

High-flying tycoon hits stony ground

American business mogul Lou Pearlman's career of blimps, charter planes, real estate and pop music is getting buried under staggering lawsuit claims and criminal probes. Report by SCOTT POWERS and SARA K CLARKE in Orlando, Florida

SITTING among glitterati such as Pierce Brosnan, Lionel Richie and Nicolas Cage, a stone-faced Lou Pearlman watched his latest and possibly last moment of triumph play out in a recent German awards show.

His boy band US5 bounced around the stage of a Berlin theatre to receive the Goldene Kamera "Pop International Band" award. Singer Jay Z interrupted his German-language acceptance speech to declare, "Lou Pearlman, we love you baby!"

It was a shining moment of fame — or the kind his friends say he has chased his entire life.

Yet in the seconds that German TV recorded him — at least as the shots were replayed on the website YouTube — Pearlman didn't even smile.

The night was February 1. A day later, an Orlando judge ordered the seizure of his corporate flagship. Within weeks, the FBI swarmed his Lake Butler, Florida, mansion and downtown Orlando offices. His career of blimps, charter planes, real estate and pop music was buried under staggering lawsuit claims and criminal probes.

Not long ago, Louis J Pearlman, 52, was sought-after Orlando celebrity, known for acts ranging from the Chippendales to the Backstreet Boys.

Now investigators allege the entertainment mogul ran an investment scam on the side that drained the life savings from hundreds of people, taking in more than \$317m. A federal grand jury has convened, though no indictments have been announced.

"It's a devastatingly tragic series of events," said old friend Frank Sicoli. "Shocked! Absolutely."

Others, in disbelief, await a different version of events.

"He's done some things that may look completely questionable," said developer Kevin Azouza, a neighbour. "But I'm not sure what's attributed to him as purposefully fraudulent behaviour can actually be attributed to him."

Since the Berlin show, Pearlman's whereabouts are a public mystery. He has reportedly been sighted in Panama, Spain, Israel, Switzerland, Belarus and Russia. A

lawyer told a judge Pearlman sent paperwork with a Bali, Indonesia, return address.

"I wonder all the time what's going through his mind," said cousin Jerry Garfunkel, who recalls annual Passover Seders he spent with Lou. "He was nothing like what he's turning out to be."

Pearlman was born to working-class parents in Queens, New York, the only child of Herman and Reenie Pearlman. He was a laundryman. She worked in a pet store.

As a child, Pearlman was friendly, smart and ambitious, always making money, selling lemonade, delivering papers, babysitting, giving guitar lessons. Music was his passion. From a young age he idolised cousin Art Garfunkel, who hit the big time with Paul Simon.

Pearlman wanted the same and tried a similar act with friend Bob Curiano.

"Lou had dreams, but he wasn't as musically inclined as he'd like to be," Curiano said. "That became his reality check."

Pearlman's talent was making business contacts, Curiano said, noting Pearlman always had an entourage. "Lou was a likeable guy... he was able to get people to rally behind him."

In the mid-1970s, Pearlman got a bachelor's degree from Queens College in New York, studying accounting.

As a boy, he also came to love blimps, watching, from his family's apartment window, the Goodyear blimp fly down at the Flushing Airport. As a teenager, he got a job on the Goodyear blimp crew there. By the late 1970s, he forged a partnership with German dirigible tycoon Theodor Wullenkemper.

In the early 1980s, Pearlman founded his own blimp advertising company, along

with a travel agency called Trans Continental Travel Services and a charter airline.

Seeking better weather, he moved his blimps to Kissimmee by 1985. Soon, he signed McDonald's, MeLife and SeaWorld as clients.

In the late 1980s, he also began his company's "employee savings investment account" programme. It became the conduit for hundreds of millions of dollars from 1,800 investors — and the main source of Pearlman's current scandal.

In the 1990s, his blimp business deflated. Another company lured away MeLife. A windstorm destroyed his Pink Floyd blimp and a Gulf Oil blimp that his company flew crashed. Company stock fell from \$6 to about 3 cents. It shut down.

By then Pearlman had turned to his other passion: music. He was inspired, friends said, by the band New Kids on the Block, convinced that there was room for a fresh act as that band got older.

Pearlman enlisted Gloria Sicoli and other friends in the music business to help him launch boy bands that mixed singing, dancing and good looks to drive young girls wild.

Backstreet Boys debuted at SeaWorld in 1993 but fell flat in the US. In Europe and Asia, though, they were a hit.

When Backstreet returned to the US in 1997, the debut American album sold 14m copies — the same as Art Garfunkel's biggest album, *Simon & Garfunkel's Greatest Hits*. Four other Backstreet albums went platinum. Two hit No. 1 on *Billboard* magazine's charts.

'N Sync was Pearlman's next act. *No Strings Attached* sold 2.4m copies in one week in 2000 — the only CD to ever top 2mm in a week, said *Billboard's* director of charts, Geoff Mayfield. The band almost did it again with *Celebrity*, in 2001.

In 1999, the bachelor, who has no dependents, traded up on an 11,000sq ft home on Lake Butler. He also picked up condos near the Mall at Millenia and International Drive, a waterfront condo in Clearwater, a couple of Las Vegas penthouses, a Hollywood bungalow and a New York City apartment.

He built state-of-the-art studios in Orlando, attracting more stars, such as Britney Spears, Matchbox 20 and Alicia Keys. He formed production companies to put out television series such as *Making the Band* on ABC and movies such as the 2000 flop *Longshot*.

And as he moulded teen heartthrobs of boys such as 'N Sync's Justin Timberlake, Pearlman made a celebrity of himself. He became "Big Poppa" — the paternal, unhip-looking "Idol Maker," as *60 Minutes* dubbed him.

"When you met him, he came with a smile. He was charming," said Maurice Starr, who created New Kids on the Block. "Whenever I was with him, he was enjoying his life."

It was the same charm investors say persuaded them to give Pearlman their money. Despite his celebrity, he always found time to court investors. He would call them, chat up their lives and make them feel special. Like family, many said.

"He was such a good salesman. He was so congenial," said James Lee VanFossan, who invested \$1.85m that is now missing. "He really duped me."

A one-time Democrat, Pearlman began supporting Republicans for national offices in the late 1990s and became a Republican in 2004. Since 1997, he and his companies contributed \$18,850 to Republican congressional campaigns. Since 2004, they gave \$22,500 to Republican state campaigns.

The teen-music boom in the US soured after 'N Sync, and the next few acts, including Pearlman's Take 5, immense and O-Town, saw fair to poor sales. *Billboard's* Mayfield said:

Concerns began to emerge about Pearlman's business. In the late 1990s, his blimp and music companies drew a flurry of breach-of-contract lawsuits.

Backstreet Boys and 'N Sync sued, complaining they got virtually none of the money the bands made. They settled out of court for undisclosed terms. In interviews, Pearlman called the suits family spats.

"In any family, it becomes a little dysfunctional," Pearlman told *The Orlando Sentinel* in 1998, referring to the bitter Backstreet suit. "It's important to explain to the whole world this is an amicable situation."

There were no amicable deals for Pearlman's third band, Take 5. In 2001, Merryly and Mark Goodell, parents of Take 5 singers Ryan and Jeff "Clay" Goodell, and Stefanie Christofore, mother of T J Christofore, complained to Florida officials that Pearlman violated child-labour laws.

They said Take 5, like Backstreet and 'N Sync, made millions of dollars overseas with platinum European album sales, packed shows, merchandise and endorsement. For a couple of years, Merryly Goodell said, "They were on magazine covers all over the world." But all they were ever paid was living expenses and "pocket money," she said.

She and Christofore said Pearlman forced the boys to work long and late hours for weeks on end, often put them in unsupervised situations and sometimes did not provide required tutors. Jeff and T J were 13 when the band formed. The oldest, Ryan, was 17. The American release of their album sold poorly, and Take 5 broke up in 2001.

"I think the man belongs in jail, just based on what he did to Take 5 alone," Merryly Goodell said. "The other groups tried to speak out. Backstreet, 'N Sync. All of them tried to say what was going on."

In 2002, the state dismissed the child-labour complaints, concluding in a report that the boys were contractors, so Trans Continental "is not subject to the



Lou Pearlman boards his private jet for a publicity trip to Atlanta, Georgia to promote his book and his new boy-band, Natural in this 2003 file photo... fading glory.

requirements of the child labour law."

Jane Carter, mother of Backstreet Boy Nick Carter and solo artist Aaron Carter (also in Pearlman's stable), said the Backstreet Boys had similar experiences.

"We didn't know anything about the music industry. We were parents. We were just star-struck," she said. "The kids were just happy to have all these fans adore them. He would buy them watches. He would give them a lot of presents. I'd say, 'Enough of the ... presents. Let's see some cash — and some accounting.'"

Boy-band disputes were not Pearlman's only growing legal problems.

In 2002, the Wilhelmina Scouting Network recruited prospective fashion models and entertainers, telling them they had the "look" and Wilhelmina could get them noticed. Clients paid about \$1,000 upfront. Hundreds complained of getting no service, so the Florida attorney general, first Bob Butterworth, then his successor, Charlie Crist, explored claims of misrepresentation and deceptive advertising.

Pearlman bought the company in the midst of the probe. He then created a new company, Fashion Rock, which bought out Wilhelmina's client lists and began similar services. Wilhelmina then went bankrupt.

State investigators simply turned their probe to Fashion Rock. In early 2004, Florida's assistant attorney general overseeing the case abruptly resigned, and the state eventually closed the case.

By 2003, Pearlman set his sights on Orlando's Church Street Station, a spectre of the tourist magnet that drew visitors in droves in the 1980s.

He and partner Robert Kling proposed a

\$12m revitalisation. The city quickly approved a deal with a \$1.5m city-redevelopment loan, tax rebates and 500 free parking spaces.

But within a year, construction slowed, contractors complained about not being paid, and Pearlman and the city traded blame.

Though he moved his corporate offices there, much of the Church Street Station complex remained more vacant than revitalised.

And Pearlman started looking for money everywhere.

Starting with a March 2003 loan, he went on a financing binge through banks across the US, according to various lawsuits. He leveraged his companies, his home, his condos, Church Street, his planes, his studio, jewellery, even his royalty interests in the boy bands. He pulled more than \$156m in cash and credit from his properties through at least 13 deals.

Now those deals are collapsing. In his absence, foreclosures, court-ordered seizures and court-approved auctions are moving swiftly. Fashion Rock already has been sold.

His Rolls-Royce car and Gulfstream jet have been repossessed.

Soon, there may be little for Pearlman to come back to claim — except perhaps his innocence and integrity.

"I think Lou's crying somewhere," his friend Curiano speculated. "I don't think he's somewhere laughing with a pile of money." — *The Orlando Sentinel/MCT*

(Orlando Sentinel correspondent Katy Moore contributed to this report.)



Federal agents raiding the offices of Lou Pearlman at the Trans Continental Building in Orlando, Florida, on February 15. The agents removed boxes of documents and filing cabinets.

Today's online dating scene all about money and looks

By Jocelyne Zahlt

WANTED: Sugar mamas, or women over the age of 40 with at least \$5m in the bank, interested in dating gorgeous men aged 20 and under.

Rich, beautiful people, turned off by the crop of lonely hearts thronging online dating sites, are honing down their wish list hoping to woo soul mates with cash in the bank or looks to die for.

And savvy American entrepreneurs are cashing in on the trend creating websites or setting up special dating events tailored for the rich and beautiful.

Some suitors who turn to these sites want looks and aren't worried about money while others are looking for a sugar daddy or, as an upcoming speed dating event in New York touts, a sugar mama.

"Online dating has become mainstream over the last couple years and prior to that only the boldest, the bravest and the most

desperate were found on these sites," said Jason Pellegrino, creator of HotEnough.org, a new dating site that only accepts applications from people who rate eight or more on a scale of one to 10.

"The problem for a good-looking person who goes on the traditional dating sites is that you're putting yourself into an average or less dating pool and it just doesn't work."

"So HotEnough.org is more or less filling a void in the industry."

Applicants must submit three pictures, including one full body shot, and are rated by active members who must give them a score of eight or more in order to be admitted. Once they're in, they can e-mail other "hotties," as Pellegrino calls them, for \$10 a month.

Since its launch in November of last year, the site has attracted more than 1,000 members and 15,000 new applications are pending, said Pellegrino, 33, who works as a project manager for a

construction company in New Jersey and who was elated to make it onto his own website. He rates 8.2.

"To a certain degree, the site is definitely shallow, but I think when it comes to dating everyone is shallow," he said.

"We all have an image of someone we would date and we also have that same image of someone we would not date."

Samantha Diane Schultz, 26, of the eastern state of Pennsylvania, said she turned to HotEnough.org after several dismal experiences with dates picked from traditional dating sites.

"I was very disappointed with the online dating scene," she said. "I'm looking for someone that isn't so beautiful it's superficial, someone like me."

"I want someone spiritual, open-minded, sexy," she added. "I want a Mr Right."

Schultz said she has exchanged e-mails with a few prospective dates on

HotEnough but plans to take her time in choosing the right guy.

"I'm picky, what can I say," she said.

At *Pocket Change*, a weekly online newsletter that lists the most expensive goods and services in the New York area, the aim is to create publicity-filled one-time dating affairs that attract only the rich and beautiful.

One such event in February for 40 very rich men and 40 very pretty women proved so successful that organisers are



now planning another one in May, this time for rich women and handsome men. Eligible women must have at least \$5m in the bank and their prospective dates must be handsome and under the age of 29.

Jeremy Abelson, 26, president of *Pocket Change* said, "In the first event tailored for rich men and wealthy women we had multiple men who were worth over \$100m," he said.

"For the Sugar Mama Speed date we'll probably attract about 10,000 men and about 500 women." — AFP

Airline tops list of worst luggage handling in Europe

By Rebecca Smithers in London

IT MAY claim to be the world's favourite airline, but when it comes to making sure passengers and their bags arrive at their destination together, British Airways (BA) is rather less impressive.

A study of major European airlines last week has revealed that BA has the worst record for losing travellers' luggage.

Figures released by the UK's consumer watchdog for aviation show that 23 bags went missing for every 1,000 passengers carried by BA. That was the worst performance out of the 24 airlines which submitted their data for official scrutiny.

The UK's Air Transport Users Council (ATUC), which published the figures on April 4, said that BA had admitted its baggage handling last year was not acceptable and it apologised to customers who had been affected.

The AUAC said more than 5,000 bags went missing last year from flights run by the 24 carriers — which are all members of the Association of European Airlines — an average of 15.7 for every 1,000 passengers.

Other poor performers included Lufthansa of Germany, Air France, Italy's Alitalia and KLM of the Netherlands.

A total of 85% of the mishandled bags were returned to passengers within 48 hours, but this meant that about 1m took more than two days to reach their owners and some were never found.

The AUAC also said that the actual figure for European carriers could be even worse because some AEA members, such as Virgin Atlantic and bmi, do not provide luggage data.

In addition, the popular budget airlines, such as Ryanair and easyJet, are not part of the association.

Separate figures published for the first quarter of this year show that baggage mishandling remains a huge concern for air travellers, triggering the third largest number of complaints after flight cancellations and delays.

The report included comments from BA's operations director, Geoff Watt. He said: "The volumes of hold baggage going through Heathrow, the change in security procedures and some baggage system failures within Terminal 4 has not helped our performance, but we accept that overall the levels of service we offered to our customers has not been up to an acceptable standard."

"We fully apologise to customers who have been affected by delayed baggage in the past year." — Guardian News & Media



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TimeOut

Eye on the world

Camel milk: Nutritious drink, useful cosmetic

According to Mauritanian entrepreneurs, vitamin-rich camel milk has health and beauty benefits. PASCAL FLETCHER checks out the fledgling industry of camel milk products

WITH its hunched back, protruding teeth, facial hair and distinctive body odour, the camel may not seem an ideal model for beauty products. Think again, says Nancy Abdeirrahmane, who runs camel dairy in the Saharan state of Mauritania and says vitamin-rich camel milk can cleanse the body both inside and out.

"It does give you a nice complexion," says British-born Abdeirrahmane, who in 1989 opened Africa's first commercial camel milk dairy, now called Tiviski, in Mauritania's capital Nouakchott.

With the dairy already producing a range of camel, cow and goat milk products in a nation where nomadic livestock rearing is a way of life, the Spanish-trained engineer is now looking at the possibility of making camel milk cosmetics. "We would make creams and soaps," said Abdeirrahmane, who has lived in Mauritania for 30 years and is a citizen of the former French colony lying on the Sahara's western edge.

"I'm thinking very unapologetic," she added.

Recalling that Egypt's Queen Cleopatra, a fabled beauty, was said to bathe daily in camel's milk, she said Mauritanian Moorish women still traditionally drank large quantities of this milk to maintain a pale, clear complexion. "It's a cleaning stuff, it's good for your arteries, it's a diuretic," Abdeirrahmane said.

While stressing that simply drinking camel milk was already an excellent beauty treatment, she said its fat could be transformed into lotions and creams.

A handful of entrepreneurs in the world already made such products, although Abdeirrahmane, an acknowl-

edged expert on camel milk, said she would need to acquire the technical know-how to set up a cosmetics plant at her Nouakchott dairy.

"There is nobody in 600 miles who makes cosmetics," she said, gesturing to the edge of the dusty Mauritanian capital, where rolling sand dunes begin where the buildings end. Just a few miles away on a sandy roadside, Mauritanian herders, their craggy, weather-beaten faces swathed in turbans, milk a herd of baying, moaning camels.

"They've all got names - this one's Fatou, that one there is Mariam," said Mohamed Sidé, 40, one of the herders.

They feed the females a hash of cereals and peanuts mixed with water before milking. It takes two people to milk a standing camel, one holding the bowl on one side and the other tweaking the teats of the udder on the other side.

The milker allows the female camel's calf to start suckling, to draw down the milk and then pushes it away. Abdeirrahmane, while admitting camels can be smelly, indignantly denies they are dirty. "The camel itself is a tussy animal, it has few germs, few diseases, it's a very clean animal," she said.

Fresh from the udder, camel milk is topped by a thick white froth. It tastes different to cow milk, less fatty and sometimes a bit saltier, and its chemical composition is very different. "It's quite weird stuff, but absolutely exquisite," said Abdeirrahmane, who drinks a carton a day.

"It's very light, its full of vitamins and minerals, it's got a lot of vitamin C," she said. Because camel milk does not curdle easily and is very difficult to skim, it does not yield

Reuters correspondent Pascal Fletcher samples fresh camel milk by the roadside in Mauritania's capital Nouakchott. Right: A Mauritanian employee wearing a woman's ski suit to keep warm in a refrigerated room holds packets of camel milk at the Tiviski dairy in Nouakchott.

the same range of products, like ice cream and yoghurt, one can obtain from cow's milk.

But the Tiviski dairy, whose name means Spring in local Arabic, produces a soft camel milk cheese, sold under the brandname Caravane, but dubbed Camelbert by some fans, after French Camelbert. "We're the only people in the world to make it," Abdeirrahmane said.

With no local market in which to sell it, most Mauritanians don't eat cheese - she sought and found interest from European gourmet outlets, especially in Germany. "We're the only people in the world to make it," Abdeirrahmane said. "We're the only people in the world to make it," Abdeirrahmane said.



able to sell camel cheese in Europe. "Europe has a big lobby that does not want dairy products... we're very small to fight the system," she said. The United Arab Emirates was also knocking on the EU's door to gain entry for camel products. A Vienna-based Austrian chocolatier had a plan for making low-fat chocolate from Emirates camel milk. Abdeirrahmane said being

able to sell camel cheese in Europe would boost her dairy operations, which already provide a livelihood to several thousand Mauritanian families. Livestock farming makes up 17% of the economy in Mauritania, whose mostly nomadic population roam with their herds over the vast desert territory twice the size of France.

"They don't have a fence, a barn among them," said Abdeirrahmane. She still hoped one day to be able to get her camel milk cheese into the EU legally - instead of smuggled inside the suitcases of Europeans returning from Mauritania. "I'm going to keep it like the Vestal fire, you know, keep the know-how alive," she said. - Reuters

Francis Callier, the pioneer of Switzerland's chocolate industry. Today Turin's rich and powerful still turn to the city's chocolatiers for special occasions. Giblino created the centrepiece for the wedding reception of John Elkann, vice-chairman of carmaker Fiat and heir to the Agnelli family empire.

At the reception, 350 chocolate replicas of Fiat's iconic Cinquecento car "drove" down a chocolate ramp to a base of white chocolate and raspberry. 2m wide and 4m long, all of it weighing 160kg. Marina Cutelle, who two years ago opened Chococall, a three-storey chocolate bar in Milan, said champagne would have been a good choice to wash down that dessert.

Cutelle, who says she eats a pound of hazelnut chocolate in one sitting and offers a variety of wines and liqueurs to match the selection in her bar, said, "A flute of champagne after a milk chocolate gives maximum pleasure." - Reuters

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Traditional mud oven makes a comeback in Iraqi kitchens



Abu Ali (left) looks at tanouirs in Ali Jafar's shop.

By Laith Hammoudi

IN THE topsy-turvy world of Iraq, Ali Mohamed Jafar offers solid evidence that the country is slipping back toward its business boom. Jafar, 26, makes tanouirs, Iraq's traditional mud oven, and when he followed his father into the craft, he knew the trade was dying. After all, how many more years would Iraqis continue to bake *khubz*, the national bread, in a clay vessel heated by glowing wood coals when steel ovens and propane fuel were so much cleaner and more efficient?

But then in the late 1990s, international sanctions began choking Iraq's economy, and people began looking for simpler technology.

The fall of Saddam Hussein's regime meant even better business conditions: Electricity became unreliable, propane prices shot up and sectarian violence kept cooking-gas deliveries from entering many neighbourhoods where a wrong turn could mean death. "I didn't ever expect that our work would boom like this," Jafar said one day recently in his shop on a busy street in central Baghdad.

"We used to sell the oven for a few dinars but never expected that the prices would reach 25,000 Iraqi dinars," the equiv-

alent of \$20. Jafar's story is a tale of how Baghdad's chaos has given new life to an Iraqi tradition that had been dying. The toppling of Saddam's regime boosted some modern businesses - more and more Iraqis now have cell phones, Internet access and satellite television. But in the tanour, Baghdadis have found a solution from the past to present-day problems.

Um Ali, 53, bought her first tanour four months ago after the price of a small tank of propane reached 30,000 dinars. "I never expected that," she said. "If I want to use a steel oven, it would cost me the whole salary of my retired husband, and I wouldn't have any money for anything else." It helps that her husband and his brother are carpenters who can bring home scraps of wood, she said.

Raghad Hussain, 19, never saw a tanour when she was a young girl. "We had a steel oven in my house. I didn't even know what the mud oven looks like," Hussain said.

But recently her father, a retired government worker, was finding the price of propane skyrocketing when used for baking bread in a steel oven, a tank lasted only three days, she said.

So two months ago, her mother bought a tanour from a neighbour for 15,000 dinars, about \$12.

Khubz is made in a tanour by sticking the dough on the inside walls of the oven, which is heated with hot wood coals on the bottom. As the bread bakes, it peels away from the wall but doesn't fall. It's scraped off when it's done.

The best tanour material comes from plains near the holy city of Najaf, south of Baghdad, in an area called the Sea of Najaf.

Truck drivers demand about \$1,000 to bring in a load, a huge increase from years past because of the risks along the way from roadside bombs and other threats.

Jafar, who operates two workshops, one in Baghdad and the other in Kufa, near Najaf, has had to nearly double the price of an oven to pay for the increased expenses.

The clay is hard like stone when it arrives. Workers drop the clay into pools of water, where it liquefies overnight. "The second stage is to smash the mud with our feet to mix it very well," Jafar said.

Still, Jafar has more than made up for it with sales of the smaller, personal ovens. He sells six or seven a day at his Baghdad shop. (Wall inputs from Richard Mauer) - MCT

There have been recent setbacks for Jafar. In the past, many of his regular customers were traditionally bakers who whose large ovens sold for five times the price of a personal tanour. Sectarian violence has also killed that area of his sales.

"Most of the bakeries in Baghdad are closed from different reasons, either because the owners were displaced or because of the violence that targeted many bakeries," he said.

Still, Jafar has more than made up for it with sales of the smaller, personal ovens. He sells six or seven a day at his Baghdad shop. (Wall inputs from Richard Mauer) - MCT

Romania's shepherds wrestle with EU norms

By Luiza Ilie and Marius Zaharia



A lamb sleeps at a sheepfold in Bucharest. Romanian shepherds, have until July to meet EU rules or be banned from selling their products. Inset: A woman arranges a piece of traditional Romanian cheese at Obor market in Bucharest.

SERBAN Enescu is wondering how to bring milk coolers 1,500m up the Carpathian mountains to a sheepfold at the end of a rocky trail unreachable by car. His weatherbeaten face creases up as the Romanian shepherd ponders new food safety standards required by the European Union (EU), which Romania joined at the start of this year.

Likewise thousands of other Romanian shepherds, he has until July to meet EU rules or be banned from selling his products.

If that happens, Enescu and many like him will be forced to give up their sheep. Some, seeing no clear alternatives to preserve their traditional livelihood in this poor, mostly rural country say they will seek other jobs abroad.

"Shepherds are already leaving the mountains because of harsh conditions. Many are confused, they sell their sheep and migrate to Italy, France, Spain," said Eugen Gontea, head of the dairy farmers' association in central Romania Brasov county.

Like many other small-scale dairy farmers, Enescu has always made his cheese in mountain-top shacks, without electricity and running water, using wooden pots and recipes handed down for generations.

Many villagers still carve out a living by selling their products, such as branza de burduf - a very salty cheese pressed inside tree bark - at roadside stands to tourists.

"We knew harder conditions were looming once we joined the European community, but this dropped like a bomb," said Enescu, a 46-year-old veterinarian.

Now it risks losing EU export markets if food safety standards are not met - or safety EU cash payments cut

back if it fails to finish an operational database for animals, crops and land, called IACS.

To avoid sanctions, Romania has to overhaul the sector, tackling issues from animal genetics, feed, health and hygiene to technology upgrades in food collection, processing, storage and distribution. In the longer term it needs to consolidate thousands of tiny and unprofitable farms, to make agriculture efficient and less of a burden on state finances.

Data shows 85% of milk collected in Romania does not meet EU standards, and health officials say they see poisoning minor cases of food poisoning from cheese.

The July deadline is for shepherds to register with local health authorities, allow inspections at least once a year and meet EU health standards.

Dairy farmers, who unlike large processors rely on direct trade, will also be confined to

blame Bucharest's government for failing to ensure a smooth transition towards EU norms for some of the poorest Romanians.

EU diplomats warn the cheese-makers' struggle to meet EU standards could become a problem if it keeps making headlines, by fanning euro-scepticism and populist support for ultranationalist politicians now on the rise in Romania.

Romania should have paid more attention to the implications of EU legislation and negotiated better protection, longer transition periods, said one EU diplomat in Bucharest.

"The cheese-makers are one example but other issues will crop up," he said. Some rural dwellers can't see what all the fuss is about.

"We have made cheese for so many years and no one's died from it," said 53-year-old Dorica Cojano, a tiny, red-checked dairy farmer from Moccu. - Reuters

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Environment

Hidden eco-dangers of hydropower

By David Adam

THEY are considered a clean source of renewable energy and, to some, a model of sustainable development. Hydropower plants supply up to 8% of the electricity in power-hungry tropical countries such as Brazil, but their murky waters could harbour a dirty secret. Contrary to popular belief, and despite burning no fossil fuels, hydroelectric plants release millions of tonnes of polluting greenhouse gases into the atmosphere each year, as bacteria degrade the vegetation submerged in their giant reservoirs.

The UN has now pledged to tackle the issue, and with it the thorny question of whether some countries that have invested heavily in hydropower might have been better off buying coal and gas power stations instead. Before more hydropower systems are built in tropical zones, it wants experts to examine the emissions from existing schemes and to work out how to make them more environmentally friendly.

Mike Acreman, a professor at the UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology in Wallingford, Oxfordshire, says: "Perhaps hydropower is not as green as we thought. A lot of these tropical hydropower schemes would have been made by simply flooding a forest. There would have been a lot of trees and plants, and you need to think about what happens to all that carbon."

According to Vincent St Louis, a scientist at the University of Alberta, Canada, manmade reservoirs across the world – about a quarter of which feed hydroelectric dams – together release around 1bn tonnes of carbon dioxide (CO₂) each year. They also release some 700m tonnes of methane, a much more potent greenhouse gas. Over a hundred years, his figures suggest, these reservoirs will contribute about 7% of the global warming impact of all human activities. The hydropower industry disputes the impact of emissions from its reservoirs and argues that the results vary hugely from place to place.

The UN's initiative follows a summit meeting last year that brought industry experts, independent scientists and government officials together in an attempt to settle the arguments. The two-day meeting in Paris, organised by the Unesco International Hydrological Programme, concluded that methane emissions from existing reservoirs need to be urgently assessed.

A joint statement released after the meeting said: "A better understanding of the methane footprint of tropical reservoirs is required. From the point of view of power generation, the majority of the world's hydropower potential remains in the tropics. It is essential to close the knowledge gaps and establish best practice." The participants called for "a focused programme of field measurements that clearly define the methane footprint of existing and new reservoirs."

Typical of the problem is the 2500MW Balbina dam in Brazil, created to feed energy to the city of Manaus in the 1980s by flooding 2,500sq km of Amazonian rainforest. According to the International Rivers Network campaign group, greenhouse emissions from Balbina's shallow and carbon-rich reservoir are 25%-38% higher than from a comparable modern coal-fired power plant. A more efficient Amazonian hydropower plant at Tucuru, which generates almost 20 times as much electricity with a reservoir 3000 km smaller than Balbina, still has a greater global warming impact than a comparable gas power plant.

In 2000, the World Commission on Dams concluded: "In some cases, the gross emissions (from hydropower schemes) can be considerable, and possibly greater than the thermal (fossil fuel) alternatives." Philip Fearnside, a conservation biologist at the National Institute for Amazon Research, in Manaus, has studied the Balbina and Tucuru dams and says the problem could be worse than many scientists think. He calculates that typical tropical hydropower plant, over the first 10 years of its life, emits four times as much carbon as a comparable fossil fuel station. A separate study of Balbina found that such downstream emissions alone have the same greenhouse warming potential as 6% of the fossil fuels consumed by Sao Paulo, a city of more than 11m people. But other scientists have accused Fearnside and colleagues of exaggerating. – Guardian News & Media

Time Out

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Surfers pan British wave power project

Wave Hub's potential impact on greenhouse gases is of little consolation to Cornwall surfers who are worried about the energy of the waves, reports PETE HARRISON

A POLITICAL storm is looming over one of Britain's first wave power projects, the Wave Hub, which surfers fear will drain energy from the waves they ride along the Atlantic coast.

In one corner stand the local authorities and power companies, who say the \$49m experimental installation is vital to developing wave power systems and helping combat global warming.

In the other, the surfers of Cornwall on Britain's southwest peninsula, many of whom moved to the region specifically to catch those waves.

The European Union (EU) is hoping to slash greenhouse gas emissions by 20% by 2020; wave power is part of many efforts to reach that goal.

With an unusually high ratio of fanatics and a long history of campaigning against pollution, the surfing subculture knows how to make itself heard. But Wave Hub's potential impact on greenhouse gases has not won them over.

They say the installation, 16km off the popular holiday destination of St Ives, will cast a shadow across their favourite beaches, draining the waves of energy and cropping their height.

"We will not stand by and not fight this," said Ben Farwagi of the London Surf Club, a regular visitor to the region.

"This is not just about one pilot project," he added. "It could lead to a whole string of Wave Hubs up and down our coast."

Half-a-million surfers ride the waves which pound Britain's Atlantic and North Sea coasts, compared to around 35,000 in 1990, says the British Surfing Association (BSA).

The Wave Hub project envisages a giant electrical terminal on the sea bed linking four wave power generators to the national power grid.

Project manager Nick Harrington says the installation is vital to developing new wave power technology: Myanmar, in a bid to generate electricity, can come and test their machines," he said. "There is no other place like it in the world."

Wave Hub's backers say the installation will also generate up to 20MW of



A British surfer rides a wave on a surfboard in north Cornwall.

energy, enough to power 7,500 homes, or 3% of Cornwall's domestic energy needs.

"Allowing the power utilities to steal 20mw out of the wave energy of the north coast of Cornwall is a major loss of wave power," said John Baxendale,

an engineer by profession and a surfer for over 40 years.

He has sent a petition with over 600 signatures to government, urging further consultation with surfers.

Initial reports suggest wave heights could be cut by up to 11% in the west

affected area, Chapelporch, a renowned surfing beach backed by rugged granite cliffs and the ruins of discarded tin mines.

Surfing chaotrons – usually home to mellow banter about surfboard designs and camper vans – have now sprung to life with vigorous debate on energy security, carbon offsetting and Britain's nuclear future.

One thread on <http://www.alsurf.com> is entitled "The Global Warming Scam – Fact or Fiction?".

But some surfers find the whole debate shameful, especially where it has been reported in local media.

"Such stories make us all look selfish, and the whole sport appears to be self-obsessed and trite," said Alex Dick-Read, editor of *Surfer's Path* magazine.

Project manager Harrington said shipping companies and fishermen have posed the most serious objections, but added: "Objections from surfers have developed something of a head of steam."

Many of Cornwall's surfers have plenty at stake, having moved to the rain-lashed peninsula to chase the giant swells that surge out of the Atlantic.

"Imagine the uproar if golf courses were required to close two holes each in order to accommodate wind farms!" said Baxendale. "Surfers in favour of the Wave Hub does sound like turkeys voting for Christmas."

Harrington says a report out last week by oceanographer Kerry Black could add clarity to the debate, by offering a second opinion on the Wave Hub's impact on surfing waves. Baxendale, one of the more influential objectors, says he will stand by that report's findings.

"Kerry is of such standing that we feel bound to believe his conclusions," he said.

Alex Dick-Read at *Surfer's Path* hopes that when the dust settles, the British surfing subculture has not damaged its own image too badly.

"There'd be no need for a Wave Hub if we harnessed the energy from this enormous storm in a teacup," he added. – Reuters

Al Gore recruits climate change 'A-team'

By David Adam

THE scientists have warned of the dangers and the politicians have promised to act, but Al Gore is still not satisfied the world is taking climate change seriously enough. The answer, the former US vice-president has reasoned, could be Sir Alex Ferguson.

The Manchester United manager (coach) was one of 150 or so high-level individuals brought to Cambridge, England, last week to meet Gore, who taught them to deliver their own version of *An Inconvenient Truth*, his Oscar-winning film on global warming.

His other "climate leaders" included Vivienne Cox, chief executive of British Petroleum, and Father Sean McDonagh, a priest and eco-theologian. In a letter to each, Gore says: "I hope that you will be first among many deeply concerned citizens who will receive this training in the UK and spread the message to deal with this looming threat to our planet, neighbours and way of life."

Gore's campaign has won him legions of new admirers. But the world is a big place, the perit urgent and he has limited time and some believe he could have other things on his mind, such as another crack at the White House.

So he is reuniting an international army to complete his work. Nearly 1,000 people in the US and Australia have already been given the materials to present his slide show on the basics of global warming, on which *An Inconvenient Truth* is based. He is now drawing up plans for China, including, he jokes, how to stop speakers being arrested.

In Cambridge last week, executives from Shell, Barclays and Unilever mingled with those from the BBC, as well as green campaigners, teachers, councillors and scientists.

All first watched Gore give the presentation – slickly, wittily and totally without notes – at the town's Corn Exchange, and then joined him the next day to swap tips on how to maximize his performance for their own audiences. – Guardian News & Media

After Australia's Big Dry, the Big Wet

NATURE lovers are making their way to Australia's normally parched interior for what some believe is a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Huge monsoon rains in the north-east of the continent have swollen streams into raging rivers that are gushing over the flats of Lake Eyre in outback South Australia.

Lake Eyre is usually just a 9,600sq km salt flat. It has only filled four times in the last 150 years. In 1974, the last big flood, the water level rose to a depth of 5.7m.

It's not the body of water that intrepid tourists come to see but the birdlife attracted to the emerging food bowl. The rash of water hatches the tiny creatures that fish feed on. In turn, water birds – pelicans, swans, cormorants and ducks – fly in by the hundreds of thousands to feast on the fish.

Most of the visitors are "birdwatchers" – birdwatchers keen enough to go anywhere and suffer the most inhospitable conditions to tick off those species they haven't yet seen. "I think they find it quite curious that in the dry heat of Australia there's a large amount of water heading down there," charter pilot Trevor Wright said.

"Water is a major topic with everyone these days and I think people see this water that has fallen in north-west Queensland – it's unique how it's just going down through this channel system through the swamps and then into Lake Eyre."

Wright, who is based in the hamlet of Willa Creek, said it was too soon to say whether Lake Eyre would fill to its brim as it did in 1974. But there are lots of small bodies of water in the system and they are certain to be inundated.

It all depends if the heavy rain comes, whether the whole system will fill. The brave are not waiting. Wright tells of taking parties out over the expanse of the lake to watch the waters flooding through from the north. It's a truly magnificent sight. – DPA



April bloom ... Visitors walk around the tidal basin during the annual Cherry Blossom Festival in Washington DC. According to the National Park Service, the trees are at the peak of their Spring bloom this month.

Thailand pins hopes on deadly nuts for biofuel

By Thanaporn Promyayai

ON A large tract of land in Thailand's dusty northeast, Suwit Yotongyot makes a fortune from jatropa, a plant with a poisonous nut that might hold the key to the nation's energy troubles.

The flowering bush has long been used as live fencing in dry regions around the world. But it's the deadly black nuts that have caught the attention of scientists who say that it could help produce biodiesel and ease Thailand's reliance on imported oil. The nuts are more than 30% oil, which burns with a clear flame, producing a fraction of the emissions of traditional diesel.

As a bonus, the oil can be used in simple diesel engines without refining, just by mixing it with fuel. Suwit says the bushes are easy to grow, start producing nuts quickly, and are resistant to drought – a key feature in Thailand's arid northeast where rains are often inadequate.

Now he's trying to convince local villagers to use jatropa oil as fuel for their tractors as it is cheaper than normal diesel. "The entrepreneurs in the area are not willing to reduce their costs when they're farming their agricultural products," said Suwit, a former adviser to

the agriculture ministry. Eventually, he hopes Thailand will follow India, Indonesia and the Philippines in pursuing development of jatropa to turn the nut into a viable fuel source.

Pichai Tinsuntisook, a businessman who heads the Renewable Energy Industry Club, said jatropa was more promising as a fuel than palm oil, which countries around the region are also investigating as an alternative energy source.

"Jatropa oil can go directly into a tractor, without direct use of palm oil will harm the engine," he said. Residue from the pressed nuts can also be burned for fuel, he said, citing research that found cake from 2,000 acres of pressed nuts could power a 1MW electricity plant enough for 400 families.

But Thailand, like other countries in the region, faces a chicken-or-egg issue in promoting jatropa. Farmers are reluctant to grow it, because there's no market for its use. But government is reluctant to promote because of the small supply of nuts, he said.

Consequently, Thailand has only 20,000 acres are planted with jatropa, mainly in the arid northeast and north. The government may be changing its tune. Both ousted prime

minister Thaksin Shinawatra and his army-installed successor, Surayud Chulanont, have aggressively searched for new energy sources.

Thailand imports almost all the oil it needs for energy, making it especially vulnerable to rising oil prices. The country is embarking on an ambitious series of dam projects across the border in military-ruled Myanmar, in a bid to generate hydro-electricity that would be brought back home.

Wal-Mart cutting energy use – and its bills

By Jim Downing

STORE manager Joe Sanders squinted up at the sunny rectangles that march across the ceiling of the Wal-Mart in Dixon. "I really didn't believe in the skylights at first," he said.

It's a simple concept, now standard in new Wal-Marts: Let the sun shine on the store floor, dim the fluorescent bulbs and cut daytime lighting costs by as much as 80%.

But it hasn't been without hassles. ("The lights) used to go completely out," Sanders said. When he took over his first store with skylights, in Palmdale, California, in 2005, a bug in the control system for the overhead lights left things gloomy.

For Sanders, though, just flipping on the lights wasn't an option. His job depended on making the skylight system work as intended: The store's electric bill was part of its performance review. "The home office is really pushing this," he said.

Looking to reduce operational costs, boost a public image scarred by criticism of its labour practices and aggressive expansion, and reverse a long – if gradual – stock slide, Wal-Mart has over the past year taken on climate-friendly initiatives as both a rallying cry and a business strategy.

With more than 3,900 stores and distribution centres across the US, Wal-Mart is the country's biggest electricity user outside the federal government. As public and government concern about global warming grows, Wal-Mart and many other businesses are taking stock of their greenhouse gas footprint.

Rules to cut emissions aren't far away. California's climate change regulations are set to take effect in 2010. The federal government may soon follow suit: House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-California, has vowed to introduce a climate-change bill by July 4.

With that outlook, businesses around the country are examining how they can both cut their emissions and remain competitive. In the retail sector, Wal-

Mart and key competitors like Target Corp have already done a lot: skylights, re-jiggered refrigeration systems and new air conditioning units – all of which let stores use less power.

That means lower electricity bills, which often make up a big chunk of operating costs.

"We would be missing out on a huge opportunity," by ignoring energy efficiency, said Wal-Mart vice-president Charles Zimmerman.

By 2012, the company has promised, existing stores will generate on average 20% less greenhouse gas emissions than in 2005. Emissions tied to newly constructed stores ultimately will be as little as half that of old models.

Cutting the first 10% or 20% of electricity consumption is relatively straightforward, Zimmerman said. Going further means getting creative.

In the future, motion-detectors may switch on display lights only when a customer is near. Dark-coloured "solar walls" may gather the sun's energy on cold days and use it to heat the store. Meat and

cheese displays may be covered by doors to keep the cold air from escaping.

Those plans have drawn praise from national environmental groups. And state regulators charged with implementing California's greenhouse-gas reduction target – a 15% cut by 2020 – are looking to Wal-Mart for leadership.

At a recent climate-change conference in Sacramento, Zimmerman's presentation of Wal-Mart's efforts fairly stole the show. "It's the most inspiring talk I've ever seen," said California Energy Watcher Art Rosenfeld.

Environmental groups echo that endorsement of the efficiency programmes, though they reserve the right to criticise other aspects of Wal-Mart's operations. "This is not a blanket endorsement of corporate policy at Wal-Mart," said Ralph Cavanna, an energy programme co-director at the Natural Resources Defense Council. But is Wal-Mart serious on the issue of energy efficiency? "We think it is." – The Sacramento Bee/MCT

	SUPER MOVIES	STAR MOVIES	ESPN SPORTS	FOX SPORTS	HOLLYWOOD CH.	ZEE TV	DISCOVERY CH.	STAR PLUS
	0500 Warriors Of Terra 3 0700 Around The World In 80 Days 2 0900 The Marilyn Hotchkiss Ballroom Dancing & Charm School 2 1100 Notebook 3	0500 Disorganized Crime 0645 Home For The Holidays 0820 Heaven Thriller 1998 18 1000 Spring Horse 1145 Mr Holland's Opus	0500 Baseball Tonight Live 0600 ESPN Soccernet 0630 Bidding Wars 0700 American Tractor 0730 Spring Horse Racing Wood Memorial 0830 Boost 0900 Major League Soccer DC United Colorado Rapids 1130 Grand Prix Sailing Tour 1200 Masters Golf Films	0500 Major League Soccer 0500 Deportivo Chivas USA At Toronto FC 0600 Fox Soccer Report 0800 Major League Baseball New York Mets At Atlanta Braves 1230 The Masters Round 3 Augusta, Ga	0500 Fashion Television Special 0600 Loud 0630 Rapcity 0700 The World This Week 0730 Originals In Art 0800 Arts & Minds 0830 Muchmusic Video Flow 0900 Star! Daily 0930 Mmmprofile 1000 The Art Of Architecture 1030 D 1100 One Hit Wonders 1200 Speakeasy Chat Show	0500 Bayless Conley 0525 Exposure Jhalak 0530 Maa 0555 Exposure Ek Nazar 0600 Maa 0630 Jai Ganesh 0725 Exposure Ek Nazar 0730 Ravan 0825 Exposure Ek Nazar 0830 Jeena Isi Ka Naam Hai 0855 Exposure Jhalak 0900 Jeena Isi Ka Naam Hai 0930 Antakshari 0855 Exposure Ek Nazar 1000 Khana Khazana 1025 Exposure Ek Nazar 1030 Best Of SRGMP	0510 Dirty Jobs 0605 Mythbusters 0700 Building The Ultimate 0730 Massive Engines 0755 Junkyard Wars 0830 The Complete Angler 0920 Lake Escapes 0945 John Lydon's Mega Bugs 1010 Dangers 1105 Trailblazers 1200 Building the Ultimate 1230 Massive Engines 1255 Junkyard Wars	0530 Pritviraj Chauhan 0600 Baa Bahoo Aur Baby 0630 Star Bestsellers 0730 Kayamath 0800 Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi 0830 Great Indian Laughter Challenge 0930 Musafir Hoon Yaaron 1000 Hum Ho Gaya Aap Ke
	1300 Cool Money 3 1500 Company Man 2 1700 White Oleander 2	1410 Truth 1545 The Long Weekend 1715 Home For The Holidays 1850 Like Mike 2	1300 Sportscenter Short 1400 Masters Golf Tournament 3rd Round 1730 Spring Horse Racing Wood Memorial-RP 1830 NCAA Hockey Frozen Four Championship Repeat	1330 ICC Cricket World Cup 2007 Highlights Super Eight Series, B2 V A2 Guyana 1630 IC Cricket World Cup 2007 Super Eight Series, A1 V C2 1st Session Antigua & Barbuda	1300 Best! Movies! Ever! 1330 TVrimes 1400 The Art Of Architecture 1430 Muchmusic Video Flow 1500 Star! Daily 1530 Bi! Hollywood Countdown 1600 Making It 1630 I Heart 1700 Behind The Movies 1730 Action 1800 The R List 1830 The Punk Show	1315 Exposure Ek Nazar 1500 Betyaan 1520 Babushah India 1635 How It's Made 1700 The Greatest Ever 1800 Biker Build-Off	1350 Brainiac 1445 Stunt Junkies 1540 Men In White 1635 How It's Made 1700 The Greatest Ever 1800 Biker Build-Off	1300 Kehta Hai Dil 1400 Thodi Si Zameen 1540 Thoda Sa Asman 1500 Lucky 1600 Baa Bahoo Aur Baby 1630 Aek Chabhi Hai Pados Mein 1730 Sai Baba 1830 Pritviraj Chauhan
	1900 Funky Monkey 2 2100 Dead Mary 3 2300 The Last Sect New RX 0100 They 3 0300 White Oleander 2	2030 Bruce Almighty 2215 Under The Tuscan Sun 0010 Heaven Thriller 1998 18 0150 Truth 0325 Hollywood Shootouts 0355 First Encounter	2130 Masters Golf Tournament Final Round Live 0200 NCAA 0300 ESPN's Major League Baseball Boston Red Sox At Texas Rangers Live	2015 Lurching ICC Cricket World Cup 2007 Highlights Super Eight Series, B2 V A2 From Guyana 2106 ICC Cricket World Cup 2007 Super Eight Series, A1 V C2 2nd Session Antigua & Barbuda 0300 Major League Soccer Club Deportivo Chivas USA At Toronto FC 0200 Golf Central 0300 The Golf Channel TBA	1900 Mmmprofile 1930 The Newmusic 2200 Video On Trial 2030 Muchmusic Video Flow 2100 Star! Daily 2130 Start At The Movies 2200 In Fashion 2230 Fashiontelevision 2300 Everything 0000 Muchmusic Video 0100 The World This Week 0130 Originals In Art 0200 Arts & Minds 0230 Muchmusic Video Flow 0300 Star! Daily 0330 Mmmprofile 0400 The Art Of Architecture	2130 Bidwin 2155 Exposure Jhalak 2200 Global Telemall 2230 Sales Slot 2300 Sales Slot Flip Play TV 0000 Kasamh Se 0030 Mamma 0100 Saath Phere 0130 Jab Love Hua 0200 Urj 0230 Narseva Narayan Seva 0300 Meditation 0330 Bhagwat Katha 0400 Bhakti Geet	1900 Rides 2000 American Chopper 2100 Brainiac 2200 Men In White 2300 A Haunting 0000 Perfect Disaster 0100 When Disaster Strikes 0200 Final 24	1900 Baa Bahoo Aur Baby 1930 Thodi Si Zameen Thoda Sa Asman 2030 Lucky 2130 Krishna Arjun 2230 Kyun Hota Hai Pyar 2230 Star Bestsellers 2330 The Medhe Sapney 0000 Sashhhh... Koi Hai 0100 Shararat - Thoda Thoda Thodi Naz 0130 Sonpari 0200 Shagun 0230 Shaad Number One 0300 Kayamath 0330 Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi
	0530 Fun Club 0630 Advance Booking 0705 Dhoom Machadhey Dhoom 0805 Fun Club 1005 Tharparker 1030 Adim Online 1105 Applause	0500 Third Watch 0600 GMA Recorded 0700 Inside The Actors Studio 0800 Smallville 0900 All My Children 1000 Everwood 1100 Crossing Jordan 1200 All My Children	0500 The Adventures Of The Bush Patrol 0530 High Flyers 0600 Sleepover Club 0630 Explorations 0700 The Why Why Family 0725 Digdigs 0730 Lift! Bits 0815 Rainbow Brits 0845 Sylvanian Families 0900 Lady Lovely Locks 0925 Princess Tenko 0945 Little Mermaid 1010 Pinness Sissi 1025 The Why Why Family 1120 Digdigs 1145 Lift! Bits 1205 Rainbow Brits 1230 Sylvanian Family 1255 Jin Jin And The Panda Patrol	0500 BBC News, Weather 0530 Paschard's People 0600 BBC News, Weather 0630 This Week 0700 BBC News 0730 Rising Tide 0800 Super Eight Series, B2 V A2 From Guyana 0900 BBC News, Weather 0930 Paschard's People 1000 BBC News 1030 The World Uncovered 1100 BBC News, Weather 1130 Reporters 1200 BBC News 1230 Rising Tide	0500 MSNBC Countdown W.K. Obermann 0600 NBC Nightly News 0630 ABC World News 0700 MSNBC News 0800 ABC World News 1030 NBC Nightly News 1100 MSNBC News 1200 ABC World News 1230 BBC Panorama	0500 This Week At War 0600 World News 0630 World Sport 0700 World News 0730 World Report 0800 World News 0830 International Correspondents 0900 News Special 1000 World News 1030 Living Golf 1100 World News 1130 World Sport 1200 Larry King	0510 Kim Possible 0535 Recess 0600 Quack Pack 0625 House Of Mouse 0650 Tarzan 0715 Lilo And Stich 0740 Brandy And Mr Whiskers 0800 The Replacements 0825 Fairly Odd Parents 0850 Emperor's New School 0900 Bambi 2 1010 Recess Animation 1025 Kim Possible 1050 American Dragon 1115 Classic Cartoons 1130 Kronk's New Groove 1240 Classic Cartoons 1245 Golf Troop	0500 Remote Control 0600 Parental Control #14 0630 Double Shot 0650 America's Next Top Model S7 #7 0800 The James Dickson Modeling Agency #5 0830 Breaking Up With Shannen Doherty #8 0930 Remote Control 1000 The Ticket 1100 Soundtracks 1120 [V] Special Take That Live In Taipei
	1405 Dr Love 1430 Khajoor 1505 Terry Ishq Mein 1605 Fun Club 1730 Pyaar Kahani 1805 Pyaar Kahani Ye Dil	1300 The O.C. 1400 Inside The Actors Studio 1500 GMA Live 1600 Smallville 1700 Crossing Jordan 1800 Law & Order	1320 Oliver Twist 1345 Eek The Cat 1410 Heathcliff 1455 The Why Why Family 1520 Digdigs 1545 Lift! Bits 1610 Rainbow Brits 1635 Sylvanian Families 1700 Camp Candy 1725 The Adventures Of Pinochio 1750 Peter Pan And The Pirates 1815 Dennis	1300 BBC News, Weather 1330 This Week 1400 BBC News, Weather 1430 Equestrian World 1500 BBC News 1510 Are We Changing Planet Earth? 1615 Sport Today 1630 Paschard's Big Gamble 1700 BBC News 1705 Have Your Say 1800 BBC News, Weather 1830 Dateline London	1400 MSNBC Tucker Weekend 1430 MSNBC Your Business 1500 NBC Weekend Today Show 1600 NBC Meet The Press 1700 MSNBC Live 1800 ABC This Week	1300 World News 1330 World Sport 1400 Recess 1430 Inside The Middle East 1500 World News 1530 World Sport 1600 Inside Africa 1630 Living Golf 1700 World News 1730 The Daily Show With Jon Stewart... 1800 Late Edition	1315 Quack Pack 1340 Tarzan 1400 Recess 1425 Emperor's New School 1445 Brandy And Mr Whiskers 1510 Golf Troop 1535 House Of Mouse 1600 Lady And The Tramp 2 1705 Classic Cartoons 1720 Brandy And Mr Whiskers Splits 1735 Lloyd In Space 1800 Kim Possible 1820 Recess 1845 Classic Cartoons	1300 [V] Rated Weekend 1305 Kylie Showgirl 1330 Homecoming Tour 1500 Double Shot 1530 Fashion TV 1600 Parental Control #14 1630 Double Shot 1700 America's Next Top Model S7 #7 1800 For The Record Take That 1815 Double Shot
	1905 Dhoom Machadhey 2005 Applause 2130 Advance Booking 2230 Pyaar Kahani 2305 Advance Booking 2330 Songs 0005 Khajoor 0030 Khunwab 0105 Songs 0130 Safaid Posh 0230 Applause	1900 West Wing 2000 Without A Trace 2100 Related 2200 Supernatural 0000 Nip/Tuck 0100 Related 0200 Supernatural 0400 CSI	2000 Skate 2030 The Tribe 2100 The Adventures Of The Bush Patrol 2130 High Flyers 2200 Sleepover Club 2230 Explorations 2330 The Adventures Of The Bush Patrol 0000 Skate 0030 The Tribe 0100 The Adventures Of The Bush Patrol 0130 High Flyers 0200 Sleepover Club 0230 Explorations	1900 BBC News, Weather 1930 Paschard's People 2000 BBC News 2030 The World Uncovered 2115 Sport Today 2130 News Your Say 2200 BBC News 2210 Are We Changing Planet Earth? 2300 BBC News 2330 Panama's Big Gamble 0000 BBC News, Weather 0030 Dateline London 0100 BBC News, Weather 0130 Asia Today 0145 Asia Business Report 0200 BBC News, Weather 0230 Asia Today 0245 Asia Business Report 0300 BBC News, Weather 0330 Asia Today 0345 Reporters	1900 NBC Meet The Press 2100 ABC This Week 2200 NBC Meet The Press 2300 MSNBC Countdown W.K. Obermann 0000 ABC This Week 0100 ABC World News 0130 NBC Nightly News 0200 NBC Meet The Press 0300 ABC This Week 0400 NBC Nightly News 0430 ABC World News	2000 World News 0720 Inside The Middle East 2045 Fairly Odd Parents 2100 Phil Of The Future 2125 Boy Meets World 2200 News Special 2230 World News 2330 World Sport 0000 World's Untold Stories 0100 The Daily Show With Jon Stewart... 0130 CNN Today 0430 World Sport	1900 High Schools Musical 2045 Fairly Odd Parents 2100 Phil Of The Future 2125 Boy Meets World 2200 Classic Cartoons 2250 Quack Pack 2275 House Of Mouse 2350 Tarzan 2315 Lilo And Stich 2340 Brandy And Mr Whiskers 0025 The Replacements 0050 Emperor's New School 0100 Kim Possible 0125 American Dragon 0150 Classic Cartoons 0225 Tarzan 0250 Recess	1900 The Ticket 1930 Global Business 2000 Rock Show 2030 Flava 2100 [V] Special Take That Live In Taipei 2230 The Record Shop 2300 Politics UK 2330 Double Shot 0000 Rock Show 0030 Flava 0050 Breaking Up With Shannen Doherty #8 0130 Double Shot 0200 America's Next Top Model S7 #7 0300 For The Record Take That 0415 Double Shot 0330 Fashion File 0400 Double Shot - 90's

RADIO STATIONS	QBS ENGLISH SERVICE	ties and events; Music; Schedule of the day	2200 National Anthem	2100 Isai Malai 2130 Uraavum Padalum 2215 Ragneratham 2300 Songs	1210 Alukkas Nammal Thammil 1300 Asiant Varthakal 1302 Aappatt Geestanjali 1400 Asiant Varthakal 1405 Hello Friends 1425 Poomuttukal 1440 Athidhi 1500 News Headline 1502 Ganapatharam 1555 Islamic Quiz 1600 Vriathanam 1615 Tamil Malai 1645 Tomorrow's Programme 1650 Asiant Varthakal/close	0700 World News 0705 World Briefing 0720 Sports Roundup 0730 Reporting Religion 0800 World News 0805 World Today 0830 Politics UK 0900 World News 0905 The World Today 0930 The Instant Guide 0945 Over To You 1000 World News 1005 Documentary: Global Perspective 1030 Heart and Soul 1100 World News 1105 Global Business 1135 Reporting Religion 1200 World News 1205 World Briefing 1230 The Interview 1240 Over To You 1300 World News 1500 World News 1505 Newshour 1600 World News 1605 ClimateChange 1700 World News 1705 Have Your Say	1800 World News 1805 Global Business 1830 The Instant Guide 1840 Over To You 1900 World News 1905 Sportsworld 2000 World News 2005 World Briefing 2030 World Business Review 2100 World News 2105 Climate Change 2200 World News 2205 The Word 2235 Wurm's Urban Groove 2300 World News 2305 Newshour 0000 World News 0005 World Briefing 0010 Sports Roundup 0040 Politics UK 0100 World News 0105 World Briefing 0120 World Business Report 0130 Charlie Gillett's World Of Music 0200 World News 0205 The Word 0235 Wurm's Urban Groove 0300 World News
	0600 The Holy Qur'an and Its Translation 0615 The Breakfast Show (News Summary 7.00) 0845 Arabic/Islamic Programme 0900 London Line 1000 Midday Show 1100 News Summary 1150 Midday Show (cont) 1300 The News 1315 French Transmission 1600 Hooked On Classic 1700 Evening Show 1800 The News 1815 Evening Show Contd 2000 News Summary 2005 World Chart Show 2200 Music In Stereo	1330 News; Qatari press review; Number 1 1345 Destination Paris 1415 French/English musical programme 1530 News Flash 1535 Music and rhythm of the world 1600 Back to English Service 1858 Opening Music 1900 Opening & Holy Qur'an 1910 Hamd or Na'at 1915 Islamic Heritage 1930 News 1945 Sports Roundup Obaid Tahir 2000 Saada Bahaar Nisarar Ansaari 2100 Aisa Keilon Dr Fozia Shafeeq	0500 Manjuruikum Pular Kalam 0530 Life Magazine 0605 Keralaeyam 0700 Sarasakeralam 0800 Hello Rainbow 0900 GNG 1000 Comedy Serial 1030 Alukas 1100 Daily Diary 1102 Snehathe thille 1330 Aardrabhavangal 1357 Nam Engottu 1420 Atlas Daily SI 1500 Viva Dhapanarvam 1530 Quiz Time 1600 Kerala Link 1605 Suvarna Nakshtram 1702 Snehathe thille 1800 Hotline 1900 Sneha Sandeshan 2000 Nenchil Ninte Rangam	0600 Opening, Visvasa Deepthi 0615 Today's Programmes 0620 Asiant Varthakal 0630 Udayavangal 0730 Sreekandan Nair Show 0800 Suprabhatam 0855 Charithrathil Innu 0900 Tele Quiz 0930 Daily Serial 1000 News Headline 1002 Navageetham 1020 Tharapadham 1100 News Headline 1102 Anthakshri 1130 K M Trading Couples 1200 Asiant Varthakal	0500 World News 0505 The World Today 0530 The Interview 0600 World News 0605 World Briefing 0630 Heart and Soul	0700 World News 0705 World Briefing 0720 Sports Roundup 0730 Reporting Religion 0800 World News 0805 World Today 0830 Politics UK 0900 World News 0905 The World Today 0930 The Instant Guide 0945 Over To You 1000 World News 1005 Documentary: Global Perspective 1030 Heart and Soul 1100 World News 1105 Global Business 1135 Reporting Religion 1200 World News 1205 World Briefing 1230 The Interview 1240 Over To You 1300 World News 1500 World News 1505 Newshour 1600 World News 1605 ClimateChange 1700 World News 1705 Have Your Say	1800 World News 1805 Global Business 1830 The Instant Guide 1840 Over To You 1900 World News 1905 Sportsworld 2000 World News 2005 World Briefing 2030 World Business Review 2100 World News 2105 Climate Change 2200 World News 2205 The Word 2235 Wurm's Urban Groove 2300 World News 2305 Newshour 0000 World News 0005 World Briefing 0010 Sports Roundup 0040 Politics UK 0100 World News 0105 World Briefing 0120 World Business Report 0130 Charlie Gillett's World Of Music 0200 World News 0205 The Word 0235 Wurm's Urban Groove 0300 World News

Listings	Television							
	BBC PRIME	NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC	STAR WORLD	GRANADA UK	SHOW MOVIES1	MGM	SHOW MOVIES2	SUN TV
5am to 1pm	0630 Balamory 0650 Tweenies 0710 Big Cook Little Cook 0730 Tikikabilla 0800 Razzledazzle 0815 Tweenies 0835 Balamory 0855 Teletubbies 0920 Roly Mo Show 0935 Andy Pandey 0940 Big Cook Little Cook 1000 Cash In The Attic 1030 Escape To The Country 1130 Garden Invaders 1200 Eastenders	0500 Megastructures 0600 Megabridges 0630 Predators At War 0700 Going To More Extremes 0800 Naked Science S2 0830 Mad Labs 0930 I Didn't Know That 1000 Showreal Asia S3 1100 Seconds From Disaster S3 1200 Is It Real?	0600 Rodney 0630 Hollywood 0700 Shootout 0730 Prehistoric Park 0930 Still Standing 0930 My Name Is Earl 1000 Fashion House 1100 Miss Match 1200 J.A.G	0600 Always & Every-one (Series 1) 0700 Emeraldale 0930 Faith In The Future (Series 1) 1000 A Fine Romance (Series 3) 1030 Watching (Series 1) 1100 Auf Wiederseh'n Pet (Series 2) 1200 Saturday TV Movie <i>The Stupids</i>	0600 The Ballad Of Jack And Rose 0800 Sister Act 1000 Sister Act 2 1200 Are We There Yet?	0525 Jinxed! 0705 Bound For Glory 0930 One More Time 1105 The McKenzie Break 1250 Gaily, Gaily	0530 The Ring Two 0730 The Aviator 1015 Tekwar 1200 War Of The Worlds	0630 Meendum Meendum Sirripu 0700 Top 10 Movies 0730 Puduya Raagangal 0800 Lingal Choice 0830 Arattai Arangam 0900 Movie 1100 Afternoon Bulletin 1115 Movie contd... 1200 Neengal Kaetta Paadal 1230 Sunday Samaiyal
1pm to 7pm	1300 Deep Blue 1430 Wildlife 1500 Ballykissangel 1600 Down To Earth 1700 What Not To Wear Dresses Up 1800 The Monastery	1300 Mad Labs 1330 I Didn't Know That 1400 Megastructures 1500 Seconds From Disaster S3 1600 World's Deadliest Animals 1700 Seconds From Disaster S3 1800 Is It Real?	1300 Prison Break 1400 Ghost Hunters 1500 The Apprentice 1600 Falcon Beach 1700 Business Week Asia 1730 Travel Asia 1800 Dance Fever	1400 Always & Every-one (Series 1) 1500 Coronation Street 1730 In Loving Memory (Series 4) 1800 William And Mary (Series 3)	1400 Duel 1530 Forty Pounds Of Trouble 1730 Joyeux Noel	1435 The 60's 1640 How I Won The War 1830 Convicts	1430 Cider House Rules 1700 Gorillas In The Mist	1300 Thirai Vimarasanam 1330 Movie 1600 Evening News 1630 Movie contd... 1700 Jolly Wood Express 1730 Evening News 1800 Super 10 1830 Anbudan
7pm to 5am	1900 Eastenders 1930 Eastenders 2000 Child Of Our Time 2100 The Monastery 2200 The Ship 2300 Son Of God 0000 Marie Antoinette 0100 Eastenders 0130 Eastenders 0200 Child Of Our Time 2005	1900 Wild Sex 2000 World's Deadliest Animals 2100 Seconds From Disaster S3 2200 Is It Real? 2300 Wild Sex 0000 Mad Labs 0030 I Didn't Know That 0100 Megastructures 0200 Seconds From Disaster S3 0300 Triumph Of Life	1930 Malcolm In The Middle 2000 Oprah Prime Time 2100 Fashion House 2200 Boston Legal 2300 The Simpsons 2330 Malcolm In TH 0000 Oprah Prime Time 0100 Fashion House 0200 Seconds From Disaster S3 0300 Dance Fever	1900 Fortysomething 2000 Sunday TV Movie <i>Bertie And Elizabeth</i> 2200 Rising Damp (Series 3) 2300 Doctor In The House (Series 1) 2300 Coronation Street In Loving Memory (Series 4) 0200 William And Mary (Series 3) 0300 Fortysomething	1930 Are We There Yet? 2130 Spanglish 0000 Broken Flowers 0200 Closer	2000 Popi 2150 The Girl In A Swing 2345 Sayonara 0210 The Siege Of Fire base Gloria	1930 War Of The Worlds 2200 Cider House Rules 0000 The Two Jakes 0230 Dogville	1930 Comedy Time 2000 Thirai Cholai 2030 Vanthamm Varuvathum 2100 News In Tamil 2200 Thirai Masala 0300 News In Tamil 0330 Putham Puduhsu 0400 Putham Puthu Paadal
5am to 1pm	0630 Europe This Week 0700 Business In Arabia 0730 Wall Street 0800 Journal Report 0830 Business In Turkey 0830 Business In Arabia 0900 Teleshopping 0930 Christian Programming 1030 Business In Turkey 1100 Christian Programming 1200 Teleshopping 1230 World Business	0830 CBS News 0900 Sunrise	NO TRANSMISSION	0635 Asianet Music Live 0730 Bombay Masala 0800 Kutikattil dot com 0830 Movie 0900 Asianet Varthakal 1100 Mega Show Continue... 1130 Interview with Tamil Superstar Vijay 1200 Cinema Diary 1230 Your Choice	0700 Araham 0930 101 All Time 1030 Greatest Comedy 1030 Zameen	0730 Bottle Top Bill 0745 Lunar Jim 0800 Barney 0830 Blues Clues 0900 Connie The Cow 0915 Pingu 0930 Koala Brothers 1000 Thomas & Friends 1015 Postman Pat 1030 Bottle Top Bill 1045 Lunar Jim 1100 A House That's Just Like Yours 1130 Hi 5 1200 Tracey Mcbean 1230 Danny Phantom	0700 Puthumai Pengal 0730 Idu Enna Galatta 0800 Sirkalam Vaanga 0830 Movie: <i>Karagattakaran</i> 0900 Song Sequence 1000 Song Sequence 1030 Movie: <i>Kalyana Galatta</i>	0530 Rasi Chakra 0600 Vasthavam 0630 Thaal 0700 Puthiya Pattukal 0730 Thirai Cholai 0800 Film Express 0830 Movie: <i>Mayilattam</i> 1100 News 1115 Movie contd... 1130 Sensations 1200 Tharika 1230 Vanitha Film Awards 2006
1pm to 7pm	1300 Christian Programming 1400 The Mclaughlin Group 1430 Business In Arabia 1500 CNBC Sports	1300 Sunday Live With Adam Boulton 1500 Sky News On The Hour 1700 News, Sport, Weather	1500 Holy Qur'an 1530 Garfield 1600 Marsipilami 1630 Play with me Sesame 1700 Pit Pony 1730 Technology Today 1845 Natural World 14 Eps	1300 Nombarpoovu - story so far 1330 Sunday Movie 1555 Munchi 1600 Newstime 1630 Movie Continue... 1700 SIB Quiz 06 1730 Saregama padhanisa 1800 Minnum Tharam	1430 Sarfarosh 1800 SFK International Grand Finale	1300 Yakkity Yak 1330 Hey Arnold 1400 Spongebob Squarepants 1430 All Grown Up 1500 Tracey Mcbean 1530 Danny Phantom 1600 Blues Clues 1630 Koala Brothers 1700 Barney 1730 Hi 5 1800 Fraggle Rock 1830 Jungle Run	1300 Song Sequence 1330 Velicham 1400 Movie: <i>Chinna Raja</i> 1630 Comedy Court down 1700 Hollywood Times 1730 Movie	1530 News 1600 Movie contd... 1630 Star Talk 1700 Melody 1730 Armmayachan 1800 Urangatha Veedu 1800 Jolly Wood Junction 1830 Krishnapaksham
7pm to 5am	1900 Meet The Press 2000 Conversations With Michael Eisner 2100 The Mclaughlin Group 2130 Questions For The Future 2200 The Tonight Show With Jay Leno 2245 Late Night With Conan O'Brien 2330 World Business 0000 The Mclaughlin Group	2000 Live At Five 2200 Sky News On The Hour 0100 Sky News At Ten 0130 Sportsline 0200 Sky News On The Hour 0330 CBS News 0400 Sky News On The Hour	1945 Empty Nest 2030 Trans World Sports 2130 The District 2200 English News 2215 Feature Film 0000 Transmission of Al-Jazeera Channel	1900 Cinemata 1930 ICC World Cup Update 2000 Asianet Varthakal 2030 MunshiRepeat 2035 Chiriyarangu April 1st - Fools Day 2105 Your Choice 2135 Home Sweet Home 2200 Gulf News 2230 Sahasikante LokamRepeat	2030 Hero No 1 2355 V Trailers 0000 101 All Time 0000 Greatest Comedy 0030 Laawaris	1900 Darcy's Wild Life 1930 My Parents Are Aliens 2000 Tracey Mcbean 2100 Danny Phantom 2130 Yakkity Yak 2200 Hey Arnold 2230 Spongebob Squarepants 2300 All Grown Up 2330 Blues Clues 0000 Koala Brothers 0030 Thomas & Friends 0045 Postman Pat	2000 Sirripu Vedigal 2030 Movie: <i>Manavite Oru Manthri</i> 2300 Song Sequence 0200 News 0230 Song Sequence 0430 Movie	1900 Vellithira 1930 Tharika 2000 News 2030 Manoyanam 2100 Movie: Johnny 2330 Surya Music 0330 Life In The Word 0400 Miracles In Rosary

All programmes are subject to change.

INFORMATION

PRAYER TIME

Fajr 4.01am, Shoroq (sunrise) 5.19am, Zuhr (noon) 11.36am, Asr (afternoon) 3.05pm, Maghreb (sunset) 5.54pm, Isha (night) 7.24pm.

DONA ZOO

Open from 8am to 12 noon and 2.30pm to 7pm daily. Tuesdays are reserved for women. Friday for general public in the afternoon only.

CONSUMER COMPLAINTS

Tel: 4408555

HOSPITALS

Visiting Hours: Hamad General Hospital, Women's Hospital and Rumailah Hospital: 6am to 7.30am, 4pm to 8pm.

HELP LINE

Is drinking a problem for you or someone you love? Call Alcoholics Anonymous: 5605901

LATEST DVD, VIDEO RELEASES

ENGLISH: *Casino Royale* (Daniel Craig); *The Devil Wears Prada* (Meryl Streep); *End Game* (Cuba Gooding Jr); *Feast*

(Duane Whitaker, Hannah Schick); *Asterix and the Vikings* (cartoon); *Stick It* (Jeff Bridges); *Unknown* (Jim Caviezel, Greg Kinnear); *Saw* (Shawnee Smith, Bahar Soomekh); *Pokémon: Destiny Devoxy's Open Season* (Animation); *Nothing* (David Hewlett, Andrew Miller); *Wicker Man* (Nicholas Cage); *King Maker* (Gary Stretch, John Rhys-Devis); *Wicker Man* (Nicholas Cage); *Find Me Guilty* (Vay Diesel); *Akeelah & The Bee* (Keke Palmer, Laurence Fishburne); *Black Hole* (Judd Nelson, Kristy Swanson); *Silther* (Nathan Fillion, Michael Rooker); *HINDI: Salaam-E-Ishq* (Salman Khan, Priyanka Chopra); *Mr Hot Mr Kool* (Zulfi Syed, Yash Pandit); *Kabul Express* (John Abraham, Arshad Warsi); *Mr Hot Mr Kool* (Zulfi Syed, Yash Pandit); *Guru* (Abhishek Bachchan); *Bhagam Bhag* (Govinda); *Dhoom 2* (Hrithik Roshan); *Jeena* (Rajesh Khanna, Zeenat Aman); *Kabbie Alvida Na Kehna* (Shahrukh Khan); *Kudiyon Ka Zamana* (Rekha); *I See You* (Arjun Rampal); *Aryaan* (Sohal Khan, Sneha Ullaskar); *Baabul* (Rani Mukherji); *Di Dya Hai* (Emraan Hashmi, Meeta Baser); *Vivah* (Shahid Kapoor, Amrita Rao).
ARABIC: *Ennaraal Yaacobian*, *Alammiel Hebe*, *Ossed Kholan*; *Dars Khsusy* (Information courtesy: Q-Mart Audio Video at The Mall).

USEFUL NUMBERS

Police, Fire, Ambulance 999
HMC 4392222
Women's (Rumailah) 4393353
HMC (Emergency) 4393507
Veterinary 653083
Water & Electricity 991
Flight Inquiries 4622999
Doha Seaport 4457457
Museum 4424191
Cinema 4671811
Mumtaz Post (24-hr Service) 4415666
..... 4432211
(Car) 4483555
Ship Phone Service 4864444
Ministry of Interior main switchboard 4330000
Public Department for passports, nationality and residence 4892882
Capital Security Department 4444420
Criminal Information Department 4477777
Boundaries and Coasts Security 4414488
Civil Defence Department 4413666
Public Relations Department 4448270
Rescue Service 4682888

YOUR STARS

ARIES (Mar 21-April 20): Your temper may get the better of you if a colleague has tried to ruin your reputation. Equilibrium in your romantic life is likely if you treat your partner well. Get involved in groups and organisations that are of a distinguished nature.

TAURUS (April 21-May 21): Your pursuits may end up being fruitless. Delve a little deeper if you really want to know the score. You may jump from the frying pan into the fire if you make a move today.

GEMINI (May 22-June 21): Travel will initiate new friendships or love connections. Make sure you concentrate if operating machinery or vehicles. It's time to reconnect with some of the people you used to know.

CANCER (June 22-July 22): Don't let your boss make you feel guilty enough to take work home with you. Dinner, theater, or a comedy club may be just the place. Children may pose a problem if they don't like suggestions.

LEO (July 23-August 22): Your abil-

ty to relate will close the generation gap. You will get drawn into groups that are not favourable to you. Be careful not to take on other people's problems. You may find yourself in a financial bind.

VIRGO (August 23-September 23): Build on friendship rather than starting out in an intimate encounter. Your position may be in question if you haven't been pulling your weight. Emotional upset may prevail on the domestic scene if you have neglected your duties or your mate.

LIBRA (September 24-October 23): Pleasure trips will be most enjoyable and should lead to new and lasting friendships. Your creative ideas must be put to good use. You can make new connections if you play your cards right.

SCORPIO (October 24-November 22): Don't count on correspondence to clear up major problems. You will want to take off and have some recreation. Catch up on correspondence.

SAGITTARIUS (November 23-December 21): You can benefit financially if you put money or maintenance into your living quarters. You're not your usual self today. Do not expect too much from others.

CAPRICORN (December 22-January 20): Try to spend time with those having similar interests. You have been going through a period of change that no doubt caused problems with your loved ones. Don't put limitations on yourself.

AQUARIUS (January 21-February 19): Secret information will be eye opening. You might not be as reserved on an emotional level as you'd like. Don't be too quick to voice your opinion. Listen to others carefully.

PISCES (February 20-March 20): Someone may be trying to pull the wool over your eyes. Your honesty will not only win you points but also respect. You will communicate with ease today.

Superman of pop

THERE'S been no shortage of big moments during pop singer Josh Groban's career the past few years. He's sung at the Olympics, the Super Bowl and the Vatican.

But when asked if one moment stands out above the others, he considers the question a moment and says, "I brought my dad to Red Rocks (the spectacular Denver amphitheatre) on his birthday. That was fun. I had the audience sing *Happy Birthday* to him."

Yes, Groban loves his family. He considers doing charity work an honour. He treasures meeting Nelson Mandela. He admits to stage fright.

Talking about his latest album, last year's *Awake*, the 26-year-old is most excited not that it hit No. 2 on *Billboard's* album chart (following 2004's *Closer*, which reached No. 1), but because he got to work with the likes of Herbie Hancock and Ladysmith Black Mambazo during recording.

"When you have a little bit of success, you can use it for good things, or you can use it for bad things," he says. "I try to use it to expand my horizons."

Success has opened doors for Josh Groban to work with new and interesting music, writes DON MAYHEW

It's too bad phone booths have become so rare. You want to stick Groban in one and see if Superman pops out.

Since his self-titled debut album hit the top 10 in 2001, Groban has become one of the best-selling singers of the 21st century. His swelling orchestral pop tunes, following the blueprints sung by such stars as Sarah Brightman and Charlotte Church, have become staples of *Billboard's* Adult Contemporary chart.

"The kind of sound that I'm doing is new and old at the same time," he says. But wary of musical formula, he wanted to push the envelope with *Awake*, on which listeners may detect an African influence.

Sticking exclusively to the big, classical sound that got his career off so solidly "felt dangerous to me. That's a one-way ticket to me of a fad," he says.

Groban admits to being ambitious, so he's unlikely to go off too wildly on a tangent: "I'm a number person. I'm always asking people, 'How many tickets are we selling? How are things going?'"

But he's not without mirth. Moments later, his cell phone rings.

"Oops," he says. "My Scorpions ringtone there."

The song? *Rock You Like a Hurricane*. Groban isn't a big fan of the hard-rock group: "I was just on a quest to find the cheesiest ringtone possible."

His current tour will visit more than 70 cities across North America and Europe, lasting at least to the end of August.

Though big one-time events have marked his early career, he enjoys touring a little more.

"When people come to see you per-

form, you know from the first moment to the last moment it's under control," he says.

"When you perform at something that's way, way beyond yourself, when you're a part of something that's a lot bigger, there's a lot of nerves. You just want to do a good job."

Given that Groban has sung in public since seventh grade, many fans would be surprised to learn that he gets nervous before performing.

"I've discovered that the stage fright is just a winding of coil," he says. "As soon as I get on stage, it's just like, 'Blast off!' It goes away."

So Superman, Groban isn't. But most fans will take him just the way he is, and he's grateful for that.

"It's all been good," he says. "The success has just opened doors for me to work with new and interesting people..."

Anytime I can sing a song or find music that inspires people to do a good thing, is a great thing."

Clark Kent couldn't have said it any better. — *The Fresno Bee*/MCT



Josh Groban ... solid career start.

Hero has his own hero

EVEN famous actors have their heroes. Alec Baldwin has finally found a project worthy of his talent in NBC's *30 Rock*, where he plays the absorbed network chief with such smooth aplomb you'd swear he was to the executive office born.

Baldwin was a fanatical movie fan when he was growing up. Once when he was home from school with the flu, he watched *Inherit the Wind* every day for five days until he had memorised every line.

He thinks of Marlon Brando as the sublime archetype in film acting. He has seen *Dog Day Afternoon* and *Serpico* 25 times. And he says that when he first met Anthony Hopkins, "I wanted to kneel down in front of him, he was so great." — MCT

Brazil's minister of (counter) culture

EVELYN MCDONNELL talks to the elegant pioneer of Brazilian song and gentle politician Gilberto Gil



Brazil's Culture Minister and singer Gilberto Gil seen with French singer Henri Salvador on the terrace of the French culture ministry in Paris in a 2005 file photo (above), and Gil in concert at the ancient Herodus Atticus open-air theatre in Athens, Greece (left) ... 'Once I was the stone-thrower, now I am the glass.'

GILBERTO Gil has a quietly intense energy. The elegant pioneer of Brazilian song and gentle politician pulls his hair back in a ponytail, keeping the vestige of 1960s rebellion discreetly maintained. His long, tapered fingers strum the air as he speaks. The Brazilian minister of culture would seem to be a model of diplomacy. But beneath the Zen surface lies a postcolonial lion.

"What's at stake is the sharing, not the gaining, not the what I take from you; it's what we both take from life that matters," says Gil. He's sitting in a hotel room on the eve of his first tour in the United States since taking office in 2003 and several days after President George W. Bush's visit to Brazil, about which he's pontificating.

"This is the new cultural ingredient, this is the novelty, this is what I categorise as a soft power, the power that's not conquering anything. It's not there to conquer it, it's there to share. This is the new concept of power. This is hippie."

Forty years ago he was one of the founders of Tropicalia, the most important countercultural movement in Latin America and, given its continuing impact on cross-hemispheric politics and recent enshrinement in a globe-travelling museum exhibition, a peer to San Francisco's Haight-Ash-

bury heyday and the Parisian student uprising.

Tropicalia fused nationalistic interest in native cultural forms with the heady changes of international pop culture - it mixed samba and rock.

As Gil said in a presentation at the South By Southwest (SXSW) conference in Austin, Texas, it was "the last modernist movement and the first postmodernist one."

For his innovations, Gil was imprisoned in 1969 in military dictatorship in Brazil and then exiled.

As Gil has said, "Once I was the stone-thrower, now I am the glass." But this glass reaches out to the stone. The appointee of Brazilian president Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva is using his political power to make the sort

of changes he might have envisioned as a young radical: funding community cultural centres that, among other things, are training grounds for Brazil's politically charged rapers; creating a cultural dialogue with Africa; and reimagining intellectual property rights in the digital age.

"We were projecting on the future screen then. Some of the ideals and expectations and what we were trying to produce are getting results now. The fruit is ripe.

Environmentalism, the peace movement, the intercultural processes - it's the talk of the town now."

And then he quotes the title of a book that few government bureaucrats would know but is classic for an old hippie: Tim-

othy Leary's *The Politics of Ecstasy*.

Gilberto Gil's life story embodies the changes in the region from a culturally rich but economically strapped entity that struggled, sometimes violently, to assert itself in a sphere still straggling off European control to an increasingly self-empowered voice.

It's a global leadership role that Gil says he has always found antithetical to his humble disposition, and which he wields with enviable aplomb.

Gil was born in 1942 in Bahia, the province where Brazil's connection to Africa is most pronounced and some of the greatest music in the world has been made.

He says he was a reflective and introverted youth, which

made his transition into generational spokesman and agent provocateur difficult.

"One of the things that really bothered me was the sense of bothering others," he says. "This really is uncomfortable for me, even if it's true, if I'm right, even if I'm doing good. I was born to be agreeable, to please."

Gil and his friends and collaborators, including Caetano Veloso, Os Mutantes and Jorge Ben, were making a scene in Sao Paulo. When they started playing psychedelically pop on a national TV show, they outraged the left as well as the right.

It was the South American equivalent of Bob Dylan playing electric guitar at the Newport Folk Festival. Except

Dylan never was jailed, interrogated, and thrown out of the country.

Tropicalia has become a widely romanticised movement, embraced worldwide by hipsters and intellectuals. It was the subject of a London art exhibit last year that then moved to Berlin, New York and Chicago. But for Gil, it was a painful, confusing time, marked by tumult, self-doubt, and brutal punishment. "It was agony," he says.

In jail, Gil turned to meditation. He recalls thinking, "Now I'm here, what do I do with my life? What do I do with my boredom? Where is the light substance, how can I grasp it?"

The study of Eastern philosophies he began then has shaped his music since. It was the subject of a 1999 book on Gil by artist Bene Fonteles that was accompanied by a CD. That CD, *Gil Luminoso*, was recently released commercially. Gil sings 15 songs from his past accompanied only by himself on guitar.

Gil has brought his experiences as a creator of culture to

bear on his post as a policymaker. He's used his unique position to become a world leader on the issue of intellectual property rights, a point of friction between developed and developing nations.

He advocates a flexible approach to copyright in which some works of art may be universally owned, while others are still individually controlled. Gil has offered a handful of his songs up to anyone who wants them.

Gil is a big-picture kind of guy. He's a wide-ranging, well-read thinker who turns discussions into philosophical points, albeit sometimes with the elliptical vagaries of a Leary-quoter.

"It's very important that philosophy inform action. Despite the pragmatic demands of life, it's this philosophical mapping that really gives you the possibility of being sufficiently humble to accept life and difference and the other, the non-you. I've been dedicating my life to this kind of research."

In jail, Gil learned to accept that, as the Vedic scriptures put it, "all life is suffering." That gave him a serenity that

he now calls "the soft power," and a psychologist might call passive aggression. If he has learned to have grace in the face of that he cannot change, beneath lies a well of courage to change what he can.

"This is the challenge of the future, how to create a new form of anti-establishmentarianism celebrating the visit of an unpopular American president.

Gil has his critics, including old friends who think he's sold out. But he sees his new role as a triumph of his old views.

"Are you still a hippie?" someone asked him at the end of the SXSW press conference. "Definitely," Gil smiled.

"Now it's not just preaching in the desert, as it was then, that counterculture," told *The Miami Herald* later. "Now it's the politicising, it's the citizen saying it, not me. It's street talk, not the private agony of a crazy boy at home. Now it's easy." - *The Miami Herald*/MCT

GARFIELD



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BOUND & GAGGED



ADAM



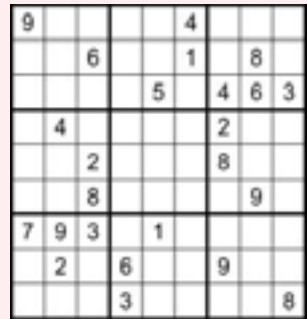
SUDOKU

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column, and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 through 9.

Yesterday's solution



This puzzle is taken from *The Sudoku Book: An Introduction to Sudoku with 101 puzzles*, by Sam Griffiths-Jones (RRP: £5.99, Harriman House). Visit www.daily-sudoku.com for a daily graded puzzle, online Sudoku resources and links.



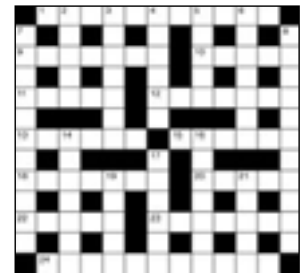
DOUBLE CROSSWORD

CRYPTIC CLUES

- ACROSS**
- 1. Taking long strides and leaving the house (8,3)
- 9. The first male colonist is unyielding (7)
- 10. Said by one who takes French leave (5)
- 11. Sample some of Rita's tea-cakes (5)
- 12. Entertain an idea that he's rich, maybe (7)
- 13. Join up the broken tinsel (6)
- 15. Bird garden reconstructed (6)
- 18. Variety of pleasure without a rebuff (7)
- 20. Make a preliminary plan, we hear, for a conscripted group (5)
- 22. The substitute gets in after this (5)
- 23. On strike, arrive at a result (7)
- 24. She is willing to take risks and dares to appear in advertisements (11)
- DOWN**
- 2. Carriers used by ladies in waiting (5)
- 3. They may well bring a man to his knees (7)
- 4. Undiminished in discreet conduct (6)
- 5. Resting place giving cause for anxiety (5)
- 6. Made into one nude arrangement if I must intervene (7)
- 7. It's assumed before the action starts (6-5)
- 8. The writer is about to restrict the powers that be (11)
- 14. North country boy embodies a scheme (7)
- 16. Counter-checker? (7)
- 17. Lay a charge against what journalists do (6)
- 19. Put up at the gatehouse (5)
- 21. They're bitter beers with nothing inserted (5)

QUICK CLUES

- ACROSS**
- 1. Timeless (11)
- 9. Tasteless (7)
- 10. Get up (5)
- 11. Inn (5)
- 12. Not identified (7)
- 13. Conquer (6)
- 15. Sift (6)
- DOWN**
- 18. Settle (7)
- 20. Muddy (5)
- 22. Sober (5)
- 23. Hateful (7)
- 24. Question (11)
- 2. Call (5)
- 3. Repeal (7)
- 4. Fervency (6)
- ACROSS**
- 5. Footprint (5)
- 6. Novous (7)
- 7. Terrifying (11)
- 8. Senseless (11)
- 14. Uphold (7)
- 16. Sculpture (7)
- 17. Tie up (6)
- 19. Shelf (5)
- 21. Increase (5)



Yesterday's solutions

QUICK CRYPTIC

Across: 1 Jeopardy; 5 Bias; 9 Across: 1 Diagnose; 5 Drop; 9 Hard; 10 Escapade; 11 Comic; Edam; 10 Strangle; 11 Spell; 12 Avarice; 13 Progressively; 18 12 Icicles; 13 Thoroughfares; Rotation; 19 Beak; 20 Exotic; 18 Artistry; 19 Ha-ha; 20 21 Daily; 22 Take; 23 Bequeath. Down: 2 Enamour; 3 Padding; 4 Dispassionate; 6 Imagine; 7 Scenery; 8 Safari; 13 Perfect; 14 Outlook; 15 Retail; 16 Vibrate; 17 Leaflet. Down: 2 In-depth; 3 Gambler; 4 Sitting pretty; 6 Regular; 7 Pleases; 8 Tariff; 13 Trapper; 14 Outleap; 15 Ousted; 16 Atheism; 17 Exhaust.