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Programs aim to instill good values in children



Four Spain attack suspects in court for questioning



Spice and all things rice: Lagos pays jollof homage



Rooney reborn: Striker back in form, eyeing England return



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TRUMP COMMITS US TROOPS TO OPEN-ENDED AFGHAN WAR

PAKISTAN BLAMED • TALEBAN VOW 'GRAVEYARD' • KABUL WELCOMES PLAN



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5-DAY EID HOLIDAY

KUWAIT: The Eid Al-Adha holiday will begin on Aug 31 (coinciding with Waqfat Arafat) and end on Sept 4, the Civil Service Commission (CSC) announced yesterday. The CSC said the holiday will begin on Aug 31 (Thursday) for all ministries, government departments, authorities and establishments. — KUNA

INDIA'S TOP COURT BANS 'TRIPLE TALAQ'

NEW DELHI: India's top court yesterday banned a controversial Islamic practice that allows men to divorce their wives instantly, ending a long tradition that many Muslim women had fiercely opposed. The Supreme Court ruled that the practice of "triple talaq", whereby Muslim men can divorce their wives by reciting the word talaq (divorce) three times, was both unconstitutional and un-Islamic. Victims including Shayara Bano, whose husband used triple talaq to divorce her in 2015, had approached India's highest court to ask for a ruling.

A panel of five male judges from India's major faiths - Hinduism, Christianity, Islam, Sikhism and Zoroastrianism
Continued on Page 11

KPC: OIL SPILL 'CONTAINED'

KUWAIT: Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) announced yesterday that an oil spill off Kuwait's southern coast has been contained. The KPC said in a statement that contingency teams had taken all necessary measures to disintegrate the oil slick near power and water desalination plants.

The corporation contacted the International Spill Control Organization (ISCO) for consultation and help in mapping out necessary plans to deal with the spill, it said, indicating that there were also contacts with oil companies operating in the Gulf region to try to pinpoint the source of possible leakage.

Moreover, samples of the floating oil have been scooped up from the waters and sent to laboratories of the Kuwait Oil Company and a scientific institute. Furthermore, operation rooms of national oil companies, emergency teams from the ministry of electricity and water and other authorities have been activated. — KUNA



KUWAIT: KPC workers clean a beach after an oil spill hit Kuwait's southern coast. — KUNA

WASHINGTON/KABUL: President Donald Trump committed US troops to an open-ended war in Afghanistan, a decision the Afghan government welcomed yesterday but which Taliban insurgents warned would make the country a "graveyard for the American empire". Trump offered few specifics in a speech on Monday but promised a stepped-up military campaign against the Taliban, who have gained ground against US-backed Afghan government forces. He also singled out Pakistan for harboring militants in safe havens on its soil, an accusation it denies.

While Trump said he would not discuss troop levels or details of the new strategy, US officials said on Monday he had signed off on Defense Secretary James Mattis' plans to send about 4,000 more troops to Afghanistan. In his first formal address to the nation as commander-in-chief, Trump discarded his previous criticism of the 16-year-old war as a waste of time and money, admitting things looked different from "behind the desk in the Oval Office".

"My instinct was to pull out," Trump said as he spoke of his frustration with a war that has killed thousands of US troops and cost US taxpayers trillions of dollars. But following months of deliberation, Trump said he had concluded
Continued on Page 11



Donald Trump

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CROWN PRINCE RECEIVES SHEIKH NASSER, AHMADI GOVERNOR

KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah yesterday received His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah at Seif Palace. (Right) His Highness also received Ahmad Governor Sheikh Fawaz Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. —KUNA photos



DELEGATION OF S KOREAN PHYSICIANS VISITS KUWAIT

KUWAIT: The visit of a South Korean contingent of physicians represents a plan by Kuwait's Ministry of Health (MoH) to improve healthcare services in the country, the ministry said yesterday. Speaking to the press after his meeting with a visiting South Korean delegation, the Ministry of Health's Assistant Undersecretary for Technical Affairs Dr Waleed Al-Falah said that Kuwait's healthcare system stands to gain from visits by foreign doctors. He added that the ministry has begun initiating a healthcare e-system to replace antiquated paper documents. The new systems provide less margin for error and are far more reliable. —KUNA

KUWAIT: Delegation of S Korean physicians hold talks with their Kuwait counterparts yesterday. —KUNA photos



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DRUG SUSPECTS NABBED



By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: The Drugs Control General Department arrested an expat with 5 kg of "chemical" and a sensitive scale. Information was received about the suspect's activities and he was arrested in his house, where the drug was found. Meanwhile, an Asian was arrested for bringing in a large quantity of drugs through a land border outlet. When his truck was searched, nearly 2 kg of heroin and one kilogram of shabu were found. The suspect said he delivers it to an Arab, who was also arrested.

Gang busted

Detectives busted a gang that forged seals, stamps and documents in violation of the law and without security approval. The gang comprised of eight expats of various nationalities, who operated a press and made seals for persons in exchange of money without checking their identity or an official letter from the department asking for the documents.

Residency detectives

Residency detectives busted 10 com-



panies with 69 workers under their sponsorship. The companies had commercial licenses and excess labor although they are closed and do not conduct any activity.



BOSTON: Health Minister Jamal Al-Harbi visited Boston pediatrics hospital and checked on the children treated there along with their families and review their treatment plans. Harbi met the hospital's management to remove the difficulties patients face and discussed means of developing the medical situation in Kuwait.



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah holds talks with Vice Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China Zhang Gaoli yesterday. —KUNA photos



KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets the visiting Vice Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China Zhang Gaoli yesterday. The meeting was attended by First Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and Kuwait Ambassador to China Samih Hayat.

AMIR RECEIVES CHINA'S VICE PREMIER



KUWAIT: Kuwaiti First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah holds talks with Vice Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China Zhang Gaoli.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah yesterday received visiting Vice Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China Zhang Gaoli at Sief Palace. Bilateral relations and issues of common concern were discussed during the reception, which was also attended by His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. Also present were First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Amiri Diwan advisor Mohammad Dhaifallah Sharar and Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah.

FM meets Vice Premier

In another development, Kuwaiti First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah yesterday held official talks with Gaoli. During the talks, they reviewed firm relations between Kuwait and China in various fields, mainly economy, trade and investment. They also exchanged views on the latest regional and international developments and several issues of mutual interest. Both sides then signed a number of significant agreements in the fields of housing care and infrastructure, together with a memo of understanding in the development area. The talks were attended by Minister of Housing and Minister of State for Service Affairs Yasser Abul, Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah, Assistant Foreign Minister for the First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister's Office and several other senior officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.—KUNA

News

in brief



Kuwait's Ambassador to Bosnia and Herzegovina Nasser Al-Mutairi meets with Minister of Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina Dragan Mektic. —KUNA

Kuwait Ambassador holds talks with Bosnia minister

KUWAIT: Minister of Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina Dragan Mektic has stressed the importance of the contributing role played by investors in supporting the economy of his country, vowing to do more to enhance security, especially in tourist places. Kuwaiti Embassy in Sarajevo said, in a statement received by KUNA, that the remarks came during a meeting held by Mektic with Kuwait's Ambassador to Bosnia and Herzegovina Nasser Al-Mutairi. The talks also highlighted ways to strengthen bilateral relations and a number of issues of common concern, including problems that face Kuwaiti tourists in Bosnia. "The role of investors and tourists is important," Mektic said, adding, "we will strengthen security, especially in places where tourists are staying."

KUWAIT'S AIRPORT IN FULL GEAR TO FACILITATE FLOW OF PILGRIMS



KUWAIT: Kuwaiti pilgrims head to Makkah to perform Hajj (pilgrimage). —KUNA photos



KUWAIT: Kuwait International Airport is in full gear to best serve the Kuwaiti pilgrims heading to Makkah to perform Islam's fifth pillar of Hajj (pilgrimage). The Airport allocated special lanes and areas to help the pilgrims. The Hajj is an annual Islamic pilgrimage to Makkah, the most holy city for Muslims, and a mandatory religious duty for

Muslims that must be carried out at least once in their lifetime by all adult Muslims who are physically and financially capable of undertaking the journey, and can support their family during their absence.

It is one of the five pillars of Islam, alongside Shahadah, Salat, Zakat, and Sawm. The Hajj is the largest

annual gathering of people in the world. The state of being physically and financially capable of performing the Hajj is called istita'ah, and a Muslim who fulfills this condition is called a mustati. The Hajj is a demonstration of the solidarity of the Muslim people, and their submission to God (Allah). —Agencies

Kuwaiti oil price up \$1.07 to \$48.76 pb

KUWAIT: The price of the Kuwaiti oil went up \$1.07 to reach \$48.76 per barrel (pb) yesterday compared with USD 47.69 pb last Friday, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) said yesterday. Meanwhile, the price of the West Texas Intermediate's future contracts for September delivery went down 13 cents to reach \$48.55 pb, the same case with the Brent Blend's future contracts for October delivery, which went down 25 cents to \$52.45 pb. Meanwhile, the Kuwait Price Index rose 18.65 points to stand at 6,932.01 points; the Weighted Index went up by 1.21 points to read 429.03 points. KSX 15 gains 4.55 points to stand at 977.93 points. Value of trade was at nearly KD 15,343,036.181 while the volume was 94,805,539 shares done through 3,605 deals.

Teamwork 'key' to the resurgence of Tennis

TUNIS: Arab nations should work closely together to further develop the sport of tennis in the region, a Kuwaiti sports official said yesterday. Speaking to KUNA on the sidelines of a ceremony held to honor him, the Chairman of both the Kuwaiti and Arab tennis federations Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah was "thankful for being feted by Tunisia", an accolade he described as a testament to Kuwait's support of the sport of tennis. "This sport can be taken to new heights only with cooperation and collective work on the part of Arab countries," he added. Meanwhile, Tunisia's Minister of Youth and Sports Majdoulaine Cherni cited an Arab amateur tennis championship currently hosted by the North African nation, which features around 120 competitors. "We would like to be the first to congratulate Kuwait on this honor," the Tunisian minister noted. Kuwait's Ambassador to Tunis Ali Al-Theferi was grateful for the honor as well, saying it was the result of Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber's strenuous efforts to push the sport of tennis to new levels of fame.

Photo

of the day



KUWAIT: Photo captures a panoramic view of the Kuwait coastline along the Gulf Road. — Photo by Fouad Al-Shaikh



‘MAKAREM’, ‘MUTHMER’ - PROGRAMS AIM TO INSTILL GOOD VALUES IN KIDS

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti studies related to childhood indicated that programs for the child need to be further developed, associated with provisions of centers specialized in child care, training courses for their caregivers and constant family awareness to achieve sound socialization. Hence, the government's serious approach and long-term outlook for a better Kuwait was to separate the youth authority from sport and build on four axioms; empowerment and leadership, creativity and innovation, national competitiveness and ensuring social cohesion.

In order to achieve its mission, the Public Authority for Youth cooperates with the Kuwaiti Ministry of Education's General Education Sector through the preparation of ambitious programs, providing a safe environment, enhancing the participation of youth, taking responsibility, and building and developing Kuwait. Makarem, one of the educational programs offered by the Authority, is designed for the 5-11 years age group, and aims to highlight positive and leadership characteristics of children.

After the program took its first step in the Jahra educational area in the last academic year, the Authority announced the adoption of the program plan for the next academic year (2017-



Education Undersecretary for General Education and member of the Board of Directors of the General Authority for Youth Fatima Al-Kanderi

18) through the annexation of the Farwaniya educational area to the program, to be followed by the rest of educational areas according to a planned schedule. Education Undersecretary for General Education and member of the Board of



Director General of the Public Authority for Youth Abdurrahman Al-Mutairi

Directors of the General Authority for Youth Fatima Al-Kanderi told KUNA that 'Makarem' aims to provide children with the characteristics of a leadership, knowledge, ability to engage in dialogue and self-respect.

'My Talent'

She pointed out that 'Makarem' includes five projects such as forums, personal competencies, awareness of parents, talents and pioneers of youth. She pointed out that (Mawhibati) or "My Talent" project, benefited 220 gifted and distinguished students, noting that there will be an exhibition for them mid-November in the 360 Mall to highlight their creativity and innovations. The "Talented camp" project started with 42 schools, from them 57 students were picked. They enrolled in a three-day camp to promote values and self-reliance as well as to accept the other opinion.

She said that the committee supervising the program would select children from Jahra and Farwaniya educational areas in mid-September based on their readiness, orientation, technical abilities and high potential. For his part, Director General of the Public Authority for Youth Abdurrahman Al-Mutairi told KUNA that the Authority will continue its partnership with the children of other age groups through 'Muthmer', fruitful educational program directed to the intermediate and secondary levels. — KUNA



DALLAS RESIDENTIAL FACILITY ACQUIRED BY WARBA BANK

KUWAIT: Warba Bank adds another investment to its global real-estate investment portfolio in line with its aspirations to becoming a corporate and investment banking champion. This transaction follows the bank's successful real estate expansion strategy, derived from in-depth research, undertaken by the Investment Banking Group, of the underlying forces that are shaping the global economic and financial market outlook which, in turn, shapes the bank's asset allocation strategy.

With a view that the real estate market in the United States of America exhibits strong fundamentals with high demand for Class A multifamily units in transient cities, Warba Bank is proud to announce its third real estate acquisition since the beginning of this year in Euless, Texas, a suburb of Dallas, Texas.

Warba Bank's equity investment in Suite 2801, a 417-unit apartment community, amounts to \$23.46 million. Warba Bank's acquisition came through a joint venture partnership with Cortland Partners, a full-service multifamily real estate acquisition, development, and operating entity.

Commenting on the Bank's third acquisition in the United States of America since the beginning of this year, Thuwaini Khaled Al-Thuwaini, Deputy Chief Investment Banking Officer, said: "Thanks to Allah, we're excited to record another milestone under the Bank's global real estate investment program for the hard efforts of the team at the Investments Banking Group. Warba Bank is keen on identifying viable real estate investment opportunities in view of diversifying

the Bank's sources of income and developing its real estate investment portfolio pursuant to its investment policy and risk appetite".

Thuwaini emphasized that the Investment Banking Group is exceptionally vigilant to the bank's risk standards when deploying its investments and fully adheres to its investment policy which aims to ensure long-term, secured risk adjusted returns.

Suite 2801 is a Class "A" community strategically located in the centre of major employment hubs including Dallas, Fort Worth and Arlington, Texas. It is within walking distance of the largest shopping destinations, making it the best option for tenants. It also provides convenient access to DFW International Airport. Built in 2013, the Class "A" property offers 1, 2 and 3-bedroom luxury apartments boasting premium finishes and quality amenities catering to all ages, including swimming pools and a fitness centre.

Since the beginning of 2017, Warba Bank's total real estate investments in the United States have reached \$70 million, equivalent to KD 22 million. The bank has already acquired the headquarters of Manpower Group, an office building in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and the luxury coastal flats of Ultris in Banyan Grove, Virginia.

Warba Bank launched its global real estate investment programme earlier this year by acquiring a modern facility exclusively dedicated to KIA Motors in the UK, strategically located in Lane Industrial Estate, just 1.5 miles away from Immingham. The ports in Immingham and Grimsby together are the largest in the UK.



Thuwaini Al-Thuwaini

KIB MARKS INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY, ORGANIZES ART COMPETITION

KUWAIT: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) recently organized an art and design competition in commemoration of International Youth Day. The competition took place at Art Space, Kuwait's first artist studio and cafe, and was attended by prolific artists and creatives from across the creative community in Kuwait.

The competition, one of the first youth competitions of its kind in Kuwait, was held under the umbrella of KIB's social responsibility program. Youth initiatives constitute a significant portion of the Bank's program, as KIB continuously strives to foster the creative talents of Kuwait's youth. Through a diverse series of activities and initiatives, the Bank seeks to encourage young creatives to embrace their talents and work hard to achieve their ambitions.

Nawaf Najia, Manager of the Corporate Communications Unit at KIB, said: "We always strive to encourage and motivate our coun-

try's younger generations, and we actively seek to nurture their creative talents by organizing and supporting various activities and initiatives. A key goal of our youth programs is to support the contemporary, creative and innovative vision of our youth across all fields and sectors."

Najia further lauded the participant's creative works and artistic ideas. He also noted that through this competition, KIB sought to provide young creatives with the opportunity to showcase their ideas, designs and artworks, in addition to giving them a platform to develop their skills and connect with other artists. It serves to note that through its social responsibility program, KIB continuously works to support social programs that promote national development. The Bank also seeks to better integrate youth into these programs, given the key role they play in social, cultural and economic national development.



Crime

Report

9 ARRESTED FOR FIGHTING

KUWAIT: Criminal detectives arrested nine young men, while two were sent to Jahra Hospital under guard, following a violent fight in a Jahra cafe. Video of part of the fight was uploaded on social media. Preliminary investigations revealed the fight was over staring, and the cafe they were in has cabins where women are allowed. The men used sharp objects, and the two injured men were admitted to the ICU in critical condition.

Three girls attacked

A security source said three Kuwaiti girls told Jleeb police station investigators that two men living in Firdous beat them. One of the girls said one of the men deliberately exposed her private parts in public. The girls submitted medical reports stating injuries they sustained. The Farwaniya prosecutor filed the beating and molestation case as a felony.

Car, flat damaged

In Fahd Al-Ahmad, a citizen told police his car was damaged while parked in front of a salon. He said the windshield and back window were smashed, and the two side mirrors were stolen. Separately, a real estate company representative lodged a complaint against a tenant for damaging the flat he rents.

Under the influence

A Syrian expat was sent to the central prison after questioning by police for resisting arrest and public drunkenness, in addition to disturbing the peace. Another Syrian was taken to Nugra police station for being drunk, then sent to forensics to determine the alcohol content in his blood. The Syrian had stormed the flat of an Iraqi woman, so she screamed for help. Meanwhile, a citizen was detained at Nugra police station for suspicion of being drunk. He then attacked a police officer who was handling him.

Fight in Nugra cafe

Paramedics rushed a Jordanian and a Syrian to hospital for treatment of injuries they sustained during a fight in a Nugra cafe over a game of cards. The two refused to solve the matter amicably, so a case of exchanging blows was filed against them, and both were sent for questioning.

Women arrested for drugs

Two female citizens were arrested upon their return from Sharm El-Sheikh with 20 illicit tablets on them. Both were taken for questioning. Customs officers noticed one of the girls got nervous when her luggage was put through the inspection system, so their luggage was carefully searched and the tablets were found.

Classified info leaked

Intensive investigations by the Interior Ministry over the leaking of a classified document to the media revealed a high-ranking official and an Iranian journalist are involved. Some media published reports that included operational orders and internal security correspondence that are highly confidential, prompting the deputy premier and interior minister to order an investigation to find who told an officer to leak a copy of a confidential letter regarding an unannounced move by police. A security source said authorities were surprised when it was discovered the journalist is an Iranian who claims he is a beedoon.

Young man fined

The comprehensive court fined a young man KD 3,000 for publishing remarks that harmed the reputation of a girl and insulting her on WhatsApp

OIL SPOTS ALONG MESSILA 'COME FROM OVERSEAS'

KUWAIT: Minister of Oil and Minister of Electricity and Water Esam Al-Marzouqi said yesterday the oil spots, found last week off Messila area, stemmed from old oil spills outside the territorial waters of Kuwait. "These oil spots have nothing to do with the recent oil spill in South Al-Zour area that prompted an effective response from Kuwait," the minister told Kuwait TV.

"Vessels from Kuwait Navy and Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) reached the scene and contained the oil spill within a few hours," he noted. "The Ministry of Oil abides by the policy of transparency in addressing oil accidents. Upon receiving notification of oil spots near the officers' club on Messila coast on August 11, the ministry started talking the problem and investigating the sources of the spill.

"Preliminary results of the probes show that the sources of the spill are old and stem from outside our territorial waters," he said, noting the Saudi and Iranian authorities affirmed that they received no reports in this regard. The final results, that will determine the exact source of the oil spill, will emerge after completing the analyses of the recent satellite images, he went on. The oil tankers responsible for the accident will be liable to sanctions on par with sanctions imposed by the United States following the Deepwater Horizon oil spill (also referred to as the Gulf of Mexico oil spill) in 2010, Al-Marzouqi added. — KUNA



KUWAIT: A man walks along the coast of Arabian Gulf Sea. An oil spill was discovered recently off Kuwait coast. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat



Freedom

Al-Anbaa



Al-Anbaa

HUMANITARIAN CENTER

By Dr Muttaq R Al-Qarawi

Kuwait celebrated the anniversary of being named as an International Humanitarian Center, and we are honored that HH the Amir was named as a humanitarian leader. These international titles did not come out of the blue, they were expressed by events and experiences that were carried out by Kuwait in the field of humanitarian support by the Amir, government and people, and it contributed to having the world admit that the humanitarian principle, and helping others, is a characteristic of this generous population.

Humanity in the Shareeah means the brotherhood in creation as Almighty Allah says: "O mankind, indeed we have created you from male and female and made the people and tribes that you may know one another," while the hadeeth of Prophet (PBUH) says: "One will not be a believer until he likes for his brother what he likes for himself," and it is understood that it is a group of philosophical and ethical views that focus on the value and efficiency of a human being, either individual or as a

group. Kuwaiti people grew up on the love of others, unless they were enemies, and these people confirmed the brotherhood of creation with all people, brotherhood of kinship and neighborhood with the Muslim and non Muslim, and the brotherhood in religion with Muslims, and fulfilled for each brotherhood's goals. Kuwait's aid helped countries like Palestine, Philippines, Europe, Pakistan and Indonesia, and concentrated in many of affected countries be it Arab or otherwise.

What makes us proud with this blessed work is that the fulfillment of this principle is not limited to some people rather all Kuwait people participate in it, starting with the efforts of HH the Amir to help the weakest of Kuwaiti people with effort and money. The effect of these works is clear through participation and many events stand witness to it. What makes us proud is that our country stands out with this humanitarian character, and that our Amir is a leader and example for it with the grace of Allah, so praise be to Him. —Translated by Kuwait Times



Salma Al-Hajjaj and Fawzi Al-Majdalli pose for a group photo with Gulf Bank and MGRP's senior management teams.

GULF BANK AND MGRP LAUNCH STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP TO SUPPORT EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM OFFERS COMPREHENSIVE GUIDANCE FOR JOB SEEKERS

KUWAIT: Reinforcing its active role in supporting Kuwait's youth and the development of Kuwait's economy, Gulf Bank is pleased to announce that it has signed a strategic partnership with the Manpower and Government Restructuring Program (MGRP). This partnership will support the Recruitment Screening Program initiative, and offer career counseling, as well as guidance to Kuwaiti nationals seeking employment opportunities in the private sector.

Salma Al-Hajjaj, General Manager for Human Resources at Gulf Bank, and Fawzi Al-Majdalli, Secretary General at MGRP signed the agreement on 21 August 2017 at the MGRP headquarters. Through this agreement, Gulf Bank will enrich the program by deploying its HR expertise and offering job seekers professional career counseling and guidance for each candidate based on an assessment delivered through the Recruitment Screening Program. The program has been developed with the aim of analyzing and assessing character, strengths and weaknesses, and skill set, based on which a recommendation on the most suitable post and company environment is made for the job seeker.

Commenting on the importance of this partnership, Mrs. Salma Al-Hajjaj said: "A major focus area for Gulf Bank is supporting young Kuwaiti nationals and we are strongly committed to making a difference, not only in the lives of our young fresh graduates, but on a nationwide level. That said; this agreement will allow us to maximize our reach, and influence and

impact so many young Kuwaitis, and ultimately, encourage and support employment in the private sector by placing the right people in the right places, and ensure sustainability through the development of local talent".

Mrs. Al-Hajjaj continued: "Gulf Bank has had the privilege of working closely with the MGRP for many years now, and when two entities share the same objectives and passion for change and growth, it yields room for more positive initiatives and hence, positive results. At Gulf Bank, we've established a solid track record of developing and supporting programs for youth which also contribute to the future of our beloved Kuwait. Today, this partnership acts as an opportunity for Gulf Bank to take its commitment to the next level and make use of its high degree of expertise and professionalism in the HR field to offer sound and constructive guidance that will act as the first solid stepping stone in these candidates careers, as they move forward in the private sector".

"In February of this year, Gulf Bank was awarded the 'Best Training Plan 2016' from the MGRP, which highlighted the bank's commitment and dedication to support Kuwait's youth. Now, this new agreement is the next step in our longstanding partnership, and I would like to thank the MGRP for putting its trust in us to act as supporters of this significant program and as counselors and mentors for Kuwait's younger generations" Mrs. Al-Hajjaj added.

Gulf Bank's support of Kuwait's youth



Salma Al-Hajjaj, General Manager for Human Resources at Gulf Bank and Fawzi Al-Majdalli, Secretary General at MGRP are pictured during the signing ceremony.

has been demonstrated through several initiatives, some of which include its external training programs held in collaboration with the MGRP and its long term sponsorship of INJAZ Kuwait which offers jobs skills and entrepreneurial training for high school and university students. Internally, the Bank is proud of its Ajyal Graduate Development Program which nurtures young Kuwaiti talent early in the career to develop them into 'holistic bankers' and

prepare them for future leadership positions in the Bank. Furthermore, the Bank also offers a Bank-wide learning and development program, which includes a wide range of training programs and courses for employees of various levels and from different departments, including the staff at its branches. For further details about Gulf Bank initiatives, please visit the Bank's website: www.e-gulfbank.com or its social media accounts.



Al-Qabas

EXPATS AND THE NEW REGULATIONS

By Atiyab Al-Shatti

Kuwait that is cradled by the Amir of humanity has always been a part of rights and security and a land of equality and justice, yet in a strange turn by the Parliamentary legislator, there are new laws that have regulated the status of expats blocking means of normal life and making it not difficult, rather close to impossible for an expat.

If an expat who was born in Kuwait, and his parents who have spent most of their lives here and have made this place their first country, is not allowed to renew their residency permit, why will that expat work towards building Kuwait while his elderly parents are thrown out without someone to take care of or having the physical ability to make a living for themselves? Expats born in Kuwait, consider it their home and do not have any place or family or friends in their second country, as we do not think that when the person is forced to leave this place where he has build a life for himself, will be welcomed there or not. Are laws thrown at the individual's backs studied from the humanitarian point of view?

As for the laws of medical visits in government hospitals, they make it nearly impossible to be treated in Kuwait. For example, examination with radio-active Iodine, with thyrogen injection costs KD 500, this is only the examination fees and not the treatment. Testing the mass of red blood cells costs KD 300, testing kidneys costs above KD 50, testing kidneys from the bottom side KD 50, of course the kidneys won't be tested from one side without the other so the total cost will be KD 100.

As for the price of the ICU, where the person is hanging between life and death the cost is KD 30 per day. The expat with limited income is surrounded by financial commitments, if he was in an accident or critical condition, humanity will be thrown in hell, and we will wait for him to pay the fees first. This expat with limited income will consider dying as a better option than entering the ICU. If we look at each suffocating law alone, we will notice that it aims at organizing the expats financial dealing and their presence in Kuwait. We appeal to the legislator to consider the humanitarian aspect, and be merciful while dealing with people, or at least not to be the cause of their harm.

—Translated by Kuwait Times



Last child saved after quake hits Italy island

REMAINS FOUND ON US WARSHIP THAT COLLIDED OFF SINGAPORE

Page 10

Page 8



Iraqi forces backed by the Hashed Al-Shaabi (Popular Mobilization units) advance towards the town of Tal Afar, west of Mosul, after the Iraqi government announced the beginning of the operation to retake it from the control of the Islamic State (IS) group. — AFP

IRAQI FORCES RETAKE DISTRICTS OF IS BASTION

PENTAGON CHIEF VISITS BAGHDAD IN SHOW OF SUPPORT

TAL ABTA: Iraqi forces yesterday recaptured from the Islamic State group the first two districts of jihadist bastion Tal Afar, as the Pentagon chief visited Baghdad in a show of support. The United Nations said thousands of civilians have fled Tal Afar in the two days since the start of the broad offensive backed by the US-led coalition fighting IS. In remarks before meeting in Baghdad with Prime Minister Haider Al-Abadi, US Defence Secretary Jim Mattis said he wanted to keep the spotlight on eradicating the jihadists.

"Right now our focus is on defeating ISIS inside Iraq, restoring Iraqi sovereignty and territorial integrity," said the Pentagon chief, using an alternative acronym for IS.

Iraqi troops, supported by the forces of a US-led international coalition, routed IS in Mosul in July after a grueling nine-month fight for Iraq's second city. They launched the offensive on Sunday to recapture Tal Afar, once a key IS supply hub between Mosul-around 70

kilometers to the east-and the Syrian border.

The jihadists inside Tal Afar, estimated to number around 1,000, responded with artillery fire yesterday as the Iraqi forces massed outside the city. Army, police and units of the Hashed Al-Shaabi paramilitary coalition later took "full control" of Al-Kifah and Al-Nur districts in Tal Afar, the Hashed said. The Iraqi forces had encircled the city despite what Hashed spokesman Ahmed Al-Assadi described as "intense" fighting. He said the fighting for the city would likely last weeks.

The International Organization for Migration said its teams were "responding to thousands of civilians fleeing Tal Afar since the launch of the military campaign". Since Friday, more than 3,000 people had arrived at two IOM emergency sites, many with just the clothes on their back, said the UN agency.

The UN refugee agency (UNHCR) said it had received some 9,000 people at the Hamman Al Alil transit centre in the past week, and it was

preparing to accommodate nearly 30,000 more.

'Fought like the dickens'

Mattis declined to make any predictions on the battle. "ISIS's days are certainly numbered, but it's not over yet and it's not going to be over anytime soon," he said. Iraqi forces had "fought like the dickens in Mosul, (it) cost them over 6,000 wounded, somewhere over 1,200 killed," he noted. Yet that comeback restored the confidence of the Iraqi forces after their shock loss of Mosul to IS in 2014. Mattis stressed that retaking Mosul would not have happened "without... Abadi's steady hand" but also thanks to extensive US support.

The future of that support still must be settled, and there would be resistance from Shiite militia and Iranians, said Nicholas Heras, Middle East Security Fellow at the Center for a New American Security in Washington. Mattis will also meet in Arbil with Massud Barzani, president of the Iraqi Kurdistan region. Mattis

had said his discussions in Iraq would focus on the way ahead, including how to keep the country from again politically fragmenting or falling further under Iran's influence. "Secretary Mattis is going to be very much focused on a pathway for the United States to continue to have a residual force in Iraq to continue to train Iraqi security forces" and avoiding a successor from IS rising up, said Heras.

Kurdistan referendum challenge

A key issue is Iraqi Kurdistan's plan for an independence referendum on September 25, strongly opposed by the US as an event that could undermine Abadi and distract from the fight against IS. "A referendum at this time would be potentially catastrophic to the counter-ISIS campaign," said Brett McGurk, the White House envoy to the anti-IS coalition. "It's not just the United States; every member of our coalition believes that now is not the time to hold this referendum."

McGurk said the initial push on the outskirts of Tal Afar was "going well", with 235 square kilometers cleared in the first 24 hours. Iraqi and US forces were "moving faster, more effectively, more efficiently," he said, in part due to US President Donald Trump having given Mattis more authority to decide on tactics and resources needed. Mattis, who is on a five-day swing through Jordan, Iraq, Turkey and Ukraine, said he would also talk about reconstruction and resettlement of hundreds of thousands of Iraqis driven from their homes and towns by the fighting, especially Mosul.

"It's not going to happen overnight. It's going to be a heavy lift for them going forward." But Heras said Mattis, whom he said has earned firm trust among Iraqis, needs to help Abadi further build his power as a moderate for the post-war, with elections looming for next year. "That will be a political pickle that Mattis will have to work Abadi through," he said. — AFP

FOUR SPAIN ATTACK SUSPECTS IN COURT FOR QUESTIONING

MADRID: Four alleged members of a terror cell were in a Madrid court yesterday, facing possible charges related to the twin attacks in Catalonia that claimed 15 lives and wounded more than 100 people. Spanish police shot dead Barcelona terror suspect Younes Abouyaaqoub on Monday in a dramatic end to the manhunt for the Moroccan national, who shouted "Allahu Akbar" (God is greatest) when he was killed.

The Moroccan was the last fugitive member of a 12-man cell suspected of plotting last week's vehicle attacks in Barcelona and the seaside resort of Cambrils. Besides the four men detained, the rest were killed, either by police or in an explosion believed to have been accidentally detonated by the suspects themselves in their bomb factory at the seaside town of Alcanar. Among those killed in the explosion was a Moroccan imam at the heart of the cell, Abdelbaki Es Satty, Catalan police chief Josep Lluís Traperó confirmed. While Spanish police say the cell has been dismantled, investigators are trying to determine if it had logistical or other forms of support from other individuals. Questions are also arising about the group's possible international connections.

Audi in Paris, imam in Belgium

In Belgium, the mayor of the Vilvorde region told AFP that Satty spent time in the Brussels sub-

urb of Machelen-next to the city's airport-between January and March 2016. On the other side of Brussels, the Molenbeek suburb has gained notoriety as a hotbed of international jihadists after the Brussels bombings in March 2016 and the Paris attacks in November 2015.

And in France, Interior Minister Gerard Collomb told BFMTV that the Audi A3 used to mow down people in Cambrils had been detected by speed cameras in the Paris region while making "a very rapid return trip" days before the Barcelona attack. Collomb is due to host his Spanish counterpart Juan Ignacio Zoido on Wednesday for talks due to include anti-terrorism cooperation. At least one of the suspects also spent a night in Zurich last December, said Swiss police, adding that it was too early to speculate about any connections with Switzerland.

In bandages but fit

Yesterday under heavy security, police vans carrying the suspects entered the National Court, which deals with terrorism cases, where a judge will decide what-if any-charges to press against the four men who allegedly formed part of the cell. The four suspects in court include Driss Oukabir, the older brother of Moussa who was killed by police in Cambrils on Friday morning along with four other suspects.

Mohamed Aalaa, Mohamed Houli Chemlal, who was injured in the explosion in Alcanar, and Salh El Karib were also in court. Chemlal, dressed in hospital patient clothing and with his right hand bandaged, was brought in after a doctor determined that he was fit for interrogation, a court spokesman told AFP. Veteran magistrate Fernando Andreu is due to determine which charges to file against the four men and what role they may have played in the terror plot. The first hearing lasted about 70 minutes, a court spokesman said. At the end of the day, Andreu is due to decide if he would send the four to provisional detention. Traperó said some of the men had given information to police during questioning, and that the elements would be weighed up by investigators.

'One or more' attacks

Investigators seeking to unravel the terror cell had homed in on the small border town of Ripoll at the foot of the Pyrenees mountains in northeastern Spain. Satty, aged in his 40s, came under scrutiny as he is believed to have radicalized youths in Ripoll. Police said the imam had spent time in prison and had once been in contact with a suspect wanted on terrorism charges but was never himself charged with terror-related incidents.



BARCELONA: A woman hugs a Muslim boy on the historic Las Ramblas during a protest by the Muslim community condemning the attack in the popular market district. — AP

The suspected jihadists had been preparing bombs for "one or more attacks in Barcelona", Traperó said Sunday, revealing that 120 gas canisters and traces of TATP components-a homemade explosive that is an IS hallmark-had been found at their bomb factory.

The accidental explosion in the house in Alcanar, south of Barcelona, may have forced the

suspects to modify their plans. Instead, they used a vehicle to smash into crowds on Barcelona's Las Ramblas boulevard, killing 13 people and injuring more than 100.

While on the run, Abouyaaqoub, 22, stabbed to death the driver of a car he hijacked to get away. Several hours later, a similar vehicle attack in Cambrils left one woman dead. — AFP

IRAN IN TALKS TO UNBLOCK TWITTER: NEW MINISTER

TEHRAN: Iran's new communications minister said yesterday that negotiations were underway with Twitter to unblock the service, which has been banned for years despite being used even by the country's supreme leader. The micro-blogging platform was barred at the time of mass anti-regime protests in 2009 that followed allegations of massive rigging in the re-election of president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

"(Twitter) has announced that it is prepared to negotiate to resolve problems," Mohammad-Javad Azari Jahromi told the Iran daily newspaper.

"Considering the current situation there are grounds for such negotiation and interaction. Twitter is not an immoral environment needing to be blocked," he added. The 36-year-old Jahromi became Iran's youngest-ever minister this week, and the first to be born after the 1979 Islamic revolution.

His selection has been criticized by rights

groups over his involvement in surveillance during and after the mass anti-regime protests of 2009. He rejected the criticism in a meeting with lawmakers this week, saying: "I wasn't responsible for surveillance—I was in charge of the technical infrastructure for the surveillance industry, and I consider it an honor." But Jahromi is also seen as a critic of online censorship in Iran, where platforms like Facebook, YouTube and Twitter remain banned even if millions use them daily through easily available privacy software.

He said officials were also looking at ways to unblock YouTube while still censoring "immoral content" on the video-sharing service, and that a pilot project would allow universities to access the site. There was no immediate response from Twitter or YouTube. Jahromi added that the final decision on unblocking sites lay with Supreme Council for Cyberspace, which includes members of the headline judiciary.

The 2009 protests were considered the first time that Twitter and social media were widely used to organize protests—a model replicated when the Arab Spring movement erupted across the region the following year. "At that time and based on remarks made by the director of this network, Iran's government believed they had interfered in the country's internal affairs and for this reason Twitter was filtered," said Jahromi, who has more than 4,000 followers on the service.

'Cyberspace can uproot religion'

Despite the ban, Twitter is widely used by supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who has official accounts in several languages, as well as President Hassan Rouhani and Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif. Even Ahmadinejad joined the service this year. But many conservatives remain worried about "Western infiltration" through social media.

In December 2016, Friday prayer leader Ayatollah Mohammad-Ali Movahedi Kermani, who heads the Committee for the Promoting Virtue and Prohibiting Vice, said the dangers of the internet were even greater than women failing to wear a headscarf. "Bad hijab is a bad thing but cyberspace is a hundred times worse," he said in a speech to religious officials, highlighting the presence of porn and anti-religious sites.

"Cyberspace can uproot religion and Islam completely," he said. Rouhani is thought to have favoured lifting the Twitter ban for some time, having even exchanged words with the site's co-founder Jack Dorsey back in 2013. "Good evening, President. Are citizens of Iran able to read your tweets?" Dorsey posted shortly after Rouhani's first election win. Rouhani replied: "Evening, @Jack... my efforts geared 2 ensure my ppl'll comfortably b able 2 access all info globally as is their #right." — AFP



DAMASCUS: Syrian Civil Defence members, also known as the White Helmets, stand in protest on the rubble of buildings in Zamalka, near Syria's capital Damascus, to commemorate the 4th anniversary of a reported chemical weapons attack on the Ghouta area. — AFP

DOZENS DEAD IN US-LED STRIKES AS BATTLE NEARS RAQQA HEART

SDF HAS CAPTURED JUST UNDER 60 PERCENT OF RAQQA

BEIRUT: Dozens of civilians have died in two days of intense US-led strikes on Raqqa, a monitor said yesterday, as fighting to retake the Syrian city from jihadists nears its densely populated centre. At least 250 US-led coalition strikes have hit Raqqa city and the surrounding area in the last week, a coalition spokesman told AFP, as the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces press an offensive in the city.

The SDF has so far captured just under 60 percent of Raqqa, monitors say, leaving jihadists from the Islamic State group in control of about 10 square kilometers in the heart of the city. But as clashes approach central Raqqa, monitors and activists have reported scores killed in intensifying coalition bombardment of the city.

On Monday, US-led air strikes killed at least 42 civilians in several neighborhoods in Raqqa under IS control, according to the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights monitor. Nineteen children and 12 women were among the dead. That takes to 167 the number of civilians killed in coalition strikes since August 14, after the Observatory said at least 27 were killed on Sunday. "The tolls are high because the air strikes are hitting neigh-

borhoods in the city centre that are densely packed with civilians," Observatory director Rami Abdel Rahman said.

'Buildings full of civilians'

"There are buildings full of civilians who are trying to get away from the front lines." The coalition says avoiding civilian casualties is its "highest priority." Coalition spokesman Colonel Ryan Dillon told AFP that the latest allegations of civilian deaths would be taken seriously and investigated. He said the coalition had stepped up its strikes in Raqqa since a US-backed offensive successfully ousted IS from Mosul in neighboring Iraq, freeing up aircraft.

The coalition, which operates in both countries, earlier this month acknowledged the deaths of 624 civilians in its strikes in Syria and Iraq since 2014, but rights groups say the number is much higher. The SDF's Arab and Kurdish fighters broke into Raqqa in early June after spending months chipping away at IS-held territory in the surrounding province. Asked about the escalating civilian tolls in recent days, SDF spokesman Talal Sello told AFP his forces were striving to avoid casualties. "One of the major reasons for the slow progress in the Raqqa fight

is the preserving of civilian lives and avoiding massive losses among them," Sello said. He blamed IS for using civilians as "human shields."

"We have opened up safe routes for civilians to cross securely towards areas controlled by our forces, who are rescuing civilians almost daily and transferring them to safe places." Tens of thousands of people have fled Raqqa city, with the United Nations estimating that up to 25,000 civilians remain trapped inside with dwindling food and fuel supplies. The UN's humanitarian pointman for Syria, Jan Egeland, has said IS-held territory in Raqqa city is now "the worst place" in the war-torn country. Civilians, including women and children, must dodge sniper fire, IS-laid mines, and coalition bombardment to make it out alive.

Activist collective Raqqa is Being Slaughtered Silently (RBSS) also reported heavy raids in recent days, and said those killed since Sunday included entire families and people displaced to Raqqa from other parts of Syria. "Unfortunately, civilians have no way to protect themselves," said RBSS's Husam Essa. "All they can do is try to hide in whatever shelter they can and avoid going out into the street as much as possible," he told AFP. — AFP

CONFEDERATE FLAGS IN NYC MET WITH ROCKS, SUIT, TARP

NEW YORK: The Confederate flags had been in a Manhattan apartment window for over a year. And then, in a matter of days last week, they were met with hurled rocks, a punched-out window, a tarp hung over them and legal action. By Monday, the lighted flags were no more to be found in the seventh-floor win-

dows in the East Village neighborhood, where the Confederate symbol had been displayed alongside an Israeli flag and a colonial-era American one.

They'd attracted new attention after an Aug. 12 white nationalist rally to preserve a Confederate statue in Charlottesville, Virginia,

spiraled into violence that left a counter-protester dead and stirred debate over where or whether Confederate statues and symbols belong in 21st-century America. A man lobbed rocks at the building last week while he and others yelled for the Confederate flags to be taken down, according to video made by a bystander and posted on local news site DNAInfo. Another man, Darren Keen, put a fist through one of the flag-flyer's windows Friday night after getting to his fire escape from an adjoining roof, according to police, who arrested him on a disorderly conduct charge.

"I just lost my temper when I saw that Confederate flag," Keen said Monday. To the Nebraska-born DJ, the flag symbolizes hatred and intolerance, and it galled him to see the banner displayed across the street from an organization that mentors and educates disadvantaged, largely minority girls from the neighborhood, where funky-chic cafes and pricey condos blend with public housing.

'This too shall pass'

Still, the 34-year-old said he hoped anyone else who feels the same way would "make a sign don't break out a window." The flag-flyer, William Green, didn't immediately respond to an email message Monday, and a possible phone number for him rang unanswered. But he has noted that he'd had the banners up for more than a year. "I find all the alleged commotion while I'm on vacation a little suspicious," he wrote in an email that the landlord attached when filing a lawsuit against him Saturday. "Whatever the drama, 'this too shall pass.'" — AP



NEW YORK: In this Monday, Aug 21, 2017 photo, the seventh floor windows, at the top of this apartment building in New York's East Village neighborhood, show no signs of the Confederate flags that had been displayed alongside an Israeli flag and a colonial-era American flag, and illuminated at night. — AP

TRUMP RETURNS TO ARIZONA AND A CHAOTIC POLITICAL LANDSCAPE

PHOENIX: Donald Trump was just a few weeks into his candidacy in 2015 when he came to Phoenix for a speech that ended up being a bigger moment in his campaign than most people realized at the time. Trump savaged his critics and the media, vowed to fine Mexico \$100,000 for each immigrant entering the country illegally, talked tough on trade, promised to return America to its winning ways and borrowed a line from Richard Nixon in declaring, "The silent majority is back." The packed crowd ate it up - the raucous enthusiasm an early sign of the overwhelming support among Trump's base that would help carry him to the presidency.

As Trump returns to Arizona yesterday in need of another big moment, he will find a place where his agenda and unconventional leadership style have consumed the political landscape and elevated the state's status in the national fight for control of power in Washington in 2018. It was Arizona senator John McCain who cast the vote that derailed Trump's effort to repeal the health care law. The other Arizona senator, Jeff Flake, has become the poster child for Republicans who buck the president's agenda and feel his wrath on Twitter. The president is almost certain to back a GOP challenger to Flake in 2018, complicating Republican efforts to maintain control of the Senate.

Immigration debate

Trump has also revived the immigration debate and infuriated Latinos here with his talk of pardoning former Sheriff Joe Arpaio over his recent conviction for breaking the law with his signature immigration patrols. The controversy over Civil War monuments has even spilled into Arizona, where the governor has faced repeated calls to take down a handful of Confederate memorials in the state. And an overlooked item in Trump's agenda, school choice, has made education a hot campaign issue in Arizona. With the strong support of Education Secretary Besty DeVos, Arizona passed the nation's most ambitious expansion of vouchers this year, and public school advo-

cates recently submitted more than 100,000 signatures in a petition drive to get the law wiped out on the 2018 ballot.

If that isn't enough fuel for a political bonfire, Trump's visit to Arizona will be his first political event since the race-driven violence in Virginia and his divisive comments in the aftermath of the protests. That created a dilemma for Republicans like Gov. Doug Ducey on whether to take the stage at the Trump rally while running for re-election. Doing so would subject him to attacks from moderates and the left by appearing with the president so soon after Charlottesville and possibly at the same time as the president pardons Arpaio and throws his endorsement behind Flake's challenger. But avoiding the stage could hurt him with the base.

Ducey's plan is to greet the president on the airport tarmac and skip the rally, saying he wants to oversee the law enforcement response to protests. The governor supported Trump and appeared on stage at one of his rallies last year in Arizona.

Faithful and vocal

Trump would be hard-pressed to find a state where his Republican base is as faithful and vocal as in Arizona, which is a big reason why he came to the state seven times during his campaign and refers to the "special place" it holds for him. The fierce, non-conformist political spirit evident at Trump rallies here traces its roots to the frontier days and allows hard-fisted politicians like him and Arpaio to thrive.

"The Republican primary base in Arizona is highly partisan, semi-libertarian in the sense that it's against the swamp," said long-time Republican political strategist Chuck Coughlin. "We're the 48th state to join. We're still acting like a juvenile. We still act like we're the last one invited to the party which is sort of what Donald Trump is." The biggest consequence of Trump's unorthodox governing style may be seen in Flake's re-election effort. Flake has been outspoken in his criticism of Trump, taking him to task in pointed jabs in a recent book. — AP



ANKARA: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan gestures as he speaks during the 39th Mukhtars Meeting, at Presidential Complex. — AFP

ERDOGAN VOWS TO RUIN ANY 'KURDISH STATE' IN SYRIA

ANKARA: President Recep Tayyip Erdogan yesterday vowed Turkey would thwart any attempt by a Kurdish militia it deems "terrorists" to carve out a Kurdish state in northern Syria. Ankara views the Kurdish Peoples' Protection Units (YPG) and the Kurdish Democratic Party (PYD) as a terror group. But the United States is closely allied with the groups' fighters in the battle against jihadists in Syria.

"We do not and will never allow a so-called state to be established by the PYD, YPG in northern Syria," Erdogan said in a speech in Ankara. "They want to establish a terror corridor in northern Syria reaching the Mediterranean," the president said. The Syrian Kurdish groups have two "cantons" in Syria's northeast as well as the Afrin region to the west. Erdogan added that Turkey would continue to fight against terror organizations "wherever we find them", referring to the YPG which Turkey says is the Syrian affiliate of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK).

The PKK is proscribed as a terror group by Turkey, the US and the European Union. It has waged an insurgency against the Turkish state since 1984 during which over 40,000 people have been killed. In August last year, Turkey launched a cross-border operation in northern Syria, aimed at clear-

ing the border zone of both YPG fighters and jihadists. There has been speculation Ankara may be planning to extend an operation against the YPG to clear it from the town of Afrin, where Erdogan has said its presence is a "threat" for Turkey.

The president indicated on August 5 that Turkey was planning to expand the operation with "new and important steps" but did not give further details. Erdogan on Monday said a joint operation with Iran against Kurdish militants which "pose a threat" including the PKK, is "always on the agenda." He was speaking after a visit last week by the Iranian armed forces chief, General Mohammad Hossein Bagheri.

Iranian security forces have also fought the PKK's affiliate, the Party of Free Life of Kurdistan (PJAK). Both groups have rear bases in neighboring Iraq. Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu will visit Iraq on Wednesday, his ministry said, to discuss issues including next month's independence referendum in Iraq's autonomous Kurdish region. Cavusoglu will meet Iraqi Prime Minister Haider Al-Abadi in Baghdad and then Iraqi Kurdish leader Massud Barzani in Arbil. Ankara has repeatedly warned against holding the non-binding September 25 poll. Last week, Cavusoglu said the plans could lead to civil war. — AFP

'THE BEGINNING OF THE END' FOR THE ANGOLAN REGIME

LUANDA: For the past 20 years, Angola's most prominent human rights activist Rafael Marques de Morais has railed against outgoing President Jose Eduardo Dos Santos and his administration, exposing through his investigative work what he sees as the regime's unfettered corruption.

In an interview with AFP, the 45-year-old outspoken campaigner—who was convicted of defaming military generals in 2015 and handed a six-months suspended sentence—dismissed Wednesday's vote as rigged, but predicted that this is "the beginning of the end" for the regime. In power since the country's 1975 independence from Portugal, the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) is expected to remain the ruling party with candidate Joao Lourenco, currently defense minister. Dos Santos, now aged 74 and reportedly in poor health, became president in 1979 but decided to step down after his nearly four-decades rule.

What do you expect from the elections?

These elections are essentially just a process

because we already know what the results are. Most of the population also knows what the results are. The question is whether the MPLA will try to understand how unhappy the population is and give more space to the opposition.

Are you expecting massive fraud?

The MPLA won't try to rig the elections, the elections are pre-rigged. In distant parts of the country, the ballots have been left at the homes of the traditional authorities ... and there is no control of the police and the electoral commission. You have many opposition members who have not been registered to monitor the elections as the law requires. There are many examples where people have been sent to vote tens of kilometers away to make sure they do not vote for the opposition.

What will be Dos Santos's legacy?

Dos Santos's legacy is corruption. It's in the structure of the social fabric of Angola where people believe that the only way to improve their lives is

through corruption. It's not through hard work, it's not through education, it's not through contributing to the common welfare, but essentially as they say in French 'debrouillez-vous'—each one on his own.

Do you expect any changes from his probable successor?

With this new president, what we expect is someone who will try to assert himself by the use of sheer force, not through diplomacy, not through changing what is wrong, but essentially by trying to be more arrogant. And that is what will get him into trouble very soon.

Do you think the regime's days are numbered?

I think this is the last election where people place their bet on the political parties. The next election will be about citizenry and people will themselves craft their own future. ... The youth of this country has hopes. There is a kind of awakening which is important to take into consideration and which will

become prominent in the coming years. For the regime, this change of president is the beginning of the end. The MPLA won't last. It can finish this term but it will disappear into oblivion, if it continues to rely on corruption as its main policy.

What does the future of the country look like?

We have 24 million people, we have many good people ... we have to create public spaces for debate for those who have different ideas, so those who have integrity and honesty can thrive and not only the crooks.

Who are you going to vote for?

I won't vote. That was my stance to remain outside the play and have the presence of mind to really see what is happening in the process. ... The ruling party doesn't abide by the law and it is my job as a citizen to continue to raise these issues until they abide by the law and end up in jail or out of power. — AFP



ISCHIA: Italian emergency workers evacuate, on a stretcher, Mattias, a 7 year-old boy who was trapped by rubble, in Casamicciola Terme, on the Italian island of Ischia after an earthquake hit the popular Italian tourist island off the coast of Naples, causing several buildings to collapse overnight. — AFP

LAST CHILD SAVED AFTER QUAKE HITS ITALY ISLAND

THE LAST OF THREE BROTHERS BURIED IN DEBRIS

CASAMICCIOLA TERME: Rescuers on the Italian holiday island of Ischia pulled the last trapped child from rubble yesterday after a magnitude-4.0 earthquake toppled buildings and left two people dead. Firefighters dug with their bare hands to reach 11-year-old Mattias, the last of three brothers buried in debris when the quake struck. "There was silence for a while, they were tired. Then they began speaking again and we drew comfort from that," said Luca Cari, a firefighter spokesman.

A woman was killed in Casamicciola, in the north of the small tourist island, by debris that fell from a church, while the body of another was spotted in the rubble of a collapsed house, local media reported. Firefighters broke into applause as a dusty Mattias, seven, was pulled free from under the bed where he had taken refuge. His 11-year-old brother Ciro was the last to emerge, rescued after 16 hours in the dark and loaded into a waiting ambulance.

The boys' father, whose hands were bandaged after spending the night digging

through the rubble alongside the firefighters, could be seen tearfully hugging relatives as his eldest son was saved. Emergency workers had previously recovered the boys' seven-month-old brother, Pasquale, crying but alive, after hours of effort overnight. Their pregnant mother had sounded the alarm.

Two small communes, Casamicciola and neighboring Lacco Ameno, bore the brunt of the quake, according to the civil protection agency. The quake hit the northwest of the island at 8:57pm (18:57 GMT) on Monday, at a depth of just five kilometers. Italian authorities first put the quake at a 3.6 magnitude, but later revised it upward to 4.0 — in seismic terms, a modest event.

The main earthquake was followed by 14 smaller aftershocks. Several buildings collapsed while others had large, ominous cracks. Thirty-nine people were injured, one seriously. "Italy is united with Ischia in sorrow for, and solidarity with, the victims. We stand side-by-side with those taking part in the rescues," Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni said on Twitter.

'A horrible experience'

Many holidaymakers packed their bags and rushed to catch special overnight ferries back to the mainland. The quake struck just days ahead of the first anniversary of the 6.0 magnitude quake that killed nearly 300 people in and around Amatrice in central Italy. In October 2016 and January 2017 three other earthquakes hit the same region. Francesco Peduto, head of Italy's National Geologists Association, yesterday slammed shoddy construction and a lack of earthquake prevention measures, saying a 4.0-magnitude quake should not have brought down buildings.

"It's frankly extraordinary that people continue to die for earthquakes of this size," he said. The quake response has benefited from the presence of emergency responders who were on the island to fight forest fires that have plagued Italy this summer, local media said. "I was on the couch watching TV. Blackout, shaking, something fell on my head. I scream, my mother grabs me and we ran outside," one witness wrote on Twitter. — AFP

SUSPECT ADMITS KILLINGS IN FINNISH STABBING SPREE

HELSINKI: The main suspect in last week's stabbing attack in Finland admitted yesterday to killing two people and injuring eight others but denied any intent to murder, his lawyer said. The Turku district court placed Abderrahman Mechkah, an 18-year-old Moroccan citizen, in formal custody after he made his statement to the court via video link from hospital, where he is being treated for a police gunshot wound to the thigh.

"The main suspect admits acts which led to deaths, but denies that they were murders," his lawyer Kaarle Gummerus told AFP. The stabbing is being investigated as Finland's first terror attack. "The offender in Turku incident is suspected on probable cause of murders and attempted murders with terrorist intent and placed in detention," the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) said in a Twitter post. "He didn't explain the motive of the acts," Gummerus added.

Police have said that Mechkah—an asylum seeker who arrived in Finland in early 2016 — targeted women in the Friday rampage at a market square in the southwestern port city of Turku. Two Finnish women were killed and six women and two men were injured. Among the injured were a Briton, an Italian and a Swede. Mechkah was shot by police minutes after the attack. Most of the hearing was held behind closed doors, but press photos taken of the video screen at the beginning showed the suspect lying in his bed, his head propped up on pillows and his face shielded by a white sheet.

Four other suspects

The country's intelligence agency SUPO

said Monday that it had received a tip earlier this year that Mechkah might have become radicalized. Because the tip did not contain information about a concrete threat of an attack, it had not yet been investigated, the agency said. In June, the SUPO raised Finland's terror threat level one notch, to "elevated" from "low", the second on a four-tier scale.

It said at the time that it saw an increased risk of an attack committed by Islamic State group militants, noting that foreign fighters from Finland had "gained significant positions within IS in particular and have an extensive network of relations in the organization." The agency reiterated on Monday that it was closely watching around 350 individuals—an increase of 80 percent since 2012. Four other Moroccan citizens were arrested in a raid in Turku just hours after the attack.

Yesterday, the Turku court placed two of them, Mohamed Bakier and Ilyas Berrouh, in custody. The nature of the two men's involvement in the attack has not yet been made public. A third, identified as Abdederrazak Essariouli, was also due to appear before the court later yesterday, suspected of being an accessory to the crimes.

Meanwhile, the fourth man remains a suspect but police said Tuesday that they had released him and would not seek his detention. Germany's interior ministry has said that Mechkah spent time in Germany from late 2015 to early 2016. He had been registered in a German police database because his stay in the country was illegal, since he had not sought asylum there. — AFP



TURKU: Suspect Mohamed Bakier allegedly involved in the Finnish stabbing attack covers himself next to his lawyer Joni Brander in the Southwest Finland District Court during the remand hearing. — AFP

NATO CHIEF TO VISIT POLAND AS RUSSIAN WAR GAMES LOOM

WARSAW: NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg will visit a US-led NATO battalion in Poland on Friday amid concern on the alliance's eastern flank over a huge Russian military exercise in neighboring Belarus next month. Stoltenberg will hold talks with Polish President Andrzej Duda in Warsaw on Thursday before travelling to the NATO base in the northern village of Orzysz, Tomasz Szatkowski, Poland's deputy defence minister, told local media yesterday.

The multinational battalion in Orzysz is one of four deployed by NATO this spring to Poland and the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, aimed at reassuring its easternmost allies unsettled by Russia's frequent military exercises near the region in the wake of its 2014 annexation of Crimea from Ukraine. Speaking in Washington this month, Stoltenberg said it was "correct to say that NATO's relationship with Russia is more difficult than it has been any time since the end of the Cold War."

General Ben Hodges, commander of US ground forces in Europe, said last week that "Poland has become for the United States Army the centre of gravity for everything that we're doing in terms of deterrence" regarding Russia. The Orzysz base lies about 100 kilometers from Russia's Kaliningrad exclave and a stone's throw from the Suwalki Gap, a strategically important land corridor critical to the security of the Baltic states. The gap, a 65-kilometre stretch

of border with Lithuania, is sandwiched between the Russian exclave of Kaliningrad and Belarus. Military strategists say it is the Achilles' heel of NATO's eastern flank since its capture would amputate the alliance's three Baltic members and so shatter its credibility.

'Serious doubts'

Formerly Soviet-ruled Baltic states worry that after Ukraine, they may be next to face pressure from the Kremlin, which is why they are casting a wary eye on September's "Zapad 2017" (West 2017) Russian military drills in Belarus, which borders Latvia, Lithuania and Poland. Lithuania's Defence Minister Raimundas Karoblis warned in June that Moscow might use the manoeuvres as cover for an aggressive troop buildup on NATO's eastern flank. "Putin would like to test NATO... and probably the best area for him to test is the Baltics," Karoblis told AFP.

He said his government estimated that 100,000 Russian troops would be involved in the exercises, while official Russian figures quoted in Polish media reports peg the number of troops at 12,700. Moscow has invited representatives of all three Baltic states to observe the drills. Michal Dworczyk, a senior Polish defence ministry official, said this week that Poles could feel "absolutely safe" despite "serious doubts" about whether Russia would withdraw all its forces from Belarus after the drills are over. — AFP

RUSSIA DETAINS TOP THEATRE DIRECTOR OVER ALLEGED FRAUD

MOSCOW: Russia's Investigative Committee said yesterday that it had detained top theatre and film director Kirill Serebrennikov on suspicion of committing massive fraud. Serebrennikov, 47, is the artistic director of Moscow's Gogol Centre theatre and has staged productions at the leg-

endary Bolshoi Theatre. His films have been shown at Cannes and Venice film festivals.

The Investigative Committee, which probes serious crimes, said in a statement he was being held on suspicion of defrauding the state of at least 68 million rubles (\$1.15 million, 977,000

euros) in arts funding over three years between 2011 and 2014. Serebrennikov's lawyer Dmitry Kharitonov told Kommersant FM radio that an investigator told him of the detention that morning and it was "a complete surprise." He said that Serebrennikov had been shooting a film in the northwestern city of Saint Petersburg.

In recent years Serebrennikov has fallen out of favor with the authorities and has criticized growing censorship of the arts by officials, warning last year that "everything is returning to the most pathetic Soviet practices." Deputy culture minister Alexander Zhuravsky told TASS news agency that he learnt of Serebrennikov's detention from media but said that "if they detained him, it means there is some legal decision that calls for such a measure."

Serebrennikov could face up to 10 years in prison if convicted on the charges. The Investigative Committee said it intends to press charges against Serebrennikov and a court will rule whether to hold him behind bars. Investigators had previously confiscated his passport, preventing him from travelling abroad. Investigators questioned the director and raided his flat in Moscow and the Gogol-Centre theatre in May, prompting protests from leading figures in the arts world, including Vladimir Urin, general director of the Bolshoi Theatre. "What was done to the director was wrong," Urin told journalists at the time, adding that he had written to President Vladimir Putin to protest the handling of the investigation. — AFP



MOSCOW: Journalists gather outside the Gogol Centre theatre. — AFP

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JAPAN MINISTER SEES UNITY WITH TRUMP, PRESSURE ON N KOREA

TOKYO: Japan's new foreign minister is a reputed renegade, famous for bashing his ruling party's policies with stands against nuclear power and for stricter checks on foreign aid. Taro Kono, appointed earlier this month, said he won't abandon his pet issues, but will make sure to send a united message when representing his country to the outside world. In comments to reporters yesterday at the Foreign Ministry, Kono was the mark of diplomacy when referring to Japan's relations with the US, its most important ally.

He said he saw no divisions or confusion in the administration of President Donald Trump in his recent talks with officials including Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, Defense Secretary Jim Mattis and Ambassador to Japan William Hagerty. "Things have never been easier," he said. "We can have solid talks." When asked about how some observers found Washington divided and confusing, Kono acknowledged that some changes were inevitable simply

because Trump is a Republican, unlike his predecessor, Barack Obama. But he said the basics of Japan's relationship with the US have remained the same, and such solidarity was important given the crisis over North Korea's nuclear and missile programs.

Kono, who has always tended to take a tough stand on North Korea, said continued pressure, not dialogue, is what is needed now to get it to abandon its nuclear weapons program. Rhetoric between Washington and North Korea has heated up since the North's two intercontinental ballistic missile tests last month. Some Japanese worry that regional tensions may escalate and that North Korean missiles may fly over Japan because of the North's threat to launch missiles into waters near Guam.

Kono accused North Korea of using talks in the past to buy time, and said "loopholes" in recent U.N. sanctions on the North need to be dealt with instead, because ample money was continuing to flow into North Korea for its missile and nuclear pro-

grams. "When North Korea clearly shows its willingness to give up nuclear weapons and takes such action, that is when we start talks," Kono said. "It is time for continued pressure until North Korea shows a clear will and acts in that way."

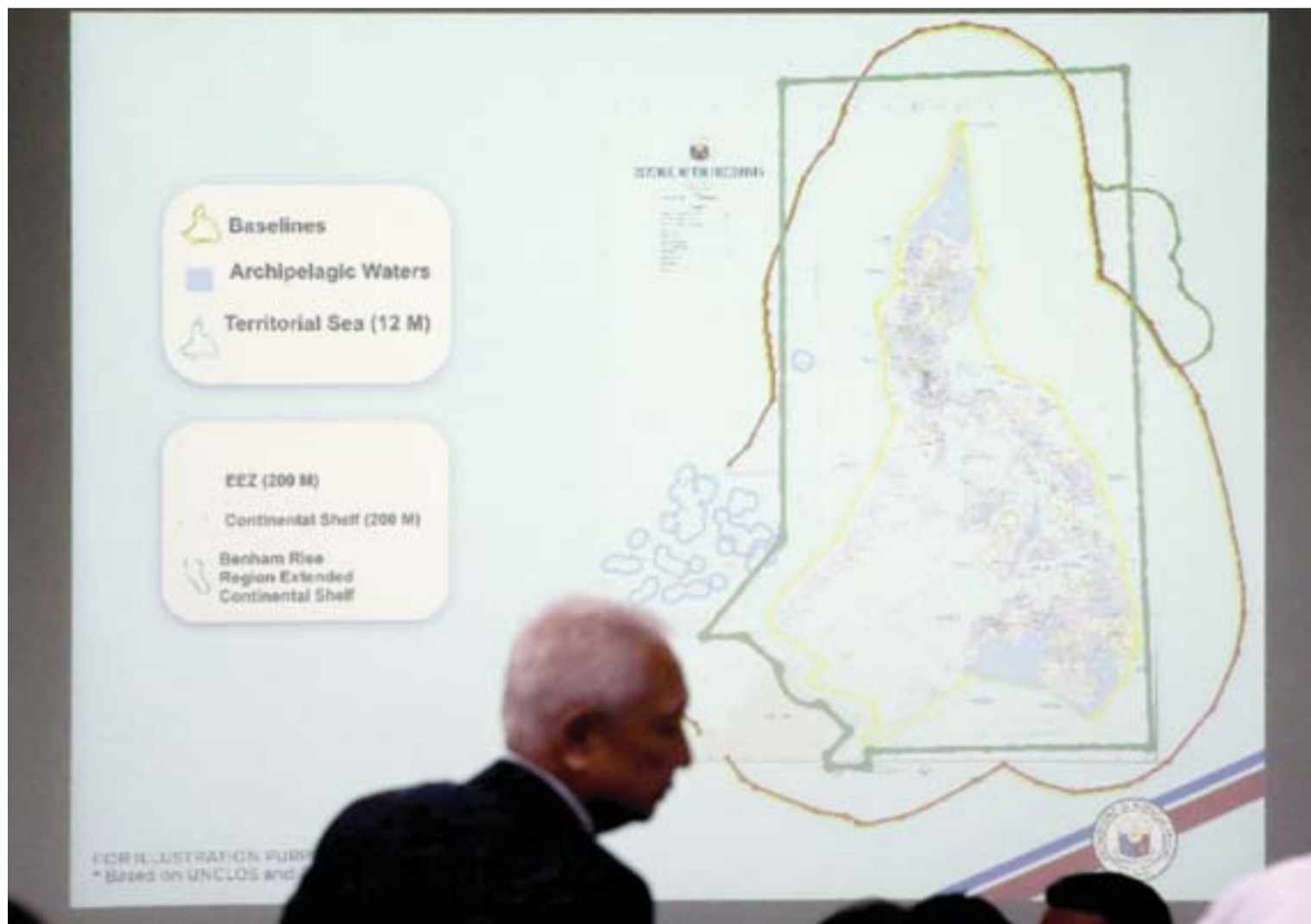
Sex slaves

On South Korea, Kono said a 2015 agreement on World War II Japanese military sex slaves, known as "comfort women," had settled the issue and ruled out any further review, reiterating the official government stance. The selection of Kono along with other popular legislators for the Cabinet, announced Aug 3, was widely seen as an effort by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to curry favor with the public after a series of scandals badly dented his approval ratings.

Kono, 54, is unusual for a Japanese politician, having graduated from Georgetown University in the United States and worked in Washington for

Alabama Sen. Richard Shelby, then a congressman. He is fluent in English and more casual in his personal mannerisms in a Japanese political world often criticized as insular and lacking in diversity.

Still, Kono is a political blue blood whose father, Yohei Kono, served as foreign minister and government spokesman and oversaw an official 1993 statement on the comfort women, one of Japan's most divisive issues with South Korea. His grandfather, Ichiro Kono, was a prominent figure in post-World War II Japanese politics, working in several ministerial posts and leading the 1964 Tokyo Olympics. The younger Kono, an avid soccer fan, scuba diver and theater goer, said he has always seen himself as a different person from his father and grandfather. Now that he is meeting officials from other nations as foreign minister, he says some remember them, and that is an asset he doesn't mind inheriting. "If that works as a plus for me, then I'm going to take it," he said with a laugh. — AP



MANILA: A man walks past a map of the Philippines and its archipelagic waters during a budget meeting. — AP

FILIPINO OFFICIALS SAY CHINESE NAVY STALKED PHILIPPINE AREA

'TERRITORY IS BEING INVADED, TO PUT IT FRANKLY'

MANILA: China recently deployed navy and coast guard ships in a cluster of uninhabited sandbars in the disputed South China Sea amid concerns that the Philippines may build structures on them, two Filipino security officials said yesterday. The government, however, said the issue was quickly resolved amid the Asian neighbors' friendlier ties.

Two senior Philippine security officials told The Associated Press that three Chinese navy ships, a coast guard vessel and 10 fishing boats began keeping watch on Sandy Cay on Aug 12 after a group of Filipino fishermen were spotted on the sandbars. The Filipinos eventually left but the Chinese stayed on.

The two spoke on condition of anonymity, saying only the Department of Foreign Affairs in Manila has been authorized to publicly discuss issues related to the country's territorial disputes with China. The foreign affairs department, however, has in recent days refused to divulge details of the situation at Sandy Cay, a cluster of three sandbars.

A senior Philippine diplomat, who also spoke on condition of anonymity because of a lack of authority to discuss the issue publicly, said China "is concerned that we will build" structures on the sandbars. Chinese and Philippine officials have quietly worked to resolve the

issue in recent days, said the diplomat, who is involved in the talks.

Encroaching vessels

A government security report seen by the AP says Chinese navy ships with bow numbers 504, 545 and 168, a Chinese coast guard ship with bow number 46115, and 10 Chinese fishing vessels took positions off Sandy Cay. Its nearest sandbar is about 2.5 nautical miles from Philippine-occupied Thitu Island.

On Aug 15, a blue Chinese helicopter flew low off Thitu's southwest coast, the report said. Philippine troops and villagers based at Thitu call it Pag-asa -Tagalog for hope - while the Chinese call the island Zhongye Dao. The Chinese military presence near Thitu sparked concerns in Manila. Philippine Supreme Court Senior Associate Justice Antonio Carpio, who has studied the disputes extensively, said the Chinese navy ships and other vessels encroached in the Philippine island's 12-nautical mile (22-kilometer) territorial waters.

"In short, Sandy Cay is a Philippine land territory that is being seized, to put it mildly, or being invaded, to put it frankly, by China," Carpio said in a statement over the weekend. He said President Rodrigo Duterte and Foreign Secretary Alan Peter Cayetano have the constitutional duty to

defend and protect Philippine territory. "The very least that they could do now is to vigorously protest this invasion of Philippine territory by China," Carpio said. "If both are courageous, they should send a Philippine navy ship to guard Sandy Cay and if the Chinese navy ships attack the Philippine navy vessel, they should invoke the Philippine-US Mutual Defense Treaty."

The 1951 treaty binds the allies to come to the aid of each other when attacked. Cayetano, however, told reporters yesterday that the issue has been diplomatically resolved and denied that China has invaded Sandy Cay. "Let me assure you, there is no more problem in that area," Cayetano told reporters, declining to provide details. "But it is not true that there was an attempt to invade or seize it."

Much-friendlier ties between Manila and Beijing under Duterte have allowed both governments to manage their disputes better. "If our relationship with our neighbors isn't this good, the situation in the West Philippine Sea will be much, much worse," Cayetano said, using the Philippine name for the South China Sea. Duterte told reporters over dinner late Monday that he has been assured by China's ambassador in Manila, Zhao Jianhua, and the Chinese foreign ministry that Beijing has no plans to occupy or build structures on Sandy Cay. — AP

REMAINS FOUND ON US WARSHIP THAT COLLIDED OFF SINGAPORE

SINGAPORE: Divers searching for 10 missing sailors on a US destroyer that collided with a tanker off Singapore have found human remains, a US admiral said yesterday. The accident off Singapore, which left a gaping gash in the destroyer's hull, was the second deadly collision in two months involving an American warship. The US Navy has announced a fleet-wide global investigation after the accident Monday involving the USS John S McCain and the merchant vessel. But Admiral Scott Swift, commander of the US Pacific Fleet, praised the surviving crew for saving the ship and saving lives.

The accident-which also left five sailors injured-happened before dawn in busy shipping lanes around the Strait of Singapore, and sent water flooding into the ship. A massive search involving planes and aircraft was launched and US Navy divers joined the hunt yesterday, searching the ship's flooded compartments. Speaking in Singapore, Swift said that "the divers were able to locate some remains in those sealed compartments during their search today."

He said bodies were found during "the diving on McCain today but it's premature to say how many and what the status of recovery those bodies are". Swift said Malaysian authorities had also found a body and were sending it to the US Navy for identification. He said the search and rescue effort, involving hundreds of personnel and several countries, would continue, adding: "We're always hopeful that there are survivors."

The admiral added that the McCain's crew were "tough, and they are resilient. It is clear that their damage control efforts saved their ship and saved lives." It was the second fatal collision in two months-after the USS Fitzgerald collided with a Philippine-flagged cargo ship off Japan in June and left seven sailors dead-and the fourth accident in the Pacific this year involving an American warship.

US Navy under pressure

The incidents have sparked concern that



CHANGI: Commander of the US Pacific Fleet, Scott Swift answers questions during a press conference with the USS John S McCain and USS America docked in the background at Singapore's Changi naval base. — AP

the US Navy could be overstretched in East Asia-both ships were from the Japan-based Seventh Fleet-as they tackle China's rising assertiveness and North Korea's nuclear ambitions. The McCain had been heading for a routine stop in Singapore after carrying out a "freedom of navigation operation" in the disputed South China Sea earlier in August, sparking a furious response from Beijing.

On Monday the Chief of US Naval Operations Admiral John Richardson ordered commanders within a week to set aside time, perhaps "one or two days", for crews to sit down together for discussions. A "comprehensive review" of practices would also begin. "As you know, this is the second collision in three months and the last of a series of incidents in the Pacific theatre," Richardson said. "This trend demands more forceful action. As such, I have directed an operational pause be taken in all of our fleets around the world."

The admiral did not rule out some kind of outside interference or a cyber-attack being behind the latest collision, but said he did not want to prejudge the inquiry. His broader remarks suggested a focus on "how we do business on the bridge." The damaged vessel is named after US Senator John McCain's father and grandfather, who were both admirals in the US navy.

The tanker involved in the collision, which was used for transporting oil and chemicals and weighed over 30,000 gross tons, sustained some damage but no crew were injured, and Singapore said there was no oil pollution. In the June incident, the destroyer USS Fitzgerald collided with a Philippine-flagged cargo ship in a busy channel not far from Yokosuka, a gateway to container ports in Tokyo and nearby Yokohama. The dead sailors, aged 19 to 37, were found by divers in flooded sleeping berths a day after the collision tore a huge gash in the ship's side. A senior admiral announced last week that the commander of the destroyer and several other officers had been relieved of their duties aboard their ship over the incident. — AFP

INDIAN TRANSGENDER COUPLE ANNOUNCES PLAN TO MARRY

MUMBAI: An Indian couple who fell in love after meeting at a gender-reassignment clinic in Mumbai announced yesterday they were engaged and planning a traditional wedding. Aarav Appukuttan, who was born a woman, met Sukanyeah Krishna, who was born a man, in the waiting room of the clinic three years ago where both were undergoing surgery to change their genders.

The couple exchanged numbers after "realizing we both cared deeply for one another", and the relationship flourished from there, Appukuttan told AFP. "I just want to spend my entire life with Sukanyeah after our legal marriage," said the 46-year-old, who spent three decades questioning his gender before undergoing surgery to become a man. "We are awaiting changes to our official documents from the government... after which we plan to get married in Kerala," he added, referring to the southern Indian state.

The couple are aware of no legal obstacles to their marriage, but they are concerned over how it will be received by the public. "Everyone in the transgender community including hijras are abused

and face attacks everyday. Families are worried about how society will perceive their trans children, but the society needs to reform," said Krishna.

"Hijras", as they are locally known, are considered a third gender but stigma is rife in India's conservative society. Transgender Indians are often banished to the margins, where they beg or engage in prostitution. Appukuttan has struggled to find work since his surgery, and was denied a visa to Dubai. 21-year-old Krishna, whose parents gave her hormone injections when she expressed a desire to become a woman, said their relationship had attracted criticism, but they were not deterred. "We receive eviscerating responses from people, and they try to criticize us, so we are trying to set an example for society and younger trans-people by telling our stories," said Krishna. The couple is planning a traditional Hindu wedding, and wants to adopt a child once their marriage is legally solemnized. "We want a child in our life despite our biological limitations, so we will adopt. All our lives will be changed for the better and we will be a complete family," said Appukuttan. — AFP

JAILED INDONESIAN CLERIC NAMED SUSPECT IN DEADLY 2016 ATTACK

JAKARTA: A jailed Indonesian cleric has been named as a suspect in a suicide bomb attack that killed eight people in Jakarta last year and was claimed by the Islamic State group, police said yesterday. They said Aman Abdurrahman is suspected of masterminding the attack in January 2016, which killed four attackers and



JAKARTA: In this Thursday, Aug 26, 2010 file photo, radical cleric Aman Abdurrahman, who is more popularly known as Aman Abdurrahman, exits a courtroom after his trial at a district court. — AP

four civilians. "He has been officially named a suspect in the Thamrin attack," national police spokesman Setyo Wasisto told AFP, referring to the street where it took place. "We already have sufficient evidence about his involvement in the attack." The assault-the first claimed by IS in Southeast Asia-saw dramatic scenes as a suicide

bomber blew himself up in a Starbucks and security forces battled gun-toting militants.

Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim-majority country, has long struggled with Islamic militancy and has been hit by a series of attacks in the past 15 years, including the 2002 Bali bombings that left 202 people dead. A crackdown has weakened the most dangerous networks but fears have grown of a resurgence in militancy after hundreds of Indonesians flocked to the Middle East in recent years to join IS. The country has seen a surge in plots and attacks linked to the jihadists over the past year.

Despite being in prison since 2010, Abdurrahman has recruited militants to join IS, according to the Jakarta-based Institute for Policy Analysis and Conflict. He is thought to have been in communication with leaders of the jihadist group and is the main translator for IS propaganda in Indonesia, it has said. The cleric was detained by counter-terrorism police on August 12, five days before he was due for release from Nusakambangan high-security prison where he was serving a sentence for raising funds for a training camp in Aceh. Abdurrahman was named a suspect on August 18, Wasisto said. — AFP



A couple poses for a selfie yesterday in front of the Sultanahmet (Blue) Mosque during a rainy day in Istanbul. — AFP

QATAR, US TROOPS STAGE JOINT MILITARY EXERCISE

ROW OVER HAJJ HELPS FUEL RIFT

DOHA: Qatari and US paratroopers held a joint training exercise in crisis-hit Doha yesterday which American officials said reinforced "the enduring military-to-military" partnership between the two countries. The "Friendship Jump" comes at a time of high political tension in the Gulf, where a boycott of Qatar by Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain has entered its third month. More than 40 paratroopers took part in the routine exercise, jumping from a C-130 transport aircraft, according to a statement from the US Special Operations Command Control.

The training "is indicative of the strong relationship between our two countries", said Colonel David Keesy, senior defense official for the US Embassy in Qatar. "This is part of a multi-spectrum, training evolution that is indicative of the mil-to-mil relationships and partnership and cooperation between the US and Qatari militaries." Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain and Egypt cut all ties with Qatar on June 5 over accusations of state support for Islamist extremist groups and close ties to Shiite Iran. Qatar denies the allegations.

The crisis has proved a diplomatic thorn in the side of the United States, which is an ally to all four Gulf nations. There have been mixed messages from Washington, with President Donald Trump appearing to back the Saudis but with the State and Defence departments being more cautious. Washington has a huge military base in Qatar and a naval base in Bahrain. Yesterday's US-Qatari military exercise is the second since the onset of the Gulf crisis, following naval exercises in June.

Meanwhile, a row over access for Qataris to the annual hajj pilgrimage is further poisoning relations between their country and Saudi Arabia and aggravating a wider diplomatic rift with other Arab powers. Qatar has accused Saudi Arabia, which hosts and supervises the hajj, of deliberately making it hard for its pilgrims to obtain permits to go to Makkah. Saudi Arabia says Qatar is seeking to politicize the ritual for diplomatic gains.

A deal last week to let some Qataris cross the desert border into Saudi Arabia appeared initially to signal an easing of tensions, but subsequently led to even more acrimonious exchanges. Many would-be Qatari pilgrims say they will not travel to the hajj out of safety concerns, or because they fear becoming pawns in the political struggle. "We are tired of this. Of course we want to go to Mecca but who should we listen to? Politics has bro-

ken down," said Ahmed Al-Rumahi, 31, a student of Islamic studies at Qatar University.

For Saudi Arabia, custodian of Islam's holiest places, much is at stake. The kingdom ventures its reputation on organizing hajj, a pillar of Islam which every able-bodied Muslim who can afford to is obliged to undertake at least once. Qatari officials say that only a handful of Qataris are expected to attend this year's event, which runs from about Aug 30 to Sept 4, depending on sightings of the moon.

'Hatred on Both Sides'

After last week's border crossing deal, which Riyadh said was brokered by a member of Qatar's ruling family, Saudi television showed dozens of Qataris driving across the frontier in white SUVs. It then emerged that the dealmaker was Abdullah bin Ali Al-Thani, a descendant of Qatar's founder, who was welcomed in Riyadh by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and then by a holidaying King Salman in Morocco.

Qatari officials expressed suspicion at his role and the praise lavished on him by Saudi media, saying the sheikh, a businessman who lives overseas, was on a personal visit and did not hold a position in the government. "The Saudis put him on a pedestal and we see this as an attempt to undermine our royal family," said a Qatari diplomat. The boycotting countries deny seeking regime change in Doha, and Sheikh Abdullah denied acting out of personal interest.

Saudi officials say over 400 Qatari pilgrims have arrived through the land border, but Qatari media said most were Qataris crossing to tend farms they own in the kingdom. Up to 1,200 Qataris are eligible for the hajj under an annual quota system. Qatar has also criticized a Saudi offer to fly Qataris to the hajj on Saudi Arabia Airlines, rather than allowing Qatari or other carriers to take them to Makkah.

The diplomatic rift has hurt businesses and separated families across the Gulf, and some conservative Qataris are angry that the infighting is preventing them from fulfilling religious duties. Some Qataris fret about their safety in the kingdom, a concern Saudi authorities say has no justification. "There is hatred on both sides now, so yeah, I wouldn't feel comfortable showing my passport in hotels or other places in Saudi," said Mohammed, a civil engineer who declined to give his second name. — Agencies

TRUMP COMMITS US TROOPS TO OPEN-ENDED...

Continued from Page 1

"the consequences of a rapid exit are both predictable and unacceptable" leaving a "vacuum that terrorists, including ISIS and Al-Qaeda, would instantly fill".

While Trump said "our troops will fight to win", he also stressed that ultimately Afghanistan's police and army must do most of the fighting to defeat the Taliban and allied Islamist militants. "The stronger the Afghan security forces become, the less we will have to do. ... We want them to succeed." Most of the approximately 8,400 US troops in Afghanistan work with a NATO-led training and advising mission, with the rest part of a counter-terrorism force that mostly targets pockets of Al-Qaeda and Islamic State fighters.

Trump for the first time also left the door open to an eventual political deal with the Taliban. "Someday, after an effective military effort, perhaps it will be possible to have a political settlement that includes elements of the Taliban in Afghanistan," he said. "But nobody knows if or when that will ever happen," he added.

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani welcomed the strategy saying it would expand the training mission for Afghan forces, which includes building its fledgling air force and doubling the size of the Afghan special forces. "I am grateful to President Trump and the American people for this affirmation of support ... for our joint struggle to rid the region from the threat of terrorism," Ghani said in a statement. The Taliban swiftly condemned Trump's decision. "If the US does not pull all its forces out of Afghanistan, we will make this country the 21st century graveyard for the American empire," Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said in a statement. US-backed Afghan forces overthrew the Taliban's hardline Islamist government in late 2001 over its sheltering of Al-Qaeda chief Osama bin Laden, architect of the Sept 11, 2001, attacks in US cities that killed nearly 2,000 people. But US forces have been bogged down ever since in a war that has vexed three presidents. About 2,400 US troops have died in Afghanistan.

Trump, who had criticized his predecessor for setting deadlines for drawing down troops in Iraq and Afghanistan, declined to put a timeline on expanded US operations in Afghanistan. Former President Barack Obama's deadlines for troop decreases brought the US military footprint from about 100,000 in 2011 to 8,400. "Our future presence will be based on conditions and not arbitrary timelines," the top US commander in Afghanistan, General John Nicholson, said in a statement.

Trump warned on Monday that US support "is not a blank cheque" for Afghanistan's often-divided and corruption-plagued government and insisted he would not engage in "nation-building", a practice he has accused his predecessors of doing at huge cost. Trump insisted in his speech that the Afghan government, Pakistan, India, and NATO allies step up their own commitment to resolving the 16-year conflict.

"We can no longer be silent about Pakistan's safe

havens," he said, referring to complaints that Taliban and other militants move freely in Pakistan. "We have been paying Pakistan billions and billions of dollars at the same time they are housing the very terrorists that we are fighting," Trump said, warning that vital aid could be cut. "That will have to change and that will change immediately." Pakistan's foreign ministry did not respond to requests for comment, but on Monday Pakistani army spokesman Major General Asif Ghafoor said: "There are no terrorist hideouts in Pakistan".

The Indian foreign ministry said it welcomed Trump's effort to confront Pakistan. India has vied with Pakistan for influence in Afghanistan, and Islamabad's policies in the country are driven by its desire to keep New Delhi at bay. But China, which is investing around \$50 billion in Pakistan, said its South Asian neighbor deserves the international community's support after the "great sacrifices" it has made in fighting extremism.

US Vice President Mike Pence told Fox News the rules of engagement were being changed "so that American commanders on the ground can make real-time decisions" and the United States would continue to target militants' safe havens in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

"Pakistan has much to gain from partnering with our effort in Afghanistan. It has much more to lose by supporting terrorists. The president has put them on notice," Pence said in an editorial in USA Today.

Trump also said he had expanded the US military's authority for its forces to target militant and criminal networks, warning "that no place is beyond the reach of American arms". Nikki Haley, the US ambassador to the United Nations, told CNN that Trump's strategy for Afghanistan included decisions that "are very different from anything that's happened before". "What we are focused on is results, stopping out terrorism, doing whatever it takes," she said. "You've seen the president do this with ISIS in Syria and Iraq. Now we're getting ready to do it in Afghanistan."

US Air Force Major Daniel Lindsey, an F-16 pilot who watched Trump's speech at the sprawling Bagram Air Field outside Kabul said he and his colleagues were now waiting for details of the changes. "It's obviously going to have some effects on us," he said. Trump's speech came after a months-long review of US policy in which the president frequently tangled with his top advisers.

Among the options were a complete withdrawal, a modest troop increase, keeping the status quo or a small reduction to focus only on counter-terrorism and not training Afghan forces. Another unofficial plan promoted by Erik Prince, founder of the former Blackwater military contracting firm and brother of Trump's education secretary, Betsy DeVos, proposed replacing most US troops with mercenaries. "The good news was the president rejected the truly dangerous ideas on the table, such as precipitous withdrawal or a transition to a mercenary force," said Joshua White, former National Security Council adviser to Obama and now a researcher at John Hopkins University. — Agencies

INDIA'S TOP COURT BANS 'TRIPLE TALAQ'

Continued from Page 1

said triple talaq was "not integral to religious practice and violates constitutional morality". They said it was "manifestly arbitrary" to allow a man to "break down (a) marriage whimsically and capriciously". "What is sinful under religion cannot be valid under law," said the judges.

Bano, who suffered a nervous breakdown after her divorce, said it was a "historic occasion" for Muslim women. "I appeal to the people to not politicize this issue and accept Supreme Court's verdict on triple talaq," she told reporters outside the court. "I have felt the pain when family breaks. I hope no one has to go through this situation in future." Indian law minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said on NDTV that since the court deemed the practice unconstitutional, there is no need for any further legislative action by the government. India was one of the few nations that permitted triple talaq, which does not constitute legal divorce in neighboring Pakistan or Bangladesh. Muslim women say they have been divorced by their husbands via Skype and even WhatsApp messages. India is officially secular and its constitution allows its 1.25 billion citizens to be governed by their own religious laws when it comes to marriage, divorce and property inheritance.

But Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu nationalist government wants to bring in a common civil code for all religious groups, a move it says will strengthen national unity. Modi hailed the Supreme Court ruling as "historic", saying in a tweet, "it grants equality to Muslim women and is a powerful measure for women empowerment".

But the All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB), which claims to represent India's 180 million Muslims, said the court case had been used to malign them. The board had argued that the practice was "reprehensible" but should not be a matter for the courts or the government. "This was made into a media campaign to malign the image of Muslims. We knew the court was in no mood to allow triple talaq," its general secretary Moulana Mohammad Wali Rehmani told AFP. "All laws including modern laws have flaws and are misused. We were working on remedies and have suggested measures."

Rehmani said the board would continue to work with the community for reform and may challenge the ruling. The board had earlier accused Modi of triggering an "internal war" in India with plans to introduce a common civil code for all religions. The judges deliberated for three months on the case before reaching their verdict, which was agreed by three of the five on the panel. Chief Justice J S Khehar, who is due to retire later this month, was a dissenting voice. He argued that while triple talaq was unconstitutional, it was for the government to decide whether it should be banned.

There is no mention of instant divorce in the Holy Quran, which instead details a different process based on mediation. "Until yesterday, a Muslim woman could be thrown out of her house on a very arbitrary basis and no reason would have been given to her," Bano's lawyer Balaji Srinivasan told AFP. "From today onwards, any Muslim man wanting to divorce will have to follow the Quranic injunctions. So that's a very important thing." — Agencies

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Focus

AS VOTE LOOMS,
ANGOLANS CHAFE
OVER SANTOS ERA

After nearly 40 years under the rule of President Jose Eduardo Dos Santos, millions of Angolans are angry and frustrated - and many seem determined to use today's elections to express their hunger for change. Few of them are signed-up members of any opposition party, but throughout the election campaign they have flocked in large numbers to rallies held by both the UNITA and Casa-CE parties. Among their ranks are youths whose education has been short cut, leaving them bereft of skills, graduates who can't find a job, and older men mired in long-term unemployment.

With Dos Santos standing down after the election, the ruling MPLA party - which has held power since 1975 - is expected to win again and install his chosen successor, Joao Lourenco, as head of state. Even if the outcome is as predicted, the margin of victory will be watched closely as a barometer of sentiment towards the MPLA government. "We need change. We must put in power a party that cares about the fate of the Angolans, not about filling their own pockets," Jean Domingo told AFP at a UNITA rally on dusty open ground outside Luanda.

Domingo, a 49-year-old university graduate, was employed in communications until the company he worked for closed down six years ago. He hasn't found a job since. "Life is so difficult," he said, vowing to vote for UNITA after listening to the searing rally speech by party leader Isaias Samakuva. "Everything has become too expensive," Domingo said. "Young people can no longer afford to study, there is no longer any way for them to find work, or for older people like me either."

Economic turmoil

Angola's elite enjoyed a heady boom after the end of the civil war in 2002, as the country vied with Nigeria to be Africa's leading oil producer, GDP growth hit 20 percent and skyscrapers shot up in Luanda. But the collapse in oil prices has triggered a full-scale national economic crisis since 2014. Inflation hit a staggering 40 percent at the end of last year, when annual growth was less than one percent. Mateos Simon, 28, has paid the price. He worked as a nurse until the hospital was unable to pay him and fired him overnight. "I live in a house where there is no water, no electricity," he said. "As I cannot find a job in my area, I survive washing cars in the street."

He is a fierce critic of the MPLA - the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola - which has dominated everyday life since before most Angolans were born. "The MPLA does nothing for us," he said. "Things have to change, now." Similar outrage brings tears to the eyes of Domingas Ngunza, a 27-year-old housewife, as she accuses Angola's leaders of "ruining the economy, stealing the wealth and leaving nothing to the people".

Family business

Critics point to two vivid examples of alleged corruption and greed under his rule, when Dos Santos installed his daughter as head of the state oil company and his son as head of the country's sovereign wealth fund. Another opposition supporter, Adelino Luis, 23, prefers the yellow of the Casa-CE party to the red and green of UNITA, but he also dreams of an end to the MPLA. "The Angolan people are tired of Dos Santos, his family and their unfulfilled promises," said the 23-year-old history student listening to a speech by Abel Chivukuvuku, the Casa-CE leader who has a strong youth following. "Housing, education, health, nothing works in this country," he said. "I wonder why I go to university, I know that I will not have any work afterwards."

One unemployed former soldier, Domingos Malongos, 42, warned that if fraud is suspected to be behind another MPLA victory then the result may be disputed. "If the MPLA tries to rob us of victory, we will not let them," he said. — AFP

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TRUMP STRATEGY WON'T SOLVE AFGHAN PROBLEMS

Donald Trump has vowed success in Afghanistan, but analysts say his strategy contains nothing new against enemies which his predecessors could not defeat - a sobering assessment that points to endless war for weary civilians. The US and Afghan governments face formidable opponents in the ascendant Taliban, weak and corrupt Afghan institutions and meddling regional powers-plus the growing menace of the Islamic State group.

The US president vowed to leave American boots on the ground indefinitely while turning away from nation-building. But his refusal to release details and define the conditions for victory have raised fears America's involvement in the conflict may never end. "Strategy is about matching means to ends. I think we heard a lot about ends but rather little about means," James Der Derian, from the Centre for International Security Studies at the University of Sydney, told AFP.

Trump backtracked from previous promises to end America's longest-ever war during a primetime speech late Monday, paving the way for thousands more US soldiers to be sent to Afghanistan. While he refused to offer detailed troop numbers, senior White House officials said he had already authorized Defense Secretary James Mattis to deploy up to 3,900 more troops to Afghanistan. There are currently 8,500 US personnel in-country who are largely restricted to NATO's mission of training the 190,000-strong Afghan army and offering strategic support on certain missions. Trump said withdrawing them would leave a "vacuum" that terrorists "would instantly fill", but analysts said sending a few thousand extra soldiers would only serve to deepen the American quagmire in the country. "I'm sorry, but unless you are willing to commit 300,000 troops there's no filling the vacuum. That's the harsh reality of Afghanistan... of counter-insurgencies in general," said Der Derian. "The Taliban can wait out another 4,000 troops. They have survived much worse," the security expert added, describing areas falling to insurgents and then being recaptured again as "a whack-a-mole phenomenon".

Trump's remark that "conditions on the ground, not arbitrary timetables" would guide strategy also met with scepticism from analysts, who questioned his long-

term plan for the war and what a victory would actually look like. "The United States has not actually defined those conditions," Javid Ahmad, a fellow at the Atlantic Council's South Asia Center, told AFP. The Taliban, whose pockets have been lined with the profits from a bountiful opium poppy trade, and other insurgent groups have seen their areas of control or influence increase recently. As of February only about 60 percent of Afghanistan's 407 districts were reported to be under government control, with the authorities in Kabul struggling to counter the militants' resurgence, according to the US watchdog agency SIGAR.

Increased violence

Analysts predict Trump's strategy will only intensify the war, leading to more casualties in a conflict that began in Oct 2001 after the then-Taliban government refused to hand over Al-Qaeda chiefs following the 9/11 attacks. Afghan civilian deaths are at their worst since records began in 2009. In the first half of the year, 1,662 civilians were killed and more than 3,500 injured, according to the United Nations. More than 2,500 Afghan police and troops have been killed already this year. "The Taliban and other belligerents are likely to respond with a new wave of violence across the country. There may be

some spectacular attacks in urban areas to send their own message," said Ahmad of the Atlantic Council. There are hopes that increased military pressure can over time force Taliban leaders to the negotiating table - a prospect that Trump sounded sceptical about, although Rahimullah Yousufzai, a Pakistan-based expert on Afghan affairs, said some of the militants "may be willing".

But many Afghans want to see America follow a multi-pronged approach that involves helping Kabul tackle rampant corruption, strengthen its institutions and boost its demoralized national army. — AFP

TRUMP VOWS VICTORY, BUT PLAN MURKY

President Donald Trump is vowing to win what has seemed to be an unwinnable war. How he plans to do so is still murky despite the months of internal deliberations that ultimately persuaded Trump to stick with a conflict he has long opposed. In a 26-minute address to the nation Monday, Trump alluded to more American troops deploying to Afghanistan, but refused to say how many. He said victory would be well-defined, but outlined only vague benchmarks for success, like dismantling al-Qaeda and preventing the Taliban from taking over Afghanistan. He said the US would not offer Afghanistan a "blank check," but provided no specific timetable for the end of an American commitment that has already lasted 16 years.

Instead, Trump projected an "I got this" bravado that has become a hallmark of his presidency. "In the end, we will win," he declared of America's longest war. Victory in Afghanistan has eluded Trump's predecessors: President George W. Bush, who launched the war after the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks, and President Barack Obama, who surged US troop levels to 100,000, but ultimately failed in fulfilling his promise to bring the conflict to a close before leaving office.

As Trump now takes his turn at the helm, he faces many of the same challenges that have bedeviled those previ-

ous presidents and left some US officials deeply uncertain about whether victory is indeed possible. Afghanistan remains one of the world's poorest countries and corruption is embedded in its politics. The Taliban is resurgent. And Afghan forces remain too weak to secure the country without American help. "When we had 100,000 US troops in Afghanistan, we couldn't secure the whole country," said Ben Rhodes, who served as Obama's deputy national security adviser.

Trump offered up many of the same solutions tried by his predecessors. He vowed to get tough on neighboring Pakistan, to push for reforms in Afghanistan and to moderate ambitions. The US will not be caught in the quagmire of democracy-building abroad, he said, promising a "principled realism" focused only on US interests would guide his decisions. Obama promised much of the same.

By simply sticking with the Afghan conflict, Trump's plan amounts to a victory for the military men increasingly filling Trump's inner circle and a stinging defeat for the nationalist supporters who saw in Trump a like-minded skeptic of US intervention in long and costly overseas conflicts. Chief among them is ousted adviser Steve Bannon, whose website Breitbart News blared criticism Monday of the establishment's approach to running the war. After Trump's speech, one headline

on the website read: "UNLIMITED WAR." Another said: "What Does Victory in Afghanistan Look Like? Washington Doesn't Know."

Now Trump leads Washington and that question falls for him to answer. As a candidate, he energized millions of war-weary voters with an "America First" mantra and now faces the challenges of explaining how that message translates to US involvement in a war across the globe, likely for years to come. In a rare moment of public self-reflection, Trump acknowledged that his position on Afghanistan had changed since taking office and sought to sway his supporters who would normally oppose a continuation of the war.

"My original instinct was to pull out," Trump said. "But all my life I've heard that decisions are much different when you sit behind the desk in the Oval Office, in other words, when you're president of the United States." Trump pointed to "three fundamental conclusions" about US interests in Afghanistan - all of which appeal to patriotism and nationalistic pride. The president said the nation needs to seek "an honorable and enduring outcome worthy of the tremendous sacrifices" made by US soldiers - a line that harkened back to promises made by Richard Nixon during the 1968 campaign to bring "an honorable end" to the war in Vietnam. — AP

SPOTLIGHT ON SITES OF DARK COMMUNIST PAST

From his office in the shadowy "House of Leaves", Nesti Vako would listen to the private conversations of his fellow Albanians, spying for the state during the country's communist era. "I had a table, a strong coffee and some equipment," the 74-year-old said, as he escorted AFP around the feared former secret service headquarters in Tirana, which opened in May as a museum. Named after the ivy that once crept up its walls, the House of Leaves shows the methods and tools of the all-pervading secret surveillance conducted under communist rule, which lasted for nearly half a century until the early 1990s.

"We put listening equipment in hotels, embassies, and so on... The microphones were placed under tables, under chairs, in picture frames, inside gas lamps," said the tall, snowy-haired Vako, a former chief of surveillance. Signs dedicate the museum to "those innocent victims who were spied on, arrested, prosecuted, convicted and executed" by a regime "that aimed at total control over human bodies and souls".

One room displays dozens of recording devices - made in Albania and Germany, Japan and China - that were deployed to catch any whiff of criticism of the state or other banned activities, such as foreign travel and practicing religion. A laboratory remains where duplicate keys were forged for illegal searches and where foreign letters to the leader-

ship of dictator Enver Hoxha were tested for biological weaponry.

Props on display that were used to hide spying kits, such as a long dark coat with a bulky inside zip pocket, would not look out of place on a James Bond parody film set. But the consequences of this constant and invasive monitoring "remain an open wound" in the Balkan country of 2.9 million people, according to museum director Eteleva Demollari.

No justice

"There was a lot of persecution in this era. Many people were condemned and suffered and for 25 years have not had justice," she said. According to the Albanian association of former political prisoners, 5,577 men and 450 women were executed by the paranoid regime, while tens of thousands more were sent to prisons or camps for forced labor or internment. The opening of the House of Leaves is seen as a step towards confronting that dark chapter of history, and follows the conversion of two of Tirana's communist nuclear bunkers into museums in recent years.

None of the major sites where persecution took place have been turned into memorial sites for the victims. But there are signs of that changing at Spac, once the country's most notorious labour camp, which lies in a remote valley around 94 km from Tirana. Hundreds of "enemies of the

state" are believed to have died in the camp's dusty copper and pyrite mines, where they toiled for lengthy shifts fuelled by pitiful diets.

'Dante's Inferno'

In some of the galleries "the temperature rose to 40 degrees Celsius," said former prisoner Saimir Maloku, as he revisited the crumbling prison buildings. The 71 year-old spent six years at the camp and three at another jail, accused of being a British agent. In that time his weight nearly halved. "I was a living corpse," he said. In the room where Maloku slept with dozens of other inmates, he pointed to marks on the walls where their narrow beds with straw-filled mattresses were stacked in three tiers.

Those deemed to underperform in the mines faced solitary confinement. Bids for freedom were thwarted by the harsh and steep terrain, which was lined with barbed wire fencing. Spac was abandoned after communism fell, but Maloku has for years campaigned for the site to become a museum dedicated to its victims. "I lived in Dante's Inferno and thanked God I came out alive."

Prison preservation

In 2015, the New York-based World Monuments Fund put Spac on a list of 50 endangered heritage sites worldwide, criti-

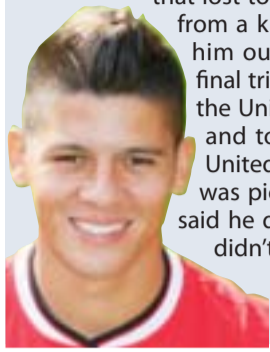
cizing the prison's "extremely advanced state of deterioration" and calling for it to be made a place of remembrance. Emergency intervention work finally began in June to prevent further damage, funded by Sweden via the Albanian branch of Cultural Heritage without Borders (CHWB), a non-governmental organization.

The group has been working since 2013 on what it calls the "memorialization process" - holding inclusive discussions on the future of Spac, researching the labor camp and arranging visits. The local "Spac Museum" NGO has also installed the first information panels around the complex. The eventual goal is to turn it into a fully functional "site of memory" - although funding is still being secured and the timeline remains unclear, said Lejla Hadzic, head of CHWB in Albania.

She said the ongoing work at Spac was "a call for state institutions to fulfill their responsibility" in preserving the site. Such efforts may help Albanians come to terms with a painful past, which Demollari said remained "very sensitive" and not discussed enough. At the House of Leaves, as visitors wandered from room to room and absorbed the implications of his spying, Vako showed no remorse over his work for the regime. "I'm very proud. Because what were we doing? We just checked information to see if anyone was conducting an unconstitutional activity." — AFP

ROJO BOOSTS UNITED WITH RETURN TO TRAINING

LONDON: Argentinian defender Marcos Rojo gave another filip to early Premier League leaders Manchester United by returning to training with the first team yesterday. The 27-year-old-a member of the Argentinian side that lost to Germany in the 2014 World Cup final-is recovering from a knee ligament injury suffered last April which ruled him out of among other things United's Europa League final triumph over Dutch outfit Ajax. Rojo-who travelled to the United States with the squad for their pre-season tour and to the Super Cup in Macedonia where they lost to United manager Jose Mourinho's former side Real Madrid-was pictured training with them yesterday. Mourinho has said he didn't see Rojo playing again until December but it didn't prevent the club from trumpeting his return to the training ground and posting several photographs as evidence on twitter. —AFP



EX-DINAMO ZAGREB BOSS INJURED AFTER SHOOTING

SARAJEVO: Controversial former Dinamo Zagreb director Zdravko Mamic was shot and injured in Bosnia on Monday, police and media reported. Croatia's state TV said Mamic was shot in his leg and taken to a local hospital on Monday. It said the injury was not life-threatening. Police were searching for two possible assailants. Bosnian media said Mamic was attending a memorial for his father at a graveyard near the town of Tomislavgrad when two people fired at him from a nearby forest. A photo showing him with a smile in a hospital bed was published. Bosnian police declined to confirm the identity of the victim by name, but said a man with the initials ZM and born in 1959 in the Croatian city of Bjelovar, just like Mamic, was shot and injured. Mamic, known for his fiery temper, has been on a high-profile embezzlement and tax fraud trial in Croatia. Prosecutors accuse Mamic, his brother, and two others of embezzling 15 million euros of the club's money since 2008 and not paying 1.6 million euros in taxes. —AP

FRENCHMAN UPSETS MALAYSIAN LEGEND LEE

GLASGOW: France's Brice Leverdez pulled off the first shock of the badminton World Championships by defeating men's second seed Lee Chong Wei in three games in Glasgow yesterday. The 31-year-old claimed the scalp of his career 21-19, 22-24, 21-17 in 75 minutes and perhaps end Lee's elusive search for the world title which has seen him take three silver medals just as he has done in the Olympics. "I'm really happy," he said. "I managed to stay relaxed and played my own game." Leverdez had two match points in the second game — 20-21 and 21-22 — and it was only a successful hawk eye challenge on the second match point that saved Lee from a straight games exit. In the decider, the 34-year-old Malaysian led 15-10 — but the Frenchman wouldn't give in. "I knew I was in trouble, but I never gave up," said Leverdez. For Lee it was another chance gone. —AFP



LAS VEGAS: File photo shows Conor McGregor trains during a workout in front of the media, Aug. 11, 2017, in Las Vegas. McGregor is scheduled to fight Floyd Mayweather Jr. in a boxing match Aug. 26 in Las Vegas. — AP

BOXING

VEGAS WILL PARTY DURING MAYWEATHER-MCGREGOR

LAS VEGAS: The fight between Floyd Mayweather Jr. and Conor McGregor may not have sold out yet, but that won't stop Las Vegas from putting on its party hat. Sin City's nightclubs have booked a long list of celebrities - including one of the fighters - and high-rolling gamblers and VIPs have snagged some of the most luxurious accommodations in town. Boxing-themed cocktails have even been concocted for the occasion.

The social media-fueled Saturday night fight at the T-Mobile Arena will be a weekend-long, city-wide affair, though in some respects it may not tip the scales as much as a previous Mayweather fight.

"It's going to be a crazy weekend," said Ryan Thompson, senior vice president and regional chief marketing officer for Caesars Entertainment, whose Planet Hollywood, The Cromwell and Caesars Palace casino-resorts on the Las Vegas Strip have a few rooms available. "The energy over that weekend is going to be on par with a New Year's Eve in the city."

Caesars and MGM Resorts International, which owns the fight's venue, expect their properties to sell out as the weekend approaches. But unlike the bullish market created by Mayweather's fight with Manny Pacquiao in May 2015 in Las Vegas, hotel rooms are still available.

The MGM Grand has cut its prices for the weekend three times, with a two-night stay now at \$329 a night. Rooms at several other hotels on the Strip can still be found for \$200 or less a night.

Many VIPs and high-rolling gamblers need not worry about prices, they will be "comped" with free hotel rooms and tickets, as it is customary. Others not so lucky - but certainly with deep pockets - have booked the most lavish accommodations on the Strip.

The villas at Caesars Palace (starting at \$25,000 a night) and Nobu Hotel at Caesars Palace (\$35,000 a night and previously used by the likes of Jennifer Lopez and Johnny Depp) have been claimed for the weekend.

"We get a ton of requests for tickets. We have plenty of our high-end players and guests who come in specifically for the event," Thompson said. "We put them up for the weekend and they will be attending the fight. We like to take care of our best guests."

RESERVATIONS

McCarran International Airport spokeswoman Christine Crews said the number of private aircraft that flew in for the Mayweather-Pacquiao fight overwhelmed available apron parking and forced a taxiway to be closed and used as a jet parking lot. Crews said there is no plan to do that again this weekend but officials are requiring pilots to make parking reservations and encouraging the use of two nearby general aviation airports, in suburban Henderson and

North Las Vegas.

UFC fighter McGregor will enter a boxing ring for the first time as a professional when he takes on the undefeated Mayweather, who is coming out of retirement for a fight that will make him tens of millions of dollars.

Just four days to fight night, there are plenty of tickets still available in the T-Mobile Arena, which seats 18,000 for boxing, and prices on the secondary market are starting to come down.

Ticketmaster has hundreds of non-VIP tickets ranging from roughly \$1,400 to \$17,000. Still available are VIP tickets that include hotel accommodations, roundtrip airport transportation, an official souvenir, food and drinks.

Those who can't afford what's supposed to be the year's hottest ticket can watch the fight inside six of the seven theaters that regularly host Cirque du Soleil shows, which are going dark for the night. Restaurants, bars and strip clubs around town will also show the fight. Closed-circuit seats are available at various MGM properties, including hundreds for \$150 each at the Park Theater just a few steps from the T-Mobile arena itself. By comparison, Mayweather-Pacquiao closed-circuit tickets sold out the day they went on sale.

Pay-per-view sales at \$100 each are expected to be in the neighborhood of 5 million buys, topping the Mayweather-Pacquiao record of 4.6 million.

The city's sports books say this will be the most heavily bet fight ever. So far most of the tickets are on McGregor, who is about a 5-1 underdog, with the William Hill chain saying a McGregor win would cost them more than \$1 million.

R&B star Chris Brown and his crew of dancers will perform at Drai's nightclub on Saturday. Other venues will see performances by Puff Daddy, Jamie Foxx, Travis Scott, Chase B and Kaskadee. The night before the fight, 50 Cent, Trey Songz and Jeezy will have a combined performance.

Win or lose, McGregor will have to party after the fight. The Irish MMA champion is scheduled to be a host at Encore Beach Club that night as part of a two-year agreement to entertain partygoers at the Encore casino-resort.

The tallest observation wheel in the world, the High Roller at The Linq casino-resort promenade, will get in on the action by turning its lighting red, white and blue if Mayweather wins or green, orange and white if McGregor pulls off the upset.

For fans who want to toast the fighters with something other than a Guinness, mixologists have created special cocktail menus. At the bars and lounges of The Cosmopolitan, The Pretty Boy is a mix of Ciroc pineapple, lemon and tropical Red Bull, while the Bob and Weave gets you Patron Silver, lime, lemongrass, lychee and cucumber soda. — AP

SKIING

JOHAUG TO MISS OLYMPICS AS CAS EXTENDS DOPING BAN

OSLO: The Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) yesterday extended Norwegian cross-country skier Therese Johaug's doping suspension to 18 months, preventing the seven-time world champion from participating in the 2018 Winter Olympics. In February, Norway's sports arbitration board imposed a 13-month suspension on the 29-year-old, who tested positive for a steroid which she said was in a lip balm.

But the International Ski Federation (FIS) deemed that decision too lenient and lodged an appeal. "I'm completely broken. I was dreaming about the Olympics and I was told yesterday that it would not happen," Johaug tearfully told a live-streamed news conference in Italy yesterday. "I cannot understand the punishment I got. I find it unfair."

Johaug, a relay gold medallist at the 2010 Winter Olympics, tested positive for traces of the anabolic steroid clostebol, banned by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA), during an out-of-competition drug test on September 16, 2016. She said the steroid was contained in a lip cream called Trofodermin, which the team doctor had given her to treat burns she received during a training session at high altitude in Italy in late August. Since the beginning of the case, the judges have believed her explanations and precluded an attempt to cheat as the steroid doses in the lip balm are not enough to boost performance. Johaug was, however, punished over negligence. CAS said "Johaug failed to conduct a basic check" of the lip balm's packaging, "which not only listed a prohibited substance as an ingredient but also included clear doping cautionary warning".

In a statement yesterday, it added that "such omissions resulted in an anti-doping rule violation inconsistent with her otherwise clean anti-doping record." The court said its panel "was obliged to apply a proportionate sanction, consistent with the level of fault" to guarantee equality in anti-doping rules.

Johaug's suspension is to run until April 18, 2018, ruling her out of the Olympics which take



FALUN: In this Feb. 28, 2015 file photo Norway's Therese Johaug celebrates her victory at the women's 30 kms mass start event at the Nordic Skiing World Championships in Falun. Former Olympic champion Johaug will miss the 2018 Winter Games after her ban in a steroid doping case was extended. — AP

place in Pyeongchang, South Korea on February 9-25. The only way to overturn the Lausanne-based CAS's decision is to lodge an appeal to the Swiss Supreme Court, but this scenario is deemed unlikely.

NORWEGIAN SKIING IMAGE HARMED

The news touched a raw nerve in Norway, where skiing is the national sport. "I am sad that Therese must pay such a high price in a case where she is believed on all accounts," Johaug's close friend and fellow skier, Marit Bjorgen, was quoted as saying by public broadcaster NRK.

Norwegian team leader Vidar Lofshus said he was "in shock". The FIS, which requested a suspension between 16 and 20 months, said it was "satisfied that an independent body had the

opportunity to review all the facts of the case and to render an impartial verdict".

Despite its accidental nature, the case has harmed the image of Norwegian skiing, which has long claimed to be clean but lately suffered several blows. In July, Martin Sundby, another national star, was suspended for two months and deprived of his victory in the Tour de Ski 2015 for improper use of asthma medicine.

The Norwegian media was unanimous in finding Johaug's punishment too severe. "Anti-doping in sports has lost its common sense," the daily Aftenposten commented. "Johaug verdict is a massive blow to Norwegian naivety," suggested tabloid Verdens Gang. Johaug has ruled out retirement but warned: "I do not know how my motivation will be in the future." — AFP

MOTOR RACING

RAIKKONEN SIGNS NEW FERRARI DEAL FOR 2018

PARIS: Kimi Raikkonen has signed a one-year contract extension with Ferrari for the 2018 season, the Formula One team disclosed yesterday.

"Ferrari announces that Scuderia Ferrari has renewed its technical and racing agreement with Kimi Raikkonen," a team statement read. "The Finnish driver will therefore race for the Maranello team in the 2018 Formula One World Championship."

Raikkonen's signature comes after he chased home Sebastian Vettel in a dominant Ferrari display in the Hungarian Grand Prix before the mid-season break.

Vettel, who increased his lead over Mercedes' Lewis Hamilton to 14 points, has yet to confirm his plans for 2018. His contract expires at the end of the year but the German is expected to keep his solid partnership with the Finn intact for 2018.

"I think I have been public on the Sebastian issue, if he wants to stay he is more than welcome to stay," said Ferrari president Sergio Marchionne after Hungary.

For Raikkonen, 37, Tuesday's deal secures his fifth consecutive season with Ferrari after an initial spell at Maranello when he captured the world title in 2007.

He is placed fifth in the 2017 drivers' standings on 116 points, 86 behind his teammate, ahead of Sunday's Belgian Grand Prix at Spa-Francorchamps.

The former McLaren and Lotus driver has yet to win a race for Ferrari since his return to the team in 2014, his last success coming at the season-opening Australian Grand Prix in 2013 for Lotus.

His last victory in the iconic red car came back at the 2009 Belgian Grand Prix. Ferrari have supplied nine of his 20 career GP wins, with another nine coming at McLaren and two behind the wheel of a Lotus.

His 122 starts for Ferrari place him third in the team's all-time drivers list behind Michael Schumacher (179) and Felipe Massa (139). Raikkonen's decision to stay put in Italy alongside Vettel has postponed until at least next season a game of musical chairs amongst the top drivers.

Hamilton is tied to Mercedes until the end of next season with the German manufacturer expected to offer his teammate Valtteri Bottas a new deal for 2018.

And Red Bull will be relieved to hold on to their flying Dutch teenager Max Verstappen and Australian Daniel Ricciardo for another campaign. —AFP



HELSINKI: Finnish Formula One driver Kimi Raikkonen (C) of Ferrari arrives for a media meeting of his sponsor Santander Bank in Helsinki, Finland yesterday. Kimi Raikkonen has signed a one-year contract extension with Ferrari for the 2018 season, the Formula One team announced yesterday. —AFP

GIANTS WR BECKHAM HURTS LEG IN FIRST HALF AGAINST BROWNS

CLEVELAND: The New York Giants' exhibition season has gotten serious. Star wide receiver Odell Beckham Jr. hurt his left leg during Monday night's game against Cleveland when he took a legal-but-questionable hit on the knee from Browns cornerback Brian Boddy-Calhoun.

Beckham, one of the NFL's best players, caught an 18-yard pass and was coming down on his left leg when he was immediately hit by Boddy-Calhoun's right shoulder and helmet. The impact flipped Beckham onto his side and his head bounced off the turf.

Beckham popped up, ripped off his helmet and slammed it in frustration. After taking a knee as medical staff ran out to assist him, the outspoken and charismatic Beckham walked off slowly and glared menacingly at Boddy-

Calhoun in Cleveland's defensive huddle.

Beckham spent a few minutes sitting alone on the bench before heading to the locker room. TV cameras captured him dropping to his knees on the floor in the corridor outside New York's locker room.

The Giants said Beckham sprained an ankle. He was also checked and cleared for a concussion. Beckham returned to the sideline for the start of the third quarter, wearing street clothes with his ankle wrapped.

Also known for his sensational one-handed catches and wild hair styles, Beckham caught 101 passes and scored 10 touchdowns last season. The 24-year-old, who has said he wants to be the league's highest-paid player, is entering his fourth season. He has 288 career receptions for 4,122 yards and 35 TDs. — AP

ENGLAND LEGEND BOYCOTT APOLOGISES FOR 'UNACCEPTABLE' REMARK

LONDON: Controversial England batting legend Geoff Boycott made a grovelling apology yesterday for remarking he needed to "black up his face" to get a knighthood at an event last week.

The 76-year-old astonished his audience with his comment during a question and answer session in one of the intervals at last week's first Test with the West Indies.

Boycott, who played a pivotal role in organising the 1982 England rebel tour of South Africa when sporting links had

been cut with the rest of the world because of the apartheid regime, said knighthoods had been bestowed on West Indian cricketers like "confetti".

"Mine's been turned down twice. I'd better black me face," Boycott is reported to have said according to a guest at the event cited by The Daily Mirror.

The guest at the event—which cost £300 (\$385, 327 euros) to attend—said the remark though intended as a joke was "crass" and went down like a "lead balloon".

However, Boycott—who has overcome throat cancer in 2002 to become a popular and outspoken pundit on BBC Radio's globally renowned Test Match Special—took to Twitter on Tuesday to unreservedly apologise.

"Speaking at an informal gathering I was asked a question and I realise my answer was unacceptable," he tweeted. "I meant no offence but what I said was clearly wrong and I apologise unreservedly."

"I have loved West Indian cricket my

whole life and have the utmost respect for its players." The BBC would not comment on whether he would continue to play a part in the ongoing West Indies three match Test series although they did issue a statement welcoming his apology.

"He has rightly apologised unreservedly for these clearly unacceptable comments," a BBC spokesperson said. West Indies greats like Viv Richards, Garfield Sobers and Curtly Ambrose have been knighted whilst the last

England cricketer to be knighted was Ian Botham—no stranger to controversy himself—in 2007.

Boycott has always contended the reason he has not been knighted is because of his conviction in France—firstly in 1996 and confirmed on appeal in 1998 — for assaulting former girlfriend Margaret Moore.

A durable but unspectacular opening batsman, Boycott played 108 Tests, scoring 8114 runs with 22 centuries at an average of 47.72. — AFP



ANAHEIM: Robinson Chirinos #61 of the Texas Rangers is forced out at second by Andrelton Simmons #2 of the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim in the third inning of the game at Angel Stadium of Anaheim on Monday in Anaheim, California. — AFP

BASEBALL

INDIANS EDGE SOX IN HEAVYWEIGHT BATTLE

CLEVELAND: Brandon Guyer scored when first baseman Brock Holt threw away Roberto Perez's bunt in the ninth inning, lifting the Cleveland Indians over the Boston Red Sox 5-4 in Major League Baseball on Monday night in a matchup of first-place teams. After Guyer's leadoff double against Brandon Workman (0-1), Holt fielded the bunted ball and tried to throw out Guyer at third. Guyer slid into the bag as the throw skipped past third baseman Rafael Devers, then got to his feet and raced across home plate. Teammates ran onto the field and doused Perez with water and white powder. Perez also had a three-run homer in the second inning. Cody Allen (1-6) allowed Christian Vazquez's leadoff single in the ninth, but retired the next three hitters. The inning ended when shortstop Francisco Lindor ran down Mookie Betts' popup in center field with his back to home plate. Cleveland relief ace Andrew Miller left in the seventh inning after aggravating the patellar tendinitis in his right knee. Miller recently returned after over two weeks on the disabled list with the knee injury.

DODGERS 6, PIRATES 5, 12 INNINGS

Yasiel Puig homered in the 12th inning, helping Los Angeles top Pittsburgh. Puig drove a 1-0 pitch from rookie Dovydas Neverauskas (1-1) over the wall in center for his 22nd of the season. The Pirates put runners on first and second with two out in the bottom half, but Ross Stripling retired Max Moroff on a liner to right for his second save. Curtis Granderson hit a grand slam off Gerrit Cole in Los Angeles' five-run seventh, and Luis Avilan (2-1) pitched one inning for the win. The

Dodgers haven't lost consecutive games since July 20 and 21. The Pirates have lost seven of their past nine.

DIAMONDBACKS 3, METS 2, 10 INNINGS

A.J. Pollock hit a two-run homer in the 10th inning as Arizona snapped a three-game skid. J.D. Martinez had an RBI single and left fielder David Peralta threw out the potential go-ahead run at the plate for the Diamondbacks, who began the day with a 2 1/2-game lead over Milwaukee for the second NL wild card. Pinch-hitter Gregor Blanco walked to start the 10th. One out later, Pollock sent a fastball from Eric Goeddel (0-1) over the center field fence to put the Diamondbacks back in front after they squandered a 1-0 lead in the seventh. Fernando Rodney gave up a leadoff homer to Michael Conforto before getting three outs for his 28th save in 33 tries. Jimmie Sherfy (1-0) pitched a perfect ninth for his first major league win.

MARINERS 6, BRAVES 5

Andrew Albers worked into the sixth inning for his second straight win since coming up from the minors, leading Seattle over Atlanta. Albers (2-0) also had the first hit an RBI of his career - in his first big league at-bat. The 31-year-old left-hander beat his former organization, having spent most of the season at the Braves' Triple-A club. He went 12-3 but never got a call to the big leagues. Instead, Albers was dealt to the Mariners for cash on Aug. 11. He was called up by Seattle to make a start four days later, working six strong innings in a 3-1 win over Baltimore. Now, after going just

over four years between major league victories, Albers has two wins in less than a week. Mike Foltynewicz (10-9) has lost four of his last five starts for Atlanta.

ORIOLES 7, ATHLETICS 3

Adam Jones hit a pair of home runs and Jonathan Schoop added a three-run shot to help Baltimore beat Oakland. Wade Miley (7-10) held the A's to two runs, five hits and four walks over six-plus innings to pick up his first win at Camden Yards since June 17. Miley is 2-0 with a 1.38 ERA against Oakland this season. Jones tied a career high with four hits and is one home run shy of reaching 25 for the seventh consecutive season. Zach Britton got the final out with two runners on for his 11th save this season and his 60th in a row. Baltimore beat Chris Smith (0-3) for the second time in 12 days.

WHITE SOX 7, TWINS 6, 1ST GAME TWINS 10, WHITE SOX 2, 2ND GAME

Jorge Polanco hit his second three-run homer of the day as Minnesota scored six times in the second inning and routed Chicago to split a doubleheader. Brian Dozier added a three-run drive off Carson Fulmer during the rally. Byron Buxton and Jason Castro each added a solo shot for the Twins, who have won five of six. They are a half-game ahead of the Angels for the second AL wild card. Dillon Gee (1-0) retired the first 12 White Sox batters before rookie Nicky Delmonico homered leading off the fifth. Gee allowed only two hits and walked none through six innings. Tyler Duffey followed with three innings to earn his first save. Polanco, who has five homers, hit a three-run shot off Derek Holland in the eighth inning of the opener to cut Minnesota's deficit to 7-6. In homering for the first time in back-to-back games, Polanco did it in consecutive at-bats. Fulmer gave up six runs over 1 1/3 innings in his season debut. In the first game, Yolmer Sanchez homered and drove in four runs, Jose Abreu hit his 25th of the season and the White Sox held on. Carlos Rodon (2-4) pitched effectively into seventh inning for the fifth straight outing to earn his first win since July 3. Juan Minaya worked a perfect ninth for his third save. Avisail Garcia had three hits and two RBIs for AL-worst Chicago. Abreu became the first White Sox player to hit 25 or more home runs in each of his first four seasons. Tim Melville (0-1) lasted just 3 1/3 innings and allowed five runs in his Twins debut.

RANGERS 5, ANGELS 3

Adrian Beltre hit a three-run homer and Cole Hamels pitched seven effective innings as Texas cooled off Los Angeles. Hamels (9-1) allowed two runs on three hits. Alex Claudio

got four outs to earn his seventh save, despite giving up an RBI single to Mike Trout in the ninth. Tyler Skaggs (1-4) was charged with five runs, four earned, in 5 1/3 innings. The Angels had won nine of 11.

GIANTS 2, BREWERS 0

Giants rookie Chris Stratton pitched six innings to run his scoreless streak to 12 2/3 innings over his past two outings, and San Francisco stymied Milwaukee. It was a night of missed chances as the Brewers, who had won six of seven, dropped 2 1/2 games back of

first-place Chicago in the NL Central. Brandon Crawford hit an RBI double to back Stratton (2-2) in his fourth major league start after he won at Washington his last time out. The Giants earned their first home shutout of the year, becoming the last team in the majors to do so. Milwaukee starter Zach Davies (14-7) allowed two runs in six innings. He took his first road defeat of the season after a 7-0 start, dropping to 14-4 away from home in his career. Sam Dyson finished for his 11th save in 12 chances with the Giants, who beat the Brewers for the 16th time in 20 games. — AP

CRICKET

JOSHI TO HELP BANGLADESH SPINNERS FOR AUSSIES TESTS

DHAKA: Bangladesh's cricket board announced yesterday that former Indian bowler Sunil Joshi has been appointed the squad's spin consultant after Australian Stuart MacGill turned down the coaching gig. Joshi, a left-arm spinner, will join the squad as a bowling coach ahead of their first Test against Australia starting this Sunday in Dhaka, Bangladesh Cricket Board spokesman Jalal Yunus told AFP.

The board had hoped to reel in MacGill for insight into Australia's bowling attack, ahead of their first tour of Bangladesh in more than a decade. But officials said MacGill, a former right-arm leg spin bowler who took 208 wickets in 44 Tests for Australia, declined the offer for personal reasons. The spin bowling job had been vacant since Ruwan Kalpage, a former Sri Lankan player, left last year. Joshi will stay for two months and also join Bangladesh for their tour of South Africa, Yunus added.

He was approached in February during Bangladesh's tour of India, their first there since gaining Test status in 2000.

Joshi won man of the match in Bangladesh's inaugural Test match against India in 2000, when he scored 92 runs and took eight wickets in the best batting and bowling figures in his 15-Test career.

Joshi, who also played 69 one-day internationals, has an impressive first-class record having taken 615 wickets from 160 games.

Bangladesh have not played a Test against Australia since Ricky Ponting's team visited the country in 2006.

Meanwhile, Australian all-rounder Ashton Agar said yesterday he was ready to return to Test cricket after a four-year hiatus if selected for the opening match of the tour

against Bangladesh this weekend. Agar impressed Australian selectors with his form this season, and has received a strong endorsement from coach Darren Lehmann ahead of the Test in Dhaka starting Sunday. "Obviously it depends on what the wicket looks like but I'm ready to go if I get the nod," Agar told reporters in Dhaka.

"I've been preparing really well and I've done everything I can now. I feel like everything is in really good order."

Agar made a sensational debut to Test cricket in 2013, scored 98 runs in his maiden innings batting at number 11 against England in Nottingham.

But since then the 23-year-old has made only one further Test appearance, and has been hungry for a return to the long format of the game. It was not until his impressive form in the Sheffield Shield this season—claiming 16 wickets and 115 runs in four innings for Western Australia—that he caught the eye of selectors once again.

He was picked for Australia's two-Test tour of Bangladesh ahead of left-arm spinner Steve O'Keefe, whose 12-wicket haul against India earlier this year helped Australia claim the first Test of that series.

Australia was not letting the pressure of his selection, or years in the wilderness, get the better of him.

"For me now I've got to not put too much pressure on myself and try and enjoy the game," he said. Australia will play two Tests against Bangladesh, the first starting Sunday and the second on September 4. "It's just four years of experience, four years of extra bowling, a lot of balls bowled in that time and naturally you just get better," he said of his break from Test cricket. —AFP

MLB Results/Standings

San Francisco 2, Milwaukee 0; Texas 5, LA Angels 3; Minnesota 10, Chicago White Sox 2; Seattle 6, Atlanta 5; Arizona 3, NY Mets 2 (10 innings); Cleveland 5, Boston 4; LA Dodgers 6, Pittsburgh 5 (12 innings); Baltimore 7, Oakland 3; Chicago White Sox 7, Minnesota 6.

American League					National League				
Eastern Division					Eastern Division				
	W	L	PCT	GB		W	L	PCT	GB
Boston	71	53	.573	-	Washington	74	48	.607	-
NY Yankees	66	57	.537	4.5	Miami	60	62	.492	14
Baltimore	61	64	.488	10.5	Atlanta	55	68	.447	19.5
Tampa Bay	61	65	.484	11	NY Mets	54	69	.439	20.5
Toronto	59	65	.476	12	Philadelphia	45	77	.369	29
Central Division					Central Division				
Cleveland	69	54	.561	-	Chicago Cubs	66	57	.537	-
Minnesota	64	60	.516	5.5	Milwaukee	65	61	.516	2.5
Kansas City	62	61	.504	7	St. Louis	63	61	.508	3.5
Detroit	54	69	.439	15	Pittsburgh	60	65	.480	7
Chicago White Sox	48	75	.390	21	Cincinnati	53	72	.424	14
Western Division					Western Division				
Houston	76	48	.613	-	LA Dodgers	88	35	.715	-
LA Angels	64	61	.512	12.5	Colorado	68	56	.548	20.5
Seattle	64	62	.508	13	Arizona	68	57	.544	21
Texas	62	62	.500	14	San Diego	55	69	.444	33.5
Oakland	54	71	.432	22.5	San Francisco	51	76	.402	39

Sports

Johaug to miss Olympics as CAS extends doping ban



Klopp feels the heat as Liverpool eye group phase



WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 23, 2017

ENGLAND LEGEND ROONEY APOLOGISES FOR 'UNACCEPTABLE' REMARK

Page 14



MANCHESTER: Manchester City's Fernandinho, right, and Everton's Wayne Rooney battle for the ball during the English Premier League soccer match between Manchester City and Everton at the Etihad Stadium in Manchester, England, Monday. —AP

ROONEY REBORN: STRIKER EYEING ENGLAND RETURN

MANCHESTER: He scored another landmark goal, he raged at the referee, he tackled back, and covered every blade of grass for his team's cause. Welcome back, Wayne Rooney.

A summer return to boyhood club Everton has lit a fire in English soccer's most talked-about player, whose career was in rapid decline as he sat on the substitutes' bench game after game at Manchester United last season.

Rooney has always been a player who needs a run of matches to really get into his stride. He is getting that at Everton. After making an early return to preseason training to work on his fitness, the 31-year-old Rooney started his fifth

competitive match of the season in the 1-1 draw at Manchester City in the Premier League on Monday. He looked fitter, sharper and hungrier than in recent years, and seemed to relish being the father-figure in a team containing two 20-year-olds (Dominic Calvert-Lewin and Mason Holgate) and a 19-year-old (Tom Davies).

Rooney hasn't lost his eye for goal, either, popping up in City's box in a rare Everton attack to side-foot home the 200th Premier League goal of his career, a scoring feat only Alan Shearer has previously achieved.

"He has that cleverness that you need in your team," Everton manager Ronald Koeman said, "to

know exactly in every moment on the pitch what is the best decision." Hurling a volley of abuse at the referee, earning a late yellow card, wasn't Rooney's wisest decision of the night at Etihad Stadium but it shows his passion hasn't dimmed.

In front of the watching Jose Mourinho, the Man United manager who has just sold him, and Gareth Southgate, the England manager who recently dropped him, Rooney played like a man with a point to prove to those who still doubt the record scorer for United and England.

"The thing for me is to play," Rooney said, repeating remarks he made in May during one of his last media duties as a United player. "I didn't

play as much last year and if you don't play, you don't get that match fitness."

Then, in a swipe at the armchair critics, he said his display was "not bad for someone who is not fit anymore and can't get about the pitch."

Rooney has scored in Everton's opening two league games, taking him to two goals by Aug. 21. It took him until Jan. 21 to reach that number last season. Playing in Europa League qualifiers against MFK Ruzomberok (home and away) and Hajduk Split (at home) has helped Rooney get a base fitness and allowed him to settle into a new-look Everton team and 5-3-2 formation.

In the past nine days, he has scored the

winner against Stoke in the Premier League, set up Idrissa Gueye with a delicate through-ball for a goal against Hajduk, and now netted against City.

Can Southgate ignore Rooney when he names his England squad on Thursday for upcoming World Cup qualifiers against Malta and Slovakia? "He's at a physical state that we need and he needs, to give this kind of performance," Koeman said. "That's what we like to keep, the good fitness. There's no doubt about his qualities on the ball. We'd like to win titles, and he knows how to win titles. That's a big experience." —AP

SCHOOLING GOLDEN, TEEN CROWNED FASTEST MAN

KUALA LUMPUR: Olympic swimming champion Joseph Schooling grabbed his second gold of the Southeast Asian Games yesterday as hosts Malaysia capped a medal-laden day when teenager Khairul Hafiz was crowned the region's fastest man.

Schooling, Singapore's first Olympic gold-medallist after his 100m butterfly win in Rio

last year, led his team-mates to a commanding 4x100m freestyle relay victory in a Games-record 3min 17.85sec.

Texas-based Schooling is targeting six gold medals in Kuala Lumpur after a winless world championships in July, and he now has two titles in two nights after his 50m butterfly victory a day earlier. But Schooling, who

admitted he felt a little tired after Monday's race, said he was just happy to help Singapore win another swimming title.

"It's a great feeling. I just tried to do my best for my team, tried to get them ahead," Schooling said. "I'm glad we could get a new record and win." There were more successes for Singapore as Roanne Ho clinched the

women's 50m breaststroke in a tournament-record 31.29, and Quah Zheng Wen won the men's 200m butterfly in 1:57.95.

Vietnam's "Little Mermaid" Nguyen Thi Anh Vien set a new Games record of 2:13.64 in the women's 200m backstroke and also won the 400m freestyle to reach three gold medals for the competition.

But the busiest day so far, with 45 titles on offer, belonged to Malaysia, who scored wins across a swathe of events and then took the big prize on the first night of the athletics competition. Khairul, who is just 19, upset defending champion Eric Cray to win the men's 100m in 10.38, five-hundredths ahead of the Filipino-American who earlier won the 400m hurdles.

Malaysia's Muhammad Irfan won discus gold, and home favourite Zaidatul Husniah took silver in the women's 100m behind Vietnamese runner Le Tu Chinh, who timed 11.56. Earlier Malaysia won the men's team time trial cycling ahead of Thailand, and in gymnastics Tan Fu Jie and Jeremiah Loo shared men's pommel horse gold and Tan Ing Yueh won the women's vault.

The hosts also took gold in men's and women's karate, wushu, petanque, mixed doubles bowling and the women's 25m pistol. Late yesterday they had 37 gold medals, ahead of Singapore on 19. Malaysia even vanquished royal opposition when they won the team dressage ahead of a Thai outfit led by Princess Sirivannavari Nariratana Vajiralongkorn, competing on her horse Prince Charming.

In the polo competition, Sports Minister Khairy Jamaluddin survived a couple of falls from his horse as he helped Malaysia to a 12-4 polo win over a Brunei team featuring Prince Abdul Mateen and Princess Azemah Bolkhia. —AFP



KUALA LUMPUR: Singapore's Joseph Schooling competes in the men's swimming 4 X 100m freestyle relay final of the 29th Southeast Asian Games (SEA Games) at the National Aquatics centre in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. — AFP

AZARENKA WITHDRAWS FROM US OPEN AMID CUSTODY FIGHT

NEW YORK: Two-time US Open runner-up Victoria Azarenka confirmed her withdrawal from the tournament on Monday amid a custody battle concerning her eight-month-old son. Azarenka, who signalled last week she may miss the tournament rather than travel to New York without her son Leo, confirmed her withdrawal in a statement.

"I am sadly unable to compete in this year's US Open due to my ongoing family situation that I am working through," the Belarus star said. "While I will dearly miss being in New York and playing in one of my favorite tournaments where I have enjoyed some of the best moments in my career, I am already looking forward to being back next year."

The Belarusian reached the final in 2012 and 2013 where she was beaten by Serena Williams on both occasions. The 28-year-old said last week she would skip Flushing Meadows rather than be separated from her baby.

It came after a Los Angeles judge presiding in her custody case with the boy's father, Billy McKeague, said the child could not leave California until the matter had been resolved. Azarenka, ranked 204 after a layoff while pregnant and after her son's birth, played last month at Wimbledon, reaching the round of 16 before losing to second-ranked Simona Halep.

"Shortly after Wimbledon, Leo's father and I separated and as we work to resolve some of the legal processes, the way things stand now is that the only way I can play in the US Open this year is if I leave Leo behind in California, which I'm not willing to do," Azarenka said last week.

"I look forward to hopefully having positive developments soon so that this difficult situation can be resolved and I can get back to competing. No parent should have to decide between their child or their career." —AFP

Kuwait Times 55 BUSINESS

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 23, 2017

Kuwait corporate earnings up on strong investment gains

Page 18

S Korea, US fail to reach deal on revision to FTA

Page 19



Qatar Airways' flight lands at Havel Airport, Prague

Page 21

WALL ST GAINS AS INVESTORS PICK BEATEN-DOWN STOCKS

Page 20



In this July 25, 2017 file photo, construction continues on the spans of the new Governor Mario M. Cuomo Bridge, right, as vehicles make their way on the Tappan Zee Bridge over the Hudson River, near Tarrytown, N.Y. President Donald Trump's road to getting legislation through Congress this year to restore the nation's crumbling infrastructure appears increasingly precarious. — AP

TRUMP'S PATH TO BOOSTING INFRASTRUCTURE FULL OF POTHOLES

PRESIDENT YET TO OUTLINE PLAN TO CREATE JOBS IN TRANSPORTATION SECTOR

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump's road to getting legislation through Congress this year to restore the nation's crumbling infrastructure appears increasingly precarious. Trump has yet to release a plan despite his campaign pledge to create jobs by building bigger and better transportation and other types of infrastructure projects. Administration officials have said a plan will be released in the third quarter of this year, but Congress is unlikely to tackle the issue right away.

Lawmakers will have too much other must-pass legislation on their agenda when they return to work after Labor Day, including deadlines to raise the federal debt limit and, separately, prevent a government shutdown after the current budget year ends on Sept 30. After that, Republican leaders plan to revamp tax laws, always difficult and time-consuming.

Even if Congress moves on to infrastructure after taxes, Democrats and many Republicans are skeptical that Trump can reach his goal of generating \$1 trillion in infrastructure spend-

ing over 10 years if he relies on tax incentives for companies that invest in projects in exchange for the right to collect tolls or other fees and speeding up the environmental permitting process.

Trump has said he's hopeful Democrats will support his plan. Democrats say they want to work with the administration on infrastructure, but that any bill must include direct funding for projects, not merely tax credits for investors. "We Democrats sent the president our 'Better Deal' infrastructure proposal in January. We still haven't heard from them," said Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y.

Democrats would pay for their \$1 trillion plan with unspecified cuts in tax breaks. In July, Schumer and House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif, made the plan a key part of Democrats' new economic agenda and messaging strategy for the 2018 midterm elections.

White House officials didn't reply to questions from The Associated Press.

Lack of details

Trump's budget proposal submitted to Congress in May called for using \$200 billion in government spending to leverage \$800 billion in local and private infrastructure investment over 10 years, but didn't provide details. Trump separately proposed cutting current transportation programs, including eliminating subsidies for Amtrak's long-distance trains and for scheduled airline service to rural communities, sharply reducing grants for transit capital projects and killing "TIGER" grants for difficult-to-fund transportation projects involving multiple jurisdictions or multiple transportation modes.

A Senate appropriations panel warned in a bipartisan spending bill last month that it "strongly disagrees with the administration's assertion that providing federal dollars for infrastructure has created 'an unhealthy dynamic in which state and local governments delay projects in the hope of receiving federal funds.'" Lawmakers were quoting a White

House fact sheet on Trump's infrastructure vision. The panel also said it is "troubling" that Trump's budget proposal assumes that after fiscal year 2020, the Highway Trust Fund - which pays for most highway and transit aid - will be limited to revenue from current federal fuel taxes and other user fees.

In 2015, Congress shored up the trust fund with general fund money spread over five years. Without a new source of funds, transportation aid would drop by about \$95 billion over five years beginning in fiscal 2021. Some GOP lawmakers and conservative think tanks advocate sharply reducing federal transportation aid, leaving it to states to raise money to cover their transportation needs or not. Prospects for a bill would improve significantly, lobbyists say, if the tax bill includes proposals for raising money for infrastructure, such as a federal gas tax increase, new trucking fees or lower tax rates for companies that return profits parked overseas to the US.

"We see tax reform and infrastructure hopefully going hand-in-hand," said Sean O'Neill, the Associated General Contractors' top infrastructure lobbyist. Gary Cohn, Trump's top economic adviser, said an infrastructure bill will "come on the heels of taxes."

"We hope it's this year," he told reporters recently. "We need to get taxes done between now and Thanksgiving ... As soon (as) tax comes out of the House and goes to the Senate, we'll put infrastructure in the House." However, it's far from assured that infrastructure money will be addressed in a tax bill, or that a tax bill can even be passed. Negotiating the bills in a bipartisan way will be critical, said Bud Wright, the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials' executive director.

"It will be difficult to get tax reform or an infrastructure bill over the goal line without Democratic support," he said. "I want to be optimistic (that an infrastructure bill) can happen, but it's going to be an uphill climb." — AP

UK AIR TRAVEL COULD SLUMP IF NO EARLY BREXIT AVIATION DEAL

LONDON: Britain's airports could see passenger numbers plunge by as much as 40 percent unless the government strikes an interim aviation deal with the European Union by October 2018, according to an industry report seen by Reuters yesterday.

The study, commissioned by leading British airports including London's Heathrow and Gatwick, said flights could be grounded and Britain's economy would be hit without a guarantee of future access to the EU's single aviation market. Britain is due to leave the EU in March 2019, but with many air passengers booking months in advance, the government needs to secure a deal well before then to reduce uncertainty, the report said.

Unlike other areas, such as trade, there is no automatic fallback position if no deal is reached. In its most pessimistic scenario, the report said there could be a 41 percent plunge in passengers at Britain's biggest airports between March 2018 and March 2019. Its central scenario, assuming uncertainty over the status of flights, is for an 11.5 percent drop during that period.

"The risk of no deal creates uncertainty for the industry," it said. "Although an 11th hour deal may prevent planes from being grounded, damage to the aviation industry and the wider economy would have already been done." Given what's at stake, however, it described the chances of Britain and the EU not achieving a deal as "remote."

The report echoes warnings from Michael O'Leary, CEO of Europe's biggest airline Ryanair, who said earlier this month the threat of major disruption to air travel from Brexit was increasing. "We

are urging the EU and UK government to prioritize an interim deal on aviation as soon as possible," a spokesman for Manchester Airports Group (MAG), which runs Manchester and Stansted airports, said in a statement.

"Tickets will soon go on sale for flights in a post-Brexit world and both airlines and passengers need

assurance from the EU and UK government to enable them to plan for the future." A spokesman for Heathrow airport said it was confident the government understood the importance of the sector. "Aviation is absolutely crucial to the UK's economy and we are committed to getting the right deal for Britain," a government spokesman said. — Reuters



NEW US PENALTIES ON CHINESE, RUSSIAN FIRMS OVER N KOREA

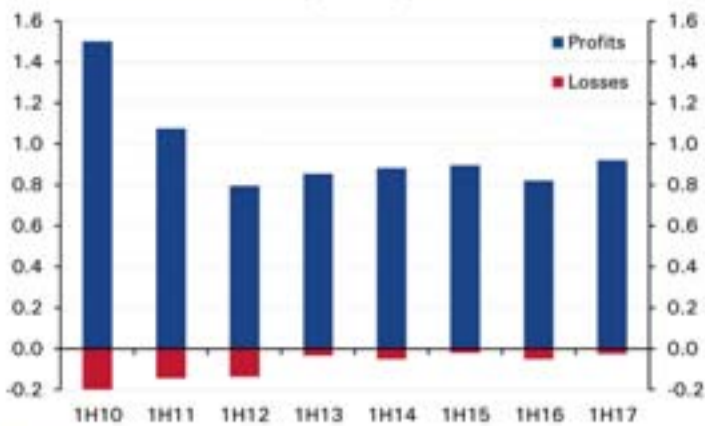
WASHINGTON: The Trump administration yesterday imposed sanctions on 16 mainly Chinese and Russian companies and people for assisting North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile programs and helping the North make money to support those programs.

The penalties are intended to complement new UN Security Council sanctions and further isolate North Korea for its nuclear and missile tests amid heightened tensions that have led to threats from both sides, the Treasury Department said in a statement. The 16 affected entities either do business with previously sanctioned companies and people, work with the North Korean energy sector, help it place workers abroad or facilitate its evasion of international financial curbs.

The measures block any assets they may have in US jurisdictions and bar Americans from transactions with them. "It is unacceptable for individuals and companies in China, Russia, and elsewhere to enable North Korea to generate income used to develop weapons of mass destruction and destabilize the region," Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said. "We are taking actions consistent with U.N. sanctions to show that there are consequences for defying sanctions and providing support to North Korea, and to deter this activity in the future."

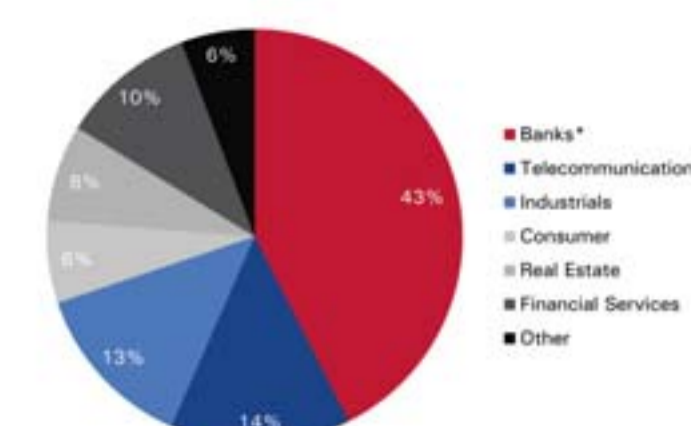
Among those sanctioned are six Chinese companies, including three coal companies; two Singapore-based companies that sell oil to North Korea and three Russians that work with them; a Russian company that deals in North Korean metals and its Russian director; a construction company based in Namibia; a second Namibia-based company, and its North Korean director, that supplies North Korean workers to build statues overseas to generate income for the North. — AP

Chart 1: Profits and losses (KD billion)



Source: Boursa Kuwait

Chart 3: Profits by sector



Source: Boursa Kuwait

KUWAIT CORPORATE EARNINGS UP ON STRONG INVESTMENT GAINS

NBK ECONOMIC REPORT

KUWAIT: Listed Kuwaiti companies saw a notable rise in profits in the first half of 2017; however, weak revenue growth continued to indicate softness in business activity. The financial sector was the main contributor to growth as investment gains, especially earlier in the year, boosted companies' bottom lines. Meanwhile, results in other sectors, including consumer companies, reflected a more lackluster operating environment. Profit announcements seemed to have a positive impact on market sentiment, with the general index up 6.4 percent during the reporting period.

Earnings of listed corporates were up 16 percent y/y during the first half of the year. The aggregate profits of 150 reporting companies, out of 158 Kuwaiti companies listed on Boursa Kuwait, rose to KD 883 million. There was also a significant drop in aggregate losses, declining by 50 percent y/y to KD 25 million; the number of loss-making companies fell from 38 in 1H16 to 34.

The financial services sector benefited from the stock market rally earlier in the year. Boursa Kuwait has since given up some of these gains but the value-weighted index was still up 5 percent in 1H17. Non-bank financial service companies with large exposures to the local market made strong gains on their investment portfolios. Total profits for this sector tripled compared to 1H16 to KD 93 million. The strong results of the sector were broad-based. The number of loss-making companies dropped notably compared to 1H16 with 70 percent of reporting companies seeing an improvement in earnings.

Banks were the second largest contributor to profit growth in 1H17. Profits for the sector rose a good 8.4 percent to KD 375 million. Most banks contributed to the growth, with only two banks seeing declines in earnings. While growth came primarily from investment

Table: Profits by sector (KD million)

	Net profits		Growth % y/y
	1H16	1H17	
Banks*	346	375	8.4%
Basic Materials	9	16	74.1%
Consumer Goods	39	37	-3.7%
Consumer Services	27	19	-29.1%
Financial Services	24	93	293.9%
Healthcare	5	7	33.6%
Industrials	99	117	17.7%
Insurance	14	21	44.7%
Oil & Gas	7	6	-17.1%
Real Estate	62	67	7.2%
Technology	6	1	-75.0%
Telecommunications	122	124	1.9%
Total	760	883	16.1%

Source: Boursa Kuwait

* Adjusted for NBK's consolidation of Boubyan Bank.

gains, net interest income also supported the sector's profitability.

Industrial companies were another main contributor to profit growth. The sector's profits were up 18 percent in 1H17. Gains from the sector were also broad-based with 65 percent of the companies seeing positive growth in earnings. Results were mostly mixed across the remaining sectors, with weakness stemming from the consumer sector.

Profits for the consumer sector were down 15 percent y/y, with more than half of the companies seeing declines in earnings. The weakness seen in the sector's profitability serves as further confirmation of a moderat-

ing trend in the sector, something seen in other data such as consumer spending, imports of consumer goods, confidence indicators and household debt.

The strength of investment income masked continued weakness in revenues. A sample of 73 non-bank listed companies saw an increase of just 1 percent y/y in total revenues. Subdued revenue growth is a reflection of a challenging business environment still faced by some sectors represented in the bourse.

Profit announcements seemed to have a positive impact on equity prices. The value-weighted index advanced 6.4 percent during the reporting period.

PARTNERSHIP WITH WOMEN FOR EMIRATI WOMEN'S DAY

ETIHAD AVIATION GROUP

ABU DHABI: Etihad Aviation Group (EAG) is celebrating the third annual Emirati Women's Day with a series of events to highlight this year's theme, Women are partners in giving, in line with the UAE's 2017 Year of Giving initiative. Women comprise 36 percent of EAG's nearly 26,000-strong workforce, working alongside men in what are traditionally regarded as male professions such as engineering, the flight deck and cargo. Emirati women are also well represented in these functions, with several of them sharing their experiences at panel discussions held at the Etihad Airways Headquarters yesterday.

Technical Engineer Mariam Al Obaidli's talent and passion were identified by the company four years ago when she was offered the opportunity to join the Etihad Airways Technical Engineer Program, as part of the airline's investment in the development of UAE national capabilities.

Today, she is one of 42 Emirati women completing their two-year, on-the-job training in order to obtain their GCAA Aircraft Engineering Licenses. Nowadays Mariam wakes up at 4am to be at Etihad Airways Engineering for the daily meeting at 5.30am and she couldn't be happier. "You should see the engineers' expressions when they see local women working hard in such extreme conditions, and knowing that we want to be here - they're amazed by it," she recounted for the audience.

Mariam was joined on the panel by an Etihad lawyer, pilot, and airport manager, who shared their own experiences of partnership with the audience. Amina Taher, Vice President of Corporate Affairs, Etihad Aviation Group, said: "Our constitution declares that men and women are equal in their rights and obligations. It provides equal access to education, healthcare and jobs. Her Highness, the mother of our nation, is the champion of

our success, securing our indispensable role as an active driving force in the nation's sustainable development.

"As a company, we foster the talents of our women and men; we encourage them to work together to promote innovation, to mentor their junior colleagues, to volunteer in the community and to give to charity. In a corporate environment, it is also important we stand together to develop not just our company, but the UAE and our country."

Guest speaker Dr Khawla Al-Saadi, Chairwoman of the Emirates Autism Society, will address staff at a special workshop on 29 August. This workshop will explore the notion of giving through showcasing successful female leaders and managers, both within the company and outside, who, despite the challenges of balancing career and family, also devote time to mentoring young women as they embark on their careers.

Speaking about Emirati Women's Day, Dr Khawla Al-Saadi said: "The women of our beloved country have delivered remarkable successes under the leadership and support of Her Highness Shaikha Fatima Bint Mubarak, Chairwoman of the UAE General Women's Union, Supreme Chairwoman of the Family Development Foundation and Chairperson of the Supreme Council for Motherhood and Childhood, for women's issues and aspirations.

"Women are Partners in Giving' is not just a slogan. It conforms with our capacity to implement the directives of our leadership in the past and today. Our role is not only to take part in building our nation, but to play a vital role in its evolution too. We will always promote giving around the nation and abroad, and to reach out to people who need help wherever they are."

Etihad Aviation Group employs 2,859 Emiratis - 1,462 women and 1,394 men - in the UAE and around the world.

TREASURY GROUP NATIONAL BANK OF KUWAIT



INDICATIVE RATES

22 August 2017

Deposit Rates

PERIOD	KD	USD	GBP	EUR	JPY	CHF
1 WEEK	0.0000	0.18750	0.01125	0.00000	0.00000	0.00000
2 MONTH	1.50000	0.40625	0.06250	0.00001	0.01125	0.00001
3 MONTH	1.50000	0.43750	0.06250	0.00001	0.01125	0.00001
6 MONTH	1.75000	0.42500	0.05000	0.01125	0.01125	0.01563
1 YEAR	1.87500	0.40625	0.05000	0.01125	0.06250	0.01563

Cash Rates

CCY	BUY	SELL
USD	0.29415	0.30475
GBP	0.38626	0.39483
EUR	0.35383	0.36317
CHF	0.30804	0.31819
BHD	0.79640	0.80440
SAR	0.07923	0.08193
QAR	0.78073	0.78858
AED	0.08174	0.08256
QAR	0.08455	0.08328

Currencies Against KWD

CCY	BUY	SELL
USD	0.30115	0.30325
GBP	0.38776	0.39183
CHF	0.31204	0.31568
JPY	0.0027522	0.0027629
CAD	0.23952	0.24206
DKK	0.04073	0.04817
SEK	0.03119	0.03755
AUD	0.23872	0.24775
NOK	0.03856	0.03840
EUR	0.35530	0.35970
BHD	0.79704	0.80502
SAR	0.08023	0.08093
QAR	0.78170	0.78828
AED	0.08193	0.08262
QAR	0.08205	0.08336
EGP	0.01649	0.01714
JOD	0.42356	0.42953
SGD	0.22193	0.22306

Currencies Against USD

CCY	BUY	SELL
USD	1.0000	1.0000
GBP	1.2787	1.3014
CHF	0.9529	0.9718
JPY	108.21	110.18
CAD	1.2441	1.2661
DKK	6.7518	6.7534
SEK	8.0290	8.1541
AUD	0.7872	0.8028
NOK	7.8424	7.9677
EUR	1.1717	1.1927
BHD	0.37409	0.38018
SAR	3.7211	3.7798
QAR	0.38203	0.38794
AED	3.6450	3.7013
QAR	3.61264	3.69992
EGP	17.5700	18.3899
JOD	0.7011	0.7160
GOLD	1,287.31	1,287.00

SPOT Cross Currencies

CROSS	BUY	SELL
GBP/JPY	138.37	141.36
GBP/CHF	1.2198	1.2345
EUR/JPY	126.80	131.41
EUR/CHF	1.1178	1.1391
EUR/GBP	0.9006	0.9327
CHF/JPY	111.35	115.50

US Treasury Bonds

TENOR	PRICE	YIELD
3 MONTH	1.00	1.011
6 MONTH	1.12	1.145
2 YEAR	100.12	1.313
5 YEAR	100.53	1.762
10 YEAR	100.52	2.192
30 YEAR	99.56	2.772

Currency Forward Rates Against KWD

PERIOD	USD	GBP	EUR	JPY	CHF
1 WEEK	0.30113	0.30325	0.38791	0.39191	0.35542
1 MONTH	0.30115	0.30325	0.38808	0.39227	0.35582
2 MONTH	0.30117	0.30340	0.38843	0.39275	0.35634
3 MONTH	0.30118	0.30356	0.38880	0.39325	0.35688
6 MONTH	0.30137	0.30403	0.39008	0.39491	0.35837
1 YEAR	0.30152	0.30474	0.39267	0.39829	0.36284

Labor and Swap Rates

TENOR	USD	EUR	GBP
1 MONTH	1.24	(1.40)	0.25
3 MONTH	1.31	(1.37)	0.28
6 MONTH	1.46	(1.30)	0.41
1 YEAR	1.73	(1.20)	0.59
2 YEAR	1.63	(1.09)	0.63
5 YEAR	1.79	0.17	0.79
10 YEAR	2.10	0.82	1.15

Equity Indices

INDEX	VALUE	CHANGE
DOW	21,703.75	29.24
NASDAQ	6,213.13	(1.40)
S&P 500	2,428.37	2.82
FTSE 100	7,318.88	(5.10)
EUROSTOXX	3,421.53	(21.50)
Nikkei 225	19,392.28	(0.27)
KUWAIT SE	6,936.07	22.71

Central Bank Rates

INDEX	VALUE
Fed Fund	1.25
European	0.00
UK	0.25
Japan	0.10
Swiss	(0.75)
Australia	1.50
Kuwait	2.75

Currency forward rates against KWD are derived using respective LIBOR for KWD and respective LIBOR for foreign currencies. This Treasury Newsletter is a publication of the National Bank of Kuwait (NBK). Although the information in this document has been prepared in good faith and from sources which we believe to be reliable, we do not represent or warrant its accuracy and such information may not necessarily represent the actual market data. NBK assumes no liability whatsoever for any loss or damage arising from the use of this document or reliance on the information contained herein. NBK will not be responsible for the consequence of reliance upon any opinion or statement contained herein.

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ZAIN ANNOUNCES 3RD WEEK WINNERS OF 'WIN CASH DAILY' CAMPAIGN

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading telecommunications company in Kuwait, announced the winners of the third week draw of its latest "Win Cash Daily" campaign, which offers postpaid customers a chance to win daily and weekly cash prizes as well as a grand cash prize of KD 5000 at the end of the campaign.

Zain announced the winners of the KD 350 daily cash prize: Hanan Ghuloum Ali Hussain, John Sami Ibrahim Wahbi Mina, Mohammad Atta Alkareem Sulaiman Ahmad, Abrar Jamal Alrashheed, Mostafa Ahmad Mohammad Abdulaziz, Meshari Mohammad Abbas Albaker, and Ahmad Abdulhadi Mohammad Maarafi. The company also announced the winner of the KD 1000 weekly cash prize: Abdullatif Mohammad Ghuloum Alboushi.

Zain launched this new campaign in partnership with Samsung Al-Babtain as part of its strategy to reinforce its relationship with its postpaid customers. The company is keen

on offering the biggest campaigns and promotions along with the latest technologies to its customer base, considered the largest in the country. The campaign runs for four weeks, where draws will be held on a daily basis. The prizes include a daily cash prize of KD 350, a weekly cash prize of KD 1000, and a grand cash prize of KD 5000 at the end of the campaign.

Customers who subscribe to any of Zain's main postpaid plans starting at KD 23 and choose either a Samsung S8 or S8+ device will get a chance to win one of the daily prizes, weekly prizes, or the grand prize at the end of the campaign. In addition, customers who subscribe to the KD 40 postpaid plan and choose two Samsung S8 or S8+ devices will get TWO chances to win one of the valuable cash prizes.

Today's announcement is a testament of Zain's tireless efforts in rewarding its customer base, further reinforcing its leadership position. The campaign further demonstrates



Zain's pivotal role in Kuwait's telecom sector, sparing no effort in introducing exceptional offerings for technology and smartphone enthusiasts.

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

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

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

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

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

Swiss Franc 316.020
Australian Dollar 240.230
US Dollar Buying 301.550

20 Gram 249.070
10 Gram 127.450
5 Gram 64.570

DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

Rate for Transfr	Selling Rate
US Dollar	302.350
Canadian Dollar	241.007
Sterling Pound	390.710
Euro	357.167
Swiss Frank	293.338
Bahrain Dinar	802.247
UAE Dirhams	82.716
Qatari Riyals	83.861
Saudi Riyals	81.477
Jordanian Dinar	427.428
Egyptian Pound	17.055
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.972
Indian Rupees	4.723
Pakistani Rupees	2.869
Bangladesh Taka	3.742
Philippines Peso	5.877
Cyprus pound	17.991
Japanese Yen	3.765
Syrian Pound	1.585
Nepalese Rupees	2.948
Malaysian Ringgit	71.344

Chinese Yuan Renminbi 45.765
Thai Bhat 10.094
Turkish Lira 86.281

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
British Pound	0.382768	0.392768
Czech Korune	0.005644	0.017644
Danish Krone	0.043881	0.048881
Euro	0.351123	0.360123
Georgian Lari	0.124809	0.124809
Norwegian Krone	0.124809	0.124809
Romanian Leu	0.077645	0.077645
Russian ruble	0.005111	0.005111
Slovakia	0.009013	0.019013
Swedish Krona	0.033322	0.038322
Swiss Franc	0.307009	

GERMAN INVESTOR MORALE SINKS AS EMISSIONS SCANDAL BITES

BERLIN: The mood among German investors fell for the third month running in August, a survey showed yesterday, linking the drop to an emissions scandal engulfing the country's car industry.

The sector's reputation and the "clean" diesel technology at its core has been battered since Volkswagen admitted in 2015 to cheating US emissions tests to conceal polluting fumes.

Last month EU antitrust regulators opened an investigation into claims of collusion among German carmakers over pricing diesel emissions treatment systems.

Achim Wambach, president of the ZEW research institute, said the scandal, along with broader signs of weakness in the export sector, had driven the drop in its sentiment reading for Europe's biggest economy. The Mannheim-based institute's monthly index fell to 10.0 in August from 17.5 in July, undershooting a Reuters consensus forecast of 15.0 and the lowest reading since last October.

"The significant decrease ...reflects the high degree of nervousness over the future path of growth in Germany," Wambach added.

He also said the overall outlook remained "relatively stable at a fairly high level" - an assessment more in line with a bullish monthly report issued on Monday by the German central bank.

The Bundesbank said the economy could grow faster than expected this year thanks to exceptionally strong industrial output, exports and consumption. The economy's solid performance is playing into the hands of Chancellor Angela Merkel in the run-up to a federal election on Sept. 24, when she is heavily tipped to win a fourth term. The car industry, which is Germany's biggest exporter and provides about 800,000 jobs, has agreed with Berlin to renew engine software on millions of diesel cars and pay customers bonuses to upgrade to cleaner vehicles as they face potential driving bans in major cities and dwindling diesel sales.

Earnings bonanza

A separate ZEW gauge measuring investors' assessment of the economy's current conditions edged up to 86.7 from 86.4, compared with a Reuters consensus forecast predicting a dip to 85.5.

Second quarter figures released by the Statistics Office last week showed an annualized economic growth rate of 2.1 percent in the April-June period, driven by soaring private consumption and higher state spending. The Bundesbank said in June it expected a 1.9 percent expansion in 2017, an upbeat picture supported by solid figures from the private sector.

That includes Volkswagen, Germany's biggest blue-chip company by market value, raised its 2017 sales forecast last month after cost-cutting and higher-margin new models at its namesake brand helped it beat quarterly profit expectations. Nearly a third of blue-chip companies raised their

full-year guidance after recording a rise in profits for the second quarter to June.

According to consultancy EY, the 30 DAX index-listed companies' combined operating profits jumped by almost a third to a record level of over 39 billion euros (\$45.9 billion), helped by demand from Asia and the United States. The German government predicts an unadjusted growth rate of 1.5 percent for 2017. This would translate into a calendar-adjusted figure of 1.8 percent.

With the eurozone economy expanding for the 17th straight quarter, Germany has been the engine of recovery, giving the European Central Bank some room to at least discuss curtailing its unprecedented stimulus cocktail. The ZEW indicator, based on the survey of some 200 analysts, will be followed by the closely watched Ifo business climate index on Friday. Analysts expect it to fall to 115.5 points after hitting three record highs in a row from May to July. — Reuters



VIVA REVEALS WINNERS OF 'ALLO' PREPAID CAMPAIGN

KUWAIT: VIVA, Kuwait's fastest-growing and most developed telecom operator, revealed the 4th week winners of the all new "allo" draw for its prepaid customers.

The names of the \$1,500 daily prize were as follows: Sawamy Kadem Kadem Rajaiah, Mubarak Fadil Jubara Abdulla, Fahad Saif Ali Mutheeb, Ahmed Abker Alsheikh Adam, Salah Ahmad Ahmad, Hadi Hamed Obaid Allah Alrasheedi, Faril Loud Dikosta.

Winners will be announced throughout

the campaign with a grand total of almost \$150,000 to give away! VIVA customers can enjoy this wonderful opportunity to win amazing cash prizes of \$1,500 daily and \$30,000 monthly, throughout the campaign by simply buying a new "allo" line or recharging their current line through Direct Debit, VIVA website, VIVA's Kiosks, VIVA App or by calling 102. Every KD 1 spent, earns VIVA customers 10 chances to win, increasing their winning chances the more they spend.

S KOREA, US FAIL TO REACH DEAL ON REVISION TO FTA

SEOUL RULES OUT RENEGOTIATING TRADE DEAL

SEOUL: South Korean and US officials failed to agree yesterday on how to move forward on discussions over their five-year-old free trade agreement that Washington is seeking to change to help cut its trade deficit with Asia's fourth-largest economy.

US President Donald Trump, in an interview with Reuters in April, had branded the bilateral trade agreement with South Korea a "horrible deal" and indicated he would renegotiate or terminate the accord. Last month, Washington issued a request to convene a special session of the Joint Committee under the Korea-US (KORUS) Free Trade Agreement to negotiate amendments to the trade pact.

South Korean Trade Minister Kim Hyun-chong and his American counterpart US Trade Representative (USTR) Robert Lighthizer held the meeting via a video conference earlier yesterday. "We have found the two sides have different views on the free trade agreement and have not reached any agreement," Kim told a news conference after the meeting.

Kim said Seoul had stressed that the US trade deficit with South Korea was not the result of the bilateral trade deal and proposed a joint study to examine the effects of the agreement.

The trade minister said the US side had not brought up the possibility of terminating the trade pact during the talks, adding, South Korea would wait for the US review of yesterday's discussions and its proposals. Lighthizer said in July the US trade deficit in goods with South Korea had doubled to \$27.6 billion last year from \$13.2 billion in 2011.

The United States has been keen to address



SEOUL: South Korean Trade Minister Kim Hyun-chong speaks during a press conference at the Foreign Ministry in Seoul yesterday. — AP

trade imbalances with South Korea, particularly for its automakers, since President Trump pointed out the imbalance in auto trade.

In 2016, South Korea's car exports to the United States stood at \$16.2 billion, while its imports of US cars were \$1.74 billion, a trade ministry official said based on data from the Korea Trade International Association. Seoul maintains that the deal has been mutually beneficial, and said last month that the joint commit-

tee meeting did not necessarily mean that South Korea would renegotiate terms. South Korea has also said it first needs to be established whether the US deficit is a result of other structural issues in US industries. The bilateral accord was initially negotiated during the Republican administration of President George W. Bush in 2007, but that version was scrapped and renegotiated by President Barack Obama's Democratic administration three years later. — Reuters

STERLING SINKS TO 8-WEEK LOW VS DOLLAR

LONDON: Broad gains for the dollar pushed sterling back towards lows from early July yesterday, the British currency weighed down by an uncertain economic outlook that has quashed expectations of a rise in Bank of England interest rates. The pound has fallen almost 4 percent since the start of August, driven by a perceived change in tack at the Bank's latest policy meeting and a broader recovery for the US currency.

Fears over Brexit negotiations, and how much the two-year process may hamper already slowing growth, have fed into a bleak mood and sterling is also at a more than 10-month low against the euro.

In trade-weighted terms, the currency is just over 1 percent off a record low hit in October's short-lived "flash crash". Public finance data showing the first July budget surplus since 2002 failed to lift the gloom. "The UK is front and centre of the press with ongoing developments (around Brexit). In a market that is this quiet, one could argue that it is making it a focus," said Lisa Scott-Smith, co-head of portfolio investments at currency fund Millennium Global in London.

"Euro-sterling is at very high levels."

By 1430, the pound was down more than half a percent on the day at \$1.2814, surging past July lows around \$1.2830. It also lost 0.2 percent to 91.75 pence per euro, its lowest since a short-lived flash crash last October.

Credit Agricole strategists pointed to upward revisions in the UK consumers' savings rate published by the ONS as a sign that UK households are still holding up well in the face of falling real incomes. But few are prepared to call the bottom on the pound ahead of the next rounds of Brexit talks and a ruling Conservative Party conference next month. "Sterling is very weak again," said John Hardy, head of FX strategy at retail broker Saxo Bank, who pointed to European Central Bank chief Mario Draghi's speech later this week as one possible plus for the pound.

"I'm not sure where the clouds part for the currency, though the euro rally has been sluggish and churning - perhaps a euro selloff on Draghi's speech is needed to reverse the advance." — Reuters



LILLE: A man checks a copy of the 2017 edition of the labor code yesterday at a book store in Lille, northern France. French president will face the first strikes against his economic reform agenda in September when he is hoping to push through radical labor law changes that are highly contested by trade unions. — AFP

INDONESIA CUTS RATES IN EFFORT TO BOOST GROWTH

JAKARTA: Indonesia's central bank made a surprise 25 basis point rate cut to interest rates yesterday as Southeast Asia's largest economy seeks to boost growth. Bank Indonesia's board of governors unexpectedly slashed the rate from 4.75 percent to 4.5 percent, defying the predictions of most analysts polled before the announcement. "Cutting the policy's interest rate is expected to strengthen the banking intermediation and therefore strengthen the stability of the financial system and support the higher economic growth," Bank Indonesia governor Agus Martowardojo said at a press conference. President Joko Widodo came to power in 2014 on a pledge to boost economic expansion to seven percent but his government has struggled to lift growth rates amid a slump in commodity prices.

The economy grew a slower-than-expected 5.01 percent in the second quarter, unchanged from the first quarter, but below the government target of 5.2 percent growth for 2017. The central bank said credit growth was expected to increase to between 10-12 percent in 2018.

Analysts have tipped further cuts could be on the horizon, given the improving outlook for inflation in Indonesia. "Given the poor outlook for growth, as well as easing concerns over infla-

tion and the currency, we suspect further rate cuts are only a matter of time," Gareth Leather, senior economist with Capital Economics, said in a statement. — Agencies



JAKARTA: A worker pulls his fully-loaded cart past an apartment complex under construction in Jakarta yesterday. — AFP

SECURE TRUST BANK'S H1 PROFIT JUMPS ON SURGE IN LENDING

LONDON: Secure Trust Bank said it further tightened its credit risk appetite and acceptance criteria for small- and medium-sized customers over the first six months of the year, on slowing economic growth and heightened levels of uncertainty.

Secure Trust, which offers both business and consumer finance, reported yesterday a 11 percent jump in pretax profit to 13.9 million pounds (\$17.9 million) for the six months to June 30 as lending surged across all of its business units. The former retail bank of Arbutnot Banking Group said overall loan book jumped 34 percent to 1.51 billion pounds, while customer deposits grew 27.2 percent to 1.33 billion pounds.

Arbutnot, which sold a 33 percent stake in Secure Trust via a placing in May 2016, had an optimistic stance on Britain's vote to leave the European Union, and had said the associated turmoil would create investment opportuni-

ties. However, Arbutnot's chairman and chief executive, Henry Angest, said last month that with uncertain economic and political times ahead, the lender remained cautious in its decision making.

The Bank of England (BoE) has also ordered banks to apply credit rules prudently and prove by September they are not being too complacent about risks to their balance sheets, with the BoE's Prudential Regulation Authority highlighting credit card firms and motor finance as areas of concern.

Secure Trust said yesterday that its motor finance balances had grown to 258.4 million pounds from 236.2 million pounds as at Dec. 31, despite deciding to end its exposure to subprime motor loans and shifting to lower risk motor lending. The group said it expected its motor portfolio quality to improve this year, as it began to see the benefits of changes made to its credit criteria and as it works through its back books. — Reuters

WALL ST GAINS AS INVESTORS PICK BEATEN-DOWN STOCKS

NEW YORK: US stocks opened higher yesterday, with the Dow gaining more than 100 points, as investors went bargain hunting following a turbulent two weeks, while awaiting the annual central bankers meeting in Jackson Hole later this week.

The S&P has tumbled 2.1 percent in the last two weeks, the biggest such drop since the US presidential election, on concerns over President Donald Trump's ability to legislate his pro-growth agenda. Still, the index is up about 14 percent since the election. The central banking conference in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, starts Thursday, with Federal Reserve Chair Janet Yellen's speech on Friday

of key interest to market participants. The speech will be closely watched for a steer on US monetary policy, especially given the persistently low inflation rate, but central bank observers do not expect Yellen to give new guidance. "The market is in a little bit of a wait-and-see mode as we go into Jackson Hole at the end of the week," said Lindsey Bell, investment strategist at CFRA Research in New York. "A lot of people are waiting to see what Yellen has to say, especially with regard to inflation and how that might signal the Fed's thinking on the next interest rate hike, if we can still expect something for December."

The Dow Jones Industrial Average was up

103.48 points, or 0.48 percent, at 21,807.23 and the S&P 500 was up 13.71 points, or 0.56 percent, at 2,442.08. The Nasdaq Composite was up 48.16 points, or 0.78 percent, at 6,261.28. Nine of the 11 major S&P sectors were higher. The top gainer was the materials index, gaining 0.74 percent, helped by a jump in prices of metals, including copper.

Freeport jumped 3.9 percent, also helped by news that Indonesia expects to strike an agreement this month to allow the miner to keep operating its copper mine in Papua.

Freeport was the top percentage gainer on the S&P, followed by Macy's, which jumped more than 4 percent to \$20.34 after

announcing a restructuring and job cuts. At the other end was Coty, tumbling about 11 percent following the beauty products maker's surprise quarterly loss. Medtronic fell about 2 percent to \$81.78 after reporting lower-than-expected revenue.

Upward momentum

Stocks around the globe headed upward yesterday, with European bourses breaking a three-day losing streak, boosted by rising commodity and metals prices and US stocks underpinned by bargain hunting.

London copper rose to a three-year high, zinc held close to its highest in a decade and nickel reached a 2017 high as mostly technical signals prompted speculators and funds to pour more cash into base metals.

"There's nothing really fundamental to drive things onwards from here, so I think it's a bit of misplaced euphoria and trend-following buyers jumping on the bandwagon," said Robin Bhar, head of metals research at Societe Generale in London.

"Admittedly, the charts have seen some good upside breaks on copper, zinc and aluminum, but I think things are slightly over-extended here so there should be correction to where we broke out - around \$6,500 on copper and just below \$3,000 on zinc."

The gain in metals helped boost mining shares, propelling a broad index of European stocks up 0.85 percent on the day. BHP Billiton, the world's largest mining company, reported a surge in underlying full-year profits and said it would exit its underperforming US shale oil and

gas business, pleasing shareholders who had called for a sale. Emerging markets shares gained 0.75 percent, continuing their outperformance this year. MSCI's EM stock index tracker has risen more than 23 percent year to date. Chinese stocks have helped propel the rally in emerging markets and yesterday China's Shanghai SE Composite, Shenzhen and Hang Seng indexes all closed higher.

Japan's Nikkei index edged lower, its fifth straight day in the red amid lingering tensions on the Korean peninsula. Meanwhile, the euro fell against the dollar, giving back most of its overnight gains after data showed German investor optimism dipped for the third straight month. The yen fell from a four-month peak while the British pound hit an eight-week low against the greenback.

"The US dollar notched across the board gains, casting aside for now the burdensome baggage of political uncertainty and skepticism in another US interest rate hike this year," said Joe Manimbo, senior market analyst at Western Union Business Solutions, in a note to clients.

Investors may also be looking to square positions before a global central bank conference this week in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, he said.

Tepid US inflation data have made it less likely the Federal Reserve will raise US interest rates anytime soon, weakening the dollar. So have doubts that Trump can implement the stimulus programs and tax reforms he promised as a candidate. The dollar index, which tracks the US currency against six rivals, was up 0.45 percent to 93.498. — Reuters

Daily Kuwait Stock Exchange Report																																																																																																																																																																																
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Index	Change	Closing	Last Closing																																																																																																																																																																													
Price Index	▲ 18.65	6,932.01	6,913.36																																																																																																																																																																													
Weighted Index	▲ 1.21	429.03	427.82																																																																																																																																																																													
KSX 15	▲ 4.55	977.93	973.38																																																																																																																																																																													
<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Volume</td> <td>94,805,539</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Value (KWD)</td> <td>15,343,036</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Number of Trades</td> <td>3,605</td> </tr> </table>							Volume	94,805,539	Value (KWD)	15,343,036	Number of Trades	3,605																																																																																																																																																																				
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Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KWD)	Trades	Last	Change																																																																																																																																																																									
IPG	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	390	▲ 0.0																																																																																																																																																																									
NAPESCO	850	845	6,500	5,497	3	845	▲ 0.0																																																																																																																																																																									
ENERGYH	36.4	32.0	74,968	2,566	11	36.4	▲ 0.0																																																																																																																																																																									
GPI	38.9	38.5	1,296,834	49,075	58	38.9	▲ 0.3																																																																																																																																																																									
ABAR	85	80	702	56	5	85	▲ 0.0																																																																																																																																																																									
Oil & Gas			1,349,094	57,195	77	1034.23	▼ -0.60																																																																																																																																																																									
KFOUC	305	290	1,985	590	3	296	▲ 6.0																																																																																																																																																																									
BPCC	573	572	37,425	21,423	5	572	▼ -1.0																																																																																																																																																																									
ALKOUT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	600	▲ 0.0																																																																																																																																																																									
ALQURAIN	336	335	48,745	16,331	16	335	▲ 0.0																																																																																																																																																																									
Basic Materials			88,155	38,344	24	1256.77	▲ 4.80																																																																																																																																																																									
KCEM	420	401	45,258	18,715	11	420	▲ 0.0																																																																																																																																																																									
ALTBARIA	510	504	49,739	25,169	13	507	▲ 2.0																																																																																																																																																																									
SHIP	216	213	37,162	8,013	11	216	▲ 1.0																																																																																																																																																																									
PCEM	970	970	1,000	970	1	970	▲ 0.0																																																																																																																																																																									
PAPER	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	280	▲ 0.0																																																																																																																																																																									
MRC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	94	▲ 0.0																																																																																																																																																																									
ACICO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	291	▲ 0.0																																																																																																																																																																									
HCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	208	▲ 0.0																																																																																																																																																																									
NCSM	197	182	1,259	229	2	197	▲ 7.0																																																																																																																																																																									
EQUIPMENT	48.0	46.2	713,680	33,861	28	48.0	▲ 2.0																																																																																																																																																																									
NCCI	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	90	▲ 0.0																																																																																																																																																																									
GYPBOM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	95	▲ 0.0																																																																																																																																																																									
SALBOOKH	82	81	147,770	9,055	9	81	▼ -0.5																																																																																																																																																																									
AGLY	871	865	869,047	581,855	55	865	▼ -4.0																																																																																																																																																																									
EDU	340	335	471,800	159,180	55	335	▼ -8.0																																																																																																																																																																									
CLEANING	48.9	48.9	20,000	978	1	48.9	▲ 0.0																																																																																																																																																																									
KSL	58	57	20,000	1,141	3	58	▼ -0.7																																																																																																																																																																									
KDPC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	141	▲ 0.0																																																																																																																																																																									
HUMANSOFT	4,349	4,300	11,404	49,037	6	4,349	▼ -1.0																																																																																																																																																																									
NAFAS	225	200	17,500	3,538	4	200	▼ -20.0																																																																																																																																																																									
GFC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	60	▲ 0.0																																																																																																																																																																									
SHOOTING	27.5	26.7	867,716	18,064	14	27.0	▲ 0.3																																																																																																																																																																									
CGC	550	540	26,891	14,521	9	550	▼ -8.0																																																																																																																																																																									
MTCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	56	▲ 0.0																																																																																																																																																																									
UPAG	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	715	▲ 0.0																																																																																																																																																																									
ALAFCO	380	375	100,769	38,237	13	380	▲ 0.0																																																																																																																																																																									
MUBARRAD	71	71	670,000	47,487	15	71	▲ 0.4																																																																																																																																																																									
LOGISTICS	53	53	234,427	12,344	13	53	▲ 0.6																																																																																																																																																																									
SCEM	82	82	135,000	11,113	10	82	▲ 2.3																																																																																																																																																																									
GCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	78	▲ 0.0																																																																																																																																																																									
QIC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	77	▲ 0.0																																																																																																																																																																									
FCEM	78	76	245,822	18,747	11	78	▼ -1.0																																																																																																																																																																									
RKWC	85	83	10,005	830	2	85	▲ 4.0																																																																																																																																																																									
SPEC	99	95	395,951	38,845	51	96	▼ -2.8																																																																																																																																																																									
Industrials			4,692,200	1,891,708	337	1910.85	▼ -8.80																																																																																																																																																																									
PAPCO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	90	▲ 0.0																																																																																																																																																																									
CATL	338	251	7,846	2,246	10	290	▲ 6.0																																																																																																																																																																									
DAH	73	72	201,950	14,605	17	72	▼ -0.9																																																																																																																																																																									
FONF	1,850	1,850	10,000	18,500	2	1,850	▲ 0.0																																																																																																																																																																									
Consumer Goods			219,796	35,351	29	1631.12	▲ 12.20																																																																																																																																																																									
MHC	482	406	12,525	5,161	3	482	▲ 80																																																																																																																																																																									
ATC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	1,100	▲ 0.0																																																																																																																																																																									
YIACO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	175	▲ 0.0																																																																																																																																																																									
Health Care			12,525	5,161	3	1688.25	▲ 173.40																																																																																																																																																																									
KCN	1,400	1,200	992	828	5	1,400	▲ 130																																																																																																																																																																									
KHOT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	250	▲ 0.0																																																																																																																																																																									
SULTAN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	67	▲ 0.0																																																																																																																																																																									
CABLETV	35.0	28.0	860	27	6	35.0	▲ 0.0																																																																																																																																																																									
EYAS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	870	▲ 0.0																																																																																																																																																																									
IFAHR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	275	▲ 0.0																																																																																																																																																																									
OULAFUEL	126	126	23,210	2,924	16	126	▼ -1																																																																																																																																																																									
MUNTAZAHAT	78	77	144,220	11,163	6	78	▼ -1																																																																																																																																																																									
JAZERA	569	535	92,050	50,587	13	569	▲ 34																																																																																																																																																																									
BOOR	128	125	81,952	7,782	28	128	▼ -3																																																																																																																																																																									
FUTUREKID	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	123	▲ 0.0																																																																																																																																																																									
ALRAI	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	125	▲ 0.0																																																																																																																																																																									
Jiyad	51	50	126,931	6,420	9	51	▼ -1																																																																																																																																																																									
Meezan	785	761	308,000	239,687	30	780	▲ 20																																																																																																																																																																									
Consumer Services			767,908	319,228	111	1074.98	▲ 13.00																																																																																																																																																																									
ZAIN	507	502	5,499,821	2,778,232	314	502	▼ -5																																																																																																																																																																									
COOREDOO	1,165	1,165	1,658	1,932	4	1,165	▲ 0.0																																																																																																																																																																									
AAN	40.0	39.6	583,966	23,205	21	39.9	▲ 0.0																																																																																																																																																																									
VIVA	803	801	40,512	32,500	48	802	▼ -1																																																																																																																																																																									
Telecommunications			6,125,457	2,835,869	387	611.51	▼ -1.10																																																																																																																																																																									
NBK	744	737	830,590	614,705	70	743	▲ 7																																																																																																																																																																									
GBK	244	242	1,381,963	334,723	77	243	▼ -1																																																																																																																																																																									
CBK	395	370	305,003	134,409	25	395	▲ 20																																																																																																																																																																									
ABK	310	310	2,000	620	1	310	▼ -4																																																																																																																																																																									
ALMUTAHED	418	417	8,000	3,341	2	417	▲ 0.0																																																																																																																																																																									
KIB	245	243	355,000	86,605	18	245	▲ 1																																																																																																																																																																									
BURG	374	370	307,620	114,414	16	373	▲ 1																																																																																																																																																																									
KFN	588	582	4,121,759	2,413,450	270	586	▲ 4																																																																																																																																																																									
BOUBAYAN	430	428	248,834	108,897	34	429	▼ -1																																																																																																																																																																									
AUB	220	218	1,210,617	264,807	27	218	▼ -1																																																																																																																																																																									
ITHMR	42.9	42.0	2,003,085	84,902	66	42.3	▲ 0.0																																																																																																																																																																									
WARBANK	266	264	1,285,858	340,660	127	266	▲ 0.0																																																																																																																																																																									
Banks			12,110,329	4,499,553	733	969.81	▲ 2.40																																																																																																																																																																									
KNS	265	265	94,835	25,131	14	265	▲ 0.0																																																																																																																																																																									
GINS	940	890	42,650	38,425	14	940	▲ 40.0																																																																																																																																																																									
ANS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	448	▲ 0.0																																																																																																																																																																									
WINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	96	▲ 0.0																																																																																																																																																																									
KUWAITRE	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	187	▲ 0.0																																																																																																																																																																									
FTI	58	58	800	35	1	58	▼ -2.0																																																																																																																																																																									
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FORD GT 1967 HERITAGE EDITION WITH UNIQUE LIVERY

KUWAIT: The Ford GT will be available in a new limited-edition Heritage theme honouring the GT40 Mark IV race car driven to victory by Dan Gurney and A.J. Foyt at Le Mans in 1967. The car will feature unique interior and exterior colour themes, and an exclusive wheel finish.

"In creating a worthy successor to the '66 Heritage edition, we logically looked at our next historic Le Mans victory with the all-American team of Dan Gurney and A.J. Foyt,"

said Dave Pericak, global director, Ford Performance. "The Ford GT '67 Heritage edition pays homage to that win, with a modern take on one of the most important vehicles in Ford's storied history of racing."

The Ford GT '67 Heritage edition features a gloss-finish Race Red exterior with white stripes and exposed carbon package. The car sports Frozen White No. 1 hood and door graphics, and 20-inch one-piece forged aluminum wheels in silver satin clearcoat with

black wheel nuts. Red callipers and silver rearview mirror caps complete the look.

The interior features new leather trimming for the carbon fibre seats, with red accent stitching, which carries over to the steering wheel. The seat belt webbing is now red and the paddle shifters are anodised grey. Satin dark stainless appliques are used on the instrument panel, door register bezels and x-brace.

Rounding out modifications to the '67 Heritage edition car are a unique serialised

identification plate, plus exposed matte carbon fibre door sills, air register pods and centre console.

"The first Heritage edition car was a huge success, honouring our history with a modern interpretation of the Le Mans winner," said Garen Nicoghosian, exterior design manager for the car. "Continuing with a Ford GT based on the winning GT40 Mark IV race car was simply something we needed to do."

The Ford GT '67 Heritage edition can be

viewed at FordGT.com using the configuration tool. Ford Motor Company is a global company based in Dearborn, Michigan. The company designs, manufactures, markets and services a full line of Ford cars, trucks, SUVs, electrified vehicles and Lincoln luxury vehicles, provides financial services through Ford Motor Credit Company and is pursuing leadership positions in electrification, autonomous vehicles and mobility solutions. Ford employs approximately 203,000 people worldwide.

KFH ORGANIZES YOUTH CAMPAIGN FOR 'MY ACCOUNT' MEMBERS

KUWAIT: KFH has launched a campaign titled "Put it on My Account" to "Hesabi" (My Account) customers. This campaign comes as an initiative to strengthen and enhance relations with "Hesabi" customers and provide an additional advantage to suite this account youth customers. This symbolic initiative was largely praised and welcomed by customers who have sensed and felt the values which this campaign carries, thus making KFH a loyal and dedicated partner to all customers.

The Public Relations Team (PR) has prepared and organized a program to host a large number of the restaurant visitors holding "Hesabi" account at KFH. Customers holding "Hesabi" account are welcome every Thursday in all 3 branches to have a free meal upon presenting "Hesabi" card.

The account was originally designed to fulfill the special needs of

the youth tranche and their active and energetic lifestyle. "Hesabi" program covers youth at the age of 15 - 21 years old and provides exclusive and distinguished offers. "Hesabi" customers are able to invest any amounts they wish. When reaching the age of 21 years the customer's status is changed to one of the other programs "Rayan", "Sundus" or Tamayuz". In addition, special offers are organized periodically for "Hesabi" customers and sundry banking services are made available to them. "Hesabi" program customers enjoy KFH online services and applications on smart phones in addition to Al-Shamel ATM service and Aloo Baitak service. Hesabi customers benefit also from the sundry service packages e.g. "Saving" account "Auto-Service" Account and "Investment Deposits" account with a specially designed ATM card. Services include also SMS service and issuance of KFH prepaid cards.



NBK OFFERS SAUDI RIYAL PREPAID CARD FREE DURING HAJJ SEASON

KUWAIT: NBK recognizes and responds to the needs of all its customers. Now during the Hajj season, customers traveling to Saudi Arabia can get a free prepaid card in Saudi Riyals.

"NBK meets customers where they need banking - either locally, regionally or internationally," explained Mohammed Al-Othman, Deputy General Manager-Consumer Banking Group, National Bank of Kuwait. "When you travel for Hajj or Umrah, we want to help make the trip as smooth as possible, providing a Saudi Riyal Prepaid Card helps our customers meet all their needs while also controlling their spending."

NBK Saudi Riyals Prepaid Card protects customers against future conversion rate fluctuations, offering the same safety and security as all other NBK cards. Customers will also receive valuable offers and promotions. You can apply for your NBK Saudi Riyals Prepaid Card easily 24/7 through NBK Online Banking or the NBK Call Center. Your card will be delivered to your door step, free of charge. The issuance fee will be waived until September 5th.

Important features of the NBK Saudi Riyal Prepaid Card include:

- Convenient tracking of spending in the same currency.



Mohammed Al-Othman

- Purchase protection.
- Currency fluctuations are managed.
- More convenient and safer than cash.
- SMS notifications to easily monitor, track and control transactions, if registered for NBK's SMS Service.
- Registration for the SMS service is available through NBK Online Banking.
- The NBK Saudi Riyal Prepaid Card can be used for online shopping, at POS machines for all transactions in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia as well as ATMs to withdraw cash.



QATAR AIRWAYS' INAUGURAL FLIGHT LANDS AT HAVEL AIRPORT, PRAGUE

AIRLINE CONTINUES ITS ROBUST EXPANSION IN EASTERN EUROPE

DOHA: Qatar Airways' first non-stop flight from Doha landed yesterday at V-clav Havel Airport Prague, inaugurating the award-winning airline's first-ever passenger service to the Czech Republic. Qatar Airways flight QR 291, operated by an Airbus A320, departed Hamad International Airport on Monday at 08:00 am and arrived at V-clav Havel Airport Prague ahead of schedule at 12:50 pm.

Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive Akbar Al-Baker travelled on board the inaugural flight with the Czech Republic's Ambassador to Qatar Martin Vitek, and was greeted by Vaclav Rehor, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Prague Airport; Pavel Klucky, Director of Department of Near East Area, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Monika Palatkova, General Manager of Czech Tourism.

Prague, widely recognized as one of the world's most beautiful cities, is known for its striking medieval architecture and old-world ambience. This picturesque Bohemian city offers visitors a wealth of choice of activities, from walking the cobbled streets of the old city to enjoying Prague's rich tradition of cafe culture.

Akbar Al-Baker said: "We are delighted to launch daily service to Prague, a long-anticipated addition to our global route network. This exquisite European city will be an extremely popular destination for both business and leisure travellers, providing our passengers the opportunity to experience the unique beauty of the city. The launch of this new service comes at a time when we are expanding our presence in Eastern Europe, as part of our efforts to extend our reach globally. We are tremendously excited to be able to provide passengers the opportunity to visit this magnificent city."

Vaclav Rehor, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Prague Airport, said: "The proposed schedule, at two different times of operations, will support connections within the carrier's network



via Doha to Asian and Australian routes. We expect that passengers coming from Prague will be most interested in the connecting flights to Bali, Bangkok, Colombo, Tokyo, Kuala Lumpur, Singapore, Ho Chi Minh City, Kuwait, Hong Kong, Delhi and Sydney. Czech passengers can look forward to a wider selection of available flights to Asia and Australia and also to comfortable connections to a number of other destinations, such as Windhoek (Namibia), Kilimanjaro (Tanzania), Zanzibar (Tanzania) and Salalah (Oman)."

As part of its rapid expansion strategy in Eastern Europe, the award-winning airline recently launched direct service to Skopje, with service to Kyiv, Ukraine, also to commence this month.

Qatar Airways will operate its daily Prague service with an Airbus A320 aircraft, which features 12 seats in Business Class and 120 seats in Economy Class.

Qatar Airways Cargo commenced freighter

operations to Prague, Czech Republic, a growing trade market in Eastern Europe, in March 2016. The airline's cargo division currently operates three times weekly Airbus A330 freighters from Doha to Prague via Budapest, providing 180 tons of cargo capacity. Prague is a major gateway into Eastern Europe from Asia for electronics and automotive parts, as well as textiles, pharmaceuticals and biotech products. The introduction of daily passenger flights to and from Prague will inject additional bellyhold freight capacity on the route, connecting local businesses to the carrier's extensive cargo network via its state-of-the-art Doha hub.

Qatar Airways will be adding many more exciting destinations to its network in 2017 and 2018, including Abidjan, Ivory Coast; Accra, Ghana; Canberra, Australia; Chiang Mai, Thailand; Utopao, Thailand; Chittagong, Bangladesh; and Mombasa, Kenya, to name a few.

MALABAR GOLD & DIAMONDS LAUNCHES 179TH SHOWROOM IN PITAMPURA, DELHI

NEW DELHI: Malabar Gold & Diamonds, one among the world's leading jewellery retailer and the flagship company of Malabar Group, a leading diversified business house of India is expanding its network in the region with the inauguration of a new world-class showroom in Pitampura, Delhi. The spacious and artistically done showroom was inaugurated by popular actress Kareena Kapoor Khan on 19th August, 2017 in the presence of Asher. O. Managing Director - India Operations, Malabar Gold & Diamonds, Abdul Salam KP - Group Executive Director, Malabar Group, Siraj PK - Regional Head, Malabar Gold & Diamonds, invited guests, media & well-wishers.

The store displays the exclusive range of Malabar Gold & Diamonds sub brands: Mine - Diamond jewellery, Era - Uncut Diamond Jewellery, Precia - Gem Jewellery, Divine - Indian Heritage Jewellery, Ethnix - Handcrafted designer Jewellery, Hi - Casual jewelry collection and Starlet - Kids' Jewellery. Apart from that, the newly opened outlet unveil a significantly large collection of traditional as well as contemporary designer jewellery and the grand opening was celebrated exhibiting the finest collection of BIS hallmarked gold jewellery, IGI, GIA certified diamonds and PGI certified platinum jewellery in

latest designs for the jewellery lovers of Pitampura.

The company also has plans to further expand their presence in Delhi by opening 5 more new showrooms in Delhi-NCR region and identified South-Ex, Dwarka, Preet Vihar, Connaught Place and Noida for the new showrooms. The jeweller currently operates 3 showrooms in Delhi-NCR

region including the newly opened showroom at Pitampura. Apart from being a successful business entity, Malabar group has always been in the forefront of social responsibility initiatives. Malabar Gold & Diamonds earmarks a distinct share of its annual profit for CSR initiatives in the field of health, education, housing, environmental conservation and woman's empowerment.



NEW DELHI: 179th showroom of Malabar Gold & Diamonds at Pitampura, Delhi was inaugurated by popular Bollywood actress Kareena Kapoor Khan in the presence of Asher O, Managing Director - India Operations, Malabar Gold & Diamonds, Abdul Salam K.P - Group Executive Director, Malabar Group, Siraj P K - Regional Head, Malabar Gold & Diamonds, invited guests, media and well-wishers.

GOOGLE TO SERVE NEXT VERSION OF ANDROID AS 'OREO'



NEW YORK: A sculpture of the Android 8.0 Oreo operating system is unveiled in New York. —AP

SAN FRANCISCO: An upcoming update to Google's Android software finally has a delectable name. The next version will be known as Oreo, extending Google's tradition of naming each version after a sweet treat. Google announced the software Monday after spending the past few months referring to it as "Android O."

Oreo boasts several new features, including the ability to respond to notifications directly on a phone's home screen and the ability to access apps without installing them on a device. The free software is scheduled to be released this fall, most likely after making its debut on a new Pixel phone that

Google is expected to begin selling in October. The nicknames for earlier Android versions have included Nougat, Marshmallow, and Lollipop.

Google and Oreo's maker, Mondelez, referred to their deal as a partnership, rather than a sponsorship, as no money was exchanged. Google has named Android after a brand before: The 2013 version was known as Kit Kat. Financial terms weren't disclosed for that. Android is the world's most widely used mobile operating system. Apple doesn't use names for its iOS system for iPhones, though the software for Mac computers is named after big cats and geographic locations in California. —AP

AI VISIONARY ANDREW NG TEACHES HUMANS TO TEACH COMPUTERS

PALO ALTO, California: Andrew Ng has led teams at Google and Baidu that have gone on to create self-learning computer programs used by hundreds of millions of people, including email spam filters and touch-screen keyboards that make typing easier by predicting what you might want to say next. As a way to get machines to learn without supervision, he has trained them to recognize cats in YouTube videos without being told what cats were.

And he revolutionized this field, known as artificial intelligence, by adopting graphics chips meant for video games. To push the boundaries of artificial intelligence further, one of the world's most renowned researchers in

acknowledging up front, in essence, that "hey, this stuff is tough."

Ng sees AI as a way to "free humanity from repetitive mental drudgery." He has said he sees AI changing virtually every industry, and any task that takes less than a second of thought will eventually be done by machines. He once said famously that the only job that might not be changed is his hairdresser's - to which a friend of his responded that in fact, she could get a robot to do his hair.

At the end of a 90-minute interview in his sparse office in Palo Alto, California, he reveals what's partially behind his ambition. "Life is shockingly short," the 41-year-old computer scientist says, swiveling his laptop into view.

his home computer. At age 16, he wrote a program to calculate trigonometric functions like sine and cosine using a "neural network" - the core computing engine of artificial intelligence modeled on the human brain.

"It seemed really amazing that you could write a few lines of code and have it learn to do interesting things," he said. After graduating high school from Singapore's Raffles Institution, Ng made the rounds of Carnegie Mellon, MIT and Berkeley before taking up residence as a professor at Stanford University. There, he taught robotic helicopters to do aerial acrobatics after being trained by an expert pilot. The work was "inspiring and exciting," recalls Pieter Abbeel, then one of Ng's doctoral students and now a

general-purpose processors - like the Intel chips that still run many PCs. Such chips can handle only a few computing tasks simultaneously, but make up for it with blazing speed. Neural networks, however, work much better if they can run thousands of calculations simultaneously. That turned out to be a task eminently suited for a different class of chips called graphics processing units, or GPUs. So when graphics chip maker Nvidia opened up its GPUs for general purposes beyond video games in 2007, Ng jumped on the technology. His Stanford team began publishing papers on the technique a year later, speeding up machine learning by as much as 70 times.

Geoffrey Hinton, whose University of Toronto team wowed peers by using a neural network to win the prestigious ImageNet competition in 2012, credits Ng with persuading him to use the technique. That win spawned a flurry of copycats, giving birth to the rise of modern AI. "Several different people suggested using GPUs," Hinton says by email. But the work by Ng's team, he says, "was what convinced me."

Teaching how to teach computers

Ng's fascination with AI was paralleled by a desire to share his knowledge with students. As online education took off earlier this decade, Ng discovered a natural outlet. His "Machine Learning" course, which kicked off Stanford's online learning program alongside two other courses in 2011, immediately signed up 100,000 people without any marketing effort.

A year later, he co-founded the online-learning startup Coursera. More recently, he left his high-profile job at Baidu to launch deeplearning.ai, a startup that produces AI-training courses. Every time he's started something big, whether it's Coursera, the Google Brain deep learning unit, or Baidu's AI lab, he has left once he felt the teams he has built can carry on without him.

"Then you go, 'Great. It's thriving with or without me,'" says Ng, who continues to teach at Stanford while working in private industry. For Ng, one of his next challenges might include having a child with his roboticist wife, Carol Reiley. "I wish we knew how children (or even a pet dog) learns," Ng says in an email follow-up. "None of us today know how to get computers to learn with the speed and flexibility of a child." —AP

computer scientist at Berkeley. Abbeel says he once crashed a \$10,000 helicopter drone, but Ng brushed it off. "Andrew was always like, 'If these things are too simple, everybody else could do them.'"

The mark of Ng

Ng's standout AI work involved finding a new way to supercharge neural networks using chips most often found in video-game machines. Until then, computer scientists had mostly relied



MADRID: A man walks with a Google Street View Trekker backpack camera in Madrid. —AFP

DON'T TURN OUT THE LIGHTS ON DARK WEB MARKET PLACES

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

We've all heard the phrase: "When one door closes, a window opens." You can bet that as you're reading this, those engaged in cyber crime on the dark web are looking for that next 'market place window' to open. The takedown of AlphaBay by an international law enforcement investigation, followed soon thereafter by the takedown of Hansa, has left many wondering about the future of dark web market places.

An erosion of trust in these more established market place models will likely derail efforts by others to fill the void quickly. But the fact remains, sellers still need to find customers and customers still need access to illicit goods and services. So what's next for illegal, online trade? As I've discussed before, it is important to remember that criminal activity isn't limited to the dark web, particularly given the fact that some countries don't extradite cybercriminals.

This is especially the case with more sophisticated level Russian-speaking criminals. With minimal consequences, bad actors have no incentive to hide. As a result, cybercrime is an Internet-wide problem, almost equally present on the deep and open web. That said, it's also safe to assume that disillusioned buyers are seeking alternative, more secure and anonymized methods for conducting online transactions via the dark web.

Despite the popularity and convenience of AlphaBay for selling drugs and credit card information, for years cybercriminals selling sensitive data or malware variants frequently opted for direct peer-to-peer (P2P) communication and relationships made on specialized forums. The P2P model provides more control and helps safeguard against exit scams and loss of funds, which weighed heavily on vendors and customers.

We're now seeing a more "formalized" approach to this method of trade. One of the first fully-decentralized P2P marketplaces is known as OpenBazaar, an open source project that allows the unrestricted sale of goods between anonymous buyers and sellers. OpenBazaar is accessed through a front-end client that can be freely downloaded from the project website.

All transactions are made using Bitcoin and are recorded on the project Blockchain as cryptographically signed smart contracts. This addresses problems with user trust; if all transactions are permanently

recorded, vendors who attempt to scam buyers can be more easily identified. Furthermore, platform operators have no control over listings and the platform is split among many nodes, making it highly resilient to law enforcement takedowns or attacks by other criminal actors.

The success of these new marketplaces remains to be seen and depends on these five drivers:

1. Adoption: Blockchain projects are not yet mainstream and are not widely understood. These platforms must become more commonly used before criminal actors will trust and embrace them.

2. Content control: Lack of centralized control is a double-edged sword, it makes the platform resilient but it also means there is less control over the material uploaded, opening up the door to material that even criminal actors find objectionable. Marketplaces that implement some level of content control will be more attractive.

3. Vendor attraction: Customers want to shop at marketplaces with successful vendors. Those market places that attract prominent vendors will naturally become more popular.

4. Secure communications: Blockchain-based platforms publicly record all messages, complicating private messaging between users. Platforms that can integrate secure messaging systems without compromising performance will attract more criminal actors.

5. User experience: As with all shopping experiences, marketplaces that can establish stable, feature-rich interfaces that seamlessly integrate payment platforms (in this case cryptocurrency platforms) will entice more users.

The emergence of decentralized marketplaces within the criminal ecosystem poses significant challenges for law enforcement agencies and private security vendors. Although public blockchains can be freely mined for data, the very high volume of content is likely to make parsing this information and developing actionable intelligence very technically and logistically challenging.

Furthermore, previous law enforcement operations targeting criminal marketplaces or forums have tended to revolve around targeting site operators or geo-locating servers and conducting raids; neither of these would likely be effective for targeting a decentralized platform. In this scenario, it would be more effective to target individual prominent vendors or vendor networks and attempt to identify and locate them, admittedly a more piecemeal approach.

Decentralized marketplaces are not yet the dominant model, with many buyers and sellers having moved to Dream marketplace. However, there is growing interest in this model and we'll be keeping tabs on what forms they will take, as well as how law enforcement and security researchers will overcome the challenges they present.



CALIFORNIA: In this photo, computer scientist Andrew Ng, right, works with others at his office in Palo Alto, California. —AP

the field says many more humans need to get involved. So his focus now is on teaching the next generation of AI specialists to teach the machines.

Nearly 2 million people around the globe have taken Ng's online course on machine learning. In his videos, the lanky, 6-foot-1 Briton of Hong Kong and Singaporean upbringing speaks with a difficult-to-place accent. He often tries to get students comfortable with mind-boggling concepts by

He's calculated in a Chrome browser window how many days we have from birth to death: a little more than 27,000. "I don't want to waste that many days."

Building brains as a teen

An upstart programmer by age 6, Ng learned coding early from his father, a medical doctor who tried to program a computer to diagnose patients using data. "At his urging," Ng says, he fiddled with these concepts on

82% OF ITSM PROFESSIONALS BELIEVE FUTURE IT ROLES TO BECOME CHALLENGING

KUWAIT: ManageEngine, the real-time IT management company and creators of ServiceDesk Plus, the IT service desk software used by more than 100,000 organizations worldwide, yesterday announced the results of its IT Service Management Future Readiness survey.

The survey, which was conducted in collaboration with ITSM.tools, consisted of ten questions that focused on the opportunities and challenges ITSM will see in the future. It was presented to ITSM professionals and garnered over 300 responses, yielding key findings in five distinct areas.



Rajesh Ganesan

Key Findings: Strong Affinity for the Cloud; AI Not a Threat to Jobs

Working in IT: Eighty-two percent of ITSM professionals believe that the IT roles of tomorrow will be more challenging - and the majority of the workforce currently feels undervalued by management.

Impact of politics on IT staffing: More than 60 percent of respondents feel that current global and local political scenarios - like Brexit, the recent U.S. election and Australian immigration policies - will adversely affect recruitment for IT roles.

New technology: Cloud technology continues to enjoy positive feedback from ITSM professionals in spite of a major outage. Artificial intelligence (AI) isn't seen as a major job disruptor yet, with only 16 percent of respondents saying it will affect IT jobs.

Best practices: Only 24 percent of ITSM professionals show confidence in the existing ITSM best practices, including ITIL, making a strong case for their revamp. Meeting service expectations: With an incoming millennial workforce, 77 percent of ITSM professionals believe that IT teams will have to do more to manage the expectation gap between younger and older employees.

ITSM gets shaped by Cloud, AI

Interestingly, while a majority of ITSM professionals (57 percent) feel that their IT teams deliver equal or better service than consumer-facing companies, 77 percent also believe that they need to do better to match the expectations of the incoming workforce of millennials. The timing of this survey - almost coinciding with the widespread outage of a cloud service provider in February 2017 - also brings to the surface a strong affinity for cloud technology. Even with this incident, only 8 percent of respondents had a negative opinion about cloud. Also revealed in the survey, only 16 percent of respondents said that they view the development of AI as a threat to IT jobs, contradicting what's seen as a popular notion.

Relevance of ITIL

While only 5 percent of respondents feel that ITIL and other published ITSM practices are irrelevant, roughly 66 percent believe ITIL and other ITSM best practices have failed to keep up with the changing ITSM landscape. These findings reinforce the need for ITIL to reinvent itself to keep pace with the changing trends in IT. "The ITSM industry is continually evolving in response to its micro and macro influencers, like technology, people, practices

and government regulations," said Rajesh Ganesan, director of product management at ManageEngine. "Being aware of potential future challenges and opportunities helps ITSM professionals stay relevant and responsive to changing landscapes in IT and business, giving their organizations a competitive edge." "It's interesting - and worrying - that 82 percent of survey respondents believe that working in IT will get harder over the next three years," said Stephen Mann, principal analyst and content director at ITSM.tools.

"There are multiple root causes, including: nearly two-thirds of respondents think that the current local and global political climate is adversely affecting IT recruitment; only 24 percent of respondents think that existing ITSM best practices have kept up with the changing IT and business landscapes; and 77 percent of respondents think that there is still more to be done to meet the expectations of millennial employees. Ultimately, as an industry, we still need to invest more in getting modern IT support right." ServiceDesk Plus, ManageEngine's flagship product, is ITIL-ready help desk software used by ITSM professionals worldwide.

With industry-certified best practice ITSM functionality, easy-to-use capability and native mobile apps, ServiceDesk Plus helps IT support teams deliver world-class service to end users on the go with reduced costs and complexity. Leveraging the latest technology and available in both cloud and on-premises versions, it comes in three editions and is available in 29 different languages. Over 100,000 organizations across 185 countries trust ServiceDesk Plus to optimize IT service desk performance and be future ready with their IT service management operations.

FACEBOOK MAKES IT SIMPLE TO SEE IF FRIENDS ARE SAFE

SAN FRANCISCO: Facebook on Monday made it simpler to see whether friends have checked in as "safe" on the online platform during disasters or other dangerous events. A Safety Check feature was given its own dedicated tab along with friends, groups, events and other main categories at the leading social network's mobile application and desktop pages, according to the California-based company.

"Safety Check helps our community let loved ones know they are safe during a crisis, find and give help, as well as

learn more about a crisis," Facebook said in an online post. "There's now a single place to go to see where Safety Check has recently been activated, get the information you need and potentially be able to help affected areas."

The modification began rolling out on Monday. Facebook added the Safety Check feature three years ago as a way for people to check on the well-being of loved ones during natural disasters. It broadened to include terrorism and other major violence after horrific attacks in Paris in 2015. —AFP

ECLIPSE: FROM GALLOPING GIRAFFES TO SOLAR WISPS

NASHVILLE, Tennessee: The giraffes ran in circles. The flamingos huddled together. And the rhinos just looked confused. At the Nashville Zoo, visitors watched and recorded how the animals behaved when the sky turned dark during Monday's total solar eclipse. And there was plenty to see when the moon slipped in front of the sun. The only trouble was with 7,000 visitors and lots of noise - drowning out the zoo animals, crickets and cicadas - zookeepers still have to figure whether the strange behavior was from the eclipse or the people there to watch the show.

The zoo project was one of many science experiments planned for the eclipse. Citizen-scientists and their more professional counterparts loaded up on pictures, video, data and just weird experiences as the eclipse's shadow crossed the United States, especially paying attention to the edges flaring out of the darkened sun. Telescopes on the ground, a fleet of satellites and astronauts in space watched the eclipse unfold. High-altitude balloons were released across the country, carrying experiments and providing live video.

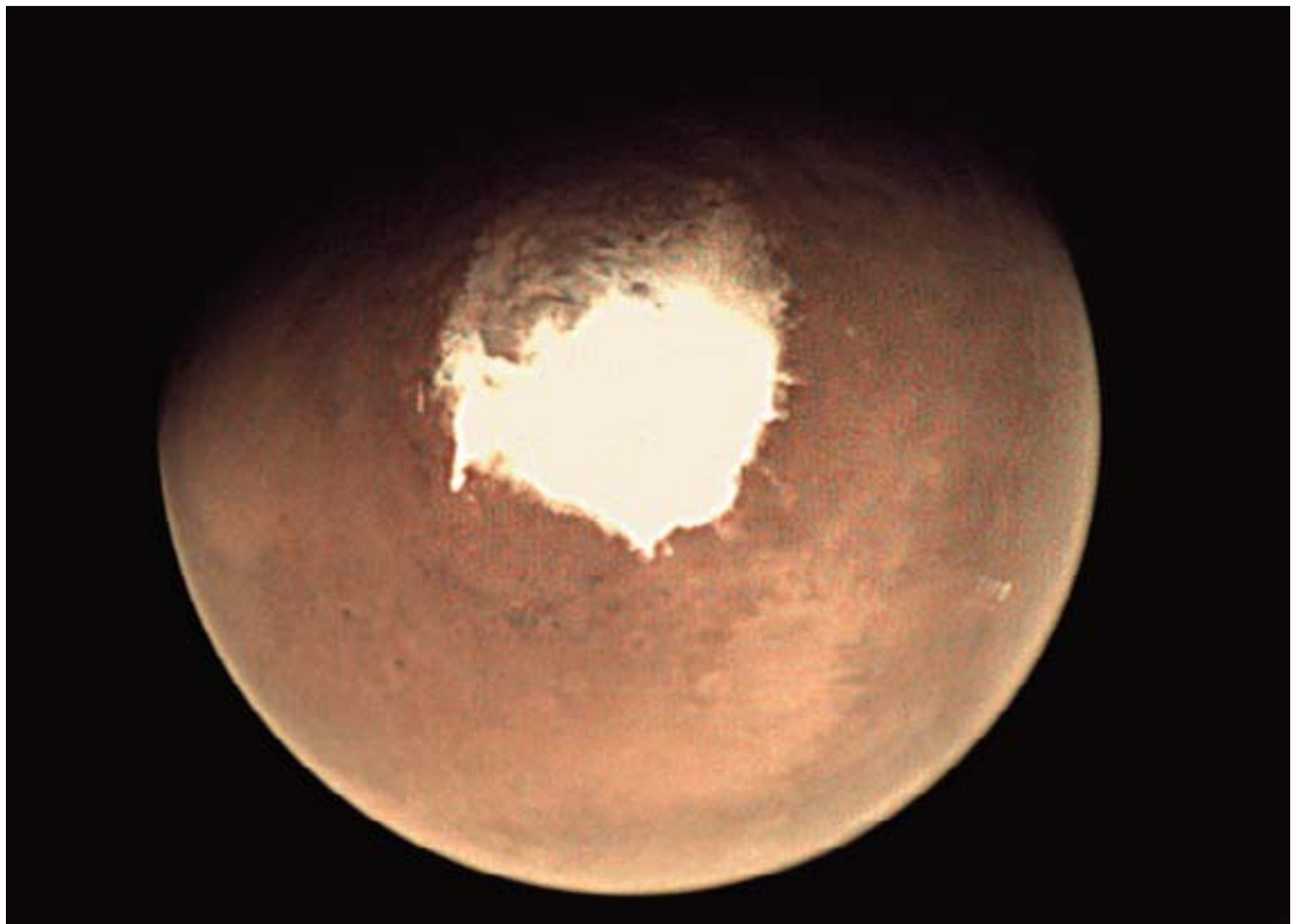
Now scientists have to figure out what it all means. "The balloon footage live was fantastic," said Angela Des Jardins of Montana State University, who headed the balloon project. "You could really see the sunset effect, the shadow come across." For the National Solar Observatory's Citizen CATE project, everyday people were given telescopes and camera equipment and trained to record the eclipse as it moved from Oregon to South Carolina. "It was really successful," said Matt Penn, an astronomer who ran the project.

Skies were clear in at least 50 of the 70 sites, including the first and last locations

on the coasts, he said. By the end of Monday night, Penn hoped to have a 70-minute movie stitched together. "We captured the right images of the science that we wanted," he said. Astronomers concentrated on the plumes from the sun's polar region to help understand why the solar wind speeds up so much, Penn said. The sun's upper atmosphere, called the corona, or crown, was the focus of astronomers' attention. It's easier to study when the sun is blocked.

Honor S. Hare, a freshman at the University of Kentucky, was at an elementary school in Adairville, Kentucky, overseeing the observations there. "It has been a great opportunity and I have learned so much," she said. At the Nashville Zoo, the giraffes were the stars. Especially 6-month-old Mazi and 3-year-old Nasha. "They're crazy running around," said Nate Zatezalo, who came from Cleveland, where he volunteers at the zoo there. During the full eclipse, all four giraffes ran. That's not unusual for the two juveniles who scamper at twilight after the crowds leave.

But the father giraffe, Congo, "usually doesn't do anything other than being the dad" and is regal and above it all, said zoo volunteer Stephan Foust. But even the above-it-all dad got in on the running during darkness. Zookeepers reported that before totality the orangutans climbed to the highest heights they've ever gone. Teresa Morehead of Indianapolis came to the zoo to help track the animals on an app called iNaturalist. She staked out the giraffes and rhinos. The rhinos wandered a bit, seeming to head to bed. "I was surprised to see they were running," she said, although noting that they seemed more confused than anything. —AP



IN SPACE: This file handout picture shows planet Mars as seen by the webcam on ESA's Mars Express orbiter, as another mission, ExoMars, is about to reach the Red Planet. —AFP

MARS WEATHER: 'CLOUDY, CHANCE OF SNOWSTORM'

PARIS: Mars is buffeted by turbulent snowstorms that occur only at night, according to a study released Monday that revises our understanding of Red Planet weather. Up to now, it was thought that snow falling from low-lying Martian clouds settled slowly and sparsely to the ground in an environment bereft of violent winds. The new findings, reported in the journal Nature Geoscience, suggest that ice-water particles swirling in a storm hit the ground within minutes, rather than descending gently for hours.

But future colonists from Earth needn't bother packing snow shoes, the lead researcher said. "It's not as if you could make a snowman or ski," said Aymeric Spiga, an expert on the dynamics of planetary atmospheres at Universite Pierre Curie in Paris. "Standing on the surface of Mars you wouldn't see a thick blanket of snow more like a generous layer of frost." The atmosphere of

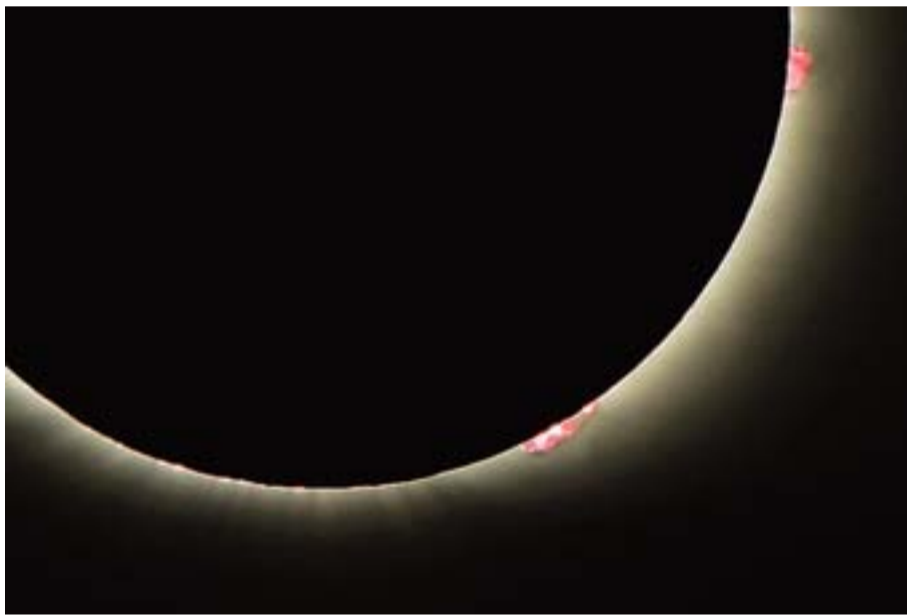
Mars is 100 times thinner than Earth's, though still thick enough to support weather, including clouds and wind.

But there's very little moisture. Indeed, the Red Planet is essentially a bone-cold desert with virtually no liquid water on its surface. In the Martian arctic, however, water ice lurks just under a layer of dust. This was detected up close by NASA's Phoenix lander, which scraped below the planet's surface with a shovel in 2008. The stationary robot lab also analyzed local weather, detecting signs of precipitation below water-ice clouds. A pair of orbiting satellites also picked up clues suggesting night-time weather, especially over the northern polar region.

Both observations perplexed scientists at the time. To probe further, Spiga and colleagues devised a new atmospheric model to simulate weather on Mars, based on more fine-grained data. Cooling of water-ice cloud particles during

the cold Martian night, they found, can create unstable conditions in clouds. "We have shown that the precipitation of snow below the clouds is transported by very violent, descending winds," said Spiga. He compared these Martian snowstorms to small, localized weather phenomena on Earth called microbursts, in which cold, dense air carrying snow or rain descend rapidly from a cloud.

The simulations were a better fit with the satellite and lander observations, he added. The Martian atmosphere is 95 percent carbon dioxide (also present as frozen dry ice), along with two percent each argon and nitrogen, with trace amounts of oxygen, nitrogen oxide, neon, and krypton. A wispy atmosphere and its greater distance from the sun make Mars very cold, with an average temperature of minus 63 degrees Celsius. Earth, by comparison, is a balmy 16 C. —AFP



TENNESSEE: This photo shows solar flares as the sun emerges from a total eclipse by the moon, in Dayton, Tennessee. —AP

WHERE'S THE KELP? WARM OCEAN TAKES TOLL ON UNDERSEA FORESTS

APPLEDORE ISLAND, Maine: When diving in the Gulf of Maine a few years back, Jennifer Dijkstra expected to be swimming through a flowing kelp forest that had long served as a nursery and food for juvenile fish and lobster. But Dijkstra, a University of New Hampshire marine biologist, saw only a patchy seafloor before her. The sugar kelp had declined dramatically and been replaced by invasive, shrub-like seaweed that looked like a giant shag rug.

"I remember going to some dive sites and honestly being shocked at how few kelp blades we saw," she said. The Gulf of Maine, stretching from Cape Cod to Nova Scotia, is the latest in a growing list of global hotspots losing their kelp, including hundreds of miles in the

Mediterranean Sea, off southern Japan and Australia, and parts of the California coast. Among the world's most diverse marine ecosystems, kelp forests are found on all continental coastlines except for Antarctica and provide critical food and shelter to myriad fish and other creatures.

Kelp also is critical to coastal economies, providing billions of dollars in tourism and fishing. The likely culprit for the loss of kelp, according to several scientific studies, is warming oceans from climate change, coupled with the arrival of invasive species. In Maine, the invaders are other seaweeds. In Australia, the Mediterranean and Japan, tropical fish are feasting on the kelp. Most kelp are replaced by

small, tightly packed, bushy seaweeds that collect sediment and prevent kelp from growing back, said the University of Western Australia's Thomas Wernberg.

"Collectively these changes are part of a recent and increasing global trend of flattening of the world's kelp forests," said Wernberg, co-author of a 2016 study in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, which found that 38 percent of kelp forest declined over the past 50 years in regions that had data. Kelp losses on Australia's Great Southern Reef threaten tourism and fishing industries worth \$10 billion. Die-offs contributed to a 60 percent drop in species richness in the Mediterranean and were blamed for the collapse of the abalone fishery in Japan. —AP



MAINE: In this photo, research technician Kristen Mello shows a sample of a red shrub-like seaweed collected in the waters off Appledore Island, Maine. —AP

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Kuwait Times
248 33 199

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BEGIN THE NEW ACADEMIC YEAR WITH BABYSHOP'S 'BACK TO SCHOOL' COLLECTION

With the summer coming to a close, children find themselves eager to return to school. Babyshop, the one-stop children's brand, offers an opportunity for kids to revamp their back to school gear with a new wardrobe and latest school supplies. The new 'Back to School 2017' collection includes a wide range of fun, stylish essentials to suit every child's personal style. As a leading children's brand, Babyshop introduces a new line of premium accessories for 'Back to School 2017' this year that include brands like High Sierra, Lyc Sac and Ace.

In addition, Babyshop introduces the innovative WOW cup for all mothers. This multifunctional and spill free cup eliminates messy - cleanup, a must have for all moms to toddlers. It is available in a variety of colors and designs to cater to a range of ages starting from toddlers, pre-schoolers and young teenagers. An incredible selection combined with wonderful offers is available at Babyshop for students and parents to choose from. The collection also offers latest selection of merchandise featuring the widest range of licensed character products in the market for both boys and girls.

For boys, after the recent success of movie franchises like the Minions and Cars 3, the store has enhanced their product lines to incorporate the latest trends and cater to their preferences. Find the likes of Spiderman, Real Madrid, Ben 10 and more popular trends available here. There is a wide range of merchandise for girls too such as Smurfs, Troll and Powerpuff girls. The line includes exclusive designs from all-time favorites such as Disney Princess, Hello Kitty and Barbie to fulfill every little girl's fantasy. Grab your new school gear from any of the Centrepoint stores located at Al-Rai, Avenues, Salmiya, Fintas, Jahra, Fahaheel, Sulaibhikhat, Kuwait City, Khaitan and Hawally.



ASSE KUWAIT CHAPTER CONDUCTS ORIENTATION FOR ITS NEW COMMITTEE

American Society of Safety Engineers (ASSE), Kuwait Chapter conducted an orientation meeting recently at Hotel Hilton, Mangaf for the newly nominated heads of the committees for the year 2017-18. Chapter President Muhammad Alamgir started the meeting with the welcome address and explained the objective of the orientation meeting. He thanked all the com-

mittee heads, deputy heads and committee members for accepting the volunteer positions to serve the Chapter voluntarily.

Sunil Sadanandan, Secretary explained about ASSE and ASSE Kuwait Chapter strategies, mission and vision. He also gave a brief about the upcoming major events of the chapter 9th ASSE HSE International Professional Development Conference &

Exhibition on November 28 and 29, 2017 at Millennium Hotel, Kuwait which is one of the major events during the year. He emphasized on the teamwork in achieving the objectives and goals of the Chapter. He further briefed on the roles and responsibilities of each committee, organization structure of the Chapter, Chapter protocols etc.

He spoke on the development of the

annual planner of the Chapter, the Committee Plans, programs and other important issues pertaining to the Chapter. He has requested all the Committee Heads to have a SMART plan to achieve their respective committee targets. During this orientation meeting, all concerns of committee heads and their members were clarified by Chapter elected members and open discussion was

held on the challenges ahead. The meeting concluded with closing remarks by Chapter Vice President Aamir Rasheed and other senior members of the chapter, who wished all the committees a successful year ahead. The participants included the elected members, committee heads, deputy heads and Subcommittee members of the Chapter Term 2017-2018.

Superfood cities: Where to find healthy urban eats

City tripping can be hungry work - and these days the options are seemingly endless. But what if you'd rather forgo the freak shake and bubble-waffle fads for something a little more nutritious? Fuel up and feel good with these tasty recommendations from our city experts.

Get supercharged bowls in Singapore

Foodie hotspot Singapore dishes up everything from hawker fare to fine dining. Indulge too often however, and your belt may need an extra notch or two. Thankfully, the health food craze has well and truly hit. For a feel-good fix, head to Grain Traders. Its two locations (Market and Tras streets) specialize in nutritious grain bowls packed with veggies, proteins and carbs. Choose from six signature bowls - 'el hibaro' is a crowd favorite - or build your own.



Go vegan with a vengeance in Budapest

Hungarian food is heavy on the meat, and even supposedly veggie options often come cooked with lard or szalonna. However, in the past few years, vegan restaurants, cafes and food trucks have sprouted up across Budapest. Vegan Love on Bartok Bela Boulevard gives the taste buds a treat with plant-based burgers and hot dogs packed with a powerhouse of healthy ingredients. Try the sweet potato burger, served up with beetroot, horseradish cream and homemade ketchup with fresh basil in a pumpkin-seed bun.

Indulge in indigenous bush foods in Perth

Going beyond the trendy bent for seasonal, locally-produced ingredients, chefs in the West Australian capital are interpreting bush foods in new and unusual ways. Forget charred kangaroo or eucalyptus-spiked billy tea: we're talking succulents and seaweeds, native fruits, herbs and even tree leaves. Cured, dehydrated, fried or left alone, they deliver savory twang and shattering crunch, all smacking of the Australian wild. City fine diner, Wildflower, nails it by dusting emu tartare with onion ash, pairing magenta-hued quandong (bush peach) with duck breast and infusing cocktails with fragrant lemon myrtle and wattle seed.



Opt for organic in Stockholm

It doesn't take visitors long to see that Stockholm locals look after themselves. Many places in the city specialize in sustainable produce, while vegan-friendly food is becoming easier to find by the day. Start your day at Halsocafet with a breakfast

bowl based on superfruits like acai, pitaya and acerola. Or why not enjoy lunch with a custom-made salad? Alternative takes on modern classics are ideal for a feel-good fika (loosely translated as 'coffee break').

Eat your way to happiness in Melbourne

It's one thing to put a chia bowl or colourful salad on a menu, but it's another entirely to design a cafe around happiness. In Melbourne, a city saturated with healthy eating concepts, Burnley's Serotonin Eatery churns out vibrant dishes made from ingredients said to release serotonin, a neurotransmitter linked to wellbeing. Try the positive pancakes made from dehydrated organic bananas. And if you're still not smiling, friendly service, a bright interior and indoor swing seats are just what the doctor ordered.



Grab a Greek salad in Athens

There are many variations of Greek salad but the classic always includes tomato, cucumber, olives, feta and a generous glug of olive oil. Known as horiatiki (meaning 'village' in Greek), it's a national staple. At Mana's Kouzina-Kouzina in Monastiraki, Athens, salad lovers can discover regional Greek salad favorites from around the country including mavromati (black eyed peas), panzaria (beetroot), and anchano karoto (shredded carrot and cabbage).

Create bespoke vegetarian platters in London

Long gone are the days when London's cuisine was mostly associated with fish and chips or pie and mash; England's capital is now a haven for hungry travelers. It



also has an increasingly health-conscious population, more likely to opt for an organic farmer's market than a greasy spoon, and this has led to an influx of wholesome establishments. Ethos on Eastcastle St, serves an eclectic buffet of vegetarian dishes. The salads are inventive and delicious - try the broccoli and carrot with curried cashew cream - and the hot options, like the squash and stilton walnut rolls, are equally impressive.

CROSSWORD 1693



ACROSS

1. South American wood sorrel cultivated for its edible tubers.
4. Early stage of an embryo produced by cleavage of an ovum.
12. The elementary stages of any subject (usually plural).
15. (British) A linear measure of 16.5 feet.
16. Paper that has been made translucent and waterproof by soaking in oil.
17. A group of Niger-Congo languages spoken primarily in southeastern Mali and northern Ghana.
18. Green algae common in freshwater lakes of limestone districts.
20. A type of dynamite in which the nitroglycerin is absorbed in a base of wood pulp and sodium or potassium nitrate.
22. A former copper coin of Pakistan.
24. Open-heart surgery in which the rib cage is opened and a section of a blood vessel is grafted from the aorta to the coronary artery to bypass the blocked section of the coronary artery and improve the blood supply to the heart.
25. With the mouth wide open as in wonder or awe.
27. Type genus of the Nepidae.
29. Being ten more than one hundred ninety.
31. A small pellet fired from an air rifle or BB gun.
34. South American shrub or small tree having long shining evergreen leaves and panicles of green or yellow flowers.
38. (Roman Catholic Church) The supreme ecclesiastical tribunal for cases appealed to the Holy See from diocesan courts.
42. A town in north central Oklahoma.
43. Resembling or characteristic of or appropriate to an elegy.
44. A ballistic missile that is capable of traveling from one continent to another.
47. An enzyme that catalyzes the oxidation of many body compounds (e.g., epinephrine and norepinephrine and serotonin).
48. Late time of life.
49. Relating to or characteristic of or occurring on land.
50. (Greek mythology) A maiden seduced by Zeus.
51. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
52. A tricycle (usually propelled by pedalling).
57. Designated by a name or title.
60. Absence of an enzyme.
61. United States naval officer and historian (1840-1914).
65. Small terrestrial lizard of warm regions of the Old World.
68. A material effigy that is worshipped as a god.
71. The battle in 202 BC in which Scipio decisively defeated Hannibal at the end of the second Punic War.
72. A state of equilibrium.
75. A constellation in the southern hemisphere near Telescopium and Norma.
76. Mild yellow Dutch cheese made in balls.
77. A federal agency established to coordinate programs aimed at reducing pollution and protecting the environment.
78. Travel by boat on a boat propelled by wind or by other means.
81. Goddess of criminal rashness and its punishment.
82. A potent estrogen used in medicine and in feed for livestock and poultry.
83. Trees or shrubs of the families Ebenaceae or Sapotaceae or Styracaceae or Symplocaceae.
84. Either of two folds of skin that can be moved to cover or open the eye.

DOWN

1. Predatory black-and-white toothed whale with large dorsal fin.
2. German botanist who is generally recognized as founding bacteriology when he recognized bacteria as plants.
3. A city in southern Turkey on the Seyhan River.
4. A long thin fluffy scarf of feathers or fur.
5. Being one more than fifty.
6. Primitive chlorophyll-containing mainly aquatic eukaryotic organisms lacking true stems and roots and leaves.
7. A detailed description of design criteria for a piece of work.
8. A fine grained mineral having a soft soapy feel and consisting of hydrated magnesium silicate.
9. Used of high or hilly country.
10. A field covered with grass or herbage and suitable for grazing by livestock.
11. A colorless and odorless inert gas.
12. Largest known toad species.
13. A modified bud consisting of a thickened globular underground stem serving as a reproductive structure.
14. A steep rugged rock or cliff.
19. A motley assortment of things.
21. Erect leafless flower stalk growing directly from the ground as in a tulip.
23. A person forced to flee from home or country.
26. The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
28. (Akkadian) God of wisdom.
30. A metal cap or band placed on a wooden pole to prevent splitting.
32. A Mid-Atlantic state.
33. Harsh or corrosive in tone.
35. Cause to lose one's nerve.
36. Deciduous South African tree having large odd-pinnate leaves and profuse fragrant orange-yellow flowers.
37. Love intensely.
39. Plaything consisting of a child's toy bear (usually plush and stuffed with soft materials).
40. Any unwholesome or desperate condition.
41. Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
45. Something that hinders as if with bonds v. 1.
46. (from a combination of MODulate and DEModulate) Electronic equipment consisting of a device used to connect computers by a telephone line.
53. Tropical American tree grown in southern United States having a whitish pink-tinged fruit.
54. French postimpressionist painter who influenced modern art (especially cubism) by stressing the structural components latent in nature (1839-1906).
55. The branch of computer science that deal with writing computer programs that can solve problems creatively.
56. Affect with wonder.
58. Being one more than two.
59. A member of an agricultural people of southern India.
62. Relating to the deepest parts of the ocean (below 6000 meters).
63. Italian violin maker in Cremona.
64. Given or having a specified name.
66. An expression of open-mouthed astonishment.
67. By bad luck.
69. Using speech rather than writing.
70. Being or occurring at an advanced period of time or after a usual or expected time.
73. A compartment in front of a motor vehicle where driver sits.
74. (Old Testament) Adam's wife in Judeo-Christian mythology.
79. Not out.
80. A radioactive transuranic element produced by bombarding plutonium with neutrons.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

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



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

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



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

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



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

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



Leo (July 23-August 22)

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



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

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



Libra (September 23-October 22)

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



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

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



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

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



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

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



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

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



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

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

WORD SEARCH

Phonetic Alphabet

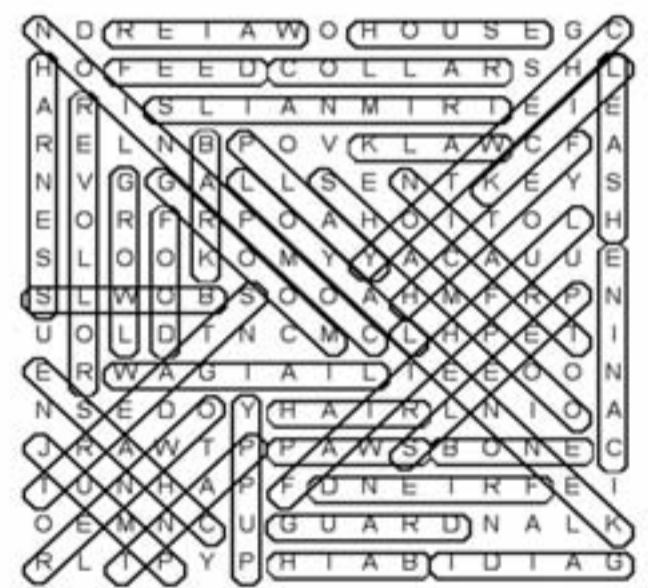
Find and circle the Phonetic Alphabet words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell an additional word from the Phonetic Alphabet.



- ALPHA HOTEL OSCAR UNIFORM
- BRAVO INDIA PAPA VICTOR
- CHARLIE JULIET QUEBEC WHISKEY
- DELTA KILO ROMEO X-RAY
- ECHO LIMA SIERRA YANKEE
- FOXTROT MIKE TANGO ZULU
- GOLF

Yesterday's Solution

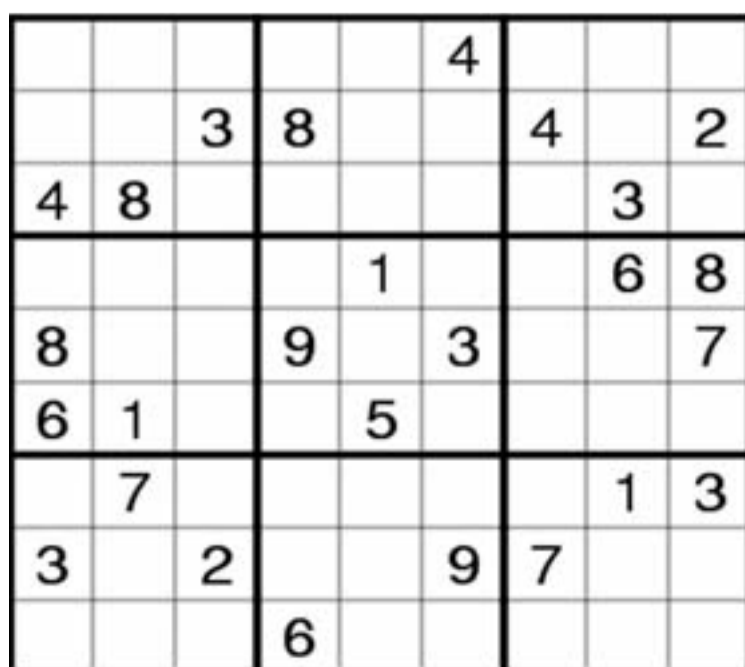
Pet Dog



- BARK BATH BONE BOWLS CANINE CHASE CHEW TOY COLLAR COMPANION FAITHFUL
- FEED FETCH FOOD FRIEND GROOM GROWL GUARD HAIR HARNES HOUSE
- ID TAG JUMP KENNEL LEASH LICK LOYAL OWNER PANT PAWS PLAY
- PUPPY ROLL OVER SHAMPOO SLEEP TRAIN TREATS TRIM NAILS WAG TAIL WALK WATER

The hidden message is: DOGS LOVE YOU UNCONDITIONALLY

Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



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Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Very hot and Relatively humid over coastal areas with light to moderate freshening at times north westerly wind changing to south easterly wind later on, with speed of 12 - 45 km/h and some high clouds will appear.

BY NIGHT: Relatively hot and Humid over coastal areas with light to moderate south easterly wind to light variable wind, with speed of 08 - 30 km/h with a chance for fog forming over some areas.

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings	
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 22/08/2017 0000 UTC	
KUWAIT CITY	43 °C	35 °C		
KUWAIT AIRPORT	48 °C	29 °C		
ABDALY	47 °C	27 °C		
BUBYAN	37 °C	25 °C		
JAHRA	47 °C	34 °C		
FAILAKA ISLAND	42 °C	30 °C		
SALMIYAH	38 °C	33 °C		
AHMADI	40 °C	32 °C		
NUWAISIB	42 °C	28 °C		
WAFRA	47 °C	31 °C		
SALMY	48 °C	31 °C		

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Wednesday	08/23	Hot	45 °C	31 °C	VRB-SE	08 - 32 km/h
Thursday	08/24	Hot and some high clouds will appear	46 °C	30 °C	NW-N	08 - 30 km/h
Friday	08/25	Hot and Relatively humid specially over coastal areas	46 °C	31 °C	NW-SE	06 - 32 km/h
Saturday	08/26	Hot	46 °C	30 °C	SE-N	08 - 28 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	03:57
Sunrise	05:20
Zuhr	11:51
Asr	15:26
Sunset	18:22
Isha	19:43

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	46 °C
MIN. Temp.	34 °C
MAX. RH	23 %
MIN. RH	08 %
MAX. Wind	N 43 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

AIRLINES

American Airlines	22087425
Kuwait Airways	22087426
Jazeera Airways	171
Jet Airways	177
FlyDubai	22924455
Qatar Airways	22414400
KLM	22423888
Air Slovakia	22425747
Olympic Airways	22424940
Royal Jordanian	22418064/5/6
Reservation	22433388
British Airways	22425635
Air France	22430224
Emirates	22921555
Air India	22438184
Sri Lanka Airlines	22424444
Egypt Air	22421578
Swiss Air	22421516
Saudia	22426306
Middle East Airlines	22423073
Lufthansa	22422493
PIA	22421044
Alitalia	22414427
Balkan Airlines	22416474
Bangladesh Airlines	22452977/8
Czech Airlines	22417901/2433141
Indian Airlines	22456700
Oman Air	22958787
Turkish Airlines	22453820/1
Aeroflot	22404838/9

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Arrival Flights on Wednesday 23/8/2017				Arrival Flights on Wednesday 23/8/2017			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
THY	772	Istanbul	00:10	AIC	988	Hyderabad/Chennai	00:05
JZR	513	Sharm el-Sheikh	00:15	JZR	565	Sohag	00:05
KAC	786	Jeddah	00:30	JZR	1540	Cairo	00:20
JZR	267	Beirut	00:35	JAI	573	Mumbai	00:30
KAC	102	London	00:55	MSR	2615	Cairo	00:30
PGT	4780	Istanbul	00:55	MSC	406	Sohag	00:30
DLH	635	Doha	01:00	FDB	072	Dubai	00:30
WAN	806	Sarajevo	01:10	THY	773	Istanbul	01:40
PGT	858	Istanbul	01:15	KAC	363	Colombo	01:55
JZR	539	Cairo	01:20	DLH	635	Frankfurt	02:00
MSR	618	Alexandria	01:35	PGT	4781	ASR	02:05
UAE	853	Dubai	01:40	KAC	677	Dubai	02:15
RJA	642	Amman	01:45	KAC	859	Istanbul	02:35
THY	1464	Istanbul	01:50	MSR	619	Alexandria	02:35
KKK	6506	Istanbul	01:55	THY	765	Istanbul	02:50
KLM	446	Bahrain	02:05	KAC	6505	Istanbul	02:55
PGT	830	Istanbul	02:10	ETH	621	Addis Ababa	03:05
QTR	1086	Doha	02:10	AEE	943	ATH	03:15
JZR	553	Alexandria	02:15	UAE	854	Dubai	03:30
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:15	KLM	446	Amsterdam	03:30
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	RJA	645	Amman	03:55
AEE	942	ATH	02:25	THY	753	Istanbul	04:00
THY	1404	AYT	02:30	OMA	644	Muscat	04:05
KAC	418	Manila	02:50	QTR	1087	Doha	04:10
THY	752	Istanbul	03:05	ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:10
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05	MSR	613	Cairo	04:15
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:10	KAC	417	Manila	04:20
RJA	644	Amman	03:10	PGT	831	Istanbul	04:20
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	JZR	560	Sohag	04:45
FDB	069	Dubai	03:15	KAC	103	London	05:00
KAC	382	Delhi	03:15	RBG	550	Alexandria	05:00
QTR	1076	Doha	03:45	QTR	1091	Doha	05:05
KAC	544	Cairo	03:50	QTR	1077	Doha	05:30
KAC	796	Madinah	03:55	KAC	303	Mumbai	05:50
QTR	1090	Doha	04:00	FEJ	954	Asyut	05:55
RBG	559	Alexandria	04:10	THY	1465	Istanbul	06:00
UAE	873	Dubai	04:15	UAE	874	Dubai	06:15
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	04:15	RJA	643	Amman	06:25
KAC	358	Kochi	04:50	THY	771	Istanbul	06:25
FEJ	931	Alexandria	05:00	GFA	212	Bahrain	06:50
KAC	784	Jeddah	05:00	JZR	238	Amman	07:00
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:10	FDB	070	Dubai	07:05
THY	770	Istanbul	05:25	JZR	164	Dubai	07:15
KAC	344	Chennai	05:30	KAC	501	Beirut	07:50
JZR	529	Asyut	05:35	KAC	171	Frankfurt	07:50
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:40	KAC	613	Bahrain	07:55
KAC	362	Colombo	05:50	BAW	156	London	08:20
BAW	157	London	06:05	KAC	741	Dammam	08:30
JZR	564	Sohag	06:30	FDB	054	Dubai	08:30
KAC	1802	Cairo	06:35	KAC	773	Riyadh	08:35
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:35	KAC	539	Sharm el-Sheikh	08:40
KAC	206	Islamabad	06:40	KAC	661	Abu Dhabi	08:45
KAC	302	Mumbai	06:55	KAC	101	London	09:00
KAC	678	Dubai	06:55	JZR	356	Mashhad	09:00
KAC	156	Istanbul	07:05	KAC	787	Jeddah	09:15
JZR	1541	Cairo	07:10	KAC	671	Dubai	09:15
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	KAC	117	New York	09:15
KAC	384	Delhi	08:00	KAC	691	Muscat	09:30
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25	KAC	561	Amman	09:30
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:55	JZR	534	Cairo	09:30
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	JZR	482	Istanbul	09:40
IRC	6511	ABD	09:10	ABY	126	Sharjah	09:40
QTR	1070	Doha	09:25	UAE	856	Dubai	09:50
IRA	665	Shiraz	09:25	KAC	541	Cairo	10:00
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	ETD	302	Abu Dhabi	10:00
IRM	1188	Mashhad	09:55	IRC	6522	Lamerd	10:00
MSC	415	Sohag	10:15	KAC	617	Doha	10:15
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	IRA	664	Shiraz	10:25
MEA	404	Beirut	10:55	KAC	153	Istanbul	10:30
SYR	341	Damascus	11:00	QTR	1071	Doha	10:35
QTR	1074	Doha	11:00	FDB	056	Dubai	10:35
AXB	889	Mangalore/Bahrain	11:05	JZR	358	Mashhad	10:45
JZR	561	Sohag	11:10	AAG	146	QA	11:00
KAC	614	Bahrain	11:15	IRM	1189	Mashhad	11:10
KAC	742	Dammam	11:45	MSC	416	Sohag	11:15
JZR	165	Dubai	11:50	GFA	214	Bahrain	11:35
IAW	157	Al Najaf	12:00	MEA	405	Beirut	11:55
JZR	239	Amman	12:25	SYR	342	Latakia	12:00
UAE	871	Dubai	12:45	AXB	890	Mangalore	12:05
KAC	774	Riyadh	12:45	QTR	1075	Doha	12:10
THY	766	Istanbul	12:50	KAC	511	Mashhad	12:45
FEJ	953	Asyut	12:55	KAC	513	Tehran	12:45
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00	IAW	158	Al Najaf	13:00
WAN	954	GYD	13:00	JZR	786	Riyadh	13:10
CLX	792	Luxembourg	13:15	JZR	176	Dubai	13:10
KAC	662	Abu Dhabi	13:15	THY	767	Istanbul	13:45
KAC	672	Dubai	13:55	FEJ	932	Alexandria	13:55
IRC	6521	Lamerd	14:00	MSR	611	Cairo	14:00
QTR	1078	Doha	14:10	UAE	872	Dubai	14:15
KNE	231	Riyadh	14:10	CLX	792	Hanoi	14:30
GFA	221	Bahrain	14:15	IRD	6512	ABD	14:50
SVA	500	Jeddah	14:15	KAC	673	Dubai	15:00
KAC	364	Colombo	14:15	KNE	382	Taif	15:00
FDB	059	Dubai	14:20	GFA	222	Bahrain	15:00
KAC	618	Doha	14:20	FDB	060	Dubai	15:05
KAC	540	Sharm el-Sheikh	14:35	QTR	1079	Doha	15:15
JZR	357	Mashhad	14:50	KAC	1706	Madinah	15:35
KNE	529	Jeddah	14:55	KAC	563	Amman	15:40
KAC	304	Mumbai	14:55	SVA	501	Jeddah	15:45
KAC	692	Muscat	14:55	KAC	1907	Jeddah	15:50
KAC	788	Jeddah	14:55	JZR	188	Dubai	15:50
ETD	303	Abu Dhabi	15:05	KNE	530	Madinah	15:55
KNE	683	Madinah	15:05	JZR	619	Doha	16:00
OMA	645	Muscat	15:10	KNE	684	Madinah	16:00
KAC	562	Amman	15:10	KAC	775	Riyadh	16:05
KAC	502	Beirut	15:25	OMA	646	Muscat	16:10
WAN	436	Al Najaf	15:25	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:15
KAC	412	Bangkok	15:30	ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
ABY	127	Sharjah	15:35	SAW	615	Bahrain	16:30
UAE	857	Dubai	15:45	KAC	706	Damascus	16:50
SAW	705	Damascus	15:50	MSR	576	Sharm el-Sheikh	16:50
RJA	640	Amman	16:00	SVA	505	Madinah	16:55
SVA	504	Madinah	16:00	RJA	641	Amman	16:55
MSR	575	Sharm el-Sheikh	16:10	FDB	052	Dubai	17:05
FDB	051	Dubai	16:15	KAC	503	Beirut	17:15
QTR	1072	Doha	16:15	JZR	266	Beirut	17:15
JZR	535	Cairo	16:20	QTR	1073	Doha	17:25
KAC	118	New York	16:25	JZR	240	Amman	17:30
JZR	359	Mashhad	16:35	JZR	1442	Doha	17:30
JZR	787	Riyadh	16:35	KAC	361	Colombo	17:35
NIA	361	Alexandria	16:50	KAC	357	Kochi	17:40
KAC	542	Cairo	17:05	UAE	858	Dubai	17:40
KAC	514	Tehran	17:10	KAC	381	Delhi	17:50
SVA	510	Riyadh	17:15	NIA	362	Alexandria	17:50
GFA	215	Bahrain	17:30	KAC	343</		

GOSSIP



AOKI PLAYS LINKIN PARK SONGS TO HELP MOURN CHESTER

Steve Aoki has been including Linkin Park songs in his set to help him deal with Chester Bennington's death. The EDM star and the late 'Numb' hitmaker were very close and had even collaborated on music together, including the 2015 track 'Darker Than Blood'. Just Hold On' hitmaker Steve has been finding it hard to come to terms with the loss of the rock star, who died from suicide last month at the age of 41, but says hearing his voice makes him remember the good times they shared and keeps his memory alive. The 39-year-old producer told The Sun Online: "It's really tough, but it's really good for me to play their music in my sets. To hear his voice and play our songs, we did a few songs together. First of all its acceptance, right. It's accepting he did actually pass away. That's a very strange thought because it's so tragic and I didn't expect it. "I play his songs in my set every night. You want to remember everything and you want to share those memories. "What we did together was so beautiful. I want to share that even more now. I'm so proud of doing something with, to me, one of the greatest singers of all time. "He's my favorite singer. The crowd are singing every word, in the moment, it's amazing." At the time of his passing, Steve hailed Chester his "hero". He wrote on Instagram: My dear friend I'm so broken from this loss. A dream come true to work with you talk with you learn from you. You are a legend. You are my hero. You are the GOAT an absolute beautiful human being and I'm so honored to have experienced those moments with you. Forever in my heart my brother. (sic)"



Ed Skrein joins Hellboy reboot

Ed Skrein is on board to star in the 'Hellboy' reboot. The 34-year-old British actor is joining the Neil Marshall reboot playing Major Ben Daimo, a consultant to the titular character at the Bureau for Paranormal Research, the Hollywood Reporter say. The casting of the 'Deadpool' star could face criticism from fans of the comic books, as the character is portrayed as Japanese-American. The plot in the new movie follows Hellboy as he battles with a medieval evil wizard who is hell-bent on destroying humankind. David Harbour has already been cast as Hellboy and will be joined by Milla Jovovich, 41, as the Blood Queen and Ian McShane, 74, as Professor Broom, the scientist who adopts the titular demon child, in the Marshall-helmed movie. The part of Professor Broom was originally brought to life by the late John Hurt in the Ron Perlman starring-movies 'Hellboy' and 'Hellboy 2: The Golden Army'. The film is expected to start shooting this September. The upcoming project has been in the pipeline for some time, but the reboot is set to happen without original director Guillermo del Toro, who couldn't agree with the studio's vision for the movie. Instead, Marshall - who worked on the likes of 'The Descent' and 'Game of Thrones' - is taking charge of the film. Aron Coleite is working on the latest draft of a script by Andrew Cosby, Christopher Golden and 'Hellboy' creator Mike Mignola. Originally titled as 'Hellboy: Rise of the Blood Queen', it was previously reported that the reboot will simply go by the name of 'Hellboy'. Unlike the original franchise by del Toro - which was PG13 - this film will be R-rated, following in the footsteps of other successful R-rated movies including 'Deadpool' and 'Logan'.

Prince's vault will be released, says his sister

Prince's sister Tyka Nelson says his vault of secret music will be released. The cove at his Paisley Park estate in Chanhassen, Minnesota, contains various demos, unheard songs, live recordings and footage of rehearsals and concerts that the late 'Purple Rain' hitmaker never made public. However, Tyka - who is the only blood sibling of Prince - says that the music icon had always wanted to put the music out and that they will fulfil his wishes. She said: "It was always Prince's plan to release those songs. "I want what Prince wants. We have to preserve everything. "So as soon as we can release it, don't worry - we sure will." A new exhibition is coming to London's The O2 on October 27 called 'My Name Is Prince' and Tyka says it is just one of many things they are working on including a music school for those less fortunate in his hometown, which was on his wish list. She told The Sun newspaper: "If he wants his music released then it will be released. If he wants a museum, then that's what we are doing now. Prince also wanted a school. I plan to make it a reality. "He wanted a music school in north Minneapolis for underprivileged kids who wanted

to play music. "He started the design before he passed and he told me his mission was the school." Despite the "mystique" surrounding the late music legend's vault, the singer's former keyboard player Tommy Barbarella says he isn't sure if the reality can live up to the fantasy of the vault. The musician - who performs in the all-new line-up of Prince's former backing band The New Power Generation - recently told BANG Showbiz: "What I think is, and I'm sure there's a lot of great stuff in the vault, but I think the idea of the vault - the mysterious mystique of it - is much more interesting to people than the content. I remember hearing about 'The Black Album' for years, and people had bootleg copies and there was all this hype. Then, when I finally heard it, I thought it was good but it can't live up to the hype. Then it was released and did nothing." The 'Little Red Corvette' hitmaker died in April 2016 at the age of 57, and his estate has been sorting through the material and planning releases ever since.



U2 send cryptic letters to fans

U2 fans received a cryptic letter teasing news on Monday. The Irish rock band have sent out pieces of paper featuring the words "Blackout ... It's clear who you are will appear ... U2.com" and a line, which reads: "U2 will announce [blank] on [blank]." Over the text, which appears to be an abstract from William Blake's collection of poems 'Songs of Innocence and Experience', the inspiration for their last album 'Songs of Innocence', is a silhouette of a boy and girl holding hands. Several fans have taken to social media to share the mail, but still have no idea what it's meant to mean. The 'With or Without You' rockers recently admitted choosing songs for their album has been an "ordeal". Bassist Adam Clayton - who is joined by Bono, The Edge, and Larry Mullen Jr in the group - said: "We've an abundance of great ideas and it's really about identifying what to finish and how to finish it." The Edge added: "That's the gift and the curse of this record. The ordeal is getting all four members to agree on the same dozen songs." Meanwhile, the band insist they don't feel a "responsibility" to raise political issues in their work - but still want to "have a go". The Edge said: "I don't know if we feel a responsibility so much. "Just that there are moments where you just feel like, 'Wow, someone has got to write a great song about this and hopefully it will be us, so let's have a go. "Coming out of the post-punk era, we were inspired by The Clash, Patti Smith, Television - innovators who also had one foot in the worlds of poetry and literature and the other in political activism. That's deeply embedded in our band. "One of the reasons we write a song is to crystallize something of significance for ourselves and, hopefully, other people." However, Adam is unsure whether rock music is now the right platform on which to take a stand because the political climate is so complicated. He said: "I think the world has changed a bit. I'm not sure that within the culture that music is the best medium any more. "There's so much noise out there anyway, people saying this, that and the other, that I think music is a little bit insecure as regards what its role is in these situations."



Morrissey announces new album

Morrissey is releasing a new album after inking a deal with BMG. The former Smiths frontman is yet to unveil the full track-listing for 'Low in High School', which is his first studio album since 2014's 'World Peace Is None of Your Business'. However, he is set to debut new music at the Hollywood Bowl in Los Angeles on November 10, a week before the LP is released on November 17. The signing with BMG also sees them look after the launch of the 'Kiss Me a Lot' singer's own label, Etienne Records. Korda Marshall, the Executive Vice President of BMG, said of the signing: "There are not many artists around today that can compare to Morrissey. He is an extraordinary talent. "He is prodigious, literate, witty, elegant and above all, courageous. "His lyrics, humor and melodies have influenced many generations. The music on this new landmark record will speak for itself and we are delighted to welcome him to BMG." Before going on a world tour in 2016, Morrissey stated that he couldn't see the point of playing live unless he had new material to release. Speaking in 2015, the outspoken songwriter said: "We are obsessively grateful for all interest and loyalty from our audience ... throughout 28 years. But without new releases, there is no point in any additional touring." Morrissey, 58, has been plagued by health problems in recent years and has undergone several treatments for oesophageal cancer since 2014. His former band The Smiths - also comprised of guitarist Johnny Marr, drummer Mike Joyce and bassist Andy Rourke - broke up in acrimonious circumstances in 1987 and despite being offered massive money to reunite for concerts they've never come

close to getting back together. Marr, 53, previously revealed: "I think we were offered \$50 million for three ... possibly five shows." Relations between the band members has been poor since 1989 when Joyce and Rourke successfully sued Morrissey and Marr to get more than 10 per cent of the group's royalties. Meanwhile, fans of the band will be able to get their hands on a remastered version of the iconic British punk band's seminal 1986 album 'The Queen Is Dead' on October 20.



Bigelow praises Boyega's Detroit performance

Kathryn Bigelow has praised John Boyega on the "complexity" in his character in 'Detroit'. The 65-year-old Oscar-winning filmmaker helmed the new movie - which is based around the murders of three African American men during the Detroit race riots in the 1960s - and she said she "loved the cast", including the 'Star Wars' actor who she praised on his "vulnerability". Speaking to Time Out Magazine, Bigelow said: "I was so lucky, I love this cast. "There are volumes that can be read on John's face, even when it's absolutely still. That character is caught between two worlds - he's wearing the uniform and yet he's also identifying with the victims. "John was able to find the complexity, the vulnerability and the incredulity of finding himself trapped in that position." The film stars Boyega, Hannah Murray, Algee Smith, Will Poulter, Jack Reynor and Anthony Mackie. Many of the characters featured in the film are based on real people, including security guard Melvin Dismukes (Boyega) and Juli Hysell (Murray) - who was injured in the riot - and Bigelow heard first-hand accounts and she said it was "incredibly important". She said: "Hearing the first-hand accounts from Melvin Dismukes, Juli Hysell and Cleveland Larry Reed was incredibly important. "They gave me little details - Juli described how they were standing facing the wall, and she put her hand over the other girl's to comfort her - at this point they had no idea if they would survive. "It's unimaginable. When Melvin was retelling his experience, it was difficult for him, but he wanted the story told right." The incident, where the three men were murdered, took place in the Algiers Motel and the hard-hitting and brutal interrogation scene took "three weeks" to film. Bigelow said: "It was intense - I shot chronologically and we probably spent three weeks in that corridor. "We were all very happy to get out of there! But what developed was a camaraderie I've never experienced before." — Bang Showbiz



Tatum tries to tell his daughter why he is away for months

Channing Tatum wants to make good films so he can explain to his daughter why he is away for "months at a time". The 37-year-old actor - who has four-year-old Everly with wife Jenna Dewan-Tatum - frequently has to go away for long periods, so he wants to have a quality finished piece of work to explain his long absences. Speaking at the UK premiere of his latest movie 'Logan Lucky' in London's Leicester Square on Monday, he said: "The script is just good. It's a good movie and doing good things is kind of paramount. "You know you want to be able to explain to your daughter and be like 'That's why dad was gone for months at a time'. "Logan Lucky' was written by Rebecca Blunt and follows two brothers, Jimmy (Tatum) and Clyde (Adam Driver), who attempt to pull off a heist during a NASCAR race in North Carolina. Driver, who shot to fame in 'Star Wars: The Last Jedi', said at the premiere that the script makes comments on "socioeconomic status". He said: "I think there's something subtle that Rebecca Blunt does in her script of making it really walk a line of, making comments on socioeconomic status or maybe having like the idea that our people, can people subvert their DNA basically. "But more than that I think it's just a great heist movie. I mean you couldn't ask for a better cast of people." The film also stars Daniel Craig, Seth McFarlane and Katie Holmes and during filming Tatum took the James Bond star on a trip to an "off roading park" and was impressed at how well he fitted in. Tatum said: "You can put the guy anywhere. I mean I took him down to this place in Atlanta. "It's called Durhamtown, and it was this off roading park. You know he fits in there and looks and he fits in wearing a tuxedo walking next to the Queen."



MUSIC & MOVIES

Dancing in the 'gods': A haven for UK concert lovers

It's a world apart from the polished atmosphere of traditional classical music concerts. Way up near the roof of London's Royal Albert Hall, spectators at the summer-time Proms soak in the music without worrying about the conventions. "If you're sitting in a seat, you have to sit with your back straight all the time and you can get a bit uncomfortable," said Lisa Beecham, a 38-year-old teacher from London. "But up here you can lie down, you can walk around, you can move position." She is among the tens of thousands who flock every year to the Proms, the world's biggest classical music festival staged at the 5,500-capacity venue.

Only a minority of them experience the concerts from the Gallery, right at the top of the circular, domed 1870s Italianate masterpiece on the edge of Hyde Park. The Gallery is a unique place to experience the BBC Promenade Concerts, which run annually for eight weeks between July and September. The circular corridor, more than 250 meters (820 feet) long, rings the top of the auditorium and offers a striking view from beneath its high arches. Up here in the Albert Hall's highest reaches-an area referred to as "the gods" in British theatres-there are no padded red seats or numbered rows.

Prommers stand where they like to best appreciate the music floating up from the philharmonic orchestra on the stage a dizzying distance below. Leaning against the barrier, with a clear view down to the musicians, Matthew Knight said he prefers standing. "You feel more part of it than if you were just sitting down," he said, marking the tempo with his right hand. "You get more concentration, you get more of the music because you're not just sitting comfortably." Knight, who works at London's Southwark Cathedral, comes to around a dozen concerts each year.

"It is the best festival in the world," he added. Like him, most concert-goers in the Gallery lean against the railing to see the stage, some with binoculars to follow the conductor close-up. If it gets crowded, elbow room is at a premium in order to see the orchestra.

Dancing with the music

A few meters back from the railing, lying on a blanket, Erica Seo and her partner have made the opposite choice. They listen to Robert Schumann's "Violin Concerto" with their eyes closed, each one lost in their own thoughts. "It is just like being in the living room, but much better music, because it is obviously live, and you get really a feel of the detail, you can feel the pulse," she said. "Usually we would sit there and watch it more closely, but today we wanted to be a bit relaxed." Jane Smith, 61, is attracted by the "anything goes" ambience. Barefoot and swinging with the rhythm, she is a regular who comes several times a year-and always to the Gallery.

"Sometimes, on the top, I can dance, but it has to be the right music. I haven't danced this year. Oh yes, I danced once," she said, with a smile. "And I can go to the toilets whenever I want." Standing by the access stairs, the ushers are relaxed towards Gallery-going Prommers. "It's kind of a special area because generally it's supposed to be standing, but it's like a tradition for each person to do their own thing," said Albert Hall employee Ruta, 21.

"As long as they don't make much noise, it's not a problem," she said. Some groups of friends make a mini-picnic out of it, sitting on the floor munching sandwiches, with plastic glasses spread out around them. The "unpretentious, relaxed" atmosphere pulls in a "much more diverse" crowd than other London classical music concerts, said Sarah Legrand, 33, who came with a friend. "Here you can see students, young people with their kids," she said, looking around. "In other normal indoor classical music venues, most people are retired." The diversity is fostered by the cheap ticketing strategy. Gallery tickets are sold on the day for £6 (\$7.75, 6.50 euros). Seats cost from £7.50 to £100. Purists lament the end this year of the traditional colorful queue outside for tickets-which has, like so much else, moved online. — AFP



This file photo shows the crowd and stage during the last night of the Proms at The Royal Albert Hall in west London. — AFP

Foo Fighters follow 'Adele' blueprint on return

Grunge veterans the Foo Fighters are channeling their inner Rick Astley with a bold new record the American rockers describe as their "weirdest" yet. While their DNA is rooted in the Seattle grunge scene of the early nineties, the band told AFP that turning to British pop diva Adele's award-winning producer Greg Kurstin for their ninth studio album, "Concrete and Gold", brought a fresh dimension to their sound. In an interview before headlining the Summer Sonic festival in Tokyo-where they invited Astley on stage for an improbable mash-up of the eighties pin-up's "Never Gonna Give You Up" and Nirvana's "Smells Like Teen Spirit"-Foo Fighters guitarist Chris Shiflett said:

"People think it's a really weird choice for us to work with a pop producer but it made perfect sense. There's so much more to Greg and his love of music and knowledge base than just the pop stuff." Foo Fighters frontman Dave Grohl, the former Nirvana drummer, chose him to replicate the alchemy he has with Adele, this time with a gnarly rock band. "We weren't getting Greg for Adele's sound," said keyboardist Rami Jaffe, previously a fan of Kurstin's indie synthpop duo The Bird and the Bee. "The Greg we had in the studio was definitely the more adventurous soundscape guy-he brought more of that stuff," he added.

"I thought: 'Oh boy, we're getting weird quick!' This record we really took extra leaps and bounds, sonically." Due next month, the new Foo Fighters album combines thunderous guitar riffs with lush, harmonic textures. Tracks such as "La Dee Da" and the Donald Trump-inspired single "Run" rock out, but the Foo Fighters shift gears on the dreamy "Dirty Water", while the title track is a slow-burner that features Boyz II Men's Shawn Stockman. Beatles legend Paul McCartney also plays drums on one track among several other guest turns, including Alison Mosshart of The Kills.

Bootleg tape

"Paul McCartney is a fan of music," said Shiflett, nibbling on vegetable sticks in between photo shoots. "He only did two passes at the song, which he had never even heard before. Then he just wanted to noodle around so we just jammed on a bunch of other stuff." The Foo Fighters shot to fame in the late nineties with hits such as "This Is A Call," "Monkey Wrench" and "Learn To Fly" and have sold more than 30 million records worldwide. "I didn't join the band until '99 but I remember a cassette tape bootleg of the first album way before it came out circulating," said Shiflett.

"All my friends that were in the know had it and it was just something that would be on the stereo at parties." But after a turbulent 2015 when Grohl broke his leg after plunging off the stage and they were forced to cancel a tour, rumors persisted that the group were set to split. "It would be so dumb for any band to break up," insisted guitarist Pat Smear, who also used to tour with Nirvana. "You just look stupid when you get back together."

Shiflett believes the secret of the band's longevity lies in not taking themselves too seriously, pointing to a spat with Coldplay, who took offence at a mischievous bumper sticker joke in a 2011 Foo Fighters video. "I remember at the time Chris Martin got super offended and actually got into it with Dave at a kids birthday party or something," he said. "It certainly wasn't meant to offend anybody. I don't think this band could ever take itself too seriously." Jaffe agrees. "Not taking yourselves too seriously-all other bands take note," he said. "It's a very important thing to keep in check and I'm sorry, Chris Martin, but all our wives love you!" — AFP



Photo shows Dave Grohl, frontman of the US band Foo Fighters, performing at the Summer Sonic festival in Makuhari, suburban Tokyo. — AFP



Photo shows members of the US band Foo Fighters performing at the Summer Sonic festival in Makuhari, suburban Tokyo.

A reptilian tail? A solar eclipse: Taylor Swift teases fans



File photo shows Taylor Swift arrives at the iHeartRadio Music Awards in Inglewood, Calif. — AP

Who can eclipse an eclipse? Why, Taylor Swift. Just days after going dark on social media, the pop star put out another clue Monday leading to a possible song drop on the same day as the big solar eclipse. And if the lyric-sharing site Genius was to be believed, the tune is titled "Timeless." The title was teased there but taken down later Monday.

As for the video clip that appears to be a twitchy reptilian tail, well, we're not sure how that might play into Swift's anticipated sixth studio album that all of her social media shenanigans seem to be leading up to, possibly in October to coincide with the anniversary of the release of her "1989." The tail may or may not have something to do with all the snake emojis that took front and center last year on Swift's social streams, including when anti-Swifties used them in Instagram comments after Kim Kardashian West released audio recordings she said proved Swift gave West's hubby, Kanye West, the go ahead for a Swift reference in the song "Famous." Swift wiped her Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and website on Friday, the third anniversary of the release of her "Shake It Off" single. — AP

Coroner: Jerry Lewis death; from end-stage heart disease

Authorities in Las Vegas say Jerry Lewis died of heart disease, but the wording of his death certificate differs from what was reported earlier. Clark County Coroner John Fudenberg said Monday that Lewis' official cause of death was end-stage cardiac disease and peripheral vascular disease. Lewis was the clownish comic hailed as an artistic genius and the host for decades of annual muscular dystrophy telethons. He died Sunday of natural causes in Las Vegas at age 91. Fudenberg says coroner deputies had been told Lewis died of ischemic (ih-SKEE-mihk) cardiomyopathy. Ferozan Malal is the hospice and palliative medicine physician in Las Vegas who signed Lewis' death certificate. She tells The Associated Press that peripheral vascular disease and ischemic cardiomyopathy both fall under the category of end-stage cardiac disease. — AP



This file photo shows Jerry Lewis accepts the Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award by the Board of Governors of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences during the Oscars telecast during the 81st Academy Awards, in the Hollywood section of Los Angeles. — AP.



File photo shows Bill Cosby arrives for his sexual assault trial at the Montgomery County Courthouse in Norristown, Pa. — AP

Cosby hires Michael Jackson's lawyer

Bill Cosby has hired Michael Jackson's former lawyer to represent him at his November retrial on sexual-assault charges in Pennsylvania. Cosby's spokesman announced Monday the 80-year-old comedian is bringing in Tom Mesereau to lead a retooled defense team. Lawyers from the first trial in June had said they wanted off the case. Mesereau won an acquittal in Jackson's 2005 child molestation trial. He also has represented boxer Mike Tyson, rap mogul Marion "Suge" Knight and a Playboy bunny. Mesereau will be joined by former federal prosecutor Kathleen Bliss and Sam Silver, who represented now-imprisoned former U.S. Rep. Chaka Fattah (SHAW-kah fa-TAH) in a corruption case. Cosby's first trial on charges he drugged and molested a woman at his suburban Philadelphia home in 2004 ended in a hung jury. — AP

Mystikal surrenders on rape charge

The rapper Mystikal has surrendered to authorities in Louisiana, where he faces a sexual assault charge. KSLA-TV video-recorded the 46-year-old rapper, whose real name is Michael Lawrence Tyler, as he entered the Caddo Correctional Center in northwest Louisiana on Monday. Tyler was wanted on a warrant listing a charge of first-degree rape.

KSLA reported that the allegation stems from an occurrence at a Shreveport casino last October. Online booking records show Tyler was in the correctional center as of Monday afternoon. Tyler was released from a Louisiana prison in 2010 after serving six years for sexual battery and extortion. Roy Maughan Jr., a Baton Rouge lawyer who represents Tyler in some matters, said he was uncertain whether counsel has been retained for the current case. — AP



File photo shows Mystikal performs at the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival in New Orleans. — AP



Brian Aldiss

BRITISH SCIENCE FICTION WRITER, BRIAN ALDISS DIES

Brian Aldiss, one of the most prolific and influential science fiction writers of the 20th century, has died aged 92. Literary agency Curtis Brown said Aldiss died early Saturday at his home in Oxford, England. Born in 1925, Aldiss served in India and Burma with the British Army during World War II and later became a bookseller, publishing his first stories in a trade magazine. He went on to have a huge influence on sci-fi, as a writer of stories and novels and as editor of many anthologies.

His work includes "Greybeard," set in a world without young people, and the "Helliconia" trilogy, centered on a planet in which the seasons last for centuries. Aldiss' 1969 short story "Supertoys Last All Summer Long" was an unrealized dream project for the late Stanley Kubrick and formed the basis for Steven Spielberg's 2001 film "A.I." He also wrote general fiction, some of it inspired by his wartime experiences, and two volumes of autobiography.

Son Tim Aldiss tweeted that his father was "a drinking companion of Kingsley Amis & correspondent with C.S. Lewis & J.R.R. Tolkien," and younger writers hailed Aldiss as a major influence and encouraging mentor. On Twitter, "Sandman" author Neil Gaiman called him "a larger than life wise writer." Aldiss was awarded the title of Grand Master by the Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America and was named an Officer of the Order of the British Empire by Queen Elizabeth II. — AP

FEATURES

Celeb ambassadors help national parks mark 101st birthday



Photo shows gymnast and Olympic gold medalist Dominique Dawes visiting the Frederick Douglass house in Washington, DC, as an ambassador for the National Park Service. — AP

How do you top a centennial? The National Park Service marks its 101st birthday Friday amid a "Parks 101" campaign enlisting celebrities as ambassadors for the park system's hidden gems. Parks 101 ambassadors have included "Queen Sugar" cast members touring Chalmette Battlefield in Louisiana, and Olympic gymnast Dominique Dawes at Washington's Frederick Douglass National Historic Site. The campaign kicked off with "Hamilton" cast member Jordan Fisher touring Alexander Hamilton's Manhattan home.

The Parks 101 campaign also introduces topics like kayaking 101 and battlefields 101. Another Parks 101 message is that visiting parks need not involve hiking or camping. Many park sites have nothing to do with the great outdoors, like a house dedicated to the history of first ladies in Canton, Ohio, and a nuclear missile site in South Dakota. — AP



Photo shows actor Jordan Fisher at Channel Islands National Park in California as an ambassador for the National Park Service.

Spice and all things rice: Lagos pays homage to jollof

In Nigeria, jollof rice isn't just a tasty West African dish—it's a national obsession. Dozens of top chefs gathered at the weekend for Lagos' inaugural jollof festival, showcasing their personal twists on the tangy tomatoey rice to a crowd of hundreds of hungry hipsters. Imoteda Aladekomo, a 31-year-old chef who has been making jollof for four years, has led the way in reinventing the national staple, creating several pioneering variants through her company Eko Street Eats.

"It's so popular because it's easy to customize," she said while preparing take-away boxes at the jollof fair, staged at a former railway yard complete with disused train tracks, blaring Nigerian music and a giant version of Scrabble. "Rice is really easy to get here whereas other ingredients aren't. Every party has to have jollof rice and every Sunday people will have it, having looked forward to it all week," she added, her plastic gloves caked in rice. "Jollof rice will always reign supreme—even compared to McDonald's or whatever, your jollof rice captures people's childhoods." Her flagship version, deep-fried in breadcrumbs and served with plantain sauce and a fiery red pepper coulis, drew a steady stream of jollof aficionados.

'Literally obsessed'

Mo Alatise, a self-taught chef, also drew a crowd with her distinctive fusion-style jollof offerings. "We try to do a mix of really local recipes, but I imagine it with things from other countries—like very traditional gnocchi from Italy with jollof," the 30-year-old told AFP. "Or a rice bowl from Asia—but instead of white rice, I made it with jollof," she said, wearing oversized sunglasses and a hat decorated with a feather.

"I've been to Italy and I read and researched a lot. It's literally our staple, we're so proud it's the nation's favorite dish. We're literally obsessed." The origins of the distinctive, deceptively simple dish are hotly contested. The word jollof is related to "Wollof", a language spoken in Senegal where the dish is also popular. As well as Nigeria and Senegal, variants of the recipe are enjoyed across West Africa. "There's this big battle



People sit waiting to be served jollof rice, a popular dish in Nigeria and across West Africa.

about where it came from. I've tried jollof from Senegal and it wasn't great. I think ours is best—but I'm a little biased," said Aladekomo. But the divisions were set aside in 2014 when British celebrity chef Jamie Oliver adapted the local favorite with alien ingredients including parsley and lemon-inspiring Ozoz Sokoh, a Lagos food blogger, to set up the festival this year.

'You cannot colonize our plates'

"There was this whole brouhaha when Jamie Oliver made it and it didn't look like jollof," said Sokoh, a 42-year-old geologist

and author of the Kitchen Butterfly blog. "Despite the jollof wars between Ghana and Nigeria they came together to say: 'You cannot colonize our plates!'" The "jollof wars" reached fever pitch last year when Ghanaian singer Sister Deborah released a song called "Ghana Jollof" that accused the Nigerian recipe of "tasting funny".

Controversies aside, Sokoh said the universal affection for the dish helps to unite the Nigerian diaspora and people with West African roots around the world. "It brings many countries together—it's not just West Africa, but countries where the slaves

went, like the American south and parts of Mexico," she said. And while food delivery services offering international favorites like sushi and pizza are expanding rapidly in Nigeria's big cities, jollof has retained a special place in the hearts of the country's huge youth population. "Most of us young people forget about our traditional food," said Jane Ibitola, a 32-year-old financial adviser from southern oil city of Port Harcourt. "But whenever you move away from it, you cherish it again." — AFP



Women hug beside letters reading "Jollof", a popular dish in Nigeria and across West Africa, during the Jollof rice festival in Lagos. — AFP photos



Members of the Amis indigenous group dancing during the traditional harvest festival in Hualien, eastern Taiwan. — AFP photos



Members of the Amis indigenous group taking part in the traditional harvest festival in Hualien, eastern Taiwan.



Members of the Amis indigenous group firing a locally-made bamboo cannons in a salute to their tribe during the traditional harvest festival.

GIRL MEETS BOY: TAIWAN'S TRIBAL MATCHMAKING FESTIVAL

As night falls on a square in the village of Matai'an, young women cast critical eyes over a dancing circle of men in embroidered skirts and feathered head dresses as part of an ancient match-making ritual. Known as "Lovers' Night", it is the grand finale of the annual harvest festival in the settlement which belongs to the Amis tribe, the largest of the 16 recognized indigenous groups in Taiwan.

Near the island's rugged east coast, the village—also known as Fata'an, the name of a local plant, in the Amis language—is a collection of basic, low-lying houses along meandering streets, located in a valley between two mountain ranges. The harvest festival—which usually runs between June and August, with each village holding it at a different time—is the biggest and most important celebration for the Amis tribe, and in Matai'an it culminates with single women taking their pick of eligible bachelors. The centuries-old custom is a reflection of the tribe's matriarchal system, which sees women make key decisions including managing finances and men marry into their wives' families.

As the singing and dancing men pick up their pace, the women move in behind their chosen love interest and tug on a multicolored cloth bag slung on their target's shoulder. To spark interest, the men wiggle and flex their muscles, the most popular among them accruing a queue of interested women. If a man reciprocates the approach, he will give his bag—known as an "alufu"—to the woman, marking the beginning of a courtship. In the past, the ritual would commonly lead to marriage and even now still sparks relationships, but it is also a chance for Amis community members who are working in the cities to return and socialize.

"Lovers' Night is to make friends," said Cheng Ying-hsuan, 22. Dressed in a red traditional outfit adorned with green beads and her own sequined alufu, she had returned to the village from the city of Hualien, where she now lives, an hour's drive away. When asked if she hoped to find a boyfriend, she laughed and said coyly: "That's also a possibility." Matai'an is one of the biggest Amis settlements and is home to around 500 people—mostly elders and children.



Members of the Amis indigenous group posing for photographs during the traditional harvest festival.

Time to reconnect

"We like the feeling of everyone coming back together and reconnecting. For us this is the most important," said Liao Ching-tung, 28, who lives in the capital Taipei. Each harvest festival, hundreds who have moved away to work or study return to join in the festivities. The indigenous community—which remains a marginalized group in Taiwanese society—has seen its traditional culture eroded since immigrants started arriving from China centuries ago.

Since President Tsai Ing-wen came to power in May 2016, her government has been pushing for greater indigenous rights and preservation of tribal languages and culture. But some groups have criticized Tsai for not going far enough and have clashed with authorities over land rights policy, demanding their ancestral areas be returned. In Matai'an, tradition is alive and kicking.

Lamen Panay, 41, who goes by her tribal name, says the matchmaking event is still meaningful to her even though she is no longer single. She has a collection of lovers' bags from past harvest festivals, but has since settled down with her long-term boyfriend, living with him in Taipei. The couple are both from the village and Lamen still makes a point of picking him out during the matchmaking ritual. "We are both usually very busy with work," she said. "It's necessary to rekindle the flames." — AFP



A child running past characters on bamboo poles that read "responsibility, undertake and to pass on".

FEATURE



A daughter of 60-year-old matriarch Dolma Lhamo standing in the balcony of a house in Zhaba.



A 60-year-old matriarch Dolma Lhamo (center) with her daughters standing in front of a house in Zhaba.



A woman and a man having a breakfast consisting of yak butter tea and tsampa in their kitchen in Zhaba in the valley of the Yalong River in Daofu County of the Garze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture. — AFP photos

IN CHINESE COMMUNITY, ONE-NIGHT STANDS ARE GETTING OLD

'Everything will be about money, and our local traditions will disappear'

Nimble after years of practice, Trinley Norbu is used to hoisting himself three stories up the side of a stone house and through the window for a one-night stand in his southwest China community. While other young men squire their love interests to dinner or a movie, Norbu has honed his climbing skills, long the key to successful courtship for men in the small matrilineal Zhaba ethnic group of Sichuan province. The Zhaba eschew monogamous relationships for traditional "walking marriages"-so-called since men typically walk to their rendezvous before slipping through their lover's window.



Fog over the houses in Zhaba in the valley of the Yalong River.



A woman riding a motorcycle on a street in Zhaba.

But the 37-year-old truck driver and others in the remote area on the edge of the Tibetan plateau lament that the tradition is waning, as women increasingly want a bit more commitment from a man. The arrival of the internet, smartphones, livestreaming and popular Korean TV shows, along with improved transportation and education opportunities beyond the valley, have exposed the once isolated Zhaba to other lifestyles. "Now the women especially have begun to want the same things as outsiders fixed marriages, and financial assets such as a house or car," he said. But an even more dramatic challenge looms on the horizon: one of the world's tallest dams will soon flood the valley, forcing villagers to scatter as they relocate from ancestral homes.

"It's heartbreaking. They've turned our area upside down, and we don't have any say in it," said Trinley Norbu, who is temporarily employed by the construction site. His friend Khando Tsering stared up at the towering, unfinished support pillars of a highway that will soon halve travel times to the nearest city and bring tourism to the once-pristine enclave. "The economy

will develop and people's character will degenerate. Everything will be about money, and our local traditions will disappear," he predicted. "That's just how things work in this era."

'People as possessions'

Walking marriages began disappearing in the 1980s as the government imposed strict family planning measures. The new policy meant heavy fines for babies born without legal fathers, forcing Zhaba people to obtain government marriage certificates and identify on paper at least a single partner as a spouse. That process introduced the idea of "people as possessions" and caused a rise in notions of jealousy, an emotion once rarely overtly expressed, according to a paper by Qinghai Normal University anthropologist Feng Min.

Since then, walking marriage has become less and less common. Feng's 2004 survey of 232 households found that only 49 percent of Zhaba households still practiced the tradition. Children in such families are raised by their mother and her siblings in large, six-story communal houses of yellowed stone on the lush green hillsides, with cavernous rooms too large for much light to penetrate. Fathers might provide some financial support, but live with their mother.

"I don't have a husband. Their father lives somewhere else," said 60-year-old matriarch Dolma Lhamo after a breakfast of yak butter tea and tsampa, roasted flour eaten by hand, as she led two daughters out to tend the family potato field. Shopkeeper Pema Bazhu used to share a home with her mother, grandmother, sisters and uncles, but she recently chose to move out and live separately with her husband and two-year-old son. "It's much more common now to see families living on their own as a unit," she said. "It's more convenient, and it's better for raising children."

'If she's willing'

Tsultrim Paldzone, 30, explained that when he and his friends were younger, they would snag tokens from girls they fancied on festival or market days, calling cards to be returned that evening during a nocturnal visit to her home. "If she's willing, then she'll run just a little bit less fast. If she's really not willing, you won't grab that token no matter how hard you try to steal it," he laughed. Cars were uncommon then. He had once walked over 10 kilometers (six miles) to reach one lover's home, starting before sunset and arriving after midnight.

Now no one in the small community - just some 13,624 people according to the latest 2010 census - lives more than a half hour's motorbike trip away. Trysts are arranged ahead of time on the popular cellphone messaging app WeChat, and the coy game of token-grabbing has mostly disappeared. "There's no challenge anymore; it's definitely not as fun as before," the painter of temple frescos lamented.



A woman standing on top of a house in Zhaba.

Government bureaucracy, too, is making it more difficult for the Zhaba's walking marriages. Children born to parents without marriage certificates are not allowed "hukou," all-important registration documents that allow them to access health care and schooling. Today, even those who wish to continue with walking marriage resort to paying unmarried acquaintances or strangers to apply for the certificate with them, said Tsultrim Paldzone. "The government won't let you just do as you please." — AFP



A woman smiling as she digs sand next to a street in Zhaba.



A girl coming out of a building in Zhaba.



Houses in Zhaba in the valley of the Yalong River.



A father and his son standing on a street in Zhaba.



Trinley Norbu demonstrating how he climbs a house in Zhaba.

Lifestyle

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 23, 2017

In Chinese community, one-night stands are getting old

31



A composite image of the total solar eclipse seen from the Lowell Observatory Solar Eclipse Experience August 21, 2017 in Madras, Oregon. — AFP

Blind visitors in Colombia try salsa, paragliding



Salsa and paragliding may not seem unusual to many visitors to the Colombian city of Cali. But exotic dances and extreme sports are brand new thrills to blind tourists from around the world. Nearly 70 blind or partially-sighted visitors from Latin

America and Europe came to the southwestern city last week in one of its first "blind tourism" expeditions. They tried salsa dancing while riding around town on a colorful local bus, clay modeling, rock climbing and even paragliding. Technology specialist Pablo

Lecuona, who is blind, launched the initiative in his native Argentina.

He started off by launching an online library for blind users and has expanded his activities to organizing adventure holidays in Argentina, Mexico and now in Colombia. "As I got in con-

tact with various people I could see that a lot of people wanted to visit Argentina or other countries," said Lecuona, 43. "But since they had a visual impairment they didn't dare to, because often the hotels are not prepared and get scared when they see a person with a visu-

al disability." Volunteers and emergency services workers act as guides. "I did different things, things I had never done before," said Spanish visitor Rafa Matos, 47, after flying off a hillside. "I wasn't thinking of paragliding but at the last minute I said to myself: 'Go for it.'" — AFP



Visually impaired people attend a salsa dance class in Cali, Colombia during the eighth version of the "Tiflocentro". — AFP photos

American Girl's first Native Hawaiian doll set to go on sale

American Girl has made its first Native Hawaiian doll. The doll's name is Nanea Mitchell and she goes on sale Monday. The doll is 18 inches (46 centimeters) tall and is priced at \$115. Her character grows up during World War II. Her wardrobe includes 1940s-era outfits, hula attire and many accessories.

A five-member advisory board helped ensure historical accuracy and cultural authenticity when creating the doll, the company said.

"We hope Nanea's powerful story of resilience, responsibility to others, and contributing for the common good - or kokua, as it's known in Hawaii - will resonate with girls and show them they have the power within to face the obstacles that come their way," said Katy Dickson, president of American Girl.

To celebrate the doll's launch, American Girl will be collecting donations for the American Red Cross Service to the Armed Forces program through the end of the year, matching every dollar made at its website and stores up to \$75,000. — AP