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AMIRI ENVOY DELIVERS LETTERS IN OMAN, UAE AND BAHRAIN

US REITERATES SUPPORT TO KUWAIT'S MEDIATION EFFORTS



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ASSEMBLY TO REVIEW NEW MEDICAL FEES

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: The decision by the Health Minister Jamal Al-Harbi to increase the fees of medical services for expats will be reviewed by Parliament as MPs believe that the decision deserved a second look, informed sources said. Although, the minister has the authority to issue such a decision and Parliament has no right to oppose it, many MPs are of the opinion that a legislative-level review maybe helpful in passing a law and chalking out a clear mechanism for fees on Kuwait's health services.

The sources said the parliamentary committee on health will soon hold a meeting to discuss the increase of fees. Though the committee agrees on the new decision in principle, it objects to the decision to grant exemptions to certain groups from the increase.

The sources added that the same applies to the education committee which will also discuss a proposal to end the exemption granted to expat children of public school teachers from joining government schools. Though a decision was taken in the 1980s to prohibit expatriate children from enrolling in public schools, an exemption was granted later to children of Arab teachers who worked in public schools. Recently, Education Minister Mohammad Al-Fares had made a proposal to the parliament's educational committee to review this exemption so that the state can save thousands of dinars which can be effectively utilized in the education sector.

KUWAIT: Amiri Envoy First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and Acting Minister of Information Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah yesterday visited UAE, Oman and Bahrain to deliver letters by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to the leaders of the GCC nations.

In Oman, the letter to Sultan Qaboos bin Said on the recent regional and international developments, was handed to Deputy Prime Minister for International Relations and Cooperation Affairs and Personal Representative of Sultan Qaboos Asa'ad bin Tariq bin Taimour Al-Said. The meeting was attended by Assistant Foreign Minister for the First Deputy Premier and Foreign

Minister's Office Ambassador Dr Sheikh Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah and Kuwaiti Ambassador to Oman Fahad Al-Mutairi. In UAE, the letter to President of the UAE Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, was handed to UAE Vice President, Prime Minister, and Dubai Ruler Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum.

Continued on Page 11



ABU DHABI/MUSCAT: Amiri Envoy First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah delivers a letter to UAE President, Prime Minister, and Dubai Ruler Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum. (Right) Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah hands over an Amiri letter to Omani official. —KUNA



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His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Central Bank of Kuwait Governor Dr Mohammad Yousef Al-Hashel. —Amiri Diwan photos

AMIR MEETS CENTRAL BANK GOVERNOR

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Al-Seif Palace yesterday Central Bank of Kuwait Governor Dr Mohammad Yousef Al-Hashel. Hashel handed His Highness the Amir a copy of the 45th annual report for the year 2016-2017, and the financial stability report for 2016, as well as the economic report for 2016. Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir also met with His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. —KUNA



KUWAIT OFFERS MORE FOOD AID TO YEMENIS IN TAIZ

RIYADH: A Kuwaiti humanitarian campaign yesterday provided 3,000 food packages to the needy families in the deprived and most-harmed areas of Yemen's Taiz Governorate. The food was offered to Yemenis in various parts of the province, including the Jabal Zeid camp for the displaced and the besieged Taiz area, the campaign said in a statement. Governorate Undersecretary Aref Jamel commended Kuwait's efforts to help the Yemeni people since the eruption of the crisis in the country, highly appreciating His Highness the Amir

Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's support. Jamel pointed to the colossal devastation in Taiz, calling for the more flow of aid.

Meanwhile, Abdulrahman Al-Wajehi, project officer in the 'Kuwait By Your Side' campaign, said that the food aid would help alleviate the suffering of the people in Taiz amid the acute conditions they have been going through. Wajehi voiced thanks to the State of Kuwait for the generous support and efforts to help the "brothers in Yemen," especially in Taiz. —KUNA



CAIRO: Egyptian President Abdelفتاح Al-Sisi reads a letter from His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, delivered by First Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. —KUNA

EGYPTIAN PRESIDENT APPRECIATES AMIR'S EFFORTS

CAIRO: Egyptian President Abdelفتاح Al-Sisi extolled His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for his efforts to consolidate the inter-Arab unity and solidarity. President Al-Sisi received His Highness the Amir's envoy - the First Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, to discuss the latest developments of Qatar crisis in the light of Kuwait's mediation to

mend the rift in the Arab rank. The meeting gathered Kuwait's Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and Acting Minister of Information Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, according to a statement by the Egyptian Presidential Spokesman Alaa Youssef.

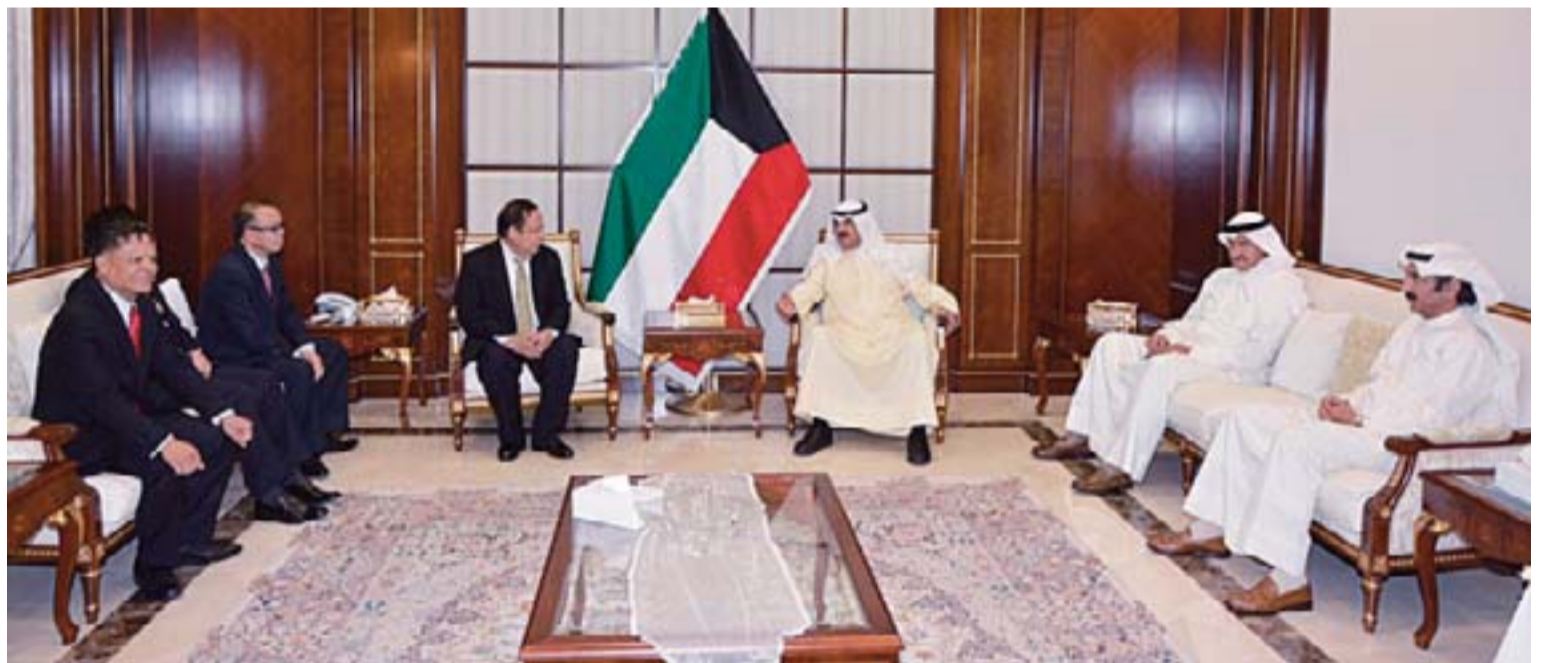
President Sisi reaffirmed support to the Kuwaiti mediation efforts and stressed the need for Qatar to address the concerns of Egypt and three other

Gulf states. The two sides agreed to continue consultations and coordination closely in the coming stage based on the commendable stances of His Highness the Amir, the statement said.

At the onset of the meeting Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled, accompanied by Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah delivered a letter to President Al-Sisi from His Highness the Amir on the latest developments in the region. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah meets with US Deputy Assistant State Secretary for Arab Gulf Affairs Tim Lenderking and retired US Marine Corps general and ex-CENTCOM Commander-in-Chief Anthony Zinni. —KUNA



Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah meets with the ambassadors of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

DEPUTY FM, US DELEGATION DISCUSS GULF ROW MEDIATION

KUWAIT: During talks with Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah on Monday, a US official and retired US general reiterated support of Kuwait's efforts to resolve the ongoing feud between Qatar and another four Arab countries.

Both Deputy Assistant State Secretary for Arab Gulf Affairs Tim Lenderking and retired US Marine Corps general and ex-CENTCOM Commander-in-Chief Anthony Zinni said the US

would double its efforts in pursuit of the joint goal, read a Kuwaiti official statement.

The meeting, which was also attended by Assistant Foreign Minister for Jarallah's office Ayham Al-Omar and US Ambassador Lawrence Silverman, also discussed bilateral relations along with regional and international developments.

Separately, Jarallah met yesterday with the ambassadors of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) on relations between

Kuwait and the bloc. During the meeting, which came on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the ASEAN, the diplomats briefed the Kuwaiti official on ongoing preparations and arrangements for marking this event in late September. The meeting was attended by Assistant Foreign Minister for Protocols Ambassador Dhari Al-Ajran and Assistant Foreign Minister for the Deputy Foreign Minister's Office Ambassador Ayham Al-Omar. —KUNA



KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah chaired the 114th meeting of the Supreme Petroleum Council, which was held at Bayan Palace yesterday. —KUNA

MOM, BOYFRIEND DENY MURDER INTENT IN FIVE-YEAR-OLD'S DEATH

CHILD SUBJECTED TO TWO MONTHS OF REPEATED ABUSE

KUWAIT: A five-year-old girl who died in a child abuse case reported earlier this week was subjected to abuse for 60 days before her eventual death, according to police findings. Meanwhile, reports emerged yesterday indicating that the child's mother and her boyfriend said during questioning that the girl was of special needs, adding yet another dark twist to the crime that shook Kuwait. The public prosecutor gave orders in the meantime to remand the couple in custody, as they are accused of the girl's murder in the Qusoor district of Jahra on Sunday.

The mother had called police and claimed that her daughter was motionless after she fell from a high place. But detectives found bruises and burns on the girl's body; which was recovered by the coroner. Detectives held the mother under interrogation, during which she eventually explained that on the night of the crime, she and her daughter were with her boyfriend in a rented car when the man proceeded to hit the girl until she was knocked unconscious.

The woman then took her daughter back to her car, and called police, who came over and discovered that the child was dead. Her boyfriend confessed during interrogation of beating the girl, saying that both him and the girl's mother used to beat the child repeatedly when she refused to shut up. The man denied murder intent.

Human trafficking

Criminal detectives closed a case involving an African woman fell victim of human trafficking, forced labor and forced prostitution in Kuwait. According to investigations, the woman, 22, paid \$2,500 to people in her country who promised that they can help her come to Kuwait to finish her higher education. When she arrived in Kuwait, a man took her to his house where she was forced to work as a domestic helper. She spent a number of days at the house - during which she was subjected to attempted rape by the homeowner, according to her statements - before she was taken by another employer; an African man who took her to an apartment. The woman then refused to work, at which point her new employer told her that he 'bought' her for KD 20 so that she could work for him as a prostitute. Faced with this reality, the woman was able to escape and

seek help at her country's embassy. A complaint was lodged with local police, and investigations revealed that a Gulf national had paid KD 400 to a man who ran an unlicensed domestic help office; and who coordinated with the person who recruited the girl from her home country in order to bring her to Kuwait. Detectives were able to arrest the African national who confessed to taking the girl to his Fahaeel apartment, and asked for \$2,000 to return her passport.

Child molester caught

An Egyptian man was arrested in Farwaniya for molesting children. His arrest came after he was identified as the prime suspect in multiple child harassment cases reported recently in several Farwaniya police stations. The man confessed to the charges and was sent to the relevant authorities for questioning.

False reports

Social media reports speculating that the government plans to monitor social networks in Kuwait are not true, informed sources said. Rumors went viral on social media recently about a government plan to tap phone calls, as well as calls and texts made over WhatsApp, Viber, Twitter and Facebook. "Such recurring rumors are completely false," said the sources who spoke on the condition of anonymity, adding that the law protects the privacy of calls and conversations made over all social media applications, and further indicating that the government respects people's privacy in that respect.

Suicide

A 33-year-old Indian man hanged himself in a room located on top of the roof of a Khaitan building. Forensic men were called in to collect the body and take it to the coroner. A suicide investigation was opened based on the initial probe's findings.

Nothing suspicious

Explosives experts dealt with a bag that was found near Riqqa medical center. A citizen had called police to inform them about the bag, and explosives experts were called who did not find anything suspicious about the suitcase.

—Translated from the Arabic press



KUWAIT: Philippine Vice Consul to Kuwait Charleson Hermosura talks with OFWs who recently availed AVRVP. — Photo by Ben Garcia

74 UNDOCUMENTED OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS REPATRIATED BACK HOME

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: Noraisa, a Filipina domestic helper in Kuwait returned home yesterday, after 16 years of working without a visa. She is one of 74 other undocumented Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) in Kuwait who were repatriated as part of the continuing program by the Kuwait's Ministry of Interior and Kuwait Immigration Department under the Assisted Voluntary Repatriation Program (AVRP). The group flew back to the Philippines late yesterday via Gulf Air.

The group was led to Kuwait International Airport by Philippine Embassy's Assistance to Nationals Unit (ATNU) along with Philippine Vice Consul to Kuwait Charleson Hermosura. "We are happy and thankful for the great help and cooperation given to us by Kuwait's Ministry of Interior and Immigration Department. This Assisted Voluntary Repatriation Program (AVRP) is a continuing program and it helps many of our compatriots leave the country without being charged for violating the country's immigration rules," Hermosura said. "Without this program, many Filipinos are in jail for violating immigration rules, while many are also deported. Thank God for AVRP," Hermosura added.

A way out

The AVRP is an agreement signed between the Kuwait government and the Philippines embassy in Kuwait as a way out for many illegal Filipinos in the country without detention and penalty. Out of 74 repatriated OFWs yesterday, only two were from the Philippine embassy's Philippine Overseas Labor Office and Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (POLO-OOWWA) shelter. The Embassy shelter is currently housing more than 200 runaway housemaids. Their repatriation is also being assisted by POLO-OOWWA with the help of Kuwait's Ministry of Interior.

To this date, there are hundreds of applicants on the AVRP list. Those who wish to leave the country through AVRP were asked to coordinate with the Philippine Embassy and wait till the Ministry of Interior processes their applications. It usually takes months to complete the process but while waiting for the immigration and the embassy procedures to complete, many of the applicants can still work at their own risk.

Noraisa, not her real name, lived in Kuwait for 16 years without a visa and was never stopped by the police, she claimed. "Maybe because I was wearing decent clothes with 'hijab' and police do not mind a simple woman like me. Besides, I rarely leave the place unless it is very important or to go the baqalas (small grocery store). I would walk closer to the buildings and if I saw police, I used to hide in the closest building," she said.

Noraisa claimed to have filed a case in 2001 against her employer, who did not pay her salary for a year. "That case did not prosper and my employer did not cooperate. So while waiting for the case to resolve, an embassy personnel allowed me to work with a Filipino couple who worked as a nurse. From there I transferred from one Filipino employer to another," she admitted. Noraisa was also thankful that for the last 16 years, she has not encountered any major health issues. "I have only had mild fevers and mostly eat healthy food like veggies and seafood," she said. She claimed to have left the Philippines in 1999 to work as a domestic helper. After completing two years, she asked her unclaimed one year salary from her employer which she did not get. She ran away and sought the embassy's help. A case was filed but it did not resolve since the employer did not cooperate.

Seven years

Linda, another domestic helper also availed AVRVP yesterday. She worked in a sweets factory in Kuwait for seven years without a visa. "I was arrested by immigration police four times because I had no visa. But my employer was a very influential person, so police would release me eventually," she told Kuwait Times.

Linda worked less than a year for her first employer before running away. "My problem with my first employer was that I was the only helper in their big house. Besides, I was not allowed to take a day off; so I left that house and ran away and found a job in a sweet factory," she said. The repatriated workers yesterday did not have to pass through a deportation center but were informed to arrive early at the airport few hours before their scheduled flight at 6 pm last night.

NO COMMERCIAL LICENSES FOR PUBLIC SECTOR EMPLOYEES

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Commerce and Industry Minister and Acting Minister for Youth Affairs Khalid Al-Roudhan rejected MPs' plan to allow citizens working in government to obtain commercial licenses, relying on a circular from the Civil Service Commission. Roudhan expressed this in a report he sent to the National Assembly as a reply to a proposal by MP Faisal Al-Kandari, which was approved by the parliamentary finance and economic committee.

Experts' services

Justice Minister and State Minister for National Assembly Affairs Faleh Al-Azb issued a decision increasing fees related to experts' services for citizens and expats. The new fees will be as follows:

1. KD 20 for each session held by the expert for each working day.
2. KD 30 for each session held by the expert for each working day at the place of the dispute or outside the department for inspection and checking documents.
3. KD 20 for the expert's appearance in

court to discuss the report.

4. KD 15 as transport fees outside the department.
5. KD 10 for printing and depositing the report.

The report set fees of experts for private residences, residential units, chalets and commercial stores at KD 50, and KD 100 for residential or commercial residences and KD 50 for the work related to industrial or agricultural land.

New structure

Ministry of Public Works (MPW) officials informed the Civil Service Commission (CSC) about the proposed new ministry structure, Undersecretary Awatif Al-Ghunaim said. She said the structure includes the transfer of the environment department from the sanitary engineering sector to the direct supervision of the undersecretary, as recommended by the higher council for the environment. She said the structure will create a department for geo-information on the instructions of the Cabinet and will be linked to the municipality. He said a new department will operate Jaber Bridge and another the airport project.



KUWAIT: Kuwait Municipality inspectors removed 71 unlicensed signs during a recent crackdown carried out in Mubarak Al-Kabeer. They also inspected 14 properties to make sure that they are in accordance with construction regulations, and searched a number of restaurants where they issued three tickets. —By Hanan Al-Saadoun

Kuwait Times

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KUWAIT: Kuwait could benefit from the examples set by other countries which focused on tourism as a viable source of national income. — KUNA

KUWAIT SHOULD PRIORITIZE TOURISM IN FINANCIAL, ECONOMIC REFORM

'LEADERS GROUP' REPORT EXPLORES OMAN, VIETNAM'S VENTURES IN THIS FIELD

KUWAIT: Leaders Group for Consulting and Development (LGCD), the representative of the International Tourism Organization in Kuwait issued its monthly report that deals with the tourism sector in Kuwait and sheds light on the most notable developments in the tourism industry.

"Eighteen months elapsed since the government issued its 'Financial and Economic Document', which is something that we have to look into deeply especially given the proposed date to execute the necessary procedural programs to achieve the reform goals," said Nabila Al-Anjari, LGCD General Manager.

Reform paths in several regional countries show reform goals that are similar to those set by Kuwait. However, the differences are in the performance speed, as well as the conformity between procedures, policies, goals and courage in implementing them on schedule. It is notable that the document ignored the importance of sustainable tourism as a major generator for development, as well as economic and financial reform.

Sustainable tourism

This year, the world is marking the 'International Year of Sustainable Tourism.' Many countries are making clear successes in this field, including Oman, which will host the second international conference of tourism and culture on December 11 and 12. The event will be organized by the International Tourism Organization and UNESCO on the eve of a major official celebration in Geneva to conclude the international occasion.

If it was not for some activities and meetings held by some private sector institutions, it could be said that state departments totally ignored the focus on the goals of

'International Year of Sustainable Tourism' with regards to increasing awareness at the importance of sustainable tourism in order to develop and focus on our tourism capabilities. This would help drive tourism development into new levels, enhance investment opportunities, and encourage making policy changes and the consumer behavior towards a more sustainable tourism sector. Those issues go in line with the spirit and goals of the Kuwait reform document.

This year's activities include the call for enhancing sustainable tourism as a tool for development while focusing on its role as an engine for economic development and increasing awareness for interested parties, including tourists themselves, in the effects of tourism on the society and environment. The lack of awareness is only one aspect of reducing the status of tourism in the reform document, contrary to what takes place in most countries, including the West which used tourism as a vehicle to get out of the latest world recession. The same was done by most GCC countries which became an example of quick and unique development due to tourism, with special emphasis on Oman's new distinction on the occasion of sustainable tourism.

Oman

Oman achieved tangible development in all aspects of life and gained the respect of many observers and foreign tourists who frequent the Sultanate with increased interest in tourism. Following oil's contribution to finan-



Nabila Al-Anjari

cial resources, which made it a rich country, and under the expectation of oil depletion in 50 years, Oman puts on tourism as an alternative, with the goal being to increase the rates of national income from tourism from two percent to five percent of the annual national product until the year 2020 (around 12 million tourists). Effectively, this plan will help make tourism the second source of national income.

Tourism in this oil country has become one of the most notable aspects of economic, social and financial reform, and a sector that meets the increased demand for job opportunities, particularly by youth (38 percent) and raising wages in various sectors, as more than 72 percent of Omanis in the private sector were receiving \$520 in 2010, while the percentage of those who could find seats at the higher education facilities are increasing every year.

Oman's has been successful in focusing on tourism as a current and future choice of reform. This success is becoming more evident in the form in which the country's tourism identity has been identified, which focuses on tourism that preserves cultural heritage, tradition and national identity. It is worth mentioning that Oman enjoys a beautiful nature in various provinces, besides 300 kilometers of coastal lines and the latest touristic projects is its manmade gulf worth 2.9 billion euros.

Vietnam

Vietnam represents another interesting case as far as economic restructuring is concerned, as well as its relation with tourism

especially that it is governed by a socialist and agricultural regime, yet it introduced many reforms in all aspects and sectors. Vietnam had goals that go in agreement with the goals in the economic and financial reform document in Kuwait. However, it took a distinguished approach in applying these goals and was able to reap the results quickly despite its conservative nature towards contemporary economic policies and openness since the early days of the communist revolution there 30 years ago.

It was able to do so because it did not hesitate to take measures and direct projects to revive tourism within its economic reform, and made offers towards foreign investors, especially South Koreans. As a result of these procedures and policies, they are in harmony with economic restructuring. The country witnessed a six percent growth while the world was witnessing a large economic recession.

Vietnamese authorities launched an appeal at the end of July, 2017 to foreign investors to invest in a new batch of touristic projects within its plan for economic reform. Sa Mo province which is located in the far south is set to invest in two touristic projects valued at \$527 million among 50 investment projects from 2017 to 2020, out of which there are 10 projects for foreigners including developing sea ports, environmental and solar energy and fine technological industries.

Vietnam signed an agreement with South Korea in July 2017 to activate cooperation in tourism. It also agreed with Hungary to support cooperation in tourism, and the touristic agenda became full of activities, the latest of which was the construction of the first special museum for pictures in Vietnam, the

singing festival for the talented in southern Vietnam and the opening of the 'culture and tourism days' in Laos.

Vital link

Analysis of economies of several Arab and foreign countries, both conservative and liberal, confirms the vital link between the financial and economic reform and tourism. Based on many studies, several objective warnings were issued based on recent experiences of financial and economic reforms. Meanwhile, the International Tourism Organization points out the importance of tourism and traveling as a social and economic activity that grew steadily and has reached unprecedented levels internationally. It also points out how tourism in many countries tops economic development priorities and contributes to redistributing wealth, reducing poverty and creating job opportunities.

Kuwait is not thinking about placing tourism as its top priority, but it is inevitable that it decides the place of tourism on its strategic priorities' list and to change the random government address in this regard to prepare implementation plans very soon. The only clear indication about tourism in the reform document was in the "legislative and institutional reform programs and supporting measures," as they included the issuance and amendment of nearly 13 laws in order to approve and adjust legislations in support of reform, including the passing of the tourism law. However, this law was released within the medium range programs (2018/2019 - 2020/2021), which means that it should be issued within the next three years, otherwise the reform programs will be lagging behind the merits they were approved for.

COOPERATION WITH INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS KEY TO DEVELOP KUWAIT BOURSE: CHAIRMAN

KUWAIT: There is a clear outline for developing Kuwait Bourse, the national stock exchange, with the main component and key being the bolstering of cooperation with other international operators, a senior market official said yesterday. Chairman of the Board and Director General of Bourse Kuwait Talal Al-Ghanem said that the decision to further transform and develop the bourse was in the court of the Capital Markets Authority, revealing that the stock exchange was taking the necessary steps to achieve this goal.



Talal Al-Ghanem

the grand scheme of things, affirmed Ghanem who indicated that collaboration between the companies and Kuwait Bourse would have its reward when the transformation finalizes. He noted that Kuwait Bourse would inform these companies about any upcoming challenges in the future.

In recent times, Kuwait Bourse has held several workshops and has set help counters to answer inquiries by companies in regards to future plans, he indicated. For example, Kuwait Bourse has set a counter to answer inquiries about the Interim Post-Trade Model (IPTM1), said Ghanem, revealing that this helpdesk began full operation on May 21, 2017.

The next level

On other steps to develop the market performance, Ghanem said that Kuwait Bourse

carried out several measures to take market operations to the next level, noting that these measures focused on improving the stock exchange's IT and trading systems as well as developing human resources via employing more Kuwaiti talents. He pointed out that listed companies now could post their profits via the system launched by Kuwait Bourse online, which offers such entities full transparency through uploading necessary trading data. All these measures are aiming towards the goal of making Kuwait Bourse "a force to be reckoned with," said Ghanem.

Over-The-Counter

Meanwhile, Ghanem touched on initiating the Over-The-Counter (OTC) services in Kuwait Bourse, saying that the mainframe of such system should be set in order to organize trading. He added that an automated system also should be set in motion for the OTC to operate smoothly. The OTC is a stocks system that allows dealers to form trading networks away from the normal market operations. — KUNA



Kuwait Stock Exchange (Bourse Kuwait).

In Brief

AMIR SENDS CONDOLENCES

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of condolences to Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud yesterday, expressing his deepest sympathy over the death of Prince Salman bin Saad bin Abdullah bin Turki Al-Saud. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah also sent similar cables. — KUNA



OIL PRICE UP

KUWAIT: The price of Kuwaiti crude oil barrel edged 26 cents higher during yesterday's trading to close the day, Monday, at \$49.03 per barrel, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) said on yesterday. Oil prices generally dropped during Monday's transactions in global markets to nine-week low amidst fears of high production by members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and the US. — KUNA



US DOLLAR STABLE

KUWAIT: The exchange rate of the US Dollar was stable at KD 0.301, the same case with the Euro which was stable at KD 0.356, said a statement by the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) yesterday. The CBK added that the Sterling Pound dropped to KD 0.393, the Swiss Franc was stable at KD 0.310, while the Japanese yen was unchanged at KD 0.002. — KUNA



Photo

of the day



KUWAIT: Young Kuwaiti men clean and paint their dhow in preparation for the 29th pearl diving trip. — KUNA

22ND GROUP OF PARTICIPANTS GRADUATE FROM 'ABK ACADEMY'

KUWAIT: Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) congratulated the 22nd group of students who recently graduated from the 'ABK Academy', during a ceremony that was held for the 16 participants who successfully completed the four-week intensive program.

The 22nd round of training consisted of two main parts. The first was classroom facilitation focused and the second was 'on the job' training, whereby the candidates had the opportunity to be fully engaged in the work culture within the bank, and the day to day operations that presented them with a valuable hands on experience.

ABK Academy has graduated a total of 498 candidates to date; preparing a substantial number of individuals to take on jobs within the bank. This type of involvement and contribution is of tremendous value not only to national youth, who gain a wealth of insight into banking as a profession, but also to the bank who has the chance to train and employ local talent.

Kuwait's youth have always been of primary interest to ABK. With the launch of the ABK Academy in 2009, the bank has been able to encourage youth to consider a career in bank-

ing. The Academy covers multiple areas in the banking profession, with particular focus on customer service, which is the backbone of any successful company.

The ABK Academy was launched as an educational platform that focuses on training students and individuals seeking a job opportunity in the banking sector. By engaging with these participants, the bank is able to build on existing potential and talent, and better identify the areas in the bank, in which they could put this positive energy to work.



SUDAN PARLIAMENT SPEAKER VISITS KUWAIT NEXT WEEK

KHARTOUM: Speaker of the Sudanese National Assembly Ibrahim Ahmad Omar is scheduled to visit Kuwait next Tuesday in response to an invitation by his Kuwaiti counterpart Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem. Kuwaiti Ambassador to Sudan Bassam Mohammad Al-Qabandi yesterday relayed Ghanem's welcome of Omar who would stay in Kuwait between August 15 and 18. Emerging from the meeting with Speaker Omar, Qabandi expressed hope that the visit would contribute to cementing further the growing relations between the two countries. He noted significance of the visit that would be part of efforts to enhance the parliamentary relations and coordinate the two nations' stance at parliamentary regional and international quarters for serving joint interests. — KUNA



KHARTOUM: Kuwaiti Ambassador to Sudan Bassam Mohammad Al-Qabandi invites Speaker of the Sudanese National Assembly Ibrahim Ahmad Omar to visit Kuwait. — KUNA

KUWAIT: The Commercial Bank of Kuwait (CBK) announced the names of winners in the first draw of the 'Life's trip with Al-Tijari' campaign, which was launched for all CBK customers. Jumana Mohammad Al-Yousufi and Ghalib Numan Tawfeeq were announced as the lucky winners of the two prizes, which are fully-paid cruise trips to Europe, in addition to business class airline tickets and stay in five-star hotels.



REQUIREMENT

A water bottling Company in Kuwait is looking for the following vacancies

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- High communications skills to solve any arising problems or complaints with direct contact with the customers.
- Strong problem solving, organizational and hands on man management skills.
- Monitor KPI's related to distribution performance, Customer complaint and call center performance to assess operations performance and implement improvements.
- Minimum experience of (12) years in food or water industries.
- Relevant university degree.
- Computer skills, english language, transferable visa and valid driving license.

Quality Assurance Manager

- Responsible for developing, implementing and maintaining the Quality Monitoring Scheme (QMS) for the factory.
- Strong knowledge of ISO 14001 & OHSAS 18000, ISO 9001, ISO 22000 requirements and procedures.
- Support & participate in factory problem solving, Quality control auditing (HACCP, GMP, GLP, On-line production)
- Minimum experience of (10) years in food or water factories.
- Relevant university degree.
- Computer skills, english language, transferable visa.

HORECA Sales Representative

- Good communication skills both English and Arabic.
- Experience in Horeca sector sales.
- Car, Valid driving license and University degree.
- Computer Skills, Transferable Visa.

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Decades into Indian democracy, royal palace continues to thrive

POWERFUL VENEZUELA ASSEMBLY MEETS AGAIN AS PRESSURE MOUNTS



ARSAL: In this June 19, 2016 file photo, a Lebanese army soldier takes his position overlooking an area controlled by the Islamic State group at the edge of the town of Arsal, in northeast Lebanon. — AP

LEBANON ARMY PREPARES FOR IS ASSAULT

TROOPS SEEKING END TO THREAT POSED TO NEIGHBORING TOWNS

BEIRUT: Lebanon's US-backed military is gearing up for a long-awaited assault to dislodge hundreds of Islamic State militants from a remote corner near Syrian border, seeking to end a years-long threat posed to neighboring towns and villages by the extremists. The campaign will involve cooperation with the militant group Hezbollah and the Syrian army on the other side of the border - although Lebanese authorities insist they are not coordinating with Syrian President Bashar Assad's government. But the assault could prove costly for the under-equipped military and risk activating IS sleeper cells in the country.

The tiny Mediterranean nation has been spared the wars and chaos that engulfed several countries in the region since the so-called Arab Spring uprisings erupted in 2011. But it has not been able to evade threats to its security, including sectarian infighting and random car bombings, particularly in 2014, when militants linked to al-Qaeda and IS overran the border region, kidnapping Lebanese soldiers. The years-long presence of extremists in the border area has brought suffering to neighboring towns and villages, from shelling, to kidnappings

of villagers for ransom. Car bombs made in the area and sent to other parts of the country, including the Lebanese capital, Beirut, have killed scores of citizens.

Aided by allies

Aided directly by the United States and Britain, the army has accumulated steady successes against the militants in the past year, slowly clawing back territory, including strategic hills retaken in the past week. Authorities say it's time for an all-out assault. The planned operation follows a six-day military offensive by the Lebanese Shiite militant group Hezbollah that forced Al-Qaeda-linked fighters to flee the area on the outskirts of the town of Arsal, along with thousands of civilians.

In a clear distribution of roles, the army is now expected to launch the attack on IS. In the past few days, the army's artillery shells and multiple rocket launchers have been pounding the mountainous areas on the Lebanon-Syria border where IS held positions, in preparation for the offensive. Drones could be heard around the clock and residents of the eastern Bekaa Valley reported seeing army reinforcements arriving daily in the northeastern district of Hermel to join the

battle. The offensive from the Lebanese side of the border will be carried out by the Lebanese army, while Syrian troops and Hezbollah fighters will be working to clear the Syrian side of IS militants. Hezbollah has been fighting alongside Assad's forces since 2013.

'Necessary counsel'

Yesterday, the army's top brass conferred with President Michel Aoun, Prime Minister Saad Hariri and interior and defense ministers at the Presidential Palace to plan operations in the eastern Bekaa Valley. The committee took the "necessary counsel and decisions to succeed in the military operations to eliminate the terrorists," Maj Gen Saadallah Hamad said after the meeting.

Experts say more than 3,000 troops, including elite Special Forces, are in the northeastern corner of Lebanon to take part in the offensive. The army will likely use weapons it received from the United States, including Cessna aircraft that discharge Hellfire missiles. Keen to support the army rather than the better equipped Iranian-backed Hezbollah, the US and Britain has supplied the military with helicopters, anti-tank missiles, artillery and radars, as well as

training. The American Embassy says the US has provided Lebanon with over \$1.4 billion in security assistance since 2005. But the fight is not expected to be quick or easy.

According to Lebanon's Interior Minister Nuhad Machnouk, there are about 400 IS fighters in the Lebanese area, and hundreds more on the Syrian side of the border. "It is not going to be a picnic," said Hisham Jaber, a retired army general who heads the Middle East Center for Studies and Political Research in Beirut. "The Lebanese army will try to carry out the mission with the least possible losses." Jaber said the battle may last several weeks. "It is a rugged area and the organization (IS) is well armed and experienced."

There are also concerns the offensive may subject Lebanon to retaliatory attacks by militants, just as the country has started to enjoy a rebound in tourism. A Lebanese security official said authorities are taking strict security measures to prevent any attack deep inside Lebanon by sleeper cells. The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity in line with regulations, said authorities have detained several IS militants over the past weeks.

Lebanese politicians say IS controls an area of about 296 square kilometers between

the two countries, of which 141 square kilometers are in Lebanon. The area stretches from the badlands of the Lebanese town of Arsal and Christian villages of Ras Baalbek and Qaa, to the outskirts of Syria's Qalamoun region and parts of the western Syrian town of Qusair that Hezbollah captured in 2013.

In a televised speech last Friday, Hezbollah leader Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah said that once the Lebanese army launches its offensive from the Lebanese side, Hezbollah and the Syrian army will begin their attack from the Syrian side. He added that there has to be coordination between the Syrian and Lebanese armies in the battle.

"Opening two fronts at the same time will speed up victory and reduce losses," Nasrallah said, adding that his fighters on the Lebanese side of the border are at the disposal of Lebanese troops if needed. "I tell Daesh that the Lebanese and Syrians will attack you from all sides and you will not be able to resist and will be defeated," he said, using an Arabic acronym for the extremist group. "If you decide to fight, you will end up either a prisoner or dead," Nasrallah added. Some Lebanese politicians have been opposed to security coordination with the Syrian army. — AP

FROM POPPY TO HEROIN: TALEBAN MOVING INTO DRUG PRODUCTION

KABUL: The Taliban—which banned poppy cultivation when it ruled Afghanistan—now appears to wield significant control over the war-torn country's heroin production line, providing insurgents with billions of dollars, officials have told AFP. In 2016 Afghanistan, which produces 80 percent of the world's opium, made around 4,800 tons of the drug bringing in revenues of three billion dollars, according to the United Nations.

The Taliban has long taxed poppy-growing farmers to fund their years-long insurgency, but Western officials are concerned it is now running its own factories, refining the lucrative crop into morphine and heroin for exporting abroad. "I pretty firmly feel they are processing all the harvest," William Brownfield, US Assistant Secretary for Drugs and Law Enforcement told reporters in the Afghan capital Kabul recently.

"Everything they harvest is duly processed inside the country. They receive more revenues if

they process it before it has left the country. "Obviously we are dealing with very loose figures, but drug trafficking amounts to billions of dollars every year from which the Taliban is taking a substantial percentage," he added. Poppies, which are cheap and easy to grow, make up half of Afghanistan's entire agricultural output.

Farmers are paid about \$163 for a kilo of the black sap—the raw opium that oozes out of poppy seed pods when they are slit with a knife. Once it is refined into heroin, the Taliban sells it in regional markets for between \$2,300 and \$3,500 a kilo. By the time it reaches Europe it wholesales for \$45,000, according to a Western expert who is advising Afghan anti-narcotics forces and asked not to be named. He said an increase in seizures of chemicals required to turn opium into morphine, the first step before it becomes heroin, such as acid anhydride, points to an escalation in Taliban drug activity.

Sixty-six tons of the chemicals were seized in all of 2016, while 50 tons were impounded in just the first six months of this year, the expert said. In early July, he said, 15 tons were confiscated in the west of Afghanistan near the border with Iran, the start of a popular drug route to Europe through Turkey.

'Helmand is all about drugs'

Seizures of morphine have also increased. Fifty-seven tons were discovered in the first half of 2017 compared to 43 tons for the whole of 2016, added the expert, who said that only about 10 percent of what is produced is actually discovered. "It's easy to build a rudimentary laboratory—walls of cob, a thatched roof—and when the operation is finished it is evacuated," the source told AFP. Afghanistan's interior ministry said that between January and June, 46 clandestine drug factories were closed down by anti-narcotics officers compared with 16 in the first half of last year. — AFP



HEMLAND: This file photo taken on April 11, 2017 shows an Afghan farmer harvesting opium sap from a poppy field in the Gereshk district. — AFP

FROM RESPECT AT ELITE UNIVERSITIES TO WANTED FOR GRUESOME MURDER

CHICAGO: After a cross-country manhunt, a former Northwestern University professor and University of Oxford employee are beginning court proceedings for the brutal stabbing death of a 26-year-old hair stylist in Chicago. The case has involved peculiar twists, including a cash donation in the victim's name at a Wisconsin library and a videotaped confession sent to friends. The two men surrendered peacefully in California after eight days as fugitives and one appeared in court Monday.

Northwestern microbiologist Wyndham Lathem and Oxford financial officer Andrew Warren were wanted on first-degree murder charges for the death of Trenton James Cornell-Duranleau. An attorney says Lathem intends to plead not guilty. Here's a closer look at the case:

The crime

The body of 26-year-old Cornell-Duranleau was found stabbed to death inside an apartment belonging to Lathem in an upscale neighborhood near downtown Chicago. The July 27 attack was so violent the blade of the

knife believed to have been used in the stabbing was broken, police said.

Authorities said the building's front desk received an anonymous call that a crime had been committed in the 10th floor apartment. When police opened the door, they found Cornell-Duranleau's body. He had already been dead for at least 12 hours. Police said the victim and Lathem had a personal relationship, but they have not elaborated or released a motive.

The professor

Authorities' primary target in the investigation has been Lathem, who had been on Northwestern's faculty since 2007. The 42-year-old was an associate professor of microbiology and immunology, though university officials say he primarily worked in a research lab. Published in top scientific journals, he was a sought-after speaker on pneumonic and bubonic plagues. Over the years, he taught medical students or graduate students, though he was not teaching at the time of the crime, said officials with Northwestern, which has campuses in Chicago and suburban Evanston.

Investigators said Lathem sent a video to friends and relatives apologizing for his involvement in the crime, which he called the "biggest mistake of my life." The video raised concern among investigators that Lathem might kill himself. Lathem, who was under intensive observation over the weekend in jail, appeared in court Monday, the same day university officials announced his firing. Northwestern officials said Lathem was terminated, effective Friday, "for the act of fleeing from police when there was an arrest warrant out for him."

The visitor

Less is known about Warren, who's British. Warren and Lathem were seen in surveillance video leaving Lathem's high-rise apartment building the day of the stabbing, but it's unclear what Warren's relationship was to the other two men. He is in charge of pensions and payroll at the University of Oxford's Somerville College. Chicago police have said he's 56 years old, while California authorities booked him into jail at 49 years old. Warren arrived in the US three days before Cornell-Duranleau's death and

after being reported missing in Great Britain, Chicago police confirmed. He doesn't have an initial court appearance scheduled yet and is being held at the county jail in San Francisco.

The victim

Cornell-Duranleau, a Michigan native who received a cosmetology license, moved to Chicago last year. He lived in a neighborhood just southwest of downtown. Family members issued a statement asking for time to grieve before commenting further, saying they're "deeply saddened" by the loss. "It is our hope that the person or persons responsible for the death are brought to justice," the statement read. A funeral will be held Aug 12 in Lennon, Michigan.

On the run

The day the crime was committed, police say Lathem and Warren drove about 80 miles (128 kilometers) northwest of Chicago to Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, where one made a \$1,000 cash donation to the local library in Cornell-Duranleau's name. Lake Geneva authorities said the man making the

donation didn't give his name. The two eluded police for eight days before their separate surrenders Friday evening in the Bay Area. Lathem turned himself in at the Oakland federal building roughly the same time Warren turned himself in to police in San Francisco, authorities said. A US Marshals spokesman said surrender negotiations through an attorney began late Friday afternoon.

Looking ahead

Wearing a red inmate uniform, Lathem briefly appeared in court Monday. He's being held without bail in Alameda County. An attorney painted a different picture of him, calling him a "gentle soul" and saying he's received dozens of calls and letters in support. "They all describe him in the same way - a kind, intelligent, and gentle soul, and a loyal and trusted friend," Kenneth H. Wine, an attorney for Wyndham Lathem, said in a statement. "What he is accused of is totally contrary to the way he has lived his entire life." Lathem plans to waive his right to an extradition hearing and expects to be returned to Chicago within weeks, according to an attorney. — AP



TEHRAN: Iran's President Hasan Rouhani, center, delivers a speech after his swearing-in ceremony for the second term in office, at the parliament. — AP

ROUHANI UNDER FIRE FOR MALE-ONLY CABINET

TEHRAN: Iranian President Hassan Rouhani put forward a new cabinet line-up yesterday that was immediately criticized by reformists for its lack of women or young people. The ministerial line-up, which must still be approved by parliament, also lacked minorities and actually increased the average age compared to Rouhani's first term.

"The lack of women ministers shows we are treading water," Shahindokht Mowlaverdi, Rouhani's outgoing vice president for women's affairs, told the Etamad daily after news of the line-up was leaked. Many on social media said Rouhani, a 68-year-old moderate cleric who whipped up reformist support to secure re-election in May, was failing to keep his campaign promises of greater diversity.

"The people's message in the last two elections has had little reflection in the proposed cabinet," tweeted Mohammad Karroubi, a son of jailed opposition leader Mehdi Karroubi. "How can you speak of equality of the entire nation and ignore women and religious minorities?" he added. There were few major changes in the cabinet, with the key figures in Iran's efforts to rebuild ties with the West-Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh-retaining their positions.

Average age 58

The one surprise was the appointment of Mohammad Javad Azari Jahromi, a 35-year-old engineer and by far the youngest addition, who is set to take over as telecoms minister. But even with his appointment, which puts an opponent of censorship at the heart of government, the average age of the cabinet remains at 58. Sunnis, who make up around 10 percent of the Shiite-majority nation, were also left out of the new government.

Rouhani did replace the defence minister, Major General Hossein Dehghan, with his deputy, General Amir Hatami-the first time in more than two decades that the post has been filled by someone from the regular army rather than the elite Revolutionary Guards. And the deputy economy minister, Masoud Karbasian, also replaced his boss, Ali Tayebnia. Analysts say Rouhani will stick with his general push to increase foreign investment and improve the management of the stagnant economy.

Over the past week, the expected lack of women has been a focus of criticism by reformists, who say Rouhani is likely bowing to pressure from the religious establishment. In his first term, Rouhani did have three women among his large cohort of vice presidents, who do not require parliamentary approval. — AFP

TRUMP HAS ESCAPED WASHINGTON, BUT DO NOT CALL THIS A VACATION

REFERS TO 17-DAY BREAK AS A 'WORKING VACATION'

BRIDGEWATER: US President Donald Trump would like to interrupt his vacation to deliver the following message: Don't call this a vacation. The president has decamped from Washington to his private golf club in central New Jersey. But he has repeatedly pushed back on the idea that this is a relaxing August getaway, posting on Twitter over the weekend: "this is not a vacation - meetings and calls!"

Trump's aides are referring to the 17-day break as a "working vacation." They say Trump is meeting with advisers and cabinet members to discuss policy. He is expected to go to New York City next week. On Tuesday, he'll attend a meeting on the opioid crisis. On Monday, he had nothing on his public schedule. Aides declined to answer repeated questions about whether he is playing golf.

Early yesterday, Trump touted his plans for the day on Twitter, saying "I will be holding a major briefing on the Opioid crisis, a major problem for our country." Still, the only sighting of Trump since he landed in New Jersey was a video that surfaced online Saturday of the president greeting wedding guests at his club. Dressed in a golf shirt and a red "Make America Great Again" hat, Trump exited a golf cart to chat with the guests.

Off the clock

So far, the main proof Trump is not off the clock is his steady flow of Twitter comments, particularly Monday, when rain likely kept him indoors. Throughout the day he pushed out messages touting his supporters, attacking Democratic Sen. Richard Blumenthal and highlighting a vote by the United Nations Security Council to slap more sanctions on North Korea.

"Working hard from New Jersey while White House goes through long planned renovation," he said, referring to White House updates underway, including the replacement of a West Wing heating and cooling system. Getting out of Washington in the dog days of summer is a well-established presidential tradition. President George W. Bush enjoyed his Texas ranch, while President Barack Obama frequented Martha's Vineyard in Massachusetts. President Ronald Reagan went out to Santa Barbara, California.

Of course, the president never really leaves the job, traveling with a mini-White House of advisers and aides and continuing briefings and conversations wherever he goes. While there is precedent for Trump to get a change of scenery, the president may be chafing at calling it vaca-



MORRISTOWN: In this Aug 4, 2017, file photo, President Donald Trump waves as he walks down the steps of Air Force One with his grandchildren, Arabella Kushner, center, and Joseph Kushner, right, after arriving at Morristown Municipal Airport to begin his summer vacation at his Bedminster golf club. — AP

tion because he frequently slammed his predecessor for leaving town and for playing golf. In August 2011, Trump tweeted: "@BarackObama played golf yesterday. Now he heads to a 10 day vacation in Martha's Vineyard. Nice work ethic."

"President Trump is hyper-sensitive about the word 'vacation' because he hammered President Obama for so long for taking it," said presidential historian Douglas Brinkley, a professor of history at Rice University. Brinkley added that presidents are "always having to work. Hence the phrase 'working vacation.'"

Overseas travels

So far, Trump has spent 13 of 28 weekends in office away from the White House, mostly at his properties in Palm Beach, Florida, or in Bedminster, New Jersey, according to an Associated Press count. The figures include a weekend during official travel overseas, and Father's Day weekend at Camp David, the government-owned presidential retreat in Maryland. Anita McBride, who served as Laura Bush's chief of staff, agreed that the White House

travels with the president. She said getting out of Washington has benefits, recalling President George W. Bush's love of cycling and other activities at his ranch in Crawford, Texas. "That's where he recharged his batteries," she said. "Any of us who have worked in the White

House really understands the need for getting away." The real world often intrudes on these summer presidential getaways. In 1998, Clinton briefly came back to Washington from Martha's Vineyard to deal with missile attacks in Sudan and Afghanistan. Reagan came home early from a California vacation in 1983 after Korean Airlines Flight 007 was shot down in by a Soviet fighter jet. In 2005, George W. Bush was criticized for not cutting off his vacation after Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans. Brinkley recalled a series of serious events that intruded on Obama's summer breaks, including the beheading of journalist James Foley by Islamic State militants in 2014 and Syria's chemical weapons use in 2013. "Things happen when presidents are away," said Brinkley. "Every August you have something horrific that's going to happen." — AP

PENCE CARVES HIS OWN ID, ON BEHALF OF TRUMP

WASHINGTON: Shuttling across the country aboard Air Force Two, Vice President Mike Pence has been a loyal messenger for President Donald Trump. At the same time, he has been carving out his own political identity as the steady understudy to a mercurial president.

The Republican vice president has raised more than \$1 million in recent months for his political committee, headlined GOP events in such key states as Iowa and Ohio, and hosted Republican VIPs for dinner at his formal residence in Washington. Pence is also preparing to take his fourth overseas trip in the last six months, a schedule that has removed him from the Trump White House's daily palace intrigue and the special counsel's investigation into the Trump administration's ties with Russia.

The vice president's push-and-pull with Trump was reflected in his office's vigorous response to a New York Times report that suggested he might be taking steps to position himself for a 2020 presidential campaign. Pence said in a lengthy statement Sunday that the report was "categorically false." The vice president's spokesman made multiple appearances on cable networks Monday to push back against the story. "The political activities of the vice president are 150 percent in support of the president's agenda. Anyone who asserts otherwise is uninformed," said Phil Musser, a longtime Pence adviser.

Preparing for election ticket

Few Republican operatives believe that Pence would challenge Trump in the 2020 Republican primary election. But at the same time, Republicans privately concede that Trump could be the first president since Richard Nixon to leave office mid-term or not to seek re-election - either for political or personal reasons. Pence would be ill-advised not to prepare for an early Trump exit, as unlikely as it may be, they say.

"I think that Pence is trying to help prepare for the ticket to be re-elected in four years," said former GOP congressman Vin Weber, who keeps in regular touch with administration officials. "But it's ridiculous to say that it never crosses your mind that the president might not be on the ballot for whatever reason, be it health or political."

As Trump's approval ratings sag, Pence is bound by a delicate political reality: His fate is likely tied to Trump's. A successful Trump presidency could help position the 58-year-old Pence to run for president in 2024. A failed Trump presidency, by contrast, could forever stain Pence's political future. Beyond his frequent travel, the vice president has sought to separate himself from special counsel Robert Mueller's investigation into ties between the Trump campaign and Russian officials.

When questions arose about Trump's eldest son, Donald Trump



MONTENEGRO: In this Aug 1, 2017, photo, US Vice President Mike Pence attends a welcome ceremony at Golubovci airport. — AP

Jr., and other Trump officials meeting with a Russian attorney in June 2016, Pence's office issued a terse statement noting that it took place before he joined the Trump ticket. His spokesman later added that Pence did not meet with any Russians during the campaign.

Pence has also traveled to nine countries as vice president so far and plans to make a four-nation trip to South America next week, creating space between his office and the churn of stories about White House shake-ups or the president's daily tweets. But he has loyally backed Trump's policies and agenda. Pence, who served in Congress for a dozen years, rarely begins a speech without passing along the president's greetings and has acted as Trump's chief lobbyist

on Capitol Hill, convening weekly dinners with Republican lawmakers and business leaders at his residence at the Naval Observatory. Even in private meetings, Pence doesn't deviate from his effusive Trump praise.

Political network

"He's an experienced legislator who can help bridge gaps between members of our conference or between the Congress and the president," said Sen Tom Cotton, R-Ark, who attended a dinner in late June. The meetings help strengthen the vice president's political network in the long term. But they also help the Trump administration's connection to an anxious Republican establishment in the short term. — AP

MAYOR FACES 'NEW NORMAL' AFTER SON'S OVERDOSE DEATH

NASHVILLE: A knock on the door woke Nashville Mayor Megan Barry and her husband Bruce out of a sound sleep about 3 am when the mayor saw police at her door. She knew it must be bad news - maybe an officer was shot, and she was needed at the hospital to comfort a grieving family. Instead, what the officer revealed just wouldn't register: Her 22-year-old son Max was dead. "He had to repeat it several times, because that was not what my brain could hear," Barry said, her voice cracking, during a news conference Monday.

Barry returned to work Monday for the first time since her son died of an apparent drug overdose July 29. It marked the start of a "new normal" for the grieving mayor - she won't ever hear his voice or get his text messages again. But even as she mourns her only child, Barry also knows she can be an important voice in drug abuse awareness and the opioid epidemic.

Max Barry's death comes amid nationwide concern about a rise in fatal drug overdoses. The National Institute on Drug Abuse reports overdose deaths from all drugs that the government tracks rose from roughly 23,000 in 2002 to more than 50,000 in 2015. In Tennessee, state health officials report 1,451 people died from drug overdoses in 2015 - the highest annual number of overdose deaths recorded in state history.

The mayor kept her composure as she went through the day's duties Monday. In an elementary school classroom she smiled wide and didn't skip on hugs as she delivered backpacks to students on their first day of classes. She showed

enthusiasm as she thanked the community for an outpouring of support for her son during the news conference that followed. At times, though, she couldn't hold back tears.

'In distress'

"Max will continue to inspire me and Bruce for the rest of our lives," she said, starting to cry. "Our hearts will always be sad and empty because we can never replace our child. But I know that with my faith and I know that with my family, and I know that with my friends, we will get through this." The Barrys still don't know what drug or drugs killed their son, as they await toxicology results. The mayor said Max had completed a month of rehab last summer. She didn't specify what substances he went to rehab for. "Max came home last summer to visit, and it was clear to me the minute that he got off the plane that he was in distress," the mayor said. "And so we got him into rehab immediately."

Afterward, he graduated from the University of Puget Sound - "almost on time," she said. For the last few weeks, he poured concrete for a construction company in Denver and was looking for an apartment out there with friends. Eventually, he wanted to return to Nashville, Barry said. Max Barry died at a private home in Jefferson County, Colorado, near Denver. One of two other people in the home called 911, saying his friend was incoherent. First responders couldn't revive him, Jefferson County Sheriff's Office spokeswoman Jenny Fulton said. His parents found out early the following morning. — AP

UN BACKS ITALY BID TO CLOSE MIGRANT ROUTE FROM LIBYA

ROME: The UN's new envoy to Libya yesterday endorsed Italy's drive to stem the flow of migrants leaving the north African state for Europe, despite misgivings among human rights groups. Rights campaigners fear Italy's focus on strengthening the Libyan coastguard to ensure boatloads of migrants are intercepted before reaching international waters could place thousands of people with a right to asylum at serious risk.

But Ghassam Salame, a former Lebanese culture minister appointed in June to head UN operations in Libya, described the cooperation between

Tripoli and Rome as a "very constructive" way of dealing with an acute problem. "It would be absolutely unrealistic to ignore the seriousness of the challenge of irregular migration," Salame said after meeting Italian Foreign Minister Angelo Alfano in Rome.

"There are hundreds of millions of them across the world. This is very serious problem." "I also believe each country has an absolute right to control its borders and that the best way of doing that is through cooperation with neighboring countries. "We are on a good track of strengthening cooperation to meet this

challenge which is a challenge for all of us." More than 600,000 refugees and other migrants have reached Italy from Libya since 2014. Italy's centre-left government is under intense pressure from domestic opponents and EU partners to close down the route. Its navy is providing technical assistance to the Libyan coastguard, which has also been provided with new patrol boats and training by its former colonial master.

Alfano said the cooperation was beginning to bear fruit, in a reference to a more than 50-percent fall in the number of migrants rescued at sea during July,

when compared to the same month in 2016. Italy has also been working to stem migrant arrivals in Libya through better controls on the southern border, cooperation with countries like Niger, Chad and Mali that migrants transit on their way to the Mediterranean and a voluntary repatriation programme.

Refugee agencies say Libya is too unstable for any potential refugee to be safely returned there. There is particular concern over the fate of migrants who end up in the country's detention camps, where conditions are usually squalid and a lack of regulation means people risk tor-

ture, sexual abuse and forced labor.

Alfano insisted the Italian government would not compromise on its commitment to human rights. "It is not a derby between security and humanity," he said. But he acknowledged Libya's migrant holding facilities leave much to be desired. "Now that we have an opportunity to reduce the fluxes and organise refugee camps in Libya, we have to invest heavily in an international, multilateral humanitarian operation to ensure these camps have an acceptable standard in terms of human rights and every other respect," Alfano said. —AFP

RUSSIAN EX-MINISTER PROTESTS INNOCENCE AT CORRUPTION TRIAL

MOSCOW: Russia's former economy minister Alexei Ulyukayev yesterday insisted he was innocent as his high-profile bribery trial began in Moscow. Ulyukayev, 61, was arrested in November 2016 while still a minister, the first time in decades an acting cabinet member had been detained and criminally charged. He denies having taken a \$2 million kickback (1.7 million euros) to clear state oil giant Rosneft to acquire a stake in oil firm Bashneft.

Yesterday, a federal prison service car took Ulyukayev from his home, where he is under house arrest, to Moscow's Zamoskvoretsky district court. Yesterday's hearing was a preliminary closed session to determine how the trial would proceed. Asked by journalists outside the courthouse if he acknowledged his guilt, Ulyukayev said: "What do you think? Of course not."

Looking visibly thinner, the ex-minister said he had lost 14 kilograms in the course of the case. "Thanks to our justice system. I did not take bribes," he insisted as he got into the car that would take him back to his home. "It's all a provocation." Investigators say Ulyukayev demanded a bribe from Rosneft and was caught red-handed accepting the cash. The identity of the person who allegedly paid the bribe however has not been revealed.

Sources say Ulyukayev was under sur-

veillance by the security service, who had also tapped his phone. If convicted, he faces up to 15 years in prison. Yesterday's hearing set the next court date for August 16, when Ulyukayev will be expected to make a formal plea. The court also ruled to extend Ulyukayev's house arrest by another six months, until late January of next year.

Ulyukayev's arrest was greeted with shock and bewilderment in Russia, unleashing speculation that it could be part of a power struggle inside the government ahead of next year's presidential elections. Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev at the time called the arrest "a grave event... beyond my comprehension" which proves that no official is immune to prosecution if he engages in corruption.

An uncharismatic official, Ulyukayev had been charged with the daunting task of pulling Russia out of economic crisis, and was considered part of the liberal wing of the government. He had initially opposed the sale of the 50.07-percent stake in Bashneft to Rosneft, which is headed by Igor Sechin, a powerful ally of President Vladimir Putin. He later endorsed it however after Putin said it could help fill state coffers. Following his arrest he was quickly dismissed from his ministerial post in a decree issued by Putin. He was replaced by a 35-year-old economist Maxim Oreshkin, who had been working at the finance ministry. —AFP

S AFRICA'S PRESIDENT FACING CRUCIAL NO CONFIDENCE VOTE

JOHANNESBURG: South Africa's parliament was voting yesterday on a motion of no confidence in embattled President Jacob Zuma that could force him to resign after months of growing anger over alleged corruption. Zuma has survived six previous attempts to unseat him in parliament, but this is the first to be held by secret ballot after parliamentary speaker Baleka Mbete on Monday made the surprise decision to allow it. Opposition parties hope it will encourage disgruntled legislators with the ruling African National Congress party to vote against Zuma, who has faced numerous allegations of graft while South Africa's economy has fallen into recession.

"Take our country back," the head of the main opposition Democratic Alliance party, Mmusi Maimane, urged lawmakers. "This is a historic day. Indeed, since the dawn of our democracy the stakes have never been higher." Widespread frustration over Zuma has hurt the ANC, the former liberation movement that has led South Africa since the end of white minority rule and the first all-race elections in 1994.

Yesterday, former President Thabo Mbeki said ANC lawmakers must ask themselves if they have confidence in Zuma when they go to vote, according to a video posted by a Nairobi-based journalist on Twitter. "Those MPs must recall that they are the representatives of the people, and must therefore represent the people in terms of what they do this afternoon," Mbeki told reporters. The ANC holds a majority of the 400 parliament seats, and the party has repeatedly said its members will not support the opposition-led attempt to unseat the president. The party has 249 parliamentary seats, five of which are currently vacant, said a party spokeswoman, Nonceba Mhlau.

The no-confidence motion needs 201 votes to succeed. The draft of the motion submitted by the Democratic Alliance accuses Zuma of "derelict leadership" and says the president has "lost all sense of rationality and sound judgment," harming the country's economy and its poorest citizens. Demonstrations both for and against Zuma, who has led South Africa since 2009, were taking place in front of the parliament building in Cape Town before the much-anticipated vote.



CAPE TOWN: Protesters against President Jacob Zuma, march to parliament yesterday. — AP

'Get rid of this man'

"As you can see, thousands of people have reached the end of their tether in terms of what is happening in our beautiful country, our beautiful, diverse country that we should enjoy but we can't enjoy because millions of our people are without jobs," said one protester, Johnnie Jacobs. "We have got to get rid of this man before he destroys everything that we have all worked so hard for," said another protester, Anne Shirley.

If the motion succeeds, Zuma and his Cabinet must resign immediately and Mbete will take over as acting president, according to Pierre de Vos, a constitutional expert and law professor at the University of Cape Town. The rest of the administration would continue its work for an interim period of up to 30 days until the country's chief justice convenes a special parliament session to elect a new president.

If the ANC cannot agree on a candidate in that time, new national elections would be held. A similar replacement process kicked into gear after the ANC recalled Mbeki in 2008. The reputation of Zuma, who spent a decade in prison for his anti-apartheid activities and has been popular among some South Africans for his personal warmth and populist policies, has been tarnished by allegations of impropriety.

Last year, the Constitutional Court ruled unanimously that Zuma "failed to uphold" the constitution by not paying back some of the \$20 million-plus in state money used to upgrade his rural home. Zuma's ties to the Gupta family, immigrant businessmen accused of trying to manipulate government leaders and state companies for financial gain, also have stirred public anger.

The president's firing of widely respected finance minister Pravin Gordhan in a Cabinet reshuffle in March led two agencies, Fitch and Standard & Poor's, to lower South Africa's credit rating to below investment grade, or junk status. While Zuma's term continues until elections in 2019, there have been calls from within the ANC for him to quit earlier and allow the party to shore up support before the vote. The ruling party is expected to replace Zuma as ANC president at a meeting in December. — AP



CARACAS: In this Friday, Aug 4, 2017 file photo, Venezuela's Constitutional Assembly poses for an official photo after being sworn in, at the National Assembly. —AP

POWERFUL VENEZUELA ASSEMBLY MEETS AGAIN AS PRESSURE MOUNTS

TREATS OF DEEPENING SANCTIONS FROM TRADE PARTNERS

CARACAS: Foreign ministers from 14 nations are meeting in Peru yesterday in hopes of finding consensus on a regional response to Venezuela's growing political crisis, while President Nicolas Maduro's all-powerful constitutional assembly is forging ahead on promises to punish the embattled leader's foes.

The assembly was expected to gather at the stately legislative palace in Caracas for the first time since voting Saturday to remove the nation's outspoken chief prosecutor, a move that drew condemnation from many of the same regional governments that are sending representatives to the meeting in Peru's capital. Peru's president has been vocal in rejecting the new assembly, but the region has found that agreeing on any collective actions has proved tricky. Still, Venezuela is facing mounting pressure and threats of deepening sanctions from trade partners, including a recent suspension from South America's Mercosur.

International criticism

Despite growing international criticism, Maduro has remained firm in pressing the constitutional assembly forward in executing his priorities. He called for a special meeting yesterday in Caracas of the Bolivarian Alliance, a leftist coalition of 11 Latin American nations. The new constitutional assembly has signaled it will act swiftly in following through with Maduro's commands, voting Saturday to replace chief prosecutor Luisa Ortega Diaz with a government loyalist and create a "truth commission" that will wield unusual power to prosecute and levy sentences.

"It should be clear: We arrived there to help President Nicolas Maduro, but also to create strong bases for the construction of Bolivarian and Chavista socialism," Diosdado Cabello, a leader of the ruling socialist party and member of the new assembly, told a crowd of supporters Monday. Opposition leaders, meanwhile, vowed to remain in their posts in their only government foothold - the country's single-chamber congress, the National Assembly.

John Magdaleno, director of the Caracas-based consulting firm POLITY, said that rather than having co-existing assemblies and chief prosecutors, it is more likely that opposition-controlled institutions will be rendered powerless as Maduro's administration further consolidates Venezuela into an authoritarian state.

The opposition-dominated National Assembly "will be a body that in principal co-exists with the constitutional assembly but that will surely be displaced in practice," Magdaleno said. National Assembly president Julio Borges told fellow lawmakers Monday that they should keep an active presence in the legislative palace despite threats from the constitutional assembly to strip them of any authority and lock up key leaders. Borges called the building, with its gold cupola, the "symbol of popular sovereignty."

"We are a testament to the fight for democracy," he said. "It should be known this assembly was true to its mandate." In theory, both the National Assembly and the constitutional assembly could operate simultaneously, but the new super body created through a July 30 election has the authority to trump any other branch of government - and Venezuela's leaders have promised to do just that.

National Assembly members voted unanimously Monday not to recognize any of the new super body's decrees. "The intent is to pursue those who think differently," lawmaker Delsa Solorzano said of the constitutional assembly's plans. Cabello said that the new assembly's decisions have all aligned strictly with the 1999 consti-

tution crafted by the late President Hugo Chavez and that the new assembly will be in power for "at least two years." "This is a completely legal process," he said.

The widening political gulf comes as opposition parties face a rapidly approaching deadline to decide whether they will take part in regional elections scheduled for December. Candidates are expected to sign up to run this week. Opposition members refused to participate in the election for delegates to the constitutional assembly but have thus far been divided on taking part in the contests for governors.

Leaders are skeptical

While Maduro's popular support is estimated to run at no higher than 20 percent, some opposition leaders are skeptical of running in regional

elections they fear could be rigged. The official turnout count in the constitutional assembly election has been questioned at home and abroad. The CEO of voting technology company Smartmatic said last week that the results were "without a doubt" tampered with and off by at least 1 million votes.

On Sunday, a band of 20 anti-government fighters attacked an army base in an apparent attempt to foment an uprising. The men managed to reach the barracks' weapons supply. Ten escaped, but two were killed and the remaining eight were captured after battling with soldiers for three hours, Maduro said. Defense Minister Vladimir Padrino Lopez said special units were being activated Monday to assist in the search for the escapees, who remained at large more than 24 hours after the attack. —AP

FRENCH PREZ MACRON WANTS TO GIVE A ROLE TO HIS WIFE

PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron wants to formalize the role of the president's wife amid controversy over the cost and status of the first lady. The president's office is preparing a formal communication in coming days, Brigitte Macron's office said yesterday. During his presidential campaign, the 39-year-old outspoken centrist promised more "transparency" on the issue. France's first lady doesn't have an official status. As the president's popularity drops in polls, more than 270,000 people have signed a petition in the past few weeks against the plan to grant a tax-funded budget to finance his wife's activities.

Brigitte Macron currently has an office at the Elysee palace and a staff composed of two advisers and two secretaries, as well as bodyguards. Publicly, she is mostly seen at her husband's side. The status of the president's partner appears to be a sensitive issue in France following a series of scandals in the past few decades, including Macron predecessor Francois Hollande's complex private life. There

hasn't been a presidential spouse in the Elysee Palace since 2012, when former President Nicolas Sarkozy and his supermodel wife Carla Bruni left. Hollande entered office in 2012 with his girlfriend Valerie Trierweiler at his side, but she left him after a tabloid magazine exposed Hollande's secret affair with actress Julie Gayet in 2014.

Gayet has never publicly appeared by Hollande's side. Macron once said he wants to end "French hypocrisy" about the status of presidential spouses. The person living with the president "must be able to play a role and be recognized for that role" but wouldn't be paid for it, he said before his election. Macron has created an inseparable team with his wife Brigitte during his presidential campaign, a move more often seen on American political stages than in France. Brigitte Macron, 64, a former teacher at Emmanuel Macron's high school, attended most of her husband's rallies. The president doesn't hide that she is also his close political adviser. —AP



PARIS: In this July 20, 2017 file photo, French President Emmanuel Macron, left, and his wife Brigitte Macron wait for a dinner at the Elysee Palace. — AP

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KASAI MARKS YEAR OF BLOODSHED AS DOUBT HANGS OVER DR CONGO POLL

TSHIKAPA: "Before, we were able to go to work in any mine to dig for diamonds. But today, we're all afraid of dying," artisanal miner Banayi Ilunga says grimly. Diamonds are the blessing of Kasai, a vast region of five provinces in Democratic Republic of Congo that in many ways holds the key to the country's future.

To Ilunga, an 11-year mining veteran, the poorly regulated industry offers a lifeline—but in the past year, his hard-scrabble existence has become even tougher. He has had to abandon the most profitable sites for the safety of mines close to the city of Tshikapa, where the pickings are slim. But that is the price to pay for staying alive.

Kasai's year of torment began on August 12, 2016, when security forces killed a local tribal chief, Jean-Prince Mpanzi, who was at loggerheads with the state administration and posing a challenge to the rule of President Joseph

Kabila. The death of Mpanzi—known by the tribal title of Kamwina Nsapu—and the failure to give him a funeral with rites befitting his status sparked an insurrection, which led to a brutal repression, in which civilians are paying a terrible price.

The Roman Catholic Church estimates that more than 3,000 lives have been lost, including those of two experts mandated to investigate the conflict by the United Nations. On Friday, the UN gave details of more than 250 "extra-judicial or targeted killings" in Kasai from mid-March to mid-June, including dozens of children. About 1.4 million people have fled the atrocities, many of them to Angola.

In office since he succeeded his murdered father in 2001 while war wracked the nation, Kabila failed to stand down last year at the end of his final elected constitutional term. A deal was cut by the regime and a minority within the opposition to hold elections by the end of 2017.

But whether the ballot can go ahead may well hang on what happens in Kasai.

A million people cut off

Astride the Kasai river weaving its way past palm trees, Tshikapa is home to a million people who are largely cut off from the rest of the world. They live like a population under siege, for to take to the roads and waterways is to roll the dice with death. "When the Kamwina Nsapu arrived here in mid-December, a whaler (a light transport vessel) and a speedboat of the provincial government were set on fire," Mama Ngombe said, referring to a tribal militia of the same name as their leader. "There is still disorder and killings of passengers."

In July, the Association of Navigators of Kasai-Tshikapa (Anakat) temporarily suspended river traffic in protest at the insecurity. Navigation has since resumed warily. The highways are especially dangerous, and people are advised never to

travel alone but in convoy. The road from Tshikapa to another major town, Kananga, is similarly under the control of the Kamwina Nsapu, according to specialists in the region. The main road to Kinshasa, meanwhile, is in the grip of Pende militia, from another local tribe. The enforced isolation has sent prices soaring. In the marketplace, the price of corn, cassava and palm oil has risen by 50, 100 and 150 percent respectively.

Homeless and burned

Tshikapa has taken in more than 70,000 people displaced by fighting between security forces and the Kamwina Nsapu, as well as bloody rivalry among communities such as the Luba, Tchokwe and Pende. One of the displaced, Agnes Mupetu, 37, lost all her six children to the flames when her home was razed. She has visible burn injuries.

"I don't know how I got out of our house when it was burned down. I woke

up in the forest with no medicine. I didn't even have access to traditional medicines. People picked me up with my wounds in the forest," said Mupetu. Her husband went missing in the fire. Food, clothing and health care have been provided for only 30,000 people by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and local NGOs. "We have limited resources," said local FAO official Moise Muhindo.

The UN body also provides seeds, hoes, rakes and watering cans to farming families in a bid to help them get agricultural activity going again. The authorities are keen to emphasize signs of a return to normal life since Kabila visited the troubled Kasai region in mid-June. Their latest announcement, jointly with Angolan provincial authorities, was that the 31,000 Congolese refugees in Angola can return. But in the past few weeks, only about 1,400 are estimated to have come home voluntarily. — AFP

7 DECADES INTO INDIAN DEMOCRACY, A ROYAL PALACE CONTINUES TO THRIVE

'THE IDEA IS TO TREAT GUESTS LIKE KINGS AND QUEENS'

JODHPUR: In the summer of 1944, hundreds of royals gathered for the opening of Umaid Bhawan Palace, a magnificent sandstone edifice that dominates the skyline in India's northwestern city of Jodhpur. It was the last of its kind. Three years later, India was free from British colonial rule, and more than 500 princely states - the semi-sovereign principalities ruled by royal clans - faced an uncertain future. Most have faded into obscurity, but the family that built this palace continues to thrive - in part by converting a section of it into a hotel.

"How many places do you know in the world where you can actually live right where the maharaja is living next door to you?" said the hotel's general manager, Mehrajwaz Avari. "The idea is to treat our guests like kings and queens."

The 347-room palace, considered one of the world's finest residences, was used as the primary location for "Viceroy House," a film by director Gurinder Chadha being released Friday in India. The movie details the last days of the British Empire in India and the bloody partition with what became Pakistan in 1947.

The iconic structure in this west Rajasthani city known for its traditional handicrafts was named after Maharaja Umaid Singh, the last king of what was known as the Marwar-Rathore Dynasty. He commissioned the project in 1929 with a "spirit of grandness," said royal family associate Karni Singh Jasol. "He had a larger-than-life vision."

Royal privileges

After independence, most of India's princely states opted to join the democratic republic, and initially maintained their titles, property and a degree of autonomy. Within decades, the royals lost almost all of it, though. India amended its constitution in 1971, giving its citizens equal rights and canceling royal privileges, including the regular payments royal families received from the state. Stripped of their allowances and unsure how to survive as commoners, many royal families descended into chaos. Some held onto property, only to lose it amid internal bickering over rival claims.

"The properties that they inherited were in a true sense white elephants," Jasol said. "The royal families were high on assets, but low on liquidity. They didn't have large bank balances to turn their family properties into something grand or sustain it for the future." The Singhs of Jodhpur not only maintained their holdings, but managed over decades to grow. The last reigning maharaja's grandson, Gaj Singh, was only 4 when his father died in a plane crash in 1952, making him sole owner of the palace and other family properties, including the ancestral Mehrangarh Fort.

When royal allowances were canceled in 1971, the young Singh patriarch acted quickly. The family opened part of its palace as a hotel in 1978, and turned the fort into a museum, investing profits into preserving Jodhpur's royal antiquities. "They today serve as the main economic levers for the city," said Jasol, who is director of the fort and museum.

The palace is open to visitors year-round, and has become a go-to destination for government leaders, other



JODHPUR: In this March 6, 2007 photo, shows a general view of the Umaid Bhawan Palace. —AP

royals, and Hollywood and Bollywood stars alike. In 2007, British actress Elizabeth Hurley married Indian businessman Arun Nayar beneath the white marble canopy, or baradari, on the palace lawn; they have since divorced.

The palace is divided into a home for Gaj Singh and his family, and a heritage hotel of 64 rooms and suites run by the luxury hotel chain Taj Group since 2005. Designed by British architect Henry Vaughan Lanchester, the palace features elements of the art deco style popular in Europe and America in the '30s and '40s, combined with traditional Indian craftsmanship. Colonnaded verandas guide one's eye up to intricately carved pillars, stylized sculptures and finally a massive central dome topped by a 30-meter (105-foot) golden cupola. The cost of the royal experience ranges from \$500 to more than \$12,000 a night. For those who can afford it, the hotel pulls out all the stops.

Region's heritage

Visitors are greeted by a smiling guard wearing one of Jodhpur's famous handlebar mustaches; he opens the door while hotel staff shower guests with rose petals. Peacocks roam the palace lawns. Further inside, pulsating Rajasthani folk tunes fill the air as colorful dancers move in choreographed circles. Guests mingle amid crystal chandeliers and silk-draped furniture. Gold-leaf furniture and

ornate mirrors are arranged around gleaming marble floors, while the walls are decorated with family portraits, as well as leopard skins and the busts of other animals hunted by former royals. The decoration was done over three years by Polish artist Stefan Norblin, who had fled from war-torn Europe in 1944. He also painted frescoes and murals in the royal suites.

The royal family has long focused on conserving the region's heritage as a way to utilize its enormous real estate holdings. It manages trusts engaged in water conservation, education and cultural revival projects, creating employment for thousands of locals. "I know at one time, royalty was a bad word," said Singh's daughter, 42-year-old Shivranjani Rajye. "Now you don't have to shy away from it."

The Cambridge-educated Rajye runs most of the family's business operations, though the family heir is her brother, Shivraj Singh, who also lives with his family in the palace. He has kept a low profile since spending several months in a coma after a near-fatal accident playing polo in 2005. Jodhpur's residents still see the family as their royals, and Gaj Singh as their maharaja. And he "very much believes he is the king," said Rajye, elegantly dressed in a chiffon sari with a hint of jewelry. "He never gave up his title - he doesn't have it officially, but he knew who he was, and he knew he commanded respect of the people." — AP

CHARITY LINKED TO MUMBAI ATTACKS BACKS NEW PARTY

LAHORE: A Pakistani charity linked to the 2008 Mumbai attacks is backing a new political party which will contest next year's general election, an official said yesterday. The official—a senior leader of Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD), which is listed by the United Nations as a terror outfit—said the newly formed Milli Muslim League Party had the "full" backing of the charity's chief Hafiz Saeed.

"The party will have full support and backing of Hafiz Saeed. However, this party will maintain an independent posture while contesting the next parliamentary election slated for 2018," the senior leader told AFP on condition of anonymity. JuD is considered by the US and India to be a front for Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), the militant group blamed for the attack on India's financial capital that killed more than 160 people.

Earlier this year Saeed, who has a \$10 million bounty on his head, was placed under "preventative detention" by authorities. Before entering house arrest, Saeed led a high-profile public life and regularly delivered fiery anti-India speeches. JuD has operated freely across the country and is popular for its charity work, especially in the wake of natural disasters.

Saeed is believed by the US State Department to be one of the masterminds of the Mumbai attacks. The horror of the Mumbai carnage played out on live television around the world as commandos battled the heavily armed gunmen, who arrived by sea on the evening of November 26, 2008. It took the authorities three days to regain full control of the city and New Delhi has long said there is evidence that "official agencies" in Pakistan were involved in plotting the attack. Islamabad denies the charge. India blames Pakistan for sending militant groups, including LeT, to foment unrest in the part of Kashmir controlled by New Delhi. Pakistan and India both control parts of Kashmir but claim the whole of the territory and have fought two of their three wars over it since independence in 1947. — AFP

EVEN FROM THE 'HELL HOLE', CHASTENED ABE RULES ON

TOKYO: Less than six months ago Prime Minister Shinzo Abe appeared poised to stay in power until 2021, becoming Japan's longest-serving leader and cementing a coveted place in history. Now, the humbled hawk finds himself fighting for his political life or, in the words of one observer, scrambling to crawl out of a "hell hole". What went wrong?

A combination of factors including nagging political scandals, arrogance, loss of trust and tone deafness to voters' everyday concerns at the expense of a nationalist agenda have clipped Abe's wings. But analysts say Japan's come-back kid has an ace up his sleeve likely to seal his rule for at least another year and possibly longer. There is no one else.

"It's the utter absence of an alternative political choice, either outside the LDP or quite frankly within it" that keeps him afloat, said Brad Glosserman, a Japan expert at think tank Pacific Forum CSIS in Honolulu, referring to the ruling Liberal Democratic Party which Abe leads. Indeed, the main opposition Democratic Party (DP) is imploding, its very existence seen at stake. And while the LDP has no shortage of prime ministerial hopefuls, none of them are seen as strong enough to take on Abe right now.

And though many have swooned over the potential of charismatic Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike, she is just a year into the job and has her hands full with the 2020 Olympics. Trouble brewed slowly but anger spilled over last month when surveys showed a precipitous decline in support, with Abe's approval ratings



ASAKA: In this Oct 23, 2016, file photo, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, center, reviews members of Japan Self-Defense Forces during a parade of the Self-Defense Forces Day at Asaka Base. — AP

reaching their lowest point over more than four years in office.

Historic drubbing

Accusations Abe wielded influence for a close friend in a business deal which he has consistently denied—were a key factor, as were other scandals including at the defense ministry headed by his protégé and fellow hawk Tomomi Inada.

And just before local elections in early July for Tokyo's municipal assembly—a bellwether for national sentiment—he further alienated voters by shouting down hecklers at a rally. The result: the LDP suffered a historic drubbing. Veteran analyst Minoru Morita, a harsh Abe critic who came

up with the "hell hole" analogy, said he also suffers from predictable weariness with a long-serving leader. "No matter the government in Japan, after three to four years the people will grow tired of it," he said.

Still, Morita believes that if Abe can get through the next year and stand for re-election as party leader in September 2018, he is likely to win as he has more internal support than even leading challengers. Voters also appear resigned to more Abe. "In the end he may be able to continue in the sense that there just isn't anybody else," said Tokyo resident Ayumi Aratake. Abe last week reshuffled his cabinet ministers, a typical move by Japanese prime ministers in trouble. — AFP

News

in brief

Boko Haram kills 31 Nigerian fishermen

KANO: At least 31 fishermen have been killed by Boko Haram jihadists in two separate attacks on islands in Lake Chad in northeastern Nigeria, fishermen and vigilantes fighting the Islamists told AFP late Monday. Armed jihadists stormed the fishing islands of Duguri and Dabar Wanzam in the freshwater lake Saturday, attacking fishermen working in the area and shooting and hacking their victims. "Boko Haram attacked Duguri and Dabar Wanzam islands and killed 31 people," a member of a local militia fighting the jihadists in Maiduguri, Babakura Kolo told AFP. "They (Boko Haram) killed 14 in Duguri and another 17 in Dabar Wanzam," Kolo said.

Landslide in China kills 24

BEIJING: A landslide triggered by heavy rain killed at least 24 people in China's mountainous southwestern province of Sichuan yesterday, state media reported. Extreme weather this summer has triggered a series of landslides and floods across the country, leaving scores dead and tens of thousands displaced. The latest disaster hit a village in Puge county at around 6 am, the official Xinhua news agency said, adding that four others were injured and one person remained missing. As of late yesterday afternoon, authorities estimated that 71 houses and five kilometers of roads had been destroyed, the Sichuan government information office said in a social media post.

Bangladesh jails 14 Islamists over 2005 coordinated blasts

DHAKA: A Bangladeshi court yesterday jailed 14 Islamist extremists for their roles in a deadly series of coordinated bomb attacks in 2005. At least two people were killed and hundreds wounded in the blasts orchestrated by the Jamayetul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), an outlawed Islamist group also blamed by authorities for last year's deadly attack on a Dhaka cafe. The court in the central district of Tangail sentenced all 14 accused to 20 years in jail, although only 10 were present, court inspector Anwarul Islam told AFP. The JMB set off over 400 bombs across the country in 2005 to press for the introduction of Sharia law in the Muslim-majority but officially secular country.

Chinese caught with his brother's arms

SHANGHAI: A Chinese man was detained after a bus station security scanner revealed that he had his brother's severed arms in his luggage, state media reported, but police said he was unlikely to face criminal charges. The 50-year-old was stopped in the city of Duyun in the southwestern province of Guizhou last week, according to the Chongqing Morning Post. Authorities initially detained the man, surnamed Zheng, on suspicion of murder. But he explained that the limbs belonged to a brother who was severely injured in an accidental electrocution that necessitated the amputation of his arms. Chinese traditionally believe that all body parts must be buried together at death to ensure the person is "whole" in the afterlife.

Morocco oppn leader resigns

RABAT: Morocco's opposition chief has resigned to take responsibility for the troubles facing his Authenticity and Modernity Party (PAM), including last year's election defeat, the party said. Ilyas El Omari's party was beaten by the ruling Islamists in Morocco's legislative polls in October, but more than doubled its number of seats in the new parliament. The PAM, formed in 2008 by a close adviser to the king, had poured enormous resources into a campaign criticising the government's economic record. But party detractors accused the PAM of acting on behalf of the royal palace in a bid to weaken the Islamist Justice and Development Party which eventually came first with 125 seats out of 395 in the election.

Tillerson visits Thailand to firm up bilateral relations

BANGKOK: US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson met Thailand's leaders during an official visit yesterday, seeking to stabilize relations that soured after the Southeast Asian nation's military seized power from an elected civilian government three years ago. Tillerson flew in from the Philippines, where he met with his counterparts from the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations at an annual regional gathering. He is the top US official to visit Thailand since its 2014 coup. Thailand has long been one of Washington's closest regional allies, but relations have been strained over US criticism of Thailand's military government for its repression of critics and failure to restore democracy. However, President Donald Trump's administration has made human rights less of a priority than did its predecessors. Thailand, like other Southeast Asian countries, has also been cultivating closer ties with China, causing consternation in Washington. — Agencies

AMNESTY OVER, 'ILLEGAL EXPATS' AWAIT SAUDI CRACKDOWN NOW

RIYADH: For four months, texts from the government pinged into every mobile phone in Saudi Arabia ordering "illegal expatriates" to leave the kingdom before the end of an amnesty that expired in late July. The campaign, "a nation without violators," warned of fines, jail time and deportation for anyone caught without valid identity documents after the grace period, in a renewed push to reduce the kingdom's abundant black market in labor. Saudi authorities estimate more than 600,000 people took the amnesty, which allowed any foreigner in breach of residency laws in the world's top oil exporter to leave without penalty.

But millions of others have remained, either determined to stay or unable to avail themselves of the offer. Now they are awaiting a pledged crackdown against what Riyadh calls the "reckless people" who defied the order to leave. "We don't know what will happen to us," said Atif Alam, 28, an Indian worker at a desolate labor camp in eastern Riyadh who fears a police raid. He rarely leaves the camp, wary of being seized at police checkpoints on roads throughout Riyadh. Aurangzeb Akram, 43, a Pakistani worker at the camp, rejects the idea that he is "illegal" or "reckless". "I am legal. I came here (for the) Binladin company," he said, holding up an expired "iqama," or employer-sponsored residency card.

Some 12 million of the 32 million people living in Saudi Arabia are foreigners, according to official figures, most of them low-skilled workers from Asia and Africa working in the construction and service sectors. But several million others live here outside the law, running unregistered businesses or accepting informal work with companies skirting requirements to hire Saudis on higher pay. Authorities have not released population estimates for "violators," but before the start of the amnesty, a member of the advisory Shura Council called for the deportation of five million people, according to al-Hayat newspaper.

Some entered the country illegally, risking a dangerous journey through Somalia and Yemen, while others overstayed work visas, ran into labor disputes with their employers or came to perform the annual Muslim haj pilgrimage and never went home.

Saudi authorities tolerated labor irregularities for decades, due to the expense and economic impact of expulsions. But with greater pressure in the past decade to create jobs for Saudis, for whom the unemployment rate is 12.7 percent, the government has committed to clearing out the excess workforce.

Akram quit his job last October, after a slowdown in construction prompted the Saudi Binladin Group to stop paying its sub-contractors and tens of thousands of foreign employees.

But he said the company never processed his payments or his visa papers, and retained his passport, leaving him and the other 300 men at his camp without valid identity documents. The company did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

The kingdom offered a first grace period back in 2013, after introducing a quota system for hiring Saudis in the private sector. At least 800,000 people were deported in the crackdown that followed, according to figures compiled from local media. In some cases that campaign turned violent, with unrest in urban areas and detention centers. Pressure for economic reform has only grown after the oil price halved since 2014.

Authorities appear to have run a more organized amnesty this time, although they did not respond to Reuters requests for comment on the planned clampdown. Workers in Riyadh report individual arrests, but no mass raids or expulsions so far. Still, thousands of workers slipped through the amnesty's cracks. They were refused exits, many of them apparent victims of slow-moving bureaucracy, complex legal problems, or both. — Reuters

NEPAL IMMIGRATION OFFICIALS TRAFFICKING WOMEN: REPORT

KATHMANDU: Immigration officials at Nepal's international airport are colluding with traffickers to illegally send Nepali women to the Gulf where they are often exploited and abused, said a parliamentary report released yesterday.

The parliamentary committee tasked with international relations and labor rights said the government had failed to protect Nepalis working overseas and turned a blind eye to allegations of trafficking. More than 60 percent of Nepali domestic workers who end up illegally in the Gulf travelled through the main airport in the capital Kathmandu, the report said.

"(They) travel on tourist visas via Tribhuvan International Airport in direct collusion with immigration officials, airline company staff, security officials and the traffickers." "The rest travel via different cities in India, Sri Lanka, China and various African countries," the report said. The women are lured to Gulf countries on promises of well-paid jobs in department stores or hotels. Instead, they are sent to work in private homes where their passports are usually confiscated.

Rights activists in Nepal have long demanded the government do more to protect the four million Nepalis who work overseas—mostly in the Gulf and Malaysia. With remittances from migrant workers accounting for nearly a third of Nepal's GDP according to government figures, activists suspect the authorities are reluctant to put pressure on host nations. — AFP



NAIROBI: A Kenyan woman carries her baby on her back as she casts her vote in Gatundu, north of Nairobi yesterday. — AP

KENYANS FLOCK TO VOTE IN HIGH-STAKES ELECTIONS

NAIROBI: Kenyans thronged polling stations yesterday to vote in elections dominated by a tight presidential battle between incumbent Uhuru Kenyatta and his rival Raila Odinga that has raised fears of violence in east Africa's most vibrant democracy. People stood patiently for hours in snaking queues around the country for a vote that went off peacefully, despite reports of some technical glitches and delays, after weeks of tensions over opposition claims of a plot to rig the outcome.

Polls closed at 5pm (1400 GMT), however those in line would be permitted to vote and polling stations which had suffered delays would stay open longer, the election commission said. All eyes will now turn to the crunch tallying process, the most sensitive part of the election in a country prone to post-poll violence.

Kenyatta, who is seeking a second term in office, urged Odinga to accept the result should he lose.

"I also want to say that if I lose, I will accept the will of the people," Kenyatta said after voting. Odinga, 72, is taking his fourth and likely final stab at the presidency. He claims elections in 2007 and 2013 were stolen from him. "In the unlikely event that I lose I don't need a speech, I will just speak from my heart," Odinga said shortly before voting.

Yesterday's elections took place a decade after a shambolic 2007 vote—which foreign observers agreed was riddled with irregularities—sparked violence which

left more than 1,100 people dead and 600,000 displaced. This year's campaign was marred by the brutal murder and torture of a top election official in charge of the crucial electronic voting system.

The IEBC electoral commission moved quickly to deal with complaints, removing clerks in a polling station where ballot papers were pre-marked as "rejected". In the port city of Mombasa a clerk was arrested for issuing double ballot papers to certain voters, local police said. IEBC chief Wafula Chebukati said voting had gone "smoothly" despite minor delays and technical hiccups at some of the 41,000 polling stations. In semi-arid northwest Turkana heavy rains saw flooding cut roads off, and several polling stations had still not opened by closing time. Odinga's National Super Alliance opposition coalition (NASA) released a statement praising poll officials and security forces. "We commend them for the good job so far and urge them to keep it up," it said.

However the coalition complained some of its voters had been turned away or their names were missing from the voters register.

NASA also said it had reports of "pre-marked ballot papers" and attempts to bribe voters. As vote tallying starts, the focus is on the electronic system in place to send results to Nairobi. The failure of this system in 2013 meant votes had to be counted manually, leading Odinga to cry foul. — AFP

AMIRI ENVOY DELIVERS LETTERS IN OMAN, UAE...

Continued from Page 1

In Bahrain, the delegation delivered a similar letter from His Highness the Amir to Bahraini King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa. The letter has a bearing on the latest regional and international developments and several issues of mutual interest. The meeting was attended by Assistant Foreign Minister for the First Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister's Office Ambassador Dr Sheikh Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah and Kuwaiti Ambassador to Bahrain Sheikh Azzam Mubarak Al-Sabah.

Meanwhile, two US envoys arrived in Kuwait at the start of a tour of Mideast states aimed at resolving a diplomatic rift between Qatar and four Arab countries. The official Kuwait news agency KUNA reported late on Monday that retired US Marine Gen Anthony Zinni and Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Timothy Lenderking met with Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah and reiterated Washington's support for Kuwait's efforts to mediate the crisis.

Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt and Bahrain cut diplomatic and transportation links with

Qatar in early June, alleging it supports extremists. Qatar denies the charge. The State Department says the envoys will also meet with leaders in all five countries over the coming days.

Timothy Lenderking, the US deputy assistant secretary of state for Gulf affairs, and retired US Marine Corps General Anthony Zinni "are in the Gulf region this week to engage with the parties involved and support the Government of Kuwait's mediation efforts," a State Department official said on condition of anonymity. US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, whose own trip to the Gulf in July resulted in a US-Qatari accord on combating terrorism financing but no major breakthrough in the dispute, announced Zinni and Lenderking's mission last week. Zinni's presence would help "maintain a constant pressure on the ground, because I think that's what it's going to take," Tillerson told reporters last week. "There's only so much you can do with telephone persuasion. But we are committed to see this disagreement resolved, restore Gulf unity, because we think it's important to the long-term effort to defeat terrorism in the region." — Agencies

IRANIAN DRONE COMES CLOSE TO US WAR PLANE

WASHINGTON: An unarmed Iranian drone came within 100 feet (31 meters) of a US Navy warplane as it prepared to land on an aircraft carrier in the Gulf, a US official said yesterday.

The official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said that despite repeated radio calls to stay clear of the US plane, the Iranian drone "executed unsafe and unprofessional altitude changes" close to the US Navy F/A-18E. The warplane was in a holding pattern and preparing to land aboard the USS Nimitz aircraft carrier.

The official described the interaction as "unsafe and unprofessional." Similar incidents between the United States and Iran are not uncommon, however this appears to be the first time an Iranian drone has come dangerously close to a US fighter plane in the Gulf.

This was the 13th unsafe and unprofessional interaction between the United States and Iranian maritime

forces in 2017, the official said. Years of mutual animosity had eased when Washington lifted sanctions on Tehran last year as part of a deal to curb Iran's nuclear ambitions. But serious differences remain over Iran's ballistic missile program and conflicts in Syria and Iraq.

The Trump administration, which has struck a hard line on Iran, recently declared that Iran was complying with its nuclear agreement with world powers, but warned that Tehran was not following the spirit of the accord and that Washington would look for ways to strengthen it.

The United States has a number of military bases in the region, including in Qatar and Kuwait across the Gulf from Iran and the US Fifth Fleet is based in nearby Bahrain. Earlier this year, a senior commander in Iran's Revolutionary Guards warned the United States that if it designated the group a terrorist organization, its action could be perilous for US forces in the region. — Reuters

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Focus

US, ALLIES SLOW
BEIJING'S SOUTH
CHINA SEA PUSH

By Jim Gomez

With the rise of a friendly leader in the Philippines, China has been spared a vocal adversary in the disputed South China Sea. In the process, it has gained momentum despite last year's ruling by an arbitration tribunal that invalidated its expansive claims in the disputed waters.

The rapprochement between President Rodrigo Duterte and his Chinese counterpart, Xi Jinping, defused a tense standoff between the Asian neighbors last year at the disputed Scarborough Shoal, where China allowed Filipinos back to fish in October as years of thorny relations began to brighten.

As President Donald Trump succeeded Barack Obama, who had challenged China's assertive advances in the disputed sea, US allies wondered if Trump would press America's role as a regional counterbalance to the Asian powerhouse.

An annual summit of Asia-Pacific nations hosted by the Philippines over the weekend, however, delivered a reality check to Beijing. US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson met his Australian and Japanese counterparts on the sidelines of the meetings in Manila of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, or ASEAN. After their meeting, they issued a joint statement that blasted aggressive actions in the contested offshore territories - without, of course, naming Beijing directly, in line with diplomatic practice.

Nevertheless, China quickly voiced its irritation. Its top diplomat said that while his country and the 10-nation ASEAN bloc "all fully recognized that the situation in the South China Sea is showing signs of changes and things are moving toward a positive direction," some countries outside the region "are not seeing the positive changes" and are holding onto a mindset that "still stays in the past."

After the Philippines, ASEAN's leader this year, hosted the first of three major summits of the bloc in April, Duterte issued a traditional chairman's statement that dropped mention of contentious issues, including Beijing's island constructions in disputed reefs that China has lobbied to be struck out of such high-profile communiqués. For China, it was seen as a diplomatic coup.

ASEAN statement

Closeted in their annual gathering in Manila over the weekend, however, ASEAN foreign ministers wrangled over the tone and wordings to depict the territorial rifts involving China and five other governments in their joint statement, which unlike the chairman's statement is a negotiated document.

A draft of the ASEAN ministerial statement seen by The Associated Press before it was finalized and made public provided a glimpse of the closed-door intramurals, with Vietnam insisting on stronger language against China's increasingly assertive actions in the busy waters.

Vietnamese diplomats, for example, insisted on mentioning concern over "extended construction" in the contested waters. Cambodia, a Chinese ally, deferred a vote on the inclusion of worries over militarization.

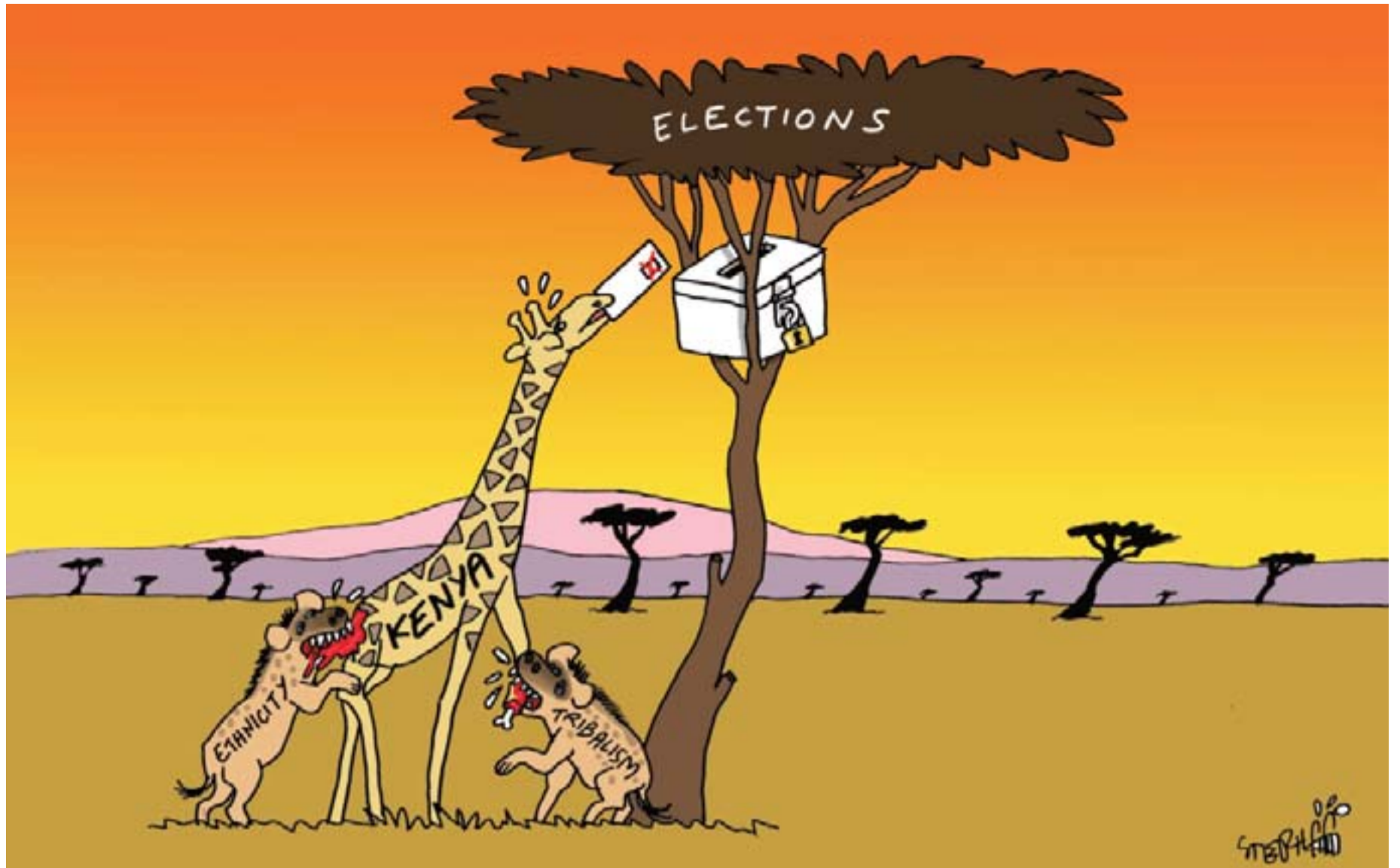
The Philippines was one of the countries that opposed mention of land reclamation and militarization in the communiqué, Foreign Secretary Alan Peter Cayetano acknowledged in a news conference late Tuesday. China, he said, threatened to end future talks aimed at resolving conflicts if the arbitration ruling was mentioned in the statement.

"We won't make any progress," Cayetano said. "China already said if you talk about the arbitration award there is no talks."

The protracted quibblings delayed the statement's release, two Southeast Asian diplomats told the AP. When it was issued a day later, the joint ministerial statement - surprisingly - mentioned land reclamation and militarization and, to Beijing's certain dismay, carried a vague reference to the arbitration ruling: "full respect for diplomatic and legal process."

Wang played down mention of the issues, including land reclamation, that critics have used to refer to China's massive island constructions in the South China Sea.

The next battle is over a proposed "code of conduct," which aims to stymie aggressive behavior in the disputed sea, including new construction and military fortifications. China concluded talks with ASEAN for a negotiating framework for the nonaggression code, a baby step both sides hailed as a milestone.—AP



Uhuru Kenyatta

FROM MILLIONAIRE PLAYBOY TO KENYAN PRESIDENT

By Tristan McConnell

Uhuru Kenyatta, who hopes to win a second and final term in yesterday's elections, is the son of Kenya's founding president and a man who epitomizes the country's elite.

The 55-year-old US-educated multi-millionaire, whose family owns an array of businesses, properties and land, followed in his father's footsteps when he defeated his rival Raila Odinga to become president in 2013.

Kenyatta won that poll despite being indicted by the International Criminal Court (ICC) along with his running mate, William Ruto, for alleged roles in orchestrating violence that left over 1,100 people dead after the previous election in 2007. Foreign powers, including Britain and the US, warned at the time that Kenya under an ICC-indicted president would be a pariah, but the threats proved empty.

In 2014 the ICC dropped charges against Kenyatta and later Ruto-citing the disappearance of witnesses and lack of evidence. Since then Kenya has welcomed then US president Barack Obama, British Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson and Pope Francis and hosted a string of international gatherings.

Privilege and wealth

Kenyatta's first term has been defined by big spending on eye-catching infrastructure and impressive economic growth in a tough climate. But this has gone hand-in-hand with spiralling debt and widening inequality. Terrorism has also been a consistent threat, with Kenyatta being forced to address the nation in doleful terms on numerous occasions, notably after the deadly 2013

Westgate mall siege and the 2015 Garissa university attack.

The former finance minister and deputy prime minister was born in 1961, shortly after his father Jomo Kenyatta was released from nearly a decade in British jails and before becoming Kenya's first president in 1964. His first name means "freedom" in Kiswahili. Educated at a private school in Nairobi and at Amherst College in the United States, Kenyatta is regarded as a leader of the Kikuyu people, the country's single largest ethnic group.

He is married with three children and regularly attends Catholic church. In 2011 Forbes magazine estimated Kenyatta's wealth at \$500 million (423 million euros). Despite his elite background Kenyatta has a common touch. He easily mixes it up with ordinary Kenyans, eagerly gets down on the dance floor and joshes in the local youth slang and, in his younger years, earned a persistent reputation for partying hard.

A leaked 2009 US diplomatic cable described him as "bright and charming, even charismatic" but warned that "Kenyatta's liabilities are at least as important as his strengths. He drinks too much and is not a hard worker."

Dynastic politics

Kenyatta's political career is a case study in pragmatism. In the 1990s, he joined with the sons of other independence heroes to call for democratic reforms but then became a close ally of autocratic former president Daniel arap Moi who had him nominated as the ruling party's candidate for the presidency in 2002.

Kenyatta lost to fellow Kikuyu politician Mwai Kibaki but then backed Kibaki's success-



NAIROBI: Kenya's President Uhuru Kenyatta casts his vote, accompanied by his wife Margaret (center-left) in Gatundu, north of Nairobi yesterday.—AP

ful re-election bid in 2007, against Odinga who at the time was allied with Ruto. The violent fallout from the disputed result led to a power-sharing government in which Kibaki was president, Odinga prime minister and Kenyatta one of his deputies.

In 2013 the two ICC indictees, Kenyatta and Ruto, joined forces to defeat Odinga in a close and controversial election. Kenyatta won in the first round with a wafer-thin margin of 50.03 percent-a result Odinga disputed, unsuccessfully but peacefully this time, in court.

Yesterday's vote is a re-run of 2013 except

that this time the opposition has united behind Odinga posing a serious challenge to Kenyatta's ruling Jubilee Party.

Opinion polls put the two neck and neck. The election will most likely be the final act in a multi-generational political rivalry stretching back half a century to when Jomo Kenyatta and Odinga's father, Jaramogi Oginga Odinga, vied for control of the nation.

If he wins, Kenyatta must stand down after one more term and, at 72, Odinga is regarded as too old to make another bid for the presidency in five years' time. Both men's children are still inexperienced in politics.—AFP

SPECTER OF COUP, SURGE IN VIOLENCE HAUNT VENEZUELA

By Alexandra Ulmer

Venezuela appears to be sliding toward a more volatile stage of unrest after anti-government forces looted weapons during a weekend raid on a military base and frustration over what some see as an ineffectual opposition leadership boils over.

Last week's installation of an all-powerful new legislative body run by leftist President Nicolas Maduro's Socialist Party loyalists, despite massive protests and a global outcry, has left many Venezuelans feeling there are no more democratic options to oppose the government.

That sentiment may have helped trigger Sunday's raid on a military base near the city of Valencia by soldiers and armed civilians, in which the government said two people were killed. Venezuelan authorities say they are hunting 10 of the attackers who escaped with a

cache of weapons. In a pre-taped video, the group of more than a dozen men in military-style uniforms said they were seeking to restore constitutional order and called for Maduro to step aside in favor of a transitional government. The raid has raised the specter of a coup or a surge in already serious levels of violence in the country of 30 million as it slides further into an economic crisis and chaos.

Even before Sunday's attack, Maduro's consolidation of power had left many protesters disappointed with what they see as a quarrelsome and self-interested opposition coalition. More than 120 people have been killed and thousands arrested in four months of unrest that failed to prevent last month's elections to the new constituent assembly.

Many hardliners felt betrayed as their leaders appeared to hesitate on strategy and postponed protests last week. The coalition's many political parties have also diverged over

whether to take part in gubernatorial elections in December, especially after widespread accusations of fraud in the constituent assembly election.

For the hooded youths who block roads with iron metal sheets and debris - forming the militant fringe of an otherwise broadly peaceful protest movement - the fragmented opposition leadership is already history. "We have to stop believing in the opposition coalition. We can only believe in ourselves," said a young man from the Andean state of Tachira, who quit university to move to Caracas and join the protests. The 20-year-old, whose face was covered with a T-shirt as he brandished a homemade petrol bomb, declined to give his name for fear of reprisal. A new public prosecutor, named by the constituent assembly in its first session on Saturday, has pledged to crack down hard on the demonstrators.

Conflict ahead?

Government repression, however, threatens to push militants within the protest movement underground and into the formation of paramilitary or rebel groups in a country awash with weapons, according to political analyst and pollster Luis Vicente Leon. "As the government radicalizes, these groups will tend to grow and the future could be full of conflict," Leon told Reuters.

He did not elaborate, but other analysts have also spoken of the threat of a low-intensity civil war in Venezuela barring some reversal in the country's current decline. In what could be a harbinger of more violent tactics by protesters, an improvised explosive device wounded seven police officers on motorbikes during the election of the constituent assembly on July 30. Maduro has said he is facing an "armed insurrection" designed to end socialism in Latin America and let a US-backed business elite get its hands on the OPEC nation's massive crude reserves.

On the surface, at least, the prospect of a decisive military coup to oust the former union leader, who was narrowly elected in

2013 after being hand-picked by former President Hugo Chavez to succeed him, seems far off.

There have been no outward signs of any split between Maduro and the military leadership, which continues to publicly back him. But the purported leader of Sunday's raid on the military base, fugitive former National Guard captain Juan Carlos Caguariapano, has called on his "brothers in arms" to disobey orders from military leaders.

And Oscar Perez, a rogue police pilot who attacked government buildings in a helicopter attack in Caracas in June, has said he is keeping up the fight while on the run. "We support the military uprisings," said Maria Rodriguez, 35, a cheese seller who was blocking roads in Caracas' wealthier Altamira district on Sunday. "We citizens can't do this alone."

Demoralized protesters

Many of her fellow opposition supporters, however, are exhausted after four months of street demonstrations and disruptions to daily life, which ultimately failed to make Maduro accept opposition demands. Turnout at marches called by the opposition has fizzled in the last few weeks, and some people just want to return to work quickly in the country plagued with empty food shelves, runaway inflation and a fourth straight year of recession.

The opposition's attempt at a recall referendum against Maduro was scuttled by authorities last year. The opposition-led congress has been effectively neutralized and the Supreme Court, stacked with Maduro's Socialist Party allies, has been fully supportive of a leftist leader the United States and others call a "dictator." Opposition leaders have long been seen as out of touch with ordinary Venezuelans, and the country's growing number of poor people, but they continue urging unity and hope for the future. "These 130 days of struggle have not been in vain," said Julio Borges, the president of the opposition-governed congress, over the weekend.—Reuters

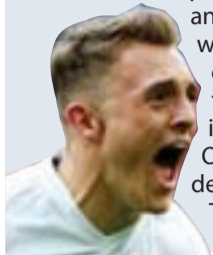


CARACAS: A cutout of Venezuela's late President Hugo Chavez stands out among supporters during a rally backing the new Constitutional Assembly outside the National Assembly building in Caracas on Monday.—AP

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LEICESTER SIGN COVENTRY CITY YOUNGSTER THOMAS

LONDON: Leicester City signed promising young Coventry City forward George Thomas for an undisclosed fee yesterday. Leicester-born Thomas has agreed a three-year contract with the Premier League club after his Coventry deal expired at the end of last season. Craig Shakespeare's side made a compensation payment to the League Two team for Thomas, who can also play in midfield and is set to be part of Leicester's development squad this season. "I'm delighted to get it over the line finally and I'm looking forward to the season coming and seeing what I can do," Thomas told Leicester's website. Thomas came through the ranks at Coventry and scored nine times in 36 appearances for the Sky Blues last season, including the winner in the EFL Trophy final against Oxford United. The 20-year-old, who made his Coventry debut four years ago, represented Wales at this summer's Toulon Tournament. — AFP



KWIATKOWSKI SIGNS NEW DEAL WITH TEAM SKY

LONDON: Michal Kwiatkowski signed a new three-year contract with Team Sky after his key role in Chris Froome's Tour de France win last month. Kwiatkowski was labelled as Sky's game changer in France by team principal Dave Brailsford after the Pole excelled himself in the mountains to help Froome to a fourth Tour crown. It was part of an impressive year for the 27-year-old, who has won one-day races in the Strade-Bianche, Milan-San Remo and Clacisa San Sebastian. "I've had great support from the team for the past two seasons - both last year, when I had a really difficult season, and this year, which has been great," he said. "I've only been here for one and a half years, but it feels like far longer. That's what I need - to feel supported, like part of a family, otherwise it can be difficult. "I truly believe I can win lots more races in the future here." Froome welcomed Kwiatkowski's deal, saying: "Kwiato has had a brilliant year. — AFP

SUPER MARIO IN HOT WATER AGAIN

ROME: Mario Balotelli has again been caught speeding in his Ferrari, police told AFP yesterday as media reports claimed the striker had been caught doing 170-200kmh (105-125mph) in a race with a friend's Lamborghini. The former Manchester City and Liverpool striker, now at French club Nice, was stopped by a highway patrol on the A4 highway near the northern Italian town of Vicenza on Saturday, a local officer told AFP. Media reports claimed Balotelli had been doing up to 200kmh but had escaped with a fine and five penalty points because he had only been registered at 170kmh. The police confirmed the star had been caught and fined, along with the Lamborghini driver, but described accounts of the incident as "exaggerated". They would not divulge how fast Balotelli had been going but said he had been allowed to continue his journey after paying his fine and having five penalty points registered on his licence. — AFP



GOLF

SPIETH CHASES GRAND SLAM HISTORY, PGA PRACTICE OPENS

CHARLOTTE: Jordan Spieth says he isn't carrying any extra pressure this week trying to become the youngest golfer to complete a career Grand Slam by winning the 99th PGA Championship. But the 24-year-old American, who won his third major title two weeks ago at the British Open, wouldn't mind making history while finishing off a dream goal this week at Quail Hollow, where practice began Monday.

"I don't need to be the youngest. I don't feel any added pressure because of that," Spieth said. "I really don't feel any added pressure whatsoever. If it happens great. If it doesn't then my next, probably last, life-long goal as a professional golfer would be to win the career grand slam." World number two Spieth, the 2015 Masters and US Open champion, could become only the sixth man to sweep the four major titles in a career after Jack Nicklaus, Tiger Woods, Ben Hogan, Gary Player and Gene Sarazen.

Spieth would be 24 years and 17 days old on Sunday, about six months younger than Woods—the youngest to win all four majors so far—was when he won the 2000 British Open to complete his career slam. And Spieth could become the first player to complete a career slam with a victory at the PGA Championship. Nicklaus, Woods and Hogan completed their career slams at the British Open, Sarazen at the Masters and Player at the US Open.

For now, Spieth is among a select group of 13 players who have captured three of the four majors in their careers. He joins Tom Watson and the late Arnold Palmer in only lacking the PGA Championship.

That list includes US left-hander Phil Mickelson, a five-time major winner missing only the US Open after a record six runner-up showings in that event, and Northern Ireland's Rory McIlroy, a four-time major winner lacking only the Masters to complete his career sweep. Mickelson, like four-time major winner Ernie Els of South Africa, will make his 100th major appearance this week at Quail Hollow.

MCLROY LOVES QUAIL HOLLOW

McIlroy is expected to be a contender for a third Wanamaker Trophy after wins

in 2012 and 2014. That would put him fourth on the all-time list behind Nicklaus and Walter Hagen with five and Woods with four.

"It would be nice to make that a hat trick," McIlroy said. And McIlroy has strong history at Quail Hollow. He won his first US PGA title in 2010 on the 7,600-yard, par-71 layout at age 20 with a final-round course record 62. In 2015, he lowered the mark, a third-round 61 sparking him to a second tour title in Charlotte.

"I play well at Quail Hollow. I love the golf course," McIlroy said. "They have made a few changes but I'll have some really good vibes." Possibly soft conditions with thunderstorms in the forecast into the weekend shouldn't dampen McIlroy's major chances, given that he won a rain-soaked US Open in 2011 by eight strokes at Congressional.

Spieth will play alongside fellow reigning major champions Sergio Garcia of Spain, who captured his first major title at the Masters, and American Brooks Koepka, the US Open winner, in the first two rounds. The feature trio starts Thursday from the 10th tee at 8:25 a.m. (12:25 GMT) and Friday from the first tee at 1:35 p.m.

97 OF TOP 100 IN CHARLOTTE

World number one Dustin Johnson will be in the group just behind them both days along with Australia's seventh-ranked Jason Day and Sweden's eighth-rated Henrik Stenson. In all, 97 of the world's top 100 are playing this week, with number 36 Brandt Snedeker dropping out injured on Monday, joining Germany's Martin Kaymer (64) and American Scott Piercy (77).

American Chris Kirk replaced Snedeker in the field. McIlroy will play alongside Spain's Jon Rahm and American Rickie Fowler in the first two rounds. Defending champion Jimmy Walker, who was diagnosed with Lyme disease in April, will join Mickelson and Jason Dufner in an all-US trio. Japan's Hideki Matsuyama, coming off a victory at the World Golf Championships Bridgestone Invitational, will join Els and England's Ian Poulter the first two days. — AFP

FOOD POISONING TAKES FAVORITE MAKWALA OUT OF 200 AT WORLDS

LONDON: Several athletes have come down with a stomach bug at the world championships, including medal favorite Isaac Makwala of Botswana. Makwala pulled out of his 200-meter heat Monday and later said he had food poisoning.

"There have been a number of cases of gastroenteritis reported by team members residing within one of the official team hotels," the local organizing committee said in a statement, putting a dampener on the 10-day event. "Those affected have been supported by both team and LOC medical staff."

Makwala wrote on his Facebook page that other athletes were also hit by the bug. Makwala was expected to be the main challenger to Wayde van Niekerk in both the 200 and the 400. The 400 final is yesterday.

"Let's hope they will allow me to run my final," Makwala wrote. Van Niekerk certainly wasn't affected by the bug. He easily qualified for the semifinals of the 200 and is the favorite for gold in Usain Bolt's absence. Although Van Niekerk has a strong chance for double gold, South African teammate Semenya missed out on one Monday, finishing with bronze in the 1,500 meters.

Semenya had the speed, but left it too late to challenge for the title. She was in 10th place in the 12-woman final going into the last lap and fought back to medal behind Faith Kipyegon of Kenya and Jenny Simpson of the United States.



LONDON: Botswana's Isaac Makwala reacts after winning his heat of the Men's 400 meters during the World Athletics Championships in London Sunday. — AP

"A lot cannot go your way in a final, so to come out with a bronze is amazing," Semenya said. Semenya, a two-time Olympic champion over 800 meters, now must concentrate on her signature event later this week to win another world title, eight years after she won her first at the 2009 Berlin worlds.

Kipyegon took charge in the final straight when the others faltered to give Kenya its second gold and fifth medal overall in the championships.

In the most stirring final of the night, 21-year-old Yulimar Rojas edged Olympic champion Caterine Ibarguen by two centimeters to give Venezuela its first ever world title. In a seesaw battle, Rojas finally came out on top of her Colombian rival with a mark of 14.91 meters on her penultimate attempt, beating the defending champion's earlier mark of 14.89.

Anyone looking for a feel-good story would gladly have handed the 110-meter hurdles gold medal to Aries Merritt, who had kidney transplant two years ago and was getting back to the form that won him gold in at the 2012 Olympics in the same stadium. It was not to be.

Running in the outside Lane 9, he finished fifth - well behind Olympic champion Omar McLeod. "I am back on the world stage, that's the main thing," Merritt said. McLeod gave Jamaica its first gold of the championships after a disappointing start, when Bolt only got bronze and Elaine Thompson finished outside the medals in the 100 meters.

"It's totally different to last year where we had Usain and Elaine winning, which I used to propel me," McLeod said. "I didn't have that this time so I really wanted to come out and shine my own light."

In the first final on Monday, Anita Wlodarczyk of Poland left it late but won her third world title with one massive hammer throw. Wlodarczyk, the dominating figure over the past half-decade with two Olympic gold medals, took the lead on her fourth of six attempts and then had her winning throw of 77.90 meters on her penultimate attempt.

Early leader Wang Zheng of China took silver with a throw of 75.98 meters and another Pole, Malwina Kopron, won bronze with a toss of 74.76. — AP



LAS VEGAS: File photo shows Floyd Mayweather Jr., left, and Conor McGregor pause for photos during a news conference at Staples Center on July 11, 2017, in Los Angeles. The two will fight in a boxing match in Las Vegas on Aug 26. — AP

BOXING

SPARRING PARTNER MALIGNAGGI SLAMS 'SCUMBAG' MCGREGOR

LOS ANGELES: Former boxing champ Paulie Malignaggi says he has no regrets about quitting Conor McGregor's training camp, describing the mixed martial arts fighter as a "scumbag" who surrounds himself with "a bunch of yes men."

McGregor is preparing to face boxing star Floyd Mayweather in a Las Vegas boxing ring on August 26 in what could be one of the richest fights in history. The 36-year-old Malignaggi, who retired from boxing five months ago, walked out of training camp last week after he said McGregor used him like a pawn, disrespected him in the dressing room and housed him and the other sparring partners in dump accommodations.

"He's a scumbag," Malignaggi said of McGregor in an interview Monday with the American website The MMA Hour. He also gave a detailed breakdown of how their sparring sessions went, no doubt providing Mayweather with a blueprint on how to beat McGregor. Malignaggi, a former multiple world champion, said despite training little during retirement he had no trouble getting the better of McGregor. Malignaggi said McGregor is more concerned about putting on a spectacle in training camp than getting ready for a serious boxing debut against one of the greatest fighters of all-time.

Malignaggi was also upset about training camp pictures made public that show the Irishman in a positive light. "The guy is all about his ego. He's actually not trying to get better. He's got a bunch of yes men in his corner who tell him he's doing good even if he's doing bad. It is just about him and cheerleading," Malignaggi told MMA Hour. He said he asked McGregor to stop releasing misleading sparring photos that showed the MMA fighter getting the better of the exchanges. McGregor refused. "At this stage I'm waiting for Ashton Kutcher to walk into the dressing rooms and tell me I got Punk'd. I thought it was a joke. I thought there was no way this guy is that much of an asshole," he said.

'SOME KIND OF CRACKHOUSE'

"I showed up with the best intentions to camp and at a certain point you start to realize you are being used as a pawn where somebody's trying to get ahead at your expense and not through your help. "I said 'I can't deal with this.' His team is a bunch of cheerleaders. They are not improving him. I don't need to be around these people. It is not like they brought me in for anything tactical." He said the training camp accommodations were better suited to drug dealers. "They put me in some kind of a crackhouse," he said. Malignaggi indicated that Mayweather should have little trouble with McGregor over 12 rounds of boxing as long as he goes to the body on a regular basis.

"From about six rounds on, he became very hittable," the former champ said. "So much more hittable that I was putting more weight on my shots and sitting down more on my shots, and of course, the body shots started to affect him more and more.

"In MMA the body shots aren't the same as in

boxing in that there is consistency to body shots in boxing. There is a debilitating breakdown from the body shots in boxing. Little by little you feel the air come out of you with fatigue."

He said McGregor's biggest asset against Mayweather will be his excellent conditioning. "Conditioning wise he could push the issue a little bit more than I could," he said. — AFP

ATHLETICS

COE AND IAAF BEHAVIOUR INHUMANE: GATLIN'S AGENT

LONDON: Athletics chief Sebastian Coe and the IAAF's treatment of controversial 100 metres world champion Justin Gatlin is 'inhumane' and 'unsportsmanlike,' the athlete's agent told the BBC in a blistering attack.

British athletics legend Coe—a two-time 1500m Olympic champion—had told the BBC on Sunday two-time drugs cheat Gatlin's victory in the sport's most high profile event in London, which was watched by over eight million viewers in Britain, was not the 'perfect script'.

Gatlin, 35, had been loudly booed throughout the 100m rounds and the verbal abuse was ratcheted up a few notches when he won the final, denying Jamaican superstar Usain Bolt a 12th world title in his last individual final. The 60,000 plus spectators jeered Gatlin whilst chanting bronze medal winner Bolt's name as if he were the champion.

Coe—who had said prior to being elected president of the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) he felt 'queasy' about dopers returning and winning titles—remarked he wasn't very excited about the prospect of placing the gold medal around Gatlin's neck. "I'm not eulogistic that someone

who has served two bans has walked off with one of our glittering prizes," said the 60-year-old. However, Gatlin's agent Renaldo Nehemiah, a former 110m hurdles world record holder, was scathing about Coe's remarks. "I take offence to, with all respect, Lord Coe," he told the BBC.

"I don't condone doping but Justin Gatlin is not the poster child for it. "He's done his time, he plays by the rules, the IAAF reinstated him. They said if you come back we should accept that. "So to put a narrative out that it's just Justin Gatlin and he's the bad guy, it's really not fair. "It's inhumane. It's unsportsmanlike."

'THE LEGEND IS OK WITH IT'

Nehemiah, who won the 1984 Super Bowl with the San Francisco 49ers, said Coe and the IAAF should be more gracious and accept their rules allowed athletes like Gatlin to get a chance at redeeming themselves. "Lord Coe's a part of the IAAF who set the rules, who set out the punishments, and when you serve the punishment you are supposed to be reinstated, which these athletes who have offended and abused some of these rules have, and if you don't want them in you should change the rules," said Nehemiah.

"You don't allow them in and then still condemn them," said the 58-year-old. Coe has always been a hardliner on doping, believing second time offenders like Gatlin should have life bans—however that view has fallen foul of the legal system when athletes have gone to court to challenge such punishments. Gatlin—who reacted to the crowd's booring of his victory by placing a finger to his mouth—served a four-year ban from 2006-10, reduced from eight years and also served a prior ban whilst a student, although that was also reduced as it was ascertained that he had taken medication for his Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD).

Nehemiah, who missed out on his chance of an Olympics due to the US boycott of the 1980 Games in Moscow over the invasion of Afghanistan, said if Bolt could accept graciously that Gatlin was justified in being there, then it should be good enough for anybody.

"If it's good for Bolt it should be good enough for everyone else," said Nehemiah, who observed that when Gatlin competed and won bronze at the 2012 Olympics in London he was not booed. "If the king, the legend is OK with it we should all be OK with it." — AFP



LONDON: IAAF President Sebastian Coe leaves after he awarded the gold medal for the men's 100-meter final to United States' Justin Gatlin during the World Athletics Championships in London Sunday. — AP

FOR HAITI'S NBA DREAMERS, SOMEONE TO LOOK UP TO

PORT-AU-PRINCE: At the edge of the court, in a steamy Port-au-Prince gym, dozens of young players crowd the stand-out silhouette of Skal Labissiere. Their hometown hero is now living their NBA dreams.

This towering 21-year-old Haitian survived a major earthquake to then leave for the United States, and played in college before going pro in style. He played this season with the Sacramento Kings.

The young men who have turned out at the gym in the capital of poorest nation of the Americas can hardly imagine a National Basketball

Association career-or making more than one million dollars a year. But thanks to Labissiere, they are getting encouragement and hope. If they work hard enough, as he urges them, they could end up playing with him and NBA stars like LeBron James, Stephen Curry and James Harden.

"It's a blessing and a real pleasure to come back and share my experience with the young people here," Labissiere said with a smile. "Seven years ago, I never thought I would be where I am today," he adds, thoughtfully staring down from his 2.11 meters (six feet 11 inches).

Labissiere's home collapsed during Haiti's devastating January 12, 2010 earthquake, trapping him, his mother and brother in the rubble. Labissiere's legs were injured, and it would take weeks before he could walk again. At this point Pierre Valmera, a former Haitian international basketball player who had already spotted the boy's potential as a hoops star, intervened to help get Skal to the United States despite his injuries.

Valmera is the co-founder of POWERforward International, a Boston-based nonprofit group that helps young Haitians gain a private-school

education in the United States on a basketball scholarship.

"A lot of doors have been opened thanks to people like Skal who have made it to NBA level, and who have got recruiters to keep an eye on Haiti," said a hopeful Michael Alphonse, one of the gym players.

Measuring 2.06 meters high and a recent high school graduate, 18 year-old Alphonse dreams of holding the Haitian flag in international competitions. "This is finally going to take away the old image of poverty that the world has of our country," said Alphonse, who with nine other young

players will travel to Texas for a week of training in August.

For the Haitian Basketball Federation, the help and contacts mobilized by the national stars are invaluable. "For sure, life is a chess match. It's tough. Young people already know that by living here. So if we can show them examples of success, show them that there is hope, it will help them fight hard. And that, it will definitely change the mentalities here," said Federation director Patrick Washington. "If we take care of these young people today, they will take care of the country later," he added. —AFP

TENNIS

FRENCH OPEN CHAMP OSTAPENKO FALLS TO US QUALIFIER LEPCHENKO

TORONTO: Qualifier Varvara Lepchenko shocked the reigning Roland-Garros champion while 37-year-old Venus Williams got off to another shaky start in the opening round at the WTA hardcourt tournament in Toronto on Monday.

Lepchenko rallied to stun French Open winner Jelena Ostapenko 1-6, 7-6 (7/2), 7-6 (7/5). Ninth seeded Williams also needed three sets and close to two hours to eliminate qualifier Irina-Camelia Begu 6-1, 3-6, 6-3. American veteran Lepchenko, 31-years old and ranked 68th in the world, trailed 6-1, 3-0 before turning things around against the 12th-ranked Latvian, who had followed up her French Open triumph by reaching the quarter-finals at Wimbledon.

"I think I woke up, I was a little bit in the sleeping mode for a set and a half," said Lepchenko, a former top-20 player herself. "All the credit to her, she played amazing tennis - she hardly missed any ball from the very beginning."

"Once I gave her a little push back, that's when the game started. I pretty much focused on my game. I know I have powerful shots and I'm as good a player as her, so I knew I just had to give my best, and it would be a battle." Lepchenko notched her first win this season over a top-20 player and her first since she beat then 15th-ranked Tímea Bacszinsky at the US Open last year. The match was one of the Centre Court highlights on the opening day of this key US Open tuneup. Seven-time Grand Slam champion Williams, who is the oldest player in the draw, faced a stern test from Romanian Begu, who is ranked 59th in the world. Heading into Monday's match, Williams had lost five out of seven opening-round matches in the event, which switches back-and-forth between Toronto and Montreal each year.

This marked the first career meeting between the two. Begu had already won a tournament in 2017 at Bucharest, while Williams, who finished runner-up in this event in 2014, is looking for her first title of the season.

Williams won the one hour, 56 minute

match despite hitting no aces and making 10 double faults compared to her opponent's four aces and six double faults. But Williams won 68 percent of her first-serve points and was able to break Begu's serve five times.

Williams advances to the second round where she will face world number 40 Katerina Siniakova, who defeated qualifier Mariane Duque-Marino 4-6, 6-0, 6-4. Elsewhere, two-time Wimbledon winner Petra Kvitová, seeded 14th fended off Spain's Carla Suarez Navarro 6-1, 7-6 (7/5). Kvitová breezed through the opening set, but had to battle back from 1-4 down in the second to finish off the Spaniard in straight sets.

PLISKOVA GETS BYE

Top seed Karolina Pliskova and second-seeded Simona Halep—who won the Canadian crown last year when the WTA played in Montreal—were among the top eight players enjoying first-round byes.

In other early action, Czech Barbora Strycova upset 13th-seeded Kristina Mladenovic of France 6-2, 6-3. Strycova, ranked 26th in the world, raced to a 5-0 lead in the first set as Mladenovic struggled to find her rhythm. Although Strycova was broken the first time she served for the set, she finally served it out with a love game and quickly took a 4-0 lead in the second frame. She again turned back a late challenge from Mladenovic, who cut the deficit to 4-3 but was unable to convert three break points that would have seen her level the set. It was another disappointing Canadian outing for Mladenovic, who has never won a match in Montreal or Toronto. Elsewhere, British qualifier Heather Watson bowed out early, retiring while trailing Japan's Naomi Osaka 6-1, 4-1 with a shoulder injury.

Belgium's Kirsten Flipkens was up 6-2 when Croatian opponent Ana Konjuh retired, the victory sending Flipkens into a second-round clash with fourth-seeded Wimbledon champion Garbine Muguurza of Spain. — AFP

NADAL EYES NUMBER ONE IN MONTREAL, MURRAY SIDELINED

MONTREAL: Rafael Nadal says he'll focus on the foes in front of him at the ATP Montreal Masters this week, and not on his chance to return to number one in the world. A semi-final run in Montreal would see the Spaniard supplant Britain's Andy Murray atop the rankings.

"I don't even think about that now," Nadal said of number one. "I'm trying to have the right preparation now and that's it. I'm going to keep trying to play the way I did in the first part of the season, so if I'm able to make that happen, I hope to have a chance to do well."

The top seed is expected to open his campaign for a fourth Canadian title on Wednesday with a second-round meeting against either Croatian Borna Coric or Russian lucky loser Mikhail Youzhny.

Nadal could also be on track for a third round showdown against 2009 tournament runner-up Juan Martin del Potro who beat hard-serving American John Isner in straight sets 7-5, 7-5 in a night match on Monday. Murray is among the notable absentees from this key US Open tuneup. Novak Djokovic is taking off the rest of the season to rehab an elbow injury and US Open champion Stan Wawrinka has ended his 2017 campaign with a knee problem.

Murray is trying to recover from a nagging hip injury in time for the final Grand Slam of the season that starts later this month in Flushing Meadows.

Nadal claimed his 10th French Open title this year but bowed out in the fourth round at Wimbledon—his fifth exit before the quarter-finals in his last five appearances at the All England Club. Roger Federer, who seized his 19th Grand Slam title at Wimbledon, is also slated to open today.

ISNER'S STREAK SNAPPED

Former US Open champion del Potro of Argentina snapped an eight-match win streak for Isner, who earned from back-to-back title in July at the Hall of Fame Open in Newport and the Atlanta Open.

Del Potro had to overcome 24 aces by 14th seeded Isner as he seeks to return to the final for the first time since losing to Murray in 2009. Del Potro hammered nine aces, had three double faults and won 85 percent of his first serves in the one hour, 49 minute match.

Del Potro closed out the victory on his second match point by hitting a forehand winner down the line. He broke Isner at 5-5 in the second set then jumped out to a 40-0 lead in the final game.

"I got lucky to win tonight," del Potro said. "Nobody wants to play John in the first round. But now I am in good shape. I look forward to improving my game and winning more matches." Isner won back-to-back titles in Newport and Atlanta in July before withdrawing from last week's tournament in Washington with a knee injury. He also pulled out of the Madrid tournament with knee trouble. Del Potro next faces either Rogerio Dutra Silva or 18-year-old Canadian wild card Denis Shapovalov. If he wins, del Potro would likely face Nadal.

In early matches on Monday, Australia's Nick Kyrgios romped past Serbian Viktor Troicki 6-1, 6-2 and France's Gael Monfils shook off a slow start to beat American Steve Johnson 2-6, 7-6 (7/1), 6-1.

France's Benoit Paire also advanced, downing American Donald Young 6-3, 5-7, 6-4, but rising French star Lucas Pouille fell 7-6 (7/5), 7-6 (10/8) to American Jared Donaldson. Monfils was broken twice in a sluggish first set, but gradually found his range, firing 11 aces and saving the only other two break points he faced in the one-hour, 38-minute victory. — AFP



Rafael Nadal



SAN FRANCISCO: San Francisco Giants catcher Buster Posey, right, tags out Chicago Cubs' Kris Bryant at home plate as Bryant tried to score from third base on a ground ball from Wilson Contreras during the seventh inning of a baseball game Monday, in San Francisco. — AP photos

BASEBALL

SCHERZER PITCHES 7 INNINGS AS NATIONALS TOP MARLINS

WASHINGTON: Max Scherzer pitched seven sharp innings in his first start since he was sidelined by neck spasms, helping the Washington Nationals beat the Miami Marlins 3-2 on Monday night. Bryce Harper homered for Washington, and pinch hitter Adam Lind singled in the tiebreaking run in the eighth inning. The Nationals expanded their lead in the NL East over second-place Miami to 14 games. Brandon Kintzler (4-2) worked the eighth and Sean Doolittle got three outs to earn his sixth save. Both pitchers were acquired shortly before the July 31 non-waiver trade deadline. Giancarlo Stanton hit his major league-leading 37th homer for the Marlins, matching his previous career high. Jarlin Garcia (0-2) got the loss. Scherzer struck out nine and gave up two runs. The right-hander was coming off an abbreviated start against the Marlins six days earlier, when he was pulled after one inning with neck spasms.

CARDINALS 11, ROYALS 3

Matt Carpenter hit a three-run homer in St. Louis' six-run fourth inning, helping the Cardinals earn their third consecutive victory. Paul DeJong and Kolten Wong also connected for the Cardinals, who returned to .500 at 56-56. Carlos Martinez (8-9) pitched eight innings of two-run ball for just his second win in his last nine starts. Royals right-hander Ian Kennedy (4-8) was charged with seven runs, six earned, and six hits in six innings. He is winless in 14 consecutive starts at Kauffman Stadium since beating Minnesota on Aug. 20, 2016. Mike Moustakas, Eric Hosmer and Brandon Moss homered for Kansas City, which has dropped six of eight.

TWINS 5, BREWERS 4

Eddie Rosario doubled home the tying run in the seventh inning and scored the winning run for Minnesota on a balk. After Eduardo Escobar drew a leadoff walk, Rosario hit a smash to right field that fooled Domingo Santana, who took two steps in before watching the ball sail over his head. Escobar scored to tie the game at 4. Rosario was still at third with two out when the Brewers employed a dramatic shift on left-handed hitting Jason Castro. With no fielder near third base to hold him on, Rosario danced halfway down the baseline, causing Oliver Drake (3-4) to step off the rubber. When Drake stepped back on the rubber, Rosario made another break for home. This time Drake flinched and plate umpire Bill Welke called a balk, sending Rosario home. Buddy Boshers (1-0) retired one batter in the seventh to earn the victory. Matt Belisle worked the ninth for his second save.

PIRATES 3, TIGERS 0

Trevor Williams pitched seven crisp innings, leading Pittsburgh to the win. Williams (5-4) struck out five and walked two, giving up only a leadoff single to James McCann in the third. Williams threw a career-high 107 pitches and never allowed a runner to third base. Juan Nicasio got three outs for his second save, completing Pittsburgh's one-hitter. The Pirates have won three straight and four of five. Francisco Cervelli put the Pirates in front with an RBI double off Jordan Zimmermann (7-9) in the second. John Jaso provided some late insurance with a pinch-hit two-run homer in the seventh. Zimmermann struck out three and walked two in seven innings. The Tigers have dropped three



CINCINNATI: Cincinnati Reds' Patrick Kivlehan, right, is forced out at second base by San Diego Padres shortstop Dusty Coleman during the seventh inning of a baseball game, Monday, in Cincinnati.

straight following a four-game winning streak.

REDS 11, PADRES 3

Joey Votto homered for the third straight game and pulled into a tie with Ted Kluszewski on the Reds' career list. The Reds homered four times in all, with Patrick Kivlehan hitting his first career grand slam. Adam Duvall and Zack Cozart also connected. Votto's 251st career homer off Jhoulys Chacin (11-8) moved him into a tie for fifth place with Big Klu, the first base-

man who cut the sleeves off his uniform to free his big upper arms. Votto's 136th homer at Great American bumped him ahead of Jay Bruce for the ballpark record. Jose Pirela drove in all of San Diego's runs with his first career multihomer game. The first was a two-run shot off Tim Lincecum, who went only 4 2/3 innings. Adleman hasn't won since June 27, going 0-5 in seven starts with a 6.88 ERA. Blake Wood (1-4) replaced Adleman in the fifth and pitched out of a two-on threat. —AP

MLB Results/Standings

Chicago Cubs 5, San Francisco 3; Baltimore 6, LA Angels 2; St. Louis 11, Kansas City 3; Minnesota 5, Milwaukee 4; Cincinnati 11, San Diego 3; Pittsburgh 3, Detroit 0; Washington 3, Miami 2.

American League				National League			
Eastern Division				Eastern Division			
	W	L	PCT				
Boston	63	49	.563	Washington	66	44	.600
NY Yankees	59	51	.536	Miami	52	58	.473
Tampa Bay	58	55	.513	Atlanta	51	59	.464
Baltimore	56	56	.500	NY Mets	49	60	.450
Toronto	52	59	.468	Philadelphia	40	69	.367
Central Division				Central Division			
Cleveland	59	50	.541	Chicago Cubs	59	52	.532
Kansas City	57	54	.514	Milwaukee	59	55	.518
Minnesota	54	56	.491	St. Louis	56	56	.500
Detroit	51	60	.459	Pittsburgh	55	57	.491
Chicago White Sox	41	68	.376	Cincinnati	46	66	.411
Western Division				Western Division			
Houston	71	40	.640	LA Dodgers	79	32	.712
Seattle	57	56	.504	Colorado	64	48	.571
LA Angels	55	58	.487	Arizona	63	48	.568
Oakland	53	58	.477	San Diego	49	62	.441
	50	62	.446	San Francisco	44	70	.386

SREESANTH BELIEVES IN WORLD CUP MIRACLE AFTER LIFE BAN LIFTED

NEW DELHI: Indian pace bowler Shanthakumar Sreesanth said yesterday he was dreaming of playing in the 2019 World Cup after a court lifted a life ban imposed over a match-fixing scandal. The 34-year-old knows he faces a tough battle after four years in the wilderness, but he said he was inspired by the successful comeback of Pakistan's Mohammad Amir from a fixing ban.

The Kerala state high court lifted Sreesanth's ban on Monday, saying the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) had not proved his role in the 2013 Indian Premier League scandal. Sreesanth said his

first target would be to play games for Glenrothes in the Scottish league, and then Kerala state, as he bids to fight back into the Indian team.

"My dream is to play 2019 World Cup for India," Sreesanth told The Times of India in an interview. "But I know it is next to impossible and it would be a miracle if I play in that World Cup. But I have always believed that miracles can happen. "There might be stiff competition for fast bowlers' spots now. But there was competition even when I made my way into the Indian team. "I have always felt that competition gets the best out of me. I just hope that I

can do justice to my talent on my comeback." The BCCI has not made any comment on the ruling. It could appeal to a national court, or accept the verdict and let Sreesanth return.

'A NEW LIFE'

The 2013 IPL season was mired in controversy after police launched legal proceedings against several officials and three Rajasthan Royals players, including Sreesanth, for illegal betting and spot-fixing. All three were cleared of spot-fixing charges by a New Delhi court in 2015, but Sreesanth's life ban by the BCCI remained

in place until Monday's ruling.

Sreesanth, who was 13 short of 100 Test wickets when he was banned, said he was optimistic of being given official approval to play. "Today I'm feeling much better than how I felt when I got my maiden call-up to the Indian team," said Sreesanth, who was banned with fellow Rajasthan Royals players Ajit Chandila and Ankeet Chavan.

"It is a new life for me. Even the biggest of criminals don't go through what I or my family went through. "A small incident was portrayed in the wrong way in front of the world. Maybe that's how the world works, I

don't know."

He highlighted the case of Pakistani bowler Amir, who was found guilty of match-fixing in court and banned for five years in 2011. Amir made an early return in 2015 and helped Pakistan beat India in the Champions Trophy final in June. "I just hope that happens in my career too," said Sreesanth. While Sreesanth had denied any role in the IPL match-fixing, the Kerala court said he had been a victim of his own silence in not defending himself at the time. "Complacency in the matter on the part of Sreesanth is really condemnable," said the judge in his ruling.— AFP

SOCCER

KOLASINAC READY TO RUMBLE, SAYS WALCOTT

LONDON: Theo Walcott has backed Sead Kolasinac to bring some much-needed steel to Arsenal's defence after the intimidating Bosnian made his presence felt in the Gunners' Community Shield victory over Chelsea.

Kolasinac joined Arsenal on a free transfer from Schalke in the close-season and already looks an ideal fit for the physical demands of the Premier League. The 24-year-old came off the bench in the first half of Sunday's friendly against Chelsea at Wembley and won over his new teammates with a commanding display, capped by Arsenal's 82nd-minute equaliser. Kolasinac is usually a left-back, but he showed his versatility, replacing the injured Per Mertesacker at centre-back and helping the often leaky Gunners defence subdue Chelsea.

Not content with dominating at the back, Kolasinac popped up at the other end to score with a powerful header, forcing the penalty shoot-out that Arsenal won 4-1. Walcott revealed the hulking Kolasinac has made a big impression with his no-holds-barred approach in training and the Gunners winger is expecting opposing forwards to get an even tougher time from the Bosnian this season. "Sead looks an absolute tank. He is one tough unit to get past. His physical attributes are going to be key for us this season," Walcott said. "He is an absolute animal. I see him in the gym everyday. You can just tell he looks after himself well. He eats the right foods. He is a professional. "The power he's got and his pace, it's beautiful to watch. He's a great addition to the squad.

"Trust me, he is not easy to get around. He's quite wide as well. He fits perfectly for the Premier League. "This league is the best and he's going to be one of the best in the league." After last season's troubled cam-

paign ended with FA Cup final victory against Chelsea, Arsene Wenger's side are under pressure to challenge for the Premier League title.

But, consigned to the Europa League after failing to qualify for the Champions League for the first time in 20 years, Walcott admits it won't be easy to change the perception that Arsenal have lost ground on their title rivals.

BUZZING

"It's going to be a tough season, we all know that, with the Europa as well," he said. "We will let people talk on the outside. We know what we have to do this season. "We know how important it is. We are up for the challenge, we do like a good challenge. "It is going to be different this year. It's how we react. We can't really dwell on the past anymore.

"We have to focus on our strengths. We had a good end to last season and we are getting used to a new system. "We are slowly learning it. It is working for now and we will stick with it." Key to Arsenal's success will be the form of club record signing Alexandre Lacazette. The France forward, signed for 46.5 million (\$60.6 million) from Lyon, hit the post against Chelsea, but that was the highlight of a largely anonymous display.

Walcott defended his new team-mate, saying: "When you give him time and space on the ball he can show his quality. "He's a goalscorer and he is going to score goals for this club. "The amount of players we have in key positions, they are going to supply chances for him."

Arsenal open their Premier League campaign at home to Leicester City on Friday and Walcott can't wait to get going. "Being a night game might be better for us. The fans will be up for it," he said.— AFP



LONDON: Jamaica's Omar McLeod, right, celebrates as he wins the gold medal in the final of the Men's 110m hurdles during the World Athletics Championships in London Monday at center is Hungary's Balazs Baji who took the bronze.— AP

ATHLETICS

MCLEOD WINS WORLD TITLE, MERRITT'S DREAM DASHED

LONDON: Jamaica's Omar McLeod added the world 110 metres hurdles title to his Olympic crown in London on Monday and jointly dedicated it to his mother and superstar Usain Bolt. However, world record holder Aries Merritt's dream of winning at least a medal two years after a kidney transplant were dashed as the American 2012 Olympic champion finished fifth.

McLeod, 23, led from start to finish to take the title in 13.04 seconds from defending champion Sergey Shubenkov with Balazs Baji of Hungary taking a surprise bronze. "It's crazy, it's my moment," said McLeod.

"I had to win tonight as my mother (Arnella Knight-Morris) was watching in the stands. "I dedicate this win to my mother." McLeod provided Jamaica with a much needed boost after both Bolt and women's double Olympic sprint champion Elaine Thompson failed to bring home gold in the 100m. "I really wanted to come out here and keep the Jamaican flag high," said McLeod.

"Usain Bolt he's still legendary, this is also for you! His legacy to Jamaican athletics he deserves such a tribute!" McLeod added: "This one is special, honestly. There was a lot of pressure coming in but I channelled it positively.

"It's totally different to last year where we had Usain and Elaine winning, which I used to propel me. I didn't have that this time so I really wanted to come out and shine my own light." McLeod dominated the race leaving the others to fight it out for the minor medals with Merritt in contention until the final hurdle.

FRUSTRATED

However, he weakened and Russian Shubenkov, who was running as an Authorised Neutral Athlete because of his country's ban over a massive doping scandal, burst through to take second with 2016 European silver medallist Baji edging Frenchman Garfield Darien for the third spot on the podium.

"I'm so frustrated," said Shubenkov. "I struggled over the last few hurdles. "The Jamaican is just too fast. I'm just happy to be competing at a world champs and get a world medal. Last year was a disaster and not just because of the Russian ban (on competing at the Olympics) so I'm happy to be back winning a world medal.

"To be honest it doesn't matter the colour of the vest I am wearing, it is more important that I gave pleasure to the people in my country who were watching." Merritt said it felt "great to be back in London where I won Olympic gold".

"The crowd greeted me very warmly. Of course, I am not happy to be in lane nine but just being in the stadium is enough for me," he said. "I am not even meant to be running, so I'm more happy to be here than not be here. I am back on the world stage, that's the main thing.

"It's definitely possible for me to medal in the future. Everyone in the hurdling game is hurdling well. "Since I broke the world record it's really transformed. There are a lot of new people and new talent, and that's fine. I'm just happy still to be part of it." — AFP

KIPYEGON WINS WORLD 1500M, SEMENYA BRONZE

LONDON: Faith Kipyegon of Kenya added the world title to her Olympic crown after sprinting to a thrilling victory in the women's 1500m on Monday as Caster Semanya snatched bronze. In a fantastic race that erupted on the final lap, Kipyegon held off allcomers, including double-hunting Semanya, down the home straight to clock 4min 02.59sec.

"I knew it would be fast, it is such a quality field," Kipyegon said. "The best was going to win here. It was always going to be quick and competitive. "I'm looking forward to celebrating this with my family."

American Jennifer Simpson claimed silver, at 0.17sec, with South Africa's 800m specialist Caster Semanya taking bronze (4:02.90). Defending world champion Genzebe Dibaba finished 12th and last, more than 4sec off the winning pace.

Simpson said her coach had told her to "be willing to run your guts out and you'll be great". "So I did exactly what she did. The last 300m in particular I ran my guts out and it paid off," said Simpson.

"Having the experience is huge because having the ability to stay calm is so hard, especially at the world championships when you're racing in a beautiful stadium like this. To come out with a medal, I think it was down to keeping my wits about me."

Semanya, who will now turn her attention to winning a third world 800m title, added: "It was like music to me coming back to this stadium with all the memories and I'm perfectly satisfied with the bronze.

"Obviously a lot cannot go your way in a final, so to come out with a bronze is amazing but I was hoping for a better time. "1500m is a tactical race, I tried to find my

own space but fortunately I managed to get away with third."

SEMENYA PLAYS DOWN CONTROVERSY

Semanya played down the ongoing controversy surrounding her elevated levels of naturally occurring testosterone. "For me I have no time for that," she said. "It's been like this since 2009. For me, when you listen to music and have one song playing each and every time... it's been almost nine years and it's quite boring. I have no time for that." Laura Muir, one of two Britons in the field led from the off, laying down a 65sec first lap, with Kipyegon a constant companion on her outside shoulder.

Semanya was her usual comfortable self in the middle of the pack, with Dibaba behind her and the Netherlands' world indoor champion Sifan Hassan, who took bronze two years ago in Beijing, bringing up the rear. They went through 800m in a relatively sedate 2:17 before Hassan moved up the field and kicked, Kipyegon following. Suddenly the pack split, Hassan and Kipyegon looking to have the battle for top of the podium to themselves. But it was not to be, at least for the Ethiopian-born Dutchwoman. Semanya left it late for her attack, eating up the yards from ninth place with 200 metres to run.

As they hit the home stretch, Hassan tied up in dramatic fashion, 2011 world champion Simpson timed her tactically astute race to near perfection and Semanya powered through for bronze on her coat-tails. Muir pipped Hassan for fourth, while world record holder Dibaba could muster nothing worthwhile in the sprint finish as she went backwards.— AFP



LONDON: Kenya's Faith Chepngetich Kipyegon, front, celebrates as she wins the gold medal in the final of the Women's 1500m during the World Athletics Championships in London Monday. South Africa's Caster Semanya, bronze, is in the rear.— AP

CRICKET

ALI HAILS SAQLAIN ROLE IN S AFRICA SUCCESS

MANCHESTER: Moeen Ali has paid tribute to the "amazing" Saqlain Mushtaq for his role in helping the England all-rounder enjoy a record-breaking Test series against South Africa. Ali, a 30-year-old off-spinner and left-handed batsman, became the first man in cricket history to score more than 250 runs and take 25 wickets in a four-match Test series during the course of England's 3-1 victory over the Proteas.

Ali has often been regarded, even by himself, as a "second spinner" when the likes of Hampshire left-arter Liam Dawson have been in the England side. But under the guidance of England spin-bowling coach Saqlain, a former Pakistan off-spinner and star of a Surrey side that won English County Championship titles at the turn of the century, Ali's bowling has improved markedly.

"Saqqy has been amazing for me in terms of helping with my fields, helping me understand my bowling a lot more than I had done previously—and I think that has been the biggest difference," said Ali after bowling England to a 177-run win in the fourth Test at Old Trafford with more than a day to spare on Monday.

"Little things like that can make a big difference," explained Ali, who ended the match with two wickets in two balls for an innings return of five for 69 after finishing England's victory in the third Test at The Oval with a hat-trick. "Before, I just bowled, (and) didn't really think too much," added Ali, who started the series with a 10-wicket haul in England's first Test win at Lord's. "I let the captain set the field. I would say I set the field a lot more throughout this series."

The South Africa series saw Ali, who showed his batting class with an unbeaten 75 not out in England's second innings at Old Trafford, cement his position of fourth in the International Cricket Council rankings for Test all-rounders.

"I feel a lot more confident in my ability," he said. "I feel like it was building... I had been batting well over the last year, and the bowling was coming." Joe Root, whose first series as England captain ended with a decisive victory, has been delighted by Worcestershire star Ali's progress. "He is definitely improving all the time," said Root. "I hope it's not just a one-off series, and he can go on now and do it again and again." — AFP



Moeen Ali

Sports

**Sparring partner
Malignaggi slams
'scumbag' McGregor**



**McLeod wins world
title, Merritt's
dream dashed**



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NADAL EYES NUMBER ONE IN MONTREAL, MURRAY SIDELINED Page 14



SKOPJE: Real Madrid pose with the trophy after defeating Manchester United 2-1 during the Super Cup final soccer match at Philip II Arena in Skopje, yesterday. — AP

ISCO MAGIC WINS SUPER CUP FOR REAL

SKOPJE: A delightful goal by Isco proved the difference as Real Madrid survived a Manchester United fightback to win 2-1 and lift the UEFA Super Cup in the Macedonian capital of Skopje yesterday. Casemiro put the reigning European champions in front on 24 minutes on a steamy summer's night in the Balkans and Isco doubled their lead seven minutes into the second half after a one-two with Gareth Bale. The gulf in class between Madrid-for whom Cristiano Ronaldo appeared as a late substitute-and Europa League winners United that Jose Mourinho had feared was all too evident and it looked like the Spaniards would go on to win by a wider margin.

But Romelu Lukaku pulled one back just past the hour, marking his competitive debut for United with a goal and sparking a big improvement from the Premier League club in the final stages.

It was to no avail, with Zinedine Zidane's side winning this trophy for the second year running and the fourth time overall. It is the eighth time in nine years that a Spanish club has won the Super Cup.

BALE HANDED START

While Ronaldo started on the bench for Madrid having only commenced pre-season training at the weekend, Bale was included in the line-up. United boss Mourinho caused a stir on Monday when he claimed he would make a bid to take the Welshman to Old Trafford if he were not a starter at the Philip II Arena.

Despite the presence of £75 million (\$97 million) signing Lukaku up front, with Paul Pogba behind, United gave the impression that they could do with some extra inspiration in the final third.

Having missed much of last season's run-in due to injury, Bale is fit again, but it was

Casemiro who emerged as the unlikely main threat going forward for Real in the first half.

The Brazilian midfielder almost opened the scoring in the 16th minute, getting in front of Matteo Darmian to head a Toni Kroos corner against the bar from six yards.

And the breakthrough came just past the midway point in the first half as Dani Carvajal was afforded the time to flight a ball over Victor Lindelof-another United debutant-for Casemiro to stretch and volley past David de Gea. De Gea, formerly a Madrid transfer target, then needed to intervene to save from a Karim Benzema snap-shot that followed a driving run into the area by Luka Modric, as Zidane's side were restricted to a one-goal lead at the break. Mourinho sent on Marcus Rashford for Jesse Lingard at the start of the second half, yet it was at the other end that the chances kept coming. De Gea repelled a Kroos piledriver but there was nothing he could do to stop Isco making it 2-0 in the 52nd minute. Surrounded by red shirts just inside the area to the left, Isco escaped their attentions by playing a one-two with Bale before coolly finishing past De Gea.

Bale then struck the bar, and all this was going on without Ronaldo, who appeared from the bench to warm-up, raising hysteric cheers from the sizeable number of locals with sympathies for the Spanish side. United had a mountain to climb and were not helped when Lukaku blazed over after Keylor Navas pushed a Pogba header out into his path. Lukaku did not make the same mistake twice, converting the rebound when a Nemanja Matic drive was not convincingly dealt with by Navas, but the 'keeper redeemed himself with a vital late save to deny Rashford. And Real, with Ronaldo on for the closing stages, held on. — AFP

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Kuwait Times ⁵⁵ BUSINESS

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World stocks shrug off slowing China growth

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Fly British Airways into the world of Jane Austen

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San Francisco street sells for \$90,000. Neighbors not happy

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KUWAIT INFLATION REVISED DOWN AS RENTS SEE DEFLATION

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CAIRO: In this Aug 1, 2017 photo, Egyptian entrepreneur Ahmed Saeed El-Feki, who hopes to reshape the country's auto-mobile industry with his new minicar, poses for a photograph inside a workshop in the village of Kerdasa, not far from the Giza Pyramids. —AP

COMING TO YOU FROM A VILLAGE: EGYPT'S FIRST MINICAR HANDMADE VEHICLE SEEKS TO TAKE ON RICKSHAWS

KERDASA, Egypt: In Egypt, where many suffer under economic hardship, 35-year-old entrepreneur Ahmed Saeed El-Feki has been working hard to make something of himself. He has launched his own business building a minicar in a country that relies heavily on imports of small automobiles. In a village not far from the Giza pyramids, Feki set up a small workshop to create the first Egyptian-made minicar, the "minicar Egypt." "The idea came at the same time as the flotation of the Egyptian pound so we decided to think outside the box and create a local product to replace the tuk tuk," Feki said, referring to President Abdel-Fattah Al-Sisi's move to help shore up the country's economy.

Feki's golf-cart looking minicar is different in design and mechanical efficiency from the Chinese tuk tuk, a three-wheeled motorized vehicle used as a taxi, which is popular in

Egypt. The minicar's engine power is 300cc, while the tuk tuk's is 175cc. The body thickness is 4mm while the tuk tuk is only 0.75mm. The minicar is also much safer because it is a 4-wheel car while the tuk tuk is only 3-wheeled. The minicar saves more fuel than the tuk tuk.

"The minicar is similar to the tuk tuk but I feel it is more practical when I drive it inside my village," said 25-year-old Hossam Gamal El-Halawany, who has been the owner of a minicar for only a few days. "It can carry more passengers, around five, in addition to the driver," Halawany said, however, he worried the minicar will be registered like the tuk tuks which means they are restricted in movement. "I am hoping to get a license for the minicar to allow to move around the whole city and not only my village," he says.

Millions of Egyptians, especially in rural and densely popu-

lated areas, depend on auto rickshaws because of their cheap fares and smallness that make it ideal to navigate narrow alleys. Egypt imports Tuk Tuks from China, spending about \$290 million a year, according to Feki. To shore up Egypt's economy, President Sisi imposed austerity measures as part of a comprehensive economic reform program. The program was set to meet the demands of the International Monetary Fund which secured a \$12 billion bailout to Egypt last year.

Speaking outside his workshop in the village of Kerdasa, Feki said he has dreamed of helping shore up the country's economy since the day the Egyptian government took the unprecedented move of floating the pound. Feki says the number of purchasing orders has grown and they are coming not only from Egyptian businessmen and companies but African neighboring countries as well. Feki said one interest-

ed party invited him to manufacture his vehicle in Mozambique, which he declined. For him, the startup had a nationalist dimension - he hopes to contribute to the Egyptian market, create jobs and increase the country's export capacity.

Feki said he is now working hard on refining and upgrading his product from just a handmade car. He was producing 30-40 per month on his own but he is now taking his business to the next level after reaching a deal with the government to have the parts manufactured in Army-run factories. The parts come back to him and he then assembles the vehicles in a separate factory space, enabling him to ramp up production. The minicar is currently on sale for 34,000 Egyptian pounds (\$1,907), significantly less expensive than the tuk tuk, which costs 38,000 Egyptian (\$2,130). —AP

CHINA EXPORT, IMPORT GROWTH RATES SLOW

BEIJING: Chinese trade growth slowed significantly in July compared to the previous month, official data showed yesterday, coming in well below expectations after months of steady momentum. Analysts said that while exports and imports were still robust year-on-year, the latest data indicated a downward trend. Exports rose 7.2 percent year-on-year to \$193.65 billion, the customs administration said, undershooting a Bloomberg News forecast of 11 percent.

Imports were up 11 percent year-on-year - compared with an expected increase of 18 percent - to \$146.9 billion, lifting the trade surplus to \$46.74 bil-

lion. "Despite the uptick at the end of (the second quarter), trade growth now appears to be on a downward trend," said Julian Evans-Pritchard, a China economist at Capital Economics. "In particular, the sharp decline in import growth since the start of the year suggests that domestic demand is softening."

The trade figures come despite other recent economic data that has been positive, including better-than-expected second-quarter GDP growth of 6.9 percent. The trade data follows the passing on Saturday of a UN Security Council Resolution that significantly strengthened sanctions on North Korea

by banning its exports of coal, iron, and other key hard-currency earners. China is North Korea's most important trading partner but has presented an increasingly united front with the US to Pyongyang.

"Although China's monthly trade surplus increased, trade tensions between the US and China have eased following China's co-operation with the US for tougher economic sanctions on North Korea," said Rajiv Biswas, chief economist for IHS Markit. "US-China bilateral trade relations are currently being driven by US-China cooperation on trying to bring North Korea back to the Six Party Talks." —AFP

GOVT LAUNCHES INQUIRY OVER FOREX LOSSES UNDER MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia's government yesterday launched an inquiry into massive foreign exchange losses by the central bank more than two decades ago, in a probe that could lead to criminal prosecution for former Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad. Opposition leaders slammed the inquiry as a political ploy to discredit Mahathir just months after he set up a new political party. He now leads an opposition coalition aimed at ousting Prime Minister Najib Razak in general elections due in mid-2018.

Mahathir, 92, led the country for 22 years before stepping down in 2003. He has been spearheading calls for Najib to resign over a multibillion-dollar financial scandal in indebted state fund 1MDB. The fund is being investigated in several countries for money laundering. Najib has denied any wrongdoing. A five-member Royal Commission of Inquiry, meeting for the first time Tuesday, said it will investigate how much the central bank lost in currency trading in the 1990s and determine if there was a cover-up.

The inquiry was set up after the government said a preliminary investigation found that the extent of losses was larger than what was reported to the cabinet and parliament. The inquiry panel said a hearing will begin Aug 21 and that it will aim to submit a report to the king by Oct 13. The panel can make recommendations on action to be taken against those found guilty, but it is up to the attorney-general to prosecute.

Mahathir has said the inquiry is a "desperate effort by Najib to silence his detractors." He and other opposition leaders have urged the government to



Mahathir Mohamad

also set up a formal inquiry into losses at 1MDB. Malaysia's government has said it found no criminal wrongdoing at 1MDB. But the fund has been at the center of investigations in the U.S. and several countries amid allegations of a global embezzlement and money-laundering scheme. Najib started the fund shortly after taking office in 2009 to promote economic development projects, but it accumulated billions of dollars in debts.

The US Justice Department says at least \$4.5 billion has been stolen from 1MDB by people close to Najib and has initiated action to seize \$1.3 billion it says was taken from the fund to buy assets in the US. The government complaints also say that more than \$700 million has landed in the accounts of "Malaysian Official 1". They did not name the official, but appear to be referring to Najib. Najib has resisted calls to resign, has clamped down on critics and continues to enjoy the unwavering support of most ruling-party members, but his real test will come in next year's elections. Najib's ruling coalition won the last elections in 2013 despite losing the popular vote to an opposition coalition. —AP



BEIJING: A woman sits on a tricycle painted gold and used as a marketing gimmick yesterday. —AP

MILLIONAIRES' TAX MULLED TO FIX NYC TRANSIT WOES

NEW YORK: Mayor Bill de Blasio, flanked Monday by community activists, labor leaders and fellow Democratic politicians, officially rolled out a proposal for a millionaires' tax to help fix the subways and aid low-income commuters. "People do not want to see this madness continue," de Blasio declared, citing people getting work reprimands, picking their kids up late and missing doctor appointments because of subway delays.

Henry Garrido, executive director of District Council 37, the municipal labor union, said that sometimes even the people tasked with fixing the subway can't get to work on time. The number of subway delays has tripled in the past five years to 70,000 per month, and trains are overcrowded on some lines. About 5.7 million people take the subway on an average work day.

At the mayor's press conference, speakers stressed that the tax would affect only a handful of taxpayers - an estimated 30,000 to 35,000 - all of them in New York City. The tax, which would generate about \$800 million annually, would increase the top income tax rate from about 3.9 percent to 4.4 percent for married couples who make more than \$1 million and individuals making more than \$500,000. In turn, they said, the improvements would fuel the economy, benefiting rich and poor alike.

The proposal includes \$250 million for half-priced Metrocards for 800,000 New Yorkers at or below the poverty level. The tax, spearheaded in Albany by Democratic state Sen. Michael Gianaris of Queens and Assemblyman Daniel O'Donnell of Manhattan,

must be approved by state lawmakers. It faces significant challenges. Cuomo and the Republicans who control the state Senate have strongly resisted efforts to raise taxes on the wealthy in recent years. Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie, a Bronx Democrat, has repeatedly proposed higher taxes on millionaires to no avail.

The often frosty relationship between de Blasio and the Senate's Republican leaders won't help. "I'm pleased Mayor de Blasio recognizes that additional funds contributed by the city would further that goal, but raising taxes is not the answer," said Senate leader John Flanagan, a Long Island Republican. Flanagan added that the city has a \$4.2 billion surplus, "and therefore has the ability to do so with existing resources. Mayor de Blasio doesn't need to reach into the wallets of city residents to make that happen."

Gianaris said opponents "may posture in the beginning," he but predicted they'll come around. O'Donnell agreed. "Public sentiment ... drives a lot of this. The public is paying attention to what the MTA is, who runs it ... and what they're doing with the money." And the mayor's proposal doesn't address the need for emergency funding to fix the ailing system, transit officials and the governor said. Joseph Lota, chairman of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, recently unveiled an emergency plan to stabilize the system at a cost of about \$836 million. The governor offered to split the cost of the plan with the city, but the mayor refused to commit money to support it.



NEW YORK: New York Mayor Bill de Blasio speaks at a rally where he announces a plan to fund MTA improvements on Monday. —AP



SAN FRANCISCO: A sidewalk leads into luxury homes in the Presidio Terrace neighborhood on Monday. — AP

SAN FRANCISCO STREET SELLS FOR \$90K. NEIGHBORS AREN'T HAPPY

SAN FRANCISCO: These days, the price of a San Francisco home can easily top a million dollars. But one savvy investor has bought up a whole street in the city's most exclusive neighborhood for a mere \$90,000. Trouble is, some of the extremely wealthy residents of Presidio Terrace were not aware their street was up for sale and are not pleased it has been sold.

Presidio Terrace is an oval shaped street sealed off by a gate from the tony Presidio Heights neighborhood. Lined with towering palm trees and multimillion dollar mansions, the street has been home, over the years, to famous residents including Sen Dianne Feinstein and House Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi.

Thanks to a city auction stemming from an unpaid tax bill, Bay Area real estate investor Michael Cheng, and his wife Tina Lam, bought the street and now own the sidewalks, the street itself and other areas of "common ground" in the private development that, the San Francisco Chronicle report ed, has been

managed by the homeowners association since at least 1905.

Cheng says reaction to the sale has been less than neighborly. "I thought they would reach out to us and invite us in as new neighbors," Cheng told AP. "This has certainly blown up a lot more than we expected." It turns out the homeowners association for Presidio Terrace failed to pay a \$14-a-year property tax, something that owners of all 181 private streets in San Francisco must do, the Chronicle reported.

So the city's tax office put the property up for sale at the cost of \$994 in an online auction to regain unpaid back taxes, penalties and interest. The couple eventually won the street with a \$90,100 bid in an April 2015 auction. Scott Emblidge, the attorney for the Presidio Homeowners Association, said in a letter to the city that the owners failed to pay because the tax bill was mistakenly being sent to the address of an accountant who hadn't worked for the homeowners association since

the 1980s, the Chronicle reported. Emblidge said the residents didn't know their street was put on the auction block, let alone sold, until May when a title search company hired by Cheng and Lam reached out to ask if any residents had interest in buying back the property. That was one of several options Cheng and Lam have considered for making the investment pay off.

Another option is to charge residents to park on their street - and rent out the 120 parking spaces that line the grand circular road. "As legal owners of this property, we have a lot of options," Cheng said, adding that nothing has been decided. The matter could be headed for court. Last month, the homeowners petitioned the Board of Supervisors for a hearing to rescind the tax sale. The board has scheduled a hearing for October. The homeowners association has also sued the couple and the city, seeking to block Cheng and Lam from selling the street to anyone while the city appeal is pending. — AP

STATE-RUN PDVSA DRIFTS FURTHER

CARACAS/HOUSTON: To survive months of street protests and an economy in tailspin, Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro is trying to turn state oil company PDVSA into a bastion of support, further degrading an already vulnerable enterprise. Political appointees are gaining clout at the expense of veteran oil executives, while employees are under mounting pressure to attend government rallies and vote for the ruling Socialists. The increasing focus on politics over performance is contributing to a rapid deterioration of Venezuela's oil industry, home to the world's largest crude reserves, and to a brain drain at the once world-class company.

Interviews with two dozen current and former employees, foreign oil executives, and contractors point to a PDVSA coming apart at the seams. "Everything is a disaster and yet we have to clap," said a PDVSA employee, who asked to remain anonymous because she feared retaliation. After four months of deadly protests against the unpopular president, new company leadership is increasingly pressuring employees to attend Socialist Party rallies and at times asking for letters explaining absences.

Managers told workers they would be fired unless they voted in Maduro's controversial election on July 30 of a new legislative superbody meant to rewrite the Constitution, which was widely denounced as a move toward dictatorship. Critics have long contended that PDVSA - short for Petroleos de Venezuela SA - was being turned into the corruption-riddled heart of late President Hugo Chavez's "21st century socialism", at the expense of the OPEC nation's once-flourishing oil industry.

Now Venezuela's oil production is on track to end 2017 at a 25-year low, but the leftist government still relies heavily on PDVSA to be its financial motor. That leaves management in a precarious balancing act and sources say political factions are increasingly locked in power struggles within the company. A senior management team named in January that draws heavily on political and military appointees has left PDVSA's president, the Stanford-educated engineer Eulogio Del Pino, largely powerless, according to two high-level sources in PDVSA and the government who spoke on the condition of anonymity for fear of reprisals. Meanwhile, the infrastructure of the company is crumbling, rig

counts are at historic lows and refineries are working at a fraction of capacity. Staff at PDVSA's once gleaming headquarters complain that many elevators are out of service, the bathrooms lack toilet paper, and their cars are broken into in the parking lot. Scarce paper and ink are diverted to make political posters. The government has long denied allegations of mismanagement, saying there is a right-wing media campaign out to smear Venezuela and highlighting PDVSA's support for social welfare programs. PDVSA and the oil and information ministries did not respond to requests for comment.

Power Struggle

Del Pino, a low-profile technocrat whom oil analysts see as a reassuring figure despite the production drop on his watch, remains nominally at the helm of PDVSA despite losing many of his top executives in a January shake-up. However, Oil Minister Nelson Martinez, the former head of Venezuela's U.S.-based refiner Citgo and a close ally of Maduro, increasingly negotiates high-level pacts and flies to oil congresses representing Venezuela.

Prominent new executives include trading division boss Ysmel Serrano, who used to work for current Vice President Tareck El Aissami, and finance vice president Simon Zerpa, a young ally of Maduro's. The influx of inexperienced executives and middle managers is keenly felt by foreign oil executives, who say they sometimes spend hours waiting for PDVSA representatives and complain that simple decisions are inexplicably delayed. "Most of the time executives don't answer phone calls or emails. It's surprising how young and unprepared some managers are," said a representative of a foreign firm holding a supply contract with PDVSA.

He said that managerial and operational chaos was worsening, with waiting time to load a tanker stretching to 30-40 days compared to 2-3 days a few years ago. Should the United States follow through on its threat to impose sanctions on Venezuela's oil sector, a struggling PDVSA would likely find it harder to respond. "Both the increasing lack of managerial expertise and the fragmentation of the hierarchy inside PDVSA into fiefdoms would make it really difficult," said Francisco Monaldi, an expert on Venezuela's oil industry at the Baker Institute in Houston. — Reuters

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

ASIAN COUNTRIES	
Japanese Yen	2.736
Indian Rupees	4.748
Pakistani Rupees	2.869
Srilankan Rupees	1.970
Nepali Rupees	2.980
Singapore Dollar	223.360
Hongkong Dollar	38.685
Bangladesh Taka	3.735
Philippine Peso	6.016
Thai Baht	9.124

GCC COUNTRIES	
Saudi Riyal	80.761
Qatari Riyal	83.180
Omani Riyal	786.512
Bahraini Dinar	804.170
UAE Dirham	82.455

ARAB COUNTRIES	
Egyptian Pound - Cash	21.200
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	16.960
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.216
Tunisian Dinar	127.160
Jordanian Dinar	427.350
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	2.018
Syrian Lira	2.158
Morocco Dirham	32.473

EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES	
US Dollar Transfer	302.650
Euro	358.940
Sterling Pound	396.470
Canadian dollar	239.820
Turkish lira	86.230

Swiss Franc	312.820
Australian Dollar	241.210
US Dollar Buying	301.450

GOLD	
20 Gram	249.070
10 Gram	127.450
5 Gram	64.570

DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

Rate for Transfr	Selling Rate
US Dollar	302.300
Canadian Dollar	239.330
Sterling Pound	395.940
Euro	358.560
Swiss Franc	295.800
Bahrain Dinar	801.800
UAE Dirhams	82.700
Qatari Riyals	83.915
Saudi Riyals	81.505
Jordanian Dinar	426.290
Egyptian Pound	16.985
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.971
Indian Rupees	4.743
Pakistani Rupees	2.868
Bangladesh Taka	3.744
Philippines Peso	6.004
Cyprus pound	166.835
Japanese Yen	3.735
Syrian Pound	1.590
Nepalese Rupees	2.973
Malaysian Ringgit	71.540

Chinese Yuan Renminbi	45.560
Thai Bhat	10.085
Turkish Lira	86.025

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
Europe		
British Pound	0.388060	0.398060
Czech Korune	0.005654	0.017654
Danish Krone	0.043952	0.048952
Euro	0.351724	0.360724
Norwegian Krone	0.034141	0.039341
Romanian Leu	0.078169	0.078169
Slovakia	0.009018	0.019018
Swedish Krona	0.033096	0.038096
Swiss Franc	0.304313	0.315313
Turkish Lira	0.080871	0.091171
Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.231205	0.243205
New Zealand Dollar	0.216145	0.225645
America		
Canadian Dollar	0.233404	0.242404
Georgina Lari	0.125005	0.125005
US Dollars	0.298550	0.302970
US Dollars Mint	0.299050	0.302970
Asia		
Bangladesh Taka	0.003335	0.003919
Chinese Yuan	0.043635	0.047135

Hong Kong Dollar	0.036597	0.039347
Indian Rupee	0.004219	0.004907
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018	0.000024
Japanese Yen	0.002650	0.002830
Korean Won	0.000259	0.000274
Malaysian Ringgit	0.067595	0.073595
Nepalese Rupee	0.002975	0.003145
Pakistan Rupee	0.002654	0.002944
Philippine Peso	0.005914	0.006214
Singapore Dollar	0.216918	0.226918
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001597	0.002177
Taiwan	0.009911	0.010091
Thai Baht	0.008742	0.009292
Arab		
Bahraini Dinar	0.795792	0.804292
Egyptian Pound	0.015560	0.021468
Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000085
Iraqi Dinar	0.000189	0.000249
Jordanian Dinar	0.422259	0.431259
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000150	0.000250
Moroccan Dirhams	0.020225	0.044225
Omani Riyal	0.779684	0.785364
Qatar Riyal	0.078841	0.083781
Saudi Riyal	0.079620	0.080920
Syrian Pound	0.001283	0.001503
Tunisian Dinar	0.122405	0.130405
Turkish Lira	0.080719	0.091019
UAE Dirhams	0.080975	0.082675
Yemeni Riyal	0.000984	0.001064

INFLATION REVISED DOWN AS RENTS SEE DEFLATION

NBK CPI REPORT

KUWAIT: Revised CPI statistics reveal significantly lower inflation in recent months. Inflation came in at 1.4 percent year-on-year (y/y) in June following a revamp of the CPI. Radically lower housing inflation was a large reason behind the drop, with the sector now seen in deflationary territory. Other sectors saw smaller revisions in their pace of inflation over the last few months. Inflation data for the three years through 2016 were revised upward, though only slightly. Inflation is now likely to average below 2 percent in 2017, down from 3.5 percent in 2016. From a policy perspective, these new figures render the inflation outlook more benign and leave additional room for flexibility on both the fiscal and monetary fronts.

The revisions are part of a broader revamp of the consumer price index (CPI), which was also rebased to 2013 prices. The revamp, which happens every

few years, included some changes in the sectoral weights and the basket of products surveyed every month. The most notable change was a rise in the weight for housing services, which was increased by four percentage points to 33 percent. The weight for the education sector was also increased. Meanwhile, weights for food & beverages, clothing & footwear, and other segments were reduced.

Prices in housing services are now seen in deflation, having slowed notably over the past twelve months, according to the revised CPI data. Housing inflation, which is dominated by growth in housing rents, slowed to -2.3 percent y/y in June (Chart 2). Before the latest revisions, the pace of inflation in this sector stood at 4.3 percent y/y for the most recent data in March 2017; this was revised to a small 0.1 percent y/y decline. Inflation in this sector is now seen to have slowed

considerably from 7.3 percent y/y at its peak a year ago, in line with the softness that has been visible in the housing market generally over the last few years.

Inflation in food prices ticked up following months of softness. Local food prices were up 0.8 percent y/y in June, the most rapid increase in nearly a year (Chart 3). This comes at a time when international food prices remain in decline, though they have shown some signs of steadying. The Commodity Research Bureau foodstuffs index was down 1.9 percent y/y in June. The latest inflation figure may have been pushed up due to seasonal factors, particularly since June coincided with Ramadan this year.

There was a noticeable upward revision in inflation in the transportation sector and a slight acceleration in June. Transportation prices, which jumped when fuel prices were raised in September 2016, saw infla-

tion accelerate to 16 percent y/y in June. However, there have been no further hikes in fuel rates. Inflation in the sector slowed to an annualized 7 percent in June.

Clothing & footwear and recreation services have also seen upward revisions and a rising trend in inflation in recent months. Inflation in clothing & footwear rose to 2.2 percent y/y in June, after a period of deflation in late 2016 and early 2017. Prices during the last three months through June rose at an annualized pace of over 13 percent. A similar trend was also seen in the recreation sector, where inflation rose to 3.2 percent y/y and price

growth topped an annualized 10 percent over the last three months through June.

Inflation is expected to see some limited upward pressure in the coming months from hikes in utility tariffs. The utility price hikes, which have hit commercial rentals and are scheduled to hit the "apartment buildings" sector in September, could push inflation up to around 2 percent in 2017.

At this point, no further pressures are expected in 2018 especially with our expectations that the promised value-added tax (VAT) would likely not be implemented before 2019.

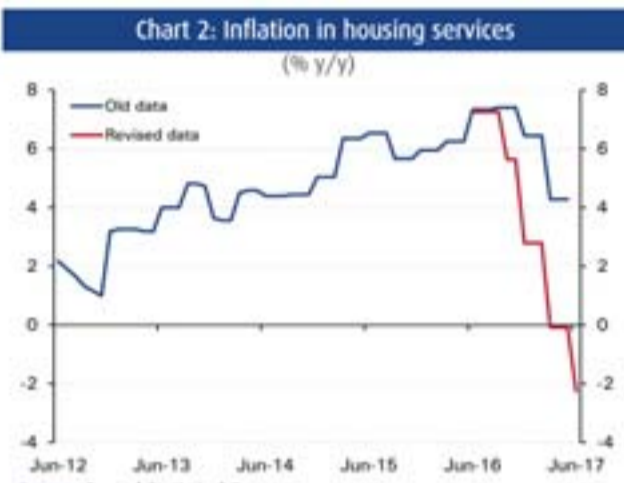
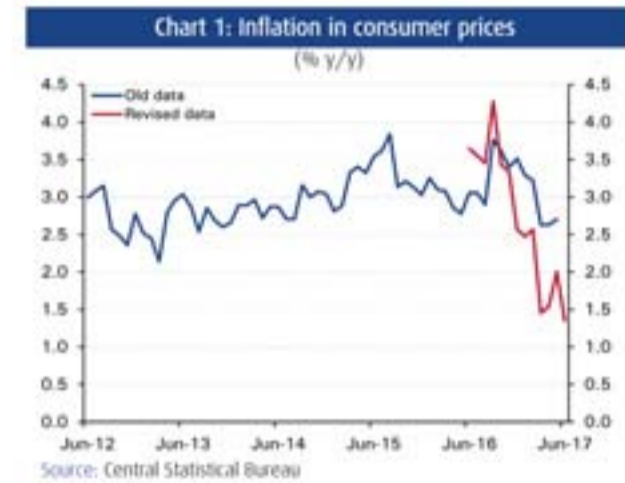


Table: Consumer price inflation

(% change)	Year-on-year		Annual average	
	May-17	Jun-17	2015	2016
Food & beverages	0.0	0.8	3.0	1.7
Tobacco & cigarettes	0.9	1.8	5.6	0.3
Clothing & footwear	1.5	2.2	0.3	0.8
Housing services*	-0.1	-2.3	6.1	6.1
Furnishings & household maintenance	3.8	3.1	3.7	2.3
Healthcare	-0.3	-0.4	1.7	1.2
Transportation	15.3	15.9	0.9	4.1
Communication	-1.5	-1.5	0.6	2.0
Recreation & culture	1.9	3.2	-0.3	-1.8
Education	3.4	3.6	4.8	3.6
Restaurants & hotels	4.5	2.6	6.3	6.9
Other goods & services	1.5	2.4	2.4	0.8
Core**	2.4	1.5	3.8	3.9
Durable goods	4.1	4.8	2.4	2.5
Semi-durable goods	1.7	2.0	1.4	1.1
Non-durable goods	2.3	2.7	0.0	0.4
Services	1.0	-0.5	5.4	4.9
Services ex-housing	3.5	3.3	3.9	2.4
General index	2.0	1.4	3.7	3.5

Source: Central Statistical Bureau, NBK estimates

KFH ROLLS OUT INT'L TOLL FREE SERVICE

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) announced the launch of "International Toll Free Service" to its customers outside Kuwait (USA, UK, Canada and France) without any additional fees. This comes as part of the bank's policy of delivering superior customer service, supporting the bank's continuing efforts to improve innovation and reinforcing the network of its banking services.



Meshal Al-Obaid

To use this service and reach KFH's Allo Baitak Call Center, customers can call and of the following toll free numbers; 1-800-818-8608 from the USA and Canada, 0-800-014-8898 from the UK, and 0805-086620 from France, where calls from those numbers have priority to pick up from the call center agents.

This service in conjunction with the travel season, enables KFH's customers to contact the KFH Call Center from the mentioned countries at any time of the day or night, adding to the customers' peace of mind in knowing that their bank is a local phone call away, wherever they are.

Meshal Al-Obaid, Executive Manager-Direct Channels, explained, "We pride ourselves in delivering the best and highest in service quality standards, and this new addition to our services allows us to further enhance these standards at the Call Center. It also has the added benefit of building trust with KFH customers by making it easy for them to contact the Call Center."

Obaid also mentioned that KFH persists in its bid to improve its services and infrastructure, indicating the International Toll Free Service is just the tip of the iceberg for KFH wide range services. He said that the bank has recently launched four new innovative e-services - The "Call Back Assist" service, wherein the IVR system will offer a call back service to waiting customers automatically as per his indicated time, the "ANI"

Service, which is a customer identification tool which allows the customer to register his/her phone number with the KFH Call Center for authentication and verification requirements, a "Favorite Menu" service, which is a list of IVR shortcuts that can be programmed by the users themselves, and a "Link Accounts" service whereby customers can link several of their own accounts to one ATM card, allowing them to use KFH's Allo Baitak service from single account.

KFH is continually striving to deliver the best and most convenient in banking technology, in efforts to meet customers' aspirations. As a consequence, KFH has recently launched the new XTM machine, which is a virtual banking service that allows customers to conduct their transactions and perform various banking services efficiently and conveniently, and using advanced audio-visual technologies.

The bank also launched the 'KFH Mobile Wallet' which is a mobile payment service that enables KFH customers to pay for their purchases by simply tapping their smart phones at NFC-enabled Point of Sale (POS) terminals. On that accord, KFH also recently launched the Visa Checkout service, which also enables quick, safe and secure online payment for e-shopping requirements.

It is worth noting that KFH won "Best Consumer Digital Bank in Kuwait" among the Middle East 2017 Awards from Global Finance Magazine. The award was based on advanced product offerings, growth of digital customers, and web/mobile site design and functionality.



Ahmed Zulficar, Senior Deputy CEO - Banking Support Group at AUB receives the award.

AUB WINS CITIBANK STP AWARD FOR FIFTH YEAR

KUWAIT: Ahli United Bank (AUB) announced that it has won the coveted Citibank Straight-Through-Processing (STP) award for the fifth consecutive year. The award recognizes AUB's excellent quality and accuracy in delivering commercial payments and processing transactions, and its continued efforts and keenness to win this high profile award on an annual basis.

AUB's latest accolade demonstrates its excellence in SWIFT automated processing of transfers and deposits along with applying the latest ground breaking technologies to drive STP-compliant serv-

ices that have been outlined by Citibank. AUB Senior General Manager of Operations & Information Technology, Jihad Saud Al-Humaidhi said, "We are proud to win Citibank's STP award."

AUB has once again succeeded in adopting strict measures in relation to international electronic payment transfers that fully comply with Citibank's rigorous correspondent banking and processing accuracy criteria. This important recognition is a testimony to the Bank's operational excellence and efficiency, and one which showcases how crucial STP is to AUB's customer

service operations. "AUB continues to strive to ensure fast, accurate and reliable execution of payment instructions through continuous investment in information technology systems and people," added Humaidhi.

The STP award is a tribute to the high caliber and superior efficiency of AUB's operational capabilities. With state-of-the-art technology and operational infrastructure, the Bank's team of seasoned professionals is well placed to meet the complete needs of individual and corporate customers alike.

50% MORE AVIOS POINTS WITH CBK

KUWAIT: The Commercial Bank of Kuwait, in cooperation with British Airways, invites its customers to take advantage of its offer this summer of 50 percent more Avios points a customer can earn every time they use the CBK/BA card until Aug 31, 2017. This is the only such card in the Middle East and aims at merging the principles of a global credit card and the loyalty program of BA for CBK customers worldwide. It also allows the collection of Avios points and redeeming them for tickets from British Airways and 13 other airlines that are members of One World alliance, with the possibility of upgrades.



Gulf Bank and 88.8 FM's management teams during Gulf Bank's second quarterly salary account draw.

FAHAD AL-RAHILI WINS KD 25,000 IN GULF BANK SALARY ACCOUNT DRAW

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank is pleased to announce the lucky winner of its second quarterly salary account draw. Fahad Awwad Ghadeer Al-Rahili, the winner of the KD 25,000 cash prize, was announced during the draw event, which was held live on 88.8 FM 'Rabaa Al-Diwaniya', on Monday, August 7, 2017, in the presence of a representative from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

Gulf Bank's Salary account is tailored for Kuwaiti customers, and allows them to benefit from a number of unique offers by transferring their salaries to Gulf Bank. The salary account offer gives new customers the opportunity to either receive a KD100 cash gift upon transferring their salaries to Gulf Bank or an interest free loan. Customers must have a minimum salary of KD

500 and are fully eligible for the offer following their first salary transfer to Gulf Bank. Customers can also enjoy a one year free of charge Visa or MasterCard credit card, as well as a chance to apply for loan up to KD 70,000, or a consumer loan up to KD 15,000. Existing and new customers who transfer their salaries to Gulf Bank are automatically enrolled in the quarterly draws and have the chance to win valuable cash prizes, including three quarterly prizes of KD 25,000, in addition to Kuwait's largest salary prize of KD 250,000 in the last draw.

The third salary quarterly draw for the prize of 25,000 will be held on November 6, 2017, while the final salary draw for the largest prize of KD 250,000, will be held on February 8, 2018.

NBK SAVE & WIN WITH ZEINA Q2 WINNERS ANNOUNCED

KUWAIT: Ten lucky children won cash prizes of KD 250 each in the National Bank of Kuwait's Save & Win with Zeina campaign. Winners for the second quarter draw held at The Avenues on 23 July 2017 from 11am include: Hanan Al Sarraf, Kawthar Eidan, Ahmed Baqer, Remas Alajmi, Naser Baqer, Abdullah Alkandari, Yousef Alazam, Maria Khudhair, Omar Aleid, Faisal Hasan. The cash prizes are deposited into the Zeina savings accounts of winners.

Every quarter, NBK awards 10 winners KD 250 as part of the campaign, in collaboration with KidZania, to encourage financial literacy and saving habits for Kuwait's youth. "By encouraging our youth about finances and savings, NBK supports Kuwait's long term economic growth and development," noted Hanadi Khazal, Assistant General Manager- Consumer Banking at National Bank of Kuwait. "The Save & Win with Zeina campaign encourages youth to save and rewards them for their efforts."

Children under 14 years old will receive one entry into the draw for every KD 10 that is deposited into their NBK Zeina Savings Account. Parents can double their children's chances by setting up a 'standing order' for deposits.

Ten winners are chosen each quarter, for a total of 40 winners through-

out the year. The campaign ends December 31, 2017. "KidZania encourages children to learn a variety of life skills through role modeling and pretend play and we are delighted to partner with NBK to help encourage financial literacy among children in Kuwait," said NAME, TITLE, KidZania Kuwait.

National Bank of Kuwait, a leading Kuwait bank, has been listed among the World's Safest Banks 12 consecutive times by Global Finance magazine. NBK enjoys the highest credit ratings by international credit rating agencies, Standard & Poor's, Moody's and Fitch Ratings.



WORLD STOCKS SHRUG OFF SLOWING CHINA TRADE GROWTH

LONDON: Global stocks inched up to a new record high yesterday, shrugging off weaker-than-expected Chinese trade data that clouded an otherwise bright outlook for global growth. Wall Street was expected to open flat to marginally lower, according to index futures, after slight falls on European bourses and modest gains in Asia. Chinese imports and exports both fell well short of forecasts last month and growth in overall trade, while still a healthy 8.8 percent, was its slowest this year.

Trade in Germany, Europe's powerhouse economy, slowed abruptly in June - another sign that demand may be starting to flag just

as central banks contemplate scaling back stimulus. However, MSCI's all-country world index ticked up to set a new record high at 480.87 points. It was last up less than 0.1 percent at 480.83 points. The index, which tracks shares in 46 countries, is up for a 10th consecutive month and is on track for its longest monthly winning streak since 2003.

Shares across the globe have been hitting record highs in record low volatility, supported by a benign environment for global growth. Ratings agency Fitch this week lifted its outlook for the world economy for this year and next. "Data continue to suggest a synchronized global expansion across both

advanced and emerging market economies. Spill-overs from the rebound in emerging market demand are reflected in the fastest growth in world trade since 2010," said Fitch chief economist Brian Coulton.

The pan-European STOXX 600 index was last down less than 0.2 percent, with miners among the losers as the Chinese data weighed on copper prices. MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan proved relatively resilient, inching up 0.2 percent and back toward decade highs. South Korea dipped 0.2 percent, while Japan's Nikkei eased 0.3 percent and China's main markets edged up 0.1 percent. Hong Kong's

Hang Seng closed up 0.6 percent. In currency markets, the dollar dipped for a second consecutive day after rising sharply on Friday following stronger-than-expected U.S. jobs numbers, which some analysts said bolstered the case for the Federal Reserve to raise interest rates further. However, many in markets remain unpersuaded the Fed, having raised rates twice this year, will hike again in 2017.

St Louis Fed President James Bullard said on Monday the central bank could leave rates where they are for now because inflation was not likely to rise much. The dollar hit a 14-year high in early January in anticipation of US President Donald Trump implementing his pro-growth campaign pledges. Those expectations have faded. The dollar index, which plunged 15-month lows last week, was down 0.1 percent. The euro gained 0.2 percent to \$1.1811 while the yen rose 0.4 percent to 110.34 to the dollar. Sterling was up 0.1 percent at \$1.3045.

German 10-year government bond yields, the benchmark for borrowing

costs in the euro zone, held close to their lowest in more than a month at 0.46 percent, supported by expectations that any withdrawal of European Central Bank stimulus would be gradual. This view was boosted on Monday by data showing industrial output in the euro zone's biggest economy unexpectedly fell 1.1 percent in June from a month earlier.

Brent crude oil, the international benchmark, dipped 11 cents to \$52.26 a barrel. An industry source familiar with the matter told Reuters Saudi state oil company Aramco will cut allocations to its customers next month by at least 520,000 barrels a day. "Support is coming from a stabilizing US rig count, falling US inventories and the Saudi cut in exports," Ole Hansen, head of commodity strategy at Denmark's Saxo Bank, told the Reuters Global Oil Forum. "But against this we still have robust production growth from the United States, Libya and Nigeria."

Copper fell 0.2 percent to just below \$6,400 a tonne after Chinese year-on-year imports of the metal fell. Gold rose 0.6 percent to \$1,265 an ounce as the dollar weakened. —Reuters

Daily Kuwait Stock Exchange Report				Global			
Tuesday 08 August 2017							
Index	Change	Closing	Last Closing				
Price Index	▼ -7.50	6,829.92	6,837.42				
Weighted Index	▲ 3.00	418.44	415.44				
KSX 15	▲ 9.45	960.53	951.08				
				Volume	110,226,738		
				Value (KWD)	10,602,914		
				Number of Trades	4,294		
Trades							
Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last	Change
IPG	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	396	▲ 0.0
NAPESCO	916	860	4,689	4,089	5	916	▲ 1.0
ENERGYH	36.4	36.4	1,025	37	2	36.4	▲ 0.0
GPI	39.7	37.0	12,511,198	472,810	352	37.7	▼ -1.8
ABAR	88	76	2,210	192	5	88	▲ 0.0
Oil & Gas			12,519,122	477,129	364	1081.06	▼ -3.00
KFOUC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	280	▲ 0.0
BPCC	570	570	332,723	189,652	17	570	▲ 0.0
ALKOUT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	600	▲ 0.0
ALQURAN	353	351	266,265	93,535	29	353	▲ 0.0
Basic Materials			598,988	283,587	46	1266.14	▲ 0.00
KCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	420	▲ 0.0
CABLE	460	439	435,508	196,341	81	458	▲ 19.0
SHIP	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	206	▲ 0.0
PCEM	950	950	20,000	19,000	3	950	▼ -19.0
PAPER	280	280	500	140	1	280	▲ 0.0
MRC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	94	▲ 0.0
ACICO	260	259	372,310	96,559	14	260	▼ -4.0
HCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	208	▲ 0.0
KBMAC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	136	▲ 0.0
NCBM	180	180	12,000	2,180	2	180	▲ 0.0
EQUIPMENT	46.5	45.5	444,530	20,260	19	45.9	▲ 1.3
NCCI	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	80	▲ 0.0
GYPSON	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	95	▲ 0.0
SALBROKH	59	58	75,978	4,443	5	58	▼ -1.4
ADLY	852	843	1,193,448	1,011,851	97	848	▲ 18.0
EDU	305	350	190,000	87,230	25	350	▲ 0.0
CLEANING	47.9	43.5	15,050	671	5	47.9	▼ -3.1
KGL	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	60	▲ 0.0
KCPK	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	150	▲ 0.0
HUMANSOFT	4,289	4,288	33,118	142,042	18	4,289	▲ 0.0
NAFAS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	195	▲ 0.0
GFC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	65	▲ 0.0
SHOOTING	28.7	27.3	1,050,742	28,802	15	27.9	▼ -0.6
CGC	568	560	46,342	25,965	10	560	▲ 0.0
MPCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	56	▲ 0.0
UTAC	770	710	54,384	39,238	5	770	▲ 0.0
ALAFOD	362	351	1,379,703	488,850	31	360	▲ 1.9
MUBARRAD	72	71	105,000	7,468	6	72	▼ -5.0
LOGISTICS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	51	▲ 0.0
SCEM	83	83	1,500	125	1	83	▼ -0.2
GCEM	80	80	41,860	3,335	4	80	▼ -0.3
GIC	75	75	1,123	64	1	75	▼ -3.0
FCEM	80	77	553,811	42,733	21	77	▼ -2.7
RKYC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	82	▲ 0.0
SPEC	96	92	1,017,617	94,797	87	92	▼ -1.6
Industrials			7,844,520	2,292,125	431	1898.12	▼ -3.70
PAPCO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	90	▲ 0.0
CATL	230	230	207	48	1	230	▲ 3.0
DANAH	73	72	205,041	14,818	9	72	▼ -0.5
FOOD	2,050	2,050	401	945	2	2,050	▼ -60.0
Consumer Goods			205,709	15,811	12	1621.36	▼ -1.80
MHC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	480	▲ 0.0
ATC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	1,500	▲ 0.0
YACD	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	179	▲ 0.0
Health Care			0	0	0	1683.91	▲ 0.00
KCIN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	1,399	▲ 0.0
KHOT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	250	▲ 0.0
SULTAN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	87	▲ 0.0
CABLETV	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	25.5	▲ 0.0
EYAS	845	820	1,030	856	3	845	▲ 0.0
IFAHR	275	275	500	138	1	275	▼ -10
OLAFUEI	122	119	162,806	19,495	27	122	▲ 2.0
MUNTAZAHAT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	79	▲ 0.0
JAZEERA	560	556	198,300	110,283	10	556	▲ 1.0
SOOR	124	122	139,907	17,175	38	122	▼ -1.0
FUTUREKID	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	106	▲ 0.0
ALRAI	119	119	40,000	4,700	2	119	▲ 0.0
Jiyad	54	48.0	34,059	1,771	3	54	▲ 2.0
Mazzan	912	895	1,121,810	1,014,173	95	912	▲ 17
Consumer Services			1,698,411	1,168,650	140	1048.44	▼ -8.50
ZAIN	459	447	6,129,590	2,794,784	257	454	▲ 8
DOREDOO	1,170	1,152	4,642	5,421	8	1,170	▲ 5
HITSTELEC	40.6	40.0	1,477,185	59,657	48	40.3	▲ 0.0
VIVA	816	800	117,560	95,344	87	814	▲ 14
Telecommunications			7,728,977	2,955,206	400	604.91	▲ 7.70
NBK	716	708	3,030,720	2,157,954	143	716	▲ 10
GBK	245	243	631,000	153,367	15	245	▲ 3
CBK	353	350	132,761	46,520	5	353	▲ 3
ABK	318	315	3,516	1,108	4	318	▲ 0.0
ALMUTAHED	415	407	45,550	18,900	7	415	▲ 0.0
KIB	246	244	330,912	81,053	13	245	▼ -1
BURG	363	360	100,000	36,090	14	361	▲ 1
KFIN	556	545	6,390,374	3,834,089	362	553	▲ 8
BOUBAYAN	417	414	522,486	217,303	45	416	▲ 1
AUB	218	215	2,671,700	577,410	98	218	▲ 2
ITHMR	41.4	40.6	3,455,348	141,891	113	40.7	▼ 0.0
WARBANK	268	266	1,415,319	377,663	137	266	▲ 0.0
Banks			18,929,686	7,443,437	876	948.74	▲ 4.60
KINS	232	230	50,000	11,540	4	230	▼ -19
GINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	614	▲ 0.0
AINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	451	▲ 0.0
WINS	97	97	171	17	1	97	▲ 0.0
KUWAITRE	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	187	▲ 0.0
FTI	58	57	20,000	1,151	2	58	▲ 1.1
WETHAQ	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	51	▲ 0.0
BKQWT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	355	▲ 0.0
Insurance			70,171	12,708	7	1065.03	▼ -8.50
Real Estate							
SOKOUK	46.5	46.0	281,767	13,037	7	46.5	▲ 0.8
KRE	62	61	934,160	57,511	31	62	▲ 1.1
URC	86	82	5,720	474	2	86	▲ 0.0
NRE	125	122	566,699	69,583	39	123	▲ 0.0
SRE	350	350	15,000	5,250	1	350	▼ -15.0
TAM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	400	▲ 0.0
AREEC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	128	▲ 0.0
MASSALEH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	41.9	▲ 0.0
ARABREC	34.5	34.0	2,271,455	77,398	55	34.0	▲ 0.0
ERESCO	40.5	40.0	100,000	4,005	5	40.0	▼ -0.5
MABANEE	810	779	286,095	227,005	53	805	▲ 26.0
INUZZAT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	88	▲ 0.0
INVESTORS	24.4	23.5	1,264,605	30,665	20	24.4	▲ 0.4
IRC	31.2	31.2	24,000	749	2	31.2	▼ -2.7
ALTUARIA	83	81	1,836,728	180,004	53	83	▲ 4.0
SANAM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	43.0	▲ 0.0
AAYANRE	83	82	130,000	10,635	4	83	▼ -2.1
AGAR	72	63	69,670	4,409	4	72	▲ 1.0
ALADARIA	40.0	39.0	83,800	3,289	10	40.0	▲ 0.0
MAZAYA	116	115	1,718,500	197,943	26	115	▲ 1.0
THEMAR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	70	▲ 0.0
TUJARA	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	59	▲ 0.0
TAAMEER	35.6	34.0	522,901	18,371	19	35.4	▼ -0.2
ARKAN	86	86	250	22	1	86	▲ 0.5
ARGAN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	160	▲ 0.0
ABYAR	25.9	24.8	7,800,789	198,438	148		

AL SAYER HONORS OUTSTANDING CUSTOMER SERVICE



Al-Sayer Business Heads with Board of Directors.



Group photo of winners.

KUWAIT: Al-Sayer Group Holding recently held its mid-year conference at its auditorium at Ardiya to recognize outstanding customer service results and honor distinguished "Best in the Business". The event was attended by Al-Sayer Group Holding Board of Directors Chairman Faisal Bader Al-Sayer and CEO Mubarak Naser Al-Sayer, along with the senior management team, managers and employees in supervisory roles.

Teams across its business units including Mohamed Naser Al-Sayer for Toyota and Lexus Sales, Service and Parts, Bahrah Trading Company, Al-Sayer Commercial Engineering, Al-Sayer Medical Company, Car Rental, Insurance, Al-Dhow Information Systems, Tristar General Trading Company and Kuwait Animal Feed Factory participated and supported the event.

According to Chairman Faisal Bader Al-Sayer: "We need to continue delivering to our customers. In the past, we have focused on providing a superb service in all that we do; we must keep doing this with even more emphasis on customer care which is, and always needs to be,

our major point of differentiation." The original mission statement initiated from Naser Al-Sayer, Honorary Chairman, was that the company should only represent the best manufacturers from around the world, supporting them with outstanding customer care.

Mubarak Naser Al-Sayer CEO said, "Customer satisfaction is what build our company, and excellent customer satisfaction delivered with passion is what is going to create our future. Customer Satisfaction keeps customers coming back and this is why customer satisfaction is the corner stone in our strategy."

Commitment to Outstanding Customer Service

Outstanding customer service efforts at Al-Sayer is intended to make the buying and owning experience of products, the best in the business. As a testimony of this Group Customer Satisfaction Index continues to be high, where among 58 of the 62 locations measured have scored 95 percent+ Customer Satisfaction Index.

Al-Sayer Board of Directors is keen towards driv-



Chairman Faisal Bader Al-Sayer and CEO Mubarak Naser Al-Sayer

ing a change culture towards reinforcing the values of guest hospitality within the divisions and departments. The Group's customer care initiatives, facility expansion, employee training and development as well as the technology enhancement efforts with recent implementation of SAP software implementation across the trading and non-trading units are collective efforts towards enhancing customer experience.

Commenting on the Group commitment towards Customer Care Bengt Schultz COO said: "Our customer focus brought us to where we are today; to the number one spot. The basic of customer care has not changed over the years, but the way of delivering has, and it is changing faster and faster.

Al-Sayer Group Management continue to emphasize on customer care statement carrying the Spirit of Yes We Can and We Will that says "We believe strongly that the way to remain successful in the face of tough, competitive trading conditions is to continue the evolution of our corporate customer care philosophy to the next level. We commit to work with all our staff and colleagues to ensure that customers feel "at home" when visiting any Al-Sayer facility. We also commit to deliver, through all our staff, the elements of the customer charter."

DUTCH EGG PROBE WIDENS TO TESTING CHICKEN MEAT

THE HAGUE: In a new twist in Europe's tainted egg scandal yesterday, Dutch authorities announced they had started testing chicken meat coming from affected poultry farms to determine whether it, too, was contaminated.

Scientists are looking for the presence of the insecticide fipronil, a substance potentially dangerous to humans, after supermarkets in Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, Sweden and Switzerland pulled millions of eggs from the shelves.

"We are currently testing chicken meat in the poultry farms where eggs were infected to determine whether the meat is contaminated as well," Tjitte Mastenbroek, spokesman for food security agency NVWA, told AFP. The probe focuses on "a few dozen" farms that produce both eggs and chicken meat, NVWA said. Millions of chickens now face being culled in the Netherlands as the scandal widens across Europe.

Hard-hit Germany yesterday called on Belgian and Dutch authorities to quickly shed light on what it termed a "criminal network" involved in the contamination of eggs with fipronil. "When one sees a criminal energy that's almost organised as a network it's unacceptable," German Agriculture Minister Christian Schmidt said. He again criticized Belgian and Dutch authorities' tardy response to the crisis.

Belgium's top agricultural official Monday ordered the country's food safety agency to report within a day why it failed to notify neighboring countries until July 20 despite knowing about fipronil contamination since June. "It's not in the spirit of the early warning system to be aware in June but only to inform us by the end of July," Schmidt said.

Mastenbroek told AFP that a criminal probe by the NVWA under Dutch prosecution authorities and assisted by Belgium is continuing, looking at the role of companies in contaminating Dutch poultry farms with fipronil. Meanwhile, the French government said Monday "thirteen batches of contaminated eggs from The Netherlands" were

delivered in July to food processing companies located in central-western France.

First egg, now chicken

Mastenbroek said so far her agency's "highest priority" has been the detection of contaminated eggs. "But now we also have the time to look at meat as a precautionary measure," she said. Most farms exclusively produce one or the other, said Eric Hubers at LTO, a Dutch farming organization. If the meat tests are negative for fipronil, producers will be cleared to resume sales, Mastenbroek said. LTO said the probability of chicken meat found to be infected was small. However, if fipronil was detected "farming will be completely suspended," Mastenbroek said.

Poultry heartland hit

The contaminated egg scandal broke last week when up to 180 Dutch farms were shuttered due to the presence of fipronil discovered in some of the eggs. It is believed the toxic substance was introduced to poultry farms by a Dutch business named Chickfriend brought in to treat red lice, a parasite in chickens. Dutch and Belgian media reports that the substance containing the insecticide was supplied to Chickfriend - a small company operating out of the Dutch poultry heartland in the central town of Barneveld - by a Belgian firm have not been confirmed.

Currently Dutch authorities have closed down 138 poultry farms - about a fifth of those across the country - and warned that eggs from another 59 farms contained enough levels of fipronil that they should not be eaten by children. Belgium has blocked production from 51 farms - a quarter of those nationwide - with fipronil found at 21 farms, although levels were ten times below the maximum EU limit, the country's food and safety authority AFSCA said. Other European countries like Austria, Bulgaria, Poland, Portugal and Romania said they were analyzing imported eggs, but so far no contaminated eggs were found. — AFP



Chatsworth House, Bakewell in Derbyshire.

FLY BRITISH AIRWAYS INTO THE WORLD OF JANE AUSTEN

KUWAIT: To mark the 200th anniversary of the great British novelist Jane Austen, British Airways selected four places in the UK for travellers from Kuwait to explore the world of Jane Austen. Travellers can enjoy great value return fares from Kuwait with daily direct flights arriving early afternoon to London making for easy transit onto the metro to begin their tour to Hampshire, Bath, Lyme Regis and Sheffield - places that play an important role in the author's life and work.

1. Hampshire: Hampshire holds a significant place for Jane Austen as her birth and resting place. Visitors can start with Jane Austen's House Museum in the quiet village of Chawton. It was here that Austen wrote and revised six of her most famous novels. She revised her manuscripts for "Sense & Sensibility", "Pride & Prejudice" and "Northanger Abbey", and wrote "Mansfield Park", "Emma" and "Persuasion". This beautiful county is the perfect blend of city, coast, and country.



Jane Austen woodcut

Visitors can visit Austen's country home that was built in the 17th century which open daily. The county is hosting the "Jane Austen 200" to celebrate her life with numerous events including special exhibitions, tours, talks, and performances to honour the novelist. (Image: The Dining Room (Cr. Peter Smith) of Jane Austen's House Museum, Chawton, Hampshire, UK. (c) Jane Austen's House Museum)

2. Bath: Enthusiasts can experience a day like Jane Austen in Bath, where she lived from 1801 to 1806. Admirers can take a free audio walking tour through the city which includes extract from Jane Austen's novels and letters while soaking in the beautiful Georgian architecture

3. Lyme Regis: For Austen fans who love the beach, Lyme Regis is the perfect place to experience both. A popular place for summer vacation, Austen and her family visited the southern coast twice, once in 1803 and in 1804. The quaint coastal town impressed the writer so much so that she used it for the setting of her book, Persuasion, which is believed to be Austen's most autobiographical book. Visitors can walk along the famous harbour, the Cobb, to relive her inspirations. (Image: The Cobb at Lyme Regis



People dressed in period costume for the Jane Austen Festival in Bath

depicted in the Northanger Abbey and Persuasion. After the tour, "Tea with Mr. Darcy" at the Regency Tea Room located in the Jane Austen Center is highly recommended. Visitors can enjoy delicious finger sandwiches, homemade cakes, a pot of tea and dress up in a selection of Regency costumes. British Airways' customers can take advantage of a free train ride from London to Bath through its partnership with the Great Western Railway. (Image: People dressed in period costume for the Jane Austen Festival in Bath, Credit: VisitBritain)

4. Sheffield: Visitors who love the illustrations and imagery from "Pride and Prejudice" should not miss the Chatsworth House located in Derbyshire. Scholars believe that Pemberley, the fictional country estate owned by Fitzwilliam Darcy, was inspired by the Chatsworth House Bakewell in Derbyshire. Today, the property serves as home to the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire, but it also opens its 105 acres of gardens, 30 lavish rooms and one of Europe's largest collections of art for public to visit. (Image: Chatsworth, a large mansion founded in the 16th century and added to and extensively remodelled over centuries, seen from across the lake in the park, reflected in the flat calm water surface. Credit: VisitBritain)

British Airways currently operates a daily service between Kuwait and London. All flights from Kuwait arrive at the airline's state-of-the-art home at London Heathrow Terminal 5.



Jane Austen's House Museum

at dawn, with the Jurassic Coast beyond, Dorset, England, UK. Credit: VisitBritain)

British Airways currently operates a daily service between Kuwait and London. All flights from Kuwait arrive at the airline's state-of-the-art home at London Heathrow Terminal 5.



Jane Austen's House Museum Dining Room



The Cobb at Lyme Regis at dawn, with the Jurassic Coast beyond, Dorset.

MCDONALD'S SET TO NEARLY DOUBLE OUTLETS IN CHINA

BEIJING: Fast food giant McDonald's said yesterday it would almost double the number of restaurants in China over the next five years as it refocuses on international markets amid slowing US sales. The Illinois-based burger chain will add 2,000 stores to its current 2,500 in China and aim for double-digit sales



growth in each of the next five years, McDonald's said in a statement. In particular, it will launch a foray into third- and fourth-tier cities, where it expects 45 percent of its China restaurants to be located by that time. More than 75 percent of its stores will offer delivery.

It made the announcement while also saying it had finalized a strategic

partnership with Chinese conglomerate CITIC Ltd and US-based investment firm Carlyle Group. McDonald's announced earlier this year that it would form a company with CITIC Limited, CITIC Capital Holdings and Carlyle Group to act as a franchisee for the chain's business in mainland China and Hong Kong for 20 years.

CITIC is a vast Chinese state-owned conglomerate with interests ranging from energy and manufacturing to real estate. The new partnership becomes the largest McDonald's franchisee outside the US. "China will soon become our largest market outside of the United States," McDonald's president and CEO Steve Easterbrook said in the statement. McDonald's has been overhauling its global structure under Easterbrook to compensate for slower growth in markets such as France and the United States.

McDonald's sales took a hit in recent years as tensions over the South China Sea dented US companies' earnings in China. Its China business also suffered a blow in 2014 after a food safety scandal involving one of its meat suppliers. In the China market, McDonald's also faces competition from fast-food market leader KFC. — AFP

SIEMENS ANNOUNCES TECHNOLOGY TO BOOST POWER PLANT EFFICIENCY

NORTH CAROLINA: Siemens is paving the way for the next level of efficiency with the development of its HL-class. In June 2017, Siemens announced the company will validate the technologies of its HL-class at Duke Energy's Lincoln County site in North Carolina. Siemens is developing this class in an evolutionary development step derived from its proven SGT-8000H technology. The advanced Siemens HL-class gas turbines combine a series of new but already tested technologies and design features with the best of past experience - resulting in a technology carrier to the next level of efficiency and performance.

The HL-class is clearing the way to efficiency levels beyond 63 percent with a mid-term goal to reach 65 percent. Furthermore, Siemens is gaining speed to drive technological upgrades and competitiveness by transferring newly developed key technologies to its entire gas turbine portfolio. In the near future, all customers will benefit from further efficiency and performance increases. This approach is part of a series of activities to help Siemens customers compete in a rapidly changing market - working to significantly reduce lead and construction times through standardization and modularization.

The new Siemens HL-class consists of three engines: SGT5-9000HL, SGT6-9000HL and SGT5-8000HL. In simple-cycle operation the air-cooled SGT-9000HL gas turbine will provide a capacity of 545 megawatts (MW) for the 50-Hertz market and 374 MW in the 60-Hertz version. SGT5-8000HL will provide 453 MW in simple-cycle operation. All engines reach more than 63 percent combined

cycle efficiency. To achieve top performance, the turbines operate at high combustion temperatures. For this purpose, Siemens' specialists have developed advanced combustion technologies, innovative multi-layer coatings, super-efficient internal cooling features as well as an optimized water-steam cycle.

Furthermore, optimized sealing's minimize cooling and air leakage. At the same time, evolutionary 3D-blading is enabling higher aero-efficiency for the compressor. Predefined and prefabricated solution elements as well as pre-selected vendors and products allow a significantly reduced construction time and a fast start for projects. The turbines are designed to plug in to Siemens' digital offering for plant operators and utilities alike, incorporating connectivity to MindSphere, the cloud-based Siemens operating system for the Internet of Things.

MindSphere offers access to powerful analytics from Siemens and its partners - using intuitive insights in engine operation and decision support to deliver benefits to customers. "Driven by digitalization, speed in technology development is rapidly gaining momentum in the power generation arena," said Willi Meixner, CEO of the Siemens Power and Gas Division. "It took us 10 years from 2000 to 2010 to increase the efficiency of our combined cycle power plants from 58 to 60 percent, a further six years to reach 61.5 percent in 2016 and now we are taking the next step to 63 percent and beyond. That's amazing.

But we know that speed and efficiency alone are not sufficient - reliability and cost effectiveness of



our solutions as well as partnership, support in financing and insurability are also key to our customers," said Meixner.

To minimize customer risk, Siemens is following an extensive and thorough validation and testing approach. After component testing and prototype testing in Siemens-owned facilities, the company is now pursuing validation under real field conditions. "With the new HL-class our customers will be prepared for whatever digitalization brings in the future," Meixner added.

"Worldwide we see renewables are growing rapidly, but gas-fired power plants will still play a vital role in the energy mix for the next decades," said Meixner. "With the growing share of fluctuation power from renewables, flexibility will be a key feature of gas turbines. Our HL-class offers a simple-cycle ramp-up of 85 MW per minute. Therefore, highly efficient and flexible gas turbines like our HL-class are the perfect fit to energy systems with a rapidly increasing share of fluctuating renewables," said Meixner.

SOPHOS ANNOUNCES SUPER STAR CAMPAIGN FOR SILVER, AUTHORIZED PARTNERS IN MEA

KUWAIT CITY: Sophos (LSE:SOPH), a global leader in network and endpoint security yesterday announced a new initiative for its authorized and silver partners from the Middle East & Africa (MEA). The Sophos Super star campaign is designed to motivate partners with additional rewards on achieving their target. It is also aimed at driving sales for the latest security solutions. Speaking on the initiative, Harish Chib, vice president, Middle East & Africa, Sophos said, "The rewards are a part of the company's plan to encourage our silver and authorized partners to generate revenue opportunities and achieve their business goal. Our main aim is to drive our partners to excel and incentivize them with rewards for their great effort."

"The rewards are applicable on the sale of all the products logged between May - October 2017. Authorized and Silver partners are our major source of SMB business in the MEA region. With this campaign, Sophos' objective is to reward and motivate the extensive list of partners of these categories in the MEA region.



Harish Chib

As part of our 'Channel First'sales strategy, this initiative will help our partners to expand their business across the channel in the Middle East & Africa. The Middle East & Africa region is divided into leading and emerging countries and both have different targets. The Top three partners in

both the regions achieving highest sales will be rewarded," Chib explained.

Being a partner-focused IT security company, Sophos has a dedicated partner program for the Middle East & Africa region. The program is well segmented into four different on-boarding levels with different skills certifications, sales and target activities, and rewards. It provides access

to the company's comprehensive portfolio of market-leading endpoint and network security products. Initiatives like Super Star Campaign and Partner Program for MEA illustrate Sophos' commitment towards being a truly channel first company that creates programs and incentives for better channel enablement and to accelerate Sophos partner profitability.

Sophos' MEA Partners are now able to manage all Sophos solutions for every customer through a centralized management platform, Sophos Central. Within Sophos Central is Sophos Central-Partner, a specialized dashboard that allows partners to distribute licenses, add new customers on demand, cross- and up sell Sophos Endpoint and Network Products, drive recurring revenue and have a clear, real-time perspective on all customer activity. Partners can respond to security incidents faster and track alerts of all levels directly from the dashboard, so time spent handling incidents, including minor ones, is more productive and effective. This also helps partners to win customer loyalty.



NEW YORK: This image released by HBO shows Nikolaj Coster-Waldau as Jaime Lannister in an episode of 'Game of Thrones.'—AP

HACKERS DEMAND MILLIONS IN RANSOM FOR STOLEN HBO DATA

NEW YORK: A group of hackers posted a fresh cache of stolen HBO files online Monday, and demanded a multimillion-dollar ransom from the network to prevent the release of entire television series and other sensitive proprietary files. HBO, which had previously acknowledged the theft of "proprietary information," said it's continuing to investigate and is working with police and cybersecurity experts. In a swaggering five-minute video from "Mr. Smith" to HBO CEO Richard Plepler included in the dump, the hackers used white text scrolling on a black background to deliver an ultimatum.

In short: Pay up within three days or see the group, which claims to have stolen 1.5 terabytes of HBO shows and confidential corporate data, upload entire series and sensitive proprietary files. Specifically, the hackers demanded "our 6-month salary in bitcoin" and claimed they earn \$12 million to \$15 million a year from blackmailing organizations whose networks they have penetrated. They said they would only deal directly with "Richard" and only send one "letter" detailing how to pay.

The dump itself was just 3.4 gigabytes - mostly technical data that appears to provide a topography of HBO's network and to list network-administrator passwords. It includes what appear to be draft scripts from five "Game of Thrones" episodes, including one upcoming episode, and a month's worth of email apparently from the account of Leslie Cohen, HBO's vice president for film programming. The network reiterated Monday that it doesn't believe that its email system as a whole has been compromised. The video text was written in often flawed but fluent English peppered with misspellings and pop-culture references.

Highly confidential
The hackers claimed it took them about 6 months to breach HBO's network. Their biggest threat appears to be dumping videos of future shows online with their logo "HBO Is Falling" superimposed. Many of the more than 50 internal documents in the dump were labeled "confidential," including a spreadsheet of legal claims against the network, job offer letters to several top executives, slides discussing future technology plans and a list of 37,977 emails called "Richard's Contact list," an apparent reference to Plepler.

One screenshot labeled "Highly Confidential" by the hackers listed folders such as "Penguin Random House," "Licensing & Retail," "Legal," "International" and "Budgets." Another document appears to contain the confidential cast list for "Game of Thrones," listing personal cell-phone numbers and email addresses for actors such as Peter Dinklage, Lena Headey and Emilia Clark. So far, however, the HBO leaks have been limited, falling well short of the chaos inflicted on Sony in 2014.

In that attack, hackers possibly associated with North Korea unearthed thousands of embarrassing emails and released personal information, including salaries and social security numbers, of nearly 50,000 current and former Sony employees. The video letter uploaded Monday claimed the hackers spend a half million dollars a year to purchase "zero-day" exploits that let them break into networks through holes not yet known to Microsoft and other software companies. It claims HBO is the hackers' 17th target and that only three of their past targets refused to pay.—AP



HONG KONG: Fans attend the eSports and Music Festival in Hong Kong.—AFP photos



HONG KONG ESPORTS FESTIVAL A KNOCKOUT FOR GAMING FANS

HONG KONG: Hundreds of youthful fans cheered on some of the world's best-known video game players as they competed in a cyber battle during Hong Kong's first ever large-scale eSports festival Friday. The event comes at a time when professional gaming is gaining global traction as an official international sport. It will be a medal-sport at the 2022 Asian Games to be held in China, the world's second largest sporting event behind the Olympics.

Gaming veterans got a rock star introduction as they were welcomed on stage at the indoor Hong Kong Coliseum Friday with a booming pyrotechnic display, as fans went wild. The three-day tournament pits teams of ex-professional players from Spain, Germany, China, the United States and Hong Kong against each other in "League of Legends" matches. Players competing in the massively popular online game control characters with different fighting abilities as they take down defensive units and opponents while trying to destroy each others' bases.

Fans cheered for the players seated on stage, whose images were also beamed onto large screens to the stadium crowd at the event, dubbed the eSports and Music Festival. Leading players, many of whom have grueling training regimens, can make mega bucks playing in tournaments which can offer more than US\$1,000,000 in prize money. "You pretty much have no free time, your free time is League of Legends as well so you're playing the whole time and thinking about the game and watching replays," well known League of Legends player Enrique CedeOo Martinez, known by his handle xPeke, said.

Despite his team's loss to players from Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan in the three hour opening match of the tournament, a queue of fans formed to take selfies with the 25-year-old Spaniard who has won multiple tournaments around the world. "In the end it's not that physical but it is as mentally demanding as a sport is,"

Martinez's teammate Lauri Happonen, from Finland, known as Cyanide, said. Video game fan and student Gabriella Leung, 20, who was at the event said the competitive element in professional gaming made it a sport, but that people may have misconceptions about it.

"What is important is that people get to know eSports and that people won't assume

that those playing games are useless youths or can't study," she said.

"Stripping away these concepts is more important than recognizing it as a sport." The festival, which ends on Sunday and is expected to draw up to 50,000 people, will also be featuring performances by Korean pop stars including bands EXO and SUPER JUNIOR.—AFP

GOOGLE FIRES DEFENDER OF TECH GENDER GAP

SAN FRANCISCO: Google on Monday fired the author of an internal memo defending the gender-gap in Silicon Valley tech jobs as a matter of biology, according to media reports. The move, which was not officially confirmed by Google, splashed fuel on a burning controversy about whether "political correctness" at the company was stifling free speech. Google said that the company "can't comment on individual employee cases."

In an email to employees, Google chief executive Sundar Pichai supported the right of employees to express themselves, saying that much of what was in the memo is fair to debate, according to a copy of the message obtained by AFP. "However, portions of the memo violate our Code of Conduct and cross the line by advancing harmful gender stereotypes in our workplace," Pichai said in the email. "To support a group of our colleagues have traits that make them less biologically suited to that work is offensive and not OK."

Pichai noted that the company code of conduct calls for 'Googlers' to do their utmost to create "a culture free of harassment, intimidation, bias and unlawful discrimination." However, Pichai defended the author's right to criticize Google training, workplace ideology, and whether programs promoting workplace diversity are adequately open to all. "The

author had a right to express their views on those topics," Pichai said. "We encourage an environment in which people can do this and it remains our policy to not take action against anyone for prompting these discussions." Recode, Bloomberg and other media outlets on Monday reported that the author of the controversial internal document was fired.

Martyr or sexist?

The news became a hot topic at Twitter, with some calling the employee a martyr and railing against Google for punishing him for expressing a view that went against Silicon Valley's efforts to promote diversity at tech companies. The leaked internal document that triggered the controversy claimed "biological causes" explained the lack of women in tech industry leadership roles. The screed-dubbed "sexist" by US media-went viral, reviving the simmering debate over a culture of sexism and lack of diversity in tech sectors.

"I'm simply stating that the distribution of preferences and abilities of men and women differ in part due to biological causes and that these differences may explain why we don't see equal representation of women in tech and leadership," read the 3,000-word fulmination. According to the author, natural aptitudes of men allow them to become bet-



CALIFORNIA: This file photo shows Google's headquarters in Mountain View, California.—AP

ter computer programmers, while women have more "openness directed towards feelings and aesthetics rather than ideas" meaning they "prefer jobs in social or artistic areas."

In response to the leaked memo, Danielle Brown, Google's new vice president of diversity, told employees in an email that "it's not a viewpoint that I or this company endorses, promotes or encourages." "I found that it advanced incorrect assumptions about gender," she said.

The controversy comes as increasing numbers of women are going public with complaints of gender-based discrimination in Silicon Valley. Currently some 69 percent of Google's employees are men, according to the company's latest figures, a proportion that rises to 80 percent when it comes to technology jobs. In 2016 at Facebook just 27 percent of senior executives were women. At Apple, around 30 percent of total employees are women.—AFP

ACTIVISTS CALL FOR WHALE REFUGES, BUT CAN THEY STAY AFLOAT?

WAIMANALO, Hawaii: A Hawaii marine park's purchase of Kina, a 40-year-old false killer whale long used in echolocation research, has reignited a debate about captive marine mammals and the places that care for them. Most of the world's captive cetaceans - dolphins, whales and porpoises - are now born in marine-park breeding programs, though some are still taken from the wild.

Since they're so expensive to care for, even marine mammals used solely for research, like Kina, often end up at attractions like Oahu's Sea Life Park. Animal-rights activists are calling for the creation of ocean-based refuges, where they say captive marine animals could retire and live a life closer to nature. At least two groups already are working to create such sanctuaries, but experts question whether they can stay afloat. A closer look at the discussion:

How do marine mammals end up in captivity?

In the past, many were captured from the wild, taken from their family pods and put in marine parks. In Japan, fishermen would round up scores of dolphins and whales in coves, killing most but selecting some for sale to parks. That fishery has been widely criticized, and most marine parks no longer take its animals.

Kina is believed to be the last living captive animal in the United States taken from a Japanese dolphin drive. Today, most marine mammals in parks are born in captive breeding programs that originated when wild animals were taken from the ocean. Parks and

aquariums have long moved animals among different facilities to ensure genetic diversity but can now mail sperm from their animals to other parks to ensure a healthy population.

What types of sites hold these animals?

Most research labs around the world that keep marine mammals solely for science have closed because of funding problems, said Paul Nachtigall, founder of the University of Hawaii's Marine Mammal Research Program. His sea pens where Kina lived at the university were among them. It cost nearly \$1 million a year to keep three animals at the lab. Scientists agree most captive whales wouldn't survive if released into the wild. Keiko, the orca that starred as Willy in the 1993 blockbuster "Free Willy," is an example of the difficulty involved in releasing captive animals. In the film, a boy helps set the captive whale free. But in real life, Keiko was rescued after the movie because of an outcry over his conditions at a Mexico park. The whale eventually was released into the wild but died a short time later.

What are ocean sanctuaries?

Animal-rights activists are proposing establishing refuges for retiring show animals by netting off large areas of coastal ocean. The sanctuaries would be much larger and deeper than tanks and pools at family attractions, though the animals would still require constant care. Advocates say the refuges would employ trained staff similar to those at marine parks.



HAWAII: In this image made from video, Kina, a false killer whale, swims in a tank at Sea Life Park in Waimanalo, Hawaii. — AP

Are any in the works?

Yes. A group called The Whale Sanctuary Project is raising money and hopes to open a sea sanctuary in the coming years. Project organizers started with about 100 possible sanctuary sites and have narrowed that to 20 locations in British Columbia, Nova Scotia and Washington state. They will begin pursuing permits for two or three promising locations next year, President Lori Marino said. The refuge will publish observational data on its whales and dolphins but will not allow in-depth, invasive research on them, Marino said. Meanwhile, the National Aquarium in Baltimore last year

announced it will retire its dolphins into a "pioneering" ocean pen by 2020.

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals welcomed the news, and the CEO of the Humane Society of the United States blogged that the head of the aquarium "has done something terribly important." "There's no model anywhere that we're aware of for this," aquarium CEO John Racanelli said in an interview ahead of the announcement. "We're pioneering here, and we know it's neither the easiest nor the cheapest option."

Would these facilities work?

Nachtigall says sanctuaries are a great idea, but he worries they'll face the same money problems his research program experienced. The animals need quality food, veterinary care and stimulation, which requires a large staff and expensive infrastructure. "If you're going to care for the animals the best way you can, you have to have the funding to do it," he said. "The best way to bring in funding consistently is to have a paying public."

Marino believes a shift in thinking - and funding - could be the answer. She says her project, which was incorporated last year, has raised about \$1 million of the \$20 million needed to get off the ground. Continued funding of about \$2 million per year would come from donors and public education programs. If marine parks collaborated with sanctuary creators, she says, more dolphins and whales could be swimming in the ocean. "I think there are people in the captivity community that want to see this happen." — AP

SIGN LANGUAGE ORANGUTAN DEAD

MIAMI: Chantek, a male orangutan that learned to communicate in sign language, has died at the age of 39, a US zoo announced. Veterinarians at Zoo Atlanta had been treating Chantek for heart disease, but officials were reluctant to give a firm cause of animal's death on Monday. Chantek was born in Atlanta in the southern US state of Georgia but raised as a human child by an anthropologist in Tennessee who taught him American Sign Language (ASL). He was the subject of a 2014 documentary titled "The Ape Who Went to College."

The orangutan moved to Zoo Atlanta in

1997. The zoo said Chantek "frequently used ASL to communicate with his caregivers, with whom he developed close personal bonds throughout his years at Zoo Atlanta." However "he was shy about signing with individuals he did not know and often chose forms of communication which are more typical of orangutans, such as vocalizations and unique hand gestures." Orangutans "are considered geriatric after the age of about 35," making Chantek "one of the oldest living male orangutans" in North America, the zoo said in a statement. — AFP

DINOSAURS BEHEADED AT AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM

SYDNEY: Three model raptors at Australia's national dinosaur museum have been beheaded by mystery vandals who scaled a fence and removed the parts using an angle grinder or hacksaw, police said yesterday. Investigators are hunting for the attackers after the damage to the dinosaurs - which were in an outside display area - took place late Saturday at the museum in Canberra, Australian Capital Territory police said. "The damage sustained to the (three velociraptor) dinosaurs indicates that an angle grinder or hacksaw was used to remove the heads from the body," they said.

"The offenders had climbed a four-foot fence to gain entry." Museum staffer Mitchell Seymour said the damaged dinos were first spotted by visitors, with children puzzled at what happened. "We went out to check it out and three of our dinosaurs here have been decapitated," Seymour told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. "We had heaps of kids coming up and going 'oh mum and dad, what's wrong with the dinosaurs?' 'It's selfish, and it's thoughtless is what it is.'" A giant fiber glass dinosaur was stolen from the museum in 2013 and later found in the home of a man who said it was taken as a birthday prank, ABC reported. — AFP



DVOREC: White lion father Agi licks his paw at the Dvorec Zoo in Dvorec, Czech Republic. — AP

SUDAN CANCER DOCTORS EYE US SANCTIONS RELIEF FOR PATIENTS

LIFE-SAVING DRUGS EXEMPT FROM TRADE EMBARGOES

KHARTOUM: Resting on a hospital bed after a session of chemotherapy, Sudanese banker Mohamed Hasan vividly recalls the day when doctors told him he had blood cancer. It is a shock in any country but in Sudan, where access to drugs and treatment is impaired by 20-year-old US sanctions, it can be more life-threatening. "It was the first week of my honeymoon when I fell sick and was admitted to hospital," Hasan, 30, said as a nurse prepared him for a sponge bath. "I never imagined it would be cancer ... it was a real tragedy."

For a year now, Hasan has been receiving treatment at the Radiation and Isotopes Centre Khartoum, the biggest state-run cancer hospital in Sudan. Life-saving drugs and medical equipment supplied to Sudan are theoretically exempt from Washington's complex set of trade embargoes. But restrictions on banking transactions, exchange of technology and spare parts, and other cumbersome trade regulations have hampered treatment of patients. The Khartoum cancer hospital is no exception.

Two of its four radiation therapy machines have been broken for months and repairing them has become a nightmare, general manager Khatir Al-Alla said. "Their spare parts have to be brought from America or Europe," Alla said. "But because of diplomatic issues we are facing problems." Importing equipment or components directly from manufacturers is cumbersome given the restrictions on transferring funds overseas.

Long waiting lists

Washington imposed sanctions on Khartoum in 1997 for its alleged support of Islamist militant groups. Al-Qaeda founder Osama bin Laden lived in Khartoum between 1992 and 1996. Over the years, successive US administrations have tightened the sanctions, accusing Khartoum of human rights violations, particularly in the 14-year-old conflict with ethnic minority rebels in the western region of Darfur. Relations between Washington and Khartoum have improved in recent months, officials say, and on October 12 President Donald Trump is to decide whether to lift the sanctions permanently.



KHARTOUM: A patient undergoes radiotherapy at Sudan's largest state-run cancer hospital, the Radiation and Isotopes Centre Khartoum. — AFP

But doctors say the situation remains difficult. The Khartoum cancer hospital receives about 1,000 new patients a month, and another 500 visit daily for follow-ups.

"The waiting period is between three to four weeks... which is too long for cancer patients," Alla said. Frustrated with the long waiting period, Hasan now plans to seek further treatment in India. The situation is no different at the Khartoum Breast Care Centre (KBCC), the only specialized facility in Sudan to treat breast cancer.

The clinic's mammography machine has been broken for weeks, said British-trained radiologist Dr Hania Fadl, the founder of the not-for-profit hospital. "The problem is with the service... we don't have proper agents to service the equipment," Fadl said. The technicians have to come from Egypt or Kenya to fix the mammography machine, the main equipment in detecting

breast cancer. It becomes a major concern when a new patient comes to the clinic. She might have an easily detectable lump in one breast, Fadl said, but in the absence of a mammography machine, it becomes difficult to detect if she has a small lump in the other.

"You have to have a mammogram done on the other breast ... it is mandatory," Fadl said. "If we go blindly and do the surgery, maybe after two or three months we might find she got another one." If the sanctions are fully lifted, repairing the machines will take less time, she said. "If anything goes wrong ... the engineer will come and they will have spare parts locally." Fadl's patient Ghada Mohammed Ali, 47, who underwent surgery for breast cancer, said it was a big concern. "When we come for check-ups we find the machine broken," she said. "I am worried because the cancer might have spread." — AFP

CLINIC PAGE



Kuwait Times
THE LEADING INDEPENDENT DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF

Dr. Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem د. فهد علي المخيزيم
 Consultant Pediatrician استشاري أطفال
 M.B. Bch. FRCPC. FAAP. PEM

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



FLOW HOUSE HOLDS 2ND WAVE RIDING FESTIVAL

Flow House held its second Wave Riding Festival with the participation of 30 individuals of various age groups. The race witnessed strong competition between participants who enjoyed the tournament atmosphere. Flow House CEO Hamad Al-Hunainni lauded the good organization and efforts of organizers. The festival was divided into 8 groups, the first and second for girls as Teejan storm won first place followed by Nouf in second and Jana in third. In the juniors category Mohammad Al-Shuway was first, Nasser second and Ahmad Al-Jerri third. In the adults category Abdelaziz took first place, Fayez second and Mark in third.



DRINK MORE WATER CAMPAIGN AT IISM

The staff and management of India International School Mangaf took special initiative in motivating students to drink water during the school hours through campaigning. 'Man is Nature's child, we are bound to react to nature's seasonal changes. With the advent of

summer, it is important for all of us to know how to beat the heat. Water as we all know is the elixir of life. IISM to teach its students clam, the vital role played by water in a human being's life conducted a campaign. In order to prioritize the consumption of water, the

school organized "Drink More Water" campaign for a week. Almost all the grades conducted special events to promote the habit of drinking more water. The primary section teachers presented a skit in their special assembly planned in this regard. Classes of VI-VIII were involved in a series of

activities such as writing slogans, inspirational quotes, drawings and making posters giving ideas to keep us cool against the scorching sun. All the various aspects of the week long program were found to be socially and personally very useful to the children.



SOUTH AFRICAN EMBASSY WILL BE CLOSED ON NATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

On the occasion of the National Women's Day of the Republic of South Africa, the Embassy of the Republic of South Africa will be closed on August 9, 2017 (today) and will re-open on August 10, 2017 with its official office hours from 8 am to 4 pm and the Consular Section operation hours will be from 8.30 am to 12.30 pm.

EMBASSY OF BANGLADESH WILL REMAIN CLOSED ON AUGUST 15

The Embassy of the People's Republic of Bangladesh in Kuwait will remain closed on August 15, 2017 on the occasion of the National Mourning Day and 42nd Death Anniversary of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The Embassy will arrange the following program to observe the above mentioned day on the Chancery roof.

Multipurpose Hall:

- 09:00 am: Ceremonial hoisting of National Flag at half-mast
- 09:15 am: Recitation from the Holy Quran
- 09:21 am: Observance of one minute silence
- 09:22 am: Reading out of the Messages
- 09:30 am: Documentary on the Day
- 09:45 am: Discussion on the Day
- 10:45 am: Speech by HE the Ambassador
- 11:00 am: Dowa and Monajat



01:35 Crossfire
03:05 Twixt
04:35 The Lovers
06:25 The Gallows
07:50 Shanghai Knights
09:45 6 Ways To Sundown
11:30 Crossfire
13:00 In Time
14:50 Shanghai Knights
16:45 Jurassic World
18:50 Kingsglave: Final Fantasy XV
20:45 Escape
22:20 Payback

19:03 Urban Tarzan
19:27 Tattoo Disasters
19:50 Impractical Jokers
20:13 The Jim Gaffigan Show
20:37 Kroll Show
21:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
21:30 The President Show
22:00 Tosh.0
22:25 Tosh.0
22:50 The Half Hour
23:15 The Half Hour
23:40 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah



00:30 Lost & Found With Mike & Jesse
01:20 Driving Me Crazy
02:10 World's Funniest
03:00 Finding Bigfoot
03:50 Guinness World Records
Smashed UK
04:40 How It's Made
05:05 How It's Made
05:30 Lost & Found With Mike & Jesse
06:20 Mythbusters
07:00 Kenny The Shark
07:25 Adventure 8: Zoo Games
07:50 Dogs/Cats/Pets 101
08:40 How It's Made
09:05 How It's Made
09:30 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?
10:20 Mythbusters
11:10 Pawn Queens
11:35 Pawn Queens
12:00 Pawn Queens
12:25 Pawn Queens
12:50 Pawn Queens
13:15 Pawn Queens
13:40 Pawn Queens
14:05 Pawn Queens
14:30 Kenny The Shark
14:55 Adventure 8: Zoo Games
15:20 Guinness World Records
Smashed UK
16:10 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?
17:00 World's Toughest Expeditions With James Cracknell
17:50 Kings Of The Wild
18:40 Mythbusters
19:30 How It's Made
19:55 How It's Made
20:20 Guinness World Records
Smashed UK
21:10 World's Toughest Expeditions With James Cracknell
22:00 Kings Of The Wild
22:50 Pawn Queens
23:15 Pawn Queens
23:40 Guinness World Records
Smashed UK

19:45 Mako Mermaids
20:10 Jessie
20:35 Crackle
20:40 Bizaardvark
21:05 Austin & Ally
21:30 Stuck In The Middle
21:55 Tsum Tsum Shorts
22:00 Bunk'd
22:25 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
22:50 Loloock
23:10 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
23:35 Binny And The Ghost



00:00 Henry Hugglemonster
00:15 Calimero
00:30 Art Attack
00:55 Zou
01:05 Loopidoo
01:20 Henry Hugglemonster
01:35 Calimero
01:50 Zou
02:05 Art Attack
02:30 The Hive
02:40 Loopidoo
02:55 Henry Hugglemonster
03:10 Art Attack
03:35 Loopidoo
03:50 Calimero
04:05 Art Attack
04:30 Henry Hugglemonster
04:45 Zou
05:00 Art Attack
05:30 Henry Hugglemonster
05:45 Loopidoo
06:00 Zou
06:15 Calimero
06:30 Loopidoo
06:45 Henry Hugglemonster
07:00 Sofia The First
07:25 Goldie & Bear
07:50 The Lion Guard
08:15 Micky And The Roadster Racers
08:40 Lion King 2: Simba's Pride
10:00 PJ Masks
10:10 Little Mermaid
10:35 Micky And The Roadster Racers
11:00 PJ Masks
11:25 Goldie & Bear
11:50 Micky And The Roadster Racers
12:15 Sofia The First
12:40 The Lion Guard
13:10 Doc McStuffins
13:35 PJ Masks
14:00 My Friends Tigger & Pooh
14:30 The Lion Guard
14:55 Unbungleable
15:00 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
15:30 Micky And The Roadster Racers
16:00 Sofia The First
16:25 Goldie & Bear
16:50 Doc McStuffins
17:15 The Lion Guard
17:40 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
18:05 PJ Masks
18:35 Micky And The Roadster Racers
19:05 Sofia The First
19:35 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
20:05 The Lion Guard
20:35 Micky Mouse Clubhouse
21:00 Goldie & Bear
21:25 Doc McStuffins
21:50 Minnie's Bow-Toons
22:00 Little Mermaid
22:30 Micky Mouse Clubhouse
22:55 PJ Masks
23:20 Henry Hugglemonster
23:35 The Hive
23:45 Loopidoo



00:45 Treehouse Masters
01:40 Bad Dog
02:35 Untamed China With Nigel Marven
03:25 Dog Rescuers
04:15 Guardians Of Rescue
05:02 Mutant Planet
05:49 Untamed & Uncut
06:36 Swamp Brothers
07:00 Swamp Brothers
07:25 Untamed China With Nigel Marven
08:15 Treehouse Masters
09:10 Bad Dog
10:05 Mutant Planet
11:00 Untamed China With Nigel Marven
11:55 Dog Rescuers
12:50 Guardians Of Rescue
13:45 Bad Dog
14:40 Mutant Planet
15:35 Untamed & Uncut
16:30 Treehouse Masters
17:25 The Bronx Zoo
18:20 Insane Pools: Off The Deep End
19:15 Bad Dog
20:10 Untamed & Uncut
21:05 The Bronx Zoo
22:00 Insane Pools: Off The Deep End
22:55 Mutant Planet
23:50 Untamed & Uncut



00:30 Line Of Duty
01:25 In The Dark
02:20 DCI Banks
03:10 DCI Banks
04:00 Holly City
05:05 Death In Paradise
06:00 Father Brown
06:45 The Coroner
07:35 Death In Paradise
08:30 Doctor Who
09:15 Father Brown
10:05 Holly City
11:00 Death In Paradise
11:55 Doctor Who
12:45 Father Brown
13:30 The Coroner
14:20 Holly City
15:15 Death In Paradise
16:10 Doctor Who
17:00 Father Brown
17:50 The Coroner
18:35 EastEnders
19:05 Death In Paradise
20:00 Poldark
21:00 Last Tango In Halifax
21:50 DCI Banks
22:40 DCI Banks
23:25 Death In Paradise



00:30 Vanity Fair Confidential
01:20 Is O.J. Innocent? The Missing Evidence
02:10 Grave Secrets
03:00 Evil Lives Here
03:48 Beauty Queen Murders
04:36 Beauty Queen Murders
05:24 Beauty Queen Murders
06:12 Beauty Queen Murders
07:00 California Investigator
07:25 California Investigator
07:50 California Investigator
08:15 California Investigator
08:40 California Investigator
09:05 California Investigator
09:30 California Investigator
09:55 California Investigator
10:20 The Locator
10:45 The Locator
11:10 Behind Closed Doors: Shocking Secrets
12:00 Beauty Queen Murders
12:50 Beauty Queen Murders
13:40 Beauty Queen Murders
14:30 Beauty Queen Murders
15:20 The Locator
15:45 The Locator
16:10 Women In Prison
17:00 Southern Fried Homicide
17:50 Southern Fried Homicide
18:40 Southern Fried Homicide
19:30 Southern Fried Homicide
20:20 On The Case With Paula Zahn
21:10 Evil Online
22:00 Evil Online
22:50 Murder Comes To Town
23:40 Grave Secrets



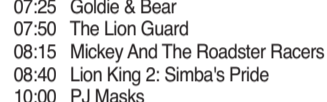
00:00 Hank Zipzer
00:25 Alex & Co.
00:45 The Hive
00:50 Evermoor Chronicles
01:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
01:40 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
02:05 Binny And The Ghost
02:30 Binny And The Ghost
02:55 Hank Zipzer
03:15 The Hive
03:20 Hank Zipzer
03:45 Alex & Co.
04:10 Alex & Co.
04:35 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
05:00 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
05:25 Binny And The Ghost
05:45 The Hive
05:50 The 7D
06:00 Jessie
06:25 Jessie
06:50 Tsum Tsum Shorts
06:55 Loloock
07:20 Elena Of Avalor
07:45 Bunk'd
08:10 Bunk'd
08:35 Bizaardvark
09:00 Bizaardvark
09:25 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
09:50 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
10:15 Jessie
10:40 Bad Hair Day
12:10 Descendants Wicked World
12:20 Liv And Maddie
12:45 Liv And Maddie
13:10 Stuck In The Middle
13:35 Stuck In The Middle
14:00 Austin & Ally
14:25 Loloock
14:50 The Zhuzhus
15:15 Whisker Haven Tales With The Palace Pets
15:20 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
15:45 Elena Of Avalor
16:10 Liv And Maddie
16:35 Descendants Wicked World
16:40 Girl Meets World
17:05 Stuck In The Middle
17:30 Bunk'd
17:55 Bizaardvark
18:20 Disney Mickey Mouse
18:25 Alex & Co.
18:50 Best Friends Whenever
19:15 Sunny Bunnies
19:20 Liv And Maddie



00:00 The Jail Atlanta: 60 Days In
01:00 Babies Behind Bars
02:00 When Life Means Life
03:00 Evil Up Close
04:00 The Jail Atlanta: 60 Days In
05:00 Babies Behind Bars
06:00 It Takes A Killer
06:30 It Takes A Killer
07:00 It Takes A Killer
07:30 It Takes A Killer
08:00 The First 48
09:00 Homicide Hunter
10:00 It Takes A Killer
10:30 It Takes A Killer
11:00 It Takes A Killer
11:30 It Takes A Killer
12:00 It Takes A Killer
12:30 It Takes A Killer
13:00 It Takes A Killer
13:30 It Takes A Killer
14:00 The First 48
15:00 Cold Case Files
16:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
17:00 Crimes That Shook Australia
18:00 It Takes A Killer
18:30 It Takes A Killer
19:00 The First 48
20:00 Homicide Hunter
21:00 Cold Case Files
22:00 My Haunted House
23:00 Psychic Kids: Children Of The Paranormal



00:05 Tosh.0
00:30 Tosh.0
00:55 Paul Chowdhry - What's Happening White People
01:45 John Oliver's New York Stand Up Show
02:10 John Oliver's New York Stand Up Show
02:35 Another Period
03:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
03:25 Disorderly Conduct: Video On Patrol
04:15 Lip Sync Battle
04:40 Ridiculousness
05:05 Disaster Date
05:30 Urban Tarzan
05:55 Tattoo Disasters
06:20 Hungry Investors
07:15 Disorderly Conduct: Video On Patrol
08:05 Disaster Date
08:30 Impractical Jokers
08:55 Ridiculousness
09:20 Nathan For You
09:45 Lip Sync Battle
10:10 Ridiculousness
10:35 Disaster Date
11:00 Life Or Debt
11:50 Disaster Date
12:15 Hungry Investors
13:05 Disorderly Conduct: Video On Patrol
13:55 Framework
14:45 Lip Sync Battle
15:10 Live With Models
15:35 Ridiculousness
16:00 Impractical Jokers
16:30 Disaster Date
16:55 Impractical Jokers
17:25 Ridiculousness
17:50 Ridiculousness Arabia
18:15 Impractical Jokers
18:39 Nathan For You



00:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
00:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
01:00 Man Fire Food
01:30 Man Fire Food
02:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
02:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
03:00 Man Fire Food
03:30 Man Fire Food
04:00 Chopped
05:00 Guy's Grocery Games
06:00 Barefoot Contessa
06:30 Barefoot Contessa
07:00 The Kitchen
08:00 The Pioneer Woman
08:30 The Pioneer Woman
09:00 Siba's Table
09:30 Siba's Table
10:00 The Pioneer Woman
10:30 The Pioneer Woman
11:00 The Kitchen
12:00 The Pioneer Woman
12:30 The Pioneer Woman
13:00 Siba's Table
13:30 Siba's Table
14:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
14:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
15:00 Chopped
16:00 The Kitchen
17:00 The Pioneer Woman
17:30 The Pioneer Woman
18:00 Chopped
19:00 Chopped Junior
20:00 Chopped
21:00 The Great Food Truck Race
22:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
22:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
23:00 Chopped



00:20 Wheeler Dealers
01:05 Kings Of The Wild
01:50 Treasure Quest: Snake Island
02:35 Legend Of Croc Gold
03:20 Fast N' Loud
04:05 Running Wild With Bear Grylls
04:50 Gold Rush
05:35 How Do They Do It?
06:00 Gold Divers
06:45 Wheeler Dealers
07:30 Fast N' Loud
08:15 Running Wild With Bear Grylls
09:00 Storage Hunters
09:25 How Do They Do It?
09:47 How Do They Do It?
10:10 Kings Of The Wild
10:55 Treasure Quest: Snake Island
11:40 Legend Of Croc Gold
12:25 How Do They Do It?
12:47 Storage Hunters
13:10 Gold Rush
13:55 Running Wild With Bear Grylls
14:40 Gold Divers
15:25 Fast N' Loud
16:10 Wheeler Dealers
17:00 How Do They Do It?
17:25 How Do They Do It?
17:50 Storage Hunters
18:20 Storage Hunters
18:50 Running Wild With Bear Grylls
19:40 How Do They Do It?
20:10 How Do They Do It?
20:35 How Do They Do It?
21:00 Blowing Up History
21:50 Strip The City
22:40 Made By Destruction
23:05 Made By Destruction
23:30 Fast N' Loud



00:00 Don't Tell The Bride
01:00 Emmerdale
01:30 Coronation Street
02:00 Coronation Street
02:30 Coronation Street
03:25 Together
03:55 Together
04:25 Doc Martin
05:15 Seven Days With...
06:05 Don't Tell The Bride
07:05 Masterpiece With Alan Titchmarsh
08:00 Together
08:30 Together
09:00 Doc Martin
09:00 Seven Days With...
10:00 Don't Tell The Bride
11:50 Masterpiece With Alan Titchmarsh
12:45 Emmerdale
13:15 Emmerdale
13:45 Coronation Street
14:10 Don't Tell The Bride
15:10 Masterpiece With Alan Titchmarsh
16:15 This Is England '90
16:55 Lewis
17:50 The Queen's Worst Year
18:45 Emmerdale
19:15 Emmerdale
19:45 Coronation Street
20:10 Masterpiece With Alan Titchmarsh
21:00 This Is England '90
21:55 Lewis
22:55 Emmerdale
23:15 Emmerdale
23:35 Coronation Street

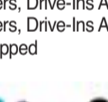
21:40 Disney Mickey Mouse
21:45 Lab Rats: Bionic Island
22:10 Lab Rats: Bionic Island
22:35 Phineas And Ferb
23:00 Programmes Start At 6:00am KSA



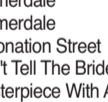
00:50 WAGs Miami
01:50 El News
02:50 Celebrity Style Story
03:20 Celebrity Style Story
03:50 So Cosmo
04:40 So Cosmo
05:30 Celebrity Style Story
06:00 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
07:00 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
08:00 El News: Daily Pop
08:55 WAGs Miami
09:55 WAGs Miami
10:50 WAGs Miami
11:45 Celebrity Style Story
12:15 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
13:10 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
14:05 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
15:00 El News: Daily Pop
15:55 WAGs Miami
16:45 WAGs Miami
17:35 WAGs Miami
18:30 Celebrity Style Story
19:00 El News
20:00 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
21:00 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
22:00 Famously Single
23:00 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
23:55 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry



00:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
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01:00 Man Fire Food
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22:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
23:00 Chopped



00:15 Wineroads
00:45 Fish Of The Day
01:10 Sinful Sweets
01:40 Island Hunter
02:10 Island Hunter
02:30 Testing The Menu With Nic Watt
03:55 Delinquent Gourmet
04:25 Fearless Chef
05:20 Valentine Warner Eats Scandinavia
05:45 Valentine Warner Eats Scandinavia
06:45 Places We Go
06:40 Sinful Sweets
07:10 Island Hunter
08:05 Cesar Millan's Dog Nation
09:00 Testing The Menu With Nic Watt
09:25 Delinquent Gourmet
09:55 Fearless Chef
10:50 Valentine Warner Eats Scandinavia
11:15 Valentine Warner Eats Scandinavia
11:45 Places We Go
12:40 Sinful Sweets
12:40 Bondi Rescue Outback Adventure
13:35 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Med
14:30 Testing The Menu With Nic Watt
14:55 Delinquent Gourmet
15:25 Fearless Chef
16:20 Valentine Warner Eats Scandinavia
16:45 Valentine Warner Eats Scandinavia
17:15 Places We Go
17:40 Sinful Sweets
18:10 Cruise Ship Diaries
18:35 Cruise Ship Diaries
19:05 Fearless Chef
20:00 Valentine Warner Eats Scandinavia
20:30 Valentine Warner Eats Scandinavia
21:00 Places We Go
21:30 Sinful Sweets
22:00 Cruise Ship Diaries
22:25 Cruise Ship Diaries
22:55 Bondi Rescue Outback Adventure
23:50 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Med



00:10 Continent 7: Antarctica
01:00 Wicked Tuna
02:00 Air Crash Investigation
03:00 Explorer
04:00 Continent 7: Antarctica
05:00 Remote Survival
06:00 Terror In The Skies
07:00 Dog Whisperer
08:00 Dog Whisperer
09:00 Remote Survival
10:00 Surgery Ship
11:00 Inside
12:00 Inside Singapore Airlines
13:00 Mega Food
14:00 Dog Whisperer
15:00 Dog Whisperer
16:00 Surgery Ship
17:00 Diana: In Her Own Words
19:00 Nazi Megastructures
20:00 Surgery Ship
20:50 Diana: In Her Own Words
22:50 Seconds From Disaster
23:20 Dog Whisperer



00:00 Ancient Discoveries
01:00 Engineering An Empire
02:00 Brad Meltzer's Decoded
03:00 Ancient Aliens
04:00 Hangar 1: The UFO Files
04:30 Million Dollar Genius
05:20 Ancient Discoveries
06:10 The Universe
07:00 Engineering An Empire
08:00 Brad Meltzer's Decoded
09:00 Ancient Aliens
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12:00 Ancient Discoveries
13:00 Engineering An Empire
14:00 Brad Meltzer's Decoded
15:00 Ancient Aliens
16:00 Hangar 1: The UFO Files
17:00 The Universe
18:00 Ancient Discoveries
19:00 Engineering An Empire
20:00 Missing In Alaska
21:00 Ancient Aliens
22:00 True Monsters
23:00 Million Dollar Genius



00:20 Mountain Men - Closest Calls
01:10 Alone: Lost And Found
02:00 Swamp People
02:50 Storage Wars Miami
03:15 American Pickers
04:05 Pawn Stars
04:30 Pawn Stars
05:00 Mountain Men
06:00 Leepu And Pitbull

06:50 Duck Dynasty
07:15 Duck Dynasty
07:40 Counting Cars
08:05 Counting Cars
08:30 Pawn Stars
08:55 Pawn Stars
09:20 Storage Wars
09:45 Storage Wars
10:10 American Pickers
11:00 Gold Hunters: Legend Of The Superstition...

11:50 Duck Dynasty
12:15 Duck Dynasty
12:40 Counting Cars
13:05 Counting Cars
13:30 Ice Road Truckers
14:20 Mountain Men
15:10 Leepu And Pitbull
16:00 Storage Wars
16:25 Storage Wars
16:50 Pawn Stars
17:15 Pawn Stars
17:40 Mountain Men - Closest Calls
18:30 Swamp People
19:20 Mountain Men
20:10 American Pickers
20:50 Counting Cars
21:25 Counting Cars
21:50 Forged In Fire
22:40 Forged In Fire
23:30 American Pickers



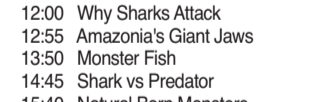
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19:00 Nazi Megastructures
20:00 Surgery Ship
20:50 Diana: In Her Own Words
22:50 Seconds From Disaster
23:20 Dog Whisperer



00:20 Bite, Sting, Kill
01:10 Monster Fish
02:00 Snake Underworld
02:50 Hooked
03:45 The Invaders
04:40 Natural Born Monsters
05:35 Snake Underworld
06:30 Hooked
07:25 The Invaders
08:20 Natural Born Monsters
09:15 Wild Botswana: Lion Brotherhood
10:10 Tiger Man
11:05 Wild Colombia
12:00 Why Sharks Attack
12:55 Amazonia's Giant Jaws
13:50 Monster Fish
14:45 Shark vs Predator
15:40 Natural Born Monsters
16:35 Cougar V. Wolf
17:30 Tiger Man
18:25 Shark vs Predator
19:20 Amazonia's Giant Jaws
20:10 Natural Born Monsters
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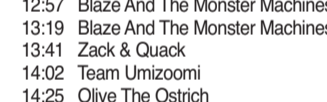
00:12 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
00:36 Rabbids Invasion
01:00 Rabbids Invasion
01:24 Sanjay And Craig
01:48 Sanjay And Craig
02:12 Winx Club
02:36 Winx Club
03:00 Harvey Beaks
03:24 Harvey Beaks
03:48 The Loud House
04:12 The Loud House
04:36 Breadwinners
05:00 Breadwinners
05:24 Get Blake
05:48 SpongeBob SquarePants
06:12 SpongeBob SquarePants
06:36 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
07:00 The Loud House
07:24 Rabbids Invasion
07:48 Get Blake
08:12 Harvey Beaks
08:36 Sanjay And Craig
09:00 Rank The Prank
09:24 Henry Danger

09:48 100 Things To Do Before High School
10:12 Game Shakers
10:36 Regal Academy
11:00 Winx Club
11:24 SpongeBob SquarePants
11:48 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
12:12 The Loud House
12:36 Breadwinners
13:00 School Of Rock
13:24 Henry Danger
13:48 Nicky, Ricky, Dicky & Dawn
14:12 Henry Danger
14:36 The Thundermans
15:00 100 Things To Do Before High School

15:24 Rabbids Invasion
15:48 SpongeBob SquarePants
16:12 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
16:36 The Loud House
17:00 Regal Academy
17:24 Winx Club
17:48 Hunter Street
18:12 Henry Danger
18:36 Nicky, Ricky, Dicky & Dawn
19:00 School Of Rock
19:24 Game Shakers
19:48 The Thundermans
20:12 SpongeBob SquarePants
20:36 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
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21:48 Rabbids Invasion
22:12 Breadwinners
22:36 Harvey Beaks
23:00 SpongeBob SquarePants
23:24 SpongeBob SquarePants
23:48 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles



00:02 Max & Ruby
00:24 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
00:35 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
00:45 The Day Henry Met
00:50 The Day Henry Met
00:56 Blaze And The Monster Machines
01:18 Blaze And The Monster Machines
01:41 Zack & Quack
02:02 Team Umizoomi
02:25 Olive The Ostrich
02:30 Olive The Ostrich
02:35 Paw Patrol
02:58 Little Charmers
03:10 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
03:22 Dora The Explorer
03:45 Max & Ruby
04:07 Nella The Princess Knight
04:30 Shimmer And Shine
04:53 Dora And Friends
05:15 Zack & Quack
05:28 The Day Henry Met
05:33 The Day Henry Met
05:38 Blaze And The Monster Machines
06:00 Rusty Rivets
06:12 Paw Patrol
06:37 Dora The Explorer
07:00 Zack & Quack
07:22 Bubble Guppies
07:45 Blaze And The Monster Machines
08:07 Paw Patrol
08:30 Shimmer And Shine
08:53 Nella The Princess Knight
09:15 The Day Henry Met
09:21 Paw Patrol
09:44 Rusty Rivets
09:57 Bubble Guppies
10:20 Fresh Beat Band Of Spies
10:43 Zack & Quack
10:54 Team Umizoomi
11:17 Shimmer And Shine
11:40 Shimmer And Shine
12:03 Max & Ruby
12:25 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
12:36 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
12:46 The Day Henry Met
12:51 The Day Henry Met
12:57 Blaze And The Monster Machines
13:19 Blaze And The Monster Machines
13:41 Zack & Quack
14:02 Team Umizoomi
14:25 Olive The Ostrich
14:30 Olive The Ostrich
14:35 Paw Patrol
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16:53 Dora And Friends
17:16 Zack & Quack
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17:33 The Day Henry Met
17:38 Blaze And The Monster Machines
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18:37 Dora The Explorer
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19:22 Bubble Guppies
19:45 Blaze And The Monster Machines
20:07 Paw Patrol
20:30 Shimmer And Shine
20:53 Nella The Princess Knight
21:15 The Day Henry Met
21:21 Paw Patrol
21:44 Rusty Rivets
21:56 Bubble Guppies
22:20 Fresh Beat Band Of Spies
22:42 Zack & Quack
22:53 Team Umizoomi
23:16 Shimmer And Shine
23:39 Shimmer And Shine



00:45 Zero Dark Thirty
03:15 The Moment
04:45 Cassandra's Dream
06:30 Reclaim
08:15 The Painted Veil
10:20 Gosford Park
12:30 Laws Of Attraction
14:00 The Woman In Black
15:35 The Upside Of Anger
17:30 Zero Dark Thirty
20:00 Million Dollar Baby
22:15 Heartbreakers



00:25 Sky High
02:15 Inspector Gadget
03:45 Herbie Fully Loaded
05:30 Oliver & Company
06:55 Sky High
08:45 Inspector Gadget
10:15 The Rescuers
11:35 Herbie Fully Loaded
13:20 Santa's Little Helper
15:00 Brother Bear
16:30 Bark Ranger
17:55 Little Women
19:55 Underdog
21:20 Brother Bear
22:50 Santa's Little Helper



01:00 K-9
02:45 Hard Promises
04:25 Miss You Already
06:15 Made In America
08:10 Hard Promises
09:50 Miss You Already
11:40 Kate Plus 8
13:35 Almost Christmas
15:25 Lovesick
16:55 My Bakery In Brooklyn
18:40 Ricki And The Flash
20:25 A Short History Of Decay
22:00 Stung
23:30 Cyrus



01:30 Born To Be Blue
02:45 Man In The Moon

04:30 Before I Disappear
06:10 A Birder's Guide To Everything
07:40 A Perfect Day
09:30 Man In The Moon
11:15 Oliver's Deal
12:55 Before I Disappear
14:35 Boychoir
16:20 The Joy Luck Club
18:40 Lawrence Of Arabia
22:15 Stand By Me
23:45 In America



00:15 Bunny Tales
01:30 Get Squirrel
03:00 Opps Noah Is Gone
04:30 Mamma Moo And Crow
06:00 Space Dogs 2: Adventure To The Moon
07:20 Memory Loss
08:45 Doctor Proctor's Fart Powder
10:15 The Heart Of The Oak
11:35 Bunny Tales
12:50 Get Squirrel
14:20 Blue Elephant 2
16:00 Doctor Proctor's Fart Powder
17:30 Outback
19:00 Egon And Donci
20:30 Blue Elephant 2
22:10 Memory Loss
23:35 The Heart Of The Oak



02:00 Last Knights
03:55 The Ladykillers
05:40 The War
07:50 Last Knights
09:45 Beaches
11:50 Rocky II
13:50 Seventh Son
15:35 The Bucket List
17:15 Enemy Of The State
19:30 Heat
22:20 Ex Machina



00:30 How Do They Do It?
00:55 Food Factory
01:20 Secrets Of The Underground
02:10 Sci-Trek
03:00 Prototype This
03:48 Mythbusters
04:36 How Do They Do It?
05:24 Food Factory
05:50 Secrets Of The Underground
06:12 Sci-Trek
07:00 How Do They Do It?
07:26 Prototype This
08:14 Mythbusters
09:02 Sci-Trek
09:50 How Do They Do It?
10:14 Food Factory

CROSSWORD 1681



ACROSS

1. An accountant certified by the state.
4. Of or relating to syllables.
12. The sense organ for hearing and equilibrium.
15. Large northern deer with enormous flattened antlers in the male.
16. A skirt consisting of a rectangle of calico or printed cotton.
17. An agency of the United Nations affiliated with the World Bank.
18. The cry made by sheep.
19. Situated at an apex.
20. Not acknowledging the God of Christianity and Judaism and Islam.
22. A member of a Turkic people of Uzbekistan and neighboring areas.
24. That is to say.
25. Ridge-like ingrowth of the exoskeleton of an arthropod that supports internal organs and provides attachment points for muscles.
27. A river that rises in central Germany and flows north to join the Elbe River.
31. A widely distributed system of free and fixed macrophages derived from bone marrow.
34. Goddess of the dead and queen of the underworld.
36. (British) A minicar used as a taxicab.
40. A republic in the Middle East in western Asia.
42. An alloy of copper and zinc (and sometimes arsenic) used to imitate gold in cheap jewelry and for gilding.
44. The basic unit of money in Western Samoa.
45. African tree with edible yellow fruit resembling mangos.
46. Type genus of the Nepidae.
47. Plants closely allied to the genera Satureja and Calamintha.
49. Respiratory disorder characterized by wheezing.
51. A fibrous amphibole.
53. Perennial mountain rice native to Mediterranean region and introduced into North America.
55. A member of the Siouan people living in the Yazoo river valley in Mississippi.
56. A slight rounded elevation where the malleus attaches to the eardrum.
57. Being two more than sixty.
60. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
65. Type genus of the Alcidae comprising solely the razorbill.
69. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
70. Woody climbers of tropical Asia to Australia.
74. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
75. (prefix) Bad or erroneous or lack of.
76. A cut of pork ribs with much of the meat trimmed off.
77. One of the most common of the five major classes of immunoglobulins.
78. The residue that remains when something is burned.
79. A mixture of nectar and pollen prepared by worker bees and fed to larvae.
80. A young woman making her debut into society.

DOWN

1. Type genus of the Cebidae.
2. A public square with room for pedestrians.
3. Jordan's port.
4. Satisfy (thirst).
5. Informal terms for the mouth.
6. Being seven more than fifty.
7. A cord that is drawn through eyelets or around hooks in order to draw together two edges (as of a shoe or garment).
8. A flat wing-shaped process or winglike part of an organism.
9. Elder brother of Krishna.
10. Being one more than three.
11. A drug (trade name Capoten) that blocks the formation of angiotensin in the kidneys resulting in vasodilation.
12. German chemist who did research on high-speed chemical reactions (born in 1927).
13. American Revolutionary patriot.
14. (the feminine of raja) A Hindu princess or the wife of a raja.
21. Inflammation of a gland or lymph node.
23. Fermented alcoholic beverage similar to but heavier than beer.
26. A tricycle (usually propelled by pedalling).
28. A radioactive metallic element that is similar to tellurium and bismuth.
29. (Scottish) Bluish-black or gray-blue.
30. An inclined surface or roadway that moves traffic from one level to another.
32. A polyhedron with two congruent and parallel faces (the bases) and whose lateral faces are parallelograms.
33. The female or generative principle.
35. An inactive volcano in Sicily.
37. The highest part (usually the melody) in a piece of choral music.
38. Remote in manner.
39. An adult male singer with the lowest voice.
41. Coffee-flavored liqueur made in Mexico.
43. Any of numerous local fertility and nature deities worshipped by ancient Semitic peoples.
48. The basic unit of money in Ghana.
50. A port city in southern Kenya on a coral island in a bay of the Indian Ocean.
52. English comic actor (1925-1980).
54. A polyvalent metallic element that resembles chromium and tungsten in its properties.
58. Being three more than forty.
59. A state in midwestern United States.
61. Armor plate that protects the chest.
62. A vigorous blow.
63. (Norse mythology) God of war and strife and son of Odin.
64. Chocolate cookie with white cream filling.
66. Set down according to a plan.
67. An enclosure made of wire or metal bars in which birds or animals are kept.
68. An Arabic speaking person who lives in Arabia or North Africa.
71. Rate of revolution of a motor.
72. Light informal conversation for social occasions.
73. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Family members may want to talk to you about family business matters. It would be wise to listen and take notes. This is nothing serious-just preventative measures for future safety and a good feeling of completion and belonging. Break up the sober moment and open up the discussion to praise and encouragement for others. Some may think you are older than you are, for you can step in and offer wonderful advice and insight. You may even enjoy the thought of being older and probably treat authority, the elderly and your teachers with great respect. Life seems to be working with rather than against you so do not hold back. This may include anything from repairs on the house to some serious hobby involvement. Whistle!



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

This day may be the beginning of a long dreamy time when you find it easy to lose yourself in one flight of fancy or another. Normally clear in your thinking, ideas temporarily become fuzzy, and it is hard to be logical or consistent. Let yourself dream today. Work will go well but it is the quiet moments that make thinking difficult. A little writing may help. Busy yourself in new projects that show your bent for beautification, perhaps planting a vegetable garden or putting in a fish tank. This would be a great time to treat your kids or the neighbor's kids to a visit to the zoo. Perhaps you will enjoy a good book or movie later today. Consider the stars tonight. Being more closely involved with another person may well become your highest priority.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You may have the opportunity to play the role of guardian angel or mentor to someone in need today. You can demonstrate a great deal of understanding and sensitivity to the needs of others and you are in a good position to communicate and promote a healing. A very young relative might not want to wait on the next vacation to enjoy those children's books that you have accumulated over the years. Consider mailing a few fun books so they can receive something special in the mail. They will love whatever you send because you thought of them. Breakthrough thinking is available today and may come through your immediate surroundings, home and environment-your support system. You will receive monetary rewards today.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

In a word, it is your emotions and inner strength that holds your innermost self together. Your feelings are not just important-they are central to knowing more about you. A strong devotional nature becomes apparent to anyone who takes time to know you. Everything else is centered upon this inner drive and energy. The search for a mate and marriage in particular are crucial for you. Communication with those in a place of worship is possible, enjoyable and uplifting at this time. You are driven to unite and find out what togetherness means. Cleaning, health-awareness, shopping and cooperation from each member of the family or from friends make your day move along easily. Someone will join you today in your fitness program or they will help you.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

There will be less of an impulse now for recognition. There is a growing need to enjoy some quality time this day. Perhaps you like to listen to teaching tapes or a hobby has taken up space in your creative sector. This time will be less outward and may call for a change of action. This is not a time of outreach and not necessarily the best point to start any great projects. There is introspection, and you may find yourself letting go of plans and projects started in a more outward phase. You may take an interest in your own psyche, religion and spiritual ideas. You take in new impressions. With all of this desire for productive time alone, you will still find time to enjoy your friends from time to time, especially today.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You could find that you are appreciated and valued for your feelings and your ability to get things done. You can always find the resources you require, plus the necessary instruction in how to use them. You have an inner vision and you are able to understand the true picture. This often finds you working as a go-between with others. Today you might use your special gift for spanning the generation gap by bringing older and younger people together. Your wisdom can be shared as you may find yourself involved in settling disputes. Because you love animals so very much, this evening may become your special time to work in finding homes for lost animals. You may talk with the new owners and help with food and training issues that may be frustrating.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Interaction with others is the focus of this day. Neighbors, friends and family members may take on more importance. Outdoor activity through, perhaps, a tour of a nearby park, zoo or group garage or yard sale can be enjoyed by many. You have a lot of energy and tend to be impatient with those who slow your pace-careful. You soak up what you need to see quickly and are ready to go forward with new experiences. You could be awed as you may find yourself unexpectedly involved with some influential individuals. This may be a great time to suggest a future meeting that will give you time to communicate some of your ideas. Keep your composure and you will do fine. Many of your friends wish they had thought of your ideas; you are spontaneous.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You will often find yourself choosing between comfort and progress. Progress is occasionally comfortable, but only when you are looking at where you have been. Today you choose to improve or enhance your surroundings with trees, flowers and perhaps a vegetable garden. Designate a little area for the younger members of the family and you could help teach the importance of helping things grow. Perhaps radishes and onions will be on your table this summer. This afternoon you may decide to watch a car race, participate in team sports, or enjoy some trendy pastime with a friend. Your sense of mission makes for impulsive, sometimes rash, but always brave actions. A restful evening will help you be prepared for the busy week ahead.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Increasing inner confidence helps you emerge from a long period of doubt. Finances are better and you can now pay more attention to the needs you have been pushing aside. There is much to accomplish today. Perhaps some repair work or catch-up work needs your attention. You push hard and much energy can be wasted if you do not stop to plan for the end result you want to achieve. You seem to choose friends that plan well, and today would be a good time to toss around a few ideas with them. This afternoon you can balance all this hard work with some fun activity. You will be pleased to discover that somebody who opposed you in the past is now more understanding of your viewpoint. It is most important to set aside time for family tonight.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Immediate needs are where your attention is today. Shopping and tending to chores are high on your to-do list. You have learned to prioritize and this is good. You have the patience that is necessary for helping friends this afternoon. This could mean a move or perhaps watching the kids while the parents tend to some difficult project. You are good at communicating and conveying yourself to others. You have a lot of energy and come across as assertive and in control of whatever is set before you now. You pursue your obligations with much emotion and obvious enthusiasm. You are conventional when it comes to your needs and surroundings. Small and less are okay with you. Take it easy and be good to yourself tonight.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

A lazy morning may consist of updating a scrapbook or photograph album. A cycle of nostalgia and domesticity begins now emphasizing a need for security and a sense of roots. Family, home and relatives play big parts in your life. This mood may promote a frenzy of phone calls to out-of-touch loved ones or friends. You want to belong on a private, intimate and personal level. A hobby is most fun when it is shared, and that is where a friend might find you this afternoon, playing with a hobby. You may enjoy some time in a park with a friend later today. Helping others is what you do best; you attract more people to you than you believe possible. Others learn from your diplomatic ways. You are wise to listen first and ask questions later.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You always seem to say just what you mean. You will be right-on when it comes to questions of feelings-you may be more interested in matters of psychology, different cultures and history. You can find support from all sides when it comes to any sort of mental activity. A new game or an interesting movie may be the goal for the afternoon. You communicate with accomplished skill and it is stimulating just being with you. Your high degree of mental concentration makes you an excellent student, able to excel in speaking, writing and all types of communication skills. Your ambitions go hand-in-hand with communication and using the mind and the two should never be far apart. The evening has romantic possibilities-a time you may look back on fondly.

WORD SEARCH

Nursing Home 1

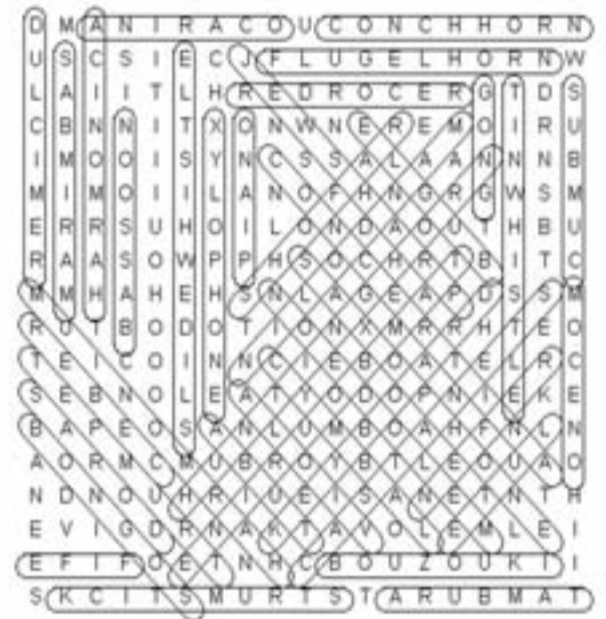
Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining 47 letters spell a Mother Theresa quotation.



- | | | | | |
|----------------|---------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| ACTIVITIES | COMFORT | HELP | OUTINGS | SING ALONG |
| AIDES | DENTURES | INCONTINENCE | PET THERAPY | SLEEPING PILL |
| ASPIRIN | DINING ROOM | LAUNDRY | PHYSIOTHERAPIST | STAFF MEETINGS |
| BATHROOM | DOCTOR | LINERS | PUZZLES | SUPPER |
| BEDRAIL | DRUGS | MAGAZINES | READING | TABLES |
| BEDS | EXERCISE | MEDICAL GLOVES | RESIDENTS | TELEVISION |
| BOARD GAMES | FALLS | HEMORRY LOSS | ROUNDS | TRANSFER BELT |
| BULLETIN BOARD | FLU SHOT | MOSTURIZER | SCRABBLE | URINAL |
| CANE | FRAIL | MUSIC | SCRUBS | VOLUNTEERS |
| CARE | GLUCOSE METER | HAIR DRESSER | SENIORS | WANDERING |
| CHARTS | HALLWAYS | NURSES | SHAVE | WHEELCHAIR |

Yesterday's Solution

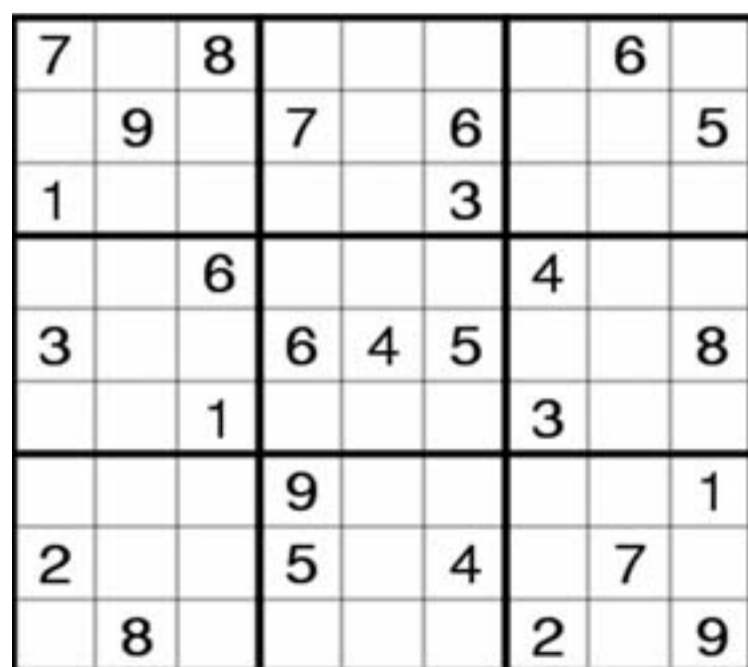
Musical Instruments 2



- | | | | |
|------------|--------------|-----------|---------------|
| BASSOON | FIFE | MARIMBAS | SHOFAR |
| BONGOS | FLUGELHORN | MELODEON | SLIDE WHISTLE |
| BOUZOUKI | GONG | MOCCINO | STRUMSTICK |
| BUGLE | HARMONICA | NEFER | TAMBOURINE |
| CASTANETS | HARMONIZUM | OCARINA | TAMBURA |
| CONCERTINA | HUNTING HORN | PIANO | TIN WHISTLE |
| CONCH HORN | JEW'S HARP | REBEC | TRUMPET |
| CUMBUS | KEYBOARD | RECORDER | TUBA |
| CYMBAL | LUTE | SARDO | VIOLA |
| DULCIMER | MANDOLIN | SAXOPHONE | XYLOPHONE |

Hidden sentence: MUSIC WITH DENNER IS AN INSULT BOTH TO THE COOK AND THE VIOLINIST

Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



CLASSIFIEDS



Kuwait Times
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 e-mail: info@kuwaittimes.net



KNCC PROGRAMME FROM THURSDAY TO WEDNESDAY (03/08/2017 TO 09/08/2017)

SHARQIA-1	Time	FANAR-2	Time	THE DARK TOWER-2D-4DX	Time
DUNKIRK	1:00 PM	DUNKIRK	11:45 AM		
DUNKIRK	3:15 PM	WAR FOR THE PLANET OF THE APES	2:00 PM	AVENUES-3	11:55 AM
BABY DRIVER	5:30 PM	BABY DRIVER	4:45 PM	DUNKIRK	2:15 PM
FIRST KILL	7:50 PM	WAR FOR THE PLANET OF THE APES	7:00 PM	WAR FOR THE PLANET OF THE APES	5:00 PM
DUNKIRK	9:55 PM	DUNKIRK	9:45 PM	DUNKIRK	8:15 PM
FIRST KILL	12:15 AM	BABY DRIVER	12:05 AM	DUNKIRK	10:30 PM
				DUNKIRK	12:45 AM
SHARQIA-2		FANAR-3		AVENUES-4	
ANTAR IBN IBN IBN SHADAD -Arabic	12:15 PM	DESPICABLE ME 3	12:30 PM	DUNKIRK	2:00 PM
ANTAR IBN IBN IBN SHADAD -Arabic	2:45 PM	MUBARAKAN -Hindi	2:30 PM	THU+FRI	
DUNKIRK	5:15 PM	MUBARAKAN -Hindi	5:30 PM	JAB HARRY MET SEJAL -Hindi	1:15 PM
ANTAR IBN IBN IBN SHADAD -Arabic	7:30 PM	JAB HARRY MET SEJAL -Hindi	11:30 AM	NO THU+FRI	
ANTAR IBN IBN IBN SHADAD -Arabic	10:00 PM	JAB HARRY MET SEJAL -Hindi	2:30 PM	DUNKIRK	4:15 PM
ANTAR IBN IBN IBN SHADAD -Arabic	12:30 AM	JAB HARRY MET SEJAL -Hindi	5:30 PM	JAB HARRY MET SEJAL -Hindi	9:30 PM
		JAB HARRY MET SEJAL -Hindi	8:30 PM		
		JAB HARRY MET SEJAL -Hindi	11:30 PM		
SHARQIA-3		MARINA-1		360°-1	
THE DARK TOWER	12:00 PM	WAR FOR THE PLANET OF THE APES	11:35 AM	DUNKIRK	12:45 PM
WAR FOR THE PLANET OF THE APES	2:00 PM	WAR FOR THE PLANET OF THE APES	2:25 PM	DESPICABLE ME 3	1:35 PM
JAB HARRY MET SEJAL -Hindi	2:00 PM	SPIDER-MAN: HOMECOMING	5:10 PM	DUNKIRK	3:30 PM
WAR FOR THE PLANET OF THE APES	5:00 PM	WAR FOR THE PLANET OF THE APES	7:45 PM	DUNKIRK	8:00 PM
JAB HARRY MET SEJAL -Hindi	7:45 PM	ATOMIC BLONDE	10:30 PM	DUNKIRK	10:15 PM
THE DARK TOWER	10:45 PM	BABY DRIVER	12:45 AM	DUNKIRK	6:00 PM
THE DARK TOWER	12:45 AM			DUNKIRK	8:15 PM
				DUNK	10:30 PM
				DUNKIRK	12:40 AM
MUHALAB-1		MARINA-2		360°-2	
THE DARK TOWER	11:30 AM	ANTAR IBN IBN IBN SHADAD -Arabic	11:30 AM	CARS 3	12:00 PM
DUNKIRK	1:30 PM	ANTAR IBN IBN IBN SHADAD -Arabic	2:00 PM	DESPICABLE ME	2:15 PM
DUNKIRK	3:45 PM	ANTAR IBN IBN IBN SHADAD -Arabic	4:30 PM	CARS 3	4:15 PM
JAB HARRY MET SEJAL -Hindi	6:00 PM	ANTAR IBN IBN IBN SHADAD -Arabic	7:00 PM	DESPICABLE ME	6:40 PM
THE DARK TOWER	9:00 PM	ANTAR IBN IBN IBN SHADAD -Arabic	9:30 PM	ATOMIC BLONDE	8:35 PM
THE DARK TOWER	11:00 PM	ANTAR IBN IBN IBN SHADAD -Arabic	12:05 AM	ATOMIC BLONDE	10:45 PM
THE DARK TOWER	1:00 AM			ATOMIC BLONDE	1:00 AM
MUHALAB-2		MARINA-3		360°-3	
WAR FOR THE PLANET OF THE APES	12:15 PM	DESPICABLE ME 3	11:40 AM	WAR FOR THE PLANET OF THE APES	1:10 PM
WAR FOR THE PLANET OF THE APES	3:00 PM	DUNKIRK	1:30 PM	TISBAH ALA KHAIR	1:40 PM
DUNKIRK	5:45 PM	DESPICABLE ME 3	3:45 PM	WAR FOR THE PLANET OF THE APES	4:05 PM
FIRST KILL	8:00 PM	DUNKIRK	5:45 PM	WAR FOR THE PLANET OF THE APES	7:00 PM
BABY DRIVER	10:15 PM	DUNKIRK	8:00 PM	WAR FOR THE PLANET OF THE APES	9:50 PM
FIRST KILL	12:30 AM	THE DARK TOWER	10:15 PM	WAR FOR THE PLANET OF THE APES	12:50 AM
		THE DARK TOWER	12:30 AM		
				360°-4	
MUHALAB-3		AVENUES-1		TISBAH ALA KHAIR	11:55 AM
DESPICABLE ME 3	11:35 AM	FIRST KILL	11:30 AM	BABY DRIVER	1:55 PM
ANTAR IBN IBN IBN SHADAD -Arabic	1:30 PM	THE BIG SICK	1:35 PM	TISBAH ALA KHAIR	4:20 PM
JAB HARRY MET SEJAL -Hindi	1:30 PM	THE BIG SICK	4:00 PM	BABY DRIVER	6:25 PM
ANTAR IBN IBN IBN SHADAD -Arabic	4:30 PM	THE BIG SICK	6:30 PM	TISBAH ALA KHAIR	8:40 PM
ANTAR IBN IBN IBN SHADAD -Arabic	7:00 PM	FIRST KILL	9:00 PM	BOYKA: UNDISPUTED	10:35 PM
ANTAR IBN IBN IBN SHADAD -Arabic	9:30 PM	FIRST KILL	11:05 PM	BABY DRIVER	12:55 AM
ANTAR IBN IBN IBN SHADAD -Arabic	12:05 AM	FIRST KILL	1:10 AM		
FANAR-1		AVENUES-2			
DESPICABLE ME 3	1:35 PM	DUNKIRK	12:30 PM		
FIRST KILL	1:00 PM	WAR FOR THE PLANET OF THE APES-3D-4DX	2:45 PM		
FIRST KILL	5:45 PM	DUNKIRK -2D-4DX	5:30 PM		
ATOMIC BLONDE	8:00 PM	THE DARK TOWER-2D-4DX	7:45 PM		
FIRST KILL	10:45 PM	DUNKIRK -2D-4DX	9:45 PM		
FIRST KILL	1:00 AM				

Urgently Required for Project Manager for Civil, Supervisor, labors for cable works Reputed General Trading Company Required Urgently for 132KV High voltage Underground Cable Laying and civil works project. Local recruitment only inside Kuwait. Selected candidates will get attractive salary

MEW Approved candidates will be preferred .

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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

Automated enquiry about the Civil ID card is

1889988

EMERGENCY 112

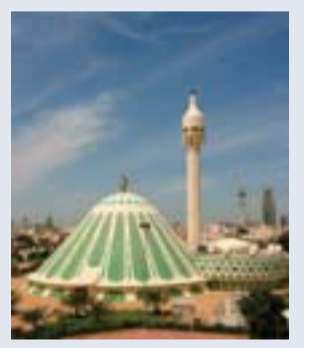
REQUIRED Delivery Driver

- Indian nationality
- Familiar with Kuwait areas and streets
- Full time
- Salary KD 250
- 1 day off
- Transferable visa 18

Call: 98989394

PRAYER TIMINGS

Fajr: 03:46
 Shorook: 05:13
 Duhr: 11:54
 Asr: 15:29
 Maghrib: 18:34
 Isha: 19:58



Directorate General of Civil Aviation Home Page (www.kuwait-airport.com.kw) DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Wednesday 9/8/2017				Departure Flights on Wednesday 9/8/2017			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
THY	772	Istanbul	00:10	QTR	1075	Doha	12:10
JZR	513	Sharm el-Sheikh	00:15	KAC	511	Mashhad	12:45
KAC	786	Jeddah	00:30	IRC	527	Mashhad	12:55
JZR	267	Beirut	00:35	IAW	158	Al Najaf	13:00
KAC	102	London	00:55	JZR	176	Dubai	13:10
DLH	635	Doha	01:00	AZQ	4721	Dubai	13:30
PGT	858	Istanbul	01:15	FEG	932	Alexandria	13:55
JZR	539	Cairo	01:20	THY	767	Istanbul	13:55
SYR	343	Damascus	01:30	MSR	611	Cairo	14:00
MSR	618	Alexandria	01:35	UAE	872	Dubai	14:15
UAE	853	Dubai	01:40	CLX	792	Hanoi	14:30
RJA	642	Amman	01:45	IRC	6512	ABD	14:50
THY	1464	Istanbul	01:50	KAC	673	Dubai	15:00
KKK	6506	Istanbul	01:55	KNE	382	Taif	15:00
KLM	446	Bahrain	02:05	GFA	222	Bahrain	15:00
QTR	1086	Doha	02:10	FDB	060	Dubai	15:05
PGT	830	Istanbul	02:10	QTR	1079	Doha	15:15
JZR	553	Alexandria	02:10	KAC	563	Amman	15:40
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:15	SVL	501	Jeddah	15:45
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	JZR	188	Dubai	15:50
AEE	942	ATH	02:25	KNE	530	Jeddah	15:55
THY	1404	AYT	02:30	KNE	684	Madinah	16:00
KAC	418	Manila	02:50	KAC	619	Doha	16:00
THY	752	Istanbul	03:05	KAC	775	Riyadh	16:05
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05	OMA	646	Muscat	16:10
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:10	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:15
RJA	644	Amman	03:10	ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	KAC	615	Bahrain	16:30
FDB	069	Dubai	03:15	MSR	576	Sharm el-Sheikh	16:50
KAC	382	Delhi	03:15	RJA	641	Amman	16:55
QTR	1076	Doha	03:45	SVL	505	Madinah	16:55
KAC	544	Cairo	03:50	FDB	052	Dubai	17:05
KAC	796	Madinah	03:55	JZR	266	Beirut	17:15
QTR	1090	Doha	04:05	KAC	503	Beirut	17:15
RBG	559	Alexandria	04:10	QTR	1073	Doha	17:25
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	04:15	KAC	283	Dhaka	17:25
UAE	873	Dubai	04:15	JZR	240	Amman	17:30
KAC	358	Kochi	04:50	JZR	1442	Doha	17:30
KAC	784	Jeddah	05:00	KAC	361	Colombo	17:35
FEG	931	Alexandria	05:00	UAE	858	Dubai	17:40
THY	770	Istanbul	05:05	KAC	357	Kochi	17:40
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:10	SAW	706	Damascus	17:50
KAC	344	Chennai	05:30	NIA	362	Alexandria	17:50
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:40	KAC	381	Delhi	17:50
KAC	362	Colombo	05:50	KAC	343	Chennai	18:00
BAW	157	London	06:05	SVL	511	Riyadh	18:15
KAC	1802	Cairo	06:35	GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
KAC	206	Islamabad	06:40	JZR	184	Dubai	18:25
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:50	JZR	538	Cairo	18:30
KAC	302	Mumbai	06:55	KAC	785	Jeddah	18:45
KAC	678	Dubai	06:55	QTR	1081	Doha	19:15
KAC	156	Istanbul	07:05	JZR	124	Bahrain	19:20
JZR	1541	Cairo	07:10	MSR	621	Cairo	19:30
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	GFA	218	Bahrain	19:50
KAC	384	Delhi	08:00	FDB	064	Dubai	19:50
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25	ABY	124	Sharjah	20:00
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:55	FDB	058	Dubai	20:30
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	KAC	331	Trivandrum	20:35
IRC	6511	ABD	09:10	UAE	876	Dubai	20:35
QTR	1070	Doha	09:25	KAC	353	Bangalore	20:55
IRA	665	Shiraz	09:25	KAC	1543	Cairo	21:00
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	DLH	634	Doha	21:00
IRM	1188	Mashhad	09:55	OMA	648	Muscat	21:05
MSC	415	Sohag	10:15	KNE	232	Riyadh	21:10
MEA	213	Bahrain	10:40	JZR	554	Alexandria	21:15
SYR	341	Damascus	10:55	MEA	403	Beirut	21:15
QTR	1074	Doha	11:00	KAC	301	Mumbai	21:40
AXB	889	Mangalore/Bahrain	11:05	KAC	203	Lahore	21:45
JZR	561	Sohag	11:10	DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50
KAC	614	Bahrain	11:15	QTR	1089	Doha	21:50
AZQ	4565	GYD	11:30	JZR	1542	Cairo	21:55
KAC	742	Dammam	11:45	KAC	205	Islamabad	21:55
JZR	165	Dubai	11:50	ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	22:00
IRC	526	Mashhad	11:55	KAC	155	Istanbul	22:15
IAW	157	Al Najaf	12:00	ALM	230	Colombo	22:20
JZR	239	Amman	12:25	KLM	445	Bahrain	22:25
KAC	774	Riyadh	12:45	THY	1413	Bahrain	22:25
UAE	871	Dubai	12:45	KAC	383	Delhi	22:35
FEG	953	Asyut	12:55	UAE	860	Dubai	22:35
THY	766	Istanbul	13:00	GFA			

GOSSIP

Drake is working on a new album



Drake has revealed he's working on a new album. The 'One Dance' rapper headlined his OVO music festival in his hometown of Toronto, Canada on Monday night where he told the audience he's set to return to the studio to prepare his follow-up to the hugely successful 'Views'. Speaking on stage, with the backdrop of 2016 LP behind him, Drake told the crowd: "I'm going to go back to making this new album in Toronto, just for you." It comes after the 30-year-old rapper released 'Signs' for fashion brand Louis Vuitton. The track was unveiled at the fashion brand's Spring/Summer 2018 catwalk show at the Domaine du Palais Royal in Paris, France in June. Sharing the artwork on Instagram, he captioned the post: "New song inspired by @louisvuitton @mrkimjones new collection Drake x LV premieres tmrw produced by @ovo40 (sic)" After 'Views', Drake released the mixtape 'More Life'. The compilation of songs broke streaming records on

both Apple Music and Spotify. Within the first 24 hours of being released the project, garnered a whopping 89.9 million streams globally on Apple Music, handing him a new world record for streams in a 24-hour period. On Spotify, the first full day of release for 'More Life' saw it rake in the best first-day streams for any album on the service. The record gained was 61.3 million global streams, smashing the previous record of 56.7 million, held by Ed Sheeran's recently released 'Divide'. If that wasn't enough, the 'Passionfruit' hit-maker also beat Ed's previously held record of the most streamed artist in a single day on Spotify. Drake managed to gain an impressive 76.4 million streams across all his available music on March 19, beating the 'Shape of You' singer's record of 68.7 million, which he picked up on March 3.

Ryan Tedder: Working with McCartney was my favorite week



Ryan Tedder says working with his idol Sir Paul McCartney was his "favorite week in his life". The OneRepublic frontman and chief songwriter has worked with a whole host of stars including recently former Fifth Harmony member Camila Cabello and he even worked with U2 on their forthcoming record. However, getting to be in the studio with the Beatles legend was a definite tick of his wish list. Speaking about what he's working on, Ryan told the latest issue of Sch?n! Magazine: "In terms of what I have coming, it's all over the map. I did a session last week with Camila Cabello and I'm really happy with it. I'm really excited about the Paul McCartney stuff. Beyond happy, it's probably my favorite session ever. "I'd go as far as saying my favorite week in my life was working with Paul McCartney. "The U2 album is shaping up and sounding incredible. I also got to do stuff with The Killers on their upcoming album. I've also been working with Jessie Ware, a British artist, whose single is out now." Meanwhile, the 'Counting Stars' hitmaker

has been vocal about how he feels the album format is becoming outdated and he says he's found it "freeing" to just put songs out on streaming services such as Apple Music and Spotify recently. This means it's highly unlikely we can expect another studio album from the band. Explaining his love of streaming platforms, Ryan said: "All we've been doing lately is just doing songs. We haven't gone to radio with a single since probably October. In a way, it's been the most freeing 9 months I've had in 10 years because I don't have to do any promo. You just put stuff out on Spotify and Apple Music...I think being able to just release music as you see fit makes it so much easier. Plus, the world kind of tells you what song they love. No Vacancy - which we put out back in April - could've easily gone to radio...The song is now closing in on 100 million streams and it's something we have done zero work behind. This doesn't mean we won't release singles in the future, but not always. We will but as and when."



Miley Cyrus announces new album Younger Now

Miley Cyrus has announced her new album 'Younger Now' will be released on September 29. The 'Malibu' singer made some significant changes to her official website overnight on Monday with the homepage simply displaying a picture of a leather jacket with what appears to be the album artwork, a leather jacket with the words "Younger Now" written in string on the garment. Emblazoned across it is the message: "New Album 9. 29 (sic)" The record will be the first studio LP from the 'Wrecking Ball' hitmaker since 2015's 'Miley Cyrus & Her Dead Petz'. The album news comes after the 24-year-old beauty - who is engaged to actor Liam Hemsworth - was announced as a performer at the 2017 MTV Video Music Awards (VMAs). The pop star will take to the stage at the Forum in Los Angeles on August 27, along with the likes of Katy Perry, Ed Sheeran, Lorde, 30 Seconds to Mars and Shawn Mendes and The Weeknd. Miley is up for the Best Pop award for her track 'Malibu'. Back in 2013, the 'Hannah Montana' star performed at the annual awards ceremony and showed off her twerking skills during a performance with Robin Thicke and said she was "making history" just like Britney Spears and Madonna have done at the bash in the past. Asked if she was bothered by criticism she received, she said at the time: "I don't pay attention to the negative because I've seen this play out so many times. "How many times have we seen this play out in pop music? "Madonna's done it. Britney's done it. Every VMA performance, that's what you're looking for; you're wanting to make history." Madonna and Britney famously locked lips in 2003 at the VMAs, and in 2001, the latter danced with a boa constrictor to 'I'm a Slave 4 U'. Miley has left a box for her fans to enter the email addresses and sign up for updates on her record.

The Beach Boys, Queen and Foo Fighters' version of Holy Man barred from release

A reworked Beach Boys song featuring members of Queen and Foo Fighters has been blocked from being released following a legal dispute. The supergroup have been working on updating 'Holy Man', which was co-written by late Beach Boys member Dennis Wilson and his lead singer brother Brian, 75. Dennis' co-writer Stephen Kalinich is the only person who was able to hear the song in its original form and he claims he hasn't had access to it for more than three decades. The 'Little Bird' drummer tragically drowned at Marina Del Rey in 1983, and the track has been stored away in a vault ever since. The original music was created by the 'Good Vibrations' hitmakers in 1974, and the rough tape was sent to Queen's guitarist Brian May and drummer Roger Taylor and the US rockers. A source said: "The song is in a vault and nobody can do anything about it. "It's such a shame as there will clearly be a huge demand for it." Dennis' co-writer Stephen says it is "such a shame" that no one will be able to get their ears on the "six-minute masterpiece" because of the law. He told The Sun newspaper: "It's over six minutes long and it's a masterpiece, but we've never been able to release it because we can't get the legalities worked out. Such a shame. "People hear it and, honest to God, it brings tears to their eyes." Foo Fighters' drummer Taylor Hawkins recorded vocals on their version and Stephen says he sounded just like Dennis with "the same gravelly, whisky voice". He added: "Taylor sent the track to Brian May and he and Roger Taylor fell in love with it. They spent weeks fooling around with it, putting on vocals and some incredible percussive things."



Ethan Hawke teases another Before film

Ethan Hawke has hinted there could be a fourth installment of the 'Before' film series. The 46-year-old actor - who has played Jesse in the movie franchise since 1995 - has teased there could be one more movie about his and Celine's journey together. Asked if he thinks there'll be another movie, he said: "I don't know. I would have said after the second there was definitely going to be a third one but I do feel complete in that the first one starts with the older couple arguing on the train and by the end of the third one we've become that couple. "If it were to continue it would change shape. It would be something else. Julie, Rick and I might work together again, we might revisit those characters but it'll need a new burst of energy. I don't know what it is. "We're not allowed to think about it until five years after - that's how we've done it every time. Waking Life was five years after Before Sunrise, and Before Midnight we met five years after Before Sunset. So we're gonna meet five years after the release of Before Midnight. talk about it and see where we wind up." And Ethan admits the movie series has been very important to him as he spent so much time of his life on it. Speaking about what movies have stayed with him the longest, he added to The Independent newspaper: "The Before trilogy ... Boyhood and the Before trilogy are deeply connected to my soul for lack of a better word. I've worked on Jesse, which is the main character from the Before movies, at nine-year intervals. "I started working on that character when I was 25 and the last time when I was 41, so it's been with me and I've gotten to put a lot of my own life into those movies. Boyhood is only short a couple of years - it was 12 years working on that character. So those movies are part of me in a way that other movies are one window."



Alfre Woodard and John Kani to star in The Lion King

Alfre Woodard and John Kani have joined the cast of 'The Lion King'. Woodard, 64, will play Simba's mother Sarabi and Kani, 73, will be taking on the role of the wise baboon Rafiki, who advises Mufasa, the king of Pride Rock, The Wrap reports. The two actors are best known for the roles in the Marvel Cinematic Universe movie 'Captain America: Civil War'. Disney are rebooting the beloved 1994 animated movie with 'Jungle Book' filmmaker Jon Favreau helming the project and Chiwetel Ejiofor is reportedly in talks to play the villain of the movie, according to The Hollywood Reporter. Sinister Scar, who is the brother of Mufasa and uncle to the young cub Simba, was originally voiced by Jeremy Irons in the award-winning 1994 animated Disney movie. John Oliver, 40, will also join the cast, alongside Donald Glover who will play Simba and James Earl Jones, who will be reprising his role as Mufasa in the cartoon classic. Oliver will be voicing Zazu, a hornbill who serves as the king's majordomo and was originally played by Rowan Atkinson. Recently it was revealed that Seth Rogen and Billy Eichner were cast to play the comedy duo Timon and Pumbaa. The movie is set for a July 2019 release and Favreau is already in pre-production, with Jeff Nathanson writing the script. It has also been rumored that Beyoncé is the preferred choice to play Nala in the movie. As well as keeping Sir Elton John and Tim Rice's original songs, which include 'Can You Feel The Love Tonight', 'Be Prepared' and 'I Just Can't Wait To Be King', the remake will also feature some new tunes. 'Can You Feel The Love Tonight' played out over the credits of the 1994 movie and went on to win Best Original Song at the 1995 Academy Awards. Back in February, Disney revealed the movie is on the "fast-track to production" and the studio announced other remakes including 'Dumbo', 'Aladdin' and 'Mulan'.



Judy Greer to star in Driven

Judy Greer is to star in 'Driven'. The 42-year-old actress has signed up for the indie thriller alongside Jason Sudeikis, Lee Pace and Timothy Olyphant. The movie follows the story of Jim Hoffman (Sudeikis), a con artist who has turned an informer for the FBI. His handler (played by Olyphant) wants to catch DeLorean (Pace) in a drug deal that became one of the craziest celebrity scandals of the 1980s. Greer is set to play Jim's wife Ellen Hoffman, Deadline reports. The film will be directed by Nick Hamm whilst Colin Bateman has penned the script. Tempo Productions' Piers Tempest and Jo Bamford will produce alongside Pimienta Film Company's Lullilo Ruiz. Blue Rider Pictures' Walter Josten is executive producing whilst Blue Rider Pictures will finance. Hamm

said previously: "All filmmakers are suckers for a good story and this is a great one - and as yet, untold. It's about ambition, success and failure in a decade where everything began to change. It's also an intelligent and personal drama about fighting for personal success. An edge-of-your-seat, character-driven and comic wink to the world of power suits, discos and vice. Above all, it's damn good fun." Whilst Tempest shared in a statement: "Jason and Lee pair in the main roles as a charismatic and risk-taking duo. And we're excited to expand upon a great filmmaking partnership between Colin and Nick formed on The Journey, in which they were so adept at creating an enticing and funny story of sworn enemies making peace possible." Filming for 'Driven' is set to begin in September in Puerto Rico.



James Gunn thinking about future of Guardians of the Galaxy

James Gunn has confirmed the script for 'Guardians of the Galaxy Vol 3' is already "in the works". Following the successful release of the first two Marvel Cinematic Universe movies, the screenwriter-and-director has been busy working on the next installment and has been in touch with Marvel boss Kevin Feige about the future of the characters. Speaking to the Hollywood Reporter, Gunn - who helmed the two first movies - said: "Those scripts are already in the works. Kevin and I talk about it all the time; we just had a meeting today. "Discussing what is the next iteration of cosmic characters and where are the characters that we've already created

going to go in the next batch of films." 'Avengers 4' marks the end of Phase 4 of the current MCU and will see many actors leave the successful franchise. At the end of the second 'Guardians' movie, fans were treated to a post-credit sequence which introduced a new team including Starhawk (Sylvester Stallone), Aleta Ogord (Michelle Yeoh), Charlie-27 (Ving Rhames), Krugarr and Mainframe (voiced by Miley Cyrus). And Gunn would like to develop these characters even more. He said: "I'm definitely interested in the direction that these characters are headed and their roles in the Marvel Universe. "These are older characters and more criminal than our Guardians. So we're focusing

on that." Gunn teased at E3 in June that he is planning on making a change to his own continuity because he has come up with a plot idea that requires it but he just hopes he won't upset fans. The 'Guardians of the Galaxy' series stars Chris Pratt as Star-Lord, Zoe Saldana as Gamora, Dave Bautista as Drax, Bradley Cooper as Rocket and Vin Diesel as fan favorite Groot. The Guardians will be joining the rest of the Avengers in the upcoming 'Avengers: Infinity War' and 'Avengers 4' as they go head-to-head against intergalactic supervillain Thanos.

—Bang Showbiz



MUSIC & MOVIES

'Magical Negro': The racist cliché Hollywood won't drop

One trope in filmmaking that is sure to draw scorn from culturally aware critics is the "Magical Negro"—a black character whose sole purpose is to help the white protagonist. From Whoopi Goldberg's psychic Oda Mae Brown in "Ghost" (1990) to Chief Gus Mancuso, played by Laurence Fishburne, in 2016's "Passengers," it is a relatively new device with roots deep in the traditions of American storytelling.

The latest production to come under the spotlight is ABC's forthcoming dramedy "Kevin (Probably) Saves the World," which was previewed on Sunday as part of the summer press tour hosted by the Television Critics Association in Los Angeles. Starring Jason Ritter, "Kevin" follows a self-absorbed loser who is given a chance at redemption by a celestial guide played by African American actress Kimberly Hebert Gregory. Gregory ("Vice Principals") was asked by journalists how the show would avoid her character becoming a "Magical Negro."

"I understand that concept but the character is not an angel. She's flawed, she's not angelic. She

doesn't necessarily behave like an angel, she doesn't use language that's angelic," Gregory said. "She has a real purpose and her purpose is really bigger than just helping Kevin do what he needs to do." "Magical Negro" characters avail themselves, sometimes literally clad in the white garb of a Biblical angel, to offer folksy wisdom and, often, mystical powers in the service of the central white character.

Spiritual wisdom

A repeat offender, Morgan Freeman has arguably played versions of the trope in "Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves," "The Shawshank Redemption," "Bruce Almighty" and its sequel, Christopher Nolan's Batman trilogy and, most recently, last year's "Ben-Hur" remake. "With such deep spiritual wisdom... you might wonder why the Magical Negro doesn't step up and save the day himself. This will never happen," notes the TV Tropes website.

"So enlightened and selfless is he that he has no desire to gain glory for himself. He only wants

to help those who need guidance, which just happens to mean those who are traditionally viewed by Hollywood as better suited for protagonist roles, not, say, his own oppressed people." The word "negro" is considered offensive and anachronistic by modern English speakers, and "Magical Negro" is deliberately provocative in its framing of a trope considered to be borne of sub-conscious racism.

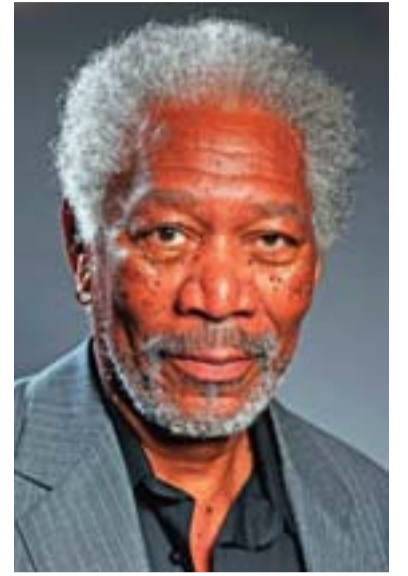
In the aftermath of the "Oscars So White" social media campaign that berated the Academy for failing to recognize a single actor of color among 40 nominees for the 2015 and 2016 ceremonies, it has been tempting to assume any movie casting among ethnic minorities for leading roles must automatically be a good thing.

'Recycling the noble savage'

But critics have argued that obvious examples of discrimination, such as the under-representation of minorities on both sides of the camera, are obscuring this more subtle, insidious form of racism. The term "Magical Negro" was popular-

ized by filmmaker Spike Lee, who said in 2001 he was frustrated that executives were continuing to employ the stereotype, naming and shaming "The Green Mile" (1999) and "The Legend of Bagger Vance" (2000). "Blacks are getting lynched left and right, and (Bagger Vance is) more concerned about improving Matt Damon's golf swing," the "Malcolm X" director, now 60, said.

"I've got to sit down. I get mad just thinking about it. They're still doing the same old thing... recycling the noble savage and the happy slave," he added. Tara Butters, co-creator of "Kevin (Probably) Saves the World," argues that the show's guardian angel, far from being just a guide for the white protagonist, was "her own hero" in the one-hour weekly drama, which premieres on October 3. "And as the show expands over multiple episodes one of the things she'll realize is that, as much as she is there to help Kevin, Kevin ends up helping her," she said. "They end up creating this really interesting partnership." — AFP



Morgan Freeman



Co-director Ben Safdie, from left, actor Robert Pattinson, and co-director Joshua Safdie pose for a portrait to promote their film, "Good Time" at the Four Seasons Hotel in Los Angeles. — AP

Q&A: Robert Pattinson goes undercover in NYC for 'Good Time'

"Good Time" is a story about one bad night gone worse. Robert Pattinson plays a small time Queens crook named Connie Nikas whose botched robbery and escape attempt lands his mentally handicapped brother in jail. And that's just in the first few minutes. The film doesn't come up for a breather for the next 90. People have described "Good Time" as "Mean Streets" on MDMA and "After Hours" on crack and meth" which might even be too tame to fully capture its kinetic pace. The filmmakers behind it, Josh and Benny Safdie, are two who the general public would be forgiven for not knowing. They are 30-something brothers whose last film, the punishing heroin drama "Heaven Knows What," played in only 14 theaters.

So how did they get one of the biggest movie stars in the world to lead their next film? Pattinson called them. The Associated Press sat down with Pattinson and the Safdies (Benny also plays Connie's brother Nick in the film) to talk about "Good Time" and how a movie star was able to stay hidden in plain sight in New York - even on the subway at rush hour. Remarks have been edited for clarity and brevity.

AP: It's a crazy story how Robert became aware of you as filmmakers.

JOSH SAFDIE: It's not that crazy, is it?

AP: He saw a promotional still from "Heaven Knows What" and decided he had to work with you?

JOSH SAFDIE: I guess it is kind of wild. Honestly I forget the stature of his stardom. To me it's like a guy saw a picture and he was inspired by it and he reached out. It's totally normal. But I guess when you look at it from afar it's kind of crazy.

PATTINSON: I don't know about the stature of my star, but I think the level of conviction was unusual for me at least. It was like I knew. And then we did the meeting and just agreed to do something. And then also for that to actually happen afterward is even more unusual. People say, "Oh let's do something together" all the time.

JOSH SAFDIE: I warned you, I said, "Be careful, we are the type of people who when we want to do something we'll just do it. We'll figure out a way to do it."

BENNY SAFDIE: The movie wouldn't be here had he not reached out to us.

AP: Was this a different experience for you?

PATTINSON: They run at a different level of energy to most people. It's nice, though. I was thinking how to describe the movie and it's like it's a car crash movie, but the car crash happens in the first five minutes and you're just skidding for the rest.

JOSH SAFDIE: We wanted to make a

thriller that actually thrilled you, like the stakes felt really real.

AP: Had you been to places like these before? A bail bonds office? A jail?

JOSH SAFDIE: We brought Rob to this one jail called the Manhattan Detention Center. We had become friendly with the warden there and she was like, "Come by!" She gave us unfettered access. It was insane. At the end I was like, "What's up with the female wing?"

PATTINSON: And you can't even go there as a guy.

JOSH SAFDIE: No you're not allowed and she's like, "You guys can come!" I look at Rob and he's like, "I don't want to go." And I'm like come on let's go. No one had recognized us.

PATTINSON: Even the people giving us the tour didn't realize we were doing it for a movie. Everyone was asking us to contact our lawyers outside. And then we went to the female wing and within seconds...

JOSH SAFDIE: One girl was like, "HIM!" (Pointing to Pattinson). He was immediately like, "I told you we shouldn't have gone in here."

PATTINSON: The assistant warden then was like, "Who are you guys?"

BENNY SAFDIE: We're like, "We've gotta go."

AP: Were you able to stay under the radar while shooting?

PATTINSON: Yeah, it was kind of a conscious decision. You find funny ways to stay hidden. And luckily we were in some places that were just so crowded, it's kind of easier. Some things I just don't understand like it's rush hour on the subway and we're stealing shots and we have a big camera and a crew and Josh is directing me via text message and people do not notice.

AP: So was it kind of a guerrilla shoot?

JOSH SAFDIE: There was an illusion of guerrilla tactics. We wanted to tap into that feeling and bring that vibe to the movie. But we push it and push it. Like Rob watches me and Benny holding a four-lane street of traffic where everyone is laying on their horn and we're like, "Go Rob, go!" He's like sprinting for his dear life.

PATTINSON: We're trying to shoot this movie totally under the radar and literally causing such a commotion doing this thing and I'm literally hiding.

BENNY SAFDIE: I kept thinking, "No one's going to hit us!"

AP: Did anything surprise you about Robert?

JOSH SAFDIE: I was really impressed and surprised that he didn't complain. Not once. Everyone on our movie complained.

BENNY SAFDIE: Everybody. — AP

Patriotic blockbuster breaks China box office record

A Chinese action film that depicts the country's soldiers saving war-ravaged Africans from Western baddies soared to become China's all-time top box-office earner yesterday, headlining a summer of patriotic cinematic fare. The wildly popular "Wolf Warriors 2" boasts the ominous tagline "whoever offends China will be hunted down no matter how far away they are", and millions of Chinese cinema-goers have lapped it up since the movie's release less than two weeks ago.

The blockbuster has raked in more than 3.4 billion yuan (\$500 million) since debuting on July 27, according to unofficial China box-office trackers Maoyan, a leading ticket merchant, and other industry tallies. The movie's phenomenal success launched it past "The Mermaid", a China-Hong Kong fantasy comedy released last year that grossed 3.39 billion and had held the record, according to Maoyan.

Replete with special effects, stunts and explosions to rival Hollywood, "Wolf Warriors 2" tells the story of a former Chinese Special Forces operative's foray into an unnamed African war zone to rescue compatriots and downtrodden locals. Experts say the movie is riding a wave of patriotic fervour drummed up by the ruling Communist Party.

It comes soon after China opened a naval base in Djibouti, a major step in the country's expanding military presence abroad. The facility in the Horn of Africa nation is China's first overseas naval base. However, not all patriotic Chinese films this season have enjoyed such rave reviews. "The Founding of an Army" boasts better-known actors but has been panned by critics, movie-goers and even families of a number of Chinese revolutionary heroes. That film was timed to coincide with the 90th anniversary of the founding of the People's Liberation Army, which was accompanied by celebrations and wall-to-wall media coverage. — AFP



Japan actor who played original Godzilla dies at 88

Haruo Nakajima, the actor who played Japan's iconic city-wrecking monster Godzilla in the original 1954 movie, has died, film studio Toho said yesterday. He was 88. Nakajima, who went on to appear as the iconic creature a dozen times, died of pneumonia on Monday, said a spokesman for the studio that produced the Godzilla films. Originally a stuntman, Nakajima at the age of 25 first took on the role of the giant monster awakened by a hydrogen bomb test to rise out of a roiling sea and swim to Japan where it crushes Tokyo.

Godzilla, a walking, radiation-breathing analogy for nuclear disaster resonated in Japan. Just nine years earlier the country had suffered the world's first, and still only, atomic bomb attacks at the hands of the United States in the closing days of World War II. The US also carried out a hydrogen bomb test at Bikini Atoll in the South Pacific in 1954, exposing a Japanese fishing boat to nuclear fallout, sickening the 23 crew and eventually killing the captain. Nakajima prepared to play the imaginary creature by visiting a Tokyo zoo for a week to analyze the moves of elephants, bears and gorillas, according to the Toho website.

He said that the suit for the original film was too heavy and he could barely walk for 10 meters (33 feet). The suit weighed around 100 kilograms (220 pounds), Toho said. Nakajima also said he "felt a sense of isolation" in the beginning because of the thickness of the rubber used in the suit that he could not remove

without help. "But I started to enjoy playing Godzilla," he said. The franchise has produced 29 films in Japan, according to Toho. The original movie "Gojira"—a Japanese portmanteau of "gorilla" and "kujira" (whale)—was a mega hit, drawing 9.6 million viewers to cinemas. — AFP



Original Godzilla suit actor Haruo Nakajima, who has played his role as the monster, speaks during an interview at his home in Sagami, near Tokyo. — AP

'Despacito' opening doors for Spanish songs on English radio

"Despacito" is easily the song of the summer with the success of the hit stretching beyond Spanish-speaking audiences to make it the year's most recognized song in the US and elsewhere. Luis Fonsi and Daddy Yankee's song, which has topped the Billboard Hot 100 chart for 13 weeks and counting, set a record as the most streamed song on Spotify and is the first YouTube video to reach 3 billion views. The song also has opened the door for other Spanish tracks to get airplay on American radio.

"The beauty behind ('Despacito') is that it was never meant to be a crossover song. When I sat down with my guitar to write this song, I just wanted to write a great song that people would automatically connect to, and dance to, and really enjoy, so it was so nice to see how - in a very organic way - the whole world just connected to it," Fonsi said in an interview from Spain, where he was set to perform the worldwide hit.

"It wasn't really forced, it wasn't gimmicky ... it's sort of an accident if you will," he said. "There's something magical in that melody and in the beat and in the production ... and people in Russia and Australia and UK and France and US and South America - everyone's just dancing." "Despacito" is the first mostly Spanish song to top the Hot 100 since Los del Rio's "Macarena" in 1996. The smooth jam about slowly falling in love has become a pop culture phenomenon since its release in January, selling more than 7.7 million tracks - based on digital sales, audio streaming and video streaming - according to Nielsen Music. It has spent 27 weeks at No. 1 on Billboard's Latin songs charts, and while some believe Justin Bieber helped make the song a hit when he jumped on its remix, it's quite the opposite.

Global momentum

"Technically, the reason why Justin Bieber discovered the song was because it was so popular already," said Rocío Guerra, Spotify's head of Latin culture. "Despacito" had reached the Top 40 on the Hot 100, and following the Bieber remix - which includes the pop star singing in Spanish - the song reached No. 1. The remix spent 14 weeks on top of Spotify's global chart until last week when it was supplanted by J Balvin's "Mi Gente" - another Spanish song finding success on US radio and the pop charts.

"Mi Gente," a collaboration with Willy Williams, is No. 30 on the Hot 100 after just a month on the chart. "I don't think this is just something that happened overnight ... it's something that happened overnight and creative community, we've been working so long toward this direction, and I don't think specifically only in the US, it's a global momentum," Guerra said.

Different languages

The Latin beat can be heard on current English-language hits as well, including DJ Khaled and Rihanna's "Wild Thoughts," which samples Carlos Santana's 1999 megahit "Maria, Maria," and French Montana's "Unforgettable," which has a reggaeton vibe (J. Balvin appears on its Latin remix). Fonsi said he doesn't want to take credit for the success of Latin music on pop radio, but knows "Despacito" has helped set the mood. "I hope that it's a door that will stay open for a long time. I think it's bigger than just this summer. I think it was (over)due for Latin music to get this attention and I love the fact that we're all collaborating in different languages," he said. "It's not about where you're from or what language you're singing in, it's about bringing cultures together and different styles, and it's good for music in general." — AP

SINGER SINEAD O'CONNOR POSTS TROUBLING VIDEO



File photo of Irish singer Sinead O'Connor performs during the Italian State RAI TV program "Che Tempo che Fa", in Milan, Italy. — AP

Singer Annie Lennox yesterday said she was "concerned for the safety" of fellow performer Sinead O'Connor after she posted a tearful video in which she said she was "fighting... to stay alive". In the post, made in a New Jersey hotel on Thursday, O'Connor, 50, who has been diagnosed with bipolar disorder, said: "For the last two years, my entire life has been revolving just about not dying."

"I'm all by myself and there's absolutely nobody in my life except my doctor, my psychiatrist, who was the only thing "that keeps me alive". "I'm fighting, fighting, fighting, fighting... to stay alive." Former Eurythmics singer Lennox responded on Facebook, calling the video a "truly distressing call for help" "She appears to be completely out on a limb and I'm concerned for her safety. Are there no close friends or family who could be with her to give her some loving support? It's terrible to see her in such a vulnerable state." O'Connor is remem-

bered for her arresting 1990 rendition of Prince's song "Nothing Compares 2 U", and its iconic video featuring the tearful and shaven-headed singer.

O'Connor quickly developed a name for inflammatory outbursts and caused an international controversy in 1992 when she tore up a picture of pope John Paul II on a US television show. An unidentified poster on her Facebook account later wrote that the singer "is safe, and she is not suicidal." "She is surrounded by love and receiving the best of care. She asked for this to be posted knowing you are concerned for her. In recent years her posts on social media have become increasingly unfiltered, often threatening legal action against former associates, referring to physical and mental health difficulties and discussing troubles with her family and children. — AFP



A couple walks along the shore of Walden Pond in Concord, Mass. — AP photos



Visitors walk past Hartwell Tavern on the restored Battle Road at Minute Man National Historical Park in Lincoln, Mass.



People enjoy an afternoon at Walden Pond in Concord, Mass.

Wandering Walden Pond: A Thoreau-ly worthwhile day trip



A stone inscription marks the actual site of Henry David Thoreau's cabin on the shores of Walden Pond in Concord, Mass.

Henry David Thoreau went to the woods because, as he famously put it, "I wished to live deliberately." Two centuries after the "Walden" author's birth, people are still deliberately following in Thoreau's footsteps to discover Walden Pond, the little lake he immortalized. Whether you're visiting Boston or the Berkshires, the pond and the bucolic Massachusetts town of Concord are Thoreau-ly worth a side trip. Here's why:

Walden Pond

A retreating glacier formed it 10,000 or so years ago, but it was Thoreau - born in Concord 200 years ago this summer on July 12, 1817 - who really put Walden Pond on the map. He spent two years and two months in solitude and reflection on its shores, writing "Walden" (the book's full title is "Walden; or, Life in the Woods"), about grasping at the meaning of life by living simply and coexisting with the natural environment.

Today, Walden Pond is a popular fishing hole stocked with trout and frequented by walkers, boaters, swimmers, sunbathers and birdwatchers in warm weather. In winter, there's snowshoeing and cross-country skiing. You can wander the shaded dirt path hugging the oblong pond; at 1.7 miles, it's perfect for walkers and runners of all abilities, and its serenity provides a spectacular backdrop for foliage in autumn.

A can't-miss attraction on Walden Pond State Reservation is the reconstruction of the tiny wood-cabin where Thoreau lived and worked. There's

also a gleaming new solar-powered visitor center that opened last October, featuring interactive exhibits about the man considered a founder of the modern environmental movement. Officials say the pond and center draw about a half-million visitors from around the globe each year.

Thoreau at Walden

Thoreau made a big splash at Walden Pond. Working at a simple green desk in the cabin he built himself, the former schoolteacher completed "Walden" in 1854. One hundred and 63 years later, it's a classic known for lines such as, "The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation," and, "I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived."

But Thoreau was many things - philosopher, naturalist, transcendentalist, abolitionist, early climate change advocate - and he wrote other acclaimed works, including "Civil Disobedience," an 1849 essay in which he agitated against slavery and government overreach.

Concord and environs

Nestled about 20 miles northwest of Boston, Concord is famous for Revolutionary War landmarks enshrined in Minute Man National Historical Park, a leafy spot to picnic and learn more about the first battles that led to American independence from England. Thoreau isn't the only renowned



A statue of Henry David Thoreau stands outside a replica of his cabin near the shores of Walden Pond in Concord, Mass.

writer who created here; Ralph Waldo Emerson sketched out his celebrated essay "Nature" in town, and it's the hometown of Pulitzer Prize-winning author Doris Kearns Goodwin.

The Concord Museum houses some truly iconic Americana, including the lantern that hung in a church steeple during Paul Revere's fateful 1775 ride warning that the British were coming. — AP



Photo shows a painting of six of Christ's Apostles, on the wall of the chancel of St Mary's Church in Kempey, Gloucestershire, western England. — AP photos



Photo shows St Mary's Church at Kempey, in Gloucestershire, western England.



Photo shows a painting of Jesus Christ, accompanied by six of his Apostles and angels.

Ancient tiny church in western England a keeper of history

St Mary's Church, in Kempey, in Gloucestershire, western England, is a hidden gem. Paintings have adorned this ancient, tiny church for 900 years. Experts from the United Kingdom's Courtauld Institute of Art say they're among the most complete and best preserved medieval wall paintings in

Northern Europe, depicting Bible scenes, saints, the apostles, Christ and the Apocalypse.

During the Reformation, the Kempey murals were whitewashed. They were not rediscovered or restored for centuries. — AP



Photo shows St Mary's Church at Kempey, in Gloucestershire, western England.



Photo shows the interior of St Mary's Church in Kempey, Gloucestershire, western England, which boasts some of the finest and most complete medieval wall paintings in northern Europe.

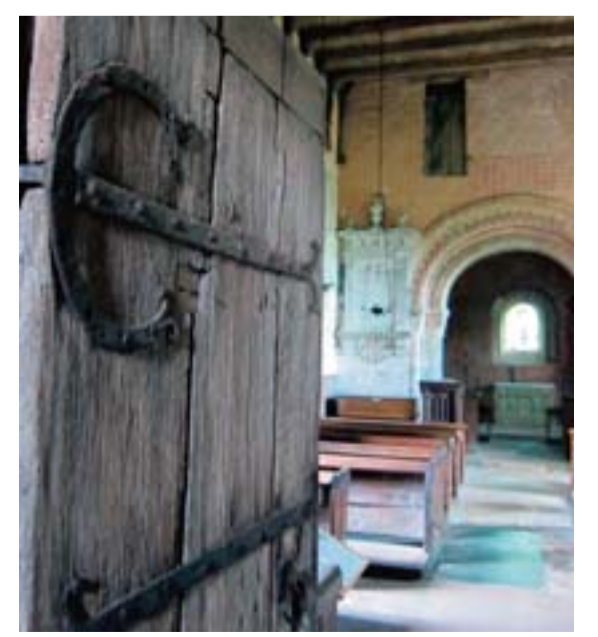


Photo shows the door from the bell tower into the nave of St Mary's Church in Kempey, Gloucestershire, western England.

FEATURES



The power of the Arabic alphabet

By Abdellatif Sharaa

Sarah Hassan is a formative Kuwaiti artist with a passion for heritage of the east. Her works reflect her leanings towards folkloric expressions.

Sarah believes Arabic alphabets have special characteristics that even foreign artists like the Swiss-German Paul Klee picked up. This can be noticed in her works, as she employs the alphabet to come up with beautiful works with significant artistic value. The Arabic alphabet, which is considered an integral part of her work, has a dynamic formation with certain various visual aspects that bring the work to life and makes it vibrant with clear musical harmony.

Sarah has a special and personal angle through which she sees the alphabet. She

does not aim to transform her works into a purely alphabetical formation, but rather attempts to create a beautiful link between the Arabic alphabets and other visual shapes. By this, she turned the alphabet one of her works' elements, where she was able to make the letters interact with other artistic elements and shapes inspired by Islamic-Arab art.

The works of Sarah Hassan are characterized by a method of (altered realism) that can be considered stable and expressionist, where shapes are disciplined. Her works fluctuate between realism in some details and expressionism as a whole. Furthermore, the ingredients of her art are drawn in vivid shapes with slight alterations in some parts to form shapes in a form that fill the work.



Thieves target historic Portuguese decorative tiles

Gaping holes on the crumbling walls of an abandoned palace in the heart of Lisbon mark where decorative ceramic tiles have been yanked off, to the displeasure of passing tourists. Thieves are swiping the elaborately painted tiles, which cover buildings across Portugal, to sell them on the black market. Just one of these tiles, called azulejos, can fetch thousands of euros. And abandoned buildings like the 17th century Pombal Palace, are especially vulnerable.

This was once the family home of the Marquis de Pombal, the statesman who rebuilt Lisbon after a massive earthquake devastated the city in 1755. Owned by Lisbon's cash-strapped city hall for the last five decades, it has fallen into ruin due to lack of maintenance. And since a cultural association, Carpe Diem, moved out at the end of July, the palace has been empty. "SOS Azulejo", a project set up by police in 2007 to stop antique dealers from selling stolen Portuguese tiles, includes it on its list of "high risk" buildings.

Tile thefts have plunged by 80 percent since the project was set up, said Leonor Sa, the head of Portugal's police museum which displays recovered stolen tiles. But a huge amount of thefts go unreported, she added. "The Portuguese do not file complaints because for them they are the most banal thing in the world. They live surrounded by tiles since their birth until their death," Sa told AFP. "Foreign tourists who discover these ceramics love them because they don't have them at home." Sa, who has a doctorate in cultural studies, gave birth to her two daughters, Rita and Joana, at a Lisbon hospital decorated in azulejos, where she herself was born 59 years ago.

Churches pillaged

Azulejos first came to Portugal in the early middle ages when Portugal was under Moorish rule. Although many assume the word is a derivation of azul-Portuguese for "blue", the colour of most tiles-the word is Arabic in origin and comes from az-zulayj, which roughly translates as "polished stone". Disgusted at the loss of this unique Portuguese treasure, Sa set up an internet site, www.sosazulejo.com, that displays photos of tiles stolen from churches, hospitals, train stations and other buildings. It makes it easy to check if a tile on sale at a street market or antique dealer was stolen.

"It's very dissuasive," said Sa, who is full of energy and has an intense gaze. Tile thefts reached peaks of around 10,000 per

year in 2001, 2002 and 2006 but "now there are significantly fewer" thefts, she said. Since 2013 it is illegal in Lisbon to demolish a facade decorated with tiles without the authorization of city officials. Parliament plans to extend the rule to the entire country shortly. At Lisbon's rambling Feira da Lada flea market, or "Thieves' Market", old azulejos are on sale for between five euros and 100 euros (\$118). A giant 18th-century panel made up of brown, gold and green tiles depicting exotic animals and flowers was on sale for 500 euros. Prices at antique dealers can go even higher, with some azulejos fetching up to 10,000 euros.

'I don't steal'

Anne Typhagne, a 43-year-old French tour guide, lingers before a display of tiles at the flea market which overlooks the Tagus river. "Before I bought a lot of them, then I stopped because I am against the theft of Portugal's heritage," she said. Police inspections of tile vendors at the market are frequent. "When they come, I show all the papers. I sell, I don't steal," said Maria Santos, 28, whose small stand teems with ceramic tiles from the 18th and 19th centuries. While some tiles are recovered from building demolitions, Santos said "often, we don't really know where they come from."

Oscar Pinto, the head of the national police division dedicated to crimes involving art, said the majority of tiles that are sold have a "legitimate" origin. "Sometimes it is the landlords themselves that get rid of them to renovate their homes," he said at his sparsely decorated office. "But lets not kid ourselves. A drug addict who sells you 20 azulejos in a plastic bag at one euro a piece, there is a strong chance that it was a theft." Pinto had gone to the flea market the day before to try, in vain, to recover over one thousand 18th-century ceramic tiles pulled down overnight from an abandoned building in Lisbon's riverside Baixa district.

The Portuguese capital's tourism boom "could contribute to an upsurge in thefts," he said. Ceramics maker Cristina Pina, 55, thinks she has found a solution to stop tourists from buying old tiles-she has set up a small shop near the market that sells reproductions of azulejos made in the 18th century. "I prefer it if tourists buy beautiful reproductions of azulejos as souvenirs of Lisbon, which will allow the originals to remain in the country," she said. — AFP



Tiles, part of the Portuguese architectural heritage, are being stolen from public spaces and buildings and sold in markets for low prices to tourists.

Migrant center in Berlin brings Germany Arabic culture

'There are almost no libraries with Arabic books or institutions for Arab culture here'

Germany is the country of Goethe and Kant, Bach and Beethoven. But recent migrants are hoping to sprinkle Arabic poetry and Middle Eastern music, into that mix. At the "Between Us" cultural center in the German capital, migrants meet regularly to share their art, poetry and music - both to provide a flavor of home, and to educate the native citizens of their new home. "There are almost no libraries with Arabic books or institutions for Arab culture here," said Muhannad Qaiconie, the 30-year old founder of the center.

"Still, Berlin is now a hotspot for Syrian authors, artists and musicians, and we want to give them a meeting place and a platform." Nearly 900,000 migrants flooded into Germany in 2015 and hundreds of thousands more have arrived since then, the largest single group being refugees fleeing war-torn Syria. Qaiconie, a native of the Syrian city of Aleppo, arrived two years ago, and founded the center this

summer for his fellow Syrians and anyone else interested in stopping by.

The center, in a room on the top floor of a 16-story refugee hostel in central Berlin, hosts poetry readings and has a library that holds a collection of Arab books. It's funded by donations and staffed by volunteers. On the weekends, Syrian musicians are invited to play at the center's outdoor space, on the rooftop of the hostel. At a recent concert Nabil Arbaain, who arrived as an asylum seeker from Syria two summers ago, charmed the crowd with melodies played on the oud, a pear-shaped instrument commonly used in Middle Eastern music, accompanied by a German guitarist and a Syrian percussionist.

Small college in Berlin

The audience is international. Arabic is mixed with English and German and the crowd cheers after each song.

In the background, the sun sets over the Berlin skyline. "Some people don't know anything about Syria" said Arbaain, 36, after the concert. "So we have to work hard to fix the image." Arbaain travels across Germany to play concerts, and said in addition to fellow Syrians longing for a taste of their homeland, many Germans turn out to listen. Some have preconceived notions about migrants, but he said the first-hand contact and cultural exchange helps immediately. "It is not so difficult to change German people's minds," he said. Meantime, Arbaain said migrants have their own challenges to work on, like learning the German language, which is helped by mixing with local residents. "German is not hard - it's the first 100 years that are difficult and then it gets easy," he joked. But kidding aside, Qaiconie said most migrants that he knows are anxious to shed the name "refugee" and be accepted as individuals.

"When I introduce myself I don't introduce myself as a

refugee, I introduce myself as a student," said Qaiconie, who is now working on a BA in English literature and philosophy at a small college in Berlin. "I don't think anyone likes being called a refugee." The cultural center's library, which is open one day a week, attracts a steady flow of people looking for books. Most are looking for volumes they might have owned before fleeing or books that can help them with their studies, but some come because they are themselves writing about their experiences as migrants, and need help and inspiration. With the passage of time and support of such efforts, Qaiconie said, he hopes that Syrian culture will become a part of Germany. "I think we will add to German society," he said. "We won't just take but we will add." — AP



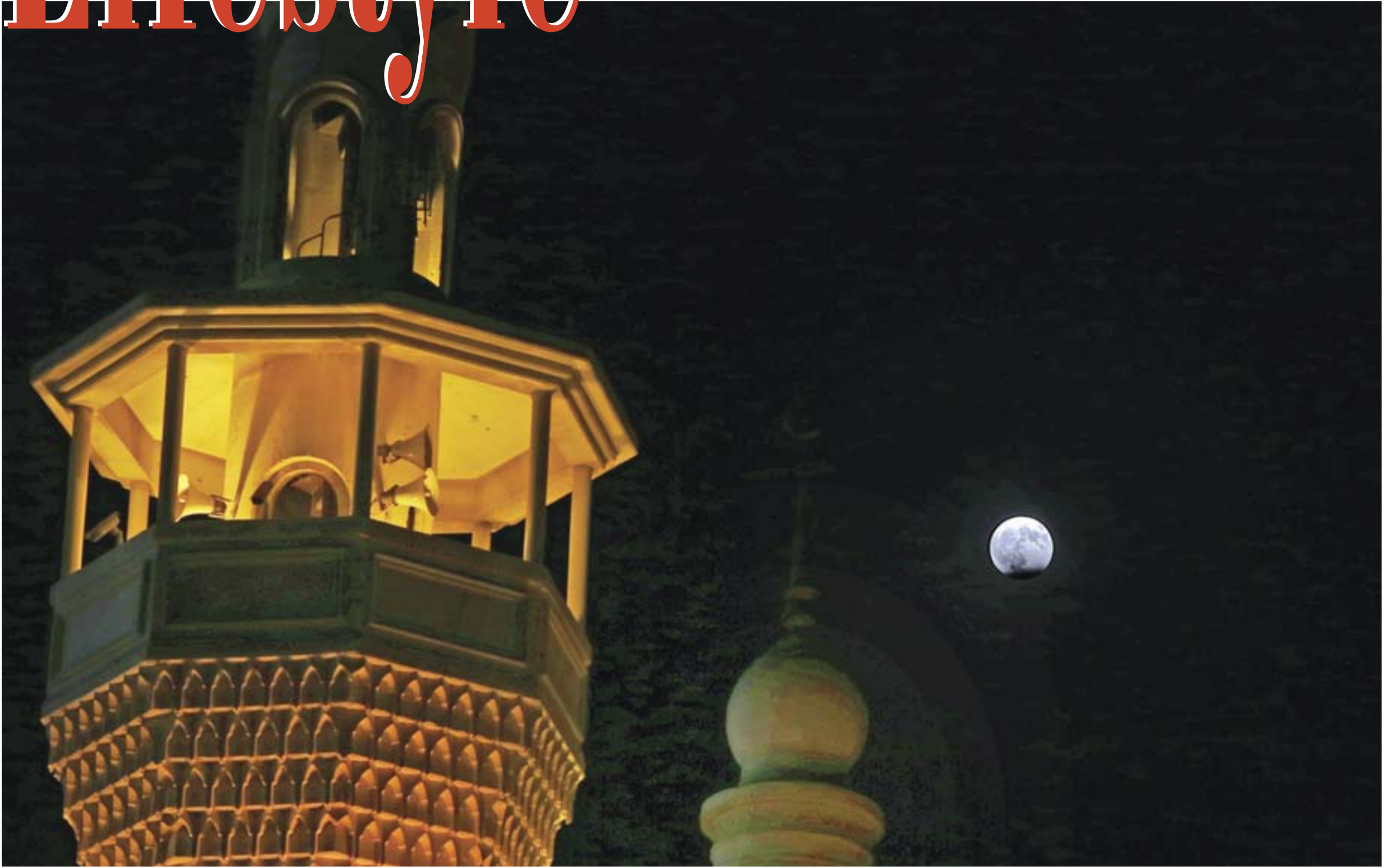
People listen to a concert at the 'Baynetna' cultural center in Berlin.



Two women look at books while a volunteer, left, organizes books at the 'Baynetna' cultural centre library in Berlin.



Muhannad Qaiconie, one of the founders of the 'Baynetna' cultural center in Berlin speaks to a visitor to the center's library. — AP photos



A picture shows the moon during a partial lunar eclipse as seen from Kuwait City on August 7, 2017. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

At midnight, Jerusalem Old City's 'cat lady' prowls

'Allah and Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) want big strong men to be nice to animals'



It is nearly midnight when Tova Saul, an Orthodox Jew, approaches the Muslim quarter of Jerusalem's Old City, carrying two large cases and a variety of contraptions. Within an hour, a row will have started that will see four people, including Saul, dragged to a police station. But for now she's searching for cats. For more than two decades she has fed and cared for hundreds of cats, earning the informal title of the walled Old City's "cat lady". It's not a nickname she likes. "When people refer to me as the cat lady, they are actually defining everybody else as people who won't lift a finger to help an animal in need. So really it's an insult to the human race," she told AFP.

In much of the Mediterranean basin, where winters are mild and open piles of rubbish plentiful, stray cats are ubiquitous. The labyrinthine Old City, nearly a square kilometer (less than half a square mile) and home to some of the holiest sites in Christianity, Islam and Judaism, also hosts hundreds, perhaps thousands of alley cats. Across Jerusalem there are more than 100,000 strays, the municipality estimates, with only a limited government plan to deal with the problems they pose. But there is Saul and a few other volunteers.

'A lot of suffering'

Saul, who is unmarried, came to Israel in the 1980s from the United States and has been caring for animals ever since. Since she started counting properly in 2009 she has caught and had spayed over 600 cats, while feeding thousands more. "Six hundred and twenty cats having kittens—they can have kittens two or three times a year, each cat having three or four kit-

tens at a time," she said. "Most of those kittens die after a lot of suffering and literally hundreds of people walking past them, watching them go blind, watching them crying for their mothers, watching them being eaten alive by fleas."

Last year, she says she spent \$15,000 (13,000 euros) of her own money on the cats, receiving back just \$7,000 in donations. The rest of her time, Saul, who is in her fifties, with curly brown hair and loose fitting clothes, is a tour guide and Airbnb host. The municipality used to poison strays but that program was scrapped more

than a decade ago, said Assaf Brill, head of the city's veterinary service. Numbers have since multiplied and budgets remain tight. "Jerusalem has a very poor population and the budget is needed for a lot of things," he said.

They rely on volunteers and Saul is one of the city's most active-working in areas many Jewish people are unwilling to visit. She started in the Old City's Jewish Quarter, where she lives in a two-bedroom flat currently filled with five cats and six kittens. She feeds them out of a frying pan, while the spare room where a sick

feline is quarantined has been closed off. Within a few years she has trapped and had spayed all the female cats in the Jewish Quarter.

Food fight

AFP accompanied Saul on a mission in the Muslim Quarter on an average Wednesday night. The area, with lanes too narrow for cars and flanked by small stalls, still holds fear for many Jews. Israeli police, seen as occupiers by Palestinian residents and international law, are regularly attacked. There have also been

attacks, some deadly, on Jewish civilians. As an Israeli American who speaks only one phrase of badly pronounced Arabic, "Allah and Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) want big strong men to be nice to animals", she admits to concerns.

"There have been a few times where they (Palestinians) have said: 'What are you doing?' And I explain to them and they look at me and they have these big brown eyes, these beautiful eyes, and they say: 'Wow, thank you. You have a good heart.'" She usually likes to work between one and five in the morning when the streets are deserted, but this night starts a little earlier. She spies a cat outside the gate she hasn't seen before and traps it—it will be taken to the city vet in the morning. Then she enters the Old City and sets up her baited traps. A cat is about to enter when a group of Palestinian youths arrive, startling it. After some terse words they move on.

Within minutes, three ultra-Orthodox Jewish men stop and stand by the trap. Saul says very religious people of all faiths often have little experience of animals. She asks them, politely at first, to move on but they refuse. Within a few minutes the scene escalates. "The Nazis behaved exactly like that," one man says. "Hitler kissed his dog at the same time as sending people to the crematorium."

Saul is incandescent. "A Jew calling another Jew a Nazi?" she shouts. She throws hummus at the man, splattering his back. Police arrive and all four are taken to the station. After half-hearted apologies, they are released without charges, but by now it is nearly 2:30 am. Saul heads back to the car to grab her traps. For Jerusalem's cat lady, the night is just getting started. — AFP



Tova Saul, an Orthodox Jew, feeds stray cats in a neighborhood in Jerusalem's Old City. — AFP photos