

Philippines president lifts ban on Filipino domestic workers

Kuwait, Philippines seal deal, ending diplomatic standoff

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: A ban on domestic workers coming from the Philippines has been lifted, ending a months-long diplomatic standoff between labor-importing Kuwait and Manila. Earlier in the week, Manila lifted the ban on the deployment of semi-skilled and skilled OFWs to Kuwait after the two governments reached an agreement on protecting Filipinos working in Kuwait. "Upon the recommendation of Special Envoy to Kuwait Abdullah Mama-o, President Rodrigo Duterte tonight (Wednesday night) instructed Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) Secretary Silvestre Bello to totally lift the ban on the deployment of Filipino workers to Kuwait," Presidential Spokesman Harry Roque said.

Domestic helpers from the impoverished Asian nation

were banned from traveling to Kuwait for work in February. Duterte ordered the ban following the gruesome murder of Filipina domestic helper Joanna Demafilis. Her body was found in a freezer in an apartment in Maidan Hawally. The ban triggered a diplomatic row between Kuwait and the Philippines, further aggravated by social media videos of Philippines embassy staff rescuing allegedly abused maids from homes in Kuwait.

Kuwait condemned the incident and insisted this was a flagrant violation of its sovereignty. Philippine Foreign Affairs Secretary Alan Cayetano apologized if the videos offended the sensibilities of Kuwait, which accepted the apology, but declared Philippine Ambassador to Kuwait Rene Villa persona non grata and asked him to leave the country. The following day, Duterte asked his nationals to go back to the

Philippines, stressing that the deployment ban on workers from the Philippines will now be permanent.

But backdoor negotiations continued, and on Friday, Kuwait and the Philippines finally signed an agreement for the protection of OFWs. It was signed by the foreign ministers of both countries. Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) Deputy Administrator Arnell Arevalo Ignacio is still in Kuwait to lay the groundwork after the ban on domestic helpers is lifted. Laila Venturina, owner of Faraj Ashkhanani Agency, was elated. "Wow, thank God! I was expecting the ban to be lifted in the first week of Ramadan, but he lifted it earlier. So I am very happy about it," she said.

An ardent supporter of Duterte in Kuwait who spoke to Kuwait Times on the condition of anonymity expressed disappointment over Duterte's move. "The

president just lost one diehard supporter. I felt betrayed by him giving in so easily to the demands of the Kuwaiti government. I respected him before, but after this, I don't know. I am totally disappointed," she noted. "I know employers won't follow the agreement. He should've at least waited until Ramadan is over before deciding to lift the ban on domestic helpers. What a waste of support and energy for this president," she said.

"I have my cousin here in Kuwait who is working as a housemaid. Until now, she can't even hold her salary. It is sent directly to her family in the Philippines. She always complains of overwork and no day off. And now we have this news! I am not happy," she reiterated. Approximately 260,000 Filipinos live and work in Kuwait, and 160,000 of these are household service workers, according to government estimates.

National Assembly approves capital spending budget

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: The National Assembly yesterday approved the capital spending budget for the current fiscal year 2018/2019 which is projected at around KD 3.2 billion out of the total projected spending of around KD 21.5 billion. MPs strongly criticized government financial policies and called for updating a number of key laws especially the civil service law, but at the end of the debate they approved the budget.

This is the second year running that the Assembly debates and approves the capital spending separately in a bid to pay greater attention to development projects. The Assembly also approved the budget and the final statement for the Roads Authority. Head of the Budgets

Committee MP Adnan Abdulsamad said that the budget ceiling was initially set at KD 20 billion but the government later came up with the addition of KD 1.5 billion. He said that the budget is being presented with figures that differ from what the development plan and government program advocate.

Abdulsamad said the Assembly is debating the capital spending or development projects budget so in order not to be blamed for delaying development projects. He said that 88 percent of revenues come from oil income which is a big distortion as the budget depends on one source for income, adding the National Assembly should hold a special session to debate the issue. The lawmaker said that the state-owned touristic enterprises company has squandered around KD 288 million and there are state debt of over KD 1.2 billion that has not been collected, mostly from the private sector.

During the debate, MPs raised the issue of the dispute between the Cabinet and the Audit Bureau which is overseen by the National Assembly and reviews all government contracts before they are signed. MPs claimed that the Bureau has rejected some 200 contracts but the Minister

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KUWAIT: Kuwaiti MPs attend a parliament session at the National Assembly in Kuwait City yesterday. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Trump-Kim summit 'in doubt'

SEOUL: North Korea threw next month's summit between Kim Jong Un and US President Donald Trump into doubt yesterday, threatening weeks of diplomatic progress by saying it may reconsider if Washington insists it unilaterally gives up its nuclear weapons. The North's official KCNA news agency said earlier Pyongyang had called off high-level talks with Seoul, which had been due yesterday, in the first sign of trouble after months of warming ties.

Citing first vice minister of foreign affairs Kim Kye Gwan, KCNA later said the fate of

the unprecedented US-North Korea summit, as well as bilateral relations, "would be clear" if the United States spoke of a "Libya-style" denuclearization for the North. "If the US is trying to drive us into a corner to force our unilateral nuclear abandonment, we will no longer be interested in such dialogue and cannot but reconsider our proceeding to the DPRK-US summit," Kim Kye Gwan said, referring to the North by its official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Trump and Kim are scheduled to meet in Singapore on June 12. The vice minister specifically criticized US national security adviser John Bolton, who has called for North Korea to quickly give up its nuclear arsenal in a deal that mirrors Libya's abandonment of its weapons of mass destruction. North Korea clashed with Bolton when he worked under the Bush administration, calling him "human scum" and a "bloodsucker".

"We shed light on the quality of Bolton already in the past, and we do not hide our feeling of repugnance towards him," vice minister Kim said. The North Korean statement, as well as its cancellation of the talks with the South due to US-South Korean military exercises, mark a dramatic reversal in tone from recent months when both sides embraced efforts to negotiate. North Korea had announced it would publicly shut its nuclear test site next week.

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said on Sunday the United States would agree to lift sanctions on North Korea if it agreed to completely dismantle its nuclear weapons program. However, Kim Kye Gwan's statement appeared to reject that, saying North Korea would never give up its nuclear program in exchange for trade with the United States. "We have already stated our intention for

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This combination of file pictures shows US President Donald Trump (left) and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un. The United States said it was moving ahead with preparations for a much-anticipated summit next month after Pyongyang appeared to cast doubt over the event. — AFP

Israeli envoy leaves Turkey; row escalates

ISTANBUL: Israel's ambassador to Turkey yesterday left the country after being ordered out by Ankara in a growing crisis over the killing by Israeli fire of dozens of Palestinians on the Gaza border that threatens a reconciliation deal. Israeli ambassador Eitan Naeh departed for Tel Aviv via Istanbul airport under the full glare of the Turkish media, who appeared to have been specially invited to film his exit. Naeh has been told by Turkey to stay away for an unspecified period of time.

Turkey had already withdrawn its Tel Aviv ambassador for consultations while Israel ordered the Turkish consul in Jerusalem to leave, also for an unspecified period of time. The Turkish foreign ministry yesterday also told the Israeli consul general in Istanbul to leave

Turkey "for a period of time", the foreign ministry said. The manner of Naeh's departure angered the Israeli government, with the ambassador filmed going through an extra security check and then sitting alone at the gate.

Israel's foreign ministry yesterday summoned the Turkish charge d'affaires in Israel to its Jerusalem headquarters for a reprimand over what it called in a statement "inappropriate treatment" of the ambassador. The statement said that Naeh was subjected to "a stringent security check in the pre-arranged presence of the Turkish media." The Israeli statement invited local news teams to film Turkish charge d'affaires Umut Deniz when he arrived at the foreign ministry.

The row, which on Tuesday saw President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Israeli counterpart Benjamin Netanyahu exchange bitter jibes on Twitter, threatens a 2016 deal to normalize ties after the crisis sparked by the May 2010 deadly storming of a Turkish ship by Israeli commandos.

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ISTANBUL: Israeli Ambassador to Turkey Eitan Naeh (left) holds his luggage at Istanbul Ataturk Airport yesterday, as he prepares to leave Turkey. — AFP

Guatemala opens its embassy in Jerusalem

JERUSALEM: Guatemala inaugurated its Israel embassy in Jerusalem yesterday, becoming the first country to follow in the footsteps of the United States' deeply controversial move that was accompanied by deadly violence on the Gaza border. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Guatemalan President Jimmy Morales were among officials who attended a ceremony inaugurating the new embassy at an office park in the disputed city, which is at the heart of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The US and Guatemalan moves break with decades of international consensus. US ambassador to Israel David Friedman also attended yesterday's ceremony. Previously Guatemala's embassy was in Herzliya, just north of Tel Aviv like that of Paraguay, so far the only other mission with immediate plans to move to Jerusalem. Paraguay's embassy is expected to relocate before the end of the month. Netanyahu profusely praised Guatemala for making the move and noted it came only two days after the

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Agreement reached for 'gradual transfer' of domestic help department

Trade union accuses manpower authority of manipulation



KUWAIT: Interior Ministry and Public Authority for Manpower officials meet to discuss the process of transferring the domestic help department from the ministry to the authority.

By Meshaal Al-Enezi and Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Director General of the Interior Ministry's Directorate General of Residency Affairs Maj Gen Talal Maarafi chaired a meeting yesterday with representatives of the Public Authority for Manpower to start the process of transferring the domestic help department from the ministry to the authority. An agreement was reached during the meeting to make the transfer gradual to help present home services and to ease obstacles for citizens. This agreement goes in line with statements made earlier by Minister of Social Affairs and Labor and Minister of Economic Affairs Hind Al-Sabeeh, who indicated that the transitional process would take some time before it is completed.



22.5 kg of foul fish confiscated

destroyed 22.5 kilograms of foul fish, filed three citations and issued 10 warning notices during an inspection tour at Ahmadi fish market, said the authority's acting public relations and media manager Mohammed Jeraq.

Manipulation

Meanwhile, the Kuwait Trade Union Federation's (KTUF) Secretary General Awadh Shoqair accused "some parties within the Public Authority for Manpower of manipulating with union activities despite repeated warnings to stop interfering and respecting the union's bylaws and regulations."

Shoqair added that the KTUF's lawful board of directors that was elected on March 20, 2017 is the only representative of workers in Kuwait, and thus it holds the manpower authority responsible for not cancelling the accreditation of the annulled board.

Foul fish

Ahmadi food and nutrition inspectors confiscated and destroyed 22.5 kilograms of foul fish, filed three citations and issued 10 warning notices during an inspection tour at Ahmadi fish market, said the authority's acting public relations and media manager Mohammed Jeraq.

Grand Mosque capacity limited due to constructions

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: The Grand Mosque will have a maximum capacity of 18,000 worshippers this year; a limited number compared to previous Ramadan seasons due to expansion works of the First Ring Road which will prevent setting up tents and utilizing open years in the mosque's perimeters to absorb extra worshippers, according to sources inside the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs. Meanwhile, Minister of Justice and Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Dr Fahd Al-Afasi reaffirmed keenness on providing all facilities for worshippers during the holy month of Ramadan. Afasi said

during a tour at the Grand Mosque yesterday that all preparations were made to receive worshippers during the holy month in cooperation with concerned authorities at the interior and health ministers, civil defense and many other state departments.

Clean Fuel Project

The Clean Fuel Project will be initially launched in July, while the remaining phases will be gradually completed by the beginning of 2019, said informed sources. The project was delayed several times because of the long time it took for some relevant bodies to study its paperwork, in addition to the delay by some contractors who had been having financial problems, the sources noted. The Clean Fuel Project is a strategic project to expand and upgrade Mina Abdullah and Mina Al-Ahmadi Refineries to be an integrated refining complex with a total capacity of 800,000 bpd. It is expected to boost Kuwait's global position in the oil refining industry, and fulfill the local and international demand for clean fuels that meet the most stringent environmental requirements.

Scores arrested in Farwaniya crackdowns

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: The Interior Ministry's Relations and Security Information General Department said that the General Security Department carried out several campaigns in various areas of Farwaniya governorate, as checkpoints were set up in Ardhiya, Sabah Al-Nasser and Firdous, resulting in arresting two absconders, two residency law violators, 11 people without IDs and five debtors. Meanwhile, 37 traffic citations were issued, three people were arrested for driving without licenses, five vehicles were impounded while one reckless driver and one roaming vendor were arrested.



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Zain launches its comprehensive campaign for holy month of Ramadan

Company welcomes the Holy Month with various social contributions



KUWAIT: Zain, the leading telecommunications company in Kuwait, announced the launch of its annual campaign for the holy month of Ramadan with a great number of humanitarian, social, religious, sports, and recreational contributions. Zain's extensive program of various social, charitable, and humanitarian initiatives planned for the holy month comes in line with the company's Corporate Sustainability and Social Responsibility strategy that closely focuses on giving back to the community. The company carefully selected the activities and programs that most presented an added value to all segments of the society. In this report, Zain showcases the initiatives and programs it will undertake during Ramadan this year:

Ramadan Machla

Zain already kicked-off its Ramadan campaign before the beginning of the holy month, where the company's own team of volunteers packed Ramadan Machla boxes - containing essential food supplies - at the company's main headquarters and delivered them to underprivileged families who are in need of support during the month of fasting. The distribution covered multiple areas of Al-Jahra governorate throughout four days.

Zain's distribution plan assured the delivery of essential food supplies to those in need before the arrival of the holy month in order to ensure disadvantaged families have enough quantities of the most basic supplies. The plan also included delivering a large number of boxes to Zain's partners of non-profit entities, including the Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS), the Kuwait Food Bank, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor, and Zakat House.

Iftar Halls

Every year, Zain launches the Iftar Halls initiative, which is a main pillar of the company's Ramadan campaign. Through this initiative, Zain provides fasting individuals with daily Iftar meals under the supervision of its volunteers team. The banquets are spread in three main halls in Jleeb Al-Shuyukh, Khaitan, and Hawalli as part of a strategy to cover the most populated areas of Kuwait in order to assure the maximum amount of individuals' iftar needs are covered. This year, Zain will offer over 50,000 daily iftar meals throughout the holy month.

Zain Quran App

Zain launched an all-new update to its Quran App, which the company gifts to its customers during Ramadan of every year. The app offers the best Quran reading experience on iOS and Android smart devices with a user-friendly interface. The app offers many great features, including reading all pages of the Holy Quran, downloading and listening to the Holy Quran in the voices of over 20 famous reciters, read Tafseer (interpretations) to understand the meaning of verses, searching the whole text of the Holy Quran, as well as synchronizing usage between multiple devices.

The app also includes a dark mode feature for easy reading in the dark, prayer times and Athan notifications, Qibla direction, and much more. Customers can download the app for free by searching 'Zain Quran' in the App Store and Google Play Store.



Social visits

Every Ramadan, Zain is keen to reach out to the many segments of the community, including orphaned children, the elderly, and people with special needs, by visiting the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor's Care Centers to share the joyful blessings of the holy month with them. Zain believes in the importance of embracing the beautiful values of the Islamic religion as well as the noble traditions of the Kuwaiti heritage all year round and especially in the holy month of Ramadan. Zain will also share the joys of the holy month with children and patients in a number of the biggest hospitals in Kuwait. The company's team always visits the hospitals during this blessed time of year to distribute gifts and 'girgean' to children and their families and celebrate the occasion in a family atmosphere full of joy and happiness.

Zain will also share the joys of 'girgean' with special needs children in collaboration with Al-Kharafi Activity Kids Center, where the company's volunteers will visit the children and their families to distribute 'girgean' and gifts while also organizing many other fun activities.

Supporting humanitarian campaigns

Zain has a long list of programs and contributions



that serve noble causes through strategically partnering with entities that adopt humanitarian work, including non-profit organizations, governmental institutions, and global entities. This year, Zain is the Platinum Partner of Nurture and Educate Students Today (NEST)'s educational campaign, entitled #Rock_Paper_Pen, which mainly aims at raising donations for the benefit of building three new schools set to serve 820 students in the Republic of Chad. The campaign's idea centers around using advanced technology solutions to attract and aware potential donors in the campaign's booth at the Avenues mall. The booth was designed to mimic the harsh living environment that faces Chad's children, where potential donors can wear Virtual Reality (VR) headsets and see up-close the hardships children face to get education, which adds a human value and encourages visitors to donate and contribute to building a better future for those who are in need of help.

This Ramadan, Zain will also be the Humanitarian Partner to a new campaign launched by the Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) to offer essential food supplies and medical aid to underprivileged families inside Kuwait. Zain will donate the full amount of donations it collected from its charitable initiative 'Ya Baghi Al-Khair Aqbel' last year to support this initiative. Zain will also send awareness messages through SMS and social media to raise awareness about this campaign and encourage the public to donate via the official channels.

Zain also sponsored the #Ramadan_Aman campaign for the second consecutive year in collaboration with 'Nahtam' volunteering team under the Volunteering Work Center and the Ministry of Interior. This year, the campaign comes under the tagline "Together for a Ramadan without accidents", and will witness Zain volunteers participating in distributing iftar meals for road drivers during Maghreb prayers

with the aim of reducing road accidents that usually occur during this particular period of time. Zain will also send awareness messages through SMS and social media to raise awareness about this campaign and contribute to minimizing the number of road accidents during this period.

This year, Zain will also be the Humanitarian Partner of #Thousand_Wells campaign organized by Direct Aid during the Holy Month of Ramadan. The campaign aims at collecting donations to dig and build 1000 water wells for those in need in areas that suffer from scarcity and lack of water in Africa by digging wells, building reservoirs, and extending water lines.

Cultural and recreational programs

Every Ramadan, Zain is keen on diversifying the content of its campaign to include cultural and recreational programs as well. This year, Zain sponsors the second season of 'Faseroo', a cultural show hosted by Sheikh Fahad Al-Kandari on Kuwait TV and YouTube. In the show, Sheikh Fahad Al-Kandari showcases many great scientific facts about the earth in a simple and creative way. The show simplifies complex facts and presents them in a fun and modern way to attract the attention of viewers, especially young ones.

Zain also partnered with Al-Salam International Hospital to shoot health awareness videos that will be aired on social media channels during the holy month Ramadan. The videos feature doctors of Al-Salam International Hospital from various fields sharing knowledge about fasting, general health tips during the holy month, tips about the most spread diseases in Kuwait and how to avoid them, and more, with the aim of raising health awareness of the public.

As for the classic Ramadan competitions that the public eagerly waits for every year, Zain announced its sponsorship of 'Kanz FM' daily radio show throughout the whole month. Customers can enjoy participating in the show's quizzes and win valuable prizes on a daily basis.

Al-Roudhan Football Tournament

Zain is the Main Sponsor of the 39th edition of Al-Roudhan Ramadan Football Tournament for the third consecutive year. On Ramadan of every year, the Kuwaiti audiences, especially young ones, eagerly look forward with great passion to Al-Roudhan Tournament, given the fact that it witnesses high levels of professionalism and excitement through both the competing local teams as well as the international football stars hosted.

As it does every year, Zain will be present at Al-Roudhan Tournament on a daily basis, where it will be interacting with the audiences through various competitions, activities, and entertainment programs. The company will also be distributing valuable prizes and holding daily challenges and competitions on its official social media channels.

This year, Al-Roudhan tournament will witness the participation of three international football legends that have millions of fans around the world. This year's star guests include World Cup winners Italian star Andrea Pirlo and Brazilian star Ricardo Kaka as well as French star Karim Benzema.



Local



By Jamie Etheridge

Every year we look forward with excitement and anticipation the wonderful and blessed month of Ramadan. An important time in the Islamic calendar for fasting and prayer, Ramadan is also a month of family, gatherings and food.

All those who have grown up or spent many years in Kuwait will recognize immediately the mainstays of Ramadan - from the Ramadan canon in Naif Palace that rings out maghreb every day to sparkling glasses of chilled Vimto, from iftar tables overflowing with food to the deserted

streets just before iftar time.

We all know and love these cherished 'icons of Ramadan' and so this year Kuwait Times celebrates our beloved Ramadan in Kuwait with 30 days of the Icons of Ramadan. We will highlight our favorite activities, events, symbols, foods that are popular during the days of Ramadan.

Read each day in these pages a bit of Kuwait's Ramadan culture, history and tradition and then tell us what are your favorite things about Ramadan in Kuwait.

Email us at local@kuwaittimes.com with your favorite symbols of Ramadan and Ramadan photos.

KFH visits patients at KCCC

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) visited patients at Kuwait Cancer Control Center as part of its 'Increase Good Deeds in Ramadan 4' program, corporate social responsibility and efforts to strengthen ties with all segments of the society, especially in the month of Ramadan.

KFH congratulated the patients on the advent of the holy month of Ramadan.

The bank's PR team distributed gifts to the patients and wished them speedy recovery. This contributed in putting a smile on their faces, while easing their pain and suffering. It is worth noting that such steps reinforce KFH's ties with the society, primarily because it prioritizes the support of humanitarian causes and contributions.

Such initiatives comes within the framework of KFH's Ramadan program "Increase Good Deeds in Ramadan 4" that includes various visits and voluntary work, social and humanitarian events and activities stemming from the bank's endeavors to solidify its commitment towards the society, while supporting all social and humanitarian initiatives.



Delegation checks on patients in Spain

MADRID: A delegation of the Kuwaiti Ministry of Health has visited patients treated at Spanish hospitals yesterday. Dr Fuad Al-Gattan, the head of the delegation and director of external treatment at the ministry, said in a statement yesterday that the delegation inspected the Kuwaiti patients' condition during the six-day mission. According to the embassy

figures, 41 Kuwaitis are currently receiving treatment in Spain. Up to 48 others had received treatment here since start of this year. A total of 152 citizens were treated in Spain last year, compared to 901 in 2016, 453 in 2015. Most of them were treated for eye illnesses. The delegation had also held talks with officials running these hospitals in Madrid and Barcelona and inspected various wards, treatment methods and techniques. The envoys have also visited the Kuwaiti Embassy, examining mechanisms for bringing in the patients from Kuwait. The delegation included Dr Fatma Al-Ali, Dr Mubarak Al-Kandari and Dr Jamal Al-Merjan. — KUNA

Military personnel held for disciplinary cases released for Ramadan

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Defense Ministry announced yesterday the release of Military personnel held for disciplinary cases for the Holy Month of Ramadan, with guidance from the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

A statement by the Defense Ministry's Public Relations said "based on the

instruction from the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense, the Army Chief of General Staff Lieutenant General Mohammad Al-Khuder issued a decision on this occasion to release the Military personnel." Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad congratulated the military personnel and wished the Almighty to bless and return this happy occasion to all good people. — KUNA

Amir, Crown Prince exchange Ramadan greetings with state officials

Defense Minister congratulates political leadership on Ramadan

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received a number of cables of congratulations and warm greetings by senior local officials on the start of the holy month of Ramadan.

His Highness the Amir received the cables from His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Parliament Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem, Kuwait National Guard (KNG) Chief His Highness Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah, KNG Deputy Chief Sheikh Meshaal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

His Highness also received cables from Chairman of Kuwait's Supreme Judicial Council and the Cassation Court, and President of the Constitutional Court, Justice Yousef Jassem Al-Mutawaa, and First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. The leaders and officials all expressed warmest greetings and prayed the Almighty bless His Highness with best of health and with tranquility, as well as wishing prosperity for Kuwait. His Highness the Amir Sheikh

Sabah also exchanged cables of congratulations with leaders of Arab countries and Islamic countries on the occasion of the start of the holy month of Ramadan. His Highness the Amir in turn sent cables in reply in which he expressed similar sentiments and prayed the Almighty bless "our homeland with stability and security" and that the Arab and Muslim nation achieve their aspirations.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince received greetings from His Highness the Amir, His Highness Sheikh Salem Al-Ali, Sheikh Mubarak Al-Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Sheikh Meshaal Al-Sabah, His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad, as well as ministers, governors, diplomats, in addition to a number of citizens and expatriates.

His Highness the Crown Prince also received a cable from Ghanem and MPs who congratulated him and His Highness the Amir on Ramadan's advent. His Highness the Crown Prince sent cables in return, thanking Ghanem and MPs on their sincere wishes.

In the meantime, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent a cable of congratulations to His Highness the Amir on start of the

holy month of Ramadan. Sheikh Nasser sent a similar cable to His Highness the Crown Prince and to His Highness the Prime Minister on the holy occasion, according to a statement by the Defense Ministry's Public Relations. Sheikh Nasser Al-Sabah hoped that they would see more happy returns of the occasion, while Kuwait continued to enjoy prosperity and advancement.

Also, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah sent cables of congratulations to His Highness the Amir, His Highness the Crown Prince and Speaker Ghanem on the start of Ramadan. Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah sent similar cables to His Highness Sheikh Salem Al-Ali and to Sheikh Meshaal Al-Sabah, the Ministry of Interior stated in a press release. It added, he also sent cables on the same occasion to His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak, Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad, and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. He expressed sincere sentiments and prayed to Allah Almighty to bless "our dear homeland with stability and security and that the Arab and Muslim nations achieve their aspirations."

KIB launches comprehensive Ramadan campaign

KUWAIT: As part of its social and humanitarian duty towards the local community, Kuwait International Bank (KIB) launched its special Ramadan campaign for this year. The campaign will kick off at the beginning of the holy month, under the umbrella of the Bank's leading social responsibility program. Additionally, KIB has already begun distributing its Ramadan calendar 2018 for prayer timings as a gift to its customers at its head office and at branches across the country. The calendar features a stylish, catchy design and comes in a variety of sizes for different uses.

This year's campaign will carry out a diverse and comprehensive program comprising religious, community-based and sports activities and initiatives, reflecting KIB's integral role as a national financial institution and its commitment

towards the local community.

Manager of the Corporate Communications Unit at KIB, Nawaf Najia, said: "Our Ramadan campaign this year is packed with impactful initiatives that truly reflect the Holy Month's value of giving and KIB's relentless commitment to giving back to the community. The campaign also exemplifies the Bank's leading role as an active member within the community, not only through its outstanding banking solutions, but also through its desire to serve all segments of the community and establish itself as a partner in every aspect of its customers' lives: a true 'Bank for Life'."

KIB's comprehensive program will celebrate Ramadan through a series of humanitarian initiatives and charitable activities for all its customers and employees, as well as diverse segments in the community. As part of these various community-based initiatives and activities, the Bank will also offer its financial and moral support to a number of charitable institutions. Additionally, KIB will organize a number of visits to schools, nursing homes, and orphanages to spread joy and happiness amongst them. Throughout Ramadan, KIB will also embrace long-held local traditions and customs such as organizing a gircean celebration for children, guraish, and the annual Ramadan ghabqa for its employees to bring people together and pro-

mote a friendly atmosphere.

In addition to distributing Ramadan food supplies and refreshing beverages throughout Ramadan, KIB will also launch its food package initiative, 'Al-Mashla'. The initiative aims at distributing Ramadan food packages to fasting families in need across Kuwait, with the participation of a large number of volunteers. On the occasion of Eid, the program will also include the distribution of vouchers across the local community to share the joy of Eid and spread the spirit of celebration and happiness.

In line with its ongoing commitment towards promoting Islamic values amongst diverse segments of the community, KIB will also hold its Annual Ramadan Quran Memorization Competition for its staff and their children, as well as the children of its customers. Additionally, the Bank will organize several religious lectures for its staff across all departments.

KIB is also dedicated to supporting youth and sports-related activities. Accordingly, the Bank is set to participate in several annual sports activities and programs, such as the late Jassim Al-Sharhan Ramadan annual football tournament, Al-Qattan tournament, the Late Abdullah Meshari Al-Roudhan Ramadan Indoor Football Tournament, as well as the Ramadan Football Tournament for its staff.

KRCS launches donation campaign for Gaza

KUWAIT: Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) launched yesterday a donation campaign to ease the suffering of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. The recent Israeli attacks left 61 Palestinians dead and over 3,000 wounded, KRCS Chairman Dr Hilal Al-Sayer said, adding that KRCS has great experience in delivering aid to those in need everywhere. The society had already delivered medicines to hospitals in Gaza, and is currently coordinating with Palestinian humanitarian organizations to deliver food and other medical supplies needed in the strip, Sayer said. He noted that people could donate for the five-day campaign from 09:00 am to 02:00 pm and from 04:00 pm to 08:00 pm. He added that the timing in Ramadan would be from 10:00 am to 02:00 pm and from 08:30 pm to 10:30 pm.

Meanwhile, KRCS and the UN World Food Program (WFP) signed yesterday a \$1 million joint deal to provide necessary assistance to the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh. Sayer said after signing the agreement that the society was keen on cooperating with international organizations such as the WFP to help those in need around the globe.

The Rohingya, who are prosecuted by the Buddhist majority in Myanmar, have sought refuge in safe areas within their country and Bangladesh, said Dr Sayer who stressed the importance of the deal, which provides food material to the WFP's central kitchen in



KUWAIT: KRCS Chairman Dr Hilal Al-Sayer supervises a donation campaign for Palestinians in Gaza. — KUNA photos



KRCS Chairman Dr Hilal Al-Sayer and Head of the WFP office in the UAE and GCC Dr Abdullah Al-Wardat sign an agreement to provide necessary assistance to the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh. Head of the UN World Food Program (WFP) office in the UAE and GCC Dr Abdullah Al-Wardat lauded cooperation with the KRCS, affirming that Kuwaiti teams were known for their efficient work and

responsibility in carrying out humanitarian missions. The current deal reflects the strong ties between the two sides and hopefully such cooperation would continue for years to come, said the WFP official. — KUNA

Workshop held at Adan Hospital pharmacy

KUWAIT: Founder and President of Alnowair Projects Management Company Sheikh Intisar Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah announced the successful conclusion of a workshop held at Adan Hospital outpatient clinics' pharmacy, in cooperation with Customer Service Specialist and Administrative Consultant Rihab Al-Twari. The workshop, titled 'Yellow Window', was the first of its kind to be held in a public medical facility. The workshop's goal was to create a welcoming atmosphere in the facility, Sheikh Intisar said, adding that employees underwent training for one month to achieve that goal. "The pharmacy is the last place that patients visit before they leave," she said, adding that Adan Hospital serves a large numbers of patients who live in the Ahmadi and Mubarak Al-Kabeer governorates.





Ash cloud from Hawaii volcano sparks red alert

On the edge: Forgotten poor left by Colombia's war

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PEKANBARU, Indonesia: Onlookers take pictures as police examine the bodies of two attackers after they launched an attack on the police headquarters yesterday. — AFP

Indonesia hit by new IS-claimed attack

Four samurai sword-wielding attackers shot dead

PEKANBARU, Indonesia: Four men who attacked an Indonesian police headquarters with samurai swords were shot dead yesterday and one officer also died, authorities said, days after a wave of deadly suicide bombings claimed by the Islamic State (IS) group rocked the country. The assault in the city of Pekanbaru on Sumatra island - also claimed by IS - saw a group ram their minivan into a gate at the station and then attack officers, police said. Days earlier, two families who belonged to the same religious study group staged suicide bombings at churches and a police station in Surabaya on Java island, Indonesia's second biggest city.

The attacks have put Indonesia on edge - and sparked a string of foreign government travel advisories - as the world's biggest Muslim-majority country starts the holy fasting month of Ramadan from today. Four attackers were shot dead at the scene yesterday and another suspect who fled was later arrested, police said. One officer was killed by the speeding vehicle and two others were wounded in the incident, they added.

Police said the men belonged to a local extremist group, but not Jamaah Ansharut Daulah (JAD), which authorities believe was behind the family suicide bombings. Both groups have pledged allegiance to IS, they

said. The violence is putting pressure on lawmakers to pass a stalled security law that would give police more power to take pre-emptive action against terror suspects. "I'm outraged and very saddened by these acts carried out by cowards - they have no humanity," said Peppy Magdalena, who joined a demonstration in Jakarta in support of the bill.

Indonesia - which is set to host the Asian Games in just three months and an IMF-World Bank meeting in Bali in October - has long struggled with Islamist militancy. Its worst-ever attack was the 2002 Bali bombings that killed more than 200 people, including locals and foreign tourists.

'Better organized'

Security forces have arrested hundreds of militants during a sustained crackdown since the Bali bombing. Most attacks in recent years have been limited to low-level operations against domestic security forces. But

on Sunday, a family of six - including girls aged nine and 12 - staged suicide bombings at three churches during morning services in Surabaya, killing 13. All six bombers died, including the mother who was Indonesia's first known female suicide bomber. It was also the first time children had been used in such attacks.

A memorial service was held yesterday for Vincencius Hudojo, 11, and Nathanael Hudojo, 8, two brothers who died after the blast at the Santa Maria Catholic Church on Sunday in Surabaya. Their mother was injured. Services were also held for Martha Djumani, 54, who was killed in the bombing at a Pentecostal church, just a day after she had got engaged. "My sister was always caring towards other people and taught her children to be compassionate," Daud Samari, Djumani's younger brother, told reporters.

Family friends

On Monday members of another family blew them-

selves up at a police station in Surabaya, wounding 10. The church bombing family were in the same religious study group as the Surabaya police station bombers and a third family believed to be linked to the wave of attacks, authorities said. "They had the same teacher and they regularly met for Koran recital every week," said East Java police chief Machfud Arifin.

The coordinated church attack was a sign local extremist groups are becoming more proficient, and it stirs concerns about an uptick in radicalism as hundreds of Indonesians who flocked to fight alongside IS in the Middle East return home. "They were better organised... (it) suggests a higher level of capacity than what we have seen in recent years," said Sidney Jones, director of Jakarta-based Institute of Policy Analysis of Conflict.

Dozens of suspects have been rounded up in raids since Sunday's attacks, while several militants, including the number two ranking leader of the Surabaya JAD chapter, had been shot and killed, police said. The church and earlier police station attacks were likely motivated by the arrest of JAD leaders, authorities said. They followed a deadly prison riot staged by Islamist prisoners at a high-security jail near Jakarta last week. — AFP



Attacks have put country on edge

With friends like Trump, who needs enemies: EU chief

SOFIA: The European Union's top official launched a stinging attack yesterday on President Donald Trump, slamming his "capricious assertiveness" and saying the US leader acted more like an enemy than a friend. EU president Donald Tusk urged leaders meeting in Bulgaria to form a "united European front" against Trump's withdrawal from the Iranian nuclear deal and his move to impose trade tariffs on Europe. Tusk even compared the US administration to Europe's traditional foes Moscow and Beijing as he launched his broadside hours before a dinner of the 28 leaders in Sofia where they will discuss the issue.

"Looking at the latest decisions of President Trump, someone could even think with friends like that who needs enemies," Tusk told reporters. "But frankly speaking, Europe should be grateful to President Trump, because thanks to him we have got rid of all illusions. He has made us realize that if you need a helping hand you will find one at the end of your arm."

The transatlantic rift has hijacked the agenda of a summit today at which the EU leaders will meet their Balkan counterparts in a bid to

foster closer ties and keep Russia out of their backyard. European ministers met with a top Iranian official in Brussels on Tuesday in a bid to save the Iranian nuclear accord after Trump decided to pull out. Meanwhile the EU is still trying to win exemptions from tariffs on steel and aluminum exports. Tusk called for more unity in the divided EU - which is set to lose Britain as a member next year - to face the growing challenges.

'Capricious assertiveness'

"Besides the traditional political challenges such as the rise of China or the aggressive stance of Russia, we are witnessing today a new phenomenon: the capricious assertiveness of the American administration," Tusk said. "I have no doubt that in the new global game, Europe will either be one of the major players, or a pawn. This is the only real alternative." The 28 leaders will also discuss the deaths of dozens of Palestinians in Gaza after Trump moved the US embassy to Jerusalem, in another move that the Europeans had strongly opposed.

Tusk said he wanted the European leaders to "reconfirm" that they will stay in the Iran deal, as long as Tehran respects it - although Europe must now find a way to make up for the US sanctions on Iran that Trump will renege. British Prime Minister Theresa May, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Emmanuel Macron will "present their assessment of the situation" to their colleagues, he said.

European Commission President Jean-

Claude Juncker and EU foreign policy chief will outline to the leaders what measures the bloc could take to shield its now substantial economic interests in Iran, Tusk added. Merkel however said that Europe had no choice but to stick with the ties that have bound it to Washington since World War II. "Despite all the difficulties we have these days, the transatlantic relations are and will remain of outstanding importance," Merkel told the German parliament. Over the dinner of Bulgarian salad, meatballs, buffalo steak and walnut biscuits with berries, May meanwhile was to tell her fellow leaders that Britain was "committed to ensuring the deal is upheld" so long as Iran honors its commitments, her spokeswoman said.

'Stick to our guns'

On Trump's decision to impose tariffs on steel and aluminium imports, a move the EU has warned could spark a trade war, Tusk urged the leaders to keep a unified front. "I will propose we stick to our guns," Tusk said. "It is absurd to even think that the EU could be a threat to the US. We need to bring back reality in this discussion, which is not the case today." Behind their message of unity and firmness, some member states seem open to tolerating limited quotas from the United States on metals imports while others want a harder line, diplomats said. The violence in Gaza will also be on the agenda as it was "linked to the bigger question of the consequences of the decisions of Donald Trump," an EU official said. — AFP

Palestinians recall envoys to 4 EU nations

RAMALLAH: The Palestinian Authority has recalled its envoys to Romania, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Austria after their ambassadors attended an Israeli reception marking the US embassy's move to Jerusalem, it said yesterday. The statement from the PA's foreign ministry said the EU nations' ambassadors had attended the reception on Sunday, a day before the US opened its Israel embassy in Jerusalem. The embassy move and Washington's recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel has deeply angered Palestinians, who see the Israeli-annexed eastern sector of the city as the capital of their future state.

The ministry "sees this participation as a grave breach of international law and United Nations resolutions which confirm that Jerusalem has been occupied since 1967 and ban

countries from moving their embassies there," the statement said. "The recalls are to consult with our ambassadors to these states about their positions and their commitment to the EU's positions."

Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas on Tuesday withdrew his top envoy to Washington. The European Union opposed the US move of its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. The embassy move was accompanied by mass protests and clashes along the Gaza border that saw Israeli forces kill some 60 Palestinians. Israel has faced international criticism over its use of live fire against demonstrators.

It says its actions are necessary to defend the border and stop mass infiltrations from the Palestinian enclave, which is run by Islamist movement Hamas. Jerusalem's status is perhaps the thorniest issue in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Israel occupied the West Bank and east Jerusalem in 1967 and later annexed east Jerusalem in a move never recognized by the international community. It sees the entire city as its capital. — AFP

International

Gaza violence puts Palestinian cause back on global agenda

Killings overshadow US embassy move

GAZA CITY: Weeks of mass protests and deadly violence on the Gaza-Israel border have put the Palestinian cause back on the global agenda, but questions remain over whether the impact will last. More than 100 Palestinians were killed in seven weeks of protests, culminating in 60 dead on Monday, mainly from Israeli sniper fire, as tens of thousands rallied against the transfer of the US embassy to Jerusalem. The violence overshadowed the embassy move, as television networks split their screens between US President Donald Trump's daughter Ivanka speaking at the inauguration and the carnage on the Gaza border.



Israel says its actions are necessary to defend the border and stop mass infiltrations from the Palestinian enclave, which is run by the Islamist movement Hamas. Following unconfirmed reports of indirect contacts between Hamas and Israel, Tuesday proved far calmer - only a few thousand people gathered on the border, with only minor incidents reported. Ramadan, the Muslim month of dawn-to-dusk fasting, was also poised to begin today, likely to keep people away from the protests.

Near the border on Tuesday evening, 26-year-old Mutassim Hajjaj showed off videos of himself seeking to breach the border fence the day before. He said the protests had overshadowed the embassy move. "That's a victory. It's a victory for us as the Palestinian people as it raised the issue of the right of return," he said. Hajjaj was referring to Palestinian demands to return to land they fled or were expelled from in 1948 during the war surrounding Israel's creation.

Israel, Hamas feel pressure

But whether the protests will have a lasting impact is up for debate. So far, there has been limited diplomatic fallout for Israel, although the dozens of dead have led to condemnation from a range of countries worldwide. Turkey, Ireland, Belgium and South Africa took diplomatic measures, while others called on the Jewish state to show more restraint against unarmed protesters. But the United States vetoed a UN Security Council motion calling for an independent probe into the deaths and the President Donald Trump's administration blamed Hamas.

Mukhaimer Abu Saada, a politics professor at Gaza's Al-Azhar University, said Hamas was hoping for an easing of Israel's blockade of the territory and for Egypt

to open its border, largely closed in recent years. "Under increased international pressure, Israel will have to come up with a solution to the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Gaza," Abu Saada said. Trump's administration and other global powers have failed to come up with a unified position, said Hugh Lovatt of the European Council on Foreign Relations think-tank. "The international community ultimately proved itself unwilling and unable to curb Israeli action," he said. "This further emboldened Israel."

Mark Heller of the Institute for National Security Studies at the University of Tel Aviv said the Israeli government, seen as the most right-wing in the country's history, would resist outside pressure. "The government, in spite of the voices raised for an easing of the blockade, will not do anything because it does not consider Hamas can be a partner" for peace.

'Big disappointment'

Three wars between Israel and Hamas since 2008 have devastated Gaza, while damage to Israel was relatively limited. Hamas has started to adopt a new language, encouraging what it argues are peaceful protests. Israel says protesters have used firebombs and explosive devices, while Israeli soldiers were fired upon at one point on Monday. Only one Israeli soldier has been reported wounded since the protests began on March 30. Officially the protests were due to end on Tuesday but Hamas leaders have said they will continue in some form.

Reham Owda, a political analyst in Gaza, said Hamas would face scrutiny over its strategy of encouraging thousands to the border for the "right to return" protests. "Maybe we will witness some easing in the blockade, but for people who lost their sons, there will be a big disappointment." Some analysts say Hamas is not looking for a fresh war, knowing the impact would be severe on its already suffering people. "But Hamas cannot afford to wave the white flag," Heller said. "We must therefore expect sooner or later that new clashes are inevitable."

Israeli drones have flown over protesters near the border dropping tear gas, largely without any armed reaction. But on Tuesday evening as one flew over, plain-clothed militants in the crowd rushed to grab their Kalashnikov rifles and fired round after round into the air, eventually bringing it down, an AFP journalist witnessed. "Victory!" a man shouted. —AFP



CHICAGO: Members of the Palestinian community and their supporters march toward the Israeli consulate to protest President Donald Trump's decision to move the US embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem on Tuesday. — AFP

B'desh oppn leader Zia granted bail

DHAKA: Bangladesh's 72-year-old opposition leader Khaleda Zia was granted bail on corruption charges yesterday after her lawyers argued her health was at risk, paving the way for her to be released from jail. Zia was imprisoned in February after being accused of embezzling money intended for an orphanage, an allegation she said was politically motivated. Bangladesh has for years been locked in an epic showdown between Zia, who has served as prime minister three times, and her arch-rival, current leader Sheikh Hasina.

In a unanimous ruling, the Supreme Court upheld a lower court's decision to grant Zia bail while she appeals against the five-year jail term, her lawyer Joyanal Abedin told AFP. She faces several other charges and it was not immediately clear when she would be released from the special jail in the capital Dhaka where she is the sole inmate. Zia's lawyers said they told the court that she faced serious health risks if kept in prison and that she would be treated at a top private hospital once she is released. "She has become very sick due to long solitary confinement," Abedin said, adding that Zia suffers from a neurological problem, arthritis and night-time fever. The Supreme Court had earlier suspended the lower court's decision to grant Zia bail, prompting her Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) to condemn the move as part of a campaign by Hasina to silence the opposition ahead of looming national elections. Zia faces more than 30 other inquiries related to violence and corruption. —AFP

Confirmation of chlorine use in Syria

THE HAGUE: Global arms experts yesterday confirmed chlorine was used in a Syrian town in February leaving residents fighting for breath, as the world awaits the results of a probe into last month's alleged poison gas attack on Douma. A fact-finding mission by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons determined that "chlorine was released from cylinders by mechanical impact in the Al Talil neighborhood of Saraqeb" on Feb 4, an OPCW statement said.



RASTAN: Syrian security forces enter this town in the central Homs province and raise the government flag along with portraits of President Bashar Al-Assad in the main square yesterday after rebels and their relatives were evacuated. —AFP

strongly condemn the use of toxic chemicals as weapons by anyone, for any reason, and in any circumstances," said OPCW head Ahmet Uzumcu. "Such acts contradict the unequivocal prohibition against chemical weapons."

Results are also awaited from a difficult mission by an OPCW fact-finding team to the Syrian town of Douma, after medics and rescuers said 40 people died in a chlorine and sarin attack on April 7. The team exhumed bodies and gathered more than 100 environmental samples now being analyzed in different OPCW-designated labs. The Douma attack triggered a wave of punitive missile strikes against alleged chemical weapons facilities in Syria by the United States, Britain and France.

Results end of May

But Syria and Russia have accused Syrian volunteer rescue workers of

staging shocking video footage of the alleged attack at the behest of the United States. Russian foreign ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said the results of the Douma mission would not be known "before the end of May". "We believe that the results of the investigation will be balanced and exhaustive ... and will help establish a real picture of what happened on April 7," she said in a televised briefing.

Zakharova added that Moscow believed the OPCW findings "will confirm the baselessness of the contrived and unproven allegations against Damascus". The OPCW's fact-finding mission was set up in 2014 to investigate repeated allegations of chemical weapons use in the Syrian conflict. Damascus joined the Chemical Weapons Convention, which bans the use or production of toxic arms, in 2013 under a deal brokered by the United States and Russia. —AFP

grace may lead to their own fall - so, by keeping him strong, they are attempting to bargain" for their own position.

'Hands off Zuma'

Zuma's most notable public appearance since his resignation was in April in the dock of the High Court in Durban, the capital of KZN, to face corruption charges dating back to before he came to power. He turned the event into a public rally, emerging from court to address several hundred supporters who were singing "Tell us what he has done wrong" and "Hands off Zuma". Zuma told them the charges against him were "politically motivated" - a defiant speech signalling his determination to extract the maximum political price from the ANC and Ramaphosa for his ousting.

KwaZulu-Natal, the largest region of ANC membership in the country, has been a fierce battleground between party factions - often spilling into violence and even a string of assassinations. "The network of patronage built around Jacob Zuma... is still alive - and desperate for survival," political commentator Justice Malala wrote this week. "This faction is regrouping... They intend to build an anti-Ramaphosa stronghold in KZN."

Zuma, 76, was due to stand down as president at the 2019 elections after serving the maximum two terms. But his apparent plan to ensure protection by positioning his ex-wife Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma as his successor was derailed when she was defeated by Ramaphosa in the December vote for a new party leader. —AFP

Zuma poses problems for new president

JOHANNESBURG: Three months ago, Jacob Zuma was ousted as president of South Africa, in a humiliating end to his nine-year rule. But he and his supporters seem determined to not go quietly. Zuma reluctantly resigned from office after the ruling ANC party turned against him as his legal troubles and corruption scandals mounted ahead of next year's elections. His forced exit brought an end to a presidency marred by increasing anger over unemployment, poor housing and decrepit services for many poor black communities in post-apartheid South Africa.

His successor Cyril Ramaphosa promised a "new dawn" for citizens and foreign investors. But Zuma's shadow is looming large over the Ramaphosa era as his allies launch a fightback within the African National Congress (ANC). "There is bad blood there, and Zuma is feeling betrayed - it is an open secret," political analyst Somadoda Fikeni from the UNISA university in Pretoria told AFP.

Zuma, a Zulu traditionalist from the key province of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), has tapped into his homeland support since being dethroned. "He has retreated to his traditional base of KZN - that's where he may cause the most damage," said Fikeni. "Some of his associates fear that his fall from

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International

Ash cloud from Hawaii volcano sparks red alert for aviation

New hazard for residents of Big Island

PAHOA, Hawaii: Explosions intensified on Hawaii's Kilauea volcano on Tuesday, spewing ash and triggering a red alert for aircraft for the first time since the latest eruption began 12 days ago. Ash and volcanic smog, or vog, as it is called, rose to 12,000 feet (3,657 m) above Kilauea's crater and floated southwest, showering cars on Highway 11 with gray dust and prompting an "unhealthy air" advisory in the community of Pahala, 29 km from the summit.

An aviation red alert means a volcanic eruption is under way that could spew ash along aircraft routes, the US Geological Survey (USGS) says on its website. Ash was also a new hazard for residents of Hawaii's Big Island, already grappling with volcanic gas and lava that has destroyed 37 homes and other structures and forced the evacuation of about 2,000 residents. A shift in winds was expected to bring ash and vog inland yesterday and make them more concentrated, said John Bravender of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

"We're observing more or less continuous emission of ash now with intermittent, more energetic ash bursts or plumes," Steve Brantley, a deputy scientist in charge at the Hawaiian Volcano Observatory (HVO), said on a conference call with reporters. The observatory warned the eruption could become more violent. "At any time, activity may become more explosive, increasing the intensity of ash production and producing ballistic projectiles near the vent," the HVO said in a statement on the change in aviation alert level to red from orange. Ash is not poisonous but irritates the nose, eyes and airways. It can make roads slippery and large emissions could cause the failure of electrical power lines, said USGS chemist David Damby.



Eruption has hit the island's tourism industry

New fissure
The eruption has hit the island's tourism industry. Big Island summer hotel bookings have dropped by almost half from last year, Rob Birch, executive director of the Island of Hawaii Visitor Bureau, told journalists on a conference call. College exchange student Constantin Plinke, 24, was planning to go to the Hawaii Volcanoes National Park before it was shut. "We had a big list of things to do and maybe 80 percent of them were in the national park," he said, after stopping by the side of the road to watch ash plumes rising into the air. "It's sad."

The area taking the brunt of the eruption is about 40 km down Kilauea's eastern flank, near the village of Pahoa. Lava has burst from the ground to tear through housing developments and farmland, threatening one of the last exit routes from coastal areas, state Highway 132. The latest fissure in the earth opened on Tuesday, spewing lava and toxic gases that pushed air quality into "condition red" around Lanipuna Gardens and nearby farms, causing "choking and inability to breathe," the Hawaiian Volcano Observatory and Hawaii County Civil Defense said.

Road crews put metal plates over steaming cracks on nearby Highway 130 and reopened it to give coastal residents an escape route should a lava flow reach the ocean and block another road, Highway 137, Civil Defense said. No major injuries or deaths have been reported from the eruption. A looming menace remains the possibility of an "explosive eruption" of Kilauea, an event last seen in 1924. Pent-up steam could drive a 20,000-foot (6,100-m) ash plume out of the crater and scatter debris over 19 km, the USGS said. —Reuters



A man drives a golf cart at a golf course as an ash plume rises in the distance from the Kilauea volcano on Hawaii's Big Island on Tuesday in Hawaii Volcanoes National Park. —AFP

Senate panel approves CIA nominee Haspel

WASHINGTON: A key US Senate panel yesterday greenlighted the nomination of veteran covert operative Gina Haspel to become director of the Central Intelligence Agency, despite her involvement in the torture of Al-Qaeda detainees in the early 2000s. The Intelligence Committee voted 10-5 to forward her nomination to the entire Senate, virtually assuring that she will earn final approval to lead the US spy agency, replacing Mike Pompeo, who is now secretary of state.

Republican Senator John McCain, who was tortured during years spent as a prisoner of war in Vietnam, led a push to reject Haspel after she refused to say the brutal interrogation methods used after the 9/11 attacks were "immoral." But she reiterated her opposition to the practice going forward in a letter sent earlier this week to the committee's senior Democrat, Mark Warner, persuading him to endorse her. "With the benefit of hindsight and my experience as a senior agency leader, the enhanced interrogation program is not one the CIA should have undertaken," she told Warner in the letter dated Monday.

Warner's support was matched by one other unnamed Democrat in the secret vote, ensuring the closely divided Senate will also be able to pass Haspel through in a vote expected to come before the end of the month. It will make Haspel, a 61-year-old Russia specialist, the first-ever woman to lead the CIA, and the first director who spent their entire career in the agency's clandestine services. "Gina Haspel is the most qualified person the president could choose to lead the CIA and the most prepared nominee in the 70-year history of the agency," said committee chairman Richard Burr in a statement. —AFP



Gina Haspel

Rio baby hit by bullet 15th child shot this year

RIO DE JANEIRO: A baby was wounded by a stray bullet in Rio de Janeiro while in his mother's arms, becoming the 15th child shot here this year, reports said Tuesday. The non-governmental organization Fogo Cruzado, which monitors the city's daily shootings, said the boy was hit Monday in the courtyard of a school in the historic Cosme Velho neighborhood of posh southern Rio. The infant's mother had come to the private Sao Vicente de Paulo school to pick up another child.

The school said it was "brutally put on Rio's map of violence when a stray bullet hit a baby while in his mother's arms, while she waited for her other child to finish a sports activity". G1 news site said the baby was struck in the shoulder and that doctors were to operate to remove the bullet. This was the 15th shooting of a child in the greater Rio area in 2018, said Fogo Cruzado, which translates as Cross Fire. These include a three-year-old girl shot dead in her parents' car in February, an 11-year-old girl hit by a stray bullet while at school, and several children shot during confrontations between police and drug gangs. Four of the 15 were killed, Fogo Cruzado said.

Parents and others in the neighborhood of Sao Vicente de Paulo expressed dismay, saying the shooting proved nowhere is safe in Rio, even if the vast majority of the violence is in the poor, gang-infested neighborhoods known as favelas. "It's worrying because when you're in a school you think you're safe, but then things happen on the outside," said Jassira, 60, who has a grandchild at Sao Vicente de Paulo. "Today you can be in the most expensive neighborhood of Rio and witness a shooting or stray bullets. —AFP

Forgotten poor left by Colombia war

BOGOTA: They live in shantytowns that overlook Bogota - hundreds of families who fled the bloodshed in rural Colombia during decades of civil war for the relative safety of the country's cities. A year and a half after the government signed a peace deal with the leftist Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), the poor still languish on society's margins. They are the forgotten ones. Jose Pineda lives with his family lives in the ramshackle Ciudad Bolivar slum on the outskirts of Bogota, which seems to hang off the gray, chilly Andes mountainsides. El Ensueno, their neighborhood, is perched at the summit.

Most of the people in El Ensueno - 600 households in all - are victims of the conflict. Once thrown off their land, they have built shacks here, and constantly fear eviction. Men, women, and children live in cramped conditions. Mud is everywhere. Water trickles down from the mountains above, and power is siphoned off from bootleg connections. If buses ever come, few have the money to afford a ticket. "Colombia is divided between those who have a real house, and those of us who have a shack with a tin roof... those who eat when they want to, and those of us who make do with one meal a day," said the 50-year-old Pineda, a father of three.

The country is only just emerging from five decades of war, and even that isn't fully over - remnants of rebel forces still battle for control of the lucrative drug trade. Those years of conflict exacerbated pover-

ty in Colombia, where the rich-poor divide is among the widest in the world, alongside Haiti and Honduras, according to the World Bank and the United Nations. Nearly eight million people have been displaced by the violence, which has pushed thousands "towards cities, generating pools of misery" on the fringes, Jorge Restrepo, a professor at Javeriana University and author of the study "Conflict and Poverty in Colombia," told AFP. The conflict - which drew in leftist guerrillas, paramilitary groups and state forces - left about 260,000 people dead.

Struggle to survive

Pineda fled the country's southeast four years ago, after being brutally interrogated about his alleged ties to the FARC, whose members surrendered their weapons after the peace deal. The group is now a political movement. But now, he is just one of the masses living on the edge. Their fate depends on the ability of Colombia, Latin America's fourth-largest economy, to truly embrace peace and keep violence from reaching urban areas when current President Juan Manuel Santos leaves office. The country will soon elect a new leader, with the first round scheduled for May 27, and the runoff for June 17.

Oscar Lezama, a former police officer who fled to Bogota in 2012, lives in El Ensueno with his wife and four children. "The war forced us from the countryside to the city. We have to fight just to have five square meters," said the 48-year-old, his frustration palpable. While the peace deal helped reduce the staggering death toll of 3,000 a year seen during the war, it has also divided Colombians. Some have criticized the amnesty offered to former rebels, who have since been rehabilitated and allowed to enter politics. If Colombia's rightwing wins the presidency, it has



BOGOTA: A boy stands in "El Ensueno", part of the Ciudad Bolivar slum, on May 4, 2018. — AFP

pledged to modify the accord. In areas like Ciudad Bolivar, home to 700,000 people, residents are angry that peace did not in any way improve their prospects. Santos's administration, in power since 2010, launched an ambitious program of land restitution, but without specific plans for those forced into the cities.

Fresh violence

Poverty in terms of income in Colombia has decreased from 37.2 percent in 2010 to 26.9 percent in 2017. However, that still means that out of a population of almost 50 million, 13 million are poor. Without "more ambitious programs," poverty will be "a permanent factor fueling violence, and perhaps even a resumption of war," said economist Eduardo Sarmiento. In El Ensueno, armed factions are taking advantage of the power vacuum left by the

FARC, with drug dealers targeting schools. Five illegal organizations including the National Liberation Army (ELN) - the country's last active rebel group - operate within Ciudad Bolivar, according to Colombia's human rights ombudsman. The violence that persists in several areas could lead to further displacement, fueling poverty, which has become a ticking time bomb in Colombian society. Deysi Garcia, a mother of five children, almost lost her farm in Viota, 90 km from Bogota. Paramilitaries occupied her land, where two bodies were later found.

Freed from prison, she succeeded in retaining her coffee plants but must also work as a maid. Her farm, because of its isolated location, cannot turn a profit. "Customers pay very little, and it doesn't cover the cost of production," said the 38-year-old widow. —AFP

Ortega attends crisis talks with opposition

MANAGUA: Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega was yesterday set to attend long-awaited crisis talks with the opposition after nearly a month of violence that has left scores dead, officials said. The Central American country's Roman Catholic bishops said earlier this week they would mediate in the so-called "national dialogue". "Tomorrow, from 10 in the morning, once the national dialogue is opened by the bishops, our president will be there, we will be there," Ortega's wife and government spokeswoman, Rosario Murillo, had said on Tuesday.

Her statement came as demonstrators and riot police clashed in the northern town of Matagalpa, ruled by Ortega's Sandinista Front party. The town's mayor, Sadrach Zeledon, said one person was killed "by right-wing vandalism groups," referring to the demonstrators, who in turn said the victim, Wilber Reyes, was killed in attacks launched by police. Meanwhile, 35 people were injured in the clashes and at least 10 people had been arrested, the Nicaraguan Association for Human Rights spokesman in the city, German Herrera, told local TV station 100% Noticias. The education ministry said on its website that local high schools had been closed as a security precaution.

In Masaya, 30 km southeast of the capital Managua, residents reported harsh

repression by riot police, while parents and students from private high schools marched Tuesday afternoon in Managua demanding justice and freedom. The US embassy in Nicaragua has suspended the processing of nonimmigrant visas until further notice, citing the instability.

Belated rights scrutiny

Ortega had accepted the notion of talks in the early days of the crackdown, but the church deemed he had not fulfilled conditions in which they could be held. Among them is a visit by a regional human rights group which has finally been given permission to enter the country to investigate reports of widespread police brutality. At least 53 people have been killed and some 400 injured in almost a month of protests, which initially broke out over proposed cuts to social security benefits, but morphed into widespread discontent with Ortega's leftist government.

The protests pose a serious challenge to the authority of Ortega, 72, who has ruled Nicaragua for the past 11 years and before that from 1979-1990, after overthrowing the dictatorship of Anastasio Somoza. The protests that erupted on April 18 were the worst his government has faced, badly shaking his tight grip on power over the country, one of the poorest in Latin America. Ortega made a series of concessions after sharp domestic and international criticism over the use of security forces to put down the protests, and curbs on independent media to report them.

100% Noticias, a private channel and one of several outlets closed in the media crackdown at the beginning of the protests,



MANAGUA: Students with a sign reading "They were students, not delinquents" - referring to at least 53 people killed in an ongoing wave of protests against the government of Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega - take part in a protest in Managua on Tuesday. — AFP

said its offices in Managua had been targeted by gunfire. "A shot was fired from a vehicle," said the channel's head of news, Lucia Pineda, adding that the station received threats from government sympathizers "every day". Ortega's concessions included abandoning the social security reforms, freeing dozens of arrested protesters, lifting broadcast bans on private TV channels, and offering dialogue. Many Nicaraguans, though - especially emboldened university students - want Ortega to step down.

Army, business support, cools

Business leaders, as well as the army, appear to have distanced themselves from Ortega as the protests, and the

deadly crackdown, have continued. Most of the dead have been protesters. Frustrations have been voiced over corruption, the distant autocratic style of Ortega and Murillo, limited options to change the country's politics in elections, and the president's control over Congress, the courts, the military and the electoral authority.

Cardinal Leopoldo Brenes, the archbishop of Managua and head of the Nicaraguan Bishops Conference who will mediate the talks, admitted during a press conference on Monday that "the circumstances for dialogue are not the best". Brenes said the talks would deal with issues designed "to pave the way for democratization" in Nicaragua. —AFP

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Analysis

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Venezuela paradox: Maduro's critics long for change but won't vote

Months before Venezuela's opposition coalition called for abstention in Sunday's presidential election, college student Ana Romano had already decided not to vote. While volunteering as a witness in October's election for state governors, Romano said, she lost count of the number of times activists for the ruling Socialist Party walked into voting booths on the pretext of "assisting" voters - a tactic the opposition says is illegal intimidation. Romano said pro-government workers at the voting center in the rural state of Portuguesa also refused to close its doors at 6:00 p.m. as per regulations, keeping it open for an extra hour while Socialist Party cadres rounded up votes.

Her experience illustrates why some in Venezuela's opposition say they will boycott Sunday's presidential vote despite anger at the South American nation's unraveling under unpopular President Nicolas Maduro. "It was four of them against me and I was 20 years old: I couldn't do anything," Romano said, adding that she did not file an official report because the other poll center workers would not have signed it - and because there was no paper available to do so. "I don't want to have anything to do with this upcoming election," Romano said. "We've already made that mistake."

Reuters could not independently verify details of her account. Venezuela's National Electoral Council - the government body in charge of organizing elections - did not respond to phone calls seeking comment. Venezuela, a once-wealthy OPEC nation, is suffering hyperinflation and widespread food shortages as its economy collapses, leading hundreds of thousands to flee into neighboring countries. Yet, despite popularity ratings languishing around 20 percent, Maduro is expected to secure a second, six-year term in his deeply divided country, in part due to low opposition turnout.

Some opposition members say participation would be pointless in the face of efforts to tilt the playing field in favor of Maduro, a former union leader who was elected in 2013 after the death of his mentor, late socialist leader Hugo Chavez. They cite tactics ranging from the kind of small-scale election-center tricks described by Romano to the detention of the most prominent opposition leader Leopoldo Lopez, the coercion of government workers to vote for Maduro and the heavy use of state resources in his campaign.

Many in the opposition say there are inadequate guarantees of a free and fair vote: they point to a ban on Western election observers. The government says they would violate its national sovereignty.

The Venezuelan Electoral Observatory, an independent local election monitoring group, has also flagged problems that include an inadequate timeframe to update the electoral register and develop a network of poll center witnesses, and a reduction in real-time audits of results. Washington, which has imposed sanctions on Maduro's government, has said it will not recognize the results of Sunday's vote.

Breaking the opposition boycott is former state governor Henri Falcon. Opposition leaders have attacked Falcon - a former Chavez ally or 'Chavista' - as a stooge who is only running to legitimize Maduro's reelection. Falcon, an ex-soldier and two-time governor of Lara state, counters that they are ceding power to Maduro without a fight and insists he would win if discontented Venezuelans turned out to vote. "So now I'm a 'Chavista' just because I have common sense, because I take a clear position and because I act responsibly toward my country?" Falcon said when asked recently by reporters about the opposition's criticism.

Falcon's camp was not immediately available for comment for this story. Maduro and allies deny the elections are unfair and insist the fractured opposition was beaten in October because its voters did not participate - an argument supported by statistics showing low turnout in its strongholds. "We have an advantage, which is the strength of the people. That can't be called an unfair advantage," Maduro said last month. Participation forecasts vary but, in general, pollsters believe turnout for Sunday's vote will be far lower than the 80 percent in the last presidential elections in 2013, when Maduro narrowly defeated opposition candidate Henrique Capriles, who is banned from running this time.

One survey by respected pollster Datanalisis showed that the number of people who said they were "very likely" to vote - its most accurate indicator of how many people will participate - had fallen close to 30 percent in March. In the Caracas slum of La Vega, Jose Vasquez, 49, described the election as too unfair to warrant participation. "It's like a game in which the referee is a family member of the other team's captain," said Vasquez, selling 40 gram (1 oz) bags of coffee and sugar on a small table in the street. "Why would I waste my time?"

During his 14 years as president, Chavez racked up repeated ballot-box victories thanks to his charisma and generous spending of Venezuela's oil revenues - much of it on popular health and nutrition programs, as well as on his own electoral campaigns. The opposition has cried fraud in the past without demonstrating evidence of it, including after a 2004 recall referendum that Chavez won. But October's vote included one incident that some opposition sympathizers see as a tipping point: election officials manually changed results at several voting centers in Bolivar state to tip the result in favor of the Socialist Party candidate, according to election center witnesses. —Reuters



Is N Korea abandoning its arsenal or hiding evidence?

Satellite imagery shows North Korea dismantling facilities at its nuclear test site, but experts say the images can't reveal whether it is the first step toward full denuclearization, or an attempt to cloak nuclear capabilities from outside observers. North Korea's intentions were thrown further into doubt yesterday, when it abruptly announced it may "reconsider" meeting with US President Donald Trump in June if the United States continues to insist on unilateral denuclearization.

Commercial satellite imagery - including photos taken by Planet Labs as recently as May 14 - show North Korea removing some structures around its nuclear test site at Punggye-ri, experts say. "So far it looks like the surface-level support structures are being dismantled," said Scott LaFoy, an open source imagery analyst. "This would be consistent with the site being closed, as you need engineers and working teams on-site to prepare and maintain the site."

Among the facilities that appear to have been razed are an engineering office, as well as buildings housing the air compressor used to pump air into the tunnels where the bombs were detonated, said non-proliferation expert Frank Pabian. "This is entirely in keeping with the official North Korean news report that 'technical measures' associated with the shutdown were underway," Pabian said. North Korea has said it plans to use explosives to collapse the tunnels; "completely" block up the tunnel entrances; and remove observation facilities, research institutes and guard structures.

A limited number of foreign media have been invited to view the ceremonial closure of the site, but so far no international inspectors, leading some experts to suspect that North Korea is seeking to hide details of its nuclear capabilities. "North Korea might seem like

be a template for denuclearizing North Korea. Bolton has proposed Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un make a deal similar to the one that led to components of Libya's nuclear program being shipped to the United States in 2004. In 2011, Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi was captured and killed by rebel forces backed by a NATO air campaign.

While the technical aspects of a North Korea deal could mirror some aspects of the Libya effort, Pyongyang has a much more advanced weapons programme and Gaddafi's fate is not encouraging, Andreas Persbo, the executive director of VERTIC, a London think tank that focuses on disarmament verification and implementation, said in a recent interview. "Libya is a horrible example to make out of that perspective because of course the North Koreans have their own teams advising Kim Jong Un on what this meant, and they will highlight the fact that this is not a good solution for North Korea," he said.

North Korea appears instead to be proposing a longer-term general commitment to "denuclearization of the Korean peninsula," which could take years even under the best circumstances, experts say. LaFoy said North Korea's actions so far are "not necessarily nefarious," but that it does raise some "red flags" about complete permanent denuclearization. "That imagery tells us the site appears to be in the process of decommissioning," he said. "But we can't tell if it is going to be closed for years or something that can ultimately be reversed in a few weeks or months." — Reuters



Images show facilities being razed at test site

they're being generous in holding this event, but this is the actual testing ground we're talking about here - The smoking gun," said Suh Kune-yull, professor of nuclear energy system engineering at Seoul National University. "It seems like they're trying to erase any evidence of the nuclear capabilities they have."

'Some red flags'

In a statement yesterday, North Korea's first vice minister of foreign affairs Kim Kye Gwan sharply criticized American officials - especially national security adviser John Bolton - for suggesting that Libya could

'Monster that devours': Royals, Meghan's dad and the media

Hounded by the paparazzi, Meghan Markle's father has been caught up in the complex and often bitter relationship between Britain's royals and the media ahead of her wedding to Prince Harry. Thomas Markle, 73, is reportedly undergoing heart surgery and will not be able to walk his daughter down the aisle during the marriage on Saturday at Windsor Castle. But his presence was already mired in scandal after he staged photographs for the media of his wedding preparations, despite earlier having complained about press intrusion.

The row is a PR disaster for the palace, which has until now executed a faultless operation of well-timed announcements on cakes, bridesmaids and other wedding details. But more importantly for the long-term, it risks further souring relations between the media and Prince Harry, who still blames the paparazzi for the death of his mother Diana. "Whatever happens on the day, the events of the past week will leave a poisonous legacy," wrote Valentine Low, a royal reporter in The Times. "Prince Harry... will inevitably blame the media for what has happened. Given what happened to his mother many will agree with him."

'Monster that devours'

Last weekend, Britain's press watchdog issued an advisory note to editors asking media to stop following Thomas Markle, warning that he was being pursued daily. His daughter Samantha, Markle's half-sister, said photographers rented the house next door to his in Mexico and followed him as he drove around. She compared the situation to that of Diana, who died in a car crash in Paris in 1997 after being pursued by photographers.

She defended her father's decision to try to control his own image by cooperating with a few chosen journalists-something Diana herself did. The palace believes it needs to engage with the public to remain relevant, and the royals use the press to promote their pet causes, most recently for Prince Harry the issue of mental health. Some commentators said Thomas Markle should have been better advised about how to handle the inevitable public interest. "The royalty-media-public intersection is a



WINDSOR: Tourists wait outside the main entrance of Windsor Castle in Windsor, west of London. Britain's Prince Harry and US actress Meghan Markle will marry on May 19 at St George's Chapel in Windsor Castle. — AFP

monster that devours those who don't know how to handle it," noted another newspaper columnist, Jane Merrick.

After the horror of Diana's death, there was a truce between the royals and the media, who-in Britain at least-largely left her young sons William and Harry alone while they grew up. But in his 20s, Harry regularly made the headlines, including the now infamous Las Vegas naked photos, while his military service in Afghanistan was abruptly ended after a media blackout was broken, sparking fears for his safety.

When he first began dating Markle, Harry issued an extraordinary statement warning about a "wave of abuse and harassment" towards her, some of it racial in tone. His older brother William, the second in line to the throne, has also been forced to act repeatedly to limit

the media scrutiny of his wife Kate and their children. In 2015, the palace warned that photographers were "going to increasingly extreme lengths" to photograph the then two-year-old Prince George.

It said one photographer hid in the boot of his car parked outside a playground, his camera peeping out a hole, while another hid in sand dunes on a beach to take photos of the boy and his grandmother.

Some believe that for all the discussion about royal privacy-and in Britain, the row over phone-hacking and other intrusion-public interest will always win out. "There is hand-wringing, and then there is the reality: a paparazzo once told me that one shot, the right shot, could keep him for a year," wrote columnist Suzanne Moore in The Guardian newspaper. —AFP

Business

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GAZIANTEP: Pedestrians walk on a shopping street in Gaziantep, in the south-west province of Turkey. In the Turkish city of Gaziantep, home to around half a million Syrians who fled the civil war south of the border, hundreds of Syrian businesses are thriving in a boost both for the displaced community and their host country. — AFP

Syrian entrepreneurs thrive in Turkey

Businesses by refugee population boost economy

GAZIANTEP, Turkey: In the Turkish city of Gaziantep, home to around half a million Syrians who fled the civil war south of the border, hundreds of Syrian businesses are thriving in a boost both for the displaced community and their host country.

Over 3.5 million Syrians are registered in Turkey, far more than in any other country that has welcomed refugees of the seven-year war. Turkish officials highlight the major economic burden of hosting so many refugees but the presence of this new population—many well-qualified and multilingual—and the success of their businesses have also been a fillip for the Turkish economy, contrary to widely-held assumptions.

More than 6,500 companies founded or co-founded by Syrians have been registered in Turkey since the 2011 start of the war, according to the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey. And the Syrian Economic Forum (SEF), an organization which aims to develop entrepreneurship among the Syrian diaspora, estimates the number in fact to be over 10,000 when the informal sector is included. In Gaziantep alone, 1,250 Syrian companies are registered with the Gaziantep Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said Rami Sharrack, deputy executive director at SEF.

'Export worldwide'

In a large complex in Gaziantep's industrial zone, Syrian businessman Amer Hadri, head of prominent crisp and snack packaging company Zirve Extrusion, has succeeded in resuming his business, once based in the war-ravaged city of Aleppo, just 125

kilometers (78 miles) south of the Turkish city.

"We have been producing machines for manufacturing and packaging crisps for over 20 years," Hadri said. "Before we exported to the Arab world but since we set up in Turkey, we have realized our ambition to export to the whole world," he added. All the packaging has a "Produced in Turkey" label, which Hadri said was a "guarantee of quality" on the European markets.

Like Hadri, many Syrians arrived in Turkey with their experience and customer base. While some target increased exports and access to international markets, other entrepreneurs have more local ambitions.

Dania Abdulbaqi, a civil engineer who came to Turkey from Hama in 2013, opened a creche in August 2016 for children of all nationalities between three months and five years old after not being able to find one in the area.

"Mothers who work in this district are near their children and can come and breastfeed them during their breaks." For this project, Abdulbaqi attended management training courses with NGOs in Gaziantep, and her husband raised funds from relatives to finance it. "The massive influx has stimulated growth and attracted new investment by providing cheap labor and boosting

consumption," the International Crisis Group said in a report this year. It added that some experts believe the presence of Syrians added about three percent to Turkish economic growth in 2016.

'Important advantage'

Fatma Sahin, mayor of Gaziantep and prominent member of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's ruling party, said she welcomed the opportunities offered by joint ventures between Turkish and Syrian entrepreneurs.

"People from Gaziantep and Syrians have started businesses together because the fact that they speak two languages, including English and Arabic, is an important advantage, especially for international trade," she told AFP. The economy has generally been a trump card for Erdogan in his 15 years in power. But, with both unemployment and inflation at over 10 percent, there are fears about the economy's underlying health.

Mustafa Turkmenoglu, a Turkmen Syrian originally from Aleppo, left Syria five years ago and created a textile company in Gaziantep. "All the traders here receive dollars from abroad," he said. "We benefit from it but others too."

Turkmenoglu employs 40 Syrians in his workshop, and five in

his shop. He said Turks seek higher wages and are more demanding regarding insurance.

The government even relaxed rules to make it easier for Syrians to open businesses although in the face of tensions over favorable treatment. Ankara agreed to impose the same conditions for all. But in the case of Syrian businesses, authorities seem to have, for now, put "on hold" a rule that a company should employ five Turks for every foreigner. Omar Kadkoy, research associate at Ankara-based TEPAV think tank said.

'Aid won't last forever'

Yet major problems remain, many linked to the long-term issues of how-and whether-to fully integrate such a large refugee community into Turkish life. Although Ankara allowed work permits to be issued to Syrian refugees in January 2016, less than one percent have one at present, even though two thirds of the refugees are of working age, said Kadkoy.

He added another obstacle was that a large part of the Syrian refugee population did not know Turkish—which belongs to an entirely different language family to Arabic — and there is no active policy to teach them. Syrians also fear losing their access to aid, for which as refugees they qualify, if they enter the formal labor market, Kadkoy said.

"They figure if they get formal employment they will be cut off from aid, which is true, (but) the issue there is the aid will certainly not last forever. The sooner they get a job, the better it is to sustain an income in the long term," he said. — AFP

For Big Oil, reserve size matters less than ever

LONDON: A decade ago, the news that the world's top oil and gas companies had less than 12 years of production left in their reserves might have caused a panicked sell-off in their shares. But as consumers try to move away from fossil fuels to cleaner and cheaper energy sources, investors and executives say reserve size is no longer the gold standard for measuring the value and health of a company. The cost of developing existing reserves and the amount of carbon those reserves produce has now become more important, they say. This is leading to a profound shift in company strategies.

"The quality of reserves and the commercial viability of reserves has eclipsed the quantity of reserves by far in recent years," said Adi Karev, Global Leader for Oil and Gas at EY.

The sector is emerging from one of its longest and deepest downturns after an oil price slump that started in 2014. The largest publicly-traded oil companies—Exxon Mobil, Royal Dutch Shell, Chevron, ConocoPhillips, France's Total, BP, Equinor (formerly Statoil) and Italy's Eni—have adapted. They saved money by cutting jobs and increasing technology spending and now make more money with oil at \$60 a barrel than they did at \$100. But they also cut spending on exploration for new resources and development of new fields. This led to a decline in reserves. An analysis by Reuters and

Guinness Asset Management of the annual reports of those eight companies shows that the size of their oil and gas reserves, when added together, fell to 91 billion barrels in 2017. That was the lowest since the same amount in 2005. The reserves of Exxon Mobil, the largest company, shrank by 1.6 percent since the slump began in 2014. Shell's reserves fell 6.5 percent since then despite the \$54 billion acquisition of BG Group in 2016. BP and Chevron's oil and gas reserves increased by a small 5 percent since 2014. Eni was the only one to significantly boost its reserves by over 20 percent thanks to the discovery of the giant Zohr gas field off the coast of Egypt.

The cumulative reserve life — the number of years a company can sustain its current production levels with existing reserves — of the eight companies fell to 11.7 years in 2017. That was the lowest level in at least 20 years although that drop is also the result of a sharp increase in production. Reuters does have access to data going back beyond 1998.

Exxon's reserves life shrank from 17 years in 2014 to 15 in 2017. Eni's from 10.6 to 10.1 years despite its discoveries. Shell slipped from 12 to 9 years over the period.

"There is clear deterioration (in reserves) and this will be a problem in time," according to Jonathan Waghorn, manager of the energy fund at Guinness Asset Management. But for now, "10-12 year's reserve life should be fine, so it is not a materially important component between the Majors."

'The best barrels'

With electric vehicles on the ascent and a peak for fuel demand on the horizon, the focus on the reserves is shifting to the quality of the reserves rather than the quantity. "Some reserves are more efficient than others," Eldar Saetre, chief

executive officer of Norwegian oil giant Equinor told Reuters.

"At some point we see a shrinking oil and gas industry, when that will be I do not know, but then it is really important that the best barrels come in and that will be increasingly a competitive factor." Some companies are already changing strategies to adapt to the new focus. Oil prices are not expected to rise sharply in the long-term and governments are seeking to reduce pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. This means firms are adjusting by setting ceilings for the cost of projects, often below \$35 a barrel. Oil reached a \$80 a barrel this month, the highest since late 2014.

Crude oil and natural gas have different grades and the cost of pumping them can vary hugely. Saudi Arabia's oil is easier and therefore cheaper to extract than Angola's complex deep-water wells. Canada's oil sands have become less attractive due to their high cost of extraction and high carbon intensity. Exxon wrote down a large part of its Canadian oil reserves in 2017. Its largest rival, Shell, has sold most of its Canadian assets in recent years. North American shale which has emerged over the past decade can be developed relatively quickly and at low cost, in contrast to multi-billion dollar deepwater projects that take years to develop. The Permian basin in Texas, the heartland of the shale oil boom in recent years, saw production costs drop sharply to as low as \$30 a barrel. Exxon and US rival Chevron have both acquired large acreage in the Permian in recent years. Shell is also expanding in US shale.

The Gulf of Mexico also has low extraction costs because it has large reservoirs of oil and some infrastructure is already located there such as services companies and onshore bases. Statoil and Total have bought exploration acreage in the US Gulf of Mexico in recent months. — Reuters

Trump denies 'folding' over ZTE in China trade talks

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump yesterday denied caving to China over US sanctions on the telecoms equipment maker ZTE. The comments followed Trump's surprise announcement on Sunday that the administration was exploring ways to soften the blow from a ban on exporting crucial US technology to the company, which Washington says violated sanctions and misled US officials. "Nothing has happened with ZTE except as it pertains to the larger trade deal," Trump said on Twitter.

"China has seen our demands. There has been no folding as the media would love people to believe. The meetings haven't even started yet!" Trump's remarks followed an AFP report last week that a Chinese state enterprise was pumping hundreds of millions of dollars into an Indonesian real estate development linked to the American president's business empire, prompting questions of possible quid-pro-quo for ZTE. Trump's latest Twitter salvo comes at a delicate moment for US trade policy, as the United States works on several fronts to resolve disputes with major trading partners. — AFP

Business

Japan's economy slides into reverse after 2-year growth

Sluggish consumption, winter cold snap hit economy

TOKYO: Japan's economy slid into reverse for the first time in two years at the beginning of the year, hit by sluggish consumption and a winter cold snap, but analysts predicted the world's third-largest economy would quickly rebound. The economy contracted by 0.2 percent quarter-on-quarter in the January-March period, compared with growth of 0.1 percent at the end of 2017, the Cabinet Office said yesterday.

This brought to an end a series of eight consecutive quarters of growth, a winning streak not seen since the heady days of the "miracle" boom of the 1980s when the Japanese economy ruled the world.

The data will come as a blow for the vaunted "Abenomics" policies of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who is already under pressure over a series of scandals. But experts said they expected a pause in the growth trend rather than a prolonged downswing. "There were one-off special factors in the January-March period, ranging from stock market sell-offs to higher vegetable prices due to bad weather," said Takeshi Minami, chief economist at Norinchukin.

The yen also strengthened against other major currencies on safe-haven buying, clouding the prospects for Japanese exporters. "There are worries about some emerging economy markets but the global economy as a whole is likely to continue its recovery for some more time. (Japan's) GDP will likely come back to positive growth in April-June," Minami told AFP. The economy was stalled by stagnant private consumption, which was flat in the January to March period after an uptick of 0.2 percent in the final quarter of last year.

Private residential investment also plunged another 2.1 percent after a 2.7 percent fall in the previous quarter. And exports of goods and services slowed, rising 0.6 percent compared to an increase of 2.2 percent in the previous three months. But despite the broad-based slowdown, Minami said the economy would remain solid. "If you look at the Bank of Japan's 'Tankan' survey released in April, business confidence was unshaken, with corporate investment plans remaining solid," he said. The



TOKYO: Passerby move on a concourse on an underground shopping district in Tokyo. Japan's economy shrank for the first time in two years in the first quarter of the year amid weak consumption, official data showed yesterday. — AFP

key survey by the central bank last month showed confidence among Japan's biggest manufacturers had slipped after five quarters of rises but the headline index still remained close to the highest level in over a decade.

'Modest' recovery

Katsunori Kitakura, lead strategist at Sumitomo Mitsui Trust Group, also believed the disappointing first quarter figure was "a one-off event, as weak personal consumption coincided with other special factors." "The Japanese economy should see a modest recovery buoyed by the global economy, with exports in particular benefiting from this, helping Japan's GDP revert back to an uptrend from Q2 2018 onwards," he said in a commentary earlier this week. But SMBC Nikko Securities chief market economist Yoshimasa Maruyama warned that private consumption

was weak even when the special factors were taken into consideration. Consumers will keep purse strings tight "unless the pace of wage increases shows a clear acceleration", he said in a commentary published ahead of the data release. Abe has launched a pro-spending policy blitz called "Abenomics" since he took office in late 2012, combining ultra-loose monetary policy and fiscal stimulus in a bid to pep up the former Asian economic powerhouse.

But consumer spending has remained stubbornly lacklustre, with companies staying stingy on wage hikes despite healthy profits. Nevertheless, wages are finally showing signs of picking up and Minami from Norinchukin said that would feed through into consumer spending in the coming months. Stock market traders appeared to be disappointed by the data, however, with the main Nikkei stock index closing down 0.44 percent. — AFP

Turkey bank vows 'necessary steps' after lira crashes to new lows

ISTANBUL: Turkey's central bank yesterday vowed to take "necessary steps" to stabilise the embattled lira after it hit historic lows as investors took fright at comments by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan that he wanted a bigger say in monetary policy.

The lira has lost eight percent in value over the last month alone as Turkey heads to snap presidential and parliamentary elections on June 24 amid growing concerns over the health of the economy. In an interview with Bloomberg TV on Monday while on a visit to London, Erdogan signalled he wanted to take greater control over monetary and economic policy if he wins the elections.

"This may make some uncomfortable. But we have to do it," he said. Investors have long been rattled by Erdogan's sustained pressure on the central bank—which is nominally independent—to hike rates to boost growth.

'Not what investors wanted'

"The comments from Erdogan were clearly

not what investors wanted to hear," said Jameel Ahmad, global head of currency strategy and market research at forex broker FXTM, saying they were seen "at the very least as a severe threat to central bank independence." The lira earlier in the morning hit 4.5 lira to the dollar for the first time in history, a loss in value of over one percent on the day. However a statement by the central bank on the "unhealthy" fluctuations helped the lira to pare its losses in the afternoon to trade at 4.42, a gain in value of 0.4 percent on the day. "The Central Bank of the Republic of Turkey is closely monitoring the unhealthy price formations in the markets," it said.

"Necessary steps will be taken, also considering the impact of these developments on the inflation outlook," it added. It was not immediately clear if the central bank was considering an emergency meeting to raise interest rates help boost the lira. Its next scheduled monetary policy meeting is not until June 7. Meanwhile, the central bank's chairman Murat Cetinkaya was at the headquarters of the ruling Justice Party (AKP) and could meet Erdogan, Turkish media said.

The currency had already been under severe pressure last week after Erdogan declared that interest rates were the "mother and father of all evil". Erdogan's statements fly in the face of economic orthodoxy where interest rates are used by central banks around the world as a tool to keep down inflation. — AFP

National Bank of Kuwait Financial Markets Daily Report
At 02:00 PM Previous Day

Global Stock Indices					
Index	Previous Close	Last Price	Change	Daily Performance %	Yearly Performance %
Dow Jones	24,899.41	24,706.41	-193.00	▼	-0.78
NASDAQ	7,411.32	7,351.63	-59.69	▼	-0.81
S&P 500	2,730.13	2,711.45	-18.68	▼	-0.68
Financial Times	7,722.98	7,733.81	10.83	▲	0.14
DAX	12,970.04	12,014.94	-955.10	▼	-7.36
CAC 40	5,553.16	5,553.00	-0.16	▼	0.00
Swiss	8,994.22	8,963.15	-31.07	▼	-0.35
Nikkei 225	22,818.02	22,717.33	-100.79	▼	-0.44
Hong Kong	1,805.15	1,800.35	-4.80	▼	-0.27
Hang Seng	31,152.03	31,110.20	-41.83	▼	-0.13
Straits Times	3,540.23	3,533.05	-7.18	▼	-0.20

MENA Stock Indices					
Index	Previous Close	Last Price	Change	Daily Performance %	Yearly Performance %
Kuwait	6,603.51	6,633.44	29.93	▲	0.45
Saudi Arabia	8,019.29	7,959.82	-59.47	▼	-0.74
Dubai	2,936.75	2,931.59	-5.16	▼	-0.18
Abu Dhabi	4,470.57	4,467.43	-3.14	▼	-0.07
Bahrain	1,273.93	1,272.92	-1.01	▼	-0.08
Qatar	8,922.00	8,950.60	28.60	▲	0.32
Oman	4,684.75	4,653.78	-30.97	▼	-0.66
Lebanon	1,127.23	1,138.53	11.30	▲	1.00
Jordan	2,132.33	2,139.65	7.32	▲	0.34
Egypt	16,985.78	16,954.13	-31.65	▼	-0.19
Morocco	12,761.64	12,718.32	-43.32	▼	-0.34
Tunisia	7,391.52	7,410.25	18.73	▲	0.25

Global Currencies Exchange Rate								
Currency	Kuwait Dinar	Saudi Riyal	US Dollar	Euro	Sterling Pound	Swiss Franc	Japanese Yen	Australian Dollar
Kuwait Dinar		12.3082	3.2960	2.7953	2.4465	3.3006	363.02	4.4023
Saudi Riyal	0.08125		0.2678	0.2271	0.1988	0.2682	29.49	0.3577
US Dollar	0.30340	3.7343		0.8481	0.7423	1.0014	110.14	1.3256
Euro	0.35774	4.4031	1.1791		0.8754	1.1811	128.88	1.5751
Sterling Pound	0.40874	5.0208	1.3472	1.1423		1.3494	148.39	1.8001
Swiss Franc	0.30298	3.7291	0.9986	0.8467	0.7411		109.97	1.3338
Japanese Yen	0.00275	0.0339	0.0091	0.0077	0.0067	0.0091		0.0121
Australian Dollar	0.22716	2.7959	0.7487	0.6349	0.5555	0.7497	82.46	

MENA Currencies Exchange Rate								
Currency	US Dollar	Kuwait Dinar	Saudi Riyal	Bahraini Dinar	Qatari Riyal	Omani Riyal	Emirates Dirham	Egyptian Pound
US Dollar		0.30340	3.7343	0.3746	3.6270	0.3831	3.6578	17.8100
Kuwait Dinar	3.2960		12.3082	1.2347	11.9545	1.2628	12.0560	58.7014
Saudi Riyal	0.2678	0.08125		0.1003	0.9713	0.1026	0.9795	4.7493
Bahraini Dinar	2.6694	0.80991	9.9485		9.8821	1.0227	9.7643	47.5428
Qatari Riyal	0.2757	0.08365	1.0296	1.0133		0.1056	1.0085	4.9104
Omani Riyal	2.6101	0.79190	9.7468	0.9778	9.6668		9.5472	46.4855
Emirates Dirham	0.2734	0.08295	1.0209	1.0204	0.9916	1.0447		4.8490
Egyptian Pound	0.0561	0.01704	0.2097	0.0210	0.2036	0.0215	0.2054	

Global Interest Rates					
Currency	1-Week	1-Month	3-Month	6-Month	1-Year
Kuwait Dinar	1.19	1.75	2.00	2.19	2.44
US Dollar	1.75	1.93	2.32	2.49	2.75
Euro	-0.42	-0.39	-0.35	-0.31	-0.24
Sterling Pound	0.48	0.49	0.64	0.75	0.92
Swiss Franc	-0.79	-0.78	-0.71	-0.64	-0.51
Australian Dollar	1.63	1.81	1.77	1.80	1.86
Japanese Yen	-0.03	-0.04	-0.03	0.02	0.12

Global Bond Yields				
Country	2-Year	5-Year	10-Year	30-Year
United States	2.58	2.91	3.07	3.19
Europe	-0.57	-0.02	0.62	1.30
United Kingdom	0.81	1.18	1.50	1.89

Commodities					
Index	Previous Close	Last Price	Change	Daily Performance %	Yearly Performance %
Kuwait Oil	73.55	73.51	-0.04	▼	-0.05
Brent	79.95	78.96	-0.99	▼	-1.24
West Texas	71.39	71.29	-0.10	▼	-0.14
Gold	1290.34	1290.21	-0.13	▼	-0.01
Silver	16.23	16.26	0.03	▲	0.18

EXCHANGE RATES

Al-Muzaini Exchange Co.

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

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

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

EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES	
US Dollar Transfer	300.700

Euro	371.670
Sterling Pound	426.390
Canadian dollar	238.080
Turkish Lira	74.520
Swiss Franc	315.860
Australian Dollar	234.090
US Dollar Buying	299.500

GOLD	
20 Gram	260.520
10 Gram	133.180
5 Gram	67.430

Dollarco Exchange Co. Ltd	
Rate for Transfer	
US Dollar	302.190
Canadian Dollar	233.955
Sterling Pound	410.280
Euro	359.600
Swiss Frank	305.900
Bahrain Dinar	803.635
UAE Dirhams	82.680
Qatari Riyals	83.910
Saudi Riyals	81.480
Jordanian Dinar	427.500
Egyptian Pound	17.133
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.918
Indian Rupees	4.496
Pakistani Rupees	2.611
Bangladesh Taka	3.619
Philippines Peso	5.817
Cyprus pound	17.985

Japanese Yen	3.755
Syrian Pound	1.590
Nepalese Rupees	2.809
Malaysian Ringgit	76.640
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	47.880
Thai Bhat	10.410
Turkish Lira	70.200

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
British Pound	0.403834	0.411334
Czech Korune	0.006103	0.015403
Danish Krone	0.044279	0.049279
Euro	0.354657	0.362157
Georgian Lari	0.122993	0.122993
Hungarian	0.001049	0.001239
Norwegian Krone	0.033535	0.038735
Romanian Leu	0.060891	0.077741
Russian ruble	0.004871	0.004871
Slovakia	0.009007	0.019007
Swedish Krona	0.030879	0.035879
Swiss Franc	0.295338	0.306338

Australasia	BUY	SELL
Australian Dollar	0.218667	0.230667
New Zealand Dollar	0.202113	0.211613

America	BUY	SELL
Canadian Dollar	0.230446	0.239446
US Dollars	0.298300	0.302700
US Dollars Mint	0.298800	0.302700

Asia	
Bangladesh Taka	0.003006
Chinese Yuan	0.046162
Hong Kong Dollar	0.036433
Indian Rupee	0.003858
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000017
Japanese Yen	0.002666
Korean Won	0.000271
Malaysian Ringgit	0.072866
Nepalese Rupee	0.002727
Pakistan Rupee	0.001953
Philippine Peso	0.005838
Singapore Dollar	0.220646
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001617
Taiwan	0.010000
Thai Baht	0.009141

Arab	
Bahraini Dinar	0.795341
Egyptian Pound	0.014563
Iranian Riyal	0.000084
Iraqi Dinar	0.000203
Jordanian Dinar	0.421906
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000149
Moroccan Dirhams	0.021154
Omani Riyal	0.079136
Qatar Riyal	0.078772
Saudi Riyal	0.079553
Syrian Pound	0.001281
Tunisian Dinar	0.117156
Turkish Lira	0.065022
UAE Dirhams	0.080907
Yemeni Riyal	0.000983

Business

Burgan Bank recognized as one of the best 'Regional Problem Solvers'

Award for enhancing business operations with unique solutions

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank, a dynamic and progressive Kuwaiti bank, was recently awarded one of the best 'Regional Problem Solver' awards in recognition of the exceptional solutions addressing potential challenges by its respective Call Center. Dedicated to ensuring optimal customer experiences through the adoption of international standards and raising the bar on performance management, Burgan Bank was handed the prestigious distinction by INSIGHTS Middle East during a ceremony that took place at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Dubai on the 25th of April 2018.

INSIGHTS Middle East, a Dubai-based enterprise is the only Call Centre dedicated professional services organization in the Middle East. Now in its thirteenth year, the INSIGHTS Middle East Call Center Awards competition is the undisputed regional indicator for remote customer interaction success and widely acclaimed as having the most comprehensive selection and awards criteria of its type in the world. Displaying intelligent and flexible attributes, Burgan Bank's Call

Center participants were congratulated for their robust approach to handling customer queries and concerns. Utilizing training methodologies that were exclusively designed



Insights Middle East Call Center 2018 awards

and adapted in-house, the employees demonstrated advanced communicative abilities and reaped outstanding results.

The award was presented by Dominick Keenaghan, CEO and President of INSIGHTS Middle East to Munther Al-Saleh, Burgan

Bank Contact Center Manager during the event. Established in 1977, Burgan Bank is the youngest commercial Bank and second largest by assets in Kuwait, with a significant focus on the corporate and financial institutions sectors, as well as having a growing retail, and private bank customer base. Burgan Bank has majority owned subsidiaries in the MENA region supported by one of the largest regional branch networks.

The Bank has continuously improved its performance over the years through an expanded revenue structure, diversified funding sources, and a strong capital base. The adoption of state-of-the-art services and technology has positioned it as a trendsetter in the domestic market and within the MENA region. Burgan Bank's brand has been created on a foundation of real values - of trust, commitment, excellence and progression, to remind us of the high standards to which we aspire. 'People come first' is the foundation on which its products and services are developed. The bank was re-certified with the presti-



gious ISO 9001:2008, making it the first bank in the GCC, and the only bank in Kuwait to receive such accreditation for the third consecutive year. The Bank also has its credit

distinction of being the only Bank in Kuwait to have won the JP Morgan Chase Quality Recognition Award for twelve consecutive years.

Iran, Venezuela weighing on oil market: IEA

PARIS: Global oil supplies could be hit by the decision by the US to pull out of the Iran nuclear deal, and also by falling production in crisis-hit Venezuela, the IEA said yesterday.

The decision by US President Donald Trump to withdraw from the Iran deal "has switched the focus of oil market analysis from the fundamentals to geopolitics," the International Energy Agency wrote in its regular monthly report.

On May 8, Trump announced he would pull the US out of a 2015 pact-agreed by Britain, China, Germany, Russia and the Barack Obama administration-that opened up Tehran's atomic program in return for an easing of sanctions. Oil prices-which had already rising on the back of steady demand growth

and a landmark deal by oil producing countries, both inside and outside the OPEC cartel, to lower output-have since surged above \$77 per barrel, the IEA said.

"In these early days, there is understandable uncertainty about (the) potential impact on Iran's oil exports" from the US move, it said. When sanctions were imposed in 2012, Iranian exports fell by about 1.2 million barrels per day, the organization said.

"It is too soon to say what will happen this time, but we should examine whether other producers could step in to ensure an orderly flow of oil to the market and offset a disruption to Iranian exports."

Shortly after the US announcement, Saudi Arabia, the OPEC cartel kingpin, acknowledged the need to work with producers and consumers to mitigate possible supply shortfalls, the IEA noted.

Demand growth to slow

Another possible risk to the global oil supply could come from crisis-hit Venezuela, the IEA said. "In Venezuela, the pace of decline of

oil production is accelerating and by the end of this year output could have fallen by several hundred thousand barrels a day," the IEA said. "The potential double supply shortfall represented by Iran and Venezuela could present a major challenge for producers to fend off sharp price rises and fill the gap, not just in terms of the number of barrels but also in terms of oil quality," it said. The IEA said that the overall market balance was "continuing to tighten", and it lowered its estimate for 2018 global oil demand growth to 1.4 million barrels per day from its previous estimate of 1.5 million.

"Demand at the start of the year was supported by cold weather in Europe and the US, the start-up of new petrochemical capacity in the US and a solid economic background," the IEA said.

"While the economic environment will continue to support oil demand... support from harsh weather conditions will vanish and the recent jump in oil prices will take its toll," it said. "Therefore, world oil demand growth is expected to slow" in the second half of the year. — AFP

US housing starts, building permits fall sharply

WASHINGTON: US homebuilding tumbled in April and permits fell, suggesting the housing market continued to tread water amid shortages of land and skilled labor. Housing starts dropped 3.7 percent to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 1.287 million units in April, the Commerce Department said yesterday. The decline reversed March's rise.

Data for March was revised to show starts rising to a 1.336 million-unit rate instead of the previously reported 1.319 million-unit pace. Building permits fell 1.8 percent to a rate of 1.352 million units last month. Economists polled by

Reuters had forecast housing starts decreasing to a pace of 1.310 million units last month and permits declining to a 1.350 million-unit rate. Starts fell in the Northeast, West and Midwest, but rose in the South. US financial markets were little moved by the data. Single-family homebuilding, which accounts for the largest share of the housing market, edged up 0.1 percent to a rate of 894,000 units last month. Single-family homebuilding has lost momentum since setting a 948,000-unit pace last November, which was the strongest in more than 10 years.

Last month's gain in single-family starts was outpaced by an 11.3 percent decline in ground-breaking activity on multi-family housing units. Residential construction has been hamstrung by rising prices for building materials and shortages of land and skilled workers. While a survey on Tuesday showed confidence among single-family homebuilders perked up in May, builders complained that "the record-high cost of lumber is hurting builders' bottom lines and making it more difficult to produce competitively priced houses for newcomers to the market." — Reuters



Burgan Bank Group wishes you a blessed Ramadan. May this holy month bring you good health, happiness and prosperity.

Burgan Bank branch timings during Ramadan:

All branches: 10:00am - 1:30pm
Airport branch (7 days a week): 10:00am - 2:30pm and from 9:30pm - 12:00am

Burgan Bank Group:

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For more information call 1804080, or visit www.burgan.com



Business

Bobcat bestows excellence award to Bahrah for outstanding performance

Awards conferred at dealer conference at Muscat



KUWAIT: Bahrah Trading Co, a subsidiary of Al-Sayer Holding and distributor for Bobcat compact equipment, Telescopic lifts and Back-hoe Loaders in Kuwait won the following prestigious awards from Bobcat in recognition of the excellent performance in the year 2017 during the recently concluded dealer conference at Muscat, Oman:

- Best Dealer Award
- Good Performance - Backhoe Loader Award
- Gain in market Share Award
- Attachment Promotion award
- After market - Excellent Performance Award

Al-Sayer delegation including Bengt Schultz COO, Hamza Melakandy General Manager along with his team members from Bahrah attended the event and actively participated in various programs. Hamza Melakandy received the awards from Bobcat senior management representatives at the grand gathering of regional dealers.

Bobcat continue to strengthen their lead in the respective segments of market and their market leading position remains a solid testimony to the exemplary cooperation

and interaction that exist between Bahrah & Bobcat.

Gaby Rhayem Business Director Middle East and Africa complimented Bahrah team members on the remarkable achievement and complimented their hard work and dedication to stay ahead over the years, securing the top position for Bobcat.

Bobcat President Alvaro Pacini and CEO Scott Park delivered key note speeches, encouraging dealers to stay ahead and always maintain the competitive edge. Bengt Schultz congratulated Bahrah on this outstanding achievement for performance not only in unit sales but for excelling in the customer support segment too, thus turning Bobcat a most favorable buy for the customers.

Bobcat members administered the meeting and addressed various queries from the dealers. Product Managers from respective segments made engaging presentations. Biju Gangadhar Sales Manager Heavy Equipment and Riyas Kochumon Parts Manager of Bahrah participated in group discussions and debate. On this notable achievement Bahrah team members expressed gratitude towards valued customers for their loyalty towards Bobcat.



How Rusal escaped the noose of US sanctions

LONDON/PARIS/WASHINGTON: They were supposed to be the toughest sanctions the United States had ever imposed on a Russian oligarch. Seventeen days later, Washington watered them down.

On April 23, the US Treasury eased restrictions on billionaire Oleg Deripaska's aluminum company Rusal. Instead of barring Rusal from international markets, which is what the United States originally intended to do, the Treasury suggested it might lift the sanctions altogether. Washington's change of course says a lot about the leverage held by the supply chain of a widely-used commodity such as aluminum. It also suggests the Trump administration is hard-pressed as it juggles international economic battles it has opened on various fronts, including with China and Iran.

Several European governments, including Germany and France, lobbied Washington to back down, according to more than a dozen US and EU officials and industry sources who spoke to Reuters.

Multinationals Rio Tinto and Boeing also appealed to the US Treasury, seeking a softening of the terms on Rusal. All made the same argument, the sources said: a squeeze on the largest producer of aluminum outside China would hit businesses around the world, disrupting production of myriad goods from car and planes to cans and foil, and putting jobs at risk.

Unlike previous cases of sanctions on Russia, European countries did not have a chance to consult with Washington on punitive moves that would have ripple effects in the European economy, the sources said. One reason for the lack of dialogue: the US State Department no longer has a Sanctions Policy Coordinator to liaise with other governments, according to three US sources familiar with the matter and one European source. The former coordinator, Daniel Fried, retired last year and has not been replaced because of a hiring freeze ordered by the Trump administration at the department.

Rusal, Rio Tinto and Boeing declined to comment. The US Treasury, whose Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) imposed the measures, said it worked to mitigate the sanctions' impact on allies and industries that faced "undesired collateral consequences". It did not comment on lobbying efforts. When asked if the lack of a sanctions coordinator had hindered international consultation, the State Department said it had held several discussions with European countries over the past year about sanctions and maintained a dialogue with them. It did not specify if it had discussed Russian sanctions.

The sanctions were the toughest the United States has imposed on a listed Russian company since Moscow's 2014 annexation of Crimea. The notice on April 6 gave buyers a deadline of 30 days to receive supplies from Rusal before dealings in dollars were prohibited.

Any individual or company that failed to comply would themselves face being shut out of the financial system, while the Treasury could seize any dollars paid to Rusal. —Reuters

GMC announces exclusive Ramadan offers for Kuwait

KUWAIT: GMC Middle East, with its national partner in Kuwait - Mohammad Saleh & Reza Yousuf Behbehani Co, has announced exclusive sales offers for its existing and potential customers during Ramadan. A brand known for its heritage in the Middle East, GMC is providing customers top-of-the-line offers and savings on the entire 2018 GMC model range this year throughout the holy month.

Available on the legendary Sierra, the full-size luxury Yukon SUV and the versatile Acadia crossover, the Ramadan campaign provides convenient offers for customers in Kuwait who seek to indulge themselves in GMC's legacy and unique ownership experience. With every purchase of a 2018 GMC vehicle during Ramadan, customers in Kuwait will enjoy a special price rate that could save them up to KD 1,500 either in cash or through the first six monthly installments.

"On behalf of GMC and our dealer partner in Kuwait, I would like to wish the people of Kuwait a blessed Ramadan," said Sajed Sbeih, Head of Brand, GMC Middle East. "As a brand that has been in the region for over 93 years, Ramadan has always been a special time for us as we continue to share the spirit of giving during the holy month. This year, we will have offers on the 2018 GMC models that our valued customers can avail, ensuring them to get the best deal on their favorite vehicle."

When it comes to reliability, refinement in design and engineering excellence, Sierra has it all. With keen attention to detail, interior craftsmanship, quality appointments, and practicality, Sierra is a cut above other trucks and the ideal choice for drivers of all ages looking for a vehicle that suits a variety of driving conditions, from highway cruising to rough terrain.

The GMC Yukon family of full-size SUVs provides the capability, refinement, safety, performance and connectivity that discerning customers expect. The 2018 Yukon distinguishes itself with bold exterior styling, a precision-crafted interior and more standard features designed to broaden the appeal of already one of the



industry's most popular full-size SUVs.

The 2018 GMC Acadia is a reimagined crossover aimed at the heart of the mid-size SUV segment, designed to offer great versatility and refinement, giving customers the option of seven, six and five seats in addition to various trim options including SLE, SLT, All-Terrain and Denali. The vehicle also comes with a number of advanced safety technologies including front pedestrian braking, low speed forward automatic braking, distance indicator and Lane Change Alert with Side Blind Zone Alert, insuring the highest safety levels for the vehicles occupants.

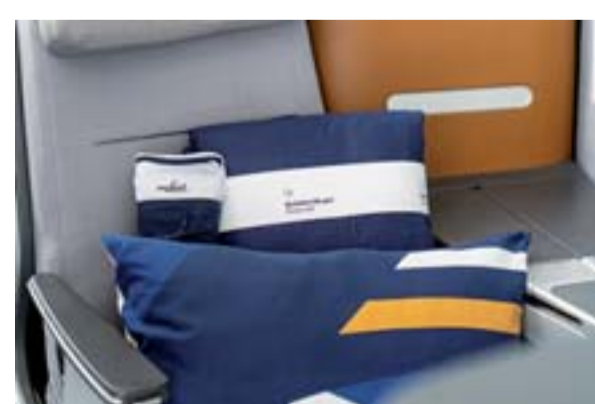
Customers could enjoy further benefits when visiting any of the GMC showrooms across Kuwait this Ramadan. Five-year/100,000 KM free service packages will be offered on all the 2018 Denali models, while customers of Acadia's both SLE and SLT trims will get free service for three years/60,000km that will further elevate their GMC experience. All models will also come with four-year free roadside assistance.



A dream! Lufthansa increases sleeping comfort in Business Class

KUWAIT: From now on, Lufthansa Business Class passengers on long-haul flights to and from South Africa, Latin and South America and the West Coast of the USA can enjoy an even more relaxed night's sleep. The Lufthansa Dream Collection makes it possible! In addition to a new pillowcase and a large, warm blanket, a comfortable mattress topper makes for beautiful dreams. In addition, our passengers can make themselves comfortable on night flights with the new sleep shirt from Van Laack.

The soft and padded mattress topper was developed especially for Lufthansa in cooperation with the renowned German bed manufacturer "Paradies". While the upper side is made of 100 percent cotton, the underside is made of non-slip



terry cloth. This enables an ideal air exchange, which prevents strong heat accumulation. A similarly soft filling is provided by the new blanket and pillow, which provide pleasant warmth and comfort. Both the blanket and the pillowcase are designed in Lufthansa's new brand design. Since Lufthansa is also setting standards in terms of environmental friendliness, the plastic packaging of the blanket was replaced by a paper band.

The increase in sleeping comfort in Business Class

is symbolic of Lufthansa's premium standard. Last December, the airline was the first western airline to receive the five-star seal from Skytrax, the British management consultancy specialized in aviation.

The Dream Collection will be successively introduced on all other long-haul flights. From June the Dream Collection from Germany will also be available on selected Asian flights. The other long-haul flights will receive the new blankets and pillowcases from autumn 2018.

Technology

Twitter steps up long-running battle against online trolls

New approach looks at behavioral patterns of users

SAN FRANCISCO: Twitter said Tuesday it was stepping up its long-running battle against online trolls, trying to find offenders by looking at "behavioral signals." The new approach looks at behavioral patterns of users in addition to the content of the tweets, allowing Twitter to find and mute online bullies and trolls. Even if the offending tweets are not a violation of Twitter policy, they may be hidden from users if they are deemed to "distort" the conversation, Twitter said.

The announcement is the latest "safety" initiative by Twitter, which is seeking to filter out offensive speech while remaining an open platform. Twitter already uses artificial intelligence and machine learning in this effort but the latest initiative aims to do more by focusing on the actions of certain users in addition to the content. "Our ultimate goal is to encourage more free and open conversation," chief executive Jack Dorsey said.

"To do that we need to significantly reduce the ability to game and skew our systems. Looking at behavior, not content, is the best way to do that." A Twitter blog post said the move aims at "troll-like behavior" which targets certain users and tweets with

derisive responses. "Some troll-like behavior is fun, good and humorous. What we're talking about today are troll-like behaviors that distort and detract from the public conversation on Twitter," said the blog from Twitter executives Del Harvey and David Gasca.

"Some of these accounts and tweets violate our policies, and, in those cases, we take action on them. Others don't but are behaving in ways that distort the conversation." Harvey and Gasca said the challenge has been to address "disruptive behaviors that do not violate our policies but negatively impact the health of the conversation." The new approach does not wait for people who use Twitter to report potential issues.

"There are many new signals we're taking in, most of which are not visible externally," the blog post said. "Just a few examples include if an account has not confirmed their email address, if the same person signs up for multiple accounts simultaneously, accounts that repeatedly tweet and mention accounts that don't follow them, or behavior that might indicate a coordinated attack."

In some cases, if the content is not a violation of Twitter policies, it will not be deleted but only shown when a user clicks on "show more replies." "The result



SAN FRANCISCO: This file photo taken shows logos of US online news and social networking service Twitter displayed on computers' screens. —AFP

is that people contributing to the healthy conversation will be more visible in conversations and search," Harvey and Gasca wrote. Twitter said its tests of this

approach shows a four percent drop in abuse reports from search and eight percent fewer abuse reports from conversations.—AFP

Facebook: We're better at policing nudity than hate speech

SAN FRANCISCO: Getting rid of racist, sexist and other hateful remarks on Facebook is more challenging than weeding out other types of unacceptable posts because computer programs still stumble over the nuances of human language, the company revealed Tuesday. Facebook also released statistics that quantified how pervasive fake accounts have become on its influential serv-

ice, despite a long-standing policy requiring people to set up accounts under their real-life identities.

From October to December alone, Facebook disabled nearly 1.3 billion accounts - and that doesn't even count all the times the company blocked bogus profiles before they could be set up. Had the company not shut down all those fake accounts, its audience of monthly users would have swelled beyond its current 2.2 billion and probably created more potentially offensive material for Facebook to weed out.

Facebook's self-assessment showed its screening system is far better at scrubbing graphic violence, gratuitous nudity and terrorist propaganda. Automated tools detected 86 percent to 99.5 percent of the violations Facebook identified in those categories. For hate speech, Facebook's human reviewers and computer algorithms identified just

38 percent of the violations. The rest came after Facebook users flagged the offending content for review.

All told, Facebook took action on nearly 1.6 billion pieces of content during the six months ending in March, a tiny fraction of all the activity on its social network, according to the company. The report marked Facebook's first breakdown on how much material it removes for violating its policies. It didn't disclose how long it takes Facebook to remove material violating its standards.

The report also doesn't cover how much inappropriate content Facebook missed. "Even if they remove 100 million posts that are offensive, there will be one or two that have some really bad stuff and those will be the ones everyone winds up talking about on the cable-TV news," said Timothy Carone, who teaches about technology at the University of Notre Dame. —AP



PHILADELPHIA: In this file photo, the Facebook logo is displayed on an iPad in Philadelphia. —AP

Kaspersky Lab to open Transparency Center

As part of its Global Transparency Initiative, Kaspersky Lab is adapting its infrastructure to move a number of core processes from Russia to Switzerland. This includes customer data storage and processing for most regions, as well as software assembly, including threat detection updates. To ensure full transparency and integrity, Kaspersky Lab is arranging for this activity to be supervised by an independent third party, also based in Switzerland.

Ultra-connected world

The Global Transparency Initiative, announced in October 2017, reflects Kaspersky Lab's ongoing commitment to assuring the integrity and trustworthiness of its products. The new measures are the next steps in the development of the initiative, but they also reflect the company's commitment to working with others to address the growing challenges of industry fragmentation and a breakdown of trust.

Trust is essential in cybersecurity, and Kaspersky Lab understands that trust is not a given; it must be repeatedly earned through transparency and accountability. The new measures comprise the move of data storage and processing for a number of regions, the relocation of software assembly and the opening of the first Transparency Center.

Relocation of customer data

By the end of 2019, Kaspersky Lab will have established a data center in Zurich and in this facility will store and process all information for users in Europe, North America, Singapore, Australia, Japan and South Korea, with more countries to follow. This information is shared voluntarily by users with the Kaspersky Security Network (KSN) an advanced, cloud-based system that automatically processes cyberthreat related data.

Kaspersky Lab will relocate its 'software build conveyor'— a set of programming tools used to assemble ready to use software out of source code to Zurich. Before the end of 2018, Kaspersky Lab products and threat detection rule databases (AV databases) will start to be

assembled and signed with a digital signature in Switzerland, before being distributed to the endpoints of customers worldwide. The relocation will ensure that all newly assembled software can be verified by an independent organization, and show that software builds and updates received by customers match the source code provided for audit.

First Transparency Center

The source code of Kaspersky Lab products and software updates will be available for review by responsible stakeholders in a dedicated Transparency Center that will also be hosted in Switzerland and is expected to open this year. This approach will further show that generation after generation of Kaspersky Lab products were built and used for one purpose only: protecting the company's customers from cyberthreats.

Independent supervision and review

Kaspersky Lab is arranging for the data storage and processing, software assembly, and source code to be independently supervised by a third party qualified to conduct technical software reviews. Since transparency and trust are becoming universal requirements across the cybersecurity industry, Kaspersky Lab supports the creation of a new, non-profit organization to take on this responsibility, not just for the company, but for other partners and members who wish to join.

As a leading global cybersecurity solutions provider, Kaspersky Lab has always been committed to the most trustworthy industry practices, including strong protection for transmitted data, strict internal policies for data access, ongoing security testing of its infrastructure, and more. With this new set of measures, Kaspersky Lab aims to significantly improve the resilience of its IT infrastructure to any trust risk - even theoretical ones - and to increase its transparency to current and future clients as well as to the general public.

Commenting on the opening of the transparency center, Eugene Kaspersky, CEO of Kaspersky Lab, said: "In a rapidly changing industry such as ours we have to adapt to the evolving needs of our clients, stakeholders and partners. Transparency is one such need, and that is why we've decided to redesign our infrastructure and move our data processing facilities to Switzerland. We believe such action will become a global trend for cybersecurity, and that a policy of trust will catch on across the industry as a key basic requirement."

Richter Creative Office's fourth anniversary



Richter Creative Office celebrated its fourth anniversary at the Promenade Cultural Complex, where the company's employees, friends and supporters took part.

The event included multiple segments such as the presentation of honorary shields to the employees, the presentation of the achievements of 2017, and launching of the strategic plan for the years 2018-2022.

Richter Creative Office is committed to supporting charitable projects and community-based initiatives in Kuwait, as well as launch independent programs and projects that will contribute to the support of local and international communities.



Health

Venezuela crisis cuts deep at children's hospital

Maduro promises to fix situation soon

CARACAS: Eight-year-old Luisito is awaiting surgery for a brain tumor, a daunting prospect at the best of times—but this is Venezuela, and the hospital, typically, has little medicine or functioning equipment. A four-month-old baby shares his nine square meter hospital room. She suffers from an abnormally large head, or macrocephaly, and needs a drainage valve. The hospital doesn't have one. The resulting fluid accumulation has left the baby girl's head the size of a basketball.

Anthony, aged seven, also shares this tight space. Following surgery, the wound on his back worsened, for lack of clean dressings either at the hospital or in local pharmacies. The litany of avoidable suffering is repeated from one ward to the next at the J.M. de los Rios Children's Hospital in downtown Caracas. Venezuela's Pharmaceutical Federation says just 20 percent of the drugs and medical equipment needed in hospitals and pharmacies across the oil-rich state are available.

Chronic shortages of medicines as well as basic foodstuffs have been a wearying consequence of Venezuela's crippling years-long economic crisis, blamed by the international community on President Nicolas Maduro, who is seeking a second six-year term in elections on Sunday. Medical materials can be bought over the internet, but in dollars only—a currency inaccessible for the grandmothers of these children from families of modest means.

"We don't have dollars. We have our backs to the wall," said Maria Silva, watching over little Anthony and his spreading wound. With better equipment, these cases could be easily treated, according to their doctor, Edgar Sotillo. "We don't have drugs...I have patients who are suffering from hydrocephalus (a build-up of fluid on the brain) and are waiting for a valve," said Sotillo. "We are seeing cases of chickenpox, tuberculosis, malaria, scabies. Sometimes the hospital has no water. If patients contract infections, there are no antibiotics and their situation worsens," said the doctor.

Brain tumor

Blaming his country's woes on an "economic war" being waged by the United States, the socialist Maduro has promised to fix the situation soon. But Yuriangela, 16, has no time to wait. Suffering from lung cancer, she is waiting for her next round of chemotherapy. Her mother,

Sujer, weeps helplessly and does not know if she will be able to find the treatment her daughter needs. For chronic diseases such as cancer, nearly all — 95 percent—of the drugs needed for treatment are not available.

"She needs to have 17 chemo sessions," she said, adding that her family had to buy the medicine she needed abroad. "We don't have the means, but we have received help." Next door, four-year-old Luana cuts out the letters from a printed alphabet while waiting for treatment for a brain tumor.

"For two months, we have not been able to get chemotherapy. It is the responsibility of the people who govern, who only take any notice of us when we demonstrate," said her mother, Rosa. Demonstrations to draw attention to the plight of the health service are frequent, whether by doctors, their patients with HIV, or the disabled.

Rats and roaches

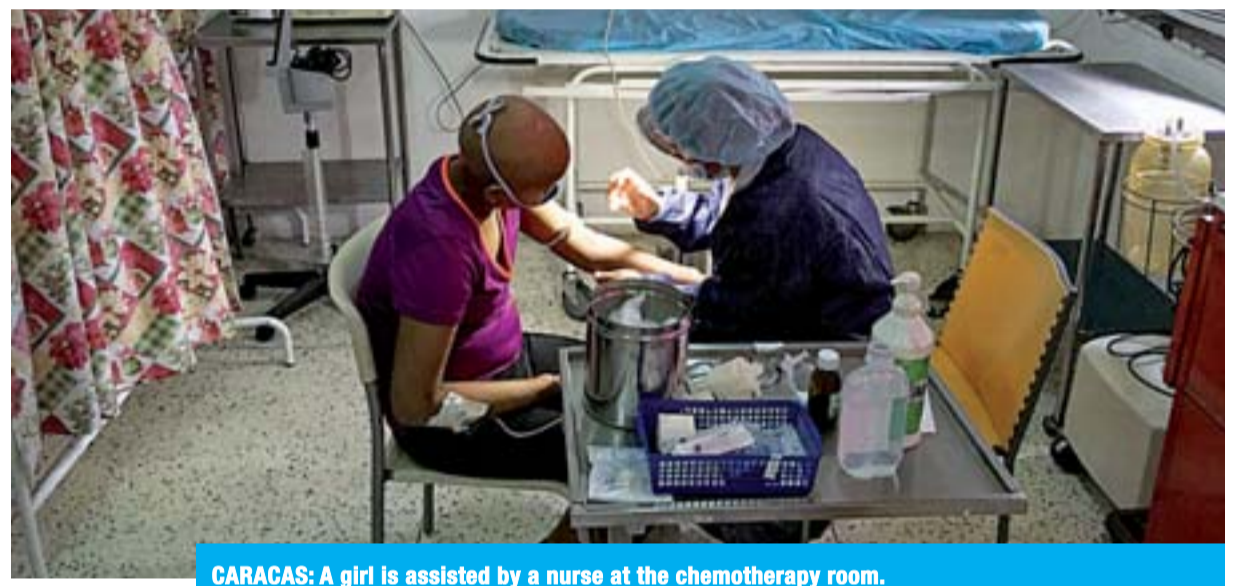
On this cancer ward, devices for medical imaging like MRI machines and radiotherapy equipment are out of order. "We cannot operate because of the lack of equipment," one woman doctor said, speaking on condition of anonymity. "We have had patients whose conditions improved, but subsequently, for lack of medicine, they deteriorated and died."

From broken water pipes to a single functioning elevator and rats and cockroaches in the hallways, the J.M. de los Rios hospital has a long list of problems, doctors say. Doctor Belen Artega, the head of the nephrology department, earns only the monthly minimum wage of 2.5 million bolivars—or \$36 dollars at the official rate. That's enough to buy a kilogram of meat in Venezuela, where the IMF predicts inflation will soar to new heights of more than 13,000 percent this year.

For want of antibiotics, Artega said she saw four children die at the hospital. Infant mortality jumped more than 30 percent in 2016 compared to 2015, the most recent official figures show. "The doctors are leaving," Artega added. According to the Venezuelan Medical Society, one-third have already emigrated. "We are witnessing a humanitarian crisis," said Huniades Urbina, head of the childcare and pediatrics society. "These are figures from sub-Saharan Africa." —AFP



CARACAS: Two girls receive chemotherapy at the 'Dr. JM de los Rios' Children's Hospital in Caracas. —AFP photos



CARACAS: A girl is assisted by a nurse at the chemotherapy room.

CLINIC PAGE



Kuwait Times

248 33 199

Global Medical Center Welcomes Dr. Marzouq Al-Bader

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What's On

Hardee's Kuwait announces 'Go Large Campaign' winners

'Go Large Campaign', an advertising campaign and promotion by Hardee's Kuwait ended last Monday with a prize distribution ceremony. The campaign which lasted for a month saw distribution of four Camaro cars by Chevrolet and 16 Iphone X. The mechanics was that the customer must place an order with Talabat.com, upgrade their order to large meal and get the raffle coupon. Every week, one Camaro and four Iphone X were raffled off and given to winners. The prize distribution ceremony was held last month. The winners are as follows:

1. Ahmed Tawfeek Abdullah
2. Ahmed Al-Blushi
3. Yousef Al Holy
4. Ahmed Al-Shaty

It was held at the Marina Mall and was attended by several personalities including Mohammed Soliman - Regional Director Hardee's, Kuwait, Iraq and Kurdistan, Rafik Eleyat - Regional Marketing Manager Hardee's (Kuwait Food Company Americana) Kuwait, Iraq and Kurdistan, Emad Qassem -Senior Marketing Manager Chevrolet - Alghanim Auto and Waleed Al-Otaibi-Marketing Executive for Talabat.com.



This Ramadan, tradition meets style at Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel



Renowned for the most lavishly decorated venues in town, Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel & Spa, lives up to its reputation this year. The luxurious resort unveils a new concept promising its guests the ultimate Ramadan experience. Adorned with traditional decorations reflecting the warmth of this month, Badriah Ballroom presents new color schemes and modern Andalusia designs.

Comfortably accommodating up to 600 guests for Iftar or Ghabqa, the buffet in Badriah includes a lavish spread of Arabian specialties and Ramadan favorites accompanied by a selection of international dishes. Guests will enjoy the generous buffet setup in an inspiring environment complemented by the sounds of live Arabian tunes.

On the other side of the resort, Garden Cafe tent is nestled within the beautiful Hotel gardens. Enlarged to welcome around 250 guests this year, Garden Cafe tent offers unforgettable private gatherings for Ghabqas and Iftar nights for friends and families with an excellent selection of shisha, sumptuous Ramadan specialties and a live entertaining program.

Commenting on this occasion, General Manager, Savino Leone, explains: "We are pleased to share our much-anticipated Ramadan activities this year. The spirit of this Holy month can be lived throughout our resort, from the main entrance to our beautifully decorated Badriah Ballroom and our Garden Cafe tent overlooking the gardens".

In partnership with Mqamash exhibition, this year, Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel & Spa showcases local products offering a wide variety of diverse items in a Ramadan Souq experience that will delight all its guests. To complement the Ramadan experience, the luxurious resort partnered with Cadillac Alghanim, Saray Perfumes and Al Bawader Real Estate LLC to delight guests with their special offerings during this Holy month. Leone added: "We look forward to welcoming everyone to live this special experience with us".

Marina Thai reopens in Souk Sharq

The revamped Marina Thai restaurant reopened with a new look in Souk Sharq on April 30, 2018 in the presence of Thai food lovers. The opening ceremony was attended by first secretary in the Thailand Embassy Perapol Berananda and a number of attendees including media delegates and lovers of Thai food who were mesmerized by the restaurants' inventive decor, scrumptious dishes and food presentation. "We strive to expand our operations in the GCC and the Middle East and that's why we have recently reopened Marina Thai restaurant in Souk Sharq," said Tony Lteif, Operations Manager at Marina Thai.

During the event, guests had a scrumptious experience while enjoying the freshly prepared dishes and the extraordinary restaurant vibes. The restaurants' trendy decorations will ensure comfortable atmosphere to achieve pleasant dining experiences for customers. Not forgetting the new menu that features various local and Thai dishes, including salads, entrees and soups, in addition to mains, fried rice and noodles as well as the delicious desserts that are freshly prepared.

The menu perfectly combines Thai dishes that are traditionally prepared with a modern twist to offer a wide variety of authentic food to select from to suit different needs and tastes. Marina Thai makes sure to select finest, fresh ingredients and deliver best experiences ever in a friendly atmosphere, giving the chance to all guests to experience the real and rich Asian cuisine.

Lteif expressed his gratitude to all guests to witness the reopening of Marina Thai Restaurant, the number one destination for authentic Thai food that was established since 1993 as the first Thai restaurant to serve buffet in Kuwait's malls. The restaurant is renowned for its ready-made menu that tantalizes taste buds with a vast selection of delicious dishes.

However, when Osaka Company took over the restaurant in 2013, it had a clear strategy to improve the

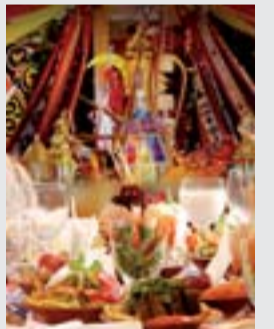


restaurant's operations and re-launch it with a new look to better serve its customers. In 2017, the company commenced the strategy implementation, starting with

Souq Sharq to be followed by other branches across Kuwait. The company is looking forward to opening new branches locally and regionally.

A blessed Ramadan awaits you at Crowne Plaza & Holiday Inn

To welcome the Holy month of Ramadan, Crowne Plaza & Holiday Inn Kuwait Al Thuraya City have opened the all-new Al Ahmadi Terrace as an extension to the renovated renowned restaurant. The modern elements reflected in the carefully selected finishing, gives the new Al Ahmadi restaurant a luxury-ship approach that appeals to almost anyone who dines there. The Terrace is a covered outdoor seating area where friends and family can gather over delicious meals from several cuisines any day of the week. During Ramadan, live oriental music will be played to enhance the ambiance of the occasion.



Al Thuraya City is not only known for its famous Al Ahmadi restaurant but also for its unrivaled array of specialty restaurants. Ramadan will be celebrated throughout all the outlets with Iftar and Ghabqa buffets at Al Ahmadi and Al Noukhaza, as well as set menus at Ayam Zaman, Jamawar, Sakura and Shabestan. Any guest may invite family and friends and enjoy the broad choice of cuisines the Hotels' have to offer.

For visitors having 50 guests or more over Iftar or Ghabqa, Crowne Plaza & Holiday Inn Kuwait Al Thuraya City have prepared a Ramadan themed ballroom where a selection of the season's delicacies will be ready and waiting for any person who would like to entertain their guests in a luxuriously sophisticated manner. There are several menus tailored to fit every taste starting from KD 11.

The Award winning Spa Aquatic at the Crowne Plaza Kuwait Al Thuraya City has also put together special packages for their guests during Ramadan. With packages starting from KD 65, visitors may enjoy packages that include body massage, tummy slimming, Aquatic pool, steam and sauna access accompanied with delicious dates and beverages. Other packages go up to also include the famed 24K Gold Facial. For those looking for a year-long of luxury pampering, the Spa is offering a discounted yearly membership throughout Ramadan with access to the Edge Fitness Center as well (2 days a week during Ramadan).

A fitness center like no other can be found at Al Thuraya City! The 24 Hour health club is offering all new comers the chance to get fit starting with the Holy Month of Ramadan: pay for 6 months and get 4 months free. The swimming pool, the gym and all the trendy classes are accessible to all those who wish to work out while maintaining the lifestyle they desire. With so much to do, every day is different during the Holy Month of Ramadan at Crowne Plaza & Holiday Inn Kuwait Al Thuraya City. Don't miss the chance of being a part of a wonderful world that took hospitality to a different level.

NOTICE

During the Holy month of Ramadan, the South African Embassy will be open to the public, from Sunday to Thursday from 9 am to 1 pm. Please note that the Consular Section operation hours will be from 9:30 am to 12:00 pm.

NCCAL, College of Architecture hold exhibition

In collaboration with the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters, the College of Architecture at Kuwait University held an exhibition showcasing the projects by the students from the interior architecture final year graduation studio at the College of Architecture, under the supervision of Dr. Lamis Behbehani, with the attendance of the head of College of Architecture Dr. Omar Khattab, Vice Dean for Academic Affairs Dr. Asseel Al Ragam, Sheikh Iman Al Salem Al Sabah and the National Council's project architect Hamad Al-Khaleefi on May 14, 2018 at the Museum of Modern Art in Kuwait City.

The exhibition consisted of 17 projects by the students, with each project providing different solutions and possibilities for the interior restoration and adaptive re-use of the historic Fahad Al-Salem Palace, situated in the Sharq region of Kuwait. Some of the projects included converting the palace into an architectural documentation and restoration center, youth center, wellness center, and ceremonial center and heritage hotel.

The studio team's lead instructor Dr. Lamis Behbehani, a faculty member at the College of Architecture in Kuwait University, mentioned that the project took one semester to complete, and was achieved through regular communication between the studio team and directly with the Secretary General of the National Council for Culture and Arts Engineer Ali Al-Youha and through the National Council's project architect Hamad Al-Khaleefi.

In addition, Dr. Behbehani expressed her gratitude for the efforts made by the National Council for supporting the project



Sheikha Iman Al Salem Al Sabah, Dr. Omar Khattab, Dr. Lamis Behbehani



Student Rawan Al Shehri explaining her project to visitors.

throughout the semester, and for providing the opportunities for the students to visit the palace. Furthermore, she emphasized that this project is unique of its kind for the reason of the collaboration and the prioritization of tangible and intangible architectural heritage of Kuwait in this year's interior architecture graduation studio's program. The collaboration enabled the team to get motivated and study the site and the palace more thoroughly, and to further appreciate the meaning of Kuwait's remaining modern architectural heritage and the prominent historic local figures associated with them by everyone involved. She emphasized that such projects are fundamental for communicating the past architectural legacy of Kuwait to the new generations of architects and designers.

Furthermore, the National Council's project architect, Hamad Al-Khaleefi, admired the collaboration between the two entities. He said that the university did help with the research of the site and the palace, provided details of the interiors, and submitted inspiring design proposals of the palace.



Aerial view of the exhibition



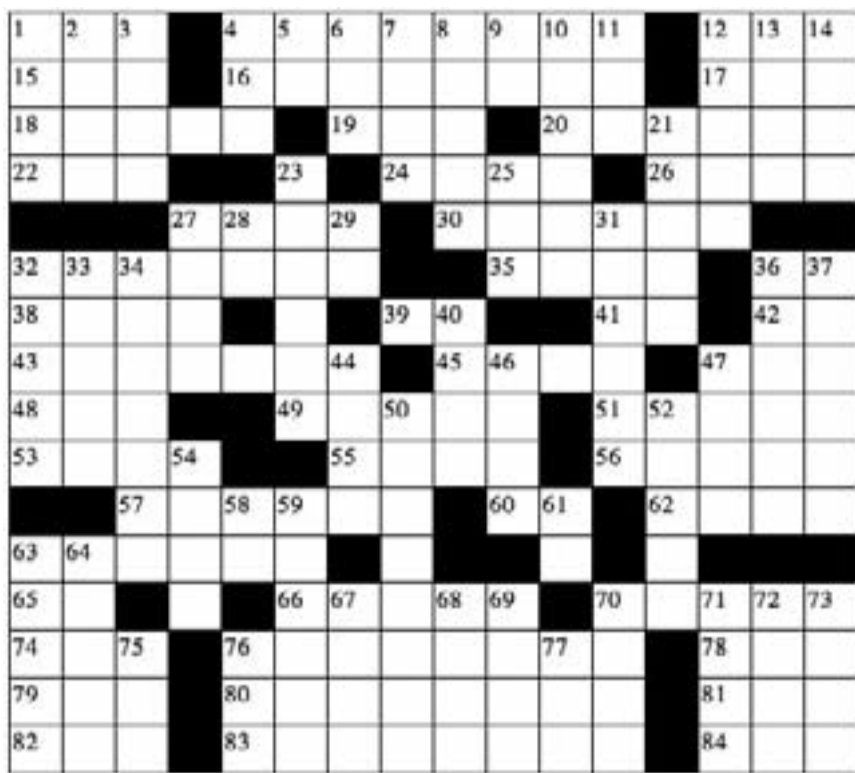
Group photograph of the project team.



Architect Hamad Al Khaleefi and Studio Assistant Nassar Al-Nassar

Stars

CROSSWORD 1911



ACROSS

- A solution containing a phosphate buffer.
- Low stinging nettle of Central and South America having velvety brownish-green toothed leaves and clusters of small green flowers.
- Provide with clothes or put clothes on.
- A flat wing-shaped process or wing-like part of an organism.
- Lacking gonads.
- A federal agency established to coordinate programs aimed at reducing pollution and protecting the environment.
- Having three dimensions.
- Injured by bites or stings.
- A sweet filling made of prunes or apricots.
- A constellation in the southern hemisphere near Telescopium and Norma.
- A Russian river.
- Have confidence or faith in.
- A midnight meeting of witches to practice witchcraft and sorcery.
- A room or establishment where alcoholic drinks are served over a counter.
- (Greek mythology) Goddess of the earth and mother of Cronus and the Titans in ancient mythology.
- Relatively small fast-moving sloth.
- A bachelor's degree in science.
- A metric unit of volume or capacity equal to 100 liters.
- A very poisonous metallic element that has three allotropic forms.
- (British) A minicar used as a taxicab.
- A member of an Algonquian people living in central Canada.
- The United Nations agency concerned with international maritime activities.
- Swiss writer (born in Germany) whose novels and poems express his interests in Eastern spiritual values (1877-1962).
- Find repugnant.
- Small European freshwater fish with a slender bluish-green body.
- Harsh or corrosive in tone.
- An Indian tree of the family Combretaceae that is a source of timber and gum.
- Any of several Orthodox Jewish sects who reject modern secular culture and many of whom do not recognize the spiritual authority of the modern state of Israel.
- A Russian river.
- Distant in either space or time.
- Noisy quarrel.
- (Akkadian) God of wisdom.
- Social status or position conferred by a system based on class.
- A mature blood cell that contains hemoglobin to carry oxygen to the bodily tissues.
- A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
- Being one more than two.
- A cut of pork ribs with much of the meat trimmed off.
- A benevolent aspect of Devi.
- A rapid bustling commotion.
- A small tessera.
- A light touch or stroke.
- that is the top of an extinct volcano.
- Committee formed by a special-interest group to raise money for their favorite political candidates.
- A soft white precious univalent metallic element having the highest electrical and thermal conductivity of any metal.
- An elegantly dressed man (often with affected manners).
- A blue dye obtained from plants or made synthetically.
- A pair of people who live together.
- A state in the Rocky Mountains.
- West Indian tree having racemes of fragrant white flowers and yielding a durable timber and resinous juice.
- Fermented alcoholic beverage similar to but heavier than beer.
- The fourth month of the civil year.
- A translucent mineral consisting of hydrated silica of variable color.
- A city in northwest Indiana on Lake Michigan.
- A village of huts for native Africans in southern Africa.
- The dried fibrous part of the fruit of a plant of the genus Luffa.
- Someone (especially a woman) who annoys people by constantly finding fault.
- Wild sheep of northern Africa.
- Functioning correctly and ready for action.
- A metric unit of weight equal to one thousandth of a kilogram.
- Cut the head of.
- (Jungian psychology) The inner self (not the external persona) that is in touch with the unconscious.
- Fudge made with brown sugar and butter and milk and nuts.
- A city in Veneto.
- Away from the right path or direction.
- Interface consisting of a standard port between a computer and its peripherals that is used in some computers.
- A small ball with a hole through the middle.
- Make anew.
- The process whereby heat changes something from a solid to a liquid.
- And edge tool having two crossed pivoting blades.
- God of wealth and love.
- (used of count nouns) Every one considered individually.
- An intensely radioactive metallic element that occurs in minute amounts in uranium ores.
- The act of escaping physically.
- A bachelor's degree in religion.
- Marked by excessive enthusiasm for and intense devotion to a cause or idea.
- Type genus of the Anatidae.
- A tall perennial woody plant having a main trunk and branches forming a distinct elevated crown.
- A British peer ranking below a Marquess and above a Viscount.
- A small cake leavened with yeast.
- (computer science) A data transmission rate (bits/second) for modems.
- God of love and erotic desire.
- An Arabic speaking person who lives in Arabia or North Africa.
- A federation of North American industrial unions that merged with the American Federation of Labor in 1955.
- Standard time in the 8th time zone west of Greenwich, reckoned at the 120th meridian west.
- A unit of length equal to one thousandth of an inch.

DOWN

- Large burrowing rodent of South and Central America.
- A hazy or indistinct representation.
- A island in the Netherlands Antilles

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You've come to a point where you're willing to stand up for your beliefs. You truly want nothing more than to gain sacred knowledge to take with you on your life's journey; enjoy and nurture this vibration. You feel drawn to traveling and exploring new people, places and ideas. Someone exhibits an unsettling attitude which could be the result of a disagreement between you. Feeling disconnected or separated could serve to help you go deep within for a quick boost through meditation. Someone needs your serious input on what looks like a healthcare issue; use your best judgement here. You're able to step away from what could turn out to be a nasty confrontation between coworkers; they could try to pull you into this, but you decline. Sneaking away, taking some time alone, creates a new you tonight.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Take your time when making decisions as this could be a period of having doubts about exactly what you want. Otherwise, your thoughts are sharp regarding a project at home or work that's finally coming together. Knowing what you want is only half the battle; figuring out how to get it is the other half. You want to tell someone something you think they need to know, but you're not sure about the timing; relax, you'll know when the time is right. Moving your body by walking or other types of exercise also refreshes your mind and the desire to move is strong. Someone urges you to attend a social function you're not sure about; think about this one before you act. You find great value in the areas of both material prosperity and spiritual abundance; you take special steps to pursue and attain both.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

The beauty you create in your environment holds your attention right now; perhaps there's been a move or one is coming. Outdoor projects take up a large portion of your time; this is where you get your best therapy. A stronger interest in organics sends you to some interesting places to shop and learn; you gain important knowledge you'll always have. Home is closest to your heart at this time; you could consider finding a position that allows you to work remotely from home. You fight the urge to shop because you feel the vibration of overspending around you; pay attention! This is a great time to let your thoughts and ideas mature. You could find that you've been volunteered to attend some sort of workshop. Later this evening, you find something creative to pass the time.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You're in a new cycle emphasizing stable energy that supports your practical side. An ability to put correct value on people, places and things is prevalent at this time; this serves you well in business and personal dealings. You make a point of stopping to enjoy life and beauty. Interest in some sort of new flavors in your diet is forecast. An in-depth study of your life helps in making decisions that could affect the rest of your present incarnation. The way you present your message makes it easy to understand; moving forward with a project makes complete sense to you now. You no longer lack the confidence to expect the best for yourself; you're more deserving than you know! It's strongly indicated that your plans for a special event come together later this evening.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

You come across as charming and witty when you find yourself socially interacting with those who think like you. If you feel blocked or disconnected, consider that you've created this energy yourself; there's nothing wrong with keeping to yourself to think, but try not to be hard on yourself. You could find your company in demand as those you spend time with seem to follow your lead. The timing's right to make changes in your career if you want something new in this area. You're happy with a large purchase you decide to make. You have strong need for emotional security and balance right now. Relax and let good things come straight to you without your lifting a finger! Home is where you prefer to be later when the weather could turn ugly; a sense of peace and comfort are dominant this evening.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Being on a nice, even keel helps as you try to work with someone who lives a completely different way from you. After thinking things through, you determine that something you want to do isn't practical just now. You feel drawn to new people and ideas that help with your efforts to learn more about things eternal. You're laying the foundation for future success with certain things in mind; some of these seem impossible, but they're not. You shine brightly when stepping up to take something over. You give your best at all times. You move into living life a whole new way during this cycle; exciting new opportunities spur this on. Taking time to look at things through spiritual eyes brings important knowledge. Using past gains to create new ones is highly likely for quite some time to come. You're in a good place.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

You appear to be comfortable on the outside, on the inside you could be experiencing high levels of frustration or anxiety. This isn't a great time for decision making, so you hold off. You tend to romanticize something you probably shouldn't; it's best to see the truth of this matter before you dive in. You receive an interesting invitation to an event you never thought of attending before. Some sort of new class could invigorate your senses. New interests are strongly indicated at this time. Dreams and intuition are at their strongest; listen to what you're being told as there's wisdom to be gained through these spiritual gifts. You could have someone from the past on your mind and this might cause you to look them up. You may have close friends from out of town as guests this evening.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You feel grateful for some decisions you made that make your house a home. A change in your work environment is definitely for the best. You consider calling someone and asking for forgiveness. Your common sense is in strong tune and it guides you down the best path to abundance; opportunities abound in the area of abundance and thriving during the phase you're in now. The heavens indicate movement toward discovering the root of a problem you want to end; this could prove to be very simple. Something regarding your health gets your total attention. You're seen as elegant and attractive by many when you make an appearance at a social event you didn't want to attend. Enjoy sincere compliments while you can! Being surrounded by very beautiful things brings out the best in you.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

You answer the call of the outdoors! Your sense of independence and strength seems to be increased by the energy you find in, and draw from, nature. People feel good when they spend time with you today; your inner glow extends outwardly as you're in close union with the universe! New karmic debts are created or paid back with some plans you make today; take care you do no harm. General support and best wishes are present during this entire phase. You're a true and trusted friend. A deeper look into the spiritual side of life awakens your connection to a specific time and place; this could indicate past life memories of another incarnation. Look closely to find the underlying reason for having these memories at this time; it could be important! You continue to add nice pieces to a collection.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

The past intermingles with the present to reveal the truth; acute intuition leads you to knock down emotional walls. Your thoughts and pursuits take on a mystic tone as you contemplate your world and the different paths you've followed. Your tastes are changing drastically and you're willing to follow where this leads. The stars say you've entered a cycle of focusing on finances, health and practicalities. Your dry wit is appreciated today and may bring a valuable new friend into your inner circle. You're in the mood to let bygones be bygones. You're secure with your understanding of the person you are and how you go through life; your values support good choices. You're in a position to come to someone's aid and you're eager to do it. Creating good karma helps you drift into restful sleep tonight.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

You've entered a cycle of deep introspection, and can actually see and accurately weigh your assets; you're forming a better opinion of yourself and what you're doing for your financial and personal wellbeing; it's about time! You have respect for an elder or supervisor; an old person loves you. You let your thoughts stay on the mysteries of life such as the heavens and what comes next. Your evolution is strongly indicated during this time and those around you clearly notice the changes. You separate yourself from the mundane and ordinary facts of life to explore exciting topics. Exploring new technologies is at the fore and you could find an excellent investment opportunity, or ideas of your own could be inspired now. You're profoundly moved by hopes and by letting go of old hurts and grudges.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

The heavens open up to bestow mystical energy into your world; this is persistent throughout the new phase your sun sign has entered. Love could grow between you and a lover or child; this could even mean a pet! Intuition and dreams color your thoughts and actions as you move toward making decisions regarding a tender issue; remember you're not the only one involved in this that could be hurt. Your ability to assess situations is right on and fair if you put your personal wants and opinions to the back and let your inborn sense of fairness prevail. Plans for the week unfold flawlessly and cost much less than you thought; good times unfold regarding expenses and spending! Sex and romance could be the best way to go this evening; your mate loves you! Something you wished for could happen soon.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Movie Actors 3

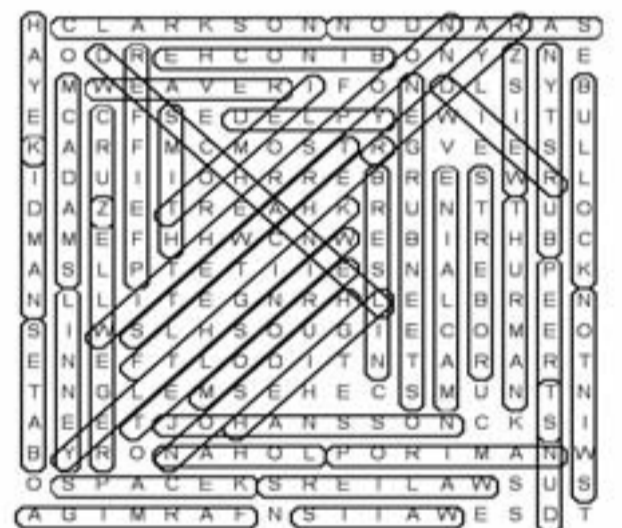
Find and circle all of the Movie Actors that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell the name of a movie for which Forest Whitaker won an Oscar.



- | | | |
|---------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| ARKIN, Alan | GLOVER, Danny | PACINO, Al |
| BALE, Christian | GOODING JR, Cuba | FAKTON, Bill |
| BANDERAS, Antonio | HARRIS, Ed | PITT, Brad |
| BRODERICK, Jim | HAWKE, Ethan | QUAD, Dennis |
| BRODERICK, Matthew | KINGSLY, Ben | RADCLIFFE, Daniel |
| BRODY, Adrien | MACY, William H. | SENSE, Gary |
| BYRNE, Gabriel | MALKOVICH, John | SLATER, Christian |
| CRAIG, Daniel | MCGREGOR, Ewan | STRATHAIRN, David |
| DAY-LEWIS, Daniel | MURPHY, Eddie | THORNTON, Billy Bob |
| EASTWOOD, Clint | MURRAY, Bill | WALKEN, Christopher |
| FIRTH, Colin | NICHOLSON, Jack | WASHINGTON, Denzel |
| FISHBURNE, Laurence | NORTON, Edward | WHITAKER, Forest |
| FRASER, Brendan | OLDMAN, Gary | WILLIS, Bruce |

Yesterday's Solution

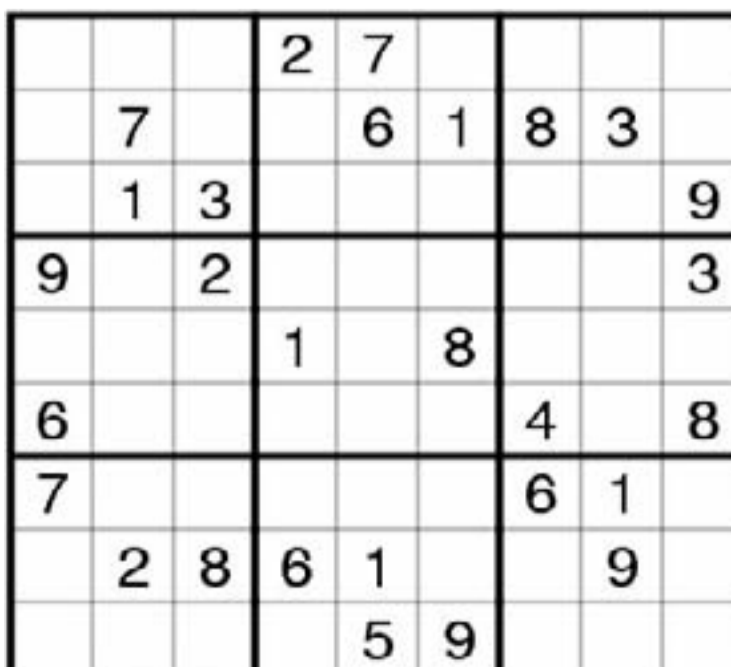
Movie Actresses 2



- | | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| BATES, Kathy | JOHANSSON, Scarlett | SPACEK, Sissy |
| BSNOCH, Juliette | KIDMAN, Nicole | STEENBURGEN, Mary |
| BRESLIN, Abigail | KNIGHTLEY, Keira | STEWART, Kristen |
| BULLOCK, Sandra | LINNEY, Laura | STREEP, Meryl |
| BURSTYNN, Ellen | LOHAN, Lindsay | SWINTON, Tilda |
| CLARKSON, Patricia | MACLAINE, Shirley | THURMAN, Uma |
| CRUZ, Penelope | MCADAMS, Rachel | TOMEI, Marisa |
| DELPY, Julie | MOORE, Julianne | WALTERS, Julie |
| DESCHANEL, Zooey | PEFFER, Michelle | WATTS, Naomi |
| DUNST, Kirsten | PORTMAN, Natalie | WEAVER, Sigourney |
| FARMIGA, Vera | REID, Tara | WEISS, Rachel |
| FLETCHER, Louise | ROBERTS, Julia | WINSLET, Kate |
| HAYEK, Salma | RYDER, Winona | WITHERSPOON, Reese |
| HEIGL, Katherine | SARANDON, Susan | ZELLWEGER, Renee |
| HUDSON, Kate | SMITH, Maggie | |

The hidden movie title is: ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST

Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



Lifestyle

THURSDAY, MAY 17, 2018



People perform during a flash mob, for the launch of a new makeup line by German fashion designer Karl Lagerfeld on Place Vendome in Paris. — AFP

'MAD' KING'S LOST GIFT TO WAGNER GETS RARE SHOW

Kept safe in a silk-lined box by its Belgian "custodian" lies a piece of the historic legacy of German composer Richard Wagner that was nearly lost forever. The Lohengrin vase, made of porcelain, was given to Wagner more than 150 years ago by Ludwig II, the "mad king" of Bavaria, whose passion for building fairy-tale castles was matched only by his love of Wagner's operas. It was believed lost after Allied bombing in World

War II destroyed much of Bayreuth, the town where Wagner built the legendary theatre that now hosts an annual music festival. But one fragment emerged after the war and was taken to the Belgian capital, Brussels, in 1949, where it has largely remained out of sight in the intervening years. A group of Wagner devotees recently received a special viewing during a production in Brussels of the opera "Lohengrin"—the work that first bewitched Ludwig—and an AFP reporter was given a rare glimpse.



Belgian organ builder Partrick Collon displays in Brussels a piece of the "Lohengrin Cup", created by Ludwig II of Bavaria for late German composer Richard Wagner. — AFP photos

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Patrick Collon, the renowned organ maker and art expert who now owns the fragment, said that "Ludwig was barely 18 years old when he started thinking about this vase, and he obsessed about it for six months. His diaries are full of it." "After Ludwig became king he sought out Wagner, who was hiding from his creditors, all over central Europe. He found him a year later and gave him this vase in May 1865 for his 52nd birthday," added Collon, 75.

Sleeping Beauty Castle. A minor king under whom Bavaria lost its independence to Prussia, Ludwig has nevertheless gone down in history as a patron of the arts, especially of the equally erratic Wagner.

Ludwig was just 15 and infused by the old German legends when he first saw Wagner's "Lohengrin", based on the traditional story of the Swan Knight, and which later became the inspiration for Neuschwanstein Castle. Two years later, Ludwig became obsessed by creating a porcelain vase featuring scenes from Lohengrin. "It was Ludwig's first creation. He didn't make it himself but he imagined it, he dreamed up the scenes that were painted on it by his drawing teacher," the German landscape painter Leopold Rottmann, said Collon.

Rottmann's watercolours of the receptacle—the only surviving evidence of what it looked like in full—show four scenes from the opera and have a lid and handles in the shape of a swan. The fragment in Brussels shows a gilded swan, the tragic heroine, Elsa, on a balcony, and the two villains Telramund and Ortrud. It is the only piece that survived the Allied bombing of Bayreuth on April 5, 1945. Two other similar vases — a Tannhaeuser Cup and a Flying Dutchman Cup—were destroyed on that day.

'Horrors of war'

"It was said that it had disappeared and that nothing was left of it. But in 1949 the Wagner brothers (Wagner's grandsons Wolfgang and Wieland Wagner) were able to get a piece in a pretty box to a Belgian benefactor," said Collon. "At the end of her life, she gave it to a musician friend. When the friend died it was passed to me."

The benefactor—identified by Collon only as Juliette, contributed to the post-war reopening of the Bayreuth festival in 1951 and was nicknamed "Joan of Arc" by the Wagner brothers. The Brussels fragment is an object of fascination for music lovers. "A smart friend once said to me: 'in the end, it's moving because it's broken,'" said Collon. "This fragment has survived all the horrors of war." — AFP

'First creation'

Saved from the ruins of the defeated Nazi Germany in 1945, the fragment at first looks insignificant, consisting of just the blue and gold base of the urn-like vase, and part of one rounded side. But it sheds an intriguing light on the extraordinary friendship between the young Ludwig and the older Wagner. The eccentric Ludwig is best known for designing the fantastical Neuschwanstein near Munich which served as the model for Disney's



A piece of the "Lohengrin Cup", created by Ludwig II of Bavaria for the late German composer Richard Wagner.



This picture in Brussels shows a piece of the "Lohengrin Cup", created by Ludwig II of Bavaria for the late German composer Richard Wagner.

Prince Harry and Meghan Markle: A tale of love at first sight



A pedestrian walks dogs past waxwork figures of Britain's Prince Harry and his US fiancée Meghan Markle, during a photo opportunity arranged by Madame Tussauds, near Windsor Castle in Windsor, west of London yesterday, as preparations continue ahead of the forthcoming Royal wedding. — AFP

It was love at first sight for Prince Harry and Meghan Markle, who both quickly sensed their brief encounter on a blind date could blossom into something much, much bigger. They were set up by a mutual friend when US actress Markle was passing through London in July 2016, with the couple later revealing they knew little about each other. The speed of their relationship surprised them both. "The fact that I fell in love with Meghan so incredibly quickly was a confirmation to me that all the stars were aligned. Everything was just perfect," said Harry.

Less than two years later, they will tie the knot at Windsor Castle on Saturday, sealing a relationship that rapidly grew outside of the media spotlight—and survived when it went public in explosive fashion. When the couple first met for a drink, both were taken aback. She was 34 and a divorcee of three years; he 31 and with a few founded relationships and his 10-year army career recently behind him. Harry had never heard of Markle or watched "Suits", the US television legal drama series she had starred in since 2011. "I was beautifully surprised when I walked into that room and saw her," he recalled, and thought to himself: "I'm going to really have to up my game here!"

Bonding in Botswana

Bonding over their passion for the good causes they represented, they immediately set up a second date for the following day. A few weeks later, he persuaded her to join him camping out for five days in Botswana, which Harry called a "huge leap" to take so soon—but one that paid off. "We were really by ourselves, which was crucial to me to make sure that we had a chance to get to know each other," he said. As Markle continued filming "Suits" in Toronto, the pair never went longer than two weeks apart.

Their romance was under cover for the first five or six months, and largely

conducted through nights in behind closed doors. "We were able to really have so much time just to connect," said Markle. The prince said the royal family had been very supportive of the relationship, including his grandparents Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip, his father Prince Charles, as well as his brother Prince William and his wife Kate.

Harry said they had frank conversations about what her future could entail and found it a "huge relief" to have finally found someone comfortable with the pressure and lifelong job that he comes attached with. Royal author Andrew Morton, who penned a biography of Markle, said the speed with which she fell for Harry was surprising as the TV star was a lifelong cautious character. "He was more of the supplicant than Meghan. He had more to gain and Meghan has more to lose by her agreeing to be his bride," Morton told AFP, in an unusual role reversal for the prince.

'This is not a game'

Harry publicly confirmed they were dating in November 2016 with a highly unusual statement blasting racist "abuse and harassment" directed towards her. "It is not right that a few months into a relationship with him that Ms Markle should be subjected to such a storm," his communications secretary Jason Knauft said. "This is not a game—it is her life and his." The angry statement, going way beyond the lengths Harry went to for previous girlfriends, confirmed how seriously he was treating this relationship. Eventually, Harry proposed in November 2017. The couple were having a cozy night in at Nottingham Cottage, the two-bedroom home they now share in the grounds of London's Kensington Palace, roasting a chicken. "It was just an amazing surprise. It was so sweet and natural and very romantic. He got on one knee," the actress said. —AFP

Gaza massacre film earns rave reviews at Cannes

A “devastating” film about the massacre of an extended Palestinian family in Gaza by Israeli forces in 2009 has been hailed by critics at the Cannes film festival. Italian filmmaker Stefano Savona spent nine years trying to piece together what happened when a farming community in the north of the Gaza Strip was razed by Israeli special forces, killing 29 civilians mostly huddled together in one house. The wounded—largely women and children—were left for three days before the Red Cross could get to them. “Samouni Road”, which uses animation and 3D images to reconstruct what happened and “bring alive the ghosts” of the victims, has had rave reviews, with one critic calling it “an anti-war film for the ages”.

The Hollywood Reporter said “its success at showing real lives unfathomably impacted by barbarism is beyond dispute: the accolades sure to accrue will drown out the few but noisy voices from all sides unable to see beyond their own fanatical propaganda”. The film’s premiere comes as 60 people were killed after Israeli troops fired on protesters in the worst violence in the Gaza Strip since the 2014 war, with at least 1,200 other Palestinians wounded. Savona told AFP that his film was not “reportage or propaganda” but an examination of “the pain and resilience of these people” trying to rebuild their lives after the 2009 massacre. The Samouni clan have farmed their fields in northern Gaza since time immemorial, Savona said.

Pilot refused to bomb survivors

“They consider themselves the original Gazans. They were kind of snobbish about that. They are like a separate community within Gaza, who marry among themselves and have their own dialect. “They were much less politically involved than most Gazans who are refugees,” who settled in the Strip after fleeing or

being expelled from their homes in what is now Israel. “And all the Samounis were against Hamas,” Savona added. Yet their land, homes and mosque were leveled during a massive Israeli “anti-terrorist operation” that the director said turned their community into a “man-made desert, like the moon”.

Savona had been in Gaza at the time, shooting his award-winning documentary “Cast Lead”—the name given to the Israeli military incursion. He befriended the Samounis when they were allowed back to the ruins of their homes a fortnight after the killings. “The bodies were in the bombed house for 14 days. I went there every day. People were coming back every morning to go through the rubble and I would talk to them,” he told AFP. “There were 150 people in the house, all cousins, when it was bombarded by an Apache helicopter gunship.”

Ironically the Israeli pilot who killed them emerges as a kind of tarnished hero from the film for repeatedly refusing orders to fire on the survivors. Savona used the Red Cross, UN and the Israeli army’s own internal reports on the tragedy. “All that we see and hear comes from cross-checked sources,” he said. “The situation of Gaza was tragic 25 years ago,” he told AFP. “Now it has gotten even worse. I just wanted to show these people and let them talk for themselves.”

Red carpet protest

With the blockade, “Gaza has become this dark place on the map—a terra incognita—of which we hear and see almost nothing,” said the Sicilian. He was smuggled into the strip through the tunnels from Egypt when he returned to see the family in 2010, a route he said was now “almost impossible”. “We see almost nothing of life there now. All we see is smoke and fire and small figures running from being shot... “But we have a responsibility



Lebanese actress Manal Issa holds sign reading ‘Stop the attack on Gaza’ as she walks Cannes red carpet. — AFP

to cover what is happening. If we had told this story in a better way we might have helped, but we haven’t,” Savona said. “I did not want to get kidnapped by my own emotions in this film. Thousands of movies end up as psychological blackmail,” said the director, who refused to comment on the killings in Gaza this week.

He sees his role as to simply observe, as in his documentary on the Egyptian revolution, “Tahrir, Liberation Square”. However, several stars and directors including Benicio Del Toro and French actress Virginie Ledoyen took part in a minute’s silence outside the Palestinian

pavilion at the festival on Tuesday to express their horror at what was happening in Gaza. French-Lebanese actress Manal Issa later staged a protest on the red carpet before the screening of the latest Star Wars spin-off, “Solo”, holding up a placard, “Stop the Attack on Gaza”. Issa is the star of the Syrian film “My Favourite Fabric”, one of the pictures in the running for the Camera d’Or prize for best debut feature at Cannes. — AFP

Iran’s Syria intervention gets cinematic treatment

While Iran’s presence in Syria raises global fears of an all-out conflict with Israel, one cinematic version of its intervention has been a Tehran box office triumph. Released for the Persian new year at the end of March, “Be Vaght-e Cham” (“Damascus Time”) pulled in almost 1.4 million viewers, making it the second-most popular film in the country according to cinematicket.org and is now being touted abroad. It tells the story of father-and-son military pilots running a rescue mission for refugees in Syria, only to be caught up in a deadly hostage-taking by the Islamic State group (IS).

Filed in Syria and Iran, it features the sort of

‘Not political’

Iran has sent military advisors, along with thousands of Iranian, Afghan and Pakistani “volunteers” to fight in Syria. But that aspect of the intervention is barely seen in the film, which focuses on explaining “what is Daesh (IS) and what are its crimes”, according to director Ebrahim Hatamikia. Hatamikia built his career on the back of films about the Iran-Iraq war of the 1980s, and has occasionally run into trouble with censors over his depiction of social problems. He told AFP he is a man of the left when it comes to critiquing society but a man of the right when it comes to “defending the regime... for which we

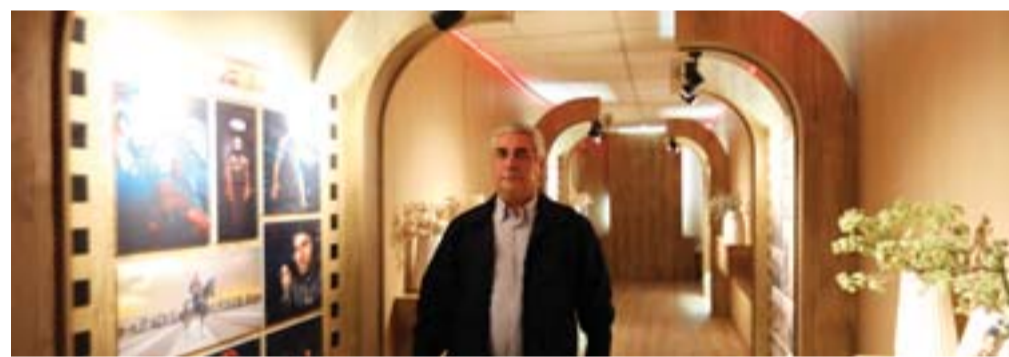
humanity (during World War II), the same has been happening here in the Middle East where we wanted to help people who had the same culture and religion as us,” Hatamikia said.

As well as blockbusters like “Damascus Time”, Ouj has made hundreds of TV documentaries and the hugely popular comedy show, “Paytakht” (Capital), now in its fifth season, which recently had an episode in which the main family was kidnapped by IS. Iran has couched its Syrian intervention in religious terms, saying it is “defending the shrine” of Zeinab, a granddaughter of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and key figure in Shiite Islam. Western powers say Iran’s intervention is helping to “destabilize” the region, while Israel fears the growth of Iranian forces on its border and has launched a series of deadly air raids against their positions. Tehran emphasizes that it is in Syria at the invitation of its long-standing ally, President Bashar al-Assad, and that its support for an established government is the exact opposite of destabilizing.

‘Regrets’ Panahi ban

Despite his fervent support for the regime, Hatamikia said he “really regrets and does not understand” the decision of the authorities to ban his fellow filmmaker, the multi-award-winning Jafar Panahi, from working or leaving the country. Panahi was blacklisted after trying to make a documentary on the mass protests of 2009.

His latest film “Three Faces” was shown at the Cannes Film Festival this weekend, but the director was banned from attending the festival by the Iranian authorities. Following its success in Iran, “Damascus Time” is now looking for foreign markets, with its promoters saying it has already signed contracts with Japan, South Korea, Lebanon and Poland. — AFP



Iranian director Ebrahim Hatamikia, arrives to give an interview on his latest film “Be Vaght-e Cham” (“Damascus Time”) in Tehran. — AFP photos

expensive special effects rarely seen on the Iranian silver screen. It ends with an act of melodramatic self-sacrifice as one of the main characters gives his life to prevent an attack on the presidential palace in Damascus—an ending that reportedly left Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif with tears in his eyes when he attended a screening earlier this year. “I have a feeling this film gives a better sense of what’s happening in the region than what we see in the foreign media,” said Shahabi, a student, as he left a showing in Tehran recently.

have given many martyrs.”

“Damascus Time” was about presenting his “vision as a Muslim”, he said. “This film is not political. It’s a human and humanitarian film. We are faced with Daesh, which displays the flag of Islam but is a satanic deviation,” said Hatamikia. He met AFP at the offices of Ouj, a production company financed by the Revolutionary Guards, as seen on memorial plaques to the country’s martyrs on every floor of the building. “The United States is always proudly announcing how they sent so many soldiers to Normandy to save



Marvel icon Stan Lee in \$1bn lawsuit against company he started

Comic books legend Stan Lee is suing the entertainment company he co-founded for damages topping \$1 billion, accusing bosses of trying to steal his image, according to court documents filed Tuesday. The complaint, filed in Los Angeles County Superior Court and published by several US entertainment media outlets, alleges that POW! Entertainment CEO Shane Duffy and co-founder Gill Champion failed to fully disclose to Lee details of the firm’s 2017 sale to Camsing International. The entertainment icon contends that they took advantage of him at a time when he was despondent over the death of his wife Joan and suffering from macular degeneration, a condition affecting the eyes.

The 95-year-old co-creator of many superhero characters, including Black Panther and Spider-Man, alleges he was

duped into signing a fraudulent agreement that gave POW! exclusive rights to his name, identity and likeness. According to the lawsuit, Lee was unable to read the document due to his eye condition, and he doesn’t remember anyone reading it to him, suggesting that his signature may have been forged, copied or induced. “In addition, POW! took control of Lee’s personal social media accounts, including Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, thereby impersonating Lee before a combined 15 million followers worldwide,” the complaint reads. There has been no response from POW! Entertainment to the lawsuit. But in April, the company issued a statement expressing concern for Lee amid reports that he was the victim of elder abuse. —AFP



Talabat hits 100 million orders

Talabat recently hit a big milestone: the 100 millionth order! The order was placed by a customer in Kuwait, who received an enviable prize. Can you guess what it was? The customer who placed the 100 millionth order won free orders for life!

That’s right, that means the lucky winner can order on Talabat from any restaurant at any time at absolutely no cost, for the rest of her life! Talabat made the big announcement on air during Marina FM’s popular program Diwaniya. The winner was called on air and surprised with the prize she has received.

Launched in 2004 in Kuwait, Talabat has since transformed the food ordering business in the Middle East. Today, it operates across the GCC and Jordan. Talabat GO, Talabat’s own delivery fleet, was launched in 2017, offering live tracking and faster delivery. Celebrating the 100 millionth order in Kuwait was meaningful to Talabat, a homegrown brand born in Kuwait before expanding to other markets.

Special collection for a festive season

Babyshop launches an exquisite collection with over 500 styles exclusively for the festive month of Ramadan

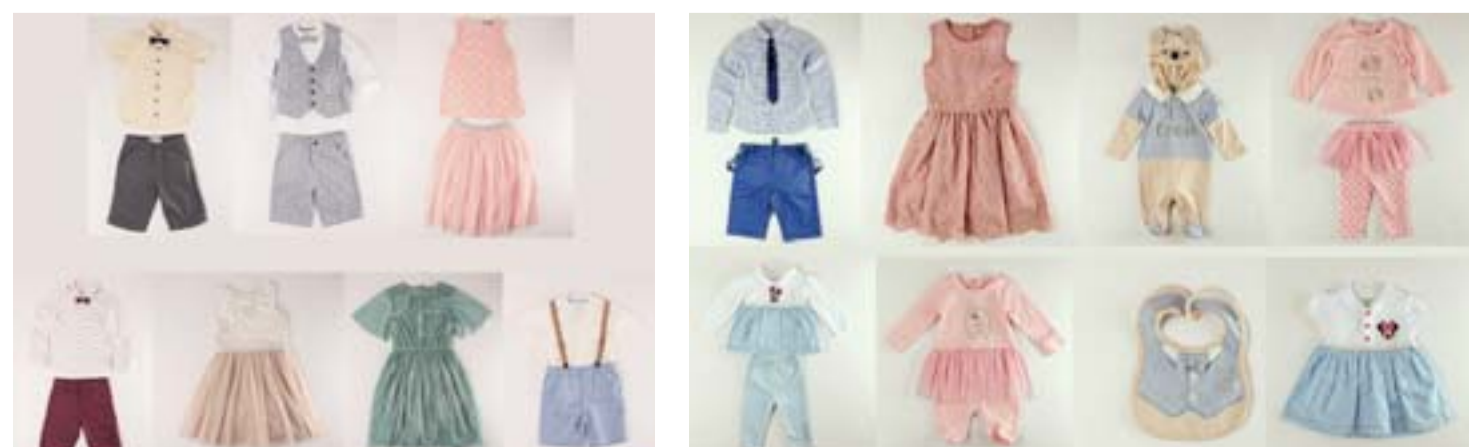
Babyshop, the one-stop destination and leading Omni-channel children’s retailer from Landmark Group introduces the latest line of festive clothing for the holy month. The exclusive range gives an extra touch of celebration and glamour to fashion apparel for children during this auspicious season. Ideal for both dressing up and gifting, it offers an array of patterns and colors for your munchkins to shine in at every occasion this Ramadan. Combining a variety of pleated skirts, polka dots, elegant floral mixes, colorful appliques and embellishments, the collection for girls focuses on the

frill and exciting fashion pieces as well as dressy outfits for special soirees. Colored in only the prettiest pastels, the collection represents a spectrum of dusky pinks, mint greens, lime yellows and warm oranges.

For the little gentlemen, the collection brings a variety of fun outfits flaunting a cute dapper look. With an assortment of chic chinos, cotton shorts, collared shirts accompanied by elegant bowties, your little men are bound to take center stage at all celebrations. The collection for boys focuses on summer elements combined with the classy look of striped or checkered shirts

and two-piece suits. The color palette concentrates on all types of blues along with hues of mustards and reds.

Mixtures of linen and soft cotton are the main fabrics for the warm season of celebration to provide comfort with style. The Ramadan collection is now available across all Centrepoin stores located at Al-Rai, Avenues, Salmiya, Fintas, Jahra, Fahaeel, Sulaihbikhat, Kuwait City, Khaitan and Hawally and online on www.babyshopstores.com



Lifestyle | Music & Movies

KOREAN SPY FILM SCREENS AT CANNES WHILE REAL-WORLD PLOT THICKENS

Set in 1990s, 'The Spy Gone North' is based on true story

The "Spy Gone North", the tale of a South Korean who infiltrated North Korea in the 1990s, is full of plot twists, but the movie might be outdone by the news, as efforts to resolve the nuclear stand-off face a real-life cliffhanger. The spy thriller was shot between January and July 2017, around the time when North Korean leader Kim Jong Un ordered a series of missile and nuclear tests, rattling neighboring nations and the new US administration. Since then, relations have thawed and the film premiered at the Cannes Film Festival days before the North and South were due to hold high-level talks to discuss the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.

But hours before the talks were due to start on Wednesday, the North called them off, complaining that the United States was pushing it for "Libya-style" denuclearization. Hollywood Reporter critic Deborah Young said: "... for sheer topicality, the film is hard to beat, and to find a full-blown entertainment yarn in Cannes ... that's partially set in newsworthy North Korea is rather astounding." The script is based on the personal notes of a South Korean spy, Park Suk-young, known as "Black

Venus", who posed as a businessman to infiltrate the North and get information on its nuclear program.

For the South Korean cast and crew of "The Spy Gone North", current events were never far from their minds. "When I read the script for the first time, I made a joke to the director, saying: is it possible to actually produce this movie?" said actor Lee Sung-min who plays an aide to the North's former leader, Kim Jong Il. "Since then, the relationship has improved, but if tensions had remained as they were before, this movie could have been a very problematic one," he told Reuters in an interview conducted before the cancellation of Wednesday's talks.

Hwang Jung-min, who plays Black Venus, said he hoped the film would help foreign audiences understand Korean history, and how there is no "fun" in and "no need" for political war games. Asked if he thought Kim would watch his movie, director Yoon Jong-bin replied: "It would be nice". The Cannes Film Festival runs to May 19. — Reuters



(From left) South Korean actor Hwang Jung-Min, South Korean director Yoon Jong-Bin, South Korean actor Lee Sung-Min and South Korean actor Ju Ji-Hoon pose as they arrive for the screening of the film "Gongjak (The Spy Gone North)" at the 71st edition of the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southern France. — AFP

Why Michael B Jordan thought twice about 'Fahrenheit 451'

Moral misgivings nearly made Michael B Jordan, the star of HBO's cinematic revival of Ray Bradbury's beloved 1953 novel "Fahrenheit 451," turn down the leading role of a book burning fireman who hunts down a gang of underground freethinkers. Jordan, one of Hollywood's growing class of top young black stars, said the role of Montag, a character who does his job with the severity and power of his flamethrower, weighed on him in the current socially charged U.S. debates about the use of police force, civil liberties and the treatment of minorities.



Michael B Jordan

"I was hesitant about taking the project due to the authoritarian nature of the character," the 31-year-old star of "Creed" and "Black Panther" told Reuters ahead of competition this year at the Cannes Film Festival, tells the story of Montag and his superior Captain Beatty, played by Michael Shannon, who work as "firemen" enforcing laws against literature, art and history.

"Taking on the role of being an oppressor - that was something I wasn't interested in doing at the moment," said Jordan, who helped produce the film. The story turns on Montag's sudden curiosity to what is inside all the literature many are willing to die for. Montag's crisis of conscience is what Jordan said assuaged his unease about the role. "The message of this movie was bigger than my reservations on this character," Jordan said. "This movie can do more good than my perspective on the police brutality and the climate that was going on in the real world. I felt art was more powerful at the moment." — Reuters

Grisogono Party



Dutch model Daphne Groeneveld poses during a photocall as she arrives to attend the de Grisogono Party on the sidelines of the 71st Cannes Film Festival, at the Villa des Oliviers in Cap d'Antibes, near Cannes, southeastern France. — AFP photos



US singer Nicole Scherzinger



US comedian Chris Tucker



Canadian model Winnie Harlow



Russian model Daria Strokous



French model Cindy Bruna



British designer Kimberley Garner

Soon screening near you? Blockchain tech premieres at Cannes

Blockchain may not be the most glamorous new star at the Cannes festival but experts touting the technology say it will rock the world of film even if the red carpet crowd doesn't know it yet. For the first time, key players in the emerging industry have set up shop at Cannes' bustling Film Market, a subterranean labyrinth where most of the world's movie trade takes place. In a series of workshops, six international start-ups are decoding the complex science behind blockchain and why it matters to both makers and consumers of movies.

"Blockchain is the future in film, there's no turning back," enthused Jonny Peters, the Australian founder of Gazecoin, one of the companies holding court at Cannes. Barely a decade old, the technology is an ultra-encrypted process used to handle peer-to-peer transactions, for now mostly of cryptocurrencies like bitcoin. But its partisans claim that blockchain has the potential to become cinema's biggest disruptor in decades. They want to break up what they see as an opaque financing monopoly controlled by a handful of big studios, while also tackling film piracy.

The revolution, if it comes, could be a "quantum shift" comparable to the advent of the internet, they say.

Cannes—which drew ire for banning red-carpet selfies and snubbing Netflix—insists its lens is firmly turned on the future, and that includes jumping on the fast-moving blockchain bandwagon. "Everyone is now talking about blockchain, and there's a general consensus that it will become important in a good number of areas including in cinema," Film Market director Jerome Paillard said.

Past 'can't be rewritten'

One main aim is to make it a lot easier for independent artists to draw funding. "Many filmmakers struggle to raise funds because investors don't feel like they know where their money is going," said Daniel Hyman, of Swiss company SingularDTV. Blockchain addresses issues like accountability and control because it "provides a window into how exactly money is spent", he told a packed audience in Cannes. Similar to a spreadsheet, a blockchain is a shared "ledger" or database, in which each entry is permanently recorded with an indelible time stamp. Crucially, there is no central operator who controls the blockchain. Every participant has a real-time, DNA-like record containing all the transactions.

This decentralized network, combined with a unique coding system, means the technology is extremely tamper-resistant. "The factor of immutability prevents the past from being rewritten," SingularDTV founder Arie Levy-Cohen Singular said. "That's unique and new and this is THE breakthrough that underpins the invention." The advantages are manifold, experts claim, from indisputable proof of intellectual property rights and protection of royalty payments to improved crowdfunding opportunities. "In cinema where the rights chain is often very complex, this could in the long run provide an alternative to big systems like France's public register of cinematography," said Paillard, the Film Market head.

Reformed pirates

For viewers, the changes could be equally important. The technology enables filmmakers to bypass big studios and distribute their content directly to audiences who can access it with digital tokens, aka cryptocurrencies. Next month will see the release of Hollywood's first blockchain film with "No Postage Necessary" by US director Jeremy Culver. The comedy about a luckless

hacker will be made available via peer-to-peer video network app Vevue, which runs on the world's most advanced blockchain. "Although this is a first for the industry, we hope it will signal a shift in the way content is shared and consumed," Culver said in a statement in March.

He banks on the technology to help "No Postage Necessary" go viral by offering Vevue reward tokens to movie reviewers. In this blockchained universe, pirates may find their hands tied, too. Not only is counterfeiting films much harder, but experts also hope that consumers will be encouraged to switch from illegally downloading to paying for movies—similar to what Spotify has done for the music industry. "Blockchain and piracy have an interesting relationship because many blockchain people are former pirates," Gazecoin's Peters told AFP. "They are therefore well-placed to provide solutions." — AFP



Safaa Al-Faqih, one of the few female Yemeni craftsmen working in the precious stones industry in Yemen, holds precious stones in the old city of the capital, Sanaa. — AFP photos



Safaa Al-Faqih holds rings containing precious stones.

In wartime Yemen, artisans keep up the shine on gemstones

Her fingers bleed from beneath the nail beds, but sitting at her workstation, filing Yemeni gemstones on a spinning wheel, Safaa Al-Faqih is at peace in a country for too long at war. In green canvas trainers and a black niqab, the young artisan—one of the few Yemeni women in her field—runs a blue Yemeni agate through a hot flame, turning it slowly with her bare hands as she fits it into a mold. “Every day, these stones tell me a different story,” Faqih told AFP. “I discover something new every day.” While the stone is still hot, she gathers her long black

home to the legendary Queen of Sheba, and it was there that she found her famed jewels and gold, which she later gifted to King Solomon in Jerusalem. Thousands of years later, war threatens to erase that history.

Yemeni agate

Yemen’s rich cultural scene is slowly being eroded by a brutal war, with the historic town of Zabid, the old city of Sanaa and the old walled city of Shibam, known as the “Manhattan of the Desert”, now on UNESCO’s World Heritage in Danger list. Yemeni agate—or “aqeeq” in the local dialect—is a trademark of the traditional silver jewelry the country is famed for, adorning rings, necklaces, women’s bracelets and, for men, curved daggers worn tucked into a belt. The traditional Yemeni men’s dagger, or jambiyya, has for decades been embellished with locally-quarried agate. The stone carries particular significance among Muslim communities, as the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is said to have worn a silver ring bearing the stone, which is hard, chemical-resistant and takes on different shades around the world.

Yemen also has a tradition of jewelry-making that dates back hundreds—some historians even say thousands—of years, joining both the country’s Muslim communities and the minority Jewish population, known for their craftsmanship. Until the war brought the country’s rich crafts industry to a halt, Sanaa in particular was famed for its silversmiths and embroidery artisans creating Yemen’s trademark shawls. In 2015, the country’s northern Huthi rebels—who today control the capital, Sanaa, unchallenged—drove the government of Abdrabbo Mansour Hadi south, prompting the intervention of a regional military coalition led by Saudi Arabia.

Just a quarter of artisans are still working in Sanaa’s old market, where the majority of gemstones were sold, and the men who previously dominated the industry have mostly gone in search of other work. Faqih has lost most of her clients, who are unable to afford gemstones in wartime, and now sells her wares to a few family members or neighbors.



Safaa Al-Faqih crafts a stone in the old city of the capital, Sanaa.

abaya and moves to a grinding wheel, where she runs her finger over the deep blue edges every second to feel for their smoothness.

The stone slowly morphs from an uneven sphere to a perfectly symmetrical emerald-cut agate that gleams in the light. “I love this craft,” the young, brown-eyed artisan said. “Sometimes my fingers are all cut, and sometimes I get sick. “But I love sitting among precious stones, I love the stones themselves. It’s a true passion for me.” That passion is part of a long love story between Yemen and precious stones. What is today modern Yemen was once



Safaa Al-Faqih (right) crafts a stone in the old city of the capital, Sanaa.

Love of the craft

It is in Sanaa that Faqih first learned her craft and where she continues to practice, creating pieces to meet whatever demand is left. The artisan credits her father for encouraging her to fight for a place in her field. In 2011, Faqih and a few of her peers pushed for women to be allowed into the male-dominated government vocational school. They succeeded, and joined the graduating class of that year. “There was some opposition, from men especially, that I do this job. My parents were supportive, though,” she said. “I went on because I love this. I love this craft. That’s the truth.”

The Yemen war has claimed nearly 10,000 lives since Saudi Arabia and its allies joined the government’s war against the Iran-backed Huthis. The conflict has triggered what the United Nations says is the world’s largest humanitarian crisis. Millions are trapped in a country at the brink of famine, as ports remain blockaded and the country’s main international airport is largely shut down. — AFP



Safaa Al-Faqih crafts a stone in the old city of the capital, Sanaa.

Tom Wolfe, author of ‘The Right Stuff’, dies at 88

Author Tom Wolfe, the acerbic chronicler of American society known for best-selling books “The Right Stuff” and “The Bonfire of the Vanities,” has died at the age of 88. Wolfe’s agent Lynn Nesbit said the writer died Monday in a Manhattan hospital, where he was being treated for an infection. “We are incredibly saddened to hear about the passing of Tom Wolfe,” his publisher Picador said. “He was one of the greats and his words will live on forever.” During a prolific career, Wolfe turned his flamboyant pen and keen eye to pop culture, the hippie movement, the art world, race relations and Wall Street. But he is perhaps best known for his non-fiction bestseller “The Right Stuff” about the US space program and the original Mercury astronauts.

The 1979 book was made into a Hollywood hit starring Sam Shepard and Ed Harris and made swashbuckling test pilot Chuck Yeager, the first man to break the sound barrier, a household name. Wolfe is credited with contributing the phrase “the right stuff” and another from the book, “pushing the envelope,” to the American lexicon. Among those paying tribute to Wolfe on Tuesday was American astronaut Scott Kelly. “He changed my life, and I am grateful I was able to thank him for the wildly unrealistic dream he gave me as an 18 year old boy,” Kelly tweeted. “He was the #RightStuff.”



In this file photo author Tom Wolfe attends the 2012 Trophee Des Arts Gala at The Plaza Hotel in New York City. — AFP

‘New Journalism’

Wolfe’s first book, “The Kandy-Kolored Tangerine-Flake Streamline Baby,” published in 1965, was born out of a collection of articles about the 1960s he wrote for Esquire and New York magazines. The book became a bestseller and placed Wolfe alongside other figures in the “New Journalism” movement such as Hunter S. Thompson, Gay Talese, Norman Mailer and Truman Capote. Instead of keeping a distance from their subjects, “New Journalism” practitioners often adopted an unconventional stylistic approach and perspective. In interviews over the years, Wolfe would fend off criticism of his liberal use of exclamation points.

Wolfe published two bestsellers in 1968 — “The Pump House Gang” and “The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test,” for which he spent time with the “Merry Pranksters,” a band of LSD-taking traveling hippies led by Ken Kesey, author of “One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest.” His 1970 book “Radical Chic and Mau-Mauing the Flak Catchers,” examined racial tensions in the United States and lampooned some of the good intentions of New York liberals in awkward detail. Wolfe’s 1975 book about the US art world, “The Painted Word,” outraged many artists with its depiction of an insular village.

Wolfe turned to writing novels in the mid-1980s, penning “The Bonfire of the Vanities,” a scathing takedown of greed and excess in New York. Like “The Right Stuff,” the book also contributed a phrase—in this case “master of the universe”—to the American vocabulary. “Bonfire” was made into a 1990 film starring Tom Hanks, Melanie Griffith and Bruce Willis.

Newspaper reporter beginnings

Another novel, “A Man in Full,” was published in 1998 and also made it to the New York Times bestseller list. More recently, Wolfe wrote “I Am Charlotte Simmons,” a 2004 novel about college life, and “Back to Blood,” a poorly received 2012 book set in Miami. Thomas Kennerly Wolfe was born on March 2, 1930 in Richmond, Virginia, where his father was the editor of The Southern Planter, an agricultural magazine. After earning his undergraduate degree from Washington and Lee University, Wolfe obtained a PhD in American studies from Yale University.

Wolfe then began a 10-year career as a newspaper reporter. He joined the Springfield Union in 1956 in Massachusetts before going on to work for The Washington Post and the New York Herald Tribune. In a 1991 interview with The Paris Review, Wolfe described his newspaper experience as invaluable training for his later fiction and non-fiction pursuits. “I wouldn’t give anything for the years I spent on newspapers because it forces you, it immerses you, in so many different sides of life,” he said. A dapper dresser, Wolfe was known for his trademark white suits, homburg hats and two-tone shoes, a style he would famously self-deprecatingly describe as “neopretentious.” Wolfe married Sheila Berger, the artistic director of Harper’s magazine, in 1978. They had two children. — AFP

Classifieds

Thursday, May 17, 2018

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Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY NIGHT: Fair with light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 10 - 35 km/h and some high clouds will appear with a chance for dust over some areas.

BY DAY: Hot with light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 08 - 28 km/h and some high clouds will appear.

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings		
STATION	MAX. REC.	MIN. EXP.	SFC. CHART 16/05/2018 1200 UTC		
KUWAIT CITY	37 °C	27 °C			
KUWAIT AIRPORT	37 °C	23 °C			
ABDALY	37 °C	22 °C			
BUBYAN	0- °C	00 °C			
JAHRA	38 °C	25 °C			
FAILAKA ISLAND	37 °C	25 °C			
SALMIYAH	33 °C	27 °C			
AHMADI	30 °C	28 °C			
NUWAISIB	34 °C	24 °C			
WAFRA	35 °C	22 °C			
SALMY	35 °C	21 °C			

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Thursday	05/17	Hot and some high clouds will appear	38 °C	23 °C	NW	08 - 28 km/h
Friday	05/18	Hot and some scattered clouds will appear	39 °C	24 °C	NW-VRB	08 - 26 km/h
Saturday	05/19	Hot and Partly cloudy	41 °C	25 °C	VRB-NW	08 - 28 km/h
Sunday	05/20	Hot and and some scattered clouds will appear	42 °C	26 °C	VRB-NW	06 - 26 km/h

TOMORROW PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	03:25
Sunrise	04:55
Zuhr	11:44
Asr	15:20
Sunset	18:34
Isha	20:01

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	36 °C
MIN. Temp.	22 °C
MAX. RH	53 %
MIN. RH	14 %
MAX. Wind	N 43 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

Hospitals

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

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khaldiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
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Sharq	22465401
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DIAL 161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Thursday 17/5/2018				Departure Flights on Thursday 17/5/2018			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
MSC	405	Sohag	00:05	THY	764	Istanbul	23:15
THY	772	Istanbul	00:15	WAN	136	Doha	23:15
SAI	441	Lahore	00:15	MSR	2614	Cairo	23:30
DLH	625	Dammam	00:50	FDB	072	Dubai	23:35
KAC	504	Beirut	00:50	JZR	241	Amman	23:40
KAC	102	London	00:50	AIC	976	Goa/Chennai	00:05
JZR	539	Cairo	01:00	JAI	573	Mumbai	00:30
PGT	858	Istanbul	01:15	FDB	073	Dubai	00:30
RJA	642	Amman	01:35	JZR	528	Asyut	01:05
UAE	853	Dubai	01:40	MSC	406	Sohag	01:05
KLM	446	Bahrain	01:45	SAI	442	Lahore	01:15
KKK	1268	Istanbul	02:00	KAC	417	Manila	01:45
AXB	395	Kozhikode	02:00	THY	773	Istanbul	01:45
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:15	DLH	625	Frankfurt	01:50
QTR	1086	Doha	02:30	JZR	502	Luxor	01:55
JZR	553	Alexandria	02:50	KAC	677	Dubai	02:00
JZR	267	Beirut	02:55	PGT	859	Istanbul	02:45
JZR	607	Kochi	02:55	THY	765	Istanbul	02:50
MSC	403	Asyut	03:05	AXB	396	Kozhikode	02:55
RBG	215	Sohag	03:05	KKK	1269	Istanbul	02:55
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05	KLM	446	Amsterdam	03:10
MSR	606	Luxor	03:05	UAE	854	Dubai	03:30
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05	JZR	142	Doha	03:45
KAC	418	Manila	03:05	RBG	216	Sohag	03:45
KAC	382	Delhi	03:10	OMA	644	Muscat	04:05
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	JZR	607	Luxor	04:05
QTR	1076	Doha	03:30	ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:05
LMU	510	Cairo	04:00	MSC	404	Asyut	04:05
JAI	572	Mumbai	04:00	QTR	1087	Doha	04:15
KAC	544	Cairo	04:25	MSR	613	Cairo	04:15
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:30	LMU	511	Cairo	05:00
JZR	609	Hyderabad	04:30	JAI	571	Mumbai	05:05
KAC	284	Dhaka	04:50	QTR	1077	Doha	05:15
PAL	668	Manila	05:00	KAC	303	Mumbai	05:35
FDB	069	Dubai	05:05	FDB	070	Dubai	06:00
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:10	JZR	750	Madinah	06:15
THY	770	Istanbul	05:15	THY	771	Istanbul	06:30
KAC	344	Chennai	05:30	GFA	212	Bahrain	06:50
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:40	RJA	643	Amman	07:00
JZR	561	Sohag	05:55	JZR	164	Dubai	07:15
KAC	362	Colombo	06:00	KAC	356	Mashhad	07:15
BAW	157	London	06:10	JZR	167	Paris	07:20
WAN	338	Alexandria	06:25	KAC	413	Bangkok	07:30
QTR	8511	Doha	06:35	PAL	669	Manila	07:40
KAC	206	Islamabad	06:40	JZR	238	Amman	07:50
KAC	678	Dubai	06:45	JZR	778	Jeddah	08:00
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:00	KAC	501	Beirut	08:00
JZR	605	Ahmedabad	07:05	QTR	8512	Doha	08:05
JZR	143	Doha	07:20	BAW	156	London	08:20
JZR	529	Asyut	07:30	FDB	054	Dubai	08:35
KAC	354	Bengaluru	07:45	KAC	791	Madinah	09:00
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	KAC	117	Bahrain	09:00
JZR	503	Luxor	07:50	KAC	787	New York	09:05
KAC	384	Delhi	08:05	KAC	671	Dubai	09:15
KAC	358	Kochi	08:05	WAN	133	Doha	09:30
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25	IRA	672	Ahwaz	09:35
WAN	352	Luxor	08:30	KAC	561	Amman	09:40
IRA	673	Ahwaz	08:35	ABY	126	Sharjah	09:40
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:55	KAC	773	Riyadh	09:45
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	JZR	534	Cairo	09:45
IRA	667	Esfahan	09:05	UAE	856	Dubai	09:50
QTR	1070	Doha	09:30	KAC	482	Istanbul	09:55
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	KAC	101	London	10:00
IAW	157	Al Najaf	10:00	KAC	515	Tehran	10:00
SYR	341	Damascus	10:00	KAC	541	Cairo	10:00
SVA	512	Riyadh	10:00	ETD	302	Abu Dhabi	10:00
JZR	751	Madinah	10:30	KAC	797	Taif	10:05
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	IRA	668	Mashhad	10:05
MEA	404	Beirut	10:55	KAC	617	Doha	10:10
QTR	1074	Doha	11:00	WAN	873	Istanbul	10:15
WAN	114	Bahrain	11:10	KAC	155	Istanbul	10:25
JZR	165	Dubai	11:45	QTR	1071	Doha	10:40
KAC	614	Bahrain	12:20	FDB	056	Dubai	10:40
MSC	411	Asyut	12:30	SGL	4101	QA	11:00
SAW	701	Damascus	12:30	SVA	513	Riyadh	11:00
THY	766	Istanbul	12:45	SYR	342	Damascus	11:00
UAE	871	Dubai	12:45	IAW	158	Al Najaf	11:00
WAN	542	KTM	12:50	JZR	788	Bahrain	11:20
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00	GFA	214	Bahrain	11:35
JZR	239	Amman	13:00	MEA	405	Beirut	11:55
JZR	357	Mashhad	13:05	JZR	776	Jeddah	12:05
AXB	393	Kozhikode	13:10	WAN	975	Baku	12:10
WAN	134	Doha	13:20	JAI	574	Mumbai	23:00

News

Malaysia's Anwar walks free after a royal pardon

KUALA LUMPUR: Reformist Anwar Ibrahim declared a "new dawn for Malaysia" yesterday after his release from prison paved the way for a return to national politics as presumptive successor to Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad following a stunning election upset. In scenes that captivated Malaysians, the charismatic 70-year-old returned to the national spotlight after the country's king quashed a widely criticized sodomy conviction that had put Anwar behind bars for three years.

To ecstatic cries of "Reformasi!" (Reform) - Anwar's rallying cry-he took selfies with his former prison guards and vowed before hundreds of journalists and supporters to back efforts to take the country in a new direction. Anwar said he had forgiven Mahathir, 92, who had him imprisoned two decades ago but has become his unlikely ally. "Now there is a new dawn for Malaysia," said Anwar, flanked by his wife Wan Azizah Wan Ismail and other members of his political party.

"The entire spectrum of Malaysians, regardless of race or religion, have stood by the principles of democracy and freedom. They demand change." Anwar has cast a long shadow over Malaysian politics for decades. He enjoyed a meteoric rise in the now-ousted Barisan Nasional (BN) coalition before a spectacular falling out with his then-boss Mahathir in 1998 that saw Anwar thrown in jail for sodomy and abuse of power. Upon his release in 2004, he joined and revitalized the opposition coalition that finally

ousted BN last week.

Anwar's release yesterday from his second jail term for an unrelated sodomy conviction sets up a tantalizing reunion with his nemesis-turned-ally Mahathir. Mahathir has said he expects to run the government for one to two years but has signaled that the reins would be turned over to Anwar eventually.

Anwar said his history with Mahathir was water under the bridge, as they shared the same goals of reforming the government and cleaning up a massive corruption scandal involving former prime minister Najib Razak. "Bury the hatchet? It's been a long time already," Anwar said when asked about Mahathir. "I have forgiven him." Anwar indicated that he had no immediate plans to get deeply involved in politics, but would support Mahathir's governing efforts as a "private citizen". Anwar's release caps a remarkable reversal of fortune made possible by the BN's unexpected electoral drubbing a week ago.

The former autocrat Mahathir, who headed BN for 22 years until 2003, came out of retirement to lead the separate opposition to a surprise victory. Many had expected a BN win thanks to its tight hold over the media, government, police and electoral apparatus of the multicultural Muslim-majority nation. But the result laid bare the depth of disgust with former leader Najib, who is implicated in a massive scandal in which billions of dollars were plundered from the state investment fund IMDB he established. Mahathir has barred Najib from leaving the country pending investigations.

The BN had ruled since independence in 1957. Anwar's release adds to a dizzying sense of change and is likely to fuel expectations for an entirely new national direction. Xavier Jayakumar, a member of parliament with Anwar's Parti Keadilan Rakyat, called it "a momentous day for all of Malaysia". — AFP

Israeli envoy leaves Turkey...

Continued from Page 1

Turkey has expressed outrage over the killing by Israeli forces on Monday of 60 Palestinians during protests and clashes on the Gaza border and also blamed tensions on the US decision to move its embassy for Israel to Jerusalem from Tel Aviv.

Ankara also withdrew its ambassador to Washington Serdar Kilic for consultations after the bloodshed, which came on the same day the embassy move took place. Kilic arrived back in Ankara yesterday afternoon, state media said. Erdogan will tomorrow host an emergency summit meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in Istanbul which he has said will send a "strong message to the world" on the whole issue.

The Turkish leader has engaged in intense telephone diplomacy to drum up support for the summit, speaking to leaders including Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, Saudi King Salman, Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas and Jordan's King Abdullah. Yet it remains to be seen which leaders will be present at the summit which will immediately be followed by a giant

rally called by Erdogan in Istanbul to support the Palestinian cause. Deputy Prime Minister Recep Akdag said Turkey wanted to evacuate wounded Palestinians from Gaza for treatment but had yet to receive the necessary permissions from Egypt or Israel.

Erdogan, who regards himself as a champion of the Palestinian cause, this week has accused Israel of "genocide" and told Netanyahu he is leading an "apartheid state" while having the "blood of Palestinians" on his hands. Netanyahu described Erdogan as "an expert on terror and slaughter" as a leading supporter of Palestinian Islamist group Hamas. Erdogan hit back, saying Hamas is a "resistance movement". Meanwhile Netanyahu's son Yair posted on his personal Instagram account the slogan "F...k Turkey" with the letter "c" turned into the crescent on the Turkish flag, Israeli media including Haaretz reported.

The Netanyahu family spokesman put out a statement saying: "Yair Netanyahu is a private person, and his Instagram page is also private." Meanwhile the Turkish presidency said that on a visit to London on Tuesday Erdogan met a delegation of ultra-orthodox Jews from anti-Zionist group Neturei Karta, a very small splinter group on the margins of ultra-Orthodox Jewry. They oppose the existence of a Jewish state before the coming of the Messiah. They had previously met with former Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who became notorious for his verbal diatribes against Israel. — AFP

Guatemala opens...

Continued from Page 1

United States opened its embassy in Jerusalem.

The Israeli premier spoke of Guatemala's early recognition of the state of Israel after its creation in 1948 and said he would visit the country of 16 million on his next visit to Latin America. "I look forward to assessing with you the practical ways... that we can advance this friendship and this alliance," Netanyahu said. "But today, I just want to say how delighted we are to have you." Morales called it a "transcendental moment for future generations" who will "remember that friendly countries took courageous decisions in favor of Israel and we do this because you have a special place in our hearts."

The US embassy move on Monday was accompanied by mass protests and clashes along the Gaza border that saw Israeli forces kill some 60 Palestinians. Israel has faced international criticism over its use of live fire. It says its actions are necessary to defend the border and stop mass infiltrations from the Palestinian enclave, which is run by Islamist movement Hamas. On Monday, tens of thousands had gathered near the border while smaller numbers of stone-throwing Palestinians approached the fence and sought to break through, with Israeli snipers positioned on the other side.

Most of those killed were shot by Israeli snipers, the Gazan health ministry said, in the bloodiest day in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict since a 2014 Gaza war. Israel's army said "it appears that at least 24" of those killed were militants, mainly from Hamas and Islamic Jihad. It said explosive devices and firebombs were used, while Israeli soldiers were also shot at. But there were numerous calls for an independent investigation into the deaths, with Britain, Germany, Switzerland and Belgium among those supporting such action.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and the European Union have previously called for an independent probe, with 116 Palestinians killed by Israeli forces since a campaign of protests on the Gaza-Israel border was launched on March 30. Morales's decision to move Guatemala's embassy has been seen as partly influenced by his evangelical religious beliefs. Evangelicals want to see Jews rebuild their temple in Jerusalem, which according to their beliefs would facilitate the second coming of Christ. The move is also seen by some as a gesture to elicit US support at a time when Morales stands accused by Guatemalan prosecutors of accepting illegal campaign contributions.

Senior Palestinian official Saeb Erekat made reference to those allegations in a scathing attack yesterday. "The Guatemalan government has chosen to stand on the wrong side of history, to side with violations of international law and human rights, and to take a hostile step against the Palestinian people and the Arab world," he wrote in a statement.

"We are not surprised that a president that has objected to UN investigations into corruption and abuses of power has decided to further violate international resolutions." Former Guatemalan foreign minister Gabriel Orellana has said Morales's embassy move has the effect of banishing his country "to the fringes of the United Nations". Jerusalem's status is perhaps the thorniest issue in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the US embassy relocation infuriated the Palestinians.

The Palestinian Authority said yesterday it was recalling its envoys to Romania, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Austria after their ambassadors attended an Israeli reception marking the US embassy move. On Tuesday Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas withdrew his top representative to the United States. Israel occupied the West Bank and east Jerusalem in 1967 and later annexed east Jerusalem in a move never recognized by the international community. Israel considers the entire city its capital, while the Palestinians see east Jerusalem as the capital of their future state. — AFP

Trump-Kim summit ...

Continued from Page 1

denuclearization of the Korean peninsula and made clear on several occasions that precondition for denuclearization is to put an end to anti-DPRK hostile policy and nuclear threats and blackmail of the United States," Kim said.

North Korea has always defended its nuclear and missile programs as a necessary deterrent against perceived aggression by the United States, which keeps 28,500 troops in South Korea, a legacy of the 1950-53 Korean War. North Korea has long said it is open to eventually giving up its nuclear arsenal if the United States withdraws its troops from South Korea and ends its "nuclear umbrella" security alliance with Seoul, though South Korean officials have said the North may be willing to compromise.

The United States has insisted on complete, verifiable, and irreversible dismantling of North Korea's nuclear weapons and the facilities needed to build the weapons as soon as possible. Asian stock markets dipped after North Korea called off the talks with the South. Cancellation of the Singapore summit could see tension flare again even as investors worry about China-US trade friction. "This will weigh on the Korean reconstruction beneficiaries that have had a strong run on peace and even reunification hopes recently," JPMorgan analysts wrote in a note.

South Korean Foreign Minister Kang Kyung-hwa spoke to Pompeo by telephone and discussed North Korea's postponement of the talks with the South, the foreign ministry said in a statement. Pompeo told Kang Washington would continue to make preparations for the US-North Korea summit, bearing in mind the recent action by North Korea, it said. Kim Kye Gwan's statement came only hours after North Korea denounced the US-South Korean military exercises as a provocation and pulled out of the talks with the South.

Earlier KCNA denounced the "Max Thunder" air combat drills, which it said involved US stealth fighters, B-52 bombers and "nuclear assets". American stealth F-22 fighters were spotted in South Korea earlier in May, but a spokesman for the US military command in South Korea said no B-52s were scheduled to take part in the drills. Neither B-52s or B-1B bombers were present at last year's Max Thunder drills, according to a South Korean defense ministry official. The drills

would go on as planned and were not aimed at any third party, the ministry said.

Cancellation of the first meeting between a serving US president and a North Korean leader, would deal a major blow to what would be the biggest diplomatic achievement of Trump's presidency. Trump has raised expectations for success even as many analysts have been skeptical about the chances of bridging the gap due to questions about North Korea's willingness to give up a nuclear arsenal that it says can hit the United States.

Kim Kye Gwan derided Bolton's suggestion that discussions with North Korea should be similar to those that led to components of Libya's nuclear program being shipped to the United States in 2004. "(The) World knows too well that our country is neither Libya nor Iraq which have met miserable fate," Kim said. "It is absolutely absurd to dare compare the DPRK, a nuclear weapon state, to Libya which had been at the initial stage of nuclear development."

The outburst could be aimed at testing Trump's willingness to make concessions ahead of the summit, which is to be preceded by a visit to Washington next week by South Korean President Moon Jae-in. A US government expert on North Korea said Kim Jong Un may also be trying to gauge whether Trump is willing to walk away from the meeting. Joshua Pollack, of the Middlebury Institute of International Studies in California, said Pyongyang appeared irritated by the US administration's vow to maintain sanctions in spite of North Korean concessions.

"The North Koreans want a change in tone from the US, and at least so far, they're not hearing one," he said. The doubt thrown over the summit comes a week after Trump abandoned the 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and six world powers, under which Tehran curbed its nuclear program in exchange for the lifting of most international sanctions. China said yesterday all parties "should show goodwill and avoid mutual provocation" to create a conducive atmosphere for denuclearization on the Korean peninsula.

Chinese President Xi Jinping, in comments to a visiting North Korean delegation, said China supported North Korea's efforts to develop its economy, improve relations with the South and its dialogue with the United States, the official Xinhua news agency reported. The North-South talks had been due to focus on plans to implement a declaration that emerged from an inter-Korea summit last month, including promises to formally end the Korean War and pursue "complete denuclearization". South Korea described the North's decision as "regrettable". — Reuters

National Assembly approves capital...

Continued from Page 1

of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh said that the Bureau has rejected some 40 projects of which the Cabinet approved nine. MP Riyadh Al-Adasani held the previous Assembly responsible for allowing the government to raise

the price of petrol but members of that Assembly said the decision was taken during summer recess.

Also during the debate, MP Safa Al-Hashem clashed with MPs Hamdan Al-Azemi and Abdulkarim Al-Kundari after she criticized the prime minister over government policies. The two lawmakers blamed Hashem for criticizing the premier now but did not sign the non-cooperation motion against him following his grilling two weeks ago. MP Khalil Al-Saleh criticized that out of the capital spending of KD 3.2 billion, health projects account for just 10 percent while education projects account for only two percent.

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Sports

Chicago Cubs rally in ninth inning to stun Atlanta Braves

Belts splash hit homer fuels Giants' big inning

ATLANTA: Ben Zobrist singled in the go-ahead run to cap a two-run, ninth-inning rally and help the Chicago Cubs score a 3-2, come-from-behind win over host Atlanta on Tuesday, snapping the Braves' three-game winning streak. The Cubs trailed 2-1 entering the ninth but came back to tie the game against Atlanta closer Aroldys Vizcaino. Chicago's Albert Almora Jr. and Addison Russell put together back-to-back doubles to tie the game 2-2, then Zobrist lined an RBI single to center field with two outs to plate the go-ahead run. Brandon Morrow pitched a scoreless ninth to earn his 10th save in 11 tries. The win went to Carl Edwards Jr. (2-0), who surrendered a long solo home run to Atlanta rookie Ronald Acuna Jr. that gave the Braves a 2-1 lead in the eighth.

AS'S, RED SOX 3

Matt Chapman and Mark Canha laced two-run doubles, helping visiting Oakland outlast Boston. Daniel Mengden (3-4) pitched six strong innings to clinch the Athletics' second consecutive series win over the Red Sox. Oakland wasted no time jumping on Red Sox starter Eduardo Rodriguez (3-1), with Marcus Semien and Chad Pinder opening the first inning with singles. Two outs later, Chapman smacked his double to right field, chasing Semien and Pinder home and giving Mengden an early 2-0 lead. Stephen Piscotty, batting for the first time since missing four games while on the bereavement list due to his mother's death, made it 3-0 in the second inning with his third home run of the season.



Minnesota ends scoring drought

ASTROS 5, ANGELS 3
Jose Altuve's three-run, eighth-inning double rallied Houston to a win over Los Angeles in Anaheim, Calif. The reigning American League MVP hooked a slider from Angels reliever Jose Alvarez into the left field corner, driving in Josh Reddick, Yuli Gurriel and Alex Bregman to erase a 3-1 deficit and spoil a stellar performance by Angels starter Jaime Barria. The Los Angeles right-hander gave up one run and four hits (all singles) in seven innings, leaving with a 3-1 lead. He struck out seven and did not walk a batter. Collin McHugh (2-1) tossed two shutout innings for the win, and Ken Giles pitched a scoreless ninth for his sixth save.

GIANTS 5, REDS 3

Brandon Belt ignited a four-run fourth inning with a leadoff home run, and five relievers combined for five innings of shutout ball, sealing a San Francisco victory over visiting Cincinnati. Pierce Johnson, Will Smith, Sam Dyson, Tony Watson and Hunter Strickland picked up for Giants starter Ty Blach in the fifth inning, protecting a narrow lead the rest of the way en route to San Francisco's second straight win over the visiting Reds. Johnson (2-1), who pitched a 1-2-3 fifth inning immediately after the Giants had taken a 4-3 lead, was credited with the win. Strickland got his ninth save with a hitless ninth. The fiveosome combined to strike out eight while allowing just two hits.

PADRES 4, ROCKIES 0

Jordan Lyles made the second-longest bid for a per-

fect game in Padres history, and a pair of two-run homers by Eric Hosmer and Christian Villanueva provided all the offense needed by San Diego in a victory over visiting Colorado. Trevor Story's one-out single to left in the eighth ended Lyles' bid for the first no-hitter in Padres history as well as the perfect game. The Padres are the only major league team without a no-hitter-a record that spans 7,858 games since the franchise's birth in 1969 as an expansion team. After Story singled, Lyles (1-1) walked Pat Valaika before leaving the field to a standing ovation.

MARINERS 9, RANGERS 8 (11 INNINGS)

Guillermo Heredia's line-drive single to left field with one out in the 11th inning scored Ryon Healy with the winning run as Seattle defeated visiting Texas. With one out, Healy singled on a popup into right field. David Freitas followed with an infield single between third and short, with Healy advancing to second base. Heredia got the winning hit on a 2-2 pitch from Alex Claudio (1-2), the sixth Rangers pitcher. Erik Goeddel (2-0), the seventh Seattle pitcher, worked two scoreless innings for the victory. The back-and-forth game saw the Mariners blow a 6-3 lead before rallying in the eighth inning, only see the Rangers tie it again in the ninth.

TWINS 4, CARDINALS 1

Minnesota ended a scoring drought and a short losing streak, beating visiting St. Louis as Twins starter Jose Berrios proved sharp over 7 1/3 innings. Minnesota had gone 16 innings without scoring, including getting shut out 1-0 Monday by the Seattle Mariners in a makeup game. But trailing 1-0 to the Cardinals, they tied it in the sixth and went ahead in the seventh to end a two-game skid. Berrios (4-4) gave up only two hits and a run and struck out 10 — nine swinging—and walked one. It also marked the third time this season that the Twins defeated the Cardinals in interleague play. The Twins swept two games in St. Louis earlier this month, outscoring the Cardinals 13-1.

PIRATES 7, WHITE SOX 0

Josh Bell drove in three runs with two doubles, and Trevor Williams combined with two Pittsburgh Pirates relievers to shut down visiting Chicago, not needing another run after a leadoff homer from Adam Frazier. Williams (5-2) pitched seven innings, allowing six hits, striking out six and walking none. Kyle Crick pitched the eighth, Richard Rodriguez the ninth. The Pirates lead the major leagues with seven shutouts. Chicago starter Reynaldo Lopez (0-3) gave up six runs and seven hits in two innings, with two walks and no strikeouts.

MARLINS 4, DODGERS 2

J.T. Realmuto went 3-for-4 with an RBI to lead Miami over visiting Los Angeles, raising his batting average to .322 as he continues to make his case to be an All-Star. Yasiel Puig hit a home run—his second of the season and second in the past two games—to lead the Dodgers. Puig also threw out a runner at third and walked twice. Miami starter Wei-Yin Chen, who was in line for a win with a 2-0 lead, couldn't make it through



ANAHEIM: Shohei Ohtani #17 of the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim strikes out during the first inning of a game against the Houston Astros at Angel Stadium on Tuesday in Anaheim, California. — AFP

the fifth inning. He went 4 1/3 and allowed three hits, three walks and no runs while striking out three. Marlins reliever Nick Wittgren (2-0), who pitched 1 2/3 perfect innings, earned the win.

METS 12, BLUE JAYS 2

Juan Lagares had four hits and three RBIs as New York routed visiting Toronto, winning for the ninth time in their past 26 games. The Blue Jays took their third consecutive loss and fell for the 16th time in the past 25 games. Toronto carried a 2-1 lead into the fourth inning thanks to a two-run single in the third by Yangervis Solarte. However, the Mets scored five runs in the fourth before putting the game away with three more runs in the fifth. Noah Syndergaard (3-1), who knocked in the Mets' first run with a second-inning double, tied the game with a fourth-inning sacrifice fly. Amed Rosario followed with an RBI double. Two batters later, Lagares chased Jaime Garcia (2-3) with a two-out, two-run single.

DIAMONDBACKS 2, BREWERS 1

Daniel Descalso singled home the tiebreaking run with two outs in the eighth inning, and Arizona broke a six-game losing streak with a victory over visiting Milwaukee. Jeff Mathis walked to open the eighth inning off Taylor Williams (0-1), and pinch runner Jarrod Dyson took second on a sacrifice bunt. Boone Logan entered and got David Peralta to ground out before walking Chris Owings to bring up Descalso, who started as the No. 3 hitter in the lineup for the first time in his career. Travis Shaw drove in a run with one of three doubles for the Brewers, who had won four of five. Diamondbacks setup man Archie Bradley (1-1) pitched a 1-2-3 eighth inning, striking out two, and Brad Boxberger pitched around a one-out error in the ninth

for his 12th save in 13 opportunities.

RAYS 6, ROYALS 5

Joey Wendle delivered a go-ahead single with two outs in the ninth inning as visiting Tampa Bay held off Kansas City. The Rays' C.J. Cron had two hits, including a two-run home run two batters into the game. Whit Merrifield had two hits and drove in three runs for the Royals, giving him a multi-hit game on consecutive nights. Jonny Venters (1-0) recorded two outs to earn the victory, and Alex Colome pitched the ninth inning for his eighth save. Kelvin Herrera (1-1) gave up one run on three hits over one inning to take the loss.

TIGERS 9, INDIANS 8

JaCoby Jones and John Hicks combined for four hits, four runs and four RBIs, and Detroit rallied from a pair of four-run deficits to defeat visiting Cleveland. Hicks had a leadoff single and drew a bases-loaded walk during a five-run uprising in the seventh inning. Jones, who homered in the first inning, contributed a run-scoring double during the big inning. James McCann had two hits, a run and an RBI. Louis Coleman (1-0) tossed an inning of scoreless relief to get the victory. Shane Greene pitched the ninth for his ninth save. Andrew Miller (1-2) took the loss, getting just one out while allowing two runs on two hits and three walks in the seventh.

YANKEES 3, NATIONALS 3 (SUSPENDED IN SIXTH)

New York and host Washington had their game suspended due to rain tied at 3-3 going into the bottom of the sixth and will resume Wednesday at 5:05 p.m. EDT. The teams will then play a regularly scheduled game beginning at 7:05 p.m. — Reuters

Russia, biathlon saga head agenda at WADA meeting

MONTREAL: The fallout from the Russia doping scandal and a corruption crisis in biathlon will dominate the agenda as World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) chiefs gather in Montreal this week. The global anti-doping watchdog's executive committee met yesterday to discuss the status of Russia's national anti-doping agency RUSADA before presenting an update to WADA's 38-member Foundation Board today. RUSADA has been at the centre of a standoff between WADA and Russia ever since the body's suspension in November 2015 following revelations of a vast doping scandal involving Moscow's main drug-testing laboratory. WADA is adamant that RUSADA will continue to be ruled non-compliant until Russia accepts the findings of its bombshell McLaren report and also allows WADA inspectors into the Moscow testing laboratory. WADA has set out a roadmap detailing the path RUSADA must take to regain "compliant" status and reinstate the ranks of recognised testing authorities. The agency has already been allowed to resume doping controls under the supervision of WADA-appointed monitors and the UK Anti-Doping Agency. RUSADA's new director-general, Yuri Ganus, meanwhile, has repeatedly vowed to restore trust in the tarnished testing agency.

However, in the eyes of WADA,

RUSADA has still failed to meet two key conditions necessary for it regain its full compliant status, namely granting access to the Moscow laboratory and samples that may have been stored there, as well as fully accepting the findings of the McLaren report. WADA President Craig Reedie told a symposium in Lausanne in March that Russia failed to respond to four letters requesting a joint inspection of their Moscow laboratory.

Russia's authorities have consistently denied allegations of a state-sponsored doping scheme, a key finding of the McLaren report. The WADA impasse takes on added significance with the football World Cup due to kick off in Russia in just under a month's time. Russia's non-compliance has already led to deadlock in athletics. The International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) says it will not lift its ban on Russian track and field athletes until WADA declares Russia in compliance with all of its regulations.

That hardline stance saw Russian track and field athletes barred from the 2016 Olympics and 2017 World Championships in London, with the exception of a handful of exempted Russian athletes competing under a neutral banner. Meanwhile, Russia has been forced onto the defensive in another scandal involving the sport of biathlon.

An internal WADA report alleged that Russia had attempted to buy the silence of International Biathlon Union chiefs to ensure that no proceedings would be opened against Russian athletes with suspicious biological passports. "The main goal of the corruption is to protect doped Russian athletes," concluded the WADA report dated late 2017.

IBU President Anders Besseberg—himself a member of the WADA Foundation Board—was forced to resign following the revelations. —AFP

KSSC honours outstanding Kuwait shooters

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Kuwait Shooting Sport Club (KSSC) honored its outstanding players in the presence of President of Arab and Kuwait Shooting Federations Eng Duaij Al-Otaibi, Deputy Chairman of KSSC Mohammad Mustafa Karam, Secretary General of Arab and Kuwait Shooting Federations Obaid Munahi Al-Osaimi, KSSC treasurer Essa Ahmad Al-Butti Bataiban, Assistant Secretary Eng Mohammad Misfer Al-Ghurba, KSSC board members, Public Works Minister, State Minister for Municipal Affairs Eng Hussam Abdallah Al-Roumi, and Dr Nidhal Omar Al-Sayed Asem, along with the shooters and a large number of shooting fans.

The honoring was for shooters who participated in several international events most notably IHH the Amir Cup tournament that was held in Todi, Italy from April 3-4, World Cup tournament in South Korea from April 20-30 and the Arab Shotgun Tournament held in Morocco April 3-11.

Eng Duaij Al-Otaibi said the club is proud of this outstanding group of shooters who insisted on having Kuwait flag flying high in international arenas while competing with Olympic and world champions. He said this honoring comes from the board of directors as an appreciation of their efforts in preparations, training and participating in the tournaments, and making achievements that we proudly dedicate to IHH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, who always gives advice while continually supporting shooting and shooters, HHH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-



Sabah, HHH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, government and people. Eng Al-Otaibi thanked Information Minister, State Minister for Youth Affairs Mohammad Al-Jabri for his support, and Director General of Public Authority for Sports Dr Humoud Fulaiteh Al-Shimari for removing all obstacles to enable shooters make their achievements in the name of Kuwait.

Engineer Duaij Al-Otaibi expressed his appreciation for the continued support from

President of Arab and Kuwait Civil Aviation Directorates Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah, the Godfather of Kuwait shooting, Secretary General of Arab and Kuwait Shooting Federations Obaid Al-Osaimi lauded the results shooters achieved, adding that KSSC board of directors lays down the plans to enable shooters make more achievements in the name of our beloved country, adding that KSSC is working on qualifying "8" shooters for Tokyo 2020 Olympics.

Sports

Pliskova smashes umpire's chair after losing Rome match

Thiem crashes in Rome, Halep demolishes Osaka

ROME: Former world number one Karolina Pliskova smashed the umpire's chair in frustration after she lost to Greece's Maria Sakkari in the second round of the WTA Italian Open yesterday. In the third set with the sixth seeded Czech serving 6-3, 3-6, 5-5 (30/30) she had an overhead shot incorrectly ruled out and both the line judge and the umpire said they could not find the mark.

After vehemently arguing with the umpire to no avail Pliskova was furious when 42nd-ranked Sakkari was given the advantage and break point at a crucial stage of the match. The Czech went on to lose that game and the match 3-6, 6-3, 7-5 in two hours 21 minutes.

She furiously repeatedly struck the umpire's chair with her racket. For Sakkari it was the first top five win of her career and she will face the winner of the second-round match between 11th seed Angelique Kerber of Germany and Romania's Irina-Camelia Begu.

Austrian Dominic Thiem, last week's Madrid finalist, crashed at the first hurdle at the ATP and WTA Italian Open Tuesday as top women's seed Simona Halep demolished Japan's Naomi Osaka. Sixth seed Thiem—who inflicted the first clay-court defeat in almost a year on Rafael Nadal last week in Madrid—smashed his racket in fury on his way to losing to Italy's Fabio Fognini 6-4, 1-6, 6-3 in just over two hours.

Fognini, ranked 21, kept his nerve while Thiem took out his frustration on his racket after handing his rival three match points, the Italian then sealing his first win in three meetings with the Austrian. Fognini, 30, next plays Germany's Peter Gojowczyk before a possible quarter-final showdown with top seed Nadal.

"It was an intense fight. He was pumped today and playing at home and coming off a good win over (Gael) Monfils," said Thiem. "If you compare it to Madrid

there were a lot of close matches I could have lost there too. I did have chances."

Earlier, Halep powered her way to a 6-1, 6-0 win in just under an hour on the clay of the Italcico Foro to claim her fourth win over 21st-ranked Osaka in five meetings.

"It was one of those helpless feeling," conceded Osaka who could be heard saying "I want to cry" courtside. The match looked set to be a battle after Halep needed to save four break points in her opening service game for 1-1 but then reeled off 12 in a row to avenge her Indian Wells loss. "I like to slide on the clay and today was easy for me. I'm more relaxed than in Madrid," said Halep. Osaka, 20, failed to convert any of her six break point opportunities, hitting 29 unforced errors to Halep's 14.

“

It was an intense fight

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'DEPRESSED, AND STUFF'

The 26-year-old Halep reached the final in Rome last year and needs to reach the quarter-finals this time to hold her world number one ranking. "It's just like one of those moments, like, you're a little bit depressed, and stuff. But I think this is the first match of the year that I've felt like this," insisted Osaka, who struggled with her backhand.

"She knew it and we were having a lot of backhand rallies, other than that I couldn't say what happened. I feel like I've played her the most of any player, this was the third time this year. She has a very solid game plan for me."

The Romanian will next play 13th-seeded American Madison Keys, who battled past Croatian Donna Vekic 7-6 (7/2), 7-6 (7/0) for a place in the quarter-finals.

Halep is building towards the French Open in two weeks time where she hopes to claim a first Grand Slam after twice finishing runner-up in Roland Garros.



ROME: Romania's Simona Halep hits a return to Japan's Naomi Osaka at Rome's WTA Tennis Open tournament at the Foro Italcico, yesterday in Rome. — AFP

France's Caroline Garcia, a semi-finalist in Madrid last week, also eased into the third round past Hungary's Timea Babos 6-3, 6-4.

Garcia, the seventh seed, went through with a break in both sets in 1hr 30min and she will next play either

American Sloane Stephens or Kaia Kanepi of Estonia. In the men's event, US eighth seed John Isner fell following a three set battle which included three tiebreaks against Spain's Albert Ramos 6-7 (5/7), 7-6 (7/2), 7-6 (7/5). — AFP

Hazard warns Chelsea to improve before he decides future

LONDON: Eden Hazard has warned Chelsea to sign players who will turn them into title contenders if they want him to commit his future to the club. Hazard has two years left on his present contract and is considering whether to sign a lucrative extension that would keep him at Stamford Bridge for the remaining prime years of his career.

But the Belgium playmaker is frustrated by Chelsea's failure to qualify for next season's Champions League and is reportedly a close-season target for Real Madrid and Paris Saint Germain. Asked what it would take to stay with Chelsea in the long-term, Hazard said: "I'm waiting for new players next season. We will see. "I want good players because I want to win next season the Premier League. I want to win a lot of things."

This would be Hazard's last big contract and the midfielder has no intention of rushing his decision, despite reports that Chelsea are willing to pay him around £300,000 (\$404,000, 343,000 euros) per week. "That's why I'm taking my time. It's something big. I need to think of a lot of things. One thing for sure is I'm happy here," he said. Chelsea finished fifth in the Premier League, well adrift of champions Manchester City, after an inconsistent season marred their defence of the title. They also failed to win the Champions League and League Cup, leaving Saturday's FA Cup final against Manchester United as their last chance of silverware this season.

Hazard concedes Chelsea have under-performed, but he believes winning the Wembley showdown with United would at least salvage something from their disappointing season. "To play Champions League next season is important. To win trophies also. We want to do it," Hazard said. "We want to play Champions League next season and win trophies. That's it. "So if we can't have one, we need the other. We can't be in the Champions League next season so we need to win trophies. That's it. "I say many times before I think it is not my last game. It's the last game of the season, that's it. "After the World Cup then we will be ready for the next season. "But for me, in my mind, I'm here, I have one week to play now. Saturday is a massive game. I just want to win for me and then also."

Hazard insists the uncertainty surrounding Chelsea manager Antonio Conte has had no impact on the squad. Conte is expected to leave at the end of the season after his feud with the club's hierarchy over their failure to back his transfer plans. "We don't think about that. We're just focused on the game," Hazard said. "We have one game to play and then we'll see what happens at the end of the season."

If Chelsea can lift the FA Cup, then the Champions League will be the one major honour to elude Hazard during his time at Stamford Bridge. "I need two more trophies, Champions League and FA Cup. That's it," Hazard said. "We're Chelsea. We need trophies at the end of the season. "At the moment we have nothing. We have not qualified for the Champions League. So the season has been bad.—AFP

Porterfield confident of Ireland's place at Test table

DUBLIN: Ireland captain William Porterfield was in no doubt his side deserved their elevation to Test cricket after a thrilling debut ended in a five-wicket loss to Pakistan. Hopes of a miracle at Malahide weren't just the stuff of fantasy when Pakistan, set a modest 160 to win on Tuesday's final day, collapsed to 14 for three before lunch at the Dublin ground.

Imam-ul-Haq (74 not out) and Babar Azam (59) then combined to dash dreams that Ireland, the 11th nation to play men's Test cricket, would record a remarkable win. But it was a testament to Ireland's skill and resolve that after they had been made to follow-on by visiting captain Sarfraz Ahmed, the game remained in the balance on the final day.

For a while, it seemed Ireland might rewrite the record books on two fronts in becoming only the fourth side to win a Test after following-on and just the second in the 141-year history of the format, following Australia's defeat of England in the inaugural 1877 Test at Melbourne, to win their debut match. That they were in a position to do that owed much to Kevin O'Brien's impressive 118 — just the fourth instance of a man scoring a century in his country's first Test match—that was the cornerstone of Ireland's second innings 339. Ireland made their reputation on the global stage with World Cup wins over Pakistan, England and West Indies. Porterfield was proud of his side's entry into the Test arena.

"The biggest thing was how we fought back in the second innings with the bat—that showed the character we have," he said. "It's something that's been talked about during big occasions, World Cups. That's always been known to be there but Test cricket is Test cricket



DUBLIN: (L-R) Ireland's William Porterfield, Ireland's Andrew Balbirnie and Ireland's Paul Stirling appeal unsuccessfully for a wicket during play on day two of Ireland's inaugural Test match against Pakistan at Malahide cricket club, in Dublin on May 15. — AFP

for a reason, it's there in the name, you did get tested and we were after the first innings.

"To get up to close to 350 showed what we've got in the changing room and the passion that we have for playing our cricket." The crowd briefly included 74-year-old Rolling Stones front man and cricket fan, Mick Jagger, but Porterfield hoped that the next generation of potential Irish cricketers would be more inspired by O'Brien's hundred. "Hopefully in the next week or two there's going to be hundreds of little kids aspiring to be Kevin O'Brien in backstreet cricket," the Irish captain said. "This Test match will have gone a long way to providing the next generation of cricketers, I'm sure."

'WORLD CUP NOISE'

This was O'Brien's first international century since

he scored the fastest-ever World Cup hundred, off just 50 balls, in Ireland's stunning win over England at Bangalore seven years ago.

Yet the controversial decision to shrink the 2019 World Cup in England to a 10-team tournament and Ireland's failure to come through an increasingly competitive qualifying tournament where only two spots were available means Porterfield's men will be on the outside looking in next year. "We wouldn't have got to where we were if we didn't get those opportunities to put down a marker on the world stage," Porterfield insisted. "That gives you an opportunity to create enough noise. To miss out by it just being a 10-team World Cup is bitterly disappointing.

"We wouldn't have had the opportunity to play a Test match today. I don't think if we hadn't been playing the last 10, 12 years at World Cups." — AFP

Maradona named chairman of Belarus club

MINSK: Diego Maradona is coming to Belarus as chairman of a small top-flight club with big European ambitions. The Argentine legend posted a photo on Instagram late Tuesday of what Dinamo Brest said was a three-year contract to serve as chairman of the board.

"Thanks for the trust and for thinking of me," Maradona wrote in his post. Dinamo Brest also posted pictures of the 1986 World Cup winner holding up a green and red Belarusian flag while wearing a matching black T-shirt and shorts.

Maradona stepped down as coach of United Arab Emirates second division club Al-Fujairah last month after failing to secure their promotion. Dinamo Brest were acquired by new owners three years ago who are intent on breaking the historic dominance of the country's two big sides: Dinamo Minsk and BATE Borisov. The 57-year-old will be in

charge of the team's transfer policy and strategic development. "Will Maradona be able to help Belarusian—particularly Brest—football? I think the answer is obvious," said club spokeswoman Olga Khizhinkova.

She also insisted that the global star intended to spend most of his time in the small city on Belarus's southwest border with Poland. "We are already looking for a place for him to live," Khizhinkova said.

"We expect that if not the whole time, he is going to spend a substantial portion of his time in Brest." Dinamo currently sit eighth in the 16-team Premier Division. The club were formed in 1960 and spent their first 32 years in the Soviet Union's second and third divisions.

Dinamo were automatically promoted to top-flight Belarusian football when the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991. They finished third in the inaugural Belarusian season but have never qualified for Europe. The team's new owners have told Belarusian media that they intended to acquire new talent and invest significant resources in the club this year.

Khizhinkova said Maradona will come to Brest after completing a Russia World Cup assignment for Venezuelan television. — AFP



Diego Maradona

Sports

Goalkeeper Hart set to miss out on youthful England World Cup squad

Joe conceded 39 goals in his 19 league appearances

LONDON: England manager Gareth Southgate will name his 23-man World Cup squad with some experienced figures such as goalkeeper Joe Hart expected to miss out. The BBC and Sky Sports reported on Tuesday that 75-times capped Hart won't be included among Southgate's three goalkeepers after a poor season on loan at West Ham from Manchester City.

Hart, who has been England's first choice goalkeeper for the last three major tournaments, was backed by Southgate after being deemed surplus to requirements by Pep Guardiola at City as the 31-year-old remained first choice during England's unbeaten qualifying campaign. However, Hart started only half of West Ham's Premier League games this season and conceded 39 goals in his 19 league appearances. Hart's omission means the experienced trio of Jordan Pickford, Jack Butland and the uncapped Nick Pope will be Southgate's options between the sticks.

Pickford has also yet to feature in a competitive international, whilst Butland's only two competitive starts came in qualifying dead rubbers against Lithuania in 2015 and 2017. Jack Wilshere is also set to miss out despite an impressive end to the season with Arsenal.

Wilshere was initially included in Southgate's squad for March's friendlies against the Netherlands and Italy, but was forced to pull out with a knee injury that cost him the opportunity to make his case. Liverpool's Adam Lallana is in contention despite an injury-ravaged season. Lallana

made his latest comeback in Sunday's 4-0 win over Brighton, but made just one Premier League start all season. In defence, Phil Jones's return to form and fitness for Manchester United could see him see off club team-mate Chris Smalling and Chelsea captain Gary Cahill for a place alongside Southgate's preferred centre-back duo of John Stone and Harry Maguire.

However, at the other end of the field, Southgate is more spoiled for options with Harry Kane and Jamie Vardy both in fine form. Kane and Vardy both scored twice as Tottenham edged out Leicester 5-4 in a final day thriller at Wembley to take their tallies for the season to 41 and 23 respectively.

Both failed to carry their club form onto the international stage at Euro 2016, and former England captain Alan Shearer has encouraged Kane to bolster his reputation around the globe by performing on the biggest stage. "It's a huge tournament for Harry because of what happened two years ago," said Shearer on Tuesday. "To put himself on the global stage, he is known all around Europe obviously, but to put himself on a world stage he has to go out and perform and score goals in this tournament."

Another former England great Gary Lineker, who won the World Cup Golden Boot in 1986, believes Kane will relish the responsibility of spearheading England's campaign in Russia.

"There are certain individuals that embrace that pressure



Gareth Southgate (left) to name his 23-man World Cup squad.

and embrace that opportunity to show you can do it on the biggest stage and Harry is that sort of guy," said Lineker. Southgate has two more warm-up friendlies, against

Nigeria on June 2 at Wembley and Costa Rica in Leeds five days later, to fine tune his preparations before England's World Cup begins against Tunisia on June 18. —AFP

Allardyce sacked as Everton manager

LONDON: Sam Allardyce was sacked as manager of Everton yesterday after just six months in charge despite guiding the Premier League club away from relegation danger to a mid-table finish. The former England manager, 63, was brought in as Ronald Koeman's replacement in November, but his rudimentary style of play has proved deeply unpopular with fans of the Merseyside club.

"We have made the decision that, as part of our longer-term plan, we will be appointing a new manager this summer," said new chief executive Denise Barrett-Baxendale. "On behalf of the chairman, board of directors and Mr Moshiri, I'd like to thank Sam for the job he has done at Everton."

"Sam was brought in at a challenging time last season to provide us with some stability and we are grateful to him for doing that," she added. Former Watford and Hull City manager Marco Silva is the favourite to take over and could complete the move to Goodison Park six months after the club failed to prise him away from Vicarage Road.

Despite signing an 18-month deal, Allardyce appeared resigned to his fate after Sunday's 3-1 defeat at former club West Ham, during which Everton supporters called for his sacking. "I can't quite say confident after all the rumours I'm reading in the paper," said Allardyce, when questioned about his future. "Generally there's no smoke without fire. We'll wait and see when we meet up."

Allardyce last month dismissed a survey sent to supporters asking them to grade his performance out of 10 as a mistake on the part of the club's marketing director, who he said does not "understand" how football works.

As part of the questionnaire, supporters were asked



Sam Allardyce

whether they agree with the statement: "I have a high level of trust in the current manager and coaching staff at Everton e.g. in making the right decisions to get the best out of the team."

Allardyce, whose previous clubs include Bolton, Newcastle, Sunderland and Crystal Palace, landed his dream job with England in 2016 but that turned sour after only one match, with Allardyce stepping down following a newspaper sting.

Everton were unwilling to pay a reported compensation fee of £15 million (\$20 million) wanted by

Watford for Silva when Koeman was sacked. However, Silva himself was then dismissed by Watford in January with the Hornets citing disruption caused by Everton's "unwarranted approach" for a major dip in form. A change in manager could also affect Wayne Rooney's future at the club.

England's all-time top scorer had reportedly agreed terms on a £12.5 million move to DC United in Major League Soccer last week. Rooney had seen his involvement limited under Allardyce, but could be convinced to stay at his boyhood club by a new regime. —AFP

Stakes raised for Mourinho-Conte feud in FA Cup final showdown

LONDON: Jose Mourinho and Antonio Conte renew hostilities with the stakes heightened when Manchester United and Chelsea face off in Saturday's FA Cup final needing silverware to mask this season's flaws.

Conte's need is the greater. Having missed out on Champions League football for next season, many expect the Wembley showpiece to be the Italian's final match in charge at Stamford Bridge, regardless of the outcome.

If it is, nothing will give Conte more joy than bowing out by winning a cup competition for the first time as a coach by beating the man with whom he has clashed most regularly and bitterly since arriving in England. Conte labelled Mourinho a "little man" and "fake" at the peak of their spat in December.

Days earlier, Mourinho had appeared to allude to a suspension given to Conte for allegedly failing to report match-fixing when coaching at Siena. Conte later won an appeal, clearing him of any wrongdoing in the case.

The root of their feud comes from Conte's success in his first campaign at Chelsea, just a season after Mourinho's second spell at Stamford Bridge ended in the Portuguese being sacked having won just four of Chelsea's first 16 league games, in December 2015.

On his first return as a visiting manager, Mourinho protested at what he perceived as Conte's "humiliating" celebrations in a 4-0 victory for the Blues over United. Conte then warned his players at the start of this season not to let their standards slip to the levels of "the last season with Mourinho".

In hindsight, the Italian was right to warn against com-



Jose Mourinho

placency as Chelsea have fallen well short of the form they showed in storming to the title last season. A fifth-placed finish in the Premier League was confirmed when they capitulated 3-0 to Newcastle on the final day of the season on Sunday.

"To finish fifth is a big disappointment. How damaging is it not to be in the Champions League? You'll have to ask the club about that," Conte said, only intensifying speculation about his future.

"If we play like this in the FA Cup final, we don't have a chance. We have six days to change our approach, our

desire, our will to fight because we can do much better."

Mourinho has at least ensured Champions League qualification for next season via a second-place finish in the Premier League. However, a record 19-point gap to champions Manchester City and a deeply disappointing Champions League last-16 exit to Sevilla means the Portuguese is also left hanging on until the final game of the season to deliver a trophy that would silence some of the critics of United's often turgid performances, lacking in the invention and flair displayed by rivals City and Champions League finalists Liverpool. —AFP

Ray Wilson, member of England's 1966 World Cup winning side, dead at 83

LONDON: Ray Wilson, a member of the England team that beat West Germany in the 1966 World Cup final, has died aged 83, former club Everton announced. An outstanding left-back, Wilson won 63 caps with 1966 a memorable year for him as he won the FA Cup with Everton at Wembley and a few weeks later the World Cup as hosts England beat West Germany 4-2 at the same stadium.

Wilson had been diagnosed with Alzheimers in 2004. "Everton Football Club is deeply saddened to learn of the passing of Ray Wilson," read a statement on the club website. "Unquestionably one of the finest footballers to wear the royal blue jersey, Ray passed away on Tuesday evening, aged 83."

Wilson, named Ramon after pre-World War II film star Ramon Navarro and married for 61 years to Pat, who survives him, and the father of two boys, Russell and Neil, never lost his love for Everton whom he joined in 1964. "He loved it at Goodison, absolutely loved it," Pat said last year. "He still does. If they are on television, that is it. He sits there and watches it, transfixed." Wilson was revered by both Everton and his first club Huddersfield and he was honoured in April this year when their Premier League clash was officially designated Ray Wilson Day.

Wilson played almost 300 matches for Huddersfield having been signed aged 17-year-old when he was working on the railways—it was thanks to Bill Shankly that he made the move to left-back from left-half in the 1956/57 campaign. He moved to Merseyside in 1964.

Huddersfield paid a fulsome tribute to him on their website. "Huddersfield Town is devastated to learn of the passing of World Cup winner Ramon 'Ray' Wilson. "Ray is arguably the most successful and best-known player ever to pull on a Huddersfield Town shirt, having been a key member of England's World Cup-winning team in 1966. —AFP

Europe angered by FIFA's new soccer plans

LYON: Europe's top leagues, players and clubs lined up yesterday against FIFA president Gianni Infantino's plans for two new global competitions saying his approach was rushed and lacking in detail. UEFA's Professional Football Strategy Council (PSFC) said it had "serious reservations" about the whole process and criticised the speed and lack of consultation from the sport's global governing body.

FIFA has proposed creating a 24-team Club World Cup tournament, to be staged every four years, as well as a Global Nations League which would culminate in an eight-team tournament — effectively a mini-World Cup—every two years.

According to a FIFA report seen by Reuters, the two tournaments, backed by a consortium of private investors, are expected to generate at least \$25 billion over a 12-year cycle. FIFA president Gianni Infantino has been trying to push through the proposals in the already hectic period leading up to this year's World Cup in Russia.

Following a meeting in Lyon, the PSFC said its members had not been properly consulted and added in a statement that it "unanimously expressed serious reservations about the process surrounding the FIFA Club World Cup and Global Nations League proposals." — Reuters

25 Chicago Cubs rally in ninth inning to stun Atlanta Braves



26 Pliskova smashes umpire's chair after losing Rome match



27 Allardyce sacked as Everton manager



SHANGHAI: Shanghai SIPG's Hulk (C) fights for the ball with Kashima Antlers's Ryota Nagaki (R) during the AFC Champions League round of 16 football match between China's Shanghai SIPG and Japan's Kashima Antlers in Shanghai yesterday. — AFP

Kashima reach Asian Champions q-final

Tehran giants Esteghlal secure place in the last eight

HONG KONG: Kashima Antlers advanced to the quarter-finals of the Asian Champions League for the first time in a decade as Go Oiwa's side knocked Chinese Super League leaders Shanghai SIPG out of the continental championship, despite losing 2-1 yesterday evening.

The J-League side progress with a 4-3 aggregate win and join Suwon Bluewings in next week's draw for the last eight after the two-time Asian champions handed fellow South Korean side Ulsan Hyundai a 3-0 defeat yesterday to complete a 3-1 aggregate win.

The pair advance along with China's Tianjin Quanjian and two-time winners Jeonbuk Motors, who booked their places on Tuesday, in the eastern half of the quarter-final draw, which will be made in Kuala Lumpur next Wednesday.

Iran's Esteghlal have also advanced after they saw off compatriots Zob Ahan to join fellow Tehran-based club Persepolis in the quarter-finals while Al Duhail ensured there are two Qatari clubs in the draw after their 8-3 aggregate win over Al Ain saw them advance alongside Al Sadd.

Kashima went into yesterday evening's meeting with Shanghai holding a 3-1 lead from the first leg but a goal by Brazilian star Hulk reduced the deficit for SIPG just seven minutes into the game.

Shoma Doi scored from close range to secure a crucial away goal for Antlers three minutes before the interval and although Hulk claimed a second from the penalty spot with nine minutes remaining, Kashima did

enough to progress after failing in the Round of 16 on four of their last five attempts.

"I'm very sorry that we lost today's game, but we have finally made it through to the next round and I'm very satisfied with that," said Oiwa. "We played very well and if we had managed to score a second goal we would have been in control of the game. It's a pity we didn't, but I'm still satisfied and that we've finally managed to go through to the next round."

Suwon, meanwhile, bounced back from a 1-0 first leg loss against Ulsan with Kim Gun-hee's double ensuring Seo Jung-won's side claimed a 3-0 win that keeps them on track for a first continental title since winning the second of back-to-back Asian Club Championship wins in 2002.

Al Duhail backed up their first leg 4-2 thrashing of former champions Al Ain with another comprehensive win over the 2016 finalists as the club from Doha hammered the United Arab Emirates' champions 4-1 to complete an 8-3 aggregate victory.

Youssef Al Arabi scored twice for Djamel Belmadi's side as they saw off the 2003 champions, with Ismael Mohamed also on the scoresheet for an Al Duhail side who took the lead thanks to an own goal from Mohamed Ahmed.

And Tehran giants Esteghlal secured their place in the last eight for the first time since 2013 as a hat-trick from Mame Baba Thiam overturned a 1-0 deficit from the first leg against Zobahan in an all-Iranian affair to progress with a 3-2 aggregate win.—Reuters

Celtics survive James' attack

LOS ANGELES: Jaylen Brown scored 23 points and the Boston Celtics overcame a 42-point performance from LeBron James to beat Cleveland 107-94 on Tuesday and take a 2-0 lead in the Eastern Conference finals.

Terry Rozier added 18 points, while Al Horford finished with 15 points and 10 rebounds for the Celtics, who improved to 8-0 this postseason at the Boston Garden.

"We really lean on him," said Brown of Horford. "He has been doing it all year. That is why they pay him the big bucks."

The Celtics, who overcame a double-digit deficit, have never blown a 2-0 series lead in the postseason. Game three is Sunday in Cleveland. Brown said they can't let up in

game three because Cavaliers superstar James usually raises his game another notch after a loss. "We need tremendous focus. He (James) one of best players of all time. But if there is anybody I would put my money on it would be this group," Brown said. The Celtics used a balanced attack as a half dozen players reached double figures. Cleveland had 15 turnovers leading to 13 Boston points and the Celtics had just six turnovers.

James also delivered 12 assists and 10 rebounds, scoring 21 of Cleveland's 27 points in the first quarter. His 42 points marked his fifth 40-point game of these playoffs. James had just 15 points and missed all five of his three-point attempts in a game one defeat.

"We have the opportunity go back home and take home court," James said. "They did what they had to do to protect home court and now it is our time as well."

"We will see what we are made of on Saturday." Tuesday's game got physical as

the Celtics pulled out all the stops to try and contain James.

James appeared to strain his neck in a first-half collision. The Cavaliers sagged in the second half, where they were outscored 59-39 by the Celtics. Cleveland coach Tyrone Lue said they need to be more physical and referred to the Boston players as goons.

"We got to be tougher mentally and physically," Lue said. "They are gooning it up and we have got to do the same thing."

Kevin Love finished with 22 points and 15 rebounds for Cleveland. Kyle Korver came off the bench to score 11 points but starters Tristan Thompson, JR Smith and George Hill combined for just 11 points in the loss. "Down the stretch we took some bad shots," Lue said. "We didn't close the half way we wanted to and they had a big third quarter."

"In the third quarter we had some miscommunication on defence and they scored some easy baskets." — AFP



BOSTON: LeBron James #23 of the Cleveland Cavaliers dribbles against Terry Rozier #12 of the Boston Celtics in the first half during Game Two of the 2018 NBA Eastern Conference Finals at TD Garden on Tuesday. — AFP