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13 Once on the ropes, Indian boxing comes out swinging



Kuwait, Oman urge producers to cooperate over output cuts

OPEC chief hails Amir's role • Kuwait to raise non-associated gas production

Amir attends 'Gulf Shield' drill



DHAHRAN, Saudi Arabia: HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah (second left), Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz (second right), Jordanian King Abdullah II (left) and Egyptian President Abdelfattah Al-Sisi attend the closing ceremony yesterday of the "Gulf Shield 1" military drills at the Samet range in this eastern Saudi region on the sidelines of the 29th Arab League summit. — KUNA (See Page 3)

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti and Omani oil ministers yesterday called on OPEC and non-OPEC producers to continue their unprecedented cooperation to maintain stability in the energy market. Producers from the OPEC oil cartel and non-OPEC countries struck a deal in 2016 to trim production by 1.8 million barrels per day to rebalance the market after its collapse in 2014. The deal, which runs out at the end of this year, has succeeded in boosting oil prices above \$70 a barrel from below \$30 a barrel in early 2016.

Kuwait's Oil Minister Bakheet Al-Rasheedi said he believes that oil producers were on the right path to restore stability to the oil market. "A year ago, there was a surplus of 340 million barrels of oil. At the end of February, the surplus dropped to 50 million barrels and we believe we are on the right path to get rid of this surplus," Rasheedi told reporters at the fifth Kuwait Oil and Gas Conference. He said that the OPEC and

non-OPEC cooperation will be reviewed at an OPEC meeting in June. "Market conditions will determine whether the deal will be extended beyond 2018 or arrive at a permanent agreement... to support the market on a long-term basis," he said.

Omani Oil Minister Mohamed Al-Rumhi said a decrease in investment in oil production operations poses a major challenge for the industry. However, producers' commitment to the oil output cut agreement helped bring back investments to their previous levels, especially with the recent recovery of oil prices, he noted. "I call for the signatories of the (cooperation) declaration agreement, those 24 nations from OPEC and non-OPEC, to continue the dialogue, the understanding and commitment in maintaining the market conditions that will encourage investment," Rumhi told the conference.

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Duterte to visit April 30; Filipino remittances fall

By A Saleh and Agencies

KUWAIT: The Philippines Embassy in Kuwait yesterday notified the Kuwaiti government that President Rodrigo Duterte will visit Kuwait on April 30 - before Ramadan. Ambassador Renato Villa met foreign ministry officials yesterday morning to inform them of the date of the visit, noting that the date will not be confirmed until the Amiri Diwan approves it in accordance with HH the Amir's scheduled obligations.

Meanwhile, the recent Kuwait-Philippines labor crisis has led to a 13.3 percent drop in remittances by Filipinos over the two past months - to \$105.9 million. Notably, the Philippines economy largely depends on remittances at a time when the Philippines currency - the peso - reached its lowest level, according to the Japanese Nikkei newspaper.

The government of Philippines imposed a ban on sending workers to Kuwait following the murder of 29-year-old Joanna Demafelis, who went missing in Sept 2016. Her body was found in a freezer earlier this year, bearing signs of torture. Last week Duterte said Kuwait had agreed to his demands to improve the working conditions of Filipinos, following negotiations between the two countries on a labor accord. One of his key demands is that Filipino workers be allowed to keep their mobile phones and passports - which can be confiscated by employers under current conditions.

Philippines Labor Secretary Silvestre Bello said the memorandum of understanding will be signed before Ramadan, with Kuwait to improve the conditions of Filipino workers in Kuwait. Around 10 million Filipinos live and work abroad, including 250,000 in Kuwait.

Maid forced to drink bleach

Separately, Manila's foreign ministry said yesterday a Philippine domestic worker has been hospitalized in Saudi Arabia after her employer allegedly forced her to drink household bleach. Domestic worker Agnes Mancilla underwent emergency abdominal surgery after she was taken, unconscious, to a hospital in Saudi's southwestern Jizan city on April 2, the ministry said. "We are working closely with authorities in Jizan to make sure that justice will be given to Agnes Mancilla," the ministry said in a statement.

The victim is in "serious but stable condition" in hospital and Saudi police have arrested her female employer, who has not been named, it added. Mancilla had worked in Saudi Arabia since 2016 "but was repeatedly physically abused by her lady employer" who also failed to pay her salary, the statement said, citing Edgar Badajos, the Philippine consul in the Saudi city of Jeddah.

MPs file to grill oil minister; panel OKs early retirement bill

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Opposition MPs Omar Al-Tabtabaei and Abdulwahab Al-Babtain yesterday filed to grill Oil Minister Bakheet Al-Rasheedi over allegations of corruption, mismanagement, squandering public funds and others. Babtain described it as the "grilling of billions" in reference to the alleged sums that have either been stolen or squandered by the oil sector, while Tabtabaei said a "mafia" is running the oil sector.

The lengthy grilling has been placed on the agenda of the May 1 Assembly session for a potential debate, Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem told reporters. He said the grilling was not placed on today's agenda because it was submitted too late and to be debated

today and requires the Assembly to agree to place it on the agenda and allow its debate.

The two lawmakers advised the minister to face the grilling and not to resign ahead of the debate, with Tabtabaei insisting that it "contains strong points" with authentic documentation. The grilling is based on 10 main issues, all alleging corruption, mismanagement, squandering of public funds and losses from bad investment decisions. The grilling blames the minister and the oil sector of squandering or losing "hundreds of millions of dinars", while Babtain said the amounts "are well over one billion dinars".

The lawmakers vowed to produce documents to prove their accusations from original sources and urged MPs to first hear the debate before judging the grilling. In the first issue, the grilling alleges a delay in the Clean Fuel Project until the end of 2018, causing the state heavy losses, besides failing to impose delay fines on contractors. It accused the minister of entering into bad investments that cost public funds massive losses, citing the example of a foreign investment that has resulted in \$630 million in losses.

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KUWAIT: Opposition MPs Omar Al-Tabtabaei (left) and Abdulwahab Al-Babtain arrive to file to grill Oil Minister Bakheet Al-Rasheedi yesterday at the National Assembly. — Photo by Fouad Al-Shaikh

Eight on trial for rape, murder of Kashmiri girl

SRINAGAR: Eight men accused of involvement in the rape and murder of an eight-year-old Muslim girl in India's Jammu and Kashmir state appeared in court yesterday for the first hearing in a case that sparked nationwide outrage and criticism of the ruling party. The girl, from a nomadic community that roams the forests of Kashmir, was drugged, held captive in a Hindu temple and sexually assaulted for a week before being strangled and battered to death with a stone in January, police said.

Public anger at the crime led to

protests in cities across India over the past few days, with outrage fuelled by support for the accused initially shown by state government ministers from Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). The protests have also focused on another rape allegedly involving a BJP lawmaker in crime-ridden Uttar Pradesh, a poor northern state with the country's biggest population.

The outrage has drawn parallels with massive protests that followed the gang rape and murder of a woman on a Delhi bus in 2012, which forced the then Congress-led government to enact tough new rape laws including the death penalty. Yet India has long been plagued by violence against women and children - reported rapes climbed 60 percent from 2012 to 40,000 in 2016, and many

Continued on Page 11



SRINAGAR: Students of the All Ladakh Association of Kashmir hold placards and shout slogans during a protest yesterday calling for justice following the recent rape and murder of an eight-year-old girl. — AFP

Seven killed, 17 injured in South Carolina jail riot

BISHOPVILLE, South Carolina: Seven inmates were killed and 17 others injured in a riot at a maximum security prison in South Carolina overnight, one of the deadliest outbreaks of prison violence in the United States in decades, authorities said yesterday. Fights among inmates erupted Sunday evening at the Lee Correctional Institution in Bishopville, South Carolina, and were brought under control at 2:55 am yesterday. "The incident at Lee CI resulted in 17 inmates requiring outside medical attention and seven inmates were killed," the South

Carolina Department of Corrections (SCDC) said on its Twitter account.

All prison guards and law enforcement authorities who responded were "safe and accounted for," it said. The department had initially described the riot as an "ongoing incident", only revealing the scope of the problem hours after its start at 7:15 pm Sunday. "The incident involved multiple inmate on inmate altercations in three housing units," it said. Lee Correctional Institution, which holds nearly 1,600 inmates, is a "Level III" maximum security facility built in 1993 to house violent offenders and prisoners with behavioral problems.

Deadly prison riots have been relatively rare in the United States, despite some notable exceptions. South Carolina's prisons are notoriously violent, however, and suffer from chronic understaffing.

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BISHOPVILLE, South Carolina: The Lee Correctional Institution is on lockdown yesterday after an overnight riot. — AFP

Local

Ministers briefed on Arab ‘Jerusalem summit’ results

Cabinet reviews business environment improvement report

KUWAIT: The Cabinet held its regular session at Bayan Palace yesterday, presided by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Hamad Al-Sabah. Following the session, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh stated that the session kicked off with a welcoming note to visiting President of the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire Alassane Dramane Ouattara, and his accompanying delegation. The cabinet asserted on the importance of such visit in supporting and bolstering cooperation between the two nations.

Later, Saleh briefed the ministers on the outcome of recent participation by Kuwait, under the direction of His Highness the Amir, at the 29th session of the Arab League Council summit, held in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, yesterday under the slogan 'Jerusalem summit'.

The summit concluded with the approval in its final communique that it is important to promote joint Arab action based on a clear methodology and solid foundations that protect Arab nations from the dangers that threaten it, safeguard security and stability and contribute to restoring hope to people in the Arab world. The summit also stressed importance on the centrality of the Palestinian issue, for the entire Arab nation and Arab identity, including occupied East Jerusalem as the capital of Palestine.

Arab world leaders also warned, in their final communique, against taking any action that would change the current legal and political formula of Jerusalem and demand the implementation of all UN Security Council

resolutions. The cabinet also was briefed on Arab leaders' strong condemnation to the targeting of Saudi Arabia and its security through Al-Houthi terrorist militias, which fired ballistic missiles at Holy Makkah and Riyadh and a number of cities in the Kingdom, stressing on their support to the Kingdom in all measures it takes to protect its security and capabilities, as well as supporting efforts by Arab Coalition to support the legitimacy in Yemen, and to end the Yemeni crisis, and to safeguard Yemen's independence and unity.

Arab leaders also stressed importance on the need to unite all efforts to reach a political solution to the Syrian crisis and emphasized its condemnation to the use of chemical weapons against the Syrian people. The cabinet praised as well the good results of Jerusalem summit, the Saudi King for his wise leadership of the Summit and for the sincere efforts that contributed to the success of the summit.

Business environment

Later, the cabinet also reviewed recommendations by the Economic Affairs Committee on the periodic report submitted by the standing Committee to improve the business environment and enhance competition and performance ratios in the business performance indicators, particularly to the concerned government agencies. The cabinet welcomed efforts of government agencies to improve the business environment and enhance competitiveness, which contribute to raising the classification of Kuwait in the relevant



KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Hamad Al-Sabah chairs the Cabinet's meeting yesterday. — KUNA

international indicators and reflected positively on the economic activity in the country.

The Council of Ministers also reviewed the recommendation of the Legal Affairs Committee on a draft law on the expropriation and temporary appropriation of public benefit, which aims to develop laws and address the gaps highlighted practically through the law. The Cabinet decided to approve the draft law and submit it to His Highness the Amir, and prior to submitting it to the National Assembly.

The Cabinet also reviewed committee's recommendation on a draft decree approving a memorandum of understanding between the government of Kuwait and

the government of the Republic of Tajikistan for cooperation in the field of higher education and scientific research. The cabinet approved the draft decree and submitted it to His Highness the Amir.

Among other issues, the cabinet also discussed issues on the National Assembly agenda. The Council of Ministers discussed political affairs in light of reports on the current developments in the political arena at the Arab and international arenas. In this regard, the cabinet condemned the terrorist attack on one of the camps of the armed forces in the central Sinai region recently, which claimed the lives of a number of military personnel and injured others. — KUNA

Campaign spreads awareness of helpers' rights

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Human Line Organization (HLO) and the Social Activity Society launched their 'Under One Roof' campaign in collaboration with the Ministry of Interior (MoI) and other relevant government bodies with the aim of boosting awareness of domestic helpers' rights. HLO representative Lolwa Al-Redaini stressed that the campaign stems from participating bodies' commitment to enhancing humanitarian activities in Kuwait through enlightening both employers and domestic helpers of their rights.

Redaini added that the campaign will also work on publishing a legal guide translated into 15 languages. She added that the guide will be available

at care centers, hospitals, police stations, embassies of domestic helpers, labor recruitment offices, money exchanges, co-ops and other facilities.

Social Activity Society's Chairperson Sheikh Bibi Al-Sabah stressed that the campaign aims at putting the domestic helpers' law that was passed three years earlier into practice. She said the campaign will comprise of seminars and symposiums to be organized at various schools and universities to boost youth awareness. She added that the campaign also aims at spreading the culture of tolerance, accepting others and accepting that a household job should be regulated by laws. She said the campaign will closely cooperate with the foreign ministry to include Kuwaiti embassies abroad and provide them with the translated brochures.

MoI's media security director Brig Tawheed Al-Kandari stressed that the campaign conforms to the ministry's humanitarian policy focusing on cooperation to achieve a good and just employer-worker relationship. Zain's Communications and Relations Executive Manager Waleed Al-Khashti expressed his pride in taking part in the campaign as part of Zain's social responsibility strategy.

4,390 books banned in five years

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: The information ministry has banned 4,390 books over the past five years, Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Mohammad Al-Jabri has confirmed. Responding to an inquiry by MP Khaled Al-Shatti, Jabri said that the ministry's grievances committee - formed according to ministerial resolution number 13/2017 - had looked into complaints against two books and agreed to reconsider banning them. He added that the banned list was 70 pages long, including religious, cultural and historical books.

Notably, Shatti had inquired about the long list of banned books, noting that he had 16 cartons full of the banned books' titles. He

said after reviewing some of the banned books, he emerged with a feeling that "we are living a real freedom of thought dilemma", warning that censorship is killing ideas and creativity. "It is as if we are living in the medieval ages," he added, noting that some of the justifications for bans were feeble.

Kuwaiti employees

The administrative court yesterday adjourned hearing a case filed by lawyer Areej Hamada against the minister of education and the academic accreditation board until March 21, 2019. In her argument, Hamada wondered why ministries' legal affairs departments have no Kuwaiti employees while the local market is full of them, and despite the fact that Kuwait has two law schools. "The minister of social affairs has been recruiting expats with the excuse that she has no trust in national labor - if citizens' education is so bad, who is responsible for this?" she demanded, blaming the government for this alleged deterioration and urging the government to interview Kuwaiti lawyers to decide whether they are fit to work or not. In a separate case, the court of appeals yes-

terday sentenced a Saudi royal to seven years in prison and a KD 10,000 fine over charges of kidnapping his Kuwaiti ex-wife's children.



Mohammad Al-Jabri

Medicine supplies

Health Minister Sheikh Dr Basel Al-Sabah said the Public Authority for Food and Nutrition is currently assessing the situation concerning food reserves. He added that the Ministry of Health's (MoH) central emergencies committee periodically updates its emergency plan concerning the availability of strategic medicine and MoH supplies, in addition to evacuation drills. "Yes, MoH has enough medicine supplies to deal with any possible dangers," he underlined, denying the ministry's intention to build private sector medicine factories.

100 firefighters battle blazes at industrial location

KUWAIT: Up to 100 fire fighters scrambled into action yesterday dousing raging fires at a factory and two warehouses in Sulaibiya. Firemen succeeded in extinguishing the fires that raged at a tissues' factory, a furniture warehouse and another containing highly flammable materials, Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFSD) said in a statement.

The firefighters struggled to put out the blazes within a 3,000-square-meter location. A vanguard group of firefighters managed to be at the scene only five minutes after the department was informed. One firefighter was injured during the operation and was given treatment at the scene. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Flames coming out from a burning factory in Sulaibiya.

Interior committed to fighting drugs

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Acting Director General of the Interior Ministry's Relations and Security Information Brig Tawheed Al-Kandari said the higher leadership dedicates all efforts against drugs abuse. He said Deputy Premier and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah places the issue on top of his priorities for the protection of society members. He said a coordinated meeting of the national campaign for the prevention of drugs that was chaired by Interior Ministry Undersecretary

Mahmoud Al-Dousary is an important step. He said an awareness plan for all society groups is implemented all year long and updated regularly in coordination with all state authorities and NGOs.

Kandari said the media information department relies in its strategy and media plans on prevention and social awareness about the dangers of drugs and its health and psychological effects, as well as social and security repercussions on security, legal and prevention aspects. He said the family should have an effective role in the comprehensive fight against drugs because it is the first line of defense; efforts to fight drugs may be lacking and may fail if the family is not one of the pillars of such efforts.

Encroachments

Mubarak Al-Kabeer municipal inspectors toured various areas of the governorate to remove encroachments on state property. Head of the department Majid Al-Mutairi said the tours resulted in the removal of violations over an area of 4,400 sq m.

Drug overdose kills youngster

KUWAIT: A young man died of an overdose while another barely made it to the hospital and was saved. The two were using drugs when the incident took place, and led to the arrest of the second suspect. Police received a call about a death in Hawally, so police and paramedics responded and discovered that the death was the result of an overdose. Detectives then found out another person was receiving treatment at Mubarak Hospital. He was placed under custody, and police are waiting for his condition to improve so he can face legal action.

Prostitutes caught

Police arrested two Romanian prostitutes who entered the country on visit visas and were charging KD 200 per hour. Vice police received tips about the two women who made appoint-

ments over the Internet, so an undercover agent was asked to contact them, and an appointment was made for Saturday night. The source went to the hotel in Salma and waited in the lobby for 20 minutes. A woman then arrived and asked him whether he wanted to go with one or both. The agent made an agreement as instructed by detectives and went with her to her room, where he handed her marked notes. Detectives who received a signal from the agent then raided the room and caught the two women red-handed. They said they had already rendezvoused with 11 men prior to the undercover agent, adding this was their first time in Kuwait.

Diwaniya fight

Two men who were at a diwaniya to offer condolences started a fight, as others tried to break it up. A source said a citizen told police he was beaten and insulted by his relative in front of others. Police are investigating.

Officer busted smoking

Environment police caught a police captain lighting a cigarette inside his station, and issued him a citation that was sent to the authority. A

source said environment officers made a surprise visit to the police station to make sure of compliance with environmental laws, when they noticed smoke was emanating from the officer's room. The source said the officer will be referred to the prosecution unless a fine is paid.

Smuggling foiled

A man was caught with 21 pieces of hashish while attempting to enter Kuwait through the Abdaly border crossing. Customs officers noticed the Filipino was nervous while driving his truck through the gate. They searched him physically, but nothing was found. They then searched the truck and found the drugs in the cabin. The man was arrested and told authorities he was planning to sell the illicit substance in Kuwait. He was sent to concerned authorities.

Arson

Firemen prevented a catastrophe when they put out a fire a citizen started at his parents' house. The suspect's parents lodged a complaint against him, adding that he has a file at the psychiatric hospital.

—Translated by Kuwait Times from Al-Rai

Gulf Shield drill in Saudi Arabia



DHAHRAN: A handout picture provided by the Saudi Royal Palace yesterday shows Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz (C-R), Kuwait's Amir His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah (C-L), Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi (R), followed by Bahrain's King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa (3rd-R, behind), arriving to attend the closing ceremony of the "Gulf Shield 1" military drills in the eastern Saudi Arabian region of Dhahran, on the sidelines of the 29th Arab League summit. — AFP photos

(From left) Kuwait's Amir His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Saudi Arabia's King Salman bin Abdulaziz, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi, Bahrain's King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and Yemeni President Abdo Rabbu Mansour Hadi walk together during the closing ceremony of the "Gulf Shield 1" military drills in the eastern Saudi Arabian region of Dhahran, on the sidelines of the 29th Arab League summit.



Jordan's King Abdullah II (left) and Kuwait's Amir His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah look through binoculars while attending the drills.



Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (right) speaks with Kuwait's Amir His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

Jordan's King Abdullah II (left) and Kuwait's Amir His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah attend the closing ceremony of the "Gulf Shield 1" military drills.



This handout picture shows explosions during the final day of the "Gulf Shield 1" military drills in the eastern Saudi Arabian region of Dhahran, on the sidelines of the 29th Arab League summit.



Mobile artillery pieces participate in the drills.



An Amphibious hovercraft participates in the drill.



A US-built Boeing AH-64 Apache attack helicopter is seen flying during the last day of the "Gulf Shield 1" military drills in the eastern Saudi Arabian region of Dhahran.

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Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: Aerial view of Kuwait City. —KUNA photo

NBK Children's Hospital organizes first value-led hospital conference in Kuwait

Improving hospital staff's performance to meet NBK's standards

KUWAIT: NBK Children's Hospital organizes the first value-led hospital conference in Kuwait in collaboration with National Bank of Kuwait on April 21 and 22, 2018. Titled "towards Best Practices in Healthcare Leadership", the conference will be held at the Stem Cell Therapy Unit Building B, in Al Sabah Medical Specialty Region.

This conference is considered the first of its kind to be held by a hospital under the Ministry of Health and covers all hospital staff. Keynote speakers from Sweden and Canada will take part in this leadership training.

Manal Al-Mattar, NBK Assistant General Manager, Public Relations, said: "The conference will provide

workshops and training programs to the hospital staff. This conference comes in line with the bank's social responsibility towards the hospital and to improve the staff's performance in order to meet NBK's standards and enhance the hospital's value."

"NBK Human Resources (HR) Group and the hospital's management team worked closely to provide specialized skill programs in client service and experience to a total of

120 employees including physician, administrative and nursing staff," she added.

Dr Maitham Husain, Director of NBK Children's Hospital, said: "The conference will take the hospital a



Manal Al-Mattar



Dr Maitham Husain

step forward towards thriving to excellence. I would like to use this opportunity to thank the National Bank of Kuwait for their comprehensive involvement in support-

ing pediatric cancer care." "I can assure that such efforts and initiatives are making significant impact on patients, families and NBK Children's Hospital staffs. The image of NBK Children's hospital is making its way to the region and international standards," he noted.

NBK's HR Training department will be presenting several training programs, covering different topics: Patient-centered Communications, Time Management, How to achieve your goals and targets. This first of a kind initiative highlights NBK's role in the Health sector in Kuwait and reflects the bank's high sense of duty and responsibility towards the community and helping those in need. It is a well-rooted tradition that has been carried out by NBK each year in its efforts to continuously have an active role in Kuwait's society.

NBK's Stem Cell Therapy Unit is the first children's bone marrow transplant center in Kuwait. The new center is the largest corporate social responsibility donation in Kuwait and will expand the hospital's ability to treat children with cancer and blood diseases.

Cultural Office signs deal with Babtain Library

CAIRO: President of Kuwait Cultural Office in Cairo Dr Ahmad Al-Mutairi and Director of Al-Babtain Central Library for Arabic Poetry Soad Al-Ateiqi signed a protocol of cooperation on Sunday evening. The protocol will give momentum for the efforts aiming to revive the cultural movement across the Arab region, Ateiqi said during the signing ceremony. She noted that Al-Babtain Library plays a major role in meeting the aspirations of the Arab intelligentsia for the advancement of the study of human intelligence, through organizing various cultural events. "Al-Babtain Library is keen on contacts with prestigious libraries inside and outside the Arab region," she said,

noting that the library dedicated more than 150,000 books to friendly libraries.

Ateiqi added that the agreement falls in the framework of the Library's appreciation of the cultural and diplomatic roles of Kuwait Embassy in Cairo, noting that the embassy hosted a ceremony to commemorate the achievements of Abdulaziz Saud Al-Babtain, a celebrated Kuwaiti poet.

On a similar note, Dr Mutairi said the Cultural Office acts as a Kuwaiti cultural beacon in Egypt and seeks to advance the literary and artistic creativity. "The Office plays an active role in the publication of books and magazines such as Al-Arabi and 'Aalam Al-Maarefa' (the world of knowledge)" he said. "Under the protocol of cooperation, Al-Babtain Library will provide the Library of the Cultural Office with copies of its literary publications in return for copies of the literary master and doctorate theses," he added, noting that library of the office houses more than 11,000 books and 1,600 theses in various subjects of knowledge. Mutairi and Ateiqi opened a section for Al-Babtain Library at the Cultural Office. —KUNA



CAIRO: Officials pose for a group photo during a ceremony held to inaugurate Al-Babtain Central Library for Arabic Poetry's corner in Kuwait Cultural Office in Cairo, Egypt. —KUNA

PACI's Jahra branch moves to new building

KUWAIT: The Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) in Jahra started serving nationals and expats from

its new building near the Governorate Headquarters as of yesterday.

In a statement on Sunday, PACI Director General Musaad Al-Asousi said the new permanent premises would replace the temporary branch in Jahra Cooperative Society, which would be closed. All PACI services would be provided to nationals and expats at the new building, he pointed out. On future plans, Asousi revealed that the PACI sought to build a second integrated branch in Al-Ahmadi Governorate to serve residents of the southern governorate. —KUNA



KUWAIT: The Public Authority for Civil Information's (PACI) new building in Jahra. —KUNA

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US pastor denies Turkey coup links

‘I almost died’: Abused Filipino women hope divorce will become legal

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DOUMA: Syrian boys walk along a destroyed street in Douma on the outskirts of Damascus yesterday during an organized media tour after the Syrian army declared that all anti-regime forces have left Eastern Ghouta, following a blistering two month offensive on the rebel enclave. —AFP

Putin predicts global ‘chaos,’ warns West

Raids trigger heated debate over legality

MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin has warned that further Western attacks on Syria would bring chaos to world affairs, as Washington prepared to increase pressure on Russia with new economic sanctions. In a telephone conversation with his Iranian counterpart, Hassan Rouhani, Putin and Rouhani agreed that the Western strikes had damaged the chances of achieving a political resolution in the seven-year Syria conflict, according to a Kremlin statement. “Vladimir Putin, in particular, stressed that if such actions committed in violation of the UN Charter continue, then it will inevitably lead to chaos in international relations,” the Kremlin statement said. The US ambassador to the United Nations, Nikki Haley, told CBS’ “Face the Nation” program that the United States would announce new economic sanctions aimed at companies “that were dealing with equipment” related to Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad’s alleged chemical weapons use.

On Saturday, the United States, France and Britain launched 105 missiles targeting what the Pentagon said were three chemical weapons facilities in Syria in retaliation for a suspected poison gas attack in Douma on April 7. The Western countries blame Assad for the Douma attack that killed dozens of people. The Syrian government and its ally Russia have denied involvement in any such attack. The bombings marked the biggest intervention by Western countries against Assad and ally Russia. French President Emmanuel Macron said on Sunday that he had convinced Trump, who previously said he wanted to take US forces out of Syria, to stay for “the long term.”

The United States, France and Britain have said the missile strikes were limited to Syria’s chemical weapons

capabilities and not aimed at toppling Assad or intervening in the civil war. Macron said in an interview broadcast by BFM TV, RMC radio and Mediapart online news that he had convinced Trump to focus on the chemical weapons sites. The White House pushed back against Macron’s comments about Trump’s intentions for US forces. “The US mission has not changed - the president has been clear that he wants US forces to come home as quickly as possible,” White House spokeswoman Sarah Sanders said. “We are determined to completely crush ISIS and create the conditions that will prevent its return,” she said. “In addition we expect our regional allies and partners to take greater responsibility both militarily and financially for securing the region.”

More damage to USA

Responding to Haley’s remarks about the plans for new sanctions, Evgeny Serebrennikov, deputy head of the defense committee of Russia’s upper house of parliament, said Moscow was ready for the penalties, according to RIA news agency. “They are hard for us, but will do more damage to the USA and Europe,” RIA quoted Serebrennikov as saying. In Damascus, Syria’s deputy for-

eign minister, Faisal Mekdad, met inspectors from the global chemical weapons watchdog OPCW for about three hours in the presence of Russian officers and a senior Syrian security official.

The inspectors were due to attempt to visit the Douma site. Moscow condemned the Western states for refusing to wait for the OPCW’s findings before attacking. Mekdad declined to comment to reporters waiting outside the hotel where the meeting took place. Assad told a group of visiting Russian lawmakers that the Western missile strikes were an act of aggression, Russian news agencies reported. Russian agencies quoted the lawmakers as saying that Assad was in a “good mood”, had praised the Soviet-era air defense systems Syria used to repel the Western attacks and had accepted an invitation to visit Russia at an unspecified time.

Trump had said: “Mission accomplished” on Twitter after the strikes, although US Lieutenant General Kenneth McKenzie at the Pentagon acknowledged elements of the program remained and he could not guarantee that Syria would be unable to conduct a chemical attack in the future. Russian and Iranian military help over the past three years has allowed Assad to crush the rebel threat to

topple him. Although Israel has at times urged stronger US involvement against Assad and his Iranian and Lebanese Hezbollah reinforcements in Syria, it voiced backing for Saturday’s air strikes by Western powers.

Risk of wider confrontation

The leader of Lebanon’s Hezbollah said on Sunday that Western strikes on Syria had failed to achieve anything, including terrorizing the army, helping insurgents or serving the interests of Israel. Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah said the US military had kept its strikes limited because it knew a wider attack would spark retaliation from Damascus and its allies and inflame the region. “The American (military) knows well that going towards a wide confrontation and a big operation against the regime and the army and the allied forces in Syria could not end, and any such confrontation would inflame the entire region,” Nasrallah said. The heavily armed, Iranian-backed Shiite Hezbollah movement, which fights alongside the Syrian army and is represented in the Beirut government, has been a vital ally of Damascus in Syria’s war.

France, the United States and Britain circulated a draft resolution to the UN Security Council late on Saturday that aims to establish an independent inquiry into who is responsible for chemical weapons attacks in Syria. The mechanism would look at cases where the OPCW fact-finding mission has established chemical weapons were used or likely used. Diplomats said negotiations on the draft resolution would begin today and it was not immediately clear when the United States, France and Britain wanted to put it to a vote. —Reuters



US to announce new sanctions; Assad in ‘good mood’

Years after hanging, Saddam mystery lives on

AL-AWJAH: In his native village of Al-Awjah, the mausoleum of Iraq’s executed dictator Saddam Hussein has been reduced to broken concrete and tangled barbed wire, showing no trace of his remains. The man who ruled Iraq with an iron fist for a quarter of a century was hanged at dawn on December 30, 2006, delighting many of the country’s long-oppressed majority Shiites and symbolizing the humiliation of Saddam’s fellow Sunnis. US president George W Bush then personally authorized the immediate transfer of the dictator’s body on an American military helicopter from Baghdad to the northern city of Tikrit, near Al-Awjah.

But today, mystery and doubt hang over the final resting place of a man whose very name for decades filled Iraqis with dread. Is his body still in Al-Awjah or was it exhumed, and, if so, where to? Sheikh Manaf Ali al-Nida, a leader of the Albu Nasser tribe to which Saddam’s clan belongs, has held on to a letter his family signed when they received the body, agreeing that Saddam be buried without delay. Saddam, 69, was laid to rest before dawn in the mausoleum he had commissioned years earlier.

The place turned into a richly-adorned pilgrimage site to which supporters and groups of local school children would flock on his birthday, April 28. Today, visitors need special authorization to enter, the site lies in ruins, and Sheikh Nida has been forced to leave the village and seek refuge in Iraqi Kurdistan. Since the 2003 US-led invasion, his tribe has been “oppressed



AL ‘AWJAH: An Iraqi fighter from the Hashed Al-Shaabi (Popular Mobilization Units) checks the severely damaged tomb of the late Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein in the village of Al-Awja. —AFP

because we were close” to Saddam, he said, wearing the traditional robes and keffiyeh headscarf of Iraq’s tribes. “Is it normal that we should pay such a heavy price for generation after generation just because we’re from the same family?”

‘Blown up’

At Saddam’s grave, the mainly Shiite paramilitaries of the Hashed Al-Shaabi coalition, tasked with security in the area, say the mausoleum was destroyed in an Iraqi air strike after the Islamic State jihadist group posted snipers on its roof. Sheikh Nida was not there to witness the blast but he is convinced that Saddam’s tomb was “opened and blown up”. Jaafar Al-Gharawi, the Hashed’s security chief, insisted: “The body is still there.” One of his fighters, however, speculated

that Saddam’s exiled daughter Hala had flown in on a private plane and whisked her father’s body away to Jordan.

“Impossible!” said a university professor and longtime student of the Saddam era, who declined to give his name. “Hala has never come back to Iraq,” he said. “(The body) could have been taken to a secret place... nobody knows who moved it or where.” If that was the case, Saddam’s family would have closely guarded the secret of the location, he added. Saddam’s tomb could have suffered the same fate as that of his father, at the entrance to the village, which was unceremoniously blown up. But some, including Baghdad resident Abu Samer, believe the Iraqi strongman is still out there. “Saddam’s not dead,” he said. “It was one of his doubles who was hanged.” —AFP

Woman is Muslim: Bangladesh court ends battle over interfaith marriage

DHAKA: Bangladesh’s highest court has ruled that a woman who took her life four years ago is a Muslim and can be buried alongside her husband, ending a high-profile legal battle over interfaith marriage. The court ruled last week that Hosne Ara Lazu did convert to Islam after marrying Humayun Farid Lazu in 2013, despite her family’s insistence that she returned to Hinduism before her death. The families opposed the union between a Muslim and a Hindu and pressured them to call off the match. The girl’s father went so far as to file allegations with police of kidnapping against the young man.

Lazu, 21, killed herself in 2014 amid the turmoil. But when his 18-year-old wife swallowed poison less than two months later, the case made national headlines as the families went to court over how she would be buried. Interfaith marriages are rare and controversial in Muslim-majority Bangladesh and the case was closely watched. The wife’s family demanded a Hindu cremation while the husband’s relatives asked that she be buried in accordance with Islamic tradition, close to her husband’s grave.

The bitter feud reached the country’s top court where judges ruled Thursday that the woman did convert to Islam and must be buried accordingly. “She can now be buried as a Muslim beside her husband’s grave,” said Samir Majumdar, the lawyer representing the woman’s family. The woman’s parents had said she converted back to Hinduism after her husband’s death. But the court ruled differently, instructing that her body be released from the mortuary-where it has been since her death-within two days of publication of its judgment. The court also ordered local authorities to ensure police protection is provided during the girl’s burial to avoid any disturbances. An estimated 90 percent of Bangladesh’s 160 million people are Muslims. Hindus account for less than 10 percent. —AFP

International

US pastor denies allegations of coup links as Turkey trial begins

Case strains US-Turkey ties; Pastor in jail for religious beliefs

ALIAGA: A US pastor denied allegations of links to a group accused of orchestrating a failed military coup in Turkey as he went on trial yesterday in a case that has compounded strains in US-Turkish relations. Andrew Brunson, a Christian pastor from North Carolina who has lived in Turkey for more than two decades, was indicted on charges of helping the group that Ankara holds responsible for the failed 2016 coup against President Tayyip Erdogan. He faces up to 35 years in prison. "I've never done something against Turkey. I love Turkey. I've been praying for Turkey for 25 years. I want truth to come out," Brunson told the court in the western Turkish town of Aliaga, north of the Aegean city of Izmir.

Brunson has been the pastor of Izmir Resurrection Church, serving a small Protestant congregation in Turkey's third largest city. "I do not accept the charges mentioned in the indictment. I was never involved in any illegal activities," said Brunson, wearing a white shirt and black suit and making his defense in Turkish. His wife was in the courtroom, as were North Carolina Senator Thom Tillis and the US envoy for religious freedom, Sam Brownback. Brunson's trial is one of several legal cases roiling US-Turkish relations. The two countries are also at odds over US support for a Kurdish militia in northern Syria that Turkey considers a terrorist organization.

Washington has called for Brunson's release while Erdogan suggested last year his fate could be linked to that of US-based Muslim cleric Fethullah Gulen, whose extradition Ankara has repeatedly sought to face charges over the coup attempt. Gulen denies any association with the coup bid. Tens of thousands of Turks have been arrested or lost their jobs over alleged connections with the coup bid. "The United States cares deeply about our relationship with Turkey," Brownback told reporters during a recess at the trial "That relationship is going to have difficulty moving forward as long as Andrew Brunson is incarcerated."

North Carolina pastor faces up to 35 years in jail



Religious beliefs

Brunson's lawyer said the pastor, detained 18 months ago, was in custody because of his religious beliefs. Turkey is a majority Muslim country though constitutionally secular. "There is evidence that shows Brunson was arrested due to his faith," Ismail Cem Halavurt told Reuters on the eve of the trial, saying Brunson's religious role had been "classified as aiding terror organizations". The Izmir prosecutor's office said that sufficient evidence had been obtained to charge Brunson with aiding armed terrorist organizations and obtaining confidential government information for political and military espionage.

A copy of Brunson's indictment seen by Reuters accuses him of working both with Gulen's network and the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) militant group which has waged an insurgency in mainly Kurdish southeast Turkey and is designated a terrorist group



ALIAGA: Jailed US pastor Andrew Brunson's wife Norine Brunson (left) arrives to the courthouse for the trial of her husband, held on charges of aiding terror groups, in Aliaga, north of Izmir yesterday. —AFP

by the United States and European Union. Halavurt said on Sunday he believed Brunson would ultimately be acquitted and there was no reason for his contin-

ued detention during trial. "Our prior expectation from the hearing is ending the arrest," he said. "We want Brunson to be freed immediately." —Reuters

OPCW field mission

THE HAGUE: Scientists, paramedics and experts from the OPCW chemical watchdog are in Syria to investigate allegations of last weekend's poison gas attack. After last month's probe in the British town of Salisbury, it is the second time in just a few weeks that investigators from the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) have been deployed to a site of a suspected toxic arms attack. Here are a few questions and answers about the experts' work behind the scenes.

How is OPCW team deployed?

Normal preparation time for a fact-finding mission takes between two to four weeks. But the OPCW's chief Ahmet Uzumcu told AFP in 2016 that amid increasing allegations of chemical weapons use in Syria he had set up a special team of up to 15 people who deploy within 24 hours. Once a mission is agreed upon, the equipment store team at the OPCW's facilities in Rijswijk gather and check a wealth of instruments and gear needed to protect the experts and aid their analysis. While inspectors want to travel as light as possible, they also need to ensure they carry the necessary equipment.

This can vary from air cylinders, to sample vials for gathering such things as soil, blood, or plants from the area of an alleged attack. Chemical vapor detectors, sample scrapers and detection papers for testing water, are also all packed into hard-shell plastic cases for safe transport. More sophisticated equipment includes detectors using flame photometry, in which an air sample is burned in a hydrogen-rich flame commonly used for detecting gas. Each team member is fitted with gas masks, or industrial respirators, as well as hazmat protection suits or air-tight decontamination suits. Satellite phones and emergency medical kits equipped with various antidotes are also essential.

Who are the team members?

A typical team could be composed of two medical doctors, two chemical weapons munitions specialist inspectors, one or two analytical chemicals inspectors, interpreters and security. They can be of all different nationalities and are experts in their field, who will have undergone extensive training. Once at the site, the team seeks to carry out interviews with witnesses, doctors and first responders as well as review any hospital records. Apart from environmental samples, they will



THE HAGUE: Photo shows the headquarters of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in The Hague, The Netherlands. —AFP

also collect biomedical samples, sometimes from those killed in an incident, but more preferably from survivors.

Difficulties in a war zone?

OPCW experts had never deployed into a war zone before they were called on in 2013 to help the United Nations probe allegations of chemical weapons use in Syria. This is the first OPCW mission to deploy outside of Damascus since 2014 when a team was ambushed with a roadside bomb and then came under attack, before two were briefly detained. Both Syria and its ally Russia have said they will ensure the Douma mission's safety and security. But the nature of the conflict means teams have tight deadlines to work under, in constantly evolving situations. They have been working closely with UN security staff to evaluate the situation on the ground. In the 2013 mission which confirmed that sarin gas had been used in an August attack which killed hundreds of people outside Damascus, the team only had about 45 minutes to collect samples before pulling out for safety concerns.

What happens next?

Once the samples are taken from the site they are brought back to The Netherlands for analysis. "Our inspectors take the sample, they witness it, they log it, they seal the sample, they keep track of the sample all the time until the analysis is done," former head of the OPCW lab Hugh Gregg said in a 2016 interview with an online news portal. "So a complete 100 percent chain of custody is absolutely critical."

The samples are split back in Rijswijk, on the outskirts of The Hague, and sent to partner laboratories for further analysis. The watchdog has about over a dozen labs around the world which it works with, described as "the lynchpin of the OPCW's verification regime" but which are "bound by secrecy agreements." They offer the "necessary assurance" for member states that chemical analyses are "carried out competently, impartially and with unambiguous results," a spokesperson said. —AFP

Bangladesh eyes settlement in US cyber heist suit

NEW YORK: An Ecuadorian bank and Wells Fargo have reached an out-of-court settlement over a 2015 cyber heist, providing a possible precedent for the Bangladesh central bank's planned suit to recover \$66 million still lost in one of the world's biggest such cases. A suit by Ecuador's Banco del Austro against Wells Fargo & Co was quietly settled in February, less than a month before a trial date was set, and the US district court in Manhattan sealed all discussions, according to court documents. No other major media has reported the settlement. Wells Fargo did not comment on the settlement, and a representative for Banco del Austro could not be immediately reached. Banco had sought to hold Wells responsible for authorizing the fraudulent transfer of \$12 million from its account in 2015.

Hackers breached Bangladesh Bank's systems in early 2016 and tricked the Federal Reserve Bank of New York into sending as much as \$81 million to accounts at Rizal Commercial Banking Corp (RCBC) in the Philippines. The accounts were held

in fake names and most of the money disappeared into casinos in Manila. Some of the funds were recovered but about \$66 million remains untraced. No one has been criminally charged for the heist despite an international investigation and two years of finger-pointing among Bangladesh, Philippines, the Fed and the SWIFT communication network that was used.

Bangladesh Bank has threatened to sue Manila-based RCBC, and any legal fallout could set a precedent amid a rash of electronic heists at financial institutions around the world. "This is a tricky issue. We can't reveal our strategy. But yes we are reviewing each and every case, including the Ecuador one," Bangladesh Bank's deputy governor Abu Hena Mohd. Razee Hassan said in a recent interview. While Bangladesh has not taken any legal action, bankers and lawyers saw the cyber-heist suit by Banco against Wells Fargo as a test for any options available to Bangladesh.

They said the settlement could signal that Wells compensated Banco in some way, a possibly encouraging sign for Bangladesh Bank. But it could still struggle to get a hearing in the United States and prove that Manila-based RCBC had a contractual obligation to freeze the stolen funds. "There are an awful lot of reasons for people to settle (and) there are all sorts of laws that may or may not apply," said Peter Jaffe, a senior associate at Washington-based law firm Freshfields

Bruckhaus Deringer LLP. "RCBC was not the one that was hacked. Someone may think that RCBC should have done something different when it saw money coming through its accounts, but that is not really a cyber security issue at that point," Jaffe said. "I don't think you would necessarily look to cyber security law (or US commercial code) to determine ... obligations and rights."

Obligation unclear

At issue is the New York Uniform Commercial Code, which says a bank that is tricked by thieves must reimburse the customer, unless it can prove it used a mutually-agreed protocol for verifying the payment messages. The customer could counter that the security protocol was not "commercially reasonable." In 2016, the judge rejected an attempt by Wells to dismiss Banco's allegations because the Manhattan court could not rule that use of SWIFT's security system alone was enough.

Bangladesh has a correspondent-banking contract with the New York Fed, which has repeatedly stressed that each of its foreign clients has agreed that it can rely on SWIFT protocols. The payment messages it received from the hackers in February 2016 were verified by SWIFT and directed the Fed to send much of the funds to RCBC. It is unclear what obligation RCBC has to Bangladesh Bank and whether US law would apply. The

Philippine bank said it had received advice from lawyers in the United States that it had "strong and valid" defenses against any suit by Bangladesh Bank.

"There is no act attributable to RCBC which caused the loss or the theft from Bangladesh Bank," it said in a statement yesterday. "We reiterate that RCBC was merely a beneficiary bank, meaning, the payment instructions which are alleged to have been the result of hacking were not executed by it." In the immediate wake of the heist, Bangladesh's central bank had threatened to sue the New York Fed and SWIFT, though relations have since warmed and the pair have committed to help recover the funds. The Fed and SWIFT, which has since strengthened its security protocols, declined to comment on implications of the Banco-Wells settlement.

Financial firms around the world have reviewed defenses after a rash of cyber heists involving SWIFT, the latest targeting Malaysia's central bank. Bangladesh's minister of state for foreign affairs, Mohammed Shahriar Alam, said in a recent interview that the central bank is determined to be reimbursed and that preparations are at a "final stage" for a suit. "It's obvious that we will be filing a case," likely in the United States, he said while in New York. "There are frustrations in Bangladesh about it. But together we should have done better by now." —Reuters

News in brief

Website to report spies

BEIJING: China has stepped up its campaign against foreign espionage with a website in Mandarin and English encouraging people to report national security threats such as bids to "overthrow the socialist system". The website, www.12339.gov.cn, launched by the Ministry of National Security on Sunday, also urges anyone to report attempts by Chinese nationals or foreigners to bribe state or military officials, instigate armed riots or incite ethnic separatism. Potential problematic behavior also includes foreigners meeting "any person within China who has conducted activities endangering state security or is strongly suspected of doing so"-raising concerns that any interaction with dissidents would be frowned upon. —AFP

Sri Lankan crisis deepens

COLOMBO: Sri Lankan police yesterday arrested a leading dissident within President Maithripala Sirisena's party, deepening political tensions on the island after the head of state suspended parliament. Mahindananda Aluthgamage, a former sports minister, was held over 39 million rupees (\$260,000) that were allegedly misappropriated in 2014, police said in a statement. He was accused of spending government money to buy sports goods, which were handed out in a bid to get support for former president Mahinda Rajapakse ahead of a national election. The items included 14,000 boards for the popular South Asian game of carrom. Aluthgamage is a key figure in a faction that opposes Sirisena within his socialist Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP). —AFP

Philippines bars EU official

MANILA: The Philippines has barred entry to an EU party official critical of President Rodrigo Duterte's brutal drugs crackdown, in a move denounced by critics yesterday as a gag on dissent. Italian Giacomo Filibeck was detained by border police upon his arrival at Cebu airport Sunday and deported for engaging in "partisan political activity". Philippine immigration authorities and his party said, Filibeck, the deputy secretary general of the Party of European Socialists, flew to the Philippines at the invitation of opposition party Akbayan to attend a congress. — AFP

Bodies of 5 soldiers returned

KHOST: Afghan tribesmen yesterday returned a Pakistani soldier they captured in a deadly skirmish along the countries' border, as well as the bodies of five soldiers, the governor of Afghanistan's Khost province said. The soldier and the bodies were handed to Pakistani troops, said Khost governor Hukum Khan Habibi. The dispute arose over Pakistan's work on a fence intended to span nearly all of the disputed 2,500-km border, much of it mountainous and porous. Afghan officials have alleged that Pakistani troops crossed onto Afghanistan soil, prompting firing on Sunday by border forces and the local tribal force. The two sides later agreed on a ceasefire. Border skirmishes in the area are common, although detention of a foreign soldier is rare. —AFP

Ethiopia ends web blackout

ADDIS ABABA: Internet users in Ethiopia said yesterday the government appeared to have ended a three-month online blackout, raising hopes of a relaxation of restrictions after the arrival of a new prime minister who promised reforms. Mobile and broadband internet services shut down in December in many regions outside the capital that were hit by unrest that threatened the ruling coalition's tight hold on country. Rights groups accused the government of trying to stop them spreading news online and organizing rallies calling for land rights and other freedoms - charges the government denied. But internet users said they had noticed services returning following the April 2 inauguration of Abiy Ahmed. —Reuters

International

Abe's woes deepen; ratings drop, predecessor predicts resignation

Scandal woes endanger Japan PM shot at 3rd term

TOKYO: Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's political crisis deepened yesterday after polls showed that suspected cronyism scandals have pushed his support to record lows and a popular predecessor said Abe would probably resign in June. In another headache for the conservative premier, the finance ministry's top bureaucrat has come under fire after a weekly magazine reported he had sexually harassed several female journalists. The bureaucrat yesterday denied the accusations and said he would file a lawsuit against the magazine's publisher.

Abe's sliding ratings raise doubts about whether he can win a third three-year term as ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) leader in a September vote, that he needs to win to stay in office, or whether he might resign before the party vote. Speculation has even emerged that Abe, who surged back to power for a second term as prime minister in December 2012, promising to reboot a stale economy and bolster Japan's defenses, could call a snap general election as he did last October when his ratings were in a similar slump. A survey by broadcaster Nippon TV released on Sunday showed Abe's support had sunk to 26.7 percent, the lowest since he took office in December 2012. An Asahi newspaper poll yesterday put his support at 31 percent.

The latest signs of trouble for Abe come ahead of a summit this week with US President Donald Trump, where the difficult topics of North Korea's nuclear and missile threats and trade will be on the agenda. "The situation is getting dangerous. Won't Mr Abe resign around the time parliament's session ends?" former premier Junichiro Koizumi, a one-time Abe mentor, said in an interview published by the online edition of the weekly magazine Aera. The session ends on June 20. Koizumi - a critic of Abe's

support for nuclear power after the 2011 Fukushima accident - said that if Abe hung on, it could hurt LDP candidates in an upper house election next year.

Crowds of protesters demonstrated near parliament on Saturday, holding signs saying "Abe is Over" and chanting "Abe quit!" Organizers said 50,000 people took part. The Asahi survey, in line with others, showed that two-thirds of voters did not trust Abe's explanations that he was not involved in the cronyism scandals. Abe has denied that he had intervened to ensure preferential treatment for the educational institution Kake Gakuen, run by his friend Kotaro Kake, to set up a veterinary school. He has also repeatedly denied that he or his wife intervened in a heavily discounted sale of state-owned land to another school operator, Moritomo Gakuen, which has ties to his wife.

Financial markets blase

The Moritomo affair has ensnared the finance ministry, which has admitted officials doctored documents related to the land-sale. The ministry is also in an unwelcome spotlight over the sexual harassment allegations against Administrative Vice Finance Minister Junichi Fukuda. He has

denied the allegations, published by the Shincho magazine, and vowed to sue its publisher for defamation. Fukuda apologized for causing trouble for the minister and ministry officials "by inviting public distrust", the ministry said. Financial markets have not reacted to the latest fall in Abe's support as many investors think he can survive, as he did last year when the cronyism scandals eroded his ratings. "If Abe will have to leave, that would be a big deal but I don't see that happening yet," said Soichiro Monji, chief strategist at Daiwa SB Investments.

Many investors also noted the risk of "Abexit" looks small compared with the more immediate risks of a possible trade war and a planned summit



TOKYO: Protesters stage a demonstration in front of the National Diet building in Tokyo to demand the resignation of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. —AFP

between Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un that could leave Japan isolated. Who would replace Abe, who has managed the rare feat of staying in office more than five years, is unclear. Former cabinet minister Shigeru Ishiba, who wants to challenge Abe for the top post, topped a list of politicians that respondents to a weekend Kyodo news agency survey saw as best suited to become the next premier, with 26.6 percent.

Popular young LDP lawmaker Shinjiro Koizumi - ex-prime minister Koizumi's son - ranked second with 25.2 percent, with Abe in third place with 18.3 per-

cent. Former foreign minister Fumio Kishida, another possible contender, was fourth with 5.9 percent followed by Internal Affairs Minister Seiko Noda at 3.6 percent and Foreign Minister Taro Kono with 2.9 percent. Among LDP supporters, however, Abe was top with 36.7 percent against 24.7 percent for Ishiba, Kyodo said. None of the potential successors has outlined clear agendas, although Ishiba and Kishida have suggested more attention should be paid to public debt and that the hyper-easy monetary policy central to the premier's "Abenomics" growth strategy could not continue forever. —Reuters



CHENNAI: Indian demonstrators detained by the police flash placards to a military chopper during a protest against Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi near airport during his visit to Chennai. Angry protesters shouted slogans and waved giant black flags as Modi visited southern Chennai amid a mounting discontent over a water crisis. Scores of demonstrators hit the streets with some holding black balloons and placards that read 'Go Back Modi!' —AFP

can trim demand for subsidized diesel, which is used to pump water from wells for irrigation.

Inflation, central bank policy

Food accounts for 50 percent of India's consumer price index, which the central bank closely monitors while deciding on monetary policy. A bumper farm output would keep food prices under control. During past droughts, the government supported farmers by giving out incentives, straining the fiscal deficit. A good monsoon will limit government spending on such measures.

How reliable is forecast?

The IMD issues its first forecast typically more than a month ahead of the monsoon's onset. On average, its forecast has been accurate only once every five years over the past two decades,

which has to draft and pass what is known as a counterpart bill, campaigners said.

The only option for unhappy couples is to seek a legal separation, which does not allow either party to remarry, or a civil annulment, which rights groups say is lengthy and costly - as Dador found out. Marriage can only be annulled on limited grounds, such as insanity or contracting a sexually transmitted disease. Abuse and infidelity are not valid reasons. "I almost died from my husband's beating and yet I have to convince the courts why I want my marriage dissolved," she told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. "The process is too tedious."

Only Muslims - about 10 percent of the population - can divorce under Muslim family laws. Dador said her family forced her to marry after she became pregnant at the age of 18. However the relationship deteriorated rapidly as he repeatedly abused her. After a night of non-stop beatings in 2010, she ran away. But village leaders, police and other officials have been unable to help her end her marriage. Her husband is now with another woman but, from time to time, he goes to her house demanding to see their children. And they remained married - on paper at least.

Trapped

Lawyer Clara Rita Padilla said the stories of women who have turned to her for help are often similar, from the marriage that turned abusive to a long drawn-out court process. "In many situations where the female files for an annulment, it takes years because it was not a joint decision and the husband does not cooperate," said Padilla, who heads the women's rights group EnGenderRights.

even after taking into account an error band of plus or minus 5 percentage points. The IMD's forecast for the 2017 monsoon was its most accurate since 2008. Last year, there was a difference of only 1 percentage point between the forecast and the actual rainfall. Even during normal monsoon years, some parts of India face drought, while some others suffer from floods.

The IMD will come out with a second forecast for the 2018 monsoon rains in June. Why is the monsoon important for Prime Minister Modi ahead of the 2019 elections? Modi, who has promised to double farmers' income over five years, remains popular nearly four years into his term. Farmer unrest, however, has flared in some states ruled by his party, catching regional leaders flat-footed. A normal monsoon could lead to higher output of summer-sown crops, helping state leaders placate farmers. —Reuters

A 2017 survey by independent pollster Social Weather Stations found that 53 percent favored legalization of divorce in the Philippines, home to Asia's largest Catholic population. The number of annul cases increased to more than 8,000 in 2017 from about 1,000 in 2008, according to figures from the Office of the Solicitor General. But President Rodrigo Duterte, who is legally separated from his wife, opposes making divorce legal over concerns for the welfare of children whose parents divorce.

The influential Catholic Church said the government should never offer divorce as an option but use other laws to stop abuse instead. "We teach that marriage, once valid, can never be broken," said Jerome Secillano, an official from the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, which represents the country's Catholic leaders. "Providing for an easy separation does not help the cause of upholding and defending marriage." This means that the only Filipinos who can legally end their marriages are those who can are rich enough to do so.

Journalist Mar-Vic Cagurangan said she worked day and night to raise \$2,000 for her annulment, while also paying her two children's school fees. The average income in the Philippines is just over \$3,500, according to the World Bank. "I was trapped. I didn't have a life," she said, adding that legal battle took her a decade. She said court employees asked her for bribes to expedite her case, making her pay 5,000 pesos (\$96) for each hearing. "Because I desired to be free, I was compelled to give them more," said Cagurangan, who now lives with her boyfriend of seven years. "Everybody deserves to be happy. People deserve to move on - romantically, mentally and legally." —Reuters



Senior Japanese bureaucrat denies harassment claim

News in brief

China, Japan boost ties

TOKYO: Asian rivals China and Japan yesterday pledged a "new starting point" for bilateral ties, vowing close co-operation amid a flurry of diplomacy on the North Korean missile threat and global trade tensions. Welcoming Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi for a rare three-day visit, Japanese Premier Shinzo Abe called for warmer relations between the two countries and said they should work together on North Korea. Abe said he would be visiting the United States for talks with President Donald Trump to seek the "complete and irreversible denuclearization" of North Korea and added "we want to co-operate with China." "We hope to develop a strategic, mutually beneficial Japan-China relationship in various fields," said Abe. —AFP

Barbara Bush 'very ill'

WASHINGTON: Former US first lady Barbara Bush is in "failing health" after a series of hospitalizations and "has decided not to seek additional medical treatment," her husband's office said in a statement Sunday. It said that Mrs Bush, after consulting with relatives and doctors, had decided to "focus on comfort care" at the family home in Houston. "She is surrounded by a family she adores, and appreciates the many kind messages and especially the prayers she is receiving," said the brief statement from the office of former president George HW Bush. The statement provided no details on her condition, but Mrs Bush had been hospitalized for bronchitis treatment in January 2017. —AFP

Armenian protesters rally

YEREVAN: Around a thousand protesters staged rallies yesterday in the Armenian capital against former president Serzh Sarkisian as he moves to maintain a chokehold on power as prime minister. Demonstrators blocked streets in the centre of Yerevan in opposition to a change of government that will see Sarkisian maintain huge influence. The 63-year-old ended his second and final presidential term last week and has been nominated by the ruling party for the post of prime minister. The pro-Moscow politician is expected to be elected by parliament today. Protesters took to the streets after opposition leader Nikol Pashinian called on Armenians to stage rallies to prevent Sarkisian's political transition. —AFP

Investigative journalist dies

MOSCOW: A Russian journalist who wrote on Moscow's "shadow army" in Syria has died after falling from the balcony of his fifth-floor flat, but investigators said yesterday they were not treating the death as suspicious. Maksim Borodin fell from his apartment in Yekaterinburg, a major city in the Urals, last week and died from his injuries in hospital on Sunday, news agencies reported. He worked for the news service Noviy Den (New Day) and recently wrote on the deaths of employees of the so-called "Wagner Group", the private army Moscow is using in Syria. "There are no grounds for launching a case," the local investigative committee told the TASS news agency yesterday. "Several versions are being considered, including that this was an unfortunate accident, but there is no sign a crime has been committed," it said. —AFP

Why monsoon is so crucial for India and Modi

MUMBAI: India's monsoon rains are likely to be 97 percent of their long-term average in 2018, its meteorological department said yesterday, reassuring farmers ahead of summer planting in a country where only half of the farmland is irrigated.

What are the categories?

A normal, or average, monsoon means rainfall between 96 percent and 104 percent of a 50-year average of 89 cm in total during the four-month monsoon season from June, according to the India Meteorological Department's (IMD) classification. Rainfall below 90 percent of the average would be classified as a drought. During Prime Minister Narendra Modi's first two years in office, in 2014 and 2015, there were consecutive droughts that led to some criticism due to the government's handling of the issue. Rainfall above 110 percent of the average would mean an excessive monsoon, which would not be as damaging as a drought but could be potentially harmful for the yields of certain crops. The monsoon season starts with rains on the southern Kerala coast around June 1, covering the whole country by the middle of July.

Why is monsoon important?

The monsoon delivers about 70 percent of India's annual rainfall and determines the yield of key crops such as rice, wheat, sugarcane and oilseeds such as soybeans. The farm sector accounts for about 15 percent of India's \$2 trillion economy, but employs more than half of the country's 1.3 billion people. If monsoon rains lift farm output, it can boost demand for consumer goods as it raises incomes of rural people. A stronger economic outlook would lift equities, mainly for companies selling products in rural areas, including consumer goods, automobiles, fertilizers and pesticides. India is self-sufficient in crops such as rice and wheat, but a drought would require the country to import food-stuffs. In 2009, India imported sugar after poor rains, sending global prices to record highs and pushing up local inflation.

Monsoon rains replenish reservoirs and groundwater, allowing better irrigation and more hydropower output. Higher rainfall

'I almost died': Abused Filipino women hoping on divorce law

MANILA: Although her husband nearly killed her, Krista Dador cannot get a divorce as the Philippines is one of only two states - along with the Vatican - without a divorce law. The prohibitive cost of an annulment means that Dador, who has received no financial support from her husband since they separated eight years ago, is looking to work as a maid in the Middle East, leaving their two children behind with her mother. "Sometimes I want to end it all," said the 28-year-old, who makes a living washing neighbors' laundry in a squalid part of Quezon City, the Southeast Asian country's most populous city.

"This is a risk I'm taking. I want my children to be in school because I was not - and because I want to earn money to pay for my annulment." The Philippines took a step toward making divorce legal in March with the lower house of Congress passing a law allowing people to dissolve marriages, in the face of opposition from the president and bishops in the mainly Roman Catholic country. Even though thousands of women want to end failed and abusive relationships, the bill is unlikely to receive the support it needs from the upper house Senate,

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Bitter rivals' embrace shakes up Kenyan politics

A surprise handshake between President Uhuru Kenyatta and opposition leader Raila Odinga has stirred up Kenyan politics as the long-time rivals set their sights on the 2022 elections. Less than a year since Kenyatta was re-elected to a second and final term in a vote that Odinga called a farce, the two shook hands on March 9 after weeks of secret talks. A warm embrace at a golf tournament followed later. They said their rapprochement would mean an end to the violence, bitterness and political instability that followed last year's elections.

But observers say the handshake signalled that Kenyatta and Odinga, who is also in the sunset of his political career, want to join forces so they can influence what happens next. They say that it may show that Kenyatta intends to ditch a deal to appoint William Ruto, who is his deputy president but comes from a different ethnic group, as his successor. Kenyatta has said he still backs Ruto.

For Odinga, it shows he feels he has more bargaining power for himself and his Luo ethnic group as Kenyatta's partner. "Everybody has had to go back to their drawing board and decide how they are going to run in 2022," said Ngunjiri Wambugu, a lawmaker from Kenyatta's Jubilee party, a political alliance between his Kikuyu ethnic group and Ruto's Kalenjin. "This pact between Kenyatta and Odinga has redefined the race."

Political victory in a country of 45 million with 44 ethnic groups is usually forged through ethnic alliances. Since independence in 1963, Kikuyu and Kalenjin have dominated government. The two groups clashed after disputed elections in 2007, in violence involving many tribes that left 1,200 Kenyans dead. They were united ahead of the 2013 vote by Kenyatta in his Jubilee alliance. The Luo and other groups have often felt excluded by central government and made their own NASA alliance, led by Odinga.

Tensions between the Kikuyu and Luo groups contributed to a dispute between Kenyatta's father and the founding president, Jomo Kenyatta, and his vice president and Odinga's father Oginga Odinga, in 1969. That set the stage for years of bitter rivalry between the two powerful families. The last staged handshake between Kenyatta and Odinga was shortly after the 2013 election when Odinga accepted defeat.

Deep-seated tensions

For now, the rapprochement has calmed fractured politics that has also disrupted the economy and put off investors. Odinga called off a months-long boycott by opposition lawmakers of all government business, including vetting Kenyatta's ministers. When they shook hands last month, the men said they plan to set up a joint office to be led by loyalists from both sides to "preach reconciliation" across Kenya.

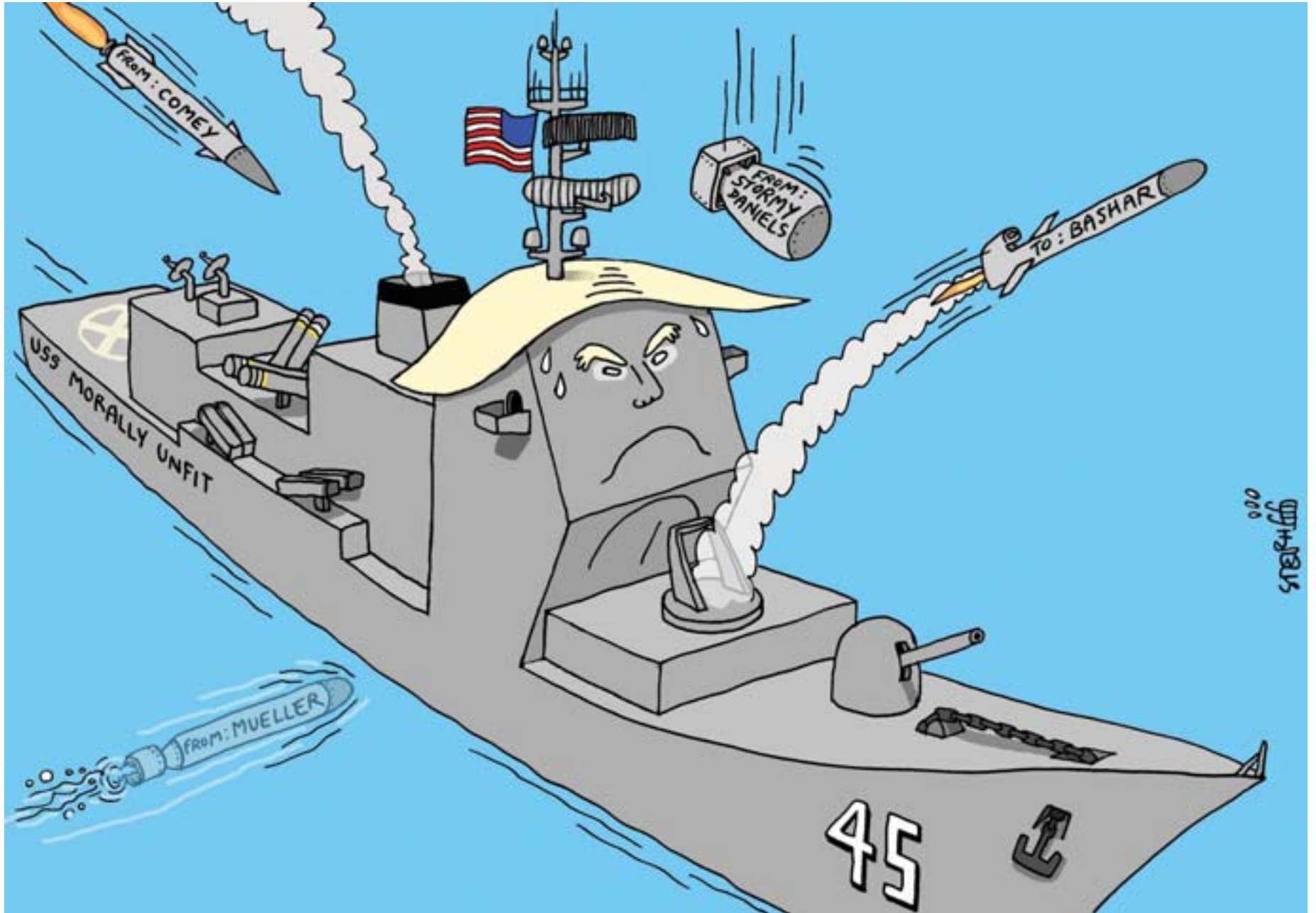
But few observers believe the truce will resolve the deep-seated ethnic tensions as Kenyatta and Odinga have promised. "Unless there is substance put into the handshake, it'll be a lost opportunity," said Maina Kiai, human rights campaigner. "Anger in the country has not been dealt with." Cases linked to the violence after the 2007 election against Kenyatta and Ruto at the International Criminal Court in The Hague collapsed.

The police killings of opposition supporters that marred both the August election and the re-run in October that took place after the Supreme Court annulled the initial poll are also still fresh in Kenyan minds. The Jubilee alliance was also forged on the premise that the populous Kikuyus and Kalenjins would stick together to lock out Odinga or other opposition challengers. The Kalenjins may be upset if Kenyatta does not let Ruto take the helm of the alliance with a view to the presidency in 2022.

Ruto declined requests for an interview but his allies dismissed suggestions that his presidential prospects have taken a knock. "Those are people who don't know William Ruto. He is a very strategic and experienced politician," said national assembly majority leader Aden Duale. The 73-year-old Odinga, a former prime minister, has run unsuccessfully for president four times and is not expected to run again. A spokesman for Odinga declined to comment.

But bringing him closer to the center of power could cause upset on both sides. "Jubilee should be cautious so that Raila does not mess it ahead of 2022," Kithure Kindiki, Jubilee's deputy speaker in the senate, was quoted by local media after the handshake. Odinga's fellow opposition coalition parties are also unhappy, with several accusing him of betrayal. If Odinga can bring Kenyatta the support of his formidable political base, he may not be as reliant on Ruto and can talk to other political leaders.

Kenyatta could also turn to Gideon Moi. The seasoned politician and senator from the sizeable Kalenjin community is the son of former President Daniel arap Moi, who made Kenyatta his protégé. "Kenyatta has pulled the classic divide-and-rule move of the cunning president, creating as many potential allies as possible in order to avoid empowering any one successor," said Nic Cheeseman, professor of democracy at the University of Birmingham. "This will help him to manage Gideon Moi, William Ruto and others with their own presidential ambitions." —Reuters



Despite Western action, Assad gained

After Syrian forces bombed the town of Douma earlier this month in an attack the United States says involved chlorine gas, Washington and its allies launched missile strikes as punishment. The retribution has changed little in the course of the seven-year civil war, but the alleged poison gas attack did. Rebels had held the stronghold of Douma, near the capital Damascus, for years despite repeated offensives. Within hours of the April 7 attack they were in retreat.

Under pressure from beleaguered residents and facing Russian threats of further such attacks, the rebel group Jaish al-Islam finally agreed to surrender Douma and leave for the Turkish border, Mohammad Alloush, a top official in the movement, said. By the time the West struck back just under a week later, armed resistance in the areas around the Syrian government's seat of power had all but collapsed, further strengthening the hand of President Bashar Al-Assad.

Syria and Russia condemned the Western military intervention early on Saturday, and deny the use of chemical weapons in Douma. Moscow branded it a lie concocted with the help of Britain, while the British government said a significant body of information, including intelligence, indicated the Syrian government was responsible. Whatever happened on that day, it prompted a dramatic shift on the ground.

Medical relief groups said dozens of civilians were killed, and one video circulated by activists showed the bodies of around a dozen men, women and children lifeless on the floor, some of them with foam at the mouth. A couple of hours later, according to Alloush, mediators from the rebel group held talks with a team led by a senior officer from the Russian defense ministry. "The threat came: 'You saw what happened in Douma. Now you can only sign, or there will be more strikes and nobody left in the town'," Alloush, who is based in Istanbul, told Reuters.

He blamed Russia for helping the Syrian army carry out the attack in order to end the rebellion. "They bombed and

bombed and we weren't defeated by conventional weapons so they found the only way was to use chemical (weapons)." The Russian defense ministry did not respond to detailed questions about Alloush's comments sent by Reuters. After talking with the Russians, Jaish al-Islam members then met a civilian council representing Douma residents: Tens of thousands have stayed on despite the fighting that has reduced

one area after another from rebels who face Russian air power and lack sufficient aid from foreign states that back them only half-heartedly. Significant areas of Syria still remain beyond the president's grasp, including nearly all of the north, much of the east, and a chunk of the southwest, areas where foreign interests will complicate further gains.

But in the region around the capital he has made big gains. Eastern Ghouta fell last month, leaving Douma as the last major rebel bastion. Its fall - insurgent fighters have been bussed towards the Turkish border over the past few days - marks another milestone. The Ghouta offensive was directed from the start by Russia and waged on the ground by elite Syrian forces, according to a commander in the regional military alliance that backs Assad.

When the assault got underway in February, the besieged area was pounded from the ground and air before troops thrust in. So far, the Ghouta offensive has killed more than 1,700 civilians, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said. Hamstrung by rivalries and weakened by the "scorched earth" bombardment, the handful of eastern Ghouta rebel groups were steadily defeated and forced to accept safe passage to opposition-held territory at the Turkish border. Jaish al-Islam, however, believed it could avoid the same fate even as Syrian troops encircled Douma, saying it wanted to protect the town and its people from forced displacement imposed by the Assad government.

Once the biggest rebel group in eastern Ghouta, Jaish al-Islam claimed to have fortified Douma extensively, meaning government forces could face a costly battle to capture it. The group also said it could have held out thanks to weapons factories it built up during the war and enough supplies to feed people for a year. Hundreds of thousands of residents had already fled the area in the years and months preceding April 7, but tens of thousands stayed. In negotiations with Russian military personnel, Jaish al-Islam pressed for a deal that would let in Russian military police, keep out the Syrian military and allow its fighters to stay as a local security force. —Reuters

Public fear and threats forced Douma rebels to surrender

much of the town to rubble. The residents' message to the rebels was clear: "They said 'we can no longer hold on. If you don't leave, we are going over to the regime'," said Alloush. "Civilian morale collapsed with the scenes of death." A council member who declined to be named told Reuters that civilians said they could no longer resist, given the threat of further attacks. Dozens of people had been killed under intense bombardment the day before poison gas was allegedly deployed, but there was a difference, Alloush said. "Chemical weapons create more terror."

Escalating tensions

Syria's civil war has been going Assad's way since Russia intervened on his side in 2015. After the key capture of eastern Aleppo in late 2016, Assad and his allies have taken back

'Drug flats' blight the heart of Spanish cities

A decade after Spain's property bubble burst, dozens of vacant apartments in Madrid and Barcelona city centers have turned into "drug flats", to the dismay of local residents who complain of abandoned syringes and frequent brawls. "You don't live anymore. You are more afraid at home than outside," said Begona Sebastian, a 51-year-old accountant whose building was one of the first in Lavapiés, a district in the center of Madrid, to have a "narcopiso", or drug flat, where people come to buy and consume drugs.

For three years, dealers sold hashish and cocaine in the apartment below her own, which had been seized by a bank from a heavily indebted family. In mid-2016, she managed to have the squatters evicted and the door of the flat walled up to avoid it from being illegally occupied again by drug dealers. The building was infested with bedbugs, and the constant coming and going of drug buyers, combined with the fear that the squatters could trigger an explosion with the gas cylinders they used for heating, caused her to lose sleep.

"You end up crying," said Sebastian, a brunette with a round face, as she passed by another drug flat that has since sprung up in Lavapiés, an old district of steep and narrow streets that has a high immigrant population. She knows by heart the addresses of each drug flat and has learned how to recognize them from the outside due to their broken doors and windows boarded up with cardboard.

Other neighborhoods in Spanish cities, such as the working class Puente de Vallecas district in southern Madrid and El Raval in the center of Barcelona, have seen

an explosion in the number of drug flats in recent years, sparking street protests by locals. Some have taken to hanging red flags from their windows to draw attention to the problem.

Evictions

Figures on how many empty flats have been taken over by drug dealers are hard to come by. The interior ministry does not have national statistics on drug flats and refers any questions to local authorities. In the Madrid region, national police say they have dismantled 105 "narc flats" in 2017, and made 314 arrests. Catalan police said that by early this month 17 flats had been searched so far this year in connection with drug trafficking and 34 people arrested.

The authorities blame the rise in drug flats on the sharp economic downturn that followed the collapse of a decade-long building boom in 2008 causing tens of thousands of families to be evicted from their homes. The empty flats they left behind often belong to banks or investment funds, which cannot sell them without making a huge loss, so they leave them empty while waiting for property values to rise. "El Raval is one of the areas most affected by speculation, with buildings in a deplorable state of conservation, which facilitates occupations," said Gala Pin, the local Barcelona city councilwoman.

'Zombies'

"Mafias occupy the apartments, then they sell drugs there, or they install people who sell for them," a police source told AFP. Traffickers take advantage of the fact that it is only possible to evict squatters with a court order, which can take months to obtain, the source added. "They started by selling a lot of hashish, then they saw that there was also a demand for cocaine and sometimes even heroin." The opioid epidemic in the United States has revived bad memories in Spain of its own devastating heroin crisis of the 1980s. —AFP

Journalists' killing shows Ecuador, Colombia must act on 'narco border'

The kidnapping and killing of two journalists and their driver has thrown up an uncomfortable truth for Colombia and Ecuador, analysts say: That their long-neglected border has become a drug traffickers' nirvana. The two governments sent troops into the dense jungle area to hunt for the killers and re-establish control over a region analysts say has become a key corridor for the supply of cocaine to the United States. Ecuador's Interior Minister Cesar Navas said Sunday he had sent 550 police and troops, backed by tanks and a helicopter, to take "total control" of the border town of Mataje, where the journalists were kidnapped.

As part of a coordinated operation Bogota sent troops into the Tumaco area on the Colombian side of the border, known as the zone with the world's highest density of coca-leaf plantations.

The northwestern area is marked by dense jungle, crisscrossed by rivers, leading into the Pacific - an ideal launching pad for seaborne drug shipments and "transnational crime" under the influence of the Mexican drug cartels, said local Colombian military commander General Mauricio Zabala.

This is the fiefdom of the Oliver Sinisterra Front, which claimed responsibility for the kidnappings of Javier Ortega, Paul Rivas and their driver Efrain Segarra. Its leader is Walter Patricio Artizala, better known by his nom-de-guerre Guacho, a former middle-ranking FARC commander known to operate on both sides of the border with about 80 men. "Guacho will fall,

sooner or later," Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos said Sunday, confirming the kingpin is on a list of high value targets. "The highly-present Mexican cartels see that one of their main cocaine supply sources is drying up, that is why they are trying to generate violence," he added.

However, the full-on military approach being undertaken by the governments risks unleashing a fresh wave of violence, according to analyst Fernando Carrion, pointing to the bloodshed in Mexico under Felipe Calderon's government (2006-2012). In depressed areas like this one "an economic policy is required so that there is substitution of crops, so that the income of the inhabitants doesn't come from narcotics," he said. "We have to have a multi-lateral policy, where there are issues of economy, politics and obviously military issues," said Carrion, an expert in security at the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences in Quito.

Government contradictions

The situation hasn't been helped by glaringly contradictory statements coming from each government. Navas, the interior minister, said the journalist team was killed on the Colombian side of the border. "They were murdered on Colombian territory," he said, tacitly putting the onus on Bogota to find and repatriate the bodies. Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos said they were killed in Ecuador, where they were kidnapped.

The two governments also differ on the nationality of Guacho, the man they hold responsible for the murders. Each say he is the national of the other country. "The impression is that there has been a kind of hand-washing going on and handing on responsibility to the other side," said Carrion. It's an uncomfortable reminder of old diplomatic failings in the region. In 2008, a Colombian attack on a guerrilla camp in Ecuador, without the endorsement of Quito, led to a diplomatic crisis. —AFP

Rangers pitcher Colon flirts with perfect game in Texas win

Flores homers two outs to lift New York to a win over Milwaukee

WASHINGTON: Texas right-hander Bartolo Colon made a stunning bid for a perfect game Sunday night, and though his no-hitter and shutout disappeared in the eighth inning, the Rangers at least made sure Colon's efforts didn't happen in a losing cause. Robinson Chirinos scorched a two-run double in the top of the 10th inning, lifting Texas to a 3-1 win over the host Houston Astros. Colon's attempt at history ended when he missed high with a 3-1 pitch to Carlos Correa for a walk to start the eighth inning, then ceded his first hit when Josh Reddick lashed a double into the right field corner. Yuli Gurriel cashed in Correa with a sacrifice fly to center, and Marwin Gonzalez lined out to center before Rangers manager Jeff Banister hooked Colon. The 44-year-old veteran's final line was 7 2/3 innings, one hit, one run, a walk and seven strikeouts. Houston starter Justin Verlander was nearly as brilliant as Colon. He finished with 11 strikeouts in eight innings, permitting just one hit (a Chirinos homer), one run and one walk.

METS 3, BREWERS 2

Wilmer Flores homered with two outs in the bottom of the ninth inning to lift New York to a win over visiting Milwaukee. The Mets improved to 12-2 — their best start ever-and also have won five series to open a season for the first time. The Brewers are 8-8. Flores' third career walk-off homer made a winner out of Jeurys Familia (1-0), who threw a hitless ninth. Matt Albers (2-1) served up the homer and took the loss. Brandon Nimmo missed the cycle by a double and scored the Mets' first two runs. Nimmo led off with a single in the first and eventually scored on Todd Frazier's single before he homered leading off the sixth.

RED SOX 3, ORIOLES 1

Andrew Benintendi collected three hits, including the game-tying triple in the bottom of the fifth inning, as host Boston continued the best start in team history with a win over Baltimore to improve to 13-2. Benintendi fell a homer shy of the cycle and recorded his first three-hit game of the season. He reached base for the 11th straight game and reached base more than once for the ninth time in that span. J.D. Martinez scored the tiebreaking run on a wild pitch, Mitch Moreland also had three hits and Tzu-Wei Lin added insurance with a double. Dylan Bundy (0-2) allowed three runs-one earned-on seven hits in 5 2/3 innings as Baltimore lost for the fifth time in six games. Manny Machado doubled in Baltimore's lone run in the first inning but the Orioles struck out 14 times.

ROCKIES 6, NATIONALS 5

Ian Desmond hit a solo homer with two outs in the

top of the ninth to give visiting Colorado a victory over Washington. Desmond lifted his shot to center on a 3-2 pitch from Sean Doolittle (0-1), handing the Rockies their third victory in the four-game series against his former team. Adam Ottavino (3-0) earned the victory despite allowing a game-tying run on a wild pitch in the eighth. Bryce Harper hit his seventh homer of the season in the first inning and gave Washington a 1-0 lead. Anthony Rendon (sore big toe) was out of the Washington lineup for the second consecutive game. He is still considered day-to-day.

DODGERS 7, DIAMONDBACKS 2

Clayton Kershaw struck out 12 batters over seven innings and the Los Angeles offense came to life and ended their 11-game regular-season losing streak to visiting Arizona. Kershaw (1-2) picked up his first victory in four starts, while the offense finally gave him more than two runs of support in a game. It was the left-hander's 59th career game with at least 10 strikeouts. The Dodgers' offense worked six walks against Diamondbacks starter Zack Godley, with two of those six runners coming around to score. Another walk to Chase Utley forced home a run in the third inning. Godley (2-1), who entered as the National League's ERA leader, gave up five runs (four earned) on five hits in just four innings. The right-hander's ERA rose to 3.00 after he came into the game with a 0.64 mark.

Kershaw struck out 12 batters

PADRES 10, GIANTS 1

San Diego left-hander Joey Lucchesi out-pitched fellow rookie starter Tyler Beede, and Christian Villanueva and Jose Pirela drove in three runs apiece as the Padres hammered host San Francisco. Lucchesi (2-0) held the Giants to one run on five hits with a career-high nine strikeouts over six innings. The 24-year-old has a 1.66 earned run average in four major league starts and has allowed only two unearned runs on 10 hits and four walks with 24 strikeouts over 17 innings in his past three starts. Villanueva put the Padres ahead with a two-run double in the third off Beede and then hit a solo homer-the third baseman's fifth of the season- leading off the fifth against Giants left-handed reliever Josh Osich. Pirela was 3-for-5 with a double and a triple for three RBIs and three runs scored. He also stole a base.

A'S 2, MARINERS 1

Oakland second baseman Jed Lowrie hit a two-run homer as the third batter of the game and left-hander Sean Manaea pitched seven strong innings as the A's avoided a three-game series sweep at Seattle. Lowrie hit a 3-0 pitch off Felix Hernandez for his fourth homer of the season after Marcus Semien singled with one out in the first inning for a quick 2-0 lead. Manaea and two



HOUSTON: Josh Reddick #22 of the Houston Astros doubles in the eighth inning breaking up a no hit-ter for Bartolo Colon #40 of the Texas Rangers at Minute Maid Park on Sunday in Houston, Texas. All players are wearing #42 in honor of Jackie Robinson Day. — AFP

relievers made it stand up for the A's, who had lost four of five. Manaea (2-2) gave up two hits, one a bases-empty homer by Taylor Motter, in seven innings while dropping his ERA to 1.63. He struck out four, walked two and retired the final eight he faced after Motter's homer in the fifth inning before leaving for Ryan Buchter and Blake Treinen.

CARDINALS 3, REDS 2

Carlos Martinez fired seven shutout innings Sunday while Harrison Bader supplied a two-run homer as visiting St. Louis polished off a four-game sweep of reeling Cincinnati. Martinez (2-1) permitted two hits and four walks, but fanned 11 in his third straight quality start. Two relievers collected the final six outs, with Bud Norris working the ninth for his third save despite a leadoff homer by Adam Duvall. The Cardinals upped their record to 9-7 with their series sweep, while the Reds suffered their eighth straight loss and dropped to an MLB-worst 2-13. The Reds got the potential winning runs on base in the ninth when Tucker Barnhart bunted for a hit and Devin Mesoraco was hit by a pitch. But Norris induced a game-ending lineout from Billy Hamilton.

PHILLIES 10, RAYS 4

Philadelphia second baseman Scott Kingery had two hits and three RBIs and Aaron Altherr hit a three-run

homer in a five-run eighth inning as the Phillies completed a three-game series sweep over host Tampa Bay. Maikel Franco had a two-run single in the big eighth inning and Rhys Hoskins had an RBI single and scored twice for the Phillies, who have won six in a row and eight of their last nine. Kingery, who signed a six-year, \$24 million contract extension on March 25, leads major league rookies with seven doubles, nine extra-base hits and 12 RBIs. He has five doubles, two homers and all 12 RBIs in the last eight games. Denard Span had two hits, including his first homer, and two RBIs and Jesus Sucre had two hits and an RBI for the Rays, off to the worst start in franchise history at 3-12. They have lost six straight at home.

PIRATES 7, MARLINS 3

Starling Marte had a home run among his career-best five hits, and Josh Bell drove in three runs, as visiting Pittsburgh cruised past Miami as Ivan Nova delivered a solid outing. Nova (2-1) gave up three runs over 6 2/3 innings with nine strikeouts and no walks, improving to 3-0 in three career starts against the Marlins. His day ended after giving up a two-run, pinch-hit home run to Miami's Justin Bour in the seventh inning. Corey Dickerson added two hits to extend his hitting streak to 10 games, as the National League Central Division-leading Pirates improved to 11-4 overall and 4-2 on their just-completed road trip to Chicago and Miami. — Reuters

KSSC make statements over Daihani's retirement

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Following the announcement by Kuwait's Olympic hero Fuhaid Al-Daihani to retire, he made statements during media interviews as to why he decided to retire, and this prompted the Kuwait Shooting Sport Club to make a statement to answer his claims.

The statement said:

Kuwait Shooting Sport Club (KSSC) received several queries about statements by the retired Olympian Fuhaid Al-Daihani during an interview with a TV Channel, as he spoke about several topics in regards to state depts., as well as Kuwait Shooting Federation and Club. So, the club wants to explain facts to Kuwait people and the sports community.

- KSSC is proud of its shooters and the Olympic and international achievements were not to be made with the help of Allah, then the generous support of HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the government of Kuwait. The best honoring of KSSC and its members is the reception of HH the Amir, HH the Crown Prince of KSSC Board of Directors and winners after each achievement they make in the name of the State of Kuwait.
- Kuwait Shooting worked as a sports institution since the shooting club was established in 1994 under the Chairmanship of Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah, member of the board and those who came after them, worked as a team that seeks sports achievement for Kuwait, and Kuwait shooting, with the efforts of all, was able to reach sports supremacy at the World and Olympic level, most notably four Olympic medals in addition to hundreds of world and continental levels. We confirm the club will continue to work as an institution with efforts

of all workers in it to continue such achievements in the name of the State of Kuwait.

- KSSC, while preparing for the Olympics, prepares a plan over four years with the government support through Public Authority for Sports that includes supplying shooters with all they need, be it the best weapons in the world, as each piece costs at least KD 3,000, shooting equipment, free sports time for athletes, employing the best world coaches, holding training camps, participating in international championship to qualify for the Olympics, and KSSC was able to qualify a number of shooters for each Olympics, the latest of which Rio de Janeiro 2016 when shooters Abdallah Al-Rashidi and Saud Habib qualified for the Skeet, Khalid Al-Mudhaf and Abdelrahman Al-Faihan qualified for the trap, and Fuhaid Al-Daihani and Ahmad Al-Afasi qualified for the Double trap.

- Kuwait Shooting was subjected to an unjust suspension following repeated complaints by several Kuwaiti Federations to the International Olympic Committee, but Kuwait Shooting defended itself, and was able to lift the suspension through the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS), and Kuwait Shooting is now practicing its activities under Kuwait's flag and participates in international events that are held under the umbrella of ISSF, and not as being said that activities were resumed only. As for participation under the umbrella of Kuwait Olympic Committee, it is now that KOC is suspended.

- It is not true that shooters are suffering from lack of accommodation, food, training and equipment, as all shooters who participate abroad are provided with all their needs according to state regulations, and the support of PAS, even when allowances were KD 45, KSSC used to provide shooters with the care they need including accommodation, transport, food and in addition to all needs shooters want.

- When a shooter decides to retire for personal reasons, to be honored by PAS, we wish him all success, but we do not accept any insult, or false information, we also do not compare ourselves with other countries, as Kuwait is ahead of all countries in providing total support to athletes, especially in shooting, and the Olympic and International achievements are the evidence.

- Kuwait Shooting Sport Club believes in

the freedom of opinion, but does not accept making false or selfish statements and denial of without our beloved country Kuwait presents in the form of generous support and all people know that there is not an athlete or shooter who represents Kuwait, the state did not care for and provide him with all means to make his achievements, and in this concept we present some of what was presented to the retired Olympic Shooter Fuhaid Al-Daihani.

- Following the Olympic Achievement in Sydney 2000 Olympics:

HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, honored him by exemption in private residence, and gave him a land in an excellent location, in addition to the clubs financial recognition. HH the Crown Prince and HH the Prime Minister honored him morally and materially. The club honored him with KD 10,000.

- Following the Olympic achievement by Fuhaid Al-Daihani in London Olympic 2012:

HH the Amir decorated him with Kuwait Medal of first degree, promoted him to the rank of Colonel in Kuwait Army in addition to the financial reward.

He was also rewarded by HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, while HH the Prime Minister rewarded him financially and morally by buying arms with special specifications at a value of no less than KD 10,000. KSSC rewarded him with KD 30,000.

- Following the Olympic achievement by Shooter Fuhaid Al-Daihani in the Rio de Janeiro 2016 Olympics:

HH the Amir gave him a KD 100,000 reward in addition to an industrial piece of land.

He was financially rewarded by HH the Crown Prince and HH the Prime Minister. KSSC rewarded him with KD 30,000. Shooter Fuhaid Al-Daihani was given KD 10,000 to participate in the Rio de Janeiro Olympics.

The club bought "9" shotguns of special specifications for shooter Fuhaid Al-Daihani. PAS rewarded the shooter with nearly KD 80,000 between the years 2009 - 2015.

Ooredoo's ambassador Al Jeraiwi wins silver in Sharm Al Shaikh

KUWAIT: Ooredoo Kuwait's brand ambassador the tri-athlete Najla Al-Jeraiwi won the silver medal in the African Triathlon Union Cup - the Pan Arab Competition, which was held earlier in Sharm Al Shaikh. The title she earned is yet another success in the athlete's sports journey.

Ooredoo Kuwait's Corporate Communications Senior Director Mijbil Alayoub lauded the achievement, noting that it counts as an achievement for all the youth of Kuwait. He added: "We have great pride in the achievement of our young promising Kuwaiti female tri-athlete Najla Al-Jeraiwi. We strongly believe that with the right support, our youth can reach their highest potential."

Earlier this year, Ooredoo proudly announced its sponsorship to Kuwaiti Tri-athlete Najla Al-Jeraiwi as its first female brand ambassador for the current season 2018-2019. The sponsorship comes in alignment with the company's commitment to enriching youth and supporting their passions and the company's dedication to empowering women.

Al-Jeraiwi was the first Arab female tri-athlete representative in the 17th Asian Games, South Korea and the first GCC representative in UCI Road World Championships 2016. She was also the runner-up in the ATU African Triathlon & Pan Arab championship and the GCC cycling champion in both Time Trial and Road race. Al-Jeraiwi is currently the national champion of Kuwait in both triathlon and cycling. She has come in the top 3 in multiple regional triathlons, and won the gold medal in the Abu Dhabi World Triathlon last March.

Supporting youth and empowering

women is among Ooredoo's top priorities through its CSR strategy. The company signed a memorandum of understanding with the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs in 2017, to support youth projects and initiatives. Ooredoo is continuously working with the Ministry to enrich youth experience in a variety of fields, with a focus on volunteerism.



Mijbil Alayoub



Najla Al-Jeraiwi

Sports

‘Embracing everybody’, Commonwealth boss signals Games rebranding

Multi-sports events should shift to medal parity between men and women

GOLD COAST: Commonwealth Games Federation president Louise Martin urged all multi-sports tournaments to follow its lead and have equal medals for men and women as she insisted the competition still had a role in the modern era.

Martin said a rebranding exercise is under way for the Olympic-style event, which started as the British Empire Games in 1930 but is now keen to stress its promotion of “humanity, equality and destiny”. The just-concluded Gold Coast Commonwealth Games in Australia had medal equality between men and women for the first time and a para-competition was integrated into the main programme.

Asked about the image of the Games as a relic from bygone times, Martin told AFP: “Those who come from that era still think of it like that but now where we are in the modern Commonwealth, we are moving forward and we’re embracing everybody.”

“We’re becoming more relevant than we’ve ever been before and what we’re trying to do is ensure that everybody else in the world sees exactly what we’re trying to do,” she said in an interview.

“(We promote) our values of humanity, equality and destiny and encourage everybody else to do the same.” Martin said other multi-sports events should also shift

to medal parity between men and women, although this year’s Pyeongchang Winter Olympics had a record number of women and close to a 50-50 split between the sexes. “Wake up, we’re all in this together,” she said, asked about the importance of having an equal number of medals. “I think every other event should be trying to do the same so they have to make the programme, they have to look at scheduling and make sure that the male events don’t dominate the female events. “So we’ve managed it and other sports can do it too.”

DUEL IN THE POOL

The Games also featured their first transgender athlete, New Zealand weightlifter Lauren Hubbard, who was warmly welcomed by the crowd and also endorsed by organisers. “As far as I’m concerned we’re fully inclusive,” Martin said.

However, there was also a series of protests by indigenous activists who dubbed them the “Stolenwealth Games”, a reference to Britain’s colonisation of Australia. And there appeared to be discomfort when English diver Tom Daley, who is gay, pointed out that homosexuality remains illegal in 37 Commonwealth countries and territories.

As part of the revamp, Martin said she was also considering Duel in the Pool-style offshoots, potentially



GOLD COAST: New Zealand players perform the haka after defeating Fiji in the men’s rugby sevens gold medal match at the Robina Stadium during the 2018 Gold Coast Commonwealth Games on the Gold Coast on Sunday. — AFP

lining up the Commonwealth against major powers in sports such as swimming or athletics. “We’re in the process of talking about these things and yes, we want to take the Commonwealth slightly further,” she said, taking inspiration from swimming’s Duel, which pitted the United States against Australia or Europe.

“What we’re trying to do is make sure that these athletes can get to compete against, say, the Americas

or... one other country that we can have a fantastic competition with, like Duel in the Pool. “Or an athletics event so that everybody can see the standard that we have within the ommonwealth.”

She added: “When you start to see the athletes that have come here and the standard that they are, we can compete with anyone anywhere. And I think (they would be) fun events.” — AFP

Williamson leads Sunrisers to top of IPL in Warner’s absence

NEW DELHI: Kane Williamson has steered Sunrisers Hyderabad to the top of the Indian Premier League table since the New Zealander was elevated to captain in the absence of scandal-tainted David Warner.

Williamson, the only foreign captain in this season’s edition of the lucrative franchise, has ensured an unbeaten run for Hyderabad in the first three games of the Twenty20 league. The Kiwi cuts a much lower profile than Warner but has notched 92 runs in the Sunrisers’ three matches, including a fifty in their win over Kolkata Knight Riders on Saturday.

Hyderabad, who won the tournament in 2016, next face second-placed Kings XI Punjab, who recorded their second win on Sunday buoyed by a quick 63-run blitz by Chris Gayle. “Obviously nice to win three in a row,” said Williamson after the Sunrisers’ win at Kolkata’s Eden Gardens last week. “Bowlers have executed their skills really well, but we know every game is tough, so look to continue doing that.”

Williamson was a last-minute replacement for Warner after the high-profile Australian was banned from the IPL over the South Africa ball-tampering scandal. Australian skipper Steve Smith-another big ticket name for the IPL-was also dropped as captain of the Rajasthan Royals. The cheating row, so close to the IPL season launch, threatened to sully the billion-dollar franchise.



KOLKATA: Kolkata Knight Riders cricketer Nitish Rana (C) plays a shot as Delhi Daredevils cricketers Rishabh Pant (R) and Mohammed Shami look on during the 2018 Indian Premier League (IPL) Twenty20 cricket match between Kolkata Knight Riders and Delhi Daredevils at The Eden Gardens Cricket Stadium in Kolkata yesterday. — AFP

But the glitzy tournament is already earning its reputation with close finishes and big hits in steady supply just a few weeks into the world’s most popular T20 league. “All the eight teams are striving for that extra “one-percenters” that can make the difference between winning and losing,” former South Africa all-rounder Jacques Kallis wrote in The Times of India newspaper.

“On many occasions in the past ten years I have made the point that the difference between the top team and the bottom team in the IPL is smaller than any other cricket league in the world,” said Kallis, who advises the Knight Riders. Gayle was only selected in the third round of IPL bidding, picked up

by Punjab for just \$314,000 in the January auctions that saw rookies going for more than \$1 million.

But the West Indian did not disappoint, smashing 63 off 33 balls in his opener for the Kings XI. Gayle hit 7 fours and 4 sixes as Kings XI defeated Chennai Super Kings by four runs and cruised into second place on the IPL ladder. “It’s good to be back,” the 38-year-old big hitter said after Punjab’s win.

Other standout performances include a 14-ball fifty-the fastest in IPL history-by Punjab opener Lokesh Rahul and some entertaining knocks by Knight Riders batsman Andre Russell and England’s Jason Roy for Delhi Daredevils. — AFP

countrywoman Michelle-Lee Ahye an upset winner of the women’s 100m, Jamaica’s Caribbean rivals enjoyed their days in the sun. Jamaica’s Olympic chief insisted that there was no crisis, pointing to a new generation of sprinters coming through.

“It was a perfectly creditable performance,” Christopher Samuda told AFP. “Jamaican athletes usually peak in June or July. “Usain Bolt had a very big influence but we have a wealth of talent and the future for Jamaican sprinting is in very good hands.” But after the Jamaican men’s 4x100m relay team were crushed by England to take third behind South Africa in a puny title defence, Bolt took to social media to question whether he had retired too soon. “Watching the relay just now made me ask myself a few questions,” tweeted the eight-time Olympic champion, who watched part of the athletics with Hollywood heartthrob Chris Hemsworth.

FEAR FACTOR

Blake insisted he would bounce back this season. “I was in record-breaking shape, and I’m still in that,” he said. “We were dominating worldwide, and my coach is working to get me back to that level so I can dominate again.”

While Jamaica appeared to have lost the fear factor, Blake dismissed the threat to their recent sprinting dominance. “It’s not that they’re getting better,” he said. “It’s that we’re not performing.” — AFP

New-look Jamaica fail Commonwealth Games test

GOLD COAST: As sprint legend Usain Bolt partied into the early hours and hung out with movie stars at the Commonwealth Games, it wasn’t so much fun for the Jamaica track team he left behind.

At their first major competition since Bolt retired after a decade of dominance, the Jamaican juggernaut caught a flat on the Gold Coast, failing to win a single sprinting gold medal. Yohan Blake’s flop in the men’s 100 metres set the tone as Jamaica’s confidence was immediately dented by South African Akani Simbine. Blake, who picked up a world title in 2011 after Bolt false-started, could only finish third behind Simbine’s countryman Henricho Bruinjies after a calamitous start.

To add insult to injury, double Olympic champion Elaine Thompson failed to win a medal in the women’s 200m as Shaunae Miller-Uibo romped to victory for the Bahamas. And with Trinidad and Tobago’s Jereme Richards capturing gold in the men’s 200m and

Meyer vows to transform struggling Stade Francais

PARIS: South African Heyneke Meyer vowed to turn relegation haunted Stade Francais into “the best team in the world” at his unveiling in Paris yesterday. The former Springbok coach will take over the reins next season-when Stade will be hoping to still be playing in the Top 14. Champions in 2015, the Parisians have fallen on hard times and are involved in a relegation battle alongside minnows Oyonnax, Brive and Agen.

But Meyer still believes that under Swiss millionaire owner Hans-Peter Wild, the club can bounce back to past glories. “I never make promises that I can’t keep-I like to under-promise and over-deliver,” said Meyer. “When I had a meeting with Doctor Wild I said to him I don’t want to go into rugby or a team if I can’t have the same vision to build the best team in the world.” Wild, though, wasn’t so guarded about his ambitions.

“In three years we’ll be champions, perhaps it’s going to take four,” said the German-born businessman. A 44-3 thrashing by Lyon at the weekend left Stade four points above the relegation places with two matches to play.

But they are being hunted down by an Oyonnax side that has won five of their last seven matches, while next week’s visit of rock-bottom Brive could prove decisive. Meyer insisted that even relegation at the end of this season would not derail his ambitions. — AFP

Once on the ropes, Indian boxing comes out swinging

GOLD COAST: A bullish India celebrated their best boxing performance at a Commonwealth Games and are now targeting more success to rival the best nations at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics. Top figures in Indian boxing said their exploits on Australia’s Gold Coast were no fluke, even if they surpassed their own expectations in racking up nine medals in the sport.

India pipped hosts Australia to sit second in the boxing medals table with three golds-Mary Kom (light-flyweight), Vikas Krishan (middleweight) and Gaurav Solanki (flyweight). England, who have poured significant resources into amateur boxing, topped the table with six gold medals.

It was a highly satisfactory ending to a fortnight that started badly for Indian boxing with a warning for breaking the Games’ strict no needle policy after giving a vitamin injection to an unnamed fighter. All this comes just a few years after Indian boxing reached a nadir when its federation was effectively expelled by the sport’s amateur world governing body, the International Boxing Association (AIBA), over how it elected its officials.

Now back in the international fold as the Boxing Federation of India (BFI), its president Ajay Singh told AFP at the Gold Coast: “Last year a new federation took over and we are trying to ensure that we hold championships in India and have our boxers participate in all international championships. “We make sure we train our boxers well, make sure we plan their fights well and there’s a great deal of enthusiasm for boxing in India.” Singh, who has been in the post for 19 months, added boldly:

“We expect that in the next two years India will be one of the leading boxing nations in the world.”

WORLD AMBITION

So far, so good. At the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealths, India failed to win one gold, underlining the stark improvement since. “We have tried to put a lot of focus on the boxers themselves, leave out the politics and make sure that we have the best support staff training our boxers,” said Singh.

“Also make sure that our boxers get as much exposure as possible-Indian fighters were not going out fighting anywhere in the world.” He is changing that, sending Indian boxers abroad for tournaments and hosting international events such as January’s inaugural Indian Open. “We are also trying to plan scientifically-how they train for endurance, what food they eat, scientifically how they can upgrade their skills,” Singh said.

“I don’t think that before we looked at boxing as a sport in which India needed to be a world power.” Santiago Nieva was brought in just over a year ago as high-performance director and said that with a population of 1.3 billion people, there is no end of potential in India.

The government and boxing federation provided good support, including financially, said the Argentine, who was previously in the same senior post in Swedish boxing. Boxers have described how Nieva will have an analyst make a video nasty of their mistakes, then send it to their phones so they can watch it any time, and hopefully avoid the same error in future.

While striking an upbeat tone, Nieva said more work remained. After all, the Commonwealths are nowhere near as competitive as the Olympics. “If we compare ourselves to the top nations, we are not there yet,” he cautioned, referencing Britain and Cuba. “We have a good infrastructure, but not compared to the best in the world,” he added, mentioning sports technology and science. “When we get that-it will take one or two years-we will produce a lot of results.” — AFP



GOLD COAST: Gold medalist India’s Vikas Krishan attends the medal ceremony for the men’s 75kg boxing event during the 2018 Gold Coast Commonwealth Games. — AFP

PSG crush Monaco to reclaim fifth title in six seasons

‘It was important to win the Ligue 1 title at home’

PARIS: Angel Di Maria and Giovanni Lo Celso scored twice as Paris Saint-Germain secured a fifth Ligue 1 title in six seasons on Sunday with a 7-1 rout of last year's champions Monaco. Unai Emery's team blew Monaco away in a first-half blitz that saw PSG score four times in 14 minutes at the Parc des Princes with Lo Celso striking either side of goals from Edinson Cavani and Di Maria.

Rony Lopes pulled a goal back for Monaco as he scored for the eighth game in a row, but Di Maria added a fifth before Radamel Falcao turned into his own net and Julian Draxler struck late on as PSG romped to the club's seventh championship. "It was important to win the title at home," PSG coach Emery told Canal+.

"We were able to show the difference between us and Monaco. "We'll have to wait a bit to analyse the season, we still have a trophy to play for. Other teams have more titles than us...but we must keep on building." With a fifth successive League Cup already won, PSG completed the second leg of a domestic treble-they are also through to the French Cup semi-finals — and could yet break their record 96-point haul from the 2015-16 campaign. PSG also became the first team in Europe's top leagues this season to reach 100 goals on a night they were without the injured Neymar and Kylian Mbappe, the teenager left on the bench after a bout of illness. Monaco arrived in Paris unbeaten on their last eight league visits to the capital but any prospect of them prolonging PSG's wait for the title quickly eroded.

Kamil Glik's absence in the heart of the visiting defence was acutely felt as Lo Celso started the move that resulted in the opening goal on 14 minutes, sauntering into the box to

tap in a Dani Alves cross. While Cavani's second half of the campaign has proved less prolific than the blistering spell that yielded 19 goals before Christmas, the Uruguayan bagged his league-best 25th goal with a powerful header from a Yuri Berchiche cross.

Cavani then released Di Maria with a superb hooked pass from inside his own half and the Argentine raced clear before lifting an exquisite chip over the advancing Daniel Subasic. Javier Pastore supplied Lo Celso to head in PSG's fourth on 28 minutes and Monaco suffered further misfortune when France international Djibril Sidibe was stretchered off with a leg injury, a worrying sign for Didier Deschamps ahead of the World Cup.

Monaco briefly held up the onslaught as Lopes turned home an Alamy Toure cross seven minutes before half-time for the in-form Portugal international's 13th goal this term. But PSG continued to attack at will and Pastore's nonchalant assist for Di Maria allowed the winger to grab his second of the game on 59 minutes. The hosts were gifted another goal

when Falcao's attempt to clear a corner went horribly wrong, summing up Monaco's misery as the ball looped beyond Subasic on 77 minutes.

Germany international Draxler rounded out the demolition, firing home via a deflection as PSG clinched the title at home for the first since 1994 while shattering Monaco's 17-match unbeaten run. Earlier, Florian Thauvin struck a late winner as Marseille twice came from behind to beat struggling Troyes 3-2 and stay in the hunt for a Champions League place. Marseille were reeling after Samuel Grandsir headed Troyes ahead with just 37 seconds gone at the Stade de l'Aube, but Clinton Njie's scuffed effort soon pulled the



PARIS: Paris Saint-Germain's players celebrate after winning the French L1 football match between Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) and Monaco (ASM) on Sunday, at the Parc des Princes stadium in Paris.— AFP

visitors level. The 41-year-old Benjamin Nivet fired Troyes back in front just after half-time as the veteran skipper followed up a rebound after Yohann Pele had saved from Grandsir. But a clinical finish from Greece striker Kostas Mitroglou made it 2-2 with quarter of an hour to play, and

Thauvin volleyed home his team-leading 17th league goal on 86 minutes to cap a dramatic victory. Rudi Garcia's Marseille remain level on points with third-placed Lyon, who occupy the final Champions League spot, while Monaco are four points ahead of the chasing duo. —AFP

Barcelona closing in on La Liga title

MADRID: Barcelona will have one eye on the Copa del Rey final while Europe is the main focus for Real and Atletico Madrid so what is left for La Liga? Barca are 11 points clear at the top of the table but, with an overhaul of the squad expected in the summer, few players can afford to ease off during the run-in.

Atletico will hope to beat rivals Real to second but both teams have their priorities now in Europe, with Real facing Bayern Munich in the Champions League semi-finals and Atleti up against Arsenal in the last four of the Europa League next week.

Sevilla face a crucial few days in their chase for European football next season while at the bottom of the table, Levante can all but secure safety with a win over Malaga. Barca squad playing for their futures. The league title may be all but sewn up and the treble dream extinguished but Barca's players are now playing for places, both in the short-term, for Saturday's Copa del Rey final against Sevilla, and further ahead, to stay beyond the summer. Andres Iniesta and Samuel Umtiti are both pondering their futures while successors, even if not replacements, need to be found for ageing stars like Gerard Pique, Sergio Busquets and Luis Suarez. Ousmane Dembele and Andre Gomes still have it all to prove. Fringe players are expected to be given a chance against ninth-placed Celta Vigo today. They need to impress.

Isco has shown the way in how to regain favour under Zinedine Zidane, the Spaniard continuing his recent surge with a goal and an assist against Malaga on Sunday. After scoring a hat-trick for Spain against Argentina, Zidane was impressed enough to start the midfielder against Juventus last week, and Gareth Bale might draw encouragement from Isco's revival. Bale's strained relationship with Zidane took another turn for the worse after he was harshly hauled off at half-time against Juve but he may be given another shot against Athletic Bilbao tomorrow. With the first leg of the Champions League semi-final against Bayern Munich to come next week, Bale needs a performance.

Atletico juggling pursuit of Europa League glory Atletico Madrid travel to Real Sociedad on Thursday, knowing defeat could give Barca the chance to wrap up the title in their next match against Deportivo La Coruna on April 29. But another strong season for Atleti, in which Champions League qualification is already confirmed, can be given extra gloss if they win the Europa League. The challenge for Diego Simeone's paper-thin squad is to stay fresh, with the two-legged semi-final against Arsenal starting at Emirates Stadium next week. Real Sociedad may be primed to take advantage.

Sevilla's season could be defined by the next five days as a trip to lowly Deportivo La Coruna on Tuesday is followed by Saturday's Copa del Rey final. There was no shame in their admirable Champions League run ending at the hands of Bayern last week but fail to beat Deportivo, and Sevilla may struggle to qualify for the Europa League next term, let alone the continent's premier club competition. A more difficult route to the Europa League would be to beat Barca and win the cup. It is time to deliver. —AFP

Mbappe left the bench after illness

Buffon should watch his mouth: Italian ref chief

MILAN: Italian referees' chief Marcello Nicchi said yesterday that Juventus goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon should think before lashing out at officials as he did during last week's Champions League defeat by Real Madrid.

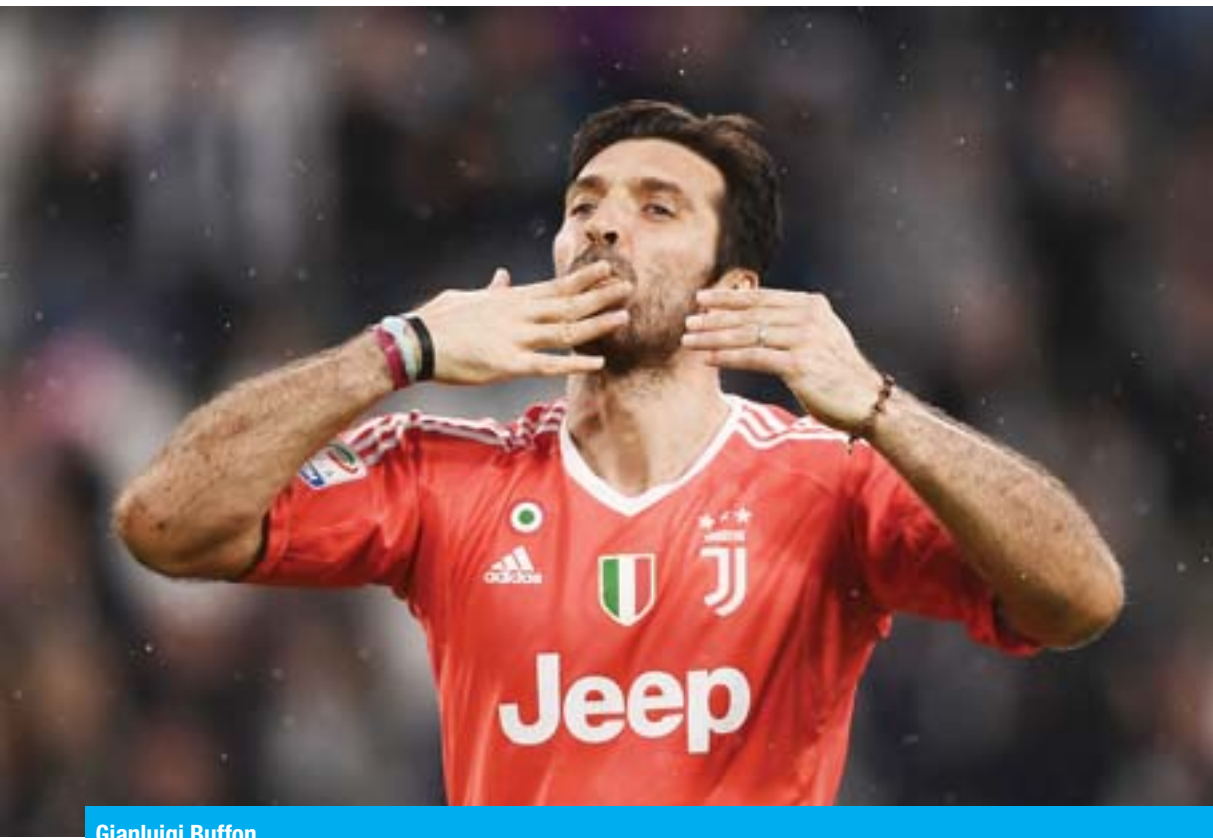
Buffon was sent off for dissent by English referee Michael Oliver after he awarded Real Madrid a stoppage-time penalty which sent the Spaniards into the semi-finals. The 40-year-old Italian icon later called Oliver "a murderer" with "a rubbish bin" in place of a heart.

"Buffon is a great champion who I hope will go on to have a great managerial career," Nicchi told Italian radio. "But at certain levels you have to be careful about what you say. There are always kids listening.

"If it happened in Italy? I would have defended the referee. They can't be threatened either before, during, or after the game. "After that, there are the appropriate bodies which must judge the conduct of all players on the pitch."

Meanwhile, Nicchi warned of a repeat of the 2006 Calciopoli match-fixing scandal if referees lose their right to vote at the top of the game in Italy. The Italian Referees' Association (AIA) could lose its two percent voting allocation in the Italian Football Federation's Federal Council. And AIA president Nicchi believes this could open the door to behind-the-scenes meddling like during the Calciopoli scandal that rocked Serie A and Serie B in 2006.

"To undermine the independence and impartiality of our referees could mean the start of a new Calciopoli,"



Gianluigi Buffon

dling like during the Calciopoli scandal that rocked Serie A and Serie B in 2006.

"To undermine the independence and impartiality of our referees could mean the start of a new Calciopoli,"

Ferguson was. Guardiola has now won seven league titles in nine seasons as a senior coach in three countries after conquering La Liga and the Bundesliga with Barcelona and Bayern Munich on multiple occasions. The workaholic Catalan's eye for detail in changing the culture at City has gone as far as dictating to the millimetre how long the grass should be at the club's many training pitches and turning off the Wi-Fi at City's Etihad campus to foster interaction between team-mates.

VALUE FOR MONEY

Guardiola's intensity can provoke burnout in himself and his players. He required a sabbatical after four draining years at Barcelona during which he won 14 trophies and he only ever planned to stay at Bayern for three seasons. His City contract expires at the end of next season but the club are confident he will extend for at least one extra year. "City hope to tie Guardiola to a new contract," wrote Oliver Kay in The Times.

"They are delighted with his impact, but winning the title was just one part of the mission... they want to be champions again and again, establishing them as the dominant force in the Premier League." Backed by a level of spending never seen before in English football, Guardiola has amassed a squad capable of dominating for years to come. Of the more than 500 million euros (\$616 million) spent in transfer fees alone during Guardiola's reign, the vast majority has been on players under the age of 25 in Gabriel Jesus (21), Leroy Sane (22), John Stones (23), Benjamin Mendy (23), Bernardo Silva (23), Aymeric Laporte (23) and Ederson (24). "There will always be those who see the money spent as detracting from the beauty but Guardiola has also improved players and he has blended them to accentuate their assets," said Jonathan Wilson in the Guardian. "Yes, money has been spent but City have got full value for it."

Seven trophies have been won since Sheikh

Manchester City target Premier League dynasty

LONDON: Manchester City are setting their sights on establishing a dynasty in English football and finally conquering Europe after their relentless march to a third Premier League title in seven seasons.

Pep Guardiola's men have already matched one of the greatest sides of the Premier League era by winning the league with five games to spare to equal Manchester United's record in 2000/2001.

The Premier League points and goals records are also likely to be smashed but the true test of whether City deserve their status in the list of all-time greats will be what comes next. "I want to see the reaction from us next season as I've never been able to retain a title," said club captain Vincent Kompany, a three-time Premier League winner.

Since City's Abu-Dhabi owners started pouring in hundreds of millions to the club's coffers a decade ago, Manuel Pellegrini and Roberto Mancini have also delivered titles but never sustained success. This year's title triumph is just the fifth in the club's history, putting them well behind fierce rivals United, with a record 20 titles, but Guardiola's side are now the pre-eminent team in the city and in the country. "Retaining a title is the next step and City were not in the right state of mind," said United's former boss Alex Ferguson after retiring in 2013, having won the title back from City.

"When I won the league for the first time in 1993, I didn't want my team to slacken off. The thought appalled me." Fortunately for City, they now have a coach as relentlessly dedicated to winning as

Mansour's takeover, but one glaring one is missing. Even Guardiola's record-breakers have fallen short again in the Champions League, losing 5-1 on aggregate in the quarter-finals to Jurgen Klopp's Liverpool.

"Sooner or later it's going to happen," insisted Guardiola, who has consistently stated City's need to grow gradually on the European stage, having made the Champions League semi-finals just once in their history. Guardiola has taken City back to the pinnacle of the English game. Keeping them there and finally breaking through their Champions League glass ceiling is now the challenge. — AFP

Live			Matches on TV
			(Local Timings)
ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE			
Brighton & Hove Albion v Tottenham Hotspur	21:45		
beIN SPORTS HD 2			
SPANISH LEAGUE			
Deportivo La Coruna v Sevilla	20:30		
beIN SPORTS			
Celta de Vigo v Barcelona	22:00		
beIN SPORTS HD 3			
Villarreal v Leganes	22:30		
beIN SPORTS HD 3			
ITALIAN CALCIO LEAGUE			
Internazionale Milano v Cagliari Calcio	21:45		
beIN SPORTS HD 4			

Sports

Neymar Jr.'s Five Returns to Kuwait on April 29



Neymar Jr's Five, since its launch in 2016, has proven to have a significant impact with tens of thousands of teams participating, vying for victory in the world's largest five-a-side football tournament. This year it is back, bigger than ever, with 22,000 teams and 76,000 players from over 60 countries, including Kuwait.

Neymar Jr's Five is the Brazilian forward's signature football tournament – and a truly global phenomenon. Across 6 continents and more than 50 countries, five-a-side teams battle it out in 10-minute matches with a twist. Every time one team scores, the opposition loses a player, which makes it fast, technical, tactical – and unique in the world of football.

The 2018 tournament is again open to teams of five to seven players aged 16 to 25, with two over-aged players allowed as part of each squad. Tens of thousands of players will set out with the hope of making it all the way from regional qualifiers to their national final and on to the World Final at the Instituto Projeto Neymar Jr in Praia Grande, Brazil. Neymar Jr. himself is dreaming too – of more success with FC Paris Saint-Germain and Brazil in

2018, and a long-term future in the country that excites him most.

Neymar Jr. expressed his excitement about the upcoming tournament saying “I hope you are as excited as I am to get out there and outplay as many teams as possible. Gather your team, sign up and I hope to see you and your friends in Brazil”.

The qualifiers in Kuwait will occur over a span of five days: April 29 – 30 at Hassan Abul Sports Center and May 1- 3 at Boulevard. 16 teams will then head to the final on May 4, also at Boulevard. Teams can now sign up to participate in one of these qualifiers by visiting www.neymarjr5.com

The winning team from Kuwait will head to the World Final in Brazil on July 21 to battle it out against over 60 other countries and outplay them all. It will be held at Neymar's Instituto Projeto Neymar Jr. in Praia Grande, an organization aimed at providing extracurricular educational and sporting activities to the most socially disadvantaged children and their families in the area.

Neymar Junior's Five Kuwait qualifier is sponsored by Intersport, Platinum, Talabat, and Acqua Eva. Media partner, Kuwait Times, will cover this popular event.

About Neymar Jr's Five

Outplay them all - Neymar Jr's Five is the Brazilian star's signature five-a-side tournament bringing players from all corners of the world together to celebrate their shared passion: football. It is a fast, technical and fun competition, played in more than 60 countries around the world, including Neymar Jr's home country Brazil, and France, where he plays with Paris Saint-Germain.

The rules? Simple. Each match lasts 10 intense minutes, there's no goalkeeper and whenever a team scores, the opposition loses a player. You need to outplay them all! The tournament is open to teams of five to seven players aged 16 to 25. In each team two players over 25 are allowed in the squad as well.

In 2017, over 100,000 players from 53 countries battled it out to be crowned World Champions, with Romania coming out victorious. Neymar Jr's Five 2018 is set to be even bigger and more players than

ever will get the chance to experience this beautiful game, as there'll also be women's competitions in addition to the mixed competition in some countries.

More than 60 countries from 6 continents will be hosting tournament qualifiers, where players will compete with the same dream of making it through the qualifiers, to their national final to book a ticket to the World Final, which will be celebrated for the third time at Instituto Projeto Neymar Jr in Praia Grande, Brazil.

The 2018 World Champions will win the experience of a lifetime, with the chance to play against Neymar Jr himself in Brazil and meeting him again in Paris.

About Instituto Projeto Neymar Jr.

The location of the World Final, Instituto Projeto Neymar Jr, is a private, non-profit association dedicated to social causes, set up by Neymar Jr. and his family. It is located in Jardim Glória, in Praia Grande, where Neymar Jr spent much of his childhood. The Institute is an 8,400m2 education and sporting complex catering for 2,470 underprivileged children aged 7-14 and their families.



12 Rangers pitcher Colon flirts with perfect game in Texas win



13 Williamson leads Sunrisers to top of IPL in Warner's absence



14 PSG crush Monaco to reclaim fifth title in six seasons



CLEVELAND: Cory Joseph #6 of the Indiana Pacers dives for the ball in front of LeBron James #23 of the Cleveland Cavaliers during the second half Game One of the Eastern Conference Quarterfinals during the 2018 NBA Playoffs at Quicken Loans Arena on Sunday in Cleveland, Ohio. — AFP

Pacers snap James’ playoff streak

James Harden’s 44 points powers Houston Rockets

NEW YORK: Forget LeBron James making his eighth consecutive trip to the NBA finals—the Cleveland Cavaliers star might have trouble just getting out of the opening round of the playoffs. Victor Oladipo scored a game-high 32 points to power the Indiana Pacers over the host Cavaliers 98-80 on Sunday in the opening game of their first-round NBA playoff series.

“Stay calm, stay composed, play the game I have all year long,” Oladipo said of the key to his overwhelming day. “This was a great team win.” James had won 21 first-round playoff games in a row until the rout, having never before lost the opener in a first-round NBA post-season series.

James, seeking his ninth career trip to the NBA finals and fourth league title, had not dropped a first-round playoff game since the New York Knicks beat Miami in the fourth game of the 2012 opening round, a minor setback on the Heat’s title run, a career first for James.

James said falling behind in a series just motivates him to step up his game. “I’m down 0-1 in the first round. I was down 3-1 in the finals. So I’m the last guy to ask about what I’m gonna be like the next couple days,” James said.

In the late game, league MVP candidate James Harden exploded for 44 points as the Houston Rockets beat the Minnesota Timberwolves 104-101. The Pacers jumped ahead 33-14 after the first quarter and led by as much as 23 in holding off the Cavs, who came no closer than seven points the rest of the way.

“You can’t ease into the playoffs,” said Cavs coach Tyrone Lue. “I thought (Indiana) came in and they attacked us.” James had a triple double in a losing cause with 24 points, 10 rebounds and 12 assists. The rest of Cleveland’s starters only managed 25 points, Kevin Love with 17 rebounds but only nine points.

J.R. Smith had 15 points off the Cavaliers’ bench

while Myles Turner had 16 points and Bojan Bogdanovic added 15 for Indiana. The Cavaliers had their lowest-scoring first period of the season and only five baskets with six turnovers in the opening quarter, drawing boos as they walked off at half-time trailing 59-38.

CELTICS EDGE BUCKS IN OT

The Boston Celtics nearly fell victim to another Eastern Conference opening upset bid before edging visiting Milwaukee 113-107 in overtime. Al Horford scored 24 points and grabbed 12 rebounds for Boston and Terry Rozier, starting in place of injured Kyrie Irving, added 23 points.

Marcus Morris scored 21 off the bench while Jaylen Brown netted 20 and Jayson Tatum contributed 19 points and 10 rebounds for the Celtics. “We’ve been down a lot, a lot of injuries, and we’ve always found a

way,” Horford said. “Morris made some big shots, Tatum down the stretch, Terry—that’s what we’re all about. We just find a way.”

Greek star Giannis Antetokounmpo led the Bucks with 35 points, 13 rebounds and seven assists and gave the Celtics headaches until fouling out in overtime. Khris Middleton added 31 points, hitting five-of-seven three-pointers, with eight rebounds and six assists in a losing cause. In Houston, Harden led a big fourth-quarter run as the top-seeded Rockets held off the Timberwolves in game one. Harden made seven-of-12 three pointers but the Rockets had their hands full with the eighth seeded Timberwolves.

Minnesota star Karl-Anthony Towns failed to get untracked Sunday, scoring just eight points, well below his season average of 21.3 points. Andrew Wiggins had 18 points for Minnesota, who are making their first playoff appearance since 2004. —AFP

Djokovic races past Lajovic in Monte Carlo

MONTE CARLO: Former world number one Novak Djokovic showed signs of rediscovering his form with a dominant 6-0 6-1 victory over Dusan Lajovic in the opening round of the Monte Carlo Masters yesterday.

Djokovic’s start of the season was disrupted by an elbow surgery, and has since suffered defeats in consecutive opening matches at Indian Wells and Miami. But there were no signs of his recent struggles as he kick-started his claycourt campaign in style to record a victory over fellow Serb Lajovic in just 57 minutes.

Djokovic, a two-time winner at Monte Carlo, dropped just eight points as he wrapped up the first set with his opponent well off the pace. Lajovic, ranked 93 in the world, offered resistance in the second set to level at 1-1 but failed to capitalise on a break point as the 12-time

grand slam winner roared back to book a second round meeting with Borna Coric of Croatia.

Earlier in the day, Japan’s Kei Nishikori came back from a set down to see off Czech 12th seed Tomas Berdych 4-6 6-2 6-1 and reach the second round. Nishikori, who missed a large part of last season with a wrist injury, started the season in the Challenger Tour events before reaching the second round at Miami.

He was playing close to his best tennis despite calling for a medical timeout for his troublesome wrist. “It’s not great but first match on clay, you know, I’m expecting little soreness,” Nishikori said.

“Hopefully I have a day off tomorrow. If I have to play tomorrow, I got to be ready tonight.” The 28-year-old, who is making his first Monte Carlo appearance since 2012, will face Russian Daniil Medvedev in the next round. World number 51 Jared Donaldson confronted an umpire after disagreeing with a call made in his first-round defeat by last-year’s finalist Albert Ramos-Vinolas. While 6-3 3-2 down, the 21-year-old American became outraged when a serve by the Spaniard was called in by Arnaud Gabas when he believed it was out. Donaldson eventually lost 6-3 6-3 and apologised to Ramos-Vinolas but refused to shake Gabas’ hand. — Reuters



MONACO: Serbia’s Novak Djokovic serves to compatriot Dusan Lajovic during their round of 64 tennis match at the Monte-Carlo ATP Masters Series Tournament, yesterday in Monaco. — AFP

TUESDAY, APRIL 17, 2018

20 Automobiles drive US retail sales higher in March



21 URC's operating profit increases by 23% to KD 87 million in 2017



22 Infiniti AI-Babtain unveils all-new Crossover QX30 2018 in Kuwait



KUWAIT: Staff working at justclean office in Al Hamra Business Tower, Kuwait City.

justclean: First Laundry App in Kuwait

Easy and convenient, justclean partners with 90 laundries

By Nawara Fattahowa

KUWAIT: justclean is the first online laundry platform servicing all of Kuwait. People can choose their favorite laundry and schedule pickup and delivery, all from the convenience of their phone. Having started with only 15 laundries, justclean has grown to partner with 90 laundries in less than two years. justclean makes the way people do their laundry easier and more convenient.

Founded as Masbagti, and later rebranded to justclean, the two Co-Founders Athbi and Nouri Al-Enezi are finding their path as entrepreneurs with the guidance and support from the Faith Capital Holding team. In an interview with Kuwait Times, Athbi, Nouri Al-Enezi and Mohammed Jaffar, Deputy Chairman and CEO of Faith Capital, spoke about justclean and the services it offers to its customers across Kuwait.

Kuwait Times: What is justclean?

Athbi: It is all of your laundry cleaning solutions in one place.

Nouri: It's not only clothes that can be sent to the laundry - items such as carpets, bags, toys and any delicate fabrics, including wedding dresses, can all be sent

through justclean. Our Customer Care team is always ready and available to support customers.

KT: How did the idea of justclean come about?

Athbi: It started when I had a corporate job and always had to wear suits to work. One day I had to send my suit to be cleaned and there was nothing else available to wear. I ended up taking a sick leave and staying home.

Nouri: We saw all the different laundries in Kuwait and asked ourselves: How could we compress all of these laundries in one place and modernize the traditional way of doing laundry.

Athbi: We remained determined for this dream to transform into reality. We even worked from our car; and although we enjoyed every minute of it, we knew we wanted more.

Mohammed Jaffar: Two young ambitious entrepreneurs who refused to succumb to obstacles are forging their path and the path of others. With belief, passion, dedication and a will to learn, opportunities are limitless.

KT: You went from having an office in a car to

being in Al Hamra Business Tower, how have you managed to grow so rapidly in the last 12 months?

Athbi: There is no one answer. After we joined the Faith Capital family, they helped us get on board the right people. A year ago, it was just my brother and I - now we have over 40 people, ranging from operations, sales, technology and so on.

Nouri: Another thing that we got from Faith Capital was expertise and the knowhow of when, where and how to invest our money. So, when we first started as Masbagti, we would go to a laundry owner and for KD 15, we would run Instagram ad for them. Now we advertise on all digital and social media channels and continuously analyze and optimize based on results.

Mohammed Jaffar: When you are starting as a young entrepreneur, you have to be careful in choosing your team. You have to find the right balance between passion and expertise. People with the real entrepreneurial spirit are willing to go the extra mile for what they believe in.

KT: Would you attribute your success to anything else?

Mohammed Jaffar: To the belief that success is not in the hands of you and I. One should have complete faith - that it is in the hands of Allah (SWT). What we

aim to do is bring the business practices of the west with what our faith teaches us in terms of how to conduct a business and merge them together.

Nouri: To add to what Mr Mohammed is saying, we are not only a profit driven business. We care about our community and giving back to it. We implemented a policy that with justclean, every order a person places contributes to helping a person in need.

Athbi: We started a program called justgood, where we sponsor charity events, collaborate with other organizations or directly help people by visiting the less fortunate on a monthly basis and helping them.

KT: What is next for justclean?

Athbi: Now that we have the business moving ahead, we feel it is the right time to venture out of Kuwait.

Nouri: We have started the process and justclean will be going to the UAE soon, followed by another GCC country.

Mohammed Jaffar: Beyond geographical expansion, we are always listening to the customer and looking into what is our next product offering.



Mohammed Jaffar standing in between Nouri Al-Enezi (left) and Athbi Al-Enezi (right).

KAMCO Oil Market Monthly Report

Geopolitical events push oil prices above \$70/b

OPEC output cuts compliance reaches a record 163%

KUWAIT: Oil prices were the ultimate beneficiary from a number of geopolitical events that took place over the past few weeks that led to increased volatility in the oil market and making oil the only asset class to scale new highs in 2018. The first push came from the ongoing US/China trade talks with the two countries trying to restrict flow of goods and services between these countries by way of tariff impositions.

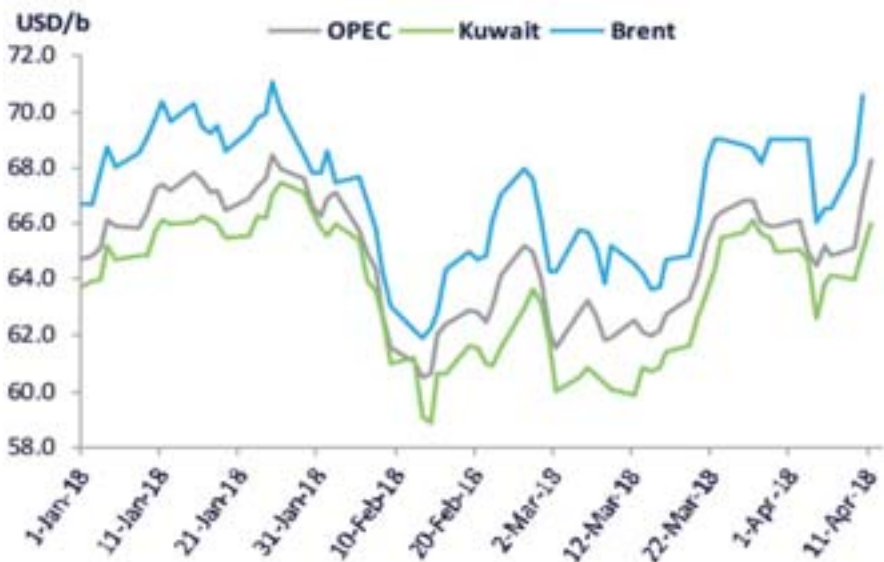
This initially resulted in a trade war like situation by the end of March-18 pushing oil prices down as it would've threatened global economic growth, but positive attempts were made in the last week to defuse the situation resulting in a positive impact on oil prices. IEA, in its monthly report, also highlighted the risk on oil demand coming from the US/China trade tariffs. These concerns also impacted gold prices, as prices moved closer to the highest level witnessed in two years.

Meanwhile, the geopolitical situation in the Middle East escalated to new high since the start of April-18 sending shockwaves across the oil market. Prices reached the highest level since 2014 after news of US intervention in the region led to Brent crude surpassing the \$72/b mark. The market is also looking at whether the US and the European Union would reimpose sanctions on Iran with a possible decision sometime in May-18 that has the potential to result in supply disruptions in the oil market.

In terms of OPEC supply, the group lowered the production even further by 201 tb/d, according to OPEC secondary sources, while Bloomberg data showed a decline of 170 tb/d while producing at an average rate of 32.04 mb/d, the lowest level since May-17. The decline came primarily on the back of lower production in Venezuela, Libya, Algeria and Angola partially offset by higher production in UAE and Nigeria. This pushed up OPEC compliance to the ongoing production cuts to a record 163 percent for the fifth consecutive month, according to IEA.

Moreover, the recent oil price rise was not just led by supply-side factors. Oil demand is also said to have risen, especially from the OECD countries, according to OPEC monthly report. This prompted an upward revision in oil demand growth for 2018 by 30 tb/d, as compared to last month's forecast, to a growth of 1.63 mb/d. On the other hand, although IEA kept its global oil demand growth forecast for 2018 unchanged at 1.5 mb/d, the agency also highlighted strong demand in OECD during Q1-18 led by cold weather in the US and the start-up of a petrochemical project.

As highlighted in our previous reports, KAMCO Research reiterates that the current surge in oil prices are backed by numerous fragile factors. We see that fundamentals have taken a backseat currently and markets are moving on external factors. Also, higher oil prices makes the production cut agreement more susceptible to opposition from members seeking to take advantage of the prices rather than allowing the US to produce unabated.



Oil prices

Average monthly oil prices were almost flat m-o-m during March-18 after healthy gains during the third week of the month were offset by declines towards the close of the month led by trade conflicts between US and China. The weakness extended during the initial trading days in April-18 but geopolitical concerns in the Middle East coupled with signs of healthy oil demand and continued low supply pushed prices up during the second week. Average OPEC crude grade prices were recorded at \$63.8/barrel while Kuwait crude and Brent Spot were at \$62.23/barrel and \$65.9/barrel, respectively.

Crude oil inventories in the US continued to fluctuate on a weekly basis with the latest report pointing to a build as against analyst expectations of a small draw. Production in the US reached another record high of 10.5 mb/d which along with higher imports resulted in higher inventory levels. API reported an inventory build of 1.8 million barrels during the week ended 6-April-18 while EIA weekly report showed an almost double inventory build of 3.3 million barrels. Nevertheless, average inventories for the last four weeks were reportedly stable as compared to the same period last year.

On the other hand, the IEA kept its global oil demand growth estimates for 2018 unchanged at 1.5 mb/d after higher demand from OECD countries and from India was offset by a downward revision to demand data for non-OECD countries, including China. According to the monthly report, global oil supply declined by 120 tb/d during March-18 led by higher compliance from OPEC producers, although rising US output partially offset this decline. In one of the significant developments, the IEA report said that OECD commercial stocks declined by 26 million barrels to reach 2,841 million barrels, merely 30 million barrels above the five-year average, the indicator used to gauge the effectiveness of OPEC's pro-



duction cuts. It is expected that the average could be reached by May-18, post which the direction on the future cuts would be expected.

World oil demand

World oil demand growth estimates for 2017 was revised up by 30 tb/d to 1.65 mb/d reflecting updated data for OECD and non-OECD regions. Oil demand data for Q4-17 was updated for OECD Europe with an upward revision of 0.12 mb/d reflecting data for Turkey, Poland and France driven by higher middle distillates requirements. For the same quarter, data for China and Other Asia in the non-OECD group was also revised upwards by 20 tb/d each backed by positive oil demand growth in these regions. Demand expectations for 2018 was also revised up by an equivalent amount to a growth of 1.63 mb/d to reach 98.7 mb/d with Q4-18 demand expected to reach a historical significance level of 100 mb/d. The revision reflected better-than-expected data from OECD countries for Q1-18 with an increase of 0.13 mb/d on the back of higher industrial activity, colder-than-expected weather conditions and strong mining activity in OECD Americas (US) and OECD Asia Pacific (Japan, South Korea and Australia). On the non-OECD side, the other Asia region saw a demand upgrade of 30 tb/d for Q1-18 reflecting better-than-expected demand from industrial and transportation sectors. Downward adjustments were made in demand growth figures for the Middle East region by 30 tb/d for Q1-18 highlighting lower-than-expected regional oil demand developments. In the US, gasoline demand was reportedly up in January-18 after a two month slump based on latest available figures backed by higher mileage. The increase in diesel demand was even higher by 0.6 mb/d or 16.2 percent y-o-y on the back of higher demand in transportation and industrial sectors coupled with colder weather in large parts of the coun-

try. Preliminary data for February-18 and March-18 also showed a continued trend of increasing oil demand in the US, although at a slightly lower pace supported by road transportation and industrial fuels segments.

World oil supply

According to preliminary data, global oil supply increased by 0.18 mb/d m-o-m to reach 98.15 mb/d in March-18 (including OPEC NGLs) as a result of higher non-OPEC oil supply to the tune of 0.38 mb/d to average 66.2 mb/d. In terms of individual producers, US, Norway, UK, Bahrain, Brazil, Latin America, Russia and China increased production during the month that was partially offset by decline in production in Colombia, Oman and Kazakhstan.

Non-OPEC oil supply estimates for 2017 was revised upwards by 0.03 mb/d to an average of 57.9 mb/d indicating a growth of 0.9 mb/d led by revisions in historical production data for Canada to show a growth of 0.9 mb/d for the full year. Non-OPEC supply growth figures for 2018 were also revised upwards by 0.08 mb/d to a growth of 1.71 mb/d to reach an average of 59.61 mb/d led by higher-than-expected supply from Russia and the US during Q1-18. Revisions to supply estimates included Canada (+51 tb/d), the US (+36 tb/d), Malaysia (+28 tb/d), Brunei (+20 tb/d), Russia (+19 tb/d) and China (-35 tb/d). Non-OPEC supply during March-18 witnessed a m-o-m growth of 0.38 mb/d, based on preliminary numbers, to average at 59.74 mb/d. The month saw higher production in all the regions except in Other Asia and Russia. The higher supply estimates for Canada was due to the starting and ramping of several new projects that will also be reflected in the coming months, although Q2-18 will see heavy maintenance activity. Brazil is also expected to raise production in 2018 by around 0.21 mb/d led by installation of eight new FPSOs this year.

Al-Tijari announces winner of Al-Najma weekly prize program

KUWAIT: Commercial Bank of Kuwait announced the winner of the first weekly draw of Al-Najma prize given account for KD 5,000, where Ahmad Saud Al-Fuzair was announced as the lucky winner. The draw was conducted in the presence of Ministry of Commerce and Industry representative Latifa AlJea'an. Al-Najma Account was recently revamped by adding several benefits to the prize program through which now the account provides its customers the chance to win the biggest annual cash prize offered by a bank in Kuwait and over the globe as much as one and a half million Kuwaiti dinar (KD 1,500,000) so that customers' dreams can easily turn to reality.

The bank stated that the account prizes this year is featured by the highest cash prize and diversity of prizes throughout the year clarifying that Al-Najma Account will offer weekly prize of KD 5,000 and monthly prize of KD 20,000 and a semi-annual prize of KD 500,000 for which the draw will be held on 1st July 2018 in addition to the grand prize (the biggest prize in the world) of KD 1,500,000 for which the draw will be held in January 2019. Al-Najma Account can be opened by depositing KD 100, and customer should maintain a minimum amount of KD 500 to be eligible to enter all draws on Al-Najma Account prizes. As for the chances of winning, the more balance a customer maintains in Al-Najma Account, the more chances the account holder will get to win, where each KD 25 will give the customer one chance to win, the account also offers additional benefits like the ATM card, a credit card against customer's account and all CBK banking services that customer can enjoy.

Now CBK existing customers can open Al-Najma Account through Al-Tijari Online and enter all draws without visiting the Bank branch. However, CBK non-customers can submit account opening application via the Bank's website where the Bank's Sales Unit will call them to arrange visit to the customers to complete the account opening formalities. Customers can obtain further information on Al-Najma Account by either calling the Service Center on 1888225 or by visiting the Bank's website www.CBK.com and they can also visit their nearest CBK branch where the Bank staff will be ready to serve them and respond to their queries. It is known that all details & information related to the latest offers & services launched by the Bank is also available on the Bank's social sites.

51,062 jobs were announced on Bayt.com during Q1 2018

KUWAIT: Between January and March of 2018, over 51,000 new job opportunities were announced on Bayt.com - the Middle East's largest job site - indicating a positive state for the region's job market. In fact, a 58 percent increase in job announcements on Bayt.com has been recorded in comparison to the first quarter of 2017.

The surge in job postings online reflects an overall increase in the region's hiring activities. In February 2018, the Middle East's Job Index Survey revealed that 9 in 10 companies are planning to hire

this year. The job Index score for 2018 was also 12 points higher than what it was in 2017, showing growth for hiring and job availability in the region.

"There are many career opportunities in the Middle East region, and we are glad to be able to bring more and more of these opportunities online on Bayt.com so that they can be easily accessed," said Suhail Masri, VP of Employer Solutions, Bayt.com. "We have started 2018 with an intensified effort to ensure that our millions of job seekers are presented with diverse and new career options, and that the hundreds of thousands of companies and organizations who partner with us for their hiring needs have access to unlimited choice of candidates."

Launched back in 2000, Bayt.com now leads the region's online hiring activities with a database of nearly 32 million job seekers and a daily job bank of more than 10,000 opportunities. One in two people who are part of the online labor force are now signed up on Bayt.com. The job site also records

millions of CV searches by companies who search for CVs and contact candidates for hiring directly.

In an effort to increase career opportunities online even further, Bayt.com just announced the launch of Job slots: an annual job posting tool that allows companies, organizations, and governments to post a job and replace it as many times as they need. This solution is designed to increase job posting activities and to make more opportunities available to the region's job seekers.

On the launch of job slots, Masri adds: "Rolling out job slots was a very mission-driven decision for us. We are telling companies that they can now post a job and then replace it with other job announcements as often as they need for the full year. Basically, instead of making one or two job postings, employers can own a job slot and post 5, 10, 20, or as many jobs as they have vacant. This has already increased online job availability and we are looking forward to how it unfolds in the upcoming months of 2018."

EXCHANGE RATES

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

CURRENCY	BUY Europe	SELL
British Pound	0.422579	0.430079
Czech Korune	0.006616	0.015916
Danish Krone	0.045665	0.050665
Euro	0.364898	0.372398
Georgian Lari	0.136341	0.136341
Hungarian 0.001101	0.001291	
Norwegian Krone	0.034561	0.039761
Romanian Leu	0.062481	0.079331
Russian ruble	0.004759	0.004759
Slovakia	0.008925	0.018925
Slovenia	0.031389	0.036389
Swiss Franc	0.305475	0.316475
Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.225121	0.237121
New Zealand Dollar	0.214583	0.224083
America		
Canadian Dollar	0.232801	0.241801
US Dollars	0.296550	0.300950
US Dollars Mint	0.297050	0.300950
Asia		
Bangladesh Taka	0.003189	0.003773
Chinese Yuan	0.046339	0.049839
Hong Kong Dollar	0.036210	0.038960

Indian Rupee	0.004128	0.004769
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000017	0.000023
Japanese Yen	0.002717	0.002897
Korean Won	0.000269	0.000284
Malaysian Ringgit	0.073406	0.079406
Nepalese Rupee	0.002999	0.003169
Pakistan Rupee	0.002500	0.002790
Philippine Peso	0.005687	0.005987
Singapore Dollar	0.223403	0.233403
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001605	0.002185
Taiwan	0.010088	0.010268
Thai Baht	0.009281	0.009831

Bahraini Dinar	0.790849	0.799349
Egyptian Pound	0.014229	0.019947
Iranian Rial	0.000083	0.000084
Iraqi Dinar	0.000205	0.000265
Jordanian Dinar	0.419429	0.428429
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000149	0.000249
Moroccan Dirhams	0.023288	0.047288
Omani Riyal	0.774591	0.780271
Qatar Riyal	0.078291	0.083231
Saudi Riyal	0.079087	0.080387
Syrian Pound	0.001273	0.001493
Tunisian Dinar	0.121295	0.129295
Turkish Lira	0.068537	0.078837
UAE Dirhams	0.080430	0.082130
Yemeni Riyal	0.000977	0.001057

Dollarco Exchange Co. Ltd

Rate for Transfer	Selling Rate
US Dollar	300.300
Canadian Dollar	233.720
Sterling Pound	429.475
Euro	371.855
Swiss Frank	291.805
Bahrain Dinar	798.610
UAE Dirhams	82.165
Qatari Riyals	83.390
Saudi Riyals	80.975
Jordanian Dinar	424.830
Egyptian Pound	17.014
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.930
Indian Rupees	4.601
Pakistani Rupees	2.599
Bangladesh Taka	3.603
Philippines Peso	5.787
Cyprus pound	17.875
Japanese Yen	3.800
Syrian Pound	1.585
Nepalese Rupees	2.876
Malaysian Ringgit	78.295
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	48.335
Thai Bhat	10.635
Turkish Lira	75.650

Business



AlMulla Motors Launches Its Mobile Service Solution



KUWAIT: In line with its policy of expanding its services and offering only the best to its clients, Al Mulla Motors has recently launched the mobile service solution to be always closer to the clients.

Al Mulla is a retail oriented organization, that listens to each customer's voice and takes immediate measures to enhance their aftersales experience and the mobile service solution is one of them.

Al Mulla promotes the best practices from the Auto industry and have called this project as "go to approach" which is a smart move rather the traditional way of receiving customers at their service centers. This is also an alternative option for customers to avoid driving in this heavy traffic to reach their facility for

servicing by taking online appointment and sit at their office or home with peace of mind.

Within the growing number of independent mobile workshop units in the market Al Mulla motors is committed to take this new opportunity to reach their valuable customers, identify their requirements and offer the services at their door step without any additional cost. Al Mulla ensures convenient, economical and reliable services to their Mitsubishi customers by using their state-of-the-art mobile vehicle and professionally trained technicians. They aim to enhance their customers overall experience by promoting unique features such as real time tracking of vehicle, automated vehicle repair status notification,

online booking, online payment and much more, which itself is a highest benchmark.

Their services includes preventive maintenance, brake repair, tire changing and balancing, battery replacement, electrical repairs, washing, nitrogen gas filling, vehicle health check, brake pads replacement, changing transmission fluids (A/T), battery replacement, normal car wash etc. where they make it hard for anyone in the market to compete with the service they offer.

Their services are very convenient for customers as they can select their most convenient date and time using online appointment system where they have a very dedicated mobile development team help to run

the operation smoothly and efficiently.

The operation is usually linked with the appointment system however Al Mulla made it even more convenient to customers as they also provide on call services depending on the mobile units availability. This service is considered to be a revolution in the service industry; all what the client has to do is to book online at: www.almullamotors.com or call their agents at 22055967 or 22055888

Al Mulla has introduced 8 Mobile units which are placed in Salmiya, Hawally, Shuwaikh, Kuwait City, Jahra and Ahmadi covering the entire region and operates 6 days a week from 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. and are ready to offer services on Friday's.



Business

URC's operating profit increases by 23% to KD 87 million in 2017

Company achieves balanced financial results, substantial project milestones

KUWAIT: United Real Estate Company (URC), one of Kuwait's leading real estate development companies, announced the holding of its General Assembly Meeting for the fiscal year ending December 31st 2017.

Tariq Mohammed AbdulSalam, Chairman of URC, discussed significant financial highlights from the annual report for the year ended December 31, 2017, which provided an overview of the company's major achievements over the past year. The report demonstrated the company's resilience in adapting to different economic conditions and challenges to achieve both balanced financial results and substantial project milestones.

URC recorded a significant growth in revenues in 2017 where total revenues increased by 23 percent to KD 87 million, compared to KD 71 million during the previous year. Total assets also increased by 5.24 percent to reach KD 602 million, as compared to KD 572 million in 2016. Profit stood at KD 2.2 million in 2017. Additionally, the company recorded a net operating profit of KD 21 million during 2017, similar to that recorded during 2016.

AbdulSalam said, "URC has sustained its growth despite external pressures, demonstrating a consistent and flexible business

model. All factors are indicative of the effectiveness of URC's strategy, which seeks to balance the sources of income and the company's diversified assets in the Middle East and North Africa."

Furthermore, AbdulSalam commented that in 2017, the Board of Directors made a com-



Total assets increases to KD 602 million

mitment to take serious and effective measures to ensure the company's adherence to the highest level of corporate governance and internal control, in line with URC's nature of business as a leading company in the real estate market. This was achieved last year, and will continue to be adhered to in 2018.

AbdulSalam then provided an overview on

the progress of URC's ongoing projects that are geographically distributed across Kuwait and the MENA region, and range from retail complexes, hotels and residential properties, to high-rise office buildings and mixed-use developments. On the subject of URC's projects, AbdulSalam commented that the company achieved significant milestones on a project level. This includes Phase 2 of "Assoufid", URC's inaugural project in Morocco. The development covers more than two million square meters, where the second phase will consist of a five-star hotel and a residential component, comprising villas and high-end apartments, in addition to several facilities and services.

In Kuwait, the company made significant progress in "Hessah Towers", URC's first residential offering in the prestigious Hessah Al-Mubarak District, one of the largest ongoing developments in the country. Launched last month,

Hessah Towers covers a total built-up area of 63,000 square meters and is comprised two towers, consisting of a range of high end apartments, duplexes and townhouses, with panoramic views of the Arabian Gulf and Kuwait City. This new landmark will also include a number of facilities such as a health club, gymnasium, children's recreational areas,



private gardens for residents, a swimming pool and multi-story parking. Ahmed Kasem, Acting Chief Executive Officer of URC, said: "The substantial rise in revenues in 2017 and the successful execution of the company's portfolio of assets reflects URC's sound business plan and reliability of its long term vision."

Kasem added that the Board of Directors and the Executive Management are committed

to further develop and support the company's subsidiaries, United Building Company (UBC), United Facilities Management Company (UFM) and United International Project Management Company (UIPM). In 2017, we witnessed remarkable progress on this front, clearly reflected in the increase in revenues of contracting and services by 72 percent and the total profit increased by 79 percent."

Flydubai marks Africa expansion with Kinshasa inaugural



KUWAIT: Dubai-based flydubai's inaugural flight touched down yesterday at N'djili Airport (Kinshasa International Airport - FIH). Flydubai will operate daily flights to N'djili Airport with an en route stop in Entebbe.

Flydubai is the first national carrier for the UAE to create direct air links to the Congolese capital, Kinshasa and with the start of the service sees its comprehensive network in Africa grow to 13 destinations in 10 countries.

With the start of flights to Kinshasa another gateway is opened up for passengers from the GCC, Russia and the Indian Subcontinent into Central Africa. Passengers from Kinshasa have access to more than 90 destinations on the flydubai network and through its codeshare partnership with Emirates can connect easily and conveniently to Emirates' destinations spanning six continents in over 80 countries.

The inaugural flight touched down at 14:20 (local time) and on board was a delegation led by Sudhir Sreedharan, Senior Vice President, Commercial Operations (UAE, GCC, Indian Subcontinent & Africa) for flydubai. The delegation was met on arrival by Tshumba Pmunga Jean, Director General, Civil Aviation Authority, Kufula Makila Rex, Cabinet Director, Minister of Transport and Constant Bopima Moelo, Cabinet Director, Minister of Tourism.

Ghaith Al-Ghaith, Chief Executive Officer of flydubai, said on the launch of flights to Kinshasa: "As one of the largest and most populous cities in Africa, Kinshasa, is a key hub for travel and trade. Africa is one of the UAE's emerging trade partners and with the opening of this new route to one of the busiest airports in the Democratic Republic of the Congo there will be further opportunities to strengthen commercial ties

across a neighboring continent with vast natural resources." The fast-growing economies of the countries of Africa are important trading markets for the UAE and their increasing prosperity will ensure that their contribution of visitor numbers to Dubai will similarly grow strongly.

Sreedharan, Senior Vice President, Commercial Operations (UAE, GCC, Indian Subcontinent and Africa) at flydubai, who led the inaugural delegation, added: "Africa has been an important market for flydubai since the airline's launch in 2009. We continue to see strong demand for direct airlinks and last year flydubai contributed 13 percent of the total growth at Dubai Airports for the African market. I am pleased to see our network in Africa grow to 13 destinations in 10 countries with the launch today of flights to Kinshasa. With the start of the daily service from Dubai's aviation hub to one of the largest countries in Africa passengers will have access to increased connectivity."

All flights to and from Kinshasa will offer travellers flydubai's onboard experience, whether opting for priority services and more space and privacy in Business Class, or enjoying flexibility and convenience as a passenger in Economy Class. flydubai will codeshare this route with Emirates, offering all passengers the benefits of this partnership, including travel on a single ticket and increased connectivity with more choice to travel and access to Emirates' destinations spanning six continents in over 80 countries.

In under 10 years, flydubai has grown an extensive network across Africa and currently offers flights to Addis Ababa, Alexandria, Asmara, Djibouti, Entebbe, Hargeisa, Juba, Khartoum and Port Sudan as well as Dar es Salaam, Kilimanjaro and Zanzibar.

Burgan Bank announces winners of Yawmi account draw

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

The lucky winners are:
1. Martin Santan Dias
2. Hasina Mohammad Omar Mohammad
3. Minor/ Hamaad Ahmad Abduljabar Abduljalal

4. Sabeeha Mohammad Ali Rostom
5. Basem Hasan Ahmad Alnassar

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



account holder will be qualified for both the quarterly and daily draws.

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

Lufthansa Group presents new seat for Airbus A320 Family aircraft

KUWAIT: With the start of the planned Airbus A320 Family aircraft deliveries starting in 2019, Lufthansa Group customers will be offered new seats on short- and medium-haul routes.

The new, ergonomic pressure distribution and fully-structured seat upholstery will allow customers to have an ever more comfortable feeling on board.

The newly, innovated literature pocket has been horizontally designed, leaving a slimmer backrest, which allows guests to enjoy more personal freedom. In addition, travel becomes more comfortable not only during the flight, but also while the aircraft is taxiing, during take-off and landing. Previously, guests were seated at a 12 degree inclination during the three phases mentioned above, whereas now they will be able to rest comfortably with their backrest at 20 degrees during the whole flight. Business Class guests can also set the backrest to 26 degrees during cruising altitude. Paul Estoppey, Head of Product Cabin Lufthansa Group Hub Airlines says: "A lot of customer feedback went into designing the seat and we are pleased to

have already received a lot of positive feedback on the implemented features over the course of the project."

For the first time, the network airlines Lufthansa, SWISS and Austrian Airlines are jointly introducing standardized seats for a harmonised, comfortable travel experience. In addition to the advantages for customers, the focus of development was also aimed at reducing weight and maintenance costs. After several preliminary talks, customer tests and quality audits, the Italian manufacturer Geven clearly won the contract for the production of the seats.

"Geven has an excellent reputation in the industry, which we can fully confirm," Estoppey emphasizes. "The cooperation has been excellent from day one and we, as the Lufthansa Group, have always benefited from Geven's great expertise and creative support for the further development of the seat."

A320 fleet standardized

The Airbus A320 of the Lufthansa Group is to be configured and standardized moving for-



ward in such a way that aircraft can be converted with little effort within a short time should the aircraft be transferred between the airlines of the Lufthansa Group. This will enable the Lufthansa Group to react more quickly and flexibly to current developments and easily and efficiently move around aircraft and capacity across the airlines and hubs of the Group. Costs for conversion and downtime can also be significantly reduced. In addition, the standardization will result in further synergies in the procurement of aircraft and components. The airline brands are protected by a different brand image.

Non-stop offers & more from Nissan Al-Babtain

KUWAIT: Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al-Babtain Company (AABC), the authorized dealer of Nissan vehicles in Kuwait, is excited to announce that the 2018 edition of Nissan vehicles are on offer for incredibly affordable prices. In addition, a wide range of advantages on the popular range of Nissan models are provided to meet the customers' needs and reward them with an exceptional driving experience.

Customers can now own the 2018 Nissan KICKS or Nissan X-Trail that comes with a service package and free comprehensive

Insurance for a year and free registration plus 3rd party insurance. Additionally, all Nissan vehicles comes with a 5 year unlimited factory warranty. The Nissan ALTIMA is now on offer starting from KD 5,300 backed by a service package, free registration and 3rd party insurance. The 4-Door Sports car, Nissan Maxima can now be purchased for a competitive fare starting from KD 7,999 which comes with a package deal which consists of free comprehensive insurance, free registration and 3rd party insurance. The Hero of all Terrain - Nissan Patrol 2018, is on offer with a luxury package which consists of free comprehensive insurance, window tinting, and full body protection in addition to free registration and 3rd party insurance.

Nissan Al-Babtain offer excellence through its exceptional breed of innovative vehicles and continues to surprise its customers with favorable deals throughout the year. All are welcome to benefit from the new offers that are available



till end of April and visit Nissan Al-Babtain showrooms located in Al-Rai and Al-Ahmadi area to enjoy a complimentary test drive and purchase your new favorite vehicle!

Samsung launches its Galaxy Studio in Avenues Mall in Kuwait

KUWAIT: Samsung Gulf Electronics has announced the opening of its third Galaxy Studio in Kuwait. Located at the Avenues Mall, Kuwait's largest shopping mall and a premier destination in the region, the Galaxy Studio is designed to bring consumers closer to the Samsung Galaxy Ecosystem of products than ever before through four exciting interactive zones. These include hands-on experience table, as well as a zone to experience Bixby Translate function and super slow motion zones among many others.

"We continue to deliver an unmatched product experience to our valued customers in Kuwait. Today, we are launching a brand new challenge through our Galaxy Studio, where we are giving people the opportunity to put some of our latest devices through their paces to test their capabilities which not only add-value to their lives, but also change the way they communicate," said Tarek Sabbagh, Head of IT and Mobile Division at Samsung Gulf Electronics. "If you haven't had a chance to see the Galaxy S9 & S9+, DEX and other Samsung Galaxy devices in action then get down to the Avenues Mall and see all that we have in store for you."



Visitors will experience the entire portfolio of the Samsung Galaxy ecosystem at the interactive experience solution: here they can freely explore the all-new Galaxy S9 and Galaxy S9+ in a unique way. The hands on table will host a variety of devices including the new Galaxy S series, Galaxy Note 8, and DeX Pad amongst many others. Consumers will also be given a chance to win incredible prizes. Any visitor who finishes two zones out of four will be entered into a draw for a chance to win Samsung Products and instant giveaways. Other unique Samsung zones include the AR emoji zone, where customers can create a personalized emoji using the

Galaxy S9 or Galaxy S9+. They will also have the option of sharing their AR emoji across their social media channels. Visitors can also create their own GIFs in super slow-mo by incorporating loops, rewinds and more.

In addition to this, Samsung enthusiasts are invited to explore the slow-motion function of the Galaxy S9 and Galaxy S9+. Here they can interact with props to create slow motion videos that represent them in an unusual or exciting new way. The Galaxy Premium Studio is located in Dome 2 at the Avenues Mall in Kuwait City. Visitors from across the nation and beyond can come and see all that is on offer between April 12 and April 25 from 10am.

Infiniti Al-Babtain unveils all-new Crossover QX30 2018 in Kuwait

QX30 bridges gap between premium compact rivals and larger crossover models



KUWAIT: Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al-Babtain Co (AABC), the sole authorized dealer of Infiniti vehicles in the State of Kuwait, announced the arrival of Infiniti QX30 to Kuwait. The all-new Infiniti QX30 premium active crossover boasts a purposeful appearance that makes a bold visual statement - and joins the Q30 as part of Infiniti's new premium compact model line-up.

Infiniti is targeting a new generation of premium buyers in Kuwait with the new QX30. The premium crossover segment is currently among the fastest-expanding markets globally. QX30 design expresses the 'self' of the driver rather than his/her 'status', through new category-defying concepts.

The QX30 will hold a unique position in the segment, bridging the gap between premium compact rivals and larger crossover models. Its crossover-style versatility extends from unique design appeal and a wide range of comfort, convenience, safety and dynamic features, including Intelligent All-wheel Drive. Its elevated ride height over the Q30 and high-stability drivetrain will give confidence to drivers.

The QX30 is characterized by dramatic curves and turbulent, sculpted character lines that make an emotional statement, evolving them into new dynamic shapes for a more purposeful appearance. The lines of the QX30 flow up the double-wave bonnet, over the fenders, across the body line and into the strong shoulders of the car. The overall effect is designed to look stretched over bone and muscle, rather than the straight, 'mechanical' lines seen on rival models. Infiniti's signature C-pillar design forges a dynamic crescent shape that emphasizes motion, even when stationary.

Versatility

The elevated dimensions make for a confident and relaxing drive, while ascribing to the car's versatile character. An overall height of 1,530mm (with standard roof rails) helps improve forward visibility over its rivals, aided by a slim A-pillar design, while the elevated ride allows for a higher hip point (1,324mm), improving ease of ingress and egress.

Other exterior details include newly-designed front and rear bumpers and grained side sills for a rugged look, as well as bodywork finished with satin chrome-plated inserts for a premium and high quality metallic finish. The bold approach Infiniti has taken to design continues inside the QX30, which challenges traditional standards of symmetry with its expressive, modern and dynamic interior.

The most premium materials and processes available have been selected by Infiniti designers in order to create a modern-looking and luxurious cabin. A custom-designed QX30 trim delivers a personalized, self-expressive interior design. The standard interior is finished in high quality black cloth, while optional black or beige leather delivers an even more premium finish.

Refinement and comfort is also a core appeal of the QX30's interior. The seat backs have been carefully engineered to match the curvature of the spine, providing consistent spinal support by more equally distributing load across the seat to minimize pressure on back muscles. The QX30 seat provides greater levels of support and comfort than rivals, reducing driver fatigue on longer journeys.

Cabin comfort

The QX30's supreme interior quietness adds to cabin comfort, with some of the lowest noise, vibration and harshness (NVH) levels in the premium compact segment. The extensive application of sound-absorbent materials reduces the intrusion of wind, road and unwanted engine noise into the cabin. Quietness in the cabin is further aided by Active Noise Cancellation, which emits sound waves from the door speakers to negate any instances of booming noise. In addition, closed sections of the high-rigidity body structure protect the QX30 from any negative noise and vibration generated by broken or inconsistent road surfaces.

The QX30 is engineered to deliver a confidence-inspiring, dynamic driving experience, aided by Intelligent All-wheel Drive. The QX30's chassis has been adapted with its own unique settings for a comfortable ride and confident handling in spite of its elevated ride height and ground clearance. While the slightly firmer suspension helps to counteract the dynamic effects of a higher centre of gravity, the modifications to the chassis enable QX30 to remain comfortable at all speeds and over a variety of road surfaces.

The QX30 comes equipped with an Intelligent All-wheel Drive system. The drivetrain is able to send up to 50 percent of the engine's power and torque to the rear axle to maintain traction on slippery surfaces and in inclement weather, enhancing a feeling of control and confidence when driving.

Another standard feature is the availability of a seven-speed dual-clutch transmission system. The dual-clutch

intelligently pre-selects gears so the next shift is always ready to go, while manual mode lets the driver control gear changes when desired. Delivering seamless acceleration at any speed and in any gear, the application of torque is almost uninterrupted during gear changes, reducing lurching while in motion and between shifts.

Safety features

For safe driving experience, the QX30 is backed up with a range of active safety and hazard avoidance technologies that enhance the driving experience and provide maximum safety to all occupants. An Around View Monitor with moving object detection and automatic parking assistance makes the QX30 the easiest car to park in its segment. Infiniti's trademark InTouch infotainment system, first introduced on the pioneering Q50, has been evolved and upgraded for the QX30 for a highly intuitive finger touch and swipe control through a seven-inch touch-screen HMI (human machine interface). Infiniti Voice Recognition interacts with the InTouch infotainment system to control audio and navigation commands.

In addition to its striking appearance, the QX30 offers an elevated ride height, confidence-inspiring handling, and a versatile attitude, underpinned by an Intelligent All-wheel Drive system. As a result, the vehicle is able to take on urban, suburban and winding rural roads in all driving conditions.

Infiniti Al-Babtain encourages its customers to discover the all-new QX30 2018 features by visiting Infiniti showroom in Al-Rai. The showroom opens daily except Fridays.



Technology

Kaspersky Lab presents META cybersecurity trends

‘Operation Parliament’, Polys unveiled • Healthcare facing cyber threats



By Islam Al-Sharaa

ISTANBUL: On April 11-14, Kaspersky Lab held its annual Cyber Security Weekend for the Middle East, Turkey and Africa (META) in Istanbul to explore the evolution of the threat landscape both – globally and in the region, and find out which approaches businesses need to take in order to survive. Kaspersky Lab’s Global Research & Analysis Team (GReAT) experts and invited experts discussed various topics during the event, including IoT security, blockchain technology and the rise of targeted attacks as well as threats aimed at medical infrastructure.

During the event, statistics from the Kaspersky Security Network for the first quarter of 2018 were revealed and showed an overall increase in local threats infections (malware spread in local networks, by USBs, CDs, DVDs) with Kenya taking the first place with 61.8 percent of its users infected, followed by 58.6 percent in Nigeria, 50.8 percent in Oman, and 55.6 percent in both Egypt and Lebanon. Turkey reported the lowest number of local threat infections with 46.2 percent.

The statistics for the same period of time also showed a noticeable overall increase in web threats with 30.2 percent of users affected by malware in Saudi Arabia, 28.8 percent in both Egypt and Oman followed by 27.4 percent in the UAE. On the other hand, South Africa had the lowest number of affected users in the META region (48.8 percent for local and 19.6 percent for web threats).

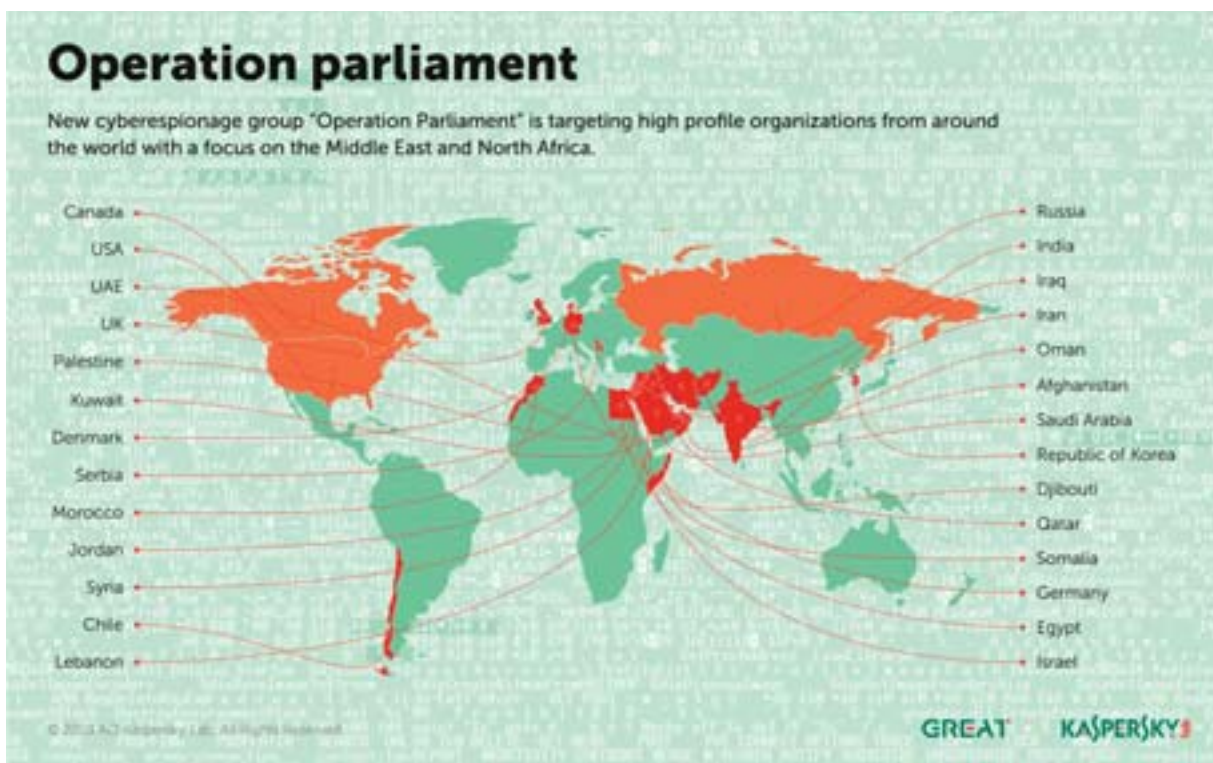
“We have seen an 8.5 percent increase in ransomware attacks in the META region in Q1 of 2018 compared to Q1 of last year, this number is not surprising, judging by the infamous success of major ransomware attacks last year. We do expect such attacks to grow and evolve in complexity and sophistication. This highlights the importance of proper security solutions backed with continuous security training to raise awareness on the dangers of such attacks,” said Mohamad Amin Hasbini, Senior Security Researcher, Global Research & Analysis Team, Kaspersky Lab.

A panel of experts from Kaspersky Lab and specially invited guests from Turkey and UAE spoke about how the blockchain affects the way people live and work nowadays. Nassar Al-Achkar, CEO of HyperChain said: “I’m honored to take part in this event and talk about blockchain. It’s important to constantly educate people on the uses of this technology as I believe it is yet another step towards a brighter more efficient future. I also salute Kaspersky Lab for their efforts in studying this technology and assessing its cyber risks.”

The discussion also briefly touched on Kaspersky Lab’s announcement about the Polys voting system which is based around blockchain technology. With organizations facing a wide range of cyberthreats that come from the outside as well as from the inside, they should have a holistic approach to cybersecurity that unites an effective IT security solution, employee education and security policies understood and followed by employees. Kaspersky Lab’s recently launched Threat Management and Defense solution gives businesses the opportunity to adopt a strategic approach to detecting complex attacks across the corporate IT infrastructure and successfully gain control and visibility of their security environment by mitigating risk in today’s digital world.

Cyberespionage campaign

During Kaspersky Lab’s Cyber Security Weekend, a new cyberespionage campaign was announced: “Operation Parliament” is targeting high profile organizations from around the world with a focus on the Middle East and North Africa. The attacks have been active since 2017 and have targeted top legislative, executive and judicial powers, including but not limited to governmental and large private entities from the region, including the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Palestine, Egypt, Kuwait, Qatar, Iraq, Lebanon, Oman, Djibouti and Somalia – all together company experts detected victims in 27 countries.



and judicial powers, including but not limited to governmental and large private entities from the region, including the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Palestine, Egypt, Kuwait, Qatar, Iraq, Lebanon, Oman, Djibouti and Somalia – all together company experts detected victims in 27 countries.

Kaspersky Lab experts believe that “Operation Parliament” represents a new geopolitically motivated threat actor that is highly active and skilled. Attackers are also believed to have access to an elaborate database of contacts for sensitive organizations and personnel worldwide, especially of non-trained staff. Victims of the attacks include government entities, political figures, military and intelligence agencies, media outlets, research centers, Olympic foundations and large private companies.

Based on the findings, the attackers infiltrated their victims using malware that provides them with a remote cmd/powershell terminal that enables them to execute any scripts/commands and receive the result through http requests. The attacks have taken great care to stay under the radar and have used techniques to verify victims devices before infiltrating them. Kaspersky Lab products successfully detect and block attacks conducted using these techniques.

“Operation Parliament is another symptom of the continuously developing tensions in the Middle East and North Africa. We are witnessing higher sophistication and smarter techniques used by attackers and it doesn’t look like they will stop or slow down anytime soon” Said Mohamad Amin Hasbini, Senior Security Researcher, Global Research & Analysis Team at Kaspersky Lab. “The type of people and organizations targeted in this attack campaign should elevate their levels of cyber maturity in order to mitigate such attacks in the future” he added.

In order to prevent falling victim to such an attack, Kaspersky Lab researchers advises organizations to exert special attention and extra measures, including: Train staff to be able to distinguish spearphishing emails or a phishing link from legitimate emails and links.

Use not only proven corporate-grade endpoint security

solution but also a combination of specialized protection against advanced threats, such as Threat Management and Defense Solution, which is capable of catching attacks by analyzing network anomalies.

Follow strict rules to avoid data leaks and deploy techniques to prevent insider threats.

Blockchain voting

Online voting appeals to many aspects of modern society – such as geographically spread communities, or progressive universities wanting to hear their students’ voices. It also appeals to global NGOs, and municipalities looking for citizen involvement in neighborhood and city-wide decision making. However, the risks of making critical choices online are also high, with large-scale online voting opening up vast opportunities for cybercriminals to fix the results.

An innovation from the Kaspersky Lab Business Incubator was announced during Kaspersky Lab’s Cyber Security Weekend. It offers a possible solution: A customizable online voting platform for non-commercial organizations, businesses and communities, which uses blockchain technology and is secured with transparent crypto algorithms.

In the modern efficiency-driven, mobile world, various limitations of offline voting have become apparent: it’s expensive, time-consuming and often inaccessible - or at least challenging - for people who aren’t physically present to cast a vote. Online voting can help overcome these challenges but this brings several uncertainties of its own: how can we secure the process? How can we make sure that our votes aren’t changed or altered by an external or internal party?

As part of a research project focused on exploring the potential implementations of innovative technologies such as blockchain, Kaspersky Lab Business Incubator has fostered a talented team of developers who have worked on an experimental project called Polys. This has resulted in a new commercial solution, which aims to provide anyone with the ability to conduct secure, anonymous and scalable online voting - with results that cannot be altered by participants or organizers.

Vartan Minasyan, Head of Investment and Innovation at Kaspersky Lab, comments: “In our Kaspersky Lab Business Incubator we’re supporting both internal and external teams in developing bright ideas and technologies, which can be implemented in various areas where safety and security are important. One such area is online voting and, when exploring the possible implementations of blockchain in particular, our team realized that this technology combined with the company’s cybersecurity expertise could solve key problems related to the privacy, transparency and security of online voting. We’re excited that we have been able to create a suitable environment for this internal innovation.”

Polys is based on smart contracts in Ethereum (sometimes referred to as Blockchain 2.0) which allows ballot verification and vote tallies to be performed in a decentralized manner. The main benefit is that, due to blockchain’s decentralized nature, the accuracy of voting execution can be verified by the network’s participants. The whole voting data is stored not on servers, but in information blocks on the computers of all network participants: To erase it, a hacker would have to breach all of the computers and gain access to the individual sets of data.

Blockchain also allows a voter to easily check if their vote has actually been registered correctly and any tampering of votes will automatically become evident. Blockchain transparency makes it easier to monitor votes and complete voting audits by independent parties. It also doesn’t require extra resources or the need for the physical presence of personnel.

In addition, within the Polys voting system, blockchain is encrypted and backed up with mathematical algorithms. These help to ensure anonymity, hide intermediate results and perform calculations on the encrypted data, which is something that can’t be done in other blockchain systems due to its distributed and open nature. By implementing these algorithms in the smart contract environment, using the advantages of blockchain while eliminating its limitations, Polys stands out as a distinctively innovative project.

The source code of Polys will be publicly available – allowing anyone to test, verify and explore the technology behind it. Any blockchain enthusiast, penetration tester or e-voting supporter will soon be able to find it on GitHub. Jutta Steiner, Co-founder of Parity Technologies, comments: “Parity Technologies is excited to be involved with Polys as their platform of choice for such an innovative project. Blockchain is increasingly being implemented by a vast number of industries and we believe that decentralising the voting procedure will ensure a fair process and create a high level of trust in the system.”

Polys is designed to support voting at all levels and for any number of participants. Upon a special project request, the platform can be made fully scalable with capacity for thousands of voters in international corporations, political parties, universities, global communities, NGOs, etc. This implementation can be tailored to specific requirements in terms of authorization, the interface design, and integration with other services. It is available in select regions only; interested parties can learn more about availability and pricing by filling out a contact form on the website.

In addition to the customized platform, there’s also a ready-to-use freemium service that is available for everyone. To arrange a vote, one simply has to go the website, create a poll in the Organizer Panel and fill in the voting information (such as the names of candidates or other participants, along with any extra details). The rest of the work, such as sending emails to voters and counting votes, is carried out by Polys.



Amin Hasbini speaks with Kuwait Times.



Amin Hasbini (right) and Sergey Novikov during the press conference.



Amir Kanaan, Managing Director, META, during the press conference.

Health

Albania's pelicans return to their lagoon 'kingdom'

Down to a proactive policy by Albanian authorities

TIRANA: With feathers on its head that make it look like it is wearing a wig, it does not go unnoticed-the Dalmatian pelican is back with a flourish in the Divjaka Lagoon in western Albania. The expansive site is one of the most important wetlands in the Adriatic basin, key for migratory wildlife and as a breeding area for the large elegant pelican.

But like other spots in Europe, the picturesque lagoon has suffered extensive damage at the hands of man and the Dalmatian pelican came close to deserting it. Now a return in force of the bird, whose wingspan reaches up to three meters, is down to a proactive policy by Albanian authorities, often criticized for being passive on environmental issues. "The king has returned this winter," said Fatos Jolla happily, a 67-year-old fisherman on the lagoon.

'A kingdom'

Since the 1980s, Europe's bird population has declined by several tens of millions, according to ornithologists. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has included the Dalmatian pelican (*Pelecanus crispus*) on its red list as it believes that 80 percent of its breeding sites in Europe have disappeared. At the Divjaka Lagoon, the pelicans had almost completely abandoned their nests, although previously "the Divjaka-Karavasta National Park was considered its kingdom," said its head, Adrian Koci. "From 250 breeding pairs in the 1960s, we arrived at 17 in 2000-2001. "We returned to 52 pairs and 57 births in 2017," he said.

Salvation island

A small island of 22 square kilometers, in the middle of the lagoon, has been crucial to helping lure back the birds. The nesting sites were raised so as not to be threatened by the rising water, barbed wire has been placed to prevent tourists from accessing and hunting was banned in 2016.

A pelican was shot in mid-February, but the hunters were identified and face two to four years in prison. The recovery is fragile and saw a setback recently, Koci said. "The trend was promising until February. But bad weather, snow and wind disturbed the colony. "Some pelicans have even abandoned their nests and eggs," said Koci, who hopes to see the birds return in April.

Urbanization

However, further determined steps are needed to ensure the long term nesting of the birds at the lagoon, he said. There need to be channels created between the lagoon and the sea

"which has not been done for 20 years, to allow the circulation of fresh water and oxygen... and the entry of fish", the basis of the pelicans' diet, Koci added. Nighttime fishermen, who are depleting the fish stock with their nets and electric lamps, should also be tracked down and banned, he suggested. Sajmir Hoxha, coordinator in Albania of Noe, a French conservation association for the protection of biodiversity, said the authorities must tackle in particular rampant development of the coastline. "We fear these major urbanisation projects that go against environmental laws and the natural balances," he said. The Mediterranean Wetlands Alliance, a gathering of some 20 associations from 12 countries for the protection of wetlands, last year voiced concerns over the possible construction of a tourist complex in Divjaka. It cautioned that the planned development could "destroy the natural wealth and biological diversity of the area".

But fears remain

Noting that 70 percent of the Balkan country's wetlands have already been destroyed, ornithologists and environmental activists wrote to Prime Minister Edi Rama asking him to veto the project. It was suspended, but the activists fear that the halt may only be temporary. "It would mean the disappearance of the Dalmatian pelican and other species that make the diversity of this park," warned Koci.—AFP



This picture taken on March 11, 2018, shows curly pelicans hatch eggs in the Karavasta lagoon, part of the Divjake Karavasta National Park. — AFP

Fish oil supplements don't help dry eye disease

TAMPA: Fish oil supplements have long been recommended to people suffering from dry eye disease, a common ailment that affects millions worldwide-but a study out Friday says they don't work. "Omega-3 supplements are no more effective than placebo at alleviating dry eye symptoms," read the findings from a randomized clinical trial involving 535 people and published in the New England Journal of Medicine.

Dry eye disease affects more than 16 million Americans, causing burning, itching, stinging, and impaired vision. Experts estimate that in the United States dry eye costs some \$55 billion per year in lost productivity and medical care, according to background information in the article. Those enrolled in the study had all struggled with moderate to severe dry eye for at least six months.

The subjects were randomly assigned to either a daily dose of an omega-3 supplement or an olive oil placebo, delivered in identical capsules. Neither the patients nor their eye doctors knew which treatment group they were in. After a year, symptoms had "improved substantially in both groups," said the report. A total of 61 percent of people in the omega-3 group and 54 percent of those in the control group achieved at least a 10-point improved,

but the difference between groups was not statistically significant. "We were surprised that the omega-3 supplements had no beneficial effect," said study co-author Vatinée Bunya, an assistant professor of ophthalmology at Perelman School of Medicine at University of Pennsylvania. "The results are significant and may change the way a lot of ophthalmologists and optometrists treat their patients."

According to Matthew Gorski, an ophthalmologist at Northwell Health in New York, doctors interested in dry eye and the effectiveness of fish oil supplements have "eagerly awaited results of clinical trials with the hope that it would potentially improve one's quality of life." Gorski, who was not involved in the research, said "further studies should be performed to confirm this finding." —AFP

CLINIC
PAGE



Kuwait Times
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Global Medical Center Welcomes Dr. Marzouq Al-Bader Consultant vascular and general surgery

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What's On

Landmark Group announces expansion plans for Oasis Mall

Landmark Group, one of the largest retail and hospitality conglomerates in the Middle East, Africa and India, is expanding its shopping mall footprint across four GCC countries under its Oasis Mall brand. Oasis Mall, the leading neighborhood shopping destination in the region, will open four new malls in strategic locations in the UAE, Oman & Bahrain.

Supported by Landmark Group's vast history of creating innovative businesses, and utilizing its rich experience and expertise, the upcoming malls will be located in vibrant communities to deliver an enjoyable experience to customers in both urban centers as well as satellite cities. Set to be completed in 2019, the expansion will increase Oasis Mall's presence to 11 mall destinations across existing territories with a total GLA of over 2.6 million square feet of retail space within the malls' portfolio of over 500 stores.

Mark Ruffley, Business Head - Oasis Malls, said: "We pride ourselves on our in-depth

understanding of the GCC retail landscape and our ability to meet changing customer needs with speed and simplicity. With the new neighborhood destinations, we aim to offer shoppers and retailers an engaging retail experience that is fun, inviting, affordable and approachable, through a vibrant mix of retail, dining and entertainment for the entire family." Recent statistics from Frank Knight, a global real estate consultancy firm, reveal that the existing malls in the UAE, combined with the ones that are in the pipeline, will together account for ten million square meters of retail space by 2020, promising a bright future for malls.

In the UAE, Oasis Mall is set to open its first destination in Sharjah in early 2019, which will also host the Emirate's first flagship Centrepoint store, and the first Cinepolis Cinema in the UAE. The upcoming 61,000 square meter, multi-storey destination will host several of Landmark Group's other home-grown brands as well,

including, Home Centre, Max, Fun City, Emax and Shoexpress, as well as other well-known brands including Carrefour market, Okaidi, Vincci, Parfois, Nabeel Perfumes and more.

Outside the UAE, three new destinations will be launched -one in Bahrain and two in Oman. In Oman, following the tremendous response for Oasis Mall in Khuwair district of Muscat, new destinations will open in Sohar and Salalah by Q4 2018. The new mall in Bahrain will be home to over 80 shops including Landmark's flagship stores Centrepoint, Homebox, Fun City, Max, a platinum standard Fitness First, Cineco Cinemas, Carrefour market and a host of over 20 food outlets including Hard Rock Cafe opening in Q3 2018 in Juffair.

Ruffley added: "The new malls will feature designs, materials and finishes that have been inspired by nature, and driven by functionality. We have incorporated natural elements to the overall look and feel and focused on sustainability in all aspects of design and material use."



Joyalukkas world-class jewellery shopping experience lands in Dajeej, Kuwait



The much-anticipated Joyalukkas Dajeej showroom opened at the Lulu Hypermarket in Dajeej, the new Joyalukkas showroom will be a welcome addition to this hub.

The showroom was inaugurated by Mohammad Ismaeil Safar Bahzad, Director, Joyalukkas Kuwait; in the presence of Mr. Mohamed Harris, Regional Director, Lulu Group International Kuwait and attended by local dignitaries, VIPs and chief executives of the Joyalukkas Group. "It is a pleasure to open our doors in Dajeej," said Mr. John Paul Alukkas, Executive Director, Joyalukkas Group, "and we are excited to present residents with a world-class jewellery shopping experience they won't find anywhere else. This

is also a great opportunity to thank our loyal patrons for their support over the years which has greatly contributed to the growth and success of Joyalukkas. I look forward to welcoming them to Joyalukkas Dajeej."

Joyalukkas Dajeej will feature over a million jewellery designs showcasing a mix of traditional, ethno contemporary and international influences. It will carry an exclusive line of Joyalukkas brands, such as Veda Temple Jewellery, Pride Diamonds, Eleganza Polki Diamonds, Masaaki Pearls, Zenina Turkish Jewellery, Li'l Joy Kids Jewellery, the Apurva Antique collection & Ratna Precious Stone Jewellery, as well as brand-new diamond collections 7 Wonders Daily Wear and Iris Colorful Diamond Jewellery.

Oncost Cash & Carry launches Mega Draw promotion



Oncost Cash & Carry, the first wholesale membership retail store in Kuwait, where members are offered products at wholesale prices in a retail environment, launched a 'Mega Draw' promotion to celebrate the opening of its first in Shuwaikh, and its largest and fourth branch in the country.

The promotion, which is limited exclusively to the new Shuwaikh branch, is set to run from 11 to 25 April. During the promotional period, for every KD10 purchase, customers will receive one coupon, which will enter them into the Mega Draw. The winners of the draw will receive a host of fantastic prizes, with the first place winner receiving a cash prize of KD1000, while

second, third and fourth place winners will each be the proud owners of a new iPhone X. The 5th place winner will gain a gift voucher worth KD100. Oncost's Shuwaikh branch offers customers the benefits of wholesale shopping in a modern retail environment that prioritizes convenience and top-notch services, while ensuring significantly discounted prices to its customers. Oncost's pricing policy has been constructed to focus on competitive pricing by the unit and wholesale prices by the pack or carton, to pass on substantial savings to its loyal customer base. Moreover, there are the added benefits of weekly promotions that see customers shopping for household staples with great savings.

Al Jahra Copthorne Hotel & Resort organizes Blood Donation Camp

Al Jahra Copthorne Hotel & Resort in coordination with Blood Central Bank in Kuwait and "Prevention is the Aim" lead by Dr Musaed Ghanem Al Enizy once again unveiled its unity for humanitarian caused by means of Blood Donation Camp held on March 28, 2018 (Wednesday) in Al Waha Ballroom.

The camp witnessed active participa-

tion from Al Jahra Copthorne Hotel & Resort employees who volunteered to donate blood for this noble cause. Through this blood donation camp, Al Jahra Copthorne Hotel & Resort aims to raise awareness for the need of safe blood and blood products and to thank voluntary blood donors for their life-saving gifts of blood.

"It gives us unwavering commitment and immense contentment to be able to contribute towards our community by way of donating blood for the needy patients. Said Alaa Selim, Al Jahra Copthorne Hotel & Resort General Manager. We do thank Dr Musaed Ghanem Al Enizy and his volunteer team "Prevention is the Aim" for their efforts and supports in organizing such a successful program". The event is solely the contribution of the employees of Al Jahra Copthorne Hotel & Resort in extending their support for the welfare of the community.



LOYAC's 'A Word Worthy of the Dictionary'

Out of its message to empower youth, LOYAC recently launched a campaign under the title of 'LOYAC, A Word Worthy of the Dictionary' which aims to further emphasize its vision about 'an enlightened youth for peace and prosperity.

Speaking on the occasion, LOYAC's PR and communication manager, Abdullah Al-Rahmani said that the campaign gave everybody the opportunity to fully understand the meaning of the word 'LOYAC'. He added that some perceived the word as a gate for self esteem and true happiness, others perceived it as a gate for humanitarian activities throughout the Arab world.

Al-Rahmani also highlighted LOYAC's summer programs noting that LOYAC takes care of the youth all year long through various programs and activities to help youth aging 16-27 develop their personalities and help them decide the career they would like to lead after graduation. Furthermore, Al-Rahmani explained that the summer programs include Bridge workshops, a social entrepreneurship youth aging 12-16 in collaboration with Babson College, USA, 'My Happiness' program for people with special needs and the DLA Piper program from UAE.



Winners of Malabar's 10KG Gold for 100 campaign

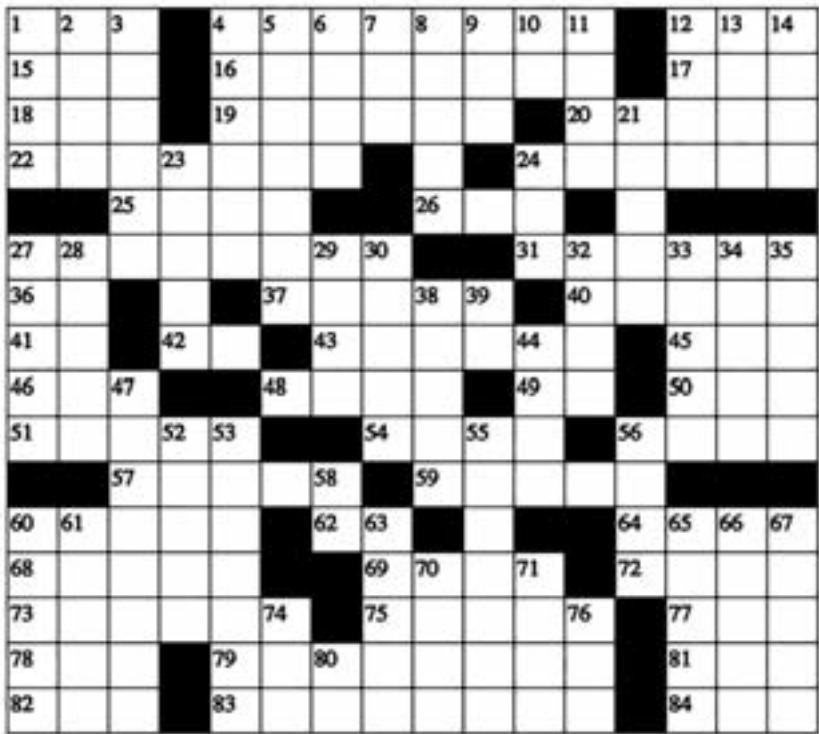


TIES announcement

Join us for the TIES talk titled 'What Every Expat Needs to Know about Ramadan'. Learn about the spiritual significance

of Ramadan, Kuwait's laws related to Ramadan, expected public etiquette, customs you will encounter in your neighborhood and workplace, how to cope with daytime restrictions such as restaurant closures, and how to get the most out of your Ramadan experience. The talk will be held on Wednesday, April 25 at 7pm.

CROSSWORD 1885



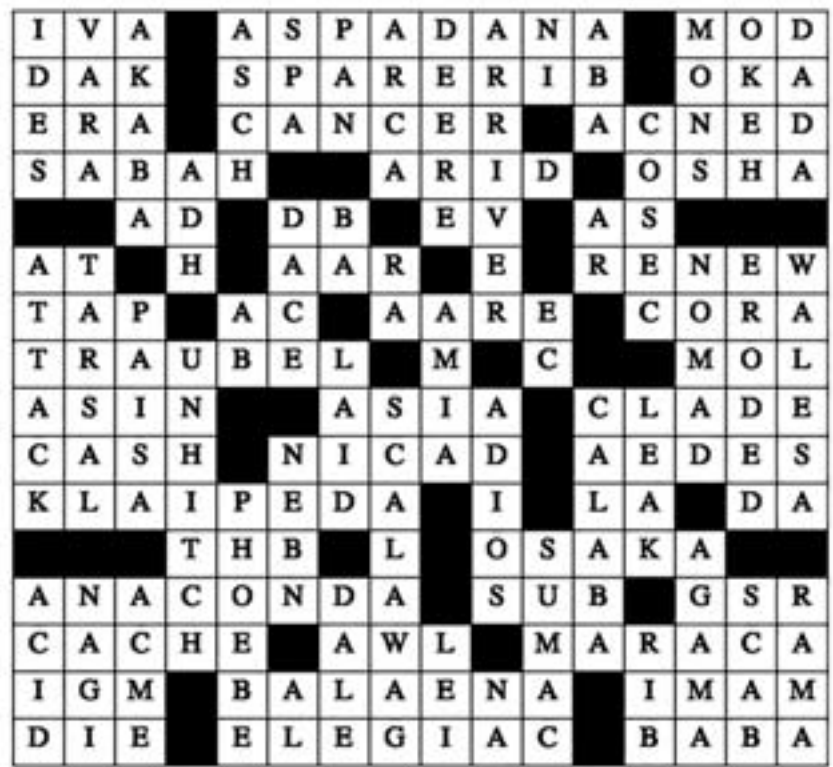
ACROSS

- 1. Of inferior or mixed breed.
- 4. Found in the ordinary course of events.
- 12. Hormone produced early in pregnancy by the placenta.
- 15. (Irish) Mother of the ancient Irish gods.
- 16. The amount of electromagnetic radiation leaving or arriving at a point on a surface.
- 17. Leaf or strip from a leaf of the talipot palm used in India for writing paper.
- 18. A periodic paperback publication.
- 19. Small space in a tissue or part such as the area between veins on a leaf or an insect's wing.
- 20. Spiritual being attendant upon God.
- 22. East Indian fruit tree bearing fruit similar to but sweeter than that of the rambutan.
- 25. Chief port of Yemen.
- 26. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
- 27. A condition in which white scales of dead skin are shed by the scalp.
- 31. African tree having an exceedingly thick trunk and fruit that resembles a gourd and has an edible pulp called monkey bread.
- 36. The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
- 37. A river that rises in central Germany and flows north to join the Elbe River.
- 40. A crown-like jewelled headdress worn by women on formal occasions.
- 41. A white metallic element that burns with a brilliant light.
- 42. A logarithmic unit of sound intensity.
- 43. North American bluebirds.
- 45. A lipoprotein that transports cholesterol in the blood.
- 46. Being one hundred more than two hundred.
- 48. A protocol (utilizing TCP) to transfer hypertext requests and information between servers and browsers.
- 49. A colorless and odorless inert gas.
- 50. Relating to or characteristic of or occurring on the sea or ships.
- 51. Jordan's port.
- 54. (Greek mythology) The goddess of youth and spring.
- 57. Chewy candy of sugar or syrup boiled until thick and pulled until glossy.
- 59. A woody climbing usually tropical plant.
- 60. Lower in esteem.
- 62. A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali earth group.
- 64. A town and port in northwestern Israel in the eastern Mediterranean.
- 68. Type genus of the Soleidae.
- 69. Common Indian weaverbird.
- 72. United States physiologist (born in Germany) who did research on parthenogenesis (1859-1924).
- 73. A member of the lowest or worker Hindu caste.
- 75. The capital and largest city of Ghana with a deep-water port.
- 77. A run that is the result of the batter's performance.
- 78. The rate at which energy is drawn from a source that produces a flow of electricity in a circuit.
- 79. Covered with or as if with a glossy and usually brightly colored coating.
- 81. A metric unit of volume or capacity equal to 10 liters.
- 82. A beverage made by steeping tea leaves in water.
- 83. Spread abroad or out.
- 84. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.

DOWN

- 1. Providing sophisticated amusement by virtue of having artificially (and vulgarly) mannered or banal or sentimental qualities.
- 2. Relatively small fast-moving sloth.
- 3. A garment (coat or sweater) that has raglan sleeves.
- 4. An implement used to erase something.
- 5. Type and sole extant genus of the Varanidae.
- 6. Any place of complete bliss and delight and peace.
- 7. The former capital and 2nd largest city of Brazil.
- 8. A resort city in southern Ukraine on the Black Sea.
- 9. A nucleic acid consisting of large molecules shaped like a double helix.
- 10. A radioactive element of the actinide series.
- 11. Not only so, but.
- 12. Scottish writer of rustic verse (1770-1835).
- 13. Large swift fly the female of which sucks blood of various animals.
- 14. Offering fun and gaiety.
- 21. A river in southeastern Australia that flows generally northwest to join the Darling River.
- 23. Combined or joined to increase in size or quantity or scope.
- 24. A compartment in front of a motor vehicle where driver sits.
- 28. Having the wind against the forward side of the sails.
- 29. Acting or moving or capable of acting or moving quickly.
- 30. A strong belief in a supernatural power or powers that control human destiny.
- 32. Essential oil or perfume obtained from flowers.
- 33. Strong lightweight wood of the balsa tree used especially for floats.
- 34. Type genus of the Ardeidae.
- 35. A pale rose-colored variety of the ruby spinel.
- 38. Lap at the front of a coat.
- 39. Angular distance above the horizon (especially of a celestial object).
- 44. The United Nations agency concerned with atomic energy.
- 47. Brightly colored carnivorous fish of western Atlantic and West Indies waters.
- 52. Being derived from.
- 53. Regional and archaic.
- 55. A cycle that has two wheels.
- 56. Any of numerous local fertility and nature deities worshipped by ancient Semitic peoples.
- 58. A soft silvery metallic element.
- 61. German mystic and theosophist who founded modern theosophy.
- 63. A unit of current equal to 10 amperes.
- 65. British filmmaker (born in Hungary) (1893-1956).
- 66. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
- 67. A promontory in northern Morocco opposite the Rock of Gibraltar.
- 70. Type genus of the Aceraceae.
- 71. A particular geographical region of indefinite boundary (usually serving some special purpose or distinguished by its people or culture or geography).
- 74. Black tropical American cuckoo.
- 76. A condition (mostly in boys) characterized by behavioral and learning disorders.
- 80. A very poisonous metallic element that has three allotropic forms.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Vibrations of health and fitness surround and encourage you to seek the best way for you to guard your physical health. This is a time to overcome temptations by substituting other foods or beverages. You make a strong effort to do well at work; your pride in your job kicks in and others notice. Bursts of energy embolden you as you move closer to reaching impressive goals. You may find yourself in a position of leadership regarding a group effort; your logical way of looking at things is well known and desired. You could be misled about something you have to make a decision on; next week could be a better time for this. An invitation to go out could present a serious problem if you accept! A good book or movie fits the bill this evening.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You're drawn to gaining control in all areas of your life; be careful that you don't come across as a control freak or busybody. Intimate secrets draw your attention and you long to have your own private reality apart from family and friends. Privately, you will go to ominous places in your mind; beware that keeping these thoughts and urges to yourself will not help them go away. An opportunity to make money comes from an unexpected place today. Vibrations of a stubborn nature plague you regarding a certain situation. This is a good day for you physically as you feel healthier than you have in a while. Tempers could flare around you and you may want to join in; use your desire for control to keep yourself calm and going in the right direction.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Things that could be considered occult hold your interest now. You could be interested in learning more about spells or potions; perhaps you're eager to learn more about historic writings and events or art. Your energy is cleansed by clearing old judgments or using new thinking regarding disagreements. Plans go smoothly today with productive results. Ideas fill your head to the point of making it spin; write these down so you can use them later when you need them. A new neighbor annoys you; you're not sure how to handle this as you're not the only one who finds this disturbing. You let your efforts flow from one to the next with ease. New surroundings could require your time this evening as you finish a project you have been at for a while.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

If there are unfinished details, focus on getting these taken care of now. Ticking things off your to-do list should come easily now; use this wisely! You could feel a lack of support from those on your team; keep your ideas to yourself just now until there's a change in energy here. You could feel stunted or slowed by circumstances or an event you attend. You figure out where a certain problem started and understand that you have the ability to repair it; you could realize that you or something you did is at the root of the problem. Your heart is usually in the right place but you somehow put your foot in your mouth at just the wrong time; working on yourself could come easier this evening as you spend time with someone who loves you.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

You long to have complete control over a certain person or situation; remember that everyone has their own free will and may want to use it! Look closely at your behavior so that no one is offended by your good intentions. It's sometimes difficult to sit back and watch someone run off a cliff. Your interest in the unknown and unusual facts regarding many different areas is heightened at this time; new books and documentaries play an important part in your free time. You make progress as a member of a group; your heart is close to it. A new pet could make an appearance at your house or the home of a friend. You have lots of love to share and many opportunities to do so during this new cycle. You should pamper yourself this evening.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Mysteries, taboo subjects and practices captivate your interest; the discovery of a new literary series could be indicated here as books are your best friends. Your passions rise and you could feel a need to demand sexual attention and affection. You want to run the show. Your advice is considered valuable; your opinions are respected and followed more than you know. Someone watches you and follows your examples and style; you help people with kindness and attention which creates great karma for your present and future. An interesting invitation arrives that stirs your curiosity and you want to know more about the person who sent it. Enjoy something new! Merely considering changes isn't enough; you must actually make them.

Wordsearch Puzzle

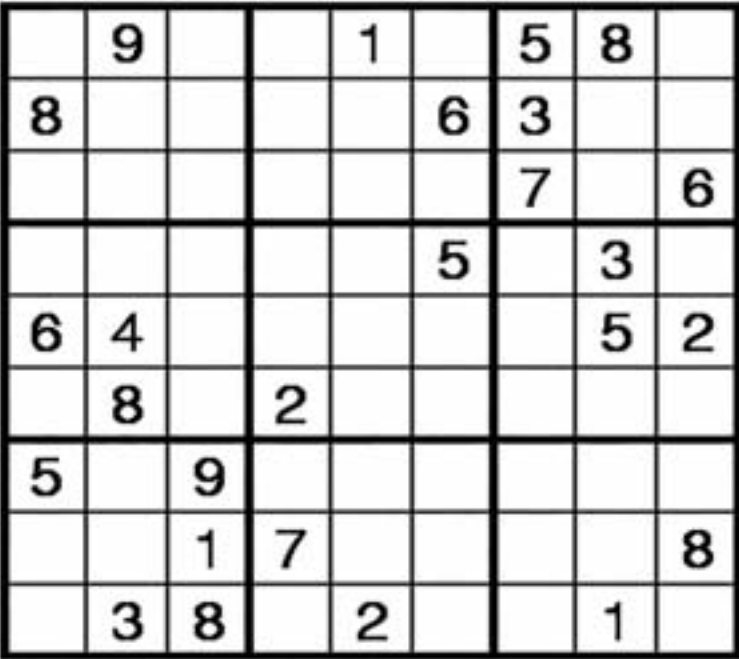
Tools

Find and circle all of the Tools that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a secret message - a Henry David Thoreau quotation

M	C	R	O	W	B	A	R	E	M	K	T	A	B	L	E	S	A	W	
R	I	W	A	S	L	L	O	R	C	S	L	W	A	S	D	N	A	H	
T	E	T	H	S	U	R	B	U	S	Q	U	A	R	E	U	E	T	R	
W	E	H	E	X	K	E	Y	S	P	N	B	L	H	G	H	I	A	R	
R	A	H	S	R	F	O	D	A	D	R	A	A	Y	C	N	S	E	T	
P	E	S	C	I	B	I	A	E	C	T	O	A	N	S	P	D	A	V	
L	R	D	G	T	L	O	L	M	H	E	R	T	N	D	N	P	B	H	
I	E	R	N	N	A	O	X	E	I	P	E	I	R	I	S	R	C	A	
E	T	I	E	I	R	P	P	S	O	P	S	F	A	E	A	M	M		
R	U	L	E	V	R	P	T	A	E	S	T	O	N	P	C	H	W	M	
E	O	L	R	E	I	G	O	T	L	A	U	D	I	T	O	T	O	E	
F	R	P	O	E	L	R	R	C	D	S	T	D	L	S	H	E	R	O	R
F	S	R	C	O	D	E	D	L	S	I	A	K	O	C	S	E	D	R	
U	T	E	F	L	D	I	E	W	E	C	P	N	C	N	R	T	R		
B	E	S	T	N	A	G	V	S	E	H	U	I	K	E	O	N	U	A	
E	L	S	A	I	U	M	R	I	R	N	F	E	R	H	I	L	B		
T	L	S	E	N	A	L	P	O	D	V	C	E	T	W	W	O	E	Y	
R	A	B	O	N	I	K	C	E	R	W	H	S	S	O	A	J	L	R	
S	M	B	O	L	T	C	U	T	T	E	R	J	I	G	S	A	W	P	

BAND SAW	FILE	POLISHER	SPRAY GUN
BOLT CUTTER	GRINDER	PROTRACTOR	SQUARE
BRUSH	HAMMER	PRY BAR	STAPLE GUN
BUFFER	HAND SAW	PUNCH	STUD FINDER
CALIPER	HEX KEY	RASP	TABLE SAW
CHALK	JIG SAW	RATCHET	TAPE MEASURE
CHISEL	JOINTER	ROUTER	TAPS AND DIES
CLAMP	KNIFE	SANDER	TINSNIPS
COPING SAW	LATHE	SAWHORSE	VICE
CROWBAR	MALLET	SCREWDRIVER	WOOD RULE
DADO	MITER BOX	SCROLL SAW	WRECKING BAR
DIVIDER	PLANE	SOCKETS	WRENCH
DRILL PRESS	PLIER		

Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution

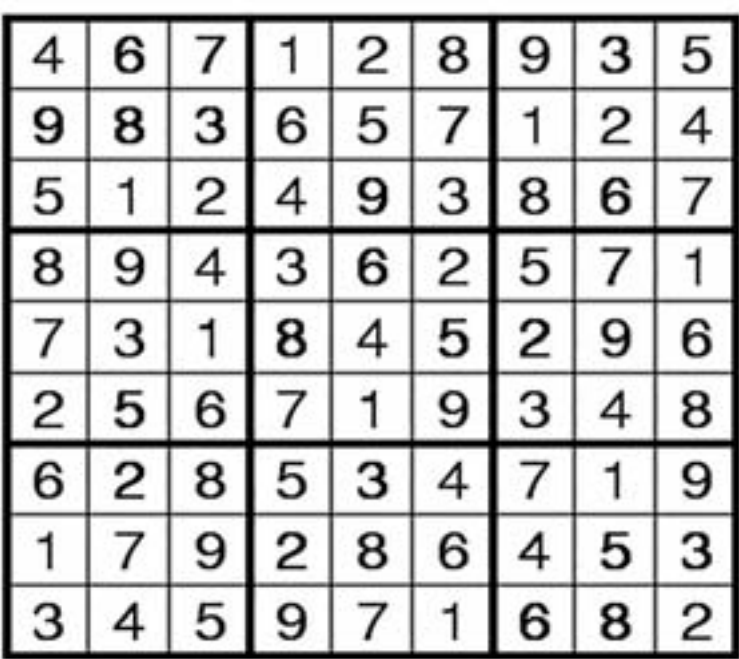
Time

Find and circle all of the Time words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a secret message - a Henry David Thoreau quotation

M	C	H	D	H	E	E	C	M	O	N	T	H
E	I	U	N	D	P	A	C	L	C	R	M	C
I	E	L	A	A	O	D	R	M	H	U	A	E
C	O	C	L	C	C	L	I	D	E	O	N	N
N	E	O	L	E	H	D	N	O	A	H	I	T
D	C	H	R	O	N	O	G	R	A	P	H	E
H	H	K	T	I	C	N	T	O	A	O	D	N
E	H	D	G	E	K	K	I	H	T	Y	N	N
D	R	H	S	T	E	T	U	A	G	O	I	
I	T	A	G	D	A	U	E	D	M	L	C	A
L	A	I	D	N	U	S	N	W	K	O	E	L
H	C	T	A	W	C	I	E	I	E	T	S	O
L	E	O	S	R	A	E	Y	I	M	A	T	E

CENTENNIAL	ERA	MONTH
CHRONOGRAPH	EPOCH	SECOND
CLOCK	HOUR	SUNDIAL
DAY	MIDNIGHT	WATCH
DECADE	MILLENNIUM	WEEK
EON	MINUTE	YEAR

Yesterday's Solution



Classifieds

Tuesday, April 17, 2018

STATE OF KUWAIT

DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION

METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



Tel: (+965) 161 Ext: 6819 - 6817

Fax: (+965) 24348714

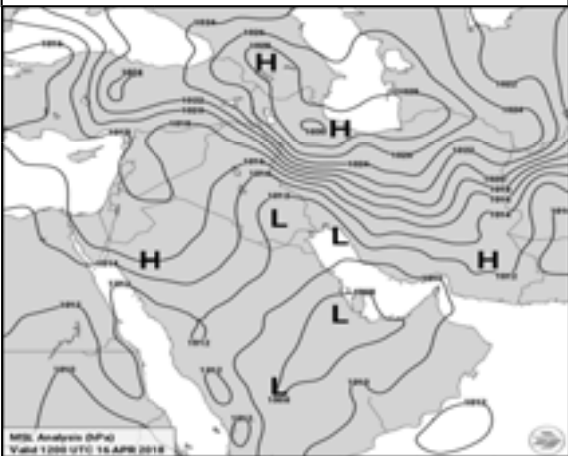
www.met.gov.kw



Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY NIGHT: Partly cloudy with light to moderate freshening at times south easterly wind, with speed of 15 - 42 km/h with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times with a chance for rising dust.

BY DAY: Mostly Sunny with light to moderate variable wind to north westerly wind, with speed of 10 - 30 km/h .

WEATHER WARNING			Thunder rain + dust	
STATION	MAX. REC.	MIN. EXP.	SFC. CHART 16/04/2018 1200 UTC	
KUWAIT CITY	29 °C	20 °C		
KUWAIT AIRPORT	29 °C	20 °C		
ABDALY	29 °C	19 °C		
BUBYAN	-- °C	18 °C		
JAHRA	32 °C	19 °C		
FAILAKA ISLAND	29 °C	21 °C		
SALMIYAH	26 °C	23 °C		
AHMADI	26 °C	22 °C		
NUWAISIB	27 °C	21 °C		
WAFRA	28 °C	20 °C		
SALMY	29 °C	18 °C		

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Tuesday	04/17	Mostly Sunny	34 °C	20 °C	VRB-NW	10 - 30 km/h
Wednesday	04/18	Mostly Sunny	33 °C	21 °C	VRB-NW	10 - 28 km/h
Thursday	04/19	Sunny	35 °C	20 °C	NW	12 - 35 km/h
Friday	04/20	Partly cloudy and rising dust with a chance for rain that might be thundery later on	36 °C	23 °C	SW-SE	15 - 45 km/h

TOMORROW PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	03:59
Sunrise	05:21
Zuhr	11:48
Asr	15:22
Sunset	18:15
Isha	19:35

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	34 °C
MIN. Temp.	18 °C
MAX. RH	62 %
MIN. RH	18 %
MAX. Wind	SE 53 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

Hospitals

Sabah Hospital	24812000
Amiri Hospital	22450005
Maternity Hospital	24843100
Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital	25312700
Chest Hospital	24849400
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010
Adan Hospital	23940620
Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300
Al-Razi Hospital	24846000
Physiotherapy Hospital	24874330/9

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khaldiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401

REQUIRED

Head Indian Chef

- ◆ 17-20 years experience
- ◆ Has transferable residency (Article 18)
- ◆ Can be team leader
- ◆ For a kitchen that will serve 500 customers and above

Good Salary
Food, Accommodation and
transportation provided

Contact number 97808071

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Shaikh Irfanahmed
Mohammadyusuf, Passport
No: J6971528, has changed
my name to Bhura
Irfanahmed
Mohammadyusuf. (C 5393)
17-4-2018

SITUATION WANTED

MEP Engineer (HVAC,
plumbing, fire fighting)
Indian (M) can join
immediately. Phone:
99054703, mail:
shibin@live.in (C 5392)
11-4-2018

ACCOMODATION

Room available for
Family/couple/working
ladies/one bachelor, on

Airport Road, Khaitan, Rent
KD 85 only, Contact:
51614467. (C5394)
17-4-2018

Automated enquiry
about the Civil ID
card is

1889988

EMERGENCY



112

For labor-related
inquiries and complaints:

Call MSAL hotline

128



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

DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Tuesday 17/4/2018

Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	WAN	134	Doha	13:20
THY	772	Istanbul	00:15	JZR	779	Jeddah	13:45
DLH	625	Dammam	00:50	KAC	341	Sohag	13:50
KAC	102	London	00:50	QTR	672	Dubai	13:55
JZR	539	Cairo	01:00	KAC	1078	Doha	14:10
PGT	858	Istanbul	01:15	GFA	618	Doha	14:10
RJA	642	Amman	01:35	FDB	221	Bahrain	14:15
UAE	853	Dubai	01:40	KAC	059	Dubai	14:20
KLM	446	Bahrain	01:45	KAC	516	Tehran	14:20
KKK	1268	Istanbul	02:00	SVA	286	Dhaka	14:25
AXB	395	Kozhikode	02:00	KAC	500	Jeddah	14:45
JZR	267	Beirut	02:05	KAC	788	Jeddah	14:50
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:15	ETD	303	Abu Dhabi	15:05
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	KAC	304	Mumbai	15:05
QTR	1086	Doha	02:15	KNE	529	Jeddah	15:10
KAC	414	Bangkok	02:30	OMA	645	Muscat	15:20
JZR	553	Alexandria	02:40	KAC	562	Amman	15:20
JZR	607	Kochi	02:50	ABY	127	Sharjah	15:35
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	02:55	KAC	502	Beirut	15:35
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05	UAE	857	Dubai	15:45
KAC	418	Manila	03:05	JZR	534	Cairo	16:10
KAC	382	Delhi	03:05	QTR	1072	Doha	16:15
MSR	612	Cairo	03:10	FDB	051	Dubai	16:20
QTR	1076	Doha	03:15	KAC	118	New York	16:20
LMU	5510	Cairo	03:30	JZR	125	Bahrain	16:55
JAI	572	Mumbai	04:00	KAC	542	Cairo	17:00
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	04:00	SVA	510	Riyadh	17:15
KAC	1544	Cairo	04:15	GFA	215	Bahrain	17:30
JZR	609	Hyderabad	04:25	JZR	777	Jeddah	17:35
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:30	JZR	145	Doha	17:35
KAC	284	Dhaka	04:30	JZR	177	Dubai	17:40
PAL	668	Manila	04:50	QTR	1080	Doha	18:10
FDB	069	Dubai	05:00	JZR	483	Istanbul	18:20
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:05	WAN	966	Tbilisi	18:30
THY	770	Istanbul	05:10	MSR	620	Cairo	18:30
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:15	RJA	640	Amman	19:00
KAC	362	Colombo	05:40	GFA	217	Bahrain	19:05
BAW	157	London	06:00	UAE	875	Dubai	19:05
WAN	338	Alexandria	06:10	FDB	063	Dubai	19:10
THY	6376	Istanbul	06:25	KAC	744	Dammam	19:10
KAC	204	Lahore	06:30	KAC	744	Dammam	19:10
JZR	561	Sohag	06:30	ABY	123	Sharjah	19:20
KAC	678	Dubai	06:40	NIA	0161	Cairo	19:30
KAC	302	Mumbai	06:45	GEL	616	Baku	19:30
JZR	143	Doha	06:45	WAN	874	Istanbul	19:30
KAC	358	Kochi	07:00	KAC	776	Riyadh	19:35
KAC	354	Bengaluru	07:20	KAC	156	Istanbul	19:35
FDB	053	Dubai	07:40	KAC	674	Dubai	19:40
JZR	605	Ahmedabad	07:45	RBG	555	Alexandria	19:40
KAC	384	Delhi	07:50	FDB	057	Dubai	19:50
JZR	529	Asyut	08:05	KAC	616	Bahrain	20:00
UAE	855	Dubai	08:05	DLH	624	Frankfurt	20:05
WAN	352	Luxor	08:15	OMA	647	Muscat	20:05
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:25	MEA	402	Beirut	20:15
ABY	125	Sharjah	08:30	KAC	620	Doha	20:15
QTR	1070	Doha	08:55	KAC	166	Rome	20:25
FDB	055	Dubai	09:00	QTR	1088	Doha	20:40
IRA	675	Lar	09:30	KAC	172	Frankfurt	20:45
SYR	341	Damascus	09:40	JZR	553	Alexandria	20:50
SVA	512	Riyadh	09:40	KLM	445	Amsterdam	21:00
WAN	312	Asyut	10:00	UAE	859	Dubai	21:15
ETD	995	Abu Dhabi/Bahrain	10:00	ALK	229	London	21:15
JZR	751	Madinah	10:20	ETD	307	Colombo	21:15
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:30	KAC	168	Abu Dhabi	21:20
MEA	404	Beirut	10:40	KAC	564	Paris	21:50
QTR	1074	Doha	10:55	GFA	219	Amman	21:50
WAN	114	Bahrain	11:00	ICV	675	Bahrain	22:05
JZR	165	Dubai	11:10	QTR	1082	Luxembourg	22:05
JZR	325	Al Najaf	11:45	ETD	309	Doha	22:10
KAC	614	Bahrain	11:55	KAC	786	Abu Dhabi	22:15
MSC	411	Asyut	12:20	AIC	987	Jeddah	22:15
SAW	701	Damascus	12:20	BBC	043	Chennai/Hyderabad	22:25
UAE	871	Dubai	12:30	WAN	136	Dhaka	22:30
THY	766	Istanbul	12:45	PIA	239	Doha	22:30
WAN	542	KTM	12:50	WAN	118	Sialkot	22:40
KAC	742	Dammam	12:50	JZR	185	Bahrain	22:50
MSR	610	Cairo	12:50	JAI	574	Dubai	23:00
AXB	393	Kozhikode	13:10	THY	764	Mumbai	23:00
				FDB	072	Istanbul	23:15
				JZR	241	Dubai	23:35
						Amman	23:40

Departure Flights on Tuesday 17/4/2018

Departure Flights on Tuesday 17/4/2018				MSC	412	Asyut	13:30
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	THY	767	Istanbul	13:40
AIC	976	Goa/Chennai	00:05	JZR	144	Doha	13:55
JZR	560	Sohag	00:30	MSR	611	Cairo	14:00
JAI	573	Mumbai	00:30	JZR	124	Bahrain	14:00
FDB	073	Dubai	00:30	JZR	552	Alexandria	14:05
WAN	541	KTM	01:15	AXB	394	Kozhikode	14:10
KAC	417	Manila	01:45	UAE	872	Dubai	14:15
THY	773	Istanbul	01:45	FEG	342	Sohag	14:50
DLH	625	Frankfurt	01:50	KAC	673	Dubai	15:00
KAC	285	Dhaka	01:50	GFA	222	Bahrain	15:00
JZR	528	Asyut	01:50	FDB	060	Dubai	15:05
KAC	677	Dubai	02:00	QTR	1079	Doha	15:15
PGT	859	Istanbul	02:45	SVA	501	Jeddah	15:45
THY	765	Istanbul	02:50	KAC	283	Dhaka	15:50
AXB	396	Kozhikode	02:55	KAC	775	Riyadh	15:55
KKK	1269	Istanbul	02:55	KNE	530	Jeddah	16:00
ETH	621	Addis Ababa	03:05	KAC	785	Jeddah	16:00
KLM	446	Amsterdam	03:10	KAC	743	Dammam	16:05
UAE	854	Dubai	03:30	KAC	563	Amman	16:10
JZR	142	Doha	03:45	KAC	619	Doha	16:15
OMA	644	Muscat	04:05	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:15
ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:05	ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
QTR	1087	Doha	04:15	OMA	646	Muscat	16:20
MSR	613	Cairo	04:15	KAC	615	Bahrain	16:40
LMU	5511	Cairo	05:00	FDB	052	Dubai	17:20
JAI	571	Mumbai	05:05	QTR	1073	Doha	17:25
QTR	1077	Doha	05:15	UAE	858	Dubai	17:40
KAC	303	Mumbai	05:35	KAC	381	Delhi	17:45
FDB	070	Dubai	06:00	KAC	331	Trivandrum	17:55
JZR	750	Madinah	06:15	KAC	343	Chennai	18:00
THY	771	Istanbul	06:30	SVA	511	Riyadh	18:15
GFA	212	Bahrain	06:50	GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
RJA	643	Amman	07:00	JZR	184	Dubai	18:20
KAC	167	Paris	07:20	JZR	608	Hyderabad	18:25
KAC	413	Bangkok	07:30	JZR	240	Amman	18:30
PAL	669	Manila	07:40	JZR	266	Beirut	18:30
KAC	171	Frankfurt	07:50	JZR	512	Sharm el-Sheikh	18:30
KAC	501	Beirut	08:00	JZR	538	Cairo	18:35
JZR	778	Jeddah	08:00	WAN	135	Doha	18:40
BAW	156	London	08:20	QTR	1081	Doha	19:20
KAC	165	Rome	08:25	WAN	117	Bahrain	19:30
WAN	133	Bahrain	08:30	MSR	621	Cairo	19:30
THY	6376	Dubai/Istanbul	08:35	GFA	218	Bahrain	19:50
FDB	054	Dubai	08:35	FDB	064	Dubai	19:50
KAC	613	Bahrain	09:00	RJA	641	Amman	20:00
JZR	324	Al Najaf	09:00	ABY	124	Sharjah	20:00
KAC	117	New York	09:05	RBG	556	Alexandria	20:20
KAC	787	Jeddah	09:05	NIA	0162	Cairo	20:30
KAC	671	Dubai	09:15	FDB	058	Dubai	20:30
WAN	133	Doha	09:30	UAE	876	Dubai	20:35
ABY	126	Sharjah	09:40	DLH	624	Dammam	20:50
KAC	561	Amman	09:40	KAC	357	Kochi	21:00
KAC	741	Dammam	09:45	OMA	648	Muscat	21:05
JZR	535	Cairo	09:45	MEA	403	Beirut	21:15
UAE	856	Dubai	09:50	KAC	543	Cairo	21:20
JZR	482	Istanbul	09:55	GEL	613	Dubai	21:30
KAC	101	London	10:00	KAC	301	Mumbai	21:35
ETD	302	Abu Dhabi	10:00	QTR	1089	Doha	21:50
KAC	515	Tehran	10:00	DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50
KAC	617	Doha	10:10	KAC	205	Islamabad	21:55
KAC	155	Istanbul	10:25	ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	22:05
QTR	1071	Doha	10:40	KLM	445	Bahrain	22:10
IRA	674	Lar	10:40	ALK	230	Colombo	22:20
FDB	056	Dubai	10:40	KAC	383	Delhi	22:25
SGL	4101	IQA	11:00	KAC	783	Jeddah	22:25
SVA	513	Riyadh	11:00	UAE	860	Dubai	22:35
SYR	342	Damascus	11:00	GFA	220	Bahrain	22:50
WAN	873	Istanbul	11:20	ETD	310	Abu Dhabi	23:00
GFA	214	Bahrain	11:35	KAC	795	Madinah	23:00
MEA	405	Beirut	11:55	KAC	411	Bangkok	23:15
JZR	776	Jeddah	12:05	QTR	1083	Doha	23:20
QTR	1075	Doha	12:10	PIA	240	Sialkot	23:35
ETD	996	Bahrain/SGN	12:20	WAN	337	Alexandria	23:40
JZR	176	Dubai	13:10	JZR	560	Sohag	23:45
SAW	702	Damascus	13:30				



Rexha's stripped back 90s-inspired album

Bebe Rexha's debut album is inspired by No Doubt and Alanis Morissette. The 'I Got You' hitmaker has opted for a stripped back "honest and raw" sound on her debut LP, 'Expectations', that is influenced by the likes of the Gwen Stefani-fronted group and the 'Ironic' hitmaker. Speaking to Billboard magazine, she said: "There's different sides of me and what I love. 'I went back to my roots, like I loved No Doubt and Alanis Morissette and Lauryn Hill and wrote these more real, honest songs and there's a lot more guitar and I think 'Meant to Be' helped me see that you could have success with a record that's just honest and raw. It doesn't have to be hidden by 10 million sounds." The 28-year-old singer's long-awaited record is titled 'Expectations' because it's about the realization that fame isn't everything she thought it would be. She explained: "I thought money would bring me happiness and being famous would bring me happiness, but I find that...this wasn't what I expected at all. "It's like the little things. It's my family, it's my mom, it's my dog, it's a cup of coffee in the morning." The pop star - who was previously the singer in Fall Out Boy's Pete Wentz's side project Black Cards - has released a string of hit singles since emerging in 2014 with the song 'I'm Gonna Show You Crazy' and penning 'The Monster' for Eminem and Rihanna. Bebe teamed up with Louis Tomlinson and Digital Farm Animals on last year's 'Back to You' and most recently 'Push Back' with Ne-Yo and Nicki Minaj. The 'Hey Mama' singer recently admitted she hates working inside creative "boundaries". Bebe doesn't enjoy being pigeonholed as a musician, and also admitted she didn't relish writing for other artists who were asking her to produce a very specific, radio-friendly sound. She shared: "Back in the day everything was so specific to the 'type' of artist you were. "This is what you look like, this is what you sound like, it was like boom-boom-boom. Being a writer at the time, it was actually hurtful because people would be like, 'Wow you're stuff is too everywhere, who are you?'" Bebe releases 'Expectations' on June 22 via Warner Bros. Records.

Gallagher poised to work on As You Were follow-up

Liam Gallagher is heading back into the studio in Los Angeles shortly to work on the follow-up to his debut album. The former Oasis star will be reuniting with producer Greg Kurstin and his team of songwriters to pen tracks for his second outing, following the worldwide success of 'As You Were', which featured the hits 'Wall of Glass', 'For What It's Worth' and 'Paper Crown'. In a dig at his bitter rival and older brother Noel Gallagher, who he previously criticised for making "cosmic pop" music, Liam wrote on Twitter: "The hills are live with the sound of LG I'm off to LA nxt Wk to start the follow up to as you were be afraid all you cosmic pop pickers Dilly Dilly as you were LG x (sic)." The 45-year-old rocker, who has also slammed Noel's French scissor player on several occasions, previously described his plans for his second solo album as "classic rock" that certainly isn't "cosmic pop" or featuring scissor players. Mocking his 50-year-old sibling and former bandmate's record 'Who Built The Moon?', Liam said: "It'll be classic rock 'n' roll, there'll be no cosmic pop and nobody playing scissors." Liam, who got a fan to peel potatoes at his solo gig as a sly dig at Noel last year, also mocked his brother for thinking his latest album is "out there" and psychedelic. He said: "I don't agree with a lot of the stuff he's talking about. "He's saying it's so out there and everyone's so square they can't get on it. "I don't think it is out there. I honestly don't and I'm not digging him out. "The stuff he did with Mark Coyle before we even got in Oasis was a lot more out there. It's designer psychedelia. "And the songs ain't that good. They're not his best batch of songs. "He's put a load of things round it. "He's in the press going, 'Oh if you think this one's out there, wait till you hear the next one', like, mate, I don't know what crowd you're hanging about with but they must be a right bunch of squares if you think that's out there."



LaTavia Roberson on Destiny's Child reunion possibilities

Former Destiny's Child member LaTavia Roberson says a reunion of all four members is down to "timing". The 36-year-old singer was full of praise of Michelle Williams and Kelly Rowland reuniting with Beyonce during her Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival on Saturday (14.04.18), and hinted that the original members could do something together in the future. LaTavia was a member of the group alongside LeToya Luckett, Beyonce and Kelly, before Michelle joined in 2000. After witnessing the trio sing together for the first time in three years, LaTavia wrote on Instagram: "It's OK to love DC3 DC4 DC5 those ladies last night went out there and gave themselves to the ppl and that's what it's about the fans the love the music (sic)" And she captioned the post: "I know the fans want a DC5 reunion but it's all in timing I support every last one of those ladies that performed last night I saw Lil sis Solange giving that H-Town style so let's just enjoy 2018 Thank you for the love and support #TeamLovers (sic)" LaTavia quit the 'Say My Name' group in 2000 with LeToya and the pair formed Aniel,



however, they failed to get off the ground. LeToya went onto forge a solo career with her 2006 self-titled debut LP topping the Billboard 200 albums chart, and later become an actress, before dropping her third studio album, 'Back 2 Life', last year. Kelly and Michelle came out towards the end of their former bandmate's Coachella set, delighting the crowd with three of their biggest hits, 'Lose My Breath', 'Say My Name', and 'Soldier'. Beyonce said: "My sisters! Please give it up for Kelly and Michelle. I love y'all." LaTavia previously said she is open to a reunion with her ex-bandmates and is willing to put their feuding behind them. Speaking in 2017, she said: "A reunion? I'd love to. The feuding which came after the split was hard, but I became a fan of the new line-up after a while and have developed a sisterhood with Michelle Williams. I guess the hard part about a reunion would be logistics. Most of us our mothers now and are raising families so that has to be taken into consideration. I think the right things will happen at the right time. That's what writing [my] book has taught me...when it's meant to be it will be."

Ryan Tedder: OneRepublic hit a wall



Ryan Tedder admits OneRepublic had "hit a wall" after a decade on the road. The 38-year-old musician says the 'Counting Stars' group had burned themselves out and became "victims of our own ambition" by pushing themselves too hard, and that's why they decided to take a three-month hiatus. Speaking in the Spring/Summer edition of ROLLERCOASTER magazine, Ryan admitted: "We reached our 10-year anniversary last January, and we celebrated by taking three months off! "We went in too hard with too many things and we eventually become victims of our own ambition. "In a decade, I don't think any one of us has patted ourselves on the back. "We operate under the assumption that it could all be gone tomorrow, that the very next song you put out could be a complete disaster. "I think for a lot of artists it takes hitting the wall before you realize where the wall is. "You're running in the dark and then it hits you. "Now that I know where that wall is, I believe and pray that I'll never hit it again." Ryan hopes in 2018 he will become a more "balanced person" no matter how successful OneRepublic are. He confessed: "I want to be a healthy, balanced person and if in 10 years from now I'm healthier and more balanced I don't give a damn what happens in my career. I'll be happy as a person and that's my goal." Alongside his band - who released their last LP 'Oh My My' in 2016 - Ryan has produced and co-written tracks for the likes of Beatles legend Sir Paul McCartney, Adele and Camila Cabello, and he credits not being a "one trick pony" for remaining relevant. He said: "I could talk about music for days. If you're just a one trick pony and you stick to one style then you're going to phase out eventually, it's inevitable. "I've worked with such a diverse range of artists recently. "I did a session with Camila Cabello for her album and was super happy with how "Into It" turned out. "The Paul McCartney stuff I've done is all really exciting - that was my favorite session ever. I've been in the studio with Charlie Puth and have done some stuff with Logic and Martin Garrix so there's lots to come!"

Rolling Stones ignore trolls telling them to retire

Ronnie Wood has vowed to defy trolls who think The Rolling Stones should retire from touring. The iconic rock group - completed by Sir Mick Jagger, Keith Richards and Charlie Watts - have been performing live for more than five decades and will do so until they can't psychically get up on stage anymore. In a stern warning to social media users who tell them to call it a day, the 70-year-old rocker fumed: "I say get off your a*** and get working while you can. "We ignore all that. We're still in our element and will go on for as long as possible. "We enjoy what we do and so do our fans. "Look how many people around the world want to come and see us. "But being in front of home fans is special." The 'Satisfaction' hitmakers are set to embark on the UK leg of their 'No Filter Tour' this summer, and The Sun newspaper reports that Florence Welch of Florence + The Machine is set to make a surprise appearance at one of their dates at London Stadium on May 22 and May



25. The 'Dog Days Are Over' hitmaker previously joined the group on stage for a duet of 'Gimme Shelter' at the capital's The O2 arena in 2012. The legendary band are set to perform on UK turf for the first time in five years. Guitarist Keith previously claimed it would take someone "keeling over" before they go their sepa-

rate ways. When asked what it would take for the band to end, he replied: "Somebody keeling over. There's never ever been a word about it muttered among ourselves. "I guess the day's obviously going to come, some day. But not in the near future. We're all looking forward to doing what we're doing, especially back in Blighty."

Aldean on the 'crazy ride' culminating at ACM Awards

Jason Aldean admits it had been a "crazy ride" leading up to his "emotional" American Country Music (ACM) Awards speech. The 'Big Green Tractor' hitmaker won Entertainer of the Year for the third year in a row at the annual ceremony at MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas on Sunday (15.04.18), where he used his time on stage to open up about the "rough year" which saw him perform at the Route 91 Harvest Festival in Sin City last year, when a gunman opened fire on the crowd, killing 58 and leaving over 500 people injured. He told 'Entertainment Tonight': "What a way to come back to Vegas. "It's unreal ... Just being back here, it's been an emotional thing for us the whole weekend. To end it like that, that's crazy. "People reached out to us a lot over the last six months, and it's meant the world to us. "It's just been a crazy ride, and when you win something like that, you feel the love of people in the industry. It makes you feel good, it's special." The 41-year-old musician - who attended the bash with his wife Brittany Kerr Aldean - joined fellow country stars Miranda Lambert, Luke Bryan, Maren Morris and Thomas Rhett on stage to perform a tribute to the victims. However, it was not an



easy task as bringing up the horrific massacre and planning the tribute has been "tough" for Jason, though it has made him appreciate life more. He said: "We've talked about [the tribute] so much over the last six months, but it's not something I enjoy talking about, really. "It's tough whenever it gets brought up, it's still tough. "I'm 40 years old, but sometimes it takes us guys a while to grow up. "Something like that happens and it sort of makes you look at a lot of things different and realize how short life is, and it makes you get your act together a

little bit. It definitely did that for me." In his acceptance speech, Jason said: "It's been a rough year and I just want to say thank you to everybody that reached out to us and showed us love and support over the last six months. "It meant the world to us. To my Route 91 people, you guys are in my hearts, always. I love you guys and we love Las Vegas. Vegas strong, baby." Several attendees sported gold pins displaying the numbers 851, 58 and 1, in memory to those who lost their lives, those who were injured and are being helped following the tragedy.

Cardi B joined on stage by big name guests at Coachella

Cardi B was joined on stage by the likes of Chance The Rapper and G-Eazy at Coachella on Sunday. The 25-year-old rapper - who recently revealed she's expecting her first child with Migos star Offset - showed off her growing baby bump as she performed G-Eazy's song 'No Limit'. Welcoming the 28-year-old rapper on stage, Cardi complained: "I'm running out of breath. You know my pregnant ass. I need some friends to help me out. Give it up for my friend G-Eazy." Cardi subsequently reflected on her remarkable rise to fame. She said: "Let me tell you something: When God put you somewhere, he's the only one who can take you out." Cardi also performed the track 'She Bad' with YG, and she made a point of repeating the lyrics "that ass" throughout. She joked: "And that's how I got pregnant, y'all. Just like that." Chance The Rapper also joined the pregnant star on stage at the annual music festival in California, where they performed 'Best Life', which received a huge ovation from the crowd. Cardi's Coachella debut came shortly after Nicki Minaj snapped back at her fellow New Yorker in their ongoing feud. Nicki admitted to being "hurt" after Cardi suggested she had re-recorded her verse on 'Motorsport' - their collaboration with Migos - in an effort to one-up her. She explained: "When I first came in the game, if a female of that stature had done a feature with me on it, I would only be singing their praises and saying, 'Thank you.' "The first interview [Cardi] did after 'MotorSport' came out, it just really hurt me 'cause she looked so aggravated and angry ... I kind of felt ambushed."



Lifestyle | Gossip

Harris practiced trying to cry



Naomie Harris practiced crying as a child. The 41-year-old actress - who stars as Miss Moneybags in the James Bond franchise - has revealed that despite being a shy child, she's always loved make-believe and has been preparing for stardom for as long as she can remember. Naomie - who was raised in London - explained: "I would spend hours in front of the mirror, pretending to be someone else, making myself cry, trying out accents - I just loved it, and would literally spend the whole day doing that. "I was really lucky, because some mothers would have thought 'oh my God my child is just crazy', but my mum actually said 'ah, she has a talent, she has an interest'. "She enrolled me at the Anna Scher Theatre School, and everything

started from there, because they had an agency attached to the school and I started auditioning and got jobs." Naomie admits she's moved into a "weird profession" in light of her shy nature. But, speaking to the Irish Independent newspaper, she said: "What I really enjoyed was losing myself in character, finding out what it was like to be someone else, and getting inside that and disappearing, that's what I really loved as a child. "I'm not shy anymore, but I'm not comfortable being in the spotlight, I'm not someone that enjoys being observed, I'm more of an observer, but I do still love that thing of where you find a character to such an extent that you actually feel like someone else, there's a freedom in that which I really enjoy."



Elizabeth Olsen reveals her hopes for the Marvel movies

Elizabeth Olsen hopes Scarlet Witch's love life becomes a more prominent part of the Marvel movies. The 29-year-old actress stars as Scarlet in the money-spinning movie franchise and, ahead of the release of 'Avengers: Infinity War', Elizabeth has revealed she would welcome her character's relationship with The Vision being explored in more depth. Asked whether she would like the comic book backstory to be brought to the movie, Elizabeth told Digital Spy: "We would love to do that. The babies and the fake babies, and her going mad. I would love the opportunity to get to do that." In the Marvel comic series, Scarlet conceived twins via magic, but it actually transpires that they were created from the soul of a demon. And when she lost her children, Scarlet also lost her mind. The on-screen relationship between Scarlet and The Vision, played by Paul Bettany, has been steadily growing since 2015's 'Avengers: Age of Ultron', and the actor has teased at what fans should expect in the upcoming 'Avengers: Infinity War'. He shared: "This has been the richest for storyline for us, I think. It was great to play." Paul also explained that the love story is something everyone can relate to. He shared: "I think it's a nice way in for people, emotionally, because not many people have been a Norse god, but a lot of people have fallen in love. And to see that happening under extraordinary circumstances is kind of fun."

Spielberg becomes first director to make \$10bn at the box office

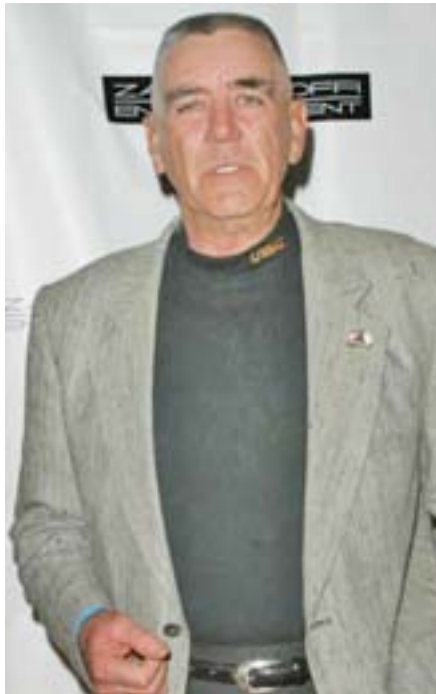
Steven Spielberg has become the first director to gross more than \$10 billion at the box office. The award-winning movie-maker - who has helmed hits such as 'Jaws', 'Indiana Jones and the Raiders of the Lost Ark' and 'E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial' - has won the race to the landmark figure. By contrast, his closest rivals - Peter Jackson, Michael Bay and James Cameron - are all currently around the \$6 billion figure. Box Office Mojo reports that Spielberg's latest effort, 'Ready Player One' - which stars Olivia Cooke and Tye Sheridan - has taken the director across the monetary threshold. So far, the movie had made \$114 million, thereby making it the 17th most successful of



Spielberg's legendary career. Despite the remarkable success he's enjoyed over the years, Spielberg previously admitted that he never reflects on his past achievements. The 71-year-old director explained that although he's proud of what he's accomplished during his time in Hollywood, he's always thinking about his next project. He shared: "I don't look back. I make movies and I work a lot and I look forward all the time. I don't often look back." Spielberg also revealed that the success of 'Jaws' marked a major turning point in his career, as it gave him a freedom to make the films he felt passionate about. He said: "The experience gave me complete freedom for the rest of my career. "The amount of success the film enjoyed just gave me final cut, gave me the chance to tell my own stories."

R Lee Ermey dies aged 74

'Full Metal Jacket' star R Lee Ermey has died aged 74. The Golden Globe-nominated star died from complications of pneumonia on Sunday (15.04.18), according to a Twitter post by Bill Rogin, his manager. Ermey is best known for playing the part of Gunnery Sgt. Hartman, who trains a group of new recruits in 'Full Metal Jacket', the Stanley Kubrick-directed drama from 1987. The Vietnam War veteran - who spent 11 years in the Marine Corps - received a Best Supporting Actor nomination at the Golden Globes for his starring role in the movie. In a statement posted on Facebook, Rogin wrote: "It is extremely difficult to truly quantify all of the great things this man has selflessly done for, and on behalf of, our many men and women in uniform. "He has also contributed many iconic and indelible characters on film that will live on forever." The death of Ermey - who received an honorary promotion to the rank of Gunnery Sergeant in 2002 - was also marked by a tweet from the US army. The army's official account posted: "Rest In Peace, Gunny. We are grateful for your service to our country and for supporting our service members. Semper Paratus (sic)" In addition to his role in 'Full Metal Jacket', Ermey starred in movies such as 'Dead Man Walking', 'Seven', and 'Prefontaine'. Ermey - who was married to Nila Ermey since 1975 - has also appeared in a number of lighter roles, including voicing parts in 'The



Simpsons', 'Toy Story' and 'Family Guy'. Rogin added: "The real R. Lee Ermey was a family man, and a kind and gentle soul. He was generous to everyone around him. And, he especially cared deeply for others in need. "Please support your men and women in uniform. That's what he wanted most of all."

Simon Pegg confirms Star Trek 4?

Simon Pegg has seemingly confirmed the current 'Star Trek' cast will come together for a fourth movie. The 48-year-old actor has played Montgomery 'Scotty' Scott in the three most recent installments of the popular sci-fi franchise - 2009's 'Star Trek', 2013's 'Star Trek Into Darkness', and 2016's 'Star Trek Beyond'. And he has said that whilst he knows that pressing forward with a fourth movie will be "difficult" since the death of Anton Yelchin - who played Pavel Chekov and passed away in 2016 when he was crushed by his Jeep after it rolled down his driveway and trapped him against a brick pillar - he is confident the cast will get together once again. He said: "I know we're doing more. I'd love to - I love those guys. It's, of course, difficult because we lost Anton and moving forward without him still feels unimaginable." Simon also commented on reports made in December that Quentin Tarantino was developing a new 'Star Trek' movie, which he would possibly helm. In an interview with The Quietus, Simon said: "We all got this email the other day from J. J. Abrams just sort of saying, 'Um, oh guys, Quentin Tarantino came in the office and pitched this and we're gonna think about it.' We were like, 'What?' People just assume, I think, because it's Quentin that it will be R-rated but he is a massive 'Star Trek' fan ... who knows!" Simon's confidence in a fourth installment of the rebooted franchise comes after it was announced



shortly after 'Star Trek Beyond' that Chris Hemsworth would be reprising his role as George Kirk - the father of Chris Pine's James T. Kirk - in a fourth movie. Meanwhile, last month, Karl Urban - who plays Doctor McCoy - insisted he was "confident" that a new movie would begin filming within the next year. He said: "It's really a question for Paramount. But, that being said, I have such a blast working on those 'Star Trek' movies. You know, that cast, we're like family at this point. I'm pretty confident within, hopefully the next year, that we'll be back on the set."

Sheeran to appear in Boyle music movie?



Ed Sheeran is in talks to appear opposite Lily James in Danny Boyle's new music-themed movie. The 'Shape Of You' hitmaker has had cameos in 'Game Of Thrones' and 'Bridget Jones's Baby', but he now looks set to take his acting career even further. According to The Daily Mail, Sheeran is in negotiations to appear in Boyle's upcoming music-themed comedy, which has been written by 'Love Actually's Richard Curtis. It is not known if Sheeran will also contribute to the film score. 'Cinderella' beauty Lily James will star as a teacher in the as-yet-untitled film, thought to be set in the 60s or 70s, whilst 'EastEnders' actor Himesh Patel is on board to play the male lead. 'Saturday Night Live' comic Kate McKinnon is also said to be in talks for the movie, which is due to start shooting this summer. Boyle is currently juggling the project with the script for the new James Bond film. Sheeran appeared as himself in 2015 comedy 'Bridget Jones's Baby' when Bridget attended Glastonbury festival. The singer also made a cameo in his favorite TV show 'Game Of Thrones', with a fleeting appearance in the first episode of the hit HBO series' seventh season in July last year. But Sheeran faced a harsh backlash from fans for his role - which saw him play a Lannister soldier who had a chance encounter with Maisie Williams' Arya Stark. The 'Perfect' singer said afterwards: "No one wants to see me come back. I wanted to be a cameo in it, and I've done the cameo. I'm cool with it, though. I enjoyed it." Sheeran also played Sir Cormac in five episodes of the historical drama 'The B Executioner' created by 'Sons Of Anarchy' showrunner Kurt Sutter. — Bang Showbiz



Jon Hamm is 'amazed' new movie has taken so long to reach cinemas

Jon Hamm is "amazed" it's taken more than 25 years for 'Beirut' to reach cinema screens. The 46-year-old actor - who stars as a former US diplomat during the Lebanese Civil War in the 80s - has admitted to being shocked that it's taken so long for Tony Gilroy's script - which was penned in the early 90s - to come to fruition. Asked what attracted him to the new espionage film, Jon said: "I was amazed that no one had made this movie. It's a wonderful story ... the length of time between when it was written and now has only made it more poignant in a way, and resonate in a way. We're still dealing with the same stuff." Jon - who is best known for playing Don

Draper in the hit TV series 'Mad Men' - revealed he embraced his character because of his "human" approach to diplomacy. And the Hollywood star appreciated that the script didn't hit viewers "over the head" with its message. Speakin to Collider, Jon explained: "What I liked about it, other than the guys attached to it, was that it's an opportunity to play a character who has everybody's best interests at heart. "It's like, 'Let's move forward. If we're going to sit here and bump heads, we're just going nowhere. Get people into a room, deal with them on a human level and try to move forward.' "It's incredibly deftly told - it's not hitting you over the head."



Cardi B visits Music Choice at Music Choice on April 10, 2018 in New York City. — AFP



People enter and exit the Spectra installation by News substance Sunday at the Coachella Music and Arts Festival.

EMINEM, CARDI B TAP STAR POWER AT COACHELLA



Ibeyi performs with Kali Uchis Sunday at the Coachella Music and Arts Festival in Indio.



Migos performs Sunday at the Coachella Music and Arts Festival.



Princess Nokia performs with Kali Uchis Sunday at the Coachella Music and Arts Festival.

Eminem and Cardi B may be at different stages of their careers, but the two rappers have one strategy in common-when playing at Coachella, go big. Both Eminem, who playfully acknowledged concerns about his continued relevance, and the pregnant Cardi B, whose first album just opened at number one on the US chart, kept a dizzying pace with a stream of surprise guests on the final day of the premier music festival.

Closing the three-day bash Sunday before thousands of often scantily clad revelers in the California desert, Eminem offered a disconcerting trip to "8 Mile"-a stage replica of his blighted hometown Detroit, cast in an even harsher light through special effects of rain and then arson. Eminem brought out 50 Cent, joining in the New York rapper's birthday anthem "In Da Club," before the crowd erupted on sight of the elusive Dr Dre, Eminem's mentor.

Dr Dre, the gangsta rapper turned Apple executive worth close to \$1 billion, appeared in the Silicon Valley chic look of a black turtleneck. He united with Eminem for several classic tracks, including late legend Tupac Shakur's "California Love." Coachella marks one of the first concerts for Eminem, who is 45, since the release last year of his album "Revival" after a four-year hiatus. Eminem, by far the most successful white rapper of all time, found a new political voice on the album as he lashed President Donald Trump, although "Revival" mostly received poor reviews on its musical merits.

Eminem confronted the criticism as late-night comedian Jimmy Kimmel came to Coachella by video for a special edition of his televised segment on celebrities reading "mean tweets." Faced with a tweet that said "No one's (sic) has been paying attention to you since 2003," Eminem faulted the Twitter user's spelling but added, "I'm not mad at that. He's kind of got a point."

Pregnant twerking

Cardi B was one of the most avidly awaited performers at Coachella, not only because she is rising quickly in hip-hop but because the 25-year-old-engaged to fellow rapper Offset of Migos-recently revealed that she is pregnant. Despite her visible baby bump, Cardi B briefly squatted to twerk to the beat, comfortably getting back up to finish her dance moves. The Bronx native has quickly found stardom with unsentimental rhymes about her rough life, including her stint earning a living by stripping.

She saluted her former profession in her tight, half-hour set as dancers stretched acrobatically on strippers' poles. She also brought out her own celebrity guests including Chance the Rapper. After the hard edges of her breakthrough song "Bodak Yellow," Cardi B has shown greater

musical versatility. Her debut album, "Invasion of Privacy," brought in energetic, street festival-style horns on the track "I Like It," which she performed live at Coachella. Cardi B has demonstrated striking candor about the finances of playing Coachella-arguably the most watched festival in the world, especially this year with Glastonbury in Britain on a scheduled break.

She told satellite radio SiriusXM that she spent \$300,000 of her own money to develop a worthy set for Coachella, where she will earn only \$140,000. That sum-presumably reached before Cardi B's recent meteoric ascent- also includes a performance next weekend, when Coachella reconvenes for a second edition with an identical lineup.

Michelle Obama in trip-hop

Coachella prides itself on both recognizing rising artists and showcasing splashy headliners, with pop superstar Beyonce on Saturday putting on her first show in more

than a year. Among performers on Sunday, Ibeyi-twin French sisters of Afro-Cuban heritage-took aim at Trump's treatment of women with the song "No Man Is Big Enough for My Arms." Set to a dominant bass line and trip-hop beat, the song samples former first lady Michelle Obama as she says, "The measure of any society is how it treats its women and girls."

Young British rocker King Krule performed a set of his explosive punk-infused jazz while French DJ Petit Biscuit packed a tent full of thousands of revelers with his guitar-infused yet minimalist electronic tracks. Indie rocker Japanese Breakfast, the stage name of Michelle Zauner, paid tribute to late Cranberries frontwoman Dolores O'Riordan with a one-notch-louder cover of "Dreams." Japanese Breakfast dedicated the track to a supportive friend who flew to the show and who, at a younger age, "painted my hair purple in the bathroom and hoped my mom wouldn't notice." — AFP



Japanese Breakfast performs at the Coachella Music and Arts Festival.



Petit Biscuit performs at the Coachella Music and Arts Festival.



Cardi B performs Sunday at Coachella Music and Arts Festival.

'Miss Sunshine' star Dano to make directorial debut at Cannes

Hollywood star Paul Dano's much-anticipated directorial debut, "Wildlife", will open Critics' Week at the Cannes film festival next month, the organizers said yesterday. The film by the "There Will Be Blood" and "Little Miss Sunshine" actor features his friend Jake Gyllenhaal, who played opposite Dano in the Oscar-nominated "Prisoners" in 2013. The film is based on a Richard Ford novel about a teenager watching his parents' marriage fall apart.

Critics' Week director Charles Tesson said it includes an "extremely impressive" performance from British actress Carey Mulligan, who was nominated for an Oscar for her performance in "An Education", the coming-of-age drama based on journalist Lynn Barber's bestselling memoir. "Paul Dano shows himself to be a true cineaste in his first feature film," Tesson told AFP, "a profoundly human portrait at the disintegration of an American family... done with elegant classicism."

The parallel event for first- and second-time directors, which starts on May 9, the day after the main Cannes festival, also features a parody of the life of a superstar footballer not unlike Cristiano Ronaldo called "Diamantino". Although its Portugese-American co-director Gabriel Abrantes has said that the film is "not really about" the Real Madrid star, Tesson said the "delightful off-the-wall" comedy would ring bells with football fans.

Women dominate

Unlike the main festival, which has been criticized for its dearth of female talent, Critics' Week is dominated by films by and about women. While only three of the 18 films competing for the top Palme d'Or prize are by women, they make up the majority in the Critics' Week competition. Indian director Rohena Gera turns the romantic comedy on its head in her first feature, "Sir", Tesson said, a master-servant love story that shakes class and caste taboos starring rising Bollywood actress Tillotama Shome. "One Day" by the Hungarian Zsolia Szilagyi follows the manic day of an overstretched working mother trying to hold her own and her family's life together, while "Woman at War" is the "funny and stirring" story of an Icelandic environmental activist.



Young documentary-maker Anja Kofmel investigates the murder of her cousin, a journalist who was killed during the wars in the former Yugoslavia, in her film, "Chris the Swiss", which is partly animated. "Sauvage" takes on the rarely touched world of male prostitution while another gritty French film "Sheherazade" dives into the chaotic life of a young prostitute and her boyfriend in the port of Marseille. French star Romain Duris plays a union stalwart whose wife leaves him with their children in the Belgium drama "Our Battles", which is being shown out of competition.

The line-up for the main competition at Cannes is markedly more political than usual, with an Iranian and Russian director who are banned from leaving their countries, in the running for the Palme d'Or. It is highly unlikely that Iran's Jafar Panahi and Russia's Kirill Serebrennikov will be able to attend, despite pleas by festival organizers and the French authorities. The world's biggest film festival runs from May 8 to 19. — AFP

In this file photo US actor Paul Dano poses as he arrives for the screening of the film 'Okja' at the 70th edition of the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southern France. — AFP

Bearded diva Conchita Wurst reveals HIV-positive

Austrian bearded drag queen and Eurovision winner Conchita Wurst has announced in an Instagram post that she is HIV positive, saying she is being blackmailed by a former boyfriend. Wurst, the creation of Austrian singer and artist Tom Neuwirth, 29, said in the post late on Sunday that the ex-boyfriend was "threatening to go public with this private information". "I won't give anyone the right to scare me and to influence my life in this way," said Wurst, describing the decision to go public as removing a "sword of Damocles".

The post has already received more than 26,000 "likes" yesterday. "Coming

out is better than being outed by someone else. I hope to give others courage and to take another step against the stigmatization of those who... have contracted HIV," Wurst added. Wurst said that she had been receiving medical treatment since her diagnosis and that it had been suppressed to undetectable levels, so it could not be transmitted. "I'm stronger, more motivated and freer than ever," Wurst said.

She praised the "unconditional support" she had received from her family and added that sparing them the publicity was one reason she had not chosen to share the information before now. "My friends have also known for quite a while now and have approached with it a spirit of acceptance that I would wish for all those affected," she said. Wurst shot to fame after winning the Eurovision Song Contest in 2014 with her song "Rise Like A Phoenix" and used her platform to campaign for gay rights. In February she announced a new album in collaboration with the Vienna Symphony Orchestra and is due to host the Amadeus Austrian Music Awards next week. — AFP



Austrian singer and drag queen Conchita Wurst attends a press conference at the Wiener Festwochen 2017 cultural festival on May 09, 2017 in Vienna, Austria. — AFP



British fashion designer Christopher Raeburn poses for a photograph at his studio in Hackney, east London.



British fashion designer Christopher Raeburn poses for a photograph at his studio in Hackney, east London.



British fashion designer Christopher Raeburn (right) poses for a photograph with a MIG jet fighter jumpsuit that is being turned into hand bags at his studio in Hackney, east London.



British fashion designer Christopher Raeburn poses for a photograph with items from his collection at his studio in Hackney. — AFP photos

UK designer Christopher Raeburn transforms the unexpected

After a childhood building tree houses and robots, British designer Christopher Raeburn has made a career out of transforming unusual materials—including parachutes—into clothes ready for the catwalk. More than a decade since graduating from London’s prestigious Royal College of Art, Raeburn has made a name for himself with streetwear fit for the style-conscious, environmentally-aware buyers. “We only do three things. We either remake, we recycle or we reduce,” the 35-year-old told AFP. Raeburn has picked the former premises of veteran fashion house Burberry for his own label, in a former industrial zone of east London.

The open-plan airy office is filled with sewing machines, ironing boards and rolls of fabric. When AFP visited, a group of seamstresses were busy creating animals made out of fabric—a quirky specialty of the designer. Pieces from past collections are stored in large white wardrobes, including a military jacket. “With (the collection) Remade, it’s about deconstructing and reworking,” said Raeburn of the piece, which in its original form was a guard’s uniform from Buckingham Palace. “Ultimately I think as humans we cannot continue consuming in the way that we are, and not just clothing—everything from product design to food, are incredibly wasteful,” he added.

Such an attitude has been at the heart of Raeburn’s work throughout his career, including his first show at London Fashion Week. “I bought one parachute on eBay, I think it cost me £30 (\$42, 34 euros), and from that one parachute I made eight garments... And things have just grown step by step from there,” he said. Raeburn has numerous sources for his materials, including foreign imports, hunting through military surplus, as well as other channels which are kept as closely-guarded secrets. “I get asked a lot, you’re not worried that things are going to run out?” he said, commenting it is “scary” just how much excess material is available.



Clothes and accessories made from recycled materials are on show at the studio of British fashion designer Christopher Raeburn.

the whole thing expands and inside it had everything you would need to survive on the open ocean for one month for 25 people,” he explained. The designer’s ability to rework such an array of materials is attributed to his childhood “in the middle of nowhere” in south-east England, close to the wood which inspired the “Winnie-the-Pooh” books.

Raeburn and his two older brothers were encouraged to draw things which their father would help them build at the weekend. “That’s an amazing way to bring up kids because we ended up designing everything from tree houses to robots,” he said. While the urban London fashion house is far from the designer’s countryside childhood home, he has certainly brought his young imagination. His environmental conscience has also made its mark on the studio, with the use of green energy and his decision to cycle to work.

“I don’t see myself as an activist but I do see myself as

“ We only do three things. We either remake, we recycle or we reduce ”

Survival raft

His most recent collection, presented at London Fashion Week in January, used protective immersion suits to create men’s and women’s coats. “(There are) hundreds of thousands of these items that have never been used,” said the designer, explaining the suits are often thrown away after a certain period of time to abide by health and safety rules.

Raeburn also bought a raft, cutting it up to make coats, jackets and bags. “You pull on the rope and then

a pragmatic entrepreneur,” he said. Despite the obstacles to Raeburn’s business model—trying to source unusual materials while working in a hugely competitive sector—he is determined to continue making it a success. “Every day is a challenge... but then that’s the exciting thing, who wants a boring life?”—AFP



A woman works in the studio of British fashion designer Christopher Raeburn in Hackney, east London.

In daytime discos, S Korea’s elderly find escape from anxiety

A discotheque hidden among the back alleys of east-ern Seoul is packed with hundreds of grey-haired couples on a Monday afternoon, dancing to local hits from the 1960s in a basketball court-sized hall. Kim Sa-gyu, 85, calls it his “playground.” “What else would I do all day? My family is busy with work. I hate going to senior centers cause all they do there is smoking,” said Kim, wearing a beret as he sat on a bench at the edge of a dance floor decorated with fairy lights and mirror balls.

Seven days a week, he gets up at 5 a.m., has breakfast with his son and two grandchildren, gets an hour of massage therapy to relieve knee pain, then hops on a bus. His destination is the daytime disco for the elderly in New Hyundai Core. Kim, who has been jobless since retiring as a hospital administrator 20 years ago, is among about 1,000 customers each weekday at the disco, called a colatec. It is one of nearly 1,000 such facilities around the country.

Almost 2,000 people visit on a weekend day, said owner Choi Jung-eun. Colatecs, a portmanteau of cola and discotheque, have arisen to serve South Korea’s rapidly ageing population, as a growing number of lonely, impoverished and ailing people rediscover ways to entertain themselves after decades of hard work. Some are here because they simply don’t feel welcome at home. “My wife yaps at me for breathing if I stay home. I love this music and no

one minds me here,” a grey-haired man who identified himself only as ‘white boots’ said, after paying an entrance fee of 1,000 won (90 cents) – a fraction of what swanky clubs in Seoul’s affluent Gangnam charge their youthful clientele. Well-dressed patrons can pay another 500 won for coat-check service. And despite the name, the disco’s best-selling beverage is 2,000 won probiotic yogurt, not cola.

Elderly and depressed

The generation that helped rebuild Asia’s fourth-largest economy from the ruins of the 1950-1953 Korean War is now the poorest and most depressed among member countries of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. The relative poverty rate of South Korea’s elderly stood at 49.6 percent in 2013, four times the OECD average, according to the latest available data. The elderly suicide rate rose from 35 per 100,000 persons in 2000 to 82 in 2010, also far above the OECD average of 22. South Korea is ageing faster than any other developed country, yet there are few post-retirement jobs, or even cheap leisure, available for the elderly.

By 2050, there will be 71 people aged 65 and over for every 100 people aged 15-64 in South Korea, up from just 17.3 per 100 in 2014, according to OECD forecasts. That

will make it the third-oldest country in the world about wealthy nations, behind Japan and Spain. Heading to a colatec is now they only way many senior citizens can find room to breathe, several customers told Reuters. Kim In-gil, still haunted by painful memories related to his failed businesses during the 1997-1998 Asian financial crisis, says two hours of dancing four times a week helps rid him of “suicidal thoughts” from time to time. “If you have music and a partner, you can put all other thoughts out of your mind,” Kim said as beads of sweat dripped off his nose.

Matchmaker, dancing teacher

Colatecs began to spring up in the late 1990s as a no-alcohol dancing club for teens, but soon started to attract the elderly as their main customers. Jitterbug instructor Song-ah’s online videos about how to dance at a colatec sparked interests after she appeared in a TV commercial for insurer LINA’s pension products. A cable TV channel offering dancing tutorials for the elderly, called Silver-I, is also popular.

At the New Hyundai Core colatec, a dance instructor walked around the dance hall searching for dancers who looked lost or lonely. Three full-time matchmaking ladies helped dancers who were too shy to find a partner. “Those helpers sometimes take me to new woman and put our

hands together to dance. I buy them a bottle of Will during our tea breaks,” the 85-year-old Kim said, referring to the in-house cafe’s best-selling drink, a local probiotic yogurt.

Song-ah, the jitterbug dance instructor, says she is always on the lookout for dating-related elder fraud at colatecs. “Sometimes I see young cougars in their 50s asking really old grandpas out for a dance. I report them to the owner and separate them,” she said, adding that lonely seniors can be taken advantage of by strangers. But for the most part, colatecs do more good than harm, says Joo Won, an economist at the Hyundai Research Institute.

“We have one unhappy ageing society that needs support both from the public and the government. Places like colatecs need to be nurtured,” Joo said. Choi, the owner of New Hyundai Core colatec, said her business made her feel good too. “My take from running this place is knowing that these old people have a place to go to when they wake up. They can’t afford to go travel abroad or play golf every day,” Choi said. She added that she had some senior-friendly expansion plans. “I also plan to open a acupuncture clinic upstairs, so that my customers can take care of their joints before and after dancing,” she said. — Reuters



A couple dance at a “colatec” in Seoul.



Han Min-ja and Yang Won-ju dance at the New Hyundai Core colatec in Seoul, South Korea.



Elderly people dance at the New Hyundai Core “colatec” in Seoul. — Reuters photos

Lifestyle

TUESDAY, APRIL 17, 2018



Dancers of the Art Tremendo dance company perform in front of the Ludwigslust castle, northern Germany, during an event to promote the 'Small festival in a big park' festival to be held on August 10 and 11. — AFP

Boy unearths **legendary** **Danish king's trove** in Germany

A 13-year-old boy and an amateur archaeologist have unearthed a “significant” treasure trove in Germany which may have belonged to the legendary Danish king Harald Bluetooth who brought Christianity to Denmark. Rene Schoen and his student Luca Malaschnitschenko were looking for treasure using metal detectors in January on northern Ruegen island when they chanced upon what they initially thought was a worthless piece of aluminum.

But upon closer inspection, they realized that it was

a shimmering piece of silver, German media reported. A dig covering 400 square meters (4,300 square feet) that finally started over the weekend by the regional archaeology service has since uncovered a trove believed linked to the Danish king who reigned from around 958 to 986. Braided necklaces, pearls, brooches, a Thor's hammer, rings and up to 600 chipped coins were found, including more than 100 that date back to Bluetooth's era. “This trove is the biggest single discovery of Bluetooth coins in the southern Baltic sea region and is therefore of great significance,” lead archaeologist Michael Schirren told national news agency DPA.

The oldest coin found in the trove is a Damascus dirham dating to 714 while the most recent is a penny dating to 983. The find suggests that the treasure may have been buried in the late 980s also the period when Bluetooth was known to have fled to Pomerania where he died in 987. “We have here the rare case of a discovery that appears to corroborate historical sources,” said archaeologist Detlef Jantzen. Bluetooth is credited with unifying Denmark. The Viking-born king also turned his back on old Norse religion and introduced Christianity to the Nordic country. But he was forced to flee to Pomerania after a rebellion led by his son Sven Gabelbart. Bluetooth's lasting legacy is found today in smartphones and laptops-the wireless Bluetooth technology is named after him, and the symbol is composed of the two Runes spelling out his initials R. B. — AFP



Amateur archaeologist Rene Schoen (left) and 13-year-old student Luca Malaschnitschenko look for a treasure with a metal detector in Schaprode, northern Germany.



This aerial picture taken with a drone shows archaeologists looking for a treasure in Schaprode, northern German.



Parts of the silver treasure are pictured on a table in Schaprode, northern Germany.



Hobby archaeologist Rene Schoen digs out a silver necklace in Schaprode, northern Germany.



An archaeologist holds Denmark's first independent type of coin after its excavation in Schaprode, northern Germany. — AFP photos