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16 Liverpool hit five past Roma as Salah runs riot



Philippines apologizes to Kuwait over ‘maid rescues’, envoy to stay

MP claims labor row ‘cover’ for money laundering

By Ben Garcia, B Izzak and Agencies

MANILA: The Philippines’ top diplomat apologized yesterday after videos emerged of embassy staff helping Filipinos flee from allegedly abusive employers in Kuwait. Kuwait had branded the rescues a violation of its sovereignty, adding fuel to a simmering diplomatic row between the two nations sparked by the murder of a Philippine maid. The first of two clips, which spread on social media after being released by the Philippine foreign ministry last week, shows a woman running from a home and jumping into a waiting vehicle. Another depicts a person sprinting from what looks like a construction site and then speeding off in a black sport utility vehicle.

“I apologize to my counterpart and we apologize to the Kuwaiti government, the Kuwaiti people and the leaders of Kuwait if they were offended by some actions taken by the Philippine embassy in Kuwait,” Foreign Secretary Alan Peter Cayetano told reporters in Manila. Three Filipinos who drove vans for the embassy in the operations were believed to be held by Kuwaiti authorities. Cayetano added a formal apology letter was being sent to Kuwait, a day after Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte met with Kuwaiti Ambassador Musaed Saleh Ahmad Al-Thwaikh over the issue.

Kuwait was furious after the videos emerged, saying the rescues were a violation of its sovereignty and “can harm relations between the two countries”. Cayetano said the Philippine embassy staff were

responding to complaints of abuse from some of the 260,000 Filipinos working in Kuwait. “This was all done in the spirit of emergency action to protect Filipinos,” he said, stating that the embassy staff believed they were dealing with “life-or-death” situations. “We respect Kuwaiti sovereignty and laws, but the welfare of Filipino workers is also very important,” Cayetano said, adding Kuwait had accepted the Philippines’ explanation.

Some 10 million Filipinos work abroad and the money they remit back is a lifeline of the Philippine economy. This controversy follows the ban Duterte imposed in February on Filipino workers moving to Kuwait, after the discovery of the corpse of Filipina maid Joanna Demafelis in a freezer. Duterte alleged that employers routinely rape their Filipina workers, force them to work 21 hours a day and feed them scraps. The two countries have since been trying to work out an agreement to protect the rights of Filipino workers in Kuwait, particularly the 170,000 who work as maids.

Cayetano said embassy workers had been carrying out “rescues” of abused Filipinos, adding that this was mostly done in cooperation with Kuwaiti police but in some cases staff acted alone due to urgency. Cayetano said the two countries still hoped to complete the labor agreement by May. Duterte previously said he will visit Kuwait to witness the signing of the accord.

In Saturday’s operation, the workers were taken to shelters ran by the embassy and would soon be repatriated, diplomats in Manila said. “The workers voluntarily went with embassy staff who waited outside the homes of



DAVAO CITY: Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte (right) meets Kuwaiti Ambassador to the Philippines Musaed Al-Thwaikh on Monday at the presidential guest house. — AFP

the domestic helpers’ employers,” said a diplomat. The employers did not hand over their passports. Some workers were persuaded to leave their employers, he said. The operation was captured on video and posted on social media. “It was not a clandestine operation,” said Elmer Cato, assistant secretary for public diplomacy.

There are 600 Filipino workers in embassy-run halfway houses in Kuwait, Cayetano said, with about 120 more who have sought rescue from employers due to abuse and tough working conditions. Duterte’s spokesman Harry Roque said part of an agreement with Kuwait was to seek assurance it would bring



KUWAIT: Philippine Ambassador to Kuwait Renato Villa addresses a press conference at the Philippine Embassy in Sidiqq yesterday. — Photo by Fouad Al-Shaikh

those who abused Filipino workers to justice. “The secretary conveyed our request for Kuwait’s kind understanding of the sworn duty of the government to protect Filipino nationals anywhere in the world,” Roque said in a statement.

Meanwhile, the Philippine Ambassador to Kuwait Renato Villa will stay on despite calls for him to be expelled and declared persona non grata over allegedly inflammatory statements he made to the media and the “rescue” videos.

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News in brief

Top US court rules for Arab Bank

WASHINGTON: The US Supreme Court yesterday ruled that foreign corporations cannot be sued in American courts for human rights abuses overseas, refusing to revive a lawsuit claiming Jordan-based Arab Bank Plc helped finance militant attacks in Israel and the Palestinian territories. The 5-4 decision left in place a lower court ruling that had thrown out a lawsuit brought by some 6,000 plaintiffs, including survivors and relatives of non-US citizens killed in attacks, filed under a 1789 US law called the Alien Tort Statute that accused Arab Bank of being the “paymaster” to militant groups. The court ruled along ideological lines, with its five conservatives in the majority and its four liberal justices dissenting. — Reuters

‘Entertainment city’ launch delayed

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia yesterday said it has delayed by three days the launch of an “entertainment city” near Riyadh, part of a series of multi-billion dollar projects as the oil-reliant kingdom seeks to diversify. King Salman had been scheduled today to launch construction of the 334-sq-km project in Qiddiya, southwest of Riyadh, touted as the kingdom’s answer to Disneyland. “King Salman will inaugurate next Saturday the Qiddiya project, which is the new entertainment, sports and cultural destination in the kingdom,” the state-run Saudi Press Agency said, without explaining the delay. Construction for the first phase of development, which would include high-end theme parks, motor sport facilities and a safari area, is expected to be completed in 2022, officials say. — AFP

18 killed in Nigerian church

MAKURDI, Nigeria: Two priests were among at least 18 people killed in a dawn attack on a church in central Nigeria, police said yesterday, in violence condemned by President Muhammadu Buhari as “satanic”. Around 30 suspected herdsmen attacked Mbalom community in the volatile region killing the worshippers and the two priests, said Benue state police commissioner Fatai Owoseni in the state capital of Makurdi. “They attacked the venue of a burial ceremony and also attacked the church where the two reverend fathers were holding mass,” said Owoseni. “We were able to recover 16 bodies from the scene of the attack and those of the two priests.” Riots over the killings erupted in Makurdi, the epicenter of the violence that has thrown the state into chaos. Police fired teargas to disperse a rampaging mob that took over a busy intersection and lit massive fires in protest of the latest attack. — AFP

Trump rips into Iran deal, calls Kim ‘honorable’

WASHINGTON: French President Emmanuel Macron and his American counterpart Donald Trump called jointly yesterday for a new nuclear deal with Iran, after the US leader denounced the three-year-old accord as “insane”. “I can say that we have had very frank discussions on that, just the two of us,” Macron told a joint press conference with Trump at his side. “We, therefore, wish from now on to work on a new deal with Iran.”

Trump earlier launched into an angry tirade against the three-year old nuclear accord as he hosted the French president in the Oval Office. “People know my views on the Iran deal. It was a terrible deal. It should have never ever been made,” Trump railed. “It’s insane. It’s ridiculous.” Trump’s European allies have repeatedly tried to persuade him not to walk away from the 2015 deal, which gave Iran massive sanctions relief and the guarantee of a civilian nuclear program in return for curbs on programs that could be used to develop an atomic weapon.

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Toronto attack driver charged with murder

TORONTO: Canada yesterday charged a man alleged to have plowed a van onto a crowded Toronto sidewalk with 10 counts of murder, as Prime Minister Justin Trudeau urged a rattled nation not to allow a “senseless attack” to shake its values. Police said the suspect, 25-year-old Alek Minassian, was not known to them before Monday’s carnage in Canada’s most populous city, which also left 15 people injured. He was not in the crosshairs of intelligence and security agencies, and Public Safety Minister Ralph Goodale played down any suggestion that the attack bore the hallmarks of those carried out by truck-driving extremists in London, Nice and other major cities. “This is a very large homicide investigation currently under way,” Goodale said, in a speech to a G7 international security meeting in



TORONTO: People gather to leave flowers at a memorial for victims of the mass killing on Yonge St at Finch Ave yesterday. — AFP

Toronto, several miles from the incident. “The investigation which is underway is still in its very early hours but so far, there is no discernable connection to national security,” he told delegates and reporters.

But authorities said the incident during the busy lunch hour Monday was undoubtedly deliberate, and a shaven-headed Minassian appeared in court yesterday to face first degree murder charges. He also faces 13 counts of the attempted murder of

most of those injured in the incident. Several of the victims were named in court documents, while others were still being identified. “Mr Minassian is the alleged driver of the van that killed ten people on Yonge Street yesterday afternoon,” Crown prosecutor Joe Callaghan told the packed courtroom.

The accused stood impassively with his hands behind his back, wearing a white police jumpsuit.

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WhatsApp raises minimum age in Europe to 16 yrs

LONDON: WhatsApp, the popular messaging service owned by Facebook Inc, is raising its minimum age from 13 to 16 in Europe to help it comply with new data privacy rules coming into force next month. WhatsApp will ask European users to confirm they are at least 16 years old when they are prompted to agree new terms of service and a privacy policy provided by a new WhatsApp Ireland Ltd entity in the next few weeks. It is not clear how or if the age limit will be checked given the limited data requested and held by the service.

Facebook, which has a separate data policy, is taking a different approach to teens aged between 13 and 15 in order to comply with the European General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) law. It is asking them to nominate a parent or guardian to give permission for them to share information on the platform, otherwise they will not see a fully personalized version of the social media platform. But WhatsApp, which had more than 1.5 billion users in January according to Facebook, said in a blog post it was not asking for any new rights to collect

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Local

Amir receives book on history of Al-Mubarakiya School

Amir to attend teachers' award ceremony



KUWAIT: Dr Abdullah Al-Ghunaim, Hamad Al-Khaled and Faisal Al-Khaled present a book to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah detailing the history of Al-Mubarakiya school.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah at Bayan Palace yesterday. He also received Dr Abdullah Al-Ghunaim, Hamad Al-Khaled and Faisal Al-Khaled, who presented His Highness the Amir with a book detailing the history of Kuwait's first school, Al-

Mubarakiya.

His Highness the Amir praised the work as exceptional, saying it documented the important role of its founders during an important time in the history of the nation. The Amir later received Kuwait Red Crescent Society's (KRCS) Chairman Hilal Al-Sayer and its board members, on the occasion of the forma-



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Kuwait Red Crescent Society's Chairman Hilal Al-Sayer and board members.—Amiri Diwan photos

tion of the philanthropic body's new board.

Separately, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received Dr Abdulredha Asseri who handed to His Highness a book titled 'Kuwait foreign policy 1991-2016: past achievements .. Present challenges.. Future prospects.'

In other news, His Highness the Amir is set to attend an award ceremony for local teachers, held under his auspices, the Amiri Diwan announced yesterday. The event, which also marks Arab Teachers Day earlier this month, will be held today at the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training main theatre in Shuwaikh. — KUNA



NEW YORK: Permanent Representative to the United Nations Mansour Al-Otaibi submits Kuwait's ratified copy of Paris Climate Agreement at the United Nations' headquarters. — KUNA

Kuwait submits ratified copy of Paris Climate Agreement to UN

NEW YORK: Permanent Representative to the United Nations Mansour Al-Otaibi submitted Kuwait's ratified copy of Paris Climate Agreement at the United Nations'

headquarters. Paris Climate Agreement aims to respond to the global climate change threat by seeking to keep average annual rise of the global temperature below two degrees. Provisions of the Paris Climate Agreement will be implemented in a manner that reflects fairness and the principle of shared responsibilities with the different parties involved despite various national circumstances. Paris climate agreement is an agreement within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) dealing with greenhouse gas emissions mitigation, adaptation, and finance starting in the year 2020. —KUNA

Forum showcases Saudi investment opportunities

KUWAIT: The Kuwaiti-Saudi Economic Forum, scheduled in Kuwait on Monday, is an opportunity for the Kuwaiti business community to identify development projects in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait's Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) said yesterday. The event will be co-organized by the Council of Saudi Chambers, and is aimed at opening up new investment and trade horizons between the two countries,

said KCCI Director General Rabah Al-Rabah. A high-level Saudi economic delegation, headed by Chairperson of the Saudi body Ahmed Al-Rajhi, will participate in the forum.

The Saudi delegation will include more than 40 Saudi companies as well as representatives from the General Investment Authority, the Economic Cities Authority and the Export Development Authority, Rabah said. During the forum, presentations on investment opportunities available under the Kingdom's vision 2030 will be delivered, in addition to the introduction of its economic cities project and services provided in an aim to attract foreign capital. Rabah called on the Kuwaiti business community to participate in the forum due to its strategic economic importance as a huge commercial market that is able to absorb a large amount of goods and services. — KUNA

Ahli United Bank celebrates Earth Day

KUWAIT: Protection of the environment is a major focus of Ahli United Bank's (AUB) corporate social responsibility program. It celebrated Earth Day on April 22, 2018 when, amongst other initiatives AUB switched off all unnecessary lighting in its main office for ten hours from 7:00 pm on Sunday to 5:00 am the next day to show in a very simple way how we care for our planet, Earth. At the start of the period, candles were lit in front of the main entrance to the Bank building to mark energy conservation initiatives and preserve the environment during its daily activities.

Sahar Dashti, AUB's Deputy General Manager, Complaints and Customer Protection, said in a press release, "At AUB

we consider Earth Day 2018 as an important event to spread awareness around the importance of the environment and helping to preserve it by attracting public attention via a simple act of switching off lights at work and/or at home, thus highlighting its impact on our lives. Earth Day holds a special symbol that is not limited to a specific country or people, it is a day for everyone who lives on this planet - it is truly international. Hence, society needs to collectively think about preserving the environment and actively participate in initiatives that aim to minimize pollution.

Dashti added, "This year, Earth Day has focused on environmental pollution caused by the overuse of plastic. We fully support this campaign and have recently installed plastic waste collection points throughout our Head Office and branches in conjunction with Omniya. The response from staff has been excellent, and we are also proud to have installed a public plastic waste collection point outside our Head Office for all to use. It is proving to be very popular. However, we should also continue to try and reduce the amount of plastic we all use day by day."

Kuwait calls for investing in youth to counter extremism

NEW YORK: Kuwait has called for further investing in youth's education and capacity building to safeguard youth from criminal networks and extremist groups. It is important to invest more in youth to build their potential and inculcate principles and values that stand as a bulwark against their exploitation by the networks of corruption and extremism, UN Permanent Delegate to the UN Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi said Monday at a special UN Security Council session on Youth, Peace and Security. He underlined the need for creating national, regional and international youth peace net-

Kuwait sounds alarm bell anew over nuclear perils

GENEVA: The State of Kuwait yesterday called for ridding the world of perils resulting from nuclear arms and urged again for denuclearization of the Middle East. Kuwait is convinced that the world is in consensus that the Nuclear non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) is the corner stone for the non-proliferation and denuclearization, said Jamal Al-Ghunaim, the State of Kuwait Representative to the UN and International Organizations in Geneva.

Ambassador Ghunaim, addressing the second preparatory commission for the NPT signatory states, said the world currently is in dire need for affirming credibility of the treaty, particularly at the threshold of its 50th

works. He called for protecting youth and providing them with high-quality education, especially in conflict-affected areas.

It is also of paramount significance to do all in power to materialize the sustainable development goals which are key for maintaining world stability and security, Otaibi said. He argued that these goals could only be achieved through the development of youth abilities and supporting organizations and civil society institutions serving them. "We, in Kuwait, are aware of the importance of youth and their pivotal role in building future, so we established the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs in 2013," he said.

Otaibi noted that the Ministry State for Youth Affairs was aiming to empower youth and improve their abilities to contribute effectively to the state building and society development as well as to spreading values of peace and tolerance. He pointed out that Kuwait was selected in 2017 as the capital of the Arab youth and on this occasion the country hosted a wide array of youth-focused cultural, sports, social and economic events. Otaibi recalled His Highness the Amir

anniversary. He called for coordination among the stakeholders ahead of the NPT revision conference, scheduled in 2020.

The NPT has succeeded in trimming nuclear arms arsenals, checking nuclear arms race and promoting know how on peaceful harnessing of the nuclear power. Re-affirming Kuwait's respect of international treaties, the envoy noted that the world had witnessed dangerous incidents and actions, such as North Korea's testing of nuclear weapons, in addition to the world's ongoing negligence of Israel's nuclear programs. He warned that the NPT was at stake due to tests of these arms and Israel's retaining of the nuclear weapons.

Ambassador Ghunaim's reiterated Kuwait' praise of Pyongyang's announcement on freezing nuclear tests, noting that the State of Kuwait is convinced that possession of the nuclear arms would deepen instability. Israel's joining of the NPT is vital, he re-stressed, noting that it is the sole party in the Middle East that has abstained from inking it. Kuwait had contributed with \$10 million for building a low-enrichment uranium plant in the Kazakh republic, in line with its belief that states have the right to employ the nuclear

Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah statement that the youth are the most precious wealth of Kuwait and the best investment should be in honing their abilities, skills and talents; increasing their knowledge; raising their awareness and protecting them from misguided ideas and deviant behavior; motivating them to further contribute to the development and progress of their homeland. He stressed that youth development was closely related to countries' overall peace and security.

Welcoming the Progress Study on Youth, Peace and Security that which had been recently submitted to the UNSC, Otaibi said many young people struggled for access to education, health care, jobs and freedom to realize their rights to expression and participation. He lamented that unemployment rate among Arab youth was estimated at 30 percent - the highest in the world - as progress in education had not translated into decent jobs. He regretted that stereotypes, terrorism and the spread of conflicts across the region were destroying young peoples' dreams and holding their innocence hostage. — KUNA



Jamal Al-Ghunaim

energy for peaceful purposes.

Up to 189 states including Kuwait have signed the 1968 NPT. The stakeholders have pledged to abstain from developing nuclear arms arsenals, transferring nuclear technology to other states and employing such arms in retaliation for attacks with the same weapons. According to UN statistics there are 15,395 nuclear warheads in the world. Up to 4,100 ones are ready for launch. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Ahli United Bank staff celebrate Earth Day 2018.

Local

Man killed, two injured in two-car collision in Kabd

Fake teacher arrested for molesting child

By Hanan Al-Saadoun,
Meshaal Al-Enezi and Agencies

KUWAIT: A citizen was killed and two others were injured in a collision between two vehicles on Kabd road, Kuwait Fire Service Directorate's (KFSD) public relations and information department said yesterday. The deceased's body was recovered and handed to forensics officers, while the injured were rushed to hospital by paramedics.

Death sentence

The criminal court yesterday sentenced a citizen to death for murdering his father, said legal sources, noting that the court rejected all pleas to pass a less severe penalty. Separately, the court of appeals sentenced a female Kuwaiti radio presenter to pay a compensation of KD 3,000 to a police major she had insulted while he was doing his job.

Child molester caught

A tire repairman, posing as an Islamic education teacher, molested a girl at an unlicensed institute and recorded his act, Al-Rai reported yesterday. A citizen told police that when she collected her 9-year-old daughter from an institute, the girl said that a teacher touched her then removed her clothes and filmed her. Police arrested the Egyptian suspect who confessed that he is not a teacher but a tire repairman, and showed them the video clip.

Safety rules

Ahmadi municipal inspectors carried out a tour to make sure contractors comply with safety rules and regulations in projects under construction, Director of the safety department Al-Humaidi Al-Mutairi said three citations were issued for throwing debris in front of the project. He added several buildings dumped garbage in yards in front of them, so five warnings were issued.

Societal partnership

Interior Ministry Undersecretary Lt Gen Mahmoud Al-Dousary met the Head of the Women's Institute for Development and Peace Kawthar Al-Jouan. The two discussed cooperation between the interior ministry and NGOs with regards to societal partnership and the role of the deaf in the ministry. The meeting was attended by Assistant Undersecretary for Criminal Security Maj Gen Khalid Al-Dayeen and Acting Director General of the Relations and Security Information Department Brig Tawheed Al-Kandari.

Inedible foodstuff

Hawally food and nutrition inspectors destroyed



136 kilograms of inedible foodstuff and filed nine citations during an inspection of Salmiya stores and restaurants.

Absconders found

Soon after the grace period for residency violators expired, a hideout of absconding laborers in Riggae was raided, where police arrested an Egyptian man and his Nepalese wife. Two drivers who helped domestic helpers to abscond were also arrested, along with four Nepalese women. The man

and his wife said they encouraged the helpers to escape with the help of the drivers and made them work in other places. Meanwhile, one of the drivers said he facilitated the transfer of money by the maids abroad for a KD 2 fee per transaction, adding that the bogus maid office was run by the Egyptian man. The helpers said the Egyptian man made them work on temporary basis.

MP's brother injured

A brother of an MP was rushed to hospital with a fractured leg following a fight with several Pakistani nationals after telling them he was a policeman. The fight took place when the citizen insulted a man and claimed he was a policeman. But the man got angry and started a fight, before other compatriots joined in. Passersby called police, who charged the citizen for posing as a policeman.

Electronic passports

The nationality and travel documents department has printed more than 80,000 electronic passports since the project started last year. Sources said crowding at the department has dropped and employees exerted extra efforts to receive the largest number of citizens who want to renew their passports. Output reached up to 8,000 passports daily, and staff worked even on holidays.

Smuggling foiled

Airport customs officers arrested a passenger trying to smuggle nearly 1,780 illicit pills. Deputy Chairman of the Customs Media Committee and Kuwait International Airport Supervisor Essa bin Essa said a roaming officer suspected the man, so his luggage was searched and the pills found. Meanwhile, an Asian man was arrested for attempting to smuggle banned (immoral) products after he went to the post office to receive them. He was sent to concerned authorities.



KUWAIT: A Kuwait Municipality inspector issues a ticket outside a building under construction during a tour to check compliance with safety rules.

Maqwa fire poses no danger to health: KOC

KUWAIT: A fire which erupted in the early hours of Monday in Al-Maqwa area due to an oil leak is under control and poses no threat on public health, Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) said. KOC said in a statement that after careful review to the site of the incident, they assured all that there are no health risks to the public and KOC workers. It added the fire is 750 meters away from the leakage, affirming that the decision to remain in the site for monitoring the situation is one of the basic procedures taken in similar situations. KOC also asserted the fire did not affect the operations of combating leakage, nor anyone was hurt during the accident. KOC added production remains normal, and specialized teams has managed to put the fire under control from the start. —KUNA



KUWAIT: This photo provided by Kuwait Oil Company shows a fire in Al-Maqwa which happened due to an oil leak.

Environmental test needed for car registration renewal

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Environment Public Authority (EPA) Chairman and Managing Director Sheikh Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah announced that a new method to examine vehicles will be employed that mandates that a vehicle's exhaust fumes must pass an environmental test to allow renewing its registration with the traffic department. Sheikh Abdullah said coordination with the Ministry of Interior (MoI) is currently in progress to find a way to examine vehicles and make sure they are environmentally safe prior to renewing their registration. He added that this system will take effect by the beginning of next year. In addition, he said hanging laundry to dry in the open will be penalized by a KD 500 fine as per the environment law. Sheikh Abdullah also said EPA will fight visual pollution, which he described as a 'negative phenomenon', such as using bizarre colors to paint the exterior of houses.

Separately, EPA deputy director for technical affairs Mohammed Al-Enezi stressed that the death of catfish in national waters is the result of pressure they become subjected to before approaching the shores, where the water is polluted by sewage and deadly weeds. Enezi added that it was normal that jellyfish increase worldwide at this time of the year, adding that jellyfish have so far only caused material losses by blocking water

inlets of the southern power plants. Enezi strongly denied that the type of jellyfish spotted in Kuwaiti waters is poisonous or deadly.

International tourism

Visa International has issued a study on international tourism travel trends, including those within the GCC states. VISA's Global Travel intentions study showed that travelers from UAE, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait largely depend on online tools while travelling and that 97, 73 and 95 percent of them respectively stayed online during their trips abroad.

As far as spending during the entire trip is concerned, the study showed that travelers with the world's top five spending rates came from Saudi Arabia, with an average of \$4,800 per trip, China with an average of \$4,034 per trip, Australia with \$3,529 per trip, US with \$3,500 per trip and Kuwait with an average of \$3,474 per trip. The study also showed that travelers from UAE spend more than the global average of \$2,443 by spending \$3,430.

The study of travel plans and reviewing opinions from 27 countries showed that the average trip duration might decrease worldwide, but GCC travelers still prefer long trips. In addition, the study showed that the current global average trip is for eight nights, compared to 9.5 nights in 2015. The study showed that average trip duration for travelers from UAE is nine nights, 10 for Kuwaitis and 14 for Saudis.

"Technology helps travelers move around destinations in a better way," the study added, noting that 88 percent of them stayed online while travelling and that 44 percent of them use transportation apps on arrival at their destinations, though 71 percent of UAE travelers, 11 percent of Saudi travelers and only 6 percent of Kuwaiti travelers use such applications.

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Local

MIT Enterprise Forum's Arab Startup Competition announces winning teams

Event held with Zain Group as a digital partner

OMAN—KUWAIT—LEBANON: The MIT Enterprise Forum (MITEF) of the Pan Arab Region announced the winners of the 11th edition of the Arab Startup Competition, an annual competition designed to support and celebrate innovation in the Arab world by awarding entrepreneurs and providing them with an avenue to exhibit and apply their ideas.

The final award ceremony, in partnership with Community Jameel, and in collaboration with this year's strategic partners Riyadh, Omantel, and Zain Group as a digital partner, was held in Oman on April 19, announcing ten winning teams.

The winning teams were announced at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman during a ceremony that attracted more than 400 investors, business entrepreneurs, media representatives and renowned public figures. Notable attendees included Dr Ali bin Masoud bin Ali Al-Sunaidi, Oman Minister of Commerce and Industry, and Chairman of the Board of Directors of Riyadh; Dr Ahmed Al-Ghassani, CEO of Riyadh; Sheikh Talal Said Al-Mamari, CEO of Omantel; Youssef Al-Harthy, CEO of Oman Technology Fund and Zain Jordan CEO Ahmad Al-Hanandeh.

Ideas Track:

Winner: Quirkpod, Egypt, an online platform that develops students' 21st century skills through expert-developed content and an engaging UX.

1st Runner up: Spike, Lebanon, helps make diabetes management less diabetic via software and hardware innovations.

2nd Runner up: Smart Data Logger, Jordan, uses IoT and roaming cellular connection to allow real-time monitoring of the temperature of a shipment.



Money prizes exceeded \$160,000

Social Entrepreneurship Track:

Winner: Al Khudairi for Biogas technology, Egypt, converts the waste and soil-damaging chemical fertilizers into energy as well as the production of biomethane gas, an alternative to fill gas cylinders.

1st Runner up: Fabric Aid, Lebanon, implements a successful European model that gives incentives to NGOs to collect more clothing without worrying about expenses and distribution.

2nd Runner up: Sunbox, Palestine, introduces an affordable off-grid, self-installable small solar kit for families who suffer from electricity shortage.

Startups Track:

Winner: ProvenMed International, Tunis, introduces a solution with options for restoring normal social life for patients suffering from Urine Incontinence.

1st Runner up: WideBot, Egypt, offer their platform to businesses to build their chatbots.

1st Runner up: Plotos, UAE, connect users to hand-picked healthy yet trendy food from favorite restaurants through an innovative user-friendly platform created and endorsed by nutrition experts.

1st Runner up: Solar Foods, Sudan, a pioneer eco-friendly company in the field of food processing.

During the ceremony, Hala Fadel, Chair of the Board of MITEF Pan Arab said: "We are so proud that this year's biggest Arab startup event was held in Oman. This event is not only a competition, but an opportunity for top tier Arab entrepreneurs to present and share their experiences in the area of innovation and the creation and nurturing of an ecosystem for innovation within Oman."



Picture taken from the award ceremony.

Investing in Arab entrepreneurship will, in turn, contribute to the revitalization of the economy, and lead to the creation of new partnerships that can eventually transform into large institutions."

The final event ceremony included a panel discussion entitled "Building Emerging Ecosystems" led by Hala Fadel, with David Fernandez, Business intelligence at Startup Chile and Ahmed Al-Alfi, Founder and Chairman at Sawari Ventures, as speakers. Another panel discussion,

themed "What Silicon Valley investors want to see in MENA," was moderated by Sharifa AlBarami, Managing Director at Oman Technology Fund, with Sharif El-Badawi, Partner at 500 Startups and Tarek Fahim, Managing Partner at Endure Capital, as speakers. Prior to the final award ceremony, the 80 semi-finalists underwent a round of training sessions and presented their work to a jury that brought together many key investors and business people

US Department of State's Report on Human Rights Practices in Kuwait for 2017 - Part III

Section 3. Freedom to participate in the political process

Recent Elections: Observers generally considered the 2016 parliamentary election free and fair and found no serious procedural problems. The election followed His Highness the Amir's October 2016 order to dissolve the National Assembly because of "mounting security challenges and volatile regional developments." Most opposition politicians and their supporters who boycotted the 2013 election returned and participated without incident. Official turnout for the 2016 elections was approximately 70 percent.

Political Parties and Political Participation: The government did not recognize any political parties or allow their formation, although no formal law bans political parties. National Assembly candidates must nominate themselves as individuals. Well-organized, unofficial blocs operated as political groupings, and MPs formed loose alliances. The law prohibits primaries during elections, but some tribes continue to hold unofficial primaries to select candidates for the National Assembly elections. In June the National Assembly amended the election law to bar those convicted of insulting His Highness the Amir and Islam from running for elected office. Voters register to vote every February upon reaching the voting age of 21. Prosecutors and judges from the Ministry of Justice supervise election stations. Women prosecutors served as supervisors for the first time during the 2016 elections.

Participation of Women and Minorities: Although women gained the right to vote in 2005, they still faced cultural and social barriers to political participation. For example, some tribal leaders have successfully excluded women from participating in local and national elections by banning them from being considered in unofficial tribal primaries. In the 2016 elections, 15 women filed candidate applications. One candidate withdrew resulting in 14 women standing for election with one woman successfully winning a seat. Women voted at a higher rate than men, having registered at 52.4 percent versus 47.6 percent.

Section 4. Corruption and lack of transparency in government

The law mandates criminal penalties for corruption by government officials, but the government did not implement the law effectively. Government observers believed officials engaged in corrupt practices with impunity. There were numerous reports of government corruption during the year.

There were many reports that individuals had to pay intermediaries to receive routine government services. Police corruption was a problem, especially when one party to a dispute had a personal relationship with a police officer involved in a case. Widespread reports indicated that police favored citizens over noncitizens. There were several reports of corruption in the procurement and bidding processes for lucrative government contracts.

Media and government officials reported cases of widespread, visa-related corruption, namely selling visas or visa fraud, at the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor and Ministry of Interior. According to a study conducted by the Research and Studies Sector at the National Assembly, 73 percent of marginal workers were victims of visa traders. The study criticized the government for failure to curb this illegal trade and bring perpetrators to justice. The study stated that in 2014, 40,000 marginal workers were brought into the country based on 1,000 false commercial licenses.

Financial Disclosure: In November 2016 government officials began filing financial disclosure statements with the ACA after the law came into effect. Approximately 10,000 officials are required to submit this disclosure, and 9,730 officials have complied with the law.

Section 5. Governmental attitude regarding international and nongovernmental investigation of alleged abuses of human rights The government imposed some limits on the operations of domestic and international human rights groups. A number of domestic and international human rights groups generally operated with limited restrictions,

investigating and publishing their findings on human rights cases. The law permits the existence of NGOs, but the government continued to deny registration to some. NGOs may not engage in political activity or encourage sectarianism.

Government Human Rights Bodies: The National Assembly's Human Rights Committee, which operated independently of the government, is an advisory body that primarily hears individual complaints of human rights abuses and worked with the plaintiff and relevant stakeholders to reach a mutual settlement. The committee visited the Central Prison and the central deportation center throughout the year to review overcrowding, prison and detainee treatment, and the condition of both facilities. The committee had adequate resources and was considered effective.

SECTION 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking In Persons

Women

Rape and Domestic Violence: Rape carries a maximum penalty of death, which the courts occasionally imposed for the crime; spousal rape and domestic violence are not considered crimes. Authorities did not effectively enforce laws against rape. Violence against women continued to be a problem. The penal code allows for a rapist to elude punishment on the condition that he marry his victim and her guardian consents that the perpetrator not be punished. There were reports alleging that some police stations did not take seriously reports by both citizens and noncitizens of rape and domestic violence.

When reported, police typically arrested and investigated alleged rapists and, in a limited number of cases, prosecuted the accused. In January an Egyptian woman was raped by a fellow Egyptian national. The perpetrator was not arrested, but he was sentenced in his absence to 10 years in prison.

The government does not publish statistics on violence against women. During the year a Kuwait University study found that 40 percent of married women were victims of domestic violence. There were no known shelters specifically for victims of domestic violence.

A woman may petition for divorce based on injury from spousal abuse, but the law does not provide a clear legal standard regarding what constitutes injury. Additionally, a woman must provide at least two male witnesses (or a male witness and two female witnesses) to attest to such injury.

Other Harmful Traditional Practices: Officials did not report any honor killings during the year. The penal code treats some honor crimes as misdemeanors. The law states that a man who sees his wife, daughter, mother, or sister in the "act of adultery" and immediately kills her or the man with whom she is committing adultery faces a maximum punishment of three years' imprisonment and a fine of 225 dinars (\$743).

Sexual Harassment: Human rights groups characterized sexual harassment in the workplace as a pervasive and unreported problem. No specific law addresses sexual harassment, but the law criminalizes "encroachment on honor," which encompasses everything from touching a woman against her will to rape, and police strictly enforced this law. The government deployed female police officers specifically to combat sexual harassment in shopping malls and other public spaces. Perpetrators of sexual harassment and assault faced fines and imprisonment.

Coercion in Population Control: There were no reports of coerced abortion, involuntary sterilization, or other coercive population control methods.

Discrimination: Women do not enjoy the same legal status and rights as men, but citizen women enjoyed many political rights, including the right to vote and to serve in parliament and the cabinet. Sharia (Islamic law) courts have jurisdiction over personal status and family law cases for Sunni and Shiite Muslims. Sharia, as implemented in the country, discriminates against women in judicial proceed-

ings, freedom of movement, marriage, child custody, and inheritance. There were no known cases of official or private sector discrimination in accessing credit, owning and/or managing a business, and securing housing. Discrimination in employment and occupation occurred with respect to both citizen and noncitizen women. Secular courts allow any person to testify and consider male and female testimony equally, but in sharia courts, which govern personal status matters such as marriage, divorce, child custody, and inheritance issues, the testimony of one man equals that of two women.

The 1984 Kuwaiti Family Law Code prohibits marriage between Muslim women and non-Muslim men. The law does not require a non-Muslim woman to convert to Islam to marry a Muslim man, but many non-Muslim women faced strong economic and societal pressure to convert. In the event of a divorce, the law grants the father or his family sole custody of children of non-Muslim women who do not convert. A non-Muslim woman who does not convert to the religion of her husband is also ineligible for naturalization as a citizen and cannot inherit her husband's property unless specified as a beneficiary in his will.

Inheritance is also governed by sharia, which varies according to the specific school of Islamic jurisprudence. In the absence of a direct male heir, a Shiite woman may inherit all property, while a Sunni woman inherits only a portion, with the balance divided among brothers, uncles, and male cousins of the deceased.

Female citizens are unable to pass citizenship to their noncitizen husbands or their children; however, exceptions were made for some children of widowed or divorced female citizens. Male citizens married to female noncitizens do not face such discrimination. The law requires segregation by gender of classes at all universities and secondary schools, although it was not always enforced.

Children

Birth Registration: Citizenship derives entirely from the father; children born to citizen mothers and noncitizen fathers do not inherit citizenship unless the mother is divorced or widowed from the noncitizen father and may then facilitate the child's application for citizenship. The government designates religion on birth and marriage certificates. The government often granted citizenship to orphaned or abandoned infants, including bedoon infants. Parents were sometimes unable to obtain birth certificates for their bedoon children because of extensive administrative requirements that prevented such children from accessing public services such as education and health care.

Education: Education for citizens is free through the university level and compulsory through the secondary level. Education is neither free nor compulsory for noncitizens. A 2011 Council of Ministers decree extended education benefits to bedoons.

Medical Care: Lack of identification papers sometimes restricted bedoons access to public medical care.

Early and Forced Marriage: The legal marriage age is 17 for boys and 15 for girls, but girls continued to marry at a younger age in some tribal groups.

Sexual Exploitation of Children: There are no laws specific to child pornography, because all pornography is illegal. There is no statutory rape law or minimum age for consensual sexual relations, although premarital sexual relations are illegal.

International Child Abductions: The country is not a party to the 1980 Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction.

Persons with Disabilities

The law prohibits discrimination against persons with permanent physical, sensory, intellectual, and mental disabilities in employment, education, air travel and other transportation, access to health care, or the provision of other government services. It imposes penalties on employers who refrain without reasonable cause from hiring persons with disabilities. The law also mandates access to buildings for

persons with disabilities. The government generally enforced these provisions. Noncitizens with disabilities neither had access to government-operated facilities nor received stipends paid to citizens with disabilities that covered transportation, housing, job training, and social welfare costs. The government still has not fully implemented social and workplace aides for persons with physical, and in particular, vision disabilities.

There is a disability law, and a parliamentary Committee for Disabled Affairs. Under that law the monthly allowance given to the mother of a disabled child or the wife of a person with disabilities is 600 dinars (\$1,980), and families of citizens with disabilities are eligible to receive grants worth up to 20,000 dinars (\$66,000). During the year the government reserved a small number of admissions to Kuwait University for citizens with disabilities, and there was regular media coverage of students with disabilities attending university classes. Nonetheless, authorities did not provide noncitizens with disabilities the same educational opportunities, and noncitizen students with disabilities experienced a lack of accessible materials and lack of reasonable accommodations in schools.

Children with disabilities attended public school. The government supervised and contributed to schools and job training programs oriented to persons with disabilities.

National/Racial/Ethnic Minorities

Approximately 70 percent of residents were noncitizens, many originating from other parts of the Middle East, the Indian subcontinent, and Southeast Asia. Societal discrimination against noncitizens and bedoons was prevalent and occurred in most areas of daily life, including employment, education, housing, social interaction, and health care. As part of expanded activity against illegal residents, police stopped, arrested, and sometimes deported noncitizens believed to be using private automobiles as taxis. This action disproportionately affected the noncitizen laborers who could not afford their own automobiles or taxi fares.

Acts of violence, discrimination, and other abuses based on sexual orientation and gender identity

Consensual same-sex sexual conduct between men and crossdressing are illegal. The law punishes consensual same-sex sexual activity between men older than 21 with imprisonment of up to seven years; those engaging in consensual same-sex sexual activity with men younger than 21 may be imprisoned for as long as 10 years. No laws criminalize sexual behavior between women. The law imposes a fine of 1,059 dinars (\$3,495) and imprisonment for one to three years for persons imitating the appearance of the opposite sex in public. Transgender persons reported harassment, detention, and abuse by security forces.

Societal discrimination and harassment based on sexual orientation and gender identity occurred; to a lesser extent, officials also practiced such discrimination, usually upon discovering that a person stopped for a traffic violation did not appear to be the gender indicated on the identification card. Transgender men and women often faced rejection by their families and, in some cases, disputes over inheritances.

HIV and AIDS social stigma

Local human rights NGOs reported no accounts of societal violence or discrimination against persons with HIV/AIDS, but persons with HIV/AIDS did not generally disclose their status due to social stigma associated with the disease.

Other societal violence or discrimination

Unmarried men continued to face housing discrimination based solely on marital status. The law prohibits single men from obtaining accommodation in many urban residential areas. Single noncitizens faced eviction due to a decision by the municipality to enforce this prohibition and remove them from residences allocated for citizens' families, citing the presence of single men as the reason for increasing crime, a burden on services, and worsening traffic.

— To be continued in tomorrow's issue

Kuwait, Gulf determined to solve crisis

KUWAIT: Kuwait Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah said that Kuwait and the Arab Gulf countries were determined to solve the crisis among the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. Qatari Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Thani visited Kuwait earlier on Monday and discussed with the officials "means of solving this crisis," Jarallah told reporters during the final session of the Arab Media Forum Monday night. "Everybody realizes the longer this division the deeper the wound will be in the Gulf body," he said. Jarallah said the US was exerting efforts to solve the crisis. He added circumstances were not yet ripe to hold a summit between the GCC and the US. He noted the summit might be held next September.

PM's sponsorship
Jarallah said meanwhile that His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah's sponsorship of 15th Arab Media Forum reflected its importance and vitality. Jarallah expressed content Kuwait was hosting Arab journalists to talk about "issues and problems of the region." He said media could play a major role in educating the public. Jarallah said social media was triggering revolutions and toppling governments, which made it impossible to control. Social media, he added, was also used as a launch pad to spread rumors.

Media credibility
Current and former ministers, and academicians, participating in the Arab Media Forum, underlined importance of credibility and professionalism in media. They said media were facing many challenges foremost credibility, professionalism, funding and training. Mohammad bin Essa, former Moroccan foreign minister, said the human being was the main challenge facing media. He called for providing professional training for journalists as well as highlighting responsible freedom.
Nabil Al-Hamar, Bahraini King's media advisor, said social media lacked credibility and complained that "the majority of journalists are not qualified and not trained properly." The fabricated news published by the social media "is the big challenge we face in media," he said.

Special agendas
Dr Mohammad Al-Rumaihi, a Kuwaiti jour-



KUWAIT: Kuwait Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah (right) attends the final session of the Arab Media Forum. — KUNA



Current and former ministers and academicians participate in the Arab Media Forum.

nalist, said media have special agendas and that he believed the main challenge was the training of journalists. Mahmoud Shammam, Libyan former Information Minister, said laws governing social media were outdated in the face of revolution of technology. Head of media network in Iraq Mujahed Abulhail said media played a great part in the victory against so-called Islamic State (IS). Sudanese Deputy Premier and Information

Minister Ahmad Othman the spread of social media has undermined freedom and responsible media. He called for the regulation of social media, as well as on state institutions to be credible and transparent. Bahrain Information Minister Ali Al-Rumaihi lamented failure of state officials in dealing with media or using social media. Rumaihi said the public should be educated on the use of media means. — KUNA

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Indonesian
ex-speaker jailed
for corruption

Pakistan’s Pashtun rights movement grows, defies army

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BEIRUT: Photo shows campaign poster for Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri, for the upcoming Lebanese parliamentary election, hanging in the Tariq Jedideh district of Beirut. —AFP

Tensions flare up before Lebanese poll

Offices of Sunni candidate attacked in Beirut

BEIRUT: Incidents of political violence including an assault on one candidate and an attack on the office of another are casting a shadow over Lebanon’s first general election in nine years. The May 6 vote will take place using a complicated new electoral law. It is not expected to cause major changes to the government or its policies. Analysts expect Prime Minister Saad Al-Hariri will head the next cabinet.

But the law has made the outcome less predictable in some places. This has sharpened local rivalries and is encouraging parties to campaign extra hard. “The threats to candidates, men and women, are escalating. We expect more of them as we approach the election, and we expect an increase in violence,” said Omar Kabboul, the executive director of the Lebanese Association for Democratic Elections (LADE), a group of independent electoral observers.

“The outcome of the elections is uncertain. The more uncertain the outcome, the more fear there is within the parties and the bigger the agitation in speeches.” Some 28 years after Lebanon’s civil war, nobody expects any major strife, but the country has been plagued by repeated bouts of political instability that have weighed on its economy. The Lebanese system divides up power according to strict

sectarian quotas, with parliament’s 128 seats split evenly between Christian and Muslim groups. The flare-ups reported so far have pitted rivals from the same sect against each other.

The army intervened on Sunday night to break up a confrontation between supporters of rival Druze parties south of Beirut in which guns were fired in the air, a security source said. The standoff spiralled from a row over electoral posters. Also on Sunday, an independent Shi’ite candidate said Hezbollah supporters beat him up in their southern Lebanon stronghold, where he is standing against the two dominant Shi’ite parties Hezbollah and Amal.

Ali al-Amin said a group of more than 30 Hezbollah supporters accosted him while he was hanging an election poster in his home village of Shaqra in Bint Jbeil district. “I

accuse... a political side, which is Hezbollah, of arranging this incident and I hold it mainly responsible,” he said, adding that the group “could not tolerate the presence of

one photo or poster of a candidate who is against them”. Ali Saleh, the pro-Hezbollah head of the local council, said it was an “individual incident” that was now in the hands of the judiciary and security forces. “Ali al-Amine is a candidate ... and every candidate has the right to practice his media campaign and his electoral campaign,” he said.

Confrontation

The heavily armed, Iran-backed Hezbollah, which gained legitimacy among many Shiites by fighting Israeli forces that occupied the south until 2000, has taken part in Lebanese elections since the early 1990s, enjoying an

effective duopoly of the Shiite vote with Amal. The parliamentary election has been postponed three times, chiefly because Lebanon’s fractious politicians could not agree on the new election law that was demanded by Christian parties.

It has redrawn constituency boundaries and introduced a new proportional representation system that experts say has been engineered to suit the dominant political players but has still left a good deal of uncertainty at the local level. Last week, supporters of Hariri’s Future Movement attacked the offices of an electoral rival in the capital, breaking his windows, the rival candidate said.

First, his election posters were torn down, then his supporters were attacked after a rally, and then his campaign office was assaulted, prompting some volunteers to quit, said Nabil Badr. Interior Minister Nohad Machnouk, a Future Movement member, acknowledged on television that some of the party’s supporters had carried out the attack. He said they had been provoked by Badr’s bodyguards, who had themselves assaulted a local figure. “All the parties are tense because they don’t know the outcome of this electoral law,” said Badr. “The electoral battle will be strong in Beirut.” —Reuters

Ex-sports stars seek to shake up Iraq politics

BAGHDAD: In the sweltering heat of Mexico ‘86, Ahmed Radhi and Basil Gorgis pulled on the same jerseys to represent Iraq’s football team in its sole World Cup Finals. But now, a third of a century later, they’re just two of several former stars taking part in a very different contest-as parliamentary candidates in next month’s election. While the World Cup adventure ended in dismal failure, with Iraq crashing out after losing all three of its group games, the ex-players’ appeal could be a big draw for some Iraqi voters.

“They already have fans,” says Hussein Hassan, a 45-year-old Baghdad resident. “It’s now the turn of these stars to put themselves at the service of the people.” Distrust of politicians ahead of the May 12 vote is high, with the 15 years since the US-led toppling of former dictator Saddam Hussein marred by repeated periods of chaos and endemic corruption. “We have more confidence in them than the politicians, who have changed nothing,” Hassan says.

‘Defending minority interests’

It’s a view that Radhi, scorer of Iraq’s only World Cup Finals goal, takes on board. “Iraqis need someone who shows that they are focusing on their interests, and who will work to guarantee a decent life,” the National Alliance candidate says. The 54-year-old says his political group “brings together all communities and confessions.” The National Alliance is led by Iraq’s Vice President Ayad Allawi, a secular Shiite, and parliamentary speaker Salim al-Juburi, a Sunni. It’s a union that seeks to move beyond Iraq’s Shiite-Sunni ethnic cleavage a major pull for the ex-footballer. The NA’s list of candidates is liberal and “transcends confessionalism,” he says. “This is what the people want now.”

Other candidates, sporting or otherwise, have more



BAGHDAD: Photo shows the campaign poster of Ahmed Radhi, a former Iraqi footballer, hanging in a street in Baghdad. —AFP

narrow motivations. Radhi’s former teammate Gorgis is among a list of candidates fielded by “Abna Al-Rafideyn,” a group bringing together Chaldean Christians, Assyrians and Syrians. Now administrator for the national team, Gorgis is running in the Kurdish city of Arbil and says he seeks to protect the interests of Christians. Standing up for the rights of his community is also what motivates Chaker Mohammad Sabbar, another former player on Iraq’s national soccer team. The 50-year-old, who appeared in every position except goalkeeper during his career, is Sunni, a group that’s played second fiddle to the majority Shiites since Saddam’s fall.

Sabbar says loved ones cautioned against involvement in politics, telling him it would “achieve nothing, because no change is possible.” But their advice hasn’t stopped him running as a candidate in Ramadi, capital of Anbar province in central Iraq. Sabbar is number 10 on the list of the “Tamaddun” group, which advocates a secular state. Sunni dominated Ramadi was seized by the Islamic State group in May 2015, before being retaken by government forces less than a year later. “The people have suffered enormously,” says Sabbar, whose family live in the region. “Now, it’s time our interests are defended, like those of other Iraqis,” he adds. —AFP



Independent Shiite candidate assaulted in southern Lebanon

George HW Bush hospitalized a day after wife’s funeral

WASHINGTON: Former president George HW Bush was being treated for a blood infection yesterday, just days after laying his wife Barbara to rest. His office stressed late Monday that Bush, 93, was responding to treatment. He was admitted to Houston Methodist Hospital early Sunday, the day after bidding a final farewell to his wife of 73 years during a funeral in the same Texas city.

Barbara Bush died last Tuesday. The 41st president greeted and shook hands with numerous attendees at the invitation-only funeral attended by four former presidents, including himself and his son George W Bush. More than a thousand people attended the ceremony. “I always knew Barbara was the most beloved woman in the world, and in fact I used to tease her that I had a complex about that fact,” Bush said after his wife’s passing. Their marriage was the longest presidential union in American history.

He married the love of his life while on leave from military deployment in 1945, several months before World War II ended. Bush, who suffers from Parkinson’s disease and is wheelchair-bound as a result, has been repeatedly hospitalized for pneumonia. His is a less-common version of Parkinson’s that only affects the lower body. “President Bush was admitted to Houston Methodist Hospital... after contracting an infection that spread to his blood,” a statement from his office read. “He is responding to treatments and appears to be recovering. We will issue additional updates as events warrant.”

One-term war hero

George Herbert Walker Bush was born June 12, 1924 in Milton, Massachusetts to a wealthy New England political dynasty, the son of Prescott Bush, a successful banker and US Senator for Connecticut. Bush had a pampered upbringing and attended the prestigious Phillips Academy in Andover, but delayed his acceptance to Yale in order to enlist in the Navy on his 18th birthday and head off to World War II. He went on to fly 58 combat missions during the war. He was shot down over the Pacific by Japanese anti-aircraft fire and rescued by a submarine after huddling in a life raft for four hours while enemy aircraft circled. He served as vice president to Ronald Reagan for eight years after losing to him in the 1980 Republican primary, and was elected president by a solid margin in 1988, as the Cold War was coming to an end.

The decorated war hero and former CIA chief suffered the ignominy of being a one-term president, but led a political dynasty that would win back the White House eight years later, albeit with a leader with a very different approach. A foreign policy realist who navigated the turbulent fall of the Soviet Union in 1989, he assembled an unprecedented coalition to defeat Saddam Hussein two years later. But he also presided over a period of economic malaise and infuriated his fellow Republicans during a budget battle with rival Democrats by famously breaking his vow: “Read my lips: no new taxes.”

After retiring from public life, Bush fulfilled a wartime pledge to one day jump out of a plane for fun and went sky-diving on his 75th, 80th and 85th birthdays. He joined Bill Clinton on the Democrat to whom he lost his re-election bid to raise funds for victims of the 2004 Asian tsunami and the 2010 Haiti earthquake. In February 2011 Democratic president Barack Obama awarded Bush the highest US civilian honor, the Medal of Freedom. Bush, who served as commander-in-chief from 1989 to 1993, is the oldest of the five living former US presidents. He is father to ex-president George W Bush (2001-2009) and former Florida governor Jeb Bush, who was a contender in the 2016 Republican presidential primaries. —AFP

International

All-male no more: London Parliament Square gets first statue of a woman

Statue of suffragist Millicent Fawcett unveiled

LONDON: A statue of 19th century British feminist leader Millicent Fawcett was unveiled in London's Parliament Square yesterday, the first monument honoring a woman in a public space previously occupied by 11 statues of men. Fawcett led campaigning for women to be given the vote in Britain, and the unveiling of the statue was the high point in a series of events marking 100 years since some women were granted that right for the first time in 1918.

Fawcett is represented in middle age, with her head held high, gazing straight at the Houses of Parliament and holding a banner that reads "Courage calls to courage everywhere", a quote from one of her speeches. The bronze by Turner Prize-winning artist Gillian Wearing - also the first statue by a woman to stand in the square - took its place among monuments to the likes of Winston Churchill, Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela and Abraham Lincoln. Prime Minister Theresa May, Britain's second woman head of government, said during the unveiling ceremony that she would not be standing there today, in that role, had it not been for Fawcett's struggle.



UK marks 100 years since women got their right to vote

"Few of us can claim to have made an impact as significant and lasting as Dame Millicent, and it is right and proper that, today, she takes her place at the heart of our democracy," May told an audience of politicians, business

leaders, feminist campaigners and schoolchildren. Among onlookers was Kimberley McGinty, who works as an advocate for women in the construction industry. She had come with her mother Anne Ballard, and her 13-year-old daughter Millicent, who is named after Fawcett. "I wanted a name with meaning, a strong character, somebody she could be proud

of," said McGinty, explaining her choice. The trio said they found the unveiling emotional and inspiring.

"There is still a long way to go for women," said Ballard. The honoring of Fawcett and wider celebrations of the centenary of women's right to vote have gained additional relevance due to recent revelations about the extent of the gender pay gap in Britain and other persistent inequalities. Fawcett started campaigning for votes for women when she was 19 years old, in 1866. She dedicated the following six decades of her life to the cause,



LONDON: People pose for photographs with a statue of suffragist and women's rights campaigner Millicent Fawcett by British artist Gillian Wearing after it was unveiled in Parliament Square in London yesterday. — AFP

leading what was then known as the suffragist movement-as opposed to the suffragettes who adopted more militant methods of activism. She lived to see Britain's then all-male parliament pass the Representation of the

People Act of 1918, which gave the right to vote to some women over 30 years old, and later the Equal Franchise Act of 1928 which equalized the age at which men and women could vote. She died in 1929. —Reuters

Fire kills 18 in China's south

BEIJING: A fire tore through a karaoke lounge in southern China yesterday, killing 18 people and injuring another five, as authorities arrested an arson suspect who had reportedly blocked the entrance with a motorcycle. The fire started after midnight in a three-storey building in Yingde, Guangdong province, and was put out shortly before 1:00 am local time, according to the police.

A preliminary investigation found that it was caused by arson, the public security department in Qingyuan city, which oversees Yingde, said on its Weibo social media account. The suspect got into an argument, then used a motorcycle to block the building's door and lit the fire, state broadcaster CCTV said, adding that he was on the lam. Police said the suspect was captured in a village district, shortly after authorities offered a 200,000 yuan (\$32,000) reward for information leading to the arrest of a man identified as a 32-year-old with burn marks on his hips.

The official Xinhua news agency, citing the city government, said the suspect, identified as Liu Chunlu, confessed after he was arrested at his home. "I was drunk last night and had had a fight with unknown people (before the fire)," Liu told police, according to Xinhua. The police statement did not describe the location of the fire but state media said it occurred in a small KTV house, or karaoke lounge. Unverified videos from the scene posted by local media show flames leaping from the building on a tree-lined street at night, with fire trucks and a crowd of onlookers on the road. The five injured people are receiving treatment in a hospital, state TV said.

Karaoke is a popular activity in China, with even shopping centers featuring booths where people can sit and sing their favorite songs. Larger KTV lounges proliferate as well, often spanning across multiple floors in a building, with narrow corridors linking dozens of individual rooms together. The lounge where the fire occurred was smaller, with only one corridor for entry and exit, state TV said. Merry-makers often go for a buffet dinner and sing and drink with a small group of friends in the private rooms late into the night. Deadly fires are common in China, where safety regulations are widely flouted and enforcement is often lax. —AFP

'Maximum security:' Philippines readies Boracay shutdown

BORACAY: Police with assault rifles patrolled entry points to Boracay island yesterday just days before a six-month shutdown and clean-up of one of the Philippines' top tourist attractions. President Rodrigo Duterte had branded the renowned white-sand resort a "cesspool" fouled by dumped sewage and imposed the temporary ban on visitors that is due to take effect tomorrow. Authorities yesterday held a practice run of security measures, asking residents of the tiny island to present identification cards at the gateway port of Catitlan to be allowed entry.



In Boracay, police conducted exercises simulating clashes with protesters, terrorist attacks and a hostage incident even as they said there was no specific threat. "In any plan we need maximum contingency. We will have an assessment if we need to add or reduce our forces but we now have enough forces," local police official Jesus Cambay said. Once hailed as one of the world's top holiday destinations by travel magazines, Boracay is among Southeast Asian destinations reeling from decades of unchecked tourism and environmental degradation. Officials have warned the island's drainage system is being used to send untreated sewage from hotels and restaurants into its turquoise waters.

Duterte has threatened to arrest people who try to block government efforts to rehabilitate the sewage system and demolish illegal structures. With no sign in sight of resistance to the clean-up, some residents were surprised by the presence of more than 600 policemen. "I think it's excessive. Why does Boracay have so many policemen?" tour promoter Jessie Ibon said. "It might scare the tourists, seeing soldiers with long firearms." Workers said they did not mind security checks, adding they were more worried about their jobs. —AFP

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International

Nicaragua on knife-edge; protest death toll hits 27

Relatives of US Embassy staff ordered to leave

MANAGUA: Nicaragua was sliding into uncharted territory yesterday with protests against longtime President Daniel Ortega swelling to outpace a robust police crack-down in which at least 27 people have been killed. Nearly a week of unrest has violently exposed public resentment of the 72-year-old leftist leader and his wife Rosario Murillo, who is the vice president. Relatives of US Embassy staff have been ordered out of the country by the State Department in a sign of international alarm at the turn of events. Looting has also broken out, prompting shop owners to guard their premises with weapons.

Sparked by pension reforms unveiled last Wednesday, the protests have since grown and taken root across the country to include long-simmering grievances over political stagnation, economic frustration, and Ortega and Murillo's distant and authoritarian style. While students have led the street protests that have degenerated into stone-throwing clashes with police firing weapons, other groups have made their opposition to Ortega felt.

That was in evidence late Monday, when tens of thousands of workers, pensioners and ordinary residents marched in the capital Managua to demand an end to the repression against protesters. The peaceful demonstration was called by business leaders who have withdrawn their support of Ortega because of the violence used by his security forces. "Out! Out!" yelled some of the marchers, echoing the students' demand that Ortega and Murillo step down. Similar marches took place in the northern cities of Esteli and Matagalpa.



President Ortega under pressure

Ortega taken aback

Ortega has been taken aback by the worst anti-government protests he has faced since being returned as president 11 years ago after a prolonged period in opposition. On Sunday he canceled the pension reform, and has offered to hold talks to calm the street tensions. Murillo on

Monday promised to have arrested protesters freed. But so far they have refused to bow to demands to rein in the police.

Late Monday, officers raided the Polytechnic University of Nicaragua—the nexus of the student protests—for the second night running, AFP photographers witnessed. The Nicaraguan Center for Human Rights has given a death toll of 26 since last Wednesday. One of the fatalities was a Nicaraguan journalist shot in the head over the weekend while covering the chaos in a city on the country's Caribbean coast. Murillo added another death to the count on Monday. She said a police officer succumbed to fatal injuries sustained in Sunday protests. Street protests are extremely rare in Nicaragua, where the army maintains a very tight grip on public order.

"We are not going to go into any dialogue as long as those arrested have not been freed, as long as the repression does not end, and as long as the conditions aren't there for talks," Michael Healy, the head of the national farmers' union said. "The protests are no longer just about the INSS (social security office), it is against a government that denies us freedom of expression, freedom of the press



MANAGUA: People march - demanding Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega and his wife, Vice-President Rosario Murillo to step down in Managua. —AFP

and to demonstrate peacefully," 26-year-old political science student Clifford Ramirez told AFP. It was unclear where the wave of unrest could go. The protesters have no identified leaders, making it difficult for Ortega to hold talks with that movement. The opposition has become toothless under the president's long reign. The Vatican, the

United States and the European Union have all condemned the violence gripping Nicaragua. UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres called for restraint and urged Ortega's government to "ensure the protection of human rights of all citizens, particularly the right to peaceful assembly and freedom of expression." —AFP

News in brief

37 Maoists killed in India

NEW DELHI: Police said yesterday that dozens of Maoist guerrillas had been killed in jungle raids in India's remote interior by commandos fighting the country's longest-running conflict. Ambushes on rebel camps over the past two days in forest deep inside the western state of Maharashtra have left at least 37 fighters dead, police said. In the latest raid six guerrillas, including four women, were killed in a shootout late Monday in Gadchiroli district, Maharashtra state's head of anti-Maoist operations Sharad Shelar said. Police also seized weapons and ammunition from the encampment, roughly 900 kilometers east of the state capital Mumbai, he added. On Sunday special commandos had surrounded a rebel camp in forests within the same district and fought approximately 100 guerillas, police said. —AFP

Anti-corruption tsar jailed

CAIRO: An Egyptian military court yesterday sentenced a former anti-corruption chief, Hisham Geneina, to five years in jail after he said a presidential candidate had secret documents allegedly damaging to the army, his lawyer said. "The verdict is five years, and we're doing the appeal (procedure) now," lawyer Ali Taha said. The military detained Geneina in February accusing him of "spreading news that harms the armed forces" following an interview he gave to Huffpost Arabi, the Arabic version of the US news site. Taha said he was convicted on the same charge. Geneina had been a top campaign aide to General Sami Anan, a former armed forces chief of staff whom the military also detained after he announced he would stand in last month's presidential election against Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi, who swept to victory for a second term.—AFP

Missing students 'killed'

GUADALAJARA: Three Mexican film students who went missing five weeks ago were kidnapped, tortured, killed and likely dissolved in acid, investigators said Monday, a gruesome end to a case that triggered vehement protests. The students-Salomon Aceves Gastelum, 25; Daniel Diaz, 20; and Marco Avalos, 20 - went missing on March 19 as they returned from shooting a film project outside Guadalajara, Mexico's second city, where they attended the University of Audiovisual Media. Witnesses said they were intercepted by a group of six to eight men who forced them into another car and fled. —AFP

A rare transplant in US

BALTIMORE: A soldier wounded by an improvised explosive device in Afghanistan has received the world's first complete penis and scrotum transplant, officials at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore said on Monday. A team of nine plastic surgeons and two urological surgeons operated on the veteran, whose nationality was not disclosed, for 14 hours on March 26, the hospital said in a statement. The team transplanted an entire penis, a scrotum without testicles and a partial abdominal wall from a deceased donor. The wounded man, who requested anonymity, has recovered from the surgery and is expected to be discharged from the hospital this week. —Reuters

Earthquake injures 39

ISTANBUL: An earthquake struck Turkey's southeastern province of Adiyaman yesterday, injuring 39 people and damaging buildings, state-run Anadolu news agency reported. The US Geological Survey (USGS) said the earthquake, which struck at 0034 GMT, had a magnitude of 5.2 and occurred at a depth of 10 km. Anadolu quoted Health Minister Ahmet Demircan as saying 35 of the 39 injured were being treated but none were in a serious condition. Images posted on social media showed serious damage to numerous houses. The quake was followed by eight small aftershocks, Anadolu said. —Reuters

Armenia unites to mark Ottoman massacres

YEREVAN: Armenians yesterday marked the anniversary of the massacre of 1.5 million of their kin by Ottoman forces in 1915, in a show of unity a day after leader Serzh Sarkisian resigned following days of mass protests. The commemorations are a hugely emotional event for the South Caucasus country and Armenians of all stripes flocked to a hilltop memorial in the capital Yerevan with flowers in their hands to honor the victims of the World War I-era killings.

This year's events were held a day after Sarkisian, who the opposition accused of a blatant power grab, stunned the country by saying he was in the wrong and resigning just days after being elected prime minister. The acting head of government, Karen Karapetyan, appealed for unity after the wrenching political turmoil, with talks set for Wednesday with protest leader Nikol Pashinyan to discuss the transfer of power.

Russia—which has a military base in Armenia—appealed for stability but said it would not interfere. Many Armenians said it was important the country managed to avoid bloodletting ahead of the highly symbolic commemorations. "Thank God Armenian blood was not shed on the eve of the Genocide Remembrance Day," Seyran Halachyan, 58 said at the foot of the hilltop memorial, the country's most visited landmark. Ashot Minasyan, 72, said he was grateful to Sarkisian for not crushing peaceful protests and "leaving without bloodshed".

'Difficult phase'

Karapetyan thanked all political forces for heeding his call for unity in the former Soviet republic. "We are going



YEREVAN: Opposition supporters carrying a giant Armenian flag attend a rally commemorating the 103rd anniversary of the massacre of 1.5 million of Armenians by Ottoman forces in 1915, in downtown Yerevan yesterday. —AFP

through a difficult new phase in our history," he said in a statement. "Today we show the world that despite difficulties and unresolved domestic issues we are together and united. This is our duty to the genocide's innocent victims." Pashinyan, who led the mass demonstrations, was expected to lead supporters to the memorial later.

"Tomorrow we will go together to tell our martyrs that the people have won, that the genocide for our people is in the past," Pashinyan said Monday. Pashinyan said on Facebook that yesterday he would conduct "political consultations" to discuss a number of concrete steps so that people's victory "could be legally guaranteed". He has said that parliament would have to elect a new prime minister within a week and that new parliamentary elections were also on the cards. Armed with buckets and brushes, some demonstrators also went to the capital's Republic Square to clean up the protest site.

'Good Taleban'

For years, Pakistan has been accused by the US and others of using militants such as the Afghan Taleban as proxies, allowing them safe haven in the tribal areas. Islamabad has repeatedly denied the claims. It says it has carried out multiple operations in the region, and taken steps to harden the porous border, while pointing to the thousands killed by militants as evidence of Pakistan's sacrifices. "No army can support terrorists against whom they have fought so relentlessly," Major General Asif Ghafoor, the military spokesman said. But the allegations persist. In January, the White House suspended security assistance to Pakistan over the issue.

Despite a dramatic improvement in security in recent years, the tribal districts remain largely out of bounds to foreigners and journalists, making claims difficult to verify. The PTM's Pashteen says at least 40 of his family members and friends have been killed in the chaos unleashed by the war since 2001. Another 30 have been abducted, he claims. Fellow activists tell of similar losses. "You can call someone 'Good Taleban' but he's not good for us... he's killed us," Pashteen explained, referring to a euphemism for alleged Pakistan-backed insurgents that fight in Afghanistan.

Tippling point

Pashtuns hold a complicated place in Pakistan, where they number roughly 30 million, accounting for 15 percent of the population. Lauded for their martial abilities since Alexander the Great, both militants and the military have turned to them for decades to fight their wars. Both the Afghan and the Pakistani Taleban, two separate militant entities, are dominated by Pashtuns. As a result, ordinary Pashtun civilians are often stereotyped as backward tribesmen in league with terrorists, harassed in cities, harassed by landlords and denied hotel rooms. "We have fought for our own country. Then why has this been done to us?" asked PTM supporter Sher Bahadar Afridi.

In the beginning, Pashteen's aims were humble. When he and a small group of friends started on the "Pashtun Long March" to Islamabad in January, they carried a list of just 150 names allegedly abducted by security forces, hoping to present it to authorities. The demand was not new-rights activists have been demanding an end to enforced disappearances for years in Pakistan. But the murder of a Pashtun social media star in an alleged extrajudicial killing by the police in January proved to be a tip-

'Will there be new shocks?'

Many said they felt mixed emotions because the impoverished country's future was uncertain. "I've been thinking from the start of the day that everything is just beginning," said Asya Bagdasaryan, 43. "What awaits us in the future? Will there be new shocks?" Political turmoil enveloped the impoverished country of 2.9 million people after Sarkisian was last week elected prime minister by lawmakers after serving a decade as president.

The opposition charged that the 63-year-old wanted to extend his grip on power under a new parliamentary system of government. Tens of thousands of people subsequently took to the streets of Yerevan and other cities in largely peaceful protests. Sarkisian initially refused to resign but quit on the 11th day of demonstrations after a number of serving and former servicemen joined the marches. —AFP



PESHAWAR: Pakistani demonstrators from the tribal Pashtun Protection Movement (PPM) shout slogans during a rally in Peshawar. —AFP

pling point, with thousands rallying behind Pashteen leading to the PTM's creation. "The biggest thing (the movement) achieved was removing that atmosphere of fear," explained analyst Rafiullah Kakar.

But their reception in the mainstream media has been muted. A far-reaching media blackout has kept news and images of the rallies off TV screens nationwide. Despite the pushback, PTM is demanding action-including investigations into disappearances and extrajudicial killings and an end to what it says is undue harassment of Pashtuns at security checkpoints. The military, meanwhile, has accused them of collusion with Pakistan's enemies. "They are young and simple Pashtuns who are being exploited by inimical forces," said Ghafoor, the military spokesman.—AFP

Indonesia’s former speaker gets 15 years in jail for corruption


One of the country’s toughest sentences for graft

JAKARTA: Indonesia’s former parliament speaker was given a 15-year prison term yesterday in one of the country’s toughest sentences for graft, marking a victory in a continuing clampdown on widespread corruption. Setya Novanto, once among the country’s most influential politicians, had been accused of taking millions of dollars in kickbacks and bribes linked to the national roll-out of government ID cards. “We have found defendant Setya Novanto, beyond reasonable doubt, guilty of violating anti-corruption law,” presiding Judge Yanto told the packed Jakarta courtroom.

Novanto—once praised by Donald Trump as one of Indonesia’s most powerful figures—said he would need time to consider an appeal. His months-long trial came after a string of maneuvers—including allegedly faking an injury in a car crash—which critics say the 62-year-old used to dodge serious charges. Prosecutors had demanded a 16-year sentence. Judge Yanto, who like many Indonesians goes by one name, also fined Novanto 500 million rupiah (\$36,000), far less than the \$7.4 million prosecutors had wanted him to pay as restitution to the state.

Novanto, who had managed to sidestep corruption allegations in the past, was accused of playing a key role in embezzlement from the \$440 million ID card project, with some \$170 million disappear-

ing from state coffers. Several other politicians, government officials and businessmen have been charged in the scandal. The scale of the graft shocked many Indonesians even in one of the world’s most corrupt countries. Payoffs and bribes are rife at all levels of society and endemic in many state agencies, including the police force.



Novanto accused of taking millions of dollars in kickbacks

Grappling with graft

Indonesia ranked 96th out of 180 countries on Transparency International’s corruption index last year, while it scored a lowly 37 on a scale of perceived public corruption with 100 seen as “very clean” and zero “highly corrupt”. The war on graft has come with a high price for some. A top investiga-

tor for Indonesia’s powerful Corruption Eradication Commission was partially blinded in a 2017 acid attack as he was heading the probe into the case involving Novanto and others.

No one has yet been arrested. The verdict comes several years after the former chief justice of Indonesia’s constitutional court, Akil Mochtar, was jailed for life for accepting bribes to issue favourable decisions in local election disputes. It was the country’s heaviest-ever sentence for corruption. Novanto, who dodged questioning by the anti-corruption agency for months, was arrested in hospital in November after he claimed to have been injured in a car crash.

The reported accident came shortly after a failed raid on his palatial estate. Indonesia’s graft buster subsequently charged Novanto’s then-lawyer and doctor with obstructing justice over allegations they booked a hospital room for the supposedly injured politician before his purported car accident happened. Novanto had been forced to quit as speaker in 2015 after he was caught on tape trying to extort a stake in the Indonesian unit of US mining giant Freeport-McMoRan in exchange for extending the company’s right to operate in the archipelago. He was later cleared and reappointed as speaker in 2016. He quit again last year after the most recent charges were laid. —AFP



JAKARTA: Indonesia’s former house speaker Setya Novanto sits in the court room during his trial in Jakarta yesterday. —AFP

Australians flock to French WWI battle site, a century on

VILLERS-BRETONNEUX: Thousands of Australians including Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull arrived in northern France yesterday to remember the soldiers who lost their lives in a key World War I battle a century ago. Turnbull and his French counterpart Edouard Philippe were set to inaugurate a new 63 million euro (\$76 million) museum commemorating the 295,000 Australian soldiers who came to fight alongside Allied forces on the Western Front. The Sir John Monash Centre in the Somme region, which became synony-

mous with slaughter during the 1914-18 war, uses life-size videos of soldiers and a 360-degree cinema to showcase the role of Australian troops.

“Lord of the Rings” director Peter Jackson advised on the filming of scenes for the museum’s video displays, which were shot in Australia, France and New Zealand to bring the experience of trench warfare to life. “I just came to pay my respects for the lads who gave their lives and the families who gave their sons,” Helen Leake, who travelled from Melbourne in honour of her father’s cousin, told AFP in Villers-Bretonneux yesterday.

Greg Henderson, a salesman from Brisbane, came to honor his great-grandfather Charles Joseph Mackie, who died at nearby Proyart. “You walk through the graveyards and see that they’re 19, they’re 20. It breaks your heart to see it,” he said. Some 8,000 soldiers’ descendants and other mourners were arriving to

remember the dead ahead of a ceremony at dawn today to mark Anzac Day, Australia’s national day of remembrance. Turnbull, Philippe and Britain’s Prince Charles will all speak at the dawn ceremony. The official opening of the museum, on the site of the Australian National Memorial where more than 2,000 soldiers are buried, comes 100 years to the day since the Battle of nearby Villers-Bretonneux.

German troops seized the village on April 24, 1918, on a major westward push towards the end of the war. But Australian and British troops, backed by French forces, launched a counter-offensive, stopping the German advance towards the highly strategic nearby city of Amiens. Over the course of the war, some 46,000 Australian troops died and more than 130,000 were injured—huge losses for a nation whose population was only five million at the time. Only one identified body was ever repatriated to Australia.

Beyond the centenary

Yves Tate, the 84-year-old who runs the small Franco-Australian Museum in Villers-Bretonneux, said it was moving to see Australians still visiting the town of 4,000 people a century on. “We’re seeing the arrival of a fourth generation of soldiers’ descendants who understand the duty to remember,” he said. “What’s essential for us is that this continues after the centenary, this welcoming of the Australians, and the relationship between the two countries.” The new history museum, which opened to the public earlier this month, is named after Australian general John Monash. Along with hundreds of screens projecting archive footage, it will display soldiers’ diaries, photographs and letters, while visitors will be able to enter a recreation of the trenches. “Lord of the Rings” director Jackson also lent the museum two World War I planes from his personal collection for the films, which took more than a year to produce. —AFP

Kim and Moon: The heir born to rule and the escapee’s son

SEOUL: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and the South’s President Moon Jae-in have followed paths to power as radically different as their two countries, but they will come together at a summit in the Demilitarized Zone on Friday. Moon’s parents were both born in a small village in Hungnam, in what is now North Korea, and his father Moon Yong-hyung graduated from an elite high school before becoming a local government agricultural official.

As the Korean War raged in late 1950 and Kim Il Sung’s forces besieged the city they were among 100,000 civilians who fled the North in the Hungnam Evacuation, one of the US military’s biggest-ever civilian rescues. Moon’s mother—whose sister was left behind—gave birth to the future president in a refugee camp in Geoje, present-day South Korea. Moon’s well-educated but taciturn father had interest in social issues and read a literary magazine popular among intelligentsia, but had little talent in business, racking up huge debts and becoming depressed. “Even when he opened a small store, it was at a location that everyone said would not work. He was like that all the time,” Moon wrote in an autobi-

ography. The family relied on food handouts from Catholic nuns—Moon still describes himself as a Catholic—and his mother became the main breadwinner, running small businesses including peddling clothes on the street, while a young Moon often helped her pulling a cart full of coal briquettes. The father passed away aged 58 in 1978 after Moon Jae-in was released from the military. “He suffered all his life as a refugee and later in poverty. He had so many expectations for me but died without seeing my success. I was so heartbroken and felt so guilty,” Moon later wrote.

But he inherited his father’s academic abilities and social consciousness, becoming a lawyer and a human rights activist during the dictatorship of Park Chung-hee, before he was tapped by liberal president Roh Moo-hyun as a key aide in 2003. The following year he accompanied his mother Kang Han-ok for a tearful reunion with her sister at Mount Kungang, and as the president’s chief of staff he attended the last inter-Korean summit in Pyongyang in 2007. He lost the 2012 presidential election to Park’s daughter Park Geun-hye, before she was impeached last year and he won the vote to succeed her.

Life of luxury

Pyongyang proclaims that Kim Jong Un’s father Kim Jong Il was born at a secret guerrilla camp on Mount Paektu, a sacred site to Koreans—and in the next-door province to Hungnam. Independent experts and Soviet records say he actually came into the world in a Siberian village where his own father Kim Il Sung was in exile. Much of Kim Jong Un’s early history is similarly surrounded in mystery—so much so that even his precise date of birth is unclear. But he has lived a life of luxury. —AFP

Germany tries man over brazen abduction

BERLIN: Germany put on trial yesterday the only suspect held over what it calls a brazen Cold War-style kidnapping by Vietnamese secret agents that has badly bruised bilateral ties. The accused—a Vietnamese-Czech man identified only as Long NH, 47 - allegedly rented and delivered the van that was used in last July’s abduction of a fugitive Vietnamese state company official in a Berlin park. The kidnapped man, Trinh Xuan Thanh, 52, who was seeking political asylum in Germany, was quickly spirited back to Hanoi and sentenced this year to two life terms in prison on corruption charges.

Thanh and his female companion, Thi Minh PD, aged in her mid-twenties, were walking in Berlin’s Tiergarten park when “they were both dragged, right out in the open, into a VW van, to be taken to Vietnam against their will,” said prosecutor Lienhardt Weiss. Weiss said Thanh was returned to Vietnam “by unknown means”. —AFP


CONDOLENCES

Kuwait Times Editor-in-Chief, management and staff convey their deepest condolences to the son, Sherwin Fernandes and the family of

Maria Rita Moraes

wife of our former colleague late Francis Xavier Moraes, who passed away on 23-04-2018 at Mubarak hospital, Kuwait.

May God rest her soul in peace



condolences

The Management and Staff of
EQUATE Petrochemical Company
wish to offer their heartfelt
condolences to

Mr. Zahid Nadeem
RMD - Reliability & Integrity Division

On the sad demise of his

Father

May his soul rest in peace and may
God grant comfort and strength to the
bereaved family members during this time

Analysis

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Unfazed Rio drug gangs willing to wait

Leaders of Rio de Janeiro's heavily armed drug gangs agree on at least one thing with the head of Brazil's army: An ongoing military intervention cannot solve the soaring crime and violence that is roiling the seaside metropolis. "Will the army break this cycle of violence?" asked a leader of the Red Command, Rio's most powerful drug gang, on a recent weeknight as deputies weighed marijuana and cocaine on a digital scale in a slum from which they operate. "Not a chance."

The comments, made to Reuters during a rare visit to leaders of Rio's two most influential drug gangs, come two months after President Michel Temer deployed 30,000 troops here, saying organized crime had "taken over Rio de Janeiro." The gang leaders are admitted criminals wanted by police for their role in drug violence. Their viewpoint, which Reuters sought in an effort to understand both sides of Rio's violent divide, reveals organizations that are unapologetic for their criminal activities but not likely to attack a military they see as a temporary inconvenience, at worst. "Nothing will change," said a leader of the Pure Third Command, Rio's second most powerful gang and the arch rivals of the Red Command. He said he may lie low during the intervention but his foot soldiers will keep selling drugs. "I will return and get back to work when they leave," he added. Two months into the army's 10-month deployment, this metropolitan area of more than 12 million people is even more tense than before - riven by the recent murder of a prominent city councilwoman and, days later, police killings of eight young men in Rocinha, Rio's largest slum.

The killings add to a mounting toll of homicides that spiked after a recent recession gutted Brazil's economy and Rio's public security budget. In just three years, as police went unpaid and ill-equipped, violent deaths here surged 35 percent, according to state figures. Although violence has plagued Rio for decades, the rate is the grisliest of many indicators once again despairing locals. Before the recession, many thought Rio had finally turned a corner, booming with offshore oil and successfully hosting the most recent summer Olympic and World Cup competitions.

Now, even the head of Brazil's army, General Eduardo Villas Boas, says Rio should not expect a quick fix for violence that pits underfunded police against drug gangs and paramilitary militias that control large swathes of the metropolitan region. In March, the first full month with the army in charge of security, 191 violent deaths were reported within Rio city limits, a 24 percent increase from February. Police killings of suspects jumped 34 percent in the same period. While the military will work to restructure police ranks and root out pockets of well-documented corruption, real solutions must be "extremely long term," the general said during a March briefing. Rio's problems stem from "decades and decades of neglect and not meeting the population's basic needs," he added.

'No real impact'

Nearly a fifth of Rio's population live in favelas, sprawling slums where many go without basic water, sewerage or garbage services. Favelas are home to millions of law-abiding citizens but also, because of the lack of state presence, Rio's most powerful drug gangs. Despite their role in the drug trade, which ravages communities and spawns bloody turf wars, the gangs have long provided authority where the government does not. The gangs are tolerated, even welcomed, by many residents fearful of what they see as trigger-happy police. The March shootings in Rocinha were typical of the grim contradictions that often surround Rio law enforcement operations, many of which are never fully investigated. While police claimed the young men were drug traffickers, their families denied any gang connections. Reuters recently spent three days and nights in the redoubts of the Red Command and, separately, the Pure Third Command. Their leaders, who spoke on condition of anonymity and that their precise locations not be disclosed, discussed the military intervention and the large social divide that in many ways empowers them. They did not discuss specific crimes or recent incidents.

Scores of subordinates, armed with pistols and AR-15 style rifles, guarded streets around both hideouts. Neither soldiers nor police, who retain responsibility for most street patrols and other day-to-day law enforcement, were anywhere nearby. The Red Command leader, who started as a gang lookout three decades ago at age 11, said he expects little interference during the intervention. Deployments in 2014 and 2016, when soldiers supplemented police forces while Rio hosted the World Cup and Olympics, barely affected business, he recalled. "They tried before," he said. "There was no real impact on violence or our ability to operate." That is in part because the gangs, who often have superior armaments to police forces, hail from and are the de facto rulers of many of Rio's roughly 1000 favelas. They not only control the drug trade but have the authority, especially in moments of conflict, to order businesses and schools to close. "To truly attack us, they have to turn this into an urban war," the Red Command leader said. "The gangs, no matter which, are part of the favela. We come from it and blend into it, are part of the fabric. How are they going to pull that apart without a slaughter?"

'On our own'

The Pure Third Command leader, speaking to Reuters in a favela 25 km away from the Red Command-controlled slum, said the previous deployments made it clear to gangs that they, after frequent armed clashes with police, are more seasoned combatants than troops. After all, Brazil's army has not waged war in nearly 150 years. "Soldiers are inexperienced kids who have seen a lot less fighting than we have," he said. "They do not really want to come after us." Brazil's army did not respond to requests for comment beyond those already made by the general. But security experts not involved in the intervention agree with the gangs' assessment. At most, they say, the army can help Rio authorities analyze the problems of a police force known as corrupt, violent and ineffective. "The best thing that can come from this is that the army gives a comprehensive diagnosis of the challenges," said Paulo Storani, a former Rio police commander who now works as a security consultant. —Reuters



Workers face 'unacceptably dangerous' conditions

Although safety is a higher priority five years on from the Rana Plaza disaster in Bangladesh that killed 1,135 garment workers, dangerous conditions persist in smaller factories, campaigners said. Among the improvements needed, they said, are raising the minimum wage, regulating work hours, and mapping supply chains. The collapse of the eight-storey building on the outskirts of the capital Dhaka on April 24, 2013 also injured more than 2,000 workers, sparking demands for better safety in the world's second-largest exporter of readymade garments.

The accident saw brands, unions and the government set up initiatives to improve factory safety. However, many workers still "work at their own peril", researchers said, despite "great progress in many of the largest and best factories". "Workers in thousands of subcontracting factories, many of them young women, continue to work under unacceptably dangerous conditions," Michael Posner of New York University's Stern Center for Business and Human Rights said in a statement.

Posner's statement was part of a report released earlier this month that assessed the post-Rana Plaza work environment. The report - "Five Years After Rana Plaza: The Way Forward" - estimated that up to 3,000 subcontractors help "mother factories manage their export workload". For many suppliers, subcontracting is a vital business practice that helps to compensate for ever-increasing production pressures, said report co-author Dorothee Baumann-Pauly.

"With falling prices and faster fashion, the need to rely on subcontractors may be greater than ever for suppliers, despite the risks involved in the practice," she said. Among the risks for workers, the report said, are that many smaller factories ignore safety rules, and operate out of unsafe buildings that lack fire exits, alarms and extinguishers.

Wake-up call

Parveen S Huda, who heads a project to map digitally every garment factory in Bangladesh, said her team was going street by street to count even the smallest manufac-

turing unit and ensure it was logged in the system. "More than 1,000 workers did not die in vain. They opened our eyes to the extreme conditions of workers, and we are slowly moving from just safety aspects to a more holistic approach to protect the rights of workers," she said.

Two agreements after the disaster saw retailers involved in initiatives to improve safety: the Bangladesh Accord on fire and building safety, and an alliance on worker safety. Since then about 2,000 factories have been inspected, nearly 3 million workers have been trained on fire safety, and failings at many factories have been fixed. Other improvements include setting up helplines and forming safety committees in factories. "Awareness is up, and



Little change 5 yrs after Rana Plaza disaster

calls on helplines are up," said Michael Bride of the Bangladesh Accord. "For years workers had been told that they shouldn't run away, but stay and fight the fire. Now they understand that they need to evacuate, and have the right to refuse unsafe work."

'Cheap labor'

Despite the progress on safety, Bangladesh's garment workers remain among the worst-paid in the world, a compensation report released by Fair Labor Association (FLA) yesterday stated. The legal minimum wage of \$66 is below the World Bank's global poverty line of \$85 and the Asia

Floor Wage of \$454. That means many workers must work overtime to supplement their wages, the FLA's report said. Overtime income accounts for 20 percent of their salary, it said, and half of the workers put in more than 60 hours a week despite the impact on their health.

"The 'cheap labor' branding of Bangladeshi workers needs to go," Syed Sultan Uddin Ahmed of the Bangladesh Institute of Labor Studies told the Thomson Reuters Foundation in Dhaka. "Within the factories, work conditions have improved in the last five years - but outside, the living conditions have not."

Way ahead

Posner at the Stern Center said it would cost \$1.2 billion to fix poor conditions in subcontracting factories, and said a task force should be set up to count the number of factories and assess what it would cost to improve safety. And, he added, a fund should be established by brands, governments and charities to help pay for improvements. "Western consumers are the beneficiaries of the cheap clothes produced in Bangladesh. Therefore, it is incumbent on western brands and retailers, as well as western governments, to step up to the plate," Posner said.

In a statement, members of the alliance for worker safety - a grouping of mostly US retailers - said their factories had reached the "starting line for safety, not the finish line", and called on brands, factory owners and the government to cement the gains made. Unions have also called on more brands to get involved. The FLA report said buyers sourcing from Bangladesh should support a higher minimum wage and assure suppliers that they would pay more to meet that cost.

"The work pressure, production targets, forced overtime and lack of social security makes the garment worker very vulnerable even today," said Babul Akhter of the Bangladesh Garment and Industrial Workers' Federation. "Constant monitoring of the initiatives is required. The negotiating power of workers has to be strengthened to get them a fair deal for the clothes they stitch for global brands." —Reuters

Armenians vent anger in 'victory for civil society'

Protesters in Armenia who forced the resignation of Prime Minister Serzh Sarkisian on Monday were united by his bid to stay in power and concerns about the country's struggling economy and rampant corruption, analysts said. Pro-Moscow Sarkisian was elected prime minister by lawmakers last week soon after ending a 10-year stint as president, sparking outrage on the streets. "The emotional catalyst was the decision of Serzh Sarkisian to stay in power... He promised not to stay, then said he was staying, because 'the situation changed,'" said Armenian-based political analyst Vigen Hakobyan.

Constitutional amendments approved in 2015 transferred powers from the presidency to the prime minister. By switching office, Sarkisian was effectively extending his chokehold on power. "People feel humiliated. The impudence, the lawlessness that is characteristic of oligarchic rule," said Hakobyan. Thousands of protesters celebrated on the streets Monday after spending the last few days demanding Sarkisian step down.

'Oligarchic state'

"In Armenia's 27 years of independence, not one president has ruled more than the permitted two terms or has rewritten the constitution to suit him," said Grigor Atanesian, a political observer and Fulbright scholar at the University of Missouri. "Serzh Sarkisian's resignation is a victory for civil society," he added, noting that all sectors of society protested against him.

Economic woes in the landlocked country of 2.9 million, known for its worldwide diaspora and ancient Christian faith, also sparked the public's anger. Currently around a third of people live under the poverty line, said Atanesian, adding that many detest the influence of powerful oligarchs. Armenian analyst Arman Boshyan was skeptical, however, that the opposition movement will reduce the power of tycoons. "Armenia has been an oligarchic state since 1991," he said, referring to the breakup of the Soviet Union. "Unfortunately I don't think that this movement will fight the oligarchs."

Atanesian echoed this caution, saying Sarkisian's resignation "will not lead automatically to an ideal liberal democracy," citing a lack of an independent judiciary and key television channels controlled by oligarchs close to Sarkisian. For Yury Navoyan, who heads a Moscow-based Russian-Armenian association of journalists and analysts, the crisis came as "most of the population had no trust either in the authorities or in the current political system in general". "For a long time now there have been two polar opposites: the authorities and the citizens." Following Sarkisian's resignation, a provisional government will either call early elections or the different parties will unite around protest leader and opposition MP Nikol Pashinyan, Navoyan said.

'No change' for Russia ties

As for Armenia's close ties with Russia, including hosting a Russian military base, analysts said that the political crisis will not affect its relationship. "Russian-Armenian relations won't see great change. The Russian military base will stay in its usual place," said Navoyan. Russia earlier ruled out action ahead of Sarkisian's resignation. "Why should Moscow interfere? This is exclusively Armenia's internal affair," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told journalists. —AFP

Rural Kenyans beat heat with mud-brick homes

Perched on a dirt tower on the edge of a bog in Kivoo village, eastern Kenya, Erastus Njiru applies finishing layers of mud to a pile of bricks. "I can sell up to 3,000 of these per week," said the 34-year-old, inspecting his work as he dried his muddy hands with a worn towel. "Each brick goes for 8 Kenyan shillings (\$0.08), so in a good week I can make up to 24,000 Kenyan shillings (\$240.00)," he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

Njiru is one of an increasing number of Kenyans selling and buying earth bricks to build homes which are cooler, cheaper and more environmentally friendly than the more typical stone houses. About 15 percent of new homes are now built with mud bricks, compared to less than 1 percent in 2010, according to Aidah Munano, a senior official at the Kenyan ministry of land, housing and urban development.

Unlike quarrying, which involves clearing trees to make room for excavations, mud bricks only require a bit of dirt and water, said Gitonga Murungi, a Kenyan conservationist. "Demand for mud bricks is on the rise in rural Kenya because they cool homes during hot days and keep them warm at night," he said. They also cost about half as much as bricks made from stone quarrying, he added. Njiru agrees. "People are giving up on building homes with quarry stones because they are expensive," he said. "And the government says that quarrying and sand harvesting damage the environment," he added.

Having dropped out of high school due to a lack of funds, the former farmer now proudly pays for his children's education. "I used to barely get by when growing maize and beans," he explained. "But now I make a lot more by selling mud bricks to residents and property developers in the area."

Rising heat

Extreme heat across the country is a threat to many Kenyans as "their crops and livestock waste away due to a lack of water", according to Ayub Shaka, deputy director at the Meteorological Department. Rising temperatures made Milka Njeri, a sorghum farmer from nearby Kanyumbora village consider brick-making as a way of making extra money. Njeri said some days are so hot she has to stay indoors and can only start work in her fields as the sun sets. Like Njiru she has started moulding bricks at home using mud from a nearby bog to compensate for the lost income from farming - while sheltering from the heat. "It is not much but I can make an extra 2,000 Kenyan shillings (\$20) a week by selling bricks at construction sites," she said.

Protecting the environment

Brick makers should ensure their work does not end up damaging the environment as well, said Violet Matiru, a conservationist at the Millennium Community Development Initiatives, a local charity that raises awareness of environmental issues. "We need to be careful that brick-making doesn't use up all the soil in bogs because it stores excess water during floods and helps limit their impact," she explained. James Nyang'aya, a researcher at the University of Nairobi, thinks that while mud-brick homes can help communities adapt to rising heat, they are not the only solution. "People should not just change their homes, but (also) their way of life," he said. Wearing light clothes and planting trees around homes to provide shade can also help cope with extreme temperatures, he said. "You can even build your home's doors and windows according to the wind direction to create your own air conditioning," he added. —Reuters

News

Toronto attack suspect charged...

Continued from Page 1

He was calm as he was led away and is scheduled to return to court on May 10 for a bail hearing.

Two South Koreans were among the dead, a foreign ministry official in Seoul told AFP, adding that another of the country's citizens seriously injured. The Canadian Broadcasting Corp identified one of the victims as Anne Marie D'Amico, an employee of asset manager Invesco Canada. In a statement, Invesco confirmed that one of its employees had been killed, but did not name her.

As the wounded recovered in local hospitals, federal, provincial and local investigators were probing the case, Toronto Police Chief Mark Saunders said. "Canadians across the country are shocked and saddened by this senseless attack," Trudeau told a news conference. But, he added: "We must not start living in fear and uncertainty every day as we go about our daily lives."

Students who attended a Toronto vocational school with Minassian described him as withdrawn and a bit awkward. The suspect lived with his father in the Toronto suburb of Richmond Hill, and attended Seneca College, according to his LinkedIn social media profile. Minassian kept mostly to himself at school, and seemed to constantly rub his head or hands - a possible sign of obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), classmates told local media.

Ari Blaff, one of the students, told public broadcaster CBC that Minassian's behavior "was usually quite strange." But he'd "never noticed anything violent" - the suspect just "made people feel uneasy around him". Minassian, who has an imposing physical build, defied a police officer during his arrest. Wielding an object in his

left hand, standing near the van with its front end smashed, the suspect shouted "kill me" to the police officer with his gun drawn, according to an amateur video posted on social media. The police officer approached the suspect, ordered him to kneel and then handcuffed him. The city's police chief later said Minassian was unarmed.

Some 30 minutes earlier, panic had gripped the residential neighborhood along a long stretch of Yonge Street where the driver had jumped the curb onto the sidewalk. "I heard screaming, yelling. I turned back and saw this truck going that way. He was going in and out, back and forth, zigzagging. He just kept on going," said 42-year-old Rocco Cignelli. "I saw there were people lying on the ground. I saw they were doing heart compressions, and I saw two people dying right here in front of me," he told AFP, pointing at bodies lying under orange sheets.

Yesterday, police continued to comb the crime scene for evidence, while crowds gathered at a makeshift memorial to leave messages of condolences and flowers. Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne was among those who stopped to leave flowers at the memorial, pausing to read cards left in remembrance of the dead. "We must remain a country that is open and free and comfortable with its values, and we will continue to do that," Trudeau said. Officials will "reflect on the changing situations in which we are in, and do everything we can to keep Canadians safe," he added.

One possible clue to his motive emerged yesterday as Facebook confirmed Minassian said in a post before the incident that referenced an "incel rebellion," a shorthand used in some online message boards for "involuntary celibacy". The post also voiced admiration for a man who killed six college students before taking his own life in California in 2014. Facebook has since deleted Minassian's account, a representative said. "There is absolutely no place on our platform for people who commit such horrendous acts," she said in an email. — Agencies



WASHINGTON: French President Emmanuel Macron (left) and US President Donald Trump meet in the Oval Office during a state visit to the White House yesterday. —AFP

Trump rips into Iran deal, calls...

Continued from Page 1

It did not tackle Western complaints about Iran's ballistic missile programs or support for militant groups across the Middle East.

Trump faces a May 12 deadline to decide on its fate and is demanding changes that many in European capitals believe would represent a legal breach. "I think we will have a great shot at doing a much bigger, maybe, deal," said Trump, stressing that any new deal would have to be built on "solid foundations". "This is a deal with decayed foundations. It's a bad deal, it's a bad structure. It's falling down," the US leader said. "We're going to see what happens on the 12th."

When asked to clarify if he meant he was pushing for a new accord, or an add-on agreement, Macron said: "I'm not saying that we move from one agreement to another." The French president said a new deal would have to include three additional elements: Tehran's ballistic missile program, its influence across the Middle East, and what happens after 2025 - when under the current accord Iran would be able to progressively restart part of its nuclear program. He called the initial 2015 deal only the "first pillar" of an eventual wider deal.

For months, American and European officials have been working behind the scenes to try to find a compromise over Trump's demands to change the agreement. Officials have toyed with the idea of a separate

joint declaration: Promising to tackle non-nuclear issues, while searching for a tougher successor accord. Iran, meanwhile, has warned it will ramp up enrichment activities if Trump walks away from the accord, prompting Trump to issue a blunt warning. "They're not going to be restarting anything. If they restart it, they're going to have big problems, bigger than they ever had before. And you can mark it down," the US president said.

Meanwhile, Trump praised Kim Jong Un as "very open" and "very honorable" yesterday, adding the North Korean leader wants to meet "as soon as possible". "We are having very good discussions," Trump said, ahead of a summit with the mercurial Kim expected sometime before the end of June. "He really has been very open, I think - very honorable. Now, a lot of promises have been made by North Korea over the years, but they have never been in this position," added the US leader as he hosted Macron at the White House.

"We have been told directly that they would like to have the meeting as soon as possible," Trump said, adding: "We think that's a great thing for the world. We'll see where that will all go." Trump also reiterated that he would walk away from the talks with North Korea if they are not fruitful. "Unlike past administrations, I will leave the table," he said. "But I think we have the chance to do something very special."

North Korea pledged last week to halt nuclear and missile tests as it prepares for a summit between Kim and Trump, but has not committed to giving up its atomic weapons - which Pyongyang views as a shield against the Western overthrow of its government. Kim is set to meet later this week with South Korean President Moon Jae-in - the highest-level encounter yet in the whirlwind of nuclear diplomacy. — Agencies

Philippines apologizes to Kuwait over....

Continued from Page 1

At a press conference yesterday, Villa echoed Cayetano's apology to Kuwait for undermining the state's sovereignty.

"This afternoon Alan Cayetano, secretary of foreign affairs, issued an apology for the actions that were undertaken by the embassy of the Philippines in the past weeks to assist Filipino nationals in grave distress here in Kuwait, but which the government of Kuwait unfortunately found unacceptable," he said.

He appealed for understanding by the Kuwaiti government and people of the sworn duty of the Philippines government under the leadership of Duterte to respond to calls for assistance from Filipinos in distress abroad. "I welcome the outcome of the meeting this morning between Secretary Cayetano and the Kuwaiti ambassador in Manila, where they agreed on measures that could be taken to avoid future misunderstandings, such as to strengthen the Kuwaiti government's 24/7 hotline to immediately respond to urgent requests for assistance by Filipino nationals in coordination with the Philippine Embassy," Villa said.

The two countries also agreed to jointly establish additional shelters if needed for distressed Filipino workers, he added. Furthermore, the two countries will jointly formulate a mechanism to ensure better and efficient coordination between the Philippine Embassy and Kuwaiti authorities in responding to any emergency case involving Filipino nationals, and also ensure immediate action by Kuwaiti authorities on pending requests for assistance from distressed Filipino workers and to facilitate the repatriation of more than 800 Filipinos currently staying in shelters of the Philippines Embassy.

Villa said the two countries agreed to ensure proper and humane treatment of Filipinos who may be taken into custody after the April 22 amnesty deadline expired and to repatriate them immediately with the assistance of the Philippines Embassy. "On behalf of my government, I would like to express deep apprecia-

tion of the embassy of the Philippines to the hospitality extended by the government of Kuwait to the more than 250,000 Filipinos who have made Kuwait their second home and for granting the amnesty that allowed us to repatriate more than 5,000 of our people," he concluded.

On Monday, Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah had said reducing number of Filipino diplomats in Kuwait was "possible" following "violations and statements" by officials in the Philippines. However, Jarallah had ruled out relations between the two countries would be severed. "The standoff with the Philippines is contrived and the officials in Manila are the ones who started this current standoff," Jarallah told the final session of the Arab Media Forum. "There are a large number of Filipinos who have been living in peace for years in this country, so it is quite strange this issue escalated so quickly," he added.

MP unimpressed

However, opposition lawmaker Mubarak Al-Hajraf was not happy over the turn of events yesterday, and charged that the diplomatic row between Kuwait and the Philippines over workers is a cover for illegal issues like money laundering, commissions and commercial deals between officials in both countries. He urged Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah to investigate "suspicious" moves by the Philippines against Kuwait under the cover of labor problems. He claimed that the domestic labor dispute "is a cover for other issues being exchanged in media circles like money laundering, commissions and commercial deals between officials in Kuwait, specifically the foreign ministry and certain sides in the Philippines".

"What is happening is a pressure card under the cover of domestic helpers," Hajraf charged. He said that the foreign ministry must do its job to safeguard the integrity and image of Kuwait and should perform its diplomatic role in the best way, adding that the measures which the ministry claimed it had taken were insufficient, unclear and did not rise to the occasion. Hajraf urged the minister to carry out his political duties by first revealing the truth about the allegations of money laundering and other illegal activities and secondly make an appropriate response to the measures being taken by the Philippines against Kuwait.

WhatsApp raises minimum age...

Continued from Page 1

personal information in the agreement it has created for the European Union. "Our goal is simply to explain how we use and protect the limited information we have about you," it said.

WhatsApp, founded in 2009, has come under pressure from some European governments in recent years because of its end-to-end encrypted messaging system and its plan to share more data with its parent, Facebook. Facebook itself is under scrutiny from regulators and lawmakers around the world since disclosing last month that the personal information of millions of users wrongly ended up in the hands of political consultancy Cambridge Analytica, setting off wider concerns about how it handles user data. WhatsApp's minimum age of use will remain 13 years in the rest of the world, in line with its parent.

GDPR is the biggest overhaul of online privacy since

the birth of the Internet, giving Europeans the right to know what data is stored on them and the right to have it deleted. Apple Inc and some other tech firms have said they plan to give people in the United States and elsewhere the same protections and rights that Europeans will gain.

European regulators have already disrupted a move by WhatsApp to change its policies to allow it to share users' phone numbers and other information with Facebook to help improve the product and more effectively target ads. WhatsApp suspended the change in Europe after widespread regulatory scrutiny. It said yesterday it still wanted to share the data at some point. "As we have said in the past, we want to work closer with other Facebook companies in the future and we will keep you updated as we develop our plans," it said.

Other changes announced by WhatsApp yesterday include allowing users to download a report detailing the data it holds on them, such as the make and model of the device they used, their contacts and groups and any blocked numbers. "This feature will be rolling out to all users around the world on the newest version of the app," it said. The blog post also points to safety tips on the service, such as the ability to block unwanted users, and delete and report spam. — Reuters

Kuwait Times

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Tokyo 2020 Summer Games warned by Olympic bosses

National Olympic committees will visit Tokyo in November

TOKYO: Tokyo Olympic organisers were given a sharp reminder yesterday to raise their game after complaints from several international sports federations about preparations for the 2020 Summer Games.

IOC coordination commission chief John Coates warned that as the spotlight falls on Tokyo after a successful Winter Games in Pyeongchang earlier this year, Olympic stakeholders would become increasingly impatient for answers.

“You are the next host city so the urgency is quite clear to us,” Coates told a news conference in Tokyo. “It is very important that when you do presentations, you just have to answer the questions and be forthright in doing so,” he added. “It might not always be in your nature, but the questions are going to come.”

More than 200 national Olympic committees will visit Tokyo in November but a handful of sports federations have already expressed concerns over Tokyo's preparations, most recently at a SportAccord meeting in Bangkok earlier this month.

Coates played down the extent of those fears, claiming they were limited to judo, sailing and triathlon. Triathlon officials remain worried about high levels of bacteria detected last year at the 2020 Olympic venue, he confirmed.

“Triathlon was still concerned about water quality,”

said Coates. “We received a presentation about experiments that will take place for better screening of the water. “There were concerns expressed by judo as to why their 2019 world championships would not be used as a test event. I think they are going to be used, so perhaps there hasn't been close enough liaison.”

GONE FISHING

Coates insisted questions raised by sailing officials boiled down to a potential clash with local fisherman. “I think it was to do with the fishermen there and how the fishing would impact on the boats as they were training in that area,” he said.

“I'm assured that those matters are under control, or being got under control or certainly receiving attention.”

Tokyo's Olympic organisers have faced criticism over a series of embarrassing public relations blunders since beating Madrid and Istanbul for the right to host the 2020 Games.

Most notable was the bungled rollout of the Olympic stadium in 2015 when Prime Minister Shinzo Abe ripped up plans for the venue because of public fury over its \$2 billion price tag. After being subsequently ordered to slash costs, Tokyo organisers announced a cut of \$1.4 billion in the budget last December, bringing the overall bill to 1.35 trillion yen (\$12.5 billion).

Pointing to the success of Pyeongchang Olympics,

what we talked about. Tonight, this is fun, this is where you want to be.”

Boston hasn't played in round two of the playoffs since 2013-14. Bruins captain Zdeno Chara said of heading to Game 7, “It's all about one game. It's one game and you've got to be ready for your best game.”

After a scoreless first period, DeBrusk put the Bruins ahead 1-0 only 1:02 into the second, beating Andersen with a wrist shot from the top of the right circle. The Maple Leafs answered almost immediately. Nylander sent a rebound past Rask at 1:37 after Nikita Zaitsev threw the puck in from the blue line.

Toronto had a goal waved off with 16:56 left in the second after Zach Hyman's skate caught Rask's gear and pulled the goalie out of position. The Bruins challenged for goaltender interference, and the tally was overturned.

Marner backhanded in the go-ahead goal through Rask's five hole with 6:35 left in the middle period. “Obviously, I mean the news that we heard when most of us woke up from our (pregame) nap was devastating,” Marner told NBC Sports Network after the game. “We're wishing all the families, we're giving our love to them. But you want to come in here tonight and make sure we played the game we wanted to, and I think we did.”

Plekanec scored an empty-netter with 1:14 remaining in the third. The team that scored first had won every game in the series before Monday. Before the game, the Maple Leafs and Bruins came together on the ice for a moment of silent to remember to victims of Monday's tragedy. The crowd joined the national anthem singer in a moving rendition of “O Canada.” — Reuters



TOKYO: International Olympic Committee (IOC) vice president and chairman of the Coordination Commission for Tokyo 2020 John Coates (L) and Tokyo 2020 president Yoshiro Mori (R) attend a joint press conference following the IOC project review meeting in Tokyo yesterday.— AFP

where North and South marched together at the opening ceremony, Coates refused to politicise North Korea's possible participation at Tokyo 2020.

But he said he was aware of the emotive issue of Japanese abducted by the North. “I understand the ter-

rible pain that those who were taken away and those that were left behind have experienced,” he said.

“But there's an obligation on a host government to allow free access to all delegations, athletes and their officials who are accredited for the Games.” — AFP

Andersen makes 32 saves as Maple Leafs top Bruins

TORONTO: The Toronto Maple Leafs earned an emotional victory for their city on Monday night, and they kept their season going in the process.

Hours after a van struck and killed 10 pedestrians and wounded many others in Toronto, the host Maple Leafs beat the Boston Bruins 3-1 in Game 6 to force a seventh game in their Eastern Conference quarterfinal series.

Mitchell Marner scored the go-ahead goal, his second of this year's Stanley Cup Playoffs, in the second period, and William Nylander (first playoff goal) and Tomas Plekanec (second) also scored for Toronto. Frederik Andersen made 32 saves.

Jake DeBrusk had his third goal of the playoffs for the Bruins. Boston's Tuukka Rask had 27 saves. Game 7 is Wednesday in Boston. The winner of that game will face the Tampa Bay Lightning in the conference semifinals.

Toronto trailed the series 3-1 after losing Game 4 at home but rallied for a 4-3 road win Saturday in Game 5. The Maple Leafs are trying to advance past the first round of the playoffs for the first time since the 2003-04 season. Maple Leafs coach Mike Babcock said, “We think we're going to win. We've thought that all along. We started poorly and crawled our way back. Now, you have the opportunity of a lifetime. This is



TORONTO: Brad Marchand #63 of the Boston Bruins skates against Ron Hainsey #2 of the Toronto Maple Leafs in Game Six of the Eastern Conference First Round in the 2018 Stanley Cup Play-offs at the Air Canada Centre on Monday in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. The Maple Leafs defeated the Bruins 3-1. — AFP

Gymnastics Australia unveils new child safety guidelines

SYDNEY: Gymnastics Australia yesterday unveiled new child safety guidelines and appointed its first coordinator to educate those involved in the sport about appropriate behaviour, in the wake of the US abuse scandal.

The governing body said that, with 91 percent of the sport's more than 220,000 athletes aged under 12, “child safety is the highest priority”. Gymnastics Australia (GA) chief Kitty Chiller told national broadcaster ABC the new National Child Safety Commitment Statement would be added to existing guidelines.

“What we are doing now is formalising practices that have already been in place,” Chiller said, adding that the sport did not have ongoing issues with child abuse. “This is obviously very much in the media and the public space, it's had a lot more exposure in the last recent months because of the Larry Nassar case.” A once highly-regarded US gymnastics national team doctor, Nassar was accused of abusing more than 260 athletes over two decades and was sentenced to up to 175 years in prison in January.

The commitment statement pledges that national, state and territory bodies will take a “zero tolerance approach” to any child abuse. It promises to go beyond policies and procedures to create a “culture of safety” that allows all members to feel comfortable when reporting inappropriate behaviour.

The new child safety coordinator Phoebe Pownall, who will also serve in a similar role for the state body Gymnastics Victoria, said part of her job will be to educate clubs, coaches, parents and gymnasts about what constituted abuse. “I don't think people in the community are really aware of what abuse is. We tend to think it is on the margins of society. It is not,” Pownall told The Australian newspaper yesterday.

“It is prevalent everywhere. It is about teaching people that it is a risk and empowering them to make a change and make it safe for kids.” A royal commission established in 2012 by Canberra to investigate institutional child sex abuse said in its final report released last year that more than 4,000 institutions were accused of abuse.

The findings said 408 survivors reported child sex abuse in sport and recreation settings, with 344 sport and recreation institutions across the nation identified by the victims. — AFP

Bryan Habana to retire at end of season

CAPE TOWN: South Africa's World Cup-winning winger Bryan Habana is to retire at the end of the season after failing to recover from injury, he said yesterday.

The 34-year-old, named World Rugby Player of the Year after helping South Africa win the 2007 World Cup, has been sidelined for much of the season at his French club Toulon.

“The inevitable moment has come knocking on my door and I've welcomed it in for a drink,” Habana wrote on Instagram. “It's

been more than a year of hoping, trying, pushing and willing to get back on the field for one last time, to taste the sweet victory or encounter that gut-wrenching despair.

“To hear the roar of the crowd or grab the pill out of the air. To make that last bone-crunching tackle or score that last game winning try. “But it's unfortunately just not to be. I, like most, would have liked my career to have ended differently, but sometimes things don't turn out quite the way we hope for.”

Habana is South Africa's leading test try scorer with 67, two behind the world record held by Daisuke Ohata of Japan. Habana's 124 caps is the second highest for a South African player. “We have been privileged to have witnessed the career of Bryan Habana, who will undoubtedly be remembered as one of the great legends of Springbok rugby,” SA Rugby President Mark Alexander said in a statement. — Reuters



Bryan Habana

National Guard, KSSC to organize shooting course

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: President of Kuwait and Arab Shooting Federations Eng Duaij Khalaf Al-Otaibi lauded the cooperation between Kuwait Shooting Sport Club and the National Guard in the field of training National Guard shooters at Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Olympic Shooting Complex.

He said this cooperation produced champions at the Arab and International levels, adding the most notable shooters this year include Mansour Al-Torqi Al-Rashidi in the skeet, as he made many achievements at the international, Asian and Arab levels, Shooter Hamad Al-Namshan in the pistol and he won the Arab Shooting Tournament Olympic archers Bader Al-Mutairi and Faisal Alrashidi and rifle shooter Khalid Ibrahim.

Al-Otaibi said, that as a continuation to support national shooting teams with outstanding athletes, and as an implementation of the cooperation protocol, the National Guard leadership organized an Olympic shooting course in cooperation with KSSC for national guardsmen from April 15th until May 3, 2018, as 55 shooters are participating in the shotgun, pistol, rifle and Olympic archery. Outstanding shooters will be given intensive training alongside national team's shooters under the supervision of KSSC international coaches.

Al-Otaibi thanked the National Guard for its continued support of Kuwait shooting.

Sports

Los Angeles Angels bounce back with win over hot Houston Astros

Williamson help San Francisco turn back visiting Washington

HOUSTON: Tyler Skaggs scattered four hits in seven innings, and Kole Calhoun and Justin Upton each had RBIs as the Los Angeles Angels defeated the host Houston Astros 2-0 on Monday in the opener of a three-game series between the top two teams in the American League West. Skaggs (3-1) outdueled Gerrit Cole, who took his first loss with the Astros. Skaggs struck out three and walked one, retired the side in order in four of his seven innings and set down the final 10 batters he faced. Cole (2-1) saw his ERA jump from 0.96 to 1.29 after surrendering two runs on four hits in seven innings. He struck out eight and walked two, pitching his fifth outstanding game for the Astros since being traded to Houston from the Pittsburgh Pirates in the offseason. The game was scoreless until the fifth, when Calhoun, who had been mired in a 0-for-20 slump, singled to right field off Cole to drive home Luis Valbuena. Los Angeles added a run in the sixth as Upton's double to center field plated Mike Trout, who had singled with two outs on a 0-2 pitch.



GIANTS 4, NATIONALS 2

Mac Williamson smacked a two-run home run in the sixth inning, and Chris Stratton pitched four-hit ball into the seventh, helping San Francisco turn back visiting Washington. Williamson, promoted from the minors last week when Hunter Pence was placed on the disabled list, drove in three runs, two with his second homer in his first 13 at-bats in the majors this season. The win in the opener of a 10-game homestand was the Giants' third in their past four games. Stratton and three relievers combined on a five-hitter as San Francisco handed Washington its fourth loss in five games.

DODGERS 2, MARLINS 1

Enrique Hernandez had three hits, including a home run, and Cody Bellinger delivered a go-ahead sacrifice fly in the eighth inning as Los Angeles earned a victory over visiting Miami. The Dodgers (11-10) won for the seventh time in their past eight games, and they moved over the .500 mark for the first time this season. Adam Liberatore (1-0) got the victory, pitching two-thirds of an inning. Josh Fields tossed a scoreless ninth inning for his first save. The Marlins lost their fifth consecutive

game and have now dropped eight of their past nine. Miami tied the score 1-1 in the top of the eighth inning on Brian Anderson's RBI single.

PADRES 13, ROCKIES 5

Carlos Asuaje homered and drove in four runs, Wil Myers had four hits, and San Diego used a nine-run seventh inning to crush Colorado in Denver in the first game between the teams since their bench-clearing brawl April 11. Franchy Cordero also homered off the Padres, who have won three of their four games at Coors Field this season. Cordero hit a two-run homer off Rockies lefty Jake McGee in the seventh-inning rally, and he singled later in the inning.

YANKEES 14, TWINS 1

Giancarlo Stanton homered and collected four hits while Didi Gregorius hit a grand slam as New York rolled past visiting Minnesota. Stanton recorded his fifth career game with at least four hits and first since July 23, 2016. He hit his fifth homer of the season with two outs in the fifth off Jake Odorizzi, and he added three singles and a walk. Gregorius hit his second career grand slam in the eighth inning to give the Yankees a 12-1 lead. Tyler Austin hit a two-run, eighth-inning homer off Ryan LaMarre, who moved from center field to the mound.

REDS 10, BRAVES 4

Scott Schebler hit a two-run homer to spark a 10-hit attack and lead Cincinnati past Atlanta, ending a five-game losing streak and giving Jim Riggleman his first win as the team's interim manager. Schebler's homer, his second of the year, came off Atlanta starter Mike Foltyniewicz and was the team's first since April 15, ending a six-game homerless drought. He was 2-for-5, scored three runs and had three RBIs. The winning pitcher was Sal Romano (1-2), who allowed two runs (one earned) on four hits in six innings. Romano walked one and struck out five.

INDIANS 2, ORIOLES 1

Yonder Alonso hit a two-run homer and Carlos Carrasco pitched 7 1/3 strong innings to help Cleveland edge host Baltimore. Alonso's fifth blast of



HOUSTON: Kole Calhoun #56 of the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim singles in a run in the fifth inning against the Houston Astros at Minute Maid Park on Monday in Houston, Texas. — AFP

the season was all the offense Carrasco needed as the Indians won for the ninth time in their past 12 games. Carrasco (4-0) surrendered one run and six hits while striking out seven and walking two. Andrew Miller got the last two outs in the eighth, and Cody Allen struck out the side in the ninth for his fourth save.

A'S 9, RANGERS 4

Marcus Semien slugged Kevin Jepsen's first pitch of the ninth inning for a tiebreaking home run, triggering a six-run uprising that gave visiting Oakland the victory. Matt Chapman had a run-scoring triple and pinch hitter Jake Smolinski a two-run triple in the ninth, during which the A's sent 10 batters to the plate against two Rangers relievers. The win was Oakland's seventh

in its past eight games. The A's have scored eight or more runs in four of those wins.

WHITE SOX 10, MARINERS 4

Yoan Moncada finished a single shy of the cycle while Jose Abreu homered twice as Chicago ripped visiting Seattle. Moncada, who entered the game leading the majors in strikeouts with 33, tripled, doubled and homered in his first three at-bats as the White Sox pummeled Mike Leake. In 3 1/3 innings, Leake (2-2) was raked for 12 hits and eight runs, walking none and fanning one. Meanwhile, Chicago starter Carson Fulmer (1-1) cruised through six innings. Fulmer gave up just three hits and two runs, issuing a walk and striking out three. — Reuters

England's Root backs plans for 100-ball format

LONDON: England captain Joe Root says controversial plans for a domestic 100-ball competition could attract a new audience to Test cricket.

The England and Wales Cricket Board's proposal to introduce a new format, tentatively titled "the Hundred", with 15 regular six-ball overs and one 10-ball over, has proved divisive since an announcement last week but the England skipper is on board with the idea.

One of the fundamental aims of the ECB is to simplify the game for a fresh audience, specifically women and children, and Root thinks if the format takes off it could lead to interest in the longer forms of the game. "It's going to appeal to a completely new audience and I think that's great," Root told the i newspaper. "The more people and kids we can get into sport, the better.

"We've got to be very careful we don't measure it against the other formats... it's something to gather a new audience and gain interest, not a threat to other formats. As players,

working with the ICC (International Cricket Council), we've got to make sure the other formats don't suffer but it has a place in the game and, hopefully, we'll see that over time. "There will be people that compare it to Twenty20 and worry it might take away interest from Test cricket, but it's important to remember it will bring new people to the game.

"It might be someone who didn't know much about the game before and then goes on to watch a Test match and gets immersed in that. That's the way I'd like to look at it."

Root's predecessor as England captain, Alastair Cook, described the format as "another interesting step for cricket". "If you went back to 2003 when the ECB first launched T20 cricket, if social media had been around then I'm sure quite a few people would probably have kicked up the same amount of fuss as they have here," he told Sky Sports.

"It's different, it's exciting. How it all works with the County Championship and Test matches and when it's played, a lot of that (planning) is still to be done. But I think it's another interesting step for cricket.

"Cricket has made huge changes over the years and since I've started in 2003 — T20 being one of them. Let's see how it all pans out. Whether I'll be there to play I don't know but I'll certainly be watching it." — Reuters



Joe Root

Sharapova stunned by Garcia in Stuttgart

STUTTGART: Maria Sharapova crashed out in the opening round of the Stuttgart Grand Prix yesterday as French sixth seed Caroline Garcia staged a fightback to win 3-6, 7-6 (8/6), 6-4.

"This was not the result that I wanted, but I can take a lot out of this match," Sharapova said. "I've not competed for a few weeks, but I played pretty solid and did all of the right things.

"I served well in the first set but had a few doubles at the wrong time. Physically, I felt quite strong." The five-time Grand Slam champion, who turned 31 last week, looked to be in control as she made just two unforced errors in winning the opening set.

But Garcia, who had never beaten the Russian in four previous meetings—they last played in Madrid three years ago—rallied in the second set as she came from 4-2 down and levelled the contest in a tie-break. The 41st-ranked Sharapova returned to tennis in Stuttgart exactly a year ago after finishing a 15-month doping ban for meldonium and reached the semi-finals. She claimed an early break in the third set, but lost it in the third game as Garcia tightened the screw on the crowd favourite.

Sharapova was broken to trail 4-5 and put her opponent under momentary pressure at 0-30 as Garcia tried to serve out the win. But the world number seven succeeded on her second match point as Sharapova struck a return wide to exit after two and three-quarter hours of battle on the indoor clay court. Sharapova said her game might have been compromised by weeks of forearm injury recovery after last playing in Indian Wells six weeks ago.

"Overall I didn't react as well as I could against a server like her, she got lot of free points," Sharapova said. "I didn't get enough balls back. We were both playing fast, and aggressive. "I need to be smarter in the winning position."

Garcia will next take on Ukrainian qualifier Marta Kostyuk who scored a 6-4, 6-1 defeat of Antonia Lottnr. The youngster, who doesn't turn 16 until just before the start of Wimbledon, was joined in round two by Czech fifth seed Karolina Pliskova, who beat



STUTTGART: France's Caroline Garcia returns the ball to Russia's Maria Sharapova during their tennis match at the WTA Tennis Grand Prix yesterday in Stuttgart, southwestern Germany. — AFP

Dutchwoman Kiki Bertens 6-2, 6-2. Kostyuk made a breakthrough with a surprise third-round showing at the Australian Open as a qualifier, finally losing to compatriot Elina Svitolina.

World number 158 Kostyuk has since claimed a second-tier title in Burnie, Australia and reached a final in Zhuhai, China in March.

Her defeat of Lottnr, ranked 155th, took just under 90 minutes, with the teenager breaking four times while losing serve only once. Pliskova, who has been on site for a week training, is playing Stuttgart for the third consecutive year, after losing to eventual champion Laura Siegemund in the 2017 quarter-finals.

"I felt the best today and for sure it was not her best match but that was not much to do with me," Pliskova said. "The serve was good and I got a lot of free points, my shots were working there was no problem from my side today." The Czech dominated Bertens, with the winner firing six aces and breaking four times. — AFP

ODIs, T20s will help India adjust to English conditions

MUMBAI: Playing limited overs cricket ahead of their Test series in England will serve as the ideal platform for the Indian team to get used to conditions away from home, coach Ravi Shastri said.

India begin their tour of England in July with three Twenty20 internationals and three one-day internationals. They then take on the hosts in a five-Test series starting in August. "We will be there (in England) almost a month before the first test match. That gives us that much more time (to prepare)," former India all-rounder Shastri said.

India will come into the contests against England high on confidence after beating hosts South Africa 5-1 in ODIs and 2-1 in T20 competition earlier this year. India had earlier bounced back after losing the first two tests against the Proteas to finish the series 2-1.

"What our boys did in South Africa makes me proud as a coach because there were 21 days of cricket and on each one of those 21 days, India competed," Shastri added. "The one-day series we won after 25 years. And so, from a coach's point of view, you have to just



Ravi Shastri

stand up and say 'well done, guys. Simply magnificent. You have raised the bar.'" India lost the five Test series 3-1 when they visited England four years ago, but prevailed 3-1 in the ODI competition. The hosts won the sole T20 match. — Reuters

James Harden hits heights as Rockets soar over Timberwolves

Utah on brink to clinch series against Thunder

LOS ANGELES: James Harden scored 36 points as the Houston Rockets moved to the brink of a Western Conference first round playoff series victory with a 119-100 rout of the Minnesota Timberwolves on Monday. Harden underscored his status as front-runner for the NBA's Most Valuable Player award after leading a stunning third quarter performance that saw the Rockets explode for an astonishing 50 points.

That devastating burst of scoring—a franchise record—included 22 points from Harden as the Rockets transformed what had been a one-point contest at half-time into a comfortable victory. “We hit the switch that we’ve been trying to hit since the beginning of the playoffs, at both ends of the court,” a satisfied Harden said afterwards. “It’s pretty scary what we’re capable of when we’re locked in defensively like that and when we get rolling offensively.”

The win gave Houston a 3-1 lead in the best-of-seven series, giving the Western Conference leaders a chance to book their place in the second round of the playoffs with a victory at home in game five today. The smart money will be on Houston to wrap up the series quickly after Monday’s demolition job at Minnesota’s Target Center arena. “It was a great (third) quarter for us,” Harden said. “It gave us the belief. Now we go back to the crib and try to finish it off.” While Harden’s virtuoso third quarter performance ultimately decided the contest, the Rockets will also take heart from an offensive display that saw five players finish with double-digit points tallies. Point guard Chris Paul weighed in with 25 points—including 15 in the lop-sided third quarter—while Eric Gordon had 18 and Trevor Ariza 15.

Center Clint Capela finished with 14 points, and also pulled down 17 rebounds during his 31 minutes on court. The Timberwolves’ scoring was led by Karl-Anthony Towns with 22 points, while Jimmy Butler (19) and Derrick Rose (17) also made significant contributions.

UTAH ON BRINK

Minnesota had looked capable of snaring a series-leveling victory after a close first half, in which the Rockets took a 50-49 lead at the break. But Houston’s scorching 50-point third quarter saw the Rockets head into the fourth quarter with a 100-69 lead.

While Minnesota closed the gap as Houston eased up, the Rockets never looked like surrendering the initiative, keeping the Timberwolves at arm’s length as they closed out the win.

In Monday’s other game, the Utah Jazz moved to within one win of clinching their series against the Oklahoma City Thunder with a convincing 113-96 win in Salt Lake City.

Rookie star Donovan Mitchell made the decisive contribution for Utah with 33 points as Russell Westbrook and Paul George’s Thunder came unstuck. Utah now lead 3-1 heading into game five in Oklahoma City on Wednesday. All five Utah starters made double figures as the Jazz overturned a 30-24 first quarter deficit to tilt the contest in their favour in the second and third periods, outscoring the Thunder 66-43.

George led the scoring for Oklahoma City with 32 points while Westbrook had 23 points and 14 rebounds. Carmelo Anthony finished with 11 points on a night

“It was a great quarter for us”

”



MINNEAPOLIS: Karl-Anthony Towns #32 of the Minnesota Timberwolves goes to the basket against the Houston Rockets in Game Four of Round One of the 2018 NBA Playoffs on Monday at Target Center in Minneapolis, Minnesota. —AFP

when the Thunder’s offense was effectively contained. Utah’s Spanish international Ricky Rubio saluted the performance of Mitchell, who belied his age with a composed performance. “He’s playing amazing,” Rubio said. “He doesn’t seem like a rookie at all.

It’s fun to see it, and it’s fun to help him get better.”

The 27-year-old Rubio, who finished with 13 points, also said the collective defense had helped subdue the potent Oklahoma City line-up. “We play as a team,” Rubio said. “We did a pretty good job of containing the ball tonight; but winning is the most important thing. We’re here to win games.” —AFP

WCup hosts Russia defend anti-racism chief in theft probe

MOSCOW: Russian football bosses are rallying behind World Cup anti-racism inspector Alexei Smertin in an embezzlement probe unfolding less than two months before kickoff. The scandal surrounding Moscow police club Dynamo brings together two major problems facing Russia ahead of the June 14-July 15 final: monkey chants and corruption. A former Chelsea player, Smertin serves both as the World Cup’s chief anti-discrimination official and Dynamo’s executive director. His second job turned into a poisoned chalice when evidence came to light of 1.6 million euro (\$2 million) being stolen from the team by former general director Yevgeny Muravyov.

The sums involved are not large when compared to the money splashing around in the bigger European leagues. But they have added to organisers’ headaches as they race against the clock to put on the most expensive World Cup ever staged. Dynamo on Tuesday confirmed that it had submitted financial records linked to Smertin and Muravyov to the interior ministry. The RBK business news site said Muravyov is suspected of wiring the 1.6 million euros to his own shell companies using the cover of two fictitious business deals.

Dynamo concedes that the documents authorising the money transfers were signed by Smertin—a charismatic former national team captain who played for English Premier League giants Chelsea in 2003-2006. But it argued yesterday that Smertin was forced into approving the transactions by Muravyov.

“The information available to (the team) permits us to believe that Smertin was intentionally deceived by, and was carrying out the direct orders of, Dynamo’s former general director,” it said.

A Russian football source familiar with the investigation told AFP that police also did not hold Smertin responsible for the wire transfers. The interior ministry has issued no comment and Muravyov has denied being aware of any wrongdoing at Dynamo.

“I have no idea what people are talking about,” he told the Sport Express website on Monday. Smertin is responsible for raising awareness about racism in Russian football and cleaning up the domestic game.

It is a high-profile role on which world governing body FIFA is placing special emphasis because of racial abuse at Russian matches in the past months. FIFA has opened disciplinary proceedings against Russia over monkey chants heard during a World Cup warm-up against France in Saint Petersburg in March. And Russian football chiefs on Wednesday will study video of abusive chanting directed at Cape Verdean midfielder Nuno Rocha during a domestic cup semi-final in Moscow.

Dynamo are a storied club who were backed by the secret police in the Soviet era but have had financial difficulties in more recent years. They were relegated to Russia’s second division in 2016 and underwent a management overhaul in March. Smertin began his carrier playing for Dynamo’s northern Siberia squad in his native city of Barnaul. — AFP

Unstoppable Ronaldo the sole survivor of Real’s ‘BBC’

MADRID: Cristiano Ronaldo, Gareth Bale and Karim Benzema were once the untouchable trio, but only one of Real Madrid’s feted “BBC” can be sure of their place against Bayern Munich today. Ronaldo has dragged Real into the Champions League semi-finals with, even by his standards, an astonishing goal glut that includes 22 in 12 games, and at least one in each of his last 11 matches in Europe. “It’s impossible to completely stifle Ronaldo, we can only stop him as a team,” Bayern defender Jerome Boateng said on Monday. “An attacker can not be more complete than him—left foot, right foot, head, he controls everything and in front of the goal, he’s a machine”. But while Ronaldo has enjoyed a fresh spurt in his new role of predatorial centre-forward, his two partners have found their responsibilities reduced ahead of the first leg at the Allianz Arena.

Bale’s decline began first. After returning from injury earlier this year, he was on the bench for both legs against Paris Saint-Germain and the first leg against Juventus. In the second leg, he did start, only to endure the humiliation of being taken off at half-time.

Benzema’s fall has been more surprising given the striker had been Zinedine Zidane’s preferred partner for Ronaldo, his work rate and supply highly valued despite the Frenchman’s lack of goals. But Benzema’s link-up play has slackened, thrusting that dry patch—one goal in 10 games and only four in 24 — more clearly into view.

‘A LITTLE BLIP’

“He does suffer a little bit, when he misses chances he suffers but the solution is easy,” Zidane said. “He has to keep working. It is just a little blip he is in at the moment.” Bale and Benzema’s dip has coincided with Ronaldo’s golden run, a parallel that may not be entirely coincidental.



MUNICH: Real Madrid’s Portuguese forward Cristiano Ronaldo (C), Real Madrid’s Brazilian defender Marcelo (R) and Real Madrid’s French forward Karim Benzema (L) take part in a training session on the eve of the UEFA Champions League semi-final first-leg football match FC Bayern Munich v Real Madrid in Munich, southern Germany yesterday. — AFP

Ronaldo in a Real team centred on playing to his strengths is nothing new, but as the Portugese has grown narrower in his scope, perhaps his team-mates have had to sharpen their focus in providing service to him. Zidane has often deployed 4-4-2 in the biggest games this season, with Lucas Vazquez and Marco Asensio preferred on the flanks for their defensive discipline and willingness to send crosses into the box. Bale is not viewed as conscientious enough in the wide midfielder role while Benzema’s key selling point was his link-up play. When that broke down, his appeal diminished. “I don’t see anyone looking sad,” Zidane said. “I said to the pair of them the other day, they would both like to score more goals

but everyone is working well. “It is always going to happen in a side like ours, there are players in good form and in the team and playing well.”

Even if Isco is selected, it means Real are likely to line up with one of their more modest-looking attacks for a crunch Champions League tie. “I’m not worried,” Zidane said last week. “It’s true that in the last two games we have had chances and we have not taken them but now we are going to have a game on Wednesday away from home. “We are going to try to score and what we have to do is to think positively and realise that this is football anything can happen, no matter who is playing on the pitch.” — AFP

French football ‘colossus’ Henri Michel dies

PARIS: Former France football coach Henri Michel, who led Les Bleus to the 1984 Olympic title, has died at the age of 70, the French players’ union announced yesterday. “Henri Michel, a colossus of French football, left us this morning,” the UNFP wrote on Twitter, adding their “sincere condolences to his family and friends”. Born in Aix-en-Provence, Michel played in midfield for Nantes and earned 58 international caps between 1967 and 1980. He was a three-time winner of the French league title.

He took over France’s Olympic men’s squad in 1982, guiding them to the ‘84 gold medal in Los Angeles where they beat Brazil in the final. Michel then took over a France team containing Michel Platini which had just won the European Championships under the management of Michel Hidalgo. “Aside from his extensive career Henri was an exceptional man,” said Platini, who played alongside Michel for the national team between 1976 and 1980.

“A faithful friend with a rare sense of loyalty. Someone with whom you could go to the end of the earth without ever doubting his support or presence.” “What terrible news,” Hidalgo said. “I knew he’d had health problems but I hadn’t realised how serious they were. “He was a great friend, a true



PUEBLA: File photo taken on June 28, 1986 French midfielder Michel Platini (2ndL) talks with coach Henri Michel (L) and midfielder Jean Tigana (2ndR) and Luis Fernandez (R), on the podium after receiving the bronze medal following France’s victory over Belgium in Puebla. — AFP

professional, a great guy in every respect.” Under Michel, France made it through to the 1986 World Cup semi-finals where they lost 2-0 to West Germany.

Michel’s time at the helm came to an unhappy end when his team failed to qualify for Euro 1988 and then drew 1-1 with Cyprus in a 1990 World Cup qualifier. Following his

time with France, Michel had a brief spell as coach of Paris Saint-Germain at the start of the 1990s, before managing a host of African teams, going to three further World Cups with Cameroon (1994), Morocco (1998) and Ivory Coast (2006). His last post was a stay of a few months with Kenya in 2012. — AFP

Sports

Record-breaking Heynckes chasing another treble

Heynckes set new Champions League record in the quarter-finals

BERLIN: Jupp Heynckes plans to down his ex-club Real Madrid in today's Champions League semi-final, first leg, and take the next step to leaving Bayern Munich with another treble. Heynckes, 72, has already won the Champions League as head coach of both clubs.

He steered Real to the title in 1998, then Bayern in 2013, a season the Germans finished with a treble. At an age when his contemporaries are busy playing bingo and looking after the grand-kids, Heynckes is relishing a high-pressure European showdown.

"It's a cracker - a gigantic meeting in a positive sense," said Heynckes. "These are two teams with a great tradition in European football, who play and love attractive football. It's a difficult draw for both sides."

Bayern are the only club left in the Champions League who can still win a treble. They wrapped up a sixth straight Bundesliga title three weeks ago and will face Eintracht Frankfurt in the German Cup final on May 19.

If Bayern lift the Champions League trophy in Kiev on May 26, Heynckes, who turns 73 on May 9, will make history as the oldest coach to win the European Cup. He would eclipse the record of 71 years, 231 days set by Raymond Goethals when Marseille won the Champions League in Munich in 1993.

RECORD-BREAKER

And winning the trophy for the third time would be his perfect parting gift to Bayern, before Niko Kovac takes over as coach for next season.

Heynckes already set a new Champions League record in the quarter-finals. Bayern's 2-1 first-leg win at Sevilla was his 12th straight victory as coach in the competition, a run that dated back to his previous spell in charge in 2012/13.

Only Louis van Gaal, with Barcelona and Bayern, and Carlo Ancelotti, at Real Madrid, had managed double figures. Regardless of the result against Real, Heynckes has showed his class in turning Bayern's fortunes around since he returned for a fourth stint at the club in October.

He replaced Ancelotti, who was sacked after a 3-0 drubbing at Paris Saint-Germain in the group stage. It was a gamble by Bayern to turn to him, but club chiefs Uli Hoeness and Karl-Heinz Rummenigge needed a replacement who already knew the club and had a proven track record.

Yet, tending the garden and walking his dog Cando had been Heynckes's main tasks in the four years since he last quit Bayern. He had quit all football after winning the treble of Champions League, Bundesliga and German Cup in 2013, being replaced by Pep Guardiola.

When Heynckes returned on a deal until the end of the season, Bayern were five points adrift of then-leaders Borussia Dortmund in the Bundesliga. Discipline was tightened, training was intense and playing time was distributed evenly amongst a star-studded squad.

The effect was immediate as Bayern won 23 of their next 24 games. "You have to look back to last October, we did not think we were going to be champions with five games to spare and to be semi-finalists (in



HANOVER: Bayern Munich's German head coach Jupp Heynckes (L) and Hanover's German head coach Andre Breitenreiter talk ahead the German first division Bundesliga football match between Hannover 96 vs Bayern Munich in Hanover, central Germany on April 21, 2018. — AFP

Europe)," said Heynckes.

"I feel like I've reached (the players). We work together as hard as we can and without selfishness." Despite his stunning achievements with Bayern this season, Heynckes remains humble.

"I got into the lift this morning in my hotel with an old couple," he said recently. "I was holding a Bayern Munich bag, so the lady asked 'oh, are you a Bayern

Munich fan?' - 'Yes, sure', I replied."

Not being recognised was no problem, but Heynckes poked fun at ex-Bayern midfielder Bastian Schweinsteiger, who now plays for Chicago Fire. "They were definitely American, even though Schweinsteiger had told me, 'oh boss, everyone knows you here (in America)'." "They definitely don't," Heynckes said with a grin. — AFP

Walcott downs Newcastle to boost Allardyce

LIVERPOOL: Theo Walcott did his best to boost Sam Allardyce's approval rating as the Everton winger clinched a 1-0 win against Newcastle United in the Premier League on Monday. Allardyce has been under fire for Everton's dour style of play since he was hired in November and fans called for his dismissal following a draw at struggling Swansea City in their previous match. The pressure on the former England manager was increased by his own club last week when Everton took the curious decision to send a survey to a group of supporters asking them to rate his performance on a scale of zero to 10. Toffees chairman Bill Kenwright apologised for a gaffe that added to the perception Allardyce is on borrowed time with Everton. Against that troubled backdrop, Allardyce—who has lifted Everton away from the relegation zone in his brief reign—couldn't afford to see his side's winless run extend to four matches against the club that sacked him 10 years ago.

Walcott ensured Allardyce wouldn't hear a chorus of disapproval for one night at least as the former Arsenal star netted in the second half at Goodison Park to lift Everton into eighth place.

It wasn't all plain sailing for Allardyce, who had to endure a banner reading "Our survey says...get out of our club" being unfurled before kick-off. But he came out fighting after the match, saying: "What was wrong with our style today? We dominated the game. You have to be patient. "You can't knock our football. You can knock some of the passing that goes astray but you can't knock me for that, I don't pass the ball. "I think eighth in the league compared to fifth from bottom tells you we're getting better."



LIVERPOOL: Everton's Irish defender Seamus Coleman (R) dives to clear the ball from the path of Newcastle United's English striker Dwight Gayle (C) during the English Premier League football match between Everton and Newcastle United at Goodison Park in Liverpool, north west England on Monday. — AFP

Rafael Benitez's 100th match as Newcastle boss marked the end of their four-game winning run as the Magpies remain in mid-table. Allardyce's team could have taken the lead when Michael Keane guided Wayne Rooney's cross towards the far post, but Phil Jagielka couldn't keep his lunging effort on target.

Ayoze Perez was having a night to forget and after he shot wide from a good position early in the second half, Everton made the breakthrough in the 51st minute. Yannick Bolasie swung a cross to the far post and when

Newcastle failed to clear, Walcott pounced on a fortuitous deflection and smashed into the roof of the net for his first goal since January.

Islam Slimani was anonymous in his first league start since joining on loan from Leicester and the Newcastle striker was replaced by Dwight Gayle, who should have snatched an equaliser moments after coming on.

Jamaal Lascelles headed down and Gayle was in position to strike from close range, but instead fired over as Benitez shook his head in frustration. — AFP

Cahill handed three-match ban for violent conduct

LONDON: Millwall's Tim Cahill has been banned for three matches after the Australia star accepted a charge of violent conduct. Cahill was charged by the Football Association after the midfielder initially avoided punishment for elbowing Fulham's Ryan Fredericks on Friday.

The 38-year-old's foul wasn't spotted by the officials during Millwall's 3-0 defeat at The Den, but the FA took retrospective action after reviewing video of the incident.

"Tim Cahill will miss Millwall's next three matches after he admitted a charge of violent conduct," an FA statement read. "The incident, which was not seen by the match officials but caught on video, occurred in the 85th minute of Friday's game against Fulham."

Cahill will miss the last two games of the regular Championship season against Middlesbrough and Aston Villa as sixth-placed Everton look to hold on to a play-off berth. The former Everton player would also miss the play-off semi-final first leg if Millwall qualify.

Cahill, who started his professional career with Millwall in the 1990s, has made 10 substitute appearances for the Lions since making an emotional return to south London in January.



Tim Cahill

His move back to Millwall in the twilight of his career was motivated partly by a desire to prove his form and fitness in time to secure a place in Australia's squad for this year's World Cup in Russia. — AFP

Panathinaikos banned from Europe for three seasons

ATHENS: Former Greek champions Panathinaikos have been excluded from European competition for three seasons after failing to meet financial requirements, European soccer's governing body UEFA said yesterday. Panathinaikos, former European Cup finalists, have fallen on hard times in recent years. The club has undergone several changes of ownership structure and suffered dire financial problems.

"The Adjudicatory Chamber confirmed that Panathinaikos FC is excluded from participating in the next UEFA club competition for which it would otherwise qualify in the next three seasons," UEFA said in a statement. "The Adjudicatory Chamber also ordered that the amount of 100,000 euros (\$122,350) as part of the total fine of 200,000 euros is no longer suspended and is due immediately."

Panathinaikos were found in December to be in breach of the overdue payables requirement of UEFA's club licensing and financial fair play regulations and were fined. That fine was suspended, pending a final deadline of March 2018 to resolve the issue. The club had to prove having paid the amounts owing or have concluded an agreement with their creditors, which they failed to do. — Reuters

Bayern wait on Alaba for Real s-final

MUNICH: Jupp Heynckes says Bayern Munich are waiting on the fitness of left-back David Alaba for today's crunch Champions League semi-final, first-leg, at home to Real Madrid.

Alaba, a free-kick expert, sat out Bayern's final training yesterday with a thigh strain, but Heynckes hopes the left-back will be fit. Corentin Tolisso also needs to shake off a bruised shin to compete for a mid-field place. "We'll make a decision about them both early today as to whether they will be in the squad," said Bayern head coach Heynckes. If Alaba drops out, Brazilian defender Rafinha will start. Tolisso is expected to start on the bench, if he is fit, with Javi Martinez in the defensive midfield. James Rodriguez and Thiago Alcantara are competing for a central midfield berth. Heynckes says Bayern are relishing a home semi-final against a Real team bidding to lift the Champions League trophy for the third straight season.

The Bavarians main task is subduing Cristiano Ronaldo who has scored 15 Champions League games and netted in each of Real's ten European matches this season. Real's goal-scoring superstar has hit the net 42 times in all competitions.

He scored five goals over two legs in Madrid's 6-3 aggregate win over Bayern in the 2017 quarter-finals. "Of course, he's a big topic for us in the game analysis," said Heynckes when asked about Ronaldo.

"But don't forget we have Robert Lewandowski, who has scored 39 goals. "So you have to ask, how can you stop Lewandowski?" Heynckes says there is no clear favourite for the Allianz Arena clash, but Real have won five of their last six matches against Bayern.

The Spaniards inflicted the Bavarians' heaviest European home defeat when Ronaldo and Sergio Ramos both scored twice in a 4-0 thrashing in Munich in 2014. "The duel against Real has a great tradition," said Heynckes who has coached both clubs to the Champions League title, Real in 1998 and Bayern in 2013. "Of course, the semi-final offers a great stage. "There are world-class players on both sides."

Defender Jerome Boateng said defeats in the knock-out stages to Real in both 2017 and 2014 will play no role. "It's not an issue for me, it may have been a bit unfair, but you should not quarrel too much with the past," said Boateng.

Bayern failed to finish either of last year's quarter-final defeats to Real with 10 men. Javi Martinez was sent off in the home leg, which Bayern lost 2-1, and Arturo Vidal saw red when the Germans went down 4-2 in Madrid after-extra time. Both were for double yellow cards. The Germany defender can expect a busy night marking Ronaldo. "He is an unbelievable athlete, you can see that when he scores goals and pulls off his shirt," said Boateng. "He is a top player who has almost no weaknesses. "Real are especially dangerous on the counter attack, especially up front. We can only stop him as a team." — AFP



Matches on TV
(Local Timings)

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE
Bayern Munich v Real Madrid 21:45
beIN SPORTS HD 1

12 Tokyo 2020 Summer Games warned by Olympic bosses



13 Sharapova stunned by Garcia in Stuttgart



15 Record-breaking Heynckes chasing another treble



Salah shines as Liverpool beat Roma

Roma punished by the man they sold to Liverpool



LIVERPOOL: Liverpool's Brazilian midfielder Roberto Firmino (4R) heads the ball past Roma's Czech striker Patrik Schick (3L) to score their fifth goal during the UEFA Champions League first leg semi-final football match between Liverpool and Roma at Anfield stadium in Liverpool, north west England yesterday. — AFP

LIVERPOOL: Mohamed Salah came back to haunt former club Roma in spectacular style with two goals and two assists as Liverpool stormed towards the Champions League final with a 5-2 semi-final, first-leg win at Anfield yesterday.

Roberto Firmino also scored twice and Sadio Mane netted Liverpool's other goal to make up for missing a series of gilt-edged chances as the scoreline did anything but flatter the hosts.

Roma produced one of the finest comebacks in Champions League history by overturning a 4-1 first-leg deficit against Barcelona in the quarter-finals. They will need to do the same in the return leg on May 2, but the visitors were at least given a lifeline when Edin Dzeko and Diego Perotti grabbed two vital away goals in the final 10 minutes.

Liverpool will rue their missed chances and poor late defending, but remain well on course for a first final in 11 years. The hosts' early rhythm was disrupted when Alex-

Oxlade Chamberlain was stretchered off with a nasty-looking knee injury, which could threaten his World Cup dreams with England.

Moments later, the visitors were inches away from the opener when Aleksandar Kolarov's long-range strike slipped through the grasp of Loris Karius and came back off the crossbar. However, Liverpool soon settled and should have put the tie beyond doubt before half-time.

Mane blazed over when clean through on goal and then skewed wide when teed up by Firmino. Salah's first sight of goal then brought a smart save from Alisson before Mane's frustrating night continued as he was flagged offside when he did put the ball in the net from Andrew Robertson's low cross.

UNSELFISH SUPERSTAR

Roma have now lost their last four Champions League away games—shipping 13 goals in the process—and were punished by the man they sold to Liverpool

for what now seems a bargain 42 million euros (£37 million, \$52 million) last year.

Nine minutes of the first half remained when Salah picked the ball up just inside the Roma area and was given far too much time by Juan Jesus to cut inside onto his favoured left foot and curl the ball with unerring accuracy into the top corner.

The chances continued to come for the hosts, but unfortunately for Jurgen Klopp not all of them fell the way of Salah as Dejan Lovren headed a glorious opportunity against the bar before Alisson got down to parry Georginio Wijnaldum's powerful strike.

Brazilian number one Alisson has been in stunning form but even he was powerless as Salah struck again in first-half stoppage time with a trademark dinked finish over the advancing keeper.

Chasing a first ever Champions League hat-trick, Salah would have been forgiven for going for goal as he bore down on Alisson once more 11 minutes into the second

period. But he showed why he is considered one of the game's more unselfish superstars by squaring for a relieved Mane to convert from close range.

Salah wreaked more havoc five minutes later when he sped past the helpless Jesus and pulled the ball across goal for Firmino to tap home. Firmino then rose highest head home James Milner's corner to take Liverpool's fear-some front three's combined tally for the season to 88.

Roma's night seemed to be summed up when midfielder Kevin Strootman and coach Eusebio Di Francesco became engaged in a blazing row after the fifth goal went in. However, Klopp's decision to withdraw Salah 15 minutes from time backfired as the tie swung back Roma's way in the final stages.

Firstly, with nine minutes left, Dzeko slotted home his 21st goal of the season as Lovren got caught underneath the ball. Moments later, Anfield was stunned when Milner was punished for handball inside the area and Perotti coolly slotted home the resulting penalty. — AFP

Ancelotti offered job of Italy coach

MILAN: Italian football federation (FIGC) chiefs yesterday confirmed talks had taken place with Carlo Ancelotti concerning the vacant Italy coaching job but insisted there was no front-runner yet.

Ancelotti, who was sacked by Bayern Munich last September, met with FIGC commissioner Roberto Fabbri and sub-commissioner Alessandro Costacurta in a Rome hotel on Monday. It was reported the 58-year-old has been offered a two-year contract, with the only sticking point financial terms which would be less lucrative than his previous deal with the German champions. But Fabbri insisted the meeting was not an official one. "Ancelotti has a fairly serious family problem, and that's why he was in Rome," Fabbri told Italian radio.

"Costacurta, having a strong friendship with Ancelotti, met him and I also took part in that meeting. "We talked about a future scenario though, but we still have a coach (Luigi Di Biaggio) under contract. "I don't think a coach can a priori rule out a presti-

gious job like leading Italy. The Azzurri bench is always an objective for any coach.

MAY 20 DEADLINE

"But of course there are other factors which affect the decision - the desire to work every day for example. "No-one is in pole, we want to respect the date of May 20 because the national team will play on May 28 (friendly against Saudi Arabia)."

Italy have been without a permanent coach since Gian Piero Ventura was sacked after the four-time champions failed to qualify for the World Cup for the first time in 60 years after losing to Sweden in a two-legged playoff in November.

Costacurta—who was coached by Ancelotti at AC Milan in the 1980s—was appointed to find a successor to Ventura and insisted the deadline remained May 20. Among the other names being touted are Zenit St Petersburg coach Roberto Mancini, Chelsea boss Antonio Conte and former Leicester coach Claudio Ranieri, now in charge of French club Nantes.

"Carlo was in Rome for personal reasons, the chosen hotel was the one where I always stay myself and we found ourselves there at the same time," Costacurta told Sky Sport Italia. "We didn't talk about the Italy bench, we only joked about the opportunity, we could not talk about the programme and

the financial part. We are loyal to the rules.

"If there will be an official meeting? Yes, but I still do not know when. We need people to make themselves available, we can't get close to contracted coaches." Ancelotti, who has also managed Chelsea, Real Madrid, AC Milan, Juventus, Roma and Paris Saint-Germain, has three Champions League titles to his name as a coach. He has also won the league in Italy, France, Germany and England.

The FIGC budget for a new coach and his staff is five million euros (\$6.1 million) per year, which would be a big drop from the reported 12 million euros plus bonuses that Ancelotti earned at Bayern Munich.

Ancelotti joined Bayern in 2016 and won the Bundesliga title in his first season but was sacked following a 3-0 defeat to Paris Saint-Germain in the Champions League. Costacurta was reported to have offered Ancelotti, who has also been linked with former club Chelsea and the soon-to-be-vacant manager's job at Arsenal, a free hand in choosing his staff.

Ancelotti's son Davide, who was his assistant at Bayern, could play a role as well as former stars such as Andrea Pirlo, Gianluigi Buffon and Paolo Maldini. Italy's under-21 coach Di Biaggio has been filling the position on an interim basis. — AFP



Carlo Ancelotti

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18 Parched Pakistani port aims to become a 'next Dubai'



19 China's ride-hailing giant Didi eyes purpose-built auto fleet



21 Making a choice for the future: Toyota Prius Iconic



COLOMBO: A Sri Lankan laborer unloads bananas at a market in Suriyawewa, in the southern district of Hambantota, yesterday. — AFP

Boursa Kuwait's London roadshow kicks off

Event to bolster global investor interest in Kuwait market

KUWAIT: In line with its ongoing efforts to further develop the Kuwaiti market to meet international standards, Boursa Kuwait's first roadshow in the UK in collaboration with multinational financial services firm Goldman Sachs will kick off in London today (April 25).

Eight listed companies, including the National Bank of Kuwait (NBK), Kuwait Finance House (KFH), Burgan Bank, Zain, Kuwait Projects Company (KIPCO), Mabaneer, Mezzan Holding, and Human Soft are participating in the tour.

The roadshow aims to put a spotlight on the investment opportunities in general and on the participating companies in particular, while also raising awareness

for Boursa Kuwait's impressive progress in creating a more transparent, modern marketplace among the international investment community.

Boursa Kuwait CEO Khaled Abdulrazzaq Al-Khaled commented: "As the first Boursa Kuwait roadshow taking place in the world's financial capital, this event gives some of our top-tier locally listed companies the opportunity to interact with interested parties. The participants were selected based on their financial performance and solid outlook, and we are proud to showcase what the Kuwaiti stock exchange has to offer. Direct engagement with market participants overseas is an important driver of our vision of creating a vibrant, mature and

diversified market. Having recently successfully completed a roadshow to New York, this is our second international event of this caliber, and we have plans for many more in the near future."

Important factors in attracting outside investors are a country's economic indicators, stable policy, modern regulations and the adoption of advanced technology - all of which Kuwait has to offer. In accordance with the Kuwait 2035 national vision, spearheaded by His Highness the Amir, Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and brought to life through the Kuwait National Development Plan, the roadshow contributes to enhancing the economic landscape in Kuwait and its global status, a core tenet of the vision. Boursa Kuwait is committed to developing a



Khaled Abdulrazzaq Al-Khaled

sound capital market providing issuers with efficient access to capital and investors with diverse return opportunities, which will further strengthen its position as a leading regional exchange.

Boursa Kuwait recently initiated the second phase of its Market Development Plan, introducing a segmented market, new indices, circuit breakers as well as entirely new listing requirements, along with the Boursa Kuwait Rulebook.

Goldman Sachs is a US multinational financial and investment services firm and is one of the most recognized banking institutions in the United States and the world. It operates in more than 30 countries and has six regional branches, with more than 100 offices and 35,000 employees and more than \$850 billion of total assets. The organization specializes in global wealth management, institutional financial services, investment management, mergers and acquisitions, insurance, and asset management, as well as acting as financial intermediaries for corporate, government and individual clients.

For OPEC, now mission accomplished

LONDON: The slump that characterized the oil market between the middle of 2014 and the middle of 2016 has been replaced by what looks like the beginning of a boom. Benchmark Brent prices have already risen by more than \$45 per barrel or 170 percent from their cyclical trough in early 2016.

Front-month futures prices, at almost \$75 per barrel, are now trading close to the inflation-adjusted average for the last price cycle, which started in 1998 and finished in 2016.

So far this year, futures prices have averaged nearly \$68 per barrel, which is well above the post-1973 real average price of \$50-\$55. Futures prices have shifted from a big contango during the slump into an increasingly wide backwardation since the middle of 2017, which is consistent with a shift from over-supply to under-supply.

Global oil consumption is predicted to increase by more than 1.5 million barrels per day (bpd) in 2018, the fourth consecutive year of very strong growth. Non-OPEC oil production is forecast to increase by 2.0 million bpd or more this year, mostly as a result of a large increase in U.S. shale plus other output increases from Canada, Brazil and Norway.

But with steep declines in output from OPEC member Venezuela as a result of unrest and mismanagement, and continued curbs on production by other OPEC and non-OPEC members, global production is failing to keep pace with consumption. OECD inventories have dropped sharply and are now in line with the five-year average, eliminating the surplus of over 300 million barrels inherited from the slump.

If inventories are adjusted for the rise in consumption, which gives a more accurate picture of the market balance, stocks are now well below the five-year average and continue to tighten.

So on every indicator, from spot prices and spreads to consumption, production and inventories, the oil market is now well into the boom phase of the cycle. But booms are

always followed by slumps. If OPEC allows the oil market to tighten too much in 2018/19, it will create the conditions for the next downturn a few years later.

Lagging indicator

Senior OPEC officials insist the organization's work on rebalancing the market has not yet been completed and they resist the characterization of "mission accomplished". In particular, they point to the relatively low level of investment in exploration and production to justify the need for continued production curbs and even higher prices. But investment is a lagging indicator. Investment was slow to pick up during the early stages of the last boom (1998-2008) then proved stubbornly resilient in the first stages of the slump (2014-2016).

Lagging upstream investment is one of the principal causes of cyclical instability in the oil market and has been since the beginning of the modern petroleum industry. If OPEC members wait for an acceleration of upstream investment before relaxing their production curbs, as ministers have indicated, they will almost certainly over-tighten the market in the meantime. — Reuters

Saudi issues new Islamic sukuk to finance budget

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia said yesterday it has completed the issuance of a new Islamic sukuk sale to help finance its budget deficit as the kingdom accelerates borrowing despite rising oil prices.

The finance ministry's debt management office said it raised \$1.3 billion from the sale of sukuk in three tranches maturing in five, seven and 10 years. This was the second sukuk sale this year following a \$4.8-billion issue it completed last month. Last week, the kingdom also raised \$11

billion in the sale of conventional bonds. In early March, it struck a deal to refinance a \$10-billion loan and added another \$16 billion to it. The OPEC kingpin exporter has posted huge budget deficits since oil prices crashed about four years ago and resorted to the debt market to finance the shortfall.

It posted budget deficits totalling \$260 billion since 2014 and is projecting a shortfall of \$52 billion for this year, according to official figures.

The government debt level, both domestic and international, rose from 1.6 percent of gross domestic product in 2014 to 17.3 of GDP last year reaching \$118 billion.

During the same period, the government has drawn down some \$245 billion from its fiscal reserves. Oil income made up more than 90 percent of public revenues before oil began to slide. —AFP

Parched Pakistani port aims to become a ‘next Dubai’

Port part of ambitious China-Pakistan Economic Corridor project

GWADAR, Pakistan: For over a decade, Pakistani officials have dreamed of transforming the small but strategically located fishing port of Gwadar into a duty-free port and free economic zone - Pakistan's answer to Dubai.

The aim is for Gwadar - located on the Arabian Sea near Iran and the mouth of the Gulf - to become a regional commercial, industrial and shipping hub, as part of the ambitious China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project. The corridor is designed to give China a shorter, more secure trading route, via Pakistan, to the Middle East and beyond, while also boosting Pakistan's economy. Right now, however, the dusty "next Dubai" on Pakistan's coast resembles the original mainly in one respect - it doesn't have much water. "It hasn't rained here for the last three years," explains a local journalist, Sajid Baloch.

Abdul Rahim, who works for the Gwadar Development Authority, under the provincial government of Balochistan, said climate change is playing a role in Gwadar's thirst.

"I would say because of climate change the rains have stopped - it used to rain much more often and in every season. Now Gwadar is facing severe water issues. There is no fresh water here," Rahim said.

Nearby Akra Kaur reservoir dried up two years ago, and water must now be brought from a more distant source, he said. Some of the water coming in is contaminated, leading to an increase in waterborne illnesses such as hepatitis, he added. Tapping groundwater isn't a solution. "There is no point in digging wells as the underground water is all brackish," Rahim said.

Growing fast

Right now, the Gwadar peninsula - a hammerhead-shaped projection of land into the Arabian Sea - is home to about 100,000 people, following completion of the first phase of the port development.

But as development continues, the area's population is expected to grow to 500,000 by 2020, according to the port authority's website. On one side of the peninsula is the deep-sea port, built by the Chinese state-owned China Overseas Holding Company. On the other side lies the local harbor. Fishing was Gwadar's main economic activity before the port started operations, and some local people say they so far see little benefit in the government's grand plans.

"We are dying from thirst, there are no doctors in our hospitals, the electricity comes and goes and there is garbage everywhere as no one collects it," complained Rasool Bux, a fisherman who lives near the harbor. "First fix all these problems. Then develop this dream of Dubai," he urged.

Bux said most in the town get their water from tankers that make the two-hour drive from Mirani Dam. But the tankers only come once or twice a month to his area, Bux said, and shortages are common. Muhammad Ali Kakar, the province's planning and development secretary, told a government

committee in December that the total demand for water in Gwadar city was 6.5 million gallons a day, but tankers supplied only 2 million gallons.

Satisfying thirst

To help solve the water shortages two desalination plants have been built in the port, with Chinese expertise. The smaller can provide 200,000 gallons of potable water per day to the port, while the larger one, recently completed in the adjacent duty-free zone, can supply double that amount.

Both plants rely on power from generators, as there is not enough grid power in Gwadar to run them, said Sajid H. Baloch, the director general of Gwadar Development Authority.

Some fishermen say they now buy clean drinking water from the port, paying up to 50 Pakistani rupees



Gwadar Port will provide a gateway through Pakistan to western China

(around \$0.40) for a three-liter can. Gul Mohammed, the operations director for the port authority, said his agency was willing to supply clean water outside the port and duty-free zone, but would need to be paid to produce it.

"We are willing to provide water from the larger plant to the city of Gwadar at the rate of 0.98 rupees per gallon, but the Government of Balochistan has to sign an agreement with us," he said.

The provincial government is reluctant to accept the offer, hoping for rains this year to fill the Akra Kaur dam, Rahim said.

The Pakistani army, tasked with protecting the CPEC project, meanwhile, also has laid the foundation for a large desalination plant to be built with help from the United Arab Emirates and Switzerland.

The plant, to be completed by July, will provide 4.4 million gallons of water a day, free of cost, to the inhabitants of Gwadar city, according to an army press release.

Providing better services, including clean drinking water, is seen as a way of helping win local support for the development push - and to help quell an ongoing insurgency by Baloch separatists in the province. As part of the winning-hearts effort, the army also has brought in specialist doctors to supplement those already working at the local government-run hospital.

A new road will soon connect the port to the Makran Coastal Highway, which links Gwadar to Karachi. Gwadar's new airport will be Pakistan's largest when it is complete.

The China Power Company also plans to open a 300 megawatt coal-fired power plant around 20km (12 miles) from the port to provide electricity to Gwadar. Meanwhile, tourism has started too, and the port is increasingly bustling with visitors. "Certainly the security in Gwadar has improved considerably in the last two years. I would say that, given all the recent development, the dream of Dubai will be realized in a decade or so," said Munir Ahmed, a port security officer. — Reuters

Eurozone yields steady, business sentiment drops

LONDON: Eurozone government bonds steadied yesterday as the prospect of heavy debt redemptions and a weaker economic climate countered the effect of rising US Treasury yields.

A survey by Germany's Ifo Institute yesterday morning showed business confidence deteriorated for a fifth consecutive month in April in Europe's biggest economy, in a further sign that it is losing some of its growth momentum. However, analysts warned that all bets are off if 10-year US Treasury yields hit 3 percent, having come within a sliver of touching that psychologically important landmark on Monday. "Apart from the supply-demand imbalance, the Ifo

survey underscores what we've identified before as a decline in economic sentiment in the euro zone that should support the market indeed," said Commerzbank strategist Christoph Rieger.

Eurozone borrowing costs were flat to a touch higher across the board, with the yield on 10-year German Bunds - the benchmark for the bloc - unchanged at 0.63 percent. The yield on the eurozone's benchmark bond has risen by about 10 basis points over the past week, pulled up by rising US Treasury yields.

On Wednesday, the yield on 10-year US borrowing costs were at 2.975 percent and with oil prices climbing above \$75 a barrel for the first time since late 2014, a rise to 3 percent cannot be ruled out. "Whether this will mark the beginning of a new range or the start of a bear market is the question; or whether it's a welcome buying opportunity," said Rieger of Commerzbank. — Reuters

China's HNA Group seeks \$1.5bn in new fund

BEIJING: A unit of debt-laden Chinese conglomerate HNA Group is seeking to raise as much as \$1.5 billion by the end of this year in an investment fund that will serve as the group's primary vehicle for global acquisitions, a document reviewed by Reuters showed.

The Overseas Aviation and Tourism Industry Fund will target travel, aviation and real estate assets around the world, according to the document. HNA Aviation and Tourism Group is the division of the company that is behind the fund, the document showed. The fund raising comes as the Chinese conglomerate is unloading assets and partnering with other companies as part of a wider reorganization, sparked by mounting debts levels after announcing more than \$50 billion worth of global M&A deals

over 2016 and 2017. The group has traditionally made direct acquisitions, and that strategy has resulted in higher debt.

HNA also has been pushed back by regulators in several countries, concerned about its murky ownership structure. Capital control restrictions placed by Chinese regulators in recent years have also been weighing on HNA's deal activity. The company has started to raise external capital for the fund this month, according to the document. HNA's aviation and tourism division and or its affiliates will be the general partner of the fund, with a group-related limited partner initially committing about \$100 million to \$150 million, it showed.

HNA is also trying to attract limited partners to invest at various stages. HNA is guaranteeing to investors a minimum return of 8 to 10 percent, calling that a competitive advantage, the document showed. HNA Group in Beijing declined to comment for the story. The fund raising plan indicates that HNA is looking to move away from using its own balance sheet to do deals - thereby reducing its risk profile - and instead adopt a model where institutional investors make significant contributions, the document showed. And the fund will be based in an offshore location.

The Chinese aviation-to-financial services

conglomerate's restructuring includes selling overseas real estate and equity investments totaling more than \$10 billion in assets, such as stakes in Hilton Worldwide, Hilton Grand Vacations and Hilton Park Hotels & Resorts.

"This is in response to the Chinese government's prohibition of future investments and concerns that their debt levels are untenable," said Frank Turner, co-chair of law firm Osler's Asia Pacific practice. "They're trying to protect their balance sheet," he added.

HNA hopes that its aviation industry expertise will attract limited partners for the fund, the document showed. In recent weeks, HNA's various units also have announced asset transfers and purchases as part of the reorganization, which is expected to be completed in the first half of the year.

Seven of the group's 17 listed units in mainland China and Hong Kong remain suspended. HNA also announced at the end of February that it signed a deal to raise two funds totaling 20 billion yuan to focus on investments linked to China's Belt and Road initiative. The funds deal was signed with China Asia Pacific Assets & Property Rights Exchange Ltd. On Monday, HNA Group said it will remain a "major investor" in Deutsche Bank, after the conglomerate reduced its stake in the German lender to 7.9 percent, from about 8.8 percent. — Reuters

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

ASIAN COUNTRIES

Japanese Yen	2.806
Indian Rupees	4.630
Pakistani Rupees	2.602
Srilankan Rupees	1.933
Nepali Rupees	2.902
Singapore Dollar	230.250
Hongkong Dollar	38.311
Bangladesh Taka	3.593
Philippine Peso	5.793
Thai Baht	9.679

GCC COUNTRIES

Saudi Riyal	80.210
Qatari Riyal	82.644
Omani Riyal	781.445
Bahraini Dinar	798.990
UAE Dirham	81.946

ARAB COUNTRIES

Egyptian Pound - Cash	0.000
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	17.039
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.208
Tunisian Dinar	126.080
Jordanian Dinar	423.910
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	2.005
Syrian Lira	0.000
Morocco Dirham	33.227

EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES

US Dollar Transfer	300.700
Euro	371.670
Sterling Pound	426.390

Canadian dollar	238.080
Turkish lira	74.520
Swiss Franc	315.860
Australian Dollar	234.090
US Dollar Buying	299.500

GOLD

20 Gram	260.520
10 Gram	133.180
5 Gram	67.430

DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

Rate for Transfer	Selling Rate
US Dollar	300.250
Canadian Dollar	239.550
Sterling Pound	430.780
Euro	373.130
Swiss Frank	293.050
Bahrain Dinar	798.475
UAE Dirhams	82.150
Qatari Riyals	83.380
Saudi Riyals	80.960
Jordanian Dinar	424.760
Egyptian Pound	16.971
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.921
Indian Rupees	4.578
Pakistani Rupees	2.598
Bangladesh Taka	3.602
Philippines Pessso	5.766
Cyprus pound	17.875
Japanese Yen	3.795

Syrian Pound	1.585
Nepalese Rupees	2.867
Malaysian Ringgit	78.085
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	48.175
Thai Bhat	10.605
Turkish Lira	73.815

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY

CURRENCY	BUY Europe	SELL
British Pound	0.414256	0.421756
Czech Korune	0.006442	0.015742
Danish Krone	0.045313	0.050313
Euro	0.362334	0.369834
Georgian Lari	0.121230	0.121230
Hungarian 0.001086		0.001276
Norwegian Krone	0.034140	0.039340
Romanian Leu	0.061998	0.078848
Russian ruble	0.004867	0.004867
Slovakia	0.008958	0.018958
Swedish Krona	0.031320	0.036320
Swiss Franc	0.301397	0.312397

Australasia	
Australian Dollar	0.220735
New Zealand Dollar	0.207958

America	
Canadian Dollar	0.229197
US Dollars	0.297250
US Dollars Mint	0.297750

Asia	
Bangladesh Taka	0.003198
Chinese Yuan	0.046298
Hong Kong Dollar	0.036329
Indian Rupee	0.004086
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000017
Japanese Yen	0.002683
Korean Won	0.000269
Malaysian Ringgit	0.073189
Nepalese Rupee	0.003007
Pakistan Rupee	0.002498
Philippine Peso	0.005663
Singapore Dollar	0.223180
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001610
Taiwan	0.010049
Thai Baht	0.009236

Arab	
Bahraini Dinar	0.792705
Egyptian Pound	0.013896
Iranian Riyal	0.000083
Iraqi Dinar	0.000203
Jordanian Dinar	0.420420
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000149
Moroccan Dirhams	0.023371
Omani Riyal	0.776409
Qatar Riyal	0.078483
Saudi Riyal	0.079273
Syrian Pound	0.001277
Tunisian Dinar	0.120795
Turkish Lira	0.068664
UAE Dirhams	0.080621
Yemeni Riyal	0.000979

Business

China's ride-hailing giant Didi eyes purpose-built auto fleet

Auto market shifts as automaker takes on Uber

BEIJING/DETROIT: China's Didi Chuxing, already disrupting the global ride-hailing market and taking on US rival Uber, has its sights set on an even bigger potential prize: designing and getting built its own dedicated fleet of Didi cars.

The firm has put together teams of automotive designers and engineers, and is now looking to work with established car makers to develop "purpose-built" vehicles, people close to the company told Reuters, a move that could shake up the auto market in China and beyond.

The move underscores how tech firms, from software makers for self-driving vehicles to car-sharing platforms, are disrupting traditional automakers such as Ford Motor and Nissan, amid major shifts towards electric cars and pay-per-use models. In response, some global automakers are now starting to bill themselves as "mobility" companies that do more than just build and sell vehicles.

Didi officials say the disruptive change sweeping the industry means there is a clear mutual interest in new players like itself and traditional manufacturers working together to develop and improve ride-hailing and sharing platforms. "Traditional automakers have different skillsets and understanding of the market, and those are all valuable to us," Kevin Chen, general manager of Didi's automotive service platform, told Reuters in an interview.

"It's not like only we understand the customer. We are open to every form of cooperation." Didi is China's biggest ride-hailing company, cementing its dominance when it bought out Uber's operations in the country in 2016, and is preparing to launch car-sharing and

other on-demand transport services. It currently uses regular passenger cars, but says as it moves forward it sees a need for more dedicated "purpose-built" vehicles. Many would likely be electric vehicles, either all-electric battery cars or plug-in electric hybrids.

Didi yesterday laid out plans at an event in Beijing for an alliance with 31 auto industry partners to develop a new mobility business model in China and beyond for sharing cars.

The alliance aims to develop "unified standards for the design and manufacturing of new energy vehicles, development of intelligent driving technologies, and planning of charging facilities", the firm said. It will also help Didi develop its purpose-built cars, with the company offering its customer and operational skills to automakers wanting to develop their own ride-sharing services in return for design expertise.

Sharing future?

Didi already has a small but expanding team of automotive designers, engineers, quality control and battery experts, according to the three sources close to the company. Those experts are scrambling to develop vehicles for a shared car service the Beijing-based company is testing in Hangzhou, in eastern China, for an eventual nationwide rollout, they said.

"We're designing customized cars because without hardware product, you can't be a serious mobility company," one of the people said. Three people close to the company said GAC Motor and CHJ Automotive have already began collaborating on projects with Didi

design purpose-built electric vehicles (EVs). The move signals that, even as a host of established automakers gear up to show off their latest models when the Beijing auto show opens later this week, a new battleground could be opening up in the automotive engineering and design centers of some ride-hailing and car-sharing services companies. As car-hailing becomes an increasingly popular option for commuting and running errands in congested cities such as Beijing and Shanghai, Didi is betting that vehicles purpose-built for such services could start to replace familiar everyday automobiles like the Toyota Camry or the Honda Civic.

Industry experts and officials remain divided on how quickly such a future might arrive. The people close to Didi pointed to the fact that most personal vehicles sit idle in parking lots for 22 hours a day or more. On top that, "parking is expensive, you need to maintain your car and pay insurance to drive", one of them said.

Re-imagining the automobile

Uber Technologies Inc, the largest US ride and delivery services firm, has not yet begun to build the sort of in-house design capability that Didi is contemplating. Uber does not have a formal design group, but it has begun working with a number of vehicle manufacturers across topics that might include future vehicle design, according to a spokesperson. A recent partnership with Toyota Motor Corp, which has a minority stake in the company, calls for Uber to provide design feedback on the interi-



or of Toyota's e-Palette self-driving vehicle. Didi has struck a similar deal with Toyota.

Lyft, the second largest US ride services firm, does not have a formal design group, either. It has provided input to at least one manufacturer's advanced design team, according to a source with knowledge of that input. Didi's designers and engineers envisage dedicated vehicles that will likely look very different to the cars used today for commuting and running errands, the people close to the company said.

For example, they say current mainstream

cars are heavily "overspecified" - packed with equipment most drivers do not need such as engines and other technologies that allow them to go as fast as 150 mph (250 kmph). Performance levels for ride-hailing and car-sharing service vehicles could be dialled down significantly, meaning they would not have to be so aerodynamic. Cars designed to carry just one or two people at a time to work or the shops could therefore be "boxier", with fewer seats and more space for luggage. "We are redefining the definition of the regular day-to-day car," one of the sources said. — Reuters

Volkswagen makes 15-bn-euro bet on electric cars in China

BEIJING: Car giant Volkswagen announced yesterday investments of 15 billion euros (\$18 billion) in electric and autonomous vehicles in China by 2022, in a massive bet on the vital market. "China is our second home," recently-installed chief executive Herbert Diess said at a Beijing press conference, with its market set to be "the biggest" worldwide for electric cars.

He added that the cash-to come from both Volkswagen and local joint-venture partners would "make mobility cleaner, safer and more intelligent to really improve people's lives". By 2021, the world's largest carmaker aims to produce battery-powered cars in "at least six factories in China", Diess said. The VW chief also announced a new joint venture with Chinese firm Anhui Jianghuai Automobile (JAC) to launch a new car brand, SOL, which will offer an electric SUV with a range of



BEIJING: A worker stretches out to dust off a Maserati car on the eve of the Beijing Auto Show in Beijing yesterday. — AFP photos

"more than 300 kilometres" (186 miles) on a single charge.

Accounting for some 28.9 million car sales last year, the Chinese car market could soon match those of the European Union and

United States combined.

VW, which said it would set up a business unit devoted entirely to China in a recently-announced restructuring, plans to release some 40 new models there in the coming



BEIJING: The Toyota C-HR Concept SUV is displayed during a launch ceremony in Beijing yesterday on the eve of the Beijing Auto Show.

eight years.

Diess' trip to the Beijing Auto Show, which opens Wednesday, is his first foreign visit since replacing former CEO Matthias Mueller, the crisis firefighter brought in after the

"dieselgate" scandal broke in 2015. During his tenure, Mueller launched a massive reorientation of the mammoth group and its 12 brands towards electric-drive vehicles and digitally-connected and autonomous driving.

Billionaire French tycoon Bollore detained in Africa corruption probe

PARIS: Billionaire French tycoon Vincent Bollore was detained yesterday as part of a corruption investigation into his group's activities in West Africa where it operates several ports, legal sources told AFP.

The 66-year-old head of the Bollore Group was taken into custody in the Paris suburb of Nanterre for questioning about how the group obtained contracts to run Lome port in Togo and Conakry port in Guinea, the sources said on condition of anonymity. The news that the magnate was being questioned in the latest probe into French business dealings in former colonies in Africa caused Bollore group stocks to tumble over 8 percent in Paris on Thursday.

The 195-year-old company, which has interests in construction, logistics, media, advertising and shipping, issued a statement denying "any illegal actions" in its African operations.

Its director general, Gilles Alix, and a senior executive from its communications subsidiary Havas, Jean-Philippe Dorent, were also taken into custody, a judicial source said.

Investigators are probing allegations that the group corrupted officials to clinch the Lome and Conakry port concessions in 2010 and 2011 respectively.

The ports are among several operated by Bollore's African logistics arm, which also has several African rail concessions. Investigators from France's financial crimes unit are probing possible links between the tenders and communications work done by Havas for Guinean President Alpha Conde and Togolese President Faure Gnassingbe. In 2016, police searched the Bollore Group's headquarters in the Paris suburb of Puteaux.

Battles over ports

Months after he became Guinea's first freely elected president, Conde summarily terminated the contract of Conakry's port operator—a subsidiary of French shipping company NCT Necotrans—and gave it to rival Bollore. A French court in 2013 ordered the Bollore Group to pay Necotrans 2 million euros (\$2.4 million) in compensation, but shortly afterwards Bollore took over the company.

Havas executive Dorent also worked on the communications strategy of Gnassingbe, who succeeded his father Gnassingbe Eyadema upon his death in 2005. After Gnassingbe's reelection to a second term in 2010, the Bollore Group won the 35-year Lome port contract—a decision also challenged by a rival.

Denying any wrongdoing in a statement Tuesday, the Bollore Group claimed it had obtained the Togo concession in 2001, before it took over Havas, and that it secured the

Guinea contract before Conde's election, following the "failure" of its rival.

"Attempting to link the attribution of a port concession with communication services" was "a great misunderstanding of this economic sector and economic activity in general," it said. It added that the company would "fully cooperate with the judicial authorities to restore the truth about those facts". The Bollore Group started out in 1822 as a family-run manufacturer of paper for cigarettes and bibles. Vincent Bollore, a close friend of ex-president Nicolas Sarkozy, revived the group's flagging fortunes in the early 1980s, turning it into a global construction, media and transport giant, mostly through acquisitions. The group owns a majority stake in telecom conglomerate Vivendi, owner of the Canal+ Group which is headed by Vincent Bollore's son Yannick. In 2016, Bollore's Africa business was thrust into the spotlight in a French TV documentary highlighting the miserable conditions of under-age workers at a subcontractor of a Cameroonian palm oil company, in which the Bollore Group has a stake.

A year later, a Cameroonian rail operator owned by the Bollore Group was accused of negligence after 79 people were killed when a packed train derailed. Other companies whose African activities have been investigated include former oil company Elf Aquitaine, which the French state was accused of using to funnel millions in bribes to African leaders in the 1990s, and nuclear giant Areva, which is under scrutiny over a controversial uranium deal in Niger. — AFP



HANGZHOU: A Chinese employee organizes fire extinguishers at a factory in Hangzhou in China's eastern Zhejiang province yesterday. — AFP

China fails to get Indian support for Belt and Road ahead of summit

BEIJING: China failed to get India's support for its ambitious Belt and Road infrastructure project at the end of a foreign ministers' meeting of a major security bloc yesterday, ahead of an ice-breaking trip to China this week by India's prime minister. The Belt and Road is Chinese President Xi Jinping's landmark scheme to build infrastructure to connect China to the rest of Asia and beyond, a giant reworking of its old Silk Road.

India has not signed up to the initiative as parts of one key project, the \$57 billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, runs through Pakistan-administered Kashmir that India considers its own territory.

Whether or not China will be able to bring India round to Belt and Road will likely be a key measure of the success of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's trip to China to meet Xi for an informal meeting on Friday and Saturday. But India's foreign minister did not express support for Belt and Road in the com-

munique released after foreign ministers of the China and Russia-led Shanghai Cooperation Organisation met in Beijing.

India, along with Pakistan, joined the group last year. All the other foreign ministers - from Kazakhstan,

Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan - "reaffirmed support for China's Belt and Road proposal", the statement read. It gave no further explanation. The communique otherwise was a broad expression of unity by the ministers on issues ranging from their support for the Iran nuclear deal to the need to combat the spread of extremism.

Modi is coming to China as efforts at rapprochement gather pace following a difficult year in ties between the two neighbors. The Asian giants were locked in a 73-day military stand-off in a remote, high-altitude stretch of their Himalayan border last year. At one point, soldiers from the two sides threw stones and punches. The confrontation between the nuclear-armed powers underscored Indian alarm at China's expanding security and economic links in South Asia.

In comments carried on the foreign ministry's website, Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Kong Xuanyou said holding the meeting in an informal way meant the two leaders could have a deep exchange of views in a relaxed, friendly atmosphere to promote cooperation. — Reuters

Caterpillar lifts outlook on strong demand

NEW YORK: Industrial machinery manufacturer Caterpillar reported a large jump in first-quarter earnings and significantly upgraded its full-year forecast yesterday, citing strong demand across the construction, mining and energy sectors. Caterpillar reported profits of \$1.7 billion for the quarter ending March 31, dwarfing the \$192 mil-

lion in the year-ago period. Revenues surged 30.9 percent to \$12.9 billion.

In the construction sector, Caterpillar pointed to "broad-based growth in all regions" in 2018, with North American and China especially strong. The mining industry, which had been in a bruising slump a couple of years ago, has picked up considerably, leading to higher capital spending by companies.

The company also predicted sales gains in oil and gas due in part to strong demand for well servicing and gas compression applications in North America. Caterpillar alluded to some constraints from spiking demand that can put pressure on suppliers. The company sug-

gested the problem was not severe, saying "although constraints remain for some parts and components, we are seeing improvements in material flows."

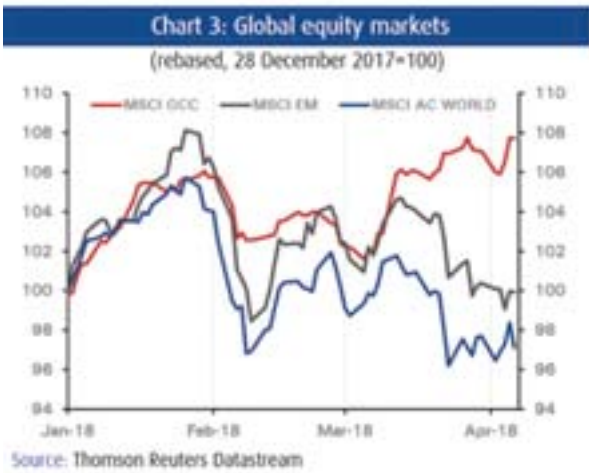
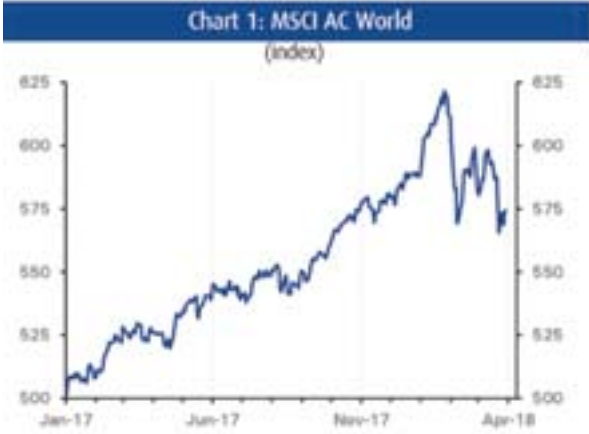
The manufacturer raised its full-year profit forecast by \$2 to a range of \$9.75 to \$10.75 a share. The figures are based on assumptions of continued global growth but it said potential impacts from "future geopolitical risks and increased trade restrictions have not been included in the outlook."

The company has been seen as vulnerable to a potential US-China trade war. Caterpillar shares soared in pre-market trading by 4.6 percent to \$160.99. — AFP

NBK Economic Report

GCC equity markets outperform their global peers in Q1 2018

Developed markets register first quarterly drop in 2 years



KUWAIT: Most GCC equity markets outperformed their global peers in 1Q18, while developed markets registered their first quarterly decline in two years. Global investor sentiment has become more attuned to monetary policy normalization and geopolitics in recent months. However, given strong expected global growth and still easy financial conditions, equity markets may be set for solid, albeit more moderate, growth in 2018.

Volatility returned to global markets in 1Q18 following the unusual calm that presided over them in 2017. The fluctuations were initially triggered by signs that the world economy may be shifting to a high-growth/high-inflation dynamic, which could push up interest rates faster and further than expected. This was followed by concerns over the departure of key US government personnel and protectionist trade rhetoric. Markets have remained on edge since.

Global equities

Global equities suffered their first quarterly loss in two years, with the MSCI AC world index down 2.3 percent in 1Q18, driven by falls in developed markets. The S&P 500 and the DJI were down 1.2 percent and 2.5 percent q/q respectively, while the pan-European Euro Stocks 600 index retreated by 4.7 percent. Emerging markets fared better, with the MSCI EM index up 0.4 percent helped by strong underlying economic fundamentals, while the MSCI GCC index outperformed, adding 7 percent q/q.

US equities were affected by changes in inflationary expectations and President Trump's trade policy initiatives. Fears of a faster pace of monetary tightening by the Fed driven by rising inflation and a tight labor market initially pushed interest rate expectations higher. Markets were then hit by the announcement of new US trade tariffs and escalating trade war rhetoric. US markets see-sawed late in the quarter as they struggled to gauge the severity of the

Table 1: GCC markets indicators for 1Q18				
	Market capitalization (USD billion)	Average daily turnover (USD million)	Growth in 2017 profits (% y/y)	Price/earnings per share
Bahrain (Bourse)	21	3	-2	9.5
Kuwait (Bourse)	97	41	17	15.3
Oman (MSM)	20	8	-21	11.7
Qatar (QSE)	129	69	-11	12.3
Saudi (Tadawul)	495	975	11	17.2
Abu Dhabi (ADX) & Dubai (DFM)	242	118	51	12.7
GCC	1,013	921	14	-

Source: Thomson Reuters Datastream, Thomson Reuters Eikon

trade measures, which often ended up milder than expected.

In Europe, a strong euro and trade fears weighed heavily on sentiment, including its export-driven conglomerates. Easing PMI and confidence indicators also pointed to some softening of economic growth, while the return of some political uncertainty - with two core Eurozone economies undergoing governmental elections - also added to investors' reservations during the quarter.

Emerging equity markets performed better, benefitting from a weaker dollar and strong economic growth, but were also affected by trade war concerns. Investor appetite towards these markets remains healthy, however, with the IIF expecting non-resident investment in emerging equities to increase to \$495 billion in 2018 from \$444 billion in 2017, driven by a strong pick-up in portfolio investments.

GCC equities mixed

GCC markets tracked global equities for most of 1Q18 though some eventually diverged on index reclassifications and firmer oil prices. Saudi's upgrade to FTSE's emerging market index saw it outperform its peers, up 8.9 percent q/q driven by foreign investor appetite, while the announcement of Kuwait's phase-in plan to the index - and the indicative list of potential stocks to be included - helped lift its mar-

ket 3.6 percent q/q. Abu Dhabi performed well (+4.3 percent q/q), supported by strong oil-related earnings, while Qatar was little changed - although recent increases in foreign ownership caps at several key listed Qatari institutions look to boost that market's attractiveness. Dubai was the worst performer, down 7.8 percent, on a soft economic backdrop and weak domestic real estate market.

Foreign investor interest in the GCC is expected to be significant following the index reclassifications. Saudi Arabia is expected to account for 2.7 percent of the FTSE emerging market index when included in March 2019 - 4.6 percent, if Saudi ARAMCO's IPO is added - possibly attracting close to \$5 billion in initial pas-

sive inflows. A possible upgrade to MSCI's emerging market index this June may add another \$10 billion in passive funds with total inflows (including active flows) projected at up to \$30 billion over the next few years. Kuwait's inclusion in the FTSE index will be phased in over two stages in September and December 2018, with a target country weight of 0.4 percent. It could generate passive inflows of \$800 million.

In April, Boursa Kuwait began implementing its new exchange structure, with a one-year phase-in period for some listings. The move is expected to boost the market's liquidity and attractiveness, particularly to foreign investors. Combined with Kuwait's inclusion in the FTSE Russell index, the changes should provide for improved foreign interest given the solid economic fundamentals Kuwait enjoys.

Going forward, global equities are expected to be supported by robust global growth and still easy financial conditions. Global growth is projected at 3.9 percent in 2018, while global interest rates remain low (if rising), providing a solid backdrop for equities. However, some risks remain: although decent, global growth may be softening; concern over increased global trade barriers could intensify; and more abrupt monetary policy normalization could threaten further market corrections.

National Bank of Kuwait Financial Markets Daily Report At 02:00 PM Previous Day					
Global Stock Indices					
Index	Previous Close	Last Price	Change	Daily Performance %	Yearly Performance %
Dow Jones	24,442.14	24,448.69	+14.25	▲	+0.06
NASDAQ	7,146.13	7,126.60	-17.53	▼	-0.25
S&P 500	2,670.14	2,670.29	0.15	▲	0.01
Financial Times	7,398.87	7,422.00	23.13	▲	0.31
DAX	12,872.39	12,613.71	-41.32	▲	-0.33
CAC 40	5,418.55	5,435.78	+17.77	▼	-0.05
Telex	8,806.63	8,811.39	4.76	▲	0.05
Hikmi 225	22,088.04	22,276.12	190.08	▲	0.86
Tpex	1,750.79	1,769.75	18.96	▲	1.08
Hang Seng	20,524.40	20,536.24	11.84	▲	1.26
Straits Times	3,579.54	3,584.56	5.02	▲	0.14
MENA Stock Indices					
Index	Previous Close	Last Price	Change	Daily Performance %	Yearly Performance %
Kuwait	6,605.51	6,632.44	29.93	▲	0.45
Saudi Arabia	8,335.35	8,321.16	-14.19	▼	-0.17
Dubai	3,061.97	3,034.27	-27.70	▼	-0.90
Abu Dhabi	4,693.47	4,689.20	-4.27	▼	-0.09
Bahrain	1,268.60	1,282.44	+15.16	▼	-1.24
Qatar	9,157.57	9,091.33	-66.24	▼	-0.72
Oman	4,736.03	4,762.01	25.98	▲	0.53
Lebanon	1,135.48	1,131.13	-4.35	▼	-0.38
Jordan	2,188.79	2,184.48	-4.31	▼	-0.19
Egypt	18,080.70	18,164.90	84.20	▲	0.47
Morocco	12,959.65	12,955.50	-4.15	▼	-0.03
Tunisia	7,164.45	7,148.39	-16.06	▼	-0.22
Global Currencies Exchange Rate					
Currency	Kuwaiti Dinar	Saudi Riyal	US Dollar	Euro	Sterling Pound
Kuwaiti Dinar		12.3432	3.3107	2.7110	2.3741
Saudi Riyal	0.08089		0.2478	0.2193	0.1920
US Dollar	0.30205	3.7343		0.8189	0.7171
Euro	0.36886	4.5603	1.2212		0.8760
Sterling Pound	0.42121	5.2075	1.3945	1.1416	
Swiss Franc	0.30884	3.8183	1.0225	0.8371	0.7331
Japanese Yen	0.00278	0.0343	0.0092	0.0066	0.0090
Australian Dollar	0.72980	2.8411	0.7608	0.6228	0.5454
MENA Currencies Exchange Rate					
Currency	US Dollar	Kuwaiti Dinar	Saudi Riyal	Bahraini Dinar	Qatari Riyal
US Dollar		0.30205	3.7343	0.3741	3.6270
Kuwaiti Dinar	3.3107		12.3432	1.2385	12.0079
Saudi Riyal	0.2478	0.08089		0.1002	0.9713
Bahraini Dinar	2.6731	0.80740	9.5821		9.6953
Qatari Riyal	0.2757	0.08328	1.0296	0.1031	
Omani Riyal	2.6101	0.78837	9.7468	0.9764	9.4668
Emirates Dirham	0.2734	0.08358	1.0210	0.1023	0.9916
Egyptian Pound	0.0567	0.01711	0.2116	0.0212	0.2055
Global Interest Rates					
Currency	1-Week	1-Month	3-Month	6-Month	1-Year
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.25	1.81	2.00	2.25	2.50
US Dollar	1.74	1.89	2.35	2.51	2.76
Euro	-0.42	-0.40	-0.36	-0.32	-0.24
Sterling Pound	0.48	0.52	0.73	0.83	1.02
Swiss Franc	-0.80	-0.78	-0.73	-0.65	-0.51
Australian Dollar	1.85	1.87	1.82	1.82	1.88
Japanese Yen	-0.05	-0.05	-0.04	0.02	0.12
Global Bond Yields					
Country	2-Year	5-Year	10-Year	30-Year	
United States	2.48	3.83	3.97	3.14	
Europe	-0.55	0.00	0.63	1.29	
United Kingdom	0.85	1.20	1.53	1.93	
Commodities					
Index	Previous Close	Last Price	Change	Daily Performance %	Yearly Performance %
Kuwait Oil	70.51	70.51	0.00	-	0.00
Brent	75.45	76.77	0.32	▲	0.42
West Texas	67.66	67.56	-0.10	▼	-0.15
Gold	1324.00	1323.65	-0.35	▲	0.12
Silver	16.53	16.42	-0.09	▲	0.56

Wall St posts slight gains

NEW YORK: US stocks rose yesterday as strong earnings from Caterpillar, Verizon and a host of other big names boosted optimism about corporate America's health, but the gains were curbed by rising bond yields. The yield on the 10-year US Treasury notes hit 3 percent for the first time since 2014, due to a growing supply of government debt and accelerating inflation as commodity prices gained.

Caterpillar, which serves as a bellwether for global economic activity jumped 4 percent, while Pratt & Whitney aircraft engines-maker United Tech rose 1.3 percent. Both companies topped quarterly profit estimates and raised their full-year earnings forecasts.

The results also run contrary to a 0.4 percent fall in the S&P industrial index this year due to fears of a tit-for-tat trade war with China. "Two big-cap companies, industrials and global in nature, beating estimates, and the takeaway being that fundamentals remain strong for corporate America," said Mark Luschini, chief investment strategist at Janney Montgomery Scott in Philadelphia.

About 18 percent of the S&P 500 companies had reported results as of Monday, with 78 percent topping profit estimates, according to Thomson Reuters I/B/E/S.

That has pushed up analysts' estimates for earnings growth in the quarter to nearly 20 percent, from 18.6 percent just over than a week back, making it the strongest in seven years.

One dampener was Google-parent Alphabet, which dipped 2.5 percent as investors focused on rising costs rather than the profit beat. "On balance, the numbers were pretty good and some of the issues related to spending are idiosyncratic to the business. I don't think its going to indict the entire sector," said Luschini. Coca-Cola gained 2 percent after its revenue beat estimates, helped by higher demand for Coke Zero Sugar and new flavors of Diet Coke. Verizon jumped 1.3 percent after its profit beat expectations.

3M fell 6.1 percent after it managed to only match profit estimates. A drop in sales for the screen glass unit of telecoms parts producer Corning Inc may also add to growing market nerves about demand for high-end smartphones. Oil rose above \$75 a barrel to its highest since November 2014, supported by OPEC-led production cuts, strong demand and the prospect of renewed US sanctions on Iran. Advancing issues outnumbered decliners by a 2.09-to-1 ratio on the NYSE and by a 2.07-to-1 ratio on the Nasdaq. The S&P index recorded 10 new 52-week highs and 11 new lows, while the Nasdaq recorded 42 new highs and 23 new lows. — Reuters

CBK at Avenues to promote 'Your Salary & More' campaign

KUWAIT: As part of its activities of 'Your Salary & More' campaign, the Commercial Bank of Kuwait (CBK)'s individual banking services team was present at the Avenues for three days to promote the campaign



Deutsche Bank eyes cuts to investment bank

FRANKFURT AM MAIN: Germany's biggest lender Deutsche Bank could slash parts of its troubled investment banking division this week, media reports suggested yesterday, as new chief executive Christian Sewing looks to make his mark quickly. Reforms to the unit could see "extensive" cuts to equities trading in the United States as part of a broader transformation, Bloomberg News reported, citing people familiar with the plans.

German business daily Handelsblatt reported the reforms could see parts of equities trading and services for hedge fund investors trimmed back. Deutsche Bank declined to comment on the reports when contacted by AFP. Renewed speculation that Deutsche will announce changes at its investment banking division

along with its first-quarter results tomorrow comes weeks after crisis firefighter CEO John Cryan was ousted after less than three years in post.

Investors and the bank's supervisory board were unhappy with the British boss's failure to bring the bank back to profitability after years of hangover from its attempt to go toe-to-toe with global investment banking giants. Deutsche booked a 751-million-euro (\$916.5 million) loss last year and saw a 12-percent slump in revenues, its third set of red figures in a row.

The bank said the profits plunge was a one-off due mostly to US President Donald Trump's tax reform.

But Cryan's push to refocus the bank on its core German business of retail banking and lending to the economy was advancing too slowly to satisfy shareholders and interventionist supervisory board chair Paul Achleitner. Sewing urged the bank's 95,000 employees to rediscover their "hunter mindset" to turn the lender around in a note soon after his nomination to the top job.

Business

Toyota Prius Iconic: Making a choice for the future



KUWAIT: For Dubai-based mechanical engineer Vinay Nagendra, his one-month-old, pearl white Toyota Prius Iconic is perfect. "I wanted a car that would be great to drive, as well as one that's kinder to the environment," the 31-year-old Indian expatriate explains.

As someone who cares for the environment, Vinay has had no second thoughts about choosing Prius, which is a Hybrid Electric Vehicle that pairs a gasoline engine with an electric motor. According to him, this is one of the car's key attractions as it doesn't see you searching desperately for a charging station. Unlike fully electric vehicles, which can run out of charge on the road, Prius works like a regular car, but, at the same time, it achieves fuel efficiency of up to 25.1 km per liter, dramatically reducing your individual carbon footprint and your contribution to air pollution. "I enjoy nature, and I want my kids to enjoy it as well."

Vinay also wanted a vehicle that's safe. "Considering the high driving speeds, safety was one of the most important factors for me when deciding which car to buy," he admits. As the Prius is equipped with multiple airbags, and its body is designed to absorb impact energy in a collision as well as reduce injury to pedestrians, it has safety records that instantly impressed Vinay.

"I had a chance to read some excellent reviews of the Prius, so it was an easy choice for me." This is how Vinay ended up looking to buy a car with his 27-year-old wife, Padmashree, who wasn't as convinced by the Prius as he was at first. "But then she test-drove it and liked it. Now she uses it all the time, and simply loves the car." Their shared adoration for the vehicle is what saw them driving around the dusty desert in the middle of a sandstorm one Saturday afternoon for a



film crew documenting savvy Prius owners in the Middle East. "This was a great and unique experience for us - it's something we have never done before."

"I'm terrible in front of the camera," he laughs. "Something my wife has been pointing out since the day we met!" Despite his fear of the camera, Vinay says he was keen to do the filming, as he wants to share his positive experiences of his car with everyone. "From the first day we got it, and when my wife and I immediately went for a long drive, I realized it was more than what I had expected. The drive is smooth and quiet and the cabin is well insulated from the outside noise. Also, the performance is good and the sound system is amazing. The interiors are lovely, the console is clean and uncluttered, and it's got a very edgy, futuristic feel. The spacious boot is an added bonus!"

"For me, the Prius is a top choice."

Venezuelan banks shrivel as inflation roars

CARACAS: Venezuela's hyperinflation has turned the struggling OPEC nation's once-powerful banks into warehouses of useless cash that are worth a total of only \$40 million, according to a Reuters analysis of regulatory data. Although banks such as Citigroup Inc and Spain's BBVA are maintaining operations in the hopes of better times, the value of the country's 31 banks in 2017 was equivalent to that of a single mid-sized bank in the Dominican Republic, according to bank regulator data.

The combination of annual inflation estimated at 8,000 percent and state-regulated interest rates has left banks with little motivation to lend and little reason to inject capital onto their balance sheets, meaning credit is steadily disappearing.

The banks are unlikely to fold, due in large part to the huge potential upside if the economy turns around, according to financial industry consultants and bank executives. "Venezuela is a tragedy," BBVA Executive Chairman Francisco Gonzalez told reporters at a meeting in Davos in February. "Of course we do not want to leave. I trust that something will happen," he added, without elaborating. BBVA did not respond to an email

seeking further comment. Meanwhile, the disappearance of credit threatens to aggravate an already brutal recession that has led hundreds of thousands to flee the country amid chronic product shortages, rising malnutrition and increased incidence of preventable disease. Caracas resident Beglis Villanueva is a private-school teacher with three credit cards issued by BBVA subsidiary Banco Provincial - and a combined total credit limit of \$2.

"I use them to buy bread, which is the only thing I can buy with them," she said. "They used to get me out of trouble in an emergency situation. I showed my new salary to the bank but they won't raise my credit limit."

Making ends meet

Though private banks' return on equity hit an eye-popping 115 percent in December of 2017, that was devoured by an estimated 2,600 percent inflation in the same month. The central bank does not provide inflation statistics, and estimates are given by the opposition-run National Assembly.

Unlike previous hyperinflationary periods in Peru and Brazil, banks cannot make ends meet through hard currency operations because the country's 15-year-old currency control system makes such financial maneuvers impossible. Venezuelan banks as of January were lending only 28 percent of their deposits, compared with an average of 100 percent in the region last year, according to data from the Venezuelan government and the Latin American Federation of Banks, or Felaban. Citibank Venezuela began suspend-

ing accounts and credit cards to clients in 2017 as part of a strategy to minimize operations while it waited for the situation to improve, according to two industry sources. The local affiliate of Citi reported a return on equity of 43.1 percent in December, according to regulatory data. Citi has already sold off its consumer banks in economically healthier Colombia and Brazil to cut costs but there are no obvious buyers for the Venezuelan one.

Citi declined to comment. Neither Venezuela's Superintendence of Banks (Sudeban) nor the Information Ministry responded to emails seeking comment. As of December, Venezuelan banks on average were lending \$13 per person per year, in a nation with 30 million inhabitants, compared with more than \$2,000 per person in 2017 in other countries in the region, according to Sudeban and Felaban data.

For large and medium-sized companies, local private banks lend no more than the equivalent of \$25,000 and in almost all cases require guarantees in dollars, said one consultant who works for large companies operating in the country. Most of those loans are for less than 2 years, according to a banking sector executive. The credit crunch hurts entrepreneurs like fashion designer Yenny Bastida. This year her bank lent her the equivalent of \$300 and required that she pay it back in six months - one fifth of the amount and half the duration of a loan she received in 2016 to open a second store in an elite Caracas shopping center. "The amount is ridiculous," said Bastida, who says she now has to self-fund any growth in her business. — Reuters

The housing market is struggling with a chronic shortage of properties that is boosting home prices and weighing on sales at the lower end of the market. Rising mortgage rates and moderate wage growth are also making home purchasing less affordable, especially for first-time buyers who account for less than a third of transactions.

Sales in the West soared 28.3 percent to their highest level since December 2006. They rose 0.8 percent in the South, which accounts for the bulk of new home sales. Sales plunged 54.8 percent in the Northeast and dropped 2.4 percent in the Midwest. The median new house price increased 4.8 percent to \$337,200 in March from a year ago. Last month, there were 301,000 new homes on the market, unchanged from February.

At March's sales pace it would take 5.2 months to clear the supply of houses on the market, down from 5.4 months in February. About two-thirds of the houses sold last month were either under construction or yet to be built. Another report yesterday showed the S&P CoreLogic Case-Shiller composite index of home prices in 20 metropolitan areas increased 6.8 percent in the 12 months to February after rising 6.4 percent in January. — Reuters

through its "quantitative easing" (QE) or bond-buying program.

Its aim is to pump cash through the financial system and into the hands of companies and consumers, powering growth and stoking inflation towards its goal of just below 2.0 percent. Banks told the ECB that the QE scheme and low interest rates had encouraged the easing of terms and conditions for repayment of loans and influenced them to loan out more cash.

Governors are expected to leave both policies unchanged at a meeting tomorrow, hoping they will help insulate the single currency area from looming economic headwinds like protectionist threats and risks of conflict. The April survey was carried out between March 15 and April 3, with 149 banks responding. —AFP

Ooredoo Kuwait Board appoints 3 new members

KUWAIT: Ooredoo Kuwait announced the appointment of 3 new members to the board, to include a woman, for the first time in the company's history.

The new members are:

- * Abdulla Ahmed Al-Zaman - Vice Chairman
- * Fatima Sultan Al-Kuwari - Member
- * Fahih Ali Al-Thani - Member

In an official statement, Ooredoo said "We congratulate the new members. We promise our customers and our shareholders to continue the journey of success and to further contribute to the company's growth and prosperity".

It is worth mentioning that the current company's Board includes profoundly great Kuwaiti officials and former ministers as well.



Below is the current Board members:

- * Saud bin Nasser Al-Thani - Chairman
- * Abdulla Ahmed Al-Zaman - Vice Chairman
- * Fahad Othman Al-Saeed - Member
- * Youssef Mohamed Al-Sumait - Member
- * Bader Nasser Al-Humaidi - Member
- * Fatima Sultan Al-Kuwari - Member
- * Fahih Ali Al-Thani - Member

Ooredoo is an international communications company operating across the Middle East, North Africa and Southeast Asia. Serving consumers and businesses in 10 countries, Ooredoo delivers the leading data experience through a broad range of content and services via its advanced, data-centric mobile and fixed networks. Ooredoo served 164 million customers and generated revenues of \$8.9 billion as of 31 December 2017. Its shares are listed on the Qatar Stock Exchange and the Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange.

US consumer confidence rebounds; new home sales rise

WASHINGTON: US consumer confidence rebounded in April and new home sales increased more than expected in March, pointing to underlying strength in the economy despite signs that growth slowed in the first quarter.

Other data yesterday also showed house prices increasing solidly in February. Strong consumer confidence and rising house prices bode well for an acceleration in consumer spending in the second quarter after it braked sharply at the start of the year.

The Conference Board said its consumer confidence index increased to a reading of 128.7 this month from 127.0 in March. Consumers' short-term expectations also improved, with the share of consumers expecting their incomes to decline over the coming months reaching its lowest level since December 2000.

US financial markets were little moved by the data. In a separate report, the Commerce Department said new home sales increased

4.0 percent to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 694,000 units last month. February's sales pace was revised up to 667,000 units from the previously reported 618,000 units.

Data for January was also revised to show sales unchanged instead of declining 4.7 percent. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast new home sales, which account for 11 percent of housing market sales, rising 1.9 percent to a pace of 630,000 units last month. New home sales are drawn from permits and tend to be volatile on a month-to-month basis.

They jumped 8.8 percent from a year ago. March's surge in new home sales and upward revisions to January and February sales data will probably not change economists' expectations that residential investment declined in the first quarter.

Gross domestic product estimates for the first quarter are below a 2 percent annualized rate. The economy grew at a 2.9 percent rate in the fourth quarter.

eased across all three categories, the banks said. Lenders reported a continuing increase in demand from borrowers over the first quarter, the ECB found.

Companies sought cash at low interest rates mainly for investments and mergers and acquisitions, while homebuyers-also attracted by low rates-were increasingly confident in the economic outlook and hoping to profit from rising housing markets.

The ECB has set interest rates at historic lows and pumped almost 2.4 trillion euros (\$2.9 trillion) into the eurozone economy

ECB sees easier credit for eurozone firms and households

FRANKFURT AM MAIN: The eurozone economy enjoyed easier access to credit in the first quarter, a European Central Bank survey showed yesterday, as banks eased their conditions for lending to firms and households.

Credit standards-the criteria banks use to determine whether to lend to a person or company-were "considerably" looser in the first quarter both for households looking for a mortgage and for firms, lenders told the ECB, with a smaller easing in loans for consumer spending. Meanwhile terms and conditions on the repayment of loans once they were granted

UPAC holds AGM for financial year 2017



KUWAIT: United Projects for Aviation Services Company (UPAC), a leading commercial real estate and facilities management company, held yesterday its Annual Ordinary General Assembly Meeting at the Public Authority for Industry, with a quorum of 94.890 percent.

The company's shareholders approved all the items on the agenda, including UPAC's audited financial results, and endorsed the Board of Directors' recommendation for a cash dividend distribution of 121 percent of nominal value per share (121 fils per share). These dividends are entitled for the shareholders who will be registered on the company's shareholders' record on 15 May 2018. Dividends will be distributed on 23 May 2018.

In 2017, UPAC reported a net profit of KD 9.64 million (101.33 fils per share), an increase of 14.23 percent compared with KD 8.44 million in 2016. UPAC's revenue increased by 5.83 percent in 2017 to KD 13.99 million, compared with KD 13.22 million in 2016. Nadia Akil, Chief Executive Officer - UPAC, said, "UPAC has witnessed significant milestones over the course of the year, primarily driven by the developments taking place with Abu Dhabi's Reem Mall. We continue to develop our strategy in growing our footprint and expanding in

commercial real estate across the Middle East, with Abu Dhabi's Reem Mall as our stepping stone in that arena. The company's stable profitability and solid revenues year-on-year are positive indicators that we are on the right track."

The development of Reem Mall, the \$1.2 billion project being developed between UPAC and the National Real Estate Company (NREC), is well underway with several important milestones having been met successfully in 2017 including the final closure of the financing for Reem Mall as well as the appointment of ItineraGhantoot as the lead contractor for the project, with construction well underway.

UPAC continues to focus on optimizing existing operations and improving efficiencies within the properties it manages. Growth was driven by the company's income generating projects in Kuwait, including the Kuwait International Airport, Sheikh Saad Terminal, and Discovery Mall, where it currently manages commercial space and facilities at almost full capacity.

Akil concluded: "I would like to take this opportunity to thank our valued shareholders, customers and employees for their continued support and loyalty. We look forward to another year of solid growth at UPAC."

Technology

China’s upcoming ‘makers’ battle mistrust in a hi-tech community

Trying to shed its notoriety as a hub for counterfeit goods

SHENZHEN: Engineers, computer programmers and children tinker with self-made radio-controlled toy cars and robotic arms in China’s southern city of Shenzhen, home to “makers” who belie the country’s reputation as a hub for technology copycats. The group works in a special space inside a high-rise in a city considered a nerve centre for the “maker movement” of tech whizzes who invent, design and make their own gadgets and devices from scratch.

China is trying to shed its notoriety as a hub for counterfeit goods, a battleground in an ongoing trade dispute with the United States, which is threatening to hit Chinese electronics and other high-end industry with steep tariffs for the “theft” of intellectual property. The Shenzhen government has doled out \$145 million in grants to lure thousands of Chinese and foreign entrepreneurs, and tens of millions more to fund “maker spaces” and activities to encourage innovation.

At the “MG Space”, a wall is covered by shelves with meticulously labeled bins containing assorted pieces of wood and foam, circuit boards, wires, soldering kits, plastic parts and joiners for communal use. “I’m designing a pulley system that can support a lot of weight,” 11-year-old Li Zhonghan said, without taking his eyes off a 3D modeling program on his computer.

Once their blueprints are ready, the makers send their plans to a 3D printer and laser cutter to make their designs a reality. Yue Lingyu, vice manager of “MG Space,” which is privately funded, said it is important to give children and youth opportunities to collaborate on projects with professionals. “The tutors here don’t see the kids as their students—they view each other as colleagues,” she said.



Give them due credit for inventions

the American Chamber of Commerce shows IP infringement continues to be a top challenge for some in China, citing inadequate laws and difficulty prosecuting cases.

Intellectual property issues have vexed Chinese companies, too. New IP courts have been created to stop the thefts. “In China, trends spring up and companies copy each other. Especially for cases where the ideas require a low level of technology, it’s hard to say who came up with it first,” said Wu Nan, founder of AllTechAsia, which tracks Chinese technology trends.

Matthew Murphy, managing partner at the Beijing-based MMLC firm, which specialises in IP, says there are too many obstacles to bringing cases to court. “The laws are fine but many innovators look at how much trouble and cost may be involved in IP enforcement and they get concerned. The requirement of notarised/legalised Powers of Attorney and other documents adds a level of cost and slows things down a lot,” he said.

Hacking the subsidy game

Another problem is that the wealth of government sub-

Google parent Alphabet profit leaps on ad growth

SAN FRANCISCO: Google parent Alphabet reported a surge in quarterly profits Monday, lifted by strong growth in the digital advertising segment it dominates along with Facebook. Profit in the first three months of 2018 soared more than 70 percent from a year ago to \$9.4 billion, Alphabet said in an earnings report that was well above forecasts.

Revenue at the California-based internet giant during the first three months of this year was \$31.1 billion, up 26 percent from the same period last year. Alphabet shares slipped slightly in after-market trades that followed release of the earnings report, evidently on investor concerns about growing costs.

“The all-important advertising revenues came in ahead of Street expectations although the bulls were hoping for a bigger beat,” GBH Insights head of technology research Daniel Ives said in an analyst note. “While fundamental worries coupled by regulatory black clouds continue to be overhangs on the name, we believe IQ advertising and ‘bread and butter’ search revenues were healthy and a good barometer of potential strength heading into the rest of 2018.” The first-quarter profit included one-time gains of \$3 billion on its equity investments, believed to have come mainly from a rise in the value of its stake in leading smartphone-summoned ride service Uber.

Scientist in Facebook data scandal says being scapegoated

LONDON: The academic behind the app that allowed consulting firm Cambridge Analytica to farm the data of some 87 million Facebook users said Monday he was being scapegoated while the social network was being “mined left and right by thousands” of companies. Aleksandr Kogan, who teaches at Cambridge University, told a British parliamentary committee that criticism of his work by Facebook showed the US social media giant was in “PR crisis mode”.

“I don’t believe they actually think these things because I think they realise that their platform has been mined left and right by thousands of others,” said the Russian-American scientist, who is now banned from Facebook. “I was just the unlucky person that ended up somehow linked to the Trump campaign. It’s convenient to point the finger at a single entity,” he said, playing down his own work as of little political value.

Kogan created a personality prediction app through his company Global Science Research (GSR), which offered a small financial payment in return for users filling out a personality test. Facebook says it was downloaded by 270,000 people, but it also gave Kogan access to their friends, giving him a wealth of information on 87 million users, according to the social media giant’s boss Mark Zuckerberg.

Cambridge Analytica went on to work on Donald Trump’s 2016 presidential campaign, using message



SHENZHEN: In this picture taken on March 2, 2018, a teacher instructs children at ‘MG Space’, a small-scale workshop offering digital fabrication. —AFP

sides available can lead to a concentration of start-ups in areas where there isn’t enough demand, critics say. Christopher Balding, economics professor at Peking University in Shenzhen, has observed entrepreneurs making decisions based on what subsidies are available regardless of whether the company actually intended to bring their proposed products to market.

“For example, the government decided that robots were a big thing and there was a lot of funding, so everyone began making robots. While there is significant new robot adoption in China, Beijing is investing vastly more than needed,” Balding said. Some say public funds for makers are not being wisely spent. “Maker spaces get so much money from the government and they’re competing with each other for members, but there are so many that some are completely empty,” Wu said.

James Simpson, founder of the private “Steamhead” makers’ education hub in Shenzhen, said there are enough maker spaces now and the priority should be to get people to use them. “In China there is huge interest and an increasing number of resources to turn creative skills into a sustainable business, but not so many chances for people to have interactions to access new experiences and learn from others,” he said.

But the satisfied parents and kids at MG Space are more optimistic about China’s innovative skills. “China has come a long way from rote learning in all the schools, especially here in Shenzhen where teachers really want to give kids practical skills,” said Yang Hong, a mother of two. “I like to make stuff,” said her daughter, 8-year-old Yao Xirou. “I don’t know the job I want yet, but I just want to have fun.” —AFP

Facebook releases rules on how it polices content

MENLO PARK: Facebook Inc yesterday released a rule book for the types of posts it allows on its social network, giving far more detail than ever before on what is permitted on subjects ranging from drug use and sex work to bullying, hate speech and inciting violence. Facebook for years has had “community standards” for what people can post. But only a relatively brief and general version was publicly available, while it had a far more detailed internal document to decide when individual posts or accounts should be removed.

Now, the company is providing the longer document on its website to clear up confusion and be more open about its operations, said Monika Bickert, Facebook’s vice president of product policy and counter-terrorism. “You should, when you come to Facebook, understand where we draw these lines and what’s OK and what’s not OK,” Bickert told reporters in a briefing at Facebook’s headquarters.

Facebook has faced fierce criticism from governments and rights groups in many countries for failing to do enough to stem hate speech and prevent the service from being used to promote terrorism, stir sectarian violence and broadcast acts including murder and suicide. At the same time, the company has also been accused of doing the bidding of repressive regimes by aggressively removing content that crosses governments and providing too little information on why certain posts and accounts are removed.

A wider variety

New policies will, for the first time, allow people to appeal a decision to take down an individual piece of content. Previously, only the removal of accounts, Groups and Pages could be appealed. Facebook is also beginning to provide the specific reason why content is being taken down for a wider variety of situations.

Facebook, the world’s largest social network, has become a dominant source of information in many countries around the world. It uses both automated software and an army of moderators that now numbers 7,500 to take down text, pictures and videos that violate its rules. Under pressure from several governments, it has been beefing up its moderator ranks since last year.

Bickert told Reuters in an interview that the standards are constantly evolving, based in part on feedback from more than 100 outside organizations and experts in areas such as counter-terrorism and child exploitation. “Everybody should expect that these will be updated frequently,” she said.

The company considers changes to its content policy every two weeks at a meeting called the “Content Standards Forum,” led by Bickert. A small group of reporters was allowed to observe the meeting last week on the condition that they could describe process, but not substance. At the April 17 meeting, about 25 employees sat around a conference table while others joined by video from New York, Dublin, Mexico City, Washington and elsewhere.

Attendees included people who specialize in public policy, legal matters, product development, communication and other areas. They heard reports from smaller working groups, relayed feedback they had gotten from civil rights groups and other outsiders and suggested ways that a policy or product could go wrong in the future. There was little mention of what competitors such as Alphabet Inc’s Google do in similar situations. Bickert, a former US federal prosecutor, posed questions, provided background and kept the discussion moving. —Reuters

Raising ‘other bets’

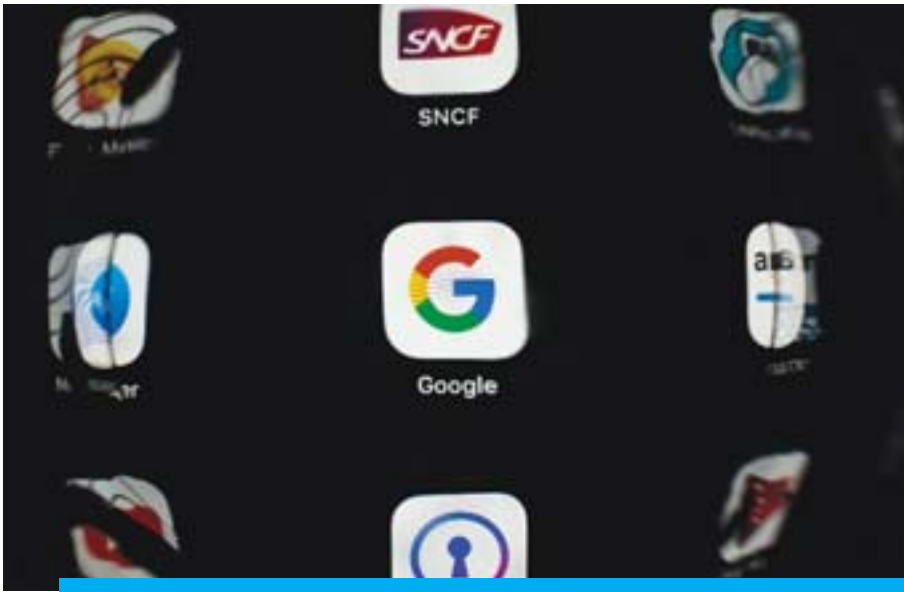
Revenues from its “other bets,” which include the self-driving car unit Waymo and life sciences firm Verily, amounted to \$150 million from \$132 million. “We have a clear set of exciting opportunities ahead, and our strong growth enables us to invest in them with confidence,” said Alphabet chief financial officer Ruth Porat. She noted that high-speed cable internet unit Fiber and Verily were mostly responsible for the money taken in by “big bets.”

Alphabet plans to keep up investment in new areas its core search service, as well as keep pumping money into undersea data cables, artificial intelligence, data centers and its line of consumer electronics devices including Pixel smartphones. Google chief executive Sundar Pichai said that he will share what the company is “up to next” at its annual developers conference in Silicon Valley next month.

Bright spots at Alphabet included YouTube, where executives are focusing on original video content and live streaming to mobile devices in the competitive market. Early this month, an Iran-born animal rights activist with a vendetta against the company shot three people before killing herself at YouTube’s California headquarters.

“It’s been a particularly tough few weeks for the Google family, especially at YouTube,” Pichai said. “I’m so proud of the resilience that our employees shown and I’m so grateful for the support we’ve got across our industry and from the community.” During the past year, the number of YouTube channels making more than \$100,000 has grown by 40 percent, according to Pichai.

While investing in content such as a hit live stream of Beyonce at Coachella music festival, Google is also working to filter out content that violates its policies, he added.



PARIS: This illustration picture taken on April 19, 2018 in Paris shows the tablet and smartphone app for Google. —AFP

“We also changed our monetization requirements to better identify creators who contribute positively to the community and drive more ad revenue to them,” Pichai said.

EU data privacy rules

Google said it is collaborating with regulators in Europe to comply with the EU’s General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which becomes effective May 25. “We started working on GDPR compliance over 18 months ago and have been very, very engaged on it,” Pichai said. “It’s really important and we care about getting it right.” Google is also working with publishers and advertisers to get in tune with the EU privacy law.

Alphabet is the first major Silicon Valley firm to report first-quarter earnings, and

micro-targeting through personality profiles. However, Kogan told MPs yesterday that the data was too imprecise to build up accurate profiles that could be used to effectively target political Facebook ads.

“One of the biggest points of confusion has been how accurate the personality scores we provided to SCL (CA’s parent company) were,” he said. “The scores were highly inaccurate. We found that the scores were more accurate than a random guess, but less accurate than assuming everyone is average on every trait.” Facebook’s own tools “provide companies a far more effective pathway to target people based on their personalities than using scores from users from our work,” he added. Kogan said that CA assured him that what he was doing was “perfectly legal and within the terms of service” of the social media giant. CA’s former chief executive Alexander Nix has denied using data collected by GSR, but Kogan called the claim “a fabrication”.

‘Unfortunate coincidence’

He also accused Facebook of feigning ignorance of how their users’ data was being used, saying it was “well documented that Facebook collaborates with researchers.” “They gave me the data set without any agreement signed,” he explained. “Sometime later they came and we did have a signed agreement.” When asked why Facebook would be so accommodating, Kogan replied that “this was something they gave their employees to stimulate them.”

Committee chairman Damien Collins asked if that meant Facebook let its employees give data to academics “and let them play with it?”, to which Kogan responded: “Yes”. The scientist claimed in an earlier interview that “tens of thousands” of apps will have taken advantage of Facebook data rules. It was, however, not part of Facebook’s terms for Kogan to sell data, and he denied he had ever done so.



LONDON: A video grab from footage broadcast by the UK Parliament’s Parliamentary Recording Unit (PRU) shows Russian-American academic Aleksandr Kogan, as he gives evidence to Parliament’s Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee. —AFP

Born in Moldova and raised in Russia, before emigrating to the United States at the age of seven, Kogan studied at the University of California, Berkeley, and obtained his doctorate at the University of Hong Kong. He joined the University of Cambridge’s Department of Psychology as a lecturer in 2012. He has also conducted work funded by the Russian government with St Petersburg University, but said that was irrelevant to the Facebook scandal. The scientist also goes by the name Aleksandr Spectre, which he took when he married his Singaporean bride. When an MP pointed out that the name was also the evil organization in James Bond films, Kogan said this was just an “unfortunate coincidence.” —AFP

Health

Leading global healthcare network performs first-time procedure in Gulf

New hope for Kuwait's obesity epidemic

CLEVELAND: Doctors from US-based Cleveland Clinic have successfully performed their first-ever endoscopic sleeve gastroplasty, a new procedure to reduce the size of a patient's stomach without the need for invasive surgical incisions or implants, on a patient in the GCC. With two thirds of the Kuwait's population classified as overweight or obese, the availability of a new, surgery-free, weight-loss procedure provides another important option for patients looking to reduce the health risks associated with obesity. An international medical team operating in the Middle East carried out the gastroplasty, the first time the operation has been successfully performed at any hospital within the Cleveland Clinic health system of hospitals.

Endoscopic sleeve gastroplasty reduces the size of a patient's stomach using an endoscopic suturing device, without the need for invasive surgery. By reducing stomach capacity and slowing down the speed at which food passes into the bowel, it makes the patient feel full more quickly, supporting his or her weight-loss program. With no cutting, stapling, or scarring, the new procedure supports a faster recovery time than traditional surgical approaches.

Dr Matthew Kroh of Cleveland Clinic's Digestive Disease Institute explains: "We continue to lead the way in gastrointestinal care in the region through the introduction of advanced procedures such as this endoscopic sleeve gastroplasty. This new approach provides an important alternative to surgical intervention and will help us tackle one of Kuwait's most pressing health issues -obesity and associated health problems." The Clinic's Digestive Disease Institute is seeing a growing volume of patients looking for support in losing weight and interested in bariatric treatments for obesity and weight-related health problems, such as diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and sleep apnea.

An important alternative

For the patient who received the first endoscopic sleeve

gastroplasty, who didn't want to have surgery but wanted to be proactive in addressing her obesity to avoid weight-related diseases, the treatment offered an important alternative. After an overnight stay in hospital, she was discharged and able to go home.

"We are very pleased with the progress of the first patient to be treated with endoscopic sleeve gastroplasty. She has responded well to her treatment and, importantly, is looking to tackle her weight-related health issues with a positive approach," said Dr Kroh. "As her weight reduces, she will find that she is able to enjoy greater levels of physical activity and overall well-being. We want to help more people

in the region regain control of their lives like this, and believe that surgical and non-surgical treatments will have a key role to play."

Reducing obesity is key to Kuwait's goal of halving the number of cardiovascular disease deaths in the country, while reducing the rate of diabetes. Reducing obesity levels is a crucial step in achieving those goals.



Does alcohol cause PMS?

PARIS: Researchers reported a link Monday between PMS and drinking alcohol, but could not conclude whether premenstrual suffering causes women to hit the bottle, or the other way round. A trawl of data from 19 studies in eight countries found a "moderate association" between premenstrual syndrome (PMS) symptoms such as cramps, breast tenderness, fatigue, moodiness, and depression on the one hand, and a tippie on (in) the other.

The link was "more pronounced" with heavy drinking-equivalent to one average-sized drink per day or more-

the researchers said. This suggested drinking may be the cause, rather than the consequence, of some PMS cases, they said. But the data "cannot strictly rule out that PMS causes women to drink in order to mitigate their symptoms," study co-author Bahi Takkouche of the University of Santiago de Compostela in Spain said.

Either way, the findings "are important given that the worldwide prevalence of alcohol drinking among women is not negligible," the team wrote in the online journal BMJ Open. The data used in the meta-analysis was taken from studies conducted in the United States, Britain, Poland, Switzerland, Turkey, South Korea, Taiwan and Australia. PMS symptoms, which vary from woman to woman, usually last one to a few days before menstruation. According to the NHS, about one in 20 women suffer symptoms so severe they interrupt their lives or work.

'Not surprising'

In the United States, previous research has found, the economic cost can reach \$5,000 (just over 4,000 euros) per PMS case per year due to women staying away from work, and seeking medical pain relief. The majority of cases are never recorded, however, as many women simply carry on as best they can. Worldwide, the proportion of women who drink alcohol is about 29 percent, said the research team. "Heavy" drinkers made up about six percent of the female population.

In Europe and America, these figures are "much higher"-about 60 percent of women drink in Europe, and 13 percent heavily. Based on these figures and the study findings, the team estimated that about one in 10 PMS cases may be associated with drinking worldwide, and one in five in Europe. —AFP

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- Treating excess perspiration
- AV connection for dialysis

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What's On



IWG holds special Nepal Day program

The International Women's Group (IWG), Kuwait organized a very special program for the celebration of "Nepal Day" on the eve of Nepal's New Year 2075 on 9 April 2018 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Kuwait. Mrs Rita Hamal, wife of the Ambassador of Nepal to the State of Kuwait and a member of IWG hosted the event. During the function, Nepal's folk dances were performed and musical instruments were played by traditional Nepalese artistes. Similarly, a documentary was shown about Nepal's great touristic attractions. Some of Nepal's famous export products, such as pashmina shawls, woodcrafts, tea, paper products, jewelry, etc. were also displayed on the occasion.

While welcoming the guests, the Ambassador of Nepal to the State of Kuwait His Excellency Yagya Bahadur Hamal expressed thanks to IWG for organizing the event as well as the group's contributions towards promoting culture, trade, tourism and people-to-people contacts between Kuwait and other countries, including Nepal.

At that time, the Ambassadors highlighted that Nepal is one of the most beautiful countries of the world, as it houses the world's tallest peak Mount Everest - and seven other highest snow-capped mountains of the world above 8,000 meters, a great number of cool fresh water rivers and serene blue water lakes, lush green mountains and valleys, dense forests, various flora and fauna with 874 species of birds, 651 types of butterfly, 187 varieties of fish, one-horned rhino, royal Bengal tiger, and precious herbs like Yarchagumba. He further said that adventures of river rafting, jungle safari, bungee jumping, trekking, mountain flights, paragliding, etc. and 10 UNESCO recognized world heritage sites with many historical and cultural attractions have been attracting a great number of tourists from around the world to Nepal every year.

He also expressed satisfaction with the friendly and cordial relations between Nepal and Kuwait and other countries, hoping for their further expansion in the time to come, and wished peace, prosperity and happiness to the guests on the occasion of Nepal's New Year 2075 that begins on April 14.



Sultan Al-Duwaish



Under auspices of the First Deputy PM and Minister of Defense, Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, the GCC Society for History and Archaeology will hold its 9th Scientific Forum in Kuwait in the period of April 25-26.

Soorya Festival spellbinds audience

Soorya Kuwait Chapter staged the "Soorya India Festival 2018" on April 12 at the Indian Community School Auditorium, Khaitan, Kuwait. Pranavam Sasi, All India Radio artiste and the Kerala Folklore Academy award winner inaugurated the festival by lighting the lamp along with Vijay Karayil, President, Renjith Pillai, and B S Pillai, General Secretary. The chief guest appreciated Soorya Kuwait Chapter for its excellent efforts in promoting the rich and diverse Indian culture. General Secretary welcomed the audience. The Soorya festival aims to promote international integration through culture.

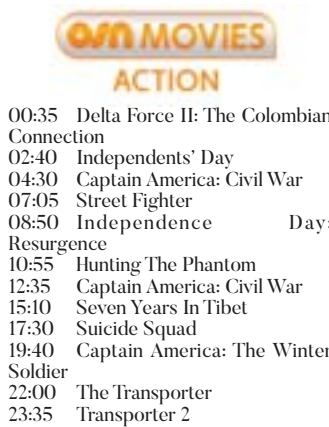
The Bharatanatyam recital by a mother-daughter duo Kalaimamani Rama Vaidyanathan and her daughter

Natyaratna Dakshina Vaidyanathan Baghel was a unique blend of tradition and innovation. Rama Vaidyanathan once again proved her individualistic statement and style, strongly expressive of her joy and exuberance. Her lucid introductions matched each one of the aesthetically pleasing items. Watching Rama Vaidyanathan dance, one gets the feeling that she is truly passionate about what she is doing as she immerses herself into the movement and the mood.

Accomplished dancer and a gifted dance choreographer, Dakshina Vaidyanathan Baghel, who comes from a family of eminent Bharatanatyam dancers, captivated the audience with her brilliant movements. With her beautiful presence and an innate grace, Dakshina was very strong in rhythm and this aspect came through attractively in her recitals. Later, the artistes were honored with gifts for their outstanding performances. Renjith Pillai and Vijay Karayil presented the gifts. Soorya has been disseminating Indian art and culture through music and dance with its 19 chapters all over the world.



TV



00:35 Delta Force II: The Colombian Connection
02:40 Independents' Day
04:30 Captain America: Civil War
07:05 Street Fighter
08:50 Independence Day
10:55 Hunting The Phantom
12:35 Captain America: Civil War
15:10 Seven Years In Tibet
17:30 Suicide Squad
19:40 Captain America: The Winter Soldier
22:00 The Transporter
23:35 Transporter 2



00:45 Weird Creatures With Nick Baker
01:40 Cats 101
02:35 Swamp Brothers
03:00 Swamp Brothers
03:25 Pit Bulls & Parolees
04:15 Cat vs Dog
05:02 North America
05:49 Untamed & Uncut
06:36 Swamp Brothers
08:15 Weird Creatures With Nick Baker
09:10 Cats 101
10:05 North America
11:00 Swamp Brothers
11:28 Swamp Brothers
11:55 Meet The Penguins
15:35 Untamed & Uncut
16:30 Weird Creatures With Nick Baker
17:25 Tanked
18:20 The Pool Master
19:15 Cats 101
20:10 Swamp Brothers
20:38 Swamp Brothers
21:05 Tanked
22:00 The Pool Master
22:55 North America
23:50 Untamed & Uncut



00:00 Evil Up Close
01:00 Evil Up Close
01:55 Killers: Behind The Myth
02:50 American Ripper In London
03:45 Evil Up Close
05:15 The First 48
07:00 It Takes A Killer
07:20 The First 48
08:05 Cold Case Files
08:50 Homicide Hunter
09:35 The First 48
10:30 Cold Case Files
11:25 Crimes That Shook Britain
12:20 Cold Case Files
13:15 Leah Remini: Scientology And The Aftermath
14:10 The First 48
15:05 Cold Case Files
16:00 Homicide Hunter
17:00 Deadly Wives
18:00 Deadly Wives
19:00 Deadly Wives
20:00 The First 48
21:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
22:00 Robbie Coltrane's Critical Evidence
23:00 Homicide Hunter



00:05 Inside Amy Schumer
00:30 Tosh.0
00:55 This Is Not Happening
01:20 The Opposition With Jordan Klepper
01:45 South Park
02:10 South Park
02:35 Tosh.0
03:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
03:25 Tosh.0
03:50 South Park
04:15 Nathan For You
04:40 Key And Peele
05:05 Catch A Contractor
05:30 Disaster Date
05:55 Ridiculousness Arabia
06:20 Comedy Central Presents
06:50 Comedy Salvo
07:15 Hillbillies For Hire
07:40 Lip Sync Battle
08:05 Key And Peele
08:30 Disaster Date
08:55 Workaholics
09:20 Nathan For You
09:45 Lip Sync Battle
10:10 Catch A Contractor
10:35 Friends
11:00 Key And Peele
11:25 Disaster Date
11:50 Ridiculousness Arabia
12:15 Friendszone
12:40 Key And Peele
13:05 Friends
13:30 Friends
13:55 Nathan For You
14:20 Workaholics
14:45 Disaster Date
15:10 Friends
15:35 Key And Peele
16:00 Nathan For You
16:30 Friendszone
16:55 Friends
17:20 Friends
17:45 Disaster Date
18:10 Disorderly Conduct: Video On Patrol
19:00 Friends
19:25 Friendszone
19:50 Real Husbands Of Hollywood
20:12 Friends

20:35 Friends
21:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
21:30 The Opposition With Jordan Klepper
22:00 Martha And Snoop Potluck Dinner Party
22:25 Inside Amy Schumer
22:50 Why? With Hannibal Buress
23:15 Real Husbands Of Hollywood
23:40 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah



00:05 Fail Army
00:30 Kids Do The Craziest Things
00:55 Kids Do The Craziest Things
01:20 How It's Made
02:10 Ecopolis
03:00 Tanked
03:50 Ultimate Survival
04:40 Cliptastic
05:05 Guinness World Records
05:30 Smashed New Zealand
05:55 Fail Army
06:20 How It's Made
07:00 Kids Do The Craziest Things
07:25 Kids Do The Craziest Things
07:50 Ecopolis
08:40 How It's Made
09:05 How It's Made
09:30 Tanked
10:20 David Baddiel On The Silk Road
11:10 Kids Do The Craziest Things
12:00 How It's Made
12:25 How It's Made
12:50 The Know It All Guide To...
13:15 Outrageous Acts Of Psych
13:40 You Can't Lick Your Elbow
14:05 You Can't Lick Your Elbow
15:20 How It's Made
15:45 How It's Made
16:10 David Baddiel On The Silk Road
17:00 Out Of Egypt
17:50 Tanked
18:40 Kids Do The Craziest Things
19:30 How To Build... Everything
20:20 What Happened Next?
20:45 What Happened Next?
21:10 How It's Made
21:35 How It's Made
22:00 Ultimate Survival
22:50 How To Build... Everything
23:15 How To Build... Everything
23:40 What Happened Next?



00:45 Blood Relatives
01:40 Casey Anthony: Killer Mom?
02:35 Jodi Arias: From Lust To Murder
03:30 Murder Chose Me
04:25 Blood Relatives
05:20 I Almost Got Away With It
06:10 Evil Online
07:00 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
07:25 Shadow Of Doubt
08:15 Blood Relatives
09:10 Evil Online
10:05 Murder Comes To Town
11:00 Gone
11:55 Shadow Of Doubt
12:50 I Almost Got Away With It
13:45 Evil Online
14:40 Murder Comes To Town
15:35 Scene Of The Crime With Tony Harris
16:30 I'd Kill For You
17:25 Blood Relatives
18:20 I Almost Got Away With It
19:15 Evil Online
20:10 Murder Comes To Town
21:05 Forbidden: Dying For Love
22:00 Betrayed
22:55 Bride Killers
23:50 Deadly Sins



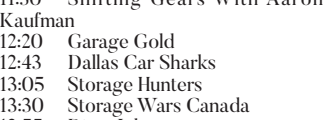
00:00 Hank Zipzer
00:25 Alex & Co.
00:45 Disney Mickey Mouse
00:50 Evermoor Chronicles
01:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
01:40 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
02:05 Binnie And The Ghost
02:30 Binnie And The Ghost
02:55 Hank Zipzer
03:15 Disney Mickey Mouse
03:20 Hank Zipzer
03:45 Alex & Co.
04:10 Alex & Co.
04:35 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
05:00 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
05:25 Binnie And The Ghost
05:45 Disney Mickey Mouse
05:50 Rolling With The Ronks S1 Splits
06:00 Kitty Is Not A Cat S1 Splits
06:15 Kitty Is Not A Cat S1 Splits
06:25 Hotel Transylvania: The Series
06:50 Tsum Tsum Shorts
06:55 Tangled: The Series
07:20 Stuck In The Middle
07:45 K.C. Undercover
08:10 Bunk'd
08:35 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug...
09:00 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug...
09:25 Lolirock
09:50 Lolirock
10:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
10:40 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
11:05 Hank Zipzer
11:30 Alex & Co.
11:55 Alex & Co.
12:20 Lolirock
13:10 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug...
13:35 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug...
14:00 The Zhuzhus S1
14:15 Bunk'd
14:40 K.C. Undercover
15:05 Disney Mickey Mouse
15:10 Kitty Is Not A Cat S1 Splits
15:20 Kitty Is Not A Cat S1 Splits
15:35 Elena Of Avalor
16:00 Tangled: The Series
16:25 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug...
16:50 Bizaardvark
17:15 Stuck In The Middle
17:40 Hotel Transylvania: The Series
18:05 K.C. Undercover
18:30 Bunk'd
18:55 Descendants Wicked World
19:00 Raven's Home
19:25 Liv And Maddie
19:50 Jessie
20:15 Disney Mickey Mouse
20:20 Tangled: The Series
20:45 Bizaardvark
21:10 Hotel Transylvania: The Series
21:35 Stuck In The Middle
22:00 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug...



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



00:15 Street Outlaws vs Fast N' Loud
01:05 Fast N' Loud
01:50 Goblin Works Garage
02:35 Shifting Gears With Aaron Kaufman
03:20 Street Outlaws
04:05 Buying Alaska
04:27 Buying Alaska
04:50 Dirty Jobs
05:35 Storage Hunters
06:00 Garage Gold
06:23 Dallas Car Sharks
06:45 Storage Hunters
07:10 Storage Wars Canada
07:35 Buying Alaska
07:57 Buying Alaska
08:20 Garage Gold
08:45 Dallas Car Sharks
09:10 Dirty Jobs
09:55 Fast N' Loud
10:45 Goblin Works Garage
11:30 Shifting Gears With Aaron Kaufman
12:20 Garage Gold
12:43 Dallas Car Sharks
13:05 Storage Hunters
13:30 Storage Wars Canada
13:55 Dirty Jobs
14:40 Ice Cold Gold
15:30 Fast N' Loud
16:15 Goblin Works Garage
17:05 Shifting Gears With Aaron Kaufman
17:50 Buying Alaska
18:15 Buying Alaska
18:40 Kinding Customs
19:25 Ice Cold Gold
20:15 Street Outlaws
21:00 Blue Collar Backers
21:50 Pacific Warriors
22:40 Outback Truckers
23:30 Buying Alaska
23:53 Buying Alaska



00:20 Milwaukee Blacksmith
00:45 Pawn Stars
01:10 Sean Bean On Waterloo
02:00 Swamp People
02:50 Who Killed Tupac?
03:40 Battle 360
04:30 Milwaukee Blacksmith
04:55 Pawn Stars
05:20 American Pickers
06:00 Swamp People
06:50 Milwaukee Blacksmith
07:15 Pawn Stars
07:40 The Curse Of Oak Island
08:30 Sean Bean On Waterloo
09:20 Swamp People
10:10 Alone
11:00 Milwaukee Blacksmith
11:25 Pawn Stars
11:50 The Curse Of Oak Island
12:40 Sean Bean On Waterloo
13:30 Swamp People
14:20 Sean Bean On Waterloo
15:10 Alone
16:00 American Pickers
16:50 The Curse Of Oak Island
17:40 Sean Bean On Waterloo
18:30 Swamp People
19:20 Milwaukee Blacksmith
19:45 Pawn Stars
20:10 American Pickers
21:00 Counting Cars
21:25 Car Hunters
21:50 Project Impossible
22:40 Milwaukee Blacksmith
23:05 Pawn Stars
23:30 Swamp People



06:00 DuckTales
06:25 Lab Rats
06:50 Gravity Falls
07:15 Marvel's Spider-Man
07:40 Disney Mickey Mouse
07:45 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
08:10 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
08:35 Supa Strikas
09:25 Mighty Med
10:20 Phineas & Ferb
11:10 Lab Rats
11:35 Lab Rats
12:00 Right Now Kapow
12:25 Two More Eggs
12:30 Right Now Kapow
12:55 Kirby Buckets Warped
13:45 Gravity Falls
14:10 Disney Mickey Mouse
14:15 Gravity Falls
14:40 Pair Of Kings
15:05 Pair Of Kings
15:30 Lab Rats
15:50 Two More Eggs
16:00 DuckTales
16:25 DuckTales
16:50 Mech-X4
17:15 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
17:40 Marvel's Spider-Man
18:05 Gravity Falls
18:35 Right Now Kapow
19:00 DuckTales
19:50 Marvel's Rocket And Groot
19:55 Kickin' It
20:45 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
21:35 Marvel's Rocket And Groot
21:40 Disney Mickey Mouse
21:45 Lab Rats
22:10 Lab Rats
22:35 Phineas & Ferb
23:00 Programmes Start At 6:00am



00:05 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
00:55 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
01:50 E! News

02:50 Botched
03:40 Botched
04:35 Botched
05:30 Celebrity Style Story
06:00 Botched
06:55 E! News Middle East
07:10 Botched
08:10 E! News: Daily Pop
09:10 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
10:05 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
11:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
12:00 E! News Middle East
12:15 Botched
13:10 Catinched Rose
15:00 E! News Middle East
15:15 E! News: Daily Pop
16:15 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
17:10 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
18:05 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
19:00 E! News
20:00 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
21:00 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
22:00 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
23:00 E! News Middle East
23:15 Botched



00:10 Paul O'grady's Animal Orphans
01:00 Emmerdale
01:30 Coronation Street
02:30 The Chase
03:25 Murdoch Mysteries
05:15 Paul O'grady's Animal Orphans
06:15 Guess This House
07:10 The Chase
08:05 Murdoch Mysteries
09:00 Murdoch Mysteries
09:55 Paul O'grady's Animal Orphans
11:00 Guess This House
11:50 The Chase
12:45 Emmerdale
13:15 Coronation Street
14:15 Guess This House
15:10 The Chase
16:00 Victoria
16:55 Hil
17:50 Paul O'grady's Animal Orphans
18:50 Emmerdale
19:15 Coronation Street
19:45 Coronation Street
20:10 The Chase
21:00 Victoria
21:55 Hil
22:50 Emmerdale
23:15 Coronation Street
23:40 Coronation Street



00:00 Ancient Discoveries
01:00 America's Book Of Secrets
02:00 UFO Hunters
02:50 Ancient Aliens
03:40 Ancient Aliens
05:20 Hangar I: The UFO Files
06:10 Hangar I: The UFO Files
07:00 Ancient Discoveries
08:00 America's Book Of Secrets
09:00 UFO Hunters
10:00 Ancient Aliens
11:00 Ancient Aliens
13:00 Ancient Discoveries
14:00 UFO Hunters
15:00 Ancient Aliens
16:00 Ancient Aliens
18:00 Ancient Discoveries
19:00 America's Book Of Secrets
20:00 UFO Hunters
21:00 Ancient Aliens
22:00 Al Capone
23:00 Hoard Hunters



00:20 Milwaukee Blacksmith
00:45 Pawn Stars
01:10 Sean Bean On Waterloo
02:00 Swamp People
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03:40 Battle 360
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16:50 The Curse Of Oak Island
17:40 Sean Bean On Waterloo
18:30 Swamp People
19:20 Milwaukee Blacksmith
19:45 Pawn Stars
20:10 American Pickers
21:00 Counting Cars
21:25 Car Hunters
21:50 Project Impossible
22:40 Milwaukee Blacksmith
23:05 Pawn Stars
23:30 Swamp People



00:15 Chocolate Covered
00:45 David Rocco's Dolce India
01:10 Lucky Chow
01:40 Stepping Out
02:05 Fish Of The Day
02:35 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia
03:00 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia
03:30 Croatia's Finest
04:25 The Diving Women Of Jeju
05:20 John Torode's Korean Food Tour
06:15 A Is For Apple
06:40 A Is For Apple
07:10 Stepping Out
07:35 Fish Of The Day
08:05 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia
08:30 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia
09:00 Croatia's Finest
09:25 The Diving Women Of Jeju
09:55 John Torode's Korean Food Tour
11:45 A Is For Apple
12:10 A Is For Apple
12:40 Fish Of The Day
13:35 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia

14:00 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia
14:30 Croatia's Finest
14:55 Croatia's Finest
15:25 David Rocco's Dolce India
15:50 Straight To The Source: Korean Food
16:20 John Torode's Korean Food Tour
17:15 A Is For Apple
17:40 A Is For Apple
18:10 Street Food Around The World
18:35 Maximum Foodie
19:05 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia
19:30 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia
20:00 Croatia's Finest
20:30 Croatia's Finest
21:00 David Rocco's Dolce India
21:30 Straight To The Source: Korean Food
22:00 John Torode's Korean Food Tour
22:55 A Is For Apple
23:20 A Is For Apple
23:50 Street Food Around The World



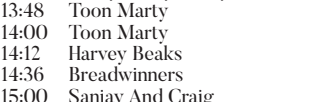
00:10 Cosmos: A Spacetime Odyssey
01:00 Wicked Tuna
02:00 Air Crash Investigation
03:00 Genius
04:00 Cesar Millan's Dog Nation
05:00 Mega Breakdown
07:00 Showdown Of The Unbeatables
08:00 Taiwan's Toughest
09:00 Cesar Millan's Dog Nation
10:00 Cesar Millan's Dog Nation
11:00 Jackie Chan's Green Heroes
12:00 Years Of Living Dangerously
13:00 Mega Breakdown
14:00 Taiwan's Toughest
15:00 Showdown Of The Unbeatables
16:00 Miracle Hospital
17:00 Before The Flood
19:00 Showdown Of The Unbeatables
20:00 Miracle Hospital
20:50 Before The Flood
22:30 Showdown Of The Unbeatables
23:20 Taiwan's Toughest



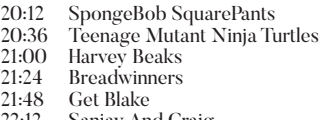
00:20 Africa's Hunters
01:10 Monster Fish
02:00 Africa's Wild Kingdom
02:50 Monster Fish
03:45 Snakes In The City
04:40 Natural Born Monsters
05:35 Africa's Wild Kingdom
06:30 Monster Fish
07:25 Snakes In The City
08:20 Natural Born Monsters
09:15 Africa's Deadliest
10:10 Animal Fight Club
11:05 Philly Undercover
12:00 Strike Force
12:55 Africa's Hunters
13:50 Monster Fish
14:45 Snakes In The City
15:40 Bite Sting Kill
16:35 Jaguars vs. Crocs
17:30 Animal Fight Club
18:25 Bite Sting Kill
19:20 Snakes In The City
20:10 Bite Sting Kill
21:00 Jaguars vs. Crocs
21:50 Animal Fight Club
22:40 Bite Sting Kill
23:30 Strike Force



00:12 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
00:36 Rabbids Invasion
01:00 Rabbids Invasion
01:24 Sanjay And Craig
01:48 Sanjay And Craig
02:12 Winx Club
02:36 Winx Club
03:00 Harvey Beaks
03:24 Harvey Beaks
03:48 Rabbids Invasion
04:12 Rabbids Invasion
04:36 Breadwinners
05:00 Breadwinners
05:24 The Loud House
05:48 SpongeBob SquarePants
06:12 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
06:36 Harvey Beaks
07:00 Breadwinners
07:24 Get Blake
07:48 Sanjay And Craig
08:12 Rabbids Invasion
08:36 The Loud House
09:00 Regal Academy
09:24 Winx Club
09:48 100 Things To Do Before High School
10:12 Game Shakers
10:36 School Of Rock
11:00 Henry Danger
11:24 The Thundermans
11:48 I Am Frankie
12:12 Rank The Prank
12:36 Massive Monster Mayhem
13:00 Hunter Street
13:24 Nicky, Ricky, Dicky & Dawn
13:48 Toon Marty
14:00 Toon Marty
14:12 Harvey Beaks
14:36 Breadwinners
15:00 Sanjay And Craig
15:24 Rabbids Invasion
15:48 SpongeBob SquarePants
16:12 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
16:36 The Loud House
17:00 Toon Marty
17:12 Toon Marty
17:24 Massive Monster Mayhem
17:48 Hunter Street
18:12 Henry Danger
18:36 Nicky, Ricky, Dicky & Dawn
19:00 School Of Rock
19:24 Game Shakers
19:48 The Thundermans
20:36 SpongeBob SquarePants
21:00 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
21:24 Breadwinners
21:48 Get Blake
22:12 Sanjay And Craig
22:36 Rabbids Invasion
23:00 The Loud House
23:24 Regal Academy
23:48 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles



01:30 Brother Bear 2
03:00 Race To Witch Mountain
05:00 Inspector Gadget
06:45 Aladdin
08:30 Brother Bear 2
10:00 Race To Witch Mountain
12:00 Inspector Gadget
13:45 Tarzan II
15:15 Monsters University
17:15 Pirates Of The Caribbean: Curse Of The Black Pearl
20:00 Herbie Fully Loaded
22:00 Tarzan II
23:30 Monsters University



00:00 Riverdale
01:00 APB
01:50 The Fosters
02:40 The Voice
04:30 Star
05:20 Chicago Med
06:10 Switched At Birth
07:00 Good Morning America
09:00 The View
10:00 Riverdale
11:00 Chicago Med
12:00 Switched At Birth
13:00 Chicago P.D.
14:00 Riverdale
15:00 The View
16:00 Live Good Morning America
18:00 Switched At Birth
19:00 Chicago Med
20:00 Chicago P.D.
21:00 The Voice



00:07 Max & Ruby
00:30 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
00:41 Kiva Can Do!
00:51 The Day Henry Met
00:57 Blaze And The Monster Machines
01:19 Blaze And The Monster Machines
01:41 Paw Patrol

01:53 Kid-E-Cats
01:58 Kid-E-Cats
02:04 Shimmer And Shine
02:26 Nella The Princess Knight
02:38 Paw Patrol
03:00 Max & Ruby
03:23 Dora The Explorer
03:46 Sunny Day
04:08 Nella The Princess Knight
04:30 Shimmer And Shine
04:53 Wallykazam!
05:17 Zack & Quack
05:27 The Day Henry Met
05:32 The Day Henry Met
05:38 Blaze And The Monster Machines
06:00 Rusty Rivets
06:13 Paw Patrol
06:25 Paw Patrol
06:37 Dora The Explorer
07:00 Nella The Princess Knight
07:22 Kiva Can Do!
07:33 Kiva Can Do!
07:44 Blaze And The Monster Machines
08:06 Paw Patrol
08:17 Paw Patrol
08:29 Shimmer And Shine
08:52 Nella The Princess Knight
09:15 Paw Patrol
09:39 Rusty Rivets
10:02 Wallykazam!
10:24 The Day Henry Met
10:30 Bubble Guppies
10:54 Team Umizoomi
11:16 Kid-E-Cats
11:22 Shimmer And Shine
11:45 Sunny Day
12:07 Max & Ruby
12:30 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
12:41 Kiva Can Do!
12:52 The Day Henry Met
12:57 Blaze And The Monster Machines
13:20 Blaze And The Monster Machines
13:42 Paw Patrol
13:54 Kid-E-Cats
13:59 Kid-E-Cats
14:05 Shimmer And Shine
14:27 Nella The Princess Knight
14:39 Paw Patrol
15:02 Max & Ruby
15:24 Dora The Explorer
15:47 Sunny Day
16:09 Nella The Princess Knight
16:31 Shimmer And Shine
16:54 Wallykazam!
17:17 Zack & Quack
17:28 The Day Henry Met
17:33 The Day Henry Met
17:38 Blaze And The Monster Machines
18:00 Rusty Rivets
18:14 Paw Patrol
18:25 Paw Patrol
18:37 Dora The Explorer
19:00 Nella The Princess Knight
19:22 Kiva Can Do!
19:33 Kiva Can Do!
19:44 Blaze And The Monster Machines
20:06 Paw Patrol
20:17 Paw Patrol
20:29 Shimmer And Shine
20:52 Nella The Princess Knight
21:15 Paw Patrol
21:39 Rusty Rivets
22:02 Wallykazam!
22:24 The Day Henry Met
22:30 Bubble Guppies
22:53 Team Umizoomi
23:16 Kid-E-Cats
23:21 Shimmer And Shine
23:44 Sunny Day



00:15 How I Met Your Mother
00:40 How I Met Your Mother
01:05 Seinfeld
01:30 Seinfeld
01:55 Powerless
02:20 Powerless
02:45 Powerless
03:10 Late Night With Seth Meyers
04:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
04:50 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
05:40 The Michael J. Fox Show
06:05 Til Death
06:30 The Good Place
07:20 Late Night With Seth Meyers
08:10 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
09:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
09:50 Speechless
10:15 Great News
10:40 The Michael J. Fox Show
11:05 Til Death
11:30 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
12:20 The Good Place
13:10 How I Met Your Mother
13:35 How I Met Your Mother
14:00 Seinfeld
14:25 Seinfeld
14:50 The Michael J. Fox Show
15:15 Speechless
15:40 Great News
16:05 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
17:00 The Good Place
17:30 Mom
18:00 How I Met Your Mother
18:30 How I Met Your Mother
19:00 Seinfeld
19:30 Seinfeld
20:00 Modern Family
20:30 Making History
21:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
22:00 Life In Pieces
22:30 Life In Pieces
23:00 Hit The Road
23:30 Late Night With Seth Meyers



01:30 Brother Bear 2
03:00 Race To Witch Mountain
05:00 Inspector Gadget
06:45 Aladdin
08:30 Brother Bear 2
10:00 Race To Witch Mountain
12:00 Inspector Gadget
13:45 Tarzan II
15:15 Monsters University
17:15 Pirates Of The Caribbean: Curse Of The Black Pearl
20:00 Herbie Fully Loaded
22:00 Tarzan II
23:30 Monsters University



00:00 Riverdale
01:00 APB
01:50 The Fosters
02:40 The Voice
04:30 Star
05:20 Chicago Med
06:10 Switched At Birth
07:00 Good Morning America
09:00 The View
10:00 Riverdale
11:00 Chicago Med
12:00 Switched At Birth
13:00 Chicago P.D.
14:00 Riverdale
15:00 The View
16:00 Live Good Morning America
18:00 Switched At Birth
19:00 Chicago Med
20:00 Chicago P.D.
21:00 The Voice



00:07 Max & Ruby
00:30 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
00:41 Kiva Can Do!
00:51 The Day Henry Met
00:57 Blaze And The Monster Machines
01:19 Blaze And The Monster Machines
01:41 Paw Patrol

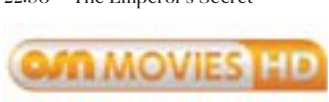
22:00 The Flash
23:00 Marvel's Agents Of S.H.I.E.L.D.



01:35 Turbo Kid
03:10 Once I Was A Beehive
05:15 Mystery Date
07:05 All She Wishes
08:50 Christmas Eve
10:35 Once I Was A Beehive
12:40 Mystery Date
14:25 All She Wishes
16:05 Christmas Eve
17:45 Step Dogs
19:20 Nacho Libre
20:55 The Time Of Their Lives
22:45 Puerto Ricans In Paris

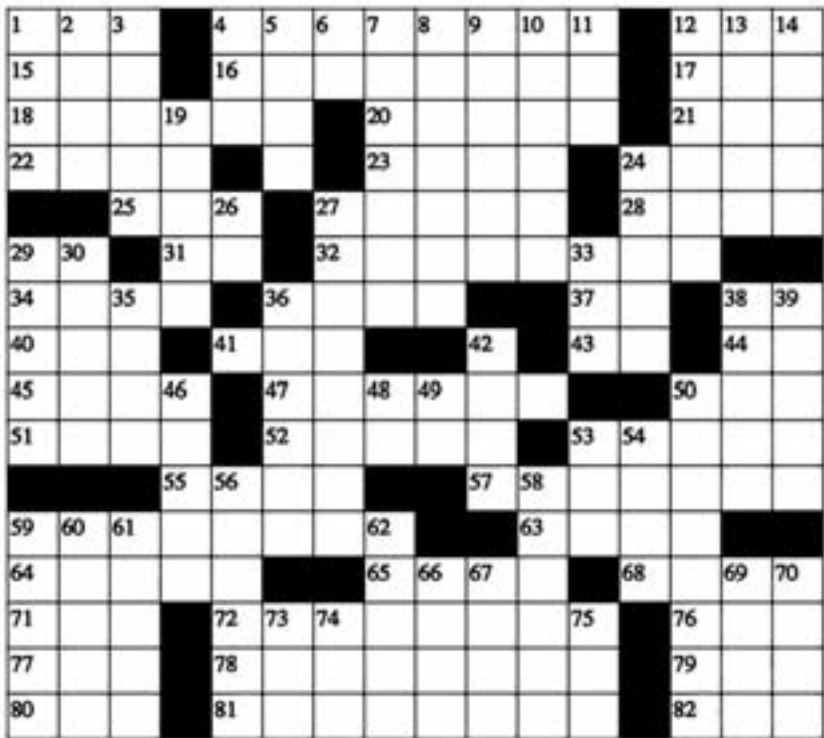


01:25 This Boy's Life
03:25 It Boy
05:10 The Last King
07:00 I Believe In Miracles
08:50 Clifford
10:35 It Boy
12:20 Roman Holiday
14:25 Tini - El Gran Cambio De Violetta
16:15 Dare To Be Wild
18:05 One True Thing
20:20 Hacker
22:15 The Preppie Connection



01:05 Phantom Boy
02:40 Funny Little Cars
03:50 Felix All Around The World
05:20 The Fairy Tales Tree
06:45 Bunny Tales
08:00 Dinofroz - An Island In The Sky
09:20 Micropolis
10:50 A Doggone Adventure
12:25 Teo: The Intergalactic Hunter
13:50 Felix All Around The World

CROSSWORD 1892



ACROSS

- 1.An agency of the United Nations affiliated with the World Bank.
- 4.An idle slothful person.
- 12.An insecticide that is also toxic to animals and humans.
- 15.A period of time spent sleeping.
- 16.Angered at something unjust or wrong.
- 17.The 17th letter of the Greek alphabet.
- 18.Malevolent aspect of Devi.
- 20.Collect or gather.
- 21.The sense organ for hearing and equilibrium.
- 22.Type genus of the Alcidae comprising solely the razorbill.
- 23.Roman Emperor notorious for his monstrous vice and fantastic luxury (was said to have started a fire that destroyed much of Rome in 64) but the Empire remained prosperous during his rule (37-68).
- 25.A gradual decline (in size or strength or power or number).
- 28.A woman hired to suckle a child of someone else.
- 29.A soft white precious univalent metallic element having the highest electrical and thermal conductivity of any metal.
- 31.A Russian river.
- 32.Congenital absence of fingers and/or toes.
- 34.Divulge information or secrets.
- 37.A state in northwestern North America.
- 40.The month following July and preceding September.
- 41.According to need (physicians use PRN in writing prescriptions).
- 43.Unknown god.
- 44.(astronomy) The angular distance of a celestial point measured westward along the celestial equator from the zenith crossing.
- 45.A three-tone Chadic language.
- 47.A soft yellow wax secreted by glands in the ear canal.
- 51.An unfledged or nestling hawk.
- 52.Occurring at or forming an end or termination.
- 55.According to the Old Testament he was a pagan king of Israel and husband of Jezebel (9th century BC).
- 57.Type genus of the Loganiaceae.
- 59.The absolute unit of pressure equal to one dyne per square centimeter.
- 63.A member of the British order of honor.
- 64.A state in the Rocky Mountains.
- 65.A British peer ranking below a Marquess and above a Viscount.
- 68.Derive or receive pleasure from.
- 71.(Brit) A tough youth of 1950's and 1960's wearing Edwardian style clothes.
- 72.Preceding an official trial.
- 76.Aircraft landing in bad weather in which the pilot is talked down by ground control using precision approach radar.
- 77.A small piece of cloth.
- 78.Former name for the order Crocodylia.
- 79.A member of a Mayan people of southwestern Guatemala.
- 80.Fermented alcoholic beverage similar to but heavier than beer.
- 81.Made less brittle by heating and then cooling.
- 82.A loose sleeveless outer garment made from a cloth.

DOWN

- 1.A ruler of the Inca Empire (or a member of his family).
- 2.Tropical woody herb with showy yellow flowers and flat pods.
- 3.With rapid movements.
- 4.Surface layer of ground containing a mat of grass and grass roots.
- 5.City in eastern Belgium.
- 6.The local time at the 0 meridian passing through Greenwich, England.
- 7.A city in southeastern Spain.
- 8.A canvas or leather bag for carrying game (especially birds) killed by a hunter.
- 9.Fungus used in the preparation of punk for fuses.
- 10.An area where many people go for recreation.
- 11.A doctor's degree in dental surgery.
- 12.Dreamy in mood or nature.
- 13.An Indian tree of the family Combretaceae that is a source of timber and gum.
- 14.The first of three divisions of the Hebrew Scriptures comprising the first five books of the Old Testament considered as a unit.
- 19.A wealthy man (who made his fortune in the Orient).
- 24.The Mongol people living the the central and eastern parts of Outer Mongolia.
- 26.A small pellet fired from an air rifle or BB gun.
- 27.A river in northeastern Brazil that flows generally northward to the Atlantic Ocean.
- 30.Having the properties of glue.
- 33.Noisy talk.
- 35.A city in northern India.
- 36.Manufactured in standard sizes to be shipped and assembled elsewhere.
- 38.(Mexican) Ground beef and chili peppers or chili powder often with tomatoes and kidney beans.
- 39.The capital and largest city of Yemen.
- 42.Round object that is hit or thrown or kicked in games.
- 46.The fourth month of the Hindu calendar.
- 48.A radioactive gaseous element formed by the disintegration of radium.
- 49.A state in northwestern United States on the Pacific.
- 50.A syntactic string that forms a part of some larger syntactic unit.
- 53.Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
- 54.An aggressive remark directed at a person like a missile and intended to have a telling effect.
- 56.Blatant or sensational promotion.
- 58.Having the equatorial diameter greater than the polar diameter.
- 60.Conforming to an ultimate standard of perfection or excellence.
- 61.Ask for and get free.
- 62.Tie again or anew.
- 66.Type genus of the family Arcidae.
- 67.The basic unit of money in Iran.
- 69.Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
- 70.God of love and erotic desire.
- 73.A Chadic language spoken in northern Nigeria.
- 74.Bulky grayish-brown eagle with a short wedge-shaped white tail.
- 75.A boy or man.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You could feel as though you are not a fit for your surroundings; disinterest is indicated strongly. You suspect you can no longer count on someone you once could. Without even trying you find yourself embroiled in arguments of the personal kind; be mindful of what you say as you can't take words back. Opinions are not what you seek; only facts matter at this particular time. You enjoy witnessing a new invention at work that could touch the lives of many if correctly promoted. You could be contacted by an old acquaintance. You go inward in an effort to figure out your true feelings on an intimately personal level. A nice distraction from the pressures of the day could come in the form of desert made especially for you and your sweet tooth.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Teamwork is very productive as you join in on an important project. You play a major role in closing a deal or making a purchase for an impressive price. You're noticed for your outward beauty or for being handsome; people enjoy your inner qualities as well and aren't afraid to say so. Your skills of persuasion are strong as you explain the ins and outs of something to a customer or client. You love new, different designs and colors; modern lines and methods hold your interest. People who don't understand your thinking offend you; they seem to be a waste of time. You find an item someone is looking for and for the price they want to pay. Let yourself be pampered tonight with a massage or exquisite dinner in a high end restaurant.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You could disagree with the way someone deals with a certain project or task. The person leading a company or supervising an office isn't on the same page with you. You dig deep when searching for answers to repairing something at home. Your intention is to counsel and help someone who becomes offended by your efforts; remember that some people wake up each morning expecting to be offended and they usually are! Opinions don't interest you for its workable ideas you seek. You could find that you have zero tolerance for those who don't think as you do. New ideas and products demand your attention just now; your tastes are changing in all aspects of life as you discover new joys and productivity in different places.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

To others you may appear as though you're nervous or worried. You could feel ignored or overlooked due to your views or beliefs. You may actually be just fine inwardly, but something is off about your appearance; check this! Aspects of your new journey separate you from those who aren't interested in where you are or where you're going. Expensive art, cars or jewels aren't what hold value for you; priorities for you are the simple pleasures and privileges like enough to eat and a place to live, the basics in life are what create your grateful heart. Someone seems petty, complaining about nothing. Solutions and making things better are at the top of your list of conversation topics, so plan to spend time with like-minded people and smile.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

What you cherish most is found in the form of family, home, intimate relationships that make life worth living. Also important is being right, being praised for all the good things you do for people; you truly are a giving, generous person. This phase brings opportunities for chances and gambles; this doesn't last forever, so act if you feel certain. Drama with a capital D is available if you desire to have it, this is a choice. You focus on others and not on yourself to the point where you could feel emotionally shallow and removed, blind to your needs. Should you insist on pursuing heated conversations, they happen and cause severe damage! You're not interested in the opinions of others; only facts and figures matter to you at a crucial time like this.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Distance grows between you and someone you're close to; a deep gap or void forms that won't be repaired. Change is difficult in some areas you have chosen, but remember your reasons for going in a different direction. Sound thinking and logic are what you seek and not opinions or theories. An urgent need for assistance arises later in the day and you can't take care of it alone. Someone steps on your last nerve with meaningless prattle and what you consider gibberish. A new hairstyle or different fashion sense puts a spring in your step; people notice the pleasant vibrations surrounding you. This is a peaceful time, and quite healing. Absorb the positives in your life and those who encourage you as you leave old habits and negativity behind.

Wordsearch Puzzle

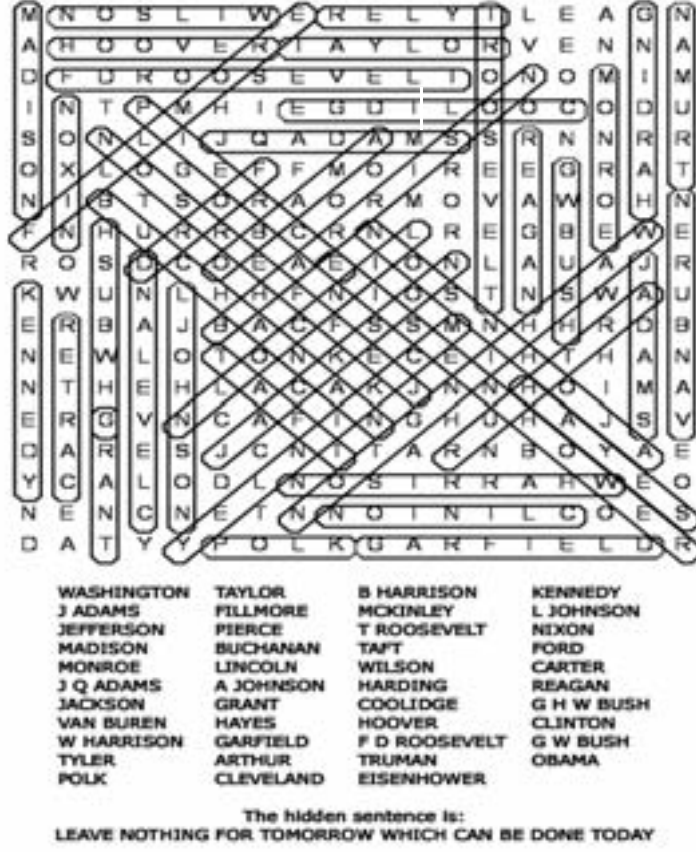
USA State Capitals

Find and circle all of the state capitals. The remaining letters spell a quote by Theodore Roosevelt.



Yesterday's Solution

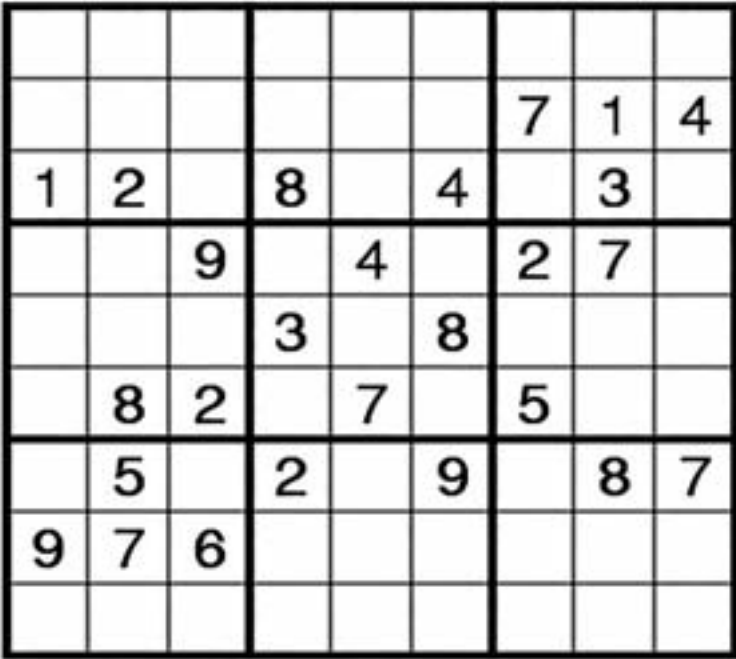
USA Presidents



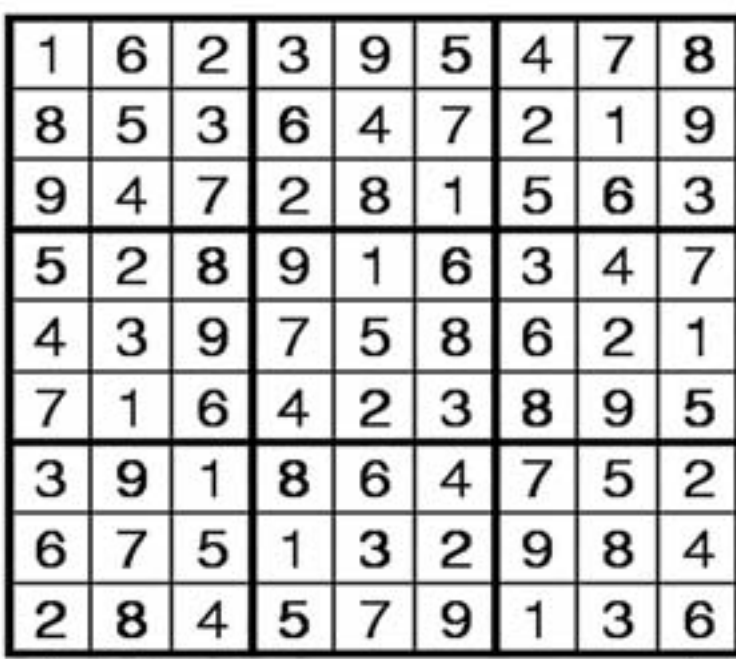
WASHINGTON	TAYLOR	B HARRISON	KENNEDY
J ADAMS	FILLMORE	MCKINLEY	L JOHNSON
JEFFERSON	PIERCE	T ROOSEVELT	NIXON
MADISON	BUCHANAN	T FORD	FORD
MONROE	LINCOLN	WILSON	CARTER
J Q ADAMS	A JOHNSON	HARDING	REAGAN
JACKSON	GRANT	COOLIDGE	G H W BUSH
VAN BUREN	HAYES	HOOVER	CLINTON
W HARRISON	GARFIELD	F D ROOSEVELT	G W BUSH
TYLER	ARTHUR	TRUMAN	OBAMA
POLK	CLEVELAND	EISENHOWER	

The hidden sentence is: LEAVE NOTHING FOR TOMORROW WHICH CAN BE DONE TODAY

Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



Classifieds

Wednesday, April 25, 2018



Now you can browse

www.kuwaittimes.net

e-mail: info@kuwaittimes.net



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

Airlines	
American Airlines	22087425
Kuwait Airways	22087426
Jazeera Airways	171
Jet Airways	22924455
FlyDubai	22414400
Qatar Airways	22423888
KLM	22425747
Royal Jordanian	
22418064/5/6	
British Airways	22425635
Air France	22430224
Emirates	22921555
Air India	22438184
Sri Lanka Airlines	22424444
Egypt Air	22421578
Swiss Air	22421516
Saudia	22426306
Middle East Airlines	22423073
Lufthansa	22422493
PIA	22421044
Bangladesh Airlines	22452977/8
Indian Airlines	22456700
Oman Air	22958787
Turkish Airlines	22453820/1
Aeroflot	22404838/9

FOR RENT

A full floor in Salwa Block 5
very close to the Supermarket

→ 5 bedrooms

→ 2 of them are masters

→ 1 maid's bedroom

→ 5 Bathrooms

→ Kitchen

→ Living room

→ Elevator

→ Public swimming pool

For further inquiries, please call in
Phone No: **55136363**

**OPERATION
MANAGER**

needed In food and beverage
sector with experience not less
than 10 years

info@robustakw.com

FOR RENT

IN SABAH AL SALIM

2 BEDROOMS FULLY FURNISHED

(GYM/INTERNET/WATER &
ELECTRICITY/ 24/7 SECURITY&
MAINTENANCE)

MONTHLY RENT: KD425 – KD450

Tel: 97261803/97283667
Email: LEASING@THEBRIDGE.CO.COM

CHANGE OF NAME

I Natha Singh S/O Buta Singh R/O Kotli Ablu (Sri Muktsar Sahib) have changed my name to Natha Singh Brar. (C 5396)
24-4-2018

I, Durgam Anjanna holder of Indian Passport No. M4636381 has changed my name to Durgam Ganganna.(C 5395)
23-4-2018

REQUIRED

A Kuwaiti family is looking for an experienced **cook** to work at their house.

Applicants who are interested can call after 5 pm at **97296669**

Automated enquiry about the Civil ID card is 1889988

EMERGENCY 112



NOTICE
April 5, 2018

Mr. Suraj Moktan son of late Mr. Pemba Moktan, resident of Sudhapa, Tole, Kurseong, Darjeeling and Ms. Mandira Ganung daughter of Mr. Durga Bahadur Gurung, resident of Ging Tea Lebong Vally, PO Lebong, PS Darjeeling, Darjeeling, West Bengal, both Indian nationals presently residing in Kuwait, have given notice of intended marriage between them under the Foreign Marriage Act, 1969. If anyone has any objection to the proposed marriage, he/she may file the same with the undersigned according to the procedure laid down under the Act/Rule within thirty days from the date of publication of this notice. Communications in this regard can be made by Email (attachecons@indembkw.org, welfaresection@indembkw.org)/ letters/ telephonic calls (00965- 22550171, 00965 - 22533125).


(Sanjeev Sukiani)
Attache (Consular) and Marriage Officer,
Embassy of India, Kuwait.

Ph.00965- 22550171 - 00965-22533125
Fax: 00965 - 22573910
Email: attachecons@indembkw.org
welfaresection@indembkw.org

Directorate General of Civil Aviation Home Page (www.kuwait-airport.com.kw)										DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION									
Flight Schedule																			
Arrival Flights on Wednesday 25/4/2018										Departure Flights on Wednesday 25/4/2018									
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	KAC	672	Dubai	13:55	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	JZR	176	Dubai	13:10				
MSC	405	Sohag	00:05	KAC	618	Doha	14:10	ICV	675	Hong Kong	00:05	THY	767	Istanbul	13:40				
JZR	513	Sharm el-Sheikh	00:10	QTR	1078	Doha	14:10	AIC	988	Hyderabad/Chennai	00:05	JZR	776	Jeddah	13:40				
THY	772	Istanbul	00:15	KNE	231	Riyadh	14:10	BBC	044	Dhaka	00:10	JZR	144	Doha	13:55				
KAC	102	London	00:50	GFA	221	Bahrain	14:15	JAI	573	Mumbai	00:30	MSR	611	Cairo	14:00				
DLH	625	Dammam	00:50	SVA	500	Jeddah	14:15	FDB	073	Dubai	00:30	UAE	872	Dubai	14:15				
JZR	539	Cairo	01:00	KAC	364	Colombo	14:20	MSC	406	Sohag	01:05	CLX	792	Hanoi	14:30				
PGT	858	Istanbul	01:15	FDB	059	Dubai	14:20	THY	773	Istanbul	01:45	KNE	382	Taif	15:00				
JZR	267	Beirut	01:25	KAC	512	Mashhad	14:25	JZR	528	Asyut	01:45	GFA	222	Bahrain	15:00				
QTR	8511	Doha	01:30	KAC	286	Dhaka	14:25	KAC	417	Manila	01:45	KAC	539	Sharm el-Sheikh	15:00				
MSR	618	Alexandria	01:35	JZR	789	Riyadh	14:45	DLH	625	Frankfurt	01:50	KAC	673	Dubai	15:00				
UAE	853	Dubai	01:40	KAC	788	Jeddah	14:50	KAC	363	Colombo	01:50	FDB	060	Dubai	15:05				
KLM	446	Bahrain	01:45	KNE	683	Madinah	14:55	KAC	285	Dhaka	01:50	QTR	1079	Doha	15:15				
KKK	1268	Istanbul	02:00	KAC	304	Mumbai	15:05	KAC	502	Luxor	01:55	SVA	501	Jeddah	15:45				
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:15	ETD	303	Abu Dhabi	15:05	JZR	677	Dubai	02:00	JZR	188	Dubai	15:45				
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	KAC	412	Bangkok	15:10	KAC	859	Istanbul	02:25	KNE	684	Madinah	15:50				
QTR	1086	Doha	02:30	KNE	529	Jeddah	15:10	PGT	859	Istanbul	02:25	KAC	283	Dhaka	15:50				
KAC	414	Bangkok	02:40	KAC	562	Amman	15:20	MSR	619	Alexandria	02:35	KAC	775	Riyadh	15:55				
KAC	418	Manila	03:05	OMA	645	Muscat	15:20	QTR	8512	Doha	02:45	KNE	530	Jeddah	16:00				
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05	KAC	502	Beirut	15:35	THY	765	Istanbul	02:50	JZR	606	Kochi	16:00				
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05	ABY	127	Sharjah	15:35	KKK	1269	Istanbul	02:55	KAC	785	Jeddah	16:00				
RJA	648	Amman	03:05	UAE	857	Dubai	15:45	ETH	621	Addis Ababa	03:05	KAC	743	Dammam	16:05				
RBG	215	Sohag	03:05	SVA	504	Madinah	15:55	KLM	446	Amsterdam	03:10	KAC	563	Amman	16:10				
KAC	382	Delhi	03:10	SAW	705	Damascus	16:00	JZR	142	Doha	03:20	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:15				
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	MSR	575	Sharm el-Sheikh	16:10	UAE	854	Dubai	03:30	KAC	619	Doha	16:15				
QTR	1076	Doha	03:30	JZR	534	Cairo	16:10	RBG	216	Sohag	03:45	ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20				
KAC	796	Madinah	03:45	QTR	1072	Doha	16:15	ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:05	OMA	646	Muscat	16:20				
JAI	572	Mumbai	04:00	KAC	118	New York	16:20	OMA	644	Muscat	04:05	KAC	615	Bahrain	16:40				
KAC	544	Cairo	04:25	FDB	051	Dubai	16:20	QTR	1087	Doha	04:15	SVA	505	Madinah	16:55				
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:30	KAC	542	Cairo	17:00	MSR	613	Cairo	04:15	MSR	576	Sharm el-Sheikh	16:55				
JZR	609	Hyderabad	04:30	SVA	510	Riyadh	17:15	JAI	571	Mumbai	05:05	SAW	706	Damascus	17:00				
KAC	284	Dhaka	04:50	GFA	215	Bahrain	17:30	QTR	1077	Doha	05:15	KAC	503	Beirut	17:15				
PAL	668	Manila	05:00	JZR	145	Doha	17:35	KAC	303	Mumbai	05:35	FDB	052	Dubai	17:20				
FDB	069	Dubai	05:05	JZR	177	Dubai	17:40	KAC	103	London	05:45	QTR	1073	Doha	17:25				
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:10	WAN	436	Al Najaf	17:40	FDB	070	Dubai	06:00	KAC	361	Colombo	17:35				
THY	770	Istanbul	05:15	WAN	976	Baku	17:40	JZR	786	Riyadh	06:05	UAE	858	Dubai	17:40				
KAC	344	Chennai	05:30	QTR	1080	Doha	18:10	THY	771	Istanbul	06:30	KAC	381	Delhi	17:45				
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:40	JZR	483	Istanbul	18:20	GFA	212	Bahrain	06:50	KAC	331	Trivandrum	17:55				
JZR	561	Sohag	05:55	WAN	874	Istanbul	18:25	RJA	649	Amman	07:00	KAC	343	Chennai	18:00				
BAW	157	London	06:10	MSR	620	Cairo	18:30	JZR	902	Baku	07:15	SVA	511	Riyadh	18:15				
WAN	338	Alexandria	06:25	RJA	640	Amman	19:00	JZR	356	Mashhad	07:15	JZR	184	Dubai	18:20				
KAC	206	Islamabad	06:40	GFA	217	Bahrain	19:05	JZR	164	Dubai	07:15	GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20				
KAC	678	Dubai	06:45	UAE	875	Dubai	19:05	KAC	167	Paris	07:20	JZR	608	Hyderabad	18:25				
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:00	FDB	063	Dubai	19:10	PAL	669	Manila	07:40	JZR	266	Beirut	18:30				
JZR	143	Doha	07:00	KAC	744	Dammam	19:10	KAC	171	Frankfurt	07:50	JZR	240	Amman	18:30				
WAN	342	Sohag	07:30	JZR	777	Jeddah	19:10	JZR	778	Jeddah	08:00	JZR	538	Cairo	18:35				
JZR	503	Luxor	07:50	ABY	123	Sharjah	19:20	KAC	501	Beirut	08:00	WAN	135	Doha	18:40				
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	KAC	156	Istanbul	19:35	BAW	156	London	08:20	QTR	1081	Doha	19:20				
KAC	384	Delhi	08:05	KAC	776	Riyadh	19:35	KAC	165	Rome	08:25	WAN	117	Bahrain	19:30				
KAC	358	Kochi	08:05	KAC	674	Dubai	19:40	FDB	054	Dubai	08:35	MSR	621	Cairo	19:30				
JZR	529	Asyut	08:10	FDB	057	Dubai	19:50	KAC	511	Mashhad	08:45	GFA	218	Bahrain	19:50				
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25	KAC	104	London	20:00	KAC	787	Jeddah	09:05	FDB	064	Dubai	19:50				
IRC	6552	ABD	08:50	KAC	166	Bahrain	20:00	KAC	117	New York	09:05	RJA	641	Amman	20:00				
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:55	OMA	647	Muscat	20:05	KAC	671	Dubai	09:15	ABY	124	Sharjah	20:00				
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	KNE	381	Taif	20:10	KAC	521	Al Najaf	09:30	JZR	552	Alexandria	20:05				
IRA	665	Shiraz	09:25	JZR	189	Dubai	20:15	IRC	6553	ABD	09:40	FDB	058	Dubai	20:30				
QTR	1070	Doha	09:30	MEA	402	Beirut	20:15	ABY	126	Sharjah	09:40	UAE	876	Dubai	20:35				
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	KAC	620	Doha	20:15	KAC	561	Amman	09:40	DLH	624	Dammam	20:50				
IRM	1188	Mashhad	09:55	KAC	166	Rome	20:25	KAC	773	Riyadh	09:45	KAC	357	Kochi	21:00				
AXB	889	Mangalore/Bahrain	10:20	QTR	1088	Doha	20:40	JZR	535	Cairo	09:45	KNE	232	Riyadh	21:00				
JZR	787	Riyadh	10:30	KAC	172	Frankfurt	20:45	UAE	856	Dubai	09:50	KAC	353	Bengaluru	21:00				
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	KLM	445	Amsterdam	21:00	JZR	482	Istanbul	09:55	OMA	648	Muscat	21:05				
MEA	404	Beirut	10:55	KAC	540	Sharm el-Sheikh	21:00	ETD	302	Abu Dhabi	10:00	MEA	403	Beirut	21:15				
SYR	341	Latakia	11:00	KAC	559	Dubai	21:15	JZR	124	Bahrain	10:00	KAC	543	Cairo	21:20				
QTR	1074	Doha	11:00	ALK	229	Colombo	21:15	KAC	541	Cairo	10:00	KAC	301	Mumbai	21:35				
JZR	165	Dubai	11:45	ETD	307	Abu Dhabi	21:15	KAC	101	London	10:00	DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50				
KIS	6032	Mashhad	12:00	KAC	168	Paris	21:20	KAC	617	Doha	10:10	QTR	1089	Doha	21:50				
IAW	157	Al Najaf	12:00	KAC	564	Amman	21:50	IRA	664	Shiraz	10:25	KAC	205	Islamabad	21:55				
WAN	134	Doha	12:20	GFA	219	Bahrain	21:50	KAC	155	Istanbul	10:25	ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	22:05				
RBG	553	Alexandria	12:30	QTR	1082	Doha	22:05	QTR	1071	Doha	10:40	KLM	445	Bahrain	22:10				
THY	766	Istanbul	12:45	ETD	309	Abu Dhabi	22:10	FDB	056	Dubai	10:40	ALK	230	Colombo	22:20				
UAE	871	Dubai	12:45	KAC	786	Jeddah	22:15	SGL	4101	IQA	11:00	KAC	783	Jeddah	22:25				
CLX	792	Luxembourg	12:45	AIC	975	Chennai/Goa	22:25	IRM	1189	Mashhad	11:10	KAC	383	Delhi	22:25				
WAN	542	KTM	12:50	SVA	514	Riyadh	22:30	AXB	890	Mangalore	11:20	UAE	860	Dubai	22:35				
JZR	903	Baku	12:55	WAN	136	Doha	22:30	JZR	788	Riyadh	11:20	JZR	604	Ahmedabad	22:40				
JZR	125	Bahrain	12:55	WAN	118	Bahrain	22:40	GFA	214	Bahrain	11:35	GFA	220	Bahrain	22:50				
KAC	522	Al Najaf	13:00	SVA	502	Jeddah	22:45	MEA	405	Beirut	11:55	ETD	310	Abu Dhabi	23:00				
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00	JZR	185	Dubai	22:50	SYR	342	Latakia	12:00	KAC	411	Bangkok	23:15				
JZR	357	Mashhad	13:05	JAI	574	Mumbai	23:00	QTR	1075	Doha	12:10	QTR	1083	Doha	23:20				
KAC	774	Riyadh	13:30	THY	764	Istanbul	23:15	IAW	158	Al Najaf	13:00	SVA	515	Riyadh	23:30				
JZR	779	Jeddah	13:45	FDB	072	Dubai	23:35	KIS	6033	Mashhad	13:00	WAN	337	Alexandria	23:40				
				JZR	241	Amman	23:40	RBG	554	Alexandria	13:10	JZR	560	Sohag	23:45				



ARCTIC MONKEYS' NEW ALBUM WAS ALMOST ALEX TURNER'S SOLO LP

Arctic Monkeys' new album almost became frontman Alex Turner's solo record. The indie rock band's guitarist Jamie Cook has revealed that the tracks were more piano-led originally so Alex was planning on keeping them for himself. However, in the end they decided to roll with the new sound and the tracks make up the band's sixth LP 'Tranquility Base Hotel & Casino'. Cook told the latest issue of MOJO magazine: "I think at first, because it was quite basic - piano, vocal and no guitar - Al was in two minds about, 'is this Arctic Monkeys or am I going somewhere else with this' 'And maybe at first I was a bit like that as well. 'It's definitely not a guitar-heavy record, not typically what we'd do. It took a lot more thinking about.' The band's new direction is partly due to the fact Turner was gifted a Steinway

Vertegrand on his 30th birthday in January. On his new writing process, he said: "I've tricked myself into writing - by sitting at the piano, doing this thing that I haven't done before. 'That gave me permission to go somewhere I'd had trouble getting to before. 'It allowed me to put across how I feel more, more ... broadly than before.' The Sheffield's band's sixth record - which is released on May 11 - pays homage to fellow British indie band The Strokes on the first line, which Turner has no regrets about. He admitted: "Did The Strokes line feel too close to home? Yeah, absolutely. 'But you can't let that stop you. 'That whole thing of 'Oh my God, what they gonna think this means? 'You can't really work like that.' 'Tranquility Base Hotel & Casino' is Arctic Monkeys' first record since 2013's 'AM'.

Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle sequel handed Christmas 2019 release



The sequel of 'Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle' has been handed a release date of Christmas 2019. The original movie - which starred Dwayne 'The Rock' Johnson, Kevin Hart and Nick Jonas - proved to be a box office smash, and Sony Pictures Motion Picture Group chairman Tom Rothman has confirmed that fans won't have to wait too long before the sequel arrives in cinemas. He joked: "I'd bet on seeing Dwayne Johnson in theatres again in December 2019. Don't rush to give all those screens to 'Star Wars'. Come on, fair's fair." 'Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle' performed impressively at the box office, despite facing stiff competition from 'Star Wars: The Last Jedi'. Dwayne previously insisted he doesn't have any fears of the money-spinning sci-fi franchise, having

received support from Hollywood icon Mark Hamill, who plays Luke Skywalker in the 'Star Wars' movies. He said: "I had this awesome Twitter exchange where I told Mark Hamill, 'Best of luck, just leave our little 'Jumanji' a little room.' 'He responded that 'The Force' is strong with 'Jumanji'. You'll be fine." In the movie, Dwayne's character transforms from being a 16-year-old gamer into a muscular hunk, with a "smoulder look". But the wrestler-turned-actor previously admitted that his character's special feature took some convincing with the director, Jake Kasdan. Dwayne - whose on-screen character is inspired by a video game - explained: "You should've heard the conversation. I was like, 'My character's trait is, he smoulders!' Silence. 'What do you mean by smoulders?'"

Michelle Williams: Destiny's Child's reunion was a blessing

Michelle Williams says Destiny's Child's reunion at Coachella was "a blessing". The 37-year-old singer admits it's overwhelming knowing that fans are still demanding new music and shows out of the 'Say My Name' group, 14 years after their last record 'Destiny Fulfilled' was released. Speaking about joining Kelly Rowland during Beyonce's set at the music festival in Indio, California twice this month, Michelle told the Los Angeles Times newspaper: "Let's call it a blessing. Beyonce and Kelly - they've been in the game for, what, 23 years? 'Me just 18 years. And when people see us together they still lose their minds! People are asking, 'When y'all gonna tour? When y'all gonna put out new music?' It's been 14 years since we've had an album together, and people are still asking." Michelle says Beyonce's work ethic inspired her and Kelly and the dancers to put on the best show possible. Talking about the intense rehearsals, she said: "Everybody was



pushing each other to do and be their very, very best. "When Beyonce does something, it's because she knows that if she can do it, everybody else on the stage can do it. "Somebody might have to rehearse a little longer than others or go over the music parts a little longer. "But she shows that you put the work in, and I know that however many people were onstage - 150, 200 - I know they're all gonna go home and their lives are gonna be changed because they saw her work ethic." Whilst the 'Survivor' hitmakers - who split up in 2006 and last reunited for a live performance in 2015 - don't look set to reunite full-time for their fans, Michelle says now they all live close to each other they are able to hang out more often. She said: "I just moved to Los Angeles full-time in January, and I'm so happy to finally move to where the girls are. "Kelly is a four-minute drive from me; I think Bey is 17 minutes exactly. So we can get together any time, whenever we want to."

Statham is open to making a sequel of The Meg

Jason Statham will happily make a sequel to 'The Meg' - but only if the original is a success. The 50-year-old actor stars in the upcoming action-horror movie, which is due out in August, and Statham has claimed that if the film is a hit at the box office, a sequel is certain to be made. He shared: "I think it's like anything in this day and age - if it makes money, there's obviously an appetite to make more money. "And if it doesn't do well, they'll soon sweep it under the carpet. But that's the way Hollywood works. Everyone tries to make a good film, and it lies in the hands of the audience. "People are the ultimate decider: the audience is the decider of whether anything gets to be a sequel or not." In the upcoming film, Statham's on-screen character, a diver called Jonas Taylor, is forced to confront a giant prehistoric shark known as a Megalodon, which has attacked a deep-sea submersible in the ocean. And Statham has teased his role in the movie, revealing he manages to defy expectations. Speaking to EW, Statham - whose previous hits include 'Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels' and 'The Expendables' - explained: "He gets brought in to save the crew at the bottom of the ocean that's confronted with this 75-foot shark. "Taylor encountered this shark many years ago, but everyone thought he was crazy. Turns out, everybody was wrong!"



SAM SMITH'S THIRD RECORD WILL CONTAIN HAPPY LOVE SONGS

Sam Smith's next album will consist of "happy" love songs. The 'Stay With Me' singer is associated with writing tear-inducing songs about heartache, but after digging "deep" on his second record, 'The Thrill Of It All', he says he's ready to pen more uplifting and upbeat music about being in love with his boyfriend - '13 Reasons Why' actor Brandon Flynn. Revealing that he's already started putting ideas together for this third record, Sam told George Ezra on his 'George Ezra & Friends' podcast: "My next album won't be sad. I've got an idea of how I want it to be. "Sad to me is the wrong word. They are reflective. "It's not sad because they give me so much happiness. I think this record did deep, maybe a bit too deep for me at times. I want to force myself to be a little bit happier. "I'm in love with someone who loves me back and it's really hopeful. "I'm going to write about it and I am, I already have recently. " However, the 'Too Good At Goodbyes' hitmaker admits it won't be any easy task writing happy songs. He added: "I don't listen to a lot of happy love songs so it's trying to find interesting ways to say I love you." The 25-year-old star has been trying to give his fans a more "uplifting" experience on his current tour. Admitting he is famous for his "depressing" music, Sam told his audience at London's The O2 arena recently: "I've tried really hard to make this show uplifting because I know my music can be depressing! I want you to leave here feeling uplifted. Life is so emotional, just today I've been through a hundred different emotions, but I want you to forget about all the tough things for the next two hours and go on a journey with me. I want you to sing along to every song, and even if you don't know the words will you pretend you know the words? I want you to dance when I tell you to dance."



Jagger working on new Rolling Stones music

Sir Mick Jagger is writing new music for The Rolling Stones. The band - currently comprising of Jagger, 74, Keith Richards, 74, Charlie Watts, 76, and Ronnie Wood, 70 - are still touring despite having a combined age of 294, and now the lead singer has hinted there may be a new album on the way. He told The Irish Independent newspaper: "I am writing at the moment ... I'm just writing. It is mostly for the Stones at the moment. I'm just writing. I don't really think about what I have written, much. I just keep ploughing forward, really."

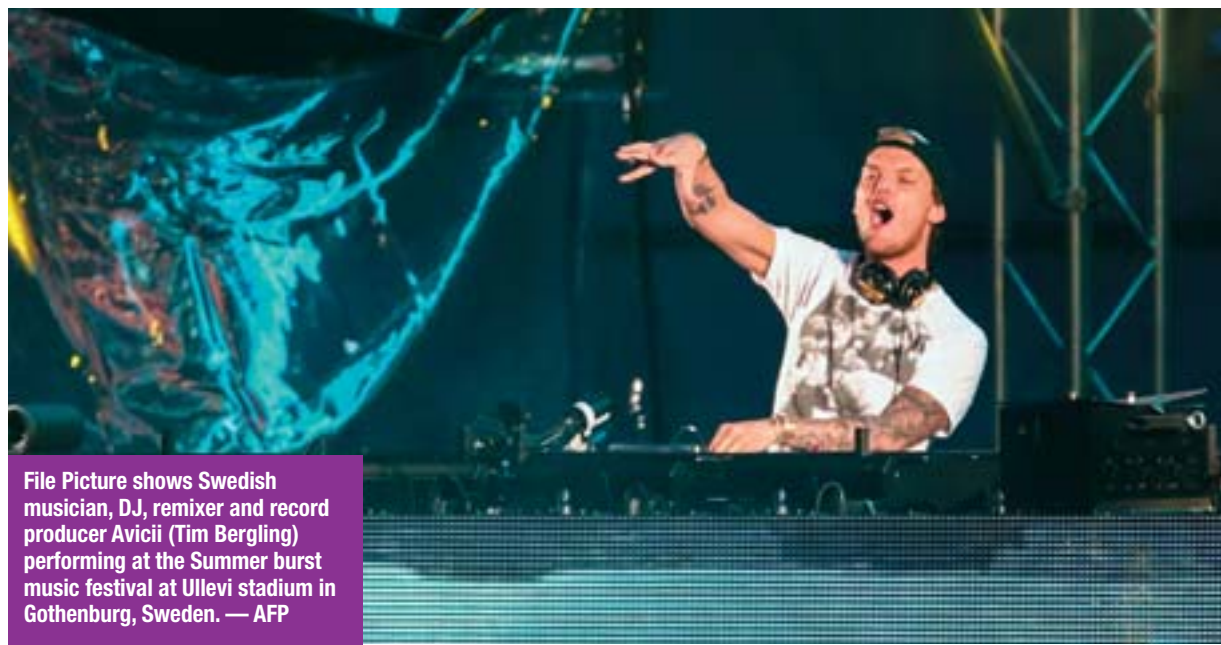
The Rolling Stones released their eponymous debut album in 1964 and have a total of 25 studio albums under their belt. Despite having to perform the band's hits over and over on stage, Mick insists: "I don't really look back. I only look back on it when we want to play a song from those albums, and before we rehearse it, we might play the actual record." The Rolling Stones' 1971 hit 'Brown Sugar' has long been subjected to analysis as to what Jagger was referring to when he wrote it. Asked to confirm it's meaning once and for

all, he said: "Oh, I don't know. I don't know! I really don't know. And I was in Australia when I wrote it. So you can add that on to the top of it, in the middle of absolutely nowhere. So I don't really know what was going through my mind. I was doing 'Ned Kelly'. "I don't know what was going on in my head. It was pretty stream of consciousness stuff. That was the stream of consciousness of the day. You just let it run. All those songs are very hastily done and hastily recorded and so on. It reflected the times." — Bang Showbiz

WHEDON REVEALS HIS BATGIRL FRUSTRATION



Joss Whedon feels heartbroken at having to exit the 'Batgirl' movie. The 53-year-old filmmaker had originally been lined up to helm the DC film, but Joss - who has been criticized for his 'Justice League' reshoots - ultimately decided to walk away from the project, saying he had issues developing the right story. Of his decision to walk away from the movie, Joss told Variety: "It had been a year since I first pitched the story and a lot happened in that year. "I felt some of the elements might not work as well, and the story kind of just crumbled in my hands." It's also been suggested that Joss' decision to quit the film was influenced by a scathing blog written by his ex-wife Kai Cole, who publicly slammed the director, saying he is a "hypocrite preaching feminist ideals". But Joss has rubbished those suggestions, insisting that isn't the reason why he's no longer directing the 'Batgirl' movie. Instead, the director explained that his idea for the film simply wasn't the right fit, which left him feeling heartbroken. He said: "There were elements I hadn't mastered and after a long time felt like I wasn't going to. So, I told people I didn't have an idea, which isn't the exact truth. "I had an idea that didn't fit in the space that was left for it. It was a little heart-breaking because I was so excited about it."



File Picture shows Swedish musician, DJ, remixer and record producer Avicii (Tim Bergling) performing at the Summer burst music festival at Ullevi stadium in Gothenburg, Sweden. — AFP

Stockholm church bells play ‘Wake me up’ in Avicii tribute

Church bells played one of Avicii's biggest hits in the Swedish capital Stockholm yesterday, paying tribute to the DJ and record producer who was found dead last week. The song "Wake me up" rang out from the 80-metre-high tower of Oscar's Church in central Stockholm, where Avicii, whose real name is Tim Bergling, grew up. One of the biggest stars of electronic dance music (EDM), Avicii was found dead at the age of 28 in Muscat, Oman, his US publicist said on Friday. No cause of death was given. The church will have its bells play the song at noon from Monday to Friday this week, it said on its web page, adding "Rest in peace".

Avicii, also known for international hits like "Hey Brother"

and "Waiting for love", announced in 2016 that he was retiring from touring, but he kept making music and was nominated for a Billboard music award last week. The family of the artist on Monday said they were grateful for the numerous public tributes paid, but offered no details on his unexpected death. Swedish prime minister Stefan Lofven called Avicii "one of Sweden's biggest musical wonders of modern time" on Instagram. Stockholm resident Jon Holmgren said Avicii had meant very much to him, as his son was the same age and in the same group of friends as the artist when he grew up. "He is a fantastic success story with a very tragic ending, unfortunately," he said, standing outside Oscar's Church. — Reuters

MADONNA LOSES BID TO STOP AUCTION OF INTIMATE ITEMS

Madonna lost Monday a nearly year-long bid to stop an auction of intimate items, including a breakup letter from rap legend Tupac Shakur. A judge ruled that the Material Girl had directed her legal action against the wrong target in going after Darlene Lutz, a New York art dealer who helped Madonna build a collection before falling out with her. Lutz had been the main source for 22 items, including love letters, cassettes and a hairbrush, that were up for sale by auction house Gottha Have Rock and Roll until a judge issued an injunction in July.

New York Judge Gerald Lebovits, in a ruling based on narrow legal grounds rather than on Madonna's claims of violations of privacy, agreed with Lutz, who said that her disputes with Madonna were settled by a 2004 legal agreement between the former friends. Lebovits, in a decision dated last week but made public Monday, also questioned why Madonna was pursuing Lutz and not the singer's assistants, who Madonna said had handed items to the art dealer. "If plaintiff's allegations are accepted as true—that Lutz received the letters through inadvertent actions of the plaintiff's assistants," Lebovits wrote, then her case against Lutz is "time-barred and improper."

The auction house said it would press ahead in July with the sale of Madonna merchandise including the offending letter from Tupac. In a statement, Gottha Have Rock and Roll said it had been confident about the case and had done "substantial due diligence" before first announcing the auction. Judd Grossman, a lawyer for Lutz, called the court decision "a total win." "Ms Lutz is now free to do with her property as she pleases without any continued interference by Madonna," Grossman said. A lawyer for Madonna did not immediately respond to requests for comment.



Private letter from Tupac

The items up for auction-part of a collection of some 100 pieces-included the 1995 letter from Tupac, who would be shot dead a year later. Madonna has only recently spoken publicly about their then-secret relationship. In the letter breaking up with Madonna, Tupac said his image would suffer by dating a white woman and voiced pain at an interview in which the singer said, "I'm off to rehabilitate all the rappers and basketball players." Madonna, in winning a temporary block of the auction in July, told the court that her celebrity status "does not obviate my right to maintain my privacy, including with regard to highly personal items." Lutz's lawyers accused Madonna of a "personal vendetta" and mocked her appeals for privacy, noting that the auction included a pair of underwear she had mailed to a lover. — AFP

NBA's Stephen Curry lands TV, film deal with Sony Pictures



Stephen Curry

NBA star Stephen Curry has signed a multi-year film and television deal with Sony Pictures Entertainment, the Hollywood studio said on Monday, as the Golden State Warriors player makes a play to be the latest athlete to break into entertainment. The development and production deal will focus on family, faith and sports-themed projects, and will "extend to opportunities in partnerships, electronics, gaming and virtual reality," the Sony-owned studio said in a statement.

"We're thrilled to work alongside Steph to bring his positive, affirming brand to create content in the scripted and non-scripted television landscape," Chris Parnell, co-president of the studio's TV division, said in a statement. "He's tapping into his drive and creative energy on the court to expand to

horizons off the court and we're honored to be a part of it," Parnell added. Neither the financial terms nor the length of the agreement were disclosed.

Curry, 30, is a two-time NBA Most Valuable Player and one of the league's most marketable stars on one of its best teams. He earned an estimated \$35 million in endorsements last year with JPMorgan Chase and Under Armour among his deals, according to Forbes. "I've been blessed to have this platform and I want to use it to affect the world positively," Curry said in a statement. "Partnering with Sony to share inspiring content with a global audience was a foregone conclusion." Curry's production company will be called Unanimous Media. He was voted the NBA's first unanimous MVP in 2016. — Reuters

Sony wows CinemaCon with glitzy opening show

Oscar-winning filmmaker Quentin Tarantino vowed Monday that his leading men Leonardo DiCaprio and Brad Pitt would make as iconic a silver screen duo as Paul Newman and Robert Redford. The 2019 movie "Once Upon a Time in Hollywood" will look at the death throes of the old studio system-seen as a pivotal time in show business history-against the gruesome backdrop of the 1960s Manson family murders. The 55-year-old "Reservoir Dogs" director opened Sony's presentation at the glitzy annual CinemaCon industry get-together vowing that his hotly anticipated ninth solo feature would be similar in tone to his acclaimed mainstream breakthrough "Pulp Fiction" (1994).

"Sony and myself will be coming to the theaters with the most exciting star dynamic since Paul Newman and Robert Redford," Tarantino told the crowd of theater operators at Caesar's Palace. Newman, who died in 2008, starred alongside 81-year-old Redford in 1973's "The Sting" but the duo were best known as the titular heart-throb outlaws in "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid" (1969). "It's very hush hush and top secret. But I can tell you that 'Once Upon a Time in Hollywood' takes place in 1969, at the height of the counterculture, hippie revolution and the height of new Hollywood," Tarantino added.

DiCaprio, a Los Angeles native, said he was excited to be working with Pitt, and described Tarantino's screenplay as "one of the most amazing" he'd ever read. The presentation came as Sony kicked off CinemaCon with an array of stars and never-before-seen footage of its upcoming slate of movies. Hollywood decamps to the Nevada desert for four days every year for the gathering, where theater operators are offered exclusive previews of the movies they can expect to be showing over the coming year.

Runaway success

Sony sparked controversy in 2017 when its movies chief Tom Rothman—who was back this year-came to the stage to present new footage from



Quentin Tarantino and Leonardo DiCaprio

"Blade Runner 2049." "Netflix my ass," he quipped after wowing the crowd with bleak scenes from the long-awaited sequel to Ridley Scott's 1982 masterpiece. The internet streamer has found itself in conflict with movie theater operators in the past because its original content goes straight to viewers' TVs and mobile devices. "I love movies and I love movies in movie theaters. They are my favorite place in the world," said Tarantino, who last directed Pitt in "Inglourious Basterds" (2009). "Once Upon a Time in Hollywood"—which is due to begin shooting in summer in L.A.—gets its US release on August 9 next year, the 50th anniversary of actress Sharon Tate's murder by Manson's cult devotees.

Sony set the tone for what is expected to be a week of surprises with exclusive footage from numerous blockbusters due to hit theaters over summer and beyond. Still celebrating the runaway success of 2017 smash hit "Jumanji: Welcome To The Jungle," which made the thick end of \$1 billion worldwide, the studio delighted fans with an array of star presenters including Will Ferrell, Michelle Williams, Matthew McConaughey, Gina Rodriguez, Riz Ahmed and Claire Foy.

'Truly iconic'

In an action-packed presentation, Sony squeezed in footage from a mix

Closing arguments to begin in Cosby's sexual assault trial

The prosecution and Bill Cosby's defense team are expected to begin closing arguments yesterday in the retrial of the entertainer, who is accused of drugging and raping a one-time friend more than a decade ago. Cosby, 80, faces three counts of aggravated indecent assault of Andrea Constand, 45, a former administrator of the Temple University women's basketball team, at his Philadelphia home in January 2004. Cosby, who declined to testify on his own behalf on Monday, has denied wrongdoing, saying any sexual contact he had was consensual.

He also did not testify at his first trial on the same charges last year, when the deadlocked jury was unable to reach a

verdict, leading prosecutors to try him again. The current trial, now in its third week, began on April 9. About 50 women have accused Cosby of sexual assault, sometimes after drugging them, going back decades. All the accusations, apart from Constand's, were too old to be the subject of criminal prosecution.

If convicted of all three counts, he would probably face at most 10 years in prison as a first offender under state sentencing guidelines, although Pennsylvania law allows for a maximum penalty of three consecutive 10-year sentences, a prosecution spokeswoman said. Earlier on Monday, Cosby's lawyers used phone and flight records from January 2004 to try again to convince the jury that he was

not at his Philadelphia home at the time of the alleged crime. The timing is crucial, since Cosby was not criminally charged until December 2015, just days before the 12-year Pennsylvania statute of limitations would have expired.

The defense has sought to show that a consensual encounter occurred earlier than January 2004. Douglas Moss, an expert on aviation record keeping, said Cosby's trips around the United States in January 2004 were accurately reflected in flight logs kept by his private jet pilot, who now suffers from dementia. District Attorney Kevin Steele sought to show that Cosby could have used other modes of transport to travel to Philadelphia. — Reuters



Actor and comedian Bill Cosby and his wife Camille arrive for the closing arguments in the retrial of his sexual assault case at the Montgomery County Courthouse in Norristown, Pennsylvania yesterday. — AFP

Prince heirs sue Illinois hospital, Walgreen pharmacy chain over singer's death

Heirs of Prince have sued an Illinois hospital and pharmacy chain Walgreens claiming they could have prevented the singer's 2016 death if they had properly diagnosed and properly treated his overdose days earlier, the Minneapolis Star-Tribune reported on Monday. The wrongful-death lawsuit, which was filed in Cook County Circuit Court in Chicago on Friday, accuses a doctor and pharmacist at Trinity Medical Center in Rock Island, Illinois of failing to properly investigate the overdose or see that the pop star was given appropriate counseling, the paper reported.

The six heirs accuse two Walgreens pharmacists of improperly dispensing prescription medication to Prince under the name of his bodyguard, according to the Star-Tribune. Representatives for the hospital could not be reached by Reuters for comment on Monday

evening. A spokesman for the hospital's parent company, UnityPoint Health, told the newspaper that the company did not comment on pending litigation.

A spokesman for Walgreens declined comment to Reuters. Walgreens parent company is Walgreens Boots Alliance Inc's Prince, 57, was found dead at his Paisley Park home and recording studio complex near Minneapolis on April 21, 2016.

The official cause of death was a self-administered overdose of the painkiller fentanyl, which is 50 times stronger than heroin. A Minnesota prosecutor said last week he could not bring any criminal charges in connection with the "Purple Rain" singer's death after a two-year investigation failed to determine where he obtained a counterfeit painkiller laced with fentanyl.



Prince

Police investigating Prince's death found numerous opioids in the singer's home, according to court documents released in April 2017. The death of the music superstar, who crafted a public image of living a clean and healthy vegan lifestyle, shocked the world and led to a protracted battle among his siblings and half siblings over who would inherit his estate, estimated to be worth hundreds of millions of dollars.

Prince, known for his androgynous style and sexually charged songs, died a day before he was set to meet a California-based doctor who specializes in addiction treatment. After his death, his longtime collaborator and protégé Sheila E. told "Entertainment Tonight" that Prince had been suffering from hip and knee pain from decades of intense performing, much of it in heels. — Reuters



Performers from the Candoco contemporary dance company rehearse their new show in north London. — AFP photos

The UK dance company putting a new spin on the art

Whether in a wheelchair, on crutches or without any disability at all, performers from the Candoco company are giving London audiences a fresh twist on contemporary dance. “It makes you very aware of your own body, as well as others, and how extraordinary that can be on the stage,” said David Clarke, a London silversmith who has come to Sadler’s Wells theatre for a double bill. The first performance explores the individual style of the seven Candoco dancers, while the second wittily examines prejudices and physical differences. “When you see movements with missing limbs, or shortened limbs, it makes you aware of how incredible the body is,” added Clarke.

In creating Candoco, Dandeker was determined to avoid a “patronizing” company for disabled dancers. “I wanted the company to be excellent dancers. I wanted the work we did to be excellent, exciting,” she said. More than 25 years since its creation, Candoco has become renowned for contemporary dance rather than the disabilities of some of its members. Along with performances in Britain, the troupe will also be performing in Croatia, France, Germany and the United States over the coming months. The company has worked with some of the industry’s leading choreographers, including American Stephen Petronio, Venezuelan Javier de Frutos and Rachid Ouramdane from France.

‘The perfect body’

Dandeker has been honored by Queen Elizabeth II, who awarded her the Order of the British Empire (OBE) title in 2007. She has now stepped aside from the company’s daily running, but the dancers are staying true to Candoco’s founding aims. “The diversity of our physicalities is how we make something new,” said Joel Brown, a wheelchair user who is one of the group’s four disabled dancers. He was paralyzed from the chest down after a car crash at the age of nine and, as a result, finds it hard to keep his balance without the use of his stomach muscles.

“It makes a big difference: if I put my arm in front of me, I will fall,” he said. “It affects my movements, but it’s also what shapes my aesthetics.” Ben Wright, named artistic co-director in January, joined Candoco after a 30-year career including choreography credits at London’s Royal Opera House and the Washington National Opera. “I feel like I’m having to unpick everything that I took for granted, everything I am beginning to kind of question,” he said, of his new role, describing it as an “enriching experience”. “I think what the company does is really challenge perceptions of ability and disability.”

Despite the company’s success, French dancer Laura Patay is frustrated that disabled people are rarely visible in the cultural sphere. “There’s been some progress, of course, but there is still a long way to go,” said Patay, who was born without the lower half of her left arm. Trained in Lyon, France, Patay remembers always being the only disabled student and instead wants dance schools to be open to everyone. “Dance progresses, but it remains highly codified by classical dance, by the image of the perfect body,” she said. — AFP



Candoco was founded in 1991 by Celeste Dandeker, who wanted to focus on the artistic aspect of dance rather than the disabilities of some of the company’s performers. Dandeker, herself a dancer, was left paralysed and using a wheelchair in 1973 after a fall during a performance. “I didn’t think I could dance again. Things were so different back in those days, you really rarely saw people in a wheelchair outside, in shops or places of work,” she said.



Razali Bin Mohamad Habidin, deputy head avian keeper, feeding birds at Jurong Bird Park in Singapore.



Razali Bin Mohamad Habidin, deputy head avian keeper, feeding birds at Jurong Bird Park in Singapore.



This photograph shows Razali Bin Mohamad Habidin, deputy head avian keeper, checking a salmon-crested cockatoo at Jurong Bird Park in Singapore. — AFP photos

DEAF ‘BIRD WHISPERER’ FORMS RARE BOND WITH FEATHERED FRIENDS

Deaf since childhood, Razali Bin Mohamad Habidin has developed a closer bond with the creatures under his care than any other keeper at Singapore’s Jurong Bird Park, where other staff refer to him simply as the “bird whisperer”. Razali, who lost 80 percent of his hearing after falling ill as a baby, started working at the park over two decades ago, and has risen to the position of deputy head avian keeper. He communicates with the birds through grunts, gestures and body languages and told AFP that he recognizes the birds by their “behaviors and personalities”. “All of them are my friends,” he added, communicating through a mix of gestures and Malay.



Razali Bin Mohamad Habidin, deputy head avian keeper, posing with a hyacinth macaw at Jurong Bird Park in Singapore.



Razali Bin Mohamad Habidin, deputy head avian keeper, preparing fruit at Jurong Bird Park in Singapore.

Other staff at the park have dubbed the 48-year-old “the bird whisperer”—after Hollywood film “The Horse Whisperer”, starring Robert Redford as a trainer with a gift for understanding horses. “He has a way of communicating with the birds that very few of us can,” said assistant curator Angelin Lim. “Just by a look, he knows whether or not the bird is well.” Communication with his colleagues can be more challenging than with the birds. Razali leads about a dozen staff and giving them instructions usually involves him making various complex hand gestures, and then reading the lips of his colleagues when they respond.

His way with the creatures at the park, which is home to more than 5,000 birds from parrots to hornbills, was on display as he brought a snack of palm fruits into an enclosure filled with parrots. The hyacinth macaws, the world’s largest parrots, stopped squawking and watched him curiously before following him. One of the giant birds perched on his shoulder, playfully rubbed his finger with its beak—a sign of trust and affection—and ate out of his hand. — AFP



Stacked stones are pictured during the European Stone Stacking Championships.



Overall winner, Pedro Duran from Spain, competes in the European Stone Stacking Championships 2018.

“Everyone thought it was a kind of magic, and I saw the science behind it”



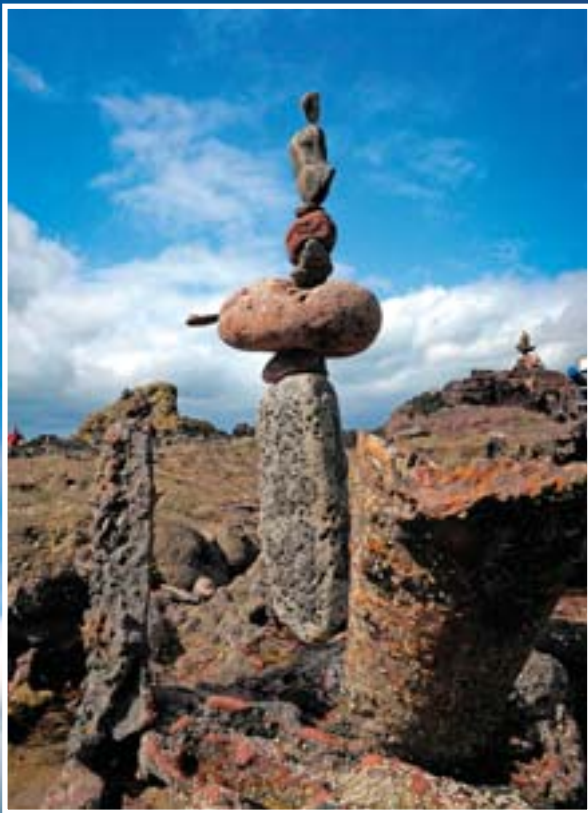
Philip Wachmann from Austria competes in the European Stone Stacking Championships 2018.



Stacked stones are pictured during the European Stone Stacking Championships.



Stacked stones are pictured during the European Stone Stacking Championships 2018.



Stacked stones are pictured during the European Stone Stacking Championships.

Stone stacking contest brings gravity-defying sculptures to Scottish beach

Sculpture artists gathered in Scotland on Sunday to compete for the weighty title of champion stone stacker, in a quirky competition launched last year. More than 30 participants from America, Spain, Italy and from around Britain converged on Dunbar, near Edinburgh, for only the second European Stone Stacking Championships. Competitors must create the most complex and gravity-defying artistic sculptures from rocks and pebbles gathered on the town's Eye Cave Beach. “(It’s) the most ancient art form that there is,” James Craig Page, the fledgling contest’s founder, told AFP.

Despite stone stacking’s lofty history, he traces the modern-day challenge to the creations of Californian stacker Bill Dan in the early 1990s. Stone stacking however has angered some conservationists who accuse enthusiasts of “rubbing out history” by removing rocks from ancient neolithic monuments, such as Bodmin Moor in Cornwall, southwest England.

Page launched the contest last year after organising a more local event—the John Muir challenge—in 2016, which was billed as the first stone stacking competition of its kind in Britain. John Muir was born in Dunbar in 1838 and became known as “the father of national parks” for his pioneering conservation work, which helped preserve the Yosemite Valley and Sequoia National Park in the United States. “That was so successful that we went on to create the European championships and to bring all these wonderful artists from around the world to Dunbar,” Page added. However, Page insists the professional artists take

care to preserve the natural and historic environment. “We make sure that we do look after nature, because that is where we work,” he said.

Pedro Duran, from Spain, was named European champion for the second year running for his stone archway, while James Brunt, 46, from the English city Sheffield, won runner up for his intricate sculpture of a rollercoaster. “I got into stone stacking when I saw somebody in the south of England on a beach about seven years ago,” said Brunt. “Everyone thought it was a kind of magic, and I saw the science behind it. “I started using different materials, leaves, sticks—whatever nature throws at me I’ll use to make artwork with.” — AFP



Stacked stones are pictured during the European Stone Stacking Championships.



Stacked stones are pictured during the European Stone Stacking Championships.



Competitors take part in the European Stone Stacking Championships 2018 in Dunbar, Scotland. — AFP photos



Competitors take part in the European Stone Stacking Championships 2018.



Overall winner, Pedro Duran from Spain, competes in the European Stone Stacking.

Lifestyle

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 25, 2018



Muslim Fashion Festival

These pictures taken in Jakarta shows combos of hijab styles presented during the Muslim Fashion Festival in Jakarta.—AFP

LIBYA'S WOMEN FOOTBALLERS STRUGGLE ON AND OFF PITCH

Libya's national women's football team is not only struggling on the pitch but also battling a conservative society that frowns on women playing sports in public at all. Female athletes and women's teams have many critics in the patriarchal Muslim country. "Go cover yourself!" "Your place is at home." You're playing because "you have no man to educate you"—such comments are hurled at players every time they train, said center-forward Saida Saad. Like her teammates, she wears thick tights under her shorts so as not to reveal too much skin. But for some critics, that's nowhere near enough.

"For the love of sport, we resist," said Saad, from the eastern city of Benghazi. "We are trying to change attitudes in society." She joined her teammates for a training session in the capital Tripoli's Sports City ahead of a two-leg African Cup qualifying match against Ethiopia earlier this month.

Challenges on

Coach Hassan Ferjani had modest ambitions for his team—getting them fit enough to last 90 minutes on the

pitch. "Poor things, it'll be the first time they play on a big field," he said. Just a few days ahead of the match, only 10 players made it to the training session. Others, including some based in the United States, joined the team in Cairo venue for the "home" match, as world football's governing body, FIFA, does not allow internationals in strife-torn Libya—for the showdown with Ethiopia.

They lost that match 8-0 and were thrashed 7-0 in the second leg in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa, unable to notch up a single goal. "Regardless of the final score, they have made us proud as they have shown amazing resilience against both patriarchal culture & violent extremism. They deserve ALL support!" Zahra Langhi, a Libyan human rights activist, wrote on Twitter. With no women's football league in Libya, players for the national team are selected at tournaments in schools across the country.

And while training these young women to an international standard is a daunting challenge, in many cases the hardest part is convincing their families to let them play. Many parents of potential players flat-out forbid



Libyan footballers take part in a training exercise in Tripoli ahead of their first African Cup qualifiers. — AFP photos

their daughters from taking part. Others accept, on condition that they accompany their daughters on their travels. Ferjani said the team's lack of resources means that is a tall order. Faced with these obstacles, the coach said he had come close to throwing in the towel. "What pushes me to continue is the will and the determination of the players who want to improve their level," he said. But, he added, "the battle off the field is much more important".

'Changing mentalities'

"There are many girls with talent but were unjustly barred from playing football" because of social pressures, said Rasha Nouri, a veteran of Libya's national team, dubbed the Knights of the Mediterranean. Nouri, 25, said she initially faced "a lot of difficulties in this very conservative society". After she was selected during a high school tournament, her parents encouraged her to take the sport further. "They challenged (society) alongside me and supported me," she said.

Having earned her coaching license, she said she now hopes to train women's youth teams and eventually start a national league. She also wants to "change mentalities via social networks and the media", she said. Souad Al-Shibani, head of women's football at the Libyan Football Federation, told AFP the body plans to launch a program to develop the sport, starting with a school football league for young women. "We will try to organize matches in schools every Saturday," she said. Shibani said she was "optimistic" about the future of football in Libya because the younger generation was "more open and more enthusiastic". — AFP



“ For the love of sport, we resist ”

