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KUWAITI MEDIA DELEGATION VISITS TRAUMATIZED, TRIUMPHANT MOSUL

GROUP BRIEFED ON DESTRUCTION, RECONSTRUCTION OF HISTORIC CITY



Min 34°
Max 47°
High Tide
00:29 & 10:59
Low Tide
05:23 & 18:44

ZAIN RECORDS INCOME OF KD 82M FOR H1 2017



Zain Group Chairman Mohannad Al-Kharafi

KUWAIT: Zain Group, the leading mobile telecommunications pioneer with operations in eight markets across the Middle East and Africa, announced its consolidated financial results for the six months to 30 June, 2017. The company ended the period serving 45.2 million customers.

For the first six months of 2017, Zain Group generated consolidated revenues of KD 508 million (\$1.67 billion) down 8 percent year-on-year (Y-o-Y) in KD terms. The Group's consolidated EBITDA for the period reached KD 212 million (\$695 million), down 17 percent Y-o-Y in KD terms, reflecting an EBITDA margin of 41.7 percent. Consolidated net income remained stable at KD 82 million (\$270 million). Earnings per share for the half-year stood at 21 fils (\$0.07).

For the first six months of 2017, foreign currency translation impact, predominantly due to the 61 percent currency devaluation in Sudan from 6.4 (SDG/USD) in H1 2016 to 16.5 cost the company \$305 million in revenue, \$131 million in EBITDA and \$58 million in net income. Excluding this currency translation impact, Y-o-Y revenues and net income



Zain Vice-Chairman & Group CEO Bader Al-Kharafi

would have grown by 8 percent and 21 percent respectively for H1, 2017.

Commenting on the results, the Chairman of the Board of Directors of Zain Group, Mohannad Al-Kharafi said: "The company's performance in the first half has been satisfactory given the various operational and forex challenges we face across our footprint. It is our focus on innovation, customer service, and the driving of efficiencies that allows us to consistently deliver strong operational results and maintain our leadership position in the majority of our markets. The Board is working closely with management to continually evaluate new business and value-creating opportunities."

Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi, Zain Vice-Chairman and Group CEO commented: "The first six-months of 2017 produced some defining positive developments such as the progress being achieved through the turnaround program in Saudi Arabia and robust growth in our data monetization, Enterprise (B2B), and smart city initiatives in several key markets." (See Page 17)



MOSUL: A Kuwaiti media delegation representing chief editors of a number of Kuwait newspapers and Kuwait Journalists Association (KJA) is seen near the destroyed leaning minaret of the historic Great Mosque of Al-Nuri during a visit to this Iraqi city after its recent liberation from the grip of the so-called Islamic State group. The Kuwaiti delegation includes Editor-in-Chief of Kuwait Times Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan, Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) Deputy Director General for Editorial Affairs and Editor-in-Chief Saad Al-Ali, Editor-in-Chief of Al-Anbaa Yousef Al-Marzouq, KJA Trustee Adnan Al-Rashed and KUNA reporter in Kurdistan Mukhlis Khishnaw. — KUNA (See Page 2)

IRBIL: A Kuwaiti media delegation, representing chief editors of a number of Kuwait newspapers and Kuwait Journalists Association (KJA), visited the Iraqi city of Mosul after its recent liberation from the grip of the so-called Islamic State (IS). The delegation is among the first Gulf and Arab media groups to visit the city after its liberation, and was briefed with the destruction in Mosul, especially the Old City and archaeological sites.

Editor-in-Chief of Kuwait Times Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan voiced regret over the destruction in the city, hoping that life would return to the historic city after years of displacement. The effects of war and destruction are visible on most of Mosul's houses riddled with bullet holes, he said, adding the situation is tragic, especially in the Old City. He added that the residents of Mosul are currently working to restore

life to their city as soon as possible, stressing at the same time the need to help them, "materially and psychologically".

"No words can describe what was seen in Mosul, except for 'tragedy' on all levels," said Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) Deputy Director General for Editorial Affairs and Editor-in-Chief Saad Al-Ali.

Continued on Page 2

VENEZUELA BASE ATTACKED; ATTORNEY GENERAL SACKED

PAGE 8

WOMEN 'COLLATERAL' IN PAKISTAN JIRGA JUSTICE

PAGE 10

ISRAEL SEEKS TO SILENCE JAZEERA

MINNESOTA MOSQUE FIREBOMBED, FBI SEEKING SUSPECTS

BLOOMINGTON, Minnesota: FBI investigators are seeking suspects after an explosive device tore through part of a suburban Minneapolis mosque as people were preparing for morning prayers, damaging a room but not causing any injuries, authorities and witnesses said. The blast happened at around 5 a.m. Saturday at the Dar Al-Farooq Islamic Center in Bloomington, according to Bloomington Police Chief Jeff Potts. Windows of the imam's office were shattered, either by the blast or by an object thrown through them, the Minneapolis Star Tribune reported.

One worshipper saw a pickup truck speeding away shortly after the explosion, said Mohamed Omar, the center's executive director. He said the mosque, which primarily serves people from the area's large Somali community, occasionally receives threatening calls and emails. "We came to this country for the same reason everyone else came here: freedom to worship," Yasir Abdalrahman, a worshipper at the mosque, told the newspaper. "And that freedom is under threat. Every other American should be insulted by this."

Asad Zaman, director of the Muslim American Society of Minnesota, described the attack as a fire-bombing. Investigators will try to determine whether the incident was a hate crime and who may have been behind it, according to Richard Thornton, special agent in charge of the FBI's Minneapolis Division. Thornton said during an afternoon news conference that the explosion was caused by an "improvised explosive device" and that investigators have recovered components of the device to figure out how it was put together.

But he didn't take questions and declined to provide details about the device, citing the ongoing investigation, which is being led by the FBI.

Continued on Page 11

JERUSALEM: Israel said yesterday it planned to close the offices of Al-Jazeera in the state, after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu accused the Arab satellite news broadcaster of incitement. Netanyahu had said on July 27 that he wanted Al-Jazeera expelled amid tensions over a sensitive Jerusalem holy site. "Al-Jazeera has become the main tool of Daesh (the Islamic State group), Hamas, Hezbollah and Iran," Communications Minister Ayoob Kara, a member of the Druze community from Netanyahu's Likud party, told a news conference.

He accused the Qatar-based broad-

caster of "inciting violence which has provoked losses among the best of our sons", referring to two Druze policemen who were killed in a July 14 attack near the Al-Aqsa mosque compound in east Jerusalem. Netanyahu tweeted his congratulations to Kara "who on my instructions took concrete steps to end Al-Jazeera's incitement" in Israel. An official at Al-Jazeera in Doha said the channel "deplores this action from a state that is called the only democratic state in the Middle East and considers what it has done is dangerous".

Continued on Page 11



JERUSALEM: Palestinian Fahamiya Shamasneh, 75, stands outside her family house in the annexed east Jerusalem neighborhood of Sheikh Jarrah on Aug 1, 2017, despite a looming deadline for evacuating the home she has lived in for more than 50 years. — AFP

PALESTINIANS FACE JERUSALEM EVICTION AFTER HALF CENTURY

JERUSALEM: Fahamiya Shamasneh, a 75-year-old Palestinian woman, refuses to pack her things despite a looming deadline for evacuating the home she has lived in for more than 50 years. Israel's supreme court has ruled the family have until Wednesday to vacate the house in annexed east Jerusalem. The family's supporters have no doubt the house will be handed over to Jewish Israelis, as part of a wider plan to boost Jewish settlements in the predominantly Palestinian neighborhood of Sheikh Jarrah.

It will be the first eviction in the neighborhood since 2009, according to Israeli anti-occupation group Peace Now, and has become part of a fight over the disputed status of Jerusalem. Israel sees the city as its undivided capital, while the Palestinians want the eastern sector as their future capital. Fahamiya, her sick husband Ayoub, 84, their son and his family have until Aug 9 to voluntarily leave the cramped, 50-sq-m basement of their building or be forced out.

"Fifty-three years here means leaving

is not easy - it is a lifetime. I was a young girl when I came to this house," said Fahamiya. "The police are threatening us. We don't know what to do," she said, adding they had not found anywhere else to go. Under a decades-old Israeli law, if Jews can prove their families lived in east Jerusalem homes before the 1948 war that led to the creation of Israel, they can demand that Israel's general custodian office release the property and return their "ownership rights".

During the war, thousands of Jews fled Jerusalem as Jordanian-led Arab forces seized the city, while hundreds of thousands of Palestinians fled from land that was later to become Israel. No such law exists for Palestinians who lost their land. Israel occupied east Jerusalem in the Six-Day War of 1967 and later annexed it in a move never recognized by the international community. Around 200,000 Israeli Jews now live in east Jerusalem in settlement homes considered illegal under international law.

Continued on Page 11



JERUSALEM: An employee of the Qatar-based news network and TV channel Al-Jazeera is seen in the channel's Jerusalem office yesterday. — AFP



MOSUL: The Kuwaiti media delegation including (from left) Editor-in-Chief of Kuwait Times Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan, Editor-in-Chief of Al-Anbaa Yousef Al-Marzouq, Kuwait Journalists Association Trustee Adnan Al-Rashed, Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) Deputy Director General for Editorial Affairs and Editor-in-Chief Saad Al-Ali and KUNA reporter in Kurdistan Mukhlis Khishnaw visit Mosul after its liberation. — KUNA



A destroyed bridge in Mosul.



Mosul's hospital.

IRAQ'S MOSUL, DEVASTATED CITY IN NEED OF RECONSTRUCTION



Al-Nuri mosque in Mosul.

IRBIL: Mosul, one of the largest cities in Iraq, is suffering the aftermath of nine months of military operations to end the control of the so-called Islamic State (IS). As the military action came to an end, it was obvious that the city has endured great damage, mainly in its western part, which represents the city's ancient history.

Having been under IS' siege for three years, Mosul has become a deserted city with its key location 'the old city' being in ruins, Iraqi MP Talib Al-Meamari, who represents Mosul at the Council of Representatives of Iraq, said yesterday. There are over 300 schools in need of reconstruction, while the overall damage in the city is about 80 percent, he noted. Iraqi MPs are signing a petition to announce Mosul as a "disaster area," he added.

Meanwhile, spokesman of Iraq's Ministry of Planning Abduzzahra Al-

Hindawi said the government has set a 10-year plan to reconstruct Mosul, with an estimated cost of \$100 billion. His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah announced last Tuesday that Kuwait is willing to host an international conference to reconstruct liberated Iraqi cities before the end of 2017.

The city took damage in all its vital governmental bodies and buildings. Those include banks, markets, schools, universities, military headquarters and houses. Mosul's electricity and water networks, as well as main roads were also damaged by about 90 percent.

Prior to the military operation to liberate Mosul, the city was home to over two million people. Since the launch of the 'Battle of Mosul,' about 920,000 had fled, according to statistics published by Iraq's Ministry of Displacement and Migration. —KUNA



KUWAITI MEDIA DELEGATION VISITS TRAUMATIZED...

Continued from Page 1

Despite the victory over terrorism, Mosul has paid much for it and there needs time to rebuild, he said. "We congratulate the Iraqi people on the victory against terrorism on the one hand, and on the other, we regret what we saw," Ali said. The reconstruction process needs determination and hard work for decades as people of Mosul need to be rehabilitated psychologically and socially due to dispersion and destruction, he added.

The delegation's visit reflects the professionalism of

Kuwaiti media, underlined Ali, pointing out that it was an opportunity for those newspapers to deliver their views on the city to their readers, especially before the donor conference for the reconstruction of Iraq, which was announced by HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. KJA Trustee Adnan Al-Rashed told KUNA: "What we saw today in Mosul is sad and joyful at the same time, as it is a victory and the beginning of IS' end." In a similar statement, Editor-in-Chief of Al-Anbaa daily Yousef Al-Marzouq urged the people of Mosul to be patient, calling on them to take part in the reconstruction process. — KUNA



FOREIGN MINISTER RECEIVES NEW AMBASSADORS' CREDENTIALS

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received yesterday the credentials of the newly appointed Ambassador of Belgium to Kuwait. During the meeting, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled wished the Belgian ambassador best of luck, and closer cooperative relations between Kuwait and Belgium.

Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled also received the credentials of Guinea's new Ambassador to Kuwait. During the meeting, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled wished the new ambassador best of luck in his new mission and more developed relations between both friendly countries.

The meetings were attended by Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah,

Assistant Foreign Minister for Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled's office Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah, Assistant Foreign Minister for the Deputy Foreign Minister's Protocols Ambassador Dhari Al-Ajran, and several other senior officials of the Foreign Ministry.

In other news, Director of His Highness the Prime Minister's Diwan Sheikhha Etamad Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday at Bayan Palace Georgian Ambassador to Kuwait, Roland Beridze. The Georgian Ambassador handed Sheikhha Etamad a letter from Georgian Prime Minister, Giorgi Kvirikashvili, to His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah concerning bilateral relations. —KUNA



First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received the credentials of Guinea's new Ambassador to Kuwait.



KUWAIT: First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received the credentials of Belgium's Ambassador to Kuwait. —KUNA



Director of His Highness the Prime Minister's Diwan Sheikhha Etamad Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received Georgian Ambassador to Kuwait Roland Beridze.

OOREDOO PARTICIPATES IN SUMMER TRAINING PROGRAM IN COLLABORATION WITH MGRP

KUWAIT: Ooredoo, Kuwait's fastest network, proudly received an award from the Manpower and Government Restructuring Program (MGRP) on the in a special awarding ceremony last week to conclude the summer training program, which was organized by the MGRP in collaboration with a number of private sector entities.



Omar Al-Bassam

Ooredoo is participating in this program for the fifth consecutive year, reiterating its commitment as a private sector organization to the society, by taking an active role in training youth and providing them with the necessary tools to embark on their career journey. Commenting on this, Ooredoo Kuwait's Chief Human Resources and Administrative Services Officer Omar Al-Bassam noted that Ooredoo's involvement stems from its deep-rooted values of caring, connecting, and challenging.

He added in a statement, "We aspire to

have a proactive role that leaves a big impact on society, especially with the youth segment which is one of the biggest and most important segments. We believe in empowering youth - that is, in fact, one of our core values at Ooredoo, and we believe that giving them appropriate training before they begin their career can have a very positive impact on their future and in turn the future of our country.

We're also very proud to be giving students a very constructive and useful outlet for their talents and aspirations, especially during the summer."

Students were given an orientation session followed by training in different departments across the organization over the period of several weeks. The training period included one-on-one training with Ooredoo Kuwait employees from different departments, in order to give trainees a clear understanding of the day-to-day business.



The Manpower and Government Restructuring Program honors Ooredoo.



KUWAIT: United States Ambassador to Kuwait Lawrence Silverman and Mrs Silverman enjoy the fish market's shrimp auction on Saturday. —Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

SUMMER CAMPS AN OPTION FOR CHILDREN DURING SCHOOL BREAK

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: The summer heat is raging in Kuwait and many people have left for a break abroad. For those who cannot do so for one reason or the other, many schools and institutions are holding summer activities for children. Kids and teens can participate and make their summer break productive by enrolling in these camps. The charges per child range from as low as KD 25 to as much as KD 1,000.

Religious institutions sometimes organize summer activities

free of charge, like the summer camp for children organized recently by the National Evangelical Church of Kuwait. This annual event was held over six days for the price of just the uniforms and the transportation fee.

The Little Gym offers summer camps with a flexible schedule, where participants can choose the days they want. The camps run from June till early September, with sessions from 9 am to noon and 4 pm to 7 pm. Every three-hour session has one hour in the gym, one hour in the swimming pool and one in the classroom.

Snacks are provided. Children aged 1 1/2 years to 12 years are put into age-appropriate groups.

Kids Play Group in Farwaniya accepts enrollees in age groups of 4-7, 8-12 and 13-16 years. A variety of summer activities have been planned for each age group including arts and crafts, painting, indoor games, karate, swimming, excursions and much more.

"We organize this summer camp every year. The objective is to provide valuable activities for kids during their summer holidays. It's very difficult to be outdoors with the kind of weather we have in Kuwait.

We feel that summer camps are a great avenue for kids to have fun, learn and at the same time keep themselves busy and productive," said Farhana, the summer camp director.

Kids and teens alike are encouraged to experience the activities mostly held at an indoor location. "We carefully plan various activities to cater to the needs of children. We want it to be pleasurable for kids, yet dynamic, and can help stimulate their young minds to let them learn various concepts without feeling they are in a school studying in a class," she said.

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In Brief

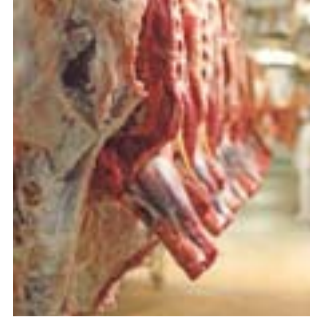
30 SCHOOLS

RIYADH: The 'Kuwait by Your Side' campaign yesterday launched a project for the renovation and furnishing of 30 schools in Ad Dali' Governorate in southwestern Yemen. The Governorate's Undersecretary Nabil Al-Afif said that the renovation project would help the education process to stabilize in Ad Dali'. Afif added that the province is in a dire need of the aid offered by the State of Kuwait after the huge devastation of the infrastructure there due to war. — KUNA



SACRIFICIAL MEAT CAMPAIGN

AMMAN: Kuwait's International Islamic Charitable Organization (IICO) launched on Saturday its annual campaign to provide sacrificial meat to the needy in troubled nations. The 'your sacrifice is good for mankind' campaign aims at helping Muslim refugees and the poor in scores of countries under extraordinary conditions such as Syria, Palestine, Yemen and Somalia, said Dr Abdullah Al-Maatouq, the IICO Chairman in a statement. — KUNA



US DOLLAR RATE STABLE AT KD 0.301

KUWAIT: The rate of the US Dollar remained stable at KD 0.301, while the Euro went down to KD 0.355, said the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) yesterday. The rate of the Sterling Pound also went down to KD 0.393, while the Swiss Franc was at KD 0.310. The Japanese Yen remained unchanged at KD 0.002. — KUNA



Photo

of the day



KUWAIT: Kuwait City's skyline is seen during a hot summer day. — KUNA

KUWAIT 2035 VISION STRESSES IMPORTANCE OF DEVELOPING TOURISM



Kuwait Towers.

KUWAIT: Kuwait's 2035 vision stresses the importance of developing tourism and its role in supporting Kuwait's economy by creating continuous employment opportunities in the private sector. In this context, Kuwait has built many modern tourist attractions and developed several facilities through the state's Touristic Enterprises Company, including Al-Khairan resort and Kuwait Towers. The Kuwaiti private sector also contributed, mainly through the building of modern shopping malls such as The Avenues, 360 Mall, Al-Muhallab, as well as the Sahara Golf resort. — KUNA



The Sahara Golf resort.



The Avenues Mall.



The Kuwait Maritime Museum.



A picture taken from inside a museum in Al-Shaheed Park.



Al-Khairan resort.



Restaurants and cafes along the coast of Kuwait.

Legalese

TECH START-UPS IN KUWAIT

By Attorney Fajer Ahmed

Most of you have probably heard the great success story of Talabat, and how a group of Kuwaiti students in Egypt decided to get together and start one of the biggest online platforms for restaurants in the region. They then sold Talabat for KD 80,000, and it was resold again after five years for KD 50 million. We also saw Carriage successfully emerge from Kuwait and compete with Talabat, which was also sold to a German VC firm for an estimated \$100-200 million.

We have seen other apps in Kuwait that have the potential to be as successful, like Yallowain, also from the food and beverage industry. Yallowain is an app that has features such as locating a restaurant near you, sharing menus and favorite dishes with friends, and contacting restaurants to pick up food or to book tables. Masbagti is a laundry app that allows you to manage your laundry, with pickup and drop off services.

I am really proud of this young generation that is extremely creative with establishing businesses, and I am really proud to have many tech start-up clients.

Legal services

Question: I would like to establish a tech start-up, and I would like to know what legal services would a tech start-up usually require?

Fajer: I get this question a lot, especially since I deal with tech startups, but there is no straight answer. It depends on what your requirements are. Some startups require lawyers on retainer, while others only need terms and conditions drafted, along with shareholder/partnership agreements. Some tech startups on the other hand would like to register their application as an offshore company, or register intellectual property rights locally, regionally, or worldwide. It is always important to budget legal fees for any business model, so I suggest you get an initial consultation from a lawyer as well as a quote or proposal with fees suggested.

Home business license

Questions: Can we run an app with a home business license?

Fajer: I would think so, yes. Home business licenses were supposed to launch in August, but are not yet available to the public when I checked on Thursday at the Kuwait Business Center (a one-stop business center at Ishbelia Co-op that I highly recommend for SMEs). Once I have more information, I will share it with you.

Intellectual property

Question: Can I get intellectual property rights for my source code?

Fajer: Although you can register applications through the Kuwait National Library, if you would like to run a business with your application, I suggest you register your application internationally and locally.

Question: How long do I need to register my app?

Fajer: Although this is not a legal question, Google/Android needs one day for approval, while the Apple Store needs two weeks usually.

Should you have any questions or concerns, or you require a consultation, please email me at ask@fajerthelawyer.com

DOCTOR USES NEW TECHNIQUE TO REPAIR PATIENT'S DAMAGED VERTEBRA



By Abdullatif Al-Sharaa

KUWAIT: A Kuwaiti doctor performed a rare procedure on an elderly patient who suffered a compound fracture in the third lumbar vertebra and a compressed fracture in the second vertebra. Dr Tareq Sinan, consultant in intervention radiology and a professor at Kuwait University's College of Medicine, had ordered the patient to be transferred to a private hospital a week after doctors gave up on finding a

remedy for his case. Once he reached the hospital, Dr Sinan performed the procedure, which is the first of its kind in Kuwait, and in which he treated the fractures using bone cement.

In order to keep the cement from leaking, Dr Sinan placed little amounts of cement inside a balloon, then inflated the balloon to create a protective wall of cement using the 'egg shell technique.'

After that, he injected the cement inside the wall, which eventually helped repair the verte-

bra's without causing any leakage.

The patient was able to walk two hours after the operation, and pain was significantly reduced. He was also able to walk under his own power within 24 hours after being bed-ridden for a week.

The technique of repairing vertebra using cement without surgery is new in Kuwait. The procedure is done without surgical intervention, is fast and safe, and does not require the patient to stay in hospital for long.



Dr Tareq Sinan



KUWAIT: Acting Undersecretary Meshaal Al-Sebei visits Kuwait International Airport. — KUNA

OFFICIAL LAUDS COOPERATION TO BOOST VOLUNTARY WORK

KUWAIT: Cooperation between the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs and the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has seen young Kuwaitis doing distinctive jobs at the DGCA's Operations Department, an official has said.

The two sides have been cooperating for boosting voluntary work for the Kuwaiti youth during the summer vacation, especially at the Kuwait International Airport, the ministry's Acting Undersecretary Meshaal Al-Sebei added in a press statement on Saturday. This is a part of the ministry's

strategy, namely broadening the circle of voluntary work through partnerships with other governmental and non-governmental bodies, Sebei noted.

During a tour at the airport, Sebei and officials from the Operations Department, and the ministry's voluntary work section, were acquainted with how the volunteers were effectively organizing work and assisting passengers. Working together, the ministry and the DGCA are promoting and consolidating the "volunteering culture" for the Kuwaiti youth to make the best use of their free time, and to

gain new skills and experience, as well as serving the nation, he noted. The volunteers offer a bright image of the Kuwaiti youth who love their dear country, he said.

Meanwhile, Acting Director of the DGCA Operations Department Abdulrazaq Burabel, lauded the cooperation with the ministry for realizing the goals of strategic partnership for the good of the nation. He said that the volunteers are working two shifts, commending their efforts and the fact that they lavish part of their time for their country. — KUNA

CO-OP RESPONDS TO 'MOUSE' VIDEO

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: In response to a video clip that went viral on social media showing a mouse in a supermarket, Abdullah Al-Mubarak Co-operative Society's Chairman Affas Al-Hajiri said that an emergency meeting was held where several measures were taken, including referring employees in the vegetables and fruits department to the relevant authorities for questioning. Other measures taken include revoking a contract signed with a rodents control company, and removing all products from shelves to safeguard consumers' health. Hajiri said the board of directors has reservations towards the authenticity of the video clip.

Legal representatives

Separately, head of the legal and financial committee at the Municipal Council Ali Al-Mousa rejected the issuance of citations against restaurants and cafes in the name of legal representatives. He said many chairmen and owners of restaurant and cafes are banned from traveling and received jail sentences due to municipal misdemeanors, although the violations in question were committed by workers.

KUWAIT REMOVED DIPLOMAT FROM NEW ZEALAND FOLLOWING ALLEGED ASSAULT: REPORT

WELLINGTON: Kuwait withdrew one of its diplomats from New Zealand following an allegation of assault, several media outlets in New Zealand reported. The envoy was removed after the Middle Eastern country declined to waive diplomatic immunity, NZ Herald reported yesterday.

The police said they were called to a central Wellington address in the early morning of November 18, 2015. "This involved an allegation of assault by a diplomat from the Embassy of the State of Kuwait."

But the police investigation halted when a request on their behalf last year by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade for Kuwait to waive diplomatic immunity was rejected. As a result, the Ministry asked Kuwait to withdraw the diplomat. The Ministry would not name the diplomat. "The process of diplomatic immunity is set out in long-established international law under the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations 1963," the Ministry said.

"New Zealand is explicitly clear with diplomatic missions that we expect them to act in accordance with New Zealand laws, and that we will request immunity be waived if allegations of a serious crime are made."

DOCUMENT SAYS KUWAIT LACKS TAX SYSTEM TO HELP FACE CHALLENGES

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: A document issued by the Finance Ministry revealed that Kuwait does not enjoy a modern taxing system that enables it to face challenges and achieve the desired goals in the development plan. It insisted on making tangible changes in the growth rates in the general revenues' structure and increase non-oil revenues, besides upgrading the systems that link between state departments so they can work to boost integration. Furthermore, the document said that the ministry completed a proposed tender in regards to the development of systems and tax management, adding that the tender is being presented to concerned authorities.

Infrastructure renovation

Assistant Undersecretary for Sanitary Engineering Sector at the Ministry of Public Works (MPW) Abdelmohsen Al-Enezi said that the project of renovating infrastructures in Rigga and Hadiya has been completed. He added that the project began in May 2015 and included improving the sewer and rain water drainage networks, and increasing their capacity to up to 400 cubic meters of triple-treated water. A coordination was established with the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR) to use the treated water in Abdaly and natural reserves.

Crime

Report

DRUG DEALER HOLDS FAMILY HOSTAGE

KUWAIT: A bedoon beat his parents and young sisters while under the influence of drugs. He locked them up in their Sulaibiya house and slashed his father with an axe, then stabbed himself before the arrival of policemen, who controlled him with difficulty. A security source said preliminary investigations revealed the suspect is unemployed, and a police flasher was found in his car. His father said he was active in peddling drugs, and when his family attempted to stop him, he became angry and acted the way he did. Both father and son were sent to the hospital for treatment.

Child drowns

A five-year-old girl drowned when she was playing near a pool, and her family's attempts to resuscitate her failed. A source said a call was received about the incident in the chalets area, and police and paramedics rushed to the scene. Paramedics did their best to revive the victim, to no avail. Forensics men went to the scene and sent the body to the coroner.

Theft

A citizen went to Rumaithiya polyclinic to take an insulin shot, and when he returned to his car five minutes later, he found it was broken into with KD 90 missing from his wallet, which the thief left behind. The victim reported the incident to Rumaithiya police, who referred the case to detectives.

Fight

Paramedics responded to a call about a fight in Khairan between two groups of youth and rushed three of them to Adan Hospital for treatment of injuries they received, as sharp objects were used. Ahmadi police arrested several of those involved and are looking for the rest.

Abducting

An Ethiopian domestic helper disappeared from her sponsor's home after stealing her jewelry and watches, in addition to KD 900, according to a complaint filed at Mubarak Al-Kabeer police station. Detectives are searching to arrest her. Separately, a citizen in Salam said his domestic helper went missing and was not answering his calls. He then discovered that KD 2,000 was gone too, and accused the helper of stealing it. In a similar case, an Egyptian accused her Ethiopian domestic helper of stealing KD 180 before disappearing. She filed a complaint at Jabriya police station. — Translated from the Arabic press



Firefighters tackle a blaze in a vehicle on King Fahad Road.

DRUG DEALER ARRESTED WITH 4 KG OF SHABU

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Drug Control General Department (DCGD) officers arrested a man with possession of four kilograms of shabu (methamphetamine), an unidentified liquid material and a sensitive scale. The Arab man was arrested inside his house, where he confessed to preparing the shabu for sale.

Separately, Fahaheel firemen tackled a blaze that engulfed a vehicle on King Fahad Road near Sabahiya. No injuries were reported in the incident. Meanwhile, an investigation was opened to determine the cause of the fire.



Drugs, an unidentified liquid material and a sensitive scale found inside the house of a drug dealer who was arrested yesterday.



Gandhi brand no longer sells in Indian politics

TUNISIAN FISHERMEN VOW TO BLOCK 'RACIST' ANTI-MIGRANT SHIP

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PYONGYANG: In a photo taken on July 21, 2017 pedestrians and vehicles pass before the portraits of late North Korean leaders Kim Il-Sung (left) and Kim Jong-Il (right). — AFP

US PRESSURES N KOREA AFTER SANCTIONS VOTE
SANCTIONS COULD COST PYONGYANG \$1 BILLION A YEAR

MANILA: The United States and China piled pressure on North Korea yesterday to abandon its nuclear missile program after the UN Security Council approved tough sanctions which could cost Pyongyang \$1 billion a year. One day after Council members voted unanimously for a partial ban on exports aimed at slashing Pyongyang's foreign revenue by a third, top diplomats from the key powers in the dispute met in Manila.

US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said he was encouraged by the vote, but officials warned that Washington would closely watch China-North Korea's biggest trade partner to ensure sanctions are enforced. China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi met his North Korean counterpart Ri Hong-Do before a major regional security forum being hosted by the 10-nation Association of Southeast Asian Nations. He urged the North to halt its nuclear and ballistic missile tests.

"It will help the DPRK to make the right

and smart decision," Wang told reporters, speaking through a translator, after talks with Ri-referring to the sanctions and to Ri's presence in Manila. Pyongyang's top envoy has so far avoided the media in Manila. But in a characteristically fiery editorial before the latest sanctions were approved, the North's ruling party newspaper Rodong Sinmun warned against US aggression.

"The day the US dares tease our nation with a nuclear rod and sanctions, the mainland US will be catapulted into an unimaginable sea of fire," it said. Tillerson also met Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and was to see Wang later on Sunday, seeking to intensify Kim Jong-Un's diplomatic isolation and reduce the risk of renewed conflict. "It was a good outcome," Tillerson said of the UN vote, before a meeting with South Korean Foreign Minister Kang Kyung-Wha.

Senior US envoy Susan Thornton said Washington was "still going to be watchful"

on the implementation of sanctions, cautioning that previous votes had been followed by China "slipping back". But she added China's support for the UN resolution "shows that they realize that this is a huge problem that they need to take on".

'Military option'

The urgency of the situation was underlined by President Donald Trump's national security adviser HR McMaster, who told MSNBC news that the US leader was reviewing plans for a "preventive war". "He said he's not going to tolerate North Korea being able to threaten the United States," McMaster said. "It's intolerable from the president's perspective. So of course, we have to provide all options to do that. And that includes a military option."

Saturday's UN resolution banned exports of coal, iron and iron ore, lead and lead ore as well as fish and seafood by the cash-starved

state. If fully implemented it would strip North Korea of a third of its export earnings-estimated to total \$3 billion per year despite successive rounds of sanctions since the North's first nuclear test in 2006.

The resolution also prevents North Korea from increasing the number of workers it sends abroad. Their earnings are another source of foreign currency for Kim's regime. It prohibits all new joint ventures with North Korea, bans new investment in current joint companies and adds nine North Korean officials and four entities including the North's main foreign exchange bank to the UN sanctions blacklist.

What next?

Trump hailed the vote-saying in a tweet that the sanctions will have "very big financial impact!"-and thanked Russia and China for backing a measure that either could have halted with their UN veto. The United States

began talks on a resolution with China a month ago, after Pyongyang launched its first intercontinental ballistic missile on July 4, followed by a second ICBM test on July 28. But the measure does not provide for cuts to oil deliveries, which would have dealt a serious blow to the North's economy.

China accounts for 90 percent of trade with North Korea, and Beijing's attitude to its volatile neighbor will be crucial to the success or failure of the new sanctions regime. China and Russia had resisted the US push, arguing that dialogue with North Korea was the way to persuade it to halt its military programs. Speaking to reporters after the council vote, Washington's ambassador to the UN Nikki Haley said "what's next is completely up to North Korea." US officials have insisted that while Tillerson and Ri will be in the same room during the Manila forum, there would be no direct meeting between the two envoys. — AFP

GOING OUTDOORS COULD BECOME DEADLY IN S ASIA

NEW DELHI: Venturing outdoors may become deadly across wide swaths of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh by the end of the century as climate change drives heat and humidity to new extremes, according to a new study. These conditions could affect up to a third of the people living throughout the Indo-Gangetic Plain unless the global community ramps up efforts to rein in climate-warming carbon emissions. Today, that vast region is home to some 1.5 billion people.

"The most intense hazard from extreme future heat waves is concentrated around the densely populated agricultural regions of the Ganges and Indus river basins," wrote the authors of the study, led by former MIT research scientist Eun-Soon Im, now an assistant professor at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology. While most climate studies have been based on temperature projections alone, this one - published Wednesday in the journal Science Advances - also considers humidity as well as the body's ability to cool down in response.

'Wet-bulb temperature'

Those three factors together make up what is called a "wet-bulb temperature," which is the air temperature taken when a wet cloth is wrapped around the thermometer. It is always lower than the dry-bulb temperature - how much so depends

on the humidity. It can help estimate how easy it is for water to evaporate. It can also offer a gauge for where climate change might become dangerous.

Scientists say humans can survive a wet-bulb temperature of up to about 35 degrees Celsius (95 degrees Fahrenheit), beyond which the human body has difficulty sweating to cool down, or sweat doesn't evaporate, leading to heat stroke and ultimately death within just a few hours - even in shaded, ventilated conditions. So far, wet bulb temperatures have rarely exceeded 31 C (88-90 degrees F), a level that is already considered extremely hazardous.

"It is hard to imagine conditions that are too hot for people to survive for a more than a few minutes, but that is exactly what is being discussed in this paper," said Stanford University climate scientist Chris Field, who was not involved in the study. "And of course, the danger threshold for punishing heat and humidity is lower for people who are ill or elderly."

Most of those at risk in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh are poor farmworkers or outdoor construction laborers. They are unlikely to have air conditioners - up to 25 percent in of India's population still has no access to electricity. In some areas that have been deforested for industry or agriculture, they may not even have very much shade. "What we see in this study is a convergence of intense

weather projections and acute vulnerability," co-author and MIT environmental engineering professor Elfatih AB Eltahir said. For the study, the researchers carried out computer simulations using global atmospheric circulation models under two scenarios - one in which the world comes close to meeting its goal of curbing emissions to limit Earth's average temperature rise to 2 degrees C (3.6 degrees F) above pre-industrial levels, and one if it continues emitting at current levels.

Growing population

Both scenarios play out dangerously for South Asia. But with no limit on global warming, about 30 percent of the region could see dangerous wet bulb temperatures above 31 degrees C (88 degrees F) on a regular basis within just a few decades. That's nearly half a billion people by today's population levels, though the full scale could change as the population grows. Meanwhile, 4 percent of the population - or 60 million in today's population - would face deadly highs at or above 35 degrees C (95 degrees F) by 2100.

But if the world can limit global warming, that risk exposure declines drastically. About 2 percent of the population would face average wet bulb temperatures of 31 degrees C (88 degrees F) or higher. "This is an avoidable, preventable problem," Eltahir said. "There is a significant dif-



ALLAHABAD: Indian children shelter under a tree during rain. — AFP

ference between these two scenarios, which people need to understand." Experts say countries must work toward meeting the Paris agreement goals to limit average global warming to 2 degrees C (3.6 degrees F), especially since the world has already warmed by 1 degree C (1.8 degrees F). That average will play out differently across the planet, and South Asia is expected to be hit harder than other regions.

"It is important to base heat mitigation strategies

on not only temperature extremes, but rather the compound effects of extreme temperatures and humidity," said climatologist Omid Mazdiyasn of the University of California, Irvine, who was not involved in the study. He co-authored another paper published last month with complimentary findings that showed how increased temperatures alone were already leading to more deadly heat waves in India. "The impacts of wet bulb temperatures are far greater than temperature alone," he said. — AFP

NO MECHANICAL ISSUES FOUND BEFORE EMIRATES FLIGHT CRASHED

DUBAI: Investigators said yesterday no mechanical issues affected an Emirates flight before it crash landed in Dubai and burst into flames last year, as their probe continues to look at "human performance factors" around the incident. A report by the United Arab Emirates' General Civil Aviation Authority stopped short of assigning blame over the Aug. 3, 2016, crash of Flight EK521 coming from Thiruvananthapuram, India. The 300 pas-

sengers and crew onboard the Boeing 777-300 escaped with their lives, though a subsequent explosion that engulfed the plane killed a firefighter on the ground.

The pilots of the plane tried to take off again after a brief touchdown and had already begun raising the landing gear when the aircraft ultimately hit the ground. "The investigation is working to determine and analyze the human performance factors that influenced flight

crew actions during the landing and attempted go-around," the report released yesterday said.

It added: "There were no aircraft systems or engine abnormalities up to the time of the accident." The report also raised the number of injured from the crash to 30, saying four cabin crew members suffered serious injuries. Previously, authorities said the crash injured 24 and only one cabin crew member suffered

serious injuries. The report offered no explanation for the new figures.

The long-haul carrier Emirates, which is based at Dubai International Airport where the crash occurred, did not respond to questions from The Associated Press. Authorities previously acknowledged looking at wind shear, a sudden change in wind speed or direction, as affecting the flight. It also was a humid 49 degrees Celsius (120 degrees

Fahrenheit) at the time of the crash. The hotter the weather, the harder it can be for engines to lift airplanes off the ground, experts say. The crash is the most serious accident in Emirates' more than three decades of operations. Another Dubai government-owned airline, discount carrier FlyDubai, suffered a March 2016 crash in Rostov-on-Don, Russia, that killed all 62 people aboard one of its 737-800 jetliners. —AP



NAIROBI: Kenya's ruling President and candidate to his own succession, Uhuru Kenyatta (R) and his deputy, William Ruto (C) attend a religious service at the Deliverance Church yesterday in the Nairobi suburb of Umoja. —AFP

KENYA ON KNIFE EDGE AHEAD OF HIGH-STAKES ELECTIONS

NAIROBI: Kenyans head to the polls tomorrow to vote in a knife-edge contest between incumbent Uhuru Kenyatta and his rival Raila Odinga which has heightened claims of vote rigging and fears of violence. The final days of campaigning have been marred by the murder and torture of a top election official, opposition claims one of its vote tallying centres was raided by police and a feverish atmosphere of conspiracy and suspicion.

The August 8 election is seen as a crucial test of Kenya's progress since a disputed poll a decade ago led to two months of politically motivated ethnic clashes, which along with a police crackdown on protests left more than 1,100 dead and 600,000 displaced. Kenyans will cast ballots in six different elections, but all eyes are on what is set to be the last showdown of a dynastic rivalry between the Kenyatta and Odinga families that has lasted more than half a century.

The men belong to two of the country's main ethnic groups, Kenyatta from the Kikuyu, the largest, and Odinga the Luo. Both have secured formidable alliances with other influential communities in a country where voting takes place largely along tribal lines. Polls are so tight the vote is seen as too close to call, and turnout will be crucial to either side's success in the 48-million-strong east African nation.

The 72-year-old Odinga at the head of the National Super Alliance (NSA) coalition, is taking his fourth-and what many suspect will be his last stab at the presidency. He claims both elections in 2007 and 2013 were stolen from him and is adamant Kenyatta's Jubilee party is trying to do the same this time around. Mounting opposition distrust of the electoral commission has seen Odinga crying foul and urging his supporters to "protect their vote".

Both candidates are so certain of victory, that Nic Cheeseman, professor of African politics at Birmingham University, warns they may have "talked themselves into a corner" in which defeat is not an option. "It seems almost inevitable that whoever loses will question the result. The question is not whether or not they will accept the result but what they will do when they don't accept it," he told AFP.

Murder, deportation

Observers agree that the most critical aspect to the election's success is

whether a biometric system of voter identification and tallying works on the day. This system was introduced in a bid to counter rigging and boost confidence in the process after the marred 2007 election. However in 2013 electronic glitches forced polling officials to resort to manual counting.

Odinga claimed there was rigging, however he took his complaints to the courts instead of the streets and despite a few riots after he lost his case, the process ended peacefully. The tension around the electronic system reached breaking point last weekend after the poll commission's top IT manager Chris Msando was found strangled and tortured in a forest on the outskirts of Nairobi.

The Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) said its system had not been compromised, and a dry run of the tallying process went off without a hitch this week. Then late Friday the opposition claimed its main parallel tallying centre which had been a point of dispute with the ruling party was raided and their equipment stolen.

The same evening, an American and a Canadian working with NASA on their poll strategy were detained before being deported the next day. Cheeseman said both these events looked "like an attempt by a political faction to prevent the opposition from verifying and checking results. It is highly suggestive they intend some form of manipulation."

Massive security

Pre-election jitters have seen foreigners and Kenyans leaving the country or main cities and stocking up on provisions in case of trouble. Up to 180,000 security forces will secure the poll in which Kenyans will also elect governors, lawmakers, senators, county officials and women's representatives in local races also rife with tension.

The two presidential candidates' fathers Jomo Kenyatta and Jaramogi Odinga were allies in the struggle for independence, but later became bitter rivals, setting the stage for decades of political rancor. Kenyatta, 55, is seeking re-election after a first term in which he and his Jubilee Party were credited with a massive infrastructure drive and overseeing steady economic growth. However polls show voters concerned about soaring food prices and massive corruption scandals. —AFP

SAUDIS PLEDGE \$33.7M TO BATTLE CHOLERA IN YEMEN

JEDDAH: Saudi Arabia has pledged \$33.7 million to help the World Health Organization eradicate cholera in war-ravaged Yemen, where the disease has killed nearly 2,000 people, the WHO said yesterday. Gregory Hartl, a spokesman for the organization, confirmed that Saudi Arabia, which leads an Arab coalition battling rebels in Yemen, had signed an agreement committing the funds to help the WHO battle the spread of cholera.

The oil-rich Gulf kingdom, in a statement on Thursday, said the money committed to WHO was part of an overall effort to combat the cholera outbreak in Yemen. Riyadh said it also pledged \$33 million to the UN's children agency, UNICEF, for a project to improve water and sanitation facilities which are "drivers of the epidemic". The Saudi aid was initially announced in June by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

Last week the ruler of Dubai, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum, also

pledged \$10 million to help the WHO stem the spread of cholera in Yemen. The United Arab Emirates is a key member of the Saudi-led coalition that entered Yemen's conflict in 2015 on the side of the government against Iran-backed Shiite Houthi rebels. Since then, the war in the impoverished Arabian Peninsula nation has killed more than 8,000 people, according to WHO figures.

The cholera outbreak has already claimed the lives of at least 1,915 people since April this year, with 436,000 suspected cases across the country. A report by three UN agencies last week said the vicious combination of war, cholera and hunger has left 80 percent of Yemeni children in desperate need of aid. It also warned that the number of cholera cases was expected to reach 600,000 by the end of the year.

The report was issued after executive directors of WHO, UNICEF and the World Food Program visited Yemen to assess the situation. —AFP

FROM FIGHTING REGIME TO ANTI-IS, SYRIA REBEL TRACES US POLICY SHIFTS

MORE THAN 330,000 DEAD AND MILLIONS DISPLACED

BEIRUT: From Special Forces officer to brigade-hopping rebel, Abu Jaafar has seen Syria's uprising from all angles. But after years of setbacks, culminating in cuts to US support, he feels disillusioned. The 31-year-old spent three years in a Syrian prison and once counted himself among his US trainers' most admired fighters. But now with more than 330,000 dead and millions displaced, Abu Jaafar expressed exhaustion and anger.

"I fall apart, I get annoyed and I want to leave but I say no-if I leave and others do too, the country will be even more destroyed than it is now," Abu Jaafar told AFP in interviews via a messaging app. In some ways, his trajectory has tracked Washington's shifting policy, which originally backed anti-regime factions but is now focused on battling the Islamic State group.

President Donald Trump's administration last month announced it was ending Washington's four-year program to back rebels. Abu Jaafar, who worked with two groups supported by that programme but now receives separate Pentagon backing, was left convinced opposition groups were pawns in a proxy war between outside powers. "Rebel factions were pieces on a chessboard. The board is in Turkey, Trump is on one side, and (Russian President Vladimir) Putin is on the other," he said ruefully.

Originally from the central province of Homs, Abu Jaafar-born Khaled Karzoun-enrolled in the special forces' officers school at the age of 17. When protests erupted in 2011, he was stationed on Syria's Mediterranean coast and ordered to fire on the few demonstrations in the regime stronghold. "The oppression was brutal in a way I cannot describe," he recalled.

In September 2011, he was accused of liaising with rebels and sentenced to 15 years in the notorious Saydnaya prison, where his wife was able to visit him only twice a year. "Three hours before the visit, I would be taken out to be tortured and beaten so that I would come out for the visit covered in blood," he said. Abu Jaafar was released on June 14, 2014 after a string of amnesties cut his sentence to three years.

Revolution as a business

Within a week, he joined the rebel Hazm Movement, at a time when the opposition still controlled swathes of Syria, including half of second city Aleppo. Washington and its allies were training and arming rebel groups, including Hazm, through a Turkey-based operations room known by its Turkish acronym MOM. Abu Jaafar



TABQA, Syria: A picture taken on August 4, 2017 shows displaced Syrian children, who fled from the Islamic State (IS) group's Syrian stronghold of Raqa, receiving humanitarian aid delivered by UNICEF at a temporary camp in the town of Tabqa, about 55 kilometers west of Raqa. —AFP

spent a month training in Saudi Arabia but returned to Syria disillusioned by what he perceived as corruption among Hazm members. "I missed the most amazing years of the revolution because I was in jail.

By then, I saw the revolution had been turned into a business." rebelled for honor, someone else was against injustice, another because his brother was in jail," he said. "That's why we were with the revolution. But now, everyone is rushing to expand his faction for his own personal interests." In September 2014, Abu Jaafar left Hazm as it lost territory and weapons to Al-Qaeda before folding the following year.

For several months, he worked as a schoolbus driver outside second city Aleppo. His wife, who taught at the school, gave birth to a boy. "He lived 21 days. There was an air strike and he died." In early 2016, Abu Jaafar was recruited by the Fastaqim Union, a rebel faction in Aleppo. "We got weapons on a monthly basis, as well as salaries, medical equipment, vehicles, and relief materials" from the MOM, he said. He led month-long training courses for Fastaqim members in Turkey and Qatar in 2016. "I had a great relationship with the Americans. They liked me a lot," Abu Jaafar said.

Seen enough for a lifetime

But the group was weakening as it and other rebel groups lost their hold on urban Aleppo. In mid-2016, Abu Jaafar transferred to the Pentagon-backed Mutasem Brigades. The move meant Abu Jaafar was now fighting the Islamic State group instead of the army-a shift already months in the making in Washington. But with the end of US support for the MOM, Abu Jaafar wonders if his latest brigade will be around much longer.

"Maybe soon it'll be our turn." US military support in Syria is now centered on the Syrian Democratic Forces, a Kurdish-Arab alliance which is on the brink of ousting IS from its Syrian bastion Raqa. From Azaz, a rebel enclave on the Turkish border, where he lives with his wife and six-year-old daughter, Abu Jaafar wonders what's next. "Aleppo is over, Raqa belongs to the SDF," he says. "Things are hard. After the regime, we got (IS chief) Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. After Baghdadi, we got Mohammad Jolani," the head of Al-Qaeda's former Syrian affiliate. "I know I'm only 31, but I've seen more than someone who has lived to 90." —AFP



JERUSALEM: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (C) speaks during the weekly cabinet meeting at his office. —AFP

NETANYAHU LOOKS TO EXUDE CALM IN THE FACE OF CHARGES

JERUSALEM: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's circle attempted to convey calm yesterday amid reports of a slew of corruptions charges against him that threatened to force him from office. Netanyahu himself did not address the latest developments at his weekly Cabinet meeting, but a close ally said he was relaxed and confident despite reports that police were preparing to recommend he be indicted.

"I am not worried at all. The prime minister is not worried either," said Sports and Culture Minister Miri Regev, one of the few ministers to rush to Netanyahu's defense. "As he has said repeatedly: 'there will be nothing, since there is nothing.' Part of the media and the opposition are doing everything they can to topple the right and topple Netanyahu. It won't help them. You replace the leadership at the ballot box, not in investigations and not in headlines."

On Thursday, Israeli police revealed they suspect Netanyahu of being involved in bribery, fraud and breach of trust in a pair of cases. On Friday, Netanyahu's former chief of staff and longtime confidante Ari Harow signed a state witness settlement in which he agreed to testify against his former mentor. This has raised speculation that Netanyahu could be indicted shortly, and sparked calls from opposition figures that he step down.

Harow will serve six months of community service and pay a fine of 700,000 Shekels (about \$193,000) for his involvement in a separate corruption case - apparently a lighter-than-expected sentence in exchange for his testimony against the prime minister. Netanyahu has repeatedly denied wrongdoing and calls the accusations a witch hunt fueled by a hostile media opposed to his hard-line political views.

Netanyahu has been questioned several times "under caution" about his supposed illicit ties to executives in media, international business and Hollywood. One investigation involving Netanyahu dubbed by police as "File 1000," reportedly concerns claims he improperly accepted lavish gifts from wealthy supporters, including Australian billionaire James Packer and Hollywood producer Arnon Milchan.

The second investigation, "File 2000," reportedly concerns Netanyahu's alleged attempts to strike a deal with publisher Arnon Mozes of the Yediot Ahronot newspaper group to promote legislation to weaken Yediot's main competitor in exchange for more favorable coverage of Netanyahu by Yediot. A third investigation, "File 3000," relates to a possible conflict of interests involving the purchase of German submarines, in which Netanyahu's cousin and personal attorney represented the German firm involved in the deal. —AP

DEMOCRATS DIFFER ON ANTI-ABORTION CANDIDATES

WASHINGTON: The proposal seemed modest in today's polarized political climate: The head of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee suggested his group might help fund candidates who didn't share the party's support for abortion rights. The backlash from abortion-rights activists and organizations was quick and harsh. The basic message: Don't go there.

A coalition of progressive groups, including Planned Parenthood and NARAL Pro-Choice America, issued a "statement of principles" challenging the party to be unwavering in its support for abortion rights. Scores of women who have had abortions made the same point in an open letter to House Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi, a staunch abortion-rights supporter who nonetheless says there's room in the party for opposing views.

"The DCCC should not be supporting any politician who does not respect a woman's right to control her body," said Karin Roland, of the women's rights group Ultraviolet. "There is no future of the Democratic Party without women - so stop betraying them for a misguided idea of what's needed to win elections."

The latest brush fires were sparked this week by the DCCC chairman, Rep. Ben Ray Lujan of New Mexico, when he told The Hill newspaper that the committee is willing to aid candidates who oppose abortion rights. His core argument: Democrats - after a series of dismaying losses in national and state elections - will only reclaim power by winning in GOP-leaning districts and states where the liberal base can't deliver victories on its own.

A DCCC official, Meredith Kelly, said Lujan isn't looking specifically for abortion-rights opponents, even in conservative districts. But, she added, "We are working right now to recruit candidates who represent Democratic values and who also fit the districts they are running in." The current Congress is almost monolithic when it comes to abortion. Only a small handful of Republicans vote in favor of abortion rights; a similarly small number of Democrats support restrictions on abortion.

Outliers

Some Democratic officials suggest the argument over Lujan's remarks is overblown - a handful of outliers won't change the agenda if Democrats reclaim congressional majorities. Abortion-rights leaders have a different view. "Every time the Democrats lose an election, they start casting about in ways that are deeply damaging to the base," NARAL president Ilyse Hogue said. "If they go out and start recruiting anti-choice candidates under the Democratic brand, the message is, 'We're willing to sell out women to win,' and politically that's just suicide."

Dawn Laguens, executive vice president of Planned Parenthood, said politicians who personally object to abortion should be welcome in the Democratic Party - as long as they don't vote to impose that view on others. Supporting candidates who voted that way, said Laguens, would be comparable to supporting candidates who voted against LGBT-rights. —AP

BRITISH HOSPITAL WORKER DEFENDS STAFF IN BABY CHARLIE GARD CASE

LONDON: A member of the medical team that treated Charlie Gard has defended the care they gave the British infant who died of a rare genetic disease while criticizing political and religious leaders for prolonging the family's suffering by intervening in a case they didn't understand. The health care worker wrote in an anonymous opinion piece published in the Guardian newspaper Saturday that staff at Great Ormond Street Hospital in London "loved this child to bits" but reached the point where they could do nothing more to help Charlie.

The worker argued that the baby suffered longer than he should have because of comments Pope Francis, President Donald Trump and U.K. Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson made about his case. The social media storm that followed their interventions triggered threats against

hospital staff, the worker said. "You have contributed to the family's pain, you have been fighting a cause you know nothing about," the worker wrote. "It's not been helpful to anyone."

Charlie suffered from mitochondrial depletion syndrome, which left him brain damaged and unable to breathe unaided. His parents wanted to take him to the United States for experimental treatment and his case ended up in the courts when doctors opposed the plan, saying the untested therapy wouldn't help Charlie and might cause him to suffer.

He died July 28, a week before his first birthday, after a judge ordered he be taken off a ventilator at Great Ormond Street Hospital and moved to a hospice for his final hours. In an interview published Saturday, Charlie's parents told the Daily

Mail newspaper their son died 12 minutes after his respirator was turned off. Parents Chris Gard and Connie Yates then took Charlie home in a temperature-controlled "cuddle cot."

Global attention

"Once home, it was lovely to sit and watch him lying there like any other baby," the Mail quoted Yates as saying. "Not surrounded by equipment and machinery, without anything obscuring his lovely face." Charlie's case made it all the way to Britain's Supreme Court and along the way became a flashpoint for debates on the rights of children and parents, health care funding, the responsibilities of medical workers and the role of the state.

The case caught the attention of Trump and the pope in late June after the

European Court of Human Rights refused to intervene. The leaders tweeted support for the family, triggering a surge of grassroots action, including a number of US right-to-life activists who flew to London to support Charlie's parents. Great Ormond Street soon reported that its doctors and nurses were receiving serious threats because of the case. London police were called in to investigate.

In the Guardian article, the health care worker described the "soap opera" that followed the comments from Trump and the pope, arguing that the medical team kept doing everything they could for Charlie even though they believed "he should be allowed to slip away in his parents' arms, peacefully, loved." "We didn't do this for Charlie. We didn't even do it for his mum and dad. Recently, we did this for Donald

Trump, the pope and Boris Johnson, who suddenly knew more about mitochondrial diseases than our expert consultants," the staff member wrote. "And we did it for the keyboard warriors who thought it was OK to write about the 'evil' medical staff at Great Ormond Street, even though we were still there next to Charlie, caring for him as best we could, as we always had."

The medical worker also wrote about the toll Charlie's case took on the entire staff of the hospital. Even friends asked, "Why are you trying to kill this child?" Parents of other young patients at the hospital were nervous about whether the right thing was being done for their children. The worker concluded by imploring everyone on social media to think twice before commenting on "how awful we are." —AP

RUSSIA: TRUMP'S UKRAINE ENVOY TO VISIT MOSCOW

MANILA: The Trump administration is sending its envoy for Ukraine negotiations to Moscow in a bid to make progress on the diplomatic crisis, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said yesterday. After his first meeting with US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson since new American sanctions, Lavrov emerged with an upbeat assessment about the potential for finding common ground on Ukraine, Syria and other issues. Lavrov said he and Tillerson had agreed to preserve a high-level diplomatic channel that Russia had suspended in protest of an earlier tightening of U.S. sanctions.

"We felt that our American counterparts need to keep the dialogue open," Lavrov said. "There's no alternative to that." There was no immediate reaction to the meeting from the US State Department. Tillerson did not comment publicly or respond to shouted questions from journalists allowed in briefly for the start of the hour-plus meeting in the Philippines.

Giving out details

Lavrov said Tillerson had asked him for details about Moscow's recent action to retaliate against US sanctions by expelling American diplomats and shuttering a US recreational facility on the outskirts of Moscow. The Russian diplomat said he explained to Tillerson how Russia will carry out its response, but Lavrov isn't giving out details.

Last month, the Kremlin said the US must cut its embassy and consulate staff in Russia by 755 people, a move that echoed former President Barack Obama's action last year to kick out Russian diplomats in punishment for Moscow's meddling in the 2016 American election. The Russian announcement has caused confusion because the US is believed to have far fewer than 755 American employees in the country.

Word that US special representative Kurt Volker plans to visit the Russian capital was the latest sign that Washington is giving fresh attention to resolving the Ukraine conflict. The U.S. cut military ties to Russia over Moscow's annexation of Crimea and accuses the Kremlin of fomenting unrest in eastern Ukraine by arming, supporting and

even directing pro-Russian separatists there who are fighting the Kiev government. In recent days, the Trump administration has been considering providing lethal weaponry to Ukraine to help defend itself against Russian aggression. Lavrov didn't say when Volker, a former NATO ambassador, would go to Moscow. Last month, Volker paid his first visit as special representative to embattled eastern Ukraine.

In their meeting, Lavrov said, Tillerson agreed to continue a dialogue between US Undersecretary of State Thomas Shannon and Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ryabkov. That channel was created to address what the US calls "irritants" preventing the two countries from pursuing better ties. Russia had suspended the talks after the US tightened existing sanctions on Russia related to its actions in Ukraine.

Lavrov and Tillerson met on the sidelines of an Asian regional gathering in the Philippines. It was their first face-to-face conversation since Congress passed new legislation in July that makes it harder for Trump to ever ease penalties on Russia. Trump signed the bill last week, but called it "seriously flawed."

The White House said Trump's opposition stemmed from the bill's failure to grant the president sufficient flexibility on when to lift sanctions. Trump's critics saw his objections as one more sign that he is too eager to pursue closer ties to Russia, or to protect the former Cold War foe from penalties designed to punish Moscow for its actions in Ukraine, election meddling and other troublesome behavior.

A US Justice Department investigation is moving ahead into Russia's election interference and potential Trump campaign collusion. Trump denies any collusion and has repeatedly questioned US intelligence about Moscow's involvement. At the same time, Trump's administration has argued there's good reason for the US to seek a more productive relationship. Tillerson has cited modest signs of progress in Syria, where the US and Russia recently brokered a cease-fire in the war-torn country's southwest, as a sign there's fertile ground for cooperation. —AP

KNIFEMAN ARRESTED AT EIFFEL TOWER 'WANTED TO KILL SOLDIER': SOURCES

PARIS: A man arrested at the Eiffel Tower after brandishing a knife in front of tourists and security forces has told investigators he wanted to kill a soldier, sources close to the case told AFP yesterday. The intruder, who is aged around 19 and has a history of psychological problems, was arrested late on Saturday at the Paris monument after bursting past security and shouting "Allahu Akbar" ("God is Greatest").

Armed soldiers who are permanently stationed at the Eiffel Tower surrounded him and ordered him to drop his weapon, which he did without attacking anyone, one security source said, asking not to be named. In custody, he said he wanted to commit "an attack against a soldier and had been in contact with a member of the jihadist group Islamic State who encouraged him to take action," a separate source told AFP.

France has been in a state of emergency since November 2015 and has seen a string of attacks on security forces who have been regularly targeted, particularly those guarding key tourist sites. In February, a man armed with a machete attacked four soldiers on patrol at Paris's Louvre Museum, while in

April another extremist shot and killed a policeman on the Champs Elysees. In June, a 40-year-old Algeria doctorate student who had pledged allegiance to the Islamic State group attacked a policeman with a hammer outside Notre Dame cathedral.

Evacuation

Police had initially treated Saturday's Eiffel Tower incident as a criminal case, but anti-terror prosecutors have since taken over the investigation. After the arrest, police checked the Eiffel Tower site and called for it to be evacuated at around 00:30, 15 minutes before it normally closes, a statement from the company that runs the monument said.

The intruder was wearing a Paris Saint-Germain football shirt. At the time of the incident the tower was lit up with the colors of the team to welcome the club's new world-record signing, Brazilian star Neymar. The legal source said the man with the knife, a Frenchman born in the West African state of Mauritania, had been discharged from a psychiatric hospital in July. The tower reopened yesterday morning as usual at 09:00 am (0700 GMT). — AFP



BARCELONA: People sunbathe close to crosses and photographs of a dead migrants and refugees, and a banner reading "Invisible frontiers" on Barcelona's Bogatell beach, during an action called by pro human rights organizations "Tanquem els CIE" (Let's close the Foreigners Detention Centers), "Immigrant Space", "Watch The Med" and "Stop Mare Mortum" to tribute the thousands of deaths in recent years in the Mediterranean sea. — AFP

TUNISIAN FISHERMEN VOW TO BLOCK 'RACIST' ANTI-MIGRANT SHIP C-STAR

FRESH BLOW TO MISSION TO DISRUPT FLOW OF MIGRANTS

ABOARD THE MS AQUARIUS: Tunisian fishermen vowed yesterday to block a ship carrying far-right activists from docking at their port, dealing a fresh blow to their mission to disrupt the flow of migrant boats from north Africa to Europe. The C-Star, a boat chartered by anti-immigration group "Generation Identity", passed through waters off Libya on Saturday. It briefly tailed the Aquarius, operated by French group SOS Mediterranee, one of several NGO boats conducting search and rescue operations in an area notorious for deadly migrant boat sinkings.

Having left Cyprus on August 1, the 40-metre (130-foot) vessel was thought to be in need of supplies: but the fishermen in the southeastern Tunisian port of Zarzi had other ideas. "If they come here we'll close the refuelling channel," Chamseddine Bourassine, the head of the local fishermen's organisation, told AFP. "It is the least we can do given what is happening out in the Mediterranean," he added. "Muslims and Africans are dying." An official at the port, who asked to remain anonymous, said: "What? Us let in racists here? Never!"

10,000 dead

The C-Star headed straight from Cyprus to Libyan waters after being discouraged from attempting to dock en route in Greece and Sicily, with authorities concerned about the prospect of protests. The self-styled "Defend Europe" mission has had a chequered history to date. Their boat was held up for a week in the Suez Canal by Egyptian authorities looking for weapons.

Then, after it landed in the Cypriot port of Famagusta last month, several of its crew jumped ship and asked for asylum in Europe—exactly the kind of thing the mission was set up to prevent. The C-Star crew say their main goal is to expose collaboration between NGO rescue ships and the traffickers who launch boats packed with migrants from Libya. Humanitarian groups say Generation Identity is engaged in a potentially dangerous publicity stunt.

Since the start of 2014, some 600,000 people from Africa, the Middle East and South Asia have been rescued from traffickers' boats and taken to Italy. Over 10,000 have died en route and serial sinkings have resulted in privately funded or charity-run boats joining a multinational search and rescue operation coordinated by Italy's coastguard. NGO boats have rescued around one third of the nearly 100,000 people picked up this year, but their relations with Italy have become strained as pressure to stem the flow of migrants has mounted.

Squalid camps

Critics say the NGOs make it too easy for the traffickers to guarantee would-be migrants safe passage to Europe, allegedly fuelling the lucrative trade. Italian authorities last week impounded one NGO boat, the Iuventa, which is operated by German association Jugend Rettet. They accused its crew of being in direct contact with traffickers to organise pick-ups of boatloads of migrants from locations very close to the Libyan coast.

Yesterday, the Aquarius and Doctors without Borders (MSF) took part in a rescue operation in which around 100 people were plucked from a distressed dinghy. The number of such rescues in international waters has fallen sharply over the last five weeks to under half the level of the same period last year. Italian officials are cautiously optimistic that this reflects a break-

through in their efforts to strengthen the Libyan coastguard's capacity to combat traffickers.

The Libyan navy told AFP that between Thursday and Saturday the coastguard, which has received training and new equipment from Rome, had intercepted five trafficker boats carrying a total of 878 people. Rights organizations have

voiced concern over the focus on sending boats back to Libya. They say the migrants on board face detention in squalid camps and the risk of torture, sexual violence and forced labor. Italian officials defend the strategy as the only way to end a humanitarian crisis threatening to overwhelm the country's reception facilities. —AFP

VENEZUELA OFFICIAL REPORTS ATTACK AT ARMY BASE, ARRESTS

CARACAS: Venezuelan ruling party chief Diosdado Cabello says that there was a "terrorist" attack at a military base controlled by troops loyal to the government and several people were arrested yesterday. Cabello reported via Twitter that troops acted quickly to control the situation in the early morning at the Paramacay base in the central city of Venezuela.

The announcement came after a small group of men dressed in military fatigues, some armed with assault rifles, released a video declaring themselves in rebellion in Carabobo state, where Valencia is located. In the video a man identifying himself as Capt. Juan Gagaripano said that any unit refusing to go along with its call for rebellion would be declared a military target. The South American has for months been in the throes of a political crisis with protests that have left more than 100 dead, nearly 2,000 wounded and over 500 detained.

On Saturday prominent opposition leader Leopoldo Lopez was returned home to serve his sentence under house arrest, days after being hauled back to prison in the middle of the night in a move that drew international condemnation. The activist's wife Lilian Tintori said in a message on Twitter that she and her husband remained committed to achieving "peace and freedom for Venezuela."

Lopez was released from prison July 8 and placed under house arrest after serving three years of a 13-year sentence on charges of inciting violence at opposition rallies. Many human rights groups considered him a political prisoner. But he was taken back into custody last Tuesday along with former Caracas Mayor Antonio Ledezma in what many believed was a renewed crackdown on the

opposition following the election of delegates to a new, all-powerful constitutional assembly charged with overhauling the nation's charter.

Alleged irregularities

That assembly voted unanimously on Saturday to remove Venezuela's chief prosecutor, a longtime government loyalist who broke with President Nicolas Maduro in April. Cries of "traitor" and "justice" erupted during the vote to oust Luisa Ortega from her post. Delegates said they were acting in response to a ruling by the government-stacked Supreme Court, which banned Ortega from leaving the country and froze her bank accounts while it weighs criminal charges against her for alleged irregularities.

Ortega refused to recognize the decision and vowed to continue defending the rights of Venezuelans from Maduro's "coup" against the constitution "with my last breath." "This is just a tiny example of what's coming for everyone that dares to oppose this totalitarian form of government," Ortega said in the statement she signed as chief prosecutor. "If they're doing this to the chief prosecutor, imagine the helpless state all Venezuelans live in."

She alleged that authorities were desperate to get their hands on dossiers containing information on dirty dealings by high-level officials, including sensitive details about millions of dollars in bribes paid by Brazilian construction giant Odebrecht. Assembly delegates later swore in as her replacement Ombudsman Tarek William Saab, who was recently sanctioned by the Trump administration for failing to protect protesters from abuses in his role as the nation's top human rights official. —AP



VALENCIA: Residents shout slogans against Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro outside of Paramacay Military base. — AP



PARIS: In this Friday, June 10, 2016 file photo, French riot police officers patrol under the Eiffel Tower. — AP

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MYANMAR GOVT PROBE FINDS NO ABUSE AGAINST ROHINGYA

YANGON: A government-appointed commission yesterday cleared Myanmar security forces of systematic rape, murder and arson against Rohingya Muslims, dismissing UN allegations of widespread abuses during a recent crackdown. The commission examined the deadly violence which began in northwestern Rakhine State in October last year after attacks by Rohingya militants on police posts near the Bangladesh border.

The government is refusing to allow a UN fact-finding team to conduct its own probe into whether the security response amounted to "ethnic cleansing" of the stateless Rohingya minority. Giving their

conclusions yesterday, a state-backed commission said it found no evidence that Myanmar security forces carried out a systematic campaign of rape, murder or arson. Instead any "excessive actions" were likely committed by low-rank "individual members of the security forces". "Some incidents (of abuse) appeared to be fabricated... others had little evidence," according to a press release by the commission. It also took aim at a detailed report by the UN's Human Rights Office released in February this year. That report said it was "very likely" that crimes against humanity had been committed during the crackdown.

'Misconceptions'

Based on interviews with 204 witnesses who fled to Bangladesh, the UN alleged Myanmar security forces gang-raped Rohingya women, butchered children and tortured men. But "no such cases were uncovered" by the government commission, which said the UN findings lacked balance and failed to recognize the gravity of the attacks by Rohingya militants. Myanmar's de facto leader Aung San Suu Kyi, who is a Nobel peace prize winner, is blocking a visit by a UN team. She says the government commission is an adequate response to the violence, which left scores dead and dis-

placed tens of thousands of Rohingya to Bangladesh.

The Rohingyas are reviled in Myanmar and widely seen as illegal immigrants. Stateless, poor and subject to tight controls on movement, education and work, roughly one million of the Muslim group are hemmed into the impoverished border zone—which remains locked down and under curfew. The commission conceded that foreign media and NGOs should have been granted access to the zone during the conflict to dispel "misconceptions." It also called for rights training for low-level security officers, urged local officials to tackle corruption

and called for swift and fair trials of suspected militants.

Rakhine State remains violent and on edge. The government says foreign-backed Rohingya militants are still active in the conflict area, accusing them of killing perceived state collaborators and running "terror" training camps. Last week seven Buddhists were found dead in the conflict area. Rohingya villages also continue to be raided. On Friday up to 50 "warning shots" were fired at a Rohingya village during a raid. Unverifiable images on social media showed several people wounded by bullets allegedly fired in the episode. —AFP

GANDHI BRAND NO LONGER SELLS IN INDIAN POLITICS

HITS NEW LOW IN VICE-PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

NEW DELHI: India's Congress party and its controlling Nehru-Gandhi dynasty that has been synonymous with political power for most of the 70 years since independence, hit a new low with this weekend's vice-presidential election. The Congress-backed candidate was crushed in Saturday's parliamentary ballot by the nominee of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his ruling nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

The victory means the BJP occupy the top three offices of state for the first time, following its victory in last month's presidential ballot. It heightened a crisis for Congress and raised fresh questions about the party's top leadership—especially 47-year-old Rahul Gandhi, great grandson of India's first prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru. Gandhi led the campaign in the disastrous 2014 general election which saw Congress win just 44 seats—an historic low. The party went on to defeat-after-defeat in state elections.

"The Congress faces two existential crises—lack of leadership and the absence of an aspirational, coherent vision for the future," Milan Vaishnav, South Asia director at Washington-based Carnegie Endowment for International Peace think-tank, told AFP. "What is stunning is that the 2014 general election result exposed both of these infirmities, yet the party has made little to no progress remedying them. If current trends continue, the Congress risks terminal decline," Vaishnav added. While still short of an outright majority, the BJP last week snatched Congress' mantle as the largest party in the upper house, the Rajya Sabha, after almost six decades. A favorable vice-



NEW DELHI: In this file photo taken on August 5, 2017 shows activists and supporters of the Indian Youth Congress (IYC) holding pictures of its leader Rahul Gandhi as they shout slogans against Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a protest outside the headquarters of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). —AFP

president could also bolster Modi's legislative agenda as the vice president doubles as chairman of the Rajya Sabha.

Dynastic crossroads

The centre-left Congress has ruled India for more than 50 of the past 70 years, most of them with Nehru and his descendants at the helm. Since Nehru, his daughter Indira Gandhi and grandson Rajiv Gandhi have been prime minister. But the so-called 'natural-born leaders' have looked

like political outsiders since the 2014 electoral drubbing. Party number two to his Italian-born mother Sonia Gandhi, 70 — widow of the assassinated Rajiv-Rahul has suffered a string of key local election defeats including in the bellwether state of Uttar Pradesh in March. "Today, unlike the past, the family needs the party more than the party needs the family," R Jagannathan, a Mumbai-based political commentator and editorial director of Swarajya, told AFP. "I think that Gandhi name is past its sell-

by date. His mother at least had AN interest (in politics), Rahul doesn't seem interested... he is unsuitable for leadership," Jagannathan added.

Rahul Gandhi made an unsuccessful attempt to mediate between regional allies in a dispute that led to Bihar state falling to the BJP last month, and the loyalty he commands within the party is open to doubt. Jagannathan suggested the once-dominant family should make way for "real grassroots leaders," but Sadanand Dhume of the Washington-based American Enterprise Institute, said a change in leadership would be problematic.

"In theory it makes sense to suggest that Congress should outgrow its reliance on the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty. In reality, the family is all that holds the party together. Take it out and Congress collapses like a proverbial house of cards," Dhume said. Rahul's younger sister Priyanka, who may see as an alternative leader, is hampered by a controversy over her husband's property dealings, and has so far refused to take a more prominent role. With the opposition in disarray, the BJP and its allies now rule 18 of India's 29 states, and look set for more gains in the upper house.

"The Rajya Sabha is effectively the only real political check on Modi's power. Once the BJP gains control, Modi will be free to pursue an expansive legislative agenda on a range of issues," Dhume said. In the current opposition vacuum, even one-time Modi challengers like Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar now say Modi's victory in the 2019 national election is a foregone conclusion. — AFP

WOMEN AS 'COLLATERAL' IN PAKISTAN JIRGA JUSTICE

RAJA RAM: The rape of a teenage girl in revenge for a crime committed by her brother has left residents of Raja Ram in central Pakistan shaken and questioning a deeply entrenched system of village justice.

Last month, a council of village elders ordered the rape of the 16-year-old victim after her brother was accused of raping a 12-year-old girl.

The ruling highlighted the role such councils — known as panchayats, or jirgas — play in the lives of many rural Pakistanis, who see the country's courtrooms as a distant presence. The councils have traditionally enjoyed broad support, thanks to their ability to offer immediate justice, compared to courts that can take years to settle a criminal case, and as much as a decade to resolve a civil dispute. But the recent ruling, which allowed a rape victim's brother to sexually assault another innocent girl, has unsettled Raja Ram, home to some 3,000 people.

"May God have mercy, it was such a strange day and it was such a big injustice," said villager Amina Bibi. "In our area there is neither a school nor a hospital, and poverty and ignorance rules here... This incident is a mark of this ignorance," said 46-year-old Imtiaz Matila. "It's a stain on the name of the panchayat," agreed another villager, 65-year-old Manzoor Hussain.

The girls have since been taken to a women's shelter in conservative Multan, Pakistan's fifth-largest city. Raja Ram is just a few kilometres down the road, but feels a world away from urban life. Men sit around on charpoys, sheltering from the blistering heat, while women are conspicuous only by their absence, shielded from view behind the rough stone walls that sur-

round each of the crudely built, single-storey houses.

'Nothing more dishonorable'

Central Punjab is also home to one of Pakistan's most prominent advocates for women's rights—Mukhtar Mai, whose own story offers a window into jirga justice and its brutal mistreatment of women. In 2002, a jirga ordered Mai to be gang-raped after her brother was falsely accused of rape. Mai, who lives a few hours north of Multan, made the unusual decision to defy her rapists and take them to court.

But in one of South Asia's most infamous miscarriages of justice, her attackers walked free, and people continued to rely on panchayats, even as she went on to become a high-profile activist. "It's an honor-based system and there's nothing more dishonorable than the rape of a woman within your family," explained women's rights activist Aisha Sarwari. The men of the aggressor's family must be shamed through the loss of their women's dignity, Sarwari explained. "That's the balance of power in these communities, which makes sure that women are some kind of collateral."

'Jirga law'

The Supreme Court, trying to bring jirgas to heel, declared them illegal in 2006. But in an apparent backtracking this year aimed at unclogging the slow-moving court system, the government passed a new law that promotes village councils as an alternative solution to small civil disputes. The decision, dubbed the "Jirga Law" by activists, has raised concerns about women's rights, given the precedents set by the panchayats. —AFP



MANILA: China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi speaks during a press conference on the sidelines of the 50th Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) regional security forum. —AFP

SE ASIAN NATIONS FEUD OVER CHINA

MANILA: Southeast Asian nations feuded yesterday over how to respond to Chinese expansionism in the South China Sea, with Vietnam insisting on a tough stance but Cambodia lobbying hard for Beijing, diplomats said. The debates among foreign ministers of the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) at a security forum in the Philippines were the latest in years of struggles to deal with competing claims to the strategically vital sea.

The ministers failed to release a customary joint statement after meeting on Saturday because of their differences on the sea issue, and follow-up negotiations yesterday did not end the stand-off, two diplomats involved in the talks told AFP. "There's still no consensus," one of the diplomats said, adding the disagreements over the wordings on the sea issue were holding up the release of the communique. "Vietnam is adamant, and China is effectively using Cambodia to champion its interests. But the Philippines is trying very hard to broker compromise language."

Tough language

Vietnam had insisted that tough language be inserted into the statement expressing concern over "land reclamation", a reference to an explosion in recent years of Chinese artificial island building in contested parts of the waters. Cambodia, one of China's strongest allies within ASEAN, has firmly resisted, according to the diplomats involved in the talks in Manila, as well as an excerpt of proposed Cambodian resolution obtained by AFP yesterday.

China claims nearly all of the sea, through which \$5 trillion in annual shipping trade passes, and its artificial islands have raised concerns it could eventually build military

bases there and establish de facto control over the waters. Its sweeping claims overlap with those of ASEAN members Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia and Brunei.

Tensions over the sea have long vexed ASEAN, which operates on a consensus basis but has had to balance the interests of rival claimants and those more aligned to China. Critics of China have accused it of trying to divide ASEAN with strong-armed tactics and chequebook diplomacy, enticing smaller countries in the bloc such as Cambodia and Laos to support it.

Vocal critics

The Philippines, under previous president Benigno Aquino, had been one of the most vocal critics of China and filed a case before a UN-backed tribunal. The tribunal last year ruled China's sweeping claims to the sea had no legal basis. But China, despite being a signatory to the UN's Convention on the Law of the Sea, ignored the ruling.

The Philippines, under new President Rodrigo Duterte, decided to play down the verdict in favour of pursuing warmer ties with Beijing. This in turn led to offers of billions of dollars in investments or aid from China. "It's clear that China's pressure on individual ASEAN governments has paid off with few prepared even to reiterate statements that they have made many times before," Bill Hayton, a South China Sea expert and associate fellow with the Asia Programme at Chatham House in London, told AFP. "Beijing's task has been made easier because the Philippines holds the (ASEAN) chair this year." The ASEAN foreign ministers and their Chinese counterpart, Wang Yi, yesterday adopted a framework for negotiating a code of conduct to defuse tensions in the sea. Wang hailed this as a breakthrough. — AFP

News

in brief



HIROSHIMA: Hiroshima Mayor Kazumi Matsui, right, hands over the name list of newly added people who died of the world's first atomic bombing over the past year during a ceremony to mark the 72nd anniversary of the 1945 bombing that killed 140,000 people, at the Peace Memorial Park. —AP

Japan marks 72 years since Hiroshima nuclear bomb

TOKYO: Japan yesterday marked 72 years since the world's first nuclear attack on Hiroshima, with the nation's traditional contradictions over atomic weapons again coming into focus. The anniversary came after Japan sided last month with nuclear powers Britain, France and the US to dismiss a UN treaty banning atomic weapons, which was rejected by critics for ignoring the reality of security threats such as North Korea. Japan is the only country to have suffered atomic attacks, in 1945. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, speaking at the annual ceremony at Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park near the ground zero, said Japan hoped to push for a world without nuclear weapons in a way that all countries can agree.

Australia police release man in foiled plane plot

SYDNEY: Australian police yesterday released a second man arrested during counter-terrorism raids, days after two others were charged with terrorism offences over an alleged plot to bring down a plane. The 39-year-old man, named by his lawyer as Khaled Merhi, was among the four arrested during raids across Sydney last Saturday, which also led to tightened security at all major Australian airports. "This investigation remains ongoing," Australian Federal Police and New South Wales state police said in a statement. "A 39-year-old man, detained in relation to allegations regarding a potential terrorist attack, has been charged with one count of possession of prohibited weapon and released from police custody."

Bangladesh seizes 25kg of gold from man posing in wheelchair

DHAKA: Authorities at Bangladesh's main international airport yesterday arrested a man accused of posing as a wheelchair user in an elaborate plot to smuggle 25 kilograms of gold past customs. The billion bust, worth an estimated \$1.5 million, was the largest this year by airport officials in Bangladesh, which have been battling a record surge in gold smuggling in recent years. Customs officials became suspicious when they noticed Jamil Akhter, who was using a wheelchair as he cleared immigration, had travelled overseas 13 times this year. "Our team challenged him and found 250 pieces of gold weighing 25 kilograms beneath his undergarments taped to his thighs," the airport customs spokesman said.

Afghan officials seize truck with 16 tons of explosives

KABUL: Afghan intelligence officials said yesterday they seized a truck in Kabul carrying more than 16 tons of explosives hidden in boxes marked as poultry feed, months after a truck bomb killed about 150 people. The truck, with Pakistani license plates, was seized in District 9 of the capital, the National Directorate of Security said in a statement, adding that five people were arrested. "It was loaded with explosives to make bombs, suicide vests and conduct terrorist activities in Kabul," the statement said, adding that 16,500 kg of explosives was seized.

Philippine military needs 20k plus troops: Duterte

MANILA: Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte has asked lawmakers to approve the recruiting of 20,000 more soldiers to tackle increased security threats following a bloody urban siege in the south, his spokesman said yesterday. Almost 700 people have been killed, according to the official count, in over two months of fighting in the southern city of Marawi against Islamist militants who have pledged allegiance to the Islamic State group. The militants, waving the black IS flag, have occupied parts of Marawi since May 23, prompting Duterte to declare martial law in the entire southern region of Mindanao.



MULTAN: In this photo taken on July 27, 2017, a Pakistani policeman (R) stands beside arrested members of a village council, who ordered the rape of a teenage girl as punishment for a rape committed by her brother, at a police station in Raja Ram village on the outskirts of Multan. —AFP



Hezbollah fighters sit on their army vehicle at the site where clashes erupted between Hezbollah and Al-Qaeda-linked fighters in Wadi al-Kheil or al-Kheil Valley on the Lebanon-Syria border. — AP

DESPITE TRUMP CLAIM, HEZBOLLAH OPERATION BOOSTS LEBANON ROLE

BEIRUT: As US President Donald Trump recently stood beside the Lebanese prime minister praising his government for standing up to Hezbollah, the Iranian-backed fighters were busy demonstrating just how wrong he was. They were clearing the country's eastern frontier from Al-Qaeda militants in a sweeping offensive and negotiating a complex prisoner deal with the group. Far from being an ally in the fight against Hezbollah, the Lebanese government headed by Saad Hariri is based on a partnership with the Shiite group, whose clout and dominance in the tiny country is on the rise.

"Lebanon is on the front lines in the fight against (the Islamic State group), Al-Qaeda and Hezbollah," Trump said at the press conference in Washington, lighting up social media with comments from Lebanese who ridiculed his perceived ignorance of Lebanese politics.

The Lebanese government headed by Hariri was formed in December following an extended paralysis and a presidential vacuum that lasted nearly three years. Hariri, a Sunni politician squarely opposed to Hezbollah and Assad, was made prime minister only after an overall bargain was reached with Hezbollah that included the election of Michel Aoun, a Christian and Hezbollah ally, as president. Aoun has repeatedly said that Hezbollah's arms complement those of the Lebanese military.

Trump aside, there is much about Hezbollah's role in Lebanon that is sometimes difficult for outsiders to understand. The Iranian proxy is the single most potent military and political force in Lebanon, with an arsenal surpassing that of the country's army. By many accounts, Hezbollah has brought disaster to the country by engaging in destructive wars with Israel, and, as Trump himself noted, it has fueled the humanitarian catastrophe in Syria where it has sent thousands of its fighters to shore up President Bashar Al-Assad's forces.

Stabilizing force

But to its many supporters, the group is a stabilizing force in a fragile country with a historically weak central government that has been repeatedly battered by Israel and struggled against Sunni militancy, particularly since the eruption of the Syrian civil war. The party, founded in the early 80s to fight Israeli occupation of parts of Lebanon, enjoys a support base that extends well beyond its Shiite constituency. It has been a mainstay of Lebanese politics for the past few decades, taking part in governments and offering state-within-a-state services to followers in its strongholds without trying to impose its religious views on the country's pluralist society.

The group has its own secure telecommunications network and a reach that extends across vital Lebanese installations and infrastructure, as well as veto power in the Lebanese cabinet. Its decision to send fighters to Syria in 2013 remains highly controversial in Lebanon, but the group has to a large extent successfully portrayed its presence as a necessity to protect Lebanon from militant groups including Islamic State and Al-Qaeda, which proliferated in Syria and overran the bor-

der with Lebanon in 2014. This week, the group took credit for ending the presence of Al-Qaeda elements in the border area, following a week-long military offensive and then a negotiated settlement that saw hundreds of Al-Qaeda-linked militants, their families and thousands of civilians, return to Syria. The Lebanese military, which has received more than \$1 billion in US security assistance in the past decade, took a back seat in the operation.

Hariri recognized Hezbollah's role - criticized by its opponents in Lebanon - saying that the end result was what mattered and calling it "a big achievement." "We have our opinion and Hezbollah has its opinion, but in the end, we met on a consensus that concerns the Lebanese people for the (good of) the Lebanese economy, security and stability," he said.

In a clear distribution of roles, the army is now expected to spearhead an upcoming fight in another section of the border, this time against Islamic State group militants. Declaring victory Friday night, Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah said the army was perfectly capable of winning that fight but offered his support should it be needed. "We are at the service of the Lebanese army and under its command ... if they ask for any help we will help," he said in a televised speech.

Complex relationship

It is this complex relationship between Lebanese governments and Hezbollah that foreigners often find so baffling. "Both Lebanon and Hezbollah occupy a grey area: Lebanon isn't really a state, and Hezbollah isn't a terrorist group - or isn't only a terrorist group, depending on your view," said Faysal Itani, a senior fellow with the Atlantic Council's Rafik Hariri Center for the Middle East, explaining the misperceptions. "So the American tendency is either to treat Hezbollah as controlling the state of Lebanon, or to see Lebanon as a sovereign entity fighting a terrorist group. Both are false."

Hariri, whose father, former Premier Rafik Hariri was assassinated with a ton of explosives in 2005 in a bombing some blamed on Hezbollah, has a tough balancing act to maintain. Hezbollah and its allies brought down a previous government headed by Hariri in 2011 by resigning while he was in Washington meeting the US president. During his visit to Washington, Hariri responded to questions about his uneasy coalition with Hezbollah, describing it as necessary to shield Lebanon from slipping into renewed civil war.

Following Trump's press conference, during which he described Hezbollah as a "menace to the Lebanese state" and the entire region, Nasrallah said he would not comment so as not to embarrass the Lebanese delegation headed by Hariri while it was still in Washington. Hezbollah displayed its clout when it invited journalists on a border tour after ousting Al-Qaeda militants from the area, parading its fighters, armored personnel carriers and missiles on the barren mountains in surreal displays of confidence that stressed that Hezbollah, and not the US, was fighting terrorism. — AP

MINNESOTA MOSQUE FIREBOMBED, FBI SEEKING...

Continued from Page 1

Saturday's bombing comes amid a rise in reports of anti-Muslim incidents in the US, including arson attacks and vandalism at mosques, harassment of women wearing Muslim head coverings and bullying of Muslim schoolchildren. Just recently in Minnesota, an Islamic cemetery in Castle Rock Township reported it had been vandalized with spray painted profanities and swastikas.

The mosque in Bloomington, just south of Minneapolis, serves as a religious center and community organizing platform for Muslim activists and leaders in the area, according to the society. The group is offering a \$10,000 reward for information that leads to an arrest or conviction. A \$10,000 reward also is being offered by the

Minnesota chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations, or CAIR. The group said its national office is urging Islamic centers and mosques to step up security.

"If a bias motive is proven, this attack would represent another in a long list of hate incidents targeting Islamic institutions nationwide in recent months," said Amir Malik, the local chapter's civil rights director. Along with a mosque, the building houses a community center that hosts computer classes, a basketball league, religious classes, lectures and other events. Minnesota is home to the largest Somali community in the US, roughly 57,000 people, according to the latest census figures. The immigrants have been coming to Minnesota from their war-torn homeland since the 1990s, drawn by generous social services and the sense of community among the diaspora. — AP

ISRAEL SEEKS TO SILENCE JAZEERA

Continued from Page 1

The official, who declined to be named, said the broadcaster "will follow up the subject through appropriate legal and judicial procedures". Israel's communications ministry said "nearly all countries in the region including Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Jordan, have concluded that Al-Jazeera incites terrorism and religious extremism". It said it had become "ridiculous that the channel continued to broadcast from Israel".

Regional kingpin Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates and Egypt broke ties with Qatar on June 5, accusing it of fostering extremism and later issuing 13 demands, including Al-Jazeera's closure. The Al-Jazeera official said yesterday he was "surprised" at Israel's justification, and defended the channel's coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, calling it "professional and objective".

The Israeli ministry said it would also demand the revocation of the credentials of journalists working for the channel and cut its cable and satellite connections. The closure of Al-Jazeera's offices would come under the remit of security officials. Israeli authorities would also seek to limit access by the state's Arab citizens to the station's broadcasts in Arabic, the communications ministry statement said without elaborating.

Arab Israelis, the descendants of Palestinians who stayed after the state of Israel was created in 1948, make up 17.5 percent of the country's population. "The Al-Jazeera channel continues to incite violence around the Temple Mount," Netanyahu wrote in a Facebook post, referring to the Haram Al-Sharif compound in Jerusalem, known to Jews as the Temple Mount.

Protests erupted at the contentious site after Israel last month

installed new security measures including metal detectors, following the shooting dead of the two Israeli policemen by attackers who emerged from the compound. "I have appealed to law enforcement agencies several times to close the Al-Jazeera office in Jerusalem," Netanyahu said on July 27 in calling for the channel's expulsion. "If this is not possible because of legal interpretation, I am going to seek to have the necessary legislation adopted to expel Al-Jazeera from Israel."

Israel has regularly accused the broadcaster of bias in its coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Netanyahu heads what is seen as the most right-wing government in Israeli history. He has frequently criticized the news media, accusing outlets of seeking to undermine his government. The latest trouble at the holy site in east Jerusalem, which Israel captured during the 1967 Six-Day War and later annexed, followed the July 14 attack.

Palestinians refused to enter the site for nearly two weeks over the new security measures imposed after three Israeli Arabs shot dead the policemen nearby. That triggered protests which left six Palestinians dead. A Palestinian also broke into a home in a Jewish settlement in the West Bank and stabbed four Israelis, killing three of them. The crisis ended when the Israeli authorities removed the newly installed security measures, including the metal detectors.

Palestinians, who had viewed the new security measures as an attempt by Israel to assert further control over the compound which houses the revered Al-Aqsa mosque and the Dome of the Rock, then ended their boycott of the site. The Al-Aqsa compound has frequently been a flashpoint in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Under a decades-old agreement, only Muslims are allowed to pray inside the Al-Aqsa mosque compound, although anyone can visit, including Jews. — AFP

PALESTINIANS FACE JERUSALEM...

Continued from Page 1

The Shamasneh family says it has paid 250 shekels (\$70) a month to the general custodian since 1967, an arrangement used by the pro-settlers' side as proof that the family recognized their status as tenants. In 2009, the original heirs along with the general custodian launched a legal process to force the family out, but the claimants later sold their rights to a US-registered company, according to Peace Now. The NGO says such companies are often used to make it unclear exactly who is behind the push to evict people, a highly-charged political act.

Arye King, director at the Israel Land Fund and a de facto spokesman for much Jewish settlement growth in Jerusalem, denied any legal misconduct. "This house is not changing hands - it has belonged to Jews for about 90 years and it is returning to the owners after some people rented it," he told AFP. In 2013, Israel's high court rejected an appeal by the family in favor of the

claimants, concluding the family were not protected tenants.

A spokesman for Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas condemned the planned eviction. Fahamiya said they had been told to leave peacefully or they would have to pay the cost of the eviction, about 60-70,000 shekels (\$16-19,000). "We will not leave of our own will. Maybe if they force us, carry us and throw us on the streets, then we'll go. But for us to lock the door and tell them 'here are the keys, that's impossible,'" she said.

Peace Now says the house is part of a "larger process the government is undertaking of establishing settlements in Sheikh Jarrah". King, who does not dispute that, said the district is "going back to being a Jewish neighborhood". "It is happening slowly, slowly but thank God we are succeeding in returning Jews to the place they ran away (from) when the Jordanian legions bombed their houses," he told AFP. Fahamiya laughs at the idea of Jewish heirs, saying she lived there for decades without any mention of any legal owners. — AFP



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Focus

WHAT NEXT FOR CASH
RICH BUT NEYMAR
LESS BARCELONA?

Barcelona find themselves flush with 222 million euros (\$263.5 million), but faced with replacing one of the world's best players after Neymar's move to Paris Saint-Germain smashed the world transfer record. The Catalans' under pressure board don't have much time to react with the transfer window set to shut on August 31. However, they can still count on one of the most talented squads in the world led by the likes of Lionel Messi and Luis Suarez. Here, AFP Sports looks at what Barca must do to try and gain ground on bitter rivals and Spanish and European champions Real Madrid.

Avoid Figo-esque crisis

Barca will suffer on the field for Neymar's absence, but seeing one of their prized assets snatched away to an inferior league is also a massive blow to Barca's prestige and a reminder of days they thought were long gone. The Catalans used to struggle to hold onto star names, particularly when Madrid's riches came calling. Luis Milla, Michael Laudrup and most famously Luis Figo crossed Spanish football's great divide.

When Figo left in similar circumstances to Neymar as Madrid paid his buyout clause for a world record fee in 2000, it floored Barca on the pitch and in the boardroom. The money was wasted and they didn't win a major trophy for five seasons. Then came Messi and a host of world class home-grown talents to propel Barca to their most successful ever era, winning eight La Liga titles and four Champions Leagues titles in the past 12 years.

In the 17 years since Figo left Barca have become a brand and one of the richest clubs in the world, plus they still have Messi. All of which should ensure the fallow period that followed Figo's departure isn't repeated.

Spend wisely

The biggest challenge for Barca president Josep Maria Bartomeu is now how much cash to splash in the next four weeks, especially after two years in which they have largely overpaid for little return in the transfer market on the likes of Andre Gomes, Paco Alcacer and Arda Turan. There will be pressure for the Catalans to reassert themselves by landing a marquee signing with Philippe Coutinho, Ousmane Dembele, Paulo Dybala and Kylian Mbappe all linked.

However, finding a like for like replacement for Neymar will be impossible that is why he fetched a fee more than double the previous transfer record. With that in mind Barca may be better placed in the long run to save some money for future windows if they are not to end up poorer on the field and no better off financially from Neymar's move.

Give youth a chance

Most worryingly for Barca's future is that Neymar has gone in his prime at 25, leaving behind an ageing squad. Messi and Suarez are both 30, as is defensive leader Gerard Pique, whilst captain Andres Iniesta is 34 and out of contract at the end of the season. One of the criticisms of Barca's evolution in recent seasons since Pep Guardiola's departure as coach in 2012 has been that graduates from the club's once famed La Masia academy have not been given a chance as the club turned to star signings such as Suarez and Neymar.

"Barcelona have been sleeping," Barca legend Xavi told the Tactical Room last month. "They have to strengthen the youth academy." In need of fresh blood, Barca could do with the academy that produced Messi, Xavi and Iniesta coming good once more.

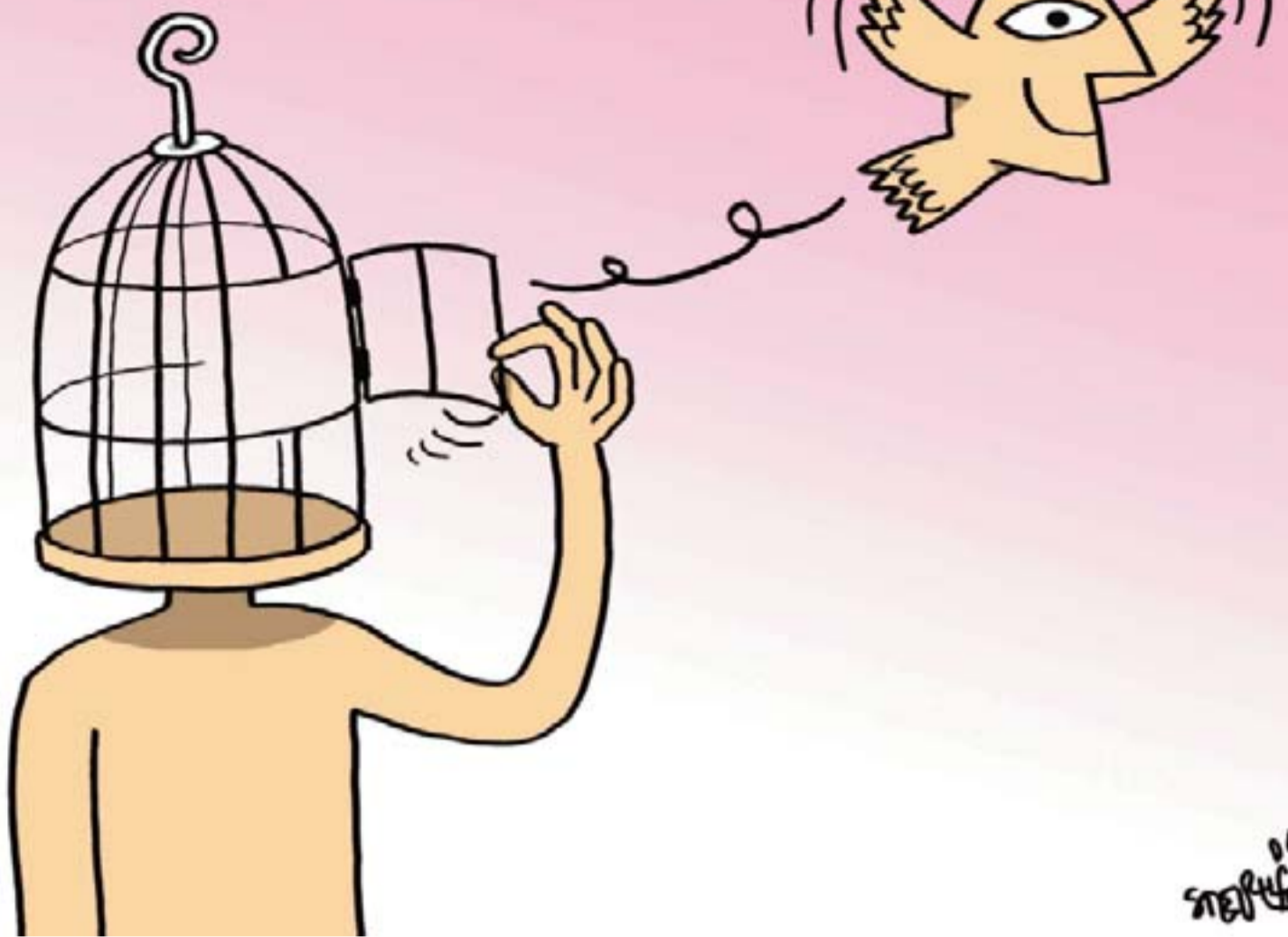
Refind balance

In Neymar's departing words: "I made a trio with Messi and Suarez that made history. Conquered everything an athlete can conquer." For three years the 'MSN' formed a thrilling front line arguably unrivalled in football history. In 110 matches together, they scored a combined 228 goals. Yet, by building the team around three forwards, other parts of the team struggled, most notably midfield which had been their strength in the glorious Guardiola years.

The 'MSN' is no more, but if Barca use the Neymar funds to reinforce their midfield to back up the firepower still provided by Messi and Suarez, they will remain a force to fear in La Liga and the Champions League. —AFP

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Cartoon for the Soul



FRANCE RETHINKS ROMANCE WITH MACRON

Emmanuel Macron's honeymoon didn't last long. Less than three months after his election, France's energetic and image-conscious president has seen his popularity drop after announcing budget cuts, launching a divisive labor reform and engaging in a damaging dispute with the military. A series of opinion polls last week showed the percentage of French citizens who said they were satisfied with Macron's policies and trusted their young leader to deal with the country's problems plunging.

The reversal might not affect the visible international profile he has cut since taking office, but it could hurt Macron's ability to secure his ambitious domestic agenda. France's Ifop polling agency put it bluntly: "Apart from Jacques Chirac in July 1995, a newly elected president has never seen his popularity rate falling as quickly during the summer after the election."

His declining approval is striking given that Macron was being credited two months ago with giving France a boost of much-needed confidence after years of security fears and economic stagnation. Increasingly, he instead is portrayed as power-hungry and inexperienced. The French media have started calling Macron "Jupiter", a reference to the mythological king of the Roman gods and what is perceived as the president's superior attitude after he upended France's political landscape and shot from relative obscurity to the nation's top post at age 39.

While struggling at home, Macron has succeeded in raising France's diplomatic profile, hosting meetings with Russian President Vladimir Putin and President Donald Trump and Libyan peace talks in Paris. Jean-Daniel Levy, director of the Policy and Opinion

Department at the Harris Interactive polling institute, connects the president's popularity slide to the government's plans to reduce housing aid for students and to initiate tax reform. The reform aims to help lower-income employees, but could weigh on retirees.

Image

Macron's image also has taken a hit during his standoff with the French military chief over budget cuts. Gen. Pierre De Villiers resigned and was quickly replaced, but some saw last month's public dispute as evidence of the president's authoritarian tendencies. Macron has promised to boost defense spending to 2 percent of gross domestic product by 2025 as part of France's commitments to NATO, but the government announced a reduction of 870 million euros in military spending for this year.

The government also launched the labor reforms that were central to Macron's campaign promise to boost France's lagging economy through pro-free market policies. Changes would include capping the potential financial penalties for companies sued for firing employees and giving businesses greater leeway to set workplace rules instead of relying on collective bargaining agreements. Labor unions and France's far-left parties are fighting the reforms, saying they would weaken hard-won worker protections. Critics also resent the way Macron is trying to speed their approval. The government is invoking a special procedure to avoid a lengthy debate in parliament.

Daniel Fasquelle, a lawmaker from the conservative The Republicans party denounced Macron for what he called the "will to weaken all opposition" and for refusing to give inter-



In this May 14, 2017 file photo, new French President Emmanuel Macron waves to the crowds as he is transported up the Champs-Elysees Avenue after his inauguration ceremony in Paris. — AP

views. Except for carefully choreographed photo opportunities, the president has distanced himself from the media. He canceled the traditional Bastille Day television interview. "These are excesses the French judge more harshly and they are right," Fasquelle said on France's Info radio. "It simply means the president is not up to the task... He's paying for his own lack of experience. Maybe he got too quickly, too soon, high responsibilities that are overwhelming him."

Government spokesman Christophe Castaner acknowledged that Macron has

been standoffish with the press, but offered an alternative explanation. "No one can blame him (Macron) for rarely speaking," Castaner told reporters. "I understand it can irritate a bit. I understand it can be questioned. But I think you and me should get used to it because the president has decided not to be a commentator (of the news), but an actor." Macron is expected to return from his August vacation to a tough September, with unions and far-left parties calling for street protests against his proposed labor reforms.—AP

TRUMP TURNS TO BASE TO PROTECT PRESIDENCY

Beset by investigations, dire approval ratings and growing party dissent, Donald Trump is stirring up his base, hoping to mobilize an army of political shock troops to protect his presidency. Revelations that a grand jury has been impaneled to investigate his finances and his campaign's ties to Russia raises the specter of indictments and subpoenas that would shake any administration. But for Trump, who is just six months into his presidency, it represents more turmoil after an exodus of top White House officials and humiliating recent reverses in Congress.

Despite a healthy economy, a new poll by the Connecticut-based Quinnipiac University shows his approval rating at 33 percent - the same level endured by Richard Nixon during the Watergate scandal or George W Bush after the grind of the Iraq war. Facing the prospect of limping through another three and a half years, Trump is settling on a strategy of shoring up the support of voters who propelled him to the White House with a series of right-wing policy announcements and red-blooded speeches.

In little more than a week, Trump has

encouraged police to dole out rough justice, summarily threatened to kick transgender personnel out of the military and played up the threat of Hispanic gangs. After warning that neighborhoods are "becoming blood-stained killing fields" he appeared in the Roosevelt Room of the White House last week to champion a massive curb on legal immigration. The next day, Trump addressed thousands of supporters at a rally where many of the themes that served him so well in the presidential campaign were dusted off again - including blistering attacks on his defeated rival Hillary Clinton.

Hitting his notes on immigration and law and order, Trump painted the grand jury investigation into his campaign's ties with Russia as a personal threat to him and his supporters. "The Russia story is total fabrication," he said, a "fake story that is demeaning to all of us and most of all demeaning to our country and demeaning to our Constitution." Given that the thrice-voiced New Yorker married an immigrant and once lectured Republicans on the need to defend gay rights, many critics have said his recent announcements smack of hypocrisy.

Energizing the core

There is still little clarity on how the ban on transgenders can be implemented while White House sources admit that the immigration proposal has scant hope of passing through Congress. Emily Ekins, polling director at the CATO Institute, believes it is too simplistic to think of Trump voters as a homogenous group, but rather a loose coalition of conservatives, free marketers, cultural preservationists, anti-elites and the politically disengaged.

But, she says, opposition to immigration is a rare common thread running through most of the US president's base. "The thing that really made this election distinctive were attitudes toward immigration, his

core supporters were the most energized on the issue of immigration," Ekins told AFP. "People ask 'is there anything he could have done to get his core supporters to abandon him?' There is one thing. If he were to back-track on immigration I think that would have been the thing to invalidate him in their eyes."

After losing a key vote on health care and then having his hands tied on dealing with Russia by a vote on sanctions that he has tried to disown, Trump has become openly critical of Congress - even though his Republican party has a majority in both houses. While Trump regularly railed against the Washington "swamp" on the campaign trail, he appeared to recognize the need to work with the Republican establishment once in power by bringing some of its main movers and shakers into the White House.

But the recent exits of his chief of staff Reince Priebus and chief spokesman Sean Spicer - both of whom were senior figures in the Republican National Committee - has made Trump's already difficult relationship with the GOP look ever-more tenuous. If the Republican establishment is being kept at arms' length, it can appear at times as if Trump is looking to a Praetorian Guard of supporters as the main protectors of his presidency. On Friday, Trump retweeted a friendly Fox News commentator who suggested there would be an uprising ahead if Trump or his family were targeted by the grand jury. "There will be an uproar in this country if they end up with an indictment against a Trump family member just to get at POTUS," he retweeted.

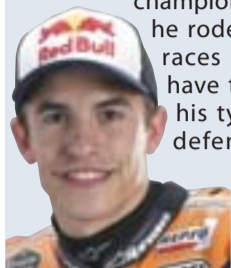
Some worry Trump's embrace of that kind of message could portend a serious constitutional crisis ahead. "We have never had a president call his supporters into the streets to resist a legal process. But it seems possible here. What then?" asked commentator and longtime Trump critic David Rothkopf. — AFP



US President Donald Trump listens as West Virginia Governor Jim Justice announces that he is switching parties to become a republican during the president's campaign rally at the Big Sandy Superstore Arena on Aug 3, 2017 in Huntington, West Virginia. — AFP

COOL-HEADED MARQUEZ AT THE DOUBLE AT CZECH GP

BRNO: Honda's Marc Marquez led a Spanish podium sweep at the Czech GP yesterday to extend his world championship lead with a second straight win. Dani Pedrosa was second almost a second back on the day ahead of Maverick Vinales and nine-time world champion Valentino Rossi. "I could have gone faster but there was no need to do so, I had it won and I'm not taking those risks anymore," said the three time world champion who however celebrated by standing on his bike as he rode past the main stand to an ovation. "These kind of races (mixed weather) can be very challenging and you have to remain focussed," Marquez said after negotiating his tyre change early. In his third win of the season the defending champion Marquez was in imperious form, starting from pole and dominating, holding his nerve during his tyre change as he temporarily dropped down the field. — AFP

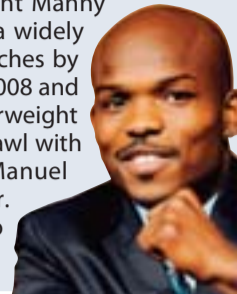


GERMAN VIDEO REVIEW STUMBLES ON DEBUT

BERLIN: The new German video review ran into trouble on its first serious test but despite the embarrassment officials insist it did not decide the Bayern Munich win over Borussia Dortmund in Saturday's Super Cup. The German Football Association (DFB) and German Football League (DFL) said in a joint statement that the still experimental video assistant referee system had malfunctioned during Saturday's match at Borussia Dortmund, stoking a debate about the new technology. Bayern Munich won the game 5-4 in a penalty shoot-out after regulation time ended 2-2. The play in question came when Christian Pulisic's early goal for Dortmund was cancelled out by Robert Lewandowski on 18 minutes. A referee was trying to determine if Bayern's Joshua Kimmich was offside when he made the assist. "The calibrated lines that the video assistant normally has to support offside decisions were not available in the first half due to technical problems," they said, meaning the referee had to make the call without VAR, the statement revealed. — AFP

FORMER CHAMP BRADLEY ANNOUNCES HIS RETIREMENT

LOS ANGELES: Former two-division world boxing champion Timothy Bradley is retiring. Bradley confirmed his decision Saturday night in a statement issued after he commentated on Vasyl Lomachenko's victory over Miguel Marriaga in downtown Los Angeles. The 33-year-old Bradley went 33-2-1 with 13 knockouts in his career, winning titles at welterweight and light welterweight. He famously fought Manny Pacquiao three times, beating the Filipino star in a widely disputed decision in 2012 before losing two rematches by decision. Bradley won a light welterweight title in 2008 and moved up four years later to claim Pacquiao's welterweight belt. Bradley defended that title in a sensational brawl with Ruslan Provodnikov in 2013, and he beat Juan Manuel Marquez by split decision seven months later. Bradley hasn't fought since his second loss to Pacquiao in April 2016. — AP



SWIMMING

LOCHE FINISHES FIFTH IN 100M BACKSTROKE

EAST MEADOW: Ryan Lochte had questions. He needed answers. After a fifth place finish in the men's 100 meter backstroke final with a time of 55.16 seconds Saturday at the US Open, the Olympian believes he knows where he stands.

"It's a good starting point," Lochte said following his first USA Swimming-sanctioned event after a 10-month suspension for his behavior at Rio de Janeiro Olympics. "Coming into this meet is just (to) get a starting point and build off from there."

Arkady Vyatchanin was first with a time of 53.91, followed by Christopher Reid (54.54), Xavier Mohammed (54.62) and Brock Bonetti (54.99). Lochte will swim in the 200 individual medley today, where he is the top seed. The weeklong event, held at the Nassau County Aquatic Center, is serving as Lochte's first recognized competitive meet following an incident at the Rio Olympics.

After a night out with teammates Gunnar Bentz, Jack Conger and James Feigen, Lochte had claimed in an interview with NBC that the taxi the swimmers were in had been pulled over and the athletes were robbed at gunpoint. In a subsequent interview with NBC, Lochte said he "over-exaggerated" the incident.

However, Brazilian authorities, citing videotape evidence, revealed the swimmers were confronted by security personnel after destroying a gas station bathroom. Lochte eventually posted a mea culpa on his Twitter account. Last September, USA Swimming and the United States Olympic Committee announced Lochte was suspended for 10 months and would be fined \$100,000 for his role, which cost him sponsorships with Speedo, Ralph Lauren, Airweave and Gentle Hair Removal.

A Brazilian appellate court in July dismissed criminal charges against Lochte,

saying he did not break the law because the swimmer's claims to NBC were not equal to filing a false police report. "Whatever happened, happened in the past. I'm a human. I made a mistake. I learned from it.

Just like everyone else. And I've moved on from it. I've bettered myself. I settled down," Lochte said. "I've learned from my mistakes. I think everyone in the world is understanding of that. The past is the past. Everyone is moving on from it." Fans stood and shot video of Lochte on smartphones and tablets, and they cheered when his name was announced.

"The love and support that I see at this swim meet - the fans - is awesome. It's one of the reasons I'm still swimming. Because of those fans and the love and the support they show me," said Lochte, who had his fiancée Kayla Rae Reid, infant son Caiden, father Steven and mother Ileana with him. "I knew just from social media and how people are so supportive of me, but I didn't know it was going to be like this."

Lochte has said he is eyeing a spot on the 2020 Olympic team. The 33-year old has won six gold medals at the last four Olympics and would turn 36 during the 2020 Summer Olympics, which will be held in Tokyo. "It's going to be a long journey the next three years," said Lochte, who is training at the University of Southern California. He estimated that he swims once-to-twice a week. "I wish I could be there more. Like I said, I go once, maybe twice a week. A good week I go twice and that is nowhere near where I need to be at.

"Before 2012 when I was at my peak, I was training daily. I was hungry. Then I lost that the past four years. Now the hunger is inside but I haven't done the training. ... Now it's go time." — AP



EAST MEADOW: Ryan Lochte swims on the way to a fifth-place finish in the men's 100-meter backstroke Saturday, at the US Open in East Meadow, N.Y. — AP



LOS ANGELES: Vasyl Lomachenko of Ukraine reacts after defeating Miguel Marriaga of Columbia by TKO in the seventh round during their WBO World Championship Junior Lightweight title fight at the Microsoft Theater on Saturday in Los Angeles, California. — AFP

BOXING

VASYL LOMACHENKO DEFENDS BELT, STOPS MARRIAGA AFTER 7 ROUNDS

LOS ANGELES: Although Vasyl Lomachenko had battered Miguel Marriaga around the ring for 6 1/2 superlative rounds, the Ukrainian star couldn't break his Colombian opponent's will until he landed a body punch that told him the end was finally near. "I hear his 'Ughhhhh,' and then I punch the body (again)," Lomachenko said with a smile.

Marriaga's corner stopped the bout after seven rounds Saturday night, and Lomachenko defended his WBO 130-pound title for the third time in nine months. Lomachenko (9-1, 7 KOs), the two-time Olympic gold medalist, showcased his virtuosic technical skill and athletic prowess in another one-sided victory. He knocked down Marriaga (25-3) in the third round and systematically took control with precise punching and graceful footwork in the ensuing rounds.

Lomachenko floored Marriaga again in the waning seconds of the seventh, and the challenger's corner had finally seen enough. "It was very hard to open his defense," Lomachenko said. "He was always looking down. I was happy when I finally got it."

Ray Beltran also fought through two cuts to squeak out a majority decision over Bryan Vasquez before a lively crowd of 4,102 at the downtown Microsoft Theater. The main event was another showcase for Lomachenko,

whose superior abilities have made him a favorite of knowledgeable fight fans ever since his amateur career. Given a US showcase on ESPN, he put on a show in breaking down Marriaga with skill and violence.

Lomachenko started to land big shots in the second round, and he sent Marriaga sprawling backward onto the canvas with a straight left hand in the third. He also put on a show, backing into a neutral corner and confidently beckoning Marriaga toward him with a flair that recalled his similar gesture to Russian amateur world champion Albert Selimov in his dynamite first fight at the Beijing Olympics.

"Unlike most fighters, he realizes that professional boxing is part sport and part entertainment," promoter Bob Arum said. "He entertains when he fights, and I think the public likes it. Who else did it like that? Muhammad Ali."

A clash of heads left a cut near Lomachenko's left eye in the fourth, but the champion shrugged it off and kept slugging. He hurt Marriaga noticeably in the fifth and sixth rounds, and Marriaga finally couldn't keep his feet. "For one round, I could just see out of one eye," Lomachenko said. "Other than that, I did everything by the plan."

Lomachenko became the greatest amateur

boxer of his generation with a 396-1 record and gold medal victories in Beijing and London. He turned pro in 2013 and rocketed to the top, winning a 126-pound belt in his third fight in 2014. He moved up to 130 pounds in 2016 and immediately claimed a junior lightweight title. After three defenses, he could move up to lightweight soon - or he could continue to show off his skills against all comers at 130 pounds.

Lomachenko was fighting for only the second time in Southern California, where he has set up training camp since turning pro. He lives and works 90 minutes west of Los Angeles in Ventura County, and his wife and children were at the Microsoft Theater to watch.

Beltran (34-7-1) improved his chances to remain in the US with another victory, albeit in an occasionally monotonous fight. The 140-pound contender, whose non-immigrant visa is near expiration, survived a rough 10th round in which he took several big shots before the final bell from Costa Rica's Vasquez.

"He hurt me a little," Beltran said. "Because of the cut, I couldn't see. I was a little surprised the judges had the fight so close. I only feel I lost the last round." US Olympian Mikaela Mayer won her professional debut on the undercard, stopping Widnelly Figueroa in 75 seconds. — AP

OSN OFFERS 50% DISCOUNT ON MCGREGOR, MAYWEATHER FIGHT BEFORE AUGUST 14

OSN LAUNCHES 24/7 FREE-TO-AIR CHANNEL

DUBAI: OSN, the region's leading entertainment network, is giving fight fans across the Middle East a 24/7 free-to-air channel dedicated to Floyd Mayweather and Conor McGregor starting August 7 ahead of the most anticipated fight of all time.

Ahead of the showdown between the undefeated, Mayweather, and UFC(r) lightweight champion, McGregor, live from T-Mobile Arena in Las Vegas on the morning of August 27, fans across the region will be treated to OSN Sports Mayweather v McGregor HD, available 24/7 on OSN Channel 7, and free-to-air for non-subscribers.

OSN Sports Mayweather v McGregor HD, will give fans nearly three weeks of action including archive fights of both Mayweather and McGregor, and a chance to relive the infamous world press tour and

The Ultimate Fighter: Team McGregor v Team Faber. In advance to the sizzling summer showdown in Las Vegas, the channel will also be premiering "All Access," an exclusive 4 episode behind-the-scenes series that looks at Mayweather and McGregor's journey to the big fight.

OSN subscribers in the region can watch the fight, live from Las Vegas, exclusively on OSN Sports Box Office HD on the morning of Sunday, August 27, 2017.

This not-to-be-missed fight can be purchased via the MyOSN app or Myosn.com in advance for the low price of \$10; or for \$20 from August 14 onwards.

The fight can also be bought from any OSN sales kiosks immediately or fans can secure coverage of the Mayweather v McGregor showdown by calling OSN.



US OLYMPIC BOXER MAYER DOMINATES HER PRO DEBUT

LOS ANGELES: US Olympic boxer Mikaela Mayer dominated her pro debut Saturday night, stopping Widnelly Figueroa 75 seconds into the first round. Mayer hurt Figueroa with a right hand and followed with a finishing combination to claim her first professional victory.

"I thought I was going to feel a little more nervous, but I actually felt calm," Mayer said. Mayer fell one victory short of a medal in Rio de Janeiro, and the 27-year-old thought about waiting for four more years for another shot at a gold medal in Tokyo. Instead, she turned pro with Top Rank last month and immediately secured this 132-pound bout in her hometown on the undercard of Vasyl Lomachenko's 130-pound title fight with Miguel Marriaga.

Mayer's longtime coach, Al Mitchell, plans to move the fighter among three

camp for the next several months. She will train in Northern Michigan with Mitchell, in Colorado Springs with USA Boxing coach Kay Koroma, and back home in Los Angeles, where she hasn't lived for several years.

"I want to get her four or five more fights to get her more polish, and see how she goes the distance," Mitchell said. Mayer had dozens of friends and family members in the Microsoft Theater. She plans to fight as often as possible while working toward an eventual title shot.

Mayer and Claressa Shields were the only women representing the US in the Olympic boxing tournament in Rio. Shields, the two-time gold medalist, won the WBC super middleweight title Friday night with a fifth-round stoppage of Nikki Adler in Detroit. — AP

TENNIS

ZVEREV RIPS NISHIKORI, FACES ANDERSON FOR TITLE

WASHINGTON: Germany's Alexander Zverev dominated Japan's Kei Nishikori 6-3, 6-4 Saturday in a showdown of top-10 rivals to reach the ATP and WTA Citi Open final against South Africa's Kevin Anderson. Zverev, ranked a career-best eighth this week, dropped only seven points on his serve and never faced a break point in the 63-minute affair, extending ninth-ranked Nishikori's ATP title drought to 30 events over 18 months.

The 20-year-old from Hamburg will try for his fifth career title and fourth of the

year Sunday against 45th-ranked Anderson, who ousted 19th-ranked American Jack Sock 6-3, 6-4 on the Washington hardcourts. "Getting the hardcourt season started with a win would be great," Zverev said.

Zverev dominated from the start, winning the first 10 points and 12 of the first 13, Nishikori netting a backhand to surrender a decisive break at love in the second game. Both men held from there, Zverev taking the first set in 28 minutes.

Zverev hit a forehand winner to break

for a 2-1 lead in the second set and held to the finish, claiming victory when Nishikori netted a forehand. "I played a great match," Zverev said. "I started 3-0. That helped the confidence. I played really well."

Zverev, whose fourth-round Wimbledon run was his Grand Slam best, won 31-of-33 first-serve points, all 13 in the first set, and 9-of-14 on his second serve. Zverev is 2-0 against Anderson, winning a 2015 Washington second-round match and a first-round meeting in

May on his way to the Rome title, his third crown of 2017 after Montpellier and Munich.

"It's going to be a tough match. Alex has had a great year," Anderson said. "For me it's really focusing on things I can do and playing the best I can." Anderson reached his first final since winning his third career ATP title in 2015 at Winston-Salem. The lanky 31-year-old from Johannesburg also won at Delray Beach in 2012 and his hometown in 2011.

Nishikori, the 2015 Washington cham-

ion, last raised a trophy at Memphis in February 2016, a run that includes six finals losses. "I don't feel like last year yet, but I feel like if I keep playing my best tennis it will come back," Nishikori said.

Nishikori was also tired after two long matches that finished after midnight because of rain. "Just a bit tough this week," Nishikori said. "I had two matches finish at 2 a.m. It wasn't easy to go to sleep. "It's not the same when you go to sleep at 4 a.m. It has been a little bit crazy."—AFP

BASKETBALL

SYRIA NATIONAL BASKETBALL TEAM HOOPS AGAINST THE ODDS

DAMASCUS: Khalil Khoury dribbles a basketball deftly down the dilapidated gym where he and the rest of the Syrian national team train, passing it through his legs before a silky-smooth lay-up.

Since Syria's conflict erupted in March 2011, Khoury's team has seen its ranks dwindle and its options for training venues shrink. But it still practises and competes, including in the prestigious FIBA Asia Cup championship to be held on August 17-27 in neighbouring Lebanon.

Among the league's biggest challenges has been retaining talent, with players emigrating, doing their military service, or being injured or killed in the conflict.

One tell-tale sign of the struggle is the unusually large age gap within the current lineup. "I'm the youngest player on the team," said 19-year-old Khoury, who moved directly onto the squad from the youth league. "My teammate Michael Madany is about 20 years older than me," he told AFP during a break from practice at Al-Fayhaa sports centre in Damascus.

"Some players have gone abroad and many others to do military service, so it's natural for players to stay on until they're older," said the small forward.

"But it affects physical fitness, and it will show when we play with young teams."

The head of Syria's Basketball Federation, Daniel Zoalkefi, said the national league has "lost more than 120 players" who have joined the exodus from their war-battered country. Jotting down the names of the 12 players attending practice, Zoalkefi said the sport also faces other challenges. With the constant power cuts that plague Syria, he has to find fuel for the generators to ensure Al-Fayhaa—the Syrian capital's most famous gym—can even keep the lights on.

MORTARS AND MIGRATING PLAYERS

The gym itself is run down and its air conditioners have been out of order for months, so training sessions are usually held at night when the mercury eases to more bearable levels.

Government warplanes can be heard overhead on their way to or from raids on opposition-held areas near the capital.

The thud of shells fired by rebels onto nearby neighbourhoods echo through the gym during practice.

"A mortar hit right where I'm standing,

and another one hit over there," said Zoalkefi as he scribbled comments on the training session in a small notebook.

"Dozens of shells have landed near the centre... Things aren't easy, but we've gotten used to it. That's war." The conflict's eruption six years ago led to the suspension of Syria's national league, which was replaced by provincial leagues until 2015 when the national competition was restored. On the court, power forward Anthony Bakar fired the ball back and forth with his teammates before dunking it, helped by his imposing 199 centimetre (six foot five) height. "The situation was very tough at the beginning of the crisis. The league was suspended for a year and every province was playing by itself," said the 24-year-old. Foreign players, who numbered about a dozen, quit and fled Syria. "It had negative consequences on the league's strength. It's not easy to convince a foreign player to stay and play in a country at war," Bakar said.

'I MISS THE CROWDS'

The conflict has also made life more difficult for the league's coaches, who have found their options for training limited by the violence. "It's not just players who have emigrated, but coaches too. For those who stayed, it's hard to get out to a field to train because of the security situation," said Hadi Darwish, who became head coach in December.

Going to training camps abroad is virtually impossible. "There's a sort of semi-siege. There are many countries that won't let us in, and visas are difficult to obtain and take lots of time," said Darwish.

"Our challenge is to build something, to build a national team that is ready to compete and represent the country in the best way possible," said Nenad Krdzic, a Serbian coach. There were no spectators for the evening training session, just a handful of managers and officials.

Just before practice ended, the power cut. The back-up generator was broken, so coaches were forced to wind up training early. Shooting guard Majd Arbasha knelt down, exhausted and trying to catch his breath. He pines for the glory days of the sport. "I miss my friends. I miss the crowds and the packed halls," he said. "Basketball puts a smile on your face. But today it puts a lump in our throats."—AFP



DAMASCUS: Syrian basketball team players take part in a training session at a stadium in Damascus on July 17, 2017. Since Syria's conflict erupted in March 2011, basketball player, Khalil Khoury, has seen his team's ranks dwindle and its options for training venues shrink. But it still practises and competes, including in the prestigious FIBA Asia Cup championship to be held on August 17-27 in neighbouring Lebanon. — AFP

GOLDEN LIONS ALSO LOSE IN CURRIE CUP

JOHANNESBURG: A miserable weekend for the Golden Lions was completed when the Currie Cup team crashed 54-22 at neighbours Blue Bulls in a third round match. The Johannesburg-based outfit lost the Super Rugby final to New Zealand visitors Canterbury Crusaders Saturday after flanker Kwagga Smith was red-carded before half-time.

And several hours later the Lions reserves fared disastrously at Loftus Versfeld stadium in Pretoria, despite playing against only 13 opponents at one stage of the opening half. Bulls outscored Lions by eight tries to four although they had three players, lock Irne Herbst, hooker Jan-Henning Campher and winger Kefentse Mahlo, sin-binned at various stages.

The home team speedily built a 21-point lead, conceded three tries when numerically depleted, then recovered to hold a 28-15

advantage by half-time. Bulls dominated the second half and man-of-the-match award winner and prop Pierre Schoeman scored the final try by burrowing over the line.

Another scorer for the winners was full-back Warrick Gelant, who received his first Springboks squad call-up this weekend, for a Rugby Championship Test against Argentina. Lions' failings were not confined to scoring fewer tries than the Bulls-fly-half Shaun Reynolds added the extra points to only one of the four.

Bulls used fly-half Tony Jantjies (five) and substitute backs JT Jackson and Tinus de Beer (one each) to successfully convert seven of their eight tries. The bonus-point triumph lifted the Bulls into a three-way tie for top place with defending champions Free State Cheetahs, who had a bye, and the Sharks.—AFP



COLOMBO: Sri Lanka's Angelo Mathews, left, plays a shot during the fourth day's play of second cricket test match against India in Colombo, Sri Lanka, yesterday. — AP

CRICKET

INDIA BEAT SRI LANKA TO CLINCH TEST SERIES

JADEJA SUSPENDED FROM 3RD SRI LANKA TEST

COLOMBO: Skipper Virat Kohli yesterday hailed Ravindra Jadeja for his all-round performance in the series-clinching victory against Sri Lanka, saying the left-arm spinner gave the side a great balance.

The celebrations were short-lived, however, after cricket's governing body suspended Jadeja from the third and final Test later this week for dangerous play during his match-winning performance in Colombo. India crushed the home team by an innings and 53 runs on day four of the second Test in Colombo to take an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match series.

Jadeja, the world number one bowler in ICC Test rankings, claimed five second-innings wickets as India bowled out the hosts for 386. He also contributed an unbeaten 70 in India's crushing first innings total of 622-9 declared. "Guys who have both abilities are very rare to find. That's where we think they're very precious, specially in the longer format because they provide you with great balance," Kohli told reporters.

"He can give you a very quick 60-70 anywhere at any stage and it can really turn the game... he's always in the game. I would say he's a very valuable cricketer for us." But India will have to make do without him in the final Test starting Saturday in Pallekele, after the International Cricket Council slapped Jadeja with a one-match ban and a fine for dangerous play. Jadeja fell foul of the umpires after the final delivery of the 58th over when, fielding off his own bowling, he threw the ball back at batsman Dimuth Karunaratne, who had not left his crease. The ball narrowly missed him in a manner which the on-field umpires determined as "dangerous", the ICC said in a release. Sri Lanka had handed India the advantage after being dismissed for 183 in their first innings and conceding a 439-run lead.

But the hosts fought back during their follow-on with a defiant 191-run second-wicket partnership between the left-handed Karunaratne and Kusal Mendis, who fell for 110 before stumps on day three.

However Kohli kept rotating his bowlers at the Sinhalese Sports Club Ground to keep the batsmen on their toes, and the strategy paid off.

TOUGH TIMES

"Today we said even if we don't get wickets early on we are going to enjoy these tough times as well, because they really improve you as a side," said Kohli, who became the only Indian captain to win two Test series in Sri Lanka.

"Success will come your way but you need patience. Very happy that we went through the difficult phases as well and you never get complacent as a side then." The hosts, who resumed the day on 209-2, lost two wickets in the morning session, including that of skipper Dinesh Chandimal for two. The batsman was caught at slip off Jadeja's left-arm spin.

Karunaratne kept up the fight during his 69-run fifth-wicket stand with former captain Angelo Mathews, who made a gritty 36 from 66 balls before being caught behind off Jadeja.

"He is a very special bowler. That is the reason why he is ranked number one in world ranking. Credit to him for sticking to his plans," said

SCOREBOARD

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka: Scoreboard yesterday at the end of the second cricket test between Sri Lanka and India at Sinhalese Sports Club:

India 1st Innings: 622-9 dec		Nuwan Pradeep c Dhawan b Ashwin 1
Sri Lanka 1st Innings: 183		Extras: (Slb, 2w, 2nb) 9
Sri Lanka 2nd Innings		TOTAL (all out): 386
Dimuth Karunaratne c Rahane b Jadeja	141	Overs: 116.5.
Upul Tharanga b Yadav	2	Fall of wickets: 1-7, 2-198, 3-238, 4-241, 5-310, 6-315, 7-321, 8-343, 9-384.
Kusal Mendis c Saha b Pandya	110	Bowling: Umesh Yadav 13-2-39-1, Ravichandran Ashwin 37-5-7-132-2, Mohammed Shami 12-3-27-0, Ravindra Jadeja 39-5-152-5, Hardik Pandya 15-2-31-2 (2w, 2nb).
Malinda Pushpakumara b Ashwin	16	Result: India won by an innings and 53 runs.
Dinesh Chandimal c Rahane b Jadeja	2	Series: India leads three-match series 2-0 with one match to be played.
Angelo Mathews c Saha b Jadeja	36	
Niroshan Dickwella c Rahane b Pandya	31	
Dilruwan Perera st. Saha b Jadeja	4	
Dhananjaya de Silva c Rahane b Jadeja	17	
Rangana Herath not out	17	

Chandimal. Ravichandran Ashwin, who took five wickets in the first innings, and pacemen Hardik Pandya shared two wickets each. The Indian batsmen had set up the victory, with Cheteshwar Pujara and Ajinkya Rahane hitting fine centuries.

Pujara, who top-scored with 133, and Rahane, who made 132, put together a 217-run stand after the tourists elected to bat first.

"Actually we were outplayed in the first innings with the bat and ball both. Credit goes to them: they batted brilliantly in the first innings and put us under huge pressure," said Chandimal. "As a unit we fought back well and I am really happy how the boys played in the second innings. We just want to take the positives out of this game and are looking forward to next one," he added. — AFP

ALI PUTS ENGLAND IN SIGHT OF SOUTH AFRICA SERIES WIN

MANCHESTER: Moeen Ali's dashing fifty all but put the fourth Test beyond South Africa's reach as England moved towards a series win at Old Trafford yesterday. When rain ended the third's play at 1615 GMT, England were 224 for eight in their second innings—a lead of 360 runs—with Ali unbeaten on 67.

South Africa already needed to set a new ground record if they were to end this four-match series all square at 2-2 as no side have made more in the fourth innings of a Test at Old Trafford to win than England's 294 for four against New Zealand in 2008.

Ali made South Africa pay for Dean Elgar dropping him on 15 when a low slip chance off left-arm spinner Keshav Maharaj did not stick. He may come in at No 8 for England but off-spinner Ali—who earlier in this match took 20 wickets in a Test series for the first time in his career—made his name with Worcestershire as a top-order batsman.

Ali, who bats left-handed, was especially severe on Maharaj, hitting him for three resounding sixes. The second of those, a straight drive that saw Ali complete a 49-ball fifty was "caught" on the England dressing-room balcony by wicket-keeper Jonny Bairstow to the delight of the crowd.

England were bidding for a first home Test series win over South Africa since 1998, with Joe Root seeking a victory in his first Test series as England captain. South Africa resumed on 220 for nine and were soon all out for 226 when Stuart Broad dismissed last man Duanne

Olivier. That gave England a healthy first-innings lead of 136. Olivier's exit meant James Anderson, England's all-time leading wicket-taker—was denied a maiden five-wicket Test innings haul on his Lancashire home ground. But figures of four for 38 in 17 overs gave Anderson, who'd struck four times from the newly-named James Anderson End on Saturday, his best innings return in seven Tests at Old Trafford.

South Africa fast bowler Morne Morkel then removed both Alastair Cook (10) and Tom Westley (nine) with the aid of gully catches.

JENNINGS FAILS AGAIN

At lunch, England were 53 for two, with Keaton Jennings—dropped in the slips on nought — 17 not out. But South Africa-born Jennings was unable to cash in on his reprieve. The Durham left-hander had added just one to his interval score when, he edged a cut off Kagiso Rabada to first slip Hashim Amla.

Prior to yesterday's innings, there had been widespread speculation that the 25-year-old would be dropped for the start of England's upcoming three-Test series at home to the West Indies, which precedes an Ashes tour of Australia.

Jennings—the 11th batsman chosen as an England opening partner for Cook since former captain Andrew Strauss retired in 2012 — moved nearer the axe after totalling just 127 runs in four Tests this series at an average of 15.88. — AFP

Sports

Vasyl Lomachenko
defends belt, stops
Marriaga after 7 rounds



Courtois, Morata
gift Arsenal
Community Shield



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ENSCHDEDE: Netherlands' team players celebrate with the trophy after winning the UEFA Women's Euro 2017 football tournament final match between Netherlands and Denmark at Fc Twente Stadium in Enschede yesterday. — AFP

DUTCH BEAT DANES TO WIN WOMEN'S EURO

ENSCHDEDE: A brace from Vivianne Miedema led hosts Netherlands to a 4-2 win over Denmark and their first women's Euro title in Enschede yesterday. Miedema pulled the hosts level at 1-1 on ten minutes and added her second goal two minutes from the end to round off the scoring, with Lieke Martens and skipper Sherida Spitse also scoring for the champions.

Denmark took the lead as Nadia Nadim scored from the penalty spot on six minutes after Kika van Es had brought down Sanne Troelsgaard in the box. Miedema then fired

home a superb cross from right winger Shanice van de Sanden who had outsprinted Cecilie Sandvej on the wing.

Martens turned with the ball just outside the box in the 28th minute and her low left-footer beat diving Danish keeper Stina Petersen at her left post. The valiant Danes equalised on 33 minutes when skipper Pernille Harder picked up a long pass on the right wing, took it inside the box and wrong-footed Dutch keeper Sari van Veenendaal, scoring with a low left-foot shot to her left post.

Spitse then scored five minutes after the break with a low shot from a free-kick and Miedema made it 4-2 after fooling a defender inside the box and beating Petersen with a low shot in the 89th minute.

The Dutch are only the fourth team to lift the trophy after eight-time champions Germany, two-time winners Norway and Sweden, who won the first edition in 1984. Denmark, like the Dutch playing in their first final, made two changes in their starting line-up as Sofie Junge Pedersen replaced midfielder Line Jensen, out

with a torn knee ligament, while Sandvej came in for left-back Line Roddik.

Propelled by a sold-out Twente stadium in Enschede, the Dutch dominated the early minutes of a very lively first half, but Denmark's first goal levelled the situation on the pitch. Martens could have extended her scoring record after 15 minutes, when van de Sanden's low cross found her inside the box, but Petersen had little trouble clearing her weak shot.

Nadim had two good chances to add to her opener, but her one-on-one with Van

Veenendaal ended in the hands of the Dutch keeper and then she missed a cross. In the second half, Van Es sent a long-range shot wide, Petersen superbly stopped Miedema's blast from long range and Jackie Groenen narrowly missed from long range.

At the other end, Katrine Veje's attempt from inside the box missed the Dutch goal, just like a rebound from a corner by substitute Frederikke Thøgersen. Troelsgaard missed the top corner by an inch five minutes from the end as the Danes pushed for an equaliser. —AFP

GATLIN GATECRASHES BOLT'S 100 METRE FAREWELL PARTY

LONDON: American veteran Justin Gatlin was booed after he stunned Usain Bolt to win the 100m world title in London on Saturday and rain on the Jamaican's farewell race in the blue riband event. Gatlin, who has served two doping bans and won silvers behind Bolt at the last two world championships, clocked 9.92 seconds, with teammate Christian Coleman winning silver in 9.94sec.

Bolt suffered a dreadful start and could only claim bronze in 9.95sec. "I'm sorry I couldn't end it on a winning note, but I want to thank you for your support," said Bolt, who embraced Gatlin after they streaked through the line with no clear victor immediately apparent.

"It's been a wonderful experience as always," Gatlin was afforded the same rough reception as he had in the heats and semi-finals, loud boos and jeering ringing around the same stadium where in 2012 his rivalry with Bolt was presented as 'good against evil', given the American's doping-tainted past.

"I tuned it out (the boos) through the rounds and stayed the course," said Gatlin. "I did what I had to do. The people who love me are here cheering for me and cheering at home. It is Bolt's last race. I have had many victories and many defeats down the years. It is an amazing occasion. We are rivals on the track but in the warm-down area we joke and have a good time." The jeering did indeed continue unabated after it became clear Gatlin, a sprinter whose past divides track and field, had gatecrashed Bolt's party.

Gatlin initially put his finger to his pursed lips as if to hush the crowd, before dropping to his knees to bow down to Bolt. "The first thing he did was congratulate me and say that I didn't deserve the boos. He is an inspiration," Gatlin said of Bolt. Coleman added: "It was an historic moment for me to beat Bolt who has taken this sport to another level and who I watched as I grew up. A humbling experience.

"I'm delighted for Justin as we have bonded and become close. I was impressed by the way he handled the pressure and the crowd." Gatlin has form as the last man to beat Bolt over 100m by a hundredth of a second in Rome in 2013 — and at the age of 35, can still produce the goods, something he has in the past ironically credited with his four years of forced exile from the track.

The evening was all supposed to be about the 30-year-old Bolt claiming a remarkable 12th world gold to add to his eight Olympic golds in what has been a glittering career. And what a gaping hole his absence will leave, no matter how brave a face track and field's governing body the IAAF try to put on it. Of his 19

global golds, 13 have come in individual events and allied with a charismatic personality, it has guaranteed Bolt recognition as one of the world's most successful sportsmen

KINGSTON IN STRATFORD

"It feels like most of Kingston is in Stratford tonight," the stadium announcer said of the welcome afforded Bolt in the eastern London stadium now home to West Ham United in the English Premier League. In temperatures of 19 degrees Celsius (68F), Bolt the showman demonstrated exactly what athletics will miss when he bows out. The sell-out 60,000 crowd roared as he entered the stadium to do his final warm-up on the track.

Stripped to a vest and tight shorts in the black, green and yellow of Jamaica, chants of "Usain Bolt" rang around in a surprisingly tense atmosphere. Gatlin, on the other hand, was emotionless as loud jeers welcomed him. Starting in lane four, Bolt was

incredibly slow to react out of the blocks, the 100 and 200m world record holder behind Coleman in the lane outside from the off.

The crowd, on their feet, roared, and so Bolt responded as he has so many times before. After 50 metres, he moved into his famed "drive phase", head coming slowly up as part of the process that unleashes the full power from his long legs. But it was not quite enough.

Teeth gritted and eyes glued on the big screen of the Trevor Brooking Stand, Bolt streaked through the finish line but any fairytale individual finish to a startling career was dashed by Gatlin and young pretender Coleman. For the IAAF, could there have been a worse outcome?

Russia remains banned from international competition over doping and now their prized athlete, destined for some kind of future ambassadorial role within the body, bows out beaten by a two-time, largely unrepentant drugs cheat. —AFP



LONDON: (L-R) Winner US athlete Justin Gatlin, Jamaica's Yohan Blake, South Africa's Akani Simbine, US athlete Christian Coleman, Jamaica's Usain Bolt compete in the final of the men's 100m athletics event at the 2017 IAAF World Championships at the London Stadium in London on Saturday. — AFP

KIRUI GIVES KENYA GOLD IN MEN'S MARATHON AT WORLDS

LONDON: Geoffrey Kirui gave Kenya a record fifth men's marathon title at the world championships yesterday, winning a seesaw race with Tamirat Tola of Ethiopia that finished on London's famed Tower Bridge.

Kirui had to come from behind to pass Tola in the final quarter of the race. And once he got through the winding streets of London, Kirui found the way clear for a victorious run along the River Thames over the last miles. Kirui won in 2 hours, 8 minutes, 27 seconds, creating such a gap over Tola that he had time to slap the outstretched hands of fans in the finishing straight before crossing the line. Tola weakened at the end and just held off bronze medalist Alphonse Simbu of Tanzania at the end.

Tola first shook off Kirui about three-quarters through the race but overestimated his strength. Slowly, the Kenyan came back and took over the lead by the 35-kilometer mark. "I feared the Ethiopian because he had such a fast time, so I just followed my plan to 35K and then felt my body to see how I was doing," Kirui said. "Good for me it responded well." Kirui, who won the Boston Marathon in April, got his nation its first men's marathon title since 2011.

THIAM EXTENDS HER LEAD

In the Olympic Stadium, Nafi Thiam extended her lead with a strong showing in the javelin, the penultimate event in the heptathlon. With only the 800-meter race to go later, the Olympic champion has 5,980 points, 172 more than Carolin Schaefer of Germany.

If Thiam gets around the two laps of the track without a serious incident, she should be able to add the world title to her Olympic gold. Anouk Vetter of the Netherlands set a huge javelin mark of 58.41 meters to move into bronze medal position overall. Thiam was second with a throw of 53.93.

In the men's 110-meter hurdles, medal contender Ronald Levy of Jamaica failed to make it into the semifinals after clipping the first hurdle with his trailing leg.

Aries Merritt of the United States, who won the Olympic title in London five years ago, easily went through with a top time of 13.16 seconds, .07 seconds ahead of reigning Olympic champion Omar McLeod of Jamaica.

Other finals yesterday are the women's marathon, 100 meters and pole vault, and the

men's shot put.

After the Americans went 1-2 in the men's 100 meters with Justin Gatlin taking gold and reducing Usain Bolt to bronze, Olympic champion Elaine Thompson will be seeking to get one back for Jamaica. Tori Bowie leads the US challenge.

The US team could well win more medals with Ryan Crouser favored to add the world title to his Olympic shot put gold. —AP

BAHRAIN'S CHELIMO WINS WOMEN'S WORLD MARATHON

LONDON: Kenyan-born Bahraini Rose Chelimo edged veteran Edna Kiplagat to win the women's marathon at the IAAF World Championships yesterday. Kiplagat hit 40km a second ahead, but Chelimo kicked in the last 2km to win Bahrain's first medal in the event in 2hr 27min 11sec.

Kiplagat, a two-time previous champion in 2011 and 2013, claimed silver seven seconds adrift, with American Amy Cragg taking bronze. "I was not expecting to win," said Chelimo, who transferred allegiance to Bahrain in 2015.

"I tried my best and I managed to become the world champion. "Edna Kiplagat is strong. At 35km I pushed, after some time Edna came and I said to myself 'let her go', I already accepted to be second. But then I caught her, I was encouraged and thought 'maybe I can try' and I succeeded."

Kiplagat acknowledged that the final run-in was "the most difficult". "All the way I worked so hard, so the last 3km was too long for me and slightly uphill. I think I was too tired after the previous sprints," the 37-year-old said. "Hopefully my body will get stronger and I keep training so I can come back and go for a major gold again."

Cragg said it felt "crazy" to have medalled. "My coach has been putting it my head that this is a potential medal and something I can do," she said. —AFP

Kuwait Times BUSINESS

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US non-farm payroll comes to the rescue

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New Mercedes-AMG GT Roadster and AMG GT C Roadster arrive in Kuwait

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ZAIN GROUP RECORDS STABLE NET INCOME OF KD 82M FOR H1

REVENUES REACH KD 508M WITH EBITDA MARGIN OF 41.7%

- In line with expectations, significant currency devaluation in Sudan impacts overall results. Excluding the currency translation impact, revenues and net income for first six months would have been up by 8% and 21% respectively
- Data revenues continue to grow, representing 25% of total Group revenues
- Zain Saudi Arabia's turnaround program catapults operation to profitability, with Sudan performing exceptionally well in local currency terms

KUWAIT: Zain Group, the leading mobile telecommunications pioneer with operations in eight markets across the Middle East and Africa, announced its consolidated financial results for the six months to 30 June, 2017. The company ended the period serving 45.2 million customers.

For the first six months of 2017, Zain Group generated consolidated revenues of KD 508 million (\$1.67 billion) down 8 percent year-on-year (Y-o-Y) in KD terms. The Group's consolidated EBITDA for the period reached KD 212 million (\$695 million), down 17 percent Y-o-Y in KD terms, reflecting an EBITDA margin of 41.7 percent. Consolidated net income remained stable at KD 82 million (\$270 million). Earnings per share for the half-year stood at 21 dils (USD 0.07).

For the first six months of 2017, foreign currency translation impact, predominantly due to the 61 percent currency devaluation in Sudan from 6.4 (SDG /USD), in H1 2016 to 16.5 cost the company \$305 million in revenue, \$131 million in EBITDA and \$58 million in net income.

Excluding this currency translation impact, Y-o-Y revenues and net income would have grown by 8 percent and 21 percent respectively for H1, 2017.

Group Key Performance Indicators (KD and USD) for the second quarter of 2017. In Q2 2017, Zain Group recorded consolidated revenues of KD 261 million (\$860 million), down 5 percent compared to the same period in the previous year. EBITDA for the quarter reached KD 104 million (\$344 million), down 21 percent Y-o-Y in KD terms, reflecting an EBITDA margin of 40 percent. Net income for the quarter amounted to KD 44 million (\$145 million), down 2 percent Y-o-Y in KD terms reflecting earnings per share of 11 fils (\$0.04).

For the second quarter of 2017, foreign currency translation impact, predominantly due to the 61 percent currency devaluation in Sudan cost the company \$157 million in revenue, \$62 million in EBITDA and \$25 million in net income.

Excluding the above-mentioned currency translation impact, Y-o-Y revenues and net income would have grown by 12 percent and 15 percent respectively for Q2, 2017.

Key Operational Notes for H1 2017:

1. Launch and expansion of high-speed 4G LTE networks across key markets saw Zain Group data revenues (excluding SMS and VAS) increase 4 percent Y-o-Y, representing 25 percent of the Group's consolidated revenues

2. Zain Saudi Arabia's turnaround and cost optimization program, combined with network upgrades and new data monetization initiatives bolstered key financial indicators

3. The significant currency devaluation impact in Sudan at the beginning of November 2016 negatively affected Zain Group's H1 and Q2 2017 financial results. Nevertheless, Zain Sudan continues to perform exceptionally well in local currency terms

4. Intense price competition in Kuwait coupled with additional operational costs in network expansion and upgrades hampered the operation and consequently Zain Group's overall financial metrics

5. The continued social unrest in Iraq, coupled with intense price competition affected all key financial indicators from the operation. Similarly,



Zain Group Chairman Mohannad Al-Kharafi

social unrest and currency devaluation impacted Zain South Sudan results

6. Zain launched iflix, the leading Streaming Video on Demand (SVoD) service for emerging markets, across several markets. This follows the announcement earlier in the year that Zain and iflix had formed a joint venture entity named 'iflix Arabia'

Commenting on the results, the Chairman of the Board of Directors of Zain Group, Mohannad Al-Kharafi said, "The company's performance in the first half has been satisfactory given the various operational and forex challenges we face across our footprint. It is our focus on innovation, customer service, and the driving of efficiencies that allows us to consistently deliver strong operational results and maintain our leadership position in the majority of our markets. The Board is working closely with management to continually evaluate new business and value-creating opportunities."

Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi, Zain Vice-Chairman and Group CEO commented, "The first six-months of 2017 produced some defining positive developments such as the progress being achieved through the turnaround program in Saudi Arabia and robust growth in our data monetization, Enterprise (B2B), and smart city initiatives in several key markets"

The Group CEO added, "Our revenues reached KD 508 million with an EBITDA margin of 41.7 percent, and data revenues continue to grow which now represents 25 percent of our total revenues. It is unfortunate that one main factor outside of our control, namely the Sudan currency devaluation



Zain Vice-Chairman & Group CEO Bader Al-Kharafi

issue, has impacted overall performance considering the sound operational progress and transformation we have undertaken across all our markets. At the same time, the various operational management teams are focused on dealing with such costly and unavoidable socio-economic challenges across several key markets and are laying the foundations to take full advantage of improving conditions, once they occur."

Bader Al-Kharafi concluded, "We also entered into several key strategic partnerships and ramped up our investment in digital technologies to further maximize the output of our modern networks with the aim of improving the customer experience and future-proofing the company's growth. The Board and executive management strongly believe in our strategic direction to unlock the many lucrative opportunities in the connected society space and look forward to the second half of the year with optimism as we deliver further on our transformation objectives in becoming a digital lifestyle operator." Operational review of key markets for the six months ended 30 June, 2017.

Kuwait: Maintaining its market leadership, Zain Kuwait saw its customer base serve 2.6 million customers. The first half of the year was characterized by intense price competition coupled with additional operational costs in network expansion and upgrades, which impacted the operation's financial performance for the period. Nevertheless, Zain Kuwait remains the Group's most profitable operation with revenues reaching KD 167 million (\$549 million), EBITDA amounting to KD 66 million (\$215 million) and



net income came in at KD 39 million (\$128 million). Zain Kuwait's EBITDA margin stood at 39 percent at the end of the six-month period, with data revenues (excluding SMS & VAS) accounting for 32 percent of total revenues. Notably, during the second quarter of 2017, Zain Kuwait's financial performance was better than the first quarter of the year due to diversification of innovative broadband offerings and increased revenues from new business streams. Zain Kuwait was awarded and is currently implementing a smart meter project, in one of the sector's largest ICT projects for the country's Ministry of Electricity and Water. This Smart Meter project is a key step of the company's strategic plans to deploy smart city solutions in Kuwait and beyond.

Iraq: Despite the exceptional socio-economic circumstances coupled with the continuation of intense price competition, Zain Iraq achieved \$523 million revenues due to the impressive growth in data usage and numerous customer acquisition initiatives in the northern regions of the country. The operation's efficiency drive saw EBITDA reach \$179 million, reflecting a 34 percent EBITDA margin. Net income amounted to \$11 million for the period. Zain Iraq leads the market serving 12.9 million customers, which represented an impressive 15 percent Y-o-Y increase.

Sudan: A significant 61 percent currency devaluation in Sudan from 6.4 (SDG /USD) to 16.5 (rate change started at the beginning of November 2016) affected this operation's financial results in USD terms for the first six months of 2017. Nevertheless, in local currency (SDG) terms, the operator continues to perform remarkably well as revenues grew by 38 percent Y-o-Y to

reach SDG 3.4 billion (\$213 million, down 44 percent in USD terms) for the first six months of 2017. EBITDA increased by 22 percent to reach SDG 1.3 billion (\$81 million, down 50 percent in USD terms), and net income increased by 14 percent to SDG 545 million (\$34 million, down 54 percent in USD terms). Data revenues (excluding SMS and VAS) accounted for 15 percent of total revenues, with an impressive annual growth rate of 69 percent. The operation saw its customer base expand 3 percent to reach 12.9 million.

Saudi Arabia: The turnaround and cost optimization program in place at the operation, combined with investment in network upgrades and the introduction of appealing data monetization initiatives bolstered all key financial indicators in H1, 2017. The operator recorded its first-ever half yearly net profit of \$14 million, compared to net losses \$154 million in H1 2016. Revenues for the period were up by 9 percent, reaching \$1.04 billion. The company recorded a significant 59 percent increase in EBITDA to reach \$346 million in H1 2017. The company's EBITDA margin rose to 33 percent, up from 23 percent in H1 2016. The introduction of the biometric identification requirement during the year and the impact of seasonality saw the operator's total customer base shrink by 15 percent, to stand at 9 million customers at the end of June 2017. Impressively, the operator witnessed a 42 percent rise in data revenues (excluding SMS and VAS) Y-o-Y, representing 50 percent of total revenues.

Jordan: Zain Jordan grew its customer base by 3 percent Y-o-Y, serving 4.2 million customers at the end of June, and maintaining its market leading position despite intense price competition. Y-o-Y revenues increased 2 percent to reach \$241 million, with EBITDA up 1 percent to reach \$116 million, reflecting an impressive 48 percent EBITDA margin. Net income decreased 5 percent to \$48 million for the six-month period. With the continual expansion of 4G services across the country, data revenues (excluding SMS & VAS) represented 37 percent of total revenues, up by 15 percent Y-o-Y.

Bahrain: Zain Bahrain generated revenues of \$100 million for the first six months of 2017, up 17 percent Y-o-Y. EBITDA for the period amounted to \$30 million, down 8 percent, reflecting an EBITDA margin of 30 percent. Net income amounted to \$4 million, reflecting a 21 percent decrease. Data revenues (excluding SMS & VAS) increased 36 percent Y-o-Y, representing 43 percent of overall revenues.

Group Key Performance Indicators (KD and USD) for the first half of 2017

Total Managed Active Customers	45.2 million
Revenues	KD 508 million (USD 1.67 billion)
EBITDA	KD 212 million (USD 695 million)
EBITDA Margin	41.7%
Net Income	KD 82 million (USD 270 million)
EPS	KD 0.021 (USD 0.07)

NBK-BAHRAIN REPORTS NET PROFITS OF \$122M FOR H1

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait-Bahrain (NBK Bahrain), the branch of NBK Group in Bahrain, reported net profits of \$122 million (BHD 46.067 million) for the first half of 2017 compared with \$92 million (BHD 34.772 million) for the same period of 2016, a growth of 32.5 percent year-on-year.

NBK-Bahrain's total assets increased by 21.4 percent y-o-y to \$14.226 billion (BHD 5.359 billion), compared with \$11.716 billion (BHD 4.414 billion) for the same period of previous year. While total shareholders' equity increased by 24.7 percent y-o-y to \$1.448 billion (BHD 0.545 billion) compared with \$1.161 billion (BHD 0.437 billion) for the same period of previous year. Customer deposits increased by 13.3 percent y-o-y to \$6.930 billion (BHD 2.610 billion) compared with \$6.117 billion (BHD 2.304 billion) for the same period of previous year.



Isam Al-Sager

Isam Al-Sager, NBK Group Chief Executive Officer said "NBK-Bahrain continues its solid performance achieving high growth in its profits and key financial indicators. The Bank's strong results affirm the success of NBK Group's regional expansion strategy despite economic and geopolitical



Ali Fardan

challenges." Ali-Sager confirmed that "NBK-Bahrain" profits are driven mainly by operating banking revenue which proves to be fruitful despite challenges imposed by the operating environment. "The Bank targets to solidify its position in Bahrain by growing core banking business activities in the

coming period" Ali-Sager added.

Ali-Sager also added that "NBK-Bahrain" is increasingly contributing to NBK Group profits. Going forward, the Bank will continue to focus on improving the banking services offered in Bahrain bringing its standards to NBK Group's best in class service quality at the regional and international levels.

Ali Fardan, NBK-Bahrain General Manager, said "This strong performance reflects our conservative management as we have consistently focused on our core business and ways to diversify sources of income. We continue to grow our operations locally by developing new products to serve our customers benefiting from the support of NBK Group."

NBK has been present in Bahrain since 1977 and enjoys strong and historical relationships with the major Bahraini and international companies. Ali-Fardan added.

NBK continues to enjoy collectively one of the highest ratings among all banks in the Middle East from the three international rating agencies Moody's, Fitch Ratings and Standard and Poor's. The Bank's ratings are supported by its high capitalization, prudent lending policies, and its disciplined approach to risk management, in addition to its highly recognized and very stable management team. NBK was also named among Global Finance's list of the 50 safest banks in the world for the eleventh consecutive time and was awarded as the Best Bank in Kuwait in 2016 by the Banker, Euromoney and Global Finance.

NBK enjoys the widest banking presence with a local and international network reaching 4 continents. NBK's international presence spans many of the world's leading financial centers including New York, Europe, GCC, Middle East, Singapore as well as China (Shanghai).



RIO DE JANEIRO: Homeless people take part in a weekly open yoga lesson at the Paris Square in Rio de Janeiro. —AFP

IN RIO, OFFICE WORKERS JOIN THE RANKS OF THE HOMELESS

HOMELESS POPULATION COMMON SIGHT IN TOURIST AREAS

RIO DE JANEIRO: Vilmar Mendonca used to be a human resources director for several companies in Brazil. Now he is homeless, sleeping outdoors along with thousands of other victims of the country's economic crisis. Mendonca lost his job in 2015 and for a while, he lived off his savings. But now, at age 58, he sleeps on a bench outside Santos Dumont Airport in Rio de Janeiro.

He leaves some of his stuff at a bank where he is a client, cleans up in public restrooms and lives off food handed out by charity organizations. "It is a terrible situation but I have no choice," said Mendonca, a thin, divorced man who has no children, as he looks at job offers on his laptop using the airport's wifi. He wears stylish glasses, a dress shirt and nice shoes. He does not at all look like one of the thousands of other homeless people in this city of six million.

In late 2016, the Rio city hall said there were 14,279 people living in the street-triple the number in 2013. Dozens of them have advanced degrees, including Mendonca, who studied business administration in Sao Paulo. His plight reflects the sting of a recession that has taken Brazil's jobless ranks up to 13.5 million people and tarnished Rio, a city that just a year ago hosted the summer Olympic Games.

"When you are like this, no one wants to come near you," said Mendonca. Like many in his situation, he has not told anyone how far he has fallen, still hoping it will be temporary.

During the day he exercises, reads in cafes and book stores, posts on Facebook where his photo shows him in a suit and tie and goes to job interviews where he competes against hundreds of younger candidates. By night, he puts on simpler clothes and a hat to go unnoticed and stretches out on a bench outside the airport, near its security cameras. "I try to stay on my own so as to remain focused because if I start to hang out with others, I might get into things I do not want, like alcohol, drugs or filth," he said.

The homeless population is an especially common sight in Rio's most popular tourist areas, including Copacabana and

Ipanema. In the old quarter, groups of up to 20 homeless people take up entire streets every night, sleeping on cardboard and wrapped in blankets.

Most are black and come from poor backgrounds. Many are drug addicts, with psychological or family problems. Among their ranks is a mix of people from street vendors to retired civil servants like Gilson Alves. Alves, 69, worked for 35 years as an X-ray technician in Rio's public hospitals. But his pension payments were late and he ended up selling his belongings and giving up his rented apartment.

The tall, kindly looking man says he never had an easy life. At five, he was run over by a street car and lost a leg. Two months ago he ended up on the street and the bag containing everything he owned was stolen. He was taken in by social services and transferred to one of the city's 64 shelters, which have room for 2,200 people. "I feel sad, humiliated, struck down for having put in so many years and then being here because of this government," said Alves, who shares a room with six people of around his age.

'Critical'

"The situation is critical," said Rio's social aid secretary, Teresa Bergher. Many Brazilians came to Rio looking for work when the city hosted the World Cup in 2014 and the Olympics in 2016. But today oil-producing Rio state's coffers are empty, hit by corruption, low crude global prices and the Olympic bill.

Former state governor Sergio Cabral, whose 2007-2014 administration was crucial to preparing the World Cup and Olympics, was convicted of embezzling millions of dollars and sentenced to 14 years in prison. Part of the money recovered from him was used to pay back wages to 150,000 retired civil servants. But the accounts are still in the red and help for the most vulnerable is insufficient. "The swift increase in the number of homeless people in Rio is due mainly to the economic crisis but also to the lack of public policy," said citizens' ombudsman Carla Beatriz Nunes. — AFP

ZAIN ANNOUNCES MONTHLY AND DAILY PRIZES WITH WAKTIPLAY

AUDI A3 2018 ON OFFER AT END OF CAMPAIGN

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading telecommunications company in Kuwait, unveiled an all-new promotional campaign for subscribers of the WaktiPlay gaming platform, which will see daily and monthly winners of valuable prizes, as well as a winner of the grand prize, Audi A3 2018, at the end of the campaign.

Wakti, meaning "My Time" in Arabic, offers customers with a new interface for remarkable gaming experiences in the world of multimedia. The introduction of this new campaign comes as part of the overwhelming demand witnessed for online multimedia content and online gaming around the world. Application developers are creating and submitting an array of multimedia applications and games through WaktiPlay, which makes it an ideal and secure platform for finding the latest in the world of online entertainment.

Zain's postpaid and prepaid customers subscribing to the WaktiPlay service through the mobile app or the website will get a chance to win valuable daily and monthly prizes, including the all-new Samsung Galaxy S8 Plus with ChromeCast Ultra, Huawei 6X, Huawei Mate 9, Huawei P10, Huawei Watch, as well as a chance to win the grand prize of Audi A3 2018 at the end of the campaign.

Customers who are Android users can get a chance to win one of the daily prizes, monthly prizes, or the grand prize at the end of the campaign by subscribing to the daily package for 100 fils daily only by sending sub 1 to 94010, or by subscribing to the monthly package for one month for KD 2,500 monthly only by sending sub 3 to 94010.

Customer who are iOS users can get a chance to win one of the daily prizes, monthly prizes, or the grand prize at the end of the campaign by subscribing to the daily package for 100 fils daily only by sending sub 4 to 94010. Through WaktiPlay, which was

developed by Huawei, Zain offers a variety of services that seek to shorten the time-to-market of newly-created entertainment services for consumers in the Middle East. The platform includes more than 160,000 mobile games available for Android devices through the dedicated mobile app <http://zgamp.waktiplay.com> or for iOS devices through the website <http://zgamp.waktiplay.com/h5>.

Zain's postpaid and prepaid customers are able to purchase online content from Waktiplay by using their existing accounts. Additionally, in an effort to facilitate the purchase process, customers can purchase the online content through a direct payment method; a newly developed payment method offered by Zain, without the need to use banking cards.

WaktiPlay offers unique gaming and entertainment services, which Zain customers are able to receive first-hand. WaktiPlay has a number of signed agreements with global and exclusive gaming partners that produce the highest ranked games worldwide.

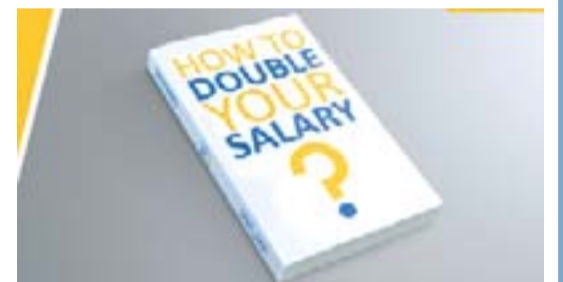


ABK ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF 64TH 'DOUBLE YOUR SALARY' WEEKLY DRAWS

GET KD 100 UPON TRANSFER OF SALARY TO ABK AND BE ONE OF THE LUCKY WINNERS TO DOUBLE UP!

Kuwait: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) held its 64th 'Double Your Salary' weekly draw at the Bank's Head Office in the presence of a representative from the Ministry of Commerce, announcing the names of the winners. The promotion includes weekly draws for existing and new ABK customers. The campaign will run until 30th September, 2017.

The winners were:
 • Suzan Esam Menqar, Salmiya Branch
 • Mahshad Daoud Abri shamKar, Jahra 2Branch
 New customers who transfer their salary to ABK receive KD 300 and will automatically be entered into the weekly draws to double their salaries. Existing



customers who are already transferring their salary to ABK are entered into a separate draw.



Amazing news from Al-Tijari...

Al-Najma account gives you the biggest daily prize in Kuwait!

CBK ANNOUNCES WINNERS IN 'AL-NAJMA ACCOUNT' DRAW

KUWAIT: Commercial Bank of Kuwait held the daily draw on 'Al-Najma Account' yesterday at the bank's Head Office to select five winners to win a cash prize of KD 7000 for each. The draw was held in the presence of Abdulaziz Ashkanani, representative of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. The following names were announced as winners of the prizes: Nour Khalaf Qutub Aldeen, Muhammad Mehdi Gareb Ali Ibrahim, Dima Mansour Halal, Mostafa Sulaiman Ali Trabulsi, and Alya Ali Theeb Shehada.

Al-Najma Account allows its customers to win a daily prize of KD 7000 which is the highest daily prize in Kuwait. In addition, the Account offers quarterly draws that provide customers with

opportunity to get their dreams turned to reality by winning great prizes starting from KD 100,000 for the first quarter escalating thereafter by KD 50 thousand for each quarter to reach KD 250,000 in the last quarter. Customers can enjoy additional benefits including obtaining ATM card and a credit card against the customer's account along with enjoying all other banking services.

The bank congratulates all the lucky winners and draws their attention that the cash prizes will be credited into their accounts with the bank. Further, the bank appreciates the Ministry of Commerce and Industry's significant role and its continuous cooperation and effective supervision on the draw that was smoothly and transparently organized.

BURGAN BANK ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF YAWMI DRAW

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank, the second largest in terms of assets, announced yesterday the names of the daily draw winners of its Yawmi account draw, each taking home a cash-prize of KD 5,000.

- The lucky winners are:
 1. OMAR ALI AL ZUMAI
 2. FAISAL FALEH AL SUBAIEI
 3. SAUD ABDULMOHSEN AL ZABEN
 4. BADER ESAM AL ESSA
 5. WAEL HUSNI BAIDAS



In addition to the daily draw, Burgan Bank also offers a Quarterly Draw with more chances to win higher rewards, offering the chance to one lucky customer to win KD 125,000 every three months. The Yawmi Account offers Daily and Quarterly Draws, wherein the Quarterly Draw requires customers to maintain a minimum amount of KD 500 in their account for two months prior to the draw date. Additionally, every KD 10 in the account will entitle customers to one chance of winning. If the account balance is KD 500 and above, the account holder will be qualified for both the quarterly and daily draws.

Burgan Bank encourages everyone to open a Yawmi account and/or increase their deposit to maximize their chances of becoming a winner. The higher the level of the deposit, the higher the likelihood to win.



First Half 2017 Results for Mobile Telecommunications Company - Zain

The Board of Directors of Mobile Telecommunications Company K.S.C.P. would like to announce to its shareholders that the company achieved a Net Profit of **KD 82 million (USD 270 million)** in H1-2017.

The Board would like to express its gratitude to its customers and stakeholders for their confidence and assures them of the company's commitment to excellence and profitable growth.

Board of Directors

45.2 MILLION	1,669 USD MILLION	695 USD MILLION	270 USD MILLION	7 CENTS
CUSTOMERS	REVENUES	EBITDA	NET INCOME	EPS
	508 KD MILLION	212 KD MILLION	82 KD MILLION	21 FILS

AMAZON SHADOW LOOMS LARGE AHEAD OF RETAIL EARNINGS

WALL STREET WEEKAHEAD

NEW YORK: As old and new Amazon.com competitors gear up to report earnings, investors are eager to know how they plan to withstand the growth of the No 1 online retailer.

So far this quarter, Amazon has been brought up in some 130 earnings calls from S&P 1500 components according to a Reuters analysis. About 50 of those came in the last week alone.

More than 30 companies reporting earnings in the following weeks mentioned Amazon during their most recent earnings call or were directly asked about threats or opportunities

regarding Amazon's growth. "Any retailer, whether it's an online retailer or has online presence, or just brick and mortar, that tells you they're not concerned about Amazon, they're either in denial or lying," said Steven Osinski, marketing lecturer at the Fowler College of Business at San Diego State University.

Beyond retailers like Wal-Mart and Target, and following Amazon's planned acquisition of Whole Foods Market announced mid-June, expect Amazon to pop up on earnings calls from food producers, packagers and retailers includ-

ing SpartanNash and Dean Foods. Amazon mentions in less-expected earnings calls could also give investors an idea of where analysts expect the behemoth to strike next. "It'll be interesting to see (Amazon CEO Jeff) Bezos' next move in terms of wanting to expand into a certain space," said Daniel Morgan, portfolio manager at Synovus Trust in Atlanta.

He said apparel as well as pharmaceutical distribution were among the areas where Amazon has been said to make its next big move. "They've shown up in places we didn't

think they'd have competitive impact just two years ago." In a sign of Amazon's widening clout, industry bellwethers like McDonald's, 3M and Johnson & Johnson in their latest earnings calls were asked for the first time about effects of Amazon on their businesses.

Not-so-great expectations

Consumer discretionary is the S&P 500 sector expected to post the smallest year-over-year earnings growth this reporting quarter, with a gain of 3.3 percent. Overall, earnings are seen rising 12 percent from last year. Amazon's own results weigh on the sector, as it earned 40 cents per share instead of the \$1.42 analysts had expected. But its 25 percent revenue increase to \$38 billion was seen as a detriment to some competitors and could weigh down expectations for their quarterly reports.

"Expectations have been pushed down because a lot of the retailers, particularly the bricks and mortar ones, have had problems - Amazon and other related - so expectations are pretty low," said Nuveen Asset Management's chief equity strategist, Bob Doll.

"Amazon obviously has a very powerful model but on the other hand, they're not going to put every bricks and mortar retailer out of business. These guys aren't going to sit and let it happen."

However, stocks in the sector approach their earnings at relatively rich valuations. Including Amazon, which has an earnings multiple above 100, investors in consumer discretionary stocks are paying more than \$19 for every \$1 in earnings forecast over the next 12 months. That is near the highest since 2009.

As costly as sector stocks are, Amazon

has kept growing faster than most, up more than 31 percent year to date. Amazon's market cap, near half a trillion dollars, places it at about 20 percent of the S&P 500's consumer discretionary sector. Its growing clout has called for comparisons with rival Wal-Mart, whose growth in the early 2000s raised concerns it would put smaller retailers out of business.

"In some ways I don't know if the Amazon effect is much different from what we've seen with Wal-Mart or Microsoft," said Jim Paulsen, chief investment strategist at The Leuthold Group in Minneapolis.

"There's fewer and fewer players and more concentration. It's the result of winner-takes-all scenarios." — Reuters

THE WEEK ON WALL ST.

Net market gains and losses for week ending Aug. 4:

Table showing market performance for Dow Jones (+262.50), Nasdaq (-23.12), S&P 500 (+4.73), NYSE (+30.20), and NYSE American (-14.25).

Daily Kuwait Stock Exchange Report header with Global logo and date: Sunday 06 August 2017.

Summary table with columns: Index, Change, Closing, Last Closing, Volume, Value (KWD), Number of Trades.

Main table listing various stocks with columns: Security, High, Low, Volume, Value (KWD), Trades, Last, Change.

National Bank of Kuwait Financial Markets Daily Report. Includes Global Stock Indices, MENA Stock Indices, Global Currencies Exchange Rate, MENA Currencies Exchange Rate, Global Interest Rates, and Global Bond Yields.

NEW MERCEDES-AMG GT ROADSTER AND AMG GT C ROADSTER ARRIVE IN KUWAIT

OPEN-TOP DRIVING PERFORMANCE

KUWAIT: Packed with power and designed for open air freedom, the AMG GT Roadster and AMG GT C Roadster are now available at A.R. Albisher & Z. Alkazemi Company, the authorized General Distributor for Mercedes-Benz in Kuwait.

Taking open-top motoring to a whole new exhilarating level, the latest AMG portfolio advances transform from coupes to open-top sports cars at the touch of a button and even on the go. Available in black, red and beige, the three-layered fabric roof with magne-



AMG



sive/steel/aluminium support structure opens and closes in around 11 seconds, while driving at speeds of up to 50 km/h. Additional rollover protection is provided by an integrated aluminium cross-member with rollover bars.

Output of 410 kW (557 hp) and peak torque of 680 Nm means the new AMG GT C Roadster not only cuts a fine figure, but also delivers a dynamic performance thanks to active rear axle steering and rear axle locking differential, in combination with the AMG RIDE CONTROL. Its 4.0-litre V8 biturbo engine and intelligent mix of lightweight materials also underlie the exclusive character of the new model, enabling a sprint from zero to 100 km/h in 3.7 seconds and a top speed of 316 km/h.

The AMG GT Roadster has an output of 350 kW (476 hp) and 630 Nm of torque, and equally impres-



Mercedes-AMG GT Roadster

sive acceleration response to 100 km/h in just 4.0 seconds, and a top speed of 302 km/h.

"The new AMG GT and AMG GT C Roadster are exciting new additions to the AMG family, and we are delighted to have them on display in our showroom. Sports car enthusiasts will appreciate the spacious interior, the perfectly weighted sharpness of the steering and multiple driving modes which ensure the high performance never falters in the transition from closed-top super coupe to open-top dream car. With their technical refinements, these Roadsters seamlessly combine the thrill of professional driving with the luxury of a convertible, making the hallmark AMG driving performance an even more intensive experience," said Mohammed Abdul Rahman Albisher, Director and Michael Ruehle, CEO of A.R. Albisher & Z. Alkazemi Company.

Highly expressive: The athletic exterior design

From the expressive AMG Panamericana grille to the long, muscular bonnet and the wide rear end, the two-seater guarantees a pure sports car experience even when stationary. The striking AMG Panamericana grille underlines the motor racing heritage: 15 chrome-plated, vertical bars echo the look of the current Mercedes-AMG GT3 customer sports racing car. The new front apron emphasizes the car's width and gives it a four-square appearance on the road. The

large outer air inlets ensure the supply of cooling air to the engine. The pronounced shoulder is suggestive of a tensed muscle, and enhances the impression of sheer power and dynamism in combination with the new 19-inch and 20-inch AMG light-alloy wheels in a 5-twin-spoke design.

Muscular with an emphasis on width: the rear end

The rear end also features numerous, conspicuous innovations. The new aluminium side walls of the AMG GT C Roadster widen the open-top two-seater by 57 millimetres compared to the AMG GT Roadster. This is exactly the width of the AMG GT R. Compared to the AMG GT Roadster, the muscular form also creates space for the larger wheels and a wider track. Both measures make for traction while allowing higher cornering speeds. The likewise wider contours of the AMG GT C Roadster's rear apron also improve the airflow at the rear with their large outer air vents. Both Roadster variants feature an aerofoil integrated into the boot lid. This is electrically extended and retracted at defined speeds, depending on the selected transmission mode.

High quality and exclusivity: the interior

The dramatic exterior lines are echoed inside, with a wide dashboard, high beltlines, concave door panels and a dynamically rising centre console. Low seat

positioning also perfectly integrates the driver with the cockpit, offering the ultimate driving experience.

Also adapted: the dual-clutch transmission

The developers have also adapted the seven-speed dual clutch transmission in a transaxle arrangement at the rear axle to the new power level of the Mercedes-AMG GT C Roadster by modifying the hardware and software. The first gear of the AMG SPEEDSHIFT DCT 7-speed sport transmission has a higher ratio, while seventh gear and the final drive have a lower ratio. This makes for even more agile acceleration and very fast responses to sudden accelerator movements.

The three transmission modes "C" (Comfort), "S" (Sport), "S+" (Sport Plus) and the individually programmable setup "I" (Individual) allow a broad range of driving experiences from comfortable to very sporty, while the transmission mode "RACE" is additionally available for the Mercedes-AMG GT C Roadster. This mode optimally adjusts the shift strategy of the dual clutch transmission to the needs of the racetrack - very fast shift speeds and highly emotive engine sound are included. By pressing the separate "M" button in the centre console, the driver can activate the manual transmission mode in any drive mode. The Mercedes-AMG GT Roadster and Mercedes-AMG GT C Roadster are now available at A.R. Albisher and Z. Alkazemi Company Shuwaikh showroom.



VIVA ANNOUNCES 1ST WEEK'S WINNERS OF 'ALLO' CAMPAIGN

KUWAIT: VIVA, Kuwait's fastest-growing and most developed telecom operator, announced the first week winners of the all new "allo" draw for its prepaid customers.

The names of the \$ 1,500 daily prize were as follows: Wasantha Lal Jalaji, Robinson David Arboleda Roserokk, Mohammad Akash Khalaf, Reynta Longayan, Hanouf Eid Khaliefah Alazmi, Abed Abdu Abu Alhassan Hussain, Mohammad Hatem Abdulfattah Mohammad Ata. Winners will be announced throughout the campaign with a grand total of almost \$150,000 to give away! VIVA customers can enjoy this wonderful opportunity to win amazing cash prizes of \$ 1,500 daily and \$ 30,000 monthly, throughout the campaign by simply buying a new "allo" line or recharging their current line through Direct Debit, VIVA website, VIVA's Kiosks, VIVA App or by calling 102. Every KD 1 spent, earns VIVA customers 10 chances to win, increasing their

winning chances the more they spend.

VIVA is the fastest-growing telecom operator in Kuwait. Launched in December 2008, VIVA makes things Possible for its customers by transforming communication, information and entertainment experiences. The company has rapidly established an unrivalled position in the market through its customer centric approach. VIVA's quest is to be the mobile brand of choice in Kuwait by being transparent, engaging, energetic and fulfilling. VIVA continues to take a considerable share of the market by offering an innovative range of best value products, services and content propositions; a state of the art, nationwide network and world-class service. VIVA offers internet speeds of more than 100 Mbps, due to the implementation of the most advanced fourth generation (4G LTE) network in Kuwait resulting in superior coverage, performance and reliability.

'Apprenticeship, lederhosen'

Albert del Barrio from Valencia was among those who benefited from Germany's welcome. After a year's exchange programme at a Prague university where he met his Italian girlfriend, he decided to move to Berlin, where "we can speak English" in his sector, he told AFP. He found work quickly in a start-up for smartphone industry marketing. "Clearly there are many more job opportunities in Germany," he said. Some 600 kilometres (400 miles) to the south of Berlin, another Spanish national,

MERCOSUR TRADE BLOC SUSPENDS VENEZUELA ON DEMOCRACY FEARS

SAO PAULO: The South American trade bloc Mercosur suspended Venezuela indefinitely Saturday for failing to uphold democratic norms amid an intensifying crackdown on dissent in the country.

The bloc previously suspended Venezuela in December for failing to uphold commitments it made when it joined the group in 2012. The suspension will have little practical effect, with no economic sanctions or changes to trade or migration, and the bloc said it would try to limit any possible impact on Venezuelans to avoid exacerbating the humanitarian crisis in the country. Brazilian Foreign Minister Aloysio Nunes, for instance, said Venezuelans remain welcome in Brazil. Venezuelans routinely cross into the continent's largest nation in search of food and other basic supplies amid shortages back home. Instead, Nunes said the move would have a "political effect."

The new suspension will also make it harder for Venezuela to return to good standing since it can be lifted only when the bloc is satisfied that democratic order has been restored.

Meeting in Sao Paulo, Mercosur foreign ministers said the move was meant to send a message to their South American neighbor, which is in the throes of a deepening political and economic crisis. "Today in Venezuela there is no democracy," Argentine Foreign Minister Jorge Faurie told reporters after meeting with his counterparts from Brazil, Uruguay and Paraguay. "Essentially what Mercosur is saying is: Without democracy, no, you cannot be a part of Mercosur."

The suspension was widely expected, and Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro criticized the decision even before it became fact. "Nobody will kick us out of Mercosur, even if they take illegal measures as they have done," he



SAO PAULO: Venezuelan citizens living in Brazil protest against Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro, outside Sao Paulo's City Hall as the Foreign Ministers of Mercosur meet in Sao Paulo. The South American trade bloc has decided to suspend Venezuela for failing to follow democratic norms. — AP

told Argentina's Radio Rebelde earlier. "It is time for us to unite, to create a trade bloc of power, of development."

The meeting came as Venezuela's newly formed constitutional assembly ousted the country's chief prosecutor, a one-time government ally turned critic.

The assembly will have powers that supersede all other branches of government, and the opposition fears it will be used as a tool to strengthen Maduro's power and crack down further on his political opponents. Maduro and his allies argue that it offers the best chance for peace after months of unrest. — AP

SPANIARDS FIND EL DORADO IN GERMANY, BUT TEMPORARILY

BERLIN: Germany's solid job market has attracted tens of thousands of southern Europeans seeking an El Dorado while crisis strangles their home economies, but few view Europe's biggest economy as a permanent home. As Spain, Portugal and Greece plunged into deep recession in the global financial crisis of 2008, unemployment rates urged, reaching 50 percent in Spain and Greece among the youth. Faced with a glut of unfilled jobs in Germany, where the economy is booming and the working population is ageing, Chancellor Angela Merkel in 2011 launched a call for young Spaniards to seek employment here.

In 2013, Berlin and Madrid signed a deal reserving 5,000 apprenticeship spots and full-time posts for Spanish school-leavers.

Between 2008 and 2015, more than 47,000 Spaniards and 27,500 Greeks aged 18 to 25 arrived in Germany seeking work, according to

figures from Germany's statistics office Destatis. But several years on, the immigration trend appears to be inverting. The number of young Spaniards who have left Germany soared from 2,800 in 2012 to 4,300 in 2015, according to Destatis, as their home economy started to recover.

Albert del Barrio from Valencia was among those who benefited from Germany's welcome. After a year's exchange programme at a Prague university where he met his Italian girlfriend, he decided to move to Berlin, where "we can speak English" in his sector, he told AFP. He found work quickly in a start-up for smartphone industry marketing. "Clearly there are many more job opportunities in Germany," he said. Some 600 kilometres (400 miles) to the south of Berlin, another Spanish national,

31-year-old Jose Ramon Avendano Fuentes is in an apprenticeship at an electricity firm.

The idea of trying his luck in Germany came from his employment agency in Albacete in 2014, after he failed to land a job at home. "They told me that it's possible to find a job in Germany where they really need people," he said in halting German. Since then, Fuentes has managed to integrate into life in Tacherting, a small south-eastern village with 5,000 people located close to the Austrian border. He now plays in a local orchestra and has no qualms about walking around in traditional Bavarian men's wear-leiderhosen. "I have about 500 colleagues, most of them are great," he said.

'We're coming back'

But some are returning to their home countries, disillusioned after struggling to fit in in Germany, where they sometimes find them-

selves with precarious contracts. Even del Barrio and Fuentes, who have found what they were seeking in Germany, don't see themselves living here in the long run.

"I would like to stay another two or three years in Germany, but after, well, life can change a lot," said Fuentes, who will finish his job training in February but is still waiting to land a full-time post.

Del Barrio is also eyeing a return to his homeland. Although the Spanish economy has been recovering, with growth expected to reach 3.1 percent this year, del Barrio acknowledged that the recovery remains fragile.

Nevertheless, he added: "I'm sure it will improve." In fact, as more southern Europeans mull packing their bags and heading home, some have even set up consulting services to help them ease back into their local job markets. Sebastian Sanz, co-founder of a Madrid-

based help group called "Volvemos" ("We're coming back"), told AFP that there is an "enormous desire" from the part of Spaniards to return. Those who fail to find a footing in Germany's vital engineering or high-tech manufacturing industries often find themselves having to reexamine their ambitions, he said. Some are increasingly "disillusioned" after spending some time in the north, said Sanz, pointing to nurses for instance, who he said found that they are "more valued in Spain than in Germany".

Javier Alarcon is one of those who went back to Spain after four years in Germany with his wife and children. "We were alone there while our families were back in Spain. With two babies, it just got too complicated," Alarcon, who was a project leader in the German auto industry, told German public radio. — AP

HUAWEI BRAND SECURES TOP SPOTS IN YOUGOV INDEX IMPROVERS LIST

DUBAI: Huawei's brand love and reputation as a company has been growing from strength to strength in the Middle East, proven by the latest YouGov 2017 Brand Index Rankings. For the second consecutive year, Huawei has secured rank 3 in the UAE Top Index Improvers list, with a significant improvement of 50 percent in its index scoring. In the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Huawei ranks second place, with an index improvement of 87 percent. By consistently enhancing its brand reputation and scoring year on year, Huawei has been winning a firm foothold and recognition in the region. The Index Rankings show the brands with the highest average index scores between July 1, 2016 and June 30, 2017.

The 'brand health' ranking takes into account consumers' perceptions of each brand's quality, value, impression, satisfaction, reputation and whether they would recommend the brand to others. "The Huawei Consumer Business Group is committed to delivering intelligent devices that anticipate users' needs and fit more organically into the way people work and live," says Gene Jiao, President of Huawei Consumer Business Group, Middle East & Africa. "Looking ahead, Huawei expects to spur continued growth as the company pushes its devices further through innovations in artificial intelligence and machine learning that will drive the new 'smart era' forward."

Huawei recently signed a memorandum of understanding with The Executive Council of Dubai to be one of the first smartphone companies to introduce Dubai Font to its users. The partnership is a further testament to Huawei's commitment to spearheading cultural and technological innovations for its consumers in the region. As a favorite brand of consumers, Huawei offers value, excellence and reliability across its comprehensive range of products to meet the needs of the most demanding global users.

With a core focus on innovation and consumer experience, Huawei has been pooling together the best R&D minds from around the globe to build

global innovation capacity and create products and services of the utmost quality and unrivalled excellence. With 30 years of innovation as a brand, Huawei continues to top the list of a number of global agencies. Fortune 500 included Huawei among its top global 100, ranking 83rd with a revenue of \$78.51 billion. Huawei also ranked number 49 in the 2017 BrandZ Top 100 Most Valuable Global Brands and number 40 on the Brand Finance 2017 Global 500 list of the top most valuable brands in the world. Huawei, one of the world's leading technology brands, strives to be a reliable and dependable provider of beautifully designed devices that exceeds user expectations.

HOW M&A ACTIVITY CAN OPEN THE DOOR TO CYBER THREATS

By Alastair Paterson, CEO and Co-Founder of Digital Shadows

Mergers and acquisitions (M&A) can be exciting, offering companies a significant platform for growth. According to the Deloitte M&A Index 2016, global M&A activity reached record-breaking deal values in 2015 at over \$4 trillion, with the resulting deals expected to add \$1.5 to \$1.9 trillion in value to these companies. But while mergers and acquisitions propel companies forward, the M&A process also fuels significant opportunities for cyber criminals. Failure to secure sensitive information during this time opens the door to threat actors looking to profit by exploiting financial markets and proprietary intellectual property (IP).

Let's just take a closer at the Middle East in terms of its M&A activity. The Middle East M&A activity recorded 75 deals worth US\$29.9bn in 2016, jumping 2.3x by value compared to 2015 (71 deals, US\$13.1bn). The oil and gas sector, along with the food and beverage, transportation, technology and utilities and energy sectors had a high share of cross-border transactions.

The acquisitions by companies based in Saudi Arabia followed by Qatar and UAE accounted for the majority of overseas acquisitions with technology being the most active sector of Middle Eastern M&A involvement. As per the prediction of an ATKearney report, over the next 12 months, it is expected that MENA and international M&A markets will continue remain active. Combine that with the explosion of big data and the prevalence of corporate data security breaches, the failure to evaluate cybersecurity risks quickly turn a great opportunity into an unmitigated failure.

Understanding the cyber risks present along the M&A process is the first step toward mitigating the risk. While each process will have its own nuances, all tend to follow five general stages. Along each stage new risks emerge and advanced attackers, well-versed in corporate espionage techniques, stand to profit. Here's a brief look at each of the stages and the types of risks and possible degradations in security posture that may occur.

Preparation for acquisition and/or valuation

Organizations are vulnerable to threats right



Alastair Paterson

from the start. Job listings for positions that require corporate development or other M&A-related experience, or activities like another round of funding or other initiatives to boost the company in the eyes of deal makers, can be clues that M&A activity is in the offing. Astute financial analysts may draw their own conclusions based on activity and start to comment. Meanwhile, sophisticated threat actors who have picked up the scent may target executives typically involved with such activity with spear-phishing campaigns, man-in-the-middle malware attacks, or simply through unsecured wireless Internet connections. Not only is the deal exposed earlier than intended, possibly leading to a host of complications, but information gained can be highly valuable to those with nefarious motivations.

Marketing

As companies move through the process they may alter their marketing behaviors. To the public these marketing activities may appear innocuous. But to a trained eye an identifiable pattern and opportunity can emerge. A company slowing down its cycle of product announcements or showing strength in profitability while quietly reducing staff can raise suspicion. Employees who have lost their jobs may start to leak information and further tip off cybercriminals who may launch spear-phishing campaigns to confirm their suspicions and acquire valuable data.

Due diligence

This stage of the process can provide executives with opportunities to gain significant insights to help reduce risk, but it can also provide cybercriminals with significant opportunities to steal data. The acquiring

company has the chance to review the security and integrity of the systems of the company they are merging with and understand how to mitigate risk before finalizing the deal. At the same time, both companies may experience an increase in spear-phishing attempts as attackers strive to take advantage of a surge in data that exchanges hands during due diligence.

Negotiations, signing and announcements

Organizations that lack social media policies, mobile device management and endpoint protection may find data leaked inadvertently as the end of the M&A process approaches. While all employees should be vigilant at this stage, executives are particularly susceptible to leaking data. Poorly secured personal devices and the use of public Wi-Fi to review documents while on the road or in meetings provide bad actors with ample opportunity to steal high-value data. Once the announcement is made, the doors will open even wider and less sophisticated attackers will also try to profit or cause disruptions.

Waiting period and final merge

The main risk at this stage is from employees who fear a job loss or change and may leak IP or other data. If an attacker has established a foothold in a merging network, this is also an optimal time to monitor communications and patiently wait for deeper access or utilize that information for social engineering.

Clearly, vigilance is required at all stages of the M&A process, as a failure to secure sensitive information constitutes both a threat to the organization and an opportunity for bad actors. Individuals' behaviors, unintentional clues and vulnerabilities in inherited network infrastructure and software can all open the door to cyber risk. However, organizations armed with these insights can better understand the threats they face and mitigate accordingly. Given the value to be gained once the companies are combined, it's safe to say that ensuring successful integrations will be a priority on boardroom agendas. Security, both during the M&A process and after the deal is closed, will play a central role in positive outcomes.



BEIJING: People walk past an Apple store in Beijing.—AFP

APPLE'S CHINA PROBLEM HIGHLIGHTS CONUNDRUM FOR TECHNOLOGY SECTOR

SAN FRANCISCO: Apple's decision to bow to Chinese officials by removing apps to sidestep online censorship underscores the dilemma faced by US tech companies seeking to uphold principles while expanding their business. The iPhone maker is the latest from Silicon Valley to face a conundrum in balancing their value for human rights and free expression against a government intent on controlling online content. Apple this week acknowledged it had removed applications for so-called VPNs or virtual private networks, despite objections.

"We would rather not remove the apps, but like in other countries, we obey the laws where we do business," Apple chief Tim Cook said during an earnings call. "We are hopeful that over time, the restrictions we are seeing are loosened, because innovation really requires freedom to collaborate and communicate, and I know that is a major focus there." The prospect of Apple scoring a hit with a 10th-anniversary iPhone model in the months ahead appeared to outweigh backlash from online rights activists who criticized the world's most valuable technology company for not standing up for online freedom.

"There is a belief that millennial really want companies to be more active in protecting people's rights and free speech," Silicon Valley analyst Rob Enderle of Enderle Group said. "There is obviously no connection between the rhetoric and buying behavior at this point." Chinese internet users have for years sought to get around the so-called "Great Firewall" restrictions, including blocks on Facebook and Twitter, by using foreign VPN services.

"If other companies follow Apple's lead, it could soon be much harder for people in China to access information freely online," Amnesty International said in a blog post. "Businesses have a responsibility to respect international human rights law. We would have expected a more robust stance from Apple, a company that prides itself on being a privacy champion."

Under pressure

Cook maintained that the App Store in China remained stocked with VPN apps, including creations from developers outside that country. A commercial VPN

securely relays internet communications through a private channel, hiding it from locals networks and, potentially, censors. "This wasn't a choice they really wanted to make, and I'm not sure what they could have done about it," analyst Enderle said of Apple. "They are not doing well in China, and ticking off the leaders would certainly not help."

Apple and Chinese censors will ultimately "face a barrage of pressures" from each other and from technology users in China, US-based internet rights group Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF) said in an online post. "If Apple makes too great a stand against China's laws, it could be thrown out of the country," Eva Galperin and Amul Kalia of the EFF said in post. "But if China pushes its censorship system too hard, it will have to face the growing frustrations of its own elite." They reasoned that there was hope the crackdown on VPNs in China would recede when the political climate there improves.

Android upside?

There is a history of US internet stars being humbled in China. Yahoo a decade ago wound up having to make amends after going along with Chinese officials demanding help some identifying pro-democracy advocates who used Yahoo online message boards. Microsoft has been doing business in China for some 20 years, staying within guidelines set by the government. Seven years ago, Google pulled its search engine out of mainland China in a rare stand against censors and for internet privacy.

"Google stood up and left, and now they aren't a power in China," Enderle said of the cost of the move. However, the removal of VPN applications in China by Apple could ramp up the popularity of iPhone rivals powered by Google-backed Android software that lets people get apps from unofficial marketplaces. Apple's business model which requires users to install only approved applications, ironically, makes it easier for a regime like China to exert control, analysts point out. Galperin and Kalia of the EFF said the Apple policy "creates a single chokepoint for free expression and privacy."—AFP

A CHINESE 3D PRINT STUDIO FUSES ANCIENT ART WITH MODERN TECH

BEIJING: The small, ornate figurines look like relics of a bygone age: a serene Buddha's head from the Tang dynasty, or a collection of stone-faced soldiers from the Qin era. The creation process, however, is decidedly modern. In northwest Shaanxi province's capital of Xian, home to such historic sites as the clay Terracotta Army and the 1,000-year-old Giant Wild Goose Pagoda, a small studio and factory uses 3D printing technology to replicate ancient art. "All the intricate details of the original design are preserved in a 3D mould," Xi Xin, the president of the Xian Chizi Digital Technology company, said.

"Human workers may not be able to produce everything we want in the design, but the printer can do it all." The firm, whose products are sold at museum shops and to personal collectors, is among the businesses taking advantage of China's foray into 3D printing—a rapidly-growing industry that has been incorporated into the country's national manufacturing strategy. "In the last five years, 3D printing in China has grown from a one billion yuan (\$149 million) industry to a more than 100 billion yuan (\$14.9 billion) industry," Luo Jun, the head of the China 3D Printing Technology Industry Alliance, said. —AFP



CHINA: This undated handout from the Xi'an Chizi Digital Technology company shows products printed using 3D printing technology in Xian in China's northern Shanxi province.—AFP

SHARING DATA THROUGH BLOCKCHAIN MADE EASIER

Mohammed Amin, Senior Vice President, Middle East, Turkey and Africa at Dell EMC said: "Today, big data appears to be restricted by access, authenticity and monetization challenges. However, sharing data through Blockchain technology, can not only help in unlocking new enterprise value for organizations but also address three of its unresolved challenges: controlling data, ensuring data credibility, and building universal exchanges."

Therefore, Blockchain technology is proving to be an effective approach to create a universally cohesive ecosystem that enables better collaboration for data exchange that can accelerate development of smart cities and transform mainstay industries such as healthcare and financial services.

Dell EMC is dedicated to unlocking the real potential of data as an economic asset by making it more accessible and democratized - central to the core objectives of the Dubai Blockchain strategy."



Mohammed Amin

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE, ANALYTICS ACCELERATE PACE OF DIGITAL WORKPLACE TRANSFORMATION

DUBAI: New research which examined how organizations are evolving from a traditional office environment to a digital work place reveals that gaining competitive advantage and improving business process are among the top goals of their digital transformation strategy. This is according to 40 percent of 800 organizations in 15 countries on five continents that were interviewed for Dimension Data's Digital Workplace Report: Transforming Your Business which was published recently. Another insight in the Report is that digital transformation is not just about adopting the technologies of the past: 62 percent of research participants expect to have technology such as virtual advisors in their organizations within the next two years.

In addition, 58 percent expect to start actively investing in technology that powers virtual advisors in the next two years. "In a new Digital Transformation in the Workplace report published by Dimension Data last month, the research revealed that countries in the GCC and the Middle East are rapidly divesting from oil driven economies into digital, smart, mobile, and data enabled services driven economies. Migrating their workforces into transformative work environments is critical to ensure success in this journey," says Mechelle Buys Du Plessis, Managing Director, Dimension Data, Middle East.

Today, the digital workplace is no longer just made up of managers and those managed; co-workers collaborating with one another to complete projects; and employees interacting with customers and part-



Mechelle Buys Du Plessis

ners. It's increasingly populated by 'virtual employees' who do not exist in a physical sense, but nonetheless play an important role in the organization. While artificial intelligence (AI) technology is still in its infancy, it is sufficiently advanced to be working its way into companies in the form of virtual assistants, and, in certain industries such as banking, virtual tellers

and virtual advisors. Manifested as bots embedded into specific applications, virtual assistants draw on AI engines and machine learning technology to respond to basic queries. "It's no longer enough to simply implement these technologies," says Krista Brown, Dimension Data's Group End-user Computing SVP. "Organizations have grown their use of analytics to understand how these technologies impact their business performance: 64% use analytics to improve their customer services, and 58 percent use analytics to benchmark their workplace technologies." Meanwhile, around 30 percent of organizations said they're far along in their digital transformation initiatives and are already reaping the

benefits, while others are still in the early stages of developing a plan.

Brown says one reason that could be holding companies back from implementing a digital workplace is their corporate culture. Often, technology and corporate culture inhibit - rather than encourage - work style change. However, the number one barrier to successful adoption of new work styles was IT issues, and research participants cited organizational issues as another. "The complexity of the existing IT infrastructure can present a major hurdle to implementing new collaboration and productivity tools to support flexible work styles. Successful transformation implementations are achieved when IT works closely with line-of-business heads," says Brown and adds that these transformations are supporting new ways of doing business or supporting clients.

IT leaders were asked to rank which technologies were most important to their digital workplace strategies. Robert Allman, Group Senior Vice President, Customer Experience and Collaboration believe that mobility is pivotal to a digital workplace. "Business leaders and CIOs are switched on to the importance of mobility in the digital workplace, with an even mix of companies supporting company-provided and employee-owned devices in the work environment." Enterprises are also turning to new workplace technologies to drive increased customer service, with 45 percent of respondents saying they've improved customer satisfaction as a result of their use of digital workplace technology.

PARIS'S URBAN ROOFTOP HIVES HOPE TO PRESERVE HONEYBEES

PARIS: To check the beehives he has set up on the roof of the sprawling Monnaie de Paris on the banks of the River Seine, Audric de Campeau slips on a harness over tan-colored trousers. The beekeeper then hooks his leg harness to a metal cable anchored to the roof's edge, running the length of the entire structure. "It's not dangerous, but my insurance insists on it," he says. Elegantly dressed in a tweed jacket, pink shirt and straw hat customized with a protective net, he steps carefully between the rafters to reach the three beehives he set on the flat side of the roof.

From there, the 34-year-old will head to the roof of the neighboring Institut de France, another historic building with a majestic domed centre. He will don the same leg harness on the rooftop of the Boucheron fine jewelry boutique overlooking the Place Vendome square, on the other side of the Seine, before making his way to his three beehives. In the distance, the Eiffel Tower rises far above the slanted Parisian rooftops.

"I'm lucky, my office is in the sky," he says, smiling, adding that he does have "to climb a lot of stairs". De Campeau is an urban beekeeper, and his beehives sit atop monuments and office buildings and on rooftop terraces. The French capital boasts more than 700 beehives, according to 2015 fig-

ures, most located on rooftops such as those of the haute cuisine Tour d'Argent restaurant, the Grand Palais and the Musee d'Orsay. More and more companies, including AFP, are also adding beehives to the tops of their office buildings. Beehives have long sat on the roof of the Paris Opera, and the Luxembourg Gardens has had beehives since 1856.

Worrying bee decline

Urban rooftops are one of the ways the city is fighting against the "worrying" decline in the bee population, a trend France recognized early on despite its elevated use of pesticides. The country is one of Europe's leading users of pesticides. The more pesticides are used, the more pests develop resistance to them, which leads to even more intensive use of pesticides. Bees around the world—especially in Europe and North America—have been decimated in recent years by a mysterious blight called "colony collapse disorder", in which entire populations disappear or die out.

Research has pointed an accusing finger at agricultural pesticides, viruses, fungi, parasites, poor weather, malnutrition because of fewer flowers—or some combination of the above. According to the EU economic and social advisory committee (EESC), "nearly



PARIS: This file photograph shows French beekeeper Audric de Campeau as he checks beehives set on the roof of the Monnaie de Paris in Paris, with Notre-Dame Cathedral in the background. — AFP

half of wild bee species have disappeared in just 30 years". But more than just the survival of the bees is at stake. Scientists have calculated that 1.4 billion jobs, and three-quarters of crops, depend on pollinators, mainly bees. All told, there are some 20,000 bee species that fertilize more than 90 percent of the world's 107 major crops.

At the same time, the United Nations estimates that 40 percent of invertebrate pollinators—mostly bees and butterflies—are at risk of extinction. In an effort to defend the bee, the northern French city of Lille began providing pesticide-free environments in 2007. The southern city of Montpellier soon followed by installing bee-

hives on the roofs of many high schools. Though experts say it may not solve the problem, Lille's environmental services said 80 species of wild bees that had disappeared from the area have returned since beginning the program.

Liquid gold

De Campeau sees his mission as two-fold: take care of the health of his bees while also producing what he calls "liquid gold" for his company, "Le Miel de Paris" (Paris Honey). Depending on the agreement he has with building owners, either he sells the honey or they use it. At the Monnaie de Paris, chef Guy Savoy uses de Campeau's honey in his restaurant desserts. He sells his homemade honey in 200ml bottles for 34.90 euros (\$41).

As well as honey, de Campeau also makes mead—an ancient alcoholic honey-based drink—in oak barrels once used for wine or sherry that are stored in a secret cellar 30 meters underground.

For a man who spent his youth illegally exploring the underground Catacombs of Paris, de Campeau feels right at home. "Stable temperature, high humidity, perfect to prevent evaporation, and zero vibration," de Campeau said, adding that these factors are essential for raising a blend "worthy of a great vintage". — AFP



MASSACHUSETTS: This file photo by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration shows an endangered North Atlantic right whale which is entangled in heavy plastic fishing link (Green Line-C) off Cape Cod, Massachusetts. — AFP

CANADIAN GOVT WILL USE ALL RESOURCES TO PROTECT WHALES

MONTREAL: The Canadian government said Thursday it would "bring all the resources necessary" to protect the endangered North Atlantic right whale, after 10 of the mammals died in the Gulf of St Lawrence in the past two months. The North Atlantic right whale, which is much larger than a humpback or a gray whale, is one of the most endangered whale species, with only about 500 of them left in the world. Most of the 10 carcasses found in the last two months showed signs of being tangled in fishing nets or cables.

Canada "will bring all the resources necessary to bear to ensure that every possible measure is in place" for both the protection and recovery of the species, said Fisheries Minister Dominic

LeBlanc. In July, authorities banned fishing in several parts of the Gulf of St Lawrence to protect the whales. "We estimate maybe 80 to 100 right whales currently in the Gulf of St Lawrence. That's two or three times higher than any other previous year," LeBlanc told a press conference. "So the phenomenon of seeing perhaps 200 or more right whales in the Gulf of St Lawrence in an area of high marine and shipping traffic, but also an area of extensive commercial fishery, is new." The government is planning to increase the number of surveillance flights checking on the whales, and also to use acoustic equipment that would detect them miles before they reach the shore, allowing fishermen to be warned. — AFP

FRENCH FARMERS, BREEDERS DEMAND ACTION AGAINST WOLVES

SEVERAC-LE-CHATEAU, France: Hundreds of farmers, shepherds and politicians rallied in Aveyron, southern France, on Saturday calling for action to halt the slaughter of livestock by packs of wolves. The demonstrators gathered more than 3,000 sheep, about a hundred cattle and a few horses in a field to represent the number of animals killed by wolves in France in recent months. "They tell us that 80 percent of French are in favor of the wolf, but that's

because these people don't know the reality," said shepherd Melanie Brune.

Brune and other livestock breeders were calling for government action to tackle the problem. So far this year, wolves have killed 4,153 animals in France, according to an official government tally. In 2016, the 10,234 animals were killed, up from 9,112 the previous year. Wolves used to be common in France before dying out in the early 1930s. — AFP

KOSOVO ROMA SEEK JUSTICE FOR LEAD-POISONED CHILDREN

'ROMA MINORITY NOT TREATED AS HUMANS'

MITROVICA, Kosovo: Kosovo's Roma minority "are not treated as humans," laments Florim Masurica, who is seeking justice for his disabled son, one of the children suffering from suspected lead-poisoning contracted at post-war United Nations camps. Kosovo's pro-independence ethnic Albanian rebels saw Roma people as guilty of cooperation with Serbs during the 1998-1999 conflict—a gratuitous accusation as Roma largely kept out of the fighting.

But some of them faced summary executions, while others were forced to flee from their homes that were looted and destroyed after the departure of Serb forces from Kosovo following a NATO bombing campaign. That was the case in the Roma neighborhood of Mahalla in Kosovo's northern city of Mitrovica. Around 600 of its inhabitants were given shelter by the UN mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) in five camps, initially meant as a temporary measure for 45 days, but they ended up staying six years.

Living near a heavy metals mining complex, these displaced people were unaware that they were breathing in air and trampling on soil contaminated with lead and other toxins, as scientific tests have showed. In 2005, human rights groups became concerned by the symptoms of Roma children in the camps such as black gums, headaches, learning difficulties, convulsions and high blood pressure. UNMIK then evacuated the camps—but for some of its residents this was too late.

Bajram Babajboks, 65, claims that there was no single member of his family—four daughters, seven sons and 60 nieces and nephews—"who is not a victim of lead toxins". "It's the doctors who say it," he told AFP, showing the latest blood test results.

Lead contamination

In February 2006, a panel of experts appointed by the UN—following complaints by 138 Roma—came up with a 79-page report examining the claims of poisoning.

It cited tests conducted by the World Health Organization in 2004, showing most children in the most exposed camps had "above acceptable" lead levels in their blood and that "more than 80 percent of soils in the camps were 'unsafe' because of lead contamination". An environmental medicine specialist, Klaus-Dietrich Runow, took



KOSOVO: This file photo shows Jetullah Veliu, 16-years-old, sitting on a wheelchair along a street in the Roma neighborhood in the town of Mitrovica. — AFP

hair tests in the camps in 2005 with "the highest ever seen (results) in the values of heavy metal in human hair samples".

The panel concluded that UNMIK had failed "to comply with applicable human rights standards in response to the adverse health condition caused by lead contamination in the IDP camps and the consequent harms suffered by the complainants". Piles of industrial waste still litter the ground where the now-dismantled tents of the Zitkovac camp once stood. Contaminated dust "covered the camp as soon as the wind blew," recalled Veli Jashari. "My son was born disabled, with his legs paralyzed," said the 58-year-old, as his son Jetullah, seated in a wheelchair, watched other children playing with a small stray dog.

"I dream of standing on my feet someday. I want to be like the others. I want to go to school," said Jetullah, now 16. Jashari said his second son, five-year-old Sejdullah, was also paralyzed—although he was born after the family left the camp. His father suspects he inherited the lead-poisoning.

According to the WHO, children are "particularly vulnerable to the neurotoxic effects of lead, and even relatively low levels of exposure can cause serious and in some cases irreversible neurological damage". But no exhaustive survey of the camps' victims has been done—which, to the Roma community, is additional evidence of discrimination.

Immoral response

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres in May this year expressed the organization's "profound regret for the suffering endured by all individuals" living in the camps. As an "exceptional measure," he decided to set up a trust fund to implement assistance projects for the Roma community. But Kujtim Pacaku, a former Roma MP in Kosovo's parliament, said it was "immoral to make up for the mass abuse only with money". Like other Romas calling for justice, he wants the case investigated and accountability established before sending "a message to everyone: you cannot treat people like that just because they are Roma". — AFP

CLINIC PAGE



Kuwait Times
THE LEADING INDEPENDENT DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF

Dr. Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem
فهد علي المخيزيم

استشاري أطفال
M.B. Bch. FRCPC. FAAP. PEM

Al-Jabriya - Block 1A - St. 1 - Mazaya Building - 15th Floor - Clinic B - Tel.: 22269369 - Fax: 22269368



AL-SAAD FOUNDATION CONCLUDES SHAYOUKHA CLUB, HONORS STUDENTS

Al-Saad Foundation has concluded the second summer program of Kuwait Innovation Ibtikar Shayoukha Club in cooperation with manpower restructuring program. Al-Saad Foundation Chairman Sheikh Fadia Al-Saad said in a press statement that "Shayoukha Club" depends mainly on play-learning method in a way that exploits time and this attracts students from kindergarten, primary and elementary schools. She added saying that Shayoukha summer club aims primarily at using students' free time at kindergarten, primary and intermediate stages through play- learning and organizing entertainment trips under the supervision of a specialized women cadres in

addition to the discovery of their scientific skills and the means of developing them. She said that Kuwait Ibtikar aims to translate the noble words of His Highness the Amir that urged state bodies to take care of youths, adding that Kuwait Ibtikar has provided various programs and competitions throughout the year to invest the girls' spare time. She pointed out that the summer club is one of the distinguished activities launched by Al-Mabarrah from a scientific vision that aspires to the future. The club offers a number of activities and programs that are compatible with the interests of children and young people that support the physical, psychological, environmental and social needs and provide

them with technical skills and innovation. She stressed that the aim is to establish the Kuwaiti national identity for children and young people and provide an environment conducive to the growth of their personalities and work to refine their talents and facilitate their integration into society to be active members. She also pointed out that it aims to develop social sense and raise the value of collective and voluntary work and encourage the automatic expression and individual and collective creations, linking them to society and instilling national loyalty in the hearts of female students. Sheikha Fadia said that Kuwait Innovation initiative of Al-Saad Foundation for

Knowledge and Scientific Research is a Kuwaiti initiative inspired by the principles of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and is based on his approach to spread science and culture with the progress of civilization. She explained that she is concerned with students in the field of scientific research and talent and seeks to empower tomorrow's woman by investing in today's students by discovering their talents, refining and developing them for the benefit of their community in Kuwait and other regional areas. In turn, the Director General of the Initiative (Ibtikar) Dr Fatima Al-Hashim said in a similar statement that the summer club

aims to fill the leisure time of students from the age of 4 to 14 years and it includes educational activities of creative aspects. She added that the summer program had included entertainment journeys and other constructive activities that aimed develop the skills of the participant girls and to get a creative young generation that can serve their country. She pointed out that the Manpower restructuring program aims to provide appropriate training for students to familiarize them with the nature and requirements of working at non-governmental organizations and preparing them to the labor market. At the end of the ceremony the participant students were honored.

JUMEIRAH MESSILAH BEACH HOTEL & SPA BAGS SERIES OF LEADING INDUSTRY AWARDS



Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel & Spa, Kuwait's idyllic resort has been recognized for its outstanding excellence across multiple guest touch-points at a series of international award ceremonies. First up, the luxurious landmark was recognized for its industry-leading service, quality and cuisine with several awards in the World Luxury Spa and Restaurant Awards 2017 held on 22 July in Vietnam. Following the Vietnamese gongs, the property's Talise Spa - a luxury signature feature of the Hotel which covers 3500 sqm and offers an array of facilities, including 17 treatment rooms, a fitness studio and the exclusive Himalayan Salt Room - was crowned a winner collecting the World Luxury Spa Award. There was more success for Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel & Spa at the glittering World Luxury Restaurant Awards, where two of the hotel's seven dining outlets gained recognition for the quality of their culinary offerings. Pepper Steakhouse, the signature fine dining outlet that offers impeccable quality, taste and ambiance, picked up the award for the luxury Steakhouse/Grill and Luxury Hotel Restaurant, while Olio restaurant, which provides authentic classic dishes and taste from Italy's renowned food regions, was named the winner of the Italian Cuisine. The hotel also picked up accolades at the MEA Markets



Kuwait Enterprise Awards 2017, where it claimed the title of Best International Luxury Hotel Resort Chain. Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel & Spa was named 'Best Business Hotel in Kuwait' at the

prestigious Business Traveler Middle East Awards. "Quality service and customer experience are at the heart of what we strive to achieve at Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel & Spa, and these awards highlight the hard

work of all involved in putting our guests and visitors first," said Ahmed Jarkass, Director of Business Development & Marketing. "The fact our Hotel has been recognized in these luxurious and renowned ceremonies reinforces

our position as the leader of hospitality industry in Kuwait and our stay different approach to our memorable guest experiences," he added.



CROSSWORD 1679



ACROSS

- A metric unit of volume or capacity equal to 10 liters.
- An act of scaling by the use of ladders (especially the walls of a fortification).
- Being one more than one.
- Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
- Subject to a demand for payment before due date.
- Thigh of a hog (usually smoked).
- The occurrence of surplus liquid (as water) exceeding the limit or capacity.
- A group of islands in the Atlantic off the Carolina coast.
- An informal term for a father.
- Lower in esteem.
- A nonmetallic element belonging to the halogens.
- (Akkadian) Mother and earth goddess in Gilgamesh epic.
- Alcoholic drink from fermented cider ('cider' and 'cyder' are European (especially British) usage for the fermented beverage).
- The quality of being the same in quantity or measure or value or status.
- A former communist country in eastern Europe and northern Asia.
- A soft yellow malleable ductile (trivalent and univalent) metallic element.
- (Akkadian) God of wisdom.
- Strive to equal or match, especially by imitating.
- Gather, as of crops.
- The basic unit of money in Bangladesh.
- Someone who can be employed as a detective to collect information.
- Any of numerous perennial bulbous herbs having linear or broadly lanceolate leaves and usually a single showy flower.
- A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali earth group.
- The Tibeto-Burman language spoken in the Dali region of Yunnan.
- A very light colorless element that is one of the six inert gasses.
- Taking place over public roads.
- A physician who is not a specialist but treats all illnesses.
- A card game for 2 players.
- A genus of Stromateidae.
- Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug (trade names Orudis or Orudis KT or Oruvail).
- Cover as if with a shroud.
- (Greek mythology) Son of Daedalus.
- A collection of facts from which conclusions may be drawn.
- A group of countries in special alliance.
- A woman's large folded hooded hood.
- A unit of surface area equal to 100 square meters.
- Japanese ornamental tree with fragrant white or pink blossoms and small yellow fruits.
- Having leadership guidance.
- A river in northeastern Brazil that flows generally northward to the Atlantic Ocean.
- An ester of adenosine that is converted to ATP for energy storage.

DOWN

- Any of a group of Indic languages spoken in Kashmir and eastern Afghanistan and northern Pakistan.
- Largest known toad species.
- Soviet physicist who worked on low temperature physics (1908-1968).
- Liquid containing proteins and electrolytes including the liquid in blood plasma and interstitial fluid.
- An overland journey by hunters (especially in Africa).
- Being ten more than one hundred forty.
- Type genus of the Alcidae comprising solely the razorbill.
- A white soft metallic element that tarnishes readily.
- A church associated with a monastery or convent.
- A chronic skin disease occurring primarily in women between the ages of 20 and 40.
- Suggestive of the supernatural.
- A heavy dull sound (as made by impact of heavy objects).
- Gully or streambed in North Africa and the Middle East that remains dry except during rainy season.
- A strategically located monarchy on the southern and eastern coasts of the Arabian Peninsula.
- A solid mass of blastomeres that forms when the zygote splits.
- Genus of East Indian trees or shrubs.
- A white trivalent metallic element.
- An intensely radioactive metallic element that occurs in minute amounts in uranium ores.
- (Norse mythology) One of the Aesir known for his beauty and skill with bow and skis.
- A software system that facilitates the creation and maintenance and use of an electronic database.
- A line of people or vehicles waiting for something.
- Noisy talk.
- South Asian deer with three-tined antlers.
- United States painter best known for his portraits of George Washington (1755-1828).
- Make one's home or live in.
- 300 to 3000 megahertz.
- A silvery ductile metallic element found primarily in bauxite.
- Small voraciously carnivorous freshwater fishes of South America that attack and destroy living animals.
- The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
- Fire iron consisting of a metal rod with a handle.
- A soft white precious univalent metallic element having the highest electrical and thermal conductivity of any metal.
- Tropical American herbs sometimes included in genus Episcia.
- An official prosecutor for a judicial district.
- A tricycle (usually propelled by pedalling).
- (botany) Especially of leaves.
- Defeated in a competition.
- A religious cult practiced chiefly in Caribbean countries (especially Haiti).
- A colorless and odorless inert gas.
- Stout-bodied insect with large membranous wings.
- Something (often something deceptively attractive) that catches you unawares.
- (Norse mythology) One of the Aesir known for his beauty and skill with bow and skis.
- Avatar of Vishnu.
- Employed in accomplishing something.
- A vessel that carries passengers or freight v.1.
- A sudden loss of consciousness resulting when the rupture or occlusion of a blood vessel leads to oxygen lack in the brain.
- A person forced to flee from home or country.
- Being one more than one.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You may be in charge of the idea box this week and spend quite a bit of time making something creative from hints or suggestions that may not make much sense. Ideas and suggestions are always on your mind and working with people to make life better for others is uppermost in your category of things-you-love-to-do. You may enjoy the collection of antiques or you may enjoy the decoration scene with a splash of color here or a mirror there. If you are in business for yourself, choosing a partner with the right amount of humor is an important factor. Too serious a partner can encourage you to go deeper into thought. If you are looking for a job, don't be afraid to claim your successes-you will shine like a star. Enjoy your family this afternoon!



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Ok, time has passed and the negative parts of last year are behind you. Don't be so afraid to take a chance with new people. Move with the energies of this day. You may gain through a legal maneuver on this day. Your desire to succeed is strengthened, not only financially, but personally as well. You are likely to hear some good news today regarding a matter of importance to you. The afternoon is a good time to relax by doing something totally different from the usual. This may mean learning to skate, learning a new dance step or creating a piece of music for a loved one. You feel unique and proud of your accomplishments. This evening you will enjoy the company of a treasured friend. There is much to talk about this day-many plans to make.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

All that effort you have been putting into your career is beginning to pay. Co-workers come to you for answers and you are feeling confident. This, however, is a time when you may be busy thinking and working at pulling in extra finances. Sensible thought must be given to the practical use of money. Complaints or your recognition of things out-of-balance will keep you on your toes today. Patience and attention to details all afternoon will put you out front in the workplace. You continue to work on that creative project of yours this evening. Tomorrow and the next few days bring opportunities to pull in some extra money. This can be an expansive, creative and even romantic phase, a time you will look back on with pride and fondness.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

There could be a disagreement concerning travel or home this morning; however, by this evening there will be an acceptable compromise. You can handle many subjects at once today, jumping easily from one to the other. Be wise in not extending your energies too far. You will have wonderful opportunities to observe and report on some professional situation. Whether you are working on a thesis report, or studying young children, your opinion is important to others and will gain attention. There are wonderful opportunities for you to counsel others. Success for you is in the recognition of some discovery or insight. Medicine and research, science, technology and psychology are worth your consideration when it comes to vocations.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

You may feel it necessary to contact an authority figure before your workday begins. This may mean that a stray animal is loose in your neighborhood or some other difficulty is present. You put lots of energy into your professional chores and your progress is successful. You create your own circumstances these days without much consideration of other people's comments. You know what you do best and you manage to direct yourself into successful positions. Determined to reach your personal goals, as well as your professional goals, you proceed with your personal activities in the same determined manner. Intense concentration in work and play leaves little time for relaxation, not to mention receptive input. Think on these things today.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

This morning you may take some time to copy an article to give to your co-workers, or spread some type of good news. There are new opportunities that are presented to young people now that will help them get into college. Everything points to your taking the lead in the area of helping, guiding and answering questions. You could feel that your co-worker friends are willing to rotate the work with you in order to make things easier; but you will probably first need to ask for their help. An attitude of gratefulness is catching. A friend or business associate will give you some new ideas on moneymaking opportunities. It is possible that you will join a club this afternoon-an opening awaits you. Any form of creativity may be enjoyed tonight.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

You may be surprised when someone requests you for a particular job this day. Ask questions, take notes and stay focused... You will see a successful outcome. Others may find you notably witty and eccentric this day. You have a good sense of humor and people enjoy working with you. Later today you may have insights or breakthroughs regarding your living situation. Ideas about additions or repairs to the permanent building construction keep buzzing 'round your head. You will find projects and problems running in a smooth manner before the day ends. Make note of any changes you want to make so that you can become better organized. Your charm is showing this evening-there is plenty of time and energy for romance.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You will want to dive in and tackle whatever work project is available this morning. You are ready to get the day started. There is an air of seriousness in all your dealings with partners. This is a good time to practice discretion. Financial matters are definitely getting better! Some sort of financial windfall is in the cards this week-possibly today. Think about a plan for investing in the future. You have an inclination to engage in new projects or invest in what are best described as shaky investments. Care should be taken when undertaking anything new but planning ahead is a good thing. This afternoon you will be feeling more secure with your spouse or business partner. Expressing affection should be easy and can do much for a close relationship.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

You may be experiencing confusion over your financial affairs at this time. It just seems to be that time of the year when most of your friends are filing income taxes or have filed and now there is talk of wise investments. Take steps that will bring your budget into a better balance. You may find romantic distractions in the workplace, but it would benefit you to keep your mind on business. This time of the year favors you in the entertainment world-perhaps a sideline. You may even consider being involved with a community or neighborhood musical group or theater company. A fun get-together with friends is in the making. The people you care about will be grateful for your nurturing and kind ways this evening.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Professional responsibilities increase at this time. You have a natural sense for what the public wants and you are willing to take chances. You can only fit so much into one day so it would be a wise move to call a halt to any additional demands on your time later this afternoon. Do not respond by impulse buying during the day. Respond through investigation and close scrutiny. You are most persuasive in your communications. Your emotions or the feelings of those around you may be very clear. A special item you have been wanting for a long time is within your reach. There is currently constant input into ideas that will increase your finances. It is up to you to act on this information. Regardless of the weather, there are fun things to do tonight.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

Good practical job-related thoughts and ideas are available to you now. Taking care of business is a major theme where your emotional orientation is concerned. You very much want to become organized and you work to get things accomplished in a quick manner. You have the ability to communicate with superiors or describe what you see. Progressive people and idealistic groups or concepts play an important role in your life. You will be experimenting as well as teaching new concepts and putting away a few old ideas and routines. Keep a low profile on your extra-curricular spending and leave your credit cards and check book at home for the next few days. Emotions, yours or others, may be very clear just now. Today, as most days, is a good day.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

There are reasons for rules although a few of the older rules undisputedly need changing or deleting. One cannot necessarily change everything in one day but you may be able to devote some of your spare time this birthday to changing laws for the better. Petitions, volunteering to work for politicians, taking on the subject of old laws in a school project or another means of making a better city in which to live is one of your interests that are taking shape at this time. You like to see positive changes happen. It is also fun to think you are the one who got others inspired to do the same. This evening you may enjoy your many friends and family as you come together in friendly fun. Enjoy kicking up your heels with a party!

WORD SEARCH

Musical Instruments 1

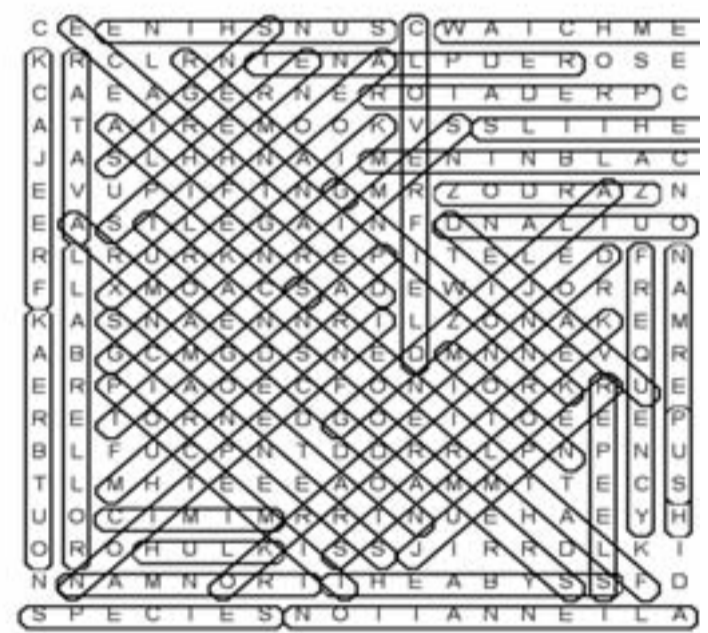
Find and circle all of the musical instruments that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a secret message.



- | | | | |
|-----------|-------------|--------------|------------|
| ACCORDION | CONGA | HURDY-GURDY | SAZ |
| BAGPIPE | CORNET | LAUTA | SITAR |
| BALALAIKA | COW BELL | MANDOLA | TARKA |
| BANJO | DIDGERIDOO | MARACAS | TRIANGLE |
| BASS | DRUM | MELODICA | TROMBONE |
| BOOHRAN | EUPHONIUM | MIZMAR | UKULELE |
| CABASAS | FLUTE | OBOE | VEENA |
| CELLO | FRENCH HORN | ODU | VIBRAPHONE |
| CHIMES | GUITAR | PENNYWHISTLE | VIOLIN |
| CITTERN | HARP | PICCOLO | XUN |

Yesterday's Solution

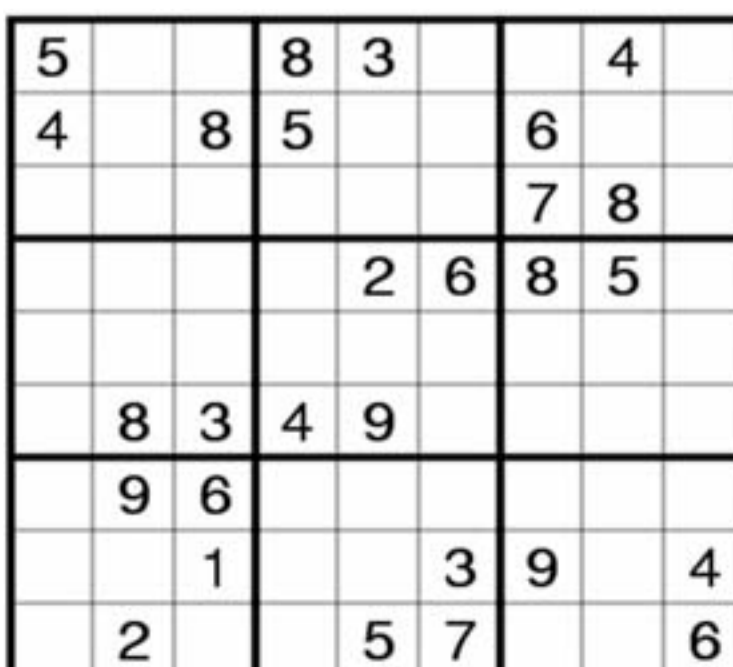
Movies: Science Fiction 2



- | | | | |
|--------------|--------------|------------|--------------|
| AEON FLUX | FREQUENCY | OUTBREAK | SPECIES |
| ALIEN NATION | GAMER | OUTLAND | SPHERE |
| ALIENS | GODZILLA | PANDORIUM | STAR TREK |
| ARMAGEDDON | HULK | PREDATOR | SUNSHINE |
| AVATAR | INCEPTION | PUSH | SUPERMAN |
| CLOVERFIELD | IRON MAN | RED PLANET | THE ABYSS |
| DARK STAR | JUMPER | ROLLERBALL | TIMECOP |
| DEATH RACE | KING KONG | SCANNERS | TIMECRIMES |
| DEJA VU | KNOWING | SERENITY | TRANSFORMERS |
| DONNIE DARKO | MEN IN BLACK | SIGNS | WATCHMEN |
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KNCC PROGRAMME FROM THURSDAY TO WEDNESDAY (03/08/2017 TO 09/08/2017)

THURSDAY 03/08/2017	FRIDAY 04/08/2017	SATURDAY 05/08/2017	SUNDAY 06/08/2017	MONDAY 07/08/2017	TUESDAY 08/08/2017	WEDNESDAY 09/08/2017
SHARQIA-1 DUNKIRK 1:00 PM DUNKIRK 3:15 PM BABY DRIVER 5:30 PM FIRST KILL 7:50 PM DUNKIRK 9:55 PM FIRST KILL 12:15 AM	FANAR-2 DUNKIRK 11:45 AM WAR FOR THE PLANET OF THE APES 2:00 PM BABY DRIVER 4:45 PM WAR FOR THE PLANET OF THE APES 7:00 PM DUNKIRK 9:45 PM BABY DRIVER 12:05 AM	DUNKIRK-2D-4DX THE DARK TOWER-2D-4DX 9:45 AM 12:05 AM	AVENUES-3 DUNKIRK 11:55 AM DUNKIRK 2:15 PM DUNKIRK 5:00 PM DUNKIRK 8:15 PM DUNKIRK 10:30 PM DUNKIRK 12:45 AM	SHARQIA-2 ANTAR IBN IBN IBN SHADAD -Arabic 12:15 PM ANTAR IBN IBN IBN SHADAD -Arabic 2:45 PM DUNKIRK 5:15 PM ANTAR IBN IBN IBN SHADAD -Arabic 7:30 PM ANTAR IBN IBN IBN SHADAD -Arabic 10:00 PM ANTAR IBN IBN IBN SHADAD -Arabic 12:30 AM	FANAR-3 DESPICABLE ME 3 12:30 PM MUBARAKAN -Hindi 2:30 PM MUBARAKAN -Hindi 5:30 PM JAB HARRY MET SEJAL -Hindi 11:30 AM JAB HARRY MET SEJAL -Hindi 2:30 PM JAB HARRY MET SEJAL -Hindi 5:30 PM JAB HARRY MET SEJAL -Hindi 8:30 PM JAB HARRY MET SEJAL -Hindi 11:30 PM	AVENUES-4 DUNKIRK 2:00 PM THU+FRJ 2:30 PM JAB HARRY MET SEJAL -Hindi 1:15 PM NO THU+FRJ 4:15 PM DUNKIRK 6:35 PM JAB HARRY MET SEJAL -Hindi 9:30 PM DUNKIRK 11:45 PM

CHANGE OF NAME

I, **Vempadapu Sarada** (old name) D/o Suryanarayana, holder of Indian Passport G7938292 & Civil ID No. 274031602387, do hereby inform to the public about the change of my name as **Sayera Banu Syed** (new name). This is for the public information and all purposes concerned. (C 5337)

I, **Khadar Ali Syed, S/o Sher Ali**, holder of Indian Passport No. L1635464 & Civil ID No. 277062402568, do hereby inform to the Public about the corrected my name is **Khadar Ali Syed** (by mistake it was noted as Syed Khada Vali). The actual name is **Khadar Ali Syed**. This is for the public information and all purposes concerned. (C 5338) **6-8-2017**

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**

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DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Monday 7/8/2017				Departure Flights on Monday 7/8/2017			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
MSC	403	Asyut	00:05	AIC	982	Ahmedabad/Chennai	00:05
MSC	501	Alexandria	00:05	JZR	1540	Cairo	00:20
THY	772	Istanbul	00:10	JAI	573	Mumbai	00:30
KAC	786	Jeddah	00:30	MSR	2615	Cairo	00:30
JZR	267	Beirut	00:35	FDB	072	Dubai	00:30
KAC	504	Beirut	00:45	PIA	206	Lahore	01:00
KAC	102	Heathrow, London	00:55	MSC	502	Alexandria	01:05
DLH	635	Doha	01:00	MSC	416	Sohag	01:05
PGT	858	Istanbul	01:15	THY	773	Istanbul	01:40
JZR	539	Cairo	01:20	KAC	677	Dubai	01:45
UAE	853	Dubai	01:40	KAC	363	Colombo	01:55
RJA	642	Amman	01:45	DLH	635	Frankfurt	02:00
THY	1464	Istanbul	01:50	PGT	859	Istanbul	02:35
KKK	6506	Istanbul	01:55	THY	765	Istanbul	02:50
JZR	553	Alexandria	02:10	KAC	6505	Istanbul	02:55
QTR	1086	Doha	02:10	KAC	351	Kochi	03:05
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	ETH	621	Addis Ababa	03:05
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:15	UAE	854	Dubai	03:30
THY	1404	AYT	02:30	THY	769	Istanbul	03:30
THY	768	Istanbul	02:35	OMA	644	Muscat	04:05
KAC	418	Manila	02:50	QTR	1087	Doha	04:10
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05	ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:10
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:10	MSR	613	Cairo	04:15
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	KAC	417	Manila	04:20
FDB	069	Dubai	03:15	PGT	861	Istanbul	04:25
KAC	382	Delhi	03:15	JZR	560	Sohag	04:45
PGT	860	Istanbul	03:25	QTR	1091	Doha	05:05
QTR	1076	Doha	03:25	QTR	1077	Doha	05:35
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	04:15	KAC	303	Mumbai	05:50
UAE	873	Dubai	04:15	FEG	954	Asyut	05:55
KAC	1544	Cairo	04:20	THY	1465	Istanbul	06:00
KAC	358	Kochi	04:50	UAE	874	Dubai	06:15
KAC	414	Bangkok	04:50	RJA	643	Amman	06:25
FEG	933	Sohag	05:00	THY	771	Istanbul	06:25
KAC	784	Jeddah	05:00	GFA	212	Bahrain	06:50
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:10	KAC	173	Munich	06:55
THY	770	Istanbul	05:25	JZR	238	Amman	07:00
KAC	344	Chennai	05:30	FDB	070	Dubai	07:05
JZR	529	Asyut	05:35	JZR	164	Dubai	07:15
KAC	362	Colombo	05:50	KAC	167	Paris	07:15
BAW	157	London	06:05	KAC	501	Beirut	07:50
KAC	204	Lahore	06:20	KAC	613	Bahrain	07:55
KAC	678	Dubai	06:25	BAW	156	London	08:20
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:35	FDB	054	Dubai	08:30
KAC	206	Islamabad	06:40	KAC	511	Mashhad	08:35
KAC	302	Mumbai	06:55	KAC	773	Riyadh	08:35
KAC	156	Istanbul	07:05	JZR	902	GYD	09:00
JZR	1541	Cairo	07:10	KAC	161	Geneva	09:10
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	KAC	671	Dubai	09:15
KAC	354	Bangalore	07:50	KAC	787	Jeddah	09:15
KAC	384	Delhi	08:00	KAC	117	New York	09:15
KAC	332	Trivandrum	08:05	KAC	165	Rome	09:20
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25	KAC	691	Muscat	09:30
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:55	JZR	534	Cairo	09:30
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	KAC	482	Istanbul	09:35
IRA	667	Esfahan	09:15	ABY	126	Sharjah	09:40
QTR	1070	Doha	09:25	KAC	101	London	09:45
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	UAE	856	Dubai	09:50
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	KAC	561	Amman	09:55
MEA	404	Beirut	10:55	ETD	302	Abu Dhabi	10:00
QTR	1074	Doha	11:00	KAC	541	Cairo	10:00
SYR	341	Damascus	11:00	IRA	666	Esfahan	10:15
AXB	889	Mangalore/Bahrain	11:05	KAC	617	Doha	10:15
JZR	561	Sohag	11:10	KAC	153	Istanbul	10:30
KAC	614	Bahrain	11:15	QTR	1071	Doha	10:35
JZR	165	Dubai	11:50	FDB	056	Dubai	10:35
JZR	239	Amman	12:25	GFA	214	Bahrain	11:35
MSC	401	Alexandria	12:30	MEA	405	Beirut	11:55
UAE	871	Dubai	12:45	SYR	342	Damascus	12:00
KAC	774	Riyadh	12:45	JZR	776	Jeddah	12:00
THY	766	Istanbul	12:50	AXB	890	Mangalore	12:05
FEG	953	Asyut	12:55	QTR	1075	Doha	12:10
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00	WAN	805	Sarajevo	12:55
CKS	511	LGG	13:15	KAC	413	Bangkok	13:05
WAN	984	TBS	13:40				
KAC	672	Dubai	13:55				



Amir Khan is 'gutted' by his marriage split

The 30-year-old boxer revealed the breakdown of his marriage to Faryal Makhdoom in a Twitter outburst last week and Amir has admitted that the break-up has left him devastated. Speaking in Dubai, where he is currently staying, he told the Sunday Mirror: "I don't know what to say. I'm gutted. I've not slept all night. I went to see some people at the marina and I've been up all night. I couldn't sleep. I need time to think. I just need to rest and to speak to some people." Faryal and Amir's family had a notoriously difficult relationship and friends say he is heartbroken that they could not make their marriage work. A source said: "Amir gave up so much to try to make it work with his wife, now it looks like he has nothing. He left his family and friends and now he is devastated." "He's heartbroken. A lot of things are said on social media but it's not how he wanted it to come out." Last week the 30-year-old professional boxer announced the break-up on his Twitter account and added a string of bizarre tweets, accusing his wife of cheating on him with boxer Anthony Joshua, something Anthony and Faryal both denied. Messages posted on Faryal's account claimed that Khan had actually cheated on her, before she wrote on Snapchat that they had both been hacked. She wrote: "Holy god! My accounts have been hacked! What is going on. Amir's account and my twitter account have been compromised. I sincerely apologize (sic)." However, he later insisted in a video posted to Snapchat that their marriage is definitely over. Amir said: "Hey guys, hope you're well. Yeah so everything you saw on social media today, it is real. Obviously me and Faryal have both decided to move on - well, I've decided to walk away... nothing's been hacked and obviously it's just a tough time we both have to go through. "We have to both move forward because it's not healthy for any of us and I'm just not happy with the way I get treated by her and everything else. So look, I wish her every best for the future and I'm in Dubai at the moment and I'm doing some training and stuff but I don't want you guys to worry. "I am staying strong and I just want to say a big thank you for all your support but yeah. What's done is done. Everything I posted on social media today was true."

Clean Bandit don't want a regular singer



Clean Bandit don't want a regular singer because they don't want their songs to "sound the same". The 'Rockabye' hitmakers have had Jess Glynne, Anne-Marie and Louisa Johnson on lead vocals of some of their biggest hits and wouldn't want to recruit the same voice for every song in fear of losing creative freedom. Asked if one of the band could become the singer, band member Jack Patterson told BANG Showbiz: "It would make it easier, for sure. To begin with we had a permanent singer, it would make it easier but then I think it would limit us because then all our songs would sound the same. And cellist Grace Chatto added: "To work with different singers gives us creative freedom because we can experiment with different sounds on every song." Clean Bandit's next record could be with us early next year, but Grace says they are still desperately searching for singers to contribute. Asked when fans can expect the eagerly-anticipated follow-up to 2014's 'New Eyes', Grace said: "Next year, that's starting to be more realistic. Early next year we think, but we do need to find a lot of singers!" 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.

The Who's Maximum As + Bs' boxset

The Who's entire collection of singles and EPs will be released on a 5-CD boxset titled 'Maximum As + Bs'. The 'My Generation' rockers - fronted by Roger Daltrey and guitarist Pete Townshend - have put together all 86 tracks they've released on all of their labels, Brunswick, Reaction, Tracks and Polydor, all of their A- and B-sides and all of their EPs for release on October 27. The boxset kicks off with the singles 'Zoo Suit' and 'I'm the Face', which were released under the band name the High Numbers, which The Who were called before they released 1979's 'I Can't Explain'. Their biggest hits including 'Pinball Wizard', 'Won't Get Fooled Again' follow with 'Be Lucky' from the 2017 compilation 'Who Hits 50!', and a remix of 'I Can't Explain' bring the set to a close. The iconic group's 'Meaty, Beaty, Big & Bouncy' and the compilation 'Live at Leeds' are also set for release on October 27. Guitar slayer Townshend's three 'Scoop' compilations are also set to be reissued on August 18. 'Scoop', 'Another Scoop' and 'Scoop 3' have been remastered on double CD and include all of the 72-year-old rocker's demos and outtakes. Meanwhile, The Who continue their residency at the world famous Caesars Palace in Las Vegas on Friday until August 11. They are the first ever rock band to perform at The Colosseum music venue since it opened its doors in 2003, and join the likes of Mariah Carey, Sir Rod Stewart, Sir Elton John, and Celine Dion, who have all performed residencies in the past.



Rihanna feels shy watching her performances back

Rihanna feels "shy" watching herself on screen. The 29-year-old beauty was very proud to star in 'Valerian and the City of a Thousand Planets' and, unusually for her, she enjoyed seeing her turn as alien burlesque dancer Bubble. She said: "I mean, when Luc Besson calls, you just go. You just show up. "I couldn't be more thrilled to be part of the cast with Cara [Delevingne] and Dane [DeHaan]. The movie is so exciting, it's so beautiful - and I usually get shy about seeing myself on TV or hearing my voice but he did such a spectacular job. I was blown away." The 'We Found Love' singer "identified" a lot with her character. She explained: "Luc told me that bubble is an artist and she's very sensitive. So I kind of identified with her. "She's a shape-shifter and I like to think of myself as a shape-shifter when it comes to my fashion, my music, and my visuals, so it was an exciting part. I fell in love with her." Though she had a great time working on the film, Rihanna admits it was "intimidating" when she first went onto the set. She told OK! magazine: "It was definitely intimidating, like walking into a whole world you don't really understand. "You can't really see what Luc has in mind but you have to just trust him, and he is such an excellent director. "He was so patient with me, knowing that I'm new to this, and he really dug in there to get what he needed out of me. I enjoyed it and I learnt a lot."

Jo Wood thinks Rita Ora is 'really lovely'

The 26-year-old singer was recently romantically linked with 33-year-old art gallery owner Tyrone Wood but his mother insists the 'I Will Never Let You Down' hitmaker is too busy for a relationship, though she's hopeful they'll get together eventually. She told OK! magazine: "They're friends but she's so busy she doesn't have any time for herself, let alone a relationship. "Tyrone says it's not the right time, so maybe when she's quieter. But I'd like it if they were together, I think she is really lovely." It was previously claimed that Rita - who has previously dated Calvin Harris, Rob Kardashian, Richard Hilliger and Dave Gardner - is attracted to Tyrone and thinks he is unlike her previous boyfriends because he is not "fame hungry" and is a "one-woman man". A source said: "Rita likes Tyrone because, unlike some of her exes, he's a one-woman man and not fame-hungry." The blonde-haired beauty is also fond of Tyrone - whose father is Ronnie Wood -

because of his philanthropic works, which she finds "really attractive" and she is hugely supportive of him and his partnerships with various charities. The insider added: "He does a lot of work for charity too and she finds that really attractive. And she has been really supportive of that." Meanwhile, Rita is set for a busy year ahead as she is currently preparing for the release of her long-awaited second studio album, and is looking to buy a home in New York City where she spends an increasing amount of her time. A source previously said: "She is in America a lot and now feels like the right time to buy in the Big Apple." As well as finishing her LP, and looking to relocate to America, she has also been secretly writing a script for a film. She explained: "I'd love to do a film. I've been writing one like secretly. It's really early, early days obviously so my dream is to one day co-produce, co-write, do the soundtrack and just do something behind the scenes."



Robert Pattinson: 'It's taken 10 years to move on from Twilight'

Robert Pattinson says it has taken him 10 years to leave 'Twilight' behind. The 31-year-old actor shot to fame playing brooding vampire Edward Cullen in the 'Twilight Saga' franchise and Robert has admitted that the popularity of the movies made it difficult for people to see him as any other character. He told The Hollywood Reporter's Awards Chatter podcast: "As soon as I signed on to do multiple sequels, I was like, 'It's gonna take 10 years to get over this.'" However, Robert has never felt stifled by 'Twilight' and he acknowledges that he wouldn't have his career without it. He said: "I've never really felt trapped by it. I've always known it was the right move. I wouldn't have done any of this other stuff if not for that." Despite his appreciation for the franchise, Robert feared he had a "credibility deficit" for his post-'Twilight' career and he managed to overcome this by working with directors including David Cronenberg, Werner Herzog and Anton Corbijn. He explained: "I was aware of a credibility deficit. And so you think, 'Well, if [Werner] Herzog and Anton Corbijn and all these people are hiring me, well, you're gonna have to s**t on your heroes if you want to s**t on me.'" And despite finding huge commercial success early in



his career, Robert doesn't care if his current movies make any money. He said: "I don't even care if they make money at all. Like, literally. As long as I can get another one."

Daniel Craig's Bond drama

Daniel Craig and Sam Mendes reportedly had a number of creative differences on the set of 'Spectre'. Although the pair had a good personal relationship, they are said to have had very different ideas on the James Bond movie, which led to tension on set. A source told The Sun on Sunday: "Daniel and Sam were best buddies when they first started working together and you would constantly see them laughing and joking. "But after filming had been going on for a while, things started to change. "There were a few areas in which they had very different creative opinions and their friendship did become strained. "There were jokes that you could cut the atmosphere between them with one of Bond's knives. "Both are hugely respected and were never unprofessional. They played their parts brilliantly and produced one of the best Bond films. "But it wasn't the easiest of times for them." Meanwhile, Sam also



directed 2012's 'Skyfall' but insisted last year that it was time for him to step away from the franchise. He said: "It was an incredible adventure, I loved every second of it. But I think it's time for somebody else. "I'm a storyteller. And at the end of the day, I want to make stories with new characters." He has also said: "There is a sense of completeness that wasn't there at the end of Skyfall, and that's what makes this feel different. It feels like there's a rightness to it, that I have finished a journey. "What is important is, not doing it is not a negative. It's not me saying, 'I don't want to do this.' What it would be is me saying, 'I really want to do this story.' There are other stories to tell."



John Newman enjoys rally racing with Sigala

John Newman enjoys going rally racing with Sigala every couple of weekends. The pair have been the best of friends since they teamed up on 'Give Me Your Love' with Chic legend Nile Rodgers and the 24-year-old producer - whose real name is Bruce Fielder - says in between writing songs for John's next record they've been going away to Wales for a bit of fun on the track. Speaking exclusively to BANG Showbiz about their friendship in and out of the studio, Sigala said: "We are really good mates now. Obviously, we did 'Give Me Your Love' together and we've done a few shows together. "We going rallying every couple of weekends up in Wales. I am always hanging out with him and I am definitely keen to do something with him again. "I have been writing some stuff for his record as well, I've done a few sessions for that and hopefully have a song together on that. "Whether or not I'll be named on it, I'm not sure. He's just an amazing person to work with." Little is known about John's next record, the follow-up to 2015's 'Revolve', however he has been a little busy late and focusing on his love life after getting engaged to his Danish girlfriend Nana earlier this month. The 27-year-old musician met Nana when she served as a flight attendant on his plane journey from Copenhagen to Bornholm last year, and the pair could be tying the knot as early as this summer. A source said: "John and Nana are completely in love and it felt completely right to get engaged. He proposed and she has been showing off her engagement ring. They have spoken about getting married later this year, although their plans are still up in the air at the moment."

GOSSIP

Amber Heard and Elon Musk split up



The pair had been dating for around a year when billionaire businessman Elon, 46, decided to call time on his relationship with the 31-year-old 'Aquaman' actress. A source told the Mail yesterday: "It's all over between Amber and Elon and she's devastated. It was his decision. He ended it a week ago. Elon's back in LA while she's licking her wounds in Australia." The split comes as a surprise after Amber's father, David, previously said his daughter is keen to settle down and have children of her own with Elon, who divorced actress Tallulah Riley for the second time last year. He said: "Amber and Elon are both very serious about each other. She would love to get married. "One of the things they want to do is settle down and have a family. They are making plans for that." And the 'Magic

Mike XXL' star's family are all said to have approved of her relationship with the businessman. A source previously said: "Amber and Elon are very serious. She wants to get married again and she would love to get pregnant with him." Amber wants nothing more than to be a mum and it's definitely something that will happen sooner rather than later if everything goes according to plan. "Elon is great for her, he is very challenging and she loves the fact that he's an intellectual. Her parents approve of the match and would love to see them get married and have a family." Amber split from her first husband Johnny Depp in 2016 after just 15 months of marriage.

Clarke and Harington 'freaked out' filming their first 'GOT' scene together

Emilia Clarke and Kit Harington 'freaked out' when they filmed their first 'Game of Thrones' scene together. The brunette beauty, who portrays Daenerys Targaryen, and her 30-year-old co-star, who is Jon Snow in the popular series, have both played major parts in the

hair front when Kit accompanied her on set. She quipped: "There's another Hair in town, and I don't like it." Kit added: "We were both kind of freaking out. "Usually you start working on a movie and meet [a co-star] for the first time and you develop chemistry on screen over time. Here, you know somebody for seven years and you've watched their character on screen all that time. So it's a unique experience as an actor to come together and know the world is watching" However, the London-born heartthrob knew the pair's characters would finally meet in the current season of the show. He explained: "I predicted, like everyone, they would meet this season, but I don't think I predicted it quite as quickly. But then again, you've got to take yourself out of the mindset of the viewer. As far as Jon knows, he's just meeting this queen he's heard of and trying to negotiate with her- he's not meeting Daenerys, who the audience has been watching for so many years. That helps with the surprise of it. He walks into the room and doesn't expect to see such a beautiful young woman of similar age to him. Any young man's reaction is going to be, 'Okay...' but he puts that aside because he has to." And the dark-haired hunk has admitted he relied on Emilia to help him remember key elements in the production, such as the names of her dragons. He said: "I asked Emilia what her dragons were called again."



franchise since it first aired in 2009, but in the last eight years the pair have yet to shoot a scene together until recently, which they both thought was "weird". Speaking to Entertainment Weekly about the 'The Queen's Justice' snippet, the 30-year-old actress said: "Both of us were going, 'Ahhh what are you doing on my set?' 'This is weird!' And the 'Me Before You' star, who dons a white wig in the program, felt she had stiff competition on the

Dominic Cooper 'surprised' he hasn't had kids

Dominic Cooper is "surprised" he doesn't have "loads" of children. The 'Preacher' actor - who has been in a relationship with actress Ruth Negga for seven years - admitted he is feeling broody because all of his friends have kids and starting a family of his own is the only thing missing from his life. He said: "All my friends have kids now. All our discussions on Whatsapp revolve around whether you can fit a buggy on an aeroplane. "Everyone does things at their own speed, but I'm always quite surprised that I don't have loads of kids. There's probably one last piece of the jigsaw [missing for me]. There's definitely something that needs to shift." The 39-year-old actor also confessed to being a "terrible godfather" to his best friend James Corden's son, six-year-old Max because he always "misses" his birthday. Despite his success, the 'Mamma Mia!' actor admits he still lives in "chaos" and often thinks he should be less indecisive, though committing to plans still makes him feel uncomfortable. He said: "I'm becoming more turbulent with age. I think I've just become more worried about where it's all going. Freewheeling is fine to a point isn't it? And then you go to yourself, 'Make some decisions'. But even committing to a date in time, or an activity at a certain point in a day [makes me uneasy]. "I'd much rather just see what happens. I'm surprised I even have some grounded things like a mortgage. I've managed to keep the out-of-control s**t at bay. Just about. But it's a struggle still, this massive chaos." When he was younger, the British actor admits he was "constantly" in trouble at school. He told Red magazine: "I was constantly in trouble at school. I didn't like bullies, I stood up to them. I was constantly in fights. It was growing up in South London. You had to have a bit of an edge about you."



Paris and Chris co-ordinate phone wallpapers

Paris Hilton and her boyfriend co-ordinate their phone wallpapers. The 36-year-old DJ changes the image displayed behind the apps on her mobile device frequently, and whenever she does, her partner Chris Zylka follows suit. She told Cosmopolitan magazine: "My boyfriend and I always have the same [phone wallpaper] - our current favorite picture of us." Paris is a fan of emojis, and can particularly relate to one of them. She said: "My favorite emoji is the blonde princess. I feel like it's me." Despite her slender frame, the blonde heiress doesn't do a lot of working out. She proclaimed: "Shopping is my cardio." After years in the spotlight, Paris is used to being around famous people, but almost "had a heart attack" when she met Madonna. Asked when she was last starrstruck, she said: "Eleven years ago at the Brits. Madonna tapped me on the shoulder and I almost had a heart attack." Paris has defied her critics in recent years, after turning her attention to DJing in 2012. At the time, her ambition was ridiculed, but she has since established herself as a credible performer, recently celebrating the five-year anniversary of her Foam & Diamonds party at Ibiza's world-famous Amnesia nightclub. Reflecting on the transformation, she's said: "I started DJing like seven years ago. My first show was in Brazil. Like 30,000 people, closing for Jennifer Lopez, it was so much fun. "I loved it so much that after that I really just got more into it and really just learned the technique and now I'm on the new Denon [turntables], which just came out and are amazing to play on. I've just been having the time of my life. I didn't realize what a huge success I would be."



Kylie Jenner FEELS LIKE AN 'OUTCAST'

The 19-year-old reality television star has admitted when she was growing up she always used to feel like the odd one out, and that feeling of being different to everyone around her is still present with her now. Speaking on her new E! spin-off show 'Life of Kylie', which will air on the broadcasting network today, she said: "I have a soft spot for the outcast because I was the outcast I guess in a lot of ways growing up. "I do feel like an outcast." The 'Keeping Up With the Kardashians' star - who first appeared on the popular program with her family at the age of nine, believes she is an outsider because she "can't relate" to other people, and she feels she is living in her own "little world". She continued: "And I still feel like an outcast in different ways now because I can't relate to a lot of people so it's like this little world." During the first episode of her own show the Kylie Cosmetics founder surprises a boy named Albert Ochoa at his prom, but the special moment made the star feel "really sad" because it brought back bad memories of her own teenage years, which saw her miss out on the end of year bash. The teen entrepreneur, who was home-schooled as a child, explained: "It was really sad, actually." And Kylie has admitted she was left feeling hurt when she scrolled through social media to see all of her friends enjoying themselves at the celebratory event, which she didn't attend, that she decided to unfollow "all" of her pals. She explained: "I had to unfollow all my friends that I went to school with. "They probably all thought I hated them, but I just couldn't see it, you know? Because they would always post photos, and they were all at the prom, and I was just like, 'Can't see it.' "You know? It just made me sad."



Alba has 'amnesia' about raising a baby

Jessica Alba has "amnesia" about having and raising a baby. The 36-year-old actress is pregnant with her third child with her husband Cash Warren, and the star - who already has daughters Haven, five, and Honor, nine, with her spouse - has admitted she has forgotten what it feels like to be woken up by a newborn in the early hours of morning to change their nappies or feed them. Speaking about the pending arrival and her lost memory to chat show host Jimmy Fallon on 'The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon', the brunette beauty said: "I have amnesia about having a baby, which is why I think I allowed this to happen. "I don't remember any of it." And the Honest Beauty founder has revealed her brood are "stoked" about having another sibling. When asked about her brood's reaction to the exciting news, the 'Into The Blue' star said: "[They're] stoked." Although Jessica has yet to reveal the sex of her baby, she has admitted the child will have to a name that begins with the letter 'H' to match their sisters, and their moniker must be "unusual" because her spouse has an odd title, although the name cannot be "too weird". Speaking about her very specific criteria for her child's name, she said: "So my husband's name is Cash, that's his actual real name, so our kids had to have unusual names. "That were also H, double syllable, has to be a word, can't be too weird. It has to be a H." Jessica announced the news she was expanding her brood on social media last month. The fashion icon posted a cute video of her with her children holding big number one and two balloons, whilst she clasped at the number three inflatable and displayed a visible baby bump. She captioned her Instagram upload: "@cash_warren and I are officially going to be outnumbered #babyonboard #herewegoagain #blessed (sic)"



Elizabeth Olsen struggled filming 'Wind River'

The 28-year-old actress portrays Jane Banner in the crime film alongside Jeremy Renner, and the star has revealed shooting scenes for the production in the Utah setting was brutal because she kept losing the feeling in her feet when it hit a "certain time of the day". Speaking about the harsh environment to PEOPLE, the blonde-haired beauty said: "Even if they're in the proper smart socks and the foot warmers, your feet eventually lose feeling at a certain time of the day." And the 'Avengers: Age of Ultron' star has revealed the cast and film crew would often have to trek further up the mountains and regularly relocate to find the desired snowy setting for a scene, which Elizabeth found even "harder" to deal with. Speaking about the problems she faced whilst filming, she said: "It was harder when we didn't have snow because then we had to go find the snow and go higher up the mountain, things like that." Although Elizabeth struggled to cope with the cold conditions, she has admitted it wasn't as bad as 'Game of Thrones', which she believes looks like "the end of the world" because of the icy setting. She added: "It wasn't so cold that, like when I watch 'Game of Thrones' that looks like the end of the world." Meanwhile, Elizabeth has admitted she often feels "a lot of anxiety" when she is surrounded by a crowd of people, and she will often try to find an excuse to avoid the masses. Speaking previously about her internal battles, she said: "I feel a lot of anxiety in crowds but I try to challenge it. The last big event I went to was a monster truck show for my friend's birthday. I was thinking of excuses not to go but I ended up having the best time."





Exhibition explores legacy of black fashion designers

As a girl, Tracy Reese thought she might be an architect. Then she caught the fashion bug. She knew, of course, that designers who are black like her existed. She used to snap up Willi Smith at The Limited growing up in Detroit. She headed to New York with high hopes. "When I first came to New York my eyes were really opened to the breadth of the industry, but I was looking for our place in it," recalled Reese, who has dressed first lady Michelle Obama.

Reese, along with other noted designers of color, Jeffrey Banks and Laura Smalls among them, spoke at the opening of a new exhibition, "Black Fashion Designers," at The Museum of the Fashion Institute of Technology. The show offers a glimpse into exactly how impactful designers of color have been through the decades, including Reese, Banks and Smalls. Smalls has seen her dresses worn seven times by the departing Obama.



Designer Tracy Reese speaks to a reporter at the opening of the "Black Fashion Designers" exhibit.



Andre Leon Talley, a former editor for Vogue magazine, speaks to a reporter at the opening of the "Black Fashion Designers" exhibit.



They also know the challenges of striving for beauty in design while attempting to break through in an industry still dominated by whites. "Designers of color don't get a lot of publicity and so many of the businesses are not sizable. It's tough to get recognition," Reese said, standing amid rows of mannequins spanning decades of diverse black voices in fashion.

Business training

Reese's father provided initial startup money when she first went into business for herself. "I had to go out and get loans. I did a lot of paper writing. A lot of business planning. I had to have a lot of assistance because I didn't have business training," she said. "That's usually what a banker wants to see, or a financial person. It's a kind of closed industry. And as difficult as it is for a person of color, you really have to rise through the ranks high enough to grab the attention of the people who are holding the purse strings."

Smalls, who grew up in Queens, knew at 8 or 9 that she wanted to be a fashion designer. She went to the High School of Art and Design, followed by Parsons School of Design. "When I graduated Parsons, being African-American, it was not easy for me to get a job. It was just not easy. I couldn't fathom that I would be able to support myself with my own collection. They don't say anything. I mean, you know. It's just you don't get the job. I could tell you a horrible story, but I won't," said Smalls, who worked in relative obscurity until 2012, when Obama first wore some of her pieces.

Banks, at 63 the oldest of the three, has focused on menswear over his decades in the business, adding home decor and childrenswear in more recent years selling on HSN. "I was very lucky in that I met Ralph Lauren when I was 16. I started working for him when I was 17, three weeks out of high school and two months before I started college." Even so, it wasn't easy.

"I remember when I was 10 years old and talking to a former nursery school teacher and telling her that I wanted to be a fashion designer and she said, 'Well whoever heard of a black fashion designer,' and she was black," said Banks, who was raised in Washington, DC. "I was so angry, even at 10 years old, to think why would someone say something like that? Why should that be an impediment to anything? I think it made me even more determined to become a designer," he said.



Great-granddaughter

Banks looked to those who came before him, but his eye was on the beauty of their creations, not necessarily their skin color. "Growing up, Stephen Burrows, when I was in high school, he was just starting to design and I thought his designs were extraordinary, and that was way before I knew he was black," Banks said. "I just thought they were great looking clothes. At the end of the day that's really what counts."

Jacqueline Bouvier must have thought so, too. In 1953, she wore an ivory silk taffeta gown to marry the young Sen. John F. Kennedy. It was designed by Ann Lowe, already a noted dressmaker for high society patrons in New York. Lowe was also the great-granddaughter of an enslaved woman and an Alabama plantation owner. She learned to sew at the knees of her mother and grandmother. "Yet she embraced all of the beauty of European couture," said Andre Leon Talley, the former editor-at-large for Vogue who remains a fashion pundit and served on the show's advisory committee.

The exhibition is intended as a sampling, not an all-consuming account of black contributions to fashion, but it does offer a wide range, from a modest ivory wedding gown by Lowe (not Jackie's) to a risqué royal blue satin Playboy bunny uniform by Zelda Wynn Valdes. Among others represented: Pyer Moss, Duro Olowu, Kevan Hall, Andre Walker, Lawrence Steele and Patrick Kelly.

And the legacy?

"The legacy is perseverance, and of struggling through many decades of culture," Talley said. "Struggling black individualism. Struggling in a country that perhaps did not recognize black people as designers. You have a rainbow of success based on innate quality and innate technique. They had dreams, and they put their dreams into fashion." — AP



File photo shows British TV personality Jeremy Clarkson watches the men's Singles tennis match at Queen's tennis championship, in London. — AP

Television personality Jeremy Clarkson hospitalized in Spain

Television personality Jeremy Clarkson has been hospitalized with pneumonia while vacationing in Mallorca. "The Grand Tour" motoring show says Clarkson was hospitalized Friday while on a break in Spain. Clarkson posted an image on social media Saturday showing his arm with a hospital identity badge.

The 57-year-old quipped: "not the sort of bangles I usually choose on holiday." Clarkson had been on vacation with his family after shooting the Amazon Prime show with co-hosts Richard Hammond and James May. The trio are the former hosts of the BBC program "Top Gear." They signed with Amazon for "The Grand Tour," after Clarkson was fired for punching a producer in a dustup while filming. — AP

Swift expected to testify in groping case in Denver

A few moments at a backstage photo session four years ago are about to be relived, as lawyers for pop star Taylor Swift and a former disc jockey she accuses of groping her begin picking jurors Monday in their dueling lawsuits. Radio host David Mueller sued the singer-songwriter, saying he was falsely accused and that she should have called police instead of his bosses, who fired him soon after the June 2013 encounter. He's seeking up to \$3 million in damages. Swift countersued, claiming sexual assault, setting up the civil trial where she is expected to testify amid tightened courthouse security.

Opening statements could begin tomorrow in the case that could last two weeks. Court documents say it is unlikely that either side will settle. Swift is seeking a verdict that awards her \$1, while holding Mueller responsible and "serving as an example to other women who may resist publicly reliving similar outrageous and humiliating acts," her lawsuit says.

Mueller is also expected to testify, along with Mueller's former boss and members of Swift's entourage. Mueller, then 51, was a morning host at a country music station when he was assigned to attend Swift's concert at the Pepsi Center in Denver. Mueller was backstage with his girlfriend when they

met with Swift, then 23, in a curtained enclosure. They posed for a photo and left. Later, Swift's bodyguard confronted Mueller with the allegation that he had reached under the singer's dress and grabbed her buttocks.

Mueller denied the allegation and asked that they call the police. He and his girlfriend were escorted out of the arena and a member of Swift's team called his boss. Swift never went to the police. She tried to keep the situation "discreet and quiet and confidential" and was upset by Mueller's claim that "for some reason she might have some incentive to actually fabricate this story," her attorney, Douglas Baldrige, has argued in court. Mueller's attorney, Gabriel McFarland, argues that Mueller may have been misidentified after someone else touched Swift. Swift's mother and a member of her team are also defendants in the lawsuit filed by Mueller. — AP

File photo shows singer Taylor Swift performs her song 'Story of Us,' as she kicks off her Speak Now North American tour in Omaha, Neb.— AP



FEATURES



Faisal Shaikh, left, of Ashburn, Virginia, embraces "Bizarre Foods" host Andrew Zimmern, during a chance encounter outside Kababish.



Andrew Zimmern snaps a cell phone photo of chicken kebabs, far left, a dish composed of organ meats, center, and a goat dish called katakat at Kababish. — AP photos



Homemade sausages and other cured meats hang above the counter as the staff at Muncan Food Corp waits to serve customers from behind the meat counter.

Bizarre Foods host on new show, travel tips, addiction hope



Spicy chicken kebabs from Kababish.

Andrew Zimmern, host of Travel Channel's "Bizarre Foods," thinks he's misunderstood. He says he's known as "fat guy runs around world, eats bugs," but adds, "I don't think I've eaten a bug or an organ in 'Bizarre Foods' in years." "I purposely set out to make a show that's entertaining," he said. "At the same time I try to be very thoughtful and thought-provoking and I try to educate and I take the cultural lessons of the show very, very, very seriously." The show's current season focuses on American destinations, along with their history and social context. And a new show, "The Zimmern List," debuts early 2018 showcasing his favorite places, "where I actually go when the cameras aren't rolling."

Zimmern - a chef who's won four James Beard awards - invited The Associated Press to follow him in Queens, New York, for a glimpse of what "The Zimmern List" will be like. In the Astoria neighborhood, he sampled cured meats and pastries at Muncan

Food Corp, founded by an immigrant from the former Yugoslavia; then had a goat dish called katakat at Kababish, which serves Pakistani, Indian and Bangladeshi food in Jackson Heights; and finished with Taiwanese noodle soup and minced vegetables at Happy Stony Noodle in Elmhurst.

Relationship with Anthony Bourdain

"We're friends, we do hang out. I did his stage show with him when he came to Minneapolis. ... We were both part of the Jose Andres tribute dinner last February, that was the last time we saw each other. We went outside on the deck and locked the door behind us, so we could just be alone, and spend a half-hour catching up. I don't think we're competition at all actually. I think Tony would probably say the same thing." "I absolutely adore what Tony does because of his storytelling ability. And it's shot beautifully."

On addiction: Nobody is hopeless

"I've been sober for 25 1/2 years. I was a heroin addict. An alcoholic, I was a criminal. I was homeless. So I have a very, very low bottom story. Tried to kill myself by drinking myself to death, didn't work, living in an abandoned building, stealing purses (left) on chairs to live. So I've come a pretty long way."

"I hope family members or loved ones who have someone (struggling with addiction) hear it loud and clear. Don't listen to the statistics. There is recovery available for everyone. There is no one so hopeless as to actually be hopeless. It just does not exist. Sometimes intervention is necessary. Actually separation from substances. And a lot of families don't go down the intervention route fast enough. ... There are tons of great places out there."

Most bizarre food ever eaten

"In Samoa, we had a coral worm that swims up from the bottom of the ocean, thousands of feet, and dies in the sun and then falls back down and fertilizes the coral. ... To eat that worm when it floats to the surface with the natives, I can't think of something stranger. Enset, which is a bread, made from pounded palm roots that's buried in the ground for months and fermented before it's baked, that some of the tribal Ethiopians still make in that country ... that's certainly strange."

Everybody wants me to call out some horribly fermented, heinous - like casu marzu, the maggot-infested cheese of Sardinia, but the term bizarre in Webster's means unique and interesting. People always ask me, "What's the strangest thing you've ever eaten?" and I'm just like, "None of it is strange to the people who are eating it there." I've not eaten any of those foods, enset, or sea worm or the casa marzu, in America. I get up in the morning, I make eggs and have cereal with my kid, roast a chicken for dinner." — AP



Homemade sausages and other cured meats hang above the counter at Muncan Food Corp.



Andrew Zimmern holds a tray of poppy seed cake prepared by Muncan Food Corp.

Food Corp, founded by an immigrant from the former Yugoslavia; then had a goat dish called katakat at Kababish, which serves Pakistani, Indian and Bangladeshi food in Jackson Heights; and finished with Taiwanese noodle soup and minced vegetables at Happy Stony Noodle in Elmhurst.

Faisal and Hera Shaikh, from Ashburn, Virginia, were picking up food from Kababish when Zimmern appeared. After taking a few selfies with him, Faisal Shaikh said he's dined at places recommended by Zimmern around the world, from Dubai to Australia. "I see his show and I write it down," Shaikh said. "Wherever he goes, I go." Shaikh says he likes the show because Zimmern tells "the whole story ... the culture, the society, the background, about where the food comes from." Here are some excerpts from AP's wide-ranging chat with Zimmern, including advice on using social media to find good food when you travel, and a message of hope for families struggling with addiction.

Finding good food when you travel

"I google local food writers. ... I look up who are the most famous chefs on the Eater Heatmap but I also look on the



Customer favorites duck and goose pastrami, are shown at Muncan Food Corp, in Astoria, Queens, in New York.



Andrew Zimmern snaps a cell phone photo of his order of Taiwanese noodle soup and minced vegetables at Happy Stony Noodle in Elmhurst, Queens in New York.

A little less drama: Kitchen backsplashes get sleeker

The kitchen backsplash - that surface behind the stovetop or sink that protects the wall from damage during cooking and dishwashing - has long been used to add color and beauty to an otherwise utilitarian space. But dramatic, ornately patterned backsplashes, once popular, are being replaced by sleeker, simpler designs, says interior designer Jenny Kirschner. Many designers are using monochromatic tiles arranged in simple patterns to create beautiful backsplashes that won't quickly go out of style. We've asked New York-based Kirschner and two other interior designers - Florida-based Andrew Howard and California-based Sayre Ziskin - for advice on creating a kitchen backsplash that is as timeless as it is gorgeous.

Quality and handcrafting

"I make it a point in every kitchen to do a stand-out backsplash," Howard says. But that doesn't mean the project has to be expensive. Because a backsplash covers a relatively small area, he says, it's possible to use high-end and even custom-made tiles while keeping costs down. There is usually a space of just 18 inches between upper and lower cabinets, so it doesn't take a lot of tile to fill that area if you wish to extend the backsplash beyond the sink or stovetop.

All three designers suggest hunting for high-quality porcelain or ceramic tiles, or commissioning them in custom colors and finishes. For ceramic tiles in custom colors, Kirschner recommends Fireclay Tile, a California company that ships nationally. Ziskin is a fan of the handmade tiles by Anne Sacks, which she says offer the beautiful flaws and uniqueness that machine-made tiles don't have.

Coordinating, not Contrasting

It's tempting to add a burst of color in your backsplash. But by keeping the backsplash neutral and adding brighter colors through more easily

replaceable things like curtains and upholstery, you're less likely to get bored. And if you'll be selling your home within a few years, a neutral backsplash in classic white subway tile or a pale gray glass tile is a much easier sell than a distinctive color. Kirschner likes designing backsplashes that are coordinated with the countertop material. By matching the materials instead of contrasting them, she says, "you don't run the risk of saying, 'What was I thinking?'"

One way to do this is to use faux-marble porcelain slab countertops in a neutral color, and then use tiles or a solid slab in the same material for your backsplash. You can also choose a tile in a slightly different material than your countertops but exactly match the color.

Creative placement

One way to make tiles in a neutral shade like white or gray look more striking is to get "playful with shape, rather than color," Kirschner says. If you like subway tiles but feel they're overused, choose an oversize version or a very elongated one. To make classic tiles look fresh and surprising, try arranging long, narrow tiles vertically instead of horizontally. Another fresh twist: Ziskin likes lining up edges of tiles so that they are stacked neatly, rather than offsetting them in a traditional brick pattern. Also popular right now are hexagonal tiles arranged with the top edge left uneven. It's traditional to cut a few hexagonal tiles in half to create a solid top line straight across. But designers are now using only whole tiles, creating a playful, uneven line across the top.

Slabs and steel

Some homeowners rarely cook, Howard says, so they can choose a backsplash that's purely about beauty. But the rest of us do give our stoves and sinks a workout, so we need to be more practical. "If

you're in your kitchen a lot and it's getting heavy use, I would shy away from marble or a grouted backsplash," Howard says. "Because you don't want to spend all your time scrubbing down your backsplash."



Ziskin agrees: Lots of thick grout lines can be "a cleaning nightmare." One solution is using a faux-marble slab backsplash (real marble may pick up stains you can't remove) rather than tiles. That way there's no grout to clean.

Another option is using tiles but keeping grout to a minimum. Kirschner has used stainless steel tiles with no visible grout lines to create a sleek backsplash in kitchens that also have stainless steel appliances. It's a unique look and easy to clean. Any design that you love can be beautiful, Ziskin says, "as long as the surface is wipeable and it doesn't stain." — AP

Photo provided by interior designer Jenny Kirschner shows a kitchen designed by Kirschner. — AP photos



Photo provided by interior designer Jenny Kirschner shows a kitchen designed by Kirschner.

Lifestyle

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Christine daVinci performs in the drag pageant and exhibition during the Jackson Pride Parade and Festival in downtown Jackson, Mich, on Saturday. — AP

A view to Porto Montenegro, one of the biggest and most luxurious of all the yachting marinas on the Adriatic, in Tivat, Montenegro.



A view of the 'Tsar's Village' complex near Sveti Stefan peninsula in Montenegro.



Despite Kremlin's warnings, Russians flock to Montenegro

Russian tourists are flocking to Montenegro despite warnings from Moscow against their visits to the latest NATO-member country. Montenegro's tourism organization said yesterday that Russians had more than 179,000 overnight stays in the first six months in the tiny Adriatic Sea country, four times more than the same period last year. When Montenegro joined NATO in June despite the Kremlin's strong opposition, Russia's Foreign Ministry warned Russians against their visit to the former allied

state, saying "there is an anti-Russian hysteria in Montenegro."

Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova had warned Russians they could face provocations, arrests and expulsions. Montenegro's authorities say that only in the last 15 days, about 13,000 Russians arrived through the seaside airport of Tivat, 15 percent more than during the same period last year. — AP

A worker repairs roof on Holy Sunday church in the 'Tsar's Village' complex near Sveti Stefan peninsula in Montenegro.



Rolling Stones' Ronnie Wood reveals cancer scare

reveals cancer scare

Rolling Stones guitarist Ronnie Wood revealed yesterday that he underwent emergency surgery earlier this year after a cancerous lesion was found on his lung. "I've had a fight with a touch of lung cancer," the 70-year-old told the Mail on Sunday's Event magazine. "There was a week when everything hung in the balance and it could have been curtains-time to say goodbye." Wood described going for a check-up with the doctor in May, a routine event before the band went on tour.

"And then he came back with the news that I had this supernova burning away on my left lung," he said. He spent a week waiting for tests to see if the cancer had spread, determined that he would not have chemotherapy for fear of going bald. "This hair wasn't going anywhere," he said. When the news came in that it had not spread, he had emergency surgery to remove part of his lung. "I'm OK now. But I'm going to have a check-up every three months. They caught it early," he said. He added: "I was bloody lucky but then I've always had a very strong guardian angel looking out for me. By rights I shouldn't be here."

Wood gave up smoking shortly before the birth in May last year of his twin girls with wife Sally, and no longer drinks alcohol or takes drugs. But for decades he lived a rock'n'roll lifestyle, along with fellow Stones hellraiser Keith Richards. "I had this thought at the back of my mind after I gave up smoking a year ago: 'How can I have got through 50 years of chain-smoking-and all the rest of my bad habits-without something going on in there?'" he told the paper. When he received the diagnosis, "to be totally honest, I wasn't surprised". Wood, who joined the Stones in 1975, is the youngest member of the iconic four-piece British rock band. He gave the interview to mark a new book of his paintings and sketches, entitled "Ronnie Wood: Artist". — AFP



A view of the Sveti Stefan peninsula, a hotel and a tourist resort on the coast of Montenegro. — AP photos



This file photo shows Ronnie Wood, the lead guitarist of British rock group 'The Rolling Stones' performs on stage at Hayarkon Park in the Mediterranean coastal city. — AFP