



2 Kuwait to give priority to Islamic world's concerns



6 Navalny, scores of supporters, detained at anti-Putin rallies



15 Team Al Aalami headed to Brazil for Neymar Jr's Five World Final



16 Stoke relegated from Premier League after Palace defeat



Tens of thousands of flats vacant as expats dwindle

Rent values fall by 13% amid apartment glut

KUWAIT: There are currently 49,130 empty flats in Kuwait and 26,466 others under construction; thus more than 75,000 units need to be "absorbed" by the domestic property market in 4-5 years, according to the Kuwait Real Estate Union. The proportion of occupied property units amounted in the current year to 86.8 percent, dropping by 8.2 percent compared to the past five years - which had soared to 95 percent, said Ahmad Al-Dewaihees, the union's secretary general at a news conference.

Average monthly rent dropped from KD 278.9 (approximately \$920.3) to KD 242 (\$798.6) - 13.2 percent - said Dewaihees, citing a report prepared by the union (Al-Murshed 2017). The report includes a survey covering a sample of 162,576 apartments in 5,695 plots in 19 locations. It studied 875 plots, including 26,466 under-construction residential units in all districts, in addition to 13,535 completed ones, where the proportion of new units amounted to 6.6 percent of the plots.

The rate of expatriates' population growth, which reached 4.8 percent over



Ahmad Al-Dewaihees

the past five years, dropped by two percent in 2017 and will fall by 1.5 percent in the coming five years. As to ownership flats, transactions exceeded 1,000 in 2007 and 2008. Following the global economic crisis, they ebbed by 2012. However, the market recovered, with 973 transactions in 2015, but dropped to 671 in 2017. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Apartment buildings are seen in this aerial view of Kuwait City. — KUNA photos

Hawaii quake triggers fresh volcano eruptions



Lava is seen coming from a fissure in the Leilani Estates subdivision on Hawaii's Big Island on Friday. — AFP

LEILANI ESTATES, Hawaii: Thousands of people have been forced to flee after a magnitude 6.9 earthquake shook Hawaii's Big Island, triggering the collapse of a coastal cliff and prompting fresh eruptions of a volcano that has been spewing lava near residential areas. No injuries have been reported but several homes were destroyed or badly damaged by the quake Friday, the biggest to hit the island since 1975, authorities said. It caused small sea-level changes but no tsunamis.

The US Geological Survey said the quake struck at 12:32 pm (2232 GMT) and was centered on the south flank of the Kilauea volcano, which first erupted on Thursday after a series of tremors. A 5.7-magnitude tremor hit the island earlier on Friday. The quakes prompted the Kilauea volcano, one of five active on the island, to erupt. The quakes temporarily cut power to thousands of households. The Federal Aviation Administration imposed flight restrictions over the area through tomorrow for all but relief operations.

The quakes triggered rock slides on trails in Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, and caused a coastal cliff to collapse into the ocean. Officials ordered a rare closure of the park, which covers more than one-tenth

the island's total area. About 2,600 visitors were evacuated. "It is currently not safe to be here," Park Superintendent Cindy Orlando said in a statement. Video footage showed orange magma gushing up from cracks in the ground and snaking through a wooded area.

Molten lava could also be seen bubbling up through cracks on streets in the Leilani Estates and Lanipuna Gardens neighborhood, where residents were ordered to evacuate on Thursday. The area is home to about 1,700 people and 770 structures, and some 10,000 people live in the broader district potentially impacted. Governor David Ige mobilized the Hawaii National Guard, which deployed about 70 soldiers and airmen to help with evacuation, neighborhood security and other emergency work.

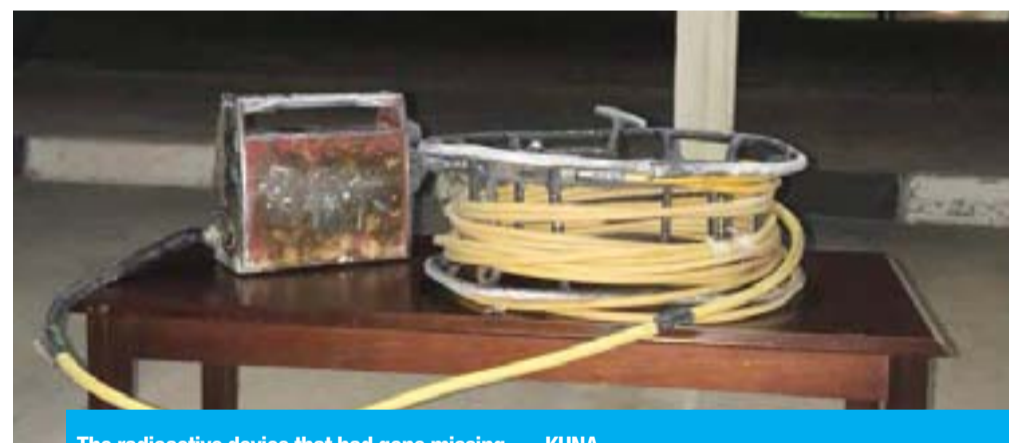
Officials warned of extremely high levels of toxic gas emitted from the volcano. "Hawaii Fire Department reports extremely dangerous air quality conditions due to high levels of sulfur dioxide gas," the Hawaii County Civil Defense Agency said. "Elderly, young and people with respiratory issues need to comply with the mandatory evacuation order," said a statement from the mayor's office.

Continued on Page 11

MoI: Missing radioactive device found

KUWAIT: A radioactive device that went missing from Burgan oilfield in southern Kuwait was found on Friday and was fully sealed, the interior ministry confirmed. It said an expatriate who works in Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) called the ministry to report he found the device near his worksite in Burgan oilfield. He said he did not try to open the device or tamper with it, and that he contacted the ministry after reading the ministry's statement over the missing device.

The ministry, which recovered the device from the expatriate from his house, said the area was scanned and no traces of radioactive materials were found. Media reports yesterday said the man, an Egyptian who lives in Jleeb Al-



The radioactive device that had gone missing. — KUNA

Shuyoukh, was sent for questioning.

The Emergency Radioactive and Nuclear Security Committee had said earlier Friday that the missing radioactive device is small and is completely sealed inside a container. The committee said in a statement it received a call that a KOC contractor discovered a radioactive

device was missing while moving radioactive materials to the company's warehouse. This device, it said, was used in industrial photography at Burgan oilfield. Teams from the committee, civil defense, health ministry, fire department, national guard and army started searching for the container in Zone 10GC. — KUNA

Mars-bound NASA lander blasts off, to study quakes

VANDENBERG AIR FORCE BASE, California: NASA yesterday launched its latest Mars lander, called InSight, designed to perch on the surface and listen for "Marsquakes" ahead of eventual human missions to explore the Red Planet. "Three, two, one, liftoff!" said a

NASA commentator as the unmanned spacecraft blasted off on a dark, foggy morning atop an Atlas V rocket at 4:05 am Pacific time (1105 GMT) from Vandenberg Air Force Base in California, marking NASA's first interplanetary launch from the US west coast.

The \$993 million project aims to expand human knowledge of interior conditions on Mars, inform efforts to send explorers there, and reveal how rocky planets like the Earth formed billions of years ago. "This is a big day. We are going back to Mars," said NASA administrator Jim Bridenstine after the launch. "It is important for our country. It is also important for the world and it

Continued on Page 11



The NASA InSight spacecraft launches onboard a United Launch Alliance Atlas-V rocket yesterday from Vandenberg Air Force Base in California. — AFP

Saudi body retracts call to end gender segregation

RIYADH: A Saudi body seems to have backtracked on a new initiative calling to end prayer-time store closures and gender segregation in public places - potentially divisive reforms for the deeply conservative kingdom. Arabic-language newspaper Okaz reported that the Quality of Life program to improve life in Saudi Arabia had cited both practices as

requiring "immediate change" in order to increase the public's participation in its activities and boost investor confidence.

The article, published on Friday, was later removed. Reuters saw a copy of the document it cited, but a different version posted on an official website did not mention gender segregation or store closures among needed reforms. No time-frame was specified. Loai Bafaqeh, chief executive of the Quality of Life program, refused to comment on the apparent discrepancy. "We are looking into all things that relate to the citizen and resident, including things that involve improving the quality of life, such as families entering sports stadiums and women driving," he told Reuters by phone yesterday.

Continued on Page 11



RIYADH: Saudi women distribute flowers to incoming attendees of the Quality of Life Program 2020 conference in the capital on May 3, 2018. — AFP

Local

Kuwait gives priority to driving off Islamic world concerns: Jarallah

No justification for Islamic nation's backwardness: Bangladesh

DHAKA: Kuwait has vowed to give priority to efforts to address the concerns of the Islamic world in collaboration with the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

The State of Kuwait, which received support to have a non-permanent seat at the UN Security Council, will work as hard as ever giving a priority to dispelling the concerns of the Islamic world, and face challenges, Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah told the Council's 45th Session that kicked off in Bangladesh yesterday. The country will exert utmost efforts to boost the role of the OIC's Council for maintaining the international security and peace, he added. This ministerial session comes at a time when the Islamic world is facing escalating incidents, massive challenges, catastrophes and crises, which prompt detailed research and discussions to face, Jarallah said. He added that Islam and its teachings of toleration are still facing unprecedented distortion by terrorist groups that claim to be Islamic while committing heinous criminal acts.

Despite the victories the world has achieved against terrorist groups and organizations, their danger remains over there, "threatening our security, and the world at large, and undermining our stability, and future," Jarallah noted. "This urges us to carry on with our endeavors and double our efforts, in cooperation with the international community, to eradicate that perilous scourge," he said. "We are also required to explore means of enhancing our Islamic action to face the political, economic and economic challenges facing our Islamic world. Magnitude of challenges and danger requires joint work and efforts to counter," Jarallah said.

Peace process

On the Middle East, the Kuwaiti Deputy Foreign Minister said that the peace process remains at a stalemate, due to Israel's intransigence and challenge of the world's will, as well as the failure to enforce the relevant UN Security Council resolutions.

Jarallah called for driving Israel to accept peace and

the two-state solution in line with the resolutions of the international legitimacy and the Arab Peace Initiative. He noted that the State of Kuwait, through its non-permanent membership at the Security Council, has taken upon itself the task of serious endeavors to revive the Middle East peace file in collaboration with fellow members for a "comprehensive settlement that brings the conflict to a halt and restores security and stability to the world." The Kuwait senior diplomat referred to Syria, "the biggest humanitarian crisis in today's world" that has entered its 8th year, with the largest figures of refugees worldwide, and tens of thousands of casualties, not to mention the enormous devastation in the country.

Impunity has been very striking in the continuation of the most egregious violations of the Security Council resolutions and human rights laws, in Syria he stressed.

Per Kuwait's international, Islamic and humanitarian responsibility, the country, a permanent Security Council member, managed with Sweden to help secure the issuance of Resolution 2401 on Syria to protect civilians and allow relief aid delivery, he said. Kuwait will continue working with fellow Council members for an end to the crisis, he said. Once again, Jarallah noted

that a political solution in Syria is the only way to reach an overall settlement that could help realize the expectations of the Syrian people in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions, especially No 2254, and Geneva I of 2012.

Developments in Yemen

The Deputy Foreign Minister also addressed developments in Yemen and reiterated Kuwait's condemnation of the launch of ballistic missiles from Yemeni territories on Saudi Arabia. These missiles targeted Makkah, and the Kingdom's security and stability, and horrified innocent people, Jarallah said. He commended the efforts of the Saudi-led Arab coalition supporting legitimacy in Yemen to remedy the humanitarian condition in Yemen.

In the meantime, Jarallah wished "brothers in Iraq" successful parliamentary election, by the end of May. He



DHAKA: Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah (right) attends the 45th Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC). — KUNA

hoped final results would reflect representation of all components of the Iraqi people to maintain the country's unity and cohesion, paving the way for a stage of reconstruction. He pointed to Kuwait's hosting of Kuwait International Conference for Reconstruction of Iraq in February, which mustered international success for the country.

Jarallah voiced high appreciation for Bangladesh's efforts to help the Rohingya refugees, victims of brutal aggression and ethnic cleansing at home. He reaffirmed Kuwait's support to the "Rohingya brothers." Kuwait took the initiative and organized the Security Council's first visit to both Myanmar and Bangladesh (April 28-May 1) to inspect the conditions of the Rohingya Muslims. The recent mission was co-led by Kuwait, the UK and Peru, he said. He noted that Kuwait had offered logistic support to secure success for the mission, saying that the country would carry on with humanitarian aid to alleviate the sufferings of the refugees.

No justification

Bangladesh meanwhile called for reshaping 'the joint strategy' of the Arab nations to employ the nation abundant resources to achieve economic prosperity and social progress. Islamic nation constitutes fifth of

the globe population and possesses strategic resources, amid some emerging economies, thus "there is no reason whatsoever to justify backwardness," said Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina, addressing the session.

"Development is one of our rights and economic prosperity is at hand and social progress falls within limits of our capacities thus we must re-design our strategy for joint Islamic action," the premier said. She called on the OIC member states to seek to restore confidence in Islam as a doctrine, tackle menace of sectarianism and stop exploiting religion as a tool to divide societies or serve marginal political goals. As to inter-Islam divisions, the premier called for dialogue to tackle differences among the Muslims. "Spilling blood is unnecessary and useless for settling issues," she pointed out.

She called on Islamic states to take a firm stance on side of the Muslim Rohingya to restore their dignity and security, noting that her nation is hosting more than one million of these oppressed Muslims who fled Myanmar seeking safety and refuge. Premier Hasina called on the international community to coerce Myanmar honor the agreement, worked out with Bangladesh early this year, to secure safe return of the Rohingya. — KUNA

Defense Minister stresses youth motivation

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti young people are the future backbone of the nation, as efforts are being exerted to spur and stimulate them in various realms, First Deputy Premier and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah said. Sheikh Nasser Sabah made the remark while meeting the 'Kafu' youth program committee at Dar al Athar al Islamiyyah (DAI), a Kuwaiti cultural institution, in presence of Undersecretary of the Ministry of Youth Affairs Sheikh Al-Zain Saud Al-Sabah, the Defense Ministry said in a press release.

Supporting young people comes at the behest of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, he said. He quoted His Highness the Amir as having always stressed in his addresses the significant role of Kuwaiti youth, who are the backbone and real fortune of the nation.

The youth program 'Kafu' is a national youth initiative that aims at creating a platform for young people



KUWAIT: First Deputy Premier and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah speaks during a meeting with members of the 'Kafu' youth program committee at Dar al Athar al Islamiyyah. — KUNA

to give views and provide information in diverse areas. The program supervision committee's head, Advisor at the Amiri Diwan Yusuf Al-Ibrahim, thanked Sheikh Nasser Sabah for his continued support to young people. Kafu is the fruit of a national youth project

that was launched in 2013, he said, speaking highly of Kuwaiti youth's interest in sports and small-sized enterprises. He hoped that the initiative would spur Kuwaiti youth to get more engaged in economic and voluntary activities. — KUNA

KJA delegation return from Umrah trip



KJA Secretary Adnan Al-Rashid and Owayyed Al-Sulaili honor Dar Al-Tawheed Intercontinental Hotel's manager Mohammed Abu Harba.



(From left) KJA Chairperson Fatima Hussein, Fatima Al-Azmi, Hosam Al-Mutawwa and Karam Al-Shennawi.

KUWAIT: Kuwait Journalists Association's (KJA) delegation yesterday returned from an Umrah trip organized for KJA members and their families. In this regard, KJA Secretary Adnan Al-Rashid hailed the services the delegation received at the Dar Al-Tawheed Intercontinental Hotel in Mecca, represented by the hotel's manager Mohammed Abu Harba and those of the National Aviation Services (NAS), represented by tourism sector's manager Kamal Abu Kabsha.



The pilgrims at Jeddah airport.

Kuwait embraced Arab innovators in 2017: Minister

KUWAIT: The celebration of Kuwait as 'Capital of the Arab Youth 2017' concludes its activities today amidst distinguished Arab youth participation. Kuwait has succeeded in embracing the creative Arab youth during the celebration which lasted for one year, said Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Mohammad Al-Jabri. He added that a special event will be held at the National Theater at Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Center (JACC) on this occasion-organized by the Ministry of Youth and the Public Authority for Youth.

On this occasion, Jabri said in a press statement that the Ministry of Youth and Public Authority of Youth have dealt with the urgent youngsters' issues and worked to meet their ambitions, highlighted their creations and achieve their aspirations and desires in various fields. During the closing ceremony, winners of the Humanitarian Action Award for Arab Youth will be announced. The award was part of the activities organized by the Public Authority for Youth which contributed to highlight the cultural and humanitarian face of Kuwait and encouraged Arab youth to join the humanitarian and voluntary programs, Jabri noted.

The event will include also the establishment of the Arab Youth Theater Festival, the Arab Youth Cultural Forum, and Youth Media Forum which will aim at highlighting creativity of junior Arabs in cultural, artistic and media fields, the Minister explained. Kuwait has succeeded in setting up many forums during this year, such as Young Leadership Forum, Entrepreneurship Forum, and Intermediate Forum, he continued. Through their organization of these events, Kuwaiti youth have acquired important experience in the organization and management of major events. The Arab Youth Drama "Sunrise" will be screened in the closing ceremony, and the Arabic Youth Song will be presented for the first time in the history of this Arab event.

Jabri wished success of this Arab youth gathering, which will be transferred to the Arab Republic of Egypt and will continue until May 2019, stressing the readiness of Kuwait to provide all support to the brothers in Egypt to complete the march of youth development in the Arab countries. The Capital of the Arab Youth is organized by the Council of Arab Youth Ministers of state member of the Arab League. It started in Bahrain three years ago, continued its journey to Morocco and Kuwait and would proceed to Egypt for a year and then move on to other Arab countries respectively. — KUNA

Local

Shuwaikh Port could be shut down for environmental reasons

After Mubarak Al-Kabeer Port opens post-2019

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Kuwait may close down Shuwaikh Port and nearby plants sometime in the future due to their negative environmental impact on Kuwait Bay, a senior government official said. Director of the Environment Public Authority (EPA) Sheikh Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah did not provide an estimated date for when the key port could be closed, but indicated that this plan is likely to be implemented once Mubarak Al-Kabeer Port opens. The Mubarak Al-Kabeer Port, a major project currently under construction at Boubyan Island, is set to be completed by late 2019, while an opening date is yet to be determined. Shuwaikh Port is considered Kuwait's most important commercial port and covers 320 hectares of land and 120 hectares of water surface.

EPA is about to mandate some state departments to use special treatment plants through which they can contribute to protecting both marine and air environments, Sheikh Abdullah said. He added that factories will be mandated to conduct environmental studies prior to being allowed to expand or operate.

Meanwhile, Sheikh Abdullah added that moving the used tire dump from its current location in Rehaya to a new one will take a year, as the total number of tires has exceeded 24 million, which requires hiring three companies to work on moving them. Once the site is cleared, it will be handed over to the Public Authority for Housing Welfare to be used for housing projects.

International investors

The General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for

Planning and Development plans to update a number of projects to improve the system of following up the five-year development plan and developmental projects' feasibility studies using technological systems that suit international investors. In this regard, informed sources said the report that the secretariat prepared for the 2035 New Kuwait vision was made according to advanced bases with the aim of improving the private sector's business environment and attract more regional and international investors. The program will realize basic infrastructure in industrial areas, free zones, housing areas and new cities, as well as improve local products' quality and increase GDP, the sources noted. The sources added that improving Kuwait's ranking in the communities conditions index will contribute to improving trade, finance, insurance and education rates, which confirms that Kuwait adopts advanced liberal economic policies despite geopolitical developments in the Middle East.

Expatriate teachers

The annual cost of expatriate teachers hired according to the 'second contract' is KD 154 million, while those hired according to monthly payments annually cost around KD 5 million, the Ministry of Education (MoE) said. MoE added that the total number of expats studying in public schools, whether they are children of teachers or other government employees, is 19,000 in various stages, and that each of them annually costs KD 4,300. Responding to a parliamentary inquiry, MoE said that the total rent allowance annually paid to expatriate teachers is KD 14 million, adding that 406 expatriate teachers were laid off in 2016 and 2017 as part of



KUWAIT: This file photo shows containers stacked up at Shuwaikh Port.

its policy to replace expats with citizens.

In other news, MoE is preparing to hand over 102 of its schools to the Ministry of Interior's (MoI) elections directorate starting from Friday, May 11, pending conducting the 2018 Municipal Council elections on Saturday, May 12. In this regard, informed sources said the six educational zone directors are currently following up the preparation and maintenance operations in progress in designated polling stations.

Financial statistics

The finance ministry is about to declare the offi-

cial financial statistics for the previous fiscal year, 2017-2018, in which the deficit exceeded the KD 5 billion limit after deducting the Future Generations Fund share, said informed sources, noting that 85 percent of the sum was covered from the general reserves, while 15 percent was covered through other debit tools. The sources predicted the deficit to remarkably fall during the current and the coming fiscal years thanks to oil price increases, reducing reliance on oil, governance indicators and the improvement in business environments and the state's general economic policies.

local spotlight

Healthcare in Kuwait



By Muna Al-Fuzai

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During the weekend, a video went viral that showed a number of women sitting on the floor waiting to be checked by doctors at Adan Hospital. This hospital is the main general hospital in Ahmadi governorate. The women claimed there are no seats for waiting patients. This short video elicited many negative comments and views on healthcare in Kuwait, and a lot of criticism of the hospital.

This article will not analyze the contents of the video, because there is currently an investigation by the health ministry on the subject. The director of the hospital said these women who were sitting on the ground did so by their own choice, because the hospital provides seats, but some patients do not adhere to the system and prefer to sit in front of the doctor's door. If you have visited Adan Hospital, you would immediately know the reality of the services provided by this hospital. But clearly, this hospital is not able to obtain the satisfaction of many for various reasons, possibly due to its limited services and the large number of patients.

Last year, Global Investment House published an interesting report about healthcare in Kuwait. It mentioned that the number of beds in hospitals will reach around 6,000. It added that despite the increase in the number of beds and nurses every year over the past few years, Kuwait does not meet the current population's needs, which is growing at a higher average rate, which could lead to a collapse in the health system unless sufficient investments are made. I could not agree more.

The report also pointed to the increase in the population in Kuwait and the decline in the number of deaths. This is a good indicator that shows a significant improvement in the level of healthcare in general, but it does not mean a total absence of medical errors or accidents. In Kuwait, medical errors that reach the courts vary from surgical mistakes to misdiagnosis of the patient's condition.

I think we have huge potential and large financial spending on healthcare, but the issue is about health management, which is important. I recently underwent treatment at a private Kuwaiti hospital and I found a great and amazing difference between private and public hospitals. I think people go to private hospitals not only because of the doctors, but the nursing care is much better too, perhaps because the number of patients is less. After all, a private hospital is a private project and business, so maintaining a good reputation is a must.

The population of Kuwait is increasing, with more than 4 million citizens and expatriates currently. This is a large number compared to the number of hospitals and services, so naturally we will keep hearing complaints. I believe that launching commercial and medical partnership initiatives between the government and the private sector is important and has a great need, as well as a positive impact on the local community. Right now we have some pioneering private hospitals that can raise the level of competitiveness among hospitals to attract people. The encouragement of the entry of more foreign investors and more private companies in this important sector is essential now. Such partnerships will ease the government's burden and create new job opportunities to develop the healthcare sector in Kuwait.

Union laments EPA's 'complicated procedures'

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: The Union of Kuwaiti Engineering Offices and Consultant Houses supports government procedures aiming to improving Kuwait's ranking in terms of fighting corruption, improving the business environment and promoting e-services with the aim of attracting more investments, said Chairman Bader Al-Salman, noting that some government bodies have been

very lenient in putting His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah's instructions into practice.

Salman added that Kuwaiti engineering offices and consultant houses play a significant role in protecting the environment in all its studies and projects, and these offices usually study the environmental impact of mega and specialized projects such as industrial facilities, oil refineries, bridges, tunnels

and highways.

However, Salman lamented that the Environment Public Authority (EPA) has been 'complicating things' through demanding its approval prior to executing any standard housing or commercial projects. He added that, for example, EPA urged the Ministry of Public Works (MPW) not to approve linking projects to national sewage grids until owners or investors check with it, so that it could appoint an environmental consultant to study the project's environmental impact before it approves the procedure. "These things prolong the paperwork needed and open more opportunities for corruption," he warned, noting

that the Premier had instructed otherwise and asked to cut short paperwork needed by using e-transactions and licensing.

Salman stressed that EPA can benefit from the experiences of Kuwait Municipality, Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFSD) and the Ministry of Electricity and Water (MEW) in this regard as they provide e-services in both Arabic and English. In addition, Salman criticized EPA's recent statements about not allowing future renewal of car registrations unless they pass EPA exhaust tests. "This is only done in advanced countries that use specialized technical companies," he remarked.

Somoud Camp concludes training year

KUWAIT: The Somoud Camp concluded its 2017-2018 training year and the specialized military and security training courses, in a ceremony held recently under auspices of Kuwait National Guards Undersecretary Lt Gen Hashem Abdul Razzaq Al-Refaie and with the attendance of the Protection and Reinforcement Commander Brig Hamad Salem Ahmad.



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

Local

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: A merchant arranges dates at a market in Kuwait City. Dates are among the top-selling commodities in Kuwait during the holy month of Ramadan, which starts in less than two weeks. — KUNA photo

Organized by NoufEXPO, Kuwait Education Forum (Q8EDU) kicks off tomorrow

Q8EDU will trigger an educational comprehensive renovation initiative

KUWAIT: A NoufEXPO senior official announced yesterday that the first "Kuwait Education Forum" will take off tomorrow at 09:30 am. Q8EDU will be held at Al-Taj Ballroom - Millennium Hotel and Convention Centre Kuwait. The Forum is held under the motto of "Learning is a Lifelong Journey". Q8EDU will be held under the auspices of Dr Hamed Mohammed Al-Azmi, Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education. The NoufEXPO Spokesman, "The Education Minister's patronage reflects Kuwait's support of the educational sector to ensure Kuwait's growth and prosperity. Our thanks are extended to for his patronage and support."

Commenting on Q8EDU motto, the Spokesman added, "Q8EDU motto reflects our belief that education is no

longer a function restricted to the school or the university. In addition, it is no more limited to any age group, specialty, or profession. We hope that this concept gets endorsed by all educational institutions and individuals alike regardless of their status. We also hope that the new technology-driven tools become widely spread to empower educational systems and boost knowledge and practical experience. Organizers look forward to trigger a

nationwide comprehensive renovation initiative of Kuwait's educational system spanning both the public and private educational institutions, as well as parents and non-government organizations."

The Spokesman commented on the participation of many educational institutions from Kuwait and abroad by saying, "We are pleased with the participation of many educational institutions in Q8EDU. We hope that high school graduates in Kuwait, as well as their parents visit Q8EDU's exhibition booths of participating institutions and universities. From Kuwait, we are pleased to welcome Kuwait University, the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training, Arab Open University - Kuwait Branch, Canadian Algonquin College in Kuwait, Kuwait College for Science and Technology, Globe for Training and Consultancy, and Professional Consultants Club. In addition, we welcome

the marketing efforts of our partner, Akhbar Elyoum, that resulted in the participation of Cairo University, Aswan University, Banha University, Menoufia University, Tanta University, Sadat University, Swiss Canal University, and The October 6 University from the Arab Republic of Egypt. The Education Sector of Akhbar Al-Youm will also display their education services at their booth. We aim to provide diverse and excellent options for high school graduates of Kuwait to help them pursue their future university education."

The Spokesman concluded his statement by extending sincere thanks to all those who helped in preparation for this event. Particularly, he extended his thanks to Dr Bader Al-Omar, Dean of College of Education at Kuwait University, and Head of Scientific Committee of Q8EDU. In addition, he extended his thanks to Al-Anbaa Newspaper, the event's exclusive media sponsor, NoufEXPO's team for their professional and relentless organizing efforts, and to all participating organizations and universities from Kuwait and abroad. He wished visitors of Kuwait a nice stay and wished all a successful event.



Featuring universities' booths from Kuwait and abroad

NBK sponsors Loyac's social entrepreneurship program 'KON'

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) is sponsoring Loyac's social entrepreneurship program 'KON'. The program is a social entrepreneurship program that is co-created with Babson College. It aims to introduce young adults between the ages of 12 to 16 to the world business and to turn their ideas into action.

For the second year in a row, NBK will take part in the training sessions that will start on July 1, 2018 until August 8, 2018. Throughout the five-week program, leaders from NBK along with a group of professional leaders' mentors and trainers, locally and regionally will encourage the participants to create a profitable business that solves an environmental challenge.

NBK Public Relations, Team Leader, Yaqoub Al-Baqer said: "NBK's sponsorship and participation in the program comes as a

part of its strategic partnership with Loyac. NBK is dedicated towards supporting talented young people and empowering them towards achieving their goals."

"KON" is one of these initiatives that help invest and support young youths. NBK is elated with the outcome of the program last year and looks forward to seeing the participants moving into key leadership roles in their near future," he added.

NBK believes that investing in human resources is investing in our future. The KON program goes along with NBK's initiatives to invest in youth and support their aspirations. LOYAC is a nonprofit organization that runs several programs for the youth to develop their professional skills, enhance their personal growth and help them find their sense of purpose by extending themselves to others.

Gulf Bank presents INJAZ Kuwait's 'Best Student Company Award'

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank recently sponsored the 'Best Student Company Award' for INJAZ Kuwait's 'Company Program Competition 2018', which was held at the Salwa Sabah Al-Ahmad Hall in the Marina Hotel on April 21, 2018, and was attended by INJAZ Kuwait's representatives, students, volunteers, CPC judges, parents, teachers, partners, sponsors, and supporters.

Twenty one student companies were featured with a total of 200 participating students from private and public schools and universities competing for the "Best Student Company of 2018" award. Gulf Bank sponsored the "Best Student Company of 2018" award, with "Be You" winning in the university category, while "Re-al" claimed the prize for the high school category. General Manager of HR at Gulf Bank Salma Al-Hajjaj was on hand to present the award to the winning teams, while Jennah Al-Mattar, Assistant General Manager of HR at Gulf Bank was part of the judges' panel for the high school category.

"On behalf of Gulf Bank, I would like to congratulate the winners of this year's Company Program Competition and the INJAZ Kuwait team on this successful event. We wish the winning team the best of luck at the regional competition," Mattar said at the ceremony.

"A long-time partner and supporter of INJAZ, Gulf Bank continues its investment



KUWAIT: Winners of the '2018 Best Student Company Award' sponsored by Gulf Bank.

in youth educational programs, and our employees from various department and backgrounds are more than happy to volunteer with INJAZ. Lastly, on behalf of the Bank, I am proud to be recognized by INJAZ as a key contributor to the success of the Company Program Competition," added Mattar.

INJAZ Kuwait, part of the global network of Junior Achievement worldwide, is a non-profit (NPO), non-governmental organization (NGO) driven by Kuwait's private sector. Through strategic partnerships with Kuwait's business and education sectors, and with the help of qualified and dedicated volunteers, INJAZ delivers both Arabic and English language educational programs on entrepre-

neurial and leadership skills to build successful careers.

The programs are designed to narrow social inequities, encourage social engagement, foster creativity and experience, and develop generations of highly skilled individuals. Board members include Omar Kutayba Alghanim, Gulf Bank Chairman and CEO of Alghanim Industries, who is also the Chairman of INJAZ Kuwait, along with Salma Al-Hajjaj, General Manager Human Resources at Gulf Bank, among other notable individuals. Gulf Bank's corporate social responsibility (CSR) program is committed to educational initiatives that make a sustainable impact on youth and in the community.



KUWAIT: Farea Al-Saqaf, Loyac's Chairperson and Yaqoub Al-Baqer, NBK Public Relations, Team Leader, are seen in a group photo with participants and sponsors.

Local

Over 70,000 road accidents in 2017: Interior Ministry

28 motorists arrested, 39 vehicles impounded in Friday crackdowns

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Interior Ministry said that 70,687 road accidents were recorded and nearly five million traffic violations were issued in Kuwait in 2017 leading to 428 accident-related deaths. The figures were released recently by Interior Ministry's acting chief spokesman Brig Gen Tawheed Al-Kanderi. In a statement marking the Arab Traffic Week, Kanderi said it aims to remind motorists of the

importance of abiding by traffic regulations and road safety guidelines. Amongst these violations, he particularly urged against the use of mobile phones while driving, mentioning this was the major cause of these deaths. A total 55,321 tickets were handed to motorists found in violation. The Interior Ministry media department intends to join its Arab neighbors in a spirit of collaboration throughout the week-long

event. It will be handing out brochures and leaflets to the public across numerous government buildings and shopping malls and will launch several public announcements over public and social media platforms, he added.

Separately, the Interior Ministry announced yesterday that 28 motorists were arrested while 39 vehicles were impounded during traffic campaigns con-

ducted in different places around Kuwait Friday night. A total of 96 traffic tickets were issued in the crackdowns that covered the Arabian Gulf Road, Second Ring Road, Damascus Street, Maghreb Expressway, Ibrahim Al-Mezyen Road and Jahra Road, the ministry's Relations and Security Media Department said in a statement, noting that more similar crackdowns are expected throughout this week.

CRIMES

Policeman arrested under the influence

KUWAIT: A policeman was arrested for being under the influence of drugs, and hashish was found on him. A patrol pulled the car he was driving and policemen became suspicious as he seemed nervous, so he was searched and the drugs found.

Muggings mystery resolved

Criminal detectives solved the mystery of eight muggings against expatriates by a female citizen and her deaf-mute boyfriend, who used to lure victims through social media. An Egyptian man complained to Andalus police that he wanted to buy a car he saw on social media, then when he called the phone number, a woman told him to come and test-drive the car. When he arrived, the woman told him her 'husband' is deaf, and will be in the front seat while she sits in the back. He said as soon he started driving, she pulled a knife and demanded all his valuables, so he obliged and gave her his wallet and phone. Detectives were able to identify and arrest the suspects. They found the man is her friend and not her husband. Many wallets and mobile phones were found with them. They were sent to the public prosecution.

Drug possession

Sustained police campaigns in various areas resulted in the discovery of 33 bags of various drugs including shabu, cocaine, Tramadol and hashish. A citizen was caught in Salmiya in an abnormal condition. Another citizen was caught in Shuhada co-op's parking lot with hashish. Three Asians were caught in Salwa with a large quantity of drugs.

Swindler detained

An African swindler was arrested for selling dollars for much less than their actual value, to a point where he was selling \$1,000 for KD 150 and was refusing to deal with customers for amounts less than KD 30,000. The source said when a deal was made, the swindler went to the buyer's place with a machine he filled with blank paper, left it for 10 minutes, then started the machine, and dollars come from the other side. The swindler used to ask the buyer to take the \$100 note to money exchangers to make sure it is authentic, then left the machine with some blank paper and warned them not to print more than \$3,000 per day because the machine cannot bear the load. He then used to take the value of the 'forged' dollars before disappearing. The suspect's arrest was made through an undercover agent, and he confessed that he had swindled 10 customers.

Indecent gesture

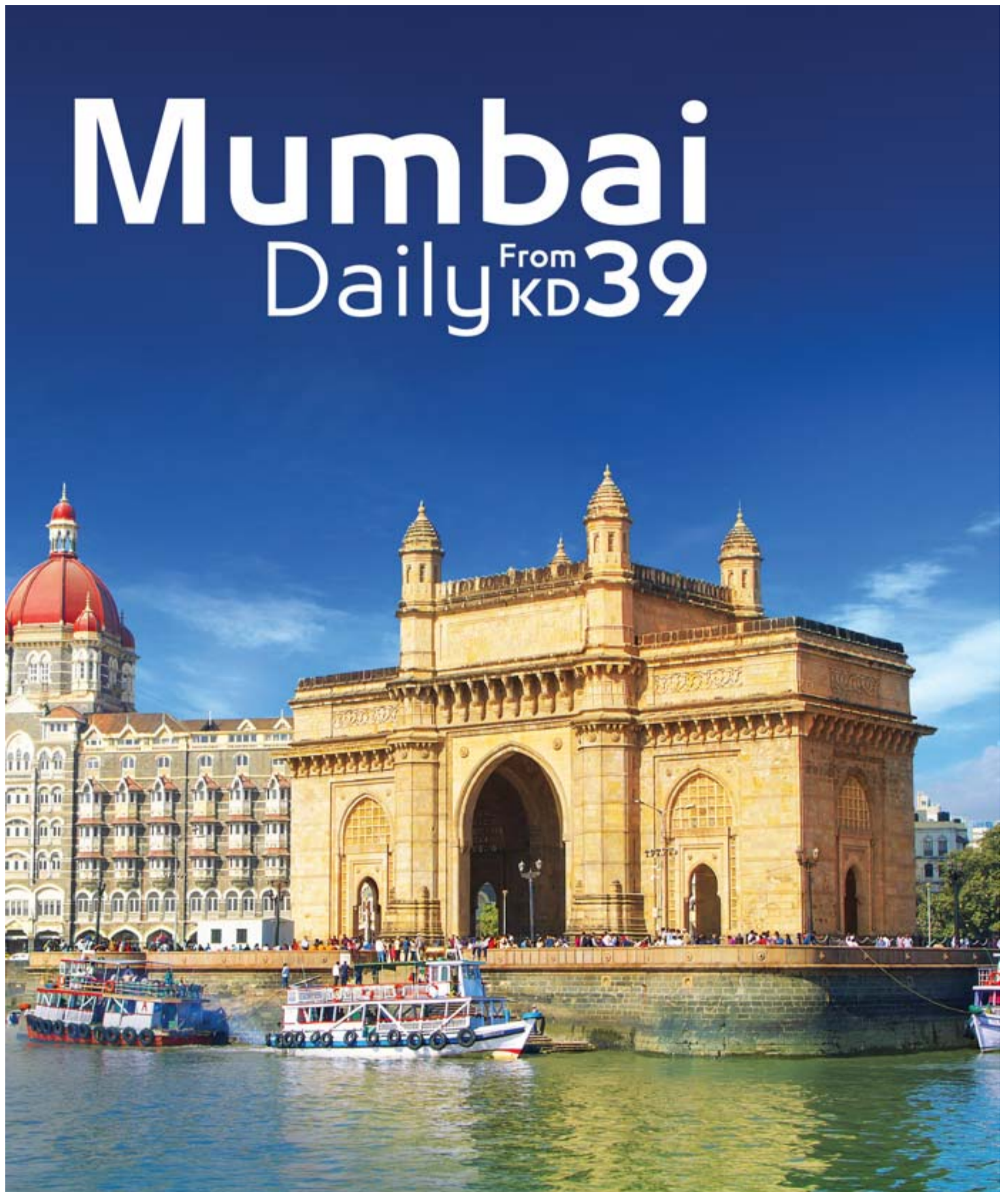
An Arab man was arrested for making an indecent gesture in front of a woman and young girl. Jabriya police received a complaint from a citizen about the expat's act, so a patrol chased him. He will be interrogated before being deported.

Intoxicated

An Asian man was sent to a police station by facilities security men when he attempted to enter a gate while intoxicated. Separately, two citizens were taken to Mubarak Hospital for treatment of injuries sustained during a fight in which sticks and knives were used. — *Translated by Kuwait Times from Al-Rai and Al-Anbaa*

Navy boat sinks, crew rescued

KUWAIT: A Kuwaiti Navy vessel with 11 crewmen on board sank in territorial waters in the Arabian Gulf on Friday evening, the Kuwaiti Army General Staff said. All the crewmen of the capsized vessel, which was on a military mission, were rescued, and the accident caused only material damage, it added in a press release. Investigations were underway to find the cause of the accident, it added. — KUNA



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Britain backs French plan for European defense force

Freedom comes fast for US detainees in N Korea



MOSCOW: Russian riot police officers detain opposition leader Alexei Navalny during an unauthorized anti-Putin rally in Moscow, two days ahead of Vladimir Putin's inauguration for a fourth Kremlin term. —AFP

Opposition leader Navalny detained at anti-Putin rally

More than 1,000 protesters detained nationwide

MOSCOW: Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny was detained along with more than a thousand of his supporters yesterday during nationwide rallies against Vladimir Putin as police used force to break up rallies in Moscow and Saint Petersburg. Riot police beat protesters with truncheons, dragged them along the ground and threw them into police vans in Moscow, in an attempt to disperse a huge crowd that packed Pushkin Square to protest against Putin's swearing-in ceremony on Monday.

Police grabbed Navalny, 41, soon after he showed up at the rally, as some shouted "Shame" in Ukrainian, a famous slogan of the Kiev uprising that ousted a Kremlin-backed regime in 2014. Tear gas was also briefly used, AFP correspondents reported from the scene. Navalny, who was barred from challenging Putin in the March presidential election, had called on Russians to stage a day of rallies across the country under the catchy slogan "Not our Tsar."

Earlier yesterday, protesters rallied in towns and cities in Russia's Far East and Siberia and some of those protests were violently broken up. Independent monitoring group OVD-Info said more than 1,000 people had been detained by police nationwide. Of them, more than 470 were detained in Moscow and more than 50 in second city Saint Petersburg. Police—which put the Moscow turnout at 1,500 people—warned it would use force and

"impact munition" against the demonstrators.

Scuffles also broke out between Navalny's supporters and pro-Kremlin activists who descended into the square in an apparent effort to sabotage the opposition demonstration. Anti-Kremlin protesters chanted "the fourth term-in prison" and "sick of you." In Saint Petersburg, several thousand people marched along Nevsky Prospect, the city's main thoroughfare, chanting "Putin is a thief" and "Down with the tsar". When police tried to stop the unsanctioned march, protesters pelted them with eggs and water bottles, an AFP reporter said.

'Putin not a tsar'

"The country needs changes," said a 20-year-old protester, Stepan Duvanov. "Putin is not a tsar to be sitting (at the Kremlin) forever." Elsewhere, many protesters were also detained in a rough manner, observers said. In the Urals city of Chelyabinsk more than 160 people were

detained, while 35 were arrested in the eastern Siberian city of Krasnoyarsk, said OVD-Info. Seventy five people were detained in the northern city of Yakutsk, while twenty six people including several miners were detained in Novokuznetsk in southwestern Siberia, OVD-Info said.

A number of Navalny's activists were also arrested across Russia ahead of the protests on Friday. "Craven old man Putin thinks he is a tsar," Navalny said on Twitter ahead of the demonstrations. Observers had expressed fears that the protests could lead to mass arrests after similar rallies in 2012 led to a huge crackdown on the protest movement. In May

2012, tens of thousands took to the streets to protest Putin's inauguration for a third Kremlin term, with rallies descending into clashes with police. Criminal charges were brought against around 30 demonstrators and many of them were sentenced to prison terms of between 2.5 years and 4.5 years.

The 65-year-old Putin, who has ruled Russia for almost

two decades, was re-elected for a fourth Kremlin term in March. He recorded his best ever election performance with more than 76 percent of the vote. Independent monitors said the election was marred by a lack of genuine competition even though fewer irregularities were reported than in previous years.

Journey of an invader

This year Putin's minders are planning a fairly low-key inauguration ceremony that will not include a lavish Kremlin reception in an apparent effort to eschew any bad publicity. TV Rain, an independent channel, reported Friday, citing informed sources. In 2012, Putin's black cortège raced through the deserted streets of Moscow on the way to his third Kremlin inauguration with authorities cordoning off roads, in what many saw as a major faux pas.

This time Putin will instead meet with volunteers who took part in his election campaign, the television channel said. Speaking on radio, prominent political analyst Stanislav Belkovsky said that throwing a Kremlin banquet for the elites "when the number of poor people is sharply rising due to Western sanctions and counter-sanctions" is now seen as an unaffordable luxury. Belkovsky said many people saw Putin's sweeping through deserted streets in the capital in 2012 as a "journey of an invader." —AFP



The country needs changes



New York celebrates commuter ferry 'success story'

NEW YORK: In a city beset by transport woes, the ferry from Brooklyn and Queens to Manhattan is a New York success story, pleasing commuters, delighting tourists and outperforming expectations on its first anniversary. On a swelteringly hot May afternoon, businessmen, school children, families and tourists queue down the pier, waiting to board a boat for the East River with an impressive view of the New York skyline.

At only \$2.75 per head, with an onboard bar, it's the same price as a sweaty, frequently delayed and often dirty subway ride, a bargain gratefully snapped up by those living close enough to the water to enjoy it. "It's been a lot easier to commute," admits Vivian, a 32-year-old designer from Long Island City, who doesn't want to give her last name. "Of course there are times when it gets pretty full, but it is pretty consistent."

"It's a lot less stressful than the subway," agrees Emily Lynch, 22, a recent New York arrival. "There's not as many crazy people on the ferries." While the city's 8.5 million residents are increasingly fed up with chronic subway delays,

complaints about the ferry focus on their popularity: long queues at peak times and services that some want more frequent than once every 25 minutes during the week and once an hour at weekends.

In a US financial capital infamous for its high prices, tourists are also fond of the ferries and the chance to take in the magnificent Manhattan skyline, with trips recommended in guide books for the thrift-conscious. Ridership reflects such enthusiasm. City hall recorded 3.7 million passengers in the first year. Two new routes plan to take in the Bronx and the Lower East Side by the end of the summer, raising the total number to six.

Twice as many passengers as thought

City officials now predict that ridership could reach nine million by 2023, nearly double initial estimates. Democratic Mayor Bill de Blasio has set aside \$300 million over the next five years for new 350-passenger capacity ferries, improvements to piers and docks, and a second homeport where ferries will be maintained. "New Yorkers have spoken. We are going to need bigger boats. We're gearing up to meet the extraordinary demand," he said Thursday.

Roland Lewis, president and CEO of the Waterfront Alliance who pushed for the ferry service for years, attributes the success to many factors: new boats, the right price and reasonably frequent operations. "It has really changed people's lives," he said. "It's opening up people's eyes to the city from a whole new



NEW YORK: A NYC Ferry crosses the East River on its way to the East 34th Street landing in New York. —AFP

perspective: for the first time in their lives hundreds of thousands of people are seeing their hometown from the water." Supporters say the ferry is helping to rejuvenate coastal communities in outer boroughs, typically former industrial areas, although there are also complaints about rent hikes in a city forever gentrifying.

What remains unclear is whether a less progressive mayor in the future or leaner economic times could spell the end of the hefty subsidies. The city cur-

rently estimates that it spends \$6.60 on each journey—more than double what passengers pay.

Thursday's announcement of the additional \$300 million fanned criticism against de Blasio. Some accuse him of favoring the ferries at the expense of the bus or the subway, which serve many areas inaccessible by boat. Lewis, however, is unapologetic. "I'd like to see a ferry to La Guardia Airport and to Kennedy Airport," he said of the city's two aviation hubs. —AFP

Police arrest 14 after teen raped, burned to death in India

NEW DELHI: Police arrested 14 men yesterday after a teenager was raped and burned alive at her home in eastern India, in the latest case of sexual violence in the country. The 16-year-old was abducted from her home when her family was away to attend a wedding and raped in a forested area of Jharkhand state on Thursday, a local police officer said. The family complained to the village council which on Friday ordered two accused men to do 100 sit-ups and pay a fine of 50,000 rupees. Village councils of local elders often settle disputes, bypassing India's lengthy and expensive judicial system. Although they carry no legal weight, they exert massive influence over rural life. Police said the punishment enraged the men, who beat the girl's parents before setting her on fire.

"The two accused thrashed the parents and rushed to the house where they set the girl ablaze with the help of their accomplices," Ashok Ram, the officer in charge of the local police station, said. Ram said they had arrested 14 men over the case so far although the main suspect was still on the run. Jharkhand Chief Minister Raghubar Das said he was shocked by the "gruesome incident" and called for stringent action against the culprits. The incident comes as India reels under a string of violent sexual crimes despite tightening of laws.

On Friday, a 55-year-old man allegedly committed suicide after being accused of raping a nine-year-old in southern Andhra Pradesh state, the Press Trust of India reported. Protests have been held across the country since horrific details emerged last month about an eight-year-old girl being gang-raped and murdered in Jammu and Kashmir. —AFP

International

Britain backs French plan for European defense force

Initiative to help maintain defense ties with EU after Brexit

SOPIA: Britain is backing a French plan to create a European military intervention force as a way to maintain strong defense ties with the EU after Brexit, a minister said yesterday. British junior defense minister Frederick Curzon said London was "very keen to support" French President Emmanuel Macron's plan for a force that could be deployed rapidly to deal with crises. The force, known as the European Intervention Initiative, would be separate from other EU defense cooperation, meaning there would be no obstacle to Britain taking part after it leaves the bloc.

"We're very keen to support President Macron in this initiative," Curzon said as he arrived for a meeting of EU defense ministers in Sofia. "We look forward to sitting down with our French colleagues to work through the ideas that they have formulated for a more efficient and joined up security and defense system across Europe. We think it has a real part to play." Twenty-five EU countries signed a major defense pact in December, agreeing to cooperate on various military projects, but it is not clear whether Britain would be allowed to take part in any of them after it leaves the bloc.

London has always resisted moves to create anything resembling an "EU army" but it has also stressed it wants to continue to have close security ties with the EU after Brexit.

Curzon said the intervention initiative could play an important role in this. "It certainly will help to achieve what we are looking for, which is a deep and special partnership with our European colleagues in defense and security," he said.



Very keen to support



Small and decisive

The EU this week announced plans to spend nearly 20 billion euros on defense in its budget for 2021-2027, most of which will go on research and developing new military technologies for the bloc. But December's defense cooperation agreement, known by the acronym PESCO, did not include plans for an intervention force. The EU has had four multinational military "battlegroups" since 2007,

but political disagreements have meant the troops have never been deployed.

Paris hopes that by focusing on a smaller group of countries its new initiative will be able to take action more decisively, freed from the burdens that sometimes hamper action by the 28-member EU and 29-member NATO. "The initiative is a way of cooperating between countries with the right operational or support capacities and which are willing to use them wherever it seems necessary and useful," French Defense Minister Florence Parly said in Sofia.

Parly used yesterday's meeting to detail the plan to fellow defense ministers and held one-on-one talks with EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini to assure her it would not compete with PESCO. "We had to explain in concrete terms what it involves and reassure some of our partners about the way this initiative is being coordinated with everything the EU is in the process of doing," she said. The nine countries that have expressed interest in joining France in the initiative, which reportedly include Germany, Italy, Spain and Estonia, will meet in June to formalize the plan, Parly said.



LONDON: This file photo shows an EU flag and a Union flag held by a demonstrator seen with Elizabeth Tower (Big Ben) in central London.—AFP

France has been keen to build a multinational force that could intervene abroad as it did in Mali in 2013. But Parly said that missions could also include evacuating nationals from hotspots, and that countries unwilling to commit troops to combat could contribute with logistics. The initiative stands outside

PESCO, but Mogherini was at pains to stress that it would be complementary. "There is full coordination, there is full coherence," Mogherini said. "What I see is the intention from the French side to make the future initiative they have in mind perfectly coherent with the work we're doing on PESCO."—AFP

Thousands stage anti-Macron protest in Paris

PARIS: Thousands of people demonstrated in central Paris yesterday amid a heavy police presence to protest against President Emmanuel Macron's sweeping reforms, a year after he came to office. Some 2,000 security forces including riot police were deployed as marchers gathered from midday in warm early summer sunshine in the central Opera square for a protest dubbed a "Party for Macron", a tongue-in-cheek "celebration" of the 40-year-old centrist's first anniversary in power.

Smaller rallies took place in the southern cities of Toulouse and Bordeaux while the Paris variant kicked off with a mass picnic which drew numerous families. Organizers had urged participants to attend in a party mood—but the high security owed much to hundreds of black-clad youths having torched cars and a McDonald's restaurant during traditional May 1 demonstrations in the capital, prompting fears that more "black bloc" protesters could hijack Saturday's event.

One protester held aloft a placard with the words "Macron is disgusting," a play on words to show his feelings about the president and the fast food chain. Organizers insisted the march from Opera to the Bastille area, east of the city centre, would be "joyful and festive."

Worried about violence

But government spokesman Benjamin Griveaux had expressed fears Friday that the demonstration could turn violent. He noted that the protest's name, the "Fete a Macron", can have a double meaning in French—either celebrating someone, or trying to do them harm. "We are worried that there could be violence, and so we're reinforcing security measures," Griveaux said, adding the police role was to ensure peaceful demonstrations could go ahead.

Some supporters of the left-wing populist La France Insoumise party (LFI) brandished anti-Macron banners with slogans including "down with the president of the



PARIS: People carrying banners demonstrate along a main thoroughfare in the French capital Paris during a rally dubbed a 'Party for Macron' against the policies of the French president on the first anniversary of his election.—AFP

rich," "no to a social coup d'etat" and "for a Sixth Republic." The protest is the latest in a series of large street demonstrations against Macron, whose overhauls of everything from the education system to the state rail operator have been causing friction with various groups.

The demonstration was organized by firebrand LFI lawmaker Francois Ruffin and other ex-members of the Nuit Debout (Up All Night) leftist movement that staged nocturnal rallies across France in 2016. Ruffin said this week that Macron may have won a democratic election last May but "democracy does not mean shutting up for five years". "People have the right to challenge him," said Ruffin, a journalist whose documentary "Merci Patron",

about a poor couple who take on France's richest man, captured an angry zeitgeist and filled cinemas in 2015.

Numerous university faculties meanwhile remain blocked by protests against Macron's plans to make university access more selective, causing major disruption to students starting their summer exams. And Friday marked the latest in a series of rail strikes as train drivers and other staff object to Macron's overhaul of the SNCF, aimed at reducing its massive debts and making it more competitive. Many French leftists have called for Macron's opponents, from students to striking rail workers, to join forces in a re-run of the massive May 1968 protest movement that shook France exactly half a century ago.—AFP

Divisions resurface as Germany fetes Marx at 200

TRIER, Germany: Germany marked the 200th anniversary of Karl Marx's birth yesterday, but celebrations risked being marred by protests as the revolutionary philosopher remains a divisive figure almost three decades after the fall of the Berlin Wall. Marx's birth city of Trier led commemorations of the man officials describe as a "great son of the city", with 600 events planned around the 19th-century scholar hailed for foretelling the ills of capitalism.

The centerpiece of the festivities will be the unveiling of a 5.5-metre tall statue of the philosopher—a gift from communist China—with dignitaries including a Chinese delegation and the head of Germany's Social Democratic Party to attend. But it is also before the statue that the association representing victims of communism have called protests against the thinker they blame for inspiring Stalinist regimes.

"We want to protest loudly against the unveiling of the Marx statue and raise our voices against the glorification of Marxism," said Dieter Dombrowski, president of the Union of the Victim Groups of Communist Tyranny. For Dombrowski, Trier's decision to accept the gift from China is "disrespectful and inhuman" to those who suffered under communist regimes. Far-right party AfD, which enjoys strong support in former East German states, has meanwhile separately called a silent march with the theme "Get Marx off the pedestal" through Trier's city centre.

Neither glorify nor vilify

Born May 5, 1818 in the western German city close to the border with Luxembourg, Marx developed his theories as the Industrial Revolution gathered pace. His works such as the Communist Manifesto and Das Kapital subsequently became compulsory course material in countries under communist regimes, with

revolutionaries from Vladimir Lenin to Mao Zedong seizing on Marx's ideas.

China's President Xi Jinping on Friday said the Asian giant's communist party will forever remain "guardians and practitioners" of Marxism, while Vietnamese leader Tran Dai Quang also penned a gushing commentary marking Marx's birth. Due to Marx's reputation as the Father of Communism, he was largely derided in the former capitalist West Germany during the Cold War.

But since reunification, and particularly over the past decade, unbridled capitalism and its discontents have fuelled renewed interest in Marx's work. His theories on inequality and oppression of the working class find resonance today as societies once again see social and political upheaval. Rainer Autz, director of a company set up to oversee the exhibitions on Marx's life, works and legacy, said that more than a quarter century after reunification it was now time to reexamine the philosopher who left Germany deeply divided.

"We're not looking to glorify or vilify him. But we want to show him as a person in his time, as well as show where he may have gone wrong," Autz said. Speaking in Trier on Friday, European Commission chief Jean-Claude Juncker said that Marx "wasn't responsible for all the atrocities for which his supposed heirs must answer." But the gigantic statue gifted by Beijing has sparked accusations of a city seeking to capitalize on Chinese tourists or investments.

Rejecting the claims, Trier mayor Wolfram Leibe said it is simply "a gesture of friendship" from China. "There isn't a single Chinese company in Trier. We have no economic relations with China and that means we made this decision autonomously. We are not susceptible to blackmail," he said.

Leibe acknowledged that the statue could become a vandalism target, but said: "that isn't going to give me sleepless nights. It can simply be cleaned up." The row over Marx and his legacy has also taken on a further political dimension over the AfD's planned silent march. A group of counter-protestors want to make themselves heard against the far-right party, saying the AfD's controversial ideas against migrants constituted a "violation against humanity".—AFP



TRIER, Germany: A statue of German revolutionary thinker Karl Marx is pictured after it was unveiled in Marx' native city Trier, southwestern Germany.—AFP

Seven Polish miners missing after quake hits coal pit

WARSAW: Seven Polish miners were missing yesterday after a quake hit a coal mine in the country's southern Silesia region, the national mining office said. The quake, whose cause was not yet clear, hit the Zofiwka mine at 11:00 am about 900 meters below ground level, and all the other miners have been rescued, Anna Swiniarska-Tadla, a spokeswoman for the WUG mining office said. Rescuers have not been able to access the area due to high levels of methane. Coal is the main energy source in Poland with 65.5 million tons mined in the country last year.—AFP

Trump says date, place set for North Korea summit

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump on Friday said the date and location have been set for a meeting with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, building suspense for the unprecedented talks, as South Korea said it would oppose a withdrawal of US troops from the area. The White House has said the first meeting ever between sitting US and North Korean leaders could take place in the coming weeks. Trump is to push North Korea to give up its nuclear weapons.

The demilitarized zone, or DMZ, between North and South Korea, and Singapore are among the top choices being considered for the summit. Trump this week expressed a preference for the DMZ but also said Singapore was possible. The Peace House at the DMZ was the venue for a meeting last month between Kim and South Korean President Moon Jae-in. The White House announced that Trump will host Moon at the White House on May 22, in talks aimed at demonstrating allied unity before the Trump-Kim summit.

The Moon visit was announced after Trump's national security adviser, John Bolton, met with his South Korean counterpart, Chung Eui-yong, at the White House on Friday. Chung told reporters afterward that it was "unacceptable that the issue of the US forces Korea keeps being raised." The New York Times said Trump had asked the Pentagon for troop withdrawal options, although Trump said it was not true and Bolton called the report "utter nonsense."

"Now, I have to tell you, at some point into the future, I would like to save the money," Trump told reporters. "But troops are not on the table." The White House said in a statement late on Friday that Bolton and Chung said there are no plans to change the US-South Korea bilateral defense posture. Trump, a former reality TV star who likes to build suspense about upcoming presidential news, did not give a date or location for the North Korea summit, and White House officials did not immediately provide further clarity.

Trump told the National Rifle Association's annual convention in Dallas on Friday that he had toned down his rhetoric in anticipation of the talks after labeling Kim "Little Rocket Man" last year and threatening him with "fire and fury." "I won't use the rhetoric now," he said. "Now I'm trying to calm it down a little bit." The US government is looking into reports that three Americans arrested in recent years in North Korea had recently been relocated from a labor camp to a hotel near Pyongyang, as expectations grow that they will be released before the summit.

White House spokeswoman Sarah Sanders said on Thursday that if North Korea were to free the three Americans, "We certainly would see this as a sign of good will" ahead of the Trump-Kim summit. Trump, speaking to reporters outside the White House, suggested activity was under way involving the captives. "We're having very substantive talks with North Korea and a lot of things have already happened with respect to the (US) hostages. I think you're going to see very good things," Trump said.—Reuters



WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump departs from the White House in Washington, DC, for one day trip to Cleveland, Ohio.—AFP

International

Freedom comes fast for US detainees in N Korea

Confinement range from hotels to windowless shacks

PYONGYANG: Freedom can come with remarkable swiftness for US citizens held prisoner by North Korea, an experience that may await three Americans currently detained by the reclusive nation. After months and even years of hardship, former detainees often say they found themselves boarding a US plane and flown out of the country less than an hour after being told by their captors that they were going home.

Ahead of a diplomatic thaw and planned summit between President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, there were reports the detainees were relocated from a labor camp to a hotel near the North Korean capital of Pyongyang, raising speculation they could be released. "They didn't tell me anything about my release until the last minute. I was in the hospital and taken to a hotel," the longest-held American in North Korea, Kenneth Bae, said in an interview from South Korea.

Once informed of his release in 2014, an American delegation came in and within 30 minutes he was aboard an airplane to take him out of North Korea. From there it was a 24-hour journey via Guam and Hawaii home to Seattle, where his family was waiting. While a prisoner, Bae was forced to shovel coal and haul rocks. He had about 30 guards watching him as their sole prisoner during his two years in captivity, which included hospital stays for the beating his body took from the hard labor.

Since the end of the Korean War, North Korea has taken 17 Americans captive, many of whom were in the country for humanitarian reasons inspired by their Christian faith. Bae and the three Americans currently being held - Kim Hak-song, Tony Kim and Kim Dong-chul - fall into that category. In North Korea, where the Kim family that has ruled the country for more than 70 years is revered as demigods, proselytizing is seen as an assault on the state, punishable by years of hard labor.

Isolated from the world, time seems to halt, former

detainees say. Confinement for the Americans detained by North Korea can range from hotel rooms to cramped, windowless shacks offering little protection from the country's bitter cold. Former prisoners, who also have included tourists and journalists, have said they were interrogated for hours and suffered mental humiliation. A few said the isolation led them to consider suicide.

The United States demands the release of US citizens every time it deals with North Korea, which detains, and releases, them for its own reasons, said a former US official. The former official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said sometimes such releases are arranged and negotiated by the US State Department via the "New York channel" of contacts with North Korean diplomats at the United Nations while others are handled via the US intelligence community.

Time seems to halt

speeds. Jeffrey Fowle, a tourist held for about six months in North Korea for leaving a bible in a sailor's club during his visit, said the day he was released, he was told he was being transferred, and presented with belongings he had not seen for months.

"I thought I was going to the detention camp, or to trial, or something. I went from my guest house to a nearby hotel," he said in a telephone interview from his Ohio home. "Then some well-dressed North Korean man came in and said 'Kim Jong Un has recommended that you be released.' And that was the first thing I heard about it," he said. Otto Warmbier, 22, from Wyoming, Ohio, was imprisoned from January 2016 to June 2017, and was released in a coma. He died a few days later in the United States, with his parents accusing North Korea of torturing him, a charge Pyongyang denies.



PYONGYANG: Kenneth Bae, a Korean-American Christian missionary who has been detained in North Korea for more than a year, appears before a limited number of media outlets in Pyongyang. —Reuters

A few months after Warmbier's death, former detainee Aijalon Gomes, 38, set himself on fire in a San Diego lot in November 2017. Gomes was held for about seven months in North Korea after he crossed into the country from China in January 2010 on what he saw as a religious mission. After his return, Gomes wrote a self-published autobiography

titled "Violence and Humanity," in which he talked about his suicide attempts while being held in North Korea. Bae and Fowle, devout Christians, said their time in North Korea deepened their faith and helped get them through. "Emotionally and psychologically, they (the North Koreans) were trying to wear me out," said Bae. —Reuters

Pakistan army chief signs death warrants of 11 militants

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's powerful army chief has confirmed the death sentences passed by military courts on 11 militants over various attacks on security forces as well as civilians that left dozens dead, the military said yesterday. A statement issued by the military said that in total the assault left 60 dead—36 civilians, 24 armed forces, Frontier Constabulary and police officials—while a further 142 people were injured.

The offenses included attacks on armed forces and other law enforcement agencies, the destruction of various educational institutions and a deadly rampage at Bacha Khan university in the northwest in early 2016

that left 21 dead. "The army chief also confirmed life imprisonment for three convicts," the statement added. Pakistan has been fighting a homegrown Islamist insurgency since 2004, when militants displaced by the US-led invasion of Afghanistan began a campaign in border tribal areas.

The military courts allow the army to try civilians on terror charges in secret, despite strong criticism from rights groups. They were established in the wake of a December 2014 Taliban massacre at an army-run school in Peshawar that killed over 150 people, mostly school children.

Following that attack the government lifted the moratorium on the death penalty. Scores of militants have since been condemned to death. Security has dramatically improved in Pakistan since then. But in April 2017, parliament voted to extend the courts for another two years. Yesterday's statement did not give a date for the executions, but hangings have often been carried out within 24-48 hours in the past. —AFP

Four killed in clashes in Kashmir main city

SRINAGAR: Three suspected rebels and a civilian were killed in a gun battle yesterday in Srinagar in Indian-administered Kashmir, police said, the first in the restive region's main city this year. The three men believed to be militants died in a shootout after government forces surrounded a densely populated neighborhood in the old part of the city, director general of police Shesh Paul Vaid said.

A young man also died after he was hit by an armored vehicle as hundreds of residents tried to help the rebels escape from the military cordon in the heart of Srinagar, a police officer said on condition of anonymity. A paramilitary trooper was injured during the exchange of fire. Since last year gun battles between government forces and militants seeking an end to Indian rule in Kashmir have become more frequent, in a region divided between India and Pakistan but claimed in full by both.

This year the fighting has left a total of 110 dead, according to officials, with 20 civilians, 28 security forces personnel and 62 militants estimated to have died. Yesterday hundreds of residents hit the streets near the site of the firefight, shouting slogans of freedom from Indian rule, witnesses said. The protests and



SRINAGAR: Indian security personnel and protesters clash following a gun battle between security forces and suspected rebels in Srinagar. —AFP

clashes later spread to other areas of the city's old quarters. India has deployed more than 500,000 soldiers to tackle the rising militancy and increasing civilian support for the rebels.

New Delhi is also preparing to deploy elite commandos from its National Security Guard, known as Black Cats, to the disputed territory. India often accuses Pakistan of fuelling the insurgency; a charge Islamabad denies saying it only provides diplomatic support to the Kashmiri struggle for right to self-determination. —AFP

Afghan forces, Taliban battle for control of highway in Ghazni province

KABUL: At least 31 Taliban militants were killed by Afghan security forces backed by US air strikes in Afghanistan's central Ghazni province, as the Afghan army battled to protect a key highway, officials said yesterday. Mohammad Arif Noori, the spokesman for the provincial governor, said the militants were planning to wrest control of an arterial road and had attacked many security check posts. "With the help of US air forces, the Taliban militants have been pushed back from the areas near Ghazni-Paktika highway, but the road is still closed due to serious damages caused by the Taliban," said Noori.

During clashes on Friday, two civilians were killed and

four were injured when a mortar shell hit a home in the Andar district. Andar is one of the unstable districts of Ghazni province, 95 miles southwest of the capital, Kabul. In a separate incident, two militants were killed when explosives went off on a highway in Ghazni. The Taliban confirmed the clashes. The group's spokesman, Zabihullah Mujahid, however, gave a conflicting casualty figure.

According to Mujahid, nine Afghan soldiers and one Taliban fighter were killed. He said 10 Afghan soldiers and three Taliban fighters were wounded in the battle to control Andar district. In April, the militants killed a district governor in Ghazni, his bodyguards and five intelligence agents. The Taliban have stepped up attacks across the country, after they announced their annual spring offensive, a start of the fighting season as the weather allows easier maneuverability through Afghanistan's mountains.

This week suicide bombers in the capital Kabul killed at least 26 people, including nine journalists. According to the top US watchdog on Afghanistan, the number of Afghan security forces fell by nearly 11 percent in the past year, and the vast majority of Afghan forces are incapable of preventing the Taliban from capturing territory. —Reuters

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Ruling parties to keep their clout as Lebanon votes

New voting system raises hope for civil society

BEIRUT: Lebanon elects its parliament for the first time in nine years today, with its ruling parties seeking to preserve a fragile power-sharing arrangement despite regional tensions. The Iran-backed Hezbollah movement and its allies could stand to dominate parliament and reinforce their clout in Lebanon, a small country clamped between war-torn Syria and Israel.

A new voting system has raised some hope for an unprecedented civil society list to make a small dent in the decades-old monopoly of political dynasties but disillusionment is rife in the electorate. The triumvirate heading the state is unlikely to change, with parliament speaker Nabih Berri almost certain to keep the post he has held since 1992 and Prime Minister Saad Hariri also set to stay put.

President Michel Aoun's position is not up for renewal on May 6 but his party is a key player in a dizzying game of alliances which leads allies in one district to be enemies in another. Hezbollah, whose militia outguns the army and is listed by the United States as a terrorist organization, is allied both to Berri and Aoun and is expected to chip at the camp led by Hariri's Sunni-dominated movement.

"Hezbollah and its allies will be the first beneficiaries" of the new electoral law, said pollster Kamal Feghali. A clear win for Hezbollah, which is active in several conflicts in the region, could further fray the nerves of Israel and Washington. Hezbollah is funded and armed by Shiite Iran while Hariri has historically been supported by Sunni regional kingpin Saudi Arabia. But both have appeared ready to continue sharing power and neutralize growing tension between their rival sponsors.

Same alliance

"These three forces will directly or indirectly be at the helm" after the vote, said Sami Atallah, director of the Lebanese Center for Policy Studies. A fifth of this year's 3.7 million-strong electorate was too young to vote in the last legislative polls in 2009. But the widespread perception that self-serving, hereditary and corrupt traditional parties have long sewn up a deal to preserve the status quo could keep many voters away today.

"What is there to be interested in? It's the same names, the same faces, the same joke," said Joumana, a 51-year-old secretary at a clinic in Beirut. "My son and my daughter are doing their university studies in

Europe. That is what's giving them a future, not the Lebanese state." Members of Lebanon's vast diaspora voted abroad for the first time this year, but those who were able to register in time were in small enough numbers that they were not expected to have a major impact on the results.

A music video released this week by two young Lebanese sisters, Michelle and Noel Keserwany, has been doing the rounds on the internet. "We've been fooled by the ruling tricksters," go the lyrics of the satirical song entitled "Again and again", which ridicules Lebanon's political dynasties and urges people to vote them out. The political force that embodies change is a list called "Kulluna Watani" which federates civil society groups, including a movement born of protests over a waste management crisis that erupted in 2015. In private, its leaders and strategists say snatching even one seat in parliament would be an achievement.

Very corrupt

Among the list's candidates with the best chances is Paula Yacoubian, a prominent TV journalist who became a key figure in the election campaign and is one of a record 86 women to run for a seat. "We have a very corrupt cast and there is a movement of brave people trying to tell them: 'We are not happy,'" she said. The challenge of rousing lethargic voters is huge, however. The country has gone through institutional crises that have left it without a president for two years and without a budget for 12 — but many Lebanese argue you could hardly tell the difference.

The new electoral law adopted last year provides for some proportionality but sectarian quotas in each district and astute gerrymandering have diluted its impact. Once tipped as a likely casualty of this election, Hariri now looks set to stay in the seat his billionaire father Rafiq, assassinated in 2005, had before him.

A bizarre sequence that saw him essentially detained in Riyadh and forced to announce his resignation on television last year eventually earned him cross-sectarian support at home and renewed solicitude from key partners France and the United States. "There may be differences of opinion now and sectarian arguments but it's all vote-fishing tactics. After May 6, we'll see these main forces return to rule the country together," Sami Atallah said.—AFP



BEIRUT: A poster of Chamel Roukoz, a candidate for the upcoming Lebanese parliamentary elections, hangs along the highway in Maameltein, north of Beirut.—AFP

Syria rescuers face freeze on US funding

BEIRUT: Syria's White Helmets rescue force are facing a "freeze" on funding from the US, its chief said yesterday, saying he was worried President Donald Trump would suddenly cut support. Raed Saleh said that Syria Civil Defense, also known as the White Helmets, would continue its programming but that financial support coming from the US was under review. "We were not formally told of any halt to funding, but what we were informed of was a freeze to some of the Middle Eastern projects by American organizations, in order to review their feasibility," he said.

"Among them are projects linked to stabilization in Syria, which includes part of the White Helmets' work," Saleh added. Speaking from Turkey, he said the group's plans were being "completely reviewed." "This happens every year but this year, no one can predict President Trump's decisions," Saleh said. The

US State Department said in April that funds earmarked for Syria's "stabilization" were being reassessed, but did not say whether funding for the White Helmets would stop.

Media reports said the White House had instructed the State Department to freeze over \$200 million funds for "recovery efforts" in Syria. The White Helmets' 3,700 members work in opposition-controlled swathes of Syria, which has been caught up in conflict since 2011. The first responders rescue civilians trapped under rubble or caught up in fighting. Since they began work in 2013, more than 200 rescuers have died and hundreds more have been injured.

Last year, a Netflix documentary called "The White Helmets" won an Academy Award for best short documentary, while a second film focused on the group, "Last Men in Aleppo," was a 2018 Oscars nominee. But they have also been the subject of smear campaigns by supporters of Syria's government and its ally Russia, who accuse the White Helmets of being a front group for Al-Qaeda or acting in Western interests.—AFP

Announcement from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry



Recall of a Product

Consumer Protection Department

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry (CPD), Whirlpool Corporation and the local distributor of the products described below, Mabrook Hotel Supplies Co. (for complete details of the local distributor see below) announce, in accordance with the Consumer Protection Law No. 39 of 2014 and its Executive Regulations number 27 of 2015, that they will recall the following products:

Brand and Model:

The following models of the KitchenAid electric kettles which were distributed under the following serial numbers:

Model Number	Serial Number Range
SKEK1722BAC	YA302***** to YA724*****
SKEK1722BER	YA302***** to YA724*****
SKEK1722BOB	YA302***** to YA724*****
SKEK1722BSX	YA302***** to YA724*****

The model and serial number are located on a label on the bottom of the KitchenAid electric kettles and also on the bottom of the KitchenAid electric Kettles base. For ease of reference, please see the pictures below:



The affected KitchenAid electric kettles were distributed in Kuwait from 2014 to present.

In rare circumstances, there exists a potential risk, within the affected field population, of a separation of the connection at the top portion of the kettle handle from the body.

Procedures:

Please stop using the affected KitchenAid electric kettle and contact Mabrook Hotel Supplies Co. at 0096524818242. Please note that preparations are being made to replace consumer's kettles included in this voluntary safety campaign population at no cost to the consumer. Mabrook Hotel Supplies Co. will proactively contact consumers whose contact details are on their records and through product registrations on the website. In these cases, Mabrook Hotel Supplies Co. will proactively facilitate the product replacement process with the consumers.

Additionally, the consumers can go directly to:

<http://www.repair.whirlpool.com>

This website will provide instructions for consumers to register and participate in the voluntary safety campaign at no cost to the consumer.

Further, Mabrook Hotel Supplies Co. will stop selling the affected products. Shipments since July 2017 are not in the affected population and do not contain the issue of the upper handle potentially separating from the main body of the kettle.

Whirlpool Corporation will issue a press release, to facilitate additional communications and instruct the consumer on how to proceed with attaining a replacement kettle.

Contact details:

For any further information, please visit the website <http://www.repair.whirlpool.com> or contact the distributor on the following contact details:

Name of the company: Mabrook Hotel Supplies Co

Physical address: Shwikha Industrial, Street 21 Contact individual: Aya Mohamed Moghnye

Phone number: 0096522204140 / Fax number: 0096524831504 /Email: aya@mabrookco.com

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WASHINGTON WATCH

What is Facebook trying to do?

By Dr James J Zogby

Last week, Facebook made a rather strange and disturbing set of announcements. In response to concerns raised by several civil rights organizations – including my own, the Arab American Institute – about hate groups using their platform to harass and at times, to threaten Black, Muslim, Arab and other minority communities. Facebook executives announced that they were asking Laura Murphy, former Director of the Washington office of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) to conduct an “audit of [Facebook’s] impact on under-represented communities and communities of color.” What was troubling was that Facebook coupled this action with the appointment of former Senator Jon Kyl to conduct a similar audit in response to charges that Facebook has a “liberal bias...against conservative voices”.

While it may be the company's prerogative to appoint whomever they wish, to combine these two audits is insulting to the communities that have been affected by extremist hate on Facebook. It further insults the year-long effort by the civil rights organizations to secure a commitment from Facebook to address their concerns. While conservative groups may have issues with Facebook's alleged “liberal bias”, it is an insensitive and a clear case of false equivalence to compare allegations of political bias with real instances of racist hate.

In addition, there is concern with Facebook's choice of Kyl to conduct the parallel audit with the ACLU's Murphy. While the ACLU has a solid record of defending free speech from both the left and right of the political spectrum, Kyl has been notorious for his partisan associations with, support from, and advocacy for the very groups that have fomented anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant policies.

Anti-Muslim

In the post-9/11 era, Kyl appeared to take it upon himself to serve as the Senate's point person for anti-Arab, anti-Muslim, and anti-immigrant initiatives. A few examples: In 2003, Kyl used his Chairmanship of the Senate Subcommittee on Terrorism, Technology, and National Security to hold what he called an “informational hearing” on Saudi Arabia. The session featured three authors – one of whom was a former United Nations Israeli ambassador – who had written inflammatory anti-Saudi books. Other than their dislike for all things Saudi, what all three authors had in common was the fact that they had never been to Saudi Arabia. In the end, the hearing was more incitement than informational. In 2009, Kyl attempted to pass a series of anti-Arab amendments to that year's budget bill. One of these was especially troubling in that it would have required that “none of the funds appropriated...by this Act be made available to resetttle Palestinians from Gaza into the United States.” Kyl's amendment was inspired by a scurrilous “conspiracy theory” that had been making its rounds on rightwing websites. These theories claimed that President Obama had secretly issued an Executive Order to expend \$20.3 million to facilitate the immigration of Gazans to the US. This story, though patently false – since no such “Executive Order” had been issued – appeared in blogs posted on so many rightwing anti-Arab sites that it became an “urban legend”. Kyl, apparently believing it to be true, decided to potentially hold up the entire budget process with an amendment based on a hoax. After colleagues convinced Kyl that it was untrue, he relented and withdrew the amendment.

Also in 2009, Kyl used his leadership role in the Senate to host an event featuring the notorious member of the Dutch parliament, Geert Wilders. Wilders was in the US, as a guest of organization that has been cited as an “anti-Muslim hate group”. Wilders' views of Islam are deplorable. He has declared that “Islam is not a religion, it's the ideology of a retarded culture.” He also termed Islam a “totalitarian ideology...like fascism,” and once said “I don't hate Muslims. I hate Islam.” At the time of Kyl's event, Wilder was under indictment in his own country for “incitement to hate and discriminate” and had just recently been denied entry to Great Britain as “an undesirable person”.

The timing of the event itself was as disturbing as Kyl's invitation to host Wilder. It took place on the very same day that Senator John Kerry, then Chair of the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee was holding a hearing on “Engaging Muslim Communities Around the World”. Kyl's event was designed to sabotage whatever positive impact might have been generated by the Kerry hearing.

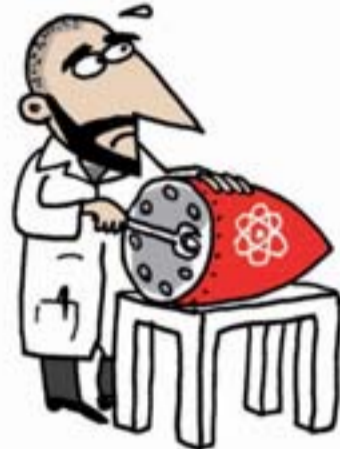
In addition to these three examples, Kyl has established a long record of other deplorable actions, statements, and associations with anti-Muslim activists. He has: warned of a Muslim conspiracy among US military chaplains; railed against “Wahhabi takeover” of US mosques; questioned the loyalty of a prominent and respected civil rights group – Muslim Advocates; opposed the building of an Islamic Community Center in southern Manhattan – which he, and other propagandists falsely claimed was at “Ground Zero”; and has appeared at events sponsored by groups identified as anti-Muslim hate groups.

It is this behavior of the former senator that calls into question Facebook's action and raises the concern that Kyl's flawed judgment and biases may end up undoing whatever good may come out of the audit that is to be done by the ACLU's Murphy. It is not unreasonable to ask whether or not, unlike Kyl's hosting of Wilder to counter Kerry's hearing, “will the very same Facebook entries that Murphy cites as extremist and hateful be countered by Kyl's charge that this is evidence of liberal bias against conservatives?” While I'm sure this is not their intention, an objective observer may be left wondering if this act of false equivalence is a deliberate effort by Facebook to avoid taking corrective measures to counter the extensive trafficking in hate on their platform?

NOTE: Dr James J Zogby is the President of the Arab American Institute

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TOLERATE
NUCLEAR DETERRENCE
EQUILIBRIUM !!!



Nuclear deal a challenge for Rouhani

Iran's hardliners are preparing to bring President Hassan Rouhani to heel if US President Donald Trump scraps Tehran's nuclear deal with major powers, officials and analysts believe. Trump has threatened to abrogate the 2015 agreement by not extending sanctions waivers when they expire on May 12, if Britain, France and Germany do not “fix” its “terrible flaws”. This sets the stage for a resurgence of political infighting within Iran's complex power structure, Iranian officials said.

Annulment of the accord could tip the balance of power in favor of hardliners looking to constrain the relatively moderate Rouhani's ability to open up to the West. While the spotlight is on Trump's eventual decision there will be a display of unity in Tehran, a senior Iranian official told Reuters, on condition of anonymity. “But when the crisis is over, hardliners will try to weaken and sideline the president,” the official said.

Nor can the president expect any weakening of Iran's system of clerical rule as a result of the uncertainty surrounding the nuclear deal, meaning “Rouhani will be in a no-win situation”, said a relative of Supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. For Rouhani the stakes are high. If the deal falls apart, he could become politically vulnerable for promoting the 2015 accord, under which non-nuclear sanctions were lifted in return for Tehran curbing its nuclear programme.

“It will also lead to a backlash against the moderates and pro-reformers who backed Rouhani's detente policy with the West ... and any hope for moderation at home in the near future will fizzle out,” said political analyst Hamid Farahvashian. It is a delicate balance. Khamenei knows that Iranians, many of whom took to the streets earlier this year to protest against high food prices, can only take so much economic pressure.

Weakened

But the establishment does not want too much of an opening to the West, despite the likely economic benefits. A weakened Rouhani, unable to push such policies, is likely to serve out his term, which ends in 2021, another senior official said. “His removal would be a sign of weakness for the system. It would harm its legitimacy abroad,” the official said. “But he will be blamed and pressured for the economic malaise.”

Khamenei gave guarded backing to Rouhani when he

opened the door to nuclear diplomacy with world powers in order to end Iran's economic and political isolation. But the Supreme Leader's aversion to the United States remains a formidable barrier to any diplomatic solution now, so a Trump withdrawal would make it hard for Rouhani to pursue better relations with the West. “The internal politics will make it difficult, if not impossible, for Rouhani to pursue detente with the West and make concessions in return for economic gains,” said another Iranian government official.

The European signatories of the deal have tried to persuade Trump not abandon it because they want to keep trading with Iran. Despite threats to walk away if Trump buries the deal, several Iranian officials said that “as long as Tehran was not excluded from the global financial and trading system” it could consider respecting the accord.

Guards

But many foreign firms are hesitant to invest in Iran, worried by unilateral U.S. sanctions imposed over human rights violations, terrorism, and the dominant role of the Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) in Iran's economy. That is another area where Rouhani is exposed. He has sought without much success to curb the economic activities of the IRGC in order to attract foreign investment. But under the command of Khamenei, the IRGC has ignored the government's attempts to limit its involvement in the economy.

If the nuclear deal collapses, what power Rouhani has to limit that involvement will decline further, boosting hardliners who want to see the president's powers reined in. The IRGC has done well since the sanctions relating to the nuclear deal were lifted, using front companies with no

obvious link to the Guard to serve as a conduit for investors returning to Iran. If sanctions are reimposed as a result of the collapse of the nuclear deal, the Guard is well placed to evade them.

“Considering their vast business network and political and military influence, the IRGC will be back to the business of evading sanctions as they did for years in the past,” said a western diplomat in Tehran. The IRGC stepped in when European oil companies abandoned energy projects after the United States and the European

Union imposed sanctions in 2012. “Sepah (the IRGC) is an asset for Iran. They protect Iran whenever needed ... They rescued the economy when the enemies wanted to crush us with sanctions,” said a headline politician who declined to be identified. “If European investors yield to America's pressure and leave Iran, then Sepah will take over,” he said.

Concerns over possible Israeli military action against Iran's nuclear facilities have empowered the IRGC, which runs security at home and abroad. But experts believe that even under the umbrella of an emboldened IRGC, hardliners might hesitate to apply harsh policies, fearing a revival of the anti-government protests in January that showed the establishment was vulnerable to popular anger fuelled by economic hardship. —Reuters



In China, trade war threat casts long shadow

At its high-tech laboratories in the Chinese manufacturing hub of Shenzhen, Beike Biotechnology is developing medical robots that could help treat cancer. It has big plans to export these to markets like the United States. Those plans are now under threat. The robots, which help develop cell cultures used in stem cell therapies, are on a sprawling list of products threatened with steep US tariffs amid a simmering trade standoff between Washington and Beijing. The company is already factoring US tariffs into its plans and order pipeline for next year and has tasked its sales teams with finding new markets to make up an expected shortfall from the United States. Beike, a domestic leader in stem cell technology with government support and long-standing ties overseas, illustrates the stakes for China Inc after Washington and Beijing kicked off trade talks on Thursday and ended Friday.

Led by US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and Chinese Vice Premier Liu He, the talks were aimed at defusing tensions between the world's top two economies and avert a full-blown trade war that could rattle companies in the United States and China. Officials from both countries reached a consensus on some aspects of the trade dispute, but disagreements over other issues remain “relatively big”. China's Xinhua news agency said. The talks were held amid signs that trade frictions are

growing. China's major ports of entry have increased checks on fresh fruit imports from the United States, five Chinese industry sources told Reuters.

In the meantime, manufacturers are watching developments nervously. “The trade sanctions between China and the US will certainly have a huge impact on us,” Hu Xiang, Beike's founder and chairman, said at the firm's Shenzhen headquarters. “We are developing a completely automated cell culture robot, which comes within the scope of the tariffs,” he said. He added that the company had received significant purchase intent orders from US buyers that could be hit hard.

The machines have various robotic parts which move the cell cultures and keep them in a controlled environment as they grow. The United States is threatening to slap tariffs of 25 percent on over 1,300 Chinese products, including medical devices, robots and sewing machines, valued at around \$50 billion. That follows levies on aluminium and steel. The US tariffs could go into effect in June following the completion of a 60-day consultation period. China has threatened retaliation in equal measure, including tariffs on major US exports like soybeans and aircraft.

Expansion Plans

Beike is not alone. Interviews around China with business leaders in medical devices, apparel, manufacturing, steel products, printing and others underscore how broadly the trade war threat is being felt. Some are already seeing tangible impacts and are shifting sales elsewhere or scrapping factory expansion plans as US orders drop. Others are grappling with the uncertain outlook the trade war threat brings.

China's state media said on Friday that reaching a deal to avert a trade war would not be easy and “failure would herald a slugfest of tariffs that would leave global trade reeling”. Other companies that could be hit include the likes of Hebei Huayang Steel Pipe Co Ltd, a manufacturer in the city of Cangzhou in eastern Hebei province that has seen US orders dry up over the last few months as trade tensions have risen.

The firm makes metal pipes used for transporting things like oil, gas or water which it said normally take three months to produce and ship to clients. US buyers were worried about paying extra tariffs if the policy came into effect, Steven Yue, a sales manager at the Hebei-based firm, said at the company's manufacturing facility. “We were planning to expand in the United States this year,” he said. Yue added that the company would now look to adjust its plans for the US market in the expectation that a new tariff policy would come into effect. Yue said US buyers would still need to buy the products from somewhere, and there would likely be more trans-shipments, whereby products avoid tariffs by being sold to middlemen in a third country before being shipped to the United States.

In the southern city of Dongguan, another firm, Wagon International Co Ltd, is seeing a weaker performance from US sales of its metal accessories for luxury brands and its soccer merchandise that it makes as an authorized partner of FIFA – although it's not all trade related. “Because they didn't get into the World Cup, sales forecasts there are about 60-70 percent lower than what we had estimated,” Perry Chou, Wagon's vice president told Reuters, referring to the United States. He added that trade frictions would however hit others areas of the firm's business.

‘Going to war’

In the port city of Ningbo, Joan Lu is anxious about rising pressures on the price of the fabric printers her company sells – 40 percent of which go to the US market – as clients look for discounts to offset higher import levies. “The whole industry is worried,” Lu said. “Future orders from clients will certainly come under pricing pressure, that's for sure.” Lu added: “It's not just a little extra – it's 25 percent. If we're talking a \$10,000 deal then you'd be adding \$2,500.” Lu said her company would not abandon the US market. “but we are putting all our energy into developing other markets”.

The United States is China's largest trading partner with \$506 billion worth of US imports from the country last year, according to US trade data. A large trade surplus with the United States is partly behind recent tensions. In Yiwu – a sprawling city known for exporting huge volumes of gadgets, toys and Christmas decorations – merchants were more circumspect about the impact, but were keeping close tabs on developments.

“We've been following the news on our phones,” said Yang Dingju, a manager at Zhejiang Bote Sewing Machine Co Ltd, as he peeled an orange inside his store in a cavernous trading hall. He added, however, that most of his buyers were in less developed markets like the Middle East and Africa, which would dull any impact. Chen Haiying, who worked for another Yiwu firm selling sewing scissors and sewing machine parts, was at a loss as to why sewing machines were on the US list, but said a full-blown trade war would have a wider ripple effect. “If we really go to war with the United States then it will affect everyone,” he said. —Reuters



An ash plume rises above the Kilauea volcano on Hawaii's Big Island on May 3, 2018. — AFP

Hawaii quake triggers fresh...

Continued from Page 1

Ige said residents were being housed in community centers until the danger has passed. The governor visited two evacuation shelters and said he had met "many people who are frightened and deeply concerned about losing everything," but added that Hawaiians would come together to help. "This is a resilient community,"

he said. One local resident, Neil Valentine, told CNN he and his wife had been forced to evacuate "our dream home that we've been looking for all this time," calling the situation "just basically heartbreaking".

The lava outbreak came after hundreds of small earthquakes in recent days that followed the collapse of a crater floor on the Puu Oo volcanic cone. A 5.0-magnitude earthquake early Thursday south of the cone triggered rockfalls and sent a massive pink plume of ash wafting briefly into the air. Big Island resident Janice Wei, who moved to Hawaii from California - known for its own high earthquake risk - said the eruption was almost a "relief". "We've been waiting for big movement from the crater, after so many small earth-

quakes," she told AFP. "Hawaiians and local people have lived here forever," she said. "You know what's going on; we have warning systems. Everybody should be prepared."

Using his drone, area resident Jeremiah Osuna captured video footage of the lava flow, which he described as a "fire curtain" that left him feeling "shock and awe". "It was like if you put a bunch of rocks into a dryer and turned it on - a lot of earth and pressure and fire just moving around," Osuna told AFP. Governor Ige signed an emergency proclamation releasing disaster funds to the Big Island. He noted the current flow was similar to a 1960 eruption in the Kapoho area that "caused significant damage."

Geologist Janet Babb of the Hawaiian Volcano Observatory told AFP that scientists had been following an "intrusion of magma" down the rift zone since Monday afternoon in anticipation of a possible eruption. Though the cracks from which lava was emitting had gone dormant, she emphasized that "the overall concern and the overall event has not ended." US Senator Brian Schatz of Hawaii said the Federal Emergency Management Agency was mobilizing resources, as well as monitoring for forest fires, power outages and water supply issues. Hawaii Island, or the Big Island, is the largest of the eight main islands that comprise the Pacific US state, an archipelago that includes hundreds of smaller volcanic islands. — AFP

Saudi body retracts call...

Continued from Page 1

Saudi Arabia has for decades imposed strict social rules, including bans on alcohol, music and mixing of unrelated men and women. Much of that is now changing under Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman who curbed the powers of the religious police in 2016 as part of ambitious social and economic reforms that saw cinemas reopen last month after a nearly 40-year ban.

The kingdom, which is set to allow women to drive this summer but still requires them to have a male guardian, does not have an all-encompassing codified legal code. It relies instead mainly on Islamic sharia law, with police and judiciary citing social customs in enforcing certain prohibitions. Analysts say there is no legal basis for enforcing store closures or segregation. The religious police still patrol some public spaces, but no longer harass people for being on the streets during prayer time or enter private establishments to enforce gender segregation. Many Saudis, especially in big cities, welcome the limits on their authority.

Unrelated men and women are increasingly allowed to enter family sections of restaurants together, and public events have generally done away with such divisions. Stores still close multiple times a day for prayer for about 30 minutes each, but some allow customers to stay inside and continue shopping.

The potential changes were not mentioned in an event on Thursday celebrating the Quality of Life pro-

gram, which includes entertainment, health, sports and education. American film star Katie Holmes and British actor-cum-director Idris Elba rubbed shoulders with Saudi officials, as the kingdom on Thursday night kicked off the initiative to invest 130 billion riyals (\$34.7 billion) in culture and leisure by 2020.

The goal is to create "a true cultural industry, with theatres, cinemas and training centers," said Ahmad Al-Mazid, who leads culture policy for Saudi Arabia. Key projects include 16 entertainment complexes, an aquatic center and three other huge leisure hubs - all part of a bid to ensure three Saudi cities make it into the global top 100 for quality of life. The project, dubbed "Quality of Life Program 2020", is in part designed to encourage wealthy young citizens to spend more of their leisure time in the kingdom, where more than half the population is below the age of 25.

"It will contribute to the satisfaction of Saudis and incentivize them to invest in their country and to stay," said Ahmad Khatib, head of the oil-rich state's entertainment policy. The government will pump 50.9 billion riyals into this cultural revolution, while courting private investors and foreign partners for the rest of the investment.

"Saudi Arabia gave me an opportunity to make my film here, it made sense on an economical model," British actor Elba, who made his name as a gangster in the gritty American police series *The Wire*, told AFP at the event. "I would definitely be here - why not?" added the Londoner, who has in more recent years turned his hand to directing and has a Twitter following of more than 2.5 million. The initiative aims to create 300,000 new jobs and represents a key pillar of the nation's "Vision 2030" reforms. — Agencies

Mars-bound NASA lander blasts off...

Continued from Page 1

really establishes American leadership in a lot of ways." About an hour and 40 minutes into the flight, the spaceship separated from the upper stage of the rocket, as planned. "I'm on my own now," said the US space agency Twitter account, @NASAINsight. "This marks the beginning of my six-month journey to #Mars." If all goes well during the 485 million kilometer trip, the lander should settle on the Red Planet on Nov 26. InSight is short for Interior Exploration using Seismic Investigations, Geodesy and Heat Transport.

NASA chief scientist Jim Green said experts already know that Mars has quakes, avalanches and meteor strikes. "But how quake-prone is Mars? That is fundamental information that we need to know as humans that explore Mars," Green said. The key instrument on board is a seismometer, called the Seismic Experiment for Interior Structure, made by the French Space Agency. After the lander settles on the Martian surface, a robotic arm is supposed to emerge and place the seismometer directly on the ground.

"For us, InSight is perhaps not the ultimate but a very, very important mission because we are going to hear the heartbeat of Mars with the seismometer we put on board," said Jean-Yves Le Gall, president of France's Centre National d'Etudes Spatiales (CNES), in an interview on NASA television after liftoff.

The second main instrument is a self-hammering probe that will monitor heat in the planet's subsurface.

Called the Heat Flow and Physical Properties Package, it was made by the German Space Agency with the participation of the Polish Space Agency. The probe will bore down three to five meters below the surface, NASA said, 15 times deeper than any previous Mars mission. Understanding the temperature on Mars is crucial to NASA's efforts to send people there by the 2030's, and how much a human habitat might need to be heated under frigid conditions, said Green.

The temperature at the landing site for InSight is frigid, and expected to range between -100 Celsius to -20 Celsius. Daytime summer temperatures near the Martian equator may reach 20 degrees C, but then plunge by night to -73 C. "It is an important part of knowledge of how this planet is evolving," Green said. "We have to be able as humans living and working on Mars to survive that."

A pair of mini-spacecraft also deployed successfully from the rocket. Known as Mars Cube One, or MarCO, the briefcase-sized satellites "will fly on their own path to Mars behind InSight," and test tiny new deep space communications equipment, NASA said. The solar and battery-powered lander is designed to operate for 26 Earth months, or one year on Mars, a period in which it is expected to pick up as many as 100 quakes.

"Hopefully it will last a lot longer than that," said Tom Hoffman, InSight project manager from NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory. The spacecraft was initially supposed to launch in 2016 but was delayed after temperature tests showed a problem with part of the seismometer, which engineers have since fixed. InSight aims to be the first NASA spacecraft to land on Mars since the Curiosity rover in 2012. "There is nothing routine about going to Mars, especially landing on Mars," said Stu Spath, InSight program manager at Lockheed Martin Space. — AFP

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Sports

Kiprop's doping failure hits Kenya's cradle of athletics

Kenya's most decorated athletes, could face a four-year ban

ELDORET: The residents of Eldoret and Iten, considered Kenya's home of distance running, are hurting following official confirmation that former Olympic and world 1,500 metres champion Asbel Kiprop has tested positive for the banned blood-booster EPO.

The Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU), an independent body handling doping matters on behalf of the sport's governing IAAF, earlier on Friday confirmed media reports that the 28-year-old three-time world champion over 1,500m had failed a dope test.

The case is now with an International Association of Athletics Federations' disciplinary tribunal and the 28-year-old Kiprop, one of Kenya's most decorated athletes, could face a four-year ban. There was a sombre mood on the Eldoret streets among the local people and in Iten, Kiprop's home town, where the residents discussed the doping situation in subdued tones.

"This one has hit us where it hurts most," Moses Kiptanui, a three-time world 3,000m steeplechase champion, told Reuters.

"Marathon runners failing dope tests was almost becoming normal. But when it came to the 1,500m, we were shocked. More so, Asbel (Kiprop), whom many youths looked to as a role model.

"We are mourning. From rural to urban areas, this has shaken everybody to the core," he said.

Kiptanui, who runs an Eldoret department store, said the lack of tough anti-doping laws coupled with a laxity among Athletics Kenya (AK) officials and Kenyans' predilection for manipulating rules will bring the country's top sport to its knees.

"Officials with vested interests, who are attracted by perks, and not the love of the game, are ruining the sport. Even with anti-doping laws in place, we don't have policing which specialises in anti-doping matters," said Kiptanui, who blew the whistle on doping problems in Kenya in 2003.

However, Barnaba Korir, a member of the Athletics

Kenya Executive Committee, defended the local governing body, saying Kenyans must accept that the country has a doping problem.

"Let us accept that there is a problem and agree on how to tackle it. Blame game won't help. Kenyans are still in denial yet this doping thing is festering," he said.

"Athletes are not children. They are responsible for what goes in their bodies. AK only sensitises and educates them on doping matters. They take full responsibility for their actions," he added.

KIPROP'S ALLEGATIONS

Kiprop alleged that testers extorted money from him, an allegation the AIU did not address. He also claimed that the testers might have interfered with his sample. The AIU, which was set up to combat all forms of corruption and ethical misconduct within athletics, was satisfied there was no interference with his sample but conceded that Kiprop had been given advance notice that he would be tested.

This contravenes the

World Anti-Doping Agency's guidelines stating that out-of-competition tests should be conducted without notice to athletes.

Kiprop also alleged that he was being pressured to accept that he doped so that he could be made an IAAF ambassador against doping, an allegation the AIU rejected. Korir and Kiptanui questioned why Kiprop had engaged in what they said was a futile attempt to smear testers and the IAAF.

"Why couldn't he raise the matter when it happened? Why wait until now to reveal that testers extorted money from him?" asked Kiptanui.

Korir also wondered why Kiprop was revealing so many of the details he should present to the IAAF tribunal. "The process is ongoing. The best thing Kiprop should do is wait for the appropriate time to argue his case. This was ill-advised," he said.

Kiprop is among almost 50 athletes from the east



BEIJING: File photo taken on August 30, 2015 shows Kenya's Asbel Kiprop celebrates after winning the final of the men's 1500 metres athletics event at the 2015 IAAF World Championships at the "Bird's Nest" National Stadium in Beijing. Asbel Kiprop tested positive for the endurance-boosting drug EPO, the Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU) confirmed on Friday refuting allegations by the Kenyan track star that his sample might have been contaminated. — AFP

African nation, long revered for its distance running pedigree, who have failed doping tests, the most famous being former three-time Boston Marathon champion, Rita Jeptoo and Jemimah Sumgong, Olympics marathon gold medallist in Rio de Janeiro in 2016. The North Rift Valley towns of Eldoret and Iten, some 350km north-west of the capital Nairobi, rank distance running as their biggest foreign exchange earner. They take so much pride in their athletes that Eldoret has the name 'city of champions', Iten is known as the 'home of champions' while Kapsabet to the south, birthplace of twice Olympic champion Kipchoge Keino, is the 'source of champions'.

In Iten, Jonah Kiplagat, a 32-year-old motorcyclist

who retired from road running due to injury, said the residents of the hamlet on the edge of the picturesque Kerio Valley were commiserating with Kiprop.

"He is our hero here. When we see his car zooming past, we are proud of him and the fame he has brought our town. This came as a shock to us," he said.

Social clubs in Iten, mostly frequented by sportspeople, were not doing much trade on Friday. The Mindililwo area where Kiprop built a training camp was like a ghost town.

Situated on the Iten-Kapsowar road where two other celebrated athletes, marathon runners Wilson Kipsang and Edna Kiplagat, live, the news was on everyone's lips. — Reuters

China's Liang betters women's 50km walk record at first attempt

SHANGHAI: China's Liang Rui took more than a minute off the world record for the women's 50km walk in Taicang yesterday, claiming gold at the world racewalking team championships in what was her maiden outing in the endurance event.

The 23-year-old, who will win \$50,000 once the record is ratified, clocked four hours, four minutes and 35

seconds to top the podium and better the mark of 4:05:56 that Inez Henriques recorded in London last year.

Henriques's time had earned her the first gold medal to be awarded in the event at the world athletics championships after the women's race was a late addition to the schedule. The Portuguese world champion dropped out of Saturday's race before the 30km mark to leave Liang to forge on through the drizzle and claim victory four and a half minutes clear of compatriot Yin Hang, who also won silver in London last year. Australia's Claire Tallent finished third for bronze in what was also her first attempt at the distance, which was first listed as a world record event in August 2015 as the IAAF looked to ensure equal competition opportunities for men and women. — Reuters

Coleman wants to be one of the best indoors and out

TENNESSEE: Christian Coleman isn't planning on letting up on his blistering start to sprinting in 2018. After wiping out the 20-year-old 60 metres world record and winning the world indoor title, the young American has loaded up his outdoor schedule with nine Diamond League meetings as he seeks top honours in both the 100 and 200 metres.

"I want to be looked at as one of the greatest sprinters of all-time. With that comes running both events," the 22-year-old world 100 metres silver medallist told Reuters from his Knoxville, Tennessee base. The races are almost evenly divided between the 100 and 200 with Coleman considering doing both in his season-opening appearance at the May 25-26 Prefontaine Classic Diamond League meeting in Oregon. His quest comes as athletics looks for ways to fill the void left by retired world record holder and multiple Olympic and world champion Usain Bolt.

Coleman, Canada's triple Olympic medallist Andre De Grasse, South African 400 metres world record holder Wayde van Niekerk and American Noah Lyles, the 300 metres global record holder, all are among the young front runners. World 100 metres champion Justin Gatlin, who defeated Coleman and Bolt for the gold, also is back and expecting another top-notch season. "There are so many guys that they



are talking about that may be the 'next one' or may be the next Bolt," Coleman said. "That whole conversation is exciting to me and really humbling."

LOOKING AT PERSONAL BEST?

Based on his 6.34 second 60 metres record, the fast-starting Coleman could be looking at running the 100 metres in a personal best 9.7 seconds this year, former holder Maurice Greene told Reuters.

Only seven sprinters have run faster, including Bolt whose world record is 9.58 seconds.

But Coleman seldom talks times, at least publicly. "I never really set any time goals," he said. "I think that puts a limit on yourself. When you set a time and you hit that time, you are kind of satisfied. I never want to have that type of feeling." His goals are more about achievements. And while wanting to leave his mark this season, 2017's fastest 100 metres runner (9.82 seconds) and third fastest in the 200 (19.85) already is thinking about the 2019 Doha world championships and 2020 Tokyo Olympics and doubling in both. — Reuters

Toyota MC 86 for team UPGARAGE clinches first place in SUPER GT 300 series opener

TOKYO: Toyota started off the 2018 AUTOBACS SUPER GT 300 series recently with a bang thanks to an astounding victory and a thrilling podium finish at Okayama International Circuit. UPGARAGE 86 MC, driven by Yuhki Nakayama and Takashi Kobayashi, won the race, while HOPPY 86 MC co-piloted by Takamitsu Matsui and ShoTsuboi finished third in the tightly-fought opening round of the new season.

"We would like to congratulate the teams for an excellent start and exceptional performance in the opening round of the season," said Yugo Miyamoto, Chief Representative of Middle East & North Africa Representative Office, Toyota Motor Corporation. "At Toyota, we believe that racing events such as the AUTOBACS SUPER GT series are an opportunity to not only test the mettle of our performance machines and leading technologies, but also to guide the future development of Toyota vehicles, as we continue to make 'ever-better' cars. I would like to take this opportunity to thank our fans for their support and constant encouragement for our racing initiatives."

At the start of the GT300 class race held at Okayama International Circuit, the No. 88 rival team held the lead, followed by the No. 11 and the No. 21 competitor teams. But tightly-fought battles ensued as No. 25 HOPPY 86 MC, with ShoTsuboi at the wheel, joined the competition for the top four positions, showing off its superior performance.

As the leading No. 88 gradually began to fall off the pace, No. 11 managed to pass it on the hairpin of lap nine and ShoTsuboi in the No. 25 HOPPY 86 MC also managed to get by No. 88 on the tenth lap. Charging up from behind, the No. 31 TOYOTA PRIUS apr GT, driven by Koki Saga, also overtook No. 88 on the 12th lap to move into the fourth position. By the 15th lap of the race, the battle for the lead was a four-car fight between the No. 25 HOPPY 86 MC, No. 31 TOYOTA PRIUS apr



GT and two competitor teams, the No. 11 and No. 21.

Things changed when the No. 21 made a swift inside move on the last corner of the lap 17 to move into the lead. Then on lap 21, the No. 11 was passed from behind by the No. 31 TOYOTA PRIUS apr GT. With this, it became a two-car battle for the lead between the No. 21 and the No. 31 TOYOTA PRIUS apr GT. The two cars raced on nose-to-tail in a tight contest until the 29th lap when there was a light bump-up between the three lead machines as the No. 21 and the No. 31 TOYOTA PRIUS apr GT got caught behind a competitor team as they slowed to enter the pit lane, which resulted in the other car to advance in position.

When all the teams had finished their routine pit stops, the lead cars were the ones that had opted for a no-tire-change strategy to cut pit time. The No. 18 UPGARAGE 86 MC, with Yuhki Nakayama at the driver's seat, had been in 9th place when making its pit stop on lap 28

and the No. 25 HOPPY 86 MC, driven by Takamitsu Matsui, made its pit stop on lap 30 chose to make no tire change. When all the pit stops were complete, it was the No. 25 HOPPY 86 MC that led the race. Right behind it came the No. 18 UPGARAGE 86 MC, and about 10 seconds behind them in the third position came rival teams, the No. 65 and the No. 7.

The battle for the lead was a close nose-to-tail contest until the 57th lap when Kobayashi in the No. 18 UPGARAGE 86 MC overtook Matsui. Meanwhile, the No. 7 running in fourth position was putting pressure on the No. 65 until it managed to pass it on the 70th lap. Then, on the 72nd lap, the No. 7 passed the No. 25 HOPPY 86 MC.

Meanwhile, the No. 18 UPGARAGE 86 MC in the lead managed to cross the finish line first. This turned the team's first SUPER GT podium into a victory as well. The No. 7 finished second and the No. 25 HOPPY 86 MC secured the third place.



Sports

Houston Rockets rout Utah Jazz 113-92 to take 2-1 series lead

Pelicans rock Warriors in Game 3 blowout

HOUSTON: Eric Gordon scored a playoff-high 25 points as the Houston Rockets turned an opening flourish into a 113-92 win over the Utah Jazz on Friday at Vivint Smart Home Arena in Game 3 of their Western Conference semifinal series.

The Rockets took a 2-1 series lead on the strength of a 19-2 run in the opening period, with Game 4 set for Sunday in Salt Lake City. Gordon shot 5-for-22 in Games 1 and 2 but was instrumental in the first-half blitz that put the Rockets firmly in control at the break.

Gordon scored 17 points on 6-for-8 shooting prior to the intermission as the Rockets ravaged the Jazz defense. While Houston scored 17 points off 11 Utah turnovers in the first half, the Jazz shot just 36.6 percent and struggled to generate offense from the usual suspects, with Donovan Mitchell and Joe Ingles shooting a combined 2-for-15 in the first half. Jae Crowder, who nailed 8 of 13 3-pointers in Houston, was 1-for-4 overall by the break as Utah trailed 70-40 at halftime.

The 30-point halftime deficit was the largest in post-season history for the Jazz. After Ingles opened the game's scoring with a deep 3-pointer from the top of the key, the Rockets responded with a hail of baskets, depositing transition threes in addition to an avalanche of paint points. Gordon scored on consecutive possessions to up the Houston lead to 23-8, and when Nene hit two free throws at the 3:23 mark of the first, the Rockets held their first 20-point lead at 32-12.

The Rockets posted a first-quarter, postseason-high 39 points and led by 17 entering the second. After Royce O'Neale engineered a 9-0 run that cut a 49-25 deficit to 15, the Rockets closed the half with a 21-6 blitz. Gordon hit two threes during that run, which was started by a nifty give-and-go between James Harden and Clint Capela that

resulted in a rousing dunk.

Houston shot 58.7 percent in the first half and assisted on 17 of 27 field goals. The Rockets led by as many as 38 points in the second half, extending to an 88-50 lead on a Gordon 3-pointer in the third quarter.

Harden finished with 25 points and 12 assists while Capela added 11 points, eight rebounds, four assists and four blocks. Chris Paul chipped in 15 points, seven rebounds and six assists for the Rockets. O'Neale led Utah with 17 points. Mitchell totaled 10 on 4-of-16 shooting. Earlier, Anthony Davis had 33 points and 18 rebounds as the host New Orleans Pelicans defeated the Golden State Warriors 119-100 in Game 3 of their Western Conference semifinal playoff series Friday night at the Smoothie King Center.

The Pelicans took the lead for good midway through the first quarter as they cut the defending champion Warriors' series lead to 2-1. Game 4 will be played today afternoon in New Orleans. Jrue Holiday added 21 points, Nikola Mirotic had 16 points and 13 rebounds, Ian Clark scored a career-playoff-high 18 points, E'Twaun Moore scored 13 and Rajon Rondo had 21 assists for New Orleans.

Klay Thompson scored 26, Kevin Durant had 22, Stephen Curry, playing in his second game and making his first start since returning from a knee injury, scored 19 and Draymond Green had 11 points, 12 rebounds and nine assists for the Warriors.

The Pelicans made 50 percent of their shots (48 of 96), including 45.2 percent of their 3-point attempts (14 of 31). The Warriors made 38 percent of their shots (35 of 92), including 29 percent of their 3-point attempts (9 of 31). Davis had two quick baskets as New Orleans began the third quarter with a 10-2 run to build a 72-58 lead. Green made a free throw, but Davis scored six more points as they Pelicans took an 83-63 lead. They led by as many as



HOUSTON: Joe Johnson #7 of the Houston Rockets shoots the ball over David Stockton #5 of the Utah Jazz during Game Three of the Western Conference Semifinals of the 2018 NBA Playoffs on Friday at the Vivint Smart Home Arena Salt Lake City, Utah. — AFP

“**Jrue Holiday added 21 points**”

before Durant scored seven points during an 10-2 run that cut New Orleans' lead to 92-75 after three quarters. Shaun Livingston scored the first basket of the fourth quarter to cut the deficit to 15, but Clark scored six points as the Pelicans took a 101-79 lead. Holiday was hot and the Warriors were cold in the early going. He scored 11 points, and the Pelicans made 6 of 10 3-point tries in the first quarter. Golden State made just 9 of 25 shots (36 percent), and

New Orleans had a 30-21 lead at the end of the period.

The lead grew to 15 twice before Thompson heated up. He scored 10 points as the Warriors got within 44-40. Davis, who had just three points, got more involved, scoring eight points as the Pelicans rebuilt the lead to 55-42. Thompson scored eight more and finished with 20 second-quarter points as Golden State cut the New Orleans lead to 62-56 at halftime. — Reuters

Lam hat-trick as ‘Canes overpower Lions, Blues upset Waratahs

WELLINGTON: Ben Lam bagged a hat-trick as the Wellington Hurricanes downed the Golden Lions 28-19 in Super Rugby yesterday while the Auckland Blues upset the NSW Waratahs 24-21 to maintain New Zealand's dominance over Australia.

The Hurricanes victory put them two points behind the Canterbury Crusaders in the New Zealand conference, but with a game in hand, while the Lions suffered their fifth loss but remain top of the South African division. The Blues, meanwhile, remain the bottom New Zealand side and even though they were outscored by the top Australian team three tries to two they cashed in on penalties to give Kiwi sides their 38th consecutive win over their trans-Tasman rivals.

Lam, the leading try scorer in the competition and seen by many in New Zealand as an All Black-in-waiting, was a central figure in the Hurricanes win as he lifted his total of tries for the year to 12.

With his mix of pace and power, Lam is seen by the Hurricanes as a special weapon. “He’s on fire. He’s playing really good football,” said captain Brad Shields while coach Chris Boyd believed Lam can only get better. “He’s starting to realise the potential he’s got. He’s big and fast. He’s doing a good job for us but at the end of a good backline.” The Hurricanes have been smarting since the semi-finals last year when they surrendered a 19-point lead to lose to the Lions 44-29.

They were determined to exact revenge and when they again took an early lead it was one which they would not surrender in a game which never reached great heights, in part because of a strong, swirling wind in the stadium.

Tries to Lam and Ardie Savea had the Hurricanes ahead 14-7 at half-time with scrum-half Nic Groom scoring for the Lions just before the break. Savea’s try came from a



WELLINGTON: Vince Aso (C) of the Hurricanes is tackled by Marnus Schoeman (L) and Nic Groom of the Lions during the Super Rugby match between the Hurricanes from New Zealand and the Lions from South Africa at Westpac Stadium in Wellington yesterday. — AFP

stolen lineup as the Lions struggled with their throw after influential hooker Malcom Marx limped off the field early with a hamstring strain.

Lam scored twice more in the second half with Beauden Barrett converting all four Hurricanes tries as they forged their way to a 28-7 lead before the Lions staged a late comeback with tries to industrious flanker Marnus Schoeman and replacement wing Sylvian Mahuza. The Blues win was only their third of the season, while the Waratahs have now lost three of nine. The Waratahs wanted to play at pace but turnovers proved costly as the Blues cashed in on the errors to lead 18-14 at half-time.

In the second half the Waratahs tightened their game only to be confronted by an uncompromising Blues defensive wall. “It was a massive effort from the boys. It’s massive for us,” said captain Augustine Pulu.

“We needed our big players to step up and have those big plays in those crucial moments.” A disappointed Waratahs' captain Michael Hooper believed his side had only themselves to blame. “We created a lot of opportunity and then blew it. We were getting into their 22 easily,” he said. Playing on Brookvale Oval, the homeground of the Manly Warringah rugby league side, the Waratahs had powerful ball-winning weapons in the form of Michael Wells, Michael Hooper and Will Miller.

But the Blues played smarter, favouring an attack through the middle while the Sydneysiders shaped to play wide. For the Blues, Rieko Ioane and Tumu Manu scored tries with Stephen Perofeta landing a conversion and four penalties. The Waratahs tries came from Damien Fitzpatrick, Sekope Kepu and Hooper with Bernard Foley converting all three. — AFP

Saxon Warrior battles to Guineas success

LONDON: Irish training great Aidan O'Brien's bid for a historic treble this weekend began in sparkling fashion as his son Donnacha rode Saxon Warrior to win the first classic of the season, the English 2000 Guineas, yesterday.

Saxon Warrior stormed through to win with ease to give Aidan O'Brien—who is in the United States where he hopes to win the Kentucky Derby for the first time for a European stable later on Saturday—his ninth win in the race. The winner, who is by Japanese stallion Deep Impact, was never challenged once he hit the front. But there was a remarkable run from 50/1 outsider Tip To Win who came home second under David Probert with favourite Mazar third for Dubai's Godolphin Operation.

Alarm bells had rung for O'Brien's other fancied runner Gustav Klimt after he drifted from favourite out to third favourite by the off, and he failed to fire, finishing mid-division of the 14 runners. Winning rider Donnacha O'Brien emulated his older brother Joseph in winning the race for his father.

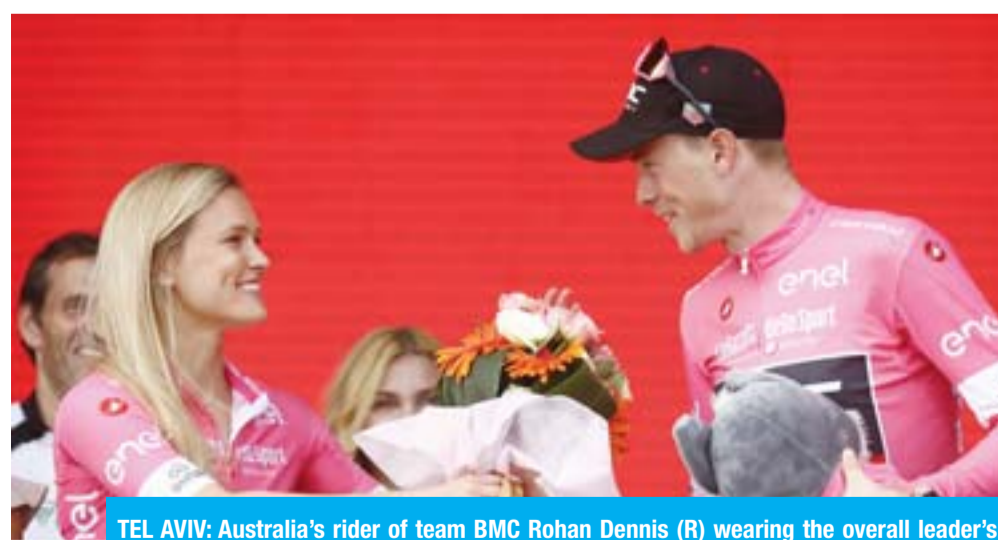
The victory was extra special as a battle with his weight means he will not have much longer in the saddle. “This is very special,” said Donnacha O'Brien. “A huge thanks to the owners especially dad for putting me on in the first place.”

“This is a proper horse,” added the 19-year-old. Joseph, who has turned to training himself and won last year's Melbourne Cup edging his father into second, ran from the stands to welcome home his brother. “Gosh he gave him a lovely ride,” gasped Joseph once he got his breath back. — AFP

Aussie Dennis in pink as Viviani wins Giro second stage

TEL AVIV: Australia's Rohan Dennis took the race leader's pink jersey off reigning champion Tom Dumoulin as Italy's Elia Viviani won the Giro d'Italia second stage in Tel Aviv yesterday. Dennis claimed three bonus seconds in an intermediate sprint earlier on the 167-kilometre stage from Haifa to overcome his two-second deficit from Friday's opening time-trial in Jerusalem.

Race favourite Chris Froome finished safely in the peloton after a bunch sprint in the Mediterranean coastal resort of Tel Aviv. The 32-year-old Briton was nursing cuts and abrasions to his right-hand side, suffered in a training crash in Jerusalem on Friday. He had surprisingly lost 37 seconds to Dutchman Dumoulin—his chief rival for overall victory—in the race against the clock, later admitting he had been riding in pain. On Saturday, Olympic omnium champion Viviani, 29, seemed to have left his charge to the line quite late but burst through from well behind to emerge from the back wheel of



TEL AVIV: Australia's rider of team BMC Rohan Dennis (R) wearing the overall leader's pink jersey receives flowers from Israeli top-model Bar Refaeli as he celebrates on the podium after the 2nd stage of the 101st Giro d'Italia, Tour of Italy, yesterday, 167 kilometers between Haifa and Tel Aviv. — AFP

Irishman Sam Bennett and surge to victory. “The win, everyone was expecting but doing it is never easy,” Viviani, who won his second stage at the Giro, told Eurosport. “I was really nervous this morning, I tried to overcome a bit this emotion but it's not easy.”

Italian Jakub Mareczko was second with Bennet taking third. Dennis, 27, had edged out Viviani at an intermediate sprint 91km into the

stage to claim the three bonus seconds he needed to take the race lead. “I think Viviani, he sprinted but he didn't go full,” admitted Dennis. “It was good to see him get the stage win after not giving it to me, but he was kind let's be honest!” Dennis has now worn the leader's jersey at all three Grand Tours, following opening stage success at the Tour de France in 2015 and last year's Vuelta a Espana. — AFP

Malnati leads at Quail Hollow; Tiger, McIlroy nine behind

NORTH CAROLINA: Peter Malnati earned his first halfway lead on the PGA Tour on Friday by opening up a one-stroke advantage over Jason Day and Aaron Wise at the Wells Fargo Championship in North Carolina.

While Tiger Woods and Rory McIlroy slipped nine strokes off the pace, Malnati used his cross-handed putting stroke efficiently, banging in two late birdies for a three-under-par 68 second round on the Quail Hollow course in Charlotte. At seven-under 135, Malnati heads Australian Day (67) and Aaron Wise (68) by a shot, while South African Charl Schwartzel (67) and Englishman Paul Casey (68) trail by two.

Woods putted poorly on slow greens to card a 73 and slump to equal 48th with, among others, birthday boy McIlroy. “I've had ample time to make the adjustment and

I haven't,” said Woods, whose lone birdie came at his final hole. Leader Malnati, ranked 673rd in the world, has not finished better than 30th in 17 starts on tour this season but he said he had adopted a more relaxed attitude this week.

“I'm feeling good, confident in what I've been doing, and I'm letting it show on the course rather than letting it stress me out,” said the 30-year-old, who has one victory on the Tour.

Second-placed Day showed glimpses of the form that took him to the world number one ranking two years ago. “The driving has been great this year, the chipping and putting has been good,” he said.

“The irons just need to tighten up. Once that starts to happen I think things are going to switch pretty quickly.” Last August, Day was in contention late in the third round at the PGA Championship at Quail Hollow, until a quadruple bogey at the 18th hole all but ended his chances.

But he still likes the course. “It's a major championships golf course so you've got to be patient and take your chances when you get them,” he said. McIlroy has won twice on the course but Friday was not a particularly happy 29th birthday for the four-times major champion, who limped home in 40 strokes on the back nine en route to a 76. — Reuters

Sports

Holdings Australia land Syria, Jordan in Asian Cup draw

Former champions Iran and Iraq slotted in Group D

DUBAI: Defending champions Australia were handed an intriguing draw for the 2019 AFC Asian Cup during a gala ceremony at the world's tallest building—the Burj Khalifa—here on Friday.

The Socceroos, who beat South Korea 2-1 in the final of the 2015 edition as hosts, have been drawn in Group B with Syria, Jordan and Palestine for the event to be held from January 5 to February 1 next year in the United Arab Emirates.

Australia and Jordan have faced each other four times—all in World Cup qualifying—with each side winning two games, while Syria's gallant but eventually unsuccessful bid to qualify for the upcoming World Cup in Russia has made football fans sit up and take notice. Japan, who have won the event a record four times, are expected to sail through to the round of 16 from Group F which also includes Uzbekistan, Oman and Turkmenistan.

Former champions Iran and Iraq have been slotted in Group D along with Vietnam and Yemen, while feuding neighbours Saudi Arabia and Qatar have been drawn in Group E with North Korea and Lebanon for company.

The Saudis have won the continental championship three times, but their last success was in 1996 when the event was hosted by the UAE.

The expanded tournament will see 24 teams battle it out for a five million dollar top prize along with a brand new trophy, which was also unveiled at the draw on Friday. The runners-up in the richest-ever Asian Cup will pocket three million dollars while all 24 teams taking part will be awarded 200,000 dollars for merely qualifying.

The tournament will kick off with a Group A match between hosts UAE and Bahrain at the Zayed Sports City Stadium in Abu Dhabi on January 5. Ahead of the draw, the new Asian Cup trophy was unveiled by Asian Football Confederation (AFC) president Sheikh Salman bin Ebrahim al-Khalifa and former UAE international Zuhair Bakheet.

"Since 1956 we have had the same trophy and in keeping with the new and exciting future of the competition, the AFC decided to commission a new trophy, one that captures the excitement and drama of the tournament ahead," said Sheikh Salman. — AFP



A picture taken on May 4, 2018 shows the final draw for the 2019 edition of the AFC Asian cup tournament, during the official draw event in Dubai.

Tournament kicks with hosts UAE and Bahrain on Jan 5

Morocco in rough ride to host 2026 World Cup

RABAT: Morocco is gearing up for a fierce competition with the US, Canada and Mexico to host the 2026 World Cup. "Morocco today has the necessary infrastructure and potential to host the World Cup," president of the Morocco 2026 World Cup host bid, Moulay Hafid Elalamy has said in statements to reporters recently on the sidelines of the bid submission ceremony. He stated that the geographical proximity to Africa and Europe, civilization and the fulfilment of the FIFA requirements all qualified his country to host the important sports event.

As part of Morocco's bid, it pledged to invest \$15.8 billion on construction of new stadiums, improvement of infrastructure to fit the FIFA standards, he pointed out. Elalamy unveiled that the Moroccan dossier to FIFA comprised 40,000 pages that included details about the four important elements that FIFA had set as the basic criteria for evaluation: stadiums, means of transportation, training spaces and accommodation.

Morocco could mobilize 14 stadiums in 10 different cities, including 12 world-class ones, and assembled pitches, he stated. Morocco had vied unsuccessfully for the world's biggest football event for four previous times in 1994, 1998, 2006, and 2010.

Rabat, however, hopes the accumulative experience of the four bids would help boost its dossier.

This time, Morocco has an important record of experience and achievements that would favor his candidacy in the face of the joint bid of the United States, Canada and Mexico, Elalamy said.

Officials in charge of the bid also pine high hopes on the expected backing from the Arab world, Africa and many European countries to boost its chances. He argued that his country's bid represented the African



continent and the Arab world, as well as had gained the support of many European Union, Asian and South America countries.

More than 58 African, Arab and European countries had so far backed the Moroccan bid, with the number of supporters expected to rise. Arab countries has unanimously voiced support for Morocco's bid during the recent Arab summit in the eastern Saudi city of Dhahran. On April 20, the FIFA's technical committee concluded its first visit to Morocco as part of its inspection mission to bidding countries to assess their ability to host the world's largest football event.

A member of the Moroccan World Cup nomination Committee and President of the Moroccan Royal Football Federation Fouzi Lekjaa told reporters at the end of the FIFA team visit that "they has collected technical data about the proposed stadiums to host the

World Cup and accommodation services." He noted that the committee had some reservations about some stadiums, the accommodation services and the model of the assembled pitches proposed Morocco. Morocco, however, vowed to address all FIFA demands and concerns. FIFA's evaluation committee can disqualify any nomination bid that does not meet the basic criteria.

The decisive vote to choose the host country for the 2026 World Cup will take place on June 13 on the eve of the 2018 World Cup in Russia. A total of 207 FIFA member associations will participate in the voting process, out of 211, as the bidding countries are not eligible to vote. This would be the first time that all FIFA member states partake in world cup host country's choice, not only the members of the Executive Committee as it was the case in the past. A total of 48 countries instead of 32 would play in the 2026 World Cup. — KUNA

Swansea in big relegation trouble after 1-0 loss

BOURNEMOUTH: Swansea City's hopes of salvaging their place in the Premier League suffered a potentially grievous blow as Ryan Fraser's deflected strike earned Bournemouth a 1-0 win yesterday to secure another season of top-flight football for the Cherries.

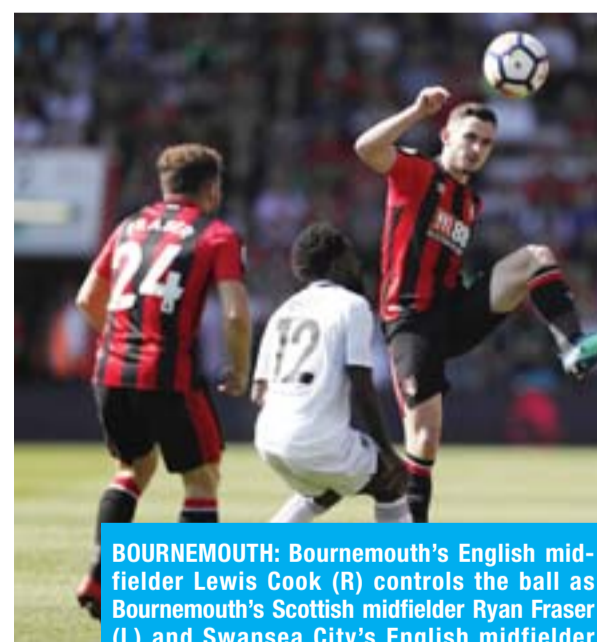
Bournemouth ended a run of three straight defeats when Andrew Surman rolled a 37th-minute free kick across the edge of the box to the diminutive Fraser, whose shot cannoned off Alfie Mawson to leave Lukasz Fabianski with no chance.

Jordan Ayew should have equalised minutes later only to shoot wide from six metres but although they had their chances, Carlos Carvalhal's side were unable to add to their 33-point haul in the danger zone.

Swansea, winless in seven matches, have two more games at home to relegation rivals Southampton and doomed Stoke City but Eddie Howe's Bournemouth, who could have won more convincingly but for fine keeping from Fabianski, are safe.

Earlier, West Ham United improved their prospects of avoiding relegation from the Premier League with deserved 2-0 victory at below-par Leicester City yesterday. West Ham, who moved on to 38 points and should be safe with two home games remaining, were the brighter side from the start and deserved their lead after 34 minutes.

The lively Marko Arnautovic hit the bar, then regained possession and laid on a pass to give Portuguese international Joao Mario a simple goal. Leicester protested in vain that Arnautovic had fouled



BOURNEMOUTH: Bournemouth's English midfielder Lewis Cook (R) controls the ball as Bournemouth's Scottish midfielder Ryan Fraser (L) and Swansea City's English midfielder Nathan Dyer (2L) during the English Premier League football match. — AFP

Christian Fuchs.

Booted off at halftime, the hosts improved a little with a double substitution but conceded again in the 64th minute to Mark Noble's fine volley from outside the penalty area. "That's the best I've scored for sure, especially with what's involved with this game," Noble said. "It could have gone anywhere but it's hit the post and gone in. "I hope on Thursday night against Man United we can perform like that but we want to try and finish as high as we can."

Manager David Moyes, with his side in 15th, is also looking up the table rather than down. "These players are capable of winning games," he told Sky Sports. "I'm thinking can we get closer to mid-table." Leicester remained ninth in the table. — Reuters

Les Herbiers plan Italian job on PSG in French Cup final

PARIS: When you don't have money, you need good ideas. That could be the motto of Stephane Masala, the coach who took third division Les Herbiers to the French Cup final in which they face the mighty Paris St Germain on Tuesday. With a budget of about 2 million euros (\$2.4 million) compared to PSG's 540 million, Les Herbiers barely stand a chance on paper against a team who have won the last three editions of the competition.

But Masala is an Italian football fan and he has been trying to instil that culture into a squad who knocked out two Ligue 2 sides on their way to the Stade de France showdown. "My father, who is from Sardinia, had recorded all the Italy games from the 1982 World Cup," the 41-year-old Masala, whose voicemail message is the Italian anthem "Fratelli d'Italia", told Reuters.

"I got the virus early on, I have always had this Italian football mentality, where the tactical work is super important." Masala, who says he will probably not watch the World Cup next month because the Italy have failed to qualify, is a Juventus fan and he has a subscription to an Italian coaching website, allenatore.net.

"Every month I receive stuff from them it's really helpful," explained the man who was in Berlin to cheer for Italy in the World Cup final they won on penalties against France in 2006. "I try to teach my players the importance of finding space."

Masala's main inspiration is Massimo De Paoli, the former Head of Youth Development at Brescia who developed the "Spaccare lo spazio" (break up the space) method. Although Les Herbiers have been struggling in the National championship (third division), where they lie two points above the relegation zone, PSG have the utmost respect for them. — Reuters

Live Matches on TV (Local Timings)		
ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE		
Man City v Huddersfield Town	15:30	beIN SPORTS HD 2
Chelsea FC v Liverpool	18:30	beIN SPORTS HD 2
Arsenal FC v Burnley FC	18:30	beIN SPORTS HD 5
SPANISH LEAGUE		
Malaga CF v Deportivo Alaves	13:00	beIN SPORTS HD 3
Atletico de Madrid v Espanyol	17:15	beIN SPORTS HD 3
Las Palmas v Getafe CF	19:30	beIN SPORTS HD 3
FC Barcelona v Real Madrid	21:45	beIN SPORTS HD 1
ITALIAN CALCIO LEAGUE		
Udinese Calcio v Inter Milano	13:30	beIN SPORTS HD 2
SS Lazio v Atalanta	16:00	beIN SPORTS MAX 4
SSC Napoli v Torino FC	16:00	beIN SPORTS HD 2 FR
AC Chievo Verona v Crotone	16:00	beIN SPORTS
Genoa CFC v ACF Fiorentina	16:00	beIN SPORTS
spal v Benevento	16:00	beIN SPORTS
Sassuolo Calcio v Sampdoria	19:00	beIN SPORTS HD 4
Cagliari Calcio v AS Roma	21:45	beIN SPORTS HD 4
FRENCH LEAGUE		
Saint Etienne v Girondins de Bordeaux	16:00	beIN SPORTS HD 1 FR
Olympique Lyonnais v ES Troyes AC	17:30	beIN SPORTS
Caen v AS Monaco FC	18:00	beIN SPORTS MAX 4 FR
Dijon v EA Guingamp	18:00	beIN SPORTS MAX 5 FR
FC Metz v SCO Angers	18:00	beIN SPORTS MAX 6 FR
FC Nantes v Montpellier HSC	18:00	beIN SPORTS HD 2 FR
Stade Rennais v RC Strasbourg	18:00	beIN SPORTS MAX 7 FR
Toulouse FC v LOSC Lille	18:00	beIN SPORTS MAX 8 FR
Olympique Marseille v OGC Nice	22:05	beIN SPORTS HD 6

Sports

Team Al Aalami headed to Brazil for the Neymar Junior's Five World Final



In front of 500 spectators, Al Aalami managed to secure the title of Kuwait National Champions at the Red Bull Neymar Junior's Five National Final. After managing to knock out one team after the other, Al Aalami will be headed to the World Final of Neymar Junior's Five in Brazil on July 21 to battle it out against over 60 other countries and outplay them all.

It will be held at Neymar's Instituto Projeto Neymar Jr. in Praia Grande, an organization aimed at providing extracurricular educational and sporting activities to the most socially disadvantaged children and their families in the area.

Neymar Junior's Five Kuwait Final, held on May 4 at Boulevard Salmiya, was sponsored by Intersport, Platinum, Talabat, and Acqua Eva. Media partner, Kuwait Times, covered this popular event.

Following action – packed qualifiers held between April 29 and May 3, twelve teams qualified to the National Final

with finesse and admirable sportsmanship.

The final kicked off with four groups of three teams, each playing against both other teams in the group. Only two teams made it from each group to begin the knock out phase. In this phase, each game was allocated ten minutes for a team to clinch the win, and move on to the semi-final.

Spectators waited anxiously as the final four, Back Remuntada, Al Aalami, Bayern Neverlusen, and Bader Hamed, went head to head in the semi-final. Ultimately, the final game was between 2017 champions, Back Remuntada and newcomers, Al Aalami.

Newcomers, Al Aalami managed to surprise participants and spectators alike, as they secured the winning goal, crowning them the national champions.

About Neymar Jr's Five
Outplay them all - Neymar Jr's Five is the Brazilian

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

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

In 2017, over 100,000 players from 53 countries battled it out to be crowned World Champions, with Romania coming out victorious. Neymar Jr's Five 2018 is set to be even bigger and more players than ever will get the chance to experience this beautiful game, as there'll also be women's competitions in addition to the mixed competition in some countries.

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

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

About Instituto Projeto Neymar Jr.

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



12 Kiprop's doping failure hits Kenya's cradle of athletics



13 Houston Rockets rout Utah Jazz 113-92 to take 2-1 series lead



14 Holders Australia land Syria, Jordan in Asian Cup draw



STOKE-ON-TRENT: Stoke City's English defender Glen Johnson (L) vies with Crystal Palace's Ivorian striker Wilfried Zaha during the English Premier League football match between Stoke City and Crystal Palace at the Bet365 Stadium in Stoke-on-Trent, central England yesterday. — AFP

West Brom stave off drop, Stoke relegated

'The lads have given everything but we came short'

LONDON: Jake Livermore kept alive West Bromwich Albion's slender hopes of avoiding relegation as his last-gasp strike clinched a dramatic 1-0 win over Tottenham, while Stoke were relegated after a 2-1 defeat against Crystal Palace yesterday.

Albion knew only three points at the Hawthorns would be enough to stave off relegation for a few hours at least. With Darren Moore's side just minutes away from dropping into the Championship, Livermore sparked wild celebrations when the midfielder prodded home after a goal-mouth scramble two minutes into stoppage time.

West Brom, owned by Chinese entrepreneur Guochuan Lai, are two points from safety with only one game left as they fight to extend their eight-season stay in the Premier League. Albion's last game of the season is at Palace next Sunday, but they could be relegated before then.

They will go down if third-bottom Southampton win at Everton later, or if fourth-bottom Swansea beat Southampton on Tuesday. "We have been on this road for

four, nearly five weeks. We wanted to get some pride and commitment back," Moore said.

"Through hard work and commitment results are coming." Since replacing the sacked Alan Pardew in early April, Moore has masterminded a significant improvement in Albion's form. Wins at Manchester United and Newcastle, as well as a draw against Champions League finalists Liverpool, seemed too little, too late. But Livermore's late intervention left West Brom dreaming of an incredible escape act. Fourth-placed Tottenham's defeat leaves them five points ahead of fifth-placed Chelsea, who can close the gap in the race to qualify for the Champions League if they beat Liverpool on Sunday.

At the bet365 Stadium, Stoke had hope of staying up when Xherdan Shaqiri scored with a 43rd-minute free-kick. But James McArthur equalised in the 68th minute and Patrick van Aanholt slotted in Palace's winner with four minutes left. Paul Lambert's side are bottom, three points from safety, with only one game remaining. Stoke have

spent 10 seasons in the Premier League, but a run of 13 games without a victory ensured that streak will come to an end. Stoke goalkeeper Jack Butland was in tears at the final whistle and City fans were just as emotional as the realisation of their team's relegation sank in.

'TOUGH AFTERNOON'

Hundreds left in the closing minutes before those that remained sang "City til I die" in a defiant rallying cry. The blame for Stoke's predicament lies jointly with Lambert and Mark Hughes, who was sacked in January after a wretched run culminated with an embarrassing FA Cup third round defeat against fourth-tier Coventry.

Hughes could suffer the indignity of having a role in two relegations in one season as his Southampton side are in trouble themselves. "My emotions are up and down. It is a tough afternoon. I am feeling for everyone connected with the club," Lambert said.

"When teams don't get results you can be sleep-walk-

ing into positions you don't want to be in. "We never had enough. Since I came in the lads have given everything but we came short. It is a chance to rebuild."

Palace's win sealed their safety, making them the first top-flight team since Liverpool in 1899-1900 to avoid relegation despite losing their first seven matches of the season. Swansea missed a chance to boost their survival bid as Bournemouth won 1-0 at Dean Court.

Ryan Fraser blasted home with a quick free-kick from the edge of the area in the 37th minute. Carlos Carvalhal's side have gone seven games without a win. Swansea's loss means Southampton would climb out of the bottom three with a draw or win at Everton.

West Ham look set to avoid relegation after a 2-0 win at Leicester. Joao Mario's close-range finish in the 34th minute put West Ham ahead before Mark Noble's 64th-minute strike left David Moyes' side six points above the bottom three. Watford beat Newcastle 2-1 at Vicarage Road to guarantee their top-flight status. —AFP

Kvitova battles past Buzarnescu to win first Prague title

PRAGUE: Petra Kvitova won her third title of the year as she fought back from a set down to beat Romanian Mihaela Buzarnescu 4-6 6-2 6-3 in the Prague Open final yesterday. The Czech second seed got off to a flying start and took a 4-1 lead in the opening set but Buzarnescu battled back to break Kvitova's dominance, winning the next five games to clinch the set.

Kvitova roared back in front of a raucous home crowd, using her powerful forehand to pin Buzarnescu back in the second set and broke the Romanian's serve three times to force a

decider. The two-times Wimbledon champion, who was missed the Prague event last year due to a hand injury, maintained her momentum to win her home tournament in her first appearance in it. The 28-year-old left-hander added to her triumphs in Petersburg and Doha this season. Buzarnescu fell to a second WTA final defeat after losing out at the Hobart International final to Belgian Elise Mertens. World number 10 Kvitova has little time to celebrate as she plays Ukrainian Lesia Tsurenko in the Madrid Open first round on Sunday, two weeks before the start of the French Open.

Defending champion Alexander Zverev booked his place in the final of the ATP tournament in Munich with an impressive straight-sets win over South Korea's Hyeon Chung in yesterday's semi-final.

Zverev, the top seed, put in an assured display to seal a 7-5, 6-2 victory in one hour, 31 minutes to claim his first win against Chung at the third attempt.

The 21-year-old Zverev will play former Munich champion Philipp Kohlschreiber in an

all-German final on Sunday. "Kohlschreiber plays very, very good tennis here, has been in the final a few times and has won it a few times, so it'll be tough," said Zverev. The first set swung after Zverev won five straight games from 3-0 down to earn the opportunity to serve for the set, but Chung responded by breaking the German to make it 5-5.

However, Zverev, ranked third in the world, kept his cool and broke the South Korean for a third time before converting his fourth set point. The German applied constant pressure in the second set, securing consecutive breaks in the third and fifth games, then continued to hold serve to reach the final.

In his semi-final, Kohlschreiber, 34, who won the Munich title in 2007, 2012 and 2016, had few problems as he saw off Maximilian Marterer for a 6-2, 6-4 win to reach his sixth final in the Bavarian capital.

Kohlschreiber, ranked 34th in the world, converted four of his six break point chances to defeat Marterer, who had not lost a set en route to the final, in 65 minutes. — Agencies



PRAGUE: Petra Kvitova of the Czech Republic celebrates with the trophy after defeating Romania's Mihaela Buzarnescu in their final tennis match at the WTA Prague Open yesterday in Prague. — AFP

Business

SUNDAY, MAY 6, 2018

18 Panasonic will support 'New Kuwait Vision' in variety of sectors: Official



19 Kuwait project awards ease in first quarter over delays



22 Dell and Microsoft collaborate to simplify delivery of IoT solutions



TRINCOMALEE: Sri Lankan fishermen sort their catch on a beach in Trincomalee yesterday. — AFP

KGL considering new expansions in region

BoD recommends distributing 5 percent cash and 15 percent bonus shares

KUWAIT: The Board of Directors of Kuwait and Gulf Link Transport Company (KGL) met on Thursday and approved the financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2017. The company's revenues amounted to KD 64.8 million. The total expenses amounted to KD 52.1 million. The company achieved a net profit of KD 10.1 million for the year 2017.



Maher Marafi

The General Assembly has also recommended the distribution of 5 percent cash dividends and the distribution of 15 percent bonus shares for the fiscal year ended 31/12/2017 on the issued and paid up share capital at 15 shares per 100 shares.

Commenting on the financial results, Chairman Maher Marafi said that the Board of Directors seeks to continue to develop the company's business and maximize its competitiveness by implementing a strategy that meets the needs of the local and regional markets and meets all the requirements of the company's growing and diverse clients to help them achieve their strategic goals and meet changing challenges in an important and fundamental sector using the most up-to-date and envi-

ronmentally friendly technology in the logistics and warehousing operations and relying on KGL 62 years of legacy in this field, which has become a huge sector because of the geographical location of Kuwait in the region.

In the coming period, we will strive to continue to capitalize on the mutual trust with the US military in the region. Two of the our companies, KGL Transportation and KGL Food Services, have won contracts worth over \$2 billion (KD 600 million) with the US Armed Forces to carry out the

Marafi also announced the renewal of a subsidiary company, KGL Passenger Transport Services, the contract for public transport with the Roads and Transport Authority (RTA) in the Emirate of Sharjah-United Arab Emirates for a period of 10 years with the aim of developing and upgrading public transport and supporting them with new buses according to the highest international standards of safety, security and technology; along with the construction of air-conditioned passenger bus stations, which is a qualitative leap in public transport in Sharjah.

He explained that the company continues to find integrated solutions in the fields of transport and custom clearance, storage and supply to its customers, within the highest specifications and standards in the global markets. He added that the Board of Directors is keen on achieving sustainable competitive development for the company to maintain the desired profits for its shareholders by diversifying its activities and services and obtaining logistical and transport contracts as well as developing storage areas in Kuwait and the GCC countries.

He concluded by saying that the new board of directors, executive management and staff are committed to supporting the company's vision to become the



Company to provide integrated supply chain

work of the main supplier of transport, logistics and warehousing services in the Arabian Gulf, Iraq and Jordan.

Qatar's sovereign investment fund QIA initially bought 19.5 percent in Rosneft together with Swiss trading giant Glencore for 10.2 billion euros (\$12.2 billion) during the Russian firm's partial privatization in 2016. But last year the consortium agreed to sell a 14.16 stake in Rosneft to CEFC China Energy in a \$9.1 billion deal that was seen as key to helping expand relations between Russia and China, the world's top energy exporter and top consumer. That deal ran into trouble after CEFC Founder and Chairman Ye Jianming was put under investigation by Chinese authorities over suspected economic crimes, Reuters reported in March.

Glencore said on Friday that the consortium that had been selling the Rosneft stake

had been dissolved, and said Qatar and Glencore would now own stakes directly. QIA would control an equity stake of 18.93 percent and Glencore would hold some 0.57 percent. CEFC has not commented publicly since the termination of the deal was announced. The company did not immediately respond to Reuters requests for comment. Calls to its Shanghai headquarters were not answered on Saturday.

The once high-flying conglomerate is now conducting fire sales of its assets following the investigation into its chief and offering staff severance packages after failing to pay them for two months, as creditors scramble to collect debts amid growing regulatory scrutiny of the firm.

KGL		FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2017			
شركة رابطة الكويت والخليج للنقل ك.م.ك.ع. KUWAIT & GULF LINK TRANSPORT COMPANY K.P.S.C.		2017	2016	Change	Percentage
REVENUE	64.8 Million KD	44 Million KD	20.8 Million KD	20.80%	
EXPENSES	52.1 Million KD	35 Million KD	17.1 Million KD	48.85%	
NET PROFIT	10 Million KD	2.2 Million KD	7.8 Million KD	354.54%	

	2017	2016
CASH DISBURSMENT	5%	-
BONUS SHARES	15%	5%

leading logistics service provider in the region. KGL is a leading provider of integrated supply chain management solutions

in the region, and a main player in ports management and cargo operations since its establishment in 1956.

Qatar steps in to rescue Rosneft's troubled stake sale to China

LONDON/MOSCOW: Qatar is taking a nearly 19 percent stake in Rosneft, rescuing the Russian oil major from its stalled deal to sell a major stake to China's CEFC. The deal strengthens ties between Moscow and Doha at a time when Qatar is facing boycott by its Gulf Arab neighbors.

Qatar's sovereign investment fund QIA initially bought 19.5 percent in Rosneft together with Swiss trading giant Glencore for 10.2 billion euros (\$12.2 billion) during the Russian firm's partial privatization in 2016. But last year the consortium agreed to sell a 14.16 stake in Rosneft to CEFC China Energy in a \$9.1 billion deal that was seen as key to helping expand relations between Russia and China, the world's top energy exporter and top consumer. That deal ran into trouble after CEFC Founder and Chairman Ye Jianming was put under investigation by Chinese authorities over suspected economic crimes, Reuters reported in March.

Glencore said on Friday that the consortium that had been selling the Rosneft stake

had been dissolved, and said Qatar and Glencore would now own stakes directly. QIA would control an equity stake of 18.93 percent and Glencore would hold some 0.57 percent. CEFC has not commented publicly since the termination of the deal was announced. The company did not immediately respond to Reuters requests for comment. Calls to its Shanghai headquarters were not answered on Saturday.

The once high-flying conglomerate is now conducting fire sales of its assets following the investigation into its chief and offering staff severance packages after failing to pay them for two months, as creditors scramble to collect debts amid growing regulatory scrutiny of the firm.

"CEFC China's purchase of a stake in Rosneft has ended in a debacle. Russia's pivot to the East now feels more like a pivot to the Middle East, with Qatar coming to the rescue," said Christian Boermel, senior research analyst, Russia Upstream, at energy consultancy Wood Mackenzie.

Profitable investment

Rosneft was hit hard by US sanctions on Russia over Moscow's annexation of Crimea and incursion in east Ukraine. But sources close to QIA have said Rosneft could prove a profitable long-term investment given the giant firm is worth only \$65 billion despite producing more crude than US ExxonMobil, which is worth \$324 bil-

lion. The fate of the CEFC deal, one of the largest investments by China in Russia, was seen as a litmus test of how far President Xi Jinping's government was prepared to go with a crackdown on financially risky activities among big-spending conglomerates.

Rosneft has, however, said it continues to consider China as a strategic market and that it will supply its term contracts based on the agreed timing and volumes to CEFC.

The Russian oil major in 2017 signed a five-year contract to supply 12 million tonnes of oil per year to the Chinese firm. Glencore will also keep its long-term crude offtake agreement with the Russian producer under the new arrangement, a source told Reuters. — Reuters

Business

NBK Economic Report

Kuwait project awards ease in first quarter over delays

KD 614 million worth projects awarded in Q1 2018

KUWAIT: Project awards eased in the first quarter of 2018, as award dates were pushed out to later in the year. Awarded projects amounted to KD 614 million in 1Q18, falling below the 2017 quarterly average of KD 1 billion, according to data from MEED Projects. The largest contribution came from the transport sector. Five awards in the transport sector added KD 283 million for the quarter, two of which were of the anticipated regional road projects. Construction picked up from the prior quarter, but not as much as anticipated, with a KD 161 million tally from seven contracts.

As for the rest of 2018, award activity may fall slightly below the 2017 level. The construction sector is expected to be the largest contributor, bringing in up to KD 1.8 billion in contract awards. Transport projects may witness more delays than anticipated due to the restructuring of the Public Authority for Roads and Transportation (PART), the government agency responsible for the tendering of these projects.



Transport sector leads the way

Transport

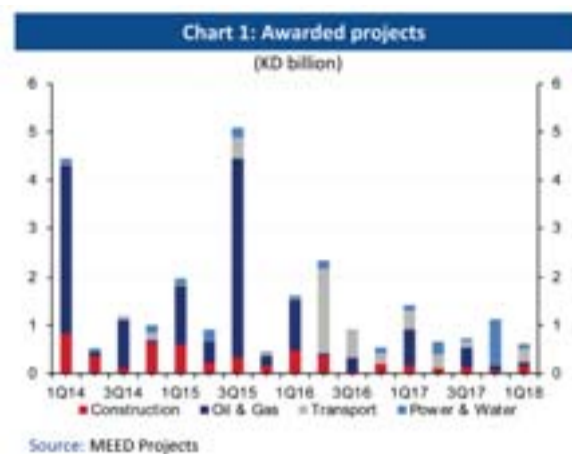
The transport sector showed signs of recovery in 1Q18, propped up by road deals and infrastructure works. As anticipated, two of the regional road projects had been awarded. Deals that included a subproject of the Regional Road South along with the Northern Regional Road from Abday Expressway to Future Crossroads (a combined KD 139 million) propped up the transport sector in 1Q18, after a subdued 4Q17. The Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) awarded three contracts for infrastructure works on housing plots in South Al-Mutlaa

and South Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak. The sector may face headwinds in the coming quarters due to possible restructuring of government authority for land-based transport projects. The Ministry of Public Works (MPW) is currently reviewing the mandate of the Public Authority for Roads and Land Transport (PART). Created in 2014, PART oversees the operations, management, and planning of land-based transport assets and projects. This may cause delays as Kuwait's parliament cited inconsistencies in the transfer of responsibilities between the different government agencies. Among the projects that have been transferred to PART from MPW and the Ministry of Communications are the national railroad and metro public private partnership tenders in 2016/2017.

In the coming quarters, up to KD 780 million in transport contracts are expected. MPW is expected to award five additional contracts this year, most of which are related to the northern and southern sections of the regional road projects, all currently in the bidding phase. In addition, there are projects from the Kuwait Oil Company, Kuwait University, as well as PAHW.

Construction

Construction sector awards picked up in 1Q18, exceeding KD 160 million for the first time in three quarters. The sector saw awards of seven contracts, three of which were awarded by the PAHW, two by the MPW, and the rest from private sector firms. Most of the contracts, however, were relatively small in size with only two above

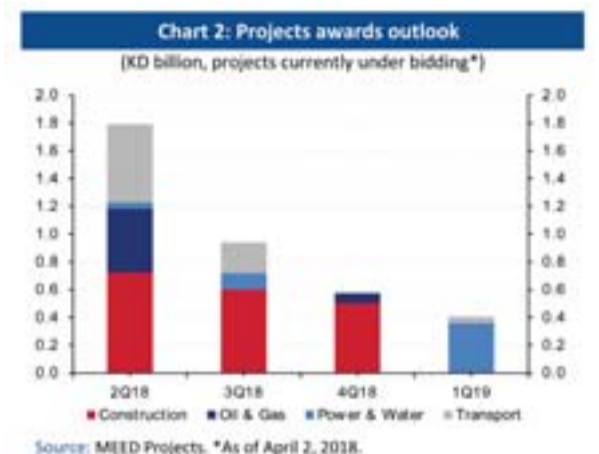


KD 30 million. The construction sector is expected to lift project awards this year, with up to KD 1.8 billion in anticipated deals for 2018.

Deals that are currently in the bidding phase include PAHW's Jahra and Sulaibiya Low-Cost Housing City (KD 470 million), the National Guard's Kazema Camp (KD 300 million), as well as three private-public partnership (PPP) projects. The Kuwait Authority for Partnership Projects is tendering a first of its kind (regionally) Schools Development Program project (KD 20 million). Though small, this PPP project is significant in that it signals the start of private involvement in the public education sector as well as broadens the sphere of PPP projects.

Power & Water

Power and water show subdued activity in the 1Q18, with awards of small-scale projects. Four contracts were awarded, three of which were in the power sector, though they were minor in size. The single water contract was



awarded by the MPW, related to water treatment tanks and worth KD 77 million.

Contract awards in the power and water sector will be less than anticipated as a major solar project has been scheduled for early 2019. The Dibdibah solar PV power plant project, in the upcoming Shagaya renewable energy complex, had been expected to be signed by 2018, but the prequalification process for the main contract is still taking place. The award and final signing of the contract is now anticipated for early 2019. The Dibdibah plant is expected to be worth up to KD 360 million.

Oil & Gas

Activity in the oil and gas sector maintains the subdued pace witnessed in previous quarters. As expected, oil and gas activity has remained quiet so far after strong performances in the prior years. With awards of just KD 70 million, the slowest in three quarters, the oil and gas sector is not expected to witness more than KD 500 million in awards this year.

Falling US unemployment rate hides racial disparities

WASHINGTON: The US jobs report on Friday showed the black unemployment rate in April fell to its lowest on record but the figure hides a multitude of racial disparities.

And those disparities reflect the failure to bring able-bodied people into the workforce at a time when many jobs go unfilled. President Donald Trump has repeatedly crowed about the falling unemployment rate for African-Americans, taking credit for economic policies that have driven strong hiring, and he did so again Friday after the Labor Department released the jobs report.

But the data show the rate, which hit 6.6 percent last month, has been declining steadily since it peaked at nearly 17 percent in March 2010 at the tail end of the Great Recession—compared to a high of nine percent for whites. However, with employers around the country struggling to find enough skilled workers to fill open positions, while the Trump administration is cracking down on immigration—usually a sure supply of new workers—economists say the country still faces racial barriers to employment and earnings, reflected in the much smaller share of blacks in the labor force compared to whites.

To be counted as part of the labor force for purposes of the Labor Department's data collection, a person must either be employed or unemployed and have looked for a job in the past four weeks.

The share of people who are unemployed but in the labor force generates the jobless rate and that rate fluctuates either because of an increase in the number of people who find jobs or a drop in the number of people in the labor force.

Fewer blacks in the workforce

The overall jobless rate fell below four percent in April for the first time in just over 17 years, but the drop was due mostly to the labor force shrinking, rather than increased hiring. The participation rate for African-Americans lags that of other racial groups but not by much: just under 62 percent, compared to about 63 percent for whites and Asians. Hispanics, who can come from any racial group, have the highest participation rate at 66.4 percent.

However, that misses the large numbers of blacks excluded from the pool of available workers: the share of blacks in the workforce compared to the total population is under 58 percent, compared to 61 percent for whites and Asians, and over 63 percent for Hispanics.

For prime age workers, 25-54 years old, the differences are even more stark, and prime age black men lag more than 10 points behind men of all other worker groups.



NEW YORK: A 'help wanted' sign hangs on a window of a restaurant in Lower Manhattan on Friday in New York City. —AFP

"The unemployment rate for young black men parallels many developing and third world countries," said Nicole Smith, chief economist at Georgetown University's Center on Education and the Workforce. And the rate is "entrenched," meaning they "aren't moving, aren't cyclical in nature, are not influenced by the business cycle."

The problem is so long-standing that the Federal Reserve—which has achieved "full employment" as one of its two policy goals—has studied the issue extensively and held a conference to do so in its last year.

One paper by Fed labor economist Tomaz Cajner and others confirms that the disparities cannot be fully explained by documented factors like age and education: in economist-speak the "observables."

"(T)he remarkably low participation rate of black men is largely unexplained by observables...and has shown little improvement over the last 40 years," Cajner and his co-authors wrote. And even amid the economic recovery from the Great Recession "the disparities remain substantial," the paper said.

Potential workers in prison

Smith told AFP educational opportunities are a key factor to explain the differences, but they also reflect

entrenched discrimination in a country that has long struggled with its history of racism.

"Those variables are in fact highly correlated with each other. The lack of opportunity in education is highly influenced by race, highly-influenced by socio-economic status, even by your location," she said. There is "a discrimination component."

That in turn snowballs into helping determine the chance of getting and holding a job and of keeping it during an economic downturn, as well as workers' earning potential over a lifetime.

Another factor is the much higher incarceration rate for blacks, which can bar them from the workforce permanently since many employers will not hire, or even consider, anyone with a criminal record. In 2016, blacks represented 12 percent of the US adult population but 33 percent of the prison population, according to the Pew Research Center.

Whites accounted for 64 percent of adults but 30 percent of prisoners, while Hispanics represented 16 percent of the adult population, and just 23 percent of inmates. Smith said this is significant especially for young black men because "you can never get that off your record." —AFP

BMW races into 2018 with sales, profits record

FRANKFURT: German high-end carmaker BMW said Friday it booked a strong first three months with record first-quarter shipments and profits, confirming its targets for the full year.

Net profit at the Munich-based group added 1.2 percent year-on-year to reach 2.3 billion euros (\$2.8 billion). But operating, or underlying profits fell 3.1 percent to 2.8 billion euros, as revenues slipped 5.1 percent to 22.7 billion.

BMW said its turnover and operating profit were both braked by currency

effects, arguing sales would otherwise have remained around the same level as last year. Away from the figures, chief executive Harald Krueger highlighted "crucial strategic decisions" the firm had taken in the first quarter to lay the foundations for more connected, electric-powered future cars.

It has agreed with Mercedes-Benz maker Daimler, its historic rival, to merge the two firms' apps for car-sharing, ride-hailing and locating parking spaces and electric car charging points, and opened an autonomous driving research centre outside Munich.

Meanwhile BMW struck a deal with local firm Great Wall to build all-electric Mini cars in China and previewed a battery-powered version of its X3 SUV. And Krueger highlighted "growing costs and significant investments linked to research and development," including the 1,800-employee autonomous driving research

centre outside Munich that opened in April. Unit sales added 3.0 percent worldwide, at 604,629 vehicles between flagship BMW, compact Mini and luxury Rolls-Royce.

'Dark clouds'

The figures offered little sign that revelations early in the year that the group had cooperated with Daimler and Volkswagen to fund tests of diesel exhaust gases on live monkeys put off buyers, with sales adding 1.0 percent in Europe, 4.0 percent in the Americas and 6.3 percent in China.

Looking ahead to the full year, BMW expects to book new records for unit sales and revenue, with pre-tax profits of "at least the previous financial year's level" of 10.7 billion euros.

But "some dark clouds are hanging over the company," analyst Frank Schwöpe of Nord/LB bank noted.

BMW was forced to recall some

12,000 vehicles in February that showed higher emissions of harmful nitrogen oxides in on-road driving than during regulators' tests. The case raised suspicions the firm could have used a "defeat device" designed to cheat supervisors similar to those deployed by Volkswagen in 11 million cars worldwide during the "dieselgate" scandal.

BMW said the unusual exhaust behavior was due to a mistakenly installed software program on certain models. Other worries for the group include a threatened US import tax on cars and suspicion BMW was involved in a cartel with other German carmakers.

Investors appeared to share Schwöpe's caution about the firm Friday, with its stock losing 1.46 percent just before midday (1000 GMT) to trade at 90.81 euros, making it the worst performer on Germany's DAX index of blue-chip shares. —AFP

Inflation may overshoot target: Williams

WASHINGTON: Inflation in the world's largest economy may overshoot the US central bank's two percent target but this is not necessarily cause for concern, a key policymaker said Friday. San Francisco Federal Reserve Bank President John Williams, who will soon take up the influential leadership of the New York Fed, said the key factor was that inflation average two percent over time.

He echoed the Federal Reserve's statement this week stressing that the inflation target was "symmetric." "From the beginning, we've seen our inflation target as being a symmetric one, where we want inflation to be on average around two percent, sometimes above, sometimes below," Williams told CNBC.

The Fed's preferred inflation measure hit the target in March for the first time in over a year. "I am personally comfortable with the fact that inflation may overshoot that two percent for a while," Williams said.

Economists expect a tightening labor market this year will drive it higher, a prospect that has seen stocks tumble since February due to fears the Fed might raise the benchmark lending rate more aggressively.

But Williams said the expectation of three or four rate hikes this year is about right, and in line with the Fed's plan for gradual increases. —AFP

Canada oil sector faces 'significant challenges' to reduce emissions

OTTAWA: Canada's oil industry faces "significant challenges" in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, which account for 26 percent of local emissions, but cuts are "essential" for meeting climate agreement targets, the Senate said Friday. The conclusion of the Senate report echoed others published by it and the auditor general, which have been critical of Canada's efforts to meet its Paris climate agreement target of slashing carbon dioxide emissions by 30 percent compared with 2005 levels by 2030.

"The biggest challenges facing the industry will be to remain competitive and to encourage investment while facing increasingly tough emissions-reduction requirements," said the report. The oil and gas sector employed 700,000 people directly and indirectly, and accounted for 7.7 percent of Canada's gross domestic product in 2015, equivalent to Can\$142 billion in economic activity.

The Senate committee studying Canada's transition to a low-carbon economy noted that the oil and gas sector released 189 megatons of carbon dioxide equivalents in 2015. Under current projections, Canada is on track to emit 722 megatons of carbon dioxide equivalent per year by 2030 — far more than its target of 523 megatons. The Senate cited a September 2017 auditor general's report that slammed years of inertia for leaving the nation vulnerable to climate change, saying: "Canada has failed to achieve every emission target it has set since 1992." These included reducing emissions to 1990 levels by 2000 (Rio Earth summit), six percent below 1990 levels by 2012 (Kyoto Protocol), and 17 percent below 2005 levels by 2020 (Copenhagen Accord).

At the same time, temperatures in Canada have risen at approximately double the global rate, resulting in the loss of Arctic sea ice and permafrost, affecting wildlife and ecosystems. —AFP

Business

Bayan weekly market report

Boursa Kuwait equities mixed as investors digest Q1 results

Market capitalization down to KD 25.97 billion

KUWAIT: Boursa Kuwait ended last week with mixed performance. The Premier Market Index closed at 4,791.84 points, down by 0.39 percent, the Main Market Index increased by 0.56 percent after closing at 4,815.54 points, whereas the All-Share Index closed at 4,800.65 points down by 0.05 percent. Furthermore, last week's average daily turnover increased by 11.30 percent, compared to the preceding week, reaching KD 11.70 million, whereas trading volume average was 68 million shares, recording an increase of 0.003 percent.

The Boursa lost more than KD 26 million, as its market capitalization reached by the end of last week KD 25.97 billion against KD 25.99 billion in the previous week, down by 0.10 percent. The Boursa market cap declined since the application of the new market segmentation by around KD 1.88 billion, and down by 6.76 percent. (Note: The market cap of the listed companies in the Market is calculated based on the weighted average number of outstanding shares as per the latest available official financial statements).

On the other hand, the Boursa is currently witnessing a general state of watch for the listed companies results for the first quarter of the current year, amid many hopes that such results will contribute into activating the market trading performance and increasing the cash liquidity level that have been at low levels for a long period.

Also, the Boursa ended last week's trading with mixed closings to its three indices, whereas the Premier Market Index and All-Share Index recorded limited losses affected by the profit collection operations that the leading stocks were subject to, especially after the increases such stocks realized in the previous sessions of the last week. The Main Market Index was able to go against the current however, and was able to end the week's trading with some gains, supported by the return of the quick speculative operations in appearing, amid concentration of the speculators on the small-cap stocks as usual. The Market witnessed such performance in light of an increased total cash liquidity compared to the previous week, as it reached KD 58.49 million, up by 11.30 percent, while the total number of traded stocks during the last week reached almost the same level as the previous week, and around 340 million stock.

Moreover, the last week witnessed trading activity over 140 stock out of 175 listed stock in the Market, where prices of 72 stock dropped against prices of 56 stock grew, and prices of 47 stock remained at no change.

Sectors' indices

Six of Boursa Kuwait's sectors ended last week in the red zone, four recorded increases, whereas the Health Care sector's index & Technology sector's index closed with no change from the week before. The Telecommunications sector headed the losers list as its index declined by 2.76 percent to end the week's activity at 820.09 points. The Oil & Gas sector was second on the losers' list, which index declined by 2.02 percent, closing at 958.23 points, followed by the Insurance sector, as its index closed at 924.40 points at a loss of 1.48 percent. The Consumer Goods sector was the least declining as its index closed at 896.55 points with a 0.11 percent decrease. On the other hand, last week's highest gainer was the Consumer Services sector, achieving 3.99 percent growth rate as its index closed at 1,057.22 points. Whereas, in the second place, the Banks sector's index closed at 979.33 points recording 0.45 percent increase. The Real Estate sector came in third as its index achieved 0.21 percent growth, ending the week at 963.06 points.

Sectors' activity

The Financial Services sector dominated a total trade volume of around 111.31 million shares changing hands during last week, representing 32.76 percent of the total market trading volume. The Banks sector was

second in terms of trading volume as the sector's traded shares were 20.47 percent of last week's total trading volume, with a total of around 69.55 million shares.

On the other hand, the Banks sector's stocks were the highest traded in terms of value, with a turnover of around KD 26.66 million or 45.59 percent of last week's total market trading value. The Industrial sector took the second place as the sector's last week turnover was approx. KD 9.26 million representing 15.84 percent of the total market trading value.

—Prepared by: Studies & Research Department - Bayan Investment Co.

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—Prepared by: Studies & Research Department - Bayan Investment Co.

—AFP

MARKET ACTIVITY			
	Last Week	Previous Week	Change (%)
Volume	340,029,355	340,020,374	0.00%
Value (K.D)	58,491,065	52,551,028	11.30%
Deals	16,947	14,882	13.88%

MARKET CAPITALISATION (K.D.)			
Last Week	Previous Week	Weekly Ch. %	Mkt Seg. to Date %
25,972,184,079	25,998,368,349	-0.10%	-6.76%

STOCKS' ACTIVITY				
Total Listed Stocks	Traded Stocks	Up	Down	No Change
175	140	56	72	47

TOP GAINERS				
Company	Last Week Closing	Previous Week Closing	Ch. (Fils)	Ch. %
SULTAN	67.00	42.30	24.7	58.39%
EFFECT	22.70	15.10	7.6	50.33%
MASSALEH	38.00	28.40	9.6	33.80%
BAYANINV	43.00	34.50	8.5	24.64%
GIH	20.10	17.60	2.5	14.20%

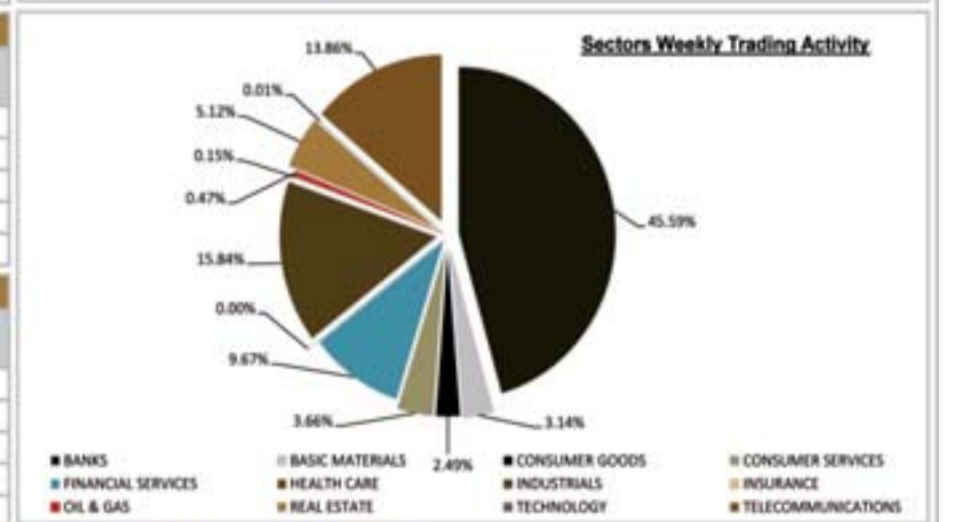
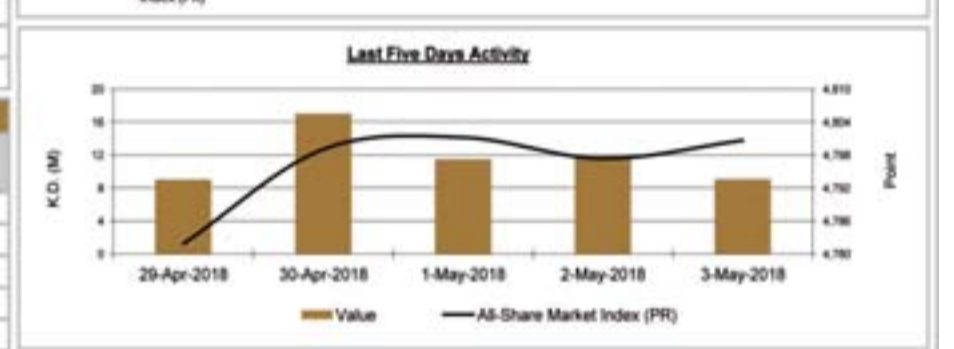
TOP LOSERS				
Company	Last Week Closing	Previous Week Closing	Ch. (Fils)	Ch. %
PAPCO	25.00	80.00	-55.0	-68.75%
MENA	28.50	48.60	-20.1	-41.36%
GFC	25.00	30.00	-5.0	-16.67%
MANAZEL	34.10	39.20	-5.1	-13.01%
NINV	89.00	99.90	-10.9	-10.91%

MOVERS BY VOLUME				
Company	Last Week Closing	Previous Week Closing	Total Volume (Stock)	To Market (%)
AAYAN	32.00	32.30	28,733,495	8.45%
ZAIN	393.00	408.00	19,596,473	5.76%
MANAZEL	34.10	39.20	18,729,130	5.51%
KFIN	523.00	513.00	17,079,486	5.02%
AUB	179.00	179.00	15,981,878	4.70%

MOVERS BY VALUE				
Company	Last Week Closing	Previous Week Closing	Total Value (K.D)	To Market (%)
NBK	740.00	748.00	9,686,290	16.56%
KFIN	523.00	513.00	8,849,008	15.13%
ZAIN	393.00	408.00	7,707,790	13.18%
AGLT	859.00	846.00	3,626,714	6.20%
AUB	179.00	179.00	2,817,447	4.82%

SECTORS TRADING ACTIVITY				
Sector	Volume	To Market %	Value	To Market %
BANKS	69,552,684	20.47%	26,661,822	45.59%
BASIC MATERIALS	3,111,491	0.92%	1,834,907	3.14%
CONSUMER GOODS	3,192,319	0.94%	1,456,534	2.49%
CONSUMER SERVICES	21,269,752	6.26%	2,141,215	3.66%
FINANCIAL SERVICES	111,313,997	32.76%	5,655,058	9.67%
HEALTH CARE	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
INDUSTRIALS	28,055,682	8.26%	9,263,484	15.84%
INSURANCE	501,319	0.15%	87,343	0.15%
OIL & GAS	9,406,370	2.77%	277,020	0.47%
REAL ESTATE	62,407,862	18.37%	2,996,550	5.12%
TECHNOLOGY	34,492	0.01%	3,121	0.01%
TELECOMMUNICATIONS	30,949,688	9.11%	8,108,051	13.86%

INDICES PERFORMANCE			
	Last Week	Previous Week	Change (Point)
Weekly	4,791.84	4,815.54	-23.70
	4,810.39	4,788.55	21.84
	-0.39%	0.56%	-0.95%
Mkt Seg. to Date	5,000.00	5,000.00	0.00%
	-208.16	-184.46	-23.70
	-4.16%	-3.69%	-0.47%



SECTORS INDICES PERFORMANCE					
Sector	Last Week Closing	Previous Week Closing	Weekly Ch. %	Annual Ch. %	
BANKS	979.33	974.98	0.45%	-2.07%	
BASIC MATERIALS	1,030.67	1,042.97	-1.18%	3.07%	
CONSUMER GOODS	896.55	897.58	-0.11%	-10.35%	
CONSUMER SERVICES	1,057.22	1,016.61	3.99%	5.72%	
FINANCIAL SERVICES	967.49	974.24	-0.69%	-3.25%	
HEALTH CARE	996.33	996.33	0.00%	-0.37%	
INDUSTRIALS	977.57	975.67	0.19%	-2.24%	
INSURANCE	924.40	938.30	-1.48%	-7.56%	
OIL & GAS	958.23	978.02	-2.02%	-4.18%	
REAL ESTATE	963.06	961.05	0.21%	-3.69%	
TECHNOLOGY	1,012.66	1,012.66	0.00%	1.27%	
TELECOMMUNICATIONS	820.09	843.39	-2.76%	-17.99%	

Wall Street greets mixed US jobs report; oil rises

NEW YORK: Wall Street stocks powered higher Friday after a mixed US jobs report was seen as reducing the odds of faster Federal Reserve interest rate hikes. US stocks initially went sideways following the jobs data but began moving gradually higher after the open, with the Dow ultimately finishing up a solid 1.4 percent. Earlier, European stock markets rose, while oil prices pushed higher on speculation President Donald Trump will spike the Iran nuclear deal.

The US economy added 164,000 jobs in April, which was below expectations. But the unemployment rate fell to 3.9 percent, the lowest since December 2000. Investors were cheered by signs inflation pressures remained tame, as average hourly wages rose just 0.2 percent. That figure was seen as reducing the odds the Federal Reserve will accelerate interest rate hikes. "We don't see anything suggesting the Fed needs to be more aggressive with monetary policy and nothing to stop them from continuing to normalize it," said Matt Miskin, market strategist at John Hancock Financial Services.

'Frank discussions' on trade

Despite Friday's rally, Miskin predicted stocks would "remain against the ropes" due in part to lingering uncertainty over international trade. High-

stakes talks between top US and Chinese officials ended Friday in Beijing without major breakthroughs.

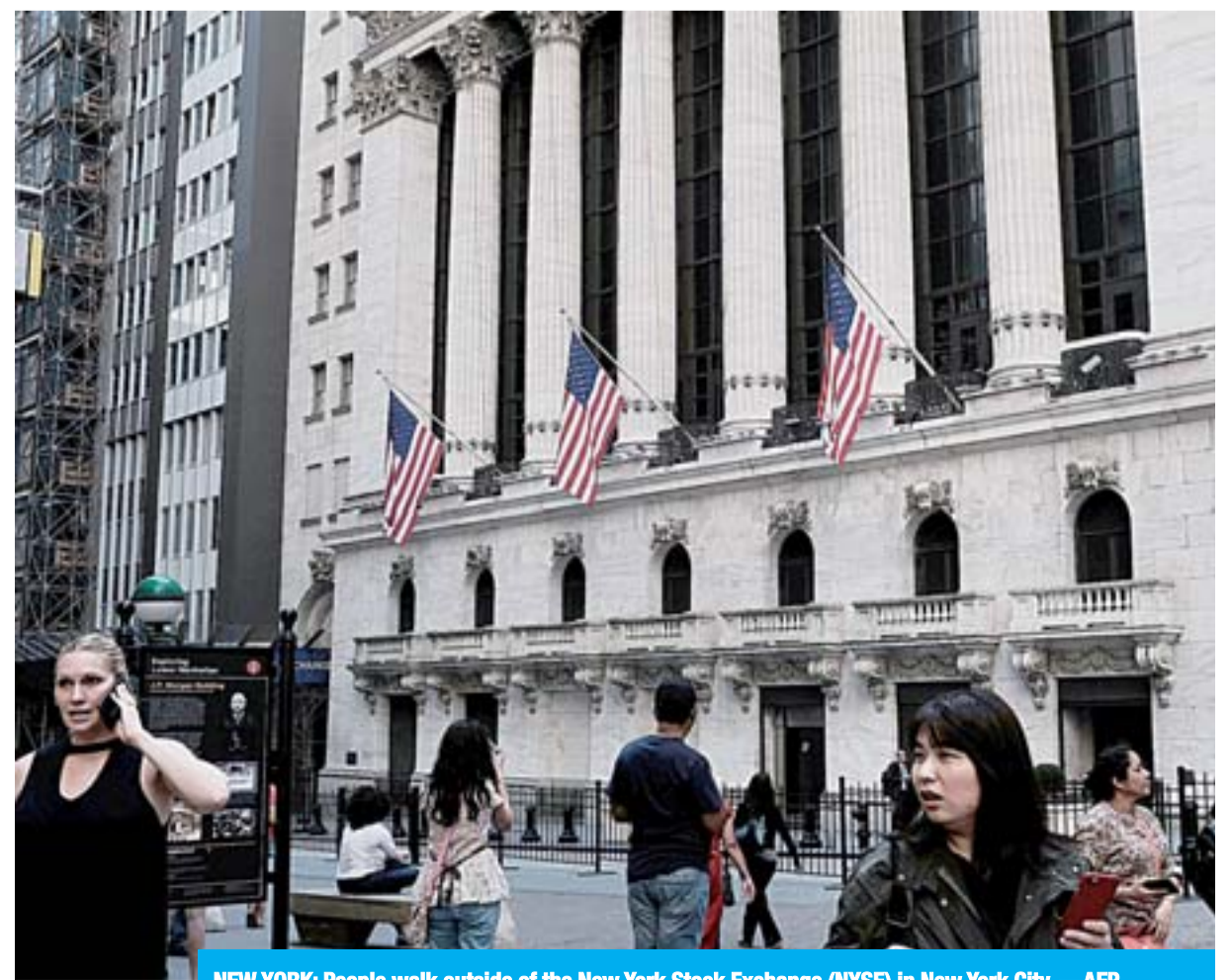
"Both sides recognize there are still big differences on some issues and that they need to continue to step up their work to make progress," China said in a statement released by the official Xinhua state news agency. A White House statement said the two sides held "frank discussions" and that "there is consensus within the administration that immediate attention is needed to bring changes to United States-China trade and investment relationship."

A note from Barclays downplayed worries about a trade war, saying "unless the US-China trade negotiations break down, we think the effects of these tariffs on world trade are likely to be modest."

Oil prices continued to advance ahead of a May 12 deadline for Trump to announce whether he will pull out of a 2015 deal on Iranian nuclear development. Among individual companies, Apple shot up 3.9 percent after Warren Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway bought an additional 75 million shares of the technology giant, lifting Berkshire's overall stake to around five percent.

Tesla Motors gained 3.4 percent after chief executive Elon Musk said on Twitter that sharp questioning by equity analysts on a Wednesday conference call came from those allied with investors who bet against Tesla shares. But Musk also said it was "foolish" not to respond to the questions.

Tesla shares had fallen sharply on Thursday after Musk was criticized for cutting off and belittling analysts who pressed for more details on company finances. The two analysts who were cut off have a "hold" recommendation on Tesla shares. —AFP



NEW YORK: People walk outside of the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) in New York City. —AFP

Business

NBK, Boubyan Bank attend Financial Crime Compliance Group meeting

Meeting held in collaboration with Wolfsberg Group in Paris

KUWAIT: The National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) and Boubyan Bank participated in the MENA Financial Crime Compliance Group (MENAFCCG) meeting held in collaboration with the Wolfsberg Group in Paris, France to bring collective action in the fight against Money Laundering and Terror Financing.

The objective of this private event was to raise confidence in MENA's Financial Sectors by sharing compliance best practices, whilst exchanging concerns with regards to correspondent banking relationships; relaying MENA banking sectors' commitment to safeguarding credibility, integrity, and trust in it.

Among the distinguished guests, MENA FCCG was honored to have the participation of the Chairman of the Union of Arab Banks, Sheikh Mohamed Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, and the Chairman of the US-MENA Private Sector Dialogue initiative, Dr Muhammad Baasiri.

NBK and Boubyan Bank's participation came in line with their status as founding members of the MENA FCCG. Commenting on the participation, Walid El Din El Seyoufi, Deputy General Manager for Group Risk Management and Compliance at National Bank of Kuwait

(NBK), said: "The meeting is a landmark event held in the collaboration with the world's largest financial institutions with an objective to improve the abilities of member-banks to overcome the challenges of the banking sector as well as to build stronger relations between participating banks. NBK's participation in the meeting comes in line with its

leadership in adopting international best practices in risk management."

El Seyoufi added that meeting comes at a time when banking and financial institutions are fighting Money Laundering and Terror Financing, stressing that NBK has adopted a solid strategy to reduce risks affecting its various activities, and therefore focusing on the quality of customers, services and banking products offered to them while providing maximum protection to the Bank.

He pointed out that NBK has successfully mitigated risks that are driven by different work environment throughout the Bank's large and diversified network which expands over four continents, thanks to policies consistent with international best practices.

On his part, Nadim Safa, Head of Compliance at Boubyan Bank, said that the meeting is the first of its kind for the members of the Wolfsberg Group and representa-



Walid El-Seyoufi

Nadim Safa

tives of Middle Eastern banks. The meeting enables member-banks from coordinating and exchanging with the Group, as well as hold meetings that aim to facilitate financial relations with other banks of the Group which are among the largest and most important correspondent banks in the world.

He added that the participation of Boubyan Bank reflects the Bank's commitment to strengthening its relations with major banks and to ensure it works by the international standards in fighting all types of financial crimes.

Established in 2016, MENA FCCG consists of 12 proactive leading private financial institutions from various Arab countries, comprising NBK, Boubyan Bank, Abu Dhabi Commercial Bank, Arab Bank, Al Baraka Banking

Group, Arab Banking Corporation, Bank Audi, Bank Muscat, Commercial Bank of Qatar, Emirates NBD, Mashreq Bank, National Bank of Egypt, as well as the Union of Arab Banks (UAB) and Thomson Reuters as Strategic Partners.

In collaboration with the Wolfsberg Group, MENA FCCG hopes to facilitate for smaller MENA Banks the filling of the Wolfsberg updated Due Diligence Questionnaire via a series of webinars and dedicated trainings.

The Wolfsberg updated Due Diligence questionnaire (CBDDQ) aims to set an enhanced standard for Correspondent Banking Due Diligence, that, if adopted across the industry, will create efficiencies, raise the bar on fighting financial crime, and make the international financial system stronger. As a result, costs of compliance could be trimmed, the speed of new onboarding reduced but, more importantly, a transparent global standard established so that Correspondent Banks can operate, more than ever, on a more level playing field, mitigating de-risking.

The Wolfsberg Group is an association of thirteen of the most influential global banks, gathering financial institutions from North America, Europe and Asia. Among its renowned achievements, the Group publishes and updates a series of principles which are known as "The Wolfsberg Standards"; banking guidelines that are recognized and applied by a vast regulatory and financial community across the world.



Aiming to unify efforts in fight against terror financing

NBK showcases Al-Shabab activities on local radio station

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait works to develop close and lasting relationships with its customers through fun and interesting activities, events and competitions. As part of this program, NBK has organized monthly radio activities to engage with customers, especially Kuwait's youth.



Aisha Al-Ghanim

On April 23, NBK hosted a radio activity on Kuwait Pulse 88.8 FM's Diwaniyat Al-Yaqout and Al-Ansari with hosts Talal Al-Yaqout and Khaled Al-Ansari. During the program, Aisha Al-Ghanim, Consumer Banking Group, National Bank of Kuwait gave an interview discussing the NBK campaign "Triple Your Allowance".

"NBK creates fun and unique campaigns to show our Shabab customers our appreciation for their trust and loyalty," said Al-Ghanim. "In the latest campaign, students who transfer their allowance to NBK have the chance to win KD 400 in Al-Shabab Daily Draw."

During the radio activity, callers also had the opportunity to answer three questions and each one of them received three gifts from NBK.

As Al-Ghanim explained live on air, NBK's Al-Shabab Account provides a range of benefits, including a free Shabab prepaid card with special rewards and discounts for students. Listeners enjoyed exciting games and valuable prizes as well as the chance to learn more about the



offers and rewards NBK has specifically tailored to suit their demographic needs and lifestyle.

"Al-Shabab Account is geared toward students in Kuwait, with our campaigns and promotions focused especially on the types of activities and events that youth enjoy and prefer," explained Al-Ghanim.

NBK's Al-Shabab account is available to anyone between the ages of 15 and 23 and/or are attending college or university. Benefits of Al Shabab account include instant discounts when customers use the NBK Al-Shabab Debit card for purchases at shops, restaurants and entertainment venues in Kuwait. Customers can also avail the popular Tap & Pay service, either through their card, stickers or wearables, allowing them to pay for small purchases up to KD 10 without having to use a pin code.

Shabab card holders enjoy many great offers. For instance, in the last weekend of each month, Shabab prepaid card customers are entitled to a 50 percent discount on Talabat.com. They also receive 50 percent exclusive discount on weekend movie tickets at Cinescape and 15 percent off on bowling and birthday parties at Cozmo Bowling. NBK is delighted to collaborate with FM 88.8 to create fun, exclusive and entertaining radio activities.

AUB launches new mobile bill payment service for major telecom companies in Kuwait

KUWAIT: Ahli United Bank (AUB) announced that it has launched a new service that allows customers to pay their mobile phone bills for major telecom companies in Kuwait (Zain, Ooredoo and VIVA). The new service allows local subscribers who are AUB's customers the chance to recharge their balance and pay their bills using their phones at any given time and place via either AUB's online banking service or mobile banking services.

The new service will be executed in its initial form under the partnership agreement AUB has signed recently with E-NET. This agreement allows the Bank to expand its scope of electronic banking services with quick payment solutions to all telecommunications companies, financing installments with companies, school tuition fees as well as purchase online shopping cards while receiving a host of entertainment services through subscribing to various television channels, entertainment packages, and electronic payment channels along with purchasing an extensive range of online games.

Commenting on the new service, Tareq Mahmood, AUB's Senior Deputy Chief Executive Officer said, "The new service is in line with our overall strategy to invest in a host of digital services to provide the best banking experience for our customers."

He further added, "We live in a digital world, and such payments can now be made easily and conveniently. With the new service, our customers are able to pay their bills using their mobile phones in an easy and secure manner. Moreover, it further reflects the Bank's commitment to provide the best digital services. I would like to thank E-NET for their exceptional collaboration to make this initiative happen."

AUB's Deputy General Manager, Alternative Distribution Channels, Huda Al-Madani also noted, "At

AUB, we strive to be proactive in providing digital services. To that extent, and due to the fast-paced environment around digital payment modes in Kuwait, we have partnered with E-NET, a company that provides prepaid bills payment to all telecom companies in Kuwait. We further hope to reflect a tangible impact in providing more convenience for our customers when paying their bills using their phones, an initiative which is considered an added value that accommodates their varied needs."

Al-Madani also said that "AUB will continue to develop digital channels and provide our customers with an exceptional banking experience."



26 new winners in Al-Hassad account this week

KUWAIT: Ahli United Bank recently conducted its Al-Hassad Islamic account weekly draw, Kuwait's leading sharia-compliant rewards program that offers a broad range of prizes to the largest number of winners, on the 2nd of May 2018. The account provides 26 weekly prizes that are comprised of KD 25,000 as a grand prize and 25 other prizes valued at KD 1,000 each. AUB also offers four quarterly prizes that are valued at KD 250,000 to each winner allowing them to achieve their dreams of travelling, studying abroad, or owning their dream home or car.

On this occasion Ahli United Bank announced, "With this draw, we are adding 26 new winners and prizes to the Al-Hassad Islamic account whereby, the total number of winners annually will include more than 1300."

The weekly grand prize winner of KD 25,000 Abdullah Fares Majed Al-Dalhani.

25 other winners won prizes of KD 1,000 and are as follows: Mahmoud Helal Al-Zoabi, Ali Fawaz Al Ibrahim, Fahad Ahmed Mohammed, Fouzeyah Fahad Hamad AlKhaled, Mohammad Abdullah Mohammad Bodastour, Ezhwa Salem M Alshelwah, Huda Ahmad Yousef Al Mailam, Jeza Eyadah Jeza AlShammari, Abd AIRasoul Ali Bader Khan, Nareman Mahmoud Hasan Elaiwah, Faten Abdulkareem Abdulrahman Al Neamah, Layan Soud H Almutairi, Khadija Ali Hassan Al Ansari, Bader Mohammad Saad Al Nkhailan, Khalifah Ashour Sulaiman Al Rasheedi, Mariam Ali Hussain Al Haddad, Jouzah Dhuhawi Jazi Maatouq Al Azmi, Hussain Ramadan Hussain Awad, Baqer Said Mohammad S H Allhuaini, Fatmah Bader Hassan, Khalid Mohammad Futuri, Mohamed Abdulrahim Mohamed Al Sadeqi, Nader Ismaeel Ali Alansari, Rohanges Ali Hussain Mohamed Ali Dashti and Ali Ghanem Mohamed Abdulla. Al Hassad Islamic account's customers in Kuwait and Bahrain are eligible to participate in the draw in line with the program's terms and conditions.

Ahli United Bank added, "There are increased opportunities that await our current customers and those who are interested in opening an Al Hassad Islamic account to benefit from the wide range of prizes and opportunities offered this year." Individual customers can open their accounts with a minimum deposit of KD 100, qualifying them to enter the draw.

Chevrolet Alghanim brings its mega offer on after-sales services again

KUWAIT: In line with its unceasing commitment to guarantee the safety and peace of mind of its customers and their families, Chevrolet Alghanim launches once more the very successful free safety checkup campaign on all Chevrolet vehicles being serviced at any of its centers, started again from April 20th & up to June 20th, 2018. Chevrolet Alghanim encourages its valuable customers to visit the nearest service center today and take advantage of this limited time offer.

Performed by a team of professional service advisors, the special safety checkup entails a detailed inspection relying on state-of-the-art technology and all latest available tools for car inspection and servicing. It covers the most important mechanical and electrical components guaranteeing a car's proper operation and safety, including disk brakes, tire treads and pressure, car battery, windshield wipers, front and rear lights, suspension, shock absorbers and controlling sticks.

Furthermore, Chevrolet Alghanim offers its customers full AC checkup that includes checking the cool temperature inside compartment, the AC system software and update, the AC belt, the AC air flow and cabin filter, the AC gas leak and free top up, the diagnostic trouble code (DTC). The offer also includes a free car wash upon visit for a unique experience and full satisfaction.

Right after the checkup is complete, customers will receive a comprehensive report of 21 check points detailing the car's condition, required maintenance, and pricing. In addition to a 30 percent discount on spare parts, 20 percent discount on accessories, 30 percent on engine cleaning bottles and 10 percent discount on labor fees for maintenance and professional service, Chevrolet Alghanim's customers will get a free car wash and nitrogen refill for their tires, which will enable them to drive their Chevy safely without having to worry about potential car malfunctions. Chevrolet Alghanim recommends its customers to take advantage of this

free checkup before it's too late and reap the valuable benefits and peace-of-mind offers.

Customers can benefit from this amazing safety checkup offer by visiting either the Shuwaikh Service Center, located in Shuwaikh Industrial Area, from Saturday to Thursday, 7:00am till 7:00pm, and Friday, 2:00pm till 7:00 pm, or the Fahaheel Service Center, from Saturday to Wednesday, 7:30 am till 6:00pm, and Thursday, from 7:30am till 1:00pm.



Trump team demands China slash US trade surplus, cut tariffs

WASHINGTON/BEIJING: The Trump administration has drawn a hard line in trade talks with China, demanding a \$200 billion cut in the Chinese trade surplus with the United States, sharply lower tariffs and advanced technology subsidies, people familiar with the talks said on Friday.

The lengthy list of demands was presented to Beijing before the start of talks Thursday and Friday between top-level Trump administration officials and their Chinese counterparts to try to avert a damaging trade war between the world's two largest economies. A White House statement did not mention specific demands, but said the US delegation "held frank discussions with Chinese officials on rebalancing the United States-China bilateral economic relationship, improving China's protection of intellectual property, and identifying policies that unfairly enforce technology transfers."

The statement gave no indication that US President Donald Trump would back off on his threat to impose tariffs on up to \$150 billion in Chinese goods over allegations of intellectual property theft.

The delegation was returning to Washington to brief Trump and "seek his decision on next steps," the White House said, adding that the administration had "consensus" for "immediate attention" to change the US-China trade and investment relationship. Trump said he would meet with the delegation on Saturday. "We will be meeting tomorrow to determine the results, but it is hard for China in that they have become very spoiled with US trade wins!" he said in a Twitter post late on Friday. China's state-run Xinhua news agency described the talks as "constructive, candid and efficient" but with disagreements that remain "relatively big." —Reuters

Technology

Dell and Microsoft collaborate to simplify delivery of IoT solutions

Industry leaders join forces to build secure, intelligent edge-to-cloud solution

LAS VEGAS: Dell Technologies and Microsoft are collaborating to deliver a joint Internet of Things (IoT) solution designed to help vertical customers simply deploying their end-to-end IoT solutions, from the edge to the cloud. The combination of Microsoft Azure IoT applications and services, VMware Pulse IoT Center and Dell Edge Gateways will offer customers streamlined management, centralized monitoring and security from devices to the cloud.

Businesses that are implementing IoT initiatives today have invested significant resources and manpower to research and integrate a multitude of hardware, software and cloud services across the fragmented IoT landscape to stand up a solution that meets their business needs and adheres to IT departments' stringent standards. Those businesses want to harness advanced services such as artificial intelligence (AI) and real-time decision making while also making sure all deployment, asset management, security and compliance requirements are met. Together, Dell Technologies and Microsoft will make IoT easier for customers by delivering a secure solution that provides consistent infrastructure management from the edge to the cloud.

Unlocking the potential of IoT

The joint solution offers an underlying IoT infrastructure, management capabilities and security for customers looking to deploy IoT for scenarios like predictive maintenance, supply chain visibility and other use cases. The solution will deliver:

- Intelligence at the edge with Microsoft Azure IoT Edge: This application extends cloud intelligence to edge devices so that devices can act locally and leverage the cloud for global coordination and machine learning at scale.

- Management and monitoring of edge devices with VMware Pulse IoT Center: This provides more secure, enterprise-grade management and monitoring of diverse, certified edge devices including gateways and connected IoT devices, bios and operating systems. This ecosystem will be built over time involving deeper integration and certification to support customer requirements.

- High-performance, rugged Dell Edge Gateways: IoT devices with powerful dual-core Intel Atom processors connect a variety of wired and wireless devices and systems to aggregate and analyze inputs and send relevant data to the cloud.

An IoT solution that is greater than the sum of its parts

VMware Pulse IoT Center will serve as the management glue between the hardware (Dell Edge Gateways or other certified edge systems), connected sensors and devices and the Microsoft Azure IoT Edge. Initially, Pulse will help to deploy the Microsoft Azure IoT Edge to the requisite edge systems so that it can start collecting, analyzing and acting on data in real-time. While this joint solution is optimized for Dell Edge Gateways it can continuously manage, monitor and better secure certified combination of gateways/edge systems with the latest patches and updates on an ongoing basis as well as monitor the health of these connected devices. Customers relying on Microsoft Azure IoT Edge and VMware Pulse IoT Center for their IoT initiatives will be able to provision, deliver and more securely manage their Microsoft Azure IoT Edge components.

Chris Wolff, head of OEM and IOT GTM, Dell EMC, said, "When we unveiled the Dell Technologies IoT division last fall, we committed to leaning on the Dell



Technologies family of businesses to engineer the right solutions to meet customer needs in conjunction with our partner ecosystem. This collaboration will enable customers to implement IoT more seamlessly, for better and faster ROI."

Ruston Panabaker, vice president IoT Solutions, Microsoft, said, "When businesses deploy secure intelligent edge to cloud solutions, they can take full advantage

of the digital transformation opportunities IoT represents. By delivering this integrated edge to cloud solution, Microsoft and Dell technologies are making it easier for customers to empower their employees, optimize operations and reimagine their products, services or even business models." Customers and channel partners can work with Dell Technologies and Microsoft to purchase this IoT Solution in the second half of 2018.

Flipkart board approves \$15bn deal with Walmart

MUMBAI: Indian e-commerce giant Flipkart has agreed to sell 75 percent of the company to US retail behemoth Walmart for about \$15 billion, a report said Friday, in what would be a blow to rival Amazon. Bloomberg News said Flipkart's board had agreed the sale. Flipkart declined to comment when contacted by AFP.

There has been months of speculation that Walmart was preparing to buy Flipkart to take on Amazon which is aggressively expanding in India, one of the world's key online markets.

Flipkart is India's largest e-commerce group on the basis of sales but has been fighting off a huge challenge from Amazon since the US conglomerate entered the country in 2013.

Amazon boss Jeff Bezos has committed \$5 billion to grabbing a big slice of India's e-commerce pie after failing to make inroads in China. India's e-commerce sales hit \$21 billion last year according to market research company Forrester and are expected to soar as its population of 1.3 billion people make greater use of increased internet access.

Bloomberg said that under the proposed deal Japan's Softbank Group would give up its 20 percent stake in Flipkart. The report said the deal could be announced soon, however it added that it was not yet certain.

Indian media said this week that Walmart was moving closer to striking a deal with Flipkart even as Amazon was trying to negotiate its own deal.

Reports quoting unnamed sources said Amazon was willing to value Flipkart higher, at around \$22 billion, but that all of Flipkart's major investors were leaning towards Walmart. Flipkart, Amazon and Walmart have all repeatedly declined to comment on the talks. Flipkart was founded in 2007 by former Amazon employees Sachin and Binny Bansal. As well as Softbank it is also backed by New York-based fund Tiger Management.—AFP

Xerox CEO to stay as Icahn deal deadline expires

TOKYO: Xerox's chief executive and several board members will keep their posts after an agreement with activist shareholders to replace them expired, the company said late Thursday.

Xerox Chief Executive Jeff Jacobson and six board members were to resign in exchange for ending a lawsuit by activists Carl Icahn and David Deason. The powerful shareholders are contesting a merger with Fujifilm. Xerox said late Thursday that the agreement, which was announced Tuesday, was moot after a deadline for Icahn and Deason to abort the litigation had expired.

"In the absence of such stipulations, the agreement expired at 8:00 pm ET on May 3, 2018," Xerox said. "As a result, the current board of directors and management team will remain in place."

Icahn and Deason have vigorously opposed a proposed deal in which Xerox would be absorbed by an existing joint venture known as Fuji Xerox, falling under the control of Fujifilm. The conflict is the latest involving a big company and a high-profile shareholder activist, in this case Icahn, a battle-tested billionaire who has aggressively challenged companies since the 1980s. A US court last week ordered a temporary block of the takeover, saying it prioritized the interest of Xerox's CEO over its shareholders.

Xerox filed papers to appeal against the injunction, saying the court had overstepped its authority. They defended the board's oversight and approval of "value-maximizing alternative for the company's shareholders." Icahn and Deason signaled Friday they planned to continue the fight, blasting the Xerox decision to reinstate Jacobson and the others as the latest sign of the "brazen self-interest" of the Xerox board.—AFP

Huawei setting the scene at SAMENA Telecom Leaders' Summit 2018

KUWAIT: Huawei, a leading global ICT solutions provider, and the SAMENA Telecommunications Council hosted the fifth annual Telecom Leaders' Summit in Dubai on Thursday. Held under the theme "Building the Digital Economy of the Middle East", the event was a platform for leading telecommunications companies, regulators, government bodies, technology providers and consultants across the Middle East and Africa to discuss how to frame practicable ICT strategies that will enable governments and organizations to reap maximum socio-economic benefits from digital transformation.

In addition to being the strategic partner of the SAMENA Summit for five consecutive years, Huawei held three sub-forums that guided discussions on key industry trends like 5G and All-Cloud Transformation, and presented the Global Industry Vision 2025 and the Global Connectivity Index 2018. Huawei also showcased its latest 5G E2E solutions, launched the "Middle East first Multitenant IoT Hosting Center" and introduced its 5G Ecosystem Program in the Middle East.

"This year, Huawei's new corporate vision is to bring digital to every person, home and organization for a fully connected, intelligent world," said Charles Yang, President of Huawei Middle East. "With 5G and artificial intelligence just around the corner, the digital world - where all things will sense, all things are connected, and all things are intelligent - is within reach. We will continue our investment on intelligent devices, to enhance people's work and entertainment experience. We will continue our investment on home broadband network, to enrich people's lives at home. We will continue our investment on network, cloud, and IoT, to inspire innovation in organizations. The SAMENA Telecom Leaders' Summit is a platform for us and all industry partners to collaborate to fulfill this mission."

Huawei's first sub-forum was "5G is Now." The forum focused on the imminent arrival of 5G and its support to national transformation plans across the region, in addition to the key role 5G will play in the Middle East's digital transformation journey. The 5G era is growing close, and preparation is necessary to build up network spectrum,



Charles Yang

Activist investor wrests Telecom Italia board from Vivendi

ROZZANO, Italy: Activist fund Elliott won Friday its weeks-long power struggle with Vivendi over Telecom Italia by wresting control of the company's board at a shareholder meeting held near Milan.

US-based Elliott scraped past Vivendi, with 49.84 percent of voting shareholders' ballots going in the fund's favor and 47.18 percent of votes for the French telecommunications giant, which is run by billionaire Vincent Bolloré and is the largest shareholder in Telecom Italia (TIM) with a stake of just under 24 percent. Elliott hailed it as a victory for an "independent slate," but it is a big win for the fund, which has about nine percent of TIM's shares and has been pushing for change at the top at TIM ever since it demanded the removal of six board members in mid-March.

"Today's win for the independent slate sends a powerful signal to Italy and beyond that engaged investors will not accept sub-

standard corporate governance," the fund wrote in a statement following the vote, in which over 67 percent of TIM's capital took part. It will hold 10 seats on the new board, with Vivendi given the remaining five, a huge blow to the French group after having previously had a stranglehold on board positions. Vivendi immediately responded to the defeat by insisting that it would work to ensure that Elliott, sometimes called a "vulture fund", would not "dismantle" TIM.

"We have five seats on the board, we are the main shareholder and we will continue to support (director and general manager) Amos Genish's strategy, which was voted for unanimously by the board," said Vivendi's head of communications Simon Gillham.

"Very bad shareholder"

Gillham added that Elliott's was "not a market-driven victory" and that they won thanks to state-controlled entity Cassa di Risparmio di Roma, which holds a 4.7 percent stake in TIM and "made the difference by voting for a hedge fund instead of an industrial long-term shareholder."

The Italian government has repeatedly criticised Vivendi's management, and tensions have often been high between Rome and the French group.

"Vivendi has been a very bad shareholder," Economic Development Minister Carlo Calenda said in April. "I am in favor of



transport, sites and business cases, in order to facilitate its approach. Huawei recommends Middle East operators and government agencies to support spectrum neutrality and use test-driven development to construct Mobile Broadband networks in order to rollout 5G as fast as possible. The sub-forum was an opportunity for Huawei and other ICT leaders to discuss how to address remaining challenges and opportunities on the road to 5G. In addition, the "5G Ecosystem Program in the Middle East" was launched with Huawei partners at the 5G sub-forum. The program aims to inspire the 5G ecosystem in the Middle East, as the 5G End-to-End commercial use is closely related to 5G ecosystem.

Global industry vision

The second sub-forum was "Huawei Global Industry Vision 2025 and Global Connectivity Index 2018" where Huawei presented two studies. First was the Global

Industry Vision (GIV) 2025, a new forward-looking report that provides quantitative and qualitative predictions about the future of industry and society. According to the report, by 2025 all things will be able to sense and all things will be connected, bringing us all into a world where everything is intelligent. Second study presented at this sub-forum was the Global Connectivity Index (GCI) which included 80 countries globally and examined how each is progressing in its digital transformation based on 40 unique indicators that cover five technology enablers: broadband, data centers, cloud, big data and Internet of Things. Nine countries from the Middle East were included

in the index. The GCC figured prominently, with the UAE ranking highest among Middle Eastern countries, followed by Kuwait, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and Oman, all placed in the "adopters" category in the report.

Huawei's third sub-forum was "All-Cloud Transformation in the 5G era". The forum was an occasion to discuss how cloud transformation can help accelerate the deployment of 5G networks in the region. The 5G era requires high-bandwidth, large-connectivity, low-latency user experience. It places higher requirements on the operator's cloud data center architecture and infrastructure, software defined anything, anything as services, services become to AI: these are more flexible, smarter and more reliable.

At the summit, Huawei also announced the launch of the "Middle East first Multitenant IoT Hosting Center" in order to facilitate IoT local ecosystem incubation and accelerate IoT business development in the region. Based on this IoT Hosting Center and ecosystem enablement strategy, Huizhong and Hayat are the first partners to obtain "The Middle East IoT Hosting Center 1st NB-IoT enabled certificate"

Huawei advocates openness, collaboration, and shared success. Huawei is an active member of more than 360 standards organizations, industry alliances, and open source communities, where they work together on mainstream standards and lay the foundation for shared success. Moreover, Huawei focuses on three domains - fully-connected networks, intelligent computing, and device innovation - and continues to invest in products, technologies, basic research, engineering capability improvement, technical standards, and industry ecosystems, with the aim of supporting customers in their digital transformation journey, and lay the cornerstone of an intelligent world.



MILAN: Shareholders are pictured after the general meeting of shareholders of Telecom Italia with the group's managers and its main shareholder Vivendi on Friday in Rozzano, south of Milan.—AFP

foreign investment, but that does not mean remaining dormant when they (want) to destroy the value rather than to create it."

Calenda's criticisms mirror those of Elliott, who have lamented TIM's performance ever since "Vivendi nominees" joined the board in December 2015. The fund has castigated governance issues and "conflicts of interest" such as TIM's January 2017

awarding of an advertising contract to Havas, which is owned by Vivendi, worth a rumored 100 million euros (\$123 million). The charges filed last week against Vincent Bolloré, CEO of the Bolloré group that owns Vivendi, in connection with the awarding of two lucrative port concessions in West Africa, was for Elliott the "latest example" of the problems posed by Vivendi.—AFP

Health

'Chronic Wound Management and Diabetic Foot Care' awareness day

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: An awareness day on chronic wound management and diabetic foot care was held at the Avenues. "Care for the foot is of immense importance for diabetics. Diabetic foot clinics receive many cases every day, an average of 43 cases - Amiri Hospital receives 35 cases during mornings and 15 during the evening," said head of Kuwait Society for Wound Management Dr Ghada Ibrahim.

The awareness day was held with the participation of an integrated team of specialists from the Diabetic Foot Care Society, which is under the Kuwait Medical Association. "Health awareness has become widespread lately with good results and has reduced amputations from 15 cases in 2009 to only six in 2017," Dr Ibrahim added.

During the event, plastic surgeons from Babbtain burn center led by Dr Qutaiba Al-Kandari and blood vessels laboratory specialist at Adan Hospital Dr Ahrar Al-Husseini along with orthopedic specialists and physiotherapists were at hand. Director General of Bader Al-Sultan Company, which sponsored the event, Emad Al-Zibin said: "The awareness day was up to expectations, and awareness brings good results, so we always attempt to spread awareness in the entire country."



Campaigners fear Latin America is rolling back on eco-farming promises

ROME: The world map, beamed on a large display screen, shows a stark contrast between Latin America, where dark colors cover most of the continent, and the rest of the world, where there are few. This map's focus is nations that have laws and policies supporting eco-farming techniques, a practice known as "agroecology". Fewer than 30 countries worldwide have such laws, and more than half of those that do are in Latin America. But in practice, campaigners told the Thomson Reuters Foundation, some Latin American governments are ignoring these laws and policies, while Brazil is accused of rolling them back. That threatens the environment and, cumulatively, the livelihoods of tens of

thousands of farmers, they said. "For the last three years ... we have been losing resources to sustain agroecology policies," said Maria Noel Salgado, a Uruguayan farmer and coordinator with the Agroecological Movement of Latin America and the Caribbean (MAELA), a network of indigenous people and small-scale farmers and fishermen. "The laws are there but there are no resources. We now have a lot of governments who only believe in the power of markets and biotechnology," she added, referring to the rise of conservative leaders across the region.

Agroecology, as its name implies, shuns chemical inputs. Instead it uses nature-friendly methods such as planting trees on farms and rotating crops to improve the soil and protect against pests. Its proponents say it can provide more nutritious and environmentally-friendly food for a growing world, increase farmers' earnings and make farms resilient to climate change. "There is growing evidence that these systems keep carbon in the ground, support biodiversity, rebuild soil fertility and sustain yields over time, providing a basis for secure farm livelihoods," said a 2016 report by the International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems (IPES-Food).

Good on paper...

The world map showing Latin America apparently leading the way was the centrepiece at an international meeting on agroecology in early April, organized by the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). The laws and policies that are now in place in the region are the result of decades of campaigning by farmers and campaigners, Angela Cordeiro, a Brazilian agronomist, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation at the meeting. "Despite the fact that we have a very strong agribusiness sector in Brazil ... civil society and social movements managed to influence some laws," Cordeiro said.

Ross Mary Borja, director of Ecuador-based charity EkoRural, said her country's progressive laws were due to pressure: its 2008 constitution, which includes specific rights for nature, was a result of constant campaigning by groups, including hers. Both Brazil and Nicaragua have laws and policies on agroecology and organic production, for example, while El Salvador is considering a similar approach. Brazil, for instance, stipulates that 30 percent of food for its school-feeding program must come from family farms, which earn a premium if they use agroecol-

ogy. And in December, the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), an intergovernmental grouping of 33 countries, agreed to strengthen policies "that contribute to the development of agroecological family farming".

Less good in practice

That said, countries' implementation of laws that support agroecology and sustainable agriculture has been uneven, said Jean-Francois Le Coq of the French Agricultural Research Centre for Development (CIRAD), a French government agency. Nicaragua has not implemented its agroecology law at the grassroots level, for example, and Costa Rica has only partly implemented its law to promote organic agriculture, said Le Coq, whose organization in 2017 studied how agroecology is practiced in eight Latin American countries. Another problem, campaigners said, is the gap between what is in the law and what happens on the ground. Despite Ecuador's constitutional protection for nature, for example, its biodiversity is under threat from industrial agriculture, oil exploration, mining and poverty, they said. —Reuters

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What's On

NBK shares fun events with children at its Specialty Hospital and Stem Cell unit

Al-Abdul Jaleel: NBK is keen on sharing children's happy moments during their treatment



National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) continued celebrating the spring season with a group of initiatives designed especially for children at its Specialty Hospital and Stem Cell unit. The spring initiatives took place in the month of April and witnessed several fun activities with the participation of the patients including planting their flower pots in the hospital's garden, creating their own farm, designing and coloring different pottery shapes and painting their own canvas' boards where they showed their artistic skills.

The fun events come as part of a program designed to engage with children and runs all year round.

Children and the Hospital team took part in those activities and fun workshops to end the spring season.

"NBK is keen on sharing this occasion with children as it symbolizes new beginnings," said Joanne Al-Abdul Jaleel, NBK Public relations Officer. "These events reflect continuity, positivity and life. Children are easily driven towards good vibes which helps them tolerate, accept their treatment and somehow overcome their medical statement."

Abdul Jaleel added, "Children, nurses and doctors took part in attending the different fun workshops showing the solidarity and the family spirit as the main values of the Hospital and its vision".

"We take great pride today in sharing our children at the Specialized Hospital and the Stem Cell Therapy Unit these activities," noted Abdul Jaleel. "NBK has always considered supporting the children an essential part of its social and philanthropic outreach."

Moreover, a doctoral committee from the hospital chose the best performing nurses for April to be honored by NBK, as part of the program that aims at encouraging team work and dedication. NBK also organized story telling sessions and movie nights for children at the Specialty Hospital and Stem Cell Therapy Unit during the month of April, as part of a fun-activity program that was launched to support chil-

dren while they get their treatment and extends all the year round.

NBK Children's Hospital stands as a landmark for the bank's social initiatives towards children. NBK expanded the hospital's capacity and opened recently the only Stem Cell Therapy Unit for children in Kuwait, further expanding its hospital's ability to treat children with cancer and blood diseases.

NBK's Social initiatives reflect the Bank's high sense of duty and responsibility towards the community. It is a well rooted tradition that has been carried out by NBK each year in its efforts to continuously have an active role in Kuwait's society.

Amira Behbehani opens second exhibition

Formative artist Amira Behbehani recently held her second personal exhibition under the title of 'Immortal Femininity,' which is devoted to women through history. Speaking about the exhibition, Behbehani said that women had always played significant historic and social roles. She added that she sought various techniques in this exhibition, including embroidery. Meanwhile, LOYAC's Chairperson Farea Al-Saqaf stressed that ever since mankind developed its awareness, women had been the core of truth, source of worries, reassurance, life, love and the sun that shines high at times and hides behind some clouds at others.



Yaqoub Alrefaei, IBS Director General and Desmond Nelson, IBS Head - Training Department is pictured with ABK's graduates.

ABK employees achieve IBS professional qualifications

Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) yesterday announced that seventeen of its employees have recently successfully graduated from professional courses held by Kuwait's Institute of Banking Studies (IBS). At the graduation ceremony set by IBS, which took place at the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce on 24th April, 2018, ABK graduates from IBS's

Certified Bank Branch Manager (CBBM), Risk Management Certification (RMC), Certified Credit Management (CCM), Certified Assistant Bank Branch Manager (CABBMM) and Certified Manager (CM). During the ceremony, which was attended by the graduate's families and senior ABK managers, each graduate received an official diploma to mark their achievement. ABK is committed to investing in its employees and ensuring that they have every opportunity to fulfill their career potential. The Bank is a keen supporter of IBS's specialized training programs which offer high caliber internationally accredited programs which are designed to specifically address the needs of Kuwait's banking sector.

Celebrate your graduation at Symphony Style Hotel

A graduation ceremony is a perfect opportunity for students to celebrate the culmination of their learning journey and mark the beginning of an exciting future. Students dream of find a venue that can enhance their celebration through a blend of luxury, elegance and a light-hearted ambiance. Symphony Style Hotel Kuwait, the jewel of Kuwait City, is the perfect location for that special day full of joy and jubilation in a luxurious environment complemented by the highest quality hospitality.

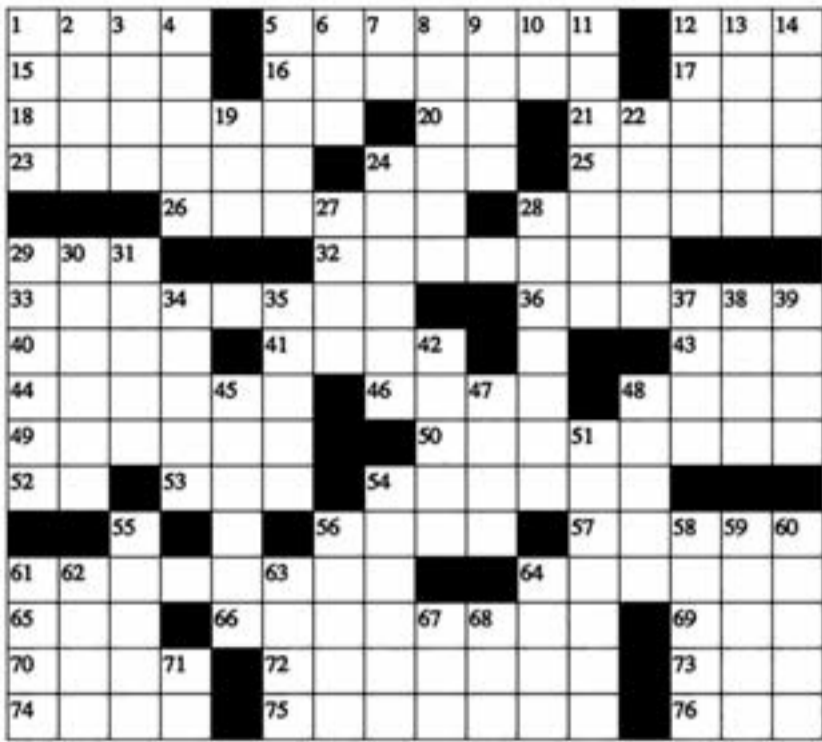
The hotel features two stylish ballrooms to guarantee impeccable experiences. Ebreez Ballroom is adorned with a meticulously considered color palette reflecting the desert's great natural beauty. This magnificent event space can accommodate 650 people for a reception/theatre style. Breesim Ballroom provides a contemporary, enlivening setting, with a beautiful curvy interior. Breesim has capacity to host 150 people, the perfect venue for a certain number of students. Adding to the appeal, both ballrooms are the epicenter of entertainment, equipped with the latest technology and a highly experienced team to ensure an unforgettable moment.

Every element of the venues is pure perfection, from stylish table set-up and decor to personalized catering to meet the needs of the students on their glorious occasions. In addition to the wonderful menus provided by the hotel, the professional catering team can blend a ceremony and an exceptional culinary experience and be confident that the expert staff will take care of every detail.



Stars

CROSSWORD 1901



ACROSS

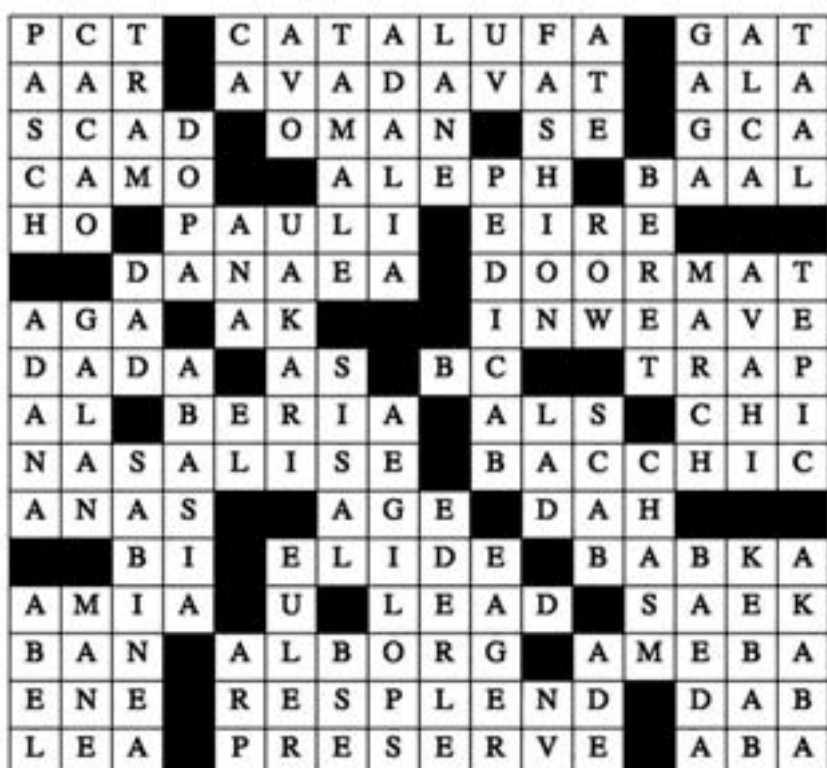
- 1. A European river.
5. An oral antidiabetic drug (trade names DiaBeta and Micronase) that stimulates the release of insulin from the pancreas.
12. The basic unit of money in Romania.
15. Tropical Asian starlings.
16. Of or relating to the enteron.
17. A kind of person.
18. An enlarged and muscular saclike organ of the alimentary canal.
20. An uproarious party.
21. A genus of Platalea.
23. A city of central Russia south of Moscow.
25. A public announcement (in church) of a proposed marriage.
26. A deep bow.
29. The portion of the vertebrate nervous system consisting of the brain and spinal cord.
32. A fractional monetary unit of Venezuela and Costa Rica and Equatorial Guinea and Paraguay and Spain.
33. A component or accessory added to something after it has been manufactured.
36. A city in central Tanzania.
40. A fencing sword similar to a foil but with a heavier blade.
41. (Old Testament) In Judeo-Christian mythology.
43. A form of entertainment that enacts a story by a sequence of images giving the illusion of continuous movement.
44. High-pitched and sharp.
46. Type genus of the Musaceae.
49. (Irish) God of love and beauty.
50. A painful sore with a hard pus-filled core.
52. A radioactive transuranic element synthesized from californium.
53. The compass point that is one point east (clockwise) of due north.
57. The Mongol people living the the central and eastern parts of Outer Mongolia.
61. A city in northwestern Mexico near the California border.
65. A religious belief of African origin involving witchcraft and sorcery.
66. A small volcanic island in Indonesia between Java and Sumatra.
69. A master's degree in business.
70. (law) Lacking any legal or binding force.
72. Loosen something by unscrewing it.
73. An adult male person (as opposed to a woman).
74. A town in north central Oklahoma.
75. A retailer of meat.
76. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.

- 4. The posterior part of the mandible that is more or less vertical.
5. A design fixed to some surface or a paper bearing the design to be transferred to the surface.
6. Antibacterial drug (trade name Nydrazid) used to treat tuberculosis.
7. A highly unstable radioactive element (the heaviest of the halogen series).
8. Wish harm upon.
9. (Greek mythology) God of love.
10. A hard gray lustrous metallic element that is highly corrosion-resistant.
11. A state in the southeastern United States on the Gulf of Mexico.
12. A woody climbing usually tropical plant.
13. Intelligence derived from non-communications electromagnetic radiations from foreign sources (other than radioactive sources).
14. An edict of the Russian tsar.
19. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
22. French biochemist who (with Jacques Monod) studied regulatory processes in cells (born in 1920).
24. Desert shrub of Syria and Arabia having small white flowers.
27. Harsh or corrosive in tone.
28. (Norse mythology) One of the Aesir.
30. A son of your brother or sister.
31. Of a stern or strict bearing or demeanor.
34. A period during which something or somebody is dominant or powerful.
35. Not in accordance with the fact or reality or actuality.
37. An organization of countries formed in 1961 to agree on a common policy for the sale of petroleum.
38. The basic unit of money in Iran.
39. An inflammatory disease involving the sebaceous glands of the skin.
42. A jurist who interprets Muslim law.
45. A city in northwestern Germany and an important Baltic port.
47. A city in northeastern Egypt at the head of the Gulf of Suez and at the southern end of the Suez Canal.
48. Make uniform.
51. Not known.
54. A derogatory term used by Jews to refer to non-Jewish women.
55. Being three more than sixty.
56. Having a horizontal surface in which no part is higher or lower than another.
58. A subsidiary proposition that is assumed to be true in order to prove another proposition.
59. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
60. A city in southern Turkey on the Seyhan River.
62. Very dark black.
63. Starch resembling sago that is obtained from cuckoopint root.
64. The United Nations agency concerned with atomic energy.
67. A legal document codifying the result of deliberations of a committee or society or legislative body.
68. The universal time coordinated time when a transmission is sent from Earth to a spacecraft or other celestial body.
71. A doctor's degree in religion.

DOWN

- 1. A city in the Asian part of Russia.
2. Evergreen tree of eastern Asia and Philippines having large leathery leaves and small green-white flowers in compact cymes.
3. An organic compound that contains a hydroxyl group bonded to a carbon atom which in turn is doubly bonded to another carbon atom.

Friday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You find you're dealing with matters of the spirit: d j vu, intuition and other such aspects but you can't explain them. It's as though you know what coworkers, family and friends are thinking and it turns out what you suspect is true! Your competitive spirit is boosted with the help of the stars; you could feel the vibration of this very strongly. Your investigation into investing pays off as you uncover a little-known loophole. You are compelled to contact someone by phone later in the afternoon; a long, meaningful discussion clears the air and mends fences. Where finances are concerned you are on a clear path to success. Contemplate all you have learned on spiritual and moral levels and you see how very far you have come.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Your mind is on big things such as eternity and life in general; remembering small details such as leaving something out of the fridge or paying a phone bill could slip your mind if you're not careful! Your intuition, spiritual gifts, or whatever you'd like to consider them, are at the fore now. The cycle you have just entered creates an energy of fact-finding that helps with figuring out the motives of others. A circumstance arises that leaves you exasperated and confounded. You have the ability to overcome having a temper tantrum; remember that all things pass. Being calm is difficult but you are able. An evening beneath the stars can serve to refresh your senses. Someone dear makes a suggestion that's perfect for making positive changes soon.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Intuitive vibrations stay with you throughout the day as you putter around the house or workplace. Your mind is preoccupied with the unknown mysteries of life and death. Cosmic information is an interest you enjoy. You could overlook normal tasks as your mind is fixed upon things you consider more important. You find yourself center stage regarding an enormous accomplishment. You feel good about your work and the opportunities offered through certain areas of endeavor. Your humor is strong and easily shared by others who come into contact with. Organic gardening or food takes a place of priority in your life. If you find that your plans may need to take an unexpected turn, remember that much success can be found in change.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Your gift of knowing is strong and at its height of intensity! The stars are aligned for ethereal energy and confirmation of what some call hunches or gut feelings. You are tapped in to the flow as you get tasks and chores done with ease. Vibrations of love and contentment are prevalent today and you're caught up in gratitude and humility. You seek more information regarding cosmic or mystic secrets that keep repeating through your mind; could there be life on other planets and UFOs, are ghosts are truly haunting physical spaces or mundane situations send you running in the opposite direction. An interest in all things new appeals to you now; art, clothing, furniture and all manner of accessories are more than likely indicated.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

When hunches are confirmed over and over again, you have got no choice but to recognize this substantial spiritual gift; speaking of this to people who understand is helpful. No matter the label you apply, gut feelings, mother's intuition or d j vu, pay attention to what you're picking up on. This ability is one you can rely on. Emotional bonds grow and strengthen within your circle. You feel the urge to stay to yourself and spend the majority of the day at home alone. Your thoughts focus inward toward your life and actions; have you completed working on your self-liking who you are makes any tasks or chores easy and not worth complaint. Tonight, special friends revisit a trip you took together many years ago when much younger.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Your savvy business skills kick in when you discover a new situation for a potential financial investment. You're able to use foresight to create a plan that works for all concerned parties. You could realize you have more money than you originally thought. You have a reputation for bringing people together by playing the diplomat; you feel empowered in a positive way for this. A surprise gathering could be held in your honor; your good works don't go unnoticed as you thought! You enjoy sharing time with others of like mind and heart. Finding out a new way to research is strongly indicated; go in an try it, you'll like it! Your intuition is a strong part of your new journey that you can't, and won't, ignore; be still and listen to this gift.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Intuition is so strong and demanding! That you could be irritated and cross. Pay attention to your knowing but strive to keep it in its place. Spiritual gifts could take your mind off of your normal tasks and responsibilities so figure out how to prevent this; you'll enjoy your abilities a lot more! You discover several good books and films regarding eternity and the mysterious workings of the universe that scratch your itch for this type of information. You'll want to jump into a situation you should take time to consider; stop for a moment, take a deep breath and think. Success can be yours if given a chance to prove your capabilities; be prepared when the opportunity does come. This evening could be a good one to practice meditation outside.



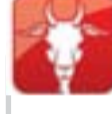
Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You're hands-on and full throttle when tackling domestic chores. You actually enjoy cleaning out and giving away to those less fortunate. You make the most of enjoying yourself even when surrounded by the demands of every day life. You feel strong and healthy as you go through an important meeting with your healthcare professional. You may make many new connections at a convention or large meeting of some kind. You could escape into a new hobby that satisfies your energy and mental levels; keep an eye on expenses regarding this. Your close circle of intimates provides security and comfort. Indulge your love of beauty by visiting a lovely old home or a unique museum; spending time with someone new could be indicated.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Your intuitive side is fully awakened when someone from your past reaches out to you. This person made your parting ugly, so carefully consider this before reconnecting. People can, and do, change but sometimes they don't. Someone rude interrupts repeatedly as you attempt to get a word in edgewise. Your future looks bright after you discover a promising new investment opportunity in an emerging field or market. Someone criticizes an idea you have for your home; ignore this person as they're jealous. A friend or family member makes an effort to hide something from you; again, the intuition kicks in! Enjoying a movie with friends takes you away for a while! Let the sense of being loved and included warm your heart tonight.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

The energy of prosperity surrounds and supports you. The new cycle you've entered creates an atmosphere of abundance and opportunity; it's up to you to accept these. Your understanding and feel for the social graces propels you forward. You enjoy your work which is why you do so well at it; if you don't like your job, you don't thrive nor even stick with it! Romance holds your interest and you wonder about a certain person. If you're romantically attached you make plans for an intimate evening. It feels good to stretch and move your body. You may want to keep your thoughts and ideas to yourself until they finish forming; someone's interested in taking credit for something you come up with. Be true to yourself.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

The mysteries of life take prominence in your thoughts and attention. A period of great spiritual evolution is at hand according to the new cycle you have entered. You could find yourself overlooking small details because you mind is focused on deep ideas and questions regarding the mystic workings you long to know more about. Be mindful that when considering eternity, you could become overwhelmed. The finer things in life interest you at this time; you are a lover of beauty and comfort. You could come across new recipes that are healthy; this could pertain to eating only whole foods that are not processed. Tonight, you feel very good about yourself and your efforts to grow; enjoy this special time with those you love.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

The heavens create an energy that focuses on your appearance as well as your health. Your beauty and intellect shine as the work week finally comes to a very successful end. Your mind is fixated on what is fair; if you discover what actually is the fair thing to do, this will generate peace and good feelings. Should you make decisions that are incorrect, you stand to lose a lot; do the right thing! There is someone who surprises you with their acceptance of wrong doing. You are motivated to complete a task; the energy of completion surrounds you now and later into the month. The day ends with handy discoveries and new methods that create ease and performance; use a new cookbook this evening to practice for a big dinner for loved ones.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Free Printable Word Search Puzzles Moods & Emotions 2

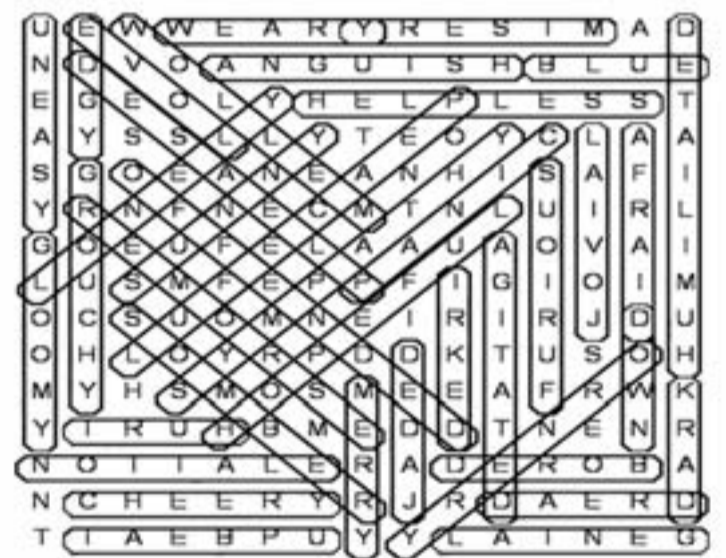
Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining 11 letters spell an additional word.



- AMUSED ANNOYED ANTSY ANXIOUS CARING CONTEMPT CONTENT CONTRITE DELIGHT DESPAIR DISLIKE DOUBT EMPATHY ENVY EUPHORIA GLUM GREED GROUCHY GUILT HATRED HORROR INFATUATED JOYOUS LEERY PRIDE RAGE SAD SATISFIED SERENITY SHAME SHOCK SULKY SULLEN TERRIFIED TRANQUIL UNCERTAIN UNHAPPY WARY

Friday's Solution

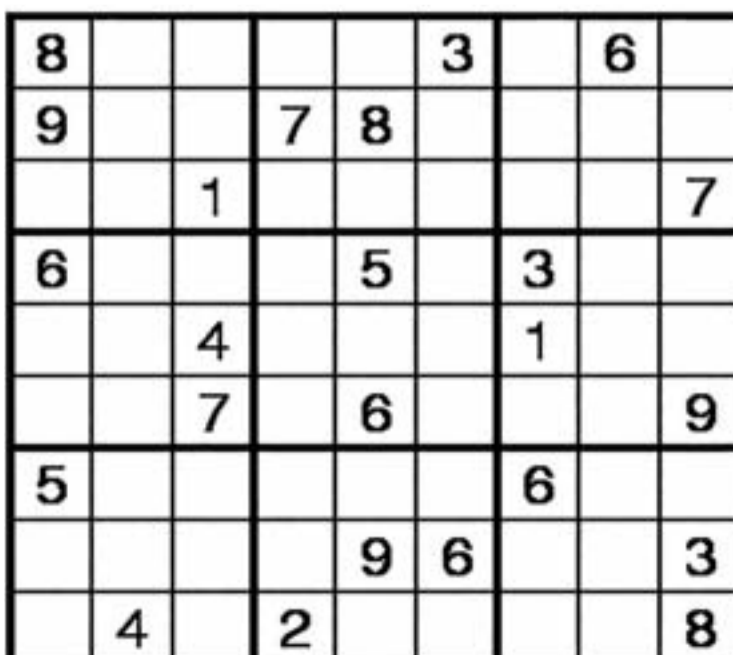
Moods & Emotions 1



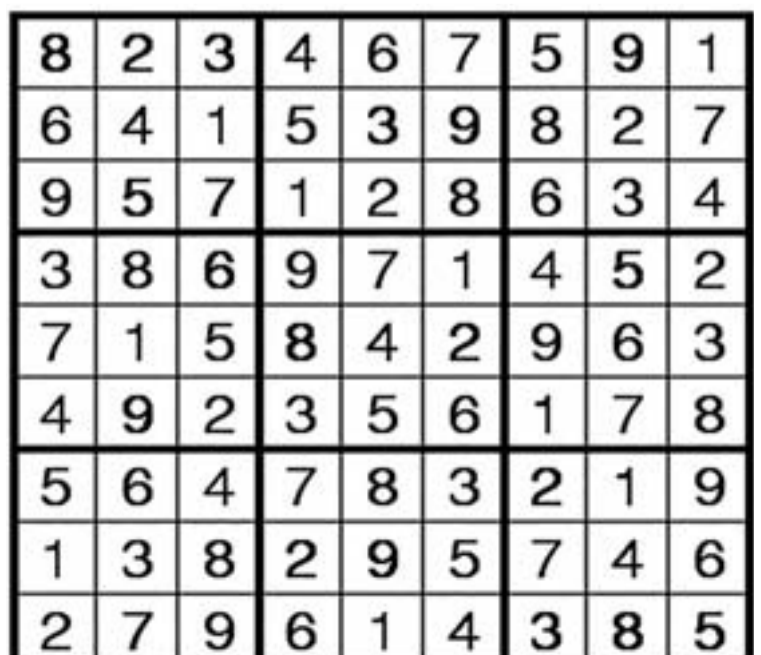
- AFRAID AGITATED ANGUISH BLUE BORED CHEERY DARK DOWN DREAD EDGY ELATION FURIOUS GENIAL GLOOMY GROUCHY HELPLESS HOPEFUL HUMILIATED HURT IRKED JADED JOVIAL LONELY LOVE MELLOW MERRY MISERY OFFENDED ORNERED PANIC PEACEFUL PLEASED REMORSE SOMBER SUNNY SYMPATHY UNEASY UPBEAT WEARY

The hidden word is: ASTONISHMENT

Daily SuDoku



Friday's Solution



Classifieds

Sunday, May 6, 2018



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Hospitals

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

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khaldiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
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Kuwait Airways	171
Jazeera Airways	177
Jet Airways	22924455
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Qatar Airways	22423888
KLM	22425747
Royal Jordanian	22418064/5/6
British Airways	22425635
Air France	22430224
Emirates	22921555
Air India	22438184
Sri Lanka Airlines	22424444
Egypt Air	a22421578

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Position: Sales Engineer.
Education: Bsc in engineering.
Experience: 5 -10 years.
Age: 30-45 years.

JOB REQUIREMENT

- Have a good knowledge about hot dip galvanizing industry.
- Energetic, fluent in English language.
- Good knowledge of local Kuwaiti market, Gulf and international market
- Good knowledge of tenders and ability to get orders.
- Good business relations
- Good negotiation skills
- Transferrable Iqama
- Driving License

Kindly forward your CV with certificate & details to:
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Education: Bsc in engineering.
Experience: 5 -10 years.
Age: 30-45 years.

JOB REQUIREMENT

- Have good knowledge about Structural steel works including tanks, pipes, and oil & gas
- Energetic, fluent in English language
- Have good experience with similar steel companies
- Good knowledge of local Kuwaiti market, Gulf and international market
- Good knowledge of tenders and ability to get orders.
- Good business relations
- Good negotiation skills
- Transferrable Iqama
- Driving License

Kindly forward your CV with certificate & details to:
ahmedku2020@gmail.com

CHANGE OF NAME

I Shaik, Mohammad Rafi S/O Sabjan R/O.H.No 1-1124 beside L M B bank Tirupati road Piler Chittoor (Dt) A.P. holder of Indian Passport No. H-1510262, do hereby change my name as Dudedula Rafi Saheb. (32147)

EMERGENCY 112

I Shaik Ayesha W/O Sahik.

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DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Sunday 6/5/2018				Departure Flights on Sunday 6/5/2018			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
JZR	513	Sharm el-Sheikh	00:10	JZR	776	Jeddah	12:05
THY	772	Istanbul	00:15	QTR	1075	Doha	12:10
DLH	625	Dammam	00:50	WAN	965	Tbilisi	12:15
KAC	102	London	00:50	JZR	176	Dubai	13:10
KAC	504	Beirut	00:50	SAW	702	Damascus	13:30
JZR	539	Cairo	01:00	THY	767	Istanbul	13:40
PGT	858	Istanbul	01:15	JZR	144	Doha	13:55
UAE	853	Dubai	01:40	MSR	611	Cairo	14:00
KLM	446	Bahrain	01:45	JZR	552	Alexandria	14:05
KKK	1268	Istanbul	02:00	AXB	394	Kozhikode	14:10
JZR	267	Beirut	02:10	UAE	877	Dubai	14:15
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	WAN	435	Al Najaf	14:20
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:15	FEJ	442	Asyut	14:50
QTR	1086	Doha	02:30	WAN	415	Beirut	15:00
KAC	414	Bangkok	02:40	KAC	673	Dubai	15:00
KAC	418	Manila	03:05	GFA	222	Bahrain	15:00
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05	FDB	060	Dubai	15:05
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05	QTR	1079	Doha	15:15
RJA	648	Amman	03:05	SVA	505	Jeddah	15:45
KAC	382	Delhi	03:10	KAC	771	Riyadh	15:55
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	JZR	606	Kochi	16:00
PGT	860	Istanbul	03:25	KAC	785	Jeddah	16:00
QTR	1076	Doha	03:30	KNE	530	Jeddah	16:00
LMU	510	Cairo	04:00	KAC	563	Amman	16:10
JAI	572	Mumbai	04:00	KAC	619	Doha	16:15
JZR	551	Alexandria	04:05	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:15
KAC	1544	Cairo	04:25	PGT	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:30	OMA	646	Muscat	16:20
JZR	609	Hyderabad	04:30	KAC	675	Dubai	17:00
DHX	170	Bahrain	04:45	KAC	503	Beirut	17:15
FDB	069	Dubai	05:05	FDB	052	Dubai	17:20
THY	770	Istanbul	05:15	QTR	1073	Doha	17:25
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	283	Dhaka	18:00
WAN	338	Alexandria	06:25	KAC	343	Chennai	18:00
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:25	SVA	511	Riyadh	18:15
KAC	204	Lahore	06:30	JZR	184	Dubai	18:20
KAC	678	Dubai	06:45	GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
JZR	143	Doha	07:00	JZR	608	Hyderabad	18:25
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:00	JZR	266	Beirut	18:30
KAC	358	Kochi	07:40	JZR	240	Amman	18:30
KAC	354	Bengaluru	07:45	JZR	538	Cairo	18:35
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	WAN	135	Doha	18:40
JZR	503	Luxor	07:50	KAC	345	Ahmedabad	19:20
KAC	384	Delhi	08:05	QTR	1081	Doha	19:20
QTR	8511	Doha	08:20	WAN	117	Bahrain	19:30
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25	MSR	621	Cairo	19:30
WAN	352	Luxor	08:30	GFA	218	Bahrain	19:50
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:55	FDB	064	Doha	19:50
IRC	528	Ahwaz	09:00	RJA	641	Amman	20:00
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	ABY	124	Sharjah	20:00
IRA	665	Shiraz	09:25	RBG	556	Alexandria	20:20
QTR	1070	Doha	09:30	FDB	058	Dubai	20:30
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	UAE	876	Dubai	20:35
IAW	157	Al Najaf	10:00	DLH	624	Dammam	20:50
SVA	512	Riyadh	10:00	KAC	357	Kochi	21:00
WAN	312	Asyut	10:20	KAC	353	Bengaluru	21:00
JZR	787	Riyadh	10:30	OMA	648	Muscat	21:05
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	MEA	403	Beirut	21:15
MEA	404	Beirut	10:55	KAC	1543	Cairo	21:20
SYR	341	Damascus	11:00	KAC	301	Mumbai	21:35
QTR	1074	Doha	11:00	DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50
JZR	165	Dubai	11:45	QTR	1089	Doha	21:50
KAC	614	Bahrain	12:20	KAC	203	Lahore	22:00
SAW	701	Damascus	12:30	ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	22:05
UAE	871	Dubai	12:45	ALK	230	Colombo	22:20
THY	766	Istanbul	12:45	KAC	783	Jeddah	22:25
KAC	742	Dammam	12:50	KAC	383	Delhi	22:25
WAN	542	KTM	12:50	UAE	860	Dubai	22:35
JZR	903	Baku	12:55	GFA	220	Bahrain	22:50
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00	ETD	310	Abu Dhabi	23:00
AXB	393	Kozhikode	13:10	KAC	411	Bangkok	23:05
				QTR	1083	Doha	23:20
				WAN	337	Alexandria	23:40
				JZR	560	Sohag	23:45



Cave says tour fans helped him cope with son's death

Nick Cave says connecting with audiences on tour helped him cope with the death of his son. The Bad Seeds frontman's son Arthur, 15, fell off a cliff near the family's home in Brighton in 2015 and died from his injuries and Nick admitted he wasn't sure if he would survive the loss at first. The effect of Arthur's death on Cave's family and also his music was explored in the 2016 documentary 'One More Time With Feeling' and he was overwhelmed by the public response from this fans on tour and those who watched the movie. Speaking at a Q&A with fans in New York, RollingStone.com reports that he said: "Talking to the audience has actually been extraordinary healing for me. My son

died and I thought that we would not really survive that - my wife and I. It didn't look good. And this film we just made ['One More Time With Feeling'] ... the extraordinary thing about the film is you don't expect this from your own work that it will do you good - or at least I've always hoped it was of some help to other people - but this film had an extraordinary effect on both my wife and I in the sense that the response back to the film we got back on social media and people sending us letters was not so much in sympathy for us but it was people telling us their own stories. And it was suddenly very, very apparent to us that we were very much connected together as people by suffering and grief. There was

just so many people that were grieving." And Nick, 60, will always be grateful to audiences for helping him through. He said: "This had a huge impact on us because it really brought home the transitory nature of our lives and how quickly they can go ... There is a feeling of incredible urgency for us to feel connected to the present moment and people around us, and that's what we got from playing live. There was a kind of contract between the band and the audience that was extremely powerful. It wasn't about sympathy, it wasn't even about support, it was about communal, collective transcendence from our own sense of suffering about things."

Orbison cried after seeing hologram of his father



Alex Orbison cried after watching a hologram of his late father performing on stage. The 42-year-old writer and director - who put together a string of shows that saw his rock n roll dad, Roy Orbison, playing famous hits like 'Oh Pretty Woman' - explained how he was moved when he saw the hologram crying. Speaking exclusively to BANG Showbiz, Alex said: "At that point, that's when I started crying just because of being so proud of what my dad was and now is and always will be I guess - and also because I didn't screw it up." He added: "The profound thing to me was the solidness of the hologram ... this looks like a guy standing on stage." Alex - who is the youngest son of the musician, who died at the age of 52 - went on to reveal that the appearance of the hologram was so life-like that it caused an argument between a couple in the audience at a show in Cardiff. He said: "After the first show there was an argument between a guy and his wife that drew in a crowd of people to try and straighten it out because he felt that we had just had a real person on stage. "He felt that he had been ripped off, he said 'I thought I was going to see a hologram.'" However, he explained that the process of putting together the shows didn't come without difficulties, saying that the "bar was set high". Alex added: "The hologram had a real risk to it to make sure it was as good as it could possibly be and that it reflected what my dad - the essence of what Roy Orbison is - and that quality. "When I first saw it and it was going well, I had a weight of relief because there is a pressure on your shoulders." On whether his dad would be proud of how successful it has been, he said: "I'm sure that him and Elvis and George and all of the rest of the boys came down to check out a show and had a big laugh and a smile."

Professor Green: My new music will break hearts

Professor Green thinks his new music will "break people's hearts". The 34-year-old star is currently working hard on a new album and promised there will be some thought-provoking and diverse tracks. He said: "Sometimes I want to be clever and say funny stuff. Sometimes the little thing in me comes out and I just want to be provocative. "There are songs that are probably going to break people's hearts. "There are a couple of tear-jerkers and a lot of happy and hard music." The 'Read All About it' hitmaker - who recently split from girlfriend Fae Williams and was previously married to Millie Mackintosh - thinks the key to writing a "tear-jerker" is to be honest. He said to new! magazine: "It's got to come with some honesty. There's one of those songs [on the album] but I can't tell you anything about it just yet." After taking a break from music

to make documentaries, Green - whose real name is Stephen Manderson - is thrilled to be back in the recording studio as it's his true love. He said: "The TV documentaries I've done are fulfilling in a different way. "The music is my outlet and it's where my heart is. "There's another documentary in the making at the moment but we're not shooting that yet. "I've just been back in the studio, the place I enjoy being in most." And the 'Lullaby' singer thinks he's making the best music of his career. He said: "I feel like I'm writing the best music I've written. "I've had so much life experience in the last few years. I'm just learning a lot more. "Also I think after not recording for such a long time, it feels like whenever I go into the studio now I don't have to wait very long for stuff to start coming out."



Bono compares U2 tour to acting in Marvel movie

Bono has compared U2's 'eXPERIENCE + INNOCENCE Tour' to pulling off a Marvel movie every night. The Irish rockers kicked off the run at Tulsa's BOK Center in Oklahoma in the US on Thursday (03.05.18), and before performing the frontman confessed that rehearsals for the major scale show had gone "really sh*tte". The 'Get Out Of Your Own Way' hitmaker describes having to "method act" each song as if he were starring in one of the franchise's superhero flicks, whilst admitting the show is like a "big technical monster". Speaking to The Irish Sun newspaper, he said: "It's sort of like doing a big Marvel movie, except you're taking this to a different city every few days so it's a bit mad-and worse than that, for me, it's like a Marvel film where you've got to method act, so that's not right. "Something like that you have to get right

inside the songs in order to sing them. "It's a big technical monster but it has to have a big bloody heart inside of it, in the machine, and that's what we do. So it is an unusual way." On rehearsals, he added: "I was going really sh*tte in the dress rehearsal. I think we put some things in place that will make it a little less indulgent." Thankfully, the ambitious production all came together on the night. The set included a touching tribute to Bono's late mother Iris with his parents' wedding day screened behind him as he sang 'I Will Follow', as well as digs at President Donald Trump. The 'With or Without You' rockers - completed by The Edge, Larry Mullen and Adam Clayton - continue the run with 26 further shows in North America. They'll then head to Europe before heading back home for two shows at Dublin's 3Arena on November 5 and November 6.

Noel Gallagher releases It's A Beautiful World Remix EP

Noel Gallagher harks back to Manchester's Hacienda days on the new High Flying Birds 'It's A Beautiful World Remix EP'. The song from the former Oasis star's third LP 'Who Built The Moon?' - which was produced by David Holmes - has been remixed by legendary Hacienda nightclub residents Mike Pickering and Graeme Park and electronica/house DJ Andrew Weatherall, who put his own vocal mix and darker dub on the psychedelic track, featuring scissor player Charlotte Marionneau. The 'Some Might Say' songwriter frequented The Hacienda - which was forced to close in 1997 due to financial issues - in his hometown, which was responsible for the rise of acid house and rave music in the 80s, before forming the Britpop group in 1991. The four-track release contains four extended instrumental versions of the song, which pay homage to

acts like New Order and Depeche Mode. Noel previously released the collection of remixes on limited edition monochrome and dipped 12" vinyl exclusively for Record Store Day, but now fans can get their ears around the tracks digitally. Noel said: "I love Record Store Day. It gives us, the artists, a chance to put music out there that otherwise might never see the light of day. "I love the fact that the items are very limited edition and I do utter the phrase 'I'll save that for Record Store Day' a LOT. Here's a question though - since when do we have 'stores' in the UK?" Noel Gallagher's High Flying Birds' third record debuted at number one - a record-breaking 10th consecutive chart-topping studio album for the 50-year-old rocker. The 'Holy Mountain' hitmaker is currently on tour and performs in his hometown at Manchester Arena.



Adler dismisses reunion rumors



Guns N' Roses former drummer Steven Adler says a reunion of all five original members isn't happening. Fans of the 'Paradise City' group got excited when a billboard featuring Axl Rose, Slash, Duff McKagan, Steven and Izzy Stradlin was erected in North London on Tuesday but the sticksman insists it was just to tease the reissue of their debut LP 'Appetite For Destruction', which has been announced to mark its 31st anniversary. Steven will be performing songs from the record on tour with his band in Australia this year, but says he'd pack his bags tomorrow if Axl invited him to reunite with everyone. Responding to the speculation, sparked by the billboard and website which was launched with the cryptic message: "Destruction is coming", Steven told Australia's Heavy magazine: "I think it's just a billboard [promoting] a box set of CDs of the GNR collection. I'm not sure, but that's what I think it is. If it's for the 'Appetite Of Destruction' line-up to be touring together again, which I have been playing for 25 years, nobody's said anything to me. So I really don't know. "But you're definitely gonna be able to see me play 'Appetite For Destruction' with an amazing singer and a great band in Australia. So that we've all got going for us." The expanded version entitled 'Locked N' Loaded' - released on June 29 - contains 49 previously unheard tracks, including 'Shadow Of Your Love', which was recorded in December 1986 as a trial, and resulted in Mike Clink getting the producer gig for the seminal album.

Ora confirms Girls collaborators



Rita Ora has confirmed her 'Girls' collaboration features Cardi B, Charli XCX and Bebe Rexha. The 'Your Song' hitmaker took to Twitter on Friday afternoon to announce the hotly-anticipated song will be released next week. Alongside the artwork, she wrote: "I'm so happy to finally announce my new single GIRLS feat some amazing powerful women who have inspired me so much! Thank you @iamcardib @beberexha @charli_xcx ! OUT 11th MAY (sic)" The 'Body On Me' hitmaker is said to have been inspired by the 2001 'Lady Marmalade' music video starring Pink, Christina Aguilera and Lil' Kim for the promo for the track, which is believed to have been filmed in London last week. 'MotorSport' rapper Cardi is on the same record label as Rita, and is said to have agreed to the job despite being heavily pregnant with her first child with her Migos rapper fiance Offset. An insider said recently: "She wanted a female rapper to appear on the song and so called in a favour from her [Atlantic] label mate Cardi B." Cardi's scenes are said to have been filmed in the US. The source added: "Rita Ora loves Lady Marmalade and has wanted to do an all-star pop collaboration for years. She finally got her wish recently when Bebe Rexha and Charli XCX agreed to appear on her next single Girls." Rita's label bosses are said to be splashing the cash on the star-studded video.

Sir Anthony Hopkins to star in The Father



Sir Anthony Hopkins is set to star in the movie adaptation of 'The Father'. The 80-year-old actor has taken on the role of Andre in the upcoming film adaptation of the hugely successful play by Florian Zeller, which first opened in Paris in 2012. Oscar-winning actor Anthony will play Andre, who suffers with early onset Alzheimer's, and can't remember if he used to be an engineer or a tap dancer. His daughter Anne becomes concerned after he accuses his third carer of stealing his watch, and fires her. 'The Father' details the life of Andre in an emotionally charged exploration of the effects of ageing. The play - which has also been performed in New York's Broadway, as well as in Sydney and Singapore - has picked up Olivier and Tony Awards for Best Actor, as well as an Olivier nomination for Best New Play, and a Tony nomination for Best Play, all in 2016. The screenplay for the movie adaptation has been written by Florian with the help of Christopher Hampton, who translated the play into English when it was performed on stage in Bath and London, and shooting is expected to start in October this year. According to the Daily Mail newspaper, it is not yet known where the production will shoot, with bosses considering both London and Paris as options. As of the time of writing, no other casting announcements have been made, but the play version doesn't feature an extensive cast, with only a handful of main characters. For Anthony, the role comes as he's currently busy portraying Pope Benedict in Netflix production 'The Pope', as well as starring as Robert Ford in the HBO sci-fi thriller series 'Westworld'.

Reynolds still wants Deadpool and Wolverine movie

Ryan Reynolds is still keen to get Deadpool and Wolverine in a movie together. The 41-year-old actor stars as the red and black lycra-clad anti-hero and his alter ego Wade Wilson in 2016's 'Deadpool' and its upcoming sequel, and despite Hugh Jackman's Wolverine meeting his demise in last year's 'Logan', Ryan still believes a collaboration between the two superheroes is possible. 'Logan' is set years in the future from the point where 'Deadpool 2' takes place, and so Ryan argues that Wolverine - who was portrayed by 49-year-old Hugh in eight movies - is still "alive and well" during the time of the Deadpool series. Ryan said: "He's alive and well in my timeline. There is a Logan running around out there with a little bushy chest and his little sharp, sharp claws, and he is alive and well and ready to go. I would love that." But Ryan admits the problem doesn't lie in Wolverine's health, but in Hugh's willingness to don the claws for a ninth time. Speaking to Entertainment Weekly magazine, Ryan added: "I think convincing Hugh of that would be a near-impossible feat, but there's no human being I love more than Hugh Jackman in that universe, and equally so as a friend. He's just the best. I already miss him as Logan, so I'm one of those guys that whenever I see him, I'm like, 'Come on, man. Just one more. Come on. We'll do it together. It'll be fun. Come on! On three. Here we go, together. One, two, three, together,' and it's always just me saying it." Ryan's comments come after Hugh previously insisted he would not be returning as the 'X-Men' mutant, but supported the idea of someone else starring in the role alongside Ryan. Asked what were the chances of seeing Deadpool and Wolverine appear in a film together, he said: "It's sort of out of my hands because I'm an actor who's played Wolverine. I'm out. But if I was running the studio and someone else was playing Wolverine."



Eric Idle writing Spamalot movie script

Eric Idle is bringing 'Spamalot' to the big screen. The 75-year-old comedian is in the process of penning a script for a movie adaptation of his musical comedy - which was based on 1975 film 'Monty Python and the Holy Grail' - and Casey Nicholaw is to direct the project. According to Deadline, Idle will also produce the motion picture, which will be overseen by Jeremy Kramer. Casting for the forthcoming film will begin soon and filming will start next spring. Nicholaw knows 'Spamalot' well having been the choreographer on the original Broadway production of the musical. The movie version is expected to be more than just an adaptation of the show. Idle has been busy writing of late and has finished his memoirs, 'Always Look On The Bright Side Of Life: A Sortabiography', which will be published later this year. He recently said: "I thought it was time to tell my tale before I suffer from Hamnesia,

which is what happens to elderly actors." The book is expected to include tales from his life featuring the likes of George Harrison, David Bowie, Robin Williams, Sir Mick Jagger, Steve Martin, Paul Simon and Mike Nichols as well as his fellow 'Monty Python' stars John Cleese, Terry Gilliam, Terry Jones, Michael Palin and the late Graham Chapman. Idle, Cleese, Gilliam, Jones, Palin and Chapman were responsible for creating classic TV series 'Monty Python's Flying Circus' and three original films, including religious parody 'Monty Python's Life of Brian'. Despite this success, Cleese recently admitted he is more known for voicing King Harold in the 'Shrek' movies nowadays. He recently said: "People say, 'Here is John Cleese, who needs no introduction,' and then go on talking about me for 18 minutes. Animation is what young kids know me for - [they hear] my voice and they go, 'Oh, Shrek!'"

Neeson signs up for Charlie Johnson in the Flames

Liam Neeson is set to star in new thriller 'Charlie Johnson in the Flames'. The 65-year-old actor - who saw his career rebooted in 2008 by action franchise 'Taken' - has signed up to the lead titular role in the action movie. Neeson will star as Charlie Johnson, a BBC war correspondent covering civil disorder in the Congo, according to Deadline. The death of an innocent woman sets him on a crusade to justice, which sees him caught up in murder, corruption and violence. The film will be adapted from the Michael Ignatieff thriller novel and will be directed by Tarik Saleh, who helmed the 2017 award-winning indie hit 'The Nile Hilton Incident'. Justin Haythe, who worked on Jennifer Lawrence's spy thriller 'Red Sparrow', has penned the script. Neeson's films have made over

\$7 billion worldwide, and his latest action was 'The Commuter'. The 'Star Wars: Episode I - The Phantom Menace' actor recently spoke at the Toronto International Film Festival to claim that cinema goers would soon stop to believe a man of his age would be able to pull off such death-defying feats. He said: "The thrillers, that was all a pure accident. They're still throwing serious money at me to do that stuff ... Audiences are eventually going to go, 'Come on.' " However, Neeson has now revealed that "it was a joke" but he is adamant he'll know when "enough is enough" in the action genre. The 'Schindler's List' star said: "It was a joke but, of course, everyone picks up on that. I am aware of audiences looking at certain action stars and going, 'Oh, come on.' I know when enough is enough."



Martin Freeman: Acting isn't a glamorous job

Martin Freeman doesn't consider his job to be glamorous. The 46-year-old actor has starred in a number of acclaimed movie and TV projects during the course of his career, including appearances in 'The Office', the 'Hobbit' trilogy and 'Sherlock' - but Martin doesn't believe his work is as fancy as some fans think it is. He explained: "There's no glamour really on any job, but that's not why you do them, otherwise you'd be on a yacht in Barbados all the time. Which would be nice for two days, but after that you'd want to get dirty, you'd want to do something else." The British actor starred in the post-apocalyptic thriller 'Cargo' in 2017. The movie - which was directed by Ben Howling and Yolanda Ramke - was shot in the Australian outback, and Martin has revealed he only joined the project once he'd been convinced it wasn't a typical zombie movie. Speaking to Western Australia Today, Martin shared: "That's the reason I'm doing it - because it's not a zombie film. I wouldn't have come here to do a zombie film." Martin subsequently clarified that while zombies appear in the film, he doesn't consider it to be a zombie movie. He said: "I think it's a film with some zombies in it, that's the absolute truth of it. I said to Ben and Yolanda a long time ago that I didn't think the world needed another zombie film, and they took that on the chin and said they are big fans of the genre but they weren't making that either. "It's not that I don't do zombie films like I don't do Ku Klux Klan films - I'm not politically allergic to them. But I don't want to do any genre film for the sake of it."



Johansson is eager to make a Black Widow movie



Scarlett Johansson thinks the Black Widow deserves her own Marvel movie. The 33-year-old actress stars as the fictional superhero in the Marvel Cinematic Universe, and Scarlett has revealed she'd relish the opportunity to appear in a standalone movie. Of her working relationship with Marvel Studios boss Kevin Feige, Scarlett told IGN: "We're creatively really compatible. I think we both agree that the character is right for a standalone, it's just a case of timing at this point for both Marvel and myself." Scarlett has reprised the role of the Black Widow for 'Avengers: Infinity War', and she has frequently been linked with a standalone movie over the years. The New York-born actress recently admitted she's relished playing the Black Widow - who is also known as Natasha Romanoff - over the last decade. Scarlett shared: "It's been an incredible opportunity for me to be able to continue to come back to a character that I love so much and be able to peel back the layers, so to speak, of a character that I think in many ways kind of reflects myself and reflects my own growth and my own challenges. "I really feel it's been an incredible gift as an actor to be able to have that experience. "It's such an unusual one. I don't think there are many other opportunities that you have like that in film, to be able to continuously come back to a character that's as complex as Natasha. "And I really feel that I've had an incredible opportunity to play this iconic character that means so much to people, and I really have to thank the audiences for that because they embraced my portrayal of her from the beginning and allowed me to walk in Natasha's shoes and kick ass in them too. So it's been great." — Bang Showbiz

Saoirse Ronan 'charmed' her Atonement castmates

Saoirse Ronan "charmed and hypnotized" everyone on the set of 'Atonement'. The 24-year-old actress starred as teenager Briony Tallis in the 2007 romantic war drama, and Ian McEwan - who wrote the best-selling novel that the film was based on - has revealed how Saoirse wowed everyone on the set. Ian said: "Even then, she showed an extraordinary ability to take control of the material, to morph from a sparky Irish kid into an upper-class English girl with cut-glass accent to match. "She knew how to convey a particular form of inwardness, of an imagination running riot." Saoirse was nominated for the Best Supporting Actress Oscar for her performance in the film. And Ian has revealed that the other cast members loved working with her. He said, according to the Irish Independent newspaper: "She also completely charmed and hypnotized the set." Meanwhile, Saoirse revealed in February that she was tempted to bring her dog Fran as her date to this year's Academy Awards. The 24-year-old actress was nominated for the Best Actress prize at the Oscars for her performance in 'Lady Bird', and Saoirse revealed she almost decided on taking the beloved family pooch. Saoirse said: "Fran is our puppy. She's a dog. I call myself my mother's first child and Fran is definitely the second child could be replacing me very soon. "I mean Fran was in the running for a while to come to the Oscars but we all had a discussion about it and Fran was like 'You know what I'm going to take a step back, because this is my first year in the house and I think mam - my mum - you should go.' It's quite big of her."



Lifestyle | Gossip

Emily Blunt reveals why she refused to watch **Marry Poppins**

Emily Blunt wouldn't watch 'Marry Poppins' when she was filming 'Mary Poppins Returns'. The 35-year-old actress takes over from Dame Julie Andrews as the magical nanny in the upcoming movie and she didn't want her performance to be influenced too much by the original movie. She said to Heat magazine: "Ultimately, I didn't end up watching [the original]. 'I had seen it as a child, so that image was sort of emblazoned in my memory but I never watched the film during the process - I just read the books. 'So however people view it, it's my version of her. I hope people like it. 'I took her from the books and she is batty, eccentric and incredibly vain. 'It was just a joy to play somebody who knows that she is better than everybody else, but ultimately, has this incredibly warm core, and that there is this plan that she takes people on. She is magical.' And Emily credits director Rob Marshall for helping ease her fears about living up to the iconic performance of Julie. She said: "It was the most magical experience, because Rob Marshall is so loving and

nurturing. He made it feel like an intimate experience and less of what I worried it would be, which would be to try and reimagine this character that is so beloved, and played by an iconic actress like Julie Andrews." Despite her career success, the 'A Quiet Place' star - who has children Hazel, four, and Violet, 22 months, with husband John Krazinski - never intended to be an actress when she was younger. She said: "I didn't have a burning desire for it my entire childhood. 'I was never planning on being an actress and I was going to go to university. 'My mother is a great linguist so I wanted to be just like her and I wanted to do modern languages and be a translator. 'I sort of fell into it - an agent saw a school play I did and said, 'Oh you are good, you should do this.' I was like, 'OK.' 'I was 17. I sort of shrugged my shoulders and not to sound cavalier about it, but it just wasn't my plan - it was not what I was wanting to do."

Sony announces **Peter Rabbit** sequel

Sony is making a 'Peter Rabbit' sequel. The CG/live-action hybrid movie - starring James Corden as the voice of the titular rabbit - was a surprise hit for Sony this year and the studio is bringing back director Will Gluck for the new film, which has a release date of February 7, 2020 in the US and March 27, 2020, in the UK. Gluck will also write the sequel. Meanwhile, previously revealed he has admired the "naughty" sense of mischief in the 'Peter Rabbit' books since he was a child. The 'Late Late Show' host thought it was "amazing" when his mum read him the tales about the bunny's cheeky ways from Beatrix Potter's beloved children's stories. He said: "The overwhelming thing that I remember was, it was the first time I read a story by a grown-up where the main character was naughty, where he was mischievous. 'I remember thinking, 'This is amazing, they have

actively told him not to do that and my mum is telling me that he did it anyway.' " Although he may have admired Peter's antics, he doesn't think he had the same naughty streak. He added: "I guess I've always had a glint in my eye, but it's not really for mischief, it's mostly just fun. What I'm into is fun. I'm into a fun experience. I don't see the point of much of it unless we are trying to at least have a laugh on some level. 'I guess there are some similarities to what I was like when I was at school. I don't know if I was a ringleader, but I was more like, 'Imagine if you went and hit that fire alarm ...' 'They would go, 'Why don't you do it?' and I would say, 'No, I think it won't be as much fun as if you do it.' There was a lot of that.' 'Peter Rabbit' also stars Margot Robbie, Daisy Ridley and Domhnall Gleeson.

Fate of **Killmonger's** mother revealed

'Black Panther' director Ryan Coogler has revealed what really happened to Erik 'Killmonger' Stevens' mother. Michael B. Jordan stars as the antagonist in the Marvel movie and before the events of the film, Prince N'Jobu, brother of the King of Wakanda, fell in love with a woman in Oakland and they had a baby named Erik. Through his love for Erik's mother, N'Jobu changed his mind about the people outside Wakanda and decided to help them. At the beginning of the movie, a young version of N'Jobu and Forest Whitaker's character, Zuri can be seen formulating a plan in an Oakland apartment. Speaking during the commentary for the 'Black Panther' Blu-ray, Coogler explained: "The idea was when you see those guys talking over the paperwork in the beginning of the film, they're talking about a way to break her out of jail. The idea was they never got her out, and she passed away in prison, so Killmonger didn't come up with a mom either." King T'Chaka later killed his brother, after discovering he had been

planning to arm the oppressed people of the world with Vibranium and he left Erik alone in Oakland to hide what he had done. And Michael previously revealed he was taken to a "dark place" when he took on the role of Killmonger. He said: "It took me to a dark place. Honestly, I can't really go through all I went through to get into it because I want to keep that close to me. But it stuck with me afterwards ... Chadwick [Boseman] is a very talented dude. There's a lot of physical moments and action sequences throughout this film that cause us to really challenge ourselves, and also fall deeper into character." The production has been praised for its predominately black cast including Forest Whitaker, Lupita Nyong'o, and Danai Gurira, but Michael said "everybody" can relate to the film in some way. He explained: "It's an all-black cast for the most part and it's set in Africa, but it's universal in so many ways to everybody around the world, so I feel like it's something that everybody can take something from."

**PITBULL** TO COMPOSE MUSIC FOR GOTTI

Pitbull is set to get his first film composing credit for 'Gotti'. The Miami-based rapper has scored the music for the biopic, which stars John Travolta as John Gotti, the Italian-American gangster and boss of the Gambino crime family in New York City, who died of throat cancer at the age of 61 in 2002, after being arrested ten years prior. The Grammy award-winning artist also wrote and performed an original song, titled 'Amore', for the movie's end credits. He said of his composing credit: "It's a true honour to be involved with this project and working with icon John Travolta on the legendary story of Gotti. By default, we were underdogs in our own right and found ways to survive against all odds." And Travolta, 64, is just as thrilled to have the "Timber" hitmaker - whose real name is Armando Perez - on board for the movie. He said in a statement: "Music has played an integral part in the success of some of my biggest films, and Armando is one of the most electric talents in the music industry today. Everything about him - his style, creativity and culture - make his scoring of 'Gotti' the perfect marriage of the artist and the material." 'Gotti' follows the life of mob boss John Gotti, who was one of the most powerful and dangerous crime bosses in America, and was known as "The Dapper Don" thanks to his expensive clothing and personality. Gotti became the leader of the Gambino crime family after organizing the murder of previous head Paul Castellano in 1985. In 1992, Gotti was convicted of five murders, conspiracy to commit murder, racketeering, obstruction of justice, tax evasion, illegal gambling, extortion, and loan-sharking, and was sentenced to life in prison without parole. The movie also stars Travolta's real-life wife Kelly Preston, Spencer Lofranco, Pruitt Taylor Vince, Stacy Keach, Chris Mulkey, William DeMoe, and Lydia Hull, and will premiere on May 15 during a private screening at Cannes Film Festival.

Lucas' quip included in **Solo: A Star Wars Story**

George Lucas has contributed to 'Solo: A Star Wars Story' after Ron Howard agreed to use a joke he suggested. The 73-year-old filmmaker created the blockbuster sci-fi franchise, but handed over the reins from Lucasfilm to Disney in 2015, with fans assuming that would be his last dealings with the movies. However, Lucas has remained supportive of the forthcoming Han Solo spin-off, and one day he came over and interrupted Howard - who took over the director's chair from Phil Lord and Chris Miller, who left the project due to creative differences - to suggest a quip on set, and he immediately agreed to add it in. Appearing on 'The Late Show With Stephen Colbert', Howard recalled: "We were doing a scene and he was trying to stay out of the way, but he did lean over and he said, 'You know what Han would really do there?' 'I said, 'What?' And he told me the joke, he gave me a little joke. 'And I said [to the crew], 'Hey, guess what? Here's what we're gonna do in the next take.' So I know when I hear a good idea." Howard is thankful that he's stay on good terms with Lucas, despite him selling Lucasfilm to the Walt Disney Company. He said: "We've remained friends, so for me it was an incredible show of support and respect and it meant the world to me that he would go out of his way to show up." Lucas' quip suggestion comes after Donald Glover promised 'Solo: A Star Wars Story' is "a lot more fun" than other 'Star Wars' movies. The 34-year-old actor - who portrays the young Lando Calrissian in the upcoming Han Solo spin-off - said: "I think it's just a lot more fun. All the 'Star Wars' [movies] are really fun, but I think this movie, we know what's going to happen, we know they're not going to die, ya know?" 'Solo: A Star Wars Story' follows the story of Han Solo, the captain of the Millennium Falcon and one of the great leaders of the Rebel Alliance. The movie will focus on a younger version of the titular character, with Alden Ehrenreich taking over the iconic role from Harrison Ford. Han and Chewbacca will be seen first meeting Lando Calrissian (Glover) and they will also encounter Woody Harrelson's alter-ego Beckett, who is believed to be a mentor to young Han who guides him on his journey to becoming a space smuggler.

**SLATE** TO STAR IN THE SUNLIT NIGHT

Jenny Slate is set to star in 'The Sunlit Night'. The 36-year-old actress has been named as one of the stars attached to the coming-of-age movie directed by David Wenden, which will see her act in the leading female role opposite Alex Sharp. Jenny will play the part of Frances, an American painter who forms an unlikely

bond with Yasha (Alex), whilst the pair are in the Arctic Circle. The dark romance movie - which is adapted from Rebecca Dinerstein's debut novel of the same name - sees Frances try to jump-start her career, whilst Yasha is aiming to bury his father in the land of the Vikings, and together, they discover the future and family they didn't know they had. According to The Hollywood Reporter, Jenny and Alex will be joined by an ensemble cast including Gillian Anderson, Zach Galifianakis and Jessica Hecht. On top of starring in the production, Jenny will also produce, with Mister Smith Entertainment handling international sales at Cannes Film Festival. Mister Smith CEO David Garrett said in a statement: "It is so refreshing to have a familiar story which is told in such an unfamiliar and original setting. Exciting to have the exuberance of Jenny Slate and Zach Galifianakis bouncing around the mountains and fjords of Norway." 'The Sunlit Night' is a collaboration between Detailfilm in Germany and Ape & Bjorn in Norway, where filming is set to begin this summer. On the producing team, Jenny will be joined by Fabian Gasmia, Ruben Thorkildsen, Michael B. Clark and Alex Turteltaub. For Jenny, the movie comes as she recently landed a role as Doctor Dora Skirth in Sony's upcoming Spider-Man spin-off, 'Venom'. The movie will hit screens in October, and stars Tom Hardy as the titular alien symbiote, and his alter ego Eddie Brock.



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CHANEL WOWS CELEBRITIES WITH SHIP FOR CRUISE SHOW IN PARIS



Kristen Stewart, Ralph Fiennes and Margot Robbie all craned their necks up in awe. A creaking, 330-foot (100-meter) cruise liner - with steaming funnels and gangplanks - was something Chanel's celebrity guests never imagined they'd see moored on the dry land of the French capital, let alone inside the city's Grand Palais. It was the decor for Chanel's annual Cruise collection Thursday night in Paris in which designer Karl Lagerfeld created a spectacle worthy of a James Cameron movie set. The show saw the larger-than-life 84-year-old continue to defy expectations in fashion show spending - after earlier shows produced a recreated Eiffel Tower, a space rocket, a supermarket and a forest. "The bar has been set very high ... The set design in itself blew me away," said Robbie. "It's amazing, but it doesn't surprise me." This is Karl's genius and imagination," said model Lily-Rose Depp. "Everything is just so realistic - down to the light that looks like water, and the smoke and the stars."

The ship took two months to create with an exterior in plywood and a hull made of myriad steel. The gargantuan vessel - named "La Pausa" after house founder Coco Chanel's Southern French villa - was brought to life by lighting mimicking lapping ocean waves and the sound of cawing sea gulls. The sea theme infused the clothes and was an apt choice for the mid-season show. Cruise or "resort" shows - shown by only a handful of the world's fashion houses - were originally conceived to target wealthy women who travelled on cruise ships in the winter. Nowadays, they're used as a lucrative means of re-stimulating fashions in the mid-season lull. Chanel's show was all about the nautical stripe.

Chic baggy pants opened the show, sporting optical black and white lines. The motif was based on the razzle dazzle designs painted on US and British warships from World War I to camouflage them from German U-Boats. The stripes appeared down layered sleeves on two-piece skirts and in technicolor across white sporty dresses. Styles from the Sixties also were a key element in the relaxed 87-piece collection. White berets met sexy exposed midriffs, miniskirts and loose white sweaters that were cut with a retro bateau collar. Mary Janes - one-strap shoes - were also given a cool reworking in silver and white, and some had rubber soles. Robbie - whose star is rising since her recent Academy Award nomination for "I, Tonya" and who has recently been named a Chanel brand ambassador - used

this trip to Paris to learn more about the Parisian couture house. "First, I went to the archives and really got to understand the brand on a whole new level and understand really learn about Coco Chanel's story, and how it influenced her designs," she said.

Stewart came to the Paris show en route to this month's Cannes Film Festival in southern France where she will serve as one of its jury members. "Cannes is a place that values the reason why people make movies that aligns with the reason that I do," said the 28-year-old "Twilight" star. "I feel like a little kid walking into something I'm not allowed." The ship, which conjured up images of the French Riviera, also bowled Stewart over. "Their shows are always like walking into a very elaborate dream," she said. After the show, VIP guests filed through the gangplanks into the ship's hull for the after-party and baptized the ship in Champagne until the wee hours Friday. — AP



Models present creations during the Chanel Croisiere (Cruise) fashion show on May 3, 2018 at the Grand Palais in Paris. — AFP photos

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Models present creations during the Chanel Croisiere (Cruise) fashion show on May 3, 2018 at the Grand Palais in Paris. — AFP

DIAMOND CITY OF ANTWERP NOW HAS A SPARKLING DIAMOND MUSEUM



Visitors view ornate objects in the Wunderkammer during the grand opening of the DIVA diamond and silver museum in Antwerp, Belgium.

Antwerp has long been known as the world's greatest diamond city. Now it has a new museum to go with a vibrant diamond trading scene that goes back six centuries. The DIVA museum opened its doors in the Belgian city Friday to highlight the beauty and dazzle of the precious stones and the jewelry and silverware they have adorned through the ages.

The museum now has everything from diamond-encrusted boots to a diamond-adorned tennis racket and stunning historical pieces. Curator Romy Cockx says the museum also teaches visitors about the history of diamonds and jewelry-making. She says visitors "can see really old diamond jewelry from the 16th-century where diamonds were not worked on yet. So they are pointed diamonds. You can see how these cuts evolve throughout the centuries." — AP



A garland necklace made of platinum and diamonds on display in The Boudoir during the grand opening of the DIVA diamond and silver museum in Antwerp, Belgium on Friday. — AP photos



A bracelet in the shape of a snake, made of gold, diamonds, rubies and enamel, on display.



A silver and coconut cup in the shape of an owl, dated 1548-1549, on display.



A visitor views ornate silver objects in the Dining Room during the grand opening of the DIVA diamond and silver museum.



Gold and diamond encrusted boots on display in The Boudoir during the grand opening of the DIVA diamond and silver museum in Antwerp, Belgium.

Japanese manga strip fetches record price at Paris auction

A rare series of sketches of Japanese manga artist Osamu Tezuka's robot character Astro Boy sold for a record 269,400 euros in an auction in Paris yesterday. "It's a world record for this artist whose works are few in the market," said Eric Leroy, an expert on comic strips in the auction house Artcurial. The winning bid was five times the pre-sale estimate and Leroy put this down to "the rarity and

exceptional character" of the China ink and water color strip measuring 35 centimeters by 25 centimeters. It drawn at the end of the 1950s and comprises six panels showing Astro Boy fighting an enemy.

The buyer was a "European collector who had been dreaming for a long time" of buying the sketch, he said. "Astro Boy is an emblematic work which has nursed a whole generation of collectors,"

he said. Astro Boy was serialized in Japan from 1952 to 1968 centered around an android with human emotions who is sold to a robot circus but saved from servitude by a professor who creates a robotic family for him. — AFP