

Amir thanks allies on 27th anniversary of Iraqi invasion



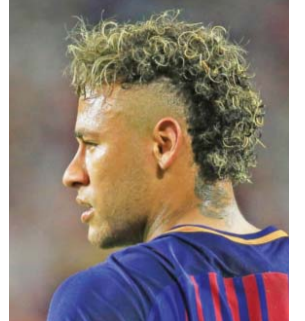
Netanyahu steps in to stop brawl of Israeli, Jordanian MPs



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KUWAIT DENIES IRAN MISUSING ITS WATERS TO SUPPLY HOUTHIS

KUWAIT: Kuwait yesterday denied a Reuters report that Iran was using the state's waters to smuggle weapons and equipment to Houthi forces in Yemen. "The State of Kuwait refutes news by the Reuters news agency regarding Iran's exploitation of Kuwaiti waters to deliver arms and military assistance to the Houthis in Yemen," a foreign ministry statement said. A source at the ministry said that the country's waters are under the total control of the Kuwaiti navy and coastguard, adding that there were no reports of suspicious marine movements or activities.

The ministry urged international media to investigate such matters "more thoroughly". On Tuesday, Reuters cited sources familiar with the matter as saying that Iran's Revolutionary Guards had begun using a new route across the Gulf to funnel covert arms shipments to their Houthi allies in Yemen's civil war. For the last six months, Western and Iranian sources say the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) has begun using waters further up the Gulf between Kuwait and Iran as it looks for new ways to beat

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KUWAIT: Hazem Jaber, a Kuwaiti who fought Iraqi troops during the invasion of the country, is seen at the Al-Qurain Martyr's Museum yesterday, on the 27th anniversary of the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. The Al-Qurain Martyr's Museum is the home of a battle which lasted 10 hours between invading Iraqi troops and a group of Kuwaiti fighters. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat (More pics on Page 3)

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: According to a ministerial decree issued by Health Minister Jamal Al-Harbi on Tuesday, the new health fees that will be paid by expatriates for using services at public hospitals and polyclinics will be as follows from Oct 1:

Fees for expats who pay annual health insurance:

The fee for getting medical treatment at the polyclinic will increase from KD 1 to KD 2; the fee for getting medical treatment at a public hospital will increase from KD 2 to KD 5; the fee for outpatient clinics at public hospitals will increase from KD 2 to KD 10; a stay in public wards will cost KD 10 per day (free currently); a stay in the intensive care unit will cost KD 30 per day (free currently); a stay in a private room at a public hospital will cost KD 50 per day, and the deposit for the private room will cost KD 200. The fees include receiving medical treatment at outpatient clinics, medication, regular x-rays and regular laboratory tests. The fees for a stay in hospital do not include surgeries, laboratory tests and x-rays.

Medical checkups at the public maternity hospital will cost KD 10 and delivery charges will be KD 50 (free currently). This includes the delivery, ultrasound, laboratory tests, medication and hospital stay for three nights. For each additional night, the patient will pay KD 10 for a stay in the public ward and KD 50 in a private room. (These services are currently free of charge, apart from the private room).

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DOHA: Italian Foreign Minister Angelino Alfano (left) shakes hands with Qatari Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani yesterday after signing a deal. — AP

ZAIN SAUDI ARABIA CONTINUES TO GROW

COMPANY RECORDS PROFITS FOR SECOND CONSECUTIVE QUARTER

KUWAIT/RIYADH: Zain Saudi Arabia (Zain KSA) reported its second consecutive quarterly net profit and its first ever, half year net profit for the period ending 30 June 2017. Data services growth leveraging the advanced 4.5G LTE network, prudent management of operational costs and the effect of the 15-year license extension were the main contributing factors to the positive performance of the company.

Key performance indicators for the 2nd quarter of 2017 when compared to Q2 2016, Zain KSA recorded: Revenues of SAR 1.865 billion, up 8 percent; Gross profit of SAR 1.259 billion, up 13 per-

cent; EBITDA of SAR 632 million, up 70 percent; Operational income of SAR 235 million; Quarterly net profit amounting to SAR 8 million, (six-month net profit of SAR 53 million).

Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi, Zain Group Vice-Chairman and CEO; and Vice-Chairman of Zain Saudi Arabia commented: "The strong performance of this promising operation in the first six months of 2017 are attributed to prudent management in implementing the turnaround program that focuses on operating efficiencies, network upgrades, customer service and data monetization initiatives combined with

the positive effect of the license extension by an additional 15 years."

For the second quarter of 2017, Zain KSA witnessed an 8 percent increase in revenues to reach SAR 1.865 billion. Impressively, Zain KSA recorded a significant 70 percent increase in EBITDA to reach SAR 632 million during Q2 2017 up from SAR 372 million during Q2 2016 with an EBITDA margin reaching 34 percent compared to 22 percent in Q2 2016. This improvement reflects the positive effects of management's efforts in driving efficiencies and optimizing the company cost structure.

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Zain Vice-Chairman and Group CEO Bader Al-Kharafi

QATAR, ITALY INK €5BN DEAL FOR SEVEN WARSHIPS

DOHA: Qatar announced yesterday a five-billion-euro order for seven warships from Italy in the midst of a nearly two-month diplomatic crisis with neighboring Saudi Arabia and its allies. "We have signed a contract on behalf of the Qatari navy to acquire seven warships from Italy for five billion euros (\$5.9 billion)," Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani said at a Doha press conference with his visiting Italian counterpart Angelino Alfano.

It follows the signing of a preliminary contract in June 2016 for the deal between the Italian group Fincantieri and Qatar for four corvettes, an amphibious vessel and two patrol boats. Alfano in a tweet welcomed the deal, which he said would create 1,000 jobs in Italy. In June this year, the United States agreed a \$12-billion sale of F-15 fighter jets to Qatar, re-affirming support for the emirate in the throes of the worst diplomatic crisis to hit the Gulf in decades.

Saudi Arabia and its allies including Egypt and the United Arab Emirates cut diplomatic and trade ties with Qatar on June 5, accusing Doha of backing extremist groups and being too close to Riyadh's archrival Iran. Qatar denies the allegations and accuses the Saudi-led bloc of imposing a "siege" on the tiny emirate.

The Qatari minister said yesterday that the four Arab states had "showed no intention to resolve the crisis peacefully" at their last meeting on Sunday in Bahrain. "We are not paying attention to decisions that don't produce anything new," he said. "Every day brings something that contradicts the other so Qatar is not going to tire itself staying abreast on what (the quartet) see as solutions to resolving the crisis."

Alfano called for a de-escalation and a solution that shows "respect for international law". The Saudi-led bloc has demanded that Qatar close regional news giant Al-Jazeera and a Turkish military base, and downgrade its ties with Iran. Doha has dismissed the demands as a violation of its sovereignty.

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KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem. —Amiri Diwan photos



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

AMIR THANKS ALLIES ON 27TH ANNIVERSARY OF IRAQI INVASION

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent cables yesterday to leaders of Gulf nations, expressing gratefulness to them for standing by Kuwait during the Iraqi invasion of the country 27 years ago. Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, UAE President Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, Bahraini King Hamad bin Issa Al-Khalifa, the Sultan of Oman Qaboos Bin Saeed and Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, along with leaders of nations which made up the Allied Coalition, were the recipients of His Highness the Amir's cables.

In his cables, His Highness the Amir said that these nations' contributions to the liberation of Kuwait from an atrocious invasion would forever be etched in the mem-

ories of Kuwaitis. He also wished these countries, whom Kuwait enjoys great ties with, continued development and prosperity. Cables of identical content were addressed 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.

In other news, His Highness the Amir received yesterday at Bayan Palace National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem. His Highness the Amir also received His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. His Highness Sheikh Sabah received First Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. —KUNA



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with First Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.



TUNIS: The third conference grouping Arab officials charged with human rights in progress. (Inset) Colonel Abdullah Al-Ajmi attends the conference. —KUNA

KUWAIT BOOSTS HUMAN RIGHTS IN SECURITY DOMAIN: OFFICIAL

TUNIS: The State of Kuwait, represented by the Ministry of Interior, seeks to boost human rights in the security realm and has taken a lot of measures to enhance cooperation among all relevant authorities at this level, a visiting official has affirmed.

Colonel Abdullah Al-Ajmi, International Relations Director at the Ministry of Interior, said in a statement on the sidelines of a the third conference grouping Arab officials charged with human rights that kicked off in Tunisia yesterday, that the partaking Kuwaiti delegation shed light in its presentation on the ministry experience in

boosting human rights.

Kuwait has taken tangible steps at this level, joining the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, enacting Law 67/2015, stipulating establishment of the National Diwan for Human Rights, in addition to cooperating with diverse regional and international agencies involved in the field.

Colonel Ajmi, moreover, indicated at the exiting cooperation between the Ministry of Interior with the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR) and the International Migration Organization (IMO). Kuwaiti police

officers often partake in training courses held by these international agencies.

At the Arab level, Kuwait coordinates with Arab countries in this domain, regularly participates in Arab human rights associations and organizations. The Arab convention started earlier today, with aim of mapping out a common strategy to boost human rights in the security field in the Arab world. Kuwait is taking part in the conference with a delegation representing the Ministry of Interior. It also includes Captain Hussein Al-Baghli, head of the Human Rights Department at the ministry. —KUNA

LESSONS TO BE TAUGHT FROM ANNIVERSARY: SHEIKH TALAL

KUWAIT: The 27th anniversary of the Iraqi invasion brings with it significant lessons enlightening the Kuwaiti generations, says Sheikh Talal Al-Sabah, the Acting Undersecretary of the Oil Ministry. Speaking to journalists following a seminar held yesterday on the occasion, Sheikh Talal recalled efforts that were exerted by devoted Kuwaitis to put out fires, ignited by the occupiers at the oil installations and fields. The last fire was extinguished in November 1991. The forum was organized by the public relations and petroleum information department at the ministry marking the 27th

anniversary, under the theme 'narratives of the painful aggression.'

Sheikh Talal expressed deep gratitude to all those who had taken part in repelling the aggression; namely the late Amir His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and His Highness the Father Amir Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah. Moreover, he lauded the Kuwaiti citizens who united in the face of the aggressors. Meanwhile, Sheikha Tamador Al-Sabah, the acting public relations supervisor, echoed identical sentiments praising those who struggled for justice and Kuwait's freedom. —KUNA

KUWAIT EAGER TO BOOST EFFORTS TO END DISCRIMINATION: AMBASSADOR

KUWAIT: Kuwait seeks to boost efforts to fully implement the terms of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, said senior Kuwaiti official at the UN yesterday. Speaking at the 93rd meeting of the UN's Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Kuwait's Permanent delegate to the UN and international organizations' headquarters in Geneva Ambassador Jamal Al-Ghunaem said that Kuwait, which joined the convention in 1968, aimed to end all forms of discrimination and protect human rights in accordance with article 70 of the Kuwaiti constitution. Presenting Kuwait's papers on its role in the convention, he mentioned article 29 of the constitution, which states that all people have equal social, political, cultural, and civil rights.

Ghunaem noted that Kuwait had

established several bodies to protect the rights of women and disabled people, fighting corruption, preventing human trafficking, child protection and a committee to improve living conditions for illegal residents. The country strongly believes in the role of women in society, thus, allowing women to seize senior positions such as ministers, ambassadors and chairpersons of top ranked companies and organizations.

Speaking of Kuwait's efforts to end discrimination, Ghunaem mentioned that the country issued a decree in 2012 to incriminate any acts that promote hatred and racism, he noted. The country is attracting large numbers of foreign job seekers due to its reputation in equality among all nationalities, said the ambassador. Kuwait is currently home to over 164 nationalities of different religions and cultures, enjoying their full rights. —KUNA



29TH PEARL DIVING TRIP CONCLUDES TODAY

By Faten Omar



Khalid Al-Foudari

KUWAIT: The 29th pearl diving trip concludes today with the 'Qefal' ceremony in the presence of Minister of Commerce and Industry and Acting Minister of State for Youth Affairs Khalid Al-Roudhan representing His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah at the Kuwait Sea Sports Club (KSSC) in Salmiya from 4:30 pm. The diving trip from July 27 to Aug 3 involved 13 traditional dhows with 200 young men.

The ceremony will begin with Roudhan touring an exhibition of art, collections and pictures

of marine heritage, followed by the arrival of the diving vessels to the coast of the club. The divers will be honored after presenting their harvest of pearls to the representative of HH the Amir to mark the end of the diving season.

The diving trip started last Thursday with a 'Dasha' ceremony under the slogan 'One Gulf, one destiny' in the presence of Education Minister Mohammad Al-Fares. The Kuwait flag was raised, marking the start of the diving season. The dhows then headed to 'Herat' in Khairan, where there are plenty of oysters to practice the actual diving process over a whole week in the same old traditional way practiced by the earlier genera-

tions amidst difficult weather conditions and high temperature and humidity.

Secretary-General of KSSC Khalid Al-Foudari said that this year's diving trip was characterized by many additions, most notably the new slogan in order to enhance the efforts of HH the Amir to reunite brothers in GCC countries and safeguard Gulf unity. He added the heritage exhibition will have new sections with the participation of divers' families. The club invited the public and the parents to attend the ceremony and enjoy the activities that will start at 3:30 pm, including cultural competitions presented by Talal Al-Majid.



KUWAIT: Kuwaitis tour Al-Qurain House yesterday, which marked the 27th anniversary of the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. The Al-Qurain Martyr's Museum is the home of a gruesome battle lasting 10 long hours between invading Iraqi troops and a group of Kuwait freedom fighters called the Al-Massilah group. The battle took place on February 24th, 1991, during the Iraq occupation of Kuwait. The battleground that this took place on is now home to the Al-Qurain Martyr's Museum, a memorial for those lost during the Iraqi occupation. —Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



CYBERSECURITY PLAN NEEDED TO KEEP THREATS AT BAY: OFFICIAL

KUWAIT: Kuwait's national cybersecurity strategy is vital to protect the country from potential electronic threats, an official said yesterday. Chairman of the Public Authority for Communications and Information (PACI) Salem Al-Uthaina touted the strategy as a comprehensive plan that would protect information security in the government and private sectors, as well as stave off cyber-attacks.

He pointed out that the plan was concocted by an ad hoc committee amid a rise in cybercrime, which would behoove the government to rely on cutting-edge technology in hopes of ensuring maximum cybersecurity. Moreover, he revealed that a national cybersecurity center, which will be tasked with monitoring cybersecurity activities, would soon be launched as part of efforts to develop cyber defense strategies.

He highlighted the need to establish an effective plan where all measures will be taken to guarantee rigid cybersecurity. Cybersecurity procedures involve the use of technologies and practices designed to protect networks, computers and programs from attacks, damage or unauthorized access. —KUNA

MUNICIPALITY MUST SUPERVISE IMPORTED FOOD: COUNCILOR

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Deputy Chairman of the Municipal Council Meshal Al-Juwaisri insisted that it is necessary for the Municipality to supervise imported food that enters the country that is not fit for human consumption. He found it strange for an entire apparatus to follow up tons of imported food that entered the country without the knowledge of inspectors. He asked Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Minister and State Minister for Municipality Affairs Mohammad Al-Jabri and Municipality Director Ahmad Al-Manfouhi to take to task those who bring in tons of spoiled food. He said the municipality is the safety

line for consumers' health, including citizens and expats.

Separately, Municipal Council member and chairman of the technical committee Fahd Al-Sane did not like a statement by the food and nutrition authority's chairman Essa Al-Kandari about mobile food laboratories, and considering them as his achievement. "I introduced this issue during my current membership in the Municipal Council, on November 14, 2013 to be exact," he said. He added that it is not acceptable for the authority's chairman to take the kudos for the proposal and ignore others. Sane asked Kandari to correct matters and hold those who made him make this statement responsible.



16.5 KG OF SPOILED FOOD CONFISCATED

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Mubarak Al-Kabeer municipality inspectors cracked down on Abu Fateera stores yesterday, and ended up issuing 23 citations, removing 103 random ads, and confiscating 16.5 kilograms of food that was found to be unfit for human consumption.

Garbage bags
Interior Ministry Relations and Security

Information commented on a video footage circulated on social media and showing workers of cleaning companies at Kuwait International Airport placing garbage bags inside the inspection x-ray system. The ministry said that the system is designated for checking the garbage bags at Kuwait International Airport to check bags available at the transit, off limit areas and some other areas before leaving to make sure that no banned substances are being smuggled.

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In Brief

ISRAEL'S VIOLENT INTENTIONS

ISTANBUL: Kuwait said that the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the international community should work together to stave off Israel's criminal actions. The remarks were made by Kuwait's Assistant Foreign Minister for International Affairs Nasser Al-Heyn in an extraordinary OIC session held in the Turkish city of Istanbul on Tuesday. "Israel's flagrant violation of the sanctity of the Al-Aqsa Mosque represents a new chapter in its violent and malicious tendencies," said the Kuwaiti diplomat. — KUNA



KUWAITI OIL PRICE UP TO \$49.30 PB

KUWAIT: The price of Kuwaiti oil went up by 45 cents to \$49.30 per barrel Tuesday after being at \$48.85 pb the day before, said Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) yesterday. The prices at the global level were down due to data showing an increase in US oil reserves last week by 1.8 million barrels. The price of the Brent crude was down to \$52.28 per barrel as in the case of the West Texas Intermediate, which was also down to \$49.84 pb. — KUNA



DOLLAR STABLE AT KD 0.301

KUWAIT: The rate of the US Dollar and the Euro remained stable at KD 0.301 and KD 0.356 consecutively, said the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) yesterday. The Sterling Pound was also stable at KD 0.398, the Swiss Franc was unchanged at KD 0.312, and the Japanese yen was firm at KD 0.002. — KUNA



Photo

of the day



KUWAIT: Kuwaiti women sit next to flags of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries in the beach outside a chalet last Tuesday in the port city of Khairan, 100 kilometers (62 miles) south of Kuwait City. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

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KUWAIT DONATES \$145,000 IN MEDICAL SUPPLIES TO TANZANIA

DODOMA: Kuwait has delivered medical equipment worth \$145,000 to a cardiac center in the eastern African nation of Tanzania. Tanzania's Minister of Health and Community Development Umy Mwalim received the medical supplies that will be used to equip an operating room in a cardiac center, read a statement Kuwait's embassy in Tanzania. The medical aid would help prop up the impoverished nation's ailing healthcare sector, where one out of every 100 children is affected by a heart disorder, Kuwait's Ambassador to Tanzania Jassim Al-Najem revealed. Addressing a ceremony where the supplies were delivered, Mwalim thanked Kuwait for the aid, saying that the new equipment would ultimately help save more lives. — KUNA



DODOMA: Kuwait's Ambassador to Tanzania Jassim Al-Najem delivers the medical supplies. — KUNA



KUWAIT AIRWAYS CLINCHES AWARD FOR INFLIGHT SERVICE

KUWAIT: Kuwait Airways has won an award for best onboard amenities in an annual travel exhibition held in the German city of Hamburg. Speaking yesterday, Fayez Al-Enezi, Kuwait Airways' head of public relations, said that globe-trotters have chosen Kuwait's national carrier as the airline with the most satisfactory in-flight services, through a poll issued on Global Traveler Magazine's official website. He pointed out that Kuwait Airways edged out a number of reputable airlines to win the award, which was a testament to its top-notch service that has garnered the trust of passengers. Enezi added that travelers are guaranteed convenience and comfort when onboard a Kuwait Airways aircraft. One of the oldest airlines in the Gulf region, the Kuwaiti Government acquired full ownership of Kuwait Airways in 1962. —KUNA

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ABK CONCLUDES SUMMER INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

KUWAIT: Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK), in partnership with Lothan Youth Achievement Center (LOYAC) and the Manpower and Government Restructuring Program (MGRP), announced the successful conclusion of its annual summer internship program. The month-long program was held at the ABK Training Center in Hawally and at the bank's various branches and offices.

The program, which involved 6 students this year is aimed at young Kuwaiti university and college students and combines lectures, on-site assignments and team

projects to deliver a hands-on learning experience with the objective of participants experiencing a real working environment at a leading financial institution. It also offers students the opportunity to enrich their knowledge of the banking world while emphasizing the importance of teamwork.

ABK is an avid supporter of education and has successfully built strong partnerships with many of Kuwait's educational institutions to offer participating students a rewarding experience at a crucial point in their educational journey.



KUWAIT: The Retired officers division of the Interior Ministry's General Department of Service Centers hosted the weekly meeting for retired officers this past Tuesday.

PSYCHIATRIC WELLNESS' SOCIAL ACCEPTANCE ON RISE IN KUWAIT

MORE THAN 200,000 SUFFER DEPRESSION-RELATED DISORDERS

KUWAIT: Life is rarely without its challenges; however, there are some issues that can be so overwhelming that it seems impossible to move on. Whether it is the death of a loved one or overwhelming feelings of anxiety, it is important for the affected people to know that help is available for every problem life throws in your way.

People seek psychiatric help for many reasons. The problems can be sudden, such as a panic attack, frightening hallucinations, thoughts of suicide, or hearing 'voices.' Or they may be more long-term, such as feelings of sadness, hopelessness, or anxiousness that never seem to lift or problems functioning, causing everyday life to feel distorted or out of control.

Talking relationship

Psychotherapy, sometimes called talk therapy, is a treatment that involves a talking relationship between a therapist and the patient. It can be used to treat a broad variety of mental disorders and emotional difficulties.

The goal of psychotherapy is to eliminate or control disabling or troubling symptoms so the patient can function better. Depending on the extent of the problem, treatment may take just a few sessions over a week or two or may take many sessions over a period of years. Psychotherapy can be done individually, as a couple, with a family, or in a group. Psychiatrists use a variety of treatments including various forms of psychotherapy, medications, psychosocial interventions and other treatments (such as electroconvulsive therapy), depending on the needs of each patient.

There are many forms of psychotherapy. There are psychotherapies that help patients change behaviors or thought patterns, psychotherapies that help patients explore the effect of past relationships and experiences on present behaviors, and psychotherapies that are tailored to help solve other problems in specific ways.

Large number

More than 200,000 people in Kuwait suffer disorders related to depression, a large number compared to the country's population of nearly four million, according to official statistics release by the Ministry of Health ahead of the World Health Day last April 7th. The official statistics seem to indicate that nearly 5-9



Despite the many benefits of psychotherapy for people suffering from mental issues, the negative social perception associated with it remains a deterrent factor for seeking help.

percent of Kuwait's population suffer depression, which is a very high rate compared to other countries, according to a senior psychiatry consultant in Kuwait.

"The percentage drops below four percent in Scandinavian countries and below 4.5 percent in countries like Australia, India and Canada according to a recent study published by the University of Queensland in Australia," said Dr Abdullah Al-Hamadi, the head of the forensic unit at the Kuwait Center for Mental Health.

Social perception

Commenting on the issue of many patients not seeking psychological treatment, Dr Faisal Al-Ajmi, a Psychological and Educational Consultant at Najahat Psychological and Social Center said that in the past, patients used to be hesitant to seek this type of treatment due to the perception of the society for those seeking psychiatric help, besides their misconception and lack of knowledge over the difference between the mental disorder and psychological illness. He said that the mental disorder cannot be treated whereas the psychological illness can be treated by a psychiatrist.

He added that the media somehow played a role in defaming the role of the psychiatrist and perceiving him as a "doctor for insane people only," praising the role of the psychiatrist in resolving many social and psychological issues with no prejudice. He noted that with the increasing pressures and problems surrounding people, the psychiatrist can play

an essential role in giving advice on how to deal with such worries.

Ajmi said that nowadays, people are accepting the psychiatrist with the youth category having the lion's share. He added that elderly also have become more tolerant towards seeking psychiatric help compared with the old generation, saying that the emergence of technology has played a positive role in highlighting the role of psychiatrists in resolving many of the daily life's complex issues.

Not addictive

Ajmi stressed that not every medicine prescribed by the psychologist can be addictive, saying that many people generalize that all psychological-related medicines are addictive. He recalled many cases where patients diagnosed with depression or obsessive compulsive disorder do not take their medicines leading to Schizophrenia which is the most severe stages of mental illness.

He also asserted the importance of paying attention to one's behaviors, saying that many women neglect the hormone aspect, thus, leading to many psychological illnesses. From the biological perspective, different studies have found that being religious increases patients' satisfaction and adherence to treatment. This can be applied to Islam in the way it helps with drug adherence through encouraging Muslims to look after their health by seeking advice and receiving treatment as health is considered a gift from God, which should be cherished. — KUNA



KUWAIT: The Interior Ministry concluded the first policewomen aircraft protection course. A total of 15 policewomen participated in the two-week course, and they were honored during a ceremony attended by Interior Ministry and Kuwait Airways officials.



KUWAIT SEEKS COOPERATION WITH FRENCH GENDARMERIE

KUWAIT: Acting Undersecretary of Kuwait National Guard (KNG) Major General Faleh Shujaa discussed yesterday with Colonel Bruno Gutierrez, the Qatar-based French military attaché, swapping expertise between the Guards and the French Gendarmerie. KNG said in a statement that the two sides discussed French support for Kuwait in its quest to attain membership in the Association of the European and Mediterranean Police Forces and Gendarmeries.

They also examined implementing the Kuwait National Guard's Strategic Document for 2020, entitled 'Security First,' and designed to revamp all KNG units. The statement quoted Colonel Gutierrez as expressing satisfaction for the cooperation with the Guards since they endorsed a joint cooperation plan in training and armament last year. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Acting Undersecretary of Kuwait National Guards Major General Faleh Shujaa meets with Colonel Bruno Gutierrez, the Qatar-based French military attaché. — KUNA



For Pakistanis, China road runs one way

US VP PENCE: BALKANS FUTURE IS 'IN THE WEST'

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HERAT: Protesters shout slogans during a demonstration in western Herat province of Afghanistan. — AP

SHIITES PROTEST DEADLY AFGHAN ATTACK

TALEBAN BOMBER ATTACKS NATO CONVOY

HERAT, Afghanistan: Thousands of Shiite protesters chanted slogans against the Islamic State group yesterday as they carried the coffins of victims of a mosque attack that killed 33 people in the western Afghan city of Herat. Up to 5,000 angry mourners, including relatives of the dead, congregated near the site of Tuesday's suicide bomb attack as IS claimed responsibility for the latest atrocity targeting the minority community. "Death to Daesh (IS)" and "Down with fundamentalism," the demonstrators chanted, as the coffins were brought one by one and placed in a refrigerated lorry near the Jawadya mosque. The mourners, who were set to march to the cemetery to bury their dead, also demanded that the government bring the

perpetrators to justice and pledged to "take revenge" if it did not. Jilani Farhad, a spokesman for the governor of Herat province, said the death toll from the attack, in which two suicide bombers throwing grenades stormed the packed mosque, had risen to 33. Another 66 were wounded. It came a day after IS claimed a deadly assault on the Iraqi embassy in Kabul as it extends its footprint in the war-torn country. Underscoring the nation's insecurity, a Taliban suicide bomber yesterday rammed a vehicle filled with explosives into a convoy of foreign forces in the restive southern province of Kandahar, causing an unspecified number of casualties. Shiites, a minority of around three million in overwhelmingly Sunni

Afghanistan, have regularly been targeted by IS jihadists over the last year. They accuse police and troops of failing to protect them. "I lost all my loved ones, they even killed children as young as seven. This wasn't an attack on Shiites, this was an attack on all Afghans, all Muslims," Farhad Dost, whose cousin died in the assault, said. Members of the Shiite community said police had fled their checkpoint, around 100 meters from the mosque, after the two attackers struck at around 8:00 pm (1530 GMT) on Tuesday.

Died in my hands

Angry locals then clashed with the police and set the checkpoint on fire, according to witnesses who reported that officers opened

fire, injuring some demonstrators.

The governor's spokesman said the police chief of the district had been suspended for "negligence" and a delegation from Kabul had been sent to investigate the attack. In a statement Wednesday, IS's propaganda outlet Amaq claimed it had killed "around 50 Shiites" and wounded 80 more in the attack, which also left young children dead.

Witnesses described scenes of terror and chaos, with emergency wards overwhelmed and survivors rushing victims to hospital in their own vehicles and even on foot. "There weren't enough ambulances... I tried to take a small child to hospital but he died in my hands," Ali, who only gave one name, said. Farhad Afshar rushed to the mosque, where

worshippers had gathered for prayers, after hearing the explosion.

"When I arrived the mosque was full of flesh and blood. I saw a mother crying and searching for her two children. She found one them wounded inside the mosque, the other was found dead in an ambulance," he said.

Quoting survivors, he said the attackers first opened fire on the worshippers, then threw grenades before finally blowing themselves up inside the mosque. IS has claimed responsibility for a series of attacks killing dozens of Shiites in Kabul over the past year, including twin explosions in July 2016 that ripped through crowds of Shiite Hazaras, killing at least 85 people and wounding more than 400.—AFP

NORTH KOREA'S ICBM FIRES UP FEARS IN SOUTH FOR US ALLIANCE

SEOUL: North Korea's latest missile test has extended the range of its weapons to much of mainland US and raised a new fear in the South: would Washington protect Seoul when that could put American cities in danger? The US is security guarantor for the democratic and capitalist South, where 28,500 US troops are stationed to defend it from Pyongyang after the 1950-53 Korean War ended with a ceasefire instead of a peace treaty.

The alliance with Seoul has also been a key pillar of Washington's geopolitical strategy in Asia, where China is increasingly flexing its muscles as it seeks military clout commensurate with its economic might. But last week's intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) test put major US cities including Chicago and Los Angeles within range of a potential attack from the nuclear-armed North. Now South Korean media and experts fear that could cast a cloud over US commitment to the alliance, long described as "rock solid" by both sides.

"Would the Trump administration protect us from an attack from the North when doing so could risk putting the US in danger of a nuclear attack?" JoongAng Ilbo, a major Seoul newspaper, said in an editorial. It was only "a matter of time" before the North develops a fully-operational, nuclear-tipped missile capable of hitting

the US, it said. And at that point, it concluded gloomily, the answer "may not be yes".

There remain doubts whether the North has mastered the technology needed for a missile warhead to survive re-entry into the Earth's atmosphere, or if it can miniaturize a nuclear weapon to fit into a nose cone. But it claims to have done so, and has undoubtedly made rapid technological advances since Kim Jong-Un came to power in 2011, with the young leader overseeing three nuclear tests and a string of missile launches. The North has for decades demanded the US sign a peace treaty with Pyongyang and withdraw its troops from the South. Visiting US politicians always pledge that Washington is committed to the alliance—Vice-President Mike Pence, who toured the Demilitarized Zone that divides the two Koreas in April, called it "ironclad and immutable". But South Korea's top-selling daily Chosun Ilbo questioned those reassurances following the ICBM test.

It was "hard to expect the US to help the South" if that risked a nuclear attack on America, it said in an editorial Monday, and followed up Tuesday warning: "The worst-case scenario is US troops withdrawing from the Korean peninsula. That is what North Korea ultimately wants," it added. "For South Koreans who have grown used to decades of protection

from the US Forces Korea, that prospect is almost unimaginable. But the reality is that things are heading in that very direction."

August crisis?

At the same time, South Koreans fear the possibility of a pre-emptive strike by the US against the North, which could trigger devastating consequences even without Pyongyang resorting to nuclear weapons. It has massed conventional artillery within range of Seoul, which could inflict catastrophic damage on the capital before being neutralized. The US has hardened its stance over the North since Friday's test, with its ambassador to the UN, Nikki Haley, saying: "The time for talk is over."

Influential US Senator Lindsey Graham said Tuesday that President Donald Trump had told him he would go to war to prevent Pyongyang developing a long-range nuclear-armed missile, even if that meant disaster for the peninsula. "He's got to choose between homeland security and regional stability," Graham said in an interview with NBC. "If there's going to be a war to stop him, it will be over there. If thousands die, they're going to die over there. They're not going to die here. And he has told me that to my face." Experts say a months-long conflict on the Korean peninsula, even using



PANMUNJOM: In this photo tourists pose for photos as a South Korean soldier stands guard inside a pavilion at the Joint Security Area (JSA) within the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) separating North and South Korea. — AFP

only conventional arms, could leave a million dead or injured before US and South Korean forces prevailed. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson later insisted the US was not trying to topple the Kim regime. "We are not your enemy. We're not your threat, but you are presenting an unacceptable threat to us, and we have to respond," he said. Jeung Young-Tae, director of military studies at the South's Dongyang University, said Pyongyang had crossed a "red

line" with its latest missile achievements.

"Whether we want it or not, the risk of unilateral military action by the US cannot be ruled out at this point," Jeung said. The possibility of a military conflict was "bigger than ever before," he added. Some observers fear an "August crisis". Later this month the South and US are due to begin an annual joint army drill long criticized as a rehearsal for invasion by the North—which could respond with a major provocation.—AFP

US SETS SEPTEMBER 1 DATE FOR START OF N KOREA TRAVEL BAN

WASHINGTON: The United States yesterday officially set a September 1 start date for a ban prohibiting its citizens from traveling to North Korea. "The Department of State has determined that the serious risk to United States nationals of arrest and long-term detention represents imminent danger to the physical safety of United States nationals traveling to and within the

Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)," read the restriction as it appeared Wednesday in the US government's Federal Register.

"All United States passports are declared invalid for travel to, in, or through the DPRK unless specially validated for such travel," it added. An exemption was noted for approved humanitarian

travel and for journalists in some circumstances. The ban is to remain in effect for one year, unless it is revoked sooner by US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson. The travel ban was first announced last month in the wake of the death of American student Otto Warmbier who fell into a coma after being imprisoned by Pyongyang during a tourist visit.

Warmbier, 22, a student at the University of Virginia, died in June after being held for more than a year on charges of stealing a propaganda poster from a North Korean hotel and sent home in a mysterious coma that proved fatal. After his death, President Donald Trump said he was determined to "prevent such tragedies from befalling innocent people at the

hands of regimes that do not respect the rule of law or basic human decency."

Warmbier's death added to already high tensions in the region over North Korea's weapons ambitions, culminating in two successful test launches by Pyongyang in recent weeks of an intercontinental ballistic missile that experts say could reach US territory.—AFP



ANKARA: This handout photo taken and released by the Turkish Prime Minister's Press Office shows Turkish Prime Minister Binali Yildirim, center, chairing the Turkish Supreme Military Council (YAS) meeting at Cankaya Palace in Ankara. —AFP

TURKEY REPLACES LAND, AIR, NAVAL FORCES COMMANDERS

ANKARA: Turkey yesterday replaced the land, air and naval commanders of the military, in a major shake-up of the armed forces just over a year after a failed coup bid. The decision from the nation's top armed forces body—now dominated by ministers rather than the military—marked another step in the growing control of the government over the once all-powerful Turkish armed forces. The Supreme Military Council (YAS) decided to remove land forces commander General Salih Zeki Colak, naval chief Admiral Bulent Bostanoglu and air force commander General Abidin Unal, presidential spokesman Ibrahim Kalin said. Colak will be replaced by General Yasar Guler, currently head of the gendamerie and former deputy chief of staff, Kalin told reporters in Ankara. Bostanoglu will be replaced by Vice Admiral Adnan Ozbal and General Hasan Kucukakyuz would replace Unal as air force commander, he said. Their new roles start on August 30, Kalin added. Chief of Staff General Hulusi Akar is however to stay in his job. Kalin, the presidential spokesman, did not elaborate on the reasoning for their exit, but thanked the men for their service.

The decision to replace the commanders also received the necessary go-ahead from President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the spokesman said. The council usually meets only once a year but this is the third meeting since the July 15, 2016 coup bid blamed on the US-based Muslim cleric Fethullah Gulen. He denies the charges. The government upped the civilian component of the council following the failed coup, giving more place to government ministers than military figures.

Fight against terror

The decision comes with the army still fighting an insurrection by the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in the southeast of Turkey that in recent years has claimed the lives of hundreds of members of the security forces. It also waged a long campaign inside Syria to oust Kurdish militia and jihadists from the border area. "The biggest threat to our fight against terror is ongoing instability, lack of authority and civil

war in countries on our southern border," Prime Minister Binali Yildirim told the meeting.

Previously, such meetings were held at military headquarters but are now hosted by the prime minister. Under Erdogan, the political influence of the once all-powerful military responsible for overthrowing governments four times since 1960 has been weakened, especially since the coup attempt. An emergency decree last year ruled deputy prime ministers as well as justice, foreign and interior ministers could join the council.

Following the attempted putsch, the government discharged 149 generals, almost half of the military's entire contingent at the time of 358. Almost 8,000 people from the Turkish armed forces have been sacked over alleged links to the Gulen movement under the state of emergency imposed after the coup bid. Over 4,800 were from the land forces, state media reported last month. Hundreds more personnel have been suspended in a military shaken by the unprecedented purge which has affected most of the Turkish public sector including education.

Fresh blood

Guler, the incoming land forces commander, was abducted and held for several hours with the Chief of Staff General Hulusi Akar and other military figures on the night of the attempted overthrow. Some Turkish media speculated over whether Guler would take over from Akar, including opposition daily Cumhuriyet which said there was "no obstacle" left in front of Guler to become chief of staff. But Akar now appears set to stay in his job until at least 2019.

Injecting fresh blood into the top brass, the council promoted 61 colonels to admiral or general status while another six generals and admirals were given top rank status from August 30 onwards, Kalin said. Other decisions the council made include extending eight generals' terms by a year while 168 colonels had theirs lengthened by two years, the defense ministry said in a statement on its website.—AFP

Climate of fear

Two decades of often deadly attacks on political opponents, journalists and rights activists have created a "climate of fear" ahead of Rwanda's election, Amnesty International said in a report last month. "There are many unknown prisons in this country, and many people have vanished and died there," said one supporter of opposition candidate Habineza, Charlotte Umutesi. "My brother disappeared for a long time and we didn't find him until much later. We need a change before it is too late." Rwandan authorities, including Kagame, deny critics' claims that the government targets dissidents for assassination or disappearances.

Others insist the president has widespread support. Eric Ndushabandi, a professor of political science at the National University of Rwanda, said many admire Kagame as a "visionary" leader who united a country scarred by the 1994 genocide, in which over 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus were massacred by Hutu extremists. "People are influenced by the traumatic situation of the genocide and conflictual politics in the past and no one is ready to go back," Ndushabandi said.

Meanwhile opposition rallies often flop, apparently because some people are afraid to be seen associating with the president's opponents. In the southeastern town of Nyamata, where independent candidate Mpayimana held his first campaign rally, only about 15 people - most of them children - attended. Police last week arrested the mayor of the western district of Rubavu, Jeremie Sinamenye, over allegations that he and some of his staff prevented voters from attending Mpayimana's rallies.—AP

IN RWANDA VOTE, PEOPLE KNEW THE WINNER A LONG TIME AGO

KIGALI, Rwanda: In the eyes of some voters Philippe Mpayimana, a fresh-faced former journalist who is running for president of Rwanda, is just a clown. Otherwise, they ask, why would he be running against longtime President Paul Kagame? Some of Mpayimana's campaign venues are nearly empty of people, underscoring a widespread belief among Rwandans that Friday's election is just another coronation for Kagame, who won 93 percent of the votes in the last election. In the tidy capital, Kigali, there is little hint of the coming vote.

Presidential candidates are barred from putting campaign posters in most public places, including schools and hospitals. The electoral commission vets candidates' campaign messages, warning that their social media accounts could be blocked otherwise. "Some people here even don't know names of candidates running against Kagame," said Chris Munyaneza, a university lecturer who lives in Kigali. "People are not bothered." "There is no excitement because people knew the winner a long time ago," said another Kigali resident who insisted on anonymity for his safety.

Kagame has been de facto leader or president of the East African nation of 12 million people since his rebels ended its 1994 genocide. While he remains popular for presiding over impressive economic growth, he inspires fear among some Rwandans who say he uses the powers of the state to remove perceived opponents. Three potential candidates for Friday's election were disqualified by the electoral commission for allegedly failing to fulfil certain requirements, including collecting enough signatures.

Two others - Mpayimana and Frank Habineza of the Democratic Green Party of Rwanda - were cleared to run. The 59-year-old Kagame has already claimed victory, telling a rally in July that the winner of the election is already known: "The day of the presidential elections will just be a formality." He pointed to a constitutional amendment after a referendum in 2015 that allows him to stay in power until 2034. Ahead of the polls, tension has been growing following the mass retirement of over 800 army officers - rare before an election - and the reported arrest of at least four senior officers.

The arrests include a man related to the

NETANYAHU STEPS IN TO STOP BRAWL OF ISRAEL, JORDAN MPs

DIPLOMATIC TENSIONS BETWEEN ISRAEL, JORDAN ESCALATE

JERUSALEM: It had all the ingredients of a political brawl: a Jordanian and an Israeli lawmaker, both known for attention-seeking bluster, challenged each other to a showdown yesterday on the border between their two countries. Everyone expected a fist fight - or at least a shouting match. Israel's Oren Hazan and Jordan's Yehiya al-Saoud were each already on their way to the border crossing on Allenby Bridge on the River Jordan when Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu ordered the Israeli lawmaker to stand down.

The showdown was averted but the hyperbole from both sides reflects heightened diplomatic tensions between Israel and Jordan over the escalation around a contested Jerusalem shrine and over last month's deadly shooting at the Israeli Embassy in Amman. Israel and Jordan signed a peace treaty in 1994, but ties are often strained over Israeli-Palestinian flare-ups. There has also been widespread anger in Jordan over last month's deadly shooting in which an Israeli Embassy guard killed two Jordanians, including a 16-year-old.

Authorities said the guard opened fire after the teen attacked him with a screwdriver during a furniture delivery. Hazan and al-Saoud, both provocative politicians, had quarreled publicly in recent days, exchanging barbs through media statements. Al-Saoud challenged



JERUSALEM: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, center, chairs the weekly cabinet meeting at his office in Jerusalem. —AFP

Hazan to a faceoff at the Allenby Bridge crossing after the Israeli berated Jordan, claiming Israel always "protects their posterior, day and night. They need a little reeducation."

Hazan picked up the gauntlet but struck a more jocular tone ahead of the rendezvous, posting photos of getting a haircut and tweeting: "A gentleman is never late!" He said he

would meet al-Saoud and "make him an offer he can't refuse." His spokesman Daniel Zirlin said the meeting would be "non-violent" and would carry "a message of reconciliation and peace."

Al-Saoud struck a harsher tone, telling reporters on his way to the crossing that he was "serious about going to the bridge and beating up this dirty person." "We want to tell

Netanyahu that if the door to jihad (holy war) was open, the Jordanians would stomp on them (Israelis) with their shoes," al-Saoud said. Hazan, who made headlines earlier this year when he snapped an unexpected selfie with President Donald Trump after he landed in Tel Aviv, was heading to the bridge on Wednesday morning when the prime minister's office called.—AP

FEARS GROW FOR MOROCCAN ACTIVIST ON HUNGER STRIKE

RABAT: Human rights groups have raised fears for a detained Moroccan activist who was hospitalized a month into a hunger strike over his arrest following protests in the troubled Rif region. Detained in the northern town of Al-Hoceima in late June and held in Casablanca's Oukacha prison, 34-year-old Rabii Elablaq immediately began refusing food to demand his release. "His health has been deteriorating ever since," said Rachid Benali, coordinator of a group defending detainees from the Rif, a predominantly Berber region gripped by months of unrest.

Elablaq's defence lawyer, Abdessadek El Bouchtaoui, said people close to his client had "repeatedly tried to persuade him to stop, but he was always determined to go all the way". Hunger strikers typically experience dizziness, joint pain and headaches in the first two weeks, followed by uncontrollable vomiting in the third or fourth week. They can lose up to 20 percent of their body weight within a month, and the risk of death rises dramatically after 50 days.

Dozens of people including defense lawyers and human rights activists held a sit-in on Tuesday in front of the Casablanca hospital where Elablaq was admitted the previous day. They denounced his "arbitrary" arrest, expressed fears for his health and called for him and other detainees to be released. On Saturday, King Mohammed VI pardoned more than a thousand detainees, including 40 people under arrest for taking part in the Rif protests, but more than 150 Rif activists, including protest leader Nasser Zefzafi, remain behind bars.

Two days later, an Al-Hoceima court sentenced 16 people to between four months and a year in jail for taking part in a banned July 20 protest that was violently broken up by security forces. Protests erupted in the region last October after a fishmonger was crushed to death in a rubbish truck as he tried to retrieve a swordfish confiscated for being caught out of season. Demands for justice later snowballed into a wider social movement named Al-Hirak al-Shaabi, calling for jobs, development and an end to corruption.—AFP

AT 96, PRINCE PHILIP FINALLY RETIRES

LONDON: Prince Philip, the 96-year-old husband of Queen Elizabeth II, conducted his final solo public engagement yesterday, overseeing a military parade in the pouring rain that capped a lifetime of service. The Duke of Edinburgh, wearing a raincoat and bowler hat, met members of the Royal Marines and veterans-many younger than him-before taking the salute in the forecourt of Buckingham Palace. Hundreds of well-wishers clutching umbrellas gathered outside the gates to cheer on the prince, who is famed for his salty and often politically incorrect sense of humor.



LONDON: Britain's Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, in his role as Captain General, Royal Marines, attends a Parade to mark the finale of the 1664 Global Challenge on the Buckingham Palace Forecourt in central London. —AFP

The ceremony was the last of 22,219 solo public engagements conducted by the former naval officer since his wife ascended to the throne in 1952. It marked the end of a charity challenge in which the marines ran 1,664 miles over 100 days to mark the founding of the commando force in 1664. Philip, who served with distinction during World War II, was made captain general of the corps in 1953, taking over from the queen's father King George VI. It is one of more than 780 organizations of which he has been patron, president or a member.

He has also carried out 637 visits abroad on his own and given almost 5,500 speeches. "He

will be missed on the public stage," said William Cook, 89, whose grandson was one of the Royal Marines being honored by the prince. "But he's got a lot of young people coming up. I think he's set a wonderful example but they can't better it," he added alongside wife Ella, who had set up camp with picnic chairs outside the palace gates.

The duke and the queen have been gradually reducing their duties in recent years, handing over to the younger royals, including heir-to-the-throne Prince Charles and his son Prince William. Philip "may choose to attend engagements alongside the queen from time to time", a spokeswoman said, while stressing that the 91-year-old monarch was not retiring. "Her Majesty will continue to carry out a full program of official engagements with the support of members of the royal family," the palace said earlier this year.

'Experienced plaque-unveiler'

The queen once described her husband as "my strength and stay"—although the duke himself is self-deprecating, joking earlier this year that he was the "world's most experienced plaque-unveiler". Observers pay tribute to his energy, intelligence and commitment to his causes, from scientific and technological research, the conservation movement, and young people. One of his biographers, Gyles Brandreth, told BBC radio that "he's been the busiest royal. Every year, he and (his daughter) Princess Anne vie to which of them does more."

While Prince Philip's life had not turned out as expected, Brandreth said the duke once told him: "I tried to make the best of it... I had to try to support the queen as best I could, without getting in the way." The prince has made headlines for politically incorrect jokes, but he uses it to break the ice, and many view it as a welcome contrast to the queen's more formal reserve. Gruff in public—he hates media interviews—he is also widely credited for keeping his family together during the turmoil of his children's divorces and the death of Diana, princess of Wales.—AFP

US, EUROPE PUSH UN FOR ACTION OVER IRAN ROCKET LAUNCH

UNITED NATIONS: The United States, backed by France, Britain and Germany yesterday pushed for action at the UN Security Council following Iran's launch of a satellite rocket, described by Washington as a threatening and provocative step. US Ambassador Nikki Haley argued in a letter on behalf of the four countries that the Sirmorgh space launch vehicle system, "if configured as a ballistic missile" would have a range of over 300 kilometers and enough payload capacity to carry a nuclear warhead.

"This launch therefore represents a threatening and provocative step by Iran," said the letter seen by AFP. Iran launched the rocket on July 27, prompting the United States to impose sanctions on six companies that Washington said were linked to Iran's missile program. "Iran's longstanding program to develop ballistic missiles continues to be inconsistent with UN Security Council Resolution 2231 and has a destabilizing effect in the region," said the letter.

Resolution 2231 was passed two years ago to

endorse a landmark 2015 nuclear deal between Iran, Britain, China, France, Germany, Russia and the United States. Under that resolution which lifted sanctions in exchange for curbs on Iran's nuclear program, Tehran is "called upon" to refrain from carrying out launches of missiles capable of delivering nuclear weapons.

What action should be taken

Iran has repeatedly said that it is not seeking to develop nuclear weapons and is not in violation of the resolution. In the letter, the United States said the technology necessary for the space launch vehicle was "closely related to those of ballistic missiles, in particular to those of an intercontinental ballistic missile." It argued that the missile technology control regime defined any ballistic missile system with a 500 kilogram payload and a range of at least 300 kilometers as being capable of delivering a nuclear weapon.

This information should "allow the council to draw

informed and timely conclusion as to what action should be taken," said the letter. Haley has repeatedly called on the council to respond to Iran's missile tests, but Russia has said Iran is not in violation of the resolution. The four countries called on Iran to "immediately cease" all ballistic missile activities and said the international community must also "send a clear message to Iran."

They requested that UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres report to the council on Iran's ballistic missile and space launch activities. Iran's foreign ministry on Saturday said it will continue "with full power" its missile program and criticized the US sanctions as "hostile, reprehensible and unacceptable." Tehran has accused the US administration of seeking to weaken the nuclear deal that US President Donald Trump branded "the worst deal ever" during his election campaign. Despite criticism of the nuclear deal, the US administration has certified that Iran was in compliance with the agreement.—AFP

ITALY ENFORCES NGO BOAT CRACKDOWN AS MIGRANT FLUX SLOWS

ROME: Italy yesterday began enforcing a controversial code of conduct for charity boats rescuing migrants in the Mediterranean as new figures revealed a sharp drop in the numbers of people arriving from Libya.

A boat operated by Germany's Jugend Rettet, one of several NGOs which have refused to sign the code, was intercepted off Lampedusa and escorted to the outlying Italian island for "routine checks", a coastguard spokesman said.

The organization said its boat, the *Iuventa*, had not been impounded and

the crew had not been arrested, but could not immediately provide further details of the coastguard operation. Only three of the nine NGOs operating search-and-rescue activities in waters off Libya have accepted the new rules, which Italian authorities say are necessary to ensure the boats are not effectively encouraging migrants to embark on the perilous crossing.

The NGOs have particularly objected to a requirement to allow an Italian police official to travel on each boat and a ban on moving rescued migrants from one

vessel to another while still at sea, which they say could result in avoidable deaths. Some 600,000 mostly African migrants have arrived in Italy from Libya since the start of 2014, putting the country's reception facilities under strain and the centre-left government under pressure over the crisis. For most of this year the numbers of new arrivals have pointed to 2017 breaking all previous records.

But July, normally a busy month, saw the trend reversed, suggesting various efforts to close down the Libya-Italy route to Europe could be having an impact. The

Interior Ministry said 11,193 people had been registered at Italian ports in July, compared with 23,552 in July 2016. Arrivals for the first seven months of this year were 95,214, up 0.78 percent on the same period last year.

Italy has been working with the Libyan authorities to strengthen the north African state's coastguard with training and new equipment in the hope of making it more effective in policing traffickers and intercepting migrant boats before they reach international waters. The Italian parliament was yesterday discussing fur-

ther support for Libya in the form of a naval mission comprised of a logistics ship and patrol boat dedicated to supporting Libyan coastguard activities.

Officials believe boats being sent back to Libyan ports will have a powerful deterrent effect on would-be migrants considering paying traffickers for passage to Europe.

But the approach has been criticised by international rights groups who say people returned to troubled Libya face detention in squalid camps and abuse at the hands of traffickers.—AFP



ALGECIRAS: Chief of the port police protection Manuel Alcazar controls the queues embarking on ferries bound for Tangier at the Algeciras port. — AFP

EVERY SUMMER, SPAIN HOSTS ANNUAL EXODUS TO NORTH AFRICA

ALGECIRAS, Spain: It's the largest annual human migration in Europe: millions of people from France, Belgium and Italy cross Spain every summer to spend their holidays with family in north Africa. This year, close to three million are expected to make the trip there and back through 16 ports in Spain, Morocco and Algeria in an exodus that presents a huge logistical challenge. In 2016, Spain's civil protection agency registered 2.8 million passengers crossing the country, and it expects even more to make the trip this year.

As a result, some 13,000 police officers have been mobilized on the Spanish side, along with translators and Red Cross volunteers. Said Arrhamani, who lives in France's northeastern Ardennes region, knows the route off by heart, having done it since he was a kid when his family would spend their summer holidays in Rabat in Morocco. It's now his turn to drive his four young children more than 2,000 kilometers down to the port of Algeciras in Spain's south, through which more than half of those crossing the country transit.

"Thirty years ago, this was pretty unhealthy," says the 36-year-old in the port where a hectic atmosphere reigns, with cars, trucks and buses filling all available parking spaces, waiting to board ferries. "We could wait two days before boarding, and there were traffic jams that reached the outskirts of Algeciras." "Now there are agents who speak to us in French and guide us until the end." As drivers approach southern Spain, road signs also appear in Arabic giving directions to the ports.

Longer but cheaper

At the Algeciras port, most cars—some modest, others expensive—are filled with clothes, food, nappies and blankets. While some holidaymakers eat and chat, others sleep inside their car or lie down on carpets in the shade, and still more smoke hookah pipes. Children play football nearby. "We left Nice (in southeastern France) yesterday at nine at night, and we arrived this afternoon," says Karima Bel Hafout, travelling to Rabat via Tangier with her husband and two children. "It's close to 2,000 kilometers, but we save 2,700 euros compared to taking the plane." Others have taken the bus, and

arrive even more tired. "I've done my back in trying to sleep," says Hamid Hafid, with a mix of resignation and humor, having come from Agen in southern France. "It's hard and long," adds his friend Said Khadrout, drinking from his water bottle.

High security

After spending time back home, they will all go back north again in August and the first half of September under the watchful eye of Spanish security agents. To avoid illegal immigration and fearing extremist attacks, agents from 16 other European countries have been mobilized to work with officers in Spain. Last year, they checked 1.6 million passengers, Spanish police said. Manuel Alcazar, the port's chief of protection, says all this activity takes its toll on the port, one of the biggest in Europe. Sitting in front of a high-definition screen in his office, where he examines the footage of close to 700 security cameras, he explains that on peak days, authorities give priority to passengers. This, however, means that the loading of trucks carrying merchandise goes slower.

And this is an important part of the activity of a port which deals with merchandise from Spanish textiles group Inditex, spare parts for car-maker Renault, which has a factory in Tangier, agricultural products and seafood. But for shipping companies, the annual exodus is good for business, particularly for those who operate in the Strait of Gibraltar—they make 40 percent of their annual turnover between mid-June and mid-September. The mass migration wave also creates temporary jobs in Algeciras, a city of 120,000, where 28,000 direct and indirect posts depend on the port.

Among these are more than 200 young people wearing fluorescent yellow shirts who help direct the traffic and count the vehicles with the help of smartphones. Isabel Corrales, about to start her last year of studying administration and finance at university, is one such temporary worker. She's been doing this every summer for five years, and the money earned—close to 1,000 euros—helps her finance her studies. "This money is very welcome," she says with a large smile.—AFP

US VP PENCE: BALKANS FUTURE IS 'IN THE WEST'

PENCE VOICES SUPPORT FOR NATIONS THREATENED BY RUSSIAN INFLUENCE

PODGORICA, Montenegro: Vice President Mike Pence said yesterday the future of the Balkans belongs in the West, reaffirming US commitment to the still-tense European region amid strong Russian pressure to assert its historical influence there. Pence was speaking in Montenegro - a small Balkan country that joined NATO this year despite Moscow's anger. It was his third and final stop in a European trip that saw him voicing support for nations threatened by Russian influence and highlighting US commitment to its allies overseas amid worsening ties with Moscow.

"We truly believe the future of the Western Balkans is in the West," Pence said in Podgorica, the capital. "We look forward to affirming the commitment of the United States to building relationships and strengthening ties between the European community, the Western Balkans and the United States of America. I bring greetings from President Donald Trump who sent me here as a visible sign of the alliance that we now enjoy through NATO," he added.

The Western Balkans refer to countries in the former Yugoslavia that aspire to or have already joined Western institutions including the European Union and NATO. It also includes Albania. Montenegro joined NATO in June. Russia had considered the country of 620,000 people, with an army of some 2,000 soldiers, its traditional Slavic ally. Pence, who is expected to attend on Wednesday a summit of Balkan leaders, praised Montenegro for standing up to Russian pressure. Its accession to NATO, Pence said, is "a sign of the strength of this country ten years after independence."

Russian pressure

Pence is the highest-ranking American official to visit the small Adriatic state in 100 years. The pro-Western Balkan states had feared that



PODGORICA: US Vice President Mike Pence waves at the Adriatic Charter Summit in Podgorica. — AFP

President Donald Trump - who once called NATO an obsolete organization - would leave them to the Russian sphere of influence. Pence's trip appeared intended to alleviate those fears. "NATO is made up of large countries and small countries but the US has no small allies, and we cherish our new alliance with Montenegro through NATO," Pence said.

During a formal dinner with Montenegro President Filip Vujanovic on Tuesday evening, Pence said Montenegro's "courage, particularly in the face of Russian pressure, inspires the world and I commend you for that."

Russia is accused of masterminding an attempted coup in Montenegro in October to prevent it from joining NATO. Moscow has

denied the allegations. Serbia is Russia's only remaining ally in the Balkan region, although Belgrade formally says it wants to join the European Union.

Serbia has been beefing up military ties with Moscow, while also maintaining a partnership relationship with NATO. Earlier in his tour, Pence pledged support for the former Soviet republic of Georgia, and met with the presidents of three NATO countries - Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania - in the Estonian capital of Tallinn, where he said that "an attack on one of us is an attack on us all." Georgia and the three Baltic nations were all occupied for nearly five decades by Soviet troops before regaining their independence in 1991 after the collapse of the Soviet Union.—AP

BRAZIL'S MICHEL TEMER: POLITICAL PLOTTER WHO RISKS LOSING THE GAME



BRASILIA: Deputies from opposition parties carry a banner that reads in Portuguese 'Temer Out!' during a key vote by the lower chamber of Brazil's Congress on whether to suspend Brazil's President Michel Temer and put him on trial over an alleged bribery scheme to line his pockets, in Brasilia, Brazil. — AP

RIO DE JANEIRO: Michel Temer is the ultimate political kingmaker who rose unexpectedly to take Brazil's presidency himself but now faces a vote by lawmakers on whether he should be tried for corruption. Known in his long career as a backroom dealer, the 76-year-old head of the powerful, opportunistic PMDB party has been playing the longest of games. And it's a game the son of Lebanese immigrants with a fancy for poetry seemed to have won handily until a few months ago.

First came accusations of obstruction of justice in May and the opening of a probe that could see him stripped of office. Then in June the country's highest election court debated on national television whether bribes and undeclared donations had invalidated Temer's entire mandate. A narrow not-guilty verdict by the court's seven judges saved Temer from immediate disaster—but not embarrassment. Now, Temer stands accused of taking bribes from a meat-packing industry executive-part of a wider scandal sucking in major politicians of every stripe.

If two-thirds of deputies in the lower house of Congress accept the charge, Temer will be suspended for 180 days and go on trial at the Supreme Court. Analysts say he has enough support to survive the vote. This all sounds familiar: a Brazilian president fighting to keep his or her job. A year ago it was leftist president Dilma Rousseff who was being hounded from office for the relatively technical crime of breaking accounting rules. Temer, her conservative vice president in a prickly coalition, took over and promised to put Latin America's biggest country back on track.

Coup plotter

That rise to power fits Temer's style perfectly. Never popular or keen on electoral politics, he originally got the vice presidency thanks to his ability to bring Rousseff's Workers' Party the support of the centrist PMDB. Rousseff was a former communist guerrilla and Brazil's first female president, while Temer was the epitome of Brazil's deeply established white male elite. The two made an odd fit. When Rousseff's enemies began circling ahead of her 2016 impeachment, Temer publicly stayed clear.

However, he worked behind the scenes against Rousseff with his ally in the PMDB, the lower house speaker and consummate political operator Eduardo Cunha. It was Cunha who steered the impeachment procedure through in 2016 and Temer, rising to the top job without having to go to the polls, who benefited most. Rousseff publicly branded the pair coup plotters—a harsh claim in a country that endured a 1964-85 dictatorship after a military takeover.

Out of touch

Temer's personal side became better known after he ascended to the presidency. He had served three times as speaker of the lower house of Congress and been president of the PMDB for 15 years. But to the public it was perhaps more interesting that he was married to a former beauty queen, Marcela Tedeschi, four decades his junior. It turned out that Temer also enjoyed writing poetry, even if his verses are a favorite target for mockery by liberals on social media networks. Temer, however, seemed happier with his image as a distant politician.

Declaring he was not looking for popularity, he said would dedicate his inherited mandate—which lasts until the end of 2018 — to implementation of painful economic austerity reforms. Rarely taking part in events where he might encounter regular voters, Temer picked a new cabinet that looked a lot like him—a collection of elderly, wealthy, white men. The strategy worked with Brazil's business community and a majority in Congress, which believes that austerity will help roll back more than a decade of leftist Workers' Party rule and exit a two-year recession.

But among ordinary Brazilians Temer quickly became as hated as Rousseff, with approval ratings into single digits. Whenever he speaks on television, horn honking and pot banging can be heard in major cities like Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo. He was even booed loudly in the Maracana stadium when he opened the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympics.

Dirty washing

And while portraying himself as dedicated to Brazil's future, Temer fell victim to his own past. The obstruction of justice allegations center on the accusation that he approved paying hush money to Cunha, who is in prison after being convicted of corruption.

And the election court case revolved around allegations that Temer and Rousseff's ticket in 2014 was financed by dirty money. Similar cases have been opened by investigators in so-called operation "Car Wash" against scores of other politicians, including many close allies of Temer and a third of his own cabinet. For months he seemed to stay above it all. Now he too has been sucked into the "Car Wash" gyre—and his fate rests with lawmakers.—AFP

46 YEARS ON, FAMILY OF S AFRICAN ACTIVIST CALL FOR MURDER CHARGE

PRETORIA: A South African policeman present at the suspicious death of a anti-apartheid campaigner in 1971 should be charged with murder, a court heard yesterday as the official version of events came under harsh scrutiny. Joao Rodrigues, a former member of the feared security police, was allegedly the last officer to have been with Ahmed Timol before Timol plunged to his death from the 10th-floor of Johannesburg police headquarters. Rodrigues has faced three days of intensive questioning at the High Court inquest in Pretoria into Timol's death and has at times given contradictory accounts of the incident of 46 years ago.

"You collaborated with the security branch to cover up various crimes: firstly the torture (of Timol)... as well as his murder," said the Timol family lawyer Howard Varney. "We will be submitting to this court that the court recommend... that you be charged with perjury (and) the murder of Ahmed Timol." Rodrigues, 78, has strenuously denied harming Timol or any involvement in his death, telling both the new inquest and an inquest in 1972 that Timol died by jumping out the window. "I do not concur with counsel's submission," Rodrigues said after Varney accused him of murder and other crimes.

Timol's family has campaigned for decades for a new probe to overturn the 1972 court verdict that he had committed suicide. They had initially said they did not want to bring prosecutions against those involved but simply wanted to learn the

truth. "Rodrigues is standing by what he said in 1972. By not being truthful he's asking to be prosecuted. He's not making things easy for himself," Timol's younger brother Mohammad said.

Judge questions evidence

Both the lawyers for Timol's family and the state have raised multiple doubts over Rodrigues' account of how the 29-year-old communist recruit fell to his death. "I have heard evidence from witnesses... which says to me that your story is not probable," Judge Billy Mothle told Rodrigues yesterday. Rodrigues had told the court that Timol was not mistreated and had jumped out of the window after becoming fearful.

"I only saw him from the side... but he did not have any injuries," added Rodrigues, who claimed that Timol barged past him to jump out of the window when he was left alone with the detainee. But Varney said that Timol had suffered serious injuries ahead of his plunge—a claim supported by two independent pathologist reports submitted to the court. "He could barely walk let alone get up and storm to the window and dive out," said Varney.

Rodrigues had also claimed that Timol's dash for the window "happened in a split second" and caught him off guard. "It would not be possible to run, open the window and dive," said Varney, quoting the report of an aeronautical expert. "It was impossible in those circumstances and is yet another example of a transparent fabrication." — AFP

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NORTH KOREA'S KIM A 'MANIAC': PHILIPPINES' DUTERTE

MANILA: North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un is a "maniac" who could destroy Asia by triggering a nuclear war, Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte said yesterday, ahead of a regional summit to be attended by the regime's foreign minister. Using characteristically crude language, Duterte teed off against Kim ahead of a regional security meeting in Manila where the hermit state's ballistic missile tests will be a hot agenda item.

"He is playing with dangerous toys and this crazy man, do not be fooled by his face, that chubby face that looks nice," Duterte, 72, said of Kim in a nationally televised speech.

"That son-of-a-whore maniac, if he makes a mistake then the Far East will become an arid land. It must be stopped, this nuclear war, because (if) a limited confrontation blows up here, I tell you the fallout, the soil, the resources. I don't know what will hap-

pen to us. We won't be able to plant anything productive." Under Kim's leadership, Pyongyang has accelerated its nuclear ambitions, in defiance of international condemnation and multiple sets of United Nations sanctions.

North Korea last week conducted its second intercontinental ballistic missile test, which led Kim to boast he could strike any target in the United States. US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and Chinese Foreign Minister

Wang Yi will also be in Manila for the security forum, which is hosted by the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). The ministers will express "grave concern" over North Korea's nuclear missile test, according to a draft copy of the chairman's statement obtained by AFP and scheduled to be released on Tuesday next week at the end of the ASEAN Regional Forum.

Duterte, who won presidential elec-

tions last year, has come under fire from foreign leaders over his war on drugs that has claimed thousands of lives and led to warnings by rights groups that he may be overseeing a crime against humanity. He typically flavors his speeches with crude language and jokes deemed by many to be offensive, including about rape. Duterte last year called then US president Barack Obama a "son of a w***e" for criticizing the drug war.—AFP

FOR PAKISTANIS, CHINA ROAD RUNS ONE WAY

'FRIENDSHIP HIGHWAY' HAS NO BENEFIT FOR PAKISTAN

TASHKURGAN, China: The China-Pakistan Friendship Highway runs over 1,300 kilometers from the far western Chinese city of Kashgar through the world's highest mountain pass and across the border. For China, the two-lane thoroughfare symbolizes a blossoming partnership, nourished with tens of billions of dollars of infrastructure investment. But for many Pakistani businessmen living and working on the Chinese side of the border, the road is a one way street.

"China says our friendship is as high as the

China has upgraded the treacherous mountain road better known as the Karakoram Highway.

While both countries say the project is mutually beneficial, data shows a different story. Pakistan's exports to China fell by almost eight percent in the second half of 2016, while imports jumped by almost 29 percent. In May, Pakistan accused China of flooding its market with cut rate steel and threatened to respond with high tariffs. "There are all of these hopes and dreams about Pakistan exports," said

his full name. But he said tariffs on imported Pakistani goods are "not declared. Today it's five percent, tomorrow maybe 20. Sometimes, they just say this is not allowed". Three years ago, Shah was charged between eight and 15 yuan per kilo to bring lapis lazuli, a blue stone. The duty has since soared to 50 yuan per kilo, he said. Customs officials said the "elements influencing prices were too many" for them to offer a "definite and detailed list" of costs.

While large-scale importers can absorb the tariffs, independent Pakistani traders have benefited little from CPEC, said Hasan Karrar, political economy professor at the Lahore University of Management Sciences. Alessandro Ripa, an expert on Chinese infrastructure projects at Ludwig Maximilian University Munich, said the highway "is not very relevant to overall trade" because "the sea route is just cheaper and faster". The project is better understood as a tool for China to promote its geopolitical interests and help struggling state-owned companies export excess production, he said.

Maybe it will be good

Traders also face overbearing security in China. Over the last year, Beijing has flooded Xinjiang, which has a large Muslim population, with tens of thousands of security personnel and imposed draconian rules to eliminate "extremism". Businessmen complain they are not allowed to worship at local mosques, while shops can be closed for up to a year for importing merchandise with Arabic script. In June, on the 300 kilometer trip between Kashgar and Tashkurgan, drivers were stopped at six police checkpoints, while their passengers had to walk through metal detectors and show identification cards.

Signs warn that officials can check mobile phones for "illegal" religious content. Police officers interrupted an interview in Tashkurgan to demand a shopkeeper hand over his smartphone and computer for inspection, an event he said occurs several times a week. Shah said that when he first arrived in the town, the intrusive security made him nervous: "But now I'm used to it. I almost feel like I'm one of the police." As he spoke, an alarm sounded.

He grabbed a crude spear, body armor and a black helmet off his counter and rushed into the street, where police had assembled over a dozen people for impromptu counter-terrorism drills. The exercises are held up to four times a day. Stores are closed for several days if they do not participate. Back in Kashgar, Muhammad hopes that CPEC will make life better, but he believes the oppressive security will remain an obstacle. He plans to give it another three years. But, he said, he cannot wait forever: "Many people have already gone back."—AFP

This is not allowed

One answer is Nigerian "male enhancement" supplements: expired medications which Pakistani merchants in the oasis city of Hotan recently peddled to bearded Muslims walking home from Friday prayers. The products were typical of the kinds of small consumer goods brought by Pakistani traders into Xinjiang: medicine, toiletries, semi-precious stones, rugs and handicrafts. Pakistani businessmen in Xinjiang see few benefits from CPEC, complaining of intrusive security and capricious customs arrangements.

"If you bring anything from China, no problem," said Muhammad, a trader in the ancient Silk Road city of Kashgar, who declined to give

Jonathan Hillman, a fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington. "But if you're connecting with China, what are you going to be exporting?"



TASHKURGAN: This picture shows a woman collecting water from the Karakul Lake before the Karakoram mountain range next to the China-Pakistan Friendship Highway, near Tashkurgan in China's western Xinjiang province.—AFP

Himalayas and as deep as the sea, but it has no heart," said Pakistani businessman Murad Shah, as he tended his shop in Tashkurgan, 120 kilometers from the mountain pass where trucks line up to cross between China's vast Xinjiang region and Pakistan. "There is no benefit for Pakistan. It's all about expanding China's growth," Shah said, as he straightened a display of precious stones.

The remote town of around 9,000 is at the geographic heart of Beijing's plans to build a major trade artery—the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) — connecting Kashgar to the Arabian Sea port of Gwadar. The project is a crown jewel of China's One Belt, One Road (OBOR) initiative, a massive global infrastructure program to revive the ancient Silk Road and connect Chinese companies to new markets around the world. In 2013, Beijing and Islamabad signed agreements worth \$46 billion to build transport and energy infrastructure along the corridor and



SRINAGAR: Villagers carry the body of Akeel Ahmed Bhat, a teenage boy, during his funeral procession in Haal village, about 47 kilometers south of Srinagar, Indian controlled Kashmir.—AP

BANGLADESH COURT ENDS MPs' POWER TO SACK JUDGES

DHAKA: Bangladesh's Supreme Court has scrapped parliament's power to sack top judges, in a landmark verdict that lawyers said yesterday bolstered the independence of the country's judiciary. The country's top court restored a military rule-era provision which allows only a Supreme Judicial Council, led by the chief justice, to remove judges found to have breached the judicial code of conduct. The full ruling released Tuesday was quickly hailed by lawyers as a crucial safeguard for the freedom of the Muslim-majority nation's secular judiciary.

"The judgment declares the 16th amendment of the constitution as null and void. It means the highest court scraps the parliament's power to remove top judges," senior lawyer Syed Ahsanul Karim said. Karim said that because of the "landmark" judgment, the executive "will have no dominant role over the judiciary". Karim said if the amendment had been left in place, it would have made top judges "subservient" to the government as they would have been under constant threat of removal.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina brought the constitutional change allowing parliament-controlled by her ruling Awami League party to remove top judges in September 2014. In May last year, the High Court declared the amendment illegitimate after a lawyer filed a public interest challenge. The Supreme Court led by chief justice S K Sinha gave a provisional verdict last month ruling against the government.

"The 16th amendment has raised doubts about the independence of the judiciary and the court boldly struck down that amendment," said Shahdeen Malik, senior lawyer and law professor. "This indicates the assertiveness of the court to preserve and protect its independence," he said. The Supreme Court has increased pressure on the government to frame a code of conduct for lower court judges, who experts say are heavily influenced by the government.

Experts say a formal code would curb the government's power to use lower courts to prosecute opposition leaders and activists on trumped-up charges. The law ministry has drafted rules, but the top court has rejected them. Since coming to power in 2009, Hasina's government has detained and charged tens of thousands of opposition supporters. — AFP



BANGKOK: Former prime minister Somchai Wongsawat, center, brother-in-law of Thaksin and Yingluck Shinawatra, arrives at the Supreme Court in Bangkok.—AFP

TWO THAI EX-PMS ACQUITTED OF ABUSING POWER IN PROTEST

BANGKOK: A Thai court acquitted two former prime ministers of abuse of power yesterday in a case involving the deadly dispersal of an anti-government protest in 2008. A division of the Supreme Court acquitted Somchai Wongsawat, his deputy, Chavalit Yongchaiyudh, and two former police officials, saying they did not intend to endanger the demonstrators by quelling what had turned into a violent protest. Hundreds of people suffered injuries during a pitched battle that developed when police tried to clear away protesters who were blocking the entrance to the Parliament complex. They wanted to stop Somchai, who was prime minister, from delivering his first policy statement.

The protesters, who became known as the "Yellowshirts" for their garb honoring the Thai king, were seeking to bring down Somchai's government, which they believed served as a proxy for former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, who was ousted in a 2006 military coup after being accused of corruption and disrespect for the monarchy. Two people died in the protest. At the time it appeared that many of the injuries were caused by out-of-date tear gas canisters that exploded after being fired, but the court said blame could not be definitively assigned.

Somchai is the brother-in-law of Thaksin, whose 2006 ouster triggered sometimes-violent battles for political power. Thaksin's supporters see the various criminal cases against him and his allies as attempts to erase his influence from Thai political life. The defendants were accused of exceeding their authority in allowing police to use force against the protesters. The court, the Supreme Court's Criminal Division for Political Office Holders, said the

defendants "could not have anticipated that tear gas would cause danger to protesters" and had not intended for police to attack protesters in a manner leading to death.

Somchai thanked the court after its verdict and said he was grateful there was still justice in the country. Chavalit, another former prime minister, did not comment. They could have faced up to 10 years in prison if they had been convicted. The ruling, however, angered a small group of protesters outside the court, some of them participants in the October 2008 protest. One woman shouted "Let them all get terrible diseases that can't be cured and die painful deaths!" as Somchai walked away.

Somchai was one of two pro-Thaksin prime ministers forced out of office in 2008 by court decisions aided by the pressure of Yellowshirt protests. Protesters occupied the prime minister's offices for three months and Bangkok's two airports for about two weeks. Thaksin's sister, Yingluck Shinawatra, was elected prime minister in 2011 and also was forced to step down in 2014 by a controversial court ruling supported by street protests against her. The army shortly afterward ousted her government and remains in power today.

In a separate trial, Yingluck declared her innocence on Tuesday and asked for "kindness" from the court that will decide whether she mishandled a rice subsidy program that allegedly lost billions of dollars. Her bank account has been frozen after an administrative court held her responsible for some of the losses. The verdict in Yingluck's case is to be issued Aug 25. Thaksin has been in self-imposed exile since 2008 to escape a prison sentence on a conflict of interest conviction.—AP



THAILAND: This handout from the Prime Minister's Office taken and received shows Thailand's Prime Minister Prayut Chan-O-Cha using a ceremonial broom to help clean a street in a town in the province of Sakon Nakhon in northeastern Thailand, after it was hit by floods.—AFP

FLOODS IN THAILAND'S NORTHEAST KILL 23

BANGKOK: Heavy rains have brought some of the worst floods in years to Thailand's rural northeast where 23 people have died over the past month, officials said yesterday. Flash floods have disrupted air travel, inundated rail tracks and swallowed farmland across the rice-farming region of Isaan, affecting more than one million Thais. Twenty-three people have died since July 5, the disaster department said in a daily update. All were swept away by floodwaters and drowned, an official said.

Junta chief Prayut Chan-O-Cha flew to the hardest-hit province of Sakon Nakhon yesterday to inspect a reservoir that had cracked under the downpour,

triggering flash floods. "Sonca Storm caused flooding in more than 35 provinces," he told residents, referring to a tropical storm that recently blew over from the South China Sea.

"Thai people need to understand that this area is a flood risk because we are facing global warming," added the junta chief, who joined rescue boats to hand out survival kits to stranded families. Ten provinces are still battling severe floods as rains continue to lash the upper part of the northeast, according to the weather bureau. In January unseasonal monsoons deluged Thailand's south, leaving over 30 dead and wrecking infrastructure across the region.—AFP

CURFEW, STRIKES IN KASHMIR AFTER TOP MILITANT'S DEATH

SRINAGAR: Thousands of Indian police and troops enforced a lockdown yesterday in parts of Kashmir, fearing violent reprisals a day after a top militant commander and two civilians were killed in clashes in the disputed Himalayan territory. Residents in the old quarters of Srinagar, the main city in Indian-administered Kashmir, were ordered to stay indoors and obey the curfew as government forces patrolled streets lined with steel barriers and razor wire.

"I was not allowed by soldiers to leave home for work. They are right outside my door," Gulzar Ahmed, a mechanic, said by phone from his house in downtown Srinagar. Schools and colleges were ordered shut for a second day to try to avert student protests against Indian rule, which frequently erupt into stone-throwing and clashes with troops. Shops and banks also remained shut after three top

Kashmiri separatist leaders called for a strike following the death of Abu Dujana, a senior rebel fighter from the Pakistan-based militant group Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT).

His death, heralded by Indian forces as "a major achievement", sparked protests and clashes with government forces across the Kashmir Valley during which a young man was killed and scores injured. A second protester died in hospital Wednesday. His funeral was attended by hundreds of mourners who pelted Indian soldiers with stones and chanted slogans calling for independence, witnesses said. Dujana's death has dealt one of the biggest blows to Kashmiri separatists since a charismatic young commander, Burhan Wani, was shot dead in July last year. Wani's killing sparked months of widespread protests against Indian rule and left nearly 100 civilians dead and thousands injured.—AFP

TRUMP BACKS STIFF CURBS ON LEGAL IMMIGRATION

TRUMP SIGNS RUSSIA SANCTIONS BILL

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump yesterday threw his weight behind efforts to give English-speakers priority for US residency cards and halving the number of legal migrants admitted to the country. Trump backed proposals that would reform the process of obtaining a US "green card" by introducing a points-based system favoring skilled Anglophone workers. Around one million immigrants are granted permanent residency each year, but the draft legislation - presented at the White House by Trump and two senators who crafted it - aims to cut that number by around 50 percent. It would also put a cap on the number of refugees able to gain permanent residency at 50,000 a year.

Trump hailed what he described as "the most significant reform to our immigration system in half a century." The legislation has only a slim chance of passing in Congress, but gives the White House an opportunity to show Trump's base supporters that he is trying to live up to his headline promises. Standing in the Roosevelt Room flanked by Senators Tom Cotton and David Perdue, Trump said that the United States had admitted too many low-skilled workers and claimed they were taking jobs from Americans.

"This policy has placed pressure on American workers, taxpayers and community resources," he said. "It has not been fair to our people, to our citizens, to our workers." He pointed to the benefits of a Canadian- or Australian-style points-based system. "This competitive application process will favor applicants who can speak English, financially support themselves and their families, and demonstrate skills that will contribute to our economy," he said. Trump said the new system, if approved, would "help ensure that newcomers to our wonderful country will be assimilated, will succeed and achieve the American dream," while also protecting "struggling American families."

Critics say that the proposals would actually result in falling wages, by slashing the number of migrants creating jobs. The National Academy of Sciences studied two decades of data and found the impact of immigration on the wages of American-born workers to be "very small". The academy also concluded that "immigration has an overall positive impact on long-run economic growth in the US," although first-generation immigrants do place more of a burden on state resources.

But Trump's message is likely to resonate strongly with low-skilled white workers who have seen wages stagnate and believe their long-held cultural dominance is being eroded.

Trump has made tackling illegal immigration from Latin America a key plank of his politics. He has promised to build a "wall" on America's southern border with Mexico and tackle violent Hispanic gangs at home. But the effort to curb legal immigration is unlikely to be universally welcomed by business leaders or within the Republican Party. Cotton first introduced the proposals in February to the Senate, where they have been stalled ever since.

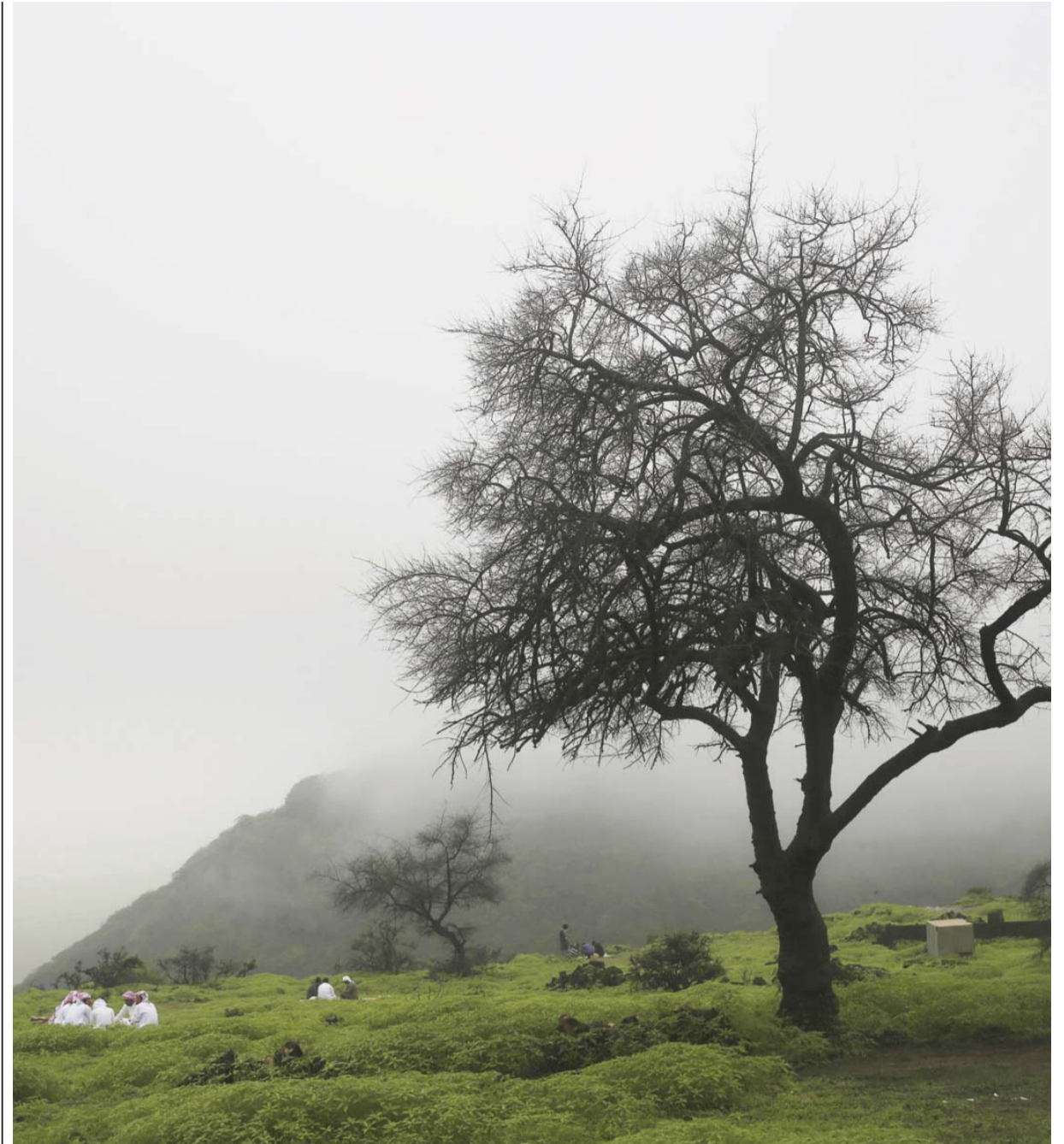
Trump slams 'flawed' bill

Earlier yesterday, Trump reluctantly signed off on new sanctions against Russia, bowing to domestic pressure and putting efforts to improve ties with the Kremlin on ice. Trump signed the legislation behind closed doors and away from the cameras, after failed efforts to scupper or water down the bill. Trump's reluctance was on full display in an angry signing statement, in which he called the legislation "significantly flawed." "In its haste to pass this legislation, the Congress included a number of clearly unconstitutional provisions," he said, including curbs on the president's ability to conduct foreign policy.

The legislation - which also includes measures against North Korea and Iran - targets the Russian energy sector, giving Washington the ability to sanction companies involved in developing Russian pipelines, and placing curbs on some Russian weapons exporters. It also notably constrains Trump's ability to waive the penalties, a statement of mistrust from the Republican controlled Congress which remains unsettled by Trump's warm words for President Vladimir Putin.

The sanctions seek to penalize the Kremlin for meddling in the 2016 US presidential election - which Trump won - and Russia's annexation of Crimea. Trump said he would "honor" some of the bill's provisions, but stopped short of saying it would be fully implemented. The White House said only that Trump would give Congress's "preferences" mere "careful and respectful consideration". Trump received the legislation at 1:53 pm on Friday and waited until Wednesday to sign it.

The nearly week-long delay in signing had raised speculation that Trump might veto or try to somehow shelve the sanctions, which were approved in a 98-2 Senate vote. By signing it, he avoided the humiliating prospect of Congress overriding his veto. Expecting the signature, Moscow preemptively ordered Washington to reduce its diplomatic presence in Russia to 455 persons before Sept 1. — Agencies



People enjoy a picnic under the foggy weather of southern Oman's summer monsoon in the Jabal Ayoub mountains north of Salalah yesterday. The otherwise extremely arid region blooms when the monsoon, known as "al-khareef" in Arabic, drenches the southern Arabian peninsula with rainy clouds and drives stormy seas as locals and tourists celebrate the rain. — AP

QATAR, ITALY INK €5BN DEAL FOR SEVEN...

Continued from Page 1

Meanwhile, US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson has asked two officials, including retired general and former Middle East envoy Anthony Zinni, to work to end the Gulf diplomatic crisis. Qatar, home to a huge US air base, has denied all accusations, but has agreed to Kuwait acting as a mediator and has come to an agreement with Washington to fight terror financing. The parties to the dispute are still not in direct talks, however, and Washington is keen to pressure its allies in the region to mend ties and work together against extremism.

Tillerson told reporters that Qatar is so far fulfilling its commitment to the United States, but that he had sent senior US diplomat Tim Lenderking to the region to push for progress. "And I've also asked retired General Anthony Zinni to go with Tim so that we can maintain a constant pressure on the ground because I think that's what it's going to take," he said. "There's only so much you can do with telephone persuasion." Zinni, now 73, was a Marine general who once commanded US forces in the Middle East. After the military he served as special envoy to Israel and the Palestinian Authority. — Agencies

MOH DETAILS FEE INCREASES FOR EXPATRIATES...

Continued from Page 1

For open heart surgeries, diagnostic catheterization will cost KD 90, and each stent will cost KD 250. The cost of these surgeries does not include medication, x-rays, laboratory tests and hospital stay.

Fees for visitors:

The fee for getting medical treatment at the polyclinic will cost KD 10 (not including medication, x-rays and laboratory tests); the fee for getting medical treatment at a public hospital will cost KD 20; the fee for outpatient clinics at public hospitals will cost KD 30; a stay in public wards will cost KD 70 per day; a stay in the intensive care unit will cost KD 220 per day; physiotherapy for patients staying at the hospital will cost KD 30 per session; a stay in a private room at a public hospital will cost KD 130 per

day, and the deposit for the private room will cost KD 300 and KD 150 for the public ward.

For visitors, a major surgery will cost KD 500, medium-risk surgery KD 300 and minor surgery KD 250. Surgery that needs specialized skills will cost KD 600. Kidney stone fragmentation will cost KD 150 per session. Outpatient one-day surgery will cost KD 100. Maternity checkup will cost KD 30, and a natural delivery will cost KD 400.

Separately, a committee responsible for developing the insurance market in Kuwait completed reviewing a study by Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) and reached a decision that second-party insurance must be raised. The study said that prices should be raised by between KD 4 to KD 5 on top of the current prices. The decision was submitted to the interior ministry for review.

KUWAIT DENIES IRAN MISUSING ITS WATERS...

Continued from Page 1

an embargo on arms shipments to the Houthi movement. Using this new route, Iranian ships were transferring equipment to smaller vessels at the northern end of the Gulf, where they face less scrutiny. The transship-

ments take place in Kuwaiti waters and in nearby international shipping lanes, the sources said. Yemen is more than two years into a civil war pitting the Iran-aligned Houthis against the government of President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi, which is backed by a Saudi-led coalition. — Agencies

ZAIN SAUDI ARABIA CONTINUES TO GROW

Continued from Page 1

Zain KSA also reported a 13 percent increase in gross profit to reach SAR 1.259 billion for Q2 2017, reflecting a gross margin of 67 percent. A much-improved operational income of SAR 235 million was recorded for Q2 2017, compared to an operational loss of SAR 108 million in Q2 2016. Notably, the company announced its second sequential quarter of net profit ever in Q2, 2017, amounting to SAR 8 million, compared to net losses of SAR 328 million in Q2, 2016. The first six-month of 2017 net profit recorded by the operation was SAR 53 million.

Kharafi noted, "The Saudi market faces ongoing challenges in terms of decreasing total number of subscribers due to biometric requirements which resulted in 6.5 million fewer subscribers in the last 12 months and increased competition. During the second quarter, Zain KSA also successfully secured additional 1800MHz spectrum which is critical to the delivery of high quality data services across the kingdom. Strategic expansion of our 4.5G LTE network's coverage and capacity is

important to delivering faster more reliable data experiences and increasing customer satisfaction resulting in improving our brand image."

Furthermore, Kharafi said, "Zain has retained its market share and continues to focus on increasing the "share of wallet" from our customer base, reducing churn and implementing a disciplined, operational efficiencies program to reduce expenditures." Kharafi added, "Zain KSA continues to explore opportunities with selected partners, to complement our wireless services portfolio and introduce high speed broadband services based on the latest, advanced fiber technology."

Kharafi concluded, "I would like to recognize the dedication of the entire Zain team in Saudi Arabia, and the continued support of the Board of Directors of both Zain Group and Zain Saudi Arabia, our shareholders and the Zain Group management team in the turnaround of this promising telecom entity. We remain focused on our strategic priorities to continually improve all aspects of this key strategic operation for Zain Group."



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Kuwait Times

THE LEADING INDEPENDENT
DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF
ESTABLISHED 1961

Founder and Publisher
YOUSUF S. AL-ALYAN

Editor-in-Chief
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EDITORIAL : 24833199-24833358-24833432
ADVERTISING : 24835616/7
FAX : 24835620/1
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Focus

TRUMP'S RISKY
GAMBLE ON IRAN

Tensions between Iran and the United States are escalating rapidly. Over the weekend, Iranian and US navy warships engaged in yet another round of shadow boxing in Arabian Gulf. Last week Congress slapped additional sanctions on individuals and companies associated with Iran's ballistic missile program and support for terrorism. Iran, in response, test-fired a rocket into space. Forces backed by Washington and Tehran continue to wage proxy wars across the Middle East from Syria to Yemen.

There is, however, one area where pressure has eased between Iran and the West: Tehran's nuclear program. To date, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has reported seven times that Iran has met its commitments under the deal. America's partners in the negotiation, the EU, Russia and China, have affirmed Iranian compliance as well. So has Trump's own administration - twice.

But Trump wants to abandon the deal regardless of whether Iran continues observing the terms of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). He was reluctant to certify Iran's compliance with the accord, and the New York Times reported last week that he told his advisers that he would like to find a reason to scuttle the multilateral agreement.

If Trump pursues this course, his actions all but assure an increase in hostilities with Tehran. It could force the Iranian leadership to believe that nuclear weapons are essential for their survival. This is precisely the situation that the United States faces presently with North Korea, which virtually holds East Asia hostage because of its nuclear arsenal.

The similarities between Trump's 2017 response to the Barack Obama-led Iran accord and George W Bush's reaction in 2001 to the Agreed Framework with North Korea that Bill Clinton signed are striking. Then as now, a neophyte president was determined to chart a new course in foreign policy to distinguish himself from his predecessor. Then as now, Bush launched a comprehensive policy review of the North Korea dossier.

At the time, the Bush administration claimed to have evidence of a covert uranium enrichment program, which would have violated the deal. Rather than building an international coalition to force Pyongyang to strictly adhere to the terms of the Agreed Framework, the Bush administration chose to abandon diplomacy.

By 2005, realizing that Pyongyang was closer to producing a nuclear weapon, Bush sought to negotiate a more comprehensive disarmament agreement - but it was too late. Perhaps seeing what happened to Saddam Hussein's Iraq, the leadership in North Korea was determined to acquire nuclear weapons as an insurance policy for its survival. One year later, they tested their first weapon.

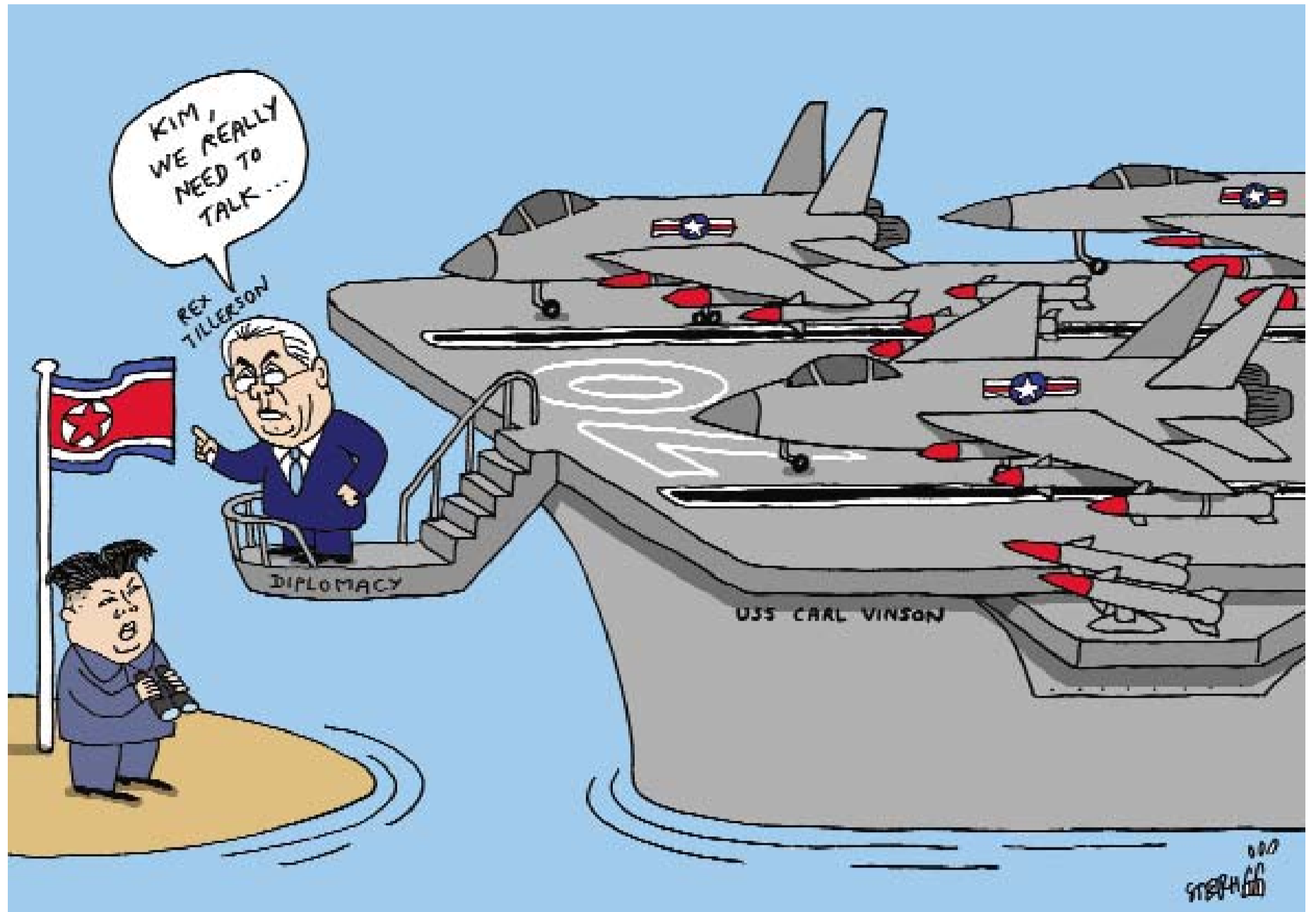
Compliance

Unlike North Korea in 2001, there is little doubt that Iran is complying with the terms of the accord to devote its nuclear program to peaceful purposes in return for the lifting of nuclear-related sanctions. The JCPOA mandates a stringent inspection regime by the International Atomic Energy Agency to ensure that Iran cannot engage in activities that contribute to the design and development of a nuclear explosive device, and forbids Iran from pursuing nuclear weapons in perpetuity. While no arms control agreement is without flaws, the question that Trump should be asking is: What are the alternatives?

Without the nuclear deal, Washington and its allies would have less access to and fewer constraints on Tehran's nuclear program. So long as Iran remains in compliance with its JCPOA commitments, any steps by the US to undermine its own obligations under the deal will be deemed as "going rogue" by the international community. This would erode the ability of future US administrations to negotiate credibly with friend or foe for fear that Washington could abandon its commitments whenever a new president moved into the White House. This is a stark difference from President Obama's approach to engaging Iran bilaterally and multilaterally, and having allies in Europe and Asia in agreement with Washington on sanctions and negotiations. Europe is much keener on keeping the Iran deal in place, and Trump's intransigence could cause irreparable harm to the transatlantic relations.

If Iran were to make the same calculation as North Korea - that Washington's goal is not to limit its nuclear program, but rather to exit the nuclear deal as a pretext to regime change - Tehran could view nuclear weapons as a deterrent, much like Pyongyang did a decade ago. This could put the Trump administration in the avoidable position of launching military strikes that might plunge America into another Middle East war. — Reuters

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NIGERIA TARGETS BOKO HARAM TOP BRASS

It was a case of instant captivation when Shagari first heard Boko Haram's founder deliver a jihadist sermon a decade ago. Gripped by the message, Shagari swapped life as a father and electrician to join the militants and rose rapidly through their ranks, his ascent mirroring the group's own growing stature. He took easily to the extremism and brutality. "If I saw a man wearing something like shorts and a T-shirt, I would be ready to finish him because of his clothing," the 42-year-old told the Thomson Reuters Foundation in an interview.

The diehard recruit was rewarded with rapid promotion - elevated from researcher to recruiter to regional leader - as he joined the fight to carve out an Islamic caliphate in Nigeria. Boko Haram has killed about 20,000 people and uprooted 2.7 million since unleashing its brutal insurgency eight years ago. The army has retaken much of the territory once held by Boko Haram, yet the group continues to carry out bombings and raids in northeast Nigeria, as well as in Cameroon, Chad and Niger. Their attacks have ramped up in recent months, with suicide bombings, kidnapping and rape used as everyday weapons of war. Once Shagari was a willing foot soldier, ready to kill for the cause, but now he has once more chosen a new direction, the product of a radical government program to reach out to Boko Haram's top militants in the hope of reforming its underlings.

Man of Peace?

"My views on killing changed," said the one-time militant, a married father of seven from northeast Nigeria. Shagari asked for his current location and full name to be withheld for fear of retaliation from Boko Haram, having cut ties with the insurgents as part of his new life. The about turn had its roots in 2011, when he was arrested for his role in the insurgency and jailed in the capital Abuja.

Held with fellow group members, Shagari was segregated from other prisoners. For three years, life was joyless. Then, in 2014, a state-run deradicalization project changed everything. "The discrimination stopped," Shagari said. "People started interacting with us, and we started going out of our cells. We were treated like human beings," he added. "I was able to do away with all the ideology and become a normal person." Since his release from prison in 2015, Shagari has helped to deradicalize others, and enrolled in secondary school with the aim of going to university and working in conflict resolution. Engaging with such high-ranking Boko Haram members is key to reforming its followers and reintegrating them into society, said Fatima Akilu, the psychologist who ran the state program. "We needed Shagari to get through to the other Boko Haram members (in prison) because he was their leader," said Akilu, now executive director of the Neem Foundation, an anti-extremism group. "We could not have done it without his help."

Belonging and Brotherhood

Poverty is often seen as the main driver for those joining Boko Haram, yet a sense of belonging, brotherhood and power tend to be bigger factors - especially for young people, Akilu said. "Boko Haram's idea of the caliphate fired the imagination of a lot of young people," Akilu said. "They (young people) want to be part of history, to form their own society and way of life... to wield a lot of power and re-imagine the world in a way that they want it," she added.

Deradicalizing people who buy into Boko Haram's ideology - unlike those who join the militants for money or out of fear - therefore presents a huge challenge for the Nigerian government. Nigeria last year launched a

new programme to rehabilitate repentant fighters, offering support and skills rather than locking them away. Officials could not be reached for comment.

For Shagari - who says he has survived three assassination attempts by Boko Haram for refusing to rejoin the group since his release from prison - returning home has been far from easy. Although he values his freedom and education - and is proud to have enrolled six of his children in school - Shagari said the temptation to go back to Boko Haram has often proved strong. "If not that I had changed wholeheartedly, I would have gone back because of the tough times," he said. "Some people did... because of lack of a single penny. Some have been killed." —Reuters

MICHELANGELO'S UNREALIZED
MARBLE DREAM COMES TRUE

In 1517, Michelangelo climbed Mount Altissimo in Tuscany and found the marble of his dreams. It was, the Renaissance master wrote, "of compact grain, homogeneous, crystalline, reminiscent of sugar". He deemed it perhaps even more precious than that from nearby Carrara, where he had obtained marble for some of his most famous statues. With the blessing of Pope Leo X, Michelangelo designed a path that could get blocks of the white marble down from the mountain to be transported to Florence to be used to decorate the facade of the church of San Lorenzo.

In exchange for getting a quarry operation going, Florentine authorities granted Michelangelo the right to take as much marble as he wanted from Altissimo - which in Italian means both "most high" and "God" - for his use for the rest of his life. "There is enough here to extract until Judgment Day," he wrote to a contemporary. But it was never to be.

After several years of work to carve out a road, Pope Leo, who was of Florence's Medici family, relieved Michelangelo of his commission and the project was abandoned. The church of San Lorenzo still has no facade. Today, the quarries of 1,589-m-high Altissimo, in Italy's Apuan Alps, buzz with the kind of activity that even a genius like Michelangelo probably could not have foreseen.

Modern cutting and extraction techniques have produced a surreal landscape similar to some Cubism paintings, a dizzying array of upside down staircases and sugar-cube structures looking heavenward. "The primitive

technology consisted of human labour and beasts of burden," said Franco Pierotti, director of extractions. "The primordial instruments such as levers, chisels and hammers later evolved with the introduction of helical wires in the 19th century and now we have diamond-tipped wires and saws and heavy earth-moving equipment," he said.

Before the extracting begins, experts known as "tecciaroli" hang on ropes from the sides of the mountain and pick at its sides with pointy iron bars to remove loose rock that could fall and hurt workers in subsequent phases of the extraction. In the three centuries following Michelangelo's time, the Altissimo quarries went through cycles of abandonment and re-discovery.

In 1821, Marco Borrini, a local landowner, teamed up with Frenchman Jean Baptiste Alexandre Henraux to start a new company and it has been active in the area ever since. The venture brought new life to the economically depressed area, employing hundreds of quarrymen, squarers, sled men, stone cutters and cart drivers, who guided oxen trains. In the 19th century, the tsars of Russia chose Altissimo marble for the construction of St Isaac's Cathedral in St Petersburg and more recently, it was used in the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque in Abu Dhabi, which opened in 2007.

Today, the Henraux company owns the entire mountain, employs about 140 people and extracts marble from five active quarries. Over the years artists such as Auguste Rodin, Henry Moore, Joan Miro and Isamu Noguchi have used Altissimo marble for their sculptures. Michelangelo would be proud. —Reuters

SENATE REPUBLICANS ABANDONING TRUMP

There wasn't a dramatic public break or an exact moment it happened. But step by step, Senate Republicans are turning their backs on President Donald Trump. They defeated an Obamacare repeal bill despite Trump's pleas. They're ignoring his Twitter demands that they get back to work on it. They dissed the White House budget director, defended the attorney general against the president's attacks and passed veto-proof sanctions on Russia over his administration's objections. They're reasserting their independence, which looked sorely diminished in the aftermath of Trump's surprise election win.

"We work for the American people," Sen Tim Scott of South Carolina said Tuesday. "We don't work for the president." Those are surprisingly tough words from a Republican whose state Trump won easily less than a year ago. But after six months of controversies and historically low approval ratings, it's clear Trump isn't commanding the fear or respect he once did.

Some Republicans no doubt are giving voice to long-held reservations about a man whose election was essentially a hostile takeover of their party. But it is notable that the loudest criticism is coming from the Senate, where few Republicans are burdened with facing an electorate anytime soon. The situation is different in the

House, where most Republicans represent conservative districts still loyal to Trump. For those lawmakers, the fear of facing a conservative primary challenger, possibly fueled by angry Trump followers, is real.

In the most remarkable example of public Trump-bashing, Sen. Jeff Flake of Arizona is taking aim at the president and his own party in a new book, writing that "Unnerving silence in the face of an erratic executive branch is an abdication" and marveling at "the strange specter of an American president's seeming affection for strongmen and authoritarians."

The criticism from Flake is especially striking since he is one of just two GOP senators facing competitive re-election races in next year's midterm elections, the other being Dean Heller of Nevada. The other 50 Senate Republicans are largely insulated from blow-back from Trump's still-loyal base, at least in the short term, since they won't face voters for several years.

Defiance

That is likely contributing to their defiance, which is emerging now after an accumulation of frustrations, culminating in the failure of the health care bill Friday. In particular, senators were agast over Trump's recent attacks on their longtime colleague Jeff Sessions, the former Alabama senator

who is now attorney general and facing Trump's wrath over having recused himself from the investigation into possible collaboration between Russia and Trump's presidential campaign.

Sen Lindsey Graham of South Carolina deemed Trump's treatment of Sessions "unseemly" and "a sign of great weakness on the part of President Trump." The comments were echoed by other Republican senators. Then, White House budget director Mick Mulvaney, a former House member, suggested on a Sunday show that the Senate must pass health care before doing anything else. No. 2 Republican John Cornyn didn't hesitate to go after him. "I don't think he's got much experience in the Senate as I recall, and he's got a big job," Cornyn said. "He ought to do that job and let us do our jobs."

The ill will flows both ways. At Tuesday's White House briefing, press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders pointedly blamed lawmakers for the president's failures to deliver. "I think what's hurting the legislative agenda is Congress' inability to get things passed," she said. Trump has been ignoring past warnings from Majority Leader Mitch McConnell to stay out of the Senate's business, tweeting relentless commands in the wake of Friday's failure on health care that the Senate should eliminate the filibuster

rule that requires 60 votes to move forward on much major legislation.

"Mitch M, go to 51 Votes NOW and WIN. IT'S TIME!" the president said over Twitter. That ignored the fact that Republicans tried to pass the health care bill under rules that required only a simple majority. So Republicans, in turn, ignored Trump. "It's pretty obvious that our problem on health care was not the Democrats," McConnell said drily on Tuesday. "We didn't have 50 Republicans."

Some Republicans say Trump and his administration only made it harder to pass health care by ineptly pressuring Sen Lisa Murkowski with threats from Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke about consequences for her state, which rankled the Alaska senator. She proceeded to postpone votes in the Energy committee she chairs on a group of administration nominees, while saying it was for unrelated reasons, and voted "no" on the health bill.

"I think most Republican senators have their own identity that's separate from the president," said Alex Conant, a GOP strategist and former adviser to Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida. "If you look at the elections last fall almost every Republican senator who was up for re-election ran ahead of Trump and that's not a fact that's lost on Congress." — AP

NIGERIA WORLD CUP HOPE FOR AILING GOALKEEPER IKEME

ABUJA: Nigeria coach Gernot Rohr is hopeful goalkeeper Carl Ikeme, who has been diagnosed with acute leukaemia, will return for next year's World Cup in Russia. "It's unfortunate that Carl Ikeme will be sick for a long time, we miss him, but hopefully he will come back for the World Cup," Rohr said on Wednesday. "So, for the moment we will work with the other goalkeepers." The Wolverhampton Wanderers number one, who made his debut against Tanzania in 2015, played a key role in Nigeria's 2-1 opening World Cup qualifier victory against Zambia in October last year. But in June the 31-year-old was diagnosed with acute leukaemia and immediately began treatment. Rohr said former national goalkeeper Vincent Enyeama will quit Lille when he has fully recovered from a knee injury. Enyeama was Ikeme's predecessor in the Super Eagles before he quit international football two years ago after a major falling out.—AFP

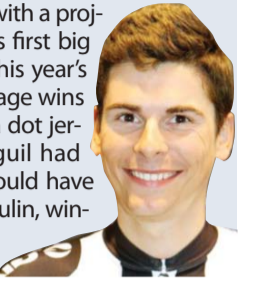


EMBATTLED WU DEFIANT AS AIBA OFFICES REOPEN

LAUSANNE: The offices of amateur boxing's ruling body AIBA reopened yesterday after a week-long closure with embattled president Wu Ching-Kuo on site despite a push for his ouster by rival executives. Wu's executive committee has passed a motion of no-confidence against his leadership and have asked Swiss courts to approve a temporary administration, accusing the Taiwanese president of financial mismanagement. A notice posted on the door of the organisation's headquarters in Lausanne, Switzerland last week announced that the office had been closed following the no-confidence vote. "The staff and the president are back at work, especially to prepare for the World Championships in Hamburg", Wu told AFP, referring to the competition set to take place in the German city from August 25 to September 2. Wu has previously charged his rivals with trying to pull off "a military coup".—AFP

'KING OF THE MOUNTAINS' BARGUIL JOINS FORTUNEO

PARIS: French rider Warren Barguil, crowned King of the Mountains as top climber in the Tour de France, confirmed yesterday he will race for Fortuneo next season. The 25-year-old competed with German outfit Sunweb this season, and becomes one of two riders to join French team Fortuneo along with compatriot Amael Moinard from BMC. "I've watched the team's rise in power these last few years," said Barguil. "Emmanuel Hubert (Fortuneo manager) has the ambition to make the team even bigger with a project that I find exciting." Barguil won two stages on his first big tour — the Vuelta in 2013 — but had to wait until this year's Tour de France for more success with two mountain stage wins at Foix and Izard. He claimed the top climber's polka dot jersey as well as winning the combativity award. Barguil had another year left on his contract with Sunweb, but would have had to share the limelight with Dutch rider Tom Dumoulin, winner of the Giro d'Italia in May.—AFP



HULL FC'S MINICHIELLO FEARS BURN-OUT OVER AUSTRALIA TRIP

LONDON: Hull FC's Mark Minichiello has voiced concerns over player welfare after his side were confirmed as one of the participations in the first Super League fixture to be held in Australia. Hull and Wigan will both head to Sydney in February 2018 to play their ground-breaking match followed a few days later by a double header at ANZ Stadium, with the Black and Whites taking on St George Illawarra and South Sydney facing Wigan.

That offers an unexpected chance for Minichiello to play in his homeland again, but he is concerned that the players will suffer as a result. "It is great to get to play against an NRL team in Australia one more time, I am looking forward to it and seeing how things have changed over there," he said.

"Never say never, but I didn't think I would be playing an NRL team in Australia again, so I am looking forward to going back there. "It's good for the game, but it's a little bit crazy to have an extra game on top of all the games we already play.

"I understand that it will push the game and expose it to new audiences, if you want to promote it in Australia this is a good way to do it. The players will be excited but it is a tough old season already." Minichiello's Hull side face Salford in their first game of the Super 8s this weekend, fresh from reaching the Challenge Cup final on Saturday. And they have also been boosted by the double signing of former Black and White Mickey Paea and Bureta Faraimo for next season.

PHENOMENAL
"They're two, quality additions to our squad for next season and beyond. Mickey is someone who knows the squad really well and Bureta will add a lot too," head coach Lee Radford said. "We tried to sign Bureta on a few occasions in the past and we were in for him when we signed Mahe Fonua but he ended up going to Parramatta. I'm over the moon to have finally got him.

"His statistics, including his metres, are absolutely phenomenal and he's the kind of outside back who gets sets going for you. "Mickey is very professional and he will provide a huge impact for us in the forwards. I was gutted to see him go when he left at the end of 2015 but it's good to have him back at the club."

The Super 8s begin on Thursday as leaders Castleford play host to in-form St Helens, with coach Daryl Powell admitting it will be a tough game to kick things off. "They have improved and there's a lot more ball movement in them," he said. "They are really challenging teams and they have a bit of form behind them so it will be a really tough one.

"We all know where we sit in the table, it's about going on with our consistency and if we get that right then obviously we'll get the prize that we want." On Friday, Leeds, who lost to Hull on Saturday, will host Challenge Cup finalists Wigan, while Huddersfield play host to Wakefield.—AFP



RIO DE JANEIRO: This file photo taken on August 18, 2016 shows Jamaica's Usain Bolt (2ndL) laughing with Canada's Andre De Grasse (L) after they competed in the Men's 200m Semifinal during the athletics event at the Rio 2016 Olympic Games at the Olympic Stadium in Rio de Janeiro. Jamaican sprint legend Usain Bolt labelled himself the underdog on Tuesday as he seeks to round off his glittering individual track career with the defence of his world 100m title this week.—AFP

ATHLETICS

GATLIN GUNNING FOR BOLT ONE LAST TIME

LONDON: Justin Gatlin has become increasingly irritated at being labelled the dope cheat contrasting with Usain Bolt's superhero image in the sprinting world, but he can set that aside by spoiling the latter's farewell at the world athletics championships. The 35-year-old American, who last year became the oldest man to win a 100m Olympic medal when he took silver behind his nemesis Bolt-gets one last go at the Jamaican legend when the world championships get underway in London tomorrow.

It will be asking a lot of Gatlin-who served a four-year ban reduced from eight for doping from 2006-2010 — to achieve that having only beaten Bolt once in nine previous meetings over the shorter sprint distance, and that was four years ago in Rome.

There exists a mutual respect between the two old rivals to the extent the Jamaican was horrified by the booing and jeering of the American prior to the 100m final in Rio last year, and then again at the medal ceremony. "I personally think he's a great athlete," said Bolt after Rio. "He shows up and pushes you to run fast and be at your best at all times." Gatlin too is gushing about Bolt, whose crowd-pleasing antics have gilded his image as the good guy

whilst the American has often been cast as a pantomime villain.

"I have the utmost respect for Usain," said Gatlin. "Away from the track, he's a great guy, he's a cool guy, there is no rivalry between us. There is no bad blood. I'm a competitor, he's a competitor and he has pushed me to be the athlete that I am today." Gatlin-who has been one of the most tested athletes in sport since his return from the ban-showed his class in adding Olympic bronze (2012) and silver in the 100m to go with the gold he won in the pre-Bolt era in Athens in 2004, when he also took bronze in the 200m.

He has the full house of Olympic 100m medals-plus a plethora of world medals including the 100m and 200m golds from 2005 — but whether it measures up to what he could have won, had he not fallen foul of the dope testers when he was a member of the now disgraced Trevor Graham stable, is a moot point.

'I WAS TOO ANGRY'

The four years in the wilderness saw him try and fail three times to make it with an NFL team, and having lost his lucrative sponsorship deals, he had to sell his house and live in more spartan

surroundings. On his return to the track there was a lot of anger stored up-no longer the sense of fun that as a child had seen him dress up as Batman and jump on his parents' bed with them sound asleep-but he addressed the issue just as he had his Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD).

Ironically, as Gatlin told the New York Times last year, he saw himself still as Batman but in his role as 'a vigilante'. "I was too angry; it was deteriorating my character," he told the newspaper. "I didn't like who I had become."

Intense chats with a priest brought peace and seemingly resolved that issue, but it has not lessened his hunger for success on the track. Although he has hinted he might try and push his ageing legs and body to try and make the Tokyo Olympics in 2020, realistically London may represent the last chance to be a genuine contender at a major championships-and deliver a title for his demanding seven-year-old son Jace.

"I mean, if anything, it makes me nervous. Your son telling you, 'you better win,'" he told US Magazine last year. "If anyone else in the crowd is like, 'You better win,' I'm like, 'I'm going to try.' That's why I'm here; I'm trying. But if my son says that, I'm trying to move mountains." — AFP

RUGBY

HOOPER REPLACES MOORE AS WALLABIES CAPTAIN

SYDNEY: Michael Hooper was yesterday named as the new Wallabies captain, replacing the soon-to-retire Stephen Moore as the team builds towards the 2019 World Cup in Japan. The openside flanker was preferred to David Pocock, who is on sabbatical, and will lead the side in the Rugby Championship opener against the All Blacks in Sydney on August 19.

The 25-year-old Hooper, who has played 68 Tests, has endured a difficult Super Rugby season with the under-performing NSW Waratahs and his leadership of the side and form has been under question.

But Wallabies coach Michael Cheika said he was the right man for the job. Moore had already announced that he will retire from international rugby at the end of the year. "Michael always shows on the field how much he loves the gold jersey and that's why he is totally respected among the rugby players in Australia," Cheika said.

"His role as the leader of this team will also be about making the standards of the Australian rugby team the highest they can possibly be." Moore, who has been capped 120 times, will continue to play for the Wallabies, helping Hooper's transition, until the end of Australia's European tour in November.

"It's a huge honour to just wear the Wallabies jersey, let alone captain the

side," said Hooper. "It's what you do in the jersey that's most important and I get another crack at showing what it means to me against New Zealand in Sydney in a fortnight.

"There are quite a few good young leaders in this team like Bernard (Foley), Adam (Coleman), Samu (Kerevi) and Allan (Alaalatoa), so we'll be working together to take this team to a new level. "I'm really excited about what we can achieve in the next four months. It is a very special opportunity for all of us, and we'll be doing all we can to show that pride in the jersey."

The Sydney-born Hooper has already captained the side in the absence of Moore. He was called up to replace the injured veteran in Australia's 2014 June Test series against France, becoming the third-youngest Wallabies skipper in history at age 22.

It was a rude awakening for him during a time when Kurtley Beale was attracting headlines for arguing with team management and the abrupt departure of former coach Ewen McKenzie. "I feel like I've grown up a lot," Hooper said in June, looking back at being thrown into the deep end at such a young age. "I've learned a lot of things since then and learned off a lot of people, being involved with some good old heads over the last couple of years has done a lot for me." —AFP



Australia's Michael Hooper has the ball knocked from his grasp by England's Chris Robshaw.

GOLF

DESPITE CURBS, CHINESE PLAYERS EMERGE ON WORLD GOLF SCENE

SHANGHAI: When Chinese golfer Li Haotong once dreamt about making headlines, he probably wasn't envisaging the mocking recent coverage of his mother wading into a water hazard to retrieve his club. Li, who turns 22 today, can giggle now because it's his game that's making the news, after a startling performance at the British Open saw him touted as a potential major-winner.

Li's success at Royal Birkdale preceded the historic achievement of his bespectacled countryman Dou Zecheng, who won on the Web.com Tour on Sunday to become the first Chinese to earn a PGA Tour playing card. China has long been viewed as the next great frontier for emerging golf talent, but that vision has been slow to materialise, at least in the men's game.

But golfers such as Li and Dou, 20, are at the forefront of a new generation of talented young Chinese players waiting to break out. Their emergence comes despite the Chinese government's ambivalent attitude towards golf, which was banned under Mao Zedong and is traditionally viewed as bourgeois.

On the one hand, Chinese authorities have shut dozens of golf courses-many of them illegal-and curbed new construction, while also warning Communist Party members about playing the game. But on the other, big tournaments such as the \$9.75-million WGC-HSBC Champions in Shanghai, one of the world's richest golf events, are a regular fixture.

None of this is the concern of Hunan native

Li, who had to contend with embarrassment in June after the video of his mother, knee-deep in water, swept the internet.

"Don't remind me, please," the often-smiling Li told reporters later. Frustrated at a poor shot at the French Open, Li launched the club into a murky pond, only for his mother to roll up her trousers to go and fetch it. As fellow players watched on in hysterics-apparently unaware it

was Li's mother-she fished out the club, only to toss it back in after realising it was snapped.

The incident did nothing to harm Li, who registered China's best performance in a major after his final round of 63 at the British Open placed him third and earned him a spot at the Masters. "It's kind of a dream come true," said Li, who is 66th in the world rankings and has been quietly making a name for himself in recent years.—AFP



Li Haotong



CHICAGO: Kevan Smith #36 of the Chicago White Sox is tagged out at home by Russell Martin #55 of the Toronto Blue Jays in the eighth inning at Guaranteed Rate Field on Tuesday in Chicago, Illinois.— AFP

BASEBALL

VAZQUEZ'S 3-RUN HR LIFTS RED SOX OVER INDIANS

BOSTON: Christian Vazquez hit a three-run homer with two outs in the bottom of the ninth inning and the Boston Red Sox pulled off the final rally of a wild game Tuesday night, beating the Cleveland Indians 12-10 despite an astonishing catch by center fielder Austin Jackson. In the fifth inning, Jackson robbed Hanley Ramirez of a leadoff homer with a leaping grab in the right-center triangle at Fenway Park. Jackson reached way above the wall and tumbled head over heels into the Red Sox bullpen, steadying himself by holding onto the fence with his right arm. Following a soft landing, Jackson stood up and showed umpires he indeed had the ball, to the amazement of players on both sides. A replay review confirmed Jackson held on for the catch. Cleveland, which tied it on Francisco Lindor's leadoff homer in the top of the ninth and added a run on a wild pitch, blew the lead for the third and last time in the bottom of the ninth in a game the Indians led 5-0 after two innings.

DODGERS 3, BRAVES 2

Kenta Maeda allowed only two hits in seven scoreless innings, Cody Bellinger homered and Los Angeles won its ninth straight. The slumping Braves were shut down by Maeda (10-4) but cut their deficit to one with Johan Camargo's two-run homer off Josh Ravin in the eighth. Atlanta ended the inning with Brandon Phillips, who had a pinch-hit single, on third base. Bellinger led off the fourth with his 29th homer into the Braves' bullpen in right-center off Lucas Sims (0-1). Sims and second baseman Ozzie Albies made their major league debuts for Atlanta, which has lost six in a row. Kenley Jansen struck out the side in the ninth for his 28th save in 29 chances.

RAYS 6, ASTROS 4

Evan Longoria became the second Tampa Bay player to hit for the cycle and drove in three runs to lead the Rays past Houston. He was a double shy when he

came to the plate with two outs in the ninth inning and laced a laser to left field. Longoria dashed to second base and slid in to avoid the tag of Jose Altuve. He was initially ruled out, but the call was overturned after a crew chief review. Most of the Rays stood up behind the railing of the dugout and cheered as the call was reversed. Logan Morrison hit a solo homer and finished with two RBIs. Lucas Duda singled with one out in the first before Longoria launched his towering homer, which banged on train tracks atop left field, off Mike Fiers (7-6) to make it 2-0. Morrison's 27th homer came next to make it 3-0. Rays starter Chris Archer (8-6) allowed six hits, four runs and struck out five in 6-plus innings to get his first win since July 4.

TIGERS 4, YANKEES 3

John Hicks hit a three-run homer in his first big league game in more than a month, Justin Upton added a solo drive off CC Sabathia, and Detroit held on to beat the New York Yankees. A 27-year-old rookie recalled Monday for his fifth major league stint this season, Hicks drove a slider over the right-center field wall in the second inning, capping a 10-pitch at-bat. Upton made it 4-0 in the third when he hit a full-count slider to left-center for his 18th homer. Shane Greene walked pinch-hitter Jacoby Ellsbury with two outs in the ninth, and bounced a pickoff throw for an error that allowed Ellsbury to reach third. Brett Gardner was intentionally walked and stole second, and rookie Clint Frazier popped out. Anibal Sanchez (3-1) allowed six hits in 6 2/3 innings and improved to 3-0 at Yankee Stadium. Sabathia (9-4) gave up six hits in six innings.

BREWERS 3, CARDINALS 2

Jimmy Nelson finally beat St. Louis with six strong innings, helping the Milwaukee Brewers hold on for a 3-2 victory over the Cardinals. Nelson (9-5) entered 0-8 with a 7.01 ERA in 11 appearances (10 starts)

against the Cardinals. This time, the right-hander overcame his division rival by allowing just two runs on six hits with seven strikeouts. The Brewers' bullpen kept the Cardinals off the scoreboard for three innings, including Anthony Swarzak striking out the side in the eighth after Josh Hader issued a leadoff walk. Corey Knebel then earned his 19th save. The Brewers scored their three runs in the first inning off Cardinals starter Carlos Martinez (7-9) and had just two infield singles the rest of the game.

MARLINS 7, NATIONALS 6

Max Scherzer hit his first career homer to help build a six-run lead, but he pitched only one inning before departing with a neck spasm, and Miami rallied to beat Washington. Scherzer slept funny and left the game as a precaution, the Nationals said. The Marlins took the lead with a four-run fifth inning. Marcell Ozuna hit a three-run homer off Matt Albers (5-2), and Derek Dietrich's RBI triple put Miami ahead 7-6. Six pitchers combined to blank Washington over the final 7 2/3 innings. Dustin McGowan (7-1) pitched two scoreless innings during Miami's comeback. Brad Ziegler, promoted to closer after A.J. Ramos was traded last week, pitched the ninth and worked around a pair of two-out singles for his 86th career save and first this year. Ryan Zimmerman grounded out to end the game.

ROCKIES 5, METS 4

Nolan Arenado hit a three-run homer in the sixth inning and a game-winning single in the bottom of the ninth that lifted Colorado past the New York Mets. Charlie Blackmon crashed into the center-field fence for an outstanding catch that ended the top of the ninth. In the bottom half, the Rockies took advantage of a misplay by new Mets shortstop Amed Rosario, a touted prospect making his major league debut. Blackmon drew a leadoff walk from Hansel Robles (6-2) and DJ LeMahieu followed with an infield single off the glove of Rosario, unable to make the backhand play after initially breaking toward second base with Blackmon running on the pitch. Arenado reached out and looped a single to center that scored Blackmon.

PADRES 3, TWINS 0

Austin Hedges hit a two-run home run in the eighth inning and Jhoulys Chacin combined with two relievers on a three-hitter for San Diego. The Padres had only two hits and led 1-0 going into the eighth before Hunter Renfroe singled off Alan Busenitz with one out and Hedges homered to right-center, his 14th. Jose Berrios (9-5) held the Padres hitless until Renfroe opened the sixth by beating out an infield single to third base. Hedges followed with a double to right and Manuel Margot hit a sacrifice fly with one out. Hedges was thrown out trying to take third. Berrios had faced the minimum 15 batters until the sixth. He issued a one-out walk to Carlos Asuaje in the first

before Jose Pirela hit into a double play. Chacin (11-7) allowed three hits in seven innings, struck out three and walked two.

ORIOLES 7, ROYALS 2

Dylan Bundy allowed three hits over a career-high eight innings, newcomer Tim Beckham had two hits and scored twice and resurgent Baltimore won its fourth straight. Seth Smith drove in three runs to help the Orioles move within two games of .500 (52-54) for the first time since July 3. Kansas City will seek to avoid a three-game sweep on Wednesday. The Royals came to town having won 10 of 11, but they've only scored three runs in these two games at Camden Yards. Bundy (10-8) struck out five and walked one. The right-hander had not pitched more than seven innings in any of his previous 34 major league starts. All three hits Bundy allowed were singles - none after the third inning - and he retired the final 13 batters he faced. The only run he allowed was unearned. Ian Kennedy (4-7) gave up four runs and eight hits in four-plus innings.

REDS 9, PIRATES 1

Billy Hamilton hit a three-run homer and tripled, Eugenio Suarez and rookie Jesse Winker also went deep, and Cincinnati overwhelmed Pittsburgh. Hamilton tripled and scored in the first inning. Then he sent a pitch from Jameson Taillon (6-5) into the right-field seats in the second for his third home run of the season as the last-place Reds beat Pittsburgh again. Cincinnati is 7-1 against the Pirates this season and 36-62 versus everyone else. Homer Bailey (3-5) allowed one run in six innings, striking out three and walking two to snap a three-start losing streak. Taillon gave up eight runs on 11 hits in 3 2/3 innings and is 1-3 with a 12.18 ERA since the All Star break.

BLUE JAYS 8, WHITE SOX 4

Justin Smoak hit his 31st homer, Josh Donaldson homered and drove in three runs, and Toronto beat Chicago. Smoak and Donaldson each connected for the second straight night and third time in five games. Donaldson also had a sacrifice fly and RBI double. Marcus Stroman (10-5) went seven innings, allowing four runs and seven hits. He was winless in his previous three starts despite a 1.89 ERA in that stretch. Toronto came out on top after dropping three of four and snapped a four-game road losing streak. Chicago's Kevan Smith hit a two-run homer batting for injured designated hitter Matt Davidson in the sixth. But the White Sox lost for the 18th time in 22 games.

CUBS 16, DIAMONDBACKS 4

Jon Lester hit his first major league homer and struck out nine to reach 2,000 for his career, helping the Cubs cruise past Arizona. Anthony Rizzo went deep twice and Ian Happ and Javier Baez also connected as Chicago kicked off a six-game homestand with its 14th win in 17 games since the All-Star break. Rizzo, Baez and Albert Almora Jr. each drove in three runs, and Kris Bryant and Willson Contreras had two RBIs

apiece. The NL Central leaders rapped out 17 hits in their highest-scoring game of the season and stayed 2 1/2 games ahead of second-place Milwaukee. With two outs and Happ on first in the third, Lester drove a 2-2 pitch from Patrick Corbin (8-10) over the wall in center to make it 8-1. The crowd of 40,709 roared as Lester trotted around the bases and kept cheering until he popped out of the dugout for a curtain call Hector Rondon (3-1) got five outs for the win and Mike Montgomery pitched three innings for his third save.

MARINERS 8, RANGERS 7

Robinson Cano doubled twice and drove in three runs as Seattle beat Texas. Cano's two-run double in the sixth was the 499th of his career, moving him into a time with Rusty Staub for 63rd in MLB history. Jarrod Dyson had his 200th career steal in the win and threw out a runner from centerfield at third to end the eighth inning in a one-run game. Nelson Cruz homered and Leonys Martin had two hits and two RBIs for Seattle. Joey Gallo had two homers and four RBIs, and Rougned Odor also went deep for the Rangers, who lost their fourth straight. Casey Lawrence (1-3) picked up his first MLB win after entering the game in the fourth inning. Edwin Diaz earned his 21st save after working a 1-2-3 ninth. Nick Martinez (3-4) gave up seven runs and eight hits in 5 1/3 innings.

GIANTS 10, ATHLETICS 4

Hunter Pence hit a three-run homer and Nick Hundley added a two-run shot to back a stellar start by Jeff Samardzija and lead San Francisco past Oakland. Brandon Belt homered leading off the fourth inning to help the Giants snap a four-game losing streak. San Francisco's five runs in the first matched its most in any inning this year, and the three homers also equaled a season high. Samardzija (6-11) struck out five over eight innings to win consecutive outings for the second time this year. Matt Joyce hit a two-run homer and a sacrifice fly for the A's. Sean Manaea (8-6) gave up nine hits and six runs - two earned. He was done after three innings for the second-shortest outing of his career.

ANGELS 7, PHILLIES 1

Albert Pujols hit a three-run homer and a two-run double, and Los Angeles snapped Philadelphia's five-game winning streak. Pujols followed up his go-ahead double off Aaron Nola (8-7) in the fifth inning with his 608th career homer in the seventh off reliever Mark Leiter. The slugger's third homer in two games left him one behind Sammy Sosa for eighth place in major league history. Pujols went 3 for 4 in his 23rd career game with at least five RBIs. That's the 11th-most in history, tied with Barry Bonds and Cecil Fielder. Ricky Nolasco (5-12) pitched six innings of one-run ball, earning his first victory in a month. The Phillies failed to match their longest winning streak of the season in the opener of an eight-game road trip. — AP

MLB Results/Standings

San Diego 3, Minnesota 0; LA Angels 7, Philadelphia 1; San Francisco 10 Oakland 4; Colorado 5, NY Mets 4; Tampa Bay 6, Houston 4; Toronto 8, Chicago White Sox 4; Chicago Cubs 16, Arizona 4; Seattle 8, Texas 7; Milwaukee 3, St. Louis 2; LA Dodgers 3, Atlanta 2; Boston 12, Cleveland 10; Miami 7, Washington 6; Cincinnati 9, Pittsburgh 1; Detroit 4, NY Yankees 3; Baltimore 7, Kansas City 2.

American League Eastern Division				National League Eastern Division				
W	L	PCT	GB	Washington	Miami	NY Mets	Atlanta	
Boston	59	49	.546	-	63	42	.600	
NY Yankees	57	48	.543	0.5	50	55	.476	
Tampa Bay	55	53	.509	4	48	56	.462	
Baltimore	52	54	.491	6	48	57	.457	
Toronto	50	57	.467	8.5	39	65	.375	
Central Division				Central Division				
Cleveland	57	48	.543	-	Chicago Cubs	57	48	.543
Kansas City	55	50	.524	2	Milwaukee	56	52	.519
Minnesota	50	54	.481	6.5	St. Louis	52	54	.491
Detroit	48	57	.457	9	Pittsburgh	51	55	.481
Chicago White Sox	41	63	.394	15.5	Cincinnati	43	63	.406
Western Division				Western Division				
Houston	69	37	.651	-	LA Dodgers	75	31	.708
Seattle	55	53	.509	15	Colorado	61	46	.570
LA Angels	52	55	.486	17.5	Arizona	60	46	.566
Texas	50	56	.472	19	San Diego	48	58	.453
Oakland	47	60	.439	22.5	San Francisco	41	67	.380

HAT-TRICK HERO CALLS FOR GREATER ASIAN INVOLVEMENT IN ENGLAND

LONDON: Moeen Ali believes English cricket is missing a trick by not reaching out to more potential players from Britain's Asian communities. Ali, whose hat-trick sealed England's 239-run win in the third Test against South Africa at The Oval on Monday, is the latest of several players of Asian descent to represent England, including former captain Nasser Hussain, with cricket deeply embedded in the life of many British Asian communities. But Ali, who was born and brought up in Birmingham, a city with one of Britain's largest Asian populations, said more work was needed if English cricket was to make the most of this enthusiasm for the sport.

"Now, a lot more south Asian people are thinking: 'Actually, I could make a good career from this now.' But it's also down to the counties to do more to help South-Asian kids," Ali, who started his career with Birmingham-based Warwickshire before moving to Midlands rivals Worcestershire, told the Guardian yesterday.

"Look at Warwickshire. This is a big city of Asian people, so why can't you produce any south Asian players? I don't understand."

'VAST TALENT POOL'
The England and Wales Cricket Board have launched a south Asian initiative to help develop players from those backgrounds and Ali said: "It's a very good step in the right direction to ask people how the ECB can help them. It's very positive because the pool of talent is vast."

"But the south Asian mentality must also change. Cricket is not just batting and bowling. There's a lot of physical stuff, fitness, fielding, diet, discipline, being on time." The bearded Ali, a 30-year-old off-spinning all-rounder, is also one of the most high profile practising Muslims in British public life and a representative of a community that has often felt stigmatised following recent terror attacks in Manchester and London.

"There is such negativity in the media around Islam but when I play cricket for England I don't have to say anything," Ali added. "I'm hoping people look at me and other Muslims and think: 'Actually, it will be all right. They're not too bad.'"

COOK PRAISE

Meanwhile Ali, who made his name as a batsman, was hailed as an "unsung hero" by former England captain Alastair Cook. England are now 2-1 up against South Africa ahead of the fourth and final Test starting in Manchester on Friday.

Ali is the leading bowler on either side with 18 wickets-including a 10-wicket haul in England's series-opening win at Lord's where he also made 87. "It has been an amazing series for Mo, he is a legend," opening batsman Cook told BBC Radio Four's Today programme. "He is the unsung hero in one sense."

"He came into the side a few years ago when I was captain as a guy who could balance the side and bowl a little bit of off-spin and now he is the leading wicket-taker in the series. His off-spin is actually very good, he's not (former England off-spinner) Graeme Swann but his record is improving all the time." — AFP

SMITH UPBEAT BUT SAYS NO TOUR WITHOUT NEW PAY DEAL

SYDNEY: Australia captain Steve Smith said he was upbeat that a bitter pay war between players and management could be nearly over-but warned the team wouldn't go ahead with this month's tour of Bangladesh until a new deal is signed.

Some 230 Australian cricketers have been unemployed since the end of June when their contracts expired, in a row that has rattled the game and left their relationship with the governing body badly strained. But after months of bad-tempered negotiations over a new pay deal-and a player boycott of an Australia A tour to South Africa-the end appears to be in sight.

"A deal hasn't been done just yet," Smith told Fox Sports Australia late Tuesday. "There's still a few things that need to be finalised, some key elements. They've been making some really good progress and hopefully they'll continue to make progress."

A resolution would give certainty not just to the Bangladesh trip, but a one-day tour to India in September and October ahead of the showpiece home Ashes series against England, beginning in November. But Smith said a deal would have to be struck before Australia board the flight for Dhaka on August 18.

"I told Pat Howard personally this was how things were going to be," he said, referring to Cricket Australia's team performance manager. "I'd like to (tour

Bangladesh), but as we've said for a long time we need to get a deal done first."

CA chief James Sutherland warned last week that unless the drawn-out negotiations over a revenue-sharing deal produced a compromise by early this week, he would take the matter to arbitration and let the industrial umpire resolve it.

This sparked new urgency to strike a deal, with talks continuing over the weekend. Players have been paid from gross revenue for the past two decades, but CA wants their pay to come from a set pool instead, with only surplus revenue shared. The Australian newspaper reported yesterday that barring last-minute stumbling blocks, the players would largely retain the previous model, which they have insisted is non-negotiable.

But even if the disagreement is resolved, former captain Michael Clarke said on Sunday he feared things would never be the same between CA and the players. Vice-captain David Warner has been particularly outspoken in the push to keep the 20-year revenue-sharing arrangement. But Smith insisted the batsman had nothing to fear regarding potential retribution from Howard and Sutherland.

"No, I think he'll be okay," Smith said. "Obviously he's been very vocal and he's supported the Australian Cricketers' Association through this whole thing and he's been great." —AFP

ON-FIRE DANES STILL IN CONSTRUCTION, SAYS COACH

BAVEL: The Danish team that sent eight-time champions Germany packing in the women's Euro quarter-final is still under construction, aiming at the 2020 Tokyo Olympic, says coach Nils Nielsen.

"The truth is we are still developing this team," the man with a gold earring in his left ear told AFP ahead of today's semi-final with Austria.

"We are trying to develop a team that can maybe not be as good as Germany and maybe not as good as France and all the other big teams, but maybe we can create a team that can stay up in the top and not have these ups and downs all the time."

Denmark were trailing Germany after three minutes last Sunday, but second-half headers from Nadia Nadim and Theresa Nielsen ended the superpower's dreams of a seventh straight title in a game postponed from Saturday because of rain. Newcomers Austria beckon in the semi-final today, and Nielsen's memories of their last encounter are not the best as Denmark lost 4-2 in Wiener Neustadt less than a month ago.

"We played them just before the Euros and they killed us, to be honest, they were too strong, they were too fast for us, and they were going directly at our goal and we didn't like it at all," he said.

"So it's going to be a really tough match for us. We will definitely have a better plan for that match than we had for the other match but enough to beat Austria I don't know-they've had an amazing tournament so far."

Building his team, the 45-year-old Nielsen needs "to be very patient and also make a mix of players, to give some young players the chance to play and still to have some more experienced players who can hold the team together when

it's tough". "And in this team we have Pernille Harder and we have Simone Boye, they are really strong characters and they can really hold this team together when we are in trouble, also with Germany, they were keeping us in the game."

Formerly coaching Denmark's youths, Nielsen took the women's team over in 2013 with this long-term plan-a challenge catering to his taste, as he said.

FAIRYTALE ENDING
"This group of players are meant to have a real go to make a qualification for the Olympics, that's the plan we had when we started this project four years ago." "And we have to qualify through the World Cup and it's going to be really tough for us, just to qualify for the World Cup, so we have to find this self-confidence somewhere."

"So this is a big boost for us that we could actually beat Germany. Now the players start to think: OK, maybe we can even beat Sweden when we play them in the qualification" for the 2019 World Cup in France.

So far, he can be happy with the team spirit, an essential factor in his team's progress at the tournament where the Danes beat Norway and Belgium and lost to hosts the Netherlands in the group.

"We all help, everybody in the team is defending, everybody is attacking, nobody is bigger than anyone else." Before the quarter-final, Nielsen said he wanted a Hans Christian Andersen fairytale, and he has got one, but like the greedy characters in Andersen's books, he wants more now. "I will say that in a fairytale there is always a happy ending and our happy ending would be a gold medal," he said. —AFP



UTRECHT: England's Jodie Taylor (C) takes part in a training session in Utrecht yesterday, during the UEFA Women's Euro 2017 football tournament. —AFP

SOCCER

ENGLAND'S BRIGHT EYES TOUGH DUTCH CHALLENGES

ZEIST: An equestrian rider as a child, Millie Bright opted for football before becoming the rock of England's back four at the women's Euro in the Netherlands. Her hard tackling style has helped England to three clean sheets in four games so far with the Lionesses' eyes on a historic success as they get ready for a semi-final against the hosts.

"It shows how far we've come as a unit, as a back four, and as a squad as well," says the 23-year-old Chelsea defender. England thrashed Scotland and cruised past Spain before sinking Portugal with a much-changed team and edging France 1-0 in the quarter-finals.

"They've all been pretty equal to be fair, but each opponent brings different threats and obviously France were a top team, we knew they were going to bring threats," said Bright. "We stayed tight as a unit and defended when we needed to defend."

"If you can do that it shows you can compete with the best and you can keep a clean sheet against top opponents." Playing her first major international tournament, Bright, who has teamed up with skipper Steph Houghton at the back, prefers a tough, no-nonsense style.

"I think positioning is your main base to start with and then everything else just falls into place, but I try not to overthink it," she said. "I just go into the game and just give myself a couple of points and then just go off those because if you give yourself too much thinking about then that's where the mistakes start coming in so I'm trying to keep it very basic."

GRANDAD ARTHUR
"When I get in there I want to win my battles and I never hesitate to go in for a challenge. "I try and play with no fear at all, just making sure that if I stick to what I know I can do, then everything else will fall into place." "You have to make the strikers almost fear you and make it difficult for them to get on the ball and make them want to go into different areas," said Bright, who looks up to Chelsea star John Terry.

"He's been a massive defender for me, and obviously he's a rock and he's really good at doing his one-on-one defending and really reading the game. I've watched a lot of his clips." Bright did equestrian until age nine, when she decided to concentrate on football in her home city of Sheffield.

"We got to the point where I had to put my all into either one and obviously I can go back to equestrian when I'm retired," said Bright, who enjoys considerable family support at the tournament, including from grandad Arthur. "He's the guy I go to for football talk, he gives me an honest opinion on the game and on my performance," she said.

"I really respect him for that, and I think that's really helped develop me as a player and a person, to be honest with myself. "He's just as competitive as me and he wants me to succeed." The former miner will be in the stands today when England face the Netherlands in Enschede, watching Bright take on the potent Dutch attack

led by young gun Vivianne Miedema.

"She's a big threat, obviously we've watched her previous games at the tournament," said Bright. "We'll just focus on ourselves and make sure we stick to our game plan and then hopefully that should not be a worry."

Bright added she expected a "very tough

game". "They're very attacking-minded, they get around the pitch well, so we're looking for a very high-paced game, but I think we've shown that we can play both types of game."

"They're not afraid of a challenge, a very strong team, looking to get the ball forward. It'll be an interesting game." — AFP

RAHUL GETS KOHLI BACKING FOR TEST RETURN AGAINST S LANKA

COLOMBO: Fit-again opener Lokesh Rahul has regained his place in India's cricket team to start the second Test against Sri Lanka today, skipper Virat Kohli said. Rahul, who missed the first Test triumph due to viral fever, maintains an impressive average of 44.44 in 17 Tests for India. India outplayed the hosts by a record 304 runs in Galle, with openers Shikhar Dhawan and Abhinav Mukund putting in strong performances at the start of the three-match series.

Speaking on the eve of the Colombo Test, Kohli made it clear that despite their stellar showing, one of the two openers will have to make way for Rahul, who is known as KL.

"Obviously KL has been our established opener. I feel one of the openers will have to make way for KL," Kohli said of the 25-year-old. "What he's done in the past two years for us has been very solid, and he deserves to come back and start fresh in Test cricket again." Dhawan hit a brilliant 190 in India's first innings in Galle and is expected to retain his spot. That means Mukund is likely to miss

out despite a gritty 81 in the second innings.

Rahul, who has hit four Test centuries and never fifties, played a vital role in India's series win over Australia in March despite getting injured during the first match. "He has battled really well in the last couple of seasons for us. As I said, it is very important for us to make him feel that this is his spot," said Kohli, who gave no other details on the playing XI. Top-ranked India are looking to seal the series at the Sinhalese Sports Club Ground against Sri Lanka who will welcome back skipper Dinesh Chandimal after a bout of pneumonia.

Indian coach Ravi Shastri has talked up his team's abilities, saying on Tuesday "a lot of big names have played for 20 years and they have come to Sri Lanka many times but they have never won a series. This team has done that." India overturned a 1-0 deficit to beat Sri Lanka in 2015 and register their first Test series triumph in the island nation for 22 years. India reclaimed the world number one Test spot from arch-rivals Pakistan last year. — AFP



COLOMBO: India's cricketer Lokesh Rahul eyes the ball as he plays a shot during a practice session at the Sinhalese Sports Club (SSC) Ground in Colombo yesterday. The second Test cricket match between India and Sri Lanka starts in Colombo today. — AFP



BREDA: Denmark's national team players stretch during a training session on the eve of the UEFA Women's Euro 2017 football match between Denmark and Austria, yesterday in Breda. — AFP

Sports

Gatlin gunning for Bolt one last time

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England's Bright eyes tough Dutch challenges

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VAZQUEZ'S 3-RUN HR LIFTS RED SOX OVER INDIANS

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BARCELONA: In this Sunday, Jan. 11, 2015 file photo, FC Barcelona's Lionel Messi, right, Neymar, center, and Luis Suarez, celebrate after scoring against Atletico Madrid during a Spanish La Liga soccer match at the Camp Nou stadium in Barcelona, Spain. Barcelona said, yesterday, Neymar's 222 million euro (\$262 million) release clause must be paid in full if the Brazil striker wants to leave. — AP

NEYMAR WORLD RECORD PSG MOVE IMMINENT

MESSI BIDS FAREWELL TO NEYMAR ON INSTAGRAM

BARCELONA: Neymar could be presented as a Paris Saint-Germain player as early as this weekend for a world record fee as Barcelona admitted defeat in convincing the Brazilian to stay at the Camp Nou yesterday.

Wagner Ribeiro, an advisor to the player, claimed PSG would pay his 222 million euro (\$260 million) buyout clause in the "coming hours" to more than double the current transfer record set by Paul Pogba's £89.3 million (\$111 million, 105.2 million euros) move to Manchester United last year.

Earlier, Barcelona ended weeks of speculation by publicly confirming for the first time the 25-year-old's wish to leave after four years at the Camp Nou. "Neymar Jr, accompanied by his father and representative, communicated to FC Barcelona this morning his decision to leave the club," Barca said in a statement.

club," Barca said in a statement.

"The club have informed them that the buy-out clause in his contract, that from July 1 is 222 million euros, must be paid in full." Neymar has been tempted to Paris by an astronomical offer that would reportedly see his wages tripled to 30 million euros a year after tax.

However, on the field he also faces the challenge of stepping out of the shadow of five-time World Player of the Year Lionel Messi to try and prove himself as the world's best. "It was a huge pleasure having shared all those years with you, my friend @neymarjr," Messi posted on Instagram alongside a montage displaying some of the pair's finest moments together.

"I wish you lots of luck in this new stage in your life. See you soon tkm," he added. "Tkm stands for 'te quiero mucho' (I love you loads).

Neymar has also been given permission to stay away from training until the deal is complete after making a brief appearance at Barca's training ground yesterday morning to say goodbye to his teammates.

Presuming both clubs don't come to a late agreement, the buyout clause would have to be paid to Barcelona via Spain's La Liga to free the player from the contract he signed last year and runs until 2021.

However, La Liga president Javier Tebas has threatened not to accept PSG's money over what he perceives as a failure on the French side's part to comply with UEFA's financial fair play rules (FFP). Clubs can be sanctioned by UEFA for making a loss of more than 30 million euros over a three-year period. "We will not accept this money from a club like PSG," Tebas told Madrid sports

daily AS yesterday. "Especially when this club is infringing rules and laws."

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE DREAM

Winning the Champions League for a first time is the dream driving PSG's owners Oryx Qatar Sports Investments (QSI) to fund a deal that could herald the start of a new era at the elite level of European football.

Since QSI's takeover in 2011, PSG have failed to make it beyond the quarter-final stage in recent seasons - most notably blowing a 4-0 first leg lead to lose 6-1 to a Neymar-inspired Barcelona in the last 16 of last season's competition in March.

Prising Neymar from the grip of Barca would truly announce PSG's presence as a contender for the likes of Barca, Real Madrid and Bayern

Munich to fear. Neymar has formed one of the deadliest strike partnerships in football history with Messi and Luis Suarez over the past three seasons. Together they have won two La Liga titles, a Champions League and three Spanish Cups, whilst Neymar has scored 105 goals and provided 80 assists in just 186 games.

However, Neymar's four-year spell in Spain has also been overshadowed by the murky transfer deal which brought him to Barcelona from Santos in 2013. He and his parents as well as Barca president Josep Maria Bartomeu face charges of fraud and corruption in an ongoing case brought by DIS, a Brazilian investment company.

DIS owned 40 percent of the players' rights at the time of the deal and believe they were deliberately cheated out of their real share due to the complex structure of the transfer. — AFP

THIEM, HALEP WIN IN WASHINGTON OPENERS

WASHINGTON: Top seeds Dominic Thiem and Simona Halep cruised into the round of 16 at the ATP and WTA Citi Open with straight-set triumphs Tuesday at the US Open tune-up event. Austria's seventh-ranked Thiem, a French Open semi-finalist in June, waited out a rain delay then needed only 63 minutes to dispatch 96th-ranked Swiss Henri Laaksonen 6-3, 6-3. "It wasn't easy but I'm pretty happy with my performance," Thiem said. "It was my first match on hardcourt since Miami (in March) and that's always a little tricky."

World number two Halep, this year's French Open runner-up, took only 79 minutes to oust US wildcard Sloane Stephens 7-6 (7/3), 6-0. "It was a tough first set. I was missing a little bit too much and she made some shots," Halep said. "Didn't have the rhythm at the beginning, but I feel better now."

Thiem, who dropped only eight points on his serve and just one on 25 successful first serves, broke in the second game of the match and again in his rival's last two service games, taking the match when Laaksonen netted a backhand. "I don't have a lack of confidence but it's always nice to get that first win," Thiem said.

This marks the biggest event where Thiem has been top seeded, but his four nearest rankings rivals are also in the field-Germany's Alexander Zverev, Japan's Kei Nishikori, Canada's Milos Raonic and Bulgarian Grigor Dimitrov.

"I think there are five or six players to beat," Thiem said. "There should be four or five top seeds. I'm one of them." But Thiem faces a possible third-round match Thursday against South Africa's Kevin Anderson, who has beaten him in all five of their career meetings, all on hardcourt and with

Thiem taking only one set. "Of course I will think about it and I have to change something," Thiem said. "It's a very tough draw." Second-seeded Nishikori turned back the determined challenge of American Donald Young 6-3, 4-6, 7-6 (7/5). Nishikori, seeking his first title of 2017, didn't face a break point in the third set, but he couldn't convert any of his eight break chances as Young forced the tiebreaker.

Nishikori finally sealed the win on his sixth match point after two hours and 25 minutes and with the clock ticking toward 2 a.m.

HALEP PASSES FIRST TEST

Halep will next face Colombia's 115th-ranked Mariana Duque-Marino for a quarter-final berth as the 25-year-old Romanian keeps her focus on building her game for the US Open that starts on August 28 in New York.

"For first match on hardcourts, it wasn't that bad," Halep said. "My serve wasn't the best but I was OK. Everything went well. I can't say I have to adjust something." "It was important I won today. It was important the second set was much better. The next round I have to be a little more aggressive. I have to come to the baseline and finish the points sooner." Stephens has been back for only a month after missing nearly a year with a left foot injury, falling to 957th in the rankings. She remains frustrated as she tries to regain the form that saw her claim her first WTA title in Washington in 2015.

"It was a good first set," Stephens said. "I did well to do the best I could. I got a little frustrated in the second set. It's going to take a while to get that consistency back and get more matches under my belt." — AFP



Simona Halep

MLS ALL-STARS GET CHANCE TO MAKE STATEMENT WITH REAL

CHICAGO: The best team in the world facing off against the local lads sounds like a recipe for disaster - just not when it takes place in the MLS All-Star Game. Then, it's a showcase. For the 13th straight year, North America's best take on a top international team, this time glamour-boys Real Madrid later at sold-out Soldier Field. The game caps a three-day, MLS-styled celebration of the sport - from matches on the sand at Oak Street beach to star-studded endorsements of the town's deep-dish pizza - that had fans in the City of Big Shoulders following along with their feet.

The payoff for those inside the venerable 61,000-seat stadium, coincidentally the site of the inaugural match of the 1994 World Cup, will be an embarrassment of soccer riches. Real's Cristiano Ronaldo won't be on hand for what amounts to another preseason friendly, but Sergio Ramos, Gareth Bale, Isco, Luka Modric and nearly all the front-liners who helped every important club championship in sight, will. They'll encounter some familiar, as aging, faces across the pitch.

They range from World Cup winner, former German national team and current Chicago Fire midfielder Bastian Schweinsteiger, to one-time Real teammate and Orlando City playmaker Kaka, as well former Atletico Madrid rival and New York City FC striker David Villa. Also familiar will be a handful of Americans who logged considerable time with the U.S. national team and European clubs, among them Toronto's Michael Bradley and Jozy Altidore, Houston's DaMarcus Beasley and Seattle goalkeeper Tim Howard.

Expect a competitive match, even though Real manager Zinedine Zidane is expected to reach deep into his bench after the starters played the opening 60 minutes against Barcelona in Miami last Saturday as part of their preseason tour. The MLS team has won seven of the previous matches.

"I do not know how the game will go," said Kaka, "but we have a great team to play a very even match with Real Madrid." MLS fans chafe at the perception the league lags well behind their top-tier counterparts in Europe and want their team to show up once again with something to prove. — AP

Kuwait Times 55th Anniversary BUSINESS

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Huawei Kuwait launches next generation nova 2

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SUBMISSIONS ARE STILL OPEN FOR LEXUS SHORT FILMS SEASON 4

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NEW YORK: Trader Peter Tuchman (center) wears a 'Dow 22,000' hat as he works on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange yesterday. A big gain from Apple yesterday morning sent the Dow Jones industrial average above 22,000 for the first time. —AP (See Page 20)

JAZEERA AIRWAYS REPORTS OPERATING PROFIT OF KD2.2M

OPERATING PROFIT AND NET PROFIT RECORD DOUBLE DIGIT GROWTH IN Q2 2017

KUWAIT: Jazeera Airways yesterday announced its second quarter financial results, reporting an operating profit of KD2.2 million, up 22.9 percent from the same period last year, and a net profit of KD2.3 million, reflecting a growth of 18.1 percent from the same period last year. Jazeera Airways' positive results were driven by higher utilization, improved network planning, and a strong demand for travel during the quarter, which was airline's best second quarter by flown passengers since Q2 2009.

Jazeera Airways Chairman Marwan Boodai said, "I am pleased to report to our shareholders that we are on track towards increasing shareholder value. The company's double digit growth at both the operational level and the net level reflects this ongoing commitment."

"Our half-year results, however, were pulled down by Q1's earnings due to a host of external factors, most notably a slowing macroeconomy and the continued overcapacity on our routes. But the turn-around we saw in the airline's performance in Q2 is very encouraging and we are

well-positioned to sustain this positive performance in the coming quarters on the back of a series of customer-focused initiatives that we've been announcing for the past year. Currently, our team is focused on digitizing, maximizing, and monetizing Jazeera Airways even more. Earlier this week we launched our new brand, along with a reengineered jazeeraairways.com, which now has a strong e-commerce infrastructure tasked with delivering a faster and more rewarding experience for our customers. Our team is also working hard to further optimize our route network, to increase utilization of our fleet, to add new routes in the coming quarters, and to deliver the state-of-the-art dedicated terminal at Kuwait International Airport, which we promised to launch in the first quarter of next year."

H1 Business Highlights

Launched two new routes: Baku and Doha
Improved yield per passenger by 4.7 percent in Q2, vs Q2'16
Improved fleet utilization by 3.4 percent

Strengthened the commercial team with new senior hirings in revenue management, network planning, and e-commerce operations

Started construction of the airline's state-of-the-art dedicated terminal at Kuwait International Airport

Launched a new, simplified brand, a new website

Operated in 2005, Jazeera Airways is a Boursa Kuwait-listed company serving popular destinations in the Middle East. The airline operates a fleet of Airbus A320 aircraft with two class cabins comprising a Business Class and an Economy Class. Business Class travelers get both an upgraded experience and exclusivity, starting with exclusive check-in lines, business lounge access, up to 60 kilograms in free baggage allowance, and an exclusive on-board cabin. The airline's Economy Class offers travelers free baggage allowance of 40 kilograms and free on-board meals with a changing menu every month.

Q2 2017 Financial and Operational Highlights

Operating revenue: KD14.0 million, up 9.5 percent from Q2 2016

Operating profit: KD2.2 million, up 22.9 percent from Q2 2016

Net profit: KD2.3 million, up 18.1 percent from Q2 2016

Load factor: 73.3 percent, up 1.5 percent from Q2 2016

H1 2017 Financial and Operational Highlights

Operating revenue: KD24.1 million, down 2.4 percent from H1 2016

Operating profit: KD1.2 million, down 65.2 percent from H1 2016

Net profit: KD1.3 million, down 77.3 percent from H1 2016

Load factor: 72.6 percent, up 0.3 percent from H1 2016

INDIA CB CUTS RATES BY 25 BASIS POINTS

MUMBAI: India's central bank yesterday cut interest rates for the first time in almost a year amid sluggish growth and record-low inflation in the world's fastest growing economy. The Reserve Bank of India announced the benchmark repo rate-the level at which it lends to commercial banks-would be cut by 25 basis points to 6 percent, a near seven-year low. The interest rate last sat at 6 percent in September 2010.

The cut-the first since last October-was predicted by 41 of 57 economists polled by Bloomberg News, with the rest anticipating no change. Finance Minister Arun Jaitley called for a reduction in the key policy rate in June after retail inflation fell sharply from 2.18 percent to 1.54 percent the lowest since the government started tracking it in its current form in 2012. New Delhi has kept an inflation target of 4 percent, with room for a 2 percent increase or decrease. The June data was the first time the lower end of that band has been breached, experts said. Rates are set by a six-member committee at the central bank.

RBI governor Urjit Patel said four voted for a cut of 25 basis points, while one

pushed for double that and another for rates to remain unchanged. Patel said low inflation and the successful rollout of the national Goods and Services Tax on July 1 helped steer the decision. "These factors... opened up some space for monetary policy accommodation," he told reporters.

The bank's previous decision to cut rates came a month before Prime

Minister Narendra Modi removed all large-denomination banknotes from circulation, in a shock move to tackle corruption and tax evasion. The controversial policy was blamed for putting the brakes on India's economic expansion.

Growth slowed in the fourth quarter ending in March to 6.1 percent, but the government defended the pain as neces-

sary to clean up corruption rife throughout the economy. Experts have predicted further disruption to the economy as businesses adjust to the Goods and Services Tax. While most economists expected the cut, not all thought it would be useful. "There's been a 175 bps (basis points) cut since January 2015 up till the last monetary policy (meeting). If that hasn't made any difference to investment and credit off-take, how will this 25 bps cut do anything?" said Sunil Sinha, principal economist at India Ratings & Research. "There are bigger problems in the economy. If there is no demand or overcapacity, 25 bps cut won't make any difference." Madan Sabnavis, chief economist at CARE Ratings, had expected the key interest rate to remain unchanged.

"I was fairly surprised by the cut," he told AFP. "The fundamental problem is of demand. Industry won't invest just because there's been a 25 bps cut."

The government welcomed the move and called it "an important step necessary to converge toward the appropriate real monetary conditions for sustained growth consistent with India's potential and for stable, moderate inflation". —AFP



MUMBAI: An Indian policeman walks through the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) head office in Mumbai yesterday. —AFP

MEASURES AGAINST QATAR DO NOT VIOLATE WTO RULES: UAE

DUBAI: Economic sanctions imposed on Qatar by three fellow Gulf states do not violate World Trade Organization agreements, a United Arab Emirates official said, after Doha launched a wide-ranging legal complaint at the Geneva-based body this week.

The UAE, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain cut ties with Qatar - a major global gas supplier and host to the biggest US military base in the Middle East - on June 5, accusing it of backing militant groups and arch foe Iran, allegations Doha denies.

Qatar made the formal protest at the WTO on Monday by "requesting consultations" with the three countries, triggering a 60-day deadline for them to settle the complaint or face litigation at the WTO and potential retaliatory trade sanctions.

"The sanctions imposed by the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain did not contradict the agreements of the WTO," UAE state news agency WAM quoted Juma Mohammed Al-Kait, an assistant undersecretary in the Economy Ministry, as saying late on Tuesday. In what appeared to be the first response to the Qatari move, he said the boycott - which included the severing

of diplomatic and travel ties - was in line with articles 21 and article 14 of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), which allows such moves in the case of security exceptions.

The boycotting countries have previously told the WTO they would cite national security to justify their actions against Qatar, using an the almost unprecedented exemption allowed under the WTO rules.

Kait said the agreements did not prevent WTO member states from using economic sanctions to protect basic security interests, or from carrying out the commitments in the United Nations Charter to maintain peace and security, WAM reported. The WTO suit does not include Egypt, the fourth country involved in the boycott. Western-backed efforts by Gulf state Kuwait to mediate have yielded little progress so far.

The disputed trade restrictions include Gulf bans on trade through Qatar's ports and travel by Qatari citizens to the three Gulf countries, blockages of Qatari digital services, closure of sea borders and the closure of airspace to Qatari aircraft. —Reuters

BOURSA KUWAIT CONCLUDES CONSULTATION FOR DRAFT RULEBOOK

KUWAIT: A market-wide consultation for the draft of the Rulebook has been concluded by Boursa Kuwait yesterday in efforts to strengthen regulations in the market and advance the overall market performance.

The extensive Boursa Kuwait Rulebook outlines market rules and regulations, guidelines related to listed companies and individuals in the Kuwaiti



exchange, integrity guidelines, and disciplinary measures while defining the role of Boursa Kuwait through its objectives, responsibilities and management team.

Khaled Abdulrazzaq Al-Khaled, Boursa Kuwait CEO, addressed all participants in the consultation and said: "Boursa Kuwait's unique transparency model ensures stakeholders can communicate freely with us and share valuable insights

helping us to build comprehensive guidelines that combine extensive market research with market realities.

"We are very grateful to all those who demonstrated commitment and devotion to the Kuwaiti market through their contributions to this important Rulebook. This achievement marks a milestone in the Kuwaiti exchange history by increasing transparency levels and advancing its

status on a global level. We are certain that the Boursa Kuwait Rulebook will be a valuable resource to all those looking to invest in the rapidly developing Kuwaiti market both local and international." The draft of the Boursa Kuwait Rulebook is the first of its kind in Kuwait and has been uploaded on the Boursa Kuwait website for public consumption after being initiated on 02 July 2017.

ETIHAD LAUNCHES BOEING 787 ON SEOUL-INCHAEON SERVICE

787 FEATURES ETIHAD AIRWAYS' INDUSTRY-LEADING, AWARD-WINNING CABINS



ABU DHABI: Etihad Airways has introduced the Boeing 787-9 on its scheduled daily service from Abu Dhabi, the capital of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), to Seoul. The aircraft touched down this morning at the South Korean capital's space-age Incheon International Airport.

The new two-class 787 Dreamliner service replaces the Airbus A340-600 aircraft previously operated on the route, and features Etihad Airways' next-generation Business and Economy Class cabins, configured with 299 seats - 28 Business Studios and 271 Economy Smart Seats.

Mohammad Al-Bulooki, Etihad Airways Executive Vice President Commercial, said: "Seoul has been a very successful and popular route for Etihad Airways since it was launched in December 2010 and we are fast approaching our one millionth traveller milestone on the service.

"There has been a steady increase in the number of business and leisure travellers flying to South Korea from Abu Dhabi and the GCC region, and vice versa. The UAE government's initiatives to develop the already strong trade ties between our two countries has allowed many Korean companies to operate successfully here, contributing to the success of Etihad Airways' Seoul Incheon service. Furthermore, many of our customers on the route transit onwards through Abu Dhabi to major destinations on the Etihad network across Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

"The addition of more 787 Dreamliners into our fleet has allowed us to upgrade the Seoul service so our customers can enjoy the unique Etihad experience available on this incredible aircraft, and ensuring that we maintain the competitive edge with the innovative cabin and seating designs featured onboard."

Etihad Airways' modern fleet of 16 Boeing 787 aircraft feature innovative, award-winning cabin designs and products, complemented by the airline's acclaimed service and hospitality offering. Seoul flights include Food and Beverage Managers in Business Class and a Norland approved Flying Nanny in Economy Class to provide extra specialized care for families with young children.

The Business Studios offer direct aisle access, a fully-flat bed of up to 80.5 inches in length, and an increase of 20 percent in personal space. Upholstered in fine Poltrona Frau Leather, the Business Studio is equipped with an in-seat massage and pneumatic cushion control system which enables guests to adjust the firmness and comfort of their seat.

Each Business Studio has an 18-inch personal touch-screen TV with noise-cancelling headsets. Guests can also enjoy mobile connectivity, onboard Wi-Fi and seven satellite channels of live TV. Economy Smart Seats provide enhanced comfort with a unique 'fixed wing' headrest, adjustable lumbar support, a seat width of approximately 19 inches and an 11.1" personal TV monitor on each seat. The aircraft has been designed with enhancements including humidity controls while air pressure levels are set to ensure a smoother flight, allowing guests to arrive feeling fresher.

The airline's Boeing 787 fleet is equipped with the latest inflight entertainment system featuring over 750 hours of movies and programs, as well as hundreds of music choices and a selection of games for both adults and children.



MOMBASA: This file photo taken on May 30, 2017 shows a cargo train with Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta on board as it leaves the container terminal at the port of the coastal town of Mombasa. —AFP

KENYA MAY BE GROWING BUT 'YOU CAN'T EAT GDP'

NAIROBI: The timing was perfect. Two months before Kenya's August 8 vote, President Uhuru Kenyatta inaugurated the nation's biggest infrastructure project: a railway connecting the capital Nairobi and the port of Mombasa. With pomp and ceremony Kenyatta touted the railway as proof of his campaign promises on the economy, yet at the same time the price of maize flour, a Kenyan staple, was rising fast, stoking anger, especially among the poorest.

Rising food prices constitute a crisis on the eve of a high-stakes election in which Kenyatta, and his economic record, go head to head with longtime opposition leader Raila Odinga.

"On the one hand, there's the symbol of Kenya which continues developing—even though it means an increased debt—and remains the most dynamic economy in East Africa," said Francis Mwangi, an analyst at Standard Investment Bank. "On the other hand, there's the Kenya which hardly benefits from the effects of economic growth." Kenyatta has put the economy at the heart of his campaign. Thanks largely to increasing household consumption and public investment Kenya has seen growth of more than five percent a year since his election in 2013. But analysts say there is more-and-less-to Kenya's economy than meets the eye.

The country's debt is rising, corruption is endemic and economic growth has not benefited the country's poor, they say.

Not your average African economy

As in many other African countries, agriculture is the dominant activity, but Kenya's economy is atypical in other ways. It has relatively few natural resources, but the country's stability, economic dynamism and well-developed service industry stand out. Kenyatta has presided over a slew of infrastructure projects, including airports, roads, bridges, the start of a new port in the town of Lamu and wind and geothermal energy plants to boost electricity production.

Ethiopia's larger, cheaper workforce means it recently overtook Kenya as the region's biggest economy, but analysts say the world's largest tea exporter remains East Africa's most dynamic market thanks to its skilled workers, fast internet and entrepreneurial mindset.

Terror warnings and attacks, including

the 2013 jihadist assault on Nairobi's Westgate mall, scared off tourists for a while, but the country's International Monetary Fund representative Armando Morales said the country has since bounced back. "Despite that, the GDP grew quite well, and conditions for business have improved," he said.

But not all of Kenya's progress can be credited to Kenyatta. His term in office coincided with low oil prices and his economic policies broadly match those of his predecessor who kickedstart some of the more eye-catching infrastructure projects Kenyatta takes credit for.

Devolution has given counties more money and power, which has led to improvements in health infrastructure and the construction of wells and dams, said Winnie Mitullah, a development specialist at the University of Nairobi. But government spending on new public works has caused Kenya's debt to balloon, increasing during Kenyatta's term to over 50 percent of GDP, much of it owed to Chinese lenders who negotiated advantageous terms.

"I think Kenya had to make those investments," said Aly-Khan Satchu, a Kenyan analyst. "But now, they need to reap the benefits of those investments, but they also need to space the next investments carefully."

Widespread corruption

Observers say it's difficult to talk about Kenyatta's economic record without including his poor performance in battling corruption.

Graft is widespread in Kenya, and while Satchu said it is difficult to tell just how deep it runs, he believes it represents a major drain on the economy. "Look where Kenya is now, and imagine where it could be without all that money disappearing through corruption," he said. Perhaps the biggest criticism levelled at Kenyatta is that despite the growth, Kenya's poor haven't seen much improvement in their daily lives, Mwangi said. That's in part because Kenya lacks a strong manufacturing base able to provide mass employment.

A drought since late 2016 has reduced agricultural production, hitting the poorest hardest. Compounding the problem, producers speculated and the government was slow to respond. —AFP

SRI LANKA TO DIVEST LUXURY HOTEL FIRMS AFTER PORT SALE

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka yesterday announced plans to sell off two state-owned luxury hotel companies following its billion-dollar privatization of a loss-making port.

Government spokesman Rajitha Senarathne said ministers approved the seeking of bids for a 51 percent stake in Hotel Developers (Lanka) plc, whose luxury hotel in Colombo is managed by Hilton.

He did not give a value for the company, which occupies prime land in the heart of Colombo. The government will also sell all of Canwill Holdings (Pvt) Limited, which owns a 49-floor building that will operate as Grand Hyatt Colombo once construction is completed.

Canwill is currently incorporated as a private company, but its equity is held by three state entities—the country's main insurance company and its subsidiary and the main pension fund.

Last year the insurance company valued the hotel property at over \$240 million. The latest

announcement came four days after the government sealed a \$1.12 billion deal to let a Chinese state firm take over the southern port of Hambantota. The loss-making port straddles the world's busiest east-west shipping route. It will now be jointly managed by the state-owned Sri Lanka Port Authority and China Merchants Port Holdings.

Sri Lanka has said it wants to reduce its crippling foreign debt with the proceeds of the Hambantota port deal, and is selling off some other enterprises to raise revenue.

International ratings agency Moody's has said the port deal was credit-positive for Sri Lanka and could help the island reduce its debt servicing and build foreign reserves.

Colombo's plans to sell its white elephant national carrier, Sri Lankan Airlines, has stalled due to lack of investor interest. Sri Lanka secured a \$1.5 billion bailout from the IMF last year after facing a balance of payments crisis. — AFP

LUFTHANSA PROFITS SOAR IN Q2

FRANKFURT AM MAIN: German airline group Lufthansa reported zooming profits in the second quarter yesterday, as increased passenger demand and lower fuel costs lent tailwinds to its business.

Net profit between April and June stood at 740 million euros (\$875 million), up 69.3 percent from its level in 2016's second quarter. Operating, or underlying profit reached 1.0 billion euros, on the back of 9.3 billion euros in revenue. The group, a European giant which owns airlines like Austrian, Swiss and low-cost Germanwings alongside its namesake brand, said cost-cutting in its passenger business had led to "sustainably higher earnings" over the first half of the year. Meanwhile, Lufthansa's cargo unit returned to profitability in the

first half as it pushes through its own efficiency drive, while its maintenance and catering divisions continued their growth.

In a statement, the executive board promised "continuous structural improvements" to keep Lufthansa competitive in a world of challenges from low-cost rivals like Ryanair. The Irish carrier tweaked Lufthansa's nose earlier this year by offering flights from its home base in Frankfurt, western Germany, with plans to expand the schedule in the autumn. Looking ahead to the full year, Lufthansa confirmed its forecast-increased in mid-July of operating profits adjusted for special items higher than the 1.75 billion euros reported in 2016. — AFP

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

ASIAN COUNTRIES

Japanese Yen	2.746
Indian Rupees	4.718
Pakistani Rupees	2.869
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.967
Nepali Rupees	2.956
Singapore Dollar	224.070
Hongkong Dollar	38.732
Bangladesh Taka	3.734
Philippine Peso	6.002
Thai Baht	9.092

GCC COUNTRIES

Saudi Riyal	80.720
Qatari Riyal	83.139
Omani Riyal	786.123
Bahraini Dinar	803.770
UAE Dirham	82.414

ARAB COUNTRIES

Egyptian Pound - Cash	21.500
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	16.828
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.215
Tunisian Dinar	126.040
Jordanian Dinar	427.140
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	2.017
Syrian Lira	2.157
Morocco Dirham	32.353

EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES

US Dollar Transfer	302.500
Euro	359.370
Sterling Pound	401.270
Canadian dollar	243.560
Turkish lira	86.430

Swiss Franc	314.780
Australian Dollar	244.870
US Dollar Buying	301.300

GOLD

20 Gram	249.070
10 Gram	127.450
5 Gram	64.570

DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

Rate for Transfr Selling Rate

US Dollar	303.100
Canadian Dollar	240.555
Sterling Pound	395.155
Euro	354.530
Swiss Frank	289.630
Bahrain Dinar	803.920
UAE Dirhams	82.920
Qatari Riyals	84.135
Saudi Riyals	81.720
Jordanian Dinar	427.420
Egyptian Pound	16.954
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.972
Indian Rupees	4.715
Pakistani Rupees	2.877
Bangladesh Taka	3.746
Philippines Peso	5.976
Cyprus pound	167.275
Japanese Yen	3.710
Syrian Pound	2.415
Nepalese Rupees	2.950
Malaysian Ringgit	71.725

Chinese Yuan Renminbi	45.280
Thai Bhat	10.050
Turkish Lira	86.255

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

CURRENCY BUY SELL

Europe	
British Pound	0.393614
Czech Korune	0.005843
Danish Krone	0.043992
Euro	0.351936
Norwegian Krone	0.034101
Romanian Leu	0.078388
Slovakia	0.009016
Swedish Krona	0.033181
Swiss Franc	0.306413
Turkish Lira	0.080953
Australasia	
Australian Dollar	0.232343
New Zealand Dollar	0.218266
America	
Canadian Dollar	0.235108
Georgina Lari	0.125792
US Dollars	0.298500
US Dollars Mint	0.299000
Asia	
Bangladesh Taka	0.003379
Chinese Yuan	0.043426
Hong Kong Dollar	0.036637

Indian Rupee	0.004234	0.004922
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018	0.000024
Japanese Yen	0.002664	0.002824
Kenyan Shilling	0.002907	0.002907
Korean Won	0.000258	0.000273
Malaysian Ringgit	0.067287	0.073287
Nepalese Rupee	0.002974	0.003144
Pakistan Rupee	0.002653	0.002943
Philippine Peso	0.005898	0.006198
Sierra Leone	0.000037	0.000043
Singapore Dollar	0.216985	0.226985
South African Rand	0.016786	0.025286
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001597	0.002177
Taiwan	0.009878	0.010056
Thai Baht	0.008740	0.009290

Arab

Bahraini Dinar	0.795659	0.804159
Egyptian Pound	0.015556	0.021464
Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000085
Iraqi Dinar	0.000189	0.000249
Jordanian Dinar	0.422189	0.431189
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000150	0.000250
Moroccan Dirhams	0.019613	0.043613
Nigerian Naira	0.000225	0.000860
Omani Riyal	0.779554	0.785234
Qatar Riyal	0.078827	0.083767
Saudi Riyal	0.079607	0.080907
Syrian Pound	0.001282	0.001502
Tunisian Dinar	0.122116	0.130116
Turkish Lira	0.080953	0.091253
UAE Dirhams	0.080962	0.082662
Yemeni Riyal	0.000983	0.001063

STRONGMAN TRADES TRUMP DEMOCRATIC DEFICITS IN 2017

LONDON: Poland's tightening grip on its judiciary has prompted nationwide protests and threats of European sanctions, but its asset prices and currency have soared this year as they have in plenty of other places where democracy has been eroded. The nationalist government in Warsaw may have angered European allies and sparked demonstrations with bills empowering it to hire and fire top judges but investors reckon the strong economy outweighs the risks.

The zloty and cost of insuring exposure to Polish investments barely budged and Polish stocks and bonds are among this year's top performers, with dollar-based returns of 38 percent and 15 percent respectively. Returns have been strong across emerging markets this year, but the list of top performers is peppered with countries where leaders are strengthening their hold on power.

Turkish and Chinese stocks jumped more than 33 percent, while Egyptian and Turkish dollar-bonds have returned more than 10 percent, showing that markets love the economic benefits and certainty that strongman politics can deliver.

"Providing governments are responsible fiscally they can get away with a lot of undemocratic measures," said Renaissance Capital emerging market fund manager Charlie Robertson. "They can pretty much do what they want to their own country,"

he added. "At least on a one-year horizon." Of course, as the likes of Zimbabwe show, authoritarian leaders do not guarantee economic success. And investment bets on undemocratic countries can turn sour - as they are now in Venezuela amid Nicolas Maduro's latest power grab and did recently in Saudi Arabia and Qatar.

Amid improving global growth and low interest rates it is not just countries where politicians are strengthening their hold that have rallied either. Chile, Brazil and South Africa have all made decent gains despite political uncertainty.

But such countries have been far outshone by the likes of Poland, Turkey, Egypt, Hungary and China, where in some cases the returns on assets have been twice as strong. The main thing for markets is a well-managed, growing economy where the government lives within its means. Poland with robust growth, rising wages and consumer demand offers all that. "The economy story (in Poland) has a lot going for it, enough for people to not worry too much about politics," said Kieran Curtis, investment director for emerging markets at Standard Life Investments.

Turkey, one of this year's other top markets, also has a budget deficit below 3 percent of GDP - as well as dynamic growth and favorable demographics.

Its stock market fell last year after an

attempted coup. A subsequent crackdown by President Tayyip Erdogan has led to tens of thousands of arrests, but Sacha Chorley, portfolio manager at Old Mutual Global Investors said the country's strong fundamentals and profitable companies have not changed.

ORBANOMICS

Any fallout from the democratic backsliding can affect longer term investors like pension funds further down the line, since bonds' present value is linked to when they will be repaid, which is often 5-10 years away. Many are playing a much shorter-term game of a year or two though. "Are these changes going to affect fixed income investors in this period? At least in case of Poland, you can say: not that much," Standard Life's Curtis added. Some longer term investors may also have in mind nearby Hungary.

The criticism levelled at Jaroslaw Kaczynski, who leads Poland's ruling Law and Justice (PiS) party, echoes that aimed at Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban some years back and who Kaczynski is now close to. "Orbanomics", as the policies were termed, included slapping huge taxes on banks, energy, telecoms and retailers - often foreign-owned, angering company bosses and EU regulators.

But fund managers who stuck with Hungary eventually reaped outside

returns. Orbanomics also brought down Hungary's budget deficit, introduced a flat 15 percent income tax rate and appointed a central bank governor who launched a huge stimulus programme.

As a result, growth restarted, the deficit swung into surplus. Since the end of 2012, MSCI's Hungarian shares are up 40 percent, far outstripping broader emerging stocks which are only now back to their 2012 levels. "Trying to trade the institutional deterioration in Hungary in recent years was one of the greatest loss-making trades you could have made," said UBS strategist Manik Narain. "That's certainly one thing that's encouraging people to sit back and be careful in Poland."

STRONGMAN MEDICINE

Democratic credentials have not just been pushed back across emerging markets. The 167-nation "Democracy Index", compiled by the Economist Intelligence Unit, downgraded the United States from a "full" to a "flawed" democracy in 2016. Yet Wall Street has regularly hit record highs since then.

Hungary, Poland and Turkey have been sinking deeper into the "flawed" category since 2015. Meanwhile Russia and Egypt both share the label of "authoritarian regime". Countries such as Singapore and China made economic development strides without adhering to Western-style

democracy but a major risk is the erosion of property rights a particular problem for investors in Russia.

But there are prominent instances this year of illiberal leaders fuelling market rallies by ramming through unpopular policies. Egyptian sovereign dollar debt has returned over 10 percent, benefiting from former military commander Abdel Fattah al-Sisi's moves to float the currency and cut subsidies. The measures, which finally put Egypt on the road to economic recovery, were adopted despite a 20 percent inflation surge that hit the poorest the most and sparked popular anger.

"In my opinion, a democratic government would not have been able to deliver (those changes)," said Shahzad Hasan, a portfolio manager at Allianz Global Investors. "So this was one example of where a strong man was able to deliver the painful medicine that was needed."

Another example, notes Frederic Lamotte, CIO of Indosuez Wealth Management, is India. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, criticized as authoritarian, has implemented a tax overhaul delayed for decades by political wrangling that could add 0.4 percent to the economy.

Since Modi's ascent, MSCI India has rallied 16 percent - double the gains of the broader emerging equities index. "Weak leadership will never manage any changes," Lamotte said. — Reuters



This file photo taken on February 15, 2017 shows the Commerzbank Tower in Frankfurt, western Germany. — AFP

COMMERZBANK REPORTS Q2 LOSS AS RESTRUCTURING BITES

BERLIN: Germany's second-largest lender Commerzbank reported a net loss for the second quarter yesterday as restructuring costs hit, but said it still expects to make a profit over the full year.

The Frankfurt-based group booked a net loss of 637 million euros (\$753 million) between April and June, compared with a net profit of 215 million in the same period last year. Commerzbank loaded some 807 million euros of costs linked to job cuts onto the second-quarter result, part of its strategy for a "digital transformation" that will modernize its operations.

Meanwhile, operating, or underlying profits stood at 183 million euros, on the back of almost 2.1 billion in revenue. Over the rest of the year, the group aims to continue implementing the plan it has dubbed "Commerzbank 4.0".

It aims to digitize around 80 percent of internal processes in the coming three years, open an online platform for consumer credit, and deepen its relationships with the "FinTech" (financial technology) sector of fast-moving internet startups.

Commerzbank had a "restrained" second quarter, finance director Stephan Engels

said during a teleconference with journalists, noting that revenues had remained roughly stable even as the bank had recruited more customers.

Around 500,000 retail clients have joined since October, he said, but they have weighed on profits as the bank offered incentives to sign up.

"It will take about 18 months before the new customers pay off," Engels added. Meanwhile, Commerzbank has also signed up more than 3,100 business clients since 2016. And the lender aims to reduce its loans to the troubled shipping sector to 3.0 billion euros by the end of the year.

But its revenues have been weakened by muted performance on financial markets and low interest rates. For 2017, Commerzbank aims for a "slightly positive" net result, which will be boosted by some 390 million euros it expects to make in the second half from selling off some assets and revaluing other holdings.

Shares in Commerzbank were one of the worst performers on the DAX index of German blue-chip stocks yesterday, losing 1.8 percent to trade at 11.01 euros (\$13.03) just after 1100 GMT. — AFP

US PLANS PROBE OVER CHINA'S DEMANDS FOR TECH TRANSFERS

GOVT COULD INVOKE RARELY USED SECTION OF TRADE ACT 1974

BEIJING: The Trump administration is weighing plans to punish China for forcing US and foreign companies to share their technology in return for access to the vast Chinese market, a person familiar with US discussions said yesterday.

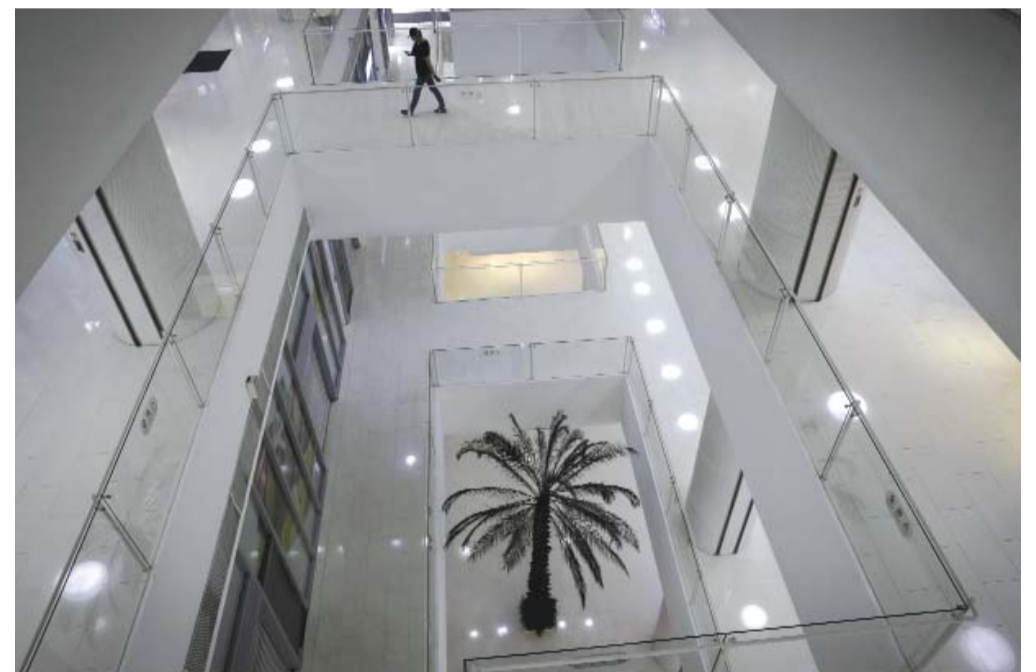
The administration is considering invoking the rarely used Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974, which empowers Washington to investigate Chinese trade practices and impose sanctions, including tariffs, within months, said the person who spoke on condition of anonymity because the plans have not been made public.

The investigation would focus on China's alleged "forced technology transfer policies and practices," the person said, adding that the Trump administration could move to launch such a probe this week.

U.S. and other Western governments and business groups accuse Beijing of unfairly nurturing Chinese competitors - in fields ranging from medical equipment to renewable energy to electric cars - by requiring foreign firms to hand over proprietary technologies in exchange for being allowed to operate in China.

China's Ministry of Commerce did not immediately respond to a faxed request for comment. These deliberations come as the administration signals a harsher stance on trade than it took in the first six months of Trump's presidency. Trump temporarily set aside complaints about market access and currency when he met with Chinese President Xi Jinping in April in hopes Beijing would help pressure North Korea to end its nuclear weapons development. But tensions bubbled up last month at a US-Chinese dialogue where US Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin blamed China's \$347 billion trade surplus with the United States last year on "government intervention in its economy."

The Wall Street Journal and New York Times also reported that US trade officials are discussing ways to counter piracy of copyrights and patents and other intellectual property in China. US Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross, in a com-



BEIJING: A man walks by vacant stores at a commercial building in Beijing yesterday. The economy faces headwinds as Beijing clamps down on lending to rein in a surge in debt that has fueled fears it might harm the financial system or drag on growth. — AP

mentary in Tuesday's Wall Street Journal, outlined a slew of grievances against both China and the European Union that he said contributed to the global US trade deficit in goods of \$725.5 billion in 2016.

"Both China and Europe also bankroll their exports through grants, low-cost loans, energy subsidies, special value-added tax refunds and below-market real estate sales, among other means," Ross wrote.

The Wall Street Journal and New York Times stories also said US officials were looking into using Section 301 of the 1974 Trade Act. Another possibility would be to invoke the "International Emergency Economic Powers Act," a law also enacted during the 1970s that

gives the president wide powers to take action after declaring a national emergency, the Wall Street Journal report said. The administration also was considering how to resist technology-sharing demands from Beijing as part of its ambitious Made in China 2025 program, a blueprint for making China a leader in advanced technologies such as autonomous driving, artificial intelligence, robotics and other industries.

Foreign companies have long complained over rampant piracy and technology theft by Chinese companies. Though he has at times sought a more conciliatory approach, Trump also has lambasted China over such problems and over the massive US trade deficit. — AP

NIGERIA LOOKS TO 'WHITE GOLD' FOR ECONOMIC RECOVERY

KANO, Nigeria: Hamisu Haruna and his men are bent over, turning the earth under a relentless sun. The work is hard in this impoverished part of northern Nigeria but the harvest will be good. "In the last two years my yield has jumped to 35 bags of rice against the 20 I was getting in previous years," Haruna, who is in his 40s with craggy features and a wooden hoe over his shoulder.

"Rice farming has greatly improved. I have had better yield and better price in the market," he told AFP at his farm at Dawakin Tofa, on the outskirts of Kano. Rising rice production is one of the few positives of Nigeria's recession, which is the west African country's worst in 25 years. Today about 5.7 million tons of rice being are produced every year - three times as much as a decade ago.

"We are now living a white gold revolution," said Francis Nwile, the Nigeria director of the AfricaRice research centre. "People understand that oil is not something Nigeria can depend on anymore." The potential is undeniable. But despite having vast tracts of fertile land, Nigeria - the largest consumer of rice in Africa - is also one of the world's biggest importers of the food staple.

In the Kano region, the GreenPro factory shifted from specializing in flour and poultry to white cereals four years ago. "Rice processing is by far more profitable than flour and chicken feed," said production manager Salisu Saleh. "Rice is a major food staple in our society which only few can live without." In a sign of rice's paramount role in Nigerian society, a "Jollof price index" - named after a popular savoury fried rice dish - was launched by an advisory firm in June to measure food inflation.

Uncompetitive

With domestic demand approaching 7.8 million tons per year, almost a quarter of Nigeria's rice comes from abroad, mainly India and Thailand. Rice is shipped through the Lagos port or by road from neighboring Benin, which shares nearly 800 kilometres

(500 miles) of porous borders. "Smuggling is a major issue which discourages local production," explained Nwile. The government has said it believes Nigeria can be self-sufficient in rice production within a couple of years and is trying to plug gaps from cheaper imports. Small-scale farmers, who make up the majority of the rice producers, face numerous challenges, not least access to land. Production facilities are also inefficient and costs high, while there are not enough ways for farmers to commercialize their products. With fertilizers and machinery, Haruna estimates he could farm "four times the current field." "I have a large farm but I can only cultivate a fraction because of my limited resources," he explained.

To boost local production, Abuja banned rice imports by land in 2015 and launched an ambitious aid program overseen by the central bank targeting some 600,000 farmers. In the arid north, new irrigation systems that allow farmers to harvest twice a year instead of just once during the rainy season have been introduced.

Dangote invests

Nigeria's economic crisis has provided a boost for rice. As global oil prices hover around \$50 a barrel, the country needs to reduce costly imports and boost exports to increase government revenue.

Faced with a severe shortage of foreign currency, Abuja has severely restricted access to dollars - necessary to pay for imports - and has repeatedly talked up the merits of local agriculture, which accounts for 24 percent of GDP. The rush for "white gold" is now attracting some of the country's biggest names in agribusiness. Nigerian tycoon Aliko Dangote, who made his fortune in cement, announced at the start of this year that he wanted to invest several billion dollars in three northern states - Jigawa, Zamfara, Sokoto - to establish commercial rice farms and build a dozen processing factories. — AFP



MIDDLETON: In this July 24, 2017, file photo, a sign advertising employment hangs outside a restaurant in Middleton, Massachusetts. US businesses added a solid 178,000 jobs in July, a survey found, evidence that employers remain confident enough about future demand to keep hiring. — AP

US COMPANIES ADDED A SOLID 178,000 JOBS IN JULY: SURVEY

WASHINGTON: US businesses added a solid 178,000 jobs in July, a survey found, evidence that employers remain confident enough about future demand to keep hiring. Payroll processor ADP said yesterday that the biggest gains were in fields such as education and health care and shipping. Manufacturers cut 4,000 jobs, while construction firms added 6,000. Mining, which includes oil and gas drilling, gained 3,000 jobs.

July's gain is below June's figure of 191,000, which was revised higher. But it is still enough to lower the unemployment rate over time. The rate is near a 16-year low of 4.4 percent. The figures provide some reassurance that the economy remains healthy. Consumer spending slowed in June

and Americans cut back sharply last month on auto purchases. But the overall economy grew at a decent 2.6 percent annual pace in the April-June quarter.

Analysts predict the government's jobs report, to be released tomorrow, will show a robust 190,000 jobs were added, according to data provider FactSet. The ADP covers only private businesses and often diverges from the official figures. The government's June report showed that employers, including federal, state and local governments, added 222,000 jobs.

Small business hiring has slowed a bit in recent months, with companies that employ fewer than 50 people adding 50,000 jobs, ADP said. — AP

AXEL SPRINGER LIFTS FORECAST AS DIGITAL MEDIA PAYS OFF

FRANKFURT AM MAIN: German media giant Axel Springer reported growing revenues and net profit yesterday, lifting its full-year forecast as more customers turned to its paid-for offerings in print, television and online. Adjusted net profit increased 13 percent to 91.5 million euros (\$108.2 million) between April and June, mainly driven by strong growth in earnings from its digital media products.

Operating or underlying profits increased 15.7 percent to 170.1 million euros, on the back of revenues up 7.1 percent at 858.8 million euros, both beating analysts' forecasts. "We're happy with these results that have beaten our expectations. Our investments, especially in online media, have paid off," chief executive Matthias Doepfner said at a press conference.

Digital media now account for around 74 percent of the group's operating profit, he added. Axel Springer's stable of online titles includes English-language site Business Insider as well as the digital versions of German newspapers like Bild or Die Welt, while it also operates a slew of European classified advertising sites. Doepfner pointed to an "international improvement in the online advertising sector, especially affiliation," when high-traffic sites receive a cut of sales from online shops they link to.

The group also reported growth in its paid-for online media that offset falling revenue from its print products. Nevertheless, print enjoyed strong sales in the first half, especially thanks to a one-off special edition of Bild celebrating the German parliament's June vote to legalize same-sex marriages that sold 41 million copies. Looking to the full year, Springer expects a "high single-digit percentage" increase in operating profits and adjusted profits per share compared with 2016's result, on the back of a "mid-single-digit percentage" increase in revenues.

Founded shortly after World War II by journalist Axel Springer, the publishing group was an early convert to digital media, setting up online subscriptions for its newspapers, selling off print publications and investing in up-and-coming sites like Business Insider. — AFP

STOCKS BASK IN APPLE GLOW, DOW CROSSES 22,000

LONDON: Asian technology stocks hit 17-year peaks and Wall Street's Dow index broke 22,000 points yesterday as blockbuster earnings from Apple rippled out to component makers globally. Shares in the world's most valuable company surged 6 percent after-hours to a record of more than \$159 each, taking its market capitalization above \$830 billion.

The Dow blue-chip index rose above the key 22,000 level for the first time after Apple reported better revenues and profits for the past quarter. "US stocks are higher in early action, with the tech sector getting a boost from the better-than-expected earnings results from Dow member Apple," said analysts at the Charles Schwab

brokerage. It helped dispel one of the few nagging doubts of the corporate earnings season so far—that Amazon's lacklustre results last week might have revealed some tiredness among the giant US tech and internet stocks that have been driving the stock market rally all year. "It is all about Apple," said Naem Aslam chief market analyst at Think Markets. "The firm comfortably topped its forecast and produced stellar numbers for its revenue and profit."

Among Asia's Apple suppliers, LG Innotek jumped 10 percent and SK Hynix, the world's second-biggest memory chip maker, rose 3.8 percent. Murata Manufacturing firmed 4.9 percent and Taiyo Yuden 4.4 percent, helping

Tokyo's Nikkei up 0.47 percent. The MSCI tech index for Asia also climbed 0.9 percent to ground not trod since early 2000, bringing its gains for the year to a heady 40 percent. Those gains balanced losses in basic materials and energy to leave MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan steady near its highest since late 2007.

There was a note of caution over reports that US President Donald Trump was close to a decision on how to respond to what he considers China's unfair trade practices.

Tepid US inflation along with political turmoil in Washington has lessened the possibility of another Federal Reserve rate hike this year, low-

ering bond yields across the globe. Improving data in other major economies has also served to push the greenback down nearly 11 percent from January peaks, benefiting commodities and emerging markets.

A swathe of manufacturing surveys (PMIs) on Tuesday had underlined how the improvement in activity had broadened out from the United States to Asia and Europe.

EBULLIENT MOOD

Alan Ruskin, head of G10 forex at Deutsche Bank, noted the top five PMIs were all Northern European economies and every index in Europe was now in expansionary territory above 50. "That will do nothing to hurt ebullient global risk appetite," said Ruskin. "This phase of the risk rally is based on growth data, but even more on subdued inflation measures."

MSCI's gauge of stocks across the globe was just below an all-time peak. On Wall Street later electric car maker Tesla, gadget firm Fitbit and insurance provider AIG will report results.

In currency markets, the dollar index was stuck at just under 93, after touching 92.777, the lowest since early May 2016. It was aided by gains on a softer yen which saw it creep to 110.80.

Yet the euro also benefited from buying against the yen, reaching its highest since February last year. It nudged up against the dollar and Swiss Franc too, briefly striking new 2-1/2-year highs against both at

\$1.1846 and 1.1468 francs per euro respectively. Euro zone June producer price inflation data helped it on its way as it topped analysts' forecasts.

There was a slowdown in the pace overall, but it bolstered bets that the European Central Bank could soon start winding down its more than 2-trillion-euro stimulus program. "The ECB is going to be the central bank to watch for the rest of the year," said JP Morgan Asset Management global market strategist Alex Dryden.

"We think they are going to take 9-12 months to get out of the market but that is a big question ... it could even be six months," he added.

Bond markets were largely quiet, with the premiums investors demand to hold South European government debt over the German equivalent close to their lowest levels in weeks and both 2- and 10-year US Treasury yields barely budged.

In emerging markets, MSCI's EM stocks index was near a three-year high. India's central bank became the first in Asia to cut interest rates this year, while Venezuela's bonds continued to slide amid rising political tensions there around President Nicolas Maduro.

Oil prices were under pressure again too amid rising US fuel inventories and as major world producers kept pumping, causing investors to worry that several weeks of steady gains had pushed the rally too far. Brent crude eased to \$51.80 a barrel, while US crude lost 8 cents to \$49.07. —Reuters

Daily Kuwait Stock Exchange Report

Wednesday 02 August 2017

Index	Change	Closing	Last Closing
Price index	▼ -18.72	6,823.95	6,842.67
Weighted Index	▼ -0.61	413.12	413.73
KSX 15	▼ -0.40	944.13	944.53

Volume	70,210,494
Value (KWD)	9,243,136
Number of Trades	2,618

Trades

Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last	Change
IPG	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	330	▲ 0.0
NAPESCO	949	860	5,030	4,558	3	949	▼ -1.0
ENERGYH	37.5	37.5	600	23	2	37.5	▼ -0.4
GPI	42.5	40.0	5,894,466	240,820	161	40.0	▼ -2.6
ABAR	90	90	1	0	1	90	▲ 15.0
Oil & Gas			5,900,097	245,400	167	1077.73	▲ 4.40

KFOUC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	289	▲ 0.0
BPCC	570	570	1,028	586	3	570	▼ -1.0
ALKOUT	600	600	100,000	60,000	6	600	▲ 10.0
ALQURAIN	348	346	100,359	34,857	25	346	▼ -2.0
Basic Materials			201,387	95,443	34	1264.56	▲ 1.30

KCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	425	▲ 0.0
CABLE	436	436	1	0	1	436	▲ 6.0
SHIP	206	205	59,740	12,267	14	205	▲ 0.0
PCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	950	▲ 0.0
PAPER	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	290	▲ 0.0
MRC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	94	▲ 0.0
ACICO	257	257	20,000	5,140	2	257	▲ 2.0
HCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	208	▲ 0.0
KBMMC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	136	▲ 0.0
NICBM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	185	▲ 0.0
EQUIPMENT	49.8	48.6	175,020	8,551	14	49.2	▼ -0.4
NCCI	80	80	11	1	1	80	▼ -5.0
GYPSUM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	95	▲ 0.0
SALBOOKH	61	59	318,000	19,035	12	60	▼ -0.1
AGLTY	837	830	74,504	62,074	28	835	▲ 0.0
EDU	369	360	3,873	1,401	7	369	▲ 9.0
CLEANING	49.0	49.0	10,000	490	1	49.0	▼ -3.0
KGL	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	60	▲ 0.0
KPCP	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	155	▲ 0.0
HUMANSOFT	4,300	4,300	24,250	104,275	15	4,300	▲ 0.0
NAFAIS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	195	▲ 0.0
GFC	79	77	50,211	3,866	3	79	▲ 2.9
SHOOTING	29.1	27.8	271,010	7,634	10	29.1	▼ -0.1
CGC	565	562	2,250	1,266	2	565	▲ 0.0
MTCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	56	▲ 0.0
UPAC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	698	▲ 0.0
ALFAFCO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	346	▲ 0.0
MUBARRAD	77	73	140,100	10,235	6	73	▼ -1.5
LOGISTICS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	51	▲ 0.0
SCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	84	▲ 0.0
GCEM	80	76	253,151	19,453	12	80	▲ 4.1
QIC	78	78	20,000	1,560	2	78	▲ 2.9
FCEM	78	78	414	32	1	78	▲ 1.0
RKWC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	89	▲ 0.0
SPEC	95	95	62,744	5,933	5	95	▲ 0.4
Industrials			1,485,279	263,213	136	1905.10	▲ 4.40

PAPCO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	90	▲ 0.0
CATTL	223	223	500	112	1	223	▼ -1.0
DANAH	73	72	62,636	4,525	7	72	▼ -1.3
FOOD	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	2,100	▲ 0.0
Consumer Goods			63,136	4,637	8	1018.36	▼ -5.80

MHC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	480	▲ 0
ATC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	1,100	▲ 0
YIACO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	175	▲ 0
Health Care			0	0	0	0.00	▲ 0.00

KCIN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	1,350	▲ 0
KHOT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	250	▲ 0
SULTAN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	67	▲ 0
CABLETV	27.9	27.9	22,252	621	2	27.9	▲ 0
EYAS	880	855	29,290	25,394	17	855	▼ -5
IFAHR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	285	▲ 0
OULAFUEL	120	120	17,363	2,084	11	120	▲ 0
MUNTAZAHAT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	77	▲ 0
JAZEERA	500	485	68,664	34,114	11	500	▲ 20
SOOR	123	122	150,383	18,483	17	122	▲ 0
FUTUREKID	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	106	▲ 0
ALRAI	119	119	9,258	1,102	1	119	▲ 0
Jiyad	54	54	60	3	1	54	▲ 0
Mezzan	910	891	265,240	238,105	36	900	▼ -6
Consumer Services			562,510	319,907	96	1036.58	▲ 2.10

ZAIN	446	443	1,233,264	548,236	72	443	▼ -3
OOREDOO	1,130	1,121	4,446	5,004	14	1,123	▼ -10
HITSTELEC	43.5	41.5	2,135,769	90,112	75	42.0	▼ -2
VIVA	806	802	35,376	28,399	44	802	▼ -4
Telecommunications			3,408,855	671,750	205	597.45	▼ -6.70

NBK	700	698	331,401	231,571	20	700	▲ 0
GBK	246	244	1,251,063	305,752	20	244	▼ -2
CBK	350	345	160,050	56,017	6	350	▲ 0
ABK	319	313	11,646	3,646	2	319	▲ 2
ALMUTAHED	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	420	▲ 0
KIB	245	244	813,070	198,759	28	244	▼ -3
BURG	354	350	107,161	37,654	14	352	▼ -2
KFIN	539	531	1,709,453	915,582	167	536	▲ 4
BOUBYAN	414	413	81,070	33,511	19	413	▲ 0
AUB	216	214	2,594,588	557,900	72	215	▼ -1
ITHMR	44.4	43.9	841,255	37,064	41	44.2	▼ 0
WARBANK	270	264	1,596,945	426,084	148	269	▲ 4
Banks			9,497,702	2,803,541	537	946.81	▼ -0.60

KINS	250	250	18,000	4,500	3	250	▲ 2
GINS	601	601	3,058	1,838	1	601	▼ -29.0
AINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	430	▲ 0.0
WINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	90	▲ 0.0
KUWAITRE	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	186	▲ 0.0
FTI	61	52	474,954	27,944	39	60	▲ 8.9
WETHAQ	51	51	102,400	5,232	3	51	▼ -3.0
BKIKWT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	355	▲ 0.0
Insurance			598,412	39,515	46	1049.37	▼ -1.80

Trades

Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last	Change
SOKOUK	46.5	45.8	391,040	18,069	18	46.5	▲ 0.0
KRE	61	60	1,037,425	62,304	41	60	▲ 0.0
URC	88	88	20	2	1	88	▲ 0.0
NRE	125	123	921,407	114,004	11	123	▼ -3.0
SRE	368	368	800	294	2	368	▼ -1.0
TAM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	400	▲ 0.0
AREEC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	139	▲ 0.0
MASSALEH	43.0	43.0	100,000	4,300	6	43.0	▲ 0.0
ARABREC	34.5	33.7	641,894	21,736	26	34.0	▼ -1.0
ERESCO	40.5	40.0	65,787	2,636	3	40.0	▼ -0.5
MABANEE	780	778	399,030	310,859	66	780	▼ -10.0
INJAZZAT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	91	▲ 0.0
INVESTORS	24.6	24.3	1,750,000	42,538	20	24.3	▼ -0.4
IRC	31.2	31.2	55,630	1,736	1	31.2	▼ -1.7
ALTIJARIA	83	82	494,109	40,563	16		

SUBMISSIONS ARE STILL OPEN FOR LEXUS SHORT FILMS SEASON 4

ASPIRING FILMMAKERS HAVE UNTIL AUGUST 24 TO PUT THEIR ENTRIES FORWARD



KUWAIT: Emerging and talented filmmakers looking for a platform to reach worldwide audience and work under the guidance of industry mentors on their filmmaking project?



SHORT FILMS

have over than one month left to get their entries in for the Lexus Short Films series, a global initiative from Lexus and The Weinstein Company aimed at sup-

porting and nurturing the next generation of filmmakers. The last date to submit entries for the program, now in its fourth season, is August 24, 2017.

The theme for this year's series is TRANSFORMATION, which identifies with the transformation of the Lexus brand and gives expression to the brand's belief that amazing things happen when you transform the ordinary into extraordinary.

For Season 4, an esteemed filmmaker selection committee which includes Oscar nominee, writer and actor Taylor Sheridan (best known for the films 'Hell or High Water' and 'Sicario'), and the television series 'Sons of Anarchy') alongside key executives of The Weinstein Company and Lexus will be reviewing the submissions to select the four finalists who will each write and direct a short film produced by The Weinstein Company. Each film will receive the full backing of The Weinstein



Company, including promotional theatrical screenings, a global film festival campaign, and promotional support for its ultimate release. Participating filmmakers can submit their films for consideration utilizing Withoutabox (www.withoutabox.com), the

premier submission service for film festivals and filmmakers. Takayuki Yoshitsugu, Chief Representative, Middle East and North Africa Representative Office, Toyota Motor Corporation, said, "The Lexus Short Films has helped to establish the careers of up-and-coming filmmakers by providing them with the support and resources needed to take their craft to the next level. Creating experiences that amaze and inspire people remains our ultimate goal in everything we do at Lexus and, through initiatives such as the Lexus Short Films series, we aim to bring our passion for design and innovation to a broad cross-section of audiences across the globe to create a wider impact."

"We sincerely appreciate the support from our customers which inspires us to bring to life projects that touch the senses," Yoshitsugu added.



BURGAN BANK WILL SOON ANNOUNCE WINNER OF AL-THURAYA SALARY DRAW

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank will soon be announcing the lucky winner of its Al-Thuraya Salary Account. The winner will be granted a Nissan Patrol SUV. The draw rewards new and existing customers who transfer their salary to Burgan bank a chance to win a Nissan Patrol SUV every month.

The draw is part of Burgan Bank's approach of rewarding loyal customers with higher chances of winning while encouraging new customers to benefit from the bank's unique offerings. With the monthly draw, every KD 10 available in the account provides the customer a chance to win.

The Al-Thuraya Account's features range from the option to hold money in Kuwaiti dinar and any other major currencies, access to account-related services such as standing orders, loans and credit cards and much more. The account has been further developed in response to offering more benefits and increasing chances to win.

Established in 1977, Burgan Bank is the youngest commercial bank and second largest by assets in Kuwait, with a significant focus on the corporate and financial institutions sectors, as well as having a growing retail, and private bank customer base. Burgan Bank has majority owned subsidiaries in the MENAT

region supported by one of the largest regional branch networks.

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

The bank was re-certified with the prestigious ISO 9001:2008, making it the first bank in the GCC, and the only bank in Kuwait to receive such accreditation for the third consecutive year. The Bank also has to its credit the distinction of being the only Bank in Kuwait to have won the JP Morgan Chase Quality Recognition Award for twelve consecutive years.

Burgan Bank, a subsidiary of KIPCO (Kuwait Projects Company), is a strongly positioned regional Bank in the MENA region.

FLY BRITISH AIRWAYS, ENJOY DISCOUNTS WITH NBK CARDS

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait offers some of the best travel promotions and discounts available in Kuwait. Now NBK Customers who enjoy visiting the UK can take advantage of an amazing special promotion offering up to 15 percent discount on flights booked with British Airways.

NBK Credit Card and Al-Shabab Cardholders flying on British Airways and booking through the dedicated link (www.ba.com/nbk) can receive a special discount up to 15 percent discount on Business Class (Club World), Premium Economy (World Traveller Plus) and Economy (World Traveller) and 10 percent on First Class for flights from Kuwait to UK, Europe, USA and Canada. The UK is one of the most popular travel destinations for people living in Kuwait, and the National Bank of Kuwait is happy to be offering this special discount fares for their loyal credit cardholders and Al Shabab account holders.

The offer is available for NBK Credit Card and Al-Shabab Prepaid Cardholders and their immediate family members when all flights are booked using



the NBK customer's card. Offer valid for flights booked up to 31st March 2018.

Terms and conditions apply. NBK Credit Cards and Prepaid Cards provide a safe, convenient

way to pay while abroad. Fly to more than 150 destinations and explore the world while earning discounts and rewards with your trusted financial partner, NBK.

AUB MAKES A CUSTOMERS' DREAM COME TRUE WITH KD 250,000 GRAND PRIZE

KUWAIT: Ahli United Bank recently conducted its Al-Hassad Islamic account weekly draw, Kuwait's leading sharia-compliant rewards program that offers a broad range of prizes to the largest number of winners, yesterday. The account provides 26 weekly prizes that are comprised of KD 25,000 as a grand prize and 25 other prizes valued at KD 1,000 each. AUB also offers four quarterly prizes that are valued at KD 250,000 to each winner allowing them to achieve their

Fathallah Abdullah, Ali Aboud Arab, Abeer Mahmoud Al-Maraghi, Milad Sami Bitar, Anwar Aljouan, Zayad Rizk Al-Najjar, Fawzayah Abdulla Boutiban, Adel Mohd Ibrahim, Ahmed Khaled Al-Khadr, Rabih Kamel Ali, Khaled Abdulatef Alshehab, Abdulhamid Shaikh, Laetitia Georges, Zaid Sulaiman Al-Musallam, Shehab Doshan Al Shammari, Mahdi Abdulla ali, Batool S. Hussain, Muhammad Anwar Rashid, Elham Ebrahim Abdulla, Ahmed Ali Hussain, Khadija Saleh Ebrahim.

Ahli United Bank added, "There are increased opportunities that await our current customers and those who are interested in opening an Al-Hassad Islamic account to benefit from the wide range of prizes and opportunities offered this year."

Al-Hassad Islamic account's customers in Kuwait and Bahrain are eligible to participate in the draw in line with the program's terms and conditions. Individual customers can open their accounts with a minimum deposit of KD 100, qualifying them to enter the draw. For every KD 50 deposited in the account, customers are given one chance to enter the quarterly draw. They must have held the minimum deposit requirement for at least two weeks prior to the draw date. The more deposits made, the higher the chances of winning on a weekly basis.



dreams of travelling, studying abroad, or owning their dream home or car.

On this occasion, Ahli United Bank announced, "With this draw, we are adding 26 new winners and prizes to the Al-Hassad Islamic account whereby, the total number of winners annually will include more than 1300.

The weekly grand prize winner of KD 250,000 Adel Nahabab Khalaf.

25 other winners won prizes of KD 1,000 and are as follows: Saleh Abdulla Othman, Emad Hasan Ali, Shuwaireb Fahad Al-Ajmi, Dhaidan Mfarreh Al-Enezi, Mohammad



Executive Management honoring employees

KFH HONORS 11 EMPLOYEES FOR OBTAINING ASSOCIATE VALUER CERTIFICATES

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) held an honoring ceremony to recognize 11 employees for obtaining Associate Valuer Certificates as part of the bank's keenness to support the educational attainment for KFH human capital and recognizing their achievements and exerted efforts that contribute to enhancing the comprehensive performance of KFH and maintaining its leading position.

Present at the ceremony were: Group Chief Human Resources Officer, Frederick Jacobus Carstens, Chief Operation Officer, Abdullah Abo Alhous in addition to officials from Real estate department and Talent Development Department. It is worth noting that the first level of the Associate Valuer program includes the international standards of property valuation, the behavior of property valuation profession, basic fundamentals and procedures for property valuation etc.

The program encompasses 4 levels; participating valuer, certified valuer, senior certified valuer and associate valuer. KFH encourages employees' initiatives of obtaining educational certificates, since they reflect the image of KFH, the world leading Islamic financial institution.

Meanwhile, the recognized employees expressed their gratitude towards KFH, and stressed their determination to work tirelessly for the sake of offering the best for KFH customers, indicating the bank has offered suitable and professional environment for further educational attainment.

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 480 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.



HUAWEI KUWAIT LAUNCHES NEXT GENERATION NOVA 2

20MP SELFIES FROM AN ELEGANT DESIGN



KUWAIT: The Consumer Business Group (CBG) at Huawei Technologies - Kuwait yesterday launched the HUAWEI nova 2 and HUAWEI nova 2 Plus smartphones, which feature bold new breakthroughs including an upgraded camera and an advanced audio experience.

With a 12MP+8MP rear dual camera and the professional portrait mode, as well as a 20MP high-definition front camera, the device makes selfie-taking easier and more fun for everyone, with stunning results.

Speaking of the nova 2 smartphone, Huawei Technologies CBG Director, Peter Wei, said: "Our HUAWEI nova 2 is one of the most sought-after products among young consumers as a result of its innovative aesthetics and superior usability. Huawei has drawn on its most dynamic users' style and attitude as inspiration to take the HUAWEI nova 2 to the next level. Featuring breakthroughs in selfie functionality and a distinctive design, these devices celebrate the individuality, energy and optimism of today's consumers." The HUAWEI nova 2 and HUAWEI nova 2 Plus are available in the Kuwait market from August 1, 2017.

Redefining the Selfie: Clear Portraits Taken Anywhere

Smartphone users are demanding increasingly high-quality photography experiences - especially for their selfies. To appeal to young consumers, the HUAWEI nova 2 series is equipped with photography applications for every scenario. Its 20MP front camera, combined with Huawei's 3D facial recognition and optimized beauty 4.0, delivers crisp and clear portraits.

Huawei's high-resolution photography capabilities are based on a range of intelligent algorithms, including a specific portrait algorithm. This takes into account a wide range of face shapes and skin colors, studying the relative position of facial features and skin types as well as textures to deliver more natural and true-to-life portraits.

Additionally, Huawei incorporates a number of fun camera features to the front camera. In low-light conditions, the HUAWEI nova 2 series uses LCD screen flash with 11 color temperatures for different degrees of illumination - making portraits really pop. The front camera is

also able to shoot selfies with a bokeh effect, creating the blurred background similar to that generated by wide-aperture professional portraits. With a new 10-level beautification mode and a new gesture shutter for taking pictures, perfect selfies become that much easier.

The amazing front camera is complemented by a stellar rear camera. HUAWEI nova 2 and HUAWEI nova 2 Plus are outfitted with a 12MP+8MP rear dual camera to capture more stunning and detailed images. The dual RGB lenses deliver optical zoom without compromising quality. For fast and precise focus in low-light environments, the rear camera features a F1.8 aperture. In addition to portrait mode, the bokeh effect can be adjusted after a picture is taken to achieve different visual effects.

Innovative Design: Cutting-edge Craftsmanship for an Elegant Look

The HUAWEI nova 2 series' design is testament to the power of creativity and innovation. From the 5.0/5.5-inch screen, to the smooth metallic unibody measuring as little 6.9mm,

special attention has been given to all aspects of the HUAWEI nova 2 and HUAWEI nova 2 Plus to ensure they appeal to, and fit, the busy lifestyles of young consumers.

Huawei implemented a smooth, rounded design as opposed to sharp lines on the HUAWEI nova 2 series. The HUAWEI nova 2 series features a unique shallow fingerprint design. The sensor's design reduces the chance of it collecting dirt and dust, ensuring continuous, seamless performance.

The HUAWEI nova 2 series' chic design and trendsetting selfie functionality is backed by the HUAWEI Kirin 659 chipset powerhouse. The combination of the Kirin 659 chipset with EMUI 5.1 and Android 7.0 ensures that the series will not slow down over time, and will continue to produce flawless performance.

In addition to its thin and lightweight design, the HUAWEI nova 2 series sets itself apart on account of its exceptional battery life and quick charging solution. It takes the HUAWEI nova 2 and HUAWEI nova 2 Plus just 30 minutes to power-up to 39% and 43% respectively, a feature that is crucial for busy lifestyles.

Professional Music: Theater-quality HiFi Music for a Super Audio Experience

Working in tandem with professional musicians, including Rainer Maillard, a Grammy Award-winning master who won the prize for Best Engineered Album, Classical, the HUAWEI nova 2 series delivers an incomparable audio experience, with upgraded software and hardware. HUAWEI nova 2 and HUAWEI nova 2 Plus feature HiFi chips, which minimize distortion, harmonics, noise and other disturbance with audio processing to make music unforgettable. Huawei also applied the HUAWEI 2012 lab's sound algorithm HUAWEI Histen for the first time - an algorithm that includes 10 targeted modules for various effects, such as 3D stereo sound.

To ensure premium sound quality, the HUAWEI nova 2 series support aptX wireless Bluetooth technology, which, when it comes to videos and games, has the shortest time lag of all Bluetooth audio coding. This ensures a more synchronized image and sound experience, emulating that of a CD.

DATA RISKS GIVE NO REWARDS, WARNS KASPERSKY LAB

DUBAI: Users are putting their precious and sensitive data in danger, by the way they share both their information, and their physical devices containing this information with others. Kaspersky Lab's My Precious Data: Stranger Danger report lifts the lid on data sharing habits and reveals that people who share their data and devices, live digital lives that are much more difficult than those who don't - suffering from data loss and problematic devices.

People who share their data with others are more likely to have digital life difficulties - for example, almost half of users who share their data online have experienced data loss on their smartphones (47 percent). The chances of data loss however, are comparatively slim among those who do not share their data with others - only 13 percent of these people have lost information from their smartphones. The risks of sharing are even higher for those who share their information with strangers, with 59 percent of smartphone users who have shared data with strangers admitting they have lost their data.

People who share their precious data digitally have also reported a wide range of problems with their devices. On smartphones, the most common issues include intrusive adverts (51 percent, compared to 25 percent of users who don't share), battery life issues (41 percent, compared to 17 percent of people who don't share), apps operating on their device without their consent (19 percent, compared to 6 percent of users who don't share) and malware infections (14 percent, compared to 4 percent of people who don't share). These findings illustrate a strong connection between sharing and device issues, with those that share data being more likely to lead difficult digital lives than those that don't.

In addition, the research shows the same correlation for people that put their physical devices in the care of others - such as giving their smartphones to others for a period of time, leaving their devices unlocked in a public place, giving out their PINs and so on. These users are also more likely to suffer data loss - for example, more than half (65 percent) who

have shared their smartphone with others have also experienced data loss on their smartphones, compared with 34 percent of those who haven't.

"Our research shows that when people over-share data digitally, they are more likely to face device problems and lose data, making their digital lives more difficult," commented Andrei Mochola, Head of Consumer Business at Kaspersky Lab. "This problem is made worse when users share their digital devices with others, or with total strangers. We know that users are unlikely to stop sharing the precious data they love with people online - this is one of the privileges of the online world. But that's why it is so important for everyone to be more aware of the potential dangers they are putting their data and devices in. We urge people to choose protection that adapts to suit their needs, whatever environment they are in. This approach identifies complex and targeted threats and offers users advice that helps to reduce the potential damage to their data and devices - leaving people to enjoy all the online world has to offer."

Award winning protection is available that helps to safeguard families and all their precious memories. Kaspersky Total Security delivers protection for PC, Mac, iPhone, iPad and Android. Features such as Backup and Encryption protect people's data from harm. In addition, Antimalware Protection, Software Cleaner and Application Manager ensure that devices continue to work in the best possible condition.

My Precious Data: Stranger Danger is based on an online survey conducted by research firm Toluna and Kaspersky Lab in January 2017. The survey assessed the attitudes of 16,250 Internet users aged over 16 years old, from 17 countries around the world.



Hiwot Mendahun

CYBER RESILIENCE EXPERT ON EMAIL SECURITY

Hiwot Mendahun, cyber resilience expert at email security firm Mimecast, commented: "Email connects the world's leaders, businesses and everyday individuals, whatever their status or intent yet was never designed with security in mind."

This prank follows a rise in similar attacks asking for wire transfers or confidential data like HR records or tax

information. Spear phishing and impersonation attacks are easy to launch with free email addresses or by registering lookalike domains. Mobile email users are particularly vulnerable. All organizations need to consider stamping external emails with simple warnings and conduct regular training to help employees recognize possible scams."

THREAT OF A BITCOIN SPLIT AVOIDED, FOR NOW

NEW YORK: On the eve of a major change in bitcoin, a threat of a split in the digital currency has been avoided - for now. A move by users to force a change in the computer code by Monday has worked. A majority of "miners" - the core bitcoin users who verify bitcoin transactions around the world - has signaled support. Though the change is designed to improve capacity on the increasingly clogged network, some miners had objected because it could reduce transaction fees they collect. The show of support has helped reverse a slide in the value of bitcoin from around \$1,900 two weeks ago to roughly \$2,800 on Monday.

However, some uncertainty still remains. A May agreement between large bitcoin companies effectively pushes the threat of a split off until November. And one proposal to launch an alternative currency, Bitcoin Cash, is sowing confusion and fears of scam trades. Here's a look at the current dispute.

What is bitcoin, again?

Bitcoin is a digital currency that's not tied to any bank or government. Like cash, it lets users spend or receive money anonymously, or mostly so; like other online payment services, it also lets them do so over the internet.

The coins are created by miners, who operate computer farms that verify other users' transactions by solving complex mathematical puzzles. These miners

receive bitcoin in exchange. It's also possible to exchange bitcoin for US dollars and other currencies. Bitcoin has been touted as a currency of the future, but so far it hasn't proven very popular as a way to pay for goods or services.

What's behind the fuss?

In a word, speed. The bitcoin network is limited in how quickly it can shuffle around digital money. As bitcoin has grown, payment delays have become more common and worrisome.

Some software developers came up with a way to speed things up by reengineering bitcoin's universal ledger, a file called the blockchain. Supporters of the new method include Microsoft, the bitcoin exchange Coinbase and a variety of other bitcoin proponents who would like to see the currency used more widely in commerce. Reformers had threatened to stop recognizing transactions confirmed by miners who hadn't adopted the upgrade.

What would a split mean?

Generally speaking, chaos - though mostly limited to those who use or squirrel away bitcoin. People who use bitcoin couldn't be sure which version they held, or what might happen if they spent it or accepted bitcoin as payment.

Taking bitcoin, for instance, could leave you with currency you couldn't spend freely - and that might disappear entirely if it ended up being the "wrong" kind. That's

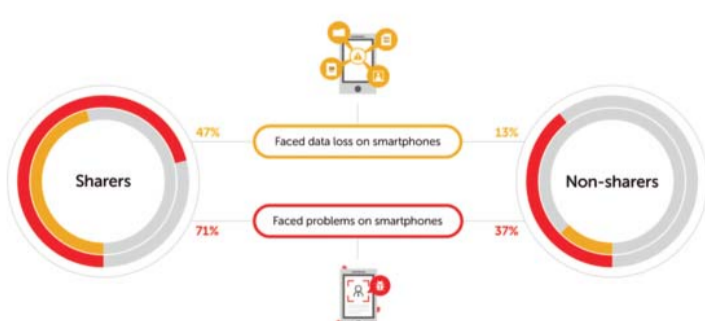
one reason the community-supported website Bitcoin.org had warned users not to accept any bitcoin up to two days prior to Monday's deadline and to wait for confirmation the situation had been resolved before trading again. But the change now has the support needed to proceed, so a disruption isn't likely this week.

What are the remaining issues?

A separate group of developers sought to solve the speed issue by proposing a new currency called Bitcoin Cash. It effectively rewards every owner of bitcoin with an equal amount of the new currency using a system that can handle much higher volumes of trades. But some digital currency exchange operators - including Coinbase and Bitstamp - have said they won't support Bitcoin Cash. And Cornell computer science professor Emin Gun Sirer says savvy traders can game the system to create free money for themselves. Bitcoin Cash was slated to launch on Tuesday. As of Monday the price of Bitcoin Cash futures was about one-tenth of bitcoin itself.

Tone Vays, a bitcoin analyst and consultant, says he thinks Bitcoin Cash is destined to become one of many alternative digital currencies known as "alt-coins." He says the concept is similar to Clams, digital coins that were also awarded to bitcoin holders in 2014 but now trade at about one-thousandth of bitcoin's price. Once Bitcoin Cash went live Tuesday, people "will immediately sell it for bitcoin," he said Monday. —AP

Dangers of Data Sharing



CHINA WELCOMES WORLD'S FIRST PANDA BORN TO WILD AND CAPTIVE PARENTS

BEIJING: China has welcomed the world's first giant panda cub born to a mixed pair of captive and wild parents, the official Xinhua news agency said. Palm-sized and pink, covered in a downy layer of white fuzz from its tiny claws to its long tail, the cub was born early Monday morning in southwestern Sichuan province to 15-year-old Cao Cao, who had mated with a wild male panda in March. The cub's birth is the result of researchers' efforts to boost the health and genetic diversity of captive pandas by getting them to mate with their forest-dwelling counterparts, Xinhua cited Zhang Zhizhong of the China

Conservation and Research Center for the Giant Panda (CCRCGP) as saying.

With only 471 captive pandas worldwide as of the end of last year, the species is at risk of inbreeding, Xinhua said. Cao Cao, who has lived in captivity since she was two, was released back into the wild for a two-month stint in March wearing positioning and recording devices around her neck. The recording device showed that after going into heat on March 11, she mated with a wild male panda for a minute and 30 seconds on March 23. Her baby weighed in at a hefty 216 grams-exceeding the typical newborn

panda weight of around 150 grams thanks to Cao Cao's good appetite during pregnancy.

Giant pandas are notoriously clumsy at mating, with males said to be bad at determining when a female is in the right frame of mind and often befuddled at knowing what to do next. In the event the animals do feel compatible, sex is frequently over too quickly to impregnate the female, who is only receptive to the proposition for two or three days a year between February and May. Fewer than 2,000 giant pandas are estimated to remain in the wild, in three provinces in south-central China. — AFP



TOKYO: In this photo released by Tokyo Zoological Park Society, a giant panda cub lies down on the floor with its mother ShinShin at Ueno Zoo in Tokyo. — AP

SATELLITE LAUNCHED TO MONITOR CLIMATE CHANGE AND VEGETATION

CAYENNE: Two satellites including one dedicated to monitoring the effects of climate change on vegetation were successfully launched into orbit late Tuesday, launch company ArianeSpace said. They were launched from Korou, in French Guiana, at 10:56 pm (0136 GMT). The Vegetation and Environment monitoring on a New Micro Satellite-or Venus-is a joint effort between

France's National Centre for Space Studies (CNES) and Israel's space agency. Venus will photograph 110 specific sites across the world every two days for two-and-a-half years, charting the impact of climate change on ecosystems and agriculture as well as studying carbon stocks and plant evolution. The other satellite is on a reconnaissance mission for Italy's defense ministry. — AFP



KUALA LUMPUR: This handout photo by the Royal Malaysian Customs shows seized pangolin scales displayed before a press conference in Sepang, outside Kuala Lumpur. — AFP

MALAYSIA SEIZES RARE ANIMAL PARTS WORTH ALMOST \$1MN

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia has seized elephant tusks and pangolin scales from Africa worth almost a million dollars, an official said yesterday, highlighting the country's role as a hub for smuggling rare animal parts. The contraband was found in two separate raids in the cargo terminal of Kuala Lumpur's main international airport on Sunday, customs officials said. In the first raid, authorities found 23 ivory tusks, weighing 75.7 kilograms with an estimated value of 275,000 ringgit.

"Customs officers seized two boxes which contained a large quantity of elephant tusks," senior customs official Pudzi Man said in a statement. The tusks had been sent from Nigeria, and the cargo was listed as food items, he said. Separately, officials found six sacks containing 300.9 kilograms (663 pounds) of pangolin scales worth 3.86 million ringgit (\$900,500), said Pudzi. The cargo had originated in the Democratic Republic of Congo. No arrests have yet been made over the seizures.

Elephant tusks are in high demand in parts of Asia, especially China and Vietnam, where the ivory is prized for decorative purposes and in traditional medicine. The global trade in elephant ivory, with rare exceptions, has been outlawed since 1989. The scales of the pangolin, a critically endangered creature also known as the "scaly anteater" that is the world's most heavily trafficked mammal, are highly sought after in some Asian countries for use in traditional medicine.

Pangolin meat is considered a delicacy in China and their scales are also sometimes used in the production of crystal methamphetamine. The seizures underline Malaysia's role as a major transit point in the global wildlife smuggling trade. Last month, a Vietnamese man was arrested at Kuala Lumpur airport and a large stash of elephant ivory found in his luggage was seized. Anyone found guilty of importing rare animals or their parts into Malaysia can be jailed for up to three years and fined. — AFP

BANGLADESH PERFORMS 1ST CONJOINED TWIN SURGERY TWINS TO REMAIN IN INTENSIVE CARE AFTER SURGERY

DHAKA: Surgeons in Bangladesh have performed what they are calling the country's first successful separation of conjoined twins in a "groundbreaking" and complex operation. Tofa and Tahura, ten-month-old sisters who were born conjoined at the spine and rectum, were separated by a team of two dozen doctors Tuesday at Bangladesh's largest hospital in the capital Dhaka. Paediatric surgeon Abdul Hanif said the twins were in a stable condition after the delicate nine-hour procedure.

"It is the first time we have successfully separated conjoined twins in Bangladesh," Hanif, from Dhaka Medical College Hospital, said. "It's a groundbreaking operation in our medical history. It was an extremely complex operation." The twins will undergo at least two further operations to restructure their internal organs, Hanif added. The surgery had been "100 percent successful" but the twins would remain in intensive care for some time to ensure no infections developed, said another doctor, Shahnoor Islam.

Born to a poor couple, the twin sisters—who do not use a surname—were brought to Dhaka a month ago. Their mother, Shahida Begum, wept following the surgery, describing her tension and joy at news the operation had been a success. "Doctors said the surgery was successful, but they are not out of risk yet. I pray to God for my kids' quickest recovery. Let their pain be gone." Another pair of Bangladeshi twins conjoined at the skull are awaiting a complex medical procedure in Dhaka. The surgery is unprecedented in Bangladesh, and doctors are consulting medical opinions from across the globe as they prepare for the operation.

Doctors are trying to establish whether the one-year-old girls—born otherwise healthy in northwest Bangladesh—share the same brain, something that would vastly complicate the surgery. In rare cases, identical twins can be born with skin and internal organs fused together. About half are stillborn, and the survival rate is between five and 25 percent. In 2008 a baby was born in Bangladesh with two heads but died after just two days. — AFP



DHAKA: Previously-conjoined Bangladeshi twins Tofa and Tahura are treated after surgery to separate them at Dhaka Medical College Hospital in Dhaka. — AFP

HAWAII ALLOWS LAB TO BEGIN TESTING MEDICAL MARIJUANA

HONOLULU: Hawaii approved its first laboratory to begin testing samples of medical marijuana 17 years after use of the drug was legalized in the state. On Monday, the state Department of Health certified Honolulu-based lab Steep Hill Hawaii. That brings Hawaii closer to the long-awaited date when dispensaries can sell their products. Hawaii was among the first states to legalize medical marijuana in 2000. But the state didn't legalize dispensaries until 2015, leaving about 17,000 patients to grow or obtain the drug on their own.

Then medical marijuana dispensaries began opening in Hawaii this summer, but they could not sell their products because the state had not certified any labs to conduct the required testing. So they conducted outreach instead. "This is a big milestone, and it couldn't have come any sooner, because many people within the industry were getting frustrated and a little angry at the time it has taken to get to this point," said state Sen. Will Espero, a Democrat. "But now that we are here, hopefully the next phase in terms of sales will hap-

pen quickly and everything will go smoothly." Once the lab receives samples, it will take about four days to test and return products to dispensaries for sale, said Dana Ciccone, owner of Steep Hill Hawaii. Then the dispensary will undergo one final inspection by the Department of Health with the product present, department spokeswoman Janice Okubo said. That on-site inspection and accompanying paperwork could take 24 to 48 hours, she said. Steep Hill worked tirelessly over the past year to receive certification so patients could finally access safe, legal cannabis, Ciccone said in an email.

"Today is a big step in the right direction for Hawaii's Medical Cannabis industry," he said. The product at Honolulu-based dispensary Aloha Green has been ready for months, and dispensary CEO James H.Q. Lee said he hopes to begin the lab testing process Tuesday. "We've been waiting, so that's very good news. I think the patients will be happy," Lee said. But Lee still has questions about what size sample to prepare, and he hasn't gotten a definitive answer from the Department of Health, he said.—AP

CLINIC PAGE



Kuwait Times



Dr. Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem

 د. فهد علي المخيزيم
 استشاري أطفال
 M.B. Bch. FRCPC. FAAP. PEM



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A NEW KIND OF COLD: NITROGEN INFUSED COFFEE NOW BREWING IN COSTA MARINA CRESCENT STORE

This summer Costa Coffee is introducing its latest innovation, Nitro Cold Brew: a nitrogen-infused sensation poured through a bespoke tap, debuting as Costa's smoothest and richest cold coffee yet. The launch of the refreshing, bold and invigorating Nitro Cold Brew Coffee will be followed by the arrival of Costa Cold Brew in all Costa Coffee stores across Kuwait.

Nitro Cold Brew Coffee is made with Costa's Cold Brew; a single origin Colombian blend, steeped for over 20 hours to enhance the natural coffee fla-

vor. The Cold Brew Coffee is then poured through a tap that infuses the drink with nitrogen for a seriously smooth new multi-sensory experience, sure to excite coffee aficionados. The nitrogen infusion creates tiny bubbles which cascade through the coffee as it streams from the tap, giving it an extra smooth taste and rich, silky texture. Nitro Cold Brew coffee is served in a glass straight-up. For those with a soft spot for sweetness, Nitro Cold Brew Coffee can also be enjoyed with caramel or vanilla syrups. Available in its Marina Crescent store

only, Costa Coffee Kuwait is the second and only country in the MENA region following the UAE to launch the Nitro Cold Brew and the first international coffee chain to launch the innovation in Kuwait. Nitro is the newest addition to the Costa Coffee family and offers a spectacular twist on the cold coffee drinking experience.

Caroline Harris, Global Brand Director at Costa Coffee commented: "As part of our mission to inspire the world to love great coffee, we are constantly working to bring new coffee experiences and innovations to our customers. Nitro Cold

Brew is a new, exciting way to enjoy coffee - our smoothest ever cold coffee and the ultimate refreshment. With its nitrogen infusion, 20-hour brewing process and single origin Colombian blend, Nitro Cold Brew Coffee is our most velvety smooth drink yet."

Since Alghanim Industries acquired Costa Kuwait in 2013, the brand's strategy became focused on customer centrality. Alghanim Industries was keen to constantly develop the brand and introduce innovative drinks to better cater to its customers.



360 MALL, EYE BOUTIQUE OPTICIANS CONCLUDE SUNGLASSES SUMMER DONATION CAMPAIGN 2017



As part of its 2017 corporate social responsibility program, 360 Mall in collaboration with Eye Boutique Opticians collected over 250 donated used sunglasses from collection boxes located at Tamdeen Group offices and from Eye Boutique Opticians directly to distribute to deserving staff helping to build a better Kuwait.

The sunglasses, all in good condition, were distributed to the hard working laborers as well as the dedicated cleaners and ancillary staff working within a public hospital. This unique campaign also included Eye Boutique Opticians offering a complementary eye test and glasses to more than 200 staff, who would normally be unable to afford this service, currently working in the housekeeping, security and maintenance departments at 360 Mall.

"This campaign was organized in line with the Tamdeen Group and 360 Mall's commitment to play a positive role in the community, and in helping those less fortunate," said Claudia Lopusinska, Marketing Manager, 360 Mall. "We would like to express our deepest gratitude to Eye Boutique for their fantastic generosity and support of this campaign."

As part of its commitment to social responsibility, 360 Mall is committed to supporting and hosting various community initiatives which promote volunteerism, active community participation, youth empowerment, arts and music appreciation and other deserving causes.

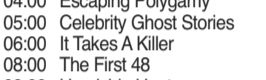




00:45 Animal Cops Philadelphia
01:40 The Bronx Zoo
02:35 Tanked
03:25 Wildest Islands
04:15 Life At Vet University
05:02 Untamed China With Nigel Marvin



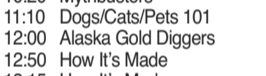
00:00 Escaping Polygamy
01:00 Celebrity Ghost Stories
02:00 My Haunted House
03:00 Psychic Kids: Children Of The Paranormal



00:00 Henry Hugglemonster
00:15 Calimero
00:30 Art Attack
00:50 Zou
01:05 Loopidoo



00:30 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?
01:20 World's Toughest Expeditions With James Cracknell
02:10 Kings Of The Wild
03:00 Destroyed In Seconds



00:30 The 1980s: The Deadliest Decade
01:20 Evil Online
02:10 Murder Comes To Town
03:00 Grave Secrets
03:48 Swamp Murders



00:20 Hank Zipzer
00:25 Alex & Co.
00:45 The Hive
00:50 Evermoor Chronicles



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00:25 Alex & Co.
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00:50 Evermoor Chronicles

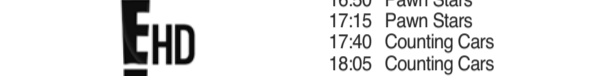


00:00 Hank Zipzer
00:25 Alex & Co.
00:45 The Hive
00:50 Evermoor Chronicles

07:40 Gravity Falls
08:05 Good Luck Charlie
10:15 Good Luck Charlie
10:40 Alex & Co.
11:05 Lolorock



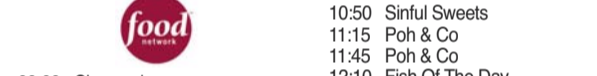
00:20 Counting Cars
01:10 Forged In Fire
02:00 Hunting Hitler
02:50 Storage Wars Miami



00:50 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
01:50 El News
02:50 Celebrity Style Story



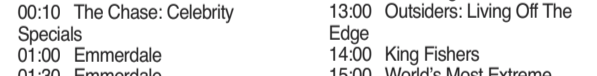
00:45 Testing The Menu With Nic Watt
01:10 Fish Of The Day
01:40 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces



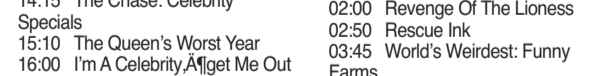
00:00 Chopped
01:00 The Great Food Truck Race
02:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives



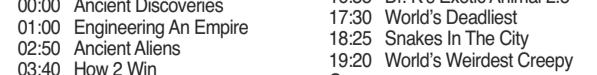
00:10 Surgery Ship
01:00 Invasion Earth
02:00 The Truth Behind
03:00 Nazi Megastructures



00:10 The Chase: Celebrity Specials
01:00 Emmerdale
01:30 Emmerdale
02:00 Coronation Street



00:20 Snake Underworld
01:10 Hooked
02:00 Revenge Of The Lioness
02:50 Rescue Ink



00:00 Ancient Discoveries
01:00 Engineering An Empire
02:50 Ancient Aliens



00:12 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
00:36 Rabbids Invasion
01:00 Rabbids Invasion
01:24 Nicky And Craig



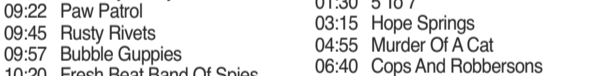
00:40 Famous In Love
01:30 The Americans
02:20 Blindspot
03:20 The Flash



01:15 Hannah Montana Movie
03:00 Frankenweenie
04:30 Alone For Christmas
06:00 A Simple Wish



00:03 Max & Ruby
00:25 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
00:36 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom



01:30 X-Men: First Class
03:45 Forbidden Empire
05:40 Alien Outpost
07:20 Mission To Mars



01:30 5 To 7
03:15 Hope Springs
04:55 Murder Of A Cat
06:40 Cops And Robbers



01:00 Boys Don't Cry
03:00 Waking Life
04:45 The Better Angels
06:25 The Yellow Handkerchief



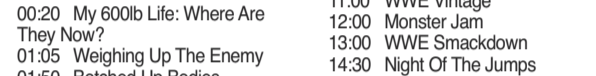
00:15 The Middle
00:40 The Middle
01:05 Baskets
01:30 Baskets



00:30 How Do They Do It?
00:55 Food Factory
01:20 Invent It Rich
02:00 Sci-Trek



00:00 WWE Vintage
01:00 WWE Raw
03:00 Arena Sports
03:30 Night Of The Jumps



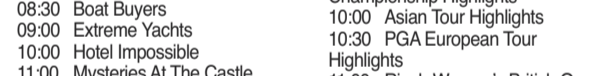
00:20 My 600lb Life: Where Are They Now?
01:05 Weighing Up The Enemy
01:50 Botched Up Bodies



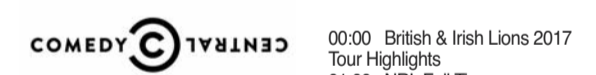
00:00 MotoGP Highlights
01:00 Legends Football League
02:20 Bellator MMA Special
03:00 One Weekly



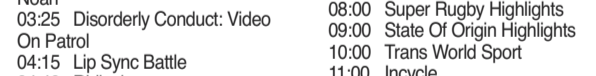
02:00 Asian Tour Highlights
03:00 EuroPro Tour
05:00 Inside The PGA Tour



00:00 Bizarre Foods America
01:00 Mysteries At The Castle
02:00 Extreme Yachts
03:00 Booze Traveler



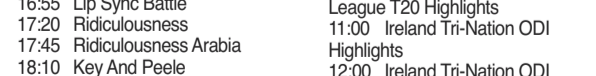
00:00 British & Irish Lions 2017 Tour Highlights
01:00 NFL Full Time
01:30 AFL Premiership Highlights



00:05 David Spade: My Fake Problems
00:55 South Park
01:20 South Park
01:45 Another Period

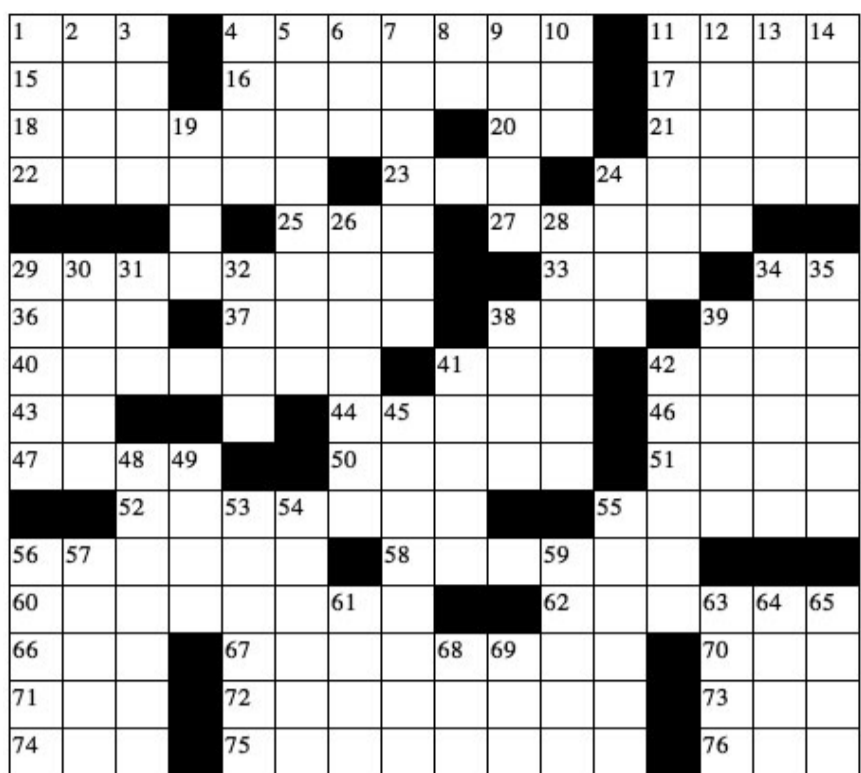


00:30 ICC Cricket 360
01:00 Hero Caribbean Premier League T20 Highlights
05:00 ICC Champions Trophy



00:30 ICC Cricket 360
01:00 Hero Caribbean Premier League T20 Highlights
05:00 ICC Champions Trophy

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ACROSS

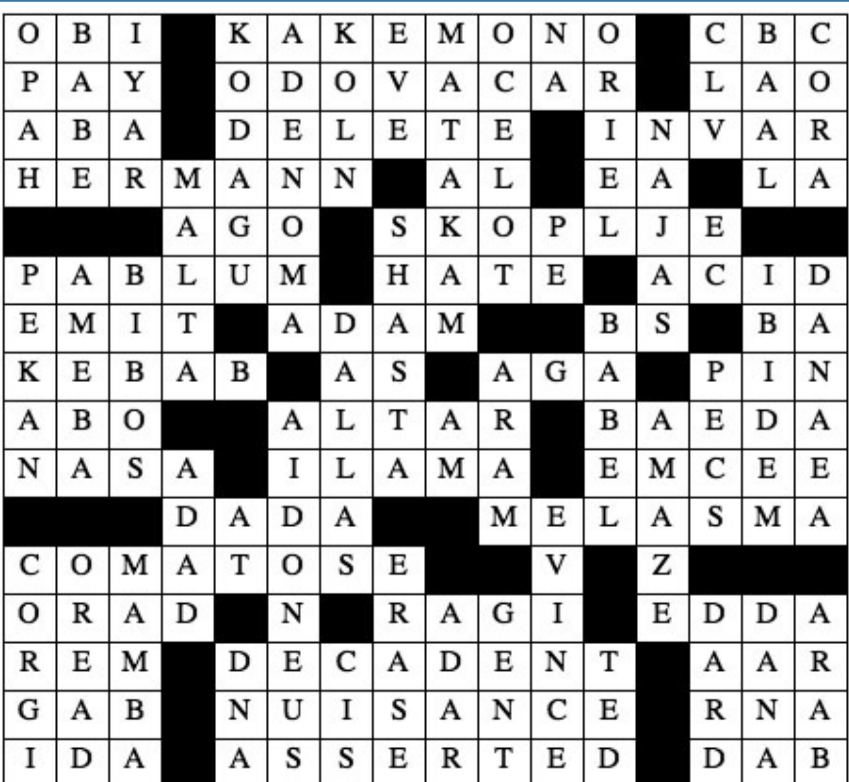
1. A federally chartered savings bank.
4. A member of the Caddo people who formerly lived in the Dakotas west of the Missouri river.
11. A law passed by US Congress to prevent employees from being injured or contracting diseases in the course of their employment.
15. Water frozen in the solid state.
16. A resident of Nevada.
17. A barrier consisting of a horizontal bar and supports.
18. Knitted jacket that is fastened up the front with buttons or a zipper.
20. A state in midwestern United States.
21. A public area set aside as a pedestrian walk.
22. Wild sheep of semidesert regions in central Asia.
23. Remaining after all deductions.
25. South American wood sorrel cultivated for its edible tubers.
27. Affect with wonder.
29. Deprived of parents by death or desertion.
33. A resource.
36. The corporate executive responsible for the operations of the firm.
37. A collection of facts from which conclusions may be drawn.
40. An esoteric or occult matter that is traditionally secret.
43. A highly unstable radioactive element (the heaviest of the halogen series).
44. A heavy dull sound (as made by impact of heavy objects).
46. The sediment from fermentation of an alcoholic beverage.
47. A master's degree in library science.
50. Suggestive of the supernatural.
51. (used of count nouns) Every one considered individually.
52. The largest island of the central Ryukyu Islands.
56. The wood of the sabicu which resembles mahogany.
58. Of or containing iridium.
60. Old World field mice.
62. (of words) Formed in imitation of a natural sound.
66. A broad flat muscle on either side of the back.
67. A sac or cavity containing fluid especially lymph or cerebrospinal fluid.
70. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
71. (informal) Of the highest quality.
72. Accumulated on a surface of a solid.
73. Ancient Hebrew unit of liquid measure = 1.5 gallons.
74. A potent estrogen used in medicine and in feed for livestock and poultry.
75. A river in northeastern Brazil that flows generally northward to the Atlantic Ocean.
76. The act of using.

DOWN

1. A tax on employees and employers that is used to fund the Social Security

2. A mark left by the healing of injured tissue.
3. A large mass of ice floating at sea.
4. A blue dye obtained from plants or made synthetically.
5. Characteristic of a region.
6. Any of various coarse shrubby plants of the genus Iva with small greenish flowers.
7. A Dravidian language spoken in southern India.
8. A public promotion of some product or service.
9. An Indian side dish of yogurt and chopped cucumbers and spices.
10. (Irish) Mother of the ancient Irish gods.
11. Chief deity of Zoroastrianism.
12. A river that rises in central Germany and flows north to join the Elbe River.
13. A local and well-defined elevation of the land.
14. A friendly nation.
19. Distinctive and stylish elegance.
24. Set down according to a plan.
26. An order of Eutheria.
28. Large bamboo having thick-walled culms.
30. A long noosed rope used to catch animals.
31. A numbered compartment in a post office where mail is put to be called for.
32. (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.
34. Surgically remove a part of a structure or an organ.
35. Usually describes a large person who is fat but has a large frame to carry it.
38. God of fire.
39. A formal expression of praise.
41. 100 aurar equal 1 krona.
42. The whiteness that results from removing the color from something.
45. A town in southwestern Maine north of Portland.
48. Type genus of the Lobotidae.
49. One of a pair of planks used to make a track for rolling or sliding objects.
53. A mass of ice and snow that permanently covers a large area of land (e.g., the polar regions or a mountain peak).
54. Guinea fowl.
55. Stout-bodied insect with large membranous wings.
57. With rapid movements.
59. The brightest star in Cygnus.
61. A former communist country in eastern Europe and northern Asia.
63. An island of central Hawaii (between Molokai and Kauai).
64. Wading birds of warm regions having long slender down-curved bills.
65. A stick that people can lean on to help them walk.
68. A period marked by distinctive character or reckoned from a fixed point or event.
69. A run that is the result of the batter's performance.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Work seems intense today but you possess a powerful, persistent drive and are a hard, steady worker. Some people find you deep, with a sense of mystery. You are willing to do work today that others would not go near, quietly putting an end to some difficult problems. Later today you might be helping others to learn technical techniques so that you will eventually not be so overburdened. You are able to direct others in your business and this may lead to a leadership position. You busy yourself this afternoon in some project that you had been putting off for some time. You will be creating a new form or format for presentation to some very important people. Some people may wonder how the business could ever get along without you.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You are friendly and encouraging today. You somehow manage to find a creative environment or the creative in any environment, so as to provide the most beneficial area in which to work or play. Others want to join you in this project. You have a built-in sense of what the public wants and can always come up with just the right image. You find it easy to work with the emotions and feelings of others and with great imagination. You are great with kids and big on animals, sports and the outdoors. You are an instant umbrella of warmth, friendship and self-expression. Clear decisions affecting others could be made easily at this time. These are the attitudes and circumstances in which you find yourself teaching others.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

There are lots of energy and action this day. Your dreams and imaginings keep bumping into the real and the actual. You quickly pick up on what is expected of you, and you are accountable. You are learning to plan ahead as you see your goals begin to develop. You do the best you can in every situation that you experience. It takes judgment to make the choices that best benefit a situation. Consider this: your powers of perception are particularly sharp at this time, and you would do well now to work out the details of any plans that you have previously made. This evening, you may feel focused and even a bit radiant. You are either entertaining company or being entertained yourself tonight. The snacks are low calorie and nutritional-good for you!



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You may realize that you may have been stagnating lately. There are opportunities today to rise above the mundane. Saying or writing with style comes naturally as you seek to write a program or progress report. It may seem that you are always writing technical material, and just now there is a desire for variety with some of your work. You may find yourself at a used book store reading all types of subjects. You may even find yourself involved with two books at once. Increasing your vocabulary expertise can be a fun ongoing activity, and you could find a friend to join you. Your ability to discriminate real breakthroughs and to spot new trends makes you able to work in areas at the very fringe of technology these days-more technology to write.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Before work begins this morning, conversations with co-workers could be in the religious realm or at least, spiritual. You have little interest in spirituality that is rampant these days. You could probably bring imagination and religious understanding to physical and scientific studies. Opportunity for further thought regarding the spirit tends to crop up during the day-you are open to new ways of thinking. Continued success on the career level may point to your abandoning some of your dreams. This afternoon, family matters tend to take precedence and you may have to help a young person to understand the word-concentration. You may even think of some fun exercise or game to play with the kids that will help with concentration.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You enjoy working hard and being organized and you exercise skill and discipline in anything that affects your career and reputation. You have the perfect combination to be in a management position at this time. If you think you are ready, this time may be best for pushing through any changes you may want to make in your career. You have good insight into all social activities that are around you and if you are not careful, you may find yourself involved in many club or social group responsibilities. You like to facilitate, compromise and otherwise show your talents-like a coat of many colors. New and creative projects help you to change that feeling of being in a rut. Chatting with neighbors or siblings this evening will help you to relax.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

An emphasis on discipline with regard to work and health is a keynote of the cycle now dawning in your life. Procedures, scheduling, details: you may become weak in some areas unless you take steps to correct any deficiencies. Deficiencies may only be when you fail to meet a deadline. You can do this... You will be pleased with your progress. Otherwise, you will have to run faster just to avoid falling behind. A desire for variety marks this phase and this especially applies to romantic experience and artistic taste. The latter tend to focus on literature and poetry. Communication with distant family members is possible this afternoon. A sociable, congenial, slightly frivolous orientation sets in this evening. A social involvement can be enjoyable.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

This is a good time for promoting yourself and for letting others know what you have to offer. Right now, the key to career moves involves attending to nagging details-what you have neglected before. This is a time during which you may be able to move ahead with your ambition and your general life's purpose. You would make an excellent teacher of philosophy or religion-you cannot help but communicate these subjects to others and enchant all who come to know you. Your understanding of the unity behind appearances, along with the ability to put these thoughts into words, is a rare and valuable gift. You would make a good director, photographer, choreographer, etc. You like working with mental images.



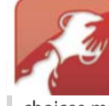
Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

You might like to ignore responsibilities and do some socializing, but realities demand you tend to business and forget your friends for the moment. This is one of the best times to make progress, push forward and rise to prominence. It will be hard for you to do wrong-all the cycles are working in your favor. Your career seems to get the support you need and this is one area of life that runs smoothly. You seem to understand what the public wants and mass marketing could be a natural for you. This is also a time when you may marry or take on a new role in the community or with other people. Your mind is ever on communication, how you present yourself, especially when negotiating. Enjoy cooking a new recipe tonight.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Independence on the part of people or events somehow challenges your authority today. Also, the forces of change assert themselves now and again, managing to overrule and overturn whatever you have managed to secure. Observing others, you will find that some people just naturally deal well with upheavals and adjustments-yet others may find much difficulty. You have great discipline and may find it enjoyable to teach young people how to solve difficulties they may uncover. You can demonstrate a good sensitivity and understanding about the needs of others. You know just the right words that will communicate positive messages. This could involve political issues. If not community politics, possibly club politics.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Opportunities may go against your own sense of responsibility. Career choices may require that you temporarily neglect the home. This is a tough call, and some compromise is perhaps the best way to a workable solution. This is a perfect time to be assertive and to move forward in your career decisions. You are driven when it comes to fulfilling your ambitions and carving out a career. There is no lack of energy or drive here, and nothing can stand in your way. Everything is poured into making the right moves-the correct decisions. You are outgoing, enthusiastic and always diplomatic-everybody's favorite. Politics or some other public career seems inevitable. Some experienced politician may tutor you in this process if that is what you want.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You enjoy working with whatever is psychological-the hidden, vulnerable, sensitive areas of the mind and self. You can handle material that is sensitive or taboo without batting an eye. This interest in all that is psychological makes you an excellent teacher. You also have a natural grasp for writing and after you worked with research, reports and projects, you may decide to go in a different direction. The different direction is what today is about. Where could you apply your talents and be the happiest your drive in the area of psychology, meditation, renewals of direction or perhaps, concentration on a focus to improve, may mean an advice column. If you are not with a mate, this may be a time you will meet someone very special.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Movies: Musicals

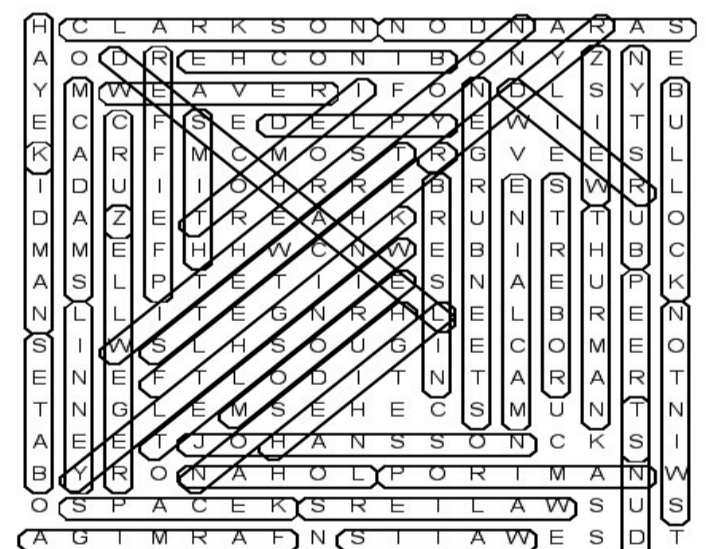
Find and circle all of the Movie Musicals that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell the title of an additional Movie Musical.



- | | | | |
|---------------|------------|----------------|-----------------|
| A CHORUS LINE | CHICAGO | HELLO, DOLLY! | PAL JOEY |
| ALL THAT JAZZ | EVITA | HIGH SOCIETY | SHOW BOAT |
| ANNIE | FAME | HOLIDAY INN | SILK STOCKINGS |
| BLUE HAWAII | FANTASIA | JAILHOUSE ROCK | SOUTH PACIFIC |
| BRIGADOON | FUNNY FACE | LA TRAVIATA | STATE FAIR |
| BUGSY MALONE | FUNNY GIRL | MARY POPPINS | SWEET CHARITY |
| CABARET | GIGI | MOULIN ROUGE | SWING TIME |
| CALAMITY JANE | GODSPELL | MY FAIR LADY | THE MUSIC MAN |
| CAMELOT | GREASE | NEWSIES | TOMMY |
| CARMEN | GYPSY | OKLAHOMA! | TOP HAT |
| CAROUSEL | HAIR | OLIVER! | WEST SIDE STORY |

Yesterday's Solution

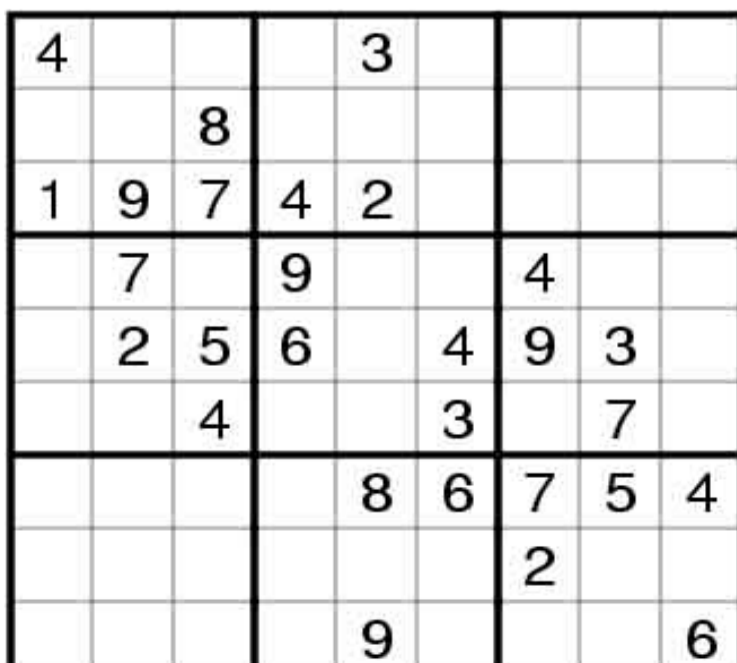
Movie Actresses 2



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

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

Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



CLASSIFIEDS



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KNCC PROGRAMME FROM THURSDAY TO WEDNESDAY (03/08/2017 TO 09/08/2017)

Time	Channel	Programme	Time	Channel	Programme
1:00 PM	SHARQIA-1	FIRST KILL	1:00 AM	DUNKIRK	5:45 PM
3:15 PM	DUNKIRK		8:00 PM	DUNKIRK	8:00 PM
5:30 PM	BABY DRIVER	FANAR-2	10:15 PM	THE DARK TOWER	10:15 PM
7:50 PM	FIRST KILL	DUNKIRK	12:30 AM	THE DARK TOWER	12:30 AM
9:55 PM	DUNKIRK	WAR FOR THE PLANET OF THE APES			
12:15 AM	FIRST KILL	BABY DRIVER	11:45 AM	AVENUES-1	
		WAR FOR THE PLANET OF THE APES	2:00 PM	FIRST KILL	11:30 AM
		WAR FOR THE PLANET OF THE APES	4:45 PM	THE BIG SICK	1:35 PM
		BABY DRIVER	7:00 PM	THE BIG SICK	4:00 PM
			9:45 PM	THE BIG SICK	6:30 PM
12:15 PM	SHARQIA-2	ANTAR IBN IBN IBN SHADAD -Arabic	12:05 AM	FIRST KILL	9:00 PM
2:45 PM	ANTAR IBN IBN IBN SHADAD -Arabic		12:05 AM	FIRST KILL	11:05 PM
5:15 PM	DUNKIRK	FANAR-3	1:10 AM	FIRST KILL	1:10 AM
7:30 PM	ANTAR IBN IBN IBN SHADAD -Arabic	DESPLICABLE ME 3			
10:00 PM	ANTAR IBN IBN IBN SHADAD -Arabic	MUBARAKAN -Hindi	12:30 PM		
12:30 AM	ANTAR IBN IBN IBN SHADAD -Arabic	MUBARAKAN -Hindi	5:30 PM	AVENUES-2	
		JAB HARRY MET SEJAL -Hindi	11:30 AM	DUNKIRK	12:30 PM
		JAB HARRY MET SEJAL -Hindi	2:30 PM	WAR FOR THE PLANET OF THE APES	2:45 PM
		JAB HARRY MET SEJAL -Hindi	5:30 PM	DUNKIRK	5:30 PM
		JAB HARRY MET SEJAL -Hindi	8:30 PM	THE DARK TOWER-2D-4DX	7:45 PM
		JAB HARRY MET SEJAL -Hindi	11:30 PM	DUNKIRK -2D-4DX	9:45 PM
12:00 PM	SHARQIA-3	THE DARK TOWER	12:00 PM	THE DARK TOWER-2D-4DX	12:05 AM
2:00 PM	WAR FOR THE PLANET OF THE APES	FANAR-4	2:40 PM		
2:00 PM	JAB HARRY MET SEJAL -Hindi	ANTAR IBN IBN IBN SHADAD -Arabic	5:00 PM		
5:00 PM	WAR FOR THE PLANET OF THE APES	ANTAR IBN IBN IBN SHADAD -Arabic	7:30 PM		
7:45 PM	JAB HARRY MET SEJAL -Hindi	ANTAR IBN IBN IBN SHADAD -Arabic	10:00 PM		
10:45 PM	THE DARK TOWER	ANTAR IBN IBN IBN SHADAD -Arabic	12:30 AM		
12:45 AM	THE DARK TOWER				
		FANAR-5	11:30 AM		
		DESPLICABLE ME 3	1:30 PM		
		DUNKIRK	3:45 PM		
		DUNKIRK	6:00 PM		
		THE DARK TOWER	8:15 PM		
		THE DARK TOWER	10:30 PM		
		THE DARK TOWER	12:45 AM		
		MARINA-1	11:35 AM		
		WAR FOR THE PLANET OF THE APES	2:25 PM		
		WAR FOR THE PLANET OF THE APES	5:10 PM		
		SPIDER-MAN: HOMECOMING	7:45 PM		
		WAR FOR THE PLANET OF THE APES	10:30 PM		
		ATOMIC BLONDE	12:45 AM		
		BABY DRIVER			
		MARINA-2	11:30 AM		
		ANTAR IBN IBN IBN SHADAD -Arabic	2:00 PM		
		ANTAR IBN IBN IBN SHADAD -Arabic	4:30 PM		
		ANTAR IBN IBN IBN SHADAD -Arabic	7:00 PM		
		ANTAR IBN IBN IBN SHADAD -Arabic	9:30 PM		
		ANTAR IBN IBN IBN SHADAD -Arabic	12:05 AM		
		MARINA-3	11:40 AM		
		DESPLICABLE ME 3	1:30 PM		
		DUNKIRK	3:45 PM		
		DESPLICABLE ME 3			

CHANGE OF NAME

Habib Ali Rajabali S/O Rajabali Kadarali, holder of Indian Passport No. H8468522 & Civil ID No. 259080500277, has change my name from Habib Ali Rajabali to Habib Ali Pathan, hereinafter in all my dealings and documents I will be known by name of Habib Ali Pathan. (C 5334) 3-8-2017

LOST

I, Neenu Ali, holder of Indian Passport No: H3127852, have lost my passport since June 20th, around Kuwait City area, if found please contact: 25618357. (C 5335) 3-8-2017

SITUATION WANTED

A B.E. graduate in electronics & communications & further master's in embedded system & instrumentation. A year of experience in layout & design engineering at Linde AG, Germany. For any possible vacancy & detailed resume please contact: 94081644, shettyswathi07@gmail.com (C 5336) 3-8-2017

PRAYER TIMINGS

Fajr: 03:41
Shorook: 05:09
Duhr: 11:54
Asr: 15:30
Maghrib: 18:39
Isha: 20:04

Vacancy Announcement

Pakistan Embassy in Kuwait requires the services of **"Local based Assistant"**. Interested candidates meeting the following criteria may apply:

- ◆ Must have experience of Data Entry
- ◆ Must have transferable Kuwait Residence Permit
- ◆ Must have proficiency in use of current operating software system.
- ◆ High language skills in English and Urdu both written and spoken.
- ◆ Must have Bachelors Degree

Interested candidates may send their C.V at email parepkwait@mofa.gov.pk. by 10 August, 2017.

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From 5pm to 8pm
Tel: 66270479

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Arrival Flights on Thursday 3/8/2017				Departure Flights on Thursday 3/8/2017			
Airlines	Fit	Route	Time	Airlines	Fit	Route	Time
MSC	501	Alexandria	00:05	JZR	239	Amman	12:25
JAI	574	Mumbai	00:05	UAE	871	Dubai	12:45
THY	772	Istanbul	00:10	FEJ	933	Sohag	12:55
KAC	102	London	00:15	MSR	610	Cairo	13:00
SVA	502	Jeddah	00:20	AXB	393	Kozhikode	13:10
SVA	514	Riyadh	00:25	KAC	514	Tehran	13:10
MSC	411	Asyut	00:30	KAC	522	Al Najaf	13:40
KAC	786	Jeddah	00:30	KAC	672	Madinah	13:55
JZR	267	Beirut	00:35	KNE	231	Dubai	14:10
KAC	504	Beirut	00:45	QTR	1078	Riyadh	14:10
DLH	635	Doha	01:00	SVA	500	Doha	14:15
JZR	539	Cairo	01:20	KAC	352	Jeddah	14:20
SAI	441	Lahore	01:30	FDB	059	Kochi	14:20
UAE	853	Dubai	01:40	KAC	618	Dubai	14:20
RJA	642	Amman	01:45	JZR	779	Doha	14:25
THY	1464	Istanbul	01:50	KNE	529	Jeddah	14:55
KKK	6506	Istanbul	01:55	KAC	788	Jeddah	14:55
AXB	395	Kozhikode	02:00	KAC	304	Mumbai	14:55
KLK	446	Bahrain	02:05	KAC	692	Muscat	14:55
QTR	1086	Doha	02:10	ETD	303	Abu Dhabi	15:05
PGT	830	Istanbul	02:10	OMA	645	Muscat	15:10
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	KAC	562	Amman	15:10
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:15	FDB	8053	Dubai	15:25
THY	768	Istanbul	02:35	KAC	502	Beirut	15:25
MEA	406	Beirut	02:50	GFA	221	Bahrain	15:30
KAC	418	Manila	02:50	ABY	127	Sharjah	15:35
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05	UAE	857	Dubai	15:45
MSR	606	Luxor	03:05	MSR	705	Damascus	15:50
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:10	RJA	640	Amman	16:00
MSR	612	Doha	03:15	FDB	051	Dubai	16:15
KAC	382	Delhi	03:15	QTR	1072	Doha	16:15
QTR	1076	Doha	03:45	JZR	535	Cairo	16:20
KAC	1544	Cairo	03:50	KAC	257	Beirut	16:20
LMU	510	Cairo	04:00	JZR	118	New York	16:25
QTR	1090	Doha	04:05	KNE	531	Jeddah	16:35
JZR	555	Alexandria	04:05	JZR	787	Riyadh	16:35
UAE	873	Dubai	04:15	NIA	361	Alexandria	16:50
JZR	1543	Cairo	04:45	KAC	542	Cairo	17:05
KAC	358	Kochi	04:50	SVA	510	Riyadh	17:15
FEJ	931	Alexandria	05:00	GFA	215	Bahrain	17:30
KAC	784	Jeddah	05:00	JZR	777	Jeddah	17:35
THY	1414	Doha	05:05	QTR	1080	Dubai	17:45
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:10	MSR	620	Cairo	18:10
KAC	344	Chennai	05:30	JZR	483	Beirut	18:30
JZR	529	Asyut	05:35	UAE	875	Istanbul	18:30
KAC	362	Colombo	05:50	GFA	217	Dubai	19:05
THY	770	Istanbul	05:55	KAC	744	Dammam	19:05
BAW	157	London	06:05	FDB	063	Dubai	19:10
KAC	204	Lahore	06:20	NIA	161	Cairo	19:15
KAC	678	Dubai	06:25	ABY	123	Sharjah	19:20
QTR	8511	Doha	06:35	KAC	174	Munich	19:25
KAC	206	Islamabad	06:40	KAC	154	Istanbul	19:30
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:50	KAC	674	Dubai	19:40
KAC	302	Mumbai	06:55	KAC	616	Bahrain	19:40
KAC	156	Istanbul	07:05	KAC	776	Riyadh	19:45
JZR	1541	Cairo	07:10	KAC	178	Vienna	19:45
JZR	503	Luxor	07:25	FDB	057	Dubai	19:50
KAC	354	Dubai	07:50	OMA	647	Muscat	20:05
KAC	384	Bangalore	08:00	KAC	620	Doha	20:05
KAC	332	Trivandrum	08:05	KNE	381	Taif	20:10
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25	DLH	634	Frankfurt	20:15
IRA	673	Ahwaz	08:35	MEA	402	Beirut	20:15
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:55	KAC	662	Abu Dhabi	20:20
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	JZR	189	Dubai	20:25
IRA	667	Esfahan	09:05	QTR	1088	Doha	20:40
QTR	1070	Doha	09:25	KAC	564	Amman	21:00
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	ETD	307	Paris	21:05
SVA	512	Riyadh	10:00	KLM	445	Amsterdam	21:10
FDK	803	Damascus	10:00	ALK	229	Colombo	21:15
AHY	5101	GVD	10:15	UAE	859	Dubai	21:15
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:20	THY	764	Istanbul	21:30
KAC	774	Riyadh	10:45	KAC	676	Dubai	21:35
MEA	404	Beirut	10:55	GFA	219	Bahrain	21:50
QTR	1074	Doha	11:00	QTR	1082	Doha	22:05
PAL	668	Manila	11:00	ETD	309	Abu Dhabi	22:10
SYR	341	Damascus	11:00	JZR	125	Bahrain	22:15
JZR	561	Sohag	11:10	AIC	981	Chennai/Ahmedabad	22:25
KAC	403	Asyut	11:15	JZR	241	Amman	22:55
KAC	614	Bahrain	11:15	JAI	574	Mumbai	23:00
RBG	553	Alexandria	11:30	JZR	185	Dubai	23:00
JZR	165	Dubai	11:50	MSR	2614	Cairo	23:30
THY	766	Istanbul	12:15	MSC	405	Sohag	23:30
				FDB	071	Dubai	23:35

GOSSIP



Ricky Wilson's pop concerns

Ricky Wilson worries Kaiser Chiefs fans were "scared off" by their last album because it was more a pop record. The 'Ruby' hitmakers love experimenting with different sounds and approaches to recording, but the 38-year-old singer admitted some of their loyal supporters were not thrilled by their October 2016 LP 'Stay Together' which they made with producer Brian Higgins, famous for his Xenomania production group that created hits for the likes of Girls Aloud, S Club and The Saturdays. Speaking to Closer magazine, he said: "We're in the studio recording and I think there is a lot more to come from us. We're always working on new music and we've made every record in a different way. I did think we might have scared off some of our fans with the pop feel of the last album, 'Stay Together'." Ricky previously revealed he thought 'Stay Together' was full of "instant hits", like 'Parachute' and 'Hole In My Soul', and he felt they were being true to their original "ethos". He said: "We weren't into making a guitar record this time. We wanted to remem-

ber our ethos ... When we wrote our first record, all we wanted to do was to play festivals where everyone remembered us. To do that we had to write what sounded to us like instant hits. "I think somewhere along the way of our career we forgot this is what we love doing. So on this record we've gone back to writing songs that when people hear them for the first time they go, 'I know this and I am enjoying it and don't care who the band is, I like it.'" Meanwhile, Ricky admits that he thinks the reason Kaiser Chiefs are still going strong after a decade of making music, is simply because they "have fun". The former 'Voice' coach said: "We just enjoy it and have fun together. And nothing actually catastrophic has happened to us. We've done all right and we are still here and that's how we will continue. Just seeing what comes next."

Fall Out Boy want to reach lost young people with their new album



The US rockers will release their seventh LP, 'Mania', next month and bassist Pete Wentz is hoping the songs will help "kids" who are looking to "figure themselves out" and let them believe they can fit the world around themselves. He said: "The world can be a big lonely place, especially for kids who are trying to figure themselves out. I think sometimes we can forget that... that's who Mania is meant to speak to. That's who I want to reach. I don't think that kids should feel like they need to adjust their empathy or selves to the world - I'd rather give them the belief that they can adjust the world to fit their empathy." Pete also promised the EDM-influenced 'Young and Menace' isn't indicative of the album as a whole, but the song offered them the chance to do a "hard restart" and do something completely different. He told Rolling Stone magazine: "It feels like every once in a while, you've gotta do a hard restart that clears the cache and erases the hard drive. "I think that's what 'Young and Menace' was - a big palette cleanse. I think it gave us the space to create something brand new." Pete believe it is important for the band to continue to evolve, rather than just making music that sounds like fan-pleasing classic work. He said: "I think we have to just move forward - that's the goal of us (I don't mean the band; I mean humans) - we just need to evolve. "No one wants to be who they were two years ago or 10 years ago... it's great to have that snapshot, but it's time to hang up your hat when you think your glory days are behind you. "I think the sound of FOB will always come with us because of the nature of how Patrick sings against the music - it is just inherently there."



Busted pick Mark Ronson would be dream producer

Busted want Mark Ronson to produce their next album. The trio - Charlie Simpson, Matt Willis and James Bourne - have started work on the follow-up to their 2016 comeback LP 'Night Driver' and have a handful of songs ready. The boys have started searching for producers who can help them construct their new record and top of their wish list is Ronson who has crafted hits with the likes of Lily Allen, Duran Duran, the late Amy Winehouse, Bruno Mars and most recently Queens of the Stone Age. Speaking to BANG Showbiz, Matt, 34, said: "It would be amazing to work with Mark Ronson, he would be a fantastic producer for us, absolutely brilliant. He's got a studio in King's Cross in London but he's never there! What I like is someone else bringing their energy into the studio. What he's done with Queens of the Stone Age is just amazing, I love that record." Charlie wants the next LP to "bridge" the sound between Busted's new electro rock sound and the pop punk style of their early 2000s hits such

as 'Air Hostess', 'Crashed the Wedding' and 'Year 3000'. And the 32-year-old singer-and-guitarist is confident the boys can achieve their goal and give their fans what they want. He said: "We want to bridge the gap between old Busted and new Busted. We love 'Night Driver' and how it sounds, but with the next record we want to go for a mix of the two eras, have more guitar on it for sure. If we can bridge those two things it will be great because 'Night Driver' feels like one thing and old Busted feels like another thing so we want to merge the two together." Last week, Busted rocked 30,000 fans at the MTV Crashes Plymouth live music event. Highlights of their performance and sets from Charli XCX, Louisa Johnson, Clean Bandit and Sigma can be seen on MTV Music on Friday 11 August at 8pm.

Cheryl Tweedy returns to work with major cosmetics company

Cheryl Tweedy has returned to work with L'Oreal Paris almost six months after giving birth. The 34-year-old singer has taken to social media to reveal she is "back at it" and is in front of the camera posing for beauty campaigns once again, and the exciting news comes just five months after the brunette beauty gave birth to her first child Bear, who she has with her partner Liam Payne. The former Girls Aloud band member shared a photograph of her on set of the L'Oreal photoshoot, which captured her brunette tresses billowing whilst a hairdryer was being blown in her face. She captioned the post: "Back at it @lorealmakeup #worthit (sic)." And Cheryl has received the full support of her 23-year-old beau who liked the post. And it has been reported Cheryl is set to be co-creating a make-up collection with the brand, which is set to hit stores in October this year. Cheryl's upcoming beauty range will see a percentage of the profits made from the make-up sales go towards Cheryl's Trust, which is in association with The Prince's Trust. The 'Fight For This Love' hitmaker first joined forces with the cosmetics giant in January 2016, which saw her front the brand's campaigns titled Sculpt and All Worth It. As part of the All Worth It campaign Cheryl worked with L'Oreal Paris and The Prince's Trust to encourage 10,000 people to feel more positive about themselves. Speaking previously about her previous collaboration with both organizations, which also starred Helen Mirren, Louisa Johnson and Neelam Gill, she said: "As a longstanding supporter of The Prince's Trust and spokesperson for L'Oreal Paris I am so happy to support this partnership. Young people are currently facing more and more problems with self-confidence and we have to address these issues as a real priority. My hope is that this partnership will help young people feel accepted and valued for who they are and make sure that they get the support they need to make the most out of life."



Starr's new album two years in the making

Ringo Starr started planning his new album just months after 'Postcards From Paradise' was released. The former Beatles member is due to drop his 19th studio venture 'Give More Love' in September, and his longtime producer Bruce Sugar has said the team started work on the album shortly after the release of 2015's 'Postcards From Paradise' because the star "likes to plan his life years in advance." Bruce said: "It wasn't long after 'Postcards' came out [that we started working on it]. Ringo likes to plan his life years in advance. I think he went on tour after that and then when he got back we started looking at some different ideas. "We're real happy with it. Everyone who's heard it can't wait till it's put out there in the universe." And Bruce also talked about what it's like to work with the 77-year-old music icon in the studio, where he claimed the process was very "casual". He said: "It's very casual, especially when it starts out. I just go over to his home studio. And we just play around with some different synth ideas and bring in a few friends of his initially and see if he can get the ball rolling, kind of get a feel for what he wants to do." Bruce has high praise for 'Give More Love', as he's even said the record could be the "best music" he's recorded with Ringo. Speaking to Billboard magazine, Bruce said: "I think it's the best music I've done with Ringo. I think it's the best musical album we've done. We'll see what happens." 'Give More Love' is due to be released on September 15.

Sia to release Christmas LP after signing with Atlantic Records

Sia has inked a deal with Atlantic Records and is set to release a festive album this Christmas. The 'Cheap Thrills' hitmaker has her own label, Monkey Puzzle, but 2014's '1000 Forms Of Fear' and 2016's 'This Is Acting' are licensed through Sony. The 41-year-old pop star - who is famous for hiding her face under a huge wig for anonymity - has also been working on a record of original songs with Adele's producer Greg Kurstin, which is set to drop later this year. Atlantic Records said in a statement: "Sia is a once-in-a-generation artist. Her extraordinary gifts as a singer and songwriter, her revolutionary approach to the art of performing, her groundbreaking videos - everything she does comes from a deep wellspring of inspiration and imagination. "Sia is that rare artist who has formed her own singular, boundless musical universe. We are so happy to welcome her into the Atlantic family and to be joining Sia on her amazing musical journey." Meanwhile, it was recently revealed that Dannii Minogue has been working with Sia on her comeback, which could mean she has contributed to the Xmas-themed LP. On releasing new music around Christmas time, the 45-year-old former 'X Factor' judge - who is the young sister of pop princess Kylie Minogue - said: "Between now and Christmas, I will be dropping more music."



Kesha announces US Rainbow Tour

Kesha has announced her first US tour in four years. The 'Praying' hitmaker will embark on a 21-date run, her first since 2013, kicking off at Iron City in Birmingham, Atlanta on September 26 and wrapping at the Hollywood Palladium in Los Angeles on November 1. The tour is in support of her first record in since 2012's 'Warrior', 'Rainbow' which the 30-year-old beauty made for her fans, affectionately known as Animals. Announcing the tour, she said: "My new album 'Rainbow' is dedicated to my fans, and I'm so excited to be able to invite you all to come boogie with me on my 'Rainbow Tour'. "I would not have made it to this point without my animals and supporters so now come out and join the celebration with me." 'Rainbow' is released on August 11, it includes the singles 'Woman' and 'Learn to Let Go' and lead track 'Praying'. Kesha says the latter helped her through a battle with depression. She previously said of her track: "Praying, my first single in almost four years, comes out today. I have channeled my feelings of severe hopelessness and depression, I've overcome obstacles, and I have found strength in myself even when it felt out of reach. I've found what I had thought was an unobtainable place of peace. This song is about coming to feel empathy for someone else even if they hurt you or scare you. It's a song about learning to be proud of the person you are even during low moments when you feel alone. It's also about hoping everyone, even someone who hurt you, can heal."



GOSSIP



Ian McShane joins Hellboy reboot

Ian McShane has joined the cast of the 'Hellboy' reboot. The 74-year-old actor has been cast to play Professor Broom, the scientist who adopts the titular demon child, in the Neil Marshall reboot, the Hollywood Reporter has revealed. The part of Professor Broom was originally brought to life by the late John Hurt in the Ron Perlman movies 'Hellboy' and 'Hellboy 2: The Golden Army'. Perlman is not set to reprise his role as the demonic anti-hero in 'Hellboy: Rise of the Blood Queen', but 'Stranger Things' star David Harbour is on board for the titular role in the

reboot and revealed the film will start shooting this September. David previously said: "We're supposed to go in September, I hope. It's good. It's a whole new thing. "I'd always been a fan of the comics and there's a darker tone to it and I think in the climate we have now there's kind of a darker ... a desire for more of that ... the script is good and this guy Neil Marshall is directing who's really good and the aesthetic is great. "So often, the superhero movies can be really fun and I want this to be really fun, but I also want it to be more of a character piece and more about this

dude's struggle. "I think it could be interesting. I don't know, I just hope we make a good movie. We'll see. You be the judge!" The upcoming project has been in the pipeline for some time, but the reboot is set to happen without original director Guillermo del Toro, who couldn't agree with the studio's vision for the movie. Instead, Marshall - who worked on the likes of 'The Descent' and 'Game of Thrones' - is taking charge of the film.

Ron Howard: Han Solo has been fantastic

Ron Howard has praised the 'Han Solo' movie for having a "fantastic script". The Academy Award-winning filmmaker took over directing 'Star Wars' spin-off story after directing duo Phil Lord and Christopher Miller left Disney's project due to "creative differences" with screenwriter Lawrence Kasdan, who penned classic 'Star Wars: Episode V - The Empire Strikes Back'. Howard has come out to reveal he has loved every minute since he began work-

ing on the Disney project, especially getting to collaborate with such a vibrant young cast. Speaking to Heat Vision, the 63-year-old director said: "It's a fantastic script, a great cast and I am having a fantastic creative experience with it. It's a great young cast, incredibly strong - smart, funny people love their characters and love being part of this. I think we'll be able to do something that is a lot of fun." Lord and Miller originally signed up to the project in July 2015 and began shooting in February, but they stepped away from the movie as their "vision" for the film differed from what studio bosses were looking for and were replaced by the Academy Award winning director. The 'Han Solo' spin-off movie is set to follow a younger version of the titular character, with Alden Ehrenreich taking over the iconic part from Harrison Ford. Han and his wookiee sidekick Chewbacca will be seen first meeting Lando Calrissian - which sees Donald Glover taking on the role from Billy Dee Williams - and they will also encounter Woody Harrelson's alter ego Beckett, who is believed to be a mentor to young Han who guides him on his journey to becoming a space smuggler. Harrelson, 56, insists any 'Star Wars' fans who may have concerns about Ehrenreich as Han have nothing to worry about. Speaking to 'Entertainment Tonight', Harrelson said: "He's a great actor and a great guy, with a great sense of humor. I think a lot of humor comes through what he's doing. I think it could be one of the funnier 'Star Wars' movies." The 'Star Wars Anthology' film is slated to be released in May 2018.



Jack Thorne to check script of Star Wars: Episode IX

Jack Thorne is going to be creating a new draft of the 'Star Wars: Episode IX' script. The 'Harry Potter and the Cursed Child' writer has been brought in by Disney and Lucasfilm to have a look over the script for the ninth film in the main 'Star Wars' saga which is set for release in 2019. Originally written by director Colin Trevorrow and Derek Connolly - who worked together on 'Jurassic World' - the duo needed a "fresh set of eyes" on the plot, according to The Hollywood Reporter. Currently, it is not known whether Thorne's input will deal with minor changes or will be a complete rewrite and is slated to start production in January next year. Episode VIII, 'Star Wars: The Last Jedi', was written and directed by Rian Johnson and is set to be released this December. 'The Last Jedi' will see the likes of Mark Hamill, Daisy Ridley, Adam Driver and John Boyega reprise their roles from 'The Force Awakens', and will mark the final big screen appearance of Carrie Fisher, who completed her scenes as General Leia Organa before her tragic death in December 2016 at the age of 60. Johnson recently reassured fans that Leia's final outing in the saga would offer "some kind of catharsis" and "emotional satisfaction". He said: "[I hope it] emotionally gives some kind of catharsis ... it gives some kind of emotional satisfaction. I think so, I really hope so. I know for me it does." And the 43-year-old filmmaker says Carrie's performance in the movie is "really beautiful", and despite the scenes not being filmed in the knowledge they would be her last, there are still moments within the feature that will "mean a lot to people" due to her passing. He added: "Carrie gives a really beautiful performance in the film ... We obviously didn't make the movie to be her final film - her final 'Star Wars' movie. Given that though, I think there are scenes that she has that are going to mean a lot to people ... there are scenes that we have with her where, now not having her around, I watch them and I think, 'I'm really thankful that we have that and that we can give that to people.'

Jessica Chastain: I'll make James McAvoy cry on X-Men set

Jessica Chastain has joked she will make James McAvoy cry "so hard" on the set of 'X-Men: Dark Phoenix'. The flame-haired actress stars alongside James in the new superhero movie and while she's remained tight-lipped about her character's identity, Jessica has suggested she will play an important, villainous role. Alongside a picture of herself and James on her Instagram account, the 40-year-old star wrote: "Hey @jamesmcavoyre-adeal you ready for me up in Montreal? Im gonna make you cry so hard (sic)" Jessica recently admitted she loves sharing things with her fans on social media - although she is still slightly guarded about what she posts on sites like Instagram. The Hollywood actress explained she enjoys maintaining an "air of mystery" about herself. She said: "I love sharing things with my fans and social media is a fantastic platform to put [positive things into the world]. "I don't put anything out there that isn't already in the press. I'm not going to put a picture of myself in a bikini. "I'm not going to put a picture of something people wouldn't normally see. I like to keep an air of mystery." And despite being one of the most sought-after women in the movie business, Jessica confessed that she doesn't feel "uber confident". She said: "It's not an industry that creates confidence; it's something you've really got to find within yourself. "I don't feel uber-confident." Jessica also said she is a "very awkward girl" and can be unsociable at times. Jessica shared: "I'm actually normally a very awkward girl and kind of shy and I'm not very social and so much has been going on. I'm talking about gender politics and the wage gap and women not asking for what they need."



Halle Berry: James Bond should be a man

Halle Berry doesn't think there should ever be a female James Bond. The 50-year-old former Bond girl has joined the debate about casting a woman in the role of the iconic British spy but, for her, the character is "steeped in history" and should always be played by a man. Speaking to 'Entertainment Tonight', Berry said: "I want women to be tough but I don't know if Bond should be a woman. I mean, that series is steeped in history, you know from Ian Fleming's stories. I don't think you can change Bond to a woman. We can create a new Bond character that's a woman, and give her a new name, based on that theory, but I don't know if Bond should be a woman." Berry played starred as NSA agent Giacinta 'Jinx' Johnson alongside 007 Pierce Brosnan in the 2002 Bond movie 'Die Another Day' and appeared in one of the most memorable Bond girl scenes when she emerged from the sea in an orange two-piece bikini complete with a white belt and knife. The scene was a homage to the white bikini Ursula Andress wore as Honey Ryder in the 1962 James Bond film 'Dr No', a swimsuit so iconic it has its own Wikipedia page. Her comments come after Chris Hemsworth claimed Charlize Theron would be the ideal candidate to replace Daniel Craig as Bond following her performance in new American spy thriller 'Atomic Blonde'. But while Charlize appreciates the compliment, she is less than convinced about the idea and laughed off his statement. The Oscar-winning star joked: "Chris, so, you got that cheque I sent you? Thanks, dude. I got your back." Charlize, 41, subsequently addressed the idea in a more serious tone, suggesting it's not some-



thing she'd ever previously considered. She said: "It's so insanely generous and nice [to be mentioned]. But I don't even know what to do with that. That's really sweet." Theron said taking the role of Bond would be "cray cray", adding: "Daniel, you got the job. I am not going to take that job away from you." Hemsworth - who starred with Theron in 'Snow White and the Huntsman' - had originally said: "She's smart as hell. She's physically able. I worked with her on 'Snow White and the Huntsman'. Watching her in those fight scenes, doing it in high heels, by the way, and an eight foot long gown was even more impressive."

Star Wars: The Last Jedi to give Carrie Fisher 'amazing' send off

'Star Wars: The Last Jedi' offers an "amazing" send off for the late Carrie Fisher. The iconic actress - who passed away in December 2016 aged 60 - will make her final ever outing as Princess Leia in the upcoming eighth installment of the popular sci-fi franchise in scenes filmed prior to her death, and fellow 'Star Wars' actor John Boyega has said the

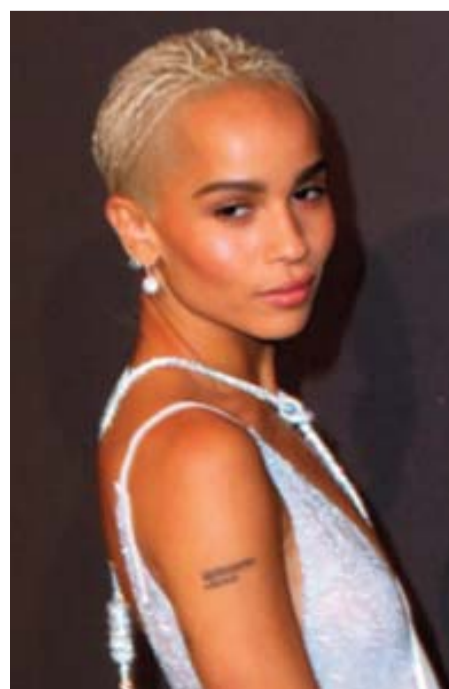
movie does well in paying homage to the star. Speaking to ABC News, John, 25, said: "We really enjoyed each other's company. I was in Nigeria when we found out [about her death]. It was a strange, strange feeling. I felt like everyone in the cast went silent for a bit after that ... [But] this movie, it sends her off in an amazing, amazing way." The news comes after director Rian Johnson reassured fans that Princess Leia's final outing would offer "some kind of catharsis" and "emotional satisfaction". He said: "[I hope it] emotionally gives some kind of catharsis... it gives some kind of emotional satisfaction. I think so, I really hope so. I know for me it does." And the 43-year-old filmmaker says Carrie's performance in the movie is "really beautiful", and despite the scenes not being filmed in the knowledge they would be her last, there are still moments within the feature that will "mean a lot to people". He added: "Carrie gives a really beautiful performance in the film ... We obviously didn't make the movie to be her final film - final Star Wars movie. Given that though, I think there are scenes that she has that are going to mean a lot to people ... there are scenes that we have with her where, now not having her around, I watch them and I think, 'I'm really thankful that we have that and that we can give that to people.'" 'Star Wars: The Last Jedi' will hit screens on December 15.



Kravitz is the global ambassador for Yves Saint Laurent Beaute

Zoe Kravitz has been announced as the global ambassador for Yves Saint Laurent Beaute. The 28-year-old actress has been handpicked to represent the luxury label after she joined forces with the company in May this year as the brand's muse. As part of the blonde-haired beauty's role with the prestigious fashion house she will front their upcoming campaigns, including YSL's

forthcoming Tatouage Couture collection later this summer. And Zoe - who is the daughter of musician Lenny Kravitz - has admitted she has "always" been a huge fan of Yves Saint Laurent because they combine "the chicest of styles with a raw edge". Speaking about the cosmetics company, she said: "YSL Beaute has always been one of my favorite brands. Their ability to combine the chicest of styles with a raw edge has always been to me one of the best ways to express yourself through fashion and beauty." And Zoe is "very excited" to be collaborating with the "legendary and timeless company". She said: "I'm very excited to work with this legendary and timeless company." The 'Big Little Lies' is also a huge supporter of YSL Beaute because nothing is "forced [and] nothing is fake", as all of their products are "bold". She continued: "Nothing is forced, nothing is fake but everything is bold, strong and unafraid." However, the star has revealed she has had beauty blunders in the past, which has seen stylists apply "a bunch of light-coloured make-up" to her face, which do not match her complexion. She previously said: "I've had [make-up artists] not even bring the right colors for me and then try to put it on. It's OK if you haven't done a lot of darker skin-but people not wanting to respect and acknowledge that there is something different going on here? "And you can't just put a bunch of light-coloured makeup or a bunch of products that work for straight hair [on me]."



MUSIC & MOVIES

Musicians flee Libya for 'right to rap'

A group of rappers who say they had to flee Libya for their art were on their way to Italy yesterday after being rescued by a charity boat. The self-described musicians were among a group of 17 mostly Libyan men picked up by the Aquarius, a vessel operated by French NGO SOS Mediterranee and international humanitarian organization Doctors without Borders (MSF), from a fishing boat in distress in waters off the Libyan coast. "I'm (a) rapper, I do rap music, so I got to get out of Libya," one of the men, Youssef, told AFP. "I have to get out of Libya for freedom of speech, you know about that. Libya is a dangerous zone right now for arts..."

Youssef, from the country's second city Benghazi, said he had paid a trafficker he met in a coffee shop in the capital Tripoli to get on the boat. "So I was talking and someone after I finished talking got me to the side and said 'If you are looking for a trip I can get you one, but it will be expensive.' I asked him how much expensive and he said 'like 1,500 (dollars)'. I said I can pay 1,000, you know, stuff like this. So he got my number and he said I will see and come back to you. The next day he called me and said: 'All right someone will come and pick the money up.'"

MSF volunteer Seraina Eldada said the rescued men had been severely dehydrated and exhausted when the Aquarius

reached their stricken boat. "They were very weak, some of them barely conscious," she said. "But they are all getting stronger now and starting to recover, drinking water. 'Right now we are just trying to figure out what their stories are.' The rescued men were to be taken to an Italian port although first the Aquarius was taking part in another rescue operation, this time for a fishing boat reported to have some 300 people on board.

More than 95,000 migrants have been rescued in the Mediterranean and taken to Italy since the start of the year, just over a third of them on privately-funded NGO boats. The organizations say they are saving lives but their operations have been criticized for allegedly encouraging migrants to risk a journey that has claimed at least 2,385 lives so far in 2017. — AFP

Migrants from Libya sleep on deck of the Aquarius rescue ship run by NGO SOS Mediterranee and Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) after their rescue, in the Mediterranean Sea, 20 nautical miles from the Libyan coast, yesterday. — AFP



Creators behind 'Game of Thrones' stir race controversy with 'Confederate'

What if the South had won the American Civil War? That is the premise behind a newly announced show on cable network HBO that has sparked a heated backlash in a country still grappling with the legacy of slavery and its generational impacts on African Americans. Unveiled in mid-July, "Confederate" will be led by "Game of Thrones" creators David Benioff and D.B. Weiss, no strangers to criticism over the overwhelmingly white cast in their epic fantasy series that is currently in its seventh season. It takes place in a world where Southern states successfully seceded during the Civil War (1861-65) and slavery continues to be practiced, as the Confederate States of America gears up for a fresh war against the Union.

Except it's progressives who are up in arms. "The same guys who have gratuitous depictions of rape & no significant POC characters are going to handle the enslavement of Blacks w/ nuance," tweeted activist April Reign, who created the #OscarsSoWhite hashtag to protest the lack of diversity among the 2016 Oscar nominees. Weiss and Benioff are working with husband-and-wife executive producers Malcolm Spellman and Nichelle Tramble Spellman (known for "Empire" and "The Good Wife," respectively), who are themselves black and have vigorously defended the project that is set to air in 2018 or 2019. That hasn't deterred a social media campaign aimed at canceling the show, with the hashtag #NoConfederate becoming the top trend on Twitter during Sunday night's broadcast of the third episode of "Game of Thrones."

White fantasies?

Questioned by a Twitter user on whether he could see himself taking a role in the series, black actor Don Cheadle replied: "Would depend on the part. As always. But I'm beyond skeptical about the project in

general." Stephane Dunn, a professor at Morehouse College, questioned the premise "given the fact that we still live in a society that still has a white supremacist orientation rooted in itself. 'And there's the other question: is it going to be so revisionist that we don't recognize the American slavery. There might be a sort of... glamorization unintentionally or not," she added.

Asked to comment on the controversy, HBO emailed a statement to AFP that indicated they had no intention of canceling the show. "We have great respect for the dialogue and concern being expressed around 'Confederate,'" the channel said. "We have faith that Nichelle, Dan, David and Malcolm will approach the subject with care and sensitivity. The project is currently in its infancy so we hope that people will reserve judgment until there is something to see." Alternate history series have enjoyed considerable critical success in recent years, including most notably Hulu's "The Handmaid's Tale" but also "The Man in the High Castle" on Amazon and the BBC's "SS-GB."

The last two, which imagined the Nazi occupations of the United States and Great Britain respectively, did not provoke widespread outrage among Jews. For critics of "Confederate," the question of who gets to tell the story—both in front of the camera and behind it—is just as important as the televised portrayal of slavery. Similar controversy arose around the movie "Detroit," which evokes the city's riots in 1967 and the repression that targeted the black community, as the director and the entire production team are white. Artist and activist Bree Newsome said the opposition to the show "is not simply issue of history, it's also issue of the fantasy genre being largely limited to the fantasies of white men." — AFP

Aussie lawn bowlers channel Beyonce to save green

A Beyonce-inspired video of three elderly Australian lawn bowlers strutting their stuff in a campaign to save their local green has gone viral with more than one million Facebook views in just a few days. The short film posted Saturday features Terry Foster, 82, Janine Hall, 82, and Wyn Hewett, 72, performing their rendition of Beyonce's hit 'Single Ladies', with the lyrics substituted for demands of their local council. "We love our club, we've had enough," they sing, dressed in their blue and white bowling outfits. "We're doing our bowling thing. We wanna keep fit and that is it. Please don't take it from me."

The site of the Chadstone Bowls Club in suburban Melbourne has been slated for a new multi-million-dollar indoor community stadium. But the club's 600 members, most of them elderly, have told the council to keep their hands off the 60-year-old facility. Denise Wallish, the video's producer and member of the Save Chaddy Bowls committee, said they had been overwhelmed by the attention, much of it from overseas, which will bolster their cause when they meet the council next week. "To say we are amazed would be an understatement," she told AFP adding that imitating the US superstar was a logical choice. "We love Beyonce!" she said. "She is sassy and anyone who can dance in those high heels is a legend." — AFP



This frame grab taken from undated handout video shows (from left to right) Terry Foster, 82, Janine Hall, 82, and Wyn Hewett, 72, performing their rendition of Beyonce's hit 'Single Ladies' at the Chadstone Bowls Club in suburban Melbourne. — AFP



File photo shows Kanye West speaks at the MTV Video Music Awards in New York. — AP

KANYE WEST SUES INSURER FOR \$10 MILLION OVER CANCELED TOUR

Kanye West filed a lawsuit Tuesday against Lloyd's for \$10 million, alleging the insurer is refusing to pay claims stemming from the cancellation of his tour following a reported mental breakdown. The 40-year-old rap superstar filed a claim with Lloyd's shortly after cutting short the second leg of his "Saint Pablo Tour" in November and checking himself into a Los Angeles clinic, according to the suit, lodged in Los Angeles federal court.

West says he and his company Very Good Touring Inc. still haven't been paid and that the insurance giant is intentionally stalling. "Nor have they provided anything approaching a coherent explanation about why they have not paid... implying that Kanye's use of marijuana may provide them with a basis to deny the claim and retain the hundreds of thousands of dollars in insurance premiums paid by Very Good," the complaint reads. The "Saint Pablo Tour" was set to run through December 31 before the last 21 shows were shelved, but West had taken out insurance in case cancellations were needed, the lawsuit states.

"The stalling is emblematic of a broader modus operandi of the insurers of never-end-

ing post-claim underwriting where the insurers hunt for some contrived excuse not to pay," the suit alleges. West stunned an audience in California in November last year with a lengthy speech in which he said he did not vote but would have backed then President-elect Donald Trump as he appreciated the businessman's outspokenness.

West was soon hospitalized after a series of erratic comments on stage, including alleging that his sometime collaborator Jay Z was sending hitmen to kill him and lashing out at Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg for not paying the rapper's \$53 million in debts.

The celebrity news website TMZ said West's doctor feared he had suffered a mental breakdown. The rapper ended up meeting Trump in December, marking the artist's first appearance since his breakdown, with his celebrity wife Kim Kardashian absent. West, a rare artist and even rarer African American celebrity to voice support for Trump, said he went to discuss issues of concern to minorities with the populist leader. — AFP

'To see Stalin': Latest WWII film aims to stir up Russians

A group of Soviet mechanics slog through a muddy forest on a mission that would eventually help change the course of World War II: reaching dictator Joseph Stalin. Among them is an engineer who has to convince the Kremlin leader that a new tank he has designed can transform the Soviet Union's outdated forces a year ahead of the invasion by Nazi Germany. Based on a little-known chapter of Soviet history from 1940 -- this is the scenario for a new film being shot outside Moscow with state funding.

The movie—currently with the working title "To See Stalin"—is the latest in a string of government-backed productions about inspiring tales from World War II aimed at bolstering patriotic fervor that the Kremlin can then tap. But critics argue that they tend to whitewash the crimes of the Soviet leadership while downplaying the tragedies of the war—and also play fast and loose with the truth. "The idea came from the culture ministry, which has been actively pushing to retell the stories of the heroes from our country's past," 32-year-old director Kim Druzhinin told AFP as he oversaw the shoot.

'Stalin is the culmination'

Druzhinin's latest project centers on the epic tale of Mikhail Koshkin, who in the spring of 1940 drove his prototype tank more than 2,000 kilometers (1,250 miles) across the Soviet Union to pitch the design to Stalin. The journey would eventually cost Koshkin his life, as he died from pneumonia contracted along the route. But his legendary T-34 tank went into mass production and eventually helped Moscow push back Nazi forces after their devastating invasion of the USSR in 1941. "It is tragic story about a designer who got his tank into production at the cost of his own life," said Druzhinin.

The film—which the director says he wants to shoot "in the style of a Soviet adventure movie"—has raised some eyebrows over what is expected to be a positive portrayal of supreme Stalin in a fleeting appearance at the end of the film. Under the conservative rule of President Vladimir Putin Russian authorities have sought to downplay the horrors of Stalin's rule during which millions were executed or sent to labor camps. Instead, officials highlight his role in winning the war against Germany, maintaining the conflict that claimed an estimated 22 million Soviet lives more than 70 years ago as a

sacrosanct rallying point for society today. "Stalin is the culmination of the film, the destination, the reward you must receive like at the end of a fairytale," Druzhinin said.

Propaganda myth

The film received the bulk of its financing — 60 million rubles (\$1 million, 860,000 euros) — from the Russian culture ministry. Those involved in the production have no doubt over its aim. "When I read the script and saw that it was ordered by the culture ministry I immediately understood that it was aimed at stirring up patriotism," said actor Dmitry Podnozov, who plays one of Koshkin's crew.

The authorities have "fear of young people taking to the streets to protest", Podnozov said, so are looking to generate nationalist pride to curb any anti-Kremlin sentiment. For director Druzhinin this is not a first foray into making controversial state-sponsored films on sticky historical subjects. Last year his WWII action movie called "Panfilov's 28" came out about the legendary resistance of a group of Soviet soldiers who sacrificed their lives destroying 18 German tanks advancing on Moscow in 1941.

Despite a poor response from the critics, the film drew support from the highest levels of the Kremlin—with Putin sitting down to watch it alongside President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan. But, while the tale of heroism had served to inspire generations of Soviet and Russian citizens, there was one major catch. It appears not to have been true. Documents declassified by Russia's state archive in 2015 showed that the famed incident was in fact invented by a Soviet journalist before becoming part of the Soviet war propaganda.

The revelations sparked a scandal and pitched the head of the archive Sergei Mironenko into a conflict with culture minister Vladimir Medinsky. Mironenko later left his post. And when Druzhinin's version of the story hit the big screen, Medinsky lashed out against those who questioned its worth. "My most profound conviction is that even if this story was invented from the beginning, even if Panfilov's troops did not exist, even if nothing happened—this is a sacred legend that cannot be touched," Medinsky told Russian news wire Interfax. "People who do this are of course scum." — AFP



A film crew shooting a scene of the movie - currently with the working title "To See Stalin" - in a forest near Voskresensk, outside Moscow. — AFP photos



Russian director Kim Druzhinin (right) speaking with actors during the shooting of a scene of his movie - currently with the working title "To See Stalin" - in a forest near Voskresensk, outside Moscow.



An actor taking pictures in the break during the shooting of a scene of the movie - currently with the working title "To See Stalin" - in a forest near Voskresensk.

Berlin activists turn Nazi hate graffiti into art

'We chose sweet, cheeky images, most of them drawn by kids'

A ragtag band of Berlin street artists is taking aim at an urban scourge of neo-Nazi graffiti, using "love and humor" to turn swastikas into colorful symbols of inclusiveness. As authorities report a sharp rise in far-right activity in Germany, including the rampant spread of anti-migrant propaganda, the #PaintBack initiative in Berlin is fighting back. "We as street artists wanted to send the message: you're abusing graffiti," said the club's founder Ibo Omari.

"Graffiti's got nothing to do with racism—it's about bright colors and diverse backgrounds," Omari, 37, owns a paint shop catering to street artists, and runs "The Cultural Heirs," an organization bringing together youth from German and immigrant backgrounds for activities from breakdancing and street art to hip-hop DJing and skateboarding. "It's a culture that shaped us in a positive way and gives young people a chance to express themselves creatively so they don't end up on the street," he said.

'Beautify' the swastika

At the headquarters, in a room plastered with classic rap album covers, the teen members practice turning Nazi swastikas, used by the far right to whip up support and intimidate minorities, into new designs. An owl, a mosquito, a rabbit with its tongue sticking out, a Rubik's cube, two men kissing, a cat in a window—the inspiration for transforming the sharp-edged symbol seems endless. "It's not hard to come up with ideas," 17-year-old Klemens Reichelt said. "I like it because I think swastikas don't belong in Berlin—it's a city open to the world and I want to defend that."

Omari and a half dozen adult volunteers use the kids' motifs to "beautify" the swastika tags when they're spotted in the neighborhood. The project began when a local resident entered Omari's shop looking for paint cans. "He didn't look like a graffiti artist, so I asked him why he wanted them and he said



Picture shows a graffiti created from a swastika symbol by artist Ibo Omari resembling a Rubik's Cube in Berlin. — AFP photos

he needed them to cover up a swastika that had been sprayed on a children's playground," Omari said. "We were pretty shocked that someone had done that, especially here in Schoeneberg," a western district of Berlin which is home to middle-class Germans, Turkish and Arab families, and a lively, century-old gay scene.

The appearance of the symbol of hate proved not to be a one-off, however, and swastikas started turning up more and more in parks, in apartment buildings—apparently fuelled by the influx of more than one million asylum seekers after Chancellor Angela Merkel opened the borders in 2015. The domestic intelligence agency this month reported a seven-percent rise in politically motivated crimes in 2016, one-third of which were classified as "propaganda offences".

'Sweet, cheeky images'

Omari, whose own parents fled Lebanon as refugees when they were expecting him, said he turned those feelings of shock and powerlessness into

action with the help of local youth who wanted to leave their own mark on the German capital. "The last swastikas I had seen were more than 20 years ago so this was a new, unpleasant development," he said. "Unfortunately the zeitgeist changed in the last few years and we have to explain things to young people that actually weren't that long ago," referring to the facts of the Nazi era and the Holocaust in the 1930s-40s. "We thought long and hard about how to react to such ugly sentiments and then we said: we'll answer with humor and love," he said.

"We chose sweet, cheeky images, most of them drawn by kids so even beginners who aren't graffiti artists could reproduce them." Neighbors now report the swastikas they find to the club. "It doesn't happen that often but once is too many," he said, estimating that the group has transformed about 20 since May 2016. It is against the law in Germany to display swastikas and other Nazi-era symbols, but those who take matters into their own hands can also run afoul of



Picture shows street artist Ibo Omari over painting a swastika in Berlin.



Bicyclists ride on the Island Line Trail bike path on an abandoned railroad causeway from the Vermont mainland to the Lake Champlain islands.



Bicyclists rest near a small bridge on the Island Line Trail bike path on an abandoned railroad causeway between the Vermont mainland and the Lake Champlain islands.

Biking across Lake Champlain on an old rail causeway

Abandoned rail lines have been converted into recreation paths all over the United States. But the Island Line Trail in Vermont is unusual: It includes a causeway that runs across the open waters of Lake Champlain, from the Vermont mainland to the island community of South Hero. And that causeway includes a gap to allow boats through. So how do bikers and others get across the 200-foot (61-meter) gap, known as the cut? An in-season ferry takes them from one side to the other. It's been more than a half-century since trains used the narrow causeway built on marble and granite blocks around the turn of the 20th century. A rotating bridge once connected the causeway's two sections, with the bridge opening up for the boats that now sail through the gap, but the bridge is long gone.



An image of a fish is carved into a piece of marble used to make a now-abandoned railroad causeway between the Vermont mainland and the Lake Champlain islands.

The trip by ferry takes just a few minutes. The unique trail across the lake is open for walking, running and fishing, but it's mostly used by bicyclists, giving them a chance to practically pedal across the water amid the sailboats and motorboats. From one side of the cut, it's more than 3 miles (5 km) south to the mainland town of Colchester. From the other side it's just a few hundred yards to South Hero. New York's Adirondack Mountains are to the west while Vermont's Green Mountains stand to the east. On sunny summer days pleasure boats will dot the water on both sides of the causeway. "It's absolutely gorgeous," said Julie Lussier, who rode the causeway while visiting the Burlington area for a recent weekend getaway from Montreal. "It's bucolic and I think that the landscape is absolutely amazing. I will recommend the trail, for sure, to my colleagues here and in Montreal."

The only downside to their afternoon on the trail was their choice of bikes. Lussier and Eric Gauthier were riding road bikes with narrow tires meant for pavement while off-road bikes would have been better for the gravel path, they said. Despite their choice of bikes, the trail made for part of a wonderful weekend of riding and sampling beer from some of Vermont's many microbreweries. "We love the microbreweries," Gauthier said. The trail can be narrow in places and the sides steep down to the water, requiring passing bicyclists to show courtesy to one another. Anglers carry their tackle onto the rocks to cast their lines into what would otherwise be the middle of the lake.

Detouring riders

The causeway is part of the almost-14-mile (22.5 km) Island Line Trail, which starts at Burlington's Oak Ledge Park and runs north along the Lake Champlain waterfront at the edge of Burlington's vibrant downtown. A portion of the bike path in Burlington is under renovation this summer, detouring riders onto the city's North Avenue for about 2 miles (3.2 km). The entire trail is owned by the city of Burlington, the town of Colchester and, north of the cut, the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife. The non-profit group Local Motion manages the trail and owns and manages the bike ferry, coordinating to make sure people who use the trail "don't even notice it has three different ownerships," said Local Motion interim executive director Jason Van Driest.

"If you're out there riding you just want a nice experience." Riders don't have to begin their journey in downtown Burlington. There are lots of places to park and begin a ride, on both sides of the causeway. For those headed north, from South Hero and Grand Isle, or farther on to North Hero, there are lots of quiet country roads that offer peaceful riding that can be part of a loop back to the ferry.

For the ambitious cyclist, the Island Line Trail map suggests what it calls a "triple ferry loop" that includes the causeway ferry. Northbound riders could then continue north to where the vehicle-carrying Lake Champlain Transportation Inc. ferry crosses Lake Champlain between Grand Isle and Cumberland Head, New York. From there, cyclists head south along US Route 9 to Port Kent, New York, where they can catch another ferry back the Burlington waterfront. The total trip is about 40 miles (64 km) with spectacular views of the lake from both sides. — AP

Bicyclists wait to get on a special ferry across a cut in an abandoned railroad causeway between the Vermont mainland and the Lake Champlain islands. — AP photos



Bicyclists watch as boats prepare to pass through a cut in an abandoned railroad causeway from the Vermont mainland to the Lake Champlain islands.



A bicyclist collect her bicycle after taking a special ferry across a cut in an abandoned railroad causeway from the Vermont mainland to the Lake Champlain islands.



Lifestyle

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A fancy dressed woman takes part in a parade marking the start of San Salvador's patron saint's festival in honor of Divino Salvador del Mundo (Divine Savior of the World), in San Salvador. The traditional festivity runs until August 6. — AFP

Alien Trump descends on Mexico in artist's billboard

His skin is blue, his face contorted and his eyes bulge from his head, but the hair is unmistakable: that alien in the giant billboard over one of Mexico City's busiest roads is Donald Trump. In case the US president's distinctive blond swirl didn't tip you off, the artist has put an American flag in the background and framed the whole thing with Trump's campaign slogan: "Make America great again." Ironically, this extraterrestrial Trump has landed in Mexico because he could not find a home in the United States.

American artist Mitch O'Connell created the work in 2015 for a horror film festival in Chicago headlined by the 1988 cult classic "They Live." But what began as a publicity poster turned into a zeitgeisty political statement, he told AFP. "I was drawing a poster of the 'They Live' alien and the TV was on my drawing table. There was Trump, campaigning or doing something on television. And that hair is so distinctive. I'm looking at my drawing and at his hair and I said, 'That hair would look fantastic on this alien,'" he said in a phone interview from Chicago.

"They Live," a satirical sci-fi movie starring late pro wrestler "Rowdy" Roddy Piper, is the story of a

drifter who discovers a pair of sunglasses that enables him to see that Earth's ruling class is in fact made up of aliens who manipulate people via the mass media to spend money and accept the status quo. O'Connell said his 21st-century take on the film resonated at a moment when reality TV star and real-estate billionaire Trump was starting his improbable rise to the presidency. "Reality kind of just turned into this drawing. It was not meant to be political, but it just kind of evolved," he said. "People had huge reactions to Trump and they loved the movie, those two things together: America getting stranger by the week with Trump running and Trump as president."

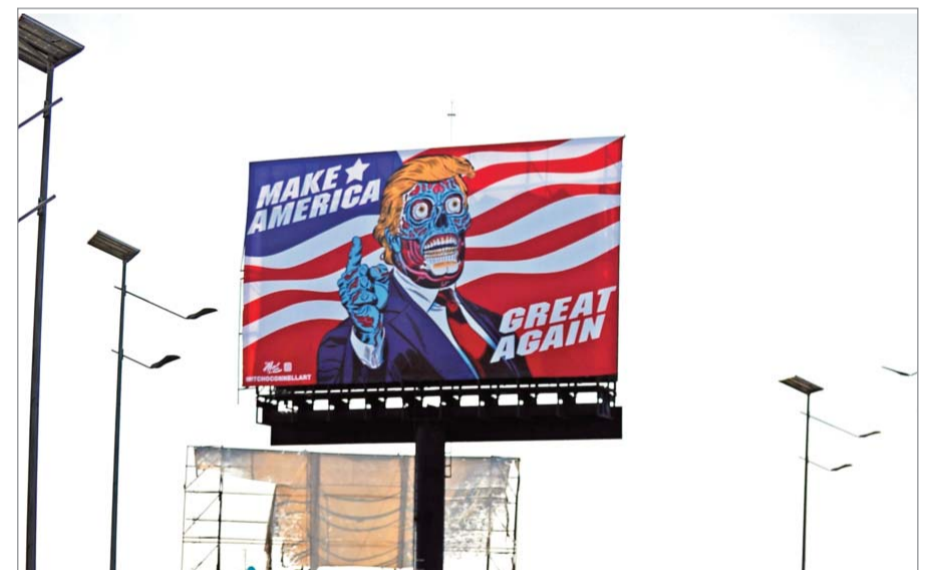
Illegal alien

O'Connell, 56, initially tried to get the work displayed on a billboard in the United States, but said he was rejected in several cities—despite raising \$30,000 online to fund the project. "Major billboard companies, I think they were actually worried about getting people protesting. There was an actual real possibility that Trump would tweet about them or bash the company," he said. A Mexico City gallery then stepped in to get the work

displayed in Mexico, the target of much vitriol from Trump. Trump kicked off his campaign in June 2015 with a tirade against Mexican immigrants, whom he referred to as drug dealers, criminals and rapists.

Anti-Mexican rhetoric was central to his campaign, with Trump vowing to deport Mexican immigrants en masse, make Mexico pay for a wall on the border and tear up the US trade agreement with Mexico and Canada. "Trump's first (campaign) speech was calling everybody from Mexico rapists and thieves and how he was going to build this majestic wall to keep them out," O'Connell said. "Mexico being the only place where I can get this billboard erected, it was a wonderful ironic twist ending to the story." In Mexico City, the billboard has met with bemused approval.

"To me, artistic expression related to Trump is a really good thing, in the sense that it has an impact on society, because this is kind of how we all feel, right?" said Carla Baeza, an employee at a telecommunications company in the capital. "I think the artist wanted to capture the essence of how Trump treats Mexicans. He doesn't respect us much," said computer programmer Julio Acuna. — AFP



A billboard by US artist Mitch O'Connell depicting US president Donald Trump is displayed, in allusion and as a tribute to John Carpenter's 1988 cult movie 'They Live', in Naucalpan de Juarez, state of Mexico. — AFP



A boy plays with bubbles during an art display titled 'Bubble Up' created by Japanese artist Shinji Ohmaki in Hong Kong yesterday. — AP

Met Museum of Art turns ancient vase over to prosecutors

An ancient vase that for years was housed in the elegant galleries of the Metropolitan Museum of Art is taking up space in a much different place - a prosecutor's office. The vase, known as a bell krater and used to hold wine, has been the subject of questions over its provenance and whether it was originally looted from Italy decades ago. A warrant issued July 24 said it "constitutes evidence, and tends to demonstrate that the crime of criminal possession of stolen property in the second degree was committed."

The museum bought the piece at an auction in 1989 for just under \$100,000. It said it had been reaching out to the Italian government's Ministry of Culture after an image of the vase was published in 2014, similar to how it had handled other issues concerning artifacts, and cooperated with the office of Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus Vance.

"When the Manhattan DA contacted the Met in recent months, we immediately took the piece off display," museum spokesman Ken Weiner said. The museum turned over the piece, which dates to 360-350 BC and has an image of the Greek god Dionysus being pulled in a cart, on July 25 and gave the dis-

trict attorney's office all related paperwork. Vance's office declined to comment.

The issue of artifacts with questionable provenances is one that has come up before in New York. In May, seven statues and vessels dating as far back as the eighth century B.C. were returned to Italian officials after coming to light at two art galleries. Vance's office said they had been looted from Italy in the 1990s and smuggled out of the country.

In December 2016, the US returned to Italy a marble statue that had been stolen from Rome in 1983 and turned in to officials in 2015. In April 2016, a stone sculpture of Buddha's footprints that had been taken from a region in Pakistan in the early 1980s was returned to that country. An antiquities dealer who pleaded guilty to criminal possession of stolen property said he had shipped it to the United States to sell at a gallery for more than \$1 million. — AP



This undated photo provided by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, shows a terracotta bell-krater dating back to 360-350 BC. — AP