



Amir urges Mol to double efforts to maintain security



Wife of Orlando shooter could face charges



Debutants Iceland hold Portugal to a shock draw 1-1



Degree of uncertainty? Row over Erdogan academic record

Ramadan Timings	
Emsak:	03:03
Fajer:	03:13
Shrooq:	04:49
Dohr:	11:49
Asr:	15:22
Maghreb:	18:49
Eshaa:	20:21

40 PAGES
NO: 16906
150 FILS

MPs APPROVE SEVEN NEW BUDGETS FOR AUTHORITIES

ASSEMBLY TO HOLD DAILY SESSIONS NEXT WEEK

Min 29°
Max 47°
High Tide 08:55 & 21:55
Low Tide 14:25 & 15:55

ALTRUISM IN ISLAM

By Hassan T Bwambale

Altruism, or 'Al-eithaar' in Arabic, means to give preference to someone's needs and welfare over your own. It also means giving preference one over another depending on each one's urgent needs and requirements. For example, if someone is about to die from hunger, then we should give him food before another poor man whose condition is better than the dying man.

From the Islamic point of view, it is to give preference and priority to someone over yourself in terms of affluence and fortunes of this mundane life in anticipation of fulfilling your religious duties that will qualify you - by the Will and Grace of Allah - to enter Paradise. That attitude emanates from a firm belief in God (Allah) and the confirmation of your love to human-beings as well as perseverance during tough times. Ibn Al-Qayyim (a prominent Muslim scholar) said that there are three main levels of altruism in mundane affairs:

(A) To give priority and preference to others over yourself in things that are not Islamically prohibited, and that will not stop you from doing good, or that won't waste your time that could be invested in doing other more important and crucial deeds, which will draw you closer to Allah (SWT). Examples of that are to feed the hungry person and to provide water to the thirsty.

(B) Giving preference to acts that will bring you God's pleasure - whatever the situation may be. By this, he means, one will tread the steep and very difficult path of seeking God's pleasure, which is the ultimate goal of every sincere Muslim. Al-Imam As-Shafie says, "Pleasing all the people is a non-achievable long-sought after goal. Therefore, strive to do whatever benefits you in which there is your salvation. Take note, that one's soul or self can't attain salvation or righteousness without giving priority and preference to Allah's pleasure."

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Photo shows drug suspect with the 98 kg of illicit drugs.

KD 3 MILLION WORTH OF ILLICIT PILLS SEIZED

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Narcotics detectives yesterday foiled an attempt to smuggle 98 kg of illicit pills with a market value of over KD 3 million into Kuwait, said the General Department for Drug Control's Acting Director Col Waleed Al-Duraei, while briefing Interior Ministry Undersecretary Lt Gen Suleiman Al-Fahd and top security officials visiting the narcotics department. Duraei explained that narcotics detectives had been tipped off concerning a large shipment of illicit pills hidden inside a van arriving from a

European country for a Syrian.

The suspect was placed under close surveillance for three weeks before a search warrant was issued and his house was stormed and he was arrested. Duraei added that the suspect confessed and led the police to the van and showed the secret compartments in it, where detectives found 49 plastic bags including around a million pills. Fahd thanked the narcotics detectives and his assistant for criminal security Maj Gen Abdul Hameed Al-Awadhi for their efforts in protecting Kuwait as well as other GCC states.

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: The National Assembly yesterday approved the budgets and final accounts for seven new government bodies after strong criticism by MPs especially against the Port Public Authority. The Assembly also decided to cancel today's additional session and instead opted to hold daily sessions throughout next week to finish debating the budgets of government bodies and later the state budget before it goes into summer recess early next month.

The bodies whose budgets were approved include Public Ports Authority, Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research, Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development, Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), Public Industries Authority, Public Authority for Communications and Information Technology and National Fund for small and medium enterprises. MP Yousef Al-Zalzalah said the Ports Authority looks like a government within another and the minister overseeing it has failed to curb many irregularities and wide-spread corruption.

He said the Ports Authority needs a bloodless coup to change the course of its operations and this requires the intervention of the Council of Ministers because the Communications Minister has not been able to resolve its problems. MP Adel Al-Khorafi said that on top of its administrative problems, the Ports Authority will immensely suffer in the coming four months because of the road construction at its gates and a strong decision is needed to rectify things at the Authority.

MP Jamal Al-Omar bluntly claimed that the state of affairs at the Ports Authority is the result of an ongoing battle between the current administration and the old one which still has supporters inside whom he accused of acting like a mafia. He said this mafia has its people and is strong and the minister cannot confront them, adding that the government's inaction is very suspicious as it appears to be scared of taking the needed decision to reform the Ports Authority affairs.

MP Abdullah Al-Tameemi said the Ports Authority situation has been deteriorating from bad to worse, adding that the main commercial port of Shuwaikh is sliding and the current administration has failed to improve it.

Continued on Page 13



SAN JUAN: Walter Martin prepares a coffee in his coffee shop in the colonial district of Old San Juan, Puerto Rico. International Agency for Research on Cancer, or IARC has announced in a report published yesterday that drinking 'very hot' beverages of any kind could potentially raise the cancer risk. — AP

'VERY HOT' DRINKS RAISE CANCER RISK

TEMPERATURE MATTERS, UN AGENCY WARNS

PARIS: Drinking very hot coffee and other drinks "probably" causes cancer of the oesophagus, a UN agency said yesterday, but lifted suspicion from a cup of joe at "normal serving temperatures". For some types of cancer, there were hints that coffee may even be beneficial, said the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) but not if consumed hotter than 65 degrees Celsius (150 degrees Fahrenheit).

A review of over 1,000 studies concluded that drinking "very hot" beverages was "probably carcinogenic to humans," said the agency. "It doesn't matter what the liquid is. What matters is the temperature," said epidemiologist Dana Loomis, who took part in the review of the world's most popular hot drinks. The IARC looked at the full complement of published scientific literature considering if there was a cancer link to coffee or mate, a South American herbal infusion that is also popular in the Middle East.

Both had been classified as "possibly cancerogenic to humans" since 1991, when the last evaluation was done. But evidence gathered since could link neither drink to

an elevated cancer risk, said IARC, an agency of the UN's World Health Organization (WHO). Only when drunk hotter than 65 C did any association arise with cancer of the gullet-the pipe that transports food and fluids from the throat to the stomach, it added. "Studies in places such as China, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Turkey and South America, where tea or mate is traditionally drunk very hot (at about 70 C) found that the risk of oesophageal cancer increased with the temperature at which the beverage was drunk," said the IARC.

Some like it too hot

But there was good news for coffee drinkers. The analysis found that at "normal" temperatures, there was some data pointing to a lower risk of cancer of the uterus, liver and breast. Studies have also found that coffee had strong antioxidant effects and other possible health benefits. Taken together, the available data suggests "there is inadequate evidence in humans for the carcinogenicity of coffee drinking," said the agency.

Continued on Page 13

Ramadan Kareem

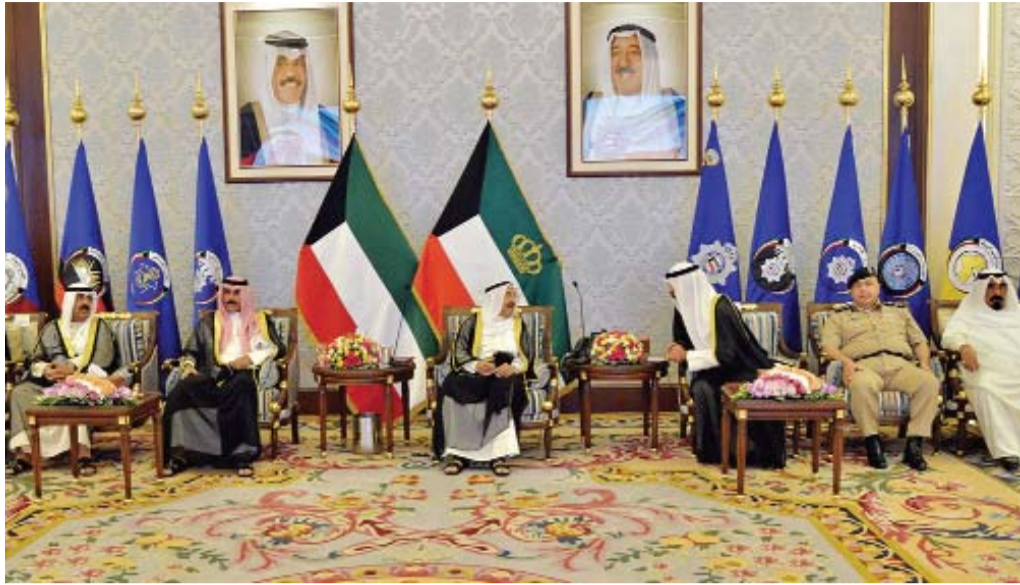
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KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah speaks with Deputy Premier and Interior Minister Sheikh Mohammad Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah during his visit to the ministry's Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's building. — Amiri Diwan photos



The Interior Ministry's Undersecretary Lieutenant General Sulaiman Al-Fahad presents a memento to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.



The Interior Ministry's Undersecretary Lieutenant General Sulaiman Al-Fahad presents a memento to His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

AMIR URGES MOI TO DOUBLE EFFORTS TO MAINTAIN DOMESTIC SECURITY

RATE OF OFFENCES DROPS BY NINE PERCENT

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah Tuesday urged the Ministry of Interior (MOI) personnel to double efforts to maintain domestic security and stability. His Highness the Amir, in a speech during a visit to MOI's Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's building, urged the police personnel to confront anyone attempting to undermine the country's stability, social fabric and chaos.

He said the country was facing "unprecedented negative phenomena," and they were growing due to the rising population and spread of social media, citing the increase use of drugs, murders, theft and trespassing. "They require strict implementation of the law on all without any tolerance," His Highness the Amir however expressed content over the declining crimes' rate.

His Highness the Amir was accompanied by His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Deputy head of National Guard Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. He called for the collaboration of efforts to address the traffic congestions, hoping the completion of new road networks would ease traffic.

His Highness the Amir, who was received by Deputy Premier and Interior Minister Sheikh Mohammad Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and MOI's Undersecretary Lieutenant General Sulaiman Al-Fahad, expressed concern at the alarming number of people being killed by road accidents. "This requires strict implementation of traffic laws and regulations, and to toughen penalties on violators and reckless," underlined his Highness the Amir.

Meanwhile, Lt Gen Suleiman Al-Fahad thanked His Highness the Amir for his annual visit, saying: "This inspiring tradition materialized the special father-son relationship and gives us impetus to double our efforts guided by your wise instructions."

Crime rates

"Since your last visit, the security institution has made numerous achievements to promote the performance of the security personnel in terms of professionalism and preventive security over the last year. These achievements include; first, reducing the rate of offences by nine percent compared with the previous year, the rate of criminal offences by 18 percent, the rate of cases registered against unknown offenders by 28 percent, and the narcotic crimes by 17 percent," he said. "Second, reducing spending by approximately KD 32 million without affecting the efficacy of the security apparatus, and securing up to KD 140 million from traffic violations committed over the last two years," he added.

On the plan of the Interior Ministry for 2015-18, Lt Gen Al-Fahad said it envisages sending intermediate officers on scholarships to Egypt, Jordan, Germany, Singapore and Britain to build their capacity and qualify them for assuming leading security positions in the future.

He noted that the number of police and traffic patrols grew by 2,700 in 2015 besides 883 traffic patrols and 550 police patrols that joined service in last March equipped with the state-of-the-art technologies.

He added that the security services made headway in leveraging the electronic systems through launching the central electronic library, mounting surveillance cameras on roads and key facilities, the electronic passport system, and launching an alternative premise for the central computer system at Nawaf Al-Ahmad Building in the Ministry of Interior in Sabhan neighborhood.

His Highness the Amir was accompanied by Minister of Amiri Diwan Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, His Highness the Amir's Chief of Staff Ahmad Fahad Al-Fahad, Head of the Amiri protocols Sheikh Khaled Abdullah Al-Sabah, Undersecretary of Highness the Crown Prince's Diwan Sheikh Mubarak Faisal Al-Sabah and head of the Media and Cultural Affairs at the Amiri Diwan Yusuf Al-Roumi. — KUNA



Senior Interior Ministry officials are pictured in attendance.



AMIR LAUDS KFSD EFFORTS IN SAVING LIVES, PROPERTIES

DIRECTORATE ANNOUNCES STRATEGY IN LINE WITH AMIR'S VISION

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah lauded the continued efforts exerted by members of Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFSD) in keeping lives and properties safe. His Highness the Amir made his remarks Tuesday during his visit to the Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFSD) headquarters on the occasion of the Holy Month of Ramadan, during which he opened the new building.

He was accompanied by His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Deputy Chief of Kuwait National Guards Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. They were received, upon their arrival, by Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah and KFSD's Director-General Yusuf Al-Ansari.

"Throughout your honorable history, which you made through great sacrifices, commitment, and loyalty to your duties, you have proven your worthiness and earned the attention and respect of all," His Highness the Amir said, according to Amiri Diwan statement.

His Highness the Amir pointed out the great responsibilities and risks taken by firefighters when controlling fires, saving lives, and preserving properties. His Highness the Amir also praised KFSD's officials' tireless efforts and strives in enhancing their employees' efficiency levels through engaging them continuously in various training courses in firefighting and security and



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Deputy Chief of Kuwait National Guards Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Sabah and Kuwait Fire Service Directorate staff in a group photo. — Amiri Diwan photos

safety rules. His Highness the Amir also commended KFSD's keenness in enhancing all their firefighting centers, spread all around the country, and equipping them with the latest firefighting equipment and systems, highlighting by that their high-level administrative work in firefighting action, whether field or precautionary.

His Highness the Amir also expressed his appreciation of KFSD's efforts in raising public awareness in fire precautionary among citizens, and adopting the procedures of implementing safety and security requirements inside buildings, malls, and public facilities.

His Highness wished the department's officials and employees all the best of luck in serving their country, and prayed to Allah Almighty to protect them and bestow his mercy upon the ones who lost their lives while attempting to save others', and place them in his heavens.

In his speech, KFSD's Director General Lieutenant General Yusuf Al-Ansari said, on behalf of the directorate's staff, it is an honor to offer greetings to His Highness the Amir, His Highness the Crown Prince and the government on the occasion of the Holy Month of Ramadan.

The visit of His Highness the Amir and His Highness the Crown Prince to the directorate translates the strongest meanings of cohesion and communication between the wise leadership and the country's firefighters, he said. "This stresses Your Highness' support for the firefighters and keenness on getting acquainted with them," he added.

Strategies

The visit is a great honor, and raises the staff's morale and encourages them to develop their performance to be in favor of the country, Ansari noted. "There are some strategies of the directorate that are in line with the vision of Your

Highness and aim to turn Kuwait as an international and financial hub," he stated.

They are as follow:

- 1- Believing in achieving national duties as planned.
- 2- Cementing the principle of achieving integration among all different bodies of the government, mainly Ministries of Defense and Interior, and Kuwait National Guard.
- 3- Believing that the private sector is an indispensable strategic partner of the development process.
- 4- Depending on national efforts to maintain the country's security and protect their properties, and for the safety of citizens and residents.
- 5- Paying attention to awareness programs on the protection of fire at homes, through educating people to be a main nucleus on how to safeguard their rights and properties.
- 6- Using modern technology and sciences to cope up with the development of industry and production, and to evolve the center of the firefighters to be an internationally recognized academy and to set up specialized centers in this field.
- 7- Coping up with the global development in the areas of research and sharing expertise on regional and international levels that helped Kuwait recently join, as a main member, International Civil Defense Organization (ICDO).

"The constant Keenness of firefighters to save lives and protect properties is undoubtedly stemming from the generous support and care of Your Highness for them as Your Highness is the



KFSD's Public Relations Officer Colonel Khalil Al-Amir delivers a speech.

Humanitarian Leader," he said. Concluding his speech, Al-Ansari wished His Highness the Amir and His Highness the Crown Prince good health, and the State of Kuwait further prosperity and progress.

His Highness the Amir was accompanied by Minister of Amiri Diwan Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, His Highness the Amir's Chief of Staff Ahmad Fahad Al-Fahad, Head of the Amiri protocols Sheikh Khaled Abdullah Al-Sabah, Undersecretary of Highness the Crown Prince's Diwan Sheikh Mubarak Faisal Al-Sabah and head of the Media and Cultural Affairs at the Amiri Diwan Yusuf Al-Roumi. — KUNA



KFSD's Director General Lieutenant General Yusuf Al-Ansari delivers a speech.



KFSD's Director General Lieutenant General Yusuf Al-Ansari presents a memento to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, as Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Sabah looks on.



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, Kuwait National Guard's Chief His Highness Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah and Vice Chief Sheikh Mashal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah are pictured with National Guard officers. — Amiri Diwan photos



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah delivers a speech during his visit to the presidency of Kuwait National Guard.

AMIR URGES NATIONAL GUARD FOR VIGILANCE AMID REGIONAL TURMOIL

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah said Tuesday the critical period being undergone by the Arab region require the National Guard personnel to double their efforts and remain vigilant.

"I am fully confident that you are aware of the turmoil in our region that require you as officers and soldiers to be wary on any mischief-makers who might attempt to tamper with the security of the country and the citizens," he said.

His Highness the Amir made the comments during his visit to the presidency of Kuwait National Guard on the occasion of the holy month of Ramadan. He was accompanied by His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

They were warmly welcomed by the National Guard's Chief His Highness Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah, Vice chief Sheikh Mashal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Undersecretary Lieutenant General Staff Hashem Abdulrazzaq Al-Rifa'i as well as other senior officers.

His Highness the Amir commended the National Guard as the first partner of the Armed Forces, saying: "You have an honorable record of professionalism and patriotism. The achievements you have made deservedly earned you the respect of everybody."

He also praised the efforts being made by president and vice president of the National Guard to enhance the preparedness of the National Guard through training programs



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah speaks with Kuwait National Guard's Chief His Highness Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah, as His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah is seen in attendance.

and field drills as well as acquisition of the latest military equipment.

Meanwhile, Undersecretary of the National Guard Lt Gen Staff Hashem Al-Rifa'i expressed, on behalf of the National Guard officers, non-commissioned officers and soldiers, the Ramadan greetings and best wishes for His Highness the Amir.

He thanked His Highness the Amir for maintaining this kind tradition of visiting the National Guard in the holy month of Ramadan and for inaugurating the new headquarters of the National Guard Presidency.

"This inspiring annual tradition and your wise instructions give impetus to the leaders

and personnel of the National Guard to pursue the march of giving, allegiance and self-sacrifice for the homeland," he said.

Wise leadership

Lt Gen Staff Al-Rifa'i attributed the achievements made by the National Guard in protecting the security of the country to the wise instructions and leadership of His Highness the Amir, pledging to do more for the sake of the homeland.

He cited the following "three gigantic projects" which have been implemented by the National Guard; first, the helicopter project; second, the comprehensive command



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah greets National Guard officers, in presence of Kuwait National Guard's Chief His Highness Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah.

and control project; and third, the chemical defense and radiation observatory system.

He added that the National Guard will continue to play its strategic role in responding to any emergency in collaboration with other key state institutions, noting that the National Guard opened channels of security cooperation with several friendly countries in terms of training programs and visit exchanges. During His Highness the Amir's visit a documentary entitled "Esnad" (support) was screened to show the facilities and

services of the new headquarters of the National Guard.

His Highness the Amir was accompanied by Minister of Amiri Diwan Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, His Highness the Amir's Chief of Staff Ahmad Fahad Al-Fahad, Head of the Amiri protocols Sheikh Khaled Abdullah Al-Sabah, Undersecretary of Highness the Crown Prince's Diwan Sheikh Mubarak Faisal Al-Sabah and head of the Media and Cultural Affairs at the Amiri Diwan Yusuf Al-Roumi. — KUNA



KUWAIT: (From left) His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Khaled Jarrah Al-Sabah are seen during the Amir's visit to Kuwait Army Officers' Club. — Amiri Diwan photos



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah greets high-ranking Kuwait Army officials.

AMIR URGES ARMED FORCES TO CONFRONT BIDS AGAINST KUWAIT

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah urged the armed forces Tuesday to be vigilant, and to confront all bids aimed at undermining Kuwait's security, safety and stability.

His Highness the Amir, in a speech during a visit to Kuwait Army Officers' Club, said the region was experiencing critical challenges from which Kuwait was not very far. "This requires vigilance and forceful confrontation to all attempts aimed at undermining our country, or threatening its security, safety and stability," His Highness the Amir said.

His Highness the Amir was accompanied during his visit by His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Deputy head of National Guard Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

His Highness the Amir said the government was keen on the development of the army and military facilities with state-of-art equipment. His Highness the Amir said he was fully confident in the army's capability to confront all circumstances. He praised Allah the Almighty to bestow his blessing on the armed forces who were protecting the country at the front-lines, and to have mercy upon souls of the martyrs.

His Highness the Amir was received by Deputy Premier and Defense Minister Sheikh Khaled Jarrah Al-Sabah, Deputy Chief of staff of the Army General Sheikh Abdullah Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and Defense Ministry Undersecretary Jassar Al-Jassar.

General Sheikh Abdullah Al-Sabah, in another speech, said terrorist groups have used sectarian conflicts in the region to spread chaos and destruction in some of the regional countries, as well as planting seeds of discord among peoples.

He said terrorism has reached Kuwait when terrorists bombed Imam Al-Sadeq Mosque in the holy month of Ramadan last year. "However, our people have united and showed national unity thus defeating terrorism," he said.

General Al-Sabah reiterated that the armed forces were ready to sacrifice their lives to defend the security and stability of Kuwait. He affirmed that the Kuwaiti Army was ready to repel all



Deputy Chief of staff of the Army General Sheikh Abdullah Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah delivers a speech.

threats against the country's territorial safety.

His Highness the Amir was accompanied by Minister of Amiri Diwan Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, His Highness the Amir's Chief of Staff Ahmad Fahad Al-Fahad, Head of the Amiri protocols Sheikh Khaled Abdullah Al-Sabah, Undersecretary of His Highness the Crown Prince's Diwan Sheikh Mubarak Faisal Al-Sabah and head of the Media and Cultural Affairs at the Amiri Diwan Yusuf Al-Roumi. — KUNA



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



IBIS HOTEL HOSTS IFTAR FOR CORPORATE CLIENTS, MEDIA

KUWAIT: This year's Ramadan activities brought about a gathering of an awesome mix of Ibis Hotel's top corporate clients with their families as well as members of the printed media to thank them for their valuable and continued support through

the years. At the iftar dinner, which is typical in the Holy month of Ramadan, a storm of lavish culinary creations were served that included an array of carefully selected international cuisine at Olivo Restaurant and a savory treat of International Cuisine.

The guests were also luxuriated in ILTERRAZZO, a tent-like restaurant that resembles an enlarged typical Arabian tent, with a variety of delectable menu and fresh fruit-flavored shishas as added treat. IL Terrazzo Restaurant is located at

the roof deck of the Hotel's third floor. It is overlooking the fantastic views of the cosmopolitan Salmiya and the coolness of its seaside.

The star of the night, however, was neither the sumptuous indulgence nor the

magnificent views of our restaurants, but our renewed and strengthened ties among our clients and the press people that perfectly resonates and reflects the true nature and essence of the holy month.



Photo

of the day



KUWAIT: Aroma floats from Bakhour (burned scented woodchips) - a traditional way of welcoming guests during Ramadan and other social occasions in Kuwait. — KUNA

Ramadan Quiz 2016

Answer & Win Fabulous Prizes

Kuwait Times annual Ramadan Competition returns with one YES or NO question published every day throughout the holy month of Ramadan. All thirty coupons with the correct answers must be sent to the newspaper to be eligible for the raffle draw. All coupons must be received by Friday 8th July 2016 at Kuwait Times Office.

<p>Kuwait Times Ramadan Quiz Answer & Win</p> <p>11) How many months are there in the Islamic calendar?</p> <p>Five times.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p>	<p>Kuwait Times Ramadan Quiz Answer & Win</p> <p>Date: _____</p> <p>Name: _____</p> <p>Civil ID.: _____</p> <p>Tel: _____</p> <p>Email: _____</p>
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Kuwait

Heritage



This image shows Dame Violet Dickson and Esakhalfan inside a museum's entrance at Faikha Island in 1962. Dame Violet (1896 -1991) was the wife of British colonial administrator H R P Dickson. She lived in Kuwait for 61 years, during which she had a good reputation among Kuwaitis because of their social activity, earning her the Arabic nickname 'Um Saud.' Photo prepared by Mahmoud Zakaria Abu Alella, Researcher in Heritage, the Ministry of Information. (Source: 'The voice of Oud: a story of Kuwait,' by Jehan S Rajab)

Young Voices



'I LOVE RAMADAN BECAUSE WE EAT TOGETHER AT THE SAME TABLE'

By Faten Omar

Nearly a quarter of Kuwait's entire population is under the age of 14 and yet with the exception of school assemblies, we never hear their voices. During Ramadan, Kuwait Times likes to publish a special series that engages with its readership in a more direct, personal way to learn their concerns, issues and viewpoints.

This Ramadan, we will chat with some of our youngest readers about their lives in Kuwait, in an attempt to see the world through their eyes. What do they see for the future of our beautiful country? What would they improve and how would they change it? By listening to their future plans, stories, and experience in Ramadan, we can remind ourselves and hopefully our readers of the ties that bind us all together as a species. These are the voice of Kuwait's future and we invite them to share their thoughts with us here.

Mohammad Jamal Sabagh is a six-year-old Syrian boy who is crazy about animals. Sabagh told Kuwait Times that he has two names, Mohammad, after Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him), and Jamal, after his grandfather.

Kuwait Times: What do you want to be when you grow up?

Mohammad: I want to be a veterinarian to help animals all over the world.

KT: What is your experience in Ramadan?

Mohammad: I love Ramadan because we eat food together at the same table, but after Ramadan we only do that on Fridays.

KT: What is your favorite thing to do in Kuwait?

Mohammad: I love going to the zoo - I would love to become a lion, tiger, cow or sheep.

KT: What do you want to change about Kuwait?

Mohammad: I want to make the sea bigger to reach the sky.

KT: What was the nicest thing you did for someone?

Mohammad: If I see a child, I let it play with my toys.

KT: What would be your ideal allowance? Tell me how you would use it.

Mohammad: I would give my allowance to poor people who do not have money.

If you would like your child to be interviewed for this special series, please email us at local@kuwait-times.net



ZAIN CELEBRATES GIRGEAAN WITH AL-AMAL CHILDREN

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading telecommunications company in Kuwait, celebrated the tradition of Girgeaan in collaboration with Al-Amal club for children with cancer and blood disorders. The event, which was hosted at the Women's Cultural and Social Society headquarters at Khalidiya, witnessed the attendance of a large number of Zain volunteers, members of the Women's Cultural Society, as well as by Kuwaiti actor Dawood Hussain and actress Dr Abeer Al-Jundi.

The annual Al-Amal Girgeaan celebration is one of the main pillars of Zain's extensive CSSR campaign during the Holy Month of Ramadan, where the company aims at sharing the joys and blessings of holy month with different segments of the society. Zain's volunteers celebrated the special occasion with children and their families in an atmosphere filled with happiness and joy.

Zain's volunteers delighted the children and their families by distributing Girgeaan and gifts while also organizing many other fun activities including a magic show, traditional dancing, and a face painting session. Zain believes in the importance of embracing the beautiful values of the Islamic religion as well as the noble traditions of the Kuwaiti heritage, all year round and especially in the Holy Month of Ramadan.

Zain affirmed that its social and CSSR campaign during the Holy Month of Ramadan will include an extensive array of initiatives and programs that will focus on helping less fortunate people to enjoy Ramadan happily, as well as celebrating the true spirit the Holy month brings.

KUWAITI DELEGATION IN NY CELEBRATES RAMADAN

NEW YORK: Kuwaiti Permanent Representative Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi invited the Permanent delegates to the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the Islamic-based consulates, and representatives of Muslim communities in New York for iftar.

"Kuwait donated two-thirds of the cost for building the largest mosque in Manhattan, New York, which can accommodate hundreds of people. It serves educational and religious needs for Muslim communities," Otaibi said late Tuesday. He added that the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs of Kuwait is keen to send Imams in Ramadan to lead Tarawih prayers and participate in various religious activities. He lauded the initiative of the Islamic Cultural Center in distributing iftar meals daily in the mosques for around 900 people. Ambassador Otaibi chairs the Board of Trustees of the Islamic Cultural Center of New York, which consists of two mosques and a school. —KUNA



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A group photo of the interns with the employees and managers who attended the event.

ALGHANIM INDUSTRIES LAUNCHES 3RD ANNUAL SUMMER INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

KUWAIT: Alghanim Industries, one of the largest private companies in the region, launched its 3rd Annual Summer Internship Program earlier this month, as part of its mission to support education and the youth in Kuwait. Over 50 employees including Executives and General Managers participating in the program rotations attended the launch which took place at the Grand Cinema, Al-Hamra Tower.

The event commenced with Senior Director - Talent Management and Organizational Development, Tom Hatton, welcoming the students and sharing words of encouragement on such a great achievement. Chief

Human Resource Officer, George Lambros, also advised the students to take advantage of the curriculum and truly invest in gaining value from their experience.

Manager - Talent Acquisition, Rose Zergani, and Senior HR Officer - Talent Acquisition, Noora Amin, gave a brief introduction to the program and highlighted the importance of exploring new opportunities, outside their field, to grasp an understanding of different functions within the company. In addition, three employees from various departments, Engineer - Operational Excellence, Hebah Al-Rasheedan, Business Analyst - Business Development, Saad Al Jassar, Assistant

Manager - Corporate Communications, Reem Al-Ghat, volunteered their time to share their university experience and time working for the company. The session concluded with words from a previous Summer Intern, Waleed El-Khatib, who recently joined the Business Development Department as a Professional Intern. Commenting on the internship program, George Lambros said: "The summer internship program is designed to give students real world business experiences. We have fifteen outstanding young people participating in the program this year, and we are pleased to contribute to their educational development. Alghanim Industries is commit-

ted to providing development and career opportunities for local students, and this program helps us engage with talented youth at an early stage in their university studies."

The Summer Internship Program is tailored to 1st and 2nd year university students giving them an opportunity to explore different businesses and functions within Alghanim Industries. The program provides the students with the technical and professional skills needed to implement their academic knowledge to real-life projects. Out of a hundred applications that were received, only 15 applicants were selected based on GPA and a rigorous interview process. During the first week, the

students completed their orientation by touring multiple Alghanim Industries businesses including KIMMCO, Kirby and X-cite, before delving into their group assignments.

It is worth mentioning that Alghanim Industries avidly supports education and empowering youth, through different initiatives that it sponsors, such as the National Union of Kuwaiti Students in USA and in Australia, as well as its continuous support of INJAZ-Kuwait. Alghanim Industries CEO, Omar Kutayba Alghanim was recently awarded the Knowledge and Education Development CEO Excellence award in recognition of these efforts and initiatives.

SEVEN ARRESTED FOR SHOOTING VIDEO OUTSIDE STADIUM WITHOUT PERMISSION

MEN WERE DRESSED IN WOMEN'S GARMENTS: POLICE

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: A Farwaniya police patrol arrested seven men (three citizens, an Egyptian, an Iraqi, a Yemeni and an Indian) dressed in women's attire and shooting a video outside Jaber Stadium, said security sources. Case papers indicate that on patrolling the area, patrol officers spotted three vehicles parked opposite Jaber Stadium in an industrial area and on approaching, policemen saw that a group of men were dressed in women's garments. They had extra women's clothing and cameras in their vehicles. The suspects were referred to state security for investigations. They said that they had been shooting a comedy video to post on Instagram without prior permission, which is illegal. Further investigations are still in progress.

Government's work

Denying that he has any intentions to join the Cabinet or assume any government position, chairman of the parliamentary priorities committee MP Yousef Al-Zalzalah stressed that he prefers parliamentary work

to governmental work. Zalzalah added that government work was restricted to the entire government team's performance even if a member has a different viewpoint. He also criticized the government's performance, noting that it lacked cooperation and coordination and that this was behind delaying many projects.

Accordingly, Zalzalah suggested establishing a special body within the Cabinet to help various ministers coordinate their work and overcome any hindrances while executing various projects. Further, Zalzalah referred to a report made by Minister of Social Affairs and Labor and Minister of State for Planning and Development Affairs Hind Al-Subaih in which she pointed out that there was a severe lack of cooperation and coordination amongst government bodies in terms of executing development projects.

"I am not completely satisfied with this government and a reshuffle must be made in many portfolios because there is only a handful of good ones, but the others have to step down," he added, noting that a message had been conveyed to His Highness

the Prime Minister that his Cabinet performance would remain below par unless he renewed some 'blood'.

Passed laws

Rapporteur of the parliamentary educational committee MP Humoud Al-Hamdan reconfirmed the parliament's importance in passing many laws and said that since the beginning of the current parliamentary term, 37 laws had been passed including ones that had been in drawers for years, although many parliaments went in and out of office. "However, thanks to both powers' cooperation, this parliament managed to pass many laws," he added. Speaking at a ghabqa held to honor his constituents in Fintas that was attended by a number of ministers and dignitaries, Hamdan said that the parliament was currently discussing 40 final statements before approving their budgets.

Value added tax

The GCC financial and economic cooperation committee members (finance minis-

ters) are scheduled to meet today in Jeddah, said the GCC secretariat general, noting that the meeting will be dedicated to discuss various issues on top of which will be the recommendations made concerning the unified value added tax and transitional tax projects.

Fake degrees

A committee formed by Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education Dr Bader Al-Essa to examine and investigate some fake degrees, papers, researches and promotions recently finished its work and submitted a report accordingly. The results are yet to be announced. Notably, the committee had been investigating some fake degrees referred to by the State Audit Bureau. Separately, Director of Information Systems Department at the Ministry of Higher Education Tareq Al-Marzouq said that the total students who applied for scholarships reached 6,672 so far, including 3,388 for scholarships overseas and 3,284 for local ones.

In my view

KUWAIT'S TREATY OF VERSAILLES

By Bader Al-Dehani



local@kuwaittimes.net

Let me begin by warning you that this article is rather straightforward yet too historical- and political-based. It will briefly link the core value that the Treaty of Versailles of June 1919 has thoroughly celebrated with what Kuwait, mainly through its effective 'soft power' instruments, could lead within the general framework of the modern-day Middle East.

On a cold winter day on January 18th 1919, the Big Four - the great four Allied Powers represented by the United States, Great Britain, France and Italy - alongside representatives of more than thirty nation-states were present in Paris, France. The series of conferences that took place thereafter until June 1919 were not only to shape the European continent but rather, in fact much more importantly to the Middle East at least, the entire international stage. Now, after having been recently told about, and thus read reviews of, Margaret MacMillan's "Paris 1919," the question this article would like to propose circulates around the importance of idealist universal organizations to the international platform. Could peace be imposed through organizations built by conferences and top-down power structures or does stability emerge popularly?

The Treaty of Versailles of June 1919, one of the most consequential outcomes of the Paris Peace Conference, eventually built the League of Nations as a system that would manage frictional forces after the First World War. The League of Nations, a purely Wilsonian universal organization that aimed to provide what post-WWI Europe lacked, namely ordered stability, represented a renewed world system that primarily put the concept of 'balance-of-power' as a core international relations principle. Despite its (limited) effectiveness, the League of Nations, however, carried numerous miscalculations; the unjoining of the United States, the tough penalization of Germany as well as imperial/colonial influences all determined not only the collapse of the idealist organization but also further instability within the disunited continent. The collapse of the League of Nations brought forward the birth of multiple portrayals of how idealism could interlink different nation-states through common interests. Like the pre-League of Nations Europe during the Great War (1914-1918), and definitely like the pre-Treaty of Westphalia Europe during the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648), the Middle East today is being challenged by unprecedented turmoil.

A number of well-known scholars have advocated the 'necessity' of creating a creative regional system that would manage the disorders that the general framework of the modern-day Middle East clearly, inevitably carries. As political shifts take place, causing unique disturbances, and as influential forces are constantly being renewed, institutions that manage how the shifts and forces operate should also be reorganized - based on the principle of interdependence. Kuwait, through its effective 'soft power' instruments, could lead the reorganization of the creative regional order that would manage the Middle East's frictional political operations.



CBK DISTRIBUTES GERGAIAN TO KIDS AT IBN SINA HOSPITAL

KUWAIT: As part of its annual activities designed to share the joy of special occasions with children, the Central Bank of Kuwait's (CBK) Public Relations and Media Department recently celebrated 'Gergaian' with kids hospitalized at Ibn

Sina hospital. In this regard, CBK's Assistant Director for Public Relations and Media Affairs Amani Al-Wera stressed that CBK is keen on taking part on such occasions, especially with hospitalized kids.

MAN BREAKS SENIOR CITIZEN'S WRIST

KUWAIT: A citizen in his forties beat a female citizen in her eighties and her son in his sixties, and broke the elderly woman's wrist. Both victims filed a complaint at Rumaihiya police station. The citizen and her son had disputes with the suspect, who attacked them and escaped. The victims went to Mubarak Hospital, where they were treated.

Abducting sisters found

Policemen arrested two sisters who were reported abducting and sent them to Mubarak Al-Kabeer detectives. This is the fourth time the two were reported abducting. The two Kuwaiti sisters escaped from their family house in Mubarak Al-Kabeer, reported their father, and detectives were asked to look for them. They were found in Maidan Hawally.

Smuggling foiled

Doha customs officers foiled an attempt by a Kuwaiti citizen and an Iranian man to smuggle out more than 500 types of subsidized food items aboard a wooden boat to

Iran. The customs officers searched the boat thoroughly until they found the subsidized food on its way out of the country. Both men were sent to concerned authorities.

Drunk man enters sponsor's house

An Indian man entered the living room of his sponsor's house by mistake, but got in more trouble as he reeked of liquor. The citizen from Rehab called police for help to control his servant, as he had drunk too much. He was arrested and sent to concerned authorities.

Skipper died

An Iranian skipper died after falling from a ferry docked at Doha port. The skipper was fighting for his life when he was pulled out, but later died at Sabah Hospital. All sailors on the ferry (four of them) were held for questioning. The skipper suffered a severe head injury. Separately, a citizen in his sixties died while making wudu (ablution) in Saad Al-Abdullah after he collapsed suddenly. His body was recovered by the coroner. — Al-Rai

KJA MEMBERS CONGRATULATED

KUWAIT: Chairman of the Arab Journalists Union Moayyad Allami and the union's Secretary General Khaled Maeri recently sent two cables Kuwait Journalists Association (KJA) to congratulate board member Duhairan Abalkhail for winning the membership of International Federation of Journalists' executive committee to represent Asia. Similarly KJA

board member Jassem Kamal received two cables of congratulations on winning the membership of the conference's follow up committee. In other news, KJA honored Kuwaiti journalist Amal Al-Randi after she earned awards from the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters and Hawally Governorate, as well as the Rashid Ben Humeid Award for Culture and Science.



PASSENGERS UP BY 7 PERCENT

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Civil aviation statistics showed a seven percent increase in the number of passengers using Kuwait International Airport in May, as 1,003 million passengers used the airport compared to 937,070 in May 2015. In a statement issued yesterday, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) explained that the total number of passengers arriving to Kuwait in May was 487,220 compared to 449,250 in May 2015, and departing passengers were 516,250 in May this year compared to 487,820 in May 2015.

Statistics also showed that the total incoming and outbound flights using Kuwait international airport in the same period were 8,832 compared to 8,630 last year. Cargo-wise, statistics showed that the total weight of air cargo transported through Kuwait airport in the same period was 17.6 million kilograms compared to 16.75 million kilograms in May 2015.



Damascus says German special forces in Syria



ORLANDO: Jean Dasilva sits next to a makeshift memorial for the victims of Sunday's mass shooting at the Pulse Orlando nightclub as he mourns the loss of his friend Javier Jorge-Reyes on Tuesday. — AP

WIFE OF ORLANDO SHOOTER TO FACE CHARGES

OBAMA CALLS US-BORN KILLER 'ANGRY, DISTURBED, UNSTABLE'

ORLANDO, WASHINGTON: The wife of the gunman who killed 49 people at an Orlando gay nightclub was to face criminal charges as early as yesterday after a federal grand jury was convened to study possible wrongdoing by her, a law enforcement source said. Omar Mateen's wife, Noor Salman, knew of his plans for what became the deadliest mass shooting in modern US history, said the law enforcement source, who has been briefed on the matter.

US Senator Angus King, a member of the Senate Intelligence Committee, which received a briefing on the investigation into Sunday's massacre, told CNN it appeared Salman had "some knowledge" of what was going on. "She definitely is, I guess you would say, a person of interest right now and appears to be cooperating and can provide us with some important information," King said. Salman was with Mateen when he cased possible targets in the past two months, including the Disney World resort in April, a shopping complex called Disney Springs and the Pulse nightclub in early June, CNN and NBC reported.

Orlando Mayor Buddy Dyer was due to open a family assistance center at a stadium yesterday where those

directly affected by the tragedy will be able to get information, support and other resources, city officials said. Mateen, who was shot dead by police SWAT team members after a three-hour standoff, called 911 during his rampage to profess allegiance to various militant Islamist groups. Federal investigators have said he was likely self-radicalized and there was no evidence he received any help or instructions from outside groups such as Islamic State. Mateen, 29, was a US citizen, born in New York of Afghan immigrant parents and worked as a security guard.

"He appears to have been an angry, disturbed, unstable young man who became radicalized," President Barack Obama told reporters. Salman's mother, Ekbal Zahi Salman, lives in a middle-class neighborhood in Rodeo, California, about 40 km north of San Francisco. A neighbor said Noor Salman only visited her mother once after she married Mateen. Noor Salman's mother "didn't like him very much. He didn't allow her (Noor) to come here," said neighbor Rajinder Chahal. He said he had spoken to Noor Salman's mother after the Orlando attack and she "was crying, weeping."

'I'm Next'

Mateen's rampage at Pulse was systematic as he worked his way through the packed club shooting people who were already down, apparently to ensure they were killed, said Angel Colon, a wounded survivor. "I look over and he shoots the girl next to me and I was just there laying down and thinking, 'I'm next, I'm dead,'" he said. Mateen shot him twice more, one bullet seemingly aimed for Colon's head striking his hand, and another hitting his hip, Colon said at Orlando Regional Medical Center, where he is one of 27 survivors being treated.

Vigils continued on Tuesday in Orlando. Hundreds of students gathered to pray and sing in the evening at the University of Central Florida. They shone cellphone flashlights during a reading of the names of the dead including two alumni. The shooting raised questions about how the United States should respond to violent extremists at home and abroad. The Federal Bureau of Investigation questioned Mateen in 2013 and 2014 for suspected ties to Islamist militants but was unable to verify that he posed a threat.

Obama slammed Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump for his proposed ban on Muslims entering the United States, joining fellow Democrat Hillary Clinton in portraying Trump as unfit for the White House. Trump criticized Obama for not using the term "radical Islamic terrorism" to describe Islamist militants. Obama replied that using that label would not accomplish anything.

Islamic State Pledge

Mateen made 911 calls from the club in which he pledged loyalty to the leader of Islamic State, Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi, whose organization controls parts of Iraq and Syria. "We could hear him talking to 911 saying that the reason why he's doing this is because he wants America to stop bombing his country," said Patience Carter, 20, who was trapped in a bathroom stall at the nightclub as Mateen prowled outside. US officials were investigating media reports that Mateen may have been gay but not openly so, and questioning whether that could have driven his attack, according to two people who have been briefed on the investigation and requested anonymity to discuss it. — Reuters

ALLIGATOR SNATCHES TODDLER AT FLORIDA DISNEY RESORT HOTEL

ORLANDO: An American family's Disney vacation turned into a nightmare when an alligator snatched a two-year-old boy at the shore of a resort lake and fought off the father's frantic attempts to wrest the toddler from its mouth, officials said yesterday. A search and rescue operation was launched after the attack Tuesday night at the Grand Floridian hotel not far from the Magic Kingdom was ongoing, but police said they held out little hope the boy would be found alive.

"We are keeping some hope alive, but it is looking more grave every moment, every hour," Orange County Sheriff's Office spokesman Jeff Williamson told AFP. The mauling was yet more terrible news for a vacation town still reeling from the weekend shooting massacre of 49 people at a gay nightclub in downtown Orlando - the worst mass shooting in American history. Another 53 were wounded.

"We determined this two-year-old child was playing at the edge of the water, a foot or so into the water, when this alligator came up and attacked the child," Sheriff Jerry Demings told a sunrise news conference. "The father did his best, tried to rescue the child - however, to no avail." The child belonged to a family of five from the Midwestern state of Nebraska that was relaxing on the shore of the man-made Seven Seas Lagoon at the hotel, Demings said.

The alligator emerged and snatched the boy around 9:00 pm Tuesday (0100 GMT yesterday). The Grand Floridian is part of the massive Disney resort complex that includes several theme parks, water parks, hotels and golf courses. Rescuers used sonar and floodlights overnight to pursue their search, as a helicopter hovered overhead. Firefighters stood on the water's edge with infrared cameras scanning the water for the child. "We are very hopeful, hoping for the best," Demings said at the early morning news conference. "Sometimes you get the worst, but we're certainly hoping for the best."

Alligators are common in Florida, where they can be found in bodies of fresh water across the state, Nick Wiley from the Florida fish and wildlife service told reporters. However, it is very rare for an alligator to attack a human, Wiley said. There was a no swimming sign at the lake, but no warning about alligators, he added. "Everyone here at the Walt Disney World Resort is devastated by this tragic accident," Disney communications executive Jacquie Wahler said. "We are helping the family and doing everything we can to assist law enforcement." —AFP



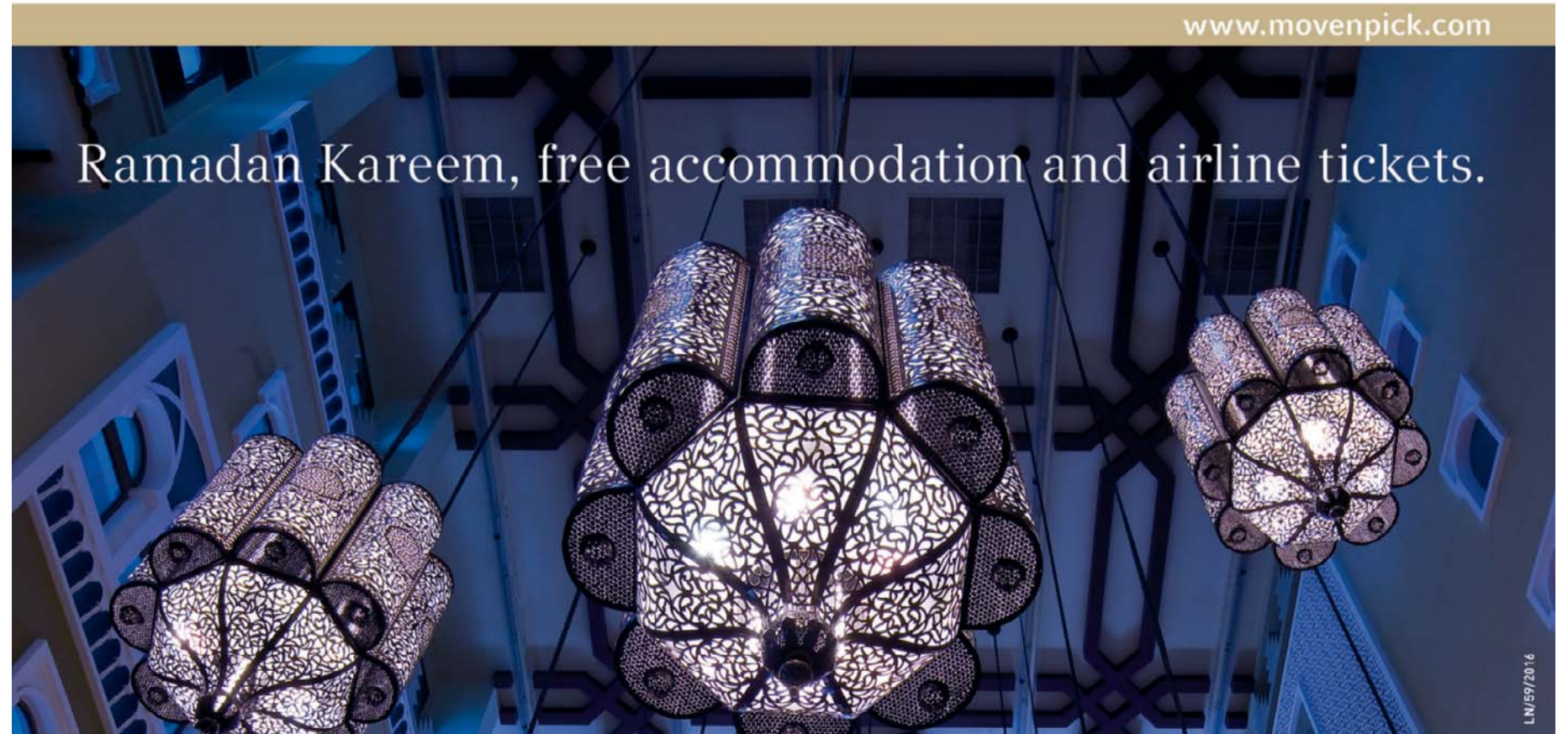
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GUNS, NOT ROSES: CONFLICTS FIRE UP BULGARIA ARMS TRADE

IGANOVO, Bulgaria: Spiralling conflicts in Syria and the Middle East have sparked a flurry of activity in Bulgarian arms factories not seen since the collapse of communism. The small EU member specialises in the production of affordable, lightweight Soviet-style weapons. While main customers include governments in Afghanistan and Iraq, the arms have also found their way into the hands of opposition fighters in Syria's bloody civil war.

At one of the country's factories, hundreds of kilometres from Damascus,

in a region known for its cultivation of roses, workers expertly assemble grenades for RPG-7 rocket-propelled launchers on a conveyor belt. "The orders are exceeding our capacity," Ivan Getsov, director of the VMZ Sopot plant in the south-central village of Iganovo, told AFP. "We produced as much in the first quarter of 2016 as in an entire year and a half previously," he said.

The boom, which started a year and a half ago, "is driven by the conflicts in Syria and Iraq," Bulgarian security expert

Tihomir Bezlov said. More specifically, it coincided with an escalation in the Syrian conflict in 2014 when major world powers became involved, either supporting or opposing President Bashar Al-Assad in his fight against rebel groups. Last June, the United States was forced to admit that it was equipping Syrian rebels, after an American defense contractor died in a blast at an arms testing range in Bulgaria.

Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia - another big Bulgarian customer - has also acknowledged supplying weapons to anti-Assad

groups. Riyadh signed a big Bulgarian arms deal in 2014. Analysts say it is unlikely that Saudi Arabia would buy these weapons for its own military, which uses modern arms. "The Saudi military generally, but not exclusively, uses Western, rather than Eastern bloc weapons," said Jeremy Binnie, the Middle East editor of Jane's Defence Weekly magazine.

In addition, evidence retrieved on the ground shows that large quantities of Bulgarian weaponry have ended up in the possession of the Islamic State group in Iraq and Syria. Of 161 cartridges used by the jihadists, 47 had been made in Bulgaria, according to Conflict Armament Research, a British non-governmental group monitoring the movement of weapons and ammunition globally.

Guns Versus Roses

At VMZ, two workers wearing protective gear carefully handle gunpowder cartridges inside a special armored booth. It is a dangerous job: Earlier this year, three people died in two separate explosions at its Arsenal factory in the neighboring town of Kazanlak. Some of the employees sport face masks against the acrid chemical smell filling the factory, nestled at the foot of the Balkan mountains.

VMZ, Bulgaria's only remaining state-owned arms firm, recently expanded its premises and has gone on a massive recruitment drive for the first time in three decades. Once severely indebted, VMZ is now one of the impoverished region's biggest employers along with the larger, privately run Arsenal plant. Together, they provide around 15,000 jobs. In fact, local growers of roses - the other major industry in the area - worry that they will not find enough seasonal workers to help them during the summer harvest, according to media reports.

Ageing Technology

While it cannot compete with large-scale exporters like the US, China and Russia, Bulgaria has become one of the leading medium-sized producers of small arms, according to several independent international research groups, including the Geneva-based Small Arms Survey.

Its military expertise harks back to the communist era. Under the Soviet Union's defence treaty known as the Warsaw Pact, Bulgaria developed a powerful arms industry with some 115,000 workers. It exported around \$800 million - its Soviet-era value - worth of weapons per year to other Soviet bloc nations, but also to pro-communist groups in Africa and the Middle East. The downfall of communism in 1989 plunged Bulgaria's industry into disarray, stripping the workforce to a tenth of its original size.

However, the escalating violence in the Middle East in recent years has helped fire up sales again. Exports jumped from \$80 million (\$90 million) in 2008 to \$400 million in 2014, further soaring to \$640 million last year. Sofia insists that it respects all international arms embargoes. "The goods have a clear certificate for end destinations. Bulgaria cannot be held responsible for what happens from there on," said Economy Minister Bozhidar Lukarski last week.

But analysts warn that the industry could soon face a major hurdle because of its rapidly ageing technology purchased during Soviet times. "There's a chronic lack of investment and cooperation with Western firms, which keeps Bulgaria from modernizing its production infrastructure," said Bezlov. Bulgarian arms producers hope their booming trade will enable them to now modernize their equipment. —AFP



IGANOVO, Bulgaria: Employees check grenades for RPG-7 rocket-propelled at the VMZ Sopot plant in this south-central village. —AFP

DAMASCUS SAYS GERMAN SPECIAL FORCES IN SYRIA

AT LEAST 70 FIGHTERS DEAD IN CLASHES AROUND ALEPPO

BEIRUT: The Syrian government said yesterday that German special forces were present, alongside French and American military personnel, in northern Syria, an accusation denied by Germany. Syrian state media said the government strongly condemned the presence of French and German forces in Ain al-Arab, also known as Kobani, and Manbij. "Syria ... considers it explicit and unjustified aggression towards Syria's sovereignty and independence," state news agency SANA quoted the foreign ministry as saying.

The US-backed Syria Democratic Forces (SDF) are staging an offensive against Islamic State near Manbij,

while Kobani is under the control of the Syrian Kurdish YPG militia, part of the SDF. Germany's defence ministry said repeated claims by the Syrian government that German special forces were in northern Syria were not and had never been true. "There are no German special forces in Syria. The accusation is false," a ministry spokesman said.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, which monitors the Syrian civil war now in its sixth year, said French special forces were building a base for themselves near Kobani. France's defense minister said last week that there were special forces operating in

Syria helping the SDF advance towards Manbij. The Observatory also said German, French and American military advisers, and French and American special forces, were assisting the SDF in its fight against Islamic State but had so far remained in a support role and not fought on frontlines.

Meanwhile, at least 70 fighters have been killed in less than 24 hours of fierce clashes between pro-regime forces, jihadists and rebels in Syria's Aleppo province, a monitor said yesterday. Pro-regime fighters - backed by regime and Russian air strikes - retook the villages of Zaytan and Khalasa to the southwest of Aleppo

city after losing control of them hours earlier, the Observatory said.

But Al-Nusra Front, Syria's Al-Qaeda affiliate, launched a counter-attack to retake Khalasa yesterday morning, Observatory chief Rami Abdel Rahman said. "Khalasa is on a high hill overlooking large parts of the south of Aleppo province," he said. The area overlooks the regime's supply road around the south of Aleppo city, linking the government-held Nayrab airport to the city's southeast and areas controlled by regime troops to its west, he said.

Rebel- and jihadist-held areas in the south of Aleppo province faced heavy strikes and shelling overnight, said the Britain-based monitor, which relies on a network of sources inside Syria to gather its information. The regime also pounded a key supply route and areas north of Aleppo city overnight, the Observatory said. The Al-Watan newspaper, which is close to the regime, reported Russian air strikes on the province yesterday. "Russian fighter jets resumed their missions in Aleppo with force, targeting positions of Al-Nusra Front and allied militias," it said.

Moscow launched air strikes in support of the Damascus regime in September. Aleppo was once Syria's commercial powerhouse, but it has been a battleground since 2012 when rebels seized the east of the city confining the army to the west. In western Aleppo, rebel shelling killed two people and injured another three yesterday, official news agency SANA reported. Syria's war has killed more than 280,000 people and displaced millions since it started with the brutal repression of anti-government protests in 2011. —Agencies



MARDIN, Turkey: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan sits with soldiers as he breaks his fast at an iftar dinner with the 70th Mechanized Infantry Brigade Command on Tuesday. —AFP

DEGREE OF UNCERTAINTY? ROW OVER ERDOGAN ACADEMIC RECORD

ANKARA: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who this month picked up no less than the 44th honorary doctorate of his political career, likes nothing more than to give one of his trademark political speeches in full academic regalia. But does the Turkish strongman, who served as premier from 2003-2014 before moving to the presidency, actually have a university degree? Despite unequivocal denials by the president and his office, the Turkish opposition has seized on a new spate of recurring claims that he does not.

The argument is not merely an idle amusement - the Turkish president must have completed and passed a full four-year university degree course in order to hold the office. Erdogan's fulsome array of honorary degrees - with his latest such award coming from Makerere University in the Ugandan capital Kampala - has provoked mockery from opponents, who point out that US President Barack Obama can only boast of six honorary doctorates.

'Diploma or Resignation'

According to his official biography, Erdogan received his university degree in 1981 after four years of study at the faculty of economic and administrative sciences of the Marmara University in Istanbul. But Turkey's association of university professors UNIVDER claimed last week that Erdogan did not have a full university degree, but the equivalent of a college diploma. It said he studied at an institution that only became part of Marmara University in 1983, two years after the president says he graduated.

A former prosecutor who now heads a magistrates' association, Omer Faruk Eminoglu, filed a complaint with Ankara prosecutors and Turkey's election council saying Erdogan should be disqualified from his position with immediate effect, as this made him ineligible. The issue has become a new rallying cause for opponents seeking chinks in the president's armor, inspiring Twitter hashtags #diplomasidasaste (your diploma is also false) and #yadiploymayaistifa (either the diploma or resignation).

A deputy from the opposition Republican People's Party (CHP), with heavy irony, proposed submitting a bill to parliament to remove the requirement for the president to have a university educa-

tion and save Turkey further embarrassment. "Despite all the discussions, President Erdogan has yet to give a clear explanation on this issue," Murat Emir was quoted as saying by Turkish media. "We have made such a proposal to stop further damage to our country's reputation being made by the person of Erdogan." The pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) was sent a notarized copy of Erdogan's diploma after a request to Turkey's election committee, but said it would continue a legal battle to find the real diploma.

'Unfair and Baseless'

Erdogan is deeply proud of his humble roots in a working class Istanbul suburb, and that he attended a so-called Imam Hatip school whose main task was to give a religious education. His political image is built on the story of the pious boy from a poor background who took on the well-educated secular elite - and won. The controversy has erupted as Erdogan has blasted opposition academics at universities as traitors for not supporting the military's offensive against Kurdish militants, indicating he would like to see a purge of disloyal lecturers.

But the president also has no intention of downplaying his academic achievements, and both he and his administration have moved to rubbish the claims. "What do you want, that we find 10 million copies of these degrees and send them to the whole world?" presidential spokesman Ibrahim Kalin said angrily. The university - whose rector Mehmet Emin Arat is a close ally of Erdogan - rejected the claims that the degree was falsified as "unfair" and "baseless".

Arat published on the university website a lengthy document outlining the university's history going back to Ottoman times and Erdogan's academic career, including his graduation on April 4, 1981. Erdogan has portrayed the issue as a tired tactic by his opponents who have exhausted all other forms of attack, saying his record of transforming Turkey while in office speaks for itself. "Despite all the explanations and declarations that have been made on this subject, some people want to revive the debate," Erdogan said last week. "Whatever you want to do, our works speak for themselves." —AFP



ALEPPO: This image posted on the Twitter page of Syria's Al-Qaeda-linked Nusra Front on Tuesday, shows a Nusra Front tank firing at Syrian troops and pro-government gunmen at the hilltop of Khalsa village in southern Aleppo. —AP

BELGIAN POLICE ALERTED TO IS FIGHTERS EN ROUTE TO EUROPE

BRUSSELS: Belgian police have received an anti-terror alert warning that a group of Islamic State fighters recently left Syria en route for Europe planning attacks in Belgium and France, a Belgian security source said yesterday. The Belgian crisis center in charge of coordinating security responses said an alert had been circulated to all police forces in the country but there were no immediate plans to raise the security level to the maximum that would indicate an imminent threat of an attack.

A source at France's Interior Ministry said Belgian authorities had transmitted a note to their French counterparts, who were currently reviewing the information in the alert. "We know the threat is very high," the source said. "We're reviewing all the elements (in the alert)." Newspaper DH quoted the alert from Belgium's anti-terror cell as saying the group "left Syria about a week and a half ago aiming to reach Europe via Turkey and Greece by boat without passports", without giving an exact departure date.

The Belgian security source confirmed the

contents of the alert. The Belgian federal police declined to comment and the French source could not confirm the content. DH said the fighters were armed and aimed to split into two units, one aiming to carry out attacks in Belgium, the other in France. Potential targets in Belgium included a shopping center, a fast-food restaurant and a police station. It mentioned no specific targets in France, which is hosting the Euro 2016 soccer championships in 10 stadiums across the country until July 10. Some 2.5 million spectators are expected to watch the 51 matches.

"We know there are fighters who are coming back (to Europe)," French government spokesman Stephane Le Foll told a news conference yesterday, adding he could not confirm the specific alert from Belgium. The alert came two days after an attacker who pledged allegiance to Islamic State killed a French police commander and his partner at their home outside Paris, and four days after a gunman declaring loyalty to the Islamist militant group massacred 49 people in a gay nightclub in Orlando, Florida.

No Change in Security Level

Belgian authorities raised the threat level for the capital Brussels to the maximum of four shortly after the Nov. 13 Paris attacks that killed 130 people and after suicide bombers killed 32 people at Brussels airport and on the city's metro on March 22. The status was lowered on each occasion after a few days. Belgian police have arrested a number of men of Moroccan origin suspected of direct or indirect involvement in the Paris and Brussels attacks.

A spokesman for the Belgian crisis center said that despite the latest alert, the body that sets the security level did not have any indication of an imminent threat. "We are still at level three, which refers to a threat that is serious, and we have been at this level since November," he said. "It is true that you should be careful in areas with large concentrations of people... Security has already been reinforced at all these targets. For now, there has not been a change." —Reuters

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SHOCK AND FEAR: AFGHAN AMERICANS IN NY

NEW YORK: When Fatima Rahmati found out the Orlando killer was Afghan American she was shocked and scared - fearful that her community could suffer reprisals in an increasingly toxic political climate.

"Everyone is still in shock," said the Women for Afghan Women program coordinator. "It's scary." Her group provides services such as English classes and driving lessons to Afghan Americans living in New York. There

are an estimated 80,000 to 300,000 Afghan Americans. The largest communities are in California and Virginia, but thousands more live in New York, where shooter Omar Mateen was born in 1986.

Like many Americans of all backgrounds, Afghans are frustrated by failures to ban assault rifles in America. They are also weary of being asked to explain or apologize for the acts of deranged individuals. "At this point, you don't know the backlash," said Rahmati, 37, scrambling to convene an emergency women's meeting to raise awareness should anyone spot suspicious activity or should children be harassed in school, for example.

A New York Times investigation after last November's terror attacks in Paris and the San Bernardino shooting in December found that the rate of suspected hate crimes against Muslims tripled in America. Activists say Islamophobia has reached unprecedented levels, fueled by acts of terror and Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump's call to ban Muslims entering America. "If you think worse-case scenario there could be retribution by any number of groups," said Rahmati. "I feel like the political climate feeds into that fire," she said, anxious about Trump's success in the 2016 campaign so far. "Is that a reflection of the country as a whole?"

Hits Home

Americans, she says, can be taken back to learn

she's Afghan and Muslim, her striking appearance and Western dress at odds with pictures they see in the media of women in burqas on dusty streets in Afghanistan. Yet she, like many Afghans in America, was once a refugee. Born in Afghanistan, she grew up in Australia and came to the United States 12 years ago. Until the Syrian war, Afghans were the largest refugee population in the world. The 1980 Soviet invasion saw millions flee to Iran and Pakistan as their country became a battleground in the Cold War.

Their lives were rarely easy. Afghans who were doctors and teachers at home had to settle for menial work. The community in New York is diverse, numbering cab drivers, cleaners, surgeons, teachers, business owners and philanthropists. Nationally, there is also a small but visible Afghan American elite. Zalmay Khalilzad, for example, served as US ambassador to Kabul, Baghdad and the United Nations under president George W. Bush.

Khaled Hosseini, author of international bestseller "The Kite Runner", is another renowned Afghan American. Wazmah Osman, 42, was sickened and appalled by the target in Orlando - a gay nightclub that would have been a refuge for many. She is a member of the Afghan American Artists and Writers' Association, which is fully supportive of LGBTQ rights, rights she said are "very much in keeping with our Afghan and Muslim beliefs." "That hit home for me," she told AFP of the massacre. — AFP



NEW YORK: Men pray at Dar Al Taqwa Islamic Center in the borough of Queens on June 13, 2016. — AFP

DOCUMENTS SHED LIGHT ON CIA TORTURE PROGRAM

LAWYERS SOUGHT LEGAL PROTECTIONS

WASHINGTON: CIA lawyers sought guarantees the US spy agency would never be prosecuted for torturing suspects after the Sept 11, 2001 attacks, while other staff warned the program was an impending "train wreck," documents showed Tuesday. The correspondence provides a new glimpse into tussles within the CIA as it implemented its notorious "enhanced interrogation" techniques aimed at thwarting further attacks.

Fifty documents, released under a freedom of information request from the American Civil Liberties Union, detail the early days of the CIA's use of torture, after then-president George W. Bush directed the agency to detain terror suspects around the world. A July 2002 draft letter from CIA lawyers to the attorney general sought legal protections before agents interrogated Abu Zubaydah, an alleged Al-Qaeda member who is still detained at Guantanamo Bay. "The use of more aggressive methods is required to persuade Abu Zubaydah to provide the critical information we need," the letter states.

"I respectfully request that you grant a formal declination of prosecution, in advance, for any employees... who may employ methods in the interrogation of Abu Zubaydah that otherwise might subject those individuals to prosecution." The Justice Department at the time ruled that certain detainees could be subjected to enhanced interrogation, including the use of the simulated drowning technique known as waterboarding. The CIA hasn't used these methods since Dec 2007,

and President Barack Obama banned them when he took office in Jan 2009. But the newly released documents describe how some agency employees had misgivings much sooner. "I will no longer be associated in any way with the interrogation program," an agency employee stated in a January 2003 memo. The CIA blanked out the name of the sender and the recipient. "This is a train wreck waiting to happen, and I intend to get the hell off the train before it happens."

'No Evidence' Waterboarding Worked

The documents show the CIA believed it extracted details from Zubaydah of a purported plot to detonate a "dirty bomb" in the Washington area. However, a top CIA medical official later said any information could have been obtained through regular interrogation. "In retrospect, (doctors) thought (he) probably reached the point of cooperation even prior to the... institution of 'enhanced' measures," the official said. "There was no evidence that the waterboard produced time-perishable information which otherwise would have been unobtainable."

The CIA claims evidence acquired through torture yielded vital intelligence, but a Senate committee later found the brutal methods produced no useful information. The documents included new details in the case of detainee Gul Rahman, who died half naked - probably from hypothermia - at a secret CIA prison in Afghanistan in 2002. "Prisoners who possess significant or imminent

threat information are stripped to their diapers during interrogation and placed back into their cells wearing only diapers," a death investigation stated. "This is done solely to humiliate the prisoner for interrogation purposes. When the prisoner soils a diaper, they are changed by the guards."

The ACLU, which represents Rahman's family in a lawsuit, blasted James Mitchell and John "Bruce" Jessen, two psychologists who designed the program. "We're seeing just how much Mitchell, Jessen and their CIA co-conspirators knew that what they were doing was wrong and illegal," Dror Ladin, a staff attorney with the ACLU National Security Project, said in a statement. "They talked about seeking a get-out-of-jail-free card for torturing people, and then discussed how to make sure their victims were silenced forever, even if they survived their torture."

Key to the CIA's detention and interrogation program was its use of "rendition" - the secret transfer of detainees to countries outside the United States that had a more lenient attitude toward torture. One man, German citizen Khalid al-Masri, was held captive for five months in a case of mistaken identity. "His rendition and long detention resulted from a series of breakdowns in trade-craft, process, management and oversight," according to an investigative report. America's experiment with torture is not necessarily a closed chapter, as presumptive Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump has said he would "bring back a hell of a lot worse than waterboarding." — AFP



CARACAS: Supporters of Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro rally on Tuesday. — AFP

US LAUNCHES TALKS WITH CRISIS-HIT VENEZUELA

SANTO DOMINGO: The United States and Venezuela said Tuesday they would launch new high-level talks as the South American country struggles with a growing humanitarian crisis. With the Venezuelan opposition pushing to remove President Nicolas Maduro, the United States urged "constructive" steps to ease the situation in the volatile oil-exporting state. The two nations have had tense relations for years, with Venezuela's socialist leaders accusing Washington of trying to topple them.

But the countries' top foreign envoys sat down together Tuesday on the sidelines of a regional gathering. US Secretary of State John Kerry said he discussed the opposition's drive for a recall referendum during the meeting with Venezuela's Foreign Minister Delcy Rodriguez. Maduro himself said later in televised comments that he agreed to "a new stage of dialogue" between his government and US officials.

The two countries withdrew their respective ambassadors in 2010 but Maduro said he was "ready to appoint ambassadors and regularize relations". Kerry told reporters he would send top State Department envoy Thomas Shannon to Venezuela "as soon as possible". Shannon has met with officials in Venezuela before but this time the talks would have a "larger agenda", Kerry said. After drawing charges of US meddling from Rodriguez earlier in the day, Kerry insisted: "We're not taking sides. We're just supporting the constitutional process" in Venezuela. He met with Rodriguez in the Dominican Republic after the general

assembly of the Organization of American States (OAS).

Recall Referendum

Oil-rich Venezuela has slid into crisis as crude prices have crashed over the past two years. Citizens are suffering shortages of basic goods. The hardship has fueled protests, violence and looting. The opposition also accuses the authorities of jailing dozens of activists for political reasons, a charge the government denies. Maduro has accused the United States and the Washington-based OAS of conspiring against his government.

The regional organization's general secretary Luis Almagro has called a meeting on June 23 to discuss the Venezuelan government's democratic record - a possible step towards its suspension from the group. Almagro accuses Maduro of trampling on the political opposition. "We're not pushing for a suspension," Kerry said, however. "I think it's more constructive to have the dialogue than to isolate at this point."

Kerry earlier drew a sharp response from Rodriguez when he called for Venezuela to allow "a fair and timely recall referendum that is part of that constitutional process". He also called on Maduro's government "to release political prisoners, to respect freedom of expression and assembly, (and) alleviate shortages of food and medicine". Rodriguez fired back: "Venezuela's internal matters will be settled by Venezuelans," in unscheduled comments ahead of her meeting with Kerry. — AFP

CLINTON WINS FINAL PRIMARY, DEBATE TURNS TO TERROR FIGHT

WASHINGTON: Hillary Clinton captured the mostly symbolic Democratic primary Tuesday in the US capital, the final vote of the 2016 presidential primaries, as the race shifts to her showdown with Republican rival Donald Trump. Clinton won nearly 79 percent of the vote against 21 percent for Bernie Sanders, with nearly all votes counted, according to US networks. It marked a deflating finish for the Vermont senator, who captivated liberals and independents with a grassroots campaign that mounted a surprisingly strong challenge to Clinton.

The attention of the candidates - and the nation - however has shifted to the aftermath of the Orlando shooting, the deadliest terror attack on US soil since Sept 11, 2001. Clinton and Trump traded verbal blows and presented dramatically different approaches for fighting terrorism following the massacre at the Florida gay nightclub. Trump, the presumptive Republican nominee, on Monday said that if elected he would "suspend" immigration from areas with a "proven history of terrorism." He also suggested that US Muslims were complicit in domestic attacks because they failed to "turn in the people who they know are bad".

In contrast, former secretary of state Clinton called on Americans to "stand together" to defeat terrorism. But after Trump suggested in a TV interview that Obama sympathized with terrorists, Clinton on Tuesday slammed her rival's approach "dangerous" and "un-American". "Even in a time of divided politics, this is way beyond anything that should be said by someone running for president of the United States," she told supporters in Pittsburgh. "What Donald Trump is saying is shameful... more evidence that he is temperamentally unfit and totally unqualified to be commander in chief," she said.

Healing Party Divisions

Washington's primary was an



WASHINGTON: Democratic presidential candidate Sen Bernie Sanders, accompanied by his wife Jane, leaves through the lobby of the Capitol Hilton after meeting Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton, in Washington on Tuesday. — AP

afterthought as Clinton reached number of delegates needed to lock up the nomination last week. Sanders however refused to concede, though he steadily softened his tone in recent days. Sanders and Clinton met at a Washington hotel "and had a positive discussion about their primary campaign, about unifying the party and about the dangerous threat that Donald Trump poses to our nation," a Clinton campaign official said after the meeting.

Sanders spokesman Michael Briggs said the two "had a positive discussion about how best to bring more people into the political process" and about the threat posed by Trump. Clinton and Sanders also discussed what would be on the Democratic Party platform ahead of the national convention next month in Philadelphia. Sanders told

reporters ahead of the meeting that he wanted to see "the most progressive platform ever passed" at a convention, one which "makes it crystal clear that the Democratic Party is in fact on the side of working people".

Sanders met with President Barack Obama last week and emerged from the White House declaring his intent to work with Clinton to defeat Trump in November. Obama endorsed Clinton later that day. Republicans in Washington held their party convention in March, with Senator Marco Rubio emerging as the top vote-getter. Tuesday's vote wraps up a spectacular primary season that saw conservatives flock to Trump, a celebrity billionaire and political novice, and liberals propel Sanders, a self-described democratic socialist, into the national spotlight.

Sanders tapped into a deep well of anger among voters disillusioned with the current political system and eager to see action on issues such as reducing income inequality and campaign finance reform. Clinton ultimately prevailed, becoming the first female presumptive presidential nominee of any major US political party. Congresswoman and Democratic National Committee chair Debbie Wasserman Schultz congratulated both candidates for having "energized voters across the country". "Now that our 2016 primaries are officially at their end, Democrats are ready to unify and take on both Trump and the Republican Party that he represents," Wasserman Schultz said in a statement. Sanders is scheduled to address supporters live via webcast today. — AFP

US GUN INDUSTRY THRIVES BUT CHALLENGED BY DEMOGRAPHICS

WASHINGTON: Driven by fears of tighter regulation, gun sales in the United States have prospered during the Obama presidency and after mass killings, even as few new customers enter the market. The day after the massacre at an Orlando nightclub, investors were back betting on a pickup in gun sales Monday. Shares in two of the largest US firearms makers, Smith & Wesson and Sturm Ruger, soared 6.9 percent and 8.5 percent, respectively. The same scenario has played out over and over in recent years.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation's list of top 10 highest weeks for firearm background checks, required to purchase guns through a federally licensed dealer, clearly reveals the trigger effect of mass shootings. The FBI's two highest records came after the Newtown, Connecticut, primary school shooting in 2012, which left 26 dead, and last December's shooting at a holiday party in San Bernardino, California, where 14 people were killed.

"The gun industry and the firearms lobby have become experts at exploiting the fears of a certain population who got scared that their guns would be taken away from them," said Josh Sugarmann of Violence Policy Center, a pro-gun control group, in an interview. These fears have run high during the eight years of President Barack Obama's two-term mandate. Obama's support for further regulation has spurred a flood of gun sales and higher production.

According to official figures, more than nine million guns and other firearms were manufactured in the United States in 2014, compared with only 5.5 million in 2009, the year Obama first took office. The year of his reelection, in 2012, marked a banner year for the sector, with sales jumping nearly 19

percent, according to a study by research firm IBIWorld. "Many consumers looking to buy industry products wondered... whether purchasing a firearm in the future would prove to be more difficult," the authors of the study said.

This dynamic is still pumping. Including munitions and military sales, revenues for the sector have jumped on average 6.5 percent each year since 2011 and are expected to total \$15.8 billion in 2016, according to IBIWorld. That translates into \$1.2 billion in profit this year, the research firm said. One of the main pro-gun lobbies, the National Shooting Sports Federation, calculates that the industry's direct and indirect economic impact is \$49.3 billion annually.

Dwindling White Males

Despite strong growth and high media profile, the gun industry represents a fraction of the roughly \$5.2 trillion in retail sales annually in the United States. And it faces a more dangerous threat than potential further regulation: Demographics. "There's an existential fear both of gun manufacturers and of the gun rights community coming from the fact that their base of support - the middle-aged, white male population - is fading," Robert Spitzer, author of "Guns Across America" and four other books on gun control, told AFP. In 2010, white Americans represented only 72.4 percent of the US population, compared with 89.5 percent in 1950. "Gun owning is simply of less interest to people than it was a few decades ago," Spitzer said. The result: Less than a third of US households reported owning at least one gun in 2014 compared with nearly 50 percent in 1980, according to a University of Chicago report. — AFP

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TOKYO GOVERNOR RESIGNS OVER SPENDING SCANDAL

TOKYO: The governor of Tokyo resigned yesterday over spending public money on lavish hotels and spa trips, the latest setback on the mega-city's troubled road to hosting the 2020 Olympics. Unpopular Yoichi Masuzoe fell on his sword just hours before facing a no-confidence vote, making him the city's second governor to quit since Tokyo was named host of the 2020 summer games. Masuzoe's predecessor Naoki Inose - who led the capital's successful Olympic bid - bowed out in late 2013 after also becoming embroiled in a personal finance scandal.

On assuming office as governor, the French-speaking Masuzoe, a former health and labour minister, pledged to run an administration free of money scandals. But Masuzoe's woes began in April when reports emerged that he was using his official car to be driven at the

weekends to a cottage south of Tokyo. Further allegations emerged that Masuzoe had travelled overseas in first class, brought art online and spent public money on family outings and accommodation in Japan.

Masuzoe, who faced repeated grilling by the legislature and in the media, had admitted to ethical lapses but denied breaking any laws. In a short speech before the Tokyo legislature, a chastened Masuzoe said he had worked hard for the 2020 Olympics and was filled with regret. "But I am responsible for all of this," he said. Lawmakers approved his resignation, effective June 21, shortly before he spoke.

Arrogance, Entitlement

An election for a new governor is expected as early as next month. Masuzoe's departure is unlikely to signif-



Tokyo's governor Yoichi Masuzoe

icantly impact the city's ability to manage the Olympics, but it adds to the lengthening list of embarrassments that have plagued the preparations for the

games. The original main stadium design had to be scrapped over ballooning costs and the official logo was caught up in a plagiarism row. French prosecutors have also launched an investigation into \$2 million in alleged bribes linked to Tokyo's host bid, an allegation the organizers deny.

Yuko Arakida, a board member of the organizing committee, told local media Masuzoe's departure was "extremely regrettable", citing his "foreign language proficiency" and "emotional attachment to the Games". His resignation "will not bring about a positive image" of Tokyo, she added. As the scandal mounted, all the major parties in the Tokyo legislature agreed to submit a no-confidence motion against Masuzoe.

Local media reported that Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) - the biggest

force in the capital's politics and Masuzoe's main supporter - was concerned that the scandal-tainted governor could also damage its chances in upcoming parliamentary elections. The motion was shelved when Masuzoe preempted it by resigning. The brouhaha has not gone down well with the general public in Japan amid stagnant economic growth and increasing hardship among low-wage earners.

A perception of arrogance and entitlement on the part of the governor has also been criticized. Local media immediately began speculating on possible candidates to succeed Masuzoe. Among them are opposition lower house member and former TV anchorwoman Renho, who goes by one name, and Yuriko Koike, also a lower house member for the ruling LDP, a former defense minister and anchorwoman. — AFP



An F/A-18 Hornet lands on the deck of the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier the USS John C Stennis during joint military exercise between the United States, Japan and India off the coast 180 miles east of Japan's southernmost island of Okinawa yesterday. — AP

TOKYO SAYS CHINESE SPY SHIP ENTERED JAPAN WATERS

INCURSION COMES DURING MILITARY EXERCISE

TOKYO: A Chinese spy ship entered Japan's territorial waters yesterday as Tokyo conducted a joint exercise with the United States and India, Japanese officials said. Japan quickly voiced "concerns" over the intrusion as it came less than a week after another Chinese naval vessel sailed near islands at the centre of a Tokyo-Beijing sovereignty dispute in the East China Sea. "The Chinese military vessel moved in after an Indian ship sailed into Japan's territorial waters as it participated in a Japan-US-India joint exercise," Gen Nakatani, defense minister, told reporters.

Japanese defense ministry officials declined to speculate why the 6,000-ton "information gathering" vessel sailed into the area, but Nakatani said China, as Japan's neighbor, must act "carefully". A Japanese navy surveillance aircraft spotted the Chinese ship around 3:30 am (1830 GMT Tuesday) in territorial waters near Kuchinoerabu island in southern Japan, said Hiroshige Seko, a government spokesman.

Tokyo did not immediately say by how much the Chinese ship breached its territorial waters, which international law stipulates are a 12-nautical-mile band offshore. The area is part of a Japanese island chain that divides the East China Sea and the Pacific Ocean, and is not subject to the territorial dispute. China's navy was conducting a "normal exercise" and passing

through international waters in the Tokara Strait where "all countries can have the right of innocent passage", foreign ministry spokesman Lu Kang said in Beijing. "There is no need to provide notification or to get authorization in advance," Lu told a regular briefing. "So if Japan insists on hyping up this issue in the media, we have to question its motives."

China's defense ministry also said in a statement that its ship's actions were in accordance with international law. The Chinese ship sailed southeast and exited Japanese waters around 5 am heading into the Pacific, Japan's Seko told a press briefing. Yesterday's incursion came less than a week after another Chinese naval ship sailed close to the disputed islands further south in the East China Sea, though it did not enter what Japan sees as territorial waters.

'Thorough Measures'

Japan said last week that a Chinese frigate sailed into "contiguous waters" surrounding the contested East China Sea islands last Thursday. Contiguous waters are a 12-nautical-mile band that extends beyond territorial waters. Under international rules, they are not the preserve of any single country, although the resident power has certain limited rights. It marked the first time a Chinese navy ship had approached so close to the disputed islets and an angry Japan

summoned Beijing's ambassador to protest.

Separately, China sent three coastguard ships inside territorial waters of the disputed isles on Wednesday afternoon, hours after Japan complained about the naval intrusion. China does not recognize Japan's claim to the disputed islands - known as Senkaku in Japan and Diaoyu in China - and says its ships have the right to sail freely in Chinese territorial waters. International laws allow ships of all states to exercise the right of "innocent passage" - cited by Lu - through territorial sea. A Chinese nuclear submarine entered Japanese waters in 2004.

Concerns over China's rising military presence in Asian waters have sparked worries in Japan. Relations deteriorated in 2012 when Tokyo "nationalized" some of the disputed uninhabited islets. The countries have taken steps to mend fences but relations remain tense. The response from Japan this time was more muted, however, with the government conveying its "concerns about the Chinese military's activities in general", Seko said. "The government will continue to take thorough measures to patrol the air space and waters surrounding our nation," he added. Japan has expressed concern over Chinese land reclamation and expansion of military facilities in the South China Sea, where Beijing has disputes with countries including Vietnam and the Philippines. — AFP

US THIRD FLEET EXPANDS

WASHINGTON: The US Navy's Third Fleet will send more ships to East Asia to operate outside its normal theater alongside the Japan-based Seventh Fleet, a US official said yesterday, a move that comes at a time of heightened tensions with China. The Third Fleet's Pacific Surface Action Group, which includes the guided-missile destroyers USS Spruance and USS Momsen, was deployed to East Asia in April. More Third Fleet vessels will be deployed in the region in the future, said a U.S. official who requested anonymity. He and a second official said the vessels would conduct a range of operations, but gave no details.

China claims most of the South China Sea, through which \$5 trillion in shipborne trade passes every year. The Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Taiwan and Brunei have overlapping claims, as well as close military ties with the United States. China has been angered by what it views as provocative US military patrols close to islands that China controls in the South China Sea. The United States says the patrols are to protect freedom of navigation.

Yesterday, a spokesman for China's Foreign Ministry said if US actions had a destructive impact on regional peace and stability and the interests of countries in the region, then China would "definitely be opposed and concerned." "How the US military uses its taxpayers' dollars to carry out deployments is its own affair," ministry spokesman Lu Kang told a regular briefing. "I'm not concerned about it. What I'm concerned about is regional peace, security and stability."

The Third Fleet, based in San Diego, California, traditionally has confined its

operations to the eastern side of the Pacific Ocean's international dateline. Japan's Nikkei Asian Review quoted the commander of the US Pacific Fleet, Admiral Scott Swift, as saying on Tuesday that the move came in the "context of uncertainty and angst in the region," an apparent reference to China's behavior. Swift argued that the Navy should utilize the "total combined power" of the 140,000 sailors, over 200 ships and 1,200 aircraft that make up the Pacific Fleet.

The Seventh Fleet consists of an aircraft carrier strike group, 80 other vessels and 140 aircraft. The Third Fleet has more than 100 vessels, including four aircraft carriers. Chinese officials have blamed the rising tension on the United States. "I think before Americans' so-called 'rebalancing in Asia-Pacific,' the South China Sea was very quiet, very peaceful," Liu Xiaoming, China's ambassador to Britain, told Reuters in an interview last week. "China was talking to the neighboring countries. We had a Declaration of Conduct. And the Philippines was talking to us. Once the Americans came in, so-called 'rebalancing,' things changed dramatically. They want to find an excuse to have their strong military presence in the South China Sea and in the Asia Pacific. If it is so quiet, what is the reason for them to be there?" he asked.

Greg Poling, director of Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative at the Center for Strategic and International Studies think tank, said on Tuesday that the move appears to be part of President Barack Obama's plan to shift 60 percent of US naval assets in Asia as part of his rebalance of resources to the region in the face of China's rise. — Reuters

NEVER TOO OLD TO LEARN: 68-YR-OLD NEPAL STUDENT

PHEDIKHOLA, Nepal: Nepalese grandfather Durga Kami brushes his bushy white beard, puts on his school uniform and, with the aid of his walking stick, trudges for over an hour to class for another day of learning. Poverty prevented Kami finishing his studies as a child and achieving his goal of becoming a teacher. Now 68, the father of six and grandfather of eight goes to school six days a week to complete his studies and escape a lonely home life following the death of his wife.

Walking into the Shree Kala Bhairab higher secondary school and the buzz created by 200 children is a welcome contrast to the hush of the isolated one-room home, with its leaking roof and frequent power cuts, where Kami lives in Syangja district, some 250 km west of Nepal's capital Kathmandu. "To forget my sorrows I go to school," Kami, one of the oldest students in Nepal, told Reuters in the classroom where he studies alongside 14 and 15-year-olds.

Kami, whose children have all left his hilltop home, first went to Kaharay primary school where he learnt to read and write with the seven and eight year olds before leaving after finishing grade five with the 11-year-olds. Shree

Kala Bhairab teacher D R Koirala then invited Kami to his school, which provided the grandfather with stationary and a school uniform including grey trousers, blue striped tie and white shirt. "This is my first experience teaching a person who is as senior as my father's age," Koirala said. "I feel very excited and happy."

The school scholarship does not stretch to cover food, though, meaning Kami's breakfast of rice with a fermented green vegetable known as 'Gundruk' must sustain him until dinner. The 20 children in his grade 10 class have dubbed Kami 'Baa', which means 'father' in Nepali, but despite his age their elderly class mate joins in all activities, including volleyball in the schoolyard. "I used to think 'why is this old man coming to school to study with us?' but as time passed I enjoyed his company," Kami's 14-year-old class mate Sagar Thapa said. "He is a little bit weak in studies compared to us but we help him out with that."

Kami said he wanted to studying until his death, adding he hoped it would encourage others to ignore age obstacles. "If they see an old person with white beard like me studying in school they might get motivated as well," he said. — Reuters

SON, WIFE OF CHINA'S FORMER DOMESTIC SECURITY TSAR JAILED

BEIJING: The son and wife of former Chinese domestic security tsar Zhou Yongkang have been jailed for corruption, state media said yesterday, the latest high-profile figures to be felled in President Xi Jinping's anti-graft campaign. Zhou's son, Zhou Bin, who had business interests in the energy sector, was jailed for 18 years for taking bribes and engaging in illegal business operations, the official Xinhua news agency reported. Zhou Bin had eluded a warrant for his arrest and fled to the United States in early 2013, sources told Reuters in 2014.

He returned to China after negotiations with Chinese authorities, the sources said. It was not clear whether he had retained a lawyer. Zhou Yongkang's wife, Jia Xiaoye, a former state television journalist, was jailed for nine years and fined 1 million yuan (\$150,000) for taking bribes, the Intermediate People's Court of Yichang, a city in Hubei province, said on its

microblog. She will not appeal, the court said in its statement after a closed trial. It was also not clear if she had retained a lawyer.

Zhou Yongkang was a member of the party's elite Politburo Standing Committee and once among China's most powerful officials. But he became embroiled in China's biggest corruption scandal in more than six decades - the most senior leader targeted in a corruption investigation since the Communist Party took power in 1949 - and was jailed for life in 2015. Dozens of his associates have also been arrested, many in the southern province of Sichuan, where he was Communist Party boss from 1999 to 2002. Sources first told Reuters in 2014 that Jia had been detained along with more than 10 of Zhou's relatives. Xi's anti-corruption campaign has felled dozens of officials, including many of his top political opponents. — Reuters

CHINA: DALAI LAMA-OBAMA MEETING WILL DAMAGE TIES

BEIJING: China has lodged diplomatic representations with the United States over a meeting between US President Barack Obama and the Dalai Lama at the White House yesterday saying it would damage Chinese-US ties, the Foreign Ministry said. China considers the exiled Tibetan Buddhist spiritual leader a dangerous separatist, and ministry spokesman Lu Kang told a regular briefing the meeting would encourage "separatist forces". "If the United States plans this meeting, it will send the wrong signal to Tibet independence and separatist forces and harm China-US mutual trust and cooperation," Lu said.

Any attempt to take advantage of the Tibet issue and undermine stability would not succeed, Lu said, saying China "resolutely opposed" the plan. China urged the United States to abide by its promises to recognize that Tibet is part of China and cease any support for Tibet independence, Lu said. Obama met the Dalai Lama when the latter visited Washington in 2014 and angered China then when he vowed "strong

support" for Tibetans' human rights.

China describes the incorporation of Tibet into its territory in 1951 as a "peaceful liberation", and says it has brought development to what was a backward region. The Dalai Lama, who fled from Tibet into exile in India in 1959 after a failed uprising against Chinese rule, says he wants genuine autonomy for Tibet, not independence. China says Tibet already has genuine autonomy, and exile groups seek to split the country. Tibetans accuse China of eroding their Buddhist culture and flooding the region with ethnic Han Chinese.

The Dalai Lama told Reuters on Monday that Obama was a "a longtime friend" whom he admired for his work to normalize relations with Cuba, and on Iran, and for his recent visits to former US foe Vietnam and the site of the Hiroshima atomic bombing in Japan. Lu said the Dalai Lama was not a purely religious figure, but a political exile who has long used religion to conduct separatist and anti-China activities. — Reuters



WASHINGTON: In this June 13, 2016 photo, the Dalai Lama waves during an event at American University's Bender Arena. — AP

AMERICANA REVIVES SALE TALKS

DUBAI: Kuwait Food Co (Americana) is back in talks to sell a majority stake to a group of Gulf investors just days after negotiations collapsed over valuation issues, sources said yesterday. Americana, which owns the Middle East franchises for fast food chains KFC and Pizza Hut and also produces branded consumer foods, has been up for sale since early 2014. Investment firm Adeptio, which is led by prominent Dubai businessman Mohamed Alabbar, in February agreed to buy 69 percent of Americana from Al Khair for Stocks and Real Estate, which is controlled by the Kharafis, a wealthy merchant family.

But the long-running sale process collapsed at the end of May. Talks have since restarted between the two parties, according to two sources familiar with the matter, who spoke on condition of anonymity as the information isn't public. Americana did not immediately respond to a Reuters' request to comment.

Adeptio was also not immediately available to comment. The talks had initially broken down after the completion of due diligence when Adeptio's attempt to revise down its valuation of the company was rejected by the seller, one Gulf-based source familiar with the transaction said.

Talks have restarted in the past few days and the gap between the buyer and the seller is narrower than before, indicating a deal could still happen, the source said. Al Khair's 69 percent stake is currently valued at around \$1.9 billion, according to Reuters' calculations. To help to finance the previous deal, Adeptio was aiming to secure a \$1.5 billion bridge loan from a group of banks including Standard Chartered, Credit Suisse, Emirates NBD and First Gulf Bank. Both sources said the same banks would be involved in financing any new deal, although the second source said the new loan amount was yet to be finalized. — Reuters

ALTRUISM IN ISLAM

Continued from Page 1

(C) Whenever you give preference and priority to someone for the sake of God Almighty you should attribute that to Allah - and not to yourself - because Allah is the One who created you in the first place, guided you, commanded you to do good deeds and promised to reward you abundantly if you carried out those good deeds properly and with good intentions.

God says what can be translated as, "And it is also for those who, before them, had homes (in Medina) and had adopted the Faith, that they love those who emigrated to them, and have no jealousy in their hearts for that which they have been given, and give them (emigrants) preference over themselves even though they were in need of that."

And whoever is saved from his own covetousness, such are they who will be the successful." (59: 9) In this verse God alludes - among others - to an incident whereby an inhabitant of Medina hosted a hungry man and gave him the food they had set aside for their children. As such, that man and his family slept on empty stomachs for the sake of their visitor whom Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) had urged them to feed - an excellent example of selflessness, altruism, and philanthropy.

Prophetic sayings

Abu Huraira (Prophet Muhammad's companion) narrated that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said what can be translated as: "I am the most deserved among people to take care of the believers according to instructions from the Book of Allah. Therefore, anyone among you who dies and leaves behind a debt or destitute children, then call me; I will be his guardian. And if any of you dies and leaves behind wealth, then his heirs are most entitled to get it, whoever they may be." (Muslim 1619).

Imagine, the Prophet (PBUH) taking up the responsibility of paying a dead person's debts yet when it comes to the latter's inheritance, he distances himself - a real

paragon of altruism, selflessness, and philanthropy. Aisha (RA) said, "A poor woman came to me carrying her two young girls, begging for food. I then gave her three dates - after which she gave each girl one date and kept the third one for herself. When she raised her hand to her mouth to eat her date, both girls asked her to give it to them (as though they were not satisfied with only one date that each one of them got)."

Seeing how hungry they were, the mother decided to split that date into two (and in the process, stayed hungry.) Aisha said, "I was deeply touched by this scenario and when the Prophet came, I shared the story with him. He then said, "Allah (SWT) has made Paradise an absolute abode for her or made her safe from the hellfire by that date (which she sacrificed to feed her two daughters)" (Recorded by Imam Muslim: 2630). Although it was that poor lady's responsibility to feed her daughters, God rewarded her and will admit her in Paradise on the Day of Judgment. So do not underestimate any kind act, even the one you do for your family members - it will accrue to you a lot of rewards from God Almighty.

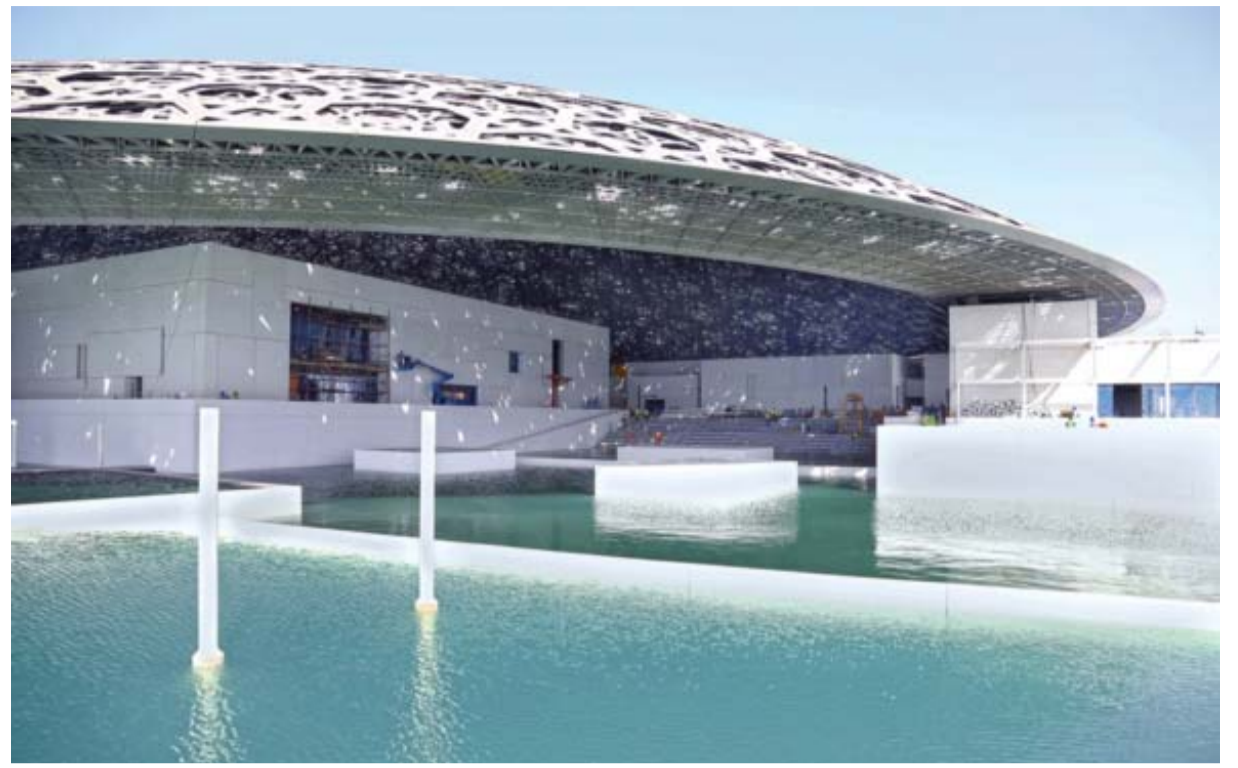
Altruism in Ramadan

Altruism is overemphasized in Ramadan in that the Muslims are urged to provide food on which fasting persons, especially the poor and destitute, would break their fast. The Prophet (PBUH) said that if you provide food on which a fasting person would break his fast, you will get the same reward of that person. This explains why in Kuwait and some other Muslim countries, tents are pitched for the purpose of feeding people whether Muslims or not.

Courtesy of the TIES Center: The TIES Center aims at empower Kuwait's expats through social and educational services that promote a positive and productive role in society, and to facilitate opportunities for intra- and interfaith interactions that promote social solidarity. For more information, please call 25231015/6 or e-mail: info@tiescenter.net



HERAT: An Afghan boy looks up as he studies the Quran during the Islamic holy month of Ramadan at a mosque in Herat yesterday. Muslims throughout the world are marking the month of Ramadan, the holiest month in the Islamic calendar during which devotees fast from dawn till dusk. — AFP



ABU DHABI: Photo shows Abu Dhabi's Louvre museum, designed by French architect Jean Nouvel, surrounded by sea water. — AFP

ABU DHABI'S LOUVRE 'A MUSEUM ON THE SEA'

ABU DHABI: Abu Dhabi's Louvre museum has been surrounded by sea water in a major step towards completion of the ambitious project, the developer said. The contractor has begun removing temporary sea protection walls used during the main construction phase, allowing the "integration of the sea" with the museum, Abu Dhabi's Tourism Development & Investment Company (TDIC) said. "This delicate process is the result of months of planning and preparation to ensure that the inflow of sea water takes place in a controlled manner around and within strategic places in the museum," said TDIC chairman Ali Majed Al-Mansoori.

Designed by French architect Jean Nouvel and built at a cost of half a billion euros, the Louvre Abu Dhabi will feature 9,200 square meters of gallery space. A temporary platform was built in the sea in 2009 for the museum's construction, during which more than 4,000 steel and

reinforced concrete piles were driven into the ground to create a base. The outer layer of the museum's giant 180-metre dome, which extends out over the water, was completed in September. The iconic structure is perforated with designs that will project light patterns in the shape of palm trees onto the exhibition space below.

A water system, derived from ancient Arabian engineering, will flow between the enclosed galleries and outer areas of the museum. TDIC has not yet announced a date for the opening. Many of France's grand museums, including the Louvre, the Musee d'Orsay and the Palace of Versailles, will loan art to Abu Dhabi as part of a 30-year collaboration with the emirate worth one billion euros. Louvre Abu Dhabi will be the first museum to open at the Saadiyat Cultural District and will be followed by the Zayed National Museum and Guggenheim Abu Dhabi. — AFP

'VERY HOT' DRINKS RAISE CANCER RISK

Continued from Page 1

As for mate-typically drunk piping hot-IARC found it was the probably high temperature, not the drink itself, behind the previously observed link with cancer.

Mate is typically consumed from a closed container with a metal straw that delivers the brew directly to the throat. "The single study that examined cold mate drinking showed no association with oesophageal cancer," said the agency. It also scoured studies on the possible link between cancer and other hot beverages, including milky teas drunk in parts of Africa and central Asia. Some of the data pointed to "significantly increased relative risks for drinking very hot tea and very hot beverages," it found. And in lab studies, very hot water at 65-70 C boosted oesophageal tumors in mice and rats, said the agency.

Very hot drinks have thus been classified "probably carcinogenic to humans", the report concluded. The IARC-partly due to a lack of research-did not find that drinking very hot water was similarly dangerous. "It is too speculative at this point," Loomis told journalists prior to the report's release. He stressed that 65 C is "really quite hot"-way above "normal serving temperatures for coffee and tea in European countries and North America," which are typically below 60 degrees. The research had taken account of other lifestyle factors that could have skewed the data, such as participants' alcohol and tobacco use-high risk factors for oesophageal cancer. According to the WHO, cancer of the food pipe accounts for about 400,000 deaths out of eight million total cancer deaths every year. — AFP

MPs APPROVE SEVEN NEW BUDGETS...

Continued from Page 1

MP Faisal Al-Kundari said the Ports Authority has a young director who has the ideas to improve it but needs powers to carry out his programs.

MP Saadoun Hammad said the Assembly needs guarantees from the government to reform the situation at the Ports Authority in order to boost profits. He also demanded to know the names of companies which lease areas at the ports but fail to pay the rent. MP Abdullah Al-Turajai said that the one who is administering the Ports Authority is more powerful than its director and public funds worth KD 20 million are squandered among influ-

ential people he did not name. MPs also criticized the functioning of other bodies especially the Industrial Authority. Head of the Budgets Committee MP Adnan Abdulsamad said that his committee has rejected the budgets of all the bodies for not taking any effort to rectify mistakes. MP Saleh Ashour said it appears that all these bodies are the property or act as closed companies for the members of the board of directors and the officials at these bodies think that they have inherited them from their forefathers. He said that most of the officials have been appointed in these bodies through influence and have no ability or competence to manage them.

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Issues

PAKISTAN PROVES A SLIPPERY TARGET FOR ISLAMIC STATE

By Khurram Shahzad

As investigators probe connections between the Orlando killer and the Islamic State group, analysts say the jihadists are struggling to gain a foothold in one country repeatedly linked to their high-profile attacks: Pakistan. White House hopeful Donald Trump mentioned Pakistan in a speech this week in New Hampshire as he doubled down on anti-immigration threats in the wake of the bloody rampage in Orlando.

Trump cited an attack in California last November, when a Pakistani woman and her US-born husband were praised by IS as "soldiers" of the caliphate after killing 14 people. Other murky links between Pakistan and IS attacks have also emerged. Two people were killed in France on Monday by a man claiming allegiance to IS and known to French intelligence for his role in a Pakistan-linked jihadist group. In April, Austrian prosecutors said they are investigating a Pakistani held in connection with last November's deadly assault on Paris, also claimed by IS. Washington earlier this year designated an IS affiliate—the "Khorasan Province"—as an Afghanistan- and Pakistan-based terrorist organization. But Islamabad officially denies IS has a formal presence in the country. Analysts say that while the group's ultra-violent ideology has seen some success as a recruitment tool, IS is still scrambling for purchase in Pakistan largely due to competition from well established extremist groups already there.

"My sense is that it has had limited success mainly because it has to compete for recruits with indigenous jihadi organizations," said Marvin G. Weinbaum, director of the Pakistan Center at the Middle East Institute in Washington DC. "I don't see it as having the potential to make large-scale territorial gains and existentially threatening Pakistan as a nation," said Aymenn Jawad Al-Tamimi, a research fellow at the US-based Middle East Forum. "I am also somewhat sceptical of the potential to supplant Al-Qaeda and the Taliban," he wrote in an email to AFP.

Recruitment web

Attacks claimed by IS in Pakistan are rare, the most significant being a 2015 gun assault on a bus in Karachi that killed 44 people. However Pakistani officials told AFP that hundreds of suspects have been rounded up as authorities try to break an domestic IS recruitment network. "Educated, motivated and unemployed youth are an IS recruitment base in Pakistan. We have busted several recruitment cells here," a senior security official told AFP on condition of anonymity.

"Their focus is on the middle-class youth, many affluent and able to run operations of the IS state," said Muhammad Amir Rana, a security analyst. That means not only foot soldiers, but people who can "run cyber operations, hospitals, and administrative operations," he said, estimating that some 700 young Pakistanis have already left to join IS. Islamic organizations and security sources say at least two dozen people suspected of IS connections have been detained in the port megacity of Karachi.

Authorities also found evidence of IS recruitment efforts in Pakistan's wealthiest province Punjab, and made arrests in 2014. Last year authorities traced a mother-of-four who went missing from the provincial capital Lahore with her children over fears she had left the country to join IS. Her family says she is now in an IS-controlled area of Syria along with another Pakistani family. Authorities have also arrested multiple people accused of IS sympathies with links to the religious political party, Markazi Jamiat Ahle-Hadith Pakistan (MJAP). A senior party member told AFP that his son had become a jihadist and is now missing. "Some people say he has gone to Damascus, others say to Afghanistan or Turkey," Talib-ur-Rehman Zaidi said.

Barbarism

In Pakistan's northwestern tribal belt that borders Afghanistan, analysts say IS are targeting militants already operating there. "My impression ... is that IS mainly attracts and tries to recruit disillusioned members of the Taliban movements as well as the likes of Lashkar-e-Taiba," analyst Al-Tamimi said. However they are not succeeding, says analyst Rana, because of sectarian differences between the militants. The jostling of Pakistan's array of other extremist groups means IS will not become a threat to Islamabad "any time soon," said Weinbaum. But the group's seeming inability to establish itself on Pakistani soil may not deter "lone wolf" attacks, as US investigators believe happened in Orlando. "Individuals just associate themselves with them (IS)," president of MJAP Sajid Mir told AFP, as he denied any links between his party and the jihadists. "We have no connection-what IS is doing, that is not jihad but barbarism."—AFP

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HOW ISLAMIC STATE OVERTOOK AL-QAEDA

By Mohamad Bazzi

On June 12, a gunman stormed a gay nightclub in Orlando, Florida, killing 49 people and wounding 53 others. During the massacre and ensuing three-hour standoff with police, the shooter, Omar Mateen, called 911 and declared his allegiance to Islamic State. The group claimed responsibility the next day, proclaiming Mateen "one of the soldiers of the caliphate in America." But US officials cautioned that even if Mateen was inspired by Islamic State to undertake the worst mass shooting in modern US history, there was still no evidence he had a direct link to the group - that he had been trained or instructed by its terror planners. Rather, Mateen might have heeded the call of Islamic State leaders to carry out "lone wolf" attacks in the West, especially during the holy month of Ramadan. Two years ago, Islamic State militants marched into Mosul, Iraq's second largest city. In quick succession, the jihadists captured a large swath of northern Iraq and consolidated their control over parts of Syria. Today, Islamic State has in many ways overshadowed Al-Qaeda as the world's most serious terrorist threat. Western and Middle Eastern security officials now view Islamic State as the greater danger to their domestic security, especially because of its mastery of social media and its ability to recruit thousands of disenfranchised young Muslims into its ranks. Since 2013, Islamic State and Al-Qaeda have been competing for funding, recruits and prestige - and they often argue over tactics. Islamic State has overshadowed Al-Qaeda in the wholesale slaughter of civilians, as epitomized by recent attacks in Paris, Baghdad, Beirut and elsewhere.

By late 2014, Islamic State seized large chunks of territory in Syria and Iraq. The group then proclaimed a caliphate in the territory under its control, and named its leader, Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi, as caliph and "leader of Muslims everywhere." Islamic State established a regional base that has allowed it to govern territory, train thousands of fighters and generate income from illicit trade in oil and other resources - all on a scale larger than anything Al-Qaeda has achieved. Islamic State has also established a larger recruitment effort and more sophisticated social media presence than Al-Qaeda's.

With its self-declared caliphate, Islamic State has gained

control of more resources and generated more income than Al-Qaeda. The group generates money by selling oil and wheat, imposing taxes on residents of the territory it controls, and through extortion. In 2014, Islamic State raked in about \$2 billion, according to the US Treasury Department. That included \$500 million in oil sales on the underground market, and up to \$1 billion in cash stolen from banks while the group made its initial march across Syria and Iraq. By contrast, Al-Qaeda has historically relied on donations from wealthy individuals, especially in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates. But even in its weakened state, Al-Qaeda still poses a danger to the West, the Middle East and the wider Muslim world. In recent years, Al-Qaeda has become more active in Yemen and it has established a strong affiliate in Syria, the Nusra Front, which is a dominant force among the jihadists fighting the regime of Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad.

It's essential not to underestimate Al-Qaeda's ability to evolve and adapt to a new landscape - as it has done before. When the United States invaded Afghanistan in October 2001 to drive out the ruling Taliban movement that sheltered Osama bin Laden and his supporters, Al-Qaeda was temporarily thrown off balance. It quickly regrouped, dispersing its surviving members, distributing its ideological tracts and techniques to a wider audience on the internet, and encouraging new recruits to act autonomously under its banner.

Islamic State and Al-Qaeda differ in other important ways: Al-Qaeda wants to overthrow what it views as the corrupt and "apostate" regimes of the Middle East - the "near enemy." But in order to do so, Al-Qaeda's leaders focused on the "far enemy," the United States and the West. That focus was partly motivated by US actions abroad. For decades, Washington has supported repressive regimes in countries such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia, which spawned Al-Qaeda's top leaders.

Both bin Laden, a Saudi, and his top lieutenant and successor, Ayman Al-Zawahiri, an Egyptian, at first turned against the dictators at home. Then - realizing that the United States was helping to prop up these regimes - they targeted the "far enemy." We will never know whether these men would have attacked America if it hadn't supported the governments they were trying to destroy. But it did not help. In targeting America, Al-Qaeda

believes it will eventually force Washington to withdraw its support for autocratic Arab regimes and abandon the Middle East entirely. But Islamic State does not subscribe to Al-Qaeda's vision and instead it mainly focuses on the "near enemy" - meaning the so-called apostate regimes in Syria, Iraq and other parts of the Arab world. So far, Islamic State has been more successful in its strategy, which relies on capturing and holding territory.

It was Zawahiri who convinced bin Laden to help inspire the Sept 11 terrorist attacks. Zawahiri fled Egypt in the early 1980s, after serving three years in prison for belonging to an outlawed militant group. He spent time in Sudan, Afghanistan and Pakistan, where he first met bin Laden in 1987. At the time, bin Laden, a multimillionaire Saudi dissident, helped train and finance a cadre of "Afghan Arabs," Islamist volunteers from across the Middle East who fought against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. Those fighters later formed the foundation of bin Laden's network.

In the late 1980s, Zawahiri established an office in Peshawar, a Pakistani city near the Afghan border that served as training ground and supply conduit for the Afghan resistance. It was in Peshawar that Zawahiri began to cement his relationship with bin Laden - and to reshape the Saudi's thinking about militant Islam. Zawahiri helped turn bin Laden from a financial backer of the Afghan resistance into a strong believer in the ideology of jihad, fighting against the perceived enemies of Islam. As Al-Qaeda's influence waned, Islamic State has tried to fill the vacuum by expanding into new territory.

In November 2014, Baghdadi announced that he was creating new "provinces" of his self-declared caliphate in five new countries: Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Libya, Algeria and Egypt. While Islamic State sympathizers had pledged allegiance to Baghdadi in other states, he singled out only those countries where the movement has a strong support base and could mount sustained attacks. But Baghdadi also called on his supporters to carry out "lone wolf" attacks wherever possible. "Oh soldiers of the Islamic State, erupt volcanoes of jihad everywhere," he declared. "Light the earth with fire against all dictators." And for more than a year, Islamic State militants have been heeding the self-proclaimed caliph's call. —Reuters

FALLUJA ABUSES HARD TO PREVENT, NOT SYSTEMATIC

By Stephen Kalin and Ahmed Rasheed

Iraq's interior minister said it was difficult to prevent attacks against people fleeing the Islamic State-held city of Falluja, but denied that such actions were systematic and pledged to punish anyone proven guilty of abuses. A regional governor said this week that 49 Sunni men had been executed after surrendering to a Shiite militia supporting the army offensive to retake Falluja, and more than 600 had gone missing between June 3-5 after escaping the city.

Interior Minister Mohammed Al-Ghabban, a senior member of the powerful Shiite Muslim political party the Badr Organization, said paramilitary fighters from the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) had been referred to court over the alleged violations but that no police personnel appeared to be involved. Badr, which is backed by neighboring Iran, is part of the government's ruling coalition and has long been criticized for controlling the Interior Ministry.

Its military wing, a leading force in the mostly Shiite Muslim PMF, is participating in the campaign to retake Falluja, an hour's drive west of Baghdad. Sohaib Al-Rawi, governor of the overwhelmingly Sunni province of Anbar where Falluja is located, accused PMF fighters on Sunday of detaining, torturing and killing civilians fleeing Falluja amid the battle to drive out Islamic State. Ghabban told Reuters in an interview late on Tuesday that such behavior was not systematic but that he could not guarantee it would not occur, noting that violations by US-led coalition forces during their nine-year occupation of Iraq did not amount to a policy of rights abuse.

Some Islamic State fighters disguise themselves as civilians, he said, "making it very difficult to distinguish between actual civilians and those who are pretending." "The diversity of formations, the large battlefield and its intersection with civilian areas is a

challenge in itself which could lead to infringements, individual behavior, violations of human rights or abuses." Ghabban said he supported investigating the claims and punishing anyone proven guilty, but warned against jumping to conclusions before the cases went to court.

"We do not want to get ahead of events and regard these as facts before they are confirmed, nor do we want to be negligent and gloss over any crime," he said. Islamic State, which has been pushed back from several key cities it seized in 2014 during a lightning sweep across Iraq's north and west, has used residents as human shields to slow the troops' advance and thwart a US-led air

campaign backing them. Falluja is a historic bastion of the Sunni insurgency against US forces that toppled Saddam Hussein, a Sunni, in 2003, and the Shi'ite-led governments that followed.

Baghdad security

The push on Falluja comes at the same time as other enemies of Islamic State launched major offensives on other fronts, including a push by U.S.-backed forces against the city of Manbij in northern Syria. They amount to the most sustained pressure on the militants since they proclaimed their caliphate in 2014. Prime Minister Haider Al-Abadi's initial decision to assault Falluja

appears to have gone against the plans of his US allies, who would prefer the government concentrate on the northern city of Mosul.

But a string of bombings last month in Baghdad which killed more than 150 people in one week, the highest death toll this year, cranked up pressure on Abadi to do something about Falluja, just 50 km west of Baghdad and seen by many Iraqis as an irredeemable bulwark of Sunni militancy. Ghabban said military gains in Falluja would help reduce attacks claimed by Islamic State in Baghdad, suggesting the militants were using the city, along with other areas in Anbar and Nineveh provinces, to assemble car bombs sent to the capital.

Intelligence has helped security forces disrupt dozens of "terrorist networks," said Ghabban, leading to a 60 percent drop in attacks in Baghdad in 2015 compared to the previous year when Islamic State threatened to overrun the capital. But the minister acknowledged that Islamic State maintains safe havens in areas just outside Baghdad, like Arab Jabour in the southern outskirts as well as Tarmiya and Mishahda in the north, whose terrain makes it difficult for security forces to pursue suspected militants.

Ninety percent of explosions in Baghdad come from such areas outside the city proper, he said. Ghabban also insisted that attacks in the capital would not end unless "disorder" plaguing the country's security apparatus was eliminated. He said security forces outside his control, including the National Security Advisory, two Defense Ministry directorates, the elite counter-terrorism service and regional security commands, overlap with the Interior Ministry's own counter-intelligence efforts. "This plurality leads to confusion in managing the security file," he said. "I believe if we do not (fix) it, we will continue to suffer from breaches and problems." —Reuters



FALLUJAH: An Iraqi woman, who fled the ongoing fighting between government forces and Islamic State (IS) group jihadists in the Fallujah area, stands with her suitcase at a camp for displaced people in Amriyat Al-Fallujah. Iraq forces launched a vast offensive more than three weeks ago to retake Fallujah, which lies only 50 kilometers west of Baghdad and is one of the main bastions of the Islamic State group. —AFP

CAVS VOW TO BE READY WHILE WARRIORS COULD LOSE BOGUT

CLEVELAND: It could take another historic effort from Kyrie Irving and LeBron James to keep Cleveland in the NBA Finals, while the Golden State Warriors faced the possible loss of center Andrew Bogut. The defending champion Warriors lead the best-of-seven series 3-2 entering game six Thursday at Cleveland, with the Cavaliers needing a victory to force a seventh game Sunday in California.

James and Irving each scored 41 points to spark Cleveland past Golden State 112-97 Monday to avoid elimination, becoming the first teammates in NBA Finals history to reach 40 points in the same game. "We'll be very well prepared for game six," Irving said. "That's the only thing that's on our mind right now. We're not satisfied. We understand the magnitude of what game

six means for us and we know that it will be an incredible level they are going to play at, and we have to play at an even better level." Golden State was awaiting final results of an MRI exam on Bogut, the Australian who suffered a left knee injury early in the third quarter Monday, to know his status for the remainder of the series.

Bogut blocked six shots in game two, the most in a finals game since Pau Gasol in 2010, and averages 3.2 points and 3.0 rebounds in the finals.

The Aussie's absence would partly be offset by the return of forward Draymond Green from a one-game suspension for accumulated flagrant fouls, but still require Golden State dig deeper into the bench for help. "Our bigs are just going to have to step up. Been doing it all year," said

Warriors guard Klay Thompson. "We're still in a great position. We'll come back stronger."

No team has won the NBA Finals after trailing 3-1 and only two of 33 such teams, the 1951 New York Knicks and 1966 Los Angeles Lakers, even managed to force a game seven. "We still have our backs against the wall and have to come out swinging. We have to be ready to play again," Cavaliers forward J.R. Smith said. "Mentally, nothing can change. We have to continue to play with desperation to exhaustion. We have to try to force a game seven. We have to bring the same effort."

'WHATEVER IT TAKES'

James, who also had game highs of 16 rebounds and seven assists, is trying to

bring Cleveland its first sports champion since 1964 and avoid a third loss in a row in his sixth consecutive NBA Finals trip. "It's do or die for us," James said. "At this point, it's whatever it takes." The Warriors have made a record 276 3-pointers in this year's playoffs, paced by NBA Most Valuable Player Stephen Curry, the NBA scoring leader who hit a record 402 3-pointers this season.

"We like our chances going forward and continuing to just try to be us, the best we can, and get one more win," Curry said. "We'll be ready, come out with confidence and get the job done."

Irving says containing Curry is vital to the Cavaliers' hopes. "We've got to be better in game six in terms of the looks that he was getting," Irving said. "We understand

he's going to hit some tough shots, but we have to limit some of those opportunities. We have to be a little better."

Irving hit 17-of-24 shots in game five, the first player to shoot 70 percent and make 40 points in a finals game since Wilt Chamberlain of the Lakers in 1970. "We're going to need another performance like that," Cleveland's Richard Jefferson said. "I hope he's ready for two more performances of high-level basketball."

Cavs coach Tyronn Lue is ready for it, saying his game six plan is the same as game five—"continue to be aggressive, continue to bring physicality and continue to attack." Warriors coach Steve Kerr expects more from his team in game six. "We'll bounce back," Kerr said. "We've got to play better and I'm confident we will." — AFP



SYDNEY: In this July 26, 2014, file photo, Brumbies' Henry Speight, center, pushes through the Waratahs' Nick Phipps, left, and Kurtley Beale during their Super Rugby semifinal match in Sydney. Former Wallaby Speight won't be adding a Rio de Janeiro Olympics sevens appearance to his rugby resume after the Fijian-born winger was ruled out of the Australian team because of a ligament injury to his right knee, the Australian Rugby Union said yesterday. — AP

Huddersfield Travel to Salford Haunted by Tragedy

LEEDS: Huddersfield and the entire rugby league community have been rocked by the news Giants academy player Ronan Costello died on Tuesday in hospital.

The 17-year-old had been on a life support machine after he was injured in a Huddersfield Under-19s game against Salford on Saturday.

The match was abandoned after the freak accident and the Giants-whose senior side also meet Salford in Super League on Friday—have issued a statement on behalf of the Costello family.

"We are absolutely devastated to lose Ronan so tragically and suddenly," it read.

"Ronan was a loving and caring 17-year-old lad who was dedicated to his family and friends. He was a credit to all of his family and we are so proud of him and his achievements. "He was passionate about rugby and rugby was a big part of his life. We acknowledge that this was a tragic accident. "As a family, we wish to extend our appreciation to Leeds General Infirmary's Neuro Intensive Care Unit for their dedication, respect and efforts in caring for Ronan and to the Giants, especially Andy (Kelly) and Richard (Thewlis) who have been a great support to us all during such a difficult time." Elsewhere in Super League this weekend, table-toppers Hull FC take their seven-match winning streak to the Jungle

to take on Castleford. The Tigers have been boosted by the news that Greg Eden will return to the club next season.

The Brisbane Bronco—who has also played for Huddersfield and Hull KR in England—joins on a two-year deal. "Coming back to the UK was a massive decision for me to make," Eden said.

"There's no better team for me to return home to than Castleford, my hometown club and the team I grew up supporting. I'm really looking forward to the new challenge ahead." The round kicks off on Thursday when Wigan Warriors—up to third in the table after last weekend's win over Hull KR—take on Widnes Vikings.

But the Warriors will be without Sam Tomkins, who will be rested after five games on the bounce since returning from major knee surgery.

The England international has yet to play on the i-pitch which was installed at Widnes in 2012 and Shaun Wane will not be risking him with five rounds to go until the Super 8s. "Sam had a bit of swelling after the Hull KR game so he won't play this week," said the Wigan coach.

"It's just a precaution but we won't take any risks with him. "Lewis (Tierney) is going to play this week. I thought he was fantastic against Hull KR after coming in for Dan Sarginson at the last minute." — AFP

SCANDAL-HIT POWERHOUSE RUSSIA OF TRACK AND FIELD

MOSCOW: Russia could face exclusion from the Rio Olympics when the IAAF Council votes tomorrow on whether to readmit the Russian athletics federation amid charges of state-sponsored doping and widespread corruption. Russia has ridden the wave of its Soviet Union past to become a giant in the athletics world, topped only by their arch-rivals the United States. In five Olympic Games since Atlanta in 1996, Russia has amassed an exceptional tally of medals, supplemented by equal successes in world and European championships. While the US team has topped the athletics medals table at every Games since 1996, Russia has also fared well.

Second in Atlanta (3 gold, 6 silver, 1 bronze; 10 medals), Russia finished fourth in 2000 in Sydney (3-4-6; 13), second in 2004 in Athens (6-7-6; 19), second in 2008 in Beijing (6-5-7; 18) and again second in London in 2012 (6-3-5; 14).

Russia initially left the London Games with eight gold medals, two of which have since been handed back following positive doping tests for Sergey Kiriyapkin (50km race walk) and Yuliya Zaripova (3000m steeplechase). Despite the loss of those two golds, with more cases under investigation, athletics remains Russia's main sport for medal glory. In London, Russia won 22 golds, six coming from track and

field, the number one sport of the Olympics.

Turning to the world championships, Russia has worked hard since its first appearance in Gothenburg in 1995 to be consistently rated among the top four countries. On two occasions, the Russian team even supplanted the USA to top the medals table, in Edmonton in 2001 and on home soil in Moscow in 2013. Perhaps a sign of the times, the most recent world champs in Beijing, in 2015, were a disaster. The Russians returned home with just four medals, two of which were gold. Russia has accumulated 24 Olympic and 51 world athletics titles since its arrival on the global stage after its split from the Soviet Union.

And with those titles have come leading personalities in the world of athletics, no less so than pole vault queen Yelena Isinbayeva. Her world title in Moscow was the crowning moment of the 2013 championships organized as a nod to the nation's athletic prowess. The younger generation features world 110m hurdles champion Sergey Shubenkov, slowly beginning to capture the media spotlight. Despite never having tested positive for banned substances, the absence of Shubenkov from the limelight of the Rio Games would be symbolic of the trouble doping-tainted Russia has made for itself. — AFP

HAMILTON HOPING FOR ANOTHER FIRST IN BAKU

BAKU: Formula One takes a step into the unknown this weekend with its first grand prix in Azerbaijan but triple world champion Lewis Hamilton hopes the race will take him back to familiar territory. A win in Baku would not only complete a hat-trick of victories for the Briton but would also see him overtake Mercedes team mate Nico Rosberg at the top of the standings for the first time this year. After winning the last two races in Monaco and Montreal, while championship leader Rosberg finished off the podium, Hamilton slashed the gap between them from 43 points to nine.

If Hamilton makes it three in a row by winning a race billed as the 'European Grand Prix', Rosberg must finish second to avoid falling behind his rival, who has beaten him to the championship for the last two years. "We need to try to keep on a roll if possible," Hamilton said after winning in Canada on Sunday for the fifth time. "Onwards and upwards, hopefully." Rosberg, winner of the first four races of the season as well as the last three of 2015, needs to hit back in Baku.

He won last season's 'new' race, the Mexican Grand Prix that was returning for the first time since 1992, but Hamilton had just won his third title and taken his foot off the gas.

"Canada unfortunately didn't work out as planned. But that's how things go when you're pushing the limits and I'm not going to change my approach or start backing down," said the German after making a quick getaway from Montreal. "I'm in this championship battle to win it, not to settle for second best."

CLOSING THE GAP

While the spotlight remains on the fierce duel



Lewis Hamilton

between the two Mercedes drivers, who have clashed on the opening lap twice in the last three races, the champions are no longer in a battle of their own. Ferrari and Red Bull have closed the performance gap and could be a real threat in Baku with its long straight and tight turns around the old city, a UNESCO world heritage site. "The speed of both the Ferrari and Red Bull is pretty much where we are now," commented Mercedes team boss Toto Wolff after Ferrari's Sebastian Vettel made a lightning start in Canada and finished second.

"We are seeing the convergence of performance between teams that naturally comes with

stable regulations, and that has made the competition tougher than ever." Formula One teams began setting up on Tuesday for a race that, despite campaigners calling for the sport to take a stance on human rights issues, has created a buzz throughout the paddock. "It looks spectacular when you see what they have built up in downtown Baku, going through the old city," said Ferrari's track operations head Jock Clear. "It looks a very exciting circuit. The stuff we've done on simulators and the photographs we've seen, it looks like it's going to be a great place to race. I think both drivers are really up for that kind of street circuit." — Reuters



OAKMONT: Chris Wood of England plays a shot during a practice round prior to the US Open at Oakmont Country Club yesterday in Oakmont, Pennsylvania. — AFP

US OPEN STARS 'READY' FOR STERN OAKMONT CHALLENGE

OAKMONT: The world's best golfers on Tuesday were preparing for the ultimate US Open test at Oakmont with a mixture of excitement and trepidation. The course is not an untamed monster like Chambers Bay in Washington State last year, but its distinctive bunkers are forbidding and its greens are among the fastest and most undulating on the circuit. On top of that, the eighth hole is the longest par-three in US Open history at 300 yards, the 12th at 667 yards the second-longest ever par five and the closing hole is an unforgiving 484-yard par four many consider to be the hardest on the Open rotation.

The par is at 70 and few think that will be bettered by Sunday evening. The last time the tournament was held at Oakmont, in 2007, Angel Cabrera won at five-over. Asked if he felt trepidation or excitement with two days to go until today's start, Rory McIlroy, who won the US Open in 2011 at 16-under par said: "Trepidation, I guess. "Yeah, excitement is a good way to describe Augusta (Masters), but it really depends the venue that you play a US Open at as well. "But, yeah, this week it's definitely not excitement. I mean, it's definitely not that." "You know you're going to be put under a lot of pressure on

basically every single golf shot you hit out there.

"So you have to be prepared for that. You have to be prepared for how mentally demanding it's going to be, how much concentration you're going to need out there." The four-time major winner from Northern Ireland is not alone in feeling his stress levels on the rise. World number one Jason Day, who forms with McIlroy and defending champion Jordan Spieth what is being regarded as golf's new "Big Three," said that he, too, was unsure what the week would hold in store for him. "I've never been more stressed in my life than right now," said the reigning PGA champion, who is also battling a bad cold.

"Sometimes your immune system gets a little heated, and you're more susceptible to getting some illnesses that way," he said. "It doesn't help that my father-in-law was sick during the Memorial, so that kind of passed it along to me. "I'm not trying to make any excuses this week," he added.

"I'm going to be ready for the start today," Day, Spieth and McIlroy, the top three in the world rankings, have all joined the list of major winners, which cannot be said of Rickie

Fowler, another leading member of the new wave of players.

CRAZY AND PENAL

Fowler said Oakmont had "the craziest greens I've ever played and most penal fairway bunkers I've entered," before adding "It's a fair golf course." The Californian believes he has a real chance to finally break his major duck. "I think there's a bit of a gap right now. I've got a little way to go. And, yeah, they've won majors. So I've got some catching up to do. Other potential storylines surround Spieth's mindset in the first major since his Masters final round meltdown in April, Dustin Johnson's quest for a first major title after his disastrous three-putt at the 18th hole of last year's US Open and whether the fast-improving Hideki Matsuyama can become the first player from Japan to win a Grand Slam tournament. But the biggest galleries, in the continued absence of the injured Tiger Woods, will likely be following Phil Mickelson as he bids, for the third straight year, to become just the sixth player to win all four major titles, having finished runner-up a record six times. The American, who turns 46 on Thursday, would also be the oldest player ever to win the US Open. — AFP



CZECHS MUST TAKE INSPIRATION FROM PAST GLORIES

FAN FERVOR



BORDEAUX: Whether it was Antonin Panenka's insouciant penalty or Karel Poborsky's audacious chip, the great Czech sides of the past had a sense of adventure and daring that the current team seems to lack, judging by Monday's 1-0 defeat to Spain. Gerard Pique's 87th-minute header was enough to earn the Spaniards an opening Euro 2016 victory in their Group D clash in Toulouse against a Czech Republic side that had frustrated the champions but offered little going forward.

Coach Pavel Vrba revealed that television stations at home had regularly been showing replays of the nation's greatest footballing moments in anticipation of the Euros, but his Czech team looked a long way short of their predecessors' panache. As Czechoslovakia, they won Euro 1976, when Panenka's chipped penalty down the middle of the goal

secured a 5-3 shootout victory over West Germany and prompted a litany of imitators. Twenty years later at Euro 96, the Czech Republic saw off Italy, Portugal and France before a 2-1 extra-time final defeat by Germany.

Winger Poborsky captured the imagination with some dazzling contributions, notably a delicious lobbed winner over Portugal's Vitor Baia to settle the quarter-final. "I saw it all as a young boy and then as a young man, so I remember them well," Vrba told reporters. "They were great tournaments for the Czechs and the Czechoslovaks. 'Panenka's penalty will never be forgotten,' he added. While supporters have been reminded of the flair and the audacity of these great sides, the present crop demonstrated few of their qualities on Monday. Better teams than the Czechs have been passed off the park by Spain,

although a tame Tomas Necid effort was worryingly their solitary shot on target.

Tomas Rosicky's occasional slaloms forward were the only nod towards the nation's more exotic footballing past. Unexpected qualities, however, did come to the fore as they frustrated the holders. For a side who conceded 14 goals in qualification, the Czechs offered an encouraging blend of aggression and discipline to thwart Spain's attackers.

Imperious goalkeeper Petr Cech also set the tone with some sharp first-half saves and was unlucky to concede. Yet while the defensive resolve they showed will serve them well in upcoming encounters against Turkey and Croatia, they will almost certainly need to produce more attacking verve if they are to come close to matching the achievements of the past. — Reuters

ANGLO-WELSH RIVALRY TO REACH NEW PEAK

PARIS: A rivalry dating back 137 years will reach a new level of intensity in Lens today when England and Wales meet at a major tournament for the first time. The fixture began in January 1879 and for exactly 100 years from 1884 was part of the now disbanded British Championship. As the Welsh won their opening Group B game 2-1 against Slovakia before England conceded a last-minute goal in a 1-1 draw with Russia, they go into this encounter looking down on their neighbors, which has not often been the case.

Wales have won only 14 of more than 100 previous meetings - the last in 1984 - and lost all four European Championship qualifying matches, in 1966-67 and 2011. Annual matches in rugby union, which the Welsh regard as their true national sport, fuel even greater passions based on complex socio-economic and cultural factors going back centuries to when the English invaded Wales and imposed their laws and language.

But those feelings will never have received greater outlet on a football pitch than in today's game. Asked about the Welsh dislike of their neighbors, England midfielder Jack Wilshere was quoted in British media as saying, "We know that Wales don't like us. Do we like them? Not really!" If that seemed harsh on his friend and fellow Arsenal midfielder Aaron Ramsey, he was right in summing up what is likely to be the nature of the match. "We know it is going to be a tough game and there are going to be tackles. We know a lot of the players-most of them play in the Premier League. It is going to be like a derby," he said.

That will apply off the pitch too for a match being played in the second smallest of the tournament venues. England manager Roy Hodgson and captain Wayne Rooney have appealed to supporters to behave and Wales coach Chris Coleman is expected to follow suit at his pre-match news conference. When England played their other neighbors Ireland (in 1988 and 1990) and Scotland (1996) at past European Championship or World Cup tournaments, the football was passionate but mostly lacking in quality. Neither side will mind this time if they emerge with the right result, which in England's case means a first Euro 2016 victory, whereas Wales probably could afford a draw. — Reuters



LENS: England manager Roy Hodgson, front, with players during a pitch walkabout session at the Bollaert stadium in Lens, France, yesterday. England will face Wales in a Euro 2016 Group B soccer match in Lens today. — AP

N IRELAND NEED ATTACKING SPARK

LYON: Northern Ireland need to come out of their shell in today's Euro 2016 Group C clash against Ukraine if their first major tournament appearance for 30 years is not to end in an anti-climax. Both sides are promising a more attacking approach than in their opening games, where the Northern Irish went down 1-0 to Poland and Ukraine were dispatched 2-0 by Germany. The Ukrainians can at least take heart from the fact that they held the world champions to 1-0 until Bastian Schweinsteiger came on as substitute and scored in stoppage time. They also created chances of their own, at one point forcing a spectacular goal-line clearance.

Northern Ireland, by contrast, were a

shadow of the side that qualified unexpectedly as winners of their group. They never looked like scoring against Poland and striker Kyle Lafferty, a lonely figure up front, lamented: "We didn't turn up today." Coach Michael O'Neill has said the squad was devastated by the death of a 24-year-old fan, Darren Rodgers, in a fall from a sea-front railing in Nice early on Monday, and wants to make today's game a "fitting tribute". With Germany waiting as their next opponents, the Ukraine fixture is Northern Ireland's best and perhaps only chance to pick up points. "We have to be more aggressive," defender Jonny Evans told reporters on Tuesday.

Ukraine have strong attacking

options of their own, through pacy wingers Andriy Yarmolenko and Yevhen Konoplyanka. "We are still thinking about the starting line-up."

There is time to choose the right tactics for the game but one thing is clear: we will attack. At the same time, we need to be accurate, especially at the back," assistant coach Andriy Shevchenko told the Football TV channel. Ukraine midfielder Ruslan Rotan underlined the high stakes. "Northern Ireland plays purely a British style, with great physical preparation, strong flanks, high crosses and lots of scrambling," he said. "This will be a decisive game to define our prospects at the tournament." — Reuters

AL-DAWLI ORGANIZES 6TH RAMADAN FOOTBALL TOURNAMENT FOR STAFF



KUWAIT: Driven by its keenness to diversify its activities and events that are tailored for staff during the Holy Month of Ramadan, Kuwait International Bank (KIB) announced the organization of the 6th Ramadan football tournament for its staff aiming to invest in their potentials by dedicating a number of events that help build their personality and strengthen the bonds between them.

Commenting on this tournament, Head of Corporate Communication Unit Nawaf Najia said, "Every year, the bank strives to dedicate a full Ramadan program for Al-Dawli's family, which aims

to fill their leisure time with something useful, as well as provoke the spirit of challenge and enthusiasm between them in a friendly atmosphere away from work environment." He added that such events would boost their intellectual and physical activity enabling them to practice their religious and spiritual rituals in a better way.

Nawaf Najia pointed out that the number of participants in the tournament is growing on yearly basis, where the number of participating staff in this tournament reached a huge number of employees from various departments and distributed on various

teams. Nawaf Najia praised the bank's vital role in strengthening the bonds and cooperation between Al-Dawli's family members on one hand and between the various departments on the other by organizing various events and sports activities on a regular basis, especially in Ramadan. He also acclaimed the staff role and dedication for their significant response and interaction with such activities, which demonstrates the mutual trust between the bank's management and staff and contributes to building a healthy and cooperative atmosphere between its employees, the bank's most valuable asset.

BALE AND BRAWL FEARS STALK ENGLAND IN LENS

FAN FERVOR



CHANTILLY: England face the twin threats of a disqualification warning if their fans misbehave and a super-motivated Gareth Bale ahead of their Euro 2016 showdown with neighbors Wales in Lens today. The bloody clashes between rival fans that marred England's opening 1-1 draw with Russia in Marseille at the weekend left Roy Hodgson's side facing the threat of elimination from European governing body UEFA.

England midfielder Adam Lallana said that such an outcome would be "devastating" and Hodgson and team captain Wayne Rooney have released a video message pleading for calm. But with England and Wales fans having been advised to base themselves in nearby Lille, where Russia play Slovakia on Wednesday, the build-up to the game will be wreathed with tension. Police numbers will be boosted in Lens, an industrial city in northern France, with 2,400 security personnel on the streets. Extra officers are being deployed from Britain to provide support, while a ban on alcohol sales has been announced and all local schools will be closed.

The Football Association and Football Association of Wales have both urged fans without tickets not to attend, but despite Lens's Stade Bollaert-Delelis holding only 35,000 fans, between 40,000 and 50,000 British supporters are expected to descend on the city. England's players witnessed the violence first-

hand on Saturday when Russia's fans charged their English counterparts at the final whistle, but they are doing their best to deflect attention from the issue. "The scenes weren't nice to see at the end of the game, but the people in charge will be dealing with that," said left-back Ryan Bertrand.

Of equal concern to Hodgson will be the danger posed by Real Madrid forward Bale, whose stunning 25-yard free-kick against Slovakia in Bordeaux set Wales on their way to a 2-1 win. With England having dropped points against Russia, a second Group B defeat would seriously compromise their chances of remaining in the competition, as well as propelling Wales into the last 16. Lallana, a former Southampton team-mate of Bale's, says that England must avoid giving away "silly fouls" around the box, but he believes it would be foolish to focus all their attention on the Welsh number 11.

BULLISH BALE

"You don't want to leave your team too vulnerable on the counter-attack with players like Gareth Bale playing, the strengths and the quality that he has. But it's not a one-man show," said the Liverpool midfielder. "They've got plenty of other good players. I've got the pleasure of playing with Joe Allen. I know what a talented player he is."

"Aaron Ramsey, another player who's very talented. So we can't just put all our focus on Gareth and then get sucker-punched by one of their other good players." Bale raised the temperature even before his team's meeting with Slovakia, saying that England "big themselves up before they've done anything" and that Wales play with "more passion and pride". It drew a rebuke from Hodgson, who described the remarks as "disrespectful", but Bale is standing by what he said. "It's good that they bit," Bale told a press conference in Dinard on Tuesday. "I really don't care what they say, to be honest. We know we're a good team and we know we can beat them on our day."

Asked how many England players would get into the Wales team, he grinned: "None." Wales manager Chris Coleman has a fitness concern over goalkeeper Wayne Hennessey, whose absence due to a back spasm against Slovakia saw 22-year-old Liverpool player Danny Ward make his first start. Joe Ledley and Hal Robson-Kanu are both pushing for starting roles after coming off the bench against Slovakia, the latter scuffing in a raucously celebrated 81st-minute winner. Raheem Sterling's place may be under threat for England after a poor display on the left flank against Russia. England's failure to kill the game off, meanwhile, could open the door for Daniel Sturridge or Jamie Vardy. — AFP



FRANCE FLOODS LILLE WITH POLICE AS RUSSIAN, ENGLISH FANS ARRIVE

ALCOHOL BAN KEEPS CITY CALM FOR NOW

LILLE: Thousands of Russia and England fans arrived in Lille yesterday as the French government said it was flooding the city with police ahead of their teams' next Euro 2016 matches. France is desperate to avoid a repeat of the violence that marred the England-Russia match in Marseille on Saturday, and authorities in Lille have banned the sale and public consumption of alcohol and stepped up security in the northern city.

Although the teams will not meet again in the group stage, they play their next matches just a few miles apart. Rival supporters are sure to meet in Lille, where trains from England arrive and fan zones have set up for those without tickets. After minor scuffles near the train station on Tuesday evening, Lille was calm at lunchtime ahead of Russia's match against Slovakia there later in the day and the England-Wales clash in nearby Lens today.

Both Russia and England have been threatened with expulsion from the competition after hundreds of fans clashed for three days in Marseille, drawing volleys of teargas from riot police who struggled to contain the skirmishes. "Today, the measure is very simple: flood the public space with police so that there is no room for any form of hooliganism," Sports Minister Patrick Kanner told RTL radio. Unlike in Marseille, where fans were able to drink for hours on end, they struggled to do so in Lille and Lens due to a blanket liquor ban imposed until Friday, closing bars and cafes and stopping shops and petrol stations selling alcohol.

Party

Russian Sports Minister Vitaly Mutko said he did "not have any certainty that disorder involving Russian fans will not be repeated," and blamed England fans for provoking the trouble. Mutko called UEFA's decision to fine his side and give it an official warning over violence inside the stadium in Marseille "excessive." About 4,000 police officers have



LILLE: A supporter is searched by a steward at the stadium entrance prior to the Euro 2016 Group B soccer match between Russia and Slovakia at the Pierre Mauroy stadium in Villeneuve d'Ascq, near Lille, France, yesterday. — AP

also been drafted in for the Russia-Slovakia match, which is the first that has not been sold out at the tournament. Some 40,000 English fans are expected in Lens for today's match. "It's a party, and our job is to make a good party. But if you have violence, we are ready to fight against this violence," local police chief Olivier Dimpere told Reuters outside Flandres train station, where about a

dozen riot police vans were parked.

"The prefect has forbidden drinking alcohol in the streets, carrying alcohol, bottles and cans. Today and tomorrow it's forbidden." Security has also been tightened inside the stadium after Russian supporters charged their English rivals in Marseille's Stade Velodrome at the end of Saturday's 1-1 draw. Soccer body UEFA

has acknowledged that stewarding was not up to scratch and it said that the number of stewards in the stadium would be increased by about 10 to 20 percent. High-risk matches have on average about 1,000 stewards. UEFA said they would be deployed differently to ensure supporters from both sides are properly segregated. — Reuters



GERMANY FOCUS ON POLAND FOR EMOTIONAL PARIS RETURN

PARIS: Old rivalries and fresh memories face Germany when they return to the Stade de France in Paris to face familiar foes Poland in a crucial Euro 2016 clash just seven months after being caught up in last November's terror attacks in Paris. Die Mannschaft

were forced to spend a traumatic night in the dressing rooms at France's national stadium when a series of jihadist attacks across Paris left 130 dead on a night they faced the French in a friendly.

Loud explosions could be heard during the match as three suicide bombers unsuccessfully attempted to get into the stadium before blowing themselves up outside and killing one man. German defender Jerome Boateng, who was in the world champions' team that night, caused a stir when he announced his wife and five-year-old twins would not be travelling to France to watch him play because he believed "the risk is simply too big." However, Boateng insists Germany will not be spooked by their return to Paris as they look to take a firm grip of Group C.

"It's not a topic for us, we feel safe and are concentrating on sporting matters," said the Bayern Munich defender. "We want to prepare well and that is our goal at the moment, we're not worried about the rest." Of more immediate concern to Joachim Loew's men will be the sight of Boateng's Bayern teammate Robert Lewandowski in a Poland side high in confidence after winning their first ever game at a European Championship finals 1-0 over Northern Ireland on Sunday. Lewandowski scored 42 goals as Bayern romped to a fourth consecutive Bundesliga title this season.

'TOP STRIKER'

The former Borussia Dortmund forward also top scored in Euro 2016 qualifying with 13 goals and played a vital role as Poland beat Germany for the first and only time 2-0 in November 2014 in Warsaw

on their road to France. "Lewandowski is a top striker," Boateng said. "At the club, we play together, but we had often played against each other before and we'll certainly come up against each other this time as well." Boateng, though, was keen to stress that Germany can't obsess over Lewandowski if they are to build on their opening 2-0 win over Ukraine with Ajax's Arkadiusz Milik, who scored the winner against Northern Ireland, also a clear threat.

"It's important that we get a win in the second game, we know Poland well and it won't be easy, but with our playing qualities, I am positive that we can decide the game for ourselves. "Of course, we have to be careful, they have good people in attack, not just Lewandowski." Germany have a stunning record against their neighbors, winning 13 of their 20 previous meetings, and bouncing back from defeat in Warsaw to win their last clash 3-1 in September.

The four-time world champions won the only previous European Championship finals match between the two 2-0 in 2008 when Polish-born Lukas Podolski scored twice. Podolski could face the country of his birth for a sixth time on his 128th cap, but is hoping both sides make it into the last 16. "It's a special game for me, anyone who knows my story knows that. I have a lot of friends, relatives and family who live there," said the Galatasaray forward. "Personally, I hope we win the group and Poland finish second. "Poland have taken a big step forward (in recent years) and are a dangerous opponent. They have developed well and have a lot of young talent, many of whom also play abroad. "They will find it hard against us, but they have the quality to reach the last 16." — AFP

Live Matches on TV (Local Timings)

UEFA EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP

England v Wales	16:00
beIN MAX 2 HD	
beIN MAX 3 HD EN	
beIN MAX 1 HD	
beIN MAX 4 HD FR	
Ukraine v N Ireland	19:00
beIN MAX 2 HD	
beIN MAX 3 HD EN	
beIN MAX 1 HD	
beIN MAX 4 HD FR	
Germany v Poland	22:00
beIN MAX 2 HD	
beIN MAX 3 HD EN	
beIN MAX 1 HD	
beIN MAX 4 HD FR	

COPA AMERICA CENTENARIO Tomorrow

United States v Ecuador	4:30
beIN MAX 3 HD EN	



Sports

US Open stars
'ready' for stern
Oakmont challenge



Argentina stroll
as Chile advance
at Copa America



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ANGLO-WELSH RIVALRY TO REACH NEW PEAK Page 18



VILLENEUVE D'ASCQ: Russia's Sergei Ignashevich, left, and Slovakia's Tomas Hubocan go for a

RUSSIA STUNNED BY BRILLIANT HAMSÍK

LILLE: Marek Hamsik set up the opener and came up with a contender for goal of the tournament as Slovakia beat Russia 2-1 in Lille yesterday to claim a first European Championship finals win.

Hamsik's pass released Vladimir Weiss to score in the 32nd minute at the Stade Pierre Mauroy and the Napoli star doubled the lead in style right on the stroke of half-time. Russia pushed in the second half but were left with too much to do, even if Denis Glushakov got one back in the 80th minute to set up a grandstand finale.

The result allowed Jan Kozak's team to bounce back from the 2-1 defeat to Wales with which they started their Euro 2016 campaign and put pressure on their Group B rivals before England take on the Welsh in Lens today. "We are very proud and happy with our first win at a European Championship," said man of the match

Hamsik. "This has perhaps opened up the gates to the last 16. I did well and am very proud that I managed to score such a goal. It was brilliant."

Russia prop up the group with one point from two matches and will surely now need to beat Wales in their final group game to keep their hopes of reaching the last 16 alive. The build-up to this match in far northern France had been overshadowed by hooliganism fears with Russia having been told they would be thrown out of the competition if there was any repeat of the crowd trouble at the end of their draw with England in Marseille.

There was a much calmer atmosphere inside the stands as the match was played with the stadium roof closed. Kozak made three changes to the Slovakia team beaten by Wales, including handing a start to Ondrej Duda, the young forward who had come off the bench

to net in the opening match. After a slow start Russia grew into the game and their powerful centre-forward Artem Dzyuba, of Zenit St Petersburg, nearly caught out Slovakian 'keeper Matus Kovacic with a header after good play down the right by Igor Smolnikov.

Dzyuba then displayed his strength to set up Fedor Smolov for a low shot that fizzed inches wide of the left post as the half-hour approached, but soon after that Slovakia were in front.

WEISS OPENER

Hamsik undid the Russia defence with a superb left-foot pass in behind right-back Smolnikov. Weiss still had work to do though, as he cut back onto his right foot and finished with aplomb past Igor Akinfeev into the far corner. Leonid Slutsky's side were stunned but there

was worse to come for them, and better from Hamsik, as the interval approached.

The Russian defence was still organising itself when Weiss played a corner short to Hamsik. Oleg Shatov came across in an attempt to block Hamsik but the 28-year-old turned back onto his right foot and curled a tremendous effort in off the far post. It was arguably the goal of Euro 2016 so far and it had the Slovaks at that end of the ground in raptures. Slutsky changed his two central midfielders at half-time, replacing Roman Neustaedter and Aleksandr Golovin with Glushakov and Pavel Mamaev. It was Glushakov of Spartak Moscow who reduced the arrears in the 80th minute, heading home after Shatov had played a one-two with Roman Shirokov and crossed from the left byline. But Slovakia held on. — AFP

SWITZERLAND ON THE BRINK OF LAST 16 AFTER ROMANIA DRAW

PARIS: Switzerland were on the brink of the Euro 2016 last 16 yesterday after they salvaged a 1-1 draw against Romania in a lively Group A clash at the Parc des Princes.

The Swiss, who owe their point to Admir Mehmedi's second-half strike, have four points from two games while Romania have one after Bogdan Stancu opened the scoring in the first half. Hosts France, on three points, will be the first team to reach the knockout phase if they beat Albania, who have yet to get off the mark, in Marseille later yesterday.

Although the Swiss have a good chance to qualify, at least as one of the four best third-placed teams, they may regret missing several chances in a game that could have seen them move into their first European Championship knockout phase. Romania, instead, earned a lifeline ahead of their final game against Albania.

After a 2-1 defeat in the tournament opener versus hosts France, Romania started cautiously, allowing their opponents to pick up momentum. In the seventh minute, Switzerland's Haris Seferovic beat defender Vlad Chichires in the box but his right-foot effort then went just wide.

The forward had another chance nine minutes later, only for goalkeeper Ciprian Tatarusanu to deny him with his left foot. Romania, however, scored with their first chance.

STANCU PENALTY

Switzerland captain Stephan Lichtsteiner grabbed Alexandru Chipciu's shirt in the area and Stancu converted the resulting penalty, put-



PARIS: Romania's Claudiu Keseru, and Switzerland's Fabian Schaer vie for the ball during the Euro 2016 Group A soccer match between Romania and Switzerland at the Parc des Princes stadium in Paris, France, yesterday. — AP

ting Romania ahead in the 18th minute against the run of play. Stancu, who also netted from the spot against France last Friday, became the first Romanian player to score two goals at a European Championship.

Two minutes later, Tatarusanu tipped Fabian Schaer's fierce 20-metre volley over the bar as the game got livelier.

Romania had a huge opportunity to double their tally but Cristian Sapuranu's shot went just wide. Blerim Dzemaili's header was off target as Switzerland missed yet another chance before halftime. Romania defended well but there was nothing Tatarusanu could do in the 57th minute when Mehmedi drilled a half-volley into the far side of the net. — Reuters

DEBUTANTS ICELAND HOLD PORTUGAL TO SHOCK DRAW

PARIS: Minnows Iceland denied Portugal superstar Cristiano Ronaldo on his record-equalling 127th international appearance to claim a 1-1 in their first ever major finals match at Euro 2016 on Tuesday. Hungary top Group F after a day of surprises as they shocked well-fancied Austria 2-0 to register a first win for 30 years at a major international tournament. Ronaldo equaled Luis Figo's record number of caps yet, it was a quiet night for the Real Madrid forward, who failed to become the first man to score in four European Championships as he was frustrated by Iceland's dogged defence and a great display from goalkeeper Hannes Halldorsson.

A superb finish by Ronaldo's former Manchester United teammate Nani gave Portugal a half-time lead in Saint Etienne. However, Iceland—the smallest country ever to feature at a Euro finals with a population of just 330,000 people—weren't to be denied as midfielder Birgir Bjarnason slammed home an equalizer just five minutes into the second-half. "We were playing a really good team and the best player in the world, the last 35 minutes were really long after we'd equalized," said Halldorsson. "I'm touched to have experienced this moment with these incredible fans behind us."

In Bordeaux second-half goals from Adam Szalai and Zoltan Stieber saw Hungary stun 10-man Austria to mark a

glorious return to the big time having not qualified for a major tournament since the 1986 World Cup. Austria, tipped as tournament dark horses, dominated the opening period, but went behind when Szalai ended an 18-month goal drought to open the scoring.

And Stieber triggered delirious celebrations when he raced from just inside the Austria half to beat Robert Almer three minutes from time with a sublime chip. "The players played out of their skins," said Hungary coach Bernd Storck, who had previously described just qualifying for the tournament as a "miracle". "This game today against such a difficult team, we had to play some very good football. We had a bit of luck, but you need a bit of luck in football."

Austria coach Marcel Koller bemoaned a disappointing performance which cranks up the pressure on his side ahead of Saturday's crucial game against Portugal in Paris. "Unfortunately we weren't able to do what we wanted today," he said. "Maybe some players were nervous because it was the beginning. We can't just push a button and say 'Now I'm going to play at my best level'. The situation now is we'll have to try and win against Portugal." Whilst, group favorites Portugal and Austria face off for a first win, pool leaders Hungary next take on Iceland in Marseille on Saturday. — AFP



LONDON TRADERS BRACE AS 'BREXIT' VOTE LOOMS LARGE



CAIRO: An Egyptian vendor arranges his goods at a market in the neighborhood of Sayeda Zeinab in Cairo on Tuesday.—AP

PRICE HIKES BITE HARD DURING RAMADAN IN EGYPT

ANNUAL INFLATION HITS 12.23% AS PRESIDENT CALLS FOR PATIENCE

CAIRO: Shop owner Hassan Mahmoud laid out his heaps of dried fruits and nuts at a multicolored Ramadan tent in the Egyptian capital to catch shoppers' eyes for the holiday, like he does every year. Only this time, he said, "people aren't buying."
"Things get more expensive every year but this time it's even worse because the dollar is higher," Mahmoud said as he stood on a street full of similar stands bedecked with lanterns set up for the holy month that began June 6.

Annual inflation hit 12.23 percent in May - the highest level in seven years - driven partly by dollar appreciation. The economy has yet to recover from the 2011 uprising that toppled longtime autocrat Hosni Mubarak, and the man charged with fixing it - President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi - has shown little tolerance for criticism. The price hikes are particularly painful during Ramadan, when families traditionally break the dawn-to-dusk fast with lavish feasts.

In an attempt to soften the impact on low-income families, the government has

opened new, mobile markets offering basic products at discount prices, and the army has fed and distributed basic goods to the poor in highly publicized events. Al-Sisi and other officials have meanwhile tried to deflect some blame about higher costs toward alleged manipulation by dishonest traders.

"Although giving out bags of basic goods is good and it helps, it cannot be a solution," said economist Omar Al-Shenety of Cairo-based investment bank Multiples Group, adding that inflation has more "chronic" causes. Egypt's imports are more than double its exports and include essential basic goods like wheat, which must be bought in dollars.

In March, Egypt's central bank devalued the pound by over 14 percent, setting the dollar at 8.85 pounds compared to 7.73 previously. On the black market, traders are paying up to 11 pounds per dollar. In an attempt to shift demand inward, the government has raised import duties on several products, especially those it labels as lux-

ury goods - including nuts and fruits frequently sold in Ramadan markets. It has also restricted some imports, which el-Shenety says exacerbates the problem. "The resulting lack of goods raises prices even more," he said.

Electricity and water bills are also rising, fuel is more expensive, and pharmacies are running out of some medications, fueling anger on social media. The government has severely cracked down on protests over the past two years, making it virtually impossible to air grievances in public.

Al-Sisi has called on Egyptians to "be patient" and urged them to donate to a fund created in 2014 called "Long Live Egypt." He has also defended his decision to slash energy subsidies that year - a step long urged by international lenders but which his predecessors had not dared to enact for fear of a backlash. The move was welcomed by economists, who said the funds would be better spent elsewhere, but the higher costs have contributed to inflation.

May's inflation was also influenced by a Health Ministry decision last month to increase prices of some locally manufactured drugs by 20 percent, said economist Mohamed Abu-Basha of EFG-Hermes. The ministry said local manufacturers had been suffering from high raw material costs since the vast majority is imported and priced in dollars, forcing some to shut down and leaving Egyptians with only imported alternatives that cost four to five times as much. Pharmacists say the drug shortages over the past two years have worsened with the pound devaluation. Egypt's central bank is expected to raise interest rates at a meeting on Thursday to stem the price rises, think tank IHS said in a statement, adding that it expects inflation could hit 15 percent during the second half of the year, when the parliament is expected to pass a value-added tax.

"Egypt's lower classes are already facing a real problem, but the purchase powers of the country's middle class are also being eroded," Al-Shenety said. — AP

SAUDI DROPS AFTER MSCI SETBACK; EGYPT SINKS

MIDEAST STOCK MARKETS

DUBAI: Saudi Arabia's stock market led falls in the Gulf yesterday after MSCI decided not to consider the country for emerging market status, while Egypt fell sharply as blue chip Orascom Telecom Media continued sliding. In its annual classification review, MSCI praised market reforms announced by Saudi authorities but did not set a date for a review that could place the country in its emerging market index. It said that once implemented by mid-2017, the reforms would "bring the Saudi equity market closer" to inclusion.

This appeared to suggest that the Saudi market was unlikely to be included before mid-2018 at the earliest. In a research note, investment bank EFG-Hermes noted that if MSCI followed its standard time frame - which it does not always do - May 2019 would be the earliest possible inclusion date. Investors had not been betting heavily that Saudi Arabia would be placed on the review list, fund managers said, but MSCI's decision was nevertheless disappointing and the index dropped 0.9 percent.

MSCI is an international compiler of equity indexes and inclusion in its emerging market index would draw billions of dollars of passive funds - those that track benchmarks - to Saudi Arabia.

Dar Al Arkan, which soared last week on hopes it would benefit from a house building program in Saudi Arabia's economic reform program, fell back 5.7 percent and was the most heavily traded stock. Retailer Fawaz Abdulaziz Alhokair Co, which had been rising sharply on its plan to sell its investment in Spanish clothing retailer Blanco for 350 million riyals (\$93 million), fell back 7.3 percent. But Saudi Electricity, which has surged this week on news of a novel financing method for two planned solar power plants, gained a further 1.0 percent. MSCI also decided on Tuesday to delay including Chinese A-shares in its emerging markets index. This was modestly positive for the United Arab Emirates and Qatar, since Chinese inclusion would have diluted their weightings in the index. With MSCI's decision to remove Pakistan, and possibly Nigeria and Argentina, from frontier market status, "Kuwait and the Middle East and North Africa could dominate the benchmark (60 percent), potentially prompting more MENA allocations by frontier market managers", EFG-Hermes said.

However, yesterday investors in the Gulf focused mainly on weak oil prices and global markets, and most regional bourses dropped. Dubai's index slipped 0.2 percent as Emaar Properties lost 0.6 percent. However, smaller real estate developer Deyaar climbed 3.0 percent as it posted the market's largest volume. Abu Dhabi's index fell 1.0 percent as blue-chip banks sagged, with First Gulf Bank down 2.9 percent. Qatar's index edged up 0.1 percent as Meseaied Petrochemical, the most heavily traded stock, jumped 8.5 percent.

Egypt sank 2.1 percent as billionaire Naguib Sawiris's Orascom Telecom, the most active stock, dropped 3.2 percent, bringing its losses this week to 15 percent. The slide was triggered by the decision of Orascom subsidiary Beltona to drop its effort to buy the investment banking arm of Commercial International Bank, after the deal failed to win regulatory approval.—Reuters

BREXIT FLOTILLA SAILS THROUGH LONDON AFTER BUDGET WARNING

LONDON: A flotilla of pro-Brexit fishing boats sailed up the River Thames yesterday ahead of next week's knife-edge referendum over EU membership, as the government warned of tax hikes and spending cuts if Britain voted to leave.

UK Independence Party leader Nigel Farage joined the procession of around 30 trawlers that steamed past parliament to protest against EU fishing quotas while Prime Minister David Cameron was facing MPs in his final debate before the June 23 vote. "The battle line of this referendum is ordinary folk and their communities up against the big establishment," Farage told AFP on board one of the boats which was decorated with Union Jack deckchairs and balloons. Events took a bizarre turn when rocker and Live Aid mastermind Bob Geldof, a "Remain" supporter, pulled up in a rival boat, shouting "Nigel you're a fraud" through a loudspeaker, only to be hosed with water from a "Leave" boat.

"The Only Way is Brexit" and "Leave, Save Our Country" read some of the signs on the pro-Brexit boats, while a flag on Westminster Bridge read: "Don't Let Farage Sink Britain, Vote Remain".

In response, the basic rate of income tax would be raised, inheritance tax would be hiked, and the budget for services including the National Health Service (NHS) would be cut, he said.

"Quitting the EU would hit investment, hurt families and harm the British economy," he said. "I would have a responsibility to try to restore stability to the public finances and that would mean an emergency budget where we would have to increase taxes and cut spending."

Osborne was joined by former finance minister Alistair Darling from the opposition Labour Party, who was in charge of Britain's economy during the 2008 financial crisis. "I am even more worried now than I was in 2008," Darling said.

'Teenage temper tantrum'

Osborne's warning came as opinion polls indicate a surge of support for the Brexit camp, putting pressure on global markets. But deputies from Osborne's own Conservative party slammed the "blackmail budget" and vowed to vote against it. Fifty-seven Tory MPs said Osborne's warning was the result of a "reckless teenage temper tantrum" and that his job was under threat if he pushed ahead with the plans. "If the chancellor is serious then we cannot possibly allow this to go ahead," said the statement. "If he were to proceed with these proposals, the chancellor's position would become untenable."

Labour party leader Jeremy Corbyn also vowed to oppose such a budget during Cameron's weekly grilling yesterday, the

last day of parliament before the vote.

The pro-Brexit camp also unveiled its blueprint for a post-EU Britain, in which it vowed to channel EU contributions to the NHS, end the free movement of people from the EU and try to secure a trade deal with Europe by 2020.

Rolls Royce warning

Investors have responded to the pro-Brexit momentum by selling stocks and putting their money in safe havens, with Europe's main markets down sharply on Tuesday-although rebounding slightly at the opening yesterday-and the euro hitting a three-and-a-half year low.

Reflecting business uncertainty, engineering giant Rolls Royce on Wednesday

urged staff to vote to stay in the union, warning in a letter that "as a company with three quarters of our workforce based in the EU, we have a clear interest in this debate". However, official figures released yesterday showed that unemployment had fallen to an eight-year low, soothing some fears that investment decisions were being put off due to the referendum uncertainty.

As the campaign enters its final stretch, a poll by ComRes showed the race on a knife edge, with support for remaining at 46 percent and the pro-Brexit side at 45 percent.

This contrasts with a result from the same pollster just one month earlier in which the pro-remain side had an 11-point lead.—AFP



LONDON: A boat decorated with flags and banners from the 'Fishing for Leave' group that are campaigning for a 'leave' vote in the EU referendum sails by the British Houses of Parliament as part of a "Brexit flotilla" on the river Thames in London yesterday.—AFP

WORLD STOCKS REBOUND ON EASING BREXIT FEARS

LONDON: World stock markets rebounded yesterday, after heavy losses in recent sessions caused largely by the prospect of Britain voting to leave the European Union.

having concluded the market is oversold," said Rebecca O'Keeffe, head of investment at stockbroker Interactive Investor.

percent. However sentiment remains fragile," she added in a note to clients.



NEW YORK: The New York Stock Exchange. US stocks were rising early yesterday after a four-day losing streak. —AFP



PARIS: People walk past the entrance of the Necker hospital as stone lie on the sidewalk during a demonstration against proposed labour reforms in Paris yesterday. —AFP

LONDON TRADERS BRACE AS 'BREXIT' VOTE LOOMS LARGE

WORLD'S BIGGEST BANKS TO DRAFT IN SENIOR TRADERS TO WORK

LONDON: The world's biggest banks including Citi and Goldman Sachs will draft in senior traders to work through the night following Britain's referendum on EU membership, set to be among the most volatile 24 hours for markets in a quarter of a century.

Lehman and QE (Quantitative Easing) but this is by far and away the biggest risk event that has presented itself to the UK," said Chris Huddleston, head of money markets at specialist bank Investec.

in the event of a remain vote, or \$130 or lower if Britain votes to leave.

ments first used in response to the global financial crisis in 2008. Carney has said the Bank would not stand in the way of any exchange rate adjustment but would take the necessary steps to ensure markets remained orderly.

"MONEY TO BE MADE"

A senior source at one London bank said his firm had been building big reserves of sterling to lend out to any clients who get caught short by swirling asset valuations that require them to post extra security deposits with their trading partners.

BRITAIN'S JOBLESS QUEUE SHRINKS TO 11-YEAR LOW

LONDON: Britain's unemployment rate dipped to 5.0 percent in the three months to April, the lowest level since 2005, official data showed yesterday.

Union. "Some unexpected good news amidst Brexit-related uncertainty-the UK labour market remains in good health despite a wider economic slowdown ahead of the referendum," said Ben Brettell, senior economist at stockbroker Hargreaves Lansdown.

BAPCO SEEKS BIDS FOR REFINERY EXPANSION

KHOBAR: State-run Bahrain Petroleum Company (Bapco) has launched bidding to expand its Sitra oil refinery, industry sources said. It aims to boost processing capacity of the country's only oil refinery to 360,000 barrels per day (bpd) from its current 267,000 bpd under its BAPCO Modernization Program (BMP).

Samsung Engineering, Hyundai E&C and Daewoo E&C said they had received a request to bid and were currently preparing to do so.

US PRODUCER PRICES RISE ON GASOLINE

WASHINGTON: US producer prices rose for a second straight month in May as the cost of energy products and services increased, but the lingering effects of a strong dollar and lower energy prices will likely keep inflation tame for a while.

data, while the dollar rose against the yen and euro. US stock index futures were trading higher. Tame inflation and a sharp slowdown in US job gains in May will likely encourage the Fed to leave interest rates unchanged at the end of a two-day policy meeting later on Wednesday.



LONDON: Britain's Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne (L) and former Chancellor Alistair Darling attend a pro-Remain event at the Hitachi Rail Europe plant in Ashford yesterday. —AFP

Some banks are planning the night down to the smallest detail to keep their traders on top form - laying on all night catering and booking nearby hotels to offer temporary respite.

Officials and bank managers planning for the event draw comparisons with the 40 percent surge in the Swiss franc in January 2015, which bankrupted dozens of small investment funds and cost banks including Citi hundreds of millions of dollars.

Foreign exchange brokers such as PhillipCapital UK and Saxo Bank have raised the security deposit they demand from clients in order to trade, a step designed to offset the increased risk that customers get caught out by sharp moves.

BREXIT NIGHT?

Sterling - the world's fourth most traded currency - has moved sharply in recent weeks, often on the back of opinion polls. Depending on the results from across the United Kingdom, the night of June 23 and early morning of June 24 could rank as one of the most volatile nights in the history of the London market.

STERLING

Polls have given contradictory pictures of British public opinion, keeping markets guessing on the final outcome.

BREXIT WOULD KNOCK HALF A PERCENTAGE POINT OFF GERMAN GROWTH

BERLIN: A British exit from the European Union would likely lead to higher export tariffs, reducing German trade and knocking half a percentage point off growth in Europe's biggest economy next year, economic institute DIW said yesterday.

surprisingly strong increase in industrial production at the beginning of the year.

time, Germany imported British goods worth some 38 billion euros, leaving a trade surplus of around 51 billion euros.



Nissan signs landmark electric vehicle deal with city of Amman for eco-friendly taxis

LEAF, e-NV200 EVs ushering in a new era of sustainable motoring

DUBAI: Nissan has signed a historic Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Greater Amman Municipality in Jordan as part of a landmark initiative to provide the Kingdom with its first 100 Nissan LEAF and Nissan e-NV200 electric vehicles (EVs). The vehicles, to be supplied by Bustami & Saheb (BSTC), Nissan's exclusive distributor in the Kingdom, will be operated by Amman's Al Mumayaz Taxi Company in Jordan and will be the first electric vehicles of their kind to be used in the Middle East.

"The Nissan LEAF and e-NV200 are Nissan's leading electric vehicles in markets around the world and offer fully-electric operation with zero tailpipe emissions," said Samir Cherfan, Nissan Middle East's Managing Director. "This historic agreement between Nissan, Bustami & Saheb and the Greater Amman Municipality demonstrates the Kingdom's forward-looking vision for a sustainable future that starts with eco-friendly public transport. Awareness of the benefits of

sustainable motoring for both private and commercial use will certainly increase from this agreement, which serves as proof-of-concept for future EV applications in the region will draw attention to the positive influence of EVs on public health, the economy and most importantly, the environment."

With more than 240,000 Nissan EVs sold worldwide, the LEAF and e-NV200 EVs are proven all-electric vehicles that are environmentally-friendly and emit zero CO2 or exhaust gases during operation. They produce very little noise during driving, making them ideal for the busy streets of Amman, in addition to being roomy, fun-to-drive, and with low running costs.

The Amman Municipality has begun deploying vehicle charging stations in major parts of the city to start building an EV charging network. The Municipality will continue to expand the number of available stations to cover a wider area.

"The partnership between Nissan,

BSTC and the Jordanian Government is the first of its kind in the Kingdom," said Wessam Issa, CEO of Bustami & Saheb (BSTC). "We believe other countries in the Middle East will see the positive impact that the use of electric vehicles will bring. We are very proud to have been able to assist the leaders of this great country in establishing this ground-breaking program. From the day this deal is signed, Nissan EV taxis will be a regular sight around the capital."

Nissan has spent more than 20 years investing in and developing the LEAF's lithium-ion batteries, which are compact, powerful, safe and durable. The car's battery modules are located underneath the floor, which means more room in the boot and the cabin. A driving range of up to 160 km on a single charge is offered on the LEAFs to be used as taxis in Amman. The Nissan LEAF can be recharged simply and quickly at home with an EV battery charger, or by using public battery recharging facilities.



SAVE \$10,000 IN RAMADAN AND START FIRST INSTALLMENT IN 2017 WITH AL-MULLA & BEHBEHANI MOTOR CO

KUWAIT: This Ramadan, Al-Mulla & Behbehani Motor Company (MBMC), the sole distributor of Alfa Romeo, Chrysler, Dodge, Fiat, Fiat Professional, Jeep(r), Ram and Mopar in Kuwait, has a package of incredibly generous offers on selected Chrysler, Dodge and Jeep models.

"We're always looking for ways to make Ramadan extra special for our customers," said Maher Abu-Shaaban, Assistant General Manager of MBMC. "This year, we're confident that our offers are better than ever, with massive savings of up to \$10,000 plus special finance deals on the Middle East's favourite vehicles, all of which come with full 5 year manufacturer warranties."

Customers looking for luxurious performance and refined performance need look no further than the 5.7-litre, V8 HEMI powered Chrysler 300 Limited. Packed with class-exclusive technologies, premium appointments and levels of quality only normally found in sedans costing considerably more, it has always represented excellent value for money - this Ramadan, MBMC is offering the 300 Limited for just KD 8,999 (a huge saving of KD 3,000).

"The latest Chrysler 300 offers unmistakable styling and world-class engineering, quality and technology that is designed to exceed expectations and rival luxury import competitors in premium segments priced considerably higher," said Shaaban.

The Chrysler 200 Sedan has captivated drivers and passengers with its simple elegance, extraordinary driving experience and cool features since it was launched. This beautifully crafted car is packed with state-of-the-art, easy-to-use technology, comes with 60 advanced safety and security features as standard and achieves fuel economy ratings of up to 36 miles per gallon (6.53 L/100km).

"It's the mid-size sedan for customers who have earned a little luxury in their life, but demand value for their money," said Shaaban. "And with Ramadan prices from just KD 5,999, it really does represent amazing value."

MBMC's Ramadan offer on the most awarded SUV of all-time - the Jeep Grand Cherokee - means

customers can save KD 3,000 on the normal showroom price.

"The 2016 Jeep Grand Cherokee delivers consumers an unprecedented combination of best-in-class fuel economy and driving range, a choice of leading powertrain options, available clean-diesel technology, legendary benchmark capability, world-class craftsmanship, premium on-road driving dynamics, and a host of advanced user-friendly technology and safety features," said Shaaban. "And with our special Ramadan price of just KD 9,999 it's even more attractive."

The Grand Cherokee's legendary Jeep capability comes courtesy of four available 4x4 systems, Jeep's Quadra-Lift air suspension system and class-leading Selec-Terrain traction management system. Grand Cherokee boasts best-in-class towing of 7,400 pounds (3,356 kgs), and a crawl ratio of 44.1:1. It also includes more than 70 safety and security features as well as an array of advanced user-friendly technology features, such as the award-winning Uconnect 8.4-inch (213.36 mm) touchscreen radio with integrated climate and infotainment controls, and a 7-inch (177.8 mm) TFT customer configurable Multiview display cluster.

Sticking with the Jeep brand, the all-new Jeep Renegade is on offer from just from KD 5,999, the Cherokee is reduced from KD 8,500 to KD 6,999 and the iconic Jeep Wrangler is available from KD 9,999, with the added bonus of free service for 2 years / 40,000 kms on all Wrangler models.

Finally, the Dodge Charger, an all-time favorite with Kuwaiti drivers, is available during Ramadan from a starting price of only KD 8,699 - a saving of KD 1,300.

"Dodge designers have re-sculpted nearly every single body panel of the latest Dodge Charger, giving it a sleek, nimble appearance," said Shaaban. "The Charger's exterior design, combined with its standard TorqueFlite eight-speed transmissions and our extensive lineup of performance-driven powertrains, highlight the latest technology under the hood and behind the wheel that builds on the brand's promise



to deliver American performance machines with world-class power, efficiency, technology, authentic materials and standout styling for our customers."

Customers arranging finance through Al-Mulla International Finance Co, will get an added Ramadan bonus in the form of either an extra discount of KD 299 or payments deferred until 2017.

"MBMC has a long history in serving the Kuwaiti market, where it actively works to obtain the complete customer satisfaction by raising the level of service as well as give them the utmost importance, and that by holding training courses for the team and create awareness of how good they have to deal with customers," Abu Shaaban added.

KFH FULLY ADHERES TO CBK'S SECURITY STANDARDS ON CHEQUES

KUWAIT: In line with the security standards and in compliance with the Central Bank of Kuwait CBK's regulations and guidelines, Kuwait Finance House (KFH) advises customers that it will not receive any nonstandard Cheques that are incompatible with the standards defined by the CBK as they will not be accepted for clearing in the near future.

KFH is keen to inform its customers about the latest banking operations developments and the banking sector official instructions in efforts to domain their interests and keep them aware of the banking transactions latest updates.

KFH cordially invites customers to visit any of its branches in order to receive the new Cheques, affirming that it will fully adhere with the new Cheques instructions conformity to Kuwait's system for clearing Electronic Checks standard and reducing the period of Cheques collection from 3 days to the same day according to the case.

It is worth noting that the CBK's security standards on cheques include several conditions, among of which is the necessity of keeping magnetic ink line, and avoiding writing or signing on the bottom of the check. Moreover, the cheques should be kept in good condition and not to be folded nor torn. Customers should avoid keeping checks in places exposed to the sun or hot places, which may cause damage to the cheques and consequently will become unacceptable by the concerned authorities. Further, the customers need to make sure that the financial value required is available before issuing cheques, as bounced cheques could

lead to prosecution. KFH is fully committed to comply with the instructions of the regulatory authorities, update standards and amend procedures for the best interest of customer, the bank and all parties whilst insuring full security of all banking transactions.

KFH was established in Kuwait in 1977 and is enlisted in the Kuwait Stock Exchange. KFH Group is a global pioneer in the field of Islamic banking services, where it offers a wide array of Islamic products and services, not to mention a high standard of innovation and client service.

KFH manages its operations in the GCC, Asia, and Europe through over 446 branches, including KFH-Turkey, in order to offer services for the bank's clients in Turkey, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Germany, Jordan, and Dubai.

KFH's mission is to achieve highest levels of excellence and innovation in the field of client service, while developing common interest for all those concerned with the financial institution. KFH's vision is to spearhead the global development in Islamic financial services, and to upgrade the bank into the level of becoming the most sustainable profitable Islamic bank in the world.

KFH's values include cementing leadership through all its businesses, including leadership in the Islamic banking services worldwide, through innovation and in client service and the development of its employees. In addition, KFH is committed to all its procedures, and to setting up long-life partnerships with the concerned authorities.

GULF BANK LAUNCHES RAMADAN VIDEO



FOR THOSE WHO SEEK GOD'S ACCEPTANCE BEFORE OTHERS

KUWAIT: On the occasion of the holy month of Ramadan, Gulf Bank created and has aired a special video which encourages doing good regardless of what others may say. This video is currently airing on television and on Gulf Bank's social media channels. Gulf Bank's Ramadan video highlights an issue prevalent in our communities, which is judging and criticizing others and their actions too quickly and without knowing the full background.

The video shares the five different stories, where the actions of the characters are being perceived as negative, but are really good deeds. The video calls for people to give beyond their limits and be part of giving, and being part of all that is good. It also reminds you of the importance of forgiveness during this Holy Month. This video is one of a series of activities and events to be undertaken by the Bank during this month. To learn more about of Gulf Bank's Ramadan activities, products and services, visit one of Gulf Bank's 56 branches, call the Customer Contact Center on 1805805, or log on to www.e-gulfbank.com, Gulf Bank's bilingual website.



CYBERCRIME MARKET SELLS SERVERS FOR ONLY \$6 TO LAUNCH ATTACKS

FRANKFURT: A major underground marketplace acting like an eBay for criminals is selling access to more than 70,000 compromised servers allowing buyers to carry out widespread cyberattacks around the world, security experts said yesterday.

Researchers at Kaspersky Lab, a global computer security firm based in Moscow, said the online forum appears to be run by a Russian speaking group. It offers access to hacked computers owned by governments, companies and universities in 173 countries, unbeknownst to the servers' legitimate owners.

Access goes for as little as \$6 for a compromised server. Each comes pre-equipped with a variety of software to mount denial-of-service attacks on other networks, launch spam campaigns, illicitly manufacture bitcoin currency or compromise online or retail payment systems, the researchers said. Starting at \$7, buyers can gain access to government servers in several countries, including interior and foreign ministries, commerce departments and several town halls, said Costin Raiu, director of Kaspersky's research and analysis team.

He said the market might also be

used to exploit hundreds of millions of old, stolen email credentials reported in recent months to be circulating in the criminal underground. "Stolen credentials are just one aspect of the cybercrime business," Raiu told Reuters in an interview. "In reality, there is a lot more going on in the underground. These things are all interconnected."

The marketplace goes by the name xDedic. Dedic is short for dedicated, a term used in Russian online forums for a computer under remote control of a hacker and available for use by other parties. XDedic connects sellers of com-

promised servers with criminal buyers. The market's owners take a 5 percent up-front fee on all money put into trading accounts, Raiu said.

Kaspersky found the machines run remote desktop software widely used by network administrators to provide technical support for Microsoft Windows users. Access to servers with high capacity network connections may cost up to \$15. Low prices, searchable feature lists that advertise attack capabilities, together with services to protect illicit users from becoming detected attract buyers from entry-level cybercriminals

to state-sponsored espionage groups.

An unnamed Internet service provider in Europe alerted Kaspersky to the existence of xDedic, Raiu said. High-profile targets include a US aerospace firm, banks in the United States, Philippines, Kazakhstan, Jordan, Ghana, Cyprus, South Korea and Saudi Arabia, chemical firms in Singapore and Thailand and oil companies in China and the United Arab Emirates, Kaspersky found. Raiu declined to name the organizations. He said Kaspersky has notified national computer emergency response teams in several countries. — AP

VR THE NEW HIGH-TECH WAY TO WATCH SPORTS

NEW YORK: Sports fans who own the right devices can follow the action at a major event this week in a new, high-tech way. If that sounds vaguely familiar, networks were embarking on similar experiments in 3-D half a decade ago.

Now virtual reality is the latest craze, and Fox Sports is offering VR streams from the US Open at Oakmont. Some of the technology - and some of the people working behind the scenes - in VR come from those short-lived 3-D productions, which never caught on widely among television viewers at home. For the companies betting that VR will be different, part of the pitch for now is that it's not intended to supplant that high-definition broadcast on a giant flat screen TV audiences seem quite happy with.

"It's not meant to be and we're not producing it as a replacement," said David Nathanson, Fox Sports' head of business operations. "Complementary" is the buzzword for the time being. The idea is that fans will still mainly watch the event on their television sets, but they'll use VR for enhancements: game recaps, highlights of a particular play, features, brief forays into watching a certain portion of the action live. As part of Fox's five-year deal with NextVR, cameras at Oakmont will be positioned at the ninth, 17th and 18th holes, with roving capability at the neighboring No. 10 and No. 12. There will also be pre-packaged video on demand, including footage of players on the practice range each morning, a narrated history of Oakmont, two-minute "golf tips" and features on each hole. The coverage is available through the NextVR app for Samsung Gear VR owners.

Similar challenges

Virtual reality still faces some of the same challenges that hindered 3-D. Viewers need to buy special equipment to view the broadcast, and even once they do, they might decide they find the devices too inconvenient and cumbersome to wear regularly. The future of VR in general will likely depend on how much - and how quickly - both the price and the unwieldiness of the hardware decrease. "Today the equipment is kind of like the original cell-

phone in a bulky briefcase," Nathanson said.

The other necessary technological advance is the quality of the picture. For now, there's a major tradeoff in the crispness of the image from HD to gain the sensation of watching from the front row.

Brad Allen, executive chairman of NextVR, said the motivation for cellphone manufacturers to invest in virtual reality will speed the process along, as they look to add functions that will lure customers to keep buying new devices. "It's moving much faster than everybody, including ourselves, even anticipated, which is fantastic," Allen said. The potential audience is still small for virtual reality, but for now Fox's motivations have little to do with the current number of viewers. Oculus has said that about 1 million people used the Gear VR in April for an average of 25 minutes per day.

VR investment

Fox views its present VR investment as a head start of sorts if the technology does catch on. These broadcasts offer the opportunity to start to figure out how VR might work best. Where are cameras best placed? Do viewers want a producer to cut between shots as would happen on a traditional telecast? What's the role of graphics and commentary?

"We make no bones about the fact this is a learning experience for us," said Michael Davies, Fox Sports' senior vice president of field and technical operations. "We don't say this is one of those things that's done and dusted and polished."

The other value of a head start is that Fox will own a library of archived footage that will look even better once the technology improves. One potential future advance Davies believes would eventually attract many users is the ability not to just virtually attend the game, but to virtually sit next to someone far away. Childhood friends who live in different cities could replicate the experience of watching their hometown team together.

Still, there's enough buzz around VR at the moment that Lexus is sponsoring Fox's US Open offerings. "People are so interested in VR right now," Davies said. "We've been promised VR for a long time along with flying cars and jet packs." — AP



MOUNTAIN VIEW: In this Nov 6, 2014, file photo, LinkedIn CEO Jeff Weiner speaks during the company's second annual "Bring In Your Parents Day," at LinkedIn headquarters. — AP

LINKEDIN MEGA-DEAL PLACES NEW FOCUS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

INDUSTRY PONDERERS THE OUTLOOK FOR SOCIAL NETWORKS

WASHINGTON: After the mega-deal for LinkedIn, Twitter's future has come into focus as the industry ponders the outlook for social networks. Microsoft's \$26 billion acquisition of LinkedIn announced Monday, the biggest-ever deal for a social media company, sent Twitter shares surging nearly 10 percent over the past two days.

Even though Twitter has a vastly different model from the professional social network, the shakeup in the sector has drawn attention to Twitter's large user base and data capabilities. With LinkedIn off the table, Twitter becomes the largest independent, non-Chinese social network which could be an acquisition target.

"At the margin, this makes all the remaining players more valuable due to the scarcity of those that have achieved scale," said Lou Kerner, founder of the Social Internet Fund, which invests in the sector. But Kerner said that while LinkedIn is an "ascendant" company, Twitter is still struggling to grow beyond its current base of just over 300 million active users worldwide. Kerner said potential Twitter acquirers "are looking for products that can help drive their growth and don't need to be fixed."

He added that "Twitter has scale, but what it doesn't have is growth, so its a far less attractive asset than LinkedIn. Still, talk has been swirling

for months about a takeover of Twitter. Last week, venture capitalist and blogger Paul Kedrosky said in a tweet, "I'm not optimistic that Twitter makes it out of 2016 as a standalone company, which is sad." Despite the bump in Twitter shares, it has lost some 75 percent of its value from highs in 2013 after its public share offering.

Bubble bursting?

Other analysts said Twitter's value as an acquisition target had not changed. Patrick Moorhead of Moor Insights & Strategy said the rise in Twitter was based on "investor sympathy" following the LinkedIn deal, but added: "I'm not buying into the notion of some sort of impending acquisition or if this even makes more strategic sense for an Apple or Google to make a social acquisition."

Michael Pachter at Wedbush Securities said he sees no real connection. "LinkedIn is really a job searching tool, nothing like Twitter at all," he told AFP. "I don't think it signals a rush to buy social media at all." Trip Chowdhry, analyst at Global Equities Research, said the Microsoft deal could signal the top of a bubble in social media companies. "What the acquisition of LinkedIn means is that we are at the tail end of social media hype," Chowdhry said. "The growth rates

are going to dramatically slow."

Chowdhry said Microsoft is seeking a distraction from its declining software business and LinkedIn's growth has been faltering as well. Although it has an estimated 433 million users, LinkedIn reported a loss of \$46 million in the past quarter and a \$166 million loss for 2015. Microsoft agreed to pay a 50 percent premium for the company.

"When you have a marriage between two struggling companies, it's a wakeup call for the industry," he said. "If anybody believes that the best is yet to come for social media stocks they will be disillusioned." Chowdhry said he believes other social networks which are not publicly traded but have high valuations such as Snapchat and Pinterest "are going to get a dose of reality." "The bubble in social media is going to burst," he said. Most social media firms have been able to grow their user base but have failed to come up with a solid business model, said Chowdhry. "Twitter is a very strong platform for celebrities and politicians, and there's a value to Twitter," he said. "But Twitter does not have mass appeal." Chowdhry said he does not rule out a bid for Twitter because "there are still many foolish companies who want to divert investor attention away from their own fundamental problems." — AFP



LOS ANGELES: Hideo Kojima playing Star Trek: Bridge Crew at Ubisoft E3 2016 - Day 1 at the Los Angeles Convention Center on Tuesday, June 14, 2016. — AP

MICROSOFT ADDS NEW WAYS FOR GAMERS TO TEAM UP

LOS ANGELES: Microsoft is making it easier for gamers who share the same passions or even gender to meet and play with each other online, a step toward curbing online harassment. The company is adding a feature called "looking for group" that will allow Xbox Live gamers to use search terms to find players interested in teaming up on certain games.

For example, if a female "Halo 5" fan only wants to blast away aliens with other women, or a dad gamer doesn't want any trash-talking during his "Killer Instinct" matches, they can use the new feature to search for compatible players online. The "looking for group" feature will include pre-set search terms created by Microsoft, as well as the option for users to make their own. It'll be available this fall, along with the ability for Xbox Live players to form "clubs" that can be private or open to all.

"I think it'll make safe spaces for people

who are currently hesitant to go online," said Shannon Loftis, head of publishing at Microsoft Game Studios. "If you can make an environment more predictable by knowing who you'll be playing with and on what games, that's a way more inviting experience."

Loftis said the features will be moderated by both the public and by an internal enforcement team at Microsoft. For years, online gaming communities have been criticized for harassment and exclusionary tendencies. While publishers such as Microsoft have rules in place to ban bad behavior on their online services, harassment continues to be prevalent in online games. Loftis said the "looking for group" feature will make it more convenient for Xbox Live users to connect instead of utilizing online forums and social networks outside Xbox Live, which boasts 46 million members. — AP

WHAT IS NET NEUTRALITY AND WHY DOES IT MATTER?

NEW YORK: An appeals court on Tuesday upheld "net neutrality" rules that treat the Internet like a public utility and prohibit blocking, slowing and creating paid fast lanes for online traffic. They have been in effect for a year. Here's a look at what the developments mean for consumers and companies:

WHAT IS NET NEUTRALITY?

Net neutrality is the principle that Internet providers treat all web traffic equally, and it's pretty much how the internet worked. But regulators, consumer advocates and internet companies were concerned about internet providers' power. For example, a broadband provider could favor its own video-streaming service at the expense of other companies.

WHAT DID THE GOVERNMENT DO ABOUT IT?

The Federal Communications Commission in 2015 proposed rules to make sure cable and phone companies don't manipulate traffic. They can't create special fast lanes for some data, like video from YouTube, or intentionally block or slow Web traffic. Many internet providers said they didn't plan to do those things, but the FCC worried that they could. The agency will also be able to investigate complaints about "unreasonable" business practices by Internet providers that aren't explicitly banned. Broadband companies have said this invites uncertainty - they don't know what's allowed. The FCC's previous attempt at net neutrality rules had been struck down by the federal appeals court.

WHAT'S CHANGING FOR CONSUMERS?

The ruling cements the FCC's authority to regulate the internet more strictly. The agency has already proposed making it harder for broadband providers to use consumer data for advertising purposes. Experts expect that it will next address "zero rating" - when broadband providers exempt some traffic from consumer data caps, an indirect

way of favoring some services over others.

WHY IS THE INDUSTRY OPPOSED?

Companies say they don't want the stricter regulation that comes with the net neutrality rules. They say the regulations will undermine

investment in broadband, and that it's not clear what is and isn't allowed under the greater authority the FCC has to investigate unspecified complaints. They are also concerned about price regulation, even though the FCC says it won't pre approve prices for service. — AP



PHILADELPHIA: A sign outside the Comcast Center. — AP

INDIAN CITY ON ALERT AS POLIO STRAIN FOUND IN SEWAGE WATER

HYDERABAD, India: A city of nearly 7 million people in southern India has declared a "high alert" for polio after an active strain of the virus was found in samples of sewage water, an official said yesterday. A vaccination drive will be launched after tests revealed a vaccine-derived poliovirus in sewage samples taken in Hyderabad, the capital of Telangana state, Rajeshwar Tiwari, the state's top health official, told reporters.

About 350,000 children ranging from 6 weeks to 3 years old will be vaccinated during the weeklong campaign, which will start on Monday. Tiwari said that "a high alert" was declared in 24 sections of Hyderabad that had been identified as "most-sensitive areas." India fought a decades-long battle to eradicate polio in the country, with the federal and state governments, the World Health Organization, UNICEF and several volunteer groups joining hands to fight the crippling disease.

'Cyberabad'

India was formally declared polio-free in 2014. Its last case was detected in the eastern state of West Bengal in 2011. The virus strain was found last

month in a water sample traced to a sewage treatment plant in the Amberpet section of Hyderabad, Tiwari said. It was detected during countrywide random tests of sewage water that have been held regularly since the disease was eradicated in India.

Hyderabad, whose population is about 6.8 million, is often referred to as "Cyberabad" because several international information technology giants, including Accenture, Microsoft, Verizon and Oracle, have their India headquarters in the city. Tiwari sought to reassure city residents by saying that the vaccination drive would be repeated so that no child is affected. "There is no need to panic," he said.

"As India was declared polio-free five years ago, tests are carried out regularly to ascertain if there are traces of polio virus in the environment." State health authorities have decided to set up more than 750 vaccination centers in Hyderabad and another 122 in nearby Ranga Reddy district to ensure that all children are covered during the vaccination drive. Apart from state government employees, volunteers from WHO, UNICEF and Rotary Club will also participate in the drive, Tiwari said. — AP



INDIA: In this file photo, a health worker administers a polio drop to an infant in Kolkata, India. — AP



WASHINGTON: This rendering provided by Aspire Bariatrics, Inc demonstrates the use of the AspireAssist weight loss device, approved by the Food and Drug Administration. — AP

FDA APPROVES OF STOMACH DRAINING OBESITY TREATMENT

A NOVEL APPROACH TO CUTTING CALORIES

WASHINGTON: A new weight loss device offers a novel approach to cutting calories: Draining them from the stomach before they are fully digested. The AspireAssist system consists of a thin tube implanted in the stomach, connecting to an outside port on the skin of the belly. About 20 minutes after finishing a meal, users connect the port to an external device, which drains some of the recently-consumed food into the toilet.

The manufacturer - Aspire Bariatric based in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania - says its system removes about 30 percent of food stored in the stomach

before it begins causing weight gain. The Food and Drug Administration approved the device on Tuesday for adults who are obese, with a body mass index of 35 to 55, and have not been able to lose weight with other methods. It's the latest option for millions of obese Americans who have been unable to lose weight via more traditional methods. Obesity is considered one of the nation's leading public health problems because it can trigger diabetes and lead to heart disease and other serious health problems. About 38 percent of all US adults are obese. A 5-foot-9 person would be obese at 203 pounds.

Last week the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that rates of obesity among women had reached 40 percent for the first time. That compares to a 35 percent obesity rate for men. The FDA said it approved the new device based on studies showing patients lost an average of 12 percent of their total body weight one year after the procedure. That compared to 3.6 percent weight loss for patients who didn't receive the device.

Lifestyle program

Side effects seen with AspireAssist included nausea, vomiting, constipation and diarrhea. "Patients need to be regularly monitored by their health care provider and should follow a lifestyle program to help them develop healthier eating habits and reduce their calorie intake," said FDA deputy director Dr William Maisel, in a statement.

Weight loss surgery is recommended for those with a BMI of 40 or those with a BMI of 35 who have other risk factors like diabetes or high blood pressure. Patients undergoing permanent weight loss surgery, such as gastric bypass surgery, generally lose about 34 percent of their total weight after one year. The 50-year-old procedure involves stapling a small pouch off from the rest of the stomach and connecting it to the small intestine. Weight loss is significantly lower with reversible banding procedures, in which a small saline-filled band is wrapped around the stomach to reduce its size. Those patients generally see weight loss of 14 percent after one year. Potential side effects include esophagus irritation, infection and vomiting, in some cases. — AP

ETHANOL, BIOENERGY NO THREAT TO FOOD SECURITY

NEW YORK: Bioenergy produced from crops does not threaten food supplies, researchers funded by the US government, World Bank and others said in a report on Tuesday, dealing a potential blow to critics of the country's biofuels program. There is no clear relationship between biofuels and higher prices that threaten access to food, as some prior analysis has suggested, according to the research partly funded by the US Department of Energy.

Environmentalists and others have long argued that the increased use of ethanol, produced from corn in the United States and sugarcane in Brazil, threatens global food security,

which the World Health Organization defines as "access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food." Critics of biofuels, which are used for transportation, say they could threaten food supplies.

"There may not be as tight a link as people think" between commodities prices and food security, Siwa Msangi, a co-author of the paper and senior research fellow at the International Food Policy Research Institute, said in an interview on Tuesday. A 2012 drought in the United States that slashed corn output, for example, caused ethanol plants to shutter or reduce output but not a notable change in food prices, the report said. — Reuters

START SCHOOL LATER TO PREVENT SLEEP-DEPRIVED TEENS: STUDY

CHICAGO: The American Medical Association on Tuesday urged starting school later in the morning for teenagers so they can get enough sleep. In a new policy adopted on Tuesday, the AMA said middle and high schools should start at 8:30 am at the earliest because research has shown that puberty is accompanied by a biological shift in circadian rhythm that contributes to later bedtimes and wake-up times in adolescents.

The influential doctors group said nearly 10 percent of US high schools today begin at or before 7:30 am as districts try to make time for additional classes, sports and extracurricular activities. Inadequate sleep has been linked to a host of mental and physical problems, from poor memory performance and mood disorders to impaired immune function and unhealthy body mass index, the AMA said.

"Sleep deprivation is a growing public

health issue affecting our nation's adolescents, putting them at risk for mental, physical and emotional distress and disorders," said Dr William Kessler, an AMA board member. "Scientific evidence strongly suggests that allowing adolescents more time for sleep at the appropriate hours results in improvements in health, academic performance, behavior, and general well-being," he added. Only 32 percent of American teens in a recent study reported getting at least eight hours of sleep on an average school night. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends teenagers between 14 and 17 years old should get 8.5 to 9.5 hours of sleep per night. The AMA's new policy, adopted at the group's annual meeting in Chicago, also encourages physicians to educate parents, school administrators and teachers about the importance of sleep for adolescent mental and physical health. — Reuters

OPIOIDS LINKED WITH DEATHS OTHER THAN ODS STUDY SAYS

CHICAGO: Accidental overdoses aren't the only deadly risk from using powerful prescription painkillers - the drugs may also contribute to heart-related deaths and other fatalities, new research suggests. Among more than 45,000 patients in the study, those using opioid painkillers had a 64 percent higher risk of dying within six months of starting treatment compared to patients taking other prescription pain medicine. Unintentional overdoses accounted for about 18 percent of the deaths among opioid users, versus 8 percent of the other patients.

"As bad as people think the problem of opioid use is, it's probably worse," said Wayne Ray, the lead author and a health policy professor at Vanderbilt University's medical school. "They should be a last resort and particular care should be exercised for patients who are at cardiovascular risk." His caution echoes recent advice from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, trying to stem the nation's opioid epidemic. The problem includes abuse of street drugs like heroin and overdose of prescription opioids such as hydrocodone, codeine and morphine.

The drugs can slow breathing and can worsen disrupted breathing that occurs with sleep apnea, potentially leading to irregular heartbeats, heart attacks or sudden death, the study authors said. In 2014, there were more than 14,000 fatal overdoses linked with the painkillers in the US. The study suggests even more have died from causes linked with the drugs, and bolster evidence in previous research linking them with heart problems.

The study involved more than 45,000

adult Medicaid patients in Tennessee from 1999 to 2012. They were prescribed drugs for chronic pain not caused by cancer but from other ailments including persistent backaches and arthritis.

Half received long-acting opioids including controlled-release oxycodone, methadone and fentanyl skin patches. Fentanyl has been implicated in the April death of Prince, although whether the singer was using a fentanyl patch, pills or other form of the drug hasn't been publicly revealed. Long-acting opioids remain in the body longer. The study authors noted that the body's prolonged exposure to the drugs may increase risks for toxic reactions.

The remaining study patients had prescriptions for non-opioid drugs sometimes used to treat nerve pain, including gabapentin; or certain antidepressants also used for pain. There were 185 deaths among opioid users, versus 87 among other patients. The researchers calculated that for every 145 patients on an opioid drug, there was one excess death versus deaths among those on other painkillers. The two groups were similar in age, medical conditions, risks for heart problems and other characteristics that could have contributed to the outcomes. The results were published Tuesday in the Journal of the American Medical Association.

The study involved only Medicaid patients, who include low-income and disabled adults and who are among groups disproportionately affected by opioid abuse. Ray noted that the study excluded the sickest patients and those with any evidence of drug abuse. He said similar results would likely be found in other groups.

SPAIN, THE ELDORADO OF FERTILITY TREATMENT

MADRID: "Making parents out of our patients," reads an ad in Madrid's metro for one of Spain's many fertility clinics that have opened their doors to husbands and wives, same-sex couples and single women thanks to lenient laws. Every year, more than 5,000 people walk through the glass doors of the Madrid IVI clinic, where couples sit in a hushed atmosphere, English, Spanish and French wafting through the waiting room to help foreign customers, 20 percent of all its patients.

Sitting in his office behind the reception, where black-and white photos of babies' hands hang on the wall, director Juan Antonio Garcia Velasco says that Spain has become a "reference point" for fertility treatment. He points for instance to "being able to provide treatment that is banned in many countries."

Up to 50 years old

A law that came into force in 2006 allows women aged 18 or over-by they single, in heterosexual or same-sex couples-to access assisted reproductive technology such as artificial insemination or in vitro fertilization (IVF). By contrast, the legislation in neighboring France bans single women or same-sex couples from undergoing such treatment. The identity of sperm and egg donors is also kept secret in Spain. And unlike in other countries such as Britain or France, there is no shortage of eggs in Spain, which already has a strong tradition of organ donation.

Last but not least, Spanish clinics accept women wanting to conceive aged up to 50. As such, in the latest figures available, some 15,600 treatments took place in Spain in 2011, compared to 3,300 in the Czech Republic, 2,100 in Britain and 1,100 in Belgium, according to the European

Society of Human Reproduction and Embryology.

Emmanuelle Lino, whose name has been modified as have those of other women who would only talk on condition of anonymity, is one such satisfied customer in Spain. The 45-year-old Frenchwoman has only just given birth to a little

boy conceived in a Barcelona clinic thanks to an egg donation. Married, she had tried IVF in Paris, to no avail. And by the time she wanted to try again, she was unable to as she was older than the 43-year-old age limit fixed by the French social security system. Egg donations in France are also rare. She had initially thought about going to Belgium, another prized destination for women with fertility problems, but "I was told there would be a huge wait." So she settled for Spain, where her treatment cost nearly 7,000 Euros (\$7,800), excluding travel costs.

Mother tongue

Many of the Spanish clinics' foreign customers are women in their forties, in relationships with men, who come for egg donations and associated IVF treatment. Others ask for their eggs to be frozen-a technique that allows them to conceive later in life. And Spanish clinics make it as easy as possible for potential foreign customers, with services in their mother tongue. "I filled in the contact form online and they called me back the very next day, in German," says Silke Khrause.

This 46-year-old single woman who lives near Dusseldorf in Germany had initially thought about going to Denmark for an egg donation, but "everything was in English, it was really complicated." So she chose Barcelona. The clinics are also competitive price-wise.

Maria Smith, a 46-year-old British woman, said she had been quoted 7,000 Euros for an egg donation in Spain, compared to 13,000 Euros in London. But she eventually settled for her home country, where unlike Spain the donors' identity can be revealed to children born from this procedure once they turn 18 — an option she wanted to have for her future son or daughter.

'Uphill struggle'

Spain has some 200 gynecological centers, more than any other European nation. According to research firm DBK Informa, the sector is doing well, helped by a general trend of Spanish or foreign women wanting to get pregnant later in life, lenient legislation and foreign demand.

The sector earned 365 million Euros in 2014 — a turnover that is expected to increase five to six percent a year, it says. As a result, Spanish fertility clinics have expanded abroad. IVI for instance has clinics in Portugal and Italy as well as Spain. But French gynecologist Joelle Belaisch-Allart warns that allowing pregnancies for older women carries many risks, such as diabetes, premature

"For me it's 45 years old maximum," she says, pointing out that once a woman gets treated abroad and comes home, she and other doctors are left having to follow their potentially-risky pregnancies. And far from being a walk in the park, such procedures are difficult, and not always successful. — AFP



BARCELONA: An employee at the clinic Eugin manipulates samples of embryos, eggs and sperm cryopreserved in a nitrogen tank. — AFP

'MAN-EATING LION' SNARED AFTER HUMAN TISSUE FOUND

AHMEDABAD: Forestry officials in western India may have identified a man-eating lion suspected of a spate of attacks, they said yesterday, after finding traces of human hair and tissue in the animal's feces. Seven lion attacks in villages near the Gir wildlife sanctuary in Gujarat state have killed three people since March, while four victims have suffered serious injuries. A pride of 17 endangered Asiatic lions, which only live in the forest in Gujarat, have been captured in the past month.

Officials have been monitoring the big cats' behavior and examining their feces to identify the culprits. "The scat analysis, that is an analysis of lion excreta, has shown remains of human hair and tissue in at least one of the lions captured," UA Vora, a forest conservator, told AFP. "This lion has been isolated and will be kept in isolation in captivity forever," he said.

Vora said that even with the discovery of human tissue, the animal would undergo further investigations to establish whether it deliberately attacked humans. He said forestry officials have undertaken a "massive" awareness drive to warn people living in villages about

the lions, telling them not to sleep in open fields. One wildlife expert told AFP the lions may have attacked because a rising human population had blocked their natural corridors—the route by which lions move from one area to another in search of prey. "The government needs to come up with a long-term plan to open these blocked corridors to stop human-animal conflict," independent expert Divyabhanu Singh said.

In May a 14-year-old boy was killed by a lioness in a mango orchard in the district's Ambardi village, with his father also injured in the attack. In April a lion killed a 50-year-old woman in a nearby village as she slept in an open field. Asiatic lions, slightly smaller than their African cousins and with a fold of skin along their bellies, have been increasing in numbers in Gir, with 523 recorded in the latest census.

Conservationists have suggested some of the lions be relocated to a different sanctuary, to reduce human-animal conflict and avoid their being wiped out by disease or natural disaster. The Asiatic lion was listed as endangered in 2008, up from critically endangered in 2000, after numbers improved in the forest. — AFP



PHILIPPINES: This photo shows a visitor using her mobile phone taking a photo of a white bellied sea eagle at the Philippine Eagle Foundation (PEF) center in Davao City, in southern island of Mindanao. — AFP

SANCTUARY OFFERS NEW HOPE FOR ENDANGERED PHILIPPINE EAGLE

WORLD'S ONLY BREEDING PROGRAM FOR THE EAGLES

DAVAO, Philippines: Surprisingly loud chirps accompany a clumsy flurry of tiny wings as a wispy-haired chick breaks through its shell, its birth offering rare cause for celebration in the struggle to save the Philippine eagle from extinction. Tropical rainforest destruction and relentless hunting have decimated the population of the majestic bird—one of the world's biggest and most powerful with just hundreds believed to be left in the wild.

A small band of conservationists at a tiny sanctuary on the fringes of Davao, the southern Philippines' biggest city, is trying to ensure their survival by running the world's only breeding program for the eagles and by rehabilitating the wounded. "The centre serves basically as insurance, or a Noah's Ark so to speak, for the species," Philippine Eagle Foundation executive director Dennis Salvador told AFP on a recent visit.

"But it certainly doesn't substitute for a population in the wild." The foundation estimates there are about 800 of the Philippines' national bird remaining in the wild, though it is impossible to count accurately due to their remote habitats. International conservation groups say there could be as few as 250 left. In more than three decades of trial and error experiments by the foundation that have yet to fully understand the eagles' breeding habits, just 27 have been born in captivity. The eagles are notoriously hard to pair, with the larger female known to attack and even kill an unwanted suitor in the wild. Once they do find a suitable partner, it is generally for life, although even in the forests the couples will generally only reproduce every two years. "It's difficult because we don't really know what happens in the wild, and we can't replicate that here in captivity," said Anna Mae Sumaya, the foundation's curator.

'Exciting, fantastic'

However, after failing to breed any eagles for nearly three years, recent successes have raised hopes. Go Phoenix, which was brought into the centre after being ensnared in a hunter's trap, and MVP, a shooting victim, were successfully paired in 2013 and have produced two chicks in quick succession, the latest in February. The exceptionally rare moments in nature were filmed from behind glass enclosures, the footage showing chick number 27 breaking out of its shell with a burst of energy and chirping before resting its head on pebbles in a small metal dish.

"It was exciting, a fantastic feeling, we were very

lucky," Sumaya said, adding she hoped Go Phoenix and MVP could produce again next season while two other pairs were also a chance to breed. However a growing problem is space: 35 eagles live in cages of various sizes in the centre, which covers just eight hectares of forest.

The centre's ultimate goal is to release the eagles back into the wild, but this has proved even more of a challenge than breeding them. One of the biggest problems has been the eagles becoming too accustomed to human contact at the centre. When released, they have been shot after getting too close to communities that are in or near the diminishing forests. Formerly known as the monkey-eating eagle, the birds are protected by law. Killing one is punishable by a maximum 12-year prison term and a one million-peso (\$21,000) fine, but shooters are rarely caught. Out of 15 eagles from the centre that have been released, only one is known to still be alive in the wild, according to Sumaya. She said four had been brought back to the centre after sustaining injuries while the others were confirmed or presumed dead.

'Devastated'

In the most recent failure, Matatag was shot in



DAVAO CITY: This photo taken on February 17, 2016 shows school children watching a Philippine eagle named "Fighter" stretching wings at the Philippine Eagle Foundation (PEF) center. — AFP

February. He had survived about a year after being released into the forests on Mt Apo, the Philippines' highest mountain. Matatag had initially been brought to the centre after being shot when he was just one year old, then spent three years in rehabilitation before his ill-fated release.

"I was devastated. I thought: 'It's happening all over again,'" Sumaya said, but added the bird was recovering well. The centre is trying to eliminate contact between humans and the eagles that are earmarked for eventual release, although Sumaya said there were no plans in the near future to set any more free. Those that are too badly injured or old to be released are put on display for tens of thousands of tourists and students who visit the centre each year.

While breeding the eagles is important, foundation executive director Salvador said the key to the eagles' survival was educating Filipinos about their plight and raising awareness about the need to stop logging, mining and other forest-destroying activities. Four-year-old Fighter spends his days chained to a perch, his grey eyes constantly darting as if he thinks he is searching for prey in the wild, while his striking brown and white crest occasionally flares in a sign of stress or territorial aggression. — AFP

GROUNDBREAKING DISCOVERY OF ORGANIC MOLECULE IN SPACE

WASHINGTON: Researchers have found an organic molecule essential to biology in interstellar space for the first time, announced experts Tuesday, a discovery that could help solve a long-time mystery. Like humans, the organic molecules that make up the universe can lean left-handed or right-handed, a preference known as chirality. Most molecules on Earth lean left—but scientists don't know why.

The recently discovered interstellar molecule is the most complex ever discovered outside our solar system, and the first chiral molecule detected in interstellar space. It's "a pioneering leap forward in our understanding of how prebiotic molecules are made in the universe and the effects they may have on the origins of life," said Brett McGuire, a chemist in Charlottesville, Virginia who co-authored the research.

Scientists have found chiral molecules in meteorites on Earth and comets in our solar system, but never before in interstellar space. The molecule, propylene oxide, was found "near the center of our galaxy in an enormous star-forming cloud of dust and gas," the National Radio Astronomy Observatory (NRAO) said in a statement.

Scientists used an extremely sensitive radio telescope to detect the molecule. They presented their findings at the American Astronomical Society meeting in San Diego,

California this week, and published a paper in the journal Science. By skewing left or right, molecules have a biological advantage, because the congruence helps them build more complicated structures. "Propylene oxide is among the most complex and structurally intricate molecules detected so far in space," said Brandon Carroll, a chemistry graduate student at the California Institute of Technology. "Detecting this molecule opens the door for further experiments determining how and where molecular handedness emerges."

Certain bio-molecules like amino acids—which make up proteins—are exclusively "left-handed," while some sugars, including those that comprise DNA, all lean right. The origin of chirality in molecules remains a mystery, but scientists are hopeful that the interstellar discovery could finally solve the puzzle by clearing up what ingredients formed the base of our solar system.

Researchers have found more than 180 molecules in space that give off a distinct vibration scientists can detect with radio telescopes. Larger, more complex molecules have more complicated vibration patterns, making them more difficult to identify. Scientists hope that if they can understand the chirality of the propylene oxide molecule found in space, they can gain a better understanding of chiral molecules on Earth. — AFP

EL SALVADOR CONFIRMS FIRST ZIKA-LINKED BIRTH DEFECT

SAN SALVADOR: El Salvador on Tuesday confirmed its first case of microcephaly in a baby that was linked to a Zika infection in the mother. Microcephaly is a birth defect that causes an abnormally small head and deformed brain. Health Minister Violeta Menjívar said the infant was born in April to a family living in the country's central La Paz province, and the Zika connection was proved "a short while ago."

Zika, a virus typically carried by mosquitoes, was first detected in the Central American country in November and

10,476 cases of infection have been recorded. Among them, the health ministry counted 274 pregnant women suspected to have been infected with Zika. Of those, 118 gave birth to babies without microcephaly. Menjívar noted that cases of babies with microcephaly believed caused by Zika have also occurred in countries including Brazil, Colombia, Martinique, Panama, Puerto Rico and the United States. Abortion is illegal in El Salvador, a predominantly Christian country. — AFP

CLINIC PAGE



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NSH CONDUCTS NATIONAL ESSAY CONTEST

The Vice President of NSH (Nasser S Al Hajri) Corporation, Sabu has announced the result of the National Essay Contest held recently. By explaining new dimensions and the cause and effect in a more comprehensive way, Alisha Sarah Jose, a grade XI student of Indian Learners Own Academy won the national level essay contest.

Alisha is followed by Aditya Ashok (FAIPS - DPS) and Zohra Khatoun (Salmiya Indian Model School) for the first and second runner up respectively. Candidates structured their essays on "Role of youth in the campaign against drug abuse" and "Say No to drugs, if not YES to death".

With a view to inculcate the awareness among the student community, the decision to conduct this contest was taken in the board meeting chaired by Sabu, Vice President of NSH Kuwait and President of NSH Global Village Harmony (NSH GVH), a non-profit organization dedicated to make a difference in the community life including focusing on the youngsters to sharpen their skills. NSH GVH is registered with the Indian Embassy, Kuwait.

It was a delight to announce this essay contest, as it provides an important opportunity to encourage youth to engage with issues of importance. It is essential for us to understand the perspective of youth on key challenges.

The contest, open to students in all fields of study, is an opportunity to articulate their vision for this globally accepted value; the challenges that must be overcome in order to realize that vision and the methods necessary to achieve, said Sabu.

The contest focused on the challenges that the youth consider pressing for future generations and seeks their views on possible solutions. Last year, the contests were held to create awareness for the work force that resulted in several workers pledged as ambassadors of non-alcoholism. All winners will be notified individually and be honored during a special function in connection with United Nations International Day

against drug abuse.

"Youngsters seek solace in drugs when they don't get proper love and guidance from the parents. So we must take care of our youngsters by nurturing good habits in them and by providing proper love and guidance" - Alisha. The contest was coordinated by Pani J Anthony, Corporate HR Manager - NSH Kuwait and General Secretary of NSH Global Village Harmony.

The evaluation committee, headed by Dilip Rarot, that selected the finalists based on the concept, flow and new ideas include Subhajith Sarkar, Sanjeev Narayanan, Chacko Joseph and Anoo Viswambharan, winner of the Master Brain Trophy - 2015.



PEFK CONDUCTS CAREER COUNSELING SEMINAR FOR STUDENTS

Pakistan Employment Forum Kuwait (PEFK) organized a career counseling seminar for students on Wednesday 25th May 2016 in Pakistan English School, Jaleeb Al Shoyoukh with coordination of Mr Ahsan Raza, Vice Principal & Madam Sanobar Farrukh Sultan, the Principal of the school.

PEFK Medical Assistance Division conducted the event led by Dr Kashif Mehmood & assisted by Dr Yasir Jamil. PEFK Medical Assistance Division is dealing with career assistance, guidance and counseling in Medical field for

job seekers and students.

Seminar started with recitation of Holy Quran by Hammad Nadeem and Hosted by Neha Tariq. Welcome note & brief intro of PEFK delivered by Muhammad Irfan Adil, Founder President of Pakistan Employment Forum Kuwait. He briefly explained about Pakistan Employment Forum Kuwait and stated that PEFK is a premier & first ever Pakistani Forum of its kind in State of Kuwait which is purely designated to provide assistance for job seekers and career counseling for students residing in Kuwait especially

among Pakistanis. PEFK is a non-political and non-governmental organization.

Dr Kashif Mehmood, Executive of PEFK Medical Assistance Division presented a comprehensive presentation for pre-medical students. Presentation reflected the full procedures, requirements & guidelines for higher education in medical field. He also presented multiple career choices and disciplines in medical field. All students showed their high interest in the presentation and obtained updated information and procedure for higher

education in medical field.

Mr Ahsan Raza, Vice Principal of School thanked PEFK Medical Assistance team members Dr Kashif Mehmood & Dr Yasir Jamil & Secretary General of PEFK Mr M Irfan Shafiq for providing valuable information to students for their higher education career. PEFK Team Thanks Madam Sanobar Farrukh Sultan, the Principal of Pakistan English School, Jaleeb Al Shoyoukh, Management & Staff of School for the privilege to conduct career counseling seminar for students.



IOM KUWAIT CONTINUES ITS SECOND AWARENESS CAMPAIGN ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) in the State of Kuwait continues its awareness campaign on human trafficking under the auspices of the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Mohammed Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

IOM Kuwait Chief of Mission Iman Ereiqtat praised the positive interaction received so far from the public, saying, "To prevent trafficking in persons, awareness is

an essential tool allowing the community to come together to fight the illegal practices conducted by the few. We very much appreciate the support of the shopping malls' management in hosting the awareness campaign booths, and contributing towards raising public awareness on human trafficking."

Throughout the campaign, IOM staff is available to answer questions about what human trafficking is and current counter trafficking efforts being undertaken in

Kuwait. Additionally, 4 pamphlets developed by Ministry of Interior and IOM are available, which contain information on the crime of human trafficking and the efforts of the State of Kuwait with the International Organization for Migration in this field. According to the US State Department, human trafficking is the third most prevalent crime in the world, making this awareness campaign particularly timely.

Who: International Organization for Migration in

Kuwait and the Ministry of Interior

What: Second awareness raising campaign about trafficking in persons

Why: To raise general awareness about the issue of human trafficking as well as the government of Kuwait's efforts to combat it

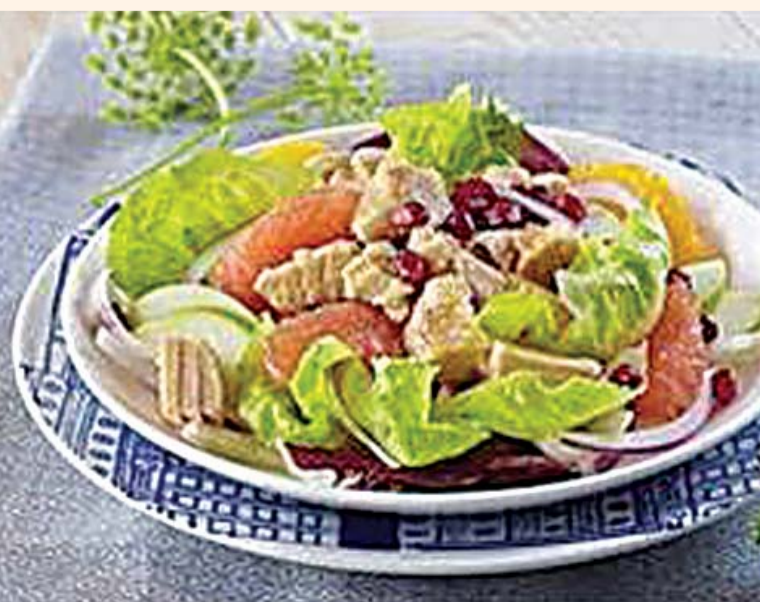
When/Where: June 14th - 16th June : Souq Sharq, 20:00 - 01:00 am. June 4th - 5th July: Gate Mall, 20:00 - 01:00 am

MEDITERANEAN TUNA SALAD WITH ORANGE, GRANNY SMITH APPLE, BABY JEM AND POMEGRANATE

Ingredients (serving for 4)		Parsley	20 gr
Yellow fin tuna loin	250 gr	Lemon juice	20 ml
Baby lettuce or romaine lettuce	80 gr	Salt and white pepper as needed	
Pomegranate fruit	1 pcs		
Red onion	1pcs		
Extra virgin Olive oil	50ml		
Orange	2 pcs		
Grapes	1 pcs		
Granny smith apple	2pcs		

Preparation

Season tuna with salt and pepper then pan seared in a non-sticky pan using ext. Virgin olive oil for 2 minute on all side. De-seed the pomegranate fruit. Slice red onions in rings. Peel the orange and grapes and make segment from them. Clean the baby romaine lettuce in ice water. Wash granny smith apple and cut in halve or desired shape. Arrange baby romaine in plate, add orange, apple, red onion and pomegranate seed. Slice tuna and arrange on top of the salad. Combine olive oil, lemon juice, salt and white pepper, whisk for few minute to bind then add chopped parsley. Dress the salad with 2 to 3 table spoon of dressing.



NAFO KUWAIT ELECTS NEW OFFICE-BEARERS

NAFO Kuwait, a non-political, non-profit organization of like-minded Indians in Kuwait, registered with the Indian Embassy (INDEMB/KWT/ASS/94)

selected the following new office-bearers for a tenure of three year (2016 - 2019), in line with the provisions of its bye-law and under the supervision of an election committee consisting of NAFO Advisory Board members, Dr Prasad M Nair, B Ajayakumar, BS Pillai and VR Vijayan Nair.

New office-bearers: ON Nandakumar (President), R Vijayakrishnan (General Secretary),

Unnikrishna Kaimal (Treasurer), Sreekumar Pillai (Vice-President), Anish Nair (Joint Secretary), Pramod Menon T. (Joint Secretary) and Vijayakumar Menon (Joint Treasurer).

The selection of new office bearers was subsequent to the unanimous approval of a twenty one members new Executive Committee in the 12th Annual General Body (AGM) meeting held on 29th April 2016, attended by a large number of NAFO members and their families.

Further, the NAFO Executive Committee also unanimously decided to endure Vijay Karayil as its patron in respect of his incomparable guidance rendered to NAFO. New Executive Committee members: KC Gopakumar, MS Nair, TKV Pradeepkumar, O N Sureshkumar, G Udayakumar, C Krishnakumar, Balasundaran Nair, Madhu G Menon, VR Anilkumar, Premraj Nambiar, Satheesh C Pillai, CP Rajiv Menon, AR Subbaraman, and PS Krishnakumar.

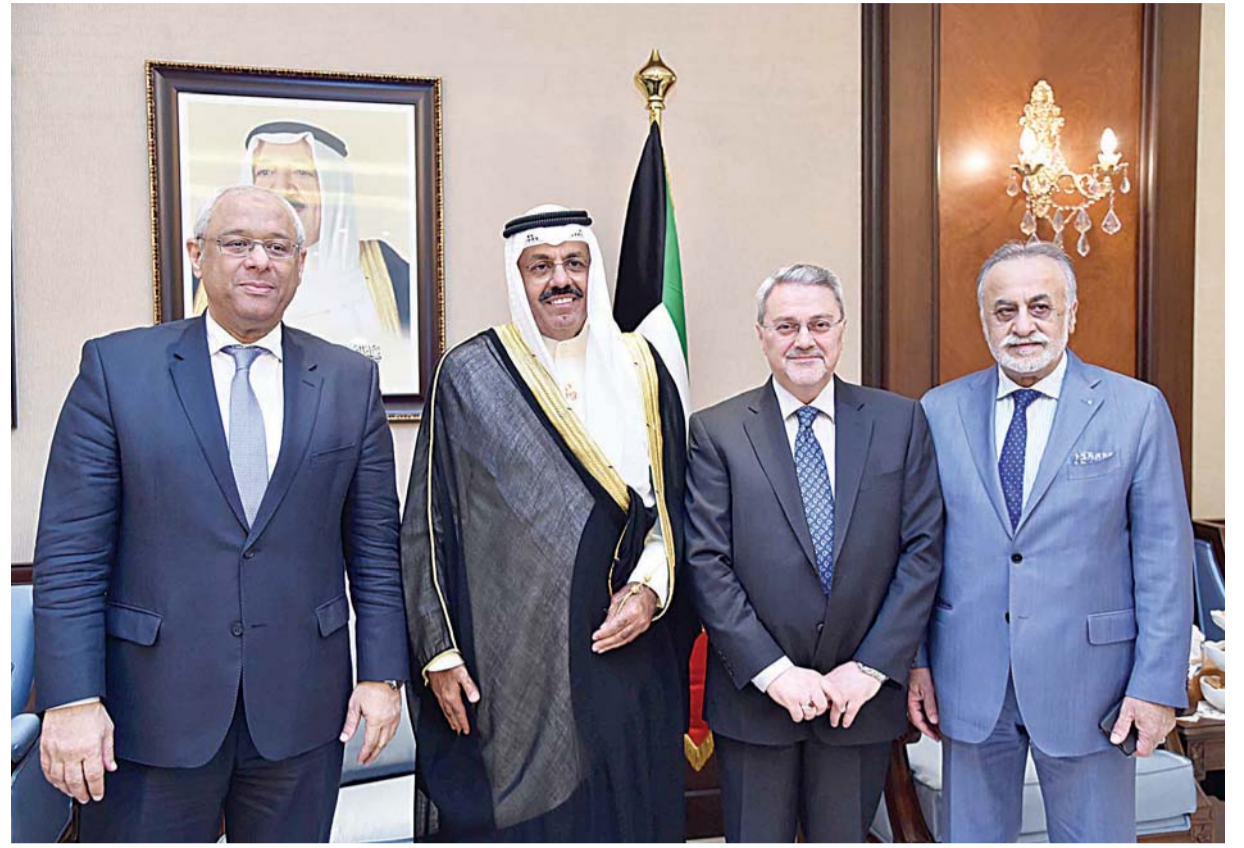
The newly-appointed office-bearers and executive committee members together with the advisory board reiterated NAFO's commitment towards the empowerment of downtrodden sections of the society through its continuing socio-cultural activities in Kuwait and India.



ANNOUNCEMENT FROM EMBASSY OF INDIA

The Embassy of India in Kuwait is organizing the Second International Day of Yoga on 24th June (Friday) from 0600 hours at the Indoor Stadium in American International School, Meidan Hawally. Yoga stands for Harmony and Peace which is the theme of the event. It would be appreciated if you can come to the Venue at 6 AM along with your photographer to cover the event.

Our partners for this event are 'Art of Living', 'Sahaj Marg', 'Artistic Yoga', 'Harmony House', 'Sevadarshan' and 'AMMA' Kuwait, all based in Kuwait. Various Yoga asanas will be performed, followed by Pranayam and Meditation session as per Common Yoga Protocol. In addition, a team of doctors from Indian Dental Alliance Kuwait (IDAK) would be conducting the oral screening and will present a talk on the "Lifestyle and Oral health" to create awareness regarding oral health management. Indian Doctors forum will also make a presentation on the occasion.



HAWALLI GOVERNOR WELCOMES WELL-WISHERS

Hawalli Governor Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah welcomed Ramadan well-wishers at the governorate's public diwan recently. The guests included government officials, parliament members, sheikhs, ambassador and a large number of citizens and residents.





Great Blue Hole

The Great Blue Hole is a giant submarine sinkhole off the coast of Belize. It lies near the center of Lighthouse Reef, a small atoll 70 km from the mainland and Belize City. The hole is circular in shape, over 300 m across and 124 m deep. It was formed during several episodes of quaternary glaciations when sea levels were much lower.

Analysis of stalactites found in the Great Blue Hole shows that formation took place 153,000 years ago. As the ocean began to rise again, the cave was flooded. The Great Blue Hole is a part of the larger Belize Barrier Reef Reserve System, a World Heritage Site of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).



Exploration and name

This site was made famous by Jacques Cousteau, who declared it one of the top ten scuba diving sites in the world. In 1971 he brought his ship, the Calypso, to the hole to chart its depths. Investigations by this expedition confirmed the hole's origin as typical karsts limestone formations, formed before rises in sea level in at least four stages, leaving ledges at depths of 21 m, 49 m, and 91 m.

Stalactites were retrieved from submerged caves, confirming their previous formation above sea level. Some of these stalactites were also off-vertical by 57°

a consistent orientation, indicating that there had also been some past geological shift and tilting of the underlying plateau, followed by a long period in the current plane.

Initial measured depth of Great Blue Hole was 125 m which is the most often cited depth up to this day. An expedition by the Cambrian Foundation in 1997 measured the hole's depth as 124 m at its deepest point. This difference in measurement can be explained by ongoing sedimentation or by imprecision in measurements.

The expedition's goal was to collect core samples from the Blue Hole's floor and document the cave system. To accomplish these tasks, all of the divers had to be certified in cave diving and mixed gases. The name "The Great Blue Hole" was coined by British diver and author Ned Middleton in the book "Ten Years Underwater".

Tourism

This is a popular spot among recreational scuba divers who are lured by the opportunity to dive in sometimes crystal-clear water and meet several species of fish, including Midnight Parrotfish, Caribbean reef shark, and other juvenile fish species. Other species of sharks, such as the bull shark and hammerheads, have been reported there, but are not regularly sighted. Usually, day trips to the Great Blue Hole are full-day trips from the coastal tourist communities in Belize.

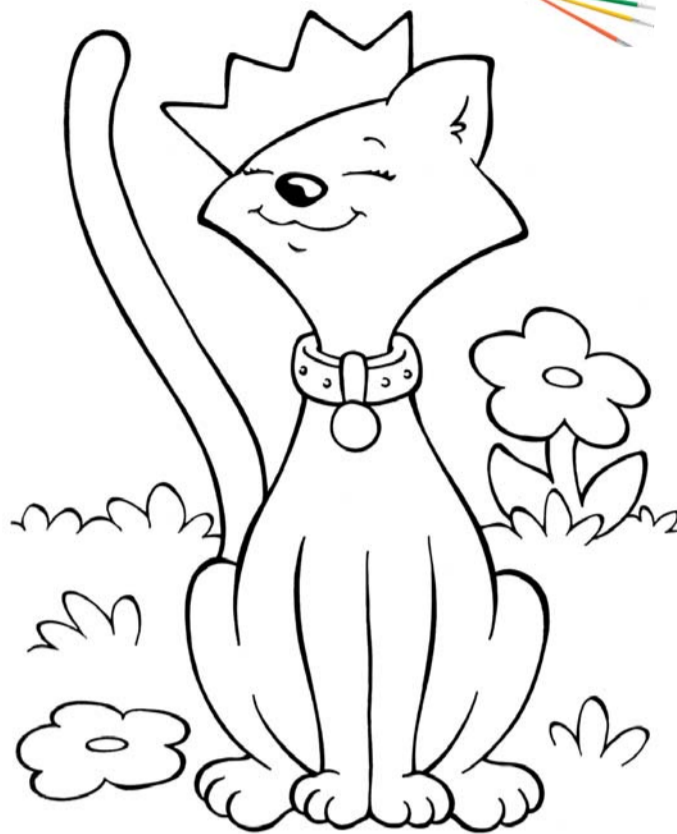
On-shore caves of similar formation, as large collapsed sinkholes, are well known in Belize and in the Yucatán Peninsula, where they are known as cenotes. Unlike the mainland cenotes which often link to underwater cave systems, there is little evidence of horizontal development in the Blue Hole. In 2012 Discovery Channel ranked the Great Blue Hole as number one on its list of "The 10 Most Amazing Places on Earth".

Even though the Great Blue Hole is considered a 'bucket-list dive', one should be aware that it is not for divers of all skill levels - a prerequisite is logging more than 24 dives. It is also not a 'colorful dive', instead, divers witness a dark cave with impressive stalactites.

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE



Color me!



DID YOU KNOW?



Elephants are unique animals that live in parts of Africa and Asia.

- There are two types of elephants, the Asian elephant and the African elephant (although sometimes the African Elephant is split into two species, the African Forest Elephant and the African Bush Elephant).
- Elephants are the largest land-living mammal in the world.
- Both female and male African elephants have tusks but only the male Asian elephants have tusks. They use their tusks for digging and finding food.
- Female elephants are called cows. They start to have calves when they are about 12 years old and they are pregnant for 22 months.
- An elephant can use its tusks to dig for ground water. An adult elephant needs to drink around 210 liters of water a day.
- Elephants have large, thin ears. Their ears are made up of a complex network of blood vessels which help regulate their temperature. Blood is circulated through their ears to cool them down in hot climates.
- Elephants have no natural predators. However, lions will sometimes prey on young or weak elephants in the wild. The main risk to elephants is from humans through poaching and changes to their habitat.
- The elephant's trunk is able to sense the size, shape and temperature of an object. An elephant uses its trunk to lift food and suck up water then pour it into its mouth.
- An elephant's trunk can grow to be about 2 meters long and can weigh up to 140 kg. Some scientists believe that an elephant's trunk is made up of 100,000 muscles, but no bones.
- Female elephants spend their entire lives living in large groups called herds. Male elephants leave their herds at about 13 years old and live fairly solitary lives from this point.
- Elephants can swim - they use their trunk to breathe like a snorkel in deep water.
- Elephants are herbivores and can spend up to 16 hours days collecting leaves, twigs, bamboo and roots.

ACTIVITY

Sock Toy



Materials:

- Sock (an ankle length works great)
- Scissors
- Polyester fiberfill stuffing
- Straight pins
- String or embroidery thread
- 2 gloves (a pair or mismatched)
- Felt-tip marker
- Needle
- Thread
- 3 buttons
- 1" thin ribbon (1/4" or thinner)

Directions:

1. If sock isn't an ankle length, cut off leg just above heel; discard. Fill sock with stuffing and close opening with pins (this is top of head). To form neck, tie string around stuffed sock, about 1/3 down from heel end (heel is back of head).
2. Cut two fingers off each glove, cutting into stuffing. Mark where you want arms attached to body. Cut a slit for each arm, slightly smaller than width of stuffed glove finger. Repeat for legs. To attach limbs, insert tab of glove finger into hole and sew, working around edges of limb.
3. For ears, cut two more fingers off a glove. Trim each to 1" long. (Do not stuff.) Unpin top of ear. Fold material under so raw edges are inside. Insert an ear at each end of opening; pin in place. Pin together top of head. Sew closed.
4. Position buttons for eyes and nose. Sew buttons to head. Tie ribbon around neck, then trim.

SUDOKU

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

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

MACARONI AND CHEESE

Ingredients:

- 6 cups water
- 1 package (7.25 ounces) macaroni and cheese dinner
- 1/4 cup butter
- 1/4 cup heavy whipping cream
- 2 tablespoons skim milk powder
- 1/2 cup cheddar cheese, shredded

Directions:

- Boil the water in a medium pan. Stir in the macaroni.
- Boil for 7 to 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Drain the macaroni and return it to the pan.
- Add butter, whipping cream, skim milk powder, cheese, and cheese sauce mix (from the macaroni and cheese dinner package).
- Reduce heat to low and mix well until the cheese has melted.



Seats are set up for the opening ceremony in front of the Enchanted Storybook Castle at Shanghai Disney Resort in Shanghai. —AFP photos



Iger on Disney Park in Shanghai: 'We Built China's Disneyland'



A girl walks in 'Alice in Wonderland Maze' at Shanghai Disney Resort in Shanghai.

Bob Iger, Disney chairman, said that the new Shanghai Disneyland theme park is an "extraordinarily great" feat. Iger was speaking at the jungle-themed Adventure Isle section within the park, a day before its official opening. "Disney is uniquely suited for success in China," said Iger, referring to the group's emotional and family-friendly content. Related Shanghai

Disney Opens With a Distinctly Chinese Focus Amid Stiff Competition "We didn't just build Disneyland in China. We built China's Disneyland," Iger said.

The park, which cost USD\$5.5 billion and took about five years to build, is a joint venture between Disney and a consortium of Chinese companies. Disney is a minority owner of the venue, but a majority owner



People watch the Mickey Parade at Shanghai Disney Resort in Shanghai.

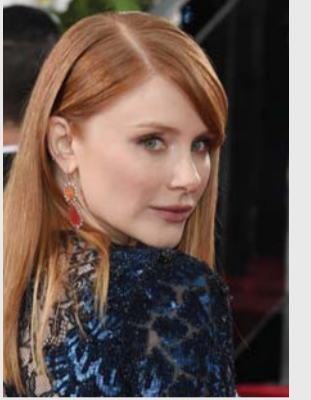
of the park's management company. The larger Shanghai Disney Resort comprises two themed hotels and Disneytown, a neighboring shopping and dining complex. It also houses the Walt Disney Grand Theater, where a Mandarin-language version of "The Lion King" premiered on Tuesday. "We have benefited from the recent success of some of our movies in

China. But nothing connects to our brands like a theme park," said Iger. "It is immersive (and allows people) to hear, see and live in the stories." Iger said that expansion of the park is likely to happen "sooner rather than later." It benefits from seven square kilometers of land and willing partners in the form of the Shendi group and the Shanghai municipal government. — Reuters

Bryce Dallas Howard, the actress who might just bowl you over

She grew up around movie sets watching her father direct Tom Cruise, Robert DeNiro and other Hollywood greats, yet Bryce Dallas Howard still has her moments of giddy fandom. The 35-year-old actress recalls her somewhat undignified first meeting with Robert Redford on the set of her new film, Disney's remake of its own 1977 classic "Pete's Dragon," directed by David Lowery. "There was this big empty road and we were supposed to run towards each other and reunite. It's an emotional thing," she tells AFP.

"I knew he was at the other end and I was very far away from set and David yelled action. We were running towards each other and I kind of picked up speed because I was so excited, and totally barreled into him." Howard says the 79-year-old Redford was still robust enough to take the hit, if somewhat taken aback at an actress coming at him "like a cannonball." It is a neat anecdote because it encapsulates rather well Howard's self-effacing charm. Whether she is talking about growing up in rural Connecticut, taking her children to school or filming some of history's biggest blockbusters, she could be any mom-of-two in America. The eldest of four children of Ron Howard, the "Happy Days" star turned Oscar-winning director, the actress divided her childhood between film studios and having adventures around the family home. "I would go away into the woods behind my house all the time. One time I got lost, which was really bad. But I eventually got my way home after dark and no one in my family had noticed," she says.



This file photo shows actress Bryce Dallas Howard arrives at the 73rd annual Golden Globe Awards at the Beverly Hilton Hotel in Beverly Hills, California. — AFP

Wonder of childhood

The wonder of growing up in the great outdoors is a central preoccupation of "Pete's Dragon," the story of an orphaned boy and his best friend Elliot, who happens to be a giant green fire-breathing beast. Howard grew up with the original movie playing on a loop, but says another reason for taking the part of forest ranger Grace was the opportunity to spend six months in New Zealand. She and her husband of 10 years, the actor Seth Gabel, were able to create "wonderful memories," she says, for her children, who are nine and four. "We lived in... a really little house, all of us on top of each other, and it reminded me a lot of the experience I had during 'Far and Away' with my dad," she says.

"We went to Dingle, Ireland, and we all four kids slept in one bed and there were sheep at our window in the morning waking us up." Howard's career almost literally fell into her lap when, as a 21-year-old stage actress, she was spotted by M Night Shyamalan, the director of "The Sixth Sense," whose standing at the time was as good as it would ever get. He invited her to lunch and tossed the script of "The Village" in front of her, and without having to go through the formality of an audition, she landed a lead part. A Golden Globe nomination as Rosalind in Kenneth Branagh's "As You Like It" was followed by "Spider-Man 3," the beginning of Howard's association with big studio blockbusters.

She appeared in "Terminator Salvation," played a vampire in the most critically appreciated of the "Twilight" movies, "Eclipse," and was a deliciously cruel and spiteful socialite in "The Help." —AFP

Meryl Streep could land record 20th Oscar nomination for 'Florence Foster Jenkins'

As an actress, Meryl Streep has been lauded for never hitting a false note. But by warbling off key as a opera-loving socialite in "Florence Foster Jenkins," the star is likely to land a record 20th Oscar nomination. At the very least, she will be a contender for next year's

Academy Awards—and a lock for a Golden Globe nomination in the best musical/comedy category. "Florence Foster Jenkins" doesn't hit theaters until Aug. 12. But Paramount Pictures is trying to build early buzz for the film, which screened early on Monday night at a Peggy Siegal



event. Tastemakers in attendance included Barbara Walters, Rufus Wainwright, Carol Kane and host Renee Fleming.

The last time Streep played a character who performed at Carnegie Hall was in 1999's "Music of the Heart," as a Harlem school music conductor. Florence Foster Jenkins isn't as skilled onstage. She's a wealthy patron of the arts who moonlights as a faulty opera singer, giving her final performance at the landmark Manhattan concert venue. But the running joke of the comedy directed by Stephen Frears is that Florence doesn't know how bad her voice really is. Another actress may have turned the part into a thin parody.

But Streep, who has embodied no shortage of real-life people from Margaret

Thatcher to Donald Trump, finds new ways to bring Florence to life. Her interpretation comes across like Julia Child meets Susan Boyle, even if Florence doesn't have the natural talent either of those women. Streep not only studied with a dialect coach to perfect the terrible singing (a hysterical feat that will certainly appeal to actors in the Academy branch), she wears a 40-pound rubber prosthetic for the role. "It was sort of interesting at the end of the day to take it off," Streep said at a post-screening Q&A moderated by Tony-winning costume designer William Ivey Long. "I've done this before—to wear a different body, it helps you sympathize with the person. It changes the way you move.

It gives you the character, and I was suddenly in the body of my grandmother." Streep is always celebrated for her dramatic parts, but she's under-appreciated as a comedienne (despite her Oscar nod in 1990's "Postcards from the Edge"). She got rare mixed reviews in dark comedies like 1989's "She-Devil" and 1992's "Death Becomes Her." But one of her best recent performances was in 2009's "It's Complicated," as a divorcee having an affair with her ex-husband (Alec Baldwin). It didn't earn awards attention, because Streep received an Oscar nomination that year instead for portraying Julia Child in Nora Ephron's "Julie and Julia" (a soufflé of an impersonation also grounded in comedic touches).

Sadly, this could again be another weak year for actresses in the movies. The two heavyweight Oscar contenders of the year so far ("Manchester by the Sea" and "A Birth of a Nation") center on male protagonists. Even if "Florence Foster Jenkins" performs modestly at the box office, it could coast into the Oscars race. It feels similar in tone to Frears' 2005 London period piece "Miss Henderson Presents." That picture went on to garner an Academy Award nomination for its leading lady Judi Dench. On Monday night, Streep didn't sit through the entire film. But when she arrived at the theater, she was horrified that the volume was too high, and quickly had it fixed. "I can't be everywhere," she said, with a dramatic sigh. —Reuters



Myanmar police personnel are posted at the lobby of a cinema during a public film screening in Yangon hosting the six-day human rights international film festival.

Myanmar censors ban movie at human rights film festival

Myanmar's film censorship board said yesterday it banned the screening of a love story featuring an ethnic leader over fears it could derail an ongoing peace process with the country's rebel armies. The ban highlights the lingering limits on free speech in the former junta-run country, despite its new civilian government led by democracy champion Aung San Suu Kyi. The Austrian-directed film, "Twilight Over Burma: My Life as a Shan Princess," is set in mid-20th century Myanmar. It tells the true story of an Austrian woman and her marriage to a Shan prince who was arrested in the wake of the 1962 military coup before dying in mysterious circumstances.

The film was supposed to be screened at the opening night of an international human rights

film festival in Yangon Tuesday, where policemen remained posted the following day. "We were worried and afraid that unnecessary problems could arise because of this (film) while we are working on achieving national reconciliation," said Thida Tin, deputy chairman of the Ministry of Information's 15-member film review committee.

She told AFP the board was concerned about ruffling feathers while Suu Kyi's administration prepares for a major peace dialogue with ethnic rebel groups, who have fought lengthy civil wars with the national army and accuse it of rampant rights abuses.

Conflicts continue to rage in several border regions after a ceasefire pact signed last year failed to include all of the country's fighters. The

censorship will come as a disappointment to many in Myanmar's budding film community, where there were hopes that Suu Kyi's leadership would usher in a new era of artistic freedom. "It is the first time in four years one of our films didn't pass the censorship committee," the festival's founder, Min Htin Ko Ko Gyi, told AFP. Under the junta all books, films and news reports were vetted for content considered inflammatory or damaging to the regime.

The former semi-civilian government that ended outright junta rule in 2011 lifted a number of censorship laws and web restrictions. But criticism of the army remains a sensitive subject as it is still a powerful presence in Myanmar, with control over key ministries and a quarter of parliament seats. — AFP

Artist Cindy Sherman confronts Hollywood cliches

Long before the selfie, there was Cindy Sherman, the shape-shifting artist best-known for her often grotesque self-portraits. For the first time in 20 years, some of her most influential works are going on view at Los Angeles's Broad Museum, focusing on Hollywood's feminine cliches in the city that invented them. From blond Hitchcock starlets to aging socialites to pin-up housewives, Sherman has imitated the spectrum of feminine tropes.

"She's produced some of the most influential work of her time," said Philipp Kaiser, the curator of the exhibition "Imitation of Life," which opened last Saturday. One of the world's most celebrated contemporary artists, Sherman's works are worth millions and consistently break auction records. The artist plays her own model, donning elaborate costumes and garish makeup, that play on cinematic imagery. Her all-encompassing retrospective includes work that plays off stereotypes from Hollywood's Golden Age, B-list horror films and even porn.

The show, which runs until October, draws "on cinema roles in the shaping of identity and stereotypes" said Joanne Heyler, director of the Broad Museum, at a press event. The

first major exhibition at the Broad since its grand opening last September, 120 pieces created over four decades by Sherman are on view. The works come mostly from the collection of real estate mogul and philanthropist Eli Broad, a long-time collector of the 62-year-old artist's work.

Broad designed Los Angeles's newest contemporary art museum to house his vast art holdings, including the world's largest collection of Sherman pieces. "Cindy has held for a long time a very special place in our collection," said the wealthy businessman, who remembers being "dazzled" when he discovered her work in the 1980s. The show is coming at a poignant moment, as critics lambast Hollywood for the lack of recognition given to women in the industry, at the same time that Hillary Clinton could become the first woman in the White House. "It's a particularly interesting time to present to the public the work of an artist which questions the way the media shape feminine identity in images, and how, as an artist, she talks back to these images," said Heyler.

Each of her photographs resemble a short silent film, added Heyler.

Submission and the male gaze

Sherman sometimes employs the same techniques old Hollywood is known for, including large-scale projections that resemble frozen movie screens, reproduced on entire walls of the Broad. She also poses with comically frightened expressions, as if taken aback in the style of a "damsel in distress," putting herself in submissive positions. In another image, she takes the opposite perspective and adopts the "male gaze," expressing desire with a bold stare. The New York artist's body of work also includes imagery from fashion magazines, like a satirical photo series that plays on images from the 80s. In those works Sherman poses in chic designer outfits with chalky makeup, slumped shoulders and greasy hair.

On aging

Because Sherman is her own model, her subjects age along with her, Heyler told AFP. The artist's 2008 series satirizes aging society women, clad in sequins with impeccable blowouts. In her most recent pieces, recently shown in New York, Sherman plays 1920s stars including Marlene Dietrich and Greta Garbo, with their extreme eyebrow arches,



Joanne Heyler, director of The Broad, is seen on June 8, 2016 at the opening of the first special exhibition of the new museum, a retrospective of photographer Cindy Sherman in Los Angeles, California.—AFP

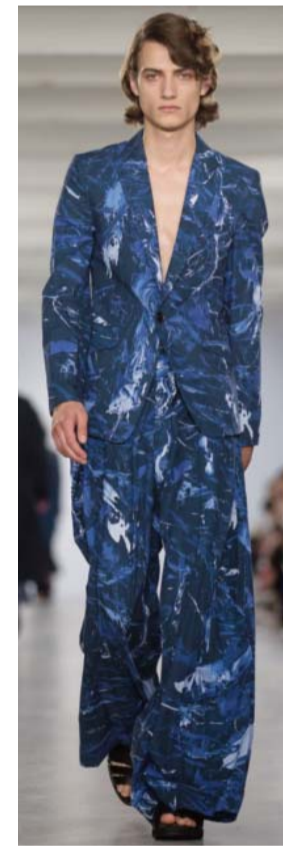
turbans and theatrical poses. "Imitation of Life" will also include Sherman's black comedy film "Office Killer," a special screening of the

artist's directorial debut, appropriately looping in a city defined by its film industry.—AFP

London Collections Men fashion event



Models present creations during the SONGZIO catwalk show on the final day of the Spring/Summer 2017 London Collections Men fashion event in central London.—AFP photos



Models present creations by Liam Hodges.

Making headway: All natural way for a healthy scalp detox

We spend so much time and energy styling and treating our hair, looking for the perfect and latest product to try and neglect the real reason why we have all our hair, which is our scalp. At times we forget that our scalp is living and breathing, and the hair strands are dead. In order to have healthy and growing hair you need to treat and pamper your scalp, especially when you're living in a region of extreme cold or hot weather. When your scalp starts to become dry, flaky and itchy that's its way of telling you to give it a break.

We don't realize that all the hair products we use such as hairspray, wax, hair oil and so on tend to create build up on your scalp which clogs your pores and results in having greasy hair and slow hair growth. A scalp detox treatment includes massaging in a mask to exfoliate the scalp, which unclogs your pores of dead skin and removes toxins from the hair follicles, roots, and oil glands. Shampooing isn't enough to clean your scalp, therefore I've typed up a few DIY home recipes to detoxify your scalp!

1. Baking soda is a natural cleansing ingredient which absorbs all of the oil in your hair, olive oil locks in the moisture in your hair and fights dandruff to allow faster hair growth and the last ingredient is cinnamon powder which prevents fungal and bacterial infections of the scalp. Mix all three ingredients together and massage into your scalp for about 10-15 minutes then shampoo and condition as usual. This mask is considered to be a deep clarifying cleanse and shouldn't be done more than a month.

2. An exfoliating scalp mask: Brown sugar and Oatmeal scrub; add 2 tablespoons of brown sugar and oatmeal to your conditioner and massage it into your



scalp after you're done with shampooing. This mask will help exfoliate your scalp to unplug your pores as well as add moisture to your scalp.

3. Salt and Olive Oil This mixture stimulates hair growth and as well exfoliates the scalp without drying it out and plugging your pores.

Also, try getting your hands on a Scalp Brush, the tiny bristles are made almost as the same size as your pores in your scalp, which allows the brush to gently exfoliate your scalp as well as pores every time you use this brush. This has been the go to brush for the Japanese for hundreds of years and works just great. This brush can come in handy if you have thick and curly hair you dread brushing after a shower.

Always put in the effort to maintain or improve the health of your hair and scalp as they both go hand in hand. If you don't have a healthy scalp you won't be growing healthy, strong hair. Keep in mind, when you're exfoliating you are massaging your scalp and that improves your blood circulation which allows hair growth and improves the flow of mineral and vitamins into your hair follicles. Having clean unclogged pores will also help your hair grow faster as well as prevents skin conditions and dead cells.

It's really interesting to read and educate myself about all the elements and ingredients we have just sitting around us, and how to make use of them in the easiest and simplest of ways! Experiment and try new ideas which can shock you in how useful it is for you, whether it is for your scalp, hair type, skin and body. Unless you're allergic to any oil or fruit, that wouldn't be cute, but other than that enjoy it! Organic and natural recipes such as those won't harm you in any way if anything they'll improve your skin, hair and nails in an all-natural way.

Japan's Uniqlo targets global stature with fashion identity

Japanese clothing chain Uniqlo has leveraged its prowess in mass production to build a fashion empire filled with shelves upon shelves of affordable, good quality items like down jackets, underwear and T-shirts. Now the 17-nation, 1,734-store retailer is on a quest to beat Western giants like Gap, H&M and Zara to become the world's biggest apparel maker. In the overcrowded, highly competitive casual fashion market, size is important but no guarantee of success: analysts say Uniqlo's challenge is to carve out a brand identity of its own, going beyond its formula of delivering non-nonsense quality at good prices.

"To win over consumers and break through the clutter, Uniqlo needs to get even more personal," says Stuart Green, chief executive of Asia Pacific at Interbrand, which consults and

ranks brands. "It will be critical for Uniqlo to maintain product quality and, most importantly, create a deeper, more emotional connection with its customers to drive brand loyalty," he said.

Non-Asian markets

Interbrand ranks Uniqlo as Japan's most valuable retail brand, and eighth among Japan's global brands, including Toyota, Sony and Nintendo. The company's founder and chief, Tadashi Yanai, is Japan's richest man, according to Forbes magazine. Analysts say that to move it its next stage of growth, Uniqlo also needs to beef up its digital presence and adapt to non-Asian markets. Winning over the huge market of suburban American shoppers will be crucial.

Consumers these days are picking brands on digital platforms and social

networks, as they increasingly shop online. To cope with the mind-boggling volumes of information online, consumers now rely on brands to serve as filters and curators, Green said. To help drive its global expansion, Uniqlo is tapping outside talent. It just hired Christophe Lemaire, formerly of Hermes and Lacoste, who started his own Uniqlo line last year, to head its Paris research center.

In 2014, it brought in a global branding expert, John Jay. An American of Chinese origin, he who worked on ad campaigns for Nike, Coca-Cola and Microsoft, and a fleece campaign for Uniqlo, at US marketing company Wieden+Kennedy. "Whether they're in Beijing or New York, there is a commonality to young people and what they want in life," Jay, whose title is president of Global Creative at Uniqlo's parent company Fast Retailing, said at a recent Tokyo event, centered on Uniqlo's second fashion show ever.

"We have barely scratched the surface. Our potential is amazing," he said.

Uniqlo is still relatively small, with 44 stores in the US, 449 stores in China and 846 in Japan, its biggest market. Retail giant H&M of Sweden has 4,000 stores around the world, Gap Inc. of the US, 3,700 stores, and Inditex of Spain operates 7,000 Zara, Bershka and other brand stores.

H&M and Inditex have posted healthy financial results recently, but Gap, which has the Old Navy and Banana Republic brands, is struggling, slashing prices to draw buyers and closing dozens of stores, including some in Japan. The Standard & Poor's credit rating agency recently downgraded Gap's debt to junk status. Uniqlo's profits also have slowed recently, hurt by a warm winter that slowed sales of its down jackets, HeatTech underwear and other winter apparel.

Fashion trends

Fast Retailing, with 100,000 employees, forecasts a profit of 60 billion yen (\$560 million) for the fiscal year through August, down 46 percent from the previous fiscal year, mainly because of falling profits at Uniqlo. Yanai's turnaround plan

includes sweeping cost cuts, improved efficiency, pricing reviews, and, perhaps most importantly, greater flair in the company's fashion offerings, building on collaborations with designers.

The company asked Nigo, a Japanese DJ with a reputation for innovation who created The Bathing Ape clothing line, to add more flair and edge to his T-shirts. Nigo added to the T-shirt line motifs from pop artist Andy Warhol, music producer and singer Pharrell Williams and from traditional Kabuki theater, in addition to old-time favorites like Mickey Mouse.

A partnership with Carine Roitfield, former editor-in-chief of Vogue Paris, has brought into Uniqlo stores chic designs unlike most anything else you'd find. The company has strengthened its sportswear, signing on tennis stars Kei Nishikori and Novak Djokovic. Uniqlo also has partnerships with labels like Liberty London, with its colorful flower-pattern fabrics, and Hana Tajima, a designer who specializes in Muslim clothing such as head scarves and long dresses.

"Uniqlo has a smart format, which stands out from most of the mass fashion retailers. Less concerned on fashion trends, and more focused on 'basics' or 'investment pieces' of good fabric and quality," said Luca Solca, analyst with BNP Paribas. "They are trying to spice this up with designer collaborations." Uniqlo executives believe fashion is globalizing, and people around the world, from China to New York, more or less want the same thing - quality for reasonable prices, and clothes that suit their lives. On a recent weekday, the company's 12-story Ginza store was crowded, as tourists milled around in front snapping selfies in front of what has become a city landmark. Olga Symonenko, an IT worker from the Ukraine, said she had heard about Uniqlo from friends who had been to the store in the US. "The prices are good, and the quality," she said, happily clutching two blue dresses. She said she and her husband planned to pick up 20 items.—AP



Models display creations by Japanese clothing chain Uniqlo during its Fall Winter fashion show in Tokyo.—AP photos



Shoppers look at items at Uniqlo's flagship store in Tokyo's Ginza shopping district.



Hadid is the face of Stuart Weitzman's new campaign

The 21-year-old supermodel previously starred in a racy spring/summer campaign for the brand with fellow Victoria's Secret models Lily Aldridge and Joan Smalls but she appears solo in promotional material for the upcoming fall collection. The advertisements - shot by Mario Testino - have been inspired by Gigi's "real-life workout regimen" and feature the stunning model in a series of active poses, including jogging and doing high kicks. Gigi says working with the label is a dream job because she is obsessed with shoes and often plans her outfits around her footwear. And over-the-knee boots are one of her favorite picks because they can be comfortable and flattering.

She told E! News: "Over-the-knee boots have become so popular and what I love is that you can wear the flat version and they're still flattering. I've worn them with miniskirts and I've worn them with jeans." Last year Gigi, Lily and Joan each wore nothing but a pair of heels for their campaign for the shoe brand. One image from their shoot showed the three models standing stomach-

to-stomach and strategically wrapping their arms around one another to protect their modesty. To ensure the attention remained on the shoes, the gorgeous girls wore a pair of identical black strappy heels, appropriately named 'Nearlynude'.—Bang Showbiz



Gigi Hadid

Naomi Campbell: I have never experienced anything like the Yeezy

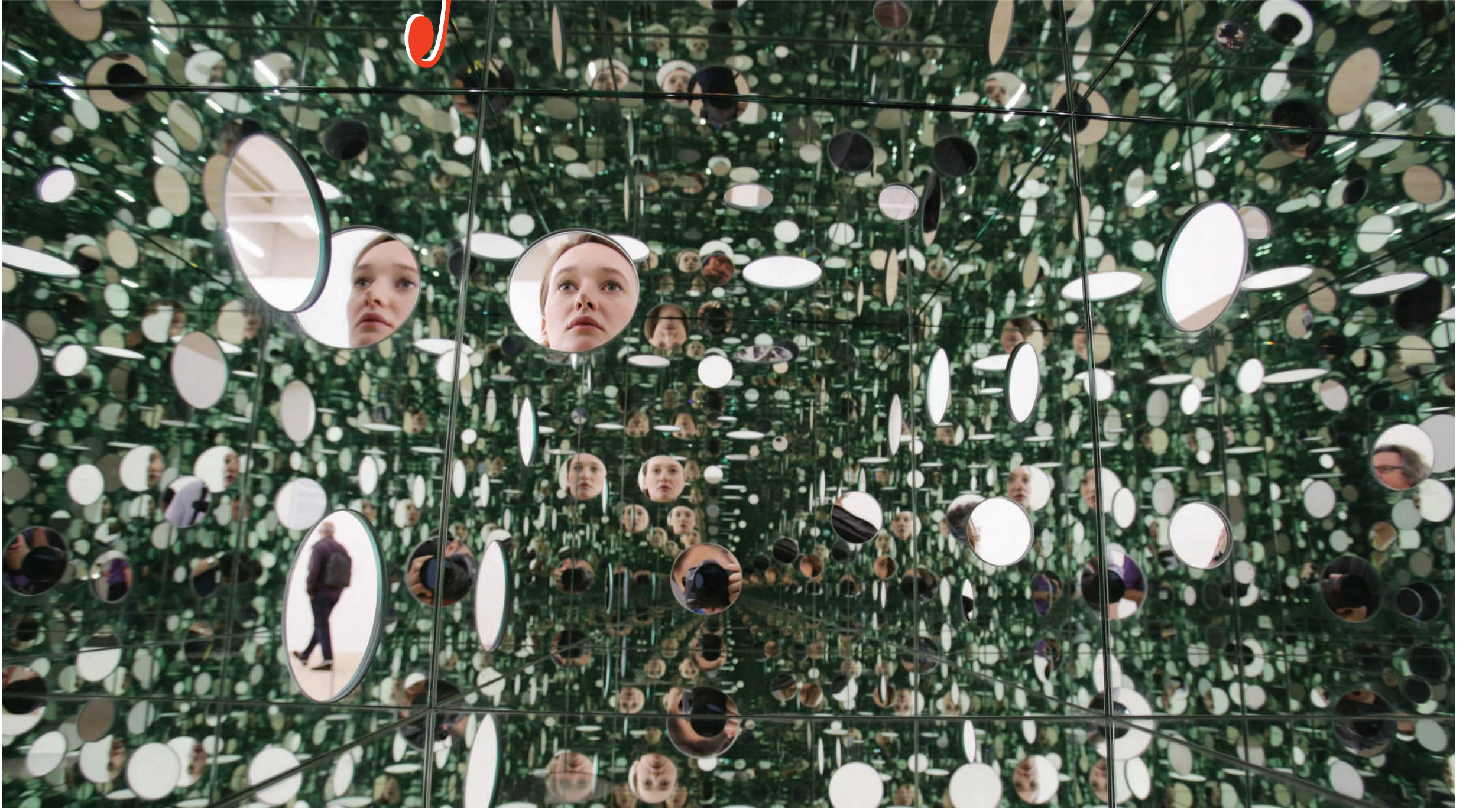
Naomi Campbell says she has never experienced anything like Kanye West's Yeezy fashion show. The 46-year-old model - who has 30 years' experience in the fashion industry - jumped at the chance to take part in the rapper's Yeezy season three show at Madison Square Garden last year but admitted she found it unusual as there was no running order and Kanye called the models to the stage when he "felt it organically". Speaking to legendary editor and journalist, Glenn O'Brien, for his M2M.tv series, "Tea at the Beatrice", she explained: "I never did anything like that before. Of course I said yes right away because I've always wanted to walk in Madison Square Garden so I was like, 'yep I wanna do it'."

"When we were in the dressing room getting ready, I said 'how is Kanye gonna call us?' and they said 'Mr West is going to call you when he feels it organically'. 'I normally never get dressed right away but I was worried that he would call me when I wasn't ready so I said 'let me just get dressed now'. And that was it, they came in and said, 'he's feeling it now - come, come'. Thank goodness I was dressed. "But it was fun - I've never done a show with

11,000 people." Naomi previously revealed Kanye gave his models a strict list of instructions - including no smiling or looking at the camera - and she was impressed by his vision. She said: "He knows exactly what he wants, what he's saying, what he does, everything!"—Bang Showbiz



Naomi Campbell



A Tate employee views 'The Passing Winter 2005' by Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama, in the new Switch House extension of the Tate Modern, in London.—AFP

Gold

rush still irresistible in Poland



Gold prospector Roman Drozd shows his findings during the International Championships in Gold Panning.



A participant prospects gold nuggets from a bucket of sand during the International Championships in Gold Panning.

Each spring they come from around the globe to the Kaczawa river in southwest Poland's gold rush capital, vying for the biggest flash in the pan.

Knee deep in water, excited enthusiasts, young and old alike, survey the riverbed in Zlotoryja in search of tiny gleaming flakes, hoping their perseverance will pay off. "Whenever I'm in the river, I find at least a dozen tiny pieces of gold and dozens of flakes," said Jaroslaw Dudkiewicz, a member of the Polish gold miners' association. "The most ambitious prospectors manage to gather three to four grams per day," he told AFP.

Zlotoryja's gold rush dates back to the 12th century when legend has it, prospectors managed to collect more than 50 kilograms (110 pounds) a year. The town even chose to enshrine the activity in its name: first Aurum, or "gold" in Latin, then Goldberg, or "mountain of gold" in German, and finally Zlotoryja, or "gold-digging" in Polish. Tadeusz Osilewicz first came down with gold fever almost 25 years ago and has since spent thousands of hours panning—all for what amounts to just one ounce (30 grams) of gold. Worth about \$1,300 (1,150 euros) at current prices, the fruit of his labor fits into a little box, but no matter. "I'm not rich, but I'm happy to own gold that I've found myself," he said. "I wanted to give the gold to my daughter so she could use it to make wedding rings for her marriage, but she didn't want it so I'm just collecting it."

Gold-panning championships

Zlotoryja's reputation as the city of gold put it on the map from the Middle Ages. "A 13th century papal map of Europe showed only two Polish cities: Wroclaw and Zlotoryja," said Zbigniew Gruszczynski, director of the local museum of gold. "Obviously, it didn't show all the cities here—just the ones that were worth mentioning," he told AFP. Prospectors poured in from around Poland and Germany and some even dug tunnels in the area's mountains. One of the resulting mines, Aurelia, is now open to tourists. But all the gold-digging soon took its toll and by the mid-14th century deposits had all but dried up, leading Zlotoryja's inhabitants to branch out into beer and textiles.

Mining is no longer viable but the old shafts continue to draw tourists and some say there is still a lot of the precious metal under foot. "We calculated the amount of gold that could have been dumped here in slag heaps during the Middle Ages," said archeologist Witold Laszewski. "According to our estimates, there are around five kilos of gold beneath the streets of Zlotoryja." In a sign that gold fever is still infectious, the town hosts the World Gold-Panning Championships every year on the last weekend of May. Open to all, including children, the competition has each participant sift through a bucket of sand and water to locate the hidden pieces of gold as quickly as possible. The current record? Fifty-two seconds.—AFP



A Tourist visits the old gold mine Aurelia during the International Championships in Gold Panning in Zlotoryja.



Participants prospect gold nuggets from a bucket of sand during the International Championships in Gold Panning.



A participant prospects gold nuggets from a bucket of sand during the International Championships in Gold Panning.