Companies have been increasingly thinking beyond the usual buffet of benefits as they try to hire and retain workers with in-demand skills amid a tighter labour market.
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Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar (CMU-Q) held the region’s inaugural ‘Alice Middle East’ programming competition, hosting 148 students from nine independent and international schools in Qatar.

To showcase the success of the Alice Middle East programme, CMU-Q held a programming competition for participating schools. The event received widespread support from industry and government, with Qatar National Research Fund, the Ministry of Education, Qatar University, Qatar Computing Research Institute and Qatar Airways contributing experts to the judging panel.

Commercial Bank generously donated prizes for all eight winning teams.

Students created projects in Alice in five different categories: environment, sports, entertainment, transportation and social values. On May 8, they came together at CMU-Q to present their projects to the judges, whose scores were based on creativity of the idea, oral presentation, visual and smooth motion, modularity and algorithm design, and use of the camera, sound and motion controls.

“Alice Middle East is an excellent resource to introduce computational thinking to young people, who will need these crucial problem-solving skills when they enter the workforce,” said IlkerBaybars, dean and CEO of CMU-Q.

‘Alice’ is software that guides students through a 3D interactive world, teaching them the fundamental skills of programming and computational thinking. Created at the main Carnegie Mellon campus by Randy Pausch, professor of computer science, human-computer interaction and design, Alice came to the attention of H H Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, Chairperson of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development, at Pausch’s untimely death in 2008. At her request, CMU-Q developed a Middle Eastern version that incorporates the culture and traditions of Qatar.

Alice Middle East was created with support from Qatar National Research Fund (QNRF), who has funded the project since 2012. The Qatar Ministry of Education and Higher Education has been instrumental in distributing the programme to schools where teachers can use it as a tool to teach the computer science curriculum.

Saquib Razak, associate teaching professor of computer science, leads the Alice Middle East project: “Because these students are so imaginative and they are using the Alice software in ways I hadn’t even thought of before, I got to learn a few new things from these projects myself. This is very positive as we look to expand Alice Middle East in the coming years.”

The top five winning teams were from Al Khor International School, Middle East International School, Al Arqam Academy for Girls, Mesaieed International School, and Arwa Bint Abd Almotaleb School for Girls.

Three special prizes were awarded to a team from Mohamed Bin Abdel Wahab School for Boys in the category of most creative idea, a team from Al Arqam Academy School for Girls for best design, and a team from Omar Bin Al-Khattab School for Boys for best presentation.
Nick DeMarco runs a small biotech startup in Raleigh, North Carolina, that makes scientific instruments. But what got his company, Practichem, featured from CNBC’s “Power Lunch” to The Huffington Post to Fortune’s website last week wasn’t the innovative products he’s making. It was his promise to lease Tesla Model 3s to employees when they become available.

“The world’s changed a lot, and technology people are really hard to bring in,” DeMarco, who has 10 full-time employees and is trying to double that number with new hires, said in an interview on Monday.

He believes spending money to lease the wildly popular cars — which are not expected to be available until at least the end of next year — will turn out to be a smarter recruiting investment than funnelling more money to headhunters.

Though he sees the leases as rewards for good performance to help retain current workers, he’s also hopeful the media coverage and word-of-mouth from employees will help him hire people with the skills he needs in what he calls an “esoteric field.”

DeMarco’s Teslas may be particularly flashy. But companies have been increasingly thinking beyond the usual buffet of benefits as they try to hire and retain workers with in-demand skills amid a tighter labour market.

Companies like Fidelity and Price-waterhouse Coopers have publicised the student loan repayment perks they now offer. Firms such Netflix, IBM and KKR have touted family-friendly benefits such as extended parental leave, free shipping for employees’ breast milk or paid travel expenses for new mothers’ nannies. Boxed Wholesale, an e-commerce company with 122 employees that sells bulk goods, sent out a news release last week announcing that it will help pay for all employees’ weddings after the CEO learned about one of his employee’s financial needs. “It’s really changed over the least five years,” says Jane Kwon, a consultant with Aon Hewitt. Companies are asking “what makes us as an employer unique? How do we fight for talent to come to my organisation versus another? What’s going to make us stand out?”

For the majority of workers who don’t get benefits such as paid leave, much less payments toward student loans, the perks arms race to wield new and cushy extras may seem dismally out of reach. And those who lived through the late 1990s and early 2000s may wonder if the froth from that period — when stock options were handed out to seemingly anyone — is being relived. But human resources experts say that among companies trying to hire employees with in-demand skills, stand-out perks — and the media mileage they often receive — is likely to continue. “Whether it’s unlimited vacation or infertility benefits or weddings, this type of unusual stuff, we’re going to see more of it,” said Bruce Elliott, manager of compensation and benefits at the Society for Human Resource Management.

He and others cite several reasons. One is that perks like extended parental leave and student loan repayment are clearly aimed at attracting and retaining millennials, who now make up the largest segment of the workforce. Not only do some of these new benefits square with the life issues millennials face — paying the bills after college, starting a family — they appeal to young workers’ desire to be affiliated with a place that’s seen as innovative or first to offer something. “Millennials all rank that consistently higher,” says Dustin Clinard, a managing director for Universum, an “employer branding” research and consulting firm.
Meanwhile, a few companies are in the process of trying to make perks less of a one-size-fits-all package and more of a choose-your-own menu of options, Kwon of Aon Hewitt says. They intend to give employees a set dollar amount they can spend on benefits — letting older employees or parents with children opt for a richer health plan, say, while younger employees might choose loan repayment plans. As a result, Kwon says, the array of creative perks on the menu is likely to grow.

It helps, of course, that employers’ perks seem to garner plenty of headlines, not only grabbing the attention of would-be employees, but customers who increasingly want to buy from companies that share their values. “There is absolute marketing value from differentiating yourself with regards to benefits,” SHRM’s Elliott says. “It’s kind of serving two purposes — highlighting the social consciousness to current and future employees, but also marketing [it] to customers who might think ‘oh, that’s a nice company, I think I’ll buy from them.’”

Boxed Wholesale CEO Chieh Huang says that wasn’t part of his calculation when he decided the company would pay for an employee’s wedding — and then extend the benefit to other workers, reimbursing them up to $20,000 for wedding expenses. In an interview on Monday, he said he settled on it only after hearing that an employee was trying to save enough to afford his wedding in time for his mother, who is gravely ill, to attend. If he instead boosted the worker’s pay substantially, it would not only “throw the whole pay scale out of whack,” Huang said in an interview, but still not let the worker save enough in time.

It isn’t the first time Huang has seen his generosity grab headlines: Last year, he said he would pay the college tuition expenses of early-stage employees’ children out of funds he and investors personally contribute. (The wedding perk will be paid by the company.) But other than those eye-popping offers, he says he provides little in the way of typical tech-world fringe benefits like office happy hours or free food, choosing to put money instead into things that he believes underscore the social contract employers have toward their workers.

His vice president of communications called the announcement “incredibly emotional and FANTASTIC!!” but Huang argues it’s unclear whether the attention will ultimately be a net benefit — he says he’s gotten negative emails, too, saying his programs are “anti-capitalism.”

“The most tangible benefit we get is in terms of recruiting and retention,” he says. DeMarco, meanwhile, says publicity was at least part of his thinking. Some employers lease cars to their employees, and they “give bonuses all the time,” he said. “We just combined the two in a way that gets us the third objective, which was publicity.” He hopes the attention will help him hire employees, but also hopes word-of-mouth comes from employees who talk up the company to their network. “We have these evangelists who will be driving around,” he says. “Now there’s a reason they’re going to be talking about us.”

Of course, large companies often can’t extend what a 122-person or 10-person company can offer to many more employees. But Elliott believes more creative perks will be announced, even from large employers, as they compete over the most talented employees. (When asked what’s next, he throws out the idea — only partly in jest — of companies paying for employees’ pets to go on vacation with them. “I could see something like that,” he says.)

That’s all, of course, until the economy turns down again, and the push for top-notch tech workers and others with in-demand skills eases up. After all, the biggest reason employers are funneling money into distinctive perks rather than boosting base salaries, Elliott says, is that they’re simply a lot more flexible to offer.

“If you think about it, it’s much easier to cut a benefit than it is to cut a salary,” Elliott says. When a downturn does come, “employees view it much more harshly when we cut salary versus cutting a benefit.”
Kids to take center stage at The Pearl-Qatar fashion show

United Development Company (UDC), a Qatari leading shareholding company and master developer of The Pearl-Qatar, is continuing its series of successful family entertainment events held during weekends at its iconic Island destination, with a Kids Fashion Show dedicated to children’s couture.

Sponsored by Blue Salon Kids, the event will feature little fashionistas which will be strutting the runway tomorrow from 4:00pm at the internal shopping arcade in 1 La Croisette, allowing parents and children to visit Blue Salon Kids and Mimisol’s nearby stores to view the complete new season’s collections after the show.

Eight premium children designer labels will be displaying more than 30 outfits of their colorful and practical designs, trending in kids’ wear this Spring/Summer season including Lesy, Aigner, Mimisol, Alviero Martini, Billionaire, Moschino, Roberto Cavalli and Bikkembergs.

While the collections for the runway, focus on pastel colors and a mix of sporty and elegant fashion picks for boys and girls, the line-up by Blue Salon Kids is meant to encourage parents to embrace mix-and-match tips and tricks to dress up their little ones for any occasion.

This fashion show is being hosted as part of UDC’s on-going efforts to build synergies with retail tenants at its flagship development, while maximising exposure of their offerings to the increasing number of visitors during peak weekend hours. A stunning showcase of talent staged by little stars of various ages and nationalities — the Kids Fashion Show is set to be a spectacular treat for all the shoppers at The Pearl-Qatar.

The concept of the show which draws young local talents from Blue Salon Kids’ customers and Trinity Talent Qatar, gives children confidence and helps instill in them the values of team work and discipline, alongside the opportunity to embrace the limelight within a fashion event of this calibre. The Pearl-Qatar where the fashion show event will take place is a unique and innovative urban development in Qatar that portrays a glamorous waterfront lifestyle for both its residents and visitors. This architectural marvel in the form of an island offers several types of accommodation and residential districts with lavish retail, marinas and entertainment facilities.

Dune London unveils Ramadan collection

A global leader of affordable luxury fashion footwear and accessories, Dune London launches an exclusive new collection in the Middle East for the Holy month of Ramadan.

Dune London has created a capsule collection which embodies the brands heritage, in-house design and style. The premium mix of satin and suede material comprise the Satin Story. With knot detailing, brooch embellishments and matching accessories designed in house.

The collection comes in jewel tones including red, navy, and two tone lurex. The new mid height heel in brooch and knot styles enable for comfortable but dressy wear in both Donatella DI and Meritculous DI.

The Jewel Story sees the mule (Misha DI) updated for the season with embellishments including baguette stones on the heel, in a slipper cut. Whilst the new Devallia DI with stones and T-Bar profile adds a touch of glamour for Eid.

Complementing the footwear collection sees matching clutches, taking you from day to night, updated with the Dune London turnlock branded hardware. The range introduces a new chain and pull through option for different shoulder lengths updating any outfit, with our Eddison and Deeson DI bags.

The collection will be available at Dune London stores in the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait and Bahrain. The price for the collection ranges from Dh349 to Dh899.
Recreational offers & leisure activities from St Regis Doha

The St Regis Doha, the finest address in Qatar, will be having a number of exciting recreational offers and specials on leisure activities this summer, making it the ultimate leisure destination to experience the best of summer in Doha.

The St Regis Doha has created the perfect pool and beach day package for those that are looking for a leisurely day in Doha which includes the Olympic-sized pool, as well as exhilarating water sports activities by the beautiful turquoise waters of the Arabian Gulf, for only QR350 for adults including a QR200 food voucher for Oyster Bay and QR175 for children below six years old.

For those that are after fun that the whole family can enjoy, then look no further than the water sports adventure package where you have the opportunity to enjoy the finest water sports in Doha. The St. Regis Doha Full Day Water Sports Adventure Package includes unlimited water sports activities, a private cabana, access to the Olympic-sized pool and studio activities, along with QR1,000 worth of credit at Remède Spa.

Meanwhile, The St. Regis Doha’s signature Remède Spa featuring 22 private treatment rooms, has recently introduced the signature Hawaii Shell Massage Therapy treatment, an indulgent body massage offering an idyllic treatment that combines the warmth of Lava Shells with deeply relaxing massage techniques. The massage has been proven to create a sense of balance to the entire body and mind, as during the massage, shells are worked over the palms, arms, feet and legs in slow deep moves to warm and de-stress the body. This is followed by a wonderfully tranquil massage on key points including the back, neck and shoulder area, to ease away all tensions, knots and stress, once again providing an unforgettable bespoke experience at The St. Regis Doha at only QR780 for the 75 minute massage.

In keeping with the theme of Ramadan, if you book a 90 minute massage this Ramadan then you will receive a complimentary Iftar or Suhour along with a QR150 cash voucher upon your next visit at Remède Spa.

Additionally, The St. Regis Doha will also be launching its exclusive Summer Nights offer, including one night free stay, available throughout summer. Guests that book during the special promotion period will be able to book and pay for 2 nights and stay for 3 nights or book and pay for 3 nights and stay for 4 nights; which will include access to The St. Regis Doha’s well regarded Remede Spa facilities, recreation centre along with full access to the Hotel’s Olympic pool and private beach. To redeem the offer guests will have to book by August 28, 2016 and stay at The St Regis Doha by August 31, 2016 for a truly luxurious experience during the summer months.

And to mark Eid celebrations this year, The St Regis Doha has confirmed the return of its much beloved Eid Brunch on Friday, July 8. At an affordable price of QR295 per person, guests can choose from a number of delicious dining options including the authentic Arabic corner, Asian station, cold station inside, along with pastry selection with live cooking of pan cake ice cream, making for an excellent Eid experience.

Albahie to hold auction of Oriental carpets and rugs

Albahie Auction house will hold an Auction of Oriental Carpets and Rugs on Tuesday, May 31, at 6:30pm at Katara Cultural Village.

There will be an opening on May 26 at 6:30pm for the preview exhibition at the auction house’s permanent exhibition space Katara Cultural Village, Building 22C. From now until May 31, those interested can view the carpets daily and see the catalogue online, www.albahie.com.

The auction will include carpets and rugs from the most famed traditional regions for Persian carpet making such as Tabriz, Kashan, Kerman, Isfahan, Saruk, Qom as well as Kashan, Saruk, Qom as well as Kashan. AlBahie advises those interested in bidding on carpets from the sale to register ahead of time for the auction on the website, or at 4408 0534. Representatives are available to provide information such as condition reports on the items in the sale and to help guide anyone unfamiliar with the auction and bidding process. Albahie has made it easy for anyone to bid at auction as bidding can be done in four ways, in person during the auction, online via the website www.albahie.com, by telephone, or by leaving an absentee bid.
Scientists have determined how we can prevent half of all cancer deaths

By Carolyn Y Johnson
The Washington Post

Imagine a powerful new treatment that could cut all cancer deaths by more than half. In the age of $10,000-a-month cancer drugs that often extend life by the thinnest margins — a few precious months before the cancer rages back — the idea of such a potent effect sounds like a fantasy.

But it isn’t, exactly. A new study published in the journal JAMA Oncology estimates that by applying insights scientists have developed over the past decade, or the past 100 years, “We should use this knowledge, to improve the current cancer prevention effort.”

Some of the declines we have already seen in cancer mortality — the large decline in lung cancer — was because of efforts to stop people from smoking,” said Siobhan Sutcliffe, an associate professor in the division of public health sciences at Washington University in St Louis not involved in the research. “Even while we’re making new discoveries, that shouldn’t stop us from acting on the knowledge we already do have.”

To make their estimates of how lifestyle changes could affect cancer’s toll on the population, a pair of researchers from Massachusetts General Hospital and the Harvard T H Chan School of Public Health used large ongoing studies that have closely followed the health and lifestyle habits of tens of thousands of female nurses and male health professionals. They divided people into two groups: a low-risk group that did not smoke, drank no more than one drink a day for women or two for men, maintained a certain healthy body mass index, and did two-and-a-half hours of moderate aerobic exercise a week or half as much vigorous exercise.

The team compared cancer cases and cancer deaths between the low- and high-risk groups and found that for individual cancers, the healthy behaviours could have a large effect on some cancers: The vast majority of cases of lung cancer were attributable to lifestyle, as well as more than a fifth of cases of colon cancer, pancreatic cancer and kidney cancer.

Then, they extrapolated those differences to the US population at large, finding an even larger proportion of potentially preventable cancer cases and deaths. For women, they estimated 41 percent of cancer cases were preventable and 59 percent of cancer deaths. For men, 63 percent of cancer cases were potentially preventable and 67 percent of cancer deaths.

There are caveats to this — the high-risk group in the study is healthier than the general US population, so there are reasons the numbers may be slightly overestimated. But Mingyang Song, the researcher who led the work, argues the numbers are a good approximation because they may be underestimating the effects of lifestyle, too, because they selected a narrow range of lifestyle factors.

“We should not ignore the knowledge we already learned over the past decade, or the past 100 years,” Song said. “We should use this knowledge to move the policy forward and also make the public aware that we already have this knowledge and we can utilise this knowledge, to improve the current cancer prevention effort.”

For years, the fight against cancer has been waged on two related, but largely isolated fronts. At the cutting-edge of science are physicians and researchers with ever more powerful tools to probe how cancer works and invent new ways to stop it. This fight is often waged near the end of the disease, once it has taken hold and doctors and patients would do anything to loosen its grip, even temporarily. On the front lines of public health are researchers who often focus on strategies to reduce deaths by preventing the disease altogether, trying to understand how to screen for it, or what environmental exposures should be avoided. “There sort of are two worlds, one world focused on therapy and another world focused on prevention, and I do think those two worlds are coming together now,” said Tyler Jacks, director of the Koch Institute for Integrative Cancer Research at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

By Carolyn Y Johnson
The Washington Post

A new study estimates that no smoking, no drinking, maintaining a healthy body weight and exercising could prevent more than half of cancer deaths and new cases of cancer could drop by 40% to 60%.

Simple healthy eating tips

- Nature knows best: Consume food that is close to its natural state and avoid ready-made meals and processed products.
- Check food labels: Check the full list of ingredients. If you recognize the ingredients — such as flour, water, chicken, salt, olive oil — that’s fine, but if the list reads more like a chemistry lesson then it’s best to avoid these foods.
- Eat healthy fats: Avoid saturated and trans fats, but consume at least two portions a week of omega rich fish such as sardines, mackerel or salmon.
- Eat little and often: Four or five small meals throughout the day are better than one or two large meals as this will help maintain balanced blood sugar levels.
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The problem of throwing away perfectly good food

Tackling date labels serves a variety of purposes such as saving consumers' money, bolstering food security and addressing the many far-ranging environmental problems associated with producing more food than actually goes to use.

Currently, with the exception of baby formula, the date labels on food products are not federally regulated. According to the US FDA, "the laws that the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) administers do not preclude the sale of food that is past the expiration date indicated on the label. FDA does not require food firms to place "expired by," 'use by' or 'best before' dates on food products. This information is entirely at the discretion of the manufacturer." Whether date labels of any sort are required on food products, which products these are and whether the sale of these products is restricted in any way after these dates have passed is left up to the states, whose approaches can differ drastically from one another.

The Harvard survey found that more than a third of respondents believed date labels are federally regulated, and another quarter of them weren't sure. That's a big deal, because people may be more likely to take these labels seriously if they believe they're mandated by the federal government, said Emily Broad Leib, director of the Harvard Food Law and Policy Clinic and an assistant professor of law.

But, in fact, even the language that's used to accompany date labels varies wildly depending on the product and the manufacturer — and sometimes, dates appear with no explanation at all. The new survey suggests that a major problem with the lack of standardised language is that people are confused about what the labels actually mean. For instance, 42 percent of respondents thought the label "use by" was an indicator of food safety, while another 40 percent thought it referred to food quality. The survey did suggest that the highest percentages of respondents considered the phrase "best if used by" an indicator of food quality and the phrase "expires on" as an indicator of food safety. So Broad Leib and her colleagues are recommending these labels as the best choices to indicate food quality and food safety, respectively, with the least amount of confusion. It's an idea that's also reflected in a new bill just introduced by Senator Richard Blumenthal of Connecticut, which calls for a federally regulated system for food date labelling. His Food Date Labeling Act was announced at a Wednesday press conference along with a companion bill introduced by Rep. Chellie Pingree of Maine. The bill would require the federal government to identify foods with a high risk of microbial contamination after a certain date — these would be stamped with an "expires on" label to indicate food safety.

For other products where safety is not a concern, any dates included by the manufacturer would require the language "best if used by," which the research shows is most likely to be taken as an indicator of quality, rather than safety.

The bill also calls for education campaigns to ensure that consumers are informed about what the two labels mean — an idea that Broad Leib supports. "Since these dates have appeared on food for a while, if we want them to be meaningful we're going to have to get the message out," she said.

Additionally, the bill would prevent states from prohibiting the sale or donation of food that has passed a "best if used by" date — a practice that's currently used in 20 states. This would prevent retailers from being forced to waste food that's still fit for consumption. "When Americans toss away so much food that should be consumable, and there are people who go hungry, I just thought this idea really made a lot of sense," Blumenthal said, adding that "enabling more food to be donated is another key objective." Tackling date labels serves a variety of purposes, he said, by saving consumers' money, bolstering the nation's food security and addressing the many far-ranging environmental problems associated with producing more food than actually goes to use. Such a standardised system would not solve the nation's food waste problem completely — but it might put a sizable dent in what's increasingly recognised as a pernicious problem around the world.
Splash introduces new way forward with ‘Love Unites’

Love’ one of the most popular of emotion intensifies when said in conjunction with the word ‘Fashion’, inspiring a loyalty beyond reason. Two decades ago, Splash, the UAE-based high-street retailer chose to fall in love with fashion and this one emotion has given the brand a journey to reflect upon and a path to create. Moving forward from celebrity led campaigns, the brand has taken the route of addressing topical issues through fashion imagery and highly stylised campaigns.

The recently unveiled campaign takes cues from a world where unrest has taken head and how even the smallest of acts of raising awareness can go a long way in uniting people. Titled ‘Love Unites’ the Splash campaign brings together six top-models of various ethnicities from across the Globe to shoot for an inspirational fashion campaign where caste, creed & color play no role.

Speaking on ‘Love Unites’, Raza Beig, Director, Landmark Group and CEO Splash & ICONIC, said: “I am a firm believer in the ideology of Love and this season Splash takes on a new route of inspiring love through a multi-ethnicity campaign which is best represented through fashion, the one word that defines Splash. Titled ‘Love Unites’ this campaign is our pitch to unite people against any resentment currently going on in the world. Adding further, “Emerging from a successful celebrity driven campaign endorsed by stars like Salman Khan and Nicole Saba, this campaign aims to take Splash from an aspirational brand to an inspirational route”.

The campaign released across the Mena, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka starting May 2, through a 360 degree communication strategy which will include Out of Home, Print, Radio and TV. Digital campaigns will be the driving force of ‘Love Unites’ with an aim to connect & unite people through interactions with the brand and subsequently with each other.

Gastronomic Fashion

Students of the Gastronomy major from the University of the Cloister of Sor Juana wear their creations during the 10th Gastronomic Fashion show at the University of the Cloister of Sor Juana, in Mexico City.
What’s on the big screen for kids this summer?

By Emily Featherston
The Washington Post

Looking for ways to enjoy a rainy afternoon or beat the heat this summer? An easy fix is just around the corner at your favourite movie theater. Here are several upcoming movies that promise adventure, magic, friendship and fun with every ticket. So grab a friend and a snack, find the best seat, and enjoy a cool afternoon or two.

“Alice Through the Looking Glass”

Alice has been away from Underland for a while, and although many believe she is losing her mind, she realises she needs to go back. When she returns, she finds herself in a race against Time to save the Mad Hatter and stop the Queen of Hearts from retaking the throne. By going back in time, Alice and her friends embark on a journey to save both the Hatter and all of Underland from Time’s curse before it’s too late.

Finding Dory

After 13 years, everyone’s favourite blue tang fish from the Great Barrier Reef is finally back. The long-awaited sequel to “Finding Nemo” follows the sometimes forgetful but always fun Dory on her journey to be reunited with her family. On her occasionally perilous journey, Dory learns the truth of what it means to have a family, while making new friends along the way.

Big Friendly Giant

Not all giants are scary, as a young girl named Sophie discovers when she meets the Big Friendly Giant. Instead of gobbling up boys and girls, the BFG is a kind soul, even if he looks dangerous. Sophie soon discovers that her magical, dream-collecting friend has been cast out by his fellow giants for his kindness. The BFG and Sophie team up to escape the bad guys and convince the Queen of England to capture them.

The Secret Life of Pets

What do our pets do all day after we leave? It might be more exciting than we think. Max, a terrier who lives inside a New York City apartment, is upset when his owner brings home Duke, a rescue from a local shelter. While the two struggle to get along and end up needing to find their way home, they cross paths with a deceptively cute rabbit who is forming a team of abandoned pets to gain revenge on all the happily owned pets in town and their owners.

Pete’s Dragon

Pete, a 10-year-old orphan, was found after six years of living in the forest. When he is brought to a nearby town, he says he was not actually alone — he had best friend Elliott to protect him. Elliott, it turns out, is a giant but friendly dragon. After years of thinking dragons were just a part of her father’s grand stories, Grace sets out to find out if there really is a dragon living in the Pacific Northwest.
Coral reefs may survive bleaching in deeper environments

**IANS**

Offering a glimmer of hope to those managing the impact of bleaching on the world's coral reefs, a new UN report has found that part of the ecosystem may survive in barely known deeper environments, known as mesophotic coral ecosystems (MCEs).

Coral bleaching has affected virtually the entire Great Barrier Reef and many other coral reef systems globally, including those of the Lakshadweep islands of India — a result of the continuing rise in global temperatures and exacerbated by the summer's major El Nino event.

The United Nations Environmental Programme report released on Tuesday said that as the world's surface reefs are being threatened, part of the ecosystem may survive in these mesophotic coral ecosystems. Shallow coral reefs from the water's surface to 30-40 metres depth are the tip of the iceberg that comprises the ocean's extensive coral ecosystem.

Mesophotic coral ecosystems are intermediate depth reefs starting at about 40 metres depth and continuing to around 150 metres. The report looked at the role mesophotic coral ecosystems could play in the preservation of shallower reefs — whether they can provide a refuge for the species under threat in shallower reef ecosystems and whether they can provide the stock to re-populate shallow reefs if they continue to decline.

"Mesophotic coral ecosystems are a seed bank for some organisms," said one of the study authors Elaine Baker from University of Sydney in Australia. "More research needs to be done to firmly establish the role of MCEs in preserving our reefs; they aren't a silver bullet but they may be able to resist the most immediate impacts of climate change — thereby providing a refuge for some species and potentially helping to replenish destroyed surface reef and fish populations," Baker said in a university statement.

"It may be that the cooler, deeper water in MCEs could be more hospitable to many species than the warmer surface water," she said.

The review brought together information on the geology, biology, distribution and socio-economic aspects of mesophotic reefs in order to examine their potential resilience.

"They also are less prone to waves and turbulence, therefore potentially offering a more stable environment," Baker noted.

The report found some deep mesophotic coral ecosystems may be less vulnerable to the most extreme ocean warming, but others may be just as vulnerable as their shallow counterparts and cannot be relied on to act as "life boats".

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Primordial black holes and dark matter are linked: Nasa

**IANS**

A NASA scientist has suggested a possible link between primordial black holes — formed during the first second of our universe’s existence — and dark matter, a mysterious substance composing most of the material universe.

According to astrophysicist Alexander Kashlinsky at NASA’s Goddard Space Flight Centre in Maryland, this interpretation aligns with our knowledge of cosmic infrared and X-ray background glows and may explain the unexpectedly high masses of merging black holes detected last year. "This study is an effort to bring together a broad set of ideas and observations to test how well they fit, and the fit is surprisingly good," said Kashlinsky.

"If this is correct, then all galaxies, including our own, are embedded within a vast sphere of black holes, each about 30 times the Sun’s mass," he added.

The nature of dark matter remains one of the most important unresolved issues in astrophysics.

"Nasa is currently investigating this as part of its Alpha Magnetic Spectrometer and Fermi Gamma-ray Space Telescope missions. "The previous and new studies are providing increasingly sensitive results, slowly shrinking the box of parameters where dark matter particles can hide," Kashlinsky added.

The failure to find them has led to renewed interest in studying how well primordial black holes — black holes formed in the universe’s first fraction of a second — could work as dark matter. Physicists have outlined several ways in which the hot, rapidly expanding universe could produce primordial black holes in the first thousandths of a second after the Big Bang.

The older the universe is when these mechanisms take hold, the larger the black holes can be. Because the window for creating them lasts only a tiny fraction of the first second, scientists expect primordial black holes would exhibit a narrow range of masses.

In September last year, gravitational waves produced by a pair of merging black holes 1.3 billion light-years away were captured by the Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory (LIGO) facilities in Hanford, Washington, and Livingston, Louisiana.

This event marked the first-ever detection of gravitational waves as well as the first direct detection of black holes. The signal provided LIGO scientists with information about the masses of the individual black holes, which were 29 and 36 times the Sun’s mass, plus or minus about four solar masses.

These values were both unexpectedly large and surprisingly similar. "Depending on the mechanism at work, primordial black holes could have properties very similar to what LIGO detected," Kashlinsky explained.

In his new paper published in The Astrophysical Journal Letters, Kashlinsky analyses what might have happened if dark matter consisted of a population of black holes similar to those detected by LIGO.

"Future LIGO observing runs will tell us much more about the universe’s population of black holes, and it won’t be long before we’ll know if the scenario I outline is either supported or ruled out," Kashlinsky added.
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<tr>
<th>Theater</th>
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Note: Programme is subject to change without prior notice.

**BABY BLUES**

“A mismatched pair of private eyes investigate the apparent suicide of a fading star in 1970s Los Angeles.”

**HAGAR THE HORRIBLE**

“I went to four markets to find this huge cut of meat for you! So... How about a kiss?”

“KISS”

5-27

Note: Programme is subject to change without prior notice.
THURSDAY 26 MAY 2016

**BRAIN TEASERS**

**Conceptis Sudoku**

Conceptis Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9×9 grid. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3×3 box contains the same number only once.

**MEDIUM SUDOKU**

```
8 3 4 1 7 9 5 2 6
7 1 5 2 8 4 6 9 3
4 6 9 5 2 7 3 1 8
3 9 2 7 6 8 5 4 1
5 8 6 9 4 3 1 2 7
2 7 8 1 9 5 4 3 6
1 4 3 8 7 6 2 5 9
9 2 1 6 3 4 7 8 5
```

**CROSSWORD**

```
ACROSS
1 Scillonian 35 Stopwatch
2 Sloop 36 Doorly
3 Scratch 37 Misile
4 Boxer 38 Freight
5 Scruffy 41 Lemon
6 Speed 42 Temperate
7 Max 43 English
8 Stove 44 George
9 Shelter 45 Novel
10 Max 46 Ship
11 Missile 47 California
12 Manx 48 Siberia
13 Pictish 49 Swindon
14 Taj Mahal 50 Furniture
15 Clyde 51 Make
16 Rhum 52 "For shame!"
17 Parthenon 53 Circus
18 Obiee 54 Port
21 - 55 Make an entrance
22 Ford 56 Planet
23 Tempresses 57 Bottom
24 French 58 Some
25 Seed coat 59 Roll
26 Lightweight 60 Jelly
27 Breath 61 Red
28 Felt 62 Some
29 Tailor 63 Thing
30 Scooter 64 Two
31 Aida and 65 In Acqua
32 Auro 66 Pulco
33 Eaters with 67 Trudge
steamers 68 Steph
```

**DOWN**

```
20 Doctrines 22 Place
21 Artist 23 Skyscraper
22 Chagall 24 Chicago
23 Spoken 25 Paragon
24 Actress 26 Elevator
25 Monte 27 Stir up
26 Chicago 28 Not
27 Airport 29 Triticum
28 Ingredient 30 Per
30 Paragon 31 Competent
30 Per 32 Agri
31 Competent 33 Chemist
32 Agri 34 Engineer
33 Chemist 35 Thing
34 Engineer 36 Thing
```

**ALL IN THE MIND**

Can you find the hidden words? They may be horizontal, vertical, diagonal, forwards or backwards.

```
U X T N A P I C T R A C P C E
Q N O I T S E U Q A R D D B X R I W
Q E S O N P O S E R L C D R E P I
O Y E R O C S P R C E T I S S O S
T C E J B U S M J A N Y L P S T M
M A I V I R T G E L A S C J U V Y J
N A A L B C H A L L E N G E R E C
G P H U O U N K L O W N D G E A O
U P O N D O Z M D A W D P R P N
E L S N E I Z P I O L Y Q A T
S A T E O M E R E U P A H I T R E
S U P E R E M I N I R Y M N S C I S
V S A H I Z O C Z E S T A J I G T
A E T T E E J I R S N R H V A
P E N N I W D R E W S N A C T N
E C I O H C R T I T E P M O C T
T Y R O M E M J G O N R W X E I E
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**TV LISTINGS**

```
07:00 News
07:30 The Stream
08:00 News
08:30 Witness
09:00 Lifelines:
10:00 News
10:30 Inside Story
11:00 News
11:30 The Stream
12:00 News
12:30 People & Power
13:00 News
13:15 Yeh Vadaa
13:30 Ek Tha Raja
13:45 Ek Thi Rani
13:30 Kumbum
13:45 Bhraya
14:00 Jhalak
14:15 Ek Thi Rani
```

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