrid's French defender Raphael Varane (2R) vies with Atletico Madrid's Argentinian forward Angel Correa (R) beside Atletico Madrid's French forward Antoine Griezmann during the Spanish league football match between Real Madrid CF and Club Atletico de Madrid at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium in Madrid yesterday. — AFP

Superb injury time goal by Jose Campana

Injury-prone Welbeck deserves a break: Wenger

LONDON: Arsene Wenger hailed Danny Welbeck's return to form as his double inspired Arsenal to a bad-tempered 3-2 victory over Southampton yesterday that saw both sides reduced to 10 men.

England World Cup hopeful Welbeck also made Arsenal's other goal for Pierre Emerick-Aubameyang as the Gunners fought off a spirited challenge from the Saints, who remain in the Premier League relegation zone. Southampton's Jack Stephens was sent off in stoppage time for a clash with Gunners substitute Jack Wilshere—who should also have been dismissed according to Southampton manager Mark Hughes.

Arsenal did finish with 10 men when Mohamed Elneny saw red for a hand in the face of Cedric Soares, but Wenger believed the game should be remembered most for Welbeck's first Premier League goals since September last year. Welbeck, whose Arsenal career has been dogged by injury problems, shrugged off missing a glorious chance seconds before he headed home the winner nine minutes from time.

"I'm pleased for him because he has been through difficult times," Wenger said. "I have seen him behave (well) when it was really tough so he deserves everything he gets. He had every reason to feel sorry for himself, to think the mountain was too big to climb, because it was the right knee, then the left knee and a year out every time.

"People were questioning whether he would come back and I believe what he has done is exceptional." Welbeck will be hoping a late-season revival increases his chances of making England's World Cup squad.

"I'm happy with the assist and glad to get the goals," he said. "I know when I get the opportunities in front of goal I will put them away—apart from the one I put over! I thought I would get another opportunity to get a winner and I kept focused on that. The World Cup will take care of itself—I don't pick the team."

The game ended petulantly when Stephens threw Wilshere to the ground after the Arsenal substitute had



LONDON: Arsenal's English midfielder Jack Wilshere (R) misses a chance at goal during the English Premier League football match between Arsenal and Southampton at the Emirates Stadium in London yesterday. —AFP

ripped his shirt. Elneny then saw red for a hand in Cedric Soares' face straight after, but Hughes was convinced referee Andre Marriner should also have dismissed Wilshere. "I saw a definite movement with his knee towards Jack (Stephens)," said Hughes. "The referee should have seen that and sent both off. Elneny has raised a hand to Cedric's face—that's a sending off clearly. So maybe there should have been three."

Southampton remain three points adrift of safety but this was a much better performance than Hughes' first Premier League game in charge—a 3-0 defeat at West Ham. Shane Long took advantage of a comical mix-up

between Petr Cech and Shkodran Mustafi to put the visitors in front early on.

And they were well worth their equaliser when Charlie Austin came off the bench to level at 2-2 17 minutes from time before Welbeck's late winner. "It was a good performance and a marked contrast to West Ham," added Hughes. "The only criticism is that when you get back on level terms you need to have the clarity of thought to make sure you take something out of the game." "It was clearly encouraging in terms of what we need to do to get out of this situation. Clearly we have got talented players, you saw that today." — AFP

Napoli keep title ambitions alive

MILAN: Last-gasp goals from Arkadiusz Milik and Amadou Diawara kept Napoli's Serie A title ambitions alive as a 2-1 win over Chievo yesterday maintained the pressure on reigning champions Juventus. Maurizio Sarri's title-chasers looked destined to remain seven points behind Juventus as they trailed until the 89th minute at their San Paolo Stadium. Polish striker Mariusz Stepinski's goal on 73 minutes had put the relegation battlers from Verona ahead, with Chievo goalkeeper Stefano Sorrentino making a string of saves including from a Dries Mertens penalty.

But Milik headed in the equaliser with one minute of normal time to go with Guinean midfielder Diawara grabbing the winner deep into injury time. "We won a game that we deserved to win," said Sarri. "It had seemed cursed, as we had 31 shots on goal, missed a penalty, hit the woodwork. It was one of those classic games where the team does everything right and the ball won't go in. But they kept pushing and the logical conclusion was to win the match." Juventus' 4-2 win over Benevento on Saturday had opened up a seven-point advantage as the Turin giants chase a seventh straight title. But the gap is now back to four points with just seven games remaining as Napoli continue to push for a first Scudetto since 1990.

Despite dominating Napoli had little to show for their efforts, with Stepinski breaking through on Chievo's first real chance after sloppy defending by the hosts. A Lorenzo Tonelli header rattled the crossbar minutes later, with Sorrentino saving a curling Insigne goal-bound shot and Mertens and Piotr Zielinski also hitting wide.

But in the final minute with the whistles of the home crowd growing louder, Insigne crossed for Milik and Diawara ensured Napoli keep the pressure on Juventus, with the two sides still to go head-to-head in Turin on April 22.

"I have to thank the fans, because without them, we would not have won the match," said Sarri. "When we got the equaliser, the Stadio San Paolo turned into a cauldron and we rode that wave."

INTER MILAN SLIP UP

Earlier, Adem Ljajic scored the only goal for Torino to ensure former club Inter Milan missed the chance to move third. Inter could have overtaken Roma after the capital club lost 2-0 at home against Fiorentina on Saturday.

But Luciano Spalletti's side now risk dropping out of the Champions League places with Lazio—two points behind in fifth—travelling to Udinese later. It was the first time that Torino coach Walter Mazzarri had faced his former club Inter since being fired in November 2014.—AFP

Egyptian gets on his bike for World Cup road trip

CAIRO: Mohamed "Ibn Nufal" Nufal, 24, kisses his mother goodbye in Cairo's Tahrir Square as he sets off for the World Cup in Russia - on a bicycle. After about 5,000 km (3,000 miles) and 65 days on the road, Nufal hopes to reach Moscow to see Egypt make its first appearance in the World Cup for 28 years.

Nufal plans to get there via Jordan, Bulgaria, Romania, Moldova and Ukraine. He will fly over Syria due to the civil war there and will also give Iraq a miss for security reasons. On his bike, Nufal has packed spare parts, an extra phone, batteries and camping gear. In addition to his tent, Nufal will put up in hostels where he can find them, as well as relying on the kindness of strangers for a bed for the night.

"It is about the road more than the arrival," he told Reuters Television. "If it were just about the World Cup, I would take a plane. It is a great chance for me to see new things." A group of cyclists and friends escorted Nufal as he started his trip on Saturday, and he hopes many more will offer him help along the way. After clinching its World Cup spot in October, Egypt will compete on football's ultimate stage for the first time since 1990. — Reuters

Griffiths puts Celtic one win from seventh straight title

GLASGOW: Celtic moved to within one win of a seventh straight Scottish Premiership title as Leigh Griffiths came off the bench to edge out 10-man Hamilton 2-1 yesterday.

Despite falling well short of the standards they set in winning a domestic treble without suffering a single defeat last season, Brendan Rodgers's men enjoy a 13-point lead over Rangers and Aberdeen with five games remaining. Rodgers made five changes to the side that were disappointingly held 0-0 at home by Dundee in midweek.

Manchester City loanee Patrick Roberts was one of those to come into the side for his first start since November and immediately made an impact by teeing up Callum McGregor to open the scoring after just three minutes. Hamilton are involved in a four-way battle to

avoid the drop at the other end of the table.

But the home side battled back into the game to equalise when Rakish Bingham showed Celtic's sluggish back line a clean pair of heels to run through and slot past Scott Bain.

However, Hamilton's chances of holding out for an unlikely point suffered a blow before half-time when midfielder Darren Lyon was shown two yellow cards in quick succession for fouling Kieran Tierney and then lashing out at the Scotland international. Rodgers reacted by introducing an extra striker at the break as Griffiths replaced Jack Hendry.

Griffiths has endured a frustrating season with injuries and inconsistent form seeing him often left on the sidelines. But he showed his predatory instincts just a minute after being introduced to head Scott Sinclair's cross into the bottom corner.

Celtic dominated possession thereafter, but failed to add to their lead with minds possibly beginning to focus on next weekend's Scottish Cup semi-final with rivals Rangers.

Their opponents for a possible title party the following week are still unknown with the SPFL yet to announce the fixture list for the final five games of the season when the league splits and sees the top six and bottom six face off in the climax to the season. —AFP

Live

Matches on TV
(Local Timings)

SPANISH LEAGUE		
Villarreal v Athletic de Bilbao		22:00
beIN SPORTS HD 3		
GERMAN BUNDESLIGA		
Leipzig v Bayer 04 Leverkusen		21:30
beIN SPORTS HD 5		

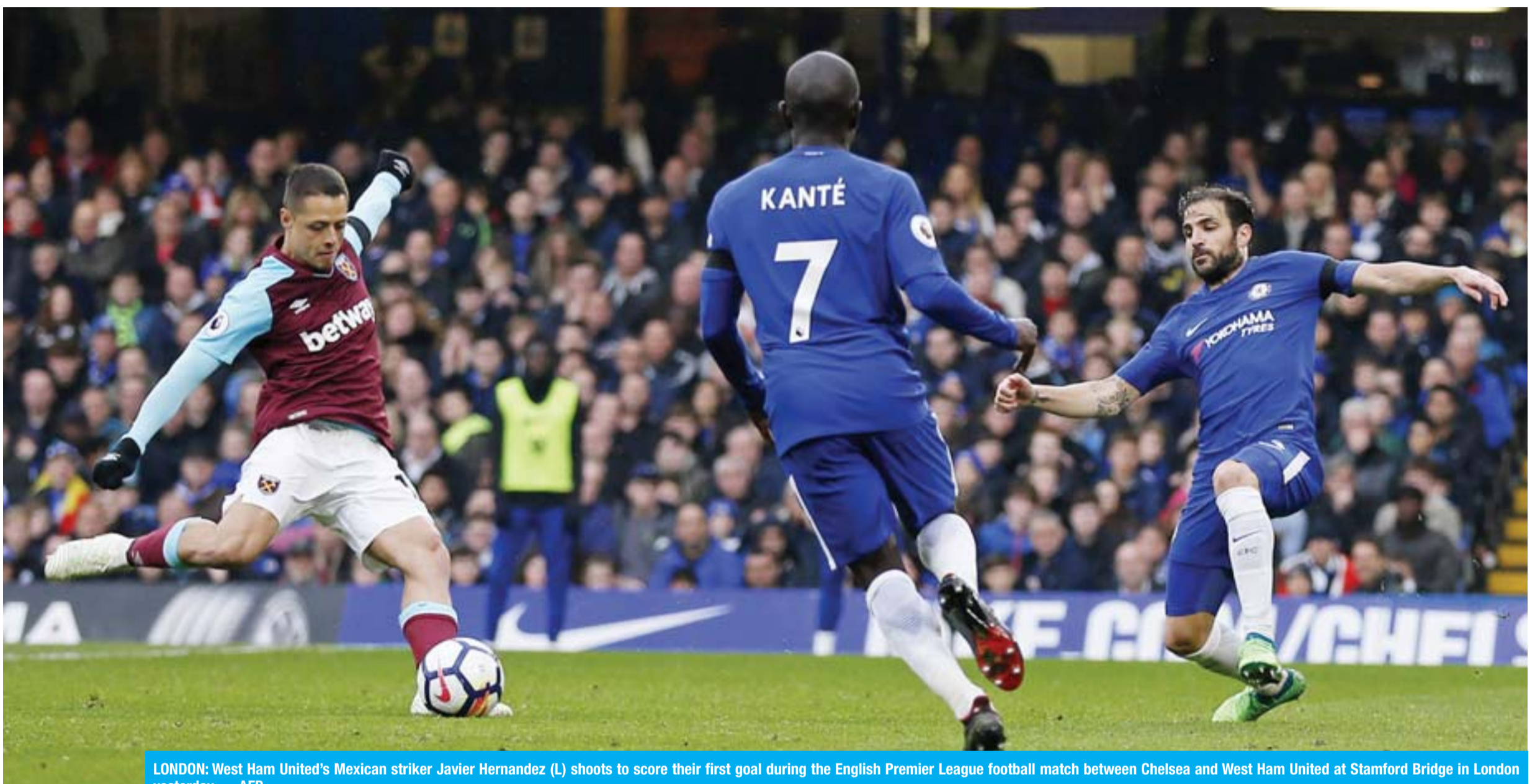
12 Fiji win record fourth straight HK Sevens crown



13 Australia continue medal rush in the pool, Scott upsets Chalmers



14 World champion Sagan seals Paris-Roubaix with epic break



LONDON: West Ham United's Mexican striker Javier Hernandez (L) shoots to score their first goal during the English Premier League football match between Chelsea and West Ham United at Stamford Bridge in London yesterday. — AFP

Chelsea's top-four bid in tatters

Hernandez's late equaliser gives struggling West Ham a 1-1 draw

LONDON: Chelsea's faint hopes of a top-four finish in the Premier League suffered a potentially fatal blow as Javier Hernandez's late equaliser gave struggling West Ham a 1-1 draw yesterday. Antonio Conte's side went ahead through Cesar Azpilicueta's first-half strike at Stamford Bridge.

But Chelsea missed a host of chances to increase their advantage and were made to pay when Hernandez came off the bench to snatch the leveller with 17 minutes left. Conte had admitted losing at home to Tottenham for the first time in 28 years last weekend was a huge setback in Chelsea's bid to salvage a dismal campaign by qualifying for the Champions League. With fifth-placed Chelsea lagging 10 points behind fourth-placed Tottenham with only six games remaining, this frustrating result should end their top-four challenge.

West Ham, now six points clear of the relegation zone, were ecstatic to escape with a point despite a largely

limp display. But it was a disappointing conclusion to a miserable week for Chelsea, who were mourning the death of their former star Ray Wilkins. Wilkins died at the age of 61 after suffering a cardiac arrest. The former England midfielder, who played for Chelsea for six years in the 1970s and had several spells as the club's assistant coach, was remembered by fans who laid flowers outside the stadium.

Inside, Chelsea and West Ham supporters, usually fierce rivals, united to sing "there's only one Ray Wilkins" and held aloft a huge flag with his image. There was a minute's applause before kick-off, with Chelsea's players all wearing number eight warm-up shirts in recognition of Wilkins' old jersey. Respects paid, Chelsea had to focus on finding a way to end a damaging run of one win from their previous four league matches. Eden Hazard's indifferent form has epitomised Chelsea's struggles and the Belgian playmaker had gone seven games without a goal.

TEMPORARY REPRIEVE

Hazard came close to ending that streak when he made a penetrating run to the edge of the area and flashed a shot just wide. Chelsea were in control but when Alvaro Morata found the back of the net from Hazard's pass, the Spain striker's effort was ruled out for offside. Hazard was looking more like his old self and he combined with Cesc Fabregas to prise open the West Ham defence, but Morata's deft back-flick rolled wide.

Back in the groove, Hazard provided the impetus for another flowing Chelsea move that saw Willian's shot pushed over by West Ham goalkeeper Joe Hart. It was only a temporary reprieve for West Ham as Conte's men took a 36th-minute lead from the resulting short corner. Victor Moses, left unmarked by West Ham's ponderous defence, scooped a cross towards Morata and he headed down to Azpilicueta, who controlled before poking a soft shot past Hart for his first goal since October.

Willian was inches away from doubling Chelsea's lead early in the second half after Hazard's clever back-heel gave the Brazilian space to shoot just wide.

Morata has endured a difficult first year with Chelsea and his fortunes weren't improving as he headed over from a corner before having another effort disallowed for offside. All those near-misses came back to haunt Chelsea in the 73rd minute. Mark Noble pumped a long ball into the Chelsea area and Blues captain Gary Cahill responded with a mistimed header that dropped for Marko Arnautovic. A quick pass from Arnautovic found Hernandez and the striker, on for just three minutes, drilled a fine finish past Thibaut Courtois.

Marcos Alonso almost spared Chelsea's blushes with a thunderous strike, but Hart finished as West Ham's hero with superb saves to keep out that effort and one from an Olivier Giroud header. — AFP

Vettel marks 200th race with Bahrain win

SAKHIR: Sebastian Vettel marked his 200th Formula One race with a thrilling and brilliantly-judged victory for Ferrari in yesterday's dramatic Bahrain Grand Prix. The four-time ex champion, on severely-worn tyres, came home narrowly ahead of Valtteri Bottas and the Finn's Mercedes team-mate Lewis Hamilton in a nail-biting finish to an intriguing contest.

French rookie Pierre Gasly took a stunning fourth place for the Honda-powered Toro Rosso team ahead of Kevin Magnussen of Haas. It was Vettel's second win in as many races this season, the 49th of his career and extended his lead ahead of Hamilton in the drivers' championship to 17 points after the Englishman delivered a dazzling drive from ninth on the grid to finish only six seconds adrift.

Both have won four championships and, this season, are battling to secure an historic fifth title. "Wow!" screamed Vettel as he crossed the line. "These tyres were done - they were done for the last 10 laps.

"I came on the radio to say everything was under control, but that was a lie! I thought Bottas would catch me and I just tried to keep it as clean as possible." Bottas said: "We were on the harder compound and I knew there was a chance.

I tried to catch him, but it was just not enough. Extremely disappointing." Hamilton, who started ninth after being given a five-place penalty for a gearbox change, said he was satisfied. "I am happy," he said. "It was damage limitation. I started ninth so third is not that bad..." But it was not all good news for Ferrari as Vettel's team-mate Finn Kimi Raikkonen failed to finish after colliding with a mechanic at a pit stop. The mechanic was taken to the circuit medical centre with a suspected broken leg.

Both the Red Bulls of Max Verstappen and Daniel Ricciardo also retired after the opening laps. Nico Hulkenberg was sixth for Renault ahead of Fernando Alonso and his McLaren team-mate Stoffel Vandoorne.

Marcus Ericsson grabbed two points for Sauber by finishing ninth ahead of Esteban Ocon, who was 10th for Force India.

LUCK ENDED

The race began with temperatures falling from 29 and 35 degrees Celsius respectively for air and track. Vettel made a clean start and Bottas swept past Raikkonen to split the Ferraris on the opening lap.

This lifted spirits for Mercedes, but Hamilton, down in ninth to resist a charging lunge by Verstappen at the start of lap two. From 15th on the grid, the Red Bull driver had reached the top ten, but his luck ended when he banged wheels with Hamilton and punctured his left rear tyre. As the Dutchman idled back to the pits, his Red Bull team-mate Ricciardo slowed and stopped at the side of the track. A Virtual Safety Car was deployed. Verstappen pitted and re-joined, but his race was over when, like Ricciardo, he stopped and retired.

This left Hamilton to make up places and after slipping to 10th he regained ninth and then passed Alonso, Hulkenberg and Ocon in one move. Vettel pitted after 19 laps, passing the lead to Bottas, and rejoining fourth. Two laps later, Raikkonen also came in for a Ferrari pit-stop that elevated Hamilton to second.

Bottas finally pitted after 21 laps, in a 3.8 seconds stop for medium tyres that were expected to see him complete the race - while both Ferrari ran on softs. In the lead, Hamilton was 5.3 seconds clear of Vettel after 22 laps, an advantage trimmed to half a second by lap 25 with Bottas five seconds adrift in third. A frustrated Vettel finally burst past the defensive Hamilton, on his original tyres, to re-gain the lead on lap 26. Hamilton then pitted, also for mediums, which left both Mercedes on a one-stop strategy and Ferrari requiring another stop each. — AFP



MANAMA: Ferrari's German driver Sebastian Vettel raises his trophy after winning the Bahrain Formula One Grand Prix at the Sakhir circuit in Manama yesterday. — AFP

Business

MONDAY, APRIL 9, 2018

18 New Mercedes-Benz S-Class Coupe arrives in Kuwait**20** Global markets remain edgy as US-China trade dispute rages on**21** Infiniti AI-Babtain's new Infiniti QX80 wins 'Best Premium SUV'

HANGZHOU: Customers looking at Tesla cars at a showroom in Hangzhou in China's eastern Zhejiang province. Chinese state media yesterday called on industrial and commercial sectors in the United States to rally against President Donald Trump's plans for an additional \$100 billion in tariffs against Chinese goods. —AFP

Trump sees trade deal with 'friend' Xi

Tech sector frets as US-China trade tensions simmer

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump yesterday said he sees an end to the escalating trade dispute with China, after tit-for-tat retaliatory tariffs and threats that rattled markets. "China will take down its trade barriers because it is the right thing to do," Trump said in a tweet.

"Taxes will become reciprocal & deal will be made on Intellectual Property. Great future for both countries!" He added that he and China's President Xi Jinping "will always be friends, no matter what happens with our dispute on trade."

US stocks plunged more than two percent Friday after Trump warned of tariffs on an additional \$100 billion worth of Chinese imports, provoking a strong response from Beijing and fanning fears of a full-blown trade war. Investors were unnerved by the latest broadside from the volatile US president and by China's strident response, which vowed Beijing would stand firm "until the end at any cost."

Some global investors have, however, taken solace from signals that the Trump administration may be taking a harsh line as a bargaining tactic towards deal-making with China. In the wake of Trump's decision in March to impose steep tariffs on steel and aluminum imports, primarily to target China, the US on Tuesday published a list of \$50 billion in Chinese goods to be hit by tariffs over what Washington says is widespread theft of intellectual property and technology.

China retaliated by unveiling planned levies on \$50 billion worth of major US exports including soybeans, cars and small aircraft. Trump hit back again late Thursday, instructing trade officials to consider the additional levies on \$100 billion in imports.

"Rather than remedy its misconduct, China has chosen to harm our farmers and manufacturers," Trump said at the time, calling Beijing's reaction "unfair." So far, only the tariffs on steel and aluminum have taken effect. US businesses, and farm states most vulnerable to Chinese retaliation, have called for restraint.

Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin acknowledged there was a risk of a trade war, but said the intention is to defend US interests and the administration remains willing to negotiate.

Speaking Friday on CNBC, Mnuchin said Trump is not aiming to provoke a conflict with China, but he is determined to defend US interests and "there is the potential of a trade war." But he said the White House is willing to negotiate and is in regular contact with Chinese officials. He argued that the situation could be a "win-win" for China and the United States if Beijing opens up its economy. "I'm cautiously optimistic to work this out," Mnuchin said, adding that "I think that we can manage this without significant difficulty to the overall economy."

China has filed two complaints at the World Trade

Organization claiming the United States has violated global trading rules, a charge the White House dismissed. Chinese state media yesterday called on industrial and commercial sectors in the United States to rally against President Donald Trump's plans for an additional \$100 billion in tariffs against Chinese goods.

Trump threatened the extra tariffs after China last week imposed \$3 billion of tariffs on US fruits, nuts, wine and pork, just hours after the United States unveiled an initial \$50 billion in tariffs on Chinese goods. The tit-for-tat tariffs between the world's two largest economies follows a US finding that China was engaging in unfair trade practices in connection with intellectual property protections. China rejects the charge.

Tech sector frets

As US-China trade tensions ratchet up, the technology sector is fretting over the potential for collateral damage to one of America's most important export industries. The tech industry is not directly affected by the new tariffs unveiled by the Trump administration which aim to target Beijing for unfair trade practices failure to protect intellectual property.

But some industry leaders fear tech will be dragged into the dispute, with the potential to impact the estimated \$3 trillion industry in which the US and China

are key players. "As trade wars escalate, they are not controllable, they are not predictable," said Ed Black, president and chief executive of the Computer & Communications Industry Association, which represents major tech firms such as Amazon, Facebook, Google and Netflix.

"There is always collateral damage," Black said the US administration "correctly identified some of the problems" with trade involving China but "missed all the problems of internet companies doing business in China."

Black said the tech industry understands the need to confront China over trade barriers and other practices, but that Washington's efforts to go alone could "weaken the international trading system."

The relationship of US tech firms with China has long been complicated by concerns about censorship, labor and human rights and the potential for stealing trade secrets.

Google shut down its search engine for China in 2010 after it found accounts of Chinese human rights activists hacked and some US-based online platforms are banned by Beijing.

But Apple recently agreed to base its cloud storage for Chinese users in the country, saying it had to comply despite concerns over Beijing's surveillance of citizens. And Airbnb said it would share customer data with the Chinese government as well. — Agencies

French train strikes resume as unions square off with Macron

PARIS: Travellers grappled with another crippling wave of transport strikes in France yesterday, as train workers protested President Emmanuel Macron's economic reforms and a stand-off between the government and rail unions hardened. Train staff last week began three months of nationwide rolling strikes in a dispute over the government's planned overhaul of state-run railway SNCF, in the biggest challenge yet to Macron's attempts to modernize the French economy.

Talks between workers and ministers have so far hit a wall. Some unions are stiffening their resistance, while the government has dug in its heels on the main aspects of its reform, which include the end of job-for-

life guarantees for rail staff. "The status quo is not viable," Prime Minister Edouard Philippe said in an interview published in the newspaper Le Parisien yesterday. "It's urgent, we need to advance, and everyone should know we are determined to see this through to the end."

Officials at the Communist-rooted CGT union said on Friday strikes could drag on well beyond June if nothing shifted, adding train workers were ready for a "marathon". The SNCF had forecast that just over a third of workers needed to make the train network run smoothly would walk out yesterday, a dip in participation compared with the last 48 hours of walkouts tomorrow and Wednesday. The strike continues today, as part of stoppages called for two days out of every five until the end of June. The shutdown is already causing havoc for commuters and holiday-makers at the start of mid-term school vacations in France.

"This endangers me professionally," said Olivier Coldefy, a court psychologist who works in French Guiana, whose travel plans fell through because of the train chaos. "I have work days that I've committed to that I can't honor," Coldefy added yesterday

morning at Montparnasse train station in Paris, where groups of tourists were scrambling to re-book trains after realizing theirs had been cancelled.

Test for Macron

The showdown is one of the toughest challenges yet of Macron's presidency, as well as a test for unions seeking to show they still have clout. Macron came to power last May on a promise to shake up Europe's second-biggest economy, in a bid to modernize some of France's creaking institutions and spur jobs growth. He has so far faced down unions to liberalize labor regulations.

The shake-up of SNCF, which also includes ending early retirement for rail workers, comes before the monopoly is opened to competition in line with European Union rules.

The government argues the overhaul will help transform the heavily indebted company into a profitable public service, but workers have hit back with complaints the SNCF was being dismantled to pave the way for privatization. Unions have also accused the government of refusing to budge an inch. Officials at the more reform-



PARIS: The platforms stand deserted at the train station in Perpignan yesterday during a strike by workers of the French rail company SNCF. — AFP

-minded CFDT union said yesterday they did not want a drawn-out conflict but that their proposed amendments to the shake-up had fallen on deaf ears. Locking horns with the

rail sector has backfired on previous French governments - paralyzing train strikes in 1995 forced then-Prime Minister Alain Juppe to pull planned reforms. — Reuters

Business

Honda AlGhanim unveils 2018 Gold Wing

The most luxurious in its class equipped with latest technology



KUWAIT: Honda AlGhanim, the exclusive distributor of Honda cars, motorcycles and marine equipment in Kuwait, unveiled the all-new 2018 Gold Wing, the most luxurious motorcycle in its class since first released in 1975, in an event held at its Motorcycle and Power Products Showroom in Al Rai.

The 2018 Gold Wing was launched amidst the presence of passionate riders and fans from all different Kuwaiti Motorcycle Clubs who explored its latest technologies and features and were impressed by the bike's striking design offering a whole new driving experience. Gold Wing merchandise giveaways among other valuable prizes were distributed to attendees in this much anticipated event that hosted live music and catering.

Honda's new bike prides itself with an exceptional design and a much lighter weight for an improved aerodynamic efficiency by 11.8% and better fuel consumption thanks to the Unicam® valve train. LED turn signals with auto-cancelling function were integrated into mirrors at the front and into the taillights at the rear. Additionally, rider can now easily control the airflow by adjusting the new electric windscreen's height and angles while riding the bike in a two-piece shaped seat allowing him to move around in the saddle during spirited riding and the passenger to tour in comfort throughout their exciting ride.

Gold Wing was refined inside and out with engine and drive system enhancements featuring a 1,833cc liquid-cooled, horizontally opposed six-cylinder engine offering low center of gravity, minimal vibration, and quiet running. The four-valve head improves combustion efficiency and fuel efficiency by 20%. Honda's bike was also equipped with a 29mm shorter engine from front to rear of left cylinder head which enabled engine and rider positions to be moved forward in chassis and put more weight on the front,



promoting sporty handling. Gold Wing's new engine's DCT offers a walking mode for creeping forward with 1.8 km/h and backward with a 1.2 km/h speeds; yet it is 3.8 kg lighter from its predecessors and equipped with a cam damper on manual-transmission model reducing shift noise and shift shock.

In this year's edition, Honda went beyond adding up-to-date technologies as Throttle By Wire technology, which provides smartphone connectivity,

where riders can listen to Apple Music, navigate maps, make Bluetooth phone calls, or send text messages using Siri. Gold Wing 2018 comes with four riding modes - Tour, Sport, Econ, and Rain to better help tailor the riding experience during specific riding conditions. Among other features, it was equipped with the Smart Start System for keyless starts and bag access, Hill Start Assist for an easier start from a stop on an ascent, Optimized Cruise

Control function for relaxed cruising, and a 7-inch full-color Thin Film Transistor (TFT) display offering clear viewing of audio and navigation systems. Additionally, the company added the Vehicle Viewfinder system to simplify finding your motorcycle in large parking lots.

The Honda Alghanim showroom in Al Rai area operates from 8:30am to 8:30pm, Saturday to Thursday, and from 10:00am to 8:00pm on Fridays.



Business

Infiniti Al-Babtain's new Infiniti QX80 wins 'Best Premium SUV'

'Wheels 2018 Car of the Year' awards ceremony

KUWAIT: Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al-Babtain Co (AABC), the sole authorized dealer of Infiniti vehicles in the State of Kuwait, is proud to announce that its new INFINITI QX80 received the 'Best Premium SUV' accolade at the prestigious 'Wheels 2018 Car of the Year' awards or popularly known as COTY which was held in Dubai. The INFINITI QX80 was recognized for its winning performance in accordance to the criteria set by COTY.

The 2018 COTY event was attended by a large number of senior executives representing all major automotive brands who witnessed the Wheels magazine recognition of the QX80 as the best SUV in the premium segment. The Infiniti model, which was launched at the 2017 Dubai International Motor Show last year, overcame stiff competition from a number of contending models launched this year by leading brands within the segment.

Proving its market leading presence in the automotive industry, the INFINITI QX80 takes INFINITI's 'Powerful Elegance' design language in a bold new

direction, creating a powerful, contemporary and commanding aesthetic. The new model was created to meet the needs of today's luxury car buyers, and introduces a trendy, modern interpretation of upscale luxury to the full-size SUV segment. It speaks to the affluent, high-achieving entrepreneurs and business leaders, often with families, who demand space and utility, hand-crafted quality and modern design, and effortless on-road performance.

Additionally, the INFINITI Q60 was also nominated in the 'Best Coupe' category during the awards, signifying the brands perusal for excellence across the board.

The COTY awards night is an annual automotive event presented by Wheels magazine, the UAE's only English weekly motoring magazine. The 2018 edition of the event was hosted last night by the Wheels magazine editorial team at the Waldorf Astoria Dubai Palm Jumeirah hotel. The awards are considered one of the region's most prestigious automotive events, with the accolades given to the best newly released vehicles each year.



Burgan Bank announces winners of Yawmi account draw

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank, the second largest in terms of assets, announced yesterday the names of the daily draw winners of its Yawmi account draw, each taking home a cash-prize of KD 5,000.

- The lucky winners are:**
1. Mohammed Ahmed Bashir Airot
 2. Fesal Dahwai Towersh
 3. Ali Abdulrahman Mohammad Alsalem
 4. Hamad Abdullah Salem Alateeqi
 5. Sadan Ahmad Abdullah Alattar

In addition to the daily draw, Burgan Bank also offers a quarterly draw with more chances to win higher rewards, offering the chance to one lucky customer to win KD 125,000 every three months. The Yawmi Account offers daily and quarterly draws, wherein the quarterly draw requires customers to maintain a minimum amount of KD 500 in their account for two months prior to the draw date. Additionally, every KD 10 in the account will entitle customers to one chance of winning. If the account balance is KD 500 and above, the account holder will be qualified for both the quarterly and daily draws.

Burgan Bank encourages everyone to open a Yawmi account and/or increase their deposit to maximize their chances of becoming a winner. The higher the level of the deposit, the higher the likelihood to win.

Ford Alghanim holds service and parts competition

KUWAIT: As part of its continued efforts to provide service excellence in Kuwait, Ford Alghanim, the official dealer of Ford in Kuwait, held a Service and Parts Competition for its aftersales team in which it aimed to demonstrate its commitment to providing the highest level of service to customers.

Held at its premises in Kuwait and attended by executives from Ford Alghanim and Ford Middle East, the competition was designed to encourage employees and enable them to showcase their abilities and knowledge of the Ford service standards, as well as excite them in celebrating the commitment they have made to achieve excellence in every aspect of their service. Sixty of Ford Alghanim's aftersales members took part in the competition that comprised of two phases. Following the first phase which consisted of a written test, 15 finalists were then put on a practical challenge in the second phase. The final phase was assessed by Ford Alghanim Management, and Ford Middle East Aftersales Management, by evaluating their skills and expertise.

Presenting the awards to the best performing service advisors, technicians and parts executives was the Regional Aftersales Manager at Ford Middle East, Nadeem Dweik, who shared the company's recognitions and great support to the initiative, encouraging Ford Alghanim's teams to continue working on achieving the highest level of service excellence. Dweik said: "We are proud of the achievements of the Ford Alghanim team as they continue to uphold the highest level of service excellence to add value to customers every day. Service excellence is a significant aspect to the full ownership experience, as the quality of the car and sales experience can only be heightened when the long-term service experience meets and exceeds customer expectations"

Also presenting the awards was Ford Alghanim's General Manager of Aftersales, Xavier Stephen who stated: "This activity is not just a competition among employees. It's a tangible proof of our passion for con-



Ford Alghanim's Vice President Ihab Al-Khatib speaks during the event.

tinuous improvement and our belief that we can only continue to raise our service standards by challenging ourselves".

Addressing the crowd present, Ford Alghanim's Vice President, Ihab Al-Khatib, said: "Ford Alghanim is dedicated to achieving the highest customer satisfaction and the highest "Fix It Right the First Time" rate in the region, this is a testament to the level of excellence we aim to maintain and exceed every day. I want to thank each member of the Ford Alghanim family for their ongoing efforts to ensure our customers are happy and satisfied every time they come into our service center and showroom."

Two winners from each category were announced based on their performance and professionalism. In the service advisor category, Khalid Morgan and Badr Radi were chosen as first and first runner up respectively, while in the parts executive category, Vipindas Valappil and Max Mariano, were chosen as first and first runner up respectively, and from the technicians category, Hasan Ali and Abdul Rahman got first and first runner up prizes respectively.

Ford Alghanim's Service & Parts center is located in



Regional Aftersales Manager at Ford Middle East Nadeem Dweik

the Shuwaikh Industrial Area, opposite of the Classical Car Museum and Sirbb Circuit. The service center's working hours are from 7 AM to 7 PM from Saturday to Thursday.

KFH announces winners of 'The Journey of 6m Miles Begins with a Card' campaign



Fadi Chalouhi and Meshal Al-Mutairi honoring the winner of 1 million miles

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) announced the winners of "the Journey of 6 Million Miles Begins with A Card" Campaign launched for 3 months in collaboration with Kuwait Airways. The draw took place under the supervision of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

KFH customer Mohammad Al-Dughaiman won 1,000,000 miles. Reem Al-Rashed, Anwar BuRahma, Abdulrahman Borsley, Nasser Alqadiri, and Tahani Alrashidi won 500,000 Miles each, while 100 winners won 25,000 miles each. The names of the 100 winners have been announced on KFHgroup account on Instagram.

The journey of 6 million miles begins with a card" campaign is the first of its kind in the local market. It is exclusive for KFH Oasis Club prepaid Mastercard cardholders in collaboration with Kuwait Airways.

Along with customers shopping experience using the "KFH Oasis Club Card", KFH has added the joys of travelling free to worldwide destinations on board of Kuwait Airways. For each KD 100 customers spend locally or globally during one month, they were entitled get a chance to enter the draw and win one of the following prizes: One winner gets 1,000,000 miles 5 winners get 500,000 miles each 100 winners get 25,000 miles each.

Group General Manager Retail Banking Fadi Chalouhi said that KFH is keen on continually rewarding its customers with unprecedented offers and campaigns. For each KD 1 spend in purchases outside Kuwait through the card, the customer earns 6 miles. Minimum spend KD 100 per month for double miles. 3000 bonus miles when the card is activated for the first time during the campaign period.

He added that "Al-Kheir" card is a prepaid card from KFH. It offers special discounts and promotions at Kuwait's most renowned stores. The card enjoys safe and secure payment online feature with 3D Secure service. Cash withdrawal possibility from all KFH ATM machines in Kuwait. All KFH customers are eligible to obtain this card regardless their credit history. They enjoy special discounts and promotions from countless international brands in Kuwait.

Meanwhile, Oasis Club Manager Meshal Al-Mutairi at Kuwait Airways, expressed his thanks and gratitude to KFH boasting success of the campaign. He affirmed the continuing efforts of improving customer service while offering the best promotions and discounts to increase customer satisfaction.

Al-Babtain Group rewarded by NBK for maintaining successful partnerships

KUWAIT: Al-Babtain Group's Infiniti and Nissan's brand managers were recently rewarded by the management of National Bank of Kuwait for maintaining a successful partnership over the years. The brand managers were handed appreciation trophies for their commendable work during an event that took place in Dar Al-Hamad, which reiterated them the many achievements shared together.

Apart from being a strong financial partner delivering the best offers for several years, Al-Babtain and National Bank of Kuwait have jointly worked alongside on initiatives to mutually benefit their customers and the entire community.

Bringing wider choices for its loyal patrons through diverse partnerships with likeminded organi-



zations and financial institutions such as NBK, Al-Babtain group will continue to furnish its customers with the highest quality of services and offers to improve their overall and daily experiences.

Al-Babtain Group was founded in 1948, to present a model of honesty, integrity and total dedication, gaining a solid reputation in the State of Kuwait and the Middle East area. Today, Al-Babtain Group has licensing rights for some of the world's leading brands stretching the globe from

the USA to the Far East. For more than 60 years, Al-Babtain Group has experienced continued success and a large measure of this success came from the Group's advanced flexible management style and long-term vision. These astounding results were achieved due to a versatile strategic formula focusing on growth amongst its sphere of activities; including automotive, technology, investment, information technology, industrial and Finance.

Technology

Michigan students prep for global robotics competition

Student teams to battle robots on playing field



DETROIT: Students work on their team's robot inside the University of Michigan's 'Michigan Engineering Zone' inside the school's Detroit center.—AP photos



DETROIT: A University of Michigan initiative has helped more than 2,800 Detroit high school students build robotics, train for competitions and expand their science, technology, engineering and math education. Students will be able to put their practice to the test as Detroit gears up to host the first Championship, a global robotics competition.

About 90 of the 400 teams from around the world competing from April 25-29 are from Michigan Student teams will battle robots on a playing field.

It's the first time the event is being held in the state. The university's Michigan Engineering Zone is offering teams workstations, equipment, storage and a cadre of

mentors, including professional engineers and graduate students. Teams visit MEZ to modify or troubleshoot for upcoming competitions. Many Detroit high schools don't have the tools, resources or staff to support a robotics team.

MEZ gives high school students a hands-on learning environment to practice real job skills,

such as problem-solving and critical thinking, said Nikolai Vitti, Detroit's public school district superintendent. "This is a something we will look to expand by including more schools and students," Vitti said. MEZ also offers students assistance on college applications, as well as financial aid.

Some even end up attending the university,

including 23-year-old Jacob Durrah. Durrah started attending MEZ as a sophomore. Now, he works at Ford Motor Co.

"That exposure and constant encouragement and seeing the results of what you can do if you put your mind to it," he said. "I can definitely say that is the reason I am here working for Ford today."—AP

New Dell Technologies research reveals a divided vision of the future

DUBAI: We're entering the next era of human-machine partnerships with a divided vision of the future, according to research now available from Dell Technologies. Half of the 3,800 global business leaders surveyed forecast that automated systems will free up their time including a majority of leaders in the UAE and KSA. Similarly, 55 percent of regional leaders believe they'll have more job satisfaction in the future by offloading tasks to machines.

The quantitative research conducted by Vanson Bourne follows Dell Technologies' seminal story, 'Realizing2030: The Next Era of Human-Machine Partnerships'. That study forecasted that by 2030, emerging technologies will forge human partnerships with machines that are richer and more immersive than ever before, helping us surpass our limitations. Business leaders agree: 87 percent of respondents from the region expect humans and machines will work as integrated teams within their organization inside of five years.

Concerning business tasks which would be outsourced to machines by 2030, leaders in the region listed Marketing and Communications and Product Design as most likely followed by Human Resources and Financial Administration, Logistics or Supply Chain, and Customer Service and Troubleshooting. However, regional opinions are also split by whether the future represents an opportunity or a threat, and torn by the need to mitigate these risks. For instance:

50 percent say the more we depend upon technology, the more we'll have to lose in the event of a cyber-attack; the other half aren't concerned

58 percent of business leaders are calling for clear protocols in the event that autonomous machines fail; while 42 percent abstained

51 percent say computers will need to decipher between good and bad commands; 49 percent don't see a need

Mohammed Amin, Senior Vice President - META, Dell EMC, said, "As organizations prepare to enter this next era of human and machine partnerships, leaders are evidently torn between two extreme perspectives about the future varying between optimism and anxiety. This differing viewpoint could make it difficult for organizations to prepare for the future and certainly hamper leaders' efforts to push through necessary change."

Given the promise of monumental change-fueled by exponentially increasing data and the applications, processing power and connectivity to harness it-63 percent in the region speculate that schools will need to teach how to learn rather than what to learn to prepare students for jobs that don't yet exist. This thinking corroborates the previous study's forecast that 85 percent of jobs that will exist globally in 2030 haven't been invented yet.

Beset by barriers

Furthermore, many businesses aren't moving fast enough, and going deep enough, to overcome common barriers to operating as a successful digital business. Only 27 percent of regional businesses believe they are leading the way, ingrain digital in all they do. Nearly half (45 percent) don't know whether they'll be able to compete over the next decade, and the majority (68 percent) of businesses are struggling to keep-up with the pace of change.

The lack of workforce readiness was identified as the leading barrier to becoming a successful digital business in 2030, further emphasizing the need for skill development among existing employees and future generations. A majority of leaders in the region (73 percent) also identified the lack of a digital vision and strategy as a prominent barrier. These were followed by the barriers of technology constraints (61 percent), time and money (47 percent) and finally law and regulations (22 percent).

Unified by the need to transform

Leaders may be divided in their view of the future and facing barriers to change, but they're united in the need to transform. In fact, the vast majority of businesses believe they'll be well on their way to transforming within five years, despite the challenges they face.

Likely to achieve within five years in UAE and KSA:
Have effective cybersecurity defences in place: 96 percent
Deliver their product offering as a service: 96 percent
Complete their transition to a software-defined business: 97 percent
R&D will drive their organization forward: 94 percent
Delivering hyper-connected customer experiences with virtual reality (VR): 92 percent

Using AI to pre-empt customer demands

93 percent Mohammed Amin adds, "We're entering an era of monumental change that will fundamentally change the way businesses operate and prioritize investments. While half of the business leaders in the region are unsure of what the next ten to fifteen years look like for their industry and are struggling with the quick pace of change, a large majority are looking at embracing change and new technologies in their digital business plans for the next five years. This pivotal time is rich with opportunities of collaboration and innovation. It is becoming increasingly clear that businesses can either transform their IT, workforce, and security and play a defining role in the future or be left behind."



Did Cambridge Analytica get your data? You'll know soon

NEW YORK: Anyone who's been wondering if their private Facebook data might have been swept up in the Cambridge Analytica scandal will soon get their first clues. Starting today, all 2.2 billion Facebook users will receive a notice on their feeds, titled "Protecting Your Information," with a link to see what apps they use and what information they have shared with those apps. If they want, they can shut off apps individually or turn off third-party access to their apps completely.

In addition, the 87 million users who might have had their data shared with Cambridge Analytica will get a more detailed message informing them of this. Facebook says most of the affected users (more than 70 million) are in the US, though there are over a million each in the Philippines, Indonesia and the UK.

Reeling from its worst privacy crisis in history - allegations that its Trump-affiliated data mining firm may have used ill-gotten user data to try to influence elections - Facebook is in full damage-control mode, with CEO Mark Zuckerberg acknowledging he's made a "huge mistake" in failing to take a broad enough view of what Facebook's responsibility is in the world. He's set to testify before Congress next week.

Cambridge Analytica whistleblower Christopher Wylie previously estimated that more than 50 million people were compromised by a personality quiz that collected data from users and their friends. That Facebook app, called "This is Your Digital Life," was



NEW YORK: In this file photo, the logo for Facebook appears on screens at the Nasdaq Market Site in New York's Times Square.—AP

a personality quiz created in 2014 by an academic researcher named Aleksander Kogan, who paid about 270,000 people to take it. The app vacuumed up not just the data of the people who took it, but also - thanks to Facebook's loose restrictions - data from their friends, too, including details that they hadn't intended to share publicly.

Facebook later limited the data apps can access, but it was too late in this case. Zuckerberg said Facebook came up with the 87 million figure by calculating the maximum number of friends that users could have had while Kogan's app was collecting data. The company doesn't have logs going back that far, he said, so it can't know exactly how many people may have been affected. Cambridge Analytica said in a statement Wednesday that it had data for only 30 million people.—AP

Put your best face forward with the Huawei nova 3e

In the age of selfies, people post around millions of selfies every day. Selfies, profile pics define who we are and share our most important experiences, as well as our exciting lives. When we look good on social media and in pictures, we feel good about ourselves. A selfie superstar, the new Huawei nova 3e is here to amp up your selfie game. The phone brings amazing features to make you look your best in pictures and rock your social media feeds. Here are a few things you need to know about this phone to get noticed and shine like a star!

Enhanced natural beauty

From now on, you'll look your best in all pictures! The Huawei nova 3e offers a unique photography experience as it packs amazing features like natural beauty algorithms that will enhance your natural beauty and remove imperfections. Bringing improved facial recognition, the phone accurately captures those details (skin tone, texture and facial details) and adjusts them to give you a natural look in any environment; it will remove acne and imperfections to give you a clear, revived skin that will enhance your natural beauty.

Additionally, the phone offers a 3D beautification mode that uses 96 facial recognition points to adjust and enhance lighting on the contours of your face. Tired eyes or dried lips? No worries! The HUAWEI nova 3e comes with eye beauty and lip beauty settings to make your eyes bigger and more pronounced, while giving you dense and prominent eyelashes. The lip beauty settings will make your dry lips look smooth and healthy.

Selfies with a hint of fun

You can now spice up your selfies with Huawei nova 3e's special effect modes using augmented reality (AR).

The special effects include background replacement, which allows you to personalize your own pictures by replacing the backgrounds with fun locations of your choice. You can choose the backgrounds from a library of templates or from your own gallery. Besides, you bring your inner kid out and have loads of fun with your selfies! The phone offers 16 different fun face templates for you to play with and get creative! Whether kitten ears, funny face masks or other, the HUAWEI nova 3e has got you covered.

Gallery-like pictures

The Huawei nova 3e offers enhanced camera modes like the portrait mode or the wide aperture mode to deliver gallery-like, sharp pictures that will wow your social media followers. You can also add an artsy feel to your shots by using the bokeh effect, which blurs the background and brings more focus onto the subject. Now that you've got this information up your sleeve, flip your HUAWEI nova 3e camera around and get on your selfie game!



Health

Physicists zoom in on mysterious 'missing' antimatter

Physicists in Europe step closer towards solving mystery

PARIS: When the Universe arose some 13.7 billion years ago, the Big Bang generated matter and antimatter particles in mirroring pairs. So the reigning physics theory goes. Yet everything we can see in the Cosmos today, from the smallest insect on Earth to the largest star, is made of matter particles whose antimatter twins are nowhere to be found. On Wednesday, physicists at Europe's massive underground particle lab said they have taken a step closer to solving the mystery through unprecedented observation of an antimatter particle they forged in the lab-an atom of "antihydrogen".

"What we're looking for is (to see) if hydrogen in matter and antihydrogen in antimatter behave in the same way," said Jeffrey Hangst of the ALPHA experiment at the European Organisation for Nuclear Research (CERN). Finding even the slightest difference may help explain the apparent matter-antimatter disparity and would rock the Standard Model of physics-the mainstream theory of the fundamental particles that make up the Universe and the forces that govern them.

But, somewhat disappointingly, the latest, "most precise

test to date", has found no difference between the behavior of a hydrogen atom and that of an antihydrogen one. Not yet. "So far, they look the same," Hangst said in a



Most precise test to date



video prepared by CERN. The Standard Model, which describes the makeup and behavior of the visible Universe, has no explanation for "missing" antimatter.

It is widely assumed that the Big Bang generated pairs

of matter-antimatter particles with the same mass but an opposite electric charge. Trouble is, as soon as these particles meet, they annihilate one another, leaving behind nothing but pure energy-the principle that powers imaginary spaceships in "Star Trek".

Within reach?

Physicists believe matter and antimatter did meet and implode shortly after the Big Bang, which means the Universe today should contain nothing but leftover energy. Yet, scientists say that matter, which makes up everything we can touch and see, comprises 4.9 percent of the Universe. Dark matter-a mysterious substance perceived through its gravitational pull on other objects-makes up 26.8 percent of the Cosmos, and dark energy the remaining 68.3 percent.

Antimatter, for all intents and purposes, does not exist, except for rare and short-lived particles created in very high-energy events such as cosmic rays, or produced at CERN. Some theoretical physicists believe the "missing" antimatter may be found in hitherto unknown regions of

the Universe-in anti-galaxies comprised of anti-stars and anti-planets. At ALPHA, physicists are trying to unravel the mystery using simplest atom of matter-hydrogen. It has a single electron orbiting a single proton.

The team creates hydrogen mirror particles by taking antiprotons left over from the CERN's high-energy particle collisions and binding them with positrons (the twins of electrons). The resulting antihydrogen atoms are held in a magnetic trap to prevent them from coming into contact with matter and self-annihilating. The team then studies the atoms' reaction to laser light.

Atoms from different types of matter absorb different frequencies of light, and under the prevailing theory, hydrogen and antihydrogen should absorb the same type. So far, it seems they do.

But the team will hope for differences to emerge as the experiment is fine-tuned. "Although the precision still falls short for that of ordinary hydrogen, the rapid progress made by ALPHA suggests hydrogen-like precision in antihydrogen (measurements)... are now within reach," said Hangst.—AFP

Raccoons' bizarre behavior gets locals' attention in US

WASHINGTON: Raccoons are normally shy, nocturnal creatures. But they've been acting out in the US state of Ohio, where police report strange and menacing raccoon behavior in broad daylight. Over the past two weeks, police in Youngstown, Ohio have responded to some fifteen calls from residents reporting sightings of "zombie" raccoons, according to local TV station WKBN.

Witnesses describe the furry black-masked creatures assuming aggressive postures toward humans, showing no fear and impervious to attempts to scare

them off with noises or movements. Robert Coggeshall, a retired banker turned nature photographer, described the "extremely strange behavior" of a raccoon that entered Coggeshall's front yard as he played with his dogs.

"He would stand up on his hind legs, which I've never seen a raccoon do before, and he would show his teeth and then he would fall over backward and go into almost a comatose condition," Coggeshall said. "He'd come out of it, walk around and then he'd do the same thing again. Get on his hind feet and show his teeth," he said.

A picture Coggeshall took of the animal, standing, lips curled and dripping saliva has gone viral on the internet. The raccoon ultimately was euthanized, as were others in the area. Ohio environmental protection officials have ruled out a local outbreak of rabies, and instead suspect canine distemper as the cause of the odd raccoon behavior. Canine distemper is a viral disease typically seen in dogs but which can spread among wild animal populations.—AFP



NEW YORK: In this file photo a raccoon rests in the hollow of a tree near Orchard Beach in New York.—AFP

CLINIC PAGE



Kuwait Times

248 33 199

Global Medical Center Welcomes

Dr. Marzouq Al-Bader

Consultant vascular and general surgery

All general and specialized surgeries such as:

- All critical and non-critical arteries and veins surgeries
- All methods of treating varicose
- Special department for care of injured diabetic foot

- Carrying out delicate procedures such as removing the extra rib
- Treating excess perspiration
- AV connection for dialysis



Telephone: 187111

Global Medical Center, Bneid Al-Qar
Bour Saeed Street, Block-1, Building-128.

@globalmedcenter
www.globalmed-center.com

Dr. Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem
فهد علي المخيزيم
Consultant Pediatrician استشاري أطفال
M.B. Bch. FRCPC. FAAP. PEM

Al-Jabriya - Block 1A - St. 1 - Mazaya Building - 15th Floor - Clinic B - Tel.: 22269369 - Fax: 22269368

What's On

PAAET receives representative from Paris Academy



PAAET director Dr. Ali Al-Mudhaf stressed on the importance of academic accreditation and coping with modern education and training systems and methods. Speaking on receiving the representative of Paris Academy (of the French ministry of education) Dr. Redha Farah to discuss mutual cooperation and providing accreditation to PAAET programs, Al-Mudhaf welcomed Dr. Farah and expressed readiness to show full cooperation with the ultimate goal to enhance the quality of the educational programs PAAET provides. Al-Mudhaf also received PAAET teaching staffs administrative board. The meeting was attended by head of PAAET teaching staff's syndicate, Dr. Suliaman Al-Sowaitt and PAAET PR and official spokesperson, Fatima Al-Azmi.



LOYAC organizes Arab Youth Festival



Within the activities of the Arab Youth Festival organized by LOYAC's Academy for Performance Arts (LAPA) at Al-Shaheed Park, the Lebanese singer, George Ne'meh enchanted the audience on the fourth festival concert by singing a variety of famous Lebanese songs that highly appealed to the audience. Notably, Ne'meh had started his career at the age of 11 before he formed his own band in 2008 and started singing iconic singers' songs.

South African embassy opens 'Book of Condolences' for Winnie Madikizela-Mandela

On 2 April 2018, the South African and international community received the sad news of the passing of the struggle stalwart and former Member of Parliament Mrs Winnie Madikizela-Mandela. She was among the great icons of the liberation struggle who sacrificed everything in the fight against the brutal apartheid state. Due to her dedication to the people of South Africa during the darkest days of apartheid and her tenacity to create a society free from racial oppression and injustice, she was affectionately referred to as the "Mother of the Nation".

The sacrifice and tireless activism of Mama Winnie, and countless other South African and international partners and friends has helped to move South Africa from a repressive regime to a society built on the values of human rights, dignity and democracy. She is lauded and acknowledged in Africa and around the world for her contribution to the struggles of the oppressed.

Mama Winnie was born Nomzamo Winifred Zanyiwe Madikizela on September 26, 1936 in the village of Mbongweni in Bizana in the former Transkei. She attended the Shawsbury High School where she matriculated with a first class pass. In 1953 she was admitted to the Jan Hofmeyr School of Social Work in Johannesburg and completed a Diploma in Social Work. Winnie Madikizela was offered the position of medical social worker at the Baragwanath Hospital making her the first qualified Black member of staff to fill that post.

It was through her social work at the hospital that she was moved by the plight and living conditions of the black majority. On June 14, 1958 Nelson Mandela and Winnie Madikizela were married in Bizana. The early years were increasingly difficult for her as a young wife and mother who was intricately involved in the liberation struggle. Moreover, the frequent police raids at her home added further turbu-



lence to her family life.

Winnie Madikizela-Mandela's life went through irrevocable change when Nelson Mandela was arrested on August 5, 1961. She took it upon herself to keep the flames of resistance burning. Madikizela-Mandela kept the memory of Nelson Mandela alive during his years on Robben Island and helped advance the struggle for justice in South Africa. Her activism and resistance to apartheid landed her in jail on numerous occasions, eventually causing her banishment to the small town of Brandfont in the then Orange Free State for nine years.

President Cyril Ramaphosa has declared ten days of mourning and a Special Official Funeral. A memorial service will be held for Winnie Madikizela-Mandela on April 11, 2018 at the Regina Mundi Church in Soweto and a funeral on April 14, 2018 at the Orlando Stadium. A Book of Condolences has been opened at the Embassy of the Republic of South Africa in (Salwa, Block 10, Street 1, Villa 91, Gate Number 3) until April 12, 2018, from 11 am to 2 pm.

KIB sponsors ACK Career Fair

As part of its belief in the important role youth play in building a nation's future, Kuwait International Bank (KIB) sponsored the Australian College of Kuwait (ACK) Career Fair, which took place at the university's campus with the participation of a large number of private and public sector Institutions.

At the fair, KIB was represented by a team from its Human Resources Department at its dedicated booth. The team answered the students' career-related questions and provided them with counsel and guidance to help them navigate through the complicated process of selecting suitable job opportunities that match their specializations.

As a core part of its philosophy, KIB has always believed in the importance of investing in youth and attracting young talents to the Bank. Accordingly, KIB prioritizes career development and actively seeks to

nurture the ambitions and aspirations of young talents - as it focuses on being an attractive working environment for young local talents in the finance sector. The Bank also prides itself on offering fair employment opportunities to enable it to attract the right candidates to the right job.

It serves to note that this is not the first time that KIB has taken part in an event of this kind. The Bank always strives to participate in career fairs in an effort to support students and open new horizons for ambitious youth by giving them opportunities to apply their educational knowledge to the professional world. Additionally, KIB is committed to supporting students along their career path, helping them carefully choose their profession and focus on opportunities that match their academic background and career interests.

KIB embraces a dynamic working environment where new ideas are encouraged. Additionally, the Bank heavily invests in its employees' professional skills, providing a wide range of training opportunities year-round. Accordingly, KIB is able to attract key talents which have supported the Bank's strategic vision of becoming the 'Islamic Bank of Choice in Kuwait' in the near future.



Brazilian Elections 2018

In view of the presidential elections on October 7, 2018 (first round), Brazilian voters in Kuwait are informed of the obligation to re-register at the consular section of the Brazilian Embassy in Kuwait. In the process of re-registration, the voter must complete the following steps (please pay attention to the deadline of each step):

Step 1 (to be fulfilled until May 9, 2018):

a) Fill the form on the website of the Superior Electoral Court (<http://www.tse.jus.br/eleitor-e-eleicoes/servicos/eleitor-no-exterior/pre-atendimento-eleitoral-no-exterior-titulo-net>)

b) Print and sign the form.

Step 2 (to be completed by May 16, 2018):

c) Attend the consular section of the Embassy of Brazil in Kuwait, which runs from Sunday to Thursday, from 08 am to 12 noon, to present the following documents:

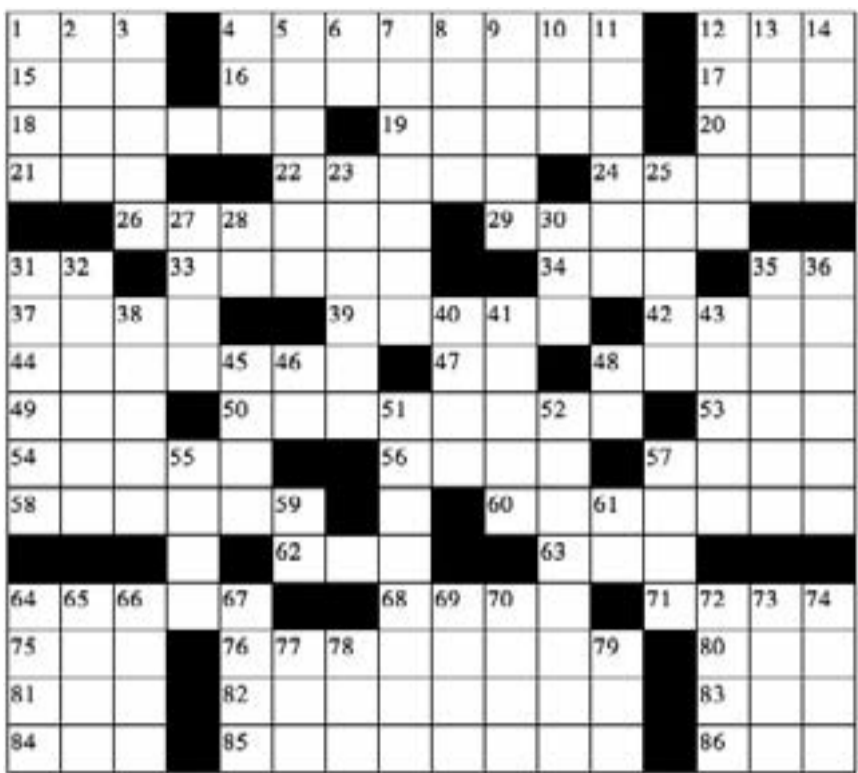
Brazilian official document of identification (identity card, professional card issued by a federal organization, birth or marriage certificate, passport, Brazilian labor ID). Documents must have the following data to confirm one's identity: Name of the father, name of the mother, date and place of birth. In the case the document does not provide the mentioned data, the voter must present another document to complete the information; Proof or statement that certifies your residence in Kuwait;

Personal attendance is mandatory for finalizing the application.

The address of the Brazilian Embassy in Kuwait is Mubarak Al Abdullah area, Block 1, Street 116, Villa 47 - phone 2537-8561/2.

Stars

CROSSWORD 1879



ACROSS

- 1. An adult male person (as opposed to a woman).
4. Greek philosopher who believed that the world is a random combination of atoms and that pleasure is the highest good (341-270 BC).
12. The portion of the vertebrate nervous system consisting of the brain and spinal cord.
15. American prizefighter who won the world heavyweight championship three times (born in 1942).
16. A port city in northeastern Greece on an inlet of the Aegean Sea.
17. An accidental happening.
18. (Old Testament) The second wife of Jacob and mother of Joseph and Benjamin.
19. Of or in relating to the nose.
20. A federal agency established to coordinate programs aimed at reducing pollution and protecting the environment.
21. A constellation in the southern hemisphere near Telescopium and Norma.
22. An arc-shaped whitish deposit sometimes seen in the cornea.
24. A resident of Iowa.
26. A small syringe with detachable nozzles.
29. Inability to coordinate voluntary muscle movements.
31. An informal term for a father.
33. A person who makes deceitful pretenses.
34. The compass point midway between northeast and east.
37. Any of several related languages of the Celts in Ireland and Scotland.
39. Red Bordeaux wine from the Medoc district of southwestern France.
42. A member of an extinct North American Indian people who lived in the Pit river valley in northern California.
44. United States astronomer (1835-1909).
47. Before noon.
49. Having a toe or toes of a specified kind.
50. Small tadpole-shaped cold-water fishes with pelvic fins forming a sucker.
53. Electronic warfare undertaken to prevent or reduce an enemy's effective use of the electromagnetic spectrum.
54. Muslim name for God.
56. German chemist who was co-discoverer with Lise Meitner of nuclear fission (1879-1968).
58. A large commercial and industrial city in northeastern Texas.
60. Lacking motor coordination.
62. An early form of modern jazz (originating around 1940).
63. A mature blood cell that contains hemoglobin to carry oxygen to the bodily tissues.
64. English scholastic philosopher and assumed author of Occam's Razor (1285-1349).
68. A disreputable vagrant.
71. A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
75. The cry made by sheep.
76. A fatty deposit in the intima (inner lining) of an artery.
80. (British) Your grandmother.
81. The ball-shaped capsule containing the vertebrate eye.
82. A cut of pork ribs with much of the meat trimmed off.
83. A branch of the Tai languages.
84. A graphical record of electrical activity of the brain.
85. Thin-shelled freshwater mussels.
86. An agency of the United Nations affiliated with the World Bank.

DOWN

- 1. God of death.
2. (botany) Of or relating to the axil.
3. A rechargeable battery with a nickel cathode and a cadmium anode.
4. The compass point midway between east and southeast.
5. A large and stately mansion.
6. Being nine more than forty.
7. Make a clean breast of.
8. Relatively small fast-moving sloth.
9. A genus of Laridae.
10. Fiddler crabs.
11. A member of the tribe of Franks who settled in the Netherlands in the 4th century AD.
12. Requiring much chewing.
13. Plant with an elongated head of broad stalked leaves resembling celery.
14. The complete duration of something.
23. Syncopated music in duplet time for dancing the rumba.
25. Any North American shrubby perennial herb of the genus Helopsis having large yellow daisylike flowers.
27. An organization of countries formed in 1961 to agree on a common policy for the sale of petroleum.
28. North American republic containing 50 states - 48 conterminous states in North America plus Alaska in northwest North America and the Hawaiian Islands in the Pacific Ocean.
30. A police officer who investigates crimes.
32. Small space in a tissue or part such as the area between veins on a leaf or an insect's wing.
35. Affectively trendy.
36. A member of the Algonquian people formerly inhabiting the Maritime Provinces of Canada.
38. (informal) Very good.
40. (Irish) Mother of the Tuatha De Danann.
41. A member of the Siouan people formerly living in the Missouri river valley in NE Nebraska.
43. Having or showing knowledge and skill and aptitude.
45. A law passed by US Congress to prevent employees from being injured or contracting diseases in the course of their employment.
46. A state in New England.
48. A metric unit of volume equal to one thousandth of a liter.
51. A clergyman who watches over a group of people.
52. Allow to enter.
55. Type genus of the Alcidae comprising solely the razorbill.
57. Electronic warfare undertaken to insure effective friendly use of the electromagnetic spectrum in spite of the enemy's use of electronic warfare.
59. A metallic element having four allotropic forms.
61. The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
65. The work of caring for or attending to someone or something.
66. Open-heart surgery in which the rib cage is opened and a section of a blood vessel is grafted from the aorta to the coronary artery to bypass the blocked section of the coronary artery and improve the blood supply to the heart.
67. An independent group of closely related Chadic languages spoken in the area between the Biu-Mandara and East Chadic languages.
69. Chocolate cookie with white cream filling.
70. Brought into existence.
72. (prefix) Opposite or opposing or neutralizing.
73. King of Saudi Arabia since 1982 (born in 1922).
74. Small buffalo of the Celebes having small straight horns.
77. Administration of a nutritionally adequate solution through a catheter into the vena cava.
78. 10 hao equal 1 dong.
79. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You're restless and unhappy with the way things are now; this could indicate either work or home. This could call for a change in residence or job; changes in location are definitely likely. A person states that he or she likes what you have done with your home or wardrobe. Your ability to convince people is at a high point; this could serve you well when attempting to sell a large item. Your affectionate side rules as you plan something special this evening. You could find yourself involved with an impromptu opportunity for a walk or perhaps a Sunday yoga class. Your body longs to move, stretch and bend! You could come across as angry or unmotivated later this evening; let fresh air and natural beauty surround and heal your tired spirit.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You have an occasion to make decisions regarding big changes in the home; painting, remodeling or new furniture could be indicated. You appear as confident and in control to those around you. Positive attitudes and energies are active as you spend the day with loved ones. Your romantic or emotional situation is up and down, it seems as though you can't make progress in this area. Sit back and let things unfold as they will; you can only control your behavior, no one else. A strong desire to escape the ordinary or mundane could be felt very strongly. You could find relief this evening by pursuing pleasurable things with a like-minded person. A good attitude works to help you see things from a different viewpoint that's very helpful.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Energy is available for you to enrich your environment or the circumstances in your life. Your goal of creating a certain aura in your home is close at hand; you understand how to pull things to you! Time spent with those younger than yourself pays off in extremely positive outcomes. Your personal life provides the happiness and security you require to feel successful. You could feel as though you prefer spending more time at home than away. You may discover a new website to shop for certain items. In your mind you revisit where you grew up and the people you knew back then. A deep discussion with someone dear reveals good news. You're able to focus and understand a new look or design you might want to work on this week.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You have an opportunity to take part in classes on a topic of interest to you for years; this could be difficult to accomplish but you'll find the time and excel. You let your determination and will lead the way. Vibrations of accomplishment are strong and readily available to you. Some tasks are finished with ease, others not so much, but mainly you're on top of things today. Family and friends are of the utmost importance now as you have entered a new cycle ushering in changes. Looking for new techniques and habits are at the fore. These new ways bring encouragement and change that create positive results you no longer go through life the way you did before because of major growth and evolution. You have reached a special goal.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

A new and improved attitude with your work takes place. You step into your routines and tasks with a desire to work smarter, not harder; you're determined to make positive changes and behaviors a permanent part of your life. Reorganization and re-thinking is on your agenda for a good part of your day. Your confidence is high as you plan to investigate a risky investment. If a certain group of people seem to be intent upon irritating you, stay clear of them and tend to your own affairs. Your temper could cause problems as you want to tell someone what you really think; remember that even when you tell this person the truth, it might not sink in. You feel completely happy and healthy as you enjoy the night sky with someone special this evening.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

An abundance of new discovery is available to you at any time you wish. As it's been said, the world is your oyster, and you find yourself taking full advantage of these unconstrained openings. Be wise in your good fortune and this time of very productive energy; guard against losing all that you have worked and believed so hard to create and gain. You look to the future to use something you have had in mind for a while, something that's nearing completion and is ready to use. Everything starts with you today as new domestic projects become realities you welcome with vigor. You're hands on and front and center this evening as the fun begins; you could find yourself using a new cook top or grill to feed a rather large group of people who love you.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Surgery

Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a secret message.



- ANESTHESIA, DRILL, LUNGS, SPLINT, APPENDIX, ENDOSCOPE, MALLET, SPONGE, BIOPSY, FORCEPS, NEEDLE, STAPLER, BLOOD, GRASPERS, OCCLUDERS, SUCTION, BONE SAW, HEART, PROBE, SURGEON, BRAIN, HEMOSTAT, RETRACTORS, SUTURE, CALIPER, HOOK, RIBS, SYRINGE, CANNULA, INCISION, RULER, TISSUE, CATHETER, INCISION, SCALPEL, TRACHEOTOME, CLAMPS, IRRIGATION, SCISSORS, TRANSPLANT, COLON, KIDNEY, SKIN, TRACHEA, DILATORS, LANCET, SPECULA, TROCAR, DISTRACTORS, LIVER, SPLEEN, TWEEZERS

Daily SuDoku



Summer Olympics



- ARCHERY, ATHLETICS, GYMNASTICS, TABLE TENNIS, BADMINTON, HANDBALL, TAEKWONDO, TENNIS, BASKETBALL, HOCKEY, TRAMPOLINING, BEACH VOLLEYBALL, JUDO, TRIATHLON, VOLLEYBALL, BOXING, RHYTHMIC GYMNASTICS, WATER POLO, CANOEING, ROWING, WEIGHTLIFTING, CYCLING, SHOOTING, WRESTLING, DIVING, SOFTBALL, YACHTING, EQUESTRIANISM, SWIMMING, SYNCHRONIZED SWIMMING, FENCING

The hidden sentence is: THE FIRST OLYMPIC GYMNAST TO ACHIEVE A PERFECT SCORE OF TEN WAS NADJA KOMANECI

Yesterday's Solution



Dua Lipa: London has been key to my success

Dua Lipa says London has played a key role in her success. The 22-year-old singer has emerged as one of the world's most talked-about pop stars over the last year, and Dua has admitted that the UK capital has played a huge part in her rise to the top of the industry. The 'New Rules' hitmaker explained: "I was born and raised in London to Kosovan-Albanian parents in 1995. "My father was a musician and music has paid a very big role in my life." Dua's family relocated to Kosovo when she was a young woman. But the chart-topping singer soon developed a desire to return to London, where she planned to pursue her musical ambitions. She told Le Parisien: "At the age of 11, my family and I moved to Pristina in Kosovo, and I guess it was living there that I really saw how much I loved to perform and how much I wanted to be in a place where everything was really happening, which for me was London. "I wanted to go back to theatre school in London." Meanwhile, Dua recently revealed that her second album is about experiencing "emotional manipulation". The brunette beauty explained that the follow-up to her self-titled debut features a lot of songs about heartbreak. She said: "It's very much dance crying. It is a pop album that you're going to be able to dance to, but a lot of the songs are sad. "They're about heartbreak and they're about going through some emotional manipulation. "It kind of sucks that that's the thing that triggers my creativity, but happy things don't seem to do it for me."



Perry thanks Musgraves for curing her homesickness

Katy Perry has turned to Kacey Musgraves' music to cure her homesickness. The 33-year-old singer has been touring in South America and Asia over the last month, but she has overcome her feelings of homesickness by listening to Kacey's 'Golden Hour' record. She wrote on Twitter: "Was feeling homesick today, being on this leg of tour for over 4 weeks now and then I put on @KaceyMusgraves's new record, Golden Hour during yoga and she made me feel not so alone (sic)" Katy claimed that her story served to underline the impact of music. She said: "Music is so powerful and I am so grateful [love emoji] (sic)" Meanwhile, Katy recently insisted that she won't change herself for anyone. The 'Dark Horse' hitmaker revealed she uses make-up as an "expression" of who she is as a person, rather than who somebody else wants her to be. She shared: "My make-up is an expression of who I am and who I'm trying to be, not a reflection of who I'm with ... "When I was younger, I'd wake up early to make sure I had a full face of 'natural look' first thing in the morning. That's a couple hours of sleep I'll never get back! I love make-up's power to transform and empower."

Embrace rock London



Embrace performed to their "favorite audience" of their tour in London on Friday. The 'Good Will Out' rockers delighted their fans at the O2 Empire in Shepherd's Bush with a set that combined their greatest hits with tracks from new album 'Love is a Basic Need', and the excited response they received left the band equally happy. Returning to the stage for their encore, frontman Danny McNamara said: "We were just saying, this has been our favorite audience of the tour so far." The 47-year-old rocker had been in a great mood during the evening, teasing the audience for their advancing years. Introducing title track from the new album 'Love is a Basic Need', he asked the crowd to sing along to the chorus, pointing out the words were printed on drummer Mike Heaton's kit, but suggesting those with deteriorating eyesight simply seek out a fan wearing one of their new t-shirts, which featured the slogan, in order to read the words. And before performing 'Save Me', he urged everyone to jump up and down, but gave a demonstration on how the crowd could save their aching knees and hips by simply lifting their heels instead of leaving the ground. After the audience got on their feet and obliged with his request, he congratulated them afterwards for doing a great job "up to the third chorus" - before doing an impression of them gasping for breath. Despite Danny's jibes at their expense, the audience were in fine form and sang along to the group's most popular hits, including 'All You Good Good People', 'Ashes', 'Gravity' and 'Come Back To What You Know', while the new tracks were equally well received. For the encore, the group performed new track - and upcoming single - 'All That Remains' before being joined by support act Eevah's Nicole Hope Smith for a duet of 'Never', ending the evening with a rousing chorus of 'The Good Will Out' that had the crowd still singing as they left the packed-out venue.

Rick Astley still surprised by Foo Fighters duet

Rick Astley still has "no idea" why he was invited to perform with Foo Fighters. The 80s pop legend was invited by the group's frontman Dave Grohl to join them onstage at Japan's Summer Sonic Festival last August, where they played Nirvana's 'Smells Like Teen Spirit' before breaking into his hit 'Never Gonna Give You Up' and he admitted the event was "nuts". Speaking on 'Kyle Meredith With...' he said: "It just all went nuts. "Dave Grohl came over and said hello, gave me a hug, and then half an hour later he's inviting me onto the stage. "I never met them [before], I have no idea why he'd invite me onstage. I didn't know what it was all about. And then he just kind of whispered and said, 'We're doing your tune, but we're gonna do it like 'Teen Spirit', and that was it. And off we went." The 51-year-old singer enjoyed a resurgence in popularity in recent years thanks to the infamous Rick Roll meme and he is a fan of the viral posts. He said: "It's been great to me, so I can't really have any negative thoughts about it." Meanwhile, the Scottish rocker - who also joined Foo Fighters on stage in London last year - recently admitted he would love to collaborate with the band in future. Asked if there could be a Rick Astley and Foo Fighters song in the pipeline after Justin Timberlake recorded vocals on 'Make It Right' on their new LP 'Concrete and Gold', he told BANG Showbiz: "There you go. It's funny that actually. I think it is really brave when artists like that do that. "You might upset the audience, the critics etc. I think they just think, y'know what we are doing it. "He's in the studio next door, we are doing it. "I am going to try and write with some other people because I want to experience that." Asked what he's going to make Dave when he comes in and records his guest vocals at his home studio, he joked: "Well Dave likes his coffee. Have you not been on YouTube and googled it? You need to do that."



Gary Barlow would play for free

Gary Barlow loves performing so much, he'd tour for free. The 47-year-old singer is gearing up for a new run of solo shows because he "can't wait" for his Take That bandmates, Mark Owen and Howard Donald, to be ready to get back out on stage again as he loves connecting with his fans. He admitted: "I can't help myself. I can't wait two more years. I have to get out there. "To be honest, I'd go on stage for nothing, because for two hours I'm just there with the audience. No phone. No urgent messages. Now it almost feels like an escape. Just don't tell anyone that I'd do it for free." But the 'Patience' hitmaker - who has children Daniel, 17, Emily, 15, and nine-year-old Daisy, with wife Dawn - admitted he needs to take some time out after pushing himself with work on his music, a new autobiography and musical 'The Band'. He said: "I need to take a year off. A year's sabbatical to be at home or to do things I've always wanted, like go to Iceland and take photographs of the landscapes or go to a bucket list of places with Dawn and the kids." However, Gary insists he'd never be tempted to give it up for good. Asked if he's ever tempted to retire, he told Event magazine: "Never. That is never going to happen." In the meantime, the 'Open Road' singer has taken up yoga and meditation to help him relax. He quipped: "I always thought I was too northern for meditation, but it really helps me." Though Take That are now a three-piece, with Jason Orange departing in 2014 and Robbie Williams - who first quit the group in 1995 - leaving again in 2012 after a three-year temporary stint, Gary will never rule out the possibility of all five of them getting back on stage again in the future. He said: "As long as we are all alive there is a chance. "I never thought it would happen when Rob came back, but it did. So you just have to see what happens."



Disciples take inspiration from Calvin Harris

Disciples are always turning to Calvin Harris in search of new ideas. The English production trio - which is made up of Nathan Vincent Duvall, Gavin Koolmon, and Luke McDermott - have previously collaborated with the chart-topping DJ, and they've subsequently developed a close working relationship. Gavin explained to BANG Showbiz: "We still work closely with Calvin because two of us are signed to his publishing company, so we continuously talk music and bounce ideas off each other. "Who knows, in the future we may collaborate again. We've definitely got a great working relationship with him." The trio's work has also been heavily influenced by the likes of Daft Punk and Pharrell. Asked which electronic pioneers have influenced Disciples, he said: "Daft Punk are definitely people that we really respect. "Pharrell, Jamie Jones and Solomun on the house side of things. They definitely influence our sounds." In spite of their recent successes, the boys - whose new single, '4SHRS', is out now - have remained unaffected by fame. In fact, Gavin revealed that their tour riders haven't changed at all over the last three years. Asked whether they have any unusual tour requests, he shared: "We haven't got too diva-ish with our requests just yet. To be honest I think it might still be the same rider we've had for the last three years. "We haven't actually changed it too much. We're happy with Coke then we're ready to go."



Lily Allen has been sexually harassed

The 'Higher' singer - who has daughters Ethel, seven, and Marnie, six, with estranged husband Sam Cooper - refused to be drawn on what had happened to her but admitted she felt much better for speaking out about it. She said: "I've been harassed. I can't talk too much for legal reasons but I'm in the process of dealing with something. "What I've found quite interesting is people suggesting that there's something to be gained from wanting to talk about these things. Actually I think all that most women want is to just offload it. "To be, like, 'You know, I don't want to carry this around with me any more.' It doesn't go away. "Suddenly, finally, I feel like I can get this man name out of my mouth and out of my head." But the 32-year-old star insisted she isn't pursuing her alleged tormentor through the courts as she isn't speaking out because she's looking for compensation. Speaking to James O'Brien on his 'Unfiltered' podcast, she added: "I don't want money. If it was about that then I would sue in the civil courts and would attach a non-disclosure agreement to it. That's not what I want." Lily did not reveal whether or not she has reported the harassment to police or taken any other action over the incident. Meanwhile, the 'Smile' singer recently admitted she suffered an "identity crisis" with her most recent album, 2014's 'Sheezus'. The record was met with underwhelmed response from fans and critics and she was accused of cultural appropriation for using primarily black backing dancers in her video for lead single 'Hard Out Here' - which she defended as being a statement about the sexual objectification of women in the music business.

Fanning's important movie

Dakota Fanning thinks 'The Bell Jar' is an "important story" to tell. The 24-year-old actress will portray Esther Greenwood and her battle with depression in Kirsten Dunst's upcoming adaptation of Sylvia Plath's classic novel and she thinks the movie will surprise a lot of people. She said: "It's such an important story, and really different from what people think it is. 'People think it's depressing, or a biography of Sylvia Plath, but it's not and there's so much humor in it. You follow a young woman during a formative time in her life, and see how overwhelming the expectations of what women feel they are supposed to be like can be. We all feel that to some extent.'" And Dakota admitted she is looking for similar roles in the future. She said: "I like playing characters where everyone thinks they're one thing but they know they're not. 'That interests me, because I feel like, in my life, I'm trying to work that out.'" The 'Alienist' star's younger sister, Elle Fanning, 21, is also an actress and though they are occasionally up for the same roles, the siblings are not competitive because they are very different. Dakota explained to Sunday Times Style magazine: "We're apples and oranges. We've definitely had meetings for the same thing in the past, but it's not weird because we feel so different from one another that it's, like, 'If you want me, then she might not be right.'" Elle wears her heart on her sleeve, she's the typical younger one, very free-spirited and can't be tamed, while I've always been quieter and more of an observer, and I keep everything to myself until I feel comfortable. She's wild from the start, and her laugh is really loud and specific. You don't hear me coming until you do."



Jeffrey Dean Morgan loved 'The Watchmen'

Jeffrey Dean Morgan thinks 'The Watchmen' was "ahead of its time". The 51-year-old actor played Edward Blake aka The Comedian in DC Comics movie back in 2009 and although the film received a polarizing reaction from both audiences and critics, Morgan admitted he is extremely proud of it. He told Variety: "I'm very proud of that movie. People are still finding it and watching it and I think it'll have fans forever. 'I think it was ahead of its time. I don't know what else to say, other than I'm extremely proud of it. 'Not long ago, I caught the second half of the film, just flipping channels, and loved it. It was great.'" The film is a dark satirical take on the superhero genre, the film is set in an alternate history in the year of 1985 at the height of the Cold War. A group of retired American superheroes investigate the murder of one of their own before uncovering an elaborate and deadly conspiracy, while their moral limitations are challenged by the complex nature of the circumstances. Morgan starred alongside Malin Akerman, Billy Crudup, Matthew Goode, Carla Gugino, Jackie Earle Haley and Patrick Wilson. The 'Walking Dead' star has continued working within the DC Universe after playing Bruce Wayne's father in 'Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice'. And recently Ezra Miller - who plays Barry Allen aka The Flash in the DC Extended Universe - said he would love to see Morgan and Laura Cohan back as Thomas and Martha Wayne. Asked if Morgan should return to the series, he said: Oh, hell yeah. I think he's amazing...And I think he would fall right into what is becoming a very, very serious ensemble of actors. "I'm so excited about Kiersey Clemons (who will play Iris West). I'm so excited about Billy Crudup (The Flash's father). I just couldn't be more stoked about the names involved so far."

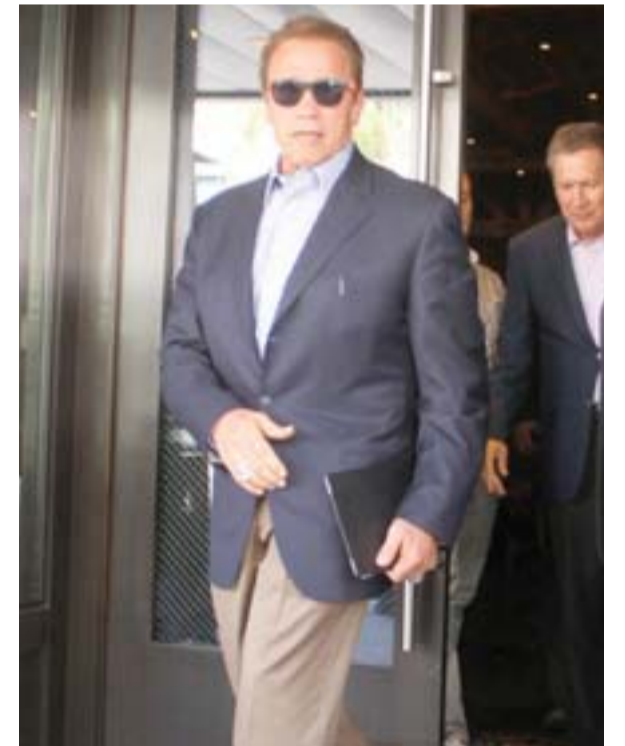


Ringwald troubled by 'The Breakfast Club'

Molly Ringwald is "troubled" by 'The Breakfast Club'. The 50-year-old actress - who recently revealed she was sexually assaulted by a director when she was 14 - was left feeling uncomfortable when she reviewed her 1985 high school drama with one of her daughters. Molly - who has Mathilda, 14, and twins Adele and Roman, eight, with husband Panio Gianopoulos - wrote in an essay for the New Yorker: "I worried she would find aspects of it troubling. 'But I hadn't anticipated that it would ultimately be most troubling to me.'" And Molly explained how one particular scene made her feel uncomfortable "after a number of women came forward with sexual assault accusations against the producer Harvey Weinstein, and the #MeToo movement gathered steam". She wrote: "At one point in the film, the bad-boy character, John Bender, ducks under the table where my character, Claire, is sitting, to hide from a teacher. 'While there, he takes the opportunity to peek under Claire's skirt and, though the audience doesn't see, it is implied that he touches her inappropriately.'" As a teenager when she made the film, Molly admitted she was only "vaguely aware" of how "inappropriate" John Hughes' writing was on the movie. But she added: "It's hard for me to understand how John was able to write with so much sensitivity, and also have such a glaring blind spot." The actress also admitted she was uncomfortable about a scene she had in 'Sixteen Candles', another of John's movies. She wrote: "I'm a little embarrassed to say that it took even longer for me to fully comprehend the scene late in 'Sixteen Candles,' when the dreamboat, Jake, essentially trades his drunk girlfriend, Caroline, to the Geek, to satisfy the latter's sexual urges, in return for Samantha's underwear." After rewatching the movies she'd worked on with the writer-and-director - who died in 2009 - she went on to watch and read more of his work but it left her disillusioned as she believed he could be "racist, misogynistic, and, at times, homophobic".

New Terminator movie delayed by four months

The release of the new 'Terminator' movie has been delayed by four months. The much-anticipated reboot - starring Linda Hamilton and Arnold Schwarzenegger - had been set for a July 26, 2019 release but has now been pushed back to November 22, 2019. The much-anticipated reboot is being directed by Tim Miller, but for the first time since 1991's 'Terminator: Judgment Day', James Cameron is also involved with the film series. Cameron was at the helm for the original 1984 movie and sequel 'Terminator 2: Judgment Day', but was not involved in 2003's 'Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines', 2009's 'Terminator Salvation' or 'Terminator Genisys'. Meanwhile, Arnold, 70, recently said that the new 'Terminator' movie is going to be a return to the storytelling of the 1984 original. The actor starred in the original Cameron movie as the titular character - a T-800 killer cyborg - alongside Linda as Sarah Connor and both are reprising their roles for the sixth movie in the franchise. Schwarzenegger insists fans of the sci-fi franchise can expect a return to the stripped down story of the cult classic. He said: "I think James Cameron and Tim Miller came up with a concept where they can continue on with the T-800 but make a whole new movie. 'What they are doing now with this one is basically to just take a few very basic characters, like Linda Hamilton's character and my character, and dismiss everything else. Just move away from all these rules of the timeline and other characters.'" Plot details are being kept under wraps but Miller and Cameron are reportedly treating the film as a direct sequel to 'T2: Judgment Day'. In the original 1984 movie, Schwarzenegger played the villain but in the sequel his character was the hero and the actor said he loves the vulnerability of the character. He said: "I think the T-800 model is a really interesting character. He's a machine, can be destructive, can do things human beings can't do, but at the same time when newer technology comes along the character suddenly is vulnerable and that makes him even more interesting."



Berry to star in Jagged Edge remake

Halle Berry is set to star in a remake of 'Jagged Edge'. The 51-year-old actress will take on the leading role in the courtroom thriller, which is a remake of the 1985 movie starring Glenn Close and Jeff Bridges. Producers Matti Leshem and Doug Belgrad are in the early stages of developing the project for Sony Pictures, according to Deadline. In the original movie, Bridges' character, a wealthy publisher, was accused of brutally murdering his wife at their remote beach house. He hired Close's lawyer character to defend him and the pair embarked on a passionate affair. Robert Loggia was nominated for an Oscar for his role as a private detective in the movie. Meanwhile, it was recently revealed that Hale is "livid" with her former manager, who has been accused of sexual abuse. The actress said she was "saddened" at first by allegations against her ex-manager Vincent Cirrincione and is now angry that he used his previous professional relationship with her "to lure and manipulate innocent women". She wrote on Instagram: "Yesterday I was saddened by the allegations against my former manager, Vincent Cirrincione, but today I'm sick after reading the horrifying detailed accounts of his abuse towards 9 women. 'I'm livid that he used me, and the role model he helped me become, to lure and manipulate innocent, vulnerable women of color for his predatory actions. I'm deeply hurt and I want these woman and countless others to know I see you. I hear you. You matter. I will fight for you (sic).'" Nine minority women have accused the Hollywood manager of sexual harassment and claim he made unwanted sexual advances toward them over a period of two decades. However, he denied any wrongdoing in a statement to the Washington Post, claiming that all relationships were consensual. He said: "We live in a time where men are being confronted with a very real opportunity to take responsibility for their actions. I support this movement wholeheartedly. I have had female clients and employees my entire career in this industry. I have built a reputation for advancing the careers of women of colour. I have had affairs while in committed relationships, ones I am now ashamed to say are coming to light and shading my past and my reputation. I can say without a doubt that I have never used favours, sexual or otherwise, as a reason for managing anyone. I want to make it clear that not one of those relationships were anything but consensual. — Bang showbiz"



Krasinski changed design of creature in 'A Quiet Place' at the last minute

John Krasinski changed the design of the creature in 'A Quiet Place' at the very last minute. The 38-year-old actor has made his directorial debut with the new horror movie, and although he had designed a monster that he loved, he realised in post-production that his original design wouldn't work and was forced to change it. Speaking to Collider, Krasinski said: "It's true. I had designed this creature and we loved him and we had so many detailed things, like drawings and boards and things for the kids to look at. 'And then it was really deep in the post [production] and it was one of those moments where, this sounds super nerdy but I now understand when people talk about visual effects and seeing this, you can just see he wasn't going to work as well as a different design. 'When you looked at the scenes and the shots that we were gonna put him in, it just didn't look like it was gonna work.'" Krasinski was forced to contact the design company ILM and luckily because they were fans of the movie they agreed with his changes. He said: "So I made the very last minute, and very horrible decision, calling ILM after they had done all this work and being like, 'So that isn't gonna work, let's move in a completely other direction'. 'And because they loved this movie so much, they went with it and they totally understood. And I will say to their credit, they have always said, 'You made the right decision. The other guy was cool, but this guy is way better.'" The new film - which stars Krasinski with his real-life wife Emily Blunt - follows a family of four who must live life in silence while hiding from creatures that hunt by sound.



Lifestyle | Music & Movies

Hopper Penn, girlfriend released from Nebraska jail

Actor and model Hopper Penn has been released from jail after he and actress Uma Von Wittkamp were arrested on drug charges earlier this week in Nebraska. Here are some facts about the couple and their arrest:

A famous family

Penn, 24, is the son of Sean Penn, the Academy Award-winning actor, filmmaker and political activist known for his roles in "Fast Times at Ridgemont High," "Mystic River" and "Milk." His mother is Robin Wright, an actress and director known for her work in the Netflix drama "House of Cards" and movies including "Wonder Woman" and "The Princess Bride." Named after Dennis Hopper and Jack Nicolson, Hopper Jack Penn was born in Los Angeles but was largely raised in Ross, a small, exclusive town outside of San Francisco. He and his mother moved back to Los Angeles around the time Wright filed for divorce in 2009.

He's also the nephew of singer-songwriter Michael Penn and the late actor Chris Penn. His sister, Dylan Frances, is a model and actress. Hopper Penn has gained some fame of his own. He acted in the film "War Machine" with Brad Pitt, and models eyewear for Fendi, an Italian

luxury fashion house. But he has shied from the label "actor," noting his regular job at a Los Angeles pizza restaurant. Von Wittkamp is less well-known, but played a role in the 2015 film short "Endings, Inc."

Struggles with addiction

Hopper Penn told the Evening Standard last year that he fell in with a "bad crowd" during his parents' divorce, which was finalized in 2010. His spiral apparently began a month after he moved to Los Angeles, when he was badly injured in a skateboarding accident and had to undergo surgery for bleeding on the brain. Penn has since admitted to using a variety of drugs, including methamphetamine, but said he sought treatment. "I went to rehab because I woke up in (the) hospital and my dad said, 'Rehab? Or bus bench?'" he said in the Evening Standard interview. "I was like, 'I'll take the bed.'" A representative for the agency that represents Hopper Penn did not have any immediate comment.

The arrest

Hopper Penn was arrested Wednesday afternoon with Von Wittkamp, his 26-year-old girlfriend, after a Nebraska State Patrol trooper



This booking photo released by the Hamilton County Sheriff's Dept shows Hopper Penn, the son of Sean Penn and Robin Wright, after he was arrested in Nebraska. — AP photos



This booking photo released by the Hamilton County Sheriff's Dept shows Uma Von Wittkamp after she was arrested in Nebraska. — AP photos

stopped them on westbound Interstate 80 for allegedly failing to signal. A Hamilton County sheriff's dispatcher said Penn and Von Wittkamp were released Thursday after posting \$25,000 bond apiece. Authorities said the trooper detected "drug activity" in the 1992 Volvo and searched the car. Inside, they said they found 14 grams of marijuana, four amphetamine pills and 3 grams of psilocybin, a psychedelic drug commonly known as mushrooms.

Penn was charged with possession of a controlled substance (psilocybin) and possession of marijuana. Von Wittkamp was charged with possession of a controlled substance (amphetamine) and possession of a controlled substance (psilocybin). Possession of a controlled substance is a felony in Nebraska, punishable by up to two years in prison, a year of post-release supervision and a \$10,000 fine. Because Penn allegedly had one ounce or less of marijuana and it's his first offense in Nebraska, the marijuana charge is only punishable by a citation, a \$300 fine and a possible drug-treatment course. Deputy Hamilton County Attorney Benjamin Dennis said he didn't have any information about the case beyond what was in court filings. —AP

India's eco warriors who sent Bollywood's Khan to jail

In this file photo Bollywood actor Salman Khan arrives at Jodhpur airport after an Indian court release him on bail, in Jodhpur. — AFP

In the movies Salman Khan always wins. But off-screen, the Bollywood tough guy hero may have met his match in a 530-year-old Hindu sect that puts animals above humans—especially superstars. The determination of the Bishnoi community forced Khan to spend two sleepless nights in a Rajasthan jail following his conviction last week for killing rare antelopes on a hunting trip. The Bishnoi self-styled ecological guardians whose guiding principles forbid them to kill animals or even sterilise a bull—have been pursuing Khan ever since a fateful night in October 1998.

Their testimony had seen the actor detained three times over the past two decades before his shock conviction last week. The Bishnoi say Khan was seen killing two black buck antelopes while on safari in the Rajasthan desert, where most of the community live. It was a grave sin in their eyes. The black bucks are protected by law and the Bishnoi also consider the antelope reincarnations of their 15th century saint Guru Jambheshwar. They believe their perseverance paid off. As Khan was ordered last Thursday to serve a five-year jail term, the Bishnoi set off firecrackers and danced in celebration.

After Khan was granted bail on Saturday, the Bishnoi said they would take the fight to the high court and even India's Supreme Court if needed. "We are doing our duty," Ram Nivas Dhuru from the Bishnoi anti-poaching activist group, Bishnoi Tiger Force, told AFP. "If you kill our children (wildlife), we will make sure you are brought to justice. It doesn't matter if you are Salman Khan or anyone else." Poonamchand Bishnoi and Chhogaram Bishnoi, two Bishnoi villagers, told successive court hearings that they saw Khan and four other actors on a poaching mission.

Khan strongly denies killing the animals. Bishnoi villagers say they heard gunshots in the night and found carcasses in the bush. The two witnesses say they followed the actors' car on a motorcycle and took down its number, passing the information to the authorities. The Bishnoi also alleged that Khan killed chinkaras, a Central Asian gazelle. Khan was convicted of the offence in 2006 and ordered jailed for five years. He spent a week behind bars before being granted bail but was acquitted ten years later.

A way of life

The testimony of the Bishnoi was striking in a country where witnesses often become forgetful, or turn hostile due to fear and intimidation—especially in high-profile cases. The episode has strengthened the legend of the Bishnoi, who for centuries have devoted their lives to protecting animals and trees from hunters and loggers. The Bishnoi trace their origins to Guru Jambheshwar, whom they consider an incarnation of the Hindu God Vishnu, and whose 29 founding principles they live by.

It includes a pledge not to kill any living creature. Legend has it that 294 Bishnoi men and 69 women sacrificed themselves or were hacked to death in 1730 when they tied themselves to trees which a local king wanted to fell to build a new palace. Today there are around two million Bishnoi spread across northern and central India, community figures say. In the past two decades up to nine Bishnoi have been shot dead by hunters, the Bishnoi Tiger Force says. The community say their name "Bishnoi" comes from their 29 guiding principles — 20 is "bis" and nine is "noi" in their dialect. — AFP

Emily Blunt believes communication is the key to a long-lasting marriage

The 35-year-old beauty — who has kids Hazel, four, and Violet, 22 months, with her husband John Krasinski — has revealed that having an open and honest dialogue has helped to sustain her marriage. Speaking to OK! magazine, Emily shared: "We've always been able to talk and discuss everything together. It's an advantage having someone who understands your profession. We also try to be very supportive of each other and we know that we always have each other to rely on and make each other feel very loved and appreciated. It's a beautiful thing." Emily also hailed her husband's parenting skills, revealing he's helped her to balance the demands of parenthood and her acting career.

The London-born star explained: "He's a very good father and that's been a great source of comfort to me. It's not easy pursuing a Hollywood career when raising young children. He's great at making sure there are



always fresh bottles of milk and fresh food in the house. Just those little things make such a big difference." Meanwhile, Emily recently explained that her children's happiness is the "most paramount thing" in her life. She said: "My children's happiness, their safety and their well-being is the most paramount thing in my life."

And if [I am] unable to give them any of those things, then who am I? What's my identity? "My greatest hope is that they are truly happy, and that they're interested in life, in anything."

Interested and interesting, and truly happy." And John revealed he wants to "protect" his children at all costs. He added: "Even when [we] drop our four-year-old daughter off at school, you don't know what she's gonna do that day. "You don't know if other kids are gonna be nice to her or if she [will get] in trouble for something. You just want to protect them at all costs." — Bang Showbiz

Tom Holland almost spilled the Avengers secrets

Tom Holland wasn't allowed to read the 'Avengers: Infinity War' script in case he leaked the plot. The 21-year-old actor is reprising his role as Spider-Man in the upcoming Marvel action movie — which brings Iron Man, Thor, the Hulk and the rest of the Avengers together — and the star revealed directors Anthony Russo and Joe Russo wouldn't let him read the whole script, so he wasn't even sure which character he was shooting his scenes with. Speaking on 'The Graham Norton Show' he explained: "I wasn't allowed to read the script because I have a tendency to tell people what's in it, so I have no idea what's going on or what the film is about. Most of time I

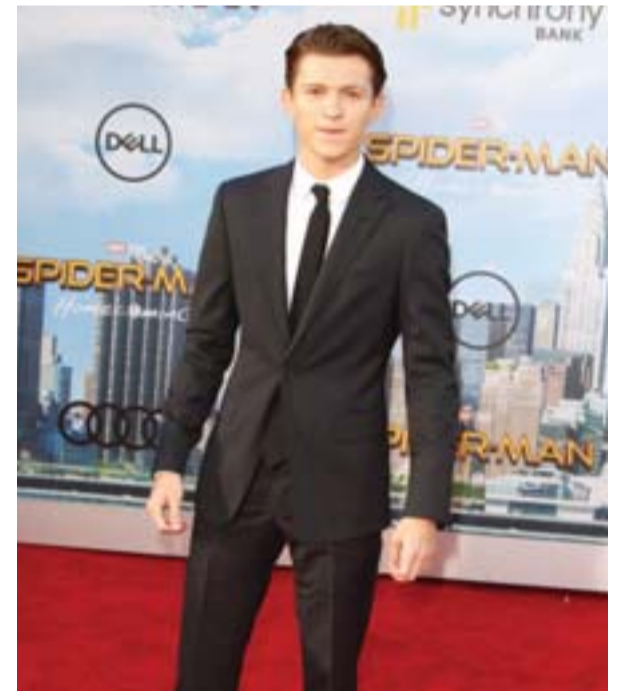
was acting a scene with a tennis ball and when I asked who it was supposed to be they wouldn't tell me so I started ringing round cast members and doing my own research to try and work it out!"

Tom made his debut as the iconic superhero in 'Captain America: Civil War' in 2016 before starring in his first solo movie 'Spider-man: Homecoming' in 2017 but is still shocked he gets to play the part because he grew up idolizing the earlier versions of the movies. He confessed: "I loved 'Spider-man' when I was a kid and watched the movies so to be in them now is surreal and a bit of a whirlwind."

Meanwhile, Tom — who is a trained dancer and starred as Billy in 'Billy

Elliot' at 'The West End' — recalled "the most embarrassing moment of his life" was when he met singer Madonna and failed to impress her with his dance moves. He said: "I'd had one too many when a friend of mine dragged me over to meet her. All the way there I was thinking, 'What should I say?'"

And all I came up with was 'Hello.' To cover the awkward moment my friend told Madonna I was a great dancer, so when she asked me to show her, I took her by the hand and started dancing with her. I was terrible and she was obviously unimpressed so I bailed and left, leaving her on the dance floor. It was the most embarrassing moment of my life." — Bang Showbiz

**Katie Price thinks she still looks like she's 30**

The former glamour model is set to celebrate her 40th birthday in May and while she's relishing the prospect of passing the landmark age, Katie believes she looks a lot younger than she actually is. The curvaceous star — who has kids Harvey, 15, Junior, 12, Princess, 10, Jett, four, and Bunny, three — explained: "I can't wait [to turn 40]. It's a massive birthday and it's a massive celebration. Also, I might be turning 40, but I look 30! "I want a week's worth of celebrations and a trip to Vegas."

Famously, Katie has undergone a number of different procedures over the years, including having breast implants, in order to achieve her perfect look. But the British star has rubbished speculation that she's spent as much as Asked about the rumors, Katie told OK! Magazine: "Half a million pounds? No way." Last year, Katie revealed that her son Junior admonished her for having had too much cosmetic surgery.

In a chat about the growing numbers of young women seeking out surgery, the TV



star shared: "Everything that I've had done to my face is not permanent."

But Junior said to me the other day, 'Mum, you are so beautiful, why did you have to have it done?' And I'm like, 'I haven't had that much Junior!' "He went, 'Mum, your eyebrows are fake, you've got fake eyelashes on, you've had your lips done, you've had your nose done and your teeth and now you've put these things in your face — why?!' And I didn't have a comeback because he's actually right!" — Bang Showbiz

Director Ramadan Khosroh recently attended a film production workshop and honored more than 75 students who participated in the workshop. The workshop was held at the headquarters of the first film division. Khosroh handed out certificates of appreciation to students for participating and completing the workshop which was divided into two parts, theoretical and practical.



Lifestyle | Fashion



Fashion show without catwalks promotes modest wear in Dubai

A weeklong fashion event in Dubai is being held without catwalks, models or skin-baring designs. Instead, around 30 designers of fashionable modest wear - some Muslim and others not - from nearly two dozen countries showcased their long-sleeved and floor-length pieces on large screens. Buyers could see and touch the collections up close in one of Dubai's newest shopping districts, a shimmering maze of walkways and fountains. At the start of the event, a handful of designs were paraded around the plaza.

"We did away with the catwalk. We thought that was one of the most antiquated things," Alia Khan, chairwoman of the Islamic Fashion and Design Council (IFDC), said, explaining the decision to mix the most common elements of fashion shows around the world. Khan spoke Wednesday, the opening night of the event dubbed "A Modest Revolution." It showcases the latest creations by designers hoping to capitalize on a growing desire by Muslim shoppers to wear modest clothing that is also fashionable.

Italian designer Isabella Caposanno's long-sleeved evening-wear dresses can take months to make by hand, and some cost upward of 30,000 euros. Her clients include Arab royalty. Under-Rapt offers modest sportswear, with longer, looser tops. Its leggings include flaps that fall just below the hips to give extra cover to the rear and front. Another line, called Blue Meets Blue, employs refugees who have resettled in the Chicago area to make dressy and formal wear.

"We're trying to change the stereotypes of refugees in the US, as well. We want people to know that they're very hardworking, they're very excited to be in their new country and they want an opportunity to show that," said Shahd Alasaly, designer and founder of the American-made brand. Alasaly says her customers aren't just Muslims, but also Orthodox Jewish women who want to wear something that's "classy, timeless and elegant."



Alia Khan, founder and chairwoman of the Islamic Fashion and Design Council.



Models present modest fashion outfits in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. — AP photos

How women choose to dress modestly varies around the world. Often, Muslim women who cover their hair with a hijab, or headscarf, in public do so in ways that reflect the local culture and their interpretation of Islamic guidelines. But even women who dress modestly and cover their hair can find themselves at odds with conservatives who say the hijab should not be eye-catching and should conceal a woman's beauty from strangers.

Halal tourism

"Modest fashion comes in so many different ways and I think people tend to pigeon-hole it and stereotype it," Khan said. "Designers are coming from all walks of life. All have their own interpretation." Malaysia has been a trailblazer in the so-called halal industry, an estimated \$2.6 trillion global Muslim lifestyle market that includes everything from halal food products that adhere to Islamic principles on how to slaughter animals, to halal tourism, where hotels cater to Muslim visitors by offering prayer rugs, halal food options and even gender-segregated beaches and pools.

On the opening night of the event, Vivvy Yusof, a designer and businesswoman from Malaysia, wore a cream-colored headscarf by her brand, "dUck," paired with a Petite Malle Louis Vuitton bag and a bejeweled black blazer and black slacks made by South Asian designers. "I think it's really funny that now modest fashion is booming so much, because that's how we've been dressing for ages," she said.

"Layering, covering, long sleeves, long pants, you know, wearing the hijab or not, that's how we've been dressing as Muslim women." The 30-year-old and her husband co-founded Fashion Valet, an e-commerce website in Malaysia that features more than 400 South Asian designers, many of them selling modest wear collections. She selected six South Asian designers to showcase their pieces at her stall.

Yusof declined to disclose specifics on the company's annual revenue, but said that since launching the site eight years ago, business has grown by 100 percent annually.

Mainstream designers and retailers are also trying to tap into the niche market for modest clothing. Just last month, US retailer Macy's launched a modest clothing line targeting Muslim fashionistas. The new line, available online for now, includes ruffled high-neck tunics, flowy jumpsuits and bell-sleeve ankle-length cardigans.

Nike has debuted a hijab designed for female Muslim athletes. US fashion house DKNY in 2014 launched a modest wear collection for Ramadan, the holy month when Muslims fast from sun-up to sundown. High-end label Dolce & Gabbana has also released a collection of headscarves and coordinated abayas, the loose robes worn by women in Arab Gulf countries. The IFDC says Muslims are expected to spend as much as \$322 billion on fashion this year.

Modest pieces to wear this Ramadan

That figure is projected to grow as the Muslim population expands to 2.2 billion by 2030. For the first time this year, more than half of all apparel and footwear sales will originate outside Europe and North America, according to consulting firm

McKinsey & Co.'s "The State of Fashion" report. The main areas of growth will be in emerging markets in Asia where fashion sales are expected to grow by 6.5 to 7.5 percent this year.

In the Middle East, fashion sales are expected to grow by 6 percent, compared to 2 to 3 percent growth in Europe and 1 to 2 percent in North America. Syrian sisters Nazek and Rama Jandali searched the fashion stalls for unique and modest pieces to wear this Ramadan, set to begin mid-May. Nazek was dressed in an off-the-shoulder cream embroidered top. Her younger sister Rama wore a colorful Fendi top and Chanel shoes. Neither covered their hair.

"I really like this event because it supports all these new designers and it's something you don't see in the market, or you don't see it in shopping malls. It's something new - not many people (have) worn it," said Rama of the collections on display. Nazek agreed. "It's not like the usual exhibitions or usual fashion shows. I found it really interesting that it inspires the conservative woman who would like to really be trendy in a very modest way," she said. — AP



Chicago-based designer Shahd Alasaly, the founder and CEO of Blue Meets Blue.

Khloe Kardashian working hard to stop stretch marks

Khloe Kardashian is using regular drugstore products to stop herself from getting stretch marks during her pregnancy. The "Keeping Up with the Kardashians" star maybe worth an estimated \$40 million and is able to have her pick of the market's most luxury brands, but she swears by seven different oils and creams that can be bought in a pharmacy to keep her skin from being too badly damaged by her growing baby. Taking to her Instagram stories, Khloe - who is expecting a child with boyfriend Tristan Thompson - shared her products of choice saying:



"A few of my tummy oils and lotions for my tummy. Yes it's a lot but I don't use them all at once. I use different ones throughout the day or every other day." The Good American founder included products such as Bio-Oil and Palmer's Cocoa Butter Tummy Butter as two of her favourite products to moisturise her ever-expanding bump and has previously praised the former product for its skin hydrating benefits.

Khloe, 33, said: "I keep Bio-Oil in my shower and before I get out, I drench myself in it from head to toe." And the 'Revenge Body' star makes sure to remain active during her pregnancy and admits she hasn't experienced a lot of the body disadvantages because she exercises. Writing on her app, she said: "Whatever you do before you're pregnant, you're allowed to continue, and they say it leads for a better delivery. I feel great, and I would feel horrible if I was just sitting around, overeating all day ... I don't have swollen feet, I don't have a lot of these things because I'm staying so active right now. So, as long as I can, I want to keep that up." — Bang Showbiz

Christian Louboutin hates shopping

Christian Louboutin is bored of people talking about clothes. The 55-year-old designer founded his namesake brand in 1992 and has designed over 15,000 shoes and boots since but despite being one of the world's most recognisable brands with his signature red sole trademark, he has no interest in shopping and thinks people who are obsessed with talking about fashion are a "nightmare". Speaking to Vogue.com, he said: "[I have] no interest [in shopping]. None. I never go clothes shopping, I have no patience for clothes. 'I'd rather spend time with someone badly dressed but smart and funny and engaging than someone perfectly dressed and boring, who talks about clothes. To me, that's the image of a nightmare: a woman incredibly well-dressed, who can only talk about clothes. That kills it for me."

Christian has a long list of celebrity clients who swear by his fanciful footwear, including Margot Robbie, Sarah Jessica Parker, Kim Kardashian West, Selena Gomez and Melania Trump, but would never partner with a celebrity for a brand endorsement because it shows a "weakness" and credits people like British monarch Queen Elizabeth II and Angelia Jolie for embracing an individual style. He explained: "I was never that associated with anyone, anyway. I'm not the type of designer to put up an Instagram with my new BFF, who happens to be a big star. I never did, I never will. "Her uniform belongs to her. Another person like that is Angelia Jolie. If you think about her you never put her in a designer mentality, like Dolce, Fendi whatever. She looks good, she looks weird, she looks amused, she looks bored, but you never think she looks 'of a designer'. She's such a strong character. Actors have such big personalities that to be associated with a brand is a bit of weakness, I would say." — Bang Showbiz



Kim Kardashian West's wedding inspires her makeup range

Kim Kardashian West's new eyeshadow shades were inspired by her wedding. The 37-year-old "Keeping Up With The Kardashians" star recently unveiled her newest KKW Beauty collection in collaboration with her long term make-up artist and friend, Mario Dedivanovic, and he revealed the pair took inspiration from her iconic looks, such as her bronzed wedding make-up, to create the shades in their eyeshadow palette.

Speaking to Allure Magazine, he said: "We've created so many looks together - thousands of them, really - and for months I just kept going through the images on both my current phone and my old phone and screen-grabbing them for reference. I

would pull images, cropping out and zooming into the eyes or lips, and then narrow it down from there, choosing the more iconic moments that her fans loved so much, the ones that got re-created on YouTube by so many people, and then of course the everyday glam moments that she loves and that I love. "Like there was a look we did in Miami: I forget the year, but I had it on my inspiration board, and we actually named one of the shadows Miami because of it. Some of the shades were inspired by her wedding, for example."

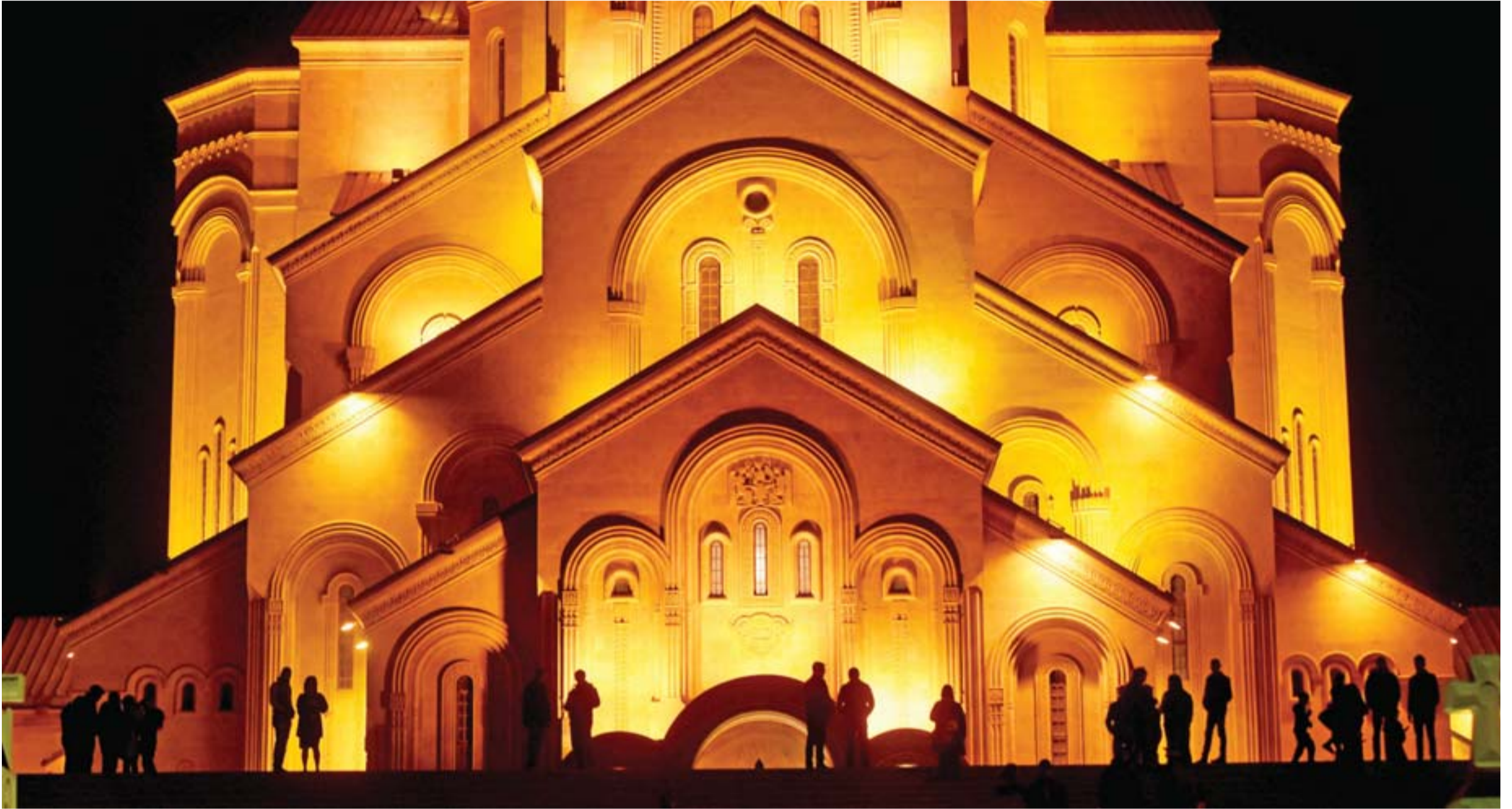
Mario and Kim knew they wanted a make-up range which would be versatile enough for fans to recreate a variety of looks and they started planning the collec-

tion even before KKW Beauty launched in 2017. He explained: "Even before Kim started her makeup line, we talked about how she wanted her first collaboration to be with me, so that's when I actually started planning it." "We wanted products that people could use to re-create basically any look that we've ever done, there have always been certain key eye shadow and lip colours that I've used on Kim, and while over the years we've used tons of different products, they've always been the same shades. So basically what we did was took all those specific shades and perfected them for exactly how we like them, how we like to use them, and what we like to pair them with." — Bangshowbiz



Lifestyle

MONDAY, APRIL 9, 2018

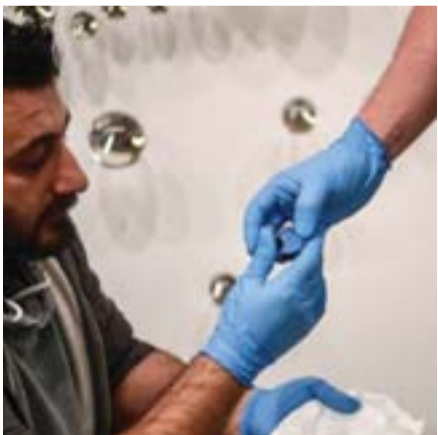


Georgians walk in front of Sameba church in Tbilisi during Easter service in Tbilisi. — AFP

Famed Istanbul modern art museum enters new era

It's a busy afternoon at Istanbul Modern, Turkey's premier modern art museum, and the gallery is packed with visitors taking selfies or discussing the artworks in hushed tones. Some pause in front of a massive canvas by celebrated German artist Anselm Kiefer, while others look in amazement at a masterpiece by Turkish abstract painter Fahrelnissa Zeid or gasp at iconic black and white images of old Istanbul by legendary local photographer Ara Guler. Since opening on December 11, 2004, Istanbul Modern, spectacularly situated on the Bosphorus with a view of the Ottoman-era Topkapi Palace, has become a symbol of 21st century Istanbul, open to outside influences but proud of its past.

The rapid success of the museum was one of the reasons Newsweek magazine famously declared in a 2005 cover story that Istanbul was "one of the coolest cities" in the world. But within a few days of the visit, all the artworks will have been taken down, carefully catalogued and put into



Workers collect pieces of an artwork for packing at Istanbul Modern museum in Istanbul.



In this file photo Workers take down a painting at Istanbul Modern museum in Istanbul.

protective cases. The building, a maritime warehouse known as Antrepo No. 4 in Turkish and beloved by many Istanbulites since the museum's opening, will be demolished. However it will not be the end for Istanbul Modern.

'Nourish our souls'

After closing its doors on March 18, the museum will reopen in a historic mansion in the central Beyoglu district in May. The mansion will be a temporary home until a new museum is built on the site of the old Istanbul Modern to showcase its collection to even greater effect. The new building will be designed by Italian architect Renzo Piano, who was behind London's iconic skyscraper The Shard, and is expected to be finished in three years. Istanbul Modern's director Levent Calikoglu admitted there was some sense of huzun—the Turkish word for melancholy—over leaving the building that had been the museum's home for the last 14 years.

"Yes, in fact, we have a kind of melancholy and a nostalgia," he told AFP inside the museum, which was devoid of visitors as staff carefully took down and packaged the art. "But a new future is in front of us and we have a completely different aim. This new building will bring a new vision to the art world and to Istanbul." The opening of Istanbul Modern was supported at the time by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, then prime minister, who gave his approval for the use and refurbishment of the maritime warehouse.

For some, the museum's sheer existence was proof that the arts could prosper in Turkey under Erdogan's Islamic-rooted ruling party, which came to power in 2002. Artistic expression in Turkey has had some difficult periods since, but Istanbul Modern is proud not just that it has attracted seven million visitors since opening but that they have come from right across the country's hugely diverse society. And on one of the museum's final opening days before its tem-

porary closure it was filled with Turks of all ages and backgrounds, as well as a sprinkling of tourists. "There are things here that I am seeing for the first time, it's interesting and I appreciate this," said Gokberk, a 19-year-old who had come with his friends. Visitor Nesrin Aktar, a fan of the museum, hoped the revamp would go smoothly. "We come to see the exhibitions, to nourish our souls, that really inspires us."

'500-year timescale'

The main financial backers for the new project are the museum's founding sponsor Eczacıbaşı Group, a major backer of the arts in Turkey, and the Dogus Group-Bilgili Holding conglomerate. As with many art projects in Turkey, there is no state funding. The new museum will be located in a specially dedicated area within the new \$1-billion (815-million-euro) Galataport project, which aims to revitalise Istanbul's historic harbourside with new living and office spaces beside an overhauled cruise terminal.

But it has not met with universal enthusiasm. The Istanbul Chamber of Architects has denounced the Galataport project as being in violation of planning rules—a claim rejected by its developers—and risking "causing damage that will not be able to be reversed". In an interview with the Hürriyet daily, Oya Eczacıbaşı, the chairwoman of the museum's board, rejected concerns that the new museum would lose its identity within Galataport. She said Galataport will "add a lot to Istanbul" when completed, insisting Istanbul Modern's leadership will remain in full control of the museum's program. Calikoglu said the Renzo Piano building—whose design is set to be unveiled later in 2018—should become a new symbol for Istanbul. "For this building he is looking on a timescale of 500 years, he is not looking at a timescale of 20 years," Calikoglu said. — AFP



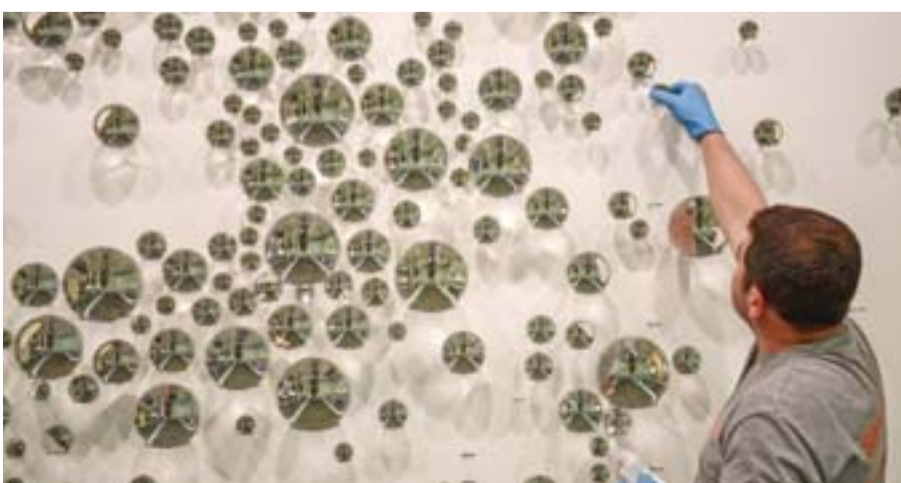
Cardi B on Saturday Night Live

Cardi B, fast-rising woman of rap, reveals pregnancy

A day after releasing one of the most eagerly awaited rap debut albums in recent years, rapper Cardi B made another splash—revealing she is pregnant. The fast-rising 25-year-old star showed off an unambiguous baby bump as she appeared on weekly comedy show "Saturday Night Live," becoming a top trending item on social media. In a teasing confirmation to persistent pregnancy rumors, Cardi B took the stage twice on "Saturday Night Live," first concealing her body with a full-some feather boa as she performed her breakout single "Bodak Yellow."

When she returned to rap "Be Careful," a track off her debut album "Invasion of Privacy" that came out Friday, Cardi B donned a body-hugging white dress and smiled knowingly as the lights shone on her protruding belly. Cardi B is engaged to Offset of rap trio Migos, who shortly after his fiancée's television appearance confirmed the pregnancy on Instagram, writing, "We feel so blessed."

Cardi B, a Bronx native whose real name is Belcalis Almanzar, has quickly found stardom with her hard-driving rhymes that unsentimentally tell a story of a rough life that included a stint as a stripper. "Bodak Yellow," released less than a year ago, made her one of the most watched names in rap—a genre dominated by men and, often, by machismo. She raked in top prizes including single of the year at last year's BET Hip Hop Awards, leading to high anticipation for her debut album—and she is not letting the pregnancy slow her down. The rapper is due to perform next weekend at Coachella, the premier US music festival—whose top headliner Beyonce pushed back her appearance by one year as she gave birth to twins in 2017. The gossip site TMZ earlier reported that Cardi B is due to give birth in early July. — AFP



A worker collects pieces of an artwork for packing at Istanbul Modern museum in Istanbul.



Istanbul Modern's director, Levent Calikoglu, is pictured during an interview. — AFP photos