

What happens when a domestic helper seeks embassy help?



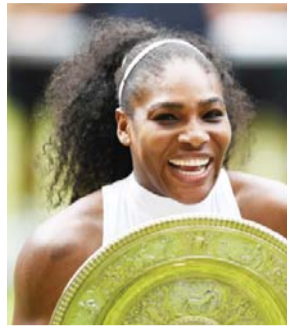
Would-be UK PM sparks row with remarks on childlessness



Eight killed in Kashmir after rebel leader's death



Serena wins 7th Wimbledon, record-equaling 22nd major title



PROTESTS AS DALLAS KILLINGS ROCK RACE RELATIONS IN US

GUNMAN WANTED TO 'KILL WHITE COPS' • OBAMA INSISTS AMERICA NOT DIVIDED



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UNITED NATO KEEPS PRESSURE ON RUSSIA

WARSAW: NATO leaders united yesterday behind a "hard-headed" policy of deterrence and dialogue with Russia after launching the alliance's biggest military revamp since the Cold War to counter a resurgent Moscow. US President Barack Obama said that whatever the circumstances, European allies in NATO would always be able to rely on the United States. "In good times, and in bad, Europe can count on the United States. Always," Obama said at the close of the summit.

Alliance chief Jens Stoltenberg said alliance leaders "stand together" on Russia, agreeing at a summit in Warsaw to bolster its eastern flank after Moscow's annexation of Crimea and the Ukraine conflict. Russian President Vladimir Putin has opposed NATO's decision to put four battalions in Poland and the Baltic states, seeing the expansion into Moscow's Soviet-era backyard as a direct security threat. "The alliance is united, we stand together," Stoltenberg said when asked about the leaders' talks on Russia. "The united message is that defense and dialogue are what our relationship is based on."

Around 200 anti-war activists defied heavy security in central Warsaw to protest against the summit, carrying banners saying "Yes to Peace, No to NATO", AFP journalists saw.

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PHOENIX: Marchers take to the streets to protest against the recent fatal shootings of black men by police on Friday. (Inset) This undated handout photo shows Micah Xavier Johnson, the gunman who killed five officers in an ambush in Dallas. — AP/AFP

DALLAS: Thousands of protesters marched in US cities late Friday, one day after a black extremist shot dead five cops who were protecting a peaceful march against police brutality in Texas. President Barack Obama said he will cut short a foreign trip and visit Dallas next week as the shooting rampage by the black army veteran, who said he wanted to kill white cops, triggered urgent calls to mend troubled race relations in the United States. Meanwhile, the Kuwait Embassy to the US yesterday urged citizens and students to avoid protests planned in all states. The embassy expressed its wishes for citizens' safety and security, stressing the importance of abiding by the instructions issued by the local authorities in this regard.

Obama yesterday sought to calm fears of a divided nation, adding the shooter was "demented" and does not represent African Americans. "The demented individual who carried out the attacks in Dallas, he's no more representative of African-Americans than the shooter in Charleston was representative of white Americans," Obama told a news conference at a NATO summit in Warsaw. "America is not as divided as some have suggested," Obama added. "There is sorrow, there is anger, there is confusion... but there is unity."

While many remembered the slain officers, anger simmered as crowds overnight Friday to yesterday protested the deaths of Alton Sterling in Louisiana and Philando Castile in Minnesota, two African-American men killed by cops. Video footage of their final moments went viral online. "As Americans, we are wounded by all of these deaths," Vice President Joe Biden said yesterday.

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ISLAMABAD: Pakistani children hold candles and signs during a candlelight vigil for renowned social worker Abdul Sattar Edhi yesterday. — AFP

PAKISTAN BIDS FAREWELL TO NATIONAL HERO EDHI

KARACHI: A gloomy Pakistan yesterday bade farewell to its national hero Abdul Sattar Edhi, the founder of the country's largest welfare organisation who died Friday in Karachi aged 92. Edhi, whose death was confirmed by his son Faisal, was revered for setting up maternity wards, morgues, orphanages, shelters and homes for the elderly, picking up where limited government-run services fell short. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif announced a state funeral and day of national mourning in honor of the man who owned just two sets of clothes, but whose work uplifting the nation's destitute and orphans cemented his place in the hearts of Pakistan's masses.

Edhi, known as a 'servant of humanity'

and who also ran the world's largest private ambulance network, was suffering from severe kidney problems according to his son. Among those to attend the funeral was President Mamnoon Hussain, military chief General Raheel Sharif, governor of Sindh province Ishrat ul Ibad Khan, the chief ministers of Sindh and Punjab provinces and many other national politicians, notables and servicemen.

Edhi's coffin, wrapped in the green national flag and covered with pink rose-petals, was carried on a military jeep into the national stadium in Karachi where there was a guard of honor as thousands paid tribute. Security officials said that a 21 gun salute was also offered. Military

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BIG DROP IN IS TWITTER TRAFFIC

News

in brief

Kerala imposes 'fat tax' on junk food

NEW DELHI: India's peaceful tourist hotspot Kerala has become the first state in the country to impose a "fat tax" on junk food in a bid to counter rising obesity. The state's finance minister Thomas Isaac announced a 14.5 percent tax on food including burgers, pizzas and sandwiches sold at restaurants and fast-food chains, as part of the local government's annual budget. The government said it hopes that the move will not only generate additional revenue for the state but also deter people from consuming junk food. "There has been an alarming trend in growth of unhealthy eating habits among Keralites and we hope the fat tax will be a deterrent," Rajan N Khobragade, the state's commissioner of commercial taxes, told The Times of India newspaper.

Man dies, two others gored in bull-runs

MADRID: A Spaniard died and two other men, including a Japanese, were gored in bull-runs in Spain yesterday, as the San Fermin festival in the northern town of Pamplona entered its third day. The 28-year-old died after a bull's horn pierced his lung and heart during a run in the southeastern village of Pedreguer near Valencia, a spokesman for the regional government said. The bull caught him as he was trying to help another runner in the annual event, in which a man also died last year. Many Spanish towns hold summer festivals involving bulls.

WASHINGTON: The Islamic State group's Twitter traffic has plunged 45 percent in the past two years, the Obama administration says, as the US and its allies have countered messages of jihadi glorification with a flood of online images and statements about suffering and enslavement at the hands of the extremist organization. Among the images: A teddy bear with Arabic writing and messages saying IS "slaughters childhood", "kills innocence", "lashes purity" or "humiliates children". A male hand covering a female's mouth,

saying IS "deprives woman her voice". A woman in a black niqab (veil), bloody tears coming from a bruised eye, and the caption: "Women under ISIS. Enslaved. Battered. Beaten. Humiliated. Flogged."

US officials cite the drop in Twitter traffic as a sign of progress toward eliminating propaganda they blame for inspiring attacks around the world. When the US formed an international coalition in September 2014 to fight IS, the administration outlined multiple goals: Military

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This image provided by the US State Department shows an image of a teddy bear with Arabic writing and message saying Islamic State "slaughters childhood", "kills innocence", "lashes purity" or "humiliates children". — AP



CAIRO: Football analyst Manar Sarhan takes notes as she watches the Euro 2016 quarterfinal between Wales and Belgium at her home in the Egyptian capital Cairo on July 1, 2016. — AFP

WOMAN BREAKS GROUND AS SOCCER PUNDIT

CAIRO: Manar Sarhan disinfects her hands after filling a patient's tooth, readying to catch the Euro 2016 match and analyse it for a newspaper as Egypt's first woman in mainstream football punditry. Sarhan, 27, appears weekly on the private CBC television channel to comment on matches in the competition, a rare sight in a field monopolized by former football players, all of them men. "I chose dentistry as a career with my mind, but football is my passion and love," Sarhan tells AFP in a private clinic where she freelances as a dentist.

"I tried to play football in the beginning but I didn't find a good opportunity in Egypt and I think specializing in analyzing football makes up a lot for it," she says after examining a patient. Sarhan began working in journalism as a volunteer in 2002, using a basic camera to capture footage for the website of her favorite Egyptian club: Zamalek. Sarhan began writing for the independent Al-Masry Al-Youm newspaper and the popular Fil Goal website before

she was picked up by satellite sports programs.

By day, Sarhan works in a government medical centre and chips in at a clinic owned by one of her friends. At night, she clears her schedule to follow games and to read the latest in the world of football. "I'm a dentist by day, and a football commentator by night," Sarhan says, laughing as she packs her medical instruments. "The effort put into commentary is more in spite of the return being lower," she says.

A profitable profession, dentistry is respected by Egyptians. It was not easy to enter the sports commentary world, especially as a woman. "The field is already difficult for male youths, so what about a girl?" says Sarhan, who decorates her bedroom with posters of Egyptian and European football players. "I was mocked in the beginning. They would tell me 'Girls belong in kitchens,'" she says. Her large following on Twitter suggests otherwise.

Top European clubs and their games are popular viewing in Egypt, and Sarhan has proven to be an expert in the field. Ibrahim Fayek, an anchor at CBC, says hosting Sarhan was "very strange" in the beginning because she is "a lady and a dentist". Now, he says, he is doing his best to keep her on his show as competitors try to poach her. "Manar has an expansive and deep understanding of football and she presents a different type of football analysis. Her explanation of the different teams' plans and tactics surprised me," Fayek tells AFP.

At home, Sarhan sits close to a large screen broadcasting Belgium against Wales, jotting down statistics on passing and the players' movements. Nearby lies an old copy of Britain's World Soccer magazine, with the cover featuring Zinedine Zidane, who she said inspired her love for Real Madrid. "I would watch a match twice before writing any comprehensive technical analysis," she says.

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KUWAIT: Several pictures showing wrecked vehicles following accidents reported around Kuwait during the Eid Al-Fitr holiday.

SIX KILLED IN ACCIDENTS DURING EID AL-FITR HOLIDAY



By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: A total of six people were killed and scores others were injured in a number of accidents reported over the Eid Al-Fitr holiday. A citizen was killed when his vehicle collided with a lamppost on Seventh Ring Road. Mubarak Al-Kabeer hazardous material fire center responded, removed the citizen's body and handed it to criminal evidence. Another citizen was killed in an accident on King Fahd Expressway near Bayan when he collided with a water tanker. Mishref fire center rushed to the area and removed the body. Separately, two

Arab nationals were killed in a car accident on a road in Abdaly. Firemen removed the trapped bodies and handed them to criminal evidence. Another fatal accident was reported on Mahboula coastal road; a collision that killed two people, who were removed from their vehicle by Mangaf firemen. Another accident took place on King Fahd Expressway, requiring Mina Abdullah fire center to respond and free a trapped injured person in the car. He was transferred to hospital. Meanwhile, Qurain fire center responded to an accident on the same road, and a number of trapped and injured people were freed and handed to paramedics.



Local spotlight

GULF TOURISM



By Muna Al-Fuzai

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Ramadan is over and the Arab tourism season has started. Although the number of passengers during the holiday reached up to 250,000 on 150 flights daily compared to around 50,000 passengers on regular days, these figures will possibly change now, especially for those who did not travel during Ramadan. My personal opinion is that most Gulf tourists do not enjoy travel as it should be, or rather as Western tourists do, although they spend a lot of money and often travel as groups or with large families. The reasons are many, but many have a wrong perception over why they want to travel, and their goals of traveling are mistaken. If the reason for travel was to boast that they spent the holiday outside their countries, then this is a ridiculous goal, and if the reason is shopping and buying more unnecessary stuff, then this is a bad excuse and only shows how shallow we are, because we have enough malls at home. This does not include those who travel for education or medical treatment.

Last year, the British Tourism Authority revealed that Kuwaiti tourists are the biggest spenders among tourists. The average expenditure of Kuwaiti tourists in London is around £4,000, while the average amount spent by French tourists in London is £350, which means that spending by a Kuwaiti tourist is 12 times more than the French tourist.

But there is ill-treatment at airports against Gulf tourists, particularly being treated as suspects and not as tourists who want to spend some time enjoying a vacation with their families or friends. This unfriendly treatment of Gulf tourists at airports is surprising, for the simple reason that we have never seen a Gulf tourist who committed a terrorist act in a foreign country. Terrorist crimes are usually committed by immigrant citizens of Muslim descent, and they are not tourists. But I have never found a foreign government that has the courage to recognize and admit that its security danger is internal and not from Gulf tourists, who want to enjoy the atmosphere and scenery, relax and spend quite a lot of money.

Arab tourists travel during peak times due to its relation with school vacations during the summer. So it is the best time for traveling. But Arabs carry many bags, even for short trips to Dubai, for example! Despite the large number of bags that cause stress on their health, most Arabs until today are heavy travelers. Some behave provocatively, shipping their cars to vacation spots for boasting that they are rich or rent luxury cars for showing off. They quickly fall victims to this extravagance. I do not feel sorry for them because they asked for it. A major mistake is the insistence of some women to wear the veil in states that prohibit completely the covering of the face, and here it is necessary to respect the laws of the state. No one objects over modest dress, but the niqab prevents others from identifying the person, and any country has the right to verify a person's identity. Another key mistake is taking maids along, and it makes me wonder why they cannot even serve themselves for once?

There is a need to change the culture of the people about the goals of travel. If it was to only spend money and brag, then it is a distasteful reason, but traveling for treatment and study is a logical one. I also believe that families should not be neglectful in monitoring the behavior of their children and teenagers to ensure they avoid falling in trouble with the law and respect nature, especially the local flora and fauna. Gulf embassies must take responsibility for educating their citizens of the importance of respecting the laws of the state they are traveling to. No more harm to animals please!

FARWANIYA POLICE ARREST DRUG DEALER

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Farwaniya detectives arrested a Turkish suspect named Mohammad Ali Jolha, who works as a barber, with possession of 250 gm hashish, two envelopes of shabu, cocaine, paraphernalia and suspicious pills. He said that he traded in the substances. The man was arrested in Jabriya. He was taken to the proper authorities for further action.

on social media that a policeman at Abdaly border outlet pulled his weapon in the face of a customs officer are not accurate. The department said that strict instructions requires security men who work at land border outlets to check all persons who use the outlet, but the customs officer did not comply with the instructions, and went to the police station and lodged a complaint. Meanwhile, investigations revealed that there was a previous problem between the two.

Unlicensed weapons

Weapons detectives arrested a citizen named Thamer Saad Mabrook, residing in Qasr, who had unlicensed firearms and ammunition. Detectives found a loaded AK-47, a pistol and an AK-47 magazine. He was sent to concerned authorities.

Thief caught

Fintas detectives arrested a citizen named Hussein Jassim Mahmoud, an ex-convict, for break-in and a theft. Police received two complaints about thefts at mobile stores and the suspect was identified and caught in Mangaf.

Report refuted

The Ministry of Interior's Relations and Security Information Department said reports

Brewery busted

Hawally security department busted a liquor brewery in Salwa run by a number of Asian nationals, who were arrested. A routine patrol suspected an Asian man who became nervous when he saw them, and when asked to stop, he attempted to escape. Police found he is an Indian national who had liquor on him. He said he receives the liquor from a house, and when it was raided, it was revealed to be a brewery.

Municipality campaign

Ahmadi municipality branch emergency team carried out a field campaign that targeted unlicensed congratulatory banners, as well as check restaurants and grocery stores. The campaign resulted in removing 39 signs, issuing 10 citations and destroying 10 kg of foodstuff.



FIREMAN INJURED IN WAFRA BLAZE

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Fire broke out in a wood warehouse in Wafra that covered an area of 1,000 meters Wafra. Firefighters from the Zour fire station responded, but when they arrived to the scene, they asked for four more teams to back them up to contain the fire and keep it from spreading. Fireman Fahd Al-Furaih suffered fractures and tendon rupture, and was rushed to Adan Hospital. It took firemen five hours to put out the fire. An investigation was opened to determine the causes of the blaze.

Medical emergencies

The medical emergencies department announced that it dealt with 1,161 cases during the Eid Al-Fitr period - 714 cases were transferred to hospitals and nearby centers, in adding to moving 15 cases by medevac, while 447 cases were treated on site. It said cases varied between road accidents, fights, burns and minor wounds.

Ambulance services supervisor Jassim Al-Foudary said statistics of the operations department at the medical emergencies department during the period between the first day of Eid and the fourth day showed 86 cases of injuries due to car accidents, including 22 cases on Wednesday, 27 on Thursday, 39 on Friday and eight on Saturday by noon.

RECOMMENDATION TO STOP APARTMENT BUILDING CONSTRUCTION IN KHAITAN

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Kuwait Municipality asked the Municipal Council not to allocate any additional investment residential areas in Khaitan within the urban area, and direct all investments to new cities and residential areas. Investment areas refer to lands where apartment buildings are allowed to be built. Commenting on this topic, Municipality Director General Ahmad Al-Manfouhi said: "It is necessary to keep block five of Khaitan as it is (private residence), because it has low housing density, and the area is well organized."

Khairan project

The Public Authority for Housing Welfare signed an agreement with the company executing the designs of Khairan residential project to cancel the signed contracts without any significant costs for both sides. This action was taken as the authority board agreed the designs were inappropriate, although the company completed the designs on time. The company received KD 3 million for its work although the housing authority did not benefit from it.

Electricity production

Ministry of Electricity and Water said it is keeping up with the population increase by establishing several power generating projects. Subbiya station director Mohyee-el-Dein Najem said the current production of electricity is nearly 5,440 megawatts. "Subbiya is one of the major stations the ministry is keen to develop continually through the most modern means of power production worldwide," he said.

Fake degrees

A committee formed to study fake certificates at the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training, said the committee submitted its final report to Education Minister Bader Al-Essa, Chairman Tariq Al-Duwaisan said. The number of teachers mentioned in the report is less than 611, he added.

Bank deposits

The Ministry Social Affairs and Labor

(MSAL) said there are no plans to tap cooperatives' bank deposits to pay their suppliers. The ministry said it will resort to preventive policies with rapid intervention, and attempt to deal with problems through measures that improve the co-ops' financial status without resorting to the deposits. Meanwhile, MSAL will announce the opening of declaring candidacies at six co-ops to select four members to replace those whose membership has expired.

Sterilization

Health Ministry Undersecretary Dr Khalid Al-Sahlawi said the ministry is keen on following all international developments and reports issued by international reference centers against infections in hospitals and health centers. He said the ministry will implement the policies, measures and infection control protocols at health centers through epidemic monitoring of infection cases related to healthcare and accurate diagnosis of their causes, in addition to the ministry's keenness on applying sterilization and environmental cleaning procedures inside health facilities by using effective disinfectants.

50 percent

First Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah said the Foreign Ministry has reduced the construction projects "Chapter 4" budget by nearly 50 percent. He said, in an answer to a query from MP Rakan Al-Nisf, that the ministry issued instructions to officials and diplomatic missions to follow what is mentioned in the Cabinet's decisions. About the financial value of the budget that is to be reduced for the year (2016 / 2017), it was estimated according to the actual needs of the ministry and representative missions abroad, though which the fourth chapter budget was reduced by nearly 50 percent. As for the Kuwait Economic Development Fund, he said the fund has been self-dependent on its resources since 1987 to cover its expenses and fulfill its developmental goals. He said the fund's capital was paid from net annual profits, and does not rely on the state that paid KD 970 million.



KUWAIT: This handout photo released by the Interior Ministry shows a man arrested in Jabriya for drug trafficking.



Weapons and ammunition found with a man arrested in Qasr.

What happens when a domestic helper seeks embassy assistance?

Processes done to repatriate Filipina runaway housemaids

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: There are about 220,000 Filipinos in Kuwait, based on the official immigration record revealed by Philippine Ambassador to Kuwait Renato Pedro Villa at the 118th Philippines Independence Day celebration last month. The majority of them work as domestic helpers, or about 60 percent of the total. There are many reported cases of abuses in the domestic labor sector committed against Filipina domestic helpers and nationals of other countries that export domestic workers. The embassy of the Philippines runs two shelters for abused workers; one in Hateen, where 150 abused maids are housed, and the other in Faiha, with about 270, as of May 25, 2016. But what really happens when a housemaid runs away and seeks the embassy's assistance? Kuwait Times spoke to Angelita Narvaez, shelter administrator and the embassy's assistant labor attache.

Standards procedures
Kuwait Times: When a household service worker (HSW) runs away and seeks the embassy's help, what should she expect? What are the procedures taken?

Narvaez: We have standard operation procedures in the embassy manual with basic guidelines that are followed. You are considered a runaway if you show up at the embassy within 48 hours after escaping from your employer. If you come after a week or so, then we believe there is something wrong on the part of the worker, so we will try to see how we can help. We ask them to sign an affidavit with their story of why they ended up at the embassy.

Those who have been staying somewhere else other than their actual employers for a long period of time are not accepted at the shelter at all, but we will continue to help them fight for their rights. We do not provide long-time runaways shelter, but all assistance needed is given on a case by case basis. If there are compelling reasons to accept such workers at the shelter, we do so, because this is exactly the reason why we are here - we are mandated to protect Filipino workers.

passport and cancel the visa immediately if the worker wants to return home - if they return the passport and agree to the process of repatriation, it will be easier for the worker. In fact, if the employer is not a hindrance in the worker's repatriation, the OFW can go home on a regular flight - she can buy tickets and return to the Philippines instantly. The problem is of runaway housemaids whose employers do not cooperate. They are usually stuck here for extended periods, but most of the time, the police here help us tremendously to resolve employer-employee relations.

KT: Some employers demand returning of the cost of hiring the helper (KD 700-KD 1,200). How is this handled?

Narvaez: Employers are given a three-month period to try the housemaid in the job. In the event that a housemaid cannot perform the job, the employer can easily return the housemaid to the agency. The employer can get the money from them, or a replacement of the helper is permitted. The employer can also wait until a new employer hires her - then the new employer pays the former employer the amount. This is

KT: What do you require from the agencies so that workers can be protected?

Narvaez: We want them to do their job properly. Their responsibility is to monitor and make sure that our workers are placed in good hands. So the agency's job does not stop when they find a job for a worker - it is a continuing responsibility. The obligation is not limited to the three-month probation period - it extends as long as the worker is under the contract of the employer. Even if the workers renew their contracts, their well-being is still in the hands of the agency. The good thing in Kuwait is that agencies have their own organization here - Fil-Aseak. Because of this organization, we can easily communicate and coordinate with them in a matter of minutes in cases of emergency.

Shelter rules
KT: What are the rules to be followed by runaway housemaids once they are housed at the shelter?

Narvaez: We fix the time for everything - there is a time to wake up and go to sleep. There are volunteers from among the runaway housemaids to assist us in minor jobs at the shelter, from cleaning to cooking. We also set timings for visitors and we regulate the use of mobile phones. We allow them to use the official phone (for a maximum of 10 minutes) to reassure their families on their whereabouts and the progress of their cases.

KT: What about food - are they able to eat properly?

Narvaez: They eat here three times a day - we have an average of 150-300 runaway workers, and we feed them and provide them with necessary hygienic kits, soap, shampoo and detergent (for washing clothes). On food alone, during the first quarter, we spent \$13,000. So we are spending a lot. Sometimes Filipino organizations in Kuwait also help us by providing food through feeding programs and activities, which boosts their morale.

KT: When a worker is hired and enters Kuwait, should they go straight to their employers?

Narvaez: No. We require that their local agency bring the workers here at the Philippine Embassy. We conduct a post-arrival orientation seminar (PAOS) to make sure that they get a proper introduction to Kuwaiti culture and norms. We also provide them with a contact number in case of emergency. The PAOS is conducted every day, and it's a one-hour program for the newly-hired workers. The impact of PAOS is really positive and helps a lot of our kababayans. We launched the PAOS in 2014 and we are getting better feedback.

Most difficult challenges
KT: What are the most difficult challenges facing runaway housemaids?

Narvaez: The main and common problem is how to recover their unpaid salaries. While employers have agreed to pay KD 110 to our Pinoy workers, many suffer due to unpaid or delayed salaries. If the employer won't cooperate, we pass the burden to the agencies, so they negotiate with the employers. They are compelled to follow our orders because our government is very strict in renewing their licenses. If a recruitment agency has a certain number of runaway housemaids (at the shelter), we temporarily suspend their transactions with us, or we recommend canceling their licenses.

We are partners in solving runaway issues. Most of the time, we also involve the recruitment agency back in Manila. If the problem is about a ticket for example, we ask them to provide the air ticket. If the housemaid's agency does not exist anymore, OWWA/POE will take over, since she is automatically a member of OWWA, and get financial support from the government. But plane tickets are not a problem for the runaway housemaids as we can get them through various sources.



Angelita Narvaez, shelter administrator and the Philippines embassy's assistant labor attache.

KT: There are cases of runaway housemaids here in the shelter that took months or even years to resolve. Are there any programs offered by the shelter to keep them productive?

Narvaez: Yes, at the shelter we have many volunteers who share their skills with runaway housemaids like handicraft making, baking, cooking, hairstyling, nail art, etc. We have these programs here at the embassy. Although they are not regular, we have at least one program in a month. We also have spiritual activities - for Catholics we have Mass, for Evangelicals we have Bible study, and various other services for their spiritual need. While they are awaiting repatriation, we enroll them in the 'assist well' program of the OWWA/POEA. When they are in Manila, they can avail various training programs and even financial loans for them to start businesses for reintegration into the society.

- 60% Filipinos in Kuwait work as domestic helpers.
- A maid is considered runaway if she shows up at the embassy within 48 hours after escaping.
- Those who stay somewhere else for a long period are not accepted at the shelter.
- The action of the embassy depends on the story they tell.
- Noncooperation from the part of employer is the most common cause for delays.
- \$13,000 spent during the first quarter on food alone.

KT: What kind of assistance do you provide to runaway workers?

Narvaez: The action of the embassy depends on the story they tell us. In the affidavit, we ask them to state the kind of assistance they want from us - most runaway housemaids want to go back to the Philippines, so we help them accordingly. There are some who want to continue working, but with other sponsors, because they have kids to feed back home. If they want to work, we will not provide them shelter. We call their recruitment agency and tell them to transfer the OFW in distress. The agency has its own shelter, so they are turned over to it. We oblige the agency to resolve its runaway cases as soon as possible, because at the end of the day, they ended up in Kuwait because they were hired by these agencies. We do not deny them the opportunity to work again, because they have families to help back home.

Extended delays
KT: Why are there cases of extended delays in resolving issues of runaway housemaids? What are the common issues for the delays?

Narvaez: Noncooperation from the part of employer is the most common cause for delay in resolving housemaid issues. At first, we coordinate the cases with the recruitment agencies that will call the employers to negotiate about their workers. We tell them to hand over the

way things work. But change of employers is not our job - it is the job of the agency. We only wait for the report. Employer-employee transactions are done at the local recruitment agency - from salaries to claims. Our role is to make sure that everything is done legally.

Hiring cost
KT: What is the cost of hiring a Filipina domestic helper? How much does the government get from the recruitment agency?

Narvaez: For many years, we have a rule that does not oblige our domestic helper to spend even a single centavo in getting a job. So the cost of hiring a domestic helper is passed to the employers. I have been hearing the cost is between KD 600 to KD 1,000 plus, but out of the amount, the POEA/OWWA only gets KD 3.25 from the recruitment agency here in Kuwait. This is the fee for the verification of contract, and that's what we (the government) get from the agency here in Kuwait. Back home, we only charge a processing fee, maybe a bit more than KD 5. There are other charges, like for example the medical test, but the amount paid goes to private companies and not to the government. It's not our business to intervene when it comes to the cost of hiring Filipinos - our concern is the well-being of the workers once they are hired. As far as I know, the amount which they charge includes the cost for the airline ticket and for some other requirements by the Kuwaiti Embassy in Manila.

In my view

ARAB ECONOMIES IN LIGHT OF TENSIONS



By Labeed Abdal

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The assessment made by the Federation of Arab Businessmen (FAB), located in Jordan, that Arab countries' losses resulting from violence and conflicts stand at \$245 billion on an annual basis and \$1.2 trillion over the past five years is very shocking. These astronomical figures have turned the so-called Arab Spring into a very hot summer.

These astronomical figures have turned the so-called Arab Spring into a very hot summer

Arab economic situations are not promising in view of the continued political and security tensions that have been going on for over half a century in many Arab countries. This does not require focusing on more losses. It also calls for excluding the saboteurs themselves from reconstruction contracts, especially since HSBC's assessment of the losses in countries like Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Libya, Egypt, Tunisia and Lebanon is equal to around 35 percent of their annual GDP.

There are expectations that instability and political conflicts will continue in a number of Arab countries, which will affect and destroy their infrastructure and make Arab economic revival unlikely to happen in the short run. This instability was reflected in various Arab economic indexes last year, especially in view of falling oil prices that slowed down Arab economies beyond all expectations. This calls for regional cooperation and selecting the right partners with all technical potentials.



KUWAIT: Minister of Social Affairs and Labor and Minister of State for Planning and Development Hind Al-Subaih distributes Eid Al-Fitr gifts to resident orphans at the Social Care Complex for the elderly, disabled, and orphans. —Photos by Amiri Diwan and Yasser Al-Zayyat

AMIR GRANTED EID GIFTS TO ORPHANS

KUWAIT: Making her annual Eid Al-Fitr visit to the Social Care Complex for the elderly, disabled, and orphans, Minister of Social Affairs and Labor and Minister of State for Planning and Development Hind Al-Subaih substituted on Wednesday for His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah in distributing Eid gifts to the resident orphans.

At the conclusion of her visit, she told reporters of the keenness of His Highness the Amir to provide optimum care and attention to orphans, ensuring that they receive the wherewithal they deserve to lead productive lives as they grow up under state supervision.

She said she valued her annual first day of Eid get-together with residents of the Social Care Complex,

stressing that the residents are an integral component of the society for whom the state spares no efforts to provide all their needs while equipping them to ease into the social fabric of society with eagerness and confidence. On the achievements of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor, she said hard work is afoot at the ministry enabling it to complete no less than 90 percent of its scheduled projects. Regarding combining the Manpower Public Authority with Kuwait Restructuring Program, Subaih said merging the two is going well and should be done before the end of the year. On the issue of public donations during Ramadan, she said the ministry monitored this process well prompting the United States Treasury to applaud the ministry's efforts. —KUNA



EQUATE SHARES JOY OF EID WITH CHILDREN

KUWAIT: EQUATE Petrochemical Company, Kuwait's first international joint-venture in this industry, shared the joy of Eid Al-Fitr with several children throughout Kuwait. For the third consecutive year, EQUATE presented a number of giveaways to children at the Kuwait Association for the Care of Children in Hospital (KACCH), as well as members of Children's Home which includes orphans

under the care of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor.

EQUATE Senior Executive for Corporate Communications and Government Affairs Abeer Al-Omar said, "Our partnerships with KACCH and the Children's Home are part of ongoing initiatives by EQUATE Sustainability Program. Investing in the future of children, as part of the human capital, is a cornerstone for

sustainability in Kuwait and beyond."

Omar, who also heads EQUATE Sustainability Committee, added, "Such partnerships are an expression of our commitment to all stakeholders for the benefit of the society as a whole. This is simply one of the pillars for 'Partners in Success.'" The activities were conducted with the participation of EQUATE Sustainability Committee Members Shirin Kamshad and Asrar Mohammad.

Meanwhile, Asrar Mohammad said, "Sharing the joy of Eid is an extension of our continuous efforts to support the society. Throughout the years, because of its belief in future generations, EQUATE has launched a number of initiatives aimed at children to ensure overall sustainability through direct interaction."

During 2012, EQUATE and KACCH launched Painting Smiles (PS) campaign to create community awareness about children receiving medical care in hospitals. PS included an art exhibition for selling paintings by those children and Kuwaiti artists where all proceedings went to KACCH. In addition, since 2014, EQUATE's partnership with the Children Home has included a number of initiatives, including visits and giveaway distribution.



KFH PR and volunteers team at the Grand Mosque.

KFH TAKES PART IN ORGANIZING QIYAM PRAYER AT GRAND MOSQUE

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) Public Relations team and a number of the bank's volunteers took part in organizing Al-Qiyam prayer held at the state's Grand Mosque as part of its social responsibly and in continuation of its eventful Ramadan program and charitable activities.

KFH PR team and the volunteers distributed beverages among worshippers and the personnel at the mosque. This step contributes in fur-

ther bolstering KFH relationship with the society, yet reinforces KFH's Islamic identity. Annually on this occasion, KFH offers services to worshippers, especially as the Grand Mosque host an influx of worshippers.

It is worth noting that KFH's team worked in collaboration with the police, paramedics and the medical staff to organize Al-Qiyam prayer at the Grand Mosque. KFH has been keen to establish strong ties with all segments of the society,

especially during Ramadan, in order to spread brotherhood, participation and solidarity.

Such initiatives underline KFH's interest in having strong social and humanitarian relationships with the society, yet reflect its Islamic identity and firm belief in its ongoing commitment to assume social and humanitarian responsibility. Meanwhile, the Grand Mosque's administration applauded KFH's initiative and expressed their thanks and gratitude to the bank.



KUWAIT: Many Muslims in Kuwait make sure to visit the graves of their loved ones during the Eid holidays. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



KUWAIT: Visiting theme parks remains one of the most favorite children activities during Eid holidays in Kuwait. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Wednesday departed to the friendly Republic of Austria starting a private visit. His Highness the Amir was seen off at Kuwait International Airport by His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and top state officials. —KUNA



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah (center) and top state officials at the Grand Mosque to attend the Eid Al-Fitr prayer on June 6, 2016. — Amiri Diwan photos



Senior state officials in attendance.

CROWN PRINCE THANKS EID AL-FITR WELL-WISHERS

KUWAIT: His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah thanked yesterday all those who greeted him well during the occasion of Eid Al-Fitr. His Highness Sheikh Nawaf expressed wishes for welfare, peace, and

security for the Arab and Muslim nations and also conveyed greetings to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the people of Kuwait on the end of this glorious holiday. His Highness the Amir and His Highness

the Crown Prince had performed Eid Al-Fitr prayer at the State Grand Mosque on Wednesday morning. His Highness the Amir was also accompanied by Parliament Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem, senior

Sheikhs, His Highness Sheikh Nasser Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al-Hamad A-Sabah, Amiri Diwan Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, First Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-

Sabah, Deputy Premier and Interior Minister Sheikh Mohammad Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Deputy premier and Defense Minister Sheikh Khaled Jarrah Al-Sabah, Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance and Acting Oil Minister Anas Al-Saleh. — KUNA



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.



Citizens greet His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.



Ambassadors greet His Highness the Amir and His Highness the Crown Prince.

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In Brief

KUWAITI CRUDE PRICE DROPS TO \$40.89 PB

KUWAIT: The price of the Kuwaiti oil dropped by \$1.92 on Friday to 40.89 per barrel (pb), compared to \$42.81 pb on Thursday, the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) said yesterday. On the international markets, the crude prices recovered after incurring losses in the session before the last when they posted record fall in two months, due to reported drop of the US crude reserves. — KUNA



TRAFFIC AT AIRPORT NORMAL

KUWAIT: Traffic at Kuwait International Airport was normal and flights were on schedule during the Eid Al-Fitr holiday despite crowds, said an official of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA). Saleh Al-Faddaghi, director of operations at DGCA refuted "baseless" reports on social media of "extremely" dense crowding at the airport. He predicted that passenger traffic at the airport would rise starting today, as many are returning home after the Eid holiday. He also noted that some 250,000 people left the country on the first couple of days of the holiday. — KUNA



OFFICIAL VISITS BORDER CROSSING

KUWAIT: Interior Ministry Undersecretary Lieutenant General Suleiman Al-Fahad visited late Friday the Nuwaiseeb border crossing. According to the Interior Ministry's media department, the official's visit aimed at checking the proceedings at the border crossing especially during the last days of Eid Al-Fitr where many citizens and expatriates are expected to head back to the country. Lt Gen Fahad lauded the efforts of the Nuwaiseeb border crossing personnel and encouraged them to boost their efforts in protecting Kuwait's borders against all threats. — KUNA



Photo

of the day



KUWAIT: Kuwait City's landscape under the clear blue sky. — KUNA photo

SAFAFIR MARKET, WHERE KUWAITIS USED TO BUY HOUSEHOLD WARES



The making of the Arabic coffee pot at Al-Safafir market.

KUWAIT: In the good old days, Al-Safafir market was the destination of Kuwaitis willing to buy household wares with signs of their heritage. Located in Sharq, a neighborhood at the heart of Kuwait City, the market still maintains a taste of the past where people bought pots, trays, jugs, boxes, cups made of cooper, pottery, iron or aluminum. In the past, Kuwaitis used to import non-metal household wares from Iraq, Iran, China, India, but metal products were made at home, historian Ghanima Al-Fahd said. There were several types of pots.

Al-Jahla (clay jar) was a major item of these days; big ones were used to keep water in, or soaking date seeds that were later turned into fodder, she added. A small one was used as a drum by tapping on it with the fingers, or with the palm of the hand on its open.

There was also the Istikana, a Turkish word used to describe a unique-looking glass used mostly to drink tea. Many of the pots used for cooking and keeping food at home were made of aluminum; big ones were used for kneading flour and washing vegetables, while small ones contained pickles, Fahd said. — KUNA



Workers at Al-Safafir market.

LATE PRINCE SAUD AL-FAISAL: BELOVED ARAB, MUSLIM FIGURE

KUWAIT: A year has passed since the former Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al-Faisal had passed away with many in the Arab and Muslim worlds considering him as one of the most prominent political figures in recent history. Kuwaitis remember late Prince Saud Al-Faisal, who was born in 1940, for his courageous efforts which led to the liberation of Kuwait from the Iraqi aggression in 1991.

Alongside the Kuwaiti leadership, which was led on the foreign affairs level by current Amir His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Prince Saud Al-Faisal rallied the international community for the cause of liberating Kuwait.

On the Arab level, Prince Saud Al-Faisal

also played a pivotal role in shaping Arab foreign policy since he took office in 1975. From the struggle to promote the Palestinian cause, the tensions caused by the Egyptian-Israeli peace accord as well as the Iraqi-Iranian war, the late Saudi Foreign Minister had a lot to handle.

Also during his tenure, Prince Saud Al-Faisal witnessed the proclamation of the Arab peace Mideast initiative in 2002 which stated that Israelis and the Palestinians could have peace on the promise of withdrawal from all occupied lands. He helped revitalize the initiative in 2007. After a long illustrious career, Prince Saud Al-Faisal stepped down from his position of Foreign Minister in 2015 due to health related issues. — KUNA



A worker at Al-Safafir market.



Handmade products at Al-Safafir market.



Handmade products at Al-Safafir market.



Former Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al-Faisal.



Women rising to the top in Brexit Britain

WHAT'S BEHIND THE RISING VIOLENCE IN BANGLADESH?

MORE THAN 150 KILLED IN SOUTH SUDAN FIGHTING

'WE ARE EXPECTING A BIGGER NUMBER OF CASUALTIES'

JUBA: More than 150 soldiers died in fighting between South Sudan's army and former rebels in the capital Juba on Friday evening, a spokesman for the former rebels said. "The number of casualties is over 150 killed," said Roman Nyarji, a spokesman for rebel leader turned Vice President Riek Machar, adding the combined death toll may rise further. "We are expecting a bigger number of casualties because the two units of the presidential guard were all engaged yesterday," he said referring to bodyguard units of Machar and his rival President Salva Kiir.

Soldiers brought scores of bodies to a hospital, as panicked residents worried of a return to civil war. The doctor said a total count of the dead was not available because soldiers were not allowing doctors to examine the bodies, but he said the morgue was full at Juba Teaching Hospital. Another doctor there estimated 110 bodies, both soldiers and civilians. It was the first word of deaths from Friday's violence. The majority of the bodies were of soldiers, the first doctor said. Both insisted on speaking on condition of anonymity because of fears for their safety.

The gunfire began outside the presidential compound as President Salva Kiir was meeting with first vice president and former rebel leader Riek Machar and soon spread through the city. The former rivals issued a joint call for calm. Residents reported quieter

streets yesterday, on South Sudan's fifth anniversary of independence. Many people remained indoors. "Government leaders are attempting to restore calm. However, these actions are not yet successful. Large numbers of troops remain on the



JUBA: South Sudan President Salva Kiir (C), followed by Vice President James Wani Igga (2nd R), leaves the conference room as artillery fire broke out near the presidential palace. —AFP

streets," the US Embassy in Juba said on its Facebook page.

International groups evacuate

Some international groups like the International Monetary Fund were evacuating their staff from the country.

All foreign and local IMF staff and their families were evacuated as the office relocated temporarily to Nairobi, Kenya, said Philippe Egoume Bossogo, head of the IMF office in South Sudan. Gunfire continued into Friday night outside a UN base in Juba sheltering more than

Chol said many of the wounded were hit in crossfire outside the UN base. One woman was hit by a stray bullet inside the base, Chol said. One death inside the UN base was reported, spokeswoman Shantal Persaud said, and at least 1,000 civilians had crowded into the UN staff housing and office areas seeking shelter. In a statement later yesterday, the mission said it was "outraged" by the heavy fighting near the UN compound and that "several rounds" had hit buildings inside it. Most of the diplomatic corps in Juba took shelter at the European Union compound Friday night, while the UN head of mission was at the US Embassy, Persaud said. Armored escorts meant to extract her from the embassy yesterday were prevented by checkpoints from bringing her back to a UN base, she said.

South Sudan's defense minister, Kuol Manyang Juuk, called the situation yesterday relatively calm and spoke to the UN mission about running patrols in the city's streets "so that they see the security situation," the UN mission tweeted. The latest violence began Thursday night with shooting between opposing army factions who are supposed to be carrying out joint patrols under a fragile peace deal reached last year. That shooting, which killed five soldiers, was similar to the skirmish between soldiers in Juba in December 2013 that led to the civil war in which tens of thousands of people were killed. —Agencies

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- **Microsoft.NET technologies** including Win Forms, WPF, ASP.NET, MVC, and ADO.NET
- **Programming Languages:** C#, VB.Net, Javascript, XML, JQuery.
- **Database design** (MSSQL) Server 2012/2008/, Stored procedures, functions, and views.

POSITIONS REQUIRED:

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- **Juniors** (minimum 2 years experience)

*Transferable residency is a must.

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*Please include on the subject the position you are applying for.

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IRAN TESTS INCONSISTENT WITH NUCLEAR DEAL: UN

UNITED NATIONS: Iran's ballistic missile tests in March were "not consistent" with the spirit of the nuclear agreement signed with world powers, UN chief Ban Ki-moon said in a report to the Security Council. The secretary general, in a confidential report that AFP saw on Friday, left it up to the Security Council to determine what, if anything, should be done in response. The report does not clearly state whether the Iranian tests violated the provisions of the landmark nuclear deal signed in July 2015 in Vienna.

Under the agreement, Tehran agreed to curb its atomic program. Western powers accused Iran of using the program to develop a nuclear bomb, but Tehran always denied the allegation. Iran's foreign

ministry on Saturday rejected Ban's report as "contradicting the text of the agreement". It instead called for a report on "America's failure to undertake its commitments in the deal, as all countries who have restored economic cooperation with Iran have acknowledged".

Tehran accuses Washington of failing to reassure foreign companies and especially international banks planning to restore links with Iran. The deal led to the lifting of sanctions in January. However, Iran's ballistic missile program was not covered by the agreement. "While it is for the Security Council to interpret its own resolutions, I am concerned that those ballistic missile launches are not consistent with the constructive spirit demonstrated by the

signing" of the nuclear deal, reads part of Ban's 16-page report, dated July 1. "I am concerned by the ballistic missile launches conducted by Iran in March 2016. I call upon Iran to refrain from conducting such ballistic missile launches since they have the potential to increase tensions in the region."

'It's up to us'

This is the first report regarding the application of Security Council Resolution 2231, which includes the terms of the nuclear accord. The resolution states that Iran "is called upon not to undertake any activity related to ballistic missiles designed to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons, including launches using such ballistic missile technology."

The Security Council is set to examine the report on July 18, but diplomatic sources are not expecting a decision to be taken, or even for the 15 nations on the Council to take a joint position. "The report makes no recommendations to the Security Council," a Council diplomat told AFP. "Having a report by the secretary general is very useful but it is up to us to decide what we are going to do about it," the diplomat said. The United States, France, Britain and Germany in late March said they believed that Iran's ballistic missile launches violated UN resolutions, and asked the Security Council to address the issue. The Western powers believe that some of the missiles could carry nuclear payloads, something that Tehran has denied. — AFP



ANTALYA: Turkish airport employees welcome Russian tourists after arriving on a charter flight yesterday at Antalya airport. — AFP

1ST RUSSIAN TOURIST FLIGHT SINCE CRISIS LANDS IN TURKISH RESORT

PUTIN LIFTS TOURISM RESTRICTIONS

ISTANBUL: The first Russian flight carrying package tourists to Turkey since a diplomatic crisis erupted eight months ago landed yesterday in the Turkish Mediterranean resort of Antalya. The Rossiya Airlines plane touched down at Antalya's international airport at around 0730 GMT, after President Vladimir Putin last month officially lifted restrictions on tourism to Turkey. The Boeing 737-800 plane, flying from Moscow's Vnukovo airport, was carrying 189 tourists, NTV television said. Russia had banned the sale of agency tours to Turkey as retaliation for Ankara shooting down a Russian warplane in November on the Syrian border. The move dealt a crushing blow to the Turkish tourism industry, which is hugely reliant on Russian tourists especially on its Mediterranean coast.

'Russian tourism down 90%'

In May, overall foreign visitor numbers to Turkey plunged 34.7 percent but the number of Russians visiting fell 91.8 percent from the year earlier, official statistics said. According to Antalya airport, the number of Russian tourists had dropped 98.5 percent in June along with a general decline in tourism. Visitors have reported seeing luxury resorts around Antalya tailor-

made for Russians—including a replica of Moscow's St Basil's Cathedral by a swimming pool in one hotel-to be near deserted.

However Putin on June 30 lifted the ban on the sale of tours and ordered charter flights from Russia to Turkey to resume. His move came after President Recep Tayyip Erdogan sent a letter to Putin that Moscow said contained an apology for the downing of the jet. Analysts say that Ankara was keen to repair its relations with Moscow after the crisis with a key regional neighbour left Turkey dangerously isolated on the international stage.

Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev on Friday gave ministries a week to draw up coordinated proposals on resuming charter flights to Turkey. But he said there needed to be "special attention on the need for additional measures to enhance transport security and prevent flights to regions with a high terrorist threat."

'Charter-like flight'

Underlining the importance of Saturday's flight, a special ceremony was laid on for the new arrivals at the airport to give a good impression of Turkish hospitality, local media said. The deputy governor of Antalya, Mehmet Yavuz, said

it was better to describe the arrival as a "charter-like flight" as while Moscow had allowed the selling of tours, it was still to give formal approval for charter flights.

"As you know, a charter flight is one that has been rented by a tourist company. This was a normal airline flight," said Yavuz, who is responsible for the airport. "Because these are all tourists who bought a package holiday, we must say 'a charter-like flight'. This is because the Russian government has yet to give permission to charter flights (to fly to Turkey)," he said, quoted by Turkish media.

A spokesperson for Rossiya Airlines told AFP in Moscow said the flight was the "first of the 2016 summer season" by the airline from Moscow to Antalya and had been performed with the full cooperation of the Turkish authorities. The Turkish tourism industry is expected to be dealt another blow by tourists staying away following the June 28 triple suicide attack blamed on jihadists at Ataturk International Airport in Istanbul that killed 47 people. Aside from the Russian crisis, the tourism industry had already been dealt repeated blows by a string of attacks in Turkey blamed on Islamic State jihadists and Kurdish militants. — AFP

IRAQ PM DISMISSES SECURITY OFFICIALS AFTER BOMB BLASTS

BAGHDAD: Iraq's prime minister fired three officials in charge of Baghdad's security on Friday after last weekend's bombing that killed nearly 300 people and caused public outrage over the inadequacy of the emergency services and security apparatus. The bombing, claimed by the ultra-hardline Sunni militant group Islamic State (IS), was the deadliest in Iraq since US-led forces toppled Saddam Hussein 13 years ago.

Islamic State has lost ground since last year to US-backed government forces and Iranian-backed Shiite Muslim militias advancing into territories they control in northern and western Iraq, but IS retains the ability to strike the heart of Baghdad. A statement posted on Prime Minister Haider Al-Abadi's Facebook page said he had dismissed the commanders of military operations, security services and intelligence in the capital.

"The sacking of the Baghdad Operations Commander was due to accumulated mistakes that cannot be overlooked," one senior security official said, speaking on condition of anonymity. "It is a difficult decision and came at a critical time because we are engaged in a tough battle with Daesh, but it had to be made because of the catastrophic failure," he said. Daesh is a derogatory Arabic acronym for Islamic State. The commander of the Joint Operations Command, General Talib Shaghathi Al-Kenani, has been put in temporary charge of security in the capital, the security official said. The Joint Operations Command coordinates Iraqi armed forces and US-led coalition air support used in military operations against Islamic State.

The official said the bombing was clear evidence of the weakness of the security apparatus in Baghdad. "The car bomb came from outside the capital, crossing dozens of checkpoints before reaching the

target. All of them answer to the operations command," he said. Interior Minister Mohammed Ghabban resigned on Tuesday, after blaming the bombing on a lack of communication between the various forces in charge of security in Baghdad. Abadi approved Ghabban's resignation on the same day he tendered it, according to a statement on the premier's website.

Fears of more sectarian violence

Iraq's top Shiite cleric, Grand Ayatollah Ali Al-Sistani, on Friday criticized the Abadi government's failure to deal effectively with the threat Islamic State poses. "Complacency among corrupt and failed (officials) at the expense of the blood and souls of innocent civilians is unbearable and needs to be stopped," he said in his weekly sermon, read on his behalf in the Shiite holy city of Kerbala, south of Baghdad.

Islamic State also claimed a triple suicide attack late on Thursday near a Shiite mausoleum north of Baghdad that killed at least 35 people, according to security sources. Baghdad-based security analyst Hisham Al-Hashimi said this attack made an escalation of sectarian strife highly likely. Shiites form a majority in Iraq but northern and western provinces are mostly Sunni, including in Salahuddin where the Mausoleum of Sayid Mohammed bin Ali Al-Hadi is located.

Prominent Shiite cleric Moqtada Al-Sadr ordered his militia, the Peace Brigade, to deploy around the mausoleum, near Balad 93 km north of Baghdad. Sadr's militia is also deployed in Samarra, a nearby city that houses the shrine of Imam Ali Al-Hadi, the father of Sayid Mohammed. A 2006 bombing destroyed the golden dome of that shrine and set off a wave of sectarian violence. — Reuters



BAGHDAD: A man looks for victims at the site of a car bomb at a commercial area in the Karada neighborhood of Baghdad, July 3, 2016. — AP

MERKEL, ERDOGAN MEND TIES AFTER GENOCIDE VOTE

WARSAW: The leaders of Germany and Turkey sought yesterday to clear the air in their first private talks since the German parliament infuriated Ankara by branding the 1915 massacre of Armenians by Ottoman forces a genocide, but they did not overcome their differences. Chancellor Angela Merkel met Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan on the sidelines of a NATO summit in Warsaw to discuss the tensions in their often prickly but strategically important relationship.

Ties between Turkey and Germany - vital partners in efforts to curb mass migration to Europe - have been strained since the Bundestag passed the Armenian resolution on June 2. Ankara recalled its ambassador and threatened unspecified retaliation. Turkey has since denied German parliamentarians access to the Incirlik airbase where 250 German soldiers are taking part in NATO operations against Islamic State militants in Iraq, causing anger in Berlin.

"We discussed all outstanding issues," Merkel told reporters at a brief news conference. "The atmosphere was constructive ... and very businesslike in an effort to solve the existing conflicts." Asked whether the issues had been resolved, she said: "The differences don't just disappear through such a discussion. But I believe it was important that we talked them through." A source close to the Turkish presidency said Erdogan had expressed his disappointment over the Bundestag resolution to Merkel, who said she would do her utmost to ensure this event would not harm German-Turkish relations.

The source said Merkel also expressed satisfaction with the way Turkey was keeping its word in preventing refugees and migrants crossing the Aegean Sea to Greece after more than one million flooded into Europe last year, most ending up in Germany. The Turkish source said Merkel had raised the issue of the Incirlik airbase and had asked Erdogan to restore access for lawmakers, who approve all military spending and investment in infrastructure at the base.

Erdogan replied that the airbase was not a place for "public shows and marketing" but Turkey would consider the request in the light of German statements on relations, the source said. The two leaders also discussed intelligence cooperation in the fight against foreign fighters recruited by Islamic State in Syria, some of whom have returned to carry out attacks in Europe. — Reuters

ALEPPO FEARS SHORTAGES AS SYRIA REGIME ADVANCES

ALEPPO: Residents of rebel-held areas of Syria's Aleppo yesterday faced food and fuel shortages after a Syrian government advance cut the opposition's last supply route into the city. The army, for its part, said it was extending a 72-hour nationwide truce that began on Wednesday but has produced little respite in fighting. Around 200,000 people remain in the opposition-held eastern sectors of Aleppo, which has been divided between government and rebel control since shortly after fighting in the city erupted in mid-2012.

Residents there described shortages of basic goods after government troops advanced within firing range of the key Castello Road supply route. "For two days the

situation was calm, I went to the market and I filled up my motorbike with gasoline. Today, I couldn't even find a single tomato," said Bilal Qaterji, a local textile factory employee. "There's not a drop of fuel left because the Castello Road has been cut," he told AFP. Government troops effectively severed the Castello Road on Thursday with the capture of a hilltop within firing range of the key route.

Rebel forces responded by firing barrages of rockets into the government-held west of the city on Friday, killing at least 41 people, most of them civilians, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights. The Britain-based monitoring group said 14 children were

among the dead, while Syrian state media gave a toll of 43 dead and 300 injured. The advance and ongoing fighting came despite the government's announcement Wednesday of a 72-hour nationwide ceasefire for Eid Al-Fitr, the holiday at the end of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.

Army says truce extended

The army said yesterday it was extending the truce for another 72 hours. But the Observatory said fresh government air strikes on rebel-held Aleppo killed four civilians yesterday. And it said opposition fighters had also renewed rocket fire on government-held districts. The Observatory also reported government strikes east of Damascus, where regime troops took the town of Midaa, severing a key rebel supply route in the opposition-held Eastern Ghouta region.

In Aleppo, residents in the east said they feared ongoing shortages if the Castello Road remained closed. "I worry that the Castello Road will be cut for a long time, it will lead to shortages of bread and other necessities," said Ahmed Kanjou, an unemployed father of four. Residents said prices were already rising, and many were bracing for the possibility of a lengthy siege. Syria's government has been accused of using siege tactics to pressure rebel forces, and the UN says nearly 600,000 Syrians live in besieged areas, most surrounded by government forces although rebels also use the method.

Activists and rights groups including Doctors Without Borders (MSF) have reported deaths from starvation in some besieged areas. The Castello Road wraps around Aleppo's eastern and northern edges and leads into rebel-controlled territory north of the battered city. President Bashar Al-Assad's forces have been trying to cut the key route for more than two years and their Thursday advance brought them the closest so far to achieving that goal.

Yesterday, the army was less than 500 meters from the key road, and soldiers were firing at anyone attempting to use the route. The Observatory said a man and two children had been killed by regime fire on the road on Friday. More than 280,000 people have been killed in Syria since the conflict began in March 2011 with anti-government protests. — AFP



ALEPPO: Syrians pass burnt-out vehicles the day after shelling on the regime-held Furqan neighborhood of the northern divided Syrian city of Aleppo. — AFP

CLINTON NOD LOOMS, SANDERS SEEKING PLATFORM CHANGES

ORLANDO: For Bernie Sanders, a campaign that began as a liberal crusade will probably end that way, with the Vermont senator still fighting for the issues that made up his "political revolution" even as his clout fades. In the weeks since Hillary Clinton clinched the Democratic nomination, her irascible primary rival won a few policy concessions and influenced the party's platform. But he's also angered fellow lawmakers for not promptly endorsing his primary foe and has seen his influence wane as President Barack Obama and Sen. Elizabeth Warren stepped in to unify the party behind its presumptive nominee.

Sanders' fights are not fully finished - he is seeking more platform changes at a party meeting in Orlando that kicked off Friday - but he appears to be winding down this period of denouement, with his endorsement of Clinton now expected to come at a joint event next week. The meeting of the Democratic National Convention full Platform Committee began slowly in an Orlando hotel ballroom on Friday, but Sanders scored a key win late in the night, when the committee approved an amendment to the platform backing raising the federal minimum wage to \$15 per hour "over time," indexed to inflation.

Sanders supporter Benjamin Jealous, a former NAACP president who serves as a member of the committee, called the amendment "a victory for the Bernie Sanders campaign and for working people across the country." Still, Sanders' supporters want more changes during the meeting, which was still going well past midnight on Friday and continues Saturday. Many were wearing stickers stressing that they want the platform to oppose the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade deal, which Clinton has come out against but Obama supports. They also want a carbon tax to address climate change and seek a freeze on hydraulic fracking.

Sanders' influence

The roughly 15,000-word platform is a nonbinding document that serves as a guidepost for the party. After the Orlando meeting, the document will be voted on at the convention in Philadelphia this month.



WASHINGTON: In this July 5, 2016 file photo, Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton speaks. — AP

The draft under review already shows Sanders' influence, as it endorses steps to break up large Wall Street banks and urges an end to the death penalty. Also on Friday night, the committee narrowly backed an amendment to strike mentions of presumptive Republican nominee Donald Trump's name in the platform. Sanders has avoided endorsing Clinton for weeks as he focused much of his energy on shaping the platform to mirror his liberal campaign, citing his millions of supporters as motivation to keep pushing his agenda. But he says the party will ultimately unite. Two Democrats with knowledge of Sanders' plans told The Associated Press that Sanders is closing in on offering his public endorsement of Clinton. The Democrats spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss private conversations they were not authorized to disclose. Clinton's campaign has announced a stop in New Hampshire on Tuesday but did not say that Sanders also would attend.

The Sanders and Clinton campaigns are still discussing policy areas where they can reach agreement, including ways to expand access to health care coverage. Clinton's campaign outlined plans earlier this week to expand college affordability and place a three-month moratorium on student loan payments, a proposal that was developed with the Sanders campaign. For many Democrats, the endorsement is overdue. Sanders' reluctance to endorse Clinton drew catcalls from Democratic lawmakers during a private meeting this week. While he has hung back, other party leaders have coalesced around Clinton.

"He ran a remarkable campaign; he didn't win," said Bob Shrum, a longtime Democratic strategist and politics professor at the University of Southern California. "Hillary Clinton and her campaign have handled him very well. I think the time is coming to resolve this and to prepare for a convention where hopefully he will give a powerful speech." Back in 2008, after a bruising primary race against then-Sen. Barack Obama, Clinton ended her presidential bid and endorsed him in a speech on June 7. The two then campaigned together in Unity, New Hampshire, three weeks later. — AP

DEBATE: IS MOTHERHOOD A BOON FOR UK'S NEXT PM?

CONSERVATIVE LAWMAKERS WHITTLE DOWN CANDIDATES

LONDON: Two Conservative women running to become Britain's next leader are facing a question that wouldn't be raised if there were male candidates for the job: Does being a mother make you better qualified to be prime minister?

A political maelstrom emerged yesterday when Energy Minister Andrea Leadsom suggested in an interview with the Times of London that her status as a mother gives her an advantage over rival Home Secretary Theresa May, who does not have children. The two women are in runoff to replace Prime Minister David Cameron, who is resigning after British voters rejected his advice and chose to leave the European Union. May is considered the front-runner, winning the most votes as Conservative lawmakers whittled down the candidates to two.

Leadsom's explosive remarks have touched off an uproar among Conservative party members, who are voting in the runoff. "I don't really know Theresa very well, but I am sure she will be really, really sad she doesn't have children. So I don't want this to be 'Andrea has got children, Theresa hasn't, because I think that would be really horrible. But genuinely I feel that being a mum means you have a very real stake in the future of our country, a tangible stake,'" Leadsom said. "She possibly has nieces, nephews, lots of people, but I have children who are going to have children who will directly be a part of what happens next," Leadsom said.

Leadsom, 53, immediately cried foul at the way in which the Times reported the remarks, which ran under the headline "Being mother gives me edge on May - Leadsom." She accused the Times of "gutter journalism" and demanded a retraction. "How could you?" she pointedly asked on her Twitter feed, directing her remarks to Times reporter Rachel Sylvester. The Times shot right back, releasing a voice recording of the key section of the interview. Sylvester, who noted that Leadsom had talked about being a mother during the EU campaign, told the BBC she was baffled by Leadsom's reaction to a question about whether motherhood had informed her politics. "She raised Theresa May and the fact that she doesn't have children herself," Sylvester told the BBC. "It was she who introduced Theresa May into the whole discussion."

'Personal life personal'
May, 59, told the Daily Telegraph

in an interview published yesterday that she likes to keep her "personal life personal," but said that she and her husband Philip have "dealt with" their inability to have children. "I hope nobody would think that mattered," May said. "I can still empathize, understand people and care about fairness and opportunity." May had asked Leadsom to sign a pledge calling for a "clean" campaign.

But the fact that the motherhood discussion is happening at all is a reflection of the turmoil that has engulfed British politics since the June 23 vote on EU membership. Leadsom's comments have caused fury within her own party. Among those angered is Conservative lawmaker Alan Duncan, a May supporter. "I'm gay and in a civil partnership," he said. "No children, but 10 nieces and nephews. Do I not have a stake in the future of the country? Vile."

Cameron, who was in Poland for a NATO summit, refused to comment on the motherhood topic. For the record, he is a parent. Amid the firestorm, Leadsom emerged from her home to read a statement before



In this two photo combo, showing the two contenders to become the leader of the Conservative Party and assume the post of Britain's Prime Minister, with Theresa May, left, dated July 5, 2016, and Andrea Leadsom, right, dated July 4, 2016. — AP

media cameras. "Over the course of a lengthy interview I was repeatedly asked about my children and I repeatedly made it clear that I did not want this to be a feature of the cam-

campaign," she said. "I am disgusted at the way this has been presented. I want to be crystal clear that everyone has an equal stake in our society and the future of our country." — AP

VIDEO AND SOCIAL MEDIA CHANGE EQUATION IN POLICE MISCONDUCT

WASHINGTON: The pattern has become familiar: a black person dies at the hands of police, with video footage of the incident hitting social media and fueling accusations of bias and misconduct. Over the past week, 32-year-old Philando Castile was fatally shot by police in Minnesota as civil rights investigators probed an incident a day earlier in Louisiana in which 37-year-old Alton Sterling was slain by officers.

They are among a dozen black people killed by police in the United States in the past few years whose deaths were the subject of viral videos that brought forth angry allegations of police brutality. While the extent of police wrongdoing remains unclear, criminal justice specialists say widespread use of social media and smartphone videos have shined light on these cases, paving the way for changes in policing.

"What constitutes police brutality or misconduct is a matter of interpretation, and until now that was left up to the police departments and the top brass," Christopher Schneider, a sociology professor at Canada's Brandon University and author of the 2016 book "Policing and Social Media." "Now these videos are circulating online immediately after an incident and what constitutes brutality is now left to all of us." The use of "citizen journalist" videos in these kinds of cases is now new, dating back to the 1991 beating of taxi driver Rodney King, which sparked riots in Los Angeles.

But it has become far more prevalent with the ability to post smartphone videos instantly on social media such as Facebook or Twitter. "Whereas citizen

journalists often drove media coverage of the so-called Arab Spring, for example, they're now performing a similar service in the national discussion of race and policing in the US," said David Uberti, a fellow with the Columbia Journalism Review. "Social networks like Twitter have helped amplify such individual voices, with content shared nationwide in hours, if not minutes."

Changing policing

Schneider, who has studied police departments in the US and Canada, said the latest high-profile cases are likely to lead to a "historic change in policing." That is because minorities and communities that have been marginalized have been given a voice by social media, forcing police departments to rethink their entire strategy, he said. "One of the biggest challenges to police agencies is that they need to regain control of public perceptions," Schneider told AFP. "We need to believe that the police are the good guys."

Schneider says wider use of body cameras and police recording devices should be a priority and may help authorities "regain the narrative" and control of data quality in cases where misconduct is alleged. A study led by Arizona State University criminologist Michael White found a sharp decline in citizen complaints of excessive force following deployments of body-worn cameras. Yet many argue that cameras and videos are not a perfect solution to police problems. Civil liberties advocates warn about privacy issues. — AFP

DALLAS SNIPER WAS A LONER; ARMY DISMISSED HIM FROM AFGHANISTAN

MESQUITE, Texas: The Dallas sniper had been sent home from Afghanistan after being accused of sexually harassing a female, and was described as a loner who followed black militant groups on social media. Micah Xavier Johnson, who fatally shot five officers and wounded seven more before police killed him with a remote-controlled bomb on Friday, lived with family members in the blue-collar suburb of Mesquite, where he played basketball for hours at a time.

Friends there said the 25-year-old black man didn't seem interested in politics, but his Facebook page suggests otherwise: He "liked" black militant groups including the African American Defense League and the New Black Panther Party, which was founded in Dallas. His photo showed him wearing a dashiki and raising his fist over the words "Black Power," and his cover shot carried the red, black and green Pan-African flag. For six years starting in 2009, Johnson served in the Army Reserve as a private first class with a specialty in carpentry and masonry, the military said.

'Highly unusual'

In May 2014, six months into his Afghanistan tour, he was accused of sexual harassment by a female soldier. The Army sent him stateside, recommending an "other than honorable discharge," said Bradford Glendening, the military lawyer who represented him. That recommendation was "highly unusual," Bradford said, since counseling is usually ordered before more drastic steps are taken. "In his case, it was apparently so egregious, it was not just the act itself," Glendening told The Associated Press. "I'm sure that this guy was the black sheep of his unit."

According to a court filing Glendening read over the phone Friday, the victim said she wanted Johnson to "receive mental help," while also seeking a protective order to keep him away from her and her family, wherever they went. Johnson was ordered to avoid all contact with her. Glendening said Johnson was set to be removed from the Army in September 2014 because of the incident, but instead got an honorable discharge

months later - for reasons he can't understand. "Someone really screwed up," he said. "But to my client's benefit."

When authorities searched Johnson's home Friday they found bomb-making materials, ballistic vests, rifles, ammunition, and a personal journal of combat tactics. Dallas Police Chief David O. Brown said Johnson told negotiators before he was killed that he was acting alone and was unaffiliated with any group. The chief said Johnson cited the fatal shootings of black men by police officers in Louisiana and Minnesota, which prompted the protest march in Dallas and many other cities. "The suspect said he was upset with white people and wanted to kill white people, especially white officers," Brown said.

Facebook groups

Activists with Black Lives Matter, whose peaceful march police were guarding as he opened fire, repudiated the shootings, and it wasn't immediately clear if Johnson had any connection to the movement, which has disavowed violence. But one of the groups Johnson "liked" on Facebook, the African American Defense League, posted a message earlier in the week encouraging violence against police in response to the killing in Louisiana. "The Pig has shot and killed Alton Sterling in Baton Rouge, Louisiana! You and I know what we must do and I don't mean marching, making a lot of noise, or attending conventions. We must 'Rally The Troops!' It is time to visit Louisiana and hold a barbecue." The message was attributed to Dr Mauricelm-Lei Millere, a leader in the organization.

Another group Johnson "liked" was the New Black Panther Party, whose leaders have "long expressed virulently anti-white and anti-Semitic opinions," according to the Southern Poverty Law Center. Johnson also "liked" the Nation of Islam and the Black Riders Liberation Party, which the center described as "hate groups." Among Johnson's other social media likes were groups that focus on the history and accomplishments of African-Americans, such as Black Love Matters, the Nubian Rootz Cultural

Center, and I Love Black Archaeologist, a web series whose main character uses a time machine to visit famous black people.

The Dallas Police Department said Johnson's Facebook account also included information about Richard Griffin, also known as Professor Griff, who "embraces a radical form of Afrocentrism." On his Facebook page Friday afternoon, Griffin, a member of Public Enemy - an influential hip hop group known for its politically charged lyrics - said he does "not advocate killing Cops." Johnson had no criminal history, according to authorities. Local court records show his parents were divorced in 1996.

He was believed to have shared a two-story tan brick home in Mesquite with family members. He graduated from John Horn High School in Mesquite, where he was a ROTC member, school district officials said. Sharon Carter, who works in the district's registrar's office and lives near Johnson's home, said she saw him occasionally wearing military fatigues as he left for Army reservist training, but never saw him armed. "They say he was standoffish in high school," Carter said. "I never really spoke to him. He kept to himself." A relative had praised Johnson on his birthday in 2014 as "definitely Army strong" on his Facebook page, calling him an "entertaining, loving, understanding, not to mention handsome friend, brother (and) son."

Friend Israel Cooper said Johnson went by "Xavier," his middle name, had a "cool vibe," wasn't really political and seemed educated. Cooper said he and Johnson played basketball at a park near his home. "He would be out there for eight hours. Like it was his job. Just hooping," he said. Cooper said that when he heard the suspect was Johnson, he "was in disbelief because he's just not like a violent or rough dude." "So I was, 'Nah, it's probably another Xavier somewhere, you know,'" Cooper said. "But then, with pictures on the internet and stuff, I'm like 'OK.'" Cooper added: "It's the quiet ones that just do the most devastating stuff. You never see it coming. But then it's more expected, like 'I should have known.'" — AP

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DIFFERENT SPEEDS: A GLANCE AT THE EU'S VARIOUS CLUBS

BERLIN: The European Union is already operating at several different speeds, even before Britain's vote to leave raised new questions about whether the bloc should be more integrated or give more power back to its member countries. That reflects differing levels of ambition and national sensitivities in what started as a club of six western European nations in 1951 and expanded gradually into a union with 15 members by 1995. A large group of formerly communist eastern countries followed a decade later, with the most recent addition - Croatia - bringing membership to 28 nations in 2013. Here's a look at some of the different groups within today's EU:

The euro club

Nineteen of the EU's members use the euro currency, which was introduced for transactions in 1999 and as cash in 2002. Britain and Denmark won the right to opt out of the euro when it was conceived. All other EU countries are, at least on paper, obliged to join at some stage. However, Sweden rejected the euro in a 2003 referendum, and while several of the EU's newer

eastern members have joined, others show no sign of doing so. Governments in Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic are paying lip service at most to the requirement to join.

The euro currency zone is still working to put behind it the debt and economic problems that threatened it with collapse and forced it to bail out Ireland, Greece, Portugal, Spain and Cyprus. The members of the eurozone are: Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia and Spain.

Open borders

The overwhelming majority of EU nations - as well as four countries that aren't actually members - are part of the continent's borderless travel area. It's called the Schengen area after the village in Luxembourg where the treaty on travel was signed three decades ago. Anyone entering the Schengen area must undergo an ID check against a customs and criminal database, but once inside there are no border checks.

However, countries can re-establish them temporarily in exceptional circumstances. That typically happens for security reasons, such as during major summits, and has also been done during the past year's migrant influx. The no-checks system also permits the smooth flow of goods, services and business expertise. Britain and Ireland opted out of Schengen while four of the EU's newest members want to join but haven't yet got the go-ahead. The Schengen area's members are: Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden - plus non-EU countries Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

Taxing transactions

A group of 10 EU countries including eurozone heavyweights France, Germany, Italy and Spain decided after the financial crisis to introduce a financial transaction tax - which they believe would curb speculation and claw back revenues after governments

had to bail out banks. However, they have yet to reach an agreement on how to go about introducing the tax, which Britain, Sweden and others rejected from the start. Another product of the economic crises of recent years is the Fiscal Compact, a German-championed agreement that introduced stricter requirements for countries' budgetary discipline. Everyone in the EU except Britain and the Czech Republic signed up.

Opt-outs

Various countries have wrung the right to opt out of EU legislation on individual issues. Britain has been a leader in this; along with Ireland and Denmark, it negotiated an opt-out from a set of common rules on immigration. Britain and Poland also obtained opt-outs guaranteeing that the EU's Charter of Fundamental Rights - a list of liberties that included collective labor bargaining and fair working conditions - would not create greater social or economic rights than those already provided for by local law. — AP



BRUSSELS: In this Oct 15, 2015 file photo, a member of protocol adjusts the British and EU flags at the EU headquarters. — AP

UK PUTS EU IN LIMBO, UNSURE WHETHER TO DO MORE OR LESS

NO ONE KNOWS EXACTLY HOW TO PICK UP THE PIECES

BRUSSELS: The European Union has known some crises in its time: the constitution that never was, impossible budget deals, debt devastating the Greek economy and threatening the euro currency, strife as nations failed to manage the continent's refugee emergency together. But Brexit - a British exit from the 28-nation union - is the EU's biggest crisis so far. No country has ever left before. Despite some speed bumps, the EU has grown from the six nations that founded a coal and steel community in 1951 to a half-billion strong trading bloc when Croatia signed up three years ago.

Now that the British decision is winding back more than 60 years of EU integration, no one knows exactly how to pick up the pieces and move on. Should the EU do more or less? How should it interest people in a project that seems distant and difficult to understand? And is the bloc even to blame for this crisis when many simply aren't happy with their own governments, let alone distant Brussels?

In the background, Greece feels marginalized as its people suffer under tough reform policies imposed by creditors to save its debt-racked economy. Italy is bickering with Germany over whether that austerity is really necessary. And the Hungarians are going to hold a referendum on refugee quotas. This is what European political limbo looks like. While heads have rolled in Britain, where Prime Minister David Cameron has resigned and the three leading figures of the "leave" campaign tumbled or quit, no one is stepping down in Brussels. With the July-August summer recess closing in, everyone is hunkering down and looking toward a summit of EU leaders in Bratislava on Sept. 16 to see what can be done.

Target for critics

The president of the EU's sprawling executive body - which over the years has proposed thousands of pieces of legislation that impact how citizens live, study, travel or do business - has been an early target for critics. Jean-Claude Juncker leads an administration of some 33,000 people. He and his policy commissioners are routinely portrayed as the embodiment of the unelected bureaucrat, imposing inane, invasive laws on ordinary citizens.

Certainly many in Britain see it that way, even if most proposals are debated between member countries and the European Parliament - whose members are elected every five years - before they become law. Yet Juncker, barely two years in office on a mandate to reform, is not going to fall on his sword. "I refuse to allow the commission to be blamed for the outcome of the British referendum. We

will not bare that responsibility," he told EU lawmakers Tuesday. "I haven't said that we want a 'United States' of Europe." He said the Commission was endorsed by all member nations, including the departing Britain. "This is a commission with a mandate to reform and we are doing that," Juncker said. "It has not overnight lost its legitimacy." The 61-year-old former Luxembourg premier, one of Europe's longest serving leaders, also makes an easy target amid rumors that he's not well. His employees deny this.

Meanwhile the EU's newest member countries - many from Central and Eastern Europe and which joined together in 2004 - feel they have been sidelined for far too long. They think European heavyweights like Germany and France

and soulless EU institutions have been dictating to them, in particular by imposing refugee quotas that they voted against. They argue that the British referendum on June 23, which was influenced by concerns about migration and national sovereignty, is a wake-up call for EU nations to reclaim their own powers.

"It is necessary to make reforms that will reach the founding treaties implemented within the European Union," Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico said on July 2, ushering in his right-leaning government's six-month presidency of the EU. "I reject the claim that everything is perfect and fine and that we shouldn't touch anything," he said. Easier said than done. The Treaty of Lisbon, which took effect in 2009, was drawn up after years of reflection involving all member countries, experts and civil society. Changing it would take years more. In February, pressed by Britain, other EU nations refused to revisit the treaty to try to persuade the UK to stay.

Knee-jerk reactions

Germany, the EU's driving power, says now is the time for cool heads, not knee-jerk reactions. "In this first phase after the British referendum, it is not about discussing structural questions or more or less Europe - it is about having very concrete thoughts on all European levels, in the institutions and in the member states, about how we can create a successful and effective Europe," said German Chancellor Angela Merkel's spokesman, Steffen Seibert. He said Germany would do all it can not to "strengthen centrifugal forces" pulling the EU apart. — AP

WOMEN RISING TO THE TOP IN BREXIT BRITAIN

LONDON: A wave of women are taking power in Britain: the country will soon have a female prime minister following the Brexit vote while Scotland and Northern Ireland already have women leaders. "Is this all a happy coincidence? Has the glass ceiling finally been smashed?" the Guardian newspaper asked this week. In the race to succeed David Cameron, who resigned as premier after last month's vote to leave the EU, one thing has been certain since Thursday-the next leader will be a woman for the first time since Margaret Thatcher resigned in 1990.

Conservative party members must now choose between Home Secretary Theresa May and energy minister Andrea Leadsom. In Scotland, Nicola Sturgeon is first minister and leader of the pro-independence Scottish National Party since 2014, while Ruth Davidson leads the Conservatives and Kezia Dugdale heads up Labour. In Northern Ireland, the first minister is Arlene Foster of the Democratic Unionists while one of Wales' main parties, Plaid Cymru, is also led by a woman, Leanne Wood. "That suggests that what might have been barriers to high office have completely evaporated," Professor Iain Begg of the London School of Economics told AFP.

Breaking the mould

Experts say it was Thatcher, who became Conservative leader in 1975 and prime minister in 1979, who opened the door for the current generation. That happened nearly 60 years after the first woman took her seat in the House of Commons-Conservative Nancy Astor in 1919. "She (Thatcher) was the one who broke the mould and made it possible in future for other women to become leaders," Begg added. The Conservatives have been slower than the main opposition Labour to recruit large numbers of women MPs, though.

In 1997, they only had 13, including May. By 2005, the figure stood at 17 and today the figure is 68 out of 330. Cameron has pushed for more women MPs while groups such as Women2Win, founded by May and Anne Jenkin, a Conservative member of the House of Lords, has helped the push, supporting figures like Leadsom. "We're getting there. We are still miles behind Labour (who have 99 female MPs out of 230), even though we will have produced two female prime ministers before they've had one woman as permanent leader," Jenkin said.

'Boys messing about'

That situation could soon change. Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn is facing a huge rebellion by his MPs and the leading contender to replace him if he falls is Angela Eagle, an MP since 1992. "In parallel we've got that societal evolution which says that being gay, being a woman is no longer an obstacle," added Begg. Eagle, Davidson and Dugdale all have female partners. Evening Standard journalist Rosamund Urwin drew a parallel with the current situation in Britain and the success of Hillary Clinton in the US and Angela Merkel in Germany.

"Merkel, May, Clinton and Eagle seem to come from a similar mould. They're authoritative, tough, have far more impressive CVs than their rivals... the kind of person you want at the tiller of the boat during a perfect storm," she wrote. Facing the political turmoil that followed the Brexit vote, Jenkin suggested that "there is a feeling of 'Yes, Nanny, please come and tell us what to do.'" "I think they feel that at a time of turmoil that a woman will be more practical and a bit less testosterone (driven) in their approach," she added. Business minister Anna Soubry told BBC radio: "Perhaps we've had enough of these boys messing about." — AFP



LONDON: A woman smiles in front of a European Union flag during a picnic against Brexit organized by the General Assembly in Green Park. — AFP

SPAIN HEADS FOR DEADLOCK AS SOCIALISTS REJECT RAJOY

MADRID: Spain's Socialist party will oppose a government led by acting Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy, whose party won the most votes in last month's election, increasing the odds that an almost seven-month political stalemate will trundle on. Spanish politics has been frozen since a national election last December stripped Rajoy's conservative People's Party (PP) of its majority and forced parties to negotiate-so far without success-over forming a coalition government.

The PP managed to increase its number of votes in a repeat election on June 26 but again fell far short of a parliamentary majority, meaning it needs support from its long-time foe, the second-placed Socialists, or a cluster of smaller parties. But Socialist leader Pedro Sanchez, speaking publicly for the first time since the election, said on Saturday that his party would neither vote in favor of Rajoy in a confidence vote nor abstain to enable a PP-led government.

"He should outline the policies that will allow him to gain support among his natural allies, of which the Socialists are not one, and that he does not wait for the others to solve his problems," Sanchez told a party conference. With the Socialists out of contention, Rajoy must convince fourth-placed centrist Ciudadanos along with two small regional

parties to back him or abstain. If negotiations fail again, Spain could face a third round of elections just as its economic recovery from a deep recession faces obstacles such as the uncertainty triggered by Britain's vote to leave the EU, and mounting pressure in Brussels to cut its deficit.

The European Commission said on Thursday it would begin disciplinary procedures against Spain, along with Portugal, for excessive deficits in 2014 and 2015. It is likely that Spain will again miss its 2016 deficit target of 3.7 percent. "It would be foolish to hold new elections," Rajoy told a news conference on Saturday after Sanchez's speech. "I would like a government to form quickly so that we don't waste the whole summer discussing."

Rajoy's best hope for reaching the 176 seats needed to form a majority are newcomers Ciudadanos, seen as a more natural ally of the PP. But they have remained vague about supporting Rajoy, only saying that third elections would be unacceptable and a solution had to be found. The PP won 137 seats in the election and Ciudadanos' support would bring it to 169. A party from the Canary Islands could add one seat, and a Basque nationalist party could add five more, although it said this week it would oppose Rajoy in a vote. — Reuters

MERKEL'S POPULARITY UP AFTER REFUGEES DENTED HER APPEAL

BERLIN: German Chancellor Angela Merkel's popularity has rebounded after the British vote to leave the EU, an opinion poll showed yesterday,

reversing a fall in her appeal caused by the refugee crisis. The poll was the second in a few days to suggest a popularity boost for the German

leader. Yesterday's poll, commissioned jointly by Stern magazine and Die Welt newspaper and carried out by the Forsa market research institute, showed Merkel's appeal up two points to 48 percent. "What's more, three quarters of CSU supporters now back Merkel," said Forsa director Manfred Gullner, referring to the southern German affiliate of Merkel's ruling CDU party.

The CSU was sharply critical of Merkel's decision to allow more than 1 million migrants to enter the country. In a poll published Thursday by public broadcaster ARD 59 percent of those surveyed said they were satisfied with Merkel. The results of the monthly poll were up nine points on June and was Merkel's best poll showing since September 2015 when she moved to open the country's borders to more than 1 million asylum seekers.

The ARD poll, which surveyed 1,500 people and was carried out by Infratest Dimap, showed that Merkel's CDU party and sister party the CSU had gained two points in voter intentions. The number of refugees arriving

in Germany is falling sharply as a result of the closure of the Balkans migration route and the EU's deal with Turkey, new government figures showed on Friday.

In April, May and June, the number was around 16,000 each month, less than a fifth of the tally seen at the start of the year, according to data from the government's Easy computer system, which counts the number of arrivals who plan to seek asylum. In June, the system registered 16,335 people compared with 91,671 in January and 61,428 in February.

Support for the far-right Alternative for Germany party (AfD) was down at the start of July in both surveys after several months of gains. The AfD's popularity dipped one point to nine percent according to the Stern/Welt survey which surveyed 2,500 people, while the party's appeal dropped three points to 12 percent according to the Infratest poll. As well as the decline in new migrant arrivals, the party has suffered from infighting amongst its leaders on what policies to adopt. — AFP



WARSAW: Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau chats with German Chancellor Angela Merkel before the meeting of the NATO-Ukraine Commission during the second day of the NATO Summit at the Polish National Stadium. — AFP

WHAT'S BEHIND THE RISING VIOLENCE IN BANGLADESH?

NEW DELHI: Bangladesh has been hit by a surge in Islamist attacks in the past three years that reached new heights last weekend when 20 hostages were murdered in Dhaka. The wave of attacks has been notably brutal with many of the victims, including the hostages, hacked to death with machetes. One week on from the end of the siege at an upmarket cafe in the capital, AFP looks at some of the factors fuelling the attacks, who might be responsible and how the government is reacting:

Are these attacks a new phenomenon?

Bangladesh has been blighted by unrest since it broke from Pakistan in a war of independence in 1971 and has witnessed more than a dozen coups. Islamist groups such as Jamayetul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) and the newer Ansarullah Bangla Team have long posed a challenge to authorities, with the JMB killing at least 28 people in a bombing campaign in 2005.

The group, blamed by the government for the Dhaka siege, was banned after the 2005 attacks and is seen as a largely spent force following the subsequent arrest and execution of its leaders. While the 2005 attacks were largely indiscriminate, the recent killings have had specific targets, including secular bloggers and gay activists. Members of minority groups such as Hindus, Christians and Sufi Muslims have also been victims, with many of them hacked to death. Although a handful of foreigners had previously been killed, last weekend's siege was by far the deadliest attack. The victims included nine Italians and seven Japanese.

Why is Islamist violence rising?

Experts point to several factors behind the recent violence, including the execution of top Islamists over their role in the independence war. Hundreds of thousands of people took to the streets in 2013 to protest at the guilty verdicts handed down by a domestic tribunal that critics say was intent on neutering opposition to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. The Supreme Court then barred the biggest Islamist political party Jamaat-e-Islami from contesting the 2014 general election, disenfranchising millions of supporters.

The main opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party-allied to Jamaat-subsequently boycotted the polls. What was then effectively a one-horse race was held against the backdrop of fire-bombings across the country. Many observers say the lack of genuine democracy has made Bangladesh a fertile ground for extremists. "There is a lot of support for the organizations

(Hasina) is trying to quash," said C Christine Fair, associate professor at Georgetown University in Washington and South Asia expert. "The country is torn. She is essentially silencing, politically, half the country."

Are IS and Al-Qaeda to blame?

Both the Islamic State (IS) organization and the competing Al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) have claimed many of the attacks. However, the government insists international jihadist networks have not got a foothold in Bangladesh and that local extremists are culpable. There is little evidence that IS trains and funds attackers in the country, although it has recruited Bangladeshis to fight in Syria.

More likely, analysts say, is that radicalized youths are being inspired by the group and pledge allegiance—a murky line in the age of social media. During the cafe siege, IS was sent gruesome pictures of the carnage by the attackers, which it immediately distributed via its affiliate news agency Amaq. Al-Qaeda may have more of a claim of presence in Bangladesh, with Bangladeshi fighters aiding the anti-Soviet mujahideen in Afghanistan as far back as the 1980s. "The ties to AQIS are much more credible. South Asia is Al-Qaeda territory," said Fair.

Why are victims hacked to death?

The use of machetes has become a chilling hallmark of the murders and nearly all the slain hostages were attacked with sharp blades, even though their killers had automatic weapons. Some experts say a lack of access to suicide vests or car bombs explains the prevalence of machete attacks but others see a more deliberate reason behind the brutal killing style. "They wanted to show the world that they can go to any extent for jihad," said KG Suresh of New Delhi's Vivekananda International Foundation think-tank.

What does the public think?

Bangladesh is intensely politically polarized, characterized by a poisonous rivalry between Hasina and the main opposition leader Khaleda Zia that stretches back decades. Although around 90 percent of Bangladesh's 160 million-strong population is Muslim, mostly Sunni, the nation is officially secular. Creeping popular support for fundamentalism has led to mounting calls for Islamist representation in government and public life. One recent study found around 47 percent of Bangladeshis say suicide bombing is justifiable to defend Islam, higher than other Muslim-majority nations in South and Southeast Asia. — AFP



SRINAGAR: Kashmiri villagers carry body of Burhan Wani, chief of operations of Indian Kashmir's largest rebel group Hizbul Mujahideen, during his funeral procession in Tral. — AP

TROOPS, KASHMIR PROTESTERS CLASH AS REBEL LEADER KILLED

TENS OF THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE DEFY CURFEW

SRINAGAR: Indian troops fired on protesters in Kashmir yesterday, killing at least one and wounding scores of others as tens of thousands of people defied a curfew and participated in the funeral of a top rebel commander a day after he was killed by Indian forces, officials and locals said. Burhan Wani, chief of operations of Hizbul Mujahideen, Indian-controlled Kashmir's largest rebel group, was killed in fighting Friday after Indian troops, acting on a tip, cordoned a forested village in southern Kashmir's Kokernag area, said Police Director-General K. Rajendra.

As news of the killing spread on Saturday, widespread clashes erupted in several neighborhoods in southern Kashmir as thousands of residents hurled rocks at Indian troops, who responded by using live ammunition, pellet guns and tear gas, two police officials said, speaking on condition of anonymity in keeping with department policy. They said that a man was killed and scores of other people were wounded in police firing, and that protesters torched at least three police stations in the region.

Street clashes also spread to Indian Kashmir's main city of Srinagar as scores of residents tried to march in the streets. Muslim-majority Kashmir is divided between India and Pakistan and claimed in entirety by both. On India's side, separatist politicians and rebels reject Indian rule over the region and have been fighting for independence or merger with Pakistan since 1989.

Separatist leaders asked people to march to southern Tral town for Wani's funeral yesterday. Rajendra said Wani's body was handed over to his family but warned that no one would be allowed to march to Tral. "Only locals will be allowed to participate in his funeral," he said.

'We want freedom'

However, by yesterday afternoon, tens of thousands of mourners joined Wani's funeral procession in Tral town in defiance of the restrictions, chanting "Go India! Go back!" and "We want freedom!" Earlier, thousands of armed police and paramilitary soldiers in riot gear fanned out across most towns and villages. They laid razor wire and erected steel barricades on the streets and drove through neighborhoods, warning residents to stay indoors. Two rebel comrades of Wani were also killed in Friday's gunbattle.

Wani, in his early 20s, had become the iconic face of militancy in Kashmir over the last five years. He was a household name and his video clips and pictures were widely circulated among young people in Kashmir. Unlike the rebel leaders of the early 1990s, Wani did not cover his face in videos widely circulated on cellphones. Inspector-General Syed Javid Mujtaba Gillani described his killing as the "biggest success against militants" in recent years. Indian officials, fearing that the killing could lead to violent protests in the already troubled region, suspended

an annual Hindu pilgrimage to a mountain cave which draws about half a million people each year.

Officials also suspended cellphone services in southern parts of Kashmir and blocked mobile internet in rest of the region to prevent anti-India demonstrators from mobilizing. Shops, businesses and government offices were shut following the security lockdown and a general strike called by anti-India separatists. Authorities also postponed school and college examinations and suspended rail services. Wani was a small-town boy and the son of a school principal. Handsome and media savvy, he was widely credited for reviving armed militancy in Indian Kashmir in recent years, using social media like Facebook to reach out to young Kashmiri men.

Noor Ahmed Baba, a political scientist at Central University of Kashmir, said Wani "rose to become the symbol of resistance and defiance against the Indian state, mainly because he was politically sharp in his messages." "He revived militancy at a time when people were waning away from armed struggle and became a youthful face of the rebellion, a hero for not just young men but even so many older people," he said. Most people in Kashmir have long resented the Indian presence, and support rebel demands for an independent Kashmir or a merging with Pakistan. More than 68,000 people have been killed in the uprising and the subsequent Indian military crackdown. — AP

MODI MARKS GANDHI'S HISTORIC S AFRICA RIDE

PIETERMARITZBURG: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi yesterday marked a historic South African train journey by Indian independence leader Mohandas K Gandhi that ended up shaping the fate of both countries. Modi's train ride commemorated the incident in which a young Gandhi in 1893 was ejected from a South African train when he refused an order to move from a first-class carriage because of his race.

The encounter influenced Gandhi's decision to resist racial segregation and other injustices with nonviolent protest, first while living in South Africa and then in India. Yesterday's train ride, with Modi sitting in a wood-paneled car with local officials, was under heavy security. He also mingled with members of South Africa's community of Indian origin, which numbers more than 1 million.

"We didn't expect him to go and mix with all the people, but he did," said Ela Gandhi, granddaughter of Gandhi and a former member of South Africa's parliament. "That's good. That is what we need." Modi later told reporters he'd had the great fortune to pay his respects at places "that are memorable for being part of Mahatma Gandhi's life and in India's independence journey." India's government says it was the first country to cut trade relations with South Africa



PIETERMARITZBURG: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi lays a wreath at the Pietermaritzburg railway station. — AFP

over its former harsh system of racial segregation, which lasted for decades and ended in the 1990s.

Both Modi and South African President Jacob Zuma on Friday paid tribute to what Zuma called "two liberation icons," Gandhi and Nelson Mandela,

South Africa's first black president, who was elected in 1994. Modi goes to Tanzania later yesterday and then to Kenya on a four-nation tour meant to raise India's profile in Africa, where China's presence has been strong. He began in Mozambique. — AP

DHAKA CAFE SURVIVOR DIES AFTER 'TORTURE'

DHAKA: A Bangladeshi teenager who police say was a suspect in last week's deadly attack on a Dhaka cafe has died in custody, with his family insisting he was a hostage and alleging torture by security forces. Zakir Hossain Shawon, 18, a kitchen assistant at the Holey Artisan Bakery, was arrested after last week's deadly siege by suspected Islamists in which 22 people, including 18 foreigners, died.

Police killed five attackers and arrested Shawon together with another man over "suspicious activities", treating him as a suspect—a claim vehemently rejected by his family, who claim he was taken hostage like other victims. He died in the intensive care unit of Dhaka Medical College Hospital

late Friday after five days in the clinic, police and his family said. Shawon's father Abdus Sattar demanded an investigation into his death, saying his "innocent son and the main breadwinner of his family" died due to torture.

Curdled blood

"His whole body had marks of torture. There were marks of curdled blood in many places. One of his eyes and two knees were blackened. His wrists were blackened. It seems he was hanged by ropes tied to his wrists," Sattar told AFP. Nur Khan Liton, the head of Ain o Salish Kendra, a leading human rights group, said there were doubts about Shawon's involvement in the attack, which was claimed by the

Islamic State group. "IS has named five attackers and police have identified all five. And he was not among the five," he said. "If he was treated as an associate or helper of the attacker, police must present evidence or information."

Police and military representatives denied that Shawon had been tortured in custody. "He was held because of suspicious activities. We did not have any opportunity to interrogate him since he was injured and hospitalized," Dhaka police spokesman Masudur Rahman told AFP. The teenager's father said he spoke with his son hours before the July 1 carnage when Shawon called to say he had received a bonus payment for Eid Al-Fitr, the largest Muslim festival. — AFP

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AUSTRALIAN PM INCHES CLOSER TO WINNING MAJORITY GOVERNMENT

SYDNEY: Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull edged closer to winning a majority government yesterday, securing a 74th seat in parliament as counting of votes in the country's marathon election entered a seventh day. Turnbull's ruling coalition is projected by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation to win at least two of the five remaining seats where counting is still going on. The prime minister needs 76 seats to form a majority government.

Counting of votes will continue over the week-

end, although a final result is now not expected before next week. Should Turnbull win a majority, it would improve his government's chances of passing legislation through the country's lower house without having to rely on the support of several independent members of parliament. Senator Nick Xenophon, the leader of the independent party that bears his name, said on Saturday that his MPs would not unduly disrupt the workings of any Turnbull government.

"We want the parliament to work. We want it to

be constructive. We want to be part of the solution, not part of the problem. So, for those that want to cause maximum mayhem in the parliament we won't be part of that," said Xenophon. While Turnbull's position would be bolstered by reaching a majority, political analysts say he remains vulnerable, particularly from the conservative wing of his own party.

Local media on Saturday reported Turnbull was considering promoting Immigration Minister Peter Dutton to the National Security Committee - a

move seen as shoring up support from conservatives. Australia has had five prime ministers in just nine years after bitter party infighting toppled a series of leaders. Turnbull, from the moderate wing of his party, ousted Tony Abbott to become prime minister last September in a divisive party-room coup. "He's going to be hostage to the right wing of his party and have to promote more of the Abbott supporters into his government, which will lead to greater division and instability," said Bill Shorten, leader of the opposition Labor Party. — Reuters

MYANMAR'S SUU KYI: FALLING STAR OR A BEACON OF HOPE?

LEADER'S HALO NEAR VAPORIZED ON GLOBAL STAGE

NAYPYITAW: For nearly 30 years, Aung San Suu Kyi starred as arguably the world's most prominent and revered political prisoner, a courageous champion of human rights and democracy in her military-ruled nation. As she completes her first 100 days in power, the Nobel Prize laureate's halo has all but vaporized on the global stage: Suu Kyi is being assailed for ignoring the plight of the oppressed Rohingya Muslims, failing to stop atrocities against other ethnic minorities and abetting moves to erase from collective memory the bloody history of the generals she replaced.

Some have even labelled her a "democratic dictator," an increasingly aloof one-person show who surrounds herself with close friends and loyalists without nurturing a vitally needed new generation of leaders. Gone are the days when the elegant hostess would charm visitors over

ment's main achievement to date as progress toward a two-fold "national reconciliation" - between civilians and military, the majority Burman people and the ethnic minorities, which make up about 40 percent of the population. "I believe we are moving in a positive direction," he said. "The main aim is to build a democratic federal union." But criticism from foreign quarters has been withering, focused on Suu Kyi's refusal to act on the Rohingya Muslims, who were driven into squalid camps amid waves of killings in 2012, and continue to flee on perilous sea voyages from a country that denies them citizenship despite historic proof of centuries-long residence.

War on ethnic groups

Meanwhile, the generals continue to wage war against several ethnic groups, who rose up

2008 constitution guarantees the military 25 percent of parliamentary seats, control of three key security ministries and a constitutional veto. The armed forces also have cornered large chunks of the economy.

"People were expecting miracles (after Suu Kyi's victory). But first of all it is important to remember that this is a government with very limited power," said Bertil Lintner, an author of several books on Myanmar. "The government has hobbled along and been blamed for actions which are beyond its control." Some observers say Suu Kyi, descending from the high moral ground of a political prisoner, has simply become a pragmatic politician, one who fears that pushing the military too far on human rights and other contentious issues could stop her in her tracks - if not spark a military coup - and never make her laudable end-game possible.

She has not taken up the cause of the Muslims, this line of argument goes, because this would alienate a key segment of her electorate, the Burman Buddhists among whom a virulent anti-Islamic movement has been growing. In another upsurge of violence, Buddhist mobs have recently burned down a mosque and attacked Muslims in several areas of the country. A less charitable view says that given her massive popular mandate and international backing, Suu Kyi has enough political space in which she could afford to alienate radical anti-Muslims and the generals, who don't appear keen for any breaks with Suu Kyi's government. Farmaner said that while Myanmar's deeply systemic problems are obviously going to take a long time to solve, "it doesn't take time to release political prisoners. This can be done immediately. Or lift humanitarian aid restrictions on the Rohingya, Kachin and the Shan. That can be done immediately, and this has not been done." More than 60 political prisoners are still behind bars with 140 awaiting trial.

A different woman

"She is so different from what she was before. People are really questioning who she really is now," said Tun Kyi, once an ardent Suu Kyi supporter imprisoned for 10 years following the 1988 uprising against the military which propelled Suu Kyi to prominence. The answer for many ethnics and Muslims like Tun Kyi is that while trying to resolve internal conflicts at heart, Suu Kyi views Myanmar as a Burman Buddhist country and will put Burman interests first. And despite her nearly 15 years under house arrest at the hands of the military regime, Suu Kyi retains an abiding fondness for the army - something she herself has acknowledged, noting that her father, independence hero Gen. Aung San, founded the institution. Some also question the leadership mantle she has assumed.

"She only wants to give orders. She is not interested in listening to those who have opinions other than her own. She has equated her own destiny to the destiny of the country," said Tun Kyi, who works with the Former Political Prisoners Society. Barred by the constitution from serving as head of state, Suu Kyi said she would "be above the president," and took on the newly created post of state counsellor. She also serves as foreign minister, minister of the president's office and heads the National League for Democracy party. President Htin Kyaw is a close friend and her personal physician Dr. Tin Myo Win acts as the inexperienced negotiator with ethnic groups. — AP



NAYPYITAW: In this March 15, 2016 file photo, National League for Democracy party (NLD) leader Aung San Suu Kyi arrives in Manama's parliament. — AP

informal teas and reduce hard-bitten reporters to voicing soft-ball questions. Even her supporters find it hard to cite concrete achievements of her government during the 100-day period, which ends this week, except for the freeing of most but not all political prisoners and initial efforts to stop rampant land grabs.

However, to the country's Burman majority, The Lady, as the charismatic 71-year-old Suu Kyi is affectionately known, remains a beacon of hope, one who will eventually surmount an array of troubles that would buckle the best of leaders - from the world's longest running insurgencies to abysmal health care and China's rampant exploitation - while somehow breaking the still-powerful grip of the military. "We should give her 1,000 not 100 days given the legacy of a half century of military oppression. People are still patient, at least the majority of Burmans. But of course, for the ethnics it is different," said Ye Naing Moe, a prominent journalist and educator.

In an interview with The Associated Press, Information Minister Pe Myint cited the govern-

against the central government following Myanmar's independence from Britain in 1948. Mark Farmaner, director of Burma Campaign UK, said his group has received more reports of atrocities by the military in Kachin and Shan states in recent months than similar periods last year under the military-dominated government. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights last month said that the new government "has the responsibility and opportunity to halt these violations" and called for an end to "discriminatory policies and practices by repealing discriminatory laws." A New York Times editorial said "a woman whose name has been synonymous with human rights for a generation has continued an utterly unacceptable policy of the military rulers she succeeded."

Suu Kyi has countered that she needs "space" to sort out such problems as the Rohingya and maintains that she has always stood for human rights and the rule of law. The question of maneuvering space seems to be key to Suu Kyi's power, or lack thereof. Despite her party's sweeping victory in last November's election, a



MANILA: In this picture taken on July 8, 2016, police officers investigate the dead body of an alleged drug dealer, his face covered with packing tape and a placard reading "I'm a pusher", on a street. — AFP

NINE FRESH KILLINGS IN PHILIPPINES DRUG WAR

MANILA: Nine people were killed overnight in the Philippines, authorities said yesterday, as police and suspected anti-drug gunmen pushed ahead with President Rodrigo Duterte's controversial war on crime. Duterte won the May 9 election by landslide largely on a pledge to kill tens of thousands of drug dealers and other criminals, and has urged the police and civilians to help in the killings.

More than 100 suspects have been killed in the seven weeks since Duterte's election. One pre-dawn raid in the town of Matalam, about 900 kilometers south of Manila, left eight "drug personalities" dead yesterday, including a woman, regional police spokesman Superintendent Romeo Galgo told reporters. One other person was arrested on suspicion of drug offences, Galgo said, adding that three

pistols and four grenades were found on the dead suspects. In Manila, police said they found a yet to be identified dead man, his entire head wrapped in tape, on a poorly lit road late Friday. His torso was covered with a cardboard sign reading: "I Am A Pusher."

Civil rights campaigners including two legislators called Friday for an enquiry into recent months' police operations amid concerns at least some of the dead suspects could have been summarily executed by the lawmen. Police have said they had operated within the boundaries of the law in killing 103 suspects between May 10 and July 7. The Manila newspaper Philippine Daily Inquirer's own "kill list" of suspected criminals showed 119 victims of suspected summary killings up until July 7, including 13 unidentified ones, since the elections. — AFP

OVERSEAS LAWYERS' ASSOCIATIONS DECRY CHINA RIGHTS CRACKDOWN

BEIJING: Overseas bar associations and lawyers' groups issued an open letter to Chinese President Xi Jinping yesterday criticizing China's detention of lawyers and activists exactly one year after the crackdown was launched. The letter adds to international expressions of concern over the unprecedented sweep. The letter called on Xi to release all lawyers and others it said were unlawfully detained, and ensure that the detainees can pick the lawyers who represent them and are provided medical treatment and visitation rights.

Yesterday marked the first anniversary of a crackdown in China on human rights lawyers and activists in which more than 200 were detained or questioned. Around two dozen are still detained, including several who could face life imprisonment after being charged with subverting state power. The open letter said the lawyers' groups sought to improve the situation for Chinese lawyers and human rights defenders. "It is in this light that we wish to remind you of your continuous pledges, Mr. President, to uphold the rule of law in China," the letter said.

The letter was signed by more than a dozen groups, including the Hong Kong-based China Human Rights Lawyers

Concern Group, the Amsterdam Bar Association, the Australian branch of the International Association of People's Lawyers and the International Commission of Jurists. It was posted on the Facebook page of the Hong Kong group. Separately, the American Bar Association, or ABA, said in a statement that it has named a Chinese human rights lawyer, Wang Yu, recipient of a newly created "ABA International Human Rights Award."

Under pressure

The ABA said Wang, who is among the lawyers and activists currently held in the crackdown, was being honored for "her dedication to human rights, justice and the rule of law in China." The lawyers' association had come under pressure in the past year from critics for not being as strident as other lawyers' groups in its criticism of the crackdown. The ministries of justice and public security did not immediately respond to faxed requests for comment.

State media have accused the lawyers and activists of disrupting public order. Rights groups say the lawyers are being targeted for waging social media campaigns and organizing protests outside courthouses to draw attention to cases involving hot-button social issues. — AP

KOREA TEST-FIRES SUBMARINE LAUNCHED BALLISTIC MISSILE

SEOUL: North Korea yesterday fired what appeared to be a submarine-launched ballistic missile off its east coast, the US and South Korea said, the latest in a string of tests that are part of efforts by the North to advance technology capable of delivering nuclear warheads. The missile was fired from a location near the North Korean coastal town of Sinpo, where analysts have previously detected efforts by the North to develop submarine-launched ballistic missile systems, said an official from Seoul's Defense Ministry. The official, who didn't want to be named because of office rules, couldn't immediately confirm how far the missile traveled or where it landed.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said in a statement that it presumed the missile successfully ejected from the submarine's launch tube, but failed in its early stage of flight. South Korea's Yonhap news agency said that the missile likely flew only a few kilometers before exploding in midair, but the Defense Ministry official couldn't confirm the report. The US Strategic Command also said that the missile was tracked over the sea between the Korean Peninsula and Japan, where it apparently fell. "We strongly condemn this and North Korea's other recent missile tests, which violate UN Security Council resolutions explicitly prohibit-

ing North Korea's launches using ballistic missile technology," said Cmdr. Gary Ross, a Pentagon spokesman.

Alarming development

North Korea acquiring the ability to launch missiles from submarines would be an alarming development for rivals and neighbors because missiles from submerged vessels are harder to detect in advance. While security experts say it's unlikely that North Korea possesses an operational submarine capable of firing missiles, they acknowledge that the North is making progress on such technology. North Korea already has a considerable arsenal of land-based ballistic missiles and is believed to be advancing its efforts to miniaturize nuclear warheads mounted on missiles through nuclear and rocket tests. North Korea last test-fired a submarine-launched ballistic missile in April, calling it a success that strengthened its ability to attack enemies with "dagger of destruction." South Korean defense officials said then that the missile flew about 30 kilometers before likely exploding in midair.

The North also test-fired a submarine-launched ballistic missile on Dec 25, but that test was seen as a failure, the South's Joint Chiefs of Staff said. The North first claimed a successful submarine-launched missile test in May last

year. Saturday's launch came a day after US and South Korean military officials said they were ready to deploy an advanced US missile defense system in South Korea to cope with North Korean threats. Seoul and Washington launched formal talks on deploying the Terminal High-Altitude Area Defense, or THAAD, after North Korea conducted a nuclear test and a long-range rocket launch earlier this year. China, Russia and North Korea all say the THAAD deployment could help US radars spot missiles in their countries.

The deployment decision for THAAD was announced hours after North Korea angrily reacted to new US sanctions on leader Kim Jong Un and other top officials for human rights abuses, with Pyongyang's Foreign Ministry saying such measures were tantamount to declaring war. North Korea has already been sanctioned heavily because of its nuclear weapons program. However, the action by the Obama administration on Wednesday marked the first time Kim has been personally targeted, and also the first time that any North Korean official has been blacklisted by the US Treasury in connection with reports of rights abuses. The United States stations about 28,500 troops in South Korea as deterrence against potential aggression from North Korea. — AP



SEOUL: People walk past a television screen at a railway station. — AFP



A man incarnating a "Toro de Fuego" (bull of fire) chases people during the San Fermin Festival on Friday in Pamplona, northern Spain. Pamplona is host to the most famous of Spain's many bull-running festivals, where hundreds of people try to outrun six charging bulls over 800 m. — AFP

BIG DROP IN IS TWITTER TRAFFIC

Continued from Page 1

action and cutting off foreign fighters and finances, confronting the group's extremist ideology and stemming the militants' growing popularity in the Arab world and beyond.

The messaging element of the campaign struggled early on. Much of the anti-IS content put online was in English, limiting its effectiveness. At the time, social media networks were only getting started with new technological approaches to the challenge of disabling accounts that were recruiting and radicalizing prospective IS members.

These shortcomings have been fixed, American officials believe. Memes and images depicting the group's treatment of women, children and others are presented almost entirely in Arabic. Whereas the US previously blasted the information out itself, it disseminates messages now through Muslim governments, religious leaders, schools, youth leaders and advocacy groups with credibility in local communities. Data show the proliferation of IS propaganda decreasing.

"We're denying ISIL the ability to operate uncontested online, and we're seeing their social media presence decline," said Michael Lumpkin, head of the Global Engagement Center, which coordinates the US government's approach to fighting extremist messaging. Using an alternate acronym for the group, he said "anti-ISIL audiences are increasingly vocal on social media. This only weakens ISIL's ability to recruit, a key aim of our messaging efforts."

Data obtained by AP show a 6-1 ratio of anti-IS content online compared with pro-IS content — an improvement from last year. When pro-IS Twitter accounts are discovered today, they have about 300 followers each. In 2014, such accounts had 1,500 followers each, according to the data. Among social networks, the administration has primarily focused on Twitter. The platform has been most heavily used by IS to crowdsource supporters and potential attackers, though it also has used YouTube and Facebook. As IS emerged from Al-Qaeda's shadow and began seizing cities and large swaths of territory in Syria and Iraq in 2013, pro-IS accounts started firing out tens of thousands of tweets each day, rapidly and repeatedly opening new accounts as others were suspended. The group's enhanced use of social media quickly set it apart

from Al-Qaeda and previous jihadi militant groups. Counterterrorism and law enforcement officials have pointed to IS' online presence for inspiring deadly attacks in Europe and the United States, including some by individuals who never had physical contact with any of its leaders or fighters in the Middle East. These include the attackers who killed 14 in San Bernardino, California, last December.

The US messages attempt to undermine many of IS' most oft-cited claims. These include the group's supposed invincibility on the battlefield or that its caliphate is good for Muslims. American partners have flooded social media with messages highlighting the group's territorial losses and inability to effectively govern or provide basic services to areas under its control.

Although the US government has no formal arrangement with Twitter, its information campaign has dovetailed with new approaches by the company to identify and eliminate tweets supporting terrorism. Until recently, child pornography was the only abuse automatically flagged for human review on social media. Terrorist messaging is now also included and Twitter announced earlier this year it was using a spam-fighting technology as well. Since mid-2015, the company has suspended more than 125,000 such accounts.

Officials accept that the focus on Twitter may be driving some of IS' traffic to secure message platforms such as WhatsApp and Telegram. But such a shift means the group's propaganda is reaching a smaller audience. On these networks, it is the job of intelligence and law enforcement officials to root out any clues about future terrorist activity.

The Global Engagement Center was created in March to replace a previous State Department entity for fighting IS messaging, the widely criticized Center for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications. In addition to shifting to Arabic content and proxy messengers, the new formation harmonizes the online campaign with military and intelligence efforts, and uses data analytics from the private and public sector to gauge IS' changing online tactics and what counterstrategies are working best. For measuring pro-IS versus anti-IS accounts, data analysts use several dozen search strings and hashtags. For example, #Caliphate is more likely used on pro-IS accounts. #Daesh, a pejorative acronym for the group, is primarily found on anti-IS accounts. — AP

PROTESTS AS DALLAS KILLINGS ROCK RACE...

Continued from Page 1

"It's on all of us to stand up, to speak out about disparities in our criminal justice system - just as it's on all of us to stand up for the police who protect us in our communities every day," he said.

Biden praised the slain officers, whom he said joined the force because they thought they could help. "So when an assassin's bullet targeted the police force in Dallas, it touched the soul of the nation," he said. Five officers were shot dead in the late Thursday shooting, with seven other officers and two civilians wounded.

Police found bomb-making materials and a weapons cache at the home of 25-year-old Micah Johnson, a Dallas area resident who gunned down the officers before being killed in a standoff with police. While the White House ruled out any link between the gunman and known "terrorist organizations," Johnson's Facebook page ties him to several radical black movements listed as hate groups. Described to police as a "loner" with no prior criminal record, Johnson served as a US Army reservist for six years, including a tour of duty in Afghanistan. Johnson told negotiators before he died that he wanted to kill white cops in retaliation for the fatal police shootings in Louisiana and Minnesota.

Leaders of the Black Lives Matter protest movement condemned the Dallas violence, but vowed to uphold planned weekend marches. The shooting revives an emotional debate over lethal use of force by police, and problems of alleged police bias towards racial minorities, especially African-Americans.

Vast crowds marched in US cities including Houston, New Orleans, Detroit, Baltimore, Philadelphia and San Francisco. One of the largest was in Atlanta, where protesters blocked a major road. In Phoenix, police in riot gear used pepper spray to disperse a large crowd that hurled rocks and threatened to block a highway. At least one person was arrested. And in Rochester, New York, Police Chief Michael Ciminelli said that 74 people were arrested for blocking a street in what appeared to be a peaceful sit-in protest.

Addressing a prayer service honoring the fallen officers, Dallas Mayor Mike Rawlings urged Americans to "step up" to heal the country's racial wounds. "We will not shy away from the very real fact that we as a city, as

a state, as a nation are struggling with racial issues," he told the crowd. Rawlings echoed Obama's message that black lives matter - and so do "blue" lives, those of police officers. "We must step up our game and approach complicated issues in a different way," Rawlings said. "And race is complicated."

Obama, who ordered flags on government buildings lowered to half-mast for five days, said that there was "no possible justification" for violence against police. The president commented on the attacks from Warsaw, where he was attending a NATO summit. He condemned the shootings as "vicious, calculated and despicable". The White House said Obama would return home late Sunday, one day ahead of schedule, and visit Dallas early next week.

The Dallas shootings sparked chaos as people scrambled for safety during a march by several hundred demonstrators in the city of 1.2 million. The ambush marks the single biggest loss of life for law enforcement in the United States since the Sept 11, 2001 terror attacks. "This must stop - this divisiveness between our police and our citizens," Dallas police chief David Brown said.

Johnson was killed by a bomb robot sent in by officers after hours of negotiations and an exchange of fire. "This was a well-planned, well-thought out, evil strategy," said Brown of the gunman. Bomb-making materials, weapons and ammunition were found in Johnson's home. "He said he was upset about the recent police shootings," Brown said. "The suspect said he was upset at white people. The suspect stated he wanted to kill white people, especially white officers."

Earlier, officials said three other people had been detained, but it was unclear if any remained in custody. US Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson said the gunman appeared to have acted alone. The gunman told police he was not affiliated with any organized groups. But groups that Johnson "liked" on Facebook included several organizations listed as hate groups by the Southern Poverty Law Center, which monitors such movements in the United States. On his Facebook page, Johnson appears with his fist raised wearing an African style tunic against the backdrop of the red, black and green Pan-African flag, all reminiscent of the US black power movement of the 1960s.— Agencies

PAKISTAN BIDS FAREWELL TO NATIONAL HERO...

Continued from Page 1

Chief Raheel Sharif and Edhi's son Faisal saluted the coffin as it was carried by soldiers.

But thousands of ordinary people who planned to attend the funeral were stopped several kilometres away from the ceremony for security reasons. More than 3,000 security and traffic police officers were deployed as the coffin was taken for burial to Edhi Village near Karachi's main National Highway, which Edhi himself had selected as a place for his grave 25 years ago. Born to a family of Muslim traders in Gujarat in British India, Edhi arrived in Pakistan after his bloody creation in 1947. The state's failure to help his struggling family care for his mother - paralyzed and suffering from mental health issues - was his painful and decisive turning point towards philanthropy. In the sticky streets in the heart of Karachi, Edhi, full of idealism and hope, opened his first medical clinic in 1951. Abandoned children and the elderly, battered women, the disabled, drug addicts; Edhi's foundation now houses some 5,700 people in 17 shelters across the country.

The most prominent symbols of the foundation - its 1,500 ambulances - are deployed with unusual effi-

ciency to the scene of extremist attacks that tear through Pakistan with devastating regularity. The foundation's adoption service sees unwanted children - many of them girls - left in cradles placed in front of every center, where they can be safely cared for. Edhi has been nominated several times for the Nobel Peace Prize, and appears on the list again this year - put there by Malala Yousafzai, Pakistan's teenage Nobel laureate.

Frail and weak in his later years, he appointed his son Faisal as managing trustee in early 2016. Edhi leaves behind his wife Bilquis and six children. He gave until the very end, his son told AFP, seeking to donate all his body organs after death - though doctors said that due to his age he could only donate his corneas. Children would run after him, to hold his hand and for small talk whenever he would visit the Edhi village.

He would refrain from taking showers to save water. "We have to conserve water for our future generations and that is why I don't misuse this precious gift of nature," he told AFP in an earlier conversation. During his last days and as his condition worsened, he refused offers to get medical treatment from abroad. The last time Pakistan held a state funeral was for military dictator General Zia ul-Haq in 1988. — AFP

WOMAN BREAKS GROUND AS SOCCER PUNDIT

Continued from Page 1

Her passion for football inspired Sarhan to learn Spanish so she could track La Liga and the club she supports from original sources. She plans to also learn Italian and Portuguese to expand the sphere of European football that she can follow. Sarhan also follows Spanish youth matches and teams that are less well-known to be able to keep abreast of up-and-coming talents.

In one corner of her house rests a ball which her mother says Sarhan still kicks around in the hallway. "Manar has loved football since she was a child. I wanted her to continue her studies in her profession, but she is happy commenting," her mother Magda Al-Hawary says with evident pride. Sarhan's dream goes beyond Egypt's borders. "My dream is to work in the field of European football in Spain itself, to become international." — AFP



WARSAW: Leaders pose for a photo after a 'quint' meeting during the NATO Summit at the Polish National Stadium yesterday. — AFP

UNITED NATO KEEPS PRESSURE ON RUSSIA

Continued from Page 1

Unity was the buzzword of the two-day summit in the Polish capital after Britain's shock vote to quit the European Union raised questions about its future role as a nuclear armed global power.

Prime Minister David Cameron reassured his peers that Britain was committed to the alliance and announced a parliamentary vote on July 18 on revamping Britain's Trident nuclear deterrent to back that up. "The nuclear deterrent remains essential in my view not just to Britain's security but as our allies acknowledge here today to the overall security of the NATO alliance," Cameron told a news conference. Cameron said Britain fully backed the measures adopted by NATO in response to the Ukraine crisis "but we must also engage in a hard headed dialogue with Russia".

NATO's two-track strategy reflects underlying divisions in the bloc, with calls from France and Germany to avoid a Cold-War style stand-off when Moscow's help is needed on issues such as terrorism. The United States and European Union have both imposed sanctions on Moscow over the Ukraine crisis but in Europe in particular there are growing calls for them to be scaled back. French President Francois Hollande appeared to offer an olive branch to Moscow, saying on Friday Russia was neither adversary nor threat but a partner. Leaders discussed Ukraine with President Petro Poroshenko later yesterday.

Stoltenberg announced earlier this week that the alliance would hold a fresh meeting with Russia on Wednesday as a gesture of the West's openness and good faith. Eastern European states have previously warned against easing the

pressure, but NATO's unprecedented new measures have begun to reassure them. Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaitė, a sharp critic of Putin, said a stronger NATO would be better able to talk to Russia. "I am softening" on the need for dialogue, Grybauskaitė told AFP Saturday.

Putin is unlikely to miss the symbolic importance of the summit being held in Warsaw, the birthplace of the Soviet-era Warsaw Pact, once NATO's adversary. Moscow bitterly opposes NATO's expansion into its Soviet-era satellites, seeing it as part of an attempt to surround it. Russia is even more critical of the Ballistic Missile Defence system the United States is building to counter missile threats from Iran or the Middle East, which NATO declared initially operational on Friday.

NATO leaders meanwhile confirmed pledges to fund Afghanistan security forces until 2020, to combat Taliban rebels who are putting the Kabul government under intense pressure. Stoltenberg said NATO will keep troops in Afghanistan until 2017 under its train and advise Resolute Support mission but could not say when the alliance's longest military engagement might end. Obama was forced this week to slow the US pullout saying 8,400 US troops will now remain in the war-ravaged country into next year.

The next NATO summit will be held in 2017 at the alliance's new \$1.2 billion headquarters in Brussels, Stoltenberg added. At the Warsaw protest, hundreds of activists chanted slogans against the NATO build-up, watched over by around 100 police officers. "I wish NATO had disappeared with the Warsaw Pact," said French environmental activist Gerard Levy. Protester Ilya Bydratskis, from Russia, added: "I am against imperialism... NATO's forces are stronger than Russia's but I am against Putin too!" — AFP

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Washington Watch

PUTTING MIDEAST
CHRISTIANS AT RISK

By Dr James J Zogby

This week a coalition of mostly far-right "Christian" organizations hosted a conference in Washington that claimed to be defending persecuted minorities in the Middle East. Given the very real threat facing vulnerable ancient religious communities at the hands of barbarous groups like ISIS, one might be inclined to commend the organizers for their timely initiative. However, after examining the groups involved and list of invited speakers, the conference's purposes appear to be dangerously provocative and even sinister.

Among the featured speakers are a handful of notorious Islamophobes and a strange collection of individuals who claim to have been "radical Muslims", of one stripe or another, all of whom say they have now converted to Christianity and have come forward to tell their conversion stories. One of the headliners is Frank Gaffney, who heads an organization which the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) identifies as an "anti-Muslim hate group". Gaffney is one of the main propagators of the notion that President Obama "may be a Muslim" and that Hillary Clinton aide, Huma Abedin, is a secret operative of the Muslim Brotherhood.

Another speaker representing an SPLC-listed hate group is Retired General William Boykin, a Bush-era Pentagon official who gained notoriety when it was revealed that he had repeatedly compared the Iraq war to the Crusades boasting that the US/Christian side was bound to win because "our God is bigger than theirs". Boykin has also said that "Islam is evil" and should not be protected by the First Amendment. Among the others scheduled to address the event were a number of evangelical preachers, Trump supporters, and Christian missionaries devoted to converting Muslims.

'Converts'

To inspire the attendees, organizers invited a number of "converts" to share their stories. One of them, Tass Saada, claims to have been a "PLO sniper" until he saw the light and converted to Christianity. He founded "Hope for Ishmael" to lead other Muslims to convert. Joining him will be Daniel Shayesteh, an Iranian American who claims to have been an "Islamic extremist" at age 9. He later became a Christian and has since founded "Exodus from Darkness". It was especially troubling that a number of conservative Republican Members of Congress and State Department officials were scheduled to speak to the conference. Their presence was intended to give legitimacy to the event.

On being made aware of the conference, my organization, the Arab American Institute, crafted a letter to the congressmen urging them to withdraw their support, detailing the dangers this gathering posed for the very people it claimed to be supporting. Endorsed by the Holy Land Christian Ecumenical Foundation, the American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, the Muslim Public Affairs Council, and the Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good, our letter, in part, read:

"We write to you to convey our deep concern with an upcoming conference, 'The Bridge: The Annual Conference on the Persecuted Church...'. The conference's program gives a platform to well-known anti-Arab and anti-Muslim activists whose work advances a dangerous agenda of fear and misunderstanding.

"We share with you the belief that it is of utmost importance to defend the rights of persecuted Christians and other vulnerable faith communities across the Middle East. Moreover, we believe that it is critical that we work to ensure that these faith communities not merely be protected as minorities but guaranteed full and equal citizenship rights in every country in the region. While some in Washington, D.C. believe that the interests of persecuted Christians can be advanced through bashing Islam and its adherents, the truth is that these tactics do nothing to advance or defend the rights of persecuted Christians.

"At a time when the public discourse in the United States has looked at Arab and Muslims across the world with acute suspicion, it is critically important that our public officials help combat hateful rhetoric and elevate leaders who speak to our highest ideals of mutual respect and understanding... We are concerned that this conference may have the unfortunate consequence of legitimizing the anti-Arab and anti-Muslim messages and policies that are associated with its speakers and will in the end do more harm than good to the persecuted communities the conference organizers claim to be defending.

We believe that your participation and/or endorsement of this event would empower these voices of bigotry, not defend the rights of religiously persecuted Christians, as the conference claims to do. With these considerations in mind, we respectfully request that you withdraw from participating in this event."

The Members of Congress did not withdraw, but on the day before the conference was to begin Frank Gaffney's name was removed from the speaker's list.

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

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STOPPED 52 TIMES: WAS IT RACIAL PROFILING?

By Carla K Johnson

When Philando Castile saw the flashing lights in his rearview mirror, it wasn't unusual. He had been pulled over at least 52 times in recent years in and around the Twin Cities and given citations for minor offenses including speeding, driving without a muffler and not wearing a seat belt. He was assessed at least \$6,588 in fines and fees, although more than half of the total 86 violations were dismissed, court records show. Was Castile an especially bad driver or just unlucky? Or was he targeted by officers who single out black motorists like him for such stops, as several of his family members have alleged?

The answer may never be known, but Castile's stop for a broken tail light Wednesday ended with him fatally shot by a suburban St. Paul police officer and his girlfriend livestreaming the chilling aftermath. The shooting has added a new impetus to a national debate on racial profiling. "The video is pretty horrific," said Gavin Kearney, who in 2003 co-authored a report to the Minnesota Legislature on racial profiling in the state. "There are things we don't know about it. But we know there are certain assumptions and biases - whether explicit or implicit - about black men that affect how police officers interpret their actions. And we know white drivers are less likely to be pulled over."

Court records dating to 2002 show Castile, a 32-year-old school cafeteria supervisor, averaged more than three traffic stops per year and received citations for misdemeanors or petty misdemeanors. Many charges were dismissed, but Castile pleaded guilty to some, mostly for driving after his license was revoked and driving with no proof of insurance. However, those two charges also were the most frequently dismissed, along with failing to wear a seat belt. The records show no convictions for more serious crimes.

No recent information is available on the racial breakdown of drivers stopped or ticketed by police in Falcon Heights, the mostly white suburb where the shooting occurred, or in other Minnesota towns. Minnesota is not among the handful of states that require police to keep such data.

Racial, Ethnic Bias

But in 2001, the Legislature asked for a racial profiling study and it fell to Kearney, then at the Institute on Race & Poverty at the University of Minnesota Law School, to conduct it. His study,

using information supplied voluntarily by 65 law enforcement jurisdictions in the state, found a strong likelihood that racial and ethnic bias played a role in traffic stop policies and practices. Overall, officers stopped minority drivers at greater rates than whites and searched them at greater rates, but found contraband in those searches at lower rates than whites.

The analysis found the pattern was more pronounced in suburban areas. In Fridley, New Hope, Plymouth, Sauk Rapids and Savage combined, blacks were stopped about 310 percent more often than expected. The St. Anthony Police Department, which

employs the officer who shot Castile, did not participate in the study. St. Anthony officials have not commented on Castile's stop since shortly after the shooting.

It was not immediately clear how much money governments in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area generate from traffic violations. A US Department of Justice investigation following the 2014 police shooting death of Michael Brown, a black, unarmed 18-year-old, in Ferguson, Missouri, found law enforcement efforts were focused on generating revenue for that city. Most of the tickets and fines were going to blacks. — AP

DALLAS GUNMAN WAS DRAWN TO
ANGER OF 'BLACK POWER' GROUPS

By Ned Parker and Mimi Dwyer

The 25-year-old army veteran who killed five Dallas police officers interacted with several "black power" groups, some of which post vitriolic and racist rhetoric online and which sometimes condone violence. Micah Xavier Johnson's links with the groups were being investigated by U.S. law enforcement on Friday, highlighting the role of little known organizations that rail against racial injustice and police abuses.

Babu Omowale, the co-founder of the Huey P Newton Gun Club, a Dallas-based black militia that performs armed community patrols, said Johnson came to black community events in Dallas. "We don't condone it, we don't support it, but we understand it," Omowale told Reuters. "We can understand how the conditions of America today pushed that man to respond how he did. Every man and woman has his breaking point, and we just think Micah got to his breaking point before anyone else."

Omowale said the club was founded in August 2014 in the wake of black teenager Michael Brown's fatal shooting by police in Ferguson, Missouri, and organizes armed groups under Texas's "open-carry" gun laws to monitor police and drug activity. He said he did not

know Johnson personally but recognized him from gatherings to commemorate black historical events. "He wasn't a stranger to us."

On Facebook, Johnson "liked" the New Black Panther Party, the Black Riders Liberation Party, the Huey P Newton Gun Club, and the African American Defense League, which following Thursday night's shootings by calling for attacks on "everything in blue except the mail man." Johnson, who posted anti-white messages on Facebook pages of some of the groups days before his attack, had also liked pages for affiliates of the Anonymous group and conspiracy-minded pages like "Illuminati Exposed Media."

He also liked pages for the Black Lives Matter movement, which advocates peaceful protests against violence towards black people, appeared to have an interest in gun culture, and followed a tactical shooting page called "Guerrilla Approach". US law enforcement officials said on Friday they were trying to determine the relationship between Johnson, who was killed by police, and the black extremist groups that he praised online. They said it appeared the gunman had acted alone but that they were still investigating whether anyone assisted him in the shootings, which killed five police officers and wounded seven. — Reuters

AFRICANS IN INDIA REFUSE TO GIVE IN TO FEAR

By Etienne Fontaine

Congolese student Arnold Mutumbo Muama refuses to be cowed by a spate of racist violence towards Africans in India's capital New Delhi, defiant after a friend was beaten up by security guards at his apartment block. "The guard called him a 'monster' in Hindi before taking him to the basement and beating him," recalled Muama, 29, who chairs a Congolese welfare association. Racism against Africans in India was thrown into the spotlight following the brutal stoning to death in May of Congolese national Masunda Kitada Oliver in a dispute over an auto-rickshaw.

Following the attack, African ambassadors in New Delhi threatened to recommend to their governments that they don't send students to the capital "as their security is not guaranteed". Around 30,000 Africans live in New Delhi, according to police, and they have told AFP of numerous humiliations they face, from insults in the street to housing discrimination and even violent attacks. This week, television footage showed police officers in the southern city of Bangalore forcefully restraining a Nigerian woman following an altercation at a market. She was tied up with ropes before being injected with sedatives. Despite these incidents, IT student Muama believes it is "out of the question to live in fear". "You have to be aware of your rights," he said.

'They Eat Dogs'

In Khirki Extension, a bustling set of interlacing streets in the south of the Indian capital long home to a sizeable Nigerian community, prejudices remain on display. "The way they eat, drink, live... Everything is different," said Inderjeet Singh, a real estate agent who has been in the neighborhood for 15 years. "People say they eat street dogs, families fear they cut their children into pieces and eat them," the 53-year-old said.

The number of Nigerians living in the district has dwindled since Jan 2014, when it was the scene of a crackdown by a member of the Delhi Legislative Assembly Somnath Bharti. Bharti, accompanied by supporters of his anti-corruption party and night vision cameras, took to the streets to denounce an alleged prostitution and drug trafficking network run by Nigerians and Ugandans. Bharti attempted to force the police to search several apartments and reportedly ordered four Africans to take urine tests to detect any traces of drugs.

In an attempt to now tackle racist views, foreign minister Sushma Swaraj has promised an awareness campaign in neigh-

borhoods with large numbers of African inhabitants. "We are trying to break the communication gap between the locals and our African friends," R P Upadhyay, a senior Delhi Police official in charge of the campaign told AFP. "We are requesting everyone that whenever anything happens, report it to the police."

'Good Friendships'

The death of the Congolese student comes as India is seeking to charm African nations, seeking to rival China, which has long staked its interest on the continent. Following an India-Africa summit last year, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited four African countries in early July. Nigerian,

Cameroonian and Congolese residents in New Delhi interviewed by AFP say that while they encounter difficulties in daily life, many Indians are open and tolerant towards them.

Congolese student Loic Ipanga, 24, believes the "racist reactions" he experiences are often due to ignorance of Africa. "It is very shocking that every time an Indian sees you, he asks you if you are Nigerian, thinking that because of my skin color I must be Nigerian," he says. "This is sometimes a disturbing issue." Yet he says he has "very good friendships with Indians, who are willing to get up in the middle of the night to help you". "We must act like adults - mature and wise. You cannot lay a hand on anyone," he said. — AFP



In this photograph taken on July 14, 2015, African customers speak with Indian traders at a market in New Delhi. — AFP

MARCEKO BIELSA BLAMES LAZIO FOR SHOCK EXIT

ROME: Marcelo Bielsa, who pulled out of coaching Lazio in a shock move just 48 hours after his appointment was announced, has blamed the club for his exit saying it had failed to sign a single player. The intense Argentine, known as "El Loco" (the Madman), called Lazio boss Claudio Lotito overnight Thursday to say he had decided not to come to Rome, triggering threats of legal action from the Italian club. In a curt letter to the Serie A club dated July 7 — which appeared in Argentine media on Saturday-Bielsa said: "It had been decided and made clear... that reinforcements were necessary, taking into account the departure of 18 players from last season. It was agreed, as an essential condition to the implementation of the work program, that we would sign at least four footballers before July 5, with the aim that they would participate in pre-season training. "To this date, not one player has been signed," he said. "For my method of working we needed to have these players arrive in a timely manner to train." Bielsa also complained that Lazio announced he was to join the club knowing full well that the conditions he had demanded had not been met. Bielsa, touted for the coaching role left open by Gerardo Martino at the Argentina national team, stressed in the letter that he had "no other work offer in hand". Struggling Lazio finished eighth last season, far behind arch rivals AS Roma. The club had released a press statement on Wednesday announcing to much fanfare that it had snapped up the former Argentina and Chile coach. — AFP



HAMILTON ON TOP, VETTEL RAISES GEARBOX FEAR

SILVERSTONE: Formula One world champion Lewis Hamilton was fastest in final British Grand Prix practice yesterday, completing a sweep of the three sessions with Mercedes team mate and title rival Nico Rosberg second. While Mercedes were again dominant, Ferrari's Sebastian Vettel had a bad start to a damp day when he told the team over the radio after his final lap: "I think we failed another gearbox". Vettel picked up a five-place grid penalty in Austria last weekend for an unscheduled gearbox change. Hamilton lapped with a best time of one minute 30.904 seconds, 0.063 quicker than Rosberg who missed all of Friday's second practice, on the soft tyres. Australian Daniel Ricciardo was third fastest for Red Bull but more than half a second off Hamilton's pace. Dutch team mate Max Verstappen, winner in Spain and second in Austria, was fourth with Vettel fifth and 1.145 slower than the leading Mercedes. The session was halted to retrieve debris and fix barriers after Marcus Ericsson crashed his Sauber heavily at the exit to Stowe with 20 minutes remaining. —Reuters

JOHNSON PULLS OUT OF OLYMPICS OVER ZIKA

LOS ANGELES: World number two Dustin Johnson, who won his first major title at the US Open Golf Championship in June, won't play in the Rio Olympics because of concerns over the Zika virus. In a statement released to the Golf Channel on Friday by his agent, David Winkle of Hambric Sports Management, Johnson said his hopes of expanding his family with fiancée Paulina Gretzky meant it would be "irresponsible" to risk contracting the mosquito-borne virus that has been linked to birth defects. "As an athlete, I can think of no greater honor than representing the United States in the Olympic Games," Johnson's statement said. "However, after much careful consideration and discussion with both my family and my team, I have made the decision to withdraw from the 2016 Olympic Games. "This was not an easy decision for me, but my concerns about the Zika Virus cannot be ignored," added Johnson, who has a one-year-old son, Tatum, with Gretzky. "Paulina and I plan to have more children in the near future, and I feel it would be irresponsible to put myself, her or our family at risk. I believe I am making the right decision for me and most importantly, my family." —AFP



MLB results/standings

Pittsburgh 8, Chicago Cubs 4; LA Angels 9, Baltimore 5; Toronto 6, Detroit 0; Miami 3, Cincinnati 1; Cleveland 10, NY Yankees 2; Boston 6, Tampa Bay 5; Washington 3, NY Mets 1; Texas 6, Minnesota 5; Atlanta 11, Chicago White Sox 8; Houston 10, Oakland 9; Philadelphia 5, Colorado 3; Milwaukee 4, St. Louis 3; Seattle 3, Kansas City 2; LA Dodgers 10, San Diego 6; San Francisco 6, Arizona 2.

American League

Eastern Division

	W	L	PCT	GB
Baltimore	49	36	.576	-
Toronto	50	39	.562	1
Boston	47	38	.553	2
NY Yankees	42	44	.488	7.5
Tampa Bay	34	52	.395	15.5

Central Division

Cleveland	52	34	.605	-
Detroit	45	42	.517	7.5
Chicago White Sox	44	42	.512	8
Kansas City	44	42	.512	8
Minnesota	30	56	.349	22

Western Division

Texas	54	34	.614	-
Houston	47	40	.540	6.5
Seattle	44	43	.506	9.5
LA Angels	37	50	.425	16.5
Oakland	37	50	.425	16.5

National League

Eastern Division

Washington	52	36	.591	-
NY Mets	47	39	.547	4
Miami	45	41	.523	6
Philadelphia	41	47	.466	11
Atlanta	30	57	.345	21.5

Central Division

Chicago Cubs	52	34	.605	-
Pittsburgh	45	42	.517	7.5
St. Louis	44	42	.512	8
Milwaukee	38	47	.447	13.5
Cincinnati	32	55	.368	20.5

Western Division

San Francisco	55	33	.625	-
LA Dodgers	49	40	.551	6.5
Colorado	39	47	.453	15
San Diego	38	49	.437	16.5
Arizona	38	50	.432	17



NEW YORK: Washington Nationals shortstop Danny Espinosa (8) throws to first base to complete a double play after getting out New York Mets Jose Reyes (7) at second base in the eighth inning of a baseball game, Friday, in New York. — AP

STRASBURG PITCHES NATIONALS PAST BANGED-UP METS

NEW YORK: Stephen Strasburg stayed undefeated, winning a marquee pitching matchup against an ailing Noah Syndergaard by tossing seven innings of two-hit ball Friday night that sent the Washington Nationals to a 3-1 victory over the banged-up New York Mets. Clint Robinson hit a two-run homer for the Nationals, going deep for the second consecutive night, and Daniel Murphy added an RBI double against his former team. Strasburg (12-0) struck out nine and became the first National League pitcher in 104 years to win his first 12 decisions in a season. Jonathan Papelbon pitched a perfect ninth for his 18th save, helping Washington extend its NL East lead to four games over the Mets after dropping the opener of the four-game series Thursday night. Syndergaard (9-4) and slugger Yoenis Cespedes left early with injuries - hours after New York announced that struggling pitcher Matt Harvey will have season-ending surgery for thoracic outlet syndrome.

PIRATES 8, CUBS 4

Andrew McCutchen had three hits, including an RBI single during Pittsburgh's four-run seventh inning, and the Pirates rallied for a rare victory over Jake Arrieta and the Cubs. John Jaso's RBI single tied it at 4 and chased Arrieta (12-4), who had beaten the Pirates in all three previous starts this season and entered with a 9-1 career record against them. The Cubs had won eight of the first nine meetings with Pittsburgh this year. Josh Bell then scored the go-ahead run from second base when first baseman Anthony Rizzo fielded Gregory Polanco's ground ball and threw wildly to reliever Travis Wood covering first. McCutchen followed with his RBI single and Starling Marte drove in the inning's final run with a grounder. Neftali Feliz (3-0) pitched an inning for the win and Mark Melancon got the final out for his 27th save.

INDIANS 10, YANKEES 2

Mike Napoli hit one of five Cleveland home runs, a 462-foot drive that nearly hit the scoreboard in left field. Napoli's two-run homer in the third inning landed near the top of the bleachers for his 18th of the season. Cleveland's five home runs marked a season high, with three coming in the first inning. Jason Kipnis homered twice, and Carlos Santana and Lonnie Chisenhall also connected. All-Star Corey Kluber (9-8) pitched eight innings for the win. Yankees rookie Chad Green (1-2) was charged with seven runs in 4 1/3 innings. Brian McCann homered in the sixth for the Yankees, who are 3-5 on a 10-game trip going into the All-Star break.

BRAVES 11, WHITE SOX 8

Freddie Freeman, Tyler Flowers and Nick Markakis homered against All-Star Chris Sale, leading the Braves to the road win. Chicago turned its third triple play this season in the third - the only inning Atlanta didn't score

against Sale (14-3) in his five innings. The White Sox ace, bidding to become the majors' first 15-game winner, allowed 10 hits - including a career-worst seven for extra bases - and a season-high eight runs. Todd Frazier hit his 24th homer and Adam Eaton also connected against Atlanta starter Matt Wisler (4-8), who gave up six runs and eight hits in five innings but got his first win since June 16.

BLUE JAYS 6, TIGERS 0

J.A. Happ and two relievers combined on a seven-hitter, Edwin Encarnacion hit a three-run homer and the Blue Jays extended their season-high winning streak to seven games. In his final start before the All-Star break, Happ (12-3) matched his career high in wins. He struck out nine in 5 2/3 innings. Tigers right-hander Mike Pelfrey (2-8) allowed one run and six hits in six innings. He has won just once in seven starts. Detroit has lost four of five.

RANGERS 6, TWINS 5

Rougned Odor and Elvis Andrus had RBI triples, and the Rangers overcame a lackluster performance for All-Star left-hander Cole Hamels. Texas twice blew two-run leads before finally going ahead for good in the sixth. Nomar Mazara had a leadoff double against Ryan Pressly (2-5) before Andrus tripled and scored the go-ahead run on Bobby Wilson's sacrifice fly. Tony Barnett (6-3) threw 2 2/3 scoreless innings in relief of Hamels, who matched a career high with six walks while throwing 109 pitches to get through 4 1/3 innings. Sam Dyson worked the ninth for his 18th save. Miguel Sano hit a three-run homer for Minnesota, which has the AL's worst record at 30-56.

RED SOX 6, RAYS 5

David Ortiz hit his 21st homer, powering Boston to its fourth win in five games. Ortiz's homer - the 524th of his career - tied him with Jimmie Foxx for seventh-most in American League history. Robbie Ross, Jr. (1-1) got the victory, and Koji Uehara picked up his third save. Tampa Bay's Chris Archer (4-12) took the loss, surrendering five runs and seven hits in six innings. Evan Longoria had four hits and a home run for the Rays, who have lost four straight and 20 of 23.

MARLINS 3, REDS 1

Jose Fernandez pitched seven sharp innings to help Miami to the win. Christian Yelich homered and drove in two runs and Derek Dietrich also knocked in a run for the Marlins, who returned home after a 3-6 road trip. Fernandez (11-4) allowed an unearned run and six hits. A.J. Ramos worked the ninth for his 26th save in 27 chances. Dan Straily (4-6) gave up three runs and six hits in six innings for the Reds.

ANGELS 9, ORIOLES 5

Daniel Nava had two RBIs and made a spec-

tacular catch to help the Angels earn their fourth straight victory. Mike Trout scored three runs for the Angels, who built an 8-1 lead in the fourth inning against the AL East leaders. The four-game winning streak matches a season high for Los Angeles. The victory came at a cost. First baseman C.J. Cron - who has 11 homers and 50 RBIs - fractured a bone in his left hand when hit by a pitch from Mike Wright in the sixth inning. He will see a specialist Monday, the team said. Matt Shoemaker (4-9) allowed three runs and five hits in five-plus innings to earn his first win since May 27. Baltimore's Ubaldo Jimenez (5-9) gave up five runs in 1 1/3 innings.

BREWERS 4, CARDINALS 3

Jonathan Villar hit a game-ending RBI single with two out in the ninth, lifting Milwaukee to the win. Villar's hit, off Seung Hwan Oh, got past diving third baseman Greg Garcia. Left fielder Tommy Pham's throw to the plate was on line and Yadier Molina slapped a quick tag on Kirk Nieuwenhuis as he slid. The home plate umpire ruled Nieuwenhuis safe, leading to an argument from Molina. The call was confirmed after a brief review. Chris Carter homered twice for Milwaukee, and Jonathan Lucroy also went deep. Jeremy Jeffress (2-4) got the win in relief. Nieuwenhuis led off the ninth with a walk off Trevor Rosenthal (2-4). He moved to second on a sacrifice by Hernan Perez.

MARINERS 3, ROYALS 2

Hisashi Iwakuma pitched into the seventh inning, and Seattle scored the go-ahead runs on Yordano Ventura's wild pitch. Iwakuma (9-6) allowed one run in 6 2/3 innings. Steve Cishek, who blew a save opportunity in the series opener, allowed Salvador Perez's homer in the ninth inning before finishing for his 21st save. Ventura (6-6) was charged with three runs and six hits in seven innings. Ventura's wild pitch allowed Seth Smith to score in the sixth. Perez threw the ball away trying to get him out at the plate, allowing Robinson Cano to score - the star catcher was given an error on the play.

ASTROS 10, ATHLETICS 9

Luis Valbuena hit a game-ending, three-run homer, lifting Houston to a wild win. The Athletics took the lead with a five-run ninth inning before the Astros rallied in the bottom half. Jose Altuve singled with one out. Carlos Correa struck out, but reached on a wild pitch before Valbuena connected against Ryan Madson (3-3). Michael Feliz (6-1) got the win. Yonder Alonso and Marcus Semien homered for Oakland, which finished with 14 hits.

PHILLIES 5, ROCKIES 3

Pinch hitter Tommy Joseph connected for a three-run homer in the seventh inning, leading Philadelphia to the road win. Vince Velasquez (8-2) allowed two runs over six innings and won his third straight start. He struck out six and walked two. The Phillies

snapped a five-game losing streak to the Rockies and have won eight of their last 10 overall. Rockies starter Jon Gray left the game with a 2-0 lead and runners on the corners with one out in the seventh. The Phillies put up four runs in their next two at-bats off Jake McGee (0-3). Jeanmar Gomez got four outs for his 24th save.

DODGERS 10, PADRES 6

Yasmani Grandal homered three times to drive in six runs, Justin Turner and Howie Kendrick added solo shots and Los Angeles snapped a three-game skid. The teams combined for 28 hits and seven homers, including two by San Diego's Melvin Upton Jr. Both starters struggled mightily before leaving early. San Diego's Andrew Cashner gave up a career-high eight runs, while Los Angeles' Scott Kazmir labored through a 31-pitch, 27-minute first inning in a game that lasted 3 hours, 45 minutes. Grandal had the first three-homer game of his career against his former team. He singled in the eighth, giving him a

career-high five hits. Pedro Baez (2-2) got the win in relief, allowing one hit in 2 2/3 innings. Cashner (3-7) lasted just 2 2/3 innings, giving up eight hits, including four homers, while striking out two and walking three.

GIANTS 6, DIAMONDBACKS 2

Brandon Crawford drove in three runs and came within a triple of hitting for the cycle and Jeff Samardzija overcame a shaky first inning to get the win for San Francisco. Brandon Belt walked four times and scored for the Giants after earlier in the day being voted by fans to fill the final spot on the NL roster for next week's All-Star Game. Crawford homered, singled, walked and doubled. He hit his ninth home run of the season off Diamondbacks starter Patrick Corbin (4-7) in the second. Jean Segura homered leading off the game for Arizona. Samardzija (9-5) walked three and struck out six in 6 1/3 innings to win for the first time in four starts. The right-hander gave up two runs, both in the first inning. Three relievers completed the seven-hitter. —AP

COLON, SCHERZER, SAUNDERS ADDED TO ALL-STAR ROSTERS

NEW YORK: Bartolo Colon and Max Scherzer are headed to the All-Star Game, picked as replacements for other pitchers originally selected to the National League team. Major League Baseball also announced Friday that Toronto Blue Jays outfielder Michael Saunders and San Francisco Giants first baseman Brandon Belt won the final two All-Star roster spots, elected by fans in online balloting.

"This is a proud moment for me and my family," Saunders said. "Everyone knows that Canada takes care of their own. I'm Canadian through and through. Just to feel that support, the best way I can describe, everyone's been asking me, is I feel loved by this country. To see the support they gave me is very humbling." Saunders joins the American League team, while Belt gets a slot on the NL squad. "Extremely excited, obviously. It's hard to put into words," Belt said. "I just can't believe that I'm an All-Star this year. It's pretty cool, especially when you step back and think about how many fans voted and how many times they voted, how many messages that I got of how their thumbs were numb. It's pretty overwhelming to think about." The 43-year-old Colon was chosen to replace Madison Bumgarner in Tuesday's showcase in San Diego because the Giants ace is scheduled to pitch Sunday against Arizona. A fan favorite with the New York Mets, Colon is 7-4 with a 3.28 ERA. He was picked by his own manager - Terry Collins of the Mets will lead the NL team.

HEFTY RIGHT-HANDER

"It means a lot, especially for someone my age," Colon said through a translator. "It surprised me a lot." In one of the most stunning and charming moments of the season, Colon homered in San Diego in early May, becoming the oldest player to hit his first major league home run.

The hefty right-hander said the All-Star nod was very meaningful to him because he's "in the final stages" of his career. He said he'd like to pitch one more season in the majors if healthy.

"When I asked him if he wanted to go the All-Star Game, he said yes. He didn't say, hey, I need to rest, I'm 43 years old. I'm shot. He said, 'Thank you, I'd like to go.' So he's going to go," Collins said, drawing laughs.

Scherzer will substitute for Washington Nationals teammate Stephen Strasburg, who came off the disabled list this week and won't pitch in the All-Star Game as a precaution. Strasburg, who is from San Diego, plans to attend the game, the Nationals said.

"Max was excited. Never seen a veteran guy as elated as he, to be a part of the All-Star Game," Washington manager Dusty Baker said. "I think he's a good representative to show people what a privilege and an honor it is to go."

Strasburg started Friday night against the New York Mets, his second outing since coming off the DL. He returned from an upper back strain Sunday against Cincinnati. —AP

CROATIA, PUERTO RICO WIN IN OLYMPIC BASKETBALL QUALIFIERS

RIO DE JANEIRO: Italy and Serbia cruised into the championship games of Olympic Qualifying Tournaments on Friday, moving a win away from a place in the basketball field in Rio. Danilo Gallinari of the Denver Nuggets scored 15 points as the Italians beat Mexico 79-54 in Turin. They will face Croatia, which knocked off Greece, in Saturday's final.

Italy hasn't reached the Olympics since winning a silver medal in 2004. Bogdan Bogdanovic had 21 points and eight rebounds, Denver Nuggets center Nikola Jokic added 19 points and eight boards, and Serbia routed the Czech

Republic 96-72. The Serbians, who won a silver medal two years ago in the Basketball World Cup, will host Puerto Rico on Saturday in Belgrade.

The three qualifying tournaments are determining the final three spots in the Olympics. The semifinals in Manila, Philippines, are Saturday, when France meets Turkey and Canada plays New Zealand.

A look at Friday's four games:

TURIN, ITALY
CROATIA 66, GREECE 61

Bojan Bogdanovic of the Brooklyn Nets

scored 20 points and Croatia shut down Greece star Giannis Antetokounmpo in the first semifinal. Dario Saric, a former lottery pick of the Philadelphia 76ers, added 16 points and eight rebounds. Antetokounmpo, the rising Milwaukee Bucks star, was held to nine points. He missed all seven 3-point attempts and finished 3 for 14 from the field.

ITALY 79, MEXICO 54

Nicolo Melli scored 14 points for the Italians, who got 12 from Marco Belinelli, recently traded to the Charlotte Hornets. Italy's victory set up a rematch with

Croatia, which it beat 67-60 in group play. Francisco Cruz scored 20 points for Mexico, which played the tournament without top big man Gustavo Ayon.

BELGRADE, SERBIA
PUERTO RICO 77, LATVIA 70

Renaldo Balkman had a tiebreaking follow shot with 1:08 left as the Puerto Ricans ousted previously unbeaten Latvia.

John Holland scored 15 points and former NBA guard Carlos Arroyo had 14 for Puerto Rico, making a 3-pointer that provided a five-point lead with 35 sec-

onds remaining. Backcourt mate J.J. Barea of the Dallas Mavericks also finished with 14 points. Jannis Timma led Latvia with 16 points.

SERBIA 96, CZECH REPUBLIC 72

Milos Teodosic scored 14 of his 16 points in the third quarter, helping Serbia outscore the Czechs 51-36 in the second half. The star guard added six assists and three steals as Serbia shot nearly 55 percent. Tomas Satoransky had 14 points, seven rebounds and seven assists for the Czech Republic. Jan Vesely chipped in 12 points. —AP

CRUSADERS CRUSH REBELS
85-26 IN 13-TRY ROUT

WELLINGTON: The Canterbury Crusaders produced a Super Rugby 13-try spectacular, including a Johnny McNicholl hat-trick, to thrash an understaffed Melbourne Rebels 85-26 in Christchurch yesterday. The lop-sided encounter kept the seven-time champions one point behind the Waikato Chiefs who also collected maximum points when they whipped the Queensland Reds 50-5 on Friday and ensured the New Zealand conference will go down to the wire.

Had Richie Mo'unga been at his kicking best the Crusaders would have been nudging 50 points by half-time as they scored seven tries in the first 40 minutes to turn with a 43-7 lead over the injury hit Rebels. They added a further six tries in the second half and were threatening competition records until their relentless scoring pace tapered off in the final quarter.

The Crusaders set the record for the highest score in Super Rugby when they beat the NSW Waratahs 96-19 in 2002. They scored a record 14 tries in that match which was equalled by the Central Cheetahs earlier this year when they beat the Sunwolves 92-17. Stung by their loss to the Chiefs last week, and losing their place at the top of the ladder, the Crusaders were determined to make amends as they thrived on audacious offloads against a brittle defence.

Sam Whitelock, in his 100th Super game and captaining the side in the absence of

Kieran Read, set the tone when he scored the opening try after 90 seconds.

"We weren't happy after last week and we wanted to start well and the boys did that, spot on," Whitelock said.

Although the Rebels ranks were decimated by injury and flanker Colby Fainga'a was converted into a back to plug a hole in the second half, captain Nic Stirzaker made no excuses.

"It was a pretty rotten start, a charge down and a try early and then it was tough to stop the rot once it set in. We were pretty dreadful and they were exceptional," he said. In addition to McNicholl's triple, Ryan Crotty and Codie Taylor both scored two tries, while Whitelock, Scott Barrett, Alex Hodgman, Nemani Nadolo, Pete Samu and Matt Todd also crossed the line.

Mo'unga landed seven conversions and Nadolo two. scored the Rebels only try in the first half with Reece Hodge, Culum Retallick and Sefa Naivalu scoring after the break. Jack Debraczni landed three conversions.

The Crusaders finish off the regular season next Saturday hosting the Wellington Hurricanes in a rare afternoon match and just ahead of the Chiefs' clash in Dunedin against the defending champion Otago Highlanders.

The Rebels, who are well out of contention in the Australian conference, play the Queensland Reds on Friday. —AFP

CLASSICS TO BLAME FOR
BELGIUM'S TOUR DROUGHT

LAC DE PAVOLLE: Only the host nation has produced more Tour de France winners than Belgium but the northern neighbour has now gone 40 years without victory.

Eddy Merckx is considered by many to be the greatest cyclist of all time and his mark of five Tour victories has been matched only by Frenchmen Bernard Hinault and Jacques Anquetil.

Yet since Merckx claimed his fifth crown in 1974, only Lucien Van Impe, two years later, has managed to bring Tour glory to Belgium. Ten different Belgians have shared 18 Tour wins between them and yet it is decades since one last looked capable of claiming the greatest prize in cycling. Jurgen Van den Broeck finished third in 2010 and fourth in 2012, but that doesn't tell the full story.

He originally came fifth in 2010 but two riders who finished above him—Alberto Contador and Denis Menchov—were subsequently banned for doping and stripped of their results.

In 2012, Van den Broeck finished more than 10 minutes behind Bradley Wiggins, whose nearest challenger was his own team-mate Chris Froome, while Vincenzo Nibali briefly looked capable of threatening, until Wiggins crushed him in the time-trials. As Greg Van Avermaet pulled on the coveted yellow jersey at the end of Wednesday's fifth stage, he did so knowing he had no chance of holding it all the way to Paris. He battled against the odds to keep it for three days but said it would be "impossible" to do so after yesterday's eighth stage with four categorised climbs.

And asked why no Belgian has won the race for 40 years, he said it was due to the preferred fare in his country—one-day classics. "The most important thing is that we're focused on classics," said the 31-year-

old. "Classics in Belgium are so big that everybody is watching this." Anyone who's been on the route of the Tour of Flanders would attest to that — it is THE sporting appointment of the year in Belgium.

'HARD TO DEVELOP'

What makes a good classics rider is not the same as the proficiency needed to win a Grand Tour.

Classics riders tend to be big and powerful, particularly those who ride the cobbles, while a Tour winner needs to be a good climber. Good climbers will struggle to make their mark in the junior ranks in Belgium, where there are no races suited to their capabilities, consequently harming their chances of ever making a career in cycling. "Firstly, we don't have big mountains in Belgium," added Van Avermaet. "If you do a lot of classics racing when you're young, you race like a sprinter."

"It's hard to develop like a climber—if you lose a lot of races, it's also hard to follow the peloton, to stay motivated or to become a professional. "We train technically on cobbles but we're not training enough on climbing."

"Also we're not supported from our country." The two biggest Belgian stars of recent years were Tom Boonen, a cobbled classics specialist, and Philippe Gilbert, who excelled in the Ardennes Classics.

But Van Avermaet believes things will change in Belgium, bit by bit. "We're trying now a little bit more to support climbers and light guys to be a bit better, to have confidence and to come to the Tour and win the Tour," he added. Who that might be remains to be seen, but there is no-one on the horizon for the moment, meaning Van Avermaet need simply enjoy his time in yellow while it lasts. —AFP



BAGNERES-DE-LUCHON: Britain's Chris Froome, wearing the overall leader's yellow jersey, celebrates on the podium after the eighth stage of the Tour de France cycling race over 184 kilometers (114.3 miles) with start in Pau and finish in Bagneres-de-Luchon, France, yesterday. — AP

FROOME SEIZES YELLOW
JERSEY WITH SOLO WIN

BAGNERES-DE-LUCHON: Reigning champion Chris Froome gave a demonstration of his versatility in riding away on a fast descent to take the yellow jersey at the Tour de France yesterday. Renowned for his blistering attacks on steep climbs, the Briton stunned his Tour rivals by going clear on a speedy descent to the finish of the 184km eighth stage from Pau to Bagneres de Luchon in the Pyrenees. He caught everyone by surprise, commentators and fans included, with a curious technique where he slipped off his saddle and onto the bike's central bar to gain aerodynamic benefits, yet still managing to pedal furiously. No-one in a select group of 13 challengers reacted quickly enough and Froome opened up a 13 second gap by the finish. Ireland's Dan Martin won the sprint for second from Joaquim Rodriguez of Spain. Froome now leads by 16sec overall from young Briton Adam Yates and Rodriguez, while previous yellow jersey holder Greg Van Avermaet finished a long way back.

"It wasn't really planned. I thought I'd give it a try in the downhill as the few tries on the climb didn't work out," said Sky leader Froome. "They (his rivals) were sticking to us so I decided to give it a go in the descent. It was cool."

"Bike racing is just fun, but maybe I spent a little bit too much energy—tomorrow is a hard stage but I take every second I can." Froome's main rival Nairo Quintana finished the stage in 13th place on the same time as Martin and is now sixth overall at 23-seconds. Team manager Dave Brailsford praised Froome's ingenuity and said this proved Sky aren't the boring team they're often made out to be. "Sometimes we're too predictable so today we decided to change things a bit," he said.

"We mixed the tactics and did something unexpected. Well done Chris! "It's true that on the descent, as an Englishman, I had my heart in my mouth, but it worked."

"Great credit to Chris, he's a fighter, he takes chances, he's a real racer." It was a bad day for Spanish two-time former winner Alberto Contador, who's still struggling with injuries he suffered in a crash on the opening stage. He finished 1:41 behind Froome and is now more than 3min behind in the overall standings.

BREAKAWAY IMPOSSIBLE

With an incredible 51km covered in the first hour of racing it was impossible for a breakaway to form. But once the climb of the monstrous Tourmalet began—the first of four categorised climbs—Frenchman Thibaut Pinot and Rafal Majka of Poland finally got away before German time-trialler Tony Martin breached up to the two climbers. Froome's Sky were setting the pace at the front of the peloton and Van Avermaet quickly found himself in a group of stragglers going rapidly backwards and seeing the yellow jersey slipping off his shoulders. The Tourmalet took its toll with 2014 champion Vincenzo Nibali also dropped and Dane Michael Morkov, who'd been struggling ever since crashing on the opening stage, being forced to abandon, the first rider to quit the Tour this year at an unprecedentedly late stage.

The leading trio were brought back 43km from the end, on the penultimate climb as Quintana's Movistar and Sky took turns setting a fierce tempo at the front of the peloton.

When the Sky-led peloton reached the final climb, there were only 30 riders left in the lead group. Finally, with 17km left, less than 2km from the climb's summit, Froome put in a dig,

followed by Martin as the peloton broke up with few riders able to hang on.

Frenchman Romain Bardet and Quintana both accelerated but neither showed any great commitment to attack.

A group of just 14 riders went over the top together with 16km to ride and Froome imme-

diately darted clear on the descent. The chasers seemed to look to each other for direction and the Briton was away to win a fifth stage in eight for his nation. Stephen Cummings won Friday's stage while Mark Cavendish has a hat-trick of sprint stage victories. —AFP

BUTTON NEEDS A
COMPETITIVE CAR
TO STAY IN F1

SILVERSTONE: Britain's Jenson Button, the most experienced driver on the Formula One starting grid, says he needs a competitive car if he is to stay in the sport for an 18th season.

The 2009 world champion's future at Honda-powered McLaren, who have not won a race since his last victory in 2012, is up in the air beyond this year but he has been linked with a possible return to Williams.

"If I am racing next year, I will only be racing if I am in a car that is competitive," the 36-year-old told British reporters at his home grand prix. Button, whose place at McLaren looks likely to be taken by Belgian Stoffel Vandoorne, has never finished on the podium at Silverstone in 16 attempts and does not expect to be a contender today.

McLaren are on a long road back after a difficult switch from Mercedes to Honda power units. "I have enjoyed the journey the last year and a half, but there is a point where you feel you have done enough and you can't give any more to the project to help it move forward," said Button.

"Hopefully, a little further into this season, we will see where we are and hopefully it will

be a good place to be, or somewhere else is a good place to be, and I can challenge for podiums or victories and I will stay."

"I only want to be in F1 next year if I feel it is going to be competitive and enjoyable. It is my decision whether I want to stay in F1 or do something else. I won't walk away if I'm competitive." Button said any decision would not be about money and he would not drive half-heartedly. He finished sixth in last weekend's Austrian Grand Prix after starting in third place following grid penalties to Mercedes' championship leader Nico Rosberg and Ferrari's Sebastian Vettel.

Williams, who have Mercedes engines, have had a podium finish this season with Finland's Valtteri Bottas in Canada but have slipped down the championship standings from third to fourth.

Brazilian Felipe Massa is his other driver and the one whose future at the team is uncertain. The top three teams—Mercedes, Ferrari and Red Bull—look certain to retain their current lineups for 2017 with the latter two already confirming their drivers and only Rosberg yet to agree an extension. — Reuters



BAGNERES-DE-LUCHON: (From left) Belgium's Thomas De Gendt, wearing the best climber's polka dot jersey, Belgium's Greg Van Avermaet, wearing the overall leader's yellow jersey and Great Britain's Mark Cavendish, wearing the best sprinter's green jersey wait prior to the start of the 184 km eighth stage of the 103rd edition of the Tour de France cycling race yesterday between Pau and Bagneres-de-Luchon. — AFP



SILVERSTONE: McLaren Honda's British driver Jenson Button sits in his car as he waits to leave the pits during the third practice session during at Silverstone motor racing circuit in Silverstone, central England, yesterday, ahead of tomorrow's British Formula One Grand Prix. — AFP

NFL HALL OF FAMER PAUL HORNUNG SUES HELMET MAKER RIDDELL

CHICAGO: Pro Football Hall of Famer and former Heisman Trophy winner Paul Hornung sued equipment manufacturer Riddell Inc. on Thursday, saying football helmets that he wore during his professional career in the 1950s and '60s failed to protect him from brain injury.

Attorneys for the 80-year-old Hornung filed the civil lawsuit in Cook County Circuit Court in Chicago, naming the Rosemont-based company as the defendant. It seeks unspecified damages. Hornung suffered multiple concussions as a running back for the

Green Bay Packers and has been diagnosed with dementia, the lawsuit says. It said that the neurodegenerative disease has been linked to repetitive head trauma.

Concussion lawsuits from athletes have become more common in recent years amid growing awareness about the long-term consequences of repeated blows to the head and Riddell is also fighting litigation elsewhere. But suits from athletes whose playing days were as far back as the 1950s are rare.

Riddell began producing helmets out of plastic in 1939, touting them as

safer alternatives to ones - more common at the time - fashioned from leather, according to the eight-page filing. Hornung, it says, wore a leather helmet when he played for Notre Dame in college but switched to the Riddell-made plastic helmets in the NFL.

Erin Griffin, a spokeswoman for Riddell, declined comment in an email, saying, "It's our policy not to comment on pending litigation." Hornung won the Heisman in 1956 while at Notre Dame, where he played quarterback. The Packers selected him as the No. 1 overall draft pick a year later. He was

the NFL MVP in 1962 and he played on four championship teams (1961, '62, '65 and '66). One of Hornung's lawyers said Riddell knew enough about the perils of concussions more than five decades ago to warn players. "Studies dating back to the 19th century linked head trauma to permanent brain damage, but Riddell failed to communicate the danger to Mr. Hornung," the attorney, William T. Gibbs, said in a written statement. Hornung's wife, Angela Hornung, is also named as a plaintiff in the suit, which says she "suffered and will continue to suffer" the loss of her hus-

band's affection and companionship as a result of his injuries.

Riddell has successfully fought some litigation. A Los Angeles jury in 2014 found that Riddell wasn't liable for the severe brain injury of a high school football player who suffered a helmet-to-helmet hit during a game.

Riddell, which provides helmets to every level of football - from the pros to Pop Warner - has said publicly previously that it has devoted enormous resources to developing equipment that can reduce the risk of a devastating head injury.—AP



Simone Biles

BILES ON ROAD TO RIO, DOUGLAS IN TROUBLE

SAN JOSE: Simone Biles is well on the road to the Rio Games but Olympic champion Gabby Douglas's journey is in danger after a dramatic opening round of the US Olympic gymnastics trials on Friday. Biles, the three-time all-around world champion unbeaten in major competitions since 2013, looks poised to keep her winning streak intact posting a leading score of 61.850, a full point clear of her nearest challenger Lauren Hernandez heading into Sunday's second round.

A USA Gymnastics selection committee will announce the five member Rio squad Sunday evening.

With 14 women battling for five spots, Douglas, the London Games all-around gold medalist, suddenly finds herself in an Olympic-sized hole sitting seventh after a bumpy night that closed with a fall off the beam. "I'm just going to take this and not get down and fight for every little thing and just not give up," a clearly shaken Douglas told reporters. "I just have to tell myself that it's not over until it's over."

"I am definitely going to recover because that is what I do, I'm a fighter."

Douglas has developed a well-earned reputation of delivering when it matters most and the stakes could not be higher on Sunday when she will need to produce a bounce-back performance and show

women's coach Martha Karolyi she deserves a ticket to Rio.

Certainly Karolyi did not appear ready to throw in the towel on Douglas, offering the London Games darling a vote of confidence.

"I feel like she will have a good presence tomorrow," said Karolyi. "I think her training wasn't so perfect leading up to today and I think in comparison to how she trained she competed well until the last event."

"She will have to perform tomorrow." Even on a night when she was not firing on all cylinders, Biles was the clear class of a quality field recording the best score on the floor and vault, second on the beam and fourth on the uneven bars to go top the rankings. Sixteen-year-old Hernandez, helped by the top mark on the beam, scored 60.850 while London gold medalist Aly Raisman sits third on 59.950 followed by MyKayla Skinner and Ragan Smith. "It's hard to control the adrenaline and bring it back down because I don't think any of besides Gabby and Aly are used to that," said Biles, about competing in front of boisterous capacity crowd of 17,904 at the SAP Center. "I would sit on the side and almost feel tired. It would be like I did a routine but I hadn't started it. "Tomorrow we still have training and hopefully we can perform better in day two." — Reuters

BURK CALLS FOR US WOMEN'S OPEN TO LEAVE TRUMP NATIONAL

NEW JERSEY: Martha Burk is back in golf, encouraging people to join a protest over the US Women's Open being held next year at Trump National in New Jersey.

She made the call for supporters in a blog for The Huffington Post on Friday. Burk rose to prominence in 2002 when she challenged Augusta National to end its discrimination by inviting a female member, suggesting it could become a problem at the Masters. The club chairman, Hootie Johnson, sent her a scathing reply that the club might one day have female members, but not "at the point of a bayonet."

Augusta National didn't budge in the wake of enormous pressure from Burk and the media, even going so far as to go commercial-free for the 2003 Masters. Burk's protest fizzled in a grassy lot. Nine years later, the club added its first two women.

Burk remains with the National Council of Women's Organizations as the director of its corporate accountability project. The USGA, PGA Tour, LPGA and PGA of America released a joint statement last August to distance themselves from Donald Trump's explosive comments about Mexican immigrants when he announced his campaign for president.

The PGA of America canceled its Grand Slam of Golf exhibition at Trump National in Los Angeles. The presumptive GOP nominee has golf courses in New Jersey and outside Washington that are to be used for the US Women's Open next year, the PGA Championship and the Senior PGA Championship.

"Seems the United States Golf Association, no stranger to hypocrisy, refuses to move next year's U.S. Women's Open

from the Trump-owned Bedminster club, even though the USGA issued a public statement condemning Trump's racist views after his 'Mexican rapist' rant when he announced his candidacy," Burk wrote.

Burk referenced the Augusta National protest and said the USGA "ignored its prohibition against holding events at clubs that discriminate." However, the USGA has no standing over players at the Masters. It runs 13 championships, 10 of them restricted to amateurs.

Burk said the USGA was putting "profit over principle," and that the LPGA also was being silent on the decision.

USGA spokeswoman Janeen Driscoll said the organization is focused on "conducting the best championship we can for the players, the spectators, the fans and the volunteers, both this year and a year from now." She also noted that Bedminster is in compliance with the USGA's anti-discriminatory member policy.

"During his presidential campaign, Mr. Trump has made some remarks that are at odds with our belief that golf should be welcoming and inclusive for all. We have reiterated that we do not share his views, and that is still true," she said in an email.

Burk concluded her blog by posting a link to a petition to force the USGA to play next year's Women's Open somewhere else. American golfer Gerina Pillar said she preferred to stay out of the debate.

"If it's a good course, it's a good course," she said from this year's US Women's Open. "I don't really see getting into politics. It's just one of those things where if it's a good course and they see it fit to host an event there, I think that that's OK." —AP

PARK SURGES AHEAD AT US WOMEN'S OPEN

CALIFORNIA: South Korea's Park Sung-hyun charged to a two-shot lead after the second round of the US Women's Open on Friday with the ominous figure of world number one Lydia Ko in hot pursuit. Park, who has three wins on the Korean Tour and is playing her first season on the LPGA circuit, birdied seven of her first 16 holes on the way to a sparkling six-under-par 66 at CordeValle Golf Club in San Martin, California. Though she bogeyed her penultimate hole, the par-four 17th, her eight-under total of 136 put her two strokes clear of fellow Koreans Amy Yang (71) and first-round leader Lee Mirim who fell with a two-over-par 74.

New Zealander Ko, seeking her third major title at the age of 19, followed her opening 73 with a seven-birdie 66 to surge up the leaderboard, finishing the day just three shots off the pace.

"I didn't start off very well, missing the fairway on one," Ko, who began her round with a bogey and ended it with a four-foot putt for birdie at the last, told reporters. "But my birdie on three kind of turned the round around and making the string of (four consecutive) birdies definitely helped."

"I'm playing on the Tour that I've always dreamt of playing, and this is the biggest championship in the US" said Ko, who won her first major title at last year's Evian Championship before adding a second at the ANA Inspiration in April. "There's a lot of golf to be played, so I don't really want to get ahead of myself."

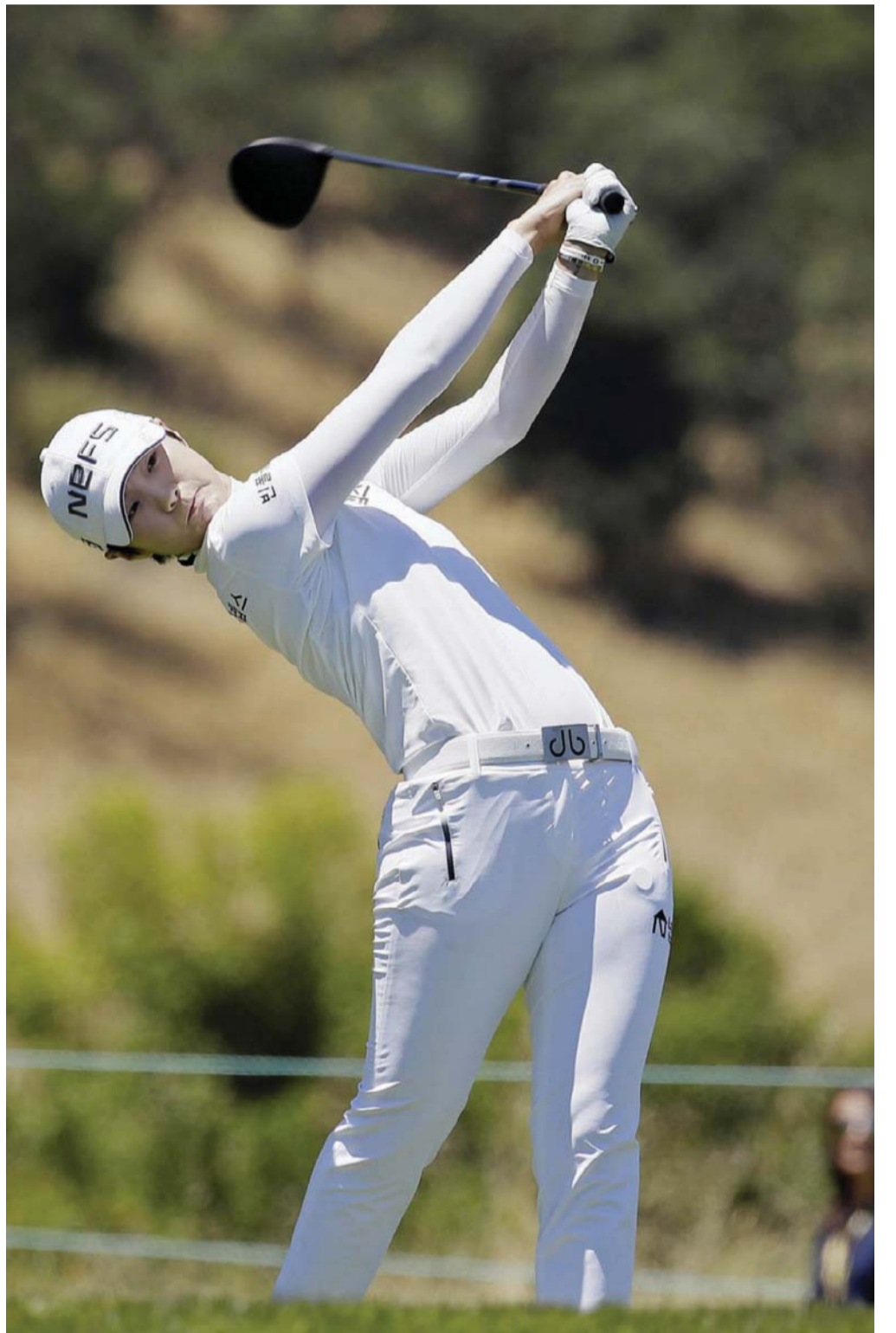
Ko's two playing competitors in a marquee group, Canadian world number two Brooke Henderson (71) and fourth-ranked American Lexi Thompson (73), each ended the day at three-over to narrowly make the cut.

Lee had vaulted to a three-stroke advantage after a 64 Thursday morning, but on Friday she got the tougher afternoon draw, as the course firmed and the wind picked up, and endured a roller-coaster round that featured four birdies, four bogeys and a double bogey.

Korean Park, who made her LPGA Tour debut at the Founders Cup in March, said she had benefited from a strategy of simply enjoying herself on the course.

"Coming to the tournament, I didn't even think about winning because this is the first time for me," she said of her maiden US Women's Open.

"I'm trying to enjoy this tournament. That's why I am comfortable, don't even think about the winning." — Reuters



CALIFORNIA: Sung Hyun Park, of South Korea, hits from the 18th tee during the second round of the US Women's Open golf tournament at CordeValle, Friday, in San Martin, Calif. — AP

RUSSIAN SWIMMER SIMONOVA GETS FOUR-YEAR DOPING BAN

MOSCOW: Russian breaststroke swimmer Vitalina Simonova has been suspended for four years after testing positive for a banned substance, the International Swimming Federation (FINA) has announced.

The test result related to an out of competition sample the 23-year-old gave on June 29, 2015 during a training camp in Naoussa, Greece, where testosterone was found.

The ban is backdated and runs until June 28, 2019, FINA said in a statement on its official website (www.fina.org). The Russian won bronze at the 2014 European Championships in the medley relay and claimed silver at the 2013 European short course championships in the 200 metres breaststroke. Simonova, who was not selected to compete at this year's Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, intends to appeal to the Court

of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) against the suspension. "The banned substance was in a dietary supplement, but it was not indicated on the packaging," Simonova told the R-Sport news agency. "I am upset that our arguments have not been listened to, but I intend to carry on and will look to defend myself at the Court of Arbitration for Sport. I have no intention of retiring," she added. —Reuters



Vitalina Simonova

MARQUES AIMING TO BE BRAZIL'S BOND GIRL IN MODERN PENTATHLON

RIO DE JANEIRO: There are few sports that owe their origins to the ancient equivalent of a Bond movie - but modern pentathlon is one of them. It was created by French baron Pierre de Coubertin, the founder of the modern Olympic movement, and combines all of the aspects of traditional combat.

The basic premise is of a soldier trapped in a castle on a lake. He must fence his way out before swimming to the shore, riding an unfamiliar horse out of the village and running through a wood shooting at enemies.

Modern pentathlon was first held at the 1912 Olympic Games and an event for women was added in 2000. It consists of fencing, swimming, show jumping, shooting and running.

ONE TO WATCH

Cheered on by a home crowd, Brazilian Yane Marques will be bidding to improve on the bronze medal she won four years ago. Modern pentathlon was a little known discipline in Brazil when Marques, who was born in a small town in the Brazilian northeast, took it

up in 2003, becoming national champion just a year later.

But a series of titles, including gold at the 2007 Pan American Games and becoming the first Olympic medal winner in modern pentathlon in the entire Southern Hemisphere has made the country sit up and take note.

Marques also won gold at the 2015 Pan American Games and silver at the 2013 world championships, where she lost out to Olympic gold medalist Laura Asadauskaitė.

"There are advantages: knowing the facilities, having a huge crowd behind me, my family being able to see me race," the 32-year-old Marques said. "Aside from all this though, there is a very great pressure."

The 32-year-old again faces stiff competition, with the top seven from London all returning. Asadauskaitė of Lithuania will be favorite, along with Germany's Lena Schöneborn, the 2008 Olympic champion and 2015 World champion.

RULE CHANGES

The core sport remains largely the

same since London 2012, but with the addition of a fencing bonus round, which sees the athletes compete in a one-on-one format on a single piste after the traditional round robin in a bid to up their score.

The combined event has also been slightly altered to involve four 800m laps of running, instead of 1000m, each still prefaced by laser shooting at five targets, with the intention of restoring more weight to the shooting element.

The introduction of the combined event was one of two dramatic changes between Beijing

2008 and London, with the other being the replacement of air pistols with laser ones, for safety reasons.

FAMILY AFFAIRS

For the first time in modern pentathlon history, two sisters will compete in the same Games. It will be a third successive Olympics for 24-year-old American Margaux Isaksen, who was fourth in London, just two seconds away from a medal, and a first for younger sister Isabella, 22.

"To be able to compete together with your sister, there is nothing more special," Margaux said. "I think this could be the most special Olympics just in that respect." There could also be sibling rivalry on the men's team. Nathan Schrimsher was the first American athlete in any sport to qualify for the Rio Games and younger brother Lucas is his reserve teammate.

Sydney siblings Max and Chloe Esposito will also both be competing in the modern pentathlon and the family link doesn't stop there.

Right alongside them will be their father and coach, Daniel Esposito, who represented Australia in the sport in the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics and also qualified for the 1988 Seoul Olympics but had to pull out due to injury.

Chloe, 23, finished a surprise seventh in London and is now targeting a first medal in modern pentathlon for Australia. It is 18-year-old Max's first Olympic Games.

SKULDUGGERY

One of the biggest scandals in

Olympic history took place in modern pentathlon during the 1976 Games in Montreal.

Soviet athlete Boris Onischenko was one of the stars of the discipline. He had helped his country win the team event in 1972, where he was also an individual silver-medallist, and he won the world championship three times.

At the age of 38, Onischenko was expected to bow out of his last Olympics with a medal.

However, during the fencing section it was discovered that he had wired his epee so that he could trigger the electronic scoring system with his hand and register a hit at will. Onischenko was disqualified and escorted from the athletes' village by Soviet officials that very night.

Two months later it was reported that Onischenko had been called before Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev for a personal scolding, dismissed from the Red Army, fined 5,000 rubles, stripped of all his sporting honors, and was working as a taxi driver in Kiev. — AP

IN-FORM ALI BOOSTS PAKISTAN

LONDON: Azhar Ali's fine form with the bat gave Pakistan the perfect boost ahead of the first Test with England next week as he stroked his second successive century in their tour match with Sussex on Friday.

Ali, who made an unbeaten 101 in the second innings of their game with Somerset earlier this week, hit a fine 145 — admittedly against an under-strength second-division county side attack as the tourists finished the first day on 363 for five.

Veterans Younis Khan and Misbah-ul-Haq made half centuries with Sussex thankful that debutant pace bowler Jofra Archer didn't suffer from nerves as he returned impressive figures of four for 49.

Indeed the 21-year-old West Indian had the Pakistanis in trouble early on with a

two-wicket blast that saw them reduced to 49-2. But a third wicket stand of 125 between Ali and Younis turned the match back in Pakistan's favour until Younis fell on 59 to a catch by Ajmal Shahzad off the bowling of Danny Briggs. Misbah quickly replaced his team-mate and kept Pakistan on track, reaching 221 for three at tea, before he became another victim of Archer when he trapped him lbw on 68. Ali too was to fall before stumps, Archer having him caught by Ben Brown.

Score summary after first day of Pakistan tour match with Sussex.

At Home

Pakistan 363-5 (Azhar Ali 145, Misbah-ul-Haq 68, Younis Khan 59, J C Archer 4-49) v Sussex. — AFP

HIGH-JUMPER INIKA MCPHERSON STANDS OUT WITH LOOK, TALENT

EUGENE: Calling Inika McPherson the most unlikely of Olympians wouldn't be much of a stretch. She's 5-foot-4 and competes in the high jump - a discipline usually dominated by taller women. McPherson is also only a few months removed from a 21-month suspension after testing positive for cocaine. And yet, the 29-year-old will be on the US team in Rio de Janeiro - and sure to stand out, thanks to her blue-striped hair, a pair of red lips tattooed on the side of her face and a made-for-the-movies story that included washing dishes to make ends meet while she was waiting for the drug ban to elapse.

"I think everyone should march to their own beat, just really live life. But I came to the point where I was harming myself and my dreams," said McPherson, who finished third at track and field trials by leaping 6-4 - or one foot higher than she stands.

That positive test was jarring - to her and her family. Her life at that point was moving "too fast," she explained.

McPherson tested positive after an in-competition sample she provided on June 29, 2014, at the USA championships in Sacramento, California. Her suspension was announced that December, with the ban made retroactive to July 27, 2014. It gave her a chance to return in time for trials.

"It was a surprise to me. I was like, 'What is going on? No way this can be happening,'" said McPherson, who lives and trains in Houston. "It was something that happened that I really learned from."

DIFFERENT ROUTE

Don't ever put yourself in that position or in that environment." The toughest part was having a conversation with her mom - that she didn't have a drug problem, that she was just as perplexed.

"My mom was concerned at the beginning, 'What's going on in your life that you would test for that?'" McPherson explained. "But we sat down and talked. 'Not to put it on the people I was around, but I turned into one of those people. I was hanging out with the wrong crew, going a different route. I'm thankful for that whole experience, because I can share that so others won't have to go through that.'"

It was painful to be away from a sport she fell in love with in fourth grade, after a gym teacher set up a makeshift high jump. They would run into the gym from the doorway and bound over the bar.

She's always been good, real good. She went to the University of California, where she finished fourth at NCAA indoor championships as a senior. Everything was progressing on an upward trajectory - made

the US team for 2011 worlds, US indoor runner-up in 2012, outdoor runner-up in '13 and outdoor champion in '14. Then, she tested positive for benzoylconine, a metabolite of cocaine.

"It was more, 'what's going to happen now?'" she said. McPherson worked at a temp agency and frequently drew assignments at the George R. Brown Convention Center in downtown Houston as a dish washer. Sometimes, people who didn't know her would ask: What do you want to do one day?

Her answer never wavered, even if it drew some raised eyebrows: Make the Olympic team. "I never took my eye off the focus or the dream of what I wanted to accomplish," McPherson said.

It was hard for her and her coach, Patrick Pyle, to always find a training facility. So they improvised in a gym at 24-Hour Fitness, simulating the high jump by running up to the basketball rim and trying to grab it. Turns out, McPherson has such hops she can actually dunk a tennis ball.

"We chose to go those unorthodox routes to keep things very fresh," Pyle explained. "That way you didn't have the stress and the everyday routine of being at the track."

Whatever they were doing certainly worked. McPherson finished third behind 32-year-old Chaunte Lowe and 18-year-old Vashli Cunningham, the daughter of long-time NFL quarterback Randall Cunningham. McPherson had even more pressure because, being away so long, she didn't have the Olympic qualifying standard of 6-4. She had to hit that at trials to secure her spot.

NOT A PROBLEM

"I wasn't concerned at all, because I had (reached the standard) a couple of times before I got here," McPherson said. "I was going to get it." McPherson is hardly your average height for a high jumper. Consider: Lowe is 5-9 and Cunningham 6-1.

"I have to work a little harder than the taller jumpers," she said, laughing. "It's all good." One thing's for sure: She stands out. She dyes her hair whatever color strikes her and went with blue for the trials because, "I looked around and saw a lot of blue."

She also has more than 30 tattoos, including the eye-catching lips ink. She said it represents how a mother or a grandmother will kiss you on the cheek. Soon, she wants to add another tattoo - the Olympic rings.

Her family also is scrambling to get tickets to Rio. They don't want to miss this show. — AP



Aries Merritt

ARIES MERRITT TRIES TO MAKE OLYMPIC TEAM WITH NEW KIDNEY

EUGENE: Hurdler Aries Merritt captured a bronze medal at worlds last August with his kidneys operating at barely 10 percent. No wonder he's beaming at the prospect of competing at full health again.

The chance to defend his Olympic title in the 110-meter hurdles in Rio is a very real possibility. All that's standing in his way is a top-three finish at US Track and Field Trials this weekend. Doctors didn't think Merritt would be ready in time after receiving a new kidney from his sister 10 months ago. They grew even less optimistic when he developed complications that resulted in another surgery - this one to place the kidney deeper into his abdomen.

What the doctors didn't factor in was Merritt's passion for this sport, and his desire for an Olympic repeat. "If I was to win, it would be ugly - I'd be on the track crying somewhere, because of all the pain, all the suffering, all the depression I went through to get to this point," said the 30-year-old Merritt, who's the world record holder in the hurdles.

He heads into Friday's first round of Olympic trials in good shape. But he's not exactly race sharp. He suffered a groin injury recently that curtailed his training. He's only raced a handful of times heading into trials.

"It's going to take focus. It's going to take determination and grit," the 2012 Olympic gold medalist said. Nobody would question him in either of those categories.

Merritt kept his ailment secret until just before worlds last August: He was suffering from a rare genetic disorder that was diagnosed in

2013. For years, it turns out, his kidneys had been faltering, to the point where he ran the final at worlds on Aug. 28 at about eight pounds under his normal weight and with his kidneys barely functioning.

In the final, he wound up third, just 0.01 seconds behind Hansle Parchment of Jamaica for second. Sergey Shubenkov of Russia captured gold. He called it an even more fulfilling medal than his Olympic gold.

A few days later he flew home to Phoenix and was on the operating table. His sister, LaToya Hubbard, is a big part of this, too - donating one of her kidneys. "One thing about Aries, when he puts his mind to it, he can do anything," said his sister, who will be at the trials. "He's determined to go back and regain his title so that when he leaves the sport, it's his." Still, it was a long road to recovery. "After surgery, my belly button was literally to the far right of my stomach. It wasn't in the right spot," Merritt said. "It's a year before everything settles in its normal place." As he dealt with his failing kidneys, there were some bleak days for Merritt, like when doctors said he might not run again. "Elite athletes don't usually go through kidney transplants," Merritt said. "(Doctors) deal with regular people. I'm not saying I'm not regular. I'm above the average on a fitness level. They're just giving me the textbook advice they'd give anyone else, not knowing what I can or my physical limits."

For a while, it hurt to hurdle. His trail leg kept hitting him in the side of the incision. "I couldn't do (indoors) because it was too painful at the time," Merritt explained. "My body wasn't ready

to hit that part of my scar repeatedly. My body is used to my trail leg. Everything should be fine."

Maybe so, but then there's this - concern over the mosquito-borne Zika virus should he be on the team for Rio. He's more susceptible to infection. "If I make it, I'm going," Merritt said. "It's really important to live that Olympic dream and try to achieve that Olympic goal of trying to win that gold medal and showing everyone around the world your story and your struggle."

A few other things to watch out at trials: **JAGER-MASTER:** Four-time national champion Evan Jager is a heavy favorite in the final of the 3,000-meter steeplechase. He won his first-round heat.

HURDLES: Brianna Rollins had the fastest time in the prelims of the 100-meter hurdles, just ahead of Keni Harrison, the hurdler who broke Rollins' American record in May.

SUHR THING: Defending Olympic champion Jenn Suhr and the rest of the pole vaulters begin qualifying. The 34-year-old is the big favorite among a youthful group that includes Sandi Morris, who turns 24 on Friday, and 19-year Alexis Weeks, who won an NCAA title for Arkansas at Hayward Field in June.

LET'S DISCUS: Mason Finley finished with the top throw in qualifying. Don't discount Lance Brooks, the 2012 Olympian who works construction to earn extra money for training.

SPRINT SERVICE: LaShawn Merritt continues his quest to make the Rio team in the 200 with a semifinal heat. He's already qualified in the 400. Not to be outdone, 400-meter trials champ Allyson Felix starts qualifying in the 200. — AP

RAIN, TEARS AND TEENS WITH OLYMPIC TRACK SPOTS ON THE LINE

EUGENE: The defending Olympic pole vault champion warmed up, then cooled down, then ran through the whole process again, as the driving rain pelted the field Friday at US Olympic Trials.

"The more time you have to think, the more you're like, 'Wow. This is how bad things happen,'" Jenn Suhr said. Suhr escaped the badness. Several other big-name athletes weren't as lucky on a rain-drenched afternoon at Hayward Field. On a day that saw LaShawn Merritt lower his world-best mark at 200 meters to 19.74 seconds in a semifinal heat, no less - and two high-school kids, Michael Norman and Noah Lyles, earn spots in the final, there was just as much buzz about those whose chances got washed away in the rain.

First among them was hurdler Dawn Harper-Nelson, whose run at a third Olympic medal came to a stunning halt in 100-meter semifinals, when she finished third - not good enough to

make the eight-woman final.

"Tears are going to come," she said. "Right now, I'm just in shock." Later, after the rain had stopped but the track was still slick, American record-holder Keni

Harrison stumbled to a sixth-place finish and a spot on the couch next month. Brianna Rollins, the 2013 worlds gold medalist, won in 12.34 seconds, a comfortable .16 ahead of Kristi Castlin, who was considered a bigger threat four years ago at trials. Harrison was supposed to be the woman to beat this year.

"It happened so fast," she said, clearly holding back tears. "I'll have to watch film. It's unfortunate, because my season was going so well. But this stuff happens."

It also happened to Shamier Little. The worlds silver medalist in 400-meter hurdles didn't make it out of her semifinal heat. Allyson Felix took to the track well before the rain hit, and coasted through her 200-meter qualifying heat in 22.93

seconds. It was her first race in nearly a year at her favorite distance. She said "nothing's really changed" with her aching right ankle, despite four days of rest. — AP



Jenn Suhr



Inika McPherson

COLEMAN TO CALL TIME ON WALES JOB AFTER 2018 WORLD CUP

CARDIFF: Chris Coleman, basking in the success of Wales's run to the Euro 2016 semi-finals, said Friday the upcoming 2018 World Cup campaign will be his last as manager.

The 46-year-old, who took Wales to their first finals since the 1958 World Cup and then oversaw a superb campaign only ended on Wednesday by a Cristiano

Ronaldo-inspired Portugal, said he would have been in the job long enough.

"I am sure this will be my last campaign whether we qualify or not (for Russia)," said Coleman, whose contract runs to the end of the next World Cup, with his team playing their first qualifier at home to Moldova on September 5.

Wales's success has seen Coleman linked with a return to club management, but he dismissed that happening any time soon. "That will be six or seven years in the job, which is a long time. So I think this will be my last hit at it so I will give it my best shot, but I would not consider going anywhere else," he said.

"I want to see this through. There's

success in this team, I think, because they're at a good age. But I'll certainly give everything I've got in this next campaign. I'll make sure they do."

Coleman, whose club managerial experience had taken him from England to Spain and Greece yielding little in the way of results, only took up the role in January 2012 after the tragic suicide of

his childhood friend Gary Speed, who was Wales's manager at the time of his death. Five months earlier, Wales had fallen to their lowest world ranking of 117th and, despite making the worst start of any Wales manager with four defeats from his first four games, Coleman is now guiding his country through its most successful era. — AFP

UEFA TO PUBLISH TOP OFFICIALS PAY DEALS

PARIS: UEFA has followed FIFA by pledging to publish details of what the president and other top officials are paid for the first time. The UEFA executive committee decided yesterday to create a three-member compensation panel to "oversee matters linked to remuneration" of senior management, including the president and general secretary.

The move toward financial openness follows world football body FIFA, which revealed in March that former president Sepp Blatter was paid a basic salary of \$3 million in 2015. In previous years, Blatter more than doubled his salary with bonuses from World Cup profits.

UEFA said in a statement that "detailed information will be disclosed" in the annual accounts published in March.

Both top UEFA posts are formally vacant after outgoing president Michel Platini was banned by FIFA and former general secretary Gianni Infantino was elected FIFA president in February. Infantino is currently working without a contract after rejecting a \$2 million salary offer from FIFA's compensation panel.

UEFA never revealed Platini's salary, or stipends and expenses that the 17 members of its executive panel receive. FIFA executive committee members are paid a \$300,000 annual stipend, plus expenses.

UEFA includes salary costs in a broader "governing expenses" amount of 72.6 million euros (\$80.2 million) in the 2014-15 financial accounts. The 55 national member federations of UEFA will elect a new president to replace Platini on Sept. 14 in Athens. The front-runner ahead of a July 20 deadline to enter the contest appears to be Aleksander Ceferin, a lawyer who has been president of the Slovenia football federation since 2011.

UEFA's interim general secretary is Theodore Theodoridis, the long-time deputy to Infantino, who joined the Switzerland-based governing body from the Greece football federation.

UEFA said its pay oversight panel will include its finance committee chairman, currently Marios Lefkaritis of Cyprus, a member of its governance and compliance committee, and an independent financial expert. — AP



PARIS: France's midfielder Paul Pogba (R) plays the ball during a training session in Clairefontaine-en-Yvelines, southwest of Paris, yesterday, on the eve of the Euro 2016 final football match between Portugal and France. — AFP

FROM BACK-UP TO BARCELONA FOR FRANCE'S SAMUEL UMTITI

SAINT-DENIS: In the space of 10 giddy days, 22-year-old Samuel Umtiti has gone from uncapped Lyon defender to big-money Barcelona signing and likely France starter in a European Championship final.

Drafted in as an injury replacement, Umtiti was still waiting for his first appearance at Euro 2016 when Barcelona announced on June 30 that they had agreed to sign him from Lyon for 25 million euros (\$26.7 million). He made his France debut against Iceland three days later and having then impressed in the 2-0 semi-final win over Germany, Umtiti is expected to line up against Cristiano Ronaldo's Portugal in today's final. "I'm not surprised by Sam. What he's doing with us is what he is doing before," France coach Didier Deschamps told journalists at Stade de France on Saturday.

"He knows I have confidence in him. Some players aren't mature at 30, some are mature at 20 — he's in the latter category. "He deserves all the praise. He has the force of character and the force of personality that you need."

Umtiti was only called up by Deschamps due to a calf injury sustained by Jeremy Mathieu, who will ironically be one of his rivals for a place alongside Gerard Pique in the heart of Barcelona's defence next season. The Cameroon-born youngster did not play a minute of France's first four games at the tournament, but a suspension to Adil Rami opened the door ahead of the last 16 meeting with Iceland at Stade de France. Preferred to the more experienced Eliaquim Mangala, Umtiti looked understandably nervous and was at fault for Iceland's first goal, although he completed 100 percent of his passes in France's 5-2 win. In a major show of faith, Deschamps kept Umtiti in the starting XI against Germany despite Rami's return and he produced a far more assured display that dazzled France's former defensive lynchpin Lilian Thuram. "Congratulations, you blew me away!" Thuram told Umtiti in a post-match encounter at Marseille's Stade Velodrome that was caught on camera by French television channel TF1. "Always stay this calm!"

MILLA OVERTURES

Umtiti's calmness was his calling card during his speedy progression through the

Lyon youth ranks and it was the confidence and accuracy of his passing that are thought to have seduced Barcelona. Having made his Lyon debut aged 18 in January 2012, he was appointed vice-captain last season and will leave France with 131 Ligue 1 appearances under his belt.

"He's sure of his ability, which is important," says France goalkeeper Hugo Lloris, who played with Umtiti in his final season at Lyon before joining Tottenham Hotspur.

"There's confidence within the team, too. This environment and confidence allows him to feel good and show all his ability."

"He's very strong in the challenge and very good at playing the ball out from the back, which marks him out. "The hardest bit is yet to come, but he has a good head on his shoulders and that's essential."

Born in Yaounde, the youngest of four children, Umtiti spent the first two years of his life in Cameroon before moving to Lyon with his family. Despite frequent overtures from the Cameroon Football Federation including approaches from one of the country's greatest players, Roger Milla.

Umtiti chose to represent France at youth level. He was a member of the France team that triumphed at the Under-20 World Cup in 2013.

"I still have family in Yaounde who I often speak to on the phone, but I have no memories of my two years in Cameroon," Umtiti told France Football magazine in March. "I've been twice. It's part of my roots. The federation asked me several times to play for Cameroon. My advisers met Roger Milla at his request, out of politeness. "They listened to his arguments, but nothing worked. My choice had already been made. Since the start, I wanted 'Les Bleus.'" — AFP



UEFA EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP

Portugal v France 22:00
 beIN MAX 2 HD
 beIN MAX 3 HD EN
 beIN MAX 1 HD



Samuel Umtiti

PORTUGAL SEEK REVENGE FOR PAST AGONY AGAINST FRANCE

PARIS: For Cristiano Ronaldo's Portugal the Euro 2016 final today offers a golden opportunity to end a miserable record in meetings with France.

As well as having home advantage and history on their side from wins in their last two major tournament finals on home soil, Les Bleus can claim to be Portugal's bete noire.

France have won their last 10 meetings with the Portuguese since going down 2-0 in a friendly back in 1975, and their head-to-head record includes victories in all three clashes at major competitions.

The first of those came at the 1984 European Championship in France, when the hosts triumphed 3-2 after extra time in a dramatic semi-final in Marseille.

Penalties beckoned at the Stade Velodrome when Michel Platini appeared to score a 119th-minute winner to send France through to a final against Spain where they lifted the Henri Delaunay trophy for the first time.

"So much sadness, frustration and disappointment. Even today it is very painful to talk about that match," said Jaime Pacheco, who played for Portugal that night, in a recent interview with French newspaper Le Parisien.

"But, to be fair, France were better than us. They deserved to win the match and the Euro." There was more agony for the Selecao in the Euro 2000 semi-finals, when a great side featuring Luis Figo and Rui Costa led in Brussels before eventually losing 2-1.

Nuno Gomes put Portugal in front but Thierry Henry equalised for the world champions and Zinedine Zidane scored a golden goal winner from the penalty spot three minutes from the end of extra time.

Again France went on to win the continental crown while Portugal were left to rue the officials' decision to penalise Abel Xavier for a handball in the box as a shoot-out again loomed.

"I tried to calm the players, it was the first time an assistant referee had given a penalty," the Portugal coach that night, Humberto Coelho, told L'Equipe of the mood in the dressing room after the game. "It was difficult because it was the end. And yet we were 'programmed' to win. I am sure that if we had reached the final we would have won it."

RONALDO TEARS

More heartache followed in 2006, when the team that had stumbled at the final hurdle of Euro 2004 on home soil lost in the last four of the World Cup.

Another Zidane penalty in the first half in Munich took the French through to a final they eventually lost in a shoot-out against Italy.

Ronaldo trudged off the field in tears that night. He has declared his wish to be crying tears of joy after Sunday's final at the Stade de France.

And on Portugal's side is the fact that two other long-running hexes have been broken at the Euros.

Germany beat Italy for the first time in nine attempts at major tournaments, albeit on penalties in the quarter-finals. France then beat the Germans in the semi-finals after high profile defeats in their last three competitive encounters.

"They are playing at home and are entitled to believe they can win. It had been a long time since they had beaten Germany and they did it," admitted Portugal midfielder Joao Mario on

Friday. "We are aware of our past defeats against France, but that can give us extra strength and motivation."

France also beat Portugal in a friendly in Lisbon as recently as last September and won 2-1 with goals from Karim Benzema and Paul

Pogba in a friendly at the Stade de France in October 2014. But Joao Mario added: "Probability doesn't win matches. The French can believe in this, but 100 percent of Portuguese also believe Portugal can win and that is what we are going to focus on." — AFP

UEFA DROPS DOPING CASE AGAINST SAKHO

PARIS: UEFA on Friday dropped a doping case against Liverpool and France international defender Mamadou Sakho, leaving him free to resume his career just two days before the Euro 2016 final. The defender, who moved to Anfield for £18 million (\$25 million) in 2013, has 28 caps for France and had been earmarked for a starting place at the championships before the case threw his career into jeopardy. "Following a hearing with the lawyers of the player and experts of the WADA-accredited laboratories on this case, the CEDB has decided to dismiss the case," UEFA said in a statement, referring to its independent Control, Ethics and Disciplinary Body.

Sakho, 26, who was left out of the French squad for the ongoing European Championships on home soil, tested positive after a Europa League tie against Manchester United in March after taking a product to reduce body fat. The centre-back is said not to have known the composition of the weight-loss supplement and informed UEFA that he had acted in good faith. He served an initial 30-day suspension that was not extended as UEFA launched an investigation into whether the substance Sakho took should be on the banned list.

"I am happy that this is finally over. It's been a difficult time for me but I knew I had done nothing wrong," Sakho told the

Liverpool website. "I am looking forward to getting back in the team and playing again." The player was technically available for international duty at Euro 2016, but despite playing a key role for France these last two seasons, Didier Deschamps left him out of the finals squad. He also missed the Europa League final.

Normally a starter for France, in his absence they have powered through to the Euro 2016 final on Sunday, where they play Portugal. "We are pleased for Mamadou that he can now resume his playing career," Liverpool said in a statement.

Gary Lineker, the former England international forward and now respected television presenter, tweeted in reaction: "Sakho cleared of doping. Tough to think he missed a Europa League final and Euros." "The independent UEFA Control, Ethics and Disciplinary Body (CEDB) met in Paris and has reached a decision relating to the proceedings instigated against Liverpool FC player Mamadou Sakho, following the UEFA Europa League round of 16 second-leg match between Manchester United FC and Liverpool FC (1-1), played on 17 March 2016," said UEFA.

"The proceedings against Mr. Sakho related to a violation of the UEFA Anti-Doping Regulations after the player failed a doping test at the above-mentioned match." — AFP



Mamadou Sakho

Sports

Strasburg pitches Nationals past banged-up Mets



Froome seizes yellow jersey with solo win



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ARIES MERRITT TRIES TO MAKE OLYMPIC TEAM WITH NEW KIDNEY

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WIMBLEDON: Winner US player Serena Williams (L) poses with the winner's trophy, the Venus Rosewater Dish, next to runner up Germany's Angelique Kerber (R) after the women's singles final on the thirteenth day of the 2016 Wimbledon Championships at The All England Lawn Tennis Club in Wimbledon, southwest London, yesterday. —AFP

SERENA WINS SEVENTH WIMBLEDON CROWN

RECORD-EQUALLING 22ND MAJOR TITLE

LONDON: Serena Williams powered to her seventh Wimbledon crown as the world number one finally claimed a record-equalling 22nd major title with a 7-5, 6-3 victory over Angelique Kerber in yesterday's final.

Williams had been stuck on 21 Grand Slams since winning last year's Wimbledon, but the American star ended that frustrating barren spell to retain the title and draw level with Steffi Graf's Open era record.

Serena was pushed hard by Kerber in a high-quality clash lasting 81 minutes on Centre Court, but the German fourth seed eventually crumbled under a barrage of 39 winners and 13 aces from the defending champion.

"It's a great feeling to be here. Angelique brings out great tennis in me," said Serena. "Number 22 is awesome. Centre Court feels like home." Kerber said the American was a great

champion. "Serena you deserve it, you are a great champion and great person. We played a great match," said Kerber. "It's an honour to play on Centre Court and a great feeling."

Having avenged her shock loss against Kerber in the Australian Open final in January, Williams was wreathed in smiles as she paraded the Venus Rosewater Dish around Centre Court after collecting a cheque for £2 million (\$2.5 million, 2.3 million euros). But the far more significant reward is the knowledge she has reestablished her supremacy at a time when doubters were beginning to question the 34-year-old's hunger for more silverware after consecutive Slam final defeats this year.

In a testament to her remarkable longevity as the sport's preeminent force, Serena is once again Wimbledon's queen 14 years after her first success at the All England Club.

Equalling Margaret Court's all-time record of 24 Grand Slam titles will be Serena's next goal. The 71st singles title of Williams' astonishing career also moved her within two of Martina Navratilova's all-time record of nine Wimbledon triumphs. Showing signs of cracking under the pressure of her bid for tennis immortality, Williams had cut a grumpy figure for much of the tournament, earning a fine for racquet smashing and threatening to sue Wimbledon officials if she was injured on a wet court. But a serene focus came over Williams with the trophy in sight and she delivered a 48-minute masterclass against Elena Vesnina in the quickest semi-final in Wimbledon history.

DEFIANT

With pop royalty Beyonce and Jay-Z among Serena's entourage in the players' box, Williams

finally hit the right notes after so many recent disappointments. In her ninth Wimbledon final and 28th at the majors, Williams had a golden opportunity to seize the initiative in Kerber's first service game, but the German showed her mettle as she nervelessly saved three break points.

Given Williams' pursuit of Graf's historic landmark, it was a delicious twist that the 47-year-old had played a role in Kerber's recent rise after advising her compatriot.

Showing she has heeded Graf's words of wisdom, Kerber had sprinted to the final without dropping a set in her six matches and she matched Serena blow for blow in a tense first set.

Kerber, in her first Wimbledon final and second major title match, was moving Williams into awkward positions with her left-handed groundstrokes. But Serena kept slugging away and the barrage eventually proved too much for the 28-

year-old to resist. A sequence of blistering ground-strokes rocked the German deep behind the baseline on set point, forcing a fatal error that Serena celebrated with a defiant shriek and a prolonged double-fist pump.

Kerber was still competing gamely in the second set, but when she finally earned a first break point in the seventh game, Williams got out of trouble with a pair of imperious aces.

The German's look of resignation suggested the end was in sight and so it proved as Serena broke in the next game. Serena's coach Patrick Mouratoglou says she enjoys her major triumphs for little more than five minutes before switching her attention to the next target. But judging by the joyous way Williams slumped flat on her back on Centre Court when Kerber miscued on match point, the sweet taste of this historic success might linger a little longer. —AFP

MURRAY READY TO DODGE RAONIC BULLETS IN FINAL SHOWDOWN

LONDON: Since Andy Murray's memory is as razor sharp as his service returns, he will not have forgotten the parting shot he received from Milos Raonic when they last played.

"Next time I'm going to try to serve through him!" the Canadian sharp shooter warned. Three weeks after losing a three-set tussle to Murray at Queen's Club, Raonic will get a chance to execute his plan as the two clash in today's Wimbledon final.

Over the past fortnight, anyone brave enough to stand in Raonic's firing line has been flayed by a series of 140 mph missiles.

The man with the golden arm tops the list for aces (137) and fastest serve (144 mph) at this year's tournament after he pole-axed Roger Federer for the first time in a major to become the first Canadian man to reach a grand slam final. Now the sixth seed wants to make sure all his hard work does not unravel in the final as he faces a rival who he called tennis's "premier workaholic". "The biggest challenge for me, (is not to get) sucked into his game," said the 25-year-old, who trails Murray 3-6 in head-to-head meetings. "Andy will try to throw you off, give you some slower balls, some harder balls, all these kinds of things. I guess my goal is to keep him away from that, play it on my terms, be aggressive, not hesitate."

TWO COACHES

In the era of super-coaches, Raonic has the

luxury of relying on not one, but two former grand slam champions in the shape of Carlos Moya and three-times Wimbledon champion John McEnroe. Adding the American to his team for the grasscourt season has proved to be a masterstroke. "Milos has got the type of game when he can take the racket out of anyone's hand. That's what he did against Federer," said McEnroe. "You can see how badly Milos wants it and how deep he is willing to go. Against Murray he will have to serve big and go for it."

While the Canadian's work ethic has come a long way since his childhood days, when he said he would "hit tennis balls from the standing position for two hours" as he was "too lazy" to move, Murray likes nothing better than to put in the hard work in training. Those behind-the-scenes sweat sessions propelled the Briton into a third Wimbledon final and his 11th overall.

But playing in an era when Novak Djokovic, Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal have snared 43 slams between them, Murray has had to make do with winning just two titles-at the U.S. Open in 2012 and the All England Club in 2013.

RAONIC THREAT

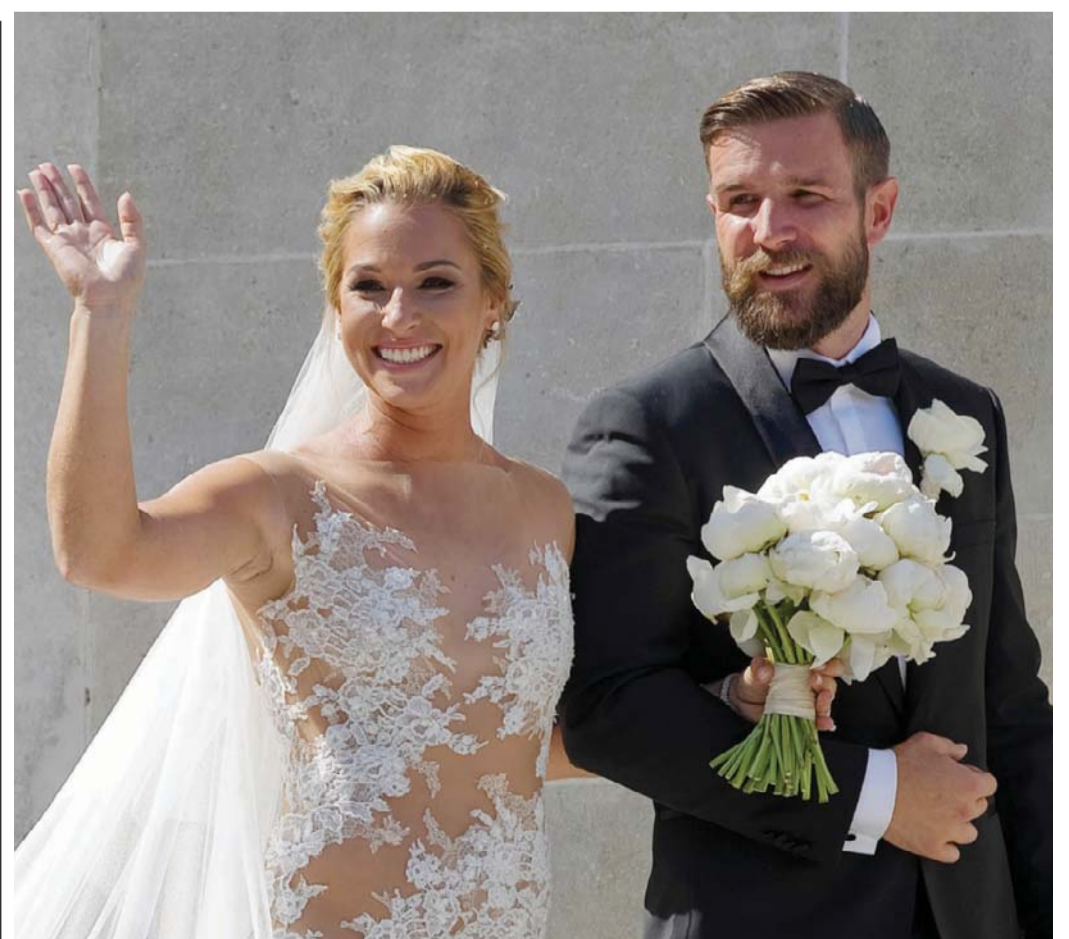
With such a poor success rate in the finals, Murray will be eager to capitalise on the chance to face someone other than Djokovic, who surprisingly perished in the third round, or Federer in a title showdown. At the same time, the number two seed is aware of the threat posed by

Raonic. "Obviously, first time I'll play a slam final against someone that isn't Roger or Novak. So, yeah, that's different," said Murray, who was runner-up to Djokovic in this year's Australian and French Open finals.

"Milos is a very tough opponent. He's played very well on the grass this year and has earned his right to (be in) the final by beating one of the best, if not the best, player ever at this event."

"But I'd love to win it again. These tournaments are why I'm still playing and why I'm training hard and trying to win these events. That's what really motivates me," added Murray, who has a 2-0 record over Raonic in grand slams and has won their last five meetings.

Rekindling his coaching partnership with Ivan Lendl, who guided Murray to his two previous major triumphs, has also added an extra dimension to his game. "From the beginning of the tournament Murray's been playing better than anyone else. He has been playing better than he ever has, he's got more confidence and adding Lendl has added that touch more belief," said McEnroe. At 29, Murray knows that these opportunities will eventually run out and he will be eager to make it count, especially since he can rely on an army of 15,000 Centre Court fans to cheer him all the way to the finishing line. "The older you get, you never know how many more chances you are going to have to play in grand slam finals so you want to make the most of your opportunities," said Murray. — Reuters



BRATISLAVA: Slovakian tennis player Dominika Cibulkova and her husband Michal Navara laugh after their church wedding ceremony at the St Martin's Cathedral in Bratislava yesterday. — AFP

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US ECONOMY LOOKS STRONG WITH 287,000 JOBS ADDED

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LONDON: People use a European Union flag as a blanket while taking part during a picnic against Brexit organized by the General Assembly in Green Park in London yesterday. The British government on Saturday formally rejected a petition signed by more than 4.125 million people calling for a second referendum on Britain's membership of the EU. —AFP

FALLING POUND A BOON FOR TOURISM

HOLIDAYS IN UK ALMOST 15 PERCENT CHEAPER NOW

LONDON: On a sunny afternoon near Big Ben, two weeks since Britain's historic decision to leave the European Union, little has changed for visitors to the capital London except that their visits are now cheaper. As tourists take selfies at the foot of the British parliament's famous clock tower and at red telephone boxes, there is little talk of what the "Leave" victory in the referendum means for the EU's future. But the ensuing currency plunge is seen as a plus. "For my holidays, it's great! They are cheaper every minute," said Robbert de Reus, from Middelburg in the Netherlands,

his sunglasses perched on his head.

This is because a plunge in the value of the pound against the dollar and the euro has made holidays in Britain almost 15 percent cheaper for foreign tourists. Roberto Serraglia said he had just arrived from Cuneo in northwestern Italy with his wife and two children. "Compared to before the vote, we will save at least 15 percent, given what the pound has lost," Serraglia said. "For us it is a very good thing to come to London at this moment, even if it's not something we would have wanted."

'More clothes, more toys'

Bretton Pyne, a US student in a French football jersey, said that he had gone on a small shopping spree to make the most of the falling pound. "I was here for the vote and I've bought a lot of stuff to try to take advantage," Pyne said. Erica Kim, who travelled from South Korea with her husband, regrets having changed money before she left, on a pre-referendum rate. "I'm quite sad because I change my money before leaving and I've lost 400 pounds," Kim said. "I have two more days to shop and I will buy more clothes, more toys for

my family," she added.

The fall of sterling means that the British tourism industry is one of the country's few industries that will quickly see a post-Brexit boost. "Tourism has the potential to benefit from the weakened pound against the euro," according to tourism agency VisitBritain. International flight bookings rose almost 10 percent in the week after the referendum compared to the same period a year earlier, the agency said, citing data collected by travel industry consultancy ForwardKeys.

Yet, not far from the tourist crowds outside

Prime Minister David Cameron's residence at 10 Downing Street, the signs of a boost to tourism are yet to be felt among sceptical souvenir sellers. "Except the American people who spend more than before, there is nothing special," said Mara Oliveira, head of CGX Accessories. Surrounded by Big Ben shaped teapots and pictures of Queen Elizabeth II framed by the colors of the Union Jack in a shop called Cool Britannia, Ashik Av forecast nothing but gloom following the Brexit vote. "We don't see anything positive from the Brexit. Tourists are confused," Av said. —AFP

PROPERTY FIRM WARNS ON BREXIT THREAT TO LONDON ECONOMY

LONDON: London-focused property firm Great Portland Estates has warned that the capital's economy would suffer a "negative impact" from Brexit. "It is likely that the uncertainty created by the EU referendum result will have a negative impact on economic growth in London," said chief executive Toby Courtald, whose company manages a property portfolio worth £3.7 billion (\$4.8 billion, 4.3 billion euros) in the capital.

"In the near-term, we expect confidence to reduce and some business investment decisions to be deferred whilst negotiations to establish our trading arrangements with the EU are undertaken." He added in a trading update that "we can expect London's commercial property markets to weaken during this period of uncertainty"—during which Portland would face "reduced rental growth prospects".

Britain's real estate market has emerged as one of the hardest hit sectors from the country's shock June 23 referendum decision to leave the 28-nation European Union. Three more British commercial property funds suspended trading on Wednesday on a wave of redemptions triggered by the Brexit vote, meaning six funds have now halted trade with assets totaling around £15 billion. The Bank of England had warned Tuesday that Brexit risks to Britain's financial stability were "crystallizing"—and cited London's "overstretched" commercial real estate market as a cause for concern.

In the wake of the referendum, London's upmarket estate agency Foxtons cautioned that profits would be hit this year by the surprise result. Fears are growing that Brexit could spark a slump in the London's property market, which has benefitted from the BoE's record-low interest rates for more than seven years. Prior to the referendum, there were already signs that the high-end London property market was slowing after the government hiked taxes on transactions aimed at preventing a bubble. —AFP

GLOBAL ECONOMY 'GRIM'

SHANGHAI: The global economic situation is grim and major economies must lead the way in tackling problems including sluggish growth and weak trade, China's trade minister Gao Hucheng said yesterday. Gao made the remarks at the start of a two-day meeting of trade ministers from G20 economies in Shanghai, as uncertainty hangs over the outlook for a slow-growing global economy now beset by post-Brexit reverberations.

The global economic recovery remained "complicated

and grim", Gao said. "Global trade is dithering, international investment has yet to recover to levels before the financial crisis, the global economy has yet to find the propulsion for strong and sustainable growth." "In the current circumstances, the international community expects the G20 to show leadership in resolving the prominent problems we are facing and inject impetus for recovery and growth," he said.

In April, the International Monetary Fund cut its 2016

global growth forecast for the fourth time in a year, to 3.2 percent from 3.4 percent, amid weakening global demand and geopolitical risks. A fifth straight global growth markdown by the IMF looks almost certain. The World Trade Organization (WTO) expects 2016 to be the fifth consecutive year of less than 3 percent growth in global trade, and Director-General Roberto Azevedo said on Friday trade would remain sluggish going into the third quarter of the year.

The ministers meeting in Shanghai were likely to agree to a set of non-binding principles to enhance investment as well as a declaration on protectionism, South Africa's Minister for Trade and Industry Rob Davies said. "The bigger context of course is there has been a very sharp reduction in trade growth," he said. "We heard from the WTO today that it has been well below the rates of GDP growth, which are in any case fairly depressed."

The spectre of protectionism also hangs over the meetings in Shanghai. China's huge but struggling steel sector has relied on exports to offset the impact of slowing domestic demand, but it has been accused of using unfair pricing to push foreign competitors out of business. Chinese trade officials have repeatedly stressed that the country has been the victim of overzealous anti-dumping actions by foreign countries, which fail to take into account Chinese efficiency or its low labor and production costs. Davies said ministers had not yet reached consensus on how to handle overcapacity and rising protectionism in the steel sector, which remains a "contested space".

"It's not that it is not important, but a number of us don't feel a comprehensive discussion has taken place... A lot of the European countries and the United States want to see something, but what exactly is going to be said is still an issue." Uncertainty over Britain's vote to leave the European Union will dampen near-term economic growth for Britain and the rest of Europe and will affect output globally, according to the IMF. British and EU representatives in Shanghai yesterday were at pains to stress that they would come up with a "sensible and mature new arrangement", Davies said. —Reuters



SHANGHAI: China's Commerce Minister Gao Hucheng (lower center) attends the opening ceremony of the G20 Trade Ministers Meeting in Shanghai yesterday. China will work with its G20 partners to promote global trade growth, Beijing's commerce minister said on July 9, as the world's top economies met in Shanghai. —AFP

ELECTRICITY-STARVED GAZANS TURN TO SUN FOR HELP

GAZA: Nahed Abu Assi's farm has been bombed in each of the three Gaza wars since 2008 and like in the rest of the Palestinian enclave, he receives only a paltry amount of electricity each day. With his chickens dying and the cost of using generators high, Assi now hopes to do as others have done in Gaza-if he can find a loan to pay for it: install solar panels. "The electricity is cut for hours every day," the balding 52-year-old said. "You have to connect to generators that cost a lot to fuel and that need regular repairs to keep the lamps and the livestock fans running around the clock." A growing number of

Gazans fed up with their erratic electricity supply are turning to solar power in an area where the sun shines for the vast majority of the year.

Grey and black solar panels are increasingly visible on rooftops. Stores and adverts promoting such technology have also expanded, and authorities in the enclave running by the Islamist movement Hamas are also turning to solar power. "Schools, hospitals and public institutions have been equipped with solar panels and other projects have been launched to at least try to partially resolve the electricity crisis," said Raid Abu Al-Hajj, head of the

solar energy unit in the strip's energy authority.

Some 10,000 homes could soon be equipped with photovoltaic panels. The option is not cheap. Assi expects to fork out between 4,500 and 5,400 euros (\$5,000 to \$6,000) for panels, but he says the investment will pay off over time. Gaza and its population of 1.9 million people has only one electricity plant and it has been devastated by wars with Israel, the most devastating of which was fought in the summer of 2014. It imports electricity from Israel and Egypt, but those supplies are not nearly enough. Electricity demand is estimated at 450 megawatts, but only 250 are available: 27 percent from Israel, 22 percent provided by Gaza's own plant and six percent by Egypt.

Safe alternative

Israel has maintained a blockade on the Gaza Strip for around a decade, saying its aim is to keep out materials that Hamas could use for military purposes. But Gazans-half of whom live below the poverty line-are now being allowed to import solar panels and prices have gradually come down, Hajj said. Those taking advantage include Daoud Tarazi, who decided to equip his home and his petrol station with solar panels. He said it was "no longer possible to work with 18 hours of electricity cuts per day" at his station, he said.

At home, where he receives 12 hours of electricity per day, "food spoils in the refrigerator and electronic equipment



GAZA: A general view shows solar panels used for street lights in a street in Gaza City. A growing number of Gazans fed up with their erratic electricity supply are turning to solar power in an area where the sun shines for the vast majority of the year. — AFP

always breaks down". With the panels, his bills have fallen since he no longer has to operate generators. Beyond that, solar power does not pollute and he no longer has to deal with days without electricity. "There are only five or six days per year without sun in Gaza," he said. Solar panels also provide a safer alternative to the dangers of generators and candles, said Mohammed Atallah, a businessman and member of a renewable energy organization that has installed solar panels for

street lights for roads traversing the Gaza Strip.

Health officials say explosions and fires from generators and candles have caused the deaths of 24 people in recent years, most of them children. But despite the recent spike in interest, solar power remains only a tiny part of the energy mix in the Gaza Strip-amounting to around three megawatts, said Hajj. "But within three years, we hope to reach 15 megawatts," he said. — AFP



GAZA: A general view shows solar energy panels at a solar plant in Gaza City. — AFP

CRACKDOWN ON HEZBOLLAH ACCOUNTS RAISES TENSIONS

HUNDREDS OF BANK ACCOUNTS SHUT

BEIRUT: A bank crackdown on hundreds of accounts linked with Hezbollah is raising tensions in Lebanon, where the powerful Shiite movement enjoys fierce support and provides a range of social services. The move follows the adoption late last year of a US law imposing sanctions on financial institutions that facilitate significant transactions associated with Hezbollah, a heavily armed, Iran-backed movement which Washington classifies as a "terrorist group". Lebanese banks-keen to maintain the country's role as a regional financial hub-have been working to comply with the law since May. But Hezbollah, which acts in many ways as a parallel government in parts of Lebanon, has warned that it considers the account closures an "attack" on its supporters.

On June 12, an explosion hit the Beirut headquarters of one of the country's largest banks, leaving one person with minor injuries. Hezbollah was not linked directly to the blast, but several Lebanese newspapers said the attack was intended as a message to the banking industry. "Hezbollah is angry because the pressure is hitting its popular base and the responsibility will fall on the group's own shoulders," said Lebanese economics expert Ghazi Wazni. Under the US Hezbollah International Financing Prevention Act passed in December, sanctions can be avoided if a bank "has taken and is continuing to take significant verifiable steps" towards ending the financial activities.

Hundreds of accounts shut

Hezbollah runs an extensive social services network in Lebanon-complete with schools, hospitals and a wide range of charity organizations. Pro-Hezbollah daily newspaper Al-Akhar reported in early June that in response to the law "hundreds, if not thousands" of accounts held by several major charities and hospitals "directly affiliated with Hezbollah" had been shut. Wazni said if the banks pursue their "hardline" approach towards Hezbollah-linked accounts, some 10,000 accounts could be shut down. Following the June bombing, the Association of Lebanese Banks held an emergency meeting and warned that the blast

threatened to "rattle economic stability".

Contacted by AFP, the association's secretary general Makram Sader would not elaborate on how accounts were being shut, saying only that banks "follow decrees issued by the Central Bank and the implementation mechanisms decided by monitoring bodies." Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah railed against the account closures in a speech last month, saying he considered them an "attack... against our people, our constituency, and our families." He also downplayed the potential consequences, saying: "As long as Iran has money, we have money." "Just as we receive the rockets that we use to threaten Israel, we are receiving our money. No law will prevent us from receiving it," Nasrallah said.

'War economy'

Steps have been taken to ease tensions. Hassan Moukalled, the editor-in-chief of Construction & Economy magazine, said he had acted as an intermediary in indirect negotiations between the Central Bank and Hezbollah. The Central Bank has now requested that some accounts belonging to Hezbollah-affiliated parliamentarians be reopened, Moukalled said, on the basis that they receive regular government salaries.

"If there is regular account activity within a certain margin, where between \$5,000 and \$10,000 is deposited on a regular basis, there is no problem. But if all of a sudden \$50,000 enters that account, it will be investigated," he said. Moukalled said the moves by the banks

were likely to have more effect on those loosely affiliated with the Hezbollah than on the movement itself. Hezbollah's "budget doesn't run through the formal banking mechanism-it's like a war economy," he said. But Wazni said the account closures would still put pressure on Hezbollah. "It will have to bear responsibility for the closing of accounts of people who may be just the sons or brothers of Hezbollah officials, as well as accounts held by charities, and the effect this will have on employees," he said. One employee at a Hezbollah-owned institution, speaking on condition of anonymity, told AFP that staff "began receiving their salaries in cash about four months ago, while before we used to get paid in cheques that we could cash at the bank." — AFP



BEIRUT: Photo shows a man talking on his mobile phone as he walks past the sign of the BLOM BANK in the Lebanese capital Beirut. A bank crackdown on hundreds of accounts linked with Hezbollah is raising tensions in Lebanon, where the powerful Shiite movement enjoys fierce support and provides a range of social services. — AFP

CAMBODIAN PM HEADS HUGE BUSINESS EMPIRE

PHNOM PENH: Cambodia's Prime Minister Hun Sen and his family have built a multi-million-dollar business empire spanning the impoverished country's most lucrative sectors, a watchdog said Thursday, warning foreign investors against bankrolling his regime. Hun Sen, a former army commander who defected from the Khmer Rouge, has dominated Cambodia's political scene during a 31-year reign marred by accusations of corruption, electoral fraud and rampant rights abuses. During that time the wily premier has also used his position to hand control of swaths of the country's economy to his family, the UK-based watchdog Global Witness detailed in a report Thursday.

Hun Sen and his relatives have amassed more than \$200 million through their interests in 114 private companies, according to the report, which cited data from the country's Ministry of Commerce. The family's firms span Cambodia's trade, finance, energy and media industries, with business links to major global brands such as Visa, Apple and Honda, the report said. "Behind the scenes of Hun Sen's dictatorial reign, his family is amassing vast personal fortunes," the watchdog said, describing a "huge network of secret deal-making, corruption and cronyism which is helping secure the prime minister's political fortress".

The premier's eldest daughter Hun Mana, a media mogul, has the biggest portfolio in the family with interests in 22 companies, 18 of which list her as chair or director, the report added. She slammed the report in a Facebook post Thursday, calling it full of lies and an "attack" on her family. Government spokesman Phay Siphon also dismissed the report as an effort to discredit the premier. "The report intends to break the Cambodian people's respect for the Prime Minister," he told AFP. "We are not paying attention to it," he added. But Patrick Alley, the founder of Global Witness, described Hun Sen's family as having an "almost feudal control of the economy" and urged foreign investors to reassess their stakes.

"Foreign investors can and should opt out of bankrolling a regime that kills, intimidates or locks up its critics," he told AFP. Hun Sen has faced fierce criticism from rights groups in recent months, who accuse him of clamping down on rivals and critics as he eyes elections in 2018. The European Parliament recently threatened to review nearly \$500 million of aid if his government continues to repress opponents, prompting a rebuke from Hun Sen who warned against interference in domestic politics. Transparency International ranks Cambodia as one of the most graft-riddled countries in the world, and the most corrupt in Southeast Asia. — AFP

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

ASIAN COUNTRIES

Japanese Yen	3.012
Indian Rupees	4.499
Pakistani Rupees	2.893
Srilankan Rupees	2.092
Nepali Rupees	2.809
Singapore Dollar	226.730
Hongkong Dollar	39.034
Bangladesh Taka	3.860
Philippine Peso	6.436
Thai Baht	8.621

GCC COUNTRIES

Saudi Riyal	80.790
Qatari Riyal	83.221
ani Riyal	786.902
Bahraini Dinar	804.570
UAE Dirham	82.484

ARAB COUNTRIES

Egyptian Pound - Cash	31.750
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	34.490
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.216
Tunisian Dinar	138.330
Jordanian Dinar	427.470
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	2.019
Syrian Lira	2.0159
Morocco Dirham	138.542

EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES

US Dollar Transfer	302.800
Euro	337.320
Sterling Pound	402.720

Canadian dollar	234.090
Turkish lira	108.850
Swiss Franc	311.200
Australian Dollar	232.250
US Dollar Buying	301.600

GOLD

20 Gram	271.450
10 Gram	138.640
5 Gram	70.170

DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

Rate for Transfer	Selling Rate
US Dollar	302.750
Canadian Dollar	234.832
Sterling Pound	402.409
Euro	338.122
Swiss Frank	295.856
Bahrain Dinar	800.880
UAE Dirhams	82.660
Qatari Riyals	83.870
Saudi Riyals	81.454
Jordanian Dinar	426.816
Egyptian Pound	33.996
Sri Lankan Rupees	2.075
Indian Rupees	4.504
Pakistani Rupees	2.889
Bangladesh Taka	3.856
Philippines Peso	6.462
Cyprus pound	159.551
Japanese Yen	3.948
Syrian Pound	2.394
Nepalese Rupees	3.801

Malaysian Ringgit	76.600
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	45.873
Thai Bhat	9.600
Turkish Lira	104.496

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
Europe		
British Pound	0.394078	0.409078
Czech Korune	0.004410	0.016410
Danish Krone	0.041163	0.046163
Euro	0.0331045	0.0340045
Norwegian Krone	0.032309	0.037509
Romanian Leu	0.074407	0.074407
Slovakia	0.009016	0.019016
Swedish Krona	0.031770	0.036770
Swiss Franc	0.304693	0.315693
Turkish Lira	0.099759	0.110059
Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.218787	0.230787
New Zealand Dollar	0.211308	0.220808
America		
Canadian Dollar	0.229358	0.238358
Georgina Lari	0.136668	0.136668
US Dollars	0.298500	0.303200
US Dollars Mint	0.299000	0.303200
Asia		
Bangladesh Taka	0.003387	0.003971
Chinese Yuan	0.044104	0.047604

Hong Kong Dollar	0.036916	0.039666
Indian Rupee	0.004334	0.004744
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000019	0.000025
Japanese Yen	0.002876	0.003056
Kenyan Shilling	0.002986	0.002986
Korean Won	0.000251	0.000266
Malaysian Ringgit	0.072045	0.078045
Nepalese Rupee	0.002853	0.003023
Pakistan Rupee	0.002744	0.003034
Philippine Peso	0.006412	0.006712
Sierra Leone	0.000051	0.000057
Singapore Dollar	0.218862	0.228862
South African Rand	0.014607	0.023107
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001672	0.002252
Taiwan	0.009257	0.009437
Thai Baht	0.008302	0.008852

Arab

Bahraini Dinar	0.076083	0.804583
Egyptian Pound	0.027064	0.032182
Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000085
Iraqi Dinar	0.000181	0.000241
Jordanian Dinar	0.422943	0.431943
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000150	0.000250
Moroccan Dirhams	0.019285	0.043285
Nigerian Naira	0.001248	0.001883
Omani Riyal	0.779554	0.785234
Qatar Riyal	0.082305	0.083755
Saudi Riyal	0.079607	0.080907
Syrian Pound	0.001282	0.001502
Tunisian Dinar	0.136075	0.144075
Turkish Lira	0.099759	0.110059
UAE Dirhams	0.080906	0.082606
Yemeni Riyal	0.001367	0.001447

BREXIT CRISIS CHALLENGES IMF'S LAGARDE ANEW

WASHINGTON: International Monetary Fund chief Christine Lagarde says that Britain's vote to quit the European Union has injected significant uncertainty into the global economy but is nevertheless unlikely to cause a world recession. But in an exclusive interview with AFP, she also said that Brexit underscores the need for the EU to better explain how it benefits Europeans, amid "disenchantment" with the institution.

And she said that Britain's move to cut corporate taxes to counter the expected economic fallout from Brexit was just a "race to the bottom" that could hurt everyone. Two weeks after the British referendum on cutting its EU ties, Lagarde, speaking in her Washington offices at the launch of her second five-year term as IMF managing director, called the event a "major downside risk" for the world. We don't think that a global recession is very likely. The immediate effects will be on the UK, with some spillover into the euro area, she said. Yet the longer the withdrawal process remains unclear, the worse the effects could be. "The key word about this Brexit affair is uncertainty and the longer the uncertainty, the higher the risk," she said. "The sooner they can resolve their timeline and the terms of their departure the better for all. It needs to be predictable, as soon as possible."

Lagarde, who as IMF managing director has already endured five years of grinding

turmoil in Europe, said she remained positive over the outcome. "My optimistic approach of life tells me that Brexit could be a catalyst that could push the EU to deepen its economic integration," Lagarde, 60, presided over possibly one of the most challenging periods for the global crisis lender, dealing with the Fund's largest ever rescue operation, for Greece, and simultaneous bailouts of three other euro-zone countries: Ireland, Portugal and Cyprus.

It made the IMF a central player in saving the euro area itself, a job still incomplete and with plenty of perils ahead. Even so, Lagarde, who was France's finance minister before moving to the IMF in July 2011, has signed on for another term, embracing the challenges ahead, including proving that the Fund is more attentive to those who suffer from its policies. She admitted that the bailout of Greece, now in its third rescue program after the first two failed, has made the IMF a "convenient scapegoat" for the ongoing crisis.

The Fund is accused of worsening the country's troubles by insisting on fiscal consolidation-deep government spending cuts and austerity reforms. With the Greek economy still contracting this year, she said the Fund has to examine whether or not its demands were overly excessive. Yet a reassessment would not radically change the IMF's key job, which sees it rescuing govern-

ments that have run aground financially but only in exchange for reforms designed to make them stronger in the future.

"In every story, there has to be a bad cop, but I just hope that this bad cop has also a human dimension," she said. Yet, as the march of globalization takes a toll on the most vulnerable people, the IMF needs to take account of that, she said. "Globalization has done a lot of good and has lifted a lot of people out of poverty. But equally it has produced some losers." The losers have to be helped and the IMF will continue to pay more attention to issues like excessive inequalities, women's empowerment, climate change, and corruption, in order to produce a decent globalization, one that not only increases the overall GDP but that also looks after those who are at risk of losing. "That's how I want to see the IMF evolve in the next five years."

EU needs to work harder

As for Europe, Lagarde had shown dismay before the June 23 referendum over the possibility of Britain breaking away. It just shows that the European Union must work harder to prove itself, she said. "The EU has to do a lot more to explain what it does, what it means for people, what the cost/benefits are in a much more transparent manner." "The overall European architecture is complicated and any means to clarify and explain it would be criti-

cal." "At the same time, member states should avoid blaming the EU for everything that goes wrong. I've seen it myself and I might have been guilty of doing it too."

'No' to a French political future

Once seen as a rising star in French politics, Lagarde was asked if she considers

returning to the political arena in her home country. "I hope that where I am today, I am useful to my country as well. Often my friends in France or people I pass on the streets of France tell me they are happy, that they are proud that I am where I am," she said. "But a strong desire to, so to speak, return to politics? No, certainly not."—AFP



WASHINGTON: International Monetary Fund (IMF) Managing Director Christine Lagarde speaks during an interview at the IMF headquarters in Washington. —AFP

News

in brief

Rating firm cuts Puerto Rico's rating to default

WASHINGTON: Rating firm Standard & Poor's cut Puerto Rico's credit rating to "default" after the financially troubled US territory missed large debt payments at the beginning of the month. The move was expected after the Caribbean island, buried under some \$70 billion in debt, missed payments of \$780 million on general obligation bonds, those directly issued by the government, on July 1. The island had already missed hundreds of millions of dollars in payments owed by state-owned enterprises and authorities that are government-guaranteed; this was the first default on general obligation debt. Puerto Rico has sought for over two years a deal with creditors to write down some of its debt in order to restore balance to its finances. But because it is legally blocked from seeking bankruptcy protection—which would put a debt restructuring in the hands of a bankruptcy court—it has not been able to force all of its creditors to agree on a deal. Faced with the looming default, in June Congress passed a White House-backed law to create a powerful oversight board that will both conduct a restructuring and implement fiscal and structural reforms in Puerto Rico.

Nigeria urges calm amid banking crisis

LAGOS: Nigeria's central bank has played down fears of a banking crisis, dismissing as without foundation suggestions that some high-street lenders were in trouble. "The attention of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has been drawn to malicious rumors and unfounded speculations that some banks in the country may have gone or may be going into distress," it said in an emailed statement. "The CBN wishes to reiterate in the strongest terms that these rumors and speculations are untrue and do not reflect the actual health of the individual banks and, indeed, the entire banking industry." The chief executive, chairman and 10 board members of Nigeria's eighth-biggest lender, Skye Bank, resigned on Monday after the biggest drop in the bank's share price in more than six months. Africa's leading economy, which relies on oil sales for 70 percent of government revenue, is in financial crisis and on the verge of a recession because of sustained low oil prices over the last two years.

Cartoon hero tackles austerity 'minotaur'

ATHENS: Greek's flamboyant former finance minister Yanis Varoufakis may no longer have the perhaps thankless task of fronting Greek attempts to resolve its debt crisis—but a cartoon version has him still socking it to the Eurocrats. Cartoon fans have seized on a strip depicting Varoufakis as a superhero standing up for Athens in its Brussels battle for financial survival as he looks to slay the "minotaur" of austerity—with German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schäuble cast in the role of villain. Leftist academic and economist Varoufakis, author of "The Global Minotaur", a book looking at the root causes of the global economic crisis, gave his assent to his portrayal in a strip which has sold more than 3,000 copies since going on sale last week. It's not the first time either Varoufakis or indeed Schäuble have been portrayed at cartoonish loggerheads—Germany-based satirist Kostas Koufogiorgos once had Schäuble order the then Greek minister to tuck his shirt in "so I can see you've really tightened your belt". In Greek mythology, the minotaur was a half-man, half-bull monster which devoured ritual offerings of young boys and maidens. It was eventually slain by the hero Theseus.

Brazil stubbornly high inflation dips to 8.84%

BRASILIA: Inflation in Brazil fell in June by 0.35 percent to an annual rate of 8.84 percent, but remains almost double the government target, official figures showed on Friday. This was an improvement from May, when inflation hit 9.32 percent, temporarily reversing a three-month falling trend. However, inflation at the year's halfway point is now well above the same time in 2015 when it was 6.17 percent. And it is far above the target of 4.5 percent. Food and drink prices for June rose 0.71 percent, while health costs were up 0.83 percent, almost half of the previous month's inflation. Stubbornly high inflation is one of the challenges facing interim president Michel Temer and new central bank governor Ilan Goldfajn, who are battling to restore confidence in the sputtering economy. Goldfajn has said reining in prices will be his top priority. Brazilian policy makers face the tricky challenge of both rising prices and a shrinking economy, which contracted 3.8 percent last year—the worst performance in 25 years.

IMF ANNOUNCES \$5.3 BN FOR WAR-RAVAGED IRAQ

ECUADOR GETS \$364 MILLION IN EMERGENCY SUPPORT

WASHINGTON: The IMF has announced a \$5.34 billion program for Iraq to help strengthen the country's finances, hit by the crash in oil prices and the fight against the Islamic State group. The International Monetary Fund said the three-year loan will see \$634 million immediately allocated to Baghdad, which needs the money to stabilize its balance of payments and ensure it can keep up with its debt obligations. It will also focus on maintaining the peg of the Iraqi currency to the US dollar, while slowly removing exchange restrictions. The program will involve fiscal consolidation moves aimed at cutting inefficient capital expenditure and at the same time protecting social spending, the IMF said.

It said Iraq's economy had contracted by 2.4 percent last year despite a 13 percent increase in oil production. The non-oil economy contracted 19 percent, it said, "as a result of the conflict with ISIS (Islamic State) and the ongoing fiscal consolidation." The IMF added that the money under the new program will also support measures to protect the poor, strengthen financial management, and fight corruption. "The Iraqi economy has been hit hard by the double shock arising from the ISIS attacks and the sharp drop in global oil prices," said Deputy Managing Director Min Zhu. Other targets of program reforms will be implementation of measures against money laundering and terror financing, the IMF said.

Ecuador gets \$364 m

In another development, IMF said it approved a \$364 million emergency loan to Ecuador after the country was hard-hit by an earthquake in April. The money will help the country steady its finances while it addresses the huge losses from the quake, which killed some 700 people. "The April 16 earthquake that hit Ecuador caused significant humanitarian losses and damage to infrastructure, housing, and agriculture," said IMF Deputy Managing Director Min Zhu in a statement. "It created new fiscal pressures and an urgent balance of payments needed at a time when Ecuador's economy is still suffering from the effects of lower oil prices, a strong US dollar, low international reserves, and limited access

to international financing."

Days after the quake the government said it needed \$3.3 billion to rebuild, even as it faced a deep budget gap due to the plunge in the price of crude oil, the country's main export earner. The IMF is granting the loan under its Rapid Financing Instrument facility, which allows it to provide assistance quickly to countries hit suddenly by financial setbacks. The loan, which is disbursed immediately, does not come with conditions. But in his statement Min urged the country to take steps to strengthen its finances for the future. "Over the medium term, fiscal policy will need to rebuild adequate buffers to create space for countercyclical policy," he said. —Agencies



LONDON: St Paul's Cathedral is seen through a window at the official opening of 'The View' viewing platform at the Shard skyscraper in London. Henry Pryor, who has helped people buy homes in London for more than 30 years, says only war would be a bigger threat to the housing market than the conditions it faces now after Britain's vote to leave the European Union. —AP

IMF'S LAGARDE ON BREXIT, GLOBALIZATION, POLITICS

WASHINGTON: In an exclusive interview with AFP at the beginning of her second five-year term leading the International Monetary Fund, Christine Lagarde expressed both worries and hopes as Britain's vote to leave the European Union raises new risks to the global economy. She also said the IMF needs to show more concern for the poorest and for social justice.

On Brexit

"The key word about this Brexit affair is uncertainty and the longer the uncertainty, the higher the risk." "We certainly hope that all parties, the UK as well as the European Union players, will decide to reduce and eliminate that uncertainty by giving predictability about the timeline, how long will it take? When will it start?" On Britain's move to cut corporate taxes to ease the impact of Brexit: "The problem with races to the bottom is that every-

body ends up at the bottom. It would be much better to avoid that competitive race in terms of corporate tax."

On the EU's future

"My optimistic approach to life tells me that Brexit could also be a catalyst that could push the EU to deepen its economic integration and deliver results for the Europeans." "The EU has to do a lot more to explain what it does, what it means for people.... At the same time, member states should avoid blaming the EU for everything that goes wrong. I've seen it myself and I might have been guilty of doing it too."

On globalization

"Globalization has done a lot of good and has lifted many people out of poverty but equally it has produced some losers, people whose job has been lost to a cheap-

er supply chain." "The losers have to be helped and the IMF will continue to pay more attention to issues like excessive inequalities, women's empowerment, climate change, and corruption, in order to produce a decent globalization, one that not only increases the overall GDP but that also looks after those who are at risk of losing."

On the IMF's reticence to join Greece's third bailout program: "The IMF is a convenient scapegoat in Greece. We would financially engage if under a reasonable hypothesis of growth, there are serious reforms implemented, and if we conclude that the debt is sustainable. But there are other options and 'no money' from the IMF does not necessarily mean a bad economic outcome for Greece." On Hillary Clinton's aspirations to become the first female US president: "A woman at the White House? Hey, why not?"—AFP

SPAIN'S MALLORCA STRUGGLES WITH THE RISING TOURISM TIDE

PALMA: "Tourist go home". The slogan daubed on a wall in the centre of Palma, the capital of Spain's holiday island of Mallorca, points to growing frustration with a rising tide of tourists. The largest island in the Balearic archipelago in the Mediterranean, which is home to one million people, expects to receive over 10 million visitors this year, a new record. The crowds have been so large that French tourist Mathilde Boudet, who visited Mallorca and its neighboring island Menorca with her partner last month, found access to a popular cove closed off by police. "We weren't expecting that," the 32-year-old said.

Spain is enjoying a surge in tourism in part as fears over terrorism drive wary travelers away from rival sunshine destinations in North Africa and Turkey and back to former favorites in southern Europe. But the rise in visitors has led to grumbling from locals in tourist hotspots like Palma who complain of soaring property prices and rents even as they welcome the jobs they help create. The discomfort was reflected in graffiti messages which appeared in April in the historical heart of Palma which were quickly cleaned up by municipal workers. "Tourism is destroying our city" was among the slogans spray painted on city walls along with "Tourist go home, refugees welcome". Roughly 80 percent of Mallorca's economy depends on tourism. The island has long been a popular beach destination, especially with visitors from Britain and Germany who favor all-inclusive package holidays and arrive on low-cost flights. Many foreigners move to Mallorca, drawn by its cove beaches and mild weather. Foreigners account for 40 percent of property sales in Mallorca, according to German premium real estate agency Engel & Voelkers.

'Can't afford it'

In the trendy Santa Catalina neighborhood, a former fisherman's quarter west of the city centre with traditional homes with forest-green shutters, 14 real estate agencies market properties, often in English. The neighborhood is gradually changing as boutiques selling vintage clothing and stores offering Vespa scooters for rent replace traditional shops. A small apartment can fetch hundreds of thousands of euros. An old fisherman's house that was converted to a luxury triplex is listed for 577,500 euros (\$642,665). "Islanders can't afford it," said Jacinta Galindo, the president of the Santa Catalina neighbors association. Rents too are on the rise. A two bedroom apartment in Santa Catalina rents for 700 euros a month, while the average salary for a waiter is 1,100-1,200 euros. But despite the complaints from locals over rising real estate prices, Galindo said the graffiti was "an isolated case". In the central La Seu neighborhood, home to Palma's main monument such as its imposing cathedral that dominates the city's palm-lined waterfront, residents want the arrival of cruise ships to be more evenly spread out. The ships, which are avoiding Tunisia and Turkey due to terrorist attacks, can pump thousands of tourists into the city for just a few hours, said Luis Clar, who heads the La Seu neighbors association.

Tourism tax

"There is a percentage, which is not yet very high but which exists, of people who question the effects of tourism," said Biel Barcelo, the tourism minister in the regional government of the Balearic islands. The left-wing government in charge of the archipelago since 2015 began charging in July a tourism tax of up to two euros for overnight stays which is expected to bring in 60 million euros per year. The money will be used for environmental projects and to restore historical sights. Local green group GOB feels the tax is not enough. They fear rising tourism is putting too much pressure on natural resources like water and demand a limit on the number of tourist lodgings. —AFP

WORLD'S OLDEST BANK COULD BECOME EUROPE'S NEWEST PROBLEM

MILAN: Banca Monte dei Paschi di Siena prides itself on being the world's oldest bank but could, along with its peers, turn into Europe's newest problem as some analysts fear its bad debts may trigger a bank crisis in Italy and euro-zone turmoil. Italy's number-three bank, BMPS, has taken a hammering on the stock market this week after the European Central Bank told it to slash its bad debts, its shares plunging 14 percent on Monday and by nearly 20 percent on Tuesday.

But expectations that a solution may be underway boosted them by 14 percent early Wednesday, and a ban by the stock market regulator on speculation also helped the rebound. With gross bad loans amounting to 46.9 billion euros (\$52 billion), BMPS, is at the forefront of concerns about the fragile balance sheets of Italian banks, which are weighed down by 360 billion euros in bad debt. The situation has come to a head as Britain's shock vote to leave the European Union has reduced expectations for growth, and thus the ability of Italian banks to handle their debt burdens.

The demand by the ECB has raised the heat on BMPS, but Europe's banking regulator is expected to release its health checks on banks later this month and which could mean other Italian lenders will have their feet to the fire. A huge bad debt burden is poison for the economy as it restricts the amount of money that banks can lend to businesses, thus holding back growth. The Italian economy has been ticking along with tepid if any growth the past few years, failing to recover much ground lost following the global economic and euro-zone crises.

Italy has tried

Italy has been trying to tackle the bad debt issue but it poses political as well as economic difficulties for the government of Prime Minister Matteo Renzi. He has been hamstrung by new euro-zone rules with restrict bailing out banks with public money without requiring investors to also bear part of the burden.

That is particularly difficult in Italy as bonds issued by banks have been popular among small investors looking for interest income given the ultralow rates. An effort to restructure four banks angered small investors who lost part of their funds. The government then organized the creation of the 4.25-billion-euro Atlante fund backed by private funds to take bad loans off banks. When banks sell bad loans, they usually do so at a fraction of the original amount, thus forcing them to realize a huge loss and usually requiring investors to pump more capital into the bank so it can meet regulations to resume lending.

German block

Given the poor economic outlook, finding willing investors can become difficult. As the value of Italian bank shares have fallen by over half since the start of the year, existing investors have to pump in large sums or see their existing stakes diluted considerably. Renzi has sought an exemption to allow a state bailout of banks, but Germany has opposed rewriting the rulebook every time there is a new problem. Italy is in negotiations with the ECB and the European Commission to find a way forward and avoid taking the path that even — AFP



SIENA: Picture shows the headquarters of Monte Dei Paschi di Siena bank in Siena, in the Italian region of Tuscany. — AFP

SHAREHOLDERS LOSE OUT IN CHINA TAKEOVER FIGHT

A DEMONSTRATION OF DYSFUNCTIONALITY AND VESTED INTERESTS

BEIJING: Shares in China's biggest property company plunged this week as it returned to trading after a six-month suspension engineered by bosses trying to fight off what would be the country's first hostile blue-chip takeover. The drop has wiped billions off China Vanke's market capitalization-hitting its shareholders, rather than the board seeking to preserve its control over the firm.

Analysts say it is a demonstration of both the dysfunctionality of China's stock markets and the power of vested interests in the world's second-largest economy—even in the private sector, seen as the best hope for renewed growth. "Retail investors are unable to make changes," Li Daokui, a professor at Tsinghua University in Beijing, told AFP, while large shareholders would "rather keep silent and do nothing." "Now someone has finally come out and said they are willing to buy shares at a higher price to restructure a company. "Companies like this are what our stock market needs."

The saga centers on China Vanke, founded in 1984 by chairman Wang Shi, now 65, an acclaimed entrepreneur who has reached the summit of Mount Everest and trekked to the North and South Poles. It was only the second company to list on the Shenzhen stock exchange. Wang and his executives currently hold just around 0.2 percent of the firm, but retain a tight grip on it by virtue of their positions. They have

been hailed as one of China's most outstanding management teams. Revenues have ballooned around 50 times since 2000 to 195 billion yuan (\$29 billion) last year, when net profits jumped 15 percent despite the country's growth slowdown and stuttering property market.

But Vanke's market capitalization of 211 billion yuan is just over a third of its 611 billion yuan in assets. With an eye on its valuable land bank, private conglomerate Baoneng began buying shares in Vanke last year, becoming its largest shareholder in December with a 24.26 per cent stake. Then Vanke asked for its dual-listed shares to be suspended in Shenzhen and Hong Kong, blocking Baoneng from any further purchases and denying investors the opportunity to sell.

After six months, Vanke in June finally announced a 45.6 billion yuan asset swap and restructuring that would see state-owned subway operator Shenzhen Metro Group overtake Baoneng as its biggest shareholder, in an attempt to sideline the raider. Baoneng tried to eject Wang and Vanke's senior management, but the directors were backed by another major Vanke shareholder, state-owned conglomerate China Resources—even though it opposed the restructuring deal as it would dilute its own stake. Trading in Vanke resumed in Shenzhen on Monday and immediately plunged by the 10 percent daily limit, and again on Tuesday.

'Barbarian invasion'

China enjoyed a decades-long boom that saw become the world's second-largest economy on the back of infrastructure investment and exports. Now growth is slowing and it needs to tackle inefficiencies that have built up over time, but could be ignored in the days of double-digit expansion. In an effort to do so, the Communist party has pledged to give the market the "decisive role" in the allocation of capital. But reform has been slow, particularly in state-owned enterprises and the vibrant and volatile stock exchanges, with individuals and organizations whose position is threatened by change looking to protect themselves. A Vanke director called Baoneng's share purchases a "barbarian invasion", and chairman Wang derided its debt-funded moves as a "gambling act".

Vanke's bonds were the highest-rated among world property companies in recent years, he said in a December internal speech, according to a transcript on Chinese news portal Sina, which helped keep the company's financing costs "extremely low". "Once Baoneng comes in as a major shareholder, its background is likely to affect Vanke's ratings," he said. Some economists criticize Wang and his team for seeking to avoid the discipline of the market. "Looking at the bigger picture, the dispute over control reflects economic transformation and the transformation of the property industry," said Tsinghua University's Li. — AFP

SMALL RULES TO RUN HIGHLY EFFECTIVE STAFF MEETINGS

Touch base, get together, round table. Whatever you call it, the staff meeting is a crucial element in any organization's life. According to the Bayt.com 'Meetings in the Workplace' survey, September 2014, eight out of 10 professionals in the Middle East and North Africa say that meetings in their company are an excellent way to reach decisions. Of course, there are bad meetings and good meetings, and avoiding to end up with a lot of unproductive 'blah blahblah' is easier said than done. Here, the career experts at Bayt.com, the Middle East's leading job site, give you 7 small rules to run highly effective staff meetings and make the most of everyone's precious time:

Detailed objectives

The first golden rule for a successful meeting is easier than you might think: get ready for it. Preparing in advance will make you able to put together an agenda you can easily share with your employees before the meeting takes place. In this way you are providing a sufficient background information and attendees will have a clear idea of what the meeting is all about - and ultimately feel all on the same page. In fact, according to the Bayt.com 'Meetings in the Workplace' survey, 80% of professionals say that they have agendas on hand before a meeting.

Make an attendee list

Imagine this is an ordinary corporate event, such as a conference or even the launch of a new product. Likewise, you need a list of people attending the staff meeting. To narrow down the list, you can use the criteria of 'relevance and contribution', so that only those who are sincerely interested in the topic and willing to contribute with their judgment and knowledge will get around the table.

Keep track of the discussion

Taking written minutes is a good strategy to keep a record of the meeting and of its key points. You can have one person specially designated to recording and sharing the most relevant information with the attendees once the meeting is over.

Make room for question

Smart questions are the fuel of produc-

tive meetings. You can appoint a meeting leader to ensure everyone gets a say. Off-topic questions won't be admitted - floor open to constructive and originaive inputs only.

Monitor time

It's scientifically proved: endless meetings that drag on and on are not as efficient as short meetings are. Don't let the attendees scratch their head about why it's taking too long. Considering that the maximum attention span to stay fully engaged is less than 1 hour, keeping your session around 30 minutes will be a good compromise between your expectations and your employee's time. In fact, the Bayt.com 'Meetings in the Workplace' survey shows that only 52% of companies finish meetings on time.

Take time for a recap

Dedicating the last 5 or 10 minutes recapping decisions and action points is the best thing you can do to make your meetings truly effective. Remind everyone of the decisions that were made and the steps to be taken in the future. Also, you can spend few words to highlight how gathering and discussing together was a breeding ground for new ideas. Who said that staff meetings are just parking lots?

Follow up

This is the most underestimated habits of the after-meeting. Yet, it's only when you follow up until you achieve the desired results and reach a solution that you can say to have run a successful, highly effective meeting. Don't forget a 'thank you' note to show your appreciation to each employee who participated and made all this beautifully happen.

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ISTANBUL: Syrian and Turkish people walk in a street next to shops with Arabic letters in Fatih neighborhood in Istanbul. Receptionist, waiter, hairdresser, pastry-seller: These are the jobs of the young Syrians who abandoned their dreams in Damascus to start from scratch in Istanbul. — AFP

'ODD JOBS' IN ISTANBUL FOR SYRIANS WHO DREAMED BIG

ISTANBUL: Receptionist, waiter, hairdresser, pastry-seller: These are the jobs of the ambitious young Syrians who abandoned their dreams in Damascus to start from scratch in Istanbul. In Fatih, a densely-packed neighborhood that serves as a hub for Arabs in Turkey's biggest city, the traces of home are everywhere. The delicate scent of Aleppo's famous soap floats out of storefronts, mingling with the enticing aromas of the pistachio and almond pastries sold throughout Syria. Rafik carefully piles a kilo of sticky baklava into a cardboard box bearing the legend "Treats from Damascus" in Arabic. "I designed the logo for the shop and the packaging myself," says the 27-year-old-a brief return to the creativity of his former days as an artisan wood carver.

"I always fought to study what I wanted. I was passionate about it and nothing could turn me away from art and design." But that was before the war that has been ravaging his homeland since 2011 and before the army of Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad began calling up young men like him for conscription. "It wasn't bombs that I fled-it was the possibility of becoming one of those people throwing the bombs," says Rafik, who like other refugees would only give his first name. Further

up the road, Ahmad dozes in the summer heat at the restaurant where he waits tables, before the arrival of the first customers after the Ramadan fast ends at nightfall.

"My parents gave everything so I could do my accountancy studies," says the 24-year-old, whose sad eyes don't match his bright smile. "Today I find myself far from them, in a country where I haven't mastered the language and where, as a waiter, I have to do everything in the restaurant." But Ahmad has no regrets over his decision to head to Istanbul two years ago-even though he earns only 900 Turkish lira (\$310, 280 euros) a month as a waiter and has to share a flat with three other Syrians to cover the rent. "I had the choice between war and exile, and I didn't even hesitate," he says.

'We have no country'

Turkey has taken in 2.7 million people from neighboring Syria since the start of the brutal conflict. Ankara has refused to grant them official refugee status, referring to them as "guests", though President Recep Tayyip Erdogan signaled recently that they could eventually be granted citizenship. Very few have work permits and many

struggle to eke out a living on odd jobs.

Around a tenth live in refugee camps, the rest in towns and cities-including some 350,000 who have come to Istanbul. Nour, 26, arrived in the city alone a few months ago and now works as a receptionist in a language school founded by a fellow Syrian. She won't go into details about what pushed her to leave behind her "family, work and love life", saying simply that she left for "ideological reasons". "I know I'm luckier than a lot of other Syrians who live in tents or who beg in the street, but that's not enough to make me happy here," she says, her voice cracking.

But she expresses pride at how young Syrians in Istanbul are doing their best to fit in. "I feel like I can be useful to my compatriots here," she said. "Since our country can't offer us anything anymore, we have to adapt to the Turks who have welcomed us and learn their language. "Our students are mainly young Syrians in their 20s and 30s. They are very motivated and in less than six months they're getting by in Turkish." Maher, a 29-year-old hairdresser, learnt his Turkish on the Internet. "It's quick and really efficient. If you're motivated you can do anything," he says. — AFP

MODI STARTS AFRICAN TOUR

MAPUTO: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi kicked off a four-nation tour of Africa, as India scrambles to catch up with its Asian rival China which has a strong presence across the continent. His first stop was Mozambique where he vowed to be "a trusted friend" after talks with President Filipe Nyusi in Maputo and announced a raft of cooperation agreements.

He will also take in South Africa, Tanzania and Kenya over his five-day trip. "Mozambique's strengths are also the areas of India's need. And what Mozambique requires is available in India," Modi said. "In Mozambique's march towards economic prosperity, India will walk every step of the way. "We will be a trusted friend in your development and a reliable partner." Modi, the first Indian leader to visit Mozambique in 34 years, said the two countries would work together

on agriculture, defence, security and health-care. He later visited a technological centre that provides training for start-ups.

India has been working to build ties with African nations as it vies for a greater share of the continent's natural resources. Last year, it hosted a summit of Africa's heads of state in New Delhi. Its economic footprint in Africa is dwarfed by that of China, whose trade with the continent topped \$200 billion last year. India is gaining ground, however, led by private entrepreneurs with a keen interest in the continent's burgeoning energy sector. But relations between India and the continent have been strained by alleged racism, with African ambassadors recently claiming after the murder of a Congolese teacher that Africans in Delhi live in a "permeating climate of fear". — AFP



JOHANNESBURG: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi (center) greets member of the Durban Indian community flanked by Gandhi granddaughter Ela Gandhi (back center) at the Gandhi settlement in Phoenix, Durban yesterday. — AFP

RUSTY BOAT MAINTAINS A LIFELINE IN WAR-TORN UKRAINE

ZHOVTE: A rusty boat crossing a calm river in separatist east Ukraine is all that enables hundreds of people living in rebel-held territory to pick up pensions and vital supplies from the government side. The illegal operation across the 50-metre (165-foot) wide Siverskiy Donets is run by a boatsman who charges pocket change from the 500 people who travel back and forth each month while battle-hardened fighters watch.

He operates the boat-made of metal with room for two or three people — by pulling his old vessel by hand with the help of a rope attached to each side of the shore. The lazy stream is part of an informal border splitting the pro-Russian separatist regions of Lugansk and Donetsk from the rest of the Western-backed former Soviet republic. There are only five legal crossing points along the 500-kilometre line of contact between the well-fortified forces.

The limit is aimed at keeping insurgents from infiltrating Kiev-controlled regions and spreading a 26-month conflict that has claimed more than 9,400 lives and driven another two million from their homes. But even those few openings along the heavily-mined front are often closed because of shelling from heavy weapons that were due to have been withdrawn under the terms of a tattered peace deal signed in February 2015.

It has left people like Valentyna—a pen-

sioner who lives near the rebels' checkpoint in Zhovte—no choice but to use this relatively peaceful spot of the Lugansk region to pick up essentials like medicine and government handouts. "Both sides let us through because they know we go for our pensions," Valentyna says. "Before the war, there was a ferry and a pedestrian bridge across the river, but that bridge was destroyed by the fighting," she adds.

'Tacit agreement'

An unspoken set of rules has been established between the sworn foes fighting on each side to let the civilians through. An insurgent who identifies himself by the nom de guerre Chekh lays down his Kalashnikov rifle each time he approaches the pier. "We see each other throughout the day and have a sort of tacit agreement not to initiate hostilities," the 30-year-old said. "It is quiet along our part of the front. But a little further down, there were three deaths the other day. There are constant provocations," Chekh says.

Lugansk is the smaller of the two separatist regions in Ukraine and has only one legal crossing point that is often crowded with cars and buses waiting long hours while the opposing camps' guards check the required identity documents. This makes passageways like the one across Siverskiy Donets essential for those trying to make end meets

during one of Europe's deadliest conflicts in decades. "We let everyone through. We just check their papers," said a rebel fighter in a Cossack hat who identified himself only as Alexander. "For us this crossing is legal, but the Ukrainians sometimes shut it down."

Students and smugglers

Some adults and children also use the old boat to get to work or school. "About 30 people make the crossing every day," Alexander says after letting through two girls returning from classes on the rebels' side of the river to their village near the Kiev-held bank. Ukrainian soldiers usually turn a blind eye on the small trickle of people who break the rules set out by Kiev.

But they do on occasion spot more suspicious people who use the passage to carry goods they buy on the Ukrainian side and then resell at a profit in their impoverished separatist-controlled village. "We often catch smugglers who transport goods by boat," Ukrainian border guard Ruslan Grekh says. "The soldiers let the civilians through but this is not official." The tenuous situation has people like the pensioner Valentyna worried that either side may soon crack down on the illegal crossings and make life for them more painful still. "In that case, I will just lose my pension," says Valentyna. "I understand that this is a war, but war does not feed the elderly." —AFP



ZHOVTE: A boatman crosses the Siverskiy Donets river in Zhovte village, Lugansk region. A rusty boat crosses a quiet river in separatist eastern Ukraine is all that enables hundreds who live in this rebel-held village to pick up pensions from the government side.—AFP

OLD S AFRICA MEDIA GIANT RIDES GLOBAL WEB WAVE

JOHANNESBURG: With a history harking back to the apartheid era, South African media giant Naspers has evolved into the biggest company on the continent, with investments spanning the world. The Cape Town-based firm, valued at a little under a trillion rand (about \$64 billion), has grown from a small newspaper publisher into a global multimedia and e-commerce investor with an appetite for emerging markets. Its internet ventures contributed 68 percent to full year revenue for the period ended 31 March 2016, with its main measure of profit jumping 21 percent to \$1.2 billion, the company said.

Founded in 1915 as Die Nasionale Pers (The National Press), the company initially published newspapers in Afrikaans, the language spoken by the descendants of Dutch immigrants in South Africa. Its media and publishing arm, Media24, still controls South Africa's Afrikaans press-in line with its founding concept of promoting the Afrikaner identity.

"Naspers was initially founded to promote Afrikaner nationalism... during a difficult time in the history of Afrikaners," who had lost their independent republics to British control, said Lizette Rabe, a media historian at Stellenbosch University. "They have always been innovative with forward thinking strategies... Maybe that is why their past political alliances have not affected them." Naspers's Afrikaans newspapers were strongly supportive of the National Party, the apartheid party that enforced white supremacist policies before collapsing when the country's first democratic election brought black majority rule in 1994.

Apartheid legacy

During an event marking Naspers's centenary last year, Media24 chief executive Esmare Weideman took the unexpected step of apologizing for the company's role in apartheid. "We acknowledge complicity in a morally indefensible political regime and the hurtful way in which this played out in our newsrooms and boardrooms," she said. Rabe believes the apology from the company, which now boasts more than 80 newspapers in English and Afrikaans as well as 60 magazine titles, was an "obligation" given its past. "It was morally imperative to do so," Rabe said.

The internet boom in Asia has been one of Naspers's key growth drivers, and the company looks set to capitalize on the booming use of the technology in Africa. One of its best investments has been Tencent, a Hong Kong-listed firm

now described as one of the world's largest internet companies, in which it holds a 34 percent stake. With more than a billion users of messaging services such as WeChat, Tencent revenues were up 36 percent, spurred by mobile growth and advertising. Naspers first bought into Tencent in 2001, three years after it was founded, and the gains from its stake have made Naspers Africa's biggest company by market capitalization.

"Naspers' acquisition moves are well calculated and the company is not afraid of going into lesser-known territories," said Owen Nkomo, chief executive of Inkunzi Investments.

Progressive outlook

"This is one South African company that has become a dominant global player in the media and internet scene," Nkomo said. "Their link with the apartheid regime is no longer relevant today. 'What matters is value to shareholders.'" Robust investment in online entertainment and e-commerce companies has extended its footprint to more than 120 countries across Latin America, Asia, Europe and Africa. "The risks have paid off," said Nkomo, adding that China was a difficult landscape to penetrate.

He cautioned that although Naspers was reaping the rewards of its Tencent investment, any changes in internet regulations in China could adversely affect the company. Naspers ventured into Russia in 2007, taking a 29 percent shareholding in Mail.ru, an enterprise that runs VKontakte, Russia's Facebook-style social network. It also owns a majority stake in e-commerce business Avito. Delivering annual results last month, chairman Koos Bekker said the firm would "continue seeking new growth opportunities". As a pioneering satellite television provider, through its subsidiaries Multichoice and Multichoice Africa, the firm enjoys a lion's share of the pay-TV market in sub-Saharan Africa.

The cable television company has the sole rights to broadcast the popular English Premier League, along with the German Bundesliga and other major European leagues. Last year it launched a video-on-demand service, Showmax, as a rival to Netflix. "The whole company is structured around entrepreneurship," said Nadim Mohamed, investment analyst at First Avenue Investment Management. "They have taken full advantage of opportunities in emerging markets and the bulk of their money comes from outside the country." Naspers is the fourth largest listing on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange after multinational giants Anheuser-Busch InBev, British American Tobacco and SABMiller.—AFP

TESLA MOTORS HITS SPEED BUMPS IN RACE TO CONQUER AUTO MARKET

TESLA SLASHES ITS 2016 DELIVERY TARGETS

NEW YORK: Tesla Motors' goal of shaking up the automobile industry has hit a fresh speed bump as disappointing car production suggests a longer wait before it reaches profitability. Already facing questions over a fatal crash involving its self-driving system and a controversial proposed merger with ailing solar power firm SolarCity, Tesla has now slashed its 2016 delivery targets after second-quarter output lagged behind expectations.

Tesla delivered just 14,370 vehicles in the second quarter, below the 17,000 originally forecast, according to figures released over the weekend. As a result, Tesla trimmed its full-year delivery forecasts to 79,000 from the prior range of 80,000 to 90,000. The revised targets further cloud the record of Tesla and its founder Elon Musk, who has vowed to remake America's roads by mainstreaming the electric cars.

Earlier this year, Musk announced an ambitious goal of producing 500,000 electric cars a year by 2018, which would take in from being a niche producer of luxury sedans to a mainstream competitor in the auto industry. Tesla shares dropped 1.2 percent Tuesday to \$213.98. "While we are modestly disappointed by the number, we are not shocked," said a note from

Deutsche Bank. "This is not the first time Tesla has missed an aggressive target." Deutsche Bank had projected that Tesla would generate a modest profit in 2016. But it now sees another loss following the disappointing deliveries. "We are not sure whether Tesla has overcome production challenges," Deutsche said.

Questions over fatal crash

The weak figures come on the heels of news last week that US auto safety regulators opened a preliminary investigation into Tesla's Autopilot self-driving technology after a fatal crash in Florida involving a Model S. Preliminary reports indicated that the crash happened when a tractor-trailer made a left turn in front of the Tesla at an intersection. Tesla said neither the driver nor the self-drive system noticed the truck and the vehicle ran under the truck, killing the Tesla driver. Some auto experts said the accident showed Tesla was deploying self-driving mechanisms before they are ready. "My concern is that this was an avoidable accident," said Mary Cummings, who heads the Humans and Autonomy Laboratory at Duke University. "My concern is that this will set the industry back."

Tesla maintains that Autopilot has been

extensively tested and improved as problems have been addressed. The Florida accident is the first known fatality in over 130 million miles driven, it said, whereas among all vehicles, there is a known fatality every 94 million miles. Tesla has also encountered criticism over a proposed \$2.7 billion acquisition of SolarCity, renewable energy company in which Musk has a large stake. The deal, which would unify two companies that together lost \$1.6 billion in 2015, has raised questions about conflict of interest because of the involvement of Musk in both companies.

Tesla has said the deal would make Tesla-bringing together electric cars, rechargeable battery technology, and solar installation—a leader across all clean energy. Despite the hits, some analysts are still betting on Tesla and Musk, who is promising success with the launch next year of the Model 3 electric car, which is priced towards the middle market. "Our investment thesis remains intact," said Trip Chowdhry of Global Equities Research. "Tesla is creating a new industry." As electric car costs decline, "we continue to believe Tesla has the potential to disrupt the auto industry," Deutsche Bank said.—AFP

BELGRADE DEMOLITIONS DEEPEN FEARS OVER WATERFRONT PLANS

BELGRADE: For 26 years, Vladimir Markovic ran his family transportation business in the heart of Belgrade's Savamala district. Then, two months ago, it was demolished without warning overnight. His office was one of several buildings abruptly knocked down on April 24 by mysterious masked men, making way for a massive riverside development that aims to transform the Balkan city.

Authorities say the \$3 billion (2.7-billion-euro) project, led by Abu Dhabi-based developer Eagle Hills, will generate thousands of jobs and much-needed investment, as well as revamping rundown parts of the banks of the River Danube for public use. The grand plans include the Western Balkans' biggest shopping mall, a 200-metre-tall (656-foot) Dubai-style tower, high-end hotels, office blocks and luxury apartments.

But to opponents in the protest movement "Ne Davimo Beograd" (Don't Drown Belgrade), the shady April demolitions epitomize all that is wrong with the scheme. "For the last few years we have been trying to warn the public that what's happening with the project is really done... in a non-democratic way and a corruptive, violent way," said Ljubica Slavkovic, a leading protester and architect. Witnesses quoted by local media said balaclava-wearing men tied up onlookers and took their mobile phones as bulldozers demolished the buildings, while police refused calls for help.

Markovic said he was never contacted about his office being knocked down, then "all of a sudden we found rubble," he said. Prime Minister Aleksandar Vucic initially branded the masked men "idiots" for their behavior, but said the buildings had been scheduled for demolition. Six weeks later, under growing pressure, he said "top city authorities" were responsible and would be held accountable, but he stopped short of giving any names.

Growing protests

The affair has emboldened protests against the waterfront project, with thousands taking to the streets in recent weeks demanding the resignations of those responsible for the nighttime incident. Protesters also allege a lack of public consultation and hasty changes to plan-

ning laws for the project, which is set to transform a two-million square meter area over a 30-year period. They fear an arts and nightlife hotspot in Savamala could be at risk, and that citizens will end up footing much of the project's bill. According to the contract, Eagle Hills will invest only 300 million euros, half of

which is a loan to the Serbian government for preparing infrastructure. "Public goods and public resources are being taken to be given, to be used, as a profit for a group of individuals who are in power or close to those in power," said Slavkovic.

Behind closed doors

Premier Vucic has repeatedly rejected concerns about the project, which is a top priority of his government. He accuses opponents of being "paid from abroad" to destroy it as part of a campaign against him. Eagle Hills did not reply to AFP's repeated requests to comment. One of the first phases of the project, a riverside promenade stretching over 1,000 meters, is already being enjoyed by cyclists, walkers and rollerbladers. "We really insisted a lot... the first things that should be done in this project should not be the big towers, big shopping malls, et cetera but it should be the public areas," said Milutin Folic, Belgrade's director of city planning. "We want the city and the citizens to have benefits."

Opening up riverside

Folic said the project was the culmination of a decades-old plan to remove railway infrastructure and open up brownfield areas, allowing the city to stretch down to its riverside. "We are just adding a little bit of investment to finish what was started a long time ago," he said, insisting historical buildings would be preserved and increase in value. Sceptics nevertheless fear that the flashy architectural proposals are inconsistent with Belgrade's character. An association of prominent Serbian architects has issued a declaration urging the government to stop the project, warning that "there is no identity there." But Folic, also an architect, dismissed such concerns as a matter of taste. "Although I would maybe do it differently, I personally think that this project and this plan fit perfectly," he said.—AFP



BELGRADE: Photo shows the construction site of the Belgrade waterfront project. Authorities say the \$3 billion (2.7-billion-euro) project, led by Abu Dhabi-based developer Eagle Hills, will generate thousands of jobs and much-needed investment, as well as revamping rundown parts of the banks of the River Danube for public use.—AFP



BELGRADE: Protesters hold a banner written in Serbian and reading 'Don't drown Belgrade' during a protest against the Belgrade waterfront project in Belgrade.—AFP

CASTRO ADMITS CUBANS FACE HARD TIMES AS ECONOMY SLOWS SHARPLY

HAVANA: President Raul Castro told Cubans on Friday to brace for tough times because the Communist-run country must cut spending and energy supply as it deals with a cash crunch and reduced oil imports from ally Venezuela. Cuban economic growth slowed to 1 percent in the first half of this year from 4.7 percent in the same period of 2015, Castro told the mid-year session of the National Assembly. This was half of what the government had forecast.

The economic outlook throughout Latin America has weakened due to lower commodity prices. Castro's warning came at a time when Cuban expectations are high due to economic reforms and warming relations with the United States. "Rumors and forecasts of an imminent collapse of our economy with a return to the acute phase of the Special Period... have started to appear," Castro said according to a copy of his speech provided by the country's official news agency Prensa Latina. Foreign journalists are barred from the assembly.

He was referring to the years after Cuba's biggest benefactor, the Soviet Union, collapsed. During that time, in the early 1990s, Cubans had to cope with widespread power outages and food shortages. "We cannot deny there will be some impact, including worse than currently, but we are prepared and in better conditions than

then to revert it." Public offices and state-run companies have already cut work hours and are limiting the use of air-conditioning, workers have said. Cinemas have cut the number of film screenings, and petrol stations are running out of fuel more frequently than in the past few years. Castro said Cuba was struggling to pay foreign suppliers on time, and thanked them for their "confidence and understanding of the transitory situation we are in." He reiterated the government is determined to pay the suppliers, even if delayed. Cuba had at least been able to fulfill its international debt obligations, Castro said. "We will not give up the aim of continuing to reestablish international credibility in the Cuban economy," he said.

Venezuelan fuel

Lower commodities prices are battering Cuban exports of nickel, refined oil products and sugar, while revenue from the sale of professional services to oil-producing countries such as Venezuela and Angola has suffered, Castro said on Friday. He said the economic crisis in Venezuela was affecting its oil supply to Cuba. Reuters reported earlier on Friday that Venezuelan shipments of crude oil and refined products to the island nation had declined around 20 percent in the first half of this year.—Reuters

MURDER IN INDIA SPARKS REPRISALS IN KINSHASA



KINSHASA: People walk outside the shut doors of a shop owned by businessmen of Indian origins in the Ngaba district in Kinshasa. The death of a Congolese woman in Hyderabad at the hand of her Indian husband who was suspecting her of adultery ignited the reaction of residents in Kinshasa who pelted the shops in an attempt lynching their Indian owners, rescued by the police. —AFP

KINSHASA: Indian traders in Kinshasa stayed indoors and shuttered their shops on Friday after the murder of a Congolese woman in India prompted violent reprisals in the city. On Thursday, residents in one of the Congolese capital's poorest neighborhoods responded to the news of the killing of one of their compatriots in the northern Indian city of Hyderabad by attacking Indian-owned shops.

In reports widely circulated on social media in Congo, Indian newspapers on Wednesday said an Indian man killed his wife, Cynthia Vechel, whom he accused of adultery, and cut up her body in an effort to conceal the crime. The next morning, at Ngaba roundabout, in one of Kinshasa's poorest districts, residents threw stones at several Indian-owned shops and tried to lynch some of their owners, according to several

witnesses. "We want to avenge our sister," said a street hawker who only gave his name as Rodrigue. As in many African countries, much of Congo's retail sector, especially for clothes, cosmetics and electrical goods, is dominated by traders of Indian origin.

On Friday, all stalls run by Indians were closed for the second day in a row. Anti-Indian sentiment also surfaced in May, following the murder of a young Congolese teacher by three Indians in New Delhi. This prompted Congolese authorities to urge citizens not to take the law into their own hands by attacking Indians. "There haven't been any riots but tension is high," said Indian shopworker Blanchard Mwadi, adding the Indian community was mostly staying indoors. Modi started a four-nation African tour on Thursday in an effort in an effort to catch up with

China's strong economic presence on the continent.

This week's incidents took place against a backdrop of widespread economic frustration and political uncertainty, as Kinshasa resident David explained. "It's all the government's fault. This government doesn't care about its people," he said. "If they want to stay in power, they need to think about the people, but they don't: living conditions are terrible, inflation is through the roof and spending is being cut. It's serious, he added. President Joseph Kabila, who has been in power since 2001, is widely believed to be considering casting aside the constitution to take a third term in office after his tenure expires at the end of the year. "We are worried the country could flare up," said trader Elie Nkunda. "People could say 'let's be done with it' any time." —AFP

US ECONOMY LOOKS STRONG WITH '287,000 JOBS ADDED'

A CLEAR DEMONSTRATION OF ECONOMIC RESILIENCE

WASHINGTON: US employers added new workers at a surprisingly strong rate in June after an unnerving stall in May, in a clear demonstration of economic resilience, the Labor Department reported Friday. The much better-than-expected numbers gave a boost to markets in the US and Europe, which have been battered down by worries that Britain's vote to withdraw from the European Union will drag down economic growth. Private business-

tion and retail sales sectors, while government hiring also picked up. That largely compensated for the poor numbers from May that had shocked policymakers and markets, sending the dollar lower and contributing to the Federal Reserve's decision last month to put off an interest rate hike. The May job creation numbers in fact were revised downward in Friday's data from the original 38,000 reported to just 11,000.

nothing spectacular. It suggests that hiring has taken a step down since late last year but that job growth is still strong enough to absorb slack in the labor market," said analysts at Nomura Global Economics in a client note. "Most important, today's report quells any concerns of a broader economic slowdown in the US." Markets reacted positively, with the S&P 500 surging 1.5 percent to a fraction shy of an all-time record. In Europe,

least once before the end of the year, early in the session the dollar jumped and US bond yields, which had plunged in recent weeks, spiked higher. But by the end of the day the dollar had retrenched to \$1.1050 per euro, only slightly up from Thursday. And the yield on the 10-year Treasury bond fell to a new all-time low of 1.366 percent. The jobs numbers were not unequivocally good. Wage growth, another indicator of economic strength, slowed slightly, bringing the annual pace for the last three months to 2.5 percent, compared with the 12-month rate of 2.6 percent.

And the unemployment rate, which is based on a separate database from the job creation numbers, rose by 0.2 percentage points to 4.9 percent, though still near the lowest level in more than eight years. That rise was mainly due to a large jump in the number of people reported rejoining the workforce, diluting the impact of the hiring surge on the jobless rate. In May the unemployment rate had fallen from 5.0 percent to 4.7 percent after the volatile data showed a huge number of people had dropped out of the labor force.

Brexit remains a worry

Analysts remained cautious over what the hiring surge means for the economy going ahead, saying US businesses could remain cautious in the coming months, concerned Britain's vote to withdraw from the European Union, which is expected to hit economic growth in Britain and Europe. "We believe the trend remains more than strong enough to keep the unemployment rate declining over time, consistent with additional upward pressure on wage gains," said Jim O'Sullivan, chief US economist at High Frequency Economics. But O'Sullivan expects the Federal Reserve will continue to keep US interest rates on hold at its end-July meeting. —AFP



WASHINGTON: A maintenance worker cleans The Court of Neptune fountain in front of the Library of Congress in Washington, DC. US employers added 287,000 jobs in June, a strong rebound from May's unnerving plunge in hiring, delivering a fresh sign of US economic strength. —AFP

es and government authorities across the United States generated 287,000 new positions last month, 112,000 more than analysts had expected.

The strongest hiring was in the health care, hospitality, informa-

US, Europe markets surge

June's hiring levels boosted the monthly average of the last three months to a solid 147,000, which economists say is adequate to keep bringing down unemployment overall. "This is a good trend but

Frankfurt's DAX index gained 2.2 percent Paris's CAC 40 added 1.8 percent, while in London the FTSE 100 barometer rose 0.9 percent.

As analysts said the data increases the chances that the Federal Reserve will raise interest rates at

APPLE, MICROSOFT, HP AMONG FIRMS SHUNNING REPUBLICAN CONVENTION

SAN FRANCISCO: Donald Trump has promised to live up this year's Republican National Convention. But some of America's biggest corporations are bailing on the party. Apple recently became the latest company to give the GOP's presumptive nominee the cold shoulder; it won't contribute money or products to the Republicans' big shindig in Cleveland this month. HP Inc. is also withholding support, while Microsoft is giving products only, not cash. Beyond the tech industry, Ford, JPMorgan Chase and United Parcel Service have opted to withhold support. Most of these companies are also taking a pass on donating to the 2016 Democratic convention. In previous election cycles, though, several of them have given Republican organizers more - sometimes far more - in cash or donated products than they have the Democrats, making their pullback from the Republican gathering this year more dramatic.

Why companies are uneasy

The reasons aren't completely clear. None of these companies publicly described its decisions as a repudiation of Trump. Several declined to discuss their thinking, while others said their sponsorship plans were decided months before Trump emerged as the front-runner for the GOP nomination. In many cases, however, their decisions became known after civil rights groups launched a public effort - including billboards, letters and online messages - aimed at persuading companies to withhold support for an event celebrating a candidate who's campaigned with incendiary proposals, racial rhetoric and harsh comments about immigrants and women.

"Of course it's because of Trump," said Larry Sabato, a University of Virginia political scientist who has studied party conventions for more than 30 years. Business executives, he said, don't want to alienate

customers who may be offended by Trump's statements. "Just as candidates don't get votes from people they insult," he said, "corporations don't get business from people they insult." Even so, Republican convention organizers say their fundraising is going well. More than 100 donors have contributed a total of \$57.5 million, or about 90 percent of what's needed, said Emily Lauer of the Cleveland 2016 Host Committee. She declined to provide a list of sponsors. Trump's campaign did not respond to requests for comment.

Apple and Republicans

Apple made headlines after Politico reported the tech giant won't support the GOP convention because of Trump's divisive statements. Apple declined to comment on its plans for either convention this year, although Lauer confirmed to The Associated Press that the company isn't a sponsor for the GOP gathering. A spokeswoman for Democratic organizers declined to comment. Apple CEO Tim Cook has publicly supported diversity and fair treatment of immigrants. Trump, meanwhile, has publicly blasted the company for manufacturing its products abroad and for resisting FBI demands to help unlock an encrypted iPhone used by an extremist killer in San Bernardino, California.

As if to underscore that Apple's dispute is with Trump, but not the GOP, Cook hosted a California fundraiser for House Speaker Paul Ryan and other congressional Republicans last week. Ryan has endorsed Trump, but opposed his call to temporarily ban foreign Muslims from entering the country and criticized a Trump remark as "the textbook definition of a racist comment." Apple hasn't been a big cash donor to past conventions, although it gave \$165,000 in computers and other tech gear for the 2008 GOP

gathering and \$140,000 worth of products to that year's Democratic event. It also loaned iPhones to organizers of the 2012 Republican convention.

Down in the valley

Another well-known tech company, Hewlett-Packard, gave a total of \$1 million in cash and tech gear for the two previous GOP conventions. While organizers of the 2012 Democratic convention didn't accept corporate cash, HP gave \$100,000 to the Democrats' gathering in 2008. HP has since split into two corporations; neither is donating to either convention this year. Meg Whitman, the chairman of HP Inc. and CEO of spinoff Hewlett Packard Enterprise, has been a prominent Republican fundraiser over the years. But she has called Trump "a dishonest demagogue" and said his nomination would be disastrous for the party.

Not every Silicon Valley company has followed suit. Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg has criticized Trump's proposal for a wall on the Mexican border to block illegal immigration. But his company said it's providing "financial and other support" to both conventions. Google said it will be the official "livestream provider" of online video from both events. Microsoft said in April that it's providing tech products to both party conventions this year but will give cash - it hasn't said how much - only to the Democratic event. Microsoft has made hefty donations to past Republican conventions. It gave \$815,000 in cash and more than \$700,000 in products in 2012, while providing \$1.3 million in cash and products to the Republican gathering in 2008. By contrast, Microsoft has given less support to previous Democratic gatherings. It provided \$71,000 in software for the 2012 Democratic convention and \$640,000 worth of products in 2008. —AP



KFH LAUNCHES NEW BANKING CARDS MARKETING CAMPAIGN

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) launched a new marketing campaign themed "Use KFH Cards and You May Win up to 2 Mercedes-Benz SUV's and Cash Prizes up to \$200000" in an attempt to encourage clients to use KFH credit, prepaid and debit cards while making purchases in Kuwait and overseas. For every KD 10 spent on their KFH cards, clients will gain a chance to enter a draw and win up to 2 Mercedes-Benz cars and a chance to win the value of their purchases up to \$20000 daily for 100 days ending October 11th 2016. It is worth noting that KFH Credit and Prepaid cards used in domestic and international purchases and KFH Debit cards used in international purchases are eligible for the daily draw.

Moreover, clients will gain the chance to enter 2 draws to win 2 Mercedes-Benz cars. The first draw will be for the first car Mercedes Benz GLE 400. This draw will be held after 50 days of the launch for purchasing transactions conducted from day 1 to day 50, while the second draw will be for the second car Mercedes Benz GLE 450 Coupe, and will be held after 100 days of the launch for purchasing conducted from

day 51 to day 100 of the campaign. KFH strives to continuously offer its clients new promotions and discounts in order to distinguish them among peers, not to mention to further bolster the bank's pioneering position in the field of banking cards. KFH marketing campaigns play a significant role in underlining KFH's principles that include boosting sales, while benefiting clients and merchants.

This new campaign is part of KFH's efforts to reward its clients and grant them additional value; thus achieving customer satisfaction and boosting their confidence. The campaign also aims at enhancing the bank's presence, especially that it dominates the largest market share in the field of banking cards. KFH has won several awards in the field of banking cards which reiterates its success and efficiency in banking cards market. KFH enjoys high confidence and leadership in the market in addition to high quality products which have enabled it to achieve growth in cards market and increase the number of customers. KFH occupies the leading position as the issuer of banking cards and one of leading banks at the GCC level.

SAMSUNG FLAGS BIG JUMP IN PROFIT; STRONG S7 SALES

SEOUL: Samsung Electronics has flagged its biggest operating profit in more than two years, boosted by cost-cutting efforts and solid sales of its latest flagship smartphone. The South Korean electronics giant-also the world's top handset maker-predicted an operating profit of 8.1 trillion won (\$7 billion) in April-June, up 17 percent from a year ago. It is the company's biggest operating profit since the first quarter of 2014 and beat the average estimate of 7.4 trillion won from analysts surveyed by Bloomberg News.

Analysts attributed the figures to the firm's aggressive cost-cutting efforts and brisk sales of the Galaxy S7, the latest version of its high-end, flagship smartphone. "Samsung's mobile unit is believed to have performed well thanks to robust sales of Galaxy S7s as well as an overhaul of its low- and mid-end handset line-up," said Peter Lee, analyst at NH Investment & Securities. He estimated that the firm had sold about 26 million units of the S7 since it hit stores in March ahead of new launches by competitors, including Apple. Samsung has bolstered its mid- to low-end smartphone line-ups in a bid to expand in fast-growing emerging markets.

The mobile business accounts for the lion's share of the firm's overall profit, which has been increasingly squeezed by competition both from Apple's iPhone and by lower-end devices from Chinese rivals such as Huawei. Past editions of its flagship smartphones-Galaxy S5 and S6 launched in 2014 and 2015, respectively-had largely met with tepid response, prompting concerns over the firm's overgrown mobile business. Samsung shares jumped Thursday 2.04 percent to close at 1.45 trillion won in Seoul.

'Technological gap'

The firm's aggressive cost-cutting in marketing played a key role in the strong profit forecast, Greg Roh of HMC Investment said, but he warned of more competition from Apple later this year. "With Apple releasing new products in the latter half of the year... I think (Samsung's) earnings may drop in the second-half," he said. But the firm's semiconductor business, which produces memory chips for Samsung gadgets as well as clients including Apple, is likely to help offset a slump in the mobile business, Lee said.

The semiconductor unit has helped buttress Samsung's profit margins, with its operating profit largely outpacing the mobile business since late 2014. It racked up operating profit of 12.8 trillion won last year, beating the 10.1 trillion won earned by the mobile unit. The world's number two chipmaker has dominated production of faster, larger-capacity chips using a technology called 3D NAND. Samsung was the first to mass produce chips using the technology and is producing the high-margin chips-used in mobile gadgets and hard drives for servers-at its factories at home and in China.

"Competitors are trying to increase their 3D NAND production capacity... but Samsung is expected to lead the market for a while given the technological gap," said Kwong Sung-Ryul, analyst at Dongbu Investment and Securities. Thursday's forecast, which comes ahead of audited results to be released this month, did not provide a net income figure or breakdown of divisional earnings for the company's mobile, TV, semiconductor and display units. It predicted second-quarter sales of 50 trillion won, up from 48.5 trillion won a year ago. —AFP

PLAYERS IN HUNT FOR POKEMON GO MONSTERS FEEL REAL-WORLD PAIN

LOS ANGELES: Beware: "Pokemon Go," a new smartphone game based on cute Nintendo characters like Squirtle and Pikachu, can be harmful to your health. The "augmented reality" game, which layers gameplay onto the physical world, became the top grossing app in the iPhone app store just days after its Wednesday release in the US, Australia and New Zealand. And players have already reported wiping out in a variety of ways as they wander the real world - eyes

glued to their smartphone screens - in search of digital monsters.

Mike Schultz, a 21-year-old communications graduate on Long Island, New York, took a spill on his skateboard as he stared at his phone while cruising for critters early Thursday. He cut his hand on the sidewalk after hitting a big crack, and blames himself for going too slowly. "I just wanted to be able to stop quickly if there were any Pokemons nearby to catch," he says. "I don't think the company is really at fault."

'Real world, virtual creatures'

The game was created by Niantic Inc, a San Francisco spinoff of Google parent Alphabet Inc that previously became known for a similar augmented-reality game called "Ingress." To play, you fire up the game and then start trekking to prominent local landmarks - represented in the game as "Pokestops" - where you can gather supplies such as Pokeballs. Those are what you fling at online "pocket monsters," or Pokemon, to

capture them for training.

At other locations called "gyms" - which may or may not be actual gyms in the real world - Pokemon battle one another for supremacy. Naturally, the game has also induced people to post pictures of themselves on social media chasing creatures in all sorts of dangerous situations. Zubats and Paras have appeared on car dashboards. Caterpies have been spotted at intersections. Police in Darwin, Australia, have even asked players not to waltz into their station, which of course is a Pokestop in the game.

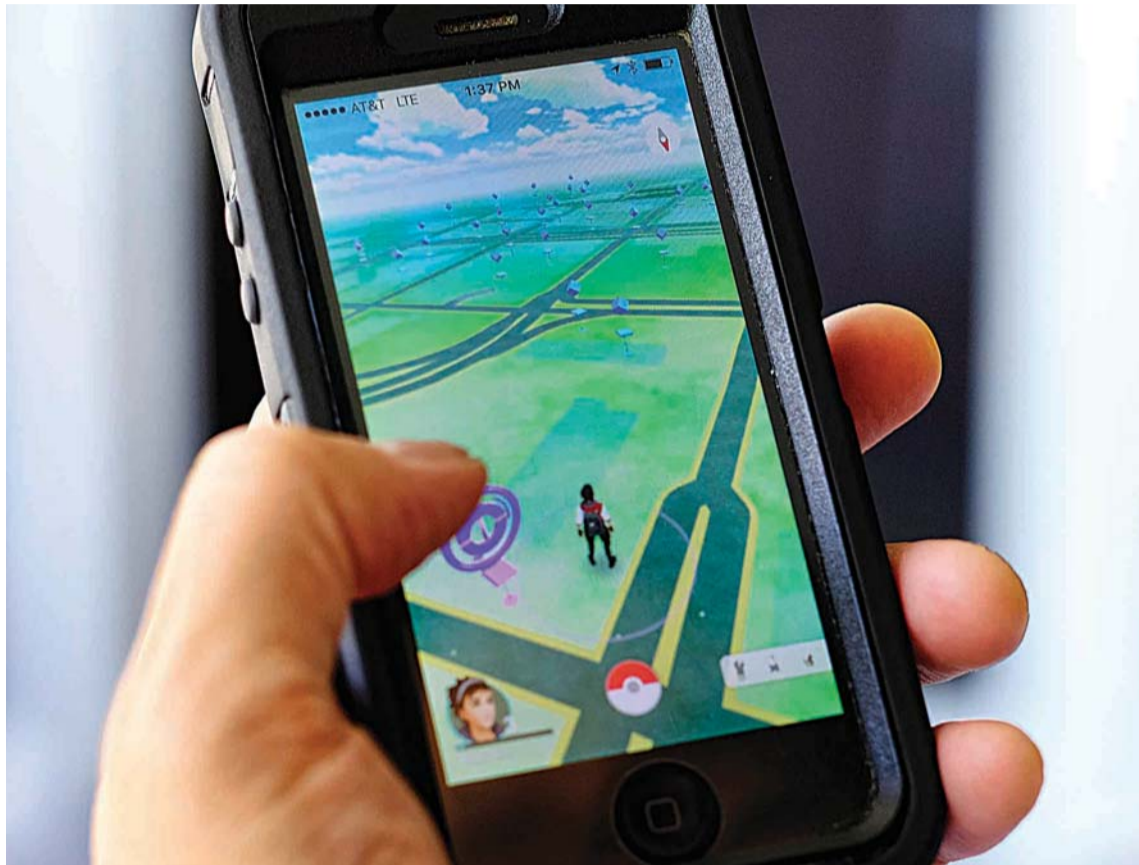
"You don't actually have to step inside in order to gain the pokeballs," the Northern Territory Police Fire and Emergency Services says on its Facebook page. Twisted ankles, mishaps with revolving doors and walking into trees have been among the painful results. Kyrie Tompkins, a 22-year-old freelance web designer, tweaked her ankle and fell on the sidewalk while wandering in downtown Waterville, Maine, on Thursday night.

"It vibrated to let me know there was something nearby and I looked up and just fell in a hole," she says. Her parents had to drive her and her fiancé home. As an upside, players get more exercise than usual and can learn more about the historical landmarks incorporated into the game as Pokestops. Digital signposts describe their significance in the real world.

'A new social medium'

And players are actually meeting face to face, despite the fact they arrived at nearby high schools, water towers and museums by staring at their screens. Lindsay Plunkett, a 23-year-old waitress in Asheville, North Carolina, made a point on Friday of parking six blocks away from the restaurant where she works, instead of the usual three. "Just so I could get some more Pokestops on the way," she says. She's still nursing a bruised shin from the previous night, when she and her boyfriend spent hours wandering downtown in the rain.

She tripped over a cinder block that had been used as a doorstop at a local women's museum. But she's got something to look forward to. Soon, she'll be traveling cross country to California with a friend. That means more chances to encounter Pokestops and Pokemons "the whole way," she says. At least the game has one failsafe - you can't hatch digital eggs while driving. That requires slower in-person movement in the real world. "It doesn't count as walking if you're going more than 20 miles per hour, so that's good, I guess," Plunkett says.—AP



LOS ANGELES: Pokemon Go is displayed on a cell phone in Los Angeles. —AP



NORTH CAROLINA: This photo provided by Justin Harrison shows the bruised shin of Lindsay Plunkett, a 23-year-old waitress in Asheville, North Carolina. —AP

KILLER ROBOT USED BY DALLAS POLICE OPENS ETHICAL DEBATE

DALLAS: When Dallas police used a bomb-carrying robot to kill a sniper, they also kicked off an ethical debate about technology's use as a crime-fighting weapon. In what appears to be an unprecedented tactic, police rigged a bomb-disposal robot to kill an armed suspect in the fatal shootings of five officers in Dallas.

While there doesn't appear to be any hard data on the subject, security experts and law enforcement officials said they couldn't recall another time when US police have deployed a robot with lethal intent. The strategy opens a new chapter in the escalating use of remote and semi-autonomous devices to fight crime and protect lives. It also raises new questions over when it's appropriate to dispatch a robot to kill dangerous suspects instead of continuing to negotiate their surrender.

"If lethally equipped robots can be used in this situation, when else can they be used?" says Elizabeth Joh, a University of California at Davis law professor who has followed US law enforcement's use of technology. "Extreme emergencies shouldn't define the scope of more ordinary situations where police may want to use robots that are capable of harm."

Dallas Police Chief David Brown defended his department's decision. "Other options would have exposed our officers to great danger," he said. Dallas Mayor Mike Rawlings applauded Brown for making "the right call" and said he would have no qualms about resorting to the same strategy in the future. "When there's no other way, I think this is a good example," he said. "The key thing is to keep our police out of harm's way."

Robots, soldiers and police

Police have been using such robots for decades to dispose of suspected bombs and in hostage standoffs and fires. Meanwhile, militaries around the world have come to rely on their robotic friends to disable improvised explosive devices - a need that only increased with the US occupation of Iraq following its 2003 invasion.

Many of the robots joining police forces are coming from a US Department of Defense program transferring surplus equipment from the military. These exchanges have provided law enforcement agencies with robots such as Packbot made by Endeavor Robotics, the Talon from QinetiQ and the MARCbot made by Exponent.

But military experts said ground-level robots are rarely used to kill the enemy. Their main purpose is to detect and defuse bombs to save lives. Military robots are "fairly clunky and used best for reconnaissance rather than the offensive," said Tom Gorup, an infantry veteran of Iraq and Afghanistan who's now an official at the IT-security firm Rook Security.

Airborne robots are another matter. The US military has sent remotely piloted drones to kill hundreds of people, including civilians, in counter terror attacks launched overseas since 2009, based on estimates released last week by the Obama administration.

How it (probably) worked

The robots working for police departments across the country range in size from devices as small as a dog bone to others as large as a truck. Some are little more than a mechanical arm mounted onto a vehicle and equipped with a video camera and two-way audio communica-

tions, according to William Flanagan, a retired deputy police chief from New York's Nassau County who now does law enforcement and technology consulting.

The most versatile robots can climb stairs and navigate other tight spots, such as this one made by Icor Technology. Many models used by police are about the size of a backpack. Flanagan speculated that police in Dallas probably equipped their robot with a low-powered explosive - possibly one similar to what bomb squads use to blow up suspicious packages - that would only disable what's closest to it. Dallas police didn't respond to a request for further information about their use of the robot.

Machine vs. Human

Robotics expert Peter W Singer, of the New America Foundation, said the killing marked the first instance he's aware of in which police have used a robot to lethal effect. But when he was researching his 2009 book "Wired for War," a US soldier told him troops in Iraq sometimes used surveillance robots against insurgents, he added in an email Friday.

William Cohen, a former Exponent employee who helped design the MARCbot, said that robot was built to save lives instead of ending them. Although he was relieved the killing of the armed suspect in Dallas assured that no other police officers or bystanders would be harmed, Cohen says he's worried about what might happen next.

"It opens a whole new set of questions of how to deal with these kinds of situations," Cohen said. "Where are the police going to draw the line when trying to decide between continuing to negotiate and doing something like this?" —AP



NEW YORK: In this file photo, a waterproof Samsung Galaxy S7 Edge mobile phone is submerged in water during a preview of Samsung flagship store, Samsung 837, in New York Meatpacking District. —AP

CONSUMER REPORTS: SAMSUNG PHONE NOT ACTUALLY WATER RESISTANT

NEW YORK: Consumer Reports says a Samsung phone that's advertised as being "water resistant" actually isn't. The problem appears limited to the Galaxy S7 Active, a rugged model available only through AT&T in the US. The standard S7 and S7 Edge models have the same claims on water resistance and passed tests. Consumer Reports, a non-profit organization that is well respected for its product testing, said Friday that it can't recommend the Active because it doesn't meet Samsung's own claims.

By contrast, Consumer Reports rates the S7 and S7 Edge phones as "Excellent" for their displays, battery life and cameras. Maria Rerecich, Consumer Reports' director of electronics testing, said she was surprised the Active failed. She said Samsung's claims are usually "fairly good." Samsung said it has received very few complaints and had subject the phone through strict testing for quality assurance, but "there may be an off-chance that a

defective device is not as watertight as it should be." The company said it was in touch with Consumer Reports to learn more about its tests.

Samsung says all S7 phones, including the Active, are designed to survive in up to 5 feet of water for 30 minutes. Consumer Reports says that after a half-hour in water, the Active's screen flashed green and other colors and didn't respond to touch. Tiny bubbles appeared on the camera lenses. Consumer Reports tested a second Active phone to verify results and it also failed.

Rerecich said it's likely that the problems affect only some of the units manufactured, but "we bought two and they both failed." Both units were bought online. Samsung says the Active can withstand drops of up to 5 feet on a flat surface, though Consumer Reports did not test those claims. In the US, the Active phone costs \$795, which is the same price as the Edge, and \$100 more than the regular S7. —AP



SAN FRANCISCO: In this file photo, David Marcus, Facebook Vice President of Messaging Products, watches a display showing new features of Messenger during the keynote address at the F8 Facebook Developer Conference in San Francisco. —AP

FACEBOOK TESTING ENCRYPTED CHATS IN MESSENGER APP

NEW YORK: Facebook is adding to its Messenger app an option for encrypted chats that can only be read on devices where they are sent or received. Users also will be able to set a timer to control how long the message remains visible to anyone, the company said Friday.

The "secret conversations," feature, which is optional, does not work across different devices. So even if a person has

Messenger on a phone and on a computer, the conversation will be visible on only one device.

The encrypted chats are now being tested with a limited number of people, Facebook said, but the option will be more widely available later this summer. WhatsApp, the Facebook-owned messaging service, already uses end-to-end encryption on all messages. —AP

WENDY'S SAYS MORE THAN 1,000 RESTAURANTS AFFECTED BY HACK

NEW YORK: Wendy's said hackers were able to steal customers' credit and debit card information at 1,025 of its US restaurants, far more than it originally thought. The hamburger chain said Thursday hackers were able to obtain card numbers, names, expiration dates and codes on the card, beginning in late fall. Some customers' cards were used to make fraudulent purchases at other stores.

Wendy's Co urged customers to check their accounts for any fraudulent purchases. The Dublin, Ohio, company first announced

it was investigating a possible hack in January. In May, it said malware was found in fewer than 300 restaurants. About a month later, it said two types of malware were found and the number of restaurants affected was "considerably higher."

There are more than 5,700 Wendy's restaurants in the US. Customers can see which locations were affected through the Wendy's website. The company said it is offering free one-year credit monitoring to people who paid with a card at any of those restaurants. —AP

NTSB TO INVESTIGATE CRASH OF TESLA WITH AUTOPILOT ENGAGED

WASHINGTON: A federal official says a second safety agency will investigate the fatal crash of a Tesla sedan while the vehicle's Autopilot self-driving mode was in use. Rob Molloy heads the National Transportation Safety Board's highway investigations division. Molloy says a team of investigators will go to Florida next week to examine the wreckage of the Tesla Model S.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration announced last week that it is investigating the May 7 crash near Gainesville to see if the Autopilot system is defective. The agency has said a truck made a left turn front of the car, but neither the Autopilot nor the driver applied the brakes. The driver was killed. Molloy says NTSB's investigation will take a comprehensive look at the entire incident. —AP



TOLEDO, Washington: Sage Nyberg, 10, huffs and puffs and slaps his hands on the ground next to his frog trying to get it to move farther from the circle where it started during a frog jumping contest on Friday. It's all part of the Toledo Cheese Days frog jumping contest during the weekend-long celebration. —AP

1ST ZIKA VIRUS RELATED DEATH RECORDED IN CONTINENTAL US

'THE VIRUS CAUSES ONLY A MILD ILLNESS IN MOST PEOPLE'

SALT LAKE CITY: A person infected with Zika has died in Utah, and while the exact cause is unclear, authorities said Friday it marks the first death related to the virus in the continental US. The unidentified Salt Lake County resident contracted the virus while traveling abroad to an area with a Zika outbreak, health officials said. The patient who died in late June was elderly and also suffered from another health condition, according to the Salt Lake County Health Department.

The person had Zika symptoms - including rash, fever and conjunctivitis - but it's unclear if or how the virus contributed to the death, said Centers for Disease Control and Prevention spokesman Benjamin Haynes. Officials discovered the case while reviewing death certificates, and lab tests confirmed their suspicions, said Gary Edwards, executive director of the Salt Lake County Health Department.

'Tropical mosquito'

Utah authorities refused to release additional information about the patient or where he or she traveled, citing health privacy laws. The virus causes only a mild illness in most people. But during recent outbreaks in Latin America, scientists discovered that infection during pregnancy has led to severe brain-

related birth defects. It's spread mainly through the bite of a tropical mosquito.

No cases of locally transmitted, mosquito-borne Zika have been reported in the continental United States, according to The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. But a 70-year-old man from the San Juan metro area in the US territory of Puerto Rico died in late February. Officials said he recovered from initial Zika symptoms, but then developed a condition in which antibodies that formed in reaction to the Zika infection started attacking blood platelet cells. He died after suffering internal bleeding.

More than 1,100 Zika illnesses have been reported in the 50 states and the District of Columbia, including six in Salt Lake County, according to health officials. Almost all were people who had traveled to Zika outbreak countries and caught the virus there. But 14 were people who had not traveled to Zika zones but had sex with someone who had.

The CDC has also been tracking pregnant women infected with Zika, and says they have five reports of pregnancy losses because of miscarriage, stillbirth or abortion. Associated Press Medical Writer Mike Stobbe in New York and AP writer Sally Ho in Las Vegas contributed to this story. —AP



SALT LAKE CITY: Dr Dagmar Vitek, Medical Director, Salt Lake County Health Department, speaks during a news conference in Salt Lake City. —AP

HOW ONE MAN SPREAD A KILLER VIRUS IN HOSPITAL

PARIS: A single patient infected 82 people with the deadly MERS virus in an overcrowded South Korean emergency room in 2015, according to a scientific investigation released yesterday. The study, published in the medical journal *The Lancet*, maps a lethal outbreak of Middle Eastern Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) in South Korea that caused 186 known infections in all, including nearly 40 fatalities.

The case is the most prolific transmission of MERS virus from one patient outside the Middle East. As long as the highly-contagious respiratory disease—with a 30-40 percent mortality rate—continues to circulate in the Middle East, governments and health care providers should be prepared for sudden outbreaks elsewhere, the researchers warn.

"This study is the first to document the spread of MERS virus through a hospital," Doo Ryeon Chung and Yae-Jean Kim of Samsung Medical Center—where the outbreak occurred—said in a

statement. "Our results show the increased potential of MERS virus infection from a single patient in an overcrowded emergency room."

The outbreak in South Korea began with a 68-year-old man—known as "patient 1"—who had traveled to Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Qatar in the Spring of 2015. Correctly diagnosed, he was admitted to Samsung and isolated from other patients. But unknown to doctors and health officials, he had already infected several other people, including a 35-year-old man with whom he shared a ward in another health facility.

It was this younger man, "patient 14," who later spread the virus through Samsung's emergency ward. The researchers estimate that nearly 1,600 people were exposed to patient 14 in the emergency room. Of the 82 who were infected, 33 were patients, eight were health care workers, and 41 were visitors. Patients staying in the same zone of the emergency room had a 20 percent chance of contracting MERS, the study found. —AFP

GIRLS UNDER 19 ACCOUNT 30 PERCENT OF EL SALVADOR PREGNANCIES: UN

SAN SALVADOR: Nearly one in three pregnancies in El Salvador are to girls under 19, according to a UN report released Friday that highlights social pressures in the country, which bans abortion. In 2015, 30 percent of the 83,500 pregnancies in El Salvador were to "adolescents aged between 10 and 19," the study by the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) said. An average of 69 girls or adolescents become pregnant each day in the country, amounting to around three pregnancies an hour, it added.

Health Minister Violeta Menjívar called the figures "extremely worrying." Some 1,500 girls aged 10 to 14 were included in the pregnancy statistics, which "theoretically means 1,500 people raped," she said, presenting the report in a news conference alongside UNFPA representative Hugo Gonzalez. She called for changes to laws that currently stipulate 40-year prison sentences for women who abort, even in cases of complications during pregnancy. —AFP

SMALLER HARMFUL ALGAE BLOOM ON LAKE ERIE



OHIO: In this file photo, an algae bloom covers Lake Erie near the City of Toledo water intake crib about 2.5 miles off the shore of Curtice, Ohio.

PUT-IN-BAY, Ohio: Potentially toxic algae is expected to form again this summer in western Lake Erie but should be considerably less severe than the blooms that blanketed the lake and threatened drinking water supplies the previous two years, scientists said Thursday. After three wet springs, the region's rainfall was more normal this year, said Richard Stumpf of the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration. That means less phosphorus from farms and sewage treatment plants has washed into the Maumee River and other tributaries that discharge into the lake, feeding harmful algae.

"With a return to average spring discharge, and much lower river flow in June than in the recent years, the western basin should look better," said Stumpf, of NOAA's National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science and the agency's top Lake Erie algae forecaster. Even so, a bloom of mild to moderate size is likely to show up late this month, reach its

peak size in August and possibly linger into October, he said. Where it goes and how big a headache it poses for water treatment plant managers and residents will depend largely on wind patterns.

Measures

In 2014, winds and currents steered a massive bloom into the Toledo area, leaving more than 400,000 people unable to drink tap water for two days. Last year's bloom was the largest on record, spreading scum for 300 square miles. But it stayed farther from shore and didn't prompt a do-not-drink order. In addition to forming ugly mats of pea-soup green on the water surface, algae blooms contribute to oxygen-depleted dead zones where fish can't survive.

Federal and state agencies have committed to a 40 percent drop in phosphorus runoff into the lake and are developing plans for achieving it. A coalition of environmental groups said the measures proposed thus far by Michigan, Ohio and federal agen-

cies are inadequate and should require farms to sharply curtail runoff of manure and other fertilizers. "We cannot just cross our fingers and hope for dry weather to ensure a healthy Lake Erie," said the groups, among which were the Alliance for the Great Lakes, the Ohio Environmental Council and the Michigan League of Conservation Voters.

'Inherently unpredictable'

"We strongly urge the US and Canadian governments to move quickly to create effective, real world plans for reducing agricultural pollution." The forecast was based on several computer models developed by NOAA, university labs and LimnoTech, a private environmental engineering firm in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Together, they produce a "severity index" that predicts how large a bloom will be in a particular year.

This summer's bloom was given a 5.5 severity rating, just above the level considered high enough to raise water

quality concerns. The 2015 bloom measured 10.5. The models varied to some extent, largely because of uncertainty about how much phosphorus from 2015's gigantic bloom remains in lake sediments and will fuel algae growth this summer, said John Bratton, a scientist with LimnoTech. And late-summer storms also could boost runoff, providing late infusions of phosphorus.

Also unclear is how toxic this year's bloom will be, Stumpf said. Lake Erie's harmful algae is a type of bacteria that generates toxins called microcystin, which can cause liver damage in humans and kill animals. Scientists are still working on ways to include toxicity predictions in their algae forecasts. They shortly will deploy technology in the lake that will analyze algal toxins and provide early warnings to water plant operators. "Drinking water managers have to be prepared for the worst," Bratton said, describing bloom movements as "inherently unpredictable." —AP

ENDANGERED GORILLA DIES AT MEXICO CITY ZOO

MEXICO CITY: Zoo officials in Mexico City say an endangered western lowland gorilla has died as he was being prepared for transfer to another zoo. The capital's zoo and

wildlife office said Thursday that the 24-year-old gorilla known as Bantu appeared to have suffered a heart attack after being sedated Wednesday night. Doctors

spent 30 minutes trying to revive him.

Bantu was headed to the Guadalajara Zoo in western Mexico with the hope of mating with two females

there. Officials say the precise cause of death will be established following additional examinations. Bantu had spent his life at the Chapultepec Zoo in Mexico

City. The death comes after an international uproar over the gorilla Harambe was euthanized at the Cincinnati Zoo on May 28, after a young boy fell into its enclosure. —AP



JAPANESE SATELLITE MADE SURPRISE FIND BEFORE FAILURE

TOKYO: A Japanese satellite recorded unprecedented observations of the Perseus galaxy before it disappeared from contact, scientists said, offering precious new information about how gas travels in the far-away cluster. The pricey ultra-high-tech "Hitomi"—or eye—was launched in February to find X-rays emanating from black holes and galaxy clusters. But in March researchers said they had lost control of the satellite and after desperate attempts to reestablish communication gave up their salvage effort the following month.

Though a major disappointment, scientists say the endeavor was not a total flop: Hitomi's quarter-of-a-billion dollar kit managed to observe the Perseus galaxy cluster, some 250 million light years from Earth, with its X-ray spectrometer. The satellite "observed movement of gas at the cluster's heart for the first time," the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency said in a statement Thursday. "With the observed data, we learnt that the movement of the gas was remarkably quiescent," added JAXA, the NASA of Japan.

The data means that "the dynamics of the pervasive hot gas at the galaxy cluster"

need to be reassessed, JAXA said. The X-ray observation showed hot gases between galaxies in the Perseus cluster moving at a speed of about 150 kilometers per second, much slower than many expected, which the researchers called a "surprising" conclusion. The findings by the consortium of international scientists, including from JAXA, were published in the journal Nature.

The satellite, developed in collaboration with the US National Aeronautics and Space Administration and other groups, was intended to help unlock the mystery of black holes, phenomena that have never been directly observed. Scientists believe they are huge collapsed stars whose enormous gravitational pull is so strong that nothing can escape.

The satellite was ferried to space from a launch centre in southern Japan. Japan has a highly developed space program and has achieved successes in both scientific and commercial satellite launches. The country's astronauts have gone on numerous space shuttle and International Space Station missions, with a Japanese crew member heading joining a mission to the latter that departed Thursday.—AFP



INDONESIA: In this file photo, conservationists from Borneo Orangutan Survival Foundation carry a tranquilized orangutan in Indonesia.—AP



TEXAS: Four-year-old Sophia Duran joins protesters along 42nd Street in front of Memorial Gardens Park in Odessa, Texas.—AP

ABOUT 90 DUCKS, GEESE AT WEST TEXAS PARK TO BE EUTHANIZED

ODESSA, Texas: About 100 people have protested plans to kill dozens of ducks and geese that overpopulated a West Texas park. Demonstrators turned out Wednesday night near Memorial Gardens Park in Odessa. Some held signs and chanted "Save Our Ducks."

The Odessa Parks and Recreation Department recently asked the Texas Wildlife Services to help euthanize the 60 ducks and 30 geese. Parks director Steve Patton cited

public health and safety concerns amid complaints about aggressive birds.

Pollution issues were also raised. Odessa has spent about \$6,000 this year to clear park sidewalks of messes blamed on the birds, compared to \$1,000 budgeted for all of 2015. Officials didn't immediately say when or how the ducks and geese would be euthanized. The park closed Tuesday and is scheduled to reopen July 14.—AP

RELEASE OF ALTERED MOSQUITOES TO START IN CAYMAN ISLANDS

GEORGE TOWN, Cayman Islands: An effort to reduce mosquitoes and prevent the spread of viruses such as Zika in the Cayman Islands by releasing genetically altered mosquitoes is to start next week, officials in the British Caribbean territory said Thursday. Mosquito abatement authorities in the Cayman Islands and British biotech company Oxitec had planned to release the GMO insects last month. But the project was put off by a delay in getting an occupancy permit for the lab in which mosquitoes are bred.

The release of the mosquitoes will begin on 300 acres in the West Bay area of Grand Cayman, according to a government statement. Plans call for releasing millions of modified male mosqui-

toes of the species *Aedes aegypti*. The males don't bite, but they will mate with females and produce offspring that die before reaching adulthood. *Aedes aegypti* are not native to the Cayman Islands and spread Zika, dengue and yellow fever. There has been one confirmed, imported case of Zika in the territory.

GMO mosquitoes have been released in Brazil seeking to halt the spread of disease there. Oxitec and officials in the Florida Keys have proposed testing there as well and are awaiting US regulatory approval. A referendum on the project is planned for November amid environmental and health concerns that the company and advocates for the project dispute.—AP

BORNEAN ORANGUTAN CRITICALLY ENDANGERED SPECIES: STUDY

JAKARTA: A global conservation group says Borneo's orangutans are now a critically endangered species due to hunting and destruction of forest habitat. The International Union for Conservation of Nature estimates the number of Bornean orangutans has dropped by nearly two-thirds since the early 1970s and will further decline to 47,000 animals by 2025. The group said the projected population figure would represent a population loss of 86 percent.

The assessment for the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species was carried out earlier this year and published this week. Previously the

species was considered to be endangered. It said deforestation has dramatically shrunk the primate's habitat, with about 40 percent of Borneo's forests lost since the early 1970s and another huge swathe of forest expected to be converted to plantation agriculture in the next decade.

On top of that, hunting is also a significant pressure because orangutans are slow breeders, producing only one offspring every six to eight years on average. IUCN estimates between 2,000 and 3,000 of Borneo's orangutans have been killed every year for the past four decades, mainly for their meat. "If hunting does not stop, all

populations that are hunted will decline, irrespective of what happens to their habitat," IUCN said. "These findings confirm that habitat protection alone will not ensure the survival of orangutans."

Orangutans only live in the wild on the Indonesian island of Sumatra and on Borneo in the Malaysian states of Sarawak and Sabah and Kalimantan, which is the Indonesian part of Borneo. The Sumatran orangutan has been critically endangered since 2008. Both species are protected in Malaysia and Indonesia but much of their habitat is not.—AP

RUSSIAN, AMERICAN, JAPANESE ASTRONAUTS BOARD INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION

MOSCOW: Three astronauts from the United States, Russia and Japan boarded the International Space Station yesterday after a two-day journey aboard a Russian Soyuz space capsule. The capsule docked smoothly with the space station at 0406 GMT yesterday at a height of 412 kilometers above the Earth. Russia's space agency Roscosmos said the crew entered the station about two hours later.

Russian Anatoly Ivanishin, NASA's Kathleen Rubins and Takuya Onishi of the Japanese space agency JAXA are beginning a four-month stay on the orbiting space laboratory. They joined American Jeff Williams and Russians Oleg Skripochka and Alexey Ovchinin, who have been aboard since mid-March. The capsule blasted off from Russia's manned space complex in Baikonur, Kazakhstan, on Thursday.—AP



KAZAKHSTAN: In this file photo, the Soyuz-FG rocket booster with Soyuz MS space ship carrying a new crew to the International Space Station, ISS, blasts off at the Russian leased Baikonur cosmodrome, Kazakhstan.—AP

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LAPA HELD 'AL-ANDALUS VOICE' CELEBRATION



LOYAC Academy of Performing Arts (LAPA) held "Al-Andalus voice" celebration, which presented Andalus music for three different generations of children, youth and adults on the second day of Eid, as part Al-Shaheed Park activities.

PANI J ANTHONY BECOMES GOODWILL AMBASSADOR

The Global Village Harmony has honored Pani J Anthony with the appointment of Goodwill Ambassador for the leading roles he has played in serving the community through his crusade against alcoholism, and in recognition of his bold endeavors in using his talents to improve the skills of the youngsters. He has been in the forefront of creating awareness among the backward communities and among youth in vital areas such as educational awareness, women's empowerment and environmental issues. He inspired several drop outs to return to school.

This appointment would provide a platform to urge the leaders to commit more human resources to creating a world of non-alcoholism. As a Goodwill Ambassador, he would assist in advocacy and program efforts and in communicating to a broad public, particularly to the youth, about the evils of alcoholism.

Anthony was honored by Sabu, President of Global Village Harmony at a ceremony held under the slogan "agent of change". At the event, his achievements including his involvement in the 72 hours non-stop longest motivational theatrical performance that entered in the Guinness Book of World Records and the leading roles he played for the betterment of the community were highlighted. HR Manager, Quiz Master, Soft skill trainer for corporates, Motivational Speaker, Writer ... Anthony wears many hats.



His first book, "Sky is the Limit" (2009) was honored by the UN.

Anthony, one of the well-known youngsters at home and overseas; who demonstrates a high level of commitment communicating strong and clear messages about the importance of non-alcoholism and protecting the general public against this danger, was recognized for his efforts to combat alcoholism which earned him recognition as an international speaker at the Model United Nations and the leading forums like World Vision, Lions Club, etc. His speeches are very inspiring.

His ability in quizzing needs a special mention. This outstanding quiz master is invited far and wide, conducted the nation-

level quiz in Qatar in connection with the UN International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking; and in Kuwait, Master Brain Trophy Quiz. Both are memorable ones, Anthony recalls.

"Right from the beginning, I sought to change the traditional view of the alcoholism in the society. I am happy that my efforts helped many to return to the smooth life and am confident that the same will continue; people realize their potential. The series of awareness programs help change of mindset of the addicts", Anthony believes.

Very clear in his ideals, Anthony said "the youth bulge can be an enormous advantage for the society; but it can also be a challenge if alcoholism is not abolished. It is really about having an educated, skilled, employed population that can contribute for the betterment. If so, the global citizens have the privilege to work together to establish truth, right and justice. His talents fetched him the Martin Luther King Jr Honor by the American College, Dr Ambedkar National Award, and his speech "Tribute to Nelson Mandela" on the UN Marked Nelson Mandela Day on 18 July 2014 was recorded from the US and broadcast worldwide.

In his special interest, Anthony conducts "Children's Parliament" to help students learn about the functioning of parliament, role of ministers and members of parlia-



ment for the betterment of the society; gaining knowledge of how to address the local issues with the elected representatives of civic bodies, and make the children aware of the importance of community affairs and rehabilitation of children in the context of Act to prevent child labor.

The moral support from well-wishers including the Embassy of India, Archbishop

Dr Soosa Pakiam, Dr Innacimuthu (former Vice Chancellor, Madras University and Bharathiar University, Coimbatore), Rehman Akhtar, Kelly Torres, Mahar Safdar Ali, R Ranganathan, his teachers, the dedicated service team are highly helpful in moving the steps for this globally accepted value, this national awardee expresses gratitude.

Eid greetings



Poet and writer Abdur Rahim, Adviser Barishal Division Expatriate Welfare Council and Ex General Secretary and running Adviser Probashi Shahitta Parshad, sends his greetings and wishes to all Bangladeshi politicians, literature, poets, writers, journalists, singers, artists, businessmen, and all dearest friends of Kuwait and Bangladesh. May Allah bless them all with best wishes and prosperity in life.

MADHURAM MALAYALAM SALMIYA ZONE INAUGURATED



Kuwait City MarThoma Yuvajana Sakhyam free Malayalam Class "Madhuram Malayalam" conducted in Salmiya Zone was inaugurated by Rev Prince Korah, Vicar - St James MarThoma. The Meeting started with the opening prayer by Jinu V Jom, Sakhyam Vice President. Rev George Varghese, Vicar - Kuwait City MarThoma Church presided the meeting. Rev Santhosh Philip, Vicar- St Peters MarThoma Church felicitated on the occasion. Parimanam Manoj (Convener) welcomed all & Jijom Issac proposed vote of thanks.

AQUAPARK CELEBRATED EID AL-FITR



Aquapark celebrated Eid Al-Fitr with the largest ride in the world "Aquaturbo", as patrons liked and enjoyed it. Director General and Board Member Mohammad Khorshed said Aquaturbo is one of the surprises that bought smiles and joy to everyone.



ANIMAL PLANET HD

03:25 Wildest Africa
05:49 Into The Pride
06:36 Swamp Brothers
07:00 Swamp Brothers
07:25 Dog TV
08:15 Restoration Wild
09:10 Saving Africa's Giants With Yao Ming
10:05 The Wild Life Of Tim Faulkner
10:30 The Wild Life Of Tim Faulkner
11:00 Dog TV
11:55 Snake Sheila
12:50 Speed Of Life
15:35 Australia Doesn't Just Want To Kill You
18:20 Woodfellas
19:15 Saving Africa's Giants With Yao Ming
20:10 The Wild Life Of Tim Faulkner
20:35 The Wild Life Of Tim Faulkner
21:05 Bondi Vet
22:00 Woodfellas
22:55 Snake Sheila
23:20 Snake Sheila
23:50 Gator Boys
00:45 Gator Boys
01:40 Speed Of Life
02:35 Speed Of Life

BBC FIRST

03:20 Luther
04:15 Doctors
04:45 Eastenders
05:15 Father Brown
06:00 Doctors
06:30 Eastenders
07:00 Death In Paradise
07:55 Father Brown
08:45 Call The Midwife
09:45 Death In Paradise
10:40 Doctors
11:10 Eastenders
11:45 Father Brown
12:35 The Musketeers
13:30 Death In Paradise
14:25 Eastenders
14:55 Doctors
15:30 Father Brown
16:15 Upstairs Downstairs
17:10 Doctor Who
18:00 Doctors
18:30 Eastenders
19:00 Father Brown
19:45 Hebburn
20:15 DCI Banks
21:00 DCI Banks
21:50 Ripper Street
22:45 Bedlam
23:40 Doctors
00:15 Eastenders
00:45 DCI Banks
02:25 Ripper Street

Discovery CHANNEL HD

03:15 The Last Alaskans
04:05 The Last Alaskans
05:00 The Last Alaskans
06:00 Alaska: The Last Frontier
06:50 Wheeler Dealers: Top 5
07:40 Fast N' Loud: Demolition Theater
08:30 Extreme Collectors
08:55 Storage Wars Canada
09:20 Storage Hunters UK
09:45 How Things Work
10:35 Alaskan Bush People
11:25 The Last Alaskans
12:15 Siberian Cut
13:05 Extreme Collectors
13:30 Storage Wars Canada
13:55 Storage Hunters UK
14:20 Alaska: The Last Frontier
15:10 Junkyard Empire
16:00 Fast N' Loud: Demolition Theater
16:50 How Things Work
17:40 Fat N' Furious: Rolling Thunder
18:30 Street Outlaws
19:20 Manhunt With Joel Lambert
20:10 Storage Wars Canada
20:35 Storage Hunters UK
21:00 Impossible Engineering
21:50 Sonic Sea
23:30 Fast N' Loud: Demolition Theater
00:20 Junkyard Empire
01:10 Impossible Engineering
02:00 Sonic Sea

Discovery Family

03:00 Dirty Jobs
03:50 Nextworld
06:20 How It's Made
07:00 Dick 'n' Dom Go Wild
07:50 Kids vs Film
08:15 Kids vs Film
08:40 How It's Made
12:50 Dirty Jobs
17:00 Ultimate Survival
18:40 Troy
19:30 Out Of Egypt
20:20 Ways To Save The Planet
21:10 Bermuda Triangle Exposed
22:00 Untamed & Uncut
00:30 Ultimate Survival
02:10 Dirty Jobs

ID. INVESTIGATION DISCOVERY

03:00 Redrum
03:48 I Almost Got Away With It
07:00 I Was Murdered
10:20 Deadly Devotion
11:10 Tabloid
12:00 Beauty Queen Murders
15:20 Tabloid
16:10 Heartbreakers
18:40 Love The Way You Lie
21:10 Deadline: Crime With Tamron
22:00 Disappeared
22:50 I Am Homicide
23:40 Obsession: Dark Desires
00:30 Paranormal Lockdown
01:20 The Haunted
02:10 True Crime With Aphrodite Jones
Discovery World
03:00 Discovery World

Disney CHANNEL

03:15 The Hive
03:20 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
03:45 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
04:10 Hank Zipzer
04:35 Binnie And The Ghost
05:00 Violetta
05:45 The Hive
05:50 Mouk
06:00 Hank Zipzer

06:25 Sofa The First
06:50 Disney Mickey Mouse
06:55 Gravity Falls
07:20 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
07:45 Backstage
08:10 Bunk'd
08:35 Jessie
09:00 Jessie
09:25 Liv And Maddie
09:50 Liv And Maddie
10:15 Austin & Ally
10:40 The Rescuers Down Under
12:10 The 7D
12:20 Grand Opening Celebration Shanghai Disney Resort
13:00 The 7D
13:10 Dog With A Blog
13:35 Dog With A Blog
14:00 Dog With A Blog
14:25 Austin & Ally
14:50 Austin & Ally
15:15 Descendants Wicked World
15:20 Liv And Maddie
15:45 Liv And Maddie
16:10 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
16:35 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
17:00 Gravity Falls
17:25 Gravity Falls
17:50 The 7D
18:00 Harriet The Spy: Blog Wars
19:30 Bunk'd
19:55 Jessie
20:20 Mako Mermaids
20:45 Good Luck Charlie
21:10 H2O: Just Add Water
21:35 H2O: Just Add Water
22:00 Binnie And The Ghost
22:25 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
22:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
23:10 Hank Zipzer
23:35 Binnie And The Ghost
00:00 Violetta
00:45 The Hive
00:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
01:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
01:40 Hank Zipzer
02:05 Binnie And The Ghost
02:30 Violetta

Disney JUNIOR

03:10 Henry Hugglemonster
03:20 Calimero
03:35 Zou
03:45 Loopedidoo
04:00 Art Attack
04:25 Henry Hugglemonster
04:35 Calimero
04:50 Zou
05:00 Loopedidoo
05:15 Art Attack
05:35 Henry Hugglemonster
05:50 Calimero
06:00 Zou
06:20 Loopedidoo
06:35 Art Attack
07:00 The Hive
07:10 Zou
07:25 Loopedidoo
07:40 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
08:05 Sofa The First
08:30 Miles From Tomorrow
08:45 PJ Masks
09:10 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
09:35 Doc McStuffins
10:00 Sofia The First
10:30 Goldie & Bear
10:55 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
11:25 Miles From Tomorrow
11:40 Bambi 2
12:55 Unbungalievable
13:00 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
13:30 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
14:25 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
14:50 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
15:20 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
15:45 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
16:00 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
16:30 Doc McStuffins
16:50 Sofia The First
17:25 Goldie & Bear
17:50 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
18:20 The Lion Guard
18:45 Miles From Tomorrow
19:00 PJ Masks
19:30 Bambi 2
20:45 Doc McStuffins
21:10 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
21:30 PJ Masks
22:00 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
22:30 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
22:45 Minnie's Bow-Toons
22:50 Zou
23:05 Henry Hugglemonster
23:20 Calimero
23:35 Zou
23:50 Loopedidoo
00:05 Art Attack
00:30 Henry Hugglemonster
00:45 Calimero
01:00 Zou
01:15 Loopedidoo
01:30 Art Attack
02:00 Calimero
02:15 Zou
02:30 Loopedidoo
02:45 Art Attack

Disney XD

06:00 Boyster
06:10 Super Matrak
06:35 Super Matrak
07:00 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
07:25 K.C. Undercover
07:50 Supa Strikas
08:15 Annedroids
08:40 Mighty Med
09:10 Marvel Avengers: Ultron Revolution
09:35 Lab Rats: Bionic Island
10:00 K.C. Undercover
10:25 K.C. Undercover
10:50 Supa Strikas
11:20 Supa Strikas
11:45 Kirby Buckets
12:10 Kirby Buckets
12:35 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
13:00 Den Brother
14:30 Phineas And Ferb
14:45 Phineas And Ferb
15:10 Disney Mickey Mouse
15:15 Mighty Med
15:40 The 7D
15:50 The 7D
16:05 Lab Rats: Bionic Island
16:30 Pickle And Peanut
16:55 Penn Zero: Part Time Hero
17:25 K.C. Undercover
17:50 Supa Strikas
18:15 Lab Rats: Bionic Island
18:40 K.C. Undercover
19:05 Disney Mickey Mouse
19:10 Annedroids
19:35 Marvel Avengers: Ultron Revolution
20:00 Kirby Buckets
20:25 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
20:55 K.C. Undercover
21:20 Supa Strikas

food network

03:00 Amazing Wedding Cakes
04:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
05:00 Chopped
06:00 Man Fire Food
07:00 Roadtrip With G. Garvin
08:00 Chopped
09:00 Amazing Wedding Cakes
10:00 The Pioneer Woman
11:00 Siba's Table
12:00 Barefoot Contessa
13:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
15:00 Chopped
16:00 Guy's Grocery Games
17:00 Amazing Wedding Cakes
18:00 Siba's Table
18:30 Siba's Table
19:00 Luke Nguyen's United Kingdom
20:00 Cutthroat Kitchen
21:00 Chopped South Africa
22:00 Man v Food
23:00 Mystery Diners
00:00 Cutthroat Kitchen
01:00 Chopped South Africa
02:00 Man v Food

itv HD CHOICE

03:15 Coronation Street
03:40 Come Dine With Me Couples
06:10 Code Of A Killer
06:55 Midsomer Murders
08:25 The Doctor Blake Mysteries
13:00 Don't Tell The Bride
14:00 Don't Tell The Bride
15:00 It's Not Rocket Science
15:55 Code Of A Killer
16:45 Lewis
17:35 Masterpiece With Alan Titchmarsh
19:00 It's Not Rocket Science
19:50 Don't Tell The Bride
20:45 Don't Tell The Bride
21:40 Midsomer Murders
23:15 The Doctor Blake Mysteries
00:10 The Chase
01:00 Emmerdale
01:30 Eggheads
02:00 Coronation Street
02:30 The Doctor Blake Mysteries

nickelodeon HD

03:00 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
03:24 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
03:48 Henry Danger
04:12 Nicky, Ricky, Dicky & Dawn
04:36 The Haunted Hathaways
05:00 Max & Shred
05:24 Henry Danger
05:48 Nicky, Ricky, Dicky & Dawn
06:12 SpongeBob SquarePants
06:36 SpongeBob SquarePants
07:00 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
07:24 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
07:48 Winx Club
08:12 The Loud House
08:36 SpongeBob SquarePants
09:00 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
09:24 Harvey Beaks
09:48 Henry Danger
10:12 Nicky, Ricky, Dicky & Dawn
10:36 The Haunted Hathaways
11:00 Winx Club
11:24 SpongeBob SquarePants
11:48 SpongeBob SquarePants
12:12 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
12:36 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
13:00 Harvey Beaks
13:24 The Loud House
13:48 Get Blake
14:12 Rabbids Invasion
14:36 100 Things To Do Before High School
15:00 Game Shakers
15:24 The Loud House
15:48 SpongeBob SquarePants
16:12 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
16:36 Harvey Beaks
17:00 Sanjay And Craig
17:24 Harvey Beaks
17:48 The Loud House
18:12 Henry Danger
18:36 Nicky, Ricky, Dicky & Dawn
19:00 100 Things To Do Before High School
19:24 Game Shakers
19:48 SpongeBob SquarePants
20:12 SpongeBob SquarePants
20:36 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
02:00 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles

OSN FIRST HD

03:00 Agent X
04:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
05:00 Good Morning America
06:00 Marvel's Agents Of S.H.I.E.L.D.
07:00 Rosewood
08:00 The Whispers
09:00 Agent X
10:00 Suits
11:00 Rosewood
12:00 The Whispers
13:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
14:00 Graceland
15:00 Live Good Morning America
16:00 Marvel's Agents Of S.H.I.E.L.D.
17:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
18:00 The Whispers
19:00 Bones
20:00 Marvel's Agents Of S.H.I.E.L.D.
21:00 Criminal Minds: Beyond Borders
22:00 Code Black
23:00 Damien
00:00 Rosewood
01:00 Criminal Minds: Beyond Borders
02:00 Code Black

OSN FIRST HD COMEDY

03:00 Galavant
03:30 Uncle Buck
04:00 Better With You
04:30 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
05:30 Hank
06:00 George Lopez
06:30 The Bernie Mac Show
07:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers
08:00 Better With You
08:30 Hank
09:00 Galavant
09:30 Baby Daddy
10:00 Crowded
10:30 The Bernie Mac Show
11:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
12:00 George Lopez
12:30 Better With You
13:00 Hank
13:30 The Bernie Mac Show
14:00 Uncle Buck
14:30 Baby Daddy
15:00 Crowded
15:30 Dr. Ken
16:00 Modern Family
16:30 George Lopez
17:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers
18:00 Living With Fran
18:30 Mad Love
19:00 The Last Man On Earth
19:30 Brooklyn Nine-Nine
20:00 Grandfathered
20:30 Grandfathered
21:00 Dr. Ken
21:30 Modern Family
22:00 The Detour
22:30 Sex & Drugs & Rock & Roll
23:00 Grandfathered
00:00 Grandfathered
00:30 Dr. Ken
01:00 Modern Family
01:30 The Detour
02:00 Sex & Drugs & Rock & Roll

OSN FIRST HD COMEDY

03:00 Galavant
03:30 Uncle Buck
04:00 Better With You
04:30 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
05:30 Hank
06:00 George Lopez
06:30 The Bernie Mac Show
07:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers
08:00 Better With You
08:30 Hank
09:00 Galavant
09:30 Baby Daddy
10:00 Crowded
10:30 The Bernie Mac Show
11:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
12:00 George Lopez
12:30 Better With You
13:00 Hank
13:30 The Bernie Mac Show
14:00 Uncle Buck
14:30 Baby Daddy
15:00 Crowded
15:30 Dr. Ken
16:00 Modern Family
16:30 George Lopez
17:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers
18:00 Living With Fran
18:30 Mad Love
19:00 The Last Man On Earth
19:30 Brooklyn Nine-Nine
20:00 Grandfathered
20:30 Grandfathered
21:00 Dr. Ken
21:30 Modern Family
22:00 The Detour
22:30 Sex & Drugs & Rock & Roll
23:00 Grandfathered
00:00 Grandfathered
00:30 Dr. Ken
01:00 Modern Family
01:30 The Detour
02:00 Sex & Drugs & Rock & Roll

OSN FIRST HD MORE

03:00 Ja'mie: Private School Girl
03:30 Funny Or Die Presents
04:00 HBO Comedy Half-Hour
04:30 Def Poetry Jam
05:00 Crime Of The Century
05:00 Mrs. Harris
09:00 Recount
11:00 Temple Grandin
13:00 Point Of Origin
14:30 Boycott
16:30 Temple Grandin
18:30 Bette Midler: The Showgirl Must Go On
20:00 John Adams
21:00 The Knick
22:00 American Crime Story: The People vs O.J. Simpson
23:00 Nothing Left Unsaid
01:00 John Adams
02:00 The Knick

OSN FIRST HD MORE

04:00 Toxin
06:00 Hercules Reborn
08:00 12 Rounds
10:00 Armored
12:00 The Hobbit: The Battle Of The Five Armies
15:00 The Taking Of Pelham 123
17:00 12 Rounds
19:00 The Bourne Legacy
21:30 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
23:15 Comedown
01:00 Backdraft

OSN MOVIES HD COMEDY

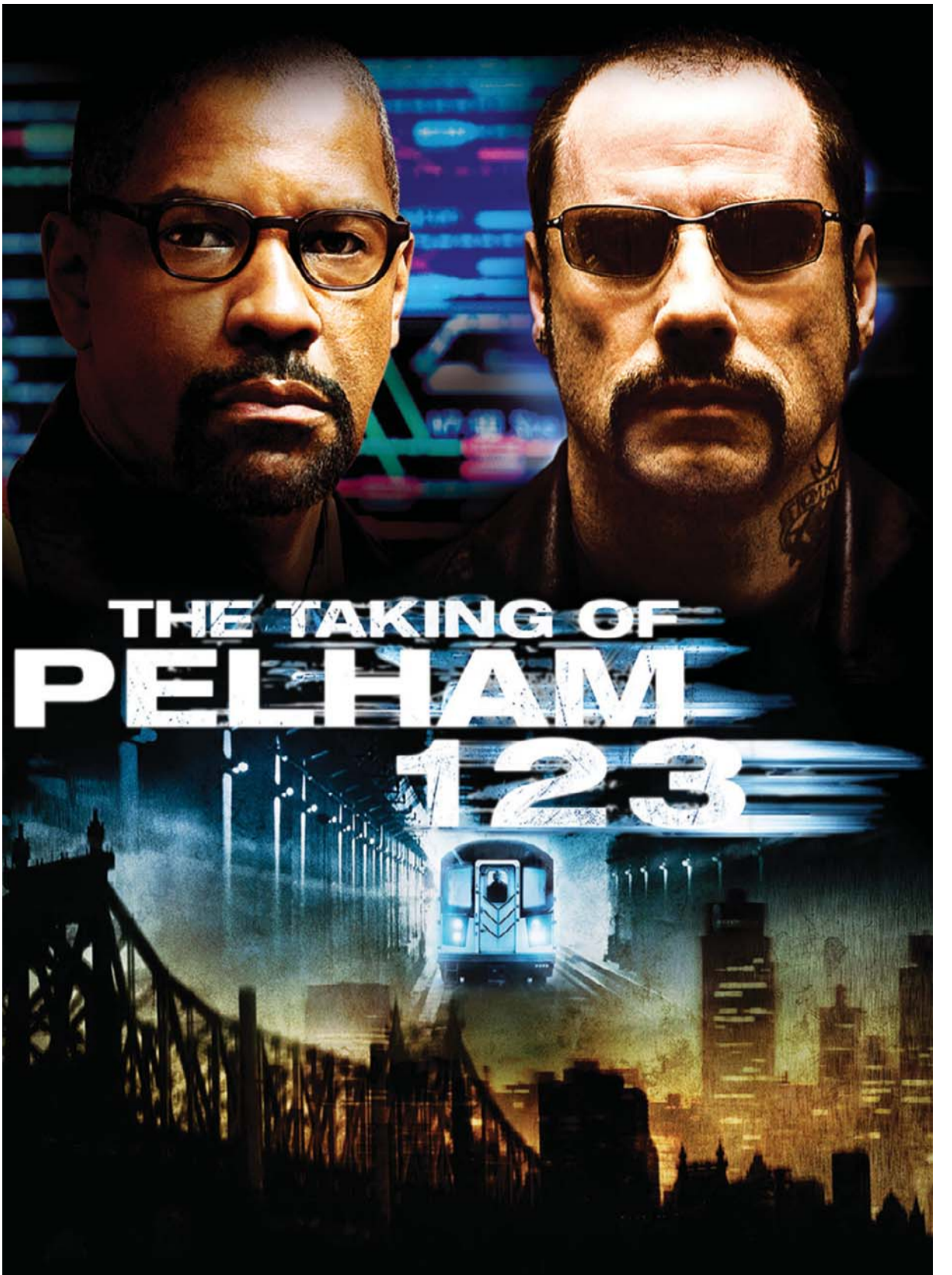
04:00 At Middleton
06:00 The Bounty Hunter
08:00 50 First Dates
10:00 At Middleton
12:00 The Bounty Hunter
14:00 The Trip To Italy
16:00 50 First Dates
18:00 Chef
20:00 The Starving Games
22:00 The World's End
00:00 50 First Dates
02:00 The Starving Games

OSN MOVIES HD DRAMA

03:00 Siberian Education
05:00 Sunshine On Leith
07:00 Memorial Day (2011)
09:00 Half Of A Yellow Sun
11:00 Sunshine On Leith
13:00 Escobar: Paradise Lost
15:00 Rosewater

OSN MOVIES HD

03:15 Step Up All In
05:15 Fast & Furious 7
07:30 Sir Billi



THE TAKING OF PELHAM 123 ON OSN MOVIES ACTION HD

OSN MOVIES HD ACTION

04:00 Toxin
06:00 Hercules Reborn
08:00 12 Rounds
10:00 Armored
12:00 The Hobbit: The Battle Of The Five Armies
15:00 The Taking Of Pelham 123
17:00 12 Rounds
19:00 The Bourne Legacy
21:30 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
23:15 Comedown
01:00 Backdraft

OSN MOVIES HD FAMILY

03:00 Toy Story
05:00 Toy Story 2
07:00 Toy Story 3
09:00 Brave
11:00 101 Dalmatians
13:00 Penguins Of Madagascar
15:00 A Bug's Life
17:00 Bedtime Stories
19:00 Dinosaur Island
21:00 Dinosaur
23:00 Bedtime Stories
01:00 Dinosaur Island

OSN MOVIES HD KIDS

04:15 Blue Elephant 2
06:00 Captain Sabertooth And The Treasure Of Lama Rama
08:00 Cher Ami
10:00 Dixie And The Zombie Rebellion
11:30 Echo Planet
13:00 Pim And Pom: The Big Adventure
14:30 Blackie And Kanuto
16:00 Snow Queen
18:00 Dixie And The Zombie Rebellion
20:00 Saving Santa
22:00 Blackie And Kanuto
23:30 Snow Queen
01:00 Cher Ami
02:45 Saving Santa

OSN MOVIES HD PREMIERE

04:30 Bears
06:00 Pompeii
08:00 Big Eyes
10:00 Drumline: A New Beat
12:00 A Promise
14:00 Barely Lethal
16:00 Big Eyes
18:00 Ghostbusters II
20:00 Ghostbusters II
22:00 Kingsman: The Secret Service

STAR MOVIES

00:15 The Remaining
02:15 Big Eyes

STAR WORLD HD

03:00 Confessions Of A Shopaholic
05:00 Dragonfly
06:45 Beyond A Reasonable Doubt
08:30 Hidalgo
10:45 Seabiscuit
13:15 Finding Neverland
15:00 Surrogates
16:30 Fright Night
18:15 Teaching Mrs. Tingle
20:00 Con Air
22:00 Before And After
23:00 Hope Springs
01:30 The Village

03:00 The Listener
04:00 The Listener
05:00 How I Met Your Mother
05:30 How I Met Your Mother
06:00 How I Met Your Mother
06:30 How I Met Your Mother
07:00 Castle
08:00 Low Winter Sun
09:00 Low Winter Sun
10:00 The Listener
11:00 The Listener
12:00 The Listener
13:00 How I Met Your Mother
13:30 How I Met Your Mother
14:00 Fashion Star
15:00 Making Mr.Right
16:00 American Idol
17:00 American Idol
18:00 Mom vs. Matchmaker
18:30 Mom vs. Matchmaker
19:00 The Bridge
20:00 House Of DVF
21:00 Style By Jury
21:30 Style By Jury
22:00 The Simpsons
23:00 The Simpsons
23:30 Bones
00:00 American Idol
01:00 American Idol
02:00 Mom vs. Matchmaker
02:30 Mom vs. Matchmaker



THE HOBBIT: THE BATTLE OF THE FIVE ARMIES ON OSN MOVIES ACTION HD

sundance CHANNEL

03:10 Cole
03:35 Blood Thunder: The Sound Of Alberts
06:00 Blood Thunder: The Sound Of Alberts
07:00 Convention
08:40 Mary Is Happy, Mary Is Happy
10:45 Christmas, Again
12:05 Made In China
13:35 Miss Firecracker
15:15 First Position
16:50 Convention
18:30 All On The Line
19:30 Writers' Room
20:00 Hollywood's Best Film Directors
20:30 Made In China
22:00 Teddy Bear
23:35 Broke Sky
23:50 Paper Covers Rock
01:15 Mary Is Happy, Mary Is Happy
TLC HD
03:15 Extreme Cheapskates
03:35 Love At First Swipe
04:00 Love At First Swipe
04:20 Ballroom Blitz
05:10 Ballroom Blitz
06:00 Say Yes To The Dress
06:25 Super Soul Sunday
07:15 Toddlers & Tiaras
08:05 Are You Fitter Than A

CLASSIFIEDS

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Flight Schedule

Directorate General of Civil Aviation Home Page (www.kuwait-airport.com.kw)

Airlines	Arrival Flights on Sunday 10/7/2016	Time	Departure Flights on Sunday 10/7/2016	Time
KAC	678 Muscat/Abu Dhabi	17:50	KAC	362 Colombo
QTR	1080 Doha	17:55	UAE	855 Dubai
JZR	483 Istanbul	18:20	ABY	125 Sharjah
MSR	620 Cairo	18:30	ETD	301 Abu Dhabi
KAC	502 Beirut	18:35	IRC	528 Ahwaz
KAC	786 Jeddah	18:35	QTR	1070 Doha
KAC	774 Riyadh	18:35	IRA	665 Shiraz
KAC	542 Cairo	18:55	FDB	055 Dubai
KAC	618 Doha	18:55	SAW	703 Damascus
KAC	166 Paris/Rome	19:05	CCE	341 Alexandria
GFA	217 Bahrain	19:05	UAE	873 Dubai
UAE	875 Dubai	19:05	GFA	213 Bahrain
KAC	614 Bahrain	19:10	MEA	404 Beirut
FDB	063 Dubai	19:10	JZR	561 Sohag
ABY	123 Sharjah	19:15	FDB	075 Dubai
MSR	606 Luxor	19:30	SAW	701 Damascus
JAI	572 Mumbai	19:35	FEQ	961 Sohag
KAC	674 Dubai	19:45	MSR	610 Cairo
FDB	059 Dubai	19:50	QTR	1078 Doha
KAC	102 New York/London	19:55	KAC	672 Dubai
DLH	634 Frankfurt	20:05	AXB	393 Kozhikode
KAC	514 Tehran	20:10	KKK	6502 Istanbul
MEA	402 Beirut	20:15	JZR	1773 Jeddah
OMA	647 Muscat	20:20	FDB	057 Dubai
QTR	1088 Doha	20:35	GFA	221 Bahrain
JZR	802 Taif	20:55	SVA	500 Jeddah
FDB	5053 Dubai	20:55	KAC	742 Dammam
ETD	307 Abu Dhabi	21:05	KAC	788 Jeddah
UAE	859 Dubai	21:15	KNE	529 Jeddah
ALK	229 Colombo	21:20	ETD	303 Abu Dhabi
KAC	1802 Amsterdam	21:25	OMA	645 Sharjah
KAC	172 Frankfurt	21:50	ABY	127 Dubai
QTR	1082 Doha	21:55	UAE	857 Dubai
GFA	219 Bahrain	22:00	RJA	640 Amman
ETD	309 Abu Dhabi	22:10	FDB	051 Dubai
AIC	981 Chennai/Ahmedabad	22:25	QTR	1072 Doha
RBG	551 Alexandria	22:30	JZR	535 Cairo
BBC	044 Dhaka/Dammam	22:40	JZR	787 Riyadh
KAC	782 Jeddah	22:50	NIA	251 Alexandria
THY	764 Istanbul	22:55	KAC	562 Amman
JAI	574 Mumbai	23:20	SVR	341 Damascus
MSR	614 Cairo	23:30	SVA	510 Riyadh
FDB	071 Dubai	23:35	CCE	345 Sohag
PIA	205 Lahore	23:40	JZR	777 Dubai

DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

ACCOMMODATION

Accommodation available One big room available in a two bedroom flat in Mahbulah for a decent lady or bachelor. Please contact 66901533 or 55891657 3-7-2016

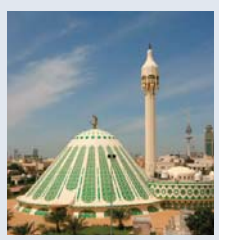
EMERGENCY 112

PRAYER TIMINGS

Fajr:	03:22
Shorook	04:56
Duhr:	11:53
Asr:	15:28
Maghrib:	18:51
Isha:	20:21

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INTERNATIONAL CALLS

Afghanistan	0093	Guatemala	00502
Albania	00355	Guinea	00224
Algeria	00213	Guyana	00592
Andorra	00376	Haiti	00509
Angola	00244	Holland (Netherlands)	0031
Anguilla	001264	Honduras	00504
Antiga	001268	Hong Kong	00852
Argentina	0054	Hungary	0036
Armenia	00374	Ibiza (Spain)	0034
Australia	00671	Iceland	00354
Austria	0043	India	0091
Azerbaijan	00994	Indian Ocean	00873
Bahamas	001242	Indonesia	0062
Bahrain	00973	Iran	0098
Bangladesh	00880	Iraq	00964
Barbados	001246	Ireland	00353
Belarus	00375	Italy	0039
Belgium	0032	Ivory Coast	00225
Belize	00501	Jamaica	001876
Benin	00229	Japan	0081
Bermuda	001441	Jordan	00962
Bhutan	00975	Kazakhstan	007
Bolivia	00591	Kenya	00254
Bosnia	00387	Kiribati	00686
Botswana	00267	Kuwait	00965
Brazil	0055	Kyrgyzstan	00996
Brunei	00673	Laos	00856
Bulgaria	00359	Latvia	00371
Burkina	00226	Lebanon	00961
Burundi	00257	Liberia	00231
Cambodia	00855	Libya	00218
Cameroon	00237	Lesotho	00266
Canada	001	Lithuania	00370
Cape Verde	00238	Luxembourg	00352
Cayman Islands	001345	Macau	00853
Central African	00236	Macedonia	00389
Chad	00235	Madagascar	00261
Chile	0056	Majorca	0034
China	0086	Malawi	00265
Colombia	0057	Malaysia	0060
Comoros	00269	Maldives	00960
Congo	00242	Mali	00223
Cook Islands	00682	Malta	00356
Costa Rica	00506	Marshall Islands	00692
Croatia	00385	Martinique	00596
Cuba	0053	Mauritania	00222
Cyprus	00357	Mauritius	00230
Cyprus (Northern)	0090392	Mayotte	00269
Czech Republic	00420	Mexico	0052
Denmark	0045	Micronesia	00691
Diego Garcia	00246	Moldova	00373
Jibouti	00253	Monaco	00377
Dominica	001767	Mongolia	00976
Dominican Republic	001809	Montserrat	001664
Ecuador	00593	Morocco	00212
Egypt	0020	Mozambique	00258
El Salvador	00503	Myanmar (Burma)	0095
England (UK)	0044	Namibia	00264
Equatorial Guinea	00240	Nepal	00977
Eritrea	00291	Netherlands	0031
Estonia	00372	Netherlands Antilles	00599
Ethiopia	00251	New Caledonia	00687
Falkland Islands	00500	New Zealand	0064
Faroe Islands	00298	Nicaragua	00505
Fiji	00679	Niger	00227
Finland	00358	Nigeria	00234
France	0033	Niue	00683
French Guiana	00594	Norfolk Island	00672
French Polynesia	00689	N. Ireland (UK)	0044
Gabon	00241	North Korea	00850
Gambia	00220	Norway	0047
Georgia	00995	Oman	00968
Germany	0049	Pakistan	0092
Ghana	00233	Palau	00680
Gibraltar	00350	Panama	00507
Greece	0030	Papua New Guinea	00675
Greenland	00299	Paraguay	00595
Grenada	001473	Peru	0051
Guadeloupe	00590	Philippines	0063
Guam	001671	Poland	0048



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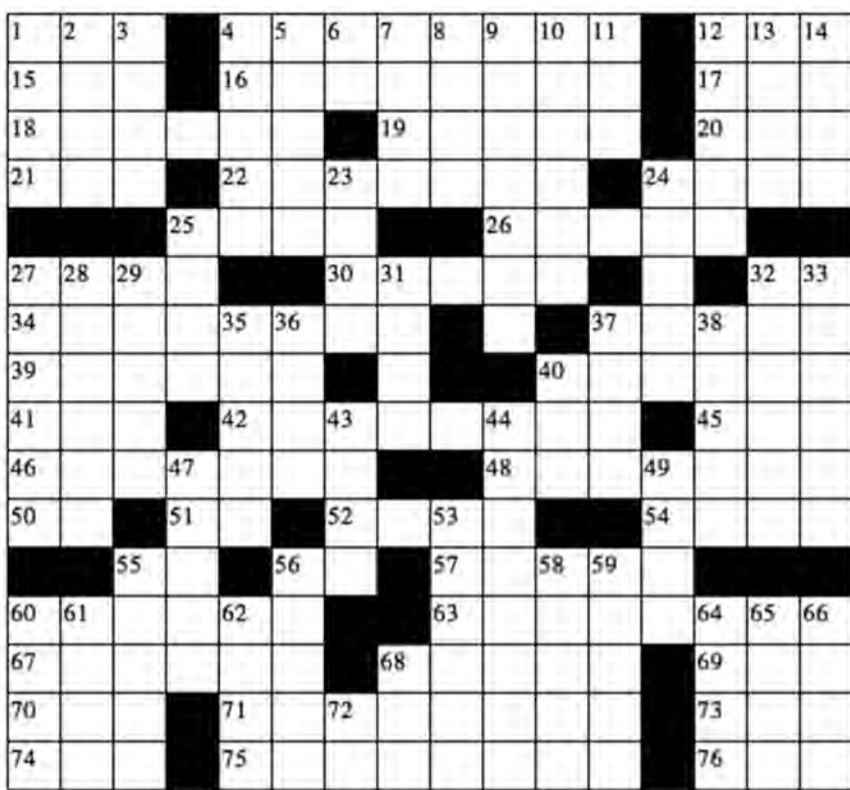
Ophthalmologists
Dr. Abidallah Al-Mansoor 25622444
Dr. Samy Al-Rabeea 25752222
Dr. Masoma Habeeb 25321171
Dr. Mubarak Al-Ajmy 25739999
Dr. Mohsen Abel 25757700
Dr. Adnan Hasan Alwayl 25732223
Dr. Abdallah Al-Baghy 25732223
Ear, Nose & Throat (ENT)
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Dr. Abdallah Al-Ali 25644660
Dr. Abd Al-Hameed Al-Taweel 25646478
Dr. Sanad Al-Fathalah 25311996
Dr. Mohammad Al-Daory 25731988
Dr. Ismail Al-Fodary 22620166
Dr. Mahmoud Al-Booz 25651426
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Dr. Tarek Al-Mikhaizeem 23926920
Dr. Fawzi Maarafi 25730465
Dr. Abdallah Ahmad Eyadah 25655528
Dr. Nabeel Al-Ayoubi 24577781
Dr. Dina Abdallah Al-Rafea 25333501
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Dr. Fawzi Taher Abul 22639955
Dr. Khaleel Abdallah Al-Awadi 22616660
Dr. Adel Al-Hunayan FRCS (C) 25313120
Dr. Leons Joseph 66703427

Plastic Surgeons
Dr. Mohammad Al-Khalaf 22547272
Dr. Abdel-Redha Lari 22617700
Dr. Abdel Quttainah 25625030/60
Family Doctor
Dr. Diviya Damodar 23729596/23729581
Psychiatrists
Dr. Esam Al-Ansari 22635047
Dr. Eisa M. Al-Balhan 22613623/0
Gynaecologists & Obstetricians
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Dr. Verginia s. Marin 2572-6666 ext 8321
Dr. Fozeya Ali Al-Qatan 22655539
Dr. Majeda Khalefa Aliyitami 25343406
Dr. Ahmad Al-Khooly 25739272
Dr. Salem soso 22618787
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Dr. Amer Zawaz Al-Amer 22610044
Dr. Mohammad Yousef Basher 25327148
Internists, Chest & Heart
Dr. Adnan Ebil 22639939
Dr. Mousa Khadada 22666300
Dr. Latefa Al-Duweisan 25728004
Dr. Nadem Al-Ghabra 25355515
Dr. Mobarak Aldoud 24726446
Dr. Nasser Behbehani 25654300/3

Paediatricians
Dr. Khaled Hamadi 25665898
Dr. Abd Al-Aziz Al-Rashed 25340300
Dr. Zahra Qabazard 25710444
Dr. Sohail Qamar 22621099
Dr. Snaa Maarooof 25713514
Dr. Pradip Gujare 23713100
Dr. Zacharias Mathew 24334282
Dermatology
Dr. Mohammed Salam Bern University 23845955
Dentists
Dr. Anil Thomas 3729596/3729581
Dr. Shamah Al-Matar 22641071/2
Dr. Anesah Al-Rasheed 22562226
Dr. Abdallah Al-Amer 22561444
Dr. Faysal Al-Fozan 22619557
Dr. Abdallateef Al-Katrah 22525888
Dr. Abdallah Al-Duweisan 25653755
Dr. Bader Al-Ansari 25620111
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Dr. Sohal Najem Al-Shemeri 25633324
Dr. Jasem Mola Hassan 25345875
Gastrologists
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Dr. Mohammad Al-Shamaly 25322030
Dr. Foad Abdallah Al-Ali 22633135

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Dr. Ahmad Al-Ansari 25658888
Dr. Kamal Al-Shomr 25329924
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Dr. Musaed Faraj Khamees 22666288
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Consultant Cardiologist
Dr. Farida Al-Habib 2611555-2622555 MD, PH.D, FACC Te: 2575077 Fax: 25723123

CROSSWORD 1307



ACROSS

- A barrier constructed to contain the flow or water or to keep out the sea.
 - Any of various strong liquors especially a Dutch spirit distilled from potatoes.
 - Someone who engages in arbitrage (who purchases securities in one market for immediate resale in another in the hope of profiting from the price differential).
 - A constellation in the southern hemisphere near Telescopium and Norma.
 - A long slender cigar.
 - A unit of length of thread or yarn.
 - A fire (usually on a hill or tower) that can be seen from a distance.
 - A woman of refinement.
 - Light informal conversation for social occasions.
 - A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
 - Obtain from someone after their death.
 - Small and light boat.
 - (Roman mythology) God of love.
 - A person of exceptional importance and reputation.
 - (Polynesian) An alcoholic drink made from the aromatic roots of the kava shrub.
 - Small spotted wildcat found from Texas to Brazil.
 - Leaf or strip from a leaf of the talipot palm used in India for writing paper.
 - Apply incorrectly or badly.
 - An acute inflammatory disease occurring in the intestines of premature infants.
 - Lying in a relaxed manner.
 - A small vessel with a rim curved to fit the orbit of the eye.
 - An edge tool with a heavy bladed head mounted across a handle.
 - (Akkadian) God of wisdom.
 - Designer drug designed to have the effects of amphetamines (it floods the brain with serotonin) but to avoid the drug laws.
 - The persistence of a sound after its source has stopped.
 - Red pear-shaped tropical fruit with poisonous seeds.
 - A river that rises in northern Colombia and flows generally eastward to the Orinoco in central Venezuela.
 - United States classical archaeologist (born in Canada) noted for leading the excavation of the Athenian agora (1906-2000).
 - An ancient Greek city on the slopes of Mount Parnassus.
 - A federal agency established to coordinate programs aimed at reducing pollution and protecting the environment.
 - Aromatic bulb used as seasoning.
 - A now obsolete picture pickup tube in a television camera.
 - A workplace for the conduct of scientific research.
 - A nucleic acid consisting of large molecules shaped like a double helix.
 - Not firmly fastened or secured.
 - An acute febrile highly contagious viral disease.
- DOWN**
- A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
 - A particular geographical region of indefinite boundary (usually serving some special purpose or distinguished by its people or culture or geography).
 - A flat-bottomed volcanic crater that was formed by an explosion.
 - (usually plural) Valuables taken by violence (especially in war).
 - Any plant of the genus Canna having large sheathing leaves and clusters of large showy flowers.
 - A colorless explosive liquid that is volatile and poisonous and foul-smelling.
 - A language unit by which a person or thing is known.
 - Essential oil or perfume obtained from flowers.
 - A tricycle (usually propelled by pedalling).
 - Any of several trees of the genus Platanus having thin pale bark that scales off in small plates and lobed leaves and ball-shaped heads of fruits.
 - A guided missile fired from shipboard against an airborne target.
 - Primitive chlorophyll-containing mainly aquatic eukaryotic organisms lacking true stems and roots and leaves.
 - A large quantity of written matter.
 - A small cake leavened with yeast.
 - A television system that has more than the usual number of lines per frame so its pictures show more detail.
 - A member of a formerly tribal people now living in south central India.
 - A steep rugged rock or cliff.
 - (trademark) An antacid.
 - Trade name for an oral contraceptive containing estradiol and norgestrel.
 - The United Nations agency concerned with atomic energy.
 - The 4th letter of the Hebrew alphabet.
 - A person afflicted with psychosis.
 - A member of a North American Indian people of southeastern California and northwestern Mexico.
 - The 16th letter of the Hebrew alphabet.
 - The British system of withholding tax.
 - Ions are accelerated along a linear path by voltage differences on electrodes along the path.
 - (British informal) Not to be deceived or hoodwinked n 1.
 - (computer science) A standardized language for the descriptive markup of documents.
 - A young peafowl.
 - A pause during which things are calm or activities are diminished.
 - A short high tone produced as a signal or warning.
 - Admission to a group (especially a college or university).
 - South African plant widely cultivated for its showy pure white spathe and yellow spadix.
 - A mound of stones piled up as a memorial or to mark a boundary or path.
 - Japanese statesman who set Japan's expansionist policies and formed an alliance with Germany and Italy (1891-1945).
 - Make improvements or corrections to.
 - One of a pair of long straps (usually connected to the bit or the headpiece) used to control a horse.
 - The imperial dynasty of China from 1122 to 221 BC.
 - Combining form.
 - A translucent mineral consisting of hydrated silica of variable color.
 - (Babylonian) God of wisdom and agriculture and patron of scribes and schools.
 - A branch of the Tai languages.
 - A soft gray malleable metallic element that resembles tin but discolors on exposure to air.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You have high ideals and a vision of unity and togetherness that allows you to become long-suffering and put up with a lot. You tend to be self-sacrificing, understanding and always interested in whatever is psychological, mystical, etc. You may feel passionate about some issue and your ideas may help others to understand a truth behind some common frustration... So... Express yourself. This could be political but more than likely will be the uncovering of some secret tradition. Romance becomes an end in itself as a new cycle begins now. This marks a time when love, creativity and self-expression satisfy a deep yearning to be appreciated and needed. Talking with your loved one about any particular subject will gain you a better viewpoint.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Your friends, partners and relationships mean a lot to you. They are your primary source of strength and you always look to them for support and encouragement. You may be visiting out-of-town family this weekend and enjoying all sorts of fun times together. You are indeed a social being and you enjoy weaving this fact into your lifestyle. You are very responsive yourself and value this in others. You do not play favorites and are quite impersonal when it comes to your responsibilities. You never forsake your ideals when it comes to relationships of any kind. Your imagination is at its best when you are being social or relating to others. Family, home, relatives and real estate play a bigger part in your life now. Misunderstandings can be healed today.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Real estate plays a bigger part in your life goals as well as plans to invest for your future. You are very gifted, having great magnetism and warmth as well as having a keen and powerful mind. A bizarre news report turns your thoughts to writing and you may think you could create an interesting story around the personality that has come to your attention. You might consider taking a class in creative writing. There is a flashy, flirty, stylish splash of color and warmth today. Being appreciated and admired for your gifts and talents are powerful needs. Taking chances can bring big rewards. Home and family matters can play a big part in this: relatives take on greater importance than before. You have decided to decorate or paint a room.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You are highly motivated to interact with family and friends this day. You tend to be the one in the group that holds the group together. There is an urge to see unity in everything. Your practical skills are linked to your almost mystical inner vision. You manifest your ideals and dreams in an organized and clearheaded manner. You would be great at giving the public a sense of the ideal via films, advertising and spiritual work. This is also a lucky day. Romance becomes an end in itself as a new cycle begins for you. This marks a time when love, creativity and self-expression satisfy a deep yearning to be appreciated, admired and needed. Your evening is a flashy, flirty type of evening. There is a lot of laughter tonight.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

There is an emphasis on close relationships and a preoccupation with ideas. You are concerned with issues of freedom and independence far beyond the average person. There could be long discussions with your friends about inventions and electronics. You adjust your ideals often and struggle not to become carried away with each new vision. The world of your imagination is a major focus of change just now. You are independent, confident and more than likely a little self-centered. You love attention and somehow manage to gravitate to the center of almost any group or happening. You enjoy a little independence this evening: there is time to clean and sort through clothes, etc. You have a story in mind and it is growing into a novelette.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You may be able to enjoy and value your private time today. Neighbors or relatives, brothers or sisters in particular, can be subjects for concern. If there are difficulties in your relationships with them, now is the time to improve situations. It will take some effort and patience on your part to keep things on an even keel. There may be a tendency to be out of touch or uncommunicative; work at developing your communication skills. You are very out-front and candid, probably not known for your great sense of diplomacy or tact. You are driven to penetrate the superficial and get at the essential. Be aware of the tendency to see yourself as unfairly treated. Your support system becomes more secure now. A fun surprise comes in a small package today.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

The key to understanding your personality and the circumstances in which you find yourself can be found in the environment or support system that surrounds you. You are very much the creature of habit and home, the encircling network of friends and relationships which are crucial to your success or lack thereof. There are opportunities to network this afternoon. You appear perhaps more charming and refined than usual. Now is the time to make yourself known. Your brilliant imagination and enchanting manner transport all who meet you beyond the mundane and into the extraordinary regions where you spend a lot of your time. Romance is possible this evening. This is a time when love, creativity and self-expression are satisfying.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Taking care of business is a major theme where your emotional orientation is concerned. This could mean your personal financial affairs as well as your professional accounts. This may be a great time to work with family relations and improvements. Health and work goals take on a great deal of importance for you and your plans for less stress and more relaxation may be in order. This could be a time of good fortune but you are wise in determining how your finances are channeled. Perhaps a budget is in order so that you will know how and where you are motivated to spend your earnings. You will make career gains with your ability to choose well. Opportunities proliferate and you may find yourself wanting to do almost everything.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 19)

This could be an action-filled day when time seems to slow down as you encounter some of your more sensitive areas. This kind of intensity and vulnerability points to inner change and growth. Communication with authority figures or older members of your family is enhanced. If needed, a surplus of insights and solutions is available. The evening brings opportunities for whatever your heart desires: quiet, romance, adventure, education or whatever else you can think up is yours for the asking. It is time to do something different for a change. This is a good time for surrounding yourself with friends and young people and for having fun. You appreciate your particular situation and enjoy support from those around you.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

There is a burning zeal for humanitarian goals, what is best for the many, the community. You may find yourself in a volunteer service today. With little patience for red tape and superficialities, you insist on getting right to the heart of any question. You have a knack for putting the feelings of a group into words and may serve as a teacher or spokesperson. Communication is one area where you can always get support and backing from friends and co-workers. Historical ideas, articles or books may be of interest to you today. It would be excellent if you could somehow make your living in these areas. An instinctive urge to get serious about taking care of yourself at many levels is emphasized now.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

Instant gratification is one of the temptations to which you are subject now: you want things and you want them this instant. This is a practical and materialistic kind of focus and may indicate the making and spending of money. Learning what really counts is an important lesson that could come about as a difficult lesson. This is a good day, one that should just flow along quite well. In particular, you will do well in activities that include children, young people and your home and surroundings. You could feel real support and harmony for circumstances and those around you. Be wise in your choice of relaxation. You could lose yourself in the social world and neglect your ability to present yourself as a separate, unique individual.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You have unusual relationships, perhaps a number of them, and not always of long duration. You are creative when it comes to partnerships; you seem to establish unusual and different relationships in the partnership area. Be aware that you may at times take on the role of mother instead of partner, whether you are male or female. It is natural for you to be very compassionate and attentive to the needs of others. If you are having trouble in the relationship area, you will find improvement soon. New paths to world or personal unity are a major interest to you and you have a very practical sense of how to make your dreams real. You will soon become involved with community service and this becomes very helpful in all of your relationships.

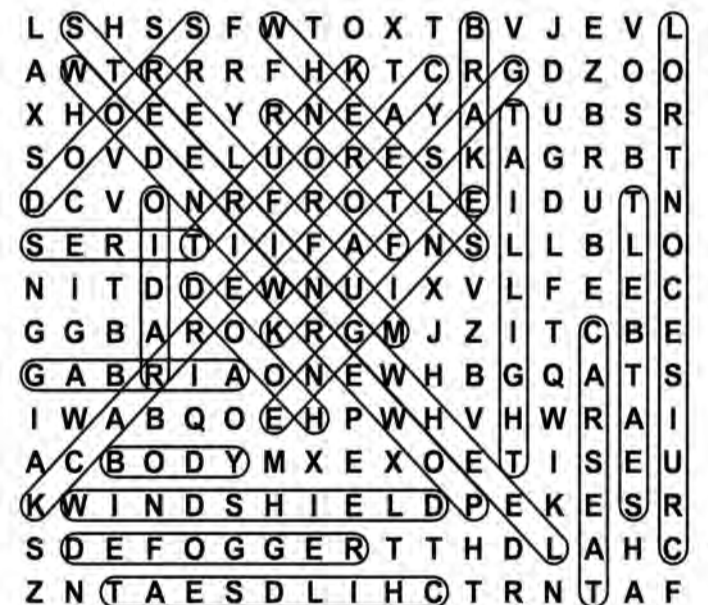
WORD SEARCH

Car Parts 2 - Word Search
Find the words hidden in the grid of letters.



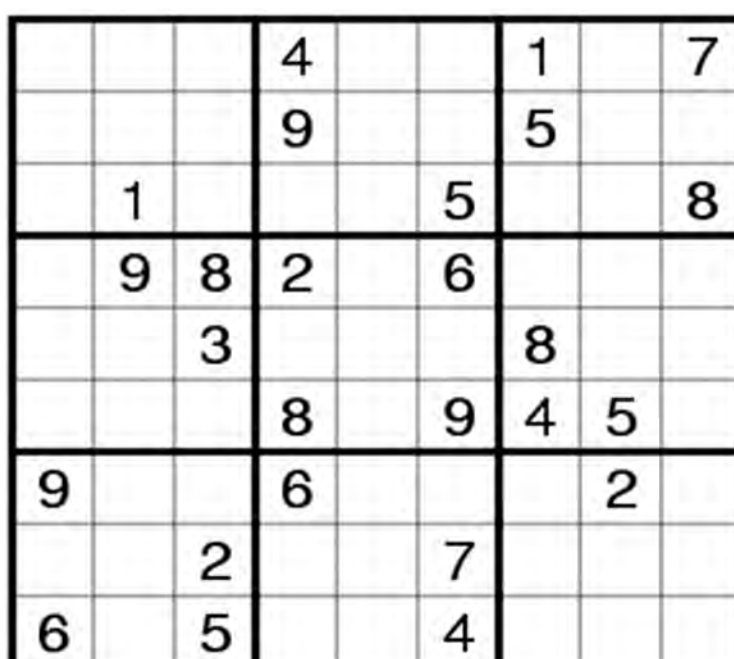
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|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| ALTERNATOR | DEFROSTER | RADIATOR |
| AXLE | DRIVE SHAFT | SPARE TIRE |
| BATTERY | FRAME | STARTER |
| BUMPER | FUSE | SUSPENSION |
| CARBURETOR | HEADLIGHT | TRANSMISSION |
| CLUTCH | HORN | TURN SIGNAL |
| COOLING FAN | IGNITION | WHEEL RIM |
| CRANKCASE | MIRROR | |

Large Print Word Search Puzzles
Car Parts 1 - Solution

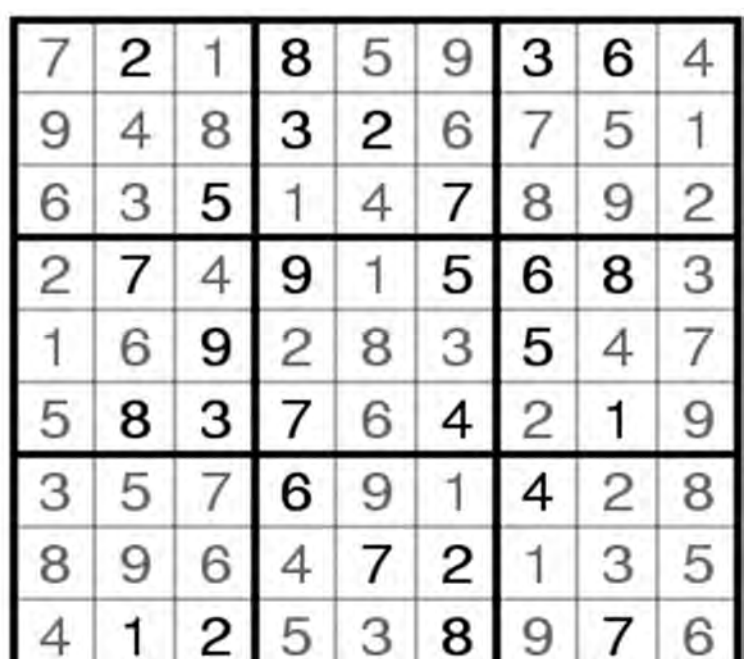


- | | | |
|----------------|--------------|----------------|
| AIR BAG | DOORS | SEAT BELT |
| BODY | ENGINE | STEERING WHEEL |
| BRAKE | GAS TANK | TAIL LIGHT |
| CAR SEAT | HOOD | TIRES |
| CARRIER RACK | MUFFLER | TRUNK |
| CHILD SEAT | POWER WINDOW | WHEELS |
| CRUISE CONTROL | RADIO | WINDSHIELD |
| DEFOGGER | ROOF | |

Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution





Summer Search

DRPSUNTANICECREAM
 ZFCHUSUNBURNFNJEN
 YIAHGHBOATCOUSUGB
 WRUEFFISHINGOINLE
 MKGUTIBIKINICWEOA
 NQUBEEWATERMELONC
 ANSWIMMINGJLWGBBH
 YQTACIPQTOUQNJDOH
 VRNNGXSGTWLXXGRLY
 ALTFMFPQDPYSDAPCD
 COLOAOAXGCMAITPCE
 ATWSMNSUNGCLASSE
 TIOHPQFXDFTENTPXL
 IOVOIUWQKRHOTBMC
 ONJRNIMUFFHLKGLRW
 NZRTGTXJZKLHATXZT
 BKNNSVOQWJVXXRDWEB

August
 beach
 bikini
 boat
 camping
 fan
 fishing



hat
 hot
 ice cream
 July
 June
 lotion
 mosquito

shorts
 sunburn
 sunglasses
 sun tan
 swimming
 tent
 vacation



SUDOKU

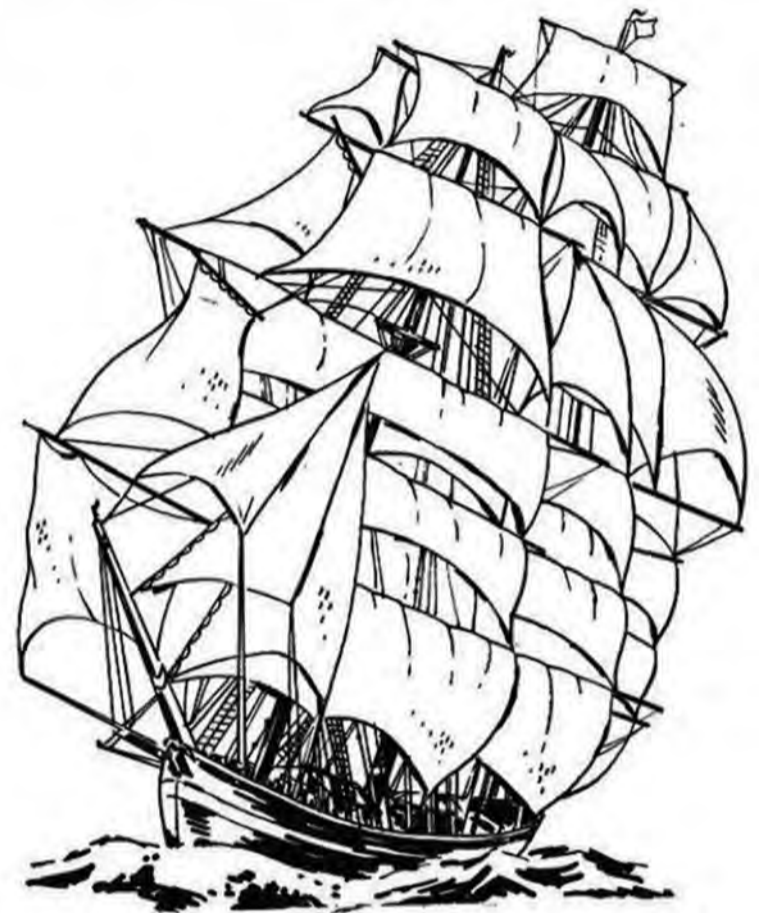
1	2			7		4		
			2	4		7		1
		8			1	9		
7				9		1		
9	5	3			4			
	6		3	5				7
	9		7			5	1	
3		7	9	2		8	6	
6								

Solution

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



Color me!



The Thorny Dragon



The thorny dragon or thorny devil is an Australian Lizard, also known as the mountain devil, the thorny lizard, or the moloch. This is the sole species of genus Moloch. The thorny dragon grows up to 20 cm in length, and it can live for up to 20 years. Most of these lizards are colored in camouflaging shades of desert browns and tans. These colors change from pale colors during warm weather and to darker colors during cold weather. These animals are covered entirely with conical spines. The thorny dragon also features a spiny "false head" on the back of its neck, and the lizard presents this to potential predators by dipping its real head. The "false head" is made of soft tissue. The females are larger than the males. The thorny dragon's scales are ridged, enabling the animal to collect water from any part of its body. That water is then conveyed to its mouth.

Description

An intimidating array of spikes covers the entire upper side of the body of the thorny dragon. These thorny scales also help to defend it from predators. Camouflage and deception may also be used to evade predation. This lizard's unusual gait involves freezing and rocking as it moves about slowly in search of food, water, and mates.

Habitat

The thorny dragon usually lives

in the arid scrubland and desert that covers most of central Australia. For example, it inhabits the Spinifex sand plain and sand ridge desert in the deep interior and the mallee belt. The habitation of the thorny dragon coincides more with the regions of sandy loam soils than with a particular climate in Western Australia.

Self defense

The thorny dragon is covered in hard, rather sharp spines that dissuade attacks by predators by making it difficult to swallow. It also has a false head on its back. When it feels threatened by other animals, it lowers its head between its front legs, and then presents its false head.

Diet

The thorny dragon mainly subsists on ants, especially *Ochetellus flavipes* and other species in the *Iridomyrmex* or *Ochetellus* genera. Thorny dragons often eat thousands of ants in one day.

Thorny dragons collect moisture in the dry desert by the condensation of dew on their bodies at night. This dew forms on its skin, and then it is channeled to its mouth in hygroscopic grooves between its spines. During rainfalls, capillary action allows the thorny dragon to suck in water from all over its body.



RECIPES FOR KIDS



Chicken Noodle Casserole

Ingredients

- 4 skinless, boneless chicken breast halves
- 6 ounces egg noodles
- 1 can condensed cream of mushroom soup
- 1 can condensed cream of chicken soup
- 1 cup sour cream
- salt to taste
- ground black pepper to taste
- 1 cup crumbled buttery round crackers
- 1/2 cup butter

Directions

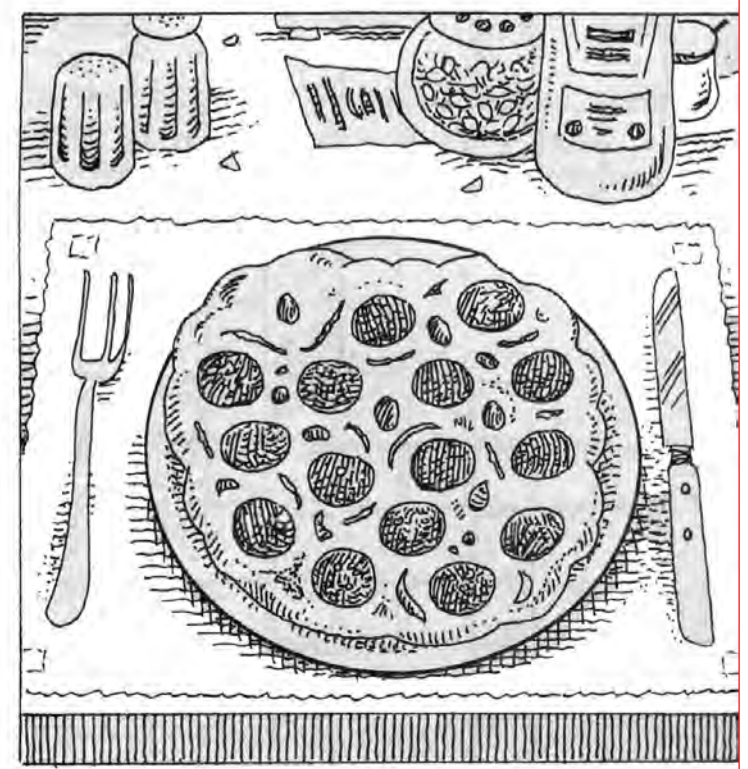
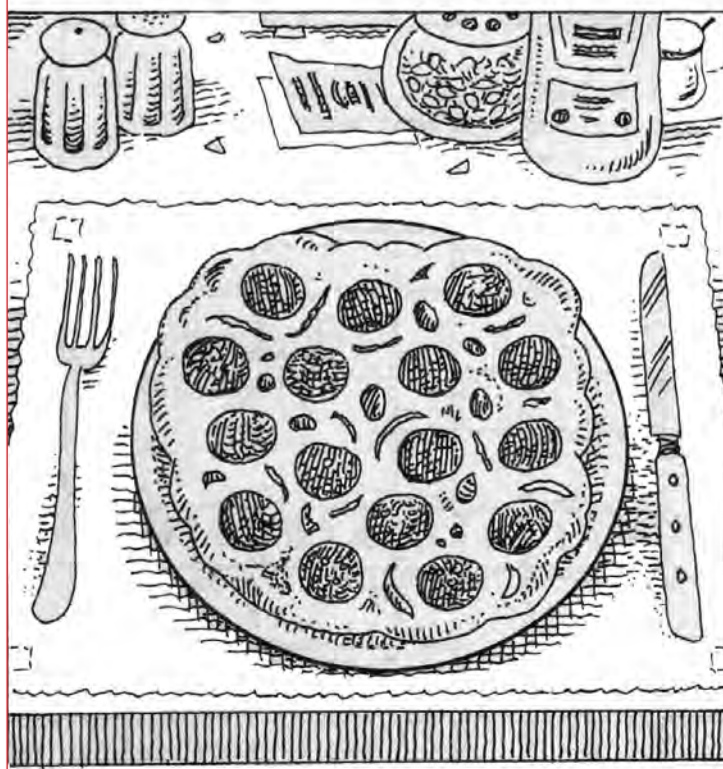
1. Poach chicken in a large pot of simmering water. Cook until no longer pink in center, about 12 minutes. Remove from pot and set aside. Bring chicken cooking water to a boil and cook pasta in it. Drain. Cut chicken into small pieces, and mix with noodles.
2. In a separate bowl, mix together mushroom soup, chicken soup, and sour cream. Season with salt and pepper. Gently stir together cream soup mixture with the chicken mixture. Place in a 2 quart baking dish.
3. Melt butter in a small saucepan, and remove from heat. Stir in crumbled crackers. Top casserole with the buttery crackers.
4. Bake at 350 degrees F (175 degrees C) for about 30 minutes, until heated through and browned on top.

Did you know?



- Fire is a chemical reaction that releases light and heat.
- Substances combine with oxygen in the air, combusting with a flame and often smoke.
- Fires require fuel, oxygen and heat to burn.
- Different types of fuel include coal, oil and wood.
- Flames are the part of a fire which we can see, they can be different colors, depending on the substance which is burning.
- A candle flame typically burns at around 1000 degrees Celsius (1800 Fahrenheit).
- Fire is very dangerous to humans as it can easily burn or blister skin. It is important to take safety precautions when using fire.
- Fire is also very useful to humans for lighting, heating, cooking and more.
- Scientists believe that humans began using fire to cook food in a controlled way around 1 million years ago.
- Forest fires can be extremely destructive and are dangerous to both humans and wildlife.
- Fires are also an important ecological process that can stimulate growth.
- Fires can be stopped in 3 different ways:
 - Removing the fuel source by exhausting it or taking it away.
 - Removing the oxygen by smothering the fire.
 - Removing the heat by absorbing it with water.
- Fire extinguishers are often used to control fires by discharging water, foams, carbon dioxide, dry chemicals or other substances.

See if you can find the eight differences.





Kate Moss and David Beckham to plan Liv Tyler's wedding

The British supermodel introduced the 'Lord of the Rings' actress to her fiancé Dave Gardner - a sports agent whose is David's best friend - and has even offered to host part of their nuptials at her home in the Cotswolds in south central England.

A source said: "Kate first introduced Liv and Dave and certainly knows how to have a good time, so it made sense for her to be charged with planning things. "She's already floated the idea of hosting part of the celebrations at her Cotswolds home." And she and David have been discussing the idea of a joint stag and hen party for the couple, who are expecting their second child together.

The source added to Grazia magazine: "David is overseeing things from Dave's perspective. There's talk of him and Kate heading up a joint stag and hen do, which is likely to be a weekend in Marrakech."

The pair are said to have swapped ideas after the recent Louis Vuitton show in Paris. Liv - who has son Milo, 11, from her marriage to Royston Langdon, and Sailor, 16 months, with Dave - will likely be relying on her pal to help choose her wedding gown too as she recently spoke of how much she loves Kate's sense of style. She said: "Kate is my style icon, I'd love to raid her closet. I was at her house yesterday and I was looking at everything. There are so many beautiful things in there, she is wonderful."

Liv is planning to spend more time in the UK next year and thinks it would benefit the kids - including Dave's eight-year son Gray - if they are all together. She said recently: "We are back and forth. I am still mostly in New York but spending a lot of time here in the UK. David's son is here and also his job. It's hard. It's beautiful. "It is what it is. It's what we signed up for. It's an evolving thing. "Next year we are going to be here for sure, for school, so the children can all be under one roof for at least the school year."

Kate Moss and David Beckham are reportedly teaming up to plan Liv Tyler's wedding. The British supermodel

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Heidi Klum won't get married again

The 43-year-old model is incredibly happy with boyfriend of two years Vito Schnabel, but following her failed unions with stylist Ric Pipino and singer Seal - with whom she raises children Leni, 12, Henry, 11, Johan, 10, and Lou, seven - she is reluctant to walk down the aisle again.

She said of Vito: "I love being in love, like when you have butterflies in your stomach and when you feel great. I celebrate all the romance - I'm quite old-fashioned that way. I don't know, I love enjoying life and celebrating the love and being happy."

Asked if that means she'll consider getting married again, she told People magazine: "I've done it twice and it didn't really work out for me, so why hurt something when it's all good the way it is. I like it the way things are right now."

Red Hot Chili Peppers rocker Anthony Keidis recently spoke of how his brief but "intense" 2002 romance with Heidi was one of the "most beautiful memories" of his life, and the German supermodel was very flattered to hear his fond recollection of their time together.

She said: "Obviously, it's very nice when you still get along with your ex in a way or someone you have dated in the past.

"And you know, we had a very special time together. I never really thought that anyone knew anything about that. It's funny that he brings it up after so many years."



Zac Efron is a 'nerd'

The 'Baywatch' actor may be a heartthrob to millions of women but he claims he finds it hard to get a date because of his uncool hobbies. He said: "I'm a nerd, dude. I love comic books and video games. I just love chilling."

The 28-year-old star - who has previously been in relationships with Vanessa Hudgens and model Sami Mir? - claims he hasn't been on many dates but thinks that's because he is "good" at dating as he quickly gets into a commitment.

Explaining why his inexperience means he isn't good at dating, he backtracked as he told The Fix: "[My dates have] all been successful. That's the problem. Maybe I am good at dates." And now he is single, the 'Mike and Dave Need Wedding Dates' is ready to try something new in his bid to find love again. He said: "I think I'd like to go and just try something totally different, like blind dating. Maybe I should do like a round-table of dates."



Zac recently admitted he used to Google himself every day, until he realized it wasn't a healthy thing to do. He said: "What I found is structure. That led me to a balance of opposites. You get out of life what you put in. "There was a moment when my morning routine was, like, get up and Google yourself. But that stopped, dramatically and instantly, probably three years ago. I realized that viewing yourself through other people's pictures is not living your own life.

"I wasn't really being myself. A lot of my hobbies had gone out the window. I couldn't skateboard or surf for fear of being followed. Crossing the line of fear is what leads to greatness."

Calvin Harris wrote '100 per cent' of his new song



The Scottish DJ - who was left stunned when the 'Shake It Off' hit-maker began dating the 35-year-old actor shortly after they split in June - has teamed up with John Newman on new track 'Ole' and the singer insists he had nothing to do with the lyrical content of the single.

John said: "In all honesty, Calvin has done 100 per cent of the writing on this. I went into the studio, he said, 'Sing this', and I sang the song. "He told me how to sing it. It's a weird one because, I've got no comment on the thing [Swift and Hiddleston's relationship]. I honestly can't - it wouldn't be fair. I've just related to the tune in my own way."

Lyrics to the song include, "My heart speaks/ I ain't seen you or been with you for weeks/ But I see online that you've begun to be/ A good girl and take trips with your boyfriend/ Being attentive, continue to pretend", and in an apparent reference to Tom's 'Avengers' character Loki, "Low key you won't tell none of your friends about me."

However, John refused to confirm the subject matter is Taylor and Tom. When pressed by the Evening Standard newspaper, he simply said: "Life's life. People make good decisions and bad decisions, and they'll do what they want, and sometimes it's on camera."

Meanwhile, it has been claimed Calvin didn't write the song about his former lover as he'd actually penned it "months" before they ended their 15-month romance. A source told Us Weekly magazine: "People are just making assumptions to get attention for a song. There's no way it could be about Tom. "It has nothing to do with Tom and Taylor."

Natalie Dormer 'constantly apologizes' for her dog's behavior

The 'Game of Thrones' actress is devoted to her puppy Indy but worries the pooch is overly affectionate towards strangers. Asked when she was last embarrassed, she told Grazia magazine: "Whenever Indy isn't behaving. She can be overly affectionate with people, so I'm constantly apologizing to people about her sniffing them or jumping on them."

The 34-year-old actress is currently splashing out huge sums of money on getting the dog trained so she can take her to work with her. She said: "My biggest extravagance is my puppy; she's named after Indiana Jones. She's a Rhodesian ridgeback. "She's being trained within an inch of her life because I want her to come on set in the future, so I'm spending a lot on training classes."

Meanwhile, the 'Hunger Games: Mockingjay - Part 1' actress insists she isn't as

strong as people always assume her to be and has moments of feeling "pathetic". She said: "The biggest misconception is that I don't have moments of vulnerability and weakness because I tend to play strong women. But I can cry and feel pathetic and like I want to give up, just like any other person."

Despite suffering a number of setbacks in her career, Natalie hasn't let them get her down and has learned to persevere. She said: "My biggest life lesson is perseverance. If you get knocked down eight times, get up nine. "It took me 12 years to get where I am, but anything worth fighting for can take time. It's a marathon not a sprint."



Idris Elba is worried about burning out

The 43-year-old actor is also a successful DJ and recently signed up to direct his first feature film but Idris worries that the general public will soon get sick of him.

Speaking to director Jon Favreau for Interview magazine, he said: "It's unhealthy to have that much going on. I don't want to sound ungrateful or anything, but I sleep less, I'm constantly thinking, I'm constantly multitasking, and I really don't know what the effects are going to be when I'm older. I don't ever stop. Not because I'm greedy or anything, but I'm always creating, debating with the part of my brain that is dormant. Wondering how I can move in and create a bit more space and take a bit more time. But it's almost like the more I achieve, the more capacity I have to achieve. "I do worry sometimes about whether I'm going to burn out. Not burn myself out, but burn my art out, with audiences going, 'Ah, yeah, I've seen enough now, thanks very much."

Idris - who will make his directorial debut with an adaptation of Victor Headley's novel 'Yardie' - also revealed he recently turned to Ben Affleck for advice on making the transition from acting to directing. He said: "I was at a party not too long ago, and I ran into Ben Affleck. I'd had a bit to drink, and I was super excited to see him. And the reason why I'm excited to see Ben is because Ben is an actor who can direct. And I've sort of been in development to direct my first feature film. I've done a couple of music videos and a couple of shorts, and I'm going into that world of the feature."

"And I say to Ben, [slurring] 'Oh Ben, hey, man. Bro, can you tell me ... I just, like, I think you're incredible.' I'm like, 'I'm so interested in that transition. You're an actor, and you're directing, and I want to know what you had to go through and how you're getting people ...' And at the time, he was like, 'Idris, just call me.' I didn't call him ever."



Kylie Jenner is worried she's going grey

The 18-year-old reality star - who recently reconciled her relationship with Tyga - was left concerned when she discovered a silvery strand among her dark locks, especially as her mother Kris Jenner's hair began to change at a fairly young age too.

In a Snapchat video, Kylie documented having a friend remove the offending strand of hair. She exclaimed: "Oh my God! Take it out." She then showed off the hair as she addressed her fans directly. She said: "You guys, my first grey hair. I think my mom got grey hairs in her early '20s."

It was recently claimed Kylie and Tyga are stronger than ever after reuniting following their brief split. A source said: "They are definitely, officially, 100 per cent back on "They needed a reset. Kylie is happy. She feels like she needed the time apart but it's fate." And they are so happy together that Kylie even referred to Tyga - who has a three-year-old son, King Cairo, with ex-girlfriend Blac Chyna - as her "husband" in a Snapchat video.

During a manicure with her pal Jordyn Woods, Kylie was seen looking at Egyptian-themed nail art and said: "This reminds me of my husband." This comes shortly after a source close to the couple claimed that despite their relationship troubles, Kylie cannot bring herself to leave Tyga for good.

The insider shared: "Kylie and Tyga are giving things another shot. They are taking things a lot slower this time around, though, and are using their former arguments and fights as a learning curve and as a reference point for a healthier future."

"She can't resist him and he can't resist her. They are still so in love, so getting back together was relatively inevitable. They both knew that but needed their space to decompress and regroup and grow."

George Takei is disappointed the new 'Star Trek' movie

The 46-year-old star is responsible for writing the script for 'Star Trek Beyond' with Doug Jung in which John Cho's version of the USS Enterprise helmsman is in a same sex relationship.

Takei portrayed Sulu in the original 1960s TV series and has come out against the creative decision as, in his opinion, it goes against franchise creator Gene Roddenberry's vision. Takei, who is openly homosexual and an LGBT rights activist, had said: "Unfortunately, it's a twisting of Gene's creation, to which he put in so much thought. I think it's really unfortunate."

Now Pegg has hit back saying it was important to represent the LGBT community in the "most inclusive, tolerant universe in science fiction" without making a big deal of introducing a "gay character". In a statement released to The Guardian newspaper on Friday (08.07.16), Pegg said: "I have huge love and respect for George Takei, his heart, courage and humour are an inspiration. However, with regards to his thoughts on our Sulu, I must respectfully disagree with him." Iterating that to make a new character gay would merely be an act of tokenism, he continued: "He's right, it is unfortunate, it's unfortunate that the screen version of the most inclusive, tolerant universe in science fiction hasn't featured an LGBT character until now. We could have introduced a new gay character, but he or she would have been primarily defined by their sexuality, seen as the 'gay character', rather than simply for who they are, and isn't that tokenism?"

"(Director) Justin Lin, Doug Jung and I loved the idea of it being someone we already knew because the audience have a pre-existing opinion of that character as a human being, unaffected by any prejudice. Also, the audience would infer that there has been an LGBT presence in the Trek Universe from the beginning."



Meghan Trainor had to 'fake it' through the first year of her career

The 22-year-old singer admitted she was "terrified" when filming the video for her 2014 debut single 'All About That Bass' because she had "no idea" what she was doing.

She said: "That first thing I ever did was the music video for ['All About That] Bass' and I had no management, I had no glam team, I was terrified - I just remember eight hands were all over me shoving me into these outfits and they were like 'GO!' And I was just faking it! A lot of my first year was fake it till you make it. I had no idea what was doing."

While the track discusses positive body image, Meghan admits it didn't reflect her mindset when she wrote it, but she penned the track to help improve her way of thinking and to try and overcome her insecurities.

She told the new issue of Notion magazine: "I wrote that song, and I did not feel that way while writing it. It was more like, 'I WISH I felt like this.' A lot of my songs were

like that, 'I wish I felt like this.' 'I was so insecure when I was younger; we would go the grocery store and my mum, and I would see the magazines that on display while you wait to purchase all your food, and I'd be like, 'Ma is that real? How does she look that perfect?'"

The 'No' singer has changed a lot since those days as she now adores taking part in photoshoots, whereas she used to be too insecure to even take a photo of herself or have confidence that she had what it took to perform on stage.

She reflected: "Man, I was at a place before where I didn't want to take a picture of myself you know? I was just too insecure to think that I was pretty enough to be the artist, or that I could perform live or do photoshoots and now I can't wait for the next photoshoot so I can Instagram a cool pic! "I Instagrammed a selfie today because I was like dang, I look beautiful!"



Rita Ora helps launch Coca-Cola's new beverage

The 25-year-old singer ensured all eyes were on her in a racy, cut-out coat while introducing Coca-Cola Zero Sugar at the brand's Zero Sugar Taste Lounge in London. Rita said: "I've always been a huge Coca-Cola fan so I'm happy that there's now a Coca-Cola that tastes just as good as the classic but without the sugar. If you're like me and love the original Coca-Cola but want to enjoy it without the sugar, then this is perfect for you."

This is not the first time 'The X Factor' judge has worked with Coca-Cola; earlier this year she helped celebrate the popular drink's 100th anniversary. Meanwhile, it's a busy time for Rita, who recently signed a worldwide deal with Atlantic Records UK. Following her departure from Roc Nation - owned by Jay Z - she was snapped up by Atlantic and is thrilled to finally start work on her long-awaited second album.

Rita wrote on Instagram: "I'm thankful to my new Atlantic Records family for all their support and encouragement. The next

chapter is going to be incredible." And Atlantic are equally as excited to have the star as part of their stable of artists, which include Ed Sheeran, Rudimental and Plan B.

Atlantic Records UK President Ben Cook said of the signing: "First and foremost she's a great singer who's hugely passionate about music and I'm delighted to welcome her to Atlantic Records. We look forward to getting in the studio with her and making an incredible album."

Her manager Sarah Stennett, of First Access Management, said of the new partnership: "I have worked with Rita since she was 17. She has always been a great entertainer with an electric personality; singing is at the heart of everything she does. I am thrilled that Rita has Atlantic Records as her global record label in this next phase of her career." Rita intends to have her new LP out this year, the follow-up to her self-titled 2012 debut.

Sylvester Stallone celebrated his 70th birthday with Monaco's Prince Albert and Ricky Martin

The 'Creed' star's pals Victoria and Isaac Oberfeld threw a star-studded bash for the actor at the restaurant La Trattoria in the principality on Wednesday (06.07.16) and Sylvester - who was accompanied by his wife Jennifer Flavin and daughters - admitted he was shocked by the party, which was attended by 88 people.

He told the newspaper Nice Matin: "I'm here at the invitation of my friend Victoria. It's a surprise for me, I didn't expect such an evening. I thought for my 70th birthday she would have offered me a hamburger and fries."

"It made me really happy to see these people, especially Prince Albert." Albert, brought Sylvester a rare black-and-white signed photograph of his mother, Princess Grace, as a birthday present.

Despite just turning 70, Sylvester shows no signs of slowing down and is reportedly set to play a mafia boss in a new TV series. The 'Expendables' actor is believed to be negotiating a deal for what will be his first major scripted small screen role in Antoine Fuqua's TV adaptation of Mario Puzo's novel 'Omerta'.

The book - which was published in 2000, a year after the writer's death - is the final in the author's mob trilogy, which began with 'The Godfather' and continued with 'The Last Don'. Stallone is expected to play the mafia head at the centre of the story.

A network is not yet attached to the project, but sources told The Hollywood Reporter it will soon be shopped to cable and streaming services ahead of filming a pilot episode beginning this summer.



Ex-park official gets home detention, jail in theft of bones

CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA: A retired National Park Service official was sentenced Friday to one year of home detention and 10 weekends in jail for stealing the ancient remains of Native Americans in 1990 and stashing them in his garage for years.

US Magistrate Judge Jon Scoles scolded Thomas Munson, former superintendent of Effigy Mounds National Monument in northeast Iowa, for removing bones tied to more than 40 individuals from the monument's collection and lying about it for two decades. Scoles said Native American leaders who were denied the ability to rebury their ancestors were "understandably outraged" by the disregard with which Munson handled their bones, which were significantly damaged by the time they were recovered in 2012.

"This is clearly an outrageous criminal act," Scoles told the 76-year-old, frail Munson in a federal courtroom in Cedar Rapids as representatives from several tribes looked on. "There can be no explanation for what he did."

The sentence ends a painful case for the National Park Service, which is tasked with preserving the picturesque monument site along the Mississippi River that many tribes consider sacred. The monument includes hundreds of earthen burial and ceremonial mounds, many in the shape of animals, that were built by Native Americans between 700 and 2,500 years ago.

During excavations from the 1950s to the 1970s, scientists dug up bones and skeleton fragments of dozens of individuals who lived and died there. The remains were kept at the monument and considered historically significant.

Munson ordered a subordinate to pack the bones into two cardboard boxes in July 1990, then drove them to his home across the river in Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin. They stayed there for more than two decades but decayed due to inappropriate storage conditions.

Munson told investigators he was concerned

about a federal law that took effect in November 1990 requiring museums to transfer remains and any associated burial objects to affiliated tribes. The purpose of the law - the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act - was to allow for reburials consistent with tribal traditions.

But Munson believed the law would allow tribes to make suspect claims that would decimate the monument's collection of burial objects, which he saw as more valuable than the remains. Once the bones disappeared, tribes could not make claims on the burial objects.

The National Park Service learned soon after Munson's retirement in 1994 that the remains had vanished. Questioned over the years, Munson denied responsibility and floated several other possibilities for where they went. The monument opened another investigation in 2011 under new superintendent Jim Nepstad, and Munson returned one of the boxes. The next year, a federal agent recovered the second box in Munson's garage.

"This is absolutely the worst case of racist, bigoted and callous behavior I have ever encountered," said Patt Murphy, of the Iowa tribe of Kansas and Nebraska, whose inquiry seeking an inventory of the monument's remains prompted the investigation. He said he spent years working to get his ancestors' remains from museums and properly reburied, but Munson denied them that opportunity.

Sandra Massey, historic preservation officer for the Sac and Fox Tribe in Oklahoma, said Munson handled the remains like "trash." "Those are my people," she said. "What kind of sick mind does this kind of thing?" Munson issued a written apology but showed no remorse in court. In a rambling statement, he said "nobody knew what to do with" remains at the time.

"A lot of it was not intentional," Munson said. His attorney Leon Spies then cut him off, telling Scoles his client has been "experiencing some cognitive



difficulties," Spies said Munson's theft was an "uncharacteristic act" for a man who worked with tribes for 30 years. Scoles ordered Munson to pay \$108,000 in restitution, the cost of repairing the collection. Once restored, the remains are expected to be returned to tribes. — AP

Harpers Ferry, Iowa: Pedestrians hike one of the trails at Effigy Mounds National Monument. — AP

Museum promotes Detroit neighborhood as arts destination

DETROIT: The Detroit Institute of Arts and a neighborhood organization have teamed up to help draw attention to the city's Osborn neighborhood as an arts destination.

A workshop is Saturday as part of the "Welcome to Osborn" project where people can paint on cellophane and watch artists work on a four-story-high, 34-foot-wide mural. Events for "Art in Osborn Day" take place across the street from the mural site on Detroit's east side.

The mural is being painted on a wall of the Matrix

Human Services building by area artists Phillip Simpson and Tony Rave. The project involving the museum and the Osborn Neighborhood Alliance is funded by a \$10,000 Knight Arts Challenge grant.

"We aim to support the alliance's goal of building a stronger sense of community pride by working with local artists and fostering the development of public art," Salvador Salort-Pons, the museum's director, said in a statement.

The Osborn neighborhood has seen a series of revitalization efforts in recent years. Last summer, a weeklong effort by the nonprofit organization Life Remodeled drew more than 9,500 volunteers. The focus was fixing up Osborn High School and the surrounding neighborhood.

On Saturday, Brandon Christopher, founder and CEO of mobile art organization CANVASDetroit will host the free painting workshop at the Outdoor Learning Garden, the museum said. The finished mural is scheduled to be

unveiled Aug. 5 during the "For the Love of Osborn" neighborhood parade.

The Detroit Institute of Arts' partnership with the Osborn Neighborhood Alliance began last summer with the installation of the museum's "Inside/Out" program, an effort that puts up artwork reproductions outdoors around Detroit and other communities. — AP



MOSCOW: Steam locomotives maneuver at a locomotive depot. — AP photos

Moscow railway museum offers nostalgic trips



MOSCOW: People look at a steam locomotive.

MOSCOW: For Boris Solomatn, a Moscow railway museum guide, steam locomotives are nothing short of time machines. Escorting guests on a steam-hauled tour across the Russian capital, he talks about the red-wheeled engines as living creatures. "I'm happy that the machine is working; it must make its soul sing," he says.

The railway museum in Moscow is one of the largest in the country, exhibiting an array of 60 engines, cars and other equipment preserved in full working condition. "A steam locomotive is a time machine that exists today, it takes us into the time of fire, coal and steam," Solomatn said.

He said he first saw a steam locomotive when he was 5, an image he could never forget. "A steam engine

would arrive at midnight, and its bright headlight and red wheels were carved in my memory for the rest of my life," Solomatn added.

Alexei Vulfov, who leads an association of locomotive fans, also speaks of steam locomotives as much more than just old machines. "The beauty of their moving mechanisms is captivating and almost irrational," Vulfov said.

Across Russia's vast space, hundreds of fully functional steam locomotives have remained in storage since Cold War times, an asset seen as an essential safeguard in case of emergencies that could incapacitate diesel and electric engines. — AP

Atlantic City's former Showboat casino reopens as hotel

ATLANTIC CITY, NEW JERSEY: An Atlantic City casino that went out of business two years ago is once again welcoming guests after reopening Friday as a hotel. The Showboat reopened to guests with 852 hotel rooms and suites. The building will keep the Showboat name, for now, but no longer offer casino games.

New owner Bart Blatstein told reporters Friday that he plans to rebrand the hotel by next year, but didn't disclose possible new names. "It removes one of the eyesores," Atlantic City Councilman Marty Small told The Philadelphia Inquirer. "It's a big day for the city of Atlantic City. It's a win."

The opening was done without much pomp or circumstance and Blatstein told The Press of Atlantic City he didn't want to "over promise and under-deliver." "There was nobody in here greeting you or anything," guest Elaine Ruggiero told the newspaper. "I think there should be music or something."

The Showboat was one of four casinos to close in the city in 2014 as it battled competition from nearby states. Owner Caesars Entertainment shut down the still-profitable Mardi Gras-themed casino in the name of lessening competition for the three other casinos it owns in Atlantic City: Harrah's, Caesars and Bally's.

After a disastrous sale to Stockton University, and a failed effort to flip it to another casino owner, the Showboat was sold in January to Blatstein, a Philadelphia developer, who last year bought and re-branded the former Pier Shops complex into The Playground.

Blatstein's plans to make that property into an entertainment destination have hit some rocky moments, including news Friday that a nightclub there will now become a comedy club, the Inquirer reported. The nightclub opened in March to replace a concert space that failed last summer.

The Showboat's reopening comes as union workers at the Trump Taj Mahal next door enter the second week of a strike. Workers from Local 54 of the Unite-HERE union continue round-the-clock picketing of that casino.

Meanwhile, the Revel casino on the other side of the Showboat remains closed. Glenn Straub, who purchased the \$2.4 billion property for \$82 million last year in bankruptcy court, had planned to open it last month, but changed his mind after state gambling regulators insisted he get a casino license. — AP



ATLANTIC CITY, NEW JERSEY: The former Showboat casino. — AP

Missy Elliott, Queen Latifah, Lil Kim to be honored by VH1

NEW YORK: Queen Latifah remembers being on set in 1997 for the music video for "Ladies Night (Not Tonight)," the female rap anthem starring Lil Kim, Missy Elliott and others. It featured a number of top female musicians performing on the song and making cameos in the video, including Left Eye, Da Brat, Angie Martinez, Mary J. Blige, SWV, Total and Xscape.

"That day was so much fun," Latifah recalled in a phone interview Thursday. "That was pretty much like Missy asking for everybody to come down and be in the video." "It was a good time. We just had a lot of good times," she added. Elliott, like Latifah, opened doors for women in rap - and in music overall - helping female performers advance their careers through guest appearances on songs, writing and producing, and management. And while they were competitive, there was also a sense of camaraderie.

Fast-forward and those helped by Elliott and Latifah are now paying it back. The list of names honoring Elliott at "VH1 Hip Hop Honors: All Hail the Queens," to air live Monday night (9 p.m. EDT) from David Geffen Hall in New York City, is long, from Pharrell to Timbaland to Nelly Furtado.

"The funny thing (is) I couldn't even fit everyone. ... People that I work with ... we are like family; it extends beyond the music thing, so you know they were calling me like, 'I'm performing right?' I'm like, 'Girl, I only got a certain amount of minutes and I can't fit everybody,'" Elliott, laughing, said in a phone interview Wednesday. "I'm so thankful and humbled."

Monica, Fantasia, Jazmine Sullivan, Remy Ma, Trina, Eve, Tweet, Keyshia Cole and Raven Symone will also honor Elliott. "VH1 Hip Hop Honors" is returning after a six-year hiatus. Common, Da Brat, MC Lyte, Naughty by Nature, Rah Digga, Suga T and Yo-Yo will pay tribute to Latifah, who will perform the 1989 classic "Ladies First" with Monie Love.

Lil Kim and Salt-N-Pepa will also be honored. "It's important for me to be part of a celebration of ladies of hip-hop because I feel like it's important we are recognized for our contributions to music and (that) our voices are heard," Latifah said.

Elliott, whose hits include "Get Ur Freak On," "Work It" and "Lose Control," said she started to rap after listening to Salt-N-Pepa and learned all of their songs, including "the album cuts, the album fillers or whatever." She also called Latifah and Lil Kim her "sisters." "So for us to come together, that's always been a dream of mine. That's another blessing that something like this can bring us together," she said.

Latifah said she hopes contemporary female rappers will collaborate like she and her peers did on the set of "Ladies Night." "It was a good time in life ... there were a lot more of us then (and) we were able to have a lot of fun together," Latifah said. "I would love for the girls today to have that same camaraderie that we had. We competed with each other in a healthy way and at the same time (were) able to hang out with each other, and perform with each other, and get on each other's records and really have fun with this music." -AP



LOS ANGELES: Queen Latifah attends "The Wiz Live!" Photo Op at the Directors Guild of America. — AP



AUSTIN: Missy Elliott appears at a panel discussion during South By Southwest. — AP



NEW YORK: Lin-Manuel Miranda, foreground, performs with members of the cast of the musical "Hamilton". — AP

A Hamilton tale too tall? Group disputes tomcat story

TRENTON, NEW JERSEY: In the song "A Winter's Ball" in the smash Broadway hit "Hamilton," Aaron Burr's character sings of Alexander Hamilton's delight for women, including the tale that Martha Washington named her feral tomcat after him.

"That's true," Lin-Manuel Miranda's Hamilton character tells the sold-out theater each night. But it's not, according to a group of Hamilton enthusiasts and researchers gathering in New York and New Jersey this week.

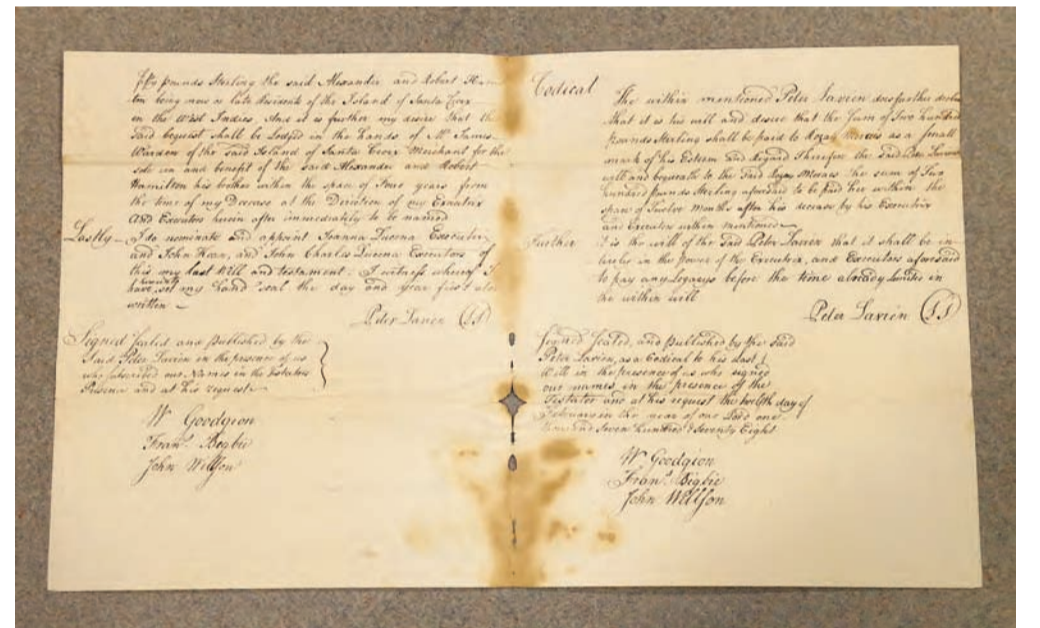
Twenty miles from the Broadway theater where fans spend thousands of dollars to see the show, a group dedicated to studying the nation's first treasury secretary gathered Thursday to unveil new artifacts and retrace a piece of history they hope can soften some of Hamilton's rough edges. They believe the tomcat story and talk of Hamilton's relationship with women have been used through the years to undercut what they say was his vital work for the country.

Phoenix-based Hamilton researcher Michael Newton says it's an issue of fairness. "If you're saying Hamilton was this scoundrel, all of a sudden it colors your view on his position on politics and economics," Newton said.

That Hamilton had at least one affair isn't in doubt. He wrote a 95-page pamphlet on his affair with Maria Reynolds, which heavily damaged his reputation. That plus a very friendly relationship with his sister-in-law plays a big part of the Tony award-winning musical that has become a cultural phenomenon and created a larger audience of people looking to learn more about him.

The tomcat story is included in multiple biographies of Hamilton, including the Ron Chernow book that the musical is based on. In "Hamilton: The Revolution," co-authored by Miranda, the song's lyrics include a footnote that says the line was "most likely a tale spread by John Adams later in life" but that Manuel included it because he likes "Hamilton owning it."

"At this point in the story," Miranda writes, "he is at peak cockiness." Newton and fellow Hamilton researcher Stephen Knott both say they haven't found evidence of Adams spreading the tale and instead trace the story to a satirical



UNION, NEW JERSEY: A will belonging to Peter Lavien, Alexander Hamilton's half brother, is displayed at the Liberty Hall Museum at Kean University. — AP

letter from someone described as a British captain republished 56 years after Hamilton's death. Newton says that what apparently started as a joke about Martha Washington naming her cat after Hamilton "in a complimentary way" morphed through the years to biographies stating she named her tomcat after him to comment on his reputation.

Newton points out that dictionaries note that tomcat only meant a "male cat" in the 18th century and didn't carry its other connotation - a promiscuous man - until later. Chernow, who only touches on the story in his 800-page book with half of a sentence, didn't respond to emails seeking comment.

Joanne Freeman, a history professor at Yale, said she's always assumed the tomcat tale wasn't actually true. She said that people should understand that not everything in the show is accurate, but that it's good that it's gotten people to ask questions.

"People should think and evaluate and not necessarily instantly accept stories whether it's on the stage or wherever they get it from," she said. "The play is getting people to ask a lot of questions about Hamilton and history. (Miranda) would be very happy."

The Hamilton researchers, part of the Alexander Hamilton Awareness Society, on Thursday also unveiled what they say is the original copy of Hamilton's half brother's will and letters about Hamilton and his wife's dealing with a yellow fever outbreak. Both were found in the files of John Kean, part of one of New Jersey's most prominent families. Hamilton lived at the former home of New Jersey's first governor, William Livingston, and it is now a museum on the campus of Kean University. — AP



KALAMAZOO, MICHIGAN: A person takes a picture as a motorcade of 10-20 motorcycles led by the Michigan State Police, escort the exhibit "Take Me Home Huey" by contemporary artist and Kalamazoo native Steve Maloney to the Air Zoo on its East campus. — AP

Sculpture created from US Army helicopter visits Michigan

KALAMAZOO, MICHIGAN: A mixed-media sculpture created from remains of a US Army helicopter that was shot down in 1969 during a Vietnam medical rescue is visiting Michigan.

The Kalamazoo Gazette reports Steve Maloney's "Take Me Home Huey" arrived Tuesday at the Air Zoo in Kalamazoo after being on display outside Henry Ford Museum in suburban Detroit. They're the latest stops on a cross-country tour that started last year.

The Kalamazoo native says the artwork "has been quite a journey for me, as well as the realization of my dream to raise the profile of military veterans who sacrificed so much and never received a proper welcome home." It seeks to boost awareness of post-traumatic stress disorder. The sculpture is on display at the Air Zoo until Aug. 31. — AP

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ROME: Models present creations by Fendi during a fashion show at the Trevi Fountain to celebrate the 90th anniversary of the fashion house. — AP

Jimmy, Rosalynn Carter reach 70th wedding anniversary

ATLANTA: Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter are marking their 70th wedding anniversary.

The former US president and first lady married on July 7, 1946, in their small hometown of Plains, Georgia. Jimmy Carter, who's 91, and Rosalynn Carter, 88, told The Associated Press last month that mutual respect makes their long marriage possible.

The Carters also said they give each other plenty of space while working on separate projects. The couple plans to spend the day

at home in Plains, while the Jimmy Carter Presidential Library and Museum in Atlanta will mark the occasion with 70-cent admission. Museum officials say they'll deliver cards to the Carters.

The Carters' marriage is second in length to one other former first couple. George H.W. Bush and Barbara Bush celebrated their 71st anniversary in January. — AP



ATLANTA: Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter talk about their years together in his office on Wednesday, June 22, 2016, at the Carter Center. — AP



NEW YORK: Ellie Kemper attends the premiere of Netflix's "Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt" Season 2. — AP

'Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt' star Ellie Kemper to pen book

NEW YORK: The star of "Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt" is breaking into print. Scribner has announced it will publish a collection of humorous essays from Ellie Kemper, who plays the title character in the Netflix comedy series "Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt" and was formerly a cast member of NBC's "The Office."

To be published in 2018, the book - not yet titled - will feature stories from Kemper's life, from growing up in St. Louis to her career in Hollywood. Scribner describes Kemper's writing style as "relatable, unexpected, insightful and hilarious."

Kemper has played the free-spirited Kimmy Schmidt for two seasons, with more to come. She portrayed receptionist Erin Hannon on the last five seasons of "The Office" and co-starred in the 2011 hit film "Bridesmaids." — AP

CINCINNATI: A Brazilian street artist is honoring astronaut and Ohio native Neil Armstrong in a downtown Cincinnati mural. The nonprofit ArtWorks announced Friday that muralist Eduardo Kobra's piece will feature Armstrong, the first person to walk on the moon. The announcement comes shortly before the 47th anniversary of the July 20, 1969, moon landing. Armstrong later taught aerospace engineering at the University of Cincinnati. The Wapakoneta (wah-puh-kuh-NET-uh) native died in 2012 in Cincinnati at age 82.

Kobra is known for his hyperrealism style and using colorful patterns. He plans to begin painting early next month. A dedication ceremony is planned several weeks later. At more than 7,500 square feet, the piece will be the largest project in ArtWorks' 21-year history. — AP

Muralist to honor astronaut, Ohio native Neil Armstrong

RICHMOND, VIRGINIA: In this Aug. 31, 2012 file photo, an American flag flies at half-staff in honor of the passing of the first person to walk on the moon, Neil Armstrong, in front of the rising moon at a baseball park. — AP



Thousands strip and paint themselves blue for UK art event

LONDON: Thousands of people have stripped naked and painted themselves in four shades of blue to celebrate the English city of Hull's relationship with the sea.

Hull City Council says some 3,200 people took part in the art installation, staged by New York artist Spencer Tunick yesterday. The work is called "Sea of Hull" and was commissioned by the Ferens Art Gallery to mark the city's celebration next

year as the UK City of Culture. Tunick says the resulting photos incorporate some of the city's unique locations including the Scale Lane footbridge, a swing bridge often compared to a pin ball flipper that is a tourist attraction in the northern English city. The port city on the Humber River has a rich maritime past dating to the 12th Century. — AP