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PAIN, GRIEF AS KUWAITI MARTYRS LAID TO REST

KUWAIT: Kuwait yesterday, amid sheer sadness, bid final farewell to two prominent citizens and clerics, both victims of a terrorist attack on a restaurant in Ouagadougou in Burkina Faso on Monday. The bodies of Grand Mosque Imam Sheikh Dr Waleed Al-Ali and Sheikh Fahd Al-Husseini were laid to rest, as leading state officials including National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem, Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Mohammad Al-Jabri and Minister of Commerce and Industry as well as Acting

Minister of State for Youth Affairs Khaled Al-Roudhan were among the mourners.

Meanwhile, HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah decided to name two new mosques after the martyred duo to pay tribute to them.

Speaking to the press, Ghanem hailed Ali and Husseini as two leading philanthropists with a profound penchant for altruism, extending his deepest condolences to their families and the Kuwaiti people over this terrible loss. — KUNA (See Page 6)



KUWAIT: Mourners attend the funeral yesterday of Waleed Al-Ali and Fahd Al-Husseini, two Kuwaiti clerics who were killed along with 16 people in an attack at a restaurant in Burkina Faso. —Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat



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NURSES' REMITTANCES



By Muna Al-Fuzai

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Nurses are the cornerstone of the healthcare sector, but unfortunately, they rarely get recognized or thanked. They have always been taken for granted and their silence taken as approval, because while we are busy addressing the healthcare situation, we forget about the problems faced by nurses.

In 2015, a new case known as "the issue of nurses' remittances" came up. The case is pending before the judiciary since 2015, when the owner of an employment agency was prosecuted by the public prosecution on charges of imposing financial charges on Indian nurses seeking to travel to work in Kuwait and other foreign countries. They were forced to transfer the charges

through exchange channels under the guise of remittances.

The case came to light after reports were published in the Indian press about a private agency illegally taking money from nurses desiring to work in Kuwait. Indian authorities began to investigate the issue that ended up with the judiciary, as the case turned into a money laundering crime. The investigation now extends to the possible involvement of Kuwaitis, who may have a hand in the matter.

The truth must be revealed. There is an agreement between Kuwait and India to cooperate in the fight against money laundering. Kuwait must cooperate in this investigation and should not protect anyone if they are found guilty, even if they only had a finger in the crime. It is natural that the ministry of health in Kuwait denies these allegations, but this does not mean that the issue should not be investigated, because the ministry is supposed to have mechanisms to follow up this matter - how it began and who benefited from it. I understand the Indian position and their desire to protect their citizens.

The government of India has restricted since May 2015 the recruitment of nurses through a few designated state-run

recruiting agencies and placed nurses under the ECR (Emigration Check Required) regime so that emigration clearance through E-Migrate becomes mandatory for them for employment in any of the 18 ECR countries. Six state manpower corporations in India have been authorized for recruitment of Indian nurses abroad.

Besides Kuwait, emigration clearance is required for 16 other nations, namely Afghanistan, Bahrain, Iraq, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Libya, Lebanon, Malaysia, Oman, Qatar, Sudan, Syria, Thailand, UAE and Yemen. The process of recruitment of Indian nurses under the E-Migrate system is easy and transparent. Recruiting agencies in Kuwait who wish to recruit Indian nurses should register themselves with this system.

Nurses don't get sufficient recognition, either from hospitals or the society, so their desperation to land a decent job abroad quickly leads them to fall victim to money laundering gangs. These women who have paid a lot of money to get a job should be compensated when the damage is proven in court. This is the recognition they should receive to carry on with their work of saving lives - including their own.

Tasting Colors

Unique ability gives Kuwaiti baker a sense of purpose

By Athoob Al-Shuaibi

Ask Hessa Al-Baroud about color and her answers might surprise you: "Blue tastes sour." Or "Orange and pink make me uncomfortable." Most of us have a color palette or preferences when it comes to clothes and decor. But Hessa claims to experience colors in a way few can truly understand. "Sometimes when I try to explain food to other people, I say something like: 'It tastes yellow, it tastes orange, or this bread tastes like a mother!' The colors create a mood and give you certain feelings," she told Kuwait Times.



Hessa Al-Baroud

The youthful Kuwaiti baker has found a way to transform her experiences of color into a colorful business, starting her own bakery to apply her intimate knowledge of color to cakes and decorating. "Personally, I can't imagine myself eating something that is dull or not visually appealing. Brown tastes like chocolate and white is tasteless, which is the reason why I can't eat vanilla cakes or bake them. You can tell from my decorations that my favorite colors are purple and blue, because purple is flowery while blue is fresh and tastes a little bit sour," she explains.

Hessa experiences what is known as synesthesia, a perceptual phenomenon where one sensory or cognitive pathway can trigger secondary sense experiences. "We have five main senses: Hearing, sight, taste, touch and smell. Some people have links between these sensory brain organs signaling networks that lead to a crossing of the senses," explains Dr Mohammad Alsuwaidan, assistant professor of psychiatry at both Kuwait University and the



University of Toronto, and the Head of the Mental Health Unit at Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital. "For instance, some individuals may be able to taste different colors, at least that's what the brain processes, or they may be able to hear certain textures and what they touch," he added.

New Passion

It's unclear when Hessa first started 'tasting' and experiencing colors. In 2008, at the age of 15, she was diagnosed with a chronic illness that effectively killed her appetite. "I was literally in seclusion and was known as Hessa the ill person. But that wasn't who I really am. I wanted to be more than that. So in 2010, I decided to find a hobby, something to match my personal interest in visual arts," she told Kuwait Times.

Hessa started baking cookies and cakes, realizing this wasn't only something she liked doing,



but was something she excelled in. "My passion for baking and decorating cakes has revealed a whole new world of art. Moreover, it gave me a purpose, energy to heal and the excitement to get up and run to the kitchen to create something new," she said. "It wasn't, however, until recently that I noticed my ability to taste the colors of my cakes."

Even if we cannot savor the flavor of colors as ordinary people, they certainly affect our mood. Our choice of colors reflects what we feel or need to feel. There's nothing comparable to the color blue in the sense of calm and quiet, but who'd imagine that calm tastes sour!



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Imagination in motion

Ambitious stop-motion and animation artist conjures up stunning videos

By Faten Omar

When you stumble across one of Kawthar Bu Metea's reality-defying stop-motion vines, the first thing you ask is: "How in the world did she do that?" The 24-year-old Bahraini stop-motion and animation artist creates a world of art where you can paint with flowers, diamonds and even use plastic surgery tools to make Disney villains more striking!

Kawthar goes far with her imagination, where every video tells a story of creativity and gives a different vision of traditional animation characters. Kuwait Times spoke to her to learn more about her art. Some excerpts:

Kuwait Times: Tell us about yourself.

Kawthar: I graduated from Bahrain Polytechnic with a bachelor's degree in web media in 2016. Throughout my four years in college, I was able to efficiently combine my studies with my work, demonstrating that I am self-motivated and proactive when working under pressure. I am currently a freelancer in the field that I enjoy most - stop-motion, animation and art. I have worked on numerous projects with big and small brands, including Disney UK, Microsoft, Guerlain, Mackintosh, Zain, Nada Dairy, Signature Juices and more.

KT: When did you discover your talent? Tell us more about your technique.

Kawthar: Ever since I was little, I enjoyed art, craftwork and computers. I still remember using Paint software to create digital artworks. As I grew older, my love for art and technology grew. I started to learn and experiment with new software and applications. In the summer of 2014, I did my first stop-motion video. I fell in love with the technique, and day by day, I tested different methods. What made my work stand out was my ability to mix all my skills (arts, computer and photography) to create unique and creative videos.

KT: How old were you when you made the transition?

Kawthar: 21 years old.

KT: You clearly have a very strong background in art. At what point did you decide to combine your drawing skills with the digital medium? And were you actively making videos before?

Kawthar: When I was little, my dad had two cameras - one big camera for pictures and another for videos. Back then it was rare to see people have them. He would let us shoot pictures and videos. He made me fall in love with photography and videography. When I was in my teenage years, I learnt how to edit my videos. I started to experiment, which made my skills get better in this field.

KT: How did you get the idea of mixing art with flowers, diamonds, medical surgeries, etc?

Kawthar: It is all about experimenting and trying different objects, materials, ideas, techniques and concepts. It is one of the reasons people love my work - offering variety and posting something new and fun every time.

KT: Your videos have a recognizable style. Why did you decide to use stop-motion and paper?

Kawthar: There is something magical when you see an animation on paper, rather than seeing it on a screen. I also love to mix real-life objects with animated sketches. I love the surprise factor, in which the viewer doesn't expect what will happen next.

KT: What were some of the challenges you encountered when making this change?

Kawthar: Not all my ideas turn out the way I imagine them. I sometimes spend a lot of time and effort in creating something that I end up not using. But this falls under the learning process and I learn from my mistakes.

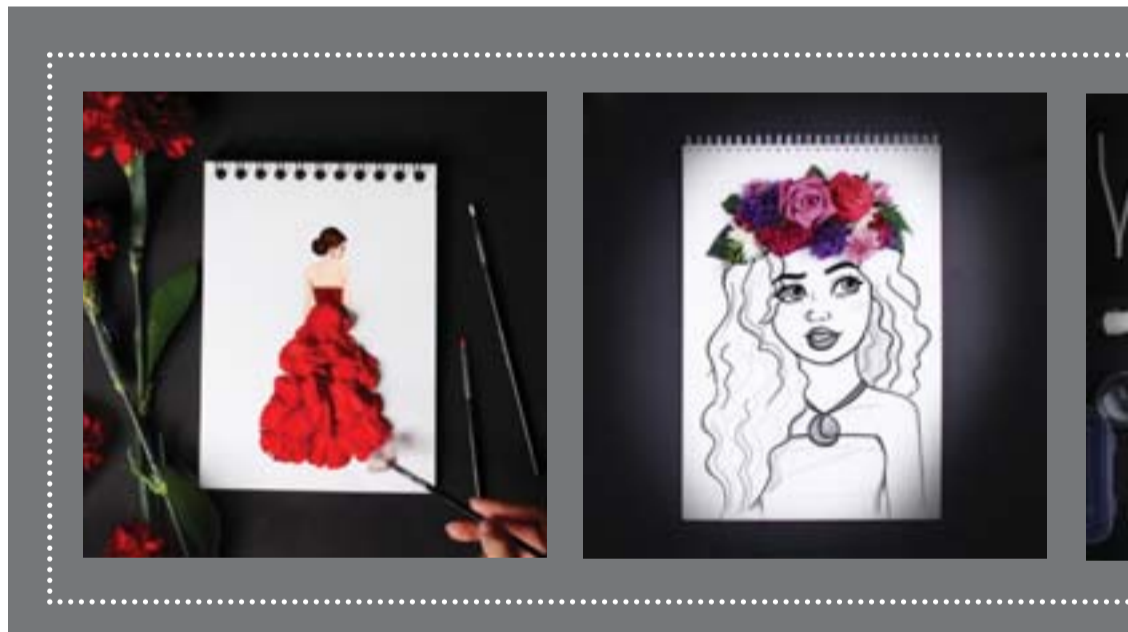
could have executed an idea and what tools they used. Even by looking at bad examples, one can see the mistakes and avoid making them.

KT: What artists have inspired your style the most?

Kawthar: I honestly can say that my style is very different from others. But a few artists that I really admire are PES film, Pinot Ichwardardi and Meagan Cignoli.



Kawthar Bu Metea



KT: What is it about stop-motion animation that attracts you as an artist? What keeps you excited about it?

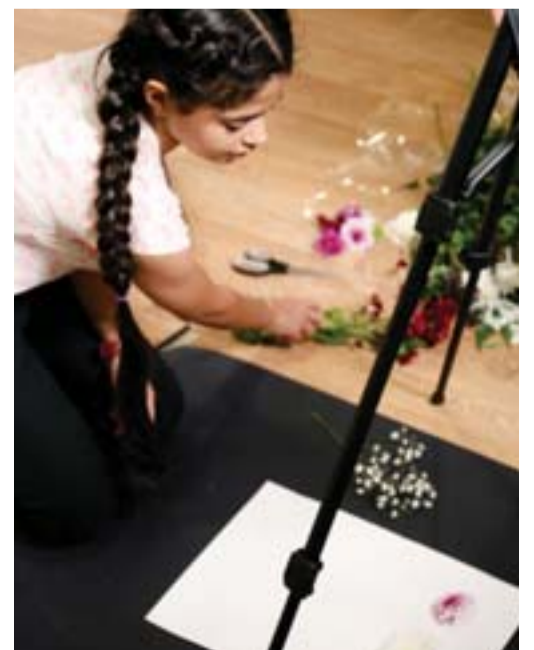
Kawthar: The ability to create very unique videos. I also love that it is a very rare technique which not a lot of people practice or know about.

KT: Can you describe what sort of planning goes into a stop-motion shot? Since it is such a time-intensive process, what aspects are the most important?

Kawthar: The most important part is to know how to execute an idea in the most efficient and best way. Before I start recording, I make sure that I have planned it out perfectly, if it is a complex idea, I usually create a storyboard. Planning it makes working on it much easier.

KT: What advice would you give or what resources would you recommend for beginners who are interested in pursuing stop-motion? What's a good place to start?

Kawthar: Watch lots of stop-motion videos on YouTube and Instagram and try to figure out how they





KT: How much planning do you do before making a video? What's your process usually like?

Kawthar: I come up with an idea, figure out how to implement it (in my head), take the pictures and finally edit. As simple as it sounds, I do get stressed when I start implementing the idea, because I want it to be perfect the first time. The most time I spend on is the editing part. I take no less than four hours even if it is just a six-second video.



Kawthar holds a workshop for children.

Mermaid or even Prince Adam in the movie Beauty and the Beast. What I did was create videos showing how they could have transformed for the purpose of entertainment. A lot of people enjoyed watching them and starting asking for more characters.

KT: Name one product or brand you'd love to work with and why?

Kawthar: There are so many. I would love to work with very high-end designers and brands with a high budget. I am a very ambitious person. I can build a team and create very extraordinary works for them. It would be a very exciting and rewarding experience.



KT: If you could change one thing about your videos, what would it be?

Kawthar: I want to take it to the next level and create very large-scale projects using people and large environments.

KT: Now that you post on Instagram as an option, do you plan on experimenting with new apps?

Kawthar: Not at the moment, but if a new app comes around and it can be the next big thing, I will certainly start posting my work there.

KT: How do you come up with your videos?

Kawthar: I create what I imagine and create what I want to see. For example, seeing a sketch come to life or painting with flowers.

KT: Many of your videos adopt the idea of transforming ugliness into beauty through plastic surgery. Why is that?

Kawthar: In some very famous and beloved movies, characters are transformed magically. Like the Evil Queen in snow white or Ursula in the movie Little

KT: How do you spend your time when you're not working?

Kawthar: I love to watch movies and spend time with my family.

KT: What would you be doing if you didn't have a career in stop-motion videos and animation?

Kawthar: Perhaps be an optometrist. But I feel that every point in my life, everything that I went through and what I was exposed to made me what I am today. I am very thankful.

KT: Last word.

Kawthar: Whenever I work on something and I feel that I do not want to do my best, I remember this hadith: "Allah loves someone who when works, he performs it in a perfect manner (itqan)." By doing things perfectly, I got in return so many things that I never asked for or even imagined I would have - mainly the clients that I got and the very exciting projects.



KUWAITI MARTYRS LAID TO REST



KUWAIT: (Left) Mourners, including National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem (fifth right), attend yesterday the funeral of Waleed Al-Ali and Fahd Al-Husseini, two Kuwaiti clerics who were killed along with 16 people in an attack at a restaurant in Burkina Faso. (Right) Ghanem offers his condolences to the families of Ali and Husseini. —Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat





Khalil Ismail



Khaled Al-Nafisi



Aisha Ibrahim



Abdulaziz Al-Masoud



Abdulaziz Al-Nimsh



Abdullah Al-Khreibit



Ali Al-Mufidi



Ali Al-Breiki

Kuwaiti artistic archive rich in works of late celebrities

KUWAIT: Late Kuwaiti stalwarts who left behind immortal contributions to various artistic sectors, namely theater, played a remarkable role in boosting patriotic faithfulness and safeguarding national unity. The latest of these stalwarts was the actor Abdulhussein Abdulredha, who was laid to rest on Wednesday in a huge funeral by his bereaved fans who shed tears over the passing away of the talented comedian who made them laugh for years.

On May 23, 2017, Kuwait lost Ali Al-Braiki, a prominent dramatist, leaving behind up to 50 theatrical and television works. On April 11, 2015, the actor Ahmad Abdullah Al-Saleh passed away. He was a pioneer in the Kuwaiti theatrical movement, co-working with pioneers in the 60s. One of his famous works was the play, 'Farhat Ummah,' (A Nation's Jubilation), which tackled family bonds and religious extremism. He starred in the famous Kuwaiti cinematic movies 'Bas Ya

Bahr,' and 'Al-Samt'. On Nov 9, 2011, the actor Mansour Al-Mansour died in Algeria due to pneumonia. He acted in the play, 'Al-Hakem Bi-Amrellah' and the TV soap, 'Habbabah.' On Oct 9, 2010, Ghanem Saleh Al-Ghuwainem died. He had appeared on the stage since the 60s, partaking in 'Nahash', 'Fatah Al-Jabal' and 'Abul-Reesh'. He had also co-starred with Abdulredha in 'Bye Bye London.' On Oct 28, 2008, Ali Al-Mufidi died in the United States after a long struggle with illness. He starred in the plays, 'Hallo Dolly' and 'Hami Al-Diyar'. He also co-starred in 'Bas Ya Bahr'. Some of his top famous TV works were 'Darb Al-Zalag,' 'Rgayyah,' 'Sabicha' and 'Soug Al-Magassis'.

On Jan 31, 2008, Khalil Mohammad Ismail passed away. He had joined the Arabian Gulf Theater Troupe in 1981. He was famous for the plays, 'Ard Wa Qard,' and 'Walehaa Shaaleha'. On

March 27, 2006, the famous actor Khaled Al-Nafisi died. He was one of the founders of the theatrical movement in Kuwait. He started his artistic career in 1957 in the play 'Daa Al-Amal.' Later, he co-starred in 'Saqr Qureish', the first popular play in the country. He co-starred in 'Darb Al-Zalag' and 'Khalti Gmashe'.

On June 3, 2004, Mariam Al-Ghadban, also known as 'Habbaba', died. She was famous for villainous roles, though her fans remained fond of her. She was honored on many occasions, and in the last days of her life she went blind. On May 22, 2002, Abdulaziz Saleh Al-Nimsh died. He starred as 'Umm Elewee' in 'Darb Al-Zalag.' He was known for impersonating women on stage, a rare talent at the time. He co-starred in 'Casino Umm Ambar,' 'Forsan Al-Manakh,' and 'Halo Bangkok'.

On Feb 17, 2002, Taiba Abdullah Al-Faraj died

following illness. She had contributions that lasted for 40 years, starting the career at the age of 14 with Mohammad Al-Nashmi in the TV program, "Diwanat Al-Talvizion." She later starred in a number of plays. On Dec 3, 1999, Mohammad Sraye' Al-Sraye' died at 59. He starred in 'Bokhour Umm Jassem' and 'Daa Al-Deek' plays. He co-starred in a number of TV works.

On May 23, 1997, Abdullah Al-Khreibet died following a life full of artistic giving. He was a theatrical actor and director, starting this artistic career in 1956. He starred in 'Ghalat Ya Nas,' 'Al-Jonoon' and 'Cazino Umm Ambar.' On Sept 1992, the actor Aisha Ibrahim died. She excelled in the soap series, 'Atawiat Al-Fereej' as a nerdy secretary. She later co-starred in a series of works. On Aug 9, 1977, Abdulaziz Al-Masoud died in London while on a mission to prepare the play, "Raas Al-Molook. He had co-starred in 'Bas Ya Bahr.' —KUNA



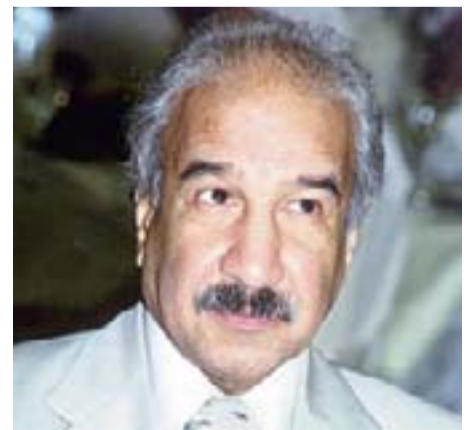
Muhammad Al-Sraye'a



Ahmad Al-Saleh



Ghanim Al-Saleh



Mansour Al-Mansour

KUWAIT, TURKEY SEEK CLOSER MILITARY TIES



ANKARA: Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Mohammad Al-Hamad Al-Sabah held talks yesterday with his Turkish counterpart Nurettin Canikli over efforts to step up military cooperation. Upon arrival, the visiting Kuwaiti minister placed a wreath on the grave of Turkey's founding father Mustafa Kemal Ataturk. After touring Ataturk's mausoleum in the Turkish capital, the Kuwaiti official said he was glad to have been acquainted with the transcontinental nation's rich history. —KUNA

KUWAIT HANDS \$2.2M DONATION TO UNRWA



AMMAN: Kuwait's Ambassador to Jordan Dr Hamad Al-Duaij hands the donation to consultant to UNRWA's Director General Maria Mohammadi. —KUNA

AMMAN: Kuwait has donated a sum of \$2.2 million to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), as part of its annual financial aid to support the UN organization. Kuwait's Ambassador to Jordan Dr Hamad Al-Duaij handed the donation to the consultant to UNRWA's Director General Maria Mohammadi, where he told KUNA that the financial aid represented an earnest desire to help out the Palestinian people, many of whom live in misery.

Meanwhile, Mohammadi described the aid as critical and said it would go a long way in granting many Palestinians access to basic necessities, while serving as a reminder of the plight of refugees. The Kuwaiti diplomat also presented Mohammadi with a miscellaneous amount of \$200,000, given by a Kuwaiti fund, which will be earmarked for healthcare aid. —AFP



KUWAIT: National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem and Minister of Commerce and Industry Khaled Al-Roudhan tour the Kuwait Business Center (KBC) yesterday. —KUNA

JARALLAH HEADS GOVT MEETING

KUWAIT: Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Suleiman Al-Jarallah chaired a government meeting with the participating parties that will attend the second round of Kuwait-US Strategic Dialogue Session. The upcoming session will be held in Washington on Sept 8, coinciding with HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's visit to the United States of America. Participants discussed topics listed on Kuwait-US meeting agenda and review preparations taken by government agencies.

First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister

of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah will head Kuwait's delegation in the upcoming dialogue session while Secretary of State of the United States of America Rex Tillerson will head the US part. The first session of Kuwait-US Strategic Dialogue was held in Oct 2016, under the chairmanship of the two foreign ministers, discussing ways to enhance cooperation between the two countries and strengthening historic friendship in all fields in addition to regional and international developments. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah presides over a meeting with participating parties that will attend the second round of the Kuwait-US Strategic Dialogue Session. —KUNA

SPEAKER LAUDS CUTTING RED TAPE ON KBC TOUR

WORK ON TO LOCATE OIL SPILL SOURCE

KUWAIT: National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem yesterday praised the Ministry of Commerce and Industry for setting up a single counter at Kuwait Business Center (KBC), thus slashing duration for issuing commercial permits from 90 days to only three days. This accomplishment is a preliminary step toward full-scale economic reforms, said Ghanem, who indicated that the prime problem in the sector remained concentration of large numbers of the workforce in the public sector.

For his part, Minister of Commerce and Industry and Acting Minister of State for Youth Affairs Khaled Al-Roudhan said the ministry had received more than 2,500 applications for licensing launch of business companies. Up to 220 permits for very small enterprises have been issued since launching the business center in April, he revealed. The ministry is seeking to improve the domestic business environment and minimizing red tape in

coordination with other departments, Roudhan affirmed.

Meanwhile, Minister of Oil Essam Al-Marzouq said yesterday that results of analyzing samples of the oil spill floating off Al-Messilah has not been delivered to the department yet. Meanwhile, action is proceeding round the clock to determine source of the oil slick. Neither Iran nor Saudi Arabia have reported oil leakage at sea, he said, indicating that Riyadh and Tehran confirmed this after being contacted by the Kuwaiti authorities.

"We are still awaiting satellite images to determine source of the oil spills," added Marzouq, also Minister of Electricity and Water, in remarks to journalists at the Kuwait Business Center. So far, there have been no effects on the sea waters "as we have encircled these spots in a specific location," the minister added. Two oil spills have been located in the Kuwaiti territorial waters recently. —KUNA

LUXURY WATCHES THRIVE AS OTHERS FADE

By Nawara Fattahova

A watch used to be an essential part of an outfit when heading outside to be aware of the time. But today, wearing a watch is like donning an accessory, as most people now depend on their mobile phones to check the time. "I'm not a big fan of watches now. I used to wear one when I was in college. But after I bought a mobile, I stopped wearing a watch," 37-year-old Khuloud told Kuwait Times. She is not the only one depending on her mobile phone to know the exact time. Mohammed, a 50-year-old employee, also doesn't wear a watch anymore.

On the other hand, 24-year-old Yousef still wears a watch, even though he has had a mobile

phone since he was in elementary school, as some people are still keen to wear a watch. "Watches are my passion. I love to wear a watch even if I don't use it to check the time. It's an essential part of my outfit, and I have tens of them. My friends and family know my passion for watches, so they give me watches as gifts on various occasions. I even have watches for diving and water activities," said 30-year-old Ahmad.

Sales of watches have been affected, but the watchmaking industry has survived. "Maybe there is a difference in sale volumes if we compare the situation today to what it was 20 years ago. Many of my friends also don't wear a watch. I think that the effect of mobiles on buying a watch is greater on men, as I definitely sell more women's watches.

The biggest chunk of my sales is of women's watches purchased as gifts," said Melvin, salesman at a popular watch shop in Marina Mall.

Murad, a salesman at a store selling luxury watches in Salhiya Complex, agreed that there is still a demand for watches. "We sell luxury watches and customers buy them, not to use them for knowing the time, but as jewelry. Not only mobiles, but even digital watches didn't dent the market for classic watches," he pointed out. "Both men and women buy watches. But demand for luxury men's watches may be a bit higher, as they have fewer options for accessorizing than women. Women can wear all kinds of bracelets, rings, necklaces, earrings and many other accessories, while for men, the selection is limited," added Murad.

SAUDI ARABIA TO RESTART WORK ON GRAND MOSQUE

DUBAI: Saudi Binladin Group will restart work next month on the \$26.6 billion expansion of the Grand Mosque in Makkah, nearly two years after work stopped in the wake of a crane collapse at the site that killed 107 people, sources told Reuters yesterday. Work will resume after the annual hajj pilgrimage, and Saudi Binladin will pay outstanding salaries owed to staff involved in the project beginning on Aug 20, according to a notice that the company sent to banks and which was seen by Reuters.

Banking and construction industry sources confirmed the plan. Saudi Binladin, one of the country's top construction conglomerates, and the Ministry of Finance were not immediately available to comment. Development of the Grand Mosque and its surrounding area to accommodate more worshippers was halted after the fatal construction accident in Sept 2015, and then remained on hold as government finances were squeezed by low oil prices.

The government is now enjoying a moderate recovery in oil income, and it is keen to resume work on big religious tourism and infrastructure schemes as part of a drive to diversify the economy beyond oil exports. Its plan to restart construction at the Grand Mosque is a fresh sign of the rehabilitation of Saudi Binladin, which was temporarily banned from winning new state contracts after the crane collapse and has been damaged financially by a deep slump in the construction sector.

The Ministry of Finance has allocated a portion of this year's budget to key projects and has been in talks with Saudi Binladin in recent weeks about restarting several big schemes, the sources said. The ministry pledged to make payments that would enable Binladin to pay its staff, they said. Another stalled government project in which Saudi Binladin is involved, the \$3.5 billion construction of the Abraj Kudai hotel complex in Makkah, will restart in coming months, sources told Reuters earlier this week. The company also restarted work earlier this year on the new King Abdulaziz Airport in Jeddah. —Reuters

SAUDIS REOPEN BORDER FOR QATAR HAJJ PILGRIMS

DOHA CAUTIOUSLY WELCOMES DECISION

RIYADH: Qatari hajj pilgrims began to enter Saudi Arabia yesterday, Saudi media reported, as Riyadh reopened the border in a move cautiously welcomed by Doha despite a diplomatic row engulfing the region. The Salwa border crossing, a key passage for Muslims on the annual hajj pilgrimage, has been closed since June in a major crisis that saw Riyadh and its regional allies cut relations with Doha over allegations that the emirate supported Islamist extremists.

Qatar has denied the charge and in turn accused Riyadh of politicizing the hajj by restricting its citizens from making the pilgrimage to Makkah, the holiest site in Islam that is located in western Saudi Arabia. Around 120 Qataris entered Saudi territory yesterday through the Salwa border, also known as Abu Samrah, Saudi state television reported, after King Salman called for the border to be opened for pilgrims without electronic permits. He also ordered that private jets belonging to Saudi airlines be sent to Doha airport "to bring all Qatari pilgrims at his expense", state news agency SPA announced.

Qatar welcomed the decision but also lashed out at what it called Riyadh's politicization of religious freedoms. "Regardless of the manner in which pilgrims from Qatar were banned from the pilgrimage, which was politically motivated... the government of Qatar welcomes the decision and will respond positively," Qatari Foreign Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani told reporters on a visit to Stockholm. "What matters to us is the bottom line, which is that our citizens now have a way to attend the hajj, and we uphold our demand that hajj be spared politicization."

The hajj, a pillar of Islam that capable Muslims must perform at least once, is to take place this year at the start of September and it is expected to draw around two million Muslims from around the world.

'Right to pilgrimage'

On June 5, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates severed diplomatic and trade ties with Qatar in what has emerged as the worst political crisis to grip the region in decades. The kingdom's decision to reopen the frontier came shortly after its powerful Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman met Qatari envoy Sheikh Abdullah bin Ali bin Abdullah bin Jassim Al-Thani, a member of Qatar's ruling dynasty.

The meeting on Wednesday in the Saudi Red Sea city of Jeddah was the first public high-level encounter between the nations since the crisis erupted more than two months ago. The Qatari foreign



JEDDAH: Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (right) meets Qatar's Sheikh Abdullah bin Ali bin Jassim Al-Thani late Wednesday. —AFP

minister, however, said that Sheikh Abdullah had acted on a "personal initiative" and not on behalf of the Doha government. The decision also came after SPA reported that Prince Mohammed had received a phone call from US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, who has sought repeatedly to defuse the regional crisis. Sheikh Abdullah, who's lived previously for some years in Saudi Arabia and has gone back on private visits, has no role in government and his last position was as head of the equestrian and camel racing federation in the 1970s and 1980s, said Gerd Nonneman, a professor of International Relations and Gulf Studies at Georgetown University in Qatar. Sheikh Abdullah's grandfather, father and brother were rulers of Qatar until a palace coup ousted his branch of the royal family in 1972. "He's certainly not an envoy of the Qatari government. This was not a deal that was struck," Nonneman said, describing it as a Saudi "propaganda ploy" to catch the Qatari government off-guard. He said Saudi outreach to various individuals within Qatar's large royal family causes discomfort and "needles the Qatari leadership". Sheikh Abdullah was quoted as telling the Saudi prince that the ties between the two countries "are brotherly relations rooted in history." Saudi Arabia's crown prince responded in kind, emphasizing the historical ties between the two royal families, according to the Saudi Press Agency.

Cautious

Qatar's National Human Rights Committee issued a brief statement yesterday responding to what it

said were "reports in Saudi media" outlining the kingdom's measures for Qatari pilgrims. The committee expressed its "satisfaction" with the decisions, but reiterated its demands that the hajj not be politicized and said the Saudi measures remain "unclear", particularly regarding the facilitation of hajj for foreigners residing in Qatar. The statement noted that the agreement does not include allowing Qatar Airways flights carrying pilgrims. The statement also called "for further measures to lift the siege entirely on citizens and residents of Qatar."

Analysts cautioned yesterday that the dispute was far from over. "This is a goodwill gesture towards the Qatari people and not a breakthrough with the Qatari" government, Ali Shihabi of Washington-based think-tank Arabia Foundation said on Twitter, referring to the border reopening.

The decision also drew strong comments on social media, with many Qataris reacting critically. "We do not need the (Saudi) king's charity. The Qatari right to pilgrimage is not given as charity from the king," one Qatari wrote on Twitter. Some Qataris said that even with permission to enter Saudi Arabia they would be concerned for their safety. "I think it is very risky to go to Makkah this year, there could be hate crimes against Qataris," said Fatima Al-Mohannadi, a Qatari student.

A tiny gas-rich emirate with a population of 2.6 million, 80 percent of them foreigners, Qatar ranks as the world's richest country on a per capita basis, according to the International Monetary Fund. —Agencies

International

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Young migrants from Morocco queue to change their clothes at the port of Tarifa, southern Spain, after being rescued in the Strait of Gibraltar on Wednesday. Spain's maritime rescue service has saved more than 600 migrants trying to cross the Mediterranean Sea from Morocco in the past 24 hours, making it one of its busiest days so far this year. —AP (See Page 14)

INDIA'S 10-YEAR RAPE VICTIM DELIVERS BABY CHILD DENIED ABORTION BY TOP COURT

MUMBAI: A 10-year-old rape victim who was denied an abortion by India's top court gave birth yesterday in a case that has drawn outrage about the sexual abuse of children. The girl did not know she was pregnant and was unaware she had delivered a baby; her parents told their daughter she was undergoing stomach surgery to remove a stone.

"The girl is doing fine, she is recovering. We expect she will be discharged early next week," said Dasari Harish, who heads a committee overseeing the girl's care.

The girl, whose identity has been kept secret, delivered a girl by Caesarean section in a state hospital in the northwestern city of Chandigarh, said Harish, who is a hospital physician. "The parents of the girl have refused to take custody of the child, and have agreed to her adoption through the state agency. They said they don't even want to see the child," he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

Local media reports said the girl had been raped by an uncle and that he was now under arrest. The pregnancy was discovered when the child was taken to the hospital last month after

complaining of stomach pains, and was found to be about 30 weeks pregnant.

Court controversy

A local court refused to grant the child an abortion, saying it was too risky at such a late stage. A plea in the Supreme Court was dismissed for the same reason on July 28. Indian law prohibits terminations at more than 20 weeks unless the mother's life is in danger or in exceptional circumstances.

An increasing number of such cases have come to the courts in recent years. In May, a court allowed another 10-year-old girl allegedly raped by her stepfather to undergo an abortion.

As many as 10,854 cases of child rape were reported in India in 2015, according to the National Crime Records Bureau. Activists say that awareness of, and reporting of, sexual violence against women has risen since a fatal gang-rape of a student on a bus in New Delhi in 2012, which sparked nationwide protests and a tightening of the law. But sexual violence against children still remains a taboo topic, with most cases going unreported. —Reuters

TURKEY TO BOOST MILITARY COOPERATION WITH IRAN

ANKARA: Turkey and Iran have agreed to boost military cooperation after talks in Ankara this week between the Iranian armed forces chief of staff and Turkish leaders, President Tayyip Erdogan's spokesman said yesterday. Iran's military chief General Mohammad Baqeri met Erdogan on Wednesday on a visit Turkish media said was the first to Turkey by an Iranian military chief of staff since the 1979 Islamic revolution in Iran. Erdogan spokesman Ibrahim Kalin described the visit as "fruitful and successful", adding that talks focused on counter-terrorism, the battle with Islamic

State, and a joint effort by Iran, Turkey and Russia to stem the fighting in parts of Syria.

"An agreement was reached to hold further high-level visits from now on," Kalin told a news conference. "A series of activities will also be held to boost military cooperation." Baqeri's trip to Ankara came days ahead of a planned visit by US Defense Secretary Jim Mattis. Ties between NATO allies Turkey and the United States have been strained by Washington's support for Kurdish YPG fighters leading the assault on Islamic State in the Syrian city of Raqqa. —Reuters

SYRIAN ACTRESS WHO RALLIED CROWDS AGAINST ASSAD DIES



PARIS: In this file photo, Syrian actress and activist, Fadwa Suleiman, center, throws roses on a giant Syrian flag during the 'White Wave' campaign to protest against the violence in Syria, in Paris.—AP

BEIRUT: Fadwa Suleiman, an outspoken Syrian actress who took center stage at anti-government protests in the early days of the uprising against President Bashar Assad, has died after a struggle with illness, Syrian opposition groups and friends of the actress said yesterday. She was 46.

Suleiman, who hails from Assad's minority Alawite sect, became a hero to many for taking a stand against his family's decades-old rule. Born in Aleppo, she often appeared at peaceful protests in the central city of Homs, giving speeches to inspire the crowds alongside local soccer star Abdelbasset Sarout who later became an armed opposition fighter. The impassioned actress, known for her performances in numerous plays and TV shows and series, soon became a rare female icon of the rebellion, urging protesters to remain peaceful and focused on their demand for freedom and justice.

As security forces intensified their crackdown on dissent and killed and

jailed opponents, she cut her hair short and began moving from house to house to avoid capture. In 2012, she disguised her appearance and was smuggled out to neighboring Jordan, from where she continued to Paris in 2012, where she has since lived.

In more recent years, she spoke with anguish about the devastation back home and frequently lamented the armed rebellion, saying it was no longer a rebellion she recognized. Eulogies poured in on social media Thursday for the actress described by many as an icon of the Syrian revolution.

In its statement, the opposition Syrian National Council described Suleiman as a "symbol of the revolution" and a "rose among those that joined the protests and sit-ins of Syrians calling for freedom."

Omar Edelbi, a Syrian journalist and opposition activist, wrote on Twitter: "Each day, our revolution loses one of its voices... Goodbye Fadwa, we promise you we will not be broken." —AP

HAMAS MILITANT KILLED BY SUICIDE BOMBER IN GAZA

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip: The Hamas militant group ruling Gaza says one of its fighters was killed by a suicide bomber yesterday while trying to stop the attacker from crossing into Egypt. It marked the first time that Hamas, which has carried out scores of suicide attacks over the years targeting Israelis, was itself struck in such an assault. The Hamas-run Interior Ministry said five other Hamas security forces and an accomplice to the bomber were wounded.

The ministry described the assailant and his colleague as "ideologically deviant," a term Hamas uses to describe members of the Islamic State group and other extremists. There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack. Hamas has sought to secure Gaza's borders in order to improve relations with neighboring Egypt, which is battling an Islamic State affiliate in the Sinai Peninsula bordering Gaza. Hamas has largely observed a truce with Israel since the 2014 Gaza war.

The Hamas fighter who was killed had been tasked with preventing Palestinians from sneaking into Israel or Egypt. He was also a member of the group's armed wing, which in his obituary vowed to "fight the alien deviant ideology without concession." After the attack, Hamas forces set up dozens of checkpoints in the area and began searching cars.

The family of the attacker issued a statement condemning what he did, offering condolences to the security officer's family and refusing to hold mourning observances. Hamas wrested control of Gaza from forces loyal to Western-backed Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas in 2007, confining his forces to parts of the West Bank. Hamas has since clashed repeatedly with more radical groups, which have carried out their own attacks against Israel in part to undermine Hamas. Groups inspired by the IS group, al-Qaida and others have created a headache for Hamas in recent years, accusing it of being too soft on Israel and failing to fully impose Islamic law. Such groups have bombed internet cafes and music stores, and attacked Christians. Jihadis killed an Italian activist in Gaza in 2011.

Egypt and Israel imposed a blockade on Gaza after the Hamas takeover that has crippled the local economy. In recent years, Egypt has cracked down on the once-vibrant tunnel trade along the border. Hamas has denied Egyptian accusations that it supports Sinai militants, and in June it began building a 13-kilometer-long (eight-mile) buffer zone along the border. It also beefed up border security in coordination with Egyptian authorities. —AP

SYRIA DE-ESCALATION ZONES SO FAR POSITIVE: UN ENVOY

UN EYES SYRIA PEACE TALKS IN OCT OR NOV

GENEVA: The United Nations hopes for a "serious negotiation" between the government and a still-to-be-formed unified Syrian opposition in October or November, UN Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura said yesterday.

After seven previous rounds that have failed to persuade the adversaries to hold face-to-face talks, let alone make progress, the veteran diplomat outlined a new timetable for talks to end the six-year war in which hundreds of thousands of people have been killed. He said he expected a meeting in October, possibly in Riyadh, among the three opposition delegations "to take stock of the realities on the ground", with a view to consolidation.

Before that, he planned a brief UN round of diplomacy with the oppositions and government around mid-September in Geneva. "We may be eventually focusing basically on the agenda for the real substantive talks that we hope will take place in October," he told reporters.

"Regarding the (Syrian) government, we are counting very much on Russia, on Iran, on anyone who has got major influence, and on the government of Syria to be ready finally to initiate when they are invited to Geneva, a genuine, direct negotiation with whatever (opposition) platform comes out."

The main opposition is the High Negotiations Committee (HNC) but there are two other dissident groupings, the "Moscow" and "Cairo" platforms. The two, much less opposed to President Bashar al-Assad than the HNC, each comprise some activists but do not control territory or have strong links with armed groups. De Mistura also said that a letter from Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu in early August had paved the way for Russian military police to be staged along the route of a UN-Red Cross



GENEVA: UN Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura (Right) next to Jan Egeland (left), Senior Advisor to the United Nations Special Envoy for Syria, informs the media after a meeting of the International Syria Support Group's Humanitarian Access Task Force at the European headquarters of the United Nations in Geneva yesterday.—AP

convoy which reached the besieged rebel-held town of Douma, in eastern Ghouta near Damascus, yesterday.

The successful convoy, the first since May, consisted of 50 trucks carrying relief items for 35,000 people. "We are seeing just today one of those examples, and I am expecting and hoping that this will become a pattern," De Mistura said.

Jan Egeland, UN humanitarian adviser, said that the convoy to Douma, one of 11 besieged areas, was "hugely symbolic." "It took a lot of effort, a lot of negotiations and a lot of help from Russia and others to make it happen," he said.

Assad is extending his military advantage, helped by the capture of swathes of territory from Islamic State with the help of his Russian and Iranian allies.

IS has also lost ground to the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), dominated by the Kurdish YPG militia. US-backed forces have Islamic State fighters surrounded in central Raqqqa, a Syrian Kurdish commander said last week.

"The worst place probably today in Syria today is the part of Raqqqa city that is still held by the so-called Islamic State," Egeland said. "We reckon there to be 20,000 or 25,000 civilians there. They are encircled by the SDF fighters and they are used seemingly as humanitarian shields by the Islamic State." "We're therefore urging the coalition, the SDF whom we can deal with, to allow, as much as they can, people to escape and come out and to avoid civilian casualties, of which there have been many," Egeland said. — Reuters

UN: ONE MILLION S SUDAN REFUGEES NOW IN UGANDA

KAMPALA, Uganda: The number of South Sudanese refugees sheltering in Uganda has reached 1 million, the United Nations said yesterday, a grim milestone for what has become the world's fastest-growing refugee crisis. Ugandan officials say they are overwhelmed by the flow of people fleeing South Sudan's civil war and the UN refugee agency urges the international community to donate more for humanitarian assistance. An average of 1,800 South Sudanese citizens have been arriving daily in Uganda over the past 12 months, the UNHCR said in a statement. Another 1 million or more South Sudanese are sheltering in Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya, Congo and Central African Republic.

The number of people fleeing jumped after deadly fighting again erupted in South Sudan's capital, Juba, in July 2016. "Recent arrivals continue to speak of barbaric violence, with armed groups reportedly burning down houses with civilians inside, people being killed in front of family members, sexual assaults of women and girls and kidnapping of boys for forced conscription," the statement said.

"With refugees still arriving in their thousands, the amount of aid we are



In this June 9, 2017 file photo, a South Sudanese refugee girl with a baby on her back carries a foam mattress to the communal tent where they will sleep, at the Imvepi reception center, where newly arrived refugees are processed before being allocated plots of land in nearby Bidi Bidi refugee settlement, in northern Uganda. —AP

able to deliver is increasingly falling short." A fundraising summit hosted by Uganda in June raised only a fraction of the \$2 billion that Ugandan officials have said is needed to sufficiently look

after the refugees and the communities hosting them.

Wake-up call

"This unhappy 1-million milestone must serve as a wake-up call to the inter-

national community that much more is needed from them," Sarah Jackson, an Amnesty International official in the region, said in a statement Thursday. "With no resolution to the conflict in South Sudan in sight, refugees will continue to flee to Uganda and the humanitarian crisis will only escalate."

Most of the refugees are women and children fleeing violence, often along ethnic lines, since the world's newest country erupted into violence in December 2013. Ugandan refugee officials have repeatedly warned the influx is straining the country's ability to be generous to the refugees, who often are given small plots of land for building temporary shelters and planting crops when they arrive. The largest of the settlements hosting refugees from South Sudan, Bidi Bidi, is roughly 230 square kilometers (88.8 sq. miles). The World Food Program cut food rations for some refugees amid funding shortages in June.

The UN says at least \$674 million is needed to support South Sudanese refugees in Uganda this year, although only a fifth of that amount has been received. The money is needed to provide basic services, including stocking clinics with medicines and putting up schools. —AP

ASSAD'S MARCH EAST COMPOUNDS WEST'S SYRIA DILEMMA

BEIRUT/AMMAN: Syria's war has entered a new phase as President Bashar Al-Assad extends his grip in areas being captured from Islamic State, using firepower freed by Russian-backed truces in western Syria. Backed by Russia and Iran, the government hopes to steal a march on US-backed militias in the attack on Islamic State's last major Syrian stronghold, the Deir al-Zor region that extends to the Iraqi border. Damascus hailed the capture of the town of Al-Sukhna on Saturday as a big step in that direction.

The eastward march to Deir Al-Zor, unthinkable two years ago when Assad seemed in danger, has underlined his ever more confident position and the dilemma facing Western governments that still want him to leave power in a negotiated transition.

The war for western Syria, long Assad's priority, has shifted down several gears thanks to the ceasefires, including one organized by Moscow and Washington in the southwest. But there is no sign of these truces leading to a revival of peace talks aimed at putting Syria back together through a negotiated deal that would satisfy Assad's opponents and help resolve a refugee crisis of historic proportions. Instead, Assad's face has been printed on Syrian banknotes for the first time, and his quest for outright victory suggests he may retain his guns on rebel pockets in the west once his goals in the east are accomplished. Attacks on the last rebel stronghold near Damascus have escalated this month.

US President Donald Trump's decision to end CIA support to rebels further weakened the insurgency in western Syria, while also depriving Western policymakers of one of their few levers of pressure. They can only watch as Iranian influence increases through a multitude of militias, including Lebanon's Hezbollah, that have been crucial to Assad's gains and seem likely to remain in Syria for the foreseeable future, sealing Tehran's ascendancy. Assad's opponents now hope his Russian allies will conclude he must be removed from power as the burden of stabilizing the country weighs and the West withholds reconstruction support.

With hundreds of thousands of people killed and militias controlling swathes of the country, Assad's opponents say Syria can never be stable again with him in power. "There is little doubt that the Russians would like a political solution to the war. The war is costly for them, and the longer it lasts, the less it will appear to be a success for Putin," said Rolf Holmboe, Research Fellow at the Canadian Global Affairs Institute and former Danish Ambassador to Syria. —Reuters

BURIALS CONTINUE AFTER SIERRA LEONE MUDSLIDES

DISASTER KILLS OVER 300, 600 STILL MISSING

FREETOWN: Burials continued yesterday for the hundreds of victims of deadly mudslides in Sierra Leone's capital as the threat of more rain and further landslides loomed, hurting recovery efforts.

Queen Elizabeth II expressed her sadness over the disaster that has killed more than 300 people. Some 600 are thought to remain missing as anguished family members and rescue workers continue to dig through tons of mud and debris, at times with their bare hands. The monarch, in a message to President Ernest Bai Koroma, said she and Prince Philip were "deeply saddened." The UN reported that a mass burial has been held for 150 bodies. The mudslides and flooding struck early Monday following torrential rains, with many victims trapped in their homes in impoverished, low-lying areas of Freetown and surrounding settlements.

A third of the dead were children. Thousands of people have lost their homes. At the city's overwhelmed Connaught Hospital morgue, many bodies have been too mangled and decomposed to be identified. Koroma's office has said all unidentified corpses will be given a "dignified burial" in the coming days.

Some people said they lost almost all of their family members. "Mother, father, sisters, brothers, cousins all gone. My life has been shattered. ... Please help me God," Hawa Stevens sobbed as she waited in the pouring rain Wednesday outside the mortuary to try to identify the corpses of her loved ones. She said she lost 28 relatives.

Some in the long line wore face masks to try to ward off the smell of death. Many clutched photos of their loved ones, hoping to give them a proper burial. The government has said contingency plans were being put in place to try to stem the outbreak of diseases such as cholera.

Sierra Leone has pleaded for international assistance as it reels from yet another disaster just a couple of years after the Ebola outbreak that left thousands in the region dead. With rain forecast for at least the coming week, the threat of further mudslides around Freetown remained. Many poor areas are near sea level and have poor drainage systems, which makes flooding worse during the rainy season.

Freetown also is plagued by unregulated construction of large residential houses in hilltop areas. Deforestation for firewood and charcoal is another leading contributor to flooding



FREETOWN: Amara Kallon, displays photos of his late daughter Hawa Kalon, who died after heavy flooding and mudslides, outside Connaught hospital morgue in Sierra Leone, Freetown on Wednesday. —AP

and mudslides. Amnesty International said the mudslides' aftermath shows "the human cost of the government's failure to implement housing and land policies." Its statement yesterday said the government should have learned from similar incidents in the past. "Due to a lack of regulation and insufficient consideration for minimum standards and environmental laws, millions of Sierra Leoneans are living in dangerously vulnerable homes," said Makmid Kamara, the group's deputy director of global issues. The U.N. children's agency has said that "children have been left homeless, vulnerable and terrified." — AP

GERMAN NATIONALIST LEADER PETRY COULD LOSE IMMUNITY

BERLIN: German nationalist leader Frauke Petry could face prosecution over allegations she lied under oath, after a parliamentary panel in the eastern state of Saxony recommended yesterday that her immunity should be lifted.

Petry's Alternative for Germany party has campaigned heavily against immigration and is expected to enter the federal parliament for the first time in next month's German elections.

Unless further objections are raised by Saxony's state parliament, Petry's immunity will be lifted next week. The 42-year-old has herself requested the move, saying she wants to clear her name. The investigation centers on differing accounts given by Petry, currently a lawmaker in Saxony, and another party official



COLOGNE: Frauke Petry looks thoughtful at the party convention of Germany's nationalist party AfD (Alternative for Germany) in Cologne. —AP

to a state legislature committee in relation to a candidate list for a 2014 regional election. Separately Thursday, German media reported that a prominent member of the party - known by its acronym AfD - had ties to a suspected Russian agent. Hamburg weekly Die Zeit reported that Markus Frohnmaier, a leader of the party's youth wing, helped register a pro-Russian think tank called European Center for Geopolitical Analysis together with Polish citizen Mateusz Piskorski.

Piskorski was detained in Poland in May 2016 on allegations of spying for Russia and remains under temporary arrest.

Piskorski's arrest prompted outrage in Moscow, where he had been a regular guest invited to speak in Russian state-owned media about the danger of nationalism in Ukraine. Rafal Pankowski, the head of the Polish anti-racism organization Never Again, described Piskorski as "one of the most active and most extreme neo-Nazis in Poland." — AP

ROMANIA: ORTHODOX SYNOD MEETS TO DISCUSS BISHOP SEX SCANDAL

BUCHAREST: The Holy Synod of Romania's Orthodox Church was meeting yesterday to discuss what action to take against a bishop who was seen on video engaging in sexual acts with a male student.

The Bishop of Husi, Corneliu Barladeanu, 51, is currently suspended and claims the 18-minute film is doctored. The two-day meeting is the first time in its 92-year history that the synod has gathered to decide on action to take in a sex scandal. In the courtyard outside, pilgrims and believers lighted beeswax candles, prayed and visited the patriarchal cathedral on a hot yesterday morning. Most said they were not aware the synod was meeting.

But many Romanians are increasingly demanding more accountability from the powerful Orthodox Church to which more than 85 percent of Romanians belong. It has been criticized for the generous subsidies it receives from the state and for being exempt from some taxes.

Public furor over the bishop and another scandal involving a priest who had sex with a male student has been more marked as it involves homosexual acts. The church, however, insists the bishop would have been similarly rebuked if the alleged sexual misdemeanors involved a woman.

Stelian Tanase, a commentator, did not agree. "Society is still not accepting of



BUCHAREST: Media waits outside the Romanian Patriarchal Cathedral in Bucharest yesterday. — AP

homosexuality," he said. "And the church has been losing popularity in recent years," for various reasons, "so it needs to take action." Church spokesman Vasile Banescu told The Associated Press: "The message is that you should not be ordained if your moral behavior does not meet church standards." He said the church would be stricter in the future

over monks that broke the vow of chastity. Bishops are required to be monks in the orthodox faith.

"I can hardly believe these stories are true," said Susana Muresan, 86, who rides seven stops in the bus every day to visit the patriarchal cathedral. "If they are true, I am confident the bishop's case will be judged correctly." — AP

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BRITAIN SAYS 'CONFIDENT' OF NEW PHASE IN BREXIT TALKS

LONDON SEEKS TO UNDERPLAY EU WARNING

LONDON: Britain said yesterday it was "confident" talks with the European Union would move towards discussing their future relationship by October, in contrast to warnings from the top EU negotiator that the target is receding. Prime Minister Theresa May's government wants to push the discussion beyond the divorce settlement soon, to offer companies some assurance of what to expect after Britain leaves in March 2019. But the bloc has repeated that until there is "sufficient progress" in the first stage of talks on the rights of expatriates, Britain's border with EU member Ireland and a financial settlement, officials cannot consider future ties.

Last month, the EU's top Brexit negotiator Michel Barnier said talks on future ties had become less likely to start in October because of a lack of progress in the "divorce" talks.

"Government officials are working at pace and we are confident we will have made sufficient progress by October to advance the talks to the next phase," a spokeswoman for Britain's Department for Exiting the European Union said yesterday. "As the Secretary of State (Brexit minister David Davis) has said, it is important that both sides demonstrate a dynamic and flexible approach to each round of the negotiations," she said in a statement.

On Wednesday, unidentified sources were quoted by Britain's Sky News as saying the two sides might have to delay talks on their post-Brexit relationship until December because they would not make the progress required by the EU.

Future certainty

British businesses have demanded more certainty from the government over how a relationship with the European Union will work after Brexit, saying they cannot make investment decisions. According to a survey of 200 chief financial officers across Britain and other parts of Europe by Thomson Reuters, a majority of businesses are yet to change their strategic planning because of Brexit.

While 69 percent of businesses said they had not seen an impact from the vote on their strategic planning, 21 percent of the CFOs reported they had held off from expanding in Britain.

More damning for the government, confidence among the CFOs in May's ability to secure a positive deal for business is



DUBLIN: Ireland's Foreign Affairs Minister, Simon Coveney, speaks to the media, at Iveagh House in Dublin, in response to the UK Government's Brexit proposals on Wednesday. — AP

just 3.5 out of 10, the survey showed. Possibly responding to criticism that it is not prepared for the talks, May's government this week published proposals for a future customs arrangement and for the border between Ireland and the British province of Northern Ireland.

Both suggested that Britain wanted to mirror much of what is already in place, to reduce friction at borders, and said there should be no border posts or immigration checks between Ireland and the north. A more difficult part of the talks might be how much Britain should pay the EU when it leaves in March 2019. While saying it will meet its responsibilities on the "Brexit bill", Britain has questioned suggestions from the EU that it must pay around 60 billion euros. — Reuters

SPAIN RESCUES 600 MIGRANTS IN MEDITERRANEAN IN 24 HOURS

MADRID: Spain's maritime rescue service has saved more than 600 migrants trying to cross the Mediterranean Sea from Morocco in the past 24 hours, making it one of its busiest days so far this year.

The service said it rescued 16 migrants early Thursday in the Strait of Gibraltar, a narrow passage that separates Spain from Morocco. On Wednesday, its vessels rescued 601 migrants, including two in a canoe and six in a beach paddle boat. The service said of the 601, 432 migrants were rescued in the Strait and 169 further east in the Mediterranean. Some 550 of the migrants were from Maghreb countries of northwest Africa and the rest from sub-Saharan African countries.

More than 9,000 migrants have reached Spain by sea so far this year, more than the total for all of 2016. The International Organization for Migration said one reason for the increase could be that the Mediterranean Sea crossing from Libya to Italy is seen as increasingly dangerous, due to lawlessness in Libya and stepped-up patrols by the Libyan coast guard. More migrants also reach Spain during good summer weather. Tens of thousands of migrants from Africa attempt the perilous sea crossing to Europe in smugglers' boats each year, with many drowning along the way. In Spain's case, many also try to enter Europe by scaling border fences surrounding Ceuta and Melilla, the country's two North African enclaves. — AP

MUGABE IN S AFRICA AFTER WIFE IS ACCUSED OF ASSAULT

JOHANNESBURG: Veteran Zimbabwe leader Robert Mugabe has arrived in South Africa, state media said yesterday, for a regional summit overshadowed by accusations his wife assaulted a 20-year-old model in a Johannesburg hotel room with an electric cable. Zimbabwe's Herald newspaper, the government's main mouthpiece, said 93-year-old Mugabe arrived at a military air base near Pretoria late on Wednesday. The Herald made no mention of the controversy swirling around his 52-year-old wife Grace, who has applied for diplomatic immunity to protect herself from possible assault charges, according to South African police.

Debbie Engels, the mother of the alleged victim, Gabriella, told Reuters her daughter had received 14 stitches on her head from Sunday's assault - which the mother did not witness - and demanded Mugabe face justice. She showed Reuters photographs taken in the hours after the incident showing gashes on Gabriella's forehead and the back of her head. Another picture, taken on Wednesday, showed a large, livid bruise on her thigh. "I just want justice for my daughter. It's not about money. It's about justice. She attacked my child for no reason," she said. Reuters has not been able to verify key aspects of the assault allegations independently. There has been no official comment from Harare and requests for comment from Mugabe's spokesman and from Information Minister Chris Mushove have gone unanswered. — Reuters

News

in brief

MAN WITH KNIFE ARRESTED IN BRIEF HOSTAGE-TAKING

PARIS: Dutch police quickly arrested a man armed with a knife who briefly held a woman hostage yesterday at a radio station building in the Netherlands. The woman was shocked but otherwise unhurt in the early morning incident in Hilversum, southeast of Amsterdam, said Ellen Deheer, a police spokeswoman for the Middle Netherlands region. The man's identity and motives weren't immediately clear, she said. "We will talk to him about what his reasons were to take this woman as a hostage," Deheer said. "She is shocked at this moment. It will take some time to talk to her about this." The man threatened the woman with a knife outside the building and forced her inside, according to another police media officer, Leonie Bosselaar. After sealing off the area, police "decided to end the situation" two hours later, entering the building, arresting the man and rescuing the woman, said Deheer.

Malala wins a place in Oxford University

LONDON: Nobel laureate Malala Yousafzai has gained a place at the University of Oxford. The 20-year-old education activist tweeted her acceptance to the school, saying she was "so excited" to win a spot to study philosophy, politics and economics. Yousafzai won international renown in 2012 after she was shot by a Taliban gunman in Pakistan for speaking out for the right of girls to go to school. After being treated at a hospital in Birmingham she continued her education in the city and won the Nobel Peace Prize. She said earlier this year that she had been offered a university place contingent on her exam results but did not reveal the institution. Yousafzai yesterday congratulated other students receiving their results, tweeting "Best wishes for life ahead!"

Sleeping toddler left in car, dies in heat

VIENNA: Austrian police say a toddler has been found dead after being left in a car for several hours in during high temperatures. Police official Rainer Fritz says the 19-month boy was found by her 17-year-old mother and her boyfriend. He says the two say they left the child in the vehicle in the western city of Bludenz with temperatures at around 30 degrees Celsius (86 Fahrenheit) because they did not want to wake him. Fritz told state broadcaster ORF yesterday that the toddler is being autopsied. If he is found to have died because of the heat, his mother and her boyfriend face manslaughter charges.



In this April 4, 2014 file photo, Mohamed Maouloud Ould Mohamed, a mausoleum caretaker, prays at a damaged tomb in Timbuktu, Mali. — AP

Mali extremist ordered to pay \$3.2 million

BRUSSELS: The International Criminal court ruled yesterday that a Muslim radical found guilty of destroying World Heritage cultural sites in the Malian city of Timbuktu should get nine years in prison and pay 2.7 million euros (\$3.2 million) in reparations. The court in the Netherlands found that Ahmad Al Faqi Al Mahdi had intentionally directed attacks against nine mausoleums and a mosque door in 2012, and ordered him to pay for damage to the buildings, economic losses and moral harm to victims - primarily the people of Timbuktu, who depend on tourism. At a previous hearing, Al Mahdi pleaded guilty and expressed remorse for his role in leading the destruction and urged Muslims around the world not to commit similar acts.

FIVE MISSING AFTER ARMY HELICOPTER GOES DOWN

HONOLULU: A multi-agency team scoured the ocean off Hawaii on Wednesday for five soldiers aboard an Army helicopter that went down during a nighttime training exercise. The UH-60 Black Hawk went missing when another Army helicopter training with it lost visual and radio contact about 9:30 p.m. Tuesday, said Lt. Col. Curtis Kellogg, a spokesman for the 25th Infantry Division. Two pilots and three crew members were on board, he said. The Army has notified the soldiers' families, Kellogg said.

"As we do this work, the soldiers and their families are in the forefront of our minds. That's what we're doing this for," Kellogg said. Honolulu Fire Department search and rescue crews found and collected pieces of helicopter fuselage and a helmet in a

debris field about 2 miles off Kaena Point on Oahu. Photos showed Army soldiers unloading suspected debris from the firefighters' boat at the harbor in the nearby town of Haleiwa.

The search later moved to an area about 5 miles offshore where currents moving in different directions converge. Officials closed the state park at Kaena Point while the search was underway. Kaena is a remote spot northwest of Honolulu where Oahu's northern and western coasts meet to form a small peninsula. The park's sandy coastline is home to a seabird colony and endangered Hawaiian monk seals. A Coast Guard plane, two helicopters and several boats were being used in the search. The Army and Marine Corps joined the effort, as did Honolulu fire

and ocean safety personnel.

Two Black Hawk crews were conducting training between Kaena Point and Oahu's Dillingham Airfield northwest of Honolulu when communications were lost, officials said. Clouds and a few showers were in the area at the time. The soldiers were training at night to maintain the skills they need to do their jobs, Kellogg said. "Our aviation assets, as well as all of our soldiers, train at night. It's what we do," he said. They need these skills to accomplish their wartime mission, Kellogg said. The two helicopters are elements of the 25th Combat Aviation Brigade based in Hawaii. The UH-60 Black Hawk is a four-bladed, twin-engine utility helicopter manufactured for the Army by Sikorsky Aircraft starting in the 1970s. —AP

REPUBLICAN LEADERS DANCE AROUND TRUMP REMARKS

'TRUMP'S RESPONSE, A MONUMENTAL FAILURE IN LEADERSHIP'

NEW YORK: One after another, the nation's most powerful Republicans responded to President Donald Trump's extraordinary remarks about white supremacists. Yet few mentioned the president. The Senate's top Republican, Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, condemned "hate and bigotry." House Speaker Paul Ryan charged that, "White supremacy is repulsive." Neither criticized the president's insistence that there were "very fine people on both sides" of a violent weekend clash between white supremacists and counterdemonstrators.

The nuanced statements reflect the party establishment's delicate dance. Few top Republican officeholders defended the president in the midst of an escalating political crisis. Yet they are unwilling to declare all-out war against Trump and risk alienating his loyalists. And as the 2018 elections begin to take shape, the debate over Trump's words appears to be taking hold in GOP primaries. Trump yesterday attacked some of the Republicans who have directly criticized him.



NEW YORK: President Donald Trump pauses as he answers questions from members of the media in the lobby of Trump Tower in New York. — AP

South Carolina Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham, who doesn't face re-election until 2020, said the president "took a step backward by again suggesting there is moral equivalency between the white supremacist neo-Nazis and KKK members who attended the Charlottesville rally" and the people demonstrating against them. "Many Republicans do not agree with and will fight back against the idea that the party of Lincoln has a welcome mat out for the David Dukes of the world," Graham added, referring to the former Ku Klux Klan leader.

Trump shot back yesterday on Twitter: "Publicity seeking Lindsey Graham falsely stated that I said there is moral equivalency between the KKK, neo-Nazis & white supremacists and people like Ms. Heyer." He was referring to Heather Heyer, the woman who was killed when she was struck by a car driven into the crowd. "Such a disgusting lie," Trump said of

Graham's remarks. "He just can't forget his election trouncing. The people of South Carolina will remember."

Trump then touted a primary opponent of GOP Sen. Jeff Flake of Arizona, tweeting Flake "is WEAK on borders, crime and a non-factor in Senate. He's toxic!" Flake had tweeted on Wednesday, "'We can't claim to be the party of Lincoln if we equivocate in condemning white supremacy.'" Trump's overall approval rating may be dismal, but a small group of die-hard supporters is expected to play an outsized role in next year's midterm elections when the Republican control of Congress is at stake.

Those supporters are praising the president's response to the violence in Charlottesville, Virginia, which left one dead and many more wounded. "You got racism in both factions, on both sides," former New Hampshire GOP chair Jack Kimball said. "Trump has zero fault here. None." Republican leaders also need the president: They hope to work with him to enact meaningful legislation on infrastructure, taxes and health care to prove to voters their party can govern.

'Splitting hairs'

The delicate relationship helps explain Wednesday's cautious comments from powerful Republicans like McConnell. "We all have a responsibility to stand against hate and violence, wherever it raises its evil head," McConnell said in a statement, noting that white supremacists are planning a rally in his home state of Kentucky. "Their messages of hate and bigotry are not welcome in Kentucky and should not be welcome anywhere in America," he said.

Former Republican Presidents George H.W. and George W. Bush, usually silent on current political developments, released a joint statement that stopped short of criticizing Trump as well. "America must always reject racial bigotry, anti-Semitism and hatred in all forms," the Bushes said. The political tap dance frustrated at least one member of Trump's diversity council, CEO of the US Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Javier Palomarez, who called Trump's response "a monumental failure in leadership."

He challenged those who denounced racism in general terms without calling out the president by name. "That's a sign of weakness, and I don't think the American people and the Republican Party is going to forget," said Palomarez, who noted he would remain on Trump's diversity council "for now." But Trump loyalists on the ground in key states are ready to fight for their leader. And there were signs that the divide between the loyalists and establishment Republicans is already shaping the mid-term political landscape.

"We've always had these weak skittish so-called Republicans in the DC crowd. They're always peeing their pants," said Corey Stewart, a former Trump aide who has already launched a 2018 Senate bid in Virginia. Many were quick to blame the media for Trump's struggles. "It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out the liberal media is not a fan of President Trump," said Trump's Alabama campaign chairman, Perry Hooper, arguing the Russia investigation is driven by media obsession. —AP



MISSOURI: This file photo shows Jim and Rhonda Beckford talking about their daughter Kara Kopetsky, who disappeared from Belton High School, in Belton, Missouri. — AP

REMAINS FOUND IN NORTHWEST MISSOURI IDENTIFIED AS TEEN'S

KANSAS CITY: Bones found in a rural area in the spring are those of a 17-year-old northwest Missouri girl, family members and authorities said Wednesday, bringing them closer to solving a 10-year mystery that began when the teen walked out of her high school and disappeared. Police in Belton, where Kara Kopetsky lived and was last seen, said in a statement that the FBI confirmed the remains - one of two sets of human bones discovered in April - were identified through DNA testing as those of Kopetsky.

The teen had been missing since leaving Belton High School on May 4, 2007. Belton is about 20 miles south of Kansas City. Her skull was found in a wooded area near Belton, the day after a mushroom hunter discovered the remains of 21-year-old Jessica Runions, of Raymore, Missouri. Runions was last seen in September 2016, and her death is being investigated as a homicide. Kopetsky's mother, Rhonda Beckford, said Wednesday that relatives had assumed the remains were Kara's since the day they were found.

"We always felt when they found one, they would find both," Beckford said, referring to her daughter and Runions. "So of course we felt from the very beginning that the other set of remains were Kara." She said her family is headed into "a new phase" - one that she describes as one of "resolution" rather than "closure." "We've gotten Kara identified and now we can have a funeral and put her to rest, the way it always should have been, and move toward prosecution," she said. —AP

IRAQ ASKS UN TO COLLECT PROOF TO PROSECUTE IS

UNITED NATIONS: Iraq is asking the UN Security Council for assistance in collecting evidence to prosecute extremists from the Islamic State group for possible crimes against humanity.

Iraqi Foreign Minister Ibrahim Al-Jaafari said in a letter to UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres circulated Wednesday that his government and the United Kingdom are working on a draft Security Council resolution seeking assistance. It was sent more than

five months after human rights lawyer Amal Clooney urged Iraqi Prime Minister Haider Al-Abadi to send a letter to the council so it can vote to set up an investigation into crimes by IS militants in Iraq.

Clooney represents victims of IS rapes and kidnappings from Iraq's Yazidi community. The lawyer, who is the wife of actor George Clooney, said in early March that the world's nations must not let IS "get away with geno-

cide." Amal Clooney on Wednesday welcomed Al-Jaafari's letter as an important first step to bring IS members to justice. But she cautioned that it will only be meaningful if the Security Council acts promptly so evidence can be collected of crimes by IS, which is also known as ISIS and by the Arab acronym Daesh. "Yazidis and other ISIS victims want justice in a court of law, and they deserve nothing less," Clooney said in a statement. "I hope

that the Iraqi government's letter will mark the beginning of the end of impunity for genocide and other crimes that ISIS is committing in Iraq and around the world." Britain's deputy UN ambassador, Jonathan Allen, said the United Kingdom is delighted the Iraqi government's letter makes clear it wants accountability. He noted that Iraq, Britain and Belgium launched a campaign last September to prosecute IS crimes.—AP

INDIANS AMUSED THAN OUTRAGED BY '7 SINS' VIDEO

NEW DELHI: Indians have been more amused than outraged by an agitprop video released by a Chinese state news agency that accuses India of perpetrating "Seven Sins" in a two-month-old frontier standoff and resorts to a racial stereotype to make its point. The video, an edition of Xinhua's new "Spark" show, features anchor Dier Wang accusing India of trespassing on Chinese soil, violating international law and "hijacking" the tiny kingdom of Bhutan that has been caught up in the dispute.

An actor wearing a turban and stick-on beard gives obtuse answers, to canned laughter, in the three-minute video posted via Xinhua's English-language account on social network Twitter. Twitter is blocked in China. "Have you ever negotiated with a robber who had broken into your house and refuses to leave?" asks Wang in American-accented English. "You just call 911 or just fight him back, right?" The actor, apparently representing India, answers: "Why call 911 - don't you wanna play house, bro?"

Wang gets the last word: "If you wanna play, get out of my house first." The trouble started in June when India sent troops to stop China building a road in the Doklam area, which is remote, uninhabited territory claimed by both China and India's ally Bhutan. China has repeatedly asked India to withdraw from the area or else face the prospect of an escalation. Chinese state media have warned India of a fate worse than its crushing defeat in a brief border war in 1962.

Although the escalation in tension is the worst in years, the clip's sketchy production values offered light relief while the stereotype played by the "Indian" actor appeared to cause only mild offence. "This is China's official sense of humor!" tweeted Indian defense pundit Ajai Shukla. "Xinhua isn't quite sure whether it's producing a spoof... or a propaganda piece." In Beijing, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying told a daily news briefing that she had not seen the video, but would look into it. India's foreign ministry could not be reached for comment. Xinhua asked for questions about the video to be sent by fax, to which it did not immediately respond.—Reuters



NEPAL: Nepalese men carry children on their shoulders as they wade through flood waters in village Ramgadhwa in Birgunj, Nepal.—AP

FLOODING MAROONS PEOPLE IN INDIAN STATES, EASES IN NEPAL

FLOODS, LANDSLIDES CLAIM MORE THAN 250 LIVES

LUCKNOW, India: Monsoon flooding is easing in Nepal, but the water flowing downriver has worsened floods in northern India and marooned thousands of villagers across the border, officials said yesterday. The existing flood situation was aggravated in Uttar Pradesh state after three rivers became swelled with the waters from Nepal, said disaster relief official Mohammad Zameer Ahmad. At least six deaths have occurred since Wednesday. Ahmad said yesterday that over 300 villages were marooned in no time and thousands of people were forced to move to higher ground.

Floods and landslides have claimed more than 250 lives in India, southern Nepal and Bangladesh, while millions of others have been displaced since the start of the monsoon season in June, officials said. Deadly landslides and flooding are common across South Asia during the summer monsoon season that stretches from June to September. Most people die because of drowning, or after being caught in collapsed hous-

es or under toppled trees. Yesterday, air force helicopters dropped food packets in flood-hit villages of eastern Bihar state where 78 people have died since June. Nearly 500 army soldiers have helped thousands of rescue workers in evacuating nearly 275,000 people from 14 of 28 state districts, said Arun Kumar Singh, a state government official. Arvind Kumar, a neighboring Uttar Pradesh state government official, said that monsoon floods caused havoc in 22 of 75 state districts, killing at least 33 people since the start of monsoon rains.

At least 115 people have been killed in northeastern Assam state, mostly by drowning, where nearly 3,000 villages have come under water. More than 200,000 people have moved to relief camps set up by the state government. In the Nepalese capital, the Home Ministry said that the flood waters were receding and no new casualties have been reported. Authorities have rushed relief supplies to flood-hit areas in Nepal where incessant rain flooded hundreds of villages, killing 110 people since June.

Security forces rescued people marooned on rooftops, while helicopters distributed food and drinking water packets in the worst-hit southern districts. Water Aid, an international charity, warned that the floods in Nepal, which have affected nearly 11.5 million, risked turning into a public health crisis unless urgent steps were taken to provide those affected with water, sanitation and hygiene.

Tripti Rai, the group's Nepal director, said that the Nepalese government must ensure affected communities were provided with emergency kits, which include water purification tablets and soap, and also temporary toilets to reduce the spread of disease. In Bangladesh, at least 18 major rivers were flowing at high levels. At least 27 people have died in the low-lying delta nation, while another 600,000 are marooned. Bangladesh's disaster management minister, Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury, said nearly 368,000 people have taken refuge in more than 970 makeshift shelters.—AP

PAKISTAN ANGRY AT US FOR ADDING KASHMIR GROUP TO TERROR LIST

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's foreign ministry has expressed anger and disappointment over Washington's move to designate a Kashmir militant group fighting to end India's rule in its area as a terrorist organization. The ministry's spokesman, Nafees Zakaria, said yesterday that Pakistan will continue to extend "political, diplomatic and moral support" to the Kashmiri people in their efforts aimed at self-determination.

Kashmir is divided between Pakistan and India and both claim it in its entirety. Rebel groups in Indian-controlled section of Kashmir have been fighting since 1989 against India's rule there. On Wednesday, the Trump administration said it had designated the Hizbul Mujahideen group as a foreign terrorist organization. Hizbul Mujahideen is the largest of Kashmir's militant groups. Its founder, Syed Salahuddin, was designated a terrorist by the United States in June.—AP

RIGHTS GROUPS SLAM OUTRAGEOUS INDIAN PLAN TO DEPORT ROHINGYA

MUMBAI: Rights groups have condemned India's plan to deport some 40,000 Rohingya Muslims, saying India should abide by its legal obligations and protect the stateless refugees who face persecution in Myanmar. Junior interior minister Kiren Rijiju told parliament last week the central government had directed state authorities to identify and deport all illegal immigrants including Rohingya, even those registered with the UN refugee agency.

"Indian authorities are well aware of the human rights violations Rohingya Muslims have had to face in Myanmar and it would be outrageous to abandon them to their fates," said Raghu Menon, advocacy manager at Amnesty International India. "It shows blatant disregard for India's obligations under international law," he said in a statement on Wednesday. The Rohingya are denied citizenship in Buddhist-majority Myanmar and classified as illegal immigrants, despite claiming centuries-old roots.

Hundreds of thousands of Rohingya have fled Myanmar, where they face atrocities, including murder, rape and arson attacks, with many taking refuge in Bangladesh, and some then crossing a porous border into Hindu-majority India. Many have also headed to Southeast Asia, often on rickety boats run by people-smuggling gangs. The Rohingya are generally vilified in India, and there has been a series of anti-Rohingya protests in the past few months.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has issued identity cards to about 16,500 Rohingya in India. Rijiju, a high-profile minister in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu nationalist government, said the UNHCR registration was irrelevant. India is not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention, which spells out states' responsibilities towards refugees. Nor does it have domestic legislation to protect the almost 210,000 refugees it hosts.

But Asia's third largest economy is bound by customary international law not to forcibly return refugees to a place where they face danger, rights groups say. "The government should put an end to any plans to deport the Rohingya, and instead register them so that they can get an education and health care and find work," Meenakshi Ganguly, South Asia director at Human Rights Watch, said yesterday.—Reuters

CAMBODIAN MEDIC WHO SPREAD HIV ASKS FOR COURT'S MERCY

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia: An unlicensed Cambodian medical practitioner who was sentenced to 25 years in prison for infecting more than 100 villagers with HIV has told an appeals court he only sought to provide care and acknowledged his mistake in reusing syringes. The court in the northwestern province of Battambang in December 2015 found Yem Chrin guilty of cruel behavior resulting in death, intentionally spreading HIV and practicing medicine without a license. He is seeking a reduction of his sentence to 10 years. The court's verdict is due Sept 8. Yem Chrin told the court in Phnom Penh yesterday that he reused disposable syringes and needles because it was difficult to get new ones and he didn't know they could spread the infection.—AP



JAMMU: Rohingya refugee children attend a madrasa at a camp set up for the refugees on the outskirts of Jammu, India. —AP

58 DEAD IN 3 DAYS IN RENEWED PHILIPPINE ANTI-DRUG KILLINGS DUTERTE HAPPY WITH THE SPIKE IN DRUG BLOODSHED

MANILA: Philippine police killed at least 26 more drug and crime suspects in overnight gunbattles in the capital, bringing to 58 the death toll in a renewed bloody crackdown in the last three days that received praises from the president. President Rodrigo Duterte expressed his satisfaction with the new spike in drug killings and reassured law enforcers yesterday they will not rot in jail if they get entangled in lawsuits.

"If the police and the military get into trouble in connection with the performance of duty, you can expect, I really won't agree for you to be jailed," Duterte said to applause from police officers.

While he acknowledged it may be tough for him to bring the drug menace under control during the rest of his six-year term,

Duterte said the deadly crackdown would continue without letup. He announced rewards of 2 million pesos (\$40,000) for each drug-linked police officer who would be killed.

"You policemen who are into drugs ... the bounty I'm offering for your head is 2 million. No questions asked. I will not ask who killed you," Duterte told police officers in southern Ozamiz city. "I want you ... dead." Twenty-six drug and crime suspects were killed and more than 100 others arrested across the congested city in overnight police assaults, said Manila police Chief Superintendent Joel Napoleon Coronel. Officials played down suspicions the slain suspects were victims of extrajudicial killings.

The deaths followed the killings of 32 sus-

pects in separate police anti-drug raids Tuesday in Bulacan province north of Manila. The police operations took place under Duterte's notoriously bloody campaign that has horrified rights groups and sparked a complaint of mass murder against Duterte before the International Criminal Court. The complaint is pending. Police records show that since the nationwide crackdown started, more than 3,200 alleged drug offenders have been killed in gunbattles with law enforcers. More than 2,000 others died in drug-related killings, including attacks by motorcycle-riding masked gunmen and other assaults.

Higher toll?

Human rights groups report a higher toll and demand an independent investigation into Duterte's possible role in the violence. Yesterday, Duterte traveled under heavy security to congratulate officers in Ozamiz, where police fatally shot 15 people, including the city mayor, Reynaldo Parojinog Sr., who was among the politicians Duterte publicly linked to illegal drugs last year.

Parojinog's wife and followers were killed in the July 30 fight that police said erupted when the mayor's men opened fire as they approached to search their houses. The mayor's daughter, who is the vice mayor, and several others were arrested. The Parojinogs have long denied allegations of their involvement in illegal drugs and firearms trade and keeping armed followers.

The involvement of politicians, even judges and police, in illegal drugs underscores how the problem has spiraled out of control, Duterte said. "Are we or are we not a narcotic country? Yes we are," he said. Duterte also expressed disgust over an unfolding scandal when a huge amount of illegal drugs shipped from China slipped past the country's ports. Senators are investigating officials of the Bureau of Customs, who Duterte has described as "corrupt to the core." —AP



MANILA: Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte gestures during the 19th Founding Anniversary of the Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption at the Malacanang Presidential Palace in Manila on Wednesday. —AP

ANTI-MUSLIM AUSTRALIAN SENATOR HANSON WEARS BURQA IN PARLIAMENT

SENATOR CHASTISED FOR OFFENDING AUSTRALIA'S MUSLIM MINORITY



CANBERRA: Senator Pauline Hanson wears a burqa during question time in the Senate chamber at Parliament House in Canberra, Australia. —AP

CANBERRA: An Australian senator provoked an angry backlash from lawmakers by wearing a burqa in Parliament yesterday as part of her campaign for a national ban on Islamic face covers. Pauline Hanson, leader of the anti-Muslim, anti-immigration One Nation minor party, sat wearing the black head-to-ankle garment for more than 10 minutes before taking it off as she rose to explain that she wanted such outfits banned on national security grounds. "There has been a large majority of Australians (who) wish to see the banning of the burqa," said Hanson, an outspoken fan of President Donald Trump, as senators objected.

Attorney-General George Brandis drew applause when he said his government would not ban the burqa, and chastised Hanson for what he described as a "stunt" that offended Australia's Muslim minority. "To ridicule that community, to drive it into a corner, to mock its religious garments is an appalling thing to do and I would ask you to reflect on what you have done," Brandis said. Opposition Senate leader Penny Wong told Hanson: "It is one thing to wear religious dress as a sincere act of faith; it is another to wear it as a stunt here in the Senate."

Sam Dastyari, an opposition senator and an Iranian-born Muslim, said: "We have seen the stunt of all stunts in this chamber by Sen. Hanson." "The close to 500,000 Muslim Australians do not deserve to be targeted, do not deserve to be marginalized, do not deserve to be ridiculed, do not deserve to have their faith made some political point by the desperate leader of a desperate political party," Dastyari said. Senate President Stephen Parry said Hanson's identity had been confirmed before she entered the chamber. He also said he would not dictate the standards of dress for the chamber.—AP

US: WAR WOULD BE HORRIFIC BUT N KOREA NUKES 'UNIMAGINABLE'

BEIJING: A military solution to the North Korean missile threat would be "horrific" but allowing Pyongyang to develop the capability to launch a nuclear attack on the United States is "unimaginable," the top US military officer said yesterday in Beijing. The chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, Marine Corps Gen. Joseph Dunford, told reporters that President Donald Trump directly has "told us to develop credible viable military options and that's exactly what we're doing."

Dunford was responding to questions about Trump's chief strategist Steve Bannon saying in a new interview that the threat posed by North Korea cannot be handled by force. "There's no military solution, forget it," Bannon told *The American Prospect*. "Until somebody solves the part of the equation that shows me that 10 million people in Seoul don't die in the first 30 minutes from conventional weapons, I don't know what you're talking about, there's no military solution here, they got us." In Beijing, Dunford said it's "absolutely horrific if there would be a military solution to this problem, there's no question about it."

But, he added, "what's unimaginable is allowing KJU (North Korean leader Kim Jong Un) to develop ballistic missiles with a nuclear warhead that can threaten the United States and continue to threaten the region." Dunford met later yesterday with Chinese President Xi Jinping, during which both men reinforced the importance of exchanges between their militaries in stabilizing a relationship frequently roiled by dis-

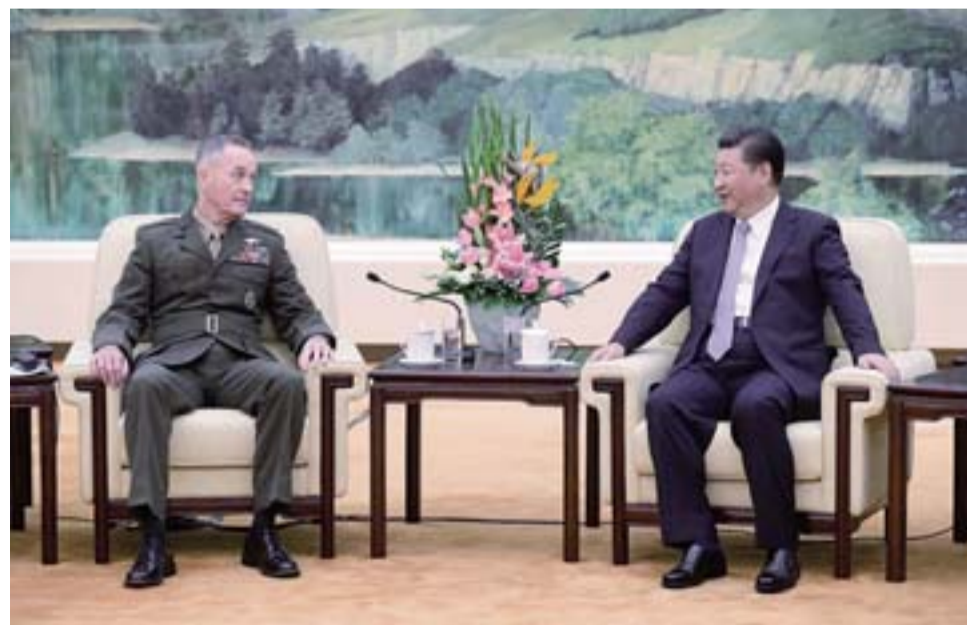
putes over security, diplomacy and trade.

"We both know that you and President Trump are committed to our improvement in military-to-military relations and we have approached it with great commitment, candor and we certainly want to deliver results," Dunford told Xi in opening remarks. Earlier, Dunford met with his Chinese counterpart Fang Fenghui, chief of the People's Liberation Army's joint staff department, another top general, Fan Changlong and top foreign policy adviser, Yang Jiechi.

Fan, the Chinese general, told Dunford that Beijing insists military action should be ruled out and "negotiations are the only effective option" in addressing the situation on the Korean Peninsula, according to a statement from China's defense ministry. Dunford visited South Korea earlier in the week and flies to Japan Thursday night. In Seoul, South Korean President Moon Jae-in said he would consider sending a special envoy to North Korea for talks if the North stops its missile and nuclear tests, in an effort to jumpstart diplomacy.

Fire and fury

He also declared, amid fears in South Korea that threats from Trump to unleash "fire and fury" on Pyongyang could lead to real fighting, that there would be no second war on the Korean Peninsula. "The people worked together to rebuild the country from the Korean War, and we cannot lose everything again because of a war," Moon said in a nationally televised news conference. "I can confidently say there will not be a war



BEIJING: US Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Joseph Dunford, left, chats with President Xi Jinping during a meeting at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. —AP

again on the Korean Peninsula."

Dunford also told reporters in Beijing that "there's no question" any potential military action in the Korean Peninsula would be taken only in consultation with South Korea. "South Korea is an ally and everything we do in the region is in the context of our alliance," Dunford said. Moon's comments follow a

spike in animosity generated by North Korea's warning that it might send missiles into waters near the US territory of Guam, and by Trump's warlike language. Both of the rival Koreas and the United States have signaled in recent days, however, a willingness to avert a deepening crisis, with each suggesting a path toward negotiations.—AP

Friday Times

FRIDAY, AUGUST 18, 2017

Lifestyle

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Diana's death: Week of grief shakes the monarchy

A model displays a creation by legendary Soviet-Russian designer Slava Zaitsev during a fashion show in Moscow.—AFP

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Emma Stone tops list of best paid actresses

Oscar-winning Emma Stone capped a perfect 12 months on Wednesday as she knocked Jennifer Lawrence off the top spot on Forbes' 2017 list of the world's highest-paid actresses. Stone, 28, who won best actress for her role as a struggling performer in "La La Land," made \$26 million in pre-tax earnings in the year up to June, according to the magazine's annual chart. "Friends" star Jennifer Aniston, 48, also leapfrogged Lawrence, grabbing the runner-up spot with earnings of \$25.5 million, boosted by numerous endorsement deals across the world.

Lawrence's \$24 million was enough for third spot but a shadow of the 27-year-old's earnings in the last Forbes list. The star, who took the best actress Oscar for 2012 comedy-drama "Silver Linings Playbook," topped the 2016 chart for a second successive year with \$46 million. Melissa McCarthy and Mila Kunis-



This file photo shows actress Emma Stone attending the 45th AFI Life Achievement Award Gala honoring Diane Keaton at the Dolby Theatre in Hollywood, California. — AFP

on \$18 million and \$15.5 million respectively rounded off the world's five highest-paid actresses. The top 10 -- also including Emma Watson, Charlize Theron, Cate Blanchett, Julia

Roberts and Amy Adams-made a combined \$172.5 million, down 16 percent from last year's \$205 million total, said Forbes.

The actors' list due to be published later in the week is expected to show once again men banking far more than their female counterparts. The issue of pay disparity grabbed headlines in 2014 after a leak of stolen emails from Sony Pictures Entertainment showed that Lawrence was paid less than her male co-stars in the hit movie "American Hustle." Last year, Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson topped Forbes' list of highest-paid actors at \$64.5 million, more than double Stone's total this year.

It has been an incredible few months for Stone, who completed a clean sweep of Hollywood's major prizes in February with an Oscar for her performance as an aspiring actress in "La La Land." She had already picked up trophies at the Golden Globes, British BAFTAs and

Screen Actors Guild Awards. Born Emily Jean Stone in Scottsdale, Arizona to a homemaker mother and businessman father, Stone began acting in youth theater in Phoenix.

At the age of just 14, she made a PowerPoint presentation entitled "Project Hollywood" to persuade her parents to allow her to drop out of school and pursue a movie career. She has appeared in more than 20 movies since her 2007 debut in "Superbad" but really came to the fore as a major talent in "The Help," Tate Taylor's 2011 drama about the racism faced by black maids in 1960s Mississippi. A string of hit films followed, including two "Spider-Man" movies and Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu's "Birdman," which earned Stone a best supporting actress nomination. — AFP

'M: I6' shoot halted as Tom Cruise breaks ankle in stunt

"Mission: Impossible 6" has halted filming after Tom Cruise broke his ankle in a botched stunt, the director confirmed Wednesday, while vowing not to push the release date back. Cruise, known for performing his own death-defying stunts, was injured as he leapt between buildings while attached to cables, slamming into a concrete wall. "M: I6" director Christopher McQuarrie took to social media to assuage fears that the movie's planned July 27, 2018 release date would have to be pushed back.



This file photo shows actor Tom Cruise attending 'The Mummy' New York Fan Event at AMC Loews Lincoln Square in New York City. — AFP

"Thank you all for your support and concern. Tom is on the mend and MI6 is on track for 07.27.2018," he tweeted after visiting the 55-year-old A-lister. McQuarrie-who directed Cruise in "Mission: Impossible 5" (2015) and "Jack Reacher" (2012) -- posted a link to an article with British film magazine Empire in which he said his star was "in very good spirits." He rejected reports that Cruise had fallen short on the jump, filmed in cen-

tral London on Saturday, maintaining that the star was always supposed to slam into the side of the target building.

"What happened is a matter of coordinating what Tom is doing with what the camera is doing, which means you have to do it a number of times," the director said. "And on the fourth try, he hit the building at a slightly different angle and he broke his ankle. He knew the instant that he hit the building that his ankle was broken. You can see it on his face."

Hair-raising moments

"Mission: Impossible 6"-co-starring Simon Pegg, Henry Cavill, Rebecca Ferguson, Angela Bassett and Alec Baldwin has two more months of filming scheduled. McQuarrie told Empire the length of the required hiatus had yet to be determined, but vowed he would "move heaven and earth" to ensure that the fateful fourth take got into the movie.

The director added that he was rearranging the order of the shoot and using any delay as an opportunity to "look at what we've shot and reassess the movie, which is a luxury you don't normally have." Cruise is admired in the industry for his adventurous attitude to filmmaking, which over the years has involved some hair-raising moments on set.

Cruise's co-stars in summer blockbuster "The Mummy" revealed earlier this year the actor is not just single-minded when it comes to doing his own stunts, but cajoles his fellow cast members to get involved too. "We jump off buildings and towns explode, and Tom really does it all, and he insists his cast do it too," added Jake Johnson, 39, who plays Cruise's sidekick in action thriller.

"Yes, I got hurt. My character dies, I almost died. We'd do a stunt and it would hurt, and I'm like, 'I think something went wrong because it hurt' and he'd go 'Well yeah-we jumped off a building, dummy.'" Paramount, the studio distributing "M: I6," and Cruise's representatives did not respond to requests for comment. — AFP



Ariana Saeed poses for a photo in Paris, France. — Reuters

SECURITY FEARS AHEAD OF CONCERT BY AFGHANISTAN'S KIM KARDASHIAN

One of Afghanistan's most controversial pop stars, Ariana Saeed, famous for her figure-hugging outfits, has vowed to go ahead with a fundraising concert in the capital Kabul on Saturday amid threats from conservatives who oppose women singing in public. The show's location is being kept secret following deadly militant attacks in Kabul, such as during a 2014 play in the French cultural centre, and criticism of the event on Facebook.

"I will do it regardless of any consequences," Saeed said by phone from Kabul. "We have already sold more than 4,000 tickets, which shows how people love music, dancing and happiness." The date is significant for women as is the anniversary of Afghanistan's independence in 1919 under King Amanullah Khan, a modernist who campaigned against the veil and polygamy.

Women performing in public is regarded as inappropriate in the conservative Muslim nation. "We will not allow such dances and acts of disbelief in our society," Atallah Faizani, a member of Kabul's provincial council said in a phone interview. Saeed's fans are determined to attend, despite the risks. "Stopping Ariana Saeed's concert is an attack on all women's identity and freedom," Bahar Sohaili said on her Facebook page. "We won't let this happen to us. I will go to this concert."

Saeed will donate money from the show to

families displaced by last week's militant attack on Mirza Olang village in northern Afghanistan, which killed at least 62 people with the number expected to rise. The Taliban and Islamic State both claimed responsibility for the attack, in which victims were buried in mass graves. "This country has deep-rooted problems to be solved," said Saeed, who many Afghans compare to reality television star Kim Kardashian for her long, straight black hair and glamorous dress sense.

"My voice represents peace for my people and a ray of hope for the girls of this country." Saeed has received numerous death threats from religious figures and conservatives who say her western outfits and public appearances flout Afghan culture. In addition to singing, she judges the Afghan version of The Voice talent show. Saeed publicly burned a skin-colored dress in May which she wore at a concert in Paris after critics said she looked like she was naked.

Islamic scholars in Bamiyan Province tried to stop a music festival in June but failed following a public outcry. Campaigners have accused Muslim clerics of hypocrisy in seeking to block Saeed's concert after photographs circulated on Facebook of senior officials watching a female singer performing at the Pakistan Embassy in Kabul. — Reuters



This file photo shows Britain's Diana, Princess of Wales, talking with a man infected with the AIDS virus, during a visit to a hospital in Rio de Janeiro. — AFP photos



This picture shows pictures and objects around the 'Flamme de la Liberté' (Liberty Flame), an original monument Princess Diana fans turned into a commemoration stele, in Paris.

Diana's death: Week of grief shakes the monarchy

Twenty years ago on August 31, 1997, Britain's Princess Diana died in a high-speed car crash in Paris. For the next week, up to her spectacular funeral, Britain was plunged into an unprecedented outpouring of popular grief which shook the monarchy. Here is how the week unfolded:

High speed crash

Divorced for the past year from heir to the throne Prince Charles, Diana, 36, and her new millionaire lover, Egyptian Dodi Al-Fayed, are stalked by a posse of press photographers over the summer as they holiday in the Mediterranean. They arrive in the afternoon of August 30 in Paris and dine in the evening at the Hotel Ritz, in the luxurious Place Vendome. They try to leave discreetly shortly after midnight in a Mercedes.

Chased by paparazzi on motorcycles, the powerful sedan careers at high speed into a pillar in an underpass near the Alma Bridge opposite the Eiffel Tower on the north bank of the River Seine. Diana is pulled out of the Mercedes, which has been reduced to twisted metal, by rescue workers. Al-Fayed and their chauffeur, who the probe shows had a high level of alcohol in his blood, die instantly. Their bodyguard is seriously injured. Seven photographers are arrested.

From the next day, photographs of the crash will be offered to magazines for a million dollars each. Diana is taken to Pitié-Salpêtrière university hospital where at 4:00 am (0200 GMT) she dies of massive chest injuries after two hours of desperate surgery. France's ambassador to Britain telephones Queen Elizabeth II's aides at Balmoral, in Scotland, where the Queen, her husband the Duke of Edinburgh, Charles as well as the couple's two children, William, 15 and Harry, 12, are holidaying over the summer.

The people's princess

Britain awakes in mourning. Under a grey sky hundreds of tearful Londoners start to lay flowers in front of Buckingham Palace and Kensington Palace, the princess's residence. A tearful young Labor Prime Minister Tony Blair pays homage to "the people's princess". The world reacts with dismay. US president Bill Clinton says he is "profoundly saddened".

In India Mother Teresa prays for Diana, just days before her own death, and US rock star Michael Jackson cancels a concert in Belgium in shock. The press is the first to be accused. Diana's brother Charles Spencer says newspapers have blood on their hands. Embarrassed, the British tabloid press elevates Diana to the status of an icon. "Born a Lady. Became our Princess. Died a Saint," writes the Daily Mirror.

Popular grief

The popular fervor grows. At Saint James's Palace, where Diana's body is taken, it takes eleven hours to reach condolence books. "The vision of the bouquets of flowers is amazing: a veritable sea, almost a hundred meters long," AFP writes. The



This file photo shows Britain's Diana, the Princess of Wales, left, and British fashion magazine editor Liz Tilberis arriving at the fourteenth Annual Council of Fashion designers of America Awards Gala at the Lincoln Center in New York.

organization of the funeral proves complex. Since her divorce Diana is no longer known as "Her Royal Highness" and does not have the right to a state funeral, although she still had the title of princess. But Britons call for a tribute worthy of their "queen of hearts".

Royal silence

Anger mounts at the silence of the royal family, still holed up in Balmoral. Newspapers, furious that the Union Jack flag is not flying at half-mast over Buckingham Palace, call on the Queen to address her subjects. The Sun tabloid asks: "Where is our Queen? Where is our flag?" It says not flying the flag is a "stark insult to Diana's memory".

The Queen decides on September 5 to pay homage to her former daughter-in-law, whom she did not like, in a televised speech for only the second time in her reign. She then publicly bows before Diana's coffin. "If they (the royals) fail to heed her lesson, they will bury not just Diana on Saturday-but their future



This file photo shows Britain's Diana, Princess of Wales, holding the face of an Indian boy during her visit to Tamana Arts and Crafts School in New Dehli.

too," The Guardian broadsheet warns, as nearly a quarter of Britons call for the abolition of the monarchy in a poll.

Billions watch funeral

The next day, nearly a million people watch as the funeral procession passes in a deep silence punctuated by sobs and tolling bells. Their heads bowed, the two princes follow the coffin, accompanied by Prince Charles, the Duke of Edinburgh and her brother Earl Spencer, under the eyes of 2.5 billion television viewers around the world.

At Westminster Abbey, 2,000 invitees, including US First Lady Hillary Clinton, Blair, opera singer Luciano Pavarotti, former Conservative Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and US film star Tom Cruise attend the ceremony. Elton John adapts his song "Candle in the Wind", rewriting the lyrics in homage to Diana. In the afternoon, the princess is buried discreetly on a small island at Althorp, Diana's ancestral home. — AFP



Zita Moldovan and Mihaela Dragan speak to audience of the play 'Who killed Szomna Grancsa?' about education of Roma children.



Zita Moldovan (left) and Mihaela Dragan play a journalist interviewing the head of the traditional Roma community in the play 'Who killed Szomna Grancsa?' Jilava village, Romania. — Reuters photos

Romania's Roma rise up with revolutionary theatre

On a hot summer afternoon, two delicately framed women are pulling off a theatrical tour de force, playing out a real-life drama in a village courtyard close to Bucharest. They are at the vanguard of a Roma revolution, a fightback - through art and activism - after centuries of oppression. Their play, "Who killed Szomna Grancsa?", is based on the true story of a Roma girl who committed suicide after her parents stopped sending her to school, and explores the many complex reasons behind the tragedy.

The actors - Mihaela Dragan and Zita Moldovan - each play several characters in her young life: the 17-year-old who killed herself, her parents, teacher, village priest, neighbors and the journalists who covered her burial. Their theatrical approach is a direct challenge to the more simple version of events told on Romanian television - that a young woman died because her parents, from one of Romania's traditional Roma communities, denied her an education. The play instead explores the other daily pressures she had faced: anti-Roma racism in Romanian schools, rural poverty, women's oppression in Romanian society at large.

"Don't all women cry?" one female character asks rhetorically in a summation of the greater female lot. The play is staged by Giuvlipen, a Roma feminist theatre company - a first for Romania - that was founded in 2014 by Dragan, Moldovan and director Mihai Lukacs. The company members spoke to the Thomson Reuters Foundation on the sidelines of their latest play, which is a tough watch for any audience, Roma and non-Roma alike.

Challenge prejudice

Hot topics are the company's forte. In "Gadjo Dildo", Giuvlipen addresses Roma women's sexuality. In one scene, three actors stand before a screen projecting the most common male stereotypes about Roma women - 'passionate', 'exotic', 'submissive' - poking fun at the labels and telling stories of Roma women who contradict them.

A gay character trying to court a female colleague is told, "I did not expect a cute Roma woman like you to be gay". During a performance at Macaz theatre cafe in Bucharest, attended mostly by Bucharest's young intelligentsia, the actors engaged directly with the audience. They singled out a politician, a policeman and an anthropologist, highlighting power relations between them and Roma women. A raw nerve was hit. Members of the elite audience grew decidedly uncomfortable.

"The topics we address are causing debate and I feel that we are contributing to this change," said Moldovan. "We usually play with a full house, so people do really want to see what we are showing them. This is what gives me strength to go on." Giuvlipen - a word created to mean feminism in the Romani language - addresses topics largely new to mainstream Romanian audiences, such as mental health, Roma or housing. Non-Roma must confront their own racism; Roma must concede that patriarchy can govern their traditional communities.

Dragan and Moldovan have faced personal attacks and are

under constant scrutiny for what they wear, say and do. If disarmingly sincere on stage, they are slow in an interview to reveal the emotions that fuel their provocative art. "My work starts from discomfort, from things that hurt me, but then again, theatre is always born from conflict," said Dragan. "I am powerful when I act: for that hour, the audience is mine and listens to my story. They even pay money to listen. When I am on stage, my identity is revolutionary."

Roma rising

While the theatre company is unique, its emergence is part of a new pride in the Roma community and a wider fightback against centuries of oppression. Romania is home to one of the world's largest Roma populations, totaling 2.5 million, according to some estimates. Romanian Roma are a diverse population, spanning rich and poor, urban and rural, the traditional and the assimilated. They are united by the widespread discrimination they face. This means there is limited knowledge about the Roma's history and diversity; stereotypes are the norm.

Anti-Roma racism in Romania goes back to the Middle Ages, when noblemen and the Orthodox Church exploited the Roma as slaves; slavery was abolished only in the 19th century. During World War Two, more than 25,000 Roma from Romania were deported to Transdnister, more than half dying there. Today, the

World Bank estimates 90 percent of Roma families in Romania live in poverty and are targets of racism, including discrimination in access to housing, healthcare and education.

Roma NGOs and activists have tried for decades to bring about change, but in recent years the voices of Roma people fighting discrimination have grown louder and some among the majority Romanians are now finally listening. A grassroots movement of Roma people fighting evictions from their homes in the centre of Bucharest and other major cities emerged in recent years, supported by non-Roma activists too. Non-Roma youth are re-evaluating their taste for 'manele', a type of Roma music, whose earlier rejection was at least in part motivated by racism.

Radu Jude's 2015 film 'Aferim!' brought the history of Roma slavery to wider circles, and non-Roma writers have created complex Roma figures in recent novels, films and journalism. Giuvlipen is now campaigning for the opening of a state-funded Roma theatre, akin to those of all other major ethnic groups in the country. Romanian authorities have so far responded with a cold shoulder. "We are fighting century-old mentalities," says Dragan. "But in the last two, three years, there has been more debate. Racists get snubbed much more often and we feel more comfortable criticizing racist attitudes." — Reuters



Mihaela Dragan (left) and Zita Moldovan play two village neighbors in the play.



Indian models showcase creations by designer Doodlage at Lakme Fashion Week (LFW) Winter /Festive 2017 in Mumbai. — AFP photos

LAKME FASHION WEEK (LFW) WINTER /FESTIVE 2017



Indian models showcase creations by designer Chola at Lakme Fashion Week (LFW) Winter /Festive 2017 in Mumbai.

Indian models showcase creations by designer Paramparik Karigara at Lakme Fashion Week (LFW) Winter /Festive 2017 in Mumbai.

AMERICAN TABLE: **Pastis Shrimp**

By Elizabeth Karmel

This is my French-flavored version of peel 'n' eat shrimp. The sauce is delicious and warrants a whole baguette just for sopping up! It's one of those summer dishes that I make frequently for friends and family. The dish pays homage to one of my favorite places on earth, the South of France, where pastis was born.

The flavors of pastis - the anise-flavored aperitif from the south of France - and big, fat jumbo shrimp in the shell complement each other. Ricard is the pastis brand most commonly available in the states, but if you can't find it, you can use its cooking cousin, Pernod. Pernod is a useful kitchen staple, and is great paired with shellfish, chicken, mushrooms and spinach - anything that is good seasoned with tarragon.

I leave the shrimp in the shell to protect it from the heat, and because much of the flavor is in the shell. The shrimp can cook longer if left in the shell, absorbing more of the flavors of the fragrant sauce - plus, it is fun to peel and eat the shrimp once they are cooked. I place the shrimp in the bottom of a gratin dish and pour a full-flavored potion of pastis, olive oil, garlic, fennel seed, green peppercorns, tarragon and coarse sea salt over it. Once the shrimp are soaked in the sauce, I place the gratin dish in a pre-heated grill or oven, and let them cook for 15-20 minutes, depending on their size. You'll know when the shrimp are done when they are curled up and pink. It is better to take them out a little under-done than over-done. The smell is intoxicating! Serve the shrimp hot-off-the-grill in the gratin dish, and soak up the sauce with a loaf of crusty French bread.

**Ingredients**

Grilling Method: indirect-medium high

Serves 6

Start to finish: 40 minutes

2/3 cup extra-virgin olive oil, plus extra for shrimp

1/4 cup pastis (either Ricard or Pernod)

8 cloves of fresh garlic, grated

2 teaspoons fennel or anise seeds

2 teaspoons whole green peppercorns

1/4 cup chopped fresh tarragon, plus more for serving

24-26 jumbo shrimp or tiger shrimp in the shells (the bigger,

the better, about 1.5 pounds)

2 teaspoons coarse sea salt

Crusty baguette

Preparation

If you prefer to cook this indoors, preheat your oven to 425 degrees Fahrenheit. Whisk together the oil, pastis, garlic, fennel, peppercorns and tarragon. Toss the cleaned and dry shrimp in a bowl with a little oil and the salt. Lay the shrimp in one layer in a shallow gratin dish or casserole (a Pyrex is fine). Pour the pastis mixture evenly over the shrimp.

Place the gratin dish in the center of the cooking grate (or in your oven) and cook about 15-20 minutes, turning the shrimp over once halfway through the cooking time. Take the dish out of the grill or oven as soon as the shrimp are done. You know they are done when they are pink, their tails are curled and they are just cooked through. Do not overcook them. Serve the dish family style on a table spread with newspapers or something that washes easily - this dish can get messy! And don't forget to sop up the sauce with a crusty baguette. — AP

COOKING ON DEADLINE:

Korean-Style Grilled Short Ribs

By Katie Workman

Those who love short ribs LOVE them. Those who haven't cooked them at home before might be a little intimidated by them. Let's bridge that gap. In general, short ribs have to be cooked either low and slow, or very quickly over high heat so that they don't become tough. This recipe calls for almost flash grilling, just 3 or 4 minutes on each side. Because this is a fast-cooked short rib recipe, the cut you'll want to buy is "flanken-style," where the ribs are cut across the bones into thin slices. This allows the surface to caramelize while keeping the middle juicy and tender.

Sometimes, if you find a very, very nice butcher (and I surely did), he or she will cut the flanken in strips in such a way that there are no bones in the slices. This might be more expensive, and some flanken purists might insist that the bones add flavor and are part of the point of short ribs. But when it comes time to eat the meat, boneless flanken strips make for very easy dining.

You can serve these on their own, with a big pile of fluffy rice. I like to serve this the way a number of Korean meat dishes are served, with rice and lettuce leaves, and some condiments of your choice. A bit of the meat and a bit of the rice goes into a lettuce leaf, along with any extras, and then you fold up the lettuce around the filling. This is known as ssam, or lettuce wraps, and they are a lot of fun. The balance of the crisp vegetables, fresh herbs, rich meat and fragrant rice works every time, even though it might be slightly different every time. Part of its charm. Add what you like, skip what you don't, and wrap and eat.

Along with the easily available suggestions for add-ins below, sometimes kimchi is offered, and a condiment called ssamjang, which translates to "wrapping sauce." If you can find either, add them to the offerings. You can also broil these instead of grilling during the months when you are cozying up to your stove instead of your grill.

KOREAN-STYLE GRILLED SHORT RIBS

Ingredients

Start to finish: 13 hours (included 12 hours marinating time)
5 scallions, trimmed and cut into pieces
1/2 cup low-sodium soy sauce
1/2 cup brown sugar
3 tablespoons minced fresh ginger
1 tablespoon minced garlic
1/4 cup apple cider vinegar
1 tablespoon sesame oil
1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper
2 1/2 pounds bone-in beef short ribs, cut across the bones into 1/2 inch slices
Cooked rice

Optional, for serving:

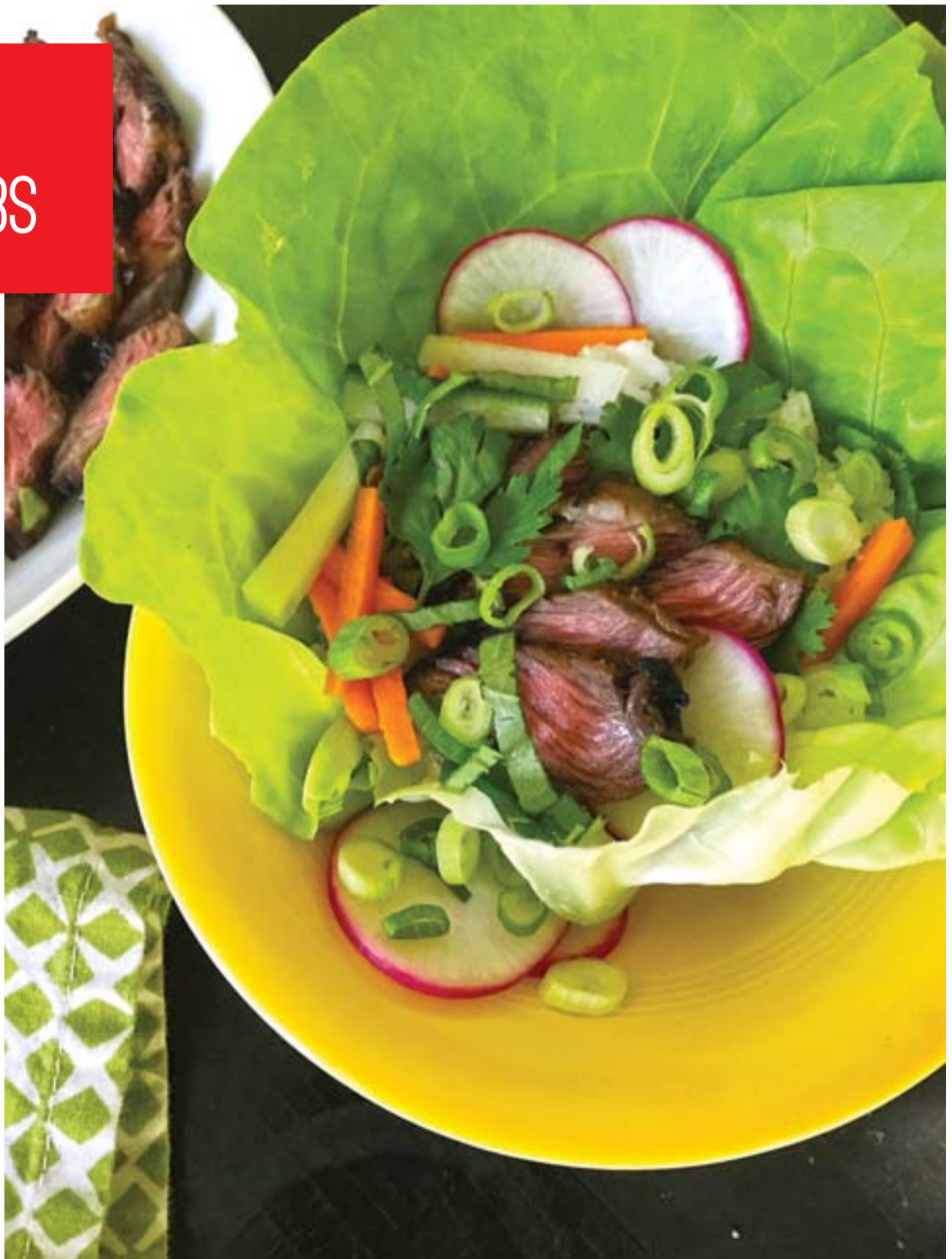
2 tablespoons sesame seeds
Large lettuce leaves, such as tender Boston or Bibb
Slivered scallions
Cucumbers and carrots, cut into matchsticks
Slivered radishes
Fresh herbs, such as basil, mint and cilantro
Sriracha or other hot chili sauce

Preparation

Place the scallions, soy sauce, brown sugar, ginger, garlic, vinegar, sesame oil, black pepper and cayenne pepper in a food processor or blender and blend until smooth. Place the short ribs in a container, pour the marinade over them and turn to coat well. Cover the short ribs and refrigerate from 12 to 24 hours.

Just before grilling, toast the sesame seeds, if using, by heating a small skillet over medium high heat, then adding the seeds. Toss and stir for a few minutes until they become deeper golden in color, but watch carefully as they can burn quickly. Transfer to a small plate.

Preheat the grill to medium high. Remove the short ribs from the marinade. Grill for about 4 minutes on each side, until the outside is caramelized and the middle is medium-rare. Allow the meat to sit for 5 minutes before slicing across the grain and serving with the hot rice. Or, if you prefer (and do consider this), slice the meat thinly and serve it with any or all of the suggested accompaniments. Let each diner wrap up some meat and rice with whatever extras they want, and make it an interactive dinner. — AP



Tomato Mozzarella and Basil Tart is a versatile dish

By Sara Moulton

There are very few things more delicious than tomatoes in season. Sure you can buy them year-round, but these imports tend to be mealy and flavorless, so why bother? Tomato Mozzarella and Basil Tart is a celebration of the tomato at the peak of its perfection, namely right now.

One important step will guarantee this recipe's success: You want to keep the tomatoes' water content from making the tart soggy. How to do it? Salt and drain them. This simple process not only flushes out their excess liquid, but it also magnifies their tomato-iness. For that matter, I recommend lightly salting and draining tomatoes even when you plan to eat them raw in a salad.

Here we've paired the tomatoes with some of their BFFs - mozzarella and basil - then stacked the deck by adding some ricotta and Parmigiano-Reggiano. The recipe calls for full-fat mozzarella and ricotta, but you can lighten it up by using low-fat versions instead.

Also, if you don't feel like making pie dough from scratch, go ahead and substitute store-bought pie dough. (It's usually sold already rolled out in a disposable pie tin.) After letting the store-bought dough soften a bit at room temperature, lift it up gently and fit it into the tart tin just as you would if you were using homemade dough.

By the way, a tart tin fitted with a removable fluted rim will make you look like a baking genius. It automatically gives the dough a fluted edge - no shaping on your part required - and it's designed for easy unmolding so it's a cinch to cut out slices. It's really a worthwhile investment. The finished tart is hard to beat - great right out of the oven or at room temperature - for lunch or dinner, at home or at a picnic. Add a salad and call it a meal.



Ingredients

Start to finish: 5 hours (1 hour active)
Servings: 6 to 8

For the dough

6 ounces (about 1 1/3 cups) unbleached all-purpose flour
1/4 teaspoon table salt
10 tablespoons cold unsalted butter, cut into 1/2-inch cubes
2 to 4 tablespoons ice water

For the pie

4 medium beefsteak tomatoes (about 1 3/4 pounds)
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt plus more for sprinkling on the tomatoes
1 cup packed basil leaves plus extra small leaves for garnish
1/2 cup plus 2 tablespoons whole-milk ricotta cheese
2 large eggs, lightly beaten
1 cup coarsely grated mozzarella cheese (about 6 ounces)
1 ounce freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano
1/4 teaspoon black pepper
Extra-virgin olive oil for brushing on the tomatoes

Make the dough

In a large bowl, stir together the flour and the salt, add the butter and, working quickly with your fingertips or a pastry blender, mix the dough until most of mixture resembles coarse meal, with the rest in small (roughly pea-sized) lumps. Drizzle 2 tablespoons of the ice water evenly over the mixture and gently stir with a fork until incorporated. Gently squeeze a small handful: it should hold together without crumbling apart. If it doesn't, add more ice water, 1/2 tablespoon at a time, stirring 2 or 3 times after each addition until it comes together.

Turn the dough out onto a clean work surface and with the heel of your hand, smear the dough in a forward motion on the work surface to help distribute fat. Gather the smeared dough together and repeat the process. Form the dough into a disk. Chill, wrapped in plastic wrap, until firm, at least 1 hour.

Remove the dough from the refrigerator and let it soften for 30 to 40 minutes at room temperature. On a lightly floured surface roll out the dough into an 11-inch round. Ease the round into a 9-inch tart tin with a removable fluted rim, trim the excess dough and prick the bottom and sides of the dough all over with a fork. Cover and chill for 1 hour.

Preheat the oven to 400 F. Line the shell with aluminum foil and fill it with pie weights, dried beans or rice. Bake in the lower third of the oven for 20 minutes. Carefully remove the foil and pie weights, return the tart shell to the oven and bake it until it is golden brown, about 10 minutes. Transfer to a rack and let cool.

Make the filling

Reduce the oven temperature to 350 F. Slice the tomatoes 1/3-inch thick, lightly salt the slices on both sides and transfer them to a large colander or cake rack to drain for 20 minutes. In a food processor, combine the basil, ricotta and eggs and process until blended. Add the salt, mozzarella, Parmigiano-Reggiano and pepper and process until combined.

Pat the tomatoes dry with paper towels. Line the bottom of the pastry shell with the tomato end pieces, and spoon on the cheese mixture, smoothing it out with a spatula. Arrange the remaining tomato slices on top, in one layer, overlapping them slightly. Brush the tomatoes with olive oil and bake until the cheese mixture is set, about 1 hour. Transfer to a rack to cool for 10 minutes before serving.

GIVE YOUR TABBOULEH A FACE-LIFT BY ADDING FAVA BEANS

By Melissa D'arabian

Beans are an inexpensive and lean source of protein, fiber and micronutrients. But it's easy to fall into a bean rut. White beans, black beans, garbanzo beans and fresh green beans easily make their way to the table relatively frequently.

Consider widening your bean circle and including fava beans, also known as broad beans (perhaps more commonly so, thanks to a "Silence of the Lambs"-induced PR problem). Fava beans are relatively large and flat irregularly-shaped beans that have a creamy, almost buttery taste. They are available in the grocery store frozen fresh, canned, dried, or (my favorite) cooked and vacuum-packed on the packaged vegetable shelf. A quarter cup of fava beans has

about 125 calories, and delivers about 10 grams each of protein and fiber, as well as vitamins and minerals, particularly magnesium and iron.

The mild flavor and pleasant non-mealy texture mean the fava bean is perfect for swapping into almost any of your favorite bean recipes - salads, stews, and soups all get a nice face-lift from bringing in a new bean. This Fava Bean Tabbouleh recipe replaces classic bulgur wheat with fava beans, and the result is a fresh, herbaceous side dish that is hearty enough to work as a meat-free main dish. The salad is sturdy enough to survive brown-bagging or picnicking, or simply an extra day in the fridge if you have leftovers. Grabbing a box of cooked fava beans at the market turns this dish into convenience food you can feel great about.



FAVA BEAN TABBOULEH

Ingredients

Servings: 6
Start to finish: 15 minutes
2 cups cooked fava beans
1 1/2 cups parsley leaves (and soft stems), chopped
1/2 cup cilantro leaves (and soft stems), chopped
1/4 cup mint leaves, roughly chopped
1 large tomato, chopped
2 tablespoons minced shallot

Dressing

1/4 cup lemon juice (approximately 2 medium lemons)
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
1 clove garlic, minced
1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
1/2 teaspoon chili powder
Salt and pepper

Preparation

Place the beans, herbs, tomato and shallot in a large bowl. In a

small bowl, whisk together the dressing ingredients, and pour onto the salad and toss. Will keep for up to 24 hours in the refrigerator. — AP

Nutrition information per serving

123 calories; 47 calories from fat; 5 g fat (1 g saturated); 0 g trans fats; 0 mg cholesterol; 216 mg sodium; 15 g carbohydrate; 4 g fiber; 3 g sugar; 5 g protein.



Friday Times Travel



The grand frontage of the Falaknuma Palace.

Living the royal life in HYDERABAD

It's hard to imagine how it must feel to be king of all you survey. To look out from the palace walls as the sun dips behind the silhouetted hills, and know that everything you see from horizon to horizon is yours to rule. Short of a marrying a monarch, daydreams are probably the closest most people will get to the extravagant existence enjoyed by the rulers of India's princely states, but behind the whitewashed walls of Hyderabad's Falaknuma Palace, you can get just a taste of this life of lavish luxury.

Run as one of India's most nostalgic heritage hotels, the Taj Falaknuma Palace serves up a perfect introduction to Hyderabad, city of palaces, perfumes and pearls. From this hilltop vantage point, the 7th Nizam of Hyderabad - once the richest man in the world - looked out over the rolling hills of India's wealthiest princely state, worth more in its heyday than many European nations.

In fact, living the royal life in Hyderabad is easier than you might imagine, thanks to the thriving traditions that persist from the Nizam's time. Even if you can't afford to stay in the Falaknuma, you can swing by for high tea or haggle for pearls and ittars (Islamic perfumes) in the same bazaars as generations of Hyderabad royals.



Elaborate stucco-work adorning the Chowmahalla Palace.

Sleeping with royalty

My own brush with royalty began with an almost absurdly ostentatious arrival at the Falaknuma, rolling through gardens teeming with peacocks in an open, horse-drawn carriage, before climbing the palace's marble steps beneath a shower of crimson rose petals. It was a wonderfully theatrical introduction to the former palace of the enigmatic (and succinctly named) His Exalted Highness Nawab Sir Mir Osman Ali Khan Siddiqi, Bayafandi Asaf Jah the VIIth, last Nizam of the princely state of Hyderabad Deccan.

Laid out in the shape of a scorpion, with two wings embracing the Palladian central hall like protective claws, the Falaknuma is an elegant sprawl of state-rooms, courtyards and formal gardens, and a splendid clash of East-meets-West ideas. While the Islamic star and crescent rises proudly from the rooftop, the stained glass windows depict Beefeaters, kings and cavaliers. For every Indo-Saracenic turret and Mughal arch, there's a nude-crowned marble fountain or a neoclassical colonnade.

This Europe-by-way-of-Asia interior design was actually the vision of Sir Viqar-ul-Umra, prime minister of Hyderabad Deccan and head of the noble Paigah family, who raised the palace and then gifted the entire complex, gardens and all, to the 6th Nizam, Mahbub Ali Khan, who passed it to his son as a venue for lavish state functions. However, by the middle of the 20th century, the palace was neglected and fading, used as a store for the Nizam's mountain of heirlooms.

Over a formal dinner in the palace grounds, I spoke to the prime minister's great-grandson, Faiz Khan, about the palace's decline. 'As a child I could hardly move in the Falaknuma,' he said wistfully. 'I remember a whole room full entirely of clocks. All the display cases were packed - there were things everywhere.'

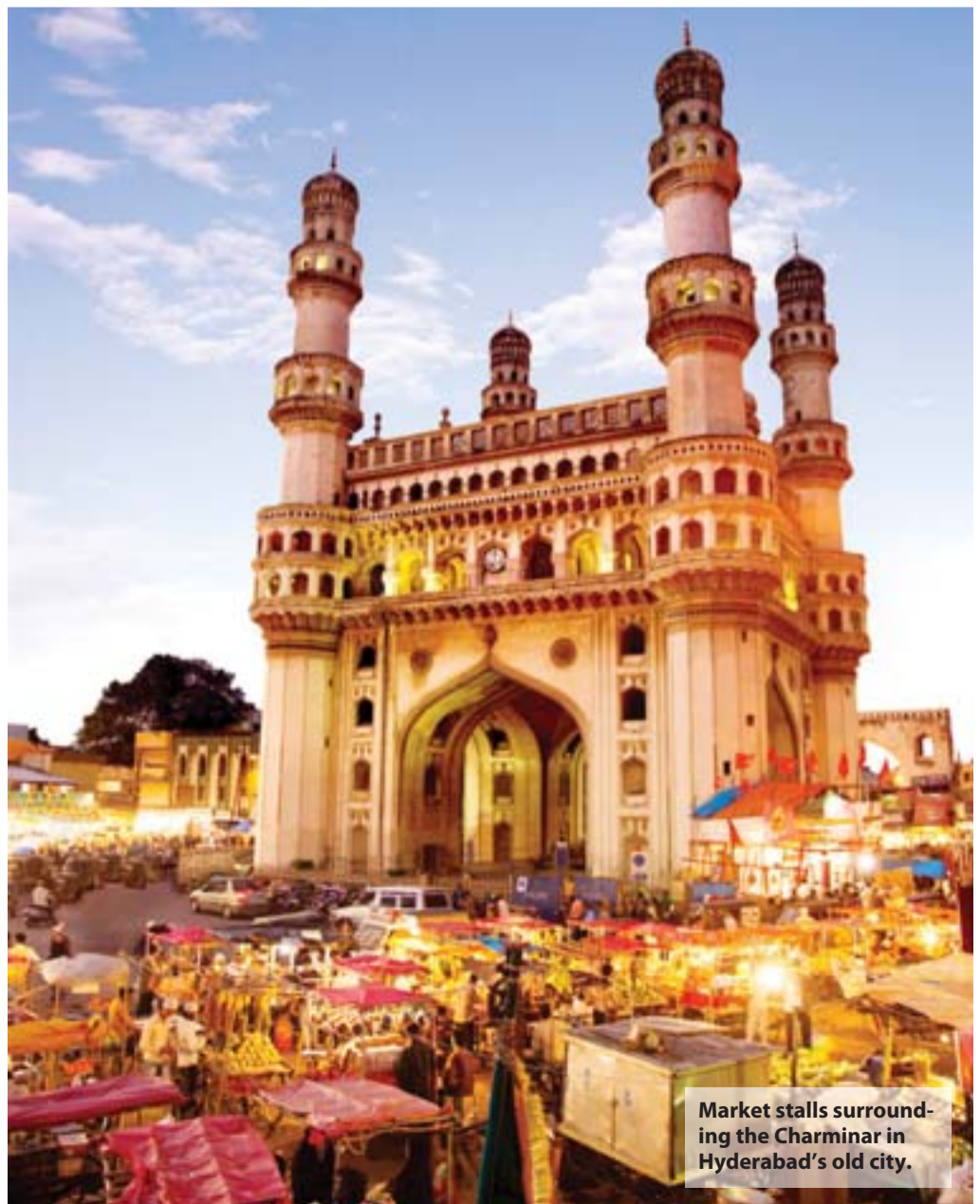
Now painstakingly restored, the Falaknuma today is far from a musty museum-piece. Guests are free to wander the staterooms, decked out with royal portraits and heirlooms as they were in the Nizam's time. During my stay, I spent one thoroughly relaxing evening sipping single malts and playing pool on the Nizam's billiard table, a twin to the table in London's Buckingham Palace. Sadly, the Nizam's legendary dinner table, set with bone china for 100 dignitaries, is no longer used; guests dine instead on the terrace leading off the trinket-stuffed Jade Room.

If you can't stretch to an overnight stay at the Falaknuma, come for high tea or a dinner tour and watch dusk settle over the rooftops of Hyderabad from the terrace, while the Islamic call to prayer rises in a multi-throated chorus from a legion of mosques and dargahs (tombs) tucked into the winding lanes of the old city.

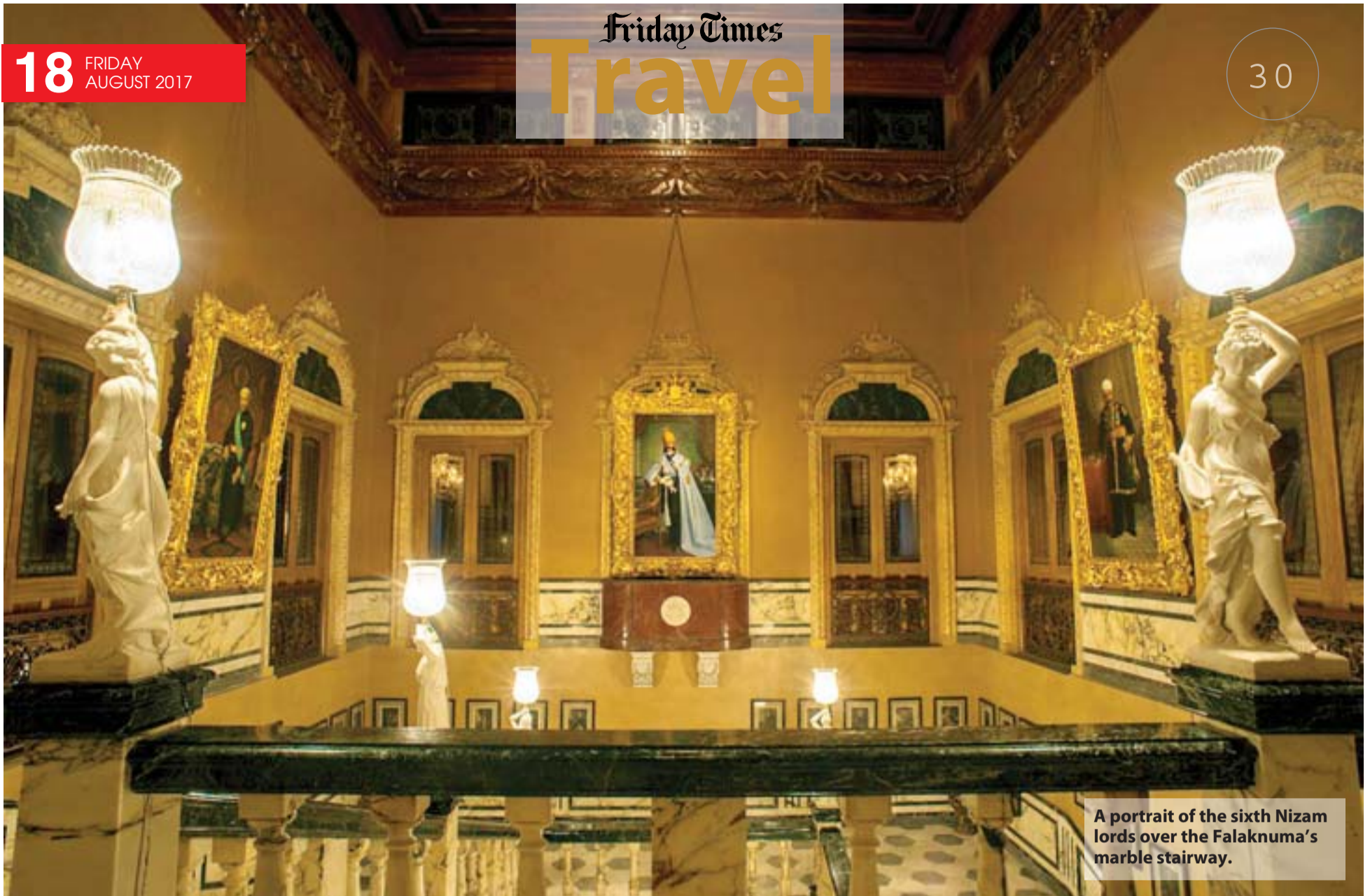
A profusion of palaces

For all its heirlooms, the Falaknuma displays just a tiny fraction of the Nizam's vast wealth. After losing his kingdom at Independence, the 7th Nizam retreated heart-broken to Istanbul and many of his treasures were spirited away by courtiers, but significant parts of the collection were saved by his daughter-in-law, Princess Esra, and displayed in the lovingly restored Chowmahalla Palace, where the Asaf Jahi dynasty entertained official guests and visiting royalty.

'When I came back to Hyderabad after a gap of 20 years I found a very sorry state of affairs,' she explained. 'The Nizam's properties were very badly kept - it was as if history were wiping them away. I felt I had to do something to bring them back to life to help people in Hyderabad remember their past, and keep their history and heritage alive.'



Market stalls surrounding the Charminar in Hyderabad's old city.



A portrait of the sixth Nizam lords over the Falaknuma's marble stairway.



Classical murals fill the entrance hall at the Falaknuma.

While the Falaknuma - also restored by Princess Esra - is unmistakably a home, the Chowmahalla was the public face of the royal family. Here, everything was about appearances, and creating the grandest impression possible for visiting dignitaries, relatives and rivals. Wandering through the interlinked courtyards, flanked by wedding-cake pavilions and rainbow-casting fountains, I felt the same sense of royal theatre as at Peterhof near St Petersburg, or Beijing's Forbidden City, or Versailles.

In one pavilion I found a library of elegant illuminated copies of the Quran, the script picked out in delicate traces of indigo, vermillion and gold. In another, the sumptuous wedding outfits of the royal family, weighed down by kilos of gold and silver thread. But these were minor treasures compared to the Darbar Hall, where the Nizams held court from a marble throne beneath a canopy of Belgian crystal chandeliers.

At the rear of the Chowmahalla compound, a garage displays just a tiny part of the Nizam's personal collection of automobiles. It is said that the sixth and seventh Nizams owned a third of all the cars imported into Hyderabad in the first half of the 20th century. Predictably, the Nizams' tastes ran to luxury limousines, but the story that the Nizam used a fleet of Rolls-Royces to collect rubbish from the streets of Hyderabad is sadly an urban myth.

Luxury in the afterlife

While the Nizams lived lavishly in life, they reverted to Islamic principles of humility in death, residing through the centuries in simple, marble tombs inside the Mecca Masjid, within sight of the Charminar, the mosque-come-triumphal arch that marks the centre of Hyderabad's ancient Islamic quarter. Some of their courtiers, however, were less restrained, building lavish tombs to

rival the great mausoleums of the Mughal emperors.

Reputedly descended from the second Caliph of Islam, the Paigahs erected their own family necropolis southeast of the Charminar. Unlike the towering domes favored by the Mughals, the Paigahs preferred delicate pavilions of carved lime mortar and sculpted marble, ringed by arcades of Islamic arches and intricate perforated marble screens.

Today, the mausoleums are quietly forgotten, and I wandered the tombs in peaceful silence, with only the occasional flash of a colorful sari behind a marble screen to show that I was sharing the necropolis with another living soul.

The price of pearls

The wealth of Hyderabad was built on solid foundations. The kingdom controlled India's only diamond mines - source of the Koh-i-Noor and Hope diamonds, amongst other splendid gems - and the city was India's busiest marketplace for pearls, imported from as far away as Sri Lanka, Basra (in Iraq) and China.

Pearl traders still crowd Patthargatti, the medieval bazaar running north from the Charminar. Stepping into a brightly-lit showroom, I was immediately seized by a vendor and draped with string after string of pearls in every imaginable size, shape and color, in a scene pulled straight from Sinbad the Sailor.

Presented en masse, the gleaming mounds of pearls can inspire a buying frenzy, but shop judiciously. The best pearls should have an even tone and luster; look for strands where every pearl is the same shape and size. You'll pay more for large sizes and perfect spheres, and naturally formed spherical pearls, as compared to cultured pearls grown around a man-made seed, command a stratospheric price tag.—www.lonelyplanet.com



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You are a very strong speaker and will communicate just what is needed. Words just flow out and you have the attention of an audience, co-workers or authority figures. An emotional impact will bring the subject matter home to your listeners. Everyone knows you are a born doer with an incredible drive to accomplish and achieve in most circumstances. Be careful not to allow others to take advantage of you just now. Your ambitions are backed up by the will to get things done. You can be very emotional and others might find you a bit aggressive. You try hard and you tend to push forward in order to reach your goals. This could be a time of career challenges. Your home life will lay the foundation for greater confidence at work.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You cannot help but overindulge today. This does not necessarily mean food. You enjoy challenges and put yourself in the line of fire often. Although you are not dangerous to yourself or others, you do enjoy overcoming difficult situations. Most people look at problems with great dread but you look at problems as the next challenge to test your skills. You have a natural sense of organization and may come across as being a little too sober in the workplace. When it comes to friends you enjoy the interaction between people. You are always available to help others but you enjoy the contact that brings about laughter, jokes and cheerful chatter. Marriage, contracts and partnerships are seen as keys to happiness, with plenty of lessons.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

This is a time during which you are unusually motivated or driven in new and unexpected directions. You could receive unexpected backing-your efforts will be successful. You could have new heights of creativity. You may feel that you can take on any projects after this but remember that life and the current energies seem to enjoy testing us with new things so that we don't always walk away the winner. You should walk in humble ways and just quietly know that you will be able to achieve most anything that is placed in your path. This is also a good time for public relations-you will accomplish much. There is a satisfaction that comes with helping others. You influence people through your optimism. Enjoy some laughter tonight!



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Your talents are clearly measurable. You can expect a sense of support and good will from those around you. The original Sherlock Holmes, you are able to find information and all kinds of secrets. You are research oriented and security minded. The boss or the customer may become much more interested in your talents today. With a shrewd and penetrating mind, you enjoy mental effort and discipline. You could be working long and hard with some project this afternoon. If you are a student, you will find your studies quite interesting. An instinctive urge to get serious about taking care of you is emphasized now. Diet, exercise and work mean more at this time: you want to feel good about yourself and the way you do things.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Your work or career is in real harmony with the rest of your life. You could gain from subordinates or young people at this time. Outer circumstances are favorable and it should be easy for you to push forward in projects and in all aspects of your life. There is time today to clear away any unfinished business. A few opportunities arise for you to help guide others in the right direction, and you have a good attitude about interruptions. This is a good time; good fortune and plain old luck surround you. As you make correct decisions, find the right path and move forward where career and success are concerned, it is time to turn to the personal side of life. Use exercise and physical activity as a means to release any tension and find ways to laugh.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

A lot of energy goes into getting things scheduled and organized. Now is the time to make that outward push to increase your income. This is the best time you will have to make progress, push forward and rise to prominence. It will be hard for you to do wrong, for all the cycles are working in your favor. This is also a time when you may marry or take on a new role in the community or with other people. You will be in demand and recognition is inevitable. This is a time during which things will come to you easily. You may find yourself wanting to shoulder more responsibilities connected with your family, neighborhood or personal business affairs. Friends and a social life are in order-an easy and untroubled life can be enjoyed.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Your career decisions may need a little more organization and self-discipline-you will be happy with the results of this effort. You will find a great deal of improvement in your abilities to respond and gain insight. New habits are developed successfully at this time. You may have enough work time now to plan ahead for a vacation. You may enjoy chatting with your co-worker friends about some of their vacation choices. Making money and multiplying what you have are not only fun but also great habits to get into, and you are good at them. You may find requests from friends for advice on money. To prepare for the worldwide changes that you will be involved in the rest of this year, increase your network of friends.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Self-discipline and a sense of self-worth become important issues this morning. You are working within your limitations instead of feeling hemmed in by them. You may be well-advised to accept the counsel of others concerning decisions relating to your career or life path. Careful-there could be a tendency to go too far, expand too fast and overindulge. Counseling will make it easier for you to understand the areas in which adjustments could be made. Enjoy the progress you are now making! There are emotional beginnings and that feeling of a fresh start-perhaps the establishment of new habit patterns-or just getting rid of old ones. Make sure these new patterns are good ones because they will set the tone for quite some time to come!



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

It may seem like it is forever before you find the answers you need in the workplace today. Your sense of humor is what sees you through as the delays may be outside your control. Customers are rushed-perhaps because of the weather. Many subjects need your attention. One thing at a time and you will be where you need to be. Looking at customers and smiling with the answer they like to hear is supreme. Customers love to hear the words that say you appreciate their patience, etc. You are well-regarded for your attempts to respond quickly to others and remain polite during the frustrations. This evening you will find a great way to relax through a favorite hobby or fun activity. Bicycling or walking with a friend would be helpful and fun.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You may find that the foggy thinking has lifted, and with a little research you will be able to find the foods, atmosphere or conditions that may have caused the difficulty. This new information will help you understand and correct any physical problems that may exist. You may soon have the opportunity to consider a part-time job. If you can swing it for a temporary assignment, it might just work out to your benefit. You successfully set out to make new friends and go to new places this evening. Be prepared to mingle with some very important people who can give your hopes a big boost. If you have a business card available to hand out to these new people, you will leave a positive impression. Dress as conservatively as possible for this evening's event.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Successful career moves may demand conformity and cost you personal freedom, perhaps toning down a few of your unconventional habits. A kind of magic seems to dawn in your life now. Prosperity and security take center stage in your thinking and you are determined to work hard for the financial results that you seek. You excel as a social being and should make a career out of your deep-seated interest in other people, partnerships and relationships. Strengthen your mastery of difficult problem-solving details. This is a month where you can pull a few strings and gain help from your co-worker friends or your other friends. This may mean research money or small errands that a customer may have requested. Tonight you can enjoy sharing a foot massage.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You are riding a high now in terms of taking advantage of the changes that are happening in your life. It is important that you secure any advances you have made recently. In other words, call to confirm things like hard-to-get appointments, price quotes, analysis results, recommendations, etc. There is a change of direction for you, away from the material and glitter, toward inner needs and security. You will find yourself more concerned with maintaining and strengthening your position, rather than pushing outward. This time should be easy and filled with opportunities and friendships. Enjoy them. More demanding times will be coming a little further down the road. Be sure to set aside some prime time for your sweetheart this evening.

COUNTRY CODES

Afghanistan	0093	Kuwait	00965
Albania	00355	Kyrgyzstan	00996
Algeria	00213	Laos	00856
Andorra	00376	Latvia	00371
Angola	00244	Lebanon	00961
Anguilla	001264	Liberia	00231
Antigua	001268	Libya	00218
Argentina	0054	Lithuania	00370
Armenia	00374	Luxembourg	00352
Australia	0061	Macau	00853
Austria	0043	Macedonia	00389
Bahamas	001242	Madagascar	00261
Bahrain	00973	Majorca	0034
Bangladesh	00880	Malawi	00265
Barbados	001246	Malaysia	0060
Belarus	00375	Maldives	00960
Belgium	0032	Mali	00223
Belize	00501	Malta	00356
Benin	00229	Marshall Islands	00692
Bermuda	001441	Martinique	00596
Bhutan	00975	Mauritania	00222
Bolivia	00591	Mauritius	00230
Bosnia	00387	Mayotte	00269
Botswana	00267	Mexico	0052
Brazil	0055	Micronesia	00691
Brunei	00673	Moldova	00373
Bulgaria	00359	Monaco	00377
Burkina Faso	00226	Mongolia	00976
Burundi	00257	Montserrat	001664
Cambodia	00855	Morocco	00212
Cameroon	00237	Mozambique	00258
Canada	001	Myanmar (Burma)	0095
Cape Verde	00238	Namibia	00264
Cayman Islands	001345	Nepal	00977
Central African Republic	00238	Netherlands (Holland)	0031
Chad	00235	Netherlands Antilles	00599
Chile	0056	New Caledonia	00687
China	0086	New Zealand	0064
Colombia	0057	Nicaragua	00505
Comoros	00269	Niger	00227
Congo	00242	Nigeria	00234
Cook Islands	00682	Niue	00683
Costa Rica	00506	Norfolk Island	00672
Croatia	00385	Northern Ireland (UK)	0044
Cuba	0053	North Korea	00850
Cyprus	00357	Norway	0047
Cyprus (Northern)	0090392	Oman	00968
Czech Republic	00420	Pakistan	0092
Denmark	0045	Palau	00680
Diego Garcia	00246	Panama	00507
Djibouti	00253	Papua New Guinea	00675
Dominica	001767	Paraguay	00595
Dominican Republic	001809	Peru	0051
Ecuador	00593	Philippines	0063
Egypt	0020	Poland	0048
El Salvador	00503	Portugal	00351
England (UK)	0044	Puerto Rico	001787
Equatorial Guinea	00240	Qatar	00974
Eritrea	00291	Romania	0040
Estonia	00372	Russian Federation	007
Ethiopia	00251	Rwanda	00250
Falkland Islands	00500	Saint Helena	00290
Faroe Islands	00298	Saint Kitts	001869
Fiji	00679	Saint Lucia	001758
Finland	00358	Saint Pierre	00508
France	0033	Saint Vincent	001784
French Guiana	00594	Samoa US	00684
French Polynesia	00689	Samoa West	00685
Gabon	00241	San Marino	00378
Gambia	00220	Sao Tome	00239
Georgia	00995	Saudi Arabia	00966
Germany	0049	Scotland (UK)	0044
Ghana	00233	Senegal	00221
Gibraltar	00350	Seychelles	00284
Greece	0030	Sierra Leone	00232
Greenland	00299	Singapore	0065
Grenada	001473	Slovakia	00421
Guadeloupe	00590	Slovenia	00386
Guam	001671	Solomon Islands	00677
Guatemala	00502	Somalia	00252
Guinea	00224	South Africa	0027
Guyana	00592	South Korea	0082
Haiti	00509	Spain	0034
Holland (Netherlands)	0031	Sri Lanka	0094
Honduras	00504	Sudan	00249
Hong Kong	00852	Suriname	00597
Hungary	0036	Swaziland	00268
Ibiza (Spain)	0034	Sweden	0046
Iceland	00354	Switzerland	0041
India	0091	Syria	00963
Indian Ocean	00873	Taiwan	00886
Indonesia	0062	Tanzania	00255
Iran	0098	Thailand	0066
Iraq	00964	Toga	00228
Ireland	00353	Tonga	00676
Italy	0039	Tokelau	00690
Ivory Coast	00225	Trinidad	001868
Jamaica	001876	Tunisia	00216
Japan	0081	Turkey	0090
Jordan	00962	Tuvalu	00688
Kazakhstan	007	Uganda	00256
Kenya	00254	Ukraine	00380
Kiribati	00686	United Arab Emirates	00976



00:45 Treehouse Masters
01:40 Preposterous Pets
02:35 Gator Boys
03:25 Whale Wars
04:15 Whale Wars
05:02 Mutant Planet
05:49 Untamed & Uncut
06:36 Swamp Brothers
07:00 Swamp Brothers
07:25 Gator Boys
08:15 Treehouse Masters
09:10 Preposterous Pets
10:05 Mutant Planet
11:00 Gator Boys
11:55 Whale Wars
12:50 Whale Wars
13:45 Preposterous Pets
14:40 Mutant Planet
15:35 Untamed & Uncut
16:30 Treehouse Masters
17:25 Deadliest Snakes Of South Africa
18:20 The Vet Life
19:15 Preposterous Pets
20:10 Gator Boys
21:05 Deadliest Snakes Of South Africa
22:00 The Vet Life
22:55 Mutant Planet
23:50 Untamed & Uncut



00:45 EastEnders
01:15 Holby City
02:10 Carters Get Rich
02:35 Mum
03:05 Uncle
03:35 Pramface
04:10 Death In Paradise
05:05 The Coroner
06:00 Holby City
06:55 EastEnders
07:20 Father Brown
08:15 The Musketeers
09:10 The Musketeers
10:05 The Musketeers
11:00 EastEnders
11:30 Holby City
12:25 The Moonstone
13:15 Father Brown
14:00 Father Brown
14:50 EastEnders
15:20 The Musketeers
16:15 The Musketeers
17:15 The Musketeers
18:15 Father Brown
19:05 The Moonstone
20:00 Top Of The Lake
21:00 Orphan Black
21:45 Benidorm
22:35 Carters Get Rich
23:00 Uncle
23:30 The Moonstone



00:00 The First 48
01:00 Britain's Biggest Heists
02:00 Homicide Hunter
03:00 It Takes A Killer
04:00 The First 48
05:00 Britain's Biggest Heists
06:00 It Takes A Killer
06:30 It Takes A Killer
08:00 The First 48
09:00 Homicide Hunter
10:00 Deadly Wives
11:00 Deadly Wives
12:00 Deadly Wives
13:00 Deadly Wives
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 Diabolical Women
23:00 Escaping Evil: My Life In A Cut



00:30 Playhouse Masters
01:20 Weather Top Tens
02:10 Engineering Earthquakes
03:00 Finding Bigfoot

03:50 Guinness World Records Smashed UK
04:40 How It's Made
05:05 How It's Made
05:30 Playhouse Masters
06:20 Mythbusters
07:00 Kenny The Shark
07:25 Kids vs Film
07:50 My Cat From Hell
08:40 How It's Made
09:05 How It's Made
09:30 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?
10:20 Mythbusters
11:10 My Cat From Hell
12:00 Finding Bigfoot
12:50 How It's Made
13:15 How It's Made
13:40 Playhouse Masters
14:30 Kenny The Shark
14:55 Kids vs Film
15:20 Guinness World Records Smashed UK
16:10 Redesign My Brain
17:00 Now That's Funny
17:50 The Carbonaro Effect
18:15 The Carbonaro Effect
18:40 Mythbusters
19:30 How It's Made
19:55 How It's Made
20:20 Guinness World Records Smashed UK
21:10 Now That's Funny
22:00 The Carbonaro Effect
22:25 The Carbonaro Effect
22:50 Finding Bigfoot
23:40 Guinness World Records Smashed UK



00:05 Important Things With Demitri Martin
00:30 The Half Hour
00:55 Broad City
01:20 Chappelle's Show
02:10 Live At The Apollo
03:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
03:25 Disorderly Conduct: Video On Patrol
04:15 Sweat Inc.
05:05 Bondi Ink
05:55 Hungry Investors
06:50 Urban Tarzan
07:15 Tattoo Disasters
07:40 Disorderly Conduct: Video On Patrol
08:30 Framework
09:20 Coaching Bad
10:10 Catch A Contractor
11:00 Lip Sync Battle
13:05 Disaster Date
13:30 Disaster Date
13:55 I Live With Models
14:20 The It Crowd
14:45 The It Crowd
15:10 Nathan For You
15:35 Nathan For You
16:00 The Jim Gaffigan Show
16:30 Impractical Jokers
18:35 Lip Sync Battle
18:59 Ridiculousness Arabia
19:25 Ridiculousness Arabia
19:46 The It Crowd
20:10 The It Crowd
20:33 Important Things With Demitri Martin
21:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
21:30 The President Show
22:00 Live At The Apollo
22:50 Kumail Nanjani: Beta Male
23:40 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah



00:30 Vanity Fair Confidential
01:20 Murder Comes To Town
02:10 The Detectives Club: New Orleans
03:00 Evil Online
03:48 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
07:00 Betrayed
07:50 Betrayed
08:40 Betrayed
09:30 Betrayed
10:20 The Locator
10:45 The Locator
11:10 Evil Online
12:00 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
12:25 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
12:50 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
13:15 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
13:40 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
14:05 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
14:30 Who On Earth Did I Marry?

14:55 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
15:20 The Locator
16:10 Murder Chose Me
17:00 Blood Relatives
20:20 Deadline: Crime With Tamron Hall
21:10 How (Not) To Kill Your Husband
22:00 Evil Lives Here
22:50 Evil Stepmothers
23:40 Jonben?: An American Murder Mystery



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 Zapped
18:15 Welcome To The Ronks
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 Alex & Co.
21:05 Austin & Ally
21:30 Stuck In The Middle
21:55 Tsum Tsum Shorts
22:00 Bunk'd
22:25 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
22:50 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
04:30 Henry Hugglemonster
04:45 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 Mickey 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 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
11:00 PJ Masks
11:25 My Friends Tigger & Pooh
11:50 Goldie & Bear
12:15 Sofia The First
12:40 Miles From Tomorrow
13:10 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
13:35 PJ Masks
14:00 My Friends Tigger & Pooh
14:30 The Lion Guard
14:55 Harry And Bip
15:00 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
15:30 Mickey 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 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
19:05 Sofia The First
19:35 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
20:05 The Lion Guard
20:35 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
21:00 Goldie & Bear
21:25 Doc McStuffins
21:50 Minnie's Bow-Toons
22:00 Little Mermaid
22:30 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
22:55 PJ Masks
23:20 Henry Hugglemonster
23:35 The Hive
23:45 Loopdidoo



00:20 Wheeler Dealers
01:05 What On Earth?
01:50 How Do They Do It?
02:12 How Do They Do It?
02:35 Impossible Engineering
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 Blowing Up History
06:45 Strip The City
07:30 Cooper's Treasure: The Hunt For A Secret Fortune
08:15 Deadliest Catch
09:00 How Do They Do It?
09:25 Kings Of The Wild
10:10 Treasure Quest: Snake Island
10:55 Gold Rush
11:40 Devil's Canyon
12:25 How Do They Do It?
12:47 Fast N' Loud
13:32 Sacred Steel Bikes
14:17 Street Outlaws: New Orleans
15:02 Ocean Warriors
15:47 Ocean Warriors
16:35 Ocean Warriors
17:25 Ocean Warriors
18:20 Ocean Warriors
20:10 How Do They Do It?
20:35 How Do They Do It?
21:00 Fast N' Loud
21:50 Sacred Steel Bikes
22:40 Street Outlaws: New Orleans
23:30 Deadliest Catch



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 Elite Force
12:30 Lab Rats Elite Force
12:55 K.C. Undercover
13:20 Flashback Friday - Your Winner
13:45 Flashback Friday - Your Winner
14:10 Disney Mickey Mouse
14:15 Flashback Friday - Your Winner
14:40 Flashback Friday - Your Winner
15:05 Bedtime Stories
16:50 Kirby Buckets Warped
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 Warped
21:10 Walk The Prank
21:35 Marvel's Ant-Man
21:40 Disney Mickey Mouse
21:45 Lab Rats: Bionic Island
22:10 Lab Rats: Bionic Island
22:35 Phineas And Ferb
23:00 Programmes Start At 6:00am



00:50 Famously Single
01:50 E! News
02:50 Celebrity Style Story
03:20 Celebrity Style Story
03:50 Botched
04:40 Botched
05:30 Celebrity Style Story
06:00 E! News
07:00 E! News
08:00 E! News: Daily Pop
08:55 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
09:55 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
10:50 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
11:45 Celebrity Style Story
12:15 Rob & Chyna
13:10 Rob & Chyna
14:05 Life Of Kylie
14:30 Life Of Kylie
15:00 E! News: Daily Pop
15:55 Botched
16:45 Botched
17:35 Botched
18:30 Celebrity Style Story
19:00 E! News
20:00 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
21:00 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
22:00 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
23:00 Botched
23:55 Botched



00:00 Rev Run's Sunday Suppers
00:30 Rev Run's Sunday Suppers
01:00 Smollett Eats
01:30 Smollett Eats
02:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
02:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
03:00 Man Fire Food
03:30 Man Fire Food
04:00 Chopped
05:00 Guy's Grocery Games
06:00 Barefoot Contessa
06:30 Barefoot Contessa
07:00 The Kitchen
08:00 The Pioneer Woman
08:30 The Pioneer Woman
09:00 Siba's Table
09:30 Siba's Table
10:00 The Pioneer Woman
10:30 The Pioneer Woman
11:00 The Kitchen
12:00 The Pioneer Woman
12:30 The Pioneer Woman
13:00 Siba's Table
13:30 Siba's Table
14:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives

14:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
15:00 Chopped
16:00 The Kitchen
17:00 The Pioneer Woman
18:00 Chopped
19:00 Iron Chef America
20:00 Luke Nguyen's United Kingdom
20:30 Luke Nguyen's United Kingdom
21:00 Reza, Spice Prince Of Thailand
22:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
23:00 Chopped



00:00 Don't Tell The Bride
01:00 Emmerdale
01:30 Coronation Street
02:30 Masterpiece With Alan Titchmarsh
03:25 I'm A Celebrity...Get Me Out Of Here!
04:40 Catchphrase
05:15 Couples Come Dine With Me
06:05 Don't Tell The Bride
07:05 Masterpiece With Alan Titchmarsh
08:00 I'm A Celebrity...Get Me Out Of Here!
09:20 Catchphrase
10:00 Couples Come Dine With Me
10:50 Don't Tell The Bride
11:50 Masterpiece With Alan Titchmarsh
12:45 Emmerdale
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!
16:55 Tonight At The London Palladium
17:50 Couples Come Dine With Me
18:45 Emmerdale
19:45 Coronation Street
20:10 Masterpiece With Alan Titchmarsh
21:00 I'm A Celebrity...Get Me Out Of Here!
21:55 Tonight At The London Palladium



00:00 Decoding The Past
01:00 Command Decisions
02:00 Missing In Alaska
02:50 Ancient Aliens
03:40 Blood And Glory: The Civil War In Color
04:30 Million Dollar Genius
05:20 Decoding The Past
06:10 The Universe
07:00 Command Decisions
08:00 Missing In Alaska
09:00 Ancient Aliens
10:00 Patton 360
11:00 The Universe
12:00 Decoding The Past
13:00 Command Decisions
14:00 Missing In Alaska
15:00 Ancient Aliens
16:00 Patton 360
17:00 The Universe
18:00 Pirate Treasure Of The Knights Templar
19:00 Command Decisions
20:00 Missing In Alaska
21:00 Ancient Aliens
22:00 The Lost Evidence



00:20 Football: A Brief History By Alfie Allen
01:10 Lost Worlds
02:00 Ax Men
02:50 Storage Wars
03:15 American Pickers
04:05 Pawn Stars
04:30 Pawn Stars
05:00 Mountain Men
06:00 Hunting Hitler
06:50 Time Team
07:40 American Pickers
08:30 Sean Bean On Waterloo
09:20 Swamp People
10:10 Ax Men
11:00 American Pickers
11:50 American Pickers
12:40 Lost In Transmission
13:30 Pawn Stars
13:55 Pawn Stars

14:20 Pawn Stars
14:45 Pawn Stars
15:10 Counting Cars
15:35 Counting Cars
16:00 Alone: Lost And Found
16:50 The Curse Of Oak Island
17:40 Billion Dollar Wreck
18:30 Car Hunters
19:20 Counting Cars
19:45 Counting Cars
20:10 Mountain Men
21:00 American Pickers
21:50 Pawn Stars
22:15 Pawn Stars
22:40 Forged In Fire
23:30 101 People Who Made The 20th Century



00:15 Eat Street
00:45 The Food Files
01:10 Wineroads
01:40 Cruise Ship Diaries
02:05 Cruise Ship Diaries
02:35 Carnival Eats
03:00 Carnival Eats
03:30 One Man & His Campervan
03:55 Wineroads
04:25 Confucius Was A Foodie
05:20 Cesar Millan's Dog Nation
06:15 Dog Whisperer
07:10 Cruise Ship Diaries
07:35 Cruise Ship Diaries
08:05 Carnival Eats
08:30 Carnival Eats
09:00 One Man & His Campervan
09:25 Wineroads
09:55 Confucius Was A Foodie
10:50 Cesar Millan's Dog Nation
11:45 Dog Whisperer
12:40 Bad Trip
13:35 Carnival Eats
14:00 Carnival Eats
14:30 One Man & His Campervan
14:55 Wineroads
15:25 Confucius Was A Foodie
16:20 Cesar Millan's Dog Nation
17:15 Dog Whisperer
18:10 Cesar To The Rescue
19:05 Confucius Was A Foodie
20:00 Cesar Millan's Dog Nation
21:00 Dog Whisperer
22:00 Cesar To The Rescue
22:55 Bad Trip
23:50 Carnival Eats



00:10 Supercar Megabuild
01:00 Big Fix Alaska
02:00 Locked Up Abroad
03:00 World's Most Extreme
04:00 Supercar Megabuild
05:00 Street Genius
05:30 Street Genius
06:00 No Man Left Behind
07:00 Airport Security: Colombia
08:00 Seconds From Disaster
08:30 Seconds From Disaster
09:00 Street Genius
09:30 Street Genius
10:00 Locked Up Abroad
11:00 World's Deadliest Gangs
12:00 Marco Polo: The China Mystery Revealed
12:30 Two Tales Of China
13:00 No Man Left Behind
14:00 Seconds From Disaster
14:30 Seconds From Disaster
15:00 Airport Security: Colombia
16:00 Locked Up Abroad
17:00 Inside The American Mob
18:00 Undercover USA
19:00 Surgery Ship
20:00 Locked Up Abroad
20:50 Inside The American Mob
21:40 Undercover USA
22:30 Surgery Ship
23:20 Seconds From Disaster
23:45 Seconds From Disaster



00:20 Feast Of The Grizzly
01:10 My Life Is A Zoo
02:00 America's Deadliest
02:50 Tiger Man
03:45 When Sharks Attack
Compilations
04:40 Animals Gone Wild
05:35 America's Deadliest
06:30 Tiger Man
07:25 When Sharks Attack

Compilations
08:20 Animals Gone Wild
09:15 Snakes In The City
10:10 Incredible Fish
11:05 When Sharks Attack
Compilations
12:00 Dinofish
12:55 Boss Croc
13:50 World's Deadliest Animals
14:45 Nature's Greatest Talents
15:40 Animals Gone Wild
16:35 Snakes In The City
17:30 Badlands
18:25 Last Devils
19:20 Nature's Greatest Talents
20:10 Animals Gone Wild
21:00 Snakes In The City



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 Best Player
12:36 SpongeBob SquarePants
13:00 SpongeBob SquarePants
13:24 SpongeBob SquarePants
13:48 SpongeBob SquarePants
14:12 SpongeBob SquarePants
14:36 SpongeBob SquarePants
15:00 Rank The Prank
15:24 Rank The Prank
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



00:01 Max & Ruby
00:23 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
00:33 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
00:43 The Day Henry Met
00:48 The Day Henry Met
00:53 The Day Henry Met
00:59 Blaze And The Monster Machines
01:21 Blaze And The Monster Machines
01:43 Zack & Quack
02:05 Team Umizoomi
02:27 Olive The Ostrich
02:32 Olive The Ostrich
02:37 Paw Patrol
03:00 Little Charmers
03:12 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
03:24 Dora The Explorer
03:46 Max & Ruby
04:07 Nella The Princess Knight
04:30 Shimmer And Shine
04:53 Dora And Friends: Into The City!
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
14:35 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: Into The City!
17:17 Zack & Quack
17:29 The Day Henry Met
17:34 The Day Henry Met
17:38 Blaze And The Monster Machines
18:00 Rusty Rivets
18:13 Paw Patrol
18:37 Dora The Explorer
19:00 Zack & Quack
19:21 Bubble Guppies
19:44 Blaze And The Monster Machines
20:07 Paw Patrol
20:30 Shimmer And Shine
20:53 Nella The Princess Knight
21:15 The Day Henry Met
21:22 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



00:15 The Middle
00:40 The Middle
01:05 Difficult People
01:30 Sex & Drugs & Rock & Roll
01:55 The Big C
02:25 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
03:10 Late Night With Seth Meyers
04:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
04:50 George Lopez
05:15 Suburgatory
05:40 American Housewife
06:05 The Mick
06:30 Mom
06:55 Breaking In
07:20 Late Night With Seth Meyers
08:10 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
09:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
09:50 George Lopez
10:15 Suburgatory
10:40 Mom
11:05 Breaking In
11:30 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
12:20 Seinfeld
12:45 Seinfeld
13:10 The Middle
13:35 The Middle
14:00 George Lopez
14:25 Suburgatory
14:50 Mom
15:15 American Housewife
15:40 The Mick
16:05 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
17:00 Seinfeld
17:30 Seinfeld
18:00 The Middle
18:30 The Middle
19:00 Powerless
19:30 Baby Daddy
20:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
21:00 Seinfeld
21:30 Seinfeld
22:00 Difficult People
22:30 Sex & Drugs & Rock & Roll
23:00 The Big C



00:40 Famous In Love
01:30 Claws
02:30 Blindspot
03:20 The Flash
04:10 Quantico
05:00 Good Morning America
07:00 The View
07:45 The Chew
08:30 Famous In Love
09:20 The Flash
10:10 Quantico
11:00 Blindspot
11:45 The Night Shift
12:30 The View
13:15 The Chew
14:00 Live Good Morning America
16:00 Quantico
17:00 The Flash
18:00 Blindspot
19:00 Time After Time
20:00 The Fosters
21:00 Secret City
22:00 Feud
23:00 Blood Drive
23:50 American Horror Story: Roanoke



01:00 Momentum
02:50 Hard Target 2
04:45 Forbidden Empire
06:45 Sherlock Holmes
08:55 Rampage: President Down
10:35 Hard Target 2
12:25 Life On The Line
14:05 Sherlock Holmes
16:15 Being Evel
18:00 In The Heart Of The Sea
20:00 King Arthur
22:00 I Am Soldier
23:30 The Covenant



01:30 Hannah Montana Movie
03:15 Pirates Of The Caribbean: At World's End
06:05 The Princess Diaries 2: Royal Engagement
08:00 Wall-E
09:40 Cars
11:40 The Princess Diaries 2: Royal Engagement
13:40 Home On The Range
15:00 Rio
16:40 The Sorcerer's Apprentice
18:30 Ghost Squad
20:00 Black Beauty
21:30 Rio
23:10 Home On The Range



00:00 Claws
01:00 Blindspot
01:50 American Horror Story: Roanoke
02:40 Famous In Love
03:30 Claws
04:30 Blindspot
05:20 The Flash
06:10 Quantico
07:00 Good Morning America
09:00 The View
09:45 The Chew
10:30 Famous In Love
11:20 The Flash
12:10 Quantico
13:00 Blindspot
13:45 The Night Shift
14:30 The View
15:15 The Chew
16:00 Live Good Morning America
18:00 Quantico
19:00 The Flash
20:00 Blindspot
21:00 Time After Time
22:00 The Fosters



00:00 Forgetting Sarah Marshall
01:55 Barbershop 2: Back In Business
03:45 The Golden Child
05:20 Ride Along
07:05 Ride Along 2
08:50 The Golden Child

10:25 Ride Along
12:05 Ride Along 2
13:50 Made In America
15:50 Mr. Popper's Penguins
17:30 Perfect Match
19:00 Made In America
21:00 Gentlemen Broncos
22:30 Cedar Rapids



00:50 A Clockwork Orange
03:10 Wild Bill
04:55 Hoosiers
06:55 The Yellow Handkerchief
08:35 Wild Bill
10:15 Hoosiers
12:10 Jappeloup
14:20 Neil Young: Heart Of Gold
16:05 Of Mice And Men
18:00 Swing Kids
20:00 Frankie And Johnny
22:00 The Apartment



00:15 Robosapien: Rebooted
01:45 Blue Elephant 2
03:25 Hocus Pocus Alfie Atkins
04:40 Marco Macaco
06:00 Paws
07:30 Bamse And The City Of Thieves
08:45 Yugo & Lala 2
10:10 Oops Noah Is Gone
11:40 Robosapien: Rebooted
13:10 Blue Elephant 2
14:50 A.R.C.H.I.E.
16:25 Yugo & Lala 2
17:50 Space Dogs 2: Adventure To The Moon
19:15 Get Squirrelly
20:45 A.R.C.H.I.E.
22:20 Bamse And The City Of Thieves
23:35 Oops Noah Is Gone



01:55 Steve Jobs
04:00 Everest
06:05 Kicking And Screaming
07:40 Norbit
09:25 The Finest Hours
11:25 Gridiron Gang
13:30 Everest
15:30 Nacho Libre
17:05 While You Were Sleeping
18:50 Seven Years In Tibet
21:05 D-Tox
22:45 St. Elmo's Fire



00:30 How Do They Do It?
00:55 Food Factory
01:20 Food Factory USA
01:45 Food Factory USA
02:10 Science Of The Movies
03:00 Kings Of Construction
03:48 Mythbusters
04:36 How Do They Do It?
05:00 Food Factory
05:24 Food Factory USA
05:48 Food Factory USA
06:12 Science Of The Movies
07:00 How Do They Do It?
07:26 Kings Of Construction
08:14 Mythbusters
09:02 Science Of The Movies
09:50 How Do They Do It?
10:14 Food Factory
10:38 Food Factory USA
11:02 Food Factory USA
11:26 Kings Of Construction
12:14 Mythbusters
13:02 How Do They Do It?
13:26 Food Factory
13:50 Science Of The Movies
14:38 Kings Of Construction
15:26 Food Factory USA
15:50 Food Factory USA
16:14 Mythbusters
17:02 Science Of The Movies
17:50 Kings Of Construction
18:40 Mythbusters
19:30 You Have Been Warned
20:20 How Do They Do It?
20:45 Food Factory
21:10 Science Of The Movies

22:00 You Have Been Warned
22:50 Kings Of Construction
23:40 Mythbusters



00:20 Say Yes To The Dress: Canada
00:42 Say Yes To The Dress: Canada
01:05 90 Day Fianc?: Happily Ever After?
01:50 Say Yes To The Dress UK
02:12 Say Yes To The Dress UK
02:35 Belief
03:20 Our Little Family
04:05 Toddlers & Tiaras
04:50 Your Style In His Hands
05:35 Say Yes To The Dress
06:00 Our Little Family
06:45 Our Little Family
07:30 Our Little Family
08:15 Outdaughters: Busby Quints
09:00 Say Yes To The Dress
09:25 Obsessive Compulsive Cleaners
10:10 Obsessive Compulsive Cleaners
10:55 Love, Lust Or Run
11:17 Love, Lust Or Run
11:40 Love, Lust Or Run
12:02 Love, Lust Or Run
12:25 Love, Lust Or Run
12:47 Love, Lust Or Run
13:10 Oprah: Where Are They Now?
13:55 Belief
14:40 Cake Boss
15:02 Cake Boss
15:25 Cake Boss
15:47 Cake Boss
16:10 Cake Boss
16:35 Cake Boss
17:00 7 Little Johnstons
17:50 Katie Price's Pony Club
18:50 Outdaughters: Busby Quints
19:40 Cake Boss
20:10 Say Yes To The Dress
20:35 Say Yes To The Dress
21:00 Outdaughters: Busby Quints
21:50 Sister Wives
22:40 My Giant Life
23:30 Return To Amish



01:30 WWE Smackdown
03:00 Red Bull Cliff Diving
04:00 WWE Wal3ooha
04:30 Monster Energy AMA Supercross Highlights
06:30 UIM F1 H20 World Championship Highlights
07:00 Monster Energy AMA Supercross Highlights
09:00 This Week In WWE
09:30 FIBA 3 X 3 Basketball World Tour Highlights
10:00 WWE Wal3ooha
10:30 Drone Racing League
11:30 WWE Bottom Line
12:30 WWE Afterburn
13:30 WWE Wal3ooha
14:00 Drone Racing League
15:00 FIBA 3 X 3 Basketball World Tour Highlights
15:30 Arena Esports
16:00 Live Solheim Cup



00:00 All Access: Mayweather v McGregor
00:30 Idemitsu Asia Talent Cup
01:30 MotoGP Highlights
02:30 Legends Football League
04:00 Taekwondo European Championships Liverpool
04:30 European Le Mans Series Highlights
05:30 FIA World Touring Car Championship Highlights
06:00 FIA World Touring Car Championship Highlights
06:30 Taekwondo European Championships Liverpool
07:00 European Le Mans Series Highlights
08:00 FIVB Beach Volleyball World Tour Highlights
09:00 One Weekly
09:30 Motul FIM Superbike Highlights
10:35 Live Motul FIM Superbike World Championship
12:00 One Weekly
12:30 All Access: Mayweather v McGregor
13:00 All Access: Mayweather v McGregor

MEXICO'S PRICKLY PEAR CACTUS: ENERGY SOURCE OF THE FUTURE?

MEXICO CITY: The prickly pear cactus is such a powerful symbol in Mexico that they put it smack in the middle of the national flag. It was considered sacred by the ancient Aztecs, and modern-day Mexicans eat it, drink it, and even use it in medicines and shampoos. Now scientists have come up with a new use for the bright green plant: producing renewable energy. Instantly recognizable with its jumble of spiny discs-its bright red fruit protruding like fat fingers from each one-the prickly pear cactus is farmed on a massive scale in Mexico.

Its soft inner flesh plays a starring role in a plethora of favorite national dishes: tacos, soups, salads, jams and even candies. Believed by some to have healing powers, the cactus is also used in blood pressure medications, anti-hair loss shampoos, skin creams and diet juices. "Since before the Spanish conquistadors arrived, we have eaten prickly pear cactus. It's our tradition and our culture," said Israel Vazquez, who has farmed the cactus for the past 20 years on a small plot in Milpa Alta, a neighborhood on Mexico City's south side. The cactus's thick outer layer, with all those spines, has always been a waste product-until researchers developed a biogas generator to turn it into electricity.

Straight to the source

The pilot project was launched in May at Milpa Alta's sprawling cactus market. The far-flung neighborhood is a splash of green amid the smog and concrete of this Latin American mega-city, thanks in part to its more than 2,800 hectares of fields of prickly pear cactus, known in Spanish as "nopal." Farmers in straw sombreros trickle into these fields every morning at dawn to work the long rows of cactus



that flow from the lower flanks of the dormant Teuhtli volcano.

The area produces 200,000 tons a year of prickly pear cactus-up to 10 tons of which ends up as waste on the floor of the cactus market each day. A local green energy start-up called Energy and Environmental Sustainability-Suema, by its Spanish acronym-got the idea to develop a biogas generator to turn that waste into energy. They decided to build it right at the source: the bustling cactus market, where hundreds of workers start each day by cleaning up the waste left from the day before.

Cactus power

Oil-producing Mexico has emerged as a green energy leader in recent years. It won praise in 2015 when it became the first emerging country to announce its emissions

reduction targets for the United Nations climate accord, ambitiously vowing to halve them by 2050. To get there, it is seeking to generate half its energy from renewable sources. Last year, green energy made up 15.4 percent of its energy mix-though just 0.1 percent was from biogas.

Suema is looking to change that with its generator, which will ultimately produce 175 kilowatt hours-enough electricity to keep some 9,600 low-energy light bulbs burning. The generator-a giant silver cylinder surrounded by an intricate web of pipes-churns together organic waste with a special mix of bacteria and heats it to 55 degrees Celsius to produce biogas. The leftovers can then be used as compost.

When it reaches full capacity around November, the generator will be able to process three to five tons of waste a day, pro-

ducing 170 cubic meters of biogas plus a little more than one ton of compost. The \$840,000 project, funded mostly by the Mexico City government, is popular at the cactus market. "It's a good idea, because now all this waste will do something productive," said vendor Evangelina Lara, 45, wearing a red apron and wielding the knife she uses to clean her stock.

The Mexico City government's scientific development chief, Bernardino Rosas, hopes the generator will be the first of many. "Our vision is to reproduce this type of project" at each of the city's more than 300 produce markets, making them energy self-sufficient, he said.

Aztec legend

In Aztec mythology, Huitzilopochtli-the god of the sun, war and human sacrifice-tore out the heart of a treacherous prince named Copilli and threw it into a lake. The first prickly pear cactus supposedly grew on an island in that lake-its juicy red fruit symbolizing Copilli's heart. According to the legend, Huitzilopochtli told the Aztecs to build a city at the spot where they found the cactus, which would have an eagle sitting atop it eating a snake.

The story has it that this is where the Aztecs built their capital, Tenochtitlan-over whose ruins the Spanish conquistadors built Mexico City. Today, the prickly pear cactus with the eagle eating the snake is a national symbol-so much so that it appears at the center of Mexico's green, white and red flag. This all makes the cactus a very fitting fuel for Mexico's future, said Horacio Chavira, deputy director for rural development in Milpa Alta. "The prickly pear cactus is so Mexican that it's a symbol of our identity," he said. —AFP

CLINIC
PAGE



Kuwait Times

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

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

Hospitals

Sabah Hospital	24812000
Amiri Hospital	22450005
Maternity Hospital	24843100
Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital	25312700
Chest Hospital	24849400
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010
Adan Hospital	23940620
Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300
Al-Razi Hospital	24846000
Physiotherapy Hospital	24874330/9

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khaldiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401
Jabriya	25316254
Maidan Hawally	25623444
Bayan	25388462
Mishref	25381200
W Hawally	22630786
Sabah	24810221
Jahra	24770319
New Jahra	24575755
West Jahra	24772608
South Jahra	24775066
North Jahra	24775992
North Jleeb	24311795
Ardhiya	24884079
Firdous	24892674
Omariya	24719048
N Khaitan	24710044
Fintas	23900322

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DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION
METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



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DAY: Thursday

17/08/2017

Valid From 7 AM To 7 PM

Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Very hot and Relatively humid specially over coastal areas with light variable wind to light to moderate south easterly wind, with speed of 08 - 30 km/h and some high clouds will appear.

BY NIGHT: Relatively hot and Humid specially over coastal areas with light to moderate south easterly wind to light variable wind, with speed of 06 - 28 km/h and some high clouds will appear with a chance for mist

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings	
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 17/08/2017 0000 UTC	
KUWAIT CITY	44 °C	35 °C		
KUWAIT AIRPORT	47 °C	31 °C		
ABDALY	49 °C	32 °C		
BUBYAN	40 °C	34 °C		
JAHRA	48 °C	33 °C		
FAILAKA ISLAND	43 °C	33 °C		
SALMIYAH	42 °C	34 °C		
AHMADI	42 °C	33 °C		
NUWAISIB	46 °C	30 °C		
WAFRA	47 °C	30 °C		
SALMY	47 °C	33 °C		

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Friday	08/18	Very hot and Relatively humid specially over coastal areas and some high clouds will appear	47 °C	32 °C	VRB-SE	08 - 30 km/h
Saturday	08/19	Very hot	49 °C	33 °C	NW-VRB	10 - 35 km/h
Sunday	08/20	Very hot and	48 °C	35 °C	NW-VRB	08 - 32 km/h
Monday	08/21	Very hot and some scattered clouds will appear	47 °C	33 °C	NW-SE	12 - 35 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	03:53
Sunrise	05:18
Zuhr	11:52
Asr	15:27
Sunset	18:27
Isha	19:49

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	46 °C
MIN. Temp.	31 °C
MAX. RH	84 %
MIN. RH	16 %
MAX. Wind	SE 32 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

SITUATION WANTED

Indian, male, MBA (finance), pursuing CFA (USA) having 12 years experience in Kuwait, presently working as finance manager, is looking for similar post for immediate placement. Please call 90073251 / 55584351. (C 5339) 14-8-2017

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LOST

I, Neenu Ali, holder of Indian Passport No: H3127852, have lost my passport since June 20th, around Kuwait City area, if found please contact: 25618357. (C 5335)

EMERGENCY
112

Automated enquiry about the Civil ID card is
1889988



PHARMACIES ON 24 HRS DUTY

GOVERNORATE	PHARMACY	ADDRESS	PHONE
Ahmadi	Sama Safwan Abu Halaifa Danat Al-Sultan	Fahaheel Makka St Abu Halaifa-Coastal Rd Mahboula Block 1, Coastal Rd	23915883 23715414 23726558
Jahra	Modern Jahra Madina Munawara	Jahra-Block 3 Lot 1 Jahra-Block 92	24575518 24566622
Capital	Ahlam Khaldiya Coop	Fahad Al-Salem St Khaldiya Coop	22436184 24833967
Farwaniya	New Shifa Ferdous Coop Modern Safwan	Farwaniya Block 40 Ferdous Coop Old Kheitan Block 11	24734000 24881201 24726638
Hawally	Tariq Hana Ikhlas Hawally & Rawdha Ghadeer Kindy Ibn Al-Nafis Mishrif Coop Salwa Coop	Salmiya-Hamad Mubarak St Salmiya-Amman St Hawally-Beirut St Hawally & Rawdha Coop Jabriya-Block 1A Jabriya-Block 3B Salmiya-Hamad Mubarak St Mishrif Coop Salwa Coop	25726265 25647075 22625999 22564549 25340559 25326554 25721264 25380581 25628241

Friday Times BUSINESS

FRIDAY, AUGUST 18, 2017

UK RETAIL SALES GROW MODESTLY AS CONSUMERS STAY CAUTIOUS

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Trump increasingly isolated as business panels dismantled

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TRIPOLI: In this Aug 9, 2017 photo, cranes offload hay from a ship onto waiting trucks in the port of the northern city of Tripoli, Lebanon. Markets across the Middle East are anticipating a mammoth reconstruction boom in Syria that could stimulate billions of dollars in economic activity, and Lebanon, as Syria's neighbor, is in prime position to capture a share of that reward. — AP

LEBANON GEARING FOR SYRIA'S POST-WAR BOOM BRITISH SAFETY MANAGERS TRAINING LOCAL HIRES FOR WINDFALL

TRIPOLI, Lebanon: The port of Tripoli in northern Lebanon wants the world to know it's ready for business. British safety managers are training local hires to operate heavy machinery and Chinese technicians are running diagnostics on two new container cranes that tower over the harbor, just 28 kilometers (18 miles) from the Syrian border.

After six years of civil war in Syria, markets across the Middle East are anticipating a mammoth reconstruction boom that could stimulate billions of dollars in economic activity. Lebanon, as Syria's neighbor, is in prime position to capture a share of that windfall and revive its own sluggish economy. Battles still rage in Syria's north and east, and in pockets around the capital, Damascus, but the survival of President Bashar Assad's government now appears beyond doubt.

That is introducing an element of stability into forecasts not seen since 2011, when the war broke out. The Damascus International Fair, a high-profile annual business event before the war, is to open on Thursday for the first time since war broke out, with participants from 43 countries.

The World Bank estimates the cost to rebuild Syria at \$200 billion. For Lebanon, that could be just the stimulus it needs - the tiny Mediterranean country's growth rate has hovered around 1.5 percent since 2013. And though the capital, Beirut, has grown visibly richer over the years, Tripoli and the impoverished north have lagged behind. "Lebanon is in front of an opportunity that it needs to take very seriously," said Raya al-Hassan, a former finance minister from northern Lebanon who now directs the Tripoli Special Economic Zone project that's

planned to be built adjacent to the port.

Ahmad Tamer, the port manager, estimates Syria's reconstruction will create a demand for 30 million tons of cargo capacity annually. Syria's chief ports, Tartous and Latakia, also on the Mediterranean Sea, have a combined capacity of 10 to 15 million tons, he says. He wants Tripoli port to be ready to step in for a portion of the rest.

"We could provide up to 5 or 6 or 7 million tons," he says. The port is nearing the completion of the first phase of an expansion project first drawn up in 2009, then revised with an eye on Syria in 2016. Capital investment has reached around \$400 million, according to the port manager.

On a map, Tamer pointed to a vacant quadrant where 7/8 preparations are underway to build silos to hold grain destined for regional markets. Syria's conflict has decimated its food production, which included an average of 4.1 million tons of wheat annually before the war, according to the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization.

In 2017, it managed to produce just 1.8 million tons. Lebanon's businessmen and politicians have always maintained close relations with Syrian counterparts. Syria is among Lebanon's largest trade partners, and arguably its most reliable supplier of cheap labor. Lebanon, in exchange, is the banker to many of Syria's enterprises and its wealthy elites.

These ties give Lebanon - and Tripoli in particular - an edge over competitors vying for the Syrian market. The city's location is also attracting foreign investment. Tripoli port signed a 25-year lease with the Emirati port operator GulfTainer in 2013,

to manage and invest in the terminal. "Our aim was to invest here in anticipation of Syria's reconstruction," said Ibrahim Hermes, the CEO of Lebanon's subsidiary of GulfTainer. Lebanon is now a fixture on itineraries of prospective investors. Hermes said he has seen delegations arriving from Europe, Asia and especially China, to scope out trade opportunities.

Silk Road project

Before the war in Syria, goods coming through Lebanon's ports used to transit as far afield as Iraq - saving ships from having to take the sea journey through the Suez Canal and around the Arabian Peninsula. There is talk now that Tripoli could even be a terminal in China's trillion-dollar new "Silk Road" project, carving a trade route from east Asia to Europe.

The Chinese firm Qingdao Haixi Heavy-Duty Machinery Co. sold the two 28-story container cranes now at the port. Safety signs inside the structures are posted in English and Mandarin.

"Tripoli can be a main transshipment hub for the eastern Mediterranean," said Ira Hare, a sunburned British manager working for GulfTainer.

Lebanon has officially sought "dissociation" from the Syrian war so as not to fuel rancor among political parties split between those aligned with Damascus and those against it.

But there is also an air of inevitability about the re-normalization of relations, as Assad looks, for the short-term at least, to stay on in power. Syria's chief champion in Lebanon, the militant Hezbollah group, which is fighting alongside Assad's forces, evinces little doubt. — AP

JAPAN TRADE SURGES IN JULY ON STRONG DEMAND IN CHINA, US

TOKYO: Japan's exports and imports rose at a fast clip in July, reflecting a recovery in demand in China, Southeast Asia and the US, though export prices rose faster than volumes for many products.

Exports rose more than 13 percent from a year earlier to 6.5 trillion yen (\$59 billion) while imports jumped 16 percent to 6.1 trillion yen (\$55 billion), helped by a surge in oil and coal shipments, according to data released yesterday.

The resulting trade surplus slipped 17 percent from a year earlier to 419 billion

yen (\$3.8 billion). Trade actually dragged on growth in the world's third-largest economy in the April-June quarter but likely will provide a slight boost for the year, Marcel Thieliand of Capital Economic said in a commentary. He is forecasting a 6 percent rise in export volumes, while import volumes will increase by about 3 percent. "The upshot is that we expect net exports to lift 2017 GDP growth by around 0.5 percentage points," he said.

Japan reported earlier this week that its economy expanded at a 4.0 percent

annual pace April-June. The rate of expansion for the year is expected to be much lower, at below 2 percent.

In July, Japan's exports to the US, mainly of cars, car parts and machinery, jumped 11.5 percent to 1.3 trillion yen (\$12 billion). Imports climbed 14 percent to 671.7 billion (\$6.1 billion), as fish and meat shipments surged. Oil imports, half of which came from the Middle East, jumped 26 percent year-on-year to 1.2 trillion yen (\$11 billion). Japan's imports of liquefied natural gas surged 47 percent from a year earlier and coal imports

jumped 68 percent. China's imports from Japan surged 18 percent to 1.2 trillion yen. Japan's exports to ASEAN, 10 countries belonging to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, also jumped 18 percent, to 1.0 trillion yen (\$9 billion), with strong growth in appliances and other devices.

Much of Japan's trade with other Asian countries is components and machinery used in manufacturing. Strong exports of machinery and electrical machinery suggest a recovery in activity in those countries. —AP



SALEM: A shopper looks at merchandise at a Walmart in Salem, NH Wal-Mart Stores, Inc reported earnings yesterday.—AP

UK RETAIL SALES GROW MODESTLY AS CONSUMERS STAY CAUTIOUS

STRONG FOOD SALES BOOST MONTHLY INCREASE

LONDON: Retail sales in Britain, a key component of the economy, rose by a solid if unspectacular 0.3 percent in July from the month before as consumers remain constrained by falling real incomes.

The rate of increase reported by the Office for National Statistics was unchanged from June's rise, which was downwardly revised from 0.6 percent. However, it was slightly ahead of market expectations for a 0.2 percent rise. The statistics agency said yesterday that strong food sales were behind the monthly increase as all the other main sectors posted falls.

Senior statistician Ole Black said trends in growth in different sectors are "proving quite volatile." Retail sales have been sluggish this year as consumers

have become cautious amid a rise in consumer prices. That's evident in the fact that retail sales in the three months to July were up only 0.6 percent from the previous three-month period, against the 1.5 percent recorded in June.

Retailers will be hoping that a pick-up in wages and signs that inflation may have peaked will soon start to boost sales. Real income growth could help shore up the economy, which has slowed markedly this year, in the choppy Brexit waters ahead.

Britain is due to leave the European Union by March 2019 and there are worries the economy could stutter through then as consumers and businesses hold off from making big spending decisions amid the uncertainty. Oliver Kolodseike, senior economist at the Centre for

Economics and Business Research, thinks there's little chance real earnings will rebound this year.

"The squeeze on household finances is therefore set to continue," he said. "Consumer spending has propelled the UK economy forward in recent years, but this trend will come to an end in 2017 as falling real wages will continue to squeeze household incomes and thereby depress retail sales volumes." Kingfisher PLC, owner of the DIY retail firm B&Q, is one firm that will be hoping to see a turnaround. It reported a 1.9 percent fall in same-store sales in the three months through July, largely because of weakness in its British operations, an update which saw its share price slump 5 percent in morning trading in London. —AP

EUROPEAN STOCKS AND BOND YIELDS FALL AFTER FED FLAGS WEAK INFLATION

LONDON: European stocks and bond yields fell in early trade yesterday after the Federal Reserve expressed concern over weak US inflation, a trend which has clouded the outlook for the world's largest economy. Some policymakers argued against future rate rises until there was more concrete evidence that inflation was moving back toward the Fed's objective, according to minutes of the US central bank's last policy meeting.

Money market futures are now pricing in about a 40 percent chance the Fed will raise rates by December, compared with just under 50 percent before the Fed's minutes. The pan-European Stoxx 600 index was down 0.2 percent, snapping a three-day winning streak and tracking earlier moves from the US S&P 500 that fell after the minutes. Germany's DAX, France's CAC 40 and the UK's FTSE 100 all fell 0.1 percent. The prospect of slower removal of stimulus gave support to fixed income assets with European government bond yields, which move inversely to prices, heading lower. The benchmark German 10-year yield was down nearly 2 basis points to 0.42 percent, coming off Wednesday's high of 0.47 percent. Most other euro zone yields fell 1-2 basis points. — Reuters

NEW ZEALAND LAWMAKER SAYS GOOD CHANCE OF PACIFIC TRADE DEAL

WELLINGTON: New Zealand's trade minister said yesterday he believes there's an odds-on chance that a group of 11 Pacific nations including Japan and Australia will sign a free-trade deal, despite the US pulling out.

Todd McClay said the remaining members of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) are committed to completing a deal quickly and with only small changes. He announced that the New Zealand government had approved a mandate for the country to push ahead with negotiations. "We think it's important to economic growth, and we are signaling how committed we are as a government to it," McClay said. "We now expect a decision to be put before TPP leaders in November of this year."

McClay said beef exporters are facing new tariffs of 50 percent on frozen beef they sell to Japan, a rate that would fall to 9 percent under the trade deal. He said the deal is getting plenty of support among the 11 nations, which met last month in Japan for talks.

"It's my expectation that the deal is now more likely to happen than not," he said. But it still faces many hurdles, including in New Zealand. The opposition Labour Party says that if it wins power when elections are held next month, it will renegotiate some of the provisions.

Labour lawmaker David Parker said one of the biggest problems with the deal is that foreign buyers could purchase homes in New Zealand without any restrictions. He said Australia managed to negotiate an exemption and New Zealand needs to do the same. The 11 countries will need to restructure the deal, which effectively required the US to participate under its original provisions. US President Barack Obama's administration helped craft the deal but President Donald Trump campaigned against it and withdrew the US from it immediately after taking office in January. —AP

FORD WILL BALANCE PRESENT WITH FUTURE: FORD CEO

DETROIT: The new CEO of Ford Motor Co says the company isn't taking its eyes off the present as it prepares for transportation in the future.

Jim Hackett, who replaced Mark Fields in May, says new mobility projects such as buying a shuttle company and the purchase of an artificial intelligence startup have not taken money from car and truck development. Responding to criticism from dealers and investors about an aging product lineup, Hackett says that more new vehicles are in the pipeline. Dealers don't know everything the company is planning, Hackett said in a brief interview with The Associated Press. "We think dealers are really going to be happy with the vehicles we've got coming this year and what we've got in the hopper," he said, without giving specifics.

Ford's US sales were down 4 percent through July and its market share has slipped 0.3 percentage points, causing investors and dealers to worry about the company's product decisions. While Ford's top-seller, the F-Series pickup, was recently updated with a new aluminum body, other important bread-and-butter products such as the Fusion sedan and Escape SUV have grown dated. Ford has lagged rivals in long-



In this Monday, May 22, 2017, file photo, Ford Motor Co CEO Jim Hackett speaks after being introduced as the automaker's new chief executive in Dearborn. — AP

range electric cars, and while subcompact SUV sales are booming, Ford doesn't plan to roll out an entry in that market until next year.

Successful CEOs always have to prepare for the future and take care of the present, Hackett said from the San Francisco area, where he was to attend a Ford symposium yesterday on helping cities handle increasing traffic with technology and better trans-

portation options. Although people in cities have more transport choices such as ride-hailing services Uber and Lyft, Hackett predicted that personal car ownership will survive. People already own vehicles and prefer to drive them knowing that they aren't used 90 percent of the time, Hackett said. "I'm not ready to admit that Ford is facing a world where it's losing a lot of personal buyers," he said. "But I would admit that they're going to have a lot more options."

In September, Ford bought Chariot, an app-based shuttle service that originally operated 100 14-passenger vans in the San Francisco area. Since then it's tripled the fleet and expanded to New York, Seattle and Austin, Texas. The company also is investing \$1 billion in a budding robotics startup, Argo AI, to acquire more expertise for autonomous vehicles.

Hackett said spending on the future is small compared with how much Ford spends on car and truck development. He said Ford has to be at the forefront of helping cities deal with increased congestion from growing populations and increased package deliveries as vehicles fight over scarce curb space for parking. "All these things point to the need to harmonize and choreograph transportation," he said. — AP

CAMBODIA TAX AGENCY DENIES CRACKDOWN IS POLITICAL

PHNOM PENH: Cambodian tax authorities denied Wednesday there is a political motive for a crackdown on delinquent taxpayers that prominently targets media and civil society organizations critical of the government. The Department of Taxation said in a statement that the motive for seeking the tax payments is to support the national budget, and it is only an effort to make such organizations comply with the law. Cambodia, like other developing countries, has been casual about tax collection as it promoted economic development.

Those singled out by the tax collectors include a long-established English-language newspaper, The Cambodia Daily, two US government-funded radio stations, the Voice of America and Radio Free Asia, and local human rights groups.

The crackdown came to public notice shortly after Prime Minister Hun Sen at his Aug. 4 Cabinet meeting recommended government agencies investigate alleged unpaid payroll taxes at civil society organizations.

Most Cambodian media, especially TV, is owned by the government or businesspeople with close connections to authorities. Voice of America and Radio Free Asia are among the few platforms where government critics can reach a large audience. They are able to lease broadcast time from local radio stations. Because they pay for the time, rather than receive income in Cambodia, their tax situation has been a matter of confusion.

The Taxation Department said their liability had to do with their having established local offices, regardless of their payments to Cambodian radio stations. It said they needed to register with the department to be licensed.

Rohit Mahajan, a spokesman in Washington for Radio Free Asia, described the situation as "evolving." He said RFA has complied with all requests since the Cambodian government approached them in October 2016.

"There has been contradictory information from different branches of the Cambodian government," he said in an email to The Associated Press. "We assure our audience in Cambodia that these issues, while we work to resolve them, will not prevent RFA from doing its important journalistic work. No matter what, RFA will continue bringing the people of Cambodia the trustworthy news and information they deserve."

The government of Prime Minister Hun Sen in recent years has used the courts to harass its opponents and tried to regulate non-governmental organizations, in what many consider an effort to silence its critics. "The pattern of targeting independent voices and organizations - be they NGOs or media companies - dedicated to transparency and reliable information is worrisome," wrote Mahajan. "It's also a reality that RFA has faced from the beginning that has only worsened in recent years. This crackdown serves to underscore the dire need for credible journalism and press freedom in Cambodia."

The Cambodia Daily reported that human rights organizations were aware of the tax issue, and were making efforts to meet any obligations. — AP



SEOUL: Hyundai Motor Co's Executive Vice President Lee Kwang-guk poses with Hyundai Motors' new hydrogen fuel cell vehicle during a media preview in Seoul yesterday. — AP

HYUNDAI UNVEILS NEW FUEL CELL SUV WITH LONGER TRAVEL RANGE

SEOUL: Hyundai Motor said yesterday it plans to launch early next year a second-generation hydrogen fuel cell vehicle that will travel more than 580 kilometers (360 miles) between fill-ups.

If delivered as promised, the new fuel cell vehicle will travel 40 percent farther than its first generation fuel cell SUV, the Tucson ix FCEV, launched in 2013. Fuel cell cars, emission-free like pure electric cars, can be refueled in two to three minutes unlike electric vehicles that can take several hours to fully recharge. But the dearth of hydrogen fueling stations is an obstacle for mass adoption. Toyota, Honda and General Motors also are investing heavily in fuel cell technology but fuel cell cars are gaining less traction than electric vehicles, which can find charging stations more easily.

South Korea plans to increase the number of hydrogen fueling stations from 16 stations this year to 100 stations by 2020 to sharply raise sales of fuel cell vehicles. The country

is aiming to have 10,000 fuel cell vehicles on its roads by 2020 to help alleviate air pollution, its environmental ministry said in March. That would be a jump from just 121 fuel cell cars in 2016.

Hyundai Motor also plans to catch up in the eco-friendly car race with longer driving range electric vehicles. It plans to launch an electric vehicle with a driving range of 500 kilometers (311 miles) after 2021. Before the summer of next year, it plans to release a small electric sports utility vehicle with a driving range of 390 kilometers per charge. In 2021, its luxury brand Genesis will unveil an electric vehicle model as well.

One reason drivers are reluctant to buy electric vehicles is that they fear not being able to find a charging station in the middle of a trip. Hyundai's first pure electric car IONIQ launched last year had a driving range of 191 kilometers (118 miles) per charge, shorter than the electric vehicles made by Tesla and General Motors. — AP



WASHINGTON: In this Feb 23, 2017 file photo, Campbell Soup CEO Denise Morrison speaks during a meeting between President Donald Trump and manufacturing executives at the White House in Washington. Morrison is resigning from a White House jobs panel over comments about racism made by President Donald Trump. —AP

TRUMP INCREASINGLY ISOLATED AS BUSINESS PANELS DISMANTLED

CORPORATE CHIEFTAINS FLEEING AMID WHITE HOUSE CONFUSION

WASHINGTON: With corporate chieftains fleeing, President Donald Trump abruptly abolished two of his White House business councils, an attempt to manage his increasing isolation and the continued fallout from his combative comments on racially charged violence in Charlottesville, Virginia.

"Rather than putting pressure on the businesspeople of the Manufacturing Council & Strategy & Policy Forum, I am ending both. Thank you all!" Trump tweeted from New York.

Trump's comments came after one of the panels had already agreed to disband earlier in the day. A growing number of business leaders on the councils had openly criticized his remarks laying blame for the violence at a white supremacist rally on "both sides."

The White House is trying to deal with the repercussions from Trump's defiant remarks on the Virginia tragedy. Presidential advisers hunkered down Wednesday, offering no public defense while privately expressing frustration with his comments.

Some Republicans and scores of Democrats denounced Trump's statements as putting white supremacists on equal moral footing with counter-protesters in Charlottesville and called for an apology. Most of those Republicans, including congressional leaders, did not specifically criticize the president. Trump himself stayed out of sight, tweeting occasionally about a primary in Alabama, the stock market and, once, his campaign slogan. Midday, he traveled from New York to his golf club in New Jersey for the night.

But he returned to Twitter early Thursday to chastise Sen. Lindsey Graham for remarks the South Carolinian made about Trump's take on Charlottesville, and also had harsh words for Sen. Jeff Flake, an Arizona Republican. He posted one tweet saying that "publicity-seeking Lindsey Graham falsely stated that I said there is moral equivalency" between the white supremacists and the counter-demonstrators in Charlottesville, Virginia, at Saturday's violent protest.

Feeling different

Earlier, the president told associates he was pleased with how his press conference went Tuesday, saying he believed he had effectively stood up to the media, according to three people familiar with the conversations who demanded anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly about them.

Business leaders felt differently. Denise Morrison, chief executive of Campbell Soup, declared she was leaving Trump's manufacturing council, saying, "The president should have been - and still needs to be - unambiguous" in denouncing white supremacists.

CEOs had begun tendering their resignations from White House panels after Trump's initial comments following the Saturday violence. The first to step down, Kenneth Frazier of Merck, drew a

Twitter tongue-lashing from the president. Later, Trump called those who were leaving "grandstanders" and insisted many others were eager to take their places.

Members of the Strategy and Policy group, led by Blackstone CEO Stephen Schwarzman, concluded after a 45-minute conference call in the morning that they would end the council and announce their decision in a statement, according to two people familiar with the discussions. They insisted on anonymity to discuss private conversations.

In a subsequent call with Trump, the president agreed it was the right course of action. He tweeted before they could announce the decision they'd reached - making it appear it was his choice.

Publicly criticizing the president and resigning from his councils is a significant step for big-name corporate leaders. Though the policy influence of such advisory groups is sometimes questionable, simply meeting with Trump with TV cameras going is valuable face-time for the executives - and for the president. Though not as outspoken as the business leaders, some fellow Republican leaders are going after Trump forcefully, too.

South Carolina Sen. Lindsey Graham said Wednesday the president "took a step backward by again suggesting there is moral equivalency" between the marching white supremacists and the people who had been demonstrating against them.

Former GOP presidential candidate Mitt Romney tweeted a similar slap shortly after the president's explosive press conference on Tuesday: "No, not the same. One side is racist, bigoted, Nazi. The other opposes racism and bigotry. Morally different universes." —AP

BRAZIL FARMERS RUN OUT OF SPACE AS CROPS PILE UP

SORRISO, Brazil: At a warehouse in the heart of Brazil's agriculture sector, farmer Rafael Bilibio watches truck after truck line up to unload corn onto the ground outside the huge storage bins.

His own corn, ready for unloading from a 50-tonne truck that has just pulled in, is destined to join the pile that has reached 65-feet high, as the bins remain stuffed with soybeans collected earlier this year in Mato Grosso state. "For the first time in history, producers here will pile one harvest on top of the other," said 33-year-old Bilibio, who cultivates some 4,700 hectares of soy and corn near Vera, in the mid-North of the state.

From Iowa to China, years of bumper crops and low prices have overwhelmed storage capacity for corn, wheat and other basic foodstuffs. The situation is dragging down farmer incomes and making it hard for traders like Archer Daniels Midland (ADM) and Bunge Ltd to make money.

But here in the world's biggest soybean exporter and the No. 2 corn exporter after the United States, Brazil is seeing these stockpiles on a crop that historically has been an afterthought.

Known as Brazil's second corn - once planted as a cheap way of resting the soil from soybeans - this year's harvest has been so big, and prices so low, that farmers have no choice but to leave it exposed to the elements.

In Mato Grosso, the massive harvest made their options for permanent storage even more limited, as part of the record soybean output still sits in silos while producers wait for prices to rebound.

The pile-up underscores a lack of preparation for these massive harvests in Latin America's largest economy, where chronic logistical bottlenecks have been worsened by farmers' refusal to sell amid slumping prices, with far-reaching effects.

Brazil's stockpiles are exacerbated by the extra corn crop its climate allows, which is set to reach a record 66.6 million tons this year out of a total 97.2 million tons. Growers say the grain stocks may still be there when the next soy harvest arrives in January, while carryover volumes for both commodities will end the crop season at a record high, according to government and private estimates. —Reuters

FED INFLATION PUZZLE FIRMS DEMAND FOR GOVT BONDS

LONDON: Most eurozone government bond yields fell yesterday, tracking an earlier move in US Treasuries after minutes of the Federal Reserve's last meeting showed some policymakers called for halting interest rate hikes until inflation improves.

Details of the July meeting, released late yesterday, showed concerns that recent soft inflation data may cool the pace of monetary tightening in the world's largest economy despite moderate growth and very low unemployment.

The Fed has raised its benchmark overnight lending rate twice this year and forecasts one more rise before the end of 2017. But money market pricing suggests investors now see less than a 50 percent chance of a hike by December. "Fed communications are cementing expectations of a very gradual approach to monetary tightening," Mizuho's head of euro rates strategy Peter Chatwell said.

Signs of the central bank's caution came as President Donald Trump dissolved two business advisory group, sowing further doubts over his ability to deliver growth-boosting spending plans he promised when elected.

The Fed is not the only central bank wary of weak inflation. Reuters reported yesterday that European Central Bank President Mario Draghi will not deliver a new policy message at next week's Jackson Hole conference, tempering expectations for the bank to start charting its course out of stimulus.

US 10-year yields, which had climbed to one-week peaks earlier yesterday, fell after the minutes and eventually closed down 4 basis points on the day at around 2.23 percent. —Reuters

DUMPING VENEZUELA'S DEBT MAY JUST BE A START FOR ETHICAL BOND BUYING

LONDON: Venezuela's crackdown on opponents of President Nicolas Maduro has made its government bonds too toxic for some investors but also raises a question for bond markets: why just Venezuela?

Screening sovereign debt for environmental, social and governance reasons-known as ESG-is in its infancy compared with well-established practice in equity investment.

This is especially so in emerging markets, where repressive governments or heavily polluting industries can still obtain international finance easily. Less than a third of the total \$700.2 billion in emerging market bond strategies tracked by research firm eVestment is said to be managed with environmental, social and governance considerations.

But pressure from pension fund clients is prompting fund managers and ratings agencies to think about how they can integrate such factors into their processes.

The turmoil in Venezuela, where more than 120 people have been killed in unrest since April, has already encouraged a number of funds to dump or reduce their Venezuela holdings.

Last week, Credit Suisse barred transactions involving certain Venezuelan bonds, insisting all its business with the country undergo a "reputation risk" review. In June, Standard Life Investments said it was also avoiding exposure to Venezuela, noting it would not qualify for its emerging debt portfolios under socially responsible investment (SRI) principles.

"Venezuela highlights the increasing importance of incorporating SRI in asset classes where such decisions can have both a negative impact on the local population and reputational consequences for asset managers," it said. Similarly, BlueBay Asset Management reduced its exposure to Venezuela bonds earlier this year, seeing a risk of an increase in Maduro's grip on power. Purely financially, the bet paid off as the bonds have lost almost 10 percent in value this year. "What you are seeing in Venezuela is an ethical issue, which is increasingly becoming an investment issue," said My-Linh Ngo, head of ESG investment risk at BlueBay. Ngo said that while ethical screening is less widely applied to bond investing than equities, one in three of her clients are now inquiring about it.

A dedicated environmental, social and governance screened bond fund that BlueBay launched in February has more than doubled in size to \$92 million. "There is more inherent risk in emerging and high yield (bonds) and your investment process should reflect that," she said.

Emerging markets

Venezuela is being sold because the risk of default is rising as the economy deteriorates. Standard Life Investments said poor fundamentals, coupled with lower commodity prices, had made it wary of the sovereign's ability to sustain its debt payments. BlueBay also flagged the growing risk of a hard line, Cuba-style repudiation of external debt. But across emerging markets managers find it hard to apply ethical screening as the most profitable opportunities may be big corporate polluters with poor records on labor relations.

Assessing sovereign bonds against ethical frameworks is also tricky, especially in frontier markets where corruption can be common. For example, El Salvador, which tapped international bond markets earlier this year, ranks 95th out of 176 countries on Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index, just behind Colombia and Zambia. "Of course we are concerned (about Venezuela) but there is a long list of EM countries who do not have these (ESG) things. Look at Egypt ... Look at Turkey-what about civil rights? South Africa, Malaysia, the list goes on and on," said Shahzad Hasan, a portfolio manager at Allianz Global Investors.

But more ESG bond investing does seem to be on the rise. A 2016 study by Robeco and Erasmus University concluded that over a 25-year period, bonds from emerging markets with an improving political risk climate outperformed those where political risk had worsened. "Long-term sustainability, in our belief, is synonymous with minimizing crisis or 'blow up' risk," Bryan Carter, head of emerging markets fixed income at BNP Paribas Asset Management, said in a commentary.

Some ratings agencies are also starting to integrate ESG factors into credit scores, mindful of the policy risk related to the Paris Agreement on global warming. —Reuters

WITH NO US-CANADA DEAL, LUMBER TALKS TO GO ON NEGOTIATIONS TO RUN PARALLEL TO NAFTA

WASHINGTON: The United States and Canada have failed to settle a festering trade dispute on softwood lumber ahead of talks to modernize the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), but will keep the lumber negotiations on a separate, parallel track, officials from both countries said.

US Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross had been pushing for a lumber deal before yesterday's start to NAFTA talks to avoid complications from the decades-old dispute. But both US lumber producers and Canadian officials say they are not close to completing a quota deal that would limit Canadian lumber mills to a specific percentage of the U.S. market.

"We're still a ways apart. I think the NAFTA is going to go ahead and get started without us," Joe Patton, vice president of Westervelt Lumber in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, told Reuters.

US lumber producers are seeking a "clean quota" deal that would limit Canadian producers' share to a level at or below a yet-to-be-negotiated share of the US market - a principle that US and Canadian negotiators agreed last year. Zoltan van Heyningen, executive director of the US Lumber Coalition, said that Canada has insisted on exceptions to a straight quota deal that could lift Canadian producers' market share well

above its current level. "Thus far, everything that we understand that Canada has tabled constitutes an at-or-above market share agreement," he said. Canadian sources familiar with the softwood lumber talks said it was impossible to predict when there would be a lumber deal and that there were no plans for any softwood discussions on the sidelines of the NAFTA negotiations. The lumber talks are aimed at reaching a negotiated settlement of US anti-dumping and anti-subsidy charges against Canadian producers that have resulted in preliminary duties of 17 percent to 31 percent on Canadian lumber.

Subsidies eyed

US producers have long accused Canada of unfairly subsidizing its lumber producers through low fees for timber cut on public lands. US producers get most of their timber from private land, where costs are higher.

Canadian Foreign Minister Chrystia Freeland said on Monday that she thought the lumber talks would continue "in parallel" to the NAFTA negotiations. "We don't want just any deal and the Americans know that. We want a deal that is good for Canadians," Freeland said. James Rockas, a US Commerce Department spokesman,

said that Ross would continue to seek a negotiated settlement to the dispute until it issues final anti-subsidy duties and anti-dumping duties - deadlines currently scheduled for Sept. 7.

"Once Commerce announces a final determination on countervailing and/or anti-dumping duties, a softwood lumber agreement would have to be negotiated under other authorities," he said.

The last lumber quota deal in 2006 was negotiated by the US Trade Representative's office - the same agency leading the NAFTA talks with Canada and Mexico. The hefty duties on Canadian lumber come at a time when rising lumber prices are causing concern among US home builders, suppliers and their investors, with companies frequently mentioning them as pressuring margins. Hilla Sferruzza, chief financial officer at Meritage Homes Corp, told investors on the company's Aug. 1 earnings call that the company was hesitant to forecast much upside for gross margins because of the tight lumber situation, which she said was driven by the tariffs on Canadian lumber and more recently by wildfires in Canadian timberlands. "We are cautious due to potentially rising lumber prices that could pressure margins and the continued tight labor supply," Sferruzza said. — Reuters

THOUSANDS OF MEXICANS MARCH TO SCRAP NAFTA

MEXICO CITY: While Mexican government negotiators fought tooth and nail to save the North American Free Trade Agreement during talks in Washington, thousands of Mexican farmers and workers took to the streets yesterday demanding the deal be scrapped.

Carrying banners that read "No to the FTA," and decorated with images of the distinctive hairstyles of U.S. President Donald Trump and Mexican counterpart Enrique Pena Nieto, the protesters said the 1994 deal had devastated Mexican farms. "We are against the treaty and the renegotiation because it has not benefited the country," said university union spokesman Carlos Galindo, reflecting views widely held in the early years of the trade pact. In a sign of that mistrust, on Jan. 1 1994 the Zapatista guerrilla army launched an armed uprising opposing free trade to mark the first day of NAFTA.

The fervor has faded and most Mexicans, including leading leftist Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador who will run for president next year, now broadly support a deal which has led to job growth, especially in the auto manufacturing sector.

A recent poll found most Mexicans wanted to save NAFTA. Mexico's government is keen to maintain preferential access to the United States and Canada, where nearly 85 percent of its exports are shipped. However, much like in America's rust belt, Mexico's small,



MEXICO CITY: Union workers march against the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in Mexico City yesterday. —AP

mainly indigenous farmers have not forgotten painful competition they blame on the free trade deal. "The great loser in these last 23 years has been Mexico, above all, the small farmers," said Ernesto Ladron de Guevara, speaking for one peasant farmers union at a park across from Mexico's Foreign Ministry.

His union is pushing for NAFTA's fate to face a public vote, possibly to coincide with next year's July presidential election and, if the deal survives, wants it to exclude anything related to agriculture and food production. Mexico now

imports some \$18.5 billion of agriculture products every year, making it one of the most important markets for US farmers. That makes US rural states key supporters of the pact, making it harder for Trump to follow his declared instinct to rip it up in favor US blue-collar workers who feel jobs have flooded south.

While some Mexican agriculture such as large-scale livestock farms and horticulture has flourished under NAFTA, others, especially small scale grains producers, have found it hard to compete with US imports.— Reuters

RED SOX RALLY TO BEAT CARDINALS

BOSTON: Mookie Betts lined a two-run double off the left-field wall with two outs in the ninth inning, capping a three-run rally that lifted the Boston Red Sox over the St. Louis Cardinals 5-4 on Wednesday. Xander Bogaerts hit a solo homer for the AL East-leading Red Sox, who won for the 12th time in 14 games and maintained their 4 1/2 -game lead over the second-place New York Yankees. Kolten Wong had three hits, including an RBI single in St. Louis' four-run second inning. It was just the third loss in 11 games for the Cardinals, who were swept in the two-game series, their first visit to Fenway Park since losing the 2013 World Series. Trevor Rosenthal gave up Bogaerts' homer into the Green Monster seats in the ninth. Zach Duke (0-1) struck out a batter and walked one before John Brebbia gave up Betts' hit. Craig Kimbrel (5-0) pitched one hitless inning for the win.

MARLINS 8, GIANTS 1

Giancarlo Stanton's homer streak ended, but he got two hits and helped Miami beat San Francisco. Stanton had homered in a team-record six consecutive games and leads the majors with 44. The major league record for the longest home run streak is eight games. Matt Cain (3-10) fell to 0-9 in his past 13 starts. Jose Urena (11-5) limited the Giants to an unearned run in five innings.

RANGERS 12, TIGERS 6

Elvis Andrus had the go-ahead home run among his four RBIs, Cole Hamels won again despite a shaky outing and Texas swept a three-game series from Detroit. Ian Kinsler led off the game with a homer for Detroit, then after taking his position at second base in the bottom of the first received an on-field handshake from the longtime umpire who he said should get another job. A day after Kinsler's harsh and extended criticism of Angel Hernandez, the umpire was working second base for the series finale. Kinsler was ejected from the opener Monday when questioning balls and strikes during the middle of an at-bat while Hernandez worked behind the plate, and the second baseman lashed out the following day. Joey Gallo homered for the third straight game and AL-high 10th time in 14 games this month. He has 35 homers this year. Adrian Beltre and Nomar Mazara also homered for Texas. Hamels (8-1) gave up four runs and eight hits with a season-high five walks in six innings. Chad Bell (0-1) took the loss.

CUBS 7, REDS 6

Anthony Rizzo hit a grand slam in the first inning and Javier Baez scored on a wild pitch in the ninth as Chicago beat Cincinnati. Baez opened the bottom of the ninth with a double off Wandy Peralta (3-3) and pinch-hitter Jon Jay walked. Then, Ben Zobrist moved the runners with a groundout. Reliever Blake Wood came in and struck out Albert Almora Jr. With two outs and Kris Bryant batting, Wood threw a breaking pitch that got away from catcher Tucker Barnhart for the game winner. Cincinnati's Joey Votto had his streak of reaching base at least twice in a game come to an end. Votto did reach once but he fell one game shy of tying Ted Williams' record of 21 straight games. Wade Davis (3-1) pitched a perfect ninth.

ANGELS 3, NATIONALS 2

Luis Valbuena and Kole Calhoun homered, Ricky Nolasco bounced back from a rocky first inning before exiting with an injury and Los Angeles split the two-game series with NL East-leading Washington. The Angels won for the seventh time in eight games. Tanner Roark (9-8) allowed four hits in seven innings for Washington, but was done in by the two home



CHICAGO: Chicago Cubs' Javier Baez is lifted by Anthony Rizzo (44) after Baez scored the game-winning run on a wild pitch from Cincinnati Reds' Blake Wood (right) during the ninth inning of a baseball game on Wednesday. The Cubs won 7-6. —AP

runs. Nolasco (6-12) threw 31 of his 112 pitches in the first inning, but he escaped trouble in the third and fourth to allow only two runs while striking out five.

YANKEES 5, METS 3

Aaron Judge launched a titanic homer, Didi Gregorius snapped a seventh-inning tie with a two-run double and the New York Yankees beat the Mets for their third straight victory in the Subway Series. Judge enjoyed his first game at Citi Field, hitting a solo drive into the rarely reached third deck in left. Mets left fielder Yoenis Cespedes never even budged as Judge's AL-leading 37th home run, projected at 457 feet, soared way over his head. The rookie slugger also struck out in the ninth inning to extend a dubious streak: Judge has fanned in 33 consecutive games, three shy of the record for a position player set by Adam Dunn from 2011-2012. Rene Rivera homered for the Mets, who will try to prevent a four-game sweep by the Yankees in the series finale Thursday night. Tommy Kahnle (2-3) retired both batters he faced. David Robertson struck out two in a hitless ninth for his 14th save, and first since rejoining the Yankees. Paul Sewald (0-5) took the loss.

BREWERS 7, PIRATES 6

Manny Pina hit a two-run homer in the eighth inning to lift Milwaukee over Pittsburgh. Keon Broxton homered twice and Neil Walker and Travis Shaw also went deep as the Brewers completed a sweep of the two-game series with their fourth straight win after an extended offensive slump. Pina's shot came off reliever Juan Nicasio (1-5). Anthony Swarzak (1-0) got the win and Corey Knebel earned his 24th save in 29 chances.

BLUE JAYS 3, RAYS 2

Marcus Stroman pitched 6 1/3 innings, Steve Pearce homered and scored twice and Toronto beat Tampa Bay. Stroman (11-6) allowed two runs and six hits to beat the Rays for the first time in five career meetings at Rogers Centre. The right-hander entered 0-3 with a 6.38 ERA in four

home starts against the AL East rivals. Roberto Osuna pitched around a leadoff single in the ninth for his 31st save in 38 chances. Jake Faria (5-4) lost his third straight start, allowing three runs in 5 1/3 innings.

ASTROS 9, DIAMONDBACKS 5

Josh Reddick hit a two-run homer in a four-run eighth inning as Houston defeated Arizona. Paul Goldschmidt hit a two-run homer and J D Martinez followed with a home run as the Diamondbacks pulled within 5-4 in the eighth. Morton (10-5) gave up one run and three hits in 6 1/3 innings, striking out nine. Taijuan Walker (6-7) allowed five runs - three earned - on nine hits in five innings.

MARINERS 7, ORIOLES 6

Recently acquired Yonder Alonso hit his first homer for Seattle and drove in three runs, and Marc Rzepczynski struck out Chris Davis with the bases loaded to end a win over Baltimore. Alonso, acquired in a trade with Oakland on Aug. 6, hit a two-run homer in the fourth inning, his 23rd of the season. He added an RBI single during a three-run fifth and also singled in the seventh. Leonys Martin opened the sixth with his third home run to put Seattle up 7-4. Tony Zych (6-3) pitched 1 2/3 scoreless innings in relief. Ubaldo Jimenez (5-8) allowed six runs in 4 1/3 innings.

ROYALS 7, ATHLETICS 6

Alex Gordon hit a go-ahead single in the ninth inning and Kansas City topped Oakland. Alcides Escobar doubled to start the ninth against Blake Treinen (1-1), matching his season high with three hits. Then Gordon delivered his second run-scoring single of the series finale. Oakland's Matt Chapman hit a tying two-run homer in the eighth against Brandon Maurer (1-1), who wound up the winner. Kelvin Herrera finished for his 26th save in 29 chances after allowing Ryon Healy's two-out infield single.

PADRES 3, PHILLIES 0

Clayton Richard pitched a three-hitter for

his first shutout since 2012 and Wil Myers stole three bases in an inning as San Diego completed a three-game sweep of Philadelphia. Richard (6-12) struck out six and walked one and ended his four-game losing streak. Nick Pivetta (4-8) struck out nine of the first 10 batters, and fanned a career-high 11 in five-plus innings. Myers, who has scuffled since the All-Star break, reached base four times. He became the first player since the Marlins' Dee Gordon in 2011 to swipe second, third and home in an inning and the first ever Padre to do so. Myers' final swipe came when he scored on the back end a double steal after Austin Hedges broke from first base. As Hedges was caught in a rundown, Myers headed for the plate and just got his hand in before Cameron Rupp's tag.

ROCKIES 17, BRAVES 2

Trevor Story had two homers and a career-high six RBIs, Jon Gray pitched six strong innings and Colorado routed Atlanta. Mark Reynolds also homered and drove in four runs, and DJ LeMahieu had a double and RBI single in his fifth four-hit game of the season for the Rockies. Gerardo Parra added three hits and four RBIs for Colorado. Gray (5-2) allowed two runs and five hits. Mike Foltynewicz (10-8) went 3 1/3 innings and allowed eight hits and career-high nine runs.

DODGERS 5, WHITE SOX 4

Yasiel Puig's two-run double in the bottom of the ninth inning lifted the Dodgers over the White Sox for their second comeback win in as many games. Puig sent a 3-2 pitch from Jake Petricka (1-1) into center field, scoring Logan Forsythe and Austin Barnes. The victory salvaged the much-anticipated home debut of Yu Darvish, who didn't figure in the decision while pitching on his 31st birthday. Chicago's Leury Garcia, Nicky Delmonico and Jose Abreu homered off Darvish, who gave up three runs and eight hits in six innings. Ross Stripling (2-4) got the victory with one inning of relief. —AP

ENGLAND 'BEATABLE', INSISTS WINDIES GREAT RICHARDS

BIRMINGHAM: Vivian Richards has insisted England are "beatable" as he urged the West Indies to restore a sense of pride during their Test series against Joe Root's men. The first of a three-match contest started at Birmingham's Edgbaston ground yesterday with the inaugural day/night Test in England. West Indies have not won a Test in England since 2000, just part of a miserable overall away record during the last 20 years.

They have also arrived without several star players, the legacy of a bitter dispute with administrators and a clash with the lucrative Caribbean Premier League Twenty20 tournament. England come into the series fresh from a 3-1 home Test success against South Africa. But former West Indies captain Richards, one of the best bats-

men cricket has known, said England had frequently under-performed, citing the hosts' defeat by eventual champions Pakistan in the semi-finals of this year's Champions Trophy one-day tournament as an example.

"Over the years, it's always amazed me with England," Richards told Thursday's edition of The Times. "They never win as much as they should," he added at an event staged by the Lord's Taverners cricket charity. "I look at the Champions Trophy - there was no better team for that format but they still fell short. England have the right stuff in their teams but then they fall down at some hurdle or just don't jump high enough."

Richards, nicknamed 'The Master Blaster', had some of his best days as a cricketer in England, including scoring

two double hundreds in a 1976 Test series where he made 829 runs in total, as well as hitting a match-winning century against England in the 1979 World Cup final at Lord's. Known for his intimidating presence at the crease, Richards urged Jason Holder's side not to be overawed by England. "I hope the West Indies team can see that England are beatable," said Richards, who also enjoyed success in English county cricket with both Somerset and Glamorgan.

'Hurt'

Richards, who scored 8,540 runs including 24 hundreds at an average of more than 50 in 121 Tests, was a key member of a West Indies side that dominated the world game in the 1970s and 1980s. As such, watching

their decline has been particularly painful for the 65-year-old Antiguan.

"It does hurt that the glory days have been lost," he said. "I was doing some television work during the Champions Trophy and there was no West Indies there. No West Indies. That's like saying there would be no Chelsea or Arsenal in the Premier League. That's how it felt."

Richards added: "I don't believe that many of the players of the modern day really understand the legacy of West Indies cricket and why they are playing for West Indies and why it matters so much. "Yes, we had our differences (when I was playing) but what stood us out was when we put on that maroon cap there was a real sense of pride. I want to see that return, I want to see that in this group." — AFP



Stuart MacGill

MACGILL DECLINES BANGLADESH JOB

DHAKA: Former Australian leg-spinner Stuart MacGill has turned down a Bangladesh offer to join the side ahead of two-Test series against his home country, a senior cricket official said yesterday. Bangladesh were hoping to get some inside knowledge from MacGill, who took 208 wickets in 44 Tests for Australia, before the crucial home series against Steven Smith's team beginning later this month.

MacGill was expected to join another Australian, Mark O'Neill, on the Bangladesh backroom staff for the tour by the world number four-ranked nation. "You know that our president (Bangladesh Cricket Board president Nazmul Hassan) already cleared it that Stuart MacGill was our first choice as spin bowling coach," BCB chief executive officer Nizamuddin Chowdhury said. "(But) for some of his personal reasons he cannot join the team at the moment," Chowdhury told reporters at a press briefing in Dhaka. "We will now go for our second or third option. We hope within a day or two we will be able to tell something about this," he said.

Bangladesh have been without a spin bowling coach since the BCB sacked Sri Lankan Ruwan Kalpage, who failed to report for duty following a deadly extremist attack at a posh Dhaka cafe in July last year. Bangladesh, who offered MacGill a short-term deal for three months, were looking to build on a year in which they recorded their maiden Test wins over England and Sri Lanka before reaching the Champions Trophy semi-final in June.

Australia are due to arrive in the Bangladeshi capital on Friday for their first Test series in the South Asian nation since 2006. The first Test against Australia is at Dhaka's Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium from Aug 27. The second starts in Chittagong on Sept 4. Australia were to play two Tests in Bangladesh in October 2015 but the tour was cancelled after a wave of attacks by extremists in the Muslim-majority nation. —AFP

US EYE SOLHEIM CROWN VS RESHUFFLED EUROPE

CHICAGO: The United States were to start as favorites to retain their Solheim Cup crown yesterday as Europe captain Annika Sorenstam attempted to reshuffle her troops after the late withdrawal of Suzann Pettersen. The three-day Ryder Cup-style tournament teed off at the Des Moines Golf and Country Club in Iowa, two years after the American women regained the crown with a thrilling final day charge in the 2015 event.

The US, captained once again by Juli Inkster, have named a team bristling with experience which includes six players who have played in the event at least four times. Inkster, who played in nine Solheim Cups, said she will look to her veteran team members to provide guidance for the trio of US rookies which includes Danielle Kang, Austin Ernst and Angel Yin.

"I basically let the veterans in the group talk to them. I think coming from them it means more," Inkster told reporters. "I try not to get too much in their mind because when it comes to it, it's just hitting, hitting shots and playing. You've got to let them figure it out themselves. So I kind of really stay out of it. If they have questions I'll be more than happy to answer them. But I leave that to the veteran leadership on my team."

Despite the core of US experience however, history has seen Europe's players punch consistently above their weight in the Solheim Cup. It needed a miraculous final day comeback from the Americans in Germany two years ago, recovering from 10-6 down heading into the singles, to clinch a 14 1/2 to 13 1/2 victory.



WEST DES MOINES, Iowa: Europe's Suzann Pettersen, of Norway, listens as Europe captain Annika Sorenstam, of Sweden (left) speaks during a news conference for the Solheim Cup golf tournament on Wednesday. —AP

'We equally suck'

Inkster is bracing for another nip-and-tuck battle over the first two days of foursomes and four-balls, where she believes Europe may hold an edge. "I was looking at our foursomes and our four-ball, what one do we do better - and we equally suck at both of them," Inkster said. "If we could be tied going into Sunday I'd be ecstatic, but it never seems to be that way. We know we usually have to come from behind. But it would be nice not to have to do that."

The 2015 tournament was dominated by controversy when Europe stalwart

Pettersen refused to concede Alison Lee a short putt during a key foursome game. Pettersen's reception by the large home crowds expected in Iowa had been a key point of interest until the Norwegian withdrew from the event on Wednesday citing a back injury.

The absence of the world number 23 deprives Europe captain Sorenstam of one of her most reliable performers. Pettersen, who would have been playing in her ninth Solheim Cup, has been replaced by British alternate Catriona Matthew. "It's been a lot of juggling, to put it mildly," Sorenstam said. — AFP

PIERCE TAKES EARLY LEAD IN FIJI

SUVA, Fiji: New Zealander Daniel Pierce held a one-shot lead after the first round of the Fiji International at Natadola with a strong performance on the back nine. Pierce fired an eagle and three straight birdies after the turn to card a six-under 66, marred only by two dropped shots on his final four holes. Fellow Kiwi Ben Campbell and Australia's Daniel Valente were tied on second at 67.

Malaysia's Gavin Green had a share of fourth place on 68, along with the Australian trio of Adam Bland, David

McKenzie and Peter Wilson. Local hero Vijay Singh, a three-time major winner, was among nine players in 24th place on one under. "Before the round started if you told me I'd take one-under, I would because it was supposed to be pretty breezy," Singh told reporters. "I was suspect to play. It's really bugging me (when) I get to the top of my back-swing, so I had to shorten my back-swing to play," he said of the elbow problem. But considering I was hurting that bad, I played OK." —Reuters

MCGREGOR VOWS FAST FINISH AGAINST MAYWEATHER

LOS ANGELES: Conor McGregor believes he will knock out Floyd Mayweather inside two rounds but is ready for all scenarios when the two fighters clash in their eagerly anticipated superfight next week. Irish mixed martial arts star McGregor told reporters on a conference call on Wednesday that a controversial switch to lighter gloves could lead to an explosive outcome in the August 26 showdown in Las Vegas.

McGregor, who is widely seen as a massive underdog against undefeated former welterweight king Mayweather, predicted an early finish to the fight. "Particularly with the eight-ounce gloves, I don't believe he makes it out of the second round," said McGregor, nevertheless expressing the hope that the fight would last longer. "I don't want people saying 'Oh, it was a lucky punch' and all that. Part of me is hoping maybe he can last so I can show some skill and dismantle him that way. But I do not see him absorbing the blows in the first few



Mayweather

McGregor

rounds." The charismatic 29-year-old said a grueling training camp has taken him to "hell and back" and left him ready to face any kind of scenario inside the ring at the T-Mobile Arena. "There is no way in hell that I'm not ready to fight in the deepest of trenches in this contest," McGregor said. "We are ready for both scenarios. I'm ready to go to war for 12 rounds and I'm ready to put him away early on." Ultimate Fighting Championship President Dana White also believes the gloves switch could shape the outcome of the fight.

'Hits like a truck'

The move is widely seen as benefiting both fighters - Mayweather's fast hands could be quicker with lighter gloves, while McGregor will be able to make his punching power more keenly felt, provided he can land a blow on his American opponent. "I think it affects the contest a lot," White said when asked if McGregor would be helped by the change. "Yes, Floyd will be faster with eight-ounce gloves but he's more defensive. Conor hits like a truck, so smaller gloves helps him big time. I think it absolutely does."

McGregor and Mayweather will climb into the ring following an international publicity tour last month marked by expletive-laden tirades and trash-talking. McGregor, who was criticized for addressing Mayweather as "boy" during one event, dismissed suggestions that there was a racially tinged dimension to the duel. "For

me, it's athlete versus athlete," McGregor said. "I'm disappointed to hear the way it's being portrayed. All I can do is stay focused on my craft and go out and put a performance for my fans."

McGregor, meanwhile, said he has used disparagement by the boxing community as motivation. "It has certainly been motivating, the disrespect and the disregard for my skill set," McGregor said. "I look at people so many times and their mind is closed to how things can be done. It's a set way and there is no other way. Well, if that was the case we would have never reached across the oceans in search of other lands. We would never have gone into space."

"You have to have an open mind and you got to realize that there are other ways. Fighting is a complex game. But I'm just looking forward to August 26 and proving what I'm saying and educating the world of what martial arts is." — AFP

NADAL'S ADVICE: KEEP GOING

CINCINNATI: Once and future world number one Rafael Nadal has some advice for men's tennis stars in danger of missing the US Open due to injury - accept it and keep going. The 31-year-old Spaniard defeated France's Richard Gasquet 6-3, 6-4 on Wednesday to reach the third round at the ATP Cincinnati Masters, the last major US Open tune-up with the year's last major starting Aug 28 in New York.



Rafael Nadal

Nadal, a 15-time Grand Slam winner nagged by knee injuries for years, will overtake Andy Murray atop the rankings on Monday, the British star being sidelined by a hip injury. Nadal was assured the top spot for the first time since July 2014 when 19-time Grand Slam winner Roger Federer withdrew from Cincinnati with a back injury. "I worked a lot to give me another chance and here I am," Nadal said. "Just to be back to that position makes me happy and of course is going to be an emotional moment for me."

Serbian 12-time Grand Slam champion Novak Djokovic will miss the remainder of the year with an elbow injury while and Swiss 2016 US Open champion Stan Wawrinka is out with a knee injury and Kei Nishikori will miss the rest of 2017 with a torn right wrist tendon. Add Marin Cilic out with an adductor injury and Milos Raonic withdrawing with a left wrist injury and seven of the world's top 10 are absent this week.

Nadal knows all too well how that feels. He has missed six Grand Slam events in the 13 years since he began winning such titles. "I have been in that position more than all these players that are out now," Nadal said. "I know how tough it is. I'm very sorry for all of them and I wish all of them a fast and good recovery. "But at the same time I tell you Roger didn't have a lot of these things during his career. Novak the same. Andy the same. Stan, I don't think he had a lot of issues. "I'm the only one of these top players that missed a lot of important tournaments in my career. More than anybody else, I know how tough it is. "But the only thing that you can do when these kind of things happen is accept and keep going."

'We're not 20 anymore'

Nadal dismisses the notion that the season has become too long and grueling. "The season didn't change for the last 20 years, so we cannot think about that now," Nadal said. "It's something that happens because we're not 20 years old anymore. We're over 30, most of us, so it's something that can happen." Nadal says it has been special having Federer turning back the clock, winning the Australian Open and Wimbledon, at the same time he is doing the same, winning the French Open and proving doubters wrong. —AFP

PHILIPPINE 'MIGHTY DUCKS' SKATE FOR GOLD AND HISTORY

MANILA: A shopping mall in tropical Manila closes for the night but a once ragtag team of skaters is hitting the rink aiming to make history in the Southeast Asian Games. Dubbed "The Mighty Ducks" after the 1992 Disney film, the Philippine men's ice hockey team are targeting gold in Malaysia where the SEA Games begin tomorrow - a far cry from the days when their players knew only of the sport from watching movies.

"The Mighty Ducks' has been an inspiration to most hockey players, especially if you're in a tropical country like the Philippines," team forward Lenard Lancero, 22, told AFP by the rink in the mall where the team practice. "You've only been watching hockey, seeing it just in the movies. But when there was ice hockey here in (the mall), it's like a dream come true."

In a nation known for its pristine beaches and obsession with basketball, ice hockey has only recently emerged as an unlikely but increasingly popular sport. What started as a hobby for boys who would ask their parents to take them to rinks in the country's sprawling shopping centers slowly turned into a competitive sport with the creation of a national federation two years ago.

Teenage students and professionals in their thirties all represent their country, and they bagged a bronze medal in their first official tournament at the Asian Winter Games in Japan in February. Despite their achievements, the squad still get strange looks from surprised shoppers as they haul their gear to the rink, said defenceman Julius Santiago, 21. "But when they see us play, they're really amazed. They like watching it because it's intense, especially when there's full contact. And Filipinos love fighting, the hitting, so that's what excites them to watch us play," he said.

'Baby steps'

This year marks the first time winter



MANILA: This photo taken on Aug 15, 2017 shows members of the Philippines men's ice hockey team, dubbed the "Mighty Ducks", during a practice session at a mall skating rink ahead of their games at the Southeast Asian Games (SEAGames) in Malaysia. —AFP

sports have featured in the SEA Games. French-Filipino Francois Gautier, the team's alternate captain, said practicing in the Philippines was much tougher than in France, Canada or the United States which have thousands of skating rinks as opposed to the Asian nation's four. "It's more organized there for sure. The level is higher. Here, we're doing the baby steps," Gautier, 33, told AFP.

Funding is another challenge, with sticks, helmets, shin pads, elbow pads and gloves costing at least \$1,000 a set. The group gets by with contributions from corporations, the government and their own pockets. Team members divide time between school or work and training as well as cutting through Manila's notorious traffic to get to practice sessions.

For Lancero, a fresh graduate, goals outweigh obstacles. "If your career is into sports, that's really different from

most Filipinos. People think where is the money in sports? But we've been representing the national team and a couple of years after, it will be a career I hope," he said.

Compared to older teams like Thailand and Singapore, the Philippines is a newcomer and an underdog but the squad are confident. "I think our chances are really good. We're actually one of the favorites. I think we're considered a big threat to the other countries," Gautier said. The squad hope their performance in the regional games will bring them a step closer to their Olympic dream and earn the sport a bigger following in the Philippines. "Every single one of us here, playing or coaching, we are leaving our mark. That's extremely gratifying than being in a system that's already been established for years," said Gautier. "Here we're making history every day." — AFP

LANKA TRANSITION GRINDS TO HALT AT INDIA ROADBLOCK

COLOMBO: Two years have passed since Sri Lanka bid farewell to the last of their batting greats yet the South Asian side appears no nearer to ending what has been a difficult period of transition. When the brilliant Kumar Sangakkara followed the equally prolific Mahela Jayawardene into retirement in 2015, even the most optimistic Sri Lankan fans acknowledged the void they left was simply too big to be filled overnight.

What they probably did not anticipate was that two years down the line, the team would still be hopelessly in the throes of a seemingly interminable era of regeneration. Once admired, even envied, for their steady supply of freak bowlers with bizarre actions and a near-invincible record at home, Sri Lanka's recent humiliating 3-0 whitewash at the hands of India made for a particularly painful watch.

Only Kusal Mendis and Dimuth Karunaratne offered fleeting glimpses of batting prowess but Sri Lanka were

otherwise completely outclassed by the tourists in one of the most lopsided series of recent times. "Since I've been in this team, this is the worst series loss I've experienced," test skipper Dinesh Chandimal said after his team lost three matches in 11 days against their neighbours.

The debacle followed their first ever one-day series loss to Zimbabwe in July, which prompted a frustrated Angelo Mathews to relinquish the captaincy of both the test and one-day sides. Mathews appeared to have sparked a revival last year when they whitewashed Australia but the 3-0 home win proved little more than a false dawn.

Sri Lanka were subsequently thrashed in both tests and one-dayers in South Africa, lost a home test against Bangladesh and then failed to progress beyond the group stage at this year's Champions Trophy. The India whitewash has led the country's sports ministry to call for a report from

Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) to explain why the side performed so poorly, while former captain Aravinda de Silva believes the board lacks vision.

"We are going through a rebuilding process but you can't be saying that forever," de Silva, hero of Sri Lanka's 1996 World Cup triumph, told the Hindu newspaper last week. "Short-term process is good for a few months, one or two series, but not for the future. "So we need to seriously look at the team in the long-term and not keep chopping and changing," said de Silva, who quit as head of the board's cricket committee in May.

String of Injuries

His former team mate and chief selector Sanath Jayasuriya pointed to a string of injuries as one reason for the side's struggles and dismissed allegations of leading a trigger-happy panel. "Why should we change a squad of players if they are performing well and are injury free?" he told reporters. "Do

you know how many players have been injured in the last 14 months?"

Asela Gunaratne missed a majority of the series after fracturing his hand on the first day of the opening test and paceman Nuwan Pradeep was sidelined after picking up a hamstring injury in the second test. Rangana Herath, who has helped Sri Lanka overcome the loss of retired spin great Muttiah Muralitharan, missed the final test with a stiff back.

Sri Lanka were twice subjected to being made to follow-on and a lack of balance was evident as they failed to stretch any of the three tests to a full five days. Jayasuriya sought to explain the lack of competitiveness. "For instance, Mathews is not bowling after his hamstring injury," the former captain said of the all-rounder. "He used to bowl at least 15 overs in a test innings earlier but now plays purely as a batsman. So it's very difficult to get the right balance when your key all-rounder is not bowling." —Reuters

PREVIEW

ALL BLACKS EYE REBOUND AGAINST WALLABIES

SYDNEY: The All Blacks will be out to reassert their dominance as the wounded Wallabies look to the return of Kurtley Beale to trigger an upset in Saturday's Rugby Championship opener in Sydney. The world champions have been reviewing what went wrong in their unexpected series draw with the British and Irish Lions at home last month and are hell-bent on rebounding against the Australians in Sydney. The Lions defied the odds to down the All Blacks 24-21 in Wellington to take their series to a decider only for the final Auckland match to end in a 15-15 stalemate.

That inability to put away the Lions raised doubts whether the All Blacks' era of dominance was on the wane after they were shocked by Ireland 40-29 in Chicago last November. The All Blacks have dominated the Wallabies - losing only three of their last 29 trans-Tasman encounters - and are expected to do it again as Australian rugby looks to emerge from a woeful season. Sonny Bill Williams returns for the New Zealanders after serving his four-match suspension, while Jerome Kaino has been dropped for the Olympic stadium Test.

In a revamped line-up with six changes from the last Test side against the Lions, only halves Beauden Barrett and Aaron Smith remain from the starting backline, while Damian McKenzie gets his chance at fullback. Double World Cup winner Williams has not played for seven weeks since being suspended for a dangerous shoulder charge and a straight red card in the second Test against the Lions. "We reviewed that (Lions) series comprehensively, and the management have done a lot on it as well," All Blacks skipper Kieran Read said. "Hopefully, it will show in this championship what we've learned."

Pressure on Cheika

At stake against the Wallabies are not only points in the Rugby Championship, which also includes South Africa and Argentina, but also the Bledisloe Cup, the symbol of trans-Tasman rugby supremacy. It has been firmly in New Zealand hands since 2003 and over the past 14 years the All Blacks and Wallabies have played each other 42 times with New Zealand winning 33, drawing two and losing seven. "This Test will give us a great opportunity to gauge where we are at when comes to things we have been working on since the Lions tour," coach Steve Hansen said.

The pressure is on coach Michael Cheika and his Wallabies after their shock home loss to Scotland in June and coming off a dreadful Super Rugby season where Australian sides were 0-26 against Kiwi opposition. The return of inside-back Beale for his first Test since the World Cup final with New Zealand at Twickenham on October 30, 2015, is seen as a boost for the ailing Aussies. —AFP

WEMBLEY FACTOR HANGING OVER SPURS' TITLE HOPES

TOTTENHAM: The season hadn't even finished when diggers and cranes arrived at White Hart Lane in the middle of May, beginning the long job of demolishing a stadium that Tottenham had turned into a Premier League fortress. It will be another year before the team returns to the site of its famous old ground to take up residence in a new 61,000-seat arena, built with the aim of giving the club a better chance of competing with Europe's elite. But can they even remain in England's elite in the intervening 12 months?

For this season, Tottenham will play its "home" games in the Premier League and in European competition at Wembley Stadium, English soccer's 90,000-capacity national stadium located about 19 km across north London. Chelsea, the defending league champion, is the first visitor on Sunday. To say Tottenham has a poor record at Wembley would be an understatement.

In 10 matches since reopening in 2007, Tottenham has lost six times and won only twice. Last season, the team played its Champions League games at Wembley and lost to both Monaco and Bayer Leverkusen in the group stage, contributing to an early exit from the competition. Spurs then played Chelsea in the FA Cup semifinals and lost 4-2. Contrast that with Tottenham's record at White Hart Lane last season: Played 23, won 21, drawn two.

Led by players like Harry Kane, Dele Alli and Toby Alderweireld, Tottenham has its best team in a generation - it finished third and second in the Premier League the last two seasons - and has the best points-to-game ratio of any team in England's top flight over the past two years. In normal circumstances, Tottenham might even be the favorite for the league title this season.

The Wembley factor threatens that status. "We have a really big challenge this season, because it's not only to fight with the big clubs to try and win (the



LONDON: This Aug 9, 2017 photo shows the Wembley Stadium. — AP

title) again, but the other thing is try to make Wembley our home," Tottenham manager Mauricio Pochettino said days before the start of the season. "That's a big challenge for us - similar to winning a title. To make Wembley home and change the fans' perception and feel, in the end, that Wembley can help us to be better and achieve our dream."

Sunday's match will be a test case to see whether the temporary tenants can adjust their style. Tottenham's disappointing record could be because Wembley (105x69 m) has a bigger playing surface than the cramped White Hart Lane (100x67 m), which was among the smallest in the Premier League. Under Pochettino, Tottenham has a distinct pressing game, with the team keeping compact in the middle of the field and its defense playing a high line.

Put simply, there is more ground to cover at Wembley and therefore cracks appear in the team's set-up, especially in defense. For example, Spurs were the better team for large parts of the semifinal match against Chelsea, but still conceded four goals. "It's so difficult to

change your mindset and be ready, when you are so comfortable at White Hart Lane," Pochettino said at the end of last season. Playing regularly at Wembley should help Tottenham's cause, but it is unlikely to feel like home. The team will undoubtedly be at a disadvantage compared to its title rivals. "It is up to us," Tottenham captain Hugo Lloris said. "We are actors and have to put intensity into our performances, in our running and in our movement. We have to create something at Wembley."

There are historical parallels to Tottenham's travails at Wembley, and they are found close to home. North London rival Arsenal played its Champions League games at the old Wembley for two seasons (1998-2000) and the team failed to advance from the group stage in either season. "It was a nightmare," Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger said last year. "In hindsight, it was the wrong decision." There's no going back for Tottenham now, though. It's time to find a cure for its Wembley woes, starting this season against the team that denied Spurs the title in May. — AP

PREVIEW

NEW STADIUM, OLD CHALLENGE FOR ATLETICO

MADRID: For an off-season that began by losing an appeal against a one-year transfer ban, Atletico Madrid have emerged impressively unscathed as they welcome in a new era by moving to the newly built Wanda Metropolitano. The challenge for a club revolutionized since Diego Simeone took charge nearly six years ago remains a daunting one. Despite Atletico's significant financial growth off the field in recent years, their budget still lags hundreds of millions of euros behind their competitors for domestic and Champions League honours in Real Madrid and Barcelona.

Since stunning Real and Barca to win La Liga in 2013/14, Atletico have finished third for the past three seasons, but were 15 points back on champions Real last season. However, it is a sign of Atletico's progress that having to

rebuild every summer after cashing in on their best players is now a thing of the past. Antoine Griezmann, Atletico's top scorer for the past three seasons, resisted the advances of Manchester United to commit his immediate future to the club in June.

And in a major coup in-demand midfielder Saul Niguez also signed a nine-year contract extension after a starring role for Spain in the Under-21 European Championship. "The club have made an important effort to maintain the players that the best teams in the world want," said Simeone. Holding onto their best players was more important than ever as Atletico can't register new signings until January. "Maintaining the group that managed to have a fantastic season is not a problem. I see it as a success," Atletico CEO Miguel Angel Gil told the club's web-

site. "We should be proud to be able to continue counting on a group of players that have given us so much in the past few years."

Costa to come?

Atletico's ban also hasn't prevented them from strengthening for the upcoming season. Spanish international winger Vitolo will join in the new year following six months on loan at Las Palmas after Atletico paid his 37.5 million-euro (\$43 million) buyout clause to release him from Sevilla. And a return for the hero of Atletico's title-winning campaign three years ago, Diego Costa, is expected to be completed with the Brazilian-born striker refusing to train with Chelsea.

Those reinforcements should make Simeone's men serious contenders to finally land the Champions League after

being eliminated in each of the past four seasons by Real. However, they may come too late for Atletico to mount a realistic title challenge, especially as they get used to their new surroundings at the Wanda Metropolitano. Atletico will play their first three league games away from home to allow construction to be completed.

Meanwhile, there are fears the intimidating atmosphere created at the Vicente Calderon won't be repeated after the move nearly 20 km north-east to an out-of-town location by the city's airport. However, Gil Marin insists Atletico's fans' enthusiasm hasn't been sapped by the move. "Before opening we have more season-ticket holders than the capacity of the Vicente Calderon which confirms the enormous social growth of Atletico Madrid." —AFP

NEW BLOW FOR BARCA AS SUAREZ OUT FOR A MONTH

COUTINHO, DEMBELE 'CLOSE' TO BATTERED BARCELONA

BARCELONA: Troubled Barcelona were dealt a new blow ahead of the start of the Spanish league season when Luis Suarez was ruled out for a month with a knee injury yesterday. The Uruguayan striker suffered the injury in the second half of Wednesday night's 2-0 defeat away to Real Madrid in the second leg of the Spanish Super Cup, although he played on to the end as Barcelona lost 5-1 on aggregate.

"Luis Suarez will be out of action for around four weeks. Tests carried out on Thursday morning confirm that the Uruguayan has a distension in the posterior articular capsule in his right knee picked up in the second half of the Clásico on Wednesday in the Santiago Bernabeu," said Barcelona in a statement in English published on their website.

The news means Suarez will miss Barcelona's first three games of the season in La Liga, at home to Betis on Sunday, away to Alaves on Aug 26 and at home to Espanyol on Sept 9. He will also miss Uruguay's World Cup qualifying ties against Argentina on Aug 31 and Paraguay on Sept 5 and is likely to sit out his club's first Champions League group game on Sept 12 or 13.

Barcelona also revealed that defender Gerard Pique is a doubt for the meeting with Betis due to a groin strain, meaning further bad news for the Spanish giants whose summer has been overshadowed by the sale of Neymar to Paris Saint-Germain.

Meanwhile, Barcelona could be handed a lift as a senior official claimed the club are "close" to signing Philippe

Coutinho and Ousmane Dembele. Pep Segura, Barca's general manager, said negotiations with Liverpool for Brazilian playmaker Coutinho and Borussia Dortmund over a deal for promising French winger Dembele could be finalized within days.

"We have to help the team with reinforcements and they will be here in the coming days," Segura told Catalan TV station Esport3 after Barca lost the second leg of the Super Cup 2-0 at Madrid's Santiago Bernabeu. "We are discussing the conditions of Coutinho and Dembele...they are close. "We hope they will be Barca players next season."

Barca's season has been thrown into turmoil by Neymar's world record 222 million euro (\$261 million) move to Paris Saint-Germain earlier this month. New Barca coach Ernesto Valverde admitted Neymar's absence has affected the balance of the side. Meanwhile, the Catalans have struggled to close deals for Coutinho and Dembele with Liverpool and Dortmund holding out for fees in excess of 100 million euros in the knowledge of Barca's desperation to land a replacement before the transfer window shuts on August 31.

Barca defender Gerard Pique denied reports there is a growing feud between club's players and under-pressure board. However, Pique admitted Barca have plenty of work to do if they are to close their gap on Madrid, who have added to their crowns as European and Spanish champions by winning both the UEFA and Spanish Super Cups in style over the past week. "We are not in the best moment. Not as a team or as a club," said Pique. "We have to stick together and move forward. The season is long and it has just begun. Madrid were superior so we have to live with defeat, congratulate them and improve." —AFP



ROME: Juventus' forward from France Gonzalo Higuain (left) and Juventus' forward from Argentina Paulo Dybala celebrate after scoring during the Italian SuperCup football match Juventus vs Lazio on Aug 13, 2017 at the Olympic stadium. —AFP

PREVIEW

JUVE WARY AS RIVALS BARE TITLE AMBITIONS

MILAN: Juventus' Serie A season starts on the back of an apology from striker Gonzalo Higuain, and coach Massimiliano Allegri warning of obstacles as they face a potentially tougher title defense. "We're not in top form yet but we have to be ready because the new championship is about to start and we can't afford to make any more slip-ups," Allegri said following a shock 3-2 loss to Lazio in the Italian Super Cup final.

Barely three months after a chastening 4-1 defeat to Real Madrid in the Champions League final capped a record third consecutive double-winning season, Juventus host Cagliari in a championship-opening clash hoping it will lead them to a record-stretching seventh straight scudetto. But last week's reverse - which prompted out-of-sorts Higuain to post an apology to fans on Twitter - is being seen as a portent that "unstoppable" Juve are finally ready to be toppled.

Despite Roma finishing only four points behind in runners-up spot last term, resurgent AC Milan could claim to be front of the queue. Amid a busy summer spending spree that has yet to end, the seven-time European champions struck a major blow by luring highly-experienced Juventus defender Leonardo Bonucci to the club. The capture of Porto starlet Andre Silva, Ivorian striker Franck Kessie (Atalanta) and, possibly, Fiorentina marksman Nikola Kalinic in the coming days, means Vincenzo Montella's men can start dreaming of challenging for a first title since Allegri led them to the 2011 scudetto. —AFP



MADRID: Barcelona's Uruguayan forward Luis Suarez grimaces as he sits on the ground during the second leg of the Spanish Supercup football match at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium on Wednesday. —AFP

FIVE-GOAL CELTIC PUT ONE FOOT IN CL GROUP STAGE

GLASGOW: Celtic have one foot in the Champions League group stages after a Scott Sinclair double helped his side to a 5-0 thrashing of Astana in their play-off round first leg in Glasgow. An own-goal from Evgeni Postnikov opened the scoring in the 32nd minute before Sinclair doubled Celtic's advantage 10 minutes later. The English winger then grabbed his sixth goal of the season on the hour before James Forrest added another in the 79th minute.

Leigh Griffiths rounded off the rout in the 79th minute with a deflection off Igor Shitov to help the Scottish champions secure a commanding advantage to take to Kazakhstan for the return leg next Tuesday. It is a major boost for Brendan Rodgers' side who are now within touching distance of sealing their place in the lucrative group stages for a second successive season.

Having narrowly seen off Astana in the third qualifying round last year, Celtic knew the threat their opponents could pose and piled on the pressure from the start in search of a positive result to take to Kazakhstan. Sinclair was first to come close as he fired wide when the ball broke to him in the box from a free-kick before Griffiths somehow sent a powerful header off-target.

After soaking up the pressure, Astana were arguably enjoying their best spell of the half when Celtic took the lead. Australian midfielder Tom Rogic confidently took a perfectly weighted through ball from Mikel Lustig in his stride before charging down the right wing. The Socceroo star then got the break of the ball as he cut into the box before clipping a shot over Aleksandr Mokin that was going wide before Postnikov applied the finishing touch to send it into his own net.

Stung by his mistake, Postnikov came close to making amends at the other end minutes later with a powerful downward header after connecting well with a corner. With half-time looming, Sinclair doubled Celtic's advantage. The winger beat the offside trap to race on to a deflected ball and burst into the box before sending a shot into the far corner from a tight angle. Sinclair then took advantage of hesitation in the Astana defence to make it 3-0.

Romanian referee Ovidiu Hategan allowed play to continue after Rogic and Ivan Maevski's clash of heads and Sinclair played a neat one-two with Griffiths before slotting through the legs of Mokin. Griffiths was again the architect of Celtic's fourth. The striker held the ball up after collecting a long pass before knocking into the path of the on-running Forrest, who sent a low angled shot past Mokin. —AFP

NAPOLI PUNISH NINE-MAN NICE

PARIS: Napoli took a big step towards the Champions League group stage with a 2-0 win over outclassed nine-man Nice in their play-off, first-leg in Italy on Wednesday. The Riviera side were down to nine men after 79 minutes when Alassane Plea was sent off for a second yellow card just after Vincent Koziello's straight dismissal. Belgian midfielder Dries Mertens had slotted in the opener after 13 minutes with Jorginho doubling the hosts' account with a penalty after 70 minutes.

It was a third straight defeat for Lucien Favre's side who have lost their first two French Ligue 1 matches, and travelled without Mario Balotelli and new signing Wesley Sneijder. Napoli, third in Serie A and in the Champions League last 16 last year, were a class above the French punishing defensive errors in front of a delighted 50,000 home fans at the San Paolo Stadium. "At this stage of the season, we can say we played a great match," said Napoli coach Maurizio Sarri. "We were playing against a team who were more advanced than us in physical preparations, so the risk was very high."

Napoli took control of the game early with Mertens outwitting the Nice defense and taking advantage of an error by Yoan Cardinale to slot past the advancing Nice goalkeeper. And in the 70th minute it was again Mertens, brought down by Christophe Jallet, who earned the penalty which Jorginho slotted in. Despite his initial error Cardinale made some key saves against Joe Callejon (15), Mertens (21) and two Lorenzo Insigne efforts after 42 and 67 minutes.

The Italians also other missed chances to increase their advantage with Insigne hitting the woodwork after 51 minutes. Nice played the final ten minutes with nine men after first Koziello was shown a straight red card for a dangerous tackle on Piotr Zielinski. Plea was then dismissed for a second yellow card, allowing the Italians to wrap up a deserved victory ahead of their Serie A opener on Saturday. —AFP



NAPOLI: Nice's French forward Alassane Plea (right) kicks the ball next to Napoli's French defender Kalidou Koulibaly (left) and Napoli's Algerian defender Faouzi Ghoulam during the UEFA Champions League Play Off first leg football match SSC Napoli vs OCG Nice on Wednesday at the San Paolo Stadium. —AFP



MADRID: Real Madrid's defender Sergio Ramos (third right) holds the trophy as he and teammates celebrate after winning the second leg of the Spanish Supercup football match Real Madrid vs FC Barcelona at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium on Wednesday. —AFP

REAL COMPLETE SUPER CUP ROUT OF BARCA

MADRID: Real Madrid shrugged off the absence of the suspended Cristiano Ronaldo to cruise past rivals Barcelona 2-0 in the second leg of the Spanish Super Cup to cap a 5-1 aggregate win. Ronaldo was slapped with a five-game ban for pushing the referee after he was sent off in the first leg, but his replacement Marco Asensio enhanced his reputation as one of world football's rising stars as he smashed Madrid into the lead after just four minutes. Karim Benzema then deservedly doubled Real's lead before half-time.

Barca responded with a more spirited second-half showing and were unfortunate not to at least pull a goal back as Lionel Messi and Luis Suarez hit the woodwork. Victory continues Madrid's run of success under Zinedine Zidane with the European champions now having lifted seven trophies in the 20 months since the Frenchman took charge. "We played a great match tonight," said Zidane. "Especially in the first half it was spectacular."

Zidane even had the luxury of leaving first-team regulars Gareth Bale, Isco and Casemiro on the bench as Real's strength in depth was demonstrated in a dominant first 45 minutes. "This team has hunger and

every time we play it shows," added Zidane. "We have to try to continue like this. To start the season like this is very good, but we know a long season is just starting."

In similar fashion to his strike in the first leg, 21-year-old Asensio sent an unstoppable left-footed shot past Marc-Andre ter Stegen into the top corner from outside the box. "I think we were superior across the whole tie," Asensio told Spanish TV station Telecinco. However, he rejected suggestions he is now ahead of Bale in Zidane's pecking order. "I am working to have as many minutes as possible on the field. I am happy on both a collective and individual level."

Barca 'on the ropes'

Barcelona boss Ernesto Valverde has suffered the worst possible start to his reign with back-to-back defeats against the Catalans fiercest rivals and the visitors never threatened to mount a comeback after conceding. "We have to recover quickly, the league is on the horizon," said Valverde, ahead of Barca's La Liga opener against Real Betis on Sunday. Shorn of Neymar after his world record breaking transfer to Paris Saint-Germain and injured captain Andres Iniesta, Barca's star front two lacked the service

needed to make a meaningful impact. "In three days we find ourselves against the ropes," added Valverde. "Things have happened in pre-season that have affected the balance of the team and our job is to refine that balance."

Indeed, the scoreline could have been a lot more embarrassing for Barca as Marcelo dragged wide before Lucas Vazquez hit the post with a glorious chance. The hosts finally doubled their lead six minutes before the break when Benzema nipped in front of Umtiti and slotted past Ter Stegen. An 11:00 pm kick-off time meant half-time saw Wednesday turn to Thursday and Barca did at least salvage some pride in the early morning with an improved second-half display.

Messi was desperately unlucky not to net a consolation goal as he hit the underside of the bar from a narrow angle. The visitors' night was summed up when Suarez headed against the post with the goal gaping after Navas had parried Messi's driven shot into his path. And there could be even worse news to come for Barca as Suarez ended the game visibly suffering from a knee injury that Valverde said will be assessed on Thursday. —AFP

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Nadal's advice:
Keep going **44**

DOMINANT MADRID CRUSH BARCA TO WIN SUPER CUP

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MADRID: Real Madrid players celebrate after winning the second leg of the Spanish Supercup football match Real Madrid vs FC Barcelona at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium on Wednesday. — AFP