



7 Zuckerberg says his own data was shared by Cambridge Analytica



9 Gazan shot in Israeli sniper video denies posing threat



11 Trump signals Syria strikes, slams Assad backer Russia



16 Last-gasp penalty takes Real past Juve; Bayern beat Sevilla



Military plane crash kills 257 in Algeria's worst air disaster

Amir sends condolences • Polisario members, Western Sahara refugees among dead

Houthi missiles, drones shot down over Saudi Arabia

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia said its air defenses yesterday intercepted ballistic missiles fired from rebel-held Yemen at Riyadh and the south of the kingdom, where two drones were also shot down. Yemen's Houthi rebels said their cross-border barrage marked the launch of what their leadership has dubbed "the year of ballistics". The attacks prompted swift condemnation from a Saudi military spokesman, who said the kingdom would respond "with resolve".

A missile launched from Sadaa, the Houthis' stronghold in northern Yemen, "towards Riyadh was successfully intercepted" by Saudi air defenses, said Colonel Turki Al-Malki, spokesman for a Saudi-led coalition fighting the Houthis. The announcement came after an AFP journalist witnessed explosions and heard three blasts over the capital, which has come under repeated attack by Houthi rebels.

Continued on Page 11

ALGIERS: More than 250 people including Western Sahara refugees were killed when a military plane crashed near Algeria's capital yesterday, state media said, with witnesses saying they saw a wing catch fire shortly after the plane took off. Dozens of firefighters, rescue workers and military officials worked around the blackened fuselage of the aircraft, which had been ripped open near its wings. Bits of mangled and smoldering debris were scattered across the field near Boufarik airport southwest of Algiers where people were searching for bodies among the rubble.

Earlier TV images showed flames and smoke billowing from the site of the crash, the country's worst air disaster. "This morning at around 8:00 an Ilyushin model military transport plane ... crashed directly after takeoff in an agricultural field that was clear of residents," Major General Boualem Madi told state TV. A line of white body bags could be seen on the ground next to the wreck of what media said was a Russian Ilyushin Il-76 transport plane, part of which was still intact. Smoke was still billowing hours after the crash.

HH the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent yesterday a cable of condolences to Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika. In the cable, the Amir expressed his deepest condolences on the crash, asking Almighty Allah to bestow his mercy upon those who were killed and speedy recovery to those wounded. HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent



BOUFARIK, Algeria: Rescuers are seen around the wreckage of an Algerian army plane which crashed near Boufarik airport from where the plane had taken off yesterday. — AFP

similar cables to the Algerian president.

"After taking off, with the plane at a height of 150 meters I saw the fire on its wing. The pilot avoided crashing on the road when he changed the flight path to the field," Abd El Karim, a witness, told the private Ennahar TV station. Another witness said: "We saw bodies burned. It is a real disaster". According to the plane manufacturer's website, the Il-76, a four-engine plane

built in the Soviet Union and then Russia, can transport between 126 and 225 passengers depending on the model and configuration.

A total of 257 people were killed, most of them military, the defense ministry said. Ten crew and other people described as family members died, and a number of survivors were being treated at an army hospital, the ministry added.

Continued on Page 11

News in brief

Aramco signs Indian refinery deal

NEW DELHI: Saudi Aramco yesterday announced a \$44-billion deal to build a giant refinery complex in India with three Indian firms that will become a crucial new outlet for the world's biggest supplier. The refinery at Ratnagiri on the west coast will be able to process up to 1.2 million barrels of crude a day, the Saudi company said after signing a memorandum of understanding with Indian Oil Corporation, Bharat Petroleum Corporation and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation. — AFP (See Page 17)



PARIS: Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri takes a selfie with French President Emmanuel Macron and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman during an official dinner at the Elysee Palace on Tuesday. — AFP (See Page 6)

Lebanon-Saudi deals planned

BEIRUT: Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Al-Hariri said yesterday he had held an "excellent" meeting with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and expected Lebanon to sign economic deals with Saudi Arabia soon. "We will see very soon certain agreements that will be signed with Saudi Arabia vis-a-vis different sectors of the economy, whether it is industry, and tourism and services," Hariri said during a news conference in Beirut without giving further details. Lebanon's relations with Saudi Arabia had plunged into crisis in November, when Hariri abruptly resigned from his post as prime minister during a visit to the kingdom. Hariri retracted his resignation after returning to Lebanon weeks later, following French intervention. — Reuters

Somalia disbands UAE program

NAIROBI: Somalia has disbanded a United Arab Emirates program to train some of its troops in a fresh sign that a dispute in the Gulf involving Qatar is spilling into the volatile country in the Horn of Africa. The government will take over paying and training the soldiers in the program, Defense Minister Mohamed Mursal Abdirahman told Somalia's state news agency SONNA yesterday. "Somalia will fully take over (its troops) trained by the UAE ... Those forces will be added to the various battalions of the Somalia National Army," Abdirahman said, adding that the troops would be integrated into other units today. — Reuters

Acting PM visits Camp Arifjan

KUWAIT: Acting Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah yesterday visited the US Army's Camp Arifjan in southern Kuwait. The visit aims to enhance cooperation and military coordination between the US and Kuwaiti armies in training and operational fields, said the defense ministry's directorate of moral guidance and public relations in a statement.

Sheikh Nasser Al-Sabah was received at the camp by US Ambassador to Kuwait Lawrence Silverman, Commanding General of Theater Sustainment Command Maj Gen Donnie Walker and Chief of the Office of Military Cooperation Brig Gen San Clemente. The visit came upon the invitation of the US envoy. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Acting Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Al-Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and US Ambassador to Kuwait Lawrence Silverman visit Camp Arifjan of the US Army yesterday. — KUNA

Panel discusses 'violations' in investment fund

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: MP Riyadh Al-Adasani said the National Assembly budgets committee yesterday discussed launching an investigation into suspected violations in a \$200 million investment fund. Adasani said the public prosecution is investigating the case, but the committee is discussing the possibility of asking the Audit Bureau

to investigate the issue. Part of the fund is shared by the state-owned Public Institution for Social Security, whose funds are under scrutiny by the Assembly, especially after courts convicted its former chief of fraud and embezzlement. Adasani said the social security body has around KD 30 billion in investments and is investing around 30 percent of it - or KD 8 billion - in the domestic market, and the rest abroad.

On the row over proposals for early retirement, the lawmaker said the government is trying to show the negative aspect of the proposal and is ignoring some positive factors related to the issue. He said the social security institution is financing its obligations through investing its funds and any shortage is met by the government. MPs are insisting to allow Kuwaiti employees to seek early retirement while still enjoying full financial

benefits, but the government says that such employees would have to give up part of their retirement benefits.

Meanwhile, the head of the Assembly committee for creating jobs for Kuwaitis and replacing expatriates Khalil Al-Saleh said yesterday his panel will complain to the Assembly because the government is refusing to answer its questions. Saleh said the committee sent several questions to the government requesting statistics about jobs for Kuwaitis, but the government "totally ignored the questions".

The lawmaker warned that if the government continues to ignore the questions, an official complaint will be sent to the speaker so the issue can be debated in an Assembly session. He added that the committee has asked authorities about why Kuwaitis shun private sector jobs in favor of the public sector.

MoH reiterates scabies outbreak reports baseless

KUWAIT: Health Ministry Undersecretary Dr Mustafa Redha denied anew press reports that there are hundreds of cases of scabies in Kuwaiti hospitals, adding that no patients have been transferred to any hospital in the past months. He said at a press conference at Adan Hospital yesterday that reports circulated on the spread of such diseases are baseless and that the matter is being investigated on a regional level.

Education Ministry Undersecretary Dr Haitham Al-Athari also strongly denied reports of the spread of scabies in Kuwait, stressing things are completely under control. He added that the education ministry has not detected a single case in any of its schools. Redha said only a single case was detected over the past two weeks, adding that the usual incidence in Kuwait is two to 10 cases a year. Reports of 200 scabies patients in



KUWAIT: Health Ministry Undersecretary Dr Mustafa Redha holds a press conference yesterday. — KUNA

Adan Hospital and 70 in Jahra Hospital are "totally false", Redha earlier told KUNA.

Redha reiterated that scabies medicines are readily available in the country and are enough to last eight

months. "The ministry is following the developments related to infectious and communicable diseases in the area very closely, and takes into consideration the availability of necessary vaccinations," he said. — Agencies

Kuwaitis exude unmatched generosity: Justice Minister

IICO chief wins another term



Philanthropist Yusuf Al-Hajji honored

KUWAIT: Kuwaitis have always been helpful to those less fortunate, regardless of race, color, religion or creed, Minister of Justice Dr Fahad Al-Afasi said yesterday. Al-Afasi, who also serves as minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, made the remark in a speech delivered on his behalf by Undersecretary of the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Fared Emadi to open the general assembly of the Kuwait-based International Islamic Charitable Organization (IICO).

By virtue of these altruistic acts, Kuwait has risen to global prominence while its contributions towards humanitarian causes remain unparalleled. Al-Afasi, who also serves as minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, pointed out. He chronicled a number of initiatives Kuwait has taken with the express purpose of coming to the aid of some of the world's most hapless people, which in turn garnered His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah a UN-bestowed moniker of "Humanitarian Leader."

Meanwhile, IICO's chairman, Dr Abdullah Al-Matouq said that the meeting comes at a time where humanitarian crises abound, naming the conflicts in Yemen, Syria and Iraq as examples, which collectively victimized millions of people. He went on to stress that his country's penchant for unbridled generosity has resulted in noble efforts on

the part of local charities that have proven instrumental in mitigating human misery around the world. Al-Matouq also spoke of a number of plans the Kuwaiti charity has in the works, including workshops and volunteer programs, all of which will help cement IICO's legacy in the philanthropic arena.

Winning another term

In another development, the International Islamic Charity Organization's Board of Directors has appointed current Chairman Dr Abdullah Al-Matouq for another term. IICO's general assembly formed its new board of directors, consisted of 21 members from various countries, for four-year term during its 16th meeting. IICO said in a press statement yesterday. The assembly also appointed Field Marshal Abdel Rahman Suwar Al-Dahab as Deputy Chairman, Ahmad Al-Jaser as Treasurer, and Dr Mutlaq Al-Qarawi as Secretary, it added. Based in Kuwait, IICO is an independent non-political organization that offers a wide range of humanitarian services. The organization works worldwide to provide services to all people regardless of their race and nationality. It also provides help to the needy, as well as urgent relief aid to individuals in countries torn by wars, natural disasters, epidemics, and famines. — Agencies

KFH participates in Career Fair at AUK

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) participated in the career fair held at the American University of Kuwait (AUK) as part of its keenness to support the efforts of qualifying national cadres while offering them suitable job opportunities, especially that KFH is a pioneer in raising bar of Kuwaiti youth and the recruitment efforts.

The Bank's participation also comes as part of its efforts in the educational field to support and encourage Kuwaiti youths to work at the private sector, while encouraging the recruitment of Kuwaiti youth, and to boost the labor market. It is worth noting that the fair includes a wide array of private and public sector companies that offer jobs for new graduates. Such events allow the youth to be aware of the privileges and benefits of working for various companies that take part in the fair, in order to find a job that suits their qualifications. In addition, the fair allows those graduates to recognize the jobs required in the labor market.



Ooredoo sponsors 'Successful Kuwaiti Talent' Conference

KUWAIT: Ooredoo Kuwait concluded its sponsorship of the Successful Kuwaiti Talent Conference, which was organized by the Arab Planning Institute and MILSET (the International Movement for Leisure Activities in Science and Technology), the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs, and the Australian College of Kuwait. The two-day conference took place on Monday and Tuesday last week at the headquarters of the Arab Planning Institute and the Australian College of Kuwait.

The conference was attended by a number of international and local entities and organizations that are focused on youth, education and sciences, such as the MILSET Middle East, Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research, and LoYAC among other organizations. The event saw attendance of hundreds of youth interested in entrepreneurship and initiatives focused on science, technology and education. The event also included an awarding ceremony for a number of influential educators and even sponsors, in addition to an exhibition for entities and organizations that have youth-focused programs and activities. Commenting on this, Ooredoo Kuwait's Corporate Communications Senior Director Mijbil Al-Ayoub underscored the company's commitment to supporting youth, noting that this comes in tandem from the company's deep-rooted values of caring, connecting and challenging.

Additionally, the company is eager to support initiatives that encourage embracing digitalization as a lifestyle. He added, "We are proud to partner with distinguished local and international organizations in providing such rich content to the attendees of the conference, aiming to pique their interest and satisfy their curious minds on topics related to sciences and technology with such opportuni-

ties. We at Ooredoo Kuwait strongly believe that by investing in youth today, we will be able to create a dynamic generation that can positively impact the future of our country."

On his part, Arab Planning Institute Consultant and the organizer of the conference Dr. Fahad Al-Fadhlah noted that the goals of this conference are aligned with the wishes of HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, who urged all entities to support youth and provide them with opportunities in shaping the future. He extended his gratitude to the sponsors of this event for their support. Activities of Monday, the first day of the conference, which took place in the Arab Planning Institute, included a special awarding ceremony for a number of distinguished former ministers of education, honoring their efforts in nourishing youth's interest in sciences and technology. This included former ministers of education Dr Musaed Al-Haroon, Dr Rasheed Al-Hamad, Nouriyah Al-Sabeeh and Abdulaziz Al-Jarallah.

Monday's activities also included two discussion panels: the first highlighted the development of science and technology and its role in the life of youth, and was presented by Dr Abdullah Al-Mutawa - Kuwait University's College of Engineering; Idris Al-Waradi from MILSET, and Mustafa Akkawi from the International Academy for Building Capacity. The second day featured Kuwaiti entrepreneurs Ghanim Al-Otaibi, Fatami Al-Attar, Ali Al-Fadala, who showcased their projects and discussed at length the challenges and obstacles they have faced in establishing their projects.

The second day of the conference, which took place in the Australian College of Kuwait, featured two panels. The first panel focused on entrepreneurship, and included entrepreneurs Mohammad Al-Rifaie, Ali Al-Wazzan, Mohammad Al-Musallam and Raghad Al-Musallam. The second panel focused on humanitarian and social-oriented projects, and was led by Athari Ismael, Jassim Al-Jassim and Saad Al-Muhteb. The conference concluded its activities on the second day with an open discussion on the policies that can potentially support entrepreneurship and youth projects. Ooredoo works year-round in collaboration with different entities to support youth and enrich their experience.



Ooredoo Kuwait's Corporate Communications Senior Director Mijbil Al-Ayoub is honored by Dr Fahad Al-Fadhlah and Meshal Al-Subal'e.



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Local

UN Under-Secretary-General hails Amir's humanitarian role

Deputy prime minister, Lowcock hold talks

KUWAIT: Visiting UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Mark Lowcock yesterday lauded His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's world humanitarian role. Speaking to reporters following a meeting with His Highness the Amir at Bayan Palace, Lowcock said: "We had an excellent discussion, it was an honor for me to meet His Highness. I wanted to thank him for his great global leadership role on humanitarian issues which goes back a long time." He added that he had a very good and detailed discussion of some of the current crises clearly the situation in Syria, Yemen and Iraq where Kuwait hosted a successful conference a couple months ago.

"I did want to thank His Highness and the people of Kuwait for what they are doing for the humanitarian situation in Syria and also to know the very important role in the Kuwait is playing on humanitarian issues in the Security Council," Lowcock said. On Syria, he said clearly it is a difficult moment on Syria, but the needs of the people must be met, and the United Nations every month provides help to 7.5 million Syrians

inside the country with water and health and so on. "We couldn't do that without the generosity of Kuwait and other countries, so I wanted to thank His Highness for the leadership that he plays on that," he added.

Meanwhile, Kuwait Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah yesterday received Lowcock. During the meeting, the UN official praised Kuwait's massive support to the international relief and humanitarian efforts. He also highlighted Kuwait's distinctive diplomacy to develop solutions to crises in some countries. In addition, Lowcock voiced gratitude for Kuwait's efforts as a non-permanent member in the UN Security Council (UNSC), especially during the country's UNSC presidency in February, when Resolution 2401 on a ceasefire in Syria was issued. Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled and Lowcock reviewed the UN mechanism of humanitarian and relief efforts in countries afflicted by wars and catastrophes. The meeting was attended by senior officials at the Foreign Ministry. — Agencies



KUWAIT: Kuwait Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah holds talks with UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Mark Lowcock. — KUNA

'Protect civilians in Great Lakes region'

NEW YORK: Kuwait has affirmed that protecting security in the Great Lakes region must be done through achieving political stability and ensuring a peaceful transition of power. The remarks were made by Kuwaiti Permanent Representative to the UN Headquarters in New York Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi, during the UN Security Council (UNSC) session on the situation in the Great Lakes region late Tuesday. The worsening humanitarian conditions due to political tension and the spread of armed groups in the region is extremely worrying, he said. Al-Otaibi called for protecting civilians in these countries against forced immigration and prevent armed groups from escaping punishment.

Facing these challenges can only be achieved through joint cooperation between the region and the UN, the EU, the African Union and the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region, said the ambassador. Creating stability in the region will have a positive impact on nearby countries as well. It will boost development and security condition in Central Africa and the rest of the continent, Al-Otaibi noted. He also spoke of the big role of UN missions in protecting peace and easing the suffering of civilians in the region, especially in South Sudan, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Central Africa and Burundi.

Meanwhile, Al-Otaibi said that the Framework of Hope, signed in 2013 to protect peace and security in these countries had entered its fifth year without any achievements. The numbers of refugees and displaced people had been rapidly rising and the number of people who were forced to leave their countries have reached 11 million until now, he added. The Kuwaiti official said the UN peacekeeping missions are also facing danger in these countries. In this context, the ambassador mentioned the December 2017 attack on the UN's Tanzanian peacekeeping forces in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which left 15 dead and 53 others injured.

He hoped the upcoming Geneva donors conference for the Democratic Republic of the Congo tomorrow will help improve the deteriorating humanitarian conditions in the country. As part of Kuwait's chairmanship of the UNSC committee on sanctions against the Democratic Republic of the Congo established pursuant to resolution 1533, Al-Otaibi said that he has been pushing for boosting efforts to protect peace and security in the conflict-torn country, by cooperating with the committee's members and the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). — KUNA



Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi

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Local

Kuwaiti lawmakers, Tunisian president meet, promote ties

Kuwaiti efforts for Palestinian children win praise



TUNIS: Tunisian President Beji Caid Essebsi meets with Kuwaiti National Assembly's Sixth Parliamentary Friendship Group headed by MP Askar Al-Enezi. — KUNA

TUNIS: Means of promoting bilateral ties were the focus of talks held in Tunis between a visiting Kuwaiti parliamentary delegation and President Beji Caid Essebsi. Head of the Kuwaiti National Assembly's Sixth Parliamentary Friendship Group MP Askar Al-Enezi told KUNA and the Kuwait TV that they had wrapped their visit to Tunisia with "deep and comprehensive" talks with the President at Carthage Palace. The talks aimed to further consolidate bilateral relations, which Al-Enezi referred to as "solid and historical." They also addressed boosting cooperation between the parliaments in the two countries, exchanging legislative and legal expertise, besides initiatives to increase the flow of investments between both countries.

According to Al-Enezi, Essebsi urged Kuwaiti and

Tunisian lawmakers to intensify exchange of visits and to work harder on bolstering bilateral economic relations. The President highly appreciated efforts by the Tunisian-Kuwaiti Parliamentary Friendship Group, reiterating the deep-rooted ties between the two countries and Kuwait's sustainable support to the tourist sector in his country. For his part, MP Mohammad Al-Huwailas said that during the meeting with the Tunisian President both sides agreed that "relations between Kuwait and Tunisia are deep-rooted and exceptional" and to work for further developing them.

29th Arab Summit

In another development, the 29th Arab Summit's preparatory meeting for senior economic and social affairs



Kuwaiti lawmakers meet Tunisian Prime Minister Youssef Chahed. — KUNA

officials concluded yesterday in Riyadh with a gesture of gratitude towards Kuwait's stance on supporting Palestinian children. After forwarding draft resolutions to tomorrow's ministerial meetings, the participants took the chance to thank the State of Kuwait for hosting the 2017 conference on the suffering of the Palestinian children amid violations by Israel. The meeting approved the "Kuwait declaration" on the protection and reinforcement of Palestinian children's rights and forwarded it to the Arab League Secretariat for implementation.

Senior officials focused their meeting today on files pertaining to the economic and social development of Arab countries. The decisions such as the grand Arab free-trade zone agreement, the unified customs union, and various

strategies focused on environmental, economic, media, and social integrations were discussed and forwarded to the ministerial meetings today. The senior officials touched on the issue of the Syrian refugees and the economic and social impacts on hosting Arab countries and forwarded the issue to the upcoming ministers meetings. The Arab strategies for improving healthcare and the protection of the environment as well as the role of society in combating terror ideologies were amongst the items forwarded to the ministerial meetings tomorrow which will include with a gathering for Arab Foreign Ministers ahead of the Arab summit on April 15. The officials welcomed Lebanon's request to host the fourth Arab economic and social development summit in 2019 and relayed the issue to competent authorities. — Agencies

News in brief

Ramadan items' prices

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Commerce and Industry said it will closely monitor prices in supermarkets and stores during the month of Ramadan. In a statement yesterday, the ministry said that its Consumer Protection Department held a meeting to follow up on different items sold in co-operative societies and markets for Ramadan. The ministry has assigned teams across the country to inspect goods and monitor prices to protect consumers against buying damaged or expired items, and impose sanctions on law violators which includes closing stores, it said. The teams will also make sure that all needed goods are available and ready for sale before the beginning of Ramadan. Meanwhile, the ministry called on consumers to contact its complaints hotline 135 to report any problems they may face. — KUNA

Dusty, unstable weather

KUWAIT: The low pressure air southwest of Kuwait yesterday led to thunderstorms, dusty winds with low visibility of less than 1,000 meters in most areas, said an official at the Meteorological Center Abdulaziz Al-Qarawi. The thunderstorms hit the south of Kuwait as unpredictable weather continues until today. Al-Qarawi said. The dust carried by storms is moving from north and south of Kuwait as well as rain in some areas. Meanwhile, air traffic at Kuwait International Airport was normal yesterday, despite the current unstable weather, said the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA). Horizontal visibility is currently at 1,500 meters conforming to the allowed visibility standards for landing and takeoff. Kuwait is currently witnessing low visibility as a result of the dust dominating various areas of the country. — Agencies

Kuwait, Poland seal deal

KUWAIT: Kuwait's State Audit Bureau (SAB) has signed an agreement for cooperation with Poland's Supreme Audit Office that would allow both sides to share expertise over inspection activities. The deal entails sharing information and research as well as the regular exchange of visits involving audit specialists from both nations, a statement by the Kuwaiti audit body cited SAB's chief auditor Mohammad Al-Doseri as saying. The agreement was sealed on the sidelines of a scientific forum involving SAB and the Albanian Supreme State Audit, in which the Polish audit body also took part, he revealed. On the meeting, Al-Doseri said that several recommendations were made related to the "Audit Risk Model", an accounting tool many audit institutions have begun to use, as well as the importance of external sources in dealing with audit research. — KUNA

Environmental council meeting

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Acting Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah presided over a meeting of the Supreme Council for the Environment at Bayan Palace yesterday. The Kuwaiti minister, who is also the chairman of the local environmental body, was joined by council members Sheikh Amthal Al-Sabah and Sheikh Dr Ibrahim Al-Duaij Al-Sabah, in addition to the Director General of the Environment Public Authority (EPA) Sheikh Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and a number of state ministers. The meeting delved into existential conditions in Kuwait Bay, where installing wastewater treatment plants will be among measures taken to protect the country's marine environment, EPA's director general said in a statement. Meanwhile, the council also agreed to carry out similar environmental conservation practices in Kuwait's power plants, which include the strict use of alternative energy sources. — KUNA

Kuwait International Bank sponsors GUST Career Fair

KUWAIT: As part of its ongoing commitment to supporting young local talents and students, Kuwait International Bank (KIB) sponsored the Gulf University of Science and Technology (GUST) Career Fair, which was held at the GUST Mishref campus. The career fair aimed at connecting newly graduated students and those expected to graduate with prospective employers and potential career opportunities.

During the fair, KIB was represented by a team from its Human Resources Department at its dedicated booth. The team introduced students to the nature of working at a bank and advised them on how they can begin their professional career at KIB. Additionally, the career fair provided a broad range of career advice geared toward recent graduates, to help guide them through the oft-complicated process of choosing suitable future careers.

KIB's participation in this event reflects the Bank's firm belief in the importance of supporting youth and newly graduated students by providing them with employment opportunities that match their career goals, particularly within the banking sector. This also comes in line with the Bank's financial literacy program, which focuses on strengthening financial awareness and inclusion amongst youth and attracting national talents to the banking sector.

Within this context, KIB has always been considered a paragon of supporting youth and promoting their career development. Accordingly, the Bank always strives to par-



ticipate in various career fairs, which serve as an excellent opportunity to introduce students to the Bank and its internal culture – given that one of KIB's central tenets has always been providing the right environment to attract the right candidates to the right job. The Bank also heavily invests in its employees to provide ongoing support for their career aspirations and professional development.

It is worth noting that KIB remains dedicated to

strengthening its leadership role amongst the top Islamic banks in Kuwait through opening its doors and attracting young local talents and providing them with employment opportunities that nature their skills and capabilities. As a core component of its corporate and social philosophy, KIB has always believed that youth are the foundation on which we can build a brighter, more successful future for the nation.

Municipal Council polls

By Hanan Al-Saadoun, Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Director General of the Municipality Ahmad Al-Manfouhi issued an administrative decision forming a higher committee to prepare for the 2018 Municipal Council elections. The committee will take all steps related to the municipality's preparations for the elections and coordinate between the municipality and all other related departments, besides following the rules and regulations with regards to signs and advertisement licenses and election headquarters.

Guard delegation

A National Guard delegation, headed by Director of the Guidance Department Col Abdullah Saleh Nazzal, visited the National Bank of Kuwait Children Hospital to inspect and open the families' ward in the hospital, which the National Guard undertook to restore and refurbish. Saleh said the National Guard took this step on the instructions of the higher leadership of HH Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah, the head of the National Guard, and his deputy Sheikh Meshaal Al-Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, with follow-up by National Guard Undersecretary Lt Gen Hashim Al-Rifae.

Providing care

Minister of Justice and Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Fahd Al-Afasi said the Ministry of Awqaf has never been neglectful in providing care to people with special needs. He also noted that all ministry sectors had been urged to provide such care starting

with translating Friday prayer sermons into sign language in 2006 at the Grand Mosque, then by doing the same live on KTV in 2008. Afasi said the Islamic culture department has issued many publications for deaf people since 2011, in addition to hosting a number of deaf sheikhs and preachers in collaboration with Kuwait Sports Club for the Deaf to deliver sermons. He added that the secretariat general also produced an educational video to teach the deaf how to perform ablution and prayers, in addition to Quran memorization, which allowed them to take part in the Kuwait Quran Competition in the past three years.

E-communications

Director of the Central Agency for Information Technology Qossai Al-Shatti stressed that the agency links various government bodies through email with the aim of enhancing the efficiency of administrative work, cutting paperwork needed and using e-communications instead of regular correspondence. Speaking during a visit to the Diwan of Ali Mubarak Al-Shatti, Shatti explained that the agency also introduced e-signatures for various e-correspondences. "Kuwait is steadily digitalizing its various government systems and citizens' services," he added, noting that the agency also provides e-payment services through an online portal.

11th GCC PR forum

Kuwait PR Society Chairman Jamal Al-Nasrallah said as part of the society's strategy, it recently took part in the 11th GCC PR forum held in Bahrain, where it was honored by the forum secretary general and Bahrain PR Society Chairman Fahd Al-Shahabi and the head of the forum's jury panel Sultan Al-Bazee.

KIA may move property department to Kuwait

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: KIA is currently considering moving the private property department at London investment office to Kuwait, where KIA would be responsible for managing all investment funds directly. Notably, investments less than \$1 billion were usually managed by the London office, while larger investments had to be run by the KIA office in Kuwait.

PAAET teaching staff

The PAAET teaching staff syndicate hailed efforts exerted by Director Ali Al-Mudhaf in ending the problem of delays in the payment of their overtime dues. Syndicate Chairman Sulaiman Al-Sowaitt said dues of 2016-2017's first semester had been sent to bank accounts and stressed that procedures to pay the second semester dues are underway.

Canceling subsidies

MoCI rejected the food and nutrition authority's demand to cancel subsidies on some food items on grounds that subsidizing such items helps control their prices and keeps inflation at certain levels. Notably, the food and nutrition authority had urged MoCI to gradually cancel subsidizing some supply goods such as sugar – for health reasons – noting that gradual reduction of the 2-kg monthly sugar rations per citizen, except for children below two years old, will help reduce sugar intake. However, informed sources said MoCI rejected the proposal after studying it out of fear of possible negative impacts, such as unjustified price increases in local markets.

Excellent incentives

Deputy PM and FM Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah said the total sums paid as excellent performance incentives to non-Kuwaiti employees in the period from Jan 2013 until March 22, 2018 is KD 325,000, in addition to KD 10,000 in overtime and KD 767,000 for official missions. Responding to an inquiry by MP Hamdan Al-Azmi concerning non-Kuwaiti employees working for the ministry and its subsidiary bodies, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled said the total number of non-Kuwaiti employees at the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development is only 53, receiving a total of KD 80,000 in salaries. Meanwhile, the public authority for the disabled completed listing employees deserving the excellent performance bonus for the previous fiscal year and sent it to the finance ministry for approval. The authority added that around 1,000 employees deserve the bonus – a total of KD 800,000 to KD 1,000,000.

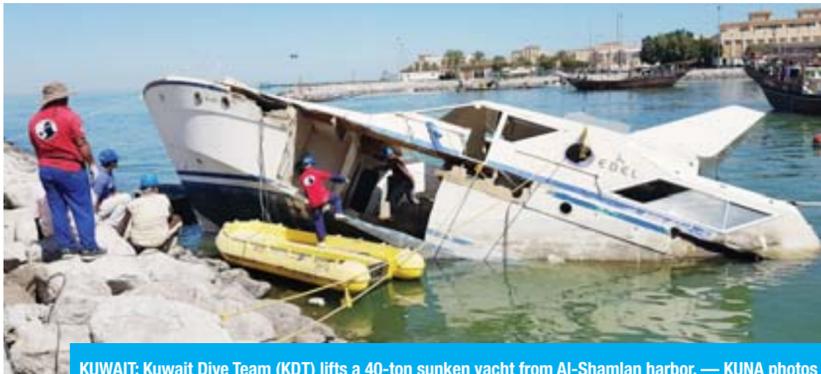
Diving Team removes a sunken yacht from Al-Shamlan harbor

Fishermen urged to stop throwing harmful waste in the harbor

KUWAIT: Kuwait Dive Team (KDT) affiliated with the Environmental Voluntary Foundation (EVF), lifted a 40-ton sunken yacht from Al-Shamlan harbor in cooperation with Kuwait Municipality, Kuwait Ports Authority (KPA), Environment Public Authority (EPA), Kuwait Fishermen Federation and Souk Sharq Administration. "The yacht sank three years ago and caused a ship docking inside Al-Shamlan harbor, which is dangerous to navigation and causing water pollution in the area", head of maritime operations at the team Waleed Al-Shatti said yesterday.

The team received guidance from government authorities to retrieve the yacht, as the team's submarines pulled out the wrecks. They faced many difficulties because of the remnants of fishing nets, ropes, debris of broken ships, and mud deposits at the bottom of the site, he added. He explained that the team used tools to break the yacht into parts to facilitate the task of extraction and then use air bags to float the remaining parts of the yacht and pulled it out of water by crane.

He pointed out that the Al-Shamlan harbor still suffers from a large number of mud residues at the bottom, despite a cleaning campaign launched sev-



KUWAIT: Kuwait Dive Team (KDT) lifts a 40-ton sunken yacht from Al-Shamlan harbor. — KUNA photos

eral years ago by Kuwait Ports Authority (KPA), calling for more efforts to remove the sunken ships from the area to avoid more damage to the marine life. He called on fishermen to stop throwing harm-

ful waste in the harbor which is characterized as an old historical location that reflects the Kuwaiti marine activity and a beautiful seafront in the capital of Kuwait. — KUNA



KFAED, Pakistan ink KD 4.5 million loan

KUWAIT: Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) yesterday signed a KD 4.5-million (\$15 million) loan agreement with Pakistan to finance the Golan Gul hydroelectric project. The Project aims at meeting the electric power demand in the North West Frontier Province by developing Golan Gul Hydroelectric Power Project. The Project is located on the Golan Gol River - a tributary of Mastuj River, at about 25 km from Chitral city, said KFAED in a statement.

The Project consists of the construction of diversion weir and its related structures at Golan Gol River, one km upstream of Babukah village, construction of gravel trap, sedimentation basin, an open channel and a tunnel for diverting the river water to the powerhouse. It also includes the manufacture, supply, installation and commissioning of three Hydel generating units with total capacity of about 106 MW and their auxiliary equipment. The project also includes the manufacture, supply, installation/construction and commissioning of a 132 kV transmission line to connect the power plant to the national grid. It pointed out that the implementation of the project began at the end of 2008 and is expected to be completed by the end of this year.

The loan is the 18th of its kind provided by the Fund to Pakistan, which has already provided 17 loans totaling KD 125.3 million (about \$417 million) to finance projects from various sectors. The loan agreement was signed on behalf of Kuwait's Fund, by Deputy Director-General Ghanem Al-Ghunaiman and by Undersecretary of the Economic Affairs Sector at the Ministry of Finance of Pakistan, Ghonafar Jilani, on behalf of Pakistan. The Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development was established on December 31, 1961, aiming at providing and managing financial and technical assistance to Arab and developing countries in support of Kuwait's foreign policy and strengthening its global standing. — KUNA

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17 killed in clashes between UN and militia in C African capital

As divisions widen, role of Yemen's president in doubt



PARIS: A handout picture provided by the Saudi Royal Palace shows French President Emmanuel Macron (C) posing for a picture with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (L) and Lebanon's Prime Minister Saad Hariri during an official dinner at The Elysee Palace. —AFP

Will Saudi Crown Prince reform Wahhabism?

MBS currently in Europe as part of a drive to woo the West

PARIS: Saudi Arabia's crown prince has pushed to curb the power of hardline clerics and prominent sheikhs who promote the kingdom's uncompromising version of Islam but analysts warn that moderating the exportation of Wahhabism could be more difficult. Currently in Europe as part of a drive to woo the West, Mohammed bin Salman has recognized his country's association with Wahhabism is a problem and moved to impose a more open form of Islam.

The draconian religious ideology has been accused of fuelling intolerance and global terrorism. Dozens of conservative Saudi religious figures have been detained under a crackdown initiated by the prince. But when asked last month about his decision to break away from the Wahhabists, MBS, as he is often called, denied they even existed. "What's Wahhabist?", the 32-year-old said in an interview with Time magazine. "There is nothing called Wahhabist."

In a separate interview, he indicated the spread of Wahhabism was a consequence of the West asking Saudi Arabia to use its resources in Muslim countries to counter the Soviet Union during the Cold War. "I believe Islam is sensible, Islam is simple, and

people are trying to hijack it," he told The Washington Post last month, while admitting Saudi governments had lost track of how resources were used abroad.

'There is no Wahhabism'

The prince's public relations exercise to promote moderate Islam and encourage global investment is now backed up by the Muslim World League, often regarded as a diplomatic arm of the kingdom and heavily funded by Saudi petrodollars. "For us, there is no Wahhabism. There is an Islam, full stop," said secretary general Mohammed Al-Issa in Paris in November.

The shift from supporting a decades-long policy of a virulently anti-Western ideology, viewed by some as a basis for jihadism, has been welcomed in many European countries, but analysts warn they need to take independent action too. "At no time

have I heard MBS say he will put a stop to money transfers by private operators or charities supporting these retrograde versions of Islam," said Michael Privot, director of the European Network Against Racism. In Belgium, the government terminated Saudi Arabia's half-century old lease of the Grand Mosque in Brussels last month over concerns it was promoting radicalism. It had been run by the Muslim World League.

Belgian politicians accused the mosque of promoting a "Salafi-Wahhabi" form of Islam that was suspected of "playing a very significant role in violent radicalism". The move came after a number of jihadist attacks, including bombings at Brussels airport and a city metro station that killed 32 people in March 2016. France and Germany have also shut mosques suspected of radicalising and encouraging young Muslims to travel to war zones including Syria and Iraq.

Power of clerics

"It was symbolically necessary to take the keys of the Grand Mosque (in Brussels) from Saudi Arabia. They had to show that 'no, we do not accept this version of Islam'," said Privot. Even though the management of the mosque is changing, he warns that "everything else is still there: the publishing houses, websites and TV channels."

Senior Wahhabi clerics' teachings broadcast online have endorsed beheadings for offences that include apostasy, adultery and sorcery, while also opposing women's right to drive or work. "Social networks play an infinitely more important role than institutional channels, especially among everyday believers", said Nabil Mouline, a political scientist in Paris. "Wahhabism stands out as the new orthodoxy. It will take years or even decades to deconstruct it," he said.

The former Muslim faith advisor to the French interior ministry, Bernard Godard, noted the apparently reformist steps MBS has taken but was also cautious. "The survival of the Saudi political-religious system is based on the alliance of the clerics with the throne," he said. "MBS can not completely cut the cord." —AFP

“ I believe Islam is sensible, Islam is simple ”

Hunger games: Modi to fast as politics gets gutsy

NEW DELHI: India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi will lead a day-long fast today in a tit-for-tat protest against the opposition, whose leaders were caught feasting moments before they launched their own hunger strike. The rival protests are part of growing showdown between Modi's ruling nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and its arch-rival Congress party ahead of a looming national election.

Both sides have suffered social media ridicule over their fasts. Congress organized a five-hour hunger strike on Monday in a pre-emptive move against a BJP plan for its fast today. But the party was left red-faced after photos of senior leaders tucking into chickpea curry served with a savory dough circulated on social media right before the fast.

Congress faced sarcastic comments on Twitter, while the BJP called their protest a "joke". With Modi set to lead today's protest, the BJP has reportedly issued strict rules to its lawmakers, including a ban on eating at public places or being photographed nosing on treats before Thursday. It is also shooing away street food vendors from the protest venue in New Delhi, according to the Mail Today daily.

Congress has called the BJP's plans "a farce of a fast". The BJP has said it will reject food for a day to show anger at the disruption of parliamentary business by Congress. Parliament



NEW DELHI: An Indian visitor takes a selfie with a waxwork of Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Madame Tussauds Delhi. —AFP

sessions are regularly suspended amid unruly shouting matches. Modi will fast to expose Congress's "undemocratic style of functioning and pursuing divisive politics and [an] anti-development agenda". Modi, a strictly observant Hindu and teetotal vegetarian, routinely fasts every year for the Navratri festival—a nine day ritual when he only takes liquids during daylight hours. In a 2012 blog, Modi called his annual fast "an act of self-purification". —AFP

House Speaker Ryan will not seek reelection

WASHINGTON: The top Republican in the US House of Representatives, Paul Ryan, has decided to retire when his term ends, casting his party into a leadership fight ahead of crucial mid-term elections. The bombshell was delivered by the speaker's counselor, Brendan Buck, who said Ryan would not seek re-election in November.

"This morning Speaker Ryan shared with his colleagues that this will be his last year as a member of the House. "He will serve out his full term, run through the tape, and then retire in January," Buck said in a statement. Ryan, who reluctantly assumed the House leadership in 2015 and never fully embraced President Donald Trump, has given no sign of his future political ambitions. Trump paid tribute to Ryan as "a truly good man."

"While he will not be seeking re-election, he will leave a legacy of achievement that nobody can

question. We are with you Paul!" the president tweeted following the announcement. Buck said the 48-year-old congressman from Wisconsin was looking forward to spending more time with his young family. "After nearly twenty years in the House, the speaker is proud of all that has been accomplished and is ready to devote more of his time to being a husband and a father," Buck said. "While he did not seek the position, he told his colleagues that serving as speaker has been the professional honor of his life, and he thanked them for the trust they placed in him."

Chuck Schumer, the top Democrat in the US Senate, praised Ryan as "a good man who is always true to his word." He expressed hope that in his remaining time in Congress, Ryan would "break free from the hard-right factions of his caucus that have kept Congress from getting real things done. "If he's willing to reach across the aisle, he'll find Democrats willing and eager to work with him." Ryan's decision sets up a fight for the Republican leadership in the House, with majority leader Kevin McCarthy and majority whip Steve Scalise seen as the top contenders for the speakership. —AFP

International

Zuckerberg says his own data was shared by Cambridge Analytica

Facebook CEO repeatedly defends company's privacy practices

WASHINGTON/SAN FRANCISCO: Mark Zuckerberg yesterday told lawmakers that he was among the 87 million or so Facebook Inc users whose data was improperly shared with political consultancy Cambridge Analytica. But the chief executive of the world's largest social media network pushed back on Congress members' suggestions that users do not have enough control of their data on Facebook. "Every time that someone chooses to share something on Facebook ... there is a control. Right there. Not buried in the settings somewhere but right there," the 33-year-old Internet billionaire told the US House of Representatives Energy and Commerce Committee.



Facebook shares up after dips

Zuckerberg's admission that his own data made its way into the hands of Cambridge Analytica laid bare that even the company's technologically adept founder was unable to protect his own information from parties seeking to exploit it. That underscores the problem Facebook has in persuading lawmakers that users can safeguard their own information if they carefully manage their personal settings and that further legislation governing Facebook's use of data is unnecessary. "How can consumers have control over their data when Facebook does not have control over the data?" asked Representative Frank Pallone of New Jersey, the ranking Democrat on the Energy and Commerce committee, at the beginning of the hearing. Wearing a dark suit and tie and prefacing almost every remark with "Congressman" or "Congresswoman", Zuckerberg repeatedly defended the company's privacy practices, saying that users have control over their own data and decide what to share. But when asked if his data had been improperly used he replied: "Yes." He gave no further details.

Inevitable regulation

Zuckerberg was on Capitol Hill for the second time in two days to answer questions about data privacy in the wake of revelations last month that mil-

lions of users' personal information was wrongly harvested from the website by Cambridge Analytica, a political consultancy that has counted US President Donald Trump's election campaign among its clients. The latest estimate of affected users is up to 87 million.

The data was improperly shared with Cambridge Analytica by an academic who gathered data on users and their friends through a questionnaire app on Facebook. Facebook has since shut off the ability of apps to gather such data, but Zuckerberg said yesterday it will take "many months" to complete an audit of other apps to determine if they also improperly used data. The House hearing followed a five-hour questioning by US Senators on Tuesday, in which Zuckerberg made no

further promises to support new legislation or change how the social network does business.

Facebook shares were up 1.2 percent yesterday after dips earlier in the day. They posted their biggest daily gain in nearly two years on Tuesday as Zuckerberg managed to deter any specific discussion about new regulations that might hamper Facebook's ability to sell ads tailored to users' profiles. "It is inevitable that there will need to be some regulation" of Internet firms, Zuckerberg said yesterday, but he again steered away from any specifics.

Some lawmakers grew frustrated at their limit of four minutes each to press Zuckerberg on specifics, and chastised the billionaire at times for offering up rehearsed platitudes about valuing user privacy. "I can't let you filibuster right now," Republican Representative Marsha Blackburn said at one point.

She cut Zuckerberg off a number of times. Bobby Rush, an Illinois Democratic congressman, was in the process of asking Zuckerberg when he learned that Facebook allowed advertisers to prevent ads from being shown to certain minority groups, a possible violation of civil rights laws. He was cut off. —Reuters



WASHINGTON: Facebook founder and CEO Mark Zuckerberg arrives to testify during a Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee and Senate Judiciary Committee joint hearing about Facebook on Capitol Hill. —AFP

Trump can fire Russia prosecutor Mueller

WASHINGTON: The White House insisted Tuesday that Donald Trump has the power to fire special prosecutor Robert Mueller, stoking fears that the president may try to kill an investigation inching ever-closer to the Oval Office. After months of denying Mueller's removal is under consideration, the change in tone came as Trump reacted furiously to an FBI raid of his private lawyer's offices on Monday.

Special counsel Mueller was appointed in May to investigate Russian efforts to tip the 2016 presidential election in Trump's favor. Over the last year, he has increasingly dug into evidence of alleged money laundering, fraud and obstruction of justice inside Trump's inner circle. Four Trump aides—including his 2016 campaign chair Paul Manafort and former national security advisor Michael

Flynn—have already been indicted or pleaded guilty. Now, Trump's longtime lawyer Michael Cohen—who holds secrets about many of the president's personal and financial dealings—is in the crosshairs. "We have been advised that the president certainly has the power to make that decision," White House spokeswoman Sarah Sanders said of the possibility to remove Mueller. "I think that the president has been clear that he thinks that this has gone too far." Trump hunkered down at the White House, canceling a first trip to Latin America that was due to start Friday and stewing on a move that could throw America into a constitutional crisis. At the same time, Trump faced a momentous decision about whether to carry out military strikes in Syria.

Trump has pledged to decide by the end of Tuesday how to respond to a suspected chemical weapons attack in the rebel-held suburbs of Damascus, blamed on the Syrian regime and its allies. But while much of his national security team debated whether strikes would be effective in deterring future chemical attacks, and how to limit the risk of escalation, Trump met his lawyers Jay Sekulow and Ty Cobb to discuss the Cohen raid. —AFP

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<p>From 12 to 14.04.2018 0.495 / 0.295 Carrot (Australia) per kg</p>	<p>From 12 to 14.04.2018 0.195 / 0.095 Onion (India) per kg</p>	<p>From 11 to 17.04.2018 1.295 / 0.995 Grapes Red (South Africa) per kg</p>	<p>From 12 to 14.04.2018 1.395 / 0.995 Pomegranate (India) per kg</p>	<p>From 11 to 14.04.2018 0.225 / 0.165 Watermelon (Egypt) per kg</p>
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International

17 killed in clashes between UN and militia in C African capital

'Here are the dead, which we have brought here'

BANGUI: Seventeen people and a UN peacekeeper were killed Tuesday in clashes in a Muslim enclave of Bangui, capital of the Central African Republic (CAR), in the city's bloodiest flare up in years. Hundreds of angry residents of the PK5 district gathered yesterday outside the headquarters of the United Nations mission in CAR, called MINUSCA, where they laid out the corpses of 17 men who they said had been killed by peacekeepers. Several bodies bore bullet wounds, an AFP reporter saw.

"Yesterday they killed lots of people. Here are the dead, which we have brought here," one man told AFP, as the bodies, draped in white, were laid before the closed door of the mission. Several UN armored vehicles were stationed around the MINUSCA base. A security source late Tuesday said a UN soldier was killed and eight were wounded in the violence, which came when their patrol was ambushed on the outskirts of the neighborhood.

According to the aid group Doctors Without Borders (MSF), 46 civilians were also injured. "A Rwandan patrol supported by Central African forces was shot at and then pursued the attackers into PK5," the security source told AFP. The clashes marked the bloodiest incident in Bangui since President Faustin-Archange Touadera was elected in 2016 — an event showcased as a turning-point in one of the world's most chronically unstable countries.

"When President Touadera was on the campaign trail, he promised us that he would not touch a hair on a

Muslim's head if we voted for him, which we did. Now you can see the results," said one of the demonstrators, who gave his name as Riyad. The former French colony of 4.5 million people spiralled into bloodshed after long-time leader Francois Bozize was overthrown in 2013 by the mainly Muslim Seleka rebel alliance.

France intervened militarily to push out the Seleka alliance, but the country — one of the poorest in the world — remains plagued by violence between ex-rebels and vigilante militias. Many armed groups are nominally organised along Christian or Muslim affiliations. But they typically gain their revenue from extortion, road-blocks or mineral resources. The PK5 district was once a Muslim

rebel bastion, but it is now home to several criminal groups who have taken advantage of the weakness of the state. Touadera's government can claim to control just a fifth of the country, with the rest in the hands of militias. The UN recently threatened to dismantle all the armed groups' bases in PK5 unless they hand over their weapons, according to sources. A series of clashes began on April 1, when UN peacekeepers on patrol in PK5 came under attack and returned fire. A security sweep that began in the area on Sunday led to the deaths of two people, with 60 others injured, and was followed by Tuesday's bloodshed.

The UN's under-secretary general for peacekeeping operations, Jean-Pierre Lacroix, and the African Union's commissioner for peace and security, Smail Chergui, issued a joint statement yesterday appealing for calm.

They laid out the corpses of 17 men



BANGUI: Residents of the mainly Muslim PK5 neighborhood carry bodies of victims of the April 10 clashes during a demonstration in front of the headquarters of MINUSCA, the UN peacekeeping mission in the Central African Republic. — AFP

The two arrived in Bangui on Tuesday on a visit aimed at promoting peacemaking goals in the troubled country. The AU last July agreed to launch an "African peace initiative" for CAR, consisting of a round table gathering armed groups and the government.

It had finished off a round of exploratory talks with

militia groups on April 1 — a week before the escalation in PK5. In Paris, the French foreign ministry issued a statement saying it condemned "with the greatest firmness the attacks and violence" against MINUSCA and CAR forces. Their joint operation consisted of "dismantling and arresting criminal groups" in the PK5, it said. — AFP

Colombia's FARC furious over ex-rebel's arrest on US drugs charges

BOGOTA: The arrest of a former FARC negotiator on US drug charges has brought Colombia's landmark peace deal to its "most critical point," the former rebel group warned on Tuesday. Jesus Santrich, a senior member of rebel-group-turned-political-party who had been slated to take a seat in Colombia's Congress in July, was arrested on Monday in Bogota.

Prosecutors in New York accuse him of conspiring to ship 10,000 kilograms of cocaine to the United States while serving as a senior member of the FARC leadership. They are pushing for his extradition along with three others who are also allied with the group. The partially-sighted 51-year-old, whose real name is Seusis Pausivas Hernandez, was a member of the FARC's peace negotiating team in Cuba, with the group warning his arrest posed a "genuine threat" to the deal. Government peace commissioner Rodrigo Rivera also said the agreement was facing its "most grave, most serious and most delicate" challenge. US prosecutors allege that between June 2017 and April 2018, the four worked together to produce and distribute approximately 10,000 kilograms of cocaine from Colombia to the States and elsewhere.

'Twisted US justice'

"These defendants conspired to ship thousands of kilograms of cocaine from Colombia to the streets of the US," said Manhattan attorney Geoffrey S. Berman in a statement, which identified the other three as Marlon Marin, 39, Armando Gomez, 70, and Fabio Younes Arboleda, 72. "They are now under arrest and face significant criminal charges." All four are facing one count of conspiring to import cocaine, and two counts of attempting to import it into the US. If convicted, they could face life behind bars.

Santrich's arrest was swiftly denounced by the FARC, with a spokesman warning it could deal a damaging blow to the 2016 peace deal. "With the capture of our comrade Jesus Santrich, the peace process is now at its most critical point, faced by a genuine threat," C said in a statement. The group accused Colombia's prosecutors of colluding with a plan "orchestrated by the US government" describing it as yet another display of "twisted US justice." But Marquez also called for calm, urging supporters "not to be provoked." The arrest was also denounced by the ELN, Colombia's last active rebel group, which said the move was "a slap in the face for the agreements made with FARC." Although the FARC's leaders have ruled out any return to the conflict, there are fears that many former rebels could take up arms again.

Pivotal situation

Speaking to AFP, Colombian Senator Ivan Cepeda, who acted as a consultant for the Cuba talks, agreed the situation was on a knife-edge. "A false accusation could be very serious, even devastating and a threat to the peace process with FARC, but if it is true, it will be a lesson," he said. "There is absolutely no chance that the victims or the state will put up with being mocked if this really is a case of drug trafficking." Under the peace accord, repentant FARC fighters were required to confess their wartime crimes and pay reparations to victims to avoid jail. But they could still be arrested for any crimes they committed after the deal. Despite the November 2016 peace agreement signed between the FARC and Santos's government, which ended half a century of bloodshed, the conflict still drags on parts of the country, financed by drug money. — AFP

Myanmar minister makes landmark visit to Rohingya camp

KUTUPALONG: A Myanmar minister yesterday toured one of the Bangladesh camps struggling to provide for some one million Rohingya Muslims, the first such visit since a Myanmar army crackdown sparked a massive refugee crisis. Social welfare minister Win Myat Aye met with Rohingya leaders at the giant Kutupalong camp near the border city of Cox's Bazar, where a group of refugees tried to stage a protest during his visit. It is the first time a Myanmar cabinet member has visited the fetid and overcrowded camps since a military crackdown that began last August in response to a spate of insurgent attacks forced some 700,000 of the Muslim minority to flee across the border. They added to the 300,000 Rohingya refugees already in Bangladesh after previous bouts of violence.

'We cleared them out'

An official said a group of refugees were prevented from unfurling a banner detailing a list of demands from the Rohingya. "We cleared them out," said Nikaruzzaman, a senior government official at nearby Ukhia township, who goes by one name. A Rohingya leader, Abdur Rahim, said protests were held in roughly a dozen locations timed with the minister's visit.

Win Myat Aye met with some 30 Rohingya community leaders and was briefed on the situation in the sprawling refugee camps by Bangladeshi and United Nations officials, he added. The minister declined to answer questions from reporters after the briefing. The leaders from the displaced minority group handed a statement to the Myanmar minister saying "it was not safe for them to return".

Bangladesh and Myanmar signed an agreement in November to repatriate some 750,000 refugees. Myanmar has approved several hundred Rohingya from a list of thousands to go back, but so far, not a single one has returned. "The military is still abusing the Rohingya population in Arakan, there are many restrictions on Rohingya who still live there," the statement said, using a local name for Myanmar's westernmost Rakhine state. "There has been no punishment for soldiers and security officers who committed abuses," it

S Africa bids emotional farewell to Mandela

SOWETO: Thousands of mourners flocked yesterday to the heart of South Africa's sprawling Soweto township, a centre of anti-apartheid resistance, to pay tribute to Nelson Mandela's former wife and struggle hero Winnie Mandela. Her grandson Bambatha Mandela described Winnie, who died on April 2 after a long illness, as "an extraordinary woman, a mother, a soldier, a fighter".

"Even at 81 (she) was one person I thought would live forever," he said in an emotional tribute. "I had the privilege of being the first grandchild they could raise after (Nelson Mandela) returned from prison." The choice of Soweto's 37,000-capacity Orlando stadium for both the memorial service and the full state funeral planned for Saturday was highly symbolic. Unlike many struggle-era leaders who moved from townships like Soweto to formerly white suburbs after apartheid fell, Winnie Mandela remained embedded in the community where she met



UKHIA: Myanmar Social Welfare Minister Win Myat Aye (L) talks to Rohingya refugees during his visit to the Kutupalong refugee camp. — AFP

continued.

The Rohingya have faced decades of persecution in Myanmar but the most recent crackdown has forced them to flee in unprecedented numbers. The UN and United States have called Myanmar's treatment of the Rohingya in the past eight months "ethnic cleansing".

Fear of return

Syed Ullah, a Rohingya community leader who met the minister, said the group were upset that Win Myat Aye referred to them as "Bangladeshis". "We showed my parents' national verification card, saying that they are Rohingya who lived in Myanmar. Yet the minister said I'm a Bangladeshi. That's completely illogical," he said. Myanmar does not regard the Rohingya as citizens but as illegal immigrants from Bangladesh. Rahim, the community leader, said the minister offered the Rohingya a residency status akin to that given to foreign migrants. "We demanded full citizenship," Rahman said, adding the Rohingya leaders outlined a detailed

list of preconditions for their return. "But the minister quietly disagreed."

Win Myat Aye is the deputy head of a task force led by Myanmar's de facto civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi on the crisis in Rakhine state, and has overseen the stalled agreement with Bangladesh to repatriate three-quarters of a million refugees. Nikaruzzaman, the Bangladeshi official, said the Myanmar minister delivered a speech saying he wanted "to see the conditions of the Rohingya".

Win Myat Aye still has two days left in Bangladesh where he will meet with the country's senior officials including Foreign Minister A.H. Mahmood Ali in the capital Dhaka today. Many displaced Muslims have said they fear a repeat of the persecution that forced them off their lands if they go back under the repatriation deal. Refugees are demanding recognition as a minority, access to health and education and an assurance they can return to their ancestral villages rather than being shunted into resettlement camps in Rakhine. — AFP

Nelson Mandela at a bus stop in 1957. "She could have gone to the suburbs like many of us did, but she chose not to," Bambatha said. "I don't think I want to wake up alongside my enemies," he remembered her as saying. Sunshine broke through a dense cloud cover over Soweto during multi-faith prayers, while outside the stadium a motorcycle club sporting African National Congress (ANC) colors arrived at the stadium to pay their respects.

'Fighting spirit'

The Soweto Gospel Choir sang several rousing numbers which prompted mourners to stand and dance beside their plastic foldaway seats. "Long live the fighting spirit of Mama Winnie Madikizela-Mandela," and "Viva Soweto!" cried the master of ceremonies to spirited chanting from the crowd. "Every time we met Mrs. Mandela, she'd tell wonderful stories, she was like no other," church leader John Moletsane told AFP as he made his way to the ceremony. "Everyone wanted to meet her. When we'd see her at an event, we'd know it would be great. "She would tell you about how to build the future and not look to the past. I don't know where South Africa would be without her — no one can fill her space." A handful of mourners inside the stadium wore the red of the radical opposition Economic Freedom Fighters party, which Winnie Mandela grew close to in later life. The ANC's signature green, yellow and black adorned mourners' shirts and flags and women's

head-wraps. Rita Ndzanga, a frail former anti-apartheid fighter who was detained alongside Winnie Mandela, drew rapturous cheers from the crowd as she spoke about their experiences. "I remember when we were arrested in our fight against pass laws for women," she said, describing how they were both breastfeeding at the time.

As well as numerous ministers, religious leaders and family members, George Bizos, an anti-apartheid icon who was close friends with Nelson Mandela, also attended. He sat alongside at least 100 VIP delegates on a black stage decorated with bright yellow and white flowers and flanked by two big screens. The stadium burst into song with a spirited rendition of struggle-era song "Mabayeke umhlaba wethu" meaning "Let them return our land" — a reference to the colonial and apartheid-era dispossession of non-white people. Mananki Joyce Seipei, the mother of a boy whose kidnapping Winnie was convicted of in 1991, was reportedly encouraged by the ANC to attend yesterday's event. She told local media she was "very sad to hear that Winnie is no more because she and I had made peace". Winnie Mandela was found guilty of kidnapping Stompie Moeketsi, a 14-year-old boy who was then beaten to death by her bodyguards in her home in 1988. She was also accused of running a mafia-style gang responsible for multiple murders and beatings in Soweto, and of endorsing "necklacing" — killing suspected informers with burning tires put over their heads. — AFP

International

As divisions widen, role of Yemen's president in doubt

Hadi is increasingly seen as a marginal figure

DUBAI: Yemen's president holds court with top diplomats, dispatches letters of condolence or congratulations, and presides over periodic meetings with aides. He sometimes grants television interviews. But after three years of gilded exile in Riyadh, whose military coalition has yet to roll back his Houthi rebel rivals, President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi is increasingly seen as a marginal figure—and even by some as an obstacle to peace.

The Saudi-led alliance was launched in March 2015 with the goal of pushing back the Iran-allied Houthis, who seized control of much of the country including the capital Sanaa, and restoring the internationally recognized government to power. The conflict has left nearly 10,000 people dead and tens of thousands wounded, creating what the United Nations says is the worst humanitarian crisis in the world. Now entering its fourth year, the coalition has shown signs of internal division, with some questioning the utility of Hadi to their cause.



Signs of internal division

Embodiment of government

Hadi is the embodiment of Yemen's internationally recognized government. He was appointed president in 2012 as part of a political deal that saw his predecessor Ali Abdullah Saleh cede power after months of street protests. When the Shiite Houthis overran Sanaa in late 2014, Hadi was forced to flee the capital, going first to the southern city of Aden—then into exile in Riyadh. While the United Nations has since recognized Hadi as Yemen's president that has not fazed the Houthis or even coalition member the United Arab Emirates, which in recent months torpedoed Hadi's authority in the southern port city of Aden.

In January, southern separatists backed by Abu Dhabi attacked pro-Hadi forces in Aden, overrunning the city,

The government was forced to hunker down until Saudi and Emirati envoys arrived, in a visit publicized in UAE state media, to quell the infighting. That showdown was the manifestation of the UAE's exasperation with Hadi, viewed as incompetent and too close to the Muslim Brotherhood, analysts say.

The Emirates and Britain, which backs the coalition both diplomatically and with arms, are in favor of a shuffle in the government camp, according to regional sources close to the process. While aware of their Yemeni ally's shortcomings, the Saudis have made restoration of the government their mission. The United States, which provide weapons, intelligence and aerial refueling to the Saudi-led coalition, also sees Hadi as key to an eventual accord.

"At the end of the day Hadi, for all of his failings, represents something very important if we want to reach a political solution in Yemen," a senior US official told AFP on condition of anonymity. "The way the Emiratis are acting in the south is complicating the task of reaching a political solution. It's only perpetuating the problem of Yemen which is the militias, and armed groups," said the official. The tensions with the southern separatists, and ever-present threats from Al-Qaeda and Islamic State group jihadists, mean Hadi's ministers cannot govern from the city they once declared their temporary capital.

Plan B

The spokesman of the Hadi government, Rajeh Badi, told AFP "the majority of ministers are spending the bulk of their time in Aden". But most of those ministers are from Yemen's formerly independent south. Ministers who hail from northern Yemen work mainly from Riyadh. They include Foreign Minister Abdel Malek al-Mikhlafi, who makes periodic visits to the government



ADEN: In this file photo taken on November 02, 2016 a poster bearing a portrait of Saudi-backed Yemeni President Abd Rabbo Mansour Hadi and text reading in Arabic "We are all Hadi" is seen as thousands of Yemenis demonstrate in the southern port city of Aden. —AFP

stronghold of Marib in central Yemen, as well as Vice President Ali Mohsen Al-Ahmar who has difficult relations with the separatists.

Hadi has not stepped foot in Yemen for about a year, while two of his ministers quit in March accusing Saudi Arabia of controlling his movements. In a September 2017 interview with Saudi-owned Al-Arabiya TV on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly, Hadi said a military solution was "the most likely" to force an end to conflict. But Yemeni political circles are increasingly looking for a way out—floating

a Plan B—aimed at fostering a political process in the war-torn country.

Hadi would keep his "ceremonial" role as the head of state, but in effect be replaced by a political figure from the north—an executive vice-president capable of negotiating an accord with the northern Houthi rebels. Hadi will inevitably remain a key figure in the process solely by virtue of his position as Yemen's internationally recognized president and head of Yemen's internationally recognized government," said Adam Baron, a fellow at the European Council on Foreign Relations. —AFP

Gazan who says was shot in sniper video denies posing threat

KHAN YUNIS, Palestinian Territories: A Palestinian who says he was shot by an Israeli sniper along the Gaza border said yesterday he was posing no threat to soldiers at the time, after a video of the incident went viral. The footage filmed from the Israeli side of the border fence, which included rejoicing after the shooting, was shared widely online and by the media earlier this week.

It led to further scrutiny of Israel's open-fire rules along the Gaza border. Israel's defense minister praised the sniper, but criticized the soldier who filmed the incident. Israel's military alleged that the soldier opened fire after rioting by Palestinians and warnings from soldiers. Tamer Abu Daqqa, 28, said he recognized himself in the video, which was filmed on December 22 in southern Gaza, particularly due to the red jacket he was wearing.

AFP could not independently verify Abu Daqqa's claim, but separate footage from that day shows him in hospital after being shot in his leg, which is still in plaster four months after the incident. Abu Daqqa said he had thrown stones at Israeli soldiers over the border during the day, but denied being armed or posing any threat at the time of the gunshot. "When they shot me I was not throwing stones. I was yelling to friends near the fence to leave and go back to our homes," he told AFP at his home in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip.

The incident took place during protests along the Gaza border sparked by US President Donald Trump's controversial recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital, which infuriated Palestinians and led to clashes. The Palestinians consider the eastern part of Jerusalem as the capital of their future state. In the footage of the incident, voices can be heard discussing opening fire on Palestinians walking on the other side of the border fence.

A soldier then opens fire on one of the Palestinians, knocking the person to the ground. "Wow. What a video! Yes! That son of a bitch," one of the voices behind the camera exclaims in Hebrew. Israel's military on Tuesday confirmed the authenticity of the video, but alleged the shooting followed riots and warnings from troops. It said a



KHAN YUNIS: Tamer Abu Daqqa, a Palestinian who says he was shot by an Israeli sniper along the Gaza border during a protest, walks with crutches outside his home. —AFP

single bullet was fired toward the Palestinian "suspected of organizing and leading this incident while he was a few meters from the fence," wounding him in the leg. "In the video they say they killed me," said Abu Daqqa. "The sniper failed. I was only injured."

'If they were men'

The video came at a highly sensitive time for Israel's military, which has faced mounting criticism over its use of live fire along the Gaza Strip border, where 31 Palestinians have been killed since late March as mass protests have led to clashes. Hundreds of others have been wounded. There have been no Israeli casualties. The European Union, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and others have called for an independent investigation into the deaths, which included a journalist.

Israel has rejected the calls, saying its forces have

opened fire to stop attempts to damage the fence, infiltrations, bids to carry out attacks and at those seeking to harm soldiers. It accuses Hamas, with whom it has fought three wars since 2008, of seeking to use the protests as cover for violence. The Abu Daqqa video, though it dates from several months earlier, led to fresh questions about Israel's rules of engagement.

The Israeli human rights organization B'Tselem said earlier this week that shooting incidents similar to what is seen in the video have "occurred hundreds of times over the past few weeks in the Gaza Strip, causing death and injuries." Abu Daqqa said the video showed the Israelis were "terrorists." "In the video they laugh at me and insult me. If they were men they would face me without weapons as I faced them," he said. "I will continue to demonstrate for our land and our rights even if they injure me in every part of my body." —AFP

Fighting fake news on the front line

VANCOUVER: Olga Yurkova has spent years fighting fake news on the front line. The Ukrainian journalist and colleagues weighed into the battle with a StopFake.org website after Russian soldiers entered Crimea under cover and their country appeared to become a testing lab for using bogus stories to manipulate public opinion.

"We needed to do something to respond to fakes, to explain what is true and what is false," Yurkova said at the prestigious TED Conference, where she is among the speakers. "There is this huge propaganda machine on the other side with money, professionals and systems powering it, and volunteers on our side. But, we do what we can do." Among stories debunked by StopFake.org was a hotly spreading one about a child of a Russia supporter being crucified in a Ukrainian city. Not only was the inflammatory tale a lie, the square mentioned did not exist.

On Tuesday, the website that Yurkova took part in launching four years ago displayed unmasked bogus tales including a lie about a US senator saying sanctions against Russia don't work. StopFake.org boasted 53,400 fans on Facebook; 25,800 followers on Twitter, and more than 51,000 subscribers.

'Don't just believe'

"Propaganda became a huge problem for Ukraine four years ago," Yurkova said. "When we told the world about this, nobody listened to us. Now, the whole world faces this problem." She believes fake news tactics refined in Ukraine have been aimed at the US, Europe and elsewhere. A longtime journalist, Yurkova was keenly aware of the need to earn people's trust. With the spread of fake news, she saw people lose faith in media of all kinds, as well as in institutions.

The mission at StopFake.org was simple—take news and check it against the facts. "With election meddling in the US and Russian troll farms, the world started to realize the scale of the problem," Yurkova said. "Do your research, don't just believe, is the only way to stop this culture of fake news."

Yurkova conceded that it may be futile trying to get truth to people seeking stories that confirm their biases, but saw hope



VANCOUVER: StopFake.org co-founder Olga Yurkova poses for a photograph after speaking about fighting fake news in the Ukraine at the TED Conference, April 10, 2018. —AFP

in reaching those without entrenched opinions. "We fight for the people in the middle in a polarized world," Yurkova said. "We spread the idea of checking facts." Among simple lessons she shared was that, unfortunately, truth tends to be boring while fake news veers toward dramatic and outrageously emotional "click-bait."

Since fake news is manufactured, it can easily be packed with juicy details. "The propaganda machine spreads trash; we try to wash it away." "It is a really huge machine. It is not just Russian state media, it is private Russian media; useful idiots in different countries who spread misinforma-

tion, and a lot of politicians. And, while Facebook is the website's main source of traffic, it could be time to find a new way for people to communicate given how the social network has been abused by purveyors of fake news, according to Yurkova.

"I can't fix human nature," she said. "The best advice I can give is that when you see something interesting, do something to check whether there is proof it is true. It takes just seconds to Google something." StopFake.org has at its website tools that can be used for checking the authenticity of headlines, photos, videos and news. —AFP

UN quashes radical Serb Seselj's acquittal

THE HAGUE: UN judges yesterday found radical Serb Vojislav Seselj guilty on appeal of crimes against humanity, but the firebrand politician will remain a free man because of time already served behind bars. "The appeals chamber reverses Seselj's acquittals for instigating persecution, deportation and other inhumane acts as crimes against humanity," presiding judge Theodor Meron said at a hearing in The Hague, sentencing the firebrand politician to 10 years behind bars.

The judges however said that in line with the court's rules, "Seselj's sentence has been served" after he spent about 12 years in jail on trial at the former Yugoslavia war crimes court. Seselj snubbed the hearing and was not present when the verdict was read by judges at the Mechanism for International Criminal Tribunals (MICT). He had been acquitted in March 2016 of nine war crimes and crimes against humanity charges after a trial lasting more than eight years at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY).

A three-judge panel led by French judge Jean-Claude Antonetti said in 2016 that prosecutors had "failed to prove beyond all reasonable doubt" or provide sufficient evidence that Seselj was responsible for the crimes he had been charged with. The verdict had been heavily criticized by law experts and historians who said it had rewritten the history of the Balkans conflicts.

'Ignored the evidence'

The five appeals judges agreed yesterday, sharply overturning the original trial's findings. Either the initial court had "ignored a substantial portion of highly relevant evidence and its own findings, or it erred in fact," Meron said. "The appeals chamber finds that no reasonable trier of fact could have concluded that there was no widespread or systematic attack against the non-Serbian population in Croatia and in Bosnia-Herzegovina."

Yesterday's appeal was before the MICT, which is wrapping up the last cases after the ICTY closed in December. During his marathon trial, prosecutors alleged Seselj was behind the murders of scores of Croat, Muslim and other non-Serbs between 1991 and 1993 in the conflicts that tore Yugoslavia apart, after the fall of communism.

The prosecution had sought a 28-year-sentence for the man they referred to as the "chief propagandist of the Greater Serbia". They said he had warned that "rivers of blood" would flow in Bosnia if his vision for a Greater Serbia was opposed. Seselj denied the allegations and in particular making two speeches highlighted by prosecutors in the indictment.

In one address, prosecutors say he encouraged Serbs "not to spare a person" in the 1991 siege of the Croat city of Vukovar. In another a year later, he allegedly described Muslims as "excrement" in the Serbian town of Mali Zvornik. "Lies," Seselj told AFP earlier this month, adding that he did not regret his role in the conflict. "We will never give up the idea of a Greater Serbia," Seselj said, adding that his extreme right-wing Serbian Radical Party exists "to unite within the same state all the territories where the Serb people live". —AFP

Analysis

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The First Daily in The Arabian Gulf

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Rights in poorer nations must be upheld as Thai firms go abroad

Thailand's businesses and its government must do more to protect the rights of vulnerable people abroad, analysts and activists said, after a landmark case filed by Cambodian farmers in a Bangkok court against a Thai sugar firm. It is the first time plaintiffs from another country have filed a class-action lawsuit against a Thai company in a Thai court over its operations outside Thailand. The two plaintiffs represent about 3,000 people who say they were forcibly removed from their homes and land in five villages in Oddar Meanchey province in Cambodia's northwest, to make way for a Mitr Pohl sugarcane plantation between 2008 and 2009.

As cross-border investments in the region increase to tap resources, markets and cheaper labour, cases such as these will become more common because of differences in legislation and inadequate protections for workers and residents, experts said. "This is about ensuring that Thai companies respect human rights in the countries they operate in, and holding them accountable for violations," said Sor Rattanamee Polka at the Community Resource Centre, which is representing the plaintiffs. "There is no Thai law against irresponsible outbound investment, and countries like Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar do not have proper frameworks for environmental and social impact assessments. We had no choice but to file a suit," she said.

The plaintiffs are asking for their land to be returned and 4 million baht (\$130,000) in total compensation, she said. Mitr Phol, the Thai sugar producer, said it had received temporary concessions in compliance with all local and national laws, and had assurances from the Cambodian government that the areas had been processed "legally and transparently". Mitr Phol said it had withdrawn from the project in 2014, and that it had recommended that the Cambodian government return the land to the "affected communities". The case, filed last month, is set to begin on June 11.

Not binding

Cambodia awarded large economic land concessions to foreign companies - mainly from China, Vietnam, South Korea and Thailand - to operate mines, power plants and farms in order to spur economic growth and alleviate poverty. Such deals, which covered more than a tenth of the country's surface area by 2012, have displaced more than 770,000 people since 2000, rights lawyers say. Following protests and pressure from rights groups, Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen announced a moratorium on new concessions in 2012, and promised to review old ones.

But activists say the reviews did not lead to significant changes, and that even when concessions were cancelled, the land was often retained by the government. In the case of Mitr Phol, the villagers first filed a complaint with the Bonsucro sugarcane sustainability initiative, and then the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) of Thailand, a government agency. After a two-year investigation, the NHRC said rights violations had occurred, and Mitr Phol was directly responsible. It asked Mitr Phol to pay compensation in line with the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

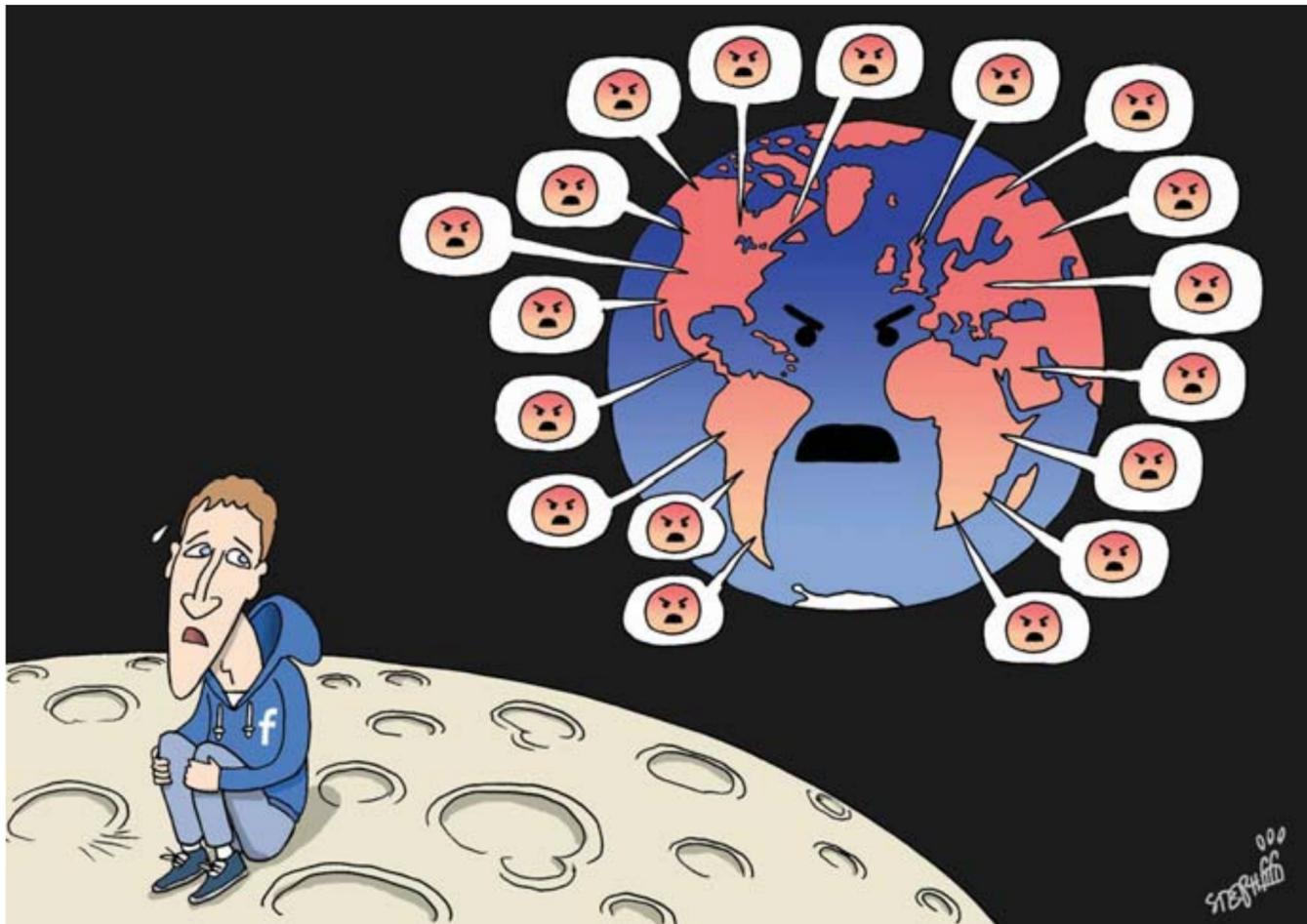
But the NHRC's powers are limited, Sor said, and the Cambodian farmers did not get compensation or their land back. "The NHRC can issue recommendations, but these are not binding. Filing cases is an option, but it is always a challenge to go through the judicial system," Angkhana Neelapajjit, a member of the NHRC, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. The NHRC has received more than a dozen complaints about Thai overseas investments, particularly in Southeast Asia, related to their impact on the environment and people, she said.

Negative impacts

In response to the NHRC's recommendations, the Cabinet issued resolutions in 2016 and 2017, calling for Thai investors to respect and protect the rights of local people, and to prevent adverse impacts on the environment and to livelihoods. Last year, Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha said the government intended to implement the UN guiding principles in a policy plan being drafted in consultation with rights groups.

But the region has proven to be a "laggard" in adopting an enforceable regional human rights system, said David Pred, co-founder of advocacy group Inclusive Development International. "We shouldn't hold our breath waiting for governments to adopt one. But that need not stop people from pursuing justice for business-related human rights violations in the national courts of the countries where the companies are domiciled."

Thai outbound investment in 2017 totalled about \$20 billion, according to the country's investment board, much of it going to Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam. But investors are backing projects "with little regulation and often with disregard for the human and environmental rights impacts", according to a report from the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights published in November. "Negative impacts commonly include destruction of livelihoods, land grabs, and forced eviction," it said. —Reuters



Rana Plaza's 'forgotten' victims battle poverty

For four days Rubina Begum lay buried in debris, waiting for death. But the seamstress survived the Rana Plaza building collapse that killed more than 1,000 workers near Dhaka in 2013. Today, she often wishes she had died that April morning. Trapped under a machine, with only her neck above the debris and the "smell of death" surrounding her, Begum prayed to be rescued so she could see her mother one more time. But five years on, as she struggles to earn enough to take care of her family, Begum often wonders about her "miraculous rescue" from Bangladesh's worst industrial disaster.

"For nine years I had a monthly income and managed to support my family," said the 35-year-old, who used to stitch pockets on to trousers on the sixth floor of the Rana Plaza. "But today I don't. The compensation I got after the crash was mostly spent on my treatment. Now I can't work like I used to, have no regular income and there are days I wish I had not survived Rana Plaza."

Begum is among more than 2,000 workers who were injured when the eight-storey building crashed on April 24, 2013, burying thousands under concrete slabs and mangled machines. Since then, global brands, manufacturers, civil society and unions have come together to address factory safety in Bangladesh, the world's second-largest garment exporter with some 4 million people working in its 4,000-plus factories.

Rana Plaza survivors have grappled with economic distress and health issues, many too scared to go back to work in Bangladesh's \$28 billion garment industry and others not fit for full-time jobs, campaigners said. "The injured workers are living with the mental and physical scars of Rana Plaza," said Amirul Haque Amin, president of the National Garment Workers Federation, Bangladesh's largest union. "Most are daily wage workers now, with injuries that make it difficult for them to take up full time jobs. The compensation they received dried up very fast, leaving with them with nothing."

Cyprus on frontline against lionfish invasion of Med

Equipped with harpoons and waterproof notebooks, Louis, Carlos and Antonis dive deep into the crystal clear waters of Konnos Bay in Cyprus on a mission to capture predatory lionfish. After colonising parts of the Atlantic on the east coast of the United States and the Caribbean, lionfish are now invading the Mediterranean. After two dives, the marine biologists from the Enalia Physis Environmental Research Centre surface with nearly 20 brown-and-white striped specimens. Armed with venomous dorsal spines and fan-shaped pectoral fins, the exotic looking lionfish, a favorite at aquariums, has no known enemies in the Mediterranean.

The reef fish, whose sting is painful but not deadly, is native to the Indian Ocean. But an outbreak in the Mediterranean has scientists, fishermen and divers so worried that they have launched a campaign to reduce its numbers. The lionfish first appeared in the waters off Cyprus in 2012, Louis Hadjoannou, research director at Enalia, told AFP. "Since then it has spread everywhere," he said. "All over the island, almost wherever you dive you can now see the lionfish in masses."

The same is true in Lebanon where Alain Najem, who runs a diving club north of Beirut, told AFP he sees greater numbers with each trip to the sea. The lionfish has also been sighted off the coasts of Greece, Turkey and Tunisia. "The invasion is under way" in the eastern Mediterranean, said Demetris Kletou,

director of the Cyprus-based Marine and Environmental Research Lab. The lionfish's "exponential rise" in the area was facilitated by the widening of the Suez Canal - completed in 2014 - and warming regional water temperatures, according to Jason Hall-Spencer, a marine biology professor at Britain's University of Plymouth. The cooler waters of the western Mediterranean, he said, have largely been spared for the moment.

First line of defense

Together with Enalia and several other partners, including the University of Cyprus and the Department of Fisheries and Marine Research, the two scientists are running a pilot project called "Relionmed" funded by LIFE, the European biodiversity protection program. Their aim is to make Cyprus "the first line of defense" against the lionfish invasion. Along with habitat loss and overexploitation, invasive species are among the top five leading causes of biodiversity loss across the globe, according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

Such a loss disrupts ecosystems and the human activities that depend on them. Since the 1980s, the lionfish has caused "significant damage" to the US and Caribbean coastlines, said marine biologist Carlos Jimenez, a senior research coordinator at Enalia. Environmental research firm VertigoLab estimates the lionfish invasion in the French West Indies - a string of seven small islands in the Caribbean - has cost "more than 10 million euros (\$12 million) per year".

Local fish are easily caught off guard by the adept predator. In two years, lionfish in the western Atlantic have reduced 40 species of coral reef fish by about 65 percent, according to a 2012 study funded by Canada's Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council. Fishermen's catches of certain species, including grouper, have slumped accordingly.

Forgotten

The land on which Rana Plaza stood is today overgrown with vegetation and strewn with garbage. The debris has been cleared but scraps of fabric still lie around. On the crowded pavement alongside stands a concrete memorial to the disaster's victims. "Our memories are sprayed with a billion tears" and "we will never forget", the

lose our jobs if we didn't." As she settled down to work on her sewing machine, she remembers the electricity going off and the generators on the roof of the building kicking in. "Then there was some loud noise and the roof just came crashing down even as we tried to move towards the door," she said, tears rolling down her cheeks. "I was trapped and couldn't move much. Near me were two other workers. I reached out to touch them. They were both dead." She was rescued six hours later and spent a month in hospital. She injured her backbone and lost hearing in one ear.

Tears

In just over two years, a trust fund made up of government, retailers, employers, trade unions and charities, raised \$30 million to compensate more than 2,800 claimants affected by the disaster, according to the International Labour Organization. But many are now struggling as they were unable to save or invest any of the money, which they spent on medical bills and daily expenses, campaigners said. "My compensation money finished a year back, most of it on daily expenses," said one survivor Nilofur Yasmin, who received 95,000 taka. "I put in 20,000 to start a small business but got cheated by my partner. Now I don't have enough money to fund my children's education. Working as a maid doesn't pay as much."

Rubina and Lutfa Begum first met at a forum for survivors to discuss compensation. Since then, the two meet every April 24 at the Rana Plaza memorial to share the grief of families who lost someone. "On that one day, we feel stronger standing together, knowing that we don't have much of a future to look forward to," Lutfa Begum said, wiping her tears and holding her youngest son close. "Ideally I would want to go back to my village and open a shop. But in the last five years, I have stopped believing I can." —Reuters

Compensation has dried up

dusty epitaphs read. "But we have been forgotten," Rana Plaza survivor Lutfa Begum told the Thomson Reuters Foundation, sitting in her one-room home not far from the memorial. "Nobody has checked on us for years now. The compensation money I got has long gone, spent on my daughter's wedding, buying two cows and medical expenses. Now I make and sell some sweets."

In 2013, the 40-year-old was earning 6,500 taka (\$78) a month stitching trouser seams on the eighth floor of Rana Plaza. She clearly remembers being very nervous walking into work on April 24. "The previous day, we had been evacuated from the building because a big, visible crack had developed," she said. "But the next day, we were told that everything was fine and we should go to work. A lot of us felt unsure but we were told we would



Louis Hadjoannou, a marine biologist from Enalia Physis Environmental Research Centre, poses for a photo after spearing a lionfish as he collects them for analysis at the Table Top dive site off the coast of Cyprus' Cape Greko on Jan 15, 2018. —AFP

'Voracious'

Fear is rife across the Mediterranean, a "small sea" in relative terms but a veritable jewel of biodiversity with some 17,000 species. "We are worried because they are so voracious," said Jimenez, as he dissected lionfish in his Nicosia office. "They'll put additional pressure on ecosystems that have already been disrupted" by over-exploitation of marine resources, pollution and tourism. The entrails of the dissected fish are analyzed to determine their favorite Mediterranean prey.

Biologists also examine their otoliths - tiny mineral concentrations in their ears, akin to black boxes revealing their age and other data. Cypriot fishermen are also concerned because many of them have been stung. Aside from the pain, the pricks can cause allergic reactions. But Theo Koutsavakis, who runs a diving club and

has lived by the sea his entire life, said the lionfish, a favorite among divers, rarely attacks humans. He is, however, concerned by the impact on marine life in Cyprus, "already limited" by fishing and tourism.

Koutsavakis is an avid supporter of efforts by the EU-funded Relionmed project to raise public awareness and monitor how the species is spread. Inspired by similar projects in the United States, the group also plans to organize events - including harpoon fishing contests - aimed at reducing the species' population and to find economic incentives for fishermen. If chefs learn how to cook them without pricking their fingers, restaurants could put lionfish on the menu, while the spines could be used in jewelry. "We know it's nearly impossible to end the invasion at this point," said Louis Hadjoannou, the biologist. "The aim of the project is not to eradicate but to control." —AFP

News

Trump signals Syria strikes, slams Assad backer Russia

WASHINGTON/BEIRUT: US President Donald Trump warned Russia yesterday of imminent military action in Syria over a suspected poison gas attack, declaring that missiles "will be coming" and lambasting Moscow for standing by Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad. Trump was reacting to a warning from Russia that any US missiles fired at Syria over the deadly assault on a rebel enclave near Damascus would be shot down and the launch sites targeted.

His comments raised the prospect of direct conflict over Syria for the first time between the two world powers backing opposing sides in the seven-year-old civil war, which has aggravated instability across the Middle East. "Russia vows to shoot down any and all missiles fired at Syria. Get ready Russia, because they will be coming, nice and new and 'smart!'" Trump wrote on Twitter. "You shouldn't be partners with a Gas Killing Animal who kills his people and enjoys it!" Trump tweeted, referring to Moscow's alliance with Assad.

In response, Russia's Foreign Ministry said: "Smart missiles should fly towards terrorists, not towards the lawful government". Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said any US missile salvo could be an attempt to destroy evidence of the reported gas attack in the town of Douma. Damascus and Moscow have denied any responsibility and say the incident is bogus. Dozens of people in Douma died and hundreds were injured in the attack, according to the World Health Organization (WHO).

US Defense Secretary Jim Mattis, striking a cautious tone after Trump's threat of missile strikes, said the United States was assessing intelligence about the suspected attack. Asked if he had seen enough evidence to blame Assad, Mattis said: "We're still working on this." The US military was ready to provide military options, if appropriate, he added. It was unclear if his remarks reflected unease about Trump's apparent move toward military action.

Two US government sources told Reuters the United States still did not have 100 percent solid evidence of what nerve agent was used in Syria and where it came from. However, there is some evidence it was sprayed from helicopters, they said. In Moscow, the head of a Russian parliamentary defense committee, Vladimir Shamanov, said Russia was in direct contact with the US Joint Chiefs of Staff about the situation.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a British-based war monitor, said pro-government forces were emptying main airports and military air bases. The Syrian military has also been repositioning some air assets to avoid the fallout from possible missile strikes. US officials told Reuters. The Russian military said it had observed movements of US Navy forces in the Gulf. Any US strike would probably involve the navy, given the risk to aircraft from Russian and Syrian air defenses. A US guided-missile destroyer, the USS Donald Cook, is in the Mediterranean.

The Syrian foreign ministry accused the United States, which has supported some rebel groups in Syria's conflict, of using "fabrications and lies" as an excuse to hit its territory. "We are not surprised by such a thoughtless escalation by a regime like the United States regime, which sponsored terrorism in Syria and still does," the state news agency SANA cited a ministry official as saying. After the Douma attack, the insurgent group dug in there, Jaish al-Islam, finally agreed to withdraw. That sealed a huge victory for Assad, crushing a long rebellion in the eastern Ghouta region near the capital Damascus.

Britain ready

In London, British Prime Minister Theresa May said all the indications pointed to Syrian government responsibility

for the attack and such "a shocking and barbaric act" could not go unchallenged. "We're rapidly reaching an understanding of what happened on the ground," she told reporters. "We'll be working with our closest allies to consider how we can ensure that those responsible are held to account."

The BBC reported later that May was ready to give the go-ahead for Britain to take part in military action. She would not seek approval from parliament, the BBC said, despite calls from the opposition Labour Party for parliament to be given a say. Oil prices jumped to their highest level in more than three years yesterday after Trump's warning, and US stock index futures fell sharply due to alarm about a possible Russian-US conflict over Syria. White House officials did not immediately provide more detail about Trump's remarks. The US Defense Department said it did not comment on potential military actions.

Highly toxic

The WHO said 43 people had died in Saturday's attack on Douma from "symptoms consistent with exposure to highly toxic chemicals", and more than 500 had been treated. The WHO cautioned that it has no formal role in forensic inquiries into the use of chemical weapons. International inspectors are seeking clearance from Damascus to visit Douma under safe conditions to determine whether globally banned munitions were used, though they will not assign blame. Moscow and Washington blocked attempts by each other at the United Nations Security Council on Tuesday to set up international investigations into chemical weapons attacks in Syria.

Moscow's threat to down US missiles came from its ambassador to Lebanon, Alexander Zasyplin, who said it was based on previous statements by President Vladimir Putin and the Russian armed forces chief of staff. The Russian military said on March 13 that it would respond to any US strike on Syria by targeting any missiles and launchers involved. Russia is Assad's most powerful ally and its devastating air power has helped him wrest back large areas of territory from rebels since 2015. Zasyplin also said a clash between Russia and the United States over Syria "should be ruled out and therefore we are ready to hold negotiations".

Airlines beware

With tensions growing, however, European air traffic control agency Eurocontrol warned airlines to exercise caution in the eastern Mediterranean due to the possible launch of air strikes into Syria over the next 72 hours. Eurocontrol said air-to-ground and cruise missiles could be used within that period and there could be intermittent disruptions of radio navigation equipment. Both Russia and Iran, Assad's other main ally, have warned his enemies against military action in recent days, underlining their commitment to the Syrian government they have armed and supported through years of conflict.

Ali Akbar Velayati, the top adviser to Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, said during a visit to Damascus on Tuesday that an Israeli attack on an air base in Syria on Monday would "not remain without response". Israel held top-level security consultations yesterday on the possibility it could be targeted by Syria or Iran if the United States strikes Syrian government forces.

Syria's Russian-supplied air defenses shot down an Israeli F-16 jet in February during a previous bombing run against what Israel described as Iranian-backed positions in Syria. Last year, the United States carried out strikes from two Navy destroyers against a Syrian air base after another toxic gas attack on a rebel-controlled pocket. — Reuters



An aerial view shows a gendarmerie helicopter hovering over as gendarmes launch tear gas canisters at protesters during a police operation to raze the decade-old anti-capitalist camp known as ZAD (Zone a Defendre - Zone to defend) set up to protest a new airport in Notre-Dame-des-Landes, near the western French city of Nantes, and evict the last of the protesters who have refused to leave despite the government agreeing to ditch the airport project. — AFP

Houthi missiles, drones shot down...

Continued from Page 1

Malki said Saudi forces also intercepted two missiles in the southern Jizan and Najran provinces, close to the border with Yemen.

Saudi Arabia has since March 2015 led a coalition of Arab states fighting to roll back the Houthi rebels in Yemen and restore its neighbor's internationally-recognized government to power. Nearly 10,000 people have since been killed in the conflict, in what the United Nations has called the world's worst humanitarian crisis. Saudi Arabia accuses its rival Iran of smuggling missiles to the Houthis - a charge Tehran denies.

Yesterday's attacks were claimed by the rebels via their news outlet Al-Masirah. "The missile force carried out a large-scale ballistic missile attack on various parts of Saudi Arabia," Al-Masirah said. It named the defense ministry in Riyadh, King Abdullah Economic City in Najran and the Saudi Aramco facility in Jizan as the targets.

The Houthis said the attacks were timed to "inaugurate the ballistic year announced by the president", Saleh Al-Sammad, head of the rebels' supreme political council, in a speech earlier this week declared 2018 would be "the year of ballistics".

As the announcement on the missile interceptions emerged, Malki also said in a separate statement that Saudi air defenses had shot down two unmanned Yemeni drones in southern Saudi Arabia. One of the drones was targeting the Abha international airport in Asir province, which led to a temporary suspension of air traffic. Upon coalition inspection, "it turned out to be a hostile Houthi drone with Iranian components", Malki said.

A second drone was identified while approaching a "civilian object" in Jizan province, he added. Arms monitor Conflict Armament Research said it has evidence that the drones used yesterday and other Houthi kits were made in Iran and was not of indigenous design and construction "in contrast to Houthi statements".

The Houthis claimed attacks on Abha airport and Saudi Aramco, located in Jizan, publishing an infographic of the "Qasef 1" drone on Al-Masirah. Oil giant Aramco downplayed the attacks, saying its "operations and facilities, including our facilities in Jizan, are operating normally and safely". But the Houthi leadership was electrified.

"We are stronger today than ever before," Houthi military spokesman Sharaf Luqman said of the incursions into Saudi Arabia. He called the drone attack on Abha airport a "strategic step" to "complement" the ballistic missile strikes. "Every time we are bombed, we will target a corresponding Saudi facility," Luqman said. — Agencies

Military plane crash kills 257 in Algeria's...

Continued from Page 1

The plane had been heading to Tindouf on the border with Western Sahara, Algeria's defense ministry said. One young man cried as he spoke to a local TV station about a relative who died in the crash. "We talked on the phone yesterday evening and he promised to call me again on arrival in Tindouf," he said.

A member of Algeria's ruling FLN party told Ennahar the dead included 26 members of the Polisario Front, an Algerian-backed group fighting for the independence of neighboring Western Sahara, a territory also claimed by Morocco in a long-running dispute. A source close to Polisario said that the dead included four refugee children and that around 30 refugees who had received medical treatment in the capital had been killed in all.

Tindouf is home to tens of thousands of refugees from the Western Sahara standoff, and a source close to Polisario said the flight route is taken regularly by

Western Saharan refugees. The defense ministry said in a statement it would investigate the cause of the crash, and it expressed condolences to the families of the victims. Bouteflika ordered three days of mourning, while former colonial power France, the United States, Russia and other countries expressed their condolences, a statement said. Doctors who have been on strike for months over their pay and work conditions resumed work to treat the survivors, residents said. Some 70 ambulances arrived at the scene after the crash, local media said.

The UN has long been trying to broker a settlement for Western Sahara, which has been contested since 1975 when Spanish colonial powers left. Despite Morocco's claims, Polisario established its self-declared Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic in part of the territory. Rabat considers Western Sahara an integral part of Morocco and proposes autonomy for the resource-rich territory. Previous major air accidents in Algeria include an Air Algerie flight that crashed in northern Mali in July 2014 carrying 116 passengers and crew, nearly half of them French, en route from Burkina Faso to Algeria. In February that year, an Algerian Air Force Lockheed C-130 Hercules crashed in a mountainous area in eastern Algeria killing 77 passengers and leaving one survivor. — Agencies



Trump to Russia: Don't support 'gas-killing animal' Assad

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Sports

Mookie Betts, Chris Sale shine in Red Sox 14-1 rout of Yankees

Perez solo lifts Cleveland over visiting Detroit

BOSTON: Chris Sale shut down the Yankees' vaunted lineup with eight strikeouts over six one-run innings, and Mookie Betts clubbed a grand slam to punctuate the Boston Red Sox's 14-1 rout of visiting New York on Tuesday night. Betts (4-for-4) scored a career-high five runs, Hanley Ramirez (2-for-2) added three RBIs while J.D. Martinez (1-for-5) and Andrew Benintendi (2-for-3) had two RBIs apiece as the Red Sox earned their major-league-leading ninth straight victory. Boston (9-1) became the 40th team in major league history to win nine of its first 10 games, not losing since a season-opening 6-4 setback at Tampa Bay, a game that Boston dropped after leading 4-0 in the eighth inning. Aaron Judge (3-for-4) hit his third homer of the year for the Yankees, who lost for the fourth time in five games. Giancarlo Stanton (2-for-4) struck out twice in his rivalry debut, bringing his season whiff total to a league-high 22.

League East. They have started the season by taking four straight series, including this one over the last-place Marlins. Mets switch hitter Asdrubal Cabrera also homered twice, once from each side of the plate. Teammate Wilmer Flores pulled an RBI double and a solo homer. Miami was led by Justin Bour, who hit a pair of two-run homers, both to the opposite field.

BLUE JAYS 2, ORIOLES 1
Curtis Granderson hit a tiebreaking homer with two outs in the top of the ninth

Scott Kingery hit a grand slam and Philadelphia defeated host Cincinnati. Nola gave up one earned run, retiring the last 10 batters he faced in a strong 103-pitch effort. Odubel Herrera also went 2-for-4 with a pair of doubles, an RBI and run for the Phillies. Homer Bailey was terrific for the Reds, allowing one earned run and two hits while striking out seven in six innings. But the bullpen-Jared Hughes and Tanner Rainey-struggled and couldn't contain the Phillies bats. Bailey had a no-hitter through five innings. The Reds managed just three hits.

INDIANS 2, TIGERS 1
Roberto Perez hit a go-ahead solo homer in the eighth inning, lifting Cleveland over visiting Detroit. Perez ripped a 2-0 offering from reliever Alex Wilson (0-2) over the right-center-field wall. Jose Ramirez, who hit a solo shot in the first inning, and Perez each had two of the Indians' four hits. Andrew Miller (1-0), the fifth Indians pitcher, threw a scoreless eighth inning to get the win. Tigers starter Matthew Boyd tossed seven

innings and gave up just one run on three hits with a walk and four strikeouts. Jeimer Candelario had three of Detroit's six hits, including an RBI double.

MARINERS 8, ROYALS 3
Jean Segura had three hits and two RBIs, and Mitch Haniger and Kyle Seager also drove in two runs apiece to support Felix Hernandez in Seattle's victory over host Kansas City. Robinson Cano reached based four times while extending his hitting streak to eight games, and Guillermo Heredia hit his second homer of the season for the Mariners. Hernandez (2-1) gave up three runs and six hits in 5 2/3 innings, striking out three and walking one. Mike Moustakas homered for the second straight game and drove in three runs, and Whit Merrifield had two hits for the Royals.



Betts scores a career-high five runs

NATIONALS 4, BRAVES 1
Stephen Strasburg threw eight scoreless innings, and Ryan Zimmerman hit a two-run triple in the first to give Washington all the offense it needed to defeat visiting Atlanta. Strasburg (2-1) gave up three hits and struck out eight while walking two. In addition, he singled, walked and reached on an error while bunting. Ryan Madson earned his first save of the season by getting the final two outs in the ninth. Braves starter Mike Foltynewicz (1-1) gave up three hits in the first inning, and he wound up yielding three runs (two earned) on five hits and two walks. He fanned three.

METS 8, MARLINS 6
Yoenis Cespedes grounded a two-run, ninth-inning double down the third base line to lead New York to a comeback win over host Miami. The Mets (9-1) have won seven games in a row and lead the National

inning after Toronto teammate Aaron Sanchez lost his no-hit bid in the eighth, and the visiting Blue Jays edged Baltimore. Granderson broke a 1-1 tie by lifting a 1-2 fastball from Darren O'Day (0-1) over the scoreboard in right field. It was his 25th career homer in the ninth inning or later. Granderson's first homer as a Blue Jay occurred after Sanchez (1-1) lost his no-hit bid on the first pitch of the eighth by allowing a double to Tim Beckham. Sanchez allowed one run on three hits in eight innings while striking out four and working around five walks. Roberto Osuna pitched a perfect ninth for his fifth save of the season, the 100th save of his career, becoming the youngest pitcher ever to reach the milestone.

PHILLIES 6, REDS 1
Aaron Nola pitched eight solid innings,

hits and a walk with eight strikeouts. Brad Hand pitched a scoreless ninth inning for his fourth save.

CARDINALS 5, BREWERS 3 (11 INNINGS)

Matt Carpenter cracked a two-run homer in the bottom of the 11th inning as St. Louis outlasted visiting Milwaukee. Carpenter pulled a 1-1 curveball just over the wall in right for his second homer of the season and his third career walk-off blast. Dominic Leone (1-2) pitched a clean inning for the victory as St. Louis twice rallied to get itself in position to win before finally ending the 4-hour, 2-minute marathon. Each team scored a run in the 10th on a two-out RBI single. Orlando Arcia put the Brewers ahead in their half of the inning, but Greg Garcia answered back with a loopier into right that scored Yairo Munoz. — Reuters



BOSTON: Aaron Judge #99 of the New York Yankees watches his home run during the fifth inning against the Boston Red Sox at Fenway Park on Tuesday in Boston, Massachusetts. — AFP

ANGELS 11, RANGERS 1

Los Angeles (9-3) matched the best start in team history with a road victory over Texas. The Angels scored nine runs and had 13 hits through just four innings, cruising the rest of the way in support of Tyler Skaggs (2-0). Seven Los Angeles players had at least two hits. Mike Trout and Andrelton Simmons homered for the Angels. Rangers starter Martin Perez (1-1) was on the wrong side of much of that offense, giving up eight runs on nine hits and four walks in three-plus innings.

PADRES 5, ROCKIES 2

Hunter Renfroe broke a tie with a three-run, two-out homer in the seventh, and rookie left-hander Joey Lucchesi didn't allow an earned run over six-plus innings to earn his first major league win as visiting San Diego defeated Colorado. Lucchesi (1-0) gave up the two unearned runs on four

Kuwait shooters reign supreme

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Kuwait shooting ended on top at the conclusion of the Arab shotgun shooting championship, that was held in Rabat, Morocco by winning six gold three silver and three bronze medals.

Kuwait shooters proved they are one-up to the task and worthy of what they have achieved so far and performed as expected from them. The national team won the gold medals of the individual and team double trap, two gold skeet medals by women individual and team, the skeet men individual gold, the team trap gold medal, the silver medals of both men and women, the silver medal of the trap men, bronze medal of both individual and team for women and the individual trap bronze for men, during the championship in which 116 shooters, representing 10 countries participated.

Secretary General of Arab and Kuwait Shooting Federations Obaid Munahi Al-Osaimi expressed his satisfaction with what Kuwait shooters had achieved, for which the Kuwait Shooting Sport Club board members had worked hard, as well as administrative and technical departments, which enabled the shooters to make such impressive results.

Al-Osaimi on behalf of the president and board members and himself dedicated the achievement to HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah who has been supporting the sport of shooting and shooters all along, which gave them the determination to make the achievements in the name of Kuwait where ever they participate.

He also dedicated it to HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and government for their care and support. He also thanked the Public Authority for Sports and its Director General Dr Humoud Fulaiteh for their support and removing all obstacles Kuwait shooting faces to allow shooters focus on their performance.



Eman Al-Shamma (left) and Ahmad Al-Afasi.

Ace Hamilton ready to deny Vettel hat-trick

SHANGHAI: Ferrari's Sebastian Vettel can complete a hat-trick of wins to start the season on Sunday but China also offers reigning Formula One champion Lewis Hamilton a perfect opportunity to end his rival's run of success. The 33-year-old Mercedes driver has won the race on the outskirts of Shanghai an unprecedented five times, with the Briton's most recent triumph coming as recently as last year.

Hamilton will be desperately hoping the Shanghai International Circuit delivers a sixth as he bids to claw back some of the 17-point deficit to championship leader Vettel in the overall standings.

"It's always been a good track for me," said Hamilton, who finished third in Bahrain on Sunday after starting ninth due to a gearbox penalty. "So I really hope that I'm able to climb the ladder and get back to where we've been working towards being in the last two races."

Wins in the Australian season-opener and Bahrain means the momentum for the moment is with Vettel, the first Ferrari driver since Michael Schumacher in 2004 to start the year with successive wins.

The last time a driver failed to win the championship after winning the opening two races was in 1982, when Alain Prost started strongly but lost out to Keke Rosberg. Hamilton can still take comfort from last year, when he clinched his fourth championship despite Vettel also winning in Australia and Bahrain, which was the third race of that season.

He can also draw encouragement from the speed and reliability of his Mercedes, with the Briton poised to set a Formula One record on Sunday of 28 successive races in the points.



Lewis Hamilton

COMING BACK STRONGER

Hamilton had a clear edge over Ferrari in Melbourne and team mate Valtteri Bottas came within a second of snatching victory from pole-sitter Vettel in Bahrain. "That... was the minimum result we should expect with both Red Bulls and (Vettel's team mate) Kimi (Raikkonen) out of the race," Mercedes team boss Toto Wolff said. "So we started to analyse what went wrong in Bahrain in order to improve for China and come back stronger." The defending constructors' champions have won the Chinese race five times in the last six years, including four in succession, whereas Ferrari last won it in 2013. — Reuters

Reed's stealth attack on Masters glory finds admirer in Love

WASHINGTON: Davis Love was not immediately impressed by Patrick Reed's game when he first saw the American play, but learned over time that the newly crowned Masters champion had the necessary ingredients for success, the 2016 U.S. Ryder Cup captain said on Tuesday.

Two days after Reed's gritty victory at Augusta National, a result that not too many casual fans saw coming, Love offered his perspective of the most recent member of the exclusive Green Jacket club.

He said that Reed's game "kind of sneaks up on you a little bit", meaning it did not necessarily make an instant impact. "He's not the longest. He doesn't have the prettiest swing," Love said at Hilton Head Island ahead of this week's PGA Tour event, the RBC Heritage at Harbour Town.

"But he's a competitor for sure. He doesn't leave anything to chance and he works hard on and off the golf course to be prepared." Reed was a key member of the Love-captained two years ago

that finally seized the Ryder Cup back from Europe after enduring three consecutive defeats.

But it was in the New York area at last year's Presidents Cup—in which the U.S. plays an International team—that Love really noticed Reed's attention to detail.

"I remember riding that ferry back and forth (from Manhattan to Liberty National) and it's literally at four or five in the morning and everybody else is trying to get some coffee and wake up," Love, who was an assistant captain of that team, recalled.

"And Patrick has got two yardage books out. He's not going to waste any time riding that ferry, he's going to study his yardage book." Love compared Reed's competitive instinct with Ian Poulter, the outspoken spiritual leader of the European team for much of the past decade.

Poulter is playing at Harbour Town this week, while Reed and most of the other contenders for the Masters enjoy a little rest and recuperation. South Carolina-born Dustin Johnson, the world number one, is the only top-10 player in the field while others of note in action include Paul Casey and Marc Leishman.

Englishman Casey threatened the course record at Augusta on Sunday before a bogey-bogey finish left him to sign for a seven-under-par 65. Australian Leishman was in second place behind Reed after two rounds, before finishing ninth. — Reuters

Beaten Zambia boxer launches foul-mouthed Games tirade

GOLD COAST: A furious losing boxer from Zambia reeled off an extraordinary succession of expletives and alleged that he was cheated out of victory at the Commonwealth Games yesterday. Mbachi Kaonga insisted he had beaten home boxer Clay Waterman of Australia in their light-heavyweight quarter-final on the Gold Coast. But ring-side judges awarded the decision to Waterman on a 4-1

points decision, infuriating Kaonga and the red mist quickly descended. As Waterman was doing an interview off to the side of the ring, Kaonga bumped into him and then swore into the camera, the Australian boxer and local officials said.

The 23-year-old Kaonga then raged into the media interview zone and launched into an expletive-filled rant. "They are killing amateur boxing," barked Kaonga, shaking with anger. "Just because it's his own ground, they gave him the fight when he didn't win. They are killing the sport," he added before storming off. "I gave him a little bit and told him to shut up," Waterman said with a laugh.

"He pretty much ran away the whole fight. I felt like I was in control. Oh well, each to their own." — AFP

Sports



'Expect the best' as Bolt boost for Jamaica at Games

South African Luvo Manyonga captures long jump gold

GOLD COAST: Shaunae Miller-Uibo grabbed a psychological edge over Olympic champion Elaine Thompson in the Commonwealth Games 200 metres semi-finals yesterday as retired sprint legend Usain Bolt settled into his new role as a spectator. Bahamian Miller-Uibo, who dramatically dived over the line to win Olympic 400m gold at the 2016 Rio Games, swept into the 200m final in 22.95 seconds, nearly half a second ahead of Thompson, easing up behind her. It sets up an intriguing final today when Thompson will attempt to win Jamaica's first non-hurdles sprint title of the Games, following Yohan Blake's shock defeat in the men's 100m.

Thompson's outing came after Aisha Praught had broken Kenya's stranglehold on the women's steeplechase, a result that also gave Jamaica its first Commonwealth medal in a race longer than 800m. American-born Praught caught Kenyan favourite Celliphine Chespol on the final bend to win in 9min 21sec, ending the East African nation's phenomenal record of sweeping the podium at the last two Games. Chespol took silver and countrywoman Purity Cherotich Kirui bronze.

"I just put in the work every day and believe that I can race anyone," said Praught. "I knew the Commonwealth Games was what I wanted and I worked towards it every day." Her victory came as Jamaica were urged on by Bolt, who arrived for his first

championships as a spectator following his retirement last year. "I always expect Jamaicans to come out and do their best," said the eight-time Olympic champion. "We are a big track nation so we always expect the best of them at all times." However, Stephenie McPherson missed the memo as the defending champion was dethroned in the 400m, finishing third behind Botswana's Amantle Montsho, who clocked 50.15 ahead of Jamaica's Anastasia Le-Roy.

DIVING HEARTBREAK

Praught's wasn't the only breakthrough performance, as Australia's Kathryn Mitchell unleashed the world's longest javelin throw in five years to win gold with a mighty effort of 68.92m. "I tried to put all thought of results out of my mind," she said. "I knew I could throw the Australian record eventually, so I just said to myself, 'Allow it to come'."

South African Luvo Manyonga, a former crystal meth addict turned Olympic silver medallist, leapt a Games-record 8.41m to capture long jump gold, while Australia's Brandon Starc won the high jump with a personal best of 2.32m. Bushy-bearded Daniel Repacholi won his third Commonwealth gold with victory in the 50m air pistol, and India's Shreyasi Singh claimed her first in the women's double trap.

England's Jack Laugher retained his one-metre

It sets up an intriguing final today



GOLD COAST: Bahamas' Shaunae Miller-Uibo competes in the athletics women's 200m semifinal during the 2018 Gold Coast Commonwealth Games at the Carrara Stadium on the Gold Coast yesterday. — AFP

springboard title but there was heartbreak for Australia's Maddison Keeney and Annabelle Smith, who led the women's 3m synchro until they botched their final dive and finished last. Malaysia's Lee Chong Wei swept into the last 16 of the men's badminton singles

when he dismantled Isle of Man's Benjamin Li in just 21 minutes, dropping only nine points. India's K. Srikanth joined him in the next round-along with formidable Indian women's players Saina Nehwal and PV Sindhu, all three winning with ease. — AFP

All smiles as Laugher retains Commonwealth diving title

GOLD COAST: England's Jack Laugher gave a dominant performance to defend his Commonwealth Games one-metre springboard title on the Gold Coast yesterday. Earlier, Esther Qin and Georgia Sheehan snatched the women's three-metre synchro gold after a fellow Aussie pair crashed from first place to last with a botched final dive.

The 23-year-old Rio Olympic silver medallist on the three-metre board, led from wire-to-wire throughout the six rounds to tally 438.00 points and win gold with some ease. Australia's James Connor took silver with 412.45 points. Scotland's James Heatty finished with bronze on 399.25 points to become his country's first Commonwealth diving medallist since his late grandfather Peter Heatty won gold at the 1958 Cardiff Games.

"It was difficult to come here as the defending champion," said Laugher. "I really knuckled down, got focused-everything went fantastically and I am very proud of what I did." Laugher's top-scoring dives were 76.50 for an inward 2-1/2 somersaults and his lead-off back 2-1/2 somersaults dive which netted 75.00 from the judges. "It was a really good score, I was 440, almost a PB but I didn't quite hit anything, everything was really good, the tops were fantastic and I felt really good going out there," Laugher said.

"But my entries were a little bit shaky. I put that down to a little bit of nerves, trying



GOLD COAST: L-R: Australia's James Connor, England's Jack Laugher and Scotland's James Heatty pose with their medals after the men's 1m springboard diving final during the 2018 Gold Coast Commonwealth Games at the Optus Aquatic Centre in the Gold Coast yesterday. — AFP

to defend the title, also being outdoors, all those different pressures, but I'm really happy with my overall performance." Laugher will bid for a second gold medal in the 3m springboard on Thursday. "Three metres is my main board and I'm a little bit nervous for it, my first international competition of the year because of the injuries I've had," he said.

"But I've got high hopes, training's been good, I'm really enjoying the pool, the place and the team village." It is Laugher's third Commonwealth Games title since his debut at the age of 15 when he competed in Delhi in 2010.

Laugher went on to win two gold medals and a silver at Glasgow 2014 before joining

forces with Chris Mears to win Britain's first-ever Olympic diving gold medal in Rio where they won the three-metre synchro competition. Qin and Sheehan, meanwhile jumped from fourth to clinch gold after leaders Maddison Keeney and Annabelle Smith bombed out with a disastrous attempt at a forward 2-1/2 somersaults with two twists that dropped them to last. A tearful Keeney, who lost control of her dive in windy conditions at the outdoor pool, put a brave face on the mishap.

"It was all over the shop," said the one-metre world champion. "Obviously I don't think anyone can say they dived well, but we've come out the other end. It was a tough day." — AFP

Indian policeman wants revenge over boxing star Spence

GOLD COAST: An aggrieved Indian policeman and amateur boxer wants a rematch with world champion Errol Spence-and says he will beat the American star all over again. Spence may be the undefeated International Boxing Federation (IBF) welterweight champion with a perfect 23-0 record, 20 of them knock-outs, but he appeared to have temporarily met his match when he faced Vikas Krishan six years ago.

Krishan, who reached the semi-finals of the 75kg division yesterday at the Commonwealth Games in Australia, was at the centre of a major controversy at the London 2012 Olympics. The Indian boxer was initially declared the winner over Spence in their preliminary-round clash despite the American dominating. The American camp appealed on the grounds that the referee failed to spot Krishan committing a number of fouls, including spitting out his mouth-guard intentionally and repeatedly holding.

Krishan subsequently had his shock victory overturned. The sense of injustice still burns within Krishan, 26, as his and Spence's boxing careers go in starkly opposite directions.

Now, with at least bronze in the bag on the Gold Coast and plans to turn professional at the end of the year, Krishan is eyeing unlikely

revenge against the man regarded as one of the best pound-for-pound fighters around. "He's one of my main targets when I go pro-because of him I'm turning pro," said Krishan after easily defeating Zambia's Benny Muzyo in their quarter-final.

"First I need to win all of my (pro) fights, my first 12 to 15 fights, and then I will fight him," said Krishan, a former bronze medallist at world amateur level. "I will beat him. I beat him at the Olympics and I will beat him again." Fellow Indian Mary Kom, a household name back home and the subject of a Bollywood film in 2014, secured at least silver with her latest victory and will face Kristina O'Hara of Northern Ireland in Saturday's light-flyweight final.

But there was more heartache for Sarita Devi, India's other prominent female fighter, after she lost her quarter-final bout in the 57-60kg division. Devi, 36, shot to prominence four years ago when she tearfully refused to accept her bronze medal at the Asian Games in Incheon, accusing judges of pandering to locals by declaring South Korea's Park Ji-Na the winner on points in their semi-final. Devi had no complaints this time as she was beaten on unanimous points by Australia's Anja Stridsman. — AFP

Le Clos sets sights on Tokyo after Gold Coast treble

GOLD COAST: He's tiptoeing lightly around the subject so whisper it, but South Africa's Chad le Clos could just become the next Michael Phelps after making history at the Commonwealth Games.

The 25-year-old shot to fame after taking down the American swimming legend at the 2012 Olympics, and proved over the past week on the Gold Coast that he will be a force to be reckoned with at the Tokyo Games in 2020.

Le Clos became the first male swimmer to win three consecutive Commonwealth gold medals in the same event when he romped to victory in the 200 metres butterfly, and followed that with silver in the 100m freestyle.

He also completed a first Commonwealth butterfly treble, finishing the week as the most decorated swimmer in Games history. In a moment of exuberance after his crushing triumph in the 200m fly, le Clos whooped: "No one's done the triple before so-Michael Phelps of Commonwealth!"

Never the shrinking violet in a sport full of uber-serious athletes, le Clos nonetheless chose his words carefully after claiming 4x100m medley relay bronze on the final night. "I was joking when I said that," said the pin-up, who competed in seven Commonwealth Games events. "Michael is a legend, he's the greatest

of all time. I want to be my own self and just be the best I can be."

"I've always prided myself on racing the best," added le Clos, who tied for silver behind Scotland's Duncan Scott in the 100m freestyle with Australia's Olympic champion Kyle Chalmers. "My two best races were the 100m and tonight's relay. I got to race the world's best in 100m free and I didn't win, I was disappointed. But I'm proud to step up against the world's best."

BIG IN JAPAN

With Phelps gone after one last hurrah at the 2016 Rio Games, the stage is set for le Clos to shine at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, although he faces a serious threat from American Caeleb Dressel.

"We'll see what happens at the Olympic Games," said le Clos, whose fingertip defeat of Phelps in the 200m butterfly at the 2012 London Olympics remains one of the sport's greatest upsets.

"There's a lot of youngsters coming through like Dressel, obviously the Aussies in the freestyle, Duncan Scott, James Guy," he added. "They're a lot younger than me now. I feel like I'm one of the older guys already but I'm always ready for a good knock, so I'm excited."

Le Clos credited fellow South African Cameron van der Burgh for helping to keep his competitive fires burning after the latter marked his final Commonwealth Games by stunning world record-holder Adam Peaty in the 50m breaststroke.

"We have to say props after that, I still can't get over it," said le Clos. "He came up against the best breaststroker the world's ever had and beat him-if that's not inspiration I don't know what is." — AFP

Cameroon athletes vanish from Commonwealth Games

GOLD COAST: A total of eight athletes from conflict-hit Cameroon are now missing from the Commonwealth Games in Australia, team officials said yesterday.

Three weightlifters and two boxers were initially reported to Australian police after not being seen since Tuesday, triggering suspicion they had fled with no intention of returning to Cameroon.

Cameroon press attache Simon Molombe told AFP the number of missing athletes had risen to eight-one third of the country's 24-strong team. "It came as a complete surprise," he said. "We have no idea where they are."

The matter is in the hands of the police. "There were no worries this kind of thing might happen," he insisted. "We continue to cooperate with the police." Australian Border Force were searching for weightlifters Olivier Matam Matam, Arcangelina Fouodji and Petit David Minkoumba and boxers Ndzic Tchoyi and Simplice Fotsala after they apparently fled.

Three more boxers have since vanished, sparking an Australian Border Force manhunt. Cameroon team manager Victor Agbor Nso told local media he had been in contact with the police. Commonwealth Games organisers called for competitors to respect the law, mindful of the fact that more than 100 athletes overstayed their visas at the 2000 Sydney Olympics.

"We would appreciate them sticking within the law, enjoying themselves, but sticking within the law," organising committee boss Peter Beattie told reporters. "That includes Cameroon and any other athletes. And if they are thinking of doing anything other, I would encourage them not to." Before the Games opened on April 4, Australia's Home Affairs Minister Peter Dutton warned that athletes would be closely monitored to ensure they did not overstay their visas and that they returned home after competition ended. "It's obviously disappointing that some athletes who have come to compete, didn't compete as scheduled," said Commonwealth Games Federation chief executive David Grevenberg.

"It's important to remember that these athletes are guests here in Australia at this time, they are still within their visas, they have a right to travel freely," he added. "But this is obviously an issue that Team Cameroon is monitoring very, very closely. "Until it becomes a real issue in terms of visas and so forth we would obviously have to take that very seriously." Cameroon, in central Africa, is suffering from civil unrest after a military crackdown on English-speaking separatists. — AFP

Sports

Sixers close in on third seed with 15th straight win

Wizards romped past Celtics 113-101

LOS ANGELES: The Philadelphia 76ers powered to a record-breaking 15th straight victory on Tuesday with a 121-113 defeat of the Atlanta Hawks to stay on course for third seed in the Eastern Conference standings.

J.J. Redick led the scoring with 28 points while Ersan Ilyasova weighed in with 26 off the bench as the Sixers moved to within one win of locking up third spot. Ben Simmons, who had been struggling with a stomach bug, added 14 points with 10 assists while Marco Belinelli had 20 off the bench as the Sixers set a new franchise record for consecutive wins. The Sixers can seal third in the Eastern Conference in the final round of regular season games yesterday when they return to Philadelphia to host Milwaukee. Sixers coach Brett Brown said he believes his team's record winning streak can be the catalyst for a strong performance in the postseason.

"We have momentum, we broke a club record tonight," Brown told reporters. "It's not like we're a young club. We're an old club with a tremendous history. Taking that kind of momentum into the playoffs is important. It doesn't guarantee anything but it certainly lets you feel you're doing things the right way. The team has been fantastic." Third place in the East could potentially be worth an easier route to the Conference finals, with the injury-hit Boston Celtics, seeded second, likely opponents in the second round.

SARIC INJURY SCARE

Philadelphia's emergence this season marks a dramatic turnaround in fortunes, just two years after finishing bottom with a dismal 10-72 record. Atlanta, the

worst side in the East with a 24-58 record, saw their season end with another loss. Taurean Prince led the Atlanta scoring with 27 points while Tyler Dorsey had 17 off the bench. The only sour note for the Sixers was an injury to power forward Dario Saric, who left the game in the opening seconds nursing a cut lip and a chipped tooth after a collision with John Collins.

"It's not an ideal time of year to lose a starting player on the first play of the game," Brown said. "We'll learn more about his condition when we get back to Philadelphia." Elsewhere Tuesday, John Wall racked up 29 points as the Washington Wizards romped past the

Celtics 113-101. Wall pulled down seven rebounds and provided 12 assists in the win as the Celtics, who are already assured of second place in the East, slipped to their fourth loss in five games.

Jaylen Brown led the Boston scorers with 27 points. Jayson Tatum had 12 points while Al Horford snagged 14 rebounds and added 10 points. In the

Western Conference, the Golden State Warriors brought their regular season campaign to a close with a tame defeat to the Utah Jazz.

The reigning NBA champions had already assured themselves of second place and were a long way off their best as they slumped to a 119-79 loss at Salt Lake City's Vivint Smart Home Arena. Kay Thompson led the scoring for the Warriors with 23 points but the Dubs were no match for the all-round offensive threat of the Jazz, who face Portland on the road yesterday to decide which team will finish third. Both Utah and Portland have identical 48-33 records. — AFP



ATLANTA: Amir Johnson #5 of the Philadelphia 76ers shoots the ball against the Atlanta Hawks on Tuesday at Philips Arena in Atlanta, Georgia. — AFP

We broke a club record tonight

Aaron targets county success to overcome IPL snub

NEW DELHI: Varun Aaron has shrugged off the disappointment of being left unwanted at this year's India Premier League (IPL) auction with the Indian pacer instead channelling his focus on striving for a successful county stint in England.

Despite being overlooked by all eight IPL franchises, the 28-year-old is now armed with a deal to play for Leicestershire in the early part of the 2018 County Championship, a stint he hopes will put his stuttering career back on track.

"I was not really thinking about whether I'd be picked or not in the IPL auction," Aaron, who has represented the Delhi, Kolkata, Bangalore and Punjab franchises in the lucrative Twenty20 league, told Reuters in a telephone interview.

"It was more a case of which team is going to pick me. But when it didn't happen, it was a shocker for sure," added the right-arm bowler, who played his last test in 2015. "But it took me a few minutes to snap out of it. For the amount of hard work I have put in, for all that I have come through, I feel there's bigger things in store. "When we talk after six months, then I can tell you that it's the best thing to have happened to me. I really feel this might be the turning point," he said, looking forward to his spell in England with the Division Two side.

After the snub, Aaron set his sights on county cricket and an unlikely door opened when Leicestershire asked him to fill the 'overseas player' void left by Pakistan seamer Mohammad Abbas, who will be busy on national duty. Aaron said he always wanted to experience county cricket and the IPL snub made his decision to head to Britain that much easier. "I even considered skipping IPL last year to play county cricket. I spoke to my colleagues and my coaches who said 'No, you must play in the IPL, it's a big thing in the calendar' and stuff like that," he said.

"This year what happened is by default... county cricket is really competitive. I know that after I come out of this, what I'm bowing now is going to be maximised by a big margin."

Aaron burst on to the Test scene in 2011 as a genuine speed merchant in an Indian pace attack of mostly line-and-length bowlers but a spate of injuries ensured he has played only nine tests and the same number of one-day internationals. "I have had so many injuries. Every time I've hit form, something has happened," he said. "Touch wood, the past year's been really good. I've bowled a lot of overs in the (domestic) Ranji Trophy and getting a county deal immediately after that, it's going to help me a lot." With India set to tour England later this year and also head there for the 2019 World Cup, Aaron felt the IPL rebuff could actually prove to be a "blessing in disguise". "While I'm not thinking about it constantly, it would be really stupid to say it's not something I haven't thought about," he said. "At the same time, I can only play for the India team if I do well for Leicestershire. I'm really looking forward to making an impact with Leicestershire."

"I can still do big things. In the coming years, I definitely want to win matches for India abroad." The pacer from Jharkhand also admitted to having a better understanding of both his body and his craft, pointing to his increased workload in domestic cricket as evidence of this acquired knowledge. — Reuters

Pollard leaves ODI return to Windies board

MUMBAI: Kieron Pollard is available to play one-day internationals for West Indies but the 30-year-old all-rounder remains unsure what plans the board may have for him in the 50-over format. Players have been embroiled in contractual disputes with Cricket West Indies (CWI) for several years, with the team even abandoning a 2014 tour of India midway through the series over a payment structure row.

However, CWI reached an agreement with the players' union for a 'temporary amnesty', paving the way for high-profile players such as Chris Gayle, Sunil Narine and Pollard to return to the national one-day international side.

While Gayle and Marlon Samuels were part of the 15-man squad for last month's 2019 World Cup qualifiers, CWI informed that Narine, all-rounder Andre Russell, Pollard and batsman Darren Bravo had opted to play in the Pakistan Super League (PSL).

"I am actually happy in my life," Pollard, who plays for the Mumbai franchise in the Indian Premier League

(IPL), told Reuters in an interview. "Whatever opportunity I get to play I am happy. "Now I am focussing on the IPL at the present time and after that there are a couple of international series."

Considered a Twenty20 specialist, Pollard has played 101 ODIs for the West Indies, the last of them against Pakistan in October, 2016. The hard-hitting lower-order batsman and medium pace bowler hopes to add to that number.

"I am still very much part of the West Indies international Twenty20 squad," Pollard said at an event to launch the new AlphaBounce Beyond shoe by Adidas.

"The 50-over cricket is still a bit up in air as to what they (CWI) are thinking. That is a question you need to ask them. "But me as a cricketer, I am happy in life, I am happy in what I am doing and I am just trying to perform in whichever continent I am playing my cricket."

Two-time champions West Indies have qualified for the quadrennial 50-over World Cup in England and Wales, finishing runner-up to Afghanistan in a 10-team event hosted by Zimbabwe last month.

Pollard was happy for the team though he was disappointed that West Indies had to take the qualifying route to grab the two non-automatic spots in the 10-team tournament. "Congratulations to them for qualifying for the World Cup," the Trinidadian said. "Obviously, as a West Indian cricketer it's disappointing that we had to go through that sort of an avenue in order to get the World Cup. "But I think the guys went and did a fantastic job." — Reuters



JAIPUR: Rajasthan Royals cricketer Jos Buttler (R) plays a shot during the 2018 Indian Premier League (IPL) Twenty20 cricket match between Rajasthan Royals and Delhi Daredevils at the Sawai Mansingh Stadium in Jaipur yesterday. — AFP

Chennai to lose IPL matches amid water protests

NEW DELHI: India's cricket board is considering shifting Indian Premier League games from Chennai, which is in the grip of a water crisis, after protesters threatened to release snakes during the next match.

The Board of Control for Cricket in India was mulling alternate venues for Chennai's remaining six IPL matches after protesters scuffled with police and threw shoes on the pitch at their home match on Tuesday. "We are thinking on the lines of shifting the IPL matches from Chennai," BCCI administrator Vinod Rai was quoted as saying by the Press Trust of India news agency.

The BCCI had four alternative venues up its sleeve-

Visakhapatnam, Trivandrum, Pune and Rajkot—none of which is in Tamil Nadu, the water-strapped southern state home to Chennai. "CSK can play their matches at these venues," Rai said, using the acronym for the Chennai Super Kings franchise.

The cash-rich Twenty20 tournament returned to Chennai after a two-year ban handed to the Super Kings for illegal gambling expired. But their homecoming was marred when protesters-trying to raise awareness about a long-running water dispute with neighbouring Karnataka—burned merchandise and jostled with police outside the stadium. Shoes were hurled at Chennai players on the boundary ropes during the match, which the Super Kings won over the Kolkata Knight Riders despite the disruption. A Tamil outfit yesterday also threatened to release snakes during the Kings' next match on April 20 against Rajasthan Royals if it is not shifted from Chennai. The drought-prone state has witnessed increasing protests in recent weeks over a disputed accord with Karnataka on how to share water from the key Cauvery river. — AFP



Kieron Pollard

ICC to resolve India-Pakistan cricket dispute

LAHORE: The International Cricket Council has created a dispute resolution panel to hear Pakistan's compensation claim against archrival India for refusing to play a bilateral series.

Sporting ties between the cricket-mad South Asian neighbours have suffered in recent years amid rising political tensions, and Pakistani cricket authorities say their Indian counterparts have violated a 2014 memorandum of understanding under which the two were to play six bilateral series between 2015 and 2023.

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) is seeking \$70 million in compensation. It initiated dispute resolution proceedings against the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) at the ICC in November last year.

A three-member panel will hear the claim later this year, the sport's world governing body said in a statement Tuesday.

"The hearing will take place in Dubai from 1-3 October and the decision of the Dispute Panel shall be non-appealable" and binding on both Pakistan and India, the ICC said.

The BCCI refused to play two series against Pakistan in 2015 and 2017, saying it did not have permission from the Indian government because of strained relations.

India-Pakistan ties, including sports and cultural contacts, plummeted after the 2008 militant attacks in Mumbai, which New Delhi blamed on Pakistani militant groups. There has been just one bilateral tour since, when Pakistan visited India to play two Twenty20s and three one-day internationals in December 2012 and January 2013. They have, however, continued to play each other in multinational events like the World Cup. — AFP

Sports

Roma dreaming of Kiev after magical recovery against Barca

Car horns blared, fans poured into streets across the Eternal City

ROME: Roma have their sights on Kiev and the Champions League final after completing a miracle comeback against Barcelona on Tuesday to overhaul a three-goal first-leg deficit and take their place in the competition's last four.

The Italian capital came alive after a magical night at the Stadio Olimpico in which Roma-fourth in Serie A and fresh from being booed off in a 2-0 defeat against Fiorentina at the weekend-swept Lionel Messi and co aside in front of a crowd that roared itself hoarse.

Trailing 4-1 after last week's quarter-final, first leg at the Camp Nou, Edin Dzeko, Daniele De Rossi and Kostas Manolas all scored to take them through to the semi-finals on away goals against all the odds. "Perhaps the greatest night in Roma's history," was how daily Il Fatto Quotidiano described the result on Twitter.

Car horns blared and fans poured into the streets across the Eternal City as supporters hailed an incredible result for a success-starved club. The last time Roma got so far in Europe's top competition was back in 1984, when the Giallorossi contrived to lose the final on penalties to Liverpool at their own ground.

In the intervening three decades they have won just one league title and four Italian Cups, but after seeing off what winning goalscorer Manolas called "the best team on the planet", coach Eusebio Di Francesco wants his team to aim for May's final in the Ukrainian capital.

"Why shouldn't we believe? If you come all this way and get to the semi-finals, why shouldn't you believe in getting to the final in Kiev," he asked reporters after the historic win.

“ Perhaps the greatest night in Roma's history ”

Roma have brought some pride back not just to Rome but to Italian football after the country's humiliating failure to qualify for the World Cup earlier in the season. Beating one of the giants from Spain, who hammered Italy 3-0 in qualifying for this year's tournament in Russia, will be particularly sweet, especially after champions-elect Juventus were bashed 3-0 on their own patch by Real Madrid last week. "Italy needed a European team, and that's what we were tonight. Today is a great moment, but it's not enough," added Di Francesco. "This team needs to aim for Kiev. And that's it." Despite their patchy domestic form, which sees them battling with Inter Milan

local rivals Lazio for a space in next season's Champions League, Roma are through to Friday's draw-where Liverpool are potential opponents-on merit.

They haven't conceded a goal at home in the whole competition and on Tuesday restricted Barcelona to just three shots on target despite the potent attacking firepower boasted by Ernesto Valverde's side. Barca could easily have already been three down by the time De Rossi slotted home the 58th-minute penalty that made it 2-0 on the night and had the Stadio Olimpico dreaming of victory.

Before that, Marc-Andre ter Stegen pulled off a brilliant 37th-minute save from a Dzeko header and off-form club-record signing Patrik Schick wasted two very presentable headed chances. Instead it was up to Manolas to make Roma fans' dreams a reality with an 83rd-minute header that sparked pandemonium on the pitch and in the stands. — AFP



MUNICH: Sevilla's Argentinian defender Gabriel Mercado (L) and Sevilla's midfielder Roque Mesa (R) react during the final team training at the stadium in Munich, southern Germany, yesterday, on the eve of the UEFA Champions League quarter-final second football match between Bayern Munich and Sevilla. — AFP

Afghan football star helps Mexican streetkids score World Cup goal

MEXICO CITY: Yelling commands and lunging for the ball on the balding astro turf, Khalida Popal drilled the team of nine Mexican teenage girls through soccer training, weeks before they jet off to Russia for the World Cup - the street children's version.

For Popal, former captain of the Afghan women's football team, soccer can open new avenues and boost self-esteem for the Team Mexico girls, who laughed and high-fived as they tackled and scored in the baking heat.

"When you enter the pitch, you forget about everything. The only thing you think about is the ball and the game - that's the beauty of football," said Popal, who was forced to flee her homeland after death threats.

"I know what it is being without identity, being without family, being without networks," said the ambassador for Street Child United, a British charity, wearing a number 10 top with her name emblazoned on the back. "What always helped me to come through that tough and difficult situation was to play football."

Children from more than 20 countries, including India, Brazil and Kenya, will converge on Moscow in May for the Street Child World Cup, whose ambassadors include Brazil's Gilberto Silva and England's Alex Scott, ahead of FIFA's 2018 event.

With up to 150 million children living on the streets

worldwide, according to the United Nations, the organisers hope the event can help erase the stigma surrounding street children and improve their treatment. "This is a global issue of children not being in a safe home," said Joe Hewitt, head of Americas for Street Child United, on the pitch sidelines. The event is also a child rights conference, said Street Child United, which works with Casa Alianza, a non-profit in Mexico that provides a home to more than 100 children, many victims of violence, sexual abuse and trafficking.

MAN'S GAME

For Mariana Nicol, who is still adjusting to her new life at Casa Alianza, football has always been a passion but she never imagined she might get a chance to train and play for Mexico.

"I can't believe it, I feel like it's a dream," said the ponytailed 14-year-old, who is trying to finish primary school. "It's exciting to be training with many kids that I know, and to then grab the ball and run with it or hand it back."

For the Mexican team from Casa Alianza - some of whom have suffered addiction, abuse and homelessness - flying to Russia will not only expand their horizons but help them see beyond the neglect that has so far dictated their lives, said its head.

"Above all, I think the most important is to know that they can achieve whatever goals they set," said Sofia Almazan Argumedo, Casa Alianza's Mexico director. Despite growing up half a world away, the Mexican girls related to Popal's story of overcoming intense opposition and intimidation in war-torn Afghanistan to play football.

"Her personal experience is very like ours, it's very difficult. But she moved forward and, like me, sought to become a footballer," said Jazmin, 15, who also wants to become a lawyer. She declined to give her full name.

Popal recounted how Afghanistan's first women's

national team worked to encourage more women and girls to play football, despite attacks and pressure from people opposed to them playing a "man's game".

"They were saying it's against men's honour and it's not made for women. Women should stay in the kitchen and wash dishes," said Popal, her long hair pulled into a tight plait. "Many times we got attacked by groups of men. It was really, really difficult."

FREEDOM

Fearing for her life after Taliban threats, Popal fled, counting herself "one of the luckiest women in my country" that she escaped being shot like many women's rights activists.

Spending several years underground, she eventually made her way to a Danish asylum centre where she encouraged women to play football to help ease crippling stress and depression as they awaited the results of their applications.

Now living in Copenhagen, she runs the Girl Power Organization, a non-profit she founded that uses football and sport to help better integrate minorities, including immigrants and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in Europe.

Although barriers are gradually crumbling for women in Afghanistan, said Popal, they still have to overcome significant hurdles to play football and take part in social activities. Her home country is hardly alone - women footballers around the world need more funding, facilities and equal pay, she said, urging soccer's world governing body FIFA and local soccer federations to step up support.

"Football is my experience," said Popal, who also helped train the England Street Child World Cup team. "It's all about team building, staying together, having networks, having friendship, happiness and feeling freedom. It empowers every woman around the world who plays this game." — Reuters



Sepp Blatter

Blatter hits out at FIFA's World Cup bidding process

ZURICH: Former FIFA chief Sepp Blatter says he is shocked at a rule which has been inserted into the World Cup bidding process that could allow a five-man task force to disqualify a candidate before a democratic vote is held.

In 2011 the FIFA Congress, where each of the global soccer body's 211 member associations hold one vote, was given the right to choose the World Cup hosts following a change proposed by Blatter while he was president.

The first hosting decision since then will be in June at the Congress in Moscow, where only two bids are in the running - a joint proposal from the United States/Canada/Mexico and one from Morocco.

However, the two bids must first pass a technical inspection from a five-man task force, which has the power to disqualify a candidate whose proposal is seen as not up to scratch. Blatter, who was banned for six years in 2015 for unethical conduct but has repeatedly denied wrongdoing and believes he can get the suspension reversed, told Reuters that both candidates should have the right to present their bids to Congress.

The Swiss said he was concerned "that there is a movement" where a "special task force" will be given power "to decide who will be a candidate or not". He added: "That is not possible."

"You cannot deny one of the candidates (the chance) to go to Congress. This is a principle and I stick to this principle... I was shocked."

Before 2011, World Cup hosting was decided by FIFA's executive committee, which had 24 members at the time. But the previous bidding process, for the 2018 and 2022 tournaments, became embroiled in allegations of illegitimate attempts to influence the committee's voting members.

The finals were awarded to Russia and Qatar respectively at the same time after a vote in December 2010. A subsequent FIFA investigation detailed numerous attempts to influence the voting officials but there was no suggestion the race should be re-run.

NEW FORMAT

Swiss Blatter, FIFA president from 1998 to 2015, was also wary of the new 48-team format to be used at the 2026 World Cup, when the tournament will be increased from 32 countries.

The teams will be divided into 16 groups of three in the first round, with the top two qualifying for the round of 32. One team in each group will not play on a given match day. "We will see what will happen with 48 teams but one thing cannot be done - to play in groups of three because we had this problem in 1982 in Spain," Blatter said.

In that tournament the second round had four groups of three teams, with the winners qualifying for the semi-finals. The format was never used again during Blatter's tenure. "In groups of three, there is always one spectator (a team who will not be in action)," he added.

The 82-year-old was also wary of the video assistant referee (VAR) system which was approved by soccer's rule-making body IFAB in March and will be used at this year's World Cup. "For a purist in football as I am, I think it is an innovation which is going too fast," said Blatter.

Qatar coach wants 2022 World Cup hosts to play in Copa America

DOHA: Qatar's national team coach Felix Sanchez said yesterday he would welcome the chance for the 2022 World Cup hosts playing in next year's Copa America in Brazil.

Amid growing speculation that wealthy Middle Eastern emirate will be invited to take part in the South American tournament, Sanchez said the possibility of playing against some of the world's best teams was "very exciting".

"I think if this will be the case, it will be a great experience to face the top international teams in the world," Sanchez told AFP on the sidelines of a cup draw ceremony in Doha. He added: "It will be good for them to face these types of games, that's what they are going to face in 2022."

According to South American media reports, Qatar is among a number of nations invited to take part in the 2019 Copa America next June and July. China, Japan, Mexico and two other countries could also join South American giants including Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay, to push tournament numbers up to 16. South American governing body CONMEBOL announced last month that three teams from the Asian Football Confederation (AFC), in which Qatar plays, will be invited along with three other nations from either the rest of the Americas or the Caribbean.

Eight different non-South American countries have been invited to play in previous Copa Americas. Officials in the Gulf are remaining characteristically tight-lipped, claiming they are waiting for an official invitation before making any announcement.

Earlier this week, Ivan Bravo, the director of the Qatari government-funded sports scouting and training centre Aspire Academy, was forced to "clarify" statements he made apparently suggesting the 2022 hosts would definitely take part.

It is clear though that Qatar needs competitive games before 2022. Ranked 101st in the world, Qatar is desperate to develop a team capable of competing on the world stage in four years' time. "If we have a chance to play against teams from South America, we need to start to do it because for the development of the players to be ready in 2022, it's going to be good," said Spaniard Sanchez.

He took over the national side last year, the ninth different coach in 10 years, after Qatar failed to reach this year's Russia World Cup finals. — AFP

Live		Matches on TV (Local Timings)
UEFA EUROPA LEAGUE		
Olympique Marseille v Leipzig	beIN SPORTS HD 5	22:05
CSKA Moscow v Arsenal	beIN SPORTS HD 2	22:05
Sporting v Atletico de Madrid	beIN SPORTS HD 3	22:05
Red Bull Salzburg v SS Lazio	beIN SPORTS HD 4	22:05

13 'Expect the best' as Bolt boost for Jamaica at Games



14 Sixers close in on third seed with 15th straight win



15 Blatter hits out at FIFA's World Cup bidding process



MADRID: Juventus' French midfielder Blaise Matuidi (L) vies with Real Madrid's Spanish defender Dani Carvajal during the UEFA Champions League quarter-final second leg football match between Real Madrid CF and Juventus FC at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium in Madrid yesterday.— AFP

Ronaldo takes Real into semi-finals

Juve staged a sensational comeback in the return

MADRID: Cristiano Ronaldo rescued Real Madrid from a shock Champions League exit as his injury-time penalty allowed the holders to edge out Juventus in the most dramatic of quarter-finals yesterday, taking them through despite a 3-1 defeat.

Real had looked certain to make the last four following last week's 3-0 first-leg victory in Turin, but Juve staged a sensational comeback in the return at the Santiago Bernabeu. Mario Mandzukic's two first-half headers kept the dream alive before Blaise Matuidi capitalised on a Keylor Navas error to pull the Italians level with half an hour left.

But, just as a thrilling second leg looked to be heading for extra time, English referee Michael Oliver awarded Real a penalty in stoppage time. With the game in the 97th minute, Ronaldo made no mistake from 12 yards, ensuring a 3-1 defeat on the night but a 4-3 win on aggregate.

Gianluigi Buffon, making his 125th and perhaps final

Champions League appearance before retirement, was sent off for his protests. If it is to be the 40-year-old's European farewell, it was a sad way to end.

Yesterday morning, Madrid newspaper Marca had revelled in Barcelona's collapse against Roma the night before with the headline "Total Failure", but Zinedine Zidane's side came within a whisker of trumping that with an emphatic loss on their own patch.

Real conceded the opener after just 76 seconds, the fastest they have ever conceded at home in the Champions League. But Ronaldo came up trumps again, scoring in his 11th consecutive fixture in this competition, extending his own record, and keeping Real on course for a third consecutive European triumph. Zidane had handed Gareth Bale his first Champions League start since September but this was far from a night of redemption for the Welshman. He was hauled off at half-time, with Real two down, and replaced by Marco Asensio.

REAL EXPOSED

Edin Dzeko needed six minutes to set Roma on their way against Barcelona, but Juve needed just over one. Sami Khedira hung a deep cross to the back post where Mandzukic powered a header past Navas.

His second, eight minutes before half-time, was almost a carbon copy. This time it was substitute Stephan Lichtsteiner, on for Mattia De Sciglio, who was given too much space by Marcelo to cross. Again Mandzukic jumped higher than Dani Carvajal as he nodded between Navas' right hand and the near post.

In between, Real had dictated possession and created chances of their own, but Buffon was in imperious form. Just after Mandzukic got his second goal, Raphael Varane rattled the crossbar with a header to which Buffon got his fingertips.

Real, though, were shaky at the back, the channel between Marcelo and 21-year-old Jesus Vallejo regu-

larly offering Juve hope. Bale's night was up at half-time as he and Casemiro were replaced by Zidane's tried-and-trusted duo in Europe of Vazquez and Asensio.

However, Real's defensive problems were exposed again on the hour. Douglas Costa crossed from the right but Navas dropped the ball, allowing Matuidi to stab home and level the tie.

Isco drove towards the bottom corner but Buffon's hand was there and the game looked to be drifting towards extra-time until the 93rd minute. Hanging in the air at the back post, Ronaldo nodded down to Vazquez who looked certain to score from five yards before Medhi Benatia desperately challenged him from behind. Oliver pointed to the spot much and in the ensuing chaos, Buffon was sent off for his protests. Wojciech Szczesny came on to face the decisive strike of the game. Ronaldo exhaled and slammed it into the top right-hand corner to take Real into the semi-finals. —AFP

Bayern push past Sevilla into last four

MUNICH: A goalless draw against Sevilla yesterday was enough to send Bayern Munich into the Champions League last four with a 2-1 aggregate victory to keep their hopes of a treble-winning season alive.

Bayern, playing in their seventh straight Champions League quarter-final, never needed to hit top form but were in control throughout with the largely toothless Spaniards only rarely venturing into their opponents' box.

The Germans, who last won the treble in 2013 again under coach Jupp Heynckes, had secured a 2-1 advantage from last week's first leg in Spain. Sevilla ended the game with ten men after the dismissal in stoppage time of Joaquin Correa for a rough challenge.

The result, however, meant Sevilla, in the last eight of

the European Cup for the first time since their only previous appearance at this stage 60 years ago, still managed to snap Heynckes' 12-game record winning run in the competition. In a physical first half Bayern, fresh from securing the Bundesliga title last weekend, were by far the more dangerous team with Robert Lewandowski and Franck Ribery coming close. Poland forward Lewandowski, who was sporting a swollen eye after some robust defending, also narrowly headed wide four minutes after the restart. Sevilla at times looked to be lacking a sense of urgency and were badly let down by their final pass, stumbling time and again at the edge of the box and failing to get a shot on target in the entire first half.

They did hit the bar with a Correa header on the hour and Ever Banega fired narrowly wide a little later as they upped the pressure briefly in search of the two goals they needed. As Sevilla ran out of ideas, the match ended with a touch of uproar as Correa was shown a straight red card for a poor and late challenge on Javi Martinez. Bayern, though, having won 20 of their last 21 Champions League matches at home going into the game, could once again celebrate a familiar last-four ticket with a degree of comfort. — Reuters



MUNICH: Javi Bayern Munich's Spanish midfielder Javier Martinez (L) vies with Sevilla's French midfielder Steven N'Zonzi during the UEFA Champions League quarter-final second leg football match between FC Bayern Munich and Sevilla FC yesterday in Munich.— AFP

Business

THURSDAY, APRIL 12, 2018

19 Kuwait mulls law to regulate, develop insurance industry**20** Rusal removed from share, debt indexes; Moscow mulls response**21** Flydubai launches first direct flights from Dubai to Dubrovnik

SHANGHAI: A shop employee sits next to a shelf of imported foods at a supermarket in downtown Shanghai yesterday. —AFP

Aramco signs \$44bn deal for Indian refinery

Indian Oil, BP and Hindustan Petroleum set up JV with Saudi giant

NEW DELHI: Saudi Aramco yesterday announced a \$44-billion deal to build a giant refinery complex in India with three Indian firms that will become a crucial new outlet for the world's biggest supplier. The refinery at Ratnagiri on the west coast will be able to process up to 1.2 million barrels of crude a day, the Saudi company said after signing a memorandum of understanding with Indian Oil Corporation, Bharat Petroleum Corporation and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation.

Ratnagiri will be among the world's largest "refining and petrochemicals projects and will be designed to meet India's fast-growing fuels and petrochemicals demand. The project cost is estimated at around \$44 billion," said a statement. "Saudi Aramco is the only company that can undertake (a) project of this scale," company president Amin Nasser said in Delhi.

The Indian accord is just the latest in a string of deals with French, US and Asian companies announced by Aramco as it seeks secure markets for its oil and to move away from being just a producer. Saudi Arabia is one of the world's top three oil producers with Russia and the United States, while Aramco is the biggest company putting oil on the world market currently awash with product.

It will provide half of the oil to be processed at the new refinery, Saudi Oil Minister Khalid Al-Falih told reporters. Iraq has in the past year overtaken Saudi Arabia as India's main oil supplier so the refinery would be a major boost.

India is 'key'

"Investing in India is a key part of our company's global downstream strategy, and another milestone in our growing relationship with India," said Aramco president Nasser.

"Participating in this mega project will allow Saudi Aramco to go beyond our crude oil supplier role to a fully integrated position that may help usher in other areas of collaboration, such as refining, marketing, and petrochemicals for India's future energy demands," he added.

Indian Oil, Bharat Petroleum and Hindustan Petroleum have set up a joint venture for the deal with Aramco, called Ratnagiri Refinery and Petrochemicals Ltd. Aramco said it may "seek to include a strategic partner to co-invest in the mega refinery". The Saudi giant and French firm Total this week announced a \$5-billion deal to build a refinery at Jubail in Saudi Arabia.

Last month, Aramco awarded more than \$8 billion worth of contracts to American firms to boost its US refinery operations. Aramco has also pledged billions of dollars for deals in Malaysia and Indonesia in the past year. In each case, supply deals have been a condition of refinery investment. Aramco is also carefully planning a huge stock market listing, ordered by Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, amid the turbulence of the world oil market.

The hotly-awaited stock market debut will happen in 2018 or 2019, depending on the market, the kingdom's



A Saudi Aramco oil installation. Saudi Aramco, the world's biggest oil company, yesterday announced a \$44-billion deal to build a giant refinery complex in India with three Indian firms —AFP

finance minister told AFP on Tuesday.

"If the market is ready in 2018, we will go in 2018. If not, we will wait until 2019," Mohammed al-Jadaan said of the giant initial public offering.

"We are not desperate for listing. We will only list when the market is right," he said. Jadaan said the gov-

ernment had not yet decided whether to list Aramco on the Saudi exchange alone, on a stock market abroad or seek a dual listing. Saudi authorities plan an initial listing of five percent of Aramco, that would bring in more than \$100 billion and would value the company overall at \$2 trillion. —AFP

OPEC trying to define structure

NEW DELHI: OPEC oil producers and their partners are trying to work out a structure for their proposed long-term agreement on oil supplies, the energy minister for the United Arab Emirates said yesterday.

Suhail Al-Mazroui also told Reuters on the sidelines of the International Energy Forum in India that the agreement may not include a provision on cutting or increasing oil output.

The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, Russia and several other non-OPEC producers began to cut supply in January 2017 in an effort to erase a global glut of crude that had built up since 2014. OPEC and its partners have extended the pact until the end of 2018 and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman told Reuters last month that Riyadh and Russia were considering a deal to extend their alliance for years or even decades.

"We are now trying to put a structure, or a term sheet, or a charter around what is the scope of the group," Mazroui, whose country holds the OPEC presidency this year, told Reuters. —Reuters

EU unveils consumer protections after 'dieselgate' scandal

BRUSSELS: The EU yesterday unveiled rules to bolster European consumer protections by ensuring "tougher fines" for cheating companies and stronger legal ways to compensate victims.

The European Commission proposed a "new deal" for consumers following the Volkswagen "dieselgate" scandal where the bloc's consumers, unlike those in the United States, have not been compensated. But the 28-nation European Union executive said the rules will not usher in US-style lawsuits across the bloc.

"In a globalized world where the big companies have a huge advantage over individual consumers we need to level the odds," EU commissioner for consumers Vera Jourova said.

"With stronger sanctions linked to the annual turnover of a company, consumer authorities will finally get teeth to punish the cheaters," Jourova said. "It cannot be cheap to cheat." Commission Vice President Frans Timmermans warned traders will face "tougher fines" if they abuse trust and said consumers will have a right to collective redress. The move to provide stronger protections for consumers came as part of a broader effort to boost public support for the European proj-

ect following a rise in anti-EU populist sentiment and Britain's vote to leave the bloc.

Markus Beyrer, director of the BusinessEurope lobby, called the new proposals unnecessary, arguing Europeans enjoyed "the strongest consumer protection" in the world.

Monique Goyens, head of the European consumer organization BEUC, welcomed them because consumers will be able to claim compensation collectively in some cases. But BEUC feared member states may have too much discretion to determine which cases are chosen.

Under rules still to be approved by the European Parliament and the member states, online consumers will be informed clearly if they are buying products or services from a company or a private person. Online consumers will also be informed when a search result is being paid for by a trader.

Free digital services

The rules would also ensure free digital services when consumers offer personal data, such as for cloud storage services, social media or email accounts. Consumer or other qualified organizations will be able in all member states to seek compensation, replacement or repair on behalf of a group of consumers harmed. Such collective action currently exists only in some member states. Boosting food safety transparency - Unlike US-style class action lawsuits, European cases will not be open to profit-seeking law firms and restricted to consumer organizations and other non-profit groups that fulfil strict criteria.

The proposed rules will ensure consumers in all mem-

ber states-not just in some-can seek financial compensation or end contracts if they face aggressive or misleading marketing.

Under the proposal, national consumer authorities can impose penalties in a coordinated way.

If consumers are harmed across the bloc, the trader will face a maximum fine of four percent of annual turnover in each member state. Member states can also impose higher maximum fines.

Unlike in the United States, the European Union struggled to punish Volkswagen for emissions cheating that erupted in 2015 and ensure customers were compensated. In a separate consumer-related development, the commission unveiled plans to boost people's trust in scientific studies to ensure the food they eat is safe.

Under the proposals, European citizens will have immediate access to scientific studies supporting applications for approval of products affecting food safety. The move was sparked by massive citizen and environmentalist opposition to the EU's renewal for five years of the weedkiller glyphosate over fears it could cause cancer.

Critics claimed that US agro-giant Monsanto, which introduced in 1974 the brand-name Roundup containing glyphosate, unduly influenced research into the weedkiller's safety.

Greenpeace's EU spokesman Mark Breddy said publishing test results supporting pesticide applications was "the bare minimum" but complained producers still controlled testing of their own products when it should be the EU's job. —AFP

Business

MIT Enterprise Forum Pan Arab Startup contest winners to be announced April 19

Event to be held in Muscat with Zain Group as a digital partner

MUSCAT/KUWAIT/BEIRUT: The MIT Enterprise Forum Pan Arab will host the final award ceremony of the 11th edition of its Arab Startup Competition on April 19, 2018, at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman.

This year's event is in partnership with founding partner Community Jameel, and in collaboration with strategic partners Riyada and Omantel, with Zain Group as a digital partner.

A total of 80 teams from 14 Arab countries have qualified to the finals of the MIT Enterprise Forum (MITEF) Arab Startup Competition, which received thousands of applications from across the Arab world. The semi-finalists hail from 14 Arab countries, as follows: Lebanon (19), Egypt (13), the United Arab Emirates (8), Saudi Arabia (9), Jordan (7), Palestine (6), Morocco (4), Tunisia (5), Bahrain (2), Sudan (2), Kuwait (1), Qatar (1), Algeria (1), Oman (1).

The teams applied for three tracks: Ideas, Startups, and Social Entrepreneurship. Three winners will be chosen from each of the three tracks, and a total of \$160,000 will be awarded amongst the nine winners.

During the two days event, the semi-finalists will undergo training sessions focused on the art of pitching. The teams will practice their pitching skills and pitch decks in front of the trainers, and attend sessions on the "do's and don'ts" of a pitch, communication skills, and body language in order to be prepared for their oral presentations.

In addition to a mentorship activity where semi-finalists will have the chance to pitch their projects to 80+ stakeholders and partners from different expertise and backgrounds. These experts will give live feedback to the teams and share their experience in the business world. During this activity, teams will be exposed to different opportunities: coaching, mentorship, networking, and potential funding.

The Award Ceremony is preceded by a high-powered conference, including two panel discussions entitled Building Emerging Ecosystems and What Silicon Valley investors want to see in MENA.

80 semi-finalists from 14 countries competing for \$160,000 in cash prizes



Several high-profile entrepreneurs, investors, and government officials from across the Arab region and beyond will be sharing insights during the conference and judging the competition. These include Ahmad Al-Alfi of Sawari Ventures, David Fernandez of Startup Chile, Said Al-Shanfari of Omantel, Abdel Aziz

Alloughani of Faith Capital Holding, and Abeer Abdullah of Riyada.

"We are so proud that this year's biggest Arab startup event is being held in Oman. This event is not only a competition, but an opportunity for top tier Arab entrepreneurs to present and share their experiences in the area of innovation and the creation and nurturing of an ecosystem for innovation within Oman. Investing in Arab entrepreneurship will, in turn, contribute to the revitalization of the economy, and lead to the creation of new partnerships that can eventually transform into large institutions," said

Hala Fadel, MIT Enterprise Forum Pan Arab Chair and Managing Director.

Ahead of the training sessions planned to be held in Oman on April 18 and 19, pre-bootcamps were organized in five different countries: Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, the

United Arab Emirates and Morocco. During these pre-bootcamps, the 80 semi-finalists underwent design-thinking sessions and practiced their pitching to mentors from different institutions and fields, to fine-tune their deliverables which they will present to judges on April 18 and 19.

Burgan Bank to announce winner of Value Account draw for expatriates



KUWAIT: Burgan Bank will soon be announcing the winner of its Value Account Draw, who will be taking home a cash prize of KD 4000. The draw rewards customers who transfer their salary to Burgan bank for a chance to win 4,000 Kuwaiti Dinar every quarter.

The Value account provides attractive features and benefits that have been designed for expatriates living in Kuwait. Value account customers can benefit from a wide range of merchant discounts and enjoy an automatic entry into a quarterly draw for KD 4,000, whereby each KD 10 shall give the account holders one chance to enter the draw. Value account customers can also obtain a free credit card for the first year and a monthly instalment fees of KD 2.5 thereafter.

For more information on opening a Value account or about the quarterly draw, customers are urged to visit their nearest Burgan Bank branch and receive all the details, or simply by calling the bank's call center where customer service representative will be delighted to assist with any questions on the Value account or any of the bank's products or services.

Air Arabia Egypt starts direct flights between Sohag and Kuwait

ALEXANDRIA: As part of its route expansion strategy, Air Arabia Egypt launched a new route linking Sohag to Egypt to Kuwait. The new flights operate three times a week, on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, departing from Sohag International Airport (HMB) at 2340 hours and arriving in Kuwait International Airport (KWI) at 0305 hours the following day.

The return flight will depart Kuwait at 0345 hours and land in Sohag at 0535 hours local time - operating Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays.

Adel Al Ali, Group Chief Executive Officer of Air Arabia, said: "Egypt is one of our fastest growing markets driven by both business and tourist travellers. The expansion of our existing network of direct flights from and to Egypt is aligned with our ongoing commitment to offering our passengers access to destinations at tremendous value."



Air Arabia, currently operates flights to over 148 routes across the globe from five hubs located in the Middle East and North Africa, continues on the mis-

sion to create an ever-expanding network of diverse destinations, allowing for high-quality and cost-effective travel.

Britain's Tesco returns to annual net profit

LONDON: British retail king Tesco rebounded into annual net profit on strong sales and restructuring, the group said yesterday, as its recovery continued in the wake of a costly accounting scandal.

The supermarket giant revealed in a statement that earnings after taxation rebounded sharply to £1.2 billion (\$1.7 billion, 1.4 billion euros) in its 2017/2018 financial year to February.

That contrasted with a net loss of £40 million in 2016/2017, when it was hurt by costs arising from the accounting fiasco. Excluding exceptional items, operating or underlying profit jumped 28 percent to £1.6 billion,

broadly in line with company forecasts and after a major restructuring overseen by chief executive Dave Lewis.

The news, combined with confirmation of the first shareholder dividend since 2014, sent Tesco's share price soaring to the top of the London stock market. Total sales grew three percent to £57.5 billion despite tough times in home market Britain, where high inflation has eroded consumers' purchasing power as the Brexit-hit pound ramps up import costs.

Tesco-the world's third-biggest supermarket chain after France's Carrefour and global leader Wal-Mart of the United States-also has global operations dotted elsewhere including China, India, Ireland, Malaysia, Slovakia and Thailand.

'Strong progress'

"This has been another year of strong progress, with the ninth consecutive quarter of growth," said Lewis in yesterday's results statement.

"More people are choosing to shop at Tesco and our brand is stronger, as customers recognise improve-

ments in both quality and value." Tesco, which completed its vast £3.7-billion takeover of British wholesaler Booker last month, added that it was on course to deliver at least £200 million of annual cost savings from the deal. Tesco has been dogged in recent years by an accounting scandal and fierce domestic competition from German discount chains Aldi and Lidl.

The group had slumped into a record loss of £5.7 billion in 2014/2015 on a vast property writedown and challenging home trade, before rebounding into slender profit in 2015/2016.

However, it then suffered a net loss of £40 million in 2016/2017, as the performance was skewed by a £235-million hit in fines and costs arising from the accounting scandal.

Last month, Britain's Serious Fraud Office decided that it would seek a retrial of three former Tesco executives, after a first hearing collapsed when one defendant suffered a heart attack. The three had all pleaded not guilty to fraud and false accounting after Tesco overstated profits in 2014. —AFP

EXCHANGE RATES

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
Europe		
British Pound	0.418960	0.426460
Czech Korune	0.006578	0.015878
Danish Krone	0.045604	0.050604
Euro	0.364450	0.371950
Georgian Lari	0.123967	0.123967
Hungarian O.001096	0.001286	
Norwegian Krone	0.034573	0.039773
Romanian Leu	0.062379	0.079229
Russian ruble	0.004966	0.004966
Slovakia	0.008928	0.018928
Swedish Krona	0.031901	0.036901
Swiss Franc	0.307496	0.318496
Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.223930	0.235930
New Zealand Dollar	0.213900	0.223400
America		
Canadian Dollar	0.231351	0.240351
US Dollars	0.296600	0.301000
US Dollars Mint	0.297100	0.301000
Asia		
Bangladesh Taka	0.003190	0.003774
Chinese Yuan	0.046271	0.049771
Hong Kong Dollar	0.036221	0.038971

Indian Rupee	0.004090	0.004740
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000017	0.000023
Japanese Yen	0.002720	0.002900
Korean Won	0.000271	0.000286
Malaysian Ringgit	0.073821	0.079821
Nepalese Rupee	0.003000	0.003170
Pakistan Rupee	0.002500	0.002790
Philippine Peso	0.005680	0.005980
Singapore Dollar	0.223850	0.233850
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001605	0.002185
Taiwan	0.010164	0.010344
Thai Baht	0.009275	0.009825

Arab	
Bahraini Dinar	0.799482
Egyptian Pound	0.014232
Iranian Riyal	0.000083
Iraqi Dinar	0.000202
Jordanian Dinar	0.419500
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000148
Moroccan Dirhams	0.023294
Omani Riyal	0.774721
Qatar Riyal	0.078305
Saudi Riyal	0.079100
Syrian Pound	0.001274
Tunisian Dinar	0.121850
Turkish Lira	0.069106
UAE Dirhams	0.080444
Yemeni Riyal	0.000977

Join the fun with Renault's 'Koleos Karaoke' running from April 14-16 in Kuwait

KUWAIT: Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al-Babtain Co, the authorized agent of Renault in Kuwait is urging all to visit the Renault store in Al-Rai, 4th Ring Road on 14th, 15th and 16th April between 12 pm to 8 pm and enter the opportunity to win one of three brand-new Renault Koleos SUVs.

In collaboration with the region's biggest TV show: The Voice Arabia, the 'Koleos Karaoke' is sponsored by Renault Middle East. Customers who test drive any Renault model will automatically qualify to take part in the singing competition for a chance to win.

Participants will be introduced to a custom-made recording studio that has been installed inside Renault's most popular SUV allowing participants to read and sing the lyrics of the unique track, composed especially for Renault by music



producer, Wael Kodeih. Each performance will appear on a dedicated website where members of the public can vote for their favorite video performance.

Each week, the five most popular videos will be short-listed and entered into a grand finale when, in the final week of the competition, three winning videos will be randomly selected in a prize draw and the singers will be awarded a brand-new Renault Koleos.

Business

Kuwait mulls law to regulate, develop insurance industry

Insurance sector plays key role in economy: Official

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: Assistant Undersecretary at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry Abdullah Al-Awais revealed a higher committee will study and develop the insurance industry in Kuwait, headed by representatives of the ministry of commerce and with the membership of all sectors and government parties involved. In his speech on behalf of Minister of Commerce



and Industry Khaled Al-Roudhan during a conference and meeting of insurance companies at the Sheraton Hotel, Awais said this step will help in developing a bright future for this sector.

"The ministry is currently working on studying and evaluating a number of options, including a draft law regulating the insurance market as one of the proposals of the ministry

of commerce and industry, as well as studying other proposals related to establishing an independent body or strengthening the existing administration. All proposals will be subject to discussion and consultation with insurance sector companies," he said.

Transparency

"We understand and agree with demands that call for the reorganization of the market



by setting controls that will help the insurance sector take a transparent approach. This will enable the insurance industry to increase its share of the market, which currently stands at 450 million dinars for all economic, commercial, industrial and investment activities," Awais said. Awais pointed out that the insurance sector is one of the economically impor-

tant and pivotal sectors and it should be supported to enhance its progress and organizational advancement towards new and ambitious horizons that suit the aspirations of the next stage, stressing that scientific and objective discussion is the way to monitor, diagnose and identify the requirements for the development of the insurance market. He vowed the minister will keep up with expectations to promote investment in this sector.

Chairman of the organizing committee of the conference Khaled Al-Awadhi said the insurance industry is needed within the structure of the modern economic system and affects the protection of other financial sectors and the economy as a whole. "Regulation of the insurance sector and establishing a higher authority for oversight and governance applications are future challenges," he said. Awadhi added that the activity of the insurance industry has developed significantly and has become one of the most powerful industries and an important pillar that supports economic activity, where companies, bodies and individuals find insurance as a protective shield and an effective means against risks.

Independent body

"It is no secret that all companies in the insurance sector are in agreement with a fundamental requirement to regulate the market, either by establishing an independ-



KUWAIT: Assistant Undersecretary at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry Abdullah Al-Awais and other officials during the insurance conference. — By Joseph Shagra

ent body or issuing a new modern law, or by assigning the sector to the Central Bank of Kuwait," he added. On the other hand, sector leaders categorically reject the proposals of the sector's consolidation under the supervision of the Capital Market Authority, which is a competent authority for securities and stock exchanges and insurance expertise, since the Central Bank has deeper and more successful experience.

In his review of the most important challenges facing the industry in the Kuwaiti market, Awadhi said some negatives led to deviation of the industry from its lofty purpose to contribute effectively to the Kuwaiti economy. He added that these shortcomings and negatives are sufficient to accelerate a new modern law that cleans up the market, controls competitiveness and mechanisms of work and protects the rights of all parties.

China to allow more FDI in its financial sector this year: BOC

BOAO, China: China will allow domestic and foreign financial firms to compete on an equal footing and "sharply" expand the business scope for foreign banks, central bank governor Yi Gang said yesterday. The pledge, made at the annual Boao Forum for Asia in southern Hainan province, echoed previous promises from Beijing to open the financial sector but comes at a time of heightened pressure on China from the United States over trade and access to China's markets.

On the trade front, Yi said China and the United States should deal with their trade issues in a rational way. Asked by a panel moderator whether China would devalue its currency to counter US tariffs, Yi said the exchange rate mechanism is "market-determined" and is "working very well as it is."

He did not say whether China would

devalue its currency or not. Yi, who became governor of the People's Bank of China (PBOC) last month, said China would allow foreign investors into trust, financial leasing, auto finance and consumer finance by the end of the year. The government would also not set foreign ownership limits for investment in wealth management companies set up by commercial banks by the end of 2018.

Yi renewed China's pledge to further open the financial markets, and said most financial opening measures would be implemented by the end of June. He did not specify exactly what policies he was referring to.

Yi also said interest rate differentials between China and the United States were in a comfortable range, and said China was prepared for global monetary policy normalization. — Reuters

Agility holds its AGM and EGM for 2017

KUWAIT: Agility, a leading global logistics provider, held yesterday its Annual Ordinary and Extraordinary General Assembly Meeting at the Radisson Blu Hotel, with a quorum of 77.7 percent.

The company's shareholders approved all the items on the agenda, including Agility's audited financial results, and endorsed the Board of Directors' recommendation for a cash dividend of 15 percent (15 fils for every share) and a bonus share distribution of 15 percent (15 shares for every 100 shares). These dividends are entitled for the shareholders who will be registered on the company's shareholders' record on 14 May 2018. Dividends will be distributed on 20 May 2018.

In 2017, Agility reported a net profit of KD 68.5 million (54.4fils per share), an increase of 16 percent over the same period in 2016. Revenue for the year reached KD 1,407 million and EBITDA was KD 135.2 million.

Tarek Sultan, Agility CEO and Vice Chairman, said, "Agility witnessed another



year of healthy growth and continued to plant the seeds for a future of sustainable growth. To reach our target of \$800 million EBITDA by 2020, we remain focused on improving GIL's performance and investing in our Infrastructure companies." "Agility is accelerating its strategy to transform the business through technology and establish its position as the leading digital player in our industry.

The company continues to grow in emerging markets logistics parks, fuel logistics, airport services, and commercial real estate development. The core commercial logistics business is also growing its volumes, despite margin pressure in a tight market. Finally, I would like to thank our valued shareholders, customers, employees and partners for their commitment that reflected a strong year," said Sultan.

Draghi sees little impact from trade tensions for now

FRANKFURT AM MAIN: European Central Bank chief Mario Draghi yesterday said the US-China trade spat has so far had little impact on the eurozone economy, but warned that the risk of further retaliation was a key concern. "So far the direct effects of tariffs that have been imposed or announced to be imposed are not big," Draghi told students at an event in Frankfurt.

But the top central banker warned that the world had only seen "the first round" in the row between the United States and China. "The key issue is retaliation," he warned. US President Donald Trump last month sparked fears of a potentially devastating trade war between the world's top two economies after threatening massive tariffs on Chinese imports.

Heated rhetoric on both sides has prompted warnings of tit-for-tat measures against hundreds of billions of dollars worth

of goods. But Chinese President Xi Jinping on Tuesday soothed world markets with a conciliatory speech pledging to further open up the country's economy, ease auto tariffs and take action on intellectual property rights, all major US concerns.

In response, Trump tweeted that he was "Very thankful for President Xi of China's kind words", adding "We will make great progress together!"

International Monetary Fund chief Christine Lagarde also waded into the US-China stand-off on Wednesday, warning that protectionist trade policies would undermine global growth.

Draghi said the greatest threats to the eurozone's robust recovery came from potential new barriers to trade and geopolitical risks such as the diplomatic tensions between the European Union and Russia, and the worsening security situation in the Middle East. — AFP

US consumer prices post first drop in 10 months

WASHINGTON: US consumer prices fell for the first time in 10 months in March, weighed down by a decline in the cost of gasoline, but underlying inflation continued to firm amid rising prices for healthcare and rental accommodation. The drop in the headline monthly inflation reading reported by the Labor Department yesterday is likely temporary, with producer prices increasing solidly in March.

In addition, the tightening labor market is expected to start generating significant wage inflation in the second half of the year. As such, many economists believe the Federal Reserve will raise interest rates three more times this year. The US central bank increased borrowing costs last month and forecast at least two additional rate hikes in 2018. "US inflation is warming up rather than heating up," said Sal Guatieri,

a senior economist at BMO Capital Markets in Toronto. "Still, the upward trend could suffice to nudge the Fed three more times this year."

The Consumer Price Index slipped 0.1 percent last month, the first and largest drop since May 2017, after climbing 0.2 percent in February, the Labor Department said. In the 12 months through March, the CPI increased 2.4 percent. That was the largest annual gain in a year and followed February's 2.2 percent increase. Annual inflation is rising as the weak readings from last year drop from the calculation. Excluding the volatile food and energy components, the CPI climbed 0.2 percent, matching February's increase.

The so-called core CPI rose 2.1 percent year-on-year in March, the largest advance since February 2017, after increasing 1.8 percent in February. The core CPI is now well above the 1.8 percent annual average increase over the past 10 years. Economists had forecast the CPI unchanged in March and the core CPI rising 0.2 percent. The Fed tracks a different index, the personal consumption expenditures price index (PCE) excluding food and energy, which has consistently run below the central bank's 2 percent target since mid-2012.

The dollar was trading slightly lower against a basket of currencies while prices for US

Treasuries were up, US stock index futures were weak. Inflation is also expected to get a boost from a \$1.5 trillion income tax cut package and increased government spending, as well as a weakening U.S. dollar. Economists expect the core PCE price index will breach its target sometime this year.

Gasoline prices tumbled 4.9 percent in March, the largest drop since last May, after falling 0.9 percent in February. Food prices edged up 0.1 percent after being unchanged in February. The core CPI was lifted by rising rents and healthcare costs. Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence, which is what a homeowner would pay to rent or receive from renting a home, increased 0.3 percent last month after climbing 0.2 percent in February.

Healthcare costs increased 0.4 percent, with prices for hospital care shooting up 0.6 percent and the cost of doctor visits rising 0.2 percent. Healthcare costs rose 2.0 percent year-on-year, below the 2.9 percent average annual rate over the past 10 years.

Apparel prices fell 0.6 percent after two straight months of robust increases. There were also declines in the cost of telecommunication, used cars and trucks, tobacco and education. Prices for new motor vehicles and recreation were unchanged last month. — Reuters

ADB sees 6% Asia growth but warns on risks from trade war

HONG KONG: The Asian Development Bank lifted its outlook for growth in developing Asia this year thanks to a pick-up in the global export demand but it warned of risks from a potential China-US trade war. Its flagship Asian Development Outlook yesterday also flagged the impact of technological advancements on jobs in the region, which it said could worsen already deep inequality.

The ADB predicted growth of six percent this year, compared with its previous forecast of 5.7 percent, and 5.9 percent in 2019. The forecast comes against a backdrop of rising trade tensions between China and the United States, the world's biggest economies and key drivers of global growth. Since President Donald Trump at

the start of March imposed tariffs on steel and aluminum imports as part of his protectionist "America First" agenda, China and the United States have swapped tit-for-tat tariff threats on goods worth hundreds of billions of dollars. ADB chief economist Yasuyuki Sawada said in a statement: "Though prospects are firm, risks are clearly to the downside. Protectionist measures and retaliation against them could undermine the recent pickup in trade growth."

The report said measures implemented by the US so far have not "discernibly dented" trade to and from developing Asian countries, but it added further actions and retaliation could hurt optimism. It added a "less headline-grabbing" risk lies in diminished capital flows to the region if the US decides to raise interest rates faster than expected.

Rise of the robots

It predicted Chinese growth would slow this year to 6.6 percent and 6.4 percent in 2019 as it "leans further toward financial stability and a more sustainable growth trajectory". The giant economy expanded 6.9 percent last year despite battles against a massive debt and pollution, while leaders look to transition its growth driver

to domestic consumption instead of the exports and state investment. Most Southeast Asian economies are projected to sustain or exceed the 5.2 percent expansion seen last year, with stronger domestic demand but moderating export growth. And India is seen as the leading major economy, growing 7.3 percent thanks to banking reforms and improved productivity from a new tax system. South Asia will be the fastest growing in the region, the ADB says. The Manila-based bank also warned that emerging technologies such as robotics, artificial intelligence and three-dimensional printing can fuel productivity but threaten jobs.

It cited the apparel and footwear industries in the region that are already experimenting with robotic production. These developments have raised concerns that automation "could cause widespread job loss, slow wage growth, and worsen income inequality in developed and developing economies alike", it said.

As automation poses challenges to workers, new technologies may also create opportunities and jobs that require a different set of skills. Workers who are not trained in skills such as digital literacy or "nonroutine and cognitive tasks" may risk being left behind. — AFP



MANILA: Vendors waiting for customers along a highway in Manila. — AFP

Business

Rusal removed from share, debt indexes; Moscow mulls response

Rusal shares to be deleted from FTSE Russell's indexes

LONDON: International financial groups took action yesterday to distance themselves from the shares, bonds and metal of Russian aluminum giant Rusal after the United States imposed sanctions on the company. In Moscow, the government pledged to provide Rusal with short-term liquidity and offer other assistance while it also considered hitting back by looking at US goods or goods produced in Russia by US companies.

Shares of United Company Rusal, one of the world's biggest aluminum producers, will be deleted from global equity and debt indexes while its metal will not be allowed on the London Metal Exchange (LME) and the CME Group. The US Treasury on April 6 announced sanctions against seven Russian oligarchs and 12 companies they own or control, saying they were profiting from a Russian state engaged in "malign activities" around the world.

This included Oleg Deripaska and his Hong Kong-listed company Rusal and his newly created holding company En+ Group. The two companies will be deleted from FTSE Russell's equity indexes effective from the open tomorrow, the index provider said in a statement.

Rusal's shares in Hong Kong have slumped by half since the sanctions were imposed on Friday and gave up another 1.9 percent yesterday. The new sanctions were an attempt to capture global markets for US companies, Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev told Russia's lower house of parliament.

"Measures in response should be well thought-out," he said. "There are quite a lot of products ... in our markets that we get from the USA." Russia imported \$12.5 billion worth of US products in 2017,

according to official Russian customs data. That included aircraft, machinery, pharmaceutical and chemical products.

Debt, metal excluded

On the debt front, Rusal will be excluded on April 30 from JPMorgan's CEMBI index group of emerging market corporate bonds, the US bank said. The exclusion will be done as part of the end-of-month rebalancing of the indexes, it added. As of Friday, April 6, Rusal has a weight of 0.12 percent and 0.15 percent in the CEMBI Broad Diversified and CEMBI Diversified indexes respectively, JPM said in a statement seen by Reuters that was sent to clients late on Monday.

Moody's said it was withdrawing all ratings for Rusal due to its own business reasons.

"At the time of withdrawal the ratings were: corporate family rating of Ba3 and probability of default rating of Ba3-PD. At the time of withdrawal these ratings had a positive outlook," it said in a statement. Rusal's aluminum brands are being

LME, CME suspend aluminum from metal exchange

excluded from the LME, the world's biggest market for industrial metals, and the US Comex exchange owned by the CME.

The CME revoked approved status for Rusal's metal for delivery against CME aluminum futures contracts, effective from April 10, a notice on the CME website said. The London Metal Exchange said late on Tuesday Rusal's aluminum would be suspended from its list of approved brands from April 17 after some members raised concerns about settling contracts with sanctions-hit companies.

Aluminum prices extended their rally yesterday to



ST PETERSBURG: Russian billionaire Oleg Deripaska, who heads aluminum producer Rusal, attends the St Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPIEF) in Saint Petersburg in this file photo. —AFP

a sixth straight session, hitting an 11-week peak, amid persistent worry about shortages. Analysts at CRU say Rusal accounts for 14 percent of aluminum supplies outside top producer China. Global output this year is estimated at 65 million tons.

"There's a lot of panic and uncertainty. Buyers are scrambling to try to replace where they can, to plug the gap left by not having Russian-origin metal," said Robin Bhar, head of metals research at Societe Generale in London. The sanctions have had

knock-on impact on precious metal palladium, which has surged 6 percent this week on the back of concerns about supply from number one producer Russia. Although the supply pipeline of the metal, more than two-fifths of which is sourced in Russia, has not been directly hit by the sanctions, the market has been rattled by the inclusion of Deripaska on the blacklist. Deripaska's Rusal owns a 28 percent stake in Norilsk Nickel, the world's biggest palladium producer. —Reuters

Cushing's oil market clout wanes amid US export boom

NEW YORK: The volume of oil sitting in 300 steel tanks in a nine-square-mile radius in Cushing, Oklahoma has long been a key barometer for the health of US crude supply and the nation's benchmark for daily trading of billions of dollars in the commodity.

But those tanks could soon drain to levels near effectively empty, even as US oil production soars past a new record of 10.4 million barrels per day. Oil supplies have fallen before in Cushing for a variety of seasonal or market-driven reasons. But this time, there is no shortage of crude in the market. In fact, US production is straining pipeline and storage capacity. The declining volumes stored at Cushing reflects a more permanent shift, underscoring the hub's waning influence as the primary measuring stick for the US oil market and the leading barometer of future supply, demand and prices.

Companies are now spending millions of dollars building infrastructure to facilitate trading and storage elsewhere, such as in Houston and other Gulf Coast ports. That could pave the way for a change in the US benchmark oil price, used to value tens of billions of dollars of crude and futures contracts every day. The current benchmark - called West Texas Intermediate crude, or "WTI" - has been derived from the price of physical oil delivered to Cushing for more than three decades.

Traders and major global crude buyers have advocated replacing WTI with a new benchmark futures contract that would reflect the value of crude delivered to the Gulf Coast. The price of oil in Cushing - which bills itself as "the pipeline crossroads of the world" - is used to value crude grades produced around the United States and some oil imported from Canada, Mexico, and South America. Prices at the hub also provide the basis for an average of 1.3 million WTI futures contracts worth about \$82 billion at current prices - that change hands on the CME Group's New York Mercantile Exchange every day, making it one of the world's most actively traded commodities.

Crude flows change

But as more pipelines are built to take oil from US shale fields to Gulf refineries or for export markets, much of the crude produced in the giant Permian Basin oilfield in Texas and elsewhere no longer passes through Cushing. Instead, producers are increasingly shipping directly to seaports such as Houston, where vessels carry the oil to dozens of countries worldwide. That reflects a major transformation in global crude flows since the United States lifted a four-decade ban on oil exports in late 2015. Some traders and buyers argue the benchmark needs to change to reflect this.

Joshua Wade, a crude oil marketer in Oklahoma, sees the benchmark delivery point moving south before long. "That's the direction it's moving," he said. "As opposed to importing, now you're exporting through the same infrastructure ... The oil capital of the nation is in Houston." —Reuters

War drums beat world stocks down

LONDON: Stock markets retreated yesterday as US Donald Trump vowed to strike Syria over its alleged use of chemical weapons. "A touch of risk aversion crept into financial markets on Wednesday, as the sense of relief over easing US-China trade tensions was overshadowed by the rising geopolitical risk surrounding Syria," said analyst Lukman Otonuga at FXTM online trading firm.

Trump said yesterday that "missiles will be coming" in response to an alleged chemical attack in Syria, defying Russian warnings against a strike. Upping the stakes in an escalating confrontation with Moscow, Trump took to Twitter in the strongest assertion yet that he plans to take military action in Syria.

"Russia vows to shoot down any and all missiles fired at Syria. Get ready Russia, because they will be coming, nice and new and 'smart!' You shouldn't be partners with a Gas Killing Animal who kills his people and enjoys it!" Trump wrote. The main US stock indices opened lower, with the Dow dropping 0.8 percent in the first minute of trading.

European markets were also lower in afternoon trading, with both Frankfurt and Paris down more than half a percentage point. London fared better, with the FTSE 100 down just 0.1 percent.

Oil prices benefited, however. "Escalating tensions in the Middle East have stimulated concerns over potential supply disruptions: this is likely the main culprit behind oil's recent aggressive appreciation," said Otonuga.

Oil prices have approached three-year highs, with easing concerns about a US-China trade war also helping sentiment. Asian equities flitted between gains and losses, with hopes that a China-US trade war will be averted providing some support.

In a thinly-veiled warning to Trump—who has locked horns with China on trade-International Monetary Fund boss Christine Lagarde said yesterday that countries should open trade further by reforming their own domestic practices rather than putting up new barriers.

Ruble slides to 2016 lows on sanctions sell-off, Syria tensions

MOSCOW: The fell yesterday to its lowest levels since 2016 as tensions with the United States over new punitive sanctions and the conflict in Syria eclipsed any benefit from higher oil prices.

The Russian market has been in a sharp sell-off since the United States imposed new sanctions against Moscow on April 6, targeting some of Russia's biggest companies and most prominent businessmen. Tensions between Moscow and Washington escalated further yesterday after Russia warned that any US missiles fired at Syria over a suspected chemical weapons attack would be shot down. US President Donald Trump said Russia should "get ready" and missiles "will be coming."

Shortly after Trump's statement, the ruble hit 65.06 versus the US dollar on the Moscow Exchange, its weakest level since late November 2016, and losing more than 11 percent of its value since the sanctions were imposed. While fundamental factors, such as the state of the Russian economy and macroeconomic policies remained unchanged, risk aversion towards Russian assets has soared in recent days.

The market is now closely watching for an indication of how Moscow will respond to the sanctions and any US



NEW YORK: Traders work on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) yesterday in New York City. —AFP

'Steer clear'

Governments "need to steer clear of protectionism in all its forms," Lagarde urged, adding that the "system of rules and shared responsibility is now in danger of being torn apart". Chinese President Xi Jinping had soothed world markets on Tuesday with a conciliatory speech pledging to further open up the world's number two economy, ease auto tariffs and take action on US intellectual property rights.

The measures address some of the key issues that have irked Trump and came after the White House on Friday unveiled another round of levies on billions of dollars of

Chinese goods. Xi's comments tempered worries about a potentially devastating trade war that could hammer the global economy just as it gets back on track after the financial crisis. The Xi speech followed a series of tit-for-tat threats by the US and China to impose retaliatory tariffs on one another that have rattled markets in recent weeks. The market had surged Tuesday on easing trade worries as well as geopolitical concerns as Western governments consider their response to an alleged chemical attack in Syria, while the US is also toying with slapping Iran with sanctions. —AFP

action in Syria. Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev said retaliation to the sanctions ought to be "appropriate", but also that Moscow should look at imported US goods and US companies operating in Russia when considering its response.

In a sign that the ruble's drop was causing concern for authorities, Finance Minister Anton Siluanov said Russia had put purchases of foreign currency for its reserves on hold to avoid extra pressure on the falling currency. "These purchases were not carried out and will be carried out later in order not to have additional impact on the situation on the currency market," Siluanov said.

Central bank data showed the finance ministry did not buy any foreign currency for its reserves on Monday. As of 13:45 GMT, the ruble was 2.49 percent weaker on the day at 64.59. Versus the euro, the ruble shed 2.7 percent to 79.95, having earlier slid beyond the psychological threshold of 80 to 80.50, a level last seen in March 2016.

"Macroeconomic indicators suggest the ruble is massively undervalued," Otkritie Brokerage said in a note. The market has largely ignored a rise in prices for oil, Russia's main export. Brent crude futures rose to \$71.34 on Tuesday and hovered at around \$71.70 yesterday.

"With the current level of oil prices, the ruble looks fundamentally undervalued: according to our model, USDRUB should be not higher than 58 now," VTB Capital analysts said in a note. "However, more than anything else USDRUB is now being driven by flows, which might well remain relatively skewed to the bid side, if hedging persists."

Buying opportunities

The impact of the latest US sanctions against 17 senior Russian government officials, seven so-called "oligarchs" and 12 companies they own or control has spread across

Russian markets and risks derailing a fragile economic recovery which had just begun to take hold following the Kremlin's last confrontation with the West in 2014. Tim Ash at BlueBay Asset Management said Russia would struggle under the weight of any further sanctions imposed by the US Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC).

"I have read a lot of waffle in the last few days talking about Russia's solid macro fundamentals," he wrote in a note. "Good luck with that when/if further OFAC sanctions hit hard if we do see further escalation." The volatility and uncertainty triggered by the latest round of sanctions has prompted some companies to change their plans, but also providing buying opportunities.

Russian unit of Volkswagen Bank said it had postponed a planned bond issue worth 5 billion rubles (\$78.34 million) due to unfavourable market conditions, Interfax reported. At the same time, Novatek, Russia's largest independent gas producer, said it bought back 482,840 ordinary shares from the market on Tuesday. Shares in Novatek dropped to as low as 656.3 rubles on Monday, down from levels of around 770 rubles seen before the sanctions were announced.

After a steep decline in the shares of Russia's largest lender Sberbank, the bank's top managers bought shares of the lender to the amount of 45 million rubles, according to a regulatory filing.

Shares in Rusal, the world's second-biggest aluminum producer, were down more than 4 percent on the Moscow Exchange. They have lost 34 percent of their value since Friday when the company was put on the US sanctions list. Stock indexes were mixed. The dollar-denominated RTS index was down 1.8 percent to 1,070.93 points, while the ruble-based MOEX index was up 0.87 percent at 2,192.03 points. —Reuters

Business

Flydubai launches first direct flights from Dubai to Dubrovnik

Airline offers greater frequency to over 200 global destinations



KUWAIT: Dubai-based flydubai's first flight touched down yesterday in Dubrovnik (DBV). On board the flight there was a delegation of representatives from the airline together with members of the media and social media. The delegation was met by the State Secretary of the Ministry of Tourism of Tonci Glavina, the Managing Director of Dubrovnik Airport, Frano Luetic, the airlines' representative in Croatia, Predrag Popovic and the Country Manager, Austria and Croatia for Emirates Martin Gross. On arrival, the inaugural flight was met with a traditional water cannon salute.

Flydubai will operate Dubrovnik as a seasonal summer route, offering four flights a week between 10 April and 25 October 2018. With the launch of flights to Krakow in Poland on 08 April and the upcoming launch of flights in June to Catania in Italy and to Thessaloniki in Greece, flydubai's route network in Europe will reach 26 points with 135 weekly flights.

Jeyhun Efendi, Senior Vice President Commercial Operations (UAE, Middle East,

Europe & CIS) at flydubai, said: "Flydubai is the first airline to offer passengers convenient, direct flights from Dubai to Dubrovnik. Our new service reflects flydubai's commitment to open up 71 previously underserved markets on our network of more than 90 destinations. We offer affordable travel options in both Business and Economy Classes together with an enjoyable experience on board our young fleet of Boeing 737 aircraft."

Business Class passengers benefit from a dedicated 24-hour Business Team to assist with bookings and enquiries throughout the journey, as well as a priority check-in service, comfortable spacious seats and dining options. Flydubai offers its Economy Class passengers a variety of features onboard including comfortable seating, a range of tasty snacks to purchase during the flights and the award-winning inflight entertainment system with more than 1,000 hours of films,

television, music and an extensive range of Arabic, English and Russian content. The airline's latest offering includes WiFi connectivity and Live TV on selected flights.



Codeshare as part of Emirates flydubai partnership

Emirates will codeshare on this route as part of the Emirates flydubai partnership announced in July 2017. For bookings under the codeshare, Emirates passengers will receive complimentary



meals and the Emirates checked baggage allowance on flights operated by flydubai in Business and Economy classes. With the partnership, passengers from the hundreds of destinations spanning six continents in over 80 countries will have an opportunity to travel to Dubrovnik via Dubai.

"Opening this new route is an exciting and significant development for Emirates, flydubai, Croatia and the UAE. Not only can travellers in this region can take a flight with flydubai from Dubrovnik and connect seamlessly in Dubai to an exciting range of Emirates' destinations, but we will also bring in more tourists to Croatia from Dubai and beyond, boosting the economy and extending business relations," said Martin Gross, Country Manager, Croatia and Austria, Emirates. Dubrovnik is a city in southern Croatia located on the spectacular coastline of the Adriatic Sea. The city of Dubrovnik, known for its Old Town, is included

in the UNESCO list of World Heritage Sites. Frano Luetic, Managing Director of Dubrovnik Airport, commented on the inaugural: "We welcome the launch of flydubai flights from Dubai to Dubrovnik. This is a significant milestone both for our airport and the entire Dubrovnik region. Connectivity is of paramount importance in today's global world and this new route will make Dubrovnik more accessible for tourists from the Middle East, Asia and Australia and contribute to the further development of the region's tourism sector."

Another hidden gem of the Adriatic coastline is Tivat in Montenegro and is under a two hour drive from Dubrovnik which provides an opportunity for a European touring holiday. Tivat is also a flydubai destination served by three flights a week. Flydubai operates flights to 26 destinations in Europe including Bosnia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Greece, Italy, Macedonia (FYROM), Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Turkey, Ukraine.

Doha Bank opens its Chennai branch

KUWAIT: Doha Bank, one of the largest commercial banks in Qatar, announced the official opening of its Chennai branch. The branch inauguration and ribbon-cutting ceremony was held on April 4, 2018. The inauguration ceremony was attended by the board members including Fahad Bin Mohammad Bin Jabor Al-Thani, Chairman, Abdul Rehman Bin Mohammad Bin Jabor Al-Thani, Managing Director, Abdulla Bin Mohamed Bin Jabor Al-Thani, Board Member, Ali Ibrahim Abdullah Al-Malki, Board Member and Dr R Seetharaman, CEO along with the senior management team of Doha Bank. The inauguration ceremony was also attended by several high-profile dignitaries from Qatar including Abdulrahman Ahmad A Y Al-Obaidan, Hassen Aliakbar G Radwani, Ibrahim Nabina, Maqbool Habeeb J Khalifan, Solaiman Haider S H Al Haider, Ahmad Abdul Kareem Al-Jalham and Yousif Mousa E Abuhelaiqa. In addition, the members of Local Advisory Board (LAB) of Doha Bank India - Shailesh Haribhakti, Dr Kailash Mishra, Rajmal Parakh and Sunder George - were also present.

Earlier, P Kumaran, Ambassador of India to Qatar had met Abdul Rahman Bin Mohammad Bin Jabor Al-Thani, Managing Director of Doha Bank, to convey his best wishes and support on the launch of their new branch in Chennai. As part of the proceedings, a separate press conference was held, headed by Sheikh Abdul Rahman Bin Mohammed Bin

Jabor Al-Thani - Managing Director of Doha Bank, Dr R Seetharaman - CEO of Doha Bank, Frank Hamer - Head of International Banking, Ahmad Al Hanzab - Head of Administration & Properties and Manish Mathur - Country Head India and attended by more than 100 representatives from various press and media houses, both local and national.

Hospitality

Sheikh Abdul Rahman Bin Mohammed Bin Jabor Al-Thani expressed his gratitude to the hospitality provided by the residents of Chennai. He also added that Doha Bank's Chennai branch will facilitate business and investments between Qatar and India.

Dr Seetharaman said "Doha Bank was the first Qatari bank to start its operations in India when it started its Mumbai operation in 2015, first Qatari bank in Kochi and we are the first bank from the Gulf to be in Tamil Nadu."

India branches

Dr Seetharaman further explained various products offered by the India branches. He added "The Chennai branch will assist the bank's growing customer base in India with a wide range of services, including Corporate Banking, Retail Banking, Treasury, Trade Finance and Foreign Exchange Services along with an array of corporate and SME products such as Term Loans, Working Capital (INR as well as in Permitted Foreign Currencies), Trade Finance Products, Buyers and Suppliers Credit as well as Treasury Products and Hedging Solutions. On the retail and NRI side, the bank offers the entire range of liability products such as savings account (NRE, NRO, and ordinary), current account, term deposits (short term and long term), FCNR (B) deposits, Exchange Earners Foreign Currency

Account (EEFC), and PIS accounts. In addition for NRIs, through our collaborations, we offer home loans, wealth management, and estate and succession planning services."

Corporate event

The Branch inauguration was followed by a corporate event 'Bilateral Business opportunities - Tamil Nadu, India and Qatar' at Hotel Leela Palace, Chennai in the presence of above Qatari Dignitaries, Board Members of Doha Bank and key personnel from prominent local & international corporate houses who were keen to hear about potential business opportunities between India and Qatar, and how Doha Bank can help support these activities from its presence in India (Chennai, Kochi, Mumbai), Qatar and other global locations.

Dr Seetharaman moderated a panel discussion with eminent speakers, namely Ali Ibrahim Abdullah Al-Malki, Maqbool Habeeb J Khalifan, Fahmi Al-Ghoussein, Shailesh Haribhakti, Dr Kailash Mishra and Aashish P Somaiyaa. The speakers shared their views on the positive impact of the new branch on different sectors both in India and Qatar, particularly the financial services, infrastructure, and industries. They also highlighted potential bilateral investment opportunities.

Dr Seetharaman, CEO of Doha Bank delivered the concept note for the event. He provided insights on the global economy stating "The advanced economies are expected to grow by 2.3 percent in 2018 and 2.2 percent in 2019, according to IMF Jan 2018 Outlook. The emerging and developing economies expected to grow by 4.9 percent and 5 percent in 2018 & 2019, respectively. Federal Reserve officials have signalled they could pick up the pace of interest-rate increases to cool economic growth after next year. We are also



witnessing trade divergence developments in the global space. The Fourth Industrial Revolution combines advanced technologies in innovative ways, dramatically reshaping the way people live, work and relate to one another. Fintech, internet of things, block chain and artificial intelligence are some of the major technological developments."

Qatar economy

Dr Seetharaman highlighted on Qatar economy. He said "IMF Oct 2017 had revised Qatar's economy growth to 3.1 percent in 2018. Qatar will raise LNG production by 30 percent to 100mtpa within five to seven years after lifting a moratorium on gas development earlier in 2017. Qatar ranked 25th in 'the Global Competitiveness Report 2017-18'. Qatar's 2018 budget allocations for health,

education and transportation reached QR83.5 billion or 41 percent of total expenditure. The transportation and other infrastructure projects were assigned the largest share in the 2018 budget with allocations of QR42.0 billion, 21 percent of total expenditure. The sports sector and 2022 FIFA World Cup projects amounted to a total allocation of QR11.2 billion. In terms of food security, Qatar now has many local companies that are supporting the country and it can develop these businesses further and boost its food production to provide both locally and internationally. The Qatari market is expected to become self-sufficient in dairy products, as Baladna Food Industries will fulfil demands of the local market. Qatar has witnessed initiatives such as 'Single Window System' and 'Own your Factory in Qatar'."

Gulf Bank announces winners of Al-Danah daily draws



KUWAIT: Gulf Bank held its Al-Danah daily draw on 8 April 2018 announcing the names of its winners for the week of 1 - 5 April 2018. The Al-Danah daily draws include draws every working day for two prizes of KD 1,000 per winner. However, from 15 April onwards, Al-Danah's draw lineup will be replaced with weekly draws, in which five winners will receive KD 1,000 each, every week.

The winners are:
(Sunday 1/4): Abdulrazag Ghadban Ghanim Muhiy Al-Fadhli, Ghanem Khalifa Ghanem Amer (Monday 02/04): Mohammed Ali Hasan Merchant, Jaafar Mohammad Ahmad Al-Wayel (Tuesday 3/4): Ali Mohammed Haif Al-Mutairi, Jawad Hasoun Ali Al-Misfer (Wednesday 04/04): Essa Sayed Baroun

Mohammed, Mona Saeed Mraibed AlMutairi (Thursday 05/04): Ibrahim Abdulkarim Abdul Reda AlKarim, Fadi Adel Rafiq Abubaker
Gulf Bank Al-Danah's first quarterly draw for KD 200,000 prize, was held on 28 March, and the second Al-Danah quarterly draw, for the prize of KD 250,000 will be held on 27 June while the third quarterly draw for the prize of KD 500,000, will be held on 26 September. The final Al-Danah draw for KD 1 million will be held on 10 January 2019, where the Al-Danah millionaire will be announced.

Gulf Bank encourages you to increase your chances of winning with Al-Danah by depositing more into your Gulf Bank account using the new ePay (Self-Pay) service, which is available on Gulf Bank's online and mobile banking.

Honda Alghanim presents 5 exclusive offers and more at its Honda Service Center

KUWAIT: Honda Alghanim, the exclusive distributor of Honda cars, motorcycles and marine equipment in Kuwait, presents to its customers throughout April more than 5 exclusive offers on the after sales services available at its Honda Service Center, winner of the Japan Automobile Manufacturers Association (JAMA) Customer Satisfaction Index (CSI) survey for its excellent service in Kuwait.

The JAMA CSI is a yearly survey that relies on a face-to-face interview format evaluating the customer's service experience and satisfaction with the exclusive agent's performance, making it one of the most important and reliable assessment tools to measure customer satisfaction. In 2017, Honda Service Center won the "Number One" position in JAMA CSI, for the fourth time in a row, in terms of its provided service and the way customers are taken care of. Seeking to preserve this title for the fifth year, Honda Alghanim launched its 2018 campaign "One Team, One Goal" among other initiatives.

As part of its relentless efforts to provide an incomparable customer's experience and

further enhance its "Highest Quality is Low Cost" aphorism, Honda Alghanim offers 15 percent discount on tires, 20 percent discount on brake parts & spare parts, and 30 percent discount on balancing. Additionally, owners of Honda car 2013 models and older can receive



genuine Honda oil for KD 8 or replace their cars' oil and filter for KD 10 only.

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.

For more information, news and updates, follow Honda Alghanim on social media @AlghanimHondaKW.

Alghanim Motors, the exclusive distributor of Honda automobiles, motorcycles, power products, and marine products in Kuwait, is committed to providing customers with flexible payment solutions and efficient and cost-effective services.

Technology

Learning computer programming, with no teachers and no tuition

The goal is to level the playing field

SAN FRANCISCO: Aspiring software engineers Kevin Yook and Becky Chen are hunched over a computer screen, fervently discussing lines of code indecipherable to the average person. The pair of twenty-some things are students at the Holberton School in San Francisco, founded two years ago by French software engineers and poised to graduate its first class. The goal: to level the playing field when it comes to access to the high-paying computer engineering jobs in Silicon Valley's tech industry.

The method: anonymous admissions tests and no tuition fees. When students find a job, the school is paid 17 percent of their income for three years. The two-year program is open to beginners, and its founders say it offers a path to the likes of Apple, LinkedIn and NASA—sometimes even before the course is over as employ-

ers rush to snap up the best talent. "Most people in the tech industry look like me: white and male," said Sylvain Kalache, 29, one of the school's co-founders. But at Holberton, students are aged from 18 to 56, and 35 percent of the more than 200 pupils are women. More than half come from ethnic minority backgrounds—profiles much different from those populating programs at the likes of Stanford or Caltech. In fact, many of the students—no doubt attracted by the prospect of a \$70,000 internship salary or even \$100,000 for a first job—are in retraining. With former bartenders, artists and cashiers

among his classmates, yoga teacher Lee Gaines, 30, is one of them.

Dream job

"I was seeking something more financially secure because I had a dream of having a home and starting a family, and what I was making as a yoga teacher wasn't enough to support that," Gaines said. "I am confident that I'll find a job because I think there will always be a demand for us." Kalache said there are two traditional routes into programming: university and so-called "bootcamps," which offer intensive training lasting a few weeks.

With university costing tens of thousands of dollars and a bootcamp's fees averaging several thousand, both were out of the question for Jesse Hedden, 32. A teacher by training, Hedden was studying in a corner of the school with Gaines, laptops on their knees as they worked to "debug" an internet server. Self-help and problem-solving skills are the name of the game here—with no teachers and no lessons reducing costs.

Around 150 mentors from Facebook, Google and Microsoft instead visit regularly to help students and update the curriculum at the school, which has received \$13 million from investors. "I wanted a career change," said Hedden, who struggled to make ends meet in the San Francisco area on his \$22,000 teacher's salary—a fraction of the compensation offered to software engineers. For Amy Galles—spotted



struggling in front of her Apple computer—the course is "hard."

"It's fast and intense," Galles said. But the arts graduate, who says she was always interested in fixing things, is motivated by the school investing in her.

College, she says, is "a dying model" with degrees no longer necessarily leading to jobs. Galles spent \$40,000 on her art studies a few years ago—but she is hopeful that it is Holberton that will help her land that "dream job." —AFP

“
It's fast and intense
”

What social media platforms and search engines know about you

NEW YORK: The Facebook scandal involving the harvesting of data from tens of millions of users has raised a lot of questions about social media and search engines. As Facebook founder and CEO Mark Zuckerberg testifies before the US Congress this week on protecting user data, here is a primer on what they know about you:

Social media

Facebook, which has more than two billion users, has access to everything you do on the site: the photos and videos you post, your comments, your "likes," anything you share or consult, the identity of your friends and any other users you interact with, your location and other information. Ditto for Instagram and WhatsApp, which are owned by Facebook, and for Snapchat and Twitter. A user can control some sharing of their Facebook data with privacy settings and the ad preferences page.

What it sells: Facebook insists it does not sell advertisers personally identifiable information or even aggregate data. What it provides an advertiser with is the ability to reach a specific demographic, which enhances the effectiveness of an ad campaign. Twitter, for its part, provides access to an internal search engine that sweeps up all messages on the site.

What it shares: Most social media platforms are open to outside developers who create apps fed in varying degrees by using data from users of these networks. In the case of Facebook, the public profile—the whole page for some people, or just the first and last name and photo for others—does not require authorization from the user, but accessing the rest may require a separate OK from the user.

Once data is mined by outside apps, it is no longer in the grasp of Facebook and trying to get hold of it again is difficult. "Once people had access to that data, Facebook has no way of knowing for sure what they did with that data," said Ryan Maltzner, co-founder of mobile app designer Fueled. "It's like sending an email to somebody and then saying: 'What did they do with that email?' You don't know." Only bank and payment details held by Facebook are off-limits.

Search engines

What they collect: Google, Yahoo and Bing gather all information involving searches including the websites that are accessed and the location of the user. This can be integrated with information from other services owned by the internet giants. "You don't have to tell Google your age and your gender and all those things. They can determine all of that based on so many other factors," said Chirag Shah, a computer science professor at Rutgers University.

What they sell: Like social networks, their revenue comes largely from advertising. They do not sell data, but rather access to a consumer with very specific characteristics. This comes from compiling search engine data but also, in the case of Google, from searches and content viewed on its YouTube platform. Google used to also mine the content of Gmail before ending this practice in June.

What they share: Like social media networks, search engines share data with developers and third-party app makers.

Are there limits?

In the United States there are practically no laws against the use of data from social media or search engines. But the Federal Trade Commission did sanction Facebook in 2011 for its handling of personal data. In Canada and Europe, there are some limits on the use of data, mainly involving health. Facebook was fined 110 million euros by the European Commission last year for sharing personal data with WhatsApp. In an attempt to harmonize data privacy laws, the EU's General Data Protection Regulation is to go into force on May 25.—AFP

Programming: A highly sought talent in Silicon Valley

SAN FRANCISCO: Computer engineers are in high demand, with companies shelling out huge salaries for the best talent—especially in California's Silicon Valley.

Talent shortage

According to nonprofit organization code.org, which works to increase representation in computer science, there are more than 520,000 vacancies in the field—about 10 times more than the annual number of qualified graduates. Meanwhile, labor market analysis firm Burningglass calculated that out of 26 million jobs posted online in 2015, seven million asked for some form of programming skills—without necessarily requiring higher education or a computer science qualification.

A shortage of qualified candidates makes competition for talent fierce—pushing up salaries. As a result, it's in the interests of tech companies to back efforts to promote computer science education for younger children. Companies also often recruit from abroad—from Asia in particular—to fill positions putting them at odds with the anti-immigration politics of the Trump administration.

Sky-high salaries

On average, a computer science graduate earns at least \$90,000 to \$100,000 a year in the United States. Code.org says that's an average of 40 percent more than peers with degrees in other fields. Even roles calling for simple programming skills are paid on average 35 percent more than jobs that don't, according to Burningglass.

Training courses

Aspiring software engineers have plenty of training options to choose from—both in the classroom and online. University studies generally entail four years and stratospheric tuition fees — \$10,000 to \$20,000 a year for a public school, or \$50,000 a year for a private institution such as Stanford in California. Factor in housing, meals and



books, and the bill shoots up to \$70,000 a year, according to the California Institute of Technology (CalTech's) estimates for the 2018-19 academic year.

If students aren't able to secure scholarships, many in the United States are forced to rely on loans to fund their studies. On the other hand, "bootcamp" programming courses tend to last a few weeks, targeting beginners or people who want to update their skills. Increasingly popular over the past five years, some are tailored to particular groups such as women, children or minorities. The Flatiron School, which has locations in New York, Washington and London, offers 15 weeks for \$15,000.

Diversity problem

According to official US statistics cited by the Center for American Progress, among Silicon Valley computer programmers in 2015, just 2.2 percent were black and 4.7 percent Hispanic. A 2016 study by Accenture for the organization Girls Who Code showed that 24 percent of IT jobs were filled by women—and women made up just 18 percent of computer science students. At Google, the company says 69 percent of its global employees are men—a figure that rises to 80 percent when taking only tech roles into account. And in the US generally, 53 percent of tech workers identify as white, compared to 39 percent Asian, one percent black and three percent Hispanic.—AFP

Uber launches new app for drivers

SAN FRANCISCO: Uber Technologies Inc on Tuesday unveiled a new app for its drivers that includes a real-time earnings tracker, the latest effort by the ride-hailing service to improve an often contentious relationship. The move follows Uber's '180 days of change' program that was launched last June to make changes requested by drivers, such as tipping and compensation for the time spent waiting for passengers.

"While 180 Days was about correcting missteps of the past, we also needed to think longer term, and the obvious place to start was the Driver app," Chief Executive Officer Dara Khosrowshahi said in a statement. The new app will

also introduce a new status bar to help drivers decide their next location based on a spike in requests, along with a notification feature that allows drivers to see messages about upcoming earnings opportunities and feedback from riders among other things.

The rollout follows a Beta version developed with the drivers, Uber said. Uber last year outlined a series of improvements for drivers, including a new navigation system and fairer approach to review performance, in response to years of complaints by drivers about their pay and treatment. Uber drivers are independent contractors, not employees, and lack paid sick leave and vacation, and must pay for car maintenance and other costs.

The company, which is preparing for a potential initial public offering in 2019, lost \$4.5 billion last year and is facing fierce competition at home in the United States and across Asia, as well as a regulatory crackdown in Europe.—Reuters



SAN FRANCISCO: In this file photo a woman walks into the Uber Corporate Headquarters building in San Francisco, California. —AFP

Bots, good or bad, dominate Twitter conversation

WASHINGTON: Automated accounts or "bots" play a big role in disseminating information on Twitter, accounting for two-thirds of tweets linking to popular websites, a study showed Monday. The Pew Research Center report found bots were a major source for diffusing information on news, sports, entertainment and other topics. The researchers found that of all tweeted links to popular websites, 66 percent were shared by

accounts that appeared to be automated rather than human users.

While bots have gained attention due to concerns over Russian-sponsored manipulation of social media during the 2016 political campaign and for other hot-button topics, the researchers said they made no effort to distinguish between "good" or "bad" bots. "The study does not find evidence that automated accounts currently have a liberal or conservative 'political bias' in their overall link-sharing behavior," the researchers wrote.

Twitter's policy on automated accounts, last updated in November, allows bots to operate but with limitations. The policy allows for bots to "automatically broadcast helpful information" or "run creative campaigns that auto-reply to users." But Twitter's rules forbid auto-

matic posts about trending topics or using automation "to attempt to influence or manipulate trending topics." It also bans the use of multiple accounts to generate more activity.

"These findings illustrate the extent to which bots play a prominent and pervasive role in the social media environment," says Pew researcher Aaron Smith. "Automated accounts are far from a niche phenomenon: They share a significant portion of tweeted links to even the most prominent and mainstream publications and online outlets. Since these accounts can impact the information people see on social media, it is important to have a sense their overall prevalence on social media." Pew researchers said some examples of automated accounts included a Netflix bot which tweets when new shows are added to

the online streaming service, and another which posts random images from the Metropolitan Museum of Art. CNN operates a "breaking news" bot and the New York Times has one that provides live analysis of NFL games. The researchers said a small number—some 500—of highly active bots are responsible for a disproportionate share of the tweeted links, or 22 percent. Pew found that an unusually large share of "adult content" is retweeted by bots, accounting for 90 percent of links to popular adult sites. That coincides with findings from other researchers on campaigns of "pombots" which advertise sex and pornographic websites. The Pew report examined some 1.2 million English language tweets linking to 2,315 of the most popular websites in a six-week period in mid-2017.—AFP

Health

Kuwait Diabetes Society launches 'Qadam Bela Alam' campaign

Campaign emanates from urgent need to tackle DPN nerve disease

KUWAIT: Kuwait Diabetes Society (KDS) launched a hospital outreach program to educate, early spot, and offer full support to help manage diabetes patients suffering from the life-changing condition Diabetic Peripheral Neuropathy (DPN) nerve disease, as a first step in the nationwide "Qadam Bela Alam" (foot without pain) campaign in Kuwait.

Highly-trained medical staff from the "Qadam Bela Alam" campaign will be stationed at an activation booth at Al Mubarak Hospital, the first hospital to adopt the concept of holistic management of Diabetes starting from educating diabetes patients about the disease and identifying foot complications to conducting foot examination tests and completing a DPN questionnaire to spot DPN patients.

The patients will then be recommended to consult their physician and modify their lifestyle to help manage the condition along with medications and continued support. Physicians are encouraged to recommend lifestyle changes for their patients such as quitting smoking, significantly reducing sugar intake and exercising regularly. Patients are also encouraged to join a social community to share their experience and learn from experts and fellow patients on the best ways to deal with the condition at "Qadam Bela Alam."

"Qadam Bela Alam" campaign emanated from the urgent need to tackle Peripheral Neuropathy nerve disease amongst diabetes patients and make them aware of its foot complications that could have serious consequences without warning symptoms. Peripheral Neuropathy is a nerve damaging condition of the lower limbs that affects more than half of diabetics worldwide and causes an average of 54,000 lower-limb amputations globally every year. With approximately 399,000 diabetics in Kuwait, the prevalence of DPN in the country is 39 percent. The nationwide campaign stresses

on the importance for diabetic patients to understand that diabetic foot problems are often caused by nerve damage and they should visit their doctor regularly for check-ups even if their feet aren't showing any symptoms. Important to note is that while keeping glucose levels within the normal range is important, it is only one step in the fight against DPN nerve disease.

Warning signs and symptoms of DPN nerve damage include tingling, burning or prickling sensations in the limbs, sharp pains or cramps in the legs, extreme sensitivity to touch, and loss of balance. "The steps we take today can protect the future steps, and this is the first important step on that journey. Peripheral Neuropathy is a growing concern affecting patients in Kuwait. Through "Qadam Bela Alam" and the numerous activations, we will emphasize that Peripheral Neuropathy nerve disease is extremely serious for diabetes patients because it can strike at any time, regardless of age, gender or ethnicity, however, it is not inevitable.

The campaign will engage with diabetes patients, their families and friends, to educate them on measures they can take to reduce the potential of Peripheral Neuropathy nerve disease, it will show those living with the condition that they have a support network and teach them how to best manage it," said Dr. Walid El Dahi, head of KDS. "Let me take this opportunity to thank all our partners joining hands in this campaign starting with Kuwait Ministry of Health, participating hospitals and our media partners Al Anba and Al Jarida newspapers".

With this in mind, the Manager of Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital, Dr. Nadia Jumaa' said: "The campaign "Qadam Bela Alam" strengthens engagement with physicians to remind them of the importance of the role they play along every step. Our goal is to foster a process whereby diabetes patients will naturally visit their doctors for



routine foot checks to have their feet examined and, how much a proactive approach can help. We would like to thank Mubarak Hospital and all of our partners for their continued support."

"50 percent of diabetics are susceptible to DPN nerve disease, so the campaign is directed to diabetes patients as a mirror

reflecting our support of the Kuwaiti society. It is important for diabetic patients to always examine their legs and feet to avoid or lower the risk of any disease," said Dr. Tanheed El Hagery, Diabetes specialist in Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital. In addition to the outreach program and engagement exercises across health centers, "Qadam

Bela Alam" involves an active social media campaign to reach diabetics and their surroundings and inform them of the risks and ways of management. This is to add more convenience to patients and those who want to support the campaign and help raise awareness and save diabetics foot around us.

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What's On

Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel and Spa celebrates Mother's Day



Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel and Spa, Kuwait's idyllic resort, marked the occasion of International Mother's Day by hosting female local media representatives for a special lunch in Olio restaurant. Greeted by General Manager, Savino Leone and Director of PR and Communications, Carol Roncoletta, the invited members of the media were given unique

insight into the art of creating authentic Italian dishes from the restaurant's award-winning team.

While enjoying the relaxed ambiance, guests were coached on how to make pizzas and pasta specialities by the Italian Chef. Following the interactive and educational cooking session, guests were treated to a cake cut-

ting ceremony to celebrate Mother's Day. Recently awarded at the World Luxury Spa & Restaurant Awards, Olio Restaurant serves traditional Italian classic dishes and is the perfect venue to sample authentic Italian cuisine. Olio Restaurant welcomes guests every day for lunch and dinner in its beautiful outdoor and indoor setups.

Royal Enfield Kuwait celebrates One Ride 2018

One Ride was introduced on the April 3, 2011 with an aim to celebrate the passion that riders have for motorcycling and Royal Enfield. Riders hook up with others and ride together celebrating what is absolutely core to Royal Enfield - the enthusiasts and the community. This brings together different levels of enthusiasts in the ecosystem, from newbies to experienced riders, and therefore the activity provides an opportunity for all RE owners to get together.

On April 8, 2018, Royal Enfield owners across the world will celebrate 'One Ride to Ride as One.' Across the globe there is one factor that is common for the Brand. The riders are a part of a very special and distinct community that gets formed on owning their first Royal Enfield. Like every year, thousands of Royal Enfield riders across the globe ride as one.

Riders assembled at Kuwait Automotive Imports Co Head Office at Al Rai on April 6, 2018 at 8 am. After a short briefing and scrutiny of motorcycles, the riders set out towards the sea road along Al Sharq, Kuwait city. On reaching their destination, riders refreshed themselves to get back with all energy back on road. After a fun-filled day, the riders returned back with good memories of riding together to celebrate Royal Enfield hood. This ride was conducted as part of One Ride to promote riding culture among Royal Enfield enthusiasts.



KCST hosts seminar on Introducing Art

Kuwait College of Science and Technology hosted a seminar on Introducing Art into the education of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) to raise the level of education for our future generations. Dr. Fatima Bouzkart, PhD in Mathematics and Educational Sciences from Erzis University in Turkey, and visiting professor at the Institute of Applied Technology in Abu Dhabi, visited us on April 10, 2018 on the campus of KCST in Doha. Students of the university and academic staff were present.

The President of the University, Professor Khalid Al-Begain, expressed his cheerfulness in the presence of our progenies for such valuably educational

seminars. This will expand their awareness at a world-class level, allowing them to see a clear, tangible and real vision to keep in touch with what is happening in the world. Professor Khalid also added that the establishment and periodicity of scientific lectures instills in our children commitment, and sets goals to assist them in achieving their goals, for they are the future speakers of KCST and the State of Kuwait.

He pointed to the scientific quality provided by Professor Fatima Bouzkart and the need for future cooperation between the educational administration and marketing to introduce such programs to improve teamwork. This seminar is the first step towards changing the educational concept of the fourth generation and its application on real grounds. Dr. Ali Yousef, Associate Professor of Mathematics at Kuwait College of Science and Technology, praised the lecture and advised students to come and discuss the topic on changing the concept of education for future generations.



Kailash Kher rocks Kuwait with scintillating performance



A rocking performance by popular Indian artist Kailash Kher over the weekend gave his fans in Kuwait an opportunity to witness a high-class entertainment show at the American International School auditorium in Hawalli. The show was organized by Indian Youth Society, (IYS), with the event Partner Carriage.

The audience were entertained by a variety of mellifluous tunes among others, as well as enthralled by the rich and raw vocals and upbeat sounds that are distinctive to Kailash, who has distinguished himself as a playback and mainstream singer. Kailash shot to fame with the 2003 hit number 'Allah ke bande' and was conferred India's fourth highest civilian award, the Padma Shri last year.

Aside from this meritorious achievement, the playback singer has sung more than 700 songs and has had private albums seen huge success. Fronting his band Kailasa as the lead singer, he has performed in over 2000 concerts all over the world and has grown in pop-

ularity to be one of the most sought-after independent music bands. The jam packed audience at the American International School- Maidan Hawalli experienced the thrilled full evening with Padma Shree Kailash Kher and his band Kailasa.

The show commenced with offering respect to the National Anthems of Kuwait and India followed by the Classical dance performance from Ghungharoo Kathak dance group and felicitations to the Sponsors. The crowd fumed up as soon as Mr Kailash Kher took charge of the stage with his band Kailasa.

He ruled the atmosphere with his soulful and super vibrant voice. A man with simple personality and high value hooked the audience to their seats with his goose bumps performance. His spiritual, unique and powerful voice amazed the crowd to their core. The crowd got wild with his performance on his spiritual number Bum Lahiri and super hit songs like Allah ke bandei, Teri Deewani, The Bahubali song Kaun hai woh, Saiyyan and many more.

His amazing comic timing shocked and amazed the audience as well, he left no space for anyone on the stage - a dynamic show to be remembered and cherished. The poetry book by renowned poet Farhat Shahzad was also released and launched during the show to support the under privileged girls education. The show was hosted by Neeta Bhatkar and Shakir Sheikh.

Kailash Kher conveyed his gratitude to IYS President Mr Shabbir Qamar for his hospitality and marvelous team and organization. American Tourister, Tik Tok, BEC-Bahrain Exchange Company, ATC-Advance Technology Company, Ooredoo, Almailem Group, Eternity Travels, City Centre and Mai Dubai were the main sponsors for the event. Indian Youth Society, Kuwait fondly known as IYS is a non-profitable organization registered with Indian Embassy of Kuwait with the vision of honouring, encouraging, supporting and celebrating the Indian social and cultural values amongst the people of Kuwait.

McDonald's holds 'Peter Rabbit' screening at Marina Mall

McDonald's Kuwait brought the magic of cinema to a very special group of children with a private screening of the new animated hit, "Peter Rabbit". At the exclusive show held at Marina Mall Cinescape, the audience featured children from Kuwait Association for the Care of Children in Hospital (KACCH), Kuwait Down Syndrome Society and Al-Kharafi Activity Kids Center.

The young audience was invited to spend a fun evening in the company of Peter Rabbit and his friends. The family-friendly film proved to be a big hit with the children, who walked away with huge smiles on their faces. Following the screening, the children were treated to special Peter Rabbit Happy Meals and toys, before wrapping up the evening and leaving with goodie bags filled with Peter Rabbit

memorabilia.

Speaking about the screening, Sherif Coutry, Marketing Director at McDonald's Kuwait, said: "The McDonald's experience is all about bringing joy and laughter to our communities, and that is something we always strive to live by. That being said, nothing makes us happier than drawing smiles on the faces of children, and these movie screenings have become a beloved tradition for us over the past few years. I personally am always thrilled to see how much joy they bring to children and families alike."

Coutry further added, "We are extremely grateful to all the different organizations and individuals who continue to help us make these events such a resounding success. All I can say is that we are already looking forward to the next event."



TV



01:30 The Darkest Hour
03:00 Starship Troopers: Traitor Of Mars
04:30 This Means War
06:10 San Andreas Quake
07:40 Starship Troopers: Traitor Of Mars
09:15 911 Nightmare
10:45 Lost & Found
12:20 This Means War
14:00 Being Evil
15:45 Bloodsport
17:20 Misfire
18:50 Blood Circus
20:20 Captain America: Civil War
22:50 Road House



00:45 River Monsters
01:40 Dogs/Cats/Pets 101
02:35 Swamp Brothers
03:00 Swamp Brothers
03:25 Tanked
04:15 The Pool Master
05:02 Mutant Planet
05:49 Untamed & Uncut
06:36 Swamp Brothers
07:00 Swamp Brothers
07:25 Swamp Brothers
07:50 Swamp Brothers
08:15 River Monsters
09:10 Dogs/Cats/Pets 101
10:05 Mutant Planet
11:00 Swamp Brothers
11:28 Swamp Brothers
11:55 Tanked
12:50 The Pool Master
13:45 Dogs/Cats/Pets 101
14:40 Mutant Planet
15:35 Untamed & Uncut
16:30 River Monsters
17:25 Whale Wars
18:20 North Woods Law
19:15 Dogs/Cats/Pets 101
20:10 Swamp Brothers
20:38 Swamp Brothers
21:05 Whale Wars
22:00 North Woods Law
22:55 Mutant Planet
23:50 Untamed & Uncut



00:25 The Durrells
01:15 Agatha Raisin
02:45 Orphan Black
03:30 Orphan Black
04:10 Holly City
05:05 Death In Paradise
06:00 Doctors
06:30 EastEnders
07:00 Agatha Raisin
08:40 Doctors
09:10 EastEnders
09:45 Death In Paradise
10:40 The Corner
11:30 Last Tango In Halifax
12:30 Agatha Raisin
14:10 Doctors
14:40 EastEnders
15:10 Death In Paradise
16:10 The Corner
17:00 Last Tango In Halifax
18:00 Doctors
18:30 EastEnders
19:40 Death In Paradise
20:00 Hold The Sunset
20:30 Mum
21:00 Holly City
22:00 Death In Paradise
22:55 Doctors
23:25 EastEnders
23:55 Hold The Sunset



00:00 Psychic Kids
01:00 My Ghost Story: Caught On Camera
01:55 Robbie Coltrane's Critical Evidence
02:50 Homicide Hunter
03:45 Psychic Kids
04:30 My Ghost Story: Caught On Camera
05:15 The First 48
06:00 Live PD: Police Patrol
06:30 Live PD: Police Patrol
07:00 It Takes A Killer
07:20 The First 48
08:05 Cold Case Files
08:50 Homicide Hunter
09:35 The First 48
10:30 Crimes That Shook Australia
11:25 Crimes That Shook Britain
12:20 Cold Case Files
13:15 Leah Remini: Scientology And The Aftermath
14:10 The First 48
15:05 Crimes That Shook Australia
16:00 Homicide Hunter
17:00 The Menendez Murders: Erik Tells All
19:00 Hatton Garden Heist: One Last Job
20:00 Live PD: Police Patrol
20:30 Live PD: Police Patrol
21:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
22:00 Homicide Hunter
23:00 The First 48



00:05 Workaholics
00:30 Another Period
00:55 Why? With Hannibal Buress
01:20 The Opposition With Jordan Klepper
01:45 South Park
02:10 Nightcap
02:35 Another Period
03:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
03:25 Tosh.0
03:50 South Park
04:15 Nathan For You
04:40 Key And Peele
05:05 Catch A Contractor
05:29 Disaster Date
05:52 Ridiculousness Arabia
06:20 Comedy Central Presents Comedy Salvage
06:50 Takeshis Castle Thailand
07:15 Takeshis Castle Thailand
07:40 Lip Sync Battle
08:05 Key And Peele
08:30 Disaster Date
08:55 Workaholics
09:20 Nathan For You
09:45 Lip Sync Battle
10:10 Catch A Contractor
10:35 Friends
11:00 Key And Peele
11:25 Disaster Date
11:47 Ridiculousness Arabia
12:15 Friendszone
12:40 Key And Peele
13:05 Friends
13:30 Friends
13:55 Nathan For You
14:20 Workaholics
14:45 Disaster Date
15:10 Friends
15:35 Key And Peele
16:00 Nathan For You

16:30 Friendszone
16:55 Friends
17:20 Friends
17:45 Disaster Date
18:10 Takeshis Castle Thailand
18:35 Takeshis Castle Thailand
19:00 Friends
19:25 Friendszone
19:50 Real Husbands Of Hollywood
20:12 Friends
20:35 Friends
21:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
21:30 The Opposition With Jordan Klepper
21:55 Comedy Central Presents Comedy Salvage
22:25 Takeshis Castle Thailand
22:50 Takeshis Castle Thailand
23:15 Real Husbands Of Hollywood
23:40 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah



00:30 Kids Do The Craziest Things
00:55 Kids Do The Craziest Things
01:20 The Know It All Guide To...
01:45 Outrageous Acts Of Psych
02:10 You Can't Lick Your Elbow
02:35 You Can't Lick Your Elbow
03:00 How The Earth Works
03:50 Bear Grylls: Born Survivor
04:40 Tanked
05:30 How It's Made
05:55 How It's Made
06:20 Kids Do The Craziest Things
06:40 Kids Do The Craziest Things
07:00 Bear Grylls: Born Survivor
07:50 How It's Made
08:15 How It's Made
08:40 Kids Do The Craziest Things
09:05 Kids Do The Craziest Things
09:30 Tanked
10:20 How The Earth Works
11:10 Space Dealers
12:00 Secret Space Escapes
12:50 How It's Made
13:15 How It's Made
13:40 Kids Do The Craziest Things
14:05 Kids Do The Craziest Things
14:30 Tanked
15:20 Bear Grylls: Born Survivor
16:10 How The Earth Works
17:00 Space Dealers
17:50 Secret Space Escapes
18:40 Kids Do The Craziest Things
19:05 Kids Do The Craziest Things
19:30 How It's Made
19:55 How It's Made
20:20 Tanked
21:10 Space Dealers
22:00 Secret Space Escapes
22:50 How The Earth Works
23:40 Bear Grylls: Born Survivor



00:45 Blood Relatives
01:40 Jodi Arias: From Lust To Murder
02:35 Murder In The Heartland
03:30 Evil Lives Here
04:25 Blood Relatives
05:20 I Almost Got Away With It
06:10 Nightmare Next Door
07:00 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
07:25 Betrayed
08:15 Blood Relatives
09:10 Nightmare Next Door
10:05 American Monster
11:00 Chandra Levy: A Mistress Murdered
11:55 A Crime To Remember
12:50 I Almost Got Away With It
13:45 Nightmare Next Door
14:40 American Monster
15:35 Forbidden: Dying For Love
16:30 A Crime To Remember
17:25 Blood Relatives
18:20 I Almost Got Away With It
19:15 Suspicion
20:10 Evil Stepmothers
21:05 I Am Homeless
22:00 The Perfect Murder
22:55 The Perfect Murder
23:50 Jodi Arias: From Lust To Murder



00:00 Hank Zipzer
00:25 Alex & Co.
00:45 Disney Mickey Mouse
00:50 Evermore Chronicles
01:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
01:40 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
02:05 Binny And The Ghost
02:30 Binny And The Ghost
02:55 Hank Zipzer
03:15 Disney Mickey Mouse
03:20 Hank Zipzer
03:45 Alex & Co.
04:10 Alex & Co.
04:35 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
05:00 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
05:25 Binny And The Ghost
05:45 Disney Mickey Mouse
05:50 Rolling With The Ronks S1
06:00 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug...
06:25 Hotel Transylvania: The Series
06:50 Tsum Tsum Shorts
06:55 Tangled: The Series
07:20 Stuck In The Middle
07:45 K.C. Undercover
08:10 Bunk'd
08:35 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug...
08:50 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug...
09:25 Lolo Rock
09:50 Lolo Rock
10:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
10:40 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
11:05 Hank Zipzer
11:30 Alex & Co.
11:55 Alex & Co.
12:20 Lolo Rock
12:45 Lolo Rock
13:10 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug...
13:35 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug...
14:00 The Zhuzhus S1
14:15 Bunk'd
14:40 K.C. Undercover
15:05 Disney Mickey Mouse
15:10 Bizaardvark
15:35 Elena Of Avalor
16:00 Tangled: The Series
16:25 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug...
16:50 Raven's Home
17:15 K.C. Undercover
17:40 Raven's Home
18:05 K.C. Undercover
18:30 Bunk'd
18:55 Descendants Wicked World
19:00 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug...
19:25 Liv And Maddie
19:50 Jessie

20:15 Disney Mickey Mouse
20:20 Tangled: The Series
20:45 Bizaardvark
21:10 Hotel Transylvania: The Series
21:35 Stuck In The Middle
22:00 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug...
22:25 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug...
22:50 Lolo Rock
23:10 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
23:35 Binny And The Ghost



00:00 Trulli Tales
00:30 PJ Masks
00:55 Trulli Tales
01:20 Henry Hugglemonster
01:35 Calimero
01:50 Henry Hugglemonster
02:05 Art Attack
02:30 The Hive
02:40 Loopdidoo
02:55 Henry Hugglemonster
03:10 Art Attack
03:35 Loopdidoo
03:50 Calimero
04:05 Art Attack
04:30 Henry Hugglemonster
04:45 Henry Hugglemonster
05:00 Art Attack
05:30 Henry Hugglemonster
05:45 Loopdidoo
06:00 Henry Hugglemonster
06:15 Calimero
06:30 PJ Masks
07:00 Trulli Tales
07:30 Jungle Junction
07:50 Handy Manny
08:10 PJ Masks
08:30 Vampirina
09:00 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
09:30 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
10:00 Puppy Dog Pals
10:30 Puppy Dog Pals
11:00 The Lion Guard
11:30 The Lion Guard
12:00 Sofia The First
12:30 Sofia The First
13:00 PJ Masks
13:30 PJ Masks
14:00 P-King Duckling
14:30 Vampirina
15:00 Puppy Dog Pals
15:30 Sofia The First
16:00 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
16:30 Doc McStuffins
17:00 PJ Masks
17:05 PJ Masks
17:30 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
18:00 The Lion Guard
18:30 Puppy Dog Pals
19:00 Trulli Tales
19:30 The Lion Guard
20:00 Vampirina
20:30 PJ Masks
21:00 Trulli Tales
21:30 Sofia The First
22:00 P-King Duckling
22:30 Puppy Dog Pals
23:00 Miles From Tomorrow
23:30 PJ Masks



00:15 Ice Cold Gold
01:05 Jungle Gold
01:50 Gold Rush: White Water
02:35 Gold Divers
03:20 Street Outlaws
04:05 Buying Alaska
04:50 Dirty Jobs
05:35 Storage Hunters
06:00 Factory Line
06:23 Dallas Car Sharks
06:45 Storage Hunters
07:10 Storage Wars Canada
07:35 Buying Alaska
08:20 Factory Line
08:45 Dallas Car Sharks
09:10 Dirty Jobs
09:55 Jungle Gold
12:00 Gold Rush: White Water
13:00 Gold Divers
14:00 Factory Line
14:20 Dallas Car Sharks
14:35 Storage Hunters
14:40 Storage Wars Canada
14:50 Dirty Jobs
15:30 Ice Cold Gold
16:15 Gold Rush: White Water
17:05 Gold Divers
17:50 Buying Alaska
18:40 Dirty Jobs
19:25 Ice Cold Gold
20:15 Street Outlaws
21:00 Impossible Engineering
21:50 Flipping Ships
22:40 What On Earth?
23:30 Buying Alaska



06:00 Supa Strikas
06:25 Lab Rats
06:50 Gravity Falls
07:15 Marvel's Spider-Man
07:40 Disney Mickey Mouse
07:45 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
08:10 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
08:35 Supa Strikas
08:50 Supa Strikas
09:25 Mighty Med
09:50 Mighty Med
10:20 Phineas & Ferb
10:45 Phineas & Ferb
11:10 Lab Rats
11:35 Lab Rats
12:00 Right Now Kapow
12:25 Two More Eggs
12:30 Right Now Kapow
12:55 Kirby Buckets
13:20 Kirby Buckets
13:45 Gravity Falls
14:10 Disney Mickey Mouse
14:15 Gravity Falls
14:40 Pair Of Kings
14:55 Pair Of Kings
15:05 Milo Murphy's Law
15:55 Two More Eggs
16:00 The Suite Life Of Zack & Cody
16:25 Walk The Prank
17:15 Mech-X4
17:40 Marvel's Spider-Man
18:05 Kickin' It
18:30 Randy Cunningham: 9th Grade Ninja
18:45 Kickin' It
19:10 Mini Ninjas
19:25 Walk The Prank
19:50 Marvel's Rocket And Groot
19:55 Mech-X4
20:20 Penn Zero: Part Time Hero
20:45 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
21:10 Kid vs. Kat
21:35 Marvel's Rocket And Groot
21:40 Disney Mickey Mouse
21:45 Lab Rats Elite Force
22:10 Lab Rats Elite Force
22:35 Phineas & Ferb
23:00 Programmes Start At 6:00am
KSA



00:05 Botched
00:55 Botched
01:50 El News
02:50 Botched
03:40 Botched
04:35 Botched
05:30 Celebrity Style Story
06:00 Second Wives Club
06:55 El News Middle East
07:10 Botched
08:10 El News: Daily Pop
09:10 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
10:10 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
11:05 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
12:00 El News Middle East
12:15 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
13:10 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
14:05 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
15:00 El News Middle East
15:15 El News: Daily Pop
16:15 WAGs Miami
17:10 WAGs Miami
18:05 WAGs Miami
19:00 El News
20:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
21:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
22:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
23:00 El News Middle East
23:15 WAGs Atlanta



00:10 Who's Doing The Dishes?
01:00 Emmerdale
01:30 Coronation Street
02:00 Coronation Street
02:30 The Chase
03:25 Victoria
04:20 Him
05:15 Royal Recipes
06:15 Who's Doing The Dishes?
07:10 The Chase
08:05 Victoria
09:00 Him
09:55 Royal Recipes
11:00 Who's Doing The Dishes?
11:50 The Chase
12:45 Emmerdale
13:15 Coronation Street
13:45 Coronation Street
14:15 Who's Doing The Dishes?
15:10 The Chase
16:00 Cannonball
16:55 The Jonathan Ross Show
17:50 Royal Recipes
18:50 Emmerdale
19:15 Coronation Street
19:45 Coronation Street
20:10 The Chase
21:00 Cannonball
21:55 The Jonathan Ross Show
22:50 Emmerdale
23:15 Coronation Street
23:40 Coronation Street



00:00 Ancient Discoveries
01:00 Brad Meltzer's Decoded
02:00 The Universe
02:50 Ancient Aliens
03:40 Pirate Treasure Of The Knights Templar
04:30 The Lost Evidence
05:20 Your Bleeped Up Brain
06:10 Your Bleeped Up Brain
07:00 Ancient Discoveries
08:00 Brad Meltzer's Decoded
09:00 The Universe
10:00 Ancient Aliens
11:00 Pirate Treasure Of The Knights Templar
12:00 The Lost Evidence
13:00 Ancient Discoveries
14:00 Brad Meltzer's Decoded
15:00 The Universe
16:00 Ancient Aliens
17:00 Pirate Treasure Of The Knights Templar
18:00 Ancient Discoveries
19:00 Brad Meltzer's Decoded
20:00 The Universe
21:00 Ancient Aliens
22:00 Ancient Impossible
23:00 The Lost Evidence



00:20 Forged: Iron & Fire
00:45 Pawn Stars
01:15 Swamp People
02:00 American Pickers
02:50 Counting Cars
03:15 Car Hunters
03:38 The King Who Tricked Hitler
04:30 Forged: Iron & Fire
04:55 Pawn Stars
05:20 American Pickers
06:00 Ice Road Truckers
06:50 Forged: Iron & Fire
07:15 Pawn Stars
07:40 Counting Cars
08:05 Car Hunters
08:30 The King Who Tricked Hitler
09:20 Ice Road Truckers
09:20 Ice Road Truckers
10:10 Alone
11:00 Forged: Iron & Fire
11:25 Pawn Stars
11:50 Counting Cars
12:15 Car Hunters
12:40 The King Who Tricked Hitler
13:30 Ice Road Truckers
14:20 American Pickers
15:10 Alone
16:00 American Pickers
16:50 Counting Cars
17:15 Car Hunters
17:40 The King Who Tricked Hitler
18:30 Ice Road Truckers
19:20 Forged: Iron & Fire
19:45 Pawn Stars
20:10 American Pickers
21:00 The Curse Of Oak Island
21:50 Hoard Hunters
22:40 Hoard Hunters
23:30 Ice Road Truckers



00:15 Poh & Co.
00:45 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia
01:10 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia
01:40 Food Lover's Guide To The Planet
02:05 Poh & Co.
02:35 Maximum Foodie
03:00 Sinful Sweets
03:30 Gok's Chinese Takeaway
04:25 Miguel's Tropical Kitchen
04:50 The Food Files
05:20 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces
06:15 Exploring Macau With Julian Davison

07:10 Food Lover's Guide To The Planet
07:35 Poh & Co.
08:05 Maximum Foodie
08:30 Sinful Sweets
09:00 Gok's Chinese Takeaway
09:55 Miguel's Tropical Kitchen
10:20 The Food Files
10:50 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces
11:45 Exploring Macau With Julian Davison
12:40 Stepping Out
13:05 Poh & Co.
13:35 Maximum Foodie
14:00 Sinful Sweets
14:30 John Torode's Korean Food Tour
15:25 The Food Files
16:20 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces
17:15 Billionaire's Paradise: Inside Necker Island
18:10 Carnival Eats
18:35 Poh & Co.
19:05 Maximum Foodie
19:30 Sinful Sweets
20:00 John Torode's Korean Food Tour
21:00 The Food Files
21:30 The Food Files
22:00 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces
22:55 Billionaire's Paradise: Inside Necker Island
23:50 Carnival Eats



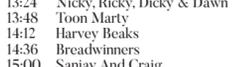
00:10 Miracle Hospital
01:00 Jane Goodall: Saving Paradise
02:00 Years Of Living Dangerously
03:00 Showdown Of The Unbeatables
04:00 Miracle Hospital
05:00 Engineering Connections
06:00 Ultimate Survival Alaska
07:00 One Strange Rock
08:00 Inside: America's Money Vault
09:00 Hustling America
10:00 Nazi Scrapbooks From Hell
11:00 Aza Scapellato: The Second World War
12:00 Access 360 World Heritage
13:00 Ultimate Survival Alaska
14:00 Car SOS
15:00 One Strange Rock
16:00 Nazi Attack On America
17:00 Apocalypse: The Second World War
18:00 Drugs Inc Compilations
19:00 One Strange Rock
20:00 Nazi Attack On America
20:50 Apocalypse: The Second World War
21:40 Drugs Inc Compilations
22:30 One Strange Rock
23:20 Car SOS



00:20 Crocodile King
01:10 Monster Fish
02:00 Big Cat Odyssey
02:50 World's Deadliest Compilations
03:45 World's Weirdest
04:40 Baby Animals In The Wild
05:35 Big Cat Odyssey
06:30 World's Deadliest Compilations
07:25 World's Weirdest
08:20 Baby Animals In The Wild
09:15 America The Beautiful
10:10 My Life Is A Zoo
11:05 Dr. K's Exotic Animal ER
12:00 New Wave Warriors
12:55 Crococalypse
13:50 World's Deadliest Compilations
14:45 World's Weirdest
15:40 Amazing Animal Selfies
16:35 Paradise Islands
17:30 Wild Case Files
18:25 Dr. K's Exotic Animal ER
19:20 World's Weirdest
20:10 Amazing Animal Selfies
21:00 Paradise Islands
21:50 Wild Case Files
22:40 Dr. K's Exotic Animal ER
23:30 New Wave Warriors



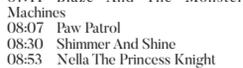
00:12 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
00:36 Rabbids Invasion
01:00 Rabbids Invasion
01:24 Sanjay And Craig
02:12 Winx Club
03:00 Harvey Beaks
03:48 Rabbids Invasion
04:36 Breadwinners
05:00 Breadwinners
05:24 The Loud House
05:48 SpongeBob SquarePants
06:12 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
06:36 Harvey Beaks
07:00 Breadwinners
07:24 Get Blake
07:48 Sanjay And Craig
08:12 Rabbids Invasion
08:36 The Loud House
09:00 Regal Academy
09:24 Winx Club
09:48 100 Things To Do Before High School
10:12 Game Shakers
10:36 School Of Rock
11:00 Henry Danger
11:24 The Thundermans
11:48 I Am Frankie
12:12 Rank The Prank
12:36 Massive Monster Mayhem
13:00 Hunter Street
13:24 Nicky, Ricky, Dicky & Dawn
13:48 Toon Marty
14:12 Harvey Beaks
14:36 Breadwinners
15:00 Sanjay And Craig
15:24 Rabbids Invasion
15:48 SpongeBob SquarePants
16:12 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
16:36 The Loud House
17:00 Toon Marty
17:12 Toon Marty
17:24 Massive Monster Mayhem
17:48 Hunter Street
18:12 Henry Danger
18:36 Nicky, Ricky, Dicky And Dawn
19:00 School Of Rock
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19:48 The Thundermans
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21:48 Get Blake
22:12 Sanjay And Craig
22:36 Rabbids Invasion
23:00 The Loud House
23:24 Regal Academy
23:48 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles



00:00 The Muppets
02:00 Cars 3
04:00 Queen Of Katwe
06:15 Pocahontas
08:00 Moana
10:00 The Muppets
12:00 Cars 3
14:00 Queen Of Katwe
16:15 Up
18:15 The Jungle Book
20:15 High School Musical 3: Senior Year
22:15 Race To Witch Mountain
00:00 DC's Legends Of Tomorrow
01:00 Grimm
01:50 Stitchers
02:40 The Voice
03:30 Marvel's Agents Of S.H.I.E.L.D.
04:20 DC's Legends Of Tomorrow
05:20 Empire
06:10 The Gifted
07:00 Good Morning America
09:00 The View
10:00 Marvel's Agents Of S.H.I.E.L.D.
11:00 Chicago Med
12:00 The Gifted
13:00 Chicago P.D.
14:00 The Flash
15:00 The View



00:58 Blaze And The Monster Machines
01:20 Blaze And The Monster Machines
01:44 Kid-E-Cats
01:49 Kid-E-Cats
01:53 Kid-E-Cats
01:58 Kid-E-Cats
02:03 Shimmer And Shine
02:25 Nella The Princess Knight
02:37 Paw Patrol
03:01 Max & Ruby
03:24 Dora The Explorer
03:47 Sunny Day
04:09 Nella The Princess Knight
04:31 Shimmer And Shine
04:53 Wallykazam!
05:17 Zack & Quack
05:27 The Day Henry Met
05:32 The Day Henry Met
05:38 Blaze And The Monster Machines
06:00 Rusty Rivets
06:13 Paw Patrol
06:37 Dora The Explorer
07:00 Nella The Princess Knight
07:21 Kiva Can Do!
07:33 Kiva Can Do!
07:44 Blaze And The Monster Machines
08:07 Paw Patrol
08:30 Shimmer And Shine
08:53 Nella The Princess Knight
09:15 The Day Henry Met
09:21 Paw Patrol
09:44 Rusty Rivets
10:07 Wallykazam!
10:30 Bubble Guppies
10:54 Team Umizoomi
11:17 Kid-E-Cats
11:22 Shimmer And Shine
11:44 Sunny Day
12:07 Max & Ruby
12:30 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
12:40 Kiva Can Do!
12:52 The Day Henry Met
12:57 Blaze And The Monster Machines
13:19 Blaze And The Monster Machines
13:41 Paw Patrol
13:52 Kid-E-Cats
13:58 Kid-E-Cats
14:04 Shimmer And Shine
14:26 Nella The Princess Knight
14:38 Paw Patrol
15:02 Max & Ruby
15:25 Dora The Explorer
15:48 Sunny Day
16:10 Nella The Princess Knight
16:32 Shimmer And Shine
16:55 Wallykazam!
17:18 Zack & Quack
17:29 The Day Henry Met
17:35 The Day Henry Met
17:40 Blaze And The Monster Machines
18:02 Rusty Rivets
18:14 Paw Patrol
18:37 Dora The Explorer
19:00 Nella The Princess Knight
19:21 Kiva Can Do!
19:33 Kiva Can Do!
19:44 Blaze And The Monster Machines
20:07 Paw Patrol
20:30 Shimmer And Shine
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22:30 Bubble Guppies
22:54 Team Umizoomi
23:17 Kid-E-Cats
23:22 Shimmer And Shine
23:44 Sunny Day



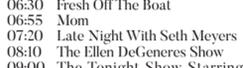
01:05 Lies & Alibis
02:45 Deck The Halls
04:25 Bowfinger
06:10 Life Or Something Like It
08:00 Mystery Date
09:50 Bowfinger
11:35 Life Or Something Like It
13:25 Mystery Date
15:10 Murder Of A Cat
16:55 SuperBob
18:25 Six Dance Lessons In Six Weeks
20:20 Office Space
22:00 Scouts Guide To The Zombie Apocalypse
23:45 Screwed



01:25 Dream Lover
03:15 Operation Avalanche
05:00 Worlds Apart
07:00 All Things Must Pass
08:45 Coming Through The Rye
10:35 Operation Avalanche
12:20 I Believe In Miracles
14:20 One True Thing
16:35 Not Without My Daughter
18:40 Tumbledown
20:35 The French Lieutenant's Woman
22:50 Carol



00:45 Elias And The Royal Yacht
02:10 Emilie Jolie
03:30 The Apple & The Worm
04:55 Song Of The Sea
06:35 Quest For A Heart
08:05 Rainbow Valley Heroes
09:40 Hocus Pocus Alie Atkins
11:05 Beyond Beyond
12:35 Emilie Jolie
13:55 The Apple & The Worm
15:20 The Adventures Of Scooter The Penguin
16:50 Hocus Pocus Alie Atkins
18:15 Nur And The Dragon's Temple
19:35 Dweegons And Leprechauns
21:20 The Adventures Of Scooter The Penguin
22:50 Rainbow Valley Heroes



01:35 Ice Age: Collision Course
03:15 Liberal Arts
04:55 DCU: Justice League vs Teen Titans
06:25 Oleanna
08:05 Ice Age: Collision Course
09:50 Liberal Arts
11:45 Alvin And The Chipmunks: Chipwrecked
13:20 7 Chinese Brothers
14:45 Eyes Of An Angel
16:25 The Big Year
18:15 Brooklyn
20:10 The Proposal
22:00 The Watch
23:45 Get Rich Or Die Tryin'



00:15 How I Met Your Mother
00:40 How I Met Your Mother
01:05 Seinfeld
01:30 Seinfeld
01:55 According To Jim
02:20 According To Jim
02:45 According To Jim
03:10 Late Night With Seth Meyers
04:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
04:50 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
05:40 Marry Me
06:05 The Bernie Mac Show
06:30 Fresh Off The Boat
06:55 Mom
07:20 Late Night With Seth Meyers
08:10 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
09:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
09:50 Modern Family
10:15 Will And Grace 2017
10:40 Marry Me
11:05 The Bernie Mac Show
11:30 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
12:20 Fresh Off The Boat
12:45 Mom
13:10 How I Met Your Mother
13:35 How I Met Your Mother
14:00 Seinfeld
14:25 Seinfeld
14:50 Marry Me
15:15 Modern Family
15:40 Will And Grace 2017
16:05 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
17:00 Fresh Off The Boat
17:30 Mom
18:00 How I Met Your Mother
18:30 How I Met Your Mother
19:00 Seinfeld
19:30 Seinfeld
20:00 The Simpsons
20:30 The Last Man On Earth
21:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
22:00 Crashing
22:35 Crashing
23:10 Difficult People
23:40 Late Night With Seth Meyers



00:00 The Muppets
02:00 Cars 3
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12:00 The Gifted
13:00 Chicago P.D.
14:00 The Flash
15:00 The View



16:00 Live Good Morning America
18:00 The Gifted
19:00 Chicago Med
20:00 Chicago P.D.
21:00 Supergirl
22:00 Lethal Weapon
23:00 S.W.A.T.



01:05 Lies & Alibis
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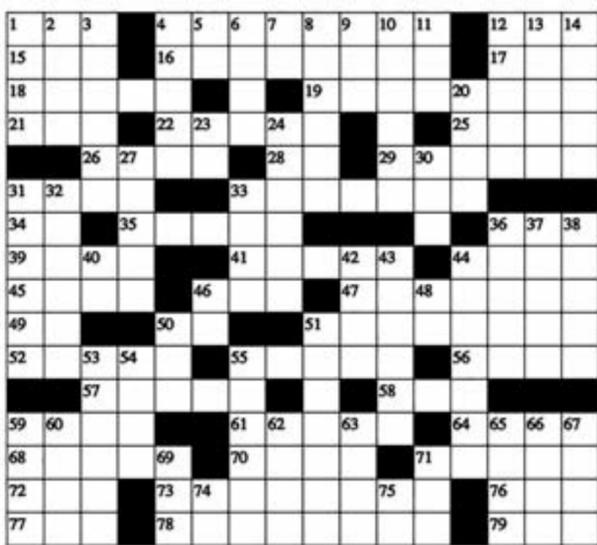


01:25 Dream Lover
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22:50 Rainbow Valley Heroes

CROSSWORD 1882



ACROSS

1. A master's degree in business.
4. Capital of Tuvalu.
12. Worthless or oversimplified ideas.
15. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
16. Put to use.
17. How long something has existed.
18. An implement consisting of handle with a free swinging stick at the end.
19. Sturdy annual of Peru.
21. Relating to or characteristic of or occurring in the air.
22. The ninth month of the Hindu calendar.
25. A European river.
26. A Loloish language.
28. An intensely radioactive metallic element that occurs in minute amounts in uranium ores.
29. Jewish republic in southwestern Asia at eastern end of Mediterranean.
31. A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
34. The eleventh month of the civil year.
35. Short and fat.
39. The 6th letter of the Greek alphabet.
41. English theoretical physicist who applied relativity theory to quantum mechanics and predicted the existence of antimatter and the positron (1902-1984).
45. (prefix) Opposite or opposing or neutralizing.
47. A dialect of Tocharian.
49. A soft white precious univalent metallic element having the highest electrical and thermal conductivity of any metal.
52. A long noosed rope used to catch animals.
56. (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.
57. (Norse mythology) God of light and peace and noted for his beauty and sweet nature.
58. A sheath worn to protect a finger.
59. (computer science) A graphic symbol (usually a simple picture) that denotes a program or a command or a data file or a concept in a graphical user interface.
61. Very lively and profitable.
64. A Hindu prince or king in India.
68. A Bantu language spoken by the Chaga people in northern Tanzania.
70. A Polynesian rain dance performed by a woman.
72. Seed vessel having hooks or prickles.
73. A cut of pork ribs with much of the meat trimmed off.
76. A former agency (from 1946 to 1974) that was responsible for research into atomic energy and its peacetime uses in the United States.
77. A condition (mostly in boys) characterized by behavioral and learning disorders.
78. Low stinging nettle of Central and South America having velvety brownish-green toothed leaves and clusters of small green flowers.
79. The ratio of the distance traveled (in miles) to the time spent traveling (in hours).

DOWN

1. A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
2. An island in Indonesia east of Java.
3. The mountain peak that Noah's ark landed on as the waters of the great flood receded.
4. A family of languages of the Fula people of west Africa in the sub-Saharan regions from Senegal to Chad.
5. The local time at the 0 meridian passing through Greenwich, England.
6. Being on the left side.
7. A silvery ductile metallic element found primarily in bauxite.
8. Haddock usually baked but sometimes broiled with lots of butter.
9. A type of submachine gun that is designed and manufactured in Israel.
10. A technician who is highly proficient and enthusiastic about some technical field (especially computing).
11. An agency of the United Nations affiliated with the World Bank.
12. A genus of Ploceidae.
13. Be in accord.
14. Relating to or resembling or made of or adorned with pearls or mother-of-pearl.
20. Any of the three Fates or goddesses of destiny.
23. A rare silvery (usually trivalent) metallic element.
24. A peninsula between the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf.
27. A river of southwestern Africa that rises in central Angola and flows east and then north (forming part of the border between Angola and Congo) and continuing northwest through Congo to empty into the Congo River on the border between Congo and Republic of the Congo.
30. A guided missile fired from shipboard against an airborne target.
32. Take revenge for a perceived wrong.
33. An informal term for a father.
36. Of power or authority.
37. The capital of Cape Verde on Sao Tiago Island.
38. An atom having a valence of one.
40. (astronomy) A measure of time defined by Earth's orbital motion.
42. A Kwa language spoken in Ghana and the Ivory Coast.
43. The position of a curate.
44. A building where theatrical performances or motion-picture shows can be presented.
46. A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali earth group.
48. A metric unit of length equal to one hundredth of a meter.
50. A metric unit of volume or capacity equal to 10 liters.
51. (botany) Outer tissue of bark.
53. On a ship, train, plane or other vehicle.
54. The taste experience when a savoury condiment is taken into the mouth.
55. Deprived of parents by death or desertion.
60. European freshwater game fish with a thick spindle-shaped body.
62. A sensation (as of a cold breeze or bright light) that precedes the onset of certain disorders such as a migraine attack or epileptic seizure.
63. A member of a rural Finnish people living in eastern Russia.
65. (Old Testament) In Judeo-Christian mythology.
66. A car suitable for traveling over rough terrain.
67. United States writer (born in Poland) who wrote in Yiddish (1880-1957).
69. Of southern Europe.
71. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
74. An informal term for a father.
75. Being nine more than ninety.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

The energy is available for you to make sound choices regarding work and personal situations. Financial abundance is indicated; be wise with how this new-found wealth is used. Someone from your past has done very well; you could struggle to be happy for this person as you ended your relationship on a negative note. An energy of judgement surrounds you as you try to accept the way someone else believes. You could experience unrealistic thoughts that could be spawned by jealousy on your part. Gains in real estate could manifest as though out of thin air, but this is a result of putting your mind on abundance and acquiring it. Smile as you relax this evening with someone fun and available to share some quality time.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You appear desirable and inviting just now; this would be a great time to go after that new job or perhaps go out on that date you have been considering. Others have noticed your appeal and someone steps up to offer a fun opportunity. Your reputation for making things happen and getting projects completed brings a request for your assistance or services. Someone is in agreement with you on a personal level. A tendency to day-dream is difficult to deal with as your list of tasks doesn't allow time for anything but work. A way for you to make extra money appears in an unusual place. You sense that someone is hiding something; you may distance yourself. Smile this evening when you realize this month is ending better than it started.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

An independent streak is seen throughout everything you do on a personal level; some of this also appears at work. Someone accuses you of being unrealistic and impractical; you could encounter a difficult situation. You're planning, or have recently made, a move pointing to the domestic area of your life. This move could pertain to work if this is where much of your focus is. You hold a strong disagreement with something the law states that you find unfair and negative. You appreciate your surroundings and find comfort here; just a small bit to go until a project is complete. Good vibrations and positive results are here! A garden party or garage sale could command your immediate attention; step forward and let unneeded items go.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You may experience feeling as though you've been excluded or that you may be unwanted. Remember that energies ebb and flow; just like the tides as influenced by the moon; temporary dips are easier when you realize they're short lived. Positive situations make themselves known today in the workplace as well as at home, seize them! Time flies as you go from one assignment or task to the next. You could have good feelings about a new acquaintance at work. You pull a sticky situation out of the fire with quick thinking. More than ever, you consider a comfortable home and loving family your safe zone. You have carried your share of the load today so take time to relax and recharge for another demanding day tomorrow.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

You feel and appear unstoppable just now. Your efforts reflect a dynamic energy and you attract the attention of many. You reach an important conclusion; make the best of what you have got and grow from there having learned a valuable lesson. The main players in your life's story change and evolve; keep in mind that relationships come and go, some temporary but leaving permanent imprints upon our lives, if not a forever physical presence. You encounter a strong desire to fling responsibility to the wind and instead take the day off to play. Focus on your happy home life and a new hobby you have started. An intimate, sexy exchange causes your pulse to race this evening as someone very special springs a surprise vacation getaway on you.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You know who you are and you're okay with it. You seem to be able to create more positive energy when you can see what you need to work on regarding yourself; plans to begin this effort come together. Figuring out how to fund a stronger will to overcome painful emotional damage isn't easy, but remembering the strength you carry inside helps. There are opportunities for gathering with like-minded people if you look around. Art, other finances and expensive investments hold your attention just now. It's appropriate to enjoy material blessings and be grateful for them. Just as the body requires nourishment, so does the soul require stirring and filling. Material blessings appear in the forms of beauty, prosperity and wealth of all kinds.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

You look closely at some changes you have noticed within yourself; steel is forged in fire and so are you, that's how you have grown stronger. Confidence levels are high as you move forward with your plans. You don't fear losing, you fear not acting! Your opinion is sought in solving a mystery or finding difficult answers; this could bring someone new into your life, friend or lover. This period of time opens up opportunities to relocate your home or place of work; you feel feng shui in certain places, pay attention to this. A team effort is at hand, you and others make a large difference for those less fortunate; this could indicate elderly people or animals. Your sense of accomplishment is prominent and it's not easy for you to wind down and relax tonight.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You're learning to let go of unimportant issues and people. Your true focus is upon your family, work and life in general; you have a strong wish to live with as much ease as possible. Your energy is forceful and strong as you listen, then pursue valuable solutions and tricks that make your job easier. You sometime feel a need to remove yourself from the group; this helps recharge and clear your mind. You stumble upon someone else's personal secret and promise not to tell. You share some special time with a mentor or teacher; you could arrive late for an engagement you don't really want to attend. You enjoy sharing new ideas with like-minded people. An exotic dish for dinner ignites your curiosity about its country of origin.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

The cycle you have entered opens up a time of good luck, protection and abundance. You excel at making plans and executing them; you're often approached to do just that. Your professional reputation is well known and your advice is sought after. Your spirits are high and pulling positive people straight to you. Involvement in a super large project pays off and you're feeling satisfied and humbled at the same time. If there's a problem with finances, these can be solved by changing your spending habits; there could be an opportunity to earn extra money. You may want to do something you know isn't right for you; this could be a strong test of will. Do what's best for you in the end. Trying something new is recommended for you.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You've entered a phase that is beneficial to creating stability and comfort. Going through this period of time making thoughtful decisions and plans pays off. Sticking with cautious investments and expenditures is the way you choose. A boss or supervisor approves of your performance and commitment. Someone pops in and brings with them laughter and a light mood. You're drawn to tending to others who have serious health care and nourishment related needs; this could indicate volunteering in an animal shelter or hospital. You could have a desire to purchase everything you see today, especially one item; be mindful of your pocketbook and budget! You feel overwhelmed and grateful for your home, family and place in life.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

An energy of dissatisfaction is prominent; there may be trouble on a deep emotional level. Some news you receive makes these negative feelings intensify. You feel helpless and unable to make this better. The positive changes you are working toward regarding yourself should not be discussed at this time. Don't be surprised when you feel as though you're going to explode! Remember the meditation and other calming directions you have been going toward; hold tightly to your beliefs no matter what anyone says. Someone is deliberately trying to upset you. It's difficult but you can always rise above this. Make preparations for the future this evening as you reconsider some choices and activities that should be rearranged.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You wake knowing you have the ability to get your tasks completed with ease. Energy levels are unusually high physically and being clumsy seems impossible! You could feel sentimental but are able to keep this to an acceptable level. You're being looked at for a leadership position regarding a volunteer project. Timing is always important and yours is spot on as you tell others of new plans and designs; you could get some important help because you shared this information. You find someone who needs help and can help you right back! This is the time of smooth energy that leads to accomplishment and positive outcomes. You may find a large item in a surprising place for a ridiculously low price; a rare find in many ways.

Wordsearch Puzzle

The Beach

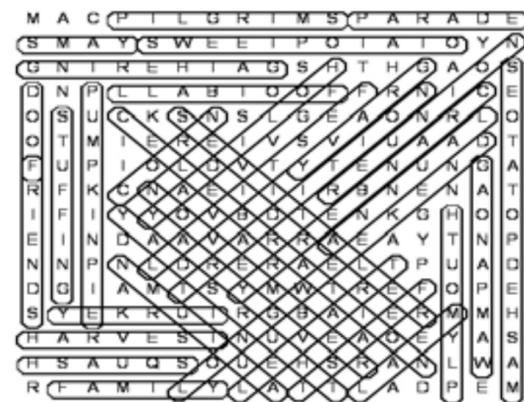
Find and circle all of the beach words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell an additional beach word.



- | | | |
|------------|------------|------------|
| BARE FEET | SAILING | SURFBOARD |
| BEACH BALL | SAND | SURFING |
| BOAT | SEAGULL | SWIMMING |
| CLOUDS | SEASHELL | SWIMSUIT |
| DRIFTWOOD | SEASHORE | T SHIRT |
| HAT | SKY | TOWEL |
| KITE | STARFISH | VOLLEYBALL |
| LIFEGUARD | SUNGLASSES | WADING |
| OCEAN | SUNSCREEN | WATER |
| PAIL | SUNSHINE | WAVES |
| PIER | | |

Yesterday's Solution

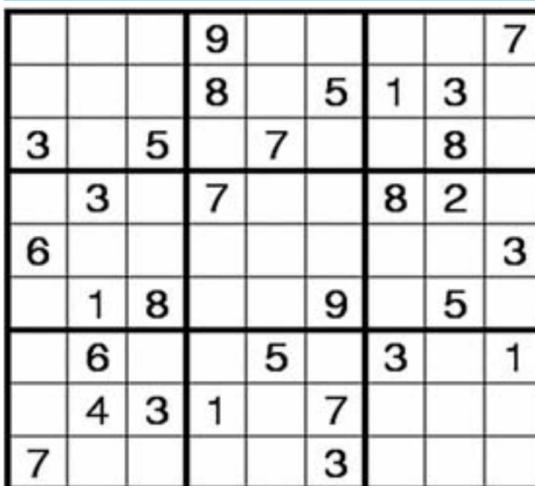
Thanksgiving (U.S.)



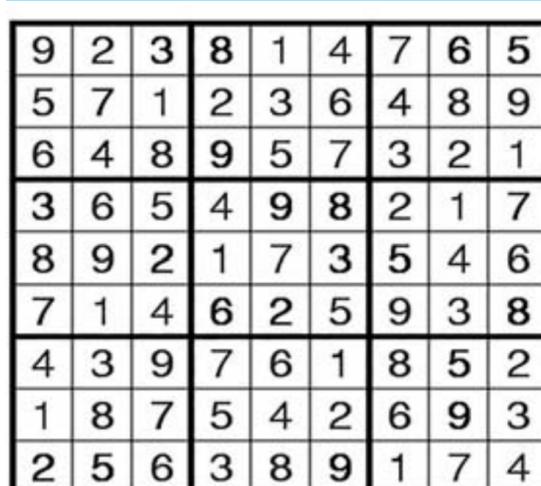
- | | | |
|-------------|-----------------|--------------|
| ANNUAL | GRAVY | RELATIVES |
| AUTUMN | HARVEST | REUNION |
| CELEBRATION | HOLIDAY | SQUASH |
| CORN | LONG WEEKEND | STUFFING |
| CRANBERRY | MASHED POTATOES | SWEET POTATO |
| FAMILY | MEAL | THURSDAY |
| FEAST | NOVEMBER | TRADITION |
| FESTIVAL | PARADE | TRAVEL |
| FOOD | PILGRIMS | TURKEY |
| FOOTBALL | PLYMOUTH | WAMPANOAG |
| FRIENDS | PUMPKIN PIE | YAMS |
| GATHERING | | |

The hidden message is: MACY'S THANKSGIVING DAY PARADE

Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



Lifestyle | Music & Movies

In Coachella debut, Japan megastars try anew to conquer US

More than 25 years after X Japan first attempted to conquer the US market, the metalheads are trying again—and recent events, at first glance, would not appear auspicious. Yoshiki, the fiercely energetic drummer and principal songwriter of the rockers who were superstars in 1980s Japan, last year urgently underwent surgery on a neck severely damaged from years of headbanging. But Yoshiki is doggedly persistent, and this weekend he brings X Japan to Coachella, the most famous US music festival—a prelude to the band's first studio album since 1996.

In perhaps the worst possible luck of the draw for an act playing the party in the California desert, X Japan will take a smaller stage Saturday night at the same moment as headliner Beyoncé. The set-time will likely mean an unusually small crowd for the rockers who still enjoy a fanatical fan base at home and have played arenas in New York and London. "I'm very excited but at the same time I'm wondering what kind of reaction we're going to get," Yoshiki Hayashi, who goes by only his first name, told AFP by telephone.

Yoshiki said that the yet-untitled album, to come out sometime in 2018, will also be the band's first that is almost entirely in English and geared primarily to an international audience. Describing the new music recorded at his studio in his adopted home of Los Angeles,

Yoshiki said "it's kind of a challenging sound—I would say it's even much edgier."

New opening for foreign acts?

Yoshiki, a classically trained pianist, blended symphonic structure into the teased-hair, high-octane world of glam metal, with the frail drummer pounding with such ferocity that he would writhe on the floor in pain by the end of shows. In 1992, the group gave a news conference in New York to announce a US record deal after hastily learning some English, but the attempt to break into the world's largest music market flopped. Yoshiki, 52, says times have changed. A small number of artists from South Korea's Psy to Puerto Rico's Luis Fonsi have gone viral with non-English songs, always a rare presence on the US charts and radio.

"Twenty years later, now we have the internet, YouTube and social media and everything, so it's almost a different world," Yoshiki said. On the flip side, rock has arguably faded from its dominance. Coachella for the first time has no rock band on the top of the bill. Yoshiki, however, voiced optimism, saying the younger generation is more fluid in enjoying music across genres. Yoshiki feels comfortable in English but he acknowledged that he was the exception in the band, fronted by the intense vocals of Toshi. "I started thinking that you don't have to pro-

nounce perfectly. We are from Japan. Maybe some kind of accent will be cool," he said with a laugh.

Assist from Manson

Since moving to Los Angeles, Yoshiki—who has played before Emperor Akihito and in leading concert halls—struck up an unlikely friendship with the ever-controversial goth prince Marilyn Manson. The two bonded over a shared passion for David Bowie. Yoshiki said he found Manson to be musically "inspirational" and that he joined X Japan in the studio, although it was unclear to what extent Manson will appear on the album.

The studio album will be the first without X Japan guitarist hide, who died in 1998 in a suspected suicide. Yoshiki said he arranged the new music as if hide were on guitar. "His spirit is in the album," Yoshiki said. Yoshiki himself had to halt touring a year ago when he lost feeling in one hand. The emergency surgery implanted an artificial cervical disc. Yoshiki said he has refused to water down his "super heavy" drum style. But in one concession to his health, he no longer headbangs. "I would say to any rock artist who does headbanging, please don't do it that much. It's really dangerous," Yoshiki said. — AFP



Mariah Carey says she has bipolar disorder



Pop singer Mariah Carey revealed yesterday that she suffers from bipolar disorder, telling People magazine that she was diagnosed in 2001 but had only recently been taking medication. Carey told People in an interview that she got the diagnosis when she was hospitalized following an emotional and physical breakdown around the time of her critically panned movie "Glitter" in 2001. She said she did not want to believe it and only sought treatment recently.

"I lived in denial and isolation and in constant fear someone would expose me," Carey told the celebrity magazine. "It was too heavy a burden to carry and I simply couldn't do that anymore. I sought and received treatment, I put positive people around me and I got back to doing what I love - writing songs and making music." Carey, one of the best-selling music artists in the world with 200 million records sold and hits like "We Belong Together," said she was taking medication for the bipolar II form of the disorder, which is marked by less severe mood swings between depression and hyperactivity.

"For a long time I thought I had a severe sleep disorder," she said. "But it wasn't normal insomnia and I wasn't lying

awake counting sheep. I was working and working and working. ... I was irritable and in constant fear of letting people down. It turns out that I was experiencing a form of mania. Eventually I would just hit a wall," the singer told the magazine. Carey came forward after a roller-coaster few years that included her divorce from comedian Nick Cannon, with whom she has 6-year-old twins, and her short-lived but high-profile 2016 engagement to Australian billionaire businessman James Packer.

She said she is taking medication that "is not making me feel too tired or sluggish" and is working on a new album due out later this year. "I'm just in a really good place right now, where I'm comfortable discussing my struggles with bipolar II disorder. I'm hopeful we can get to a place where the stigma is lifted from people going through anything alone," she said. Carey's interview is featured in the Friday edition of the magazine. — Reuters

FROM HOUSING PROJECTS TO TV: TRACY MORGAN GETS HIS HOLLYWOOD STAR

Comedic actor Tracy Morgan, who rose to prominence on sketch comedy series "Saturday Night Live" after growing up in one of New York City's toughest housing projects, said he felt right at home receiving a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame on Tuesday. With his trademark wide, mischievous grin, Morgan, 49, bent over and kissed the emblematic terrazzo and brass star along Hollywood Boulevard in Los Angeles, now one of the city's most-visited sites but for decades was a home to L.A.'s underbelly.

"When I was a poor kid growing up in the projects in Brooklyn, I would never dream of having a star on the Walk of Fame," the comic known for his cringe-inducing style said. "But

now that I'm here, I have to tell you I feel pretty comfortable," the "30 Rock" star added. "I'll tell you why! Because of the smell of weed and stale urine - it's just like being in the projects. What would really make me feel at home, if somebody spray painted graffiti on my star." Morgan, who stars in the new Time Warner Inc.-owned TBS comedy "The Last O.G." with Tiffany Haddish, was introduced by Oscar winner Jordan Peele and comedian Martin Lawrence, who gave Morgan his first break in 1994 on his TV comedy series "Martin."

"The Last O.G." is Morgan's first big step back into Hollywood after he was seriously injured in 2014 when a Wal-Mart truck crashed into his limousine on the New Jersey Turnpike

killing his friend, the comedian James McNair. "He's been through so many things and he's come out with an outlook on life that is absolutely beautiful," Peele told the assembled crowd. "He'll take you all over the map in a conversation with him," Peele added. "You'll be laughing one second, you'll be crying the next second. He'll have you thinking one second and then he'll say something so stupid it's just funny the next second." The Hollywood Walk of Fame is administered by the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce. — Reuters



Comedian Tracy Morgan (center) poses with the cast from 'The Last O.G.' on his Hollywood Walk of Fame Star on April 10, 2018 in Hollywood, California. — AFP photos



Comedian Tracy Morgan poses with his Hollywood Walk of Fame Star.



'Black Panther' pounces past 'Titanic' box office record

"Black Panther" broke more records over the weekend in North America, exceeding revenues from the 1997 blockbuster "Titanic," while horror thriller "A Quiet Place," with barely three minutes of dialogue, made a resounding \$50.2 million debut. "A Quiet Place" is built around a simple but chilling premise: flesh-eating creatures have invaded Earth, but they are blind and can track their prey only by sound. So actor/director John Krasinski, his wife (in the film and in real life) Emily Blunt and their children must adapt-through sign language and ingenious adaptations—or die.

The film has drawn rave reviews, with a 97 percent Rotten Tomatoes rating. Steven Spielberg's "Ready Player One"—a futuristic tribute to 1980s films—came in second at \$24.6 million from Friday to Sunday, according to box office tracker Exhibitor Relations. The Warner Bros. film tells the story of a teenage gamer (Wade Watts) who finds himself inside an addictive virtual reality world. It's earned \$96.5 million in two weeks. In third was another new release, Universal's "Blockers," at \$20.6 million. A raunchy comedy starring John Cena and Leslie Mann, the movie drew considerable buzz at the South by Southwest film festival.

Still flourishing in its eighth week out, "Black Panther" netted \$8.7 million for fourth spot. Already the highest-grossing superhero film in US history, its cumulative total in the US and Canada now exceeds \$665.6 million. The film stars Chadwick Boseman, Michael B. Jordan and Lupita Nyong'o. That number takes the film past "Titanic," which had collected \$659 million in North America. "Black Panther" is now third in movie ticket sales of all time on the continent. "Avatar" (2009) and "Star Wars: The Force Awakens" (2015) are still ahead, with \$760 million and \$936.7 million in ticket sales respectively.

In terms of global sales, "Avatar" leads with \$2.8 billion, followed by "Titanic" (\$2.2 billion), both directed by James Cameron. "Black Panther" is only 10th worldwide. In North America, the weekend's fifth spot went to psychological thriller "Tyler Perry's Acrimony" with \$8.4 million.

Rounding out the top 5 were: "I Can Only Imagine" (\$7.8 million) "Chappaquiddick" (\$5.8 million) "Sherlock Gnomes" (\$5.4 million) "Pacific Rim: Uprising" (\$4.8 million) "Isle of Dogs" (\$4.6 million)—AFP

Go your own way: Buckingham leaves Fleetwood Mac, again

Fleetwood Mac, the veteran rockers notorious for internal strife, are at it again. The band said Monday it was parting ways once more with guitarist Lindsey Buckingham. The announcement, made as the British-American group prepares a summer tour, nonetheless came as a surprise as the band's classic lineup had reunited over the past few years. "Lindsey Buckingham will not be performing with the band on this tour. The band wishes Lindsey all the best," the remaining members said in a statement. The group said he would be replaced on the tour by two guitarists—frontman Neil Finn of Australian pop stalwarts Crowded House and Mike Campbell, who led the backup band of late rocker Tom Petty.

"Fleetwood Mac has always been a creative evolution. We look forward to honoring that spirit on this upcoming tour," the band said. It was not immediately clear why Buckingham was, in the words of one of the band's hits, set to go his own way. But entertainment site Variety, quoting an anonymous source, said the band fired Buckingham rather than the guitarist choosing to leave. Representatives for the band declined comment. Drummer Mick Fleetwood has been the only consistent member of the 50-year-old group, which has generated a string of emotionally resonant hits such as "Dreams" and "Landslide."

The California-born Buckingham originally joined when he was dating Stevie Nicks, whose sandy voice would define the sound of Fleetwood Mac. They split while still bandmates and Fleetwood Mac's internal tensions famously belied an uneasy musical unity on the 1977 album "Rumors," the group's most acclaimed work. Buckingham, a key songwriter for the

group, initially left the band in 1987. But the group put behind bad blood to come back together in early 1993 for the inauguration of president Bill Clinton, who adopted the Fleetwood Mac song "Don't Stop" as a forward-looking campaign theme. In January, Clinton saluted Fleetwood Mac when the group-including Buckingham—was honored at a charity con-

cert in New York as part of the Grammy Awards. Fellow vocalist Christine McVie, who was married to bassist John McVie and had kept a low profile in recent years, rejoined Fleetwood Mac in 2014 to complete the classic lineup. — AFP



Lifestyle | Features



Advertising posters for consumer saving aimed specifically at children in West Germany (from left) from 1955, 1967 and 1951 are on display at the exhibition "Saving - History of a German Virtue" at the German History Museum in Berlin. — AFP photos



Vice or virtue? Exhibition charts Germans' mania for saving

While the European Union gears up for another of its endless post-crisis bouts over spending, debt and deficits, Berlin's German Historical Museum has turned a microscope onto the mania for saving in Europe's largest economy. "Merkel's bullying", "Queen of austerity", "German dogma": headlines from around the EU greet visitors to the baroque pile on the leafy Unter den Linden boulevard that houses the museum.

All are relics of Berlin's insistence that eurozone members stick to strict limits on debts and deficits at the height of the currency bloc's post-2008 financial blues.

Politicians and the public have been puzzled by the rage from other nations, while Spaniards, Italians and above all Greeks have cursed Berlin for soaring unemployment and slashed government services. "These attacks meet with little understanding in Germany. Why is this conflict so highly charged emotionally?" questioned museum chief professor Raphael Gross. To most Germans, saving around 10 percent of their income has long been an "unquestioned virtue" come war, inflation, famine or fortune, Gross noted.

Witness to that fact are some 2.3 trillion euros (\$2.8 trillion) socked away in savings accounts or under mattresses, according to a January report by Germany's central bank, the Bundesbank. Curator Robert Muschalla said he deliberately wanted to provoke with the title of the exhibition—"Saving: History of a German virtue". "The idea isn't to say that saving is good or bad, it's about opening a debate on a topic that is seen as self-evident



A money transport cart for wage payments in a small factory in Halle in 1923 is on display.

in Germany... saving has become internalized into a habit," he explained.

Gold for iron

To understand Germans' nest-egg neurosis, visitors must look back to the 18th century, when the building that today houses the museum was the arsenal of militaristic Prussia. Like neighboring France, Prussia and other German states were roiled by emancipatory ideas spread by the Enlightenment thinkers of the time. But "while the French carried out their Revolution [in 1789], the Germans invented saving" as the foundation of personal autonomy and a means to pay for education, Muschalla pointed out. The first of the Sparkasse savings banks that dot

cityscapes to this day was opened in free city Hamburg in 1778. Prussia boasted some 278,000 savings accounts by 1850 and 2.2 million by 1875.

To a state that had asked citizens to fund its war effort against Napoleon by exchanging gold jewelry for iron rings, the savings system was a natural bulwark against enemies within and without. Communist thinker Karl Marx raged in "Das Kapital"—a first edition of which can be seen among the exhibits—that workers' cash piles kept them invested in the capitalist system, giving them something to lose in case of a revolution. And when World War I broke out in 1914, ordinary citizens' savings again helped foot the bill for the bloodletting.



A Deutsche Bank "Savings Automat" from 1970 is on display.

Truckloads of cash

At the heart of the exhibition stands the symbol of what came next—a replica of the wheelbarrows used to haul stacks of near-worthless banknotes through the streets during the hyperinflation of the early 1920s. Adolf Hitler's Nazi party was quick to seize on the opportunity, placing "saving in opposition to lending," curator Muschalla said. A "background noise of anti-Semitism" painted finance and credit as the province of their preferred scapegoat for Germany's ills, the Jews, he added. Propaganda posters from 1938 — five years after the Nazis seized power—hailed "those who work and save" as the guardians of "German tradition".

Under Hitler's Third Reich, a "Sparautomat" or savings machine was installed in many schools, allowing children to deposit pennies and pull a lever to mark their savings books. Meanwhile, the regime began confiscating Jews' bank deposits in 1938, a few years before it began deporting them to forced labor and extermination camps.

'Stinginess is cool'

After the Nazis' 1945 defeat, the new Federal Republic of Germany turned westwards and became a thriving capitalist economy. But unlike Americans or western European neighbors, the new Germans still shunned purchases on credit, hoarding their deutsche marks until they could afford a car, fridge or television—and keeping the savings machines in schools, minus the Nazi propaganda.

A poster preserved in the exhibition blares the "Geiz ist geil"—"stinginess is cool"—slogan used by the Saturn electronics chain in the 2000s. In a society still obsessed with discount supermarkets and money-off coupons, saving is a "German pathology" lamented Die Welt newspaper columnist Henryk M. Broder in a video. "Geiz ist geil" is really the worst phrase—except for "Heil Hitler"—ever invented in this country," he said. — AFP

Trouble in Paradise: Tourism surge lashes Southeast Asia's beaches

Hordes of tourists clamber across the white sand with selfie sticks as Thai park rangers wade into turquoise waters to direct boats charging into the cliff-ringed cove. Made famous by the 2000 movie "The Beach" starring Leonardo DiCaprio, Maya Bay on the western Thai island of Koh Phi Phi Ley is now a case study in the ruinous costs of runaway tourism, swamped by up to 4,000 daily visitors. "There is too many people here, it's bad," lamented Saad Lazrak, a 61-year-old from Morocco, as crowds around him swallowed the stretch of sand encircled by an amphitheatre of limestone cliffs.



Tourists having their photo taken by a guide on Maya Bay, on the southern Thai island of Koh Phi Phi.

Across the region, Southeast Asia's once-pristine beaches are reeling from decades of unchecked tourism as governments scramble to confront trash-filled waters and environmental degradation without puncturing a key economic driver. Thailand's Maya Bay will be off limits for four months from June to September, officials announced last month, in a bid to save its ravaged coral reefs.

In the Philippines, President Rodrigo Duterte ordered this month the Boracay beach resort closed to tourists for up to six months from April 26, describing the destination as a "cesspool" tainted by sewage dumped directly into the sea. Indonesian officials, meanwhile, declared a "garbage emergency" last year swamping a six-kilometer stretch of coast along the island of Bali. The island's grim coastal pollution was highlighted in March by British diver Rich Horner's viral video of swimming through a sea of trash swirling off shore. "Plastic bags, more plastic bags, plastic, plastic, so much plastic!" Horner said in a Facebook post that has been viewed more than a million times.

Conservationists and governments are worried about the health of coral reefs, which are in a dire state globally due to climate change and rising sea temperatures. When exposed to warmer waters, they shed the algae that dazzle the eye and are vital to marine eco-systems, leaving the corals diseased or bone-white in a process called bleaching. Environmental stress, including pollution, human contact and exposure to plastics that comes with mass tourism are also major threats to reefs that are part of the draw for snorkellers and scuba-divers.

"Tourism has a series of detrimental effects on coral health," said Eike Schoenig, a Thailand-based marine biologist at the Center for Oceanic Research and Education. Countries in Southeast Asia are looking to stem the threats without cutting off the cash flow of a regional tourism boom, led by China, the top source market for travellers to the region. Thailand received 35 million tourists last year, of whom nearly 10 million hailed from China, according to official data. But what is good for business can be bad for beaches. Songtam Suksawang, Thailand's National Park Office Director, told AFP he personally inspected the beach at Maya Bay and said it "must definitely be (temporarily) closed" in order to rehabilitate it. He said authorities are discussing new rules once the shut-down is lifted, such as restrictions on the number of daily visitors, better regulation of boats and a higher entrance fee.

Tourism costs

Thailand is also conducting studies on six other marine parks, while the Philippines is weighing action on other top destinations buckling under mass tourism. But governments are wary of curtailing an industry that cre-



A group of fire dancers performing for tourists on the southern Thai island of Koh Phi Phi.



A crowd of tourists on the Maya Bay beach, on the southern Thai island of Koh Phi Phi.

ates jobs and buoy economies. Spending on travel and tourism contributed nearly \$136 billion to the region's GDP in 2017, a figure forecast to rise to \$144 billion this year, according to the World Travel & Tourism Council. The cost of the closures is already being felt in the Philippines, where hundreds of Boracay hotels and tour



This photo shows tourists getting off a speedboat onto Maya Bay, on the southern Thai island of Koh Phi Phi.

companies are facing steep losses from cancelled rooms, flights and other bookings.

But some countries are not taking such dramatic steps. In Indonesia, the tourism ministry said there were no plans to close Bali or any other holiday destination in the archipelago, although it acknowledged that pockets of the tropical paradise were under strain from heavy tourism. "Shut down Bali? I don't think we will need to do that yet," said ministry spokesman Guntur Sakti. "Bali is the center of Indonesian tourism." In fact, Indonesia has identified 10 other destinations where it is trying to boost visitors and replicate Bali's success, including neighboring island

Lombok and Lake Toba in Sumatra. Experts are also skeptical that short shut-downs will have lasting effects. "Bottom line is that temporarily closing the beach is probably not the optimal solution to these problems. It only take a day for a bunch of incompetent snorkellers to trash a small reef," said Andrew Baird from the ARC Centre of Excellence for Coral Reef Studies in Australia. In Thailand, the government hopes to draw people to lesser known beaches.

"We are working very hard to spread people out, not to go to one condensed area," said Thon Thamrongnawasawat, a marine expert working with the parks and tourism authorities. Travellers to Maya Bay might like the idea. "It's very touristy. There wasn't a patch of sand that didn't have people laying down on it, taking photos," Oliver Black, a 22-year-old tourist, said of his afternoon at the destination. As for his thoughts on the looming closure? "It would not really upset me if I wasn't able to go to (back to) Maya beach," he told AFP. — AFP



Tourists getting off a speedboat onto Maya Bay, on the southern Thai island of Koh Phi Phi. — AFP photos

Thailand: The unseen beauties of undiscovered areas



Thailand Ambassador to Kuwait, Dusit Manpan and Thani Thongphakdi, Deputy Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand.

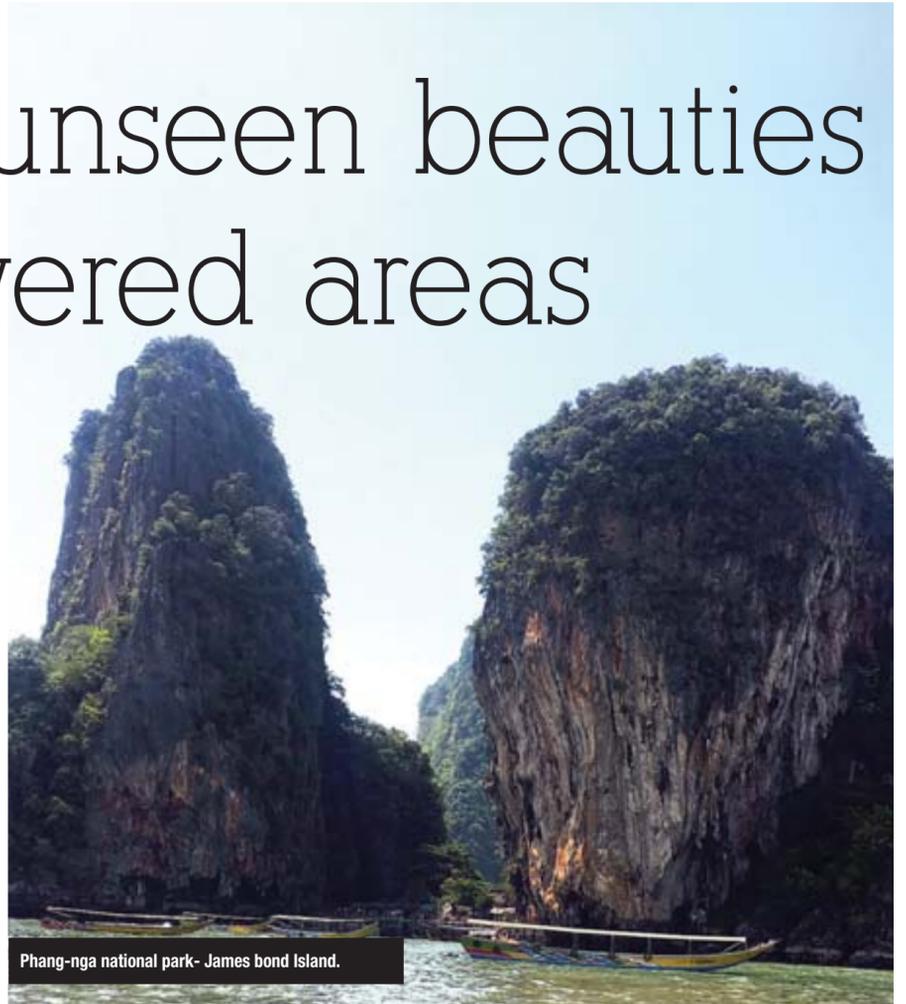
By Ingie Al-Nakhlawi

When it comes to Thailand, it is needless to say that its tourism industry has flourished in the past few decades. Its blissful beaches and exotic islands with nature reserves and historic monuments untarnished by man or climate and its traditional food that tourists yearn for in their home countries are the two most interesting things that capture the attention of all travelers.

However, there are numerous other reasons for tourists to consider Thailand as their forthcoming vacation destination. To begin with, this gem of a country has not yet been totally discovered by social media. There are many provinces and islands that are still virgin and not less beautiful than the famous Phuket or Koh Samui.



Fishermen village- Ko Pun Yee Island.



Phang-nga national park- James bond Island.

promising quality standards of branded chicken. I realized that the afternoon will include some intense knowledge and delicious food. S-Pure stands for quality and safety of all its products, which is expanding internationally. What I found to be extra fascinating was how you can trace back the manufacturing process via their QR code on the chicken packaging to monitor the origin of the S-Pure chicken. They have been exporting their outstanding 100 percent antibiotics-free chicken to parts of Asia and Europe and are tackling the Middle East, starting with Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates.

Departing to Phuket on the 7.50 am flight to proceed to Phang Nga province in spite of the hot weather was

into the water to retrieve the ball."

We got onto a speedboat and headed to Ko Ta Pu, also known as James Bond Island, since it gained popularity after a part of "The Man with the Golden Gun" was filmed there. Not only James Bond attracts tourists, but also the beauty and fascination of this large rock built by nature that has been standing erect in the sea for millions of years.

After a long day of historic attractions, we arrived at the JW Marriott to relax and unwind before dinner. The resort is fascinating and blends extraordinary natural beauty, from its beachfront to tropical spas.

Our final visit was to Piyavate Hospital, an interna-



Mosque at Ko Pun Yee Island.

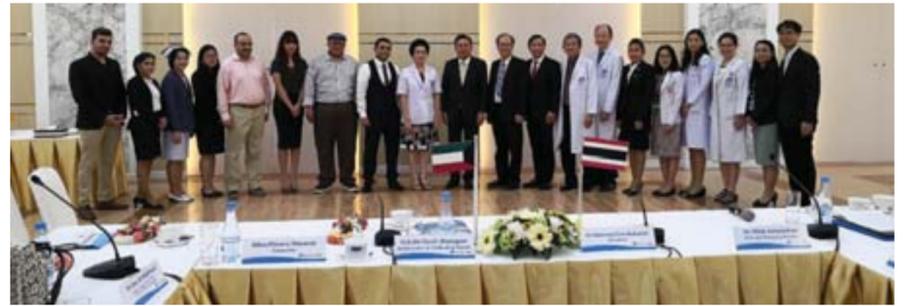
In addition to enjoying the gorgeous scenery, the translucent sea, the mountains and the religious temples, one can also visit the most sophisticated medical facilities for a quick full one-day check-up. We embarked on a five-day voyage to different provinces to enjoy the unseen beauties of undiscovered areas, engage with the locals known for their hospitality to foreigners and whatever else Thailand has to offer. During our trip we were joined by Dusit Manapan, Ambassador of Thailand to Kuwait, and Ms Pittara, counselor at the Embassy of Thailand in Kuwait.

Thailand the welcoming country

The 20-year-plan, as proposed by Thani Thongphakdi, Deputy Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, is to become a developed country. He expressed how "Thailand is a welcoming country and that there is harmony between all religions". His words expressed the attitude and truthfulness of the citizens, which were proven during our exciting journey of Thailand.

On meeting Pataraporn Sithivanich, Executive Director to Europe Africa and Middle East, Tourism Authority of Thailand, I felt the enthusiasm in her voice while she was speaking about the yearly increase of tourists, which gave her a sense of pride in the developing country. As any director would, she desires to open the country's doors and welcome more tourists to experience unlimited exotic adventures as well as growing medical facilities.

After a long ride to Lopburi province, we were welcomed by the Betagro Company known for their uncom-



A group photo at the Piyavate Hospital.

well worth it. Upon arrival, we were met by a warm Thai greeting followed by a meeting with Sittichai Sakda, Governor of Phang- Nga.

Phang-Nga is a province with forests and mountains near the sea, which keeps the temperature constant throughout the year, giving tourists a chance to come visit as they please. Phang-Nga can be reached by flying to Phuket or Krabi and taking any other means of transportation, since they don't have any direct flights. Visitors usually enjoy boating while watching the scenic islands, mountains and forests.

Pan Yi Island

We proceeded to Pan Yi Island, a one-of-a-kind fishing village, which currently consists of 360 families and is strangely built on stilts that look like a cluster of colorful floating houses. Here in this Muslim village, where an Indonesian leader migrated over 200 years ago, stands a mosque, school, shops and restaurants.

As we ate delicious seafood while chatting with the locals, and got a sense of how close and involved everyone is in their own roles in this small community. By visiting this village, you will never miss the feeling of togetherness between all residents. I noticed that there was a football field built on the water surface - truthfully, I have never seen anything similar before. I asked a local girl about who came up with this idea. She replied: "It was built many years ago, and as a tradition, you must jump

ally accredited care facility with over-the-top quality of care. We came across a few Kuwaiti patients, who after a few minutes of conversation, could not stop raving about the intense quality and care of the doctors, staff and hospital administration.

Committed to family care

Burin Nuchniyom, MD, International Medical Director said: "We are committed to family care, providing physical and emotional support for patients and families. Future plans are to have continuous care in GCC countries." After patients leave the facility, they would like to be offered support from a place closer to home. A rehab center would make it easier for patients to fly out and stay close to their countries and families.

They take comfort levels very seriously, where not only the overall surgery success is important, but how you are admitted and discharged without any hurdles. As success rates and popularity rise, they are expanding from 150 to 350 beds in the coming years. 'Tria', is the hospital's wellness center - a building of serenity and healing. Not only does it provide pain management, integrative detox and anti-ageing procedures, but also a relaxing spa and fitness center for patients.



Phang-nga national park-James bond Island.



Photo shows Witit Artavatkun M.D. Chief executive officer, Ambassador Dusit Manpan and Burin Nuchniyom, M.D international medical director at the TRIA, Piyavate Hospital.



The sitting area and classroom at the Kid Mai Death Awareness Cafe, an exhibition space built to educate the public about death and Buddhism, in Bangkok.



A man lying inside a traditional Thai coffin at the Kid Mai Death Awareness Cafe, an exhibition built to educate the public about death and Buddhism, in Bangkok.



A Thai teenager trying out a traditional coffin at the Kid Mai Death Awareness Cafe.—AFP photos

BITE THE DUST AT BANGKOK'S 'DEATH AWARENESS' CAFE



Patrons having drinks at the Kid Mai Death Awareness Cafe.

Dying for a cup of coffee? You will feel right at home at Bangkok's new "death awareness" cafe, a macabre, Buddhist spin on the themed-cafe craze where customers are urged to confront their own mortality—and live better lives as a result. With drinks called "death" and "painful" on the menu and a skeleton splayed out on a couch in the corner, the meet-your-maker theme is alive and well at this open-air lunch spot in the Thai capital.

But the centerpiece of the "Kid Mai (Think New) Death Cafe" experience is a decorated white coffin where customers are encouraged to lay down for a few minutes to contemplate their final moments—and secure a discount on a drink. "I feel like I am in a funeral," 28-year-old Duanghatai Boonmoh said with a laugh as she sipped a chocolate "death smoothie" on a recent Saturday afternoon. She and other curious customers took turns climbing into the wooden box as friends sealed the lid.

"The first thing that came to my mind was, what if no one opens it?" Duanghatai said after emerging from the coffin. "How you going to tell everyone that I'm here, I'm still alive?" I think that's probably the feeling you have when you know you're going to die soon," she added.

Buddhist cure

The cafe's owner says his restaurant is more than just a gimmick or dark take on the cute and cuddly coffee shops common in the Thai capital, which boasts everything from cat, husky and meerkat cafes to unicorn and mermaid-themed eateries. A professor and social researcher, Veeranut Rojanaprapa conceived of the cafe as a way to teach Thai people—some 90 percent of whom identify as Buddhist—about the benefits of "death awareness". "We found that having an awareness of death decreases greed and anger," explained Veeranut, whose giggly demeanor belies his fascination with more morbid matters.

He believes the Buddhist concept, rooted in ideas of impermanence and selflessness, is the key to ridding Thai society of chronic problems like violence and corruption. "When one is aware of their own death, they will do good. This is what our Lord Buddha teaches," he explained. The casket experience is also a way to nudge the country's technology-addicted youth to step back and reassess their personal lives. "When teenagers go down to the coffin and our staff close the coffin, because



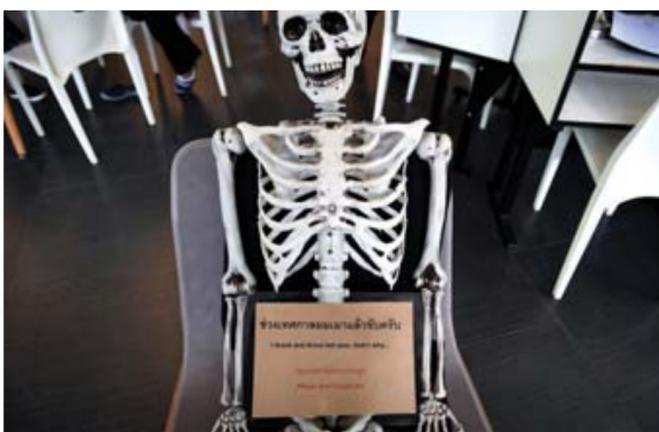
A Thai teenager trying out a traditional coffin at the Kid Mai Death Awareness Cafe.

of the darkness, because of the small space, they will be aware of themselves... they will recall the things that they still haven't done," said Veeranut, adding that he makes a point of considering his own demise nightly.

The professor is not the first to offer a resurrection experience in Thailand, where a temple outside Bangkok is famous for hosting symbolic funerals for devotees looking to clear their souls of bad karma. But his cafe and coffin sit squarely in the middle of a local community center in northern Bangkok, offering a public—and morbid—reminder of mortality that not everybody in the neighborhood is happy about.

The cafe has also spread out to a public walkway, which is now posted with signs asking questions like: "What is the purpose of your life?" "This is so disturbing. I feel really strange walking there and might avoid this shortcut," one netizen wrote on a neighborhood Facebook page. Yet Veeranut says he welcomes any controversy as a sign of success. "I love all of the complaints. Because if they are complaining it means they are thinking about death, they are aware of death." — AFP

“We found that having an awareness of death decreases greed and anger”



A skeleton on a chair at the Kid Mai Death Awareness Cafe.



Pictures of drinks available to order at the Kid Mai Death Awareness Cafe.



Thai teenagers arriving at the Kid Mai Death Awareness Cafe.



A traditional Thai funeral wreath at the Kid Mai Death Awareness Cafe.



A barista preparing a chocolate milkshake called "Death," at the Kid Mai Death Awareness Cafe.



The coffee bar area at the Kid Mai Death Awareness Cafe.



A group of Thai teenagers visit the Kid Mai Death Awareness Cafe.

Lifestyle

THURSDAY, APRIL 12, 2018

Real Madrid vs Juventus



A sports shop owner in Kuwait arranges miniature football players statue as Spain's Real Madrid and Italy's Juventus played the second leg of Europe Champion league quarter finals last night. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Tracey Emin sends anti-Brexit message in pink neon



British artist Tracey Emin's new neon sculpture "I Want My Time With You", is pictured at St Pancras station in London.

British artist Tracey Emin has unveiled her latest artwork: a bright pink homage to Europe at St Pancras station in London-Britain's rail gateway to the continent. Emin, one of country's most famous living artists, said she conceived the 20-metre-long text-based work, "I Want My Time With You", as a response to Brexit. The installation-bright neon letters spelling out the phrase-is suspended from the ceiling inside the cavernous Victorian era station facing trains arriving from continental Europe.

"Essentially, it is a great subliminal message sent out to the rest of Europe... I want my time with Europe," she told reporters at Monday's unveiling. "I'm deeply saddened that Britain is going to be demoted to a tiny island floating around in the North Sea." Emin, 54, who first rose to fame with her 1999 exhibit "My Bed"-a stained bed surrounded with detritus-said she is not against people who voted to leave the European Union.

"What I'm worried about is the people who voted Brexit who didn't understand what they were voting for," she added. "The people who did understand, that was their prerogative." The contemporary artist said the work also aimed to evoke the romance of stations, and being met by someone after getting off a train. She revealed the project proved a health and safety headache.

"The main consideration is the train drivers coming in. They mustn't be shocked," added Emin, who is known for her raw openness and often sexually provocative work. She first emerged more than two decades ago as part of a wave of young, bold, British artists and has gradually become a staple of the art world establishment. The installation will remain on display at St Pancras until the end of the year. — AFP



Visitors take a selfie photograph in front of British artist Tracey Emin's new neon sculpture "I Want My Time With You" at St Pancras station in London yesterday. — AFP photos