



3 Most Filipinos in Kuwait snub Duterte, prefer to stay



6 Twin blasts in Kabul kill 26, including 9 journalists



31 Cairo women take to the American football field



13 'Batman' to the rescue for IPL cricket stars



Govt eyeing cooperation with 'friendly' states to hire maids

Kuwait seeks to calm crisis with Manila • Duterte slammed for asking Filipinos to leave

Assembly to debate three grillings today

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: The National Assembly is scheduled to discuss three grillings today in a marathon session that is likely to end tomorrow morning, Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem said yesterday. He said the grillings will all be debated one after the other, starting with the grilling against the oil minister, followed by the one against the prime minister and finally the grilling against the minister of social affairs and labor. Ghanem said that the session will continue until the last grilling is finished and expected it to last until late today or the early

hours of tomorrow, which might lead to the cancellation of the regular session. MPs Omar Al-Tabtabaei and Abdulwahab Al-Babtain had filed to grill Oil Minister Bakheet Al-Rasheed on charges of mismanagement and failure to control the oil sector's top executives, whom they accused of corruption. The two lawmakers vowed to expose the minister and top oil executives over charges of squandering public funds and delays in mega projects, causing losses to public funds.

MP Hamdan Al-Azemi had surprisingly filed to grill HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak

Continued on Page 11

KUWAIT: During its weekly Cabinet meeting, the government yesterday said it was opposed to any move "aimed at undermining its sovereignty and its laws", amid a crisis with the Philippines over the treatment of domestic workers in the state. The government added however that it will set up a special commission chaired by the minister of social affairs and labor to follow up "on cooperation with friendly states" on the employment of housemaids in Kuwait.

Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte in February prohibited workers heading to Kuwait following the murder of a Filipina maid whose body was found stuffed in her employer's freezer. The resulting row deepened last week after Kuwaiti authorities ordered Manila's envoy to leave the country over videos of Philippine embassy staff helping workers in Kuwait flee allegedly abusive employers.

Earlier yesterday, a senior Kuwaiti official sought to calm the crisis. "This is largely a misunderstanding and exaggeration of some minor or one-off cases," Deputy Foreign Minister

Nasser Al-Subaih told reporters in Kuwait City. "We have taken a serious stance ... but we do not believe in escalation and want to remain in direct communication to resolve the problem," Subaih added.

Kuwait has also detained four Filipinos hired by the Philippine embassy and issued arrest warrants against three diplomatic personnel. Subaih said those suspected of participating in the operation to help workers escape were not accredited diplomats and that they were now holed up in the Philippine Embassy. The foreign ministry was "awaiting cooperation" for their handover to carry out an investigation.

Kuwait and the Philippines had earlier been negotiating a labor deal that could have resulted in the lifting of the ban on Filipinos working in Kuwait. But after the fresh escalation in tensions, Duterte said on Sunday that the temporary ban on Filipinos going to work in Kuwait was now permanent. Around 262,000 Filipinos work in Kuwait, nearly 60 percent of them domestic workers, according to the Philippines' foreign ministry. Domestic helpers account for

more than 65 percent of the more than 260,000 Filipinos in Kuwait, according to Philippine government data. The earnings overseas workers send home is vital to sustaining low-income families and a crucial economic driver.

Meanwhile, a Philippine labor group and a senator accused Duterte yesterday of gambling with the livelihoods of tens of thousands of Filipinos in Kuwait after he asked them to come home. Duterte at the weekend appealed to the "sense of patriotism" of overseas Filipino workers, known as OFWs, and asked them to return home, where he said they would get financial aid and job opportunities in other countries. He added they could find employment as English teachers in China, citing improved ties with Beijing.

Critics said Duterte had no way of guaranteeing that and should not ask those whose income was vital to their families back home to quit their jobs. Senator Risa Hontiveros called Duterte's request "extremely reckless, shortsighted and uncaring".

Continued on Page 11

Bibi says Iran lied on nukes; strike on Syria kills Iranians

TEL AVIV: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said yesterday that Iran had lied about never having pursued nuclear weapons and had continued to preserve and expand its nuclear weapons knowledge even after signing a 2015 deal with global powers. "Iran's leaders repeatedly deny ever pursuing nuclear weapons," said Netanyahu during a prime-time televised address carried by Israeli networks. "Tonight I'm here to tell you one thing: Iran lied."

The Israeli leader spoke in English and showed pictures and videos purporting to be of historic secret Iranian nuclear facilities, as well as Iranian docu-

ments and plans to develop atomic weapons. He said Israel had obtained tens of thousands of files "a few weeks ago in a great intelligence achievement". "Tonight we're going to reveal new and conclusive proof of the secret nuclear weapons program that Iran has been hiding for years from the international community in its secret atomic archive," Netanyahu said. "We're going to show you Iran's secret nuclear files."

While the lion's share of the briefing focused on what he said was past nuclear work and alleged obfuscation about it by Iran, Netanyahu asserted that

Continued on Page 11

May picks Javid as home minister after Rudd quits

LONDON: British Prime Minister Theresa May appointed a former banker of South Asian origin as interior minister yesterday, trying to draw a line under an immigration scandal threatening her authority as she negotiates Brexit. Sajid Javid, the son of immigrants from Pakistan, replaces Amber Rudd, who quit as Home Secretary after acknowledging she had "inadvertently misled" parliament by denying the government had targets for the number of illegal migrants Britain departs.

British ministers have struggled for two weeks to explain why some descendants of the so-called "Windrush generation", invited to Britain from its former colonies to plug labor shortfalls between 1948 and 1971, were denied basic rights. But in trying to solve

one problem, May risked creating another by changing the balance of views in her top team on plans to leave the European Union. Rudd opposed Brexit but Javid, a lukewarm "remainer", has said that after the referendum, "in some ways, we are all Brexiteers now".

The scandal has weighed on May, who, after winning support for tough responses on Russia and Syria, has lost a close ally and must now try to overcome rifts in her Conservative Party over Brexit, especially on future customs arrangements with the European Union. Javid, the first lawmaker from Britain's Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic community to become interior minister, tried before his appointment to address public anger over the scandal by saying his own family could have been caught up in it.

"We are going to have a strategy in place ... about making sure that we have an immigration policy that is fair, it treats people with respect and with decency, and that will be one of my most urgent tasks," Javid told Sky News yesterday. A spokesman for May said Javid, who had been minister for housing, communities

Continued on Page 11

Japan, UAE agree to expand cooperation

ABU DHABI: Japan and its top trade partner in the Middle East, the United Arab Emirates, agreed yesterday to expand economic, political and defense cooperation. Tokyo and Abu Dhabi also signed an investment protection agreement, capping off a two-day visit by Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to the oil-rich Gulf state. Abe arrived late Sunday on the first leg of a Middle East tour which will also take him to Jordan, Israel and the Palestinian territories.

In a joint statement, the two countries praised growing trade between them. They "stressed the importance of further

enhancing trade, investments, and business such as renewable energy, sustainable water desalination ... artificial intelligence, health care and medical equipment," the statement said. They also reiterated their commitment to diversify joint business ventures in the non-energy sector, and stressed the need to boost defense cooperation.

The UAE is Japan's main trading partner in the Middle East, accounting for about a third of Tokyo's trade in the region. It is also Japan's second-largest supplier of crude oil, accounting for almost a quarter of its needs and more than half the trade volume between them last year - \$28 billion - was energy-related. Press secretary of the Japanese foreign ministry Norio Maruyama told reporters in Abu Dhabi the two countries are expected to sign a memorandum of defense cooperation next month.

Continued on Page 11



TEL AVIV: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu delivers a speech on Iran's nuclear program at the defense ministry yesterday. — AFP



LONDON: Britain's newly appointed Home Secretary Sajid Javid poses for a photograph after exiting the Home Office yesterday. — AFP



ABU DHABI: Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and UAE's Minister of Economy Sultan bin Saeed Al-Mansoori attend a Japan-UAE Business Forum yesterday. — AFP

News in brief

Qatar to hike minimum wage

DOHA: Qatar could increase the minimum wage for migrant workers by the end of 2018, unions predicted yesterday, as the 2022 World Cup host seeks to push through labor reforms. It would be the first change to the monthly wage since its introduction by the gas-rich Gulf state last November. "By the end of the year we expect a new minimum wage to be set, that's good news," said Sharan Burrow, general secretary of the International Trade Union Confederation. Burrow did not name a figure but said the new wage would be calculated by assessing a "basket of goods". The minimum wage was set at 750 riyals a month (\$206) on its introduction. — AFP

Saudi court tries Mossad spies

RIYADH: Two Arab Israelis went on trial in Saudi Arabia yesterday for allegedly plotting an attack during the hajj pilgrimage, according to the charge sheet and local media reports. The charge sheet said the two suspects had travelled to the kingdom, which is home to Islam's holiest sites, on passports of an Arab country. The two men were charged with spying for the Israeli intelligence agency Mossad and of planning "a terrorist act for the hajj season", which this year falls in August, while one of them was also accused of contacts with the Islamic State group. The Saudi dailies Okaz and Al-Riyadh said the trial opened in the capital's special anti-terrorism court, without specifying when the men had been arrested. — AFP

'Avengers' opens with \$630m

LOS ANGELES: "Avengers: Infinity War" took in \$630 million in its first weekend, the highest global opening of all time, industry estimates showed on Sunday. "The latest Marvel juggernaut... opened with \$630m worldwide, making it the largest global weekend tally in the history of film, and this was done without China," which has a later opening, industry tracker Exhibitor Relations said. "Infinity War," which features more than two dozen superheroes fighting to save the universe, also broke the record for highest North American opening weekend, raking in \$250 million at US and Canadian box offices. — AFP (See Page 29)

Japan jail escapee nabbed

TOKYO: A thief who fled an open jail in Japan sparking a high-profile manhunt involving some 15,000 officers was taken into custody yesterday, police said, more than three weeks after his escape. Tatsuma Hirao, 27, a "model" inmate who was serving time for multiple thefts, was arrested on a street near Hiroshima railway station in western Japan, a local police spokesman told AFP. He was captured some 70 km west of Mukaishima island, where police had deployed helicopters, drones, police dogs and infrared detectors to find him. Hirao told investigators that he escaped from the island by swimming across the sea, according to public broadcaster NHK. — AFP

Local

Amir hosts finance minister, investment authority, Kuwait Airways' executives

Sheikh Sabah hosts departing South Korean envoy



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Minister of Finance Dr Nayef Al-Hajraf and Director General of Kuwait Airways Corporation (KAC) Yousef Al-Sager, and KAC Board of Director members. —KUNA photos



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with the South Korean Ambassador Yoo Yeonchul.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday at Seif Palace Minister of Finance Dr Nayef Falah Al-Hajraf and Managing Director, Group Chief Executive Officer and Member on the Board of Directors of the Public Investment Authority Farouq Ali Bastaki.

His Highness the Amir also received Director General of Kuwait Airways Corporation (KAC) Yousef Abdulhameed Al-Sager, and KAC Board of Director members on the occasion of forming the new administration. The meeting was attended by Amiri Diwan affairs Minister Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah. The officials also met with His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah later yesterday. Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir received the departing South Korean Ambassador Yoo Yeonchul.

In other news, Kuwaiti Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah met with Minister of State at the German Foreign Office Nielz Annen. During the encounter, they discussed several aspects of Kuwaiti-German relations and the latest regional and international developments. The meeting was attended by Assistant Foreign Minister for the Deputy Foreign Minister's Office Ambassador Ayham Al-Omar and



Deputy FM meets German Minister



Kuwaiti Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah meets with Minister of State at the German Foreign Office Nielz Annen.

German Ambassador to Kuwait Karlfried Bergner. The German minister later met with National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem and Deputy Amiri Diwan Minister Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah as well.

Separately, Ghanem received in his office Chairman of the Council of Saudi Chambers (CSC) Ahmad Al-Rajhi. The meeting was attended by MP Riad Al-Adsani and CSC Secretary General Dr Saud Al-Meshari. —KUNA



National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem meets with Minister of State at the German Foreign Office Nielz Annen.

Egyptian, Kuwaiti top army officers discuss cooperation

CAIRO: Egyptian Commander of the Armed Forces and Minister of Defense Forces General Sedqi Subhi discussed on Sunday with Kuwaiti Army Chief of Staff General Mohammad Al-Khudher the ways of bolstering military cooperation on many fronts.

The meeting between the two sides delved into current Arab, regional, and international issues, and their repercussions on the security and stability in the Middle East, Colonel Tamer Al-Refai,

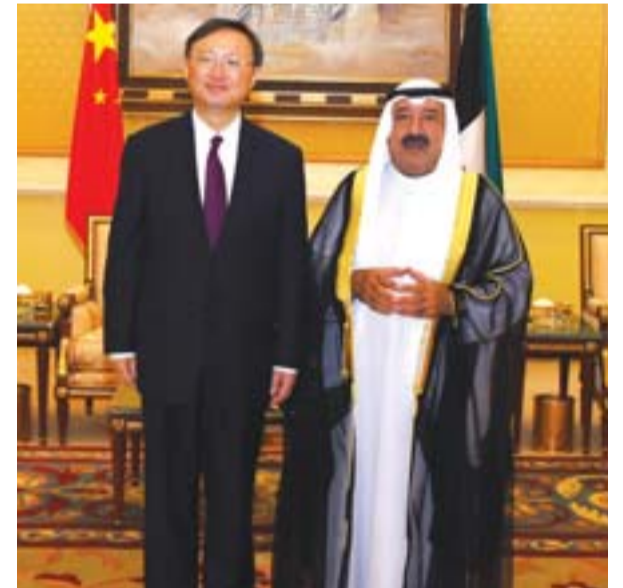
Egyptian Spokesman of the Armed Forces said in a statement. He added that Khudher also met with Chief of Staff Gen. Mohammad Fareed. He noted that the meeting highlighted several bilateral topics in military cooperation and trainings between the two countries' armed forces. Refai said Khudher praised Egypt's role and its armed forces efforts in fighting terrorism and the important role they play in facing current challenges in the region. —KUNA



CAIRO: Egyptian Commander of the Armed Forces and Minister of Defense Forces Gen Sedqi Subhi meets with Kuwaiti Army Chief of Staff Gen Mohammad Al-Khudher. —KUNA



KUWAIT: First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah meets with French Ambassador to Kuwait Marie Masdupuy.



First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah meets with the Chinese President Xi Jinping's special representative Yang Jiechi.

GCC committee ready for joint work: Lawmaker

KUWAIT: The GCC Parliament committee in charge of bolstering ties with European Parliament has put cornerstone and statutes for the committee's work and mechanisms, and is ready for action, National Assembly Secretary Ouda Al-Rowaei said Sunday.

Quoted by Al-Dustoor news network, Rowaei said that the committee members were keen to ensure success of deliberations, thanking all delegations and national

councils for their attendance and consultations with the national assembly. Rowaei added that this was the second committee meeting regarding boosting the GCC-European dialogue.

The committee, Rowaei said, sought to boost dialogue and exchange parliamentary experience between the two sides, including specialized research centers that are established by the European parliament. Rowaei said the committee also has adopted a coordination role for GCC, and is keen on supporting Arab and Islamic issues, which are supposed to be based on an ideal parliamentary work. The Kuwaiti lawmaker noted that the committee delved into various topics that concern GCC and Arab affairs, including issues that have political, social, religious, cultural, and economic aspects. —KUNA



Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Lieutenant General Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah meets with US Ambassador Lawrence Silverman.



Ministry of Defense's Undersecretary Sheikh Ahmad Mansour Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah meets with the British Ambassador to Kuwait Michael Davenport.

Defense minister meets French ambassador

KUWAIT: First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received French Ambassador to Kuwait Marie Masdupuy at Seif Palace yesterday. Sheikh Nasser lauded the 'deep-rooted' bilateral relations between the two countries during the meeting, in which he discussed issues of mutual concern with the ambassador.

In other news, Sheikh Nasser hosted a dinner banquet Sunday night in honor of the Chinese President Xi Jinping's special representative, member of the political office of the central committee of Communist Party of China and director of the central foreign affairs commission office Yang Jiechi, and his accompanying delegation.

Separately, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Lieutenant General Sheikh

Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah tackled issues of common concerns with US Ambassador Lawrence Silverman. The meeting highlighted as well new ways to boost ties between the two countries. Interior Ministry Public Relations and Security Media office said in a press release on Sunday. The statement added that the minister asserted on the two friendly countries' common vision about regional and international issues. Meanwhile, Ambassador Silverman praised Kuwait's role in achieving peace in the region and praising cooperation and understanding between Kuwait and the United States.

In other news, the Ministry of Defense's Undersecretary Sheikh Ahmad Mansour Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah tackled on Sunday with British Ambassador to Kuwait Michael Davenport, accompanied by Military Attache Colonel Vinyl Mclean, issues of common concern. A statement by the ministry's Public Relations and Moral Guidance Department said Sheikh Ahmad praised the strong ties between both countries and emphasized his wishes to strengthen and develop such relationship. —KUNA

Local

Most Filipinos prefer to stay even as Duterte issues 'patriotism' call

Pinoys fear they won't find decent jobs back home

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: A majority of Filipino workers in Kuwait are not willing to gamble their future amid a diplomatic row between the Philippines and Kuwait. Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte has called on Filipinos to return home and show patriotism. "We cannot eat patriotism," said Edith (not her real name). "I fully support him, but unless we are provided decent high-paying jobs, I cannot go back just because he says so," she said.

Edith, 55, is a nurse who works in a clinic in Kuwait, and will retire in a few years. "I will retire and go back home on my own timeframe. I have been cared for and pampered here in Kuwait for many years, so why turn back on them," she said.

Bok-bok, also a nurse, said he is willing to go home if the government in the Philippines is able to provide a similar salary he is receiving here. "Come on, how can the sins of a few people in the Department of Foreign Affairs be burdened by all of us? Duterte should fire those people involved in the video fiasco. They knew they were breaking the laws of Kuwait, and should be punished for doing so," he said.

Alex, another Filipino worker in Kuwait, is more knowledgeable on what allegedly transpired with the community before the videos were posted on social media. "Remember that everything started not because of this video," he said. "It started because the president wants the protection for our workers. We should not deviate from the real story. He had cited the growing number of alleged suicides, mis-

treatment and abuses - these are the real issues here," he pointed out.

"Why we focus on those videos? The rescues happened because apparently there are housemaids that are being mistreated and need help. Those people that were involved in rescues were Filipinos and they did what they did because they were in extreme danger. It is their sworn duty as embassy officials to protect and care for Filipinos. The breach of laws was very regrettable, but if you listen to them carefully, they said they informed authorities here but did not act quickly, so they did it on their own. At least they informed authorities here," Alex said.

"The Philippines apologized and Kuwait accepted it, but still expelled our ambassador," he said. "This is the reason why our president is furious. Kuwait has the right to do so, but at least they should be cautious. The Philippines did not ask for an apology for the deaths and mistreatment - we deserved it too," he said.

Larry, a Filipino aircraft maintenance engineer, said he will not leave Kuwait, since he has taken a 1.3 million peso loan from a local bank. "I will have to pay all my obligations before I go. If Duterte is willing to pay this amount, I will immediately go home - even tomorrow. But I have two more years to repay this amount," he said.

Ready to cooperate

On Sunday, Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah affirmed that Kuwait rejects any breach of sovereignty or laws and is ready to act decisively against any relevant attempt. Jarallah, reacting to remarks by Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte, said Kuwait was ready to cooperate with Manila to explore all means to address labor issues, including 800 Filipino citizens who are currently in shelters. Also on Sunday, Duterte said the temporary ban on Filipinos going to work in Kuwait is now permanent, intensifying the diplomatic standoff over the treatment of migrant workers in the state. Duterte in February prohibited workers heading to Kuwait following the murder of a Filipina maid whose body was found stuffed in her employer's freezer. The resulting row deepened after Kuwaiti authorities last week ordered Manila's envoy to leave the country over videos of Philippine embassy staff helping workers in Kuwait flee allegedly abusive employers.

The two nations had been negotiating a labor deal that Philippine officials said could result in the lifting of the temporary ban but the recent escalation in tensions has put an agreement in doubt. "The ban stays permanently. There will be no more recruitment for especially domestic helpers. No more," Duterte told reporters in his hometown in the southern city of Davao.

Speaking after a meeting held by Kuwaiti authorities yesterday regarding the row, Jarallah said Kuwait is keen on maintaining the safety and rights of all expatriates including the Filipino community within the labor laws of the country, which have been praised by international human rights agencies. He appreciated the contributions of Filipinos, who are working in different sectors.

Jarallah said Kuwait shared Duterte's desire to maintain deeply-rooted relations, citing Manila's support of Kuwait during the 1990-91 Iraqi invasion. He said "the historic friendship" between the two countries "could help overcome this exceptional circumstance". Jarallah said Kuwait was looking forward to working with the Philippines to honoring mutual interest.

Around 262,000 Filipinos work in Kuwait, nearly 60 percent of them domestic workers, according to the Philippines' foreign ministry. Last week the Philippines apologized over the rescue videos but Kuwaiti officials announced they were expelling Manila's ambassador and recalling their own envoy from the Southeast Asian nation. Kuwait also detained four Filipinos hired by the Philippine embassy and issued arrest warrants against three diplomatic personnel, Manila said.

About 10 million Filipinos work abroad, seeking high-paying jobs they are unable to find at home, and their remittances are a major pillar of the Philippine economy. The Philippine government has for decades hailed overseas workers as modern heroes but advocacy groups have highlighted the social cost of migration, tearing families apart and making Filipinos vulnerable to abuse.

“We cannot eat patriotism”

Ministry won't give away Patriot missiles' site

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: The defense ministry rejected a parliamentary proposal to make it release its land near West Abdullah Al-Mubarak (site of Patriot missiles) in favor of the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW). The ministry said in its memo to the National Assembly that "its plan to protect the country from ballistic missiles and enemy attacks are based on instructions by His Highness the Amir, the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, to maintain the security of vital and strategic areas of the country." The movement of the Patriot missiles will cause a gap in defensive plans and make vital and strategic areas prone to destruction, it explained.

Kuwait's bedoons

The United Arab Emirates Embassy in Kuwait denied social media reports claiming that it was offering UAE citizenships to bedoons (stateless) in Kuwait. The embassy sent a 'tweet' yesterday saying that reports on social media claiming that the UAE plans to

naturalize Kuwait's bedoons are categorically false.

Kuwait's metro

Director General of the Public Authority for Roads and Land Transport Ahmad Al-Hossan said the authority is studying the project of Kuwait's metro. He said based on Kuwait Municipality's request to provide it with a time schedule to start tendering the metro project, the feasibility study has been completed by a consultative office that has contracts with the authority so that it will be carried out under the public-private-partnership (PPP) system.

Meanwhile, Hossan and the Ministry of Services had told a state department that was handling the project before the roads authority was establishment not to tender the project under the PPP system due to the service nature of the project and its high cost, and also due to the risks that go along with the system. He said the commission plans to implement Kuwait's metro project due to its importance in developing the domestic transport sector and helping in reducing traffic jams.

Licenses' fees

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry is studying exempting people with special needs from paying fees for licenses of companies, sources said, adding that the types of companies are being discussed. The commerce ministry said it is keen on activating law 8/2010 regarding rights of the disabled, whose article 37 says "the disabled person will be exempted from paying fees for public services," the sources noted.

Man beats up 'disobedient' wife

KUWAIT: An Indian woman complained against her husband, saying that he beat her for no reason. The husband was summoned and confessed to the beating, and claimed she does not obey him. He was detained for further action.

More reckless drivers arrested

Five citizens were arrested in Sabahiya for driving recklessly and showing off with their cars during rain, four days after a similar incident during which police were attacked. Police responded to calls and when they arrived at the scene, many escaped, but five were caught and their cars were impounded.

Rumors denied

The interior ministry denied rumors about the spread of flu at the

Saad Al-Abdullah Security Science Academy. It said the college tested five cadets who had fever, but results were negative.

Search for swindler

A swindler made a citizen believe he can help her in 'cashing her loan' so she can get another, then took KD 1,000 from her before disappearing. The citizen said she responded to an online ad for cashing loans, and a man asked her to meet him near a bank and give him KD 1,000. He asked her to wait in the car while he met bank officials, but he did not return and switched off his phone. Detectives are working on the case.

Harassers caught

Eleven young men were arrested for harassing girls near Nuzha Co-operative Society. Police responded to complaints from citizens and set up checkpoints around the co-op. They were able to nab 11 citizens and issued citations to some of them for not having driving licenses.

— Translated by Kuwait Times from Al-Rai

Kuwait Times
ESTABLISHED 1961

SUBSCRIBE OR RENEW

KD 25

PAINTBALL KUWAIT

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

www.kuwaittimes.net

www.paintballkuwait.com

50+ 1 Entrance Ticket Value KD 9.250

30 1 Entrance Ticket Value KD 9.250

20 1 Entrance Ticket Value KD 9.250

10 1 Entrance Ticket Value KD 9.250

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

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

Local

Cabinet stresses lawmakers' right to grill ministers

Cabinet expresses relief over Crown Prince's medical test results

KUWAIT: Members of parliament have the constitutional right to table interpellation requests to cabinet ministers, but relevant regulations and conditions should be observed, the Kuwaiti cabinet said yesterday. The cabinet made this statement during its customary weekly meeting presided over by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, as the National Assembly is set to meet today to discuss three grilling motions against Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak and two cabinet ministers. The cabinet, however, reiterated willingness to work with the assembly to put control tools in effect with a view to ensuring the national interest, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh said in a statement following the meeting.

Also locally, the Cabinet expressed relief over the results of routine medical examinations His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah recently underwent in the United States, which showed that he is in good health. First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, as well as Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah briefed the executive body on Chinese President Xi Jinping's special representative Yang Jiechi's

visit to the country. The talks the Chinese official had with Kuwaiti leaders focused on strategies to establish closer bilateral ties, in addition to political happenings around the world, the minister explained. The Kuwaiti foreign minister went on to address the ongoing diplomatic row with the Philippines, stressing that Kuwait fervently opposes any measures that undermine its sovereignty and that the foreign ministry will determine the proper course of action to take in the best interests of both nations.

Row with Philippines addressed

Meanwhile, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh informed the Cabinet that British Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns's recent visit to Kuwait was productive, in which it focused on relations between both countries. The Kuwaiti executives also approved a pair of proposals dealing with forming a Gulf accreditation center in the country and an agreement between Kuwait and INTERPOL over the police body's travel document initiative.

The Cabinet also gave the thumbs up to an economic deal between Kuwait and Nicaragua, in addition to a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for high-level talks involving Kuwaiti and Australian officials, as well as a MoU for direct investment between Kuwait and Turkey.



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

In addition to discussions over the agenda for the next session of parliament, the Cabinet also agreed to form a committee comprising representatives from across the government spectrum to examine the issue of domestic labor. On Arab and international affairs, the cabinet emphatically deplored missile-firing by Yemeni Houthi militias at populated areas in Saudi Arabia. It condemned such heinous attacks by Houthis as they target the kingdom's security and stability, in a clear-cut proof of this group's insistence on shrugging off international efforts to settle the conflict in Yemen.

It, further, reaffirmed that the State of Kuwait stands by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and backs its measures to maintain its security and stability. The Kuwaiti ministers then welcomed the recent historic Korean meeting, which

culminated in a peace agreement between North Korea and South Korea, speaking highly of their leaders' effort to defuse tensions in the Korean Peninsula. The agreement is hoped to set an example for putting an end to world conflicts and tensions so that security and stability would prevail, the cabinet said.

Furthermore, the cabinet deplored and condemned a recent shooting of worshippers in Quebec City in Canada, which left a number of people killed or injured. Finally, it openly denounced twin blasts targeting an intelligence facility in Kabul, together with an attack on foreign forces in Kandahar early yesterday, which claimed caused some casualties. The cabinet emphasized that the State of Kuwait has adopted an unshakable position that is primarily based on decrying all forms, manifestations and motives of terrorism. —KUNA

Minister greets unions on Labor Day

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Minister of Social Affairs and Labor and State Minister for Economic Affairs Hind Al-Sabeeh congratulated workers in Kuwait as well as unions, including the Kuwait Trade Union Federation and the general union of trade unions of workers in the government sector on the occasion of Labor Day, which falls today. She said Kuwait will continue presenting all forms of support and encouragement to the union movement and protect the rights of all of its members. She said Kuwait has signed several treaties that were approved by the International Labor Organization (ILO) aiming at protecting the rights of workers and ensure their safety, adding that Kuwait is keen on safeguarding workers' rights as per the constitution.



Hind Al-Sabeeh

Kuwaitis urged to explore investment opportunities in UK

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: The United Kingdom's Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns is in Kuwait on a trade and investment mission. He met several Kuwaiti government officials including Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh and Gatehouse Bank officials, underlining investment opportunities in the United Kingdom, especially in real estate, and to thank Kuwait for its big role and influence in the region.

He said his visit aimed to deepen Kuwait and British trade ties, recognize and appreciate Kuwait as a nation and thank His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for playing a pivotal role in the region. "The Gulf region is very important to us as well as its role in the UN Security Council, and for its support following the (Russian poisoning) attack in Salisbury," he said.

On March 4, Sergei and Yulia Skripal were found collapsed on a bench in Salisbury and it was later confirmed by British authorities that the pair had been poisoned by Novichok, a type of nerve agent. According to the BBC, Skripal is a retired Russian military intelligence colonel

who came to the UK after being convicted and jailed in Russia for spying for the UK. The findings about his poisoning by Novichok have been verified by an independent investigation carried out by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). Britain and many other foreign governments, have blamed the Russian state for the attack.

Investments opportunities

"There are many investments opportunities for Kuwaitis in Britain and we would like to welcome them. The United Kingdom and Kuwait have a long history that spans over a century, particularly our relations in foreign policy and cooperation for many years; these are all treasured, especially in recent years when HH the Amir visited the country in 2012. They have special bonds, especially the British royal family and HH the Amir. We see this as very positive influence that Kuwait brings in the region, especially its role in the Security Council that is fundamental to stability in the region as well as the wider role of the UN internationally," Cairns said.

The value of trade between the two nations, according to Cairns, runs into tens of billions of pounds and the figure continues to rise year after year. "Gatehouse Bank, for example, has British ownership, but uses sovereign wealth funds from Kuwait. It is a UK-registered bank. What I am trying to say here is that Kuwait and Britain are intertwined by commercial relations," he said.

Cairns mentioned that Kuwait wants to diversify its health sector and introduce new innovations, and the UK is ready to be part of it. "The UK is excellent in planning and



KUWAIT: The United Kingdom's Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns speaks during a press conference. —Photo by Joseph Shagra

consultancy services in this field and we think we can support you in achieving your objectives. The majority of shareholders of Aston Martin are Kuwaitis - it is a great British brand but has Kuwaiti investors. Also, we are interested in airport management and perhaps in the oil and petroleum sectors in Kuwait," he said.

With regards to the Syrian situation and its support of some rebel groups inside Syrian territory trying to overthrow the Assad regime, Cairns noted that what is important to the UK is the safety and security of every Syrian and the long-lasting stability of the region.

Palestinians in Kuwait reiterate their rights

KUWAIT: The Palestinian community in Kuwait released the following statement yesterday, commenting on the recent developments in the Middle East:

"The Palestinian cause faces conspiracies that stand in the way of our Palestinian people and their leadership in their march towards obtaining their rights. Our leadership is facing regional and international pressures to accept the so called 'deal of the century' that was prepared and approved by those who are new to politics, and whose first concern is the Zionist entity and their interests in the Middle East.

"Our Palestinian people staged major demonstrations to reject the conspiracy and condemn the decision to move the US embassy to Jerusalem. Our Palestinian leadership moved in international arenas to document its rejection of what is being conspired against our cause, and to affirm our national right to establish an independent state on the Palestinian territories with Jerusalem as its capital, as well as the Palestinian refugees' right of return.

"The Palestinian community in Kuwait declares its solidarity with its legitimate leadership and stresses the following:

- The Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) is the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people in Palestine and abroad.
- The National Palestinian Council is the highest legislative Palestinian authority that represents every Palestinian in Palestine and abroad.
- We support and stand with the Palestinian right to establish the independent Palestinian state on the Palestinian land with Jerusalem as its capital.
- We affirm our right to have a just solution for Palestinian refugees, and reserve our right of return to our land.
- We reject the US administration's decision to move its embassy to Jerusalem, and we also reject any move that changes the geographic or demographic status of Jerusalem. We do not accept any other city than Jerusalem as the capital of our Palestinian state.
- Any personality, entity, or gathering outside the institutes and departments of the PLO is illegal, rejected and does not represent us as a Palestinian community in the state of Kuwait.
- "Finally, we greet our Palestinian people and our POWs in the occupier's prisons."



KUWAIT: Officials attend a seminar organized by the Kuwaiti Foreign Ministry yesterday. —KUNA

Kuwait's political agenda promotes human rights: Envoy

KUWAIT: The protection of human rights is deeply embedded in Kuwait's political ideology and endorsed by the Islamic faith, a Kuwaiti diplomat said yesterday. Kuwait's Assistant Foreign Minister on International Cooperation Affairs and Development Nasser Al-Sabeeh made the remarks in a speech on behalf of Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah in a seminar organized by the Kuwaiti Foreign Ministry. "Kuwait's contributions towards humanitarian causes give credence to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's UN-bestowed moniker of Humanitarian Leader," the diplomat said.

He went on to say that the UN's sustainable development goals revolve around the notion of human rights, explaining that nations that rank high on the human devel-



Nasser Al-Sabeeh



Tarek El-Sheikh

opment index usually have immaculate human rights records. One of the topics included in the seminar is the private sector's weighty responsibility to ensure that its economic goals actually promote human rights, the Kuwaiti diplomat added.

Meanwhile, the UN's Resident Coordinator Tarek El-Sheikh hailed Kuwait as among the frontrunners in efforts to protect human rights, citing the seminar as an earnest endeavor on the part of the Kuwaiti foreign ministry. He said that the countries in the region should follow in Kuwait's footsteps by actively engaging with the private sector through programs and activities in the human rights arena. —KUNA

KIB sponsors Earth Day activities at Shaheed Park

KUWAIT: As part of its leading social responsibility program aimed at supporting various youth-related and environmental activities, Kuwait International Bank (KIB) sponsored the Earth Day celebration, which was organized by students from the O2 Club, From the College of Life Sciences at Kuwait University. Held at Shaheed Park, the event aimed at promoting a deeper awareness of environmental stewardship and the importance of protecting the environment. The event featured an awareness exhibition which was attended by a group of 17 committed environmental activists who have made a positive contribution to the environmental state of the planet. Manager of Corporate

Communications at KIB, Nawaf Najia, said: "Our sponsorship of this event reflects our unwavering commitment towards our environment and our ongoing pursuit of promoting environmental protection amongst all segments of the community. Our main objective is to support activities and initiatives spearheaded by students, as well as to spread awareness amongst youth about the importance of improving the environment in which we live in."

Najia also shed light on the importance of celebrating and organizing events that focus on important environmental issues in Kuwait, particularly waste disposal. KIB believes in the importance of promoting the reuse and reclamation of useful materials in a manner that is safe and protective of human health and the environment, thereby benefitting the nation as a whole.

KIB adopts impactful environmentally-friendly processes for employees that promote environmental consciousness. The Bank encourages all employees to reduce paper use and discourages printing, instead urging employees to rely on electronic alternatives for transactions and correspondences.



12

YEARS IN KUWAIT

DAYS OF GREAT OFFERS

MST1AB9-24CR1

Split AC وحدة تكييف جائط

24000 BTU/hr



الآن 139
قبل 199

وفر 60
SAVE

- High Speed Air Cleaner Filter
- 4 Way Air Flow
- 2 Way Pure CONNECTION

MWTF-12CM

Window AC مكيف شباك

12000 BTU/hr



الآن 66
قبل 96

وفر 30
SAVE

AC120-5

Multifunction Fan

- Humidifier
- Ionizer
- Fan
- Appairer

الآن 20
قبل 29

وفر 8
SAVE



HD-663FWE

663 لتر



- 23 Cubic Feet
- White
- No Frost

وفر 60
SAVE

الآن 109
قبل 169

HS-235L

235 لتر



- Single Door
- 8.3 Cubic Feet
- Glass Shelves
- Silver Color

وفر 15
SAVE

الآن 49
قبل 64

YL1536S

Water Dispenser



- 2 Tap, Hot & Cold
- Cold Water Tank 3 Litres
- Hot Water Tank 1 Litres

وفر 9
SAVE

الآن 19
قبل 29

MAC-120FMPS

غسالة WASHER

12 كجم Kg



الآن 69
قبل 95

وفر 26
SAVE

- 8 Programs
- 8 Water Level Selection
- Delay Start Option

MTE160-P2002S

غسالة WASHER

16 كجم Kg



الآن 58
قبل 99

وفر 41
SAVE

- Spin Capacity 9 Kg
- 15 Minutes Wash Timer
- 5 Minutes Spin Time
- Air Dry

20BME61058

Cooker

50X55cm

Silver Finish



- 4 burners
- Gas grill and oven
- Stainless steel cooktop

الآن 29
قبل 45

وفر 15
SAVE

MM720CTB

Microwave

20 لتر



الآن 9
قبل 18

وفر 8
SAVE

- Defrost Settings

MJ-BL40G1

Blender

1.5 لتر



الآن 4
قبل 9

وفر 4
SAVE

- 2 speeds+Pulse
- 4 slices Blade

VCB37A14C

Canister VC

400 Watts



الآن 8
قبل 15

وفر 7
SAVE

- Hepa Filter
- 1.5 M Hose



US accused of 'pushing' Saudi to confront Iran

South Korean trust in North jumps after feel-good summit

Page 8

Page 7



KABUL: This file photo shows Agence France-Presse (AFP) photographer Shah Maral sitting in a helicopter with a member of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) while on assignment in Afghanistan. Agence France-Presse's chief photographer in Kabul, Shah Maral, was killed yesterday, AFP has confirmed, in a secondary explosion targeting a group of journalists who had rushed to the scene of a suicide blast in the Afghan capital. —AFP

Blasts in Afghan capital kill at least 26

Nine journalists die; 11 children killed

KABUL: Twin blasts in the Afghan capital Kabul killed at least 26 people yesterday, including nine journalists who had arrived to report on the first explosion and were apparently targeted by a suicide bomber, officials said. The attacks, a week after 60 people were killed as they waited at a voter registration centre in the city, underlined mounting insecurity despite repeated government pledges to tighten defenses. Hours after the attack in Kabul, a suicide bomber in a vehicle attacked a foreign military convoy in the southern province of Kandahar, killing 11 children studying in a nearby religious school, police said.

"These attacks caused untold human suffering to Afghan families," said Tadamichi Yamamoto, the top UN official in Afghanistan. "I am furthermore outraged by the attack which appears to have deliberately targeted journalists," he said in a statement. The attacks in rapid succession were a grim reminder of the strength of both the Taliban and Islamic State's emerging Afghanistan branch to wreak violence despite stepped up US air attacks under Trump's new policy for the 16-year-old war.

Taliban militants, fighting to restore their version of strict Islamic law to Afghanistan, announced their

usual spring offensive last week and there has been heavy fighting in several areas of the country since. Islamic State claimed responsibility for the two blasts in the capital, which killed at least 26 people, including four police, and wounded 49 seriously, Hashmat Stanekzai, a senior police official, said. The Afghan Journalists Safety Committee (AFJSC) said nine journalists were killed in Kabul, the worst toll for media workers in a single attack in the country.

Najib Danish, a spokesman for the interior ministry, said a suicide bomber appeared to have posed as a media worker and blew himself up where reporters and rescue workers had gathered. "We know that a suicide bomber pretended to be a reporter. He showed his press card and stood among journalists before blowing himself up," Danish told Reuters.



IS militant group claims responsibility

'Very dangerous'
Afghanistan was already considered one of the most dangerous countries in the world for journalists, with at least 20 killed last year. Last week, unidentified gunmen shot a journalist in the southern city of

Kandahar. Yesterday's attack was the most serious on the Afghan media since 2016, when seven workers for Tolo News were killed in an attack claimed by the Taliban.

Eight of the journalists were from Afghan outlets: two reporters from the Mashal TV, a cameraman and a reporter working for ITV, three reporters from Radio Azadi and one from Tolo News, the AFJSC said. The French news agency Agence France-Presse said its chief photographer in Afghanistan, Shah Marai, was killed. A Reuters photographer was slightly hurt by shrapnel. "Journalists were doing their job when a

suicide bomber killed them, such attacks prove that the working environment is very dangerous now," said Rahimullah Samandar, a senior member of the AFJSC.

The reporters had arrived to cover the initial blast in the Shashdarak area close to buildings of the National Directorate of Security (NDS) intelligence service and near to the US embassy. Held back by police, they were waiting some distance away near the Ministry of Urban Development and Housing, when the second explosion went off just as people were entering the government office. Hundreds of people have been killed and wounded in a series of attacks in Kabul since the beginning of the year, despite President Ashraf Ghani's offer in February for peace talks "without preconditions".

In the southern city of Kandahar, where NATO-led forces operate out of a big air base, 11 children were killed and 16 wounded when a suicide bomber drove his explosive-laden van into a foreign-force convoy, police said. The 11 children who were killed were studying in a nearby madrassa, or religious school, said Matiullah Zhman, a spokesman for Kandahar police. In addition eight members of the NATO-led Resolute coalition were wounded, the force said. —Reuters

Divided Kurds face losses in Iraqi election

ARBIL: As if the loss of oil-rich territory last year wasn't painful enough, Iraq's divided Kurds are bracing for a blow on the political front in the country's May 12 elections. Analysts estimate the Kurds' loss of seats in Iraq's parliament could reach double figures as their shrunken geographic footprint is compounded by a bitter feud between the two main political parties in semi-autonomous Kurdistan. An independence referendum for the region held in September saw over 92 percent back secession—but Baghdad was incensed, after long warning that any plebiscite would be "illegal". In response, federal troops in October pushed Kurdish forces out of Kirkuk and its oilfields, along with other disputed areas in Nineveh and Salaheddin provinces in northern Iraq. Baghdad also imposed economic penalties. With Iraqi Kurdistan licking its wounds, the region's historically dominant parties are attempting to rally their demoralized supporters, while trading blame over a split between the two camps.

ment. The rival Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) in the town of Sulaimaniyah has been calling on people to "vote for a strong future in favour of the right to self-determination". But for the KDP, the PUK's "treachery" has made it impossible to cooperate. "We think Kirkuk has been occupied (by Iraqi federal forces) because of the treason by certain members of the PUK," Khosro Kuran, a KDP leader, told AFP. "We had no response when we proposed a unified Kurdish list for the whole country" ahead of the election, he added.

Quite the opposite, in the view of Saadi Bireh from the PUK's political office: the KDP was the first to field its own candidates, after refusing several offers to agree on joint lists. "What certain KDP leaders are saying reflects their political indecency, because instead of just considering us adversaries, they view us as enemies," he said. Alternative parties threaten to further split the Kurdish vote, such as Goran (Kurdish for change) and the newly created New Generation movement. The result: 503 hopefuls on 77 candidate lists, competing for just 46 seats reserved in Iraq's parliament for the provinces of Arbil, Sulaymaniyah and Dohuk, officially constituting the autonomous region.

Balance of power shifted

In Iraq's last election in 2014, Kurdish parties won 62 out of parliament's 329 seats, which included Kirkuk, Nineveh, Diyala and Baghdad. "The loss of Kirkuk is a big moment in the history of Iraq post-Saddam



ARBIL: An Iraqi Kurd attends an electoral rally for the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) in Arbil, the capital of the northern Iraqi Kurdish autonomous region. —AFP

Hussein," said Adel Bakawan, director general of the Kurdistan centre of sociology at Soran University near Arbil. Since then, "the balance of power has shifted against the Kurds. It's difficult to give an exact figure. It will depend, but the loss of some seats is certain," said Bakawan. "For the Kurds, the city of Kirkuk is not only a source of oil, but also a major population centre in the electoral sense," Bakawan added. The loss of Kirkuk is a blow, acknowledged the KDP's Kuran. "In contrast to the 2014 elections, there will be no participation in the Kurdish territories outside the autonomous region, in the absence of Kurdish

security forces to protect our voters," he said.

In yet another setback for Kurdish parties, this will be the first time Kurds appear on candidate lists fielded by other ethnic blocs in their home region. The most striking example is Mustafa Sheikh Kawa, grandson of Sheikh Mahmud Hafid Barzinji, who fought British occupation and set up a Kurdish state between 1920 and 1922. Kawa is running as a candidate for a bloc led by Shiite chief Amar al-Hakim. "It's an Iraqi list" said Saed Hissa Barzinji, an associate of Kawa. "Our aim is to serve the people of Kurdistan." —AFP

Jailbirds in love: 63 inmates marry in Mexico prison

CIUDAD JUAREZ: With a lot of kissing and tears, Jorge Armando Perez finally tied the knot with his fiancée Corina Chavez at an emotional ceremony inside a prison in Mexico where a total of 63 couples got hitched. Perez, who has lived his entire life in El Paso, Texas, was deported to Mexico seven months ago to begin serving a 40-year sentence for extortion in a prison just across the border in the northern city of Ciudad Juarez. To have, to hold and to visit every week - And it was there that the 37-year-old met Chavez some three years ago. Together they have been raising six children, four from previous relationships. Holding his hand to seal their union in front of family members and officials, his 35-year-old wife pledged to visit him each Wednesday and Saturday and "every day possible" at this facility, which houses some 3,100 prisoners.

'She is very beautiful'

Others had less time to wait before being reunited with their new spouses, with one bride saying she had two years before her new husband finished a sentence for drug possession. "We love each other very much, he loves me and I love him and we want to make a life for ourselves outside of here," she told AFP, declining to give her name. "She is very beautiful," beamed the newly-wedded inmate, who had showered his beloved with chocolates, cakes and pictures he himself had made in jail.

'Strengthening bond'

Through the weddings, local authorities are seeking to give legal security to the partner and children of those inside. "But above all, it strengthens the family bond and the acquisition of values within the family," said prison director Rene Lopez Ortiz. —AFP

International

US accused of pushing Saudi to confront Iran, stoke crisis

Khamenei blasts US after Pompeo visits Riyadh

ANKARA: Iran's supreme leader yesterday hit out at the United States a day after new Secretary of State Mike Pompeo visited Riyadh, accusing Washington of trying to stoke a "regional crisis" by provoking its ally Saudi Arabia to confront Tehran. In remarks broadcast on state television, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei reiterated longstanding calls for the United States to "leave" the Middle East, which he called Iran's home, and said any power seeking to challenge Iran would be defeated.

"One of the ways to confront Iran is to provoke inexperienced rulers of the region," he said, in an apparent reference to Saudi Arabia's 32-year-old Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. "Americans are trying to provoke Saudi Arabia against Tehran ... Their aim is to create more regional crisis ... to push Muslims to fight against Muslims." "If these governments gain more wisdom, they will not confront Iran. If they confront Iran, they will be defeated." Khamenei's remarks were aired a day after Pompeo met Saudi King Salman in Riyadh on a flying visit to the region. Pompeo said on Sunday that the United States was deeply concerned by Iran's "destabilizing and malign activities" in the Middle East.

Appearing to address those remarks, Khamenei said Iran had no intention of limiting its influence in the Middle East. "Americans are the ones who should leave ... The Middle East, the west of Asia and the Arabian Gulf is our home," Khamenei said. Tehran and Riyadh have long been locked in a proxy war, competing for regional supremacy from Iraq to Syria and Lebanon to Yemen. US President Donald Trump has strongly backed Saudi Arabia in its efforts to counter Iran's influence.

“ Any power challenging Iran will be defeated ”

Sanctions relief

Iranian state TV quoted Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qasemi as saying Tehran would keep on backing its friends in the region despite US pressure to curb its influence. "The cooperation between America and Saudi Arabia will further destabilize the Middle East and will lead to more crisis in the region," Qasemi said. "Pompeo's remarks about Iran are baseless and repetitive ... As long as the legitimate governments of the regional countries need our help, Iran will remain in those countries."

In Riyadh, Pompeo reassured Saudi Arabia that the United States would exit Iran's 2015 multinational nuclear deal, unless European signatories of the accord "fix" it. Trump has given the European signatories a May 12 deadline to "fix the terrible flaws" of the 2015 nuclear deal, or he will refuse to extend US sanctions relief on Iran.

Under Iran's settlement with the United States, France, Germany, Britain, Russia and China, Tehran agreed to curb its nuclear program to satisfy the powers that it could not be put to developing atomic bombs. In exchange, Iran received relief from sanctions, most of which were lifted in January 2016. Khamenei has warned that Tehran would stick to the accord as long as the other signatories respected it, but would "shred" the deal if Washington pulled out. Britain, France, Germany, Russia, China and the European Union say Washington cannot unilaterally cancel an accord enshrined by a UN resolution. But they have called on Iran to curb its regional influence and ballistic missile program.



TEHRAN: A handout picture provided by the office of Iran's Supreme Leader, shows Ayatollah Ali Khamenei delivering a speech during Labor Day at the workers' meeting.—AFP

Trump accuses Iran of supporting terrorism and says the 2015 deal does not do enough to block its path to acquiring nuclear weapons.

Iran says it does not seek nuclear arms, and blames Washington and its allies for stirring Middle East tension. Iranian officials yesterday reiterated that Tehran

had no intention of suspending its defensive missile capability. "By accusing Iran, Americans want to justify their presence in the region and to sell weapons to the regional countries," Tasnim news agency quoted deputy head of Iran's elite Revolutionary Guards Hossein Salami as saying.—Reuters

Pakistan moves to curb air pollution after court ruling

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan's environmental protection agency is installing air quality monitors and warning factories to add pollution filters after a panel of the country's top judges ordered the government to detail its efforts to control worsening air pollution. The court ruling earlier this month followed a lawsuit by a Karachi man challenging the government's failure to control air pollution in that port city. Chief Justice Mian Saqib Nisar, head of a three-member high court panel, ruled that the government must provide details of what it is doing to curb air pollution across the country. He said he was shocked at how dirty the air had become, particularly in Pakistan's cities.

The ruling has spurred government authorities to action to try to reduce pollution levels, fearing they could face court orders or sanctions. Venu G Advani, the Karachi lawyer who filed the court petition, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation he was seeking to have air quality regulations in the country enforced. He said he hoped the court would ensure "provision of the constitutional right to a clean environment, for which clean air is key". "There is no hope without the Supreme Court's intervention to awaken government officials from their deep slumber" on air quality, he said in a telephone interview from Karachi.

Air pollution deaths

According to a 2015 report published by the medical journal Lancet, nearly 22 percent of annual deaths in Pakistan - or more than 310,000 each year - are caused by pollution, the majority of them due to air pollution. A 2014 World Bank study on Pakistan's air quality recommended the country set aside funding to "install and operate a reliable air quality monitoring network", and set other standards and frameworks to cut pollution. Since the court ruling, officials at the Pakistan Environmental Protection Agency have said they are moving rapidly to comply. "We are now installing air quality monitoring instruments with the help of federal government funding and punishing the polluters," said Ziauddin Khattak, director of the agency. "We have now told dozens of industrial units and brick kilns through warning notices to install air cleaning filters on smoke-emitting chim-



SINDH: A Pakistani laborer works at a small steel factory in Karachi yesterday, ahead of the International Labor Day.—AFP

neys and have started monitoring vehicles on various thoroughfares and issuing fines to the polluting vehicle owners," he said. Nearly 50 brick kilns have been issued notices, Khattak said, and more than 130 buses and other vehicles fined over the last two months. He said seven fixed and three mobile ambient air quality monitoring stations have been set up in Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad, Peshawar and Quetta, all cities that have suffered particular problems with air pollution.

Saif Anjum, Punjab provincial environment secretary, said his agency also had installed six air quality monitoring units in Lahore, with 30 more being put in place. The units, along with an air quality action plan, "will help cut 50 percent of air pollution in the next couple of years," he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. Other keys to improving air quality include planting more urban trees, replacing aging city buses and increasing parking fees to encourage the use of public transport, Anjum said.

Left out?

A 2016 study by the World Health Organization ranked Rawalpindi, located near the capital Islamabad, as the second most

polluted city of the country after the north-west city of Peshawar. So far no air quality monitors are being installed in Rawalpindi, however, because of a lack of funds, officials said. With few trees and an abundance of traffic, as well as brick kilns spewing black smoke and open incineration of waste, Rawalpindi has air pollution levels more than 10 times above levels considered safe by the World Health Organization, said Asif Shuja Khan, a former director general of the Pakistan Environmental Protection Agency.

Karachi, Lahore and Islamabad stand as 3rd, 4th and 5th most polluted cities in the country in terms of air quality, Khan said. Over 90 percent of Rawalpindi's population of over 2 million inhales contaminated air regularly, exposing them to a higher risk of health problems such as cardiovascular disease and lung cancer, he said, with children particularly vulnerable. Pakistan's Constitution says a clean environment is a fundamental right of all citizens, under provisions that guarantee a "right to life" and "right to dignity," said Ahmad Rafay Alam, vice president of the Pakistan Environmental Law Association.—Reuters

Fadi Al-Batsh, said to be a rocket-making expert, was on his way to dawn prayers on April 21 when he was assassinated by motorbike-riding gunmen, a killing his family have blamed on Israel's spy agency. The Jewish state has denied it was behind the murder. The Dane, who did not have a lawyer and was wearing white robes and a green skullcap during a court appearance in Kuala Lumpur, said he was not aware of Malaysia's laws. "I agree I did a mistake because I didn't ask what is the law of this country," he said, speaking in English, his hands trembling.

'Surprised, disappointed'

A clip of the video played in court, which lasted almost two minutes, showed him speaking in Arabic and complaining about what he claimed was the slow response of the police and ambulance service after the shooting. Authorities have disputed his claims. Judge Zaman Mohamad Noor sentenced him to a week in jail, including time already served since his April 23 arrest, and fined him 10,000 ringgit (\$2,500). If he cannot pay the fine, then he will have to serve another

month in jail, the judge said. The Dane, who had been on a 10-day visit to Malaysia when the crime was committed, said he did not have enough money to pay the fine. He said he had three wives and six children. The law banning fake news has sparked concern the government is seeking to crack down on criticism, particularly with a general election looming on May 9. Leading independent news portal Malaysiakini last week mounted the first legal challenge against the legislation, arguing in the Kuala Lumpur High Court that it breaches constitutional guarantees of freedom of speech.

Malaysian legal reform group Lawyers for Liberty said they were "surprised and disappointed" that yesterday's prosecution went ahead even though the law was being challenged in court. "Bringing criminal charges against a person is a serious matter," said N Surendran, an adviser to the group, in a statement. "Surely where the legality of the law has been a question of national debate, enforcement should await the authoritative decision of the courts."—AFP

Rio's militias go from vigilantes to feared gangsters

RIO DE JANEIRO: They're seldom mentioned by officials and are almost never identified, but paramilitary groups are increasingly embedded in Rio de Janeiro, and, with the slaying of a prominent politician last month, are ever more brazen. When Marielle Franco, an outspoken activist for the rights of poor blacks in Rio's violence-plagued favelas, was gunned down, the most unusual thing was that authorities firmly pointed the finger at the paramilitaries, or "militias" as they're known locally.

Murders happen all the time in Rio de Janeiro state. There were 15 homicides a day in the first two months of the year, according to the Public Security Institute. But with the focus nearly always on the drug gangs controlling swathes of the favelas, killings by militias-shadowy groups of ex-police and serving officers gone rogue—mostly pass under the radar.

Franco's killing, which was conducted in a chillingly professional manner, changed that. Franco had made a name for herself criticizing what she said were police death squads in the favelas and now, in a deliberate and public way, she had been silenced. "What they did to Marielle showed that what's happening in Rio is very serious," said leftist legislator Marcelo Freixo, who oversaw a congressional committee, joined by Franco, seeking to lift the lid on militia activities. And six weeks after the killing, police have yet to make any arrests—more proof, critics say, of the militias' heavy hand.

Frankenstein project

Ironically, when the militias first formed around the year 2000, they were seen as an attempt to save Brazil's second biggest city from the ravages of drug gangs. Uniformed police were unable to cope, and so vigilantes with close links to the police stepped in. The city authorities did nothing to stop them, seeing the loosely organized groups as far preferable to the dreaded

narcos. But like an out-of-control Frankenstein monster, the militias gradually morphed from neighborhood protection into mafia-like protection rackets, using their muscle and expertise not only to fight drug gangs but to replace them as rulers of the local streets. And from the streets, the militias have extended their influence into politics, all the while preventing the Brazilian media from daring to dig too far into their activities.

Their ranks are filled with current and former members of the police, firefighters, prison staff and soldiers, who tout their mission as "bringing morals and cleaning out the drug dealers," said sociologist Thais Duarte, an expert on the phenomenon. Look back far enough, and you can trace the origins of today's militias to the underground death squads doing dirty work for the dictatorship between 1964 and 1985, said Jose Claudio Souza Alves at the Federal Rural University of Rio de Janeiro. But today their principal role has veered into the commercial, making them more like mafia gangs than anything else.

In their strongholds of western Rio they control distribution of cooking gas, the internet, cable television and local transport. In this way, a single militia group can earn an estimated \$7 million a month, experts say. And because of their law enforcement links they are rarely brought to justice. They are "deeply rooted in the state apparatus," Duarte said. "Militias have a different political and social capital to the traffickers," she added. "Traffickers have those negative stereotypes of being normally black and from favelas, while the militias are better off, they're white and older. All this gives them legitimacy."

The militias' protection rackets extend into politics, and they're not afraid to back up their threats. "The militias sell votes in whole areas. They can offer a candidate control if he pays them and agrees not to get in their way," Alves explained. But that's not all: "They have campaigned themselves, and once they are in office they are able to get total control," he said. Those ambitions broke into the open in 2016 municipal elections when more than a dozen candidates were murdered, including one known as "Falcon," who also served as president of one of Rio's famed samba schools.—AFP

Malaysia convicts first person under the fake news law

KUALA LUMPUR: A Malaysian court yesterday handed a Danish man a one-week jail term for breaking a law against "fake news", the first person to be punished under the controversial legislation. The law, passed in early April, makes the deliberate dissemination of false information punishable by up to six years in jail and a hefty fine. It has sparked outrage from rights groups, who believe it is aimed at cracking down on dissent. Salah Salem Saleh Sulaiman, a 46-year-old of Yemeni descent, admitted making and posting on YouTube a video accusing emergency services of responding slowly after a Palestinian Hamas member was gunned down in Kuala Lumpur.

ST. JOHN'S INTERNATIONAL RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL
Chennai • Bangalore • Palangkaraya • Kavarattipet Post • Chennai - 600 123
Tel: 9841 1511, 9841 6512 E-mail: admission@stjohns.edu.in web: www.stjohns.edu.in

ADMISSIONS OPEN 2018 - 19

- CBSE • Co - Education • Classes IV to XII
- Streams in Classes XI & XII - Science, Commerce & Humanities
- South India's BEST RESIDENTIAL School
- In - House Coaching Centre for NEET & IIT - JEE
- Wholesome Education Through Co - Scholastic & Extra Curricular Activities.
- Leadership Training & Competency Building Life Oriented Education.
- Fostering in Place of Parenting.
- Optimum Infrastructure for perfect Learning.
- Air - Conditioned Dormitories for community Living
- Pure Veg / Egg Veg / Non - Vegetarian
- Medical Care in Campus
- Qualified & Experienced Faculty
- Full Fledged Sports Activities for Physical Education
- Career Guidance for Bright Future

A Holistic Education for your Children...!

DR. R. KISHORE KUMAR
Senior Principal & Chief Mentor

International

South Korean 'trust' in North jumps after feel-good summit

Poll shows most S Koreans believe North will denuclearize

SEOUL: South Korean trust in North Korea has surged since last week's feel-good summit at which their leaders declared an end to hostilities and to work towards denuclearization of the peninsula. A survey taken on Friday, the day North Korean leader Kim Jong Un met South Korean President Moon Jae-in, showed 64.7 percent believe the North will denuclearize and keep peace. Before the summit, only 14.7 percent of those polled said they did, research agency Realmeter said yesterday.

Many South Koreans were struck by the live TV images during the summit of a smiling and joking Kim. Never before had they seen a self-deprecating and witty side to him, admitting that his country's train system was inferior and promising he wouldn't wake up Moon any more with early morning missile launches. Kim seemed markedly different from former North Korean leaders - his father Kim Jong Il and grandfather Kim Il Sung, people on the street in Seoul said yesterday.

"Denuclearizing is definitely possible," said 41-year-old Kim Jin-han. The North Korean leader "talked about his country's weaknesses, such as the infrastructure. He was very open about that.

This is very different from the previous leaders. So I think he is ready to wholly give up nuclear weapons." Kim's comments about bringing Pyongyang-style cold noodles to the summit banquet clearly captivated many in the South, prompting some to add his face to the photo of a popular app for a food delivery service, holding a bowl of noodles under his arm.

One social media post getting attention said that with a successful summit, South Korea should brace for an onslaught of North Korean beer as the first wave of "cultural aggression". A parody showed a South Korean news announcer reporting that Kim complaining about warty South Korean beer compared to Taedonggang Beer featured in the background. South Korea's stock market got a boost yesterday, lifted by shares of construction companies and train and steel manufacturers on hopes for joint economic projects.



Trump-Kim summit could take place in about 3-4 weeks

questions unanswered, particularly what "denuclearization" means or how that will be achieved. Much hinges on Kim's upcoming summit with Trump, who said it could happen in the next three to four weeks.

Any deal with the United States will require that North Korea demonstrate "irreversible" steps to shutting down its nuclear weapons program, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said on Sunday. A flurry of diplomacy is unfolding in the lead-up to that meeting, with China saying it will send the government's top diplomat, Wang Yi, to North Korea on Wednesday and Thursday this week. China is the North's main ally. And over the weekend, South Korea's spy chief visited Tokyo to brief Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

No more speakers

In initial small steps towards reconciliation, South Korea said yesterday it would remove loudspeakers that

Next summit

A euphoric mood also enveloped the presidential Blue House yesterday as Moon was greeted by cheers and a standing ovation by scores of aides and staff. "I am confident a new era of peace will unfold on the Korean peninsula," Moon told his aides, asking them to quickly follow up on the agreements made in Friday's declaration. The two sides are technically still at war since their 1950-53 conflict ended in a truce, not a treaty. Moon's approval rating after the summit rose to 70 percent, Realmeter said, its highest since mid-January. Moon also told aides that US President Donald Trump deserved the Nobel Peace Prize for helping to end the standoff with North Korea over its nuclear weapons program, a South Korean official said.

"President Trump should win the Nobel Peace Prize. What we need is only peace," Moon told aides, according to a Blue House official who briefed the press. In January, Moon had said Trump "deserves big credit" for bringing about the inter-Korean talks, saying it may have come from "US-led sanctions and pressure." Friday's final declaration, however, leaves many



PANMUNJOM: Ri Sol Ju (left), wife of North Korea's leader Kim Jong Un, and Kim Jung-sook, wife of South Korea's President Moon Jae-in, walk together before the official dinner at the end of their historic summit at the truce village of Panmunjom. —AFP

blared propaganda across the border, while North Korea said it would shift its clocks to align with its southern neighbor. South Korea turned off the loudspeakers that broadcast a mixture of news, Korean pop songs and criticism of the North Korean regime as a goodwill gesture ahead of the summit. It will begin removing the speakers tomorrow. "We see this as the easiest first step to build military trust," South Korean defense ministry spokeswoman Choi Hyun-soo said. "We are expecting the North's implementation."

North Korea will shift its time zone 30 minutes earlier to align with South Korea, starting May 5, state media reported yesterday. The KCNA dispatch said the decision came after Kim found it "a painful wrench" to see two clocks showing different times on a wall at the summit venue. The northern time zone was created in 2015 to

mark the 70th anniversary of Korea's liberation from Japanese rule after World War Two. South Korea and Japan are in the same time zone, nine hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time.

Kim also told Moon during the summit he would soon invite experts and journalists from the United States and South Korea when the country dismantles its Punggye-ri nuclear testing site, the Blue House said on Sunday. North Korea has conducted all six of its nuclear tests at the site, a series of tunnels dug into the mountains in the northeastern part of the country. Some experts and researchers have speculated that the most recent - and by far largest - blast in September had rendered the entire site unusable. But Kim said there were two additional, larger tunnels that remain "in very good condition" beyond the existing one, which experts believe may have collapsed. —Reuters

News in brief

Landslides kill 100

MOMBASA: Hiribae Mame stood waist-deep in water outside her wrecked house in eastern Kenya, one of around 200,000 people forced to flee by weeks of floods, landslides and heavy rains. Kenya's Red Cross estimates at least 100 have also died in the downpours since early April, a humanitarian disaster that it says needs emergency funding. "I have lost 12 chicken and four goats. We were not able to save all of them and I can't access the house because the door can't open," said the mother-of-four in the town of Tana River in lower Coast region. Her youngest daughter clung to her neck, the girl's feet just touching the water. Mattresses and wreckage floated by as handmade boats ferried people, animals and goods to safer ground. Floods have blocked major roads across central and northern Kenya and coastal areas - the route from the capital Nairobi to the main port Mombasa was under water last week. —Reuters

'Whistleblowing police'

YANGON: A Myanmar police officer who told a court his colleagues had tried to "entrap" two Reuters journalists has been handed a prison term, a police spokesman said yesterday. Deputy police major Moe Yan Naing, called as a prosecution witness earlier this month in a pre-trial hearing against the journalists, stunned the courtroom when he alleged a senior officer had ordered colleagues to "get" reporter Wa Lone by handing him sensitive files. The 32-year-old Myanmar journalist and his colleague Kyaw Soe Oo, 28, face up to 14 years in prison on charges of possessing classified documents relating to security operations in Rakhine state, where the military is accused of atrocities against Rohingya Muslims. They have been detained since they were arrested in December after meeting with police, in a case that has drawn intense global attention. —AFP

Post 'insulting Islam'

JAKARTA: An Indonesian was jailed for five years yesterday for a Facebook post deemed offensive to Islam, his lawyer said, the latest conviction under the country's controversial electronic information law. Alnohdy Bahari, 39, was found guilty of spreading hate speech for a post in which he claimed to have experienced God's presence and questioned the faith of other Muslims. "He's been sentenced to five years' jail and has to pay a fine of 100 million rupiah (\$7,200)," said Bahari's lawyer Andi Komara. "We will most likely appeal because many facts weren't taken into account and were twisted." The verdict will fuel fears that Indonesia's moderate brand of Islam is coming under threat from increasingly influential radicals. —AFP

Landslide in China kills 9

BEIJING: A landslide killed nine people in a village in northern China yesterday, authorities said. The disaster occurred in the village of Caijiazhuang shortly before 5:00 am, Luliang municipal government in Shanxi province said on its official social media account. More than a hundred firefighters, medical workers and rescuers-some using earth-moving machinery-were sent to the site to search for survivors trapped under fallen earth. The cause of the landslide has not been confirmed. A 2008 landslide in Luliang city killed 19 people. —AFP

Seeking security support, Nigeria president meets President Trump

WASHINGTON: Nigeria's fight against the Boko Haram jihadist group was expected to top the menu for talks when President Donald Trump meets Nigeria's Muhammadu Buhari, president of Africa's most populous and wealthiest country. Buhari will be the first leader from sub-Saharan Africa to visit Trump, and they plan a joint press conference in the White House gardens after their meeting around midday. In his talks with Trump, Buhari will be seeking support in his battle against Boko Haram, as well as investment in Nigeria's rickety infrastructure. Trump, meanwhile, has to overcome the hard feelings left by his insulting reference to "shithole countries" in questioning why the US should accept immigrants from Africa.

The US president also raised eyebrows in March by firing Rex Tillerson as secretary of state while he was visiting Nigeria, in part to prepare the ground for Buhari's visit. But Trump's receiving Buhari at the White House just after visits by France's Emmanuel Macron and Germany's Angela Merkel is a positive signal, analysts say. "The fact that the president of Africa's most populous country is visiting Washington at all may be more important to strengthening the US-Africa relationship than any discussion of policy during the trip," said John Campbell, a former US ambassador in Abuja who is now at the Council of Foreign Relations.

Talks on security, business

The White House says both security and business will be up for discussion during the visit. Nigeria is entering its ninth year fighting Boko Haram extremists, who have devastated the northeast of the country and killed over 20,000



WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump and Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari shake hands during a meeting in the Oval Office of the White House yesterday. —AFP

people in a bloody quest to establish an Islamist state. Trump's administration has agreed to the sale of a dozen A-29 Super Tucano turboprop light attack aircraft for use in the fight against the jihadist group, a deal worth a reported \$496 million. In January 2017, then-president Barack Obama froze the deal after Nigeria's air force bombed a refugee camp, killing more than 100 people, on a mission against Boko Haram.

Washington is now ready to allow the sale to go forward. But it has come under scrutiny inside Nigeria, where lawmakers are accusing the president of illegally withdrawing funds to purchase the planes. Nigeria is also seeking support for its farm and transport sectors. Buhari is scheduled to meet with potential investors in Nigerian farming and food processing. Amid intensifying competition with China and Europeans for the business of oil-rich Nigeria, officials accompanying Buhari also will be meeting with aviation giant Boeing, according to his office. —AFP

Italy's 5-Star calls for snap election as talks flounder

ROME: The leader of Italy's anti-establishment 5-Star Movement yesterday called for early elections in June, saying efforts to form a coalition government after last month's inconclusive vote had failed. "At this point for me there is no other solution. We have to go back to the polls as soon as possible," Luigi Di Maio said on Facebook, blaming centre-left and centre-right parties for refusing to negotiate with 5-Star. Italian politics have been in limbo since an inconclusive vote on March 4, which saw a centre-right alliance led by the anti-immigrant League win the most seats and the 5-Star emerge as the biggest single party. The centre-left Democratic Party (PD) came a distant third. Di Maio appealed to League leader Matteo Salvini to join his call for a snap election in June. "Let's ask together to go and vote," he said.

President Sergio Mattarella, tasked with resolving the political impasse, has made clear he does not want an immediate return to the polls and a ballot in June would probably be impossible to organize at this late stage. If there was political consensus for a new vote, the most likely date would be sometime in the autumn, but before then,

Mattarella would almost certainly seek backing for a unity government to try to work on electoral reform. Both Di Maio and the League have, up until now, rejected the idea of any broad-based, non-political government taking office. Di Maio has said previously he would like to strike a coalition accord with the League, but insists that to do so, Salvini has to abandon his electoral ally Forza Italia, which is led by former prime minister Silvio Berlusconi. Salvini has refused to do this and he was bolstered on Monday when his centre-right alliance, led by a League politician, won a resounding victory in a local ballot in the northeastern region of Friuli Venezia Giulia. The vote, which saw 5-Star lose ground, suggested that Salvini has gained political clout over the past two months at the expense of his opponents. With the door to a League deal apparently closed, Di Maio last week reached out to the PD, but that initiative also looked doomed after centre-left bigwig Matteo Renzi urged his party on Sunday to shun any tie up with 5-Star.

"The Democratic Party lost, I resigned, seven out of 10 Italians voted for Salvini or Di Maio. It's up to them to govern," he told RAI television. "We can not sneak back in by the window after the Italian people have shown us the door," Renzi added. Although he relinquished the reins of power within the PD after last month's stinging election defeat, Renzi still carries much sway within the party. Di Maio said Renzi's comments showed it was impossible to deal with the PD. "Given that parties are afraid of change, let's allow the people to decide between revolution and restoration," Di Maio said. —Reuters



ROME: A Corazziere, a soldier of the cuirassiers regiment and honor guard of the Italian presidency, stands guard as the President of the Chamber of Deputies meets with the Italian President on another exploratory mandate to continue talks over who will lead the new government, at Quirinal Palace in Rome. —AFP

Contract Manager
 Eiffel Engineering
 Kuwait

You will be responsible to draft, evaluate, negotiate and execute contracts, establish and maintain supplier relationships by serving as a single point of contact for contractual matters, manage record keeping for all contract-related correspondence and documentation.

Apply Now [JB3794169](#)

Dietitian
 Career Hunters
 Kuwait

You will be responsible to assess patients' and clients' health needs and diet, counsel patients on nutrition issues and healthy eating habits, develop meal plans, taking both cost and clients' preferences into account, and evaluate the effects of meal plans and change the plans as needed.

Apply Now [JB3794212](#)

Accountant
 La Francaise Catering-Nagwa
 Hail w Zafaran - Kuwait

You will be responsible to effectively carry out duties assigned in a timely and accurate manner. Duties assigned can include any of the following responsibilities: Receivables accounting, Payable accounting, cash management and General Ledger accounting.

Apply Now [JB3655226](#)

CCTV Supervisor
 GLA Property Management
 Kuwait

You will be responsible to provide overall operations and monitoring of CCTV system and ensure integrity, accuracy and confidentiality of all information gained by compliance with quality standards and legislation.

Apply Now [JB3782919](#)

Customer Service and Secretary
 Nazzek
 Kuwait

You will be responsible to maintain customer satisfaction at all times and respond to customer requirements through emails, phone calls and problem solving, cooperative with management and team members, guide and follow up with the delivery drivers, upload and edit items on the website, prepare papers needed for vendors and schedule meetings, and make customer records and reports.

Apply Now [JB3794111](#)

Waitress/Cashier
 Story 3
 Kuwait

You will be responsible to take orders and deliver food and beverages to our customers. Ultimately, you should be able to provide an excellent overall guest experience. Duties and responsibilities: Provide excellent customer services that promote satisfaction. Greet customers and present menu.

Apply Now [JB3794098](#)

QC Engineer - Piping (GRP / GRE)
 Alghanim International
 Kuwait

You will be responsible to undertake QC functions in the workplace for daily QC activities, conduct an inspection of raw materials, bought out items and review of Material Test Certificates (MTC) and the specification requirements, interface and coordinate with clients for QC matters and coordinate with third party inspection agencies for all related inspection activities.

Apply Now [JB3793975](#)

Accounts Manager
 M.H. Alshaya Co.
 Kuwait

You will ensure compliance with commercial, customs and tax laws as well as with international accounting processes. Additionally you will control and alert Operational, Brand and Finance Management to under or over performance and work with management to revise overall brand account servicing strategies, and/or to implement tactical financial solutions to maximize profitability.

Apply Now [JB3793720](#)

Urban Planner (Technical Support) - National Housing Company - KSA

You will be responsible to follow the day-to-day operations related to own job to ensure continuity of work, contribute to the identification of opportunities for continuous improvement of processes and practices taking into account 'international best practice', improvement of business processes, cost reduction and productivity improvement.

Apply Now [JB3794257](#)

Employment Advisor Dammam (Male) - Ingeus' KSA

You will build and maintain effective rapport with Job Seekers within your caseload. You will use exceptional planning and organizational skills to help people enhance their chances of starting and sustaining work.

Apply Now [JB3794238](#)

Operation Manager
 Multi Brands
 KSA

You will be responsible for participating in the development of strategies and objectives of the department, establishing operational structure for all units and detailed policies and procedures, developing and managing the execution of short-term plans for implementing the approved objectives etc.

Apply Now [JB3788633](#)

Technical Specialist
 Fircroft
 KSA

You will be responsible for maintaining and operating the modern closed circuit television systems (static, portable), access control systems, transport gates, automatic barriers, motion-sensing device and portable access control system utilized by Security.

Apply Now [JB3794170](#)

Financial Accountant
 Dawaam
 UAE

You will be responsible to ensure that all management and statutory reporting of all financial affairs of the company activities are delivered on a timely basis and in accordance with best practice, formulation and preparation of annual budgets and targets for all existing investments.

Apply Now [JB3794213](#)

Ecommerce / Digital Marketing Manager - Harmony Connections- UAE

You will be responsible to develop and lead the Digital Marketing Team for all Digital Platforms (Website development, SEO/PPC, Social Media Strategy, Online Campaigns, App Development, e-Commerce, etc.) across the business in order to maximize the sales and profitability of Brand's Product Portfolio.

Apply Now [JB3794143](#)

Public Relation Officer
 Averda
 UAE

You will be responsible to perform all matters related to Government Relation to ensure all legal formalities are obtained, completed and constantly up-to-date, submits, follows-up and collects all new employment visas to ensure that it is processed in a timely manner.

Apply Now [JB3794121](#)

Engineering/Technology Summer Internship - General Electric UAE

You will be responsible to provide assignments, projects & tasks that is related to his/her major where the intern can develop Leadership Capabilities, communication skills and introduce him to the work environment.

Apply Now [JB3789029](#)

Teaching Specialist - Physiology, Pathology and Pharmacology
 Weill Cornell Medicine-Qatar
 Qatar

You will be responsible to support students in the Foundational Sciences Curriculum of the Medical Program. This position will provide specific focus on the subjects Physiology, Pathology and Pharmacology.

Apply Now [JB3787565](#)

Procurement Manager
 Saleh Al Hamad Al Mana Group of Companies - Qatar

You will be responsible for the company's purchases of products and services of Saleh Al Hamad Al Mana Co., and its sister company. The role will involve optimizing the total supplier costs as well as the end to end procurement process in terms of time, quality & value for money.

Apply Now [JB3793697](#)

Processing Officer - Trade Finance - AhliBank Q.S.C Qatar

You will be responsible for processing LCs, Guarantees, Collection, Payments and related work in the system as per instructed by the manager, initiate availments for transactions, follow-up on day to day processing, and communicating with the clients and Relationship Managers for smooth processing of transactions.

Apply Now [JB3793668](#)

Wellness Specialist
 Primary Health Care Corporation
 Qatar

You will be responsible for promoting and coordinating community health and wellness programs in the health centers. The position holder will be responsible for Clinical decision making in accordance with their clinical privileges, and closely working multi-disciplinary team providing healthy lifestyle service to ensure the cohesive running of wellness services, providing efficient coordination, effective implementation of services, and workflow management.

Apply Now [JB3793521](#)

Analysis

Kuwait Times
Established 1961
The First Daily in The Arabian Gulf

THE LEADING INDEPENDENT
DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF
ESTABLISHED 1961

Founder and Publisher
YOUSUF S. AL-ALYAN

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

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

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

Barcelona storm to Liga title but work to be done

Barcelona will bid a glorious farewell to Andres Iniesta after winning La Liga on Sunday to seal a domestic double but this season may mark the end for more than just the 33-year-old midfielder. Iniesta is calling time, for some prematurely, on his 22-year association with the club he joined as a 12-year-old and he goes out on a high after Barca turned what threatened to be a transitional, even turbulent, campaign into a tremendous one. They wrapped up the title with four games to spare, 11 points ahead of Atletico Madrid and 15 clear of Real.

They have been top since beating Espanyol in their third game on September 9. They are 41 league matches unbeaten and four away from becoming the first ever side to finish a single La Liga calendar as invincibles. As title races go, this one was a whitewash but all the more surprising then, that this Barca side will not be remembered particularly fondly, even by their own supporters. Before last weekend's Copa del Rey final against Sevilla, which they won 5-0, Barcelona's daily sports newspaper Mundo Deportivo wrote Ernesto Valverde's future as coach could be in doubt if they missed out on the double.

When Barca threw away a 4-1 advantage to lose to Roma in the Champions League quarter-finals, the same publication described it as a "disaster", "disgrace" and, most damaging of all, "deserved". That collapse will still hang over the title celebrations, because it was not a one-off - this was Barca's third consecutive exit in the last eight - and because Real's march towards the final has heightened the sense of absence.

But more than their departure in Europe, Valverde's team have departed from tradition in the way they have won. Barca have scored 87 goals, with four matches left. Since Pep Guardiola's first season in charge, they have won the title seven times, with their goals scored column for those years reading 105, 98, 95, 115, 110 and 112. This team was not always entertaining and occasionally it was even dull, but it was organized, disciplined and never knew when it was beaten.

Late escapes against Espanyol, Atletico and Sevilla preserved the undefeated run and maintained momentum. The dogged 1-0 victory over Atletico in March all-but delivered the title. Lionel Messi's free-kick proved decisive that day and the Argentinian has arguably been the difference all season, offering creativity, penetration and a league-high 32 goals to a team not so blessed with attacking imagination. But even if underwhelming on the eye and perhaps over-reliant on Messi, Valverde and his team deserve even greater credit considering where they began in August.

When the unexpected sale of Neymar to Paris Saint-Germain was followed by Super Cup defeats home and away by Real Madrid, many concluded Barca's squad had been worsened by the transfer market, not improved. Despite the impressive job Valverde has done since, that will have to be rectified this summer. In the Copa del Rey final, only three players in the starting line-up were younger than 29 - Samuel Umtiti, Sergi Roberto and Philippe Coutinho.

With Iniesta gone, only Messi, Sergio Busquets and Gerard Pique will be left of Guardiola's "tika-takas", the latter pair both showing signs this season that Barca could do with a more capable back-up. Coutinho is expected to fill Iniesta's shoes, although that gargantuan task cannot be completed overnight, and Antoine Griezmann's potential arrival from Atletico would allow the 31-year-old Luis Suarez more regular rest next term. —AFP

Players who inspired Barca to win La Liga

Barcelona won their 25th La Liga title on Sunday with four games to spare. Here, AFP Sport looks at the three key players behind their latest league triumph:

Lionel Messi

Of course, the Argentinian striker, top scorer in the league with 32 goals, led from the front and, at times, dragged his team to victories they did not deserve. Messi not only scores goals, his assists and build-up play are also crucial. The number 10 has often played through spells in matches like a central midfielder this season and he also scored the goal which all but settled the title race, his bending free-kick against Atletico Madrid in March securing a pivotal 1-0 win. "If we took Messi and put him in an Atletico shirt, we would have won this match 1-0," Atletico coach Diego Simeone said.

Andres Iniesta

Iniesta will bid farewell to Barcelona after 22 years with a La Liga-Copa del Rey double. He has been the brain of the team on the field and a figure of calm off it in a season when Ernesto Valverde managed the midfielder's minutes carefully. "Iniesta has symbolised an era," said Barca president Josep Maria Bartomeu after Iniesta scored in the brilliant 5-0 victory over Sevilla in the final of the Copa del Rey. Iniesta was again the soul of the team this term. He will be sorely missed.

Marc-Andre ter Stegen

Barcelona's ascendancy this season has more often been based on resilience and defensive discipline than attacking gusto, and at the heart of their backline has been ter Stegen. Barca have conceded the second fewest goals in the league, second only to Atletico, and their German goalkeeper has managed 18 clean sheets in the 34 games that he has played in the league. Ter Stegen, who is also exceptional with the ball at his feet, has enjoyed a season to mark himself out as one of the finest goalkeepers in the world. —AFP



UN criticized for failing on promise

Haitians battling cholera blamed on United Nations peacekeepers are getting little support with only two percent of promised funds materializing, according to campaigners accusing the global community of again failing the Caribbean nation. Haiti was free of cholera until 2010 when peacekeepers helping after a devastating earthquake that killed more than 250,000 people accidentally dumped infected sewage into a river. Since then about 9,750 Haitians have died of the waterborne disease that has infected more than 800,000 people, with the epidemic continuing to affect dozens of people every week.

The United Nations has not accepted legal responsibility for the outbreak but in late 2016 outgoing UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon apologized to Haiti for the organization's role and announced a \$400 million fund to help affected Haitians. But to date - almost halfway through the fund's expected three-year term - the UN Haiti Cholera Response Multi-Partner Trust Fund has only raised \$8.7 million or 2.2 percent of the total - and less than half has been spent, UN figures show.

Sienna Merope-Syngé, a human rights lawyer at the US-based Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti (IJDH), said this showed "a failure by the UN system to honor that promise". "The UN promises, in particular to create a package of assistance that would provide redress to victims, (have) not been moved forward," she said. The IJDH previously filed a lawsuit against the UN on behalf of cholera victims, including a demand for financial compensation, but in 2016 a US federal appeals court upheld the organization's immunity from damages.

Slow progress

The spotlight on the failure to eradicate cholera comes after the United Nations and aid organizations have faced criticism for slow reconstruction efforts in Haiti due to a lack of coordination and bypassing the government and businesses. The behavior of aid workers in Haiti after the earthquake has also come under scrutiny with Oxfam rocked by allegations that staff, including a former Haiti country director, used prostitutes during the relief mission.

Eight years after the disaster Haiti remains the poorest nation in the western hemisphere. World Bank figures show only one in four rural Haitians has access to a toilet, and less than half to

clean water. Experts said improving the country's water and sanitation systems is vital to overcome Haiti's vulnerability to new cholera outbreaks, particularly after hurricanes. In emailed comments, the UN Special Envoy for Haiti, Josette Sheeran, said nearly \$700 million had been spent by the UN and global community on fighting cholera in Haiti since 2010 but funding for the Multi-Partner Trust Fund was lacking.

The office said Sheeran was working on "new innovative financing mechanisms" to raise funds but gave no details. "There is still a big funding gap, and we urgently need \$80 million to complete the next phase of cholera reduction, and community

No compensation

The UN fund envisions a two-track process. The first track would focus on eradicating cholera and building infrastructure for sanitation and clean water. The second is described as "a package of material assistance and support to those most affected by the disease" which Ban described as a "concrete expression of the regret of our organization for the suffering so many Haitians have endured". But Merope-Syngé said so far no one has received any type of financial compensation, and projects to help rebuild affected communities - such as constructing markets and clinics - were virtually non-existent. Ivers said working out which families could receive support is "daunting" because it is now hard to prove who died of what but that this should not account for the slow progress made. "What's happened over the last year is a real reluctance by the UN system, including the donor states, to support direct payment to households," Merope-Syngé said. "There's a fear among the donors and within the UN system that it could set a precedent, that if the UN does something bad in the future it might have to compensate."

In response to emails from the Thomson Reuters Foundation, the UN Office of the Special Envoy for Haiti did not confirm whether the UN had provided any direct financial assistance to individual cholera victims or families, or plans to do so. The UN office also did not provide requested details about any development projects that are up and running. It did say Sheeran and Haitian government officials met some cholera victims in February to discuss proposed pilot projects.

Following consultations with four communities in the central town of Mirebalais, the first set of projects had been chosen, and will start next week, with \$1.1 million disbursed, the UN office said. The United Nations did not provide details about what this would entail or look like on the ground but said it planned to carry out similar work in at about 140 more communities. However Ivers said some Haitians feel they have been excluded from the UN consultation process which had led to street protests over the past year. Merope-Syngé said the cholera outbreak had left thousands of families struggling to rebuild their lives with little support. "Families lost breadwinners that have plunged them further into poverty, people took on debt to buried loved ones. All these very real financial consequences," she said. —Reuters

Haiti still battling cholera epidemic

support," Sheeran said by email. Cholera is currently infecting about 74 more people each week although this is down from 18,500 at the outbreak's peak.

Cholera expert Louise Ivers, executive director of the Centre for Global Health at the Massachusetts General Hospital said it was not enough to say things had improved since 2010. "This has been one of the biggest cholera epidemics in recent history and we are into the eighth year," said Ivers, a doctor who led cholera response efforts during the outbreak in Haiti as head of mission for medical charity Partners In Health. "Epidemics go down because people have had the disease, they have some natural immunity now."

Poland consigns communist-era monuments to dustbin of history

For nearly 70 years, an imposing monument to Soviet Red Army soldiers dominated a central square in the southwestern Polish town of Legnica. Known as Little Moscow, Legnica hosted the largest Soviet military base in Poland during the Cold War. But one day recently, in the early hours, the classic example of Stalinist-era propaganda was hauled away to a warehouse to be mothballed with dozens of other monuments under a new de-communization law.

According to town spokesman Arkadiusz Rodek, Legnica acted in order to qualify for a state refund of the removal costs, which had included hiring a crane. "After the (end-March) deadline, we would have paid out of our own pocket," he told AFP. Although the Soviet Union drove Nazi German forces out of occupied Poland towards the end of World War II, Moscow went on to impose its own brand of totalitarianism until the regime collapsed in 1989.

Now, nearly three decades on, Poland's governing rightwing Law and Justice (PiS) party is bent on removing all vestiges of the communist system, even judges who served during that era, as part of a series of controversial reforms. From statues to street names, the government's strong nationalist views underpin an enduring aversion to communism, which it views as primarily a form of foreign domination.

'Glorifying communism'

Under the 2016 law, the PiS government put the Institute of National Remembrance

(IPN) - responsible for prosecuting Nazi and communist-era crimes - in charge of removing around 300 monuments nationwide. "They glorify the communist regime in public spaces, so they must be dismantled and transferred to museums showcasing communist propaganda," IPN chief and historian Maciej Korkuc told AFP. In Legnica, the 2.5-tonne bronze statue is of a strapping Red Army soldier shaking a Polish soldier's hand in a fraternal but dominant gesture of congratulations to Poland for its post-war "freedom". The soldiers also hold a little girl dressed as a communist youth pioneer, symbolizing a bright future. Dozens of communist monuments still stand across Poland, which has long been a European Union and NATO member, and their removal has rankled Russia. Several statements by lower-level Russian officials have accused Poland of ingratitude as well as disrespecting Red Army soldiers.

Soviet tanks

Meanwhile, critics at home, including the liberal opposition, view the PiS's decommunization drive as a bid to impose its own version of history. In the southern town of Lapanow, a memorial to the communist militia killed by the anti-communist resistance in 1946 has been rededicated to the so-called "cursed soldiers" of the Polish resistance, a group now promoted by the IPN. But many municipalities oppose sweeping away relics of recent history. In the northern city of Elblag, authorities circumvented the law and kept a Soviet T-34 tank in a park by donating it to a museum as a historical artifact.

The nearby town of Malbork tried to sell its tank but failed to find a buyer. "It's always been here; as children, we played cat and mouse or hide-and-seek around it. It never bothered anyone. It was always an attraction," Malbork resident Mateusz Jablonski told AFP. The PiS government is also working on a new draft law to demote communist-era generals, some posthumously. "It's unprecedented in Polish history; there have never been demo-



A monument dedicated to Soviet Red Army soldiers stands on the grounds of a warehouse in the Polish town of Legnica, where the monument is being mothballed, on March 24, 2018. —AFP

against the renaming of streets dedicated to Poles who fought dictator Francisco Franco during the Spanish Civil War. Warsaw residents complained when the Avenue of the People's Army was switched to Lech Kaczynski Avenue after the late Polish president killed in a 2010 jet crash in Russia. He was the identical twin of powerful PiS party chief Jaroslaw Kaczynski, a former communist-era dissident now widely regarded as Poland's main powerbroker.

PiS Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki also says he "dreams" of demolishing the Palace of Culture and Science, a soaring Stalinist-era tower in the heart of Warsaw. But while the PiS still regards this icon of Socialist-realist architecture "gifted" by Soviet dictator Josef Stalin as a symbol of foreign domination, polls show that residents want the landmark to stay put. —AFP

Re-writing history?

The IPN has also compiled a list of 1,500 streets and organizations to be renamed, but the move faces grassroots opposition. In Sosnowiec, a southern mining town, residents have been vocal about keeping a roundabout named after Edward Gierk, who was born nearby and became a firebrand communist working in the coal mines of northern France and Belgium before returning to Poland to become the communist party's popular leader in 1970.

Veterans' families have also protested

News

May picks Javid as home minister...

Continued from Page 1

and local government, "has proved his drive, his ambition and determination to get to grips with difficult subjects, and these are abilities which will all be required at the Home Office".

May will hope Javid's appointment deflects public anger over a problem the opposition Labour Party says is at least partly her fault because she spent six years as home secretary. Out campaigning yesterday, May defended the use of targets to tackle illegal immigration and declined to answer directly when asked whether she should take the blame for what opposition lawmakers call a toxic culture at the Home Office.

While aimed at ending the scandal, Javid's appointment may also signal a shift on Brexit. Rudd was one of the most outspokenly pro-EU members of May's cabinet and could now join other Conservative lawmakers voting in favor of keeping the closest possible ties with the bloc. Javid's position is less clear. An admirer of late prime minister Margaret Thatcher, he strongly supports free markets. Several pro-Brexit campaigners have said he is now firmly on their side and will oppose attempts to retain the closest possible ties with the EU.

Javid will now take Rudd's place on May's Brexit committee, a cabinet sub-grouping balanced between those who supported staying in the EU and those who wanted to leave. That committee will meet this week to try to come up with a future customs arrangement with the EU that avoids a return to a hard border on the island of Ireland.

Javid is the son of a Pakistani bus driver who arrived

in Britain in 1961 with one pound in his pocket. Javid, 48, was a senior investment banker at Deutsche Bank before becoming a member of parliament in 2010. He became a Treasury minister in 2013 and joined the Cabinet in 2014 as culture secretary before switching to business secretary in 2015 and communities secretary the following year.

Javid's primary job at the interior ministry, or Home Office, will not be an easy one either. The department is one of the toughest to lead, responsible for immigration, the police and security at a volatile time of public spending cuts, Islamist attacks and Brexit talks. May was the longest-serving home secretary in decades before becoming prime minister, and some opposition figures have accused her of drawing up overly harsh immigration policies.

Jeremy Corbyn, leader of the main opposition Labour Party, again called on her to answer questions about her time at the Home Office, when "she was presiding over, in her terms, the creation of a 'hostile environment'". Rudd lasted less than two years, becoming the fourth minister May has lost to scandals in the last six months. After days of apologies, she wrote in her resignation letter that she should have been aware of the deportation targets, but added that Britons "want people who have a right to live here to be treated fairly and humanely, which has sometimes not been the case" - a criticism of her own ministry, and perhaps of May.

May will hope Javid, known for a passion for detail when business minister, can ease the pressure on the ministry. But some doubted whether he would soften the approach to immigration. "Sajid Javid is one of the most rightwing anti-immigration politicians in the Conservative Party," said Dr Kehinde Andrews, an associate professor at Birmingham City University who specializes in race issues. "The fact that his skin is brown does not change anything in that at all." — Agencies

Japan, UAE agree to expand...

Continued from Page 1

He also said the agreement for the promotion and protection of investment will likely boost investments by both countries. Abe held talks with the crown prince of Abu Dhabi and deputy supreme commander of UAE armed forces Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al-Nahayan.

Yesterday, Abe hailed cooperation with the UAE as a "strategic relationship" and welcomed Abu Dhabi's renewal of oil concessions with Japanese oil firms. "Over the past five years since I last visited Abu Dhabi, our bilateral relations have made dramatic progress to a relationship that has been called a strategic relationship," he told a UAE-Japan business forum. Top executives from Japan's leading business groups addressed the forum, highlighting projects underway in the UAE as well as future plans. "On this visit, we are accompanied by 27 companies representing Japan with a dele-

gation of top business leaders," Abe said.

In February, Abu Dhabi's state energy company ADNOC said it had awarded Japan's INPEX a 10 percent stake in Lower Zakum offshore oil concession, in a 40-year deal worth \$600 million. ADNOC also said it had extended INPEX's 40 percent stakes in Abu Dhabi's Satah and Umm Al-Dalkh concessions for another 25 years. In 2017, trade volume between the two countries increased 10.5 percent to \$28 billion, with Japan's exports accounting for \$7.2 billion - a drop of 10 percent from the previous year, according to official figures released by the Japanese embassy in Abu Dhabi.

Meanwhile, representatives of Japan, Jordan, Israel and the Palestinians held a meeting on the Jordanian banks of the Dead Sea on Sunday night to discuss their "corridor for peace and prosperity" initiative. Japan's Foreign Minister Taro Kono told reporters the initiative - which aims to promote regional cooperation including through the creation of an agro-industrial park in the West Bank - was making progress. "Today, we are witnessing tangible results. Our efforts have finally started to bear fruits," Kono said. He said the initiative is vital for economic development in the Palestinian territories and the Jordan valley. — AFP

Govt eyeing cooperation with...

Continued from Page 1

"President Duterte should stop gambling with the lives and employment of thousands of OFWs, and the welfare of their families, in a desperate attempt to break the diplomatic impasse," she said in a statement.

Although Duterte said on Saturday the work ban was permanent, his spokesman, Harry Roque, suggested yesterday that the labor protection agreement between the two countries may still happen. Roque also clarified that Duterte "is not compelling anyone to

come home". He noted that Labor Secretary Silvestre Bello III and other Cabinet members are expected to visit Kuwait on May 7, which means that the process of diplomatic negotiations and conversation continues as we speak".

As many as 60,000 workers might return from Kuwait, said Jacinto Paras, undersecretary at the Labor Ministry. "Those who have been running away, complaining of abuses and maltreatment, they can be free to return," he told the ANC news channel yesterday. Migrante International, an alliance of Filipino migrant organizations, doubted the government could provide for those who return. "We cannot expect our OFWs to come home if the root cause of their migration - poverty due to landlessness and lack of decent jobs - still exists and is actually worsening," it said. — Agencies

Assembly to debate three...

Continued from Page 1

Al-Sabah over a variety of allegations, including the rise in corruption levels in the country.

He accused the premier of being responsible for the massive slide in Kuwait's position in the International Corruption Perception index by more than 50 places from 35 in 2003 to 85 last year.

He said part of the causes for corruption in the country is the delay in mega projects and the increase in their costs due to variation orders. He said that the cost of the two key roads linking Kuwait City and Jahra increased from KD 275 million to around KD 560 million. The lawmaker also said the prime minister was responsible for not implementing laws issued by the Assembly and accepted by the government, listing more than 10 legislations that the government has failed to take the necessary measures to implement them.

The grilling also accuses the prime minister of being responsible for revoking the citizenship of a number of Kuwaiti opposition figures who opposed government policies. It also accuses the prime minister of being responsible for the government's failure to present any solution for the plight of 120,000 stateless people, known

locally as bedoons.

MP Saleh Ashour had filed to grill Minister of Social Affairs and Labour Hind Al-Sabeeh, her second in a few months, over allegations she misused the law to dissolve non-governmental organizations and cooperative societies, failing to enforce necessary policies to restructure the demographic composition and also failing to apply development plans to bolster the country's economy.

Ashour said the minister has dissolved 28 NGOs and cooperative societies, some of which have been reinstated by the courts, which means that the minister misused her powers. He accused her of curbing public freedoms to form NGOs by dissolving them without a valid legal reason. The grilling also charged that the minister has failed to devise reasonable policies to amend the country's demographic structure, which is dominated by expatriates.

It charged that the minister has failed to confront visa traders who have tarnished the image of the country abroad, adding that a research study by the Assembly showed that as high as 73 percent of expatriate workers are impacted negatively by visa traders.

The filing of the three grillings had sparked speculations that this could lead to dissolving the Assembly and calling for snap polls, but the speaker denied the reports as baseless rumors. The grillings against the two ministers could end up in filing no-confidence motions, and that against the prime minister in a non-cooperation motion. The two ministers can be voted out of office directly, but the prime minister cannot be ousted by the Assembly directly because only HH the Amir can dismiss the premier.

Bibi says Iran lied on nukes; strike on...

Continued from Page 1

such activities had continued after the 2015 deal that was meant to curb Iranian capabilities. "After signing the nuclear deal in 2015, Iran intensified its efforts to hide its secret files," he said. "In 2017 Iran moved its nuclear weapons files to a highly secret location in Tehran."

Netanyahu referred to a secret Iranian nuclear project, codenamed "Amad", which he said had been shelved in 2003, but he said work in the field had continued. "Even after the (2015) deal, Iran continued to preserve and expand its nuclear weapons knowledge for future use," Netanyahu said. Iran has always denied seeking nuclear weapons. US President Donald Trump has threatened to withdraw from the agreement reached between Iran and global powers. Israel has long opposed the agreement. Washington's major European allies have urged the Trump administration not to abandon it and argue that Iran is abiding by its terms.

Meanwhile, missile strikes on central Syria killed 26 pro-regime fighters, most of them Iranians, a monitor said yesterday, in a raid that bore the hallmarks of Tehran's archfoe Israel. The Syrian regime, which denounced a "fresh aggression" after the strikes, meanwhile continued to flush out armed groups from the capital with more deals to transfer fighters to the country's north. According to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights monitoring group, missile strikes hit two military targets in Aleppo and Hama provinces late Sunday.

The strike on Hama province hit a base known as the 47th Brigade where pro-regime fighters are stationed. Both hits destroyed surface-to-surface missiles, the monitor said. "At least 26 fighters were killed, including four Syrians," in the Hama strike, said Rami Abdel Rahman, who heads the Britain-based monitoring group. "The others are foreign fighters, a vast majority of them Iranians," he told AFP. "Given the nature of the target, it is likely to have been an Israeli strike."

Israeli Intelligence Minister Yisrael Katz told army radio yesterday morning that he was "not aware" of the latest strikes. But, he said, "all the violence and instability in Syria is the result of Iran's attempts to establish a military presence there. Israel will not allow the opening of a northern front in Syria".

Syria President Bashar Al-Assad, whose main allies are Russia and Iran did not explicitly mention the overnight strikes but said that "hostile countries have shifted to a stage of direct aggression". Quoted by the official SANA news agency after meeting an official Iranian delegation, Assad said "escalating aggression on Syria will enhance Syrians' resolve to eliminate terrorism". Syria remains technically at war with neighboring Israel, which is concerned at the growing presence of Iranian forces and those of Tehran's Lebanese ally Hezbollah on Syrian territory.

Israeli Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman vowed in an interview Thursday to strike at any attempt by Iran to establish a "military foothold" in Syria. Iran has forces deployed in Syria to support Assad's regime, as well as supervising the involvement of several Shiite militia groups it sponsors, some of them from other countries such as Iraq or Afghanistan.

There was no immediate comment from Tehran on the Sunday strikes, but the reformist-linked ILNA news agency quoted a security official who did not deny the strike and said any reports on the military situation in Syria should come from Damascus. "The Syrians must announce the statistics as they are responsible. We are present in this country at the request of the government of Syria," said Hossein Naghavi Hosseini, spokesman for parliamentary national security and foreign policy commission.

The Syrian government has focused its efforts in 2018 on securing the capital Damascus, the heart of which was spared the worst of the seven-year-old conflict but was long surrounded by rebel-held pockets. Backed by massive Russian military support, the regime took full control of the Eastern Ghouta enclave earlier this month. The sprawling semi-rural area east of Damascus had been home to thousands of armed fighters, who were besieged for years but sporadically fired rockets and mortar rounds on the capital. — Agencies



TEL AVIV: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu delivers a speech on Iran's nuclear program yesterday. — AFP

Premier Brands

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

MIDA70
Vented Dryer

7 كجم
7 Kg

49 دينار
79 دينار

30% توفير

- 6 Programs
- With Buzzer
- 1 Hour Timer
- Transparent Window

MTE60-P1301Q

6 كجم
6 Kg

25 دينار
36 دينار

10% توفير

- Spin Capacity 3.5 Kg
- 15 Minutes Wash Time
- 5 Minutes Spin Time
- Lint Filter

24LME61038
Cooker

50X60cm

46 دينار
69 دينار

23% توفير

- Inox
- 4 Burners
- Gas grill

best بست
AL-YOUSIFI اليوسفي

Credit: Start from SKD • Up to 48 month • Instant approval

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

1809 809

• Kuwait 1 (the New str.) • Kuwait 2 (Panasonic Tower) • Hawalli 1 (Tunis str.) • Hawalli 2 (Bin Khalid str.) • Shuwaikh (4th Ring road) • Al-Rai (4th Ring road) • Salmiya (Salem Al-Mubarak str.) • Farwaniya (Behind police Station) • Fahaheel (Opp. General Parking) • Jahra (Opp. Main Co-op.) • Airport (Departure Hall)

2018 / 05 / 01
2018 / 05 / 31

Sports

Lydia Ko snaps title drought by winning Down Under playoff duel

Ko notches her 15th career LPGA title

SAN FRANCISCO: Former world number one Lydia Ko ended a near-two-year victory drought Sunday with an eagle at the first playoff hole to beat Minjee Lee in the LPGA Mediheal Championship.

New Zealand's Ko, has slipped to 18th in the world as she searched for her first LPGA victory since the Marathon Classic in July of 2016. Up by one to start the day, she bogeyed three of her first six holes, but showed her championship mettle on a solid back nine at the Lake Merced Golf Club, where victories in 2014 and 2015 helped fuel her precocious rise to the summit of women's golf.

Her three-wood second shot at the first playoff hole, the par-five 18th, bounced short of the green and rolled toward the pin. After Australia's Lee salvaged a birdie from the greenside rough, Ko rolled in her three-foot eagle putt to end the Down Under playoff duel.

Ko, who turned 21 on Tuesday, dropped her head back in relief or disbelief-then cried as she was congratulated on the green. "When that putt dropped I was like 'Oh my God.'" Auckland's Ko said after notching her 15th career LPGA title, a tally that includes two majors. "A lot of emotions, my whole team and my family have

worked really hard for this moment."

Ko, whose chip from off the green at 18 in regulation kissed the edge of the cup, tapped in for birdie to complete a one-under 71 and force the playoff as she joined Lee in the clubhouse on 12-under par 276.

Lee, also 21, finished with back-to-back birdies, holing out from a bunker at 17 and ramming in a birdie putt at the last to post a four-under 68 that featured seven birdies. Lee, of Perth, remains in search of her fourth LPGA title and her first since the 2017 Thornberry Creek LPGA Classic.

On a day that saw three different players hold the lead, Ko recovered from her shaky start with five birdies. That included a chip-in from off the green at 13 and a birdie at 15 that gave her a one-shot lead over Lee, who was unable to get up and down for par from a bunker at 16.

Lee regained a share of the lead with her hole out from a bunker at 17, where Ko left her birdie putt well right and settled for a par. "It's crazy because I was three-over for the day at one point," Ko said. "I said hey, you've just got to focus you never know what could happen-and I was able to kind of put my game together on the back nine." — AFP



DALY CITY: Lydia Ko of New Zealand poses with the trophy and the Chairman and CEO, Oh-sub Kwon, after winning the Mediheal Championship at Lake Merced Golf Club on Sunday in Daly City, California. — AFP

“Tally that includes two majors”

Wings for Life World Run returns to battle spinal cord injury

KUWAIT: At 2 pm on May 6, tens of thousands across the globe will run, roll, and walk in the Wings for Life World Run. The charity run has one goal: to raise funds for Wings for Life, a foundation that supports the most promising spinal cord research projects in the world, all asking different questions to find a cure. You can join the Wings for Life World Run yourself by downloading the app or visiting www.wingsforlifeworldrun.com

It has been five years since the Wings for Life World Run charity event started the world running as one. Every year, it has grown bigger & better as hundreds of thousands of runners and wheelchair participants start running from the Catcher Car at the same time - 2 pm Kuwait time - over the world, alone with the app or together in events. In those five years, the event has blossomed into a global movement with die-hard fans running year after year. It has grown and developed as a race and as a community. As a charity event, it has raised millions for the Wings for Life Foundation to fund research into a cure for spinal cord injury.

Because that is what it is all about - running for those who can't; running for people with spinal cord injury, whose lives changed in a heartbeat from a slip, trip or everyday accident? Day and night, spring and autumn, on May 6, 2018, Wings for Life World Run participants will once again walk, run and roll to stay ahead of the Catcher Cars for as long as they can. They dive into the fun of the race, enjoying the sense of togetherness and the rush of excitement as either the real Catcher Car in the events or a virtual Catcher Car in the App approaches from behind, pushing each person to keep going and feel the pride of finishing.

Chopra sets sights on breaking India's track-and-field duck

MUMBAI: Javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra knows what an Olympic track-and-field medal would be worth for Indian athletics and the gold he landed at the recent Commonwealth Games has given him confidence ahead of the Tokyo Games in two years' time.

While the International Olympic Committee credits India with Norman Pritchard's hurdles silver medals in 1900, before it gained independence from Britain, the world's second most populous nation considers itself never to have won an athletics medal at an Olympics.

There was rare track-and-field success for India this month at the Carrara Stadium at Gold Coast when the 20-year-old Chopra won the javelin at the Commonwealth Games. The former world junior champion became only the third man to win gold for India in Commonwealth Games athletics after sprinter Milkha Singh in 1958 and discus thrower Vikas Gowda in 2014.

"It was my first Commonwealth Games and I started thinking about how hard I had worked to get to that moment," Chopra told Reuters in an interview, reminiscing the moment when his yellow medal was confirmed.

"The happiest thought for me was that I had made history by winning the first javelin gold." Track and field success at the Olympics has largely eluded India and the country's two most famous track stars - Milkha Singh and P.T. Usha - missed podium places by the narrowest of margins.

Singh missed a bronze in the 400m at the 1960 Rome Olympics after a photo finish left him fourth, while Usha suffered the same heartbreak 24 years later when she was placed fourth after a photo



As ever, the 2018 Wings for Life World Run promises a wonderful atmosphere. The Catcher Cars - some driven by celebrities - will chase participants in the event locations until they pass them and end their race. The 2018 edition also sees the growth of the Organized App Runs, so people can run their own track alone, create or join a local community to share in the joy and spirit of the day, or explore the world and be a part of an Organized App Run somewhere they have always wanted to visit. This is a race for everyone - no experience required,

but having fun is a must. The Wings for Life World Run encourages every one of all abilities to join the race - from absolute beginners to international athletes. The real and the virtual Catcher Car makes everyone's race personal, means everyone finishes and everyone is part of a global running movement that focuses on the power of good, with 100% of registration fees and donations going directly to spinal cord research. Sign up for the Kuwait organized app run by downloading the app or visiting www.wingsforlifeworldrun.com



Neeraj Chopra

finish in the 400m hurdles final in Los Angeles.

Chopra, who put in his season's best effort of 86.47 metres in the final at Gold Coast, said his triumph will motivate the junior athletes in India and make them believe "Yes, we can".

"We have athletics medal in every event... be it Asian Games, Commonwealth Games, world championships," said Chopra, who is part of diversified conglomerate JSW Group's Sports Excellence Programme. "So the main aim is to win an Olympic medal. I can't even imagine what that would mean to track-and-field in the country. People keep telling me that the person who wins an Olympic medal will probably become the God of athletics." — Reuters

British racing targets younger following

LONDON: Horse racing chiefs must find ways to capture the next generation of racegoers even as Britain's Jockey Club celebrates record financial results, chief executive Simon Bazalgette said yesterday.

The 56-year-old Englishman-who has been described as the "most powerful man in racing"-was speaking after the club posted record turnover for 2017, breaching the £200 million (\$275 million) mark for the first time.

British horseracing's leading commercial group-whose racecourses feature blue-riband events such as the Cheltenham Festival and the Grand National as well as the Epsom Derby-welcomed 1.9 million people to its 334 racing fixtures in 2017.

The club, which reinvests all profits back into the sport, said it had nearly doubled its turnover since 2008. Bazalgette welcomed a "ninth successive year of commercial growth", saying the club was working hard to engage more people in the sport.

"Certainly for big race days there is a younger audience and racing has the best gender balance — 45 percent of those buying tickets for those days are women," Bazalgette told AFP.

"Where racing is very successful with the young is they enjoy the theatre element, there is great food and drink and excitement. "Racing excels there but what we need to do is convert them to be racing fans, they are coming for a great day out with family and friends."

Concerts after a day's racing-the club is a major promoter in Britain-have played a big role in attracting younger spectators and courses also encourage racegoers to share pictures and comments on big screens at the venues via social media

But Bazalgette admits one major stumbling block is the terminology. What is a handicap? How long is a furlong? Efforts are being made to demystify the sport. "We do that with an app called 'Racing Explained' for basics and there is also a lot in the race card and on the screens explaining the jargon," said Bazalgette.

"Most of our people booking online we send emails explaining to them to make it as easy as possible." Bazalgette also said the image of racing being only for the wealthy is misplaced, with free tickets or major discounts for younger racegoers and ticket prices at £15 to £20 on most days for a whole day's action, which compares well with other sports such as football.

"If you look at the demographics there is a mix more than many other sports from top to bottom of society," he said. — AFP

Horschel, Piercy win PGA Tour's team event

LOS ANGELES: Billy Horschel and Scott Piercy combined for a closing round of five-under par 67 to win the PGA Zurich Classic of New Orleans by one stroke over fellow Americans Jason Dufner and Pat Perez.

The Horschel-Piercy pairing rallied from a three-shot deficit to start the alternate shot format final round, vaulting into the top spot with a 22-under par total of 266. "This means a lot to me," said Horschel. "My game hasn't been great in the last year.

"We both put a lot of hard work into our game. This validates all the hard work." The US duo were one of 17 teams within five shots of the lead at the start of Sunday's second four-somes round at TPC Louisiana. The teams played a best-ball format in rounds one and three.

Playing under perfect conditions with sunshine and temperatures in the low 80s Fahrenheit (26C), Dufner and Perez finished one shot back in

second with a final-round 68. South Africans Charl Schwartzel and Louis Oosthuizen were another stroke back in third with a 68.

Tommy Fleetwood-Chris Paisley made an eagle-three at No. 18 to shoot a 69 and finish tied for fourth. Third round leaders Kevin Kisner and Scott Brown, who lost in a playoff last year, slumped to a 77 and finished in a tie for 15th, seven shots off the pace.

Piercy drained a three-foot putt for par on the final hole to secure the win, but Horschel had the hotter putter of the two this week.

"I putted really well the last couple of weeks," Horschel said. "I said 'Scott just get me on green'. I felt like every putt was going to go in the hole." "We are excited. I'm excited," said Piercy of the win.

They birdied their first two holes Sunday and then added two more birdies to begin the back nine as they went head-to-head against Dufner and Perez down the stretch. "I knew my partner was hitting good shots," Piercy added. "I kept trying to put it in right spot for him to do something good with it. To get back is nice and to do it with a good friend is even better."

Kisner and Brown faltered late with a bogey and double bogey on 15 and 16. Dufner had a 14-foot putt to force a playoff on 18 but missed it. — AFP

Sports

Mumbai's 'Batman' to the rescue for IPL's big hitting cricket stars

Modern bats tend to be weaker because they don't undergo machine pressing

MUMBAI: When the Indian Premier League's big hitters need their favourite bat urgently repaired there's one person they call upon—Aslam Chaudhry, a.k.a. "Batman".

The 65-year-old bat-maker and fixer frequently comes to the rescue of cricket's most recognisable stars out of his small, decades-old workshop in south Mumbai. "I've done bats for Sachin (Tendulkar), for (Fa) du Plessis, for (Steve) Smith, for Chris Gayle, for most of them," the floppy-haired Chaudhry tells AFP. He is the owner of M. Ashraf Bros, a bat-manufacturing shop set up by his father in the late 1920s. Chaudhry, who still makes bats by hand, is known as a master of his craft and is in high demand from players during the eight-month-long Indian cricket season.



MUMBAI: This picture taken on April 23, 2018, shows Indian bat maker Aslam Chaudhry checking a cricket bat at his workshop in Mumbai.— AFP photos



MUMBAI: Aslam Chaudhry shaving wood from a cricket bat at his workshop in Mumbai.

He is known as Mumbai's "Batman", and the logo on his business card shows two cricket bats in front of bat wings. Chaudhry works flat-out during the seven weeks of the IPL. The 11th edition is currently taking place, and he is getting regular calls about urgent work.

"The IPL is the busiest time because the bats break quite often," he says, explaining that modern bats tend to be weaker because they don't undergo the same amount of machine pressing as in previous eras.

those they send for patching up. Often Chaudhry is also asked to tweak bats they have received, like adjusting the shape or thickness of edges, to suit each batsman's tastes.

the player's representative, but once Indian captain Virat Kohli phoned him personally. "He said, 'This is Virat Kohli.' I thought it was a prank!" says Chaudhry, laughing. The softly spoken bat-maker has also done work for former India skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni.

on the handles. Chaudhry goes to training sessions at the nearby Wankhede Stadium or to cricketers' hotels to collect the bats due to the hysteria surrounding top players in cricket-mad India.

bats that are branded "Mehtab" after his father, who started the business from nothing and died in the early 1980s.

When making new bats, Chaudhry starts with a thick block of willow. He shaves it and cuts a V-groove for the handle. A machine then presses a five-tonne weight on the bat to strengthen the wood. Chaudhry then shaves the bat into its final shape, paying close attention to its curvature while meeting the customer's requirements regarding weight and thickness.

"You have to have a feel for it and be at one with the wood," he explains, describing bat-making as "an art form". Chaudhry is rare in that he still shaves the wood by hand, vigorously pushing the tool backwards and forwards, stopping every so often to step back and inspect the bat's progress.— AFP

“ You have to have a feel for it and be at one with the wood ”

The call to Chaudhry usually comes from a member of the team's backroom staff or

In Chaudhry's workshop, dozens of cricket bats line a wall. Others are piled on a table and many more are stored away in cupboards, while wood shavings cover parts of the floor. Photos of Chaudhry with Tendulkar adorn the walls alongside newspaper clippings, including one about the time rookie English batsman Haseeb Hameed turned up with a broken bat. When AFP visited, Chaudhry had just received three new bats belonging to South Africa's J.P. Duminy. He was about to add the finish and put thick grips

'ALL HELL BROKE LOOSE'

"All the big stars dare not come here because they will never get out of this lane alive, there will be so much crowd," he says. "(Lasith) Malinga made the mistake of coming here once. All hell broke loose and we had to call the police. We had to down all the shutters and he was inside for the best part of two hours until the police came!"

Chaudhry estimates that around a thousand bats come through his shop every year, partly thanks to a fondness among many Indians for patching things up and using them again. He also makes original

Hamilton says Vettel broke safety car re-start rules

BAKU: Formula One champion Lewis Hamilton has accused Ferrari title rival Sebastian Vettel of failing to play by the rules when leading behind the safety car in Sunday's chaotic Azerbaijan Grand Prix.

The Mercedes driver told reporters he would seek a clarification from race director Charlie Whiting ahead of the next race in Spain. Hamilton, who won in Baku and now leads Vettel by four points after four races, was on the receiving end of a famous "road rage" incident in Azerbaijan last year when the roles were reversed. Then, the Briton was leading the German while the safety car was deployed and was accused of "brake testing", with the two colliding and the Ferrari driver angrily pulling alongside to bang wheels.

Vettel later apologised for his behaviour. "The rules are that when the safety car goes (in), you're not allowed to start and stop, start and stop," Hamilton said. "You're not allowed to gas and then brake. You're not allowed to fake the guy behind."

"Because naturally if there was not that rule, that's what you'd do because eventually you'd catch them sleeping. You're not allowed to do that. "Every re-start I've done...I've abided by



Lewis Hamilton

that," the Briton told reporters. "In Australia, Sebastian accelerated and then braked and I nearly went up the back end of him. And today he did it like maybe four times."

Hamilton said he believed Whiting had passed the matter on to stewards for their consideration but they had decided not to take action because the other cars were doing it. The four-times world champion said that was because of a domino effect.

"That now sets a precedent, so that means everyone leading a grand prix under a safety car can start and stop, start and stop," he said. "I need to get that rectified when I have the briefing next because clearly they don't care

about it, and if that's the case then we will see more of that. And I will expect that from him next time I am racing with him."

Sunday's race had two safety car periods due to crashes, with drivers weaving to keep heat in their tyres in cold and gusty conditions. Vettel was leading from pole position at the first re-start, with Hamilton's team mate Valtteri Bottas at the head of the field for the second with the Ferrari behind and Hamilton third. The German overtook an attempt to pass Bottas at the second re-start, with Hamilton and Ferrari's Kimi Raikkonen going through as he went wide. Bottas retired with a puncture three laps from the end.— Reuters

we play India in a day-night Test match in Adelaide, but we are still working through this detail and hope to have an answer on this in the coming weeks," he said.

Sutherland has been pushing hard at International Cricket Council level for the new Test Championship schedule to include day-night Tests, but the powerful BCCI has a big say in outcomes.

CA confirmed Australia will face South Africa in a Twenty20 international on Queensland's Gold Coast, while the new Perth Stadium and Canberra's Manuka Oval will both host Test cricket for the first time. But Hobart misses out. The international season starts on November 4 with the first of three ODIs against South Africa before the one-off T20 against the Proteas on the Gold Coast, which will be followed by three T20s against India preceding the start of the Test summer.

"Our men's international season structure changes slightly this summer, with one-day and T20 international matches against South Africa and India in November," Sutherland said.

Adelaide opens the Test series against India for the Border-Gavaskar Trophy and Perth Stadium will host the second Test, before the series moves back to Melbourne and Sydney for the traditional Boxing Day and New Year's showpiece games.

Following the Tests, there will be three ODIs against India in a seven-day window before a

two-Test series against Sri Lanka in Brisbane under lights at the Gabba and a second match in Canberra.

International dates:

South Africa
Tour match: PM's XI v South Africa, Manuka Oval, Canberra, October 31.
First ODI: Perth Stadium, November 4
Second ODI: Adelaide Oval, November 9
Third ODI: Blundstone Arena, Hobart, November 11
T20: Metricon Stadium, Gold Coast, November 17

India
First T20: Gabba, November 21
Second T20: Melbourne Cricket Ground, November 23
Third T20: Sydney Cricket Ground, November 25
First Test: Adelaide Oval, December 6-10
Second Test: Perth Stadium, December 14-18
Third Test: MCG, December 26-30
Fourth Test: SCG, January 3-7
First ODI: SCG, January 12
Second ODI: Adelaide Oval, January 15
Third ODI: MCG, January 18

Sri Lanka

First Test: Gabba, January 24-28 (D/N)
Second Test: Manuka Oval, February 1-5.— AFP

Asian Games could have 7 joint Korean teams: Seoul officials

SEOUL: Seven South Korean sports associations are considering forming joint teams with North Korea for this year's Asian Games in Indonesia, an official told AFP yesterday – but reports said football will not be joining them.

At their groundbreaking summit on Friday, the latest step in a rapidly moving diplomatic sequence, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and the South's president Moon Jae-in agreed to show solidarity by "jointly participating in international sports events such as the 2018 Asian Games".

The phrasing left open whether it was a reference to unified teams, or marching together at opening ceremonies, as they have done at several past Olympics, including this year's Winter Games in Pyeongchang in the South.

But a spokeswoman for the South's national Olympic committee told AFP that the country's governing bodies for "basketball, judo, canoe, gymnastics, table tennis, rowing and soft tennis have expressed interest". No details had been discussed yet, she added.

Seoul's unification ministry declined to comment on the issue but said the two sides will soon hold a working-level meeting which may include discussions on joint teams at the Asian Games. Some sports bodies are already pushing ahead, proposing their own plans for the Asian Games, which will take place in Jakarta and Palembang from August 18 to September 2.

The Korean Canoe Federation said Monday a joint team for the dragon boat race—one of three canoe disciplines at the event—will be a good idea since neither Korea has a national team for it. "Even if we form a joint team, it won't affect any existing athletes," the group said in a statement.

The joint teams could hold open practice sessions on the Han river in Seoul as well as the Taedong river in Pyongyang, it added.

FINAL WHISTLE

But the South's football association declined the idea, Yonhap news agency reported, saying the move could require unwanted sacrifices from its players.

In South Korea, male athletes who win gold at the Asian Games or any Olympic medal are exempted from the country's mandatory two-year military service. Tottenham Hotspur forward Son Heung-min could be among the players seeking the Asian Games title to enable him to extend his career in Europe without interruptions.

Son withdrew from consideration for the South Korean team for London 2012 when the side finished third, earning its members the exemption-to concentrate on his club activities with Hamburg SV. When a joint women's ice hockey team was first mooted for the Winter Olympics it provoked a backlash in the South, on the grounds that Seoul was depriving its own athletes of the chance to compete on the Olympic stage. Ultimately the sight of North and South Korean skaters wearing the same jersey and passing the puck to each other drew emotive responses from spectators and quickly became an Olympic favourite, despite the team being thrashed in all five of their matches.

The rapprochement on the peninsula was triggered by the Games, to which the North's Kim sent athletes, cheerleaders and his sister as an envoy. Friday's historic meeting saw Kim and Moon agree to pursue the complete denuclearisation of the peninsula and to improve inter-Korean relations. Seoul's defence ministry said yesterday it will start removing propaganda loudspeakers along the border with the North today.— AFP

India resist Australia overtures for day-night Test

SYDNEY: Australian cricket chiefs are still trying to convince reluctant India to play a day-night Test in Adelaide this year after releasing their international playing schedule yesterday. Cricket Australia have scheduled the opening Test of the four-Test India series in Adelaide from December 6-10, with hopes it will be a pink ball match following concept successes against New Zealand, South Africa and England in recent years.

Australia believes day-night Test cricket is the future of the sport and perhaps the only way to save the format despite boom television ratings and record crowds. But the powerful Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) have so far resisted CA's overtures.

CA will play a pink-ball Test against Sri Lanka in Brisbane from January 24-28 next year, but chief executive James Sutherland said he was still negotiating with India. "It is our preference that

Sports

Holtby shines as Capitals level playoff series with Penguins

Fiala lifts Predators to a 5-4 win over Winnipeg Jets

LOS ANGELES: Braden Holtby stopped 32 shots and the Washington Capitals used a balanced offensive attack to defeat the Pittsburgh Penguins 4-1 to even their Eastern Conference playoff series at one game apiece on Sunday.

Four different Capitals-Alex Ovechkin, Jakub Vrana, Brett Connolly and Nicklas Backstrom-scored goals as the second round NHL series now shifts to Pittsburgh.

Kris Letang scored the lone goal for the Penguins in front of a sold-out crowd of 18,500 at Washington's Capital One arena. The two-time defending Stanley Cup champion Penguins host game three today.

Pittsburgh appeared to cut the Capitals lead to 3-2 halfway through the final period when Swedish forward Patric Hornqvist jammed a puck under the leg pad of Holtby.

The play went to video review and despite the replays appearing to show white ice between the puck and the red goal line, league determined there was no goal. The Penguins were furious, saying they did their own homework. "It's 100 percent a goal," Penguins coach Mike Sullivan said. "When you blow it up, you can see the white. It's behind the post." With their kettle already on boil from that ruling, the Penguins fury with the officials escalated on another controversial play.

Canadian enforcer Tom Wilson wasn't penalized for a blindside check to Brian Dumoulin's head with his left shoulder in the second period. Dumoulin, of the US, left the game to be checked for a head injury and did not return. "He made contact with his head," said Penguins star Sidney Crosby who suffered a similar hit that led to a concussion from former Capitals player David Steckel seven years ago. "Given his history and things like that, I'm sure the league will take a good look at it." Backstrom scored an empty-net goal with seven sec-

onds left in the third to round out the scoring.

In the late game, Kevin Fiala scored in double overtime to lift the Nashville Predators to a 5-4 win over the Winnipeg Jets and a 1-1 tie in their second round series.

Ovechkin scored just 86 seconds into the game as he blasted a shot from the high slot area past Penguins goaltender Matt Murray. The goal was the seventh of the post-season for Russia's Ovechkin.

Vrana, with his first career playoff goal, made it 2-0 on the powerplay about 14 minutes later after taking a pass from Lars Eller. Fiala took a pass from Craig Smith and deked to his backhand, lifting a shot just off the glove of goalie Connor Hellebuyck for his third goal of the playoffs and his second of the series.

The teams next head to Winnipeg for Game 3 tonight. The Jets forced extra hockey with an extra attacker. Mark Scheifele scored his second goal of the game at 18:55 of the third period when he roofed his NHL-high eighth goal of the playoffs and fourth marker of the series.

Ryan Johansen's second goal of the contest gave Nashville a 4-3 edge at 5:45 of the third period, answering Brandon Tanev's equalizer 34 seconds earlier off a Predators turnover.

In most ways, Winnipeg played a far better game than it did on Friday night, when it was outshot 48-19. The Jets carried play for most of the third period and finished the evening with a 50-41 advantage in shots on goal. But Hellebuyck, who was easily the best player on the ice in Game 1, was merely human in this one. He made 36 saves, although he played better as the night progressed. Pekka Rinne, who was pulled from Game 1 following the second period after permitting three goals on 16 shots, bounced back



WASHINGTON: Jake Guentzel #59 of the Pittsburgh Penguins falls to the ice in front of Matt Niskanen #2 of the Washington Capitals during the third period in Game Two of the Eastern Conference Second Round during the 2018 NHL Stanley Cup Playoffs at Capital One Arena on Sunday in Washington. — AFP

with 46 saves for Nashville. Johansen put Nashville ahead just 27 seconds into the game with his first goal, skating into the slot and wiring a wristler just inside the right post off a Filip Forsberg feed.

Winnipeg responded with two goals in a 29-second span late in the opening period. Dustin Byfuglien bagged his first playoff goal at 12:47 with a sharp-angle wristler from the right circle through Rinne's pads, and Scheifele tallied on the power play.

The Predators answered with two second-period markers. P.K. Subban bombed a point shot off the left post on the power play at 5:04 for his first goal of the postseason, and Arvidsson registered his third at 18:41 on a slapper from the right faceoff dot. Forsberg wound up with three assists while Arvidsson had two. Scheifele had a three-point game. Byfuglien and Subban each had a goal and an assist. —Agencies

'Tongan Thor' Tupou relishing Reds revival

MELBOURNE: A youth-led revival and the guidance of a rugged former All Black have the Queensland Reds dreaming of an unlikely playoffs berth after several years in the Super Rugby doldrums.

The Brad Thorn-coached Reds notched their fourth win of the season over the weekend, scraping home 27-22 against the Johannesburg-based Lions, last year's runners-up and the dominant side in South Africa. A week after being routed 36-12 by New Zealand's visiting Waikato Chiefs, Thorn's youthful side needed to respond in front of long-suffering home fans. One-test Wallabies prop Taniela Tupou was one of nine players aged 21 or under who were thrown to the second-placed Lions and ultimately enjoyed a standing ovation from sections of the Lang Park crowd. "We had a good chat last week, had a team meeting where we discussed what we needed to work on and we worked on it all week," Tupou told Reuters yesterday. "And then we put it out there on the weekend and got the job done, so that was good. "We've just got to keep it up and see how we go." Under former All Blacks enforcer Thorn, who took the reins from the sacked Nick Stiles in the off-season, the Reds have already equalled their highest wins tally of the previous three campaigns.

With eight rounds left in the regular season, they have lifted themselves to third in the Australian conference, seven points shy of the leading New South Wales Waratahs. Top spot in Australia would be enough to secure their first playoffs berth since 2013. "If we play like we did on the weekend, we get a few more wins, hopefully," said 134-kg Tupou, who made his Wallabies debut against Scotland in November.

'THORNY'

Times have been tough for the Reds since their first and only championship in 2011, when bumper crowds watched halfbacks Quade Cooper and Will Genia bamboozle opponents from across the southern hemisphere. But a buzz has returned to Lang Park with the elevation of Thorn, who coached the Reds' youth side to the national title last year. The 43-year-old has shown scant regard for sentiment or media opinions, refusing to pick former Wallabies flyhalf Cooper while backing a number of his under-20s proteges.

It's difficult, maybe dangerous, not to listen to dual international Thorn, who won a World Cup with New Zealand, a Super Rugby title with the Canterbury Crusaders and a National Rugby League championship with the Brisbane Broncos. "He's a no-bullshit kind of guy, like, you just can't bullshit him. He's a tough man on the field at training," said Tupou. "He wants everything to be absolutely spot on. Obviously with Thorny, you know, he's a winner. He's won pretty much everything. When he speaks to you, you kind of want to listen because you know he's done it all."

With last year's harrowing axeing of Perth-based team Western Force still fresh in the memory and a 36-game losing streak to New Zealand opponents, Australian rugby could do with a good news story. With a bye this week, the Reds will pause and reset before continuing their playoffs bid away to the Sunwolves in Tokyo. Attention will turn to the next attempts to break the New Zealand hoodoo, with the Melbourne Rebels hosting the champion Canterbury Crusaders on Friday.—Reuters

Draw dents Marseille Euro bid, Cavani sets PSG record with rescue act

PARIS: A late leveller from Ismael Traore put the brakes on Marseille's bid for Champions League football next season as the southern giants were held to a 1-1 draw at Angers on Sunday. Marseille travelled west hoping to move into the Ligue 1 top three after Monaco were held to a scoreless draw at home to Amiens on Saturday as Lyon took second by beating Nantes.

Paris Saint-Germain, who battled back from two goals down to draw 2-2 with Guingamp on Sunday, wrapped up the title with plenty of room to spare two weeks ago. On paper, three points were well within Marseille's grasp. Coach Rudi Garcia certainly appeared to believe so as he left both Dimitri Payet and Kostas Mitroglou on the bench ahead of Thursday's Europa League semi-final second leg at Salzburg.

But despite a third-minute penalty from Florian Thauvin, misfiring Angers finally got back on level terms thanks to Traore's header from a free-kick on 79 minutes. Marseille remain fourth, one point behind Monaco in the third and last Champions League qualifying position.

But Garcia remained confident that Marseille will reach their objectives both at home and in Europe. "We've dropped two points, which is a regret because we're approaching the end of the season," he said.

"But we still have three matches to play, and Monaco also dropped points. It's not over yet." He added: "Now, we'll turn our focus to the Europa League and do everything we can to make the final. Then we host Nice (in Ligue 1) and we'll start our bid to move up one or two places in the table. Everything is possible."

After Monaco's slip-up, motivation should not have been an issue for Marseille at the Raymond Kopa stadium. But Garcia's men struggled to build on the early lead provided by Thauvin after Abdoulaye Bamba had fouled Valere Germain during the first corner of the game. In wet and slippery conditions both keepers

Seventh heaven in Scotland, but real challenge awaits Celtic in Europe

LONDON: Champions of Scotland again, Celtic's seventh straight title was made all the more special by the fact it was bitter rivals Rangers who were embarrassed once more 5-0 on Sunday to mathematically get Brendan Rodgers's men over the line. Despite an understandable slip in standards following a historic treble of domestic trophies without suffering a single defeat last season, there was rarely any doubt who would win the league from the moment the season kicked off in August.

Trailing the champions by 13 points, Rangers-only in their second season back in the top-flight since dropping



PARIS: Paris Saint-Germain's Uruguayan forward Edinson Cavani (L) vies for the ball with Guingamp's French defender Jeremy Sorbon during the French L1 football match Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) versus Guingamp on Sunday at the Parc des Princes Stadium. — AFP

were kept on their toes. Marseille shot-stopper Yohann Pele produced a great one-handed save to thwart Flavien Tait from a tight angle minutes before the interval. But Ludovic Butelle was the busiest of the pair, the 35-year-old forced into action quickly after the restart to charge down Jordan Amavi's angled strike before palming a wicketed curling effort from Thauvin over the bar moments later. The greasy pitch made for a scrappy affair with passes, and shots, going astray. But not even those challenges were an excuse for Angers missing a golden chance to level on 70 minutes. Karl Toko Ekambi's run through the middle into the area saw the ball stop dead, with Pele stranded.

Yet, faced with an empty goal, Thomas Mangani sent his effort high over the bar from 16 yards out.

But the home fans were finally given reason to cele-

brate when Traore rose highest at the back post to meet Tait's free-kick from deep on the left and fire a header past a rooted Pele and into the bottom corner. Champions PSG needed two goals from Uruguayan striker Edinson Cavani to rescue a point at home to mid-table Guingamp.

Ludovic Blas and Jimmy Briand had put Guingamp on course for a shock win at the Parc des Princes before Cavani became his club's all-time Ligue 1 top scorer with a 75th-minute penalty and leveller seven minutes from time. The brace took Cavani's career total to 115 goals in the French top flight. Rennes boosted their hopes of fighting for a Europa League place with a precious 2-1 win over Toulouse that pushed the Brittany side up one place to sixth. They are now just one point behind fifth-placed Saint-Etienne. — AFP

happier at this club," said Rodgers.

"Already we are thinking how can we improve for next year, how can we be better in our form and our game? How can we be better in all aspects? So that's something that is important." Having already seen off three Rangers managers, the next appointment at Ibrox could see Rodgers come up against one of his most illustrious former players. According to reports, Liverpool legend Steven Gerrard has been offered his first senior role in management at Ibrox come the end of the season.

Gerrard's presence would restore some of Scottish football's lost lustre, but trying to end Celtic's domestic dominance would be a monumental challenge for a rookie manager. For Celtic, the challenge is to look beyond the goldfish bowl of Glasgow rivalry to register an improvement on the European stage.

Rodgers has successfully navigated a series of tricky early season qualifiers to reach the Champions League group stage in each of his two seasons in charge. However, Celtic have won just one game of 12 in the Champions League proper in the past two seasons with harrowing thrashings at the hands of Barcelona and Paris Saint-Germain a reminder that the financial chasm between the European elite and the rest is growing every season.— AFP

Sports

Messi's hat-trick seals Barca's 25th title in style

'Indescribable emotions' for Barca skipper Iniesta

MADRID: Barcelona coach Ernesto Valverde was delighted that his side "finally" wrapped up a 25th La Liga title with four matches to spare, after a Lionel Messi hat-trick secured a thrilling 4-2 victory at Deportivo La Coruna on Sunday. Valverde's men completed a league and cup double after thrashing Sevilla 5-0 in last week's Copa del Rey final, regaining the Spanish crown from Real Madrid and relegating Deportivo in the process. "When you chase it for so long you say 'finally,'" he told Spanish television.

"I feel very happy because in the end the league is very long, it starts in August... and when spring arrives everything is decided, we have passed everything. 'We've been pursuing it since the beginning, we have been in the lead, we've finished well, with a big margin... It's the first La Liga that I've won.'"

The only blip on the Catalans' season was the stunning Champions League quarter-final loss at Roma when they blew a 4-1 first-leg lead.

"The elimination (by Roma) marked us a little bit because it was unexpected, but our trajectory has been extraordinary," added Valverde. "There is always a small 'but', but we'll try again next year." Barca knew they just had to extend their record unbeaten streak to 41 La Liga matches to seal a seventh title in 10 seasons, and Philippe Coutinho fired them into an early lead.

Messi's 38th-minute volley made it two, but Lucas Perez pulled one back for Deportivo before half-time and Turkish winger Emre Colak stunned Barca with an equaliser midway through the second period.

Barca finally saw off their stubborn hosts, though, as Messi pounced after a brilliant one-two with Luis Suarez before slotting in to complete his 30th La Liga treble.

The Catalan giants now hold an unassailable 11-point lead over second-placed Atletico Madrid, who have just three games to play, and are closing in on becoming the first Spanish side to go through a top-flight season without tasting defeat. "We have managed an almost perfect

league campaign, without losing so far. I hope we can continue," midfielder Sergio Busquets said. Andres Iniesta was surprisingly left on the bench after the mid-field great announced earlier this week that he will leave the club at the end of the season.

But it was his expected long-term successor Coutinho who broke the deadlock in the seventh minute, bending an exquisite finish into the top corner for his third La Liga goal for the club since signing from Liverpool in January.

Deportivo had to win to stave off relegation for another week, but Clarence Seedorf's men were denied an equaliser when Perez was flagged offside after tapping in from close range. Messi went close to doubling the advantage just before the half-hour mark, only for home goalkeeper Ruben to pull off an excellent one-handed save to turn his free-

kick around the post.

DEPORTIVO CAUSE PROBLEMS

Deportivo were causing Barca plenty of problems at the back, though, and centre-back Fabian Schaar should have levelled as he headed over when unmarked inside the six-yard box. But Messi drilled a curling Suarez cross past Ruben at the keeper's near post to score his 30th league goal of the campaign, before on-loan Arsenal striker Perez swept home to halve the deficit just two minutes later. Despite the close scoreline, Barca were playing as if the second half was a pure title party, with centre-back Gerard Pique even performing a few 'keepie uppies' on the left wing. Their complacency cost them in the 64th minute, as Celso Borges unselfishly squared for Colak to score.

Suddenly the champions-elect were desperately trying to hang onto their unbeaten record, as goalkeeper Marc-Andre ter Stegen made a smart stop from another Schaar header. But Barcelona showed their class as Suarez and Messi combined to terrific effect with eight



CORUNA: Barcelona's Spanish midfielder Andres Iniesta celebrates after his team won the Spanish league football match against Deportivo Coruna and claimed their 25th La Liga at the Riazor stadium in Coruna on Sunday. —AFP

minutes to play—the latter clipping the ball in off the post.

Suarez again sent the Argentinian racing clear three minutes later, and the 30-year-old made no mistake to complete a hat-trick. The 33-year-old Iniesta came on to a standing ovation in the 87th minute as Barca closed out a successful title-winning campaign in style.

Andres Iniesta said his team were worthy winners of a 25th La Liga title as the veteran skipper prepares to leave the Spanish giants. The 33-year-old revealed Friday that he will leave Barcelona at the end of the season, bringing the curtain down on a phenomenally successful career at the club he has served since he was 12.

On Sunday, he came off the bench for a brief cameo appearance as Barcelona defeated Deportivo La Coruna 4-2 at a Riazor stadium which stood to honour him. "This

feels good. The championship is a competition that lasts all year, it is about consistency and the team deserved this title," said Iniesta.

"It has been a great season with the Copa del Rey and now La Liga." On the ovation he received from Deportivo fans when he made his 87th-minute entry, he said he was overwhelmed, especially as the home side had been relegated as a result of the defeat. "These are indescribable emotions. On a personal level, as a sportsman, there are no words when you receive such affection in such a difficult situation for the fans. "I am eternally grateful for all the messages received from the heart. In all my career, I tried to be a good sportsman, a good person, being respectful. "I have been fortunate to experience unique situations. I am very grateful." —AFP

Simeone treble buries Napoli as Juventus close on seventh straight title

MILAN: Napoli's title hopes looked in tatters on Sunday after a shock 3-0 defeat at Fiorentina, complete with an early sending-off for Kalidou Koulibaly and a hat-trick from Giovanni Simeone, edged Juventus closer to a seventh successive Serie A title.

With just three games left, Juventus have a four-point lead on closest challengers Napoli and could wrap up yet another 'Scudetto' next weekend. Argentina forward Simeone—the son of Atletico Madrid boss Diego Simeone scored all three goals in a spectacular display to keep Fiorentina's Europa League hopes alive.

Koulibaly, labelled a hero when he scored the last-gasp header that kept Napoli's ambitions alive with a 1-0 win over Juventus in Turin last week, turned villain in Florence when he was sent off after just eight minutes. "We lost tactical certainties after the sending off, and faced with adversity we lost our way and our nerve too," said Napoli coach Maurizio Sarri.

"The entire team had a bad performance. We won as a team at other times, today we lost as a team. I didn't see any positives." Juventus battled past 10-man Inter Milan in a San Siro thriller on Saturday to prevail 3-2 thanks to two late goals in three minutes.

Massimiliano Allegri's champions host Bologna on Saturday and will be assured of the title if they win and Napoli lose at home against Torino on Sunday. "I want the whole team to fight back straight away," said Sarri as Napoli chase a third title after 1987 and 1990. "If we always focus on the next game, we can have a good season." Napoli never recovered from Koulibaly's dismissal, the towering Senegalese defender initially shown a yellow card for kicking out at Simeone as he charged



FLORENCE: Napoli's Brazilian midfielder Allan (R) jump kicks the ball during the Italian Serie A football match Fiorentina vs Napoli on Sunday at Artemio-Franchi stadium in Florence. —AFP

towards goal. But a video assistant referee (VAR) review at the Stadio Franchi upgraded the yellow to red, with a free-kick given instead of a penalty.

Sarri replaced midfielder Jorginho with central defender Lorenzo Tonelli. But Napoli struggled to contain their rivals, Simeone breaking the deadlock by firing through the legs of goalkeeper Pepe Reina after 34 minutes. Simeone pounced to drive home the second on 62 minutes after the ball initially bounced off Elseid Hysaj and Reina saved with his leg.

The 22-year-old completed his hat-trick three minutes into injury-time to claim his 13th goal this season. The suspense remains over who will join Juventus and

Napoli in the Champions League next season.

Both Roman clubs occupy the two remaining places with Roma beating Chievo 4-1 and Lazio edging past Torino 1-0 to remain third and fourth respectively level on points, with Inter Milan four points behind in fifth.

Luis Alberto saw his penalty saved and Serie A top-scorer Ciro Immobile went off injured, with Sergej Milinkovic-Savic's header giving Lazio all three points at Torino. The final game of the season will see Lazio host Inter. AC Milan maintained their Europa League hopes with a 2-1 win at Bologna to end a six-game winless streak including last week's shock reverse to bottom club Benevento. —AFP

Madrid in the quarter-finals after losing 3-0 in Turin, bowing out 4-3 on aggregate.

"Juve are a good example of putting pressure on Real in Madrid," said Rummenigge. "We need cool heads and hot hearts." Defender Niklas Sule, who will step in for Boateng at centre-back, added: "It's a difficult starting position, but we trust ourselves to do it. "It will be important to switch well between attack and defence. "We also did well against (Cristiano) Ronaldo (who failed to score) in the first leg."

PRESSURE TO SCORE

Rummenigge says the loss of Boateng and Robben gives their replacements the chance to step up and shine. "Boateng and Robben will not make the trip and we can't change that," said Rummenigge.

"I think lamenting makes no sense, we have other players who can step in. "When I look at the development of Niklas Sule, that's been top notch. "Whoever stands on the pitch will have to go to their limits if we want to be successful."

Bayern must score at least two goals to have any chance of reaching the final on May 26 in Kiev. "We're confident," said right-back Joshua Kimmich, who scored in the first leg. "We did not play at our top level and still had some chances.

"The aim is to score two goals and conceding wouldn't change much." In the first leg, the Germans were kicking themselves for converting just one of their 17 shots on goal, compared to Real's seven, two of which Marcelo and Asensio put away.

"We will get some chances and when we get them, we will have to use them," said Bayern president Uli Hoeness. Rummenigge defended Bayern striker Robert Lewandowski, who was criticised in the German media for struggling in front of goal in the first leg.

"I find this discussion ridiculous, as we all actually find it ridiculous at Bayern Munich," fumed Rummenigge, a former striker. "He has scored 39 goals again this year and we are glad that he is with us and that next year he will play with us."

Rummenigge pointed to legendary Bayern striker Gerd Mueller, who scored 68 goals in 62 games for West Germany in the 1970s. "He (Lewandowski) is a goal machine and I can remember Gerd Mueller for example, who is the number one in all (goal) statistics, not only at Bayern Munich, but throughout Germany. "He also had eight or ten games in which things did not work out, where he didn't play the way he wanted to.

"But then, there are days when you score two or three times. "I hope he (Lewandowski) has a day like that tomorrow." —AFP

Pochettino says Spurs years ahead of schedule

LONDON: Mauricio Pochettino says Tottenham are victims of their own success as they scramble to finish in the top four of the Premier League ahead of deposed champions Chelsea. Fourth-placed Spurs, who host Watford later, have stumbled in the league in recent weeks and crashed to their eighth successive FA Cup semi-final defeat against Manchester United last week.

But Pochettino, targeting Champions League qualification for a third straight year, said his approach would not change as he strives to take the club to the next level and win silverware after a barren decade.

Spurs are two points clear of Chelsea, with four games remaining. Antonio Conte's side, who have won three successive league matches, have three games left. "Tottenham needed when we arrived here to have a clear idea about discipline, rules, principles, a project to develop, to use young players, and that was how we created this project all together," he said.

"Whether it is me or another, that is the right project to keep pushing, don't be disappointed if we still don't win a trophy, the expectation always is massive. "We are victims of our own success because we are ahead in our project. I remind you that in my first meeting with (chairman) Daniel Levy and (owner) Joe Lewis, the target was to arrive in the new stadium in four years and to create a team to have the possibility to fight for the top four and the second year to play Champions League."

Pochettino, whose club will move into their new stadium next season, raised eyebrows following the defeat to Jose Mourinho's United by saying the project at Spurs will go on "with me or another".

The Argentine still has three years to run on his contract and was coy about whether a new deal is in the offing. "Am I going to sign? It's a question for Daniel," he said. "I am not (Arsene) Wenger or (Alex) Ferguson who decides about their own future. I decide only about the starting XI in this football club. That is up to Daniel, does he want to offer or not? "I am a person who is never going to ask to improve my salary or extend my contract or anything like this." —AFP

Bayern need 'cool heads and hot hearts' to shock Real

BERLIN: Bayern Munich need "cool heads and hot hearts" if they are to learn from Juventus and pull off an unlikely Champions League victory at Real Madrid, says chairman Karl-Heinz Rummenigge.

Bayern face an uphill task in today's semi-final, second leg, at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium after losing 2-1 in Munich last Wednesday when a defensive slip let Marco Asensio hit the winner.

To compound their problems, Bayern have lost both key defender Jerome Boateng and creative winger Arjen Robben with groin injuries. Nevertheless, the Germans jetted to Madrid on Monday determined to pull off an unlikely win. They can take solace from Juventus who went down fighting with a 3-1 win in

Live

Matches on TV
(Local Timings)

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Real Madrid v Bayern Munich 21:45

beIN SPORTS HD 1

12 Lydia Ko snaps title drought by winning Down Under playoff duel



13 Mumbai's 'Batman' to the rescue for IPL's big hitting cricket stars



15 Messi's hat-trick seals Barca's 25th title in style



CLEVELAND: Victor Oladipo #4 of the Indiana Pacers battles for the ball with Larry Nance Jr. #22 of the Cleveland Cavaliers during the second half in Game Seven of the Eastern Conference Quarterfinals during the 2018 NBA Playoffs at Quicken Loans Arena on Sunday in Cleveland, Ohio. —AFP

James brings Cavs back from brink

Harden scores 41 as Rockets blast past Jazz

LOS ANGELES: LeBron James scored 45 points in another magnificent game seven performance Sunday, leading the Cleveland Cavaliers to a 105-101 victory over the Indiana Pacers and into the second round of the NBA playoffs.

Facing elimination in the first round for the first time, James was having none of it. The 33-year-old superstar, who has now reached the second round in all 13 of his playoff appearances, produced his third 40-point game of the series, adding nine rebounds, seven assists and four steals as Cleveland booked a second-round clash with Eastern Conference top seeds Toronto starting today.

"I just try to do whatever it takes to help us win. I felt like I wanted to do that again in this series," said James, who is now 5-2 in game sevens in all rounds of the playoffs. "There's nothing like a game seven," said Cleveland's Tristan Thompson.

"Game seven separates the men from the boys." With their season on the line after a humbling 34-point loss in game six, the Cavaliers exploded out of the

blocks. James made his first seven shots and finished the first half with 26 points, five assists and four rebounds.

The Cavs pulled down 11 offensive rebounds in the first half and led by as many as 14 in the second quarter as coach Tyrone Lue switched his starting lineup to include all four of his holdovers from the last three NBA Finals teams: James, Thompson, Kevin Love and JR Smith. "We started the game with guys that have been in big games before," said James, but there was no doubt that it was "King James" who ruled. James became the career playoff leader in steals when he picked off a pass in the second quarter, having entered the contest tied with former Chicago Bulls great Scottie Pippen (395) atop the all-time post-season list.

James also became the first player to score 20 or more points 200 times in the playoffs. "He put us on his back," Lue said. "He did it all for us this series." After their dominant first half, Cleveland once again saw the Pacers gain ground in the third.

Indiana took a one-point lead on Bojan

Bogdanovich's three-pointer with 7:13 left in the third period and a determined Victor Oladipo scored 14 of his 30 points in the third.

Cleveland weathered the storm to take a two-point lead into the fourth quarter, and with James sidelined for several minutes fighting leg cramps they built the advantage to nine.

Oladipo's driving layup cut Indiana's deficit to four with less than a minute to play, but James responded with a layup and Cleveland held on. "I'm burnt right now," James admitted after the game. "I'm not thinking about Toronto right now until tomorrow. I'm ready to go home. Can we? I'm tired. I want to go home." The Cavaliers have beaten the Raptors in each of the last two post-seasons, sweeping them in the second round last year.

ROCKETS DOMINATE JAZZ

But fatigue could be a factor against a Toronto team that punched their second-round ticket on Friday. It was evident on Sunday that the Utah Jazz just couldn't

keep up with the potent Houston Rockets in their Western Conference second-round opener.

James Harden scored 41 points as the Rockets romped to a 110-96 victory. Houston connected on 17 of 32 three-point attempts and led by as many as 27 over a Jazz team that eliminated Oklahoma City on Sunday in the sixth game of a bruising first-round series.

"We knew what they just went through, how tough their last series was. "We had a comprehensive rest," added Harden, whose Rockets finished off the Minnesota Timberwolves 4-1 on Wednesday. "So we wanted to come out here and pick up the pace up-aggressively get stops and aggressively move the ball, and we did that."

Point guard Chris Paul added 17 points, six assists and four rebounds for the Rockets, who had 16 points from Clint Capela and 15 from PJ Tucker. Donovan Mitchell, starting at point guard in place of injured Ricky Rubio, and reserve Jae Crowder scored 21 apiece for the Jazz. — AFP

Russia seeks monkey chant solution ahead of WCup

MOSCOW: Russian football's anti-racism chief wants the World Cup hosts to start using fan ID cards at league matches to combat monkey chants. Ape noises have turned into one of the most serious dilemmas facing Russia in the run-up to the June 14-July 15 showpiece.

The incidents have blighted some of the biggest games played in Russia and aired live on national TV. The most recent case resulted in defending champions Spartak Moscow receiving a partial stadium ban last week over fan abuse hurled at an African player in a league cup semi-final.

The football federation simultaneously fined Zenit

Saint Petersburg for "Nazi slogans" heard during a league match against the north Caucasus side Anzhi. And world governing body FIFA launched disciplinary proceedings against Russia over monkey chants heard during a friendly against France in March.

Anti-discrimination inspector Alexei Smertin said yesterday the same fan ID cards being used at World Cup matches should be applied to domestic Russian games. Russia first tried out the system with FIFA's approval at last year's Confederations Cup.

"I am in favour of the Russian championship using the Fan ID system, just as we did at the Confederations Cup," Smertin told Russia's RT television. "There were no incidents during that tournament. "Every fan understood that if something happened, that person would have been easily identified." Each fan getting World Cup tickets must also apply for a special ID card with the Russian authorities.

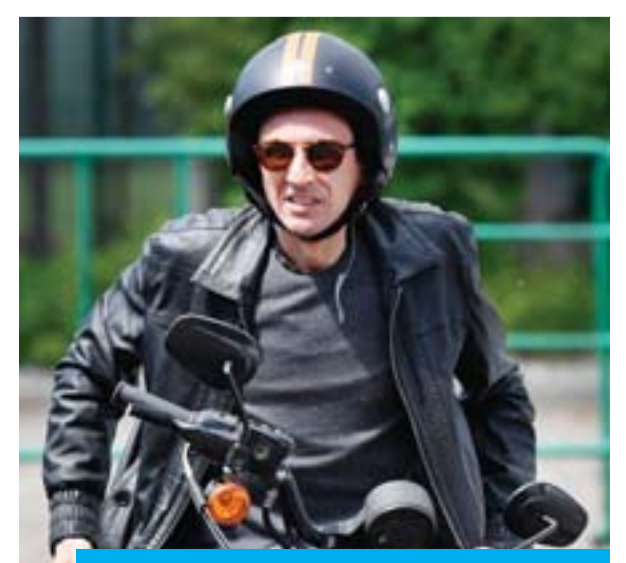
The security services then conduct background checks with the help of their foreign counterparts. Supporters' identities are matched up against CCTV

screen grabs taken when they first enter the stadium.

Smertin said the system would enable the Russian football federation to start zeroing in on specific offenders instead of issuing blanket penalties to teams. "The way it works now, the clubs are being held responsible instead of the fans-and the fans know this perfectly well," said Smertin.

The Russian football union said last month that it had forwarded the names of suspects at the French match to the security services. The police are yet to take action and no Russian supporter has been banned from a stadium this year. "We need to introduce personal responsibility so that fans who violate rules start being denied the right to go to stadiums and support their teams."

Smertin added that he was working closely with the Football Against Racism in Europe (FARE) anti-discrimination network. The London-based group reported 89 racist and far-right incidents at Russian games in the 2016/17 season. The number was about the same as in each of the previous three seasons and suggests that Russia's current approach was not having the desired results. — AFP



Alexei Smertin

Business

TUESDAY, MAY 1, 2018

18 Oil prices continue to gain on geopolitical risk, tighter supplies

19 US inflation measures jump; consumer spending picks up

21 In collaboration with KFH, Al Shaya & Al Sager offers Peugeot SUV 2018



ABK reports 18% rise in net profit for Q1 2018

Bank delivered excellent performance in first quarter of this year: Behbehani

KUWAIT: Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) yesterday announced its financial results for the first quarter ended 31 March, 2018. Net profit was KD 10.0 million, a healthy 18 percent increase over the same quarter last year. Earnings per share stood at 6 fils, compared to 5 fils in the same quarter in 2017. Operating income grew by 4 percent to KD 39.8 million in 2018.

Total Assets as of end of March 2018 reached KD 4.47 billion, up 3.6 percent compared to end of March 2017, while total Shareholders' Equity increased by KD 12 million to reach KD 561 million, a growth of 2.2 percent year-on-year. Asset quality remained strong with the NPL ratio at 1.89 percent and an NPL coverage of 372 percent. Capital adequacy ratio was robust at 16.84 percent.

Speaking on the results, Talal Mohammed Reza Behbehani, Chairman of ABK said, "The Bank has delivered an excellent performance in the first quarter of this year, as we continued to advance on all key parameters. The results are a validation of our growth strategy and have put us in a good position to carry favorable momentum

into the rest of the year. We are focused on maintaining strong returns for our shareholders through prudent financial management. As a homegrown bank, we operate in a culture of transparency and excellence to ensure long-term sustainability and value for our customers. We are optimistic about our opportunities across all markets we are

our strengths: focusing on our core operations, putting our customers first, fostering a culture of transparency, focusing on prudent and profitable lending and providing world-class standards of corporate governance and risk management practices. As such, we have logged strong growth across all markets in which we operate.

We have invested heavily in technology over the past 18 months with the implementation of our new core banking system, and going forward, we will continue to evolve our digital banking proposition and reinforce digitization as a strategic pillar for continued growth. We will also continue investing in the training and development of our employees while we strengthen our nationalization initiatives and succession planning."

Recently, ABK introduced cardless cash withdrawals, a service that enables customers to withdraw cash from ABK Branch ATMs using the Mobile App or Online Banking without the need of a debit card. The Bank's salary offering has also been enhanced greatly to better serve the needs of key sectors, particularly Kuwait.



Net profit reaches KD 10 million

active in and look forward to continuing the good year ahead."

A strong start

Michel Accad, Group Chief Executive Officer at ABK stated, "ABK has achieved a strong start to 2018 by remaining true to



Talal Mohammed Reza Behbehani



Michel Accad

ABK continues to be recognized internationally and locally and received a number of awards including: "Best Treasury & Cash Management" from Global Finance, "Fastest Growing Bank" from Banker ME for Egypt, "Best Bank" from Arabian Business, "Best

Commercial Bank" from Banker ME, "Best Retail Bank" from IFM, "Best Employer" from Naseba, as well as being recognized by Global Finance as one of the "Top 10 Safest Banks in the region and 29th in Emerging Markets".

UK supermarkets Sainsbury's, Asda agree £13bn merger

LONDON: Britain's second and third biggest supermarket chains Sainsbury's and Walmart-owned Asda have agreed to merge, the pair said yesterday, hoping to create a £13-billion (\$18-billion, 15-billion-euro) retail king and leapfrog UK number one Tesco.

The blockbuster deal—which is effectively a takeover bid with Sainsbury's acquiring a majority 58-percent stake—comes as the British supermarket sector faces squeezed profit margins and fierce competition from German-owned discounters Aldi and Lidl and online US titan Amazon. Britain's Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) regulator warned that the deal will "likely" be subject to a review, amid concerns over the impact on consumer choice and jobs—despite terms of the deal saying both brands would be retained and no stores shut.

News of the tie-up sent Sainsbury's share price spiking more than 20 percent in initial deals on the London stock market. Stock in Tesco sank almost four percent on fears the group could lose its supermarket crown and possibly also the title of Britain's biggest retailer. "Sainsbury's and Walmart Inc. are pleased to announce that they have agreed terms in relation to a proposed combination of Sainsbury's and Asda Group Limited, a wholly owned subsidiary of Walmart, to create an enlarged business," they said in a statement after confirming advanced talks over the weekend.

The transaction values Asda at £7.3 billion. Sainsbury's market capitalisation stood at £5.9 billion at the close of business on Friday. "This is a transformational opportunity to create a new force in UK retail, which will be more competitive and give customers more of what they want now and in the future," said Sainsbury's chief executive Mike Coupe. Walmart will own 42 percent of the combined business and receive £2.97 billion in cash, and 29.9 percent of total voting rights.

'Rapid change'

"The retail sector is going through significant and rapid change, as customer shopping habits continue to evolve,"

Sainsbury's added. "This has led to increased competition across grocery, general merchandise and clothing, as customers seek ever greater value, choice and convenience."

The combined business would have total revenues of £51 billion and boast a network of 2,800 Sainsbury's, Asda and Argos stores. "We believe the combination offers a unique and exciting opportunity that benefits customers and colleagues," said Walmart chief executive Doug McMillon. "We look forward to working closely with Sainsbury's to deliver the benefits of the combination."

Sainsbury's will seek to lower prices by around 10 percent on many popular products, and anticipates cost savings of at least £500 million. The new company will have a combined 24 percent of the British grocery market, beating Tesco on 22 percent, according to data published by retail consultancy Euromonitor. "The deal points to the highly competitive UK grocery market, which has long been concentrated in the hands of the top four players—Tesco, Sainsbury, Asda, Morrisons—but is now facing an onslaught from new challengers," said Simran Jagdev, analyst at the Economist Intelligence Unit. "The transaction will, however, attract regulatory scrutiny, given that the merged companies will become the largest grocery retailer in the UK." In later morning deals on the London stock market, Sainsbury's stock rallied 16.0 percent to 313 pence. Tesco pared losses to 236.50 pence, down nearly 0.7 percent from Friday's closing level.

'Better position to fight'

In Britain's fast-changing retail landscape, Sainsbury's previously bought catalogue retailer Argos in 2016 for £1.4 billion. This year meanwhile, Tesco purchased wholesaler Booker-Britain's biggest cash-and-carry operator for £3.7 billion in a deal that was completed in March.

At the same time, Amazon has ramped up its 'Fresh' delivery service in Britain, amid speculation that it could decide to buy a UK supermarket group. "What is clear from the proposed deal is that Sainsbury's and Asda are very aware of a potential Amazon acquisition in the UK supermarket industry which is why they are looking for scale in order to safeguard their future," said Euromonitor analyst Philip Benton.

"They (are) also concerned at being able to maintain price competitiveness, with discounters Aldi and Lidl continuing to eat at their market share. "It would certainly be the biggest merger in UK retail history and be of grave concern to their number one rival Tesco." — AFP



LONDON: In this file photo, customers come and go at a branch of Asda supermarket in south London. — AFP



NBK ECONOMIC REPORT

Oil prices continue to gain on geopolitical risk, tighter supplies

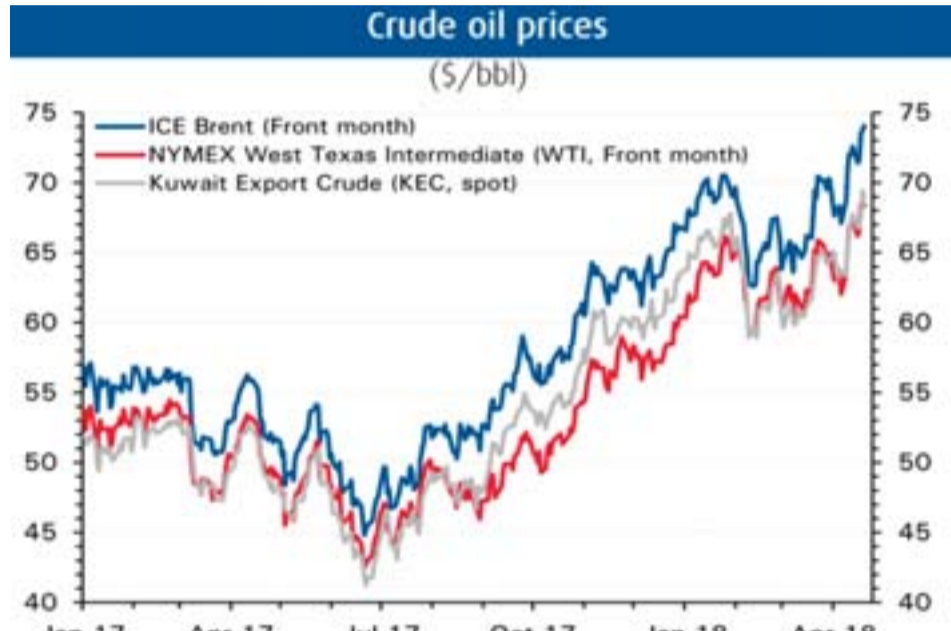
OPEC supply cuts and buoyant global demand underpin price spike

KUWAIT: Despite continued increases in US shale production, oil prices saw sizeable gains last month as market fundamentals continued to tighten and geopolitical factors heightened concerns over supply stability. Brent crude, the international benchmark, has risen 18 percent from its 2018-low in February to more than \$74/bbl currently, while West Texas Intermediate (WTI), the US marker, has gained more than 15 percent from its February-low to reach \$68/bbl. Both crude markers are trading at close to three-and-a-half-year highs and are up more than 10 percent and 13 percent, respectively, so far in 2018.

The US-led airstrike on Syria, concerns over President Trump's intent to withdraw from the Iran nuclear agreement and Venezuela's oil production declines have pushed oil prices up in recent weeks. The prospect of a global trade war sparked by a deterioration in trade relations between the US and China, however, has represented a downside risk. While that fear appears to have eased, the fallout could be significant in terms of reduced global trade, economic activity and therefore oil demand.

Supply concern

President Trump indicated in January that he would not be amenable to continue waiving sanctions on Iran unless the US congress and the other Iran deal signatories (known officially as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, JCPOA) took a tougher line on the Iranian regime's weapons development program. His appointment of Mike Pompeo as Secretary of State and John Bolton as National Security Advisor, two notable foreign policy hawks and vocal critics of the JCPOA, would appear to have made America's withdrawal from the agreement all but inevitable when the deadline expires on 12 May. Taking the most conservative estimate, 400,000-500,000 b/d of Iran's exports could be lost within a year in the event that sanctions are re-imposed. However, the figure is highly uncertain since the Europeans, the Russians and the Chinese believe that Iran is in compliance with JCPOA obligations and those members purchasing Iranian crude are unlikely to curtail imports unless substantial pressure is brought to bear on them by the



Americans (through, for example, restricting access to the US banking system).

Other OPEC members could in theory step in with increased volumes to compensate for the loss of Iranian barrels, but this is unlikely under the current circumstances, with OPEC focused on compliance and determined to keep supplies tight (and prices up).

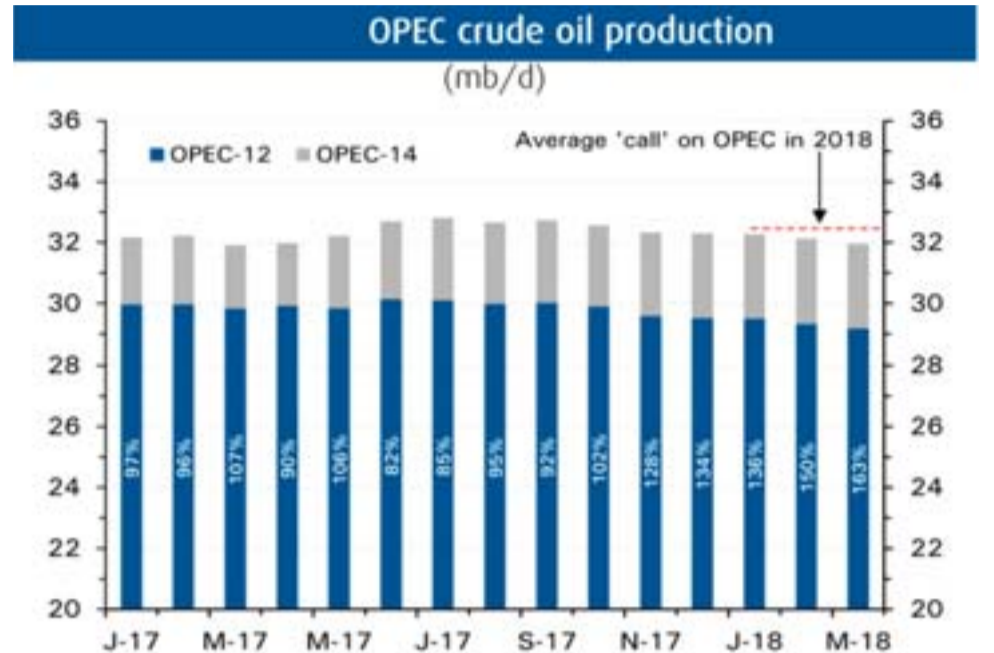
Venezuela's crude output, meanwhile, continues to decline due to the country's economic crisis and chronic underinvestment. OPEC figures for February show Venezuelan production down to just 1.59 mb/d, a year-on-year (y/y) decline of 700,000 b/d or 31 percent. Its oil infrastructure is creaking under the weight of mismanagement, negative cash flow and foreign obligations-up to 37 percent of the country's oil production (approx. 600,000 b/d) is sent to Russia and China as repayment for past loans. Absent a reversal in the fortunes of Venezuela or in President Trump's mindset regarding Iran, then markets would likely continue to price in the risk of reduced global oil supplies and decreased global spare production capacity especially in the context of buoyant demand. Oil prices would likely

find a new support level around \$70, rather than the lower bound of \$60 of earlier in the year. The current market consensus is for oil prices to average about \$64 this year.

Bullish sentiment

Money managers have amassed a record number of bets on prices going up in recent weeks. The net long position in ICE Brent crude reached 632,444 contracts in mid-April, the highest in data going back to 2011. Though intensifying in recent weeks, this bullish trend began in mid-2017, just after OPEC agreed to extend the supply cuts into 2018. And since then, market fundamentals have tightened, with OPEC withdrawing 1.9 mb/d of crude from the market since January 2017 and reducing OECD crude and product stocks from more than 3 billion barrels at the beginning of 2017 to 2.84 billion barrels in February.

Indeed, the International Energy Agency (IEA) said in its latest report that OPEC and its partners led by Russia could declare as soon as next month "mission accomplished" in their quest to bring global stocks to below their target five-year average. Inventories were only



30 million barrels above OPEC's target as of February, the most recent data point. OPEC and Russia indicated last week that they intend to continue cooperating beyond 2018 in order to keep the market balanced.

OPEC own output fell to 31.9 mb/d in March, according to OPEC secondary sources. Venezuela, Saudi Arabia and Angola led the declines, which totaled 170,000 b/d month-on-month (m/m). This brought OPEC's compliance rate up to a record 163 percent in March, while non-OPEC producers achieved a compliance of 90 percent, the IEA noted.

The IEA puts global demand growth at 1.5 mb/d in 2018, a slight fall from last year's 1.6 mb/d, but still solid. The agency's oil outlook tends to reflect the IMF's economic projections. These now show global growth steady at 3.9 percent in both 2018 and 2019, with emerging Asian economies, led by India, the main engines of global growth. Meanwhile, China recorded another robust quarter of economic growth in 1Q18, with output rising by 6.8 percent y/y. The pace of China's economic expansion is a key barometer of oil demand, given that it is the world's largest oil

importer and accounts for 13 percent of worldwide oil consumption.

US shale and trade war risks

The IEA expects non-OPEC supply growth, led by US shale, to top 1.8 mb/d in 2018. US crude production is projected to rise by 1.3 mb/d, almost double last year's growth. Output reached 10.54 mb/d in the second week of April amid rising oil rig counts.

In terms of oil balances, US shale has already replaced more than two-thirds of the supplies withdrawn from the market by OPEC and its partners since the start of last year. But thanks to buoyant oil demand and increasing talk of pipeline bottlenecks in the country, US supply growth will probably not be enough to tip the global oil balance in 2018 from an expected slight deficit (-0.4 mb/d on average) to a surplus. Of course, the market would be affected were global oil demand to take a hit from trade wars sparked by escalating tit-for-tat tariffs between the US and China. The IEA warned that a 5 percent drop in global trade could reduce international fuel oil bunker demand (3.6 percent of global oil demand) by 5 percent, for example.

North-linked firms soar on Seoul market after summit

SEOUL: Shares in South Korean builders, railway component makers and other firms with links to the North rocketed yesterday as Friday's inter-Korea summit fuelled optimism for new cross-border projects. The historic meeting saw the North's leader Kim Jong Un and South Korean President Moon Jae-in vowing to "encourage more active cooperation, exchanges" and promote "co-prosperity".

The declaration sent shares of many firms which were once involved in now moribund inter-Korean projects shooting up on the Seoul stock market. Shares of Hyundai Engineering & Construction-which built buildings at the now-shuttered Kaesong jointly-run industrial complex in the North-surged 26 percent. The zone-where 53,000 North Korean workers once churned out products ranging from watches to clothes for some 120 South Korean companies-was

shuttered in 2016 under Moon's conservative predecessor Park Geun-hye.

Kim and Moon agreed on Friday to open a joint liaison office in the Kaesong area-a move seen by some as a first step toward reopening the compound, although UN Security Council sanctions imposed on the North over its missile programs could yet stymie such hopes.

Nam Kwang Engineering & Construction, which once ran a construction materials factory in the complex, jumped 15 percent. Apparel maker Good People rose 6.3 percent, although North Korea is banned from both importing and exporting textiles under the UN measures.

Hyundai Elevator jumped 11 percent. It has a controlling stake in Hyundai Asan, which holds rights from Pyongyang and Seoul for several cross-border projects including the Kaesong development.

Other units of the Hyundai group, whose late founder-a refugee from the North-pioneered cross-border economic projects, saw their shares soar in anticipation of a business boom. Hyundai Information Technology climbed 20.4 percent and railway equipment maker Hyundai Rotem soared by the daily limit of 30 percent after Kim and Moon vowed steps towards the "connection and modernization of the railways and roads" between the two halves of the peninsula. — AFP

McDonald's Q1 earnings jump on strong US, China sales

NEW YORK: Fast-food giant McDonald's reported higher first-quarter earnings yesterday behind solidly better sales in the US, China and several other key markets. Earnings for the quarter ending March 31 were \$1.4 billion, up 13.2 percent. Revenues dropped 9.5 percent following the sales of company-owned restaurants to franchisers.

Shares jumped following the results, which bested analyst expectations and showed continued strength in the US and in many key overseas markets. Important international markets with good results included Britain, Germany, China and Italy. Those countries helped compensate for weaker markets, such as South Korea. Chief executive Steve Easterbrook has been credited with boosting the chain's fortunes after being tapped to lead the company in 2015.

Key steps have included simplifying the menu, improving restaurant appearance and



BEIJING: In this file photo, people stand outside a McDonald's restaurant in Beijing. Fast-food giant McDonald's reported higher first-quarter earnings yesterday. — AFP

moving more swiftly to tech-centered ventures, such as orders via mobile application. "We're keeping the customer at the center of everything we do as we continue enhancing their McDonald's experience," Easterbrook said. "We are satisfying the

rising expectations customers have for the taste and quality of our food and greater convenience as they visit our restaurants or enjoy meals delivered to their homes and offices." Shares rose 4.1 percent to \$164.73 in pre-market trading. — AFP

EXCHANGE RATES

Al-Muzaini Exchange Co.	
ASIAN COUNTRIES	
Japanese Yen	2.806
Indian Rupees	4.630
Pakistani Rupees	2.602
Sri Lankan 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
Rate for Transfer	Selling Rate
US Dollar	301.300
Canadian Dollar	235.590
Sterling Pound	416.500
Euro	367.015
Swiss Frank	300.135
Bahrain Dinar	801.270
UAE Dirhams	82.435
Qatari Riyals	83.665
Saudi Riyals	81.240
Jordanian Dinar	426.240
Egyptian Pound	17.020
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.913
Indian Rupees	4.521
Pakistani Rupees	2.607
Bangladesh Taka	3.615
Philippines Peso	5.795
Cyprus pound	17.935

Japanese Yen	3.760	
Syrian Pound	1.585	
Nepalese Rupees	2.827	
Malaysian Ringgit	77.760	
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	48.040	
Thai Baht	10.565	
Turkish Lira	74.980	
BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL		
CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
Europe		
British Pound	0.411214	0.418714
Czech Korune	0.006346	0.015646
Danish Krone	0.045015	0.050015
Euro	0.360865	0.368365
Georgian Lari	0.138050	0.138050
Hungarian 0.00136	0.001326	
Norwegian Krone	0.033844	0.039044
Romanian Leu	0.064488	0.081338
Russian ruble	0.004835	0.004835
Slovakia	0.008972	0.018972
Swedish Krona	0.030824	0.035824
Swiss Franc	0.299378	0.310378
Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.221023	0.233023
New Zealand Dollar	0.207975	0.217475
America		
Canadian Dollar	0.230117	0.239117
US Dollars	0.297550	0.301950
US Dollars Mnt	0.298050	0.301950

Asia	
Bangladesh Taka	0.002981
Chinese Yuan	0.046119
Hong Kong Dollar	0.036683
Indian Rupee	0.003982
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000017
Japanese Yen	0.002682
Korean Won	0.000273
Malaysian Ringgit	0.073167
Nepalese Rupee	0.002780
Pakistan Rupee	0.001984
Philippine Peso	0.005676
Singapore Dollar	0.222510
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001612
Taiwan	0.010350
Thai Baht	0.009223
Arab	
Bahraini Dinar	0.793501
Egyptian Pound	0.013914
Iranian Riyal	0.000083
Iraqi Dinar	0.000203
Jordanian Dinar	0.420844
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000155
Moroccan Dirhams	0.022592
Omani Riyal	0.777188
Qatar Riyal	0.078566
Saudi Riyal	0.079353
Syrian Pound	0.001278
Tunisian Dinar	0.119617
Turkish Lira	0.069438
UAE Dirhams	0.080703
Yemeni Riyal	0.000980

Business

US inflation measures jump; consumer spending picks up

Core PCE price index increases 1.9% from year ago

WASHINGTON: US consumer prices accelerated in the year to March, with a measure of underlying inflation surging to near the Federal Reserve's 2 percent target as last year's weak readings dropped out of the calculation. The rise in the annual inflation measures reported by the Commerce Department yesterday was anticipated by economists and Fed officials and is not expected to alter the US central bank's gradual pace of interest rate increases. Annual inflation readings in March of last year were held down by large declines in the price of cell phone service plans.

Consumer prices as measured by the personal consumption expenditures (PCE) price index jumped 2.0 percent year-on-year last month. That was the biggest gain since February 2017 and followed a 1.7 percent rise in February. The PCE price index was unchanged on a monthly basis after advancing 0.2 percent in February.

Excluding the volatile food and energy components, the PCE price index soared 1.9 percent in the 12 months through March, the biggest increase since February 2017, after increasing 1.6 percent in February. The so-called core PCE price index rose 0.2 month-on-month in March after a similar gain in February. The core PCE index is the Fed's preferred inflation measure.

Last month's increase was in line with economists' expectations. Minutes of the Fed's March 20-21 policy meeting published this month showed officials expected the annual PCE price indexes to accelerate in March partly because of "the arithmetic effect of the soft readings on inflation in early 2017 dropping out of the calculation." The minutes also noted that the rise in inflation emanating from the so-called base effects "by itself, would not justify a change in the

projected path" for the central bank's benchmark overnight interest rate.

Fed officials are scheduled to convene today and tomorrow for a regular policy meeting. The Fed raised rates last month and forecast at least two more rate hikes for this year. The dollar slipped against a basket of currencies after the data. US Treasury yields edged lower. US stock index futures were trading higher.

Tightening labor market

Away from the favorable base effects, inflation is rising thanks to a tightening labor market. The government reported last Friday that wages and salaries recorded their biggest increase in 11 years in the first quarter. Inflation is also likely to be fanned by an anticipated pickup in economic growth, driven by a \$1.5 trillion tax cut package and increased government spending.

The Commerce Department's report yesterday also showed consumer spending increased 0.4 percent in March after being unchanged in February. The data was included in last Friday's advance first-quarter gross domestic product report. Consumer spending, which accounts for more than two-thirds of US economic activity, grew at a 1.1 percent annualized rate in the January-March period, the slowest pace in nearly five years, after surging at a 4.0 percent pace in the fourth quarter. As a result of the weakness in consumer spending, the economy grew at a 2.3 percent rate in the first quarter after expanding at a 2.9 percent pace in the final three months of 2017. When adjusted for inflation, consumer spending increased 0.4 percent in March. The so-called real consumer spending fell 0.2 percent in February. The rebound in real consumer spending last month supports expecta-



WASHINGTON, DC: This file photo, shows a view of the Federal Reserve Board of Governors seal before a briefing at the US Federal Reserve in Washington, DC. —AFP

tions that consumption was held back by temporary factors and will gain steam in the second quarter.

Consumer spending in March was lifted by a rise in purchases of long-lasting goods such as motor vehicles after two straight monthly declines. There were also increases in purchases of recreational goods. Cooler temperatures in March boosted demand for heating, leading to a rise in household

electricity and gas purchases. Personal income rose 0.3 percent in March after increasing by the same margin in February. Wages gained 0.2 percent in March after rising 0.4 percent in the prior month. With spending outpacing income, savings fell to \$460.6 billion last month from \$483.1 billion in February. The saving rate slipped to 3.1 percent from 3.3 percent in February. —Reuters

Greece deserves debt relief after reform effort: OECD

ATHENS: Greece has made an "enormous" reform effort since its debt crisis broke out and its international lenders must now grant the country debt relief, OECD chief Angel Gurría said yesterday.

Gurría, who met Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras in Athens, urged Greece to continue with reforms after its third international bailout expires in August. "I want to congratulate the entire Greek people for an enormous reform effort, it was a very ambitious reform package," he said in translated comments. "And these reforms are bearing fruit."

In its latest survey on Greece, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development sees the Greek economy growing by two percent this year and possibly by 2.3 percent next year, Gurría said. He welcomed the country's national growth strategy, which was presented to euro zone finance minister last week, but warned that high unemployment and low investment were still among the challenges that Greece faced.

Tsipras said Greece and the OECD would work together in the post-bailout period and reiterated that Greece does not need any more belt-tightening but relief measures instead. —Reuters



ATHENS: Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras (right) welcomes Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Secretary General Angel Gurría (left) before their talks in Athens yesterday. —AFP

Rusal shareholder wants new strategy to face US sanctions

MOSCOW: SUAL Partners, a co-owner of Russian aluminum producer Rusal, said yesterday that Rusal's board and shareholders needed to start work as soon as possible on a new strategy after the company was hit by US sanctions.

Washington this month imposed sanctions on billionaire Oleg Deripaska and several companies in which he is a prominent shareholder, including Rusal, in response to what the United States called

Russia's "malign activities." SUAL Partners is Russian billionaire Viktor Vekselberg's investment vehicle and owns a 22.5 percent stake in Rusal.

SUAL Partners will take "all necessary steps to facilitate the swift lifting of US Treasury Department sanctions on Rusal," SUAL Partners representative Andrei Shtorkh said in a statement sent to Reuters. "At the same time, SUAL Partners believe that in these circumstances Rusal cannot keep working and evolving in the same way as it did before," Shtorkh said. "Serious transformations, reflecting the new reality, must be carried out. For this purpose, the board of directors and the shareholders of Rusal must swiftly start discussions on the company's new strategy, which will deter-

mine the new thrust of its development in the short and longer term," he added, without elaborating on what the new strategy might be.

A Rusal spokeswoman declined to comment, when asked about the SUAL statement, as did Swiss-based trading and mining giant Glencore, also a Rusal shareholder and one of its biggest customers.

Rusal has been considering a range of measures to try to convince the US Treasury Department to lift the sanctions, which have led customers to stop buying its aluminum and sent creditors scrambling to offload debt. It is planning a major overhaul of its board and management, sources close to the company told Reuters last week.

Rusal's shareholders are deep in discus-

sions working out how to save the company, a source close to the situation said. "These discussions are important because the company cannot deliver its products to clients, it is operationally paralyzed, and clients are starting to complain," the source said. Deripaska has also agreed in principle to reduce his stake in En+, which holds a 48 percent share of Rusal, after the United States said it could remove Rusal from the sanctions list if the sanctioned businessman ceded control.

However, a spokesperson for the US Treasury said this did not guarantee the end of sanctions for the company. Vekselberg and his Renova Group conglomerate were also included on the U.S. sanctions list. —Reuters

Eurozone bond yields creep up, German, Italian inflation data caps rise

LONDON: Government bond yields in the euro area nudged up yesterday, reversing some of the sharp falls seen late last week, with bigger rises limited by further signs that inflation in the bloc remains subdued. Annual inflation in four German states was steady in April, regional data showed yesterday, suggesting price pressures in Europe's largest economy are stable.

In Germany's most populous state, North Rhine-Westphalia, annual inflation slowed to 1.5 percent in April from 1.6 percent the previous month, the data showed. Yearly consumer price inflation was unchanged in the states of Baden-Wuerttemberg, Bavaria, Hesse and Brandenburg.

Data from Italy meanwhile showed annual inflation slowed to 0.6 percent in April from 0.9 percent in March. The inflation numbers from two of the euro zone's biggest economies points to the challenge the European Central Bank (ECB) faces in seeking to meet its target of inflation just below 2 percent in the eurozone as a whole. The flash estimate of euro zone inflation in April is due out on Thursday.

"The German inflation data suggests another subdued inflation reading for the euro zone later in the week," Commerzbank rates strategist Rainer Guntermann said. "We think the core euro zone number could slip below 1 percent, which may cause a headache for the ECB's exit strategy," he said, referring to the central bank ending its policy of injecting new money into the economy, known as quantitative easing. Benchmark 10-year bond yields were 1 to 2 basis points (bps) higher as stock markets rallied and last week's historic summit between North and South Korea eased concerns about tensions on the Korean peninsula, denting the appeal of safe-haven bonds.

A softening in eurozone economic data and signs that inflationary pressures remain subdued, encouraging the ECB to hold off from raising interest rates until well into 2019, have supported bond markets in recent weeks. German monthly retail sales unexpectedly fell in March, data showed yesterday, marking a fourth consecutive drop.

"The soft tone of today's inflation data coupled with the recent dip in the activity surveys appears to justify the ECB's latest decision not to make any major changes in its forward guidance for now," Capital Economics chief European economist Jennifer McKeown said.

Still, a sell-off in the US Treasury market that pushed 10-year Treasury yields briefly above 3 percent last week has weighed on eurozone bond markets this month. Germany's 10-year bond yield was 1 bps higher at 0.58 percent, above a one-week low of 0.56 percent hit on Friday. It was poised to end April up 9 bps, the first monthly rise since January. —Reuters

EU 'prepared' for US trade tariffs as deadline looms

BRUSSELS: The EU said yesterday it was "prepared" for US President Donald Trump imposing controversial tariffs on steel and aluminum from the bloc, as a deadline looms amid growing fears of all-out trade war. The European Union's top trade official Cecilia Malmstrom is set to hold last-ditch talks with US Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross on Monday but hopes for winning a permanent exemption are slim.

Trump granted the EU temporary relief from the 25 percent steel and 10 percent aluminum duties but this expires today and cannot be renewed. Europe has lined up its own punitive tariffs on American imports including iconic items such as Harley-Davidson motorbikes, blue jeans and bourbon whiskey.

Margaritis Schinas, spokesman for the European Commission, the bloc's executive arm, said contacts were under way with Washington "at all levels" to try to head off a tariff tit-for-tat but warned the EU was ready to act, saying Brussels officials would even work on Tuesday's public holiday to tackle the issue. —AFP



HYDERABAD: Indian laborers load mangoes at the Gaddiannaram fruit market on the outskirts of Hyderabad yesterday. —AFP

Business

T-Mobile, Sprint to merge, push superfast 5G network

A force for positive change for all US consumers, businesses: Legere

WASHINGTON: US wireless operators Sprint and T-Mobile will form a new company and push development of a super-fast 5G network, the heads of both firms said on Sunday.

The announcement came months after the two companies called off merger talks when they failed to clinch mutually agreeable terms. "I'm excited to announce that @T-Mobile & @Sprint have reached an agreement to come together to form a new company—a larger, stronger competitor that will be a force for positive change for all US consumers and businesses!" T-Mobile CEO John Legere announced as part of a series of tweets about the tie-up.

T-Mobile, a division of Germany's Deutsche Telekom, and Sprint—a subsidiary of Japan's SoftBank—are at present the third and fourth largest US wireless operators, respectively.

Together they would have about 131 million subscribers, virtually matching second-ranked AT&T and posing stiff competition to market leader Verizon Communications.

Sprint chief executive Marcelo Claure also used Twitter to announce "some incredibly exciting news - @Sprint and @T-Mobile are joining forces." He said they will "combine to create the most disruptive US carrier!"

In a video posted online the long-haired Legere and Claure, wearing a T-shirt, appeared side-by-side.

Legere said "the New @T-Mobile will be the ONLY company able to bring a broad & deep nationwide 5G network—something no US wireless company could achieve alone in the critical early years of 5G."

In its first three years, the new firm will be able to invest around \$40 billion, "nearly 50 percent more than both of us invested in the last three years," he said.

'20,000 lost jobs'

Legere announced that he would lead the new company as CEO, while T-Mobile's chief operating officer Mike Sievert would be president.

T-Mobile is one of the biggest earners for its German parent. In 2017, it added 5.7 million net new customers compared with 8.2 million the previous year, but the hoped-for merger with Sprint fell through in November. At that time, the Communication Workers of America union had warned that a merger would result in the loss of at least 20,000 US jobs through store closings and other consolidation, while also harming consumers.

The two firms had previously held talks in 2014 on a merger but ended discussions in the face of opposition from US regulators. 5G or fifth-generation wireless communication networks would enable services such as smart cities, remote surgery and driverless cars.

The networks would allow customers to experience video and virtual reality with greater ease.

Claure, who is also a partner in David Beckham's Miami Major League Soccer franchise, said "the difference between 4G and 5G is the difference between black-and-white TV and color TV."

The first commercial 5G roll-outs begin this year and next in the United States, Korea and Japan, but industry players have cautioned development of 5G still has a long way to go.

In February China's Huawei unveiled what it said is the world's first commercial chipset to meet the standards of 5G wireless networks. An unusual move by US President Donald Trump earlier this year to block a proposed takeover of Qualcomm by a chip rival then based in Singapore highlighted growing concerns about the rise of Chinese competitors.

Trump's order made no mention of China, but a letter from the US Treasury Department warned that the mooted takeover by Broadcom might hurt US leadership in 5G. 5G will account for 14 percent of global wireless connections by 2025, according to GSMA, the global mobile operators association. Deutsche Telekom CEO Timotheus Hoetges has estimated the cost of providing 5G networks in



This combination of file pictures created yesterday shows the T-Mobile logo and a Sprint cell phone company logo.—AFP

Europe alone will be €300-500 billion (\$363-606 billion). The telecoms industry will invest \$275 billion in the United

States to develop 5G networks there, Claure said at the Mobile World Congress in Barcelona in February.—AFP

Beancounting: The EU's 'coffee-a-day' new budget

BRUSSELS: The European Commission will unveil proposals tomorrow for the Union's next seven-year budget, starting in 2021. Worth over a trillion euros (dollars), the costs of EU membership played a role in Britain voting to quit the bloc. However, EU leaders insist that spending just about one percent of total income—roughly equal to the cost of one cup of coffee a day for 440 million citizens—brings benefits for security, stability and prosperity.

Here are answers to key questions:

DOES BREXIT MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

Absolutely. Despite a large and much envied British rebate, the loss of the EU's second-ranked economy will leave a hole of at least 10 billion euros a year. Rich states such as the Netherlands and Sweden insist they do not want to pay another cent and demand that the budget shrink. They have, however, lost an important ally since Britain was a driving force behind previous cuts. Poorer countries which are net recipients of EU cash, such as Poland, have warned that they will not accept less from Brussels.

WHAT IS THE BUDGET FOR?

The 2014-20 budget or Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) is 1.1 trillion euros or 155 billion a year and, when agreed in 2013 was worth 1.03 percent of the bloc's economic output. It represents 2.2 percent of public spending in the 28 EU states.

Most goes on subsidising farmers, improving poorer

regions and promoting cooperation across the bloc. About 39 percent goes on farm support, rural development and related areas and 34 percent on economic, social and regional cohesion. Lawmaking and administration costs about 10 billion euros a year, or 6 percent.

WILL THAT CHANGE?

Yes. Budget Commissioner Guenther Oettinger has promised to propose spending at least as great as at present despite Brexit—at least 1.1 percent of the EU's Brexit-diminished output and possibly close to 1.2 percent—he calls it "1.1x percent".

EU leaders expect to put more cash into:

- Policing frontiers to control immigration—one source told Reuters the Commission will propose quintupling spending on border guards to 25 billion euros over 2021-7;
- Science and technology research and cooperation;
- Joint EU defence projects, especially on procurement.

To make room for that, Oettinger has spoken of cuts of about six percent in spending on agricultural and regional support.

SO THAT'S ALL SETTLED?

Far from it. The last MFF negotiations went down to the wire, taking two and a half years of haggling. Member states and the European Parliament are set for tough talks, though there is an informal deadline of agreement in the middle of next year.

Germany and France, the biggest paymasters putting in 19 and 17 percent of the budget respectively, are ready to plug some of the Brexit gap if the budget suits their new priorities. Paris, for example, wants to see some budget allocated to the 19-member euro zone as part of plans to bolster the EU single currency. With its traditionally strong farm lobby, France is also likely to defend farmers from pressure to cut back on EU subsidies.

Supermarket merger carries LSE stocks higher

LONDON: The prospect of a supermarket mega-merger helped carry the London stock market higher yesterday. Earlier, Hong Kong led a rally across most Asian markets as traders brushed off a slowdown in the US economy, while the boost from last week's historic North-South Korea summit continued to support Seoul and the won.

"A genuinely game-changing deal in the supermarket sector was the main highlight" for London's benchmark FTSE 100 index, said Spreadex analyst Connor Campbell. Britain's second and third biggest supermarket chains Sainsbury's and Walmart-owned Asda have agreed to merge, the pair said Monday, hoping to create a £13-billion (\$18-billion, 15-billion-euro) retail king and leapfrog UK number one Tesco. Sainsbury's stock shot up 16.3 percent to 313.80 pence in London afternoon deals, while Tesco was down 1.0 percent at 235.80 pence. Asda is not listed. Walmart shares slid 0.7 percent in opening trading in New York to \$87.29.

Shares in T-Mobile and Sprint tumbled at the opening bell as investors got cold feet over the prospects US regulators would approve allowing the number of national network operators to drop to three, T-Mobile shares fell 3.4 percent to \$62.32 while Sprint shares slumped 10.9 percent to \$5.79. A previous effort by the firms to merge in 2014 was abandoned after the Obama administration signaled it was unlikely to approve. Investors across the globe meanwhile continued to react to data Friday that showed US growth had

slowed in January-March. Despite the update, tech firms on Wall Street won pre-weekend support after healthy earnings figures from Amazon, Microsoft and Intel. The positive lead from New York provided some much-needed help Monday to Asian tech firms, which had been hammered in recent weeks by worries about the lucrative smartphone market. Hong Kong-listed AAC Technologies and Tencent each posted healthy gains, while in Taipei Apple suppliers TSMC was also sharply higher.

On broader markets Hong Kong ended 1.7-percent higher, with a better-than-forecast Chinese factory activity reading also providing support as it eased concerns about a slowdown in the mainland economy. Seoul added 0.9 percent while Sydney gained 0.5 percent. Tokyo and Shanghai were closed for public holidays.

Geopolitical glow

South Korean traders remain upbeat after Friday's meeting between President Moon Jae-in and Kim Jong Un, which fuelled hopes for peace on the peninsula and for Pyongyang's possible denuclearisation. Adding to the positive news, Kim said he would shut the North's atomic test site within weeks and invite American weapons experts to verify its closure. And new US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said Washington had an "obligation" to pursue peace.

The developments, which come weeks before a planned summit between Kim and US President Donald Trump, have helped push the won up more than one percent against the dollar.

Attention this week turns to the Federal Reserve's latest policy meeting. While the Fed is not expected to raise borrowing costs, its statement Wednesday will be scanned for clues about future moves. That is followed by the release Friday of US jobs figures for April, which will provide a fresh look at the economy and give an idea about the Fed's monetary policy plans.—Reuters

Weak inflation data is hurdle on ECB's way out of easy money

FRANKFURT/BERLIN: Consumer prices in Germany, Italy and Portugal grew less than expected in April, data showed yesterday, raising fresh questions about the European Central Bank's plans to wean the eurozone off its supply of easy money.

The ECB has been widely expected to wind down its 2.55 trillion euro (\$3.08 trillion) bond-buying program by the end of the year and its President, Mario Draghi, expressed confidence in the economic outlook after last week's policy meeting. But a string of softer-than-expected economic indicators since the start of the year has been casting a shadow on the ECB's plans, which are predicated on euro zone inflation hovering around 1.5 percent in the remainder of the year.

"The market is starting to doubt and the (economic) numbers confirm that," Kenneth Broux, an analyst at Societe Generale, said. "You've seen negative surprises throughout Q1 and you need to see the trend turn." Price growth in Italy and Portugal was a paltry 0.6 percent and 0.4 percent respectively this month, according to preliminary estimates published yesterday.

Germany's reading was closer to the mark at 1.4 percent but still came in below analyst expectations, raising

the prospect of a new disappointment when data for the euro zone as a whole is published on Thursday. "For the ECB, today's German inflation data will not make life any easier," Carsten Brzeski, an economist Dutch bank ING said.

"The decision on the nitty-gritty details of QE tapering could become complicated."

One key issue will be the uneven picture in different countries, with Germany closer than most to the ECB's target of just under 2 percent. ECB policymakers from Germany and the Netherlands have long called for a rapid winding down of bond purchases, which would then pave the way for higher interest rates. "We're definitely in the comfort zone for consumers," Uwe Burkert, an economist at German regional bank LBBW, said.

Yet Spanish inflation data had disappointed on Friday at 1.1 percent, while France provided the only positive surprise with a reading of 1.8 percent.

Following the mixed readings, economists at Barclays cut their euro zone inflation forecast for April by 10 basis points to 1.3 percent yesterday, bringing it in line with the median estimate in a Reuters poll of economists. Not all data was weak yesterday, however, with loans to euro zone households growing at their fastest pace since 2008 at 3 percent year on year in March, and credit to companies also accelerating to 3.3 percent.

But a broader indicator of money circulating in the currency bloc, which often foreshadows future lending activity, slowed sharply, likely reflecting reduced bond purchases from the ECB, and German retail sales unexpectedly shrank.—Reuters



SOFIA: French Minister for the Economy and Finance Bruno Le Maire speaks as he gives a joint press conference with German Finance Minister after an informal meeting of economic and financial affairs ministers (ECOFIN) at the National Palace of Culture in Sofia.—AFP

WHAT'S THE BIGGEST FIGHT?

Aside from possible reforms to the farm budget, officials expect the biggest fight to be one that pits poor, ex-communist countries in the east against rich net contributors in the west over what Brussels sees as threats to democracy and the rule of law, notably in Poland and Hungary. Leaders there deny they are breaking EU laws and values to entrench their own power.

EU officials have told Reuters their proposals include a dramatic novelty which will tie disbursement of EU funds that via national and regional governments to authorities' provision of functioning judicial systems capable of enforcing EU rules. Expect Poland and Hungary to lead a vocal push back.—cutters

Wall St rises on earnings, M&A boost

NEW YORK: US stocks rose yesterday as strong earnings reports from McDonald's and a slate of merger announcements lifted sentiment, while inflation worries were kept in check after tepid data on U.S. income and spending. McDonald's jumped 4.7 percent after the world's biggest food chain reported a better-than-expected rise in sales at its restaurants.

The consumer discretionary index was up 0.8 percent, which led the gains among the 11 major S&P sectors. Shares of oil refiner Andeavor surged 15.9 percent, the biggest gainer on the S&P 500, after rival Marathon Petroleum agreed to buy the company for more than \$23 billion. Marathon's shares were down 4.2 percent.

The main indexes are on track to record their first monthly gain since January as strong quarterly earnings take the lead, even as investors weigh concerns about rising interest rates and inflation.

"If the previous several weeks of earnings season are any indication, corporate results should continue to act as a buffer to any meaningful turn lower in equity markets," noted Peter Kenney, senior market strategist at Global Markets Advisory Group, in New York. "However, the principal threat to equity markets remains rising interest rates." US bond yields edged lower after data showed March personal income rose 0.3 percent, lower than estimates of 0.4 percent.

On the consumption side, personal spending in February was lowered to 0.3 percent, from the previously reported 0.4 percent.

Focus will turn to the Federal Reserve, when it meets on May 1 and 2 to discuss monetary policy. Though the central bank is not expected to raise rates, investors will be on the watch for clues about inflation and the pace of future rate hikes. Despite strong results, warnings from some large US manufacturers about escalating costs going forward, had investors worried that profit margins may get squeezed. Of the 267 S&P 500 firms that reported first-quarter earnings as of Friday, 79.4 percent topped profit expectations, according to Thomson Reuters data. That lifted the estimate for earnings growth to 24.6 percent from about 18 percent at the start of the season.

At 10:01 am ET, the Dow Jones Industrial Average was up 156.55 points, or 0.64 percent, at 24,467.74, the S&P 500 was up 9.81 points, or 0.37 percent, at 2,679.72 and the Nasdaq Composite was up 34.40 points, or 0.48 percent, at 7,154.20.

Investors are also keeping an eye on developments around the \$26 billion takeover of wireless carrier Sprint by T-Mobile announced on Sunday, which needs to clear five regulatory hurdles.

Sprint fell 12.8 percent, while T-Mobile was down 5.1 percent. Allergan Plc reversed course to fall 1.6 percent after its quarterly profit topped Wall Street estimates. Technology stocks were the biggest boost, led by Apple's 2.4 percent rise ahead of its results today. Advancing issues outnumbered decliners for a 1.75-to-1 ratio on the NYSE and for a 1.64-to-1 ratio on the Nasdaq. The S&P index recorded 16 new 52-week highs and four new lows, while the Nasdaq recorded 35 new highs and nine new lows.

Boursa Kuwait

Boursa Kuwait ended yesterday's session with the All Market Index rising by 11.91 points and settling at 4,793.7 points. This index trade volume amounted to 88.18 million, in 3,855 spot deals, valued at KD 14.18 million (\$46.7 million).

Main Market Index rose 20.06 to 4,822.6 points, with stock volume at 63.91 million shares, in 2,293 spot transactions, valued at KD 3.2 million (\$10.5 million). Premier Market Index rose 2.4 to 4,777.1 points, with stock volume standing at 24.2 million, in 1,562 dealings, valued at KD 10.9 million (\$35.9 million).—Agencies

Business

In collaboration with KFH, Al Shaya & Al Sager offers Peugeot SUV 2018

Launch offer via operational lease product



KUWAIT: (From Left to right) Hassan Al-Daramally, Nader Selmah, Muaz Al Zuabi, Ashish Tandon, Ahed Al Eissa, Dhari Almenayes

KUWAIT: Kuwait Automotive Imports Co (Al Shaya & Al Sager) and Kuwait Finance House (KFH) have announced the launch of the all-new Peugeot SUV 2018 via operational lease product or lease with maintenance, a service that offers many benefits to corporate and retail customers. The joint cooperation includes a variety of 2018 model: Peugeot 5008 Allure - Peugeot 5008 Active - Peugeot 3008 GT and Peugeot 2008

Allure, which will be available at KFH showrooms in Kuwait. The interior design of the all new PEUGEOT SUV is unique to the market. The design is successful and rich, and the on-board technology promises much.

This feeling is carried over to the outside. At first glance, the new PEUGEOT car is striking and surprises by the strength of its character. The effect is strong, clear and Self-evident: This is an SUV

Getting into the new PEUGEOT SUV is to enter another world, surprising, original and oozing quality. A spectacular, almost futuristic dashboard immediately catches the eye. This coherent and highly technological ensemble is the latest generation PEUGEOT i-Cockpit, a novel concept that has rewritten the book on the car cockpit. Here, everything seems to be at the service of the pleasure and concentration of the Driver in a pronouncedly



high-tech niche. The steering wheel is even more compact and has been redesigned with two flats to make it easier to grip and to afford the driver maximum visibility and legroom. The close attention paid to material choices and attention to detail - full hide leather from level 2, chrome inserts, gloss black trims - deliver a high level of perceived quality and attractiveness. The multi-award-winning Peugeot 3008 SUV was named Drive 360's Family

Car of the Year, the judging panel acclaimed the 3008 SUV's striking new exterior, class-leading cabin, superior materials and outstanding design.

For the first time with the operational leasing option from KFH in cooperation with Kuwait automotive Imports Co. Clients can choose from a variety of Peugeot SUV that suit their demands and decide on the period of the lease contract ranging from 24 to 36 months.

Infiniti Al-Babtain wins 3 awards at regional sales skills competition



KUWAIT: Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al-Babtain Co (AABC), the authorized dealer of Infiniti vehicles in the State of Kuwait, is proud to announce the outstanding winners of the FY17 regional contest that took place on April 4th and 5th at Park Hyatt hotel in Dubai. Achieving the positions of second Runner Up in Sales, second Runner up in Aftersales and the Infiniti Ambassador Award, the Kuwait based participant's demonstrated exceptional caliber and performance.

The categories within these areas included written tests, customer receiving, telephone skills and vehicle delivery role-play, mystery activities. The winners were congratulated by the Al-Babtain CEO in

the presence of Laurent Pernet, General Manager Automotive at Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al-Babtain and Chief Human Resources Officer, Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al-Babtain.

"Once again, our staff have exhibited the motto we strive to live by at Al-Babtain - of delivering the best experience through passion and innovation in everything we do. Each year, we raise the bar for others watching and accomplish more heights as the new sales ambassadors have proven. As the demand for sales and growth increases, we ensure our employees are consistently trained, adept and excel at achieving new goals the markets expect," said Al-Babtain CEO Saleh Al-Babtain.

Ooredoo offers prepaid bundles with Al-Mulla

KUWAIT: Ooredoo Kuwait announced that its prepaid customers can obtain the latest devices with flexible prepaid plans, courtesy of an agreement with Al-Mulla International Finance Company. Through this agreement, the two companies offer customers high-speed mobile telecommunication and internet services to complement their lifestyle, at the

flexibility of purchase through an international financing company.

The service, which is available exclusively in Ooredoo's head office branch, gives customers the flexibility of choosing the devices that they want with a prepaid line, and



bundling it with the devices that they want, which is financed completely by Al-Mulla International Finance Company.

In a statement to the press, Ooredoo expressed its gratitude to working alongside Al-Mulla International Finance Company to provide customers with affordable flexible solutions to enrich their experience and complement their lifestyle. Ooredoo noted that it is in tandem with its mission to enrich the



experience of customers through telecommunication services.

Ooredoo offers a broad range of mobile telecommunication prepaid and postpaid services, for individuals and corporates.

VIVA wins 'Best Network Development' in MENA award

KUWAIT: VIVA, Kuwait's fastest-growing and most developed telecom operator, has been recognized with an award as "Best Network Development", in the MENA region, presented at the third annual 5G MENA Awards 2018 Ceremony, held in Dubai from 7th to 9th April 2018.

Eng Zarrar Khan, CTO at VIVA commented: "We are proud at VIVA to receive such accolade that fosters our leadership in the telecom market. 5G is the next generation mobile technology that will become a game changer to the society, consumer and

enterprise, therefore VIVA will be the "engine" to support the digital transformation for the country of Kuwait across the society and all verticals (education, health care, mobility...).

He added: "In the latest years, VIVA has continued its efforts to innovate its network by testing both 4.5G technology in 2016 and 5G technology in 2017, so we remain in the leadership path to bring the latest mobile innovation for the country."

5G MENA brings together telecom operators, solution providers, regulators, OTT players, and IoT specialists from across the region to define clear use cases, debate new business models, and drive the connected revolution towards LTE-A, IoT, Smart Cities, and 5G. This year, the conference featured a new, more balanced focus on both the technical and commercial aspects of LTE and 5G Networks, incorporating issues such as early 5G trials and use cases, IoT networks and services, digital transformation, service innovation.



US Fed faces new challenge: A world without labor 'slack'

WASHINGTON: Business is coming in so fast and workers are in such high demand at AOW Associates Inc, an Albany, New York-based construction firm, that its chief financial officer hired a guy six weeks ago for a job that didn't exist.

"We keep our project management ads continuous, even if we are not looking to fill a particular role, and if someone does come along, we make a job for them," AOW CFO Nicki Armsby said in a recent interview. The company is not alone in looking for creative ways to deal with a US labor shortage that, according to recent economic data and documents from the US Federal Reserve, may be getting worse.

Policymakers at the Fed, which holds its latest policy meeting this week, must now decide what weight to give to signs that the economy is reaching a point where wages, inflation and other laggard indicators may turn higher. Data on Friday showed US employment costs rose in the first quarter at an annualized rate of 4 percent, continuing what JP Morgan economists view as a steady march higher since the unemployment rate fell below 5 percent in 2015. Investors appear to be betting on that scenario playing out. The yield on the benchmark 10-year US Treasury note breached the 3 percent level last week for the first time in more than four years.

Backlogs

And labor shortages have been cited by analysts as being responsible for the growing backlogs for manufactured goods in recent supply manager reports. Add in the fiscal stimulus from the Trump administration's tax

cuts and spending that is hitting the economy this year, and the higher prices for aluminum, steel and potentially other goods triggered by new import tariffs, and the tenor of upcoming Fed analysis could be poised to shift.

"Demand has stayed very strong," said Tim Fiore, who heads the Institute of Supply Management's manufacturing business survey committee. "There is plenty for a strong expansion ... Dig into the details and the employment side has clearly been constricting producers' ability to meet demand."

The Fed is not expected to raise interest rates at the end of its two-day policy meeting on Wednesday. It also is not releasing updated economic forecasts and Fed Chairman Jerome Powell is not scheduled to hold a press conference. The policy statement alone could show how policymakers have accounted for a range of recent developments, and how their thinking may have evolved since the last meeting in March, when the US central bank raised rates. According to documents released in the interim, the wages and inflation debate within the Fed appears to be shifting.

In the minutes from the March 20-21 meeting, released earlier this month, the word "slack" was jettisoned in the discussion of labor markets, a notable change in what has been a staple description of labor conditions during the current economic expansion.

The Fed then said in its "Beige Book" report, also released this month, that entrepreneurs across broad sectors of the economy were struggling to fill both skilled and unskilled jobs. "The labor market is tight and continuing to tighten," Erin Browne, head of asset allocation at UBS Asset Management, said on Friday after the Labor Department released the latest employment cost data. "We are finally starting to see that translate into wage inflation."

Although inflation has remained below the Fed's 2 percent medium-term target for years, there appears to be growing confidence among policymakers that the pace of price increases will not collapse again and that the objective will be reached. — Reuters

EU-US: Two months of escalating trade tensions

PARIS: Here are key dates in the trade stand-off between the European Union and the United States, as the clock ticks towards a May 1 deadline for averting a trade war:

Trump threatens, EU responds

On March 1, 2018, US President Donald Trump, who has made correcting his nation's trade deficit a priority, announces that he intends to impose heavy tariffs on steel and aluminium imports.

The EU responds by drawing up a hitlist of flagship American products it could tax including Harley Davidson motorcycles, blue jeans, bourbon whiskey and peanut butter.

Heavy taxes

On March 8 Trump announces tariffs of 25 percent on steel products and 10 percent on aluminium from March 23. He brushes aside warnings from allies on the risks of a trade war with unpredictable consequences. He bases his move on a rarely used procedure in US trade legislation: article 232 which allows him to limit the import of certain products to protect national security.

Exemptions to May 1

On March 22, on the eve of the tariffs coming into force, Trump announces that they will be suspended until May 1 for the European Union, Australia, Argentina, Brazil, and South Korea are also exempted, while Canada and Mexico are spared as they are part of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) trade bloc.

China is not exempted and announces tit-for-tat tariffs, slapping duties on US cars.

EU goes to WTO

On April 16 the EU follows China in complaining to the World Trade Organization (WTO) over the tariffs. "Having a substantial interest as an exporter in this case, the European Union requests consultations with the United States" to agree "safeguards", the EU says. Two days later the EU's Trade Commissioner Cecilia Malmstrom calls for the bloc to be "permanently and unconditionally excluded from these measures". She says the

EU will not negotiate with the US on trade issues otherwise. On April 26 the US National Economic Council Director Larry Kudlow says that exemptions cannot be extended beyond May 1 unless the EU makes "some concessions with respect to trading practices, tariffs and taxes".

France's Economy Minister Bruno Le Maire says that it is not up to Europe to make concessions. On April 29 leaders of the EU's three largest economies - Britain, France and Germany - agree on the need to be "ready to react, if necessary, with efficiency and speed" to new tariffs. —AFP



DHANBAD: Indian coal loaders take a rest at a Bharat Coking Coal Limited (BCL) open cast mine in Dhanbad, in the eastern Indian state of Jharkhand yesterday. —AFP

What's On

ACK success in Injaz 'Company Program' competition

Australian College of Kuwait (ACK) students recently won the Injaz "Company program" Annual Competition for High Schools and Universities in Kuwait. ACK students participated under the company named 'KUN' or 'Be Yourself'. Students worked over 6 months period, after classes and including during their weekends, to finalize their entry.

The requirements for the competition included designing a company from scratch, starting with the need to raise capital, developing the product, marketing and selling, HR organization, tracking financials and finally closure of the company with dividend distribution. The students assembled all their information and data into a formal business report, as well as preparing a booth to showcase their products. The KUN team had to compete against other universities through their presentation as well as participate in an intensive interview with the judges.

The motivation behind the KUN business idea was to revive the richness and

beauty of the Arabic Language through handmade arts, designs and calligraphy. It aimed to spread the power of identity and create a mindset that cherishes the language, civilization and tradition of a rich culture and invite people of curiosity to reflect on their vast cultural wealth. The students who represented ACK were: Adel Al Khulaifi, Mohammad Ayman Zaher, Kermel Essa, Shahad Dawara, Mahsa Rahimi, Zainab Huseni Jabla, Mohammad Hamadah, Maisam Khazal and Ahmad Al-Behbehani. Students received mentor guidance from ACK faculty member Rola Mourdaa and Ahmad Nagi from industry.

The ACK students outperformed their competitors in all aspects and as a result of their hard work over an extended period they secured 2 prizes: Best Social Impact Award and Best Company Award for the Year 2018. ACK Mentor, Mourdaa commented that the ACK students epitomized the ACK college spirit of enabling human potential within a culture of care. ACK will now represent Kuwait in the Regional Competition to be held in November, 2018.



Sheraton awarded prestigious 'Kuwait's Leading Hotel 2018'

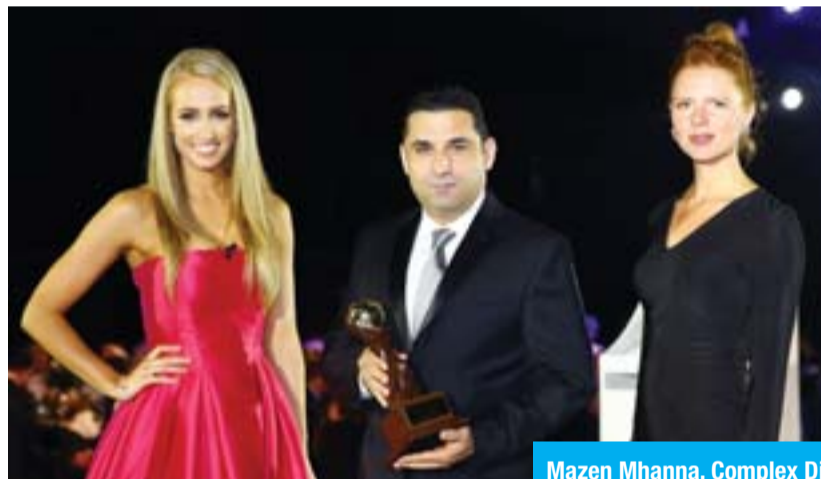
The Sheraton Kuwait, a Luxury Collection Hotel has added to its impressive track record another award as Kuwait's Leading Hotel for the eighth year in a row, this was announced during the Gala Ceremony event at the World Travel Awards for the Middle East 2018 which took place at The Waldorf Astoria Hotel in United Arab Emirates -Ras Al Khaimah in the presence of the major companies involved in the hotel industry, travel & Tourism, this prestigious award was received by Mr Mazen Mhanna, Complex Director of Sales and Marketing of Sheraton Kuwait Who expressed his great happiness with the award.

Since its inception in 1966 as the first five stars hotel in Kuwait and the first hotel for Marriott International in Africa and the Middle East, the Sheraton Kuwait continues to uphold its consistent finest standards of hospitality, best quality services and promoting the pathway to presenting the most luxurious of standards throughout the country. These services have been extended bringing it closer to our patrons by branching out where they can shop and experience luxury dining right in the premises of Kuwait's largest shopping mall - the Avenues Mall.

Dubbed as "The Oscars of the Travel Industry" The World Travel Award is the travel industry's leading awards program and the benchmark for excellence in the hospitality business globally. The award giving body has bestowed Sheraton Kuwait numerous awards in the past years; for the 8th time in a row as Kuwait's Leading Hotel which brings more prestige to the hotel. Fahed Abushaar - General Manager of Sheraton Kuwait stated "We are extremely honored to receive such a prestigious award for the eighth time, emphasizing the exceptional professionalism and care that our team continues to deliver. With over 50 years of excellence and a year of being under the Marriott International, we are confident that our commitment of service excellence will be kept with the highest standard".



Fahed Abushaar
General Manager



Mazen Mhanna, Complex Director of Sales and Marketing of Sheraton Kuwait received the award.



Symphony Style Hotel honors artistic talents of students



Symphony Style Hotel Kuwait, the jewel of Kuwait City, and a market leader in Responsible Business recently hosted talented schoolchildren from across Kuwait for the awards ceremony of the 'Kuwait Beautiful & Green' competition. The 'Kuwait Beautiful & Green' competition, organized by Kuwait Times, encourages students aged 6-18 to demonstrate their artistic skills while showcasing their environmental awareness.

The hotel's stunning Ebreez ballroom provided a warm and welcoming location for the young artists to showcase their fine work. The ceremony, honored the students for their creations, with 51 awards handed out in several age categories. About 19,000 children from their parents from 242 schools took part in the competition. There was also a section dedicated to young people with special needs. Hosting the awards ceremony was another shining example of Symphony Style Hotel Kuwait's commitment to Responsible Business, and the team's ongoing activities and objectives to encourage environmental awareness, sustainable practices and to nur-



ture young talent across Kuwait.

Since its inception in 1994, 'Kuwait Beautiful & Green' is designed to promote environmental awareness amongst students and encourage them to take part in environment-oriented activities with the aim of acquiring more knowledge, skills, sense of responsibility, positive attitude and connection to the environment. The competition was open for all schoolchildren aged between 6

and 18 with the brief to create a drawing or painting inspired by their environmental passions. As a committed Responsible Business leader, Symphony Style Hotel Kuwait implements a range of sustainable, environmental initiatives. These include Sprout Pencil. The innovative stationary is giving to guests to use during meetings and, once the pencil becomes too short to use it can be planted, sprouting herbs or plants.

Burgan Bank sponsors 5th annual Art's Night

Burgan Bank, one of the highest contributors to progress in society, sponsored the "American United School" 5th Annual Art's Night themed 'A Night to Remember...Five Years in the Making'. The latest sponsorship continues in the tradition of building self-confidence and logical thinking among kids by appreciating their artistic expression and creativity.

The Art Night, an annual activity which took place on 26 April 2018 at the AUS campus, reinforces Burgan Bank's commitment to bringing about positive change by embracing innovative platforms that cater to all age groups. Self-expression comes in different forms and is an extension of a child's imagination. Educational institutions are encouraged to play an active role in preserving inherent talents by displaying their works, while also advancing their knowledge by creating an engaging environment.

Burgan Bank champions causes that reflect its values across all spectrums - trust, commitment, excellence and progression. The bank seeks to instill these values in the leaders of tomorrow. Through such dedicated events, children are enabled to think

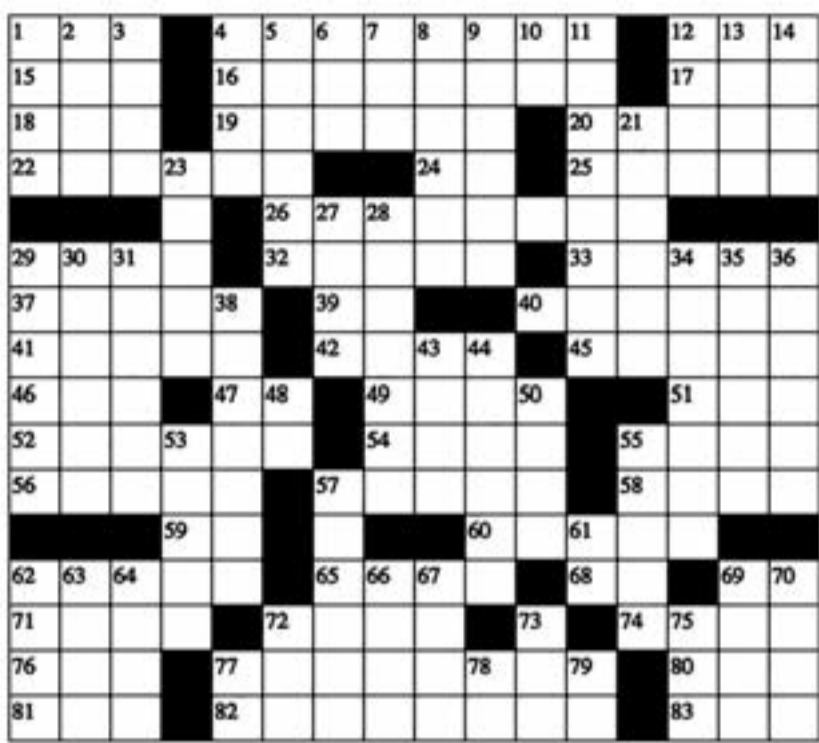
openly, acknowledge their peers and be tolerant to one another in a healthy environment. Equally, the kids will be encouraged to step out of their comfort zone and participate in a competitive event. Such practices are proven to improve a child's mental, emotional and psychological being through crucial learning experiences.

The event will showcase art displayed around the building of which some highlights include 2D and 3D pieces from 5th grade students. Demonstrating individual culinary skills will be the Middle to High school students who will be passing out hors d'oeuvres made of their own recipes. The Educational media students will be presenting documentaries filmed, directed and edited by themselves in addition to the photography students who will be on hand to photograph the event and guests as part of the school memorabilia. Musical performances from the choir band and the elementary music students will also grace the event with their skilled vocals.

Burgan Bank's support of this initiative falls under its dynamic full-fledged community program entitled 'ENGAGE' - Together to be the change. This program sheds light on important aspects affecting every segment of the society by promoting social welfare through educational, cultural and health driven initiatives. Burgan Bank's approach to 'ENGAGE' begins with a vital principle that as a leading Kuwaiti financial institution, its conduct and policies should be aligned with the needs and interests of the community.

Stars

CROSSWORD 1897



ACROSS

- Music in three-four time for dancing a jig.
- One who can't stay still (especially a child).
- A condition (mostly in boys) characterized by behavioral and learning disorders.
- Hormone secreted by the posterior pituitary gland (trade name Pitressin) and also by nerve endings in the hypothalamus.
- The act of reaching out.
- A constellation in the southern hemisphere near Telescopium and Norma.
- The 26th letter of the Roman alphabet.
- A river in Germany.
- Overgrown with ivy.
- The capital of Croatia.
- An official prosecutor for a judicial district.
- Wife of Balder.
- Selecting what seems best of various styles or ideas n.
- (informal) Exceptionally good.
- Green algae common in freshwater lakes of limestone districts.
- Thin fibrous bark of the paper mulberry and Pipturus albidus.
- Relating to the deepest parts of the ocean (below 6000 meters).
- Before noon.
- A bodily organ that is essential for life.
- Small arboreal tropical American insectivorous lizards with the ability to change skin color.
- English writer and a central member of the Fabian Society (1858-1943).
- Any of various plants of the genus Sedum.
- Of a dull grayish brown to brownish gray color.
- A state in the eastern United States.
- An accidental hole that allows something (fluid or light etc.) to enter or escape.
- A benevolent aspect of Devi.
- United States jazz musician who influenced the style of Louis Armstrong (1885-1938).
- A field of cultivated and mowed grass.
- Of or in relating to the nose.
- A quantity of no importance.
- A brittle gray crystalline element that is a semiconducting metalloid (resembling silicon) used in transistors.
- An ancient Hebrew unit of dry measure equal to about a bushel.
- Essential oil or perfume obtained from flowers.
- A member of the Siouan people inhabiting the valleys of the Platte and Missouri rivers in Nebraska.
- A very poisonous metallic element that has three allotropic forms.
- Any of numerous local fertility and nature deities worshipped by ancient Semitic peoples.
- Type genus of the Alcidae comprising solely the razorbill.
- (folklore) Fairies that are somewhat mischievous.
- Being one more than two.
- An audiotape recording of sound.
- A major school of Buddhism teaching social concern and universal salvation.
- An agency of the United Nations affiliated with the World Bank.

DOWN

- Empty rhetoric or insincere or exaggerated talk.
- The content of cognition.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

There's no doubt in your mind that you have got to step up to the plate on an emotional issue. If you've been difficult, the time is now to repair any damage, if you choose, for it's up to you. Should you decide to eliminate the relationship, do it quickly and move on; this indicates either work or home. You desire to have personal and professional matters in order and when they're not you're hard to be around. You could discover a new yoga or cooking class. The physical energy is balanced and you feel you can go the distance in a physically challenging situation. Good decisions are made when you're called on to lead a group for fundraising or public relations purposes; you're able to tap in to the feelings of others as you go through the day.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

A lot rides on your ability to look honestly at a sensitive situation you're involved in; work and home life are indicated here. If you choose to truly consider your role in this you could discover the root of this touchy matter. Delving deeply into your mind-set reveals something you'd rather not see. You feel a strong need to be appreciated and held in high esteem; you're definitely worthy of both! Your job and success are firm focuses and you realize some respectable monetary gain. You feel a sense of comfort and permanence in your home and family life. You may come across an expensive item you'd really like to have for your home; be careful to stay inside your set budget. Tonight, an old friend stops by for a long overdue visit.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You've entered a new phase of life that welcomes self-care; taking the time to breathe, rest, stretch or whatever your wellness requires dominates now. You follow the lead of this positive time and this manifests in the material world; remember how hard you have worked to get to the great place you're in. New love is indicated; this could mean romantic or any other type of deep affection. Intuition serves you well and this gift seems to strengthen at this time. Peace and progress are the hallmarks of the energy surrounding you. If you are challenged, remember this person is usually up for an argument; stop and consider that this could simply be a personality trait! The beauty you carry inside is on full display as you dine with someone special.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

The thoughts are there but you can't seem to understand or separate them. It may seem as though you're muddled and foggy, not clear of mind. Recite a certain prayer or meditation you have recently discovered to clear a crowded mind. The urge to jump into a new purchase or situation is strong, almost overpowering; you find it difficult to choose a decision and stick with it. Feeling stressed creates negative energy you don't need; figure out how to change this vibration. Your newest phase indicates desire to let your positive side be known; you remain true to your commitment to evolve and grow. Your outward appearance attracts positive attention. Eating and sleeping well, moving and stretching your body pays off this evening.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

You encounter a difficult circumstance in which you're confronted with emotional turmoil. Anger and frustration mount as someone close insists on a disturbing verbal exchange that causes you to open your eyes; remember we're all on our individual journeys. Yoga or breathing is called for as you attempt to remain focused on being productive and engaged. You gladly receive compliments on your d'cor or clothing later as you attend a social gathering where you interact with like-minded people you enjoy. This satisfies your desire for positive mental stimulation and education. Someone lets you know personal information is being kept from you by someone you trust. Your need to be in control is demanding just now as you organize your belongings.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Serious disagreements occur. Objections from you could set negative outcomes in motion that could prove painful. Keeping your thoughts, and perhaps some actions you have taken, to yourself might be a very smart move for now. Members of a group make clear they aren't interested in what you have to say. A step back could be productive. It may seem as though nothing you say is appropriate or needed. A new recipe provides great distraction and positive results you and others enjoy. An opportunity to spend time alone is an interesting experiment you may just enjoy. Cooking for one could be something you don't especially like; meeting a new friend for a light dinner could be just the thing to fill your time with this evening.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

No matter how hard you try, it seems that you just can't get ahead. Time passes slowly and you aren't getting where you need to be; perhaps taking your eyes off the ball for a few moments will help. You're able to manage issues throughout the work day; later you have fun sharing life hacks with friends who have the same needs and issues you do. You may receive invitations to two events happening at the same time; tread lightly, this could cause serious conflict. You draw comfort and security from your closest circle of friends; a special kind of strength is created by the bonds of friendship. Someone is in trouble and requests your help; you're never really totally sure where they come from but answers materialize and once again you save the day.



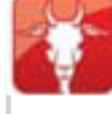
Scorpio (October 23-November 19)

Your opinion is requested on a professional or job-related project. Decisions regarding others are easy, for yourself, not so much. You avoid shopping because you recognize that something is off; perhaps waiting will help when choosing colors or clothing. You take someone younger under your wing to teach them the best way to work with something. You may learn quite a bit from an unexpected source. You tap into daydreams and fantasies that energize your imagination; your most creative energy is strong today as you try new designs or sentences. Someone could challenge or condemn your behavior or treatment of someone. Tonight, reading holds your attention and relaxes you to the point of peaceful slumber; sweet dreams.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

You're totally in control of your emotions; self-discipline is firmly in place and active! This could be a very good time for new beginnings in business endeavors. The urge to bring things together for the sake of ease and organization is prominent, and this is a good move. You long to understand the ways of the universe and supreme love; realizing you live on a harsh planet isn't pleasant. A sensitive situation arises when a friend requests your input on an extremely personal matter. You're a true, loving friend to many. Attention to the home is foremost in your mind as you plan for the weekend; remember the budget as you go! Much later tonight, you realize a most surprising fact regarding someone you love and respect.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You have a fine taste for life and all of its pleasures; everything from fine art and materials to the best coffee qualifies here. This is a great window of time to choose furniture, clothing, jewels all of the higher end items as you have a strong eye for value just now. Your tastes have undergone drastic shifts lately and you make the most of it! You attract attention later as you attend the formal opening of a new restaurant or store or other type of business. Just sit back and enjoy the attention. Someone discusses ideas for a new business; your input is valuable and could pay off down the road. You feel good about where you are and where you're going; the path you have chosen isn't easy, but it's well worth it. Sweet dreams for you tonight.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

Your sharp thoughts a management skills are in high gear; someone could be threatened and cause a scene. Communication with someone is blocked and seemingly impossible; wait until the time is right and you can get to the bottom of this. The vibes could feel off at home and in the workplace. Hold off on making important choices or choosing different directions until foggy energy evaporates. Tensions could be mounting between you and someone dear; patience will pay in this case; remember that love conquers all. You witness the circumstances of someone less fortunate and become very thankful for your own. Warm feelings are expressed tonight when someone complements your domestic choices.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You could want to stay on the dreamy side throughout the day; your practical ways will do battle with this less than realistic mood. The people around you are not impressed with your disposition and want you to step up with real answers. This is a day requiring hands on attention and action; a project demands your attention and is nearly complete. If everywhere you turn provides frustration and blockage go inside and listen to your intuition; you have the ability to get through this quickly. You are in touch with who and what you hold dear. You could happen upon life hacks that make some chores or tasks much simpler. You realize your desires include being less shy and communicating your thoughts; words flow this evening at home.

Wordsearch Puzzle

What's the Point?

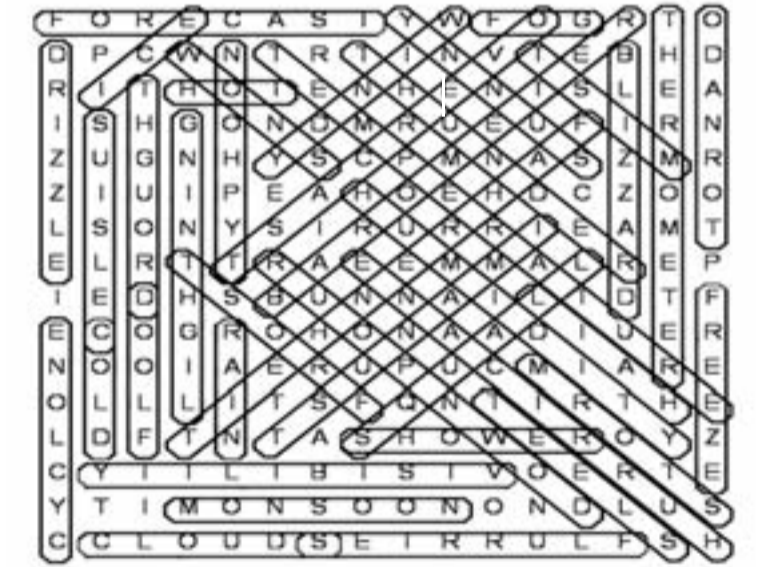
Find and circle all of the things with points that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a secret message.



- ANTENNA
- ANTLER
- ARGUMENT
- ARROW
- BACKGAMMON BOARD
- BALLPEN
- BEAK
- BIRD TALLOW
- COMPASS
- CONE
- CORKSCREW
- CRAYON
- DART
- DECIMAL FINGER
- FISH HOOK
- FORK
- ICE PICK
- ICICLE
- JANGLIN
- KNIFE
- NAIL
- NOSE
- PENCIL
- FINE NEEDLE
- POINTER STICK
- PYRAMID
- QUILL
- RHINOCEROS HORN
- ROCKET
- SCALPEL
- SCISSORS
- SEWING NEEDLE
- SHARK TOOTH
- SHERIFF'S BADGE
- SPEAR
- SPIKE
- STAPLE
- STAR
- STYLUS
- SWORD
- THORN
- THUMBSTICK
- TOOTHPICK
- TRIANGLE
- TRIDENT
- VULCAN EAR
- WOODEN STAKE

Yesterday's Solution

Weather



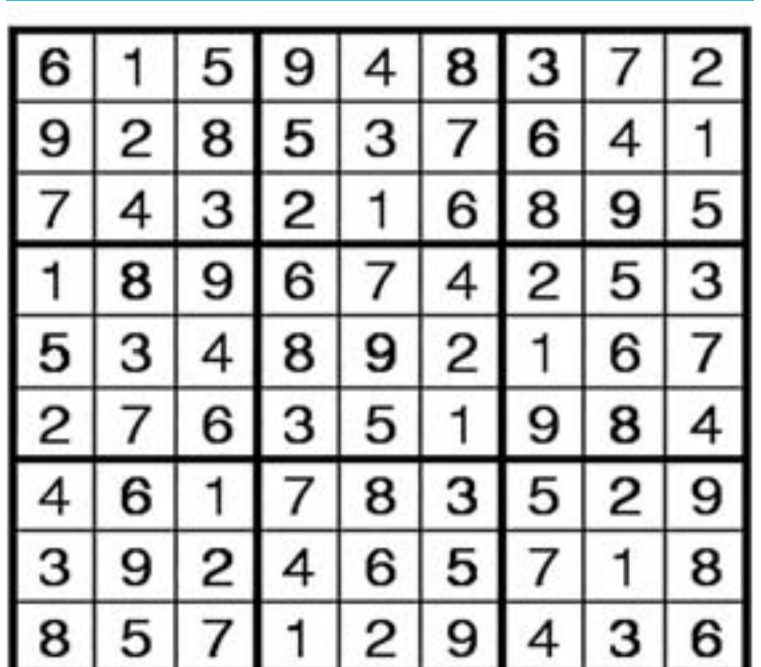
- BAROMETER
- BLIZZARD
- CELSIUS
- CLOUDS
- COLD
- CYCLONE
- DOWNPOUR
- DRIZZLE
- DROUGHT
- FAHRENHEIT
- FLOOD
- FLURRIES
- FOG
- FORECAST
- FREEZE
- FROST
- HAIL
- HOT
- HUMIDITY
- HURRICANE
- ICE
- LIGHTNING
- MIST
- MONSOON
- OVERCAST
- RAIN
- SHOWER
- SLEET
- SNOW
- SQUALL
- STORM
- SUNNY
- TEMPERATURE
- THERMOMETER
- THUNDER
- TORNADO
- TSUNAMI
- TYPHOON
- VISIBILITY
- WINDY

The hidden word is: PRECIPITATION

Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



Strategic Partner



KUWAIT BEAUTIFUL & GREEN

CATEGORY 9-11



Al-Juri fahad Al-Rashid - Dasman Bilingual School



Fida Ancy - Indain Educational School



Dana Al-Qenaie - Al-Ruya School



Aleen Binu George - Indain Academy



Malaak Mohammed Adel - Al Najat School - Mangaf



Mohammed Abd Al-Wahed - Ibn Al-Jawzi



Fatma Jawad - Om Malek Al Ansariya



Marly Medhat Nadeer - Al Rashaid Indian School



Ahmed Mohammed Soliman - AL- Ghafiqi School



Dalal Malek - American Creativity



Strategic Partner



KUWAIT BEAUTIFUL & GREEN

CATEGORY 12-14



1



Rodaina Khaled - Salmiya Intermdiate

2



Angel Mary Thomas - Indian Central School

3



Hiba Hameed - Indian Community



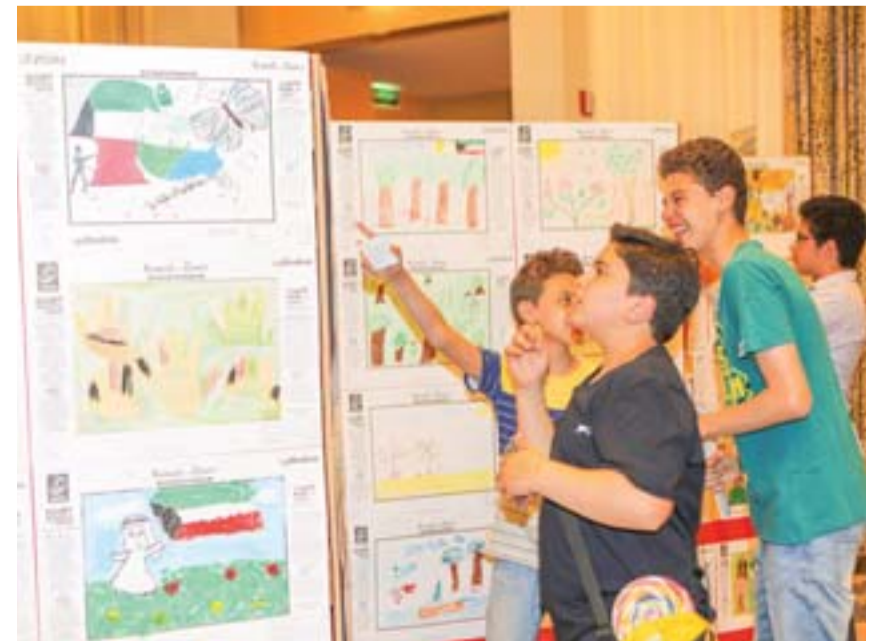
Yadhu krishnan - IES



Omar Parker - The English School



Palestinian Ambassador and his wife together with French Ambassador listen to Adnan Saad as he explained about the art competition.



Sponsored by



Organized by



Hosted by



Strategic Partner



KUWAIT BEAUTIFUL & GREEN

KBG 15-17 RESULTS



1



Ghadeer Ibrahim - Omama Bin Bisher School

2



Taiba Ahmed Jawhar - Fatima Al Hashimea

3



Samah Rahiman - Indian Community School



Minjae Son - Kuwait English School



Meghna P.R - Indian Educational School



Elena Sarah Mathew - Bahrata School



Rawan Mubarak Mahmoud - Jabriya Al-Ahliya



Abd Al-Aziz Hassan - Al-Zabi - Tamyoz School



Hisa Hamad Al-Humizi - Bayan Secondary



Adla Ghanimeh - Al-Ruya Bilingual School



Sponsored by



Organized by



Hosted by



Strategic Partner



KUWAIT BEAUTIFUL & GREEN

SPECIAL EFFORTS



1
Munira Al Zanki - Fatma Al Hashmia School



2
Reem Khaled Al-Shahat - Salmiya Intermediate



3
Aayaat Amaan Pal - Indian Educational school



Salma Adel - Salmiya Intermadiat



Justin Ingatius - Indian Educational



Doaa Hussain Al-Saraf - Omama Bent Bisher



Myoungjae Son - Kuwait English School



Jumana Kamal - Al-Ekhlis School



Dalal Abd Al-Hadi Al-Zaid - Al-Roda School



Aishe waddah - Arab Modern Academy



Classifieds

Tuesday, May 1, 2018

Kuwait Times
 Now you can browse
www.kuwaittimes.net
 e-mail: info@kuwaittimes.net

STATE OF KUWAIT
 DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION
 METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



Tel: (+965) 161 Ext: 6819 - 6817
 Fax: (+965) 24348714
www.met.gov.kw



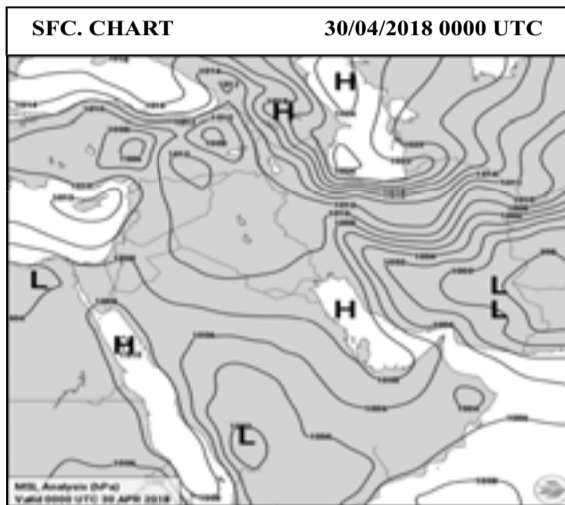
Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Relatively hot with light to moderate variable wind to north westerly wind, with speed of 08 - 30 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.

BY NIGHT: Fair with light to moderate north westerly wind to light variable wind, with speed of 06 - 26 km/h and some high clouds will appear.

WEATHER WARNING No Current Warnings

STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.
KUWAIT CITY	34 °C	26 °C
KUWAIT AIRPORT	35 °C	22 °C
ABDALY	35 °C	21 °C
BUBYAN	32 °C	22 °C
JAHRA	35 °C	24 °C
FAILAKA ISLAND	34 °C	23 °C
SALMIYAH	30 °C	27 °C
AHMADI	30 °C	26 °C
NUWAISIB	31 °C	21 °C
WAFRA	33 °C	20 °C
SALMY	34 °C	20 °C



DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Tuesday	05/01	Clouds will increase gradually with a chance for scattered rain later on	35 °C	22 °C	VRB-SE	08 - 30 km/h
Wednesday	05/02	Cloudy to partly cloudy with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times	36 °C	24 °C	VRB-SE	10 - 40 km/h
Thursday	05/03	Partly cloudy to cloudy with a chance for scattered rain at times	36 °C	24 °C	VRB-SE	08 - 38 km/h
Friday	05/04	Cloudy causing rising dust with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times	37 °C	25 °C	SW-SE	15 - 45 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	03:41
Sunrise	05:07
Zuhr	11:45
Asr	15:21
Sunset	18:24
Isha	19:47

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	34 °C
MIN. Temp.	20 °C
MAX. RH	95 %
MIN. RH	24 %
MAX. Wind	SE 25 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

Hospitals

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

Clinics

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

Vehicle Sale

WE Afcons Infrastructure Limited would like to sale below used vehicle

SI No.	Make	Model	Manufacture Year
1	Nissan	X-Trail	2011
2	Nissan	X-Trail	2011
3	Nissan	Tidda (Car)	2012

Interested person may contact
Mr. Charanjeet Singh (60934955)

ACCOMODATION

For Filipino ONLY
 Farwaniya block 1, near gulfmart. Available 25 of May, Contact 94418396 or 69972330 23-4-2018

WANTED

Houseboy
 For private home

97296669

EMERGENCY 112

Automated enquiry about the Civil ID card is
1889988

For labor-related inquiries and complaints:
 Call MSAL hotline 128

Directorate General of Civil Aviation Home Page (www.kuwait-airport.com.kw) DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Tuesday 1/5/2018				Departure Flights on Tuesday 1/5/2018			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
THY	772	Istanbul	00:15	AIC	976	Goa/Chennai	00:05
DLH	625	Dammam	00:50	JZR	560	Sohag	00:30
KAC	102	London	00:50	JAI	573	Mumbai	00:30
JZR	539	Cairo	01:00	FDB	073	Dubai	00:30
PGT	858	Istanbul	01:15	WAN	541	KTM	01:15
RJA	642	Amman	01:35	KAC	417	Manila	01:45
UAE	853	Dubai	01:40	THY	773	Istanbul	01:45
KLM	446	Bahrain	01:45	DLH	625	Frankfurt	01:50
KKK	1268	Istanbul	02:00	KAC	285	Dhaka	01:50
AXB	395	Kozhikode	02:00	JZR	528	Asyut	01:50
JZR	267	Beirut	02:05	KAC	677	Dubai	02:00
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:15	PGT	859	Istanbul	02:45
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	THY	765	Istanbul	02:50
QTR	1086	Doha	02:30	AXB	396	Kozhikode	02:55
KAC	414	Bangkok	02:40	KKK	1269	Istanbul	02:55
JZR	553	Alexandria	02:50	ETH	621	Addis Ababa	03:05
JZR	607	Kochi	02:55	KLM	446	Amsterdam	03:10
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05	UAE	854	Dubai	03:30
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05	JZR	142	Doha	03:45
KAC	418	Manila	03:05	OMA	644	Muscat	04:05
KAC	382	Delhi	03:10	ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:05
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	QTR	1087	Doha	04:15
QTR	1076	Doha	03:30	MSR	613	Cairo	04:15
LMU	5510	Cairo	04:00	LMU	5511	Cairo	05:00
JAI	572	Mumbai	04:00	JAI	571	Mumbai	05:05
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	04:15	QTR	1077	Doha	05:15
KAC	1544	Cairo	04:25	KAC	303	Mumbai	05:35
JZR	609	Hyderabad	04:30	FDB	070	Dubai	06:00
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:30	KAC	331	Doha	06:15
KAC	284	Dhaka	04:50	KAC	337	Madinah	06:15
PAL	668	Manila	05:00	THY	771	Istanbul	06:30
FDB	069	Dubai	05:05	GFA	212	Bahrain	06:50
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:10	RJA	643	Amman	07:00
THY	770	Istanbul	05:15	KAC	167	Paris	07:20
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:40	KAC	413	Bangkok	07:30
KAC	362	Colombo	06:00	PAL	669	Manila	07:40
BAW	157	London	06:10	KAC	512	Frankfurt	07:50
WAN	338	Alexandria	06:25	KAC	501	Beirut	08:00
THY	6376	Istanbul	06:30	JZR	778	Jeddah	08:00
KAC	204	Lahore	06:30	BAW	156	London	08:20
JZR	561	Sohag	06:40	KAC	165	Rome	08:25
KAC	678	Dubai	06:45	WAN	133	Bahrain	08:30
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:00	THY	6376	Dubai/Istanbul	08:35
JZR	143	Doha	07:20	FDB	054	Dubai	08:35
KAC	358	Kochi	07:40	KAC	613	Bahrain	09:00
KAC	354	Bengaluru	07:45	JZR	324	Al Najaf	09:00
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	KAC	117	New York	09:05
JZR	605	Ahmedabad	08:05	KAC	787	Jeddah	09:05
KAC	384	Delhi	08:05	KAC	671	Dubai	09:15
JZR	529	Asyut	08:15	WAN	133	Doha	09:30
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25	ABY	126	Sharjah	09:40
WAN	352	Luxor	08:30	KAC	561	Amman	09:40
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:55	KAC	741	Dammam	09:45
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	JZR	535	Cairo	09:45
QTR	1070	Doha	09:30	UAE	856	Dubai	09:50
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	JZR	482	Istanbul	09:55
IRA	675	Lar	09:40	KAC	101	London	10:00
SYR	341	Damascus	10:00	ETD	302	Abu Dhabi	10:00
SVA	512	Riyadh	10:00	KAC	515	Tehran	10:00
WAN	312	Asyut	10:20	KAC	617	Doha	10:10
ETD	995	Abu Dhabi/Bahrain	10:20	QTR	1071	Istanbul	10:25
JZR	751	Madinah	10:30	IRA	674	Lar	10:40
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	FDB	056	Dubai	10:40
MEA	404	Beirut	10:55	SGL	4101	QA	11:00
QTR	1074	Doha	11:00	SVA	513	Riyadh	11:00
WAN	114	Bahrain	11:10	SYR	342	Damascus	11:00
JZR	165	Dubai	11:45	WAN	873	Istanbul	11:20
JZR	325	Al Najaf	12:20	GFA	214	Bahrain	11:35
KAC	614	Bahrain	12:20	MEA	405	Beirut	11:55
MSC	411	Asyut	12:30	JZR	776	Jeddah	12:05
SAW	701	Damascus	12:30	QTR	1075	Doha	12:10
UAE	871	Dubai	12:45	ETD	996	Bahrain/SGN	12:20
THY	766	Istanbul	12:45	JZR	176	Dubai	13:10
WAN	542	KTM	12:50	SAW	702	Damascus	13:30
KAC	742	Dammam	12:50				
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00				
AXB	393	Kozhikode	13:10				

Kuwaiti documentary wins prize at Arab media Festival



Winners of Arab media festival's awards. — KUNA pictures



The Kuwaiti documentary film 'Threads of Gold' won first rank in the 19th Arab Radio and TV Festival.

The Kuwaiti documentary film "Threads of Gold" won first rank on Sunday night in the 19th Arab Radio and TV Festival held in Tunisia, as part of documentaries on Palestinian cause competition. This came during the closing

ceremony of the festival organized under the theme "In Support of Arab Jerusalem." Official at Kuwait Television Talal Al-Haifi in remarks to KUNA expressed his thanks to the festival's organizers. "Threads of Gold" is a documentary

prepared by Kuwait youth on the Palestinian cause, and more specifically on the local young fighter Ahd Al-Tamimi, he said. This honoring reflects Kuwait's deep care for Arab vital issues, namely the Palestinian cause, he added.

Meanwhile, the Kuwaiti Ambassador to Tunisia Ali Al-Thifiri expressed satisfaction for winning the award. Kuwait is known for its tremendous efforts in media as it won many prizes in previous sessions of the festival, which reflects its sufficiency, the

diplomat affirmed. Other countries also won prizes over their remarkable participation with distinguished reports, radio and television programs and documentaries including Iraq, Sudan, Bahrain, Egypt, UAE, Oman, and Palestine. — KUNA



In this file photo taken Bill Cosby (center) walks through the Montgomery County Courthouse with his publicist, Andrew Wyatt, after being found guilty on all counts in his sexual assault trial in Norristown, Pennsylvania. — AFP

Cosby juror: Comedian's talk of quaaludes led to conviction

The jury that convicted Bill Cosby at his sexual assault trial said that its decision was only influenced by what happened in court, and the youngest member of the panel said that the comedian's own words sealed his fate. Harrison Snyder said in an interview aired yesterday on ABC's "Good Morning America" that Cosby's deposition - in which he admitted giving women drugs to have sex with them - was the evidence that made him believe he was guilty. "I think it was his deposition, really. Mr Cosby admitted to giving these quaaludes to women, young women, in order to have sex with them," Snyder said of a deposition that was part of a civil case brought by accuser Andrea Constand.

The 22-year-old said it "wasn't an open and shut case," but that he had no doubt the jury made the right decision in convicting Cosby Thursday on three counts of aggravated indecent assault. The investigation into Cosby was reopened in July 2015 after a federal judge, acting on a request from The Associated Press, unsealed portions of Cosby's deposition testimony from a civil lawsuit he settled with Constand in 2006 for \$3.4 million. In the testimony, which was read to jurors at both trials, he described giving quaaludes to women before sex in the 1970s and his encounters with Constand, a Temple University women's basketball administrator. Snyder said he didn't know much about the 80-year-old comedian before the trial and knew nothing of the allegations.

"I knew he was an actor, I knew he did the 'Cosby Show.' I never watched the 'Cosby Show.' I'm a little too young for that," Snyder said Cosby, 80, is now a prisoner in his own suburban Philadelphia home and faces the prospect of spending the rest of his life

behind bars as he awaits sentencing within the next three months on three counts of aggravated indecent assault. He has maintained his innocence. His publicist has declared his conviction a "public lynching," and his lawyers have vowed to appeal. NBC's "Today" show said yesterday the Cosby jury issued a statement saying its decision was not influenced in any way by factors other than what was seen and heard in the courtroom. They said race and the #MeToo movement were never discussed.

"After thoughtful and meticulous consideration of the information and evidence provided to us, we came to our unanimous verdict," the jury said in the statement. "Not once were race or the #metoo movement ever discussed, nor did either factor into our decision, as implied in various media outlets." Prosecutor Kristen Feden told The Associated Press in an interview Saturday that in the tense moments before the jury convicted Cosby, she started to worry about the global implications if the #MeToo era's first big trial went the other way.

"I felt like this verdict could dictate something more," Feden said. "If they found him not guilty, I felt like they were feeding into every character assassination on sex crime victims." Cosby's lawyers have vowed to appeal, but prosecutors said they are confident Cosby's conviction will stand.

Two days after Cosby's conviction, law books and papers were still strewn on a long table in the war room where prosecutors plotted their strategy: leading off with an expert to educate the jury in victim behavior, successfully fighting to call five additional accusers and fending off the defense's allegations that Constand was a scammer framing Cosby for a big payday. — AP

'Avengers' opens with \$630m, smashing global record

'Avengers: Infinity War' took in \$630 million in its first weekend, the highest global opening of all time, industry estimates showed on Sunday. "The latest Marvel juggernaut... opened with \$630M worldwide, making it the largest global weekend tally in the history of film, and this was done without China," which has a later opening, industry tracker Exhibitor Relations said. That topped "The Fate of the Furious," the eighth installment of the high-octane action series starring Vin Diesel, Dwayne Johnson and Michelle Rodriguez that opened with more than \$530 million globally in 2017.

"Infinity War," which features more than two dozen superheroes fighting to save the universe, also broke the record for highest North American opening weekend, raking in \$250 million at US and Canadian box offices. That beat "The Force Awakens," the seventh film in the long-running "Star Wars" space saga that made \$248 million in its opening weekend in 2015.

Saving the universe

"Infinity War" is the 19th film in the so-called Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU), combining a whopping nine franchises and a cast list that reads like a who's who of Hollywood's A-list. Robert Downey Jr dons the red and gold metal suit once again as Iron Man; Benedict Cumberbatch is Doctor Strange; Scarlett Johansson is back as Black Widow; and Australia's Chris Hemsworth is Thor. Also back for more?

Black Panther-the Marvel breakout of the year after the standalone pic's massive opening in February, Captain America, the Hulk, Spider-Man, Hawkeye, the Guardians of the Galaxy and their assorted allies. Their mission is to prevent the powerful purple alien Thanos (Josh Brolin) from destroying the universe. "We took a picture of every single person whose character has been in the MCU. We hung it up on a wall all around us," co-director Anthony Russo, who helms the film with his brother Joe, told reporters ahead of its release.

"We basically spent months and months and months talking about where we could go with each character, how we could draw them through the story," he added. "Every one of these characters... has been on a very specific journey through the MCU to arrive at this moment." This is the third "Avengers" film, before the final, untitled saga set for next year.

'North Star'

An important source of inspiration is the Marvel canon-the storylines developed over decades in the original comic books. "Infinity



In this file photo Actress Scarlett Johansson arrives for the World Premiere of the film 'Avengers: Infinity War' in Hollywood, California. — AFP

War" is drawn from the "Infinity Gauntlet" series of the early 1990s. "It starts with those comics and us beginning to rip pages out or rip copies of pages out and put them on the walls and start to be inspired," explains Kevin Feige, the president of Marvel Studios, which is owned by Disney. "It's a North Star for us as we lead these giant productions into reality."

In the movie's trailer, Gamora (Zoe Saldana) — Thanos's daughter, of sorts explains that the

villain believes that if he annihilates half of the universe, he can save the other half. He needs the so-called Infinity Stones to do it. So, the heroes need to keep him from getting them. The film cost an eye-watering \$300 million to make, according to Hollywood media.

"It was about the most fun creative exercise I think I've ever been through in my life," said Anthony Russo. "We thought about everybody in the MCU." — AFP



This image released by Marvel Studios shows, front row from left, Danai Gurira, Chadwick Boseman, Chris Evans, Scarlett Johansson and Sebastian Stan in a scene from "Avengers: Infinity War." — AP



Aisha Taylor from left, Sheryl Underwood, Sara Gilbert, Eve and Julie Chen pose in the press room with the award for outstanding entertainment talk show for "The Talk".



Ken Corday and the cast and crew of "Days of Our Lives" accept the award for outstanding drama series at the 45th annual Daytime Emmy Awards.



Jeannie Mai from left, Tamera Mowry-Housley, Loni Love and Adrienne Houghton pose in the press room with the award for outstanding entertainment talk show host for 'The Real'.

'DAYS OF OUR LIVES' TOPS DAYTIME EMMYS WITH 5 TROPHIES

NBC's "Days of Our Lives" topped the Daytime Emmy Awards, capturing five trophies including best drama series and lead actor honors for veteran performer James Reynolds. Reynolds, who began playing Abe Carver on the drama in 1981, is the third African-American to win in the category, with more than 30 years separating him from Darnell Williams' 1985 victory for "All My Children." Al Freeman Jr was the groundbreaker, winning for "One Life to Live" in 1979.

In the scene that Reynolds submitted for awards consideration, his character confronts an off-duty law enforcement officer who shot Carver's son, wrongly believing he was armed, according to the Gold Derby awards website. "Days of Our Lives" also claimed trophies for its writing and directing teams and supporting actor Greg Vaughan at Sunday's ceremony. ABC's "Good Morning America" won its second consecutive trophy for best morning program, amid rocky times for two other shows nominat-

ed in the category. Sexual misconduct allegations led to the 2017 exits of Matt Lauer from NBC's "Today" and Charlie Rose from "CBS This Morning."

"The Talk" was honored as best entertainment talk show, with the award for best entertainment talk host shared by "The Real" co-hosts Adrienne Houghton, Loni Love, Jeannie Mai and Tamera Mowry-Housley. "The Dr Oz Show" received the award for informative talk show, with Steve Harvey named best informa-

tive talk show host for "Steve." ABC's "General Hospital" and CBS' "The Young and the Restless" each won two awards, including best actress Eileen Davidson and supporting actress Camryn Grimes for "Y&R." Other winners at the 45th Daytime Emmy ceremony hosted by Mario Lopez and Sheryl Underwood included: "Entertainment Tonight," entertainment news program.

Lili Estefan, daytime talent in a Spanish-language program, "El Gordo y la Flaca."

"Destinos," entertainment program in Spanish.

Wayne Brady, game show host for "Let's Make a Deal."

Lidia Bastianich, culinary host for PBS' "Lidia's Kitchen."

"The Price is Right," game show. — AP



James Reynolds accepts the award for outstanding lead actor in a drama series for "Days of Our Lives" at the 45th annual Daytime Emmy Awards at the Pasadena Civic Center. — AP photos

Lifestyle | Features

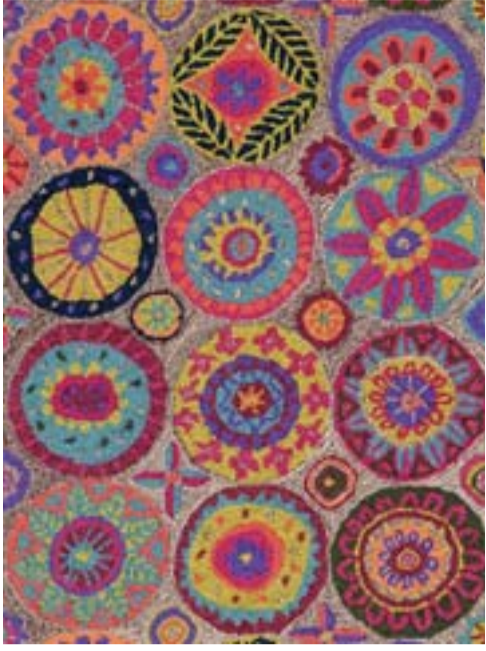


Photo provided by Annie Selke shows her Merry Go Round hooked rug, inspired by a piece of 1950s art she found in France.



Photos provided by HALFDROP show a fabric design on various items by the Romanian design brand that creates fabric designs and products for interiors.— AP photos



MODERN FOLKLORE PATTERNS ADORN DECOR

Many young international designers are drawing on heritage, folklore and their imaginations to create contemporary textile, ceramic and wall-covering patterns. Some are finding larger audiences through decor retailers and online sites. Others are taking their imaginations outdoors, onto the sides of buildings. At Spoonflower, designer Andrea Lauren creates linocut patterns of woodland animals, flora, even the Loch Ness monster. They're printed on textiles that can be used for pillows, curtains, bedding or lampshades. Illustrator Jeremiah Witting of Portland, Oregon, does pen-and-ink illustrations inspired by a 1910 compendium of Grimm's Fairy Tales passed down to him by his grandmother. And for Parisian artist Vannina Baquero, inspiration comes from an eclectic mix of Mexican serape blankets, fantastic gardens and Scandinavian folk prints.

Many early American quilt and rug patterns live comfortably in the 21st century because of their simple geometric designs and clean color palettes.

At Garnet Hill, the Johanna puts a modern spin on

pieced quilts with circle pieces instead of traditional squares. Annie Selke's Merry Go Round hooked rug re-scales the playful medallions and flowers of a 1930s art-work that Selke found in France; the rug is offered in two different colorways.

Great Plains Native American motifs are crafted into a bold geometric rug exclusively at Grate & Kids from Los Angeles-based Bethany Yellowtail. The artist has also done a striking wool blanket, available on her own website, that she calls "All My Relations." Stripes of various configurations reflect Crow and Northern Cheyenne elements, both part of her heritage. Modcloth has ceramic plates and glassware decorated with delicately painted folk art motifs in a pretty palette of charcoal, lime, orange and mint, from the company One Hundred Eighty Degrees in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Nathalie Lete's storybook-style ceramic collection at Anthropologie features winsome woodland creatures, fruits and flowers, all hand-painted. At the Heimtextil fair in Frankfurt, Germany, in January, design students from

PatternLab, a master's program at Aalto University in Helsinki, Finland, showed their work to potential buyers. Many designs were inspired by Finnish folk art. For pattern designers without access to an exhibition booth at an international fair, there are lots of online portals to sell work.

In her Harvest collection for her studio Half Drop, Romanian designer Alexandra Lazarescu reinterprets her country's folklore through the lens of her architecture background. Traditional spoons, botanicals, wheels, and symbols of day and night are rendered in geometric patterns that have a distinct Arts and Crafts vibe. The National Museum of Warsaw recently opened its Gallery of Polish Design, showcasing some of that country's rich folkloric tradition in carved furniture, ceramics and textiles. In studios around the city, and in nearby Lodz, young makers are translating those designs for the 20th century, using digital printing, 3-D imaging and other modern techniques. International decor powerhouses like IKEA, Vitra and Hay are buying their work. In Zalpie, a village about

three hours from Warsaw, huts and homes are painted with elaborate floral and geometric motifs. The practice began generations ago as a way for residents to cover walls smudged with soot from stoves.

Other designers are playing with lacework, another of Poland's renowned craft arts. Warsaw-based street artist NeSpoon uses spray paint to create intricate outdoor murals of lace patterns on the sides of buildings all over the world. "I like to make positive art," she says. "In lace, there's an aesthetic code which is deeply embedded in every culture. In lace we find symmetry, some kind of order and harmony." What's perched on the hot-pattern horizon? "Look for Japanese and Persian folkloric themes and motifs - like Williams-Sonoma's Dragon Zardozi pillow cover," says designer Karen Wolf of South Orange, New Jersey. Also on her radar: Delftware. Designers are reinterpreting the traditional Dutch folk patterns, with minimalist versions and the addition of Chinoiserie elements. — AP

Royal wedding dress: Will Meghan go trendy or classic?

A dramatic ball gown, or a classic, simple silhouette? Sleeves, or bare shoulders? With less than a month to go until she marries Prince Harry at Windsor Castle on May 19, Meghan Markle most likely has already chosen her wedding dress - though what it looks like is expected to remain a top secret until the last minute.

Whoever the designer might be, Markle's shopping experience is sure to be vastly different from most brides out there. London's most upscale bridal retailers explain what it really takes to create a luxury gown fit for a royal wedding, and weigh in on whether Markle will go classic or embrace one of 2018's popular bridal trends.



In this file photo Britain's Prince Harry and his fiancée Meghan Markle pose for photographers in the grounds of Kensington Palace in London.



Bridal designer Philippa Lepley stands with a display of wedding dresses in her shop in London.— AP photos

The sky's the limit

Royal brides don't generally pick ready-made dresses off the rail. Instead, Markle is likely to have commissioned an exclusive designer dress tailored to her shape and tastes - and chances are it will be handmade in Britain. A luxury couture dress like that typically takes months of painstaking preparation and a small army of fitters and seamstresses, and can easily cost hundreds of thousands of pounds.

"If you were to commission a couture made dress, you need to have a lot of trust in the designer and a lot of money. Because the cost of the labor involved in making your dress is tremendous. You should expect to start from 30,000 pounds (\$42,000) and keep going up to as much as 300,000 pounds," said Caroline Burstein, owner of London's Browns Bride, which sells some of the most exclusive and stylish bridal wear in the capital.

It all adds up: Silks are very expensive, as are British labor costs. A top-quality bespoke dress typically starts with a consultation to explore what styles fit the bride, followed by precise measurements and several initial fittings done in a mock-up fabric, according to leading London bridal designer Philippa Lepley. "If it were a royal wedding we'd do maybe three fittings to make sure everything's to the millimeter, absolutely right," she said.

Then comes the labor-intensive part: When seamstresses work on the embroidery artwork and lace. More fittings follow to decide details such as where exactly the neckline sits and how many layers of petticoats are needed. "For a really exclusive dress it could take 60 hours plus (of labor), it depends on the embroidery. If it's embroidered all over we're talking hundreds of hours. The sky's the limit," Lepley said. "It really is very old-fashioned and all done by hand. It's unbelievable how many hours things take."

3-D petals or clean and simple?

Romantic, soft and whimsical styles with 3-D details like petals are popular with many brides right now, experts say. But traditional shapes like a ball gown or a column silhouette never go out of style, and many who have watched Markle's style have a hunch she might go for something unfussy and streamlined.

"Ball gowns are forever popular, because they look so incredibly dramatic. If you can't make an entrance on your wedding day when can you?" Burstein said. "Lace is always a strong trend and at the moment you'll see a lot of 3-D petals that give the dresses so much life."

Lepley said that she hoped Markle would choose "something not too over-designed." She showed off one of her luxury duchess satin gowns with no embellishments, with just a striking picture collar framing the bride's face. "This would be amazing," she said.

"I got a feeling she'd probably like to go quite straight and simple, but she might end up going much bigger because of the drama, the size of the venue," Lepley said. "She's got to hit it just right hasn't she? Not too ornate, not the dress wearing her. She still needs to shine." Susan Courter, who runs WhatMeghanWore.net, a popular website identifying Markle's choice of apparel in each public appearance, agreed.

"I'm thinking there'll be clean lines, a tailored look, very chic. That's who she is," Courter said. "I don't think there will be a lot of lace, maybe a little bit of whimsical touches to represent her personality."

The royal effect

There's no denying the huge effect royal weddings have on what brides everywhere want to wear. Princess Diana's 1981 wedding gown, with its puff sleeves, romantic ruffles and dramatic train, defined the 1980s fairytale bridal look. More recently, when Kate Middleton married Prince William in 2011, the long-sleeved lace gown she chose sparked a trend for more covered-up, traditional bridal dresses that lasted for years.

"I think people tend to be, 'Yes I want to follow that through, or I totally don't want to be like that at all,'" Lepley said of the royal effect. "You get a double reaction." Markle has already set herself apart from traditional royal style, ditching classic frocks for trousers on several royal engagements. If she picks something similarly bold for her wedding, it's sure to make a fashion statement, Burstein said.

"She may not go for a long dress at all, but a beautifully tailored dress and coat. That would send a huge message and no doubt there would be a dramatic shift in what a bride would choose after this wedding," she said.

And as an established actress known for her love of fashion, Markle's wedding style will appeal to a broad audience - likely surpassing the "Kate effect," Courter said. "We've seen the frenzy with what she wears for all these engagements," she said. "I can really see these brides are going to be running out and saying 'I want that look, how can I get it?'" — AP



In this file photo, Prince Phillip, Carole Middleton, Queen Elizabeth II and Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall stand outside of Westminster Abbey after the Royal Wedding of Prince William and Kate Middleton in London.— AP photos



In this file photo, Britain's Prince Andrew, center, and his daughters Britain's Princess Eugenie, left, and Britain's Princess Beatrice leave Westminster Abbey.

Etiquette and protocol highlights for royal wedding guests

Grab those nude stockings, ladies. You'll be at a royal wedding, after all. While the May 19 nuptials of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle will be a lower key affair than those of Will and Kate, guests at St. George's Chapel will still be expected to follow church and royal protocol, or at the very least basic British tradition, etiquette pros said.

The invitations to 600 guests described the high church dress code thusly: For men, military uniforms, morning coats or lounge suits, otherwise known as business suits in not-wacky colors. For women, "day dress with hat." The edicts leave plenty of room for faux pas. They also leave room for honoring age-old but not widely known customs, such as choosing straw as the material for hats after Easter. Some fashion and style etiquette fit for a queen:

Daywear hems and shoulders

Etiquette expert Myka Meier, who trained in London under a former member of the royal household, said dressing for such an occasion in Britain and elsewhere can be very different things. Women's shoulders should be covered. It's the Church of England, and the groom's grandmother is the head of that institution, FYI. Hemlines shouldn't be shorter than the longest finger when arms are held at the side, and no longer than mid-calf, Meier said.

"You won't see cleavage. You won't see a lot of skin," she said. "At least you shouldn't. It would be seen as disrespectful." Dresses that are mostly black or mostly white are no-nos. White is reserved for the bride, and perhaps the bridal party. Black remains a color of mourning. Accents, patterns or smaller pops of those colors are fine.

Light prints and patterns are likely, but big and blocky prints are unacceptable, Meier said. It's a spring wedding so expect plenty of pastels and traditional seasonal prints such as floral. International guests clearly are welcome to wear their country's equivalents. "At the end of the day you just want to match the formality of the event you're attending," Meier said.

Hats: Bigger isn't always better

Royal weddings can seem like a hat free-for-all. "Hats are a sign of festivity for a British wedding. They are kept on inside the church, but people should be careful of the people sitting behind them," said Meier, who specializes in international social and business etiquette and protocol. "It's not the Kentucky Derby. No huge brims. Nothing too high," she said.

Fascinators - headpieces decorated with bows, flowers

and more - are popular and perfectly acceptable, lending an air of whimsy. "Whimsy as opposed to crazy is fine," said celebrity and society stylist Diane Lloyde Roth, who has been dressing Americans for European formal events for more than 30 years. Meier said women often start with the hat when planning their outfits. A rule of thumb from Lloyde Roth: "Make sure your hat and your outfit are going to the same event."

The huge hat worn by Princess Beatrice to the wedding of Harry's brother, Prince William, and Kate Middleton lives on as a cautionary tale. Royal watcher Anne Chertoff called the high bow on Beatrice's fascinator "ridiculous in so many ways, but at least you could see through it."

Shoes matter

The wedding is a formal church affair but also a day event. That doesn't mean anything goes on the feet. This isn't a garden party. Forget open toes and wedges. Slingbacks are also considered too informal, Meier said. "You want something that is about 4 inches maximum," she said. "The walk in is not going to be easy. There are lots of cobblestones even though there will be different types of carpeting." And stilettos? Forget about it.

Handbags

They should be small. "There are about 800 seats in St. George's Chapel but it's very tight seating. There isn't any place to put large bags," Meier said. Clutches or other handbags that fit easily on laps or just slightly to the side will rule the day. Kate Middleton rolls that way routinely. The queen also doesn't tote around a tote.

The men

Most will be in morning suits, Meier said. They have coattails and they often come in grey, navy and black. There's also a waistcoat, like a vest, and a regular tie. Pinstripes are sometimes involved in trousers. As for lounge suits, the darker they are the more formal, which is true for morning suits as well. No linen suits, guys.

Shoes will be polished like they've never been polished before. And the men will likely play with color and patterns in ties, pocket squares and socks. But no brown belts or brown shoes, considered less formal than black ones. Medals for those wearing dress military uniforms are common. So are medals of distinction of other kinds pinned to morning suits.

Don't overdo

"Americans forget that sometimes," said Lloyde Roth, based in New Canaan, Connecticut. "You're not the princess." Makeup should be minimal, along with accessories. Savvy guests will let the hat do the talking, she said. "Do a great bold lip with the hat. That balances everything," Lloyde Roth suggested. In terms of accessorizing, she offered the wise words of Coco Chanel: "Before you leave the house, look in the mirror and take one thing off." —AP

Lifestyle | Features



Cairo women take to the American football field



It's a sight that few would imagine in Cairo—an American football field full of Egyptian women. From humble beginnings in 2016 with only three teams, Egypt's all-female informal "flag football" league now has eight clubs vying for supremacy in the capital. The version played by women here is non-contact, with players seeking to snatch flags tucked into opponents' waistbands. For the young women who have taken up the game, which faces stiff competition for attention in a nation mad about soccer, it's a chance to escape the many pressures of city life.

Habiba Mohamed, 19, says her friends and parents were surprised about her new passion. "When I told them at home I will practice American football, my father and mother told me: 'How is this possible? You need to be careful,'" she says. Mohamed is kitted out in the green-and-yellow jersey of her team, Gezira Thunder, which is playing rivals the AUC Titans at the Maadi Olympics Centre, a stadium that normally functions as a soccer venue. It proves a good day for her, as Gezira storms to victory, albeit in a largely empty arena, save for a smattering of cheering friends and family.

A teammate is keen to emphasize the non-contact nature of flag football. "My friends thought it was a violent sport but it is not, as I have told them, and when they came to watch the games, they liked the sport a lot," says 20-year-old quarterback Yara Tawheed. "The level of violence in this sport is similar to that in ballet," she adds.

Release for stress and anger

But some would prefer to play the full contact version. Alia Haytham, 22, a student at Cairo's American University, says she hopes to play the undiluted game, to help her release anger and energy. "But this does not detract from flag football being fun," she says. "All of us here have problems at university and at home, but as soon as we enter the pitch we forget everything that preoccupies us." The coach of another female team, the adventurously named Hell Hounds, is proud of his players. "If you see how hard these girls work, I think you would really admire what they put into it," says 30-year-old American Matthew Kershey. Egypt became a member of the International Federation of American Football in 2014. The federation is leading a drive to register teams outside Cairo and expects several new clubs will



be up and running in time for next season.

But the game "is not new in Egypt, where it was initiated among men in 2007", Asmaa Marie, a spokeswoman for the Egyptian Federation of American Football, tells AFP. Marie, who wears the Islamic hair cover and plays regularly, cites similar motivations to Haytham. "The game has helped me control my anger and release stress."

International games

Games have even been organized against teams in other countries. Last year, Cairo Warriors, another of the capital's teams, played a Moroccan outfit in a friendly, and early this year they took part in a tournament in the US. In a socially conservative country, playing a spectator sport can be a radical departure from the norm for women—especially games traditionally associated with Western men. But Marie believes that "the game's popularity in Egypt will surpass that of many team sports, like volleyball and handball".

"The American football community in Egypt has grown, and we feel that we all know each other," she says. — AFP



Egyptian female American football players from the AUC Titans (red) play against Gezira Thunder (green) during their match at the Maadi Olympic Centre in the southern Cairo suburb of Maadi. — AFP photos

For both beauty and flavor, consider planting berry bushes

No need to choose between planting either an ornamental or a fruiting bush in your yard. Plant both with a single plant! Many berry bushes are pretty enough to be grown as landscape plants. Let's foray out into the yard to see which bushes are best at offering these dual pleasures.

Beautiful blues

Blueberries are an attractive and tasty place to begin this berry sampler. They are truly year-round ornamentals. Spring brings clusters of blossoms dangling from stems like dainty, white bells. Summer brings soft, slightly bluish, greenery which, come fall, ignites into a fiery red. Even in winter, the stems turn red to offer a bright contrast to a snowy backdrop. In some gardens, birds try to monopolize every blueberry. If birds threaten, drape bird netting over the bushes while the fruits are ripening, or construct a decorative, walk-in, bird-tight cage, either permanent or temporary. Alternatively, do nothing and take your chances.

Blueberries require a soil that is moist, very acidic and rich in humus. Provide these conditions by testing the acidity of your soil and adjusting it to the requisite pH of 4 to 5.5, and by mixing a generous bucketful of peat moss into each planting hole. After planting, spread a few inches of leaves, wood chips, sawdust or some other weed-free organic mulch over the ground, to be replenished every year. Blueberries like the same soil as rhododendrons, mountain laurels and azaleas, so why not mingle them with these other beautiful shrubs?



This undated photo shows clove currant flowers in New Paltz, NY. — AP

Beyond blueberries

A blueberry relative that's also ideal for "luscious landscaping" is lingonberry. This one's a spreading groundcover less than 6 inches high and decked out year-round in dark, lustrous green leaves. The red berries, tart but tasty fresh or in sauces and jams, decorate the stems all winter long. Lingonberry enjoys the same soil conditions as its blueberry kin. More cosmopolitan in its soil likes and dislikes is juneberry. It exists in both tree and bush forms, and all sport cheery white or pink flowers in early spring, blazing orange and purple foliage in fall, and neat growth habits all year. Juneberry plants are better known for their beauty than for their fruits, but the berries - which look like blueberries - provide their own unique gustatory experience: They're sweet and juicy, with the richness of sweet cherry and a hint of almond.

Nanking cherry is another bush more often planted as an ornamental than for its fruit. It has just one season of flamboyance, but what flamboyance that is! In early spring, the whole bush bursts into a dense cloud of pinkish white blossoms. Plant two Nanking cherries for cross-pollination and just about all those flowers will go on to become fruits. The cherries are small, pink or red, and refreshingly semi-sweet. Birds may or may not eat some fruits, but no matter. Production is so profuse that you won't notice the loss.

Much of the beauty of red currant bushes lies in the berries themselves, dangling from the branches like strings of jewels. The delicate spheres are so translucent that you can see the seeds floating within when the berries are backlit by sunlight. Currants also are among the few fruits that bear well even in partial shade. Red currants are the most common ones, but don't overlook equally beautiful white currants, essentially the same fruit except for their color.

A bush to please all your senses

Perhaps the star performer among bushes for edible landscaping is a relatively unknown currant called the clove currant. It was a common dooryard plant in Victorian times. The name hints at why it was planted near the house: In spring, the flowers pour out a spicy, clove-like fragrance. The tart fruit is very aromatic, good for jam or just popped into your mouth as you walk around your yard.

As if fragrance and fruit were not enough, clove currant's abundant flowers also put on an eye-catching show. Each blossom is a long yellow trumpet, with a spot of red in its center. Native to the upper Midwest, the clove currant is also tough, able to laugh off drought, heat, cold, insects, diseases, even deer. — AP

Lifestyle

TUESDAY, MAY 1, 2018



People stand past to the artwork "Umbrellas" by Greek sculptor George Zongolopoulos during the celebration of the World Wish Day by the charity organization "Make A Wish" in Thessaloniki on April 29, 2018. — AFP



Visitors look at the painting "Le clocher de Ria" (right) (The bell tower of Ria), next to "Portrait d'un inconnu" (left) (Portrait of a stranger) at the museum dedicated to French painter Etienne Terrus, in Elne (Elna). — AFP photos



A visitor looks at painting by French painter Etienne Terrus at the museum dedicated to the artist, in Elne (Elna).



An autoportrait of the French painter Etienne Terrus is displayed at the museum dedicated to the artist, in Elne (Elna).

French museum's collection mostly fake, but is it the only one?

Over decades, the small museum of Elne in southern France built up a collection of works by local painter Etienne Terrus, mostly oil and watercolors of the region's distinctive landscapes and buildings. But what was once a source of pride has turned to embarrassment after 60 percent were found to be fakes, providing a lesson about the dangers of buying art without expert skills and the ubiquity of counterfeit canvases.

"Etienne Terrus was Elne's great painter. He was part of the community, he was our painter," lamented mayor Yves Barniol on Friday as he reopened the museum and its exhibition of Terrus paintings minus the forgeries. "Knowing that people have visited the museum and seen a collection most of which is fake, that's bad. It's a catastrophe for the municipality," he added. Terrus (1857-1922) was born and died in Elne near the city of Perpignan where he painted the sun-baked Mediterranean coastline as well as the misty foothills of the Pyrenees mountains and local red-tiled homes.

While once a friend of Henri Matisse, Terrus never reached the heights of fame achieved by his contemporary, but he earned a following in art circles and regionally with his Impressionist- and Fauvist-influenced production. The Terrus Museum in Elne began collecting his work in the 1990s and went on a spending splurge over the last five years, acquiring 80 new canvases often thanks to local fund-raising drives. Devastated locals who helped with the effort now regret being so naive, having handed over tens of thousands of euros to local art dealers and private collectors. Out of 140 works owned by the museum, 82 were judged to be fakes by a panel of experts, causing an estimated loss to the town of 160,000 euros (\$200,000).

A global problem

But art-testing expert Yan Walther says fake art being exhibited publicly is a problem worldwide and the case of Elbe, though extreme, is not unique. "The fact that there



Visitors look at the painting "Le clocher de Ria" (The bell tower of Ria) at the museum dedicated to French painter Etienne Terrus, in Elne (Elna).

are fakes and misattributed works in museum collections is something absolutely clear and nobody with an understanding of the field has any illusions about this," Walther told AFP. "There are misattributed works in the Louvre (in Paris) in the National Gallery (in London), all museums in the world, but it is not in a proportion like 60 percent," he added.

A state museum in the Belgian city of Ghent was accused of exhibiting fakes in January after it put 26 works supposedly by Russian avant-garde artists such as Kazimir Malevich and Wassily Kandinsky on display. Many experts questioned how the paintings—the private collection of Russian businessman Igor Toporovski—could have been amassed in secret and the museum had to cancel the show amid a police investigation. Walther's company, Swiss-based SGS Art Services, is a world leader in using scientific methods such as X-rays and carbon-dating to help authenticate art works.

SGS mostly tests high-end paintings worth between 50,000 and sometimes tens of millions of euros and Walther says on average a staggering 70-90 percent are found to be fake or misattributed. Misattribution can mean, for example, that a painting was produced by the workshop or assistant to an artist. "When you acquire real estate or a car, there are a certain number of steps everyone would take: a technical assessment, background checks on the seller," he said. "For art work, very strangely it is still not in people's minds. You can buy an artwork for two million dollars and people hardly check anything. But it is starting to change."

Crude fakes

The fraud in Elbe was discovered by local art historian Eric Forcada who said he had seen the problems immediately, with some of the paintings crude counterfeits. "On one painting, the ink signature was wiped away when I passed my white glove over it," he said. In another painting, there was a building that was completed in the 1950s 30 years after Terrus's death while some of the canvases did not match those used by the original painter. Forcada alerted the region's top cultural expert and requested a meeting of a panel of experts to confirm his findings.

A police investigation is now set to focus on local art dealers who were the source of many of the paintings. "The whole of the local art market is rotten, from the unofficial street vendors who pitch to local private collectors up to the art dealers and the auction houses," Forcada said. Prior to the scandal, paintings by Terrus could fetch up to 15,000 euros (\$18,200) and drawings and watercolors would sell for up to 2,000 euros, he said. — AFP

Making a move: First-time buyers should consider many factors

As more and more millennials approach the milestone of buying their first homes, the real estate industry is finding that this group is gravitating toward different trends than their predecessors. Caroline Schlemmer, a Realtor with Greenwood King Properties, said the biggest and most important to young buyers is lifestyle, with many seeking homes within walking distance to places such as parks, restaurants and fitness studios.

"It's about the house, but also the location equally, I'm seeing that for millennial buyers, walkability ratings for places are becoming a stronger consideration, so that buyers can have a sense of community while living, working and playing all in the same place," she said. Schlemmer also is noticing that younger buyers aren't necessarily looking for larger homes, but rather smaller houses that are more efficient. "A smaller house can be just as appealing as a big house as long it has all other check boxes, such as the buyer's preferred number of bedrooms and bathrooms, some yard space and built-in

storage," she said.

With land prices continuing to soar in Houston, entry-level prices in various neighborhoods are continuing to go up, with \$500,000 getting to be a common entry-level point, up from \$300,000. Areas such as west of downtown and Montrose are getting higher, while EaDo is a bit more affordable, even as it continues to gain walkability and infrastructure it didn't have before, she said. "As far as aesthetics, a trend I'm seeing in architectural style, is with buyers looking more for transitional style, clean lines, mix of natural stone and man-made stone," Schlemmer said. "Functionality and durability are taking precedent over aesthetics."

Space and neighborhood

Before deciding to purchase a home, first-time buyers should consider the costs of all aspects of owning a home, aside from just the mortgage itself. According to Schlemmer, one thing many new buyers tend to overlook



are additional fees, such as property insurance, taxes, homeowners association dues, maintenance, and higher electricity and water bills. In order to ensure the home-buying process goes smoothly, Schlemmer emphasizes the importance of assembling your team of experts to guide you through the process. The team should include an experienced and knowledgeable Realtor, a good lender with experience in Houston, a qualified insurance agent and good inspectors - especially now after the region recently endured catastrophic events such as Hurricane Harvey.

One thing Schlemmer said young and first-time buyers should keep in mind is that dedicating time to visit houses

is critical. "Yes, you can do a lot of research online, but nothing compares to seeing a house in person during the day to get a feel for the space and neighborhood," she said. "Buying a home should be viewed as a project like getting married or graduating from school - it's supposed to be fun, but it's key to put work into it and be involved." Schlemmer also emphasized the importance of choosing a good lender when applying for a mortgage. "When talking with a lender, there are three main things to evaluate: interest rates, additional fees and customer service. It's critical to get a lender with a good track record for closing on time," she said. "Often buyers will just compare interest rates, but they have to look at the full picture. If you don't close on time, someone else can get the house you want, and that can be worse than paying more for a good lender to get you there on time."

Checklist for first-time buyers:

Find a reputable Realtor,

Get a qualified lender,

Determine your price range,

Get prequalified for a mortgage, and Factor in other expenses including taxes, insurance and maintenance bills. — AP