



Amir's US visit
new strategic
cooperation
chapter: Envoy



Nearly 60,000
evacuated
after China
quake kills 19



73% of Kuwait's
population has
bank accounts:
CBK governor



Syrian
Ghazal leaps
over admin
barriers



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QATAR ANNOUNCES VISA-FREE ENTRY TO 80 NATIONALITIES

GULF DIPLOMATIC CRISIS SPLITS FAMILIES, DASHES DREAMS



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SAUDI FORCES RAZE AWAMIYA OLD QUARTER

AWAMIYA, Saudi Arabia: A security campaign against gunmen in the eastern part of Saudi Arabia has reduced dozens of buildings in the town of Awamiya to husks and seen thousands of residents flee. Security forces have been trying for three months to flush out gunmen behind years of attacks on police in the small town of around 30,000 that has been the center of protests.

Journalists on a government tour of the town yesterday were the first outside witnesses of the damage wrought by the rare battle in the tightly controlled kingdom, a key Western ally and the world's top oil exporter. Reporters escorted by special forces in armored vehicles saw streets in Awamiya's old quarter transformed into a war zone a world away from the sparkling cityscapes elsewhere in the energy-rich Gulf. There was no fighting during the tour. Rusted-out cars lay half-flattened next to eviscerated homes pocked with hundreds of bullet holes. Graffiti blared along one rubble-strewn street.

Fighting picked up this month when elite forces joined an operation that authorities began in May to tear down the old quarter, known as Al-Musawara, **Continued on Page 11**

AMIRI ENVOY HANDS LETTER TO QATAR EMIR



DOHA: Envoy of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, delivers a written letter to Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani yesterday. The letter has bearing on the latest regional and international developments and several issues of mutual interest. — KUNA

DOHA: Qatar, isolated by its neighbors in a diplomatic crisis, yesterday introduced a visa-free entry programme for 80 nationalities to stimulate air transport and tourism. "The visa exemption scheme will make Qatar the most open country in the region," tourism department official Hassan Al-Ibrahim told a news conference in Doha. Interior ministry official Mohamed Rashed Al-Mazrouei said that nationals of 80 countries would only need to present a valid passport for entry to the energy-rich Gulf state which is to host football's 2022 World Cup.

The waiver program, which came into immediate effect, benefits countries of the European Union's Schengen zone, other Western states, Latin American and Asian nations, including India. Lebanon is the only Arab country in the list published at the end of the news conference, although the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council of which Qatar is a member already allows freedom of movement by its nationals.

Nationals of 33 countries will now be authorized to reside in Qatar for 180 days and the other 47 states listed for up to 30 days, periods which are renewable a single time. Mazrouei said the countries were selected on the basis of security and economic considerations, or for the buying power of their nationals.

Qatar Airways chief Akbar Al-Baker said his carrier, which this year plans to extend its network to 62 new destinations, would be a primary beneficiary. "This historic announcement comes at time of historic significance while some countries in the region have decided to close their skies and their borders, Qatar has instead opened its borders," he said. On Aug 3, Qatar created a new permanent residents status for certain groups of foreigners, including those who have worked for the **Continued on Page 11**

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KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Speaker of the National Assembly Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem. —KUNA



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



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

AMIR RECEIVES TOP STATE OFFICIALS

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace yesterday Speaker of the National Assembly Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem. His Highness the Amir also received His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah as well as First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. — KUNA



NEW YORK: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah waves goodbye as he prepares to leave New York yesterday. — KUNA



VIENNA: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is welcomed upon his arrival to the Austrian capital Vienna.

CROWN PRINCE ARRIVES IN VIENNA

KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah arrived yesterday in the Austrian capital Vienna on a private visit. He was received at the airport by Deputy Chief of the Kuwait National Guard Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Kuwaiti Ambassador to Austria Sadeq Marafie, and other Kuwaiti diplomats.

His Highness the Crown Prince flew to Vienna from New York where he underwent regular medical checkups. His Highness Sheikh Nawaf was seen off by Kuwait's Ambassador to Washington Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Kuwaiti Permanent Delegate to the United Nations headquarters in New York Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi, and other diplomats. — KUNA

AMIR'S US VISIT NEW STRATEGIC COOPERATION CHAPTER: US ENVOY

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's upcoming US visit will open a new chapter of multi-faceted strategic ties and cooperation, while Washington was throwing its weight behind Kuwait's mediation in 'intra-GCC' political dispute, a US diplomat said. His Highness the Amir's next month visit to Washington DC, the fourth since his assumed office in 2006, will take place as Kuwait's head of state continues his mediation efforts to solve the Gulf dispute.

His Highness the Amir's mediation in the 'intra-GCC' political dispute is highly praised and supported, US Ambassador to the State of Kuwait Lawrence Silverman said. He made the remarks during an exclusive interview on the heels of retired US Marine Corps general and ex-CENTCOM Commander-in-Chief Anthony Zinni's recent visit to Kuwait to reiterate support and discuss Kuwait's efforts in resolving the ongoing feud between Qatar and another four Arab countries. This is Zinni's first leg of a tour that will also take him to Jeddah, Manama, the UAE and Cairo in addition to Doha.

The US Administration had expressed support and appreciation of Kuwait's mediation "because we want to see an end to this dispute as quickly as possible," for the sake of the region, Silverman noted. Since early summer, Kuwait, supported by regional and international parties, have been mediating to solve the rift between Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates and Egypt on one side and Qatar on the other.

Global leader

However, Silverman carried on saying, that this was not the only area that Kuwait has been active in. "Kuwait is truly a global humanitarian leader. What Kuwait is doing is not about charity only, but it is also investing in the stability of its neighbors, as well as preserving such stability. This is extremely important and very appreciative by those neighbors. It is a great vision on the part of His Highness the Amir and the Kuwaiti Government."

Furthermore, it is highly praiseworthy that Kuwait have announced hosting a donor conference to the reconstruction of Iraq within the first quarter of 2018, he stressed. The conference, called by His Highness the Amir, aims to pool financial resources from international donors to help the Iraqi government rehabilitate areas recently liberated from terrorist groups.

"Kuwait, alone, hosted the first three Syria donor conferences, which were not only designated for helping refugees, but also supporting countries hosting them, in Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey and Iraq," the ambassador pointed out. Silverman said the US was honored with His Highness the Amir's forthcoming visit.



KUWAIT: US Ambassador to the State of Kuwait Lawrence Silverman speaks during an exclusive interview. — KUNA

Strategic partnership

His Highness the Amir paid official visits to Washington DC in 2006, 2009 and 2013. He also participated in a GCC-US summit in Camp David in May 2015. "We are extremely pleased that His Highness is honoring us with the visit," noted Silverman regarding His Highness the Amir's September 7 scheduled visit to Washington DC, pointing out that this visit was planned before the Gulf crisis. "The visit reflects the very strong, close and strategic partnership between the United States and Kuwait, which is longstanding, but also we are in the process of enhancing that relationship; making it even closer," he underlined. His Highness the Amir's visit is a result of discussions that His Highness had with President (Donald) Trump earlier this year, in February, and during the Riyadh Summits in May, Silverman said.

"That was the genesis of the idea of having His Highness visit Washington and focus on the bilateral relationship, but of course also on regional issues that concern both of us," he indicated. "This is also an opportunity for both delegations to have the second session of the Strategic Dialogue. Secretary of State (Rex) Tillerson very much looks forward to welcoming First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah to Washington to continue the work that we're doing, including issues on defense; in conjunction with the US commitment to Kuwait's securi-

ty, which is continued. But also security when it comes to our joint; and separate, efforts, to fight terrorism and terrorism financing."

Furthermore, Silverman said "we are also making progress in issues related to trade and investment, in both directions, in addition to education; a fundamental part of our relationship, with five generation of Kuwaitis who have studied in American universities and colleges. "It is really one of the foundation blocks of our relation, as part of the dialogue would be discussing possibilities in even furthering this cooperation. So, it is the whole gambit of relations."

Strategic dialogue

On the strategic dialogue, Silverman said it is basically a 'government-to-government' cooperation. "The Dialogue would also have an impact on the business and private sectors, in a bid to enhance trade and investment in both directions. "In this vein, we have about \$3 billion in trade in each direction. I know that Kuwait wants more foreign investments here, including American investments, through their attempt to address various issues to streamline business-making in Kuwait.

"Whether it is cutting through the red tape (bureaucracy), or having even more transparency in the process of tendering for government contracts," among other related issues. Another very important aspect of the trade discussion is the protection of intellectual property rights, he noted. "It is not only about American, but also Kuwaiti intellectual property rights, as Kuwaitis are impacted by this as well, where a Kuwaiti filmmaker, musician or poet, in addition to local software developers, need to know that they have the ability to sell their protected product, which would allow and encourage them to be more creative and productive."

The strategic dialogue, first held last October in Washington DC, translates the vision of His Highness the Amir and the US Administration of strengthening bilateral relations and drawing a road map for such relations for the next 25 years. During its meeting two days ago, the Kuwaiti Cabinet was notified of the delegation that will accompany His Highness the Amir in the official visit to Washington.

The delegation includes Deputy Chief of the Kuwait National Guard Sheikh Mishaal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Anas Al-Saleh, in addition to senior officials of the Amiri Diwan, and other relevant bodies. Security and a media teams are also included. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Kuwait Army Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Mohammad Al-Khedhr meets with head of International Policy and Planning for the United Kingdom's Ministry of Defense David Hogan Hern. — KUNA



Kuwait Army Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Mohammad Al-Khedhr meets with the Bangladesh Military Command (BMC) Commander Brigadier General SM Shamim.

ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF MEETS BRITISH GENERAL

KUWAIT: Kuwait Army Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Mohammad Al-Khedhr met yesterday with the visiting head of International Policy and Planning for the United Kingdom's Ministry of Defense David Hogan Hern. The two sides discussed matters of mutual interest and ways of boosting military cooperation between Kuwait and the UK. Also yesterday, Lieutenant General Khedhr met with the Bangladesh Military Command (BMC) Commander Brigadier General SM Shamim, who was accompanied by the new BMC Commander Brigadier General Abul Mansoor.

On Tuesday, the visiting British official met with Kuwait Land Force Commander Major General Khaled Al-Saleh Al-Sabah. During the meeting, both generals discussed means of enhancing military cooperation between the two countries, said Directorate of Moral Guidance and Public Relations at the Ministry of Defense in a press release. Chief of Land Force's Operations Brigadier General Abdullah Al-Juba'a and Military Attache of the British Embassy to Kuwait Colonel Pilot Fenley Mackin were present at the meeting. — KUNA

FIRES IN BUILDINGS UNDER CONSTRUCTION MOST DIFFICULT TO TACKLE: KFSD CHIEF

90 PERCENT OF RECENT FIRES CAUSED BY WELDING

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: Director General of the Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFSD) Lieutenant General Khalid Al-Mikrad yesterday said the most difficult blazes firefighters deal with are in buildings under construction, as they cannot determine the cause of the fire. "These fires are also very dangerous as firefighters have to go inside the building if the blaze is hard to reach, especially if the project is a huge one, as fire spreads quickly," he said during a symposium by KFSD titled 'Safety in Buildings Under Construction' yesterday.

KFSD aimed to increase prevention of fires at buildings under construction though this symposium. "We aim to have a unified vision which will protect lives and properties. Public institutions should cooperate with us to exploit previous experiences to protect all private and public projects," Mikrad said. He explained that if the fire is large, it will pose a danger to the surrounding area and may spread to other buildings. "The Sharq fire caused more fires, which confused firefighters who were dealing with six fires in one place. Also, if the wind is strong, the blaze might get out of their control," he noted.

Human errors

According to him, the main reasons behind the fires are human errors and neglecting safety and security measures. "Ninety percent of the fires that took place recently were caused by cutting metal and welding inside the project area. Our reports are purely technical that are issued based on evidence. If the fire is deliberate, then we will announce it, but the recent fires happened due to cutting and welding, due to which hot sparks fell on inflammable materials, according to surveillance cameras," he concluded.

There are various reasons behind fires, so there should be strict laws to protect lives and properties under construction. "These laws should be strictly applied against violators and to avoid committing the same mistake again. Also, I suggest having safety and security departments in all ministries and state institutions according to the municipality law to ensure the implementation of safety and security measures," pointed out Ahmad Al-Manfouhi, Director General of the Municipality.

Deputy General Manager for the Prevention Sector Brig Khaled Fahad stressed that prevention is better than firefighting as the expenses of applying safety measures is much lower than the cost of the losses due to accidents. "The losses from fires are great, especially if workers die or are injured. It takes a long time to replace the injured workers and train new ones, which will delay the project. In addition, investigations at the police, fire department and insurance companies take time. Also, damage to the building and tools all lead to distrust in the contractors," he said.

Ensuring safety

Naser Khreibit, Deputy Director General of the Public Authority for Housing Welfare for Planning and Designing Affairs, said the planning and designing phase of the project should adopt measures that ensure safety. "The instructions of the engineering office should be followed, starting from preparing the documents of the project, which obliges the contractor to use the latest safety and security tools," he noted.

Khreibit gave an example of the South Mutlaa City housing project under construction now. "This project will house around 30,000 families and is in the execution phase. KD 4.5 million is being paid in housing allowances monthly. If a fire occurs in this project, the losses will be very high, especially with the delay. So safety criteria should be very strict, and this includes fire detectors," he highlighted. Futuh Al-Asfour, Secretary General of the Federation of Kuwaiti Engineering Offices and Consultant Houses, noted that engineering offices play a great role that is neglected by many institutions that are responsible for the safety and security of buildings under construction. "I suggest forming a committee that will force the engineering offices to set criteria for executing companies, and find qualified offices to supervise safety and security measures," she explained.

"Cutting and welding should take place outside the working area. Also, bank deposits are not enough to cover losses caused by fires, especially if there are fatalities, so this should be reviewed. Furthermore, consultants should have the right to report mistakes or shortages in the constructor's work regarding safety and security to the municipality," Asfour stressed.



KUWAIT: Ahmad Al-Manfouhi, Director General of the Municipality (center left) speaks during a symposium that also hosted Director General of the Kuwait Fire Service Directorate Lieutenant General Khalid Al-Mikrad (center right) and other officials. —Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

BORROWING LAW CRUCIAL FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING, DEFICIT FINANCING: OFFICIAL

KUWAIT: A borrowing law with an adequate ceiling in terms of amount and time limit is essential for strategic planning and financing the deficit in the state budget, a senior Finance Ministry official has said. Abdulazi Al-Mulla, chief of the ministry's Public Debt Management Office, added in a press release yesterday that the draft bill

on borrowing is part of a series of legislations issued in 1987 allowing the government to borrow for financing the deficit in the budget.

The bill has been recently approved by the cabinet, to be later referred to the National Assembly. It combines a host of choices to handle the situation, external and

domestic borrowing, and withdrawing from reserves, Mulla noted. He pointed out that each choice has its own criteria, and regulations, for preserving the state's financial reputation and credit rating. The draft bill sets a ceiling of the amounts of money the government could borrow over a certain period of time. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Ambassador of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) to Kuwait So Chang Sik visited Kuwait Times yesterday and met with Editor-in-Chief Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan. —Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

AUTOMATIC CUT OF TELEPHONE SERVICE IF AUG BILLS NOT PAID

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Communications yesterday urged subscribers to pay financial dues, warning that it will enforce a programmed automatic severance of telephone land lines service for August in line with the procedure in force.

Subscribers will receive a general warning message on August 13, then a second will follow to the concerned ones a week later, the ministry said in a statement. Service will be cut as of August 27 if bills are not paid, it added. The financial ceiling according to which the computer

will include a phone line in the 'severance list' is KD 50 (about \$165) for home lines and KD 100 (about \$330) for commercial ones, the ministry noted.

Telephone lines whose bills are being paid in installments will be automatically comprised on the list once a subscriber welves on payment. Subscribers can pay bills via the ministry's website or the official one of the State of Kuwait Government, the Kuwait Government on Line. They can also phone 123 to ask about their bills. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Director General of Kuwait Environment Public Authority (EPA) Sheikh Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Homoud Al-Sabah speaks with volunteers during the event. —KUNA

WASTE DUMPS CENTER IS BASE OF RECYCLING: SHEIKH ABDULLAH

KUWAIT: Environment Public Authority (EPA) opened yesterday the first waste dumps center in Al-Salmi, north of Kuwait, in an area of two square kilometers. "Waste dumps assembly center is the base for recycling projects in the country and will be followed with many other ventures," said Director General of Kuwait Environment Public Authority (EPA) Sheikh Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Homoud Al-Sabah. EPA is working to increase number of waste recycling factories in Kuwait and reducing waste landfills, Sheikh Abdullah said in a speech, delivered after opening ceremony of the paper waste recycling center.

The center is established in coordination with Kefan Co-Op Society, Kuwait Union Of Consumer Co-Operative Societies (KUCCS), with support by National Fund for Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) and plastic recycling project 'OMNIYA'.

Sheikh Abdullah said EPA was keen to find a 2-sq-km plot of land in Al-Salmi to build recycling factories in coordination with the Public Authority for Industry (PAI), noting that Kuwait will have more than 15 percent of alternative and renewable energy sources by the end of 2035.

Meanwhile, President of Union of Cooperative Societies Ali Al-Kandari said this project is the first of its kind and can be of a great use to both society and consumers. Regarding the (OMNIYA) project, "it was just a small idea to create environment friendly awareness concept in Kuwait," said Sanna Al-Qamla, one of the team members, adding they were able to expand rapidly during their first year. (OMNIYA) signed a contract with (SME) to build the first recycling center for (Pt) substance in the Gulf region, not only in Kuwait. —KUNA

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In Brief

BAN ON PUBLISHING STATE SECURITY CASES

KUWAIT: A publication ban has been placed on all cases that deal with state security, particularly, outlawed groups' recruitment of new members and efforts to help convicts evade justice in Criminal Case 51/2015, Kuwait's General Prosecutor said on Tuesday. Authorities are continuing to investigate these issues, read a statement provided by General Prosecutor Dharar Al-Asousi's office. The statement noted that the publication ban applies to all social media outlets. —KUNA



KUWAITIS IN BRUSSELS URGED TO BE CAUTIOUS

BRUSSELS: The Kuwaiti embassy in Brussels is urging Kuwaiti citizens visiting the Belgian capital to be cautious following the shooting incident earlier in the Molenbeek district. The embassy urged Kuwaitis to call their emergency number: 003247775801, in case of any difficulties. Police in the Molenbeek district of Brussels, in the afternoon, fired at a car, whose driver claimed to have been carrying explosives. — KUNA



MOBILE CLINICS SENT TO SYRIA

ANKARA: Al-Rahma International Charity, under the Social Reform Society, has sent yesterday two mobile clinics from the Turkish city of Hatay to Idlib in Syria. The project aims to ease the suffering of displaced Syrians who pay a high cost to reach clinics near the borders, head of Syria office at the organization Waleed Al-Suwailem said. He added that Al-Rahma International had provided over \$75 million worth of aid and development projects since the breakout of the Syrian crisis in 2011. — KUNA



Photo

of the day



KUWAIT: The white-eared bulbul or white-cheeked bulbul. It is a member of the bulbul family that is found in southwestern Asia from India to the Arabian Peninsula. — KUNA photo

OOREDOO AWARDS WINNER WITH FORD MUSTANG

KUWAIT: Ooredoo, Kuwait's fastest network, announced the name of the winner of its Ooredoo Surprises campaign which was launched on its digital channels. The winner of the car, Mohammed Hassan Mohammed, received his 2017 Ford Mustang from the Ooredoo Kuwait head office in a ceremony attended by representatives of Ooredoo's Marketing and Corporate Communications departments.

This campaign comes to reiterate Ooredoo Kuwait's commitment to enrich the experience of its customers from all segments and throughout the year, stemming from its core values of caring, connecting and challenging. Ooredoo has recently launched a number of campaigns on its digital channels to ensure better outreach and communication with all its customers.



KUWAIT: Mohammed Hassan Mohammed receives the 2017 Ford Mustang from Ooredoo officials.



Ooredoo's head office building.

KRCS' JUVENILE VOLUNTEER CLUB INSTILLS BENEVOLENCE IN KIDS



Anwar Al-Hasawi

KUWAIT: Kuwait Red Crescent Society's (KRCS) special child volunteer club has been assembled to promote such virtues as altruism and goodwill, the charity's deputy president said yesterday. Speaking at a ceremony to cap off a month's worth of events put together by the club, Anwar Al-Hasawi pointed out that some 140 children joined the festivities this year, all of whom were taken under the wings of highly qualified trainers. He added that volunteerism

and development are often co-related and that the initiative has "left a new mark" on the venerable Kuwaiti charity's long odyssey.

Meanwhile, Dr Hawazen Al-Zahrani, project consultant at the Arab Red Crescent and Red Cross Organization, hailed Kuwait as a bastion of philanthropy, saying Kuwaitis' penchant for volunteerism was admirable.

She noted that Kuwait's humanitarian endeavors are well-chronicled and

prove just how eager the country's leaders are in promoting such moral excellence. Tariq Al-Kandari, a dentist and KRCS volunteer, said that he shared some of his medical knowledge with the kids, particularly, the importance of dental health.

Similarly, Issa Al-Kandari and Fatma Al-Sharah, two child volunteers, said that they both cherish the experience of working with KRCS, one that has given them valuable skills that would serve them well in their lives. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Kuwait Red Crescent Society's Special Child Volunteer Club members participate in a medical exercise.— KUNA



KUWAIT: Ali Bin Shaibah from ABK receives the recognition award from MGRP officials.

ABK EFFORTS IN LOCAL YOUTH DEVELOPMENT RECOGNIZED

KUWAIT: In light of its on-going support to the development of Kuwait's youth, Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) was recently honored by the Manpower and Government Restructuring Program (MGRP) for the role it plays in developing the skills of Kuwait's youth population. The ceremony was held on August 2, 2017 at the MGRP premises.

The award was received by representatives of the Learning and Development team at ABK who conveyed gratitude to MGRP and reiterated the importance of working closely to help fulfill the common goal of supporting the youth of Kuwait and preparing tomorrow's leaders to take the nation forward on a local, regional and ultimately,

global level. ABK has been collaborating with MGRP to conduct its annual summer internship program since 2014, which targets young Kuwaiti university and college students, through the 'ABK Academy'. The program combines lectures, on-site assignments and team projects, which offer students the opportunity to enrich their knowledge of the banking sector and gain first-hand experience in the work field, while emphasizing the importance of teamwork.

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

IRAQI PM: ONGOING NEGOTIATIONS TO FINALIZE KUWAIT COMPENSATIONS ISSUE

BAGHDAD: Iraqi Prime Minister Haidar Al-Abadi said Tuesday that negotiations are ongoing to finalize compensations to Kuwait, which remain an issue for the lifting of UN Chapter 7 sanctions off Baghdad. In a press conference, Abadi said Iraq has already finalized the issue of oil-for-food with the United Nations, but that compensations owed to the State of Kuwait remain the key issue for the lifting of Chapter 7. "We are currently negotiating with Kuwait about this, and the issue was discussed during my last visit to Kuwait," he said.

"A Kuwaiti delegation has visited Iraq for this purpose and there is now an Iraqi

delegation (which has been formed) to discuss the same issue," he added. The Iraqi premier said he hoped the matter would be completely resolved. He, however, did not disclose the details of the ongoing negotiations nor their results, neither did he reveal any information regarding the delegations. Chapter 7, which demanded that Iraq's global assets be used to compensate victims of the Iraqi 1990 invasion of Kuwait, was imposed on Iraq by the UN Security Council after Kuwait's liberation. Over the past few days, Iraq ended the issue of oil-for-food with the UN, paving the way for the payment of dues to Kuwait. — KUNA



KUWAIT: A file photo showing passengers at Kuwait International Airport. — KUNA

MPS VOICE REJECTION TO GOVT VAT APPROVAL

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: A number of MPs rejected the government's decision to impose value added tax (VAT), and said they will not vote for it in the National Assembly, because VAT will increase prices for both citizens and expats. MP Riyadh Al-Adasani said he is against taxes including VAT. He said this proposal was included in the government's work program and the prime minister was grilled over several policies including the issue of high prices.

MP Jamaan Al-Harbash said it is not possible to accept VAT due to inflation and the government's inability to control prices. He said the Cabinet's approval of the GCC VAT treaty does not mean it will be effective without parliament ratification. MP

Abdelkareem Al-Kandari demanded improvement in services before thinking about imposing VAT, adding "we will vote against the proposal".

Network arrested

A Moroccan newspaper said members of a prostitution network that was busted includes Kuwaiti businessmen and lawyers. Al-Masaa newspaper said the arrestees include a 36-year-old judicial official and a lawyer who is divorced with two children, in addition to a businessman in the field of well-digging. The four Kuwaitis confessed to arriving at Al-Manarah airport from Barcelona. The network of 13 persons was arrested after vice police raided a villa, but the public prosecution decided to free the Gulf suspects.

MUNICIPAL COUNCIL MEMBER PROPOSES RENAMING AIRPORT AFTER AMIR OVER A MILLION PASSENGERS IN JULY

By Hanan Al-Saadoun and Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Chairman of the Legal and Financial Committee at the Municipal Council Ali Al-Mousa presented an official proposal yesterday to rename Kuwait International Airport into 'Sheikh Sabah International Airport', after His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-

Jaber Al-Sabah in recognition of his contributions in the diplomatic and humanitarian fields.

In other news, statistics of airport passports department show that the total number of passengers recorded at Kuwait International Airport in July was 1,185,623. Arrivals totaled 533,270 including 201,726 Kuwaitis, 31,882 Gulf nationals and 299,662 from other nationalities. The

department said the number of visas issued was 15,884. Eleven passengers were arrested for forgery of travel documents, while 118 wanted passengers were arrested. Separately, Airport traffic organization department carried out 2,244 security missions during July 2017. It said 20 vehicles were impounded, while 2,223 traffic citations were issued.

Crime

Report

TWO DEAD BY DROWNING

KUWAIT: A two-year-old Kuwaiti child drowned while he was with his family in a chalet south of Kuwait. The child was taken to a polyclinic, then medevacked to Adan Hospital, but died on arrival. Meanwhile, a Gulf youth drowned and died near a Salmiya beach. The body was recovered by the coroner. In a separate case, medics failed to revive an Egyptian man who was taken to Adan Hospital by ambulance. The coroner recovered the body and police are waiting for the report.

Deliveryman beaten

An Egyptian deliveryman accused a citizen of beating him in Nagra because his order was late. The citizen reportedly got angry when he was called back and told that his order would be delayed. Ten minutes later, he called the Egyptian and insulted him. When the order was delivered, the citizen got out of the car and punched the Egyptian in the face, then left without paying. The Egyptian lodged a complaint and police are investigating.

Drug abuse

Ahmadi police arrested two citizens in an abnormal condition and found drugs and Lyrica tablets with them. The arrest was made when a traffic violation was committed and the driver refused to stop.

Abscnders caught

Farwaniya police arrested eight absconding women from three nationalities. They are all in violation of the labor law and do not have IDs. They are being questioned and will be deported.

Domestic violence

A woman, 27, accused her brother of beating her. She submitted a medical report at Adan police station stating she sustained minor bruises.

Fight

A fight broke out between several adolescents in Sabah Al-Salem, injuring one of them in the process. A 16-year-old boy told police he was beaten by three unidentified persons. He said he was talking to another man when the three men got out of a nearby car and beat him.

Prison search

Central prison authorities searched several cells and found 15 mobile phones inside bathrooms. Other inmates are being questioned.

Smuggling foiled

Kuwait International Airport officers foiled yet another attempt to smuggle 7,500 Tramadol tablets, which an Arab man had hidden in a vest. He was sent to concerned authorities.

Theft

A citizen told Sabahiya police that a laptop and a licensed shotgun were stolen from his car while it was parked in front of the house.

Swindling

A female citizen told South Surra police she was conned by a Kuwaiti man when he made her believe he can make her four times the amount of money she pays him. She said that she gave him KD 1,000 on a trial basis and expected to get KD 3,000-KD 4,000 back, but the man disappeared and did not answer her calls. Separately, a Syrian jeweler told Adan police that he met a citizen and an Egyptian who told him about a project, so he gave them KD 59,000, then discovered that he was swindled.

— Translated from the Arabic press

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Kenya tensions spike as oppn cries foul over election result

NEARLY 60,000 EVACUATED AFTER CHINA QUAKE KILLS 19



PYONGYANG: In this April 15, 2017, file photo, a missile that analysts believe could be the North Korean Hwasong-12 is paraded across Kim Il Sung Square. — AP

**TRUMP WARNS N KOREA OF ‘FIRE AND FURY’
 DECLARES US NUCLEAR ARSENAL ‘MORE POWERFUL THAN EVER’**

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump yesterday ratcheted up his war of words with North Korea, declaring that America’s nuclear arsenal was “more powerful than ever”—even as his team insisted there was no imminent threat of danger. Hours after putting Pyongyang on notice that it faced “fire and fury” over its weapons and ballistic missile programs, Trump took to Twitter to issue another stark warning. But after North Korea said it was considering a missile strike near the US Pacific territory of Guam, Trump’s top diplomat delivered a message of reassurance to its residents and military personnel as he made a stop-over on the island.

Trump’s “fire and fury” comments on Tuesday had triggered expressions of concern from China as well as from US allies. Yesterday, stock markets and the dollar slipped as investors sought safe-haven investments. Trump’s early morning tweets—written from New Jersey, where he is on vacation for two weeks—did little to calm frayed nerves. “My first order as President was to renovate and modernize our nuclear arsenal. It is now far stronger and more powerful than ever before,” Trump wrote. “Hopefully we will never have to use this power, but there will never be a time that we are not the most powerful nation in the world!”

‘Americans should sleep well’

Trump’s language towards North Korea has become increasingly hard-edged since Pyongyang carried out a pair of successful intercontinental ballistic missile tests (ICBM) in July, which put the US mainland in range for the first time. Guam—a 210-square-mile dot in the Pacific that is home to some 6,000 US troops—would be a far easier target were North Korea to confirm its position as a fully-fledged nuclear power.

Pyongyang’s KCNA state news agency reported yesterday that plans were being drawn up for missile strikes against Guam that could be put into action at “any moment” after North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un gives the order. US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, who refueled in Guam on yesterday while flying back home from Southeast Asia, said Trump was determined to send an unequivocal message to his North Korean counterpart. “What the president is doing is sending a strong message to North Korea in language that Kim Jong-Un would understand, because he doesn’t seem to understand diplomatic language,” he said.

Tillerson, however, said that he did not believe “there is any imminent threat” to Guam or other US targets and hoped that diplomatic pressure would prevail in the crisis. “I think Americans should sleep well at night, have no concerns about this particular rhetoric of the last few days,” Tillerson said. The island’s gover-

nor Eddie Calvo reassured residents there was currently “no threat” to the territory, which has a total population of more than 160,000 and houses two US military installations. In the capital Hagatna, islanders kept their cool. “It’s not like there’s anything we can do anyway. This is a small island. There’s nowhere to run to,” resident James Cruz said AFP.

Rapid progress

Experts have long differed over the North’s exact capabilities but all agree it has made rapid progress under Kim. Last month, Pyongyang carried out its first two successful ICBM launches, the first described by Kim as a gift to “American bastards”—showing it could reach Alaska, and the second extending its range even further, with some experts suggesting New York could be vulnerable.

On Tuesday, The Washington Post quoted a US Defense Intelligence Agency analysis as saying officials think North Korea now has “nuclear weapons for ballistic missile delivery”—including by its ICBMs—making it a potent threat against neighbors and possibly the United States. The Pentagon did not comment on the story, but the Post said two US officials familiar with the analysis had verified the assessment’s broad conclusions, and CNN said it had confirmed the report.

The North’s current ability to launch an accurate nuclear strike remains open to question, with analysts suggesting it has yet to overcome some major technical hurdles. After Kim’s second ICBM test, some experts said it appeared the “re-entry vehicle” that would carry a warhead back into Earth’s atmosphere from space had failed in the intense heat.

US officials have repeatedly said this year that military action against the North was an “option on the table,” though Tillerson said nothing had “dramatically changed” in the military equation in the past 24 hours. The UN Security Council unanimously approved a series of sanctions over the weekend which could cost North Korea \$1 billion a year, with even the regime’s main ally China voting for the US-drafted proposal. While the sanctions vote was seen as a diplomatic triumph for the US, there is widespread unease about the ramping up in tensions. The North’s main ally China warned against “words and actions” that would stoke tensions, while Germany said it was watching the “increasing rhetorical escalation” with concern. France meanwhile praised Trump’s “determination” in standing up to Pyongyang. Republican US Senator John McCain said Trump should tread carefully when speaking about the North, telling a US radio station: “All it’s going to do is bring us closer to some kind of serious confrontation.” — AFP

**ROSARY IN HAND, CHRISTIANS
 FLEE SYRIA’S IS-HELD RAQA**

JAZRA: Sawsan Karapetyan and her family lived in fear for years as some of the only Christians in the Islamic State group’s Syrian stronghold Raqa. On Tuesday she fled, clutching her rosary. Under the cover of darkness, the 45-year-old Syrian Armenian and six other family members left IS-held territory in the northern city on foot. They were rescued by Christian fighters participating in the battle to oust IS from Raqa and taken to the safety of the western suburb of Jazra in the back of a truck.

“I didn’t want to leave, but there was so much bombardment around us that we fled,” said Karapetyan, 45, still clad in the black robes mandated by IS. Like many of the thousands who have fled IS control, they escaped with virtually nothing. But Karapetyan could not bear to leave behind her rosary, or her pet parrots, “Lover” and “Beloved”.

“It would have been a shame to leave these birds in Raqa. I left everything except them,” she said. As she spoke, she sipped a cup of tea handed to her by fighters from the Syriac Military Council (SMC), a Christian unit battling alongside the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces to oust IS from Raqa. The anti-IS fighters have captured more than half of the city from IS since first penetrating it two months ago.

The offensive has ravaged the city, leaving civilians caught in the crossfire of mortar rounds, sniper fire, and US-led coalition air strikes. “When Raqa was bombed, we’d gather

together to pray to the Lord so things would be calm,” Karapetyan said, fiddling with her greenish-grey rosary. Along with three female and three male relatives, she fled Raqa at 3:00 am on Tuesday using an escape route the SMC opened two days ago. “We lived through the hardest moments these last three days because of the fierce bombing. I was terrified for my husband and my family.”

Thousands of Armenians and Syriac Christians once lived in Raqa, making up around one percent of the city’s population, which is predominantly Sunni Arab. Armenians in Syria are the descendants of those who fled mass killings in Anatolia at the peak of World War I, massacres the Armenians see as a genocide, though Turkey rejects the term. When IS seized Raqa in 2014, most of the city’s Christians, as well as its Kurdish population, fled. Under IS rule, Christians face the choice of converting to Islam, paying a sectarian tax called jizya, or fleeing under threat of death. The group has regularly destroyed religious symbols and houses of worship, and Karapetyan’s relative Alexey told AFP she had haunting memories of IS’s oppression of Christians. “When IS entered they burned the churches, all the prayer books, the angels, the statue of the Virgin Mary and of Jesus the Messiah,” she recalled. The city’s famed Armenian Catholic Church of the Martyrs and the Greek Catholic Church of Our Lady of the Annunciation were both ravaged by jihadists. — AFP

200K PROTESTERS BRING MUMBAI TO HALT

MUMBAI: An estimated 200,000 protesters brought India’s financial capital Mumbai to a halt yesterday as they demanded set quotas for government jobs and colleges amid unemployment and reduced farm incomes. Many businesses in the southern part of Mumbai were closed and traffic was diverted as the protesters, largely from rural areas of western Maharashtra state, descended on the bustling capital in a sea of saffron flags and banners.

A spokesperson from Mumbai police told AFP an estimated 200,000 people participated in the march, which brought rail and roads to a standstill as protesters from the Maratha community pressed their demands. “We want reservations for the Maratha community in government jobs, educational institutes, and better farm loan waivers,” Bhaiya Patil, one of the organizers said.

In June, the government in Maharashtra agreed to write off loans to farmers estimated to be worth nearly \$5 billion after 11 days of protests that strangled supplies to Mumbai. Maharashtra is one of several largely agricultural Indian states that have suf-

fered disappointing rains and crop failures in recent years. More than 1,417 farmers killed themselves in Maharashtra in 2016, according to official figures.

Demands for quotas for highly sought-after government jobs and university places have escalated as unemployment has risen and conditions in rural areas worsened. India reserves places for lower castes to try to bring victims of the country’s worst discrimination into the mainstream, but the policy causes resentment among other communities, who say it freezes them out. Maharashtra’s Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis responded yesterday with a promise for “regular interaction” with the Maratha community through a committee. India has nearly 260 million farmers and farm laborers and over half the population lives in rural areas, but agriculture accounts for just 17 percent of its gross domestic product. Farmers around the country have been pressing for more government assistance, often through protests. — AFP

ROUHANI NAMES NEW FEMALE VICE PRESIDENTS

TEHRAN: Iranian President Hassan Rouhani appointed two female vice presidents yesterday but continued to take flak from reformists for nominating no women ministers. The appointments came a day after the moderate president announced his all-male list of ministers to parliament, seen as a betrayal by reformists who backed his re-election campaign in May. "It is incredible and shocking that the president has ignored the demands of women in nominating his government," Parvaneh Salahshouri, head of a parliamentary women's group, told lawmakers.

A letter calling for female ministers to be appointed was signed by 157 of the 290 MPs. There was small comfort in the appointment of

two women as vice presidents, who do not require parliamentary approval. Massoumeh Ebtekar, known internationally for her role as spokesperson during the 1980 US embassy hostage crisis, was named as vice president in charge of women's affairs, having previously run the environment brief in Rouhani's office.

Laya Joneydi was appointed as the vice president for legal affairs, while another woman, Shahindokht Mowlaverdi, was named as a special adviser for citizens' rights. Rouhani, a moderate cleric who had three female vice presidents during his previous term, has several more deputy positions to fill and it was unclear if any would go to women.

Unsurprised

In an interview with AFP, the head of the newly formed Reformist Women's Party, Zahra Shojaei, said she was unsurprised by the lack of female ministers given the continued opposition of many lawmakers and powerful religious figures behind the scenes. A large independent faction of MPs "are still not in favour of female ministers," said Shojaei. But she said female vice presidents actually have more power than ministers and have already broken the taboo on putting women in positions of authority. "We have gone past the symbolic stage. Female ministers are important but it's not our only demand. Even if Rouhani had appointed several women ministers, it would not have solved

women's issues," she said. She highlighted a number of legal issues-including the need to gain permission from a male relative to leave the country, lower levels of legal compensation and "blood money" for women, and discriminatory inheritance laws — as areas that needed action.

"Rouhani has worked on policies of empowerment for women over the past four years, and we want that to continue, as well as amending laws in parliament," she said. The continued fraught issue of gender in Iranian politics was highlighted over the weekend, when EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini led an all-female team for talks with an all-male Iranian contingent led by Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif. — AFP



DOUMA: In a humid room in the besieged Syrian town of Douma, Abu Nabil inspects the pearly white mushrooms sprouting from white sacks hanging from a ceiling. — AFP

BESIEGED SYRIA TOWN SWAPS MEAT FOR WHITE MUSHROOMS

'A GOOD SOURCE OF PROTEINS AND MINERAL SALTS'

DOUMA: In a humid room in the besieged Syrian town of Douma, Abu Nabil inspects the pearly white mushrooms sprouting from white sacks hanging from a ceiling. The oyster mushrooms poking out from holes in the bags are now a substitute for meat in the rebel stronghold, where a government blockade has created food shortages.

Abu Nabil walks between the sacks inspecting the clusters of mushrooms emerging from the plastic and checking the internal temperature to ensure conditions are optimal for the unusual crop. Mushrooms are not a common crop in Syria, and rarely feature in local cuisine. But in the Eastern Ghouta region, a key rebel bastion outside the capital Damascus, years of government siege have put traditional staples like meat far beyond the reach of ordinary people.

The Adala Foundation, a local NGO, began thinking about ways to help residents in need of nutritious alternatives. "We turned to cultivating mushrooms because they're a food that has high nutritional value, similar to meat, and can be grown inside houses and basements," said Abu Nabil, an engineer who is project director. "We were looking for a good source of proteins and mineral salts as an alternative to meat, which is very expensive," added Adala's director Muayad Mohieddin. "We discovered the idea of mushrooms as a solution."

Eastern Ghouta has been under siege since 2013, leaving locals to rely on food produced locally or smuggled in through tunnels or across checkpoints. While the area was once an important agricultural region for Syria, mushrooms were not a local crop. "This type of cultivation was totally unknown in Ghouta before the war," said

Mohieddin. "We learned about it by searching on the internet for places in similar (wartime) situations to Eastern Ghouta," he added.

A delicate growing process

The NGO discovered mushroom farming required neither large amounts of space, nor major financial investment, making it a good fit for their needs. To cultivate the mushrooms, the project's workers begin by sandwiching thin slices of high-quality mushroom between pieces of carton and placing the samples in sterile plastic containers.

Over the course of 15-25 days, the mushroom slivers begin to process fungus that is then removed and mixed with sterilised barley grains to create "seeds". Next, straw that has been boiled until sterile and then drained is placed on a table and sprayed with gypsum to prepare it for the "seeds". Finally, the straw is packed into the sacks, with the mushroom starters sprinkled at intervals on top of the straw as it is layered in.

The bags are transferred to a room known as an incubator where they are suspended from the ceiling for between 25 to 45 days, and each produces between four and five mushroom harvests before being replaced. The project relies on generators to keep conditions steady at 25 degrees centigrade and 80 percent humidity. But with fuel also in short supply and expensive, the generators are fed with a locally produced fuel that is extracted from plastic.

In the three months since the project began, the NGO has distributed mushrooms across Douma and other parts of Eastern Ghouta free of charge. "We distribute nearly 1,300 kilograms of mushrooms a week to 600 people," said Abu Nabil.

"The distribution is free for the poorest families, and for those suffering malnutrition or spinal cord injuries that need lots of nutrients," he added.

'What's that? A flower?'

It's a major boon for people like Um Mohammed, a mother-of-four, who can only dream of affording meat at prices of around \$10 a kilogram. "If you're able to get mushrooms, it's a huge blessing," the 50-year-old said. "It's as though you're eating a dish of fish or chicken or meat," she added, preparing a dish in her sparsely furnished home, wearing a black robe and headscarf. Abu Adnan Al-Sidawi, 30, had never even tasted mushrooms before he received them through the project.

"I received a bowl of mushrooms three or four weeks ago," said Sidawi, who suffered multiple fractures in his leg and back in an air strike in April. "I didn't know what they were and I'd never eaten them before. I learnt how to cook them from the internet," he said. "On the first day, I fried them up with some onions, and on the second day I cooked them in a yoghurt sauce," he said, lying on a bed in his house. "Mushrooms are delicious cooked and we liked them in the yoghurt sauce," he said with a smile.

Like many adults in Douma, the city's children were also unfamiliar with the ingredient. At one psychosocial centre, the children saw mushrooms for the first time when they were distributed during the fasting month of Ramadan, an employee said. "I organized a small workshop to teach them about it and how it is cooked," said the employee, who asked to be identified as Rasha. "When I showed it to them, they said to me: 'Miss, what is that? A flower?'" — AFP

GOP INSURGENTS CLAIMING TRUMP MANTLE, SPELL TROUBLE FOR PARTY

WASHINGTON: Republicans face a problem as they try to defend a slim majority in the Senate and win races elsewhere: Insurgent primary candidates are trying to lay claim to President Donald Trump's mantle, and knock out the establishment's choices. The latest case is in Nevada, where endangered GOP incumbent Sen. Dean Heller drew a challenge Tuesday from businessman and repeat failed candidate Danny Tarkanian, who announced his bid in an early morning Fox News Channel appearance seemingly aimed at an audience of one: the president himself.

"We're never going to make America great again unless we have senators in office that fully support President Trump and his America-first agenda," Tarkanian said, criticizing Heller as "one of the first never-Trumpers in Nevada" and arguing he had obstructed Trump's agenda in Congress. Heller opposed early versions of Trump-backed health care legislation in the Senate before voting for a final version that failed anyway. His campaign spokesman, Tommy Ferraro, dismissed Tarkanian as a "perennial candidate." The National Republican Senatorial Committee, which is the official Senate GOP campaign arm, quickly announced its support for Heller, and a super PAC backed by Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., committed to spending what it takes to support him and other GOP incumbents.

Dynamic mirrors

The dynamic mirrors longstanding clashes between the GOP's establishment and activist wings, which played out disastrously in 2010 and 2012 when hard-core conservatives won Senate primaries but went on to lose to Democrats. McConnell and his allies vowed never to let that happen again and have subsequently intervened in primaries when necessary to produce candidates who could win.

The X factor now is the appeal Trump may hold to Republican primary voters - and what Trump himself will do. The president offered one clue Tuesday night, backing the establishment candidate in next week's GOP Senate special election primary in Alabama, hours after an Associated Press story noted the absence so far of a presidential endorsement in the race. "Senator Luther Strange has done a great job representing the people of the Great State of Alabama. He has my complete and total endorsement" the president wrote, bypassing a firebrand House conservative, Mo Brooks, and an evangelical former state chief justice, Roy Moore, in favor of the appointed senator strongly backed by McConnell. The candidates are fighting over the seat previously held by now-Attorney General Jeff Sessions.

But whether Heller will get the presidential seal of approval in his primary is far less clear, and he is not alone. Next door in

Arizona, GOP incumbent Sen. Jeff Flake, another Trump skeptic during last year's campaign, faces at least one challenge from the right in conservative Kelli Ward, who repeatedly denounces Flake while praising Trump. In each case, to their annoyance, establishment-aligned Republicans face the prospect of spending millions to protect an incumbent from a challenger who might have a tough time getting out of the general election. Republicans hold a 52-48 Senate majority and are playing offense against Democratic incumbents in 10 states Trump won. "It's a critical time to make sure that Republican members know, when they're casting tough votes, that we'll have their backs," said Steven Law, a former McConnell chief of staff who heads the Senate Leadership Fund, in describing the decision to come in with millions to back Strange in Alabama.

Underscored questions

Until Trump weighed in with his endorsement late Tuesday, the Alabama race had underscored questions about the role the president would play in Senate primaries. A former GOP Senate campaign official with knowledge of the situation said the NRSC has sought help from the Trump White House on Senate races but those requests went unanswered under the leadership of recently ousted Chief of Staff Reince Priebus, leading to widespread frustration. The former campaign official spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss internal party matters. While Trump and Vice President Mike Pence have said they want to increase the Republican majorities in the House and Senate, the White House's approach to contentious primaries isn't clear yet. And Trump has already worked against McConnell's goals, ignoring his pleas not to appoint former Montana Rep. Ryan Zinke, a likely Senate candidate, as Interior secretary, while boosting endangered Democratic Sens. Heidi Heitkamp of North Dakota and Joe Manchin of West Virginia by hosting them at Trump Tower.

As for Heller, he is already walking the Trump tightrope. Heller's initial denunciation of a Senate plan to repeal and replace Obamacare drew the ire of a political non-profit promoting Trump's agenda. America First Policies tied Heller to House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., in a social media push and threatened to spend more than \$1 million trashing him on television and radio on his home turf. McConnell called the group's attacks "beyond stupid."

In addition to the health care episode, Heller in 2015 said he was donating Trump's previous campaign contributions to charity - a move he announced after Trump came under fire for characterizing some illegal immigrants from Mexico as rapists. For a president with a famously long memory for slights, Heller may have little hope of getting back into his good graces. — AP

US COLLEGES HELP STUDENTS WARY OF TRAVELING HOME

NEW YORK: Art student Usman Anwar planned to spend this summer at home in Pakistan, visiting family and hiking with friends, but as he followed news about President Donald Trump's orders on immigration, he decided it was too risky to leave the US. "I had a feeling that if I would go back ... I won't be able to continue my studies here again," he said.

Instead of visiting Lahore, the 22-year-old sophomore remained at Adelphi University on New York's Long Island, which provided him with a free room and a campus marketing job - assistance that was key, he said, because his family hadn't budgeted for the expense and visa restrictions limit off-campus work. Adelphi is among a number of US schools that offered housing, employment or other help to accommodate international students who stayed because of the concern and uncertainty surrounding US requirements since the White House imposed a travel ban on six mainly Muslim countries.

A Supreme Court ruling on the travel ban exempted many travelers who have a "bona fide relationship" with an entity in the US, such as those admitted to universities. But educators who work with and advocate for international students say many remain concerned, even if they aren't from the six listed countries - Iran, Libya, Syria, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen.

"Whether or not the fears that the students have are based in a concrete reality is almost not relevant," said Perry Greene, Adelphi's vice president for diversity and inclusion. "What's relevant is the anxiety and fear that for our students was quite real." It's unknown exactly how many inter-



NEW YORK: In this undated photo provided by Adelphi University, student Usman Anwar works at his campus job. — AP

national students decided to cancel travel plans and stay put this summer. Some schools say they learned of such students only through efforts to make assistance available.

Travel ban rules

Ohio University said it provided summer housing or dining accommodations for 18 students from the countries in Trump's temporary travel ban rules, covering the costs through an

existing endowment used to help students in need. A handful of Lawrence University students from two countries not on the list, Pakistan and Jordan, decided to stay in the US, and the school in Appleton, Wisconsin, provided reception-type campus jobs for two of them, said Leah McSorley, the associate dean of students for international student services.

Many other schools pointed foreign students to support services and legal resources that could help with travel questions. "With the uncertainty that's there, I think people have been thinking twice about some of these decisions and wanting to make sure that they don't put themselves in situations that could complicate their lives," said Fanta Aw, the interim vice president of campus life at American University in Washington, DC. The school surveyed international students in the spring and found that many planned to stay for summer, often for academic or professional reasons, but travel and visa concerns also were a consideration, Aw said.

Anwar said he reconsidered his summer plans after experiencing increased airport scrutiny and heightened anxiety among travelers when he returned to New York from a visit in January shortly before Trump's inauguration. He's still wary about traveling and wonders whether talking about his concerns might cause him trouble in the future. "I'm waiting for fall semester, he has spent his free time sketching or occasionally grabbing halal meals with friends at a Long Island restaurant. He is getting homesick and wants to visit Pakistan during winter break - maybe, "if the situation changes." — AP

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MORMON LEADER EXCOMMUNICATED FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THREE DECADES

SALT LAKE CITY: A Mormon church leader was removed from his post and kicked out of the religion Tuesday for the first time in nearly three decades. James J Hamula was released from a mid-level leadership council based on disciplinary action by the religion's highest leaders, said Eric Hawkins, a spokesman for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Hawkins didn't say why Hamula was ousted, but the Utah-based church said it was not for apostasy, which refers to teaching inaccurate doctrine or publicly defying guidance from church leaders. Efforts to reach Hamula at listed phone numbers were not successful. The last leader to be excommunicated was the late George P. Lee in 1989 after Lee, an American Indian, called Mormon leaders racist. The church said

then that Lee was removed for "apostasy and other conduct unbecoming a member of the church."

The last church leader removed before Lee was Richard R Lyman, who was excommunicated in 1943 for adultery but baptized again 11 years later. Hamula became a member of a group called the "General Authority Seventy" in 2008. It is a group of nearly 90 leaders that sit below the church president, his two counselors and two other levels of leaders. They help run church operations by serving as a bridge between local lay leaders in Mormon congregations around the world and the top leaders working at church headquarters in Salt Lake City.

Well-regarded

Hamula's removal is surprising because he was

well-regarded and was even considered by some outside Mormon scholars as a possible candidate to join the high-level Quorum of the Twelve Apostles when the church was filling three vacancies in 2015, said Matthew Bowman, a Mormon scholar and history professor at Henderson State University.

Hamula was not chosen, but he was still considered an up-and-comer destined for more important assignments, Bowman said. In recent years, Hamula served in important roles as assistant executive director of church history and executive director of a department that reviews all documents published by the church. "He had a promising future," Bowman said.

His removal will likely be talked about among some of the nearly 16 million worldwide mem-

bers of the Mormon religion, but it may not cause a huge stir because it may be the first time many have heard of Hamula, Bowman said. Hamula was born in Long Beach, California, and is married with six children, according to his church biography. He was a lawyer until joining the leadership council in 2008. That year, he gave a speech at a Mormon conference watched by millions about choosing good over evil.

"Satan is marshaling every resource at his disposal to entice you into transgression," Hamula said. "He knows that if he can draw you into transgression, he may prevent you from serving a full-time mission, marrying in the temple, and securing your future children in the faith, all of which weakens not only you but the church." —AP

KENYA TENSIONS SPIKE AS OPPN CRIES FOUL OVER ELECTION RESULT

RIVAL CLAIMS MASSIVE HACKING ATTACK MANIPULATED RESULTS

NAIROBI: Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta appeared headed for re-election yesterday but his rival Raila Odinga claimed a massive hacking attack had manipulated results, ratcheting up tensions in opposition strongholds. Police fired tear gas to disperse a few hundred protesters in Kisumu in western Kenya as well as in Nairobi's Mathare slum, with Odinga's supporters setting up burning barricades and blocking roads with debris in both spots, AFP reporters said.

With votes from 95 percent of polling stations

raised the spectre of electoral violence in Kenya, still traumatized by the memory of bloody post-poll clashes a decade ago which left 1,100 people dead and 600,000 displaced.

Odinga detailed accusations of a massive hacking attack on the electronic system, saying hackers had gained entry to the system using the identity of top IT official Chris Msando, who was found murdered and tortured late last month. "This is an attack on our democracy. The 2017 general election was a fraud," said Odinga,

shall carry out investigations to establish whether or not the (hacking) claims are true," he said, adding that the IEBC had a week to release final results.

Raphael Tuju, secretary-general of Kenyatta's Jubilee party, urged the opposition to "look at the figures soberly" and accept the results. "You cannot claim that results are fake with respect to presidential vote and you welcome the areas where your governors and MPs have won convincingly. You have to accept the results however they come," he said. Odinga urged his supporters to "remain calm as we look deep into this matter." But he added: "I don't control the people." As his speech ended scores of supporters gathered at a roundabout in Kisumu and began burning tyres, while others gathered in the Nairobi slum of Mathare under a heavy police presence.

Police fired shots into the air and volleys of tear gas to disperse protesters in Mathare who set up burning barricades in some roads. "If Raila is not president, we can't have peace," one Kisumu protester told AFP. Resident Geoffrey Omondi, 22 shook his head as protesters lit a new fire nearby. "It is very painful to watch. The problem is the IEBC who did not announce results well." However the protests remained isolated, and in opposition strongholds where elections tend to stoke tensions. Nevertheless the normally traffic-choked streets of Nairobi remained deserted as the country held its breath over the results.

Dynastic rivalry

The contest between Odinga and Kenyatta was seen by pollsters as too close to call ahead of the vote. It is the second time the two men have faced off in a presidential election, a dynastic rivalry that has lasted more than half a century since their fathers Jomo Kenyatta and Jaramogi Odinga went from allies in the struggle for independence to bitter rivals.

The men belong to two of Kenya's main ethnic groups, Kenyatta from the Kikuyu, the largest, and Odinga from the Luo. Both had secured formidable alliances with other influential communities in Kenya, where voting takes place largely along tribal lines. In 2013 Kenyatta won by 800,000 votes. Kenyatta, 55, is credited with overseeing steady economic growth of more than five percent. However food prices have soared under his watch and several major corruption scandals broke out in his first term. —AFP

'Free and fair'

IEBC chairman Wafula Chebukati insisted the poll was "free and fair." "As a commission we



NAIROBI: Residents of the Mathare area of Nairobi, Kenya, take to the streets by blocking roads with burning tires to protest in support of Kenyan opposition leader and presidential candidate Raila Odinga. —AP

counted, electoral commission (IEBC) results showed Kenyatta leading with 54 percent of the over 14 million ballots tallied against Odinga's 44.7 percent. "These results are fake, it is a sham. They cannot be credible," Odinga told a press conference in the early hours of Wednesday as partial results streamed onto a public website via an electronic tallying system aimed at preventing fraud.

The IEBC said the results could not be considered official until they were verified by original documents from polling stations. Odinga's accusations, and the reaction of his supporters, again

claiming detailed evidence of the hacker's movements. He would not say how he got the information, as he wanted to "protect his source". The 72-year-old, who is making his fourth bid for the presidency as the flagbearer for the National Super Alliance (NASA) coalition, accused his rivals of stealing victory from him through rigging in 2007 and in 2013. "You can only cheat a people for so long," he said.

US BACK ROAD IS ROUTE TO HOPE IN CANADA FOR MANY MIGRANTS

CHAMPLAIN, NY: They have come from all over the United States, piling out of taxis, pushing strollers and pulling luggage, to the end of a country road in the north woods. Where the pavement stops, they pick up small children and lead older ones wearing Mickey Mouse backpacks around a "road closed" sign, threading bushes, crossing a ditch, and filing past another sign in French and English that says "No pedestrians." Then they are arrested.

Seven days a week, 24 hours a day, migrants who came to the US from across the globe - Syria, Congo, Haiti, elsewhere - arrive here where Roxham Road dead-ends so they can walk into Canada, hoping its policies will give them the security they believe the political climate in the United States does not.

"In Trump's country, they want to put us back to our country," said Lena Gunja, a 10-year-old from Congo, who until this week had been living in Portland, Maine. She was traveling with her mother, father and younger sister. "So we don't want that to happen to us, so we want a good life for us. My mother, she wants a good life for us."

The passage has become so crowded this summer that Canadian police set up a reception center on their side of the border in the Quebec community of Saint-Bernard-de-Lacolle, about 30 miles (50 kilometers) south of Montreal, or almost 300 miles (480 kilometers) north of New York City. It includes tents that have popped up in the past few weeks, where migrants are processed before they are turned over to the Canada Border Services Agency, which handles their applications for refuge.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police are adding electricity and portable toilets. A Canadian flag stands just inside the first tent, where the Mounties search the immigrants they've just arrested and check their travel documents. They are also offered food. Then shuttle buses take the processed migrants to their next destination. Trucks carry their luggage separately. How this spot, not even an official border crossing, became the favored place to cross into Canada is anyone's guess. But once migrants started going there, word spread on social media.

Legal port

Under the 2002 Safe Country Agreement between the United States and Canada, migrants seeking asylum must apply to the first country they arrive in. If they were to go to a



QUEBEC: A Royal Canadian Mounted Police officer, left, standing in Saint-Bernard-de-Lacolle, Quebec, advises migrants that they are about to illegally cross from Champlain, NY, and will be arrested, Monday, Aug 7, 2017. —AP

legal port of entry, they would be returned to the United States and told to apply there. But, in a quirk in the application of the law, if migrants arrive in Canada at a location other than a port of entry, such as Roxham Road, they are allowed to request refugee status there.

Many take buses to Plattsburgh, New York, about 20 miles south. Some fly there, and others take Amtrak. Sometimes taxis carry people right up to the border. Others are let off up the road and have to walk, pulling their luggage behind them. Used bus tickets litter the pavement, their points of origin mostly blurred by rain that fell on nights previous. One read "Jacksonville."

One Syrian family said they flew into New York City on tourist visas and then went to Plattsburgh, where they took a taxi to the border. The migrants say they are driven by the perception that the age of Republican President Donald Trump, with his calls for bans on people from certain majority-Muslim countries, means the United States is no longer the destination of the world's dispossessed. Taking its place in their minds is the Canada of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, a member of his country's Liberal Party.

Most of the people making the crossing now are originally from Haiti. The Trump administration said this year it planned to end in January a special humanitarian program enacted after the

2010 earthquake that gave about 58,000 Haitians permission to stay temporarily in the US. Walking toward the border in a group on Monday, Medyne Milord, 47, originally of Haiti, said she needs work to support her family.

"If I return to Haiti, the problem will double," she said. "What I hope is to have a better life in Canada." Jean Rigaud Liberal, 38, said he had been in the United States for seven months and lived in Florida after he left Haiti. He learned about Roxham Road from Facebook and said he thinks "Canada will be better than America." "We are not comfortable in America," Liberal said. "We are seeking a better life; we don't want to go back to Haiti."

Not our mission

On the New York side, US Border Patrol agents sometimes check to be sure the migrants are in the United States legally, but they said they don't have the resources to do it all the time. Besides, said Brad Brant, a special operations supervisor for the US Border Patrol, "our mission isn't to prevent people from leaving." Small numbers continue to cross into Canada elsewhere, but the vast majority take Roxham Road. US officials said they began to notice last fall, around the time of the US presidential election, that more people were crossing there. —AP



PARIS: French Police work on the scene where French soldiers were hit and injured by a vehicle in the western Paris suburb of Levallois-Perret. —AP

SUSPECT JAILED AFTER CAR RAMS INTO PARIS ANTI-TERROR TROOPS

PARIS: French police shot and arrested a suspect in a dramatic motorway chase yesterday after a car smashed into soldiers outside a barracks in a Paris suburb, injuring six. The suspected terror attack is the latest in a string of assaults that have hit France since January 2015, claiming more than 230 lives.

The servicemen were hit by a BMW which drove down a quiet street in the upmarket western Paris suburb of Levallois-Perret at around 8:00 am. It accelerated as it neared the troops, rammed into them and then sped away. "I heard a huge crash which I thought was the sound of scaffolding being put up," Thierry Chappe, a resident in a building opposite the crime scene, told AFP.

Police later gave chase to the vehicle on a motorway north of Paris, and shot and wounded the suspect, a man aged in his late 30s who was also arrested, sources involved in the manhunt said, speaking on condition of anonymity. Interior Minister Gerard Collomb described the act as "deliberate" and carried out by a "man on his own".

He spoke after visiting three of the injured soldiers along with Defence Minister Florence Parly. All six were taken to hospital, but none has life-threatening injuries, they said. They were part of the 7,000-strong anti-terrorism Sentinelle force set up in January 2015 which sees armed, uniformed soldiers patrol the streets and guard high-risk areas such as tourist sites and religious buildings.

Collomb said the forces had been attacked on six different occasions since 2015. The country has been under a state of emergency since major attacks in Paris in November 2015. The Paris prosecutors' office said its anti-terrorism unit has launched a probe into "attempted killings... in relation to a terrorist undertaking". The Islamic State group (IS) has repeatedly tar-

geted France because of its participation in the US-led international coalition fighting the jihadist group, with French jets carrying out air strikes in Syria. "Security forces are actively seeking the perpetrator who is on the run. The ongoing probe will determine his motives and the circumstances in which he acted," Parly said in a statement earlier.

Latest attack

The incident came just four days after Sentinelle soldiers intervened to control an 18-year-old with a history of psychological problems at the Eiffel Tower where he brandished a knife and shouted "Allahu Akbar" (God is Greatest). He told investigators he wanted to kill a soldier, sources close to the case told AFP.

In February, a man armed with a machete attacked four soldiers on patrol at Paris's Louvre Museum, while in April another extremist shot and killed a policeman on the Champs-Elysees, the French capital's most famous boulevard. In June, a 40-year-old Algerian doctorate student who had pledged allegiance to IS attacked a policeman with a hammer outside Notre Dame cathedral.

The wave of attacks in France has had a serious impact on tourism in the world's top tourist destination, but the industry has begun to recover as incidents have become more widespread and generally less deadly. The attack took place as the new centrist government was holding its last cabinet meeting before the summer holidays.

President Emmanuel Macron publicly clashed with the head of the French armed forces last month over a proposed cut to the military budget this year. Macron slapped down General Pierre de Villiers, telling him "I'm your boss", after he complained about the impact of the cuts at a time when the army was in action in the Middle East and West Africa as well as at home. De Villiers resigned a few days later. —AFP

DESPITE VENEZUELA'S GROWING ISOLATION, KEY ALLIES HANG ON

MADRID: Nicolas Maduro's government in Venezuela is increasingly isolated but it still counts powerful support from countries such as Russia and China that can block or delay punitive action from the likes of the United Nations, analysts say. As the economic and political situation deteriorates in the Latin American country, with close to 130 people killed in anti-regime protests, international condemnation of the leftist government of Caracas has increased, with the United States slapping Maduro himself with direct sanctions.

This week, the UN rights office slammed it for using "excessive force" against protesters and a dozen American nations including Brazil, Mexico, Argentina and Canada issued a joint statement condemning "the break in democratic rule" in the country. Nevertheless, Maduro still has varying degrees of support around the world, from both an ideological and financial standpoint.

China, Russia key allies

"In almost all cases, support for Venezuela is strategic," says Michael Shifter of the US-based Inter-American Dialogue research centre. "China is looking to protect long-term access to Venezuela's oil reserves, small countries in the Caribbean and Central America are hedging their bets and avoiding the messiness of confrontation." Venezuela has the support of both China and Russia, two countries traditionally opposed to international sanctions that hold all-powerful vetoes in the UN Security Council.

They have invested heavily in the country's oil sector, and when the United States banned the sale and transfer of north American weapons and military technolo-

No EU sanctions

In Latin America itself, "Cuba, Bolivia and Nicaragua close ranks with Maduro" as they share his leftist ideology as well as fierce anti-imperialist feelings towards the United States, Anna Ayuso said. Paul Hare, a former British ambassador in Cuba and professor at Boston University, said other regional allies also "find it difficult to break with the Chavez legacy which gave them" cut-rate crude as part of the Petrocaribe 17-nation club.

He adds that the Organization of American States, where all 34 member states have a vote, has been incapable of adopting measures to try and solve the crisis as Venezuela has rejected them as meddling. —AFP

FAMILIES RECOUNT HORRIFYING, BLOODY TALEBAN, IS MASSACRE

MAZAR-I-SHARIF: Taliban and Islamic State fighters unleashed a killing spree targeting civilians after capturing a remote village in northern Afghanistan, traumatized families said yesterday after being released by the insurgents. The militants killed about 50 villagers, including women and children in Mirzawalang—a mainly Shiite village in Sayad district of northern Sar-e Pul province—on Saturday after overrunning a government-backed militia, said officials.

The insurgents also took a number of residents captive, but released 235 hostages late Tuesday after elders and

provincial officials struck a deal with the group. Survivors fleeing the violence described nightmarish scenes, detailing how the militants went from house to house, shooting villagers. "When the fighting began, the villagers tried to flee, but they were stopped by IS fighters. They took a group of men, women and children behind a hill and shot them," said Ali Dad Zafari, a Mirzawalang resident.

'I buried 10 bodies in one grave'

"Since my mother was too old to walk, she was left behind, I don't even know what has happened to her," he

added. Villager Yasin Abuzar said IS and Taliban fighters cut off the main roads to the area before launching a killing spree. "I could only rescue my kids. When they entered our village they opened fire at everyone indiscriminately, they didn't even spare women and children," he said, adding that hundreds were still missing. "I buried 10 bodies in one grave. We don't want the government to give us coffins, we want them to provide us security," he said.

Local officials called for more aid as hundreds of displaced arrived in the provincial capital. "The families who

have come to Sar-e Pul city need shelters and food. They are living in the mosques, schools, with their relatives and some even on the streets," Zabiullah Amani, a provincial spokesman, told AFP. "If aid agencies don't help we will face a humanitarian crisis," he added. The villagers said most of those killed were Shiites and Hazaras who were either shot or beheaded.

IS has given a sectarian twist to the Afghan conflict, with a number of deadly attacks on Shiites in the past year. Last week two suicide bombers killed more than 33 worshippers at a

mosque in Afghanistan's western city of Herat, in an attack claimed by group. A resurgent Taliban, whose ranks are mostly made up of Sunni Muslim ethnic Pashtuns, is at the peak of its summer fighting season. The Taliban confirmed capturing Mirzawalang but said it did so alone. It has also denied allegations it had killed civilians. Army spokesman Nasratullah Jamshidi said Afghan forces launched an operation yesterday to retake the district. "We will avenge the blood of our innocent people," Mohammad Zahir Wahdat, the provincial governor, told reporters. —AFP



ISLAMABAD: Supporters of Pakistan's deposed Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif shout slogans against the opposition during a rally. —AP

DEPOSED PAKISTANI PM BEGINS 2 DAYS OF RALLIES

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan's deposed prime minister Nawaz Sharif began two days of rallies yesterday aimed at demonstrating his political strength, making stops to the capital Islamabad to his hometown of Lahore, ignoring security threats and drawing thousands of supporters. Sharif planned to spend at least two nights along Grand Trunk Road, the main road from Islamabad to Lahore, in his first public appearances since July 28, when the country's Supreme Court disqualified him from serving for concealing his assets.

Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, who replaced Sharif days after his removal from office, hugged the three-time premier as he boarded a vehicle along with his supporters. Abbasi is a lawmaker from Sharif's ruling Pakistan Muslim League party. Sharif's supporters showered rose petals on his vehicle and waved national and ruling party flags, chanting: "My Lion, your lion, Nawaz Sharif, Nawaz Sharif." The lion was Sharif's election symbol when he won the 2013 vote.

'Sea of people'

Despite the heat and humidity, hundreds of people walked for about 2 kilometers with Sharif's slow-moving convoy, as volunteers distributed bottles of water. Sharif's party decorated the route with his portraits and national flags. Hours later, Sharif reached the garrison city of Rawalpindi in a sports vehicle and moved to an elaborately equipped container truck that was fitted with beds, air-conditioning and bathroom.

In Rawalpindi, Rana Sanaullah, a provincial minister for law, said the "sea of people" who joined the rally proves that Sharif "can be expelled from power but not from hearts." Jamshed Ahmed Khan, a local trader, said the hot weather could not deter them from coming out to support their leader. Two youths, Hamid Ali and Baz Mohammad, who came from the northwestern town of Sawabi to show their solidarity with Sharif, said they would

even sacrifice their life for Sharif.

Local police officer Mohammad Ramzan estimated that up to 30,000 people were accompanying the convoy when it headed to the nearby garrison city of Rawalpindi. Earlier, Asif Kirmani, a lawmaker from Sharif's party, said vehicles carrying supporters will pass through Islamabad's key road before entering Rawalpindi. From there the rally will continue on the main road leading to Lahore.

The rally comes a day after Sharif said he was determined to go to his home despite Monday's truck bombing in Lahore, in which two persons were killed. Former information minister Pervaiz Rashid and top leaders from Sharif's party were seen in his car as he started his journey amid claims from opponents that Sharif's political career had ended after his disqualification by the court.

Not the end

Sharif insists his removal from office did not mean the end of his future in politics. He plans to file a review petition in an effort to get his disqualification reversed. Sharif says he wants to start a debate in parliament and the public to discuss why no elected prime minister has completed their full term in Pakistan, which has been ruled by army generals for more than half of its 70-year history.

Sharif has a history of rocky relations with the military, but since his removal he has exercised restraint in commenting on the sensitive issue of civil-military relations. Last month's removal of Sharif briefly plunged Pakistan into political turmoil but parliament later elected senior lawmaker Abbasi as the country's new prime minister. Sharif's party initially wanted Abbasi to serve as an interim premier for 45 days until Sharif's younger brother, Shahbaz Sharif, the chief minister of Punjab, secures a national assembly seat in a by-election. But now Sharif says his party won't replace Abbasi with his brother. —AP

NEARLY 60,000 EVACUATED AFTER CHINA QUAKE KILLS 19

6.5 MAGNITUDE QUAKE CRACKS HIGHWAYS, TRIGGERS LANDSLIDES

CHENGDU: China yesterday evacuated nearly 60,000 people in its mountainous southwest after a strong earthquake killed at least 19 people, rattling a region where memories of a 2008 seismic disaster remain fresh. The 6.5-magnitude earthquake struck Sichuan province late on Tuesday, tearing cracks in mountain highways, triggering landslides, damaging buildings and sending panicked residents and tourists fleeing into the open.

The provincial government said yesterday afternoon that most of the tourists—many stranded at a popular national park near the epicenter—have been evacuated after spending a nervous night out in the open as more than 1,000 aftershocks rippled across the region. Locals will also be moved to safer ground, according to the authorities.

The area's difficult geography and travel restrictions quickly imposed by authorities—have so far prevented a clear picture of the scale of the disaster from emerging, but there were no reports of catastrophic damage or large-scale casualties by yesterday afternoon. The quake killed at least 19 people and injured at least 247, 40 of them seriously, according to the local government of Aba prefecture where the epicenter was located.

Two foreign nationals, a French man and a Canadian woman, are among the injured. Images on social media or in state news outlets showed cars and buses tossed into ravines or crushed by giant boulders jolted loose from surrounding hills, and rescue personnel combed through rubble for any victims. Aerial footage broadcast by state-run Xinhua news agency showed picturesque green-forested mountains now scarred by huge gouges from giant landslides that sent clouds of dust into the air.

'We just ran'

The quake's epicenter was near Jiuzhaigou, a national park and UNESCO World Heritage Site famed for its karst rock formations, waterfalls and lakes. Xinhua said at least five of the deaths occurred there, and that more than 30,000 people had been evacuated from Jiuzhaigou alone. "Nearly all the tourists are being evacuated," a Jiuzhaigou tour company worker

who gave only her surname, Yan, told AFP by phone. "We slept overnight in tour buses and have been staying in the open ground.

Landslides are pretty bad, rocks keep falling down." China's official earthquake monitoring agency said more than 1,000 aftershocks had been detected, the most powerful reaching magnitude 4.8 yesterday morning. More than 2,000 kilometers to the northwest, a 6.3-magnitude tremor shook the far-western

border region of Xinjiang on Wednesday morning, according to the US Geological Survey. The Xinjiang quake, which was followed by aftershocks of 5.2 and 5.3 magnitude, injured 32 people and damaged more than 1,000 homes, Xinhua said.

been deployed to the Jiuzhaigou area, along with hundreds of vehicles, and dozens of sniffer dogs and devices used to detect life underneath rubble.

A stream of empty tour buses bearing the sign "Emergency Rescue Vehicle" made their way across the highway toward the disaster zone yesterday afternoon. The quake struck at a shallow depth of 10 kilometers, the USGS said, and was reportedly felt hundreds of kilometers

outside right away." Several people contacted by AFP reported seeing some structures collapse. Others, speaking from the road amid an exodus on traffic-choked mountain highways, reported cars being hit by persistent rockfalls in the quake's aftermath.

The 2008 quake set off deadly landslides in the region, obliterating towns and damming rivers—creating menacing "quake lakes" that forced the evacuation of thou-



SICHUAN PROVINCE: In this photo released by China's Xinhua News Agency, medical personnel treat an injured man at the People's Hospital in Jiuzhaigou county. —AP

ters from the epicentre. Shallow quakes tend to cause more surface damage. It evoked memories of a massive 8.0-magnitude earthquake that devastated wide areas of the same region in 2008, leaving 87,000 people dead or missing in China's worst seismic disaster in a generation.

"I was also in Jiuzhaigou in 2008 during the last big quake, so I knew what it was. This felt even stronger," local restaurant owner Tang Sesheng told AFP by phone. "People didn't dare grab anything like money or clothes—we just all ran

sands downstream as the army worked to clear the blockages. The Red Cross Society of China said it was sending emergency specialists and volunteers, while Save the Children was also mobilizing teams. "Given the frequent landslides in the rainy season and potential massive secondary disaster following the big earthquake, Save the Children is deeply concerned about the safety of children and women in the affected areas," said the charity's operations director in China, Zhang Hongxia. —AFP

border region of Xinjiang on Wednesday morning, according to the US Geological Survey. The Xinjiang quake, which was followed by aftershocks of 5.2 and 5.3 magnitude, injured 32 people and damaged more than 1,000 homes, Xinhua said.

'All-out efforts'

President Xi Jinping called for "all-out efforts to rapidly organize relief work and rescue the injured" in the Sichuan quake. Hundreds of soldiers and rescue personnel had

A-BOMB ANNIVERSARY IN NAGASAKI AMID US-NORTH KOREA TENSION

TOKYO: Amid growing tension between Washington and North Korea, the mayor of Nagasaki said yesterday that the fear of another nuclear bomb attack is growing at a ceremony marking the 72nd anniversary of the US atomic bombing of his city. Nagasaki Mayor Tomihisa Taue urged nuclear states to abandon such weapons and criticized Japan's government for not taking part in the global effort toward a nuclear ban.

The bombing anniversary comes just as Pyongyang and Washington are trading escalating

threats. President Donald Trump threatened North Korea "with fire and fury" and North Korea's military said yesterday that it was examining its plans for attacking Guam. "The international situation surrounding nuclear weapons is becoming increasingly tense," Taue said at Nagasaki's Peace Park. "A strong sense of anxiety is spreading across the globe that in the not too distant future these weapons could actually be used again."

The world's first atomic bomb, used on Aug. 6, 1945, killed 140,000 people in Hiroshima. The

bombing of Nagasaki three days later killed 70,000 more. At 11:02 am, when the bomb struck 72 years ago, people at the ceremony observed a moment of silence as the peace bell rang. "The nuclear threat will not end as long as nations continue to claim that nuclear weapons are essential for their national security," Taue said.

Taue sharply criticized Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's government for what he said were empty promises about working to achieve a nuclear-free world. He said Japan's absence even during diplomatic negotiations for the UN Nuclear Prohibition Treaty, adopted in July, is "incomprehensible to those of us living in the cities that suffered atomic bombings."

The outspoken mayor praised the atomic bombing survivors, or "hibakusha," for their lifelong devotion to the effort. He urged Japan's government to change its policy of relying on the US nuclear umbrella and join the nuclear prohibition treaty as soon as possible. "Nuclear weapons are incompatible with mankind," said Yoshitoshi Fukahori, an 88-year-old survivor of the Nagasaki atomic bombing who lost his sister in the blast. He said that as he rushed home the morning after the bombing, the shocking view from the hilltop—his hometown flattened and the landmark Catholic church on fire—made him cry.

Fukahori, who operates a library of atomic bombing photos, said Japan, which has since rebuilt itself as a pacifist nation, should never lose the respect and trust it has regained from the international community. Abe, in a speech that was almost a repeat of what he said in Hiroshima, did not mention the UN nuclear ban treaty. More than 175,000 hibakusha have died in Nagasaki since the attack, including 3,551 in the past year, while over 300,000 of their peers have died in Hiroshima. The average age of the survivors is more than 81 years. Many suffer from lasting effects of radiation. —AP



NAGASAKI: Doves fly over the Statue of Peace at Nagasaki Peace Park in Nagasaki, southern Japan during a ceremony to mark the 72nd anniversary of the world's second atomic bomb attack over the city. —AP

GAY MARRIAGE VOTE SPARKS FURY, DEBATE IN AUSTRALIA

SYDNEY: Australia's bitter political battle over legalizing gay marriage came to a head yesterday, with the government pushing ahead with a postal vote after parliament rejected a referendum—both options bitterly opposed by activists. Polls indicate popular support in Australia for marriage equality, but the issue has dragged on for more than a decade amid political wrangling over the best way to vote on the issue.

The conservative Liberal-National coalition last year went to the polls promising to hold a nationwide plebiscite, but the opposition Labor Party, Greens and crossbench senators yesterday rejected the option in the upper house Senate for the second time. The opposition, along with many gay rights campaigners, favor a free vote among MPs, with parliamentarians not bound by party policy.

Vote challenged

They say a national vote is costly and will prove divisive, subjecting gay people and their families to hate speech. Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull Tuesday committed Aus\$122 million (US\$97 million) to the postal vote, run by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, with ballot papers sent out by September 12 and due back early November.

"Strong leaders carry out their promises. Weak leaders break them," he said. If it returns a "yes" outcome, the government will table a private bill on parliament's lower

house, where the Liberals could cast a free vote by December. If "no" is the result, the issue will not go to parliament. Marriage equality advocates have vowed to challenge the postal vote in court, saying the government might be exceeding its executive authority in holding it, casting doubt on whether the ballot would go ahead.

Supporters also fear the postal option could disenfranchise younger Australians—usually more supportive of same-sex marriage—who are less likely to use the mailing system. Former conservative prime minister Tony Abbott yesterday welcomed the postal vote, kicking off the "no" campaign. "If you don't like same-sex marriage, vote no," he told reporters. "If you are worried about religious freedom and freedom of speech, vote no. If you don't like political correctness, vote no."

Labor senator Penny Wong made an impassioned speech in parliament, accusing the government of "handball(ing) a hard decision to the community" and also of failing to defend the LGBTI community against hate speech. "Let me say, for many children in same-sex couple parented families and for many young LGBTI kids, this ain't a respectful debate," she said. Same-sex couples can have civil unions or register their relationships in most states across Australia, but the government does not consider them married under national law. —AFP

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FAX : 24835620/1
CIRCULATION : 24833199 Extn. 163
ACCOUNTS : 24835619
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P.O. Box 1301 Safat, 13014 Kuwait.
E MAIL: info@kuwaittimes.net
Website: www.kuwaittimes.net

Focus

SANCTIONS MIGHT NOT
BUDGE NORTH KOREA

The strongest sanctions yet against North Korea could still prove no match for the communist country's relentless nuclear weapons ambitions. While the United States hails a new package of UN penalties that could cut a third of North Korea's exports, the sanctions themselves aren't the American objective. They're only a tactic for getting Kim Jong Un's totalitarian government to end its missile advances and atomic weapons tests. And there is little evidence to suggest this newest round of economic pressure will be more successful than previous efforts.

Nevertheless, President Donald Trump on Tuesday hailed the sanctions as necessary "to finally address the dangers posed by North Korea." He tweeted: "We must be tough & decisive!" Whatever the economic pain on Pyongyang, Kim's government has expressed no interest in negotiating away its fast-growing arsenal of perhaps 20 nuclear bombs and the ballistic missiles needed to deliver them. For the young North Korean leader, the weapons are fundamental to the survival of his authoritarian regime, even if they deepen diplomatic isolation and bring even more extreme poverty for his long-suffering people.

And the sanctions may not prove effective. The North has learned through decades of U.S. efforts at isolation how to circumvent commercial and financial restrictions, and reluctant powers like China and Russia have often proven half-hearted partners when it comes to policing their ally. "On paper, this is a pretty strict containment of North Korea economically," said Scott Snyder, an expert on the Koreans at the Council on Foreign Relations. "But North Korea has been able to evade sanctions in the past and it's not clear to me things are going to be much different this time."

Speaking in the Philippines after meeting Asian foreign ministers, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson on Monday said there is "no daylight" in the view among Washington and its partners that North Korea must move toward abandoning its nuclear weapons. But he was quick to stress the importance of everyone enforcing the new, tougher sanctions. "We will be monitoring that carefully," he said.

The UN penalties aim to cut off roughly \$1 billion of North Korea's estimated \$3 billion in annual exports, by banning countries from importing its coal, iron, lead and seafood products, and stopping them from letting in more North Korean laborers, who help Kim's government by sending cash home. Trump's UN ambassador, Nikki Haley, called it "the single largest economic sanctions package ever leveled against" North Korea.

Even if, in the best-case scenario, the sanctions hurt North Korea's economy and weaken its government, questions remain over what to do next. Can North Korea be persuaded to give up its weapons of mass destruction, removing the threat to the United States and its allies, South Korea and Japan? If not, what new options does the United States have? Trump is only the latest US president to choose sanctions instead of confronting the North militarily or offering diplomatic talks without nuclear concessions.

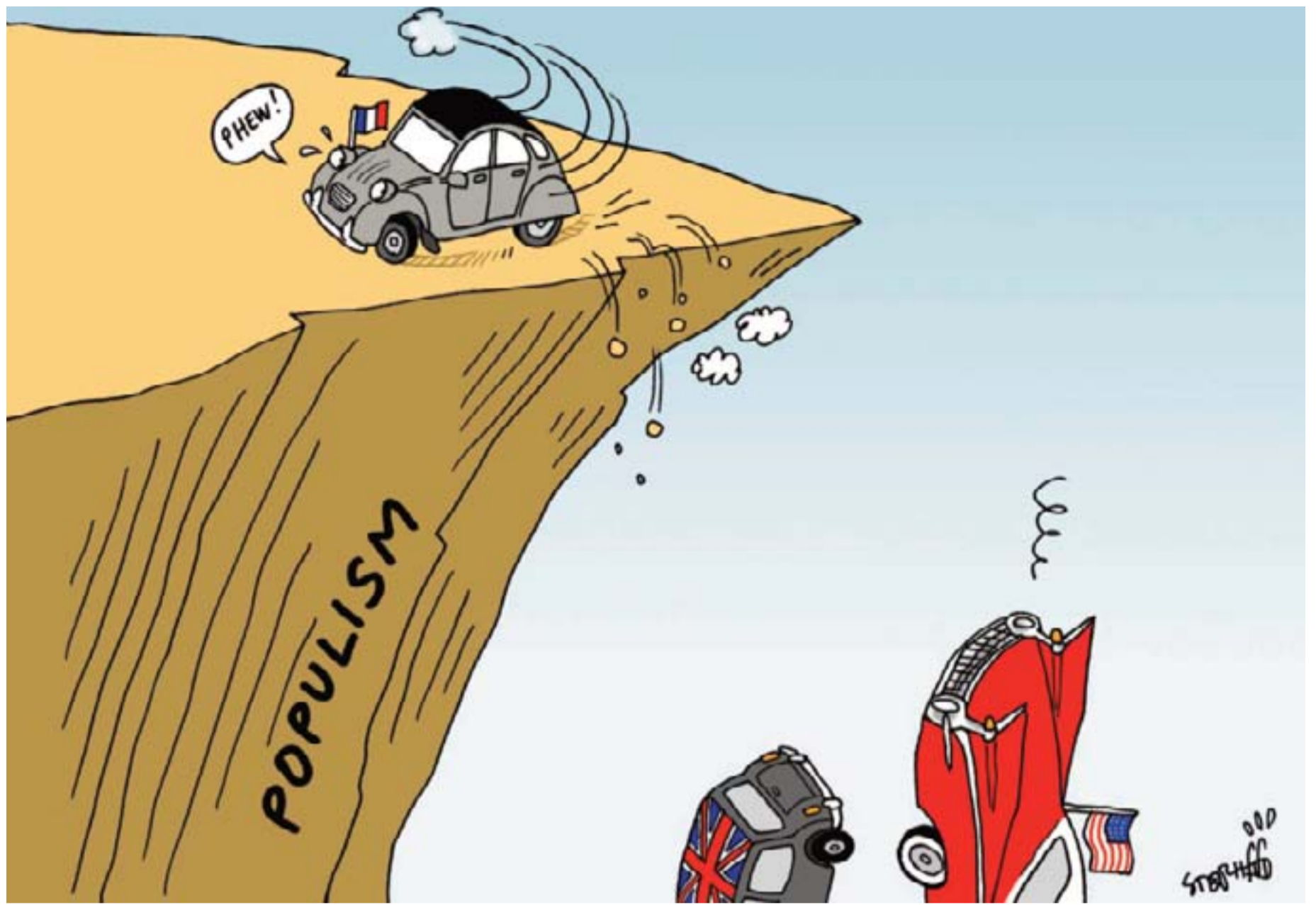
China cautious

Much rests on the willingness of China, the North's traditionally ally and main trading partner. China opposes Pyongyang's nuclear weapons, and is uncharacteristically forthright in saying so this week. But it remains cautious of triggering a North Korean collapse, fearful of fomenting chaos along its border or advancing any scenario that would lead to a reunified and US-allied Korea on its doorstep.

In private diplomatic conversations, the US has been telling Beijing that the North's weapons development will eventually spread instability in the region, an argument that plays to China's strong preference for policies that preserve long-term stability and the status quo. The US has been arguing that an unfettered North Korea could lead to an arms race in which Japan, South Korea and even Vietnam could pursue their own nuclear weapons, said a US official who briefed reporters traveling with Tillerson on condition of anonymity.

There have been a half-dozen previous UN resolutions on North Korea since 2006, when the country became the first and only one this century to conduct a nuclear test explosion. Four further atomic tests since then have honed its capability to miniaturize a nuclear device. Last month's pair of groundbreaking tests of long-range ballistic missiles has put the continental United States in range for the first time. While uncertainty remains over the North's ability to wed a warhead with such a missile and strike a US target, it is a prospect that looms large over Trump's presidency.

Amid all the pressure, his administration has left open the possibility of resuming talks with Pyongyang. In Manila, Tillerson said he hoped the North would "choose a different pathway and when the conditions are right, that we can sit and have a dialogue." He urged North Korea to first halt tests for an "extended period," however often such confidence-building measures have failed. — AP



SECRECY PRECEDED US WEED KILLER CRISIS

As the US growing season entered its peak this summer, farmers began posting startling pictures on social media: fields of beans, peach orchards and vegetable gardens withering away. The photographs served as early warnings of a crisis that has damaged millions of acres of farmland. New versions of the herbicide dicamba developed by Monsanto and BASF, according to farmers, have drifted across fields to crops unable to withstand it, a charge authorities are investigating.

As the crisis intensifies, new details provided to Reuters by independent researchers and regulators, and previously unreported testimony by a company employee, demonstrate the unusual way Monsanto introduced its product. The approach, in which Monsanto prevented key independent testing of its product, went unchallenged by the Environmental Protection Agency and nearly every state regulator.

Typically, when a company develops a new agricultural product, it commissions its own tests and shares the results and data with regulators. It also provides product samples to universities for additional scrutiny. Regulators and university researchers then work together to determine the safety of the product. In this case, Monsanto denied requests by university researchers to study its XtendiMax with VaporGrip for volatility - a measure of its tendency to vaporize and drift across fields.

The researchers interviewed by Reuters - Jason Norsworthy at the University of Arkansas, Kevin Bradley at the University of Missouri and Aaron Hager at the University of Illinois - said Monsanto provided samples of XtendiMax before it was approved by the EPA. However, the samples came with contracts that explicitly forbade volatility testing. "This is the first time I'm aware of any herbicide ever brought to market for which there were strict guidelines on what you could and could not do," Norsworthy said.

The researchers declined to provide Reuters a copy of the Monsanto contracts, saying they were not authorized to do so. Monsanto's Vice President of Global Strategy, Scott Partridge, said the company prevented the testing because it was unnecessary. He said the company believed the product was less volatile than a previous dicamba formula that researchers found could be used safely. "To get meaningful data takes a long, long time," he said. "This product needed to get into the hands of growers."

'Jeopardize the Federal Label'

Monsanto employee Boyd Carey, an agronomist, laid

out the company's rationale for blocking the independent research at a hearing of the Arkansas Plant Board's Pesticide Committee in the summer of 2016. A meeting summary by the Arkansas Legislature's Joint Budget Committee described Carey's testimony as follows: "Boyd Carey is on record on Aug 8 stating that the University of Arkansas nor any other university was given the opportunity to test VaporGrip in fear that the results may jeopardize the federal label."

Efforts to reach Carey were not successful. Monsanto declined to comment on his testimony. To be sure, complaints about damaged crops are still under investigation and there is no evidence that independent testing of XtendiMax's volatility would have altered the course of the crisis. But it would have given regulators a more complete picture of the formula's properties as they decided if and how to let farmers use it, agriculture experts said.

In the end, the EPA approved the product without the added testing in September. It said it made its decision after reviewing company-supplied data, including some measuring volatility. "EPA's analysis of the data has shown reduced volatility potential with newer formulations," the EPA said in a July 27 statement. However, EPA spokeswoman Amy Graham told Reuters the agency is "very concerned about the recent reports of crop damage" and is reviewing restrictions on dicamba labels. Monsanto Chief Technology Officer Robert Fraley said, "We firmly believe that our product if applied according to the instructions on the label will not move off target and damage anyone."

States Approve Without More Testing

Companies can limit independent testing because the substances are proprietary. When samples are provided to researchers, lawyers hammer out contracts detailing how testing will be conducted and results will be handled, but rarely do agreements limit what the products can be tested for, according to researchers interviewed by Reuters. For instance, BASF, which introduced its rival herbicide, Engenia, around the same time, said it allowed several university researchers to evaluate its "off-target impact and application parameters."

Norsworthy, of the University of Arkansas, confirmed he had been permitted by BASF to study Engenia for volatility and that the results showed less volatility than previous dicamba formulations. BASF says its product is safe when properly applied. The EPA did not answer questions about whether it noticed a lack of input from university researchers about XtendiMax's volatility or whether it

requested such testing. It also did not address whether the lack of independent research played into its decision to give the product an abridged two-year registration, less than the 20 years experts say is more common. The agency did the same for BASF's Engenia.

"The EPA placed time limits on the registration to allow the agency to either let it expire or to easily make the necessary changes in the registration if there are problems," Graham, the EPA spokeswoman, said. After the EPA signed off, Monsanto sought approval from individual states, which determine whether agricultural products are suitable for their climates and geographies.

To help them do that, Monsanto shared its XtendiMax testing results with state regulators. But it only supplied that data in finished form, Monsanto's Carey told the Arkansas Plant Board meeting, meaning it withheld underlying data that could be analyzed independently by the regulators. Only Arkansas wanted more. Terry Walker, the director of the Arkansas Plant Board, said the state asked Monsanto for extra testing, but the company refused. "As the system progressed and it got closer to EPA approval, the board kept asking for local data," Walker said. "That did not happen."

Monsanto's Fraley said the company could not honor Arkansas' request within the EPA's timeline. "Given the timing of the approval... there simply wasn't the opportunity to do the additional testing," he said. Arkansas blocked Monsanto's product because of the lack of extra volatility testing by universities, but approved BASF's because it had not limited such testing and the results were acceptable. Thirty-three other states - every other state where the products were marketed - approved both products.

After Arkansas blocked XtendiMax in December, crop damage began to appear in the state anyway. Investigators trying to determine the cause of the damage are considering a range of possibilities including problems with or improper use of Engenia or illegal use of XtendiMax or earlier formulations. In July, the state banned all products containing dicamba. Some states including Illinois, Missouri and Tennessee said they do not seek the more data if products pass EPA scrutiny. "The EPA is the federal agency responsible for approving and registering pesticides for sale and use," said Missouri Department of Agriculture spokeswoman Sarah Alsager. "The Department does not perform field testing or solicit local input." Some states are now forming task forces to determine what should be done about the damage. — Reuters

CANADA ROUGHNECKS SEEK GREEN ENERGY JOBS

After nearly a decade of riding Canada's oil boom, drilling contractor Jennifer Turner found herself low on work, like thousands of other employees in the fossil fuel business left jobless following a plunge in oil prices. Today, she helps unemployed oil workers find jobs in the burgeoning solar power industry. She hopes it's part of a broader transition to adopt more renewable energy in the North American nation with the world's third-largest oil reserves. "Workers risk getting left behind," said Turner, a spokeswoman for the advocacy group Iron and Earth based in western Alberta province, the heartland of Canada's oil sector.

In fact, many require "minimal training" to repurpose their expertise for renewable energy projects, she told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. Skills like welding, machinery repair and project management can be transferred from the oil industry to solar power installation or other renewable enterprises if workers get the right support, said Turner who still occasionally contracts for oil companies. From the sands of Saudi Arabia, to the Bakken shale formation in North Dakota and Angola's coastal waters, low oil prices, concerns over climate change and the falling cost of clean power are leading investors and governments to reconsider energy policies.

Finding jobs for ex-oil workers is key to smoothing the path towards renewable energy and building public support for that shift, officials and campaigners say. The Paris Agreement to tackle climate change, adopted in 2015 by close to 200 governments, notes that countries will take into account "the imperatives of a just transition of the workforce" in their efforts to limit global warming.

High Emissions

Since oil prices collapsed in 2014, Canada has lost more than 40,000 jobs in oil, gas and related industries, showed data released last year by the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, an industry group. Extracting about 3.6 million barrels of oil daily, Canada is the largest foreign

petroleum exporter to the United States and the world's seventh largest producer, according to the US Energy Information Administration.

Partially due to its oil industry, Canada is one of the highest per-capita greenhouse gas emitters among the wealthy countries in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. Canada's government has pledged to improve its record on climate change by investing in renewable energy, taxing carbon emissions and other policies.

'Tipping Point'

In Alberta, which produces about 80 percent of Canada's oil, renewable energy capacity is doubling roughly every two years, said Jim Sandercock, chair of the alternative energy technology program at the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology. Currently, renewable energy accounts for less than 10 percent of Alberta's power, according to government figures. With unemployment in the once-booming province at nearly 8 percent, largely due to lay-offs in the oil sector as prices dropped, interest in green energy training has grown swiftly, Sandercock said.

"Solar and other renewable energy used to be expensive," he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. "Now they are amongst the cheapest forms of new electricity generation... any new technology has to get past that initial hump." The institute will double the number of places on its renewable energy program next year to 50, but demand is more than ten times that, the professor said. The employment rate for graduates is 93 percent.

"We are about to see a tipping point" as clean energy grows rapidly in the United States and developing nations, Sandercock predicted. "These are exciting times." Employment in solar power in the United States jumped nearly 25 percent last year to more than 260,000 workers, according to a February study from The Solar Foundation, a trade group. The US solar power industry now employs more people than coal, according to a 2017 report from the US Department of Energy. The broader oil industry, howev-

er, remains a larger employer than solar, despite recent job losses, it said.

Pay Cut

Workers transferring from oil jobs into renewable energy are likely to take a significant "haircut" on their salaries when making the switch, said Sandercock. But some still want to do it for environmental reasons, to avoid the boom-and-bust cycle common in the oil industry, or simply because they need a job, he added. John Archer, a spokesman for Alberta's government, said the province has programs to help unemployed oil workers.

"The biggest obstacle for workers who want to retrain is identifying which of their skills are transferable to new job opportunities and what new skills are needed," Archer said. The government does not have statistics on how many ex-oil workers have got green energy jobs since the price collapse in 2014, he added.

Fossil Fuel Subsidies

Provincial officials expect to attract more than \$10.5 billion in renewable electricity investment by 2030, creating an estimated 7,200 jobs. "The Alberta government has committed to increasing the amount of green energy produced," Archer said, without providing details on targets for energy generation or new projects. Both Turner and Sandercock said the government could do more to create clean energy jobs, including better tax incentives for companies and individuals using green technologies.

Canada supplied \$3 billion annually in financial backing - including government subsidies - for oil, gas and coal companies between 2013 and 2015, compared to \$171 million for clean energy, according to data released in July by a coalition of environmental groups. Despite this financial backing for fossil fuels, drilling supervisor and campaigner Turner believes the long-term outlook for renewables is more optimistic than for oil. "We just need to avoid excluding workers," she said. — Reuters

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Rolls of straw are photographed on a field on the outskirts of Frankfurt yesterday.— AP

LANKA WAR WIDOWS TRAFFICKED AS SLAVES

JAFFNA: When Nathkulasinham Nesemalhar took a flight from Colombo to Muscat in March she believed the boarding pass she clutched in her hand was her golden ticket to a better life after decades of war where she lost everything, including her husband. The 54-year-old widow from Sri Lanka's former war zone had been promised work as a maid for an affluent family in the Gulf state of Oman. She would get a nice room, decent working hours and 30,000 rupees (\$150) a month - enough to pay off her debts.

But Nesemalhar's dream soon turned into a nightmare. She found herself enslaved with other women in a dimly-lit room with no ventilation, miles from Muscat. She was taken out daily, sent to different homes to clean, and then locked up again at night. "There were 15 of us. We never got paid. Finally we got back home when the Sri Lankan government intervened," said the mother-of-three whose husband went missing in 2001.

"People who have not gone through a conflict will not understand how difficult it is to take care of young children on your own. We suffered during the war and we are suffering now," she said at her home in Jaffna in Sri Lanka's Northern Province. The abuse of Asian and African maids in Middle Eastern countries such as Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain and Oman is commonly reported.

But Nesemalhar's story highlights a rising yet unacknowledged trend in the Indian Ocean island where a lack of opportunities for thousands of war widows is making them easy prey for traffickers who sell them as slaves overseas. According to the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment, over 1,000 women from the north - many from female headed homes - sought jobs as maids in Gulf nations in 2015 and 2016. Central Bank data shows only 300 went in 2011. "The numbers are insignificant compared to the over 100,000 Sri Lankan women who leave annually as domestic workers," said S Senthurajah, executive director of Social Organizations Networking for Development, a Jaffna-based charity. "But given that hardly anyone from the north left as domestic workers a few years back, it is an important number. It's because they cannot make ends meet."

90,000 War Widows

Sri Lanka is in its eighth year of peace after a 26-year conflict which ended with the defeat of the separatist Tamil Tigers in 2009. More than 100,000 died, around 65,000 remain missing and millions were uprooted from their homes during the violence, concentrated mainly in the island's ethnic Tamil majority Eastern and Northern Provinces. Yet despite the government pumping billions of dollars into infrastructure development in the north, little has been done for the estimated 90,000 women who lost their husbands, fathers and brothers during the conflict, say activists. The Northern Province is one of the country's most

under-developed provinces in terms of gender parity. Female workforce participation is 21 percent compared to the national average of 35 percent, government data shows, while the maternal mortality rate is 30 percent against 22 percent nationally. The United Nations estimates more than a fifth of the 250,000 households in the north are headed by women like Nesemalhar - war widows who have become breadwinners.

With no jobs and few opportunities to earn a livelihood, these women - many of whom look after up to four people - are being forced to borrow from money lenders, leaving them open to exploitation by trafficking networks. "They are the most vulnerable and easiest to convince to take up these offers," said Ravindra De Silva, head of the charity Association for Friendship and Love, which worked with authorities to rescue Nesemalhar.

Recruitment agencies employ local villagers who are known and trusted in their communities and who scout for indebted and impoverished women. They promise decent jobs, generous salaries and paint an alluring picture of a good life in a wealthy nation. All the women have to do is sign a basic contract and fill in some paperwork - but they are often unaware of any terms and conditions. This amounts to a contract of bonded labor, where the recruitment agencies - which are government registered - dupe victims into believing no fees need to be paid, said Da Silva.

The agency that sent Nesemalhar to Oman, for example, refused to repatriate her saying the employer paid 300,000 rupees (\$1,955) for her and she must refund that in order to be allowed to return home. Nesemalhar was luckier than most. After being held for several weeks, she was rescued when the Sri Lankan authorities found out about her plight through the relative of another woman enslaved with her. But many victims are not rescued or cannot pay the money to return home and can be exploited and abused for years. In most cases, there is no prosecution of the recruitment agents or employers.

Only a handful of cases have made headlines. In 2013, a Sri Lankan maid was beheaded in Saudi Arabia, accused of negligence after a child in her care died. In 2010, doctors found a 50-year-old woman rescued from Saudi Arabia had been burned with a hot iron and had pieces of metal embedded into her skin. Activists say that while reports of physical and mental abuse are common, women are reluctant to speak about sexual abuse and rape, fearing shame and stigma. Officials say they cannot cancel the registration of recruitment firms and prosecute traffickers or foreign employers as victims do not come forward - often too poor and too traumatized to pursue legal action. The Sri Lankan authorities say most women go through registered recruitment agencies and complete a 40-day housekeeping course before their departure. — Reuters

SAUDI FORCES RAZE AWAMIYA OLD QUARTER

Continued from Page 1

to prevent gunmen using the narrow streets to evade capture. Casualty figures have not been published, but the ministry representative said eight members of a police rapid reaction team and four special forces troops have been killed since the latest campaign began. Residents say nine civilians have been killed in the violence in the past week.

Residents estimate that up to 20,000 people have fled or been evacuated to safer towns and villages nearby. An interior ministry representative said the old quarter had been empty except for "terrorists" for the past six months, but the security forces had to wait until families left adjacent areas before they could begin their final push. The authorities say they compensated residents who have had to leave. Footage shared on social media yesterday

showed security forces celebrating their progress by linking arms and dancing in a circle, their automatic weapons hoisted in the air. But the fight may not yet be over, and the campaign may sow further discontent among the Shiite population which complains of discrimination, charges the kingdom's authorities deny.

Around ten bulldozers busily worked to demolish more buildings and scrape up the detritus of combat, and the soldiers driving them still wore their helmets and body armor. The bright pink walls of a bedroom lay exposed on the first floor of a collapsed house.

A light brown-colored dog was seen wandering around, an orange leash still dragging behind him. In place of Al-Musawara, authorities say they will build an attractive district of shopping centers, office buildings, green spaces and fountains. — Reuters

QATAR ANNOUNCES VISA-FREE ENTRY...

Continued from Page 1

benefit of the emirate, a first for the Gulf. Under the new rules, children with a Qatari mother and a foreign father can benefit from the new status, along with foreign residents who have "given service to Qatar" or have "skills that can benefit the country". Those deemed eligible for the new status will be afforded the same access as Qataris to free public services, such as health and education. Qatar has a population of 2.4 million people, 90 percent of whom are foreigners, including many from south Asia working in construction.

For Qataris affected by the diplomatic crisis rocking the Gulf, the reality of politics is stark: families divided, assets frozen and dreams put on hold. Sara, a 29-year-old Qatari, had been poised to start her senior year in business school in Dubai when on June 5, a bloc of Arab states led by Saudi Arabia abruptly cut ties with her country. "We were suddenly told that we were no longer permitted to attend classes and had to go back to Doha," she said.

Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt and Bahrain accused the Gulf emirate of supporting Islamist extremism and being too close to Riyadh's regional arch-rival Iran. They ordered all Qataris to leave their territories within two weeks, recalled their ambassadors and citizens from the emirate and banned Qatari carriers from their ports and airspace. Qatar denied the allegations and denounced what it called a "blockade" aimed at bringing the wealthy emirate to its knees.

Qatari authorities have committed schools and universities to enrolling repatriated students. But for Sara and many like her, the crisis was personal. "When someone prevents you from studying, it destroys your dreams," she said. "One day, overnight, with no warning - suddenly you're told 'you have to stay home, no school for you.'" As the standoff drags into its third month, the uncertainty is causing agony, particularly for families of mixed nationality. Sara, who did not want her surname revealed because she feared the consequences for her relatives elsewhere in the

region, has an Emirati mother and a Qatari father. That is nothing unusual in a region where cross-border marriages are commonplace. The diplomatic spat has thrown such families into their own crises. "Half my family is in Dubai, in the UAE. I also have family in Bahrain," Sara said, choking back tears.

When her grandmother fell ill in Dubai, her mother was reluctant to travel to the UAE for fear she would not be allowed to return to her children in Qatar. States in the Saudi-led bloc have demanded that their citizens leave Qatar, but many have hesitated to do so - especially those with families in the tiny gas-rich emirate. Some say they fear punishment by their own governments.

One Saudi mother, who has been based in Qatar for years and asked to remain anonymous, said she was terrified. She and her two adult daughters are caught between fear of their own government and uncertainty about their future in Qatar. "We feel trapped," she told AFP by phone. "We will have to renew our visas in a year. It's frightening - we don't know what will happen."

She said she does not want to go back to Saudi Arabia, but fears that if she does not she will be blocked from accessing her late husband's Saudi pension, her only source of income. Her daughters, who work in Qatar, also want to stay. One has started losing her hair because of stress over the issue. All three declined to meet AFP journalists in person for fear of the consequences.

Other Qataris, interviewed at a center in Doha set up to support those affected by the crisis, fear for their assets in other countries. Nour, who declined to be named in full, owns apartments in Dubai but can no longer access them. Ahmad and Abdullah own camels worth a fortune, but they are in Saudi Arabia where they are traditionally sent to graze. Many Qataris are in a state of shock. Qatari civil servant Ahmad said political issues "should stay between leaders, people should not be involved". Abdullah Al-Marri, another government worker, said he was surprised at the turn of events. "I didn't think such things could happen between brothers," he said. — AFP

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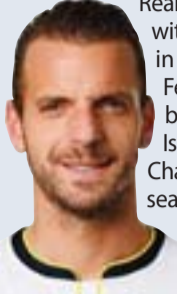
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EX-SPURS STRIKER SOLDADO TO JOIN FENERBAHCE: CLUB

ISTANBUL: Former Tottenham Hotspur striker Roberto Soldado is set to join Turkish Super Lig side Fenerbahce after two seasons at Villarreal in his native Spain, the Istanbul club said yesterday. An agreement with Spain international Soldado has been reached in principle, Fenerbahce said. The player will arrive in Istanbul later Wednesday to finalise the deal. After stints at Spanish sides including Real Madrid and Valencia, Soldado joined Tottenham in 2013, staying with the English Premiership side for two seasons. He joined Villarreal in 2015 but much of last season was blighted by a knee injury. Fenerbahce are looking to reinforce their side after finishing well behind champions Besiktas and surprise runners-up Basaksehir Istanbul in the Turkish Super Lig last season, thus missing out on a Champions League place. Other signings for Fenerbahce in the close season have included Moroccan international defender Nabil Dirar, French attacking midfielder Mathieu Valbuena and Chilean international defender Mauricio Isla. —AFP



REAL BETIS CLINCH DEAL FOR ALGERIAN BOUDEBOUZ

MONTPELLIER: Spanish side Real Betis have signed Algerian international attacking midfielder Ryad Boudebouz from Ligue 1 outfit Montpellier, the French club announced yesterday. The 27-year-old has penned a four-year deal with the Seville-based team, who paid Montpellier seven million euros (\$8.22m) for his services. Boudebouz, who previously played for Sochaux and Bastia, scored 11 goals and made nine assists in the French top flight last season. He has 24 international caps, having made his Algeria debut in 2010. Real Betis finished 15th in La Liga last term, but new head coach Quique Setien has bolstered his squad significantly since taking over in May after a successful spell in charge of Las Palmas. Boudebouz is Setien's eighth signing of the close season, joining the likes of former Barcelona winger Cristian Tello, midfielders Victor Camarasa and Andres Guardado, as well as former Swansea City defender Jordi Amat, in moving to the Benito Villamarin. —AFP

SQUARE CLOSE TO RETURN TO TRAINING AFTER CAR CRASH

LONDON: Crystal Palace's Senegalese left-back Pape Souare has returned to full training after sustaining serious injuries in a car crash 11 months ago, his club revealed yesterday. Souare, 27, had to be airlifted to hospital with a broken leg and jaw after the accident on the M4 motorway in London in September 2016. Having undergone a lengthy period of rehabilitation, he was shown going through fitness drills and ball work in a video posted on Twitter by Palace. "I heard you were looking for me. Feeling blessed to come back for my first training session with the 1st team," Souare wrote on Twitter. "I want to say Thank You to all of you for your love and support on this journey! I read every msg and I hope to make u all happy soon." Senegal international Souare joined Palace from Lille in January 2015 and has made 46 league appearances for the club. Palace begin their Premier League season at home to promoted Huddersfield Town on Saturday. —AFP



MICKELSON AND ELS REACH MILESTONE IN 100TH MAJOR

CHARLOTTE: On the monitor below them was a photo from the first time they met. The 14-year-old South African with an easy smile was holding the winner's trophy from the 1984 Junior World Championship. Next to him was the golden boy from San Diego, slightly taller at the time, holding his trophy as the runner-up.

Ernie Els and Phil Mickelson are still going at it, rarely rivals, always friends. The next time playing together, this week at the PGA Championship, marks a special occasion for both. Three decades later, Els and Mickelson join an elite club by competing in their 100th major championship. Els won his first one in 1994 at the US Open at Oakmont. Two-time US Open champion Curtis Strange was quoted as calling Els the "next god." Only later did the media realize that what Strange had actually said was that Els would be the "next guy." It just sounded the other way because of his thick Virginia accent.

Mickelson didn't win his first major until he was 34, at the Masters, and it came at the expense of Els. Mickelson holed an 18-foot birdie putt on the final hole. Els, on the putting green hopeful of a playoff, heard the ground-shaking roar, picked up his golf balls and walked off. He never won a green jacket. The PGA of America brought them together Tuesday for an interview and a celebration, complete with a cake. They become the 13th and 14th players to reach 100 majors, a list that starts with Jack Nicklaus and his 164. He is followed by Gary Player, Tom Watson, Arnold Palmer, Raymond Floyd, Sam Snead, Ben Crenshaw, Gene Sarazen, Tom Kite, Mark O'Meara, Bernhard Langer and Nick Faldo, who played his 100th and final major at St. Andrews in the British Open two years ago.

All of them are in the Hall of Fame, Els and Mickelson included. The PGA of America had photos from the first major they played (Els at the 1989 British Open, Mickelson at the 1990 US Open); the victories in the majors (five for Mickelson, four for Els); and yes, that 1984 Junior World. "Do you see how grumpy Phil looks there," Els said with a chuckle. "It was quite a while ago, I can tell you. We had a great time. It was my first time ever to the United States and what a place to go play golf at in San Diego. I guess that was the first time we

met. I think we played 18 holes together there that time, and I would never have thought that we'd be playing basically for life." Mickelson remembers it well, specifically a shot Els hit in the final round when he was 20 yards short of the green on a par 5. "You hit this little skipping, spinning wedge shot that checked up about a foot from the hole, and that's when I knew you were going to be a good player because I had not seen anybody else at 14 hit that shot," he said. "It's amazing that we've played together and against each other for so many years. It doesn't seem that long ago from those days."

And then he looked at the photo and said, "But it sure looks like a long time ago." Their daughters were born a month apart, and now Els and Mickelson are sending them off to college this year. Samantha Els was accepted to Stanford. Amanda Mickelson is headed to Brown.

They are linked mostly through competition, win or lose. "Phil has had a great time, winning five. I've won four," Els said. "But we've been in the hunt many, many other times and it didn't quite come off. But it's a hell of a thrill. It's what we play for, what we practice for. And you want to pull off great shots in the bigger stage."

They also had to settle for being second fiddle in the generation that was Tiger Woods. Els was runner-up seven times to Woods worldwide, including back-to-back majors in 2000. Mickelson lost out to Woods in the final group of the 2001 Masters, and he was runner-up to him at the US Open the following year.

How different could it have been with Woods? Both say they would not have been the players they became. Woods was as tough a rival as anyone would face, though Els and Mickelson say they relished the challenge. "I feel as though had Tiger not come around, I don't feel I would have pushed myself to achieve what I ended up achieving, because he forced everybody to get the best out of themselves," Mickelson said. "He forced everybody to work a little bit harder. He forced everybody to look at fitness as a big part of the game of golf, and I think that's actually helped me with longevity. ... So I don't think I would have had the same level of success had he not come around." —AP

NOTHING TO PROVE, SAYS MCILROY AS HE TRIES TO END MAJOR DROUGHT

CHARLOTTE: Rory McIlroy says he has nothing to prove this week as he chases his first major title in three years on a Quail Hollow layout where he has two wins and the course record. The world number four will be a favorite when the 99th PGA Championship tees off today even though the 28-year-old from Northern Ireland hasn't won since last September's US PGA Tour Championship.

"I'm not putting that much pressure on myself. I don't feel like I need to prove anything to anyone," McIlroy said Tuesday. "I never lost faith. I've always believed in my own abilities. I still do." It was a contrast from how four-time major winner McIlroy felt in 2015, when he fired a third-round 71 to break his own course record on the way

to victory while world number one, saying he needed to show how well he could play.

"I definitely don't want to be in the mind-set this week of wanting to make any type of statement or go out and prove myself. I'm past that point," McIlroy said. "I've proven myself enough over the last nine years of my career."

"Obviously I wouldn't have won as much as I would have liked this year, and there's been a few components to that, injury-wise, changing equipment and stuff. It has been a bit of a transitional year. But I feel like everything has settled. I just want to go out and play my game and hopefully that will be good enough."

McIlroy, the 2012 and 2014 PGA Championship winner who also took the 2011 US Open and 2014 British Open, could become only the third player to win five majors before turning 30, joining Jack Nicklaus and Tiger Woods.

NO BEST, NO PROBLEM

It won't hurt that he has played well in majors in wet conditions, which are expected this week, and that he has a comfort zone with Quail Hollow despite changes to the opening third of the course.

"You don't really have to have your best game and you still feel like you have a chance to win—that's sort of how it feels here," McIlroy said. "For the most part, 15 of the 18 holes are the same. I just feel good around here. I don't know what it is. I've got some great memories. Once you go back to a place where you have great memories, all that starts to come flooding back to you and it makes you feel good about yourself. That's sort of how I feel around here."

McIlroy admits he has been looking forward to this major since it was announced. "This has been a week I've been looking forward to for a long time," he said. "I'm glad I'm showing up for this week feeling like my game is in good shape as well."

A poor start doomed his fightback bid at the British Open, but he still shared fourth at Royal Birkdale and followed by sharing fifth at last week's WGC Bridgestone in Akron. "My form is better coming into this event than it was going into the Open," McIlroy said. "I'm coming off the back of a couple of top-5s. Things are a bit different than they were a couple of weeks ago." —AFP



CHARLOTTE: Dustin Johnson watches his tee shot on the 16th hole during a practice round at the PGA Championship golf tournament at the Quail Hollow Club Tuesday, in Charlotte. — AP

GOLF

TOP-RANKED JOHNSON BACK ON FORM AFTER MASTERS MISHAP

CHARLOTTE: Top-ranked Dustin Johnson says he feels almost as good at the PGA Championship as he did the last time he showed up at a major one hour's drive from his hometown.

And maybe this time he'll actually get to play. The 2016 US Open winner is playing this week at Quail Hollow, north of his hometown of Columbia, South Carolina. The same distance to the south is Augusta, Georgia, where Johnson was a huge favorite in April until a fall on the eve of the Masters forced him to withdraw with a back injury.

"I was playing as good as I've ever played and consistently every day," Johnson said. "I was as good as I ever felt and confidence probably as high as it has ever been. But things happen. Just when you feel like you get on top, something happens that knocks you down. But I'm fighting back and I feel like the game is as good as it was before then."

"It has finally coming back into form. I felt like I got some things worked out in the swing that were just holding me back a little bit. My body feels great. I'm looking for a really good week this week."

Johnson, 33, had won three events in a row going into the Masters, becoming world number one after taking Riviera and adding World Golf Championships Mexico and Match Play titles. Then came his stumble down a small set of stairs at a rental home in Augusta. His trip to the driving range before his late tee time turned into a reality television drama that ended with him walking to the tee, shaking hands with his scheduled playing partners and then walking away.

"I think I knew before I even went," said Johnson of his Augusta practice swings. "I was just trying my hardest because I wanted to play so badly." "It is frustrating what happened when I was playing so well, but there's nothing I can do about that. Things happen, and so now I've just got to fight and practice and work hard to get back to where I was. I'm driving it really well again."

Asked for a number grade, Johnson said he was a 3 when he returned in May. "It wasn't that good, but then it went down and got worse after that," Johnson said. "But I feel like I'm about an 8 1/2 right now."

"I'm going to continue to work hard on it and hopefully we're going to have a good week. I'll be there on Sunday." Johnson has battled back before, overcoming the heartache of a penalty for grounding his club in an ill-marked sand hazard that cost him the 2010 PGA Championship at Whistling Straits to win a major last year.

He says he isn't owed a PGA Championship. "I don't think it owes me one," he said. "It was my fault. I grounded a club in what they still say is a bunker." —AFP

KUWAITI SHOOTERS POWER TO VICTORY IN ASIAN TOURNEY

KUWAIT: Kuwait clinched first place yesterday in the team competition of the Seventh Asian Shotgun Championship held in Kazakhstan.

Abdulrahman Al-Faihan and Sara Al-Hawal led their team to victory, as South Korea and India trailed in second and third place, respectively. Duajj Al-Otaibi, head of the Kuwait and Arab Shooting Sports Federations went on to dedicate this monumental victory to HH the Amir, HH the Crown Prince, government and Kuwaiti people. He told Kuna via telephone that 350 competitors representing 29 nations participated in the tournament which is being in Kazakh capital.

Meanwhile, Kuwaiti shooters returned to the crowning stage on Tuesday under the Kuwaiti flag after the ban was lifted.

Trap shooter Abdelrahman Al-Faihan won the individual gold medal, followed by his teammate Talal Abdallah Al-Rashidi, who won silver.

The team of Abdelrahman Al-Faihan, Talal Al-Rashidi and Khalid Al-Mudhaf won the first place with 350 points, Lebanon took the second spot with 336 points and UAE with 331 points.

Honorary President of Asian Shooting Federation Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoudy Al-Sabah attended the awarding ceremony. —KUNA



CHARLOTTE: Rory McIlroy of Northern Ireland, chips to the 18th green during a practice round at the PGA Championship golf tournament at the Quail Hollow Club Tuesday, in Charlotte. — AP

NFL

JAMES READY TO TAKE OVER AS STEELERS' TOP TIGHT END

LATROBE: Jesse James has prepared the last two offseasons to be the starting tight end for the Pittsburgh Steelers even as the team explored its options following Heath Miller's unexpected retirement in 2015. Pittsburgh splurged in free agency a year ago, signing Ladarius Green to a four-year deal. It lasted only one. When the Steelers released Green in the spring, James found himself in the spot he believed he could be in all along: a starter on one of the NFL's most potent offenses.

"I knew I had a chance to be the guy last year. Things didn't work out for Ladarius early in the season, so I had that opportunity," James said. "This summer,

the Steelers really gave me a chance to come into that role, and now that's the expectation, so that's what I'm going to do." While Green struggled to stay healthy in his only season in Pittsburgh, James flourished. He appeared in all 19 games last season for the AFC North champions, finishing with 39 receptions for 338 yards and three touchdowns. Heady territory for a kid who grew up in suburban Pittsburgh. Yet he hardly thinks he's arrived. "I'll have to step it up and be more reliable and more prepared to help the team in every situation," James said. "I feel great and obviously I'm in a better position than I was last year, mentally and physically. I feel better about where

my game's at and what I need to do to be ready for the season."

Green, who signed a four-year, \$20 million contract in free agency, was placed on the physically unable to perform list in training camp and didn't appear in a game until November, the 10th week of the regular season against Dallas. He played in five games before a season-ending concussion in week 14. The Steelers released Green after he failed his physical in May.

The team didn't draft or sign another tight end, allowing James to take over the starting role. "It shows a lot that the coaching staff didn't go out and get somebody in free agency," James said.

"They must've liked what they saw in those 10 games we didn't have Ladarius. We have a young group, so they know what to expect from us and they know we're going to grow."

James played high school football at nearby South Allegheny and starred in college at Penn State. He grew up watching Miller and the Steelers. James, a fifth-round draft pick in 2015, spent a year under Miller's tutelage and now he leads a group that includes evolving pass-catcher Xavier Grimble and veteran blocking specialist David Johnson. The Steelers added offensive lineman Chris Hubbard to the tight end group last season in an effort to boost the run game

and create space for All-Pro running back Le'Veon Bell.

The plan helped carry the Steelers to the AFC Championship game. Pittsburgh reeled off nine straight wins and averaged 144 rushing yards per game, up from an average of 82 yards for the first 10 games. Expect to see more of the same in 2017 from James and the Steelers' tight ends. "I see Jesse getting better each year because that's the type of player he is," Grimble said.

"He's always working hard and he's really good with the offense, especially with another year under his belt. I would expect nothing less than a breakout season from him." — AP



SAN FRANCISCO: San Francisco Giants' Brandon Crawford, bottom, scores past Chicago Cubs catcher Willson Contreras during the fourth inning of a baseball game in San Francisco, Tuesday. — AP

BASEBALL

LAMB'S SLAM GIVES D-BACKS 6-3 WIN OVER DODGERS

PHOENIX: Jake Lamb hit his second career grand slam in the seventh inning and the Arizona Diamondbacks rallied to beat Los Angeles 6-3 on Tuesday night, handing the major league-leading Dodgers their eighth loss in the last 52 games. Lamb, who also connected for a solo homer in the sixth, was hitting .143 against left-handers this season when he drove Tony Watson's 1-2 pitch off the right-field foul pole to put Arizona up 6-3. Justin Turner homered twice for the Dodgers, who led 3-2 entering the bottom of the seventh. Watson (5-4) was charged with the loss. David Hernandez (2-0) got one out for the win and Fernando Rodney worked the ninth for his 26th save in 31 tries.

RED SOX 2, RAYS 0

Chris Sale struck out 13 in eight innings, and the Red Sox earned their seventh straight victory. Sale (14-4) reached double digits in strikeouts for the 15th time this season. He allowed two hits, and Craig Kimbrel struck out the side in the ninth for his 28th save. The win pushed Boston's AL East lead over the New York Yankees to four games. Dustin Pedroia, who returned to the lineup as the designated hitter after a stint on the disabled list with left knee inflammation, scored Boston's first run on a fielder's choice in the fourth. A bad throw by Austin Pruitt (6-3) prevented a possible inning-ending double play on Rafael Devers' chopper to the mound. It was the only run allowed by Pruitt in his fourth major league start. He pitched 6 1/3 scoreless innings in a win at Houston last Wednesday.

INDIANS 4, ROCKIES 1

Yan Gomes hit a three-run homer off Greg Holland with two outs in the ninth inning, lifting Corey Kluber and Cleveland to the victory. After Austin Jackson tied it with a two-out bloop RBI single, Gomes connected on the first pitch from Holland (2-3), driving it into the seats in center field to touch off a wild celebration in Progressive Field. Gomes flung his helmet and skipped around the bases as the Indians players danced out of their dugout at the improbable walk-off win. Kluber (10-3) struck out 11 in his second straight complete game. He allowed three hits and walked none. Charlie Blackmon homered for the Rockies.

BLUE JAYS 4, YANKEES 2

Josh Donaldson hit two two-run homers for the Blue Jays, and J.A. Happ won his sixth straight decision against the Yankees. Donaldson connected twice against CC Sabathia (9-5), who came in with an AL-best 2.29 ERA in 10 road starts. The 2015 AL MVP hit a drive to right-center in the first, and hooked one down the left field line in the third. It was Donaldson's 12th multihomer game and his second this season, both coming against the Yankees. Happ (5-8) allowed one run and four hits in 5 2/3 innings, improving to 6-0 in 10 starts against the Yankees since 2014. Roberto Osuna got three outs for his 29th save in 36 chances.

MARLINS 7, NATIONALS 3

Miami slugger Giancarlo Stanton hit his career-high and major league leading 38th

homer of the season and drove in three runs. Stanton crushed a first-pitch fastball from A.J. Cole (1-2) deep into the center-field stands in the fifth for a 4-1 lead following singles by Miguel Rojas and Dee Gordon. Derek Dietrich also homered and drove in three runs for the Marlins. Gordon's RBI double and Dietrich's two-run single put Miami up 7-1 in the seventh. Vance Worley (2-2) beat the Nationals for the second time in nine days. He allowed one run in six innings after holding Washington to two hits while pitching seven innings in Miami's 7-0 win on July 31.

CARDINALS 10, ROYALS 3

Yadier Molina, Jedd Gorko and Randal Grichuk homered, leading St. Louis to its fourth straight win. Michael Wacha (9-4) allowed a three-run double to Cheslor Cuthbert but otherwise kept the Royals in check, surrendering six hits over six innings to win for the sixth time in seven decisions. Molina connected against Jason Vargas (13-6) in the fourth and Grichuk and Gorko connected to highlight the six-run fifth, when the crown-shaped videoboard at Kauffman Stadium suddenly went dark. About half of it came back online in the seventh, when the Cardinals were tacking on runs.

WHITE SOX 8, ASTROS 5

Rookie Kevan Smith homered and drove in four runs, and the last-place White Sox stopped a six-game losing streak. Left-hander Derek Holland (6-11) earned his first win since June 13, despite issuing seven walks in 5 2/3 innings. He had been 0-5 in eight starts and one relief appearance since beating Baltimore. Dallas Keuchel (9-2) allowed a season-high eight runs and 10 hits in four innings for AL-leading Houston. He had a 1.67 ERA when he went on the disabled list for the second time with a neck injury, on June 8. The All-Star left-hander has a 10.50 ERA in three starts since his return. Tyler Clippard pitched the ninth for his second save.

METS 5, RANGERS 4

Rookie Chris Flexen got his first big league win and hit, and the Mets stopped a four-game losing streak. Michael Conforto, Yoenis Cespedes and Travis d'Arnaud homered for New York, which led 4-0 after two innings. Cespedes went deep at Citi Field for just the third time this season, his first since June 17. D'Arnaud hit his first at home this year after nine on the road. Joey Gallo, Adrian Beltre and Robinson Chirinos homered for Texas. Flexen (1-1) allowed three runs and four hits in 5 2/3 innings in his third big league start. A.J. Ramos gave up Chirinos' two-out homer in the ninth, then retired

Drew Robinson on a groundout for his 21st save. Texas' A.J. Griffin (5-3) allowed four runs and four hits in five innings.

PADRES 7, REDS 3

Jose Pirela had four hits and Yangervis Solarte had a homer among his three hits, powering the Padres to the victory. San Diego's Luis Perdomo (6-6) escaped threats by inducing three ground-ball double plays his specialty - while pitching into the seventh. Cincinnati catcher Tucker Barnhart hit a three-run homer off Jose Torres. The Padres improved to 4-1 against the Reds, who haven't won a season series from them since 2012. The Reds have gone 7-18 since the All-Star break. San Diego piled up nine hits and five runs off Sal Romano (2-4), who was in trouble in each of his six innings. Austin Hedges homered for a 5-0 lead in the sixth. Solarte connected for a two-run shot an inning later.

TWINS 11, BREWERS 4

Brian Dozier hit his first career grand slam and Max Kepler and Eddie Rosario each homered twice, powering Minnesota to a two-game sweep of Milwaukee. Matt Garza (5-6) turned in his shortest and worst start of the season with eight hits and eight runs allowed in 3 1/3 innings for the Brewers, who fell to 4-11 in their last 15 road games. Twins starter Adalberto Mejia was pulled with one out in the fourth inning with pain in his upper left arm, after allowing seven hits and three runs. Tyler Duffey (1-3) relieved with two innings for his first victory of the season, and Dillon Gee struck out five over four scoreless innings for his first career save.

PIRATES 6, TIGERS 3

Andrew McCutchen hit his 23rd homer, leading Pittsburgh to its fifth win in six games. Pirates right-hander Chad Kuhl (5-7) allowed three runs and five hits in six innings in his second straight win. He also picked up the first two RBIs of his big league career on a two-run single in the fourth off Matthew Boyd (5-6). McCutchen took Boyd to the seats in center field leading off the fourth for his franchise-record 13th interleague home run. David Freese added two hits for the Pirates, and Felipe Rivero worked a perfect ninth for his 10th save. Detroit has dropped four in a row.

PHILLIES 5, BRAVES 2

Odubel Herrera hit a two-run homer, Zach Eflin pitched seven strong innings following his recall from the minors, and the Phillies continued their season-long mastery of the Braves. After Maikel Franco drove in Freddie Galvis with a line-drive single to

right field in the fifth inning, Herrera reached down to pull a low pitch from Julio Teheran (7-10) into the restaurant behind the right-field wall. Freddie Freeman hit a first-inning homer off Eflin, who was recalled from Triple-A Lehigh Valley before the game and earned his first win of the season. Eflin (1-3) allowed two runs and seven hits. The Phillies have won 10 of 12 against Atlanta this season. Hector Neris pitched a perfect ninth for his 12th save in 15 chances.

ANGELS 3, ORIOLES 2

Parker Bridwell, a right-hander the Angels picked up simply for cash in mid-April from the Orioles, came back to haunt his former team in a victory for Los Angeles over Baltimore. Bridwell (6-1) went seven strong innings, holding the Orioles to one run and six hits. He struck out four and did not walk a batter. The Angels are 10-1 this season in games started by Bridwell. Jeremy Hellickson (7-6) was matching Bridwell until running into trouble in the seventh. He had retired 10 straight in the 1-1 game when the Angels chased him with four consecutive hits.

MARINERS 7, ATHLETICS 6

Leonys Martin homered in the top of the 10th inning as the Mariners rallied from a four-run deficit to defeat the Athletics. Martin hit a high arcing shot to right off a 2-1 94 mph fastball from Josh Smith (2-0) with two outs. His second home run of the season pushed the Mariners' record on their nine-game road trip to 5-3. Tony Zych pitched out of a jam in the bottom of the 10th for his second save. Marc Rzepczynski (2-0) pitched a scoreless inning in the bottom of the ninth. The A's had runners at first and second with one out but Zych struck out Chad Pinder swinging and got Matt Chapman to fly out to right.

GIANTS 6, CUBS 3

Buster Posey hit a three-run homer in the first that was upheld after review and later stole a base, Ty Blach won his second straight start and the Giants beat the Cubs. Replay showed Posey's drive to left-center had just enough to clear the wall and left fielder Jon Jay's outstretched glove before being caught by a fan. Blach (8-7) hit an RBI single to help his cause and the Giants snapped a four-game losing streak to the Cubs with just their third win in the last 10 against Chicago, which rallied to win Game 4 of the NL Division Series and eliminate the Giants last October on the way to a World Series title. Blach also beat the Cubs again after a May 22 win at Wrigley Field, allowing two runs on seven hits in seven innings Tuesday with three strikeouts and a walk. — AP

MLB Results/Standings

San Francisco 6, Chicago Cubs 3; LA Angels 3, Baltimore 2; Seattle 7, Oakland 6 (10 innings); Arizona 6, LA Dodgers 3; St. Louis 10, Kansas City 3; Chicago White Sox 8, Houston 5; Minnesota 11, Milwaukee 4; Philadelphia 5, Atlanta 2; Boston 2, Tampa Bay 0; Cleveland 4, Colorado 1; San Diego 7, Cincinnati 3; NY Mets 5, Texas 4; Toronto 4, NY Yankees 2; Pittsburgh 6, Detroit 3; Miami 7, Washington 3.

American League					National League				
Eastern Division					Eastern Division				
	W	L	PCT	GB		W	L	PCT	GB
Boston	64	49	.566	-	Washington	66	45	.595	-
NY Yankees	59	52	.532	4	Miami	53	58	.477	13
Tampa Bay	58	56	.509	6.5	Atlanta	51	60	.459	15
Baltimore	56	57	.496	8	NY Mets	50	60	.455	15.5
Toronto	53	59	.473	10.5	Philadelphia	41	69	.373	24.5
Central Division					Central Division				
Cleveland	60	50	.545	-	Chicago Cubs	59	53	.527	-
Kansas City	57	55	.509	4	Milwaukee	59	56	.513	1.5
Minnesota	55	56	.495	5.5	St. Louis	57	56	.504	2.5
Detroit	51	61	.455	10	Pittsburgh	56	57	.496	3.5
Chicago White Sox	42	68	.382	18	Cincinnati	46	67	.407	13.5
Western Division					Western Division				
Houston	71	41	.634	-	LA Dodgers	79	33	.705	-
Seattle	58	56	.509	14	Arizona	64	48	.571	15
LA Angels	56	58	.491	16	Colorado	64	49	.566	15.5
Texas	53	59	.473	18	San Diego	50	62	.446	29
Oakland	50	63	.442	21.5	San Francisco	45	70	.391	35.5

RANATUNGA URGES ICC TO PROBE SRI LANKA CHIEF

COLOMBO: Former skipper Arjuna Ranatunga has blamed Sri Lanka's string of humiliating defeats on the country's cricket chief and demanded his investigation by the International Cricket Council. In what could be the opening shots of a new bid to head Sri Lanka Cricket, Ranatunga, 53, told AFP there was no "proper discipline" in the national team which has had a horror run of results.

The team lost by an innings and 53 runs in the second Test against India on Sunday, after being crushed in the first match by 304 runs. They are now fighting to avoid a whitewash in the three-Test series. Sri Lanka also suffered an early exit from the Champions Trophy, and lost a one-day series at home to bottom ranked Zimbabwe last month. Ranatunga accused Sri Lanka Cricket president Thilanga Sumathipala, 52, of being involved in gaming-a claim Sumathipala denies-and said he should not be allowed to hold office.

"There is no proper discipline in the team... (but) no point in blaming the cricketers when they get involved in all these gambling things. First they have to get the officials in order," Ranatunga told AFP. There have been reports of attempts to approach Sri Lankan players for alleged match-fixing.

Several officials, umpires and players have been suspended or fined for involvement in match-fixing or refusing to cooperate with investigations. Ranatunga said the International Cricket Council should investigate Sumathipala over alleged gambling links and the conduct of the Sri Lankan board. "I want to know if the ICC has a backbone to check if these people (Sri Lanka Cricket management) are in compliance with ethics standards," Ranatunga told AFP.

There was no immediate comment from the ICC. But Sumathipala denied the allegation and accused Ranatunga of a smear campaign in a bid to take over the board. Sumathipala said Sri Lanka's sports ministry and the ICC had both cleared him to hold

office at SLC, as well as at the Asian Cricket Council and ICC. "I deny any involvement personally, directly or indirectly with gaming business," Sumathipala told AFP.

'THEY MESSED UP EVERYTHING'

He also slammed Ranatunga, Sri Lanka's minister of petroleum, for accusing President Maithripala Sirisena's government of failing to protect the game. "If he wants to criticise the government, he must first resign," Sumathipala, said adding that allegations are frequently made against the board when the national team performs badly.

"Every time the game is affected at the middle, Sri Lanka cricketers are not performing to the expectation, we hear this kind of noise coming from the same quarter," Sumathipala said.

He added that Ranatunga was hoping to oust him as Sri Lanka's cricket chief, a position he tried and failed to secure in elections in January 2016. "The same man (Ranatunga) is continuously making every effort undemocratically, unethically to hold office of Sri Lanka Cricket, even when he has been democratically defeated more than once," Sumathipala said. Ranatunga and his younger brother Nishantha stood against Sumathipala at last year's board elections and lost. The next elections are due in five months. Since retiring from the game, Ranatunga has entered politics and he was an unelected cricket administrator in 2008.

Authorities have not responded to his demand that an interim committee run Sri Lanka Cricket. "I thought OK, if the government thinks this is right-and I am part of this government-I tried to take a step back and allowed them (the board) to run. They have messed up everything," Ranatunga said. Last month Ranatunga also demanded an investigation into the country's 2011 World Cup final defeat by India, which was accompanied by allegations of match-fixing. Sports minister Dayasiri Jayasekera said he was willing to order a probe if there was a written complaint.—AFP



Syrian high jumper Majd Eddin Ghazal

ATHLETICS

SYRIAN GHAZAL LEAPS OVER ADMIN BARRIERS

LONDON: Veteran Syrian high jumper Majd Eddin Ghazal will gladly put administrative hassles to one side as he bids for a third-ever world medal for his war-torn country. Ghazal has been a regular on the global circuit, appearing in the last four world champs and three Olympics, his seventh-placed finish in Rio last summer his best result.

But the 30-year-old admits that life has not been easy in Syria, where he is still based, much to the amazement of many fellow athletes. More than 330,000 people have been killed in Syria since the ongoing conflict began with anti-government protests in March 2011.

"If we didn't face war in Syria, everything would have been different now, from the visa and financial issues to general athlete's facilities like access to coaching and treatment," Ghazal told AFP. "We're in a huge crisis, which affects the mentality of athletes. 'Daily life in Syria is extremely hard. You can't imagine what we face on a daily basis.' Ghazal added that he encountered problems travelling to compete internationally.

"I have big problems with embassies. They are sometimes afraid I am an immigrant," he said. "I'm an expert in embassies, where they are, their addresses, when they open, when they close, what documents you need for visas... I'm an administrative expert in this subject."

Ghazal was refused a Moroccan visa for the Diamond League meeting in Rabat, but can now travel unimpeded in Europe thanks to a six-month Schengen visa he managed to obtain through a Spanish embassy.

OVERSEAS CAMPS

While his daily training regime is based in Damascus, Ghazal also departs, from neighbouring Lebanese capital Beirut as there is no access to international flights from Syria, for overseas camps, notably in Barcelona and Russia over winter, thanks to financial support from the Syrian Athletics Federation.

"Everyone is surprised when I say I still train and live in Syria, especially as I am among the top six in the world," said Ghazal, nominally employed as a government-paid sports teacher. With coach Imad Sarraj in tow, Ghazal said the thing he missed when competing was the back-room staff most competitors take for granted.

"I don't have a doctor, a physio, a masseur, I miss that a lot, especially in a championships where fatigue is great and you have to recover quickly," he said. "Because of minor muscular problems, or cramps, you might lose a championships and your heights may range between and 2.20 and 2.30, a huge gap."

Ghazal, who has suffered pain in his take-off foot, first appears in action in Friday's qualifiers, and he said: "I don't think about nailing a certain height. My whole focus will be on reaching the final." His best this season has been 2.32m in last month's Diamond League meet in Paris, while 2.36 in Beijing last year remains his personal best. "I hope to be as ready as I was in Paris,"

Ghazal said, adding that the overall standard of jumping had dipped in 2017. "I expect surprises this year," he warned. Syria has two medals in the world champs, Ghada Shouaa having won heptathlon gold in 1995 and bronze in 1999.

Ghazal, whose first name Majd means "glory", is backing himself to add a third for a country caught in the crosshairs of a bloody crisis.—AFP

CRICKET

SETHI ELECTED CHAIRMAN OF PAKISTAN CRICKET BOARD

ISLAMABAD: Newly-elected chairman of the Pakistan Cricket Board Najam Sethi says one of the challenges for him is to bring back international cricket to Pakistan. "You know how much work we are doing in this regard and soon the results will be in front of you," Sethi told reporters on Wednesday.

Sethi, 69, will replace Shaharyar Khan, who quit because of health and personal reasons after completing his tenure. Sethi was unopposed and was unanimously elected by a new 10-member PCB board of governors.

Pakistan's deposed Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif had appointed Sethi as member of the board of governors last month. It is mandatory, according to the PCB's constitution, that the chairman should be elected from the members of the board of governors. Zimbabwe has been the only team to visit Pakistan since a terrorist attack on the Sri Lanka cricket team's bus in Lahore in 2009. "Lots of people are disappointed but I request you to show some patience," Sethi said.

"There are security issues, one day we decide that a team will come and then something happens (in Pakistan), but over the next 2-3 months you will hear some

good announcements." As part of the revival of international cricket in Pakistan, the PCB is also planning to host a Twenty20 series against a World XI in Lahore. However, the final dates and which players are expected to come to Pakistan are yet to be decided.

Sethi was also a former caretaker chief minister of the Punjab province and was the key official behind the successful staging of Pakistan's domestic Twenty20 league. Although the two editions of Pakistan Super League were held in the United Arab Emirates, Sethi staged the final of the second edition of PSL at Lahore in March.

It will be Sethi's second term as chairman of the PCB after he was involved in a legal battle over the leadership with former PCB chairman Zaka Ashraf. That ended in May 2014 when Sethi said he would not contest elections for the chairman's post.

Sethi will be travelling to Sri Lanka today to chair the meeting of the Asian Cricket Council. He said he will discuss the Sri Lanka team's tour to Pakistan later this year. Pakistan is due to host Sri Lanka in October in the United Arab Emirates and Sethi said Pakistan wants to host Sri Lanka in Pakistan after the series ends in the UAE.—AP



LAHORE: Najam Sethi of Pakistan Cricket Board addresses a news conference in Lahore, Pakistan, yesterday. Najam Sethi has been elected yesterday, as new chairman of the Pakistan Cricket Board for a three-year term.—AP

BOSSE HOPES FOR LUCK IN LOVE AFTER 800M GAMBLE PAYS BIG

LONDON: Pierre-Ambroise Bosse loves gambling and on Tuesday he rolled the dice and won the biggest prize of his life, the 800 metres world title, to give France their first ever gold in the event.

The 25-year-old, who had finished a valiant if frustrating fourth in last year's Olympic final, seized the initiative with 150 metres to go with a stunning burst passing Kipyegon Bett and race favourite Nijel Amos and held on to take the tape first from fast-finishing Pole Adam Kszczot.

"I am a gambler, I love going to the casino," said Bosse. "And today I just gambled, I put everything on the red, even my last Euro. So hopefully, this is also for luck in love." Bosse, who is renowned for his offbeat character and addressed his cat 'Rabs' after finishing outside the medals in Rio by telling him to go the fridge and drink a beer for him, said he thought he had cast a spell over his rivals as no one threatened him down the final 100m.

"It felt like a nightmare as I was getting chased," he said. "It was a never ending nightmare. I could not understand why nobody was going past me. 'Even when I crossed the line I could not believe it.' 'The others killed themselves and they were already dead in the last 100m.' 'I was like a witch casting a spell on them.' Bosse, who along with a friend launched an app called 'Deserve Her' earlier this year as a rival he said to dating app 'Tinder', said that he had felt like a kid who would do anything to

have the toy he wanted from the shop.

"It was a war of attrition," said Bosse, who revealed he had spilt a bottle of water on his bed on Monday when he was fantasising about winning the gold. "I felt like a little boy who wanted this toy and I said to myself: 'in any case you have nothing to lose.' 'When I went past them I put myself in their place and I said to myself: 'What must they be thinking? I thought they are going to pay for this and that pleased me.' 'It is the first time in my career I have felt like that. 'Finally today I was ahead of everyone. People can forgive me now because I now have that world title.' Bosse, who away from the track plays guitar-largely tunes by legendary French poet and songwriter Georges Brassens, said he thought he was seeing things after he went on his lap of honour and espied his best friend in the crowd.

"He had a date with a girl in the south of France yesterday and we spoke to each other on the phone last night," said Bosse. "He wished me the best of luck and I thought I'd see him again in France."

"And then tonight, I see him in the crowd and I was so pleased. 'He came all the way from France to see me. Maybe he brought me luck.' However, any thoughts of going out and celebrating with him have perhaps been put on hold. "I had to pinch myself really hard to realise that I had really won," he said. "In any case 200 metres after that I was throwing up. 'I cannot party like Usain Bolt.' — AFP



LONDON: France's Pierre-Ambroise Bosse celebrates after winning the gold medal in the men's 800-meter final during the World Athletics Championships in London Tuesday.—AP

ERRANI INSISTS SHE IS NOT A CHEAT AFTER 2-MONTH DOPING BAN

MILAN: Former French Open finalist Sara Errani struggled to hold back the tears yesterday as she insisted she is not a cheat after being handed a two-month doping ban. The International Tennis Federation announced the suspension on Monday after Errani tested positive for the banned substance letrozole in a test taken in February. At a news conference, Errani continued to blame food contamination from her mother's breast cancer medication.

"The sentence speaks clearly: I was found guilty of the involuntary ingestion of a substance which does not have a doping effect on a female," said Errani, who reiterated several times that letrozole is not a performance-enhancing drug.

"I don't know exactly how it could have happened that a pharmaceutical pill taken by my mother ended up in the food, but it's the only plausible option, because we have eliminated all the others." The 30-year-old Errani was informed of the results of the test on April 28 but decided to continue playing tennis in the hope she could

avoid a ban. "It is up to the athlete whether to continue playing or to suspend themselves," she said. "I decided to continue because I knew and I know that I had done nothing wrong. 'I hoped for and I worked toward being found not guilty, unfortunately the test on my hair that I presented wasn't accepted because of a legal technicality ... I have always been a champion of clean sport, and I remain convinced that anyone who voluntarily dopes should be banned for life.' An adjudication panel ruled that Errani's fault was "at the lower end of the scale," but that she should still be banned for two months from Aug. 3.

Errani's ban will end on Oct. 2, precluding her from playing in the US Open. "I hope this time will give me even more motivation," Errani said. "I hope to use this time to recover from the stress and these awful experiences ... I will train my hardest, as I have always done, to try to return stronger than before."

The Italian broke down in tears as she added: "It's a difficult situation for my family but

we have managed to be even more united so I'm proud of them." Errani has also been retroactively disqualified from tournaments from Feb. 16 through June 7. Her only notable performance in that period was a semifinal in Rabat, Morocco, in May, plus a second-round loss at Roland Garros.

She announced she would appeal against the removal of her points earned during that period. Errani repeatedly and heatedly criticized the media for reporting falsehoods, adding: "You played with the life and sentiments of other people: of me, my mother, my family ... that makes me very angry." Errani reached the 2012 French Open final, losing to Maria Sharapova, and has completed a career grand slam in women's doubles with Roberta Vinci.

The 98th-ranked Errani has won nine singles titles and 25 doubles titles in her WTA career. She reached a career-high singles ranking of No. 5 in 2013. She also helped Italy to three Fed Cup titles.—AP



MELBOURNE: In this file photo dated Thursday, Jan 19, 2017, Italy's Sara Errani makes a return to Russia's Ekaterina Makarova during their second round match at the Australian Open tennis championships in Melbourne, Australia.—AP

VIKINGS OWNERS JOIN GROUP TRYING TO BRING MLS TO NASHVILLE

NASHVILLE: The owners of the Minnesota Vikings have joined a group trying to bring a Major League Soccer expansion franchise to Nashville, after a failed bid to bring a club to their enclosed NFL stadium.

Zygi Wilf, Mark Wilf and Leonard Wilf are minority partners in the Nashville project, according to Nashville Soccer Holdings CEO John R. Ingram. Terms of their investment haven't been disclosed.

The expansion fee being charged by the league is \$150 million. "We've been passionate about soccer for a long time, and we believe very strongly in its future in the United States," Mark Wilf said in a phone interview with The Associated Press. "Really, our interest hasn't wavered since our efforts to bring MLS to Minnesota."

Minnesota United FC joined the MLS this season. The league preferred an out-

door, soccer-specific venue to the 68,000-seat U.S. Bank Stadium that opened for the Vikings last year. Minnesota United, led by owner Bill McGuire, is playing outside at the University of Minnesota for two seasons until its new stadium opens.

The Wilfs, who made their fortune in real estate out of the family business founded in New Jersey, bought the Vikings in 2005. Zygi Wilf is owner and chairman. Mark Wilf, Zygi's younger

brother, is owner and president. Leonard Wilf, their cousin, is owner and vice chairman.

"They know sports and sports business, and they are well-known and respected for their professional sports experience," Ingram said in a statement released by his group. "The Wilf family brings expertise in a number of areas like stadium development, fan experience, marketing, communications and

ticket sales. They are a strong addition to our bid."

Nashville is one of 12 cities that submitted bids for four expansion franchises, with both Charlotte and Raleigh-Durham in North Carolina, Cincinnati, Detroit, Indianapolis, Phoenix, Sacramento and San Diego in California, St. Louis, San Antonio and Tampa-St. Petersburg in Florida. The MLS is expected to announce two sites later this year. —AP

NO PSG CONTACT OVER SANCHEZ, SAYS WENGER

LONDON: Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger said yesterday he has had no contact with Paris Saint-Germain regarding Alexis Sanchez, who will miss the start of the season through injury. Sanchez, 28, has been linked with a move to PSG, who have just completed a world-record 222 million euros (\$260 million) swoop for Barcelona superstar Neymar.

But Wenger said he had not heard from PSG president Nasser Al-Khelaifi and referred to French media reports suggesting PSG are more interested in signing Monaco's Kylian Mbappe. "It's a long time I didn't speak to Nasser, because it's certainly very busy to complete the transfer of Neymar," Wenger told a press conference at Arsenal's London Colney base.

Asked if he expected Al-Khelaifi to get in touch, Wenger replied: "No, no. I think if you read the French papers, they are on Mbappe's case to finish their transfer market." Wenger was coy, though, when he was asked if any bids had been tabled for Sanchez.

"I can't tell you that at the moment," said the Frenchman, whose side open their Premier League campaign at home to Leicester City tomorrow. "I just think we are not open-what I said to you many times-to any offers, anyway."

Sanchez, who has also been linked with Manchester City, has not played for Arsenal in pre-season after being granted extra

time off after playing at the Confederations Cup with Chile.

Wenger said the forward had sustained an abdominal injury and was likely to miss both Friday's game against Leicester and the trip to Stoke City on August 19. "He has a little abdominal strain that he caught on Sunday morning in training, before he came to Wembley (for last Sunday's Community Shield)," Wenger said.

"He had a scan two days ago and he's out for a while. I don't know if it is two weeks or one more week, but he will not be available. I think he will not play at Stoke, yes," Wenger added. "For us Alexis Sanchez is a loss, of course. But we have all the other players prepared in pre-season and they are all ready."

"It can happen in pre-season and anyway, I don't think I would have included him on Friday night. I don't think I would have started him."

Speaking after Arsenal beat Chelsea on penalties at Wembley, Wenger revealed he was looking to trim his squad before the transfer window closes, but he said no departures were currently imminent.

"No," he replied when asked if any players were poised to leave. "Yesterday I had the managers' meeting and was talking with the other managers in the other clubs. It looks like everywhere there is many, many players and a bit of congestion at the moment everywhere." — AFP



Pep Guardiola and Jose Mourinho

SOCCER

GUARDIOLA RETURNS TO MAN CITY DRAWING BOARD

LONDON: Rattled by a chastening first season in England, Pep Guardiola has gone back to the drawing board in an attempt to fashion Manchester City into Premier League champions. Expectations were sky-high when Guardiola alighted in Manchester after years of being courted by City, but a title challenge failed to materialise and his side did not make a mark in any of the cup competitions. They return to the fray this weekend having spent around £200 million (\$261 million, 221.3 million euros) on players and Guardiola believes an exciting new team is taking shape.

"With all respect to the players, last season we were one of the oldest teams in the Premier League. We didn't buy full-backs for five, six years," said Guardiola. "We decided last season we could change the team to make the team younger for the next four or five years. "Danilo is 26, (Benjamin) Mendy is 23, Bernardo (Silva) is 22, Ederson is 23, so we bought players who are going to be stable for the next years." There were some promising signs last season-an opening salvo of 10 straight wins, a stunning Champions League victory over Barcelona-but City never found any consistent form.

Guardiola seemed unprepared for the rude physicality of English football and was derided for saying he was "not a coach for the tackles" after a one-sided 4-2 defeat at Leicester City. City's football was, occasionally, dazzling and they were only outscored by champions Chelsea and Tottenham Hotspur, but finding an effective defensive configuration gave Guardiola a constant headache. John Stones looked shaky following his big-money move from Everton and Guardiola's dissatisfaction with his full-back options saw midfielders Fernandinho and Jesus Navas deployed in the wide defensive positions. There should not be any shoe-horning of players into unfamiliar roles this season after Guardiola signed three top-level full-backs-Kyle Walker, Benjamin Mendy and Danilo-at a combined cost of around £124 million.

AGUERO-JESUS CONUNDRUM

Guardiola hopes to have put his goalkeeping problems to bed as well, having reacted to Claudio Bravo's travails by bringing in Brazil goalkeeper Ederson from Benfica in a £35 million deal.

Bernardo Silva, meanwhile, arrived from Monaco, further strengthening a stellar attacking department that also contains Sergio Aguero, Gabriel Jesus, Leroy Sane, David Silva, Kevin De Bruyne and Raheem Sterling. "Manchester City have the best team on paper," ex-England midfielder Owen Hargreaves told the Premier League official website. "It took a bit of an adjustment for Pep Guardiola, but City are my favourites."

Back-up goalkeeper Willy Caballero, full-backs Pablo Zabaleta, Bacary Sagna and Gael Clichy and wingers Jesus Navas and Nolito have all left, while the unwanted Joe Hart has gone out on loan again to West Ham United. Guardiola has tested out a three-man defence in pre-season, with Stones lining up alongside Nicolas Otamendi and captain Vincent Kompany, whose ability to remain fit will once again be under scrutiny.

Playing three at the back may enable Guardiola to associate Aguero and Jesus in attack, after he generally used a single-striker system last season following Jesus's arrival in January. Even more so than his old foe Jose Mourinho across town at Manchester United, if Guardiola cannot at the very least orchestrate a sustained title challenge, his gilded reputation will take a sizeable hit. Last season was the first time in his managerial career that he finished a campaign without having added at least one trophy to his collection.

Another season without silverware will raise serious doubts as to whether he really is the man to carry City to the summit of European football for the first time. —AFP

TOP 10 PREMIER LEAGUE TRANSFERS OF 2017-18

LONDON: Ahead of Arsenal's home game with Leicester City in the curtain-raiser to the new Premier League season tomorrow, AFP Sport selects the 10 biggest transfers of the close season:

Romelu Lukaku

Everton to Manchester United; £75 million
After four increasingly prolific seasons at Everton, Belgium striker Lukaku has been given another shot at the big time with Manchester United. Lukaku, 24, has been brought in to replace Zlatan Ibrahimovic and will hope to do a better job of impressing manager Jose Mourinho than he managed during their time together at Chelsea.

Alvaro Morata

Real Madrid (ESP) to Chelsea; £58 million
With Diego Costa having been very publicly frozen out by manager Antonio Conte, Chelsea broke their transfer record to sign 24-year-old Spain striker Morata. He made an inauspicious start to his Chelsea career by squandering his spot-kick in a Community Shield penalty shootout loss to Arsenal.

Benjamin Mendy

Monaco (FRA) to Manchester City; £52 million
Saddled with an ageing group of full-backs, Pep Guardiola found it difficult to play the kind of trusting football he loves in his maiden campaign as Manchester City manager. He has taken remedial action during the close season, most notably forking out £52 million to make France left-back Mendy the game's most expensive defender.

Alexandre Lacazette

Lyon (FRA) to Arsenal; £46.5 million rising to £52.6 million
France striker Lacazette had been poised to join Atletico Madrid, only for the Court of Arbitration for Sport to uphold a transfer ban against the Spanish club. Arsenal stepped in, breaking their transfer record to sign the 26-year-old, who was the top-scoring Frenchman in Ligue 1 in each of the last three seasons.

Kyle Walker

Tottenham Hotspur to Manchester City; £45 million
The second of Manchester City's three new full-backs (the other being Brazilian Danilo), Walker arrived from Spurs after Dani Alves opted to join Paris Saint-Germain over rejoining forces with Guardiola. Walker's flying raids down the

right flank for Tottenham have turned him into England's first-choice number two.

Bernardo Silva

Monaco (FRA) to Manchester City; £43 million
Portuguese playmaker Silva pitched up at City after his 11 goals and 12 assists inspired Monaco to Ligue 1 glory and a place in the Champions League semi-finals. The 22-year-old is expected to line up on the right flank for City, as he did at Monaco, but is likely to have been earmarked as the long-term successor to his namesake David Silva.

Tiemoue Bakayoko

Monaco (FRA) to Chelsea; £40 million
The third player to have left Monaco for England, France midfielder Bakayoko will make Chelsea's midfield an even more intimidating prospect. Tall and muscular, the former Rennes player will provide a redoubtable physical presence alongside the buzzing N'Golo Kante.

Nemanja Matic

Chelsea to Manchester United; £40 million
Deemed surplus to requirements at Chelsea following Bakayoko's arrival, Matic moved to United to link up with Mourinho, who previously brought him back to Chelsea from Benfica in 2014. A stylish but steely holding midfielder, the 28-year-old Serbia international will provide a counterweight for the forward runs of last year's star signing, Paul Pogba.

Ederson

Benfica (POR) to Manchester City; £35 million
The goalkeeping situation gave Guardiola constant problems during his first season at the Etihad Stadium, with Claudio Bravo proving an inadequate replacement for Joe Hart, who was loaned out to Torino. Guardiola moved to remedy the problem by signing 23-year-old Brazilian Ederson, who became the world's second most expensive goalkeeper after Gianluigi Buffon.

Mohamed Salah

Roma (ITA) to Liverpool; £34 million
A bright light in a gloomy transfer window for Liverpool. Egyptian winger Salah did not get a look-in during his previous spell with Chelsea, but he excelled in Serie A with Fiorentina and Roma, scoring 35 goals in 81 games. denotes fees as reported by British media. —AFP



Romelu Lukaku

THREATENED BY TRUMP, BUT UNITED BY FOOTBALL

NEW YORK: New York's most unlikely football league meets every Saturday in the Bronx. Its players are minors who arrived from Central America without their parents, with no documents or money. They made the dangerous journey here with one goal in mind: to escape the violence and poverty of their homelands. Now, the 50 or so members of the "Union" league face deportation. Football acts as sort of collective therapy for them, a place to briefly forget the tragedies of the past and the new threats they face from the administration of President Donald Trump.

"When you're playing football, you are not thinking of your immigration case, or people who want to hurt you back home, or that a judge may deport you," said Elvis Garcia Callejas, who is both coach and counsellor to the young players.

"You're going after the ball, your main goal is to win, play as a team and just have fun." Garcia Callejas, 27, founded the league in 2014, when a record of almost 70,000 minors flooded across the Rio Grande into the United States without their parents.

KIDS AGAIN

Garcia Callejas is a migration counsellor for Catholic Charities. He arrived unaccompanied in the United States when he was just 15, dodging border guards in El Paso, Texas to make it. He is also a huge football fan-his office is adorned with the banners of his favorite teams, Barcelona and Paris Saint-Germain. He visits detention centers to interview recently arrived minors from Central America and determine if they qualify for any kind of protection. When he founded the Union league, he had just three boys from Honduras on board, and used trash cans as goalposts. Now he has more than 50 boys from across Central America and the league is backed by the South Bronx United club, which has included the league in a number of its social programs.

"The kids that we work with have to grow up very fast," he said. "But on the football pitch, they can be kids again." Since 2014, more than 200,000 unaccompanied teenagers and children have arrived in the United States from Mexico and Central America, according to the US Border Patrol.

Teofilo Chavez is a promising 17-year-old player who dreams of going pro. He was 14 when he left Corozal, on Honduras' Caribbean coast, to stay with his aunt and uncle in the Bronx. "These are the first friends I made in

this country-this friendship will last forever," he said.

A BROKEN SYSTEM

Although the US government does not provide them with an attorney, the teenagers must fight in court to stay here. Most depend upon help provided by lawyers doing pro bono work. Thanks to his lawyer Jodi Ziesemer, who is handling around 700 cases of unaccompanied Central American minors for Catholic Charities, Teofilo is close to obtaining the green card that will allow him to stay. But around 60 percent of unaccompanied minors have to go before a judge and prosecutor on their own, with no lawyer and often without even speaking English, a situation Ziesemer calls "ridiculous" and a symptom that "the system is broken." "These kids are fleeing horrific situations, abuse, they are fleeing death threats," she said, noting that the situation has only deteriorated since Trump became president on the back of promises to deport millions of undocumented migrants.

The president has also linked these minors with the rise of the dangerous street gang MS-13, which he has vowed to eradicate. "Things have taken a dramatic turn since the Trump administration in terms of how cooperative the government is in resolving these cases," Ziesemer said. "Before this government, attorneys were much more cooperative in not actively fighting to deport kids that were very young, or in therapy, or had medical issues," she said.

LOOKING FOR A FUTURE

Teofilo is the youngest of five brothers. After his mother died when he was two, he was raised by his grandmother. But when she died, he was left practically alone. At 14, he and a brother travelled to the Rio Grande on the roof of a Mexican cargo train nicknamed "The Beast" for the number of migrants who die or are maimed on it.

On the banks of the river, the brothers said a quick goodbye to each other "so that we wouldn't cry. I swam across with a bag of clothes tied to my wrist." Now Teofilo is finishing high school but cannot forget Honduras. He closes his eyes as he recalls what he misses most: "The sunshine, the beach, coconuts, my friends, my grandmother, my father, the plantations near my house." The youngest player in the league is 15-year-old Yefri, who arrived three months ago from Guatemala with his 11-year-old brother. —AFP



NEW YORK: Against a backdrop of Yankee Stadium players for South Bronx United go through their warm-ups before a match at Macombs Dam Park in New York. South Bronx United is composed of minors from Central America who arrived alone to the United States. — AFP

Sports

Nothing to prove, says McIlroy as he tries to end major drought



Threatened by Donald Trump, but united by football



THURSDAY, AUGUST 10, 2017

SYRIAN GHAZAL LEAPS OVER ADMIN BARRIERS

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LONDON: South Africa's Wayde Van Niekerk, left, crosses the line to win the gold medal in the Men's 400m final ahead of Bahamas' Steven Gardiner, right, who took bronze during the World Athletics Championships in London Tuesday. — AP

ONE-LAP WONDER VAN NIEKERK TARGETS JOHNSON DOUBLE

LONDON: Wayde van Niekerk's bid for a first world double since 1995 now turns to the 200m after he stormed to a comfortable victory in the 400m. After initially struggling with the cold, the 25-year-old ran a solid final bend to blast to victory in 43.98 seconds with a lot to spare, and went straight into recovery ahead of yesterday's 200m semi-finals, with the final today.

"It was quite freezing and I struggled to get myself warmed up and ready," said Van Niekerk, who came into the 400m as defending world and Olympic champion. "I was

doubting my momentum. In the last 150 metres I tried putting in an extra gear, but I couldn't catch my stride until my last few metres. I just allowed the race to go through to the finish line."

Thoughts will turn straight to the 200m, and a rare double. The last athlete to claim the 200/400m double was American Michael Johnson, who achieved the feat the 1995 worlds in Gothenburg, repeating the achievement a year later in the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta.

"It's easier said than done," said Van Niekerk,

who smashed Johnson's 400m world record when winning gold in Rio and then his rarely-run 300m record in Ostrava last month.

"It's competition, it's very unpredictable. My body still feels very good. It took me a while to recover. But from endurance I go straight to speed... It's a day-by-day, step-by-step process for us athletes."

NEW CHALLENGES

Van Niekerk reiterated that every season threw up new challenges. "I know it's never going to be a walk in the park," he said. "I'm

just so grateful to say I came through with a gold medal.

"Every year has its new challenges, and every year it gets tough. I don't think it ever became easier. Right after Rio I found out I had a back injury, and this entire season I have been struggling to find fitness, but at the same time my times have been getting better, especially in the short sprints."

Van Niekerk, the first athlete to break 10 seconds over 100m, 20sec over 200m and 44sec over 400m, added he was delighted his coach Anna "Tannie Ans" Botha would also

receive a medal as part of a championships initiative to reward coaches. "Everyone knows the superstar coach I have," he said of the 74-year-old great-grandmother who oversees the hottest property in world athletics.

"It's actually a massive honour for me to be able to reach these great heights with her. She has had to wait a long time - with the third gold, she gets to take one home with her too. Unfortunately my two previous medals had to go to Mum as she said 'Everything achieved at home has to stay here.' So I am glad to be able to take this one home myself!" — AFP



TORONTO: Eugenie Bouchard, of Canada, reacts during a first round match against Donna Vekic, of Croatia, at the Rogers Cup women's tennis tournament in Toronto, Tuesday. — AP

HOME COURT NO HELP AS BOUCHARD FALLS IN TORONTO

TORONTO: Home support proved no help as Eugenie Bouchard's struggles continued Tuesday with a straight-sets loss to qualifier Donna Vekic at the WTA hardcourt tournament in Toronto. Croatia's Vekic powered to a 6-3, 6-4 victory, to the disappointment of a partisan crowd whose vocal support couldn't lift Bouchard.

The Canadian, who has just one match win since a second-round exit at the French Open, committed 32 unforced errors and seven double faults. She was broken six times by the 21-year-old Vekic, who is in the main draw of this US Open tuneup for the first time.

"I guess I am going to have to have a tournament in Croatia to finally have the home crowd," said Vekic, who booked a second-round clash with German third seed Angelique Kerber who held the world number one ranking earlier this year. Bouchard, touted as a rising star

when she reached the 2014 Wimbledon final on the heels of semi-final appearances at the Australian and French Opens, was once ranked as high as fifth in the world.

She's now 70th and received a wildcard entry into the main draw, but her Toronto campaign lasted just 94 minutes. "I'm obviously a bit low in confidence right now," Bouchard said. "So it's tough to get through tough matches when you're in a moment like that."

In second-round action, former world number one Caroline Wozniacki of Denmark, seeded sixth, powered through with a 6-3, 6-0 win over Russian Ekaterina Alexandrova. Fifth-seeded Elina Svitolina of Ukraine also advanced with a 7-6 (7/4), 6-4 win over Russian Daria Kasatkina.

In other first-round matches, 10th-seeded Agnieszka Radwanska of Poland continued her dominance of big-serving

American CoCo Vandeweghe with a 6-3, 6-2 win. Radwanska, winner of the Canadian crown in 2014 when the tournament was held in Montreal, has won five straight hardcourt meetings against Vandeweghe — who managed to turn the tables in a grass court clash at Birmingham last year.

It was a disappointing early exit for Vandeweghe, who reached the final at Stanford last week to move into the top 20 in the world rankings. Russia's Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova swept past France's Alize Cornet 6-0, 6-1 to book a second-round meeting with newly minted world number one and top seed Karolina Pliskova.

Magdalena Rybarikova of Slovakia downed Croatia's Mirjana Lucic-Baroni 7-5, 6-0 to line up a meeting with second-seeded defending champion Simona Halep, who won the Canadian title in Montreal last year. — AFP

SHAPOVALOV BATTLES BACK AS YOUNG STARS SHINE IN MONTREAL

MONTREAL: Canadian teenager Denis Shapovalov saved four match points en route to a three-set victory over Rogerio Dutra Silva on Tuesday in the first round of the ATP Montreal Masters. The 18-year-old trailed 4-6 in the second-set tiebreaker but saved all four match points he faced to force a third set.

"I don't remember all of them. Honestly, it's a little bit of a blur," Shapovalov said. "I remember one of them, he passed me. I hit a pretty tough volley. It was a pretty long point there. On one of them, I remember I was pretty far back. I went for a backhand down the line, which was pretty good. I wasn't holding back. I just told myself, he's got to win it from me, I'm not going to give it to him. I think I did a good job to stay tough out there." Shapovalov broke Brazil's Dutra Silva in the seventh game of the third and went on to close out a 4-6, 7-6 (10/8), 6-4 victory. "It's matches like this I live for and that I play for," said Shapovalov, who earned a second-round meeting with former US Open champion Juan Martin del Potro of Argentina.

With old-guard stars Rafael Nadal and Roger Federer taking a day off-19-time Grand Slam champion Federer to celebrate his 36th birthday-Shapovalov was one of a wealth of young talents to shine on Tuesday. South Korean 21-year-old Chung Hyeon withstood 16 aces to beat 2014 semi-finalist Feliciano Lopez 6-1, 4-6, 7-6 (7/3).

After the third set went to the tiebreaker without a break of serve, the 56th-ranked Chung built a 4-2 advantage and went on to secure the victory in two hours and 16 minutes. He next faces ninth-seeded Belgian David Goffin, a 4-6, 6-1, 6-4 winner over Japan's Yuichi Sugita. Croatian 20-year-old Borna Coric breezed past Russian lucky loser Mikhail Youzhny 6-2, 6-4 to set up a second-round meeting with top-seeded Nadal. Coric has won two of three prior encounters with the Spanish great, who won a 10th French Open title this year and can regain the world number one ranking with a run to the semi-

finals this week.

American Ernesto Escobedo, 21 years old and ranked 85th in the world, got his chance as a lucky loser when 10th-seeded Czech Tomas Berdych withdrew with a rib injury. Escobedo stepped in and defeated Georgia's Nikoloz Basilashvili 7-6 (7/4), 6-4.

'RIB DYSFUNCTION'

Berdych, a semi-finalist at Los Cabos in Mexico last week, tweeted his regret at having to withdraw. "I am sorry I have to apologize (to) all my Montreal fans," tweeted Berdych, who had played in 12 straight Canadian Masters. "I couldn't play, because of my rib disfunction I need to get well to go to office soon!!" Third-seeded Dominic Thiem highlighted the evening action on Court Central, the 23-year-old Austrian taking on Argentina's Diego Schwartzman for a place in the third round.

Thiem, ranked seventh in the world, lifted a title in Rio de Janeiro this year and reached clay court finals in Barcelona and Madrid-losing to Nadal in both. In other first-round action, American Sam Querrey defeated Vincent Millot for the second time in as many weeks, peppering the French qualifier with 18 aces in a 4-6, 7-6 (7/4), 7-5 win. Querrey beat Millot in the quarter-finals at Los Cabos en route to his 10th ATP title.

American Jack Sock, seeded 15th, also advanced, downing France's Pierre-Hugues Herbert 7-6 (7/4), 6-3. — AFP



MONTREAL: Denis Shapovalov of Canada returns to Rogerio Dutra Silva of Brazil during the first round of the Rogers Cup tennis tournament, Tuesday in Montreal. — AP



TRUMP'S 'FIRE AND FURY' WARNING HITS STOCKS



KUWAIT: A general view of the Central Bank of Kuwait building in downtown Kuwait.

73% OF KUWAIT POPULATION HAVE BANK ACCOUNTS: CBK CHIEF

CBK RELEASES FINANCIAL STABILITY REPORT 2016

KUWAIT: Governor of the Central Bank of Kuwait Dr Mohammad Al-Hashel said yesterday that 73 percent of Kuwait's population, whose age above 15, have a bank account—the highest proportion at the regional level. Governor Al-Hashel made the statement on the occasion of releasing the financial stability report (2016), the fifth regular report, issued by the bank as part of efforts to boost transparency, publicize data and document statistics of the national banking and financial sectors.

He said that the report includes monitoring and analyzing economic and financial developments on basis of their relation with

The fourth one sheds light on developments in the money markets, foreign currency exchange, stocks and properties and the fifth is an analysis about settling financial payments in Kuwait.

Performance

Despite challenges, the CBK precautionary measures and hazard early warning systems have proven helpful in maintaining strength and regular performance of the banking sector in 2016, he said.

Moreover, they have contributed to maintaining steady growth and positive performance in several sectors that constitute founda-

(some \$1.4 billion) against growth that reached 1.7 percent in 2015. The growth was the lowest in the past years, largely as a result of the decline of the banking loans portfolio in the GCC states, Asian and European nations.

Credit growth better

Shedding further light on the domestic market, he said the credit growth was better, at a rate of 2.9 percent, distributed over 70.5 percent of the total loans, matured in December 2016 for conglomerates, 24.2 percent for personal loans and 5.3 percent for small and medium establishments.

Total banking deposits in 2016 posted growth slowness by 2.4 percent compared to three percent in 2015. In spite of the record growth of the local deposits, 4.8 percent, the general growth of the deposits declined due to drop of the deposits by companies affiliated to the banks or the banks' external branches. The banking sector continues to enjoy stable financial base, with the forward deposits accounting to 63.6 percent of the total, thus affirming stability of the funding basis for the banking apparatus and its ability to remain stable, amid liquidity pressure.

On risks' assessment, he said improvement at this level persisted, in the past year, with respect of the assets' quality, where irregular lending dropped by 2.2 percent in December 2016, compared to 2.4 percent in the previous year. This proportion is lower than that posted before the global financial crisis, reaching 3.8 percent in 2007.

Decline of these loans became possible due to fruitful cooperation among the banks and their adherence to the CBK instructions, Governor Al-Hashel explained.

Moreover, in this vein, there was tangible improvement in the proportion of covering allotments to the irregular loans in 2016, rising from 205 percent in 2015 to 237 percent in 2016, much higher than the proportion recorded ahead of the global

crisis 87 percent—at a time liquidity levels remained robust at the banks.

Profitability

Kuwaiti banks continued to post net profits in 2016, though at a slower pace as compared to 2015, where the net earnings rose to KD 745.8 million (some \$2.4 billion), at a 5.6 percent in annual growth proportion. Capital risk adequacy stood at 16.9 percent in 2015, 17.5 percent in 2016, 18.6 percent in 2016, he said, noting that the Kuwaiti banks' maintaining high capitals contributed to safeguarding the

Debt instrument

The Kuwaiti Government, in light of the good liquidity levels, decided to issue general debt instruments. It issued KD 2.92 billion (\$9.6 billion) worth of such instruments in 2016, against KD 1.25 billion (\$4 billion) in 2015, as a result of which public debts rose in 2016 to KD 3.3 billion (\$10.8 billion). On the exchange market, he said the Kuwaiti dinar dropped against the US dollar by 0.9 percent in 2016, noting that the exchange rate fluctuations were within a very limited range (02.+)

Governor Al-Hashel attributed the KD relative stability against the greenback and other major currencies to the state policy of pegging the dinar to a basket of currencies. As to Boursa Kuwait, he said that the bourse concluded the year bullishly where the benchmark rose 2.4 percent compared to the decline posted in 2015, 14.1 percent. This improvement was caused by recovery of the oil prices in last quarter of 2016. Local realty sector declined for the second year in a row, in terms of number and value of transactions, respectively 21.4 percent and 23.1 percent, Al-Hashel said. Property also dropped in terms of sectors, with sales in the housing and investment ones falling respectively by 30.3 and 33.4 percent. But, commercial sales rose 26.3 percent. Noticeable spread of information technology and substantial development in the sector of automated machines have resulted in increasing digital banking transactions, he indicated affirming the CBK vital role to safeguard the national financial system in the conclusion of his statement. — KUNA



Dr Mohammad Al-Hashel

financial system. The Capital risk adequacy, he said, climbed due to robust growth of the banks' capitals — 10.3 percent—compared to assets' growth, with projected risks at four percent in 2016. The Kuwaiti banks maintained high levels of capitals despite quarterly stress tests, conducted in 2016.

The CBK, in December 2016, increased the discount interest rate by a quarter point, to 2.5 percent, the same level that existed in October 2012. Al-Hashel affirmed that the decision

The report includes monitoring and analyzing economic and financial developments on basis of their relation with the financial stability. They reveal the banking sector capacity to withstand shocks and carry on with regular services. The report includes five chapters; the first tackles performance by conventional and Islamic banks as financial brokers, along with shedding light on credits' distribution trends and deposit activities.

the financial stability. They reveal the banking sector capacity to withstand shocks and carry on with regular services. The report, he added, includes five chapters; the first tackles performance by conventional and Islamic banks as financial brokers, along with shedding light on credits' distribution trends and deposit activities.

The second chapter deals with assessing basic hazards facing the banking sector, the third addresses in an analytical manner trends of profit-making, capitalization in the banking sector, its resistance, according to several financial and economic pressure tests, the governor added.

tions for financial stability. Financial brokerage continued improving in 2016, though at a slower pace, as compared to 2015. The banking sector growth slowed in 2016, with the overall assets growing by 1.85 percent compared to 2.6 percent in 2015.

Local assets' growth was relatively better, posting 3.1 percent, against backdrop of the local crediting growth which reached 2.9 percent, lower than the proportion of 2015 — 8.5 percent. Basic banking assets' decline was largely attributed to the noticeable slowness in credit growth, with the loans portfolio in the banks recording slight growth estimated at one percent, with a rise of KD 424 million

BREXIT INFLATION PUSHING BRITISH SHOPPERS TO CHEAPER GOODS

LONDON: British firms are keeping a lid on pay and automating more production while some shoppers, faced with rising prices, are switching to cheaper products, the Bank of England said yesterday.

The findings came in a report from around the country that showed Brexit is hurting households, mainly through the weaker pound. Businesses serving British consumers are suffering compared with export-focused manufacturers, as the weaker exchange rate and higher inflation following last year's vote to leave the European Union feeds through the economy.

Last week BoE Governor Mark Carney said Britain's economy was suffering from uncer-

tainty and higher prices caused by the referendum decision in June 2016, and the central bank cut its forecasts for future growth and wages. Yesterday's report by the BoE's regional staff—which fed into last week's forecasts—showed businesses planned to offer pay awards of between 2 and 3 percent, despite growing recruitment difficulties.

"Overall employment intentions remained modest," the BoE said. "Growth in manufacturing (employment) intentions was stable and was dampened by a stronger focus on productivity improvements and automation over job creation," it added. The BoE forecast last week that economic growth would slow to 1.7 percent this year and 1.6 percent in 2018, while

wages are seen rising by 2 percent and then 3 percent. After unexpectedly outperforming other big advanced economies last year, in 2017 Britain had its slowest first half of the year since 2012.

Firms reported prices for goods and services rose at the fastest pace in four years, in line with official measures of inflation, and consumer spending growth slowed.

"Some contacts ascribed this to increased caution among consumers, and to consumers trading down to cheaper products or brands," the BoE said. Sales at consumer services businesses grew at their slowest pace in over four years, while manufacturing exports saw their fastest expansion since 2011. — Reuters

US PUSH FOR FREER NAFTA E-COMMERCE FACES WRATH

MEXICO CITY: A US proposal for Mexico and Canada to vastly raise the value of online purchases that can be imported duty-free from stores like Amazon.com and eBay is emerging as a flashpoint in an upcoming renegotiation of the NAFTA trade deal. Vulnerable industries like footwear, textiles and bricks and mortar retail in Mexico and Canada are pushing back hard against the proposal by the US trade representative to raise Mexican and Canadian duty-free import limits for e-commerce to the US level of \$800, from current thresholds of \$50 and C\$20, respectively. For the Mexicans, the main worry is that such a move could open a back door for cheap imports from Asia and beyond. For Canadian retailers, the fear is that e-commerce companies will undercut their prices.

The US plan was unveiled in July as part of the Trump administration's goals to renegotiate the 25-year-old treaty. While Mexico and Canada are still formulating their responses, Mexico City is leaning strongly against the proposal in its current form, and Ottawa may not be far behind. The proposed \$800 level "opens a completely unnecessary door" to imports from outside the NAFTA trading bloc, Mexican Economy Minister Ildefonso Guajardo said on Thursday on the sidelines of a NAFTA-related event, calling it "a very sensitive topic." The growing controversy over how to account for a burgeoning regional e-commerce sector dominated by the United States highlights a rare area where the Trump administration is pushing to liberalize trade rules rather than tightening them. — Reuters

AL-BABTAIN GROUP WINS 'OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE AWARD'

INFINITI MIDDLE EAST RECOGNITION FOR ATTAINING 100% TRAINING TARGETS

KUWAIT: Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al Babtain Co (AABC), the exclusive dealer of Infiniti vehicles in the State of Kuwait, is proud to announce its new achievement of 'Outstanding performance Award for attaining 100 percent training targets in both Infiniti Sales and Aftersales at the Infiniti Middle East FY16 Infiniti Quality Program (IQP).

The IQP was developed by Infiniti Middle East as a specific initiative to recognize and enhance Operational Excellence of its partners. The award was presented by Nissan Gulf (NGF) Chief Operating Officer, Cameron Gowing to Al-Babtain Group Learning & Development Manager, Dr M Mahendhran. Other attendees at the prestigious event included NGF Director - Aftersales David Graves, NGF General Manager - Aftersales Harmeet Singh, NGF Deputy General Manager - Training & Dealer Network Development Fatma Zenagui & NGF Deputy General Manager - Aftersales Surendra Acharya.

In honor of the recent accolade, Al-Babtain held a congratulatory meeting where Al-Babtain CEO, Saleh Al-Babtain, COO Mohamed Shalaby and CHRO

Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al-Babtain appreciated and thanked Dr Mahendhran for his contribution.

Al-Babtain CEO Saleh Al-Babtain commented on the award, "This recognition brings great pride to us as we strive to continuously push our boundaries to deliver excellence to our customers. Al-Babtain will continue to reach for new milestones as we forge ahead." "We have built an empire of outstanding personnel who are eager to learn and grow. It is our responsibility to nurture talent to provide the best sales and aftersales services as the Al-Babtain brand commands. All of our staff undergoes rigorous training programs and we are proud to invest in our human capital. The new award is further testament to our commitment to maintain a prominent benchmark in the automotive industry", said Al-Babtain COO, Mohamed Shalaby.

"Our highly professional sales and after sales staff reflect the group's values of passion, integrity and commitment and is firmly committed to achieving excellence and delivering a superior customer experience from start to finish", added CHRO Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al-Babtain.



BURGAN BANK ANNOUNCES WINNER OF AL-THURAYA SALARY ACCOUNT DRAW

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank, the second largest in terms of assets, announced yesterday EBRABHIM FALEH MAHMOUD as the lucky winner of the Al-Thuraya Salary Account monthly draw. The winner was presented with a Nissan Patrol SUV.

The draw rewards new and existing customers who transfer their salary to Burgan Bank by offering them a chance to win a Nissan Patrol SUV every month. With every KD 10 available in the account, the customer receives one chance to enter the draw.

The Al-Thuraya account holders have the option to hold money in Kuwaiti Dinar and any other major currencies and can access other account-related services such as standing orders, loans and credit cards and much more. MENAT region supported by one of the largest regional branch networks.

The Bank has continuously improved its performance over the years through an expanded revenue structure, diversified fund-

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

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

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

CHINA HELPS LAUNCH \$13 BILLION BELT AND ROAD RAIL PROJECT IN MALAYSIA

NEW PUSH TO BEIJING'S BELT AND ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE

KUANTAN, Malaysia: China and Malaysia broke ground yesterday on a \$13 billion rail project linking peninsular Malaysia's east and west, the largest such project in the country and a major part of Beijing's Belt and Road infrastructure push.

The planned 688-km (430-mile) East Coast Rail Link will connect the South China Sea, large parts of which are claimed by China, at the Thai border in the east with the strategic shipping routes of the Straits of Malacca in the west. It is among the most prominent projects in China's controversial Belt and Road Initiative, which aims to build a modern-day "Silk Road" connecting the world's second-largest economy by land corridors to Southeast Asia, Pakistan and Central Asia and maritime routes opening up trade with the Middle East and Europe.

"The ECRL is indeed yet another 'game changer' and a 'mindset changer' for Malaysia as it will significantly cut travel time to and from the east coast of the peninsula," Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak said at the ceremony half way along the route in Kuantan, which faces the South China Sea.

For China, the project is another expansion of its soft power in Malaysia, which also lays claim to some disputed South China Sea islands, and is critical for China's geopolitical and strategic interests.

"The China government has attached great importance to the China-Malaysia relations and has always considered Malaysia a dear neighbor and trustworthy partner who is committed to seeking mutually beneficial cooperation and common development in the country," Chinese State Councillor Wang Yong said at the ceremony, heading up a 100-strong delegation in Kuantan.

Najib said the project would be financed with an 85 percent loan from China Exim Bank and the balance through a "sukuk" Islamic bond program managed by local investment banks.

The project is being built by China Communications Construction Co Ltd. Beijing has repeatedly come to the rescue of Najib over the last year, as he sought foreign investment that would help him pay off a massive debt piled up by scandal-plagued state fund 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB).

Najib has announced a spree of infrastructure projects in the last few months, many funded by China, as he builds up momentum for a general election that he has to call by mid-2018.

A Nomura research report last month said foreign direct investment inflows from China into Malaysia surged by 119 percent in 2016 and continued to grow at 64 percent year on year in the first quarter of 2017. The growing closeness to China has raised eyebrows among Najib's opponents who have argued that the country has become too reliant on Chinese funds.

But Najib dismissed the concerns in a speech on Tuesday, saying turning away from Chinese FDI made "no economic sense". There have been protests in Sri Lanka and Thailand over the Belt and Road initiative. A planned rail link through Thailand hit some resistance with what critics said were Beijing's excessive demands and unfavorable financing.

But Thailand's cabinet last month approved construction of the first phase of a \$5.5 billion railway project to link the industrial eastern seaboard with southern China through landlocked Laos. — Reuters

INFORMAL ECONOMY NOT ENOUGH TO HANDLE AFRICA'S WORKFORCE EXPLOSION

LONDON: Unemployment in Nigeria, sub-Saharan Africa's largest economy, is running at more than 14 percent and climbing; in South Africa, the second largest economy, it is over 27 percent. For youth in both places, it is far more. This may seem bad enough, but according to International Monetary Fund calculations the sub-Saharan Africa region's jobs travails are in danger of reaching uncharted territory in less than two decades.

That is, unless the economies can create jobs for their burgeoning, young population.

"By 2035, sub-Saharan Africa will have more working-age people than the rest of the world's regions combined," the IMF wrote in a blog post this week. "This growing workforce will have to be met with jobs." This has major implications for the region's economy, its security and wider immigration patterns.

In the past, some of the jobs strain has been taken up by the so-called informal economy which is dominated by street vendors, household workers and off-the-radar cash jobs.

Typically, these workers pay no tax and do not come under regulation, but they do add to a country's wealth. The informal sector in sub-Saharan Africa was around 38 percent of gross domestic product in 2010-14, according to the IMF. This represented a steady decline from nearly 45 percent in 1991-99, possibly a reflection of more formal growth in some parts of Africa. But up to 90 percent of jobs outside agriculture are still in the informal sector. It is not generally by desire.

The IMF found that a third of new entrepreneurs in sub-Saharan Africa said they were doing what they were doing out of necessity. "Most would prefer a job in the formal sector, but don't have that option," it said.

The International Labor Organization goes further. "Some of the characteristic features of informal employment are lack of protection in the event of non-payment of wages, compulsory overtime or extra shifts, lay-offs without notice or compensation, unsafe working conditions

and the absence of social benefits," it notes. "Women, migrants and other vulnerable groups of workers who are excluded from other opportunities have little choice but to take informal low-quality jobs."

Economic impact

For the economy, informal sector work can be both positive and negative for growth. In some cases, for example, it represents entrepreneurship and start-up businesses. But a lot of it is far from opportune for growth. The informal sector tends to be low productivity work, partly because it attracts lower skilled workers.

"In a country where the informal sector is large, the rate of economic growth is reduced," the IMF said.

This would suggest that countries such as Tanzania and Nigeria, where the informal economy is 50 to 65 percent of GDP, will fare worse than others such as Mauritius, South Africa and Namibia, where it ranges from between 20 to 25 percent. Africa is not alone, of course. Indeed at the moment the region where the informal sector plays the biggest role is Latin America and the Caribbean. It also amounts to around 15 percent of GDP in developed countries.

But with the large working age population about to explode, the countries of the region are facing a crunch. "Countries need to adopt a balanced approach in the design of policies to grow the formal sector. This means focusing on ways to increase the productivity of the informal sector, while working to support the expansion of formal businesses," the IMF said. —Reuters

AHLI UNITED BANK MAKES A CUSTOMER'S DREAM COME TRUE WITH KD 250,000 GRAND PRIZE

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

On this occasion Ahli United Bank announced, "With this draw, we are adding 26 new winners and prizes to the Al-Hassad Islamic account whereby, the total number of winners annually will include more than 1300. The weekly grand prize winner of KD 25,000 is Mohd Baqer Ghuloom.



25 other winners won prizes of KD 1,000 and are as follows: Fatemah Abdulkareem Mousa, Shreif Abdulhafeez Basheer, Ebtessam Ibrahim Shahatah, Ali Mohd Kayed Kaydi, Ahmad Rashed Al Wahaib, Hamed Ahmad Al-Awadhi, Mohammad Al-Mousa, Mustafa Abdulredh Hussan, Abdulrazaq Farhan Mubarak, Abdurrahman Yousef, Ahmad Mohammad Al-Khaled, Ali Hussain Mohammad, Mahmoud Jaber Al-Oqla, Mohammed Abdulla Kunhi, Mohd Ali Al Amir, Abdulawahab Meaidh Al-Azmi, Khaled Rashed Al-Hajri, Saad Abu Abbass, Zainab Ali

Makki, Huda A Majeed, Madinah Hamad, Muhammad, Hasan Isa Ebrahim, Zahid Haider, Ehsan Ali Yousif, Mohd Muslem Ahmed. Ahli United Bank added, "There are increased opportunities that await our current customers and those who are interested in opening an Al-Hassad Islamic account to benefit from the wide range of prizes and opportunities offered this year." Al-Hassad Islamic account's customers in Kuwait and Bahrain are eligible to participate in the draw in line with the program's terms and conditions.

Individual customers can open their accounts with a minimum deposit of KD 100, qualifying them to enter the draw. For every KD 50 deposited in the account, customers are given one chance to enter the quarterly draw. They must have held the minimum deposit requirement for at least two weeks prior to the draw date.

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

ASIAN COUNTRIES	
Japanese Yen	2.759
Indian Rupees	4.746
Pakistani Rupees	2.870
Srilankan Rupees	1.971
Nepali Rupees	2.981
Singapore Dollar	223.020
Hongkong Dollar	38.695
Bangladesh Taka	3.737
Philippine Peso	5.988
Thai Baht	9.127

GCC COUNTRIES	
Saudi Riyal	80.787
Qatari Riyal	83.207
Omani Riyal	786.772
Bahraini Dinar	804.440
UAE Dirham	82.482

ARAB COUNTRIES	
Egyptian Pound - Cash	21.200
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	16.972
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.216
Tunisian Dinar	127.210
Jordanian Dinar	427.490
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	2.018
Syrian Lira	2.159
Morocco Dirham	32.414

EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES	
US Dollar Transfer	302.750
Euro	356.940
Sterling Pound	395.540
Canadian dollar	239.710
Turkish lira	85.890

Swiss Franc	316.020
Australian Dollar	240.230
US Dollar Buying	301.550

GOLD	
20 Gram	249.070
10 Gram	127.450
5 Gram	64.570

DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

Rate for Transfr	Selling Rate
US Dollar	302.400
Canadian Dollar	238.945
Sterling Pound	394.050
Euro	356.520
Swiss Frank	294.450
Bahrain Dinar	802.065
UAE Dirhams	82.725
Qatari Riyals	83.945
Saudi Riyals	81.535
Jordanian Dinar	426.430
Egyptian Pound	17.029
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.973
Indian Rupees	4.744
Pakistani Rupees	2.869
Bangladesh Taka	3.738
Philippines Peso	5.970
Cyprus pound	166.890
Japanese Yen	3.750
Syrian Pound	1.590
Nepalese Rupees	2.974
Malaysian Ringgit	71.400

Chinese Yuan Renminbi	45.645
Thai Bhat	10.080
Turkish Lira	86.055

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
Europe		
British Pound	0.386197	0.396197
Czech Korune	0.005562	0.017562
Danish Krone	0.043659	0.048659
Euro	0.349637	0.358637
Norwegian Krone	0.033856	0.039056
Romanian Leu	0.077712	0.077712
Slovakia	0.009023	0.019023
Swedish Krona	0.032899	0.037899
Swiss Franc	0.306164	0.317164
Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.230046	0.242046
New Zealand Dollar	0.214874	0.224374
America		
Canadian Dollar	0.232975	0.241975
Georgina Lari	0.125021	0.125021
US Dollars	0.298650	0.303070
US Dollars Mint	0.299150	0.303070
Asia		
Bangladesh Taka	0.003321	0.003905
Chinese Yuan	0.043717	0.047217
Hong Kong Dollar	0.036652	0.039402

Indian Rupee	0.004221	0.004909
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018	0.000024
Japanese Yen	0.002667	0.002847
Korean Won	0.000256	0.000271
Malaysian Ringgit	0.067407	0.073407
Nepalese Rupee	0.002991	0.003161
Pakistan Rupee	0.002624	0.002914
Philippine Peso	0.005894	0.006194
Singapore Dollar	0.216485	0.226485
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001598	0.002178
Taiwan	0.009886	0.010066
Thai Baht	0.008737	0.009287
Arab		
Bahraini Dinar	0.796057	0.804557
Egyptian Pound	0.015566	0.021474
Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000085
Iraqi Dinar	0.000190	0.000250
Jordanian Dinar	0.422401	0.431401
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000150	0.000250
Moroccan Dirhams	0.020832	0.044832
Omani Riyal	0.779944	0.785624
Qatar Riyal	0.078868	0.083808
Saudi Riyal	0.079647	0.080947
Syrian Pound	0.001283	0.001503
Tunisian Dinar	0.121912	0.129912
Turkish Lira	0.080747	0.091047
UAE Dirhams	0.080958	0.082658
Yemeni Riyal	0.000984	0.001064



BEIJING: People ride an escalator at an upscale shopping mall in Beijing on Tuesday. China's trade growth weakened in July in a negative sign for growth in the world's second-largest economy and global demand. —AP

CHINA FACTORY GATE INFLATION MISSES EXPECTATIONS IN JULY

BEIJING: China's factory price inflation remained steady for the third consecutive month in July, the government said yesterday, coming in slightly below expectations as experts warn of a further slowdown in the world's second-largest economy. The producer price index (PPI) rose 5.5 percent year-on-year, according to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), the same as the previous two months but missing the 5.6 percent gain forecast in a Bloomberg News survey.

Julian Evans-Pritchard of Capital Economics warned the producer price gauge's steadiness "appeared to be almost entirely due to the recent rally in domestic steel prices, which is unlikely to be sustained in our view". China's steel prices surged in July, which has helped lead world steel market prices higher, the China Iron

and Steel Industry Association has said. China's consumer price index (CPI), a main gauge of retail inflation, rose 1.4 percent year-on-year last month, down from 1.5 percent in June and also missing Bloomberg's forecast of 1.5 percent.

Consumer price inflation has been "generally stable", NBS analyst Sheng Guoqing said in a statement, adding that high temperatures and heavy rains this summer have supported vegetable and egg prices.

"With policy tightening now weighing on economic activity, underlying inflation has already begun to decline," Evans-Pritchard said in a research note.

The inflation data came a day after the release of figures showing the rate of growth in China's exports and imports also slowed significantly in July. — AFP



120 فائز في 120 يوم

KFH ANNOUNCES CARDS SUMMER CAMPAIGN 8TH DRAW WINNERS

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) announced 7 winners of the eighth draw of the new banking cards summer campaign themed "Get Back Double the Value of your Purchases". The campaign was launched in an attempt to encourage clients to use KFH credit, prepaid and debit cards while making purchases in Kuwait and overseas.

The winners are: Zeyad Alshalfan, Huda Hasan, Tayba Algharabali, Abdulrahman Alnesif, Mashan Alotaibi, Fahad Almansour and Yousef Altarawa. The campaign that lasts for 120 days gives KFH customers chances to enter draw to win double cash-back up to KD 2000 daily. KFH Credit and Prepaid cards used for domestic and international purchases and KFH Debit cards used for international purchases are eligible for the draw. For every KD 1 spent locally earns 1 chance and every KD 1 spent internationally earn 3 chances to enter the daily draw.

This campaign is part of KFH efforts to reward its clients and grant them addition-

al value; thus achieving customer satisfaction and boosting their confidence. The campaign also aims at enhancing the bank's presence especially that it dominates the largest market share in the field of banking cards.

KFH strives to continuously offer its clients new promotions and discounts in order to distinguish them among peers, not to mention to further bolster bank's leading position in the field of banking cards.

KFH marketing campaigns play a significant role in underlining KFH's principles that include boosting sales, and benefitting clients and merchants. It is worth noting that KFH has won several awards in the field of banking cards which reiterates its success and efficiency in banking cards market. KFH enjoys high confidence and leadership in the market in addition to high quality products which have enabled it to achieve growth in cards market and increase the number of customers.

RICE TO RICHES: VIETNAM SHRIMP FARMERS FISH FOR FORTUNES

SOC TRANG, Vietnam: With a flashy gold watch and a chunky matching ring, Tang Van Cuol looks a far cry from the average Vietnamese farmer as he slings back a shot of rice wine and boasts about his projected earnings. After years scratching a living growing rice and onions or farming ducks, the 54-year-old says his life was transformed in 2000 — by shrimp.

The Mekong Delta, long renowned as the "rice bowl of Vietnam", is now also home to a multi-billion-dollar shrimp industry and burgeoning numbers of farmers are building fortunes from the small crustaceans. "Raising shrimp can bring so much income, nothing can compare," Cuol says over lunch with friends, a healthy spread of rice, salad, pork and-of course shrimp. This year he expects to make one billion dong, or around \$44,000 — an enormous sum in the delta, where rice farmers make around \$100 a month. The shrimp bonanza began in the 1990s when rising sea-levels seeped saltwater into the Mekong Delta.

It has surged in parallel with demand from the US and European Union. Savvy locals were swift to spot the changing conditions were ripe for shrimp farming.

The wealth has transformed Cuol's part of Soc Trang province: motorbikes have replaced bicycles on newly-paved roads dotted with multi-storey concrete homes unimaginable just a generation ago.

Cuol owns several motorbikes, funded his daughter's wedding and claims an impressive collection of antiques "worth hundreds of millions of dong."

Crisis is looming

But environmentalists warn that the bounty from intensive shrimp farming may be short-lived. Today pollution and disease frequently lay waste to crustacean harvests. But a wider crisis is looming caused by the obliteration of mangrove forests to make way for farms, exposing the area to lashings from storms and further rises in sea-level linked to climate change. "This is not sustainable," said Andrew Wyatt, Mekong Delta Program Manager at the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). The IUCN is encouraging farmers to preserve mangroves and stop using harmful chemicals so their shrimp can be certified as organic, earning a five to 10 percent premium in the process. Yet shrimp farmers say the financial rewards are too great to ignore.

Just like his father and grandfather, Tang Van Tuoi struggled as a rice farmer. He slept under a roof fashioned from coconut palms, earning just enough to support his family. But when saltwater started creeping into his rice fields—he saw an opportunity and started harvesting shrimp. "Now everything is developed, we have vehicles, roads, things have changed massively," he told AFP from his polished living room, where a flatscreen TV hangs over a wood furniture set. Even in a bad year, he can earn more than he did as a rice farmer. In a good year he can rake in upwards of \$40,000. — AFP

US JOB OPENINGS AT RECORD HIGH; MARKET IS TIGHTENING

PRODUCTIVITY RISES IN Q2; LABOR COSTS SOFT

WASHINGTON: US job openings jumped to a record high in June, outpacing hiring, the latest indication that companies are having trouble finding qualified workers.

The monthly Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey, or JOLTS, released by the Labor Department on Tuesday also underscored labor market strength that will likely encourage the Federal Reserve to continue tightening monetary policy despite benign inflation and concerns about consumer spending.

"Companies are running out of workers to hire to do the job or even train to do the work, and this is a ticking time bomb for economic growth," said Chris Rupkey, chief economist at MUFJ in New York. "Today's JOLTS data bring a September meeting balance sheet unwind announcement a little closer to reality." JOLTS, is one of the job market metrics on Fed Chair Janet Yellen's so-called dashboard. Economists expect the US central bank will announce a plan to start reducing its \$4.2 trillion portfolio of Treasury bonds and mortgage-backed securities at its next policy meeting in September.

Tame inflation and worries about consumer spending amid tepid wage growth and faltering motor vehicle sales, however, suggest the Fed will delay raising interest rates again until December. It has increased borrowing costs twice this year.

Job openings, a measure of labor demand, increased by 461,000 to a seasonally adjusted 6.2 million. That was the highest level since the data series started in December 2000 and pushed the job openings rate up two-tenths of a percentage point to a near one-year high of 4.0 percent.

The monthly increase in job openings was the largest since July 2015. The surge in job openings was almost broad-based. There were 179,000 additional vacancies in the professional and business services industries. The health care and social assistance sector had 125,000 more job openings and construction companies had an additional 62,000 unfilled positions. In June, job openings were concentrated in the Midwest and West regions.

Skills mismatch

The ratio of job openings to unemployment hit a 16-year high. Hiring was little changed at 5.4 million in June, leaving the hiring rate steady at 3.7 percent. The gap between job openings and hiring points to a skills mismatch, which was also corroborated by a separate report on Tuesday from the National Federation of Independent Business.

The NFIB survey showed job openings at a 16-year high in July. Small businesses cited a lack of skills as the main reason for the vacancies. Others also blamed "unreasonable" wage expectations, attitude, appearance as well as drug addiction for disqualification of job seekers.

Economists are optimistic that tightening labor market conditions will spur faster wage growth. Annual wage growth has struggled to break above 2.5 percent, contributing to inflation persistently running below the Fed's 2 percent target.

"The JOLTS report continues what has been a reasonably strong run for the labor market data,



BOSTON: Men work on a street in downtown Boston. The US Labor Department released second quarter productivity data yesterday. —AP

and we expect continued improvement in the job market to keep upward pressure on wages," said Daniel Silver, an economist at JPMorgan in New York. Other details of the JOLTS report were mixed. About 3.1 million Americans voluntarily quit their jobs in June, down from 3.2 million in May. As a result, the quits rate, which the Fed looks at as a measure of job market confidence, dipped to 2.1 percent from 2.2 percent in May.

Layoffs rose 28,000 to 1.7 million in June, lifting the layoffs rate one-tenth of a percentage point to 1.2 percent.

Productivity

US worker productivity rose more than expected in the second quarter as hours increased at their fastest pace in 1-1/2 years, keeping labor costs under control. The Labor Department said yesterday that nonfarm productivity, which measures hourly output per worker, increased at a 0.9 percent annualized rate in the April-June period. First-quarter productivity was revised to show it edging up at a 0.1 percent pace instead of being unchanged as previously reported.

Compared to the second quarter of 2016, productivity increased at a 1.2 percent rate, the strongest performance in two years. Economists had forecast productivity increasing at a 0.7 percent pace in the second quarter. With productivity rising, unit labor costs, the price of labor per single unit of output, increased at only a 0.6 percent pace in the second quarter after jumping at

a 5.4 percent rate in the January-March period. Compared to the second quarter of 2016, unit labor costs fell at a 0.2 percent rate, pointing to muted inflation. Coming on the heels of a recent moderation in price pressures, the retreat in unit labor costs may worry Federal Reserve officials as they contemplate further monetary policy tightening.

Prices for US Treasuries were higher in mid-morning trading while US stocks were lower. The dollar gained against a basket of currencies.

The government also revised productivity data going back to 2014, in line with recent revisions to gross domestic product figures. Those revisions showed productivity falling 0.1 percent in 2016, the first drop since 1982. Productivity increased at an average annual rate of 1.2 percent from 2007 to 2016, below its long-term rate of 2.1 percent from 1947 to 2016, indicating the economy's potential rate of growth has declined.

Anemic productivity is bad news for President Donald Trump who has pledged to boost annual economic growth to 3.0 percent through tax cuts, infrastructure spending and a rollback of regulation. "To reattain 3 percent real GDP growth with the demographics the US is facing, productivity growth will have to exceed its long-run average growth rate of 2.1 percent, and we are far short of attaining such a pace," said John Ryding, chief economist at RDQ Economics in New York. —Reuters



KUWAIT: Khaled Al-Mutawa, General Manager - International Banking and Investments, and Mrs. Mona Mansour, General Manager - Customer Services Delivery accepting the award from Citibank representatives.

GULF BANK RECEIVES 'STRAIGHT THROUGH PROCESSING EXCELLENCE' AWARD 2016

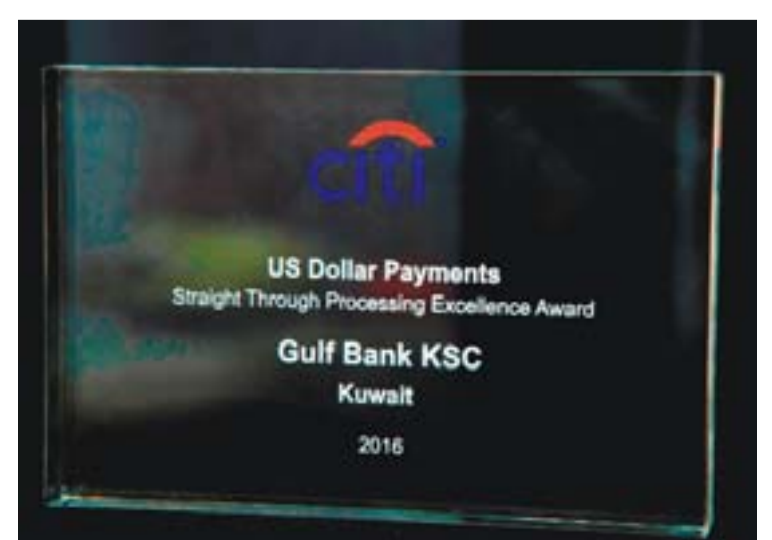
KUWAIT: Gulf Bank yesterday announced it has been awarded the prestigious 'Straight Through Processing Excellence' Award 2016 from Citibank for the Bank's STP Rate of 99.8 percent for Treasury and commercial payments. This is the sixth consecutive year that Gulf Bank receives this award.

Straight Through Processing (STP) is the full automation of a payment transactions by which financial institutions receive and process a payment by an electronic system without the requirement of any manual intervention. This automated process increases the efficiency and eliminates any delay in execution of payments.

The award was received by Khaled Al-Mutawa - General Manager - International Banking and Investments; Mona Mansour - General Manager - Customer

Service Delivery, Maab Al-Qassem - Executive Manager - International Banking & Investments; and Nouria AlBader - Deputy General Manager - Central Operations. It was presented by a team of Citibank representatives that included Mohamed A Al-Hammadi - Vice President - Correspondent Banking Group Middle East & Public Sector - Treasury and Trade Solutions, Emre Umur - Director - Head of F.I. & Correspondent Banking Sales - MENAPT, Omar Kopti - Vice President - Corporate & investment Bank and Mohannad Barakat - Vice President - Treasury & Trade Solutions Head.

Receiving the award on behalf of the Bank, Al-Mutawa said: "We are honored to receive this award and proud to be recognized by such a renowned financial institu-



tion as Citibank. Receiving this award is acknowledgment for being one of the top correspon-

dent banks and it reinforces our reputation as a market leader in operations and service quality."

TRUMP'S 'FIRE AND FURY' WARNING HITS STOCKS

LONDON: President Donald Trump's warning North Korea faced "fire and fury" and Pyongyang's threat of possible retaliation drove investors out of stocks yesterday and into the yen, Swiss franc, gold and government debt. US stock index futures fell, with the S&P 500 indicated to open down 0.4 percent after share prices fell in Europe and Asia.

The Swiss franc, by contrast, was on track for its biggest single-day rise against the euro in more than 2 1/2 years. "Trump's comments about North Korea have created nervousness and the fear is if the President really means what he said: 'fire and fury,'" said Naem Aslam, chief market analyst at Think Markets in London.

"The typical text book trade is that investors rush for safe havens." Trump's remarks on Tuesday that North Korea would face "fire and fury like the world has never seen" pushed Wall Street lower on Tuesday and drove up the VIX "fear gauge" of expected volatility on the S&P 500 higher.

The VIX rose further yesterday, rising as far as 12.11, its highest in almost a month.

A spokesman for the Korean People's Army said in a statement on Wednesday it was "carefully examining" plans for a missile attack on the US Pacific territory of Guam, which has a large US military base. In Europe, the pan-continental STOXX 600 index fell 0.9 percent, with falls deep-

ening after a car rammed a group of soldiers in Paris, injuring six, in what officials said was a suspected terrorist attack. France's CAC dropped 1.6 percent and Germany's DAX fell 1.3 percent.

Asia stocks dip

Tokyo's Nikkei 225 share index closed down 1.3 percent at its lowest since June 1 as the strong yen hit exporters, while South Korea's KOSPI index fell 1.1 percent to seven-week lows. South Korea's won currency dropped 0.9 percent against the dollar to its lowest close since July 13.

MSCI's main index of Asia-Pacific shares, excluding Japan, was last down 0.6 percent. Chinese blue chips closed flat but Hong Kong's

Hang Seng fell 0.4 percent. Instead, investors turned to assets that tend to benefit in times of geopolitical and financial stress. The Japanese yen strengthened by 0.5 percent to around 109.70 per dollar. Japan is the world's biggest creditor country and there is an assumption investors there will repatriate funds in a crisis.

The Swiss franc reversed a two-week losing streak and gained 1.1 percent to as firm as 0.9611 per dollar. The Swiss currency was also on track for its biggest daily gain against the euro since the Swiss National Bank removed its cap on the currency in January 2015. It was last up 1.2 percent at 1.1305 per euro. "Heightened geopolitical risks overnight have seen the markets flip from risk-on to risk-off and we have to wait and see how long this move runs before adding some positions," said Viraj Patel, an FX strategist at ING in London.

The dollar index, which measures the US currency against a basket of major peers, slipped 0.1 percent as US Treasury yields fell. The euro dipped 0.1 percent to \$1.1733 but the single European currency has been slipping this week against the dollar, having hit a more than 2 1/2-year high of \$1.1892 on Aug. 2.

Yields on core government debt fell. Ten-year US yields dropped 4.3 basis points to 2.24 percent and German equivalents fell 3 bps to 0.43 percent, a six-week low.

Gold rose 0.6 percent to \$1,268 an ounce. "The market hates uncertainty and that's certainly what we have now," said

Ole Hansen, head of commodity strategy at Saxo Bank. "But looking ahead unless we start to see a conflict break out or a major stock market correction, (gold) is capped at 1,295 (although) the upside at moment is the favored direction."

Oil prices rose before a report expected to show US crude stocks fell for a sixth week. Bent crude, the global benchmark, rose 19 cents to \$52.33 a barrel.

Highly-rated government bond yields fell yesterday as tensions between North Korea and the United States firmed investor demand for so-called 'safe haven' assets. The escalation in rhetoric jarred financial markets as investors sheltered their cash in assets that tend to perform in times of stress. German and US government bonds, alongside gold and the Japanese and Swiss currencies, were the main beneficiaries.

Yields on lower-rated euro zone bonds in Portugal, Spain and Italy were flat to slightly higher on the day. Analysts said demand should remain firm for a sale of 4 billion euros of five-year German bonds at auction. "Bunds appear stuck in their tight ranges below 0.5 percent for now and should be supported by geopolitics this morning," Commerzbank said in a note.

There was little market reaction to inflation data from China, the world's second largest economy, which showed prices holding steady in July in a positive sign for industrial output and profits for the third quarter.—Reuters

Daily Kuwait Stock Exchange Report									
Wednesday 09 August 2017									
Index	Change	Closing	Last Closing						
Price Index	▼ -0.89	6,823.03	6,829.92						
Weighted Index	▼ -0.49	417.95	418.44						
KSX 15	▲ 0.94	961.47	960.53						
Trades									
Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last	Change		
IPG	390	390	12,500	4,504	2	390	▼ -0.0		
NAPESCO	912	912	1,000	912	1	912	▼ -0.0		
ENERGYH	35.5	35.0	36,000	1,261	4	35.5	▼ -0.9		
GPI	37.9	37.1	5,045,084	189,465	157	37.9	▲ 0.2		
ABAR	89	76	9,000	734	17	81	▼ -7.8		
Oil & Gas	5,193,684	196,676	181	1067.90			▼ -13.20		
KFOUC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	280	▼ -0.0		
BPCC	571	570	54,896	31,316	7	570	▼ -0.0		
ALKOUT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	600	▼ -0.0		
ALQURAIN	353	349	224,191	78,832	23	349	▼ -4.0		
Basic Materials	279,687	110,148	30	1260.73			▼ -5.40		
KCEM	418	418	35,736	14,938	1	418	▼ -2.0		
CABLE	458	450	27,863	12,642	9	458	▼ -0.0		
SHIP	212	208	93,078	19,488	24	212	▲ 0.0		
PCEM	950	950	5,000	4,750	1	950	▼ -0.0		
PAPER	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	280	▼ -0.0		
MRC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	94	▼ -0.0		
ACICO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	260	▼ -0.0		
HCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	208	▼ -0.0		
KBMAC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	136	▼ -0.0		
NOCEM	180	180	12,850	2,313	2	180	▼ -0.0		
EQUIPMENT	48.0	48.0	50	2	1	48.0	▲ 2.1		
NCCI	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	80	▼ -0.0		
GYPSUM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	95	▼ -0.0		
SALBOOKH	82	80	151,000	9,062	4	82	▲ 4.3		
ADLY	850	841	427,188	361,054	29	849	▲ 3.0		
EDU	305	350	7,170	2,510	4	355	▲ 5.0		
CLEANING	46.9	45.0	270,900	12,249	8	45.3	▼ -2.6		
KIL	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	60	▼ -0.0		
KCPK	150	150	10,000	1,500	1	150	▼ -0.0		
HUMANSOFT	4,290	4,289	97,538	418,435	22	4,290	▲ 1.0		
NAFAS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	195	▼ -0.0		
GFC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	65	▼ -0.0		
SHOOTING	27.8	27.0	1,394,110	37,004	42	27.3	▼ -0.6		
CGC	560	550	25,345	14,045	9	550	▼ -10.0		
MTCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	56	▼ -0.0		
UPAC	770	770	50	39	1	770	▼ -0.0		
ALAFOD	355	355	53,586	19,023	3	355	▼ -0.0		
MUBARRAD	78	73	1,192,000	87,022	89	73	▲ 5.6		
LOGISTICS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	51	▼ -0.0		
SCEM	77	76	150,000	11,448	7	76	▼ -7.3		
GCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	80	▼ -0.0		
GIC	79	76	22,083	1,739	3	78	▲ 0.0		
FCEM	77	77	160,000	12,329	3	77	▲ 1.1		
RKYAC	82	82	4,462	366	1	82	▼ -0.0		
SPEC	94	91	398,600	36,673	33	94	▲ 1.7		
Industrials	4,508,605	1,578,630	277	1899.34			▲ 1.20		
PAPCO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	90	▼ -0.0		
CATL	230	229	15,207	3,497	3	229	▼ -1.0		
DANAH	72	72	129,000	9,311	3	72	▲ 0.0		
FOOD	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	2,950	▼ -0.0		
Consumer Goods	144,267	12,808	6	1621.30			▼ -6.10		
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	175	▼ -0.0		
Health Care	0	0	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	800	2,600	2,152	3	845	▼ -0.0		
IFAHR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	275	▼ -0.0		
OLUFAUEL	121	119	54,877	6,552	20	119	▼ -3		
MUNTAZAHAT	75	71	140,040	10,230	10	75	▼ -4		
JAZZEERA	573	547	218,175	123,418	14	573	▲ 17		
SOOR	122	122	14,869	1,790	11	122	▼ -0.0		
FUTUREXID	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	106	▼ -0.0		
ALRAI	120	120	110,000	13,200	3	120	▲ 1		
Jiyad	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	54	▼ -0.0		
Mazzan	915	910	431,500	393,515	15	915	▲ 3		
Consumer Services	971,861	550,865	76	1045.94			▼ -3.40		
ZAIN	454	451	1,363,045	617,033	88	451	▼ -3		
DORDDO	1,170	1,150	2,625	3,061	5	1,170	▼ -0.0		
AAAN	40.3	40.0	86,825	3,491	8	40.3	▼ -0.0		
VIVA	813	810	59,137	48,037	53	812	▼ -2		
Telecommunications	1,511,632	671,622	154	603.37			▼ -1.50		
NBK	719	716	2,284,567	1,541,156	76	716	▲ 2		
GBK	246	245	65,392	16,034	6	245	▼ -0.0		
CBK	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	353	▼ -0.0		
ABK	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	318	▼ -0.0		
ALMUTAHED	415	410	46,340	19,212	5	414	▼ -1		
KIB	245	244	380,876	93,338	22	245	▼ -0.0		
BURG	366	360	265,132	96,541	21	364	▲ 3		
KFIN	554	551	4,062,972	2,245,414	190	553	▼ -0.0		
BOUBAYAN	417	416	299,454	124,668	35	416	▼ -0.0		
AUB	218	216	1,810,407	302,458	39	217	▼ -1		
ITHMR	41.4	40.1	1,605,738	65,659	63	41.2	▲ 1		
WARBANK	267	265	340,861	90,659	88	265	▼ -1		
Banks	11,161,858	4,785,142	547	949.59			▲ 0.90		
KINS	249	230	35,250	8,112	3	230	▼ -0.0		
GINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	614	▼ -0.0		
AINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	451	▼ -0.0		
WINS	90	80	2,378	193	6	81	▼ -16.5		
KUWAITRE	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	187	▼ -0.0		
FTI	58	57	110,000	6,282	8	58	▼ -0.2		
WETHAQ	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	51	▼ -0.0		
BKQWT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	355	▼ -0.0		
Insurance	147,628	14,506	17	1025.83			▼ -19.20		
Investment Instruments	0	0	0	0	0	1081.87	▼ -0.00		
ASC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	180	▼ -0.0		
OSOS	128	128	350	45	1	128	▲ 3.0		
HAYATCOMM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	90	▼ -0.0		
Technology	350	45	1	654.21			▲ 11.30		
SANAD	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	100	▼ -0.0		
AFQA	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	111	▼ -0.0		
EFFECT	32.9	30.0	10,668	325	6	32.9	▼ -0.0		
AJWAN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	62	▼ -0.0		
MASAKEN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	75	▼ -0.0		
DALGAN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	350	▼ -0.0		
ALEID	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	90	▼ -0.0		

WARBA BANK ACQUIRES 'ULTRIS' BEACH APARTMENTS IN VIRGINIA DEAL REINFORCES ITS REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT PROGRAM IN US

KUWAIT: Warba bank continues to reinforce its strategy which primarily aims to position the Bank as the Islamic corporate and investment banking champion in Kuwait while expanding its international real-estate investment program. Within this context, the bank announced that it has invested \$17.34 million in acquiring a multi-family apartment complex "Ultris" at Banyan Grove located in Virginia Beach-USA.

This marks the second investment in 2017 made by Warba Bank and also sourced by its strategic partner Bentall Kennedy, one of the leading real estate consultancy firms assigned by Warba Bank as its real estate consultant and co-investor for the Bank's commercial real estate investments in USA. The propriety has been acquired in a joint venture with a locally based operating

partner, Croatan Investments that has local knowledge and a long track record in the Hampton Roads area.

The Ultris at Banyan Grove is a Class A, multifamily community comprising 13 buildings with 288 units. Built in 2003, this apartment community boasts spacious floor plans and a full spectrum of community amenities. Centrally located in Virginia Beach, Ultris at Banyan Grove provides convenient access to the Oceanfront area and many of the employment centers throughout Hampton Roads.

About the bank's new partnership with Bentall Kennedy, Shaheen Hamad Al-Ghanem, Warba Bank's CEO said: "Our cooperation with Bentall Kennedy has been fruitful and this remarkable acquisition is a continuation of a long-term cooperation between us. It is in-

line with the Bank's vigorous international real estate investment program and fulfils our strategy aiming to income diversification and growth of the Bank's investment portfolio."

Al-Ghanem further elaborated that the new acquired residential complex is located in a market with low volatility and strong demand for rental housing. It is expected to provide steady income returns throughout the investment period. He added: "Warba Bank aims to expand its real-estate portfolio in the USA promising markets and is currently studying a number of opportunities guaranteed to provide rewarding income and complies with the Bank's prime policy for investment and risk criteria."

Al-Ghanem ended: "Investment Banking Group at Warba Bank is fully

committed to make risk mitigated investments strictly following investment policies and procedures with the target of generating long term secured returns for the Bank and its investors".

Previously this year, Warba bank has acquired, in collaboration with Bentall Kennedy, the ManpowerGroup Headquarters, a 280,000-square foot office building in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Previously this year, Warba bank has launched its international real estate investment's program by acquiring a new KIA motors facility in UK. It's marked with its strategic location in the Industrial Keln Lanek, only a mile and a half from Amenigham which is renowned to have the biggest seaports in the United Kingdom along with Grimsby.



Shaheen Al-Ghanem

HUAWEI CONSUMER BUSINESS GROUP ANNOUNCES 2017 H1 BUSINESS RESULTS

DUBAI: Huawei Consumer Business Group yesterday announced its 2017 first half year financial results: sales revenue for the first six months of 2017 increased by 36.2 percent year-on-year to CNY105.4 billion. Smartphone shipments also rose to 73.01 million, a year-on-year increase of 20.6 percent.

Richard Yu, chief executive officer of Huawei's Consumer Business Group, said, "Our Consumer Business Group continued to deliver extraordinary growth, beating the industry average and penetrating high-end markets around the globe. This ongoing growth is testament to the strength of the Huawei brand and the momentum we've built through delivering premium, market-redefining devices that resonate with today's discerning consumers."

In Q1 2017, Huawei's market share rose to 9.8 percent of the global smartphone market, according to industry analysts IDC. This growth was driven by a significant increase in sales of mid-range and high-end smartphones in key geographies. In Greater China, Huawei laid claim to 22.1 percent of the market where shipments increased by 24 percent year-over-year. Huawei also saw rapid growth in smartphone shipment across Europe, reporting 18 percent year-over-year growth with particularly robust performance in Central and Eastern and Nordic Europe. The Huawei Consumer Business Group also experienced major breakthroughs in Asia-Pacific markets including Thailand, Malaysia, Japan and South Korea. Russia also grew strongly. Meanwhile, according to the research of GfK and Sino, Huawei's Honor brand consecutively topped both the Internet smartphone sales volume and sales revenue in China from January to May, 2017.

This year on year growth was reflected in Huawei's rise as a globally recognized premium brand. In 2017, Huawei was named number 49 on BrandZ's Top 100 Most Valuable Global Brands, number 88 in Forbes World's Most Valuable Brands and number 40 on the Brand Finance Global 500 Most Valuable Brands lists.

"Huawei devices have resonated with global audiences because of our clear commitment to quality, experience and innovation," continued Yu. "With a robust consumer devices ecosystem that includes critically acclaimed smartphones, tablets, wearables and now PCs, consumers know that they can trust Huawei to deliver the kind of experience they're looking for in a premium device."

As Huawei's brand presence grows, so too will its sales strategy. Huawei is set to grow its expansive retail network, reaching 56,000 retail stores worldwide by the end of 2017 - an increase from 35,000 in May 2016. These stores reflect the high-end, premium image that Huawei has cultivated around the world.

Looking ahead, Huawei expects to spur continued growth as the company pushes its devices further through innovations in artificial intelligence and machine learning that will drive the new "smart era" forward. The Consumer Business Group is committing to delivering intelligent devices that anticipate users' needs and fit more organically into the way people work and live.

Across its 15 global research centers and 36 joint innovation centers, Huawei is working on new technologies including sensors, data management and advances to its Kirin chipset that are designed to bring this type of functionality to the marketplace. Huawei is also complementing its own innovation by collaborating with industry-leading companies such as Leica, Dolby, Microsoft, Intel and Google.

Through these efforts, Huawei will continue to delight customers, challenge the industry, and build a Better Connected World.



QATAR AIRWAYS LAUNCHES INAUGURAL FLIGHT TO SOHAR

AIRLINE'S THIRD DESTINATION IN THE SULTANATE OF OMAN

DOHA: The first Qatar Airways non-stop flight from Doha to Sohar touched down yesterday at Sohar Airport, inaugurating the award-winning airline's newest destination in the Middle East, and its third destination in the Sultanate of Oman.

Qatar Airways Chief Commercial Officer, Ehab Amin, who travelled on board the inaugural flight, was greeted by His Excellency Ali bin Fahd Al-Hajri, Ambassador of Qatar in Oman, and officials from Oman Airports Management Company (OAMC), including Chief Operations Officer, David Wilson; General Manager Commercial Operations, Sheikh Samer Ahmed Al Nabhani; General Manager Operations, Ali Zaid Al-Balushi; General Manager Information & Communication Technology, Dr Moaman Mohammed Al-Busaidi and government officials of Al-Batinah Governorate.

Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive Akbar Al-Baker said: "We are delighted to add Sohar to our global route network. We launched services to the Sultanate of Oman nearly 17 years ago, and ever since, we have added additional frequencies on a yearly basis to accommodate demand for increased capacity to this charming country, known for its traditional culture and the warmth of the Omani people. Now passengers from Sohar will have the opportunity to experience our award-winning service, connecting them to a wide variety of popular summer holiday destinations."

Sohar is a city known both for its traditional Omani culture and beautiful beaches. As the Sultanate of Oman's largest city in the governorate of Northern Al-Batinah and the country's main shipping hub, this vibrant coastal city offers a range of tourist attractions and activities, in particular water sports such as diving, snorkelling and kite boarding. Shoppers will not want to miss the city's souq, which offers traditional Omani handicrafts as well as leather goods, ceramics, perfumes, herbs and honey.

Oman Airports Management Company, Chief Executive Officer, Sheikh Aiman bin Ahmed Al-Hosni said: "We are delighted to welcome Qatar Airways as a new strategic partner in



Sohar, which plays a significant role in the Sultanate of Oman's business model, and is home to many successful projects implemented by the Omani Government."

Sheikh Aiman bin Ahmed Al-Hosni added: "The new direct route between Doha and Sohar operated by Qatar Airways is a prestigious addition to the operations of Sohar Airport. We will ensure that all passengers have a seamless and convenient travel experience."

The airline will operate three weekly flights between Doha and Sohar, bringing the total capacity across Oman to 59 weekly flights. Qatar Airways first began service to the Sultanate of

Oman by launching flights to the capital, Muscat in 2000. In 2013, Salalah was added to the airline's growing network as the second destination in the Sultanate of Oman. The award-winning airline currently operates five daily flights between Doha and Muscat, and three daily return flights on the Doha-Salalah route.

The new route to Sohar will be served by an Airbus A320 aircraft, featuring 12 seats in Business Class and 132 seats in Economy Class.

The 2017 Airline of the Year, as awarded by Skytrax, has a host of exciting new destinations planned for the remainder of this year and 2018, including Canberra, Australia; Chiang

Mai, Thailand; Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; San Francisco, US; and Santiago, Chile, to name a few.

Qatar Airways has received a number of accolades this year, including Airline of the Year by the prestigious 2017 Skytrax World Airline Awards, which was held at the Paris Air Show. This is the fourth time that Qatar Airways has been given this global recognition as the world's best airline. In addition to being voted Best Airline by travellers from around the world, Qatar's national carrier also won a raft of other major awards at the ceremony, including Best Airline in the Middle East, World's Best Business Class and World's Best First Class Airline Lounge.

MEZZAN HOLDING REPORTS H1 2017 FINANCIAL RESULTS

KUWAIT: Mezzan Holding KSC, one of the largest manufacturers and distributors of food, beverage, FMCG and pharmaceutical products in the Gulf, yesterday announced the company's financial results for Q2 2017. The company reported KD50.3 million in Q2 revenue, and a Q2 net profit of KD2.0 million. The quarter's results bring Mezzan Holding's H1 revenue to KD107.8 million, down slightly by 0.6 percent from the same period last year, and bring H1 net profit to KD7.3 million, down 26.7 percent from the same period last year.

Mezzan Holding Executive Vice Chairman Mohammed Jassim Al-Wazzan said, "We are pleased to announce to our shareholders that this is our ninth quarter of consecutive profitability since our listing on Boursa Kuwait and despite the challenging dynamic of our region. Though we had a drop in profitability due to these factors, our balance sheet and cash positions continue to be strong and ahead of our regional peers while our diversified business model, which is very unique to Mezzan, has proven once again to be our biggest asset."

Mezzan Holding CEO Garrett Walsh said, "Q2 proved to be a quarter that had both opportunities and some internal and external challenges that were a drag on our profitability. Some of the challenges were addressed while others were beyond our control or influence. With that said, the defensive nature of our business model helped us maintain our revenue level and our continued profitability. Looking forward, we are working to offset external challenges by maximizing internal opportunities. New synergies are being identified in logistics to lessen the impact of similar situations in the quarters to come and to return to growing our profitability."

Financial Highlights Revenue:

Q2'17: KD50.3 million, down 4.8%, compared to Q2 2016



Garrett Walsh

H1'17: KD107.8 million, down 0.6% compared to H1 2016

EBITDA:

Q2'17: KD4.0 million, down 40.6% compared to Q2 2016

H1'17: KD11.3 million, a decrease of 18.5% compared to H1 2016

Net profit:

Q2'17: KD2.0 million, down 58.1%, compared to Q2 2016

H1'17: KD7.3 million, a decrease of 26.7% compared to H1 2016

H1 Financial Performance Review:

Food Business Line: The Food Business Line accounted for 72.7 percent of Group Revenue and comprises of Manufacturing and Distribution (52.8 percent), Catering (13.3 percent) and Services (6.6 percent). Revenue reached KD78.3 million, an increase of 1.2 percent compared with the same period in 2016.

Manufacturing and Distribution: H1 Revenue increased by 1.4 percent, with broad based growth across our key operating units. This

was largely driven by our food manufacturing divisions and the continued success of Danone products in our trading division.

Catering: H1 Revenue increased by 13.2 percent driven by contracts won in Q3 2016.

Services: H1 Revenue declined by 17.7 percent due to the temporary client-side disruption of business in Afghanistan and nature of the inconsistent tender flow resulting in periodic revenue fluctuations.

Non-Food Business Line: The Non-Food Business Line accounted for 27.3 percent of Group Revenue and comprises FMCG and Pharmaceuticals (24.7 percent of Group Revenue) and Industrials (2.6 percent of Group Revenue). Revenue reached KD29.4 million, a decrease of 4.7 percent compared with the same period in 2016.

FMCG and Pharmaceuticals: H1 Revenue decreased by 4.5 percent due to the continued slowdown in the tenders offered by the Ministry of Health, however the difference is gradually being compensated by other areas in our FMCG business.

Industrials: Revenue decreased by 6.9 percent driven by slowdown in the plastics manufacturing business.

Regional Business Highlights:

In Kuwait: H1 Revenue dropped by 1.2 percent, as the strong start from the beginning of the year was curbed by a soft Ramadan shopping period.

In UAE: H1 Revenue down by 5.0 percent, undermined by softer regional exports due to regional circumstances.

In Qatar: H1 Revenue grew by 2.3 percent.

In KSA: H1 Revenue grew by 921.8 percent as Mezzan continues to focus on gaining a foothold in the region's largest consumer market.

In Jordan: H1 Revenue decreased by 39.6 percent due to challenges to tender-driven business.

FROM ZERO-DAY EXPLOITS TO RAMPANT RANSOMWARE

DUBAI: The second quarter of 2017 saw sophisticated threat actors unleash a wealth of new and enhanced malicious tools, including three zero-day exploits and two unprecedented attacks: WannaCry and ExPetr. Expert analysis of the last two suggests the code may have escaped into the wild before it was fully ready, an unusual situation for well-resourced attackers. These and other trends are covered in Kaspersky Lab's latest quarterly threat intelligence summary.

The months from April to end June witnessed significant developments in targeted attacks by, among others, Russian-, English-, Korean-, and Chinese-speaking threat actors. These developments have far-reaching implications for business IT security: sophisticated malicious activity is happening continuously almost everywhere in the world, increasing the risk of companies and non-commercial organizations becoming collateral damage in cyber warfare.

The allegedly nation-state backed WannaCry and ExPetr destructive epidemics, whose victims included many companies and organizations across the globe, became the first but most likely not the last example of the new, dangerous trend.

Highlights in Q2, 2017 include:

Three Windows zero-day exploits being used in-the-wild by the Russian-speaking Sofacy and Turla threat actors. Sofacy, also known as APT28 or FancyBear, deployed the exploits against a range of European targets, including governmental and political organizations. The threat actor was also observed trying out some experimental tools, most notably against a French political party member in advance of the French national elections.

Gray Lambert - Kaspersky Lab has analyzed the most advanced toolkit to date for the Lamberts group, a highly sophisticated and complex, English-speaking cyberespionage family. Two new

related malware families were identified. The WannaCry attack on 12 May and the ExPetr attack on 27 June. While very different in nature and targets, both were surprisingly ineffective as 'ransomware'. For example, in the case of WannaCry, its rapid global spread and high profile put a spotlight on the attackers' Bitcoin ransom account and made it hard for them to cash out. This suggests that the real aim of the WannaCry attack was data destruction. Kaspersky Lab's experts discovered further ties between the Lazarus group and WannaCry. The pattern of destructive malware disguised as ransomware showed itself again in the ExPetr attack.

ExPetr, targeting organizations in the Ukraine, Russia and elsewhere in Europe also appeared to be ransomware but turned out to be purely destructive. The motive behind the ExPetr attacks remains a mystery. Kaspersky Lab's experts have established a low confidence link to the threat actor known as

Black Energy. "We have long maintained the importance of truly global threat intelligence to aid defenders of sensitive and critical networks. We continue to witness the development of overzealous attackers with no regard for the health of the Internet and those in vital institutions and businesses who rely on it on a daily basis. As cyberespionage, sabotage, and crime run rampant, it's all the more important for defenders to band together and share cutting-edge knowledge to better defend against all threats," said Juan Andres Guerrero-Saade, Senior Security Researcher, Global Research and Analysis Team, Kaspersky Lab.

The Q2 APT Trends report summarizes the findings of Kaspersky Lab's subscriber-only threat intelligence reports. During the second quarter of 2017, Kaspersky Lab's Global Research and Analysis Team created 23 private reports for subscribers, with Indicators of Compromise (IOC) data and YARA rules to assist in forensics and malware-hunting.

DISNEY TO LAUNCH STREAMING SERVICES FOR MOVIES, LIVE SPORTS

NEW YORK: With new streaming services in the works, Disney is trying to set itself up for a future that's largely been framed by Netflix: Providing the stuff you want to watch, when you want to watch it. The Magic Kingdom is launching its own streaming service for its central Disney and Pixar brands and another for live sports. That would allow it to bypass the cable companies it relies on - and Netflix - to charge consumers directly for access to its popular movies and sporting events.

"They're bringing the future forward. What they talked about were things that looked inevitable, at some point," said Pivotal Research Group analyst Brian Weiser. What's less clear is if Disney will be able to make big bucks from it, he said. This is important as the decline in cable

Kingdom's own app. That will include "Toy Story 4" and the sequel to the huge hit "Frozen." Older movies will be there too, as well as shows from the TV channels Disney Channel, Disney Junior and Disney XD, and original TV and films. That could be hugely attractive for families with young children in the US.

Disney is ending an exclusive earlier movie deal with Netflix, and the streaming giant's shares tumbled in after-hours trading. Netflix today has grown into an entertainment juggernaut in its own right, however, as it focuses more on its own exclusive programming. Netflix already seemed to be bracing for the potential loss of the Disney movie rights earlier this week when it announced its first-ever acquisition - the purchase of Millarworld, a comic book publish-

ing company that will develop films and kids shows based on its portfolio of character.

Sports

Disney had already said it would be launching a streaming ESPN service. It's not meant to compete with the company's TV channels. The sports service is coming in early 2018, a little later than previously announced, and will air baseball, hockey and soccer games, tennis matches and college sports through ESPN's popular mobile app. Notably, ESPN will not be streaming pro football or basketball, at least initially. Customers will also be able to buy fuller streaming packages from the baseball, hockey and soccer leagues, and watch them on the ESPN app.

"Ultimately, we envision this will become a dynamic sports marketplace that will grow and be increasingly customizable, allowing sports fans to pick and choose content that reflects their personal interests," Iger said on a conference call with analysts. Disney will have to be careful that it doesn't transfer too much sports programming from its TV channels to the app. Getting the balance wrong could upset cable companies and weigh on the price they pay Disney for ESPN, Weiser said.

The back end

To roll out its streaming services, The Walt Disney Co. will take majority control of BAMTech, a streaming arm of Major League Baseball spun off last year from Baseball Advanced Media, for \$1.58 billion. When the deal closes, Disney will own 75 percent of BAM Tech, up from the 33 percent stake it acquired for \$1 billion as part of an agreement announced last year. The acquisition and the new services will be "an entirely new growth strategy" for Disney, Iger said.

The new streaming services will likely "accelerate the erosion" of Disney's TV networks, especially if other major cable networks make similar moves, said Moody's analyst Neil Begley. But Iger argues that BAMTech gives Disney "optionality" if the cable ecosystem changes further, Iger said on a conference call with analysts Tuesday. If there's greater "erosion" - say, if more people drop cable bundles or choose cheaper bundles without key Disney channels - the company has more ways to get its entertainment directly to customers, Iger said.

He said there are no current plans to sell the Disney or ESPN TV channels directly to customers on the apps. But having a direct relationship with customers tells Disney exactly what they're watching, giving it powerful tools and information that could help feed decision-making and, on the sports side, sell advertising.—AP



NEW YORK: In this photo, The Walt Disney Co. logo appears on a screen above the floor of the New York Stock Exchange.—AP

households and the shift to smaller, cheaper bundles pressures the profitability of Disney's cable networks. Fewer subscribers and fewer viewers mean less money. In the nine months through July 1, cable networks' operating income fell 13 percent from the year before, to \$4.12 billion.

Kid stuff

Starting in 2019, the only subscription streaming service with new animated and live-action Disney and Pixar movies will be the Magic

Kingdom's own app. That will include "Toy Story 4" and the sequel to the huge hit "Frozen." Older movies will be there too, as well as shows from the TV channels Disney Channel, Disney Junior and Disney XD, and original TV and films. That could be hugely attractive for families with young children in the US.

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Disney might bring more of its properties - particularly its Marvel superheroes and the Star Wars franchise - under its wing, and could even offer them as separate streaming services. CEO Robert Iger said Disney is considering whether it should continue licensing Marvel and Star Wars movies to outside services like Netflix, move them into the Disney app or develop individual services for them. The Disney service will be available in "multiple markets" outside

the US as well, taking advantage of Disney's global name recognition.

Department of Homeland Security incident response data. The numbers may be imprecise because companies in key industries often don't report attacks for fear of diminished public perception. But attacks demanding ransom against all US institutions are spiraling higher.

Emerging threat

The FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center received 2,673 ransomware reports in the year ending last September nearly double from 2014. While manufacturers are increasingly prey to these cyber-stickups, it may just be because criminals are playing the odds and striking as many enterprises of all types as they can across a targeted region, said John Miller, who heads a team at cybersecurity firm FireEye that tracks money-driven online threats. Attackers "aren't necessarily going after manufacturing to the exclusion of other sectors or with a preference above other sectors. It's more that, 'OK, we're going to try to infect everybody in this country that we can,'" Miller said.—AP



NORTH CAROLINA: This undated photo provided by AW North Carolina shows production operations inside the company's Durham, North Carolina factory.—AP

TAKE DOWN: HACKERS LOOKING TO SHUT DOWN FACTORIES FOR PAY

DURHAM: The malware entered the North Carolina transmission plant's computer network via email last August, just as the criminals wanted, spreading like a virus and threatening to lock up the production line until the company paid a ransom. AW North Carolina stood to lose \$270,000 in revenue, plus wages for idled employees, for every hour the factory wasn't shipping its crucial auto parts to nine Toyota car and truck plants across North America, said John Peterson, the plant's information technology manager.

The company is just one of a growing number being hit by cyber-criminals looking for a payday. While online thieves have long targeted banks for digital holdups, today's just-in-time manufacturing sector is climbing toward the top of hackers' hit lists. Production lines that integrate computer-imaging, barcode scanners and measuring tolerances to a hair's width at multiple points are more vulnerable to malevolent outsiders. "These people who try to hack into your network know you have a set schedule. And they know hours are meaningful to what you're doing," Peterson said in an interview.

"There's only a day and a half of inventory in the entire supply chain. And so if we don't make our product in time, that means Toyota doesn't make their product in time, which means they don't have a car to sell on the lot that next day. It's that tight." He said that creates pressure on manufacturers to make the criminals go away by paying the sums demanded. "They may not know what that number is, but they know it's not zero. So what is that number? Where do you flinch?"

Hackers' lock

Last August at the 2,200-worker Durham transmission factory, the computer virus coursed through the plant's network, flooding machines with data and stopping production for about four hours, Peterson said. Data on some laptops was lost, but the malware was blocked by a firewall when it tried to exit the plant's network and put the hackers' lock on the



JAPAN GIVES WORLD-BEATING FIDGET SPINNER A WHIRL

FUJISAWA: One company in perfectionism-obsessed Japan is claiming it has developed a fidget spinner that whirles longer than any rival on the market — 12 minutes and counting. Most fidget spinners, the must-have toy for 2017, can only rotate on their own for a few minutes at most. But a subsidiary of precision machinery maker NSK set its sights on utilizing the company's ball bearings, used in space satellites and computer disks, to make the Rolls Royce of fidget spinners.

The gadget-billed as a stress reliever but banned in some schools as a distraction has a ball bearing in the center and is designed to effortlessly spin with the flick of a finger. "We're confident that ours is the longest spinner around," said Toshikazu Ishii, president of NSK Micro Precision. Put

to the test inside AFP's Tokyo bureau, the company's wheel-shaped Saturn Spinner whirled for 13 minutes and 35 seconds—although it took a few tries.

The secret is all in the design, Ishii says. The gadget, built at a pristine factory near Tokyo, has a heavy brass frame and a light aluminum ball bearing to increase centrifugal force. But they don't come cheap at 17,280 yen (\$157) apiece, making them the preserve of only the most eager and cash-rich fidgeters.

Most spinners cost around \$12 or less. Ishii hopes the pricey gadget will stimulate interest in the often overlooked world of ball bearings. "Hundreds of bearings are found in products all around us, but most people don't see them or pay much attention to them," he said.—AFP



FRENCH START-UP TAKES OFF WITH FLIGHT-SHARING APP

LONDON: A French start-up is reaching for the skies with a flight-sharing app, matching pilots with passengers looking for a low-cost way to take off in a private aircraft. "It's a great way to get on planes. It's quite a unique experience. It's something new," says Adam Nicholas, 27, at an airfield close to London. He is readying for his second trip with Wingly, a French firm connecting passengers and pilots for short flights, and the undisputed market leader in Europe with a community of more than 80,000 members.

In Nicholas' first experience he took his girlfriend on a surprise day trip to Le Touquet, across the Channel in France. "We flew there in the morning, had some lunch, had some wine and then flew back again in the evening," he says. This time the Londoner will be flown by pilot Somasekhara Pemmiyedy, 34, above the British capital aboard a Cessna 172 aircraft. Pemmiyedy has clocked up more than 290 hours since gaining his pilot's license in 2011.

Working in security at a London airport during the evenings, he flies for Wingly in the daytime as a way to add more flight hours which are vital to achieving his ambition of working for an airline. Pemmiyedy describes the set-up as a "win-win situation", as he prepares an eager Nicholas with the details of the altitude, speed and flight path they are about to take. But not before the pilot checks out another flight request on his phone, using the Wingly app which allows clients to contact pilots directly.

"A month ago, I received a request for a flight with one-hour notice and I managed to fly," says Pemmiyedy. "The guy was very lucky as it was my day off, so I could fly the couple to celebrate their anniversary in

France." After the technical checks have been meticulously carried out, Pemmiyedy and his passenger board the small aircraft which is owned by a flying club. The duo return an hour later after their flight over the city, both smiling.

Leisure and discovery

Adopting a low-cost approach, Wingly co-founder Emeric de Waziers says he wants to "demonstrate that private aviation is accessible" and should not be restricted to a privileged few. Himself a pilot, Waziers explains that the flight-sharing model "allows you to fly cheaper and enjoy this passion without money being an obstacle". Rather than compete with commercial airlines or other modes of transport, he explains the focus is on "leisure and discovery" through picking destinations which are usually hard to reach.

Wingly flights only cover short distances and, given the size of the aircraft used, can be cancelled at short-notice due to poor weather conditions. The London to Le Touquet route is among the most popular—costing around £100 (\$133, 112 euros) per person each way—along with Paris to French islands Belle Ile or Ile d'Yeu. Rather than be likened to car service Uber, Waziers prefers to be the "BlaBlaCar of the skies" because Wingly allows passengers to divide the costs of a flight. While flight-sharing is proving popular in the UK and Germany, it has been slower to take off in France owing to restrictions on short flights by the civil aviation authority (DGAC), which was lifted in June. Between the three countries over 80,000 people have registered with Wingly, including 6,000 pilots, and each month the community is growing by 20 percent.—AFP

MOTORHEAD'S 'LEMMY' HAS DINO CROC NAMED AFTER HIM

PARIS: A team of music-mad scientists unveiled an extinct, sea-dwelling crocodile from the Jurassic period yesterday, which they named in honor of Motorhead lead singer Ian "Lemmy" Kilmister who died in 2015. "Lemmysuchus"—Latin for Lemmy's crocodile—was about 5.8 meters long and had a skull of more than a meter—similar to a modern-day saltwater crocodile to which it is only distantly related. "It would have been one of the largest coastal predators of its time," researchers from the Natural History Museum said in a statement.

"The teeth were large and blunt, perfect for crushing prey such as turtles." Lemmy's croc was dug up at Peterborough in England in the early 20th century. But it was recently re-examined and found to have been incorrectly lumped with other

sea crocodiles from the area. Given that it belonged to a unique group, the creature "needed a new scientific name," said the statement. "Natural History Museum curator Lorna Steel was still mourning the demise of her favorite band, and suggested that it should be named after her musical hero."

"Although Lemmy passed away at the end of 2015, we'd like to think that he would have raised a glass to Lemmysuchus, one of the nastiest sea creatures ever to have inhabited the Earth," the statement quoted Steel as saying. Lemmy, a chain-smoker who boasted of drinking a bottle of Jack Daniel's a day and of sleeping with more than 1,000 women, died in December 2015 at the age of 70 in Los Angeles. He formed Motorhead, a metal band, in 1975. —AFP



PARIS: An artist's rendering of a Lemmysuchus, a Jurassic-era sea-dwelling crocodile. —AFP

LASSA FEVER KILLS TWO IN LAGOS

LAGOS: Two people in Lagos have died and a hundred medical workers have been placed under observation after a flare-up of Lassa fever, a cousin of the deadly Ebola virus, officials said yesterday. Lagos University Teaching Hospital said the two died this week after being admitted for treatment. "Each of these two patients presented very late and died in spite of efforts to salvage them," Professor Chris Bode, the hospital's chief medical director, said.

The first case was a 39-year-old pregnant woman with a bleeding disorder who died after stillbirth, he said. A post-mortem examination had been conducted before her Lassa fever status was confirmed. "No less than 100 different hospital workers exposed to this index case are currently being monitored," he said. He said a doctor who took part in the autopsy and was confirmed with the disease, was responding to treatment. Bode said two other suspected cases brought to the hospital were awaiting the results of tests. He

urged health workers to maintain "a heightened level of alert" and observe every precaution in handling suspected cases. Lassa fever, also known as Lassa hemorrhagic fever, belongs to the same family as Marburg and Ebola, two deadly viruses that lead to infections with fever, vomiting and in worse case scenarios, hemorrhagic bleeding. Its name is from the town of Lassa in northern Nigeria where it was first identified in 1969.

More than 100 people were killed last year in one of the nation's worst outbreaks of the disease, affecting 14 of the 36 states, including Lagos and the capital Abuja. The virus is spread through contact with food or household items contaminated with rats' urine or faeces or after coming in direct contact with the bodily fluids of an infected person. Nigeria's Centre for Disease Control (CDC) in Abuja confirmed the outbreak. "We have put health workers on the alert and are working with the authorities in Lagos to contain its spread," an official said.—AFP

NETHERLANDS FOUND INSECTICIDE IN EGGS

BRUSSELS: Belgium's agriculture minister said yesterday that the Netherlands detected a potentially harmful insecticide in eggs in November last year, nine months before the pan-European scandal became public. Minister Denis Ducarme told a Belgian parliamentary hearing on the crisis that the Belgian food safety agency obtained an internal Dutch document that "reports the observation of the presence of fipronil in Dutch eggs at the end of November 2016."

"There was in relation to that no official communication from the Netherlands," Ducarme said, adding he has been in contact with his colleagues in the neighboring country for an explanation. The scare has hit major egg exporter the Netherlands

the hardest, where the scandal erupted on August 1 and the Dutch authorities ordered eggs pulled from supermarket shelves and urged shoppers to throw theirs away. Dutch authorities have temporarily closed 138 poultry farms and may cull millions of chickens.

In addition to the Netherlands, supermarkets in Germany, Belgium, Sweden and Switzerland have since pulled millions of eggs from the shelves. The problem is believed to stem from a substance used by a Dutch company, Chickfriend, that farmers in the Netherlands and Belgium say they hired to treat their chickens. A lawyer for a Belgian company, Poultry-Vision, says the firm sold it to Chickfriend but has not said where it got the substance. —AFP



NEW YORK: This file photo shows visitors to the American Museum of Natural History examining a replica of a 122-foot-long dinosaur on display at the American Museum of Natural History in New York. —AP

MEET THE NEW HEAVYWEIGHT DINOSAUR CHAMPION: PATAGOTITAN

WASHINGTON: A study proclaims a newly named species the heavyweight champion of all dinosaurs, making the scary Tyrannosaurus rex look like a munchkin. At 76 tons, the plant-eating behemoth was as heavy as a space shuttle. The dinosaur's fossils were found in southern Argentina in 2012. Researchers who examined and dated them said the long-necked creature was the biggest of a group of large dinosaurs called titanosaurs.

"There was one small part of the family that went crazy on size," said Diego Pol of the Egidio Feruglio paleontology museum in Argentina, co-author of the study published Tuesday in the journal Proceedings of the Royal Society B. The researchers named the dinosaur Patagotitan mayorum after the Patagonia region where it was found and the Greek word titan, which means large. The second name honors a ranch family that hosted the researchers.

Six fossils of the species were studied and dated to about 100 million years ago, based on ash found around them, Pol said. The dinosaur averaged 122 feet long and was nearly 20 feet high at the shoulder. A cast of the dinosaur's skeleton is already on display at the American Museum of Natural History. It's so big that the dinosaur's head sticks out into a hallway at the New York museum. Legendary T. rex and other meat-eaters "look like dwarfs when you put them against one of these giant titanosaurs," Pol said. "It's like when you put an elephant by a lion."

Scientists have known titanosaurs for a while, but this is a new species and even a new genus, which is a larger grouping, Pol said. Another titanosaur called Argentinosaurus was previously thought to be the largest. "I don't think they were scary at all," Pol said. "They were probably massive big slow-moving animals." "Getting up. Walking

around. Trying to run. It's really challenging for large animals," he said. The big question is how did these dinosaurs get so big, Pol said. Researchers are still studying it, but said it probably has to do with an explosion of flowering plants at the time.

Along with a forest, it was like an all-you-can-eat buffet for these dinosaurs and they just got bigger. "It's hard to argue this isn't a big deal when it concerns the (probable) largest land animal ever discovered," University of Maryland paleontologist Thomas Holtz, who wasn't part of the study, said in an email. Kristi Curry Rodgers, a paleontologist at Macalester College who wasn't part of the study, praised the work as important. She said the fact that Patagotitan's bones show signs that they haven't completed their growth "means that there are even bigger dinosaurs out there to discover." —AP



CALIFORNIA: In this photo provided by the Aquarium of the Pacific, a baby penguin swims during its public debut at the June Keyes Penguin Habitat at the Aquarium of the Pacific in Long Beach, California. —AP

BABY PENGUIN DEBUTS AT AQUARIUM OF THE PACIFIC

LONG BEACH, California: A baby Magellanic penguin has made its public debut at Southern California's Aquarium of the Pacific. The chick waddled out in front of news media Tuesday after spending weeks in a behind-the-scenes nursery at the Long Beach aquarium. The chick hatched in May as the latest offspring of parents Roxy and Floyd and sibling to Skipper, Lily, Heidi and Anderson. Its sex has yet to be determined. Magellanic penguins are native to the coasts of Argentina and Chile. Incubation takes 38 to 43 days before hatching. Initially, chicks are covered with a downy plumage that is not watertight. During a process called fledging the down is replaced by watertight juvenile feathers. —AP

CLINIC PAGE



Kuwait Times
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Dr. Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem
د. فهد علي المخيزيم

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

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



LOYAC CONCLUDES ITS SUMMER PROGRAM

Loyac youngsters concluded their summer program for the age group of 5 to 12 years during a ceremony at Al-Shaheed Park in the presence of Loyac Board Member Futooh Al-Dalali, and director of voluntary programs department Ninar Al-Qamis, as well as parents.



Eng. Jadaan Ghannam Al-Enezi returned home with his mother who was treated abroad. Chairman of Al-Wiqa Ghays voluntary team Dr. Musaed Al-Enezi and Eng. Waleed Al-Enezi received them at the airport along with family and friends.

BEC ANNOUNCES ITS THIRD DRAW WINNER

BEC Exchange Company (BEC), one of Kuwait's leading Money Transfer and Foreign Exchange Company, yesterday announced its 3rd draw winner of its latest 'BEC BONANZA' campaign. The lucky winner, Muhammad Naveed from Pakistan was presented with the prize of Chery E5 by Najem Budastoor, Chairman Budastoor Group in the presence of BEC's General Manager Mathews Varughese, Arshad Mirza, GM Budastoor Group and Rexcy Williams, Brand Manager Chery. Fronted by the company's Brand Ambassador BOB, the BEC Buddy, the campaign will consist of 5 prize draws taking place on the 18th June, 9th and 27th July, 16th August and 5th September 2017 where one lucky customer will win a new Chery E5 and twenty lucky customers will win 20 gold coins of 4 grams on each draw.

Running from the 28th May to 5th September 2017, the campaign will be open to all customers that make any money transfer or currency exchange transaction from one of its 40+ branches, plus customers who send money online through BEC's secure online money transfer service 'BEC Online' will also be eligible to take part. Customers will be entered into the draw for the transactions made between each draw dates throughout the campaign period. Commenting on his win, Muhammad Naveed a regular BEC customer said, "I am very delighted to win this car and thrilled to win through BEC from whom I have been sending money from many years and I will try my luck again by sending money for their remaining two draws". Mathews Varghese, added "At BEC we are committed to continually rewarding

our loyal customers as well as attracting new customers to BEC to experience our customer service and quality product offering, which differentiates us from our competitors and we are delighted to have campaigns which benefits our loyal customers". Established in 1992, BEC specializes in sending money worldwide, safely and efficiently, at competitive rates. It is parented by BFC Group Holdings, the leading remittance and foreign exchange group in the region which has over 100 branches across Bahrain, Kuwait, the UK, India and Malaysia. BEC has a global reach covering over 200 countries, through its own money transfer product - EzRemit and its partnership with MoneyGram an international money transfer company and offers customers unparalleled remittance and foreign exchange products and services.



(Above) Contemporary Japan magazine Editor Mujahid Iqbal, Ambassador of Japan to Kuwait Takashi Ashiki and Irfan Nagra. (Below) Third Secretary Takatera, Iqbal, Cultural Attache Shinji Banani, Nagra and Second Secretary Sako. The Japanese Ambassador to Kuwait Takashi Ashiki held a reception at his residence on August 8, 2017 to mark the latest issue of Contemporary Japan, a magazine published annually in cooperation with the Japanese Embassy promoting business and tourism to Japan among Kuwaiti businessmen and youth. The ambassador promised to support the upcoming 10th anniversary issue of Contemporary Japan and discussed holding an award ceremony to recognize companies and individuals for their support to Japan.

IDUKKI ASSOCIATION TO HOLD ONAM-EID CELEBRATION



A grand celebration of Onam and Eid called 'Onanilavu' of Idukki Association - Kuwait will be held on Sep 8, 2017 at Co-op Community Auditorium, Abbassya from 9.30 am onwards. IAK 2nd Humanitarian award for social service will be presented in the celebration. Prof Gopinath Muthukad and star singer fame Jins Gopinath will perform in the program. The flyer of the celebration was released on Aug 06, 2017 at a function in Mangaf. The flyer was released by Thankachan and the coupon was released

by Afsal Ghan. President Jeral Jose addressed the audience. Advisory chairman Joy Mundakkattu felicitated and Jackson Chacko, General Secretary, Jose Thomas, Treasurer, Tom Edayody, Vice President, Shamla Biju, Secretary, Emil Mathew, Acting J Treasurer, Executive Members - Roy Joseph, Biju Joseph, Nix Baby, Binoy M K AB Members - Georgy Mathew, Shaju Paul and family, Dias Joseph, N. S Jayakumar and family, Sajeev Narayanan and Abraham Kuruvila were also present during the ceremony.



AM MOVIES ACTION

00:05 Vikingdom
02:00 Kingsglave: Final Fantasy XV
03:55 Jurassic World
06:00 Escape
07:25 Black Rose
08:50 Kingsglave: Final Fantasy XV
10:50 Age Of Tomorrow
12:25 Escape
13:50 Black Rose
15:20 Echo Effect
16:50 Tracers
18:25 Age Of Tomorrow
20:00 Fast & Furious 7
22:20 The Transporter: Refueled



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



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



00:00 Escaping Polygamy
01:00 Celebrity Ghost Stories
02:00 My Haunted House
03:00 Psychic Kids: Children Of The Paranormal
04:00 Escaping Polygamy
05:00 Celebrity Ghost Stories
06:00 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 Homicide Hunter
23:00 The First 48



00:05 Inside Amy Schumer
00:30 Inside Amy Schumer
00:55 Broad City
01:20 Broad City
01:45 Another Period
02:10 Chappelle's Show
02:35 Important Things With Demetri Martin
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 Catch A Contractor
06:20 Framework
07:15 Disorderly Conduct: Video On Patrol
08:05 Disaster Date
08:30 Impractical Jokers
08:55 Ridiculousness
09:20 Key And Peele
09:45 Lip Sync Battle
10:10 Ridiculousness
10:35 Disaster Date
11:00 Urban Tarzan
11:25 Tattoo Disasters
11:50 Disaster Date
12:15 Catch A Contractor
13:05 Disorderly Conduct: Video On Patrol
13:55 Sweat Inc.
14:45 Lip Sync Battle
15:10 Lip Sync Battle
15:35 Ridiculousness
16:00 Impractical Jokers
16:30 Disaster Date
16:55 Disaster Date

17:25 Ridiculousness
17:50 Ridiculousness Arabia
18:15 Impractical Jokers
18:39 Key And Peele
19:03 Ridiculousness Arabia
19:27 Ridiculousness Arabia
19:50 Disaster Date
20:13 Lip Sync Battle 'Shorties'
21:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
21:30 Another Period
22:00 IdiotSitter
22:25 Kroll Show
22:50 John Oliver's New York Stand Up Show
23:15 John Oliver's New York Stand Up Show
23:40 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah



00:30 Lost & Found With Mike & Jesse
01:20 World's Toughest Expeditions With James Cracknell
02:10 Kings Of The Wild
03:00 Pawn Queens
03:25 Pawn Queens
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 Dogs/Cats/Pets 101
12:00 Finding Bigfoot
12:50 How It's Made
13:15 How It's Made
13:40 Lost & Found With Mike & Jesse
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 Weather Top Tens
17:50 Engineering Hurricanes
18:40 Mythbusters
19:30 How It's Made
19:55 How It's Made
20:20 Guinness World Records Smashed UK
21:10 Weather Top Tens
22:00 Engineering Hurricanes
22:50 Finding Bigfoot
23:40 Guinness World Records Smashed UK



00:30 Vanity Fair Confidential
01:20 Evil Online
02:10 Murder Comes To Town
03:00 Grave Secrets
03:48 Southern Fried Homicide
04:36 Southern Fried Homicide
05:24 Southern Fried Homicide
06:12 Southern Fried Homicide
07:00 Beauty Queen Murders
07:50 Beauty Queen Murders
08:40 Beauty Queen Murders
09:30 Beauty Queen Murders
10:20 The Locator
10:45 The Locator
11:00 Women In Prison
12:00 Southern Fried Homicide
12:50 Southern Fried Homicide
13:40 Southern Fried Homicide
14:30 Southern Fried Homicide
15:20 The Locator
15:45 The Locator
16:10 Evil Online
17:00 Id Kill For You
17:50 Id Kill For You
18:40 Id Kill For You
19:30 Id Kill For You
20:20 On The Case With Paula Zahn
21:10 Murder Chose Me
22:00 Murder Comes To Town
22:50 The Detectives Club: New Orleans
23:40 Evil Online

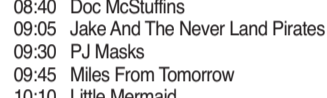


00:00 Hank Zipzer
00:25 Alex & Co.
00:45 The Hive
00:50 Evermoor Chronicles
01:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
01:40 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
02:05 Binny And The Ghost
02:30 Binny And The Ghost
02:55 Hank Zipzer
03:15 The Hive
03:20 Hank Zipzer
03:45 Alex & Co.
04:10 Alex & Co.
04:35 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 Lolirock
07:20 Elena Of Avalor
07:45 Bunk'd
08:10 Stuck In The Middle
08:35 Bizaardvark
09:00 Austin & Ally
09:25 Austin & Ally
09:50 Good Luck Charlie
10:15 Good Luck Charlie
10:40 Alex & Co.
11:05 Lolirock
11:30 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
11:55 Disney Mickey Mouse
12:00 Welcome To The Ronks
12:15 Hank Zipzer
12:40 Dog With A Blog
13:05 Star Darlings
13:10 Good Luck Charlie
13:35 Austin & Ally
14:00 Jessie
14:25 Lolirock
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
19:45 Mako Mermaids
20:10 Jessie
20:35 Cracked

20:40 Bizaardvark
21:05 Austin & Ally
21:30 Stuck In The Middle
21:45 Tsum Tsum Shorts
22:00 Bunk'd
22:25 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
22:50 Lolirock
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 Loopdidoo
01:20 Henry Hugglemonster
01:35 Calimero
01:50 Zou
02:05 Art Attack
02:30 The Hive
02:40 Loopdidoo
02:55 Henry Hugglemonster
03:10 Art Attack
03:35 Loopdidoo
03:50 Calimero
04:05 Art Attack
04:40 Zou
05:00 Art Attack
05:30 Henry Hugglemonster
05:45 Loopdidoo
06:00 Zou
06:15 Calimero
06:30 Loopdidoo
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 Doc McStuffins
09:05 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
09:30 PJ Masks
09:45 Miles From Tomorrow
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 Unrumbungleable
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 Loopdidoo



00:00 Chopped
01:00 The Great Food Truck Race
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 Siba's Table: Fast Feasts
13:30 Siba's Table: Fast Feasts
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 Rev Run's Sunday Suppers
20:30 Rev Run's Sunday Suppers
21:00 Smollett Eats
21:30 Smollett Eats
22:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
22:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
23:00 Chopped



00:20 Wheeler Dealers
01:05 Blowing Up History
01:50 Strip The City
02:35 Made By Destruction
02:57 Made By Destruction
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 Blowing Up History
10:55 Strip The City
11:40 Made By Destruction
12:02 Made By Destruction
12:25 Gold Rush
13:55 Deadliest Catch
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 Ocean Warriors
21:50 How Do They Do It?
22:15 How Do They Do It?
22:40 Impossible Engineering
23:30 Fast N' Loud



06:00 Milo Murphy's Law
06:25 Supa Strikas
06:50 Mech-X4
07:15 Right Now Kapow
07:40 Gravity Falls
08:05 Marvel's Ant-Man
08:10 K.C. Undercover
08:35 Milo Murphy's Law
09:00 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
09:25 Supa Strikas
09:50 Supa Strikas
10:20 Kickin' It
10:45 Kickin' It
11:10 Mighty Med
11:35 Mighty Med
12:00 Lab Rats: Bionic Island
12:30 Lab Rats: Bionic Island
12:55 K.C. Undercover
13:20 K.C. Undercover
13:45 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
14:10 Disney Mickey Mouse
14:15 Future-Worm!
14:40 Kirby Buckets
15:05 Lab Rats
15:30 Walk The Prank
15:55 Right Now Kapow
16:25 K.C. Undercover
16:50 Kirby Buckets
17:15 Mech-X4
17:40 Gravity Falls
18:05 Disney Mickey Mouse
18:10 Milo Murphy's Law
18:35 Disney11
19:00 Disney11
19:25 K.C. Undercover
19:50 Marvel's Ant-Man
19:55 Milo Murphy's Law
20:20 Mech-X4
20:45 Kirby Buckets
21:10 Walk The Prank

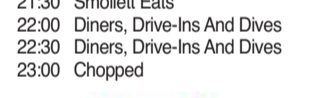
21:35 Marvel's Ant-Man
21:50 Disney Mickey Mouse
21:45 Lab Rats: Bionic Island
22:10 Lab Rats: Bionic Island
22:35 Phineas And Ferb
Programmes Start At 6:00am KSA



00:50 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
01:50 El News
02:50 Celebrity Style Story
03:20 Celebrity Style Story
03:50 Botched By Nature
04:40 Botched By Nature
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 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
09:55 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
10:50 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
11:45 Celebrity Style Story
12:15 Botched
13:10 Botched
14:05 Botched
15:00 El News: Daily Pop
15:55 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
16:45 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
17:35 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
18:30 Celebrity Style Story
19:00 El News
20:00 WAGs Miami
22:00 WAGs Miami
23:50 Famously Single



00:00 Chopped
01:00 The Great Food Truck Race
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 Siba's Table: Fast Feasts
13:30 Siba's Table: Fast Feasts
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 Rev Run's Sunday Suppers
20:30 Rev Run's Sunday Suppers
21:00 Smollett Eats
21:30 Smollett Eats
22:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
22:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
23:00 Chopped



00:00 Don't Tell The Bride
01:00 Emmerdale
01:30 Emmerdale
02:00 Coronation Street
02:30 Masterpiece With Alan Titchmarsh
03:25 This Is England '90
04:20 Lewis
05:15 The Queen's Worst Year
06:05 Don't Tell The Bride
07:05 Masterpiece With Alan Titchmarsh
08:00 This Is England '90
09:00 Lewis
10:00 The Queen's Worst Year
10:50 Don't Tell The Bride
11:50 Masterpiece With Alan Titchmarsh
12:45 Emmerdale
13:15 Coronation Street
13:45 Coronation Street
14:10 Don't Tell The Bride
15:10 Masterpiece With Alan Titchmarsh
16:00 I'm A Celebrity...Get Me Out Of Here!
17:15 Catchphrase
17:50 Autopsy: The Last Hours Of...
18:45 Emmerdale
19:15 Coronation Street
19:45 Coronation Street
20:10 Masterpiece With Alan Titchmarsh
21:00 I'm A Celebrity...Get Me Out Of Here!
22:15 Catchphrase
22:50 Emmerdale
23:15 Coronation Street
23:35 Coronation Street



00:00 Ancient Discoveries
01:00 Engineering An Empire
02:00 Missing In Alaska
02:50 Ancient Aliens
03:40 True Monsters
04:30 Million Dollar Genius
05:20 Ancient Discoveries
06:10 The Universe
07:00 Engineering An Empire
08:00 Missing In Alaska
09:00 Ancient Aliens
10:00 Monster Quest
11:00 The Universe
12:00 Ancient Discoveries
13:00 Engineering An Empire
14:00 Missing In Alaska
15:00 Ancient Aliens
16:00 Monster Quest
17:00 The Universe
18:00 Ancient Discoveries
19:00 Engineering An Empire
20:00 Missing In Alaska
21:00 Ancient Aliens
22:00 Blood And Glory: The Civil War In Color
23:00 Million Dollar Genius

06:00 Lost In Transmission
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 Miami
09:45 Storage Wars Miami
10:10 American Pickers
11:00 Alone
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 Lost In Transmission
16:00 Storage Wars Miami
16:25 Storage Wars Miami
16:50 Pawn Stars
17:15 Pawn Stars
17:40 Counting Cars
18:05 Counting Cars
19:20 Forged In Fire
19:20 Mountain Men
20:10 American Pickers
21:00 Football: A Brief History By Alfie Allen
21:25 Lost Worlds
22:40 Outlaw Chronicles: Hells Angels
23:30 American Pickers



00:45 Testing The Menu With Nic Watt
01:10 The Food Files
01:40 Island Hunter
02:35 Eat Street
03:00 Eat Street
03:30 The Food Files
03:55 The Food Files
04:25 Food Lover's Guide To The Planet
04:50 Fish Of The Day
05:20 Sinful Sweets
05:45 Sinful Sweets
06:15 Living Free With Kimi Werner
07:10 Island Hunter
08:05 Eat Street
08:30 Eat Street
09:00 The Food Files
09:25 The Food Files
09:55 Food Lover's Guide To The Planet
10:20 Fish Of The Day
10:50 Sinful Sweets
11:15 Sinful Sweets
11:45 Living Free With Kimi Werner
12:40 Taste Of Tropic: Taiwan
13:35 Eat Street
14:00 Eat Street
14:30 The Food Files
14:55 The Food Files
15:25 Poh & Co.
15:50 Fish Of The Day
16:20 Sinful Sweets
16:45 Sinful Sweets
17:15 Living Free With Kimi Werner
18:10 Fearless Chef
19:00 Poh & Co.
19:30 Fish Of The Day
20:00 Sinful Sweets
20:30 Sinful Sweets
21:00 Living Free With Kimi Werner
22:00 Fearless Chef
22:55 Taste Of Tropic: Taiwan
23:50 Eat Street



00:10 Surgery Ship
01:00 Diana: In Her Own Words
03:00 Nazi Megastructures
04:00 Surgery Ship
05:00 Generals At War
06:00 Outsiders: Living Off The Edge
07:00 World's Most Extreme
08:00 King Fishers
09:00 Generals At War
10:00 Supercar Megabuild
11:00 Big Fix Alaska
12:00 Nazi Megastructures
13:00 Highway Thru Hell
14:00 King Fishers
15:00 Megastructures
16:00 Supercar Megabuild
17:00 Big Fix Alaska
18:00 Locked Up Abroad
19:00 Megastructures
20:00 Supercar Megabuild
20:50 Big Fix Alaska
21:40 Locked Up Abroad
22:30 Megastructures
23:20 King Fishers



00:20 Amazonia's Giant Jaws
01:10 Monster Fish
02:00 Super Pride
02:50 Spine Chillers: Scorpions
03:45 World's Weirdest Creepy Cures
04:40 Unlikely Animal Friends
05:35 Super Pride
06:30 Spine Chillers: Scorpions
07:25 World's Weirdest Creepy Cures
08:20 Unlikely Animal Friends
09:15 Dr. K's Exotic Animal 2.5
10:10 World's Deadliest
11:05 Snakes In The City
12:00 Shark Island
12:55 Attack Of The Big Cats
13:50 Spine Chillers: Vampire Bats
14:45 When Sharks Attack Compilations
15:40 Unlikely Animal Friends
16:35 Dr. K's Exotic Animal 2.5
17:30 World's Deadliest
18:25 When Sharks Attack Compilations
19:20 Attack Of The Big Cats
20:10 Unlikely Animal Friends
21:00 Dr. K's Exotic Animal 2.5
21:50 World's Deadliest
22:40 When Sharks Attack Compilations
23:30 Shark Island

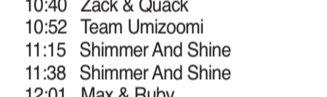


00:12 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
00:36 Rabbids Invasion
01:00 Rabbids Invasion
01:24 Sanjay And Craig
01:48 Sanjay And Craig
02:12 Winx Club
02:36 Winx Club
03:00 Harvey Beaks
03:24 Harvey Beaks
03:48 The Loud House
04:12 The Loud House
04:36 Breadwinners
05:00 Breadwinners
05:24 Get Blake
05:48 SpongeBob 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
21:00 The Loud House
21:24 Sanjay And Craig
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
00:25 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
01:40 Zack & Quack
02:02 Team Umizoomi
02:24 Olive The Ostrich
02:29 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
04:06 Nella The Princess Knight
04:30 Shimmer And Shine
04:53 Dora And Friends
05:16 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
07:21 Bubble Guppies
07:44 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
09:22 Paw Patrol
09:45 Rusty Rivets
09:57 Bubble Guppies
10:20 Fresh Beat Band Of Spies
10:40 Zack & Quack
10:52 Team Umizoomi
11:15 Shimmer And Shine
11:38 Shimmer And Shine
12:01 Max & Ruby
12:25 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
12:36 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
12:47 The Day Henry Met
12:52 The Day Henry Met
12:57 Blaze And The Monster Machines
13:19 Blaze And The Monster Machines
13:41 Zack & Quack
14:03 Team Umizoomi
14:25 Olive The Ostrich
14:30 Olive The Ostrich
14:35 Paw Patrol
14:58 Little Charmers
15:10 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
15:22 Dora The Explorer
15:44 Max & Ruby
16:07 Nella The Princess Knight
16:31 Shimmer And Shine
16:54 Dora And Friends
17:17 Zack & Quack
17:29 The Day Henry Met
17:34 The Day Henry Met
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20:53 Nella The Princess Knight
21:15 The Day Henry Met
21:22 Paw Patrol
21:45 Rusty Rivets
21:57 Bubble Guppies
22:20 Fresh Beat Band Of Spies
22:40 Zack & Quack
22:52 Team Umizoomi
23:15 Shimmer And Shine
23:38 Shimmer And Shine



00:10 Surgery Ship
01:00 Diana: In Her Own Words
03:00 Nazi Megastructures
04:00 Surgery Ship
05:00 Generals At War
06:00 Outsiders: Living Off The Edge
07:00 World's Most Extreme
08:00 King Fishers
09:00 Generals At War
10:00 Supercar Megabuild
11:00 Big Fix Alaska
12:00 Nazi Megastructures
13:00 Highway Thru Hell
14:00 King Fishers
15:00 Megastructures
16:00 Supercar Megabuild
17:00 Big Fix Alaska
18:00 Locked Up Abroad
19:00 Megastructures
20:00 Supercar Megabuild
20:50 Big Fix Alaska
21:40 Locked Up Abroad
22:30 Megastructures
23:20 King Fishers



00:25 Little Women
02:25 Underdog
03:50 Bark Ranger
05:15 Santa's Little Helper
06:55 Little Women
09:00 Underdog
10:30 Brother Bear
12:00 Bark Ranger
13:30 Tarzan
15:00 Finding Nemo
16:45 Secretariat
18:55 The Game Plan
20:55 Pirates Of The Caribbean 2: Dead Man's Chest
23:30 Finding Nemo



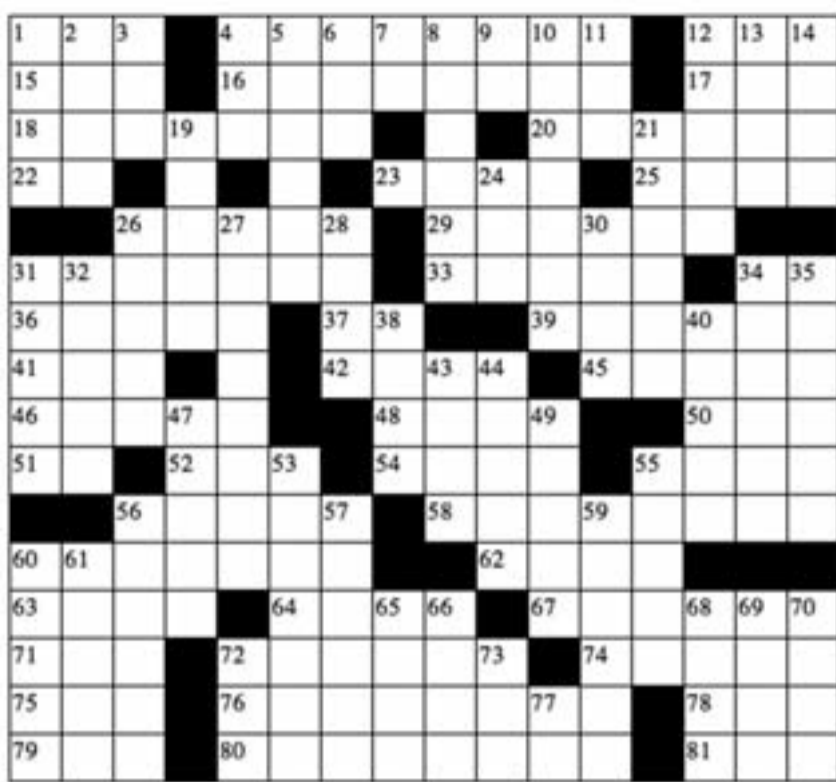
01:05 A Short History Of Decay
02:40 Lovelick
04:10 My Bakery In Brooklyn
05:55 Ricki And The Flash
07:40 Once Upon A Crime
09:15 Lovelick
10:45 My Bakery In Brooklyn
12:30 Once Upon A Crime
14:10 Fierce Creatures
15:50 Mr. Deeds
17:30 Other Plans
19:00 Love, Rosie
20:45 Baby, Baby, Baby
22:15 The Bronze



01:35 Child Of God
03:20 Lawrence Of Arabia
06:55 The Joy Luck Club
09:15 Oliver's Deal

10:55 Boychoir
12:40 The Joy Luck Club
15:00 Every Thing Will Be Fine
17:00 Fast Girls
18:35 Rushmore
20:10 Some Like It Hot
22:10

CROSSWORD 1682



ACROSS

1. A vinyl polymer used especially in paints or adhesives.
4. A dicotyledonous genus of the family Ericaceae.
12. A sweetened beverage of diluted fruit juice.
15. Relating to or characteristic of or occurring in the air.
16. Red Asian weaverbirds often kept as cage birds.
17. A boy or man.
18. Asiatic plant grown for its cluster of edible white stalks with dark green leaves.
20. A small smooth rounded rock.
22. A silvery ductile metallic element found primarily in bauxite.
23. A flat mass of ice (smaller than an ice field) floating at sea.
25. (in Gnosticism) A divine power or nature emanating from the Supreme Being and playing various roles in the operation of the universe.
29. Animal food for browsing or grazing.
31. A word or phrase spelled by rearranging the letters of another word or phrase.
33. Goddess of fate.
36. A member of a North American Indian people of southeastern California and northwestern Mexico.
37. A highly unstable radioactive element (the heaviest of the halogen series).
39. Covered with scabs.
41. (Irish) Mother of the ancient Irish gods.
42. A pilgrimage to Mecca.
44. A city in southern Turkey on the Seyhan River.
46. Found along western Atlantic coast.
48. Crowd or pack to capacity.
50. Someone who is morally reprehensible.
51. A state in northwestern North America.
52. An association of countries in the western hemisphere.
54. The basic unit of money in Bangladesh.
58. Of or relating to the language of Germans.
60. The title of the ancient Egyptian kings.
62. Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
63. Set down according to a plan.
64. Affected manners intended to impress others.
67. Characteristic of or relating to winter.
71. Thickening of tissue in the motor tracts of the lateral columns and anterior horns of the spinal cord.
74. United States abstract expressionist painter (1910-1962).
75. An inflammatory disease of connective tissue with variable features including fever and weakness and fatigability and joint pains and skin lesions on the face or neck or arms.
76. Italian painter and sculptor and engineer and scientist and architect.
78. (British) Your grandmother.
79. A master's degree in education.
80. A great raja.
81. Syndrome resulting from a serious acute (sometimes fatal) infection associated with the presence of staphylococcus.

DOWN

1. An informal term for a father.
2. A small bottle that contains a drug (especially a sealed sterile container for injection by needle).
3. (Judaism) Sacred chest where the ancient Hebrews kept the two tablets containing the Ten Commandments.
4. The longer of the two telegraphic signals used in Morse code.
5. Naked freshwater or marine or parasitic protozoa that form temporary pseudopods for feeding and locomotion.
6. The Tibeto-Burman language spoken in the Dali region of Yunnan.
7. A doctor's degree in optometry.
8. Imperial moths.
9. Being five more than one hundred.
10. (Greek mythology) The Titan who was father of Atlas and Epimetheus and Prometheus in ancient mythology.
11. Goddess of criminal rashness and its punishment.
12. American dramatist (1928-).
13. Herb of the Pacific islands grown throughout the tropics for its edible root and in temperate areas as an ornamental for its large glossy leaves.
14. Any place of complete bliss and delight and peace.
19. Either of two Welsh breeds of long-bodied short-legged dogs with erect ears and a fox-like head.
21. Capital and largest city of Iraq.
24. Consisting of or made of wood of the oak tree.
26. Any of various hard resins from trees of the family Dipterocarpaceae and of the genus Agathis.
27. A river in central Brazil that flows generally northward (with many falls) to join the Tocantins River.
28. A woman hired to suckle a child of someone else.
30. Type genus of the Alcidae comprising solely the razorbill.
32. Indian religious leader who founded Sikhism (1469-1538).
34. A member of the Algonquian people of Maine and southern Quebec.
35. Of or relating to a dyad or based on two.
38. Consideration in dealing with others and avoiding giving offence.
40. Back and sides of a hog salted and dried or smoked.
43. The phenomenon of resistance to motion through a fluid.
44. A small outbuilding with a bench having holes through which a user can defecate.
47. A committee having supervisory powers.
49. The month following February and preceding April.
53. Genus of tropical hardwood timber trees.
55. A brief description given for purposes of identification.
56. Above the surround or above the normal position.
57. The second great battle of the American Civil War (1862).
59. South American plant cultivated for its large fragrant trumpet-shaped flowers.
61. A city in the Saxony region of Germany on the Saale River.
65. Type genus of the Ranidae.
66. A mark left by the healing of injured tissue.
68. As if new.
69. Type genus of the Anatidae.
70. A transparent optical device used to converge or diverge transmitted light and to form images.
72. Any of various trees of the genus Ulmus.
73. A period marked by distinctive character or reckoned from a fixed point or event.
77. A person who announces and plays popular

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Many of your friends from the past still keep in contact with you and you keep in contact with them. It is fun to see the kids in each family grow and prosper. Having so many friends in so many different places makes it fun to travel and visit and even entertain the idea of trading homes occasionally. A new relationship coming to you may be based first on a sort of friendship. You know there are more friends to enjoy and someday a special person will be available to share life experiences with you. All people have something special to bring to the experience of living and they create wonderful challenges as well as simple pleasures. A new friend may take an interest in making movies or you may decide to try your hand at some form of art. Happy birthday!



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You are in a mood of self-enjoyment this morning and may express yourself with much confidence. You may see value in or feel love for an older person or someone in authority. You appreciate and discover the beauty in your own life and in those around you. At the same time, everything could take on added value and importance. Be careful that you do not overspend or indulge too much just now. You may find yourself enjoying a long conversation, writing a letter or making a special phone call this afternoon. You feel good when all the people in your life are accounted for and in a healthy place. The preparations for a get-together with your friends will show off your abilities to create a positive and beautiful atmosphere.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Partnerships are accentuated and through this avenue, you will find much can be accomplished. When given the opportunity, you generously want to share your visions, ideals and ideas with other people—they can be spellbound for hours. You might want to pay attention to the interest that someone shows you and learn when to back away from a conversation if others are not interested. Today, however, you will encourage someone to move forward with plans for some particular goal that this person might not have believed attainable. With all the communication exchange today, you may find a new interest. You may really become involved with the art of handwriting or the art of numerology. This is a time of harmony, fun and success.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You could be very popular this day, especially with superiors or in relation to your work. You may find that you enjoy your job or the responsibility it entails more than usual. Your dealings with money will be successful as well. If your attitude is positive, this is what you will project and if your attitude is negative you will project this as well. You do not have a hidden agenda and others know what to expect from you. Make sure your feelings compliment your goodness. You may need the emotional balance of a friendly person today. A kind of romantic longing characterizes your approach to life. This could mean a longing for a soul mate or a yearning to save the world; it could mean carrying a torch as well; patience.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Some previous plans that are finally developing into a most positive end result will boost the mood for you and those around you today; whatever the case this is a day that is approached with high energy and an attitude that gets much accomplished. Success is easy to find. Others will notice your efficiency. Your inner resources and emotions are accentuated. This afternoon new projects come to your attention. There are interesting subjects for your evaluation and a relationship from the past may come to your attention later this afternoon. Find time to relax and commune with nature in order to balance your energies before the evening begins. Avoid actively pursuing new social objectives. There is a small package for you to open this evening.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Work progresses fairly well today; obtaining and exchanging information take on more importance. To complete important work, you may need certain information from others—you can successfully accomplish this with your smooth professional manner. If there is someone you are trying to influence, this would be the day when you would be most successful. Setting time aside this evening for family conversations makes for a closer knit family and the feeling of a good support system for all. Helping a young person with a hobby may aid in his or her creativeness and provide opportunities for one-on-one conversations. You work on a project this evening while this young person enjoys his or her hobby—perhaps you sew, repair furniture, etc.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Stay in touch with your own sense of direction. Many things come to your attention this morning and staying focused may become very difficult. Work particularly hard now to stay focused and complete projects. This is an exciting day and you could become distracted from what you really want to accomplish. An instinctive urge to get serious about taking care of you is emphasized now. Diet, exercise and work become important routines now. You want to feel good about yourself and the way you do things. A healthy change in your diet and a new exercise program are positive plans. Perhaps you can bring a friend or family member along when you exercise. You will find this time speeds right along when shared with a friend.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

An appointment or a meeting signifies the need to be professionally well dressed. Your presentation or report will bring you respect. Considering you set the pace for others to follow, you will do well to keep current with trends and styles. Allocating certain responsibilities to trusted individuals will gain excellent results. You are in a planning mood this afternoon and are able to view all the alternate paths. You can see the road ahead and will make the right choices. One of the most common human experiences is disappointment. You help a member of your family recover and learn from a disappointment that might be felt today. Most people see disappointment as a downer; you teach that it can be a tool for correction, learning and growth.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

A feeling of inadequacy or frustration may occur today. It is important to look at the possibility that failures at work may not be your fault. You are, however, to be commended for your dedication and perseverance and can find answers or solve a problem without the stress most would feel. You crave organization and you want to get things accomplished. Good focus and concentration make most any task run well. Be aware of an impossible standard and take it easier on everyone—including you. A little humor could go a long way this day. It is your responsibility to expand your vision without losing the innocence of your convictions. Do not lose your ability to play. Borrow a relative or friend's child if you have none and play.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Clear some space so that you can work more easily. Hard work and trying to make contact with higher-ups seem to take priority. Problem is this activity of trying to contact certain people may be a bit difficult. You have time to think through what you want to say—expressing yourself is done very well. You want to get things accomplished and this may end up a very productive day. After work your creative side kicks in as you help share your talents in the art of sewing, cooking or gardening. You may be surprised at the result of your effort with this teaching. You could become a teacher or others could teach you. Health habits and work goals also come to your attention and you may decide to set a few goals. A sense of harmony makes this a happy time.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

Watch what you say to a new person today—you will be protecting your best interests in your future job security. Speculating or participating in sports may be scheduled this afternoon. Perhaps you and your co-workers have an ongoing tournament. You may find yourself being put to good use by your friends and enjoying them as well. Excessive emotional energy could produce flare-ups, harsh words and arguments. Be aware of this possibility and when you feel yourself becoming highly emotional, take a break in order to refocus. Find ways to relax this evening by doing something really funny, renting a comedy video, tickling a loved one, etc. Laughter is the best way to promote a healing and get rid of any excessive negative energy.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Job-related subjects take precedence this morning. New projects turn out to be more successful than you had previously thought. There seems to be very little that you cannot do today—the day is yours. You have the energy and wisdom to tackle any problem that comes to your attention. A lot of personal and sensitive psychological material from a mate may be just as important for you as for your mate. You may look back on this time as very transforming. There could be a temporary estrangement from a loved one today but if you leave this alone it will be turned around for the positive. Being more closely involved with another person may well become your highest priority. Marriage, contracts and partnerships are seen as keys to success and happiness.

WORD SEARCH

Nursing Home 2

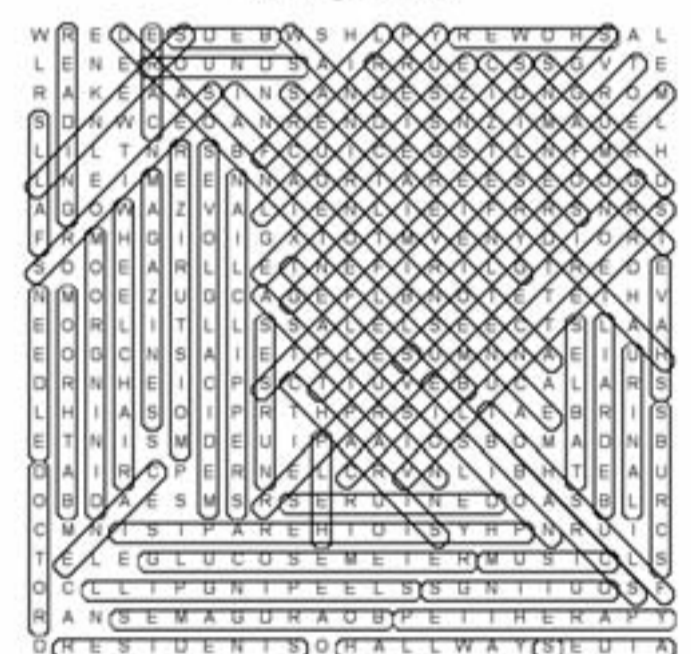
Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining 47 letters spell a Benjamin Franklin quotation.



- | | | | | |
|------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------|--------------|
| ADMISSION | DISABILITY | LOTION | PHYSICAL THERAPY | SOAP |
| ASSIST | DOCTOR | LOUNGE | PILLS | SOCIALIZE |
| BEDPAN | ELEVATOR | MEALS | PODIATRIST | STAFF |
| BEDTIME | ENTERTAINMENT | MECHANICAL LIFT | RECLINER | SURROGATORY |
| BOOKS | EYEGLASSES | MEDICINE | RECREATION ROOM | SYRINGE |
| CALL BELL | FOOD TRAY | MEMORY | RELATIVES | THERMOMETER |
| CARD GAMES | GERIATRIC | MORNING CARE | ROOMMATE | TUBE FEED |
| CHARTING | HEALTH | NURSE | SEGATIVES | VIRUS |
| CRAFTS | HOLIDAY EVENTS | OSTEOPOROSIS | SHAVEN | VISITOR |
| DEMENTIA | INSULIN SHOT | OXYGEN | SINGING | WANDER ALARM |
| DIABETES | LAKATIVES | PATIENTS | SLEEP | WASH HANDS |
| DINNER | LOCKDOWN | PHARMACIST | SNACK CART | |

Yesterday's Solution

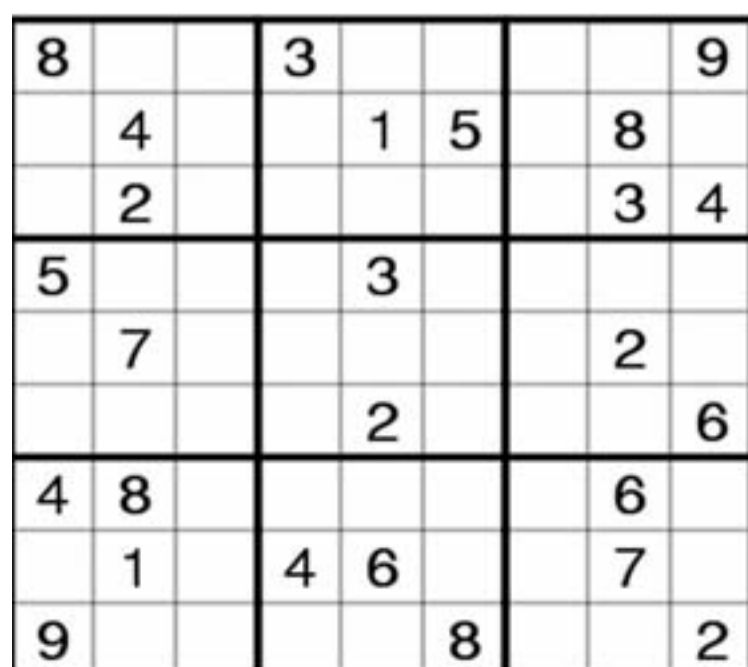
Nursing Home 1



- | | | | | |
|-----------------|---------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| ACTIVITIES | COMFORT | HELP | OUTINGS | SING ALONG |
| AIDES | DEPTURES | INCONTINENCE | PET THERAPY | SLEEPING PILL |
| ASPIRIN | DINING ROOM | LAUNDRY | PHYSIOTHERAPIST | STAFF MEETINGS |
| BATHROOM | DOCTOR | LAUNDRY | PUZZLES | SUPPER |
| BEERAIL | DRUGS | MAGAZINES | READING | TABLES |
| BEDS | EXERCISE | MEDICAL GLOVES | RESIDENTS | TELEVISION |
| BOARD GAMES | FALLS | MENORY LOSS | ROUNDS | TRANSFER BELT |
| BULLETTIN BOARD | FLU SHOT | MOISTURIZER | SCRUBBLE | URINAL |
| CANE | FRAIL | MUSIC | SCRUBS | VOLUNTEERS |
| CARE | GLUCOSE METER | NAIL CLIPPERS | SENSORS | WALKING |
| CASE MEETING | HAIRDRESSER | NEEDLE | SHAVE | WHEELCHAIR |
| CHARTS | HALLWAYS | NURSES | SHOWER | |

The hidden message is: WE SHALL NEVER KNOW ALL THE GOOD THAT A SIMPLE SMILE CAN DO

Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



MUSIC & MOVIES

Glen Campbell said goodbye to his life, career through music



In this file photo, musician Glen Campbell poses for a portrait in Malibu, Calif. — AP

Glen Campbell was a rare entertainer who got to say goodbye to his life and career in every way he knew how. Before his mind evaporated into Alzheimer's disease, Campbell was able to go out on one last big tour, star in a documentary and record an album of his favorite songs, fittingly called "Adios." Three of his children sing on the album, which was released earlier this summer. The country superstar died Tuesday morning in Nashville, Campbell's family said. He was 81.

"I owe him everything I am, and everything I ever will be," daughter Ashley Campbell wrote on Twitter. "He will be remembered so well and with so much love." A guitarist since age 4, Campbell's musical talent, boyish looks and friendly charm brought him decades of success. He won five Grammys, sold more than 45 million records, had 12 gold albums and 75 chart hits, including No. 1 songs with "Rhinestone Cowboy" and "Southern Nights." His performance of the title song from the 1969 film "True Grit," in which he played a Texas Ranger alongside Oscar winner John Wayne, received an Academy Award nomination. Campbell was nominated again for an Oscar in 2015 for "I'm Not Gonna Miss You," a song from the documentary "Glen Campbell... I'll Be Me."

The 2014 film about Campbell's farewell tour in 2011 and 2012 offers a poignant look at his decline from Alzheimer's while showcasing his virtuoso guitar chops that somehow continued to shine as his mind unraveled. His wife, Kim Campbell, announced earlier this year that her husband could no longer play guitar. Campbell's musical career dated back to the early years of rock 'n roll. He toured with the Champs of

"Tequila" fame. He was part of the house band for the ABC TV show "Shindig!" and a member of Phil Spector's "Wrecking Crew" studio band that played on hits by the Ronettes, the Righteous Brothers and the Crystals. Campbell also played guitar on Frank Sinatra's "Strangers In the Night," The Monkees' "I'm a Believer" and Elvis Presley's "Viva Las Vegas."

"We'd get the rock 'n' roll guys and play all that, then we'd get Sinatra and Dean Martin," Campbell told The Associated Press in 2011. "That was a kick. I really enjoyed that. I didn't want to go nowhere. I was making more money than I ever made just doing studio work." One of 12 children, Campbell left his native Arkansas and a life of farm work as a teenager in pursuit of music. He moved to Albuquerque, New Mexico to join his uncle's band and appear on his uncle's radio show. By his early 20s, Campbell had formed his own group, the Western Wranglers, and moved to Los Angeles. He opened for The Doors and sang and played bass with The Beach Boys as a replacement for Brian Wilson, who in the mid-'60s had retired from touring to concentrate on studio work.

Minor traffic accident

In 1966, Campbell played on The Beach Boys' classic "Pet Sounds" album. "I didn't go to Nashville because Nashville at that time seemed one-dimensional to me," he told the AP. "I'm a jazzier. I just love to get the guitar and play the hell out of it if I can." By the late '60s, he was a performer on his own, and an appearance on Joey Bishop's show led to his TV breakthrough. Tommy Smothers of the Smothers Brothers saw the program and asked Campbell if he'd like to host a summertime series,

"The Summer Brothers Smothers Show." "The whole lid just blew off," Campbell told the AP. "I had never had anything like that happen to me. I got more phone calls. It was awesome. For the first couple of days I was like how do they know me? I didn't realize the power of television." His guests included country acts, but also The Monkees, Lucille Ball, Cream, Neil Diamond and Ella Fitzgerald.

Like his crossover contemporaries Johnny Cash, Roy Clark and Kenny Rogers, Campbell also enjoyed success on TV. He had a weekly audience of some 50 million people for the "Glen Campbell Goodtime Hour" on CBS. He released more than 70 of his own albums, and in the 1990s recorded a series of gospel CDs. A 2011 album, "Ghost On the Canvas," included contributions from Jacob Dylan, Rick Nielsen of Cheap Trick and Billy Corgan of Smashing Pumpkins. "Adios" features collaborations with Willie Nelson and Vince Gill.

Campbell was married four times and had eight children. As he would confide in painful detail, he suffered for his fame and made others suffer as well. He drank heavily, used drugs and indulged in a turbulent relationship with country singer Tanya Tucker in the early 1980s. In late 2003, he was arrested near his home in Phoenix after causing a minor traffic accident. He later pleaded guilty to "extreme" DUI and leaving the scene of an accident and served a 10-day sentence. Besides wife Kim and daughter Ashley, Campbell is survived by children Cal, Shannon, Debby, Kelli, Travis, Kane and Dillon, and 10 grandchildren. — AP

Review

Love somehow shines through 'The Glass Castle'

Any parents of young children - or anyone thinking of hearing the pitter-patter of little feet - are urged to go to their local movie theater and see "The Glass Castle." Not as a how-to guide, mind you. No, that might actually get you thrown in jail. They should go see it instead as a much-needed reminder that you can mess up spectacularly with your kids and still manage to have them adore you. "The Glass Castle" is steeped in crazy love, but love nonetheless.

Based on Jeannette Walls' 2005 best-selling memoir, the film is both a tribute to parenting and a confessional of its absence. Like the book, it looks back without pity or sentiment. Unlike the book, it's got Woody Harrelson and Brie Larson, acting spectacularly. Walls created a sensation when she wrote about her destitute and nomadic youth, a childhood of hunger and privation at the hands of a pair of idiosyncratic parents who shunned schools, authority, capitalism and regular bill payments.

Hers was a childhood where she suddenly moved in the middle of the night, badly burned herself while unsupervised at the stove, had to eat butter and sugar as a meal, endured rages from her alcoholic dad and lived in homes without plumbing or electricity. She was left in the house of an abuser to fend for herself and "learned" to swim when her father repeatedly tossed her underwater so she'd no longer cling to the side of the pool. Struggle, she was taught, gives life beauty. Adventure was more important than comfort.

"You learn from living," her father says after steering the family's broken-down station wagon into the unforgiving desert for a night under the stars. "Everything else is a damn lie." The film is directed by Destin Daniel Cretton, who co-wrote the screenplay with Andrew Lanham and reunites with Larson, who starred in his indie "Short Term 12." It's a mature, empathetic work of filmmaking from a young artist even if such a quirky story has a few too many grand Hollywood flourishes, as when our heroine - high heels in hand - abruptly leaves a fancy dinner to sprint to her father's bedside amid a soaring soundtrack.

Artistic, bohemian mother

Larson plays the adult Jeannette Walls who seems to have blocked out much of her hard-

scrabble youth as a rising magazine writer in New York City. The movie opens like the book, with the author in a taxi in 1989 happening to spy her parents Dumpster-diving on a street in the East Village. A series of flashbacks reveal the unique way the Walls' four children were raised. They have an artistic, bohemian mother (an understated Naomi Watts as Rose Mary Walls) and a fiery, charismatic dad (Harrelson as Rex Walls) who promises to build a fantastic glass castle for the family to live in one day. Their father is brilliant and dashing but undependable. He offers them their own stars in the heavens for Christmas, but takes their last few dollars to get drunk. Warts and all are shown - yet very little blame.

The exact moment when dad goes from off-beat quirky to dangerous is never clear but Harrelson's descent into a moody, angry, lying Walls - but one always loving - is riveting. A man who once promised thrilling freedom for his kids becomes their warden, refusing to let them leave for better lives. (The younger Jeannettes are played with real skill by Ella Anderson and Chandler Head). Jeannette Walls' story is clearly lovingly protected by the filmmakers, from the stiff shoulder pads of the 1980s to the developing darkness of the film. There's astonishing detail rendered, down to the use of real Rose Mary Walls' paintings on the walls and the long-gone "Please Do Not Slam the Door" stickers on yellow cab windows.

In the face of a horrific childhood, the Walls kids are fiercely protective of each other, as expected. What's not as expected is that they still love their parents, too. Frustratingly, it's not clear if they became happy adults because of their upbringing or despite of it, but that almost seems beside the point. The messages here are that kids are more resilient than we think, that your parents aren't as crazy as you think, and that love always, always, wins. "The Glass Castle," a Lionsgate release, is rated PG-13 by the Motion Picture Association of America for "mature thematic content involving family dysfunction, and for some language and smoking." Running time: 127 minutes. Three stars out of four.

MPAA Definition of PG-13: Parents strongly cautioned. Some material may be inappropriate for children under 13. — AP



In this file photo, Taylor Swift performs at the DIRECTV NOW Super Saturday Night Concert in Houston, Texas. — AP

Taylor Swift 'cost me my career,' radio host tells jury at groping trial

AUS radio host denied groping pop singer Taylor Swift and accused her of ruining his career as a civil suit brought by him got underway Tuesday. The 27-year-old Swift has counter-sued, alleging David "Jackson" Mueller groped her during a photo opportunity at a 2013 concert. She looked on with her mother at her side in the Denver courtroom as he took the stand to testify. "It cost me my career...the thing I love the most," Mueller said. "It's despicable, the thing they've accused me of."

Mueller did not sue his station KYGO or its parent company Lincoln Financial Media Co of Colorado, after he was fired June 4, 2013. Instead, he is seeking \$3 million in lost wages and future income from Swift, alleging her complaint led to his unfair dismissal. He told the court he had sent out two dozen resumes and audio samples, but received no job offers since being terminated. He had a contract with KYGO for \$150,000 a year. Mueller's attorney Gabriel McFarland told the eight member jury it was a "he said, she said situation," and that Swift mistook her client for someone else.

'It's an assault'

The singer, who alleges he lifted her skirt and fondled her buttocks during the photo op, has said she knew who had assaulted her. Her lawyer, Doug Baldrige, told the jury that four members of Swift's team were in the room where the photo was taken, and knew immediately something wrong had happened. "It's not inappropriate touching. It's an assault," Baldrige said. He said Mueller, who was 51 at the time of the incident, has changed his story seven times since it occurred. "This side has never changed its position," he said.

According to Baldrige, Mueller had destroyed five laptops or cell phones that may have contained recorded evidence of his meeting with KYGO executives, possibly including other references to the DJ's behavior that the radio station was not happy with. Jurors hearing the case were picked earlier in the day from a pool of 16 prospective jurors. Swift and her mother, Andrea Swift, watched while they were asked if they were familiar with the circumstances of the civil case.

They were questioned specifically about their familiarity with either Swift or Mueller and whether they considered themselves to be fans of their work. Some fans were in the courtroom, but the celebrity trial has so far not drawn big crowds, and many of the 32 seats reserved for the public were empty. "I'm a huge Taylor Swift fan. This is a huge event and it's exciting to be a part of it," said Jacquelyn Evans, 32, an unemployed food safety specialist. Arthur Lewis, also 32 and a real estate agent, said he's "a big supporter of Taylor Swift and just wanted to check it out." Swift, who appeared in court wearing a dark suit over a bluish-green blouse, has said she will donate any damages awarded in her suit to charities that fight sexual assault on women. — AFP

Review

In 'Good Time', Pattinson in the role of his life

The fraternal directing duo of Josh and Benny Safdie make urban odysseys that flow with the quicksilver currents of New York City. You can feel the gum-stained pavement under your feet. You can smell the Q train. The Safdies were already an electric new energy in cinema - streetwise and scuzzy - but in the ironically titled caper "Good Time," they have quickened their already kinetic pace. This movie, wild and erratic, is downright blistering. The opening credits, as if rushing to catch up, don't appear until well into the film, after all hell has already broken loose.

Many of their gritty, abrasive tales emanate directly from the street; that's where they found the homeless, heroin-addicted protagonist (Arielle Holmes) of their last film, the verite "Heaven Knows What." The same could not be said for the star of "Good Time": Robert Pattinson. The "Twilight" actor, captivated by a still from "Heaven Knows What," contacted the Safdies and out came "Good Time."

It goes without saying that this is a long way off from "Twilight" - a franchise that, whatever its other attributes, has at least given us two of the most interesting actors of a generation. While Kristen Stewart has already won acclaim for herself in Olivier Assayas films and others, Pattinson has more quietly assembled an equally impressive filmography with the likes of David Cronenberg and James

Rush of neon colors

From here, it's a nonstop freefall. Chased by the police, Nick crashes through a glass door and is arrested. Connie, desperate to put bail money together, first tries to take advantage of his better-off girlfriend (Jennifer Jason Leigh) and, when that fails, improvises his way through increasingly audacious schemes in a nocturnal adventure that somehow includes trips to an amusement park, White Castle and a random household in which Connie takes the time to dye his hair blond. Along the way, Taliah Webster, as a black teen exploited by Connie, and the "Heaven Knows What" actor Buddy Duress, give terrific performances. (Duress' entrance is alone worth the price of admission.)

In the annals of the crime film, the pulpy "Good Time" is roughly the opposite of something like the uber-professional thieves of "Heat." At one point, "Cops" is seen on a television, and these are the kind of dimwitted exploits that would fit right in there. But aside from being a devoted brother, the predatory Connie also a clever, lecherous user of people. Love was a drug for the smitten young woman of "Heaven Knows What." For the brothers of "Good Time," it's an exploitation. But in the film's headlong rush, the jailed Nick virtually disappears, and that feels like a mistake. If there's a knock on "Good Time," it's that its sheer



Gray, in whose "The Lost City of Z" Pattinson made such a distinct (if heavily bearded) impression earlier this year.

In "Good Time," he plays Connie, one of two brothers from Queens. The other, Nick (played by co-director Benny Safdie), is mentally challenged. With no parents apparently on the scene, Connie is Nick's keeper, and a highly questionable one at that. In the opening scene, he pulls Nick out of a psychiatrist session, admonishing him as they hustle down the hallway that it's not where he belongs. Connie believes in his brother - too much, you could say. Not moments after fleeing the doctor, he's ordering Nick to put on a mask - a cheap, rubbery black face - and leading him into a bank robbery at a teller window. Not since "Dog Day Afternoon" has a more unprepared pair tried their hand at an ill-considered heist. They emerge with \$60,000 in cash but soon after their livery cab driver picks them up, a dye pack explodes and the brothers spill out of the car in a cloud of red smoke.

eagerness for anything unconventional comes at the cost of something deeper.

But what a trip it is. "Good Time" flies by in a rush of neon colors and the throbbing electro score of Oneohtrix Point Never. The cinematography of Sean Price Williams is exceptionally agile. In the style of Robert Altman's "McCabe & Mrs Miller," Williams fuses grainy realism with frozen moments held in a lengthy zoom. And in close-up, we see Pattinson more clearly than ever before. His performance - sensitive and controlled amid the chaos - is easily the best of his career. But the Safdies, one suspects, are just getting started. "Good Time," an A24 release, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association of America for "language throughout, violence, drug use and sexual content." Running time: 99 minutes. Three and a half stars out of four. MPAA definition of R: Restricted. Under 17 requires accompanying parent or adult guardian. — AP



This image released by Lionsgate shows, from left, Sadie Sink, Charlie Shotwell, Ella Anderson, foreground center, Woody Harrelson, Naomi Watts and Eden Grace Redfield in "The Glass Castle." — AP

Bangladesh film star turns Islamic preacher

ABangladeshi film star who became an Islamic preacher said yesterday he wants to use his fame to draw young people in the Muslim-majority nation to the faith. Ananta Jalil is the latest actor to take up the practice after 22-year-old Naznin Akter Happy, whose decision to become an ultra-conservative Islamic preacher was the subject of a best-selling book. Thousands of fans turned out late last month to watch 39-year-old Jalil preach in the capital Dhaka. Photos of him wearing an Islamic turban and long robe went viral on social media.

He told AFP he had joined the Tablighi Jamaat - a Sunni Muslim evangelical movement

that boasts millions of adherents in Bangladesh - after a pilgrimage to Mecca earlier this year. "The main reason Allah gave us life... sent us to the earth is to worship Him. I learnt it there," he said by phone yesterday. "If I can preach Islam to the young generation, they'll abide by Allah and the traditions of the prophet and they'll say prayers five times a day." Unlike Happy, Jalil said he would keep making movies although his next one would be used to "propagate Islam."

Jalil made his fortune as a textiles entrepreneur and used the money to bankroll films in which he played a starring role. He has made six movies, starting with "Khoj" ("The Search")

in 2010, in which he played a secret service agent who takes on an international arms syndicate. The moderate version of Islam practiced in Bangladesh for generations has been slowly replaced by a more orthodox version of the faith in recent years. The burka most associated with the rigid Islam of Afghanistan and the Gulf is becoming more commonplace, new mosques and madrassas are flourishing and hardliners have won symbolic victories in their push to overhaul Bangladesh's secular constitution. — AFP

Ananta Jalil



FEATURES



Jason Ashcroft, left, Wendell Ashcroft, and Danielle Garrick share a family hug after landing safely from their skydiving experience at Skydive Ogden. — AP photos



Wendell Ashcroft and his tandem instructor Scotty Freeland prepare to land at Skydive Ogden.



Scotty Freeland, left, offers advice to Wendell Ashcroft about watching his head when he climbs into the plane.

'Of course I'm not nervous':

87-year-old skydives for the first time

Wendell Ashcroft floated gracefully to the ground after falling from 12,000 feet. As Ashcroft completed his first jump, the casual observer might have thought the 87-year-old man had been skydiving his whole life. He was filled with excitement and did not once hesitate at the idea of jumping out a perfectly good airplane. While Ashcroft jumped with two of his granddaughters, a grandson, a daughter-in-law and a niece, many of his other family members gathered to snap photos and cheer from the ground as he sailed in under a fluttering red, white and blue parachute.

The decision to go skydiving started when Ashcroft decided to go on a zip line trip. His grandson, Jason Ashcroft, said that when he saw his grandfather arrive at the bottom of the zip line, he had the idea to ask if Ashcroft would be interested in skydiving. "I was just making a joke out of it," Jason Ashcroft said, but his grandfather liked the idea and a plan quickly formed to go skydiving.

Ashcroft's granddaughter, Danielle Garrick, said she wasn't sure if Wendell Ashcroft was actually expecting to go skydiving, but she liked the idea and began searching for a time and a place to take the idea forward and was surprised by how ready he was to skydive. Though Wendell Ashcroft is a

man of few words, his family sees him for his actions and his willingness to do anything with his children and grandchildren. Even when he is not seeking thrills, he leads an active life and can often be seen mowing his lawn, as well as his neighbor's lawn.

His son, Dale, said that upon telling Ashcroft that he is doing too much, Ashcroft said, "What do you want me to do, sit in my chair and die?" When Ashcroft, who was born and raised in Cache County's Hyde Park, was a young man, he worked as a carpenter until he received his draft notice on Thanksgiving 1951. As the United States was fighting in the Korean War, Ashcroft enlisted in the Air Force and began teaching jet mechanics.

"The Air Force was the best thing that ever happened to me," Ashcroft said. "I was a little dumb kid, and I didn't know that I could do anything until I got into the Air Force." Ashcroft said he gained a sense of confidence from working with other airmen from across the United States. "You learn a lot about them and you learn a lot about yourself," Ashcroft said.

Job in carpentry
Though Ashcroft was supposed to be sent to Korea, a last-minute change in policy allowed Air Force servicemen to stay home if their wives were

within two months of giving birth. The change in policy allowed Ashcroft to stay in the United States as his wife gave birth to their second child, Richard. A year later Ashcroft found out that three of the servicemen he was supposed to go to Korea with had been killed in a plane accident upon their return home.

"I got out of going because of (Richard). Instead he saved my life," Ashcroft said. "I would have been on that plane, just as sure as anybody." After getting out of the Air Force in 1956, Ashcroft said he didn't know where to go. He didn't want to return to a job in carpentry, which he said he didn't like. Instead he sought the opportunity to attend college and eventually found a passion for teaching while working in the Logan School District from 1961 to 1992.

"I think he is an amazing human being altogether," Jason Ashcroft said. "I was asking him if he's nervous, and he's just like, 'No I've been through everything, of course I'm not nervous.'" Garrick said that in her time spent with her grandfather, he has taught her that people are never too old to pursue their dreams. Upon landing, Ashcroft said he had enjoyed the jump and would be excited to go again. — www.deseretnews.com



Skydive Ogden Owner Suzanne Wallace helps fit Wendell Ashcroft in a cap.

Ex-Miss Universe urges HIV testing in Philippines

The Philippines' former Miss Universe conducted a public HIV test in Manila yesterday a week after the United Nations said her country had the fastest-growing number of infections in Asia. Pia Wurtzbach, UNAIDS goodwill ambassador for Asia and the Pacific, took the test in front of reporters as part of her efforts to raise awareness of HIV and remove the stigma surrounding the virus in the conservative nation. The United Nations and the government said last week the Philippines saw a 140 percent increase in new cases from 2010 to 2016, bucking a regional trend that saw infections decline by 13 percent over the same period.

"It is very tricky in the Philippines because we're a predominantly Catholic country and we are conservative. That's why it can be quite a challenge to spread awareness on this issue," Wurtzbach said. "This is a problem that's really happening right now and if we don't do anything about it, we're gonna be number one in the world." The nation of 100 million people, of whom 80 percent are Catholic, is heavily influenced by the church which frowns on contraceptive use. Testing for HIV is also considered taboo. Wurtzbach has been campaigning for HIV awareness since winning the 2015 beauty pageant. She secured the crown following a major blunder in which host Steve Harvey initially gave it to Miss Colombia in error.

Yesterday Wurtzbach launched an HIV information campaign for young people as she expressed support for proposed laws which would allow 15-year-olds to get an HIV test without parental consent. The minimum

age is now 18. The health department had said most reported HIV cases were among men having sex with men. This group on average started having sex at 16 before they had begun using condoms or taken tests, increasing the risk of infection. "We hope to see an increase in the rates of regular HIV testing among Filipinos to normalize the procedure as a regular medical exam," Wurtzbach said. — AFP



Miss Universe 2015 and also United Nations AIDS (UNAIDS) Goodwill Ambassador for Asia and the Pacific Pia Wurtzbach makes a heart sign after receiving a public HIV test to increase awareness yesterday. — AP



Sarajevo announced as the latest eastern European destination on Qatar Airways' growing route map

The historic city of Sarajevo is set to join Qatar Airways' expanding global network as the award-winning airline announces the famous Balkan city will now launch in October as part of Qatar Airways' expedited expansion plans.

The capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina is now becoming the latest must-see destination for leisure travellers, combining its rich history with a modern atmosphere to offer a unique cultural mix. Visitors can experience stunning views of the city and surrounding mountains from one of Sarajevo's many viewing platforms, and visit Bascarsija, an Ottoman bazaar in the heart of the city boasting many remarkable historical and cultural sights.

Yesterday's announcement of the new four times-weekly service, set to begin on 31 October, is part of the airline's expedited expansion into Eastern Europe, with the recent launch of four times-weekly service to Skopje as well as daily flights to Prague, Czech Republic and Kyiv, Ukraine set to begin later this month.

Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive, Akbar Al-Baker said: "Launching flights to Sarajevo is a significant step toward increasing our presence in Eastern Europe, and will provide our passengers with a new and exciting route to and from this remarkable city. It is also tangible proof of our ongoing commitment to expand our global network. Adding Sarajevo to our global network will allow passengers in Bosnia-Herzegovina to connect to more than 150 destinations worldwide through our five-star hub, Hamad International Airport."

The service between Doha and Sarajevo will be operated four times a week by an Airbus A320, featuring 12 seats in Business Class and 132 seats in Economy Class. As well as enjoying the award-winning in-flight service on board the Skytrax Airline of the Year 2017, passengers flying on board will also have access to Oryx One, Qatar Airways' in-flight entertainment system offering the latest blockbuster movies, TV box sets, music, games and much more.

An exciting year for the airline continues with a total of 26 new destination launches set to take place through the rest of 2017 and into 2018, with new flights starting to Canberra, Australia; Chiang Mai, Thailand; Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; San Francisco, US; and Santiago, Chile, to name a few.

Qatar Airways, the national carrier of the State of Qatar, is one of the fastest growing airlines operating one of the youngest fleets in the world. Now in its 20th year of operations, Qatar Airways has a modern fleet of 200 aircraft flying to business and leisure destinations across six continents.

Doha - Sarajevo flight schedule:
Four times a week
Doha (DOH) to Sarajevo (SJJ) QR293 departs 06:40 arrives 10:40
Sarajevo (SJJ) to Doha (DOH) QR294 departs 11:40 arrives 18:55



OPRAH-BRANDED MASHED POTATOES, SOUPS TO HIT SUPERMARKETS



Oprah Winfrey is headed to the supermarket aisle with her own line of refrigerated soups and side dishes. The media mogul teamed up with food giant Kraft Heinz to launch the line, after creating a joint venture earlier this year. The new brand, called O, That's Good!, will offer comfort foods with added vegetables, such as mashed potatoes with cauliflower mixed in.

Kraft Heinz Co said yesterday the new brand has no connection to Winfrey's deal with Weight Watchers and won't mention the weight loss program on its packaging. Winfrey bought a 10 percent stake in Weight Watchers two years ago and appears in its ads. The Oprah-branded soups and side dishes will come to some supermarkets this week and be available nationwide by October. — AP

This image released by HBO shows Oprah Winfrey in a scene from HBO film "The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks." — AP

Japan 3D Art



In these file photos, visitors pose for photos with a 3D image at an art exhibition by Japanese artist Masashi Hattori in Kawasaki, near Tokyo. — AP photos



Photo shows a row of gilded houses in Bruges, Belgium. — AP photos



Photo shows one of the many canals that wind through Bruges in northern Belgium.

Beautiful Bruges: Old-world Europe in the present

Walking through central Bruges is like a romantic journey into the past. With centuries-old gabled buildings lining a web of canals and cobblestone streets, the vibe is quintessential old-world Europe. Bruges also is one of the most beautiful cities in Western Europe, a place that has been called the Venice of the North. Located about an hour northwest of Brussels not far from the North Sea, Bruges is the capital of West Flanders in the Flemish region of Belgium.

The city was spared major damage during the two world wars, so much of its medieval architecture is intact, earning the historic center of town a UNESCO World Heritage Site designation in 2000. Just walking the streets and along the canals is worth the trip, but there are a few must-see sites around the city, including an early work by Michelangelo. Here are some:

The Markt

The large square at the city center is one of the most picturesque and bustling places in Bruges. A marketplace starting in 958, The Markt (Market Square) is often filled with pedestrians and bicycles crisscrossing past statues of medieval freedom fighters Jan Breydel and Pieter de Coninck. The square is framed by the majestic Belfry Tower and Provincial Palace, seat of the West Flanders Provincial Court. Old, gilded houses with cafes on the ground floor line the rest of the square. Wednesday is market day, where traditional Belgian fare can be found.

Church of Our Lady

The spire of Our Lady towers above the city at 381 feet (116 meters) and claims to be one of the world's tallest brick structures. Inside it's like an art museum, filled with exquisite paintings, detailed woodcarving and elaborately-painted tombs. The real treat is Michelangelo's marble "Madonna and Child," believed to be created around 1505 and the only one of his statues to leave Italy during his lifetime. Tickets for the museum are 6 euros for adults, 5 euros for seniors and kids 11 and under free. Note: The church is currently undergoing a major renovation that won't be completed until next year.

Groeninge Museum

Built on the site of the medieval Eekhout Abbey, the Groeninge Museum has a wide range of Belgian art, including paintings from the 18th and 19th century neoclassical and realist periods, Flemish expressionism and postwar modern art. The main focus of the collection is the works of the Flemish Primitives, including Jan van Eyck, Hans Memling and Hugo van der Goes. Adults, 8 euros, seniors, 6 euros, kids 11 and under free.

Begijnhof

This site is a quiet escape from the hustle and bustle in the rest of the city center. Founded in 1245, it was the home of



Photo shows the historic city center of Bruges, Belgium.

Beguines, a group of women who lived pious lives without being part of a convent or monastery. Now a home for sisters of the St Benedict Order, it features an expansive lawn planted with poplars, homes, an active church and a small museum that recreates the living quarters of a Beguine.

Saint John's House Mill

The Netherlands is famous for its multitude of windmills, but Bruges has four of its own. The Saint John's House Mill, built in 1770, is the only one open to visitors. Located on the northeast side of town, the Saint John's House Mill also is the only mill still in its original spot and still grinding grain. Closed on Mondays. Adults, 3 euros; seniors, 2 euros, kids 11 and under free.

North Sea

Belgium has a small coastline along the North Sea, but it's worth seeing (in the summer, at least) and only about 30 minutes from Bruges. Oostende is the largest town and the main transportation and fishing hub. Beach towns dot the coast, from Knokke near the Netherlands to De Panne near France. The beaches and dunes are perfect for a wide range of outdoor activities, from swimming and wind surfing to land yachting (think sailboat on wheels). The North Sea is very shallow, so low tide could mean a long walk to reach the water. — AP



Photo shows the beach along the North Sea near Knokke-Heist, Belgium.

FEATURES



Wearing a Superman costume, Toly Shtapenko, of Ukraine, takes a long stride along the Hollywood Walk of Fame to impress tourists, in the Hollywood section of Los Angeles. — AP photos



Donte, a musician who only gave his first name, straightens out dollar bills on his first day in a brand new Chewbacca costume purchased from eBay for \$441, in the Hollywood section of Los Angeles.



Superhero impersonator Matthias Balke poses with tourists on Hollywood Boulevard near the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles.



Covered in sweat, impersonator Belnarr Golden enters a public restroom with his SpongeBob SquarePants costume folded in half after working on Hollywood Boulevard in Los Angeles.



Belnarr Golden, wearing a SpongeBob SquarePants costume, dodges a tourist trying to pull the nose of his costume on Hollywood Boulevard, in Los Angeles.

Struggling actors moonlight as superheroes in LA

'It's a place of diversity, drama, illusion and broken dreams'

Captain America has a thick British accent, and his day job is cinematographer. Iron Man lives in an apartment behind Hollywood's Dolby Theatre, and at least one of Batman's wings are made with a pair of shower curtains from Target. Superman comes from Ukraine, not the planet Krypton, and don't be surprised to see several Spider-Men and Catwomen of various races and nationalities. Welcome to the superhero world of Hollywood Boulevard, where just about every caped crusader you've seen in comic books or on film is busy posing for photos with tourists.

While the Hollywood we see in movies is a place of glamour and beautiful celebrities, the cast of superheroes filling Hollywood Boulevard is frequently anything but. Many are people struggling to make a buck as they pursue their dream of stardom. "It's a place of diversity, it's a place of drama, it's a place of illusion, a place of broken dreams," says Dan Inigo, a 25-year-old actor who prowls the boulevard dressed as Spider-Man.

Although he barely scrapes by, Inigo says it's still a great gig for a struggling actor who needs to keep an open schedule for auditions. "You can just suit up and come down here whenever you need," he said. "It really is a perfect job if you are an artist."

If you want to make any real money on Hollywood Boulevard, you have to really look the part, says Matthias Balke, who put \$3,000 into his elaborate Batman ensemble. He doesn't grab tourists or crack a joke to get their attention. Instead, he waits for them to come to him. "My way of soliciting is the quality of my costume," he said. "People see it, they come to me to ask me for a picture. I'd never walk up to anybody."

The screenwriter-producer-actor says tips can range from a few coins to as much as \$100. He accepts them all, noting the change occasionally comes in handy: "Even Batman has to do laundry." Longtime street performers say the business used to be more lucrative, until the boulevard became overpopulated with costumed char-



Rashad Rouse, 27, whose dream is getting his star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, hangs upside down from a traffic signal pole in a Spider-Man costume to get attention from tourists on Hollywood Boulevard, in Los Angeles.

acters. What's worse, some look grungy, while others turn off tourists with aggressive demands for money. "This should be done by people with performance backgrounds," Balke said. "It should be like Disneyland." — AP



Superhero impersonator Omar Budhoo stands in front of Thomas Suriya's mural depicting iconic Hollywood celebrities while waiting for a green light to cross the street in the Hollywood section of Los Angeles.



Superhero impersonator Justin Harrison, left, rides a Metro train wearing a Superman costume on his way to Hollywood Boulevard in Los Angeles.



Captain America impersonator Henry Hodge, a cinematographer from England who lives a stone's throw away from Hollywood's Dolby Theatre, opens his apartment door in Los Angeles.



Batman impersonator Matthias Balke is silhouetted while standing on Hollywood Boulevard near the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles.



A young tourist tips Justin Harrison, wearing a homemade Captain America costume, and Harrison's roommate, Reginald Jackson in a Black Panther costume after taking pictures with them on Hollywood Boulevard in Los Angeles.



Superhero impersonator and actor Dan Inigo, left, uses a tourist's smartphone to take a selfie on Hollywood Boulevard in Los Angeles.



Two Spider-Man impersonators, Rashad Rouse, front, and Juan Carlos Banegas, an immigrant from Honduras, change in the alley next to the TCL Chinese Theatre after working on Hollywood Boulevard in Los Angeles.



Ramiro Rodriguez in a Bumblebee costume, a character from the Transformers movie series, shakes hands with young tourists on Hollywood Boulevard, in Los Angeles.



Superman impersonator Justin Harrison, center, high-fives a commuter wearing a sweatshirt with a Superman symbol printed on it as he and his roommate, Reginald Jackson, in a Red Power Ranger costume, head back home after working on Hollywood Boulevard.



A woman takes selfie with an audio-visual art installation titled 'cornerstone' displayed at The Future of Today Exhibition at Today Art Museum in Beijing, yesterday. The Future of Today Exhibition themed by 'zip' presents artistic works by different artists and shows various expression formats of art inspire people to reflect on existence and future at different dimensions of time and space. — AP

Guitar-slinging Singapore granny shreds stereotypes

Big names flock to Cuba's first contemporary art space

For decades, Cubans have been used to the revolutionary slogan "La lucha continua," or "the struggle goes on." Now the first ever international contemporary art space on the Communist-ruled island has been dubbed "Arte Continua," or "art goes on," reflecting the changes shaping Havana. The concept, originally from Italy, brings leading contemporary artists to an island that has been under one-party rule for more than half a century. It is an offshoot of a project called "Galleria Continua" which started when Italians Mario Cristiani, Lorenzo Fiaschi and Maurizio Rigillo had the idea of setting up contemporary art spaces in the most unlikely places, starting in 1990 in the medieval Italian village of San Gimignano.

They scored a notable coup when they installed a gallery in China in 2005. The Havana space includes work from big names including Michelangelo Pistoletto, Daniel Buren of France, British-Indian artist Anish Kapoor, India's Shilpa Gupta and the



late Greek-Italian artist Jannis Kounellis. Pistoletto has already put on his own performance art show in Havana, when he

smashed mirrors with a giant hammer in front of a stunned audience in the old city's 18th century San Francisco de Paula church.

Non-profit art

Fiaschi says he had the idea of installing an art exhibit space in Cuba during a visit in 2014, when he stumbled upon the ruined shell of a 1950s cinema in the old Chinese quarter of Havana. Working with the Cuban authorities, he transformed the space and baptized it "Arte continua" to signify that unlike its predecessors, this was not an actual gallery but more in line with Cuba's cultural centers. As well as sculptures, the space will feature musical events, dance, theatre and photographic and architectural exhibits.

"We are the first non-Cuban exhibition space in Cuba," said Luisa Ausenda, one of the organizers of "Arte Continua," boasting of the project's pioneering, non-profit role. Under a deal with the Communist authorities, the pieces on display will not be for sale. Nevertheless, the concept has succeeded in luring some of the biggest names in the contemporary art world to Cuba, thanks in part to private sponsorship and the collaboration of diplomatic missions in Havana.

Import and export of artists

"We have a dual mission," said Ausenda. "On the one hand, we want to bring renowned international artists here, while on the other hand, we want to help the development of Cuban artists, both here on the island and abroad."

With support from "Arte continua," local artists Reynier Leyva Novo and Jose Eduardo Yaque were able to take their work to the Venice biennale and other "Galleria continua" spaces.

The Havana space also organizes a regular cinema club, guided tours and community workshops that cater to local schoolchildren.

"It's a positive project," said Jorge Fernandez, director of Cuba's Museum of Fine Arts and the Havana biennale. "They bring in artists but above all, they work with the local community, with children. They are not here to sell pictures, and that is what we must promote." — AFP

An 81-year-old guitar-slinging Singaporean granny has shredded stereotypes to pursue her love of rock music, becoming a sought-after performer and unlikely internet sensation. Mary Ho's late-flourishing career will reach its zenith Wednesday when she performs in front of a huge crowd at Singapore's National Day Parade, marking 52 years of the city-state's independence. Grandmother of seven Ho only started playing the guitar at 60, fulfilling a lifelong dream to learn the instrument.

She initially taught herself from a book with an acoustic and was content strumming along and singing. But when a friend introduced her to rock star Carlos Santana's classic track "Samba Pa Ti" about a decade ago, she decided to seek some professional tutoring to shift things up a few gears. "It was too difficult (to learn on my own) so I found a teacher," she told AFP. "But the teacher looked at me and said 'Oh I've never taught anyone your age before!'"



This picture shows Mary Ho, also known as Grandma Mary, posing with her electric guitar during a rehearsal in Singapore. — AFP

Despite not knowing how to read music, Ho was determined to learn her favorite song and practiced up to three hours a day to get the hang of it. Since then, she's amassed a collection of more than 20 guitars, recorded her own album of Latin music and is often in demand for charity gigs. A video of Ho playing rock classic "Need Your Love So Bad" has more than 1.1 million views on YouTube. In fast-ageing Singapore, Ho is a poster child for how to remain active when elderly, and has featured in various campaigns encouraging senior citizens to stay active.

She admitted to feeling a little anxious ahead of Wednesday's performance before a crowd of 27,000 at the parade, which features a military tattoo before a festive show featuring local stars.

"Being my first time for such a large performance, I naturally feel very nervous," she said. Asked if she was exhausted from all her activities, Ho simply laughed. "Maybe it's just my nature, it's the love of doing things, learning things... I don't ever get tired," she said. — AFP



Arte Continua' is the first private gallery of contemporary art based in Cuba. —AFP photos