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16 On home turf, everyone wants a piece of Salah



16 Benzema scores twice against Bayern to send Real into final



10 MPs file no-confidence motion against oil minister

Assembly debates premier's grilling in closed session



KUWAIT: (Left) HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah speaks during a grilling session at the National Assembly yesterday. (Center) MP Abdulwahab Al-Babtain speaks as MP Omar Al-Tabtabaei looks on. (Right) Oil Minister Bakheet Al-Rasheedi speaks during the session. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Ten lawmakers yesterday filed a no-confidence motion against Oil and Electricity Minister Bakheet Al-Rasheedi following an 11-hour marathon grilling over allegations of corruption and squandering public funds. After the oil minister's grilling was completed, the Assembly began the debate of the grilling against HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, and later it was scheduled to debate a grilling against Minister of Social Affairs and Labor Hind Al-Sabaeeh.

The prime minister said he was prepared, although "we all know the motives and the aims" of the grilling. The government immediately demanded the debate to be held behind closed doors and speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem ordered spectators to leave the chamber to allow lawmakers to debate the government's request.

Rasheedi, who has been in office for less than five months, was grilled by opposition MPs Omar Al-Tabtabaei and Abdulwahab Al-Babtain, who accused the minister and top oil executives of causing billions of dollars in losses for the oil sector, which provides the majority of Kuwait's revenues. The minister denied the allegations and explained that there were no delays in mega oil projects underway and that the alleged losses in the oil sector were not based on material evidence.

Ahead of the no-confidence motion, the Assembly rejected a proposal by 16 MPs to form a committee to investigate allegations in the grilling and submit its findings to the Assembly after two months. Five MPs later submitted the same proposal but said the findings of the committee should be submitted in just one month instead of two. The Assembly was likely to vote on the proposal later. The lawmakers who signed the no-confidence motion are: Al-Humaidi Al-Subaei, Abdulkarim

Al-Kandari, Faisal Al-Kandari, Hamdan Al-Azemi, Babtain, Tabtabaei, Adel Al-Damkhi, Salah Khorshid, Safa Al-Hashem and Khalil Abul.

During the lengthy debate, the two MPs blasted the minister and the top oil executives of the national oil conglomerate Kuwait Petroleum Corp (KPC) and other oil companies. Babtain accused the minister of causing hundreds of millions of dollars in losses by delaying the opening of the joint venture refinery in Vietnam, saying that Kuwait pays annual interest of \$52 million for the delay. In addition, the oil sector has loaded nine oil vessels worth \$900 million for the refinery, which did not start on time and caused the losses, he said.

He also said that the oil sector paid end of service compensation totaling KD 3.4 million to 25 expatriate employees, alleging irregularities. Babtain also accused the minister of being responsible for lucrative retirement packages of millions of dinars given to senior oil

officials on retirement, saying this violated the law.

Tabtabaei charged that only 42 percent of the new refinery has been completed, although the oil sector has announced that 80 percent has been completed. He claimed that a foreign businessman paid bribes to get an oil project which eventually cost public funds close to \$500 million. Tabtabaei claimed that CEO of KPC Nezar Al-Adsani convinced the prime minister to establish a new oil company worth \$6 billion and a year later called for scrapping it to cut spending.

The minister denied the allegations and in particular denied the bribery case. He also denied that there is any plan to scrap the \$6-billion company. Rasheedi also stressed that he has answered 151 questions out of 153 questions he received from MPs. A number of MPs also defended the minister, saying he has been in the post for only a few months and should have been given more time to be evaluated.

News in brief

Morocco severs ties with Iran

RABAT: Morocco has severed diplomatic ties with Iran over Tehran's support for the Polisario Front, a Western Sahara independence movement, the Moroccan foreign minister said yesterday. Foreign Minister Nasser Bourita accused Iran and its Lebanese ally Hezbollah of training and arming Polisario fighters via the Iranian embassy in Algeria. Bourita said he had just returned from Iran after informing it of Morocco's decision to sever relations. Rabat's ambassador has already returned home and Iran's charge d'affaires will be expelled with immediate effect, he said. — Reuters

Abe pledges not to move embassy

RAMALLAH: Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe told Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas yesterday his country would not move its Israeli embassy to Jerusalem, official media reported, two weeks before the United States completes its controversial relocation. Meeting in the Palestinian city of Ramallah, Abe told Abbas his country "will not move its embassy to Jerusalem", a readout on Palestinian official news agency Wafa said. It said the Japanese premier reasserted his country's support for the creation of an independent Palestinian state within the framework of the two-state solution. — AFP

Iran calls Bibi 'infamous liar'

TEHRAN: Iran yesterday branded Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu an "infamous liar" over his allegations of a secret Iranian nuclear weapons program. Foreign ministry spokesman Bahram Ghasemi called the accusations that Tehran lied about its nuclear ambitions "worn-out, useless and shameful". Netanyahu's comments came from a "broke and infamous liar who has had nothing to offer except lies and deceits," Ghasemi said in a statement. — AFP

Manila moves to halt Kuwait labor dispute

MANILA: The Philippines yesterday welcomed an olive branch from Kuwait over their migrant labor row, days after President Rodrigo Duterte announced a permanent ban on Filipino workers going to the state. The dispute, simmering for months, erupted last week when Kuwait expelled the Philippine ambassador over videos of embassy staff helping Filipino workers flee allegedly abusive bosses in Kuwait.

But the Kuwaitis sought to calm the

crisis after Duterte said on Sunday that he was making permanent the departure ban in place since February, when a murdered Filipina maid was found in her employer's freezer. Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Nasser Al-Subaih said on Monday the row was "largely a misunderstanding" and "we do not believe in escalation".

Philippine Foreign Secretary Alan Peter Cayetano welcomed that conciliatory message yesterday. "This gesture on the part of Kuwait, a country with which we have a shared history and strong people-to-people ties, will allow us to move forward," Cayetano said in a statement. "We affirm our friendship with the government of Kuwait and its people."

Continued on Page 11

Facebook to launch new dating service

SAN JOSE, California: Facebook chief Mark Zuckerberg announced yesterday the world's largest social network will soon include a new dating feature - while vowing to make privacy protection its top priority in the wake of the Cambridge Analytica scandal. Zuckerberg unveiled the plans as he addressed Facebook's annual developers conference in San Jose, California - emphasizing that the focus would be on helping people find long-term partners.

"This is going to be for building real, long-term relationships, not just hook-ups," Zuckerberg said in presenting the new feature, noting that one in three

marriages in the United States start online - and that some 200 million Facebook users identify as being single. Under the new feature, users will be able to create a separate "dating" profile not visible to their network of friends, with potential matches recommended based on dating preferences, points in common, and mutual acquaintances.

Zuckerberg did not specify whether the feature would be free of charge, in line with Facebook's core offer - but the announcement was enough to send shares in the online dating giant Match.com tumbling by 17 percent. The 33-year-old CEO also said the dating offer was built from the ground-up with privacy and safety in mind, as he underscored the firm's commitment to boosting privacy protections.

Facebook's closely-watched developer conference comes as the giant faces intense global scrutiny over the mass

Continued on Page 11



KUWAIT: Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah meets Philippine Presidential Adviser on OFWs Abdullah Mamac yesterday. — KUNA



SAN JOSE: Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg speaks during the F8 Facebook Developers conference yesterday. — AFP

Local

Kuwait shows remarkable engagement with Iraq: Germany

Minister stresses need to support Iraq after defeat of IS

KUWAIT: Kuwait has shown a remarkable engagement with Iraq, offering multifaceted assistance and recently hosting a reconstruction conference pledging billions of dollars to the fellow Arab country, in addition to contributions and commitment to regional stability and security, a German official said. Niels Annen, Minister of State at the Foreign Ministry, said he believed Kuwait "is really remarkable" in its engagement towards helping Iraq at political and humanitarian levels.

"Kuwait has been the victim of an (Iraqi) aggression and is now providing the platform for reconstruction and reconciliation" in Iraq, Annen said in an interview, referring to the Iraqi 1990-91 invasion and seven-month occupation of the Gulf State. Kuwait hosted Iraq's reconstruction conference last February. Donor countries, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and international financial institutions pledged \$30 billion to help rebuild the country, specially areas liberated from so-called Islamic State (IS).

Aside from the conference, Kuwait government and charitable societies have been at the forefront in offering humanitarian aid for the needy Iraqi people. Annen met yesterday with National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem and Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah to discuss economic cooperation. He said his visit to Kuwait, the first in his capacity as minister, also aimed at underlining "our support" for His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's mediation efforts to finding a "political solution" for the Gulf crisis.

Germany's relations with Kuwait and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) as a whole are important, he noted. "We share the concern of His Highness the Amir that this (crisis) could affect unity of the GCC," said Annen. On Iraq, Annen said it was important to support the Iraqi government following the defeat of IS.

The global coalition fighting IS also pursuing remaining pockets of the terror organization in Iraq and neighboring Syria, which include many foreign fighters who posed a real threat when they return to their countries of origin, including Germany. However, the European country is well prepared for them, said Annen. Germany was also helping Iraq by providing expertise in de-mining, for example, or rehabilitation of infrastructure like sewers. This is in addition to training operations for the Kurdish Peshmerga forces in northern Iraq.

On Syria, Annen expressed concern at the

"pattern of warfare by the Syrian regime" which was following a policy that starve people, bombarding populated areas with cluster bombs and recently the use of chemical weapons, triggering global outrage. UN Security Council failed, due to a Russian veto earlier last month, to adopt a draft resolution that would have launched an inquiry into use of chemical weapons against civilians in Eastern Ghouta, Syria.

Annen meanwhile said Germany was contributing to humanitarian efforts to helping the Syrian people. "We increased our support for (the UN refugee agency) UNHCR and World Food Program (WFP)" to also help the Palestinian refugees living in Syria. The German government is also working to help maintain stability of neighboring countries to make sure the conflict in Syria is not affecting stability of Lebanon and Jordan, explained Annen. Germany, which accepted many refugees from Syria, has provided a significant amount of financial aid and expertise to help host nations - Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey - better deal with growing needs of Syrian refugees, he said.

Iran's nuclear agreement
Asked about Iran's nuclear agreement, the German minister said the deal was meeting its objectives, curbing the Islamic Republic's

“Iran deal meeting its objectives”

nuclear program. International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) experts concluded the 2015 nuclear agreement, which took around 13 years to conclude, has been implemented, he said, and this was an important step towards nuclear free Iran. However, he added, Germany was not in agreement with Iran's foreign policy. "We believe the deal should be preserved and protected but at the same time we need to have real tough conversation with Iran about its foreign policy and interference in the affairs of Lebanon, Yemen, Syria, Iraq and other countries," he said. Germany is pursuing a structured dialogue, which means enforcing



Niels Annen

the agreement and talking with Iranians about regional aspects, which include ballistic missile tests that are harming regional stability, said Annen.

Two-state solution
On Palestine, Annen said his government believed in the two-state solution, while the question of occupied Jerusalem should be resolved at the end of the negotiations' process. US President Donald Trump announced last year he was recognizing Jerusalem as capital of Israel and ordered the transfer of the American embassy from Tel Aviv to the occupied city, triggering outcry around the globe.

Annen meanwhile said inter-Palestinian reconciliation was important. "We believe it is necessary that there is a government" representing all Palestinians, he added. The German Minister, on the other hand, said his country's relations with Russia, which he described as difficult, were important for peace and stability in the region. Annen acknowledged that Russia was an important actor in international affairs like in the conflict in Syria, where "we need a new political momentum" but could not happen without involvement of Moscow. Russia, Turkey and Iran brokered military de-escalation zones in Syria, seen as a step towards political stability. The three countries are also the guarantors of the Syrian negotiations in Astana, Kazakhstan. Annen commented on Afghanistan President Ashraf Ghani's peace initiative with the Taliban, describing it as "realistic." Ghani offered a "courageous initiative," said Annen, but it needed inclusion of neighboring countries and regional powers. — KUNA

Official touts Kuwait's investment friendly environment

KUWAIT: State of Kuwait has a good investment-friendly environment, and Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) provided laws and legislations that attracted international companies, a senior diplomat said Monday. The Foreign Ministry's Economy Department is operating within a roadmap alongside government institutions to facilitate cooperation with international companies wishing to work in Kuwait, Amal Al-Hamad, Assistant Foreign Minister for Economic Affairs, said. She was speaking to reporters on fringes of a reception held by the Dutch Embassy to mark the King's birthday.

Hamad hoped Dutch companies contribute to development projects within the 2035 New Kuwait Vision. She said Kuwait's investment in the Netherlands exceeded USD eight billion, mostly in the oil sector. Hamad said economic, cultural and political relations with Netherlands were "deep and historic." — KUNA



KUWAIT: Ambassador of the Netherlands to Kuwait Frans Potuyt is joined by other dignitaries in cutting the cake during a reception hosted Monday night to mark the King's birthday. — Photos by Joseph Shagra



Senior officials, diplomats and other dignitaries attended the ceremony.



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KUWAIT: Ambassador of South Africa to Kuwait Mzolis Bona hosted a reception recently to celebrate his country's Freedom Day. Government officials led by Minister of Housing, State Minister for Services Dr Jenan Bushehr, diplomats and other dignitaries attended the event. — Photos by Joseph Shagra



Local

Crown Prince leaves France, returns home to Kuwait

Amir receives Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad



PARIS: Kuwaiti Ambassador to France Samie Al-Suleiman bids farewell to His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. — KUNA photos



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is seen off upon his departure from France yesterday.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah left France yesterday, returning to Kuwait following a private visit. His Highness the Crown Prince was seen off at the airport by Kuwaiti Ambassador to France Samie Al-Suleiman and embassy staff. In other news, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah at Bayan palace yesterday. — KUNA

Kuwait seeks economic integration with Saudi



Chairman of the Council of Saudi Chambers Ahmad Al-Rajhi addresses the Kuwaiti-Saudi economic forum.

KUWAIT: The President of Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) Ali Al-Ghanem asserted Monday on improving trade and investment relations with Saudi Arabia through joint ventures, as part of Kuwait development plan and economic integration between both countries. Ghanem made his remarks at the Kuwaiti-Saudi economic forum held incorporation with the Saudi Chamber, adding the chamber is ready to provide all necessary facilities to overcome any obstacles.

Chairman of the Council of Saudi Chambers (CSC) Ahmad Al-Rajhi praised, in a similar statement, Kuwait's "pioneer" leading role in the development of economic relations. Rajhi hailed efforts between both the two countries in providing great possibilities for the right environment for exchanged businesses.

Meanwhile, Kuwait's General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development representative Hamed Al-Aidan delivered a presentation on the comprehensive development plan analyzing Kuwait's vision for 2035.

On behalf of Kuwait's Assistant

General Director of Investment Promotions authority, Mohammad Yaqoub explained the benefits and advantages for foreign investors presented by Director of Public Relations Partnership Projects Lolwa Al-Saif providing the organizations offers and main projects in Kuwait alongside the private sector. Director of Saudi Business Development, General Investment authority Hashem Al-Fozan also briefly presented investment opportunities that aim to attract outside investors, under the vision of the Kingdom 2030.

In conjunction with Mazin Al-Hamdan Director of Environmental and Development exports authority delivered details of the organization and services it provides. The Economic Forum witnessed participation from governmental agencies from both sides of the spectrum along with a delegation of 40 members representing private companies. — KUNA



KUWAIT: President of the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ali Al-Ghanem (right) presents a gift to Chairman of the Council of Saudi Chambers Ahmad Al-Rajhi. — KUNA photos

Kuwait interested in Iraqi election's success: Ambassador

BAGHDAD: Kuwait's Ambassador to Iraq Salem Al-Zamanan said yesterday that his country is interested on the success of the democratic practice in Iraq, which will enhance the stability and safety of the fellow Arab country and the region. In a statement on the sideline of his meetings with the President of the Iraqi Front for National Dialogue Saleh Al-Mutlq and the Head of the Islamic

Supreme Council Hammam Hamoudi, Zamanan stressed Kuwait's supportive role towards Iraq's security and welfare. Iraqis will vote on May 12th to choose 329 representatives for parliament. The Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) confirmed its readiness to oversee the elections especially with the introduction of electronic voting, used for the first time in Iraq. — KUNA

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Local

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: A fish hanging from a tree near a beach in Kuwait. — Photo by Jamie Etheridge

Kuwait owns 6% of Islamic banking assets: Central Bank

Islamic Financial Services Council's annual meeting underway

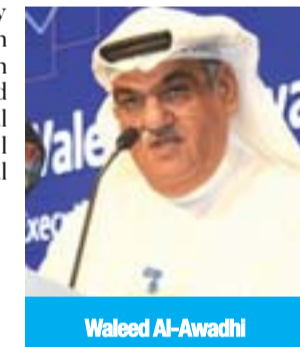
KUWAIT: Kuwait accounts for around six percent of all Islamic banking assets in the world, the Central Bank of Kuwait's (CBK) Executive Director for the Supervision Sector Waleed Al-Awadhi said yesterday. In a speech to open the Islamic Financial Services Council's annual meeting held in Kuwait, he noted that the Gulf state has been instrumental in the rise of the Islamic finance industry, having launched its first Islamic bank in 1977. He said that Kuwait is working closely with Islamic financial institutions around the world in a bid to give this emerging financial system the exposure it needs. On measures CBK has taken to ensure financial stability, he pointed out that the Kuwaiti bank has spearheaded the local banking sector's efforts to create a financial system that is highly resistant to economic shocks.

Financial stability alone would not suffice, Awadhi explained during the three-day meeting, citing the need

for "balanced and steady economic growth" which can be achieved through stringent policies that lead to stability in the financial sector. The CBK official divulged that conventional



First Islamic bank in Kuwait in 1977



Waleed Al-Awadhi

banks in the country own more than 60 percent of total Kuwaiti banking assets, adding that the bank stays abreast of financial developments in order to keep the local financial system afloat. Dishing out statistics, he revealed that the Kuwaiti banking sector's capital adequacy ratio stands at 18.45 percent, saying that protecting capital requirement is among measures CBK has taken to cope with a capricious financial market. —KUNA



KUWAIT: The Central Bank of Kuwait's Executive Director for the Supervision Sector Waleed Al-Awadhi speaks during the Islamic Financial Services Council's annual meeting yesterday. — Photos by Fouad Al-Shalkh

Kuwait committed to completing Greater Arab Free Trade

CAIRO: A Kuwaiti official confirmed on Monday the country's commitment to completing the Greater Arab Free Trade Area and fulfilling requirements by Arab Customs Union Committee. Kuwait is considered one of the leading countries in supporting the Greater Arab Free Trade Area. Public Authority for Industry (PAI) Director for Development and Industrial Support Abdullah Al-Hajri said in a statement.

Hajri, who is heading the Kuwaiti delegation in meetings of the 28th Technical

Committee on Rules of Origin, at the Arab League, also confirms that Kuwait's commitment to Free Trade rules, and has been supportive of Free Trade in the region to all Arab countries. Hajri indicated that last Arab Summit, held in Dhahran, supported the agreement on implementing the rules of origin between Arab countries starting from October 2018. Such rules are considered one of the main obstacles that stand against the completion of the Greater Arab Free Trade Area, which was launched since 1989. —KUNA



CAIRO: Public Authority for Industry (PAI) Director for Development and Industrial Support Abdullah Al-Hajri speaks during the meetings of the 28th Technical Committee on Rules of Origin, at the Arab League. —KUNA

KFH participates in AAOIFI 16th annual conference

MANAMA: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) participated in the AAOIFI 16th Annual Shariah Conference held recently in the Kingdom of Bahrain. Participants at the conference comprised shariah scholars and senior representatives from central banks, regulatory authorities, financial institutions, accounting and auditing firms, legal firms, universities, higher learning institutions and media.

Abdulhakeem Al-Khayyat, the Managing Director and CEO at KFH-Bahrain said: "Due to the rapid growth of the Islamic financial industry, we have to ensure the banking products comply with the provisions of the Islamic Shariah and adhere to professional standards. We are delighted to sponsor and participate at the AAOIFI 16th Annual Shariah Conference, one of the most important conferences that bring together leading shariah scholars and practitioners of the Islamic banking industry in the region."

Amongst the topics being discussed at the conference were the Adoption of the International Islamic Industry Technical Standards, Pioneer Bankers' Evaluation and



Views on the Standardization in Islamic Finance Industry and its Impact on IF Qualitative Growth, Standardization of Shariah Standards for the Islamic financial Industry at the International Level and Regulatory and Supervisory Framework Development & Main Challenges for Islamic Finance in New Markets.

Established in 1991 and based in Bahrain, AAOIFI is the leading international not-for-profit organization primarily responsible for the development and issuance of standards for the global Islamic finance industry. The

body has issued a total of 100 standards in the areas of shariah, accounting, auditing, ethics and governance for international Islamic finance. It is supported by a number of institutional members, including central banks and regulatory authorities, financial institutions, accounting and auditing firms, and legal firms, from over 45 countries. Its standards are currently followed by all the leading Islamic financial institutions across the world and have introduced a progressive degree of harmonization of international Islamic finance practices.

Local

KIPCO announces partnership with Women Mentor Forum

Emphasizing KIPCO's commitment to creating an inclusive work environment

KUWAIT: KIPCO - the Kuwait Projects Company (Holding) - has announced a partnership with the Women Mentor Forum (WMF), a local non-profit organization committed to female empowerment in the workplace. In its role as a strategic partner, KIPCO will be hosting WMF's events throughout 2018 and participate in discussion panels and workshops. This partnership further emphasizes KIPCO's commitment to creating an inclusive work environment.

Speaking on this occasion, Eman Al-Awadhi, KIPCO Group Communications Director, said: "When it comes to female empowerment, public support does not always translate into action in the workplace. Despite all efforts, Kuwait continues to trail the global averages for female inclusion in executive positions. Even though women have been part of the workforce since the establishment of modern Kuwait, studies indicate that they hold only 14% of the executive positions more than half a century later. KIPCO is proud to have

female representatives at all levels of its business and across industries. We hope that initiatives of WMF and other organizations can help companies lay down a blueprint for gender diversity and creating the ideal corporate work environment for women in Kuwait."

Meanwhile, Besma Al-Qassar, WMF

in conversation and creating a platform that enables the increase of Kuwaiti women in executive positions and inspire women entrepreneurs. Women have a role to play in supporting the growth of the economy and we aim to support these efforts through development, mentorship and networking opportunities."

Studies conducted in the private sector across the world highlight the financial gains and other benefits companies gain when employing more women and empowering them to move up to higher positions. A 2012 report by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) found that countries with more female participation in the workforce were likely to grow faster than others. A survey done by the Harvard Business Review found that women in executive

positions scored higher than their male counterparts when it came to evaluating characteristics usually associated with men in executive positions.

Over the course of the year, WMF's



KUWAIT: Besma Al-Qassar (left) and Eman Al-Awadhi.

activities will focus on the important role of women in the private sector and the value that they bring to the table. In May, WMF will be hosting an international

guest speaker who will be focusing on gender equality and inclusion. Another event will be held in November on women and entrepreneurship.



Companies gain when employing more women

Founder and Project Manager, said: "We are proud to partner with a leading private company such as KIPCO. WMF is focused on supporting the Kuwaiti economy through gender diversity by engaging

Trade union, rights society mark Labor Day

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Kuwait Trade Union Federation issued a statement yesterday on the occasion of Labor Day, in which it said it will continue its efforts to realize more achievements for laborers in Kuwait, and will hold more activities domestically and abroad to achieve that goal. "Our goals are to achieve stability for our unions and maintain their unity and harmony," it said, adding that this makes the current executive council of

KTUF play its role in representing Kuwait's national interests at its best.

The Kuwait Human Rights Society also celebrated Labor Day, saying in a statement that it comes this year "with positive and deep-rooted changes in the labor movement in Kuwait, most notably a decision to move the domestic help department from the interior ministry to the social affairs ministry."

The market witnessed several movements monitored by the society - the start of Kuwaitization of government jobs, the escalation of the labor situation at a major company that was one of the most important reasons for issuing an amnesty to correct the status of residency violators, and the tensions between Kuwait and the Philippines over the conditions of Filipino workers, it noted.

Sawaber-like projects hinder housing plans: Minister

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Housing Minister and State Minister for Services Jenan Bushehri said a proposal to build housing complexes like those in Sawaber and rent the apartments to Kuwaiti newlyweds at a nominal rent adversely affects the efforts of the Public Authority for Housing Welfare and keeps it from implementing its plan that aims at providing 12,000 units to citizens.

State property

Kuwait Municipality Director General Ahmad Al-Manfouhi asked emergency and road occupancy teams to deal with car offices that use state property to display their vehicles for sale. He asked the Hawally department to check violations on the coastal road by such offices, as several warnings have been issued, so that the cars

on display will be removed before being impounded. The department issued citations to some offices that concretized vast areas of pavements and damaged state property. Some violators do not have any licenses, while others have permissions to display their vehicles over an area of 12 sq m, but many of them use public land.



Jenan Bushehri

Social care center

The number of beneficiaries of the social care center at the Ministry of Social Affairs during March was nearly 5,000 persons. Statistics by the ministry said the total number of those who benefit from the family nursing department is 1,045 cases - 36 in the children's home, 11 in the girls' home, 91 in guest homes, 617 in the nursery department, 220 in the children follow-up department and 70 cases in the care of Kuwaitis abroad department. Statistics also showed the number of those in the juvenile care home during March was 456 cases, and there were 3,387 elderly care cases.

API, World Bank ink deal on 2030 development agenda

KUWAIT: Kuwait-based Arab Planning Institute (API) yesterday signed a memo of understanding (MoU) with the World Bank on the application of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development for developing the Arab region. The World Bank was represented by its Vice-President for the Agenda Dr Mahmoud Mohieddin, while the API Director-General Bader Malallah represented the institute. Speaking after the signing, Mohieddin said the MoU involves various development cooperation domains, including human development, economic growth programs and sustainable development.

Now that the bank attaches much attention to human development, it is keen to

provide fresh programs aiming at developing the human element by means of offering health and education services, he said.

The agenda puts into consideration the privacies, national capabilities and internal challenges of all countries, while pointing to their shared responsibilities for achieving sustainable development, he added.

The API chief said meanwhile that both sides shared the same views on diverse issues and subjects, primarily sustainable development, during a separate meeting held on the sidelines of the signing ceremony. He pointed to his agency's eagerness to put in place the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, outlined by the United Nations (UN). The MoU is an umbrella for unifying efforts and coordinating work between the API and the bank with a view to addressing relevant issues, especially regarding sustainable development, following up on the implementation of goals and measuring indexes, he remarked. The document embraces joint training courses, carrying out programs and holding seminars, the API chief pointed out. — KUNA

CRIMES

Co-op arson suspect identified

KUWAIT: Sabah Al-Ahmad detectives are looking for a citizen who set a box of potato chips on fire inside the area's local co-op society for no apparent reason. Co-op officials told police that surveillance cameras recorded a man wearing a red cap who entered the supermarket, then set the box alight and left. Detectives identified the suspect and he is being sought.

Arcades thief arrested

A citizen who owns a cafe accused a customer of stealing money from an arcade game by using a copy of the key. The suspect paid for his drinks and shisha from the stolen money. The cafe owner told police that while he was checking the machines, he noticed that the two had money, while a third was completely empty. When he asked workers about it, they told him that a young man comes daily and sits near the machine for hours. The citizen checked security footage and found the customer used to open the moneybox under the game and stole its contents. Detectives are investigating.

Drug dealer caught

A female citizen was taken to the Drugs Control General Department after he was caught in an abnormal condition, and he confessed to pushing drugs. Police found hashish and a sensitive scale with her. Police noticed the girl driving aimlessly in Salmiya, so they pulled her over. When they spoke to her, she seemed abnormal. Police found the hashish and scale in her car. At the police station, she said she uses and trades in drugs, and has special customers.

Gamblers detained

Eight Indians were arrested after they were caught gambling inside Khaitan Park. A guard noticed the eight gambling, so he called police, who arrived and arrested them.

KD 3,000 a month

Ahmadi prosecution is considering the case of two sheikhs, one of whom made a deal with a Bangladeshi man to dump sewerage and industrial waste in his farm for KD 2 per tank, while the other sheikh kept the matter under the lid, as the farm owner earned KD 3,000 a month, according to a security source. An Environment Public Authority (EPA) team received a tip about a farm near Um Al-Haiman station in which sewer waste is dumped, and the owner charges KD 2 for each tanker. Environment police noticed a car belonging to a ruling family member inside the farm, who confessed that he knows about the matter but denied any links to it, adding the farm belongs to another sheikh and that a Bangladeshi empties sewer trucks in the farm. Tests proved the material is hazardous and may spread diseases and cancer. It could also affect public health and may seep into the country's groundwater. EPA Director General Sheikh Abdullah Al-Humoud referred the two sheikhs and the Bangladeshi man to the prosecution, which is investigating the matter. — Translated by Kuwait Times from Al-Rai

No injuries in shooting at passports center

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Ishbelia passports center witnessed a shooting by a patron who had differences with an officer, but no one was hurt. Press reports said police authorities began a search for the citizen who fired three rounds towards a cap-

tain who told him his father's passport was not ready yet, and he should return in the afternoon. A security source said the citizen had gone to collect his father's passport, then began an argument when he learned the passport was not ready. He then fired his weapon before escaping.

Indian maids' recruitment could start next week

KUWAIT: The interior ministry sent a letter to the foreign ministry to inform it that negotiations between the domestic help department and officials from the Indian embassy, including the labor consul, were successful. A detailed explanation was given of the domestic help law, which deals

with salaries and number of working hours, and guarantees workers' rights in case of injury or death. A security source said the process to bring in female domestic helpers from India may start next week after the necessary measures are taken by the foreign ministry. — Al-Anbaa

KUNA chief, US envoy discuss media role in enhancing relations

KUWAIT: US Ambassador to Kuwait Lawrence Silverman praised KUNA services and Kuwait's media role in enhancing bilateral relations between the two countries and efforts in spread of knowledge and awareness among citizens. This came during his meeting with KUNA Board Chairman and Director General Sheikh Mubarak Al-Duajj Al-Sabah yesterday, discussing media role in enhancing relations and communication between world countries.

Sheikh Mubarak Al-Duajj stressed KUNA's commitment to Kuwait's policy

in supporting international efforts for the sake of world security and stability. The meeting also tackled the outstanding relations between Kuwait and US and ways of promoting them. The meeting was attended by KUNA Deputy Chairman for Administrative and Financial Affairs Abdulhameed Malik, KUNA's Deputy Director General for the Editorial Sector and Editor-in-Chief Saad Al-Ali, KUNA's Director of Marketing and Public Relations Essam Al-Ruwayeh, Sheikh Mubarak's Office Director Nayef Al-Otaibi and US Embassy officials. — KUNA



KUWAIT: US Ambassador to Kuwait Lawrence Silverman meets with KUNA Board Chairman and Director General Sheikh Mubarak Al-Duajj Al-Sabah. — KUNA



North, South Korea dismantle speakers

Outrage after a bloody day for Afghan journalists

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NEW DELHI: An Indian woman looks out of a window near the shrine of Sufi saint Khwaja Nizamuddin in New Delhi yesterday. — AFP

India child brides sold into sex slavery

India court orders special trials for child rape cases

MUMBAI: Girls are being trafficked into domestic servitude or sex slavery after their parents illegally marry them off, said officials in the Indian state of Maharashtra yesterday. Researchers are conducting the state's first survey into links between child marriage and slavery, according to Vijaya Rahatkar, chairperson of Maharashtra's women's commission. The legal age of marriage in India is 18 for women and 21 for men. Parents face a fine of 100,000 rupees (\$1,535) and two years in prison if they are caught trying to marry off their underage children.

But discrimination against girls remains widespread, particularly in rural and poor communities where parents often view daughters as financial burdens and continue to marry them off early. "Many of these marriages do not last, and we have now seen cases where there are direct and indirect linkages to trafficking," Rahatkar said. Rahatkar said her commission decided to carry out the survey after receiving reports of child brides enslaved in households and sold into brothels.

After one such report, authorities rescued a girl who had been married off and then forced to work without wages on a farm, where she was abused and tied up so she did not run away. The findings of the survey, current-

ly underway in districts that report high rates of child marriage, will be shared with various state governments, said Rahatkar. There has been a "complete vacuum in the research space on trafficking and child marriage," said Adrian Phillips of the anti-trafficking group Justice and Care. The research is expected to provide data that will expose connections between the two crimes, said Phillips, whose group has partnered with the women's commission to conduct the survey.

The number of girls getting married in India has fallen by nearly half in the past decade, the United Nations children's agency, UNICEF, said in March. But 27 percent of all brides are still below age 18, according to UNICEF. Campaigners say it is difficult to convince many people that the tradition of child marriage is

wrong. "They believe there is no ill in the practice, as it has been going on for years," said Nirmal Gorana, convenor of the National Campaign Committee for Eradication of Bonded Labor. "When parents marry their girls young, it is also to ensure they do not stake any claim on the parent's property," he added.



India legal age of marriage for women is 18; 21 for men

Special trials for rape Meanwhile, India's Supreme Court yesterday called for fast-track investigations and special courts to hear child rape cases

amid an upsurge in deadly sex crimes. Authorities have been facing intense pressure to act since the rape and murder of an eight-year-old Muslim girl by a group of Hindus, and other cases. After the rape of the girl in Jammu and Kashmir state made national headlines last month, the government changed the law so that child rapists can face execution. A Supreme Court bench

headed by Chief Justice Dipak Misra said yesterday that trial courts must not grant unnecessary adjournments in such sensitive cases.

It also said state police chiefs should form task forces to investigate child rape cases, which must be heard by special courts. "Efforts have to be made by high courts to provide child-friendly courts," the bench said. The directives came amid public outrage in recent weeks over the rape and murder in Jammu that has put an increased spotlight on other near-daily cases. Activists say the government does not take rape seriously. Accusations have mounted since new Kashmir deputy chief minister Kavinder Gupta called the Jammu rape a "small incident" just hours after being sworn in on Monday.

Anger has also grown over the case of a six-year-old girl who died in hospital at the weekend, a week after she was viciously attacked and raped at Cuttack in the northeastern state of Odisha. India saw similar protests after the 2012 gang-rape of a student on a bus in New Delhi. She later died in hospital of her injuries. The incident triggered weeks of street protests and global condemnation. But sexual violence, including against children, remains unabated. Some 11,000 child rape cases were reported in 2015. — Agencies

Indian groom killed at wedding party by celebratory gunfire

NEW DELHI: Indian police yesterday arrested a man accused of killing a bridegroom when he marked his friend's wedding with gunfire, the latest in a grim series of marriage celebrations gone wrong. A video of Sunil Verma, 25, being hit in the chest late Sunday as he performed Hindu wedding rituals has gone viral on Indian social media. The footage shows a man identified as a friend of Verma adjusting a pistol when it goes off.

The next moment, the groom is seen clutching his chest and slumping face down. "He has confessed to the shooting but the investigations will continue. We have recovered the murder weapon," Ghanshyam Chaurasia, investigating officer in the Lakhimpur Kheri district of Uttar Pradesh state, told AFP. The shooter, who could face a murder charge, was on the run until his arrest yesterday in a neighboring town.

Police said two shots were fired from the licensed pistol belonging to the friend. Although outlawed in India, celebratory gunfire at weddings and other social events is common and sometimes deadly. A 20-year-old man was killed at his cousin's wedding on Sunday after revelers fired live ammunition to celebrate the event in neighboring Allahabad district. The shooter, a relative of the groom, is also on the run, police said. And in February, during celebratory gunfire at a wedding in the capital New Delhi, the groom was hit by a stray bullet and killed. — AFP

Vatican treasurer to face trial on historical sexual offence charges

MELBOURNE: Vatican Treasurer George Pell must face trial on charges of historical sexual offences, an Australian court ruled yesterday, making him the most senior Catholic official to be tried on such allegations. He pleaded not guilty. Magistrate Belinda Wallington handed down her decision that Pell's case will proceed to trial in a Melbourne court, following a month-long pre-trial hearing. Pell did not comment when he left the court, surrounded by police and flanked by his legal team.

Pope Francis has said he would not comment on the case involving his economy minister until it was over. The Vatican said in a statement that it had "taken note" of the court's decision and that the leave of absence of the pope granted Pell last year so he can defend himself "is still in place". A statement issued by Pell's lawyers and distributed by the Sydney Archdiocese, his last employer before his Vatican posting in 2014, said Pell had fully cooperated with police investigators and "always and steadfastly maintained his innocence".

"He would like to thank all those who have



MELBOURNE: A woman holds up a bible as Vatican finance chief Cardinal George Pell leaves court after making an appearance in court in Melbourne. Pell pleaded not guilty yesterday after being ordered to stand trial on multiple historical sexual offence charges in Australia. — AFP

supported him from both here in Australia and overseas during this exacting time and is grateful for their continuing support and prayers," the statement said. In her ruling, Wallington dismissed what Pell's lawyer has called "the worst of the charges" leveled against his client, but said allegations of offences at a pool and at a church in Victoria state will be heard.

Pell was ordered to appear in the Melbourne County Court today, when it will be decided how and when the case will proceed. Some

charges "are of such a vastly different nature" from the rest that he foresaw a separation of trials, Pell's lawyer, Robert Richter, told the court at the end of the committal hearing. Pell, 76, sat quietly behind his lawyer, wearing a black suit with a clergyman's collar, as the magistrate's decision was read out over 90 minutes. During the pre-trial hearing, Pell's defense raised questions about police procedure, the reliability of witnesses' memories and their psychological condition. — Reuters

International

Dominican Republic dumps Taiwan to establish relations with China

China dangled \$3 billion to grab Dominican Republic: Taiwan

TAIPEI: China offered the Dominican Republic a \$3.1 billion package of investments and loans to get them to sever ties with Taiwan, a Taiwan official said yesterday, after the Caribbean nation switched allegiance to China in a diplomatic blow to the self-ruled island. China said there were no economic pre-conditions. Taiwan, claimed by China as its own, has formal relations now with only 19 countries, many of them poor nations in Central America and the Pacific like Belize and Nauru. China says Taiwan is simply a wayward province with no right to state-to-state ties.

China and Taiwan have tried to poach each other's allies over the years, often dangling generous aid packages in front of developing nations, though Taipei struggles to compete with an increasingly powerful China. Panama ended its long-standing relationship with Taiwan last year in a major diplomatic victory for China. The Vatican is possibly next on the list, as the Holy See and China edge closer to an accord on the appointment of bishops in China. The news on the Dominican Republic switch, announced in both Beijing and Santo Domingo, drew strong and swift condemnation from Taiwan Foreign Minister Joseph Wu.

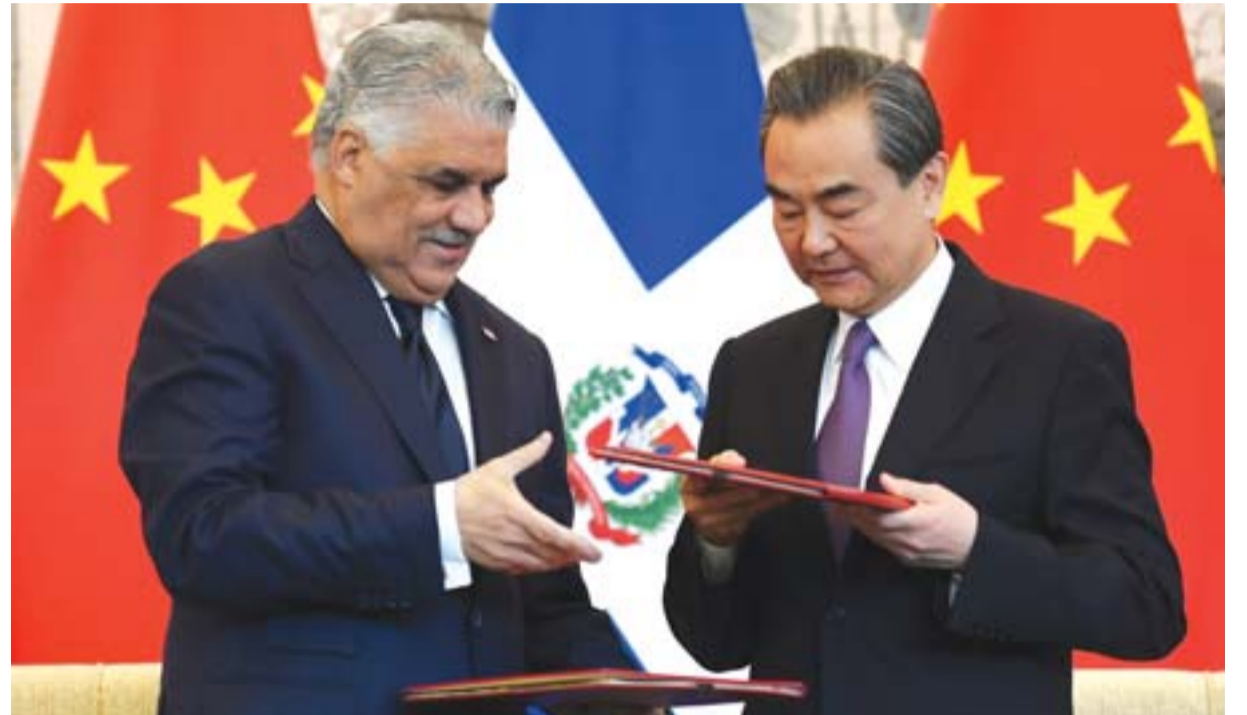
"President Danilo Medina of the Dominican Republic has ignored our long-term partnership, the wishes of the people of the Dominican Republic, and the years of development assistance provided by Taiwan, to accept false promises of investment and aid by China," Wu told

reporters. "(Taiwan) strongly condemns China's objectionable decision to use dollar diplomacy to convert Taiwan's diplomatic allies. Beijing's attempts at foreign policy have only served to drive a wedge between the people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait, erode mutual trust and further harm the feelings of the people of Taiwan."

A Taiwan Foreign Ministry official, speaking on condition of anonymity, told Reuters that, according to initial calculations, China dangled at least a \$3.1 billion package of investments, financial assistance and low-interest loans for the Dominican Republic, which shares an island with Haiti to the west. That included \$400 million for a new freeway, \$1.6 billion for infrastructure projects and \$300 million for a new natural gas power plant. "It was a cost that Taiwan could not match," the official said.

China's Foreign Ministry said the move was a political one with no economic pre-conditions, but that now they have established ties, China will "proactively promote mutually beneficial cooperation in all areas". A person who answered the telephone at the Dominican Republic's Beijing representative office said it did not know about the situation and declined further comment. China has stepped up the pressure on Taiwan since the 2016 election of Tsai Ing-wen, from the pro-independence Democratic Progressive Party, as president. Beijing fears she will push for Taiwan's formal independence, but Tsai says she wants to maintain the status quo.

The Dominican Republic had been a diplomatic ally of the Republic of China - Taiwan's official name - for 77 years, including when the government ruled all of China



BEIJING: Dominican Republic Foreign Minister Miguel Vargas (left) and China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi exchange documents during a signing ceremony where they formally established relations in Beijing yesterday. —AFP

before being forced to Taiwan in 1949 after losing a civil war to the Communists. Taiwan's presidential office said that despite the severe challenges, the government would not bow its head in pressure to Beijing, and vowed to do all it could to protect Taiwan's interests. The Taiwan official said the Dominican Republic move was not unexpected.

"We've always known things were not looking rosy here," the official said.

The Chinese government's top diplomat, State Councilor Wang Yi, lauded the decision as in line with the trend of the times and history, in comments to reporters in Beijing at a hastily arranged news conference. —Reuters



Vatican could be next on the list to switch allegiance

the telephone at the Dominican Republic's Beijing representative office said it did not know about the situation and declined further comment. China has stepped up the pressure on Taiwan since the 2016 election of Tsai Ing-wen, from the pro-independence Democratic Progressive Party, as president. Beijing fears she will push for Taiwan's formal independence, but Tsai says she wants to maintain the status quo.

The Dominican Republic had been a diplomatic ally of the Republic of China - Taiwan's official name - for 77 years, including when the government ruled all of China

Assad's ally Sayyed plots a comeback in Lebanon's election

NABI AYL: A friend of Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad who was once one of Lebanon's most powerful men is trying to make a comeback, with the backing of the Iran-backed Hezbollah movement. Jamil Al-Sayyed rose to become Lebanon's feared intelligence chief during Syria's 15-year domination of the country after its 1975-90 civil war. He quit in 2005, weeks after former Prime Minister Rafiq Al-Hariri was assassinated, and spent four years in jail until he was released without charge over his killing.

Now 68, the retired general and former spymaster is running on Sunday in Lebanon's first parliamentary election since 2009. Prime Minister Saad Al-Hariri, a Sunni Muslim, is expected to remain in power though he is likely to lose some seats to rivals including candidates allied to Hezbollah. But Hariri, who is backed by the West and leads a government that includes Hezbollah and nearly all Lebanon's other main parties, has signaled his concern by indirectly identifying Sayyed as "Bashar Al-Assad's candidate".

The Baalbek-Hermel constituency in eastern Lebanon, where Sayyed is running as an independent candidate, has become one of the most important battlegrounds in the election. Sayyed says Hezbollah's opponents have chosen it "as a point of confrontation." "I am an independent but not neutral," Sayyed told Reuters in an interview in his home village of Nabi Ayla in the fertile Bekaa Valley. Making clear his allegiance is with Hezbollah, he said: "I have firm political convictions in support of the resistance."

Hezbollah leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah has said he will go to the district if necessary to support Hezbollah and its allies against Hariri's Future Movement and the Lebanese Forces party led by Samir Geagea, a former Christian militia leader. Sayyed's critics say his potential comeback and that of his wartime opponents from the anti-Syria camp, such as Geagea, could trench old divisions. One of the biggest anti-Syria dissidents of that time, Christian politician Michel Aoun, is now president of the country of 4 million. But Sayyed said he was unfazed that Lebanon is mostly run by leaders from the civil war era. "I know their secrets and what they hide - their history - because I worked as required in the state in security, in politics," he said.



BEIRUT: Supporters of the Lebanese Communist Party take part in a march celebrating the International Labor Day in the Lebanese capital Beirut yesterday. — AFP

Criticism of Washington

Sayyed criticized US financial support for the Lebanese army, saying it was intended to provoke a confrontation with Hezbollah, which Washington considers a terrorist organization. But he said the Lebanese army and Hezbollah continue to operate in such a way as to complement each other. Hezbollah remained "a necessity (for the army) all the while the West and America do not supply the army with necessary deterrent capabilities", he said.

Sayyed's candidacy in the election has revived memories of a turbulent period which ushered in a sometimes violent power struggle between allies and opponents of Damascus. If he makes it into parliament, he could become a candidate to one day succeed Nabih Berri as the assembly's speaker—a post reserved for a Shi'ite in Lebanon's sectarian power-sharing system. At the peak of his influ-

ence, Sayyed inspired fear among opponents of Syrian influence in Lebanon. A career soldier, he was central to what critics saw as a Syria-controlled security order that suppressed voices opposed to Syrian dominance.

Sayyed shaped the politics of that era alongside top Syrian officials and Lebanese leaders, many of them militia leaders from the 1975-90 conflict. At the time of Rafiq Hariri's killing, Sayyed was head of the General Security Directorate intelligence agency. He was the most powerful of four Lebanese generals detained in 2005 at the request of Detlev Mehlis, the German prosecutor who headed the early stages of the UN investigation into the assassination and implicated Syrian and Lebanese figures. A UN-backed tribunal ordered their release in 2009 for lack of evidence and has charged five members of Hezbollah over the assassination. Hezbollah denies any role in the killing. — Reuters

US pledges support for Nigeria's fight against Boko Haram

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump pledged stronger support for Nigeria's fight against Boko Haram jihadists Monday, while demanding greater trade access to Africa's largest economy. After a meeting with Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari, the first leader from sub-Saharan Africa invited by Trump to the White House, Trump said he was prepared to sell helicopters to the oil-rich country in addition to light fighter aircraft already agreed. "These new aircraft will improve Nigeria's ability to target terrorists and protect civilians," Trump said during a joint press conference in the White House's Rose Garden.

Asked when the first deliveries of equipment—including a dozen A-29 Super Tucano light fighter aircraft and unspecified helicopters—would take place, Trump replied: "Very soon." "We're getting them approved. Part of the problem is you weren't allowed to buy helicopters in our country and now you are; I worked that out," he added. "We make the best military equipment in the world. And our friends can now buy that equipment." Buhari, visiting the United States on a mission to drum up more counterterrorism support and US business investment, thanked Trump for Washington's support to help rebuild the country's northeast, which has been under assault for nine years from Boko Haram.

"The United States of America has been to date the biggest contributor to the humanitarian response," said Buhari. And Buhari diplomatically brushed off the controversy

over Trump's alleged branding of Nigeria and other African nations as "shithole countries" in a January rant over immigration. "I'm very careful with what the press says, other than about myself," Buhari told reporters. "I'm not sure about the validity or whether that allegation against the president was true or not. So the best thing for me is to keep quiet."

Access for US exports

Trump told Buhari that in return for America's support, US exporters are "owed" more access to Nigerian markets. "We look forward to growing our trade relationship based on the principal of fairness and reciprocity," Trump said. "But we give Nigeria well over \$1 billion in aid every year, and we have already started talking with the president about taking down the trade barriers very substantial barriers to the United States trading with Nigeria. So we think that we are owed that."

Trump also appeared to tie US support for Nigeria and other African countries to their backing for the joint US-Canada-Mexico bid to host the football World Cup in 2026. The North American group faces one rival bid from Morocco, with the decision by world football's governing body FIFA to come on June 13. "I hope all African countries and countries throughout the world, that we also will be supporting you, and that they will likewise support us in our bid along with Canada and Mexico for the 2026 World Cup," Trump said. "We will be watching very closely, and any help they can give us in that bid we would appreciate," he said.

During the press conference, Trump also raised the issue of the killings of Christians, in an apparent reference to the April 24 attack on a central Nigerian church where 18 people, including two priests, were murdered. "We are deeply concerned by religious violence in Nigeria, including the burning of churches and the killing and persecution of Christians," he said. —AFP



WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump and Nigeria's President Muhammadu Buhari take part in a joint press conference in the Rose Garden of the White House. —AFP

Outrage after a bloody day for Afghan journalists

KABUL: Condemnation poured in from across the world yesterday after 10 journalists were among dozens killed in attacks in Afghanistan, in what the UN described as the "deliberate targeting" of the media.

A double suicide blast in Kabul left 25 people dead including AFP photographer Shah Marai and eight other journalists, while a BBC reporter was killed in a separate attack in eastern Khost province.

The second Kabul bomber disguised himself as a journalist and detonated himself among the crowd, police said, in what Reporters Without Borders said was the most lethal single attack on the media since the fall of the Taliban. Journalists from Radio Free Europe and Afghan broadcasters Tolo News and ITV were among the others killed. United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said he was "outraged" by the suicide blasts, which were claimed by the Islamic State group and left another 49 people wounded. "The deliberate targeting of journalists in the attack highlights once again the risks media professionals face in carrying out their essential work," he said.

In a third strike on a bloody day for Afghanistan, 11 children were killed and 16 people wounded, including Romanian and Afghan soldiers, when another suicide attacker exploded his car near a NATO convoy in southern Kandahar province. US Defense Secretary Jim Mattis said that the weakened militants were targeting journalists in Afghanistan in order to undermine the electoral process ahead of an expected vote in October. "This is the normal stuff by people who cannot win at the ballot box, so they turn to bombs," he said.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo also condemned the "senseless and barbaric attack". "The vibrant media landscape that has developed in Afghanistan will endure, in large part due to those journalists and media professionals who tragically died in today's attack, but whose courageous and steadfast work helped lay the foundation for Afghanistan's thriving and resilient independent media," he said. The BBC confirmed that its reporter, 29-year-old Ahmad Shah who had worked for the broadcaster for more than a year, was shot by unidentified armed men in Khost and that police were investigating the motive.

Bloody summer

The attacks came days after the Taliban began a spring offensive, in an apparent rejection of a peace talks overture by the Afghan government. Afghanistan was last year ranked the third most dangerous country in the world for journalists by Reporters Without Borders (RSF) and on Monday the watchdog urged the international community to guard the media from future attacks. "It is high time that the UN send a strong signal to the international community and to local protagonists by appointing a Special Representative for the protection of journalists," the group's chief Christophe Deloire said.

Human Rights Watch also warned that a deliberate attack on civilians was a "war crime", adding in a statement yesterday: "Journalists have long paid a high price for covering Afghanistan's armed conflict." RSF said that since 2016, it has recorded the killings of 34 journalists in Afghanistan. In 2016, seven employees of popular TV channel Tolo were killed in a Taliban suicide bombing. And in November last year, broadcaster Shamsad TV was stormed by gunmen who killed one person. After that strike, the defiant station was back on the air within hours, with a newscaster with bandaged hands reporting on the attack as its director vowed: "They cannot silence us."

AFP's Marai joined the agency as a driver in 1996, the year the Taliban seized power. He soon began taking pictures on the side, covering stories including the US invasion in 2001. In 2002, he became a full-time photo stringer, rising through the ranks to become the bureau's chief photographer. —Reuters

International

How old is Big Ben? The trivia Meghan Markle must know to become British

Would-be citizens must take quiz about life in UK

LONDON: US actress Meghan Markle will join Britain's royal family when she marries Prince Harry this month but before she can become a British citizen, it will help her to know how big the Lake District is and the age of "Big Ben". Markle plans to take the nationality of her new husband after their wedding on May 19 but, like tens of thousands of others wanting to become British every year, she will first have to demonstrate knowledge of some historical facts and obscure trivia that many Britons are oblivious to. All would-be citizens must pass the "Life in the UK" test by successfully answering 18 out of 24 questions selected from some 3,000 facts, such as knowing the height of the London Eye Ferris wheel and how many lawmakers sit in the Scottish Parliament.

Even many Britons find the questions baffling. In a random survey carried out by Reuters, only 23 out of 41 Britons quizzed could correctly answer questions put to them, and many of those admitted they were guessing. "I did history at school but some of them are just absolutely stupid," said chef Tom Poston, 46, after failing a sample test shown to him by Reuters. "I would have been kicked out, amazing," said Poston, who lives in London. "I think she's (Markle) going to have to do a lot of studying because I'm shocked."

Hurdles to citizenship

Britain has made the process of becoming a citizen more difficult in recent years as it struggles to cut annual

net immigration to less than 100,000. Underlining the sensitivity of that issue, Amber Rudd quit as Home Secretary (interior minister) on Sunday over an immigration scandal. Becoming a citizen requires a person to have lived in Britain for three years, to have good knowledge of English, to be of sound mind - and to pass the 50 pound (\$69) test.

However, the additional requirement of earning a combined income of at least 18,600 pounds should not prove to be too burdensome for a prince of the realm and his new wife. For many applicants, though, the citizenship test is a major stumbling block. The most recent official figures showed that 133,490 tests were taken in 2016 with 47,312 failures.

"It's very divorced from what the normal experience is for people," Thom Brooks, an academic and vocal critic of the test, told Reuters. "It's the British citizenship test that very few British citizens can pass." Brooks, originally from the United States, sat the quiz himself in 2009 before becoming a UK citizen two years later. "The general view is that it's a money-making ruse by the Home Office," said Brooks, adding that one applicant had failed it more than 60 times. "I haven't really found anyone who found that the test was particularly beneficial for helping them settle in the country."

Last month, a report by Britain's House of Lords committee on citizenship agreed with Brooks and called for a review. "The current test seems to be, and to be regarded as, a barrier to acquiring citizenship rather than a

means of creating better citizens," it said. Among the possible questions are who opened Britain's first Indian restaurant (Sake Dean Mahomed), the size of the Lake District natural park in northern England (885 sq miles or 2,292 km), and the age of the famous "Big Ben" bell in

parliament's clock tower (it came into operation in 1859). Some of those quizzed by Reuters thought Markle might fare better than they had. "I did terribly," said retired engineer David Armstrong, 58. "She's a bright girl, she might get half." — Reuters



US actress Markle, Prince Harry to wed on May 19



LONDON: Britain's Prince Harry (right), his US fiancée Meghan Markle, and Britain's Prince William, Duke of Cambridge, attend a service of commemoration and thanksgiving to mark Anzac Day in Westminster Abbey in London. —AFP

means of creating better citizens," it said. Among the possible questions are who opened Britain's first Indian restaurant (Sake Dean Mahomed), the size of the Lake District natural park in northern England (885 sq miles or 2,292 km), and the age of the famous "Big Ben" bell in

News in brief

Porn star sues Trump

NEW YORK: Porn star Stormy Daniels, who claims she had an affair with Donald Trump in 2006, filed a lawsuit against the US president on Monday for defamation. Daniels, whose real name is Stephanie Clifford, lodged the complaint with the US District Court for the Southern District of New York. In the suit, Clifford said that Trump made "false and defamatory" statements about her in an April 18 tweet. Trump's tweet was in response to the release by Clifford the previous day of a sketch of a man whom she claimed warned her in 2011 to "leave Trump alone." Clifford claimed she was threatened in a Las Vegas parking lot after agreeing to an interview with "In Touch" magazine about her alleged affair with Trump. After Clifford released a drawing of the man she said threatened her, Trump tweeted: "A sketch years later about a nonexistent man." —AFP

Swiss Alps storm kills 6

GENEVA: A sixth person has died after a group of 14 skiers were caught up in a storm, police said yesterday, after the bodies of two climbers were also found elsewhere in the Swiss Alps. Yesterday morning, "a sixth person died. The deceased was a 52-year-old Bulgarian woman," police in Valais canton said in a statement. Bad weather in the Pigne d'Arolla area of the Swiss Alps on Sunday had caught the group of skiers by surprise. The group had set out from the Dix rest-stop and had intended to make it to Vignettes to sleep, trekking along a route called The Serpentine. The manager of a rest-stop in the remote mountain region sent out a call for help at dawn on Monday, triggering a major relief operation that involved seven helicopters, police said. One person, a 59-year-old Italian national who was serving as a guide for the group, was found dead on the scene following a fall, police said. —AFP

Chicago man exonerated

CHICAGO: A Chicago judge on Monday declared innocent a man who spent 22 years in prison for murder, and vacated his conviction, as part of an official review of past cases possibly tainted by police misconduct. Anthony Jakes, convicted of murder when he was 15, was the latest to be exonerated in America's third largest city. Jakes had been sentenced to prison for 40 years for a 1991 murder, but released in 2013 after serving about half of that term. He claimed a now-retired police detective beat and coerced him into confessing. A judge on Monday officially declared Jakes innocent and cleared his name. "I wish my grandmother and my mother were here to celebrate this with me," Jakes told reporters outside the courtroom. —AFP

Alarm gun fired in Nice

NICE: People fled bars and restaurants in Nice in panic Monday after a man fired a noisy but harmless alarm gun into the air in the southern French resort town, police said. Around a dozen people were lightly injured, some requiring hospital treatment, as people rushed out of bars and cafes fearing an attack, emergency services personnel said. France has been hit by a string of terror attacks in recent years, raising the levels of security, and concern, in the country. Last month, an Islamist gunman who killed four people and injured four others in a shooting spree in southwestern France. Nice suffered a terrible attack in 2016 when a Tunisian man ploughed a truck through a large crowd gathered for Bastille Day fireworks in the Mediterranean city, killing 86 people and injuring more than 400. —AFP

Armenia protest leader warns of 'political tsunami'

YEREVAN: At least 20,000 supporters of Armenia's opposition leader Nikol Pashinyan rallied in the centre of the Armenian capital yesterday as he warned lawmakers in parliament of major unrest if they did not elect him prime minister. Heeding the 42-year-old's call to take to the streets, huge crowds gathered in and around the capital's Republic Square, clutching tricolour flags and watching a live video stream from the nail-biting special parliamentary session on a giant screen, an AFP journalist reported.

"There is information that (former presidents) Serzh Sarkisian and Robert Kocharyan—the famous tandem—are planning to take back power," Pashinyan told lawmakers in parliament. "I want to warn them—gentlemen, the mistaken interpretation of people's leniency as a weakness can lead to a genuine political tsunami." "I call on everyone to take to the streets because once again they want to steal the people's victory," he added.

Moscow-allied Armenia has been in the clutches of a severe political crisis for the past few weeks, with Sarkisian stepping down last week after a decade in power in the face of major protests in the impoverished South Caucasus nation. Pashinyan, who is the sole candidate for the post of prime minister, insists that only he can rid Armenia of corruption and poverty and conduct free and fair parliamentary elections. He however is a handful of votes short of a majority and lacks the crucial support of Sarkisian's ruling party to get elected. Speaking to his supporters in the early hours of yesterday, Pashinyan said that the ruling party planned to derail the vote and urged hundreds of thousands to take to the streets.

'Republicans cling to power'

A source familiar with the negotiations told AFP that the situation was febrile, saying Pashinyan could still be elected prime minister if several Republican lawmakers defected and voted for him. "The Republican Party leadership is clinging to power and opposes Pashinyan's election.



YEREVAN: Supporters of Armenian protest leader Nikol Pashinyan attend a rally in downtown Yerevan yesterday. —AFP

The outcome of the vote now depends on how individual Republican Party MPs will vote," the source said.

The source earlier said Pashinyan and the Republican Party had struck a backdoor deal several days ago, with the ruling party agreeing to support his bid. But it appears that the ruling party backed out at the last minute. In a troubling sign, Sarkisian's party has not publicly announced its official stance prior to the vote, with a senior lawmaker only saying it will not stand in the way of Pashinyan's candidacy. Over the past few days Pashinyan has secured the backing of two major parties including Prosperous Armenia, giving him a total of 47 votes. But he was still six votes short of the 53 he needs from the 105-seat legislature, where the Republican Party has a majority.

'Political death sentence'

"The Republicans won't be able to thwart the people's victory," 59-year-old financier Armen Nikagosyan told

AFP at the rally. David Babayan, a 25-year-old software specialist, warned that the ruling party's desire to cling to power would backfire. "They will sign their own political death sentence," he said. Pashinyan's protest movement had accused ex-leader Sarkisian of a power grab, saying he had failed to tackle a litany of problems like corruption, poverty and the influence of oligarchs.

Many political observers had said in the run-up to the vote that it was highly likely that the hugely popular protest leader would be elected prime minister, saying even the Republican Party appeared to understand that Pashinyan's victory would calm things. Observers and the international community have expressed concern that the turmoil could destabilize the Moscow-allied nation, which has been locked in a territorial dispute with Azerbaijan for decades. Russia has urged compromise while the United States has called for "a resolution that reflects the interests of all Armenians." —AFP

On the backfoot, British PM braces for election test

LONDON: With Prime Minister Theresa May on the ropes over her Brexit strategy and immigration policy, Britain's main opposition Labor Party hopes to deliver a further blow in local elections tomorrow. Labor is targeting traditional strongholds for May's Conservatives such as Wandsworth, south London, just days after the resignation of top ally Amber Rudd as interior minister.

"We need a change," Beverley Shillingford, a 54-year-old social worker living in a tower block in Wandsworth, told AFP as Labor Party supporters went canvassing door-to-door one evening in April. Shillingford accused the borough's Conservative leaders of "letting this place fall down" and fellow residents in the 16-storey building complained about everything from a lack of services to a mouse problem. Defeat in the local council polls would pile further pressure on May, who is struggling to keep her party united on Brexit and whose leadership has been on borrowed time ever since she lost her party's parliamentary majority in a general election last year.

Rudd's departure for misleading parliament over migrant deportation targets also deprives May of a key ally at a difficult

time. "The big attention will be on London and the Tories are going to do badly," said Robert Hayward, a Conservative peer and polling expert. "Although essentially people are supposed to be voting on local issues, the reality is that turnout is often driven by perceptions of national politics." Paul Scully, the Conservatives' vice chairman for London said: "It's going to be really tough. "We are trying to hold on to what we've got," he said.

'Signal' to government

The elections are set to highlight Britain's burgeoning divides between urban and rural areas, and eurosceptic and pro-European voters, according to analysts. John Curtice, politics professor at Strathclyde University and one of Britain's top polling experts, believes May will make gains outside the big cities, cementing her party's move away from the more cosmopolitan conservatism of predecessor David Cameron. When results come out, expect to see Labor leader Jeremy Corbyn celebrating in London and the prime minister in England's provincial heartlands, agreed Hayward.

Nonetheless, losing Wandsworth would be a stinging and symbolic Conservative defeat. The borough was former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's favorite local authority for pioneering free-market policies and has low local tax rates and a reputation for sound management. Conservative voters stayed true even when Labour swept its three parliamentary seats in the 1990s and while similar urban areas have shifted leftwards. Ravi Govindia, the incumbent leader, said he is "hopeful" of retaining control. "There is not a single Labor authority in London that has the



SALE, England: Britain's Prime Minister Theresa May (center) meets with pupils as she visits Brooklands Primary School in Sale, near Manchester as part of the Conservative Party's local election campaign. —AFP

kind of low tax levels that our Wandsworth has," he told AFP in his office in the borough's town hall.

His plea to voters: "Why change a winning formula—why risk it?" Labor would need to pick up 12 council seats to pull off what their local leader Simon Hogg describes as "a political earthquake". "I think it would send a signal to the national government," he said. Hogg believes Brexit will prove crucial. "It has severed the tribal connection between a lot of Conservative voters and the Tory party," Hogg said. "I think you'll find lots of Tory councilors are going to lose jobs because of the extreme and chaotic hard Brexit that they're pushing through." The parties are courting

Europeans allowed to vote in local polls—but not national elections, nor the EU referendum—as well as disaffected Tories. Wandsworth has 230,000 eligible voters and typical turnout of around only a third, leaving the 26,000 EU citizens on its rolls ready to play a potentially pivotal role. Despite reassurances of support for EU citizens after Brexit from Wandsworth's Tories, few appear poised to vote Conservative.

"It would be a mismatch between what they're doing on the local level and the national level," said Costanza de Toma, 45, an Italian voting in Wandsworth. The trend could be replicated across London, where EU nationals comprise around 12 percent of the population. —AFP

International

North and S Korea dismantle border speakers, fulfilling 'summit pledge'

UN chief asked to verify test site shutdown

SEOUL: North and South Korea began dismantling loudspeakers that blared propaganda across their heavily fortified border yesterday. South Korea's defense ministry said, fulfilling a promise made at last week's historic summit. The moves are the first practical, if small, steps toward reconciliation after Friday's meeting between South Korean President Moon Jae-in and the North's Kim Jong Un.

Moon, meanwhile, asked that the United Nations help verify North Korea's planned shutdown of its Punggye-ri nuclear test site in a phone conversation yesterday with UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, a statement from the presidential Blue House said. Guterres said the requests need approval from the UN Security Council, but he wanted to cooperate to build peace on the Korean peninsula and would assign a UN official in charge of arms control to cooperate with South Korea, the statement said.

Several days before Friday's summit, the North surprised the world by declaring it would dismantle the test site to "transparently guarantee" its dramatic commitment to stop all nuclear and missile tests. The Punggye-ri site, where North Korea has conducted all six of its nuclear tests, consists of a system of tunnels dug beneath Mount Mantap in the northeastern part of the

country. Some experts and researchers have speculated 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".

Border loudspeakers removed

Along the border, South Korea started taking down its loudspeakers yesterday afternoon, a defense official said. Activity at several spots along the border indicated North Koreans were doing the same, he said. For decades, with only a few breaks, the two sides have pumped out propaganda from huge banks of speakers as a form of psychological warfare. The South broadcast a mixture of news, Korean pop songs and criticism of the northern regime, while the North blasted the southern government and praised its own socialist system. As a sign of goodwill, the South had

Trump likes the idea of meeting with Kim at DMZ



stopped its propaganda ahead of the summit, and the North followed suit.

The incremental steps come amid speculation about where Kim will meet U.S. President Donald Trump, who said their planned summit could take place in three or four weeks. Trump tweeted Monday that meeting Kim at the Peace House in the demilitarized zone, where Moon met Kim, would be an excellent venue. "There's some-



PAJU: South Korean soldiers dismantle loudspeakers that were set up for propaganda broadcasts near the demilitarized zone separating the two Koreas in Paju yesterday. — AFP

thing that I like about it because you're there, you're actually there. Where, if things work out, there's a great celebration to be had on the site, not in a third-party country," Trump later told reporters at the White House.

But a senior US official said Singapore was still high on the list of potential sites. Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong said on Saturday Singapore had not had any request to host the Kim-Trump meeting. South

Korea's presidential Blue House seemed to welcome the prospect of hosting the meeting in Panmunjom, the border village where the Peace House is located. "Panmunjom is quite meaningful as a place to erode the divide and establish a new milestone for peace," a senior presidential official told reporters, asking not be identified because of the sensitivity of the matter. "Wouldn't Panmunjom be the most symbolic place?" — Reuters

No smokes, many drinks for North's Kim at the summit

SEOUL: North Korean leader and known heavy smoker Kim Jong Un refrained from lighting up during a summit with the South's President Moon Jae-in, but enthusiastically accepted every offer of a drink. Kim has often been seen with a cigarette dangling from his fingers-riding a subway train, visiting hospitals or schools, even when inspecting a ballistic missile. In 2012 he was seen holding a cigarette while watching a sports event with his pregnant wife Ri Sol Ju.

But Kim was not seen smoking throughout Friday's headline-grabbing summit, neither indoors nor out, even during an extended conversation with Moon at an outdoor table where an ash-tray had been provided for him. "Chairman Kim did not smoke even when there were no prying eyes from journalists and photographers around him," a Moon aide was quoted by local media as telling journalists. "This was probably a gesture of respect towards

President Moon who is much older than him," he said. Kim also gestured to Moon to step into a lift ahead of him, with Moon later describing him as "well-mannered" and "straightforward and candid".

At the summit the two men pledged in a blaze of publicity to pursue denuclearization and a peace treaty-although analysts point out that previous similar pledges have come to naught and the North made no explicit commitment to give up its nuclear weapons. Kim drank heartily at a dinner after the event, the reports said Monday. "When South Koreans approached him with a drink, he stood up from his seat, let them pour for him and drained it all in one shot," according to one participant. "He never turned it down, whoever came," even though the "munbaeju" liquor was 40 percent alcohol.

Kim's passion for basketball-former Chicago Bull Dennis Rodman has visited Pyongyang several times-was confirmed when he suggested the two Koreas focus on it for sports events rather than football. "Why don't we have basketball exchanges first instead of Seoul-Pyongyang football exchange?" Kim reportedly told Moon, lamenting the loss of a former North Korean star centre described as the world's tallest player. "When we had Ri Myong Hun, we were stronger than the South but after his retirement, we became weak," Kim said.



PANMUNJOM: North Korea's leader Kim Jong Un (left) and South Korea's President Moon Jae-in participate in a tree-planting ceremony next to the Military Demarcation Line that forms the border between the two Koreas at the truce village of Panmunjom. — AFP

Kim was described as taking everything by surprise, including his own sister and close aide Kim Yo Jong, when he promised to reset Pyongyang time to synchronize it with Seoul. "This is news to me as well," the sister told Moon's top aide Im Jong-seok when he asked whether she had been aware of the deci-

sion in advance. A Realmeter opinion poll after the meeting showed that 65 percent of South Koreans believed the North is willing to denuclearize, while 28 percent do not. The figures were a complete reversal from beforehand, when 78 percent distrusted the North's promises and 14 percent trusted them. — AFP

Defectors send bottles of food, facts to N Korea

GANGHWA: North Korean defectors sent water bottles filled with rice and K-pop-loaded USB sticks floating towards their homeland yesterday, even as the two Koreas removed border loudspeakers following a rare summit last week. The North's leader Kim Jong Un and the South's president Moon Jae-in agreed last week to "completely cease all hostile acts" along the Demilitarized Zone from May 1, including loudspeaker broadcasts and leaflet balloon launches. But former North Korean political prisoner Jung Gwang-il and other activists tossed bottles into the sea from an island, hoping the tide will carry them northwards.

Seoul is playing into Pyongyang's hands by depriving ordinary North Koreans of much-needed information, Jung said. "What is one thing that Kim Jong Un hates the most?" he asked. "It's North Koreans becoming aware of the reality." The defectors have been throwing hundreds of bottles filled with food, cash, medicine and memory sticks into the sea twice a month for more than two years.

It will take about four to five hours for the bottles to reach the closest North Korean shore, said another defector Park Jung-oh. "We all lived in North Korea for at least 30, 40 years so we know exactly what the people there want and need," Park said. "When they watch the content of our USB sticks, they will realize that they have been tricked by their government," he added. There is no definitive way of verifying whether the items have been received, but Jung said the South's coastguards have told him the bottles are often retrieved by North Korean fishing boats.

K-pop and news

The USB sticks contain movies, current affairs programs, and K-pop music videos-carefully selected by

Jung to include female musicians in revealing outfits. "It shows what freedom is," he said. "It's no problem in South Korea but banned in the North. That's what we want to show." A survey conducted in 2015 said 81 percent of North Korean defectors had watched foreign films on USB sticks before they fled the country. "Thae Yong Ho, North Korea's former deputy ambassador to Britain who defected to the South in 2016, once described the USB sticks as an effective tactic for spreading information in the isolated country, despite efforts by the Kim regime to block them.

Disseminating outside information was a way to educate North Koreans to resist the authorities, he said after defecting. As the activists tossed the bottles into

the sea, the South's defense authorities began removing loudspeakers along the Demilitarized Zone to implement the Panmunjom Declaration agreed at last week's summit. North Korea also began removing its own loudspeakers, Seoul's defense ministry said. The high-decibel loudspeakers have long blared K-pop music and South Korean news towards the North's border troops, with their use varying depending on the situation. US activist Susan Scholte called Seoul's move a "huge mistake". "I think any way that you can get information in should be increased, not diminished," Scholte said. She added: "Any information that you can get into North Korea is a peaceful, non-violent way to bring about awareness and change. — AFP



GANGHWA-GUN: Bottles containing rice, money, and USB sticks, are thrown into the sea by North Korean defector activists on Ganghwa island, west of Seoul yesterday. — AFP

News in brief

Japan's 'wood alcohol'

TOKYO: Discerning drinkers may soon be able to branch out after Japanese researchers said yesterday they have invented a way of producing an alcoholic drink made from wood. The researchers at Japan's Forestry and Forest Products Research Institute say the bark-based beverages have woody qualities similar to alcohol which is aged in wood barrels. They hope to have their "wood alcohol" on shelves within three years. The method involves pulverizing wood into a creamy paste and then adding yeast and an enzyme to start the fermentation process. By avoiding using heat, researchers say they are able to preserve the specific flavor of each tree's wood. So far, they have produced tipples from cedar, birch and cherry. — AFP

Dozens detained in Istanbul

ISTANBUL: Istanbul police yesterday detained over 50 people and placed a security lockdown on the city as the Turkish metropolis marked a tense May Day. The annual workers' holiday has traditionally been a place for confrontation between protesters and police but in recent years the authorities have left nothing to chance by entirely barring access to key protest areas. The central Taksim Square was entirely barricaded off by police, with images taken from the air showing the usually thronged urban space deserted apart from officers. Authorities also barred access to the city's main shopping street, the pedestrianised Istiklal Avenue, which has in the past been the scene of protest marches. Reports said that almost all shops were closed the length of the street and tradesmen would have to wait until the evening for the public to be allowed through. — AFP

Burundi controversial vote

NAIROBI: Burundi yesterday launched the official campaign for a referendum on constitutional change that could enable President Pierre Nkurunziza to stay in power for another 16 years. Twenty-six parties, most of them aligned with the ruling CNDD-FDD party, have been authorized to campaign for the May 17 plebiscite in the politically tense central African nation. The vote is taking place in tightly-controlled conditions, and parties which advise electors to abstain-rather than cast a Yes or No ballot-risk up to three years' jail. Burundi's exiled opposition, gathered in an alliance called CNARED, has called for a boycott of the referendum, which it describes as the "death knell" to a 2000 agreement that helped end a bloody civil war. Nkurunziza, a 54-year-old former rebel leader, has ruled the small, densely populated central African nation since 2005. — AFP

Brazil tower collapses

SAO PAULO: A 24-storey building in the center of Sao Paulo, Brazil's biggest city, collapsed yesterday after a blaze that rapidly tore through the structure, reportedly killing one person. Dozens of homeless families were squatting in the building, according to local media. However, so far only one person was reported dead, local media reported. The Sao Paulo fire department said "we are still not confirming the number of victims." The fire began overnight and spread rapidly, turning the building into an inferno. Dramatic pictures tweeted by the fire service showed flames shooting up the sides of the whole tower, which then collapsed. Television footage showed damage to an adjacent church. Fifty-seven vehicles and 160 firefighters were deployed to the scene, the department tweeted.— AFP

Analysis

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ADVERTISING : 24835616/7
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Mongolians sip 'oxygen cocktails' to cope with smog

Fed up with the smog in Mongolia's capital, residents have resorted to sipping "lung" tea and "oxygen cocktails" in a desperate bid to protect themselves from pollution, despite health officials saying there is no evidence they work. Ulaanbaatar topped New Delhi and Beijing as the world's most polluted capital in 2016, UNICEF said in a report warning of a health crisis that has put every child and pregnancy at risk. With residents of so-called ger (slum) districts using coal stoves to cook and heat their homes in the world's coldest capital, where temperatures can dip as low as -40 Celsius, pollution has skyrocketed.

While most of the pollution comes from stoves in the gers, road transport and power plants add to the toxic mix. On Jan 30, air pollution was 133 times higher than the safe limit set by the World Health Organization (WHO). UNICEF reported that cases of respiratory infections have nearly tripled and pneumonia is now the second leading cause of death for children under five. Worried parents have held protests to press the government to take action. But some businesses are cashing in, even though a WHO official says there is no evidence that such anti-smog products work.

'Life is air'

Advertisements in Mongolia boast that "drinking just one oxygen cocktail is equal to a three-hour-walk in a lush forest". At the produce section of the State Department Store, blue cans of oxygen called "Life Is Air" are on sale for \$2, and promise to turn a glass of juice into a foamy, sweet "oxygen cocktail" after spraying some into a glass through a special straw. Other stores and pharmacies have oxygen cocktail machines that resemble coffee makers and can turn a juice into a frothy drink for \$1.

Pregnant women are among the most avid customers of the Russian-made product, with some saying they are following their doctor's orders. Batbayar Munguntuul, a 34-year-old accountant and mother of three, drank oxygen cocktails when she was pregnant, but she ended up spending much more money on medicine. "Every winter we constantly buy medicine," she told AFP. "It has reached a point that it is like just any other grocery product that you have to buy regularly."

Like many other Mongolians, she has chosen to buy an air purifier to make sure her family breathes clean air at home. Her machine, which filters out toxic fumes, cost her \$300. The average level of PM2.5 particles - which penetrate deep into the lungs was 75 micrograms per cubic metre last year, or three times the exposure recommended by the WHO for a 24-hour period. Air pollution has been linked to asthma, bronchitis, and other long-term respiratory diseases.

Some Mongolians drinking special teas named Enkhjin, Ikh Taiga, and Dr Baatar that claim to clean lungs. Dr Baatar's CEO, Baatar Chantsaldulam, said sales surge by 20 to 30 percent during winter, when pollution tends to reach its peak. "First it takes all the toxins out of the blood, then it turns the toxins in the lung into mucus, and all the plants in tea helps boost the human immune system," he told AFP.

But Maria Neira, the head of the WHO's public health department, said the "real solution" to protect the lungs and the cardiovascular system was to reduce air pollution and avoid exposure to it. "The business community will offer plenty of those solutions," Neira said, referring to the oxygen cocktails and lung teas. "We don't have any scientific evidence whether they provide any benefit," she said.

Angry parents

Non-profit organizations such as Parents Against Smog say the government is not doing enough to reduce air pollution and argue that ordinary people should not have to suffer financially to protect their health. The group organized a sit-in protest earlier this year. "For the past 10 years, people have known that air pollution has reached dangerous levels," Parents Against Smog coordinator Tumur Mandakhjargal told AFP. "However, policymakers only address the issue by talking about passing out clean stoves and clean coal," Mandakhjargal said.

The NGO says the government should give some 200,000 ger residents access to loans so that they install heating insulation and replace their stoves with cleaner heaters. It also complains that a ger relocation plan has been too slow. The government spent \$120 million between 2008-2016 to combat pollution, with half of the funds coming out of its foreign aid revenue. Part of the money has gone to distributing low-emission stoves to residents of ger districts. —AFP



A customer buys "oxygen cocktails" at a store in Ulaanbaatar on April 17, 2018. —AFP



Marx at 200: Germany torn over legacy

As Germany prepares to mark Karl Marx's 200th birth anniversary, the revolutionary philosopher's legacy remains divisive more than a quarter century after the fall of the Berlin Wall. With scars from the Cold War still fresh, people from capitalist former West Germany and the once communist East are of two minds about the 19th-century philosopher. Some hail Marx as a visionary scholar who foretold the ills of the market economy, while others revile him for inspiring Stalinist regimes.

In the western town of Trier, the icon's birthplace which is planning 600 events for his bicentenary, it is not lost on critics that the centerpiece of the celebrations is a gargantuan statue offered as a gift from communist China. "I never had a need for him," retiree Helene Schmidt, 76, told AFP, voicing her opposition to the statue, which is 5.5 m tall and is to be unveiled on Saturday, Marx's birth anniversary.

For many Germans, their feelings are shaped by where and when they grew up. "My mother told me once that Karl Marx is a communist and that was that. And now he is standing before us," said 92-year-old Anne-Lise, somewhat puzzled by the imposing statue, which is positioned near a set of recently installed special edition traffic lights featuring the philosopher.

As she was growing up in the West, she rarely heard mention of Marx, and it was only this year that she learned anything about the man. Anne-Lise said, declining to give her last name. University student Sandra Konrad, 22, however has no doubts as to his lasting importance. Marx "delivered a great manifesto and no one can counter that," she said. "He should not be buried away."

While older generations in west Germany grew up with little knowledge of key Marx works such as the Communist Manifesto and Das Kapital, that has changed since reunification. Over the last decade in particular, unbridled capitalism and its discontents have fuelled renewed interest in Marx's work on the oppression of the working class and inequality. The theories, developed as the Industrial Revolution gathered pace in the

19th century, find resonance today as societies once again see social and political upheaval. "There is a growing timeliness about Karl Marx - certainly the financial and economic crises played a role since 2008 when renowned contemporary economists praised him as a theorist," said Rainer Auts, director of a company set up to oversee the exhibitions on Marx's life, works and legacy.

Capitalizing on Marx

But in the former East, where the work of the burly man known for his flowing mane and beard was once espoused in every school, some reject any praise for Marx because of the damage his ideas wrought. "Karl Marx developed the foundation upon which all subsequent communist dictatorships have built until today," Dieter Dombrovski, president of the Union of the Victim Groups of Communist Tyranny, told AFP. "He wrote these works; sure, he did not implement them but he developed the thought and the communist dictatorships implemented everything that he wrote word for word."

"According to our penal system today, if someone were to incite a person to commit murder, and if the other person carries out the murder, then the one who incited is also convicted, which is only right," said Dombrovski, who was once jailed by the East German dictatorship. More people were killed under communist regimes than under Adolf Hitler, he added.

The giant statue gifted by China has also become a lightning rod. "In Germany, erecting a statue means conferring an honor to that individual. The city of Trier is therefore honoring Karl Marx and his works," said Dombrovski, also accusing it, perhaps ironically, of capitalizing on the philosopher to draw more Chinese tourists.

'Great son of the city'

Officials in Trier reject the accusations, arguing that Marx cannot be blamed for regimes which distorted his theories to their own ends. "The (East German) regime treated Marx as its god, and his words were the



Supporters of the Frontline Socialist Party display placards with the images of (from left) Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels and Vladimir Lenin as they take part in a May Day rally in Colombo yesterday.



This picture taken on April 10, 2018 in Trier in southwestern Germany shows the front and the back side of a zero euro banknote released on the occasion of German philosopher Karl Marx's bicentenary. —AFP photos

true gospel. That discredited his ideas and philosophy. A new look has not been possible until after reunification," Auts said, stressing that the commemorations aim neither to "glorify nor vilify" Marx.

For Trier mayor Wolfram Leibe, this year offers an opportunity to reassess the man and his work. "We now have 30 years of distance from reunification... which gives us the possibility to look at Marx with a critical eye without prejudice," he said, adding that the

thinker should "take his place as one of the greatest sons of the city." Leibe also denied trying to attract Chinese tourists - many of whom come on a pilgrimage to visit Marx's birthplace. Only one percent of Trier's five million visitors a year are Chinese, he said, adding that the city does not have sufficient capacity to accommodate more tourists even if it wanted to. "Karl Marx formulated important ideas, and it is worthwhile to think about these ideas. —AFP

Greek-Turkish border again under refugee pressure

PYTHIO, Greece: Their clothes caked with mud, a small group of refugees from Syria trudge past a Greek farmer tilling his field on a tractor. He barely pauses to look at them. In the villages near the Evros River, the natural boundary with Turkey in northeastern Greece, such arrivals are now common. In Pythio, retired factory worker Yiannis Kiourtidis gets a phone call at the local coffee shop. "Here comes another bunch. They have children with them," he shouts to his fellow villagers, who are playing cards.

Refugees - mainly people fleeing the war in Syria - usually arrive in Greece via the Aegean Sea. But Aegean island camps are vastly overcrowded, and a months-long wait is in store for anyone who applies for asylum there. Since the beginning of the year, the overland route has picked up again. Many are Syrian Kurds from Afrin, the enclave in Syria that fell to Turkish forces in March after a month of fighting.

According to the UN refugee agency UNHCR, some 2,900 people have arrived in Evros so far this month, mostly Syrian and Iraqi families. This is equivalent to half the estimated land arrivals recorded in all of 2017, outpacing arrivals by sea, the agency said. "It's too early to know the causes of the increase... More time is needed to say if the flow really is shifting," says Izabella Cooper, a spokeswoman for EU border agency Frontex, which has a staff of 26 officers in the area.

'Will they send us back?'

At the village, Kiourtidis, who was once an immigrant worker in Germany, swiftly loads a car with bottled water and biscuits with the help of a friend. Rushing out, he makes contact with the 11 refugees - six adults and five children - at a nearby field. "Syria, Syria," calls out the man leading the group. Kiourtidis motions them towards him. The two villagers hand out water as the Syrian children reach for the biscuits. Gesturing again, the group leader asks for directions to Thessaloniki, the main city in northern Greece.

While they talk, an unmarked van pulls over and two Greek policemen step out. They are armed, yet not in uniform. The Syrians are terrified. They have heard reports of refugees being illegally rounded up and pushed back to Turkey, a practice the Greek state has officially denied. "Are they going to send us back?" 25-year-old Ayla, who has travelled here from the Euphrates city of Abu Kamal with her husband and five-year-old daughter, asks fearfully. The policemen assure her that this is not their intention. "Allah be praised," Ayla says. "You have to understand, we have lost our homes, our relatives, everything," she says, adding that her family paid smugglers \$1,000 for each member to get to Greece.

'Full to capacity'

From the border area, the refugees are taken to police facilities for identification and then forwarded to reception camps in the north. Some privately seek passage to Thessaloniki, or even Athens if they can afford it. The camps are already filling up, and the UNHCR this week called on the government to urgently expand reception capacity to ease the strain. "Hundreds of people are at present being held in police detention facilities," UNHCR said.

Some refugees actively seek out the police, to get



Villagers hand out bottled water and biscuits to a small group of Syrian refugees after they crossed the Evros River in the village of Pythio on April 28, 2018. —FP

themselves indoors. Shortly after dawn, 27-year-old Ahmet from Somalia is walking on a rural road with his wife and two other relatives. "We are trying to find the police. We've been on the road for two days," he says. Elias Akidis, head of the police officers' union of Orestiada, near the Turkish border, says refugees are aware that camps on Greek islands are already overflowing with people, and are opting to take the land route accordingly. "In addition, crossing the Evros River is easy at this time of year," he says.

Another senior officer, speaking on condition of anonymity, says they can barely keep up with arrivals. "The reception center is full to capacity... There is a great increase in flows, but the situation is still under control," he told AFP. Frontex's Cooper said the agency is ready to divert additional resources to the area if requested. "Our operations are flexible and we are ready to increase our presence if necessary," she told the daily Ethnos on Sunday. —AFP

Chaos and color in May Day rallies across globe

PARIS: Traditional May Day rallies turned violent in some parts of the world yesterday, as workers gathered to defend labor rights. There was looting in Paris and dozens of arrests in Turkey, in contrast to Cuba with its colorful celebrations and new leader. Here is a round-up of some of the biggest events on the annual workers' holiday.

Paris riots, looting

A march against French President Emmanuel Macron's public sector reforms descended in riots in central Paris. On the sidelines of the May Day union-led demonstration for workers' rights, chaos erupted when a group of protesters began torching a McDonald's restaurant and vehicles at a car dealership. Around 1,200 people in black jackets and face masks shouted slogans such as "Rise up, Paris" and "Everyone hates the police". Police, who had warned of the risk of extremist groups using the march to spark fresh clashes, used tear gas and water cannon to disperse demonstrators. The scenes of looting and destruction overshadowed the May Day march, which drew between 20,000 and 55,000 peaceful protesters, according to police and union estimates.

Burning effigy in Philippines

A giant demon in the role of Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte was burned by protesters near the presidential palace in a lively Labour Day rally. Thousands of workers marched in Manila to voice anger over what they said was the president's failure to scrap short-term employment contracts. Police said some 5,500 people attended the marches and that the events were "generally peaceful".

Tense crackdown in Turkey

Key protest areas were closed off in Istanbul, with the annual workers' holiday often the occasion for confrontation between demonstrators and police in Turkey. Protesters who sought to defy the ban in central Taksim Square were taken away by police, supported by helicopters, armored cars and water cannon vehicles. Police said they arrested 84 people in Istanbul. Thousands of people took part in officially-sanctioned May 1 events in the Istanbul district of Maltepe, and in other cities, at a time when political tensions are running high ahead of snap parliamentary and presidential elections in June.

Show of hope in Cuba

In Havana, the first May Day march of the post-Castro era drew a colorful crowd of close to a million people. Cubans carried posters of the Castro brothers and fellow revolutionary Che Guevara and unfurled huge copies of the country's flag, while children dressed as soldiers bounced on their parents' shoulders. The annual Workers' Day march at the capital's Revolution Square was the first major appearance for new president Miguel Diaz-Canel, who was accompanied by his predecessor Raul Castro.

Flowers and stones

Riot police were deployed to control crowds in Medellin, Colombia, where protesters threw stones at officers during clashes. In Berlin, police officers looked on as demonstrators dressed in black from the "Revolutionary 1st of May Demonstration" lit flares. According to unions, some 500 events were planned nationwide, with many



Protestors dressed in black and with the face covered hold a banner and gesture as they take part in a march during the annual May Day workers' rally in Paris yesterday. — AFP

held under the slogan of "solidarity, diversity and justice". But in Athens demonstrators carried red carnations in union marches through the Greek capital. One of the largest demonstrations of the Greek Communist Labour Union attracted at least 11,000 people. Supporters of Brazil's former president Luiz Inacio Lula

da Silva, who is serving a 12-year sentence for corruption, gathered in front of the Federal Police headquarters in Curitiba where he is being held. Wearing red, the color of the Workers' Party, and holding aloft signs calling for his release, they marked May Day by staging a "Good Morning Lula" event. — AFP

Ahead of polls, disillusionment, apathy in Tunisia

KASSERINE, Tunisia: A student from a working-class family in central Tunisia, Karim tries to convince himself municipal elections will usher in a new class of politicians committed to working for local people. "I'm only 20 and I want to remain hopeful, even if I'm not 100 percent sure the future will be better," he tells AFP in a market in the city of Kasserine, ahead of Sunday's poll. In Jan 2011, Kasserine was a hotbed of protest in the popular uprising that forced dictator Zine El Abidine Ben Ali from power.

The revolution's cradle was the neighboring town of Sidi Bouzid, where 26-year-old fruit-seller Mohamed Bouazizi set himself ablaze in Dec 2010 after authorities confiscated his stock. Six years older than Karim is now, the graduate's burns were so severe he didn't survive beyond an agonizing couple of weeks in hospital.

But he was posthumously revered as a catalyst for change. Karim, who works nights as a lorry driver to fund his studies, still clings to the hope generated by the dictator's fall - but his optimism is ridiculed by other market-goers. "You dream my boy!" says unemployed Sami Khadraoui, cutting off the young student in full flow. "The candidates, even those from Kasserine, will only serve their own interests. They will fill their pockets then leave," says the 31-year-old. "The first thing the new representatives will do is clean up the areas right in front of their own homes," pipes up another scornful voice, amid the market bustle in Ennour, a poor district of Kasserine.

Such is the disillusionment here that some even pine for the days of Ben Ali. Seven years after the dictator fell, and in the only country where the so-called Arab Spring has brought a degree of democratic reform, little seems to have changed in this part of the country. Unemployment in Kasserine and its wider governorate of the same name is 26.2 percent, around 50 percent higher than the national average, according to Tunisian NGO the Forum for Economic and Social Rights.

The per capita representation of small- and medium-sized enterprises in Tunisia is more than 15 times

higher than in Kasserine, which has a population of around 90,000. Alleged government neglect has also made it a breeding ground for extremism, with insurgents tempting some young men to their mountain hideouts in the governorate. A Dec 2015 study by the Soufan Group think-tank found Tunisia to be the single greatest source of foreign fighters in the conflicts in Iraq and Syria, dwarfing by a factor of nearly 2.5 those coming from Saudi Arabia.

And frustration over the lack of change has brought fresh street clashes. In Jan 2016, five years after the uprising against Ben Ali, social unrest broke out in Kasserine and spread to the rest of the country. Further demonstrations against unemployment and high prices in January this year resulted in more than 200 people being arrested, according to the interior ministry, with this part of central Tunisia again a flash-point area. "Hope has expired for the majority of people," says 61-year-old Jamel Ben Mohamed, a trained lawyer who has scraped by selling vegetables for the past 25 years. "They have lost all confidence in politicians and are not interested in the municipal elections or the legislative and presidential polls" set to take place next year, he adds. — AFP



KASSERINE: A man looks at lists of candidates for the upcoming municipal elections on April 23, 2018. — AFP

Manila moves to halt Kuwait...

Continued from Page 1

The strength of that friendship will withstand this misunderstanding," he added.

Cayetano apologized last week for the rescues, but Kuwait called them violations of sovereignty before expelling the Philippine envoy and recalling its own ambassador from Manila. Before relations plunged, Kuwait and the Philippines had been negotiating a labor deal that could have resulted in the lifting of the ban on Filipinos leaving to work in the state.

Meanwhile, Kuwaiti Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah yesterday met visiting Presidential Adviser on Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) Abdullah Mamo and his accompanying delegation. During the meeting, they discussed the labor row between the two countries. They stressed the depth of friendly relations between both sides, pointing to mutual willingness to promote and develop them, and overcome the crisis for

the common interest of both countries.

In a speech marking Labor Day, Duterte reiterated his long-standing condition that Kuwait implement more worker safeguards before the standoff can end. "We are pushing for better protection of migrant workers especially those in vulnerable groups such as domestic helpers or household workers in the Middle East," he said. The president added the protections should include guarantees that Filipina maids be allowed to keep their phones and passports, which some employers confiscate to keep the workers in line.

Duterte also repeated an offer of free transport to Filipinos in Kuwait who want to return home, promising assistance when they get back. "We shall mobilize continuously till everyone who wants (to come back) will come home," he said. Around 262,000 Filipinos work in Kuwait, nearly 60 percent of them domestic workers, according to the Philippine foreign ministry. Duterte previously said workers returning from Kuwait could find employment as English teachers in China, citing improved ties with Beijing. The Philippines has sent millions of its people to work abroad, seeking salaries they cannot get in their relatively impoverished nation. The money they send back home accounts for about 10 percent of the Philippine economy. — Agencies

Facebook to launch new...

Continued from Page 1

harvesting of personal data by Cambridge Analytica, a British political consultancy that worked for Donald Trump's 2016 election campaign. Facebook has admitted up to 87 million users may have had their data hijacked in the scandal, which saw Zuckerberg grilled at length by the US Congress last month. "We need to make sure that never happens again," Zuckerberg told the audience.

In a related move, Facebook yesterday announced an upcoming feature called "Clear History" that will allow users to see which apps and websites send the network information, delete the data from their account, and prevent Facebook from storing it. The social network has already moved to limit the amount of data it shares with third-party applications and plans further steps to prevent a repeat of the Cambridge Analytica debacle, Zuckerberg said.

Facebook is also reviewing applications overall as

well as auditing those that accessed large amounts of data to make sure access isn't abused, he said. "Security isn't a problem than you ever fully solve," Zuckerberg said, outlining the slew of efforts by Facebook to battle election interference, misinformation, spam among other challenges. "This is an arms race; we are going to be working to stay ahead of our adversaries forever."

Facebook separately announced yesterday that its popular Messenger app would soon be able to translate missives in real time, deploying artificial intelligence to enable text conversations between people using different languages. The feature will launch in the United States with English and Spanish translations of conversations in the Marketplace section of Facebook, and will be extended to general Messenger use in coming weeks, the service said in a blog post.

Facebook joins internet giants Amazon, Microsoft and Google in offering artificial-intelligence based translation features - most prominently Google's Pixel car buds which promise real-time translation across dozens of languages. The slew of announcements at the developer-centric "F8" conference also included the arrival of a stand-alone Oculus Go headset aimed to get more people using virtual reality. — AFP

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2018 / 05 / 01 - 2018 / 05 / 31

Sports

Mayweather legacy faces challenge from Thai fighter 'dwarf giant'

Menayothin is shorter, leaner and less wealthy than Mayweather

BANGKOK: After a career laden with belts, cash and kudos, boxing great Floyd Mayweather Jr retired undefeated over 50 fights—but his flawless record faces an unlikely challenge from an obscure Thai fighter known as the "dwarf giant".

At 5ft 2in (1.57m) and weighing just 105lb (47.6kg), minimum weight Wanheng Menayothin is shorter, leaner and significantly less wealthy than Mayweather, who briefly emerged from retirement last year to fight MMA star Conor McGregor for a \$100 million purse.

If Wanheng triumphs today afternoon he will equal Mayweather's feat of winning 50 successive fights. His WBC minimum weight belt is on the line against Panamanian challenger Leroy Estrada. The fight, to be held outside the town hall of second-tier Thai city Nakhon Ratchasima, has none of the glitz or pay-per-view pull of a Mayweather bout in Las Vegas.

But still Wanheng will enter boxing lore with victory—and, at 32 years of age, has time to go one better and match the 51 wins, one draw and no losses set by Mexican flyweight Ricardo Lopez.

It is not just the box office power that differentiates Mayweather from the Thai, who turned to the ring at the age of 12 as a path out of poverty. While the prelude to Mayweather fights was defined by hype and trash-talking, Wanheng has adopted a more karmic approach. "I'm not feeling pressured, you win and you lose, and that's the nature of sports," he said at his gym in Bangkok a few days before defending his title. But he said he had trained hard with the aim of "equalling

Floyd". Nicknames also capture the difference between the pair.

NUMBERS GAME

In addition to "Money", the American fought under the moniker "Pretty Boy" and "The Best Ever", tags he still rolls out on a Twitter profile boasting more than eight million followers. With Wanheng, it's more complicated.

Fighters in Thailand often compete under the label of their gym, which is where his second name Menayothin—the name of his Bangkok gym—comes from. His legal name is Chayaphon Moonsri, while his most widely used nickname is the "dwarf giant" because of his small stature and powerful punches. But the boxer also fights under the alias "Five-Star Grilled Chicken" as part of sponsorship deal with Thai food giant CP Chicken. Should Wanheng win today his name will enter the record books, but with an asterisk of sorts.

He has fought mostly low-profile Asian challengers on his home turf in Thailand. His rivals have been a mixed bag—one last year had 44 losses, while another in 2014 had 24. In December he tied Rocky Marciano's 49-0 tally with a win over Japanese contender Tatsuya Fukuhara.

Mayweather, meanwhile, had a much tougher ride defeating some of the sport's all-time greats, including Manny Pacquiao and Oscar De La Hoya. The welterweight has 27 KOs to Wanheng's 17. "With respect to Wanheng he's never beaten anyone of note. In the west

“ I'm not feeling pressured, you win and you lose ”

”



BANGKOK: File photo taken on January 31, 2018 shows the current World Boxing Council (WBC) mini-flyweight champion, Wanheng Menayothin, punching a bag during a training session in Bangkok. At 5ft 2in (1.57m) and weighing just 105lb (47.6kg), minimum weight Wanheng Menayothin is shorter, leaner and significantly less wealthy than boxing great Floyd Mayweather Jr. — AFP

this fight will be nothing more than a trivial pursuit question," Anson Wainwright, a boxing correspondent for The Ring magazine, told AFP, adding that matching the record would nevertheless be a "good achievement." Carlos Costa, a boxing reporter covering the fight, said the 23-year-old Estrada also poses a unique

challenge to Wanheng, 32. "He's younger and fresher," Costa said of Estrada. "He's hungry for glory, and that makes a boxer always dangerous."

And the Panamanian is in no mood to help Wanheng into the history books, telling AFP "this is my opportunity to be a champion". — AFP

Athletics Canada calls for sport free of discrimination

TORONTO: Canada's athletics federation called on Monday for a rigorous review of a new IAAF hyperandrogenism rule. "Athletics Canada has serious concerns with last week's announcement from the IAAF regarding hyperandrogenism testing," the federation said in a statement.

The new regulations by the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) lay down a series of criteria for athletes with a Difference of Sexual Development (DSD) to be eligible to compete internationally in certain events.

They could prevent South African double Olympic champion Caster Semenya from competing in 800m and 1500m races. "In Canada, we encourage the full access for all Canadians to participate and compete in athletics, at every level of our sport free of discrimination," the federation said.

"Athletics Canada believes in the principles of inclusion, respect and health and safety." The federation said it planned to review the eligibility rule in detail and hold discussions with government officials and other national sports organisations.

"We believe this IAAF eligibility ruling requires rigorous review," it said. The new rule goes into effect in November unless overturned by the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS). Athletics authorities have struggled to find a solution to the issue that respected the rights of Semenya while also providing what they say is a "level playing field".

Some female rivals had complained that the 27-year-old's hyperandrogenism gave her an unfair competitive advantage. The condition is characterised by higher than usual levels of testosterone, a hormone that increases muscle mass, strength and haemoglobin, which affects endurance.

To compete internationally, athletes with a Difference of Sexual Development (DSD) must: Be recognised at law either as female or as intersex (or equivalent); Must reduce her blood testosterone level to below five (5) nmol/L for a continuous period of at least six months (e.g., by use of hormonal contraceptives); Thereafter she must maintain her blood testosterone level below five (5) nmol/L continuously.

The rule applies to events from 400m to the mile, including 400m, hurdles races, 800m, 1500m, one mile races and combined events over the same distances. It effectively gives Semenya a choice of taking medication to restrict her testosterone or move to longer distance events.

The IAAF's previous attempts to regulate the issue fell foul of a Court of Arbitration for Sport ruling in 2015 following an appeal on behalf of Indian athlete Dutee Chand, who had been banned from competing because of her testosterone levels.

IAAF President Sebastian Coe has previously said nobody was suggesting Semenya had done anything wrong. Athletics South Africa said last week it would study the new regulations and compare them with the CAS recommendations to see if they are compatible and in line.

"We will further seek support from the Minister of Sport and Recreation, SASCO, other expert institutions and relevant organisations or individuals, so that we have a full grasp of this matter and how it should be properly handled," it said. —Reuters

Golovkin seeks record-tying win against Canelo fill-in foe

LOS ANGELES: Undefeated Gennady Golovkin defends his three major world middleweight titles against fill-in foe Vanes Martirosyan on Saturday with boxing history and a possible rematch with Canelo Alvarez on the line.

"Triple G" tries to stretch his reign, which began in 2010, to 20 fights and equal Bernard Hopkins for the longest title run in middleweight history when he faces Armenian-born American Martirosyan.

"(It means) a lot. I feel like a star," Golovkin said Monday. "If you check Bernard Hopkins, my record is much bigger, much stronger. This is a good situation for my career, for my fans." Golovkin was set for a Las Vegas pay-per-view showdown on the Mexican Cinco de Mayo holiday against Alvarez, a rematch of their thrilling draw last September.

But the Mexican tested positive for the banned substance clenbuterol and dropped out of the bout four weeks ago. "He was extremely frustrated and disappointed when the positive test was announced," said Golovkin promoter Tom Loeffler. "He had been training for the biggest fight in boxing and it was a big shock-wave when it came."

Alvarez is banned until August but hopes to fight again on September 16, another Mexican holiday, and maybe against Golovkin. Asked about fighting Alvarez next if he retains his titles Saturday, Golovkin said, "Maybe. Why not? I want activity."

If not Alvarez, then British southpaw Billy Joe Saunders, whose World Boxing Organization middleweight crown is the only one not held by Golovkin, and Ukraine's Sergiy Derevyanchenko, Golovkin's mandatory next International Boxing Federation challenger, would be likely next rivals.

But Golovkin, 36, made it clear he wants to break the

Veteran Williams to bare all if he reaches world final

LONDON: Veteran two-time world snooker champion Mark Williams vowed if he reaches this year's final to appear naked before the world's media. The 43-year-old-champion in 2000 and 2003 — made the pledge after seeing off journeyman Englishman Robert Milkins 13-7 in their second round clash.

Williams will play Ali Carter-conqueror of five-time champion 'Rocket' Ronnie O'Sullivan in the second round in what is the Welshman's eighth quarter-final at the championships at The Crucible Theatre in Sheffield. "I would come in here naked and do the press conference," said Williams, bidding to reach his first world championship semi-final since 2011. Williams was in a jocular mood remarking he would do his best not to earn a slap from Carter, who was involved in a heated exchange with O'Sullivan during their second round match. "I might have to walk sideways back to my chair a couple of times in case he gives me a dig, but apart



GLENDALE: (R-L) Vanes Martirosyan and Gennady Golovkin of Kazakhstan pose in the ring during a media workout at the Glendale Fighting Club in Glendale, California. — AFP

record championship middleweight run, saying, "Next fight I'm looking in the middleweight division. It's best for boxing and for us." Golovkin, 37-0 with one drawn and 33 knockouts, surrenders a height and reach advantage to the light-middleweight contender who is moving up in class.

"I'm not a big guy. If I'm shorter, don't care," Golovkin said. "This is boxing. I know my style. I know my fight. I think it's more stronger. My style is more interesting. He's a good fighter. I remember him from 2004 Olympic Games. He has good experience. I believe this is a good show for people and a big fight for us."

'THIS IS WHAT WE DREAM ABOUT'

Martirosyan, 36-3 with one drawn and 21 knockouts,

from that I'll be fine," joked Williams. Williams said he could scarcely believe he had reached the last eight only a year after he considered calling time on his career such as his lack of form—the nadir when he failed to reach the 2017 world championships. "Excellent how many more times am I going to get to the quarter-finals? Not many," said Williams.

"I am going to enjoy it more than the others. At my age one has to cherish these moments and drive for getting to the semi-final." Williams, who won the Northern Irish Open and German Masters this season, said there were not many sports where 40-somethings like him and four-time world champion John Higgins would still be in contention for the title. "Unbelievable both of us turned pro in 1992 or something like that," he said. "It is incredible we are still playing at the top level, well he has always been at that level whilst I have slumped and come back two or three times. "There are not too many sports you get to the latter stages of a world championship 25 years on."

"I feel I am in the best shape for years, okay maybe I played better 20 years ago but I am not far away from those performances." Williams said the fact he and Higgins are the only two to have won the title before could be decisive now that nerves might start jangling among the likes of Chinese favourite Ding Junhui. "Just three more matches to go for two of us," he said.

turned 32 yesterday ahead of the biggest fight of his career after a two-year layoff, having had several bouts fall through before getting a break for the biggest fight of his career.

"I took the fight on short notice but we're ready," Martirosyan said. "You could wake me up and I'd be ready to fight. I can't wait. This is what we dream about, these big fights."

Golovkin trainer Abel Sanchez said his fighter was in the ring only a couple of hours after Alvarez was out, confident of another foe and planning for two more fights this year, Alvarez or not. "Hopefully we fight in September and again in December. We want to fight as much as we can as long as we can," Sanchez said. "He's the most entertaining boxer in the sport today. We need to appreciate him while he's here." —AFP



Mark Williams

"Eight men left all thinking they have a great chance to win it. "Only me and John Higgins have won it and that might be the telling thing." —AFP

Sports

Golden Knights edge Sharks as Lightning strike Bruins

Fleury posted his 68th career playoff victory

LOS ANGELES: William Karlsson scored at 8:17 of overtime to give the visiting Vegas Golden Knights a 4-3 victory over the San Jose Sharks on Monday night. The expansion Golden Knights grabbed a two-games-to-one lead in the best-of-seven Western Conference semifinal series. Game 4 is today night in San Jose. Karlsson took a pass from James Neal, who had just clanged a shot off the post 30 seconds earlier, and then fired a wrist shot from the top of the right circle over the stick side of San Jose goalie Martin Jones.

Marc-Andre Fleury made 39 saves and Colin Miller, Jonathan Marchessault and Reilly Smith each had a goal for the Golden Knights. Marchessault added two assists while Karlsson and Smith had one helper apiece.

Fleury posted his 68th career playoff victory, tying him with Andy Moog for 10th place on the NHL's all-time list. Knights coach Gerard Gallant said, "We were disappointed when they scored with nearly two minutes left in the game (to force overtime). We regrouped in the OT session and said, 'Let's go out there and get this game.'"

Tomas Hertl, Evander Kane and Timo Meier each scored goals for San Jose. Jones finished with 29 saves. Fleury kept the Golden Knights in the game early as San Jose outshot the visitors 27-10 over the first 27 minutes.

Sharks coach Peter DeBoer said, "I think our game's in a good place. It's just one of those (nights). We're doing a lot of good stuff, but through the three games, we're chasing the game every night. We've got to find a

way to get out in front."

The Sharks finally broke through with a power-play goal by Meier at 6:59 of the second period. Vegas answered with three goals, including two on the power play, over a 4:46 span to take a 3-1 lead after two periods. Miller tied it when he tapped in a nice crossing pass through the crease by Neal while cutting toward the left side of the net as Brenden Dillon was serving a penalty for holding David Perron. Marchessault gave Vegas a 2-1 lead with another power play goal less than four minutes later after Hertl was whistled for roughing Neal. Alex Tuch fired a pass from the right point to a wide-open Marchessault in the left circle, and Marchessault one-timed a shot past Jones' stick side for his second goal of the playoffs.

Smith made it 3-1 just 77 seconds later when Karlsson, stationed to the right of the net, redirected a pass through to the crease. Smith tapped in the puck for his first goal of the playoffs. Kane cut the deficit to 3-2 at the 7:49 of the third period when he rifled a wrist shot over the glove of Fleury from the middle of the right circle. Vegas challenged that Fleury was interfered with by Logan Couture, who nudged him on the edge of the blue paint, but the goal stood.

Hertl tied it with 1:57 to go in regulation, firing in a rebound from the slot during a wild scrum around the net. His fourth goal of the playoffs only set the stage for Karlsson's overtime heroics. — Reuters



SAN JOSE: Shea Theodore #27 of the Vegas Golden Knights and Barclay Goodrow #23 of the San Jose Sharks go for the puck during Game Three of the Western Conference Second Round during the 2018 NHL Stanley Cup Playoffs at SAP Center on Monday. — AFP

“ I think our game's in a good place ”

Serena made to wait over Wimbledon seeding

LONDON: Wimbledon chiefs have admitted they will hold an internal debate to clarify if seven-time champion Serena Williams can be seeded at Wimbledon. Williams is currently 449th in the WTA rankings after taking time off to get married and have her first child last year.

Following the difficult birth of daughter Alexis Olympia, which left the American star fearing she might die after developing blood clots, Serena has played only two singles tournaments.

The 36-year-old lost to her sister Venus in the last 32 at Indian Wells and was beaten by Naomi Osaka in the first round in Miami. However, Miami Open tournament director James Blake said recently that the 23-time Grand Slam winner had been "punished" for wanting to start a family. The WTA provides players returning from injury lay-offs or pregnancy with a 'protected ranking' that can be used to enter tournaments, but not for seeding at those tournaments.

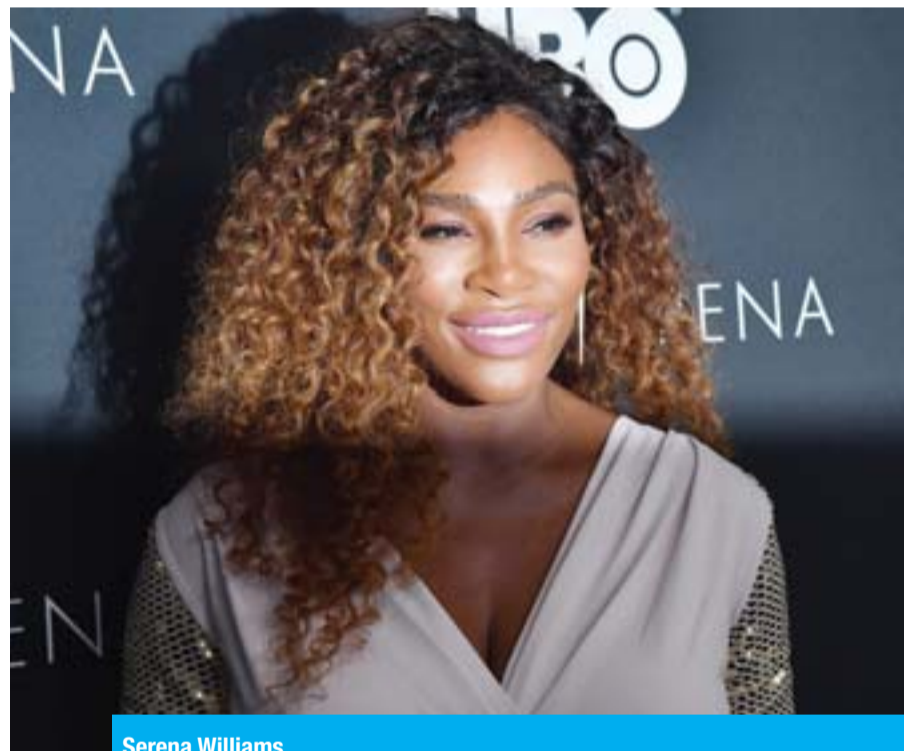
Players can enter eight events using the ranking they had when they left, including

for two Premier Mandatory events and two Grand Slams. But players who hold the protected ranking for any reason, on both the men's and women's tours, can't be seeded even if their protected ranking merits it.

World number one Simona Halep said Williams should have been the top seed in Indian Wells because after she contested her last tournament before stepping away from the game, she was on top of the rankings. Despite her difficult return to action, Williams is registered on the entry list for the French Open in June, with Wimbledon scheduled to get underway one month later. Serena, whose last Grand Slam appearance was her victorious 2017 Australian Open campaign, would have a good case to be seeded at both the French Open and especially Wimbledon, given her remarkable record on the All England Club lawns. She had won the tournament in 2015 and 2016 before missing last year's edition.

However, Victoria Azarenka, a two-time Grand Slam winner, wasn't seeded when she returned to tennis in 2017 after giving birth in 2016. Azarenka was ranked fifth in her last tournament prior to her time away from tennis due to her pregnancy.

And, asked yesterday, where they stood on the issue of giving Serena a seeding, Wimbledon officials conceded the question would be reviewed. "It's a good detailed question that we will for sure address at our meeting," All England Club chairman Philip Brook told reporters at Wimbledon's spring press conference. "It is totally different from an injury. We have empathy



Serena Williams

and sympathy for the point being made.

"Our understanding is that if a player is outside the top 32 in terms of their ranking, then they will not be seeded," Wimbledon's seeding guidelines appeared to give leeway to allow Serena to be among the 32 seeds, but Brook said that wasn't necessarily the case. "The reason there is reference

to the top 32 in the men's is there needs to be a reference point," he added.

"We know for the top 32 we are adjusting for the surface based seeding. For the ladies we don't have that issue. "So maybe those words didn't refer to the 32 because they didn't need to. We need to double check that." — AFP

Cloud hangs over history-seeking Froome at Giro

JERUSALEM: Chris Froome heads into the Giro d'Italia insisting he is focusing on his attempt to make history by holding all three titles from cycling's Grand Tours at the same time. But the 32-year-old Briton is being weighed down by a cloud looming over his continued participation in professional cycling races while waiting for a doping storm to be resolved.

Froome tested positive in September last year for elevated levels of the asthma medication salbutamol, resulting in an adverse analytical finding. But rather than face a doping suspension, he has been given the opportunity to explain his test result during the Tour of Spain race he won. The issue has dragged on, with some prominent voices in cycling—such as world governing body chief David Lappartient—expressing his belief that Froome should have been suspended by his British team Sky pending an outcome to his case.

Froome and Sky insist the Kenyan-born athlete has done nothing wrong and simply took more puffs on his asthma inhaler than normal on the day he gave the adverse reading. "I certainly haven't been charged (with) anything as of yet and I hope to be fully exonerated of any wrongdoing because I know I didn't do anything wrong," Froome said last week when Sky announced their Giro line-up.

Tour de France organisers have insisted they want his case resolved before he aims for a record-equalling fifth victory in the world's most prestigious cycle race in July but there is currently no end in sight to the scandal.

Should he be found guilty of a doping offence, Froome would likely lose his victory in the Tour of Spain and any subsequent results such as a Giro d'Italia success. But should he win the three-week race around Italy, which starts on Friday with a time-trial in Jerusalem, he would become the first man since Bernard Hinault 35 years ago to hold all three Grand Tour titles at the same time and only the third ever to do so—with Belgian great Eddy Merckx



Chris Froome

out on his own having won four in a row in the 1970s.

Froome has admitted the whole doping investigation has been "hugely frustrating" because it "is now being played out in the public domain". Normally with an adverse analytical finding, which does not trigger a provisional suspension under International Cycling Union (UCI) rules, a rider would be spared public scrutiny. But that wasn't the case with Froome as a joint investigation by newspapers in Britain and France exposed the news in December. Froome's lawyers are working behind the scenes to fight his case with the UCI but even if he loses, he would likely appeal to the Court of Arbitration for Sport.

That would further delay any final decision on whether or not he will serve a ban, meaning he would continue competing for the sport's biggest prizes. While Giro organisers seem delighted to have the greatest stage racer of this generation gracing their event for the first time

since 2010, when Froome was still a relative unknown, he might not face such a welcome at the Tour.

Froome has endured an at-times fractious relationship with French fans as some media have questioned the validity of his most explosive performances at a time when the sport is still suffering from the fall-out of the systematic doping of the Lance Armstrong era.

Froome has previously been grilled over doping and even the use of a motorised bike, with some fans considering him and his team guilty without trial. In 2015 he claimed a fan threw urine over him during one Tour stage while a Sky team-mate said he'd been punched. Many French fans support Froome but his team, and in particular team principal Dave Brailsford, are far from popular. As for his Giro chances, he arrives in somewhat underwhelming form, although he insists that he's "had a different start to the season as I've obviously been aiming to try and reach my peak quite a bit earlier than usual". — AFP

Prize pot of 34m pounds on offer at Wimbledon

LONDON: Wimbledon announced a hefty prize-pot hike yesterday, along with a new sustainability project aimed at ensuring it is not just the grass courts that remain green at the All England Club.

Organisers of the oldest grand slam tournament revealed a prize fund of 34 million pounds (\$46.57 million) for the 2018 championships, up 7.6 percent from last year.

That figure includes awards of 2.25 million pounds each for the men's and women's champions - an increase on the 2.2 million pounds Roger Federer and Garbine Muguruza received in 2017. Organisers also issued a warning that players who compete while knowingly carrying an injury, and quit mid-match, face being docked all their first-round prize money. The move is aimed at preventing a repeat of the rash of retirements in early action last year.

"In the wake of first-round withdrawals we pledged to act on it, and we have done so," Wimbledon chief executive Richard Lewis told reporters. "We were very influential in the creation and adoption of the 50-50 rule and hope the introduction of it will play a significant role in mitigating the problems of first-round singles retirements."

Under the new rule, if an injured player withdraws onsite after midday on the Thursday before the Championships they will receive 50 percent of the first-round prize money. The replacement "lucky-loser" will get the other 50 percent.

With pound signs dominating the headlines at the club in leafy south-west London, tournament organisers also underlined their commitment to combating corruption in the sport and rolling out a sustainability programme.

STRAW BAN

Central to the "greening" of the championships is a ban on plastic straws—some 400,000 were used at last year's tournament—the introduction of electric vehicles in the courtesy car fleet; additional water-fill points around the grounds and the provision of paper bags at Wimbledon's shops.

"Sustainability is an important and necessary area of focus, particularly for major events," Lewis said. "We have put in place a sustainability vision which is to sustain the running of the club, and the championships in a way that minimises the impact on our environment."

Organisers also reiterated they would be implementing rules first announced last November. In addition to stripping players of their first-round prize money if they pull out of a match or perform to what the club deems "below professional standards", Wimbledon will strictly enforce warm-up timing to speed up the game, but will also extend the time allowed between points from 20 to 25 seconds. Wimbledon's 2018 prize money eclipses the 55 million Australian dollars (\$41.32 million) paid out at January's first grand slam of the year in Melbourne, but at current exchange rates is just shy of the 39.2 million Euros (\$47.18 million) on offer at the French Open starting later this month.

The US Open, the final grand slam of the tennis calendar starting in August, is yet to announce its prize money. Wimbledon, the only grand slam event to be played on grass, will take place from July 2-15. This year's championships mark the 150th anniversary of the club, 50 years of Open tennis and 125 years of the women's singles championships. — Reuters

Sports

Xander Bogaerts slams Red Sox to win over Royals

Houston snap New York's nine-game winning streak

BOSTON: Xander Bogaerts hit a grand slam in the bottom of the third inning as the Boston Red Sox closed out April with a 10-6 victory over the visiting Kansas City Royals on Monday. The Red Sox set a team record with 19 wins in April. Boston also tied the major league record set by the 1996 Montreal Expos by hitting its sixth grand slam before May 1. Bogaerts hit his second grand slam of the season and third of his career. He also recorded his fourth three-hit game of the season. Mitch Moreland added a solo home run and bases-loaded walk for the Red Sox, who scored at least 10 runs for the fifth time.

ASTROS 2, YANKEES 1

Charlie Morton took a no-hitter into the sixth inning and fanned 10 hitters over 7 2/3 dominant innings as host Houston snapped New York's nine-game winning streak. Morton (4-0) lowered his ERA to 1.72 by allowing only two hits and a run with two walks. Austin Romine's one-out single in the sixth broke up Morton's no-hit bid, and a two-out double off the bat of Gleyber Torres in the eighth ended Morton's night after 102 pitches. Carlos Correa (first-inning groundout) and Yuli Gurriel (fourth-inning double) drove in runs for the Astros. The Yankees' run scored in the eighth on Brett Gardner's single after Morton had been replaced.

DIAMONDBACKS 8, DODGERS 5

A.J. Pollock hit three home runs, Nick Ahmed added a homer, and Zack Greinke had his first 10-strikeout game of the season as Arizona held off visiting Los Angeles. Pollock hit bases-empty homers in the second and fifth innings to help Arizona grab a 5-0 lead. He added a third solo homer in the eighth as the Diamondbacks (20-8) equaled the best start in franchise history. They did not lose back-to-back games in April, a franchise record for any month. Ahmed had three hits, including a bases-empty homer in the fourth inning, and Greinke (3-2) gave up two runs on four hits and one walk in six innings. He had double-digit strikeouts for the first time since fanning 12 Chicago White Sox batters on May 22, 2017.

GIANTS 6, PADRES 5

Pinch hitter Nick Hundley capped a three-run rally in the bottom of the ninth inning with a two-out, two-run, walk-off single, lifting San Francisco to a victory

over visiting San Diego. The improbable rally off Padres closer Brad Hand (1-3) came with San Diego left-hander Eric Lauer one out away from his first major league win. Instead, San Francisco right-hander Pierce Johnson (1-1), who pitched a scoreless top of the ninth, got his first major league victory. Hand hit pinch hitter Austin Slater with a pitch to start the ninth. Buster Posey drew a two-out walk, and Evan Longoria, who earlier committed a key two-base error, got San Francisco within 5-4 with an RBI single. After Hand walked Brandon Belt on a full count to load the bases, Hundley came through with the game-winner.

BREWERS 6, REDS 5

Domingo Santana laced a two-run double to center field in a three-run seventh inning as Milwaukee won a see-saw game at Cincinnati. Santana hit the first pitch from Reds reliever and former Brewer Jared Hughes, who inherited runners on first and second. Brandon Woodruff (1-0) got the win in relief, striking out two in 1 1/3 innings. Hard-throwing Brewers left-hander Josh Hader finished it off with a flourish, striking out eight in 2 2/3 innings and allowing only a walk to record his fourth save. Hader became the first pitcher in major league history to strike out eight batters in an outing of less than three innings.

RAYS 3, TIGERS 2

C.J. Cron broke a scoreless deadlock with a two-run homer in the top of the ninth, and visiting Tampa Bay held off Detroit. Cron crushed a 2-0 pitch to the opposite field off Shane Greene (1-2) after the Tigers closer issued a leadoff walk to Denard Span. Cron's homer was his seventh this season. Brad Miller added a solo shot one out later off Greene as the Rays won for the ninth time in 10 games. Jacob Faria tossed eight innings to pick up the win. Faria (2-1) gave up just three hits and a walk while striking out six. Jose Alvarado got the last two outs for his first major league save.

INDIANS 7, RANGERS 5

Jose Ramirez had two hits and two RBIs, including the game-winning double in the eighth inning, and closer Cody Allen struggled but got the win as host Cleveland came from behind to beat Texas. Allen (2-0) entered with one out in the eighth with Cleveland down 4-3 and got the final two outs of the inning. After



SAN FRANCISCO: Christian Villanueva #22 of the San Diego Padres tags out Alen Hanson #19 of the San Francisco Giants attempting to steal third base in the bottom of the fourth inning at AT&T Park on Monday in San Francisco, California. — AFP

the Indians took the lead in the bottom of the frame on Ramirez's double, Allen could not finish the game, allowing the Rangers a run with two outs and leaving in favor of Jeff Beliveau. Beliveau then struck out the Rangers' Joey Gallo looking with runners on the corners to earn his first save of the season.

NATIONALS 3, PIRATES 2

Wilmer Difo, Tanner Roark and Trea Turner each had RBI singles for Washington, and Roark gave the Nationals a strong start in a win over visiting Pittsburgh. The Nationals, who had lost seven of their previous 10 games, snapped the Pirates' five-game winning streak. Roark (2-2) tossed a solid seven innings, allowing two runs on six hits with four strikeouts and two walks after failing to notch a win in his last four starts. Ryan Madson threw a scoreless eighth before Brandon Kintzler took care of the ninth and earned his first save.

CUBS 3, ROCKIES 2

Kris Bryant tripled and scored the go-ahead run in the sixth inning as Chicago posted a victory over visiting Colorado. Cubs starter Jon Lester gave up two runs over 5 2/3 innings, but neither run was earned. Chicago reliever Luke Farrell (1-0) struck out two over 1 1/3 scoreless innings for his first career victory. Steve Cishek recorded the final two outs for his first save.

Kyle Freeland (1-4) allowed three runs in seven innings while taking the loss.

MARLINS 8, PHILLIES 4

Brian Anderson went 3-for-4 with a homer and a clutch catch as host Miami defeated Philadelphia. Anderson, a rookie third baseman, played in right field for just the third time as a pro. In the seventh inning, after the Phillies loaded the bases with one out while trailing 6-4, Anderson charged in and made a diving grab. The Phillies did not score in the frame. Reliever Merandy Gonzalez (2-0), another Marlins rookie, earned the win, pitching two scoreless innings. Jorge Alfaro and Maikel Franco each hit two-run homers for the Phillies. Franco has 12 RBIs in four games against Miami this year.

BLUE JAYS 7, TWINS 5

Justin Smoak and Russell Martin hit home runs, and visiting Toronto held on to defeat Minnesota. Toronto starter Aaron Sanchez (2-2) allowed four runs, six hits, three walks and had two strikeouts in six innings. Roberto Osuna pitched around a single and a double in the ninth to pick up his seventh save of the season. Twins starter Lance Lynn (0-3) allowed six runs, seven hits and five walks while striking out four in five innings. Eduardo Escobar homered for Minnesota. — Reuters

NBA campaign addresses mental health, athletes

LOS ANGELES: Toronto Raptors star DeMar DeRozan and Cleveland Cavaliers ace Kevin Love are part of a new public service campaign launched by the NBA aimed at encouraging mental wellness for athletes. "We always preach eating healthy, exercising, being an elite athlete," DeRozan told the Toronto Globe and Mail newspaper. But with all that pressure "we don't really look at the mental-health aspect first and foremost, somebody's everyday life," DeRozan said.

"You never know where we've grown up and where we've come from before we made it—that could be dwelling on us." The ads began yesterday the same day the Raptors and Cavaliers start their second round Eastern Conference playoff series in Toronto.

It is rare for NBA athletes to speak about their struggles with mental health, but DeRozan and Love are trying to change that. DeRozan's own battle with depression and loneliness came to light during the recent NBA all-star game when he wrote a seven-word tweet, "This depression get the best of me."

The 28-year-old all-star guard DeRozan grew up in Los Angeles suburb of Compton, the same crime-plagued area that the tennis Williams' sisters come from. His openness led to Love speaking and writing about his struggle with dark thoughts.

When the Raptors played in New York in March, NBA commissioner Adam Silver met with DeRozan to discuss the matter. Besides the TV ads, the league is coming out this week with a website that will include links to mental health resources for not only young and older athletes but the public.

DeRozan and Love, who comes from the Los Angeles area, could also contribute by speaking at the league's rookie transition program events. "The best thing I did was come out and say, 'Hey look, I need some help.'" Love says in one of his ad spots. Said DeRozan, "Never be ashamed of wanting to be a better you, period." They are, of course, not the first athletes to talk openly about mental wellness, but too often the headline-grabbing stories in the sports sections these days focus on trivial matters like bad calls by officials. Three months ago, 28-time Olympic medalist Michael Phelps spoke about his life-long struggle with anxiety and depression at a mental health conference in Chicago where he encouraged people to seek help like he did.

NBA Hall of Famer Jerry West wrote a book called "West by West: My Charmed, Tormented Life" that was released seven years ago and dealt with his struggle with depression and low self-esteem. Like Love, former National Hockey League goaltender Corey Hirsch penned an article for the online magazine "The Players' Tribune" where he opened up about anxiety, depression and suicidal thoughts. — AFP

Rozier fires Celtics as Boston down Sixers

LOS ANGELES: Terry Rozier scored 29 points as Boston outmuscled Philadelphia 117-101 to win the opening game of their Eastern Conference semi-final series on Monday.

Rozier was the top scorer in a dazzling Celtics offensive display at the TD Garden, with Al Horford and Jayson Tatum also making hefty contributions.

Horford finished with 26 points while Tatum added 28 points as Boston surged into a 1-0 lead in the best-of-seven series with a statement victory. Horford later praised Rozier's superb contribution. "I've always seen that potential in Terry. I just think he's taken advantage of the opportunity," Horford said. "It's a great experience for him to come into a play-off game of this magnitude and have such a great game," Horford added. "I just think defensively we did a great job tonight, really containing them and just trying to play with pace at the other end." The third-seeded Sixers had advanced to the semi-finals after a confident demolition of Miami in the opening round.

But the Celtics lineup look to be a vastly more challenging proposition for the Sixers, who saw Joel Embiid score 31 points while pulling down 13 rebounds.

J.J. Redick had 20 points for the Sixers, while point guard Ben Simmons had 18 points from 41 minutes on the court. Yet it was the shooting prowess of Celtics ace Rozier that caught the eye as the 24-year-old point guard kept Boston firmly on track for a well-earned win. Boston, who advanced to the semi-finals after a grueling seven-game series win over Milwaukee, have regrouped superbly after a slew of injuries which means they are without stars Kyrie Irving, Jaylen Brown and Gordon Hayward.

Rozier's 29-point haul included 21 points from three-point range, a 77.8 conversion percentage from outside the arc. Rozier credited his form to a determined training

Watson, Bailey to join captains in Australia review

MELBOURNE: Former Test players Shane Watson and George Bailey will join Australia captains Tim Paine and Rachael Haynes on a panel tasked with drafting a charter of behaviour in the wake of the ball-tampering scandal in South Africa. Cricket Australia said yesterday.

The player review, to be overseen by former test opener Rick McCosker, would also include fast bowler Pat Cummins and Darren Lehmann's replacement as coach of the men's team, CA said. The team's culture has been under the microscope since batsman Cameron Bancroft was spotted by cameras trying to scuff up the ball with a piece of sandpaper during the third test against South



BOSTON: Shane Larkin #8 of the Boston Celtics drives to the basket past Dario Saric #9 of the Philadelphia 76ers during the second half of Game One in Round Two of the 2018 NBA Playoffs at TD Garden on Monday in Boston, Massachusetts. The Celtics defeat the 76ers 117-101. — AFP

regime launched last year. "Up early every day. Putting in a lot of work, watching a lot of film. A lot of hard work over the summer," Rozier said.

"We got together yesterday and we had a plan. No matter who it is out there, we're going to play hard and take care of business." Sixers coach Brett Brown was left to reflect on a below-par night for his team while acknowledging the Celtics had simply been better.

Africa in Cape Town. The scandal saw then-captain Steve Smith and his deputy David Warner banned for a year, with Bancroft suspended for nine months. Lehmann, who was appointed in 2013, was cleared of wrongdoing by CA but resigned as coach in March more than 12 months before his contract was up. CA have also appointed Dr Simon Longstaff, executive director of the Sydney-based Ethics Centre, to lead a separate independent review into the governing body. The Ethics Centre led a review into the culture at the Australian Olympic Committee last year after multiple allegations of bullying rocked the organisation. "We understand and share the disappointment of fans and the broader Australian community about these events (in South Africa)," CA chairman David Peever said in a statement.

"The board is determined to do all we can to prevent such events from ever happening again. The reviews will commence immediately, and we fully anticipate being able to begin implementing findings before the start of the 2018-19 cricket season."

The Australian Cricketers' Association, which fought a

"We did have an off night shooting but a lot of that you can attribute to their good defense and them getting to our shooters," Brown said.

"We give them credit. I never really felt we were in the game. It sure felt like we were playing a good team today. "But defensively, offensively, this isn't who we are. This was a poor game from us. We're going to have to fix some things." Game two takes place in Boston tomorrow. — AFP

bitter campaign with CA over a new pay deal for players last year, said it welcomed an investigation into CA's culture and governance. But the players' union complained it was not invited to co-chair the independent review. It also said it had a number of concerns over the transparency of the review process and whether players would be held to higher standards than those set out by the International Cricket Council.

"We are concerned that our players may be subject to conditions which could be different from those that apply to players from other countries against which they play," ACA president Greg Dyer said in a statement.

"Changes to player behaviour, expectations or sanctions must be aligned with those which would be handed down to players on both sides of international cricket matches." Australia's players have long prided themselves on playing aggressive cricket and often spoken of "pushing the line" of acceptable behaviour.

Former players and pundits, however, have criticised the team for relentless sledging of opponents and other boorish conduct on field. — Reuters

Sports

Kane keen for strong finish with Spurs ahead of World Cup

Watford still in need of a point to secure survival

LONDON: Harry Kane admitted it has taken him time to recover top form after an ankle ligament injury, but believes he still has time to rediscover his best ahead of shouldering England's World Cup hopes.

Kane scored his 38th goal of the season as Tottenham Hotspur edged closer to a third consecutive season in the Champions League by opening up a five-point lead on fifth-placed Chelsea with just three games of the Premier League season to go thanks to a 2-0 win over Watford at Wembley on Monday.

But Kane was again far from his best and believes he should have scored more in a laboured Spurs performance that was characteristic of the dip in form from Mauricio Pochettino's men in recent weeks. "Obviously, I would have liked to play better over the last few games or so but I think the whole team feel like that," said Kane.

"I feel good, I feel sharp, I probably could have scored a couple more out there today. I'm looking forward to the last three games. Hopefully I can finish strong like I did last year going into a big summer."

Kane was sidelined for just three weeks after suffering ankle ligament damage at Bournemouth last month. But on top of trying to get back into top physical shape, he has also had to cope with public ridicule for claiming a goal in a 2-1 win at Stoke to aid his chances of beating Liverpool's Mohamed Salah to the Golden Boot award for the league's top scorer.

"Of course it is a mix about different things. It wasn't a great period for him the past few weeks, he is human like everyone else, and was a little bit affected," said

Pochettino. However, the Argentine has no concerns over Kane's mental toughness to lead England in Russia. "He scored. He needs to improve his performance still, but 150 games in the Premier League, 105 goals, what we can say more? He is a fantastic striker. "He's a strong guy, physically and mentally. I am sure he is going to perform for us in a very good way and arrive in a good condition for the World Cup."

An 11th defeat in their last 12 away games leaves Watford still in need of a point to mathematically secure survival. But the visitors were left to rue a host of missed chances after matching the under-par hosts for long spells.

A bright start from Watford was undone on 16 minutes when goalkeeper Orestis Karnezis spilled a simple cross from the right and Christian Eriksen teed up Alli to tap home his fourth goal in five games.

Watford had more than enough chances to be at least level at the break, but were denied by a return to form by Hugo Lloris. The French number one had cost his side with a series of errors in recent weeks, but Lloris stood up well to save from Andre Grey, Abdoulaye Doucoure and Jose Holebas.

"For me the most important is to win. Of course, maybe, it wasn't a great performance, but Lloris in the goal showed fantastic skills and (showed) why he is one of the best keepers in the world," added Pochettino.

Having escaped unscathed before the break, Pochettino's men doubled their lead within three minutes of the second period. An inopportune slip prevent-



LONDON: Tottenham Hotspur's English striker Harry Kane celebrates scoring the team's second goal during the English Premier League football match between Tottenham Hotspur and Watford at Wembley Stadium in London, on Monday. — AFP

ed Kane turning home Son Heung-min's initial cross, but the England international quickly picked himself up to slot home when Kieran Trippier flashed the loose ball back across goal.

Victory was Spurs' first in four games in all competitions as they bounced back from their FA Cup semi-final disappointment at the hands of Manchester United last weekend. That defeat ensured Pochettino will still

be without a trophy as Spurs boss after four seasons in charge.

And he believes the disappointment from that match was still evident in the atmosphere at Wembley and his side's display. "You felt during the game our fans were disappointed because of the defeat against Man Utd. The atmosphere wasn't great to play tonight, but the most important (thing) is to be in the top four." — AFP

"I feel good, I feel sharp"

Red alert in Rome ahead of Liverpool match

ROME: Rome is on red alert with 3,000 police officers deployed to avoid ugly scenes during Roma's Champions League return leg match against Liverpool at the Stadio Olimpico today.

Liverpool supporter Sean Cox, a 53-year-old Irishman, remains in critical condition after being attacked close to Anfield by visiting supporters before last week's semi-final, first leg. Around 5,000 Liverpool fans are expected to attend and authorities fear rival gangs could clash from Tuesday evening when many Reds fans begin arriving in the Italian capital.

British police are in Rome backing up their Italian counterparts with city authorities saying 1,000 officers are being deployed around the Stadio Olimpico in addition to a further 2,000 throughout the city. Furthermore, there will be a complete alcohol ban, as well as a huge crackdown on fake tickets.

Merseyside Police Chief Superintendent Dave Charnock urged fans not to travel to Rome without tickets. "If the details on your ticket and passport do not match, you will be refused entry to the ground by Italian authorities," said Charnock.

Liverpool fans have been warned to use shuttle buses and not to leave the Stadio Olimpico on foot. "Under no circumstances should supporters attempt to walk," the club warned.

'STAB CITY'

The club have also told fans to respect public monuments in the capital, to avoid street drinking which is prohibited, and stay clear of the Ponte Milvio and Ponte Duca d'Aoste, two bridges near the stadium.

Fans have also been told to avoid areas of the north of the city on match day, and to expect a long wait before being allowed to leave the stadium. Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp and Roma counterpart Eusebio



ROME: Liverpool's striker Mohamed Salah (R) takes part in a training session a day before the Champions League semi-final, second-leg football match AS Roma vs Liverpool yesterday at Olympic stadium in Rome. — AFP

Di Francesco both appealed for calm along with club legends Francesco Totti and Robbie Fowler. Wearing the colours of the Irish flag, Klopp said: "The game on Tuesday night showed the beauty of the game, and it showed the most ugly face of parts of the game."

"What can I say? Behave? It's easy to say!" "I've already said that I stand shoulder-to-shoulder with Sean Cox and his family and I'm against all forms of violence, like we all are here," said Di Francesco.

"Every set of supporters has some bad apples, who do things that they shouldn't. All over the world, unfortunately, there are those who ruin great evenings like

the first leg.

"I hope it's an enjoyable occasion for those coming to the stadium tomorrow, that's what I'm pleading for." But the bad blood between Roma and English fans goes back decades. Liverpool's last visit in 2001 was blighted by missile attacks inside the stadium and stabbings.

English fans who visited for the 1984 European Cup final—where Liverpool famously beat Roma on penalties—dubbed the Italian capital 'stab city'. Middlesbrough fans were also the victims of stabbing attacks in 2006, while there was trouble the following year with Manchester United supporters. —AFP

Salah wins writers' footballer of the year award

LONDON: Mohamed Salah was named as the football writers' footballer of the year yesterday, completing a personal double after winning the players' award for his incredible goal-scoring feats for Liverpool.

The Egypt international narrowly topped the poll of the 400-strong Football Writers' Association (FWA) membership ahead of Manchester City midfielder Kevin De Bruyne, the margin understood to be less than 20 votes.

Tottenham striker Harry Kane was in third place. Between them, Salah, signed by the Reds from Roma last summer, and De Bruyne, who helped City claim the Premier League title with five games remaining, collected more than 90 per cent of the journalists' votes. Salah, who struggled to make an impact during his first spell in England at Chelsea, has scored 43 goals in 48 appearances in all competitions in his first season for Liverpool.

He has spearheaded Jurgen Klopp's team's push towards a potential place in the Champions League final—the Reds lead Roma 5-2 ahead of today's semi-final second leg in Italy.

The 25-year-old, who was last month crowned the players' player of the year, became the first African winner of the FWA accolade, which has been awarded since 1948. "It has been the tightest call since 1968/69, when there was a dead heat between Tony Book of Manchester City and Derby's Dave Mackay," said FWA chairman Patrick Barclay. — AFP

EPLTable

LONDON: English Premier League table after Monday's match (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

| | | | | | | | |
|----------------|----|----|----|----|-----|------|-------------|
| Man City | 35 | 30 | 3 | 2 | 102 | 2693 | - champions |
| Man Utd | 35 | 24 | 5 | 6 | 67 | 27 | 77 |
| Liverpool | 36 | 20 | 12 | 4 | 80 | 37 | 72 |
| Tottenham | 35 | 21 | 8 | 6 | 68 | 31 | 71 |
| Chelsea | 35 | 29 | 6 | 9 | 60 | 34 | 66 |
| Arsenal | 35 | 17 | 6 | 12 | 67 | 48 | 57 |
| Burnley | 36 | 14 | 12 | 10 | 35 | 32 | 54 |
| Everton | 36 | 13 | 9 | 14 | 42 | 54 | 48 |
| Leicester | 34 | 11 | 11 | 12 | 49 | 47 | 44 |
| Newcastle | 35 | 11 | 8 | 16 | 35 | 44 | 41 |
| Bournemouth | 36 | 9 | 11 | 16 | 42 | 60 | 38 |
| Watford | 36 | 10 | 8 | 18 | 42 | 62 | 38 |
| Brighton | 35 | 8 | 13 | 14 | 32 | 47 | 37 |
| Crystal Palace | 35 | 8 | 11 | 16 | 36 | 54 | 35 |
| West Ham | 35 | 8 | 11 | 16 | 43 | 67 | 35 |
| Huddersfield | 35 | 9 | 8 | 18 | 27 | 56 | 35 |
| Swansea | 35 | 8 | 9 | 18 | 27 | 52 | 33 |
| Southampton | 35 | 6 | 14 | 15 | 35 | 54 | 32 |
| Stoke | 36 | 6 | 12 | 18 | 32 | 65 | 30 |
| West Brom | 36 | 5 | 13 | 18 | 30 | 54 | 28 |

Note: Top four teams qualify for 2018/19 Champions League; fifth and sixth-placed teams qualify for 2018/19 Europa League; bottom three teams relegated to Championship.



Matches on TV
(Local Timings)

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE
AS Roma v Liverpool 21:45
beIN SPORTS

McDermott to sell European Cup winners medals

LONDON: Terry McDermott, a key figure in Liverpool's dominance in the late 1970's and early 80's, is to sell his three European Cup winners medals he told The Sun newspaper yesterday. The 66-year-old former England midfielder will also put up for sale five league winners medals and player awards at historic British auction house Sotheby's on May 22 just days before his old team could be appearing in the Champions League final.

McDermott won both the Professional Footballer's Association and Football Writer's Association awards for the 1980 season—present Liverpool superstar Mohamed Salah is expected to emulate that later adding

the Football Writer's award to the PFA gong. McDermott, who scored the opener in Liverpool's 1977 European Cup final win over Borussia Moenchengladbach and was pivotal in the 1978 and 1981 wins over Bruges and Real Madrid respectively, told "The Sun" he didn't need the money. It is hoped the auction—he is selling 43 pieces of memorabilia—will raise £150,000 (\$206,000, 171,000 euros) less than the club's reported new proposed weekly salary of £185,000 for Salah—but wanted to leave his children something. "I might get some stick for it in Liverpool—but I don't really care," he said. "I don't need the money. But I don't need medals to be proud of what I've done. I already know—and that will not go away."

"I've got three kids who are doing very nicely, but I want to give them something before I die. They can pay off the mortgage," added McDermott, who was capped 25 times. Liverpool are in a strong position to reach May 26 Champions League final, their first since 2007, as they take a 5-2 first leg lead in the semi-final to Rome for the return clash with AS Roma today. —AFP



Terry McDermott

12 Mayweather legacy faces challenge from Thai fighter 'dwarf giant'



14 Xander Bogaerts slams Red Sox to win over Royals



15 Kane keen for strong finish with Spurs ahead of World Cup



Real into Champions League final

Benzema scores twice to eliminate Bayern Munich



MADRID: Real Madrid's Costa Rican goalkeeper Keylor Navas (C) prepares to block a shot on goal during the UEFA Champions League semi-final second leg football match between Real Madrid and Bayern Munich at the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium in Madrid yesterday. — AFP

MADRID: Real Madrid are within touching distance of a third consecutive Champions League triumph after Karim Benzema scored twice to eliminate Bayern Munich yesterday and book their place in the final.

Bayern, who trailed 2-1 following last week's opening leg in Germany, looked capable of inflicting this season's latest European comeback when Joshua Kimmich scored early and James Rodriguez levelled shortly after the hour. But Benzema's double in between, the first a header, the second a simple finish following a dreadful error from Bayern goalkeeper Sven Ulreich, proved enough as Real hung on for a 2-2 draw, and a 4-3 win on aggregate.

Benzema's two goals here were another feather in the cap for coach Zinedine Zidane, who had decided to start the French striker, despite only one goal in his previous 12 games. It was another brave call from Real's coach, who now stands on the brink of history himself.

with Carlo Ancelotti and Bob Paisley the only other managers to have ever won Europe's premier competition three times.

Liverpool or Roma will certainly offer a stern test in Kiev later this month but, having now seen off Bayern, the German champions, Paris Saint-Germain, the French champions, and Juventus, who sit top of Serie A, the feeling is that a 13th European success is now Real's to lose. Zidane sprung a surprise by dropping Casemiro to the bench and bringing the more mobile Mateo Kovacic into midfield while Lucas Vazquez played in the unfamiliar role of right back. It meant no place again in the starting line-up for Gareth Bale, who was named as a substitute for the fifth time in six knock-out matches.

Bayern, meanwhile, were without a host of star players, with Javi Martinez, Arturo Vidal, Arjen Robben, Jerome Boateng, Kingsley Coman and Manuel Neuer all injured. Martinez was fit enough to make the bench.

Kimmich had given Bayern the lead after 28 minutes at the Allianz Arena and here he did it in three, slamming home after Sergio Ramos poked Corentin Tolisso's cross straight to his feet.

Real were rattled, their fans tetchy, and if Bayern had held on for longer the pressure might have told. Instead, the home side were level by the 11th minute, Benzema peeling free of David Alaba at the back post and heading in. Marcelo and Toni Kroos both weaved their way into Bayern's six-yard box, but failed to pick a final pass, while at the other end, Vazquez was enduring a torrid time at right back.

After another ball was threaded inside the winger's left shoulder, Robert Lewandowski unleashed and James should have scored but was unable to adjust his body to the follow-up.

A breathless opening 45 minutes ended with Bayern wanting a penalty as the ball struck Marcelo on the arm

but referee Cuneyt Cakir waved away the appeals. Real were certainly the more relieved to hear the half-time whistle but they were given a gift shortly after the restart. Tolisso's backpass was misjudged and underhit but Ulreich still had the chance to clear. Instead, the keeper got his feet in a tangle and ended up in a heap on the floor, presenting Benzema with an open net.

The game looked finished but Bayern came again and after 10 minutes of desperate Real defending, it was no surprise when they scored. James chased down his own rebound before beating Keylor Navas at the near post. The on-loan Colombian chose not to celebrate against his parent club.

Bayern had 27 minutes to find a third and there were a handful of near misses. Thomas Muller was denied by Navas and Mats Hummels headed agonisingly wide in injury time, but Real held on for their fourth final in five years. — AFP

On home turf, everyone wants piece of Salah

CAIRO: Patriotic statements, flashy commercials and an anti-drug campaign: Mohamed Salah's dazzling displays for Liverpool have taken the football world by storm, and on his home turf in Egypt seemingly everyone wants a piece of him. Salah has shot to stardom thanks to his goal-scoring exploits in England and Europe, and senior Egyptian officials increasingly refer to the player - although he has carefully steered clear of politics. Last month foreign ministry spokesman Ahmed Abu Zeid went so far as to call him "an icon of Egypt's soft power".

Abu Zeid made the comment on Twitter after Salah scored a brace and set up two more goals as Liverpool beat AS Roma 5-2 in the Champions League semi-final first leg at Anfield last week. The second leg takes place tonight in the Italian capital. The remarkable game prompted President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi to also congratulate the flying forward. "What he has accomplished calls for pride and affirms Egyptians' capabilities in all fields... Proud of him every Egyptian who holds Egypt's name high," Sisi tweeted.

Salah the "Pharaoh" represents an opportunity for the country to improve its image internationally after years of turmoil in the aftermath of the 2011 uprising that toppled longtime ruler Hosni Mubarak. The fact that "an athlete at that level penetrates the media wall and becomes a face known globally inevitably reflects... on his home country," said Pascal Boniface, director of the French Institute for International and Strategic Affairs.

From the modest village of Nagrig in the Nile Delta, Salah has catapulted to worldwide fame since his arrival last summer in England from AS Roma in a transfer deal worth €42 million. Awards have since piled up, leading to talk of him challenging Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi for the 2018 Ballon d'Or, given to the world's best player. On April 22, Salah scooped the Professional Footballers' Association player of the year for the 2017-18 Premier League season. Yesterday, Salah was named as the Football Writers' Association (FWA) footballer of the year, completing a personal double.

Salah also became a national hero for his leading role in helping Egypt to qualify for the World Cup for the first time in 28 years. The competition kicks off on June 14 in Russia, and the eyes of all Egyptians are expected to be on him. But Boniface remains skeptical of how successful attempts would be to use Salah politically on the international stage. Such attempts would be "very exposed" and similar "to the old ways of propaganda," he said. On the other hand, the prodigy can give a significant boost to Egyptians' "national self-esteem", he said.

In Egypt, images of President Sisi abound in public, with Salah the only other person coming close to having as many appear on advertising billboards, television screens and online. Pictured alone or alongside his Egyptian or Liverpool teammates, Salah features prominently in adverts for a mobile telecoms company, a brand of soda or a local bank. At the same time, he has publicly supported a campaign by the National Council for Women promoting gender equality, and appears in a government video for an anti-drug campaign. The "You're Stronger Than Drugs" campaign has increased the number of calls to the anti-drugs help line, according to the Ministry of Social Solidarity.

Efforts to turn such a big star into a symbol of soft power are not new, said Gamal Abdel-Gawad, a researcher at



CAIRO: Picture taken on April 30, 2018 shows a Ramadan lantern bearing the image of Liverpool's Egyptian midfielder Mohamed Salah hanging on sale at a market in the capital Cairo's central Sayyida Zeinab district. — AFP

Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies. The greatest such symbol in Egypt remains Umm Kalthoum, the undisputed queen of Arab song, more than four decades after her death, he said. But Salah's overexposure could also now be a source of conflict. An image rights controversy over the past few days has seen Salah lash out at Egyptian football authorities, causing an uproar on Twitter among his 5.36 million followers.

The dispute has centered on an advertising campaign by

the national team's main sponsor, Telecom Egypt's mobile arm WE, which has relied heavily on photos of Salah, who has his own contract with global telecom giant Vodafone. On Sunday, Salah signalled his growing frustration by tweeting "unfortunately the way it is being dealt with is very insulting. I was hoping the interaction would be classier than this". But a few hours later, after the issue trended on Twitter, he announced it was being resolved, while thanking his fans for their "unreal" support. — AFP

Business

WEDNESDAY, MAY 2, 2018

18 Pakistan opens long-delayed new airport in Islamabad**19** Tijari declares a net profit of KD 10.1 million for Q1 2018**21** Jazeera Airways adds Tbilisi to travelers' list of summer destinations!

ISTANBUL: Young members of the Revolutionist Workers' Party DIP demonstrate during a May Day rally yesterday on the Anatolian side of Istanbul in Maltepe. — AFP

Gulf Bank records 15% increase in Q1 net profit

Bank on the right track in delivering sustainable results: Alghanim

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank K.S.C.P. announced its financial results for the first quarter of 2018. The Bank recorded a net profit of KD 10.8 million, an increase of 15 percent over the same period in 2017. The Bank generated a net interest income of KD 36.8 million during the first quarter of 2018, 23 percent above the previous year, and an operating income of KD 48 million, which is a 9 percent increase over the same period in 2017. The operating profit before provisions/impairment losses was KD 32.6 million during the first quarter of 2018, recording growth of 9 percent, over the same period in 2017.

In addition, credit costs (total provisions and write-offs minus recoveries) declined 15.2 percent in the first quarter of 2018 compared to the same period of 2017.

Total general provisions on the balance sheet stood at KD 219 million, representing

nearly 37 percent of shareholders' equity, while total assets stood at KD 5.7 billion. Commenting on the results, Omar Kutayba Alghanim, Gulf Bank's Chairman said, "I am pleased to announce that the Bank started



the year positively with an increase of 15 percent in our first quarter net profit compared to the same period last year. These great results highlight the Bank's progress quarter after quarter, and confirm that we

are on the right track in delivering sustainable results."

During the first quarter of 2018, Gulf Bank held its Annual General Meeting for the fiscal year 2017. During the meeting, shareholders approved a cash dividend of 9 fils per share, an increase of 29 percent compared with 7 fils per share in the previous year.

Gulf Bank now rated "A"

Gulf Bank is now rated "A" by all four leading credit international rating agencies: Moody's Investors Service, S&P Global Ratings, Fitch Ratings and now, Capital Intelligence. As part of their 2017 annual credit rating review, Capital Intelligence, the international credit rating agency, upgraded Gulf Bank's Financial Strength Rating to "A-" from "BBB+" with a "Stable" outlook. "I am very proud that Gulf Bank has been rated "A" by the top



Omar Kutayba Alghanim

rating agencies across the board for the first time since 2008. This is a huge milestone for the Bank and is an affirmation of Gulf Bank's solid capital, sound liquidity position and sustained improvement in loan asset quality matrices," commented Alghanim.

Recognition

The Bank was awarded "Best Retail Bank" and "Best Mobile Banking App" by International Finance magazine. The Bank was also recognized by the Arabian Society for Human Resources Management (ASHRM) for its youth empowerment initiatives through the AJYAL Development Program, which celebrated the graduation of its third class earlier this year. The Bank also continued a long-standing relationship with the Manpower and Government Restructuring Program (MGRP), sponsoring the Program's Career Fair in early February.

Alghanim concluded his remarks by stating, "I would like to thank everyone that contributed to these strong results. I'd also like to thank our shareholders and the Central Bank of Kuwait for their continued support. I especially want to thank our customers for their loyalty and reiterate our commitment to place them at the center of everything we do."

Business hit by Trump trade uncertainty: EU

BRUSSELS: The European Commission said yesterday that US President Donald Trump's decision not to impose steel and aluminum tariffs on the European Union for now prolonged business uncertainty and the EU should get a permanent exemption.

The White House announced on Monday that Trump had extended a temporary reprieve from the tariffs for the EU, Canada and Mexico until June 1, just hours before they were due to come into force. He also reached agreements for permanent exemptions for Argentina,

Australia and Brazil, it said. The Commission, which coordinates trade policy for the 28 European Union members, acknowledged Trump's decision but said the EU should be permanently exempted from the tariffs since it was not the cause of overcapacity in steel and aluminum. "The US decision prolongs market uncertainty, which is already affecting business decisions," the Commission said. Trump has invoked a 1962 trade law to erect protections for US steel and aluminum producers on national security grounds, amid a worldwide glut of both metals that is largely blamed on excess production in China. Germany, whose trade surplus has attracted criticism from Trump, said it expected a permanent exemption.

"I am firmly convinced that in the interests of jobs in Germany, in Europe and in the USA, we need a long-term provision and that raising tariffs is the wrong way," German

Economy Minister Peter Altmaier said, urging more talks with Washington. "We need fewer, not more duties in global trade," said.

France said it agreed there was overcapacity in the steel and aluminum industries but said the EU was not to blame and should be exempted permanently from the tariffs so the overcapacity issue could be addressed in talks. "We are ready to work with the USA and other partners to deal with those issues, and to develop fast and appropriate solutions," the French finance and foreign ministries said. EU business federation BusinessEurope called the extended respite positive, but said companies needed predictability. Germany's DIHK Chambers of Commerce and Industry said the delay did offer the opportunity to defuse the trade conflict.

Frictions

Britain's trade minister Liam Fox said he

was delighted that Trump had decided to extend the temporary exemption, saying hitting British imports made no sense. The tariffs, which have increased frictions with US trading partners worldwide and have prompted several challenges before the World Trade Organization, are aimed at allowing the two US metals industries to increase their capacity utilisation rates above 80 percent for the first time in years.

European steel association Eurofer said the US decision was welcome, albeit temporary, but said it was concerned a surge in imports already seen in the past few months could increase as countries redirected exports to the open EU market. The European Union had consistently shown it was willing to discuss concerns about the openness of each other's markets, but would not negotiate under threat, the Commission said. "Any future transatlantic

work program has to be balanced and mutually beneficial," it said in the statement. EU Trade Commissioner Cecilia Malmstrom would continue talks with US counterparts, Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross and Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer, the Commission said. The Commission has said the EU will set duties on 2.8 billion euros (\$3.4 billion) of US exports, including peanut butter and denim jeans, if its metals exports to the United States worth 6.4 billion euros are subject to tariffs.

Economists say the stand-off could tip towards a trade war if Trump responds with further tariffs, such as on EU cars. Trump has complained about the EU import duty of 10 percent on cars, compared with the US rate of 2.5 percent. The EU has stressed that for other products, such as trucks, it is the United States that has a higher tariff. — Reuters

Business

British factory growth sinks to 17-month low in April

Data further cuts chance of BoE hike in May

LONDON: British manufacturing growth slid to a 17-month low in April, sending sterling sinking and further reducing the chances of an interest rate hike by the Bank of England next week.

The pound fell below \$1.37 for the first time in 3-1/2 months after yesterday's Markit/CIPS UK Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) dropped a full point to 53.9 in March, below the average forecast of 54.8 in a Reuters poll of economists. It is the second disappointing data point in the space of a few days after official figures on Friday showed Britain's economy barely grew in the first three months of 2018, with heavy snow only partly to blame.

Separate figures from the BoE showed consumers borrowing slowed sharply in March, in line with earlier data showing a big fall in retail sales that month. "All in all,

Markit's manufacturing survey provides more evidence that the economy has fundamentally slowed this year, strengthening the case even more for the MPC to hold back from raising interest rates later this month," Samuel Tombs, economist at consultancy Pantheon Macro economics, said.

Even before Friday's weak growth figures, BoE Governor Mark Carney had said economic data had been mixed and suggested the BoE might wait rather than raise rates to a new post-financial-crisis high of 0.75 percent on May 10. There was nothing in yesterday's PMI report to suggest British factories - which account for around a tenth of overall economic output - will regain the vigor they enjoyed in late 2017,

when a recovery in the euro zone boosted British manufacturing.

Gauges of new orders and exports weakened to the lowest levels since mid-



Sterling sinks further

2017, while manufacturers took on staff at the slowest pace since February last year. IHS Markit said weakness centered espe-

cially around producers of consumer goods who have been hit by the reduced spending power among households caused by last year's rise in inflation. The Bank of England data yesterday added to signs of a lackluster consumer economy, as Britons borrowed only a net 254 million pounds (\$347 million) in March - far weaker than the Reuters poll forecast for growth of 1.45 billion pounds.

The year-on-year growth rate in unsecured consumer lending tumbled to 8.6 percent, its slowest since November 2015, down from 9.4 percent in February.

The drop in the annual growth rate was the sharpest from one month to the next since August 2009. On a three-month on three-month basis, which gives a clearer idea of the short-term trend, lending

growth slowed at the fastest pace since 2000 to an annualized rate of 6.3 percent.

"With real incomes barely rising, such a sharp fall in consumer credit does not bode well for either the high street or the overall growth outlook," ING economist James Smith said. IHS Markit said optimism among manufacturers dipped to a five-month low in April as concerns about Brexit, trade barriers and the overall economic climate remained widespread. The PMI's gauge of factory cost pressures cooled to a nine-month low, something that will be noted by BoE rate-setters who are keeping an eye on inflation pressures ahead of next week's policy decision.

Separate PMIs for the construction industry and the much larger services sector are due today and tomorrow. — Reuters

Pakistan PM opens long-delayed new airport in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi yesterday inaugurated the long-delayed new airport in the capital, Islamabad, replacing the cramped Benazir Bhutto airport often criticized by travellers. A Pakistan International Airlines pilot waved a green and white Pakistani flag out of his cockpit window after landing the carrier's first commercial flight at the New International Islamabad Airport.

With a sleek glass-front entrance, spacious check-in areas and jetway bridges for boarding, the Y-shaped airport promises an end to the congestion that has frustrated air travel in the past. "This airport rightly reflects what has happened in Pakistan in the last five years," said Abbasi.

Abbasi's ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) party had been eager to open the new airport before national polls, likely in July, as it louts big-ticket infrastructure as sign of economic progress in the South Asian nation of 208 million people.

Abbasi's government is spending billions of dollars on upgrading Pakistan's transport infrastructure and ending energy blackouts, with freshly paved motorways as well as dams and power plants popping up across the country. Abbasi, who has a pilot's license and is a founder of a Pakistani budget airline, said new airports in the cities of



ISLAMABAD: Pakistani officials take part in a rehearsal by the airport officials at the newly built Islamabad International Airport ahead of its official opening tomorrow on the outskirts of Islamabad. — AFP

Multan, Faisalabad, Quetta and Peshawar were in the final stages.

The new Islamabad airport, which has the capacity to handle 15 million passengers annually and space for further expansion, was first suggested in the 1980s and has been more than a decade in the making. The delays have become a running joke with many Pakistanis, who mock the frequent announcements that the new airport would open soon and subsequent clarifications of further delays. The airport's most recent delay was last month.

"Nothing is impossible but this project

definitely seemed impossible," quipped Abbasi, in reference to his government inheriting the project in 2013. The new airport is about 15 km (nine miles) from the capital. Benazir Bhutto airport was in the nearby city of Rawalpindi and attached to a military base. International travellers often complained about chaotic scenes at the airport and in 2014 it was voted the worst in the world by the "Guide to Sleeping in Airports" website, prompting widespread criticism of the airport in Pakistani media. The new airport is due to start full operation tomorrow. — Reuters



SYDNEY: A woman walks in front of Sydney Metro billboard in Sydney yesterday. — AFP

Australia keeps rates on hold ahead of national budget

SYDNEY: Australia's central bank kept interest rates at a record low yesterday for a 19th consecutive meeting, unwilling to make any move ahead of the national budget next week.

The Reserve Bank of Australia has not adjusted rates since August 2016, following a series of cuts from November 2011 that took it to 1.50 percent in a bid to boost non-min-

ing sectors of the economy. Its decision to stay on hold comes just before the conservative government of Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull is due to release its next budget on May 8. The spending plan, which will take the country up to national elections early next year, is tipped to be generous with personal income tax cuts and infrastructure investment, and keep the nation on track to a return to a budget surplus in the next few years.

In its statement explaining its decision to extend the record breaking run on rates, the board noted that employment was growing strongly but wage growth remained low. "The various forward-looking indicators continue to point to solid growth in employment in the period ahead, with a further gradual reduction in the unemployment rate expected," it said. — AFP

Tomorrow's jobs require impressing a lot with quick thinking

NEW YORK: When Andrew Chamberlain started in his job four years ago in the research group at jobs website Glassdoor.com, he worked in a programming language called Stata. Then it was R. Then Python. Then PySpark. "My dad was a commercial printer and did the same thing for 30 years. I have to continually stay on stuff," said Chamberlain, who is now the chief economist for the site.

Chamberlain already has one of the jobs of the future - a perpetually changing, shifting universe of work that requires employees to

be critical thinkers and fast on their feet. Even those training for a specific field, from plumbing to aerospace engineering, need to be nimble enough to constantly learn new technologies and apply their skills on the fly.

When companies recruit new workers, particularly for entry-level jobs, they are not necessarily looking for knowledge of certain software. They are looking for what most consider soft skills: problem solving, effective communication and leadership. They also want candidates who show a willingness to keep learning new skills. "The human being's

role in the workplace is less to do repetitive things all the time and more to do the non-repetitive tasks that bring new kinds of value," said Anthony Carnevale, director of the Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce in the United States. So while specializing in a specialized STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) field can seem like an easy path to a lucrative first job, employers are telling colleges: You are producing engineers, but they do not have the skills we need. It is "algorithmic thinking" rather than the algorithm itself that is relevant, said Carnevale.

Finding gems

Out in the field, Marie Artim is looking for potential. As vice president of talent acquisition for car rental firm Enterprise Holdings

Inc, she sets out to hire about 8,500 young people every year for a management training program, an enormous undertaking that has her searching college campuses across the country. Artim started in the training program herself, 26 years ago, as did the Enterprise chief executive, and that is how she gets the attention of young adults and their parents who scoff at a future of renting cars.

According to Artim, the biggest deficit in the millennial generation is autonomous decision-making. They are used to being structured and "syllabused," she said.

To get students ready, some colleges, and even high schools, are working on building critical thinking skills.

For three weeks in January at the private Westminster Schools in Atlanta, Georgia, students either get jobs or go on trips, which

gives them a better sense of what they might do in the future. At Texas State University in San Marcos, meanwhile, students can take a marketable-skills master class series.

One key area hones in on case studies that companies are using increasingly to weed out prospects. This means being able to answer hypothetical questions based on a common scenario the employer faces, and showing leadership skills in those scenarios.

The career office at the university also focuses on interview skills. Today, that means teaching kids more than just writing an effective resume and showing up in smart clothes. They have to learn how to perform best on video and phone interviews, and how to navigate gamification and artificial intelligence bots that many companies are now using in the recruiting process. — Reuters

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 | Japanese Yen | 3.755 |
| Sterling Pound | 426.390 | Syrian Pound | 1.585 |
| Canadian dollar | 238.080 | Nepalese Rupees | 2.833 |
| Turkish lira | 74.520 | Malaysian Ringgit | 77.815 |
| Swiss Franc | 315.860 | Chinese Yuan Renminbi | 48.070 |
| Australian Dollar | 234.090 | Thai Bhat | 10.535 |
| US Dollar Buying | 299.500 | Turkish Lira | 74.665 |
| GOLD | | | |
| 20 Gram | 260.520 | | |
| 10 Gram | 133.180 | | |
| 5 Gram | 67.430 | | |
| Dollarco Exchange Co. Ltd | | | |
| Rate for Transfer | | Selling Rate | |
| US Dollar | 301.500 | US Dollar | 301.500 |
| Canadian Dollar | 235.790 | Hungarian 0.001136 | 0.001326 |
| Sterling Pound | 416.215 | Norwegian Krone | 0.033844 |
| Euro | 365.370 | Romanian Leu | 0.064488 |
| Swiss Frank | 301.675 | Russian ruble | 0.004835 |
| Bahrain Dinar | 801.800 | Slovakia | 0.008972 |
| UAE Dirhams | 82.490 | Swedish Krona | 0.030824 |
| Qatari Riyals | 83.720 | Swiss Franc | 0.299378 |
| Saudi Riyals | 81.295 | | |
| Jordanian Dinar | 426.525 | | |
| Egyptian Pound | 17.046 | | |
| Sri Lankan Rupees | 1.912 | | |
| Indian Rupees | 4.542 | | |
| Pakistani Rupees | 2.608 | | |
| Bangladesh Taka | 3.617 | | |
| Philippines Peso | 5.833 | | |
| Cyprus pound | 17.945 | | |

| BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL | | |
|------------------------------|----------|----------|
| CURRENCY | BUY | SELL |
| 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 0.001136 | 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 Mint | 0.298050 | 0.301950 |

| | | |
|-------------------|----------|----------|
| Asia | | |
| Bangladesh Taka | 0.002981 | 0.003763 |
| Chinese Yuan | 0.046119 | 0.049619 |
| Hong Kong Dollar | 0.036683 | 0.039433 |
| Indian Rupee | 0.003982 | 0.004709 |
| Indonesian Rupiah | 0.000017 | 0.000023 |
| Japanese Yen | 0.002682 | 0.002862 |
| Korean Won | 0.000273 | 0.000288 |
| Malaysian Ringgit | 0.073167 | 0.079167 |
| Nepalese Rupee | 0.002780 | 0.003120 |
| Pakistan Rupee | 0.001984 | 0.002754 |
| Philippine Peso | 0.005676 | 0.005976 |
| Singapore Dollar | 0.222510 | 0.232510 |
| Sri Lankan Rupee | 0.001612 | 0.002192 |
| Taiwan | 0.010350 | 0.010530 |
| Thai Baht | 0.009223 | 0.009773 |
| Arab | | |
| Bahraini Dinar | 0.793501 | 0.802001 |
| Egyptian Pound | 0.013914 | 0.019632 |
| Iranian Riyal | 0.000083 | 0.000085 |
| Iraqi Dinar | 0.000203 | 0.000263 |
| Jordanian Dinar | 0.420844 | 0.429844 |
| Kuwaiti Dinar | 1.000000 | 1.000000 |
| Lebanese Pound | 0.000155 | 0.000255 |
| Moroccan Dirhams | 0.022592 | 0.046592 |
| Omani Riyal | 0.777188 | 0.782868 |
| Qatar Riyal | 0.078566 | 0.083506 |
| Saudi Riyal | 0.079353 | 0.080653 |
| Syrian Pound | 0.001278 | 0.001498 |
| Tunisian Dinar | 0.119617 | 0.127617 |
| Turkish Lira | 0.069438 | 0.079738 |
| UAE Dirhams | 0.080703 | 0.082403 |
| Yemeni Riyal | 0.000980 | 0.001060 |

Business

Tijari declares a net profit of KD 10.1 million for Q1 2018

Bank witnesses a healthy growth in all key areas of its business

KUWAIT: Commercial Bank of Kuwait announced a net profit of KD 10.1 million for the first quarter of 2018, compared to KD 0.8 million for the same period of 2017. The bank witnessed a healthy growth in all the key areas of its business. Net interest income grew by 8.7 percent, fee income grew by 2.5 percent and the foreign exchange increased by 209 percent.

Sheikh Ahmad Duaij Al-Sabah, the bank's Chairman, commented on these positive results that the bank continues to capitalize on its core competencies by focusing on asset quality, operational efficiency and customer service. The operating profit for the Q1 2018 was KD 26.7 million and the bank prudently allocated a portion of it to strengthen its pool of available provision. The total provisions held with the bank against its credit portfolio as at the end of the 31st March 2018 were KD

154.5 million. Sheikh Ahmad added that Bank's total assets are KD 4,291 million mainly comprising of KD 2,144 million of loan portfolios



Net income grew by 8.7 percent

and KD 470 million of investment securities. The bank intends to continue its prudent policy of conservative approach towards growth

by maintaining and improving the quality of its assets during 2018 and beyond, in order to meet the challenges of volatile economic and geopolitical situation in the region.

Sheikh Ahmad further added that banks' capital adequacy ratio at the end of March 2018 was at 19.2 percent, the leverage ratio at 11.8 percent, net stable funding ratio at 113.0 percent and liquidity coverage ratio at 193 percent, comfortably exceeding the regulatory requirement set by the Central Bank of Kuwait. The bank continues to demonstrate its cost leadership with operational efficiency, a competitive advantage for the bank, which continues to maintain one of the lowest cost/income ratios among Kuwait banks at 28.9 percent for the quarter ended 31 March 2018. He pointed that the bank's strong financial indicators are due to its prudent policy of cleaning its

loan portfolio by writing off irregular loans but taking all the necessary steps to protect the interests of the Bank. The NPL ratio at 0.71 percent is much lower than the industry average.

Investing in technology

Sheikh Ahmad emphasized that the Bank has focused on investing in technology and human capital to meet the customer's expectation and satisfaction. Our customer centric approach is improving our market share and business return. The Bank is continuously investing in automation through self-service (KIOSKS) and virtual banking to digitize and enhance branch functionality. The Bank is promoting digital channels through social media and listening to customer suggestions to keep

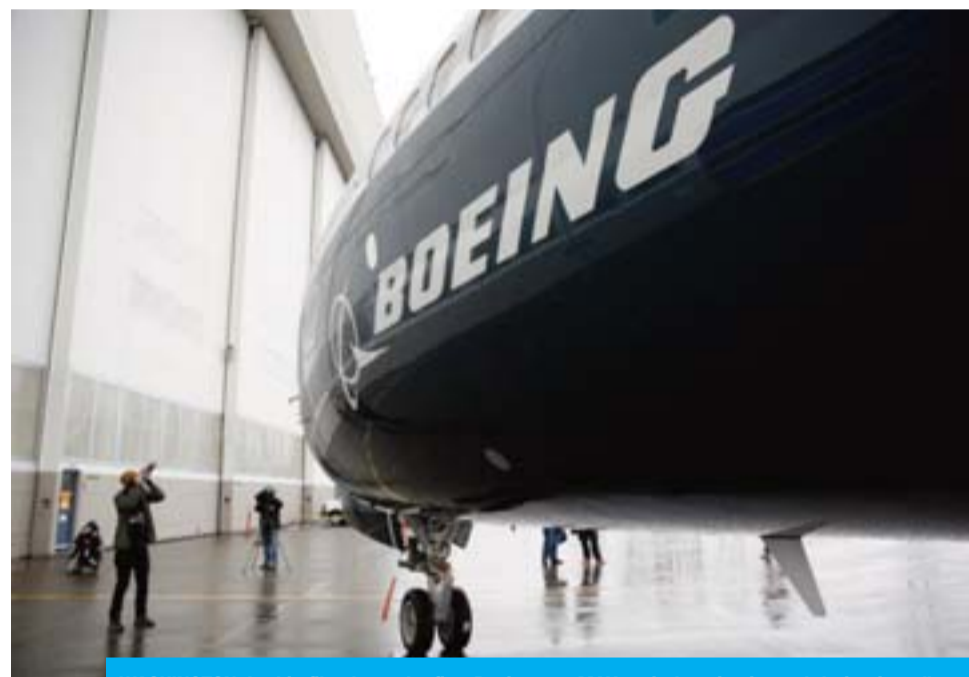


Sheikh Ahmad Duaij Al-Sabah

enhancing the Digital Channels. Another strategic vision of the bank is "people focused" approach and the bank continues to invest in this area to build a highly skilled and motivated team to serve our customers better.

Sheikh Ahmad further commented that the bank will continue its balanced strategy and focus on available growth opportunities by financing the new projects of national importance with public and private partnership by efficient management of risks and associated returns. Sheikh Ahmad took the opportunity to thank the bank's shareholders, valued customers, staff and regulatory authorities, emphasizing that the Bank's Management continues to implement all the required policies for safeguarding the interest of all stakeholders'.

Boeing buys aviation parts company KLX for \$4.25bn



WASHINGTON: In this file photo, the first Boeing 737 MAX 9 airplane is pictured during its rollout for the media at the Boeing factory in Renton, Washington. — AFP

NEW YORK: Boeing announced yesterday that it reached an agreement to acquire aerospace parts distributor KLX for \$4.25 billion as it boosts its aviation services business.

Boeing executives described the move as a significant step in bolstering its global services segment, which was launched last year and aims to increase annual revenues from \$15 billion in 2017 to \$50 billion in five years. "This acquisition is the next step in our services growth strategy, with a clear opportunity to profitably grow our business and better serve our customers in a \$2.6 trillion, 10-year serv-

ices market," said Stan Deal, chief executive of Boeing Global Services.

Miami, Florida-based KLX provides aerospace parts and services to commercial, business and defense jet customers worldwide, shipping a majority of goods within 24 hours of the order, according to a KLX securities filing. KLX reported \$1.7 billion in revenues in 2017. Under the all-cash deal, Boeing values Florida-based KLX at \$63 per share and will assume \$1 billion in debt. KLX will divest its energy services business, which provides oilfield tools and services to the oil business. — AFP

Germany wants permanent US tariffs exemption

BERLIN: Germany has taken note of US President Donald Trump's decision to postpone the imposition of steel and aluminum tariffs on the European Union and, in principle, still expects a permanent exemption, deputy government spokeswoman Martina Fietz said.

"Neither the European Union nor the United States can have an interest in an escalation (in tensions) in trade relations," Fietz added in a statement. "Rather, both the US and the EU would benefit from further deepening trade relations."

"It is particularly important that the European Union has sought talks with the United States and will continue to do so." The White House said on Monday Trump had postponed the imposition of steel and aluminum tariffs on Canada, the EU and Mexico until June 1, and reached agreements for permanent exemptions for Argentina, Australia and Brazil.

The president of Germany's DIHK Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Eric Schweitzer, said: "The extended respite offers the opportunity to defuse the trade conflict."

"The current situation shows that we need a fresh start for a comprehensive, transatlantic trade agreement," he added in a statement. On Monday, German Economy Minister Peter Altmaier said he saw little chance of reviving the stalled US-European trade deal known as the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP). "A new edition of TTIP is not realistic now," he said. — Reuters

Maduro raises minimum wage again amid hyperinflation

CARACAS: Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro announced yesterday he was almost doubling the minimum wage in an effort to tackle the crisis-wracked Latin American country's runaway inflation. Venezuela's economic collapse ranks as one of the worst in modern history, with hyperinflation likely to see prices soaring 13,000 percent this year, the International Monetary Fund said last week.

The wage increase—the third this year—brings minimum monthly income to 2.55 million bolivars, or \$3.20 on the widely used black market, when a food voucher is included. The president also said that from Tuesday, when Venezuela celebrates Workers' Day, public service employees will receive an additional increase of around \$2.

Maduro is controversially seeking another six-year term in May 20 elections that regional powers have criticized as lacking democratic standards, amid a boycott by the main opposition coalition. Even with the increases, the minimum wage will buy little more than two kilo-



CARACAS: Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro delivers a speech during a press conference announcing the increase of the minimum wage in Caracas on Monday. — AFP

grams (4.4 pounds) of chicken. Despite sitting on the world's largest oil reserves, Venezuelans are grappling with severe shortages of food and medicines, largely due to a drastic cut in imports caused by falling oil prices.

"In a time of revolution, like never before in history, the policy that Commander Hugo Chavez always promoted and that I have perfected, is to take care of the working class,"

Maduro said, citing his popular socialist predecessor. Venezuelan economists have attacked Maduro's constant adjustments, saying they succeed only in driving up the cost of living and are not accompanied by a plan to cut inflation or impose fiscal or monetary discipline. About 13 million Venezuelan workers earn the minimum wage, according to the government. — AFP

In Venezuela, five years of severance pay now buys a coffee

CARACAS: When Yolanda Abreu got her check for severance pay after five years working as a cardiologist, she let out a laugh of sheer disbelief: it was barely enough for a cup of coffee. Like her, millions of Venezuelans have seen their salaries decimated by rampant hyperinflation that is expected to drive prices up by 13,000 percent this year, IMF figures show.

Her story hit the headlines after she tweeted a photo of the check for 156,584.29 bolivars, which equates to about \$0.20 on the black market. "They called me from Caracas University Hospital to come and collect my check for benefits accrued over five years of service as a level 2 specialist in cardiology and electrophysiology," she wrote on Twitter.

And what will it buy, she wondered indignantly. "A coffee?" If she had received the check when she resigned in January 2017, it would have been worth \$45.

But her severance pay was decimated by the country's chronic hyperinflation and the accelerated collapse of the bolivar. Within a

week, her indignant outburst had been retweeted 11,000 times, and commented on more than 1,400 times, with many relating similar stories or empathizing: "Friend, they robbed you blind." "I never thought it would have such an impact. I wrote it because the check was so ridiculous that it made me laugh, and suddenly you find so many people who feel like you that all your work, your effort is just disregarded," she told AFP.

'Hopeless cause'

On the eve of International Workers Day, Venezuela's embattled President Nicolas Maduro moved to double the monthly minimum wage, raising it by 95.4 percent to 2,555,500 bolivars—or \$37 (30 euros), according to the central bank's official DICOM rate. But access to such a favorable rate is very limited for Venezuelan citizens and companies, meaning they have to use the black market where the same sum is worth just \$3.20 — just about enough for two kilos (4.4 pounds) of chicken.

It is the 22nd such readjustment by Maduro, the self-declared "workers' president" who took office in 2013 following the death of Hugo Chavez. "In times of revolution, as never before, the policy of comandante Hugo Chavez, which I have perfected... is to care for the working class," said Maduro, who will seek reelection when Venezuela goes to the polls for a controversial presidential election on May 20 — which the opposition is boycotting.

With the country facing its worst economic crisis in decades, the government has accused Washington and the opposition of waging an "economic war" on Venezuela in a bid to overthrow Maduro. For Asdrubal Oliveros, an analyst with consultancy Ecoanalitica, the constant hiking of salaries is "a hopeless cause" in the face of such inflation without correcting the imbalances in the Venezuelan economy, which is running a fiscal deficit of an estimated 20 percent of GDP that the government is trying to resolve through printing money.

A graduate of the Central University of Venezuela—the country's best-who went on to do specialized studies in Madrid, Abreu has borne the brunt of such a policy.

She survives through offering private consultations, but still works in public hospitals "to help train" junior doctors. "You almost have to pay to work. It is painful to see them graduate and leave, but I understand. We are not a bunch of money-grabbing quacks, you just can't live on these salaries," she says. According to a joint university study carried out with the Medical Federation, 40 percent of graduate surgeons have left Venezuela over the past decade in an exodus driven by the socio-economic crisis.

And a study by the country's main universities found that in 2017, some 87 percent of the people were living in poverty, despite government statistics claiming the figure stands at 23 percent. — AFP

BP logs soaring Q1 profits

LONDON: British energy major BP said yesterday that first-quarter net profits soared 70 percent on rising crude oil prices and increasing output. Earnings after taxation, or bottom-line net profit, jumped to \$2.5 billion (2.1 billion euros) in the three months to the end of March from a year earlier, BP said in a results statement.

Total production advanced six percent to 3.7 million barrels of oil equivalent per day. BP also paid another \$1.6 billion for costs arising from the 2010 Gulf of Mexico oil spill catastrophe, including \$1.2 billion for the final payment relating to the 2012 Department of Justice settlement.

"We have delivered another strong set of results," said chief executive Bob Dudley. "Our safe and reliable operations and strong financial delivery have continued into 2018."

Underlying replacement cost profit—which excludes fluctuations in the value of crude oil inventories—surged 71 percent to \$2.6 billion. That set BP shares on an upward trajectory

because it comfortably beat market expectations of \$2.2 billion. Chief financial officer Brian Gilvary cautioned that the performance was energized only partly by the oil price recovery. "It's come through in terms of the reliability that we are seeing in both upstream and downstream and a little bit of benefit from the oil price," Gilvary said in a video message posted on the company's website.

"But overall, a strong set of results in terms of earnings." Downstream comprises refining, marketing and distribution, while upstream covers exploration and production.

"The results definitely benefit from a higher oil price that we've seen come through," Gilvary noted. "But actually, it's more about the seven projects that we brought on stream last year, the six more projects that we will be bringing on stream in the upstream this year, the ramp up of those projects and the volumes that come with that, and continued underlying performance improvements in the downstream." "So it's not just about price, it's actually about the performance of the kit." Oil prices have nevertheless shot above \$70 a barrel from below \$30 in early 2016. The turnaround has been helped by an agreement in late 2016 between the OPEC oil producers'



cartel and Russia to reduce a global supply glut by trimming production.

The recovery has been fuelled also by geopolitical tensions, US President Donald Trump's threat to reimpose sanctions on Iran and production problems in Venezuela, Nigeria and Libya.

In late morning deals, BP shares gained 1.0 percent to 543.40 pence on London's FTSE 100 index, which stood 0.3 percent higher at 7,532.06 points. "BP shares are in demand... after the company posted a surge in profit that topped analyst estimates," noted CMC Markets analyst David Madden. "Higher output and stronger oil prices were behind the strong results," he added. — AFP



ALLAHABAD: Indian laborers construct a temporary road on the river bank of Ganga in Allahabad yesterday. Countries across the world marked May 1 as International Labor Day. — AFP

Business

Wall St falls, oil drags on energy stocks

NEW YORK: US stocks slipped yesterday as the latest batch of earnings from companies such as Pfizer and Tapestry disappointed investors already concerned about rising costs and protectionist policies. A drop in oil prices, due to uncertainties around the Iran nuclear deal, weighed on energy stocks. The S&P energy index was down 0.9 percent. US equity index futures got a bump overnight after President Donald Trump postponed the imposition of steel and aluminum tariffs on Canada, the European Union and Mexico until June 1, and reached agreements for permanent exemptions for Argentina, Australia and Brazil. The decision comes ahead of Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin's highly anticipated trip to China later this week to discuss trade issues.

Shares of AK Steel and US Steel were down more than 3 percent. At 10:00 a.m. ET the Dow Jones Industrial Average was down 143.28 points, or 0.59

percent, at 24,019.87, the S&P 500 was down 5.25 points, or 0.20 percent, at 2,642.80 and the Nasdaq Composite was down 1.54 points, or 0.02 percent, at 7,064.73. "You had the tariff news, but that may have already been baked in," said Scott Brown, chief economist at Raymond James in St. Petersburg, Florida.

"It causes the same amount of uncertainty, you had worse-than-expected revenue from Pfizer, and there might be some caution ahead of Apple results."

Pfizer fell 2.3 percent after the largest US drugmaker's quarterly revenue missed estimates. Merck shares also dipped 0.6 percent despite profit beating estimates and the company lifting earnings forecast for the year. Tapestry, formerly Coach, tumbled 12 percent after it reported a drop in quarterly margins and a steeper-than-expected decline in same-store sales in its Kate Spade business.

Apple, the world's biggest publicly traded company,

comes out with results after market closes yesterday. The US Federal Reserve began its two-day monetary policy meeting yesterday. Although no change in policy rates is expected, investors will watch for clues on whether three more rate hikes are due for the rest of 2018. Trading volumes could remain light as most financial centers across Europe and Asia were closed on account of May Day. Declining issues outnumbered advanced for a 1.97-to-1 ratio on the NYSE and for a 1.92-to-1 ratio on the Nasdaq.

The S&P index recorded one new 52-week high and 16 new lows, while the Nasdaq recorded 22 new highs and 44 new lows.

LSE jumps

London's stock market rose yesterday following gains in Tokyo and a slump in the pound, with most world indices shut owing to public holidays. Investors

in London reacted to data showing that Britain's manufacturing sector dropped to a 17-month low point in April.

The Markit/CIPS UK Manufacturing purchasing managers' index (PMI) showed a reading of 53.9, down on March's reading of 54.9. The data weighed on sterling, as prospects for a May interest rate hike from the Bank of England receded further, analysts said.

The pound's weakness though provided support to London's benchmark FTSE 100 index, owing to the fact that it includes a number of heavyweight companies earning in dollars. Earlier yesterday, Tokyo's Nikkei closed higher in quiet trade during Japan's Golden Week holiday period, as investors took to the sidelines ahead of key earnings and economic data in the US. Wall Street closed down on Monday, despite a strong start with good earnings from McDonald's and several merger announcements. — Reuters

UK territories ordered to open up about secretive firms

LONDON: Britain's government agreed yesterday to order its overseas territories to make secretive company ownership information public to try to tackle corruption and tax avoidance.

Overseas territories and crown dependencies have come under increasing pressure to reveal who is behind anonymously owned companies, with campaign groups saying such secrecy aids money laundering, tax evasion and corrupt diversion of public funds from developing economies.

Many of these territories, such as the Cayman Islands and the British Virgin Islands, have large financial services sectors because they levy low taxes and ownership of businesses lacks transparency.

Despite repeated calls for more openness, British crown dependencies and overseas territories are only required to reveal information on the true owners of offshore companies to law enforcement bodies, and then only if asked. Alan Duncan, a junior foreign office minister, told parliament the government would support an amendment brought by two Members of Parliament calling for a central register of company ownership in these territories as lawmakers debated an amendment on an anti-money laundering law.

"We have listened to the strength of feeling in his house on this issue and accept that it is without a doubt the majority view of this house that the overseas territories should have public registers," Duncan said. Britain has been making efforts to clamp down on tax evasion and corrupt flows of money through its large financial services sector, but has faced resistance from some of its overseas territories because the secrecy and low taxes are what makes their finance sectors attractive.

Margaret Hodge, the opposition Labor Member of Parliament who introduced the amendment, said it will help prevent tax evasion and disrupt the activities of criminal gangs and militant groups.

"It will stop them exploiting our secret regime, hiding their toxic wealth and laundering money into the legitimate system, often for nefarious purposes," she said.

"With open registers we will then know who owns what and where, and we will be able to see where the money flows, and then we will be better equipped to root out dirty money and deal with the issues that arise from that," Duncan Hames, a director of policy at Transparency International UK, said these territories have been the "Achilles Heel" of Britain's defense against money laundering.

"Corrupt individuals everywhere will be deeply concerned that they are about to lose the secrecy afforded by the British Overseas Territories that has until now given them an easy route to launder their ill-gotten gains," he said. — Reuters



LONDON: Britain's International Trade Secretary Liam Fox leaves after attending the weekly meeting of the cabinet at Downing Street in central London yesterday. — AFP

US April auto sales show lackluster start to spring

DETROIT: Major automakers yesterday posted lower new vehicle sales in April as consumer demand continued to weaken following a lengthy boom for the industry. Auto sales have been on a bit of a roller coaster ride this year, with a weak performance in February followed by a jump in sales for some automakers in March.

Ford Motor Co posted a 4.7-percent decline in sales, with retail sales to consumers down 2.6 percent. The No 2 US automaker said sales of its popular pickup trucks were up 0.9 percent, but SUV and passenger car sales were down 4.6 percent and 15 percent respectively.

For years, US consumers have been shifting away from traditional passenger cars in favor of larger and more comfortable pickup trucks, SUVs and crossovers. But the number of new models

vying for a share of that market is growing faster than demand, threatening the fat profits automakers have enjoyed. "That is a very competitive part of the market ... with so many new entries," Ford's US sales chief Mark LaNeve said of the SUV segment on a conference call with analysts and reporters.

Last year, US auto sales fell 2 percent after hitting a record high of 17.55 million units in 2016. Sales are expected to fall further in 2018 as higher interest rates push up monthly car payments. Also, millions of nearly new vehicles will return to the market this year after coming off lease, providing a lower-cost alternative for consumers. "We believe the industry continues to operate at a very healthy level," Ford's LaNeve said. "With a plateauing market, you are going to get some bumpiness."

Nissan Motor Co Ltd's sales hit quite a bump, plunging 28 percent in April. The Japanese automaker's passenger cars dropped nearly 35 percent and SUV and truck sales were down 23.1 percent. Even sales of the company's popular SUV crossover model Rogue were down almost 15 percent.

No 1 US automaker General Motors Co announced last month that it would no longer

report monthly sales and instead will just post sales on a quarterly basis. But industry estimates showed the company posting a monthly decline for April of anywhere up to 8 percent.

Ford said yesterday it will continue to post monthly sales. Fiat Chrysler Automobiles NV (FCA) posted an overall sales increase of 5 percent in April. But retail sales to consumers were down 1 percent while lower-margin fleet sales to rental car companies and government agencies were up 5 percent.

Sales of the company's popular Jeep brand hit a record for the month. But sales of FCA's Ram pickup truck were down 9 percent in April. FCA said last week when it reported first-quarter results that it had encountered problems ramping up production of the new RAM 1500 pick-up truck at its U.S. Sterling Heights plant. Toyota Motor Corp posted a 4.7 percent decline in sales for April, with a 1.5 percent increase in SUV and pickup truck sales offset by a 12.7 percent drop in passenger car sales. Sales of the company's recently revamped flagship Camry sedan were down 5 percent. In late morning trading, Ford shares were flat, GM was down 44 cents or 1.2 percent at \$36.31 and FCA was down 0.6 percent or 13 cents at \$21.70. — Reuters

Dollar turns positive for 2018 before Fed meeting

NEW YORK: The US dollar surged into positive territory for 2018 yesterday and broke past key levels against several currencies as a divergence between growth and the interest rate outlook versus other countries spurred investors to chase the currency higher. The dollar, traded against a basket of major currencies, rose 0.45 percent to 92.250, the highest since Jan. 11 and higher than where it started the year.

"We're pretty much back to where we were at the

Nut rage sister faces fruit juice questions in S Korea

SEOUL: The stony-faced daughter of a Korean billionaire, whose older sister was brought low by the "nut rage" scandal, apologized yesterday as she reported to police for questioning over allegations she sprayed a business associate in the face with fruit juice. "I'm really sorry for causing concern," Cho Hyun-min repeatedly told a crowd of journalists outside the Gangseo police station in Seoul, without admitting to any specific actions. Cho, who police said is accused of using violence and obstructing business, is the daughter of Hanjin Group chairman Cho Yang-ho.

Hanjin is among the country's 15 biggest business groups, owner of flag carrier Korean Air, logistics and transport firms, and with interests in information technology and hotels. It used to own Hanjin Shipping, once one of the world's biggest shipping firms, which was declared bankrupt last year.

The younger daughter's police interrogation is only the controlling family's latest brush with the law, with a series of scandals making them some of the country's most notorious super-wealthy. South Korea's economy—the world's 11th-largest—is dominated by a series of giant business conglomerates known as chaebols. In the past, the chaebols contributed to the country's fast economic growth, but as the founders' sons and grandsons took over they expanded into every corner of business, and now stand accused of suffocating smaller companies and hampering innovation. They have long had murky ties with political authorities—Samsung scion Lee Jae-yong was jailed last year for his role in the corruption scandal that brought down president Park Geun-hye, although most of his convictions were quashed on appeal.

Many chaebol families retain only a small ownership stake in their companies, but maintain control through complex webs of cross-shareholdings between subsidiaries, and rapid promotions for family members—some of whose antics have battered the firms' images.

"The Cho family is one of the most vili-

fied chaebol families, with multiple family members implicated in alleged bad behavior," Chung Sun-sup of online information service chaebol.com told AFP.

'Family misdeeds'

In the most infamous incident, the chairman's elder daughter Cho Hyun-ah made global headlines in 2014 for forcing two flight attendants to kneel and beg for forgiveness after she was served macadamia nuts in a bag rather than a bowl.

She ordered the Seoul-bound flight back to the gate so one of them could be ejected in an incident quickly dubbed "nut rage". Since the accusations against her sister emerged, hundreds of Korean Air personnel have joined an online chat room to allege Cho family misdeeds against employees and domestic staff. Police said last week they were investigating allegations that the sisters' mother Lee Myung-hee had herself abused employees verbally and physically.

Korean Air said the company had no comment. The family are also accused of using Korean Air planes to smuggle luxury goods into the country to avoid import duties.

Chairman Cho Yang-ho—who last year faced accusations of embezzling company funds, although prosecutors rejected a request for his arrest—last month apologized for the "immature" behavior of his daughters, both of whom resigned from their executive posts.

The row could yet impact Korean Air itself, and other conglomerates. Thousands of petitioners went to the presidential Blue House homepage, urging the government to ban the airline from using "Korean" in its name and to expel Cho Hyun-min, who was born in the US and is an American citizen.

Under South Korean immigration law, foreigners found to have disturbed social order or harmed public safety can be ordered to leave the country. Former lawmaker Park Won-suk said the Cho family controversies would serve as a "catalyst" for a reform drive. President Moon Jae-in was elected last year partly on promises to reform the chaebols—a pledge various politicians have made many times before.

There has been little action so far, but Chung noted that the justice ministry last week introduced a bill to grant minority shareholders a greater voice in appointing board members. The move was "apparently in sync with mounting public demand for chaebol reform triggered by the Cho case", he said. — AFP

| National Bank of Kuwait Financial Markets Daily Report | | | | | | | | |
|--|----------------|---------------|-------------|---------------------|----------------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| At 02:00 PM Previous Day | | | | | | | | |
| Global Stock Indices | | | | | | | | |
| Index | Previous Close | Last Price | Change | Daily Performance % | Yearly Performance % | | | |
| Dow Jones | 24,311.19 | 24,163.15 | -148.04 | ▼ | -0.61 | -2.25 | | |
| NASDAQ | 7,119.80 | 7,064.27 | -55.53 | ▼ | -0.75 | -2.36 | | |
| S&P 500 | 2,648.91 | 2,648.05 | -0.86 | ▼ | -0.03 | -0.96 | | |
| Financial Times | 7,509.30 | 7,547.87 | 38.57 | ▲ | 0.51 | -1.82 | | |
| DAX | 12,580.87 | 12,612.11 | 31.24 | ▲ | 0.25 | -2.37 | | |
| CAC 40 | 5,483.19 | 5,520.50 | 37.31 | ▲ | 0.68 | 3.91 | | |
| Swiss | 8,843.02 | 8,884.26 | 41.24 | ▲ | 0.49 | -5.25 | | |
| Nikkei 225 | 22,487.87 | 22,508.03 | 40.16 | ▲ | 0.18 | -1.13 | | |
| Topix | 1,777.23 | 1,774.18 | -3.05 | ▼ | -0.17 | -2.39 | | |
| Hang Seng | 35,280.47 | 35,058.45 | -222.02 | ▼ | -0.63 | 2.97 | | |
| Shanghai | 3,577.21 | 3,613.93 | 36.72 | ▲ | 1.03 | 4.30 | | |
| MENA Stock Indices | | | | | | | | |
| Index | Previous Close | Last Price | Change | Daily Performance % | Yearly Performance % | | | |
| Kuwait | 4,603.51 | 4,632.44 | 28.93 | ▲ | 0.63 | 2.94 | | |
| Saudi Arabia | 8,208.87 | 8,140.88 | -67.99 | ▼ | -0.83 | 13.60 | | |
| Dubai | 3,065.96 | 3,030.75 | -35.21 | ▼ | -1.15 | -9.02 | | |
| Abu Dhabi | 4,669.52 | 4,673.31 | 3.79 | ▲ | 0.08 | 6.18 | | |
| Bahrain | 1,262.78 | 1,257.88 | -4.90 | ▼ | -0.39 | -5.18 | | |
| Qatar | 9,111.97 | 9,014.32 | -97.65 | ▼ | -1.07 | 6.91 | | |
| Oman | 4,729.05 | 4,731.27 | 2.22 | ▲ | 0.05 | -7.21 | | |
| Lebanon | 1,129.01 | 1,129.01 | 0.00 | - | 0.00 | -1.70 | | |
| Jordan | 2,181.20 | 2,191.52 | 10.32 | ▲ | 0.47 | 2.56 | | |
| Egypt | 18,304.46 | 18,295.57 | -8.89 | ▼ | -0.05 | 21.87 | | |
| Morocco | 13,056.84 | 13,028.01 | -28.83 | ▼ | -0.22 | 5.16 | | |
| Tunisia | 7,124.94 | 7,124.53 | -0.41 | ▼ | -0.01 | 13.42 | | |
| Global Currencies Exchange Rate | | | | | | | | |
| Currency | Kuwaiti Dinar | Saudi Riyal | US Dollar | Euro | Sterling Pound | Swiss Franc | Japanese Yen | Australian Dollar |
| Kuwaiti Dinar | | 12.1428 | 3.3052 | 2.7470 | 2.4135 | 3.2828 | 362.35 | 4.1999 |
| Saudi Riyal | 0.08102 | | 0.2678 | 0.2226 | 0.1955 | 0.2660 | 29.36 | 0.3565 |
| US Dollar | 0.30255 | 3.7343 | | 0.8311 | 0.7302 | 0.9932 | 109.63 | 1.3212 |
| Euro | 0.36403 | 4.4931 | 1.2032 | | 0.8788 | 1.1952 | 131.97 | 1.6021 |
| Sterling Pound | 0.41434 | 5.1141 | 1.3695 | 1.1379 | | 1.3608 | 150.19 | 1.8238 |
| Swiss Franc | 0.30462 | 3.7399 | 1.0068 | 0.8367 | 0.7349 | | 110.44 | 1.3403 |
| Japanese Yen | 0.00276 | 0.0341 | 0.0091 | 0.0076 | 0.0067 | 0.0091 | | 0.0121 |
| Australian Dollar | 0.22728 | 2.8052 | 0.7512 | 0.6242 | 0.5483 | 0.7461 | 82.35 | |
| MENA Currencies Exchange Rate | | | | | | | | |
| Currency | US Dollar | Kuwaiti Dinar | Saudi Riyal | Bahraini Dinar | Qatari Riyal | Omani Riyal | Emirates Dirham | Egyptian Pound |
| US Dollar | | 0.30255 | 3.7343 | 0.3742 | 3.6270 | 0.3631 | 3.6575 | 17.5700 |
| Kuwaiti Dinar | 3.3052 | | 12.1428 | 1.2369 | 11.9881 | 1.2663 | 12.0889 | 56.0720 |
| Saudi Riyal | 0.2678 | 0.08102 | | 0.1002 | 0.9713 | 0.1026 | 0.9794 | 4.7050 |
| Bahraini Dinar | 2.6723 | 0.80850 | 0.9792 | | 9.6924 | 1.0238 | 9.7739 | 46.9522 |
| Qatari Riyal | 0.2737 | 0.08342 | 1.0296 | 0.1032 | | 0.1056 | 1.0084 | 4.8442 |
| Omani Riyal | 2.6101 | 0.79948 | 9.7468 | 0.9767 | 9.4668 | | 9.5464 | 45.9591 |
| Emirates Dirham | 0.2734 | 0.08272 | 1.0210 | 0.1023 | 0.9917 | 0.1048 | | 4.8038 |
| Egyptian Pound | 0.0569 | 0.01722 | 0.2125 | 0.0213 | 0.2064 | 0.0218 | 0.2082 | |
| Global Interest Rates | | | | | | | | |
| Currency | 1-Week | 1-Month | 3-Month | 6-Month | 1-Year | | | |
| Kuwaiti Dinar | 1.25 | 1.75 | 2.00 | 2.19 | 2.44 | | | |
| US Dollar | 1.75 | 1.90 | 2.36 | 2.51 | 2.77 | | | |
| Euro | -0.42 | -0.40 | -0.35 | -0.31 | -0.24 | | | |
| Sterling Pound | 0.49 | 0.51 | 0.71 | 0.80 | 0.97 | | | |
| Swiss Franc | -0.80 | -0.78 | -0.72 | -0.64 | -0.51 | | | |
| Australian Dollar | 1.66 | 1.88 | 1.82 | 1.82 | 1.88 | | | |
| Japanese Yen | -0.05 | -0.05 | -0.03 | 0.02 | 0.12 | | | |
| Global Bond Yields | | | | | | | | |
| Country | 2-Year | 5-Year | 10-Year | 30-Year | | | | |
| United States | 2.49 | 2.80 | 2.95 | 3.12 | | | | |
| Europe | -0.58 | -0.06 | 0.56 | 1.22 | | | | |
| United Kingdom | 0.77 | 1.10 | 1.40 | 1.82 | | | | |
| Commodities | | | | | | | | |
| Index | Previous Close | Last Price | Change | Daily Performance % | Yearly Performance % | | | |
| Kuwait Oil | 69.64 | 69.64 | 0.00 | - | 0.00 | 8.88 | | |
| Brent | 76.68 | 75.85 | -0.83 | ▼ | -1.08 | 12.52 | | |
| West Texas | 68.61 | 68.51 | -0.10 | ▼ | -0.15 | 11.88 | | |
| Gold | 1314.95 | 1308.13 | -6.82 | ▼ | -0.52 | 0.94 | | |
| Silver | 16.31 | 16.23 | -0.08 | ▼ | -0.48 | -3.93 | | |

Source: National Bank of Kuwait

Business

Boubyan Bank launches business banking unit to support SMEs

Step to encourage young Kuwaiti entrepreneurs: Al-Tuwaijri

KUWAIT: Boubyan Bank announced the launch of a package of banking solutions for business banking in light of the remarkable growth of SMEs in Kuwait. This step came to encourage more young Kuwaitis to take up this types of businesses in various domains.

Abdulla Al-Tuwaijri, Boubyan Bank's Deputy CEO, stated: "In the past years, we have witnessed a remarkable growth in the establishment of small projects at the hands of thousands of Kuwaiti youths who are enthusiastic to do private business. This necessitated a response from the banking industry including Boubyan Bank to customize solutions that cater for this segment."

"Boubyan banking solutions for business banking come as a response to meet the demands and needs of the youths, especially that their projects have recently faced several challenges since they do not rank under either corporate or retail services banking-wise," he added.

He went on to add: "Due to this dilemma, Boubyan has introduced the solution by establishing a special business banking unit at the bank which shall cater for the business sector and SMEs in particular. This unit is comprised of Kuwaiti youths who advise entrepreneurs around the clock." "The new services keep up with the modern changes, namely in technology as a customer may get all the provided services either by mobile or internet banking in addition to the conventional banking method such as branches," he added.

Al-Tuwaijri stressed that Boubyan Bank's top management put the youths with private business as a top priority as a part of the management's social commitment towards the Kuwaiti society.

Special solutions

Speaking about the special banking services, Zaid Rashid Al-Sadoun, Senior Manager - Business Banking, stated that the business banking

services were designed to be smart banking solutions aiming at understanding the needs of businesses and providing a variety of exceptional benefits which would make it possible to manage several banking transactions smoothly and easily while enjoying a wide range of smooth banking services which are available around the clock.

Boubyan Business Banking services allow businesses to manage their accounts, submit requests, check their balances, and review accounts' details in addition to many other online services such as staff salary transfers, local and international fund transfers, ordering chequebooks, audit certificates and access to all the details of accounts as well as printing & downloading account statements, deposit service and many other services.

The staff salary transfer service, same as many other services, has many benefits and can be accessed swiftly and smoothly online. A customer may also benefit from POS machines which make



Abdulla Al-Tuwaijri

Zaid Al-Sadoun

sale transactions easier, smoother and more secure for companies while maintaining all their advantages. Boubyan Bank further extends the payment service which is designed for companies and retailers, allowing them to manage their commercial transactions online.

Al-Sadoun also stated: "The new solutions

include the ePay service, which is a payment collection service, provided by Boubyan Bank to companies in order to enable them to collect the payments by sending an SMS including the invoice number to their clients who can pay online using their debit cards".

All these benefits are coupled with the newly designed business credit card, which is especially designed to give cardholders an exceptional range of benefits, giving them access to a wide range of offers and unique experiences with the leading international trademarks. Also, the business banking services include elboq service which is a mobile app-based payment service provided by Boubyan Bank to its subscribers of all consumer and merchant segments in order to process payment transactions and to receive payments by various elboq accounts. A subscriber may use elboq by Boubyan Bank and may make transfers between elboq account and the bank account linked with it.

KAMCO acts as Joint Lead Manager and Bookrunner for DAMAC's USD 400mn sukuk issuance

KUWAIT: KAMCO Investment Company, a leading investment company with one of the largest AUMs in the region, acted as one of the Joint Lead Managers ("JLMs") and bookrunners for Dubai real estate developer DAMAC Properties' ("DAMAC") USD 400 million 5 year sukuk issuance with a 6.625% yield.

In addition to KAMCO, Barclays, Dubai Islamic Bank, Emirates NBD Capital and HSBC acted as JLMs in the Islamic sukuk issuance. The transaction was well received by international and regional investors with orders reaching USD 850 million.

Mr. Khaled Fouad, Chief Investment Officer at KAMCO, said, "KAMCO is very pleased to have been one of the Joint Lead

Managers in DAMAC's latest sukuk transaction. This transaction was another step towards KAMCO offering both Islamic and conventional services to its clients in the region. Islamic sukuk are a key component to corporates and governments funding base. We will also continue to provide our trusted clients with various financial solutions that will strengthen their position while improving the local and regional economy."

Also commenting on the issuance, Mr. Omar Zaineddine, Senior Vice President and Head on the Investment Banking Department at KAMCO, said, "We are proud to have played a role in the sukuk issuance of one of the leading real-estate



Khaled Fouad

Omar Zaineddine

developers in the region. With a unique understanding and in-depth knowledge of industry trends, the investment banking team will continue to be actively involved in investment banking transaction that add value to both KAMCO's clients and the capital markets as a whole."

KAMCO Investment Company, incorporated in the Dubai International Financial Centre and regulated by the Dubai Financial Services Authority.

The young generation's smartphone is finally here!

KUWAIT: As the first generation to come of age in the era of the smartphone, the Generation Z embraces technology and communicates digitally. The smartphone has become an extension of young consumers' hands as they rely on it to do their daily tasks. They spend over 4 hours online shopping, reading, browsing social media pages, and 98 percent of them say they own a smartphone.

The smartphone is by far the most important device in young people's lives; this is why they are very demanding when it comes to choosing a device that caters to their lifestyle. Taking to heart young consumers' needs, Huawei designed the new Y Series, a new affordable series of smartphones packed with advanced technology and amazing camera features that will be the ideal companion for today's tech-savvy generation. Here are 4 top things to know about this Series.

Australia's biggest company CBA slammed for 'complacent culture'

SYDNEY: Australia's biggest company, the Commonwealth Bank, has a complacent culture and ineffective board, the country's financial services regulator said yesterday in a scathing assessment after a series of scandals. The banking giant has been embroiled in claims it broke anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing laws and is also facing court over alleged rigging of the benchmark interest rate, which is used to set the price of domestic financial products.

The Australian Prudential Regulation Authority (APRA) launched an inquiry into the lender last year to examine its governance, culture and accountability. Its overarching conclusion was that "CBA's continued financial success dulled the senses of the institution", particularly over the management of non-financial risks. "These risks were neither clearly understood nor owned, the frameworks for managing them were cumbersome and incomplete, and senior leadership was slow to recognize, and address, emerging threats to CBA's reputation," its report said.

While emphasizing CBA had a sound financial position, Treasurer Scott Morrison said the APRA report was damning. "The report, I think, is required reading not only for every financial institution in this country; but, frankly, it should be the next item on the agen-

1. A FullView display to see great possibilities

The big world awaits you! See your world in full with the amazing FullView display that delivers an amazing viewing experience. Whether you want to watch movies, play games, read your favorite books or magazines, or check social media, the Y Series' display will make you enjoy it. Designed with a 18:9 display ratio, it allows you to see 12.5 percent more content while offering you the best gaming, entertainment and multi-tasking experience.

2. A great camera to shoot awesome pictures

Rock your Instagram with amazing selfies and pictures! The Y Series offers advanced camera features for you to capture breathtaking pictures. The Y9 Series is packed with 4 cameras, 2 at the front and 2 at the back to capture amazing shots. The Y7 Series offers a rear dual camera and a selfie toning flash to capture amazing selfies: even with zero makeup on, you will naturally glow in the pictures! And because pictures don't have to be boring, you can use the AR lens features to be creative and add a hint of fun to your snaps!

3. Cool technology to make your life easy

If you're a tech whiz, the Y Series has got you covered! The Series smartphones come with the Android 8.0-based EMUI 8.0 that supports great technology features to offer you a seamless experience and make your life easier. The



Y7, Y6 and Y9 smartphones offer cool, fun features that include group music, karaoke mode, dual Bluetooth, Face Unlock, Game Suite, smart split-screen, eye comfort, three-finger screenshot, navigation dock, and mini screen view.

4. Amazing battery for loads of fun

Gone are the days when your battery dies on you! The Y Series smartphones offers you long battery life to support your activities, even if they're power-draining. The Y9 offers a 4000 mAh while the Y5, Y6 and Y7 are packed with a 3000 mAh battery. You can play intensive games, watch movies, and listen to your music tracks knowing that your smartphone packs a smart power management solution to save battery and deliver an outstanding performance.

Jazeera Airways adds Tbilisi to travelers' list of summer destinations!



KUWAIT: Seeking to provide travelers with a variety of leisure destinations, Jazeera Airways, Kuwait's leading low cost airline, operating regionally and internationally, is proud to announce the launch of its three weekly flights to Tbilisi, capital and largest city in Georgia from 13 June 2018.

"Following our successful launch to Baku last year, we are extending our reach to address a growing travel demand for popular choices outside of the region. Tbilisi is a fascinating city with wonderful architecture and provides a really diverse and unique cultural experience, which travelers from Kuwait will enjoy. Additionally, the new route will open connections from Tbilisi to Kuwait and onwards to Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Dubai and India," said CEO of Jazeera Airways, Rohit Ramchandran.

Ideal for all travelers looking to explore short breaks, Jazeera Airways will provide a frequency of three weekly flights scheduled for departure at 14:50 pm and arrival at 18:20 pm in Shota Rustaveli Tbilisi International Airport and departure at 19:10 pm with arrival in Kuwait at 20:45 pm.

Visa procedures - Visa free policy for nationals and residents of GCC countries. Furthermore, valid visas from Schengen states, United States of America, United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, Japan and South Korea are also granted visa free entry into Georgia. For travelers who aren't in the above category, an e-visa online service is available at www.evisa.gov.ge with a fee.

Located between Europe and Asia, Tbilisi is an industrial and multicultural city that features many art galleries and renowned artists tourist attractions, including the Memorial history of Georgia, Dancing fountains, Tbilisi Opera and ballet theatre, Freedom Monument, Jumah Mosque, Tbilisi Great Synagogue, Rustaveli Avenue, Narikala Fortress and the Mtatsminda Pantheon.

Head of the Georgian National Tourism Administration, George Chogovadze said: "We are delighted to welcome Jazeera Airways to the Georgian market. The GCC region is among our top priority markets and it is the fastest growing market for inbound tourism. Our team will closely collaborate with Jazeera Airways on joint marketing campaigns to further promote Georgia in Kuwait and the rest of the GCC region. We wish Jazeera Airways the best of luck and look forward to a fruitful partnership!"

Jazeera have appointed Voyager as their general sales agent in Georgia as their partner to promote and sell flights through the Georgian travel trade.

Mariam Kvirivshvili, General Director of Voyager commented, "It is an honor and privilege to represent Jazeera Airways on Georgian market. They have built a great reputation as a low cost champion in Kuwait and the Gulf region, hence I believe this truly is an important step for the development of Georgia's tourism sector, as well as the promotion of the country's travel potential across Jazeera Airways' network. I strongly believe that the partnership between Voyager and Jazeera Airways will develop dynamically and further support the achievement of mutually beneficial goals set forth by both countries."

Jazeera Airways will soon be opening their new terminal in May at Kuwait International Airport, bringing an enhanced passenger experience to its customers.

Jazeera Airways currently operates a fleet of 9 Airbus A320 aircraft. Passengers can enjoy a baggage allowance of 30kg for Economy class and 50kg per Business class passenger. To book the flights to Tbilisi or learn more about Jazeera Airways services, offers, promotions and destinations, customers can visit the airline's website at jazeeraairways.com, use the Jazeera app, or contact their travel agent.

Fed likely to keep rates steady; investors bet on June hike

WASHINGTON: The US Federal Reserve is set to hold interest rates steady this week but will likely further encourage expectations that it will lift borrowing costs in June on the back of rising inflation and low unemployment. Investors have all but priced out the chance of a rate hike at the end of the Fed's two-day policy meeting today, particularly given its adherence in recent years to only raising rates at meetings that are followed by press conferences.

The central bank is due to announce its decision at 2 pm EDT (1800 GMT) today. Fed Chairman Jerome Powell is not scheduled to hold a press conference. "Fed speakers have done little to push back against this expectation ... we expect no fireworks," JPMorgan economist Michael Feroli said in a note to clients. The Fed raised its benchmark overnight lending rate at its March 20-21

meeting by a quarter percentage point to a target range of between 1.50 percent and 1.75 percent. It currently forecasts another two rate rises this year, although an increasing number of policymakers see three as possible. The Fed's next policy meeting after this week is scheduled for June 12-13. Investors overwhelmingly see a rate hike then. The pace of rate increases has picked up since the central bank began its tightening cycle in December 2015. It raised rates once in 2016, but lifted borrowing costs three times last year amid a strengthening economy.

Unemployment is at a 17-year low of 4.1 percent and the Trump administration's tax cuts and fiscal stimulus are expected to further juice the economy. Ahead of this week's meeting, Powell has stuck to flagging a middle-of-the-road approach on rate increases in the face of data showing the robust economy had not yet triggered a jump in inflation. Data on Monday, however, showed that price gains are now near the Fed's 2 percent target.

The Fed's preferred measure of inflation soared 1.9 percent in the 12 months through March, the biggest increase since February 2017, after increasing 1.6 percent in the year through February, the US Commerce Department reported. — Reuters



SYDNEY: Signage for Australia's biggest company, the Commonwealth Bank, is seen on a building in Sydney yesterday. The Commonwealth Bank has a complacent culture and ineffective board, the country's financial services regulator said yesterday in a scathing assessment after a series of scandals. — AFP

da of every single board meeting in this country, regardless of whether you're a bank or not," he said. Morrison said it showed the bank had "a complacent culture, dismissive of regulators, an ineffective board that lacked zeal and failed to provide oversight, a lack of accountability and ownership of key risks by senior executives". CBA said it had given an "enforceable undertaking" to APRA to address all recommendations made in the report. They include a more rigorous level of governance, improving accountability, and a cultural change "that moves the dial from reactive and complacent to empowered, challenging and striving for best practice".

CBA's new chief executive Matt Comyn said the report was "confronting" and that he had printed 500 copies and sent them to the

bank's top executives. "And over the next week I am going to have responses from all of those 500 leaders coming back to me, and a discussion across all of the top leadership groups in the Commonwealth Bank talking about how things are going to be different," he said. The bank was taken to the Federal Court last August for "serious and systemic non-compliance" of anti-money laundering laws more than 53,000 times, with financial intelligence watchdog AUSTRAC filing 100 other claims in December.

CBA in March said it plans to enter mediation in the case. Alongside Australia's three other major lenders-National Australia Bank, Westpac and ANZ-CBA is also under scrutiny in a royal commission looking into misconduct in the finance industry. — AFP

What's On



Mais Alghanim announces weekly raffle for the upcoming FIFA World Cup 2018

Mais Alghanim To Go recently announced its latest promotion for the summer season with "Wanna Watch the World Cup" for customers to enjoy watching the World Cup this year with a bundle of special prizes. Also, they announced the first winner Winson Paul, who won the first raffle draw prize on Wednesday 25th April 2018. The promotion prizes include eight Wansa 65" TV 4K UHD. In addition, the winner gets a beIN receiver with 2018 World Cup sub-

scription. The last draw will also include a grand prize of coupons worth KD 300/- with the TV and the receiver. Please note that this offer is only valid at Mais Alghanim To Go.

The conditions for participation in the weekly draw are as follows. For every KD 15 spent at any branch of the Mais Alghanim To Go, the customer is entitled to a coupon. This coupon needs to be filled in completely in order and dropped in any of the raffle boxes available

throughout the Mais Alghanim To Go outlets across Kuwait. Once the winner is announced, they must bring the original bill with the original coupon in order to redeem his gift. The customers can get the participation coupon for pick up order as well as delivery orders.

The offer is valid from 18th April until 12th June 2018 and the last draw will be on Wednesday 13th June 2018 at Mais Alghanim To Go located in Creative Design mall, Shuwaikh. This promotion comes in collaboration

with the announcement of new To Go menu with a special variety of new delicious dishes and distinctive cuisine. In addition to this, there are newly added dishes that are inserted carefully to meet the customer's different tastes. For more information or orders, call the hotline or order through Talabat & Carriage Apps. Orders can be delivered to any destination inside Kuwait or picked up at Mais Alghanim To Go branches in Bneid Al Qar, Salmiya, Shuwaikh, Fintas, Hawally, and Ardiya.

Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel celebrates five years of success

Since the day it opened its doors on May 7th, 2013, Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel & Spa has consistently raised the level of luxury hospitality, creating memorable experiences through unmatched unique services. This year, the hotel proudly celebrates five years of great achievements, outstanding hospitality and a milestone of awards for excellence.

To honor this occasion, the luxurious landmark offers for the first time a special 50% discount on room bookings received on Monday May 7th for a stay between May 7th and September 30th, 2018 excluding public holidays. This special stay entitles guests an additional 50% discount on lunch and dinner buffet in the all-day dining restaurant Garden Cafe.

With dining excellence playing such a key role in the resort, Garden Cafe, known for its beautiful outdoor terrace, live cooking stations and international buffet,



will also host 5 consecutive days of raffle draws. Starting on May 6th to May 10th, diners to the popular restaurant have the chance to win complimentary lunch or dinner for two persons.

General Manager Savino Leone said: "Ever since the opening of this unique resort in Kuwait, our aim was to create memorable experiences and offer our Jumeirah's promise of "Stay Different TM which is the inspiration behind our culture and our innovative thinking. We take

pride in the loyalty we receive from our guests that keep Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel & Spa as a main key player in the local hospitality scene. For the coming years, we look forward to keep designing experiences that go beyond our guests' expectations to make them feel extra special during their time with us".

The luxurious property scooped a variety of prestigious awards throughout the years. Most recently, Leading Business Hotel by World Travel Awards for the

3rd consecutive year, Hotel & Spa of the Year 2018 by Travel & Hospitality Awards, Leading Luxury Beach Resort in 2017 by World Luxury Hotel Awards for the 2nd consecutive year and a series of World Luxury Spa & Restaurant Awards. The coveted awards prove the hotel's strong regional and international appeal, becoming a destination for all guests from business and corporate to family and leisure holidaymakers for the next five years and beyond.

Grand Hyper's 50th showroom opens in the GCC

In the midst of a splendid display of Indo-Arab cultural festivity, the 50th branch of Grand Hypermarket was officially inaugurated on Friday, 27th April, at Souq Al Kabir in Kuwait City. Offering a cultural feast to the guests were exclusive performances of Punjabi dance, traditional drums from Kerala, and items from other Indian states including Bengal.

The much-awaited 50th branch of Grand Hyper in the GCC was inaugurated by Sheikh Dawood Salman Al Sabah. This also happens to be the group's 13th outlet in Kuwait. Grand Hyper and Regency Group's Dubai Managing Director conducted the first official sales transaction with Dr Anwar

Ameen Jamal Al Dosari in the presence of eminent cultural and community leaders in Kuwait.

Thousands of customers turned up enthusiastically for the inaugural ceremony braving the dusty weather conditions making the event a success. The main highlight of the new branch is the Food Court as there are no restaurants or eateries in the close vicinity. The Indian and Chinese cuisines served at the Food Court are sure to be a delicious relief to the many hundreds of employees working in the area.

The retail chain has been catering to both citizens and expatriates with a wide range of products that are much sought-after for their high quality and competitive pricing. Grand Hypermarket achieves this by sourcing the items directly from the source, bypassing middlemen, thus transferring the price benefits to the end consumer. In addition to the competitive pricing, innumerable prizes are also awaiting customers throughout the year.

Grand Hypermarket provides its



customers a wide range of world-class products and brands. Enabling the everyday customer access high quality products for affordable rates is what sets Grand Hypermarket

apart from the others. The success of this strategy of putting the consumer first has been proven by the chain's continuous expansion in various parts of the GCC.

Rocket World introduces unique gifts in its first store

Rocket World, a new concept specializing in unique and fun gifting ideas, opened its first store in Kuwait located at Shuwaikh in Al Sager Complex, across from Mayar Complex. The opening night gathered a vibrant crowd who came to discover and experience the wide range of exclusive products while enjoying the upbeat music and fun atmosphere.

Created to fit a need in Kuwait, Rocket World offers a variety of gifting ideas that suit teens, young adults and anyone who is young at heart and seeks to add the right amount of cute quirks in their life. These products are brought exclusively to Kuwait with the sole objective of providing customers with unique gifting options that they currently don't have in the market, which include selective brands such as Pylones, a French gift shop chain that

is famous for its quirky and unique items, yet of functional value for everyday use.

Rocket World products are sure to stand out of the crowd, thanks to their functionality and unique look and feel providing exiting and vibrant experiences, ranging from purses and hair brushes, to home and kitchen-wares. Today, everyone who walks into Rocket World's realm can say goodbye to standard earphones, mugs, mirrors, notepads, pens, watches, travel pillows and others practical items.

Mohit Sawhney, Rocket World's Brand Manager, stated: "We are proud to be launching a new concept in Kuwait that was especially created to fill a need among all generations who are interested in unique gifting options that express a different spirit with the special experiences they bring. At Rocket World, we make sure to mirror our tag line "Discover the Difference" in every corner of the store, starting from staff wearing astronauts uniforms, outstanding displays behind the counter sales and special floor tiles, making it a fun place to shop with a twisted experience. Lastly, we promise to bring the best in class of gifting ideas that are unique in their design and functional-



ty while keeping it affordable for everyone."

From trendy gifts, funky accessories to cool toys, Rocket World offers a large spectrum of ideas that promise great experiences. Customers who look for cool and quirky trinkets and gifts will have their fill of Rocket World's fantastic lines including the famous kikkerland home and kitchen accessories, travel and desk functional gadgets. Rocket World's unconventional gifts include a wide variety of gadgets you can present to your food lover

friend such as hotdog shaped staplers, burger shaped lip balms, watermelon/orange shaped juice containers, or even a bicycle shaped pizza cutter.

Located in Shuwaikh in Al Sager Complex, across from Mayar Complex, Rocket World is the ideal destination for everyone who is looking to own or gift funky and cool life stuff without compromising on functionality and affordability. Welcomed by the staff dressed like astronauts, people will surely "Discover the Difference" as soon as they step in the store.

The Knowledge Club 2018

Vigor Events - in co-operation with Al Gas events- presents Lifelack Bootcamp, a 2-day Workshop with the founders behind Lifelack Bootcamp, the top ranked productivity and lifestyle Design Company, Demir Bentley and Carey Bentley.

This powerful, solution-based workshop is designed to destroy the hundreds of distractions that are bogging all business professionals down and keeping them from highest performance, learn super-hacks to master focus and spend more time on top priorities, so can measurably increase your impact, build discipline and motivation throughout the course of the workshop, so that this new knowledge starts to become habitual.

Lifelack Bootcamp is a top ranked productivity program led by head coach Demir Bentley. Lifelack Bootcamp is an innovator in the online productivity space, breaking numerous industry records for client engagement and results. Their focus is converting knowledge into ACTION and leaving each participant with an insight, tool, or technology that changes their life.

It is worth mentioning that Demir Bentley and Carey Bentley the founders behind Lifelack Bootcamp, the top ranked productivity and lifestyle Design Company for high performing professionals who want to bring sanity back in their work environment. Their work has been featured in Forbes, Bloomberg, WSJ, HuffPo, and on podcasts like Forbes 30 under 30, Amy Porterfield's Online Marketing Made Easy, The ONE Thing, and Don't Keep Your Day Job.

They're Influencer Top 25 Influencers and members of the elite Forbes Coaches Council. They adapt the no excuses coaching style and passion for creating huge transformation in each of their clients. Carey and Demir also known for leading by example and constantly pushing the boundaries of lifestyle design, traveling around the world and experimenting with different ways of living.

This 2-Day workshop is specially tailored for Forward-thinking leaders, managers, and self-starters who are ready to commit to change, and driven ambitious people who want to get further, faster. The Lifelack Bootcamp will take place on the 8-9th May, 2018 from 9am to 3pm at Burgan Meeting Room, Hilton Resort Mangaf as part of the Knowledge Club 2018. The Knowledge Club(tm) 2018 series is organized by Vigor Events and Co-Organized by ALGAS Events Company. Members of the Knowledge Club(tm) this year include Warba Bank as Gold Member, Kuwait Oil Company as Corporate Member, media support from the International Advertising Association Kuwait (IAA).

Health

Dr Helen Azaryan speaks on new developments in plastic surgery

'99 percent of the patients are demanding a more natural look'

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: Medicine is improving and new techniques are coming to the market. Esthetic medicine is one of the most developing, both surgical and non-surgical. Dr Helen Azaryan, Dermatologist, Venereologist, and Cosmetologist at the Ansari Clinic in Salmiya has invented a new technology, the 'Hap treatment' (Hyaluronic Acid and PRP 'plasma therapy').

"By mixing these two materials, I got amazing results. We are using the PRP for a long time, and in this treatment we take the blood from the patient, and we separate the white cells from the rest of the cells, activating it, and then injecting it to the skin (PRP). Then the Hyaluronic Acid is known as a filler," she said during a media round-table held recently.

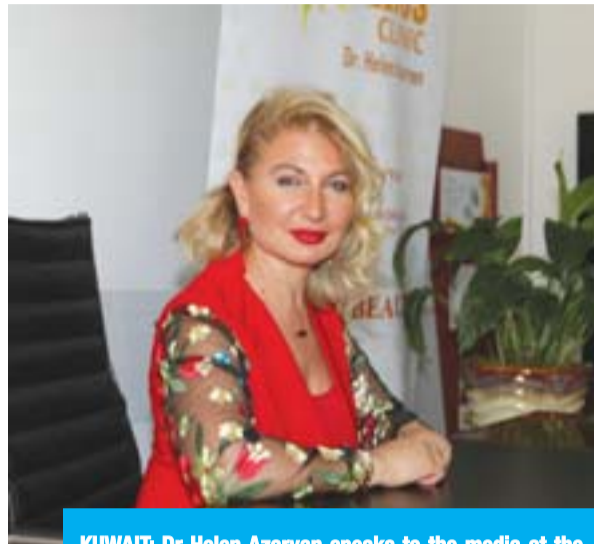
Our skin from the inside consists of three main ingredients: "Collagen, elastin, and Hyaluronic. So if we are just injecting the hyaluronic acid for volume, it is not enough for the other ingredients - the collagen and elastin. During the aging process, bones desorption and the loss of fats from the face causes sagging skin, and we notice orbital space under the eyes is bigger and the chin as well as bones start getting smaller," she added.

"To replace this, we can just provide volume with Hyaluronic Acid replacement. But with activated plasma therapy we can stimulate all the cells, which we need to activate. And when we mix them together they work better, and stimulate each other better. Hyaluronic stimulates the fiberglass which is the mother cell in the skin and at the same time the PRP stimulates the fiberglass and this activation is doubled. This is based on the researches I did two years ago in Armenia," explained Azaryan.

Better construction of the skin

In this study, she applied the Hyaluronic Acid and the PRP alone and then the combination of both mixed together on 57 women. "This evidence-based study was applied by the skin ultrasound, which is not very popular yet. And before these 57 cases I also applied it on 20 cases by biopsy on smaller areas near the ears. These studies showed better construction of the skin when using the mix for all the layers of the skin. The skin ultrasound machine shows the inner layers of the skin and the effect of the treatment," she noted.

She decided to apply this treatment especially for eye



KUWAIT: Dr Helen Azaryan speaks to the media at the Ansari Clinic in Salmiya. —Photos by Joseph Shagra



problems, where it is most common. "When just using the Hyaluronic Acid filler in this area, after some time the color changes to blue, so we have to remove the filler and inject it again, as the Hyaluronic Acid collects water. I avoided this problem by producing the PRP in solid form to work as a filler. I mixed a little of the Hyaluronic Acid with the PRP in one injection. Here the PRP will first give volume, then it will go deeper and increase the collagen and elastin, and at the same time the Hyaluronic Acid will provide volume. So the result will be better and for a longer period without causing the blue color," highlighted Azaryan.

The result of this treatment differs depending on the purpose and dosage. "If it's only used for rejuvenating then the sessions should be repeated. But if we used it as a filler then it can stay for over two years, as the Hyaluronic Acid stays long in the eye area. With this treatment, we can rejuvenate even other areas of the body such as décollete, hands, skin after surgeries, hair and many others," she pointed out.

Undesired filler

The second treatment is about removing or eliminating the wrong Botox application. "Removing the undesired filler has treatment, thus for Botox it is not available yet. I'm

using the Botox for over 15 years. The trend and demand of patients changed compared to 10 years ago. Today about 99 percent of the patients are demanding a more natural look, so it's not ideal to have a completely frozen look and removing all wrinkles, but there should be some natural moving of the face muscles. So instead of getting the Botox done every 6 months, we can apply it every 4 months, thus use less quantity, so we don't get the angry or freeze look. The beauty becomes harmonic," she further said.

"People have different structure and anatomy of their face, they can't all look the same. We apply the Botox to both the lower and upper parts of the face, to get the right balance, so muscles in both areas work in the same way. Until now there is no antidote for Botox here, but it's already available in Armenia, Georgia, Russia, and some other countries. I also did study on this using neuro-stimulator, which stimulates the nerves used as intramuscular injection. So I thought why not using it to treat the areas that are paralyzed by the Botox. This is the same as using mesotherapy for hair

and skin after it was originally used as medical treatment," stressed Azaryan. Dr Azaryan decided to do researches on the Procerus muscle. "This muscle is not attaching to other muscles. I checked the activity of this muscle with Mayography to show the activity of this muscle on 25 patients. So I compared the results between the groups of patients from those who applied the antidote and those who didn't and I didn't get any allergy reaction. The reaction to the antidote differs from one patient to another, some get the result after two days while others after a week, but it's not three months. This is something new. Botox is a great thing but it should be in an experienced hand," she also said.

Nose thread is another new practice used by Dr Azaryan. "I used the nose thread that is used for nose lifting to eliminate and lift the line of the forehead, as this is a danger zone for filler. This is a fast solution giving lifting effect for long time. This is safer than filler, as the wrong injecting of filler into the nose may cause necrosis," she concluded.

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Global Medical Center Welcomes Dr. Marzouq Al-Bader

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إستشاري أطفال
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Strategic Partner



KUWAIT BEAUTIFUL & GREEN



Abdul Kareem Al Enezy, Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan and Hamad Mattar



Asaad Bu Nashi



Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan honoring Kareem Shawqi (Symphony Style Hotel)



Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan honoring Sawzan Shaaban



Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan gives the certificate to the youngest participant



Group photo



Adnan Saad with Anfal Group



Selfie with Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan



Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan takes a selfie





Son twins winners



Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan honoring Zain



Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan honoring Svitlana Arndt



Adnan Saad, Lisa Thapsem, Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan and Sherif Ismael



Kaye Saad, Adnan Saad, Palestinian Ambassador and his wife



Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan (center) and Adnan Saad (left) explain a drawing to Egyptian Ambassador Tareq Al-Qoni



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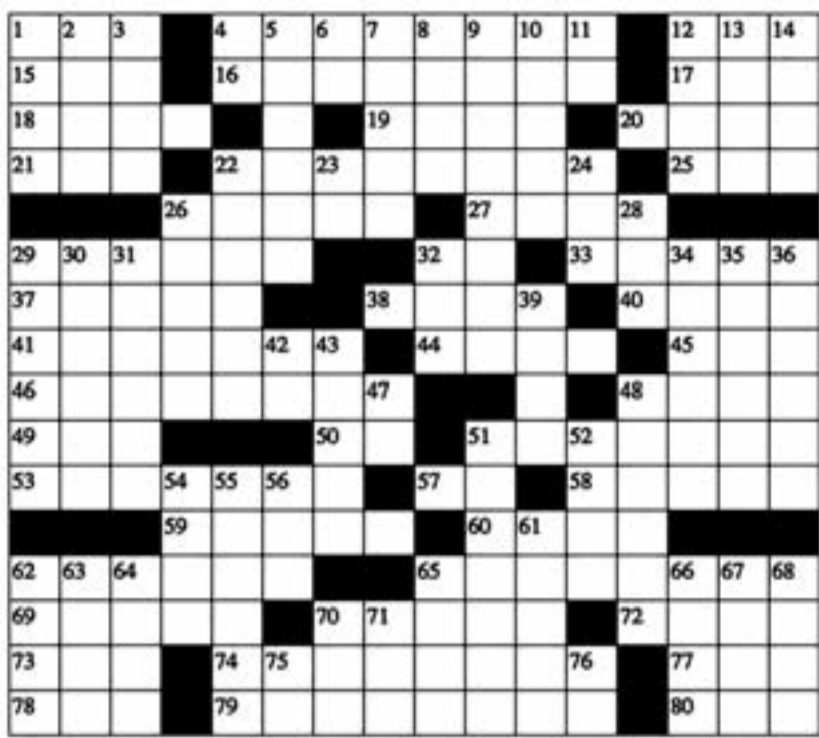


Hosted by



Stars

CROSSWORD 1898



ACROSS

- (Scotland) A small loaf or roll of soft bread.
- A long narrow opening.
- An insecticide that is also toxic to animals and humans.
- A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
- Annual grown especially for its fragrant golden nocturnal flowers.
- An associate degree in applied science.
- (informal) Exceptionally good.
- Type genus of the Rutaceae.
- Tropical starchy tuberous root.
- (usually followed by 'to') Naturally disposed toward.
- An implement used to propel or steer a boat.
- An anxiety disorder associated with serious traumatic events and characterized by such symptoms as guilt about surviving or reliving the trauma in dreams or numbness and lack of involvement with reality or recurrent thoughts and images.
- The basic unit of money in Spain.
- Unpleasantly stern.
- A gliding joint between the distal ends of the tibia and fibula and the proximal end of the talus.
- Hinge joint in the human leg connecting the tibia and fibula with the femur and protected in front by the patella.
- Cook and make edible by putting in a hot oven.
- Having or showing or requiring special skill.
- (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.
- Someone who is morally reprehensible.
- Resembling or characteristic of a prophet or prophecy.
- An artificial language that is a revision and simplification of Esperanto.
- A silvery soft waxy metallic element of the alkali metal group.
- Egyptian statesman who became president in 1981 after Sadat was assassinated (born in 1929).
- The syllable naming the fourth (subdominant) note of the diatonic scale in solmization.
- Designating a solution containing 1 mole of solute per 1000 grams of solvent.
- Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
- English illustrator of several of Dickens' novels (1815-1882).
- The Creator.
- An island of central Hawaii.
- Open-heart surgery in which the rib cage is opened and a section of a blood vessel is grafted from the aorta to the coronary artery to bypass the blocked section of the coronary artery and improve the blood supply to the heart.
- American prizefighter who won the world heavyweight championship three times (born in 1942).
- A person with the same name as another.
- An informal debt instrument.
- A logarithmic unit of sound intensity equal to 10 decibels.
- Administer or bestow, as in small portions.
- A nucleic acid that transmits genetic information from DNA to the cytoplasm.
- The fleshy part of the human body that you sit on.
- A metallic element having four allotropic forms.
- West Indian tree having racemes of fragrant white flowers and yielding a durable timber and resinous juice.
- A heavy brittle metallic element of the platinum group.
- An elongated leather strip (or strip of similar material) for binding things together or holding something in position.
- The immaterial part of a person.
- Not provided with a special tip.
- Showing or feeling mirth or pleasure or happiness.
- (Akkadian) God of wisdom.
- Panel forming the lower part of an interior wall when it is finished differently from the rest.
- An informal term for a father.
- A male monarch or emperor (especially of Russia prior to 1917).
- Render verbally, "recite a poem".
- A polyvalent metallic element that resembles chromium and tungsten in its properties.
- The residue that remains when something is burned.
- The region of the body of a vertebrate between the thorax and the pelvis.
- A light touch or stroke.
- (Sumerian) Legendary friend of Gilgamesh.
- A vehicle resembling a bicycle but having skis instead of wheels.
- A nucleic acid consisting of large molecules shaped like a double helix.
- Of or related to genetically distinguished groups of people.
- God of war.
- A respondent who avoids giving a clear direct answer.
- (used of count nouns) Every one considered individually.
- Angular distance above the horizon (especially of a celestial object).
- A Nilotic language.
- A white metallic element that burns with a brilliant light.
- A selective-serotonin reuptake inhibitor commonly prescribed as an antidepressant (trade name Prozac).
- A windlass rotated in a horizontal plane.
- An independent ruler or chieftain (especially in Africa or Arabia).
- A Loloish language.
- Put in the mind of someone.
- A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
- Large strong hand (as of a fighter).
- A rapid series of short loud sounds (as might be heard with a stethoscope in some types of respiratory disorders).
- A blue dye obtained from plants or made synthetically.
- Affected manners intended to impress others.
- The habitation of wild animals.
- Very dark black.
- Largest known toad species.
- A syndrome that occurs in many women from 2 to 14 days before the onset of menstruation.
- (informal) Informed about the latest trends.
- The branch of computer science that deal with writing computer programs that can solve problems creatively.
- The branch of engineering science that studies the uses of electricity and the equipment for power generation and distribution and the control of machines and communication.

DOWN

- A small cake leavened with yeast.
- An association of people to promote the welfare of senior citizens.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

If choices can be put off, you should and wait until a better time opens for making decisions. You receive an invitation to join someone after work; think about this one very carefully. Everywhere you look you seem to encounter blockages or cut-offs. You aren't comfortable in your own skin and there seems to be no escaping it; let meditation take you to a more peaceful place. Music is an important part of your life, especially now when you need it so much. You detest need and as a result you work very hard to accumulate financial wealth and real estate. You may find yourself in a library or book store in search of good fiction. You could have a problem keeping your cool this evening when confronted with the truth.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

It's best that you keep your thoughts and suggestions to yourself as you could experience problems getting others to understand. Working with groups is not advisable today but could open up for you tomorrow. Make a point to get your affairs in order during this phase: the energy of getting business taken care of is strongly present. You make a decision regarding a serious situation. Peace of mind is bestowed when you come to a correct conclusion: living life in a new way is empowering. Your way of thinking is required for finishing a certain project. Even though you feel like being alone, joining in the fun should be a mood lifter; go in and try! Now is the time for material acquisitions... Prosperity is coming to you through hard work.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Depression seems to be a thing of the past; you're surrounded by peaceful, positive vibrations even when perhaps you don't want to be. Relax and let these good times just be and don't worry about tomorrow. Your path is set and the way you live and learn is pretty much established; this is a time of feeling secure and cared for. Music is important as you work and discover ways to increase your income and acquiring some important items. You feel certain you have enough in place regarding planning for your future needs. Your ability to make things happen and see them through is strong. Things seem to magically fall into place as you start a new adventure. Happy times ahead with those who just happen to think like you do.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Awareness of possessions and what these are worth is top of mind for you now. You have entered a phase of material gains, investments and earnings; things unseen are also affected by this energy. A sense of being in a good, secure place is the hallmark of this period of time: sometimes life just seems to flow more smoothly and feels easier to navigate, here's one of those times. There could be dancing with someone you share strong, sexy chemistry. Your focus is one of productive activity; this includes progress made on any level of your life such as material, mental or emotional expansion. Memories linger around your childhood experiences with those you grew up with: an intense sense of sadness could accompany this tender time.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Someone dislikes what you have to say regarding their personal choices. You're considered to be negative and old-school; stand your ground but with an open mind. Strong emotional energy is available but manageable if you concentrate; you figure out the best way in the end. The foundation of your life is secure and comfortable in the form of home and hearth, domestic bliss this is the prize jewel in your intimate, personal life. You stumble upon a happy musical surprise in an unexpected place. You acquire belongings such as furnishings, appliances, clothing and perhaps even a vehicle. Abundance is available in many areas of your life now; remember where you came from and be generous with those who have much less than you.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Words are your friends as your mind is quick and alert; if you are an attorney you have a better than average day in court! You relay your opinions from your specific view point in an understandable manner. The vibrations indicate that you should stay away from shopping or making choices involving colors or designs; this is temporary, be patient. You enjoy a sense of being cared for and secure on an intimate level. Material gains are strongly present and you feel thankful to be free from want. You no longer choose to use old methods you feel could be improved upon; if someone complains ignore them. Someone could try to put pressure on you to do something you really don't want to do; remember saying no is always an option.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

You shine brightly in business as some of the research and production you have created is a large success. The time to enjoy the results of your hard work has arrived and you should take pride and joy in every moment. Your career is at the top and brings great satisfaction to you personally. There could be someone near who's a bit envious, but this is temporary as the person loves and cares for you. Teamwork is appealing when you accept a project that takes lots of effort and skill. Someone challenges you in a good-natured way but there could be a seed of truth here: a new way to do something could be discovered. Your drive and determination take you a long way toward completion of paying off a loan or reaching salary or savings goals.



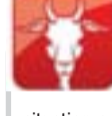
Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You could be down and upset about something you regret; regrets are the very best way to learn. Hold off on making choices or decisions where your personal life is concerned. Maintaining your focus upon home or office improvements helps lift your spirits and you feel productive. You receive an invitation to a uniquely themed party; someone you like is a huge help with your costume. A community issue needs your help in cutting through the red tape and getting directly to the problem; something related to natural beauty is indicated here. You're able to sneak away early today for a secret meeting about a surprise party for a loved one. Thoughts clear as you wind down with a great meal and movie with someone you love and enjoy.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Surprising progress at work encourages you to aim higher; a period of gains and abundance is prominent. You may be doing more on your own to reach your personal and professional goals. Don't forget your friends on the way to success; you're loved more than you know. Home and work demand your attention more now than ever before; a period of rapid change has arrived and brings an energy of movement that could take you to places you hadn't planned on. Love and affection keep you grounded and feeling secure with your life and those sharing it. Spending time with a new friend helps you understand something confusing; new connections and directions take you in interesting directions that help you grow.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You're sensitive to the feelings of those you spend time with today; a friend needs your strong energy. The group looks to you for leadership when a new situation arises. You could experience a confrontation from someone who regularly disagrees with you and your methods. Any blockages you experience today are of very short duration. As you speak, several people cut you off and make it impossible for you to finish; these people don't mean to do this, they're just thoughtless and rude. Fight the pessimism you feel creeping up; you know you can fight it and win! A sense of balance and peace characterizes your day; you smile as you feel grateful for your blessings. An opportunity to assist with a surprise comes tonight.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

Working smarter not harder is strongly indicated. Your goal is to expedite and simplify. Traditional ways seem complicated when the team looks at new ways to reach goals. Insisting on change could disrupt the old guard; this could cause serious disagreements. Your one of a kind way is encouraged by open minded people. Your patient observance unravels a problematic situation. Normalcy and security provide comfort and encouragement regarding your home life. A discussion with a colleague or friend uncovers facts that make sense; your logic kicks in. You feel badly for someone who has fallen on hard times. The stars are aligned to create an energy of being ready and contemplating! Rest well and have sweet dreams.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Friends ask for your assistance in a major project that could require weeks to complete. The realm of dreams and cosmic laws will continue to be an interest you can't resist; there are reasons for every occurrence, no matter how baffling. Put your designs on paper before you forget them; you'll have clear visions of something that could help many. You're determined to add a splash to your decor; you look in very different places and find just the thing! You may have the urge to examine your thoughts and motives; trust your heart and intuition, you are loved. You truly enjoy seeing a former coworker or perhaps this indicates a former student. No matter, you're held in high esteem and affection by most people you have worked with in any way.

Wordsearch Puzzle

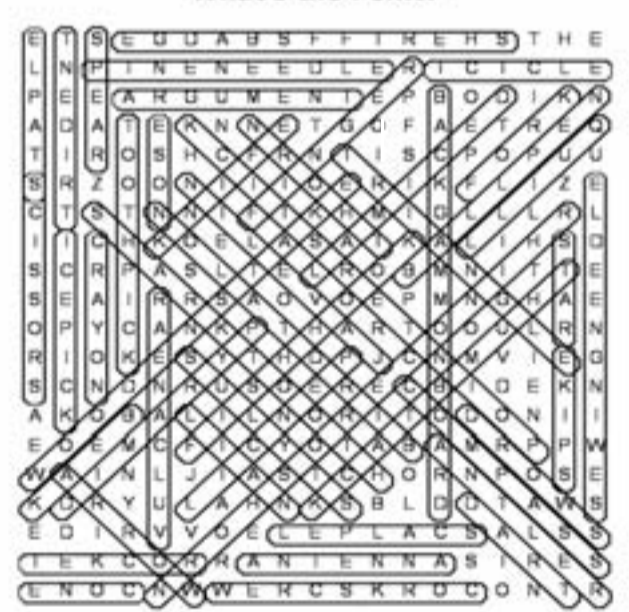
Winter

Find and circle all of the Winter related words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a Japanese proverb.



- | | | | |
|-----------|----------------|-------------|------------|
| BLACK ICE | HAIL | SEASON | SNOWBOARD |
| BLIZZARD | HEADBAND | SKATES | SNOWFLAKE |
| BOOTS | HIBERNATION | SKI DOO | SNOWMAN |
| CARNIVAL | HOCKEY | SKI PANTS | SNOWSHOES |
| CHRISTMAS | HOLIDAYS | SKIING | SOLSTICE |
| COLD | ICE FISHING | SLED | SOUP |
| EGG NOG | ICICLES | SLEET | STEW |
| FIREPLACE | KNIT CAP | SLIPPERY | STORM |
| FIREWOOD | LONG UNDERWEAR | SNOW CASTLE | SWEATSHIRT |
| FOG | MITTENS | SNOW FLOW | TOBOGGAN |
| FREEZE | OLYMPICS | SNOW SHOVEL | VACATION |
| FROST | PARKA | SNOW TIRES | WIND CHILL |
| GLOVES | SCARF | SNOWBALL | WOOL SOCKS |

What's the Point?



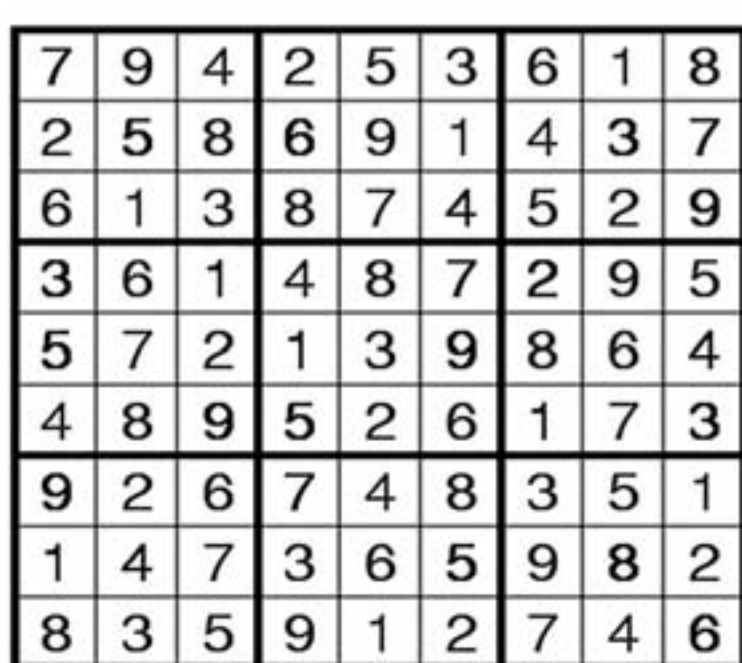
- | | | | |
|------------------|-----------|-----------------|-----------------|
| ANTENNA | DART | FINE NEEDLE | SPIKE |
| ANTLER | DECIMAL | POINTER STICK | STAPLE |
| ARGUMENT | FINGER | PYRAMID | STAR |
| ARROW | FISH HOOK | QUILL | STYLUS |
| BACKGAMMON BOARD | FORK | ROCKET | RHINOCEROS HORN |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

The hidden message is: THE POINT OF THIS PUZZLE IS TO PROVIDE AN ENJOYABLE DIVERSION.

Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



Classifieds

Wednesday, May 2, 2018

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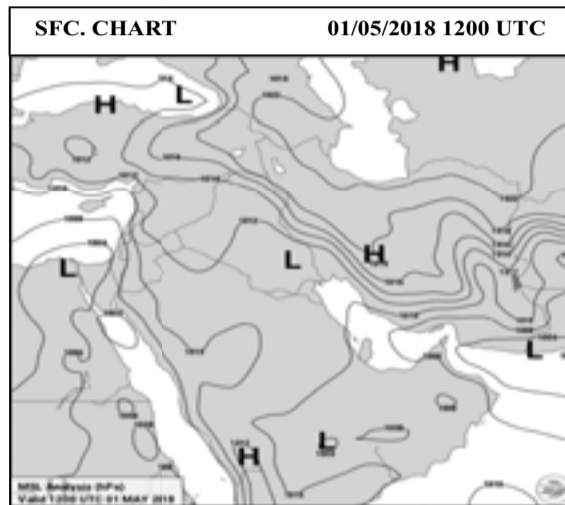
Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY NIGHT: Partly cloudy to cloudy with light to moderate freshening at times south easterly wind to north westerly wind, with speed of 10 - 40 km/h with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times.

BY DAY: Cloudy to partly cloudy with light to moderate freshening at times at times variable wind to south easterly wind, with speed of 08 - 40 km/h with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times.

| WEATHER WARNING | No Current Warnings |
|-----------------|---------------------|
|-----------------|---------------------|

| STATION | MAX. REC. | MIN. EXP. |
|----------------|-----------|-----------|
| KUWAIT CITY | 33 °C | 25 °C |
| KUWAIT AIRPORT | 34 °C | 23 °C |
| ABDALY | 37 °C | 21 °C |
| BUBYAN | 31 °C | 23 °C |
| JAHRA | 37 °C | 23 °C |
| FAILAKA ISLAND | 32 °C | 23 °C |
| SALMIYAH | 29 °C | 25 °C |
| AHMADI | 30 °C | 26 °C |
| NUWASIB | 32 °C | 22 °C |
| WAFRA | 35 °C | 20 °C |
| SALMY | 36 °C | 21 °C |



| 4 DAYS FORECAST | | | | | | |
|-----------------|-------|--|--------------|-------|----------------|--------------|
| DAY | DATE | WEATHER | Temperatures | | Wind Direction | Wind Speed |
| | | | MAX. | MIN. | | |
| Wednesday | 05/02 | Cloudy to partly cloudy with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times | 35 °C | 23 °C | VRB-SE | 08 - 40 km/h |
| Thursday | 05/03 | Cloudy to partly cloudy causing rising dust over open areas with a chance for rain that might be | 34 °C | 24 °C | SE-VRB | 08 - 42 km/h |
| Friday | 05/04 | Relatively hot and Clouds will increase gradually | 37 °C | 23 °C | VRB-SE | 06 - 28 km/h |
| Saturday | 05/05 | Hot and Partly cloudy | 39 °C | 24 °C | VRB-SW | 08 - 30 km/h |

| TOMORROW PRAYER TIMES | |
|-----------------------|-------|
| Fajr | 03:40 |
| Sunrise | 05:06 |
| Zuhr | 11:45 |
| Asr | 15:21 |
| Sunset | 18:25 |
| Isha | 19:47 |

| RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT | |
|--------------------------------------|------------|
| MAX. Temp. | 36 °C |
| MIN. Temp. | 22 °C |
| MAX. RH | 66 % |
| MIN. RH | 18 % |
| MAX. Wind | NW 43 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 |

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| Arrival Flights on Wednesday 2/5/2018 | | | | Departure Flights on Wednesday 2/5/2018 | | | |
|---------------------------------------|------|-------------------|-------|---|------|-----------------|-------|
| Airlines | Flt | Route | Time | Airlines | Flt | Route | Time |
| MSC | 405 | Sohag | 00:05 | JZR | 176 | Dubai | 13:10 |
| JZR | 513 | Sharm el-Sheikh | 00:10 | THY | 767 | Istanbul | 13:40 |
| THY | 772 | Istanbul | 00:15 | JZR | 776 | Jeddah | 13:40 |
| KAC | 102 | London | 00:50 | JZR | 144 | Doha | 13:55 |
| DLH | 625 | Dammam | 00:50 | MSR | 611 | Cairo | 14:00 |
| JZR | 539 | Cairo | 01:00 | UAE | 872 | Dubai | 14:15 |
| PGT | 858 | Istanbul | 01:15 | CLX | 792 | Hanoi | 14:30 |
| JZR | 267 | Beirut | 01:25 | KNE | 382 | Taif | 15:00 |
| QTR | 8511 | Doha | 01:30 | GFA | 222 | Bahrain | 15:00 |
| MSR | 618 | Alexandria | 01:35 | KAC | 539 | Sharm el-Sheikh | 15:00 |
| UAE | 853 | Dubai | 01:40 | KAC | 673 | Dubai | 15:00 |
| KLM | 446 | Bahrain | 01:45 | FDB | 060 | Dubai | 15:05 |
| KKK | 1268 | Istanbul | 02:00 | QTR | 1079 | Doha | 15:15 |
| GFA | 211 | Bahrain | 02:15 | SVA | 501 | Jeddah | 15:45 |
| ETH | 620 | Addis Ababa | 02:15 | JZR | 188 | Dubai | 15:45 |
| QTR | 1086 | Doha | 02:30 | KNE | 684 | Madinah | 15:50 |
| KAC | 414 | Bangkok | 02:40 | KAC | 283 | Dhaka | 15:50 |
| KAC | 418 | Manila | 03:05 | KAC | 775 | Riyadh | 15:55 |
| OMA | 643 | Muscat | 03:05 | KNE | 530 | Jeddah | 16:00 |
| ETD | 305 | Abu Dhabi | 03:05 | JZR | 606 | Kochi | 16:00 |
| RJA | 648 | Amman | 03:05 | KAC | 785 | Jeddah | 16:00 |
| RBG | 215 | Sohag | 03:05 | KAC | 743 | Dammam | 16:05 |
| KAC | 382 | Delhi | 03:10 | KAC | 563 | Amman | 16:10 |
| MSR | 612 | Cairo | 03:15 | ABY | 128 | Sharjah | 16:15 |
| QTR | 1076 | Doha | 03:30 | KAC | 619 | Doha | 16:15 |
| KAC | 796 | Madinah | 03:45 | ETD | 304 | Abu Dhabi | 16:20 |
| JAI | 572 | Mumbai | 04:00 | OMA | 646 | Muscat | 16:20 |
| KAC | 544 | Cairo | 04:25 | KAC | 615 | Bahrain | 16:40 |
| KAC | 784 | Jeddah | 04:30 | SVA | 505 | Madinah | 16:55 |
| JZR | 609 | Hyderabad | 04:30 | MSR | 576 | Sharm el-Sheikh | 16:55 |
| KAC | 284 | Dhaka | 04:50 | SAW | 706 | Damascus | 17:00 |
| PAL | 668 | Manila | 05:00 | KAC | 503 | Beirut | 17:15 |
| FDB | 069 | Dubai | 05:05 | FDB | 052 | Dubai | 17:20 |
| DHX | 170 | Bahrain | 05:10 | QTR | 1073 | Doha | 17:25 |
| THY | 770 | Istanbul | 05:15 | KAC | 361 | Colombo | 17:35 |
| KAC | 344 | Chennai | 05:30 | UAE | 858 | Dubai | 17:40 |
| KAC | 332 | Trivandrum | 05:40 | KAC | 381 | Delhi | 17:45 |
| JZR | 561 | Sohag | 05:55 | KAC | 331 | Trivandrum | 17:55 |
| BAW | 157 | London | 06:10 | KAC | 343 | Chennai | 18:00 |
| WAN | 338 | Alexandria | 06:25 | SVA | 511 | Riyadh | 18:15 |
| KAC | 206 | Islamabad | 06:40 | JZR | 184 | Dubai | 18:20 |
| KAC | 678 | Dubai | 06:45 | GFA | 216 | Bahrain | 18:20 |
| KAC | 302 | Mumbai | 07:00 | JZR | 608 | Hyderabad | 18:25 |
| JZR | 143 | Doha | 07:00 | JZR | 266 | Beirut | 18:30 |
| WAN | 342 | Sohag | 07:30 | JZR | 240 | Amman | 18:30 |
| JZR | 503 | Luxor | 07:50 | JZR | 538 | Cairo | 18:35 |
| FDB | 053 | Dubai | 07:50 | WAN | 135 | Doha | 18:40 |
| KAC | 384 | Delhi | 08:05 | QTR | 1081 | Doha | 19:20 |
| KAC | 358 | Kochi | 08:05 | WAN | 117 | Bahrain | 19:30 |
| JZR | 529 | Asyut | 08:10 | MSR | 621 | Cairo | 19:30 |
| UAE | 855 | Dubai | 08:25 | GFA | 218 | Bahrain | 19:50 |
| IRC | 6552 | ABD | 08:50 | FDB | 064 | Dubai | 19:50 |
| ETD | 301 | Abu Dhabi | 08:55 | RJA | 641 | Amman | 20:00 |
| ABY | 125 | Sharjah | 09:00 | ABY | 124 | Sharjah | 20:00 |
| IRA | 665 | Shiraz | 09:25 | JZR | 552 | Alexandria | 20:05 |
| QTR | 1070 | Doha | 09:30 | FDB | 058 | Dubai | 20:30 |
| FDB | 055 | Dubai | 09:40 | UAE | 876 | Dubai | 20:35 |
| IRM | 1188 | Mashhad | 09:55 | DLH | 624 | Dammam | 20:50 |
| AXB | 889 | Mangalore/Bahrain | 10:20 | KAC | 357 | Kochi | 21:00 |
| JZR | 787 | Riyadh | 10:30 | KNE | 232 | Riyadh | 21:00 |
| GFA | 213 | Bahrain | 10:40 | KAC | 353 | Bengaluru | 21:00 |
| MEA | 404 | Beirut | 10:55 | OMA | 648 | Muscat | 21:05 |
| SYR | 341 | Latakia | 11:00 | MEA | 403 | Beirut | 21:15 |
| QTR | 1074 | Doha | 11:00 | KAC | 543 | Cairo | 21:20 |
| JZR | 165 | Dubai | 11:45 | KAC | 301 | Mumbai | 21:35 |
| KIS | 6032 | Mashhad | 12:00 | DHX | 171 | Bahrain | 21:50 |
| IAW | 157 | Al Najaf | 12:00 | QTR | 1089 | Doha | 21:50 |
| WAN | 134 | Doha | 12:20 | KAC | 205 | Islamabad | 21:55 |
| RBG | 553 | Alexandria | 12:30 | ETD | 308 | Abu Dhabi | 22:05 |
| THY | 766 | Istanbul | 12:45 | KLM | 445 | Bahrain | 22:10 |
| UAE | 871 | Dubai | 12:45 | ALX | 230 | Colombo | 22:20 |
| CLX | 792 | Luxembourg | 12:45 | KAC | 783 | Jeddah | 22:25 |
| WAN | 542 | KTM | 12:50 | KAC | 383 | Delhi | 22:25 |
| JZR | 903 | Baku | 12:55 | UAE | 860 | Dubai | 22:35 |
| JZR | 125 | Bahrain | 12:55 | JZR | 604 | Ahmedabad | 22:40 |
| KAC | 522 | Al Najaf | 13:00 | GFA | 220 | Bahrain | 22:50 |
| MSR | 610 | Cairo | 13:00 | ETD | 310 | Abu Dhabi | 23:00 |
| JZR | 357 | Mashhad | 13:05 | KAC | 411 | Bangkok | 23:15 |
| KAC | 774 | Riyadh | 13:30 | QTR | 1083 | Doha | 23:20 |
| JZR | 779 | Jeddah | 13:45 | SVA | 515 | Riyadh | 23:30 |
| | | | | WAN | 337 | Alexandria | 23:40 |
| | | | | JZR | 560 | Sohag | 23:45 |



Janelle Monáe inspired by Prince on new record

Janelle Monáe was inspired by Prince on her new record 'Dirty Computer'. The 32-year-old singer released her third studio album last week, and she has now revealed that she was heavily influenced by the late 'Purple Rain' hitmaker - who passed away in 2016 at the age of 57 - despite being "scared" of him as a child because of how he "expressed himself". She said: "There's only one Prince and there will never be another. I had the opportunity to be inspired by Prince like the rest of the world growing up. In fact, I used to be terrified of Prince. I could not watch his videos. I had a dream that he chased me in a purple suit. "It was something about watching this black man, I'd never seen a black man express himself like that, and it scared me. You know I don't know if it was because maybe I hadn't been comfortable with tapping into my fearlessness...it's just like you got the sense that he was free right? And I don't know if I was ready to tap into my free ass nature, but I think what I love most is that I got the opportunity to get to know the man who everybody looked at as this mysterious, other-worldly being. You know I did get the opportunity to perform onstage with him." Janelle - who recently came out as pansexual - gave Prince a copy of her debut album 'The ArchAndroid' in 2010, and believes that the 'Little Red Corvette' singer was the "one person" who understood the music she was making. Speaking to Apple Music's Beats 1 Radio, she said: "In fact, I gave him the first copy of my first album. I gave it to him at Paisley Park, and I got a chance to see that he was such a philanthropic person. "Like he gave, and he didn't want people to know what he gave. And he's given a lot to me. Any way that I can honor him, and just remind this generation of how much he paved the way for artists like myself. I mean, there were times that when I ever felt confused on what direction I should take, or if my ideas were too big for the music industry ... I knew that was the one person who understood where I was trying to go."

ED SHEERAN FEATURES ON BIG NARSTIE'S LP BDL BIPOLAR



Ed Sheeran has a song on Big Narstie's LP 'BDL Bipolar'. The 'Supermarket Flowers' singer - who is godfather to the London star's child - features on the track 'Hello Hi 2' on the grime star's forthcoming debut album. There is also another collaboration with Craig David, 'Sunshine', which follows their 2016 hit 'When the Bassline Drops' and 'Game of Thrones' star Ryleigh Ritchie features on 'Control'. The 32-year-old rapper - whose real name is Tyrone Lindo - says the record is a mix of energetic tracks and ones that aim to encourage "change". He explained: "There are parts of it that are going to make you want to dance around your house and be really excited. "And there are parts that'll make you want to think about stuff, while sitting around in your boxers and eating baked beans. "It's basically about how things change. Like those people who put down their grime swagger and wanted to get into R&B or funky house, or fall back into swing. Grime is now a very talkable subject. The whole situation is just... woah!" Meanwhile, the 'BDL Anthem' rapper has admitted he would "cry" if he got the chance to work with Liam Gallagher after he released the Oasis covers mixtape 'What's The Story? Brixton Glory Pt II' in 2014. Speaking exclusively to BANG Showbiz about the possibility of teaming up with Britpop group's former frontman for a track on his second solo album - the follow-up to 2017's 'As You Were' - Narstie said: "That could be on the cards you know, I would cry if that happened." 'BDL Bipolar' is released on July 6.

BOYZONE CONFIRM SPLIT AND FINAL ALBUM

Boyzone have confirmed their plans to release one final album dedicated to late bandmate Stephen Gately. The Irish band - comprised of Ronan Keating, Keith Duffy, Mikey Graham and Shane Lynch - have announced they will go their separate ways after their upcoming 25th anniversary tour and album, a tribute to Stephen - who tragically died suddenly in 2009 of a congenital heart defect. Confirming the devastating news to their fans on Twitter, they wrote: "The news is out and yes it's true. Our new album will be the last for Boyzone. We've had 25 amazing years and we promise you that this will be our biggest and best year yet. Watch this space... #BZ25 (sic)" The 'No Matter What' hitmakers recently found an old recording of an unreleased song by Stephen and have added their own vocals to include the tune on the album, which is also set to feature Ed Sheeran and Sam Smith. Keith previously admitted he struggled to cope when the band returned to touring after Stephen's shock death. He



said: "We did two huge [comeback] tours in 2008 and 2009, and we did four nights in each venue. "We then came back with the Greatest Hits album in 2009, and in the October we were in the middle of recording the Brother album when we lost Stephen. "He died in 2009 and we were back on the road in 2011, two years later - which was way too soon. Way too soon. "Emotionally and psychologically... I'll be very honest, myself and Shane were drinking too much, trying to numb the pain, onstage and offstage. "It just didn't work, and it wasn't enjoyable. We didn't want to be together. That's when we took a sabbatical." And the Irish hunk revealed the 'No Matter What' hitmakers return five years ago wasn't the "success" they hoped for, which was why they cancelled a string of their concerts. He continued: "Then in 2013 and 2014 we decided to try and tour again but by that stage the success wasn't as good, though we probably pretended it was. We actually did one night in each venue, as opposed to four in 2009."

POLDARK'S ELEANOR TOMLINSON ANNOUNCES ALBUM RELEASE DATE



'Poldark' star Eleanor Tomlinson's debut album 'Tales From Home' will be released on May 8. The 25-year-old actress - who has made her name as Demelza Poldark in the BBC One period drama - has recorded a number of folk inspired covers for the record. Eleanor has worked with the show's soundtrack composer Anne Dudley on the album, which includes fresh interpretations of tracks like Simon & Garfunkel's 'Homeward Bound', and 'Hushabye Mountain' from 'Chitty Chitty Bang Bang'. Dudley - who was awarded the Outstanding Contribution to British Music award at the 2017 Ivor Novello Awards - was responsible for production, having worked with the likes of Sir Elton John, Tina Turner and Robbie Williams in the past. 'The Fully Monty' composer Dudley has previously recorded with the likes of Sir Elton John, Tina Turner and Robbie Williams, and Eleanor has heaped praise on her work. She said previously: "I'm incredibly excited to announce the release of my debut album Tales From Home. To have the opportunity to perform some of my favorite songs with Anne Dudley's brilliant new arrangements has been wonderful, not to mention working alongside my brother Ross. "I would like to thank the 'Poldark' fans who inspired me to make this album. Without their support, this would not have been possible." Fans first got a taste of her talent when she sang in the show, and Dudley previously hailed her skills as a singer. She said: "She's one of those people who when she sings it's so natural. Her parents are both very good singers so she has it in her genes."

Lily Allen felt 'isolated' touring Sheezus

Lily Allen refused to carry on promoting her last record 'Sheezus' because she fell out of love with it. The 32-year-old singer has admitted she felt "isolated" when her record label made her perform by herself in places like Wisconsin in the US, where she felt she didn't really have any fans, in support of her 2014 effort. Appearing on the latest episode of George Ezra's 'George Ezra & Friends' podcast, Lily confessed: "I said to the record label, 'I am not doing any more promoting. I don't care about this album anymore.' "I just did not want to be doing it. "I even felt really isolated in the shows with the audience as well, as the band I had I did not like. "I did not like the people. They were not listening to me when I said I wanted things to change. "It was like, 'I don't want to be in Wisconsin on my own, playing music that I am not really into with these people that don't really care about me and I don't care about. "What the am I doing here?" Lily previously admitted she felt as though she lost her way on the record. The record was met with an underwhelmed response from fans and critics and she was accused of cultural appropriation for using primarily black backing dancers in her video for lead single 'Hard Out Here' - which she defended as being a statement about the sexual objectification of women in the music business. In hindsight, Lily realized she didn't like the music she was making at the time and admitted she got things wrong. She said: "I think I had an identity crisis. I didn't like the clothes I was wearing, the songs that made it as singles ... like everything!" Now Lily is gearing up for the release of her new record 'No Shame' - which is released on June 8 - and she has taken as much control of the creative direction of the tracks as she could. She said: "There are a lot of things I don't have control over. "With this record, I got so upset with all of those things I didn't have control over, especially as a woman, you're kind of sent out to."



Florence + the Machine join Instagram to announce new single

Florence + the Machine have joined Instagram to announce their next single. The 'Dog Days Are Over' hitmakers - fronted by Florence Welch - set up an account on the social media app on Monday to officially launch their new song 'Hunger', which will be released on Thursday. Alongside the artwork, photographed by Vincent Haycock, the band wrote: "HUNGER Single out May 3 Video directed by @a.g.rojas Photos by @vincenthaycock (sic)" 'Hunger' follows their Record Store Day release 'Sky Full of Song'. Prior to that, Florence and co haven't released new material since their 2015 LP 'How Big, How Blue, How Beautiful'. Mark Ronson is said to have been recruited by the group to help launch their comeback. The 'Uptown Funk' producer - who worked his magic on Lady Gaga's LP 'Joanne' two years ago - has reportedly been working closely with the band and Jamie XX on the record, which is due this summer. An insider revealed previously: "Flo and Mark really gelled in the studio and wanted to work together more. Mark has a proven track record for creating hits so Flo is really excited." And that's not all the flamboyant frontwoman has in store for fans, as late last year she confirmed she will release her first collection of lyrics and poetry. The 'Dog Days Are Over' singer has penned the tome 'Useless Magic' with her own original artwork accompanying her words. Florence wrote: "Extremely honored to announce that I will be releasing my first book of collected lyrics and poetry with Penguin Books next year x x (sic)" The collection will hit shelves on July 5, with Penguin imprint Fig Tree publishing the book. The 'You've Got The Love' hitmakers are set to support The Rolling Stones at London Stadium on May 25.



Cabello added to Capital Summertime Ball 2018 bill

Camila Cabello has been added to the Capital Summertime Ball with Vodafone 2018 line-up. The former Fifth Harmony star - who has had a string of hits from her self-titled debut solo album, including 'Havana' and 'Never Be The Same' - joins 'Symphony' hitmakers Clean Bandit, DJ Jonas Blue, 'Envy Us' rapper Stefflon Don and 'Bestie' hitmaker Yungen in the second announcement for the music extravaganza at London's Wembley Stadium on June 9. On Monday it was confirmed that Shawn Mendes, Jess Glynne,

Rudimental, Charlie Puth and Jax Jones are set to perform at the summer concert. Speaking to Roman Kemp about his unforgettable performance at the event last year on Capital Breakfast on Monday morning - 'In My Blood' hitmaker Shawn said: "There's a photo of me walking off the stage and I look back at that photo and it's just like, moments like that and when you watch videos back of that, it's very hard to believe that it's you!" Ashley Tabor OBE, Founder & Executive President of Global, commented: "This year we are taking it to

the next level with the hottest hit music stars flying in from around the world to perform live at the Capital Summertime Ball with Vodafone. "We're so excited that Shawn Mendes, Rudimental, Jess Glynne, Charlie Puth and Jax Jones will be partying with more than 80,000 Capital listeners, and we can't wait for Roman to reveal who will be joining them tomorrow!" Last year saw the likes of Bruno Mars, Little Mix, Shawn Mendes, Stormzy, Liam Payne and Dua Lipa entertain 80,000 fans. Tickets go on sale on Thursday from 8am.

Lifestyle | Gossip

McQuarrie open to directing Man of Steel sequel

Christopher McQuarrie will happily direct the 'Man of Steel' sequel - if Henry Cavill asks him to. The 49-year-old filmmaker has recently worked with Henry, 34, on 'Mission: Impossible - Fallout', and he's revealed he'd be keen to reunite with the star for the sequel to 2013's 'Man of Steel'. Asked whether he'd be interested in directing a superhero movie, Christopher replied: "I feel like if the story was right and the character was right - I love working with Henry, Henry's great." Subsequently, Christopher was asked about the prospect of directing the next Superman movie. Speaking to CinePOP, he replied: "If Henry asked me to, sure, why not?" Meanwhile, Henry revealed in April that he's



already held discussions about potential plotlines for the 'Man of Steel' sequel. The hunky actor - who has reprised the role for 'Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice' and 'Justice League' since starring in 'Man of Steel' - shared: "I'm having a lot of conversations, behind-the-scenes, with certain people and we will hopefully be having conversations with other people who are also behind-the-scenes to make things start happening. "It is very much in my desire to do a 'Man of Steel 2', a direct sequel to 'Man of Steel', and there is a whole bunch of Superman story that I want to tell. "There is a whole style of Superman's character that I'm very keen to tell and I'm looking forward to the opportunity."

Cena handed lead role in The Janson Directive



John Cena has been cast in 'The Janson Directive'. The 41-year-old star is set to play the lead role in the new movie, which is being executive produced by fellow wrestler-turned-actor Dwayne 'The Rock' Johnson through Seven Bucks Productions, with Dwayne announcing the news on his Instagram account. He explained: "I've got some great news. There's been a project that I've been working on for years now - myself and our production company, Seven Bucks Productions - we've partnered with Universal Studios to make a movie called 'The Janson Directive'. "The Janson Directive' is a novel written by Robert Ludlum. Robert is, of course, one of the greatest crime writers of all time. He wrote Jason Bourne, the character made famous by that handsome man Matt Damon in the

'Bourne' movies. "The cool news is this: I've found my star, and the star of 'The Janson Directive' is going to be John Cena. I've known John for years, he's so excited to play the role and I'm excited for him." Dwayne and John have taken similar career paths, moving from the wrestling industry into Hollywood. And Dwayne, 45 - who has become one of the industry's most bankable stars over recent years - has also delivered a tongue-in-cheek warning to his one-time wrestling rival. He captioned his Instagram post: "Congrats man and I'm excited to go on this journey with you. Thank you for your commitment to the role and remember, as your producer if you screw up, I'm coming to set and droppin' the People's Elbow on ya. And you know firsthand how devastating my elbow drops can be (sic)".

Nyong'o for The Killer reboot



Lupita Nyong'o has been chosen by John Woo to star in a reboot of his 1989 classic 'The Killer'. The original Hong Kong crime thriller starred Chow Yun-fat as the assassin, but in a twist on the original, Woo wants to remake the movie with a woman in the lead role. 'Black Panther' star Lupita, 35, is now in negotiations to board the project, according to Deadline.com, with Universal Pictures putting the film on fast track. Woo will return to the director's chair. The original Hong Kong crime thriller followed an assassin who has lost all hope after accidentally blinding a singer. He accepts one last hit in the hope of using his earnings to help her, only to be double-crossed by his boss. The film is hailed as a classic for its use of balletic, stylised stuntwork which Woo hopes to recreate in the

remake. 'The Killer' has had its script rewritten by Eran Creevy, with Brian Helgeland producing alongside Mark Gordon and Lori Tilkin. Lori is also executive producing with Matt Jackson, Luc Etienne, and Terence Chang. Lupita had her breakthrough in 2013's '12 Years A Slave', for which she won the Oscar for Best Supporting Actress. She most recently starred as Special Forces warrior Nakia Marvel movie 'Black Panther'. Lupita said of the role: "[She] is a war dog, which means that she is an undercover spy for Wakanda. She goes out into the world to places like Korea. "She has a special relationship with T'Challa and what I love about that relationship is that it's not your average, you know, sweetheart story [with a] damsel in distress. They have a history but she is a reliable ear for him."

Gibson to direct Destroyer

Mel Gibson is in talks to helm war thriller 'Destroyer'. The 62-year-old actor is believed to be heading behind the camera for a directing credit on the World War II movie, according to



The Hollywood Reporter. The project would mark Gibson's second war film directing role in a row, after having previously worked on 'Hacksaw Ridge' - which starred Andrew Garfield - in 2016, which served as his directorial comeback. 'Destroyer' is a naval war movie from Hollywood Gang Productions, and is based on the non-fiction book 'Hell From the

Heavens: The Epic Story of the USS Laffey and World War II's Greatest Kamikaze Attack' by John Wukovits. The movie - which is set to start filming in the fall - will tackle the Battle of Okinawa in the Pacific Theater during World War II, taking on a different angle of the same fight which was detailed in 'Hacksaw Ridge'. In the book, Wukovits writes of the heroic story of how the crewmen of the Laffey defended their ship from an astounding 22 kamikaze attacks on April 16, 1945. Gibson's longterm girlfriend Rosalind Ross is said to have penned the script for the wartime feature. The directing credit comes as Gibson is also being eyed for an acting role in 'The Six Billion Dollar Man', where he would star opposite Mark Wahlberg. Warner Bros.' big screen adaptation of the 1970s television series is due to begin shooting in the summer, and as of the time of writing, it is unknown what role Gibson is in talks for. Wahlberg is starring as Steve Austin, a downed pilot who is saved by an operation that makes him part machine. According to The Hollywood Reporter, Wahlberg is keen to get Gibson on board after the pair worked together on the Paramount comedy 'Daddy's Home 2' in 2017.

Kevin Feige says interest in Avengers: Infinity War sequel is 'out of proportion'



Kevin Feige admits the interest surrounding the title of the 'Avengers: Infinity War' sequel has been "blown out of proportion". The 44-year-old President of Marvel Studios has admitted he doesn't know when the name of the much-anticipated superhero movie will be released - but he conceded that too much attention has been paid to the issue. He shared: "When we announce the title I am not sure, but as I've probably said to you, it's gotten completely blown out of proportion. "It will just be a name and the reason to hold it back was to keep the attention on 'Infinity War'. That backfired a little bit because now everyone thinks what's the name of the next one gonna be? But it was really just to keep the focus [on 'Infinity War']. "We did not want to call it 'Part

One' and 'Part Two'. Although it will be quite evident that the films obviously connect, as all our films do, but this in particular connects very directly. And then we changed the 'Part One' and 'Part Two', we said let's just keep this 'Infinity War' and we'll talk about the next movie later." Marvel had hoped to ensure that fans' attention centered on 'Avengers: Infinity War', which is why the studio has delayed naming the follow up movie. But he admitted that it's been a tough situation to balance. Kevin told Collider: "We had done things in the past that had taken attention off of whatever the film at hand is because we talked about this. "For instance, 'Infinity War' came out, and it worked out, it was fine, but it felt like let's keep the attention on the film at hand."

BUTTERFIELD ADMITS SLAUGHTERHOUSE RULEZ IS 'BIZARRE'



Asa Butterfield admits his latest movie role alongside Simon Pegg and Nick Frost is "bizarre". The 21-year-old actor teamed up with the acclaimed duo to star in the new comedy movie 'Slaughterhouse Rulez', and Asa has revealed he relished the experience. He shared: "That's gonna be an interesting one. I did that last year, and it's a comedy/horror, as Simon Pegg does so well. I loved working with the two of them, as well as with the great cast. "It's set in an English private school, and I play one of the students there, who's incredibly sarcastic and dry and funny, which was a lot of fun to play with. I enjoyed inhabiting that character, who's very witty. It's very bizarre. I'm excited to see it." Despite his youth, Asa has already starred in a host of successful films, including 'The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas' and 'Journey's End'. And the London-born actor has revealed the different factors he considers before he accepts a role in a movie. Asked what he's now looking for in a film project, Asa told Collider: "It's a combination. You want to find a character you can relate to, or you think will be exciting or memorable. "You also want to be invested in the story and all of the characters, and tell a story that's original or exciting or funny. There are a lot of factors when I'm looking at a project, like who's involved, as far as the director and the cast members."



Theron says too much attention had been given to her appearance in Tully

Charlize Theron thinks too much focus has been put on her weight gain for 'Tully'. The Academy Award-winning star gained 50 pounds for her starring role in the new drama movie, in which her character is pregnant with her third child, but Charlize believes that the issue has been overblown. She explained: "Women gain that amount, if not more, every time they get pregnant. So it's not that big of a deal. "I was playing this woman and I wanted to get closer to her. I don't think when an actress does that we have to get so focused on it." 'Tully' has been described by some critics as 'Mary Poppins' for millennials. And Charlize, 42 - who has two adopted children, a boy and a girl - has been intrigued by how women who don't have children have reacted to the Jason Reitman-directed film. In the film, Charlize's character forms a strong bond with Tully, the woman she's employed to take care of her children. She told Time Out London magazine: "It's been really interesting to see young women who don't have kids being incredibly moved by this story. Because there's something of a Tully experience too. "Younger women see this movie through the eyes of Tully: What will my life be like? Who will I marry? Am I going to be happy? "Everybody can relate to that time where they have to say goodbye to a piece of themselves to make room for the next chapter. That's ultimately what Marlo's story is about." — Bang Showbiz



VODAVODA WATER EXCLUSIVELY DISTRIBUTED IN GCC

A donation of \$50,000 to UNICEF in the name of Kuwait

A contract for the distribution of Vodavoda water was signed with its exclusive distributor in GCC countries Karo Kuwait Company in the presence of the Serbian Municipality Minister, Belgrade Governor, Kuwaiti Ambassador to Serbia Yousuf Abdulsamad and Qatar's Ambassador to Serbia Sheikh Mubarak Al-Thani. Vodavoda water has become popular in Kuwait and demand is on the increase in other GCC countries.

A visit was organized to the "house of water", as it is

called in Serbia, and the delegation toured the plant and saw how the water is filled as well as its source. Vodavoda water is considered the world's purest and has been underground for thousands of years. It is brought up to the surface from a depth of 605 m and filled directly by adding or removing elements. It is purified through the calcareous layers underground.

Kuwaiti Ambassador Abdulsamad emphasized the importance of cooperation between Kuwait and Serbia,

adding that relations go back more than 50 years. Abdulsamad said Kuwait Karo Company is considered a bridge to strengthen Kuwait-Serbia relations. Director General of Karo Company - the sole Vodavoda distributor - Abdulaziz Abdeen said a donation of \$50,000 to UNICEF in the name of Kuwait comes as a contribution with Vodavoda Serbia to build children care centers in Serbia and the rest of the world.



Home Centre's New Ramadan Catalogue is About Cherishing Valuable Moments

'Catalogue Highlights Design Trends, Iftar Recipes and Styling Tips'

In keeping with the spirit of contemplation and togetherness that symbolizes the Holy Month of Ramadan, Home Centre, the region's leading home retailer, is set to launch its Ramadan catalogue themed Valuable Moments. Featuring over 400 new lines, the 60-page catalogue will highlight elegant and affordable furniture pieces, decorative accessories, festive lighting options and essential tableware and kitchenware for today's stylish and distinctive homes.

From spending some quiet time with family and friends to entertaining guests at home or exchanging gifts with loved ones, the Holy Month is about making memories and Home Centre's diverse range of products and styling tips promises to enhance and make these special moments even more precious.

A distinct focus this year is on the Suzani collection, a grand and luxurious line that features mirror-, silver- and champagne-finishes, with exquisite embroidered patterns. The catalogue also includes a separate 'cook' section for the very first time, to highlight its sought-after kitchenware and tableware ranges. This section also contains some delicious regional Ramadan recipes for readers to try out at home during their Ramadan get-togethers.

This year's much-anticipated catalogue showcases bedroom furniture lines and accessories along with tips on how to remain well-rested throughout the Holy Month. As per the catalogue's suggestion, Home Centre's products also make the perfect gifts. Customers can purchase Ramadan gift cards in-store to present to friends and family. Throughout the Holy Month of Ramadan, Home Centre is encouraging customers to share their #ValuableMoments on Instagram, for a chance to win exciting prizes. In line with its commitment to providing exceptional value, Home Centre offers a warranty of up to five years on furniture and up to one year on home accessories. The Ramadan collection is available across all Home Centre stores.



SCREAMING FANS FLOOD HOLLYWOOD AS NSYNC GETS WALK OF FAME HONOR

Thousands of fans shut down Hollywood's Walk of Fame Monday as 1990s boy band NSYNC were recognized for a glittering chart run that catapulted Justin Timberlake to pop superstardom. The heartthrob was joined by bandmates Lance Bass, JC Chasez, Joey Fatone and Chris Kirkpatrick to receive their star on the iconic thoroughfare, watched by talk show hosts Ellen DeGeneres and Carson Daly. "For all of you who came from far and wide to be here to share this moment with us, thank you so much - this really means the world to all of us," Timberlake, an accomplished singer and actor yelled out at the screaming crowd.

NSYNC sold more than 70 million records — 30 million in the US — with a dozen singles making the Top 40, adult contemporary, dance, Latin, country or R&B charts. The group are also among the most successful live acts in pop, with the first 52 dates of the "No Strings Attached" world tour selling out in record time. The band's first single, "I Want You Back" (1996), became the longest Top 10 entry for a new group, while the self-titled debut album, released in 1997, sold more than 10 million copies. The next two records, "No Strings Attached" and "Celebrity," topped the US charts in 2000 and 2001, while other memorable singles include "Bye Bye Bye," "Girlfriend" and "It's Gonna Be Me." — AFP



Singers Chris Kirkpatrick, Lance Bass, JC Chasez, Joey Fatone and Justin Timberlake of NSYNC are honored with a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in Hollywood, California. — AFP

Lifestyle | Features



Chilean music group 'Rough Bunnies' - a K-Pop band which pays tribute to South Korean band B.A.P. rehearses in Santiago. — AFP photos



Fernanda of Chilean music group 'Rough Bunnies,' poses for a picture.



Mar'a Paz of Chilean music group 'Rough Bunnies,' poses for a picture.

IN CHILE, TEENS ARE IN LOVE WITH SOUTH KOREA'S K-POP

Across Chile, parks and cultural centers have come alive with the catchy melodies of K-pop as teens embrace this wildly popular South Korean mix of upbeat electronic music and high-voltage choreography. As embassies around the world stage early competition rounds ahead of the 2018 K-Pop World Festival, thousands of teenagers have been out practicing their moves, with the local winners invited to join the final in South Korea. "We get together to rehearse several days a week," says Alicia, 17. "All we want to do is dance."

songs and that's why I wanted to come and see him." Last year, when another hugely popular boy band called BTS came to Chile, 12,000 tickets were sold within just two hours.

Gangnam Style

K-pop mania really took off in Chile in 2012 following the explosive success of "Gangnam Style," a wacky hit which transformed the rapper/singer Psy into an international sensation. Taking the country by storm, the genre inspired the creation of local bands such as "Rough



Chilean K-Pop fans watch the performance.

"All we want to do is dance"

A massive teen following

When Kim Hyun-joong, former lead singer of K-pop boy band SS510, announced a February concert in Santiago, the tickets were quickly snapped up by some 3,000 delirious young fans. "I have waited six years for Kim Hyun-joong to come to Chile," 16-year-old Cristal Escobar said, who traveled 550 kilometers to get to the concert. "I really like how he sings, how he dances, his

Bunnies," which emerged in 2014 after K-pop boy band BAP (Best Absolute Perfect) canceled a concert there.

"We started out calling ourselves BTP (the Spanish acronym for Babes: Perfect Tribute) but we weren't completely convinced and it sounded a bit ridiculous," band leader Tamara said. "We started to look for a new name and came up with 'Rough Bunnies' as it sounded better in English than in Spanish."

And they have been well received, with their songs played on local radio stations and success both on YouTube and on social networks. But the real K-pop still dominates the airwaves, luring young fans with its electronic rhythms, meticulously choreographed dance routines and immaculately coiffed singers decked out in extravagant outfits.—AFP

At New York's Met, an opera even babies can go gaga for

New York parents, ever vigilant for new ways to amuse their offspring, are picking up babies and flocking to the Metropolitan Opera this week for a very special US performance. "Bambino"—a 40-minute opera composed specifically for infants—has crossed the Atlantic for a booked-out, six-day run after winning over audiences in Britain and Paris. Well-dressed and well-groomed six- to 18-month-old New Yorkers assemble in a small auditorium at the Met, either cradled on parents' knees or crawling and toddling among a sea of soft blue cushions.

the baby's quest for flight ultimately leads to separation. "It's not a patronizing kiddies show, it's a genuine, beautiful piece of quite challenging music," explains director Phelim McDermott. Jokes aside about the Met's quest to lower the average age of its audience, each performance seeks to win over babies and caregivers to an art form often castigated as elitist and out of touch. "We thought what a magical thing to bring true opera to little people," says composer Liam Paterson, believing even very young children respond to musical patterns, rhythm and text.

Toddlers get bored

Initially commissioned by Scottish Opera and performed in Scotland and Manchester, Paterson said coming to New York, arguably one of the world's greatest opera venues, was a "amazing." Charlotte Hoather, who plays the character Uccellina, says reactions are different every time, and vary from country to country. If French children were very calm, Americans were more forthright. "We had confident babies today. Very brave," she says.

"I was just having fun because she was clearly overjoyed the whole time. I couldn't stop smiling," says nurse Jessie Thisell, whose daughter Bonnie wandered around transfixed. "She wouldn't have enjoyed it if she had to sit still." In a world of opera obsessed with widening outreach, Bambino makes no secret of its determination to win over new audiences.

"We've had people who love rock music and punk rock people and they were like 'I might go to something at my local theater' and that's really cool," says Hoather. The performers say meltdowns are surprisingly few, and usually food or tiredness-related. "It's an experiment. We'll see what happens," said Peter Gelb, general manager of the Met, asked whether it could become regular repertoire.

"We need to reintroduce the arts to the school system and we might as well start earlier than that, at the beginning," he said. But McDermott has words of advice for parents trying to push the envelope and bring children older than 18 months. "We genuinely created an opera for babies. Toddlers get bored." — AFP



The character Pulcino, played by Timothy Connor, performs for children and their parents during the presentation of Bambino.



Mothers and children listen during the presentation of Bambino.

Babies can make as much noise as they want, the audience is told. Adults, on the other hand, are told to pipe down. Then the music starts. Sung in Italian and baby sounds, it's performed by a cellist, a percussionist and two singers, who roam among the children, introducing them to furry toy birds and a golden egg. Almost any baby contemplating a meltdown stopped crying, variously grinning, baffled and engaged by the colorfully-costumed singers.

Sloane Campbell, 12 months, already goes to a music class once a week and her mom Kate Mangiameli is a Met singer herself, but Monday marked her first live performance. "Hearing that kind of singing from someone other than me is probably pretty great for her," says Mangiameli. The plot, secondary to the music as in most operas, tells the story of a bird, a baby bird and their relationship before



Charlotte Hoather, playing Uccellina, and Timothy Connor, playing Pulcino, perform during the presentation of Bambino at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York. — AFP photos



The character Uccellina, played by Charlotte Hoather, performs for children and their parents during the presentation of Bambino.



Laura Sergeant plays the cello during the presentation of Bambino.



Percussionist Stuart Semple performs during the presentation of Bambino.

Lifestyle

WEDNESDAY, MAY 2, 2018



A mammoth skeleton on a lifting platform is seen behind water fountains in Cathedral Square in Strasbourg, eastern France, as part of the 'Industrie Magnifique' festival. Several art pieces will be shown in different squares of the city from May 3 to May 13. — AFP

Neon nostalgia in Hong Kong as lights go out



Wu Chi-kai demonstrates how to make a neon sign.

Neon sign maker Wu Chi-kai is one of the last remaining craftsmen of his kind in Hong Kong, a city where darkness never really falls thanks to the 24-hour glow of myriads of lights. During his 30 years in the business, neon came to define the urban landscape, huge flashing signs protruding horizontally from the sides of buildings, advertising everything from restaurants to mahjong parlors.

“The painful experiences are the memorable ones”

But with the growing popularity of brighter LED lights, seen as easier to maintain and more environmentally friendly, and government orders to remove some vintage signs deemed dangerous, the demand for specialists like Wu has dimmed. Despite a waning client-base, 50-year-old Wu continues in the trade, working with glass tubes dusted inside with fluorescent powder and containing various gases including neon or argon, as well as mercury, to create different colors.

He bends them into shape over a powerful gas burner at a scorching 1,000 degrees Celsius. “Being able to twist straight glass materials into the shape I want, and later to make it glow—it’s quite fun,” he said, though it is not without risks. Wu works without a safety visor and has been scalded and cut by glass that sometimes cracks and explodes.



These pictures show neon works by Hong Kong sign maker Wu Chi-kai in Hong Kong. — AFP photos



“The painful experiences are the memorable ones,” he adds philosophically. Wu’s father used to scale Hong Kong’s characteristic bamboo scaffolding while installing neon signs across the city. Believing the installation work too dangerous for his son, he instead encouraged Wu to learn to make the signs as a teenager.

Wu became one of only around 30 masters of the craft in Hong Kong, even in neon’s heyday. Although demand is now significantly lower than at neon’s peak in the 1980s, Wu says there has been revived interest and nostalgia for its gentler glow, immortalized in the atmospheric movies of award-winning Hong Kong director Wong Kar-wai. Some of Wu’s clients are now requesting pieces for indoor decoration. “I’ve been working with neon lights all my life. I can’t think of anything else I’d be better suited for,” he says. — AFP



Neon sign maker Wu Chi-kai looks at one of his works.

Winning wildlife photo ‘likely’ stuffed animal

The winner of a prestigious wildlife photography competition last year was disqualified on Friday after organizers said it was “highly likely” the anteater depicted was a stuffed specimen usually on display at a national park visitor center. An image showing the animal eating from an ant hill in Brazil’s Emas National Park had won an award at the Wildlife Photographer of the Year contest in London’s Natural History Museum. The striking image called “The Night Raider” was taken by Marcio Cabral and won the “Animals in their Environment” category.

“Evidence was presented to the Museum by third parties that it is highly likely the animal in the award-

ed photograph is a taxidermy specimen,” the museum said in a statement. “After a thorough investigation, the Museum concluded that the available evidence points to this allegation being true,” it said, adding that competition rules state that “entries must not deceive the viewer or attempt to misrepresent the reality of nature”. The museum said it had been in contacted by “anonymous sources” in March questioning the authenticity of the image and had asked animal and taxidermy specialists to investigate the claims. The evidence included photos of a stuffed anteater on display at a visitor centre in the park where the image of the anteater was taken that close-

ly resembled the winning entry.

The museum said in a statement that the experts had “concluded there are elements of the animal’s posture, morphology, raised tufts of fur and patterns on the neck and head that are too similar for the images to show two different animals”. The museum said Cabral had cooperated with the investigation and strongly denies the image he took was of a stuffed animal. — AFP

