

Friday Times

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DAMASCUS: An image released by the government-affiliated 'Central War Media' in Syria purportedly shows Syrian air defense systems intercepting Israeli missiles over Damascus' airspace. — AFP

Local

India in our hearts



Local Spotlight
By Muna Al-Fuzai

muna@kuwaittimes.net

Indian singer Adnan Sami recently expressed his dissatisfaction over what he claimed was harassment against his staff by officials at Kuwait airport. He said they were mistreated and called "Indian dogs". Sami tweeted about the matter and tagged the Indian embassy in Kuwait in his tweet.

He said, and I quote: "We came to your city with love and our Indian brethren embraced us with it. You gave no support. Kuwaiti airport immigration mistreated my staff for no reason and called them 'Indian Dogs'! When you were contacted you did nothing!! How dare Kuwaitis behave like this with arrogance?!" Indian officials later contacted the singer to get all the details.

I can't deny or confirm this allegedly outrageous incident, but I believe that racist or inappropriate comments at the airport against guests of Kuwait should not pass without an investigation and punishment - but only with the existence of irrefutable evidence. I believe it is necessary to know the circumstances that led to these words, and who these officials are. Are they airport employees, for example, customs officials, policemen or travelers? What were the reasons for this outburst?

The word "official" is a general phrase that does not specify the identity of the offender or his status. Therefore, I hope everyone will not rush to conclusions without ascertaining all the circumstances of the incident. The victim can also submit a legal complaint to the court. I think Twitter is often about making a fuss with no benefit and no verification.

The other problem - and it is a common misperception here - is that it's not necessarily true that someone who wears a dishdasha is a citizen. Many expatriates, for example, or bedoons, wear the dishdasha for several reasons including the fact that it is cooler in this heat. They may also speak in the Kuwaiti dialect. So some non-Arab expats may assume these people to be citizens, officials or employees of the airport.

In Kuwait, Indians form the majority of the foreign workforce, with 498,900 workers in March 2016 and climbing to 544,900 in March 2017, an annual growth rate of 9.2 percent, followed by Egyptian and other nationals. The Indian community, although relatively large in number in comparison to the number of citizens, has never posed a danger to Kuwait or its security.

Kuwaitis in general love Indians a lot due to the cultural, social, commercial and economic ties with them before the discovery of oil. The large number of Indian migrant workers is the biggest evidence that Kuwait was and is still open to Indians. Many Indians have found comfort, security and safety in Kuwait and have brought their families over as well.

I hope before jumping to conclusions to remember that India is a diverse country with many religious and ethnic communities. And from this combination of ethnicities and beliefs, Indians who come to Kuwait practice their rituals and religious rites freely, along with Christians who attend churches openly. Indians in Kuwait face no harassment for practicing their religion or for any other reason.

Good and evil people exist in all communities, and every person represents himself and not all Kuwaitis. So, if this incident is true, punishing those who insulted Kuwait's guests is needed, along with clarifying the circumstances of the incident.

PHOTO OF THE DAY



KUWAIT: A white-eared bulbul rests on a tree branch at Shaheed Park. — KUNA photo

Will English kill Arabic?



IN MY VIEW

By Jeri Al-Jeri

local@kuwaittimes.com

It's a very sensitive issue, but language preservation is in fact a popularity contest. A language going extinct is a language that is being used by fewer people. On the other side of the blade, English is intercontinentally used at unprecedented rates. But English is suffering from various forms of linguistic cancers that will eventually break its momentum down to a point of no return. Without competition, English is on the path of self-destruction, but Arabic is not. Arabic is spreading, regardless of the fact that it is getting butchered, especially in Kuwait. These are my claims, and I am willing to prove their validity, however controversial they may seem.

Being a graduate of English literature, I was taught Shakespeare's English to Mildred D Taylor's English, to Australian and even Irish English. It seems that English is abundant with a seemingly infinite vocabulary that has a great appetite to "borrow" words from every culture and community. This borrowing process is not without the cost of damaging English's inherent grammatical structure. I insist that English is dying due to these reasons:

- Universal linguistics taught us that there is a difference between letters and the sound each word makes, whether borrowed or not. The science of UL dictates that there are sounds - phonemes - that have a "cannon-shoot" nature. Phonemes that come out of words like "walk or talk", that have a double O feel to them, did in fact demolish the pronunciation of silent (L) letters. This kind of phoneme is continually destroying other letters as long as people utter it, rendering a dead typographical vessel with more and more words in the future.

- The science of UL also dictates that the presence of the "La or El" sound, such as in French and Spanish, serves as a cradle that prolongs a language's lifespan, which English is clearly lacking.

- English is a "zombie". The military and logistical supremacy of both the British and American empires did force-feed

English into educational systems until it became a marketing necessity for the whole globe to use as a vehicle to interact with one another, without the knowledge that this current English is the mummified body of Old English that became unintelligible during the 11th century. Old English's death was at the hands of Middle English, that suffered the same fate as the former in the 15th century due to modern-day English that is setting itself for its ultimate doom because of the same tool that gave it its biggest push - the Internet. This West Germanic language won't bear the future anymore without the gap between British English, Australian English and American English becoming too much to sustain.

All of these points work in reverse effect for Arabic. Every noun and verb in Arabic has what amounts to the cradle phoneme of "Al and El", called (تسمية قرية لام الفاء) roughly translated as moon and sun Alif-Lam, which function as "the", or in other words, the article of definition. This means that all words in Arabic begin with Al or El in their stable form to secure its root forever.

Secondly, Arabic does not include any cannon-like phoneme at all. Moreover, religiously, 1.6 billion people are obligated to utter and understand Arabic verses from the Holy Quran, an advantage that Latin did not share in its intensity and quantity. Plus, Arabic can borrow words as well, but without mutating any of its etymologically foreign words into a cancer cell. In terms of age and number of vocabulary, ancient Arabic, prior to Islam, is completely understood by an Arabic speaker with a moderate knowledge of classical word choices or poetic taste, unlike modern English that has 988,968 words, according to the Global Language Monitor. Arabic has 12,300,000 words.

All in all, the reason for the dramatically charged title that hints of some kind of a battle between the two languages is due to the state of Arabic in Kuwait and the GCC countries collectively. Arabic is not winning the "popularity contest" in the Arabian Gulf, which is why we "Khaleejiis" feel threatened. Medicine and geometry and all the rest of the science fields are taught in English at advanced levels and businessmen in all fields favor applicants who are well-versed in English for these two pivotal reasons: English-speaking foreigners are everywhere - from house helpers to salesmen to doctors and nurses. Secondly, the world is a village that currently shops, negotiates, motivates, sings and films in English.

Kuwait  Times

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Local



What's still missing from Saad Al Abdullah area

By Faten Omar

As part of our occasional series exploring various areas of Kuwait, Kuwait Times visited Saad Al-Abdullah to discover the main features of this area. Saad Al-Abdullah City, which is in Jahra governorate, is located south of new Jahra and north Amghara. The area consists of 11 blocks and is named after the late Father Amir Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah.



Local



Many residents of Saad Al-Abdullah are unhappy because frequent fires in Amghara affect the neighborhood. The residents of the area also have a lot of other concerns, citing a lack of services at all levels.

Abdullah Al-Mutairi, a resident, told Kuwait Times that despite the existence of services in the municipal plan, it is a "land of nothing" in reality. "For example, we do not have a fire station, and no public parks, sports clubs or youth centers. We have been living in the area since 2006, and so far have not seen anything," he said. "We also face healthcare issues. We should have a medical center that is open 24/7, especially since the area is heavily contaminated and many people suffer from allergies, asthma and other diseases because of the frequent fires in Amghara."

Obeid Al-Ali, another resident, said people are calling for more services in the area. "In my opinion, we need to increase schools to accommodate the students of the city and increase police patrols for safety reasons. Also, they should build public parks, a citizen service center and clean up the area," he said. Ali added that the municipality and the commerce and interior ministries must control prices in grocery stores. "We also suffer from stray dogs. But I think traffic patrols have eliminated the scourge of young and reckless drivers drifting and racing."

— Photos by Joseph Shagra



NEST launches charity drive to build school in Africa

In cooperation with Kuwait Red Crescent Society

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: Nurture and Educate Students Today (NEST), working under the Kuwait Red Crescent Society's (KRCS) umbrella, is

organizing a charity campaign to encourage people and children to do good deeds and donate for building a school in Africa. Those who would like to donate can do so by visiting a pavilion placed for this campaign at the

Avenues Mall phase 2 from May 10th to 25th, 2018. The visitor can see an imitation of the streets and houses in Africa, along with live models presenting what life is like there. Visitors can also watch videos using 3D glasses available at the pavilion.

Soud Al-Zamel, Member of NEST, noted that this project is executed in cooperation with the Direct Aid Society. "It is a simulation of the life of children in Africa," he stated. "The visitor can see the life in Chad via virtual reality through the 3D glasses. They can also see models of neighborhoods and schools, and at the end he gets a chance to participate in donating to build a school in Chad. Depending on the amount of the donations, we may be able to build more than one school. Our goal is to build three schools, thus we will start with one step at a time."

There is no minimum amount to donate. "The donations depend on the person, and each dinar will participate in building the school. The first school will cost KD 140,000, and I believe that we will collect the necessary amount to build it. I hope that we will even collect enough donations to build three schools. Each school will accept 860 students, and we are planning to build elementary and high schools," he further stated.

NEST executed many projects. "We had five projects prior to this one. One project was in India for educating children there. We also helped Syrian refugees in Egypt, Lebanon, and Jordan. We consider the needs in choosing the location of the project and our ability to reach the place. I would like to thank the Direct Aid for suggesting this project, and we realized the necessary needs in Africa, and particularly Chad, for education," concluded Zamel.

Nisaiba Al-Sumeit, Public Relations and Media Officer at the Direct Aid Society, said that she was glad to participate in this campaign with NEST. "This activity has a new

idea which is not common in other charity activities. This campaign allows the child to live the experience and get the feeling before helping those in need. The Avenues Mall is known for children as the place for fun and happiness. The child thinks of it as the place where he will eat, play, or buy something new," she noted.

"This project allows the child to live the experience of the African girl Louisa, a girl in Chad, who is not getting education. So the visitor, while walking in the pavilion, will live the life of Louisa. By the time he ends the tour, the visitor would gain a unique experience that kids in Kuwait could not witness unless they travel to Africa, and we brought this experience for the children here. This idea spreads the moral value of thinking about others and not just ourselves," added Sumeit.

Waleed Al-Khashti, Chief Communications and Relations Director at Zain, stated that Zain is always sponsoring youths' initiatives with noble goals. "This is a successful initiative, and we are happy to see more similar ones in Kuwait. I think that parents should show their children such activities to let them know what people in need in poor countries suffer from. Such activity encourages them to try and help people who aim to make a change in their lives. This exhibition is really a great work, and I advise everybody to come and visit it, and even if they donated KD 1, it will make a difference. This participation and sponsorship is just one of many others for Zain," he explained.

Mohammed Al-Dhubaib, AGM of Melanzane Restaurant, said that the main reason for participating and sponsoring the event is that the holy month of Ramadan is approaching and this participation adds value to their work, especially that the purpose of the donation is for education. "It is great to support charity events and participate in educating people in need," he pointed out.

Ghetto – The Micro Drama Festival by Future Eye Theatre, Kuwait

Future Eye Theatre, a theater organization in Kuwait, which have always been coming with innovative and never-before-stage concepts in drama that are providing evergreen memories to the art lovers of Kuwait, is coming up with another amazing show. This time, FET is staging five micro dramas, followed by a solo drama under the caption 'Ghetto'.

The programme will be staged at Indian Central School, Abbasiya, on 12th May 2018, Saturday at 6 p.m. onwards. All theatre enthusiasts are invited and the admission is free. The festival, the first of its kind in GCC countries, will be playing five micro dramas, under the directorship of five experienced directors of Kuwait. The dramas are 'Nananja Kuda (Wet Umbrella)' by Mrs. Maya Seeta, 'Jeevan (Life)' by Mr. Elayath Edava, 'Daivam Thanna Peepi (The Whistle by God)' by Mr. Anish Adoor, 'Mortuary' by Govind Santha and 'Praviyude Pusthakam – Onnaam Adhyayam (The Book of Creation-Chapter 1)' by Mr. Bergman Thomas. All these dramas will take the spectators to a different world of experience and enjoyment. After these five micro dramas, a solo drama 'Kashappukaarante Makal (The Daughter of Butcher)', directed and performed by Mini Sathesh will be staged. All these dramas are presented under the supervision of one of the most experienced director in Kuwait Mr. Shemej Kumar K.K, winner of best director award by Kerala Sangeetha Nataka Academy in 2014.

To add more colour to the function,



the founder, director and CEO of One World Actors Centre, U.K., Creative Director of TAQA Productions, Kuwait, and director of One World Youth Theatre, Mrs. Alison Shan Price MBE has magnanimously agreed to be the chief guest of the event. She has been honoured by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth in 2017. She is a patron of The Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama. Mrs. Alison founded the One World Shakespeare Festival in 2012 and in 2015, began adapting for stage and directing bilingual (Arabic-English) productions under the National Council of Culture Arts and Letters of Kuwait, hosted by Dar Al Athar Cultural Centre, which have won acclaim on the world stage at the Edinburgh Festivals in 2016 and 2017. She has been a resident in Kuwait for the last 33 years providing services to Dramatic Arts in Kuwait and the Gulf Region.



KUWAIT: Officials pose for a group photo at a pavilion placed for the campaign at the Avenues Mall. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

National Council holds spring plastic arts exhibition



KUWAIT: NCCAL's assistant secretary general for arts and theatre Bader Al-Duwaish and other officials tour the exhibition. — KUNA



KUWAIT: The National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL) held on Wednesday the 11th edition of the spring plastic arts exhibition. It aims to discover promising artistic talents of young people and review distinguished

works of experienced artists. The exhibition, inaugurated by NCCAL's assistant secretary general for arts and theatre Bader Al-Duwaish, showcases several items, paintings, ceramic crafts and others

made by a group of Kuwaiti plastic artists. The event carries a message of NCCAL that it supports and backs Kuwaiti artists, mainly young people. — KUNA

Kuwait 1st Gulf nation to organize old pearl diving

KUWAIT: The State of Kuwait is no stranger to the role of pioneer in the Gulf region especially within the legislative and law domains. In the late 1930s and early 1940s, Kuwait issued its first law that organized the pearl diving and fishing professions, a unique step within the boundaries of the region back then.



Amir Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah

Prior to the issuing of the law, 'Al-Salfa', a precursor for the legal position held by today's judges, was tasked with arbitrating disputes and organizing the marine professions. Many have held the position in Kuwait, which proved to be valuable to an extent. With the increasing pressure on Al-Salfa, it was deemed necessary and important to issue a law that would be more comprehensive in dealing with chal-



KUWAIT: Pearl divers at work. — KUNA archive

lenges faced by the pearl diving and fishing industries. In 1940, the first official law was relayed to the then legislative council, which approved the 51-articles law in the era of the Amir Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the 10th ruler of Kuwait. The law largely contributed to ending dis-



Pearl merchants brokering a deal.

putes over matters pertaining to the pearl diving and fishing professions. It also ensured the rights of workers and their families. It protected laborers assets during their lives and also after they long passed away due to natural causes or accidents. — KUNA

Local

Prime Minister patronizes diplomatic institute's graduation ceremony

Diplomacy is ethics, culture and activity: Foreign Minister

KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah patronized yesterday the graduation ceremony of the sixth class of Saud Al-Nasser Al-Sabah Diplomatic Institute. After listening to the national anthem and verses from the Holy Quran, the Institute's Director-General Ambassador Abdulatif Al-Sharekh began his welcoming speech.

Sharekh's speech was followed by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah's speech. Later, a documentary film was shown to the attendees about trainees of the Diplomatic Institute's sixth batch, followed by some graduates' speeches. His Highness the Premier, afterwards, handed the trainees their graduation diplomas, and honorary certificates to their instructors.

The Kuwaiti diplomacy plays a key role in boosting the country's status among world countries, His Highness the Prime Minister stated following the graduation ceremony. Since its independence, the Kuwaiti diplomacy, founded by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, played a positive role in various regional and international issues and organizations, said the Premier. Kuwait's diplomacy has always stressed the importance of establishing international security and peace, he said, noting it has achieved leadership for the country and a motive to promote peace and brotherhood around the world. It had also made valuable contributions to aiding affected and needy people around the world, he said.

His Highness called on the graduates to take advantage of the skills they gained in order to be the best representatives for the country abroad. He also encouraged the sixth class graduates to make the best implementation of Kuwait's foreign policy, and preserve the country's good reputation among world nations. Furthermore, His Highness lauded all efforts exerted by the foreign



KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and foreign ministry officials pose for a group picture with graduates of the sixth class of Saud Al-Nasser Al-Sabah Diplomatic Institute. —KUNA

ministry and Saud Al-Nasser Al-Sabah Diplomatic Institute in organizing professional programs for the trainees that qualify them to implement the values and ethics of diplomacy.

His Highness also stressed the importance of committing to the basics of international diplomatic action, which is one of the important pillars that Kuwait depends on to preserve its sovereignty, and boost its relationship with all world countries along with their state and public bodies. The ceremony was attended by a number of senior state officials, ministers, and advisors in His Highness the Prime Minister's Diwan, foreign ministry, and diplomatic sector.

Meanwhile, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled said that diplomacy is ethics, culture and activity, recalling identical words used by His Highness the

Amir while opening Saud Al-Nasser Al-Sabah Diplomatic Institute in 2008.

Addressing the ceremony, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled thanked all those who devoted time, knowledge and deep experience for trainees. The diplomats are armed with experience and knowledge that can help them serve the dear nation and defend its interests, inspired by the democratic basics and principles set out by His Highness the Amir. Kuwaiti diplomacy has always been based on positive and constructive international communication and cooperation for the sake of a safer and more peaceful, developed and prosperous world, he added. Wishing the graduates best of luck, he voiced confidence that they would efficiently live up to their due responsibilities.

The Institute's Director-General Ambassador Abdulatif Al-Sharekh said this year's class includes 28 diplomats; eight females and 20 males. The graduates have successfully completed a one-year training program that embraces necessary skills and information for distinguished and effective diplomatic performance, he said.

By the graduation of this class, the institute has now provided more than 42 percent of the country's diplomats, he added. On behalf of the new diplomats, Abdulaziz Al-Shawaf said the institute's sixth class graduates have done their utmost during the training period in order to be up to responsibility. He quoted his colleagues as having vowed to respect laws, shoulder responsibility and depend on themselves. — KUNA

Defense minister receives Uzbek presidential envoy

KUWAIT: First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday the special envoy of Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, Ismatilla Irgashev. A statement by the Defense Ministry's Public Relations said that Sheikh Nasser Al-Sabah lauded relations with Uzbekistan during his meeting with Irgashev. The statement added that both officials have discussed issues of mutual interest during their gathering. Uzbek Ambassador to Kuwait Dr Bakhromjon Aloev attended the meeting. — KUNA



KUWAIT: First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with the special envoy of Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev. — KUNA

Kuwait takes part in Izmir military drills

ANKARA: Army chiefs from different countries, including Kuwait, attended military drills "EFES 2018" in Izmir, Turkey yesterday with the participation of Kuwaiti soldiers. According to Anadolu News Agency, the drills was also attended by 65 supervisors and representatives from 38 countries including Turkey, Uzbekistan, Qatar, Georgia, Kuwait, Sudan, Bosnia, Nigeria, Romania and Kazakhstan. It added that there are 7,500 Turkish soldiers and 945 from different countries taking part in the drills. — KUNA

Local

Ministers comfortably survive no-confidence votes

Assembly panel backs government on Philippines

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Minister of Oil Bakheet Al-Rasheedi and Minister of Social Affairs and Labor Hind Al-Sabeeh comfortably defeated no-confidence motions against them filed following last week's grilling. Only 11 MPs voted against Rasheedi while 34 supported him and Sabeeh survived with 12 MPs voting against her, 28 backed her while five members abstained. The motions required 25 votes to pass and dismiss the ministers from office.

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable to His Highness Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, praising professional and sound democratic process during the session.

In the cable, His Highness the Amir hailed constructive and fruitful cooperation between both legislative and executive authorities, affirming that this democratic practice is a source of pride for the nation and citizens, and reflects adherence to the constitution. His Highness the Amir also voiced his sincere congratulation on the parliament's restored confidence in Sabeeh and Rasheedi.

Ahead of the voting, two lawmakers spoke in support of the motion and two against for each of the two ministers. Following the voting, MP Omar Al-Tabtabai, who grilled the oil minister

along with MP Abdulwahab Al-Babtain, said that it would not take too long before grilling the prime minister over violations in the oil sector. MP Saleh Ashour described what happened in the session as "theatrical" and vowed to continue monitoring the minister.

Full support

In the meantime, the National Assembly's foreign relations committee yesterday declared the assembly's full support to the government measures against the Philippines over the labor dispute between the two countries. The panel's position comes as the Kuwait and the Philippines are scheduled to sign a labor cooperation agreement to provide more protection to some 260,000 Filipinos working in Kuwait.

Manila also partially lifted a total ban on the departure of its nationals to Kuwait allowing skilled laborers to go back to their work in Kuwait while the ban continues on domestic helpers who constitute the majority of Filipinos in Kuwait.

Rapporteur of the panel MP Mohammad Al-Huwailah said after the committee meeting yesterday that the panel totally supports all the measures taken by the foreign ministry for the sake of safeguarding Kuwait's sovereignty and respecting the country's laws.

He said that Kuwaiti laws had been breached in a flagrant way and blamed the Philippines for



KUWAIT: (From left) First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Minister of Social Affairs and Labor Hind Al-Sabeeh and Minister of Oil Bakheet Al-Rasheedi attend yesterday's parliament session. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

escalating the dispute, and stressed that the foreign ministry should deal with the issue in a decisive manner.

Huwailah said that Kuwait enjoys a good human rights record and the Filipino community receives full respect and its rights and well-pro-

tected, adding that the measures taken by the Philippine authorities followed by violations committed by the Philippine embassy in Kuwait are "totally unacceptable." The lawmaker said the committee will at a later date invite the foreign ministry to discuss the issue in detail.

Ten recruitment offices closed

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Ten domestic helpers' recruitment offices were closed in the past 48 hours, bringing the total number of violating offices that were shut down to 75 since authorities announced a few months ago that there are 300 unlicensed offices were operating around the country.

The Domestic Help Department, which is still operating under the Interior Ministry's Residency Affairs General Department until its transfer to the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor is completed, had learned about the activity of a number of offices whose licensed owners authorize others to run them for a monthly fee. Investigations confirmed that violations were happening at the offices, which are mostly located in Hawally, and they were permanently closed as a result, an Interior Ministry source said.

Water leak

A special committee was formed to investigate the causes of a water leak at

Kuwait International Airport on Wednesday following heavy rain. Minister of Housing and Minister of State for Services Dr Jenan Bushehri said. Air traffic was obstructed briefly after leaking water accumulated on the runway. "This situation is unacceptable in light of the preparations" that take place ahead of the rainy season every year, Bushehri said in a statement. She explained that a committee formed in November 2017 to prepare for the rainy season ended its work last February.

MPW budget

The Finance Ministry approved the Ministry of Public Works' (MPW) budget at KD 960 million for the current fiscal year (2018-2019). Funds were distributed to sectors and authorities of the ministry; at KD 110 million for construction projects, while KD 101 million were allocated for the health engineering sector and facilities operations. Meanwhile, KD 20 million were allocated for mega projects (including the Mubarak Port), KD 38.5 for maintenance engineering, while a KD 490 million budget was allocated for the Roads Public Authority. The new airport (terminal 2) had a separate item in the budget at KD 200 million to be spent during the current year, which goes in line with the huge size of the project.

Man claims he was assaulted by debtors

By Hanan Al-Saadoun and Agencies

KUWAIT: Jahra detectives are investigating the claims of a Jordanian man who said that he was detained for 20 hours, beaten and forced to sign five debt receipts stating that he received \$100,652 in cash that he had loaned to his attackers. The man submitted a medical report with his complaint. In his statements to police, the complainant said that two people, Kuwaiti and Egyptian, detained and beat him then forced him to sign five statements acknowledging that he received his money. He said that the suspects took his passport but gave it to his country's embassy on the same day.

Cigarettes smuggling

Customs officers at the Nuwaiseeb land border outlet foiled a driver's attempt to smuggle a large quantity of cigarettes to a neighboring country, Al-Anbaa reported. The suspect's vehicle was sent to the Customs General Department's head-

quarters. Officers found 65 cardboard boxes of various brands of cigarettes inside the car, while passengers are allowed to carry two boxes only. The cigarettes were found hidden in the tires.

Drug possession

Jahra police arrested a citizen with drugs at a check point in Waha. The suspect attempted to escape when asked for his ID, but was stopped and was discovered to be driving in an abnormal condition. He was sent to the Drug Control General Department (DCGD). Meanwhile, Ahmadi police arrested an Asian man with possession of four liquor bottles in Mangaf.

Fugitives arrested

Farwaniya police arrested two citizens over several cases, in addition to a Pakistani man who entered Kuwait illegally to escape sentences in a neighboring country. Farwaniya patrolmen first stopped a citizen who was arrested after an identity check revealed that he was wanted on kidnapping, impersonating police and theft charges. He was sent to the criminal investigations department. Meanwhile, a female citizen was found wanted to serve a two-year jail sentence on a drug-related case. The Pakistani man was caught in Farwaniya, and police did not find any IDs on him, and found a paper with him showing that he was sentenced to eight years in jail in Saudi Arabia and wanted for a SR 127,000 debt.



At least 47 dead as Kenya dam bursts

Australian, 104, commits assisted suicide in Switzerland



GOLAN HEIGHTS: An Israeli soldier climbs on a M270 Menatetz, a multiple rocket launcher vehicle, near the Syrian border in the Israel-annexed Golan Heights yesterday. Israel's army said it had carried out widespread raids against Iranian targets in Syria overnight after rocket fire towards its forces it blamed on Iran, marking a sharp escalation between the two enemies. —AFP

Targets hit in biggest Iran-Israel flare-up

Bahrain backs Israel's right to 'defend itself'

JERUSALEM: Israel carried out widespread deadly raids against what it said were Iranian targets in Syria yesterday after rocket fire towards its forces which it blamed on Iran, marking a sharp escalation between the two enemies. The incident came after weeks of rising tensions and followed US President Donald Trump's decision to withdraw from a key 2015 Iran nuclear deal on Tuesday, a move Israel had long advocated.

It led to immediate calls for restraint from Russia, France and Germany. "The escalation of the last hours shows us that it's really about war and peace," warned German Chancellor Angela Merkel. The raids that a monitor said killed 23 fighters were one of the largest Israeli military operations in recent years and the biggest such assault on Iranian targets, the military said. "We hit nearly all the Iranian infrastructure in Syria," Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman told a security conference.

"I hope we've finished this episode and everyone understood." Israel carried out the raids after it said 20 rockets, either Fajr or Grad type, were fired from Syria at its forces in the occupied Golan Heights at around midnight. It blamed the rocket fire on Iran's Al-Quds force, adding that Israel's anti-missile system intercepted four while the rest did not land in its territory. No Israelis were wounded. If confirmed, the incident would be the first time Iran had sought to directly attack Israeli-controlled territory aside from an alleged attempted drone attack in February.

"We know that comes from the Al-Quds force," army spokesman Lieutenant-Colonel Jonathan Conri-

cus said, referring to the special forces unit affiliated with Iran's elite Revolutionary Guard. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights monitoring group said dozens of rockets were fired from Syria towards the Israeli-occupied Golan, but did not confirm they were fired by Iranian forces. It alleged the rockets followed a "first Israeli bombardment on the town of Baath" in Quneitra province. A senior pro-regime military source in Syria confirmed the salvo of rockets, insisting that Israel had fired first.

'Not looking to escalate'

Later, in the early hours of the morning, explosions were heard in Damascus, while live images were broadcast on television showing projectiles above the Syrian capital and several missiles destroyed by anti-aircraft systems. Syrian state media reported that Israeli missile strikes had hit military bases as well as an arms depot and a military radar installation, without specifying the locations.

The official SANA news agency added that "dozens of missiles were shot down by anti-aircraft systems in Syrian airspace", acknowledging a number of missiles had reached their targets. Israel's military later confirmed it had carried out the raids, saying some 70 targets had been struck and all of its aircraft had returned safely. The army's Conricus said intelli-

gence, logistics and storage facilities and vehicles were targeted as well as the origin of the rockets.

Syrian air defenses, which fired dozens of times on Israeli forces, were also targeted, he said. There had been no comment from Iranian officials. Lieberman called the rocket fire "a new phase". "We don't want an escalation, but won't let anyone attack us or build an infrastructure to attack us in the future," he said. Russia's defense ministry said 28 Israeli F-15 and F-16 planes took part in the raids with a total of around 70 missiles fired. "My husband went out on to the balcony and saw the air defenses," said 27-year-old Rim, adding she and her family were awakened at their home in a western suburb of Damascus by the raids.

Risks of wider escalation in Mideast region

'Right to protect self'

Israel has long warned that it will not accept Iran entrenching itself militarily in neighboring Syria, where Tehran is supporting Presi-

dent Bashar Al-Assad's regime in the country's seven-year civil war. Israel has been blamed for a series of recent strikes inside Syria that have killed Iranians, though it did not acknowledge those raids. It does acknowledge carrying out dozens of raids in Syria to stop what it says are advanced arms deliveries to Iran-backed Hezbollah, another key foe of Israel.

Israel had been preparing itself for weeks for possible Iranian retaliation. Trump's withdrawal from the

nuclear deal has added to tensions and led to a new level of uncertainty over how Iran will respond. On Wednesday, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu held talks in Moscow with Russian President Vladimir Putin, whose country has provided massive military and diplomatic backing to Assad's regime. "I told President Putin that it is the right of every state, certainly the right of Israel, to take the necessary steps in order to protect itself from this aggression," Netanyahu said in a statement, referring to Iran's presence in Syria.

Bahrain backs Israel

Meanwhile, Bahrain's foreign minister, Sheikh Khalid Al-Khalifa yesterday backed Israel's right to "defend itself" after the Israeli military said it struck dozens of Iranian military targets in Syria overnight. "As long as Iran has breached the status quo in the region and invaded countries with its forces and missiles, any state in the region, including Israel, is entitled to defend itself by destroying sources of danger," the minister, whose country is a close ally of Saudi Arabia, said on his Twitter account. Syria has had strained relations with most of the Arab world since launching a deadly crackdown on demonstrators in March 2011 and was eventually suspended from the Arab League. But the Bahraini foreign minister's support for the Israeli strikes marks a rare, if not unprecedented public stance by an Arab government. Bahrain is a close ally of Saudi Arabia and the two countries, whose foreign policies are often in lockstep, view Iran as the chief threat to the region. —Agencies



International

Defying the tides of misfortune: Migrant babies born at sea

ROME: Mercy, Francesca, Newman, Diabam and Sophia were the names their mothers chose. What they had no control over was where their babies were born. As hundreds of thousands of migrants risk their lives on the perilous sea crossing from North Africa to Europe, dozens of newborns have taken their first breath aboard rescue ships in recent years. "There were a lot of people in the rubber boat, we were all packed together... the pain was awful," said Stephanie, a Nigerian woman who gave birth to Francesca aboard an aid boat.

There are many elements of a tortuous sea crossing that can push pregnant women travelling aboard cramped vessels into labor-stress, the vibration of boat engines, even the relief of being rescued from danger. But the chance of a woman having to give birth on the perilous voyage is ultimately a question of numbers. Since 2014, almost 80,000 women have landed on Italian shores, not including adolescents. The majority of them are young and many are pregnant.

"I've met many women who were raped," said Marina Kojima, a Japanese midwife who spent several months aboard the Aquarius, a rescue ship jointly run by NGOs SOS Mediterranee and Doctors Without Borders (MSF). "Often they have to sell their bodies in order to get a place on the boat." For these women, pregnancy makes the perilous journey through the desert into hellish Libya even more difficult, and giving birth at sea can be a scarring experience.

Births, deaths

Giulia Marinig, a recently qualified doctor, remembers a hectic 48 hours in October 2016 when three women went into labor aboard the Dattilo mi-

grant rescue ship. "We barely had time to realize what was happening and after just 45 minutes a little boy was born," said the 26-year-old. "I was working on autopilot. Just trying to do my best for the patients, we didn't sleep for two days." Marinig reckons there were around 30 other heavily pregnant mothers on board the Dattilo, and a number of women carried babies in their arms they had recently given birth to in Libyan detention centers. Even if their birthing suites amounted to the ship's hard floors with plastic crates as cots, the successful deliveries that night brought a shimmer of light to dark two days - 10,500 migrants had been picked up in the Mediterranean and a total of 50 corpses discovered.

For relief workers, delivering newborns alive and healthy is such a powerful experience that the European Union re-baptised its anti-trafficking operation in the Mediterranean Sophia in tribute to a Somali girl born in August 2015 on a German ship. A baby born aboard the Aquarius in 2017 became the inspiration behind this year's French Eurovision entry, simply called "Mercy". And the tributes go both ways. Stephanie chose to name her girl Francesca after Pope Francis while little Desire Alex, born on the NGO boat Aquarius in 2016, was named after the ship's captain.

Citizenship dead-end

But even if the 35 babies born aboard Mediterranean rescue vessels in recent years defy the odds to make it safely to Europe, their ordeal is just getting started. According to maritime law, children born at sea are considered nationals of the ship's flag carrier: Italy for Francesca, Germany for Sophia, the United Kingdom for Mercy.



CATANIA: Stephanie poses with her daughter Francesca Marina, born on May 3, 2015 during a rescue operation of the Italian Navy off the coast of Sicily. —AFP

But in these countries, restrictive citizenship laws mean the babies are not entitled to a European passport. Upon arrival in Italy, their unusual birth affords them no special treatment and they often get lost among the masses. Mercy and her mother were taken to Mineo reception centre in Sicily, the largest in Europe and long dogged by scandals of embezzlement and trafficking. It still houses nearly 3,000 people who sometimes wait years for an answer to their asylum applications.

Little Francesca, and two others, Newman and Favor, born on the Aquarius in 2016, were luckier: their parents were taken in by smaller centers which offered legal support, Italian courses and independent accommodation. On the advice of German sailors, Sophia's mother continued her journey and was granted asylum in Germany. They all share the same hope: that their children can go to school and grow up to live a life less precarious than their birth. —AFP

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International

Baghdadi aide's phone used to 'lure, capture' IS commanders

Abu Zaid Al-Iraqi responsible for funds IS transfers

BAGHDAD: Iraqi agents are holding a top aide to Islamic State leader Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi, and used an app on his mobile phone to lure four commanders from the group into a trap, a security advisor to the Iraqi government said yesterday. Ismail Al-Eithawi, who also uses the alias Abu Zaid Al-Iraqi, was captured in February in Turkey by Turkish authorities and handed over to Iraqi agents, Iraqi security advisor Hisham Al-Hashimi said yesterday. Hashimi described Eithawi as a direct aide to Islamic State leader Baghdadi, responsible for funds transfers to the group's bank accounts in different countries.

Iraqi agents used the Telegram messaging

app on Eithawi's mobile phone to lure other Islamic State commanders to cross the border from Syria into Iraq, where they were captured, Hashimi said. Those held include Saddam Jamal, a Syrian who served as the group's governor of Syria's eastern Euphrates region. Hashimi described Eithawi and Jamal as the two most senior Islamic State figures ever to be captured alive. The capture of all five was announced on Iraqi state TV on Wednesday.

Hashimi said the operation was carried out in cooperation with US forces, part of an American-led coalition fighting against Islamic State on both sides of the Iraqi-Syrian border. Following Eithawi's capture, Iraqi and American intelligence agents were able to un-

cover bank accounts used by the group and also secret communication codes he used, Hashimi said. Apart from Eithawi and Jamal, the operation captured three field commanders: Syrian Mohamed Al-Qadeer and two Iraqis, Omar al-Karbouli and Essam Al-Zawbai, Hashimi said.

"The noose is tightening around him," Hashimi said, referring to Baghdadi, whose real name is Ibrahim Al-Samarrai. Baghdadi, who declared himself ruler of all Muslims in 2014 after capturing Iraq's main northern city Mosul, is now believed to be hiding in the Iraqi-Syrian border region after losing all the cities and towns of his self-proclaimed caliphate. Iraqi Prime Minister Haider Al-

Abadi said last month he would "take all necessary measures" against militants based in Syria. The Iraqi air force has carried out several air strikes since last year against Islamic State positions in Syrian territory.

Abadi declared final victory last December over the ultra-hardline group within Iraq. But the militants still pose a threat along the border with Syria and have continued to carry out ambushes, killings and bombings across Iraq. Islamic State militants last month restated their loyalty to Baghdadi, in what is believed to be their first public pledge of allegiance to him since his self-proclaimed caliphate in Syria and Iraq collapsed last year.—Reuters

Islamic State in Iraq

BAGHDAD: The Islamic State group launched a blistering offensive in 2014, capturing nearly a third of Iraq's territory before it was driven out at the end of 2017. Here is a recap of the main events involving jihadists in Iraq.

Jihadist breakthrough

In January 2014, Iraq loses its first key town since the US-led invasion as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and its allies capture Fallujah and parts of Ramadi. On June 10 ISIL launches a lightning offensive in northwestern Iraq, seizing second city Mosul and sweeping across Sunni Arab areas bordering the autonomous Kurdistan region. Tens of thousands of Christians and Yazidis flee. On June 29 ISIL declares a "caliphate" in territories it holds in Iraq and Syria, rebranding itself the Islamic State (IS) group and declaring its leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi "caliph".

Yazidi abuses

In early August IS conquers several Kurdish-held towns, including Sinjar and Zumar near the Syrian border, driving out tens of thousands of civilians, many from the Yazidi minority who flee to inhospitable mountain regions. According to the United Nations, thousands of women and teenagers, many of them Yazidi, have suffered terrible abuse in zones controlled by IS, including rape, kidnapping and slavery.

Anti-jihadist coalition

In August 2014 the US gets directly involved in Iraq for the first time since its troops left in 2011, bombing IS positions and initiating a coalition to fight the jihadists. Only a minor-

ity of the countries in the coalition deploys soldiers on the ground. The US, in the biggest contribution, sends 5,000 troops to Iraq.

First defeats

On March 31, 2015, Iraq announces the "liberation" of Tikrit, a city north of Baghdad, after nearly 10 months under IS rule. On November 13 Iraqi Kurdish forces backed by US-led coalition air strikes recapture the northern town of Sinjar, and on February 9, 2016 IS is ousted from Ramadi, the capital of Iraq's largest province Anbar. The army retakes neighboring Fallujah on June 26.

Mosul retaken

A major offensive to retake Mosul is launched in October 2016 involving some 30,000 Iraqi troops, backed by US-led air support. After a months-long battle that leaves the city in ruins and thousands displaced, victory is declared on July 10. The Iraqi Prime Minister Haider Al-Abadi says it marks the end of the jihadists' "caliphate". In August 2017 Iraq announces Tal Afar and the surrounding areas to the west of Mosul are fully retaken, declaring "the province of Nineveh is now entirely in the hands of our forces". In November, Iraqi forces reclaim Rawa and Al-Qaim, the main town in the group's last bastion in the country along the border with Syria.

Victory claimed

On December 8 Iraqi forces announce a new drive against IS fighters holding out in the western desert. A day later, Abadi declares the "end of the war" against IS and "complete control" of Iraq's border region with Syria. Experts warn however that jihadists are still hiding in the vast desert plains along the porous border with Syria, and IS continues to claim sporadic attacks in Iraq.—AFP

Iraq readies for first poll since end of IS war

BAGHDAD: Iraq is gearing up for key parliamentary elections tomorrow, some five months after declaring victory over the Islamic State group, with the dominant Shiites split, the Kurds in disarray and Sunnis sidelined. A lull in violence ahead of the fourth such nationwide vote since Saddam Hussein was toppled in 2003 has spurred some hope for Iraqis, but surging tensions between key players Iran and the United States could rattle the country. Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi—who has balanced off Washington and Tehran—is angling for a new term as he takes credit for the brutal fightback against the jihadists and seeing off a Kurdish push for independence.

But stiff competition from within his Shiite community, the majority group that dominates Iraqi politics, should fragment the vote and spell lengthy horse-trading to form any government. Whoever emerges as premier will face the mammoth task of rebuilding a country left shattered by the battle against IS. Despite a rare period of calm, more than two and a half million people remain internally displaced and the jihadists still pose a major security threat. Over 15 blood-soaked years since the US-led invasion upended Iraqi politics there is also widespread disillusionment with the same old faces from an elite seen as mired in corruption and sectarianism.

Shiite rivals

Abadi—who took over as IS rampaged across the country in 2014 — is facing two leading Shiite challengers to his Victory Alliance, which has pitched itself as an attempt to bridge Iraq's Shiite-Sunni divide. Ex-prime minister Nuri al-Maliki—a bitter foe despite coming from the same Dawa party—is widely reviled for stirring sectarianism and losing territory to IS, but draws support from a hardline base. Former



SAYYIDA ZEINAB, Syria: An Iraqi resident of Syria casts her vote for the Iraqi parliamentary elections at a polling station in the city of Sayyida Zeinab on the outskirts of Damascus yesterday. —AFP

transport minister Hadi Al-Ameri—who has close ties to Iran's Revolutionary Guards—is hailed by many as a war hero after leading paramilitary units that fought IS alongside Baghdad's troops. He wants US forces that helped battle the jihadists to leave Iraq for good, challenging Abadi's cautious foreign policy that has seen him build bridges with Iran's rival Saudi Arabia.

Overall just under 7,000 candidates are standing and Iraq's complex system means no single bloc looks set to get anything near a majority in the 329-seat parliament. "There is certainly a contest between the three main lists for the post of prime minister, but that will not impact the system that sees the Shiites control and run Iraq," said Jordan-based analyst Adel Mahmud. Among the other groups jostling for position in the negotiations to come is an unlikely alliance between Shiite cleric Moqtada Sadr and secular communists that is looking to ride a wave of protests against corruption.

Votes in the Sunni heartlands once dominated by IS—including Iraq's devastated second city Mosul—are up in the air as traditional alliances have been shredded by the fallout of jihadist rule. Abadi is aiming to be the first Shiite leader to make inroads there but apathy is high as people struggle to rebuild their lives and few efforts have been made to reach out to the hundreds of thousands still displaced in camps. —AFP

International

Europe licks wounds as Saudi and Israel hail Trump on Iran

Europeans fail to persuade Trump to stay in

PARIS: When Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince visited France in April, he oozed confidence that President Donald Trump would pull the United States out of the Iran nuclear deal which Riyadh has long opposed. Answering reporters' questions in Paris, two weeks after talks with Trump in Washington, Prince Mohammed bin Salman compared the deal to the 1938 Munich Agreement which was meant by European powers to appease Nazi Germany but ended in war. Where French, German and British diplomatic efforts failed with Trump, Saudi Arabia's appear to have succeeded.

A source close to Saudi policymakers said Washington and Riyadh, Iran's main regional rival, had been discussing the 2015 nuclear deal "for some time" before Trump announced on Tuesday that the United States was pulling out of it. The source said it was "obvious" from the Crown Prince's talks with Trump in the White House on March



Trump pulls US out of the Iran nuclear deal

20 and a visit to Riyadh a month later by US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo that there had been a "coordination" of positions. "We were for it and we worked on it," another Saudi source said of Riyadh's diplomacy.

Also celebrating is Israel, another of Iran's enemies. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu unveiled what he said was evidence of a secret Iranian nuclear weapons program on April 30. Most of the purported evidence Netanyahu presented dated to the period before the 2015 accord was signed, although he said Iran had also

Trump's Iran nuke decision puts Iraq leaders to the test

BAGHDAD: President Donald Trump's decision to withdraw from the Iranian nuclear deal has cast a shadow over an already fraught election in Iraq, where Tehran and Washington have vied for influence since the US-led invasion toppled Saddam Hussein in 2003. The removal of a Sunni dictatorship cleared the path for the country's Shiite majority, from which the three top contenders for the premiership, including incumbent Haider Al-Abadi, are drawn. The outcome of the May 12 ballot is too close to call. Whoever wins must balance Iraq's interests - and the need to reduce the struggling economy's dependence on oil - with those of the United States and Iran, whose intensifying rivalry makes that more difficult.

Abadi and his main rivals - predecessor Nuri Al-Maliki and new challenger Hadi Al-Amiri, a hardline militia commander at the head of a powerful paramilitary coalition aligned with Iran - tilt heavily towards Tehran. With Trump increasing pressure on Iran, its Shiite clerical leadership will be even more determined to maintain its patronage in Iraq. For Iran, Iraq is the most important Arab state, even more than Syria and Lebanon, where it also holds political and military sway. That is because Iran and Iraq share a border and Iraq is positioned in the heart of the Gulf region. Iraq is also Iran's main route for supplying arms and

kept important files on nuclear technology since then, and continued adding to its "nuclear weapons knowledge". Tehran dismissed Netanyahu as "the boy who cried wolf", and called his presentation propaganda.

Although Israeli officials said they did not know whether Trump had been swayed by the information, the president referred to it in his announcement on Tuesday. Netanyahu had talks with Trump in the White House in March and Israeli diplomats worked hard behind the scenes to get their country's views across on the deal, intended to prevent Tehran obtaining a nuclear bomb but seen by opponents as flawed. Asked how much of the Israeli ambassador to Washington's time had been spent arguing the case against the deal, Deputy Minister for Diplomacy Michael Oren told Reuters: "Ball-park guess? Something in the vicinity of 90-plus (percent) ... This issue is, for Netanyahu, paramount."

Macron visit 'last resort'

Trump's announcement was a blow to French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Angela Merkel. Both tried to change Trump's mind on Iran during visits to the White House in April, and both failed. British Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson also made a last-minute dash to Washington but did not get to see the president. He put Britain's case at talks with Pompeo and in an interview with "Fox & Friends" on

fighters to Syria, where it has deployed with allied Iraqi and Lebanese Shiite militias to back President Bashar Al-Assad in the civil war. One concern for Iraq is the risk of clashes between the 5,000 US troops there and Shiite paramilitaries notionally under Baghdad's command but answering to Iran's Revolutionary Guards, and to supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. "The Iraqis are very worried. They don't want Iraq to become a new theatre of ... war between Iran and the United States," said one senior Western envoy. "If there is a war between Iran and the United States, part of it will be here." The US and Iran had found a common enemy in Islamic State, which at one point held about a third of Iraq, mainly in the north and the west. Its rapid advance owed much to the collapse of Iraq's army, hollowed out by the sectarian policies of the Maliki government. Many Iraqis attribute the jihadis' subsequent defeat to men like Amiri and the Iranian-trained militias, rather than to US-led coalition forces. America mainly provided air power, while relying on Kurdish fighters on the ground in both Syria and Iraq.

Proxy war

But while Iran sees Iraq as the most strategically important Arab state, some experts believe Tehran will focus more on Israel and the Syrian battlefield. The conflict there threatens to draw in Israel. Only hours after Trump's announcement on the Iran nuclear deal it launched air strikes against what it says were Iranian and Hezbollah assets, creeping closer to Israel's borders. Iranian forces in Syria shelled Israeli army outposts across the Syrian frontier overnight, Israel said, prompting one of the heaviest Israeli strikes in Syria since the war began in 2011.—Reuters



TEHRAN: Iranian women carry anti-US signs during a demonstration outside the former US embassy headquarters in the capital Tehran. —AFP

cable channel Fox News, which Trump regularly watches. Despite their efforts, European leaders knew by mid-April that the chances of persuading Trump to stay in the nuclear deal were fading, European diplomats said. "Macron's visit was the last resort," a European official told Reuters in Brussels, referring to the French leader's talks with Trump in the White House on April 24. Describing the last month of diplomacy as "disastrous", the official said: "For weeks all the indications from the White House and State Department were: 'He's out (of the deal).'"

On Wednesday, the European allies were seeking to salvage the nuclear deal and preserve their business with Iran. Trump's message to the Europeans in the run-up to his announcement was that they must come up with a way to toughen the nuclear deal if the United States was to remain in it, said sources familiar with the discussions. He pressed for a separate deal to go alongside the nuclear agreement that would address other US concerns about Iran such as its ballistic missile program, which was not covered in the 2015 accord, they said.—Reuters

Questions swirl around Trump's lawyer after payments revealed

WASHINGTON: The White House on Wednesday brushed aside reports that Michael Cohen, President Donald Trump's personal lawyer, received millions of dollars from a Russian oligarch and corporations seeking access to the administration. "I haven't heard the president express any specific concerns about that," White House spokeswoman Sarah Sanders said when asked about the revelations of the payments to Cohen. "I would refer you to the president's outside counsel to address those concerns," Sanders said at the daily press briefing.

She also said she was not aware of any actions taken by the Trump administration to benefit the companies which made payments to Cohen. Cohen, Trump's attorney and fixer for the past decade, is under criminal investigation in New York and his home and office were raided by the FBI last month. The probe was prompted by a tip from the office of Special Counsel Robert Mueller, who has been looking into Russian interference in the 2016 elec-

tion, but the authorities have not said what crimes Cohen is suspected to have committed.

The various payments to Cohen were revealed by Michael Avenatti, the attorney representing porn star Stormy Daniels, who was paid \$130,000 just days before the November 2016 election to keep quiet about an affair she claims to have had with Trump a decade earlier. The New York Times and NBC News said they had reviewed financial documents that corroborated the payments made to Essential Consultants, the Delaware company set up by Cohen to pay Daniels. The Avenatti document revealed a series of payments to Essential Consultants beyond the "hush money" payment to Daniels, whose real name is Stephanie Clifford. Essential Consultants received \$500,000 from Russian oligarch Viktor Vekselberg and money from telecom giant AT&T, Switzerland-based pharmaceutical company Novartis and South Korea's Korea Aerospace Industries.

'This is a big deal'

AT&T and Novartis confirmed having made the payments and Avenatti suggested that Cohen may have been seeking to profit from his longtime ties to Trump. "It appears that this may be your typical pay-to-play type scenario, where you have someone close to a politician... selling access, potential access, to the president of the United States," Avenatti told CNN.—AFP

International

US defies most of world with Jerusalem embassy

Embassy inauguration due to take place Monday

JERUSALEM: The United States moves its embassy in Israel to Jerusalem next week in defiance of the Palestinians and most of the world, likely further heightening tensions at a time of tumult in the region. US President Donald Trump is set to make good on his pledge in December when he broke with decades of precedent and recognized the disputed city as Israel's capital to global outcry.

The embassy inauguration due to take place Monday caps his decision but comes at a particularly fevered time, after weeks of deadly protests and clashes along the Gaza Strip's border with Israel. It also follows Trump's announcement on Tuesday that the United States will withdraw from the Iran nuclear deal, creating a new level of uncertainty in the turbulent Middle East, and Israeli strikes on dozens of Iranian targets in Syria. Yesterday's deadly air strikes followed rocket fire toward Israeli forces in the occupied Golan Heights that Israel blamed on Iran.

Monday's ceremony will include some 800 guests and a White House delegation though not Trump himself—at what until now had been a US consulate building in Jerusalem. US Deputy Secretary of State John Sullivan will lead the delegation that will include Trump's daughter Ivanka, her husband and senior White House aide Jared Kush-

ner, and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin. Less than 100 kilometers away, more protests are planned along the Gaza border, with some Palestinians vowing to rush the fence and try to break through despite Israeli snipers deployed on the other side.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has sought to portray the "historic" US embassy move as encouraging other countries to do the same, though that has not played out on a significant level. "I must tell you that the bold decision by President Trump has prompted other countries, quite a few now, who are planning to move their embassy to Jerusalem as well," Netanyahu told US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo when he visited Tel Aviv last month. Senior Palestinian official Nabil Shaath told journalists Wednesday that Trump is supporting "Israeli cleansing of our people from Jerusalem, and is giving Israel a chance to violate all the international law that guarded this situation".

Heightening tensions in a troubled region



'Cut the siege'

Beyond the disputed nature of the city, the embassy move will take on added significance due to the date when it will occur. May 14 marks the 70th anniversary of the founding of Israel. The following day is when the Palestinians mark the "Nakba," or

old said he hoped the widespread interest in his case would spur Australia and other countries to rethink their legislation. "I would have preferred to have (ended) it in Australia, and I greatly regret that Australia is behind Switzerland" when it comes to right-to-die laws, he said. Goodall secured a fast-track appointment with the foundation in Basel after he attempted but failed to commit suicide on his own earlier this year.

"It would have been much more convenient for everyone if I had been able to, but unfortunately it failed," he said of the suicide attempt. But he said he was happy that he had been offered the "Swiss option", since he has been able to see most of his large family, which is spread over several countries, in the run-up to his final day. Assisted suicide is illegal in most countries and was banned in Australia until the state of Victoria became the first to legalize the practice last year. But that legislation, which takes effect in June 2019, only applies to terminally ill patients of sound mind and a life expectancy of less than six months.

Beethoven and cheesecake

According to Swiss law meanwhile, anyone who is of sound mind and who has over a period of time voiced a consistent wish to end their life can request so-called assisted voluntary death, or AVD. Asked on Wednesday if he had any hesitations or doubts, the 104-year-old said: "No. None whatsoever." —AFP

Happy to end it

"I am happy to have the chance tomorrow to end it, and I appreciate the help of the medical profession here in making that possible," he said. The 104-year-



BETHLEHEM: Palestinians escape from tear gas fired by Israeli security forces during a protest organized near the separation fence between Jerusalem and Bethlehem, ahead of commemorations marking the 70th anniversary of the Nakba yesterday. —AFP

catastrophe, commemorating the more than 700,000 Palestinians who fled or were expelled from their homes in the 1948 war surrounding Israel's creation. Palestinian protests are planned on both days. On the Gaza border, 52 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli forces in protests and clashes since March 30. No Israelis have been wounded and the military has faced criticism over the use of live fire.

Israel says it only opens fire when necessary to stop infiltrations, attacks and damage to the bor-

der fence, while accusing Hamas, the Islamist movement that runs the blockaded Gaza Strip, of seeking to use the protests as cover to carry out violence. Some young protesters gathered near the fence last Friday pledged a rush towards the fence on May 14, though much will likely depend on whether Hamas encourages such actions. "We will cut the siege, then enter inside," a 22-year-old who only gave his name as Hani said, adding he was not afraid to die. "Our lives are cheaper than Palestine." —AFP

Young women changing the face of African media

PORT LOUIS: A new generation of 30-somethings with brilliant careers, feminist convictions and, above all, confidence, are spearheading an assault on African media, using social networks as a launchpad. "I do not understand what 'no' means," Peace Hyde, one of the most high-profile members of this club, said in an interview with AFP on the sidelines of a conference on African media in Mauritius this month. The British-born Ghanaian taught physics and chemistry in Britain before moving to Africa in 2014 to try her hand at journalism.

In the traditionally male-dominated world of the American financial media group Forbes, she quickly became head of digital media and partnerships at its African subsidiary. Hyper-telegenic, Hyde grabbed an audience by creating and fronting the talk show "My Worst Day" on CNBC Africa, in which she persuaded powerful Africans to disclose their biggest failures, and what they learned from them. She has a growing personal audience with 380,000 followers on Instagram and 63,000 on Twitter.

At the recent NexTV CEO Africa conference in Port Louis, her popularity could be measured by the number of selfies she was asked to pose for, especially by young women who seem to see her as a role model—which this individualist rejects. "There is a

heavy focus on feminism and women having a voice from a feminist point of view, but I have always believed I am an individual with a voice," said Hyde, who divides her time between Lagos and Johannesburg. "By default you will empower others and inspire others to follow in that same respect."

Change is coming

"Succeeding in media in Africa as a woman is a lot of work, it is not for lazy people. You have to constantly prove yourself, you have to constantly work against the grain," said Nigerian presenter Chinenye Nnoli, host of the talk show "Metrowoman" and head of a production company of the same name. "In Africa—and not only in Africa, it is global—women have been over-sexualized, but the truth is that it is changing and people are responding to that," she said. "There actually is a lot of content that mirrors powerful, influential women who have succeeded ethically."

The non-hierarchical nature of social media has helped. "Because of the advent of social media... you can actually have your show without necessarily trying to get some infrastructure. Now with your mobile phone you can actually start your talk show," Nnoli said. Ugandan sisters Seanice Lojede and Nancy Kacungira have achieved comparable success in different sections of the media: Lojede with her East Africa-focused Blu Flamingo digital marketing company, and Kacungira by presenting BBC World News's daily "Focus on Africa" show. The two share both feminist and pan-African beliefs, which they recently promoted in a video titled "Sexism at Work", posted on Lojede's "Black Working Mother" YouTube channel. —AFP

International

League, 5-Star making 'significant steps' towards government deal

Berlusconi agrees to stand aside to facilitate deal

ROME: The anti-establishment 5-Star Movement and far-right League have made "significant steps" towards forming a government, the two parties said yesterday as Italy looked to end nine weeks of political deadlock. The two groups, which are hostile to European Union budget restrictions and have made electoral pledges that would cost billions of euros to implement, entered into negotiations on Wednesday just as a swift return to the polls looked inevitable. "Significant steps forward have been made on the composition of the government and on the (nomination) of a prime minister," a joint statement said following a meeting between League leader Matteo Salvini and 5-Star chief Luigi Di Maio.

They gave no indication of who might lead the administration or who could take charge of the key ministries. "I cannot disguise my joy and happiness that we can finally start solving Italy's problems," Di Maio told supporters on Facebook. He said he should have more details

later in the day. News that a deal was at hand pushed the spread between Italian benchmark bond yields and the safer German equivalent to their widest level in seven weeks over fears state accounts might take a hit. Italian shares also lost ground.



Italy stuck in political limbo since election

Italy has been stuck in political limbo since an inconclusive March 4 election that saw a centre-right bloc, including the anti-immigrant League, win the most seats, and the 5-Star

emerge the largest single party by far. 5-Star had signaled for weeks it was ready to form a coalition with the League, but not with that party's electoral ally, former prime minister Silvio Berlusconi, whom it sees as a symbol of political corruption after years of scandals. Salvini had refused to abandon Berlusconi out of loyalty to the centre-right bloc, but the 81-year-old billionaire businessman finally agreed to step aside voluntarily late Wednesday, removing a major obstacle to an accord. Even so, a government deal faces various difficulties.

EU conflict

5-Star draws much of its support in the impoverished south while the League's electoral base is the wealthy north. While 5-Star wants to introduce generous welfare benefits, the League wants to slash taxes. One of the first things the two parties are likely to agree on will be to scrap a 2011 pension reform which raised the retirement age and required further hikes

over time. Economists say repealing the law would cost 20 billion euros (\$24 billion) a year, but opponents say it is unfair on ordinary Italians. Both parties also want to renegotiate the EU's fiscal rules to allow Italy to spend more. 5-Star has rowed back on a pledge to hold a referendum on Italy's membership of the euro zone, but the League still calls the euro a "flawed currency" and wants to exit it as soon as is politically feasible.

Setting up a possible institutional clash in Italy, President Sergio Mattarella made clear yesterday that he did not want to see any confrontation with Brussels. "To think that one can go-it-alone in Europe is knowingly deceptive in front of public opinion," Mattarella said in a pointedly pro-European speech at a conference on the state of the European Union in the town of Fiesole. Referring to the euro, he said: "We have a currency that is capable to being a concrete anchor in international relations, a role that no national currency can perform."—Reuters

New masculinities: Meet Uganda's transgender men fighting sexism

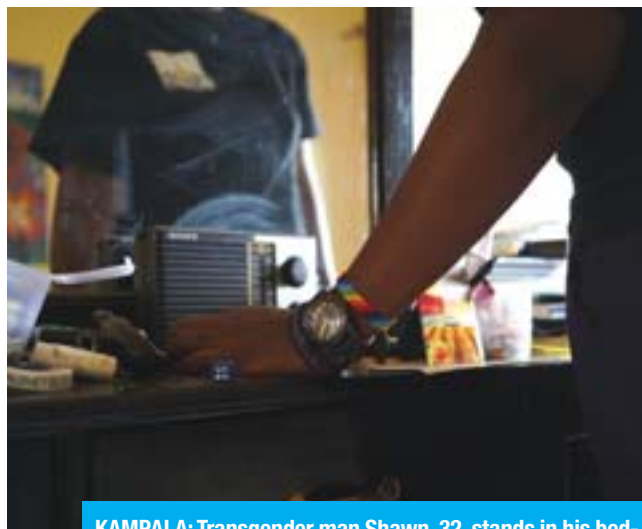
KAMPALA: Shawn, a young transgender man, was sitting in a public minibus in the Ugandan capital, when an old schoolmate boarded and started loudly calling him by his former female name, astounding other passengers in the conservative east African nation. The conductor then attempted to lock Shawn in the vehicle so that everyone could 'check' if he was male or female. "When people give you trouble like that, it makes you concerned about who you are and the choices you've made," said Shawn, who declined to give his full name. "If I say I'm a man, am I really a man? Am I man enough? ... You start thinking about hormone therapy. Is it that that makes you a man?"

Being transgender is not illegal in Uganda, which is famous for its stringent anti-gay laws, but there is little understanding of people who do not identify with the gender they were born with. Many Ugandans believe transgender people are gay, leading to discrimination and violence in a political and religious environment often hostile towards homosexuality. Shawn has never taken a minibus again and, like all transgender men interviewed by the Thomson Reuters Foundation, said he now leads a secluded life - mostly avoiding public spaces and social situations.

He is one of a growing number of transgender men who - having lived as both male and female - are using their experiences to challenge traditional gender roles and sexism in Uganda. "Some transgender men ... think that if I go home and someone doesn't remove my shoes or cook for me, they are undermining my masculinity," said Shawn. "But have we taken the time to interrogate why some of these men are actually like this?"

Violence

Williams Apako, who heads advocacy group Tranz Network Uganda and describes himself as a "feminine man", said his experiences of discrimination have opened his mind to feminism. The expectation that men must provide financially for their partners encourages gender-based violence, he said, particularly among transgender men who often have trouble finding work. There are



KAMPALA: Transgender man Shawn, 32, stands in his bedroom on the outskirts of Kampala, Uganda. — Reuters

no legal provisions for those who want to change their official gender status on identity documents in Uganda, which often creates problems getting formal employment.

"Women have lived with these injustices for years," he said. "Why would we feel that being more masculine, more violent and more powerful should be what defines us as men?" Transgender men say they are denounced if they do not fulfill male stereotypes, like appearing physically strong and being the breadwinner, yet they are also treated as inferior by those who consider them women, from family to officials. Jordan Zeus, a transgender man who lives with his girlfriend just outside Kampala, said his gender identity made every stage of growing up difficult - and dangerous.

"My uncles burnt down all my clothes," said the 24-year-old. "When I was 19, one of them even wanted to rape me. He told me, 'If I give you this, your mind will change'." Zeus left home and went into further education, but he did not finish because of further harassment and negative reactions from teachers and fellow students. Zeus said he now has a good relationship with his mother but she still asks about "babies and boyfriends and marriage". "For parents in an African setting, they think girls can change any time, that lesbians will grow out of it," he said.—Reuters

Cameroon girls sell sex to survive after fleeing Boko Haram

MAROUA: Djamila lowers her eyes and nervously fiddles with the veil covering part of her face. She has bathed, put on her nicest clothes and is heading out to a busy crossroads called the "Old Manor" in Maroua, capital of Cameroon's far north. This is where the 16-year-old meets her friends most nights not for fun but to walk the streets. Since Boko Haram ran them out of their villages, the girls turned to sex work to survive. "I go look for money to feed myself," Djamila said in the quiet of a nearby office building, her eyes fixed on the floor.

She hesitated before continuing. "I sleep with men and they give me money." Three years ago, she was a happy middle school student in the village of Amchide on the Nigerian border. When the Islamist militants attacked in 2015, she was separated from her parents and fled into the woods. Now she has joined the ranks of what social workers say are a growing number of child sex workers in Maroua and nearby cities, driven there by violence and offered little support.

"Because of poverty and Boko Haram, girls from 10 to 16 years old are prostituting themselves in the streets of Maroua," said Ezechiel Marvizia, national coordinator of the Association for the Protection of Children Separated from their Families in Cameroon (APEEFC). Marvizia estimates there are about 150 underage sex workers in Maroua, and more in towns such as Mora, Mokolo and Kousseri, though there are no official figures. "It's difficult (to help) because Boko Haram keeps attacking and young people keep fleeing their villages," he said.

Djamila and a younger brother walked for days, carrying nothing, after they fled Boko Haram. "They burned, raped and killed everyone," said Djamila. "Three years later, I don't know what happened to my parents." She found an aunt in Maroua but was not offered shelter - the family already had too many mouths to feed.—Reuters

International

'Sea of water' from Kenya dam burst kills at least 47

Weeks of torrential rain in East Africa

SOLAI: A dam on a commercial flower farm in Kenya's Rift Valley burst after weeks of torrential rain, unleashing a "sea of water" that careened down a hillside and smashed into two villages, killing at least 47 people. The walls of the reservoir, situated on top of a hill in Nakuru county, 190 km northwest of Nairobi, gave way late on Wednesday as nearby residents were sitting down to evening meals.

Kenya is one of the largest suppliers of cut flowers to Europe, and roses from the 3,500-acre Solai farm are exported to the Netherlands and Germany, according to Op-

timal Connection, its Netherlands-based handling agent. The floodwaters carved out a dark brown chasm in the hillside and swept away everything in their path - powerlines, homes and buildings, including a primary school. The bodies of two women were found several kilometers away as excavators and rescue workers armed with shovels picked through rubble and mud searching for survivors and victims. Local police chief Japheth Kioko said the death toll could well climb. "So far it is 47 dead. We are still on the ground," he told Reuters.



Dam walls give way, villages swept away

After a severe drought last year, East Africa has been hit by two months of heavy rain, affecting nearly a million people in Kenya, Somalia, Ethiopia and Uganda. Bridges have been swept away and roads turned into rivers of mud. In Solai, Veronica Wanjiku Ngigi, 67, said she was at home brewing tea with her son at around 8 pm when his wife rushed in to say the dam had burst and they needed to get to higher ground immediately. "It was a sea of water. My neighbor was killed when the water smashed through the wall of his house. He was blind so he could not run. They found his body in the morning," she said. "My other neighbors also died. All our houses have been ruined."

Boulders, roots

Nakuru lies in the heart of Kenya's fertile Rift Valley, home to thousands of commercial farms that grow everything from French beans to macadamia nuts to cut flowers, nearly all of which are exported to Europe. The region is dotted with irrigation reservoirs built in the last two decades to meet the demands of the rapidly expanding agricultural sector, the



SOLAI, Kenya: People gather around victim's bodies at a residential area after Patel dam burst its bank at Solai, about 40 kilometers north of Nakuru, Kenya yesterday. — AFP

biggest foreign exchange earner for East Africa's largest economy and a major source of jobs. Vinoj Kumar, general manager of the Solai farm, blamed the disaster on massive rainfall in a forest above the dam. "In the past

two days the intensity of the rain was high and the water started coming down carrying boulders and roots which damaged the wall," he told Reuters. "The dam wall cracked and the water escaped." — Reuters

Tunisia Islamists top municipal polls without majority

TUNIS: The Islamist movement Ennahdha has beaten rivals in Tunisia's first free municipal elections but failed to win outright majorities in a poll marked by voter frustration and a low turnout. The election on Sunday was touted as another milestone on the road to democracy in the North African country, which has been praised for its transition from decades of dictatorship. But Tunisia has struggled with persistent political, security and economic problems as well as corruption since its 2011 revolution that sparked the Arab Spring uprisings.

Ennahdha came first in several of the country's main cities including Tunis, but fell short of winning outright majorities. Nationwide, independent lists won 2,367 seats, just shy of a third of the total. Ennahdha took 2,135 seats and the Nidaa Tounes party of President Beji Caid Essebsi clinched 1,595. That put Ennahdha ahead in 155 of the country's 350 municipalities, according to esti-

mates by multiple NGOs. "These results show a real emergence of independent lists as a new actor that will inevitably reshuffle the cards" politically, said analyst Selim Kharrat.

But he added that an alliance between Ennahdha and Nidaa Tounes - partners in a coalition government nationally since 2014 - could mean independents will remain in opposition. The poll was marked by low turnout, with 64 percent of voters abstaining, the electoral commission said Wednesday. Tunisia's 7,212 municipal councilors now have until July to elect their mayors. The two top parties are expected to hold talks aimed at upholding their coalition. The outcome "will depend on Ennahdha's ability to negotiate and rally coalitions at the local level", Kharrat said. The Islamists won 21 out of 60 seats in the capital, while Nidaa Tounes took 17.

If Ennahdha's candidate Souad Aberahim wins the backing of a majority of municipal councilors, the 53-year-old pharmacist could become the capital's first ever female mayor, a post previously appointed by the president. But Nidaa Tounes official Wissam Saidi said its candidate Kamel Idir, also a pharmacist and former president of a leading football club, was better placed to form a coalition as the capital's mayor. The secular party, whose leaders are already at odds, has been divided over the alliance with the Islamists since it won legislative and presidential elections in 2014. — AFP

Kenya's 'rape taboo' spurs women to report attacks via SMS

NAIROBI: Hundreds of women and girls in Kenya are using SMS to report cases of rape through a toll-free messaging service set up to help survivors break the silence around sexual violence in the conservative nation, the initiative's founder said yesterday. Although there are several hotlines for victims of sex attacks, the SMS platform - operated by the Kenyan charity Wangu Kanja Foundation - is the first to connect survivors with community volunteers who provide them with direct support. "In Kenya, we are socialized to believe sex, sexuality and sexual violence is a private issue. People don't discuss it - it's a complete no-go zone," said Wangu Kanja, founder of the charity operating the SMS service, and also a rape survivor.

"Those who do speak out about being raped are not taken seriously and can face negative reactions from their family, community and police. Most survivors have no one to turn to for help such as getting medical care or even reporting the crime." Some 5,490 rapes were reported in Kenya in 2016, up 3 percent on the previous year, the latest police statistics show. But women's rights campaigners say the data is a gross underestimate as many victims do not report sexual offences, fear-

ing they will face shame and stigma in the largely patriarchal and conservative east African nation.

The platform has helped about 700 victims of sexual and domestic violence, largely in the country's sprawling city slums, since launching almost two years ago. "The service was designed for people living in informal settlements," Kanja said. "They don't know their rights as well as the rich and elite in Kenya, and don't how to access services or can't afford to pay for things like medical care." The 24-hour SMS service - launched in July 2016 in partnership with ActionAid Kenya - provides a mechanism for survivors to seek help by speaking to someone safely, confidentially and without fear of judgment, she added.

A 2014 study by the National Crime Research Centre found that only 15 percent of women and girls who had been sexually violated reported it to the police. Users text HELP to the SMS code 21094 and are immediately called back by an operator who will ask about their situation and connect them with local volunteers - often survivors of sexual violence themselves. The volunteers then accompany the women and girls to hospitals or clinics where they can get medical care and also take them to the police to report the assault.

Women's rights lawyers welcome such reporting mechanisms, but add that more needs to be done to ensure access to justice. "We conduct training sessions with the police on gender issues, but they often end up being transferred to other areas such as dealing with cattle rustling or terrorism-related crimes," said Teresa Omondi-Adeitan, executive director at the Federation of Women Lawyers in Kenya (FIDA), an advocacy group. — Reuter

International

Mahathir's shock election victory raises populist economics specter

Mahathir surprisingly beats Najib in Malaysian election

HONG KONG: Mahathir Mohamad's shock Malaysian election win has raised concerns his populist promises could undermine economic prospects at an increasingly challenging time for emerging markets, despite hopes elsewhere he may revive his bold approach to economic management. The Southeast Asian economy, while vulnerable in some areas, is widely seen as being in better shape than regional peers, the Philippines and Indonesia, which run current account deficits. Malaysia has also halved its budget deficit since the global financial crisis.

Its economy is one of the fastest in the world, growing at close to 6 percent and its stock market in dollar terms is the second best

performing in Asia. And a surge in crude prices to 3-1/2 year highs has helped the net energy exporter's income. But the country may be left without key sources of revenue if Mahathir keeps his pledge to remove the goods and services tax and toll fees, bring back fuel subsidies, raise minimum wages. Protectionist overtures on Chinese infrastructure projects have also raised concerns about foreign investment. Such a policy shift comes amid heightened fears about

capital outflows following a rise in US Treasury yields.

"Some campaign promises, such as abolishing GST and reintroducing fuel subsidies, may boost consumption but, without offsetting measures, would adversely affect the country's budget deficits and sovereign rating," said Eli Lee, head of investment strategy at Bank of Singapore. "At a time of growing pressure on emerging markets currencies and bonds, the situation in Malaysia bears careful watching for potential knock-on effects." Mahathir ruled Malaysia with an iron fist from 1981 to 2003. On Wednesday, his opposition coalition defeated his former mentee Prime Minister Najib Razak and

the UMNO bloc, which has governed Malaysia for six decades.

Ratings agency Moody's was prompt in warning Mahathir's promises were credit negative for its A3 ratings if implemented without any other adjustments. Local markets are closed for the week but a fall in the ringgit in offshore trading and a rise in the cost of insuring the country's debt showed investors are nervous about the country's first political change in six decades.

spinning reversals—not least of which was Mahathir's own conversion to grandfatherly opposition darling—and the future remains unclear. "Now the hard work begins," influential political website Malaysiakini.com said in an editorial. "No one should be under the illusion that a new government would be able to reverse the rot that had taken root for decades." "For a country that is so divided, it would take time to heal the wounds and for Malaysians to rebuild the trust for one another and for the many institutions that have failed them."

Racial tensions

Multicultural Malaysia has been increasingly riven by political and racial tension under now-ousted leader Najib Razak, exacerbated by a multi-billion-dollar corruption scandal. Najib is accused of presiding over the looting of sovereign wealth fund IMDB and has responded with strident denials—and increasing repression. Much depends on Mahathir, whose 1981-2003 tenure as UMNO leader and premier is often credited with creating a modern Malaysia, but also tarnished by the jailing of opponents and entrenchment of the political dominance of Muslim Malays, the country's majority group, over the sizable Chinese and Indian minorities.

Just a few years ago, then-retired Mahathir had chastised his former protege Najib for loosening the reins with political liberalisation moves, which Mahathir warned would lead to chaos. Those reforms were later nullified as Najib tightened the screws over IMDB. — AFP



**First time
opposition wins;
markets face
major uncertainty**



KUALA LUMPUR: Former Malaysian prime minister and opposition candidate Mahathir Mohamad (center) celebrates with other leaders of his coalition during a press conference following the 14th general elections in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. — AFP

"This upset ranks up there with Brexit and Trump's election," said Aninda Mitra, senior sovereign analyst at BNY Mellon Investment Management. "I think there will be short term volatility."

China connection

While Malaysia's 6 percent GST sparked large street protests when it was introduced in 2015, it helped mitigate a 30 percent drop in oil

revenues, pulling back the ringgit from 10-year lows. Foreign investment has since returned as well, although largely fuelled by China's soft power push into Southeast Asia. Projects such as the \$100 billion Forest City residential development near the Singapore border and the \$13 billion East Coast high-speed railway, part of Beijing's Belt and Road Initiative, were seen as boosting jobs, but prompted discontent about increasing Chinese influence. — Reuters

'Now the hard part': Malaysia awakens to new political dawn

KUALA LUMPUR: Hope for lasting change in Malaysia after the opposition's historic election win may hinge on whether triumphant 92-year-old autocrat-turned-progressive Mahathir Mohamad has truly changed his ways and possesses the vigor and clout to heal national divisions. The wily former authoritarian ruler, expected to become prime minister once again, proved the difference in finally enabling a rising opposition movement to break the United Malays National Organization's (UMNO) six-decade lock on power.

The Pakatan Harapan coalition's victory is Malaysia's first real government change since independence from Britain in 1957 and will fuel public aspirations for wholesale change including rights protections, press freedom, anti-corruption measures, changes to divisive race-based policies, and true democratic rule. "The People's Tsunami," the Malay-language Sinar Harian newspaper screamed in a front-page headline.

But Malaysian politics is known for head-

From Churchill to Mahathir: The political 2nd acts

KUALA LUMPUR: With his shock victory in Malaysia's election, Mahathir Mohamad has pulled off a political second act that few expected, joining the select ranks of politicians who have revived their careers. The 92-year-old former strongman ruled Malaysia with an iron fist for more than two decades before stepping down, but returned to political life to challenge his own former party, snatching a surprise win in Wednesday's poll. Here are some other political figures who have had second, and even third acts during their careers:

Winston Churchill

Winston Churchill is revered for leading Britain from the verge of defeat to victory in World War II, but his political career was far from smooth sailing. Churchill was forced to resign from government in 1915 after the dis-

astrous Gallipoli campaign, and his eventual return to the cabinet was contentious. Appointed prime minister in 1940, he won acclaim for his rousing leadership during the war, but suffered a shock defeat in the 1945 election and was forced into the opposition. In 1951, he won a second term as prime minister, but resigned several years later as his health deteriorated. The ups and downs of his career have been cited as inspiration by other politicians looking for their own turnarounds.

Shinzo Abe

Shinzo Abe became Japan's youngest-ever prime minister when he took office in 2006 at the age of 52. The son of a former foreign minister and grandson of a former prime minister, Abe seemed destined for political office. But he resigned after just a year, hit by scandals and political disappointment and debilitated by health issues. In 2012, he made a shock political comeback, returning to office on a pledge to revive Japan's economy with his signature "Abenomics" program. He has said he was encouraged to seek a path back to power by reading a biography of Churchill entitled: "Never Despair." — AFP

International

Trump-Kim summit set for June 12 in Singapore

Upbeat Trump welcomes US prisoners released by North Korea

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump yesterday announced his historic summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un will take place in Singapore on June 12. "We will both try to make it a very special moment for World Peace!" Trump said in a tweeted announcement. The location was revealed hours after three American prisoners were released by North Korea and arrived back in the United States. Trump welcomed three Americans who had been held prisoner in North Korea back home yesterday, thanking its leader Kim Jong Un for their release and sounding upbeat about a planned US-North Korea summit.

The former prisoners, freed after US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo traveled to Pyongyang for a second meeting with Kim in less than six weeks, landed at around 2:40 am at Joint Base Andrews near Washington. Trump and his wife, Melania, boarded the plane for about five minutes before the three men stepped out, shaking hands with the president and waving to media and military personnel. "Frankly, we didn't think it was going to happen and it did," Trump said after thanking Kim for releasing the men. "We're starting off on a new footing. This is a wonderful thing that he released the folks early."

Trump said he believed Kim wanted to bring North Korea "into the real world" and had high hopes for their planned meeting, which would be

the first between a serving US president and a North Korean leader. "I think we have a very good chance of doing something very meaningful," Trump said. "My proudest achievement will be - this is part of it - when we denuclearize that entire peninsula." Trump and Kim engaged in a bellicose exchange of rhetoric last year over North Korea's development of nuclear missiles capable of reaching the United States. Tensions began to ease, coinciding with the North's participation in the Winter Olympics in South Korea in February.

There has been no sign that Pompeo's visit has cleared up the central question of whether North Korea will be willing to bargain away weapons its ruling family has long seen as crucial to its survival. However, the release of the three men marked a dramatic victory for Trump's embattled White House at a time when his foreign policy is under withering criticism after Tuesday's US withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal. His administration has also been under fire for ethics violations and a chaotic turnover of personnel, as well as a federal investigation of whether the Trump campaign colluded with Russia to sway the 2016 presidential election.

Made-for-TV moment

The arrival of the released prisoners in the



MARYLAND: US President Donald Trump (left) and wife Melania Trump (2nd left) walk with US detainees Tony Kim (2nd right), Kim Hak-song (right) and Kim Dong-chul upon their return after they were released by North Korea, at Joint Base Andrews in Maryland yesterday.—AFP

dead of night created a made-for-TV moment for Trump, a former reality television host. "I think you probably broke the all-time-in-history television rating for three o'clock in the morning," Trump joked to cameras. Details of the planned Trump-Kim summit have yet to be announced, but a US official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Singapore had emerged as the likeliest location.

Trump said it would be held in a few weeks and details would be announced within three days. The three former prisoners were Korean-

American missionary Kim Dong-chul, detained in 2015 and sentenced in 2016 to 10 years' hard labor; Kim Sang-duk, also known as Tony Kim, who taught for a month at the foreign-funded Pyongyang University of Science and Technology (PUST) before he was arrested in 2017; and Kim Hak-song, who also taught at PUST and was detained last year.

They appeared to be in good health but were taken to Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in nearby Maryland for further medical evaluation. —Agencies

Alma mater: The North Korea university where 3 US detainees taught

SEOUL: The university where two of the latest three American detainees released by North Korea taught is unique: an institution founded and funded by foreign Christians in an isolated country that decries religion. The Pyongyang University of Science and Technology (PUST) was set up by James Kim, a wealthy evangelical Korean-American the North once detained on suspicion of being a US spy. Only North Korean citizens can enroll, and it is known to educate many children of the country's elite. Opened in 2010, it now has 560 students and 100 "international volunteers", according to its website, many of them coming to it through church organizations.

PUST says its mission is "to pursue excellence in education, with an international outlook, so that its students are diligent in studies, innovative in research and upright in character, bringing illumination to the Korean people and the world". But sources stress that it carries out no Christian proselytizing, which is unwelcome by Pyongyang. Although religious freedom is enshrined in the North Korean constitution, it does not exist in practice and religious activity is severely restricted to officially-recognized groups linked to the

government. Agricultural expert Kim Hak-song and former accounting professor Tony Kim were both lecturers at the institution but were arrested by North Korean authorities as they were leaving the country. The university previously said their detentions were "not connected in any way with the work of PUST", and it is understood the duo may have come to the attention of the Pyongyang authorities through previous Christian activities elsewhere. The two, along with fellow detainee Kim Dong-chul, were granted "amnesty" by Pyongyang following a meeting between Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, and landed back in the United States on yesterday, to be welcomed by President Donald Trump.

'Hopes and prayers'

"Our hopes and prayers have been fulfilled by their release," PUST said in a statement. The university expressed "sincere hope" that the detainees would be able to "now enjoy some peace and rest with their families and friends, and begin to rebuild normal life". The school itself has faced indirect repercussions from their detentions. Tony Kim was arrested in April last year, Kim Hak-song the following month. Weeks later American student Otto Warmbier, who had been sentenced to 15 years in prison for trying to steal a propaganda poster, was released in a mysterious coma and died shortly afterwards. That prompted Washington to slap a travel ban on US citizens. About half of PUST's 80-odd foreign faculty were Americans who have been unable to return for this academic year as a result, and it has filled the gaps with Chinese replacements. —AFP

Life among the ruins: Chinese village 10 years after earthquake

RADISH VILLAGE: For some residents of southwestern China's Radish Village, very little has changed in the decade since a devastating earthquake nearly leveled their ancient homes. The tiny hamlet is one of several in Sichuan province that decided to preserve the destruction as a memorial to the disaster that left 87,000 people dead or missing when it struck on May 12, 2008.

But there is one major difference: among the debris in Radish Village, life goes on. Vegetable gardens quilt the spaces where homes once stood. Survivors grow greens and other crops among the rubble to supplement their meagre income. Collapsed homes double as hog pens. Bees buzz through empty window frames and into rooms open to the sky, where elderly survivors tend to their hives. The honey is one of several products locals hawk to tourists wandering the village's quiet footpaths. As an early morning mist breaks, women in the traditional blue robes of the local Qiang minority group set up tables full of trinkets and medicinal herbs gleaned from the mountainside.

Padlocks still protect ancient wooden doors, twisted in their frames by the earthquake's tremendous power. While most of the houses were purchased by the government, some elderly residents continue living in them. The structures, made from wood and mud, survived one 1,000-year earthquake, they reason. Surely they can withstand another. Their new homes, however, they are not so sure about. A number of them have already begun falling apart, with some villagers blaming local government corruption for the problems. Billions of dollars poured into the region to rebuild homes and infrastructure devastated by the quake. But in Radish Village at least, recovery funds were never put to their intended use, locals said. Instead, they enriched cadres and their relatives. "Officials took all the money for fixing our homes and ran off with it," said one villager. Their "relatives can get money. The regular people who don't have officials for relatives can't." Wang Chengguo, a local resident, offers journalists an alternative tour of the village. Instead of leading them through the ruins of the old town, he takes them to see the new town, built right next door. —AFP

Lifestyle

Friday Times

FRIDAY, MAY 11, 2018

www.kuwaittimes.net

US-Japanese model Kiko Mizuhara poses as she arrives for the screening of the film 'Yomeddine' at the 71st edition of the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southern France.— AFP

Detained Russian director gets standing ovation at Cannes

See Page 20

Detained Russian director gets standing ovation at Cannes

A new film by the enfant terrible of Russian theatre—who is under house arrest in Moscow—got a standing ovation Wednesday before it was even shown at the Cannes film festival. The cast of Kirill Serebrennikov's "Leto", a biopic of the Soviet-Korean rock legend Viktor Tsoi, were cheered as the movie premiered at the world's top film festival. They had earlier held up a white placard with the director's name on it after climbing the steps of the red carpet to the cinema. A seat was left symbolically empty inside for Serebrennikov, who has been under house arrest on embezzlement charges since last August.

He has dismissed the charges as "absurd" and his supporters see them as political. Serebrennikov's detention has sent shockwaves through the Russian arts world. The 48-year-old has revolutionized Moscow's theatre scene with radical stagings of new plays and by reinventing classics. He has also won prizes at the Cannes and Rome film festivals, while his 2012 film "Betrayal" was nominated for the prestigious Golden Lion at Venice. "Leto", which means summer, is in the running for Cannes' top prize, the Palme d'Or.

It tells the story of Tsoi, whose songs are seen in



(From left) French producer Charles-Evrard Tcherkhoff, Russian actor Roma Zver, Russian actress Irina Starshenbaum, German actor Teo Yoo, Russian director of photography Vladislav Opeliants and Russian producer Ilya Stewart pose with a cardboard bearing the name of Russian director Kirill Serebrennikov, as they arrive for the screening of their film "Leto (Summer)" at the 71st edition of the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southern France. — AFP

Russia as anthems of the late 1980s Perestroika era. Both the festival and the French government pleaded with Moscow to allow Serebrennikov to travel to Cannes for the screening. Cannes director Thierry Fremaux told reporters before the premiere that Russian President Vladimir Putin had told them that "Serebrennikov has problems with the judicial system of our country. I would have loved to help but the courts are independent." Russian conservatives were outraged when Serebrennikov was allowed to direct a ballet about legendary gay ballet dancer Rudolph Nureyev at the Bolshoi.

Nikita Mikhalkov, a powerful Oscar-winning film director with close Kremlin links, said Serebrennikov should not have been allowed "to hang Nureyev's cock" in the country's most important theatre. This was a reference to the production's use of a famous full-frontal nude photograph of the dancer by Richard Avedon. Serebrennikov is one of two directors competing for the Palme d'Or who has been banned from travelling to the festival. Dissident Iranian director Jafar Panahi is also barred from leaving his homeland for supporting pro-democracy activists after the "stolen election" of 2009. — AFP

The Dude abides: 'The Big Lebowski' at 20

Twenty years ago, a bathrobe-wearing stoner and his two buddies entrenched themselves in the public consciousness with a strange little movie about bowling, White Russians and a ruined rug. Ethan and Joel Coen's idiosyncratic, hopelessly complex "The Big Lebowski" distilled the unfussy, slacker spirit of 1990s Los Angeles into a Raymond Chandleresque crime caper. It received no Oscar recognition and pretty lukewarm reviews for a byzantine plot which the Coens themselves admitted never really mattered—but it has proven its staying power.



Today it is nothing less than a cultural phenomenon, with its own religion, Dudeism, boasting 450,000 "ordained priests." Bathrobe-clad fans gather at the annual Lebowski Fest, which comes to Los Angeles in two weeks, to celebrate Jeffrey "The Dude" Lebowski, played by Jeff Bridges when he could still get away with board shorts. "I'm so proud of being part of this movie. It's just a good movie, a really good movie," the 68-year-old Oscar winner said at a recent screening in Hollywood, hosted by Turner Classic Movies. The Dude, a drama-averse, unemployed slacker with a penchant for vodka with Kahlua and cream, provides the drama as he embarks on a quest to replace his beloved rug, destroyed in a twisted case of mistaken identity. Along

for the ride are John Goodman's loose-cannon Vietnam vet Walter Sobchak and Steve Buscemi's virtually mute sidekick Donny.

'Off-kilter thriller'

Despite eventually making Rolling Stone's list of "10 Best Stoner Movies of All Time," it was neither a critical nor commercial hit on its release. David Denby, of New York magazine, called it an "off-kilter thriller with a sad-sack hero" while for Kenneth Turan of the Los Angeles Times, the story was "disjointed, incoherent and even irritating." The most scathing critics have largely recanted in the intervening years, recognizing that they were too quick to dismiss a film with lines so quotable that many entered the lexicon. "The Dude abides," said by an insouciant Bridges as his way of rolling with the punches, is perhaps the most frequently-quoted, although the character's introductory spiel is just as delicious. "I'm the Dude, so that's what you call me," he insists. "That or, uh, His Dudeness, or uh, Duder, or El Duderino, if you're not into the whole brevity thing." Bridges said The Dude referring to his almost identically-named foe Jeff "The Big" Lebowski as "human paraquat" (toxic herbicide) was the only improvised line in the film, while every "man" and "dude" his hippy character utters was meticulously planned.

'Good writing'

"That's one of the great things about the Coen brothers—it seems like it's happening in the moment but that's good writing, really," Bridges said. "As actors, we all realized that and said, 'We've got to get these lyrics down,' like it was a song we were singing." "Lebowski" was released in March 1998, although the 20th anniversary celebrations are taking place throughout the year, including screenings in 600 US theaters in August. Bridges, a youthful 48 when it came out, has been asked in countless interviews—including by AFP—if he would be interested in doing a sequel. — AFP

'Not dead yet!' Gilliam beats ban on his Cannes film

A legal bid to stop the world premiere of Terry Gilliam's disaster-plagued film "The Man Who Killed Don Quixote" at Cannes has failed—but the war over its rights is far from over. The film's former producer Paulo Branco had attempted to stop the movie closing the world's top film festival next weekend. But Cannes' lawyers and Gilliam's producers told AFP that "we have won", though Branco said yesterday that judges in Paris had declared the screening technically illegal and ordered that his rights to the film be shown in the credits.

The Monty Python veteran released a picture of himself in a "Quixote Vive" T-shirt in his garden to celebrate the victory, declaring: "Not dead yet! We are coming to Cannes." Gilliam has struggled for nearly two decades to get the film, one of the most ill-fated in movie history, to the screen. The legendary polymath and maker of such screen classics as "Time Bandits" and "Brazil" reportedly suffered a minor stroke at his London home at the weekend but was later released from hospital. "After days of rest and prayers to the gods I am restored and well again. So is 'The Man Who Killed Don Quixote'!" he tweeted Wednesday after the verdict. "We are legally victorious! We will go to the ball, dressed as the closing film at Festival de Cannes! May 19. Thanks for all your support."

Cannes director Thierry Fremaux—who infuriated Branco last week by weighing in to support Gilliam—confirmed the "triumph" before a gala screening at the festival to cheers from the audience, which included Hollywood stars Cate



In this file photo American-born British film director Terry Gilliam poses during a photo session at the Opera Bastille in Paris. — AFP

Blanchett and Kristen Stewart. He said that the 77-year-old Gilliam would be well enough to travel to Cannes for the premiere. "Terry Gilliam will be there. Let's turn this victory into a great party," the festival later tweeted.

Gilliam's various attempts to shoot the surreal story based on Cervantes' "unfilmable" novel have been beset by a series of calamities, some of them recounted in the acclaimed 2002 documentary, "Lost in La Mancha". The set was washed away during an aborted attempt to make it in 2000 with Johnny Depp, when lead actor Jean Rochefort also had to be airlifted to hospital after falling ill. — AFP

Pop star Brown named in sex assault lawsuit

A Los Angeles woman filed a lawsuit on Wednesday against Chris Brown and a fellow rapper, alleging she was repeatedly raped and sexually assaulted at Brown's home during a drug- and alcohol-fueled party last year. The woman, identified only as Jane Doe, said she was lured to the singer's house following a concert at a nightclub on February 23, 2017 and was raped several times by Lowell Grissom, who performs under the name Young Lo. She also alleges that another unidentified woman at the party assaulted her.

"This is one of the most horrific cases involving alleged sexual assault that I have ever seen," Gloria Allred, one of three lawyers representing the woman, said in a statement. "Our client, Jane Doe, has been severely traumatized by what she was forced to suffer." According to the lawsuit, following a concert at 1 Oak club in West Hollywood, the plaintiff and her roommate went to an after party where they met Grissom and Brown and had their phones confiscated. The suit says that the plaintiff

later ended up at Brown's home as she was told by Grissom she could retrieve her cell phone at that location, where the party was continuing. "Our client alleges ... she was forced to go to Brown's home because she perceived that she would only be able to retrieve her phone there," Allred said. The lawsuit said that the 29-year-old rapper provided alcohol and drugs, including cocaine, ecstasy and marijuana, at his home. He also gave each female guest a clear capsule filled with white powder and instructed them to take it to have a "good time," the suit alleges, adding that the plaintiff refused to take the drug.

'Wants justice for herself'

The complaint says that at one point, the plaintiff was led to a bedroom where several women were having sex with Grissom and Brown. "Plaintiff refused to undress and made it clear that she did not want to engage in any sexual activity with anyone," according to the document. It said that the plaintiff was subsequently repeatedly raped by Grissom and assaulted



This file photo shows singer Chris Brown performing during a free concert in Champ de Mars, downtown Port-au-Prince, Haiti. — AFP

by Doe X. She was later allowed to leave the room by Doe X, who instructed her to take a shower.

It said the victim eventually was allowed to call a ride-sharing service and went to a rape treatment center and to the police where she reported the assaults. "She filed this lawsuit because she wants justice for herself, but she also wants to warn other young women about the potential danger to themselves if they have their phone taken away and if they go to Chris Brown's house," Allred said.

Brown and Grissom's publicists could not be immediately reached for comment. Contacted by AFP, Los Angeles police said there was "no open investigation at this time regarding Chris Brown." The pop star over the years has had several brushes with the law. He was convicted in 2009 of beating fellow singer Rihanna, his then girlfriend, who was forced to miss the Grammy Awards that year. In 2016, he was arrested and charged with assault with a deadly weapon after a bizarre hours-long standoff with police in Los Angeles. — AFP

Eurovision up for grabs as Portugal hosts song contest for first time

Portugal plays host for the first time Saturday to the Eurovision Song Contest—the annual music spectacle known for its mix of outrageous costumes, glitz and politics. Cyprus, Israel, France and Norway are among those predicted to do well but unlike last year—when Salvador Sobral took the Eurovision crown with a jazzy-style ballad—there is no out and out frontrunner. The event in Lisbon comes as cash-strapped public broadcaster RTP said it was planning a more "theatrical" contest that makes less use of video projections and new technologies, following in the footsteps of Sobral's performance at the festival in Kiev last year.

Sobral, 28, who said after his win that "music is not fireworks, music is feeling", turned down the lights and simply swayed to the music as he performed "Amar pelos dois" ("Love for Two"), a song penned by his sister. "We want our project to be as simple and elegant as Salvador Sobral's performance in Kiev," said Eurovision executive producer Joao Nuno Nogueira last month as he discussed RTP's plans for the contest, often billed as the biggest non-sporting television event in the world. He would not say exactly how much Portugal had spent on staging Eurovision, only that it would be less than 25 million euros (\$30 million dollars) which would make it the lowest budget contest in a decade.

'Different feel'

The president of Britain's main association of Eurovision fans, Alasdair Rendall, welcomed the changes, predicting it would give a "different feel" to the contest, started in the 1950s with the aim of uniting Europe after World War II. "I think it will make it more of a live music show, it was in danger of becoming too much of a pure TV show," he told AFP. "Some of the

graphics and LED screens have been taking away from the performance element of it," added Rendall, who has attended 10 other Eurovision finals.

Sobral's victory was the first time Portugal had won Eurovision since it entered the contest in 1964 — and the first time a song sung entirely in a language other than English had won since 2007. His success appears to have inspired more countries to field candidates performing in their mother tongue. Of the 43 acts taking part this year, 13 are sung entirely in a language other than English, up four from last year.

Repeat winner?

Among those tipped to win the outlandish annual extravaganza is Norway's Alexander Rybak, who won Eurovision in 2009. If he does, it would be only the second time in Eurovision history that the same singer has won twice, after Ireland's Johnny Logan in the 1980s. After getting some chiding for picking three men to host last year's competition, contest organizers this year enlisted four Portuguese women to host the final, including Daniela Ruah, who stars in the hit U.S. TV crime drama "NCIS: Los Angeles". Sobral will perform on Saturday for the first time since he underwent a heart transplant in December.

Lisbon's riverside Praca do Comercio has been converted into a buzzing "Eurovision Village", complete with bars and food trucks, which will broadcast the contest being held at the Altice Arena, located on the outskirts of the city. For those without tickets, the competition will be broadcast on a giant outdoor screen. Viewers and professional juries in all 43 participating countries will pick the winner, with the televoting and juries each representing 50 percent of the outcome. — AFP



Estonia's singer Elina Nechayeva performs the song 'La Forza' during the first semifinal of the 63rd edition of the Eurovision Song Contest 2018 at the Altice Arena in Lisbon. — AFP

Eurovision 2018: What you need to know before watching

From geopolitical drama to its ardent gay fan base—and questions like why can Australia enter? Here are five facts about the Eurovision Song Contest which this year is being held in Portugal for the first time.

Guinness record

The contest was started in 1956 with the aim of uniting Europe after World War II under the original name of the "Eurovision Grand Prix". It has been held every year since then, making it the longest-running international TV music competition, according to Guinness World Records. There are annual music competitions that pre-date the event, which adopted the title of the Eurovision Song Contest in 1968, but none of them are broadcast on television. Often billed as the biggest non-sporting TV event in the world, organizers predict this week's two semi-finals and the finale in Lisbon on Saturday will have

a combined global audience of around 200 million viewers.

'Big Five'... and Australia

The five biggest contributors to the European Broadcasting Union (EBU), which operates Eurovision, automatically qualify for the finale along with the host nation of the event, which changes every year. The so-called "Big Five" are Britain, Germany, France, Italy and Spain. While Australia is on the other side of the world, the contest has since the 1980s been hugely popular in the country, especially among its large population of descendants from European countries, and in 2015 the EBU agreed to let it take part in the competition. Australia's participation was initially set to be a one-off event but it has taken part in every subsequent edition, finishing second in 2016 when Korean-born Australian singer Dami Im represented the country. — AFP

ARAB FASHION WEEK

ESCHEWS THE ABAYA WITH RESORT-COUTURE



Models walk on the catwalk displaying designs by Amato Couture during Arab Fashion Week in the Gulf emirate of Dubai. — AFP photos



As the abaya witnesses a global resurgence, the sixth edition of Arab Fashion Week opened Wednesday with fallen angels, Rococo corsets, cupcake headbands and nary a kaf-tan in sight. Billed as an official fashion week alongside the famed Paris, Milan and London shows, the Arab edition of fashion week is the sole event dedicated entirely to ready-couture and pre-collections. Hosted on the Queen Elizabeth II cruise ship, the show, which prides itself on its Arab name, opened with angel-inspired and baroque kitsch collections by designers from Russia, Portugal, the UAE, the Philippines, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and more.

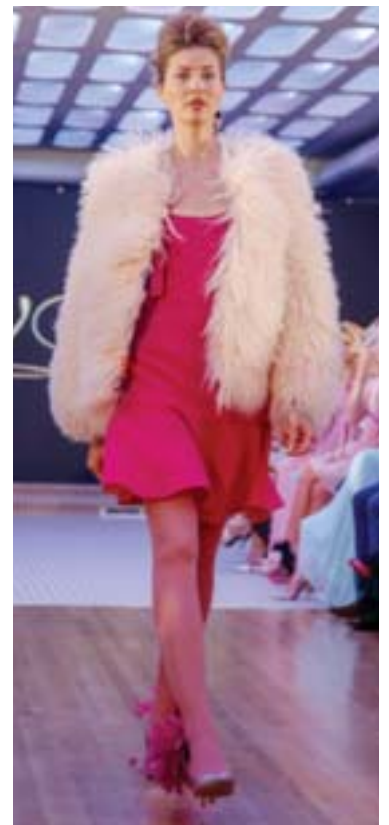
Designer Furne One of Amato Couture, loved in Dubai for his ethereal designs, opened the four-day affair with his "White Noise" resort collection, inspired by angels both cherubin and fallen. With winged white liner, pearl teardrops beneath their eyes and nude fishnet stockings, his models walked the runway in hot-pants, tea-length dresses, mermaid gowns and sheer flowing capes, draped head-to-toe in lace, voile and crystals. "The inspiration about this collection is angels. White angels, fallen angels all kinds of angels, who are here on earth-because we don't know," said One, whose popular collections are frequently inspired by mythical creatures.

"Angels are with us. They're with everybody." Russia's Tatiana V. Lyalina paid tribute to Marie Antoinette with a Rococo-inspired collection featuring pink heart-print pantsuits underneath bright blue fur stoles, teal velvet gowns with brooches, glitter knee boots, corsets and cupcake headbands. The Arab Fashion Council has openly said it aims to spread ready-couture across the region—a form of fashion that is financially more accessible than haute couture, but pricier and slightly more exclusive than ready-to-wear.

The spread of ready-couture has not sat particularly well with traditional gatekeepers in the fashion world, but the growing influence of social media has seen its popularity continue to skyrocket. The Arab Fashion Council is banking on that popularity to make its mark on the global scene. "With the change of the market and the economy and the business of fashion, we have noticed that ... even in Paris, in the last fashion week, there were many designers trying to shift from haute couture to ready-couture," said Jacob Abrian, head of the Arab Fashion Council.

"It is because of the economy, because of the financial status, because of social media, because of your social life. You tend to go to more events than before and you tend to spend less... but you will keep a certain level of luxury," Abrian told AFP. "I believe this is a very important tool in our hands, that we can push Arab Fashion Week to become one of the first, most important fashion weeks in the next 10 years."

For five seasons exclusive to Dubai, Arab Fashion Week now has two editions: Dubai Arab Fashion Week, and Riyadh Arab Fashion Week, less than one month apart. Saudi Arabia last month hosted its own version of the event, drawing press from around the world to a lineup that included trunk shows by Jean Paul Gaultier and Roberto Cavalli but did not include men or cameras. — AFP





Models walk on the catwalk displaying creations by Russian designer Tatiana V. Lyalina.

Lagerfeld may drop German citizenship over migrant welcome

Fashion designer Karl Lagerfeld, who has made no secret of his disdain for Chancellor Angela Merkel's decision to allow some one million migrants into Germany, has said he might have to renounce his German citizenship over the issue. "Did she really need to say it was necessary to welcome one million migrants at a time when France, which casts itself as the land of human rights, pledged to take in 30,000?" Lagerfeld said in an interview with French weekly *Le Point* published yesterday.

Again dismissing Merkel as a "pastor's daughter who can't accept the evil that Germany carried out after 1933," the designer accused her of fostering the emergence of the far-right Alternative for Germany party. "The AfD didn't exist, yet with one sentence she made it exist by alienating

two million voters and sending 100 of these neo-Nazis into parliament," he said, referring to the 92 AfD lawmakers who obtained seats in the Bundestag in last September's election. "If this keeps up, I'll abandon German citizenship," Lagerfeld said, without indicating what he might trade it for, though he has gushed previously that "a new day is dawning in France" with the arrival of President Emmanuel Macron. "I like Macron personally, and (his wife) Brigitte, but that doesn't mean I want to become French," he told *Le Point*.

"I don't like nations, I'm cosmopolitan. And I don't feel German either—I'm Hanseatic," he said, referring to the Hanseatic League of merchant guilds across northern Germany that emerged in the 13th century. His stance would appear to be a stark reversal from one espoused just a few

months ago, when he told *Madame Figaro* magazine that he was "a Kraut at heart." "It's in my genes and I'm fine with that. And it's not because Mrs Merkel does stupid things that I'm going to renounce being German," he said. Lagerfeld had already stirred up outrage last November by evoking the Holocaust while assailing Merkel for opening Germany's borders to migrants. "One cannot—even if there are decades between them—kill millions of Jews so you can bring millions of their worst enemies in their place," he told a French television show. — AFP

File photo shows German fashion designer Karl Lagerfeld acknowledges the audience at the end of Fendi 2017-2018 fall/winter Haute Couture collection in Paris. — AFP





People look at the art of the conceptual artist, graffiti artist, hip-hop pioneer, Rammellzee (RAMMSLLZSS), during a private preview at Red Bull Arts New York, in New York. — AFP photos

FROM GRAFFITI TO GOTHIC MYTHOLOGY, RAMMELLZEE IS REMEMBERED IN NEW YORK



Nearly a decade after his death, a New York retrospective of the rapper, composer, graffiti artist, painter, sculptor and cosmic theorist Rammellzee hopes to reveal to the world his multifaceted, iconoclastic work. While street art has worked its way into everyone's living room, and a painting by Jean-Michel Basquiat can fetch more than \$100 million, Rammellzee, although a key figure of 1980s New York, remains—as Sotheby's put it—"perhaps the greatest street artist you've never heard of."

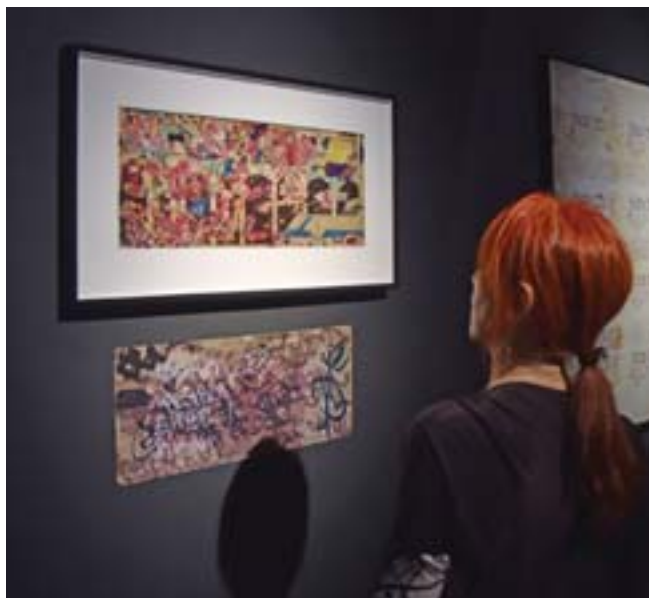
Like many aspiring artists of his time, a teenage Rammellzee in 1970s Queens, New York, started out spraying on subway trains. But as time passed, his letters transformed into abstract figures—compositions that by the start of the 1980s could be found in galleries, even Rotterdam's prestigious Boijmans Van Beuningen museum in 1983. He also rapped—and Basquiat produced his single "Beat Bop," which would go on to be sampled by the Beastie Boys and Cypress Hill. Next, he made a stealthy cameo in Jim Jarmusch's cult film "Stranger Than Paradise."

But instead of being propelled to the same heights as Basquiat, Rammellzee changed course—inventing the concept of gothic futurism, creating his own mythology based on a manifesto. In his Tribeca studio, he materialized his creation in the form of the "Letter Racers"—huge letters on skateboards that symbolize the possibility of free language as an emancipation tool. He also made the "Garbage Gods," figurines made of recyclables—half the "Recyclers," and half the "Trashers."

From the 1990s, Rammellzee would appear in public disguised in futuristic warrior get-up. Until his death from heart disease at 49, he remained in this imaginary world, current trends far from his mind. "Our biggest challenge was how to find a way to take such a multi-faceted artist, character, myth and try to create a nar-



ative arch that could convey his intentions," explained Max Wolf of Red Bull Arts New York, which is hosting the retrospective until August 26. The pieces come from private collections and Rammellzee's family. "The US doesn't really know a lot of that work, that was created and put into collections in Europe and never seen again," Wolf added. "So it was important that we try to forage all that and present it here." "He had a purpose. He had a certain body of work that he had to complete, to complete this capsule of gothic futurism. He finished it and he passed away." — AFP



FOR SPRING, WINDOW TREATMENTS WITH FLAIR

Even the simplest window treatments have an important role to play in the look of a room. “They really soften and furnish a space much more than most people imagine,” says interior designer Betsy Burnham of Los Angeles. Yet she often has to reassure people that drapes, curtains or other window treatments don’t have to be fussy.

“It can be tailored, simple panels done in great fabrics and the simplest of hardware,” she says.

With spring finally arriving, we’ve asked Burnham and two other interior designers - Florida-based Maggie Cruz and New York-based Deborah Martin - for advice on what’s trending in window design. How can homeowners preserve their privacy while letting in the sunlight and enjoying their view all spring and summer?

Simple can be powerful

“We’re seeing a trend more toward minimalizing what’s happening around the window,” says Cruz. Her clients are increasingly seeking functional items like simple shades, perhaps softened with a lightweight drapery. “The hardware,” she says, “is just enough to maybe play with the color of the metal.”

Burnham loves that kind of simplicity: “I like to use the thinnest rod I can that will support the weight of the curtain,” she says. Ideally, that’s just 1-inch thick. “For support brackets, I like them always to be horizontal so you can’t see them. They’re behind the rod. It’s really minimal, and yet it’s drapery.”

Martin says her clients are also embracing soft organic fabrics and natural fibers like woven woods and raffia shades, perhaps looking for “more of a high-touch, tactile element for our homes as we try to disengage from high tech.”

Minimalism still has fans

Martin is also working with clients who are bringing more color and glamour into their furnishings and window design: “Color, color, color,” she says, “is the No. 1 trend.” Taking their cue from the fashion industry, many of her clients in New York are embracing bold, graphic patterns, and in some cases “shimmer, glittery and even sequined fabrics.” She is also seeing soft velvets, popular for several years as sofa upholstery, now being



A room designed by Burnham.

used for stationary drapery panels that serve as columns of color to frame a window.

Burnham is also seeing some of this embrace of bold patterns, though the look is less overtly glamorous. “I think that we’re done with the urban farmhouse,” she says. “Minimalism is coming back to a certain degree. In L.A., it’s not about glitz and glam, but it’s about pattern. And it can be a pattern that’s reminiscent of your grandmother’s cottage in the country or it can be a pattern that’s more geometric and tailored.”

Technology has its place

All three designers see the growing popularity of remote-controlled motorized shades, which have become less expensive and less complicated to install. Cruz says her clients love them “just for the ease and functionality.” Martin sees the same trend in Manhattan: “If you live in a high-rise in the city,” she says, “and you have walls of windows, who is going to take the time to raise and lower all those shades” every morning and evening?

New twists on classics

Cruz has been using a lot of wooden plantation shutters for clients, but they are “updated and modern,” she says. Because these shutters have wide louvers, they let in lots of light and don’t obscure the view when open. Many are designed with a hidden tilt bar, she says, so the horizontal line of the shutters isn’t cut so obviously by a vertical bar of wood. Wooden shutters, Cruz says, “add to the millwork of the house.” Martin, who uses this type of wooden shutter in some rooms in her own home, agrees: “They’re architectural and functional,” she says, “and they just add so much to a room, almost like wood moldings.”

Another new twist on traditional style: In her dining room, Burnham has leopard-print draperies in a casual cotton fabric. “They’re not heavy or fancy,” she says, “and they’re funky in a way that it’s not taking itself too seriously.” Whether you’re most comfortable with minimalist Roman shades or leopard-print draperies, Burnham does suggest taking time in choosing new window designs for your home.

“This is a much more complicated category of design” than selecting a side table or rug, she says. “There are a lot of things to consider, and people do make mistakes” if they design their windows without a lot of thought. “They hang their rods too low or too high, so that you walk into the room and you know something is a just little bit off.” — AP



A room designed by Burnham.

A bedroom designed by Burnham. — AP photos





Photo shows the Halia indoor/outdoor rug which comes in festive hues in a geometric pattern that's modern and fresh for the outdoor space. — AP photos

Outdoor entertaining with indoor style



Photo provided by Frontgate shows a Brazilian blue quartz slab table on polished stainless steel legs, giving the Solstice dining table contemporary elegance.



Photo provided by Anthropologie shows one of British designer Tracey Boyd's ceramic stools, right of chair.

Hosting an outdoor party on the balcony or in the backyard has often involved a run to the big-box store for utilitarian paper goods and plastic plates, and setting the table with a mishmash of random bowls and tea lights. But this summer there's a range of decor and serveware with the more sophisticated look and feel of indoor-quality goods - part of a growing trend toward blurring indoor/outdoor decor lines. "Outdoor spaces should really be thought of as an extension of your living room, and that definitely applies to entertaining," says Kara Smith of SFA Design, a bicoastal luxury design firm. "The furnishings should be as approachable as the interior, so that guests feel comfortable."

A look at some of what designers and retailers are offering:

Article.com has a teak and powder-coated-steel dining table with midcentury modern/industrial style that could live indoors as well as out. The Bali pendant light looks like rattan, but is really hardy, woven synthetic fiber; a weatherproof rubber insulates the power cord.

Anthropologie's new outdoor collection includes a woven, natural, blue-and-white rattan bar cart, table and chairs that evoke a chic French outdoor cafe. Here too, British designer Tracey Boyd's Twill and Atlas ceramic side tables, with interesting geometric patterns.

Digital printing and improved materials and manufacturing are giving us wonderful new indoor/outdoor rugs that are a far cry from the slippy, cheap-looking plastic mats of a few years back. Frontgate has the hip, geometric color-block Halia rug that's colorfast and stain-resistant. Yet the hand-tufted, looped pile makes for a soft, plush feeling underfoot. Also here, a sea green and blue abstract design rug inspired by a slice of agate. Extending the mineral theme: a Palm Springs-style dining table crafted of Brazilian blue quartz on a sleek steel base. Or evoke the British West Indies with the Montserrat dining chair, inspired by traditional wing chairs but built of cast aluminum and outdoor-worthy woven materials and finishes.



Photos provided by Frontgate show the Montserrat woven dining chair which takes style notes from a traditional Colonial-era wing chair; it's an outdoor option of the classic indoor piece.



Photo provided by Anthropologie shows a rattan bar cart with French bistro style elements, which adds flair to the backyard or city terrace outdoor space.



Photo provided by Article shows the Bali pendant light fixture.



Photo provided by Merritt shows the Botánica Bamboo plates. Merritt's Botánica Bamboo pattern evokes tropical flora and fauna in rich hues.



Photo provided by Jenna Rammell shows Article's Lisse teak dining table.



Photo shows Merritt's melamine dinnerware which combines design elements of fine tableware with weather resistance, making it a good option for those looking to enhance their outdoor entertaining game using goods with a more elevated style and substance.

A botanical print

One of the biggest trends in outdoor decor, and a boon to al fresco home entertaining, is deep, comfortable seating. We're seeing roomy sofas and chairs with all the style and finish chops of indoor furniture. RH Modern has the Balmain collection, designed by Australian brothers Harrison and Nicholas Condos. Inspired by the lines of the Sydney Harbour Bridge, the modern, minimalist pieces include sofas, swivel chairs and ottomans, with either teak or aluminum frames, and can be custom-covered in hundreds of performance-grade fabrics.

Another chic option at RH Modern: the Positano chair. Milan-based Toan Nguyen created a contemporary twist on basket-weave with an oversize, woven teak frame that makes a comfy lounger for an entertaining-oriented outdoor space. Anchoring the outdoor entertainment zone with furniture and a rug is important, but don't forget lighting. Lamps Plus has a chandelier with a weathered-zinc finish and a trio of seeded-glass shades for a soft illumination. At Uttermost, find a collection of hand-carved slate and hammered copper indoor/outdoor table lamps by designer Carolyn Kinder of St Petersburg, Florida. Tableware is another area where manufacturing advancements have led to higher quality outdoor products.

Los Angeles-based Merritt has a collection of marble-printed dinnerware that closely resembles the real thing, with heft and pattern depth we haven't associated with melamine before. A botanical print edged with a bamboo motif has the look and feel of fine china.

World Market has acrylic highball glasses that look like cut crystal, "One of the best parts of summer is the chance to do some outdoor entertaining," says Todd Childs, assistant homes editor at Southern Living magazine. "Give your dining room the summer off. Invite some friends over and take the fun outside." — AP



Photo provided by Anthropologie shows British designer Tracey Boyd's ceramic stools.

Lifestyle | Feature



Egyptian female weightlifter Shaimaa Khalaf, 26, takes part in a training session at the Maadi Olympic center in Cairo. — AFP photos



Egyptian female weightlifter Sara Samir, known in competitions as Sara Ahmed, 20, takes part in a training session at the Maadi Olympic center.



Sara Samir takes part in a training session at the Maadi Olympic center.

Olympic medal propels **female Egyptian weightlifting boom**

Her sinews stretched above the neckline of a long-sleeved training top, 20-year-old Egyptian Sara Samir propels a barbell with more than 90 kilos above her head, before the weights smash back to earth. Even before this impressive lift, it's clear Samir has a commanding presence in the national team's weightlifting hall in Cairo. She has become something of a trendsetter since winning bronze in the 69kg (152 pound) class at the 2016 Olympic Games—the first female Egyptian Olympian to win a medal on the podium.

"After I won the medal in Rio, girls started weightlifting in a big way in Ismailiya," she said with a beaming smile, referring to her home province. But it wasn't always like that for Samir, who

“ After I won the medal in Rio, girls started weightlifting in a big way in Ismailiya ”

competes under the name "Sara Ahmed". "People would tell me things like 'oh, you weightlift? Can you carry me?'" she said of her experience aged 11, when she first began training. On the back of her Olympic success, the number of girls competing seriously in weightlifting has surged nearly tenfold. "Female participants in weightlifting championships were no more than 30 or 40 girls," said Mohamed Eldib, head coach of the national weightlifting team, after he supervised Samir and her peers in the southern Cairo district of Maadi.

Now more than 300 girls are registered with the Egyptian Weightlifting Federation, he said. "Winning forms a strong moti-

vation for female athletes... and gives hope in the possibility of accomplishing wins, whatever the difficulties," sports analyst Mohamed Seif told AFP. The challenges include a "lack of interest of the family which cares first about the boy" since girls are expected to stop practicing sport when they get married, Seif said. Girls are encouraged to take part in other sports such as swimming or gymnastics, he said, rather than weightlifting or athletics.

Return to medals

Before Samir's bronze, Egypt had not won a single weightlifting medal since 1948 — a drought of nearly 70 years. Her triumph was followed the same day by another bronze won by male weightlifter Mohamed Mahmoud. Samir is completely absorbed by her training. "Her whole mind is weightlifting," said her coach proudly. She has also benefited from supportive parents—as a girl, it was Samir's father who accepted her wish to start weightlifting and took her to train.



Months later, she won a gold medal in Egypt's national championships in the under-14 age group. At just 13, she joined the national team. But Samir is not the only Egyptian woman to have made it big on the world weightlifting stage. Years after competing, compatriot Abeer Abdelrahman is due to be handed Olympic medals retroactively, after podium winners were stripped of their medals due to testing positive for doping. Abdelrahman had originally come fifth in both the 2008 Olympics in Beijing and the 2012 Olympics in London.

In 2016, she was informed she had won a silver medal in London, and a few months later that she would be awarded a bronze medal for Beijing. And last year, Shaimaa Khalaf, 26, won silver and bronze at the US World Championships in the +90kg weight category.

'Tolerance' key to glory

But despite such major successes, weightlifting and other sports are not the government's top priority—a spot reserved for football in Egypt. "The state usually reacts at the moment of the accomplishment... and then as time passes we forget and focus on football," said analyst Seif. Eldib said that while state funding covers the national team's needs, the lack of funding for gyms limits potential champions because many people do not have access to weightlifting training.

All of Samir's medals since she began competing—more than 50, she says—are gold, except for two bronze, including the Rio Olympic medal. Her secret? "It all depends on how much you want to achieve," she said, echoing her coach Eldib, who believes girls "have higher levels of tolerance in training than boys". — AFP

Sara Samir takes part in a training session at the Maadi Olympic center.

PARADISE FOR PENNIES:

Our tales of budget bliss

Historically, paradise on earth has cost the earth: Persian emperors constructed opulent private gardens (pairidaeza - from which the word 'paradise' originates), European nobles built lavish Renaissance mansions deemed divine and, more recently, exclusive luxury resorts promise holidaymakers 'a slice of paradise'. But does paradise have to be synonymous with extravagance? We don't think so. Here, a selection of Lonely Planet staff share their stories of earthly paradise found on the cheap, proving serenity is found just as often in more humble surroundings.

Slowing down time in Guatemala

For three weeks Guatemala had flooded my senses with its rainbow-bright textiles, jam-packed chicken buses and latino beats. But Rio Dulce was different. As my water taxi left the dock at Livingston, the hubbub gave way to fresh air and birdsong. We drifted through a mighty canyon, watching local men glide by in canoes, and stark white herons, which in turn observed us from lofty branches. Time seemed to slow to match the flow of the river.

I soon reached my very own Central American Shangri-La in the form of a solar-powered jungle bungalow by the riverside. There were no shops, no roads, no phone signal. Days were spent spotting hummingbirds from a hammock, devouring coconut cookies and paddling to nearby hot springs. The highlight? Kayaking to a local waterfall for a refreshing dip, and having the place all to myself.



Stumbling upon an idyllic oasis in Peru



As two scruffy, pre-university backpackers, my travel buddy and I had largely prioritized seeking out Peru's best nightlife over uncovering a tranquil paradise. But as we burst out of a bus (accompanied by countless bags) at the tiny village of Huacachina, it seemed we'd stumbled upon something special.

Encircled by windswept sand dunes, Huacachina is built around a miniature, palm-fringed oasis, which glinted and

winked at us, reflecting our awestruck faces as we stared into its depths. Wordlessly, we kicked off our bedraggled flip-flops, dropped our backpacks and stretched out next to the water's edge. Unsurprisingly, Huacachina has not remained as hidden and untouched by tourism as it was back then, but for one day at least; it was our own sun-soaked, sand-strewn idyll.

Finding surprise serenity in an English campsite

I'll admit it: a sloping English camping field might not immediately evoke 'paradise'. But hear me out, because my happy place is a Devon hamlet called East Prawle. We'd driven for an hour through Devon's tiny, high-hedged lanes to find the campsite, and it was worth it for the view alone: big, cornflower seas stretching out beyond the field. We pitched up our tents, walked to the cliff path and scrambled down the bank to swim in a deserted sandy cove.

Later, we wandered the few hundred meters from our tent to the only pub for miles: the Pig's Nose, a scruffy and loveable 16th-century inn. Nestled in a recessed snug, we passed the evening in a happy reverie with board games and ale, before lumbering back to our canvas beds for the night. The best part was saved for the morning: unzipping the tent to that view - the very thing that draws me back, summer after summer.



Lifestyle | Travel



Enjoying simple pleasures in the Moroccan mountains

During a recent trip to Morocco, I was lucky enough to undertake a yoga retreat at an ageing Berber fortress-cum-ecolodge perched amongst the Atlas Mountains, a few hours' drive from Marrakesh. After morning yoga sessions, I spent hours on the roof terrace sketching tropical plants and the panoramic mountain views fuelled by cups of herbal tea in flavors I'd never experienced, like geranium and absinthe, which were picked daily from the herb and cactus garden.

I shared argan nuts with local workers, sampled some of the owner's natural health remedies (who knew a burnt lemon could whiten your teeth?), and in the evening undertook a stargazing lesson by moonlight. Though there were many highlights during my time in Morocco, it's these simple experiences that have stayed with me.

Sampling sunsets and tuna steaks in Jordan

After spending a couple of hours splashing around in the salty still waters of the Dead Sea, my friends and I were so bowled over by the lilac sunset lighting up Jordan's distant red banks that we decided to spend the night right there on the shore. We opened cans of tuna, stuffed the tops with paper and set each one on fire. Soaked in oil this

way, the paper burns for a while until it peeters out, having given the tuna a smoky flavor. We sat by the sea eating it, watching the ripples turn silver and the stars come out. If we didn't speak, everything was silent. This was paradise for the price of a tuna can!



Swapping gaudy bars for glowing plankton in Cambodia

I grinned the moment I spotted the shoreline of Koh Ta Kiev, a sun-baked spec of land off the southern tip of Cambodia. The drone of bass lines from bustling beach bars finally began to dissipate, washed away by the calming crash of the surf. Koh Ta Kiev, with its lone wooden bunkhouse set amidst a tangle of forest, appeared to embody tranquility - and that wasn't even the island's biggest trick.

With the sun setting, I scrambled from the small ferry, dumped my stuff in a

drafty dorm and grabbed a pair of goggles from a rental box. I waded into the warm sea just as darkness set in and watched as all around me phosphorescent plankton began to flicker beneath the surface, giving the shallow water an ethereal glow. I ducked below to take in the show more clearly, the water blocking everything else out. — www.lonelyplanet.com



Comic

WORD SEARCH

Movie Actors 1

Find and circle all of the Movie Actors that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell the name of a movie for which Jeremy Irons won an Oscar.

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

- | | | |
|--------------------|------------------------|------------------|
| BACON, Kevin | DUNCAN, Michael Clarke | MCKELLEN, Ian |
| BARDEM, Javier | FORD, Harrison | NEESON, Liam |
| BLACK, Jack | FOX, Jamie | PESCI, Joe |
| BRIDGES, Jeff | GIBSON, Mel | PHOENIX, Joaquin |
| CAINE, Michael | GOLDBLUM, Jeff | REEVES, Kevin |
| CARREY, Jim | GRANT, Hugh | RUSH, Geoffrey |
| CHAN, Jackie | GILLENHAAL, Jake | RUSSELL, Kurt |
| CLOONEY, George | HACKMAN, Gene | SPACEY, Kevin |
| COSTNER, Kevin | HARTNETT, Josh | STATHAM, Jason |
| CUSACK, John | IRONS, Jeremy | TRAVOLTA, John |
| DAMON, Matt | JACKMAN, Hugh | VOIGHT, Jon |
| DANIELS, Jeff | JONES, James Earl | WAHLBERG, Mark |
| DEPP, Johnny | LAW, Jude | WEAVING, Hugo |
| DICAPRIO, Leonardo | MCCONAUGHEY, Matthew | WOOD, Elijah |
| DOUGLAS, Michael | | |

CROSSWORD 1906



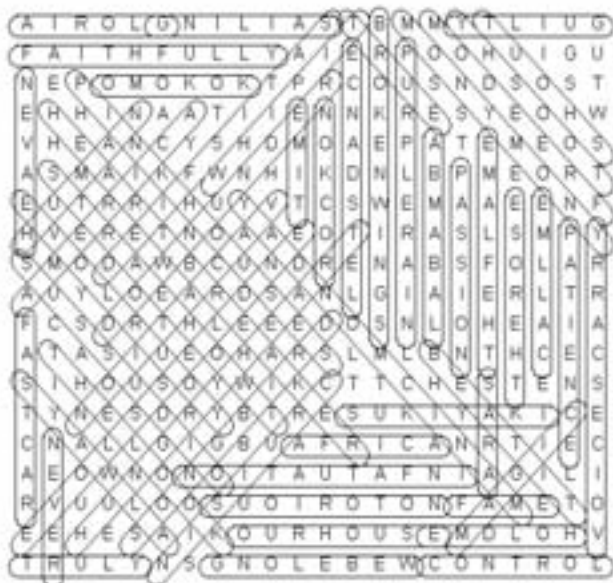
ACROSS

- A chronic skin disease occurring primarily in women between the ages of 20 and 40.
- (medicine) A systematic plan for therapy (often including diet).
- A public area set aside as a pedestrian walk.
- The fatty flesh of eel.
- Compatibility in opinion and action.
- Widely cultivated in tropical and subtropical regions for its fragrant flowers and colorful fruits.
- Used as a Hindi courtesy title.
- A United Nations agency created to assist developing nations by loans guaranteed by member governments.
- An underground enclosure with access from the surface of the ground or from the sea v l.
- A detailed description of design criteria for a piece of work.
- A man who is the lover of a girl or young woman.
- A soft silver-white ductile metallic element (liquid at normal temperatures).
- A Russian prison camp for political prisoners.
- Distinctive and stylish elegance.
- English theoretical physicist who applied relativity theory to quantum mechanics and predicted the existence of antimatter and the positron (1902-1984).
- A member of an agricultural people of southern India.
- Small terrestrial lizard of warm regions of the Old World.
- Large ornamental tropical American tree with bipinnate leaves and globose clusters of flowers with crimson stamens and sweet-pulp seed pods eaten by cattle.
- The portion of the vertebrate nervous system consisting of the brain and spinal cord.

- #### DOWN
- United States labor organizer who ran for President as a socialist (1855-1926).
 - A light springing movement upwards or forwards.
 - A river in central Europe that arises in northwestern Czechoslovakia and flows northward through Germany to empty into the North Sea.
 - The 17th letter of the Greek alphabet.
 - (Akkadian) God of wisdom.
 - Norwegian composer whose work was often inspired by Norwegian folk music (1843-1907).
 - Tropical American tree with large peltate leaves and hollow stems.
 - A solid mass of blastomeres that forms when the zygote splits.
 - Either extremity of something that has length.
 - A Mid-Atlantic state.
 - Covered with paving material.
 - Jordan's port.
 - (Levi's is a trademark) A popular brand of jeans.
 - Carnivorous or bloodsucking aquatic or terrestrial worms typically having a sucker at each end.
 - English scholastic philosopher and assumed author of Occam's Razor (1285-1349).
 - (used of eyes) Open and fixed as if in fear or wonder.
 - Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
 - A public promotion of some product or service.
 - Refuse to acknowledge.
 - Follower of Rastafarianism.
 - Mentally or physically infirm with age.
 - United States comedian and film actor (1880-1946).
 - Essential oil or perfume obtained from flowers.
 - The basic unit of money in Nigeria.
 - The Tibeto-Burman language spoken in the Dali region of Yunnan.
 - Of or relating to or characteristic of Thailand of its people.
 - (Roman Catholic Church) The supreme ecclesiastical tribunal for cases appealed to the Holy See from diocesan courts.
 - (music) The speed at which a composition is to be played.
 - One of the proteins into which actomyosin can be split.
 - Using speech rather than writing.
 - Genus of erect herbs of the Middle East having showy flowers.
 - A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
 - A colorless odorless gaseous element that give a red glow in a vacuum tube.
 - A lyric poet.
 - Pompous or pretentious talk or writing.
 - A region of Malaysia in northeastern Borneo.
 - Of or concerning this.
 - A state in northwestern United States on the Pacific.
 - A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
 - Antineoplastic drug (trade name Elspar) sometimes used to treat lymphoblastic leukemia.
 - (Babylonian) A demigod or first man.
 - (computer science) Memory whose contents can be accessed and read but cannot be changed.
 - Type genus of the family Balanidae.
 - Tall woody perennial grasses with hollow slender stems especially of the genera Arundo and Phragmites.
 - A nucleic acid consisting of large molecules shaped like a double helix.
 - A studio especially for an artist or designer.
 - Type genus of the Alcidae comprising solely the razorbill.

Yesterday's Solution

More 80's Songs



- | | | | |
|--------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|
| AFRICA | GLORIA | NEVER | SUSSUDIO |
| ALWAYS | GUILTY | NOTORIOUS | THE FLAME |
| AMERICA | HEARTBREAKER | OUR HOUSE | THE LOOK |
| BEAT IT | HEAVEN | PASSION | THE ROSE |
| BROKEN WINGS | HOLD ME | PATIENCE | TIME |
| CALL ME | HUMAN | PINK HOUSES | TOO SHY |
| CONTROL | HUNGRY HEART | PURPLE RAIN | TRUE |
| CRUISIN' | INFATUATION | ROCK ON | TRULY |
| DOWN UNDER | KOKOMO | SAILING | TWO HEARTS |
| ENDLESS LOVE | LA BAMBOLA | SARA | VACATION |
| FAITHFULLY | LET'S DANCE | SATISFIED | VOICES CARRY |
| FAME | MAGIC | SHOUT | WE BELONG |
| FAST CAR | MANIC MONDAY | SONGBIRO | WHIP IT |
| FREEDOM | MONY MONY | SUKTYAKI | YOUR LOVE |

The hidden song is: I GUESS THAT'S WHY THEY CALL IT THE BLUES

Yesterday's Solution



Daily SuDoku

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|
| | 8 | 5 | 2 | 4 | | | | |
| | | 9 | | 1 | | | | |
| 1 | 3 | 4 | | 8 | | | | |
| | 9 | | 1 | | | | | |
| 3 | | 2 | | | 7 | | 1 | |
| | | | | | 3 | | 5 | |
| | | | 1 | | 2 | 7 | 4 | |
| | | 3 | | | 9 | | | |
| | 5 | 6 | | 7 | | 3 | | |

Yesterday's Solution

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 6 | 4 | 9 | 7 |
| 9 | 5 | 7 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 8 | 3 | 6 |
| 3 | 6 | 4 | 8 | 9 | 7 | 1 | 5 | 2 |
| 5 | 4 | 6 | 7 | 2 | 8 | 9 | 1 | 3 |
| 2 | 7 | 3 | 9 | 1 | 5 | 6 | 8 | 4 |
| 1 | 8 | 9 | 6 | 3 | 4 | 7 | 2 | 5 |
| 7 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 6 | 9 | 2 | 4 | 8 |
| 4 | 9 | 8 | 5 | 7 | 2 | 3 | 6 | 1 |
| 6 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 8 | 3 | 5 | 7 | 9 |

TV Listings

MOVIES ACTION

01:00 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Out Of The Shadows
 03:00 Starship Troopers: Traitor Of Mars
 04:45 The Veil
 06:25 Time Trap
 08:05 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Out Of The Shadows
 10:15 Railroad Tigers
 12:35 Bloodsport
 14:20 Nick Of Time
 16:00 S.W.A.T.: Under Siege
 17:40 Suicide Squad
 19:45 Transporter 2
 21:15 In A Valley Of Violence
 23:05 Ben-Hur

ANIMAL PLANET HD

00:45 Rugged Justice
 01:40 Tigers Attack
 02:35 The Wild Life Of Tim Faulkner
 03:00 The Wild Life Of Tim Faulkner
 03:25 Whale Wars
 04:15 North Woods Law
 05:02 Life On Earth: A New Prehistory
 05:49 Lone Star Law
 06:36 Swamp Brothers
 07:00 Swamp Brothers
 07:25 The Wild Life Of Tim Faulkner
 08:15 Rugged Justice
 09:10 Tigers Attack
 10:05 Life On Earth: A New Prehistory
 11:00 The Wild Life Of Tim Faulkner
 11:55 Whale Wars
 12:50 North Woods Law
 13:45 Tigers Attack
 14:40 Life On Earth: A New Prehistory
 15:35 Lone Star Law
 16:30 Rugged Justice
 17:25 The Vet Life
 18:20 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
 19:15 Tigers Attack
 20:10 The Wild Life Of Tim Faulkner
 20:38 The Wild Life Of Tim Faulkner
 21:05 The Vet Life
 22:00 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
 22:55 Life On Earth: A New Prehistory
 23:50 Lone Star Law

BBC FIRST

00:25 The Detectorists
 00:55 Death In Paradise
 01:45 Holby City
 02:40 The Level
 03:30 The Level
 04:15 Mum
 04:45 The Detectorists
 05:15 The Coroner
 06:00 Doctors
 06:30 EastEnders
 07:00 Holby City
 07:55 Doctors
 08:25 Doctors
 08:55 EastEnders
 09:25 Bad Move
 09:50 I Want My Wife Back
 10:20 Death In Paradise
 11:20 Casualty
 12:15 Holby City
 13:10 Doctors
 13:40 EastEnders
 14:10 Casualty
 15:05 Bad Move
 15:30 I Want My Wife Back
 16:00 Doctors
 16:30 Doctors
 18:30 Carters Get Rich
 19:00 Death In Paradise
 20:00 Sherlock
 21:35 Father Brown
 22:25 Poldark
 23:20 Poldark

COMEDY CENTRAL

00:05 Nathan For You
 00:55 Russell Simmons Presents: The Ruckus
 01:20 The Opposition With Jordan Klepper
 01:45 The Meltdown With Jonah And Kumail
 02:10 South Park
 02:35 Tosh.0
 03:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
 03:25 Tosh.0
 03:50 South Park
 04:15 The Meltdown With Jonah And Kumail
 04:40 Workaholics
 06:50 Lip Sync Battle
 08:55 Friends
 10:10 Hillbillies For Hire
 11:00 Friends
 13:05 Ridiculousness Arabia
 13:30 Brotherhood
 15:35 Workaholics
 16:30 Takeshis Castle Thailand
 16:55 Takeshis Castle Thailand
 17:20 Friends
 19:20 Takeshis Castle Thailand
 19:45 Workaholics
 20:07 Martha And Snoop Potluck Dinner Party
 20:30 Graves
 21:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
 21:30 The Opposition With Jordan Klepper
 22:00 Kyle Kinane: Loose In Chicago
 22:50 This Is Not Happening
 23:15 Inside Amy Schumer
 23:40 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah

Discovery Family

00:30 Destroyed In Seconds
 01:20 How It's Made
 02:10 Must Love Cats
 03:00 Tanked
 03:50 Ultimate Survival
 04:40 How The Universe Works
 05:30 Secret Space Escapes
 06:20 How It's Made
 07:00 Destroyed In Seconds
 07:50 Must Love Cats
 08:40 How It's Made
 09:30 Tanked
 10:20 Ultimate Survival
 11:10 Destroyed In Seconds
 12:00 How It's Made
 12:50 React To That
 13:40 The Carbonaro Effect
 14:30 Must Love Cats
 15:20 How It's Made
 15:45 How It's Made
 16:10 Ultimate Survival
 17:00 Reign Of The Dinosaurs
 17:50 Tanked
 18:40 Destroyed In Seconds
 19:30 React To That
 19:55 React To That
 20:20 The Carbonaro Effect
 21:10 How It's Made
 21:35 How It's Made
 22:00 Ultimate Survival
 22:50 React To That
 23:15 React To That
 23:40 The Carbonaro Effect

ID

00:45 A Crime To Remember
 01:40 Betrayed
 02:35 Bride Killa
 03:30 Deadly Sins
 04:25 Nightmare Next Door
 05:20 I Almost Got Away With It
 06:10 Gone
 07:00 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
 07:25 I Am Homicide
 08:15 Nightmare Next Door
 09:10 Gone
 10:05 Grave Secrets
 11:00 Deadly Affairs
 11:55 Murder Chose Me
 12:50 I Almost Got Away With It
 13:45 Gone

14:40 Grave Secrets
 15:35 Killer Confessions
 16:30 Murder Chose Me
 17:25 Nightmare Next Door
 18:20 I Almost Got Away With It
 19:15 Disappeared
 20:10 Grave Secrets
 21:05 Guilty Rich
 22:00 The 1980s: The Deadliest Decade
 22:55 True Crime With Aphrodite Jones
 23:50 Bride Killa



00:00 Hank Zipzer
 00:25 Alex & Co.
 00:45 Disney Mickey Mouse
 00:50 Evermoor Chronicles
 01:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
 02:05 Binny And The Ghost
 02:55 Hank Zipzer
 03:15 Disney Mickey Mouse
 03:20 Hank Zipzer
 03:45 Alex & Co.
 04:35 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
 05:25 Binny And The Ghost
 05:45 Disney Mickey Mouse
 05:50 Rolling With The Ronks
 06:00 Kitty Is Not A Cat
 06:25 Hotel Transylvania: The Series
 06:50 Tsum Tsum Shorts
 06:55 Tangled: The Series
 07:00 Stuck In The Middle
 07:45 K.C. Undercover
 08:10 Bunk'd
 08:35 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
 09:00 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
 09:25 Lolirock
 10:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
 11:05 Hank Zipzer
 11:30 Alex & Co.
 12:20 Lolirock
 12:45 Lolirock
 13:10 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
 14:00 Hotel Transylvania: The Series
 14:15 Bunk'd
 14:40 K.C. Undercover
 15:05 Disney Mickey Mouse
 15:10 Kitty Is Not A Cat
 15:35 Elena Of Avalor: Realm Of The Jaquins
 16:25 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
 16:50 Bizaardvark
 17:15 Stuck In The Middle
 17:40 Hotel Transylvania: The Series
 18:05 K.C. Undercover
 18:30 Bunk'd
 18:55 Descendants Wicked World
 19:00 Raven's Home
 19:25 Liv And Maddie
 19:50 Jessie
 20:15 Disney Mickey Mouse
 20:20 Tangled: The Series
 20:45 Bizaardvark
 21:10 Hotel Transylvania: The Series
 21:35 Stuck In The Middle
 22:00 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
 22:25 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
 22:50 Lolirock
 23:10 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
 23:35 Binny And The Ghost

Disney Junior

00:00 Trulli Tales
 00:30 PJ Masks
 00:55 Trulli Tales
 01:20 Henry Hugglemonster
 01:35 Calimero
 01:50 Henry Hugglemonster
 02:05 Art Attack
 02:30 The Hive

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



00:15 Deadliest Catch
 01:05 Hot Grease
 02:35 Kidnap And Rescue
 03:20 Diesel Brothers
 04:05 Alaskan Bush People
 04:50 Kindig Customs
 05:35 Storage Hunters
 06:00 The Liquidator
 06:23 Property Wars
 06:45 Storage Hunters
 07:10 Storage Wars Canada
 07:35 Alaskan Bush People
 08:20 The Liquidator
 08:45 Property Wars
 09:10 Kindig Customs
 09:55 Alaskan Bush People
 10:45 Kindig Customs
 11:30 Deadliest Catch
 12:20 The Liquidator
 12:43 Property Wars
 13:05 Storage Hunters
 13:30 Storage Wars Canada
 13:55 Kindig Customs
 14:40 Deadliest Catch
 15:30 Hot Grease
 17:00 Impossible Engineering
 17:50 Impossible Engineering
 18:40 Flipping Ships
 19:25 Deadliest Catch
 20:15 Gear Dogs
 21:00 Fast N' Loud
 21:50 Gear Dogs
 22:40 Shifting Gears With Aaron Kaufman
 23:30 Jungle Gold



06:00 Marvel's Spider-Man
 06:25 Lab Rats
 06:50 Phineas & Ferb
 07:05 DuckTales
 07:32 Phineas And Ferb
 08:00 Milo Murphy's Law
 08:25 Disney Mickey Mouse
 08:30 Phineas And Ferb
 08:55 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
 09:20 Star vs The Forces Of Evil

09:45 Phineas And Ferb
 10:00 Kid vs. Kat
 10:25 Kid vs. Kat
 10:50 Marvel's Rocket And Groot
 10:55 Marvel's Ant-Man
 11:00 Counterfeit Cat
 11:15 Counterfeit Cat
 11:30 Randy Cunningham: 9th Grade Ninja
 11:55 Randy Cunningham: 9th Grade Ninja
 12:20 Gravity Falls
 12:45 Milo Murphy's Law
 13:00 Lab Rats
 13:25 Lab Rats
 13:50 Mech-X4
 14:15 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
 14:40 Milo Murphy's Law
 15:05 Supa Strikas
 15:32 Lab Rats
 16:00 DuckTales
 16:25 Disney Mickey Mouse
 16:32 Big Hero 6 The Series
 16:55 Two More Eggs
 17:00 Milo Murphy's Law
 17:25 Disney Mickey Mouse
 17:32 Gravity Falls
 18:00 Mech-X4
 18:25 Lab Rats Elite Force
 18:50 Lab Rats Elite Force
 19:15 Walk The Prank
 19:40 Phineas And Ferb
 19:55 Disney Mickey Mouse
 20:00 DuckTales
 20:32 Big Hero 6 The Series
 21:00 Marvel's Spider-Man
 21:25 Star Wars Rebels
 21:50 Disney Mickey Mouse
 21:55 Two More Eggs
 22:00 Phineas And Ferb
 22:25 Phineas And Ferb
 23:00 Programmes Start At 6:00am



01:45 E! News
 02:45 #RichKids Of Beverly Hills
 03:40 #RichKids Of Beverly Hills
 04:35 #RichKids Of Beverly Hills
 05:30 Celebrity Style Story
 06:00 Rob & Chyna
 06:55 E! News Middle East
 07:10 Rob & Chyna
 08:10 E! News: Daily Pop
 09:10 Botched
 10:05 Botched
 11:00 Botched
 12:00 E! News Middle East
 12:15 WAGs LA
 13:10 WAGs LA
 14:05 WAGs LA
 15:00 E! News Middle East
 15:15 E! News: Daily Pop
 16:15 The Real Princess Diaries: From Diana To Meghan
 17:10 Botched
 18:05 Botched
 19:00 E! News
 20:00 The Real Princess Diaries: From Diana To Meghan
 21:00 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
 22:00 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
 23:00 E! News Middle East
 23:15 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry



00:10 Broadchurch
 01:00 Emmerdale
 01:30 Coronation Street
 02:00 Coronation Street
 02:30 The Chase
 03:25 Kate: The Making Of A Modern Queen
 04:20 Change Your Tune
 05:15 Broadchurch
 06:15 Guess This House
 07:10 The Chase
 08:05 Kate: The Making Of A Modern Queen
 09:00 Change Your Tune
 09:55 Broadchurch
 11:00 Guess This House
 11:50 The Chase
 12:45 Emmerdale
 13:15 Emmerdale
 13:45 Coronation Street

14:15 Guess This House
 15:10 The Chase
 16:00 A Very Royal Wedding
 16:55 When Phillip Met Prince Philip
 17:50 Broadchurch
 18:50 Emmerdale
 19:15 Emmerdale
 19:45 Coronation Street
 20:10 The Chase
 21:00 A Very Royal Wedding
 21:55 When Phillip Met Prince Philip
 22:50 Emmerdale
 23:15 Emmerdale
 23:40 Coronation Street



00:00 Ancient Impossible
 01:00 America's Book Of Secrets
 02:00 UFO Hunters
 02:50 Ancient Aliens
 03:40 Ancient Impossible
 04:30 WWII: Lost Films
 05:20 Million Dollar Genius
 06:10 How 2 Win
 07:00 Ancient Impossible
 08:00 America's Book Of Secrets
 09:00 UFO Hunters
 10:00 Ancient Aliens
 11:00 Ancient Impossible
 12:00 WWII: Lost Films
 13:00 Ancient Impossible
 14:00 America's Book Of Secrets
 15:00 UFO Hunters
 16:00 Ancient Aliens
 17:00 Ancient Impossible
 18:00 Ancient Impossible
 19:00 America's Book Of Secrets
 20:00 UFO Hunters
 21:00 Ancient Aliens
 22:00 Missing In Alaska
 23:00 WWII: Lost Films



00:15 United Plates Of America
 00:45 Chocolate Covered
 01:10 Poh & Co.
 01:40 David Rocco's Dolce India
 02:05 Eat Street
 02:35 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces
 03:30 A Is For Apple
 04:25 Dog Whisperer
 05:20 Dog Whisperer
 06:15 Places We Go
 07:10 David Rocco's Dolce India
 07:35 Eat Street
 08:05 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces
 09:00 A Is For Apple
 09:55 Dog Whisperer
 10:50 Dog Whisperer
 11:45 Places We Go
 12:40 Places We Go
 12:40 Hotel India
 13:35 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces
 14:30 A Is For Apple
 14:55 A Is For Apple
 15:25 Dog Whisperer
 16:20 Dog Whisperer
 17:15 Places We Go
 17:40 Places We Go
 18:10 Eat Street
 18:35 A Taste Of South Africa
 19:05 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces
 20:00 A Is For Apple
 20:30 A Is For Apple
 21:00 Dog Whisperer
 22:00 Dog Whisperer
 22:55 Places We Go
 23:20 Places We Go
 23:50 Eat Street



00:10 Inside The SS
 01:00 Apocalypse World War I
 02:00 My Fighting Season
 03:00 One Strange Rock
 04:00 Inside The SS
 05:00 Situation Critical
 06:00 Mega Factories
 07:00 Years Of Living Dangerously

TV Listings

08:00 Genius
09:00 Situation Critical
10:00 Breakout
11:00 My Fighting Season
12:00 Somewhere In China
13:00 Mega Factories
14:00 Genius
15:00 Years Of Living Dangerously
16:00 Breakout
17:00 My Fighting Season
18:00 Inside The SS
19:00 Apocalypse World War I
20:00 Breakout
20:50 My Fighting Season
21:40 Inside The SS
22:30 Apocalypse World War I
23:20 Situation Critical

17:24 Alvin And The Chipmunks
17:48 Alvin And The Chipmunks
18:12 Alvin And The Chipmunks
18:36 Alvin And The Chipmunks
19:00 School Of Rock
19:24 Game Shakers
19:48 The Thundermans
20:12 SpongeBob SquarePants
20:36 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
21:00 Harvey Beaks
21:24 Breadwinners
21:48 Breadwinners
22:12 Sanjay And Craig
22:36 Rabbids Invasion
23:00 The Loud House
23:24 Regal Academy
23:48 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles



00:20 Croc Labyrinth
01:10 World's Deadliest Compilations
02:00 Lion Battle Zone
02:50 World's Deadliest Compilations
03:45 Animals Gone Wild
04:40 Man V. Monster
05:35 Lion Battle Zone
06:30 World's Deadliest Compilations
07:25 Animals Gone Wild
08:20 Man V. Monster
09:15 Snakes In The City
10:10 Wild Sri Lanka: Paradise Island
11:05 The World's Most Wanted Leopard
12:00 Man vs. Octopus
12:55 Croc Invasion
13:50 Hidden Worlds
14:45 Deadly Game
15:40 Man V. Monster
16:35 Snakes In The City
17:30 Wild Chile
18:25 Walking With Giraffes
19:20 Deadly Game
20:10 Man V. Monster
21:00 Snakes In The City
21:50 Wild Chile
22:40 Walking With Giraffes
23:30 Man vs. Octopus



00:06 Max & Ruby
00:29 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
00:39 Kiva Can Do!
00:50 The Day Henry Met
00:56 Blaze And The Monster Machines
01:18 Blaze And The Monster Machines
01:40 Paw Patrol
01:52 Kid-E-Cats
02:02 Shimmer And Shine
02:24 Nella The Princess Knight
02:36 Paw Patrol
03:00 Max & Ruby
03:22 Dora The Explorer
03:45 Sunny Day
04:08 Nella The Princess Knight
04:31 Shimmer And Shine
04:53 Wallykazam!
05:16 Zack & Quack
05:27 The Day Henry Met
05:32 The Day Henry Met
05:38 Blaze And The Monster Machines
06:00 Rusty Rivets
06:13 Paw Patrol
06:37 Dora The Explorer
07:00 Nella The Princess Knight
07:22 Kiva Can Do!
07:33 Kiva Can Do!
07:44 Blaze And The Monster Machines
08:06 Paw Patrol
08:29 Shimmer And Shine
08:51 Nella The Princess Knight
09:14 Paw Patrol
09:38 Rusty Rivets
10:02 Wallykazam!
10:24 The Day Henry Met
10:30 Bubble Guppies
10:54 Team Umizoomi
11:16 Kid-E-Cats
11:22 Shimmer And Shine
11:45 Sunny Day
12:07 Max & Ruby
12:30 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
12:40 Kiva Can Do!
12:51 The Day Henry Met
12:57 Blaze And The Monster Machines
13:19 Blaze And The Monster Machines
13:41 Paw Patrol
13:53 Kid-E-Cats
13:58 Kid-E-Cats
14:03 Shimmer And Shine
14:25 Nella The Princess Knight
14:37 Paw Patrol
15:01 Max & Ruby
15:23 Dora The Explorer
15:46 Hunter Street
16:09 Nella The Princess Knight
16:31 Shimmer And Shine
16:53 Wallykazam!
17:17 Zack & Quack
17:27 The Day Henry Met
17:32 The Day Henry Met
17:38 Blaze And The Monster Machines
18:00 Rusty Rivets
18:13 Paw Patrol
18:37 Dora The Explorer
19:00 Nella The Princess Knight
19:22 Kiva Can Do!
19:33 Kiva Can Do!
19:44 Blaze And The Monster Machines
20:06 Paw Patrol
20:28 Shimmer And Shine
20:50 Nella The Princess Knight
21:13 Paw Patrol

21:36 Rusty Rivets
22:00 Wallykazam!
22:23 The Day Henry Met
22:29 Bubble Guppies
22:52 Team Umizoomi
23:15 Kid-E-Cats
23:20 Shimmer And Shine
23:43 Sunny Day



00:15 How I Met Your Mother
00:40 How I Met Your Mother
01:05 Seinfeld
01:30 Seinfeld
01:55 Til Death
02:20 The Michael J. Fox Show
02:45 The Michael J. Fox Show
03:10 Late Night With Seth Meyers
04:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
04:50 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
05:40 The Michael J. Fox Show
06:05 Til Death
06:30 The Mick
06:55 Mom
07:20 Late Night With Seth Meyers
08:10 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
09:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
09:50 The Simpsons
10:15 The Last Man On Earth
10:40 The Michael J. Fox Show
11:05 Til Death
11:30 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
12:20 The Mick
12:45 Mom
13:10 How I Met Your Mother
13:35 How I Met Your Mother
14:00 Seinfeld
14:25 Seinfeld
14:50 The Michael J. Fox Show
15:15 The Simpsons
15:40 The Last Man On Earth
16:05 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
17:00 The Mick
17:30 The Mindy Project
18:00 How I Met Your Mother
18:30 How I Met Your Mother
19:00 Seinfeld
19:30 Seinfeld
20:00 The Carmichael Show
20:30 The Carmichael Show
21:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
22:00 Better Late Than Never
23:00 You're The Worst
23:25 Late Night With Seth Meyers



01:45 Toy Story 3
03:45 Cars
05:45 Confessions Of A Teenage Drama Queen
07:30 Toy Story 3
09:30 Planes
11:30 Confessions Of A Teenage Drama Queen
13:15 Cars 2
15:15 Tangled
17:15 Race To Witch Mountain
19:15 High School Musical 3: Senior Year
21:15 Cars 2
23:15 Tangled



00:00 The Americans
01:00 Famous In Love
01:50 The Good Doctor
02:40 Lethal Weapon
03:30 S.W.A.T.
04:20 The Americans
05:20 Supergirl
06:10 DC's Legends Of Tomorrow
07:00 Good Morning America
09:00 The View
10:00 S.W.A.T.
11:00 The Good Doctor
12:00 DC's Legends Of Tomorrow
13:00 How To Get Away With Murder
14:00 Lethal Weapon
15:00 The View
16:00 Live Good Morning America
18:00 DC's Legends Of Tomorrow
19:00 The Good Doctor
20:00 How To Get Away With Murder
21:00 Survivor: Ghost Island
22:00 Once Upon A Time
23:00 WWE Experience



01:25 The Hot Chick
03:15 Breaking The Bank
05:00 Who Gets The Dog?
06:40 Meet Dave
08:15 Step Dogs
10:00 Breaking The Bank
11:50 Who Gets The Dog?
13:30 Meet Dave
15:05 Step Dogs
16:50 The Family Fang
18:50 Nacho Libre
20:30 The House Bunny
22:10 Hot Property
23:35 Joshy



00:45 Days Of Heaven
02:30 The Benefactor
04:10 African Safari
05:50 Little Man Tate
07:35 Days Of Heaven
09:20 The Benefactor
11:00 African Safari
12:40 The Salesman
14:50 Akeelah And The Bee
16:50 Operation Avalanche
18:30 The Age Of Innocence
20:55 Margot At The Wedding
22:35 Stand By Me



00:10 Back To The Sea
01:50 The Happy Cricket
03:20 Mia And The Migoo
05:00 Deep
06:40 Rainbow Valley Heroes
08:25 The Snow Queen 3
10:05 Jake And The Giants
11:30 Freddy Frogface
13:00 Felix All Around The World
14:35 Deep
16:15 Rainbow Valley Heroes
18:00 Teo: The Intergalactic Hunter
19:25 Freddy Frogface
20:55 Funny Little Cars
22:05 Monkey King: The Hero
23:40 Teo: The Intergalactic Hunter



00:00 The Watch
01:45 The American President
03:40 Alvin And The Chipmunks: The Road Chip
05:15 7 Chinese Brothers
06:40 Ice Age: Collision Course
08:20 The American President
10:15 Ghostbusters
12:15 My All American
14:15 Kung Fu Panda
15:50 Diary Of A Wimpy Kid: Dog Days
17:30 Avatar
20:15 Terminator Genisys
22:25 Hardcore Henry



00:30 How It's Made
00:55 Food Factory USA
01:20 Strangest Weather On Earth
02:10 Secrets Of The Underground
03:00 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?
03:48 Mythbusters
04:36 How It's Made
05:00 Food Factory USA
05:24 Strangest Weather On Earth
06:12 Secrets Of The Underground
07:00 How It's Made
07:26 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?
08:14 Mythbusters
09:02 Secrets Of The Underground
09:50 How It's Made
10:14 Food Factory USA
10:38 Strangest Weather On Earth
11:26 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?

12:14 Mythbusters
13:02 How It's Made
13:26 Food Factory USA
13:50 Secrets Of The Underground
14:38 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?
15:26 Strangest Weather On Earth
16:14 Mythbusters
17:02 Secrets Of The Underground
17:50 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?
18:40 Mythbusters
19:30 How The Universe Works
20:20 How It's Made
20:45 Food Factory USA
21:10 Mythbusters: The Search
22:00 How The Universe Works
22:50 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?
23:40 Mythbusters



00:45 Alif
02:50 D
03:00 D
04:30 The Front Row
05:00 Maseeha
07:00 Nautanki Saala
09:15 Coolie No.1
11:50 Raju Ban Gaya Gentleman
14:45 Bombay Velvet
17:25 Hera Pheri
20:00 Jai Ho
22:30 Nayak: The Real Hero



01:30 Monkey Kingdom
03:00 Frailty
04:35 Clown
06:10 Foxcatcher
08:25 Deception
10:05 The Good Dinosaur
11:45 Frank
13:15 While We're Young
14:45 Monkey Kingdom
16:15 The Hoax
18:15 The Singing Detective
20:00 Ant-Man
22:00 Heshel
23:45 Head In The Clouds



00:00 Mistresses
01:00 Mistresses
02:00 Project Accessory
03:00 Married At First Sight
04:00 House Of DVF
05:00 Mom vs. Matchmaker
05:30 Mom vs. Matchmaker
06:00 Mistresses
07:00 Mistresses
08:00 Project Accessory
09:00 Married At First Sight
10:00 House Of DVF
11:00 Mom vs. Matchmaker
11:30 Mom vs. Matchmaker
12:00 Mistresses
13:00 Mistresses
14:00 Project Accessory
15:00 Married At First Sight
16:00 House Of DVF
17:00 Grey's Anatomy
18:00 Fashion StartUp
19:00 Fashion StartUp
20:00 Project Runway All Stars
21:00 The Fashion Fund
22:00 The Fashion Fund
23:00 Project Accessory



00:20 Say Yes To The Dress UK
00:42 Say Yes To The Dress UK
01:05 90 Days To Wed
01:50 90 Days To Wed: Before The 90 Days
02:35 Dr Christian Will See You Now
03:20 7 Little Johnstons
04:05 Toddlers & Tiaras
04:50 My 600lb Life: Where Are They Now?
05:35 Say Yes To The Dress UK

06:00 7 Little Johnstons
06:45 7 Little Johnstons
07:30 7 Little Johnstons
08:15 Say Yes To The Dress UK
08:37 Say Yes To The Dress UK
09:00 Cake Boss
09:25 Say Yes To The Dress: Bridesmaids
09:47 Say Yes To The Dress: Bridesmaids
10:10 Say Yes To The Dress: Bridesmaids
10:32 Say Yes To The Dress: Bridesmaids
10:55 Cake Boss
11:17 Cake Boss
11:40 Cake Boss
12:02 Cake Boss
12:25 Cake Boss
12:47 Cake Boss
13:10 7 Little Johnstons
13:55 Say Yes To The Dress UK
14:17 Say Yes To The Dress UK
14:40 Cake Boss
15:02 Cake Boss
15:25 Cake Boss
15:47 Cake Boss
16:10 Cake Boss
16:35 Cake Boss
17:00 Little People, Big World
17:50 Diva Brides
18:50 Sister Wives
19:40 Cake Boss
20:10 Say Yes To The Dress: Bridesmaids
20:35 Say Yes To The Dress: Bridesmaids
21:00 Sister Wives
21:50 Little People, Big World
22:40 I'm Fat: What's Your Problem?
23:30 Return To Amish



00:00 Fred Dineage: Murder Casebook
01:00 Cold Case Files
01:55 Crimes That Shook Australia
02:50 It Takes A Killer
03:20 It Takes A Killer
03:45 Fred Dineage: Murder Casebook
04:30 Cold Case Files
05:15 The First 48
06:00 Crimes That Shook Australia
07:00 It Takes A Killer
07:20 Cold Case Files
08:05 Homicide Hunter
08:50 The First 48
09:35 Crimes That Shook Australia
10:30 Evil Up Close
11:25 Leah Remini: Scientology And The Aftermath
12:20 Crimes That Shook Britain
13:15 Cold Case Files
14:10 Homicide Hunter
15:05 The First 48
16:00 Crimes That Shook Australia
17:00 Homicide: Hours To Kill
18:00 Homicide: Hours To Kill
20:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
21:00 Evil Up Close
22:00 Escaping Polygamy: After The Escape
23:00 The First 48



00:20 Milwaukee Blacksmith
00:45 Pawn Stars
01:10 American Pickers
02:00 Swamp People
02:50 Mountain Men
03:40 Ronnie O'Sullivan's American Hustle
04:30 Milwaukee Blacksmith
04:55 Pawn Stars
05:20 American Pickers
06:00 Time Team
10:10 Swamp People
14:20 American Pickers
18:30 How The World Made America
20:10 Counting Cars
20:35 Car Hunters
21:00 Counting Cars
21:25 Car Hunters
21:50 Time Team

Stars

**Aries (March 21-April 19)**

Your confidence is boundless; you long for a new romantic involvement or reigniting an established one. Restless energy runs rampant even as you search for something to satisfy it; happiness could very likely be found in your own backyard! You could walk a risky path as you seek investment opportunities or perhaps this indicates a romantic encounter. You save the day when a friend or neighbor has an unexpected situation and you are called to help; this could refer to plumbing or wiring. You see a way to spend less money maintaining your home or office; have you been looking into solar or wind energy you keep your thoughts and ideas to yourself this evening as you give serious thought to making changes at home and possibly work.

**Taurus (April 20-May 20)**

You go inside for an honest look at the workings of your life and how your choices affect this. Your desire to help could be viewed as intrusive and you could be regarded as a busybody; remember that you should take control of your life, not the life of others. You take time out of the rush and figure out how to breathe new life into your work situation. Working with a group brings success. Your leadership skills are required on a special project no one else knows how to accomplish. A movie entertains and takes you away from reality for a bit. As you clean out drawers and closets you rediscover something you thought lost; this could indicate an heirloom. You examine something closely in order to figure out what makes it work and how.

**Gemini (May 21-June 20)**

Getting your thoughts across to others is easy and productive. Confidence levels are high just now and others notice this as you complete a certain difficult task. You set your goals higher as you come to realize anything is possible if you believe and work. Your new positive attitude takes you a long way today and into the month. Information you uncover could start some emotional reactions for the better if presented in the right way; think before you share this with the people involved. You become connected to a neighbor in a new way through someone who is ill or in dire need of help. Tonight brings an opportunity to create a new, exotic meal for family or friends; you use a special ingredient that adds some unusual flavor for all.

**Cancer (June 21-July 22)**

The new cycle you have entered emphasizes confidence, positivity and belief. You may be willing to take chances on a deep emotional level. This could indicate a new romance or another type of serious relationship. Someone younger watches and follows your example. You experience a sort of restlessness that demands your attention. Your input on a new project is required by someone in charge; smooth progress is indicated for some time to come. You discover an item that's been missing for a long time. A good deed you did a while ago comes back in the form of an invitation to lunch or dinner. The day ends with your unique and enjoyable qualities being highlighted as you entertain a small group of friends at home.

**Leo (July 23-August 22)**

Someone younger could push a challenge to the point of bitter confrontation. Your intentions are good, but be certain they are clear. Guard against yours, or the feelings of others, being hurt when unnecessary; good results are possible when handled with care. Time spent with jovial, like-minded people raises your spirits; compliments on your clothes or other accessories make your day much better. Abundance is possible when you discover a new means of making extra money that's a good match for your interests. You could be misled if you're reckless in making decisions without researching the facts. A mentor suggests a meeting this evening over delicious food and desert in a place filled with encouragement and positive vibrations.

**Virgo (August 23-September 22)**

Your quirks and unique ways of going through life are at the fore; you're in the process of accepting who you are and figuring out where to go from here. You enjoy a sense of being comfortable in your own skin. A new circumstance requires your specific talents and ideas; this could indicate a new job or hobby that becomes valuable. Loved ones come together to discuss an important issue; you feel humbled by enjoying the life and family you have been blessed with. Confidence levels rise as you approach a new assignment or project you're challenged by; chin up, you know you can do this! You enjoy stretching the bounds of your emotions as you consider entering a new romantic relationship; if a current relationship is indicated, it's firing up!

**Libra (September 23-October 22)**

You have high hopes and high confidence levels; you're required to take a project from zero to hero mode in a short period of time. Teamwork is key; you seem to be the chosen one to lead, and this gives you an opportunity to try something new. Someone asks your opinion and actually listens and follows your good advice. Communication skills are high and your message is clearly received; a challenge arises from this but passes quickly. You're in the mood for a new love or to rekindle a current flame; it's up to you to make this happen. Your imagination runs wild later when you have to tend to a few details; if anyone can fix this, you can! The urge to see a newly released movie or read a best seller gets your attention and tonight's the night.

**Scorpio (October 23-November 21)**

A difficult project at work grows more complicated; you figure this out, but not without great effort and team work. Your skills grow more proficient as you learn about new machinery or methods. This is a phase in which cleaning out closets, drawers and dark corners is important; this could indicate material or emotional cleansing. A friend is having a hard time and there's nothing you can do but sympathize; just being there could mean more than you know. Your taste is expensive, but you feel you're worth it. Personal friction is strongly indicated; this could be repaired if you let go of your pride. An opportunity for continuing education on something work related becomes known. Be mindful of your spending as it could get way out of hand.

**Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)**

Standing up for the rights of friends or loved ones takes on an important meaning. Your connections to people in positions of authority are useful in your attempts at facilitating justice. Social issues could cause a stir among friends. You feel more positive about yourself after working hard to change. You don't shy away from using new tactics to get what you want; amazing new high-tech gadgets could be a big help. You may long for excitement and perhaps even some mystery to solve! Decisions or choices relating to work, job, career should be put on pause until your concentration approves in this area. You could experience a lack of interest in work or domestic duties. Take your mind off the events of the day and rest later.

**Capricorn (December 22-January 19)**

You're in tune with those around you and they know it. Be prepared to be called upon for advice regarding something extremely personal and sensitive in nature. Your environment is overall supportive and encouraging. Convincing people to go your way on a project is easy but one person could present a challenge. If tempers flare, you do your very best to avoid any confrontations. Watch for instigators! The energy of ambition is strong and you're able to by-pass anyone or anything that could cause blockage; be careful, someone's watching closely. You could let someone in emotionally you might not ordinarily accept. Some consider you far too independent for their purposes. A book you love helps end your day with optimism.

**Aquarius (January 20-February 18)**

Your suggestions could be rejected by a boss or supervisor. Pick yourself up and continue looking for solutions this person will approve of; the cycle you have entered supports this. It could seem you encounter opposition at work and home; be patient and watch this vibration disappear. The plans you present are directly opposite of what the team wants; slow down and let this unfold. If you're able, exercise helps your mind and body; a walk, yoga or dancing could make a huge difference for you now. Decisions may seem elusive and foggy today but this could change tomorrow or the next day. If you feel disconnect, relax and gather your thoughts over a nice dinner and a game of cards this evening with a loved one.

**Pisces (February 19-March 20)**

You're surrounded by those you love and enjoy. There's acceptance of your thoughts and ideas; you feel satisfaction and accomplishment. Although it's hard, you may actually feel that it's okay to have the opinions you have; you have entered a phase of being realistic. There could be a reconciliation between you someone you love. You take an emotional trip down memory lane; this could indicate the family you grew up with or the family you have raised. This isn't a time to make serious choices involving a change of job or educational plans. You could suspect someone of doing something that's shady or unjust. You may be experiencing thoughts that are less than appropriate; this could turn into a dangerous, negative preoccupation if you aren't careful.

COUNTRY CODES

| | | | |
|--------------------------|---------|-----------------------|--------|
| Afghanistan | 0093 | Jordan | 00962 |
| Albania | 00355 | Kazakhstan | 007 |
| Algeria | 00213 | Kenya | 00254 |
| Andorra | 00376 | Kiribati | 00686 |
| Angola | 00244 | Kuwait | 00965 |
| Anguilla | 001264 | Kyrgyzstan | 00996 |
| Antigua | 001268 | Laos | 00856 |
| Argentina | 0054 | Latvia | 00371 |
| Armenia | 00374 | Lebanon | 00961 |
| Australia | 0061 | Liberia | 00231 |
| Austria | 0043 | Libya | 00218 |
| Bahamas | 001242 | Lithuania | 00370 |
| Bahrain | 00973 | Luxembourg | 00352 |
| Bangladesh | 00880 | Macau | 00853 |
| Barbados | 001246 | Macedonia | 00389 |
| Belarus | 00375 | Madagascar | 00261 |
| Belgium | 0032 | Majorca | 0034 |
| Belize | 00501 | Malawi | 00265 |
| Benin | 00229 | Malaysia | 0060 |
| Bermuda | 001441 | Maldives | 00960 |
| Bhutan | 00975 | Mali | 00223 |
| Bolivia | 00591 | Malta | 00356 |
| Bosnia | 00387 | Marshall Islands | 00692 |
| Botswana | 00267 | Martinique | 00596 |
| Brazil | 0055 | Mauritania | 00222 |
| Brunei | 00673 | Mauritius | 00230 |
| Bulgaria | 00359 | Mayotte | 00269 |
| Burkina Faso | 00226 | Mexico | 0052 |
| Burundi | 00257 | Micronesia | 00691 |
| Cambodia | 00855 | Moldova | 00373 |
| Cameroon | 00237 | Monaco | 00377 |
| Canada | 001 | Mongolia | 00976 |
| Cape Verde | 00238 | Montserrat | 001664 |
| Cayman Islands | 001345 | Morocco | 00212 |
| Central African Republic | 00236 | Mozambique | 00258 |
| Chad | 00235 | Myanmar (Burma) | 0095 |
| Chile | 0056 | Namibia | 00264 |
| China | 0086 | Nepal | 00977 |
| Colombia | 0057 | Netherlands (Holland) | 0031 |
| Comoros | 00269 | Netherlands Antilles | 00599 |
| Congo | 00242 | New Caledonia | 00687 |
| Cook Islands | 00682 | New Zealand | 0064 |
| Costa Rica | 00506 | Nicaragua | 00505 |
| Croatia | 00385 | Niger | 00227 |
| Cuba | 0053 | Nigeria | 00234 |
| Cyprus | 00357 | Niue | 00683 |
| Cyprus (Northern) | 0090392 | Norfolk Island | 00672 |
| Czech Republic | 00420 | Northern Ireland (UK) | 0044 |
| Denmark | 0045 | North Korea | 00850 |
| Diego Garcia | 00246 | Norway | 0047 |
| Djibouti | 00253 | Oman | 00968 |
| Dominica | 001767 | Pakistan | 0092 |
| Dominican Republic | 001809 | Palau | 00680 |
| Ecuador | 00593 | Panama | 00507 |
| Egypt | 0020 | Papua New Guinea | 00675 |
| El Salvador | 00503 | Paraguay | 00595 |
| England (UK) | 0044 | Peru | 0051 |
| Equatorial Guinea | 00240 | Philippines | 0063 |
| Eritrea | 00291 | Poland | 0048 |
| Estonia | 00372 | Portugal | 00351 |
| Ethiopia | 00251 | Puerto Rico | 001787 |
| Falkland Islands | 00500 | Qatar | 00974 |
| Faroe Islands | 00298 | Romania | 0040 |
| Fiji | 00679 | Russian Federation | 007 |
| Finland | 00358 | Rwanda | 00250 |
| France | 0033 | Saint Helena | 00290 |
| French Guiana | 00594 | Saint Kitts | 001869 |
| French Polynesia | 00689 | Saint Lucia | 001758 |
| Gabon | 00241 | Saint Pierre | 00508 |
| Gambia | 00220 | Saint Vincent | 001784 |
| Georgia | 00995 | Samoa | 00684 |
| Germany | 0049 | Samoa West | 00685 |
| Ghana | 00233 | San Marino | 00378 |
| Gibraltar | 00350 | Sao Tome | 00239 |
| Greece | 0030 | Saudi Arabia | 00966 |
| Greenland | 00299 | Scotland (UK) | 0044 |
| Grenada | 001473 | Senegal | 00221 |
| Guadeloupe | 00590 | Seychelles | 00284 |
| Guam | 001671 | Sierra Leone | 00232 |
| Guatemala | 00502 | Singapore | 0065 |
| Guinea | 00224 | Slovakia | 00421 |
| Guyana | 00592 | Slovenia | 00386 |
| Haiti | 00509 | Solomon Islands | 00677 |
| Holland (Netherlands) | 0031 | Somalia | 00252 |
| Honduras | 00504 | South Africa | 0027 |
| Hong Kong | 00852 | South Korea | 0082 |
| Hungary | 0036 | Spain | 0034 |
| Ibiza (Spain) | 0034 | Sri Lanka | 0094 |
| Iceland | 00354 | Sudan | 00249 |
| India | 0091 | Suriname | 00597 |
| Indian Ocean | 00873 | Swaziland | 00268 |
| Indonesia | 0062 | Sweden | 0046 |
| Iran | 0098 | Switzerland | 0041 |
| Iraq | 00964 | Syria | 00963 |
| Ireland | 00353 | Taiwan | 00886 |
| Italy | 0039 | Tanzania | 00255 |
| Ivory Coast | 00225 | Thailand | 0066 |
| Jamaica | 001876 | Toga | 00228 |
| Japan | 0081 | Tonga | 00676 |

Health

Chinese city takes pollution fight to crematoriums, toilets

BEIJING: China's northern city of Shijiazhuang will take aim at everything from coal-fired power plants to crematoriums and even public toilets in its latest effort to fix its notorious pollution problem, the city government said yesterday. Shijiazhuang, the capital of Hebei province, which surrounds the Beijing metropolitan region, has given all 52 crematoriums in the city until the end of October to replace or upgrade their furnaces to ensure they meet emission standards, the government said in a statement on its website.

Furnaces at chemical, steel, non-ferrous metal and coking factories have to install ultra-low emission equipment by the same date. The moves are among 44 measures out-

lined in a 2018 action plan released by the city government that targets emissions from industries such as transportation, construction and open-pit mining. But pollution sources from residential activities are also being marked, with Shijiazhuang banning outdoor barbecues and the sale of fireworks. It has also pledged action against "foul-smelling" air emitted from rubbish transfer stations and public toilets.

The smog-prone city aims to cut its concentration of particulate matter that is smaller than 2.5 microns, hazardous airborne pollutants known as PM2.5, to 74 micrograms per cubic metre in 2018, down 14 percent from 2017. PM2.5 pollution is considered especially haz-

ardous since the particles can lodge deep inside the lungs. Shijiazhuang achieved a 13.7 percent drop in PM2.5 levels last year but still ranked seventh from the bottom of 365 cities nationwide, according to data compiled by Greenpeace.

In March, Hebei set up a "punishment and reward system" designed to give incentives for local cities to improve air quality. Shijiazhuang said it will also launch a punishment system to push local authorities to adopt "iron-fisted pollution-control measures".

It also asked industrial companies to be ready to adopt capacity restriction measures in the coming winter, but detailed plan will be published after September. —Reuters

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Kuwait Times

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Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Relatively hot and Clouds will increase gradually with light to moderate freshening at times northerly wind changing to south easterly wind, with speed of 12 - 40 km/h with a slight chance for rain that might be

BY NIGHT: Partly cloudy with light to moderate south easterly wind to south westerly wind, with speed of 08 - 30 km/h with a chance for scattered light rain.

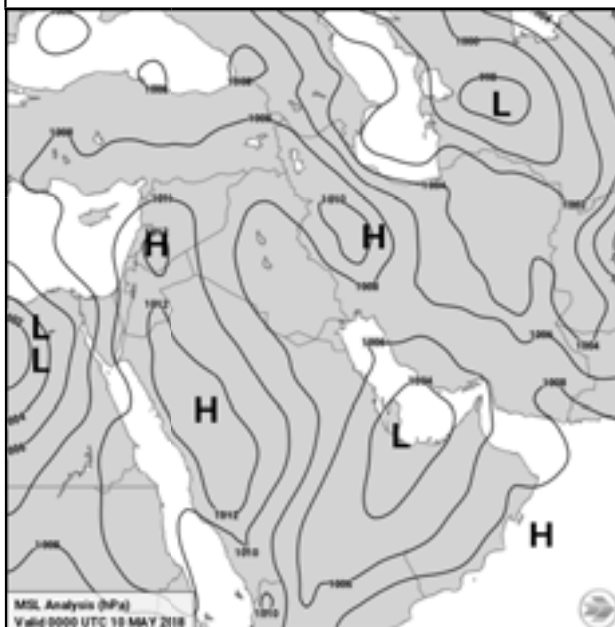
WEATHER WARNING

No Current Warnings

| STATION | MAX. EXP. | MIN. REC. |
|----------------|-----------|-----------|
| KUWAIT CITY | 35 °C | 23 °C |
| KUWAIT AIRPORT | 36 °C | 22 °C |
| ABDALY | 35 °C | 19 °C |
| BUBYAN | 34 °C | 26 °C |
| JAHRA | 35 °C | 22 °C |
| FAILAKA ISLAND | 33 °C | 23 °C |
| SALMIYAH | 33 °C | 24 °C |
| AHMADI | 33 °C | 24 °C |
| NUWAISIB | 35 °C | 22 °C |
| WAFRA | 36 °C | 21 °C |
| SALMY | 34 °C | 20 °C |

SFC. CHART

10/05/2018 0000 UTC



4 DAYS FORECAST

| DAY | DATE | WEATHER | Temperatures | | Wind Direction | Wind Speed |
|----------|-------|--|--------------|-------|----------------|--------------|
| | | | MAX. | MIN. | | |
| Friday | 05/11 | Partly cloudy to cloudy causing rising dust with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times | 35 °C | 25 °C | SW-SE | 15 - 45 km/h |
| Saturday | 05/12 | Clouds will decrease gradually with a chance for carried dust | 38 °C | 24 °C | NW | 15 - 38 km/h |
| Sunday | 05/13 | Relatively hot and some scattered clouds will appear | 38 °C | 26 °C | NW | 15 - 38 km/h |
| Monday | 05/14 | Relatively hot | 34 °C | 24 °C | VRB | 08 - 22 km/h |

PRAYER TIMES

| | |
|---------|-------|
| Fajr | 03:31 |
| Sunrise | 04:59 |
| Zuhr | 11:44 |
| Asr | 15:20 |
| Sunset | 18:30 |
| Isha | 19:55 |

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT

| | |
|--------------------------|-----------|
| MAX. Temp. | 34 °C |
| MIN. Temp. | 22 °C |
| MAX. RH | 98 % |
| MIN. RH | 27 % |
| MAX. Wind | W 57 km/h |
| TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR. | 11.9mm |

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Androose Chacko, S/o Late P.C. Chacko, Palackal Purayidathil, Ulickal PO, Iritty, Kannur District, Kerala State, Changed my minor son's name from Amal Palackal Purayidathil Androose (Passport No. L4531913) to Amal Androose. (C5397) 8-5-2018

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| | |
|----------------------|--------------|
| American Airlines | 22087425 |
| | 22087426 |
| Kuwait Airways | 171 |
| Jazeera Airways | 177 |
| Jet Airways | 22924455 |
| FlyDubai | 22414400 |
| Qatar Airways | 22423888 |
| KLM | 22425747 |
| Royal Jordanian | 22418064/5/6 |
| British Airways | 22425635 |
| Air France | 22430224 |
| Emirates | 22921555 |
| Air India | 22438184 |
| Sri Lanka Airlines | 22424444 |
| Egypt Air | 22421578 |
| Swiss Air | 22421516 |
| Saudia | 22426306 |
| Middle East Airlines | 22423073 |
| Lufthansa | 22422493 |
| PIA | 22421044 |
| Bangladesh Airlines | 22452977/8 |
| Indian Airlines | 22456700 |
| Oman Air | 22958787 |
| Turkish Airlines | 22453820/1 |
| Aeroflot | 22404838/9 |



First Quarter 2018 Results

for Mobile Telecommunications Company - Zain

The Board of Directors of Mobile Telecommunications Company K.S.C.P. would like to announce to its shareholders that the company achieved a Net Profit of **KD 41 million (USD 137 million)** for Q1 - 2018.

The Board would like to express gratitude to all customers and shareholders for their confidence and assures them of the company's commitment to excellence and profitable growth.

Board of Directors

| | | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
| 46.9 MILLION | 864 USD MILLION | 281 USD MILLION | 137 USD MILLION | 3 CENTS |
| 259 KD MILLION | 84 KD MILLION | 41 KD MILLION | 9 FILS | |
| CUSTOMERS | REVENUES | EBITDA | NET INCOME | EPS |



Business

Zain reports 7% net profit growth to reach KD 41 million, 5% revenue growth to reach KD 259 million for Q1 2018

Kuwait and Iraq operations perform strongly in quarter: Bader Al-Kharafi

KUWAIT: Zain Group, a leading mobile telecom innovator in eight markets across the Middle East and Africa, announces its consolidated financial results for the first quarter (Q1) ending 31 March 2018. Zain served 46.9 million customers at the end of the period, reflecting a 2 percent increase year-on-year (Y-o-Y).

For financial reporting purposes for the first three-month period of 2018, Zain applied the new IFRS 9 and IFRS 15 accounting standards that negatively impacted Zain's key financial indicators, particularly EBITDA.

Zain Group generated consolidated revenues of KD 259 million (\$864 million) for the first quarter of 2018, up 5 percent compared to the same period in the previous year. EBITDA for the quarter reached KD 84 million (\$281 million), down 21 percent Y-o-Y, reflecting an EBITDA margin of 32.5 percent. Net income for the quarter reached KD 41 million (\$137 million), up 7 percent Y-o-Y reflecting Earnings Per Share of 9 Fils (\$0.03).

For Q1, 2018, foreign currency translation impact, predominantly due to the 38 percent currency devaluation in Sudan from an average of 15.5 in Q1, 2017 to 24.9 in Q1, 2018 (SDG / USD), cost the company \$38 million in revenue, \$16 million in EBITDA and \$7 million in net income. Excluding the currency translation impact, Y-o-Y revenues would have grown by 9 percent.

Key Operational Notes for three months ended 31 March, 2018:

- The company held its General Assembly Meeting (AGM) on 28 March, and approved the distribution of a cash dividend of 35 fils (\$0.11) per share for the 2017 financial year.
- Group data revenues (excluding SMS and VAS) increased 10 percent Y-o-Y, representing 26 percent of the Group's consolidated revenues.
- The application of IFRS 15 standards significantly impacted EBITDA predominantly due to two main factors, one, the Cost of Sales (COS) related to handsets that could no longer be amortized, and two, the company's investment in attracting Enterprise (B2B) customers.
- Zain Kuwait and Zain Iraq record strong growth, while significant currency devaluation in Sudan, and loss of customers and other factors in Saudi Arabia impact overall performance
- During the quarter, Zain entered numerous agreements with world-leading entities to support its digital lifestyle aspirations. These included with Google's Apigee to launch the Zain Group Application Program Interface (API) Platform, that will see the operator exposing its APIs, thereby helping to remove a significant barrier to developing potential digital partnerships from across the globe. Another agreement was a strategic partnership with Apigate, a subsidiary of Axiata Digital, to procure and provide API services via Zain's API Hub for its operating companies and end users.
- Zain Group and its operations also entered Memorandum of Understandings (MoU) with leading technology solutions provider Ericsson, Huawei and Nokia and other entities in areas of developing 5G roadmaps as well as in rollout exciting and compelling innovative solutions to enrich the enterprise (B2B) market and exploit the vast opportunities in cloud services, gaming, digital content and e-commerce, all key and lucrative growth areas.



Zain Group Chairman- Ahmed Al-Tahous

Commenting on the results, the newly appointed Chairman of the Board of Directors of Zain Group, Ahmed Al-Tahous said, "It is a great honor to have been appointed Chairman of Zain Group, a company with a rich history that has created substantial returns for all shareholders as well as extensive positive socio-economic benefit for the countries we operate in over the years."

The Chairman continued, "The encouraging first quarter 2018 results were achieved as a result of the transformation strategy implemented several years ago by the company to focus on innovative programs to improve the efficiency of the operations as well diversifying income sources primarily from digital related areas. The Board is working closely with management in further fostering these value accretive areas as well as seeking new opportunities in driving the business forward."

Vice-Chairman and Group CEO, Bader Al-Kharafi said, "Management's transformational and digitization efforts are resulting in sound operational progress across several of our key markets as reflected in our robust results for the first quarter, highlighted by the improving performance in our home market of Kuwait and similarly in Iraq, as well as in the strong growth of data revenues. If it were not for unavoidable externalities such as the prolonged currency issue in Sudan and various adverse factors in Saudi Arabia, as well as the application of the new IFRS accounting standards, the Q1, 2018 results would have been even more impressive."



Zain Vice-Chairman & Group CEO, Bader Al-Kharafi

Kharafi added, "The data monetization, Enterprise (B2B) and smart city initiatives implemented in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and across other key operations are growing at impressive rates and we will continue to develop the required infrastructure and invest resources to further benefit from these lucrative and strategic business areas."

The Vice-Chairman and Group CEO concluded, "Although we operate in many markets with diverse levels of socio-economic challenges and technological maturity, we are committed to our digital lifestyle strategy and leveraging our state-of-art networks. We remain focused on enhancing shareholder value and actively seeking lucrative opportunities in the digital space as well as ensuring the mobile experience for our customers is second to none."

Operational review of key markets for the three months ended 31 March, 2018.

Kuwait: Maintaining its market leadership, the flagship operation of Zain Group saw its customer base serve 2.8 million in a very challenging period that saw improving financial performance for the quarter. Revenues generated for the quarter increased 21 percent reaching KD 96 million (\$320 million), and net income increased 16 percent to reach KD 19 million (\$63 million). Zain Kuwait's EBITDA amounted to KD 26 million (\$87 million), a 15 percent decrease with EBITDA margin standing at 27 percent for the quarter. Data revenues (excluding SMS and VAS) grew by 4 percent Y-o-Y representing 29 percent of total revenues.

Iraq: Zain Iraq performed exceptionally well in Q1, 2018 when compared to the corresponding 3-month period with revenues reaching \$275 million, a 9 percent increase Y-o-Y and EBITDA reached \$96 million, up 12 percent reflecting an EBITDA margin of 35 percent. The operation reported a net profit of \$8 million, substantially up on the \$283,000 profit recorded for Q1, 2017. The expansion of 3.9G services across the country and restoration of sites in the West and North, combined with numerous customer acquisition initiatives, especially in core regions, resulted in impressive addition of 2.2 million customers (18 percent increase) to reach 14.5 million. Also contributing to the operation's financial revival was the significant growth of data revenues, robust growth in enterprise (B2B) segment, and the revamping of its call centers significantly improving customer service.

Sudan: In local currency (SDG) terms, the operator continues to perform well, as revenues grew by 26 percent Y-o-Y to reach SDG 2.1 billion (\$85 million, down 20 percent in \$terms) for Q1, 2018. EBITDA increased by 35 percent to reach SDG 802 million (\$33 million, down 14 percent in \$terms), reflecting an EBITDA margin of 38 percent while net income increased by 18 percent to reach SDG 305 million (\$14 million, down 17 percent in \$terms). Data revenues (excluding SMS and VAS) formed 16 percent of total revenues, with an impressive annual growth of 41 percent in SDG terms. Zain Sudan now serves 13.8 million customers.

Saudi Arabia: Zain Saudi Arabia performance for the quarter was affected by a 17 percent Y-o-Y (1.7 million) reduction of its customer base due to exodus of expat community, bio-metric measures and a two-sim policy for expats. In addition, the increase in depreciation and amortization due to acquiring spectrum and additional property equipment and one-off charges in Q1 2018 relating to the absorption of VAT customer related fees negatively impacted the operation. The company reported quarterly net losses of SAR 77 million (\$21 million) compared to a SAR 45 million (\$12 million) net profit in Q1, 2017. Revenues decreased by 12 percent in Q1, 2018 reaching SAR 1.686 billion (\$450 million). The company recorded a 14 percent decrease in EBITDA to reach SAR 571 million (\$152 million) in Q1 2018, resulting in an EBITDA margin of 34 percent. Impressively, data revenues (excluding SMS and VAS) represents 55 percent of total revenues.

Jordan: Zain Jordan serves a customer base of 3.8 million customers as at Q1, 2018, maintaining its lead in the market. Y-o-Y revenues were stable at \$119 million, with EBITDA decreasing 18 percent to reach \$48 million, reflecting an EBITDA margin of 40 percent. Net income reached \$18 million. With the continual expansion of 4G services across the country, data revenues (excluding SMS and VAS) grew by 5 percent Y-o-Y which now represents 39 percent of total revenues.

Bahrain: During Q1, 2018, Zain Bahrain generated revenues of \$44 million. EBITDA for the period reached \$10 million, reflecting an EBITDA margin of 22 percent while net income increased 120 percent to reach \$2.9 million. The operation's focus on new, attractive packages coupled with a totally revamped 4G network saw the customer base served reach 650,000, with data revenues (excluding SMS and VAS) representing 45 percent of overall revenues.

Group Key Performance Indicators (KD and USD) for Q1, 2018

| | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| Total Active Customers | 46.9 million | up 2% on Q1, 2017 |
| Consolidated Revenues | KD 259 million | - (USD 864 million) |
| EBITDA | KD 84 million | - (USD 281 million) |
| EBITDA Margin | 32.5% | |
| Net Income | KD 41 million | - (USD 137 million) |
| EPS | 9 Fils | - USD 0.03 |

Business

Asia stocks gain as crude oil extends rally on Iran woes

Ringgit slides after Malaysia vote upset

TOKYO: Asian stocks rose yesterday, with energy shares leading the way as crude oil prices bolted higher after US President Donald Trump's decision to pull out of a nuclear deal with Iran. Spreadbetters expected European stocks to open higher as well, with Britain's FTSE adding 0.2 percent, Germany's DAX rising 0.4 percent and France's CAC gaining 0.3 percent. MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan advanced 0.6 percent, while Japan's Nikkei climbed 0.3 percent. South Korea's KOSPI rose 0.5 percent and Shanghai was 0.2 percent higher.

Brent crude futures rose 0.8 percent to \$77.82 a barrel, the highest since November 2014 and building on gains of about 3 percent on Wednesday. US light crude futures were up 0.6 percent at \$71.69. Energy shares soared as crude oil prices reached 3-1/2-year highs, with investors betting the US withdrawal from a nuclear agreement with Iran would increase tensions in the Middle East and curtail oil supply. Overnight, the Dow gained 0.75 percent and the S&P 500 climbed nearly 1 percent, with the S&P energy index rallying 2 percent.

Rising oil prices in turn pushed up US Treasury yields by fanning inflation concerns. The 10-year Treasury note yield rose to a two-week high above the 3 percent threshold before pulling back to 2.982 percent. Shored up by higher yields, the dollar climbed to a 4-1/2-month high of 93.416 against a basket of six major currencies overnight. The dollar index was last at 92.956.

The New Zealand dollar retreated to a five-month low of \$0.6915 after the Reserve Bank of New Zealand (RBNZ) wrong-footed hawks. It kept interest rates steady as expected, but said its next move might be a cut or a hike. "The RBNZ surprised markets with a slight dovish shift," said Imre Speizer, an economist at Westpac. The euro crawled back to \$1.1871 after slipping

overnight to \$1.1823, its lowest since late December. The dollar was steady at 109.690 yen after brushing an eight-day peak of 109.930.

Malaysian vote upset reverberates

Investors in emerging markets, already facing financial uncertainty in countries such as Argentina and Turkey, received another jolt after a stunning election upset in Malaysia. Moody's ratings agency said the country was now in uncharted territory after an alliance of opposition parties led by former prime minister Mahathir Mohamad shocked the ruling coalition.

Over the past day the Malaysian ringgit slid nearly 3 percent in the one-month non-deliverable forward market and the cost to insure against the country's debt default has risen. "The surprise win by Mahathir's coalition party is likely to see an increase in policy uncertainty at least in the short term with market volatility

likely to be higher," said Sian Fenner, lead Asian economist at Oxford Economics. Special public holidays were declared for Thursday and Friday following the elections. But, highlighting investor worries, the US-traded iShares MSCI Malaysia ETF plunged 6 percent overnight to a one-year low.

"Malaysian markets are expected to eventually regain some calm as Mahathir's win may not spell a dramatic policy departure from those under (incumbent prime minister) Najib," said Kota Hirayama, senior emerging markets economist at SMBC Nikko Securities in Tokyo. "Malaysia still enjoys a current account surplus and this could help cushion any fiscal spending policies Mahathir could pursue. That said, the opposition parties that won is a loose coalition and it remains to be seen if they can retain a united front."—Reuters

“

Malaysian markets to regain some calm

”

How Trump's steel tariffs kick the can business

WOODLAND: Dan Vincent is in a bind. The president of Pacific Coast Producers (PCP) plans to use around 700 million tin-coated steel cans this year for tomatoes, peaches and pears from 168 growers here in California. His cooperative then sells the canned fruits and vegetables to grocers ranging from Walmart Inc to Kroger Co, as well as food services companies such as Sysco Corp and a host of restaurant chains.

Since President Donald Trump announced sweeping tariffs on steel and aluminum to help the domestic steel industry on March 20, PCP's steel costs have jumped 9 percent as the market prices in the tariffs before they even take effect. Vincent now expects his steel bill for the year to rise \$18 million to \$20 million, forcing him to choose between taking a potential 75 percent cut to his company's profits, or pushing the added costs to his retail customers and eventually to consumers - many of whom are lower-income Americans "who can least afford it," Vincent said.

"Look, we all want to protect US steelworkers," Vincent said while touring a tomato farm in Woodland, California. "But we don't want to be an unintended consequence of this." Meant to protect US jobs and even out trade imbalances, the Trump administration's tariffs on steel and aluminum are having a ripple effect throughout the US economy, from cars to aircraft to oilfield pipes. Cans have a special significance in the debate over the pros and cons of the policy.

US Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross, during a March 2 appearance on CNBC, held up a Campbell Soup Co can and said it only contained 2.6 cents worth of steel in it, equating to less than a one cent added cost per can. "Who in the world is going to be too bothered by six tenths of a cent?" Ross said. A Commerce Department spokesman said the figures Ross used were based on the cost of tin plate steel and calculated for a 10.75 ounce can, adding steel is "only one component of the cost."

Canning industry executives, however, say the cost of America's most common 15 ounce can is actually around 17 cents, and will rise 4 cents thanks to tariffs. Even a 10-ounce can costs food processors up to 14 cents, and should cost 3 cents more with tariffs. Those pennies add up. If the cost of all 24 billion cans Americans use annually went up 3 cents, it would generate an additional \$720 million in costs someone in the supply chain must eat, industry executives said.

"Our members have razor-thin margins," said Nickolas George, president of the Midwest Food Products Association, which represents Seneca Food Corp and Del Monte Pacific Ltd, which both can fruit and vegetables, among others. "Lower profits for them mean less innovation, less investment, less expansion into new markets and less hiring."—Reuters



NEW YORK: Traders work on the floor at the closing bell of the Dow Industrial Average at the New York Stock Exchange in New York. — AFP

Business

Chinese insurer Anbang's ex-boss jailed for fraud

Xiaohui found guilty of defrauding \$10bn

SHANGHAI: A Chinese court jailed the former high-flying head of troubled Anbang Insurance Group for 18 years yesterday for defrauding the company of more than \$10 billion. Wu Xiaohui was toppled as Anbang's head last year and China's insurance regulator announced an unprecedented takeover of the conglomerate in February, as the government moves to prevent heavily-indebted large private companies from collapsing and posing a risk to the financial system.

Established in 2004, Anbang grew rapidly into a financial-services powerhouse, making waves in 2014 by buying New York's landmark Waldorf Astoria hotel for \$1.95 billion and other acquisitions. In addition to the prison sentence, the Shanghai Municipal No. 1 Intermediate People's Court announced that it had ordered the seizure of 10.5 billion yuan worth of his property and the suspension of his political rights for four years.

The court found him guilty of defrauding Anbang of more than 65 billion yuan following a trial in March. The funds were transferred to companies that Wu personally controlled to repay debts or for "personal expenditures", the judges said. Between 2011 and 2017, Wu instructed others to produce false earnings reports, disclose false information, fake fund injections and conceal insurance revenue to deceive regulators, the court said. "(Wu) used bait by promising interest rates higher than the bank depository rate to illegally absorb large amounts of funds, which exceeded the scale the former insurance regulator approved," it said. At his March trial, the court was also told that An-

bang had sold investment products that exceeded allowable fund-raising amounts by a whopping 723.9 billion yuan. The government's swoop on Anbang marked its most aggressive step yet to rein in politically connected conglomerates that grew rapidly and launched a wave of splashy multibillion-dollar overseas investments fuelled by excessive debt. The government of President Xi Jinping, who has dramatically strengthened his grip on power recently, has made cleaning up financial risks a top national priority.

Crackdown

Wu's situation marks a startling fall from grace for a man who reportedly married a granddaughter of the late Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping—a sign that even political connections cannot guarantee immunity. Wu previously worked in auto sales and infrastructure investment before setting up Beijing-based Anbang, according to Chinese media reports. Anbang used massive sales of short-term, high-yield policies to become one of China's biggest insurers, but regulators are now believed to fear the company had hugely overextended.

The company made a failed \$14-billion bid for the Starwood hotels chain in 2016. It also was in aborted talks with Donald Trump's son-in-law and adviser Jared Kushner to redevelop a Manhattan office tower, Bloomberg News reported last year. Anbang's takeover by the authorities is due to last a year but the government has said it could be extended if necessary as authorities work to restruc-



BEIJING: Workers clean windows on the Anbang Insurance building in Beijing.—AFP

ture the firm. The highly unusual commandeering signalled deep official concern over the Beijing-based company's financial situation and appeared to confirm that toxic financial risks lurked in the world's second-largest economy. The company announced in April that the government would inject 60.8 billion yuan into it. Acquisitive private companies such as Anbang, HNA, Fosun and

Wanda spent billions on the overseas purchases of everything from European football clubs to hotel chains and movie studios. But Chinese authorities, who originally encouraged such asset-shopping, abruptly reversed course over the past year, clamping down amid concerns over capital flight and fears that companies could collapse and trigger a financial contagion at home.—AFP

US universities seed start-ups

NEW YORK: A decade ago, Devin Jameson might have chosen to drop out of college and work on Eversound, a wireless headset start-up for senior communities. Instead, Jameson was able to combine his co-founded company with his academic coursework through Cornell University's eLab program, an accelerator curriculum he completed in 2015.

The eLab program runs for a full academic year. Students build out their businesses while participating in lectures, class work, mentorship and receiving a \$5,000 investment. At the end of the program, students demo their businesses in front of a crowd of hundreds, including potential investors. "Being able to get actual college credit for going through an incubator program was really important," Jameson said. "I didn't have to make a compromise."

As students increasingly pursue entrepreneurship, more universities are creating accelerator and incubator programs to support them. They are also nurturing job skills that will help the next generation of workers thrive in the gig economy, including flexibility, innovation and digital expertise. The share of incubator programs associated with universities has grown to a record high of 42 percent, according to the International Business Innovation Association's 2016 IMPACT Index, up from around one-third in 2012 and one-fifth in 2006.

This trend comes as the US venture capital industry deployed \$84 billion to entrepreneurs last year, the highest annual amount since the early 2000s dot-com boom, according to the PitchBook-NVCA Venture Monitor. —Reuters

Philippine economic growth surges, central bank hikes rates

MANILA: The Philippine economy was one of Asia's best performers in the first quarter of 2018, data showed yesterday, but concerns over inflation pushed the central bank to lift interest rates. The 6.8 percent expansion, which tied it with China and was only eclipsed by Vietnam, was boosted by a surge in government spending under President Rodrigo Duterte. Philippine growth, which was 6.5 percent at the end of 2017, has now come in at 6.5 percent or better for 10 successive quarters.

"The Philippines remains one of the best performing economies in the region," Economic Planning Secretary Ernesto Pernia told reporters. "If not for the... increase in inflation, real GDP growth could have been closer to the high end of our growth target of 7.8 percent," he added. As part of his "Build, Build, Build" initiative, Duterte has pushed spending to a record high. He is taking aim at bridges and public transit in a drive to unclog Manila's notorious traffic, while also building another



MANILA: Children sit on a wooden boat in Manila Bay.—AFP

international airport north of the capital. However, inflation is at a five-year high of 4.5 percent and the central bank policy board took action yesterday. "The monetary board noted that the latest forecasts have further shifted higher, indicating that inflation pressures could become more broad-based over the policy horizon," the central bank said in a statement. The board raised the benchmark interest rate to 3.25 percent after it had been at a record low of 3.0 percent since being reduced in June 2016. The last rate hike was September 2014.

Central bank deputy governor Diwa Gunigundo said the board had boosted its inflation rate forecast for 2018 to 4.6 percent. Capital Economics analysts warned

rising prices, along with weak export growth and sluggish investment pose a risk to the high-growth trajectory. "Looking ahead, while we expect the Philippines to remain one of the fastest growing economies in the region, growth in 2018 is unlikely to match the 6.7 percent expansion seen last year," it said.

Analysts had said they expected the central bank's response but warned a rate hike could hurt consumer spending. Pernia said last week that higher inflation was due mainly to the "transitory" impact of a major tax reform law passed last year that increased the price of fuel, alcohol and beverage products. However, he said this should "taper off over the coming months".—AFP

Business

New Google Assistant sparks ethics questions

Human-sounding AI potential boon to busy people

SAN FRANCISCO: The new Google digital assistant converses so naturally it may seem like a real person. The unveiling of the natural-sounding robo-assistant by the tech giant this week wowed some observers, but left others fretting over the ethics of how the human-seeming software might be used. Google chief Sundar Pichai played a recording of the Google Assistant independently calling a hair salon and a restaurant to make bookings—interacting with staff who evidently didn't realize they were dealing with artificial intelligence software, rather than a real customer.

Tell the Google Assistant to book a table for four at 6:00 pm, it tends to the phone call in a human-sounding voice complete with “speech disfluencies” such as “ums” and “uhs.” “This is what people often do when they are gathering their thoughts,” Google engineers Yaniv Leviathan and Yossi Matias said in a Duplex blog post. Google Assistant artificial intelligence enhanced with “Duplex” technology that let it engage like a real person on the phone was a surprise and, for some unsettling, star of the internet giant's annual developers conference this week in its home town of Mountain View, California.

The digital assistant was also programmed to understand when to respond quickly, such as after someone says “hello,” versus pausing as a person might before answering complex questions. Google pitched the enhanced assistant as a potential boon to busy people and small businesses which lack websites customers can use to make appointments. “Our vision for our assistant is to help you get things done,” Pichai

told the approximately 7,000 developers at the Google I/O conference, along with an online audience watching his streamed presentation on Tuesday. Google will be testing the digital assistant improvement in the months ahead.

Realistic robocallers

The Duplex demonstration was quickly followed by debate over whether people answering phones should be told when they are speaking to human-sounding software and how the technology might be abused in the form of more convincing “robocalls” by marketers or political campaigns. “Google Duplex is the most incredible, terrifying thing out of #IO18 so far,” tweeted Chris Messina, a product designer whose resume includes Google and bringing the idea of the hashtag to Twitter.

Google Duplex is an important development and signals an urgent need to figure out proper governance of machines that can fool people into thinking they are human, according to Kay Firth-Butterfield, head of the AI and machine learning project at the World Economic Forum's Center for the Fourth Industrial Revolution. “These machines could call on behalf of political parties and make ever more convincing recommendations for voting,” Firth-Butterfield reasoned. “Will children be able to use these agents and receive calls from them?”

Digital assistants making arrangements for people also raises the question of who is responsible for mistakes, such as a no-show or cancellation fee for an appointment set for the wrong time. At a time of heightened concerns about on-



CALIFORNIA: Google CEO Sundar Pichai delivers the keynote address at the Google I/O 2018 Conference at Shoreline Amphitheater in Mountain View, California.—AFP

line privacy, there were also worries expressed about what kind of data digital assistants might collect and who gets access to it. “My sense is that humans in general don't mind talking to machines so long as they know they are doing so,” read a post credited to Lauren Weinstein in a chat forum below the Duplex blog post.

An array of comments at Twitter contended

there was an ethical breach to not letting people know they were conversing with software. “If you've grown up watching ‘Star Trek TNG’ like me then you probably considered natural voice interactions with computers a thing of the future,” read a post by Andreas Schafer in the blog chat forum. “Well, looks like the future is here.”—AFP

Apple fells plans for Ireland data centre over trees

DUBLIN: US tech giant Apple announced yesterday it had shelved plans to build an 850-million-euro data centre in Ireland over a court battle with conservationists seeking to preserve a forest. “Several years ago we applied to build a data centre at Athenry. Despite our best efforts, delays in the approval process have forced us to make other plans and we will not be able to move forward with the data centre,” the company said in a statement.

“While disappointing, this setback will not dampen our enthusiasm for future projects in Ireland as our business continues to grow.” The Silicon Valley giant believed it had got the green light in October when a High Court judge dismissed appeals brought by three campaigners, who were concerned about the environmental impact of the project which was to occupy nearly 166,000 square meters, or roughly 40 Premier League football pitches, in County Galway, west Ireland. But the campaigners won last week their Supreme Court bid for their appeal



BEIJING: In this file photo taken shows Apple logos on a computer screen in Beijing.—AFP

to be heard, delaying the process even further. Apple said it was “proud of the many contributions we make” to the Irish economy, and insisted it was still “deeply committed to our employees and customers” in Ireland. The project, which was first announced three years ago, would have been the biggest private investment in western Ireland. Apple has its European headquarters based in the southern Irish city of Cork, but has run into problems in the country. The Irish government last month said it was signing a deal for the US tech giant to pay 13 billion euros in back taxes as ordered by the European Commission, which said it had received favorable terms that amounted to state aid.—AFP

More execs exit as Nike confronts workplace harassment

NEW YORK: Nike has dismissed additional executives as it moves to address a workplace culture marred by sexual harassment and bullying, embarrassing a brand that has self-defined around equality and empowerment. The latest departures, confirmed Wednesday by a Nike spokeswoman, consist of five executives, including one woman, and lift the total exits to around a dozen, including former president Trevor Edwards, who had been seen as a CEO in waiting.

Since Edwards' departure was announced in March, US media reports have chronicled myriad cases in which women were subjected to sexual harassment and often passed up for promotions in a boorish frat-like culture. The revelations have come amid a broader rethink in US society over gender relations following the downfall of Hollywood mogul Harvey Weinstein and the ensuing “#MeToo” movement that has toppled numerous figures across business, pol-

itics and entertainment. Remaining Nike brass have said little publicly about the staffing overhaul beyond chief executive Mark Parker's remarks in March emphasizing the need to address “some behavioral issues” that clashed with Nike's culture. “I'm committed to ensure that we have an environment where every Nike employee can have a positive experience and reach their full potential,” Parker said on a March 22 earnings conference call.

The upheaval comes as Nike has experienced sales stagnation in North America, offset in the most recent quarter by a strong performance in China and other overseas markets. CFRA Research analyst Victor Ahluwalia said it was too soon to know if the problems would further dent North Americans sales, but he predicted the company's travails could trouble consumers. Nike's famous “Just Do It” slogan emphasizes empowerment, as do sponsorships of iconic athletes such as Michael Jordan and Serena Williams.

“The company was viewed as progressive and kind of millennial friendly, so for something like this to happen with a brand that comes with that kind of a message was shocking,” said Ahluwalia. But Ahluwalia praised the company for “being proactive,” in contrast to other companies that responded to workplace scandals only after problems publicly surfaced, usually in media reports.—AFP

Sports

Sainz hoping for special return to Barcelona's Circuit de Catalunya

Sainz boasts strong record and plenty of fans in Spain

BARCELONA: Carlos Sainz boasts a strong record and plenty of fans at his home Spanish Grand Prix but he can expect his return to Barcelona's Circuit de Catalunya this weekend to feel particularly special.

For the last three seasons the 23-year-old Formula One driver has been with Red Bull-owned Toro Rosso—finishing ninth, sixth and seventh respectively in Spain—but Sunday will be his first home race with Renault.

And that, for a generation brought up on Fernando Alonso's groundbreaking 2005 and 2006 championship-winning years with the French factory team, means a lot. "It is like a love story, Spain with Renault," Sainz told Reuters.

"I was the first one who was a big fan of Fernando and Renault back in the day so that's why I feel so proud and so comfortable here in this team and why I am working here at the moment like I was going to be here forever." Whether his stay is for longer than just the current one-year loan remains open, with Red Bull having the option to pull Sainz back if Australian Daniel Ricciardo decides to leave that

team at the end of the season.

Sainz is evidently keen to stay, and Renault want to keep him, but his immediate priority is to measure up against German team mate Nico Hulkenberg who has out-qualified him 4-0 this season and is well ahead on points. "I'm comfortable where I am, I have full confidence in this project and I'm very comfortable doing a full season with Renault without really having a clear picture of the future," he said in Baku at the end of last month. "I'm more concerned about performance, how can we make this car faster, how can we evolve as a team and how can I help this team to move forward."

FIFTH IN BAKU

He did that in Azerbaijan, the race immediately before Barcelona, where he finished fifth after Hulkenberg had hit the wall and retired. It was the first time he had beaten the German this year. The points left Renault just one behind fourth-placed McLaren, who use the same engines, in the constructors' standings. The result was also Renault's best since the former champions rescued Lotus from imminent

collapse and returned to the sport as a full team in 2016, and set Sainz up nicely for home. "I've always felt very special and respected in Spain, in Barcelona," he said.

"Probably my first ever qualifying there, making P5 (fifth on the grid), helped to get the Spanish fans to believe in me," he said of a 2015 race in which he out-qualified and beat his then-team mate Max Verstappen. In 2016, a race won by Verstappen after moving to Red Bull, the Spaniard ran as high as third. "I don't know why it's always been a very good race for me and I've always performed very well and that has helped me to have my little fan base in Barcelona," said the ardent Real Madrid fan.

Before Baku he had been struggling to get the car to his liking, particularly in cornering, while Hulkenberg seemed to move up a gear. "I have a big challenge but I knew since Austin last year that I was facing up against probably one of the strongest drivers on the grid at the moment," Sainz said of his experienced team mate. "I'm working hard. I think that's the only response to it.



BARCELONA: McLaren's Spanish Formula 1 driver Fernando Alonso (L) speaks with Renault's Spanish driver Carlos Sainz Jr (R) during a press conference at the Circuit de Catalunya in Montmelo on the outskirts of Barcelona yesterday ahead of the Spanish Formula One Grand Prix.—AFP

Working hard to get closer. "I think the margins are still extremely small, we're talking about a tenth, or two tenths sometimes, which multiplies itself in the race because of track position and all that.

"When you're talking about a tenth or two, it can fall to one side or the other, especially when I know that I am still not 100 percent confident with the car. I know there's performance and lap time to come."—Reuters

Cipriani back, Shields in for England's South Africa tour

LONDON: Danny Cipriani has been recalled to the England squad to tour South Africa next month three years after his last appearance, while New Zealand-based back rower Brad Shields was also included for the three-test tour.

Coach Eddie Jones released his squad yesterday that included seven new players and included Shields after he was released by the New Zealand rugby union overnight. Ben Earl (Saracens), Jonny Hill (Exeter Chiefs), Dan Robson (Wasps), Ben Spencer (Saracens), 18-year-old Cameron Redpath (Sale Sharks) and Jack Willis (Wasps) were all given their chance in the face of a series of absentees.

Cipriani is the headline name, forcing his way back into contention after a great season for Wasps. He won his first cap in 2008 but has won only 14 in all since then, with his last start also coming 10 years ago.

A succession of England coaches have declined to include him, deterred by his reputation for individualism, but Jones has given him a final lifeline. Brilliantly talented but also too often disruptive, the 30-year-old Cipriani is leaving Wasps at the end of the season and is currently without a club.

He will travel as third choice flyhalf behind George Ford and Owen Farrell, who captains the squad in the absence of the injured Dylan Hartley, though Cipriani could also feature at fullback. Billy Vunipola (Saracens) is recalled after recovering from injury having last played for



Danny Cipriani

England in the 2017 Six Nations. Mark Wilson (Newcastle Falcons) — a year after last featuring for England in the two Test series in Argentina—is also included.

Danny Care (Harlequins), Dan Cole (Leicester Tigers), James Haskell (Wasps) and Richard Wigglesworth (Saracens) have been rested for the tour. Jones also confirmed that Australian Scott Wisemantel will join the coaching staff for the tour as an attack consultant.

England, coming off the back of three successive Six Nations defeats, will play South Africa in three Tests in Johannesburg (June 9), Bloemfontein (June 16) and Cape Town (June 23).

"Our tour to South Africa will be the most exciting challenge for us as a group since 2016," Jones said. "We have an opportunity to create some history next month and win the Test series, something no England side has done before." —AFP

Williams hails Cardiff ahead of Gloucester cup final

BILBAO: Cardiff's barn-storming Kiwi No 8 Nick Williams might be nearing end of his career, but the veteran insists the form of the Welsh region has peaked perfectly ahead of today's European Challenge cup final against Gloucester at Bilbao.

The former Junior All Black, now 34, has enjoyed one of the finest seasons in his 14-year career, playing a key role in the back row alongside the likes of Ellis Jenkins, Josh Navidi and Olly Robinson.

"In this part of my career, I didn't think I'd be able to go to play in a final," said Williams, who arrived in Cardiff in 2016 and previously played for Munster, Aironi and Ulster after quitting North Harbour in 2008. "It's a big blessing, personally, but from where we were when I arrived in Cardiff compared to where we are going to be on tonight, is a huge step. "Us getting there is one huge step, and winning will be another big one, another task that I'm very much looking forward to."

Williams added that minds would be on the game rather than potential silverware at the San Mames Stadium. Cardiff won the competition in 2010 while Gloucester are seeking a third success after wins in 2006 and 2015.

"We need to treat this one as any other game, and that's what we've tried to drive through the heads in training this week," said the Kiwi, older brother of Chiefs back Tim Nanai-Williams and cousin of both code-swapping All Black Sonny Bill Williams and boxer Joseph Parker.

"Not much will change in the game, just that you get a little silver thing to hold up at the end if you win," he said. "Form came into play at the right time of the season, and we're now looking forward to getting to Bilbao and hopefully get the win. "When you have a happy camp and happy players, that can go a long way. The boys come to work with a smile, which might sound like a cliché, but the boys want to play for each other. "We have a really good mix here of young guys coming up and the older boys like myself and Melon [Gethin Jenkins] and we seem to be clicking."—AFP

Max Stassi leads Houston Astros to sweep of Oakland A's

Yankees rally to beat Red Sox, seize AL East lead

OAKLAND: Gerrit Cole pitched his third straight overpowering game, while teammates Max Stassi and Derek Fisher stunned Daniel Mengden with back-to-back, two-strike home runs with two outs in the seventh inning Wednesday afternoon, sending the visiting Houston Astros to a 4-1 win over the Oakland Athletics and a sweep of their three-game series. Cole (4-1), a California native who never previously pitched in Oakland, struck out nine in six innings to run his total to 37 in his last three starts covering 21 2/3 innings. He allowed one run, which put the Astros in a 1-0 hole in the bottom of the sixth. A one-out single by Matt Joyce and RBI double by Jed Lowrie provided the game's first scoring. The Astros, who completed a 4-2 trip, bounced right back against Mengden, who had shut out Houston on four hits before allowing the two homers.

YANKEES 9, RED SOX 6

Brett Gardner hit a go-ahead, two-run triple, and Aaron Judge followed with a mammoth two-run homer with one out in the eighth inning as host New York pulled out a victory over Boston. Gardner began the night with a .198 average but capped his first three-hit game of the year by lifting Craig Kimbrel's 96 mph fastball soaring over center fielder Mookie Betts' head to give the Yankees a 7-6 lead. Judge and Gardner each scored three runs, and Judge drove in three. Giancarlo Stanton hit a two-run double for New York. Mitch Moreland, Andrew Benintendi and Hanley Ramirez homered for the Red Sox.

PADRES 2, NATIONALS 1

Matt Szczur doubled home Manuel Margot to break a seventh-inning tie, giving host San Diego a victory over Washington, preventing the Nationals from sweeping the three-game series. Margot singled for his third hit of the game opening the seventh against Trevor Gott (0-2). Margot immediately stole second and moved to third when catcher Matt Wieters' throw bounced into center field. One out later, Szczur, who was hitting in the leadoff spot for the first time this season, lined an RBI double to left-center. Craig Stammen (1-0) got the win after throwing two scoreless innings in relief, and Brad Hand picked up his 10th save.

PHILLIES 11, GIANTS 3

Nick Pivetta pitched five shutout innings, Maikel Franco homered, and Philadelphia handily defeated visiting San Francisco. Pivetta allowed only four hits while striking out seven and walking none. Carlos Santana had three hits and a career-high-tying five RBIs while Franco added three hits as the Phillies won for the third straight time in a series that ended yesterday.

BLUE JAYS 5, MARINERS 2

Yangervis Solarte and Justin Smoak had RBI doubles to key a four-run, eighth-inning rally, and Toronto came back to defeat visiting

Seattle. Teoscar Hernandez had three hits, including a home run, for the Blue Jays, who were no-hit Tuesday by Mariners left-hander James Paxton. With Seattle ahead 2-1 entering the eighth, Josh Donaldson led off with a double against Mariners reliever Juan Nicasio (1-1). The Blue Jays then got RBI doubles from Solarte and Smoak.

ORIOLES 5, ROYALS 3

Mark Trumbo's two-run single in the eighth inning allowed Baltimore to snap a seven-game losing streak with a victory over visiting Kansas City. Chris Davis accounted for the Orioles' other three runs with a fourth-inning home run. Richard Bleier (3-0) pitched two scoreless innings for the win, and Brad Brach escaped a two-on, no-out jam in the ninth for his fourth save.

BRAVES 5, RAYS 2

Julio Teheran pitched seven scoreless innings, and Atlanta beat Tampa Bay to sweep a two-game series in St. Petersburg, Fla. Teheran (3-1) allowed only four hits and did not walk a batter for the first time in eight starts. He struck out seven in his first career appearance against Tampa Bay. Teheran has not allowed a run in his past two starts, a stretch of 13 innings. Arodys Vizciano pitched around a single to work a scoreless ninth inning. He struck out one and earned his sixth save in seven tries.

ANGELS 8, ROCKIES 0

Justin Upton homered for the second time in two days, and Zack Cozart and Rene Rivera also hit home runs as Los Angeles snapped host Colorado's six-game winning streak. It was the Angels' sixth win in their last eight games, as four pitchers combined for 14 strikeouts. The early offense backed rookie right-hander Jaime Barria (3-1), who worked 5 1/3 innings, allowing five hits and a walk with seven strikeouts. Justin Anderson, Jose Alvarez and Akeel Morris completed the eight-hit shutout. Upton finished with three hits while Mike Trout and Cozart had two apiece.

PIRATES 6, WHITE SOX 5

Pittsburgh overcame a four-run deficit for the second day in a row to beat host Chicago and earn a sweep of the two-game series. The Pirates trailed 5-2 entering the ninth but scored four runs against reliever Nate Jones (2-1) on Elias Diaz's two-run double and Colin Moran's two-run homer, his third, to right-center. Pittsburgh reliever Richard Rodriguez (1-1) pitched the eighth, giving up a run but still earning his first major league win. Felipe Vazquez pitched a perfect ninth to pick up his seventh save in as many opportunities.

CUBS 13, MARLINS 4

Anthony Rizzo and Addison Russell homered as part of an eight-run third inning, and Chicago defeated visiting Miami. Rizzo finished 3-for-5



OAKLAND: Yuli Gurriel #10 of the Houston Astros is tagged out by Matt Chapman No 26 of the Oakland Athletics as he attempted to steal third base in the eighth inning at Oakland Alameda Coliseum on Wednesday in Oakland, California. —AFP

with five RBIs. Russell went 3-for-3 with two walks as the Cubs swept the three-game series. That broke a Marlins streak of having won four consecutive series before arriving in Chicago. Jose Quintana (4-2) earned the win, allowing five hits, two walks and one run in six innings. Chicago's Kris Bryant hit a milestone homer—No. 100 for his career. The line-drive solo shot to left came on the three-year anniversary of his first major league home run.

REDS 2, METS 1 (10 INNINGS)

Adam Duvall homered leading off the bottom of the 10th inning as Cincinnati earned its first home series win of the season by edging visiting New York, which continues to struggle. Duvall hit the fourth pitch he saw from AJ Ramos (1-2) well into the left field seats for his first career walk-off homer. The shot made a winner out of Rafael Iglesias (1-0), who tossed two perfect innings. The Reds won the final two games against the Mets to win their first series at home since they swept the Pittsburgh Pirates last Sept. 15-17. The Mets lost for the 16th time in 23 games on an afternoon "highlighted" by a first inning in which a double by Asdrubal Cabrera was nullified because he batted out of order.

INDIANS 6, BREWERS 2

Carlos Carrasco dominated on the mound with a season-high 14 strikeouts, and Tyler

Naquin and Francisco Lindor each homered to help visiting Cleveland snap a four-game slide with a win against Milwaukee. Carrasco (5-1) went the distance for his 10th career complete game and second this season. He allowed five hits and walked only one. He struck out the side in the third and fourth inning and induced inning-ending double plays in the second and sixth. Naquin delivered the big blast in the fourth inning, hammering a 3-2 slider from Milwaukee starter Junior Guerra over the center field wall for a three-run shot that gave the Indians a 4-0 lead. It was Naquin's second home run of the season.

RANGERS 5, TIGERS 4 (10 INNINGS)

Nomar Mazara hit two solo homers, including the game-winner to lead off the bottom of the 10th inning, to give host Texas a win over Detroit. The Tigers were playing without five regulars due to injuries or rest. That group included right fielder and cleanup hitter Nicholas Castellanos, who was scratched due to knee soreness. Mazara ripped a 1-0 pitch over the right field wall off Warwick Saupold (1-1) to allow Texas to take the series 2-1. Mazara has 10 homers this season and seven in his last nine games. Delino DeShields walked four times and scored twice while Adrian Beltre drove in two runs for the Rangers. Keone Kela (3-2) pitched two scoreless innings with three strikeouts to notch the win. —Reuters

Sports

Ireland and Pakistan Test revives World Cup memories

Ireland will be huge underdogs

DUBLIN: Ireland will be huge underdogs when they face Pakistan in their inaugural men's Test match at Malahide today. But several members of their squad already know what it's like to cause a huge upset against Pakistan, having played in the Ireland side that knocked the Asian giants out of the 2007 World Cup in the Caribbean with a stunning three-wicket win in Jamaica.

It was the stuff of fairytales with Ireland, a team of part-timers containing school teachers, farmers and postmen defeating the Asian giants—and on St Patrick's Day as well. One of the few green-tinged pitches in the West Indies, and thereby reminiscent of surfaces at home in Ireland, was matched by fans wearing Irish green shirts in a jubilant crowd at Kingston's Sabina Park.

The fairytale soon became a nightmare, however, when Pakistan coach Bob Woolmer, the former England batsman who in his previous development role with the International Cricket Council had done much to raise the standard of non-Test nations, was found dead in his hotel

room the next morning.

Ireland dismissed Pakistan for a meagre 132 with fast bowler Boyd Rankin—set to be involved in the Test-taking three wickets. Ireland were soon 15 for two before an innings of 72 from Niall O'Brien, also in the Test squad, got them back on track before now-retired captain Trent Johnston won the match with a six off Azhar Mahmood.

“

It was the start of something special

”

'SOMETHING SPECIAL'

"It was the start of something special," Johnston told The42.ie website. "The start of an amazing journey and a day when the rest of the world sat up and took notice of us as a cricket-

ing nation."

Ireland's victory came just 48 hours after they had exceeded many people's expectations by playing out a tie with another Test side in Zimbabwe. "I was lucky I won that toss," said Johnston, who was also rightly proud of the "bloody good cricket," Ireland played against Pakistan.

"We were a bunch of amateurs going to a World Cup and we had absolutely nothing to

Pakistan Tour Ireland 2018



File photo shows Pakistan (left) and Ireland teams in action.

lose," he added. Irish joy was quickly tempered by widespread mourning for Woolmer, whose sudden death gave rise to a host of wild conspiracy theories.

Although no one knew it at the time, Ireland's win perversely damaged the cause of aspiring cricket nations. Pakistan and arch-rivals India were both knocked out in the first round, a huge blow to organisers banking on their fans to pack out grounds later on, as well as broadcasters who had paid heavily for television

rights in the subcontinent.

The ICC, as much a club for its leading members as a global governing body, soon decided a repeat had to be avoided at all costs. That outlook has led to next year's World Cup in England being shrunk to a 10-team event, with an all-play-all group stage.

Ireland, however, will not be there after missing out in a 10-team qualifying tournament where only Afghanistan and the West Indies made it through to the finals. — AFP

UAE coach suspended over spot fixing offer

KARACHI: United Arab Emirates based coach Irfan Ansari was suspended following allegations from Pakistan's captain Sarfraz Ahmed that he was approached to participate in a spot fixing scheme, Cricket's administrative body said yesterday.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) said Ansari was charged with three counts of breaching the body's anti-corruption code. "Ansari has been provisionally suspended with immediate effect and has been charged for directly soliciting, inducing, enticing or encouraging a participant to breach the code and for failure or refusal to cooperate with the anti-corruption unit's investigation," said an ICC release. Ansari, who is originally from

Pakistan, has coached a number of small professional clubs in the UAE for years.

The ICC said the suspension comes after Ansari failed to provide requested information to group's anti-corruption wing on two separate occasions. The charges centre on Sarfraz's admission to the Pakistan Cricket Board and the ICC that Ansari had approached him about spot fixing during the one-day series between Pakistan and Sri Lanka in the UAE last October. Spot-fixing involves determining the outcome of a specific part of a match rather than the overall result, and is therefore harder to detect than match-fixing.

Ansari will now have two weeks to respond to the charges. "The ICC will not make any further comment in respect of these charges at this stage," said the body in a statement. The PCB took extra measures to stem spot-fixing, with all six teams in this year's league monitored by anti-corruption officers. Pakistan has a history of fixing cases, the latest being last year's scandal which rocked the Pakistan Super League held in UAE. — AFP

Australian skipper denies Warner rift

SYDNEY: Australian skipper Tim Paine yesterday denied David Warner was a divisive figure widely disliked within the team, insisting he would be welcomed back after his ban for a cheating scandal. Disgraced former vice-captain Warner is serving a year-long suspension for his part in the plan to use sandpaper to tamper with the ball during the third Test in South Africa in March.

He was considered the mastermind of the scandal that rocked the sport and also saw former captain Steve Smith and batsman Cameron Bancroft suspended. Respected News Corp cricket writer Robert Craddock this week questioned whether Warner could fit back into a team under the leadership of new coach Justin Langer given "half the players can't stand him". But Paine said the comments were "off the mark" and "really unfair". "I certainly like Craddock's writing and when he's on TV I'm a fan of his," Paine told reporters in Hobart in his first press conference since officially being made one-day and Test skipper.

"But I thought he was a little bit off the mark there and really unfair on David Warner as a person and as a cricketer." He said while Warner's competitiveness might sometimes "rub the opposition up the wrong way," he was well received within the Australian camp. "Within our team he's someone with that energy and that competitiveness who we love playing with," he said.

"There's a side of David that people don't know which is a really loyal, really caring and a good team man to have around." Langer, who was appointed this month to replace Darren Lehmann who quit as coach in the wake of



Tim Paine

the tampering scandal, has said he would welcome Warner back, but only if he meets his behavioural standards. Paine said he had been in touch with all suspended players. "All three are certainly going to be welcomed back into our team, if they're prepared to toe the line with our new brand of cricket, which I know they will," he said.

"I know they'll all do the right thing and score enough runs to be back on our side and they'll be certainly be welcomed back." Speaking to SEN radio this week, Craddock claimed some in the team had contacted Cricket Australia saying they didn't want to play with Warner again. "If (Langer) wants cultural shift, how do you have cultural shift and Warner in the same team? That's my question," he said. — AFP

Sports

Dembele delights Nou Camp as Barca roll over Villarreal

Coutinho fired the home side ahead in 11th minute

BARCELONA: Barcelona forward Ousmane Dembele scored twice and produced a mesmerising display to fire his side to a 5-1 win over Villarreal on Wednesday which stretched the champions' unbeaten run this season to 36 games with two remaining.

Barca's record signing Philippe Coutinho fired the home side ahead in the 11th minute on the rebound after a darting run forward and shot from Frenchman Dembele while midfielder Paulinho finished off a delightful team move to double their lead five minutes later.

Barca's departing captain Andres Iniesta produced the through ball to help create the second goal and he further delighted the crowd with a crafty first-time pass over the top which Lionel Messi tucked into the far corner on the volley for the third goal at the end of the first half.

Villarreal got a goal back nine minutes into the second period when Nicola Sansone diverted a shot beyond Barca's stand-in goalkeeper Jasper Cillessen, who later blocked a shot from Spain international Rodri on the line with his body.

Dembele grabbed a deserved goal in the 87th by knocking in from close range after a stunning individual run from substitute Ivan Rakitic. The Croatian coasted past two defenders down the right wing, knocking the ball past one and through the legs of the other, before laying on the pass for the Frenchman to score.

Dembele, 20, then delighted the home fans with a virtuoso individual run and stylish dink over goalkeeper Sergio Asenjo to complete the drubbing in stoppage time. It was the finest display in a Barca shirt from Dembele, who has taken his time to adapt to life in Spain since a 105 million-euro move from Borussia Dortmund last August, not helped by a long layoff with a serious hamstring injury.

"We've talked about him a lot, he has so much

talent, technique, he's fast, he has a spark about him, he's two footed. He has it all and he can help us a lot," Barca coach Ernesto Valverde said of Dembele. "He's young and he has a lot of time ahead of him. Every player needs time to adapt and when you are young you have a lot to learn, but today for his second goal he was incredible." — Reuters

Dembele has so much talent, technique



BARCELONA: Barcelona's Brazilian midfielder Philippe Coutinho (R) challenges Villarreal's Spanish defender Mario and Villarreal's Spanish midfielder Rodrigo Hernandez (C) during the Spanish league football match between Barcelona and Villarreal at the Camp Nou Stadium in Barcelona on Wednesday. —AFP

Small is beautiful for World Cup debutants Iceland

ZURICH: For most of Iceland's footballing history the Nordic country's national team have been regarded as also-rans, their fortunes best summed up by their top player Gylfi Sigurdsson. "When I was young, everyone told me: too bad you are from Iceland," the attacking midfielder once said. "You are never going to play at a major tournament."

Yet Sigurdsson was at Euro 2016 and is now set to take part in the country's first World Cup in Russia next month. With a population of 340,000, Iceland is the smallest country ever to qualify for the tournament. Their first venture at the finals will see them face Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation, as well as Argentina and Croatia.

Hallgrímsson, however, likes to think of them as different whether for their remarkable grass roots programme, the spirit in the squad or the fact that the coach meets supporters in the pub to talk about their tactics. In an interview with Reuters after giving a presentation at the FIFA Museum, the 51-year-old recalled that when he joined Iceland as assistant coach in 2011, the team were unloved.

"Half the seats were empty at international games," he said, sipping a beer. So he tried the personal touch. Hallgrímsson offered to meet the Tólfan, the team's supporters' group, in a nearby pub before home games.

He would give them the lineup "before even the players knew it," talk them through the tactics and show them the same motivational video the players would see. "The first time we did it, seven supporters turned up. Now we get 500 or 600 people," he said.

"There is one rule: nobody takes pictures or makes a recording, nobody puts anything online. Nothing has ever leaked out. That shows the respect for the national team."

FORTUNES CHANGE

Iceland's change in fortunes began about 15 years ago when the country began building indoor artificial pitches. There are now dozens of them around the country, owned and administered by municipal governments, prompting a boom in participation in the sport.

With 25,000 registered players, an impressive seven percent of the population play organised football, rising to 30 percent in the 15 to 16 age group. Although children have to pay to play, part of the fee is subsidised and it goes towards paying the coaches, another key to Iceland's success. The country boasts 600 coaches holding UEFA licences, most earning a welcome addition to their regular income. Hallgrímsson said that young players, meanwhile, are given "organised and fun training which helps with inner motivation and makes them fall in love with the game." — Reuters

Guardiola eyes 100 points for record-breaking Man City

MANCHESTER: Pep Guardiola is targeting 100 points to cap an "almost perfect season" after champions Manchester City set a hat-trick of Premier League records and home fans said farewell to veteran midfielder Yaya Toure.

City's 3-1 win against Brighton on Wednesday took them to 97 points and 105 goals for the season as they registered their 31st win of the campaign—all three are new records. On his final home appearance as a City player, Toure, who is leaving the club at the end of the season after eight years, captained the side. His name was chanted throughout the contest, there was a huge cheer when he was substituted late on and the crowd also showed their appreciation for the 34-year-old Ivorian during a post-match presentation on the pitch involving his brother and former City team-mate Kolo Toure.

City boss Guardiola said: "97 points, a lot of

goals, a lot of wins—that's a consequence of the season we have done. It's good. "Now it's one more game (away against Southampton on Sunday). We're going to try for 100 points and finish this almost perfect season in the Premier League.

"It's fantastic because we did that (break the records) in the day we always will remember—the day for Yaya." Guardiola said he agreed with those who argue that City need to win more titles to be considered the equals of the great sides of the past, including Liverpool and Manchester United.

"In the end, we have won one Premier League-three in six years, but in this moment just one. They won a lot of things," he said. "But in terms of statistics and numbers, this season we were the best, and that's why we are so satisfied. Once, a team will arrive and do better than us but they will have to do really good."

Daniolo put City ahead and after Leonardo Ulloa equalised, Bernardo Silva and Fernandinho also got on the scoresheet for City. Leroy Sane provided assists for all three City goals. Guardiola said City can get "a lot" better, and said of Professional

Footballers' Association Young Player of the Year Sane: "What I like the most with Leroy, seeing his outstanding performance today, was I had the feeling he can do better, and that is the best." — AFP

Sports

Kane fires Spurs into Champions League as Chelsea's charge falters

Kane proved to be their talisman with his 39th goal of the season

LONDON: Harry Kane fired Tottenham Hotspur into next season's Champions League as Chelsea faltered in a 1-1 draw at home to Huddersfield on Wednesday that secured survival for the Terriers.

A point for Huddersfield also ensures Swansea will join West Brom and Stoke in being relegated to the Championship barring a 10-goal swing in goal difference between the Welsh side and Southampton on the final day of the season on Sunday. At the other end of the table, only defeat for Champions League finalists Liverpool at home to Brighton at the weekend will give Chelsea any chance of a top-four finish as their late season charge came undone at Stamford Bridge.

Spurs capitalised on Chelsea's slip-up to ensure they will have Champions League football for a third consecutive campaign when they move into a new 62,000 capacity stadium next season. "For the club (it) is a massive thing to move to the new stadium and play Champions League," said Tottenham boss Mauricio Pochettino.

Tottenham had won just one of their previous five matches and were again far from their best in a nervy display. But Kane proved to be their talisman once more as his 39th goal of the season just after half-time was enough to move Spurs above Liverpool into third.

A surprisingly much-changed Chelsea side from the one that beat Liverpool four days ago fell behind when Laurent Depoitre forced the ball home five minutes into the second-half. Recognising the error of his team selection, Antonio Conte threw on Olivier Giroud and Eden Hazard from the bench, and was

quickly rewarded when Marcos Alonso levelled just after the hour mark.

"We had so many chances and you must be good to take them. It is not the first time that we are not clinical," lamented Conte, who ducked questions over his future. However, Huddersfield held on desperately in the final half hour to secure the vital point that guaranteed survival on their return to the top flight for the first time in 45 years.

"I was shocked that we had the lead! People said we had no chance, I will not criticise one of them because they were right," said Huddersfield manager David Wagner. "We were everything but a Premier League club last summer, but we have given it a go. We have showed everybody that we are humble but we are ambitious."

At the Etihad, champions Manchester City added three more records to a sensational season by breaking the previous best Premier League marks for wins, points and goals in a 3-1 victory over Brighton. Pep Guardiola's men also bid farewell to Yaya Toure in the Ivorian's final home game in City colours.

Toure was an inspirational figure in City's first two title wins of a free-spending era under Sheikh Mansour's ownership. However, he has been relegated to a supporting role this season in a supremely talented squad that has now racked up 31 wins, 105 goals and 97 points to beat Chelsea's hitherto records of 30 wins, 103 goals and 95 points.

"Thank you for being such a wonderful teammate," City captain Vincent Kompany told Toure. "If there is ever going to be a legend at this club it is



LONDON: Tottenham Hotspur's English striker Harry Kane (2L) has a shot on goal by Newcastle United's English defender Jamaal Lascelles during the English Premier League football match between Tottenham Hotspur and Newcastle United at Wembley Stadium in London. —AFP

this man." Leroy Sane bagged a hat-trick of assists for City as Danilo, Bernardo Silva and Fernandinho found the net.

Arsene Wenger's penultimate game in charge of Arsenal ended in depressingly familiar fashion as the 10-man Gunners were defeated 3-1 at Leicester. Arsenal remain the only team in England's top four leagues without a point away from home this year having now lost seven straight Premier League games on the road.

Kelechi Iheanacho had already fired the Foxes

into an early lead before Arsenal were reduced to 10 men when Konstantinos Mavropanos was shown a straight red card for hauling down Iheanacho.

Pierre Emerick-Aubameyang scored his ninth Arsenal goal in just 13 appearances since a club record move from Borussia Dortmund in January to draw the visitors level. But Arsenal were left ruing another refereeing decision as Demarai Gray tumbled inside the area and Jamie Vardy rifled home the resulting penalty before Riyad Mahrez added a late third for Leicester. —AFP

Footballers' union warns FIFA plans could harm players

PARIS: The professional footballers' union (FIFPro) yesterday expressed their concern over the impact on the health of their members should FIFA plan to add or enlarge international tournaments. "In the light of the current discussions, it would be remiss if FIFPro did not explore the impact of these proposals on players," Bobby Barnes, president of FIFPro Europe, said in a meeting in Serbia.

Gianni Infantino, the president of world football's governing body, is pushing to revamp the Club World Cup, boosting it from seven clubs to 24 in a four-year format rather than retaining it as an annual event. At the same time, he is working to create a biennial tournament for countries, the Global Nations League, grouping eight teams including the winners of international competitions in each of FIFA's regional confederations. Infantino has said a group of investors has guaranteed up to \$25 billion (20.9 billion euros) for these two competitions. Barnes, a former striker who played in the English and Scottish leagues and in Hong Kong, told the FIFPro meeting in Novi Sad that "while other stakeholders might have other priorities, the health and wellbeing of the players has to be our first priority." The European Leagues, an organisation which represents the regions' top domestic competitions, said last week that it opposed the plans and said FIFA had opening a "can of worms." —AFP

Dortmund's roller coaster season ends with Champions League battle

BERLIN: Borussia Dortmund's roller coaster Bundesliga season culminates tomorrow in a desperate battle to secure Champions League qualification on the final matchday against Hoffenheim, their rivals for a European place. Dortmund must earn at least a point at Hoffenheim in order to make sure of a top-four finish, which guarantees a place in the Champions League group stage for next season.

The Ruhr valley club are in third place on 55 points, three ahead of fourth-placed Hoffenheim and Bayer Leverkusen in fifth. Defeat to Hoffenheim and a win for Leverkusen could potentially drop Dortmund down to fifth, out of the lucrative Champions League, with the publicly-traded club missing out on millions of euros in revenue.

Dortmund had kicked off their campaign hoping they could be title contenders, giving champions Bayern Munich a run for their money. With six wins in their first seven matches at the start of the season, things looked to be going their way under new coach Peter Bosz. Yet fast forward only a few months to December and an eight-game winless streak brought Bosz's spell to a quick and disappointing end. Only days after his own sacking from Cologne, coach Peter Stoeger joined Dortmund as Bosz's successor but the Austrian failed to inject much-needed consistency.

An ignominious exit to RB Salzburg in the Europa League over two legs was followed by just two wins in their last six Bundesliga matches, leaving their Champions League hopes in the balance.

The departure of their top scorer Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang



DORTMUND: File photo shows Dortmund's goalkeeper Roman Weidenfeller (C) bids farewell to supporters at the end of the German first division Bundesliga football match Borussia Dortmund vs Mainz 05 in Dortmund, western Germany. —AFP

to Arsenal in January did not help their situation and results this year have done little to convince Dortmund bosses that Stoeger deserves a contract extension.

The Austrian is widely expected to announce his departure after the last matchday. Former champions Hamburg SV have a far tougher task and need to beat Borussia Moenchengladbach and hope VfL Wolfsburg lose their final game at home to already-relegated Cologne to lift themselves out of the drop zone and into the relegation playoff spot.

Hamburg, the only team with an uninterrupted presence in the Bundesliga since the league's creation in 1963, are on 28 points in 17th place, with Wolfsburg, on 30, occupying the playoff place. Schalke 04, in second place on 60, host Eintracht Frankfurt while champions Bayern Munich complete their Bundesliga campaign with a home game against VfB Stuttgart. —Reuters

Sports

Juventus crush AC Milan 4-0 to lift fourth consecutive Italian Cup

Benatia opened the floodgates after 56 minutes

ROME: Juventus ran riot to beat blundering AC Milan 4-0 on Wednesday in Rome's Stadio Olimpico and lift the Italian Cup for a fourth consecutive year. Juve are now poised to become the first Italian team to complete the league and cup double four years in a row after their 13th Italian Cup triumph.

Massimiliano Allegri's side are one point away from claiming a seventh consecutive Serie A title with two games to play and could seal it this weekend against Roma in the same Stadio Olimpico stadium.

"It's not that Juve have to win, but I'm now unfortunately used to the idea that people take our victories for granted," said Allegri. "Nothing is to be taken for granted. 'The lads had an extraordinary game and deserved this win. Now we have to ensure the Scudetto mathematically and enjoy this extraordinary season.' The Turin giants put their foot on the gas after a balanced first half with Gennaro Gattuso's Milan crumbling with two errors from young goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma and a Nikola Kalinic own goal gifting the cup to Juventus.

Mehdi Benatia opened the floodgates after 56 minutes for the first of a double on the night for the Moroccan with Douglas Costa also finding the net, before Kalinic's blunder after 76 minutes.

AC Milan—sixth in Serie A—had been hoping for a win which would have guaranteed them a place in the Europa League group phase. "I think it hurts more that we took 40,000 fans here and gave them a result like this," said coach Gennaro Gattuso.

Ramos has night to forget as Real lose at Sevilla

SEVILLE: Real Madrid captain Sergio Ramos scored an own goal and missed a penalty as his side were beaten 3-2 by Sevilla on Wednesday, falling to their sixth defeat in La Liga this season after coach Zinedine Zidane made sweeping changes to his side.

French forward Wissam Ben Yedder put Sevilla in front in the 26th minute after racing in behind Ramos while Miguel Layun doubled the home side's lead on the stroke of halftime, knocking into an empty net from close range.

Former Sevilla defender Ramos struck the crossbar from the spot in the 58th minute and then put through his own net to stretch the home side's advantage to three goals in the 84th as he tried to cut out a cross from Gabriel Mercado. Real striker Borja Mayoral headed a goal back in the 87th and Ramos scored from his second attempt from the penalty spot deep in stoppage-time.

Zidane made eight changes to his side after Sunday's grueling 2-2 draw at arch rivals Barcelona, only retaining Ramos, French striker

"Now we have two games against sides who are in better shape than us and must try to get into the Europa League with better performances than this." The match had been dubbed a duel between Juventus legend Gianluigi Buffon who at 40 is set to retire and Donnarumma, 19, his touted replacement in the Italian national team.

While Buffon kept a clean sheet Donnarumma finished the night in tears after a game to forget. Buffon made an early save from Patrick Cutrone minutes into the game with Costa and Paulo Dybala both testing Donnarumma.

But there was controversy before the break when Hakan Calhanoglu was brought down only for the referee to blow the whistle for the break without letting Milan take the free-kick. Gattuso ran onto the pitch to calm his players.

But after the interval defender Benatia turned goalscorer heading in from a 56th-minute Miralem Pjanic corner—the first goal conceded by Milan in the Italian Cup this season. Donnarumma then conceded two goals he should have saved—letting Costa slip through five minutes later and then failing to control a Mario Mandzukic header from a corner, allowing Benatia to tap in his second off the rebound.

Three goals down, Milan were in disarray and when Kalinic turned into his own net off a Pjanic corner it ended Milan's hopes of a first major trophy since Allegri led them to the Serie A title in 2011. "Juve always do something special, it's not the first time. We have a winning mentality," said Benatia, who had come in for criticism after letting in

Karim Benzema and midfielder Casemiro. Toni Kroos, Luka Modric, Marcelo and top scorer Cristiano Ronaldo all remained in the Spanish capital to stay fresh for the Champions League final against Liverpool in Kiev on May 26. "I picked a team that could have won the game comfortably, I don't have any regrets about the players I picked," Zidane told reporters.

"It's a shame for the players who play less often but I can't blame them, they did everything possible." Madrid are third in the standings on 72 points and missed out on the chance to move level with city rivals Atletico, who are second on 75.

Champions Barcelona stretched their heavy lead over Atletico to 15 points after thrashing Villarreal 5-1 at home on Wednesday.

Sevilla, meanwhile, continued their resurgence since Italian coach Vincenzo Montella was sacked, picking up their second win from two games under stand-in manager Joaquin Caparros. They climbed two points above Getafe into seventh place, the final Europa League qualification spot, with two games left of the campaign.

Sevilla can clinch seventh if they win at fierce city rivals Real Betis on Saturday and Getafe fail to beat second-placed Atletico Madrid.

"We've talked to the players a lot as a group and individuals, we've told them they are very good and they're used to playing in finals and we told them today was like a final," said veteran coach Caparros, who is in his second spell in charge of Sevilla. —Reuters



ROME: Juventus players pose with the trophy after winning the Italian Tim Cup (Coppa Italia) final Juventus vs AC Milan at the Olympic stadium on Wednesday in Rome. —AFP

Kalidou Koulibaly's goal in a 1-0 defeat to Napoli two weeks ago.

"After my error ... everyone said I was useless. I felt bad for a few days, but fortunately the lads completed the job and I thank them for being close to me." The team now could celebrate the Serie A

title at the Stadio Olimpico on Sunday.

"The Scudetto is the main target and I'll be glad if we do it here, because I had an extraordinary campaign at Roma and it's a special stadium for me," added the 31-year-old former Roma player Benatia. —AFP

Carvalho to leave Swansea at the end of the season

LONDON: Swansea City manager Carlos Carvalho will leave the Premier League club at the end of the season, British media reported yesterday. The 52-year-old's contract expires at the end of the campaign but the club are not expected to exercise their option to extend it, the Guardian newspaper and the BBC reported.

Swansea, who are third from bottom in the table, are almost certain to be relegated on Sunday. Carvalho was appointed to succeed Paul Clement last December and oversaw an initial improvement in form, which saw them rise to 13th in the table.

Swansea, however, have picked up only three points since beating West Ham United 4-1 at the start of March and failed to win any of their last nine matches in all competitions. They lost 1-0 on Tuesday at home to Southampton, their main relegation rivals, a result that effectively ended their seven-season stay in the top flight.

The defeat left them three points behind the Saints, who have a hugely superior goal difference. Swansea's only slim hope is to beat Stoke City



Carlos Carvalho

heavily in their final game on Sunday and hope Southampton are routed by Manchester City.

The club, however, appear to have accepted their fate and moved to ditch Carvalho even though he has Championship experience with Sheffield Wednesday, whom he led to the playoffs in successive seasons.

The Portuguese was appointed just four days after losing his job at Wednesday. Swansea were bottom of the table and facing a survival fight for the third successive season, only just staying up the previous year after a late run of form under Clement. But their squad is widely seen as ill-equipped for the top flight and they now face a major restructuring job if they are to mount a promotion challenge next season. —Reuters



ROME: Juventus' forward from Colombia Juan Cuadrado poses with the trophy after winning the Italian Tim Cup (Coppa Italia) final Juventus vs AC Milan at the Olympic stadium in Rome. — AFP

Juventus crush AC Milan 4-0 to lift fourth consecutive Italian Cup

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