

Meteorologist refutes 62 C temperature as fake news



Damascus bomber kills 18 after car chase



Small traders struggle with India tax revolution



Stindl tap-in wins Germany Confederations Cup over Chile



150 FILS
NO: 17269
40 PAGES

ALL SIDES STANDING GROUND AS GULF DEADLINE 'EXPIRES'

QATAR REJECTS ULTIMATUM, COULD FACE FRESH SANCTIONS



Min 30°
Max 48°
High Tide 08:10 & 21:23
Low Tide 00:44 & 15:14

ABU DHABI AIRPORT NOW EXEMPT FROM US BAN ON LAPTOPS

DUBAI: The capital of the United Arab Emirates became the first city to be exempt from a US ban on laptop computers being in airplane cabins, the country's flag carrier said yesterday. Long-haul airline Etihad said it welcomed the decision by the US Department of Homeland Security, which comes "subject to enhanced security measures" at Abu Dhabi International Airport. That airport already has a US Customs and Border Protection facility that allows passengers to clear screening they'd otherwise have to go through when landing in America. Etihad did not elaborate on what additional security measures passengers would face to be allowed to have their laptops, tablets and other electronics with them on their flights. Neither Abu Dhabi International Airport nor Homeland Security immediately responded to a request for comment. The US ban, first announced in March,

now applies to nonstop US-bound flights from nine international airports in Amman, Kuwait, Cairo, Istanbul, Jeddah, Riyadh, Casablanca, Doha and Dubai. In late May, Homeland Security Secretary John Kelly said he was considering banning laptops from the passenger cabins of all international flights to and from the United States. Kelly's comments came after US President Donald Trump shared highly classified intelligence about the Islamic State group wanting to use laptops to target aircraft with senior Russian officials visiting the White House. The laptop ban, as well as a Trump administration travel ban on six predominantly Muslim nations, has hurt Gulf long-haul carriers. Emirates, the long-haul carrier based in Dubai, has slashed 20 percent of its flights to America in the wake of those decisions. **Continued on Page 13**

AMIR RETURNS FROM INDIA



KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah (right) is received at the airport by HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah after he arrived back to the country from a private visit to India yesterday. — KUNA (See Page 2)

DUBAI/DOHA: Qatar faces possible further sanctions by Arab states that have severed ties with Doha over allegations of links to terrorism, as a deadline to accept their demands was expected to expire yesterday night. Qatari Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani said the demands were made to be rejected, adding that the Arab ultimatum was aimed not at tackling terrorism but at curtailing his country's sovereignty. But he told reporters in Rome that Doha remained ready to sit down and discuss the grievances raised by its Arab neighbors. "This list of demands is made to be rejected. It's not meant to be accepted or ... to be negotiated," Sheikh Mohammed said. "The state of Qatar instead of rejecting it as a principle, we are willing to engage in (dialogue), providing the proper conditions for further dialogue." He added that no one had the right to issue an ultimatum to a sovereign country. The feud erupted last month when Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt severed diplomatic and travel ties with Qatar, accusing it of supporting terrorism and being an ally of regional foe Iran, charges that Doha denies. The countries have threatened further sanctions against Qatar if it does not comply with their list of 13 demands presented to Doha by Kuwaiti mediators 10 days ago. The demands include closing a Turkish military base in Qatar and shutting the Al Jazeera pan-Arab television network, which Doha also rejected. Qatar's Gulf critics accuse Al Jazeera of being a platform for extremists and an agent of interference in their affairs. The network has rejected the accusations and said it will maintain its editorial independence. **Continued on Page 13**

EGYPT FUEL HIKE FANS INFLATION FEARS

CAIRO: Hisham Gaber had been preparing his wedding for months, but started to have second thoughts as inflation in Egypt rocketed due to government austerity measures, including sharp increases in fuel prices. "Marriage and handling the additional burdens in these conditions have become an unsound decision," said the 28-year-old engineer. The government on Thursday announced an increase in fuel prices of up to 55 percent, the second since November when it also floated the currency in an IMF-backed

reform program, which fuelled inflation. Analysts believe the fuel price rises will further increase inflation although it was announced to have decreased in May to an annual rate of 30.9 percent, from 32.9 percent the previous month. "Prices are still rising but not as sharply as before," said Amr Adly, an analyst with the Carnegie Middle East Center. Radwa El-Sweify, an analyst with Pharos Holding for Financial Investments, believes that inflation will spike. **Continued on Page 13**



CAIRO: An Egyptian petrol station worker fills up a pickup truck's tank in the capital on June 29, 2017. — AFP

News

in brief

Saudi king orders columnist to stop piling on the praise

DUBAI: Saudi Arabia's King Salman bin Abdulaziz has ordered an over-enthusiastic columnist to be suspended from his job after he equated him with God, Saudi media reported yesterday. Ramadan Al-Anzi's column in Al-Jazirah newspaper describing King Salman as "Haleem", or forbearing, and "Shadeed al-Eqab", strict in punishment - both terms associated in Islam with God - appeared to have gone too far. The newspaper published an apology late on Saturday. Saudi media reported that the king had ordered that action be taken against the newspaper. In a message to Information Minister Awwad bin Saleh Alawwad, the king wrote that he was "astonished by some of the phrases used in the column", according to Okaz newspaper.

Indian woman attacked with acid for fifth time

NEW DELHI: A woman who survived an alleged gang rape and four separate acid attacks has once again been hit by corrosive liquid, Indian police said yesterday. The 35-year-old mother, who was allegedly gang-raped and attacked with acid by two men in 2008 over a property dispute, was at a women's hostel in Lucknow when a man scaled the walls and poured the chemical onto her. The woman sustained burn injuries to her face and shoulder and is undergoing treatment at a hospital. The woman was attacked twice more by the same men, in 2012 and 2013, in a bid to force her to withdraw the criminal cases against them. Most recently, the two men allegedly forced her to drink acid while she was travelling on a train with one of her daughters in March this year.

Assad appears on Syrian currency for first time

BEIRUT: President Bashar Al-Assad has appeared on the Syrian currency for the first time, his portrait printed on a new 2,000-pound banknote that went into circulation yesterday. Central bank governor Duraid Durgham said the 2,000-pound note was one of several new notes printed years ago but the decision to put it into circulation was delayed "due to the circumstances of the war and exchange rate fluctuations".



GAZA: A member of the Hamas security forces sets fire to a pile of confiscated bars of hashish and analgesic pills, seized since the beginning of the year in Gaza City, on May 11, 2017. — AFP

STIGMA KEEPING DRUG ADDICTS QUIET IN GAZA

GAZA CITY: After Umm Mazen found her husband shivering in his bed and complaining of a migraine, he confessed he was addicted to painkillers and could no longer provide for the family. In the Gaza Strip, the tiny Palestinian territory sandwiched between Israel, Egypt and the Mediterranean and ravaged by three wars in a decade, drug abuse is often a hidden problem. While no reliable statistics are available, experts and medical support groups estimate there are tens of thousands of drug users in Gaza. Young men are among those most affected in a territory suffering 45 percent unemployment, rising to more than 60 percent among the youth. Narcotics such as cannabis are sold illegally in the enclave of some two million people, but many of the most serious addicts are hooked on illicitly bought prescription medicines. Gaza's Islamist rulers Hamas, who have ruled the Strip for a decade and take a firm line on drugs, launched a fresh crackdown this year. Hamas military courts have sentenced four Palestinians to death for drug smuggling, the first such punishments since Hamas seized the Strip in 2007. Raids have also uncovered record hauls of drugs, particularly Tramadol - a powerful opiate-based painkiller that is widely available.

Umm Mazen, a 32-year-old mother of three who refused to give her full name for fear of consequences in Gaza's conservative society, said the drug nearly ruined her life. Fearing a scandal, her husband refused hospital treatment. "I warned his family and I even threatened to report it to the Hamas police," she told AFP. Iyad Al-Bozum, spokesman for the Hamas-run interior ministry, told AFP there was an "organized plan to smuggle large quantities of drugs into Gaza," saying dealers were targeting young people. While some drugs are smuggled through the Israeli border, most enter from Gaza's southern border with Egypt, the ministry said. The Gaza Strip has been blockaded for more than a decade by Israel, which has fought three wars with Hamas since 2008. The Rafah crossing with Egypt, the only entrance to the territory not controlled by Israel, has been almost completely closed since the military ousted Egypt's Islamist president Mohamed Morsi in 2013. Gaza has almost no industry and suffers from a chronic lack of water and fuel. Interviewed at a Hamas prison where he is serving seven years for drug dealing, a trafficker arrested in 2013 said he had turned to selling narcotics to make ends meet and pay for his own addiction. **Continued on Page 13**

PACQUIAO LOSS STUNS WAR-WEARY FILIPINOS

MARAWI, Philippines: Millions of boxing fans in the Philippines, including those displaced by fighting with Islamist militants, walked away in stunned disbelief as national hero Manny Pacquiao lost his world title to Australian Jeff Horn in a major upset yesterday. Pacquiao, 38, is an elected senator and a unifying figure in the Southeast Asian nation beset by conflict, grinding poverty, and frequent natural calamities. Residents of a war-torn southern city had hoped for a respite by watching the 12-round fight in displacement camps but their idol's defeat silenced cheers and prompted many to stand up even before the announcement was over. "It pains our hearts so much. Pacquiao lost and we are thinking about our burned houses. We hoped we could somehow get joy and help," displaced resident Moktar Sunggod, 42, told AFP

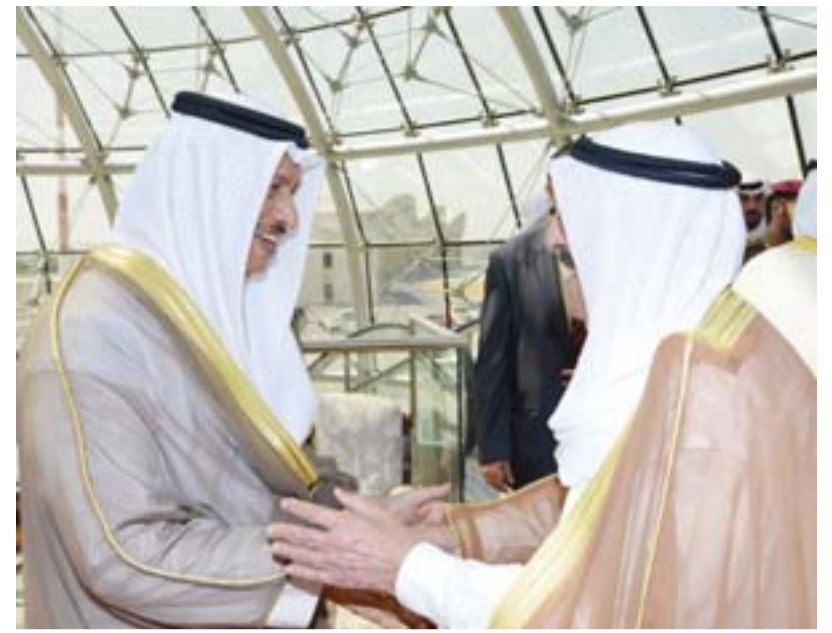
after watching the fight in an evacuation center near war-ravaged Marawi city. Islamist militants who went on a rampage in Marawi on May 23 have triggered weeks of intense fighting with the country's military that has killed more than 400 people and forced nearly 400,000 people to flee their homes. In Manila, soldiers wounded from the clashes in Marawi watched a bloodied Pacquiao from screens set up in a military hospital. Pacquiao had bled profusely from cuts to the head high above both eyes, prompting boos from crowds gathered in gymnasiums in the capital. "Pacquiao lost, but a battle is really like that. He is a true soldier because even if he is wounded he keeps attacking the opponent," armed forces chief General Eduardo Ano told reporters. **Continued on Page 13**



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is welcomed by His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.



National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem welcomes His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. — Amiri Diwan photos



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah welcomes His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

AMIR ARRIVES BACK FROM INDIA

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, accompanied by Deputy Chairman of National Guard Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, has arrived back to the country yesterday from a private visit to India. His Highness the Amir was welcomed at the airport by His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem, Sheikh Jaber Al-Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Sheikh Faisal Al-Saud Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, First Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Deputy Premier and Minister of Defense Sheikh Mohammad Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Deputy Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah, Deputy Premier and Minister of Interior Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, Deputy Premier and Finance Minister Anas Al-Saleh, Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and Acting Minister of Information Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, senior state officials and high-ranking officers of the Army, Police, National Guard, Police and Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFSD). — KUNA



First Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah welcomes His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.



Indian Ambassador to Kuwait Sunil Jain welcomes His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

CROWN PRINCE RECEIVES SENIOR OFFICIALS



KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem. —KUNA photos



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday at Bayan Palace National Assembly Speaker

Marzouq Al-Ghanem. His Highness Sheikh Nawaf also received His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

His Highness also received First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister

and Minister of Defense Sheikh Mohammad Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah

and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and Acting Minister of Information Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah. — KUNA



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Mohammad Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and Acting Minister of Information Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah.

KFH HOLDS TRAINING PROGRAM FOR 25 NEW RECRUITS

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) inaugurated a training program for 25 new recruits in order to raise their bar, enrich their banking knowledge and put them on track to be well equipped and prepared to assume the responsibility of optimally serving customers.

Deputy General Manager Sales and Distribution at KFH, Khaled Al-Subaiei said that the training program was designed to prepare the employees to get fully functional in banking transactions and financial services at KFH branches to better serve clients and cater for their aspirations.

He added that such training pro-

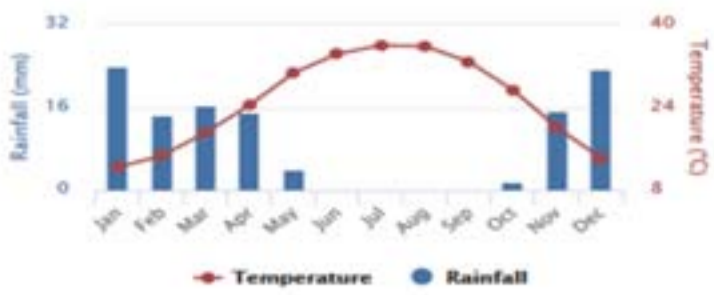
grams contribute in encountering any obstacles and challenges that face employees at work, yet raise their service level to the highest international standards of service quality. Moreover, Subaiei urged trainees for putting forth extra efforts, while striving towards pursuing leadership positions. Meanwhile, Amani Al-Merri, an official at the National Labor Force Development Department at Manpower and Government Restructuring Program - MGRP praised KFH in recognition of its efforts in training the national labor through comprehensive training plans, hailing its commitment towards qualifying

and honing the skills of its human resources. She expressed, on the sidelines of inaugurating the training program, her pride of Kuwaitis working at the private sector, affirming MGRP's support for the Kuwaitis nationals in collaboration and coordination with KFH and the private sector in general.

It is worth noting that the 5-week program includes training courses and workshops on banking products, such as; banking cards, bank accounts, deposits, letters of guarantee, and KFH eservices. In addition, the program tackles subjects on sharia basics, counterfeiting and fraud, IT systems, etc.



Average monthly Temperature and Rainfall for Kuwait from 1901-2015



It is important to evaluate how climate has varied and changed in the past. The monthly mean historical rainfall and temperature data can be mapped to show the baseline climate and seasonality by month, for specific years, and for rainfall and temperature. The chart above shows mean historical monthly temperature and rainfall for Kuwait during the time period 1901-2015. The dataset was produced by the Climatic Research Unit (CRU) of University of East Anglia (UEA). Source: The World Bank



A photo circulated on social media and Photoshopped to show the temperature appear as if it was 62 C degrees.

62 DEGREES CENTIGRADE TEMPERATURE UNTRUE, FAKE NEWS

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: "Do not believe in fake news," warned meteorologist Adel Al-Saadoun, head of the Fintas Weather Observatory, as he debunked social media reports that temperatures in Kuwait reached 62 degrees. "It is fake news - not true," Saadoun told Kuwait Times. "Kuwait has only recorded temperatures of a maximum of 52 degrees centigrade. Never in history has the

temperature in Kuwait reached 62. As we speak now, the temperature is 49 degrees Celsius (at 2 pm yesterday), but people have been posting images of 54, 56 degrees - the temperature inside the car is higher, but not as per our weather monitoring system." Saadoun said the mercury will continue to rise in the next few days till the end of July, but by the beginning of August, the heat will start subsiding. "This has been the usual weather in

Kuwait. This period is called the summer solstice. This is the period when the sun is right next to us up there, and we expect such weather in July," he said. In order to cope with the temperature in Kuwait, people are advised to stay indoors as much as possible, or if walking under the sun, apply sunscreen or use an umbrella. "This kind of weather can cause heat stroke to people walking in the sun. People easily get dehydrated, so I

strongly advise public to carry water or other liquids to replace the loss of water caused by the heat. If you have a car, don't drive without air-conditioning, as it can also be dangerous to health," Saadoun said. He also appealed to netizens to avoid sharing fake stories that could psychologically affect people. "Wait for the weather expert to say something about the weather - do not post fake stories on social media," he advised.



Adel Al-Saadoun

Legalese

CALCULATING TERMINATION INDEMNITY OR END OF SERVICE BENEFITS IN KUWAIT

By Attorney Fajer Ahmed

Starting a new job and letting go of an old work-space can be difficult, emotionally and mentally. You might be excited about your new work but you also do not want your previous employer to create tensions. Because of this, employees may on some occasions let go of their monetary rights - there is too much going on for them to calculate their indemnity or pursue it. From my experience, employees usually do not want to create tensions or go to court. So what can you do if you don't go to court? I suggest the following:

1. Try to get the previous employer's opinion or calculation from them in writing.
2. Try to negotiate with them.
3. Get your lawyer to write a letter to them or negotiate on your behalf.
4. File a complaint at shuoon (Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor).

Calculation

Question: Is there an easy way of calculating my termination indemnity? Can you please explain how I can calculate it?

Fajer: First of all, I would like to make it clear that it is not a lawyer's job to do the actual calculations. Even through the legal procedures, lawyers will not usually calculate - instead experts are called in to calculate the final amount (they are usually accountants). With that said, the principle of the calculations is not that hard to master, and I suggest that you calculate it so that you have a rough idea of your termination indemnity amount.

This will depend on whether you have been terminated or you have terminated the contract.

- In the event where you are terminated:
- Less than 5 years of employment - 15 days' pay of your salary.
 - Between 5 to 10 years of employment - 30 days' pay of your salary.
 - The total amount should not exceed an amount that is more than one year and a half of salary.

In the event where you have terminated your contract and it is an indefinite term contract:

- 3-5 years of employment - half of the indemnity mentioned above.
- 5-10 years - two thirds of the indemnity mentioned above.
- 10 plus years - you will be entitled to your entire indemnity.

Let me give an example. You ended your indefinite contract (with a three-month notice period) and your salary is KD 450 a month. You have been working for seven years with this company. How much is your termination indemnity? I have answered this question by breaking it down to simple steps, as follows:

- 1) Break down your salary into daily pay. You have 26 working days per month. Therefore, you should divide 450 by 26. This will average to KD 17.310.
- 2) Calculate your termination indemnity as if you were being terminated. That's 15 days' pay for the first five years and one month pay for the remaining two years - $15 \times \text{KD } 17.310 \times 5 = \text{KD } 1,298.1$. $30 \times \text{KD } 17.310 \times 2 = \text{KD } 1,038.6$. Total = KD 2,336.7
- 3) Calculate your termination indemnity according to the fact that you have terminated the contract. For seven years that's 2/3 of the total above.

26 days

Question: I am confused about how to calculate my indemnity. I am getting paid on a monthly basis and that is usually for 30 days, but my company is calculating my indemnity by dividing my total salary over 26 days. I could not find anything in the law that refers to 26 days.

Fajer: The reason why it is calculated 26 days is because you average have 26 working days a month - Friday is the only non-working day a month. Saturdays in Kuwait are usually paid off days. Kuwaiti labor law does not state how many days a week we can work, but did state that 48 hours a week maximum/eight hours a day - that would be six days then. Even if you do not work on Saturdays, companies calculate Saturday as paid working day to save money when calculating indemnity.

If you have any legal questions, please email Ask@FajerTheLawyer.com



The victim's car after the accident.



Drugs found with a suspect arrested yesterday.

MOTORIST KILLED IN ACCIDENT

By Hanna Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Kuwait Fire Service Directorate's (KFS) public relations department said a

vehicle flipped over and caught fire, leaving its driver, a Kuwaiti citizen, dead. The body was recovered from the vehicle and handed to forensic officers.

Drug possession

A bedoon man was arrested with a large quantity of shabu (meth) and psychoactive drugs that were brought into the country

by a truck driver. The arrest was made at the suspect's farm in Kabd, where 4 kg of shabu, 15,000 Captagon pills and an unlicensed pistol were found.

RESTAURANT FINED FOR OVERCHARGING DELIVERY

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: A citizen took a restaurant to court for charging 500 fils as delivery fee within the same area he lives instead of 250 fils. The court fined the popular restaurant KD 50. Delivery fees are set at 250 fils for deliveries made within the restaurant's area and 500 fils outside the limits.

Postmen on strike

Several workers at a company contracted with the Kuwait postal service went on strike in protest against a delay in their salaries and lack of renewal of their residency permits. An agreement was eventually reached whereby the workers agreed to hold off their strike for three days as long as

their company renews their expired visas; otherwise they will resume their strike. Labor ministry officials said salaries of postmen were deposited at the Central Bank on Thursday and workers will receive their rights.

Spoiled food

Municipal Council Member and Head of

the Technical Committee Fahd Al-Sane found it strange that the Capital municipality is unable to control a warehouse used to store spoiled food, adding that most raids over spoiled food have been against this warehouse over the past five years. He said such a warehouse should have been closed for good by concerned authorities for not making sure about the food stored in it.



KUWAIT AIRWAYS WELCOMES 8TH BOEING 777-300ER INTO ITS FLEET

PARTNERSHIP WITH ALAFCO HERALDED AS 'COLLABORATION FOR NATION'S FUTURE'

KUWAIT: Kuwait Airways, the official national airline of the State of Kuwait, welcomed the eighth of the 10th Boeing 777-300ER aircraft it has on order to Kuwait International Airport, on July 1. The eighth aircraft has been named 'Auhah' after the small island situated 41km east of the Kuwaiti mainland.

Following the recent partnership with ALAFCO, the Kuwait-based aircraft leasing company, the last four aircraft will now be financed as part of a 'sale-lease-back' agreement, each on 12-year leases. According to Kuwait Airways' Chairman,

Sami Fahad Al-Rushaid, the leasing arrangement underlines a strategic decision to ensure the short and long-term financial stability of the airline.

"The Kuwait Airways - ALAFCO collaboration will have wide-ranging influence on the stable growth and development of Kuwait Airways. This partnership is not just a key milestone for the airline, but it is also one that promotes the future success of the nation as a whole."

"Since becoming chairman, in April, it has been a key priority to ensure the long-term financial stability of the air-

line. After conducting a review and doing our due diligence on the airline's aircraft acquisition strategy, the board of directors and I concluded that 12-year leases for the four remaining aircraft presents the best way to apportion the airline's exposure to risk and bring the airline back into profitability sooner," added Rushaid.

On board the latest edition to Kuwait Airways' fleet, included KAC's technical team of engineers that's comprised of Kuwaiti nationals. The Boeing 777-300ER ('ER' for Extended Range) is the second

largest passenger aircraft in the skies today and boasts one of the longest ranges of any commercial passenger aircraft, at around 7,370 nautical miles (13,650 km). Kuwait Airways' bespoke interior design offers a three-class cabin configuration: Royal, Business, and Economy. The latter is inclusive of a 54-seat Premium Economy section. The 777-300ER aircraft are the first to be painted in the airline's dynamic new livery, as revealed at the Boeing Factory, in Everett, Washington State, in October last year.

INTERIOR DENIES TAKING ADDITIONAL MEASURES AGAINST TERRORIST THREATS

KUWAIT: The Kuwaiti Interior Ministry yesterday dismissed reports that it was taking extraordinary security measures to address external or terrorist threats. The ministry said in a statement that precautionary plans and preventive measures are part of a security plan that has been launched since the holy month of Ramadan. The plan is subject to the supervision of Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah and all relevant security departments, the ministry added. —KUNA

10 EXPATS IN EACH KUWAITI HAJJ CAMPAIGN

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Awqaf Ministry Assistant Undersecretary for Technical Coordination, Foreign Relations and Hajj Khalaf Al-Othaina announced several new mechanisms that will be applied for this season's hajj, most notably allowing early registration for campaigns and finalizing contracts of the Kuwait hajj mission. He said the ministry is reviewing prices of hajj campaigns and comparing them with the services of each campaign. He added that 275 needy and limited-income pilgrims will benefit from a low-cost pilgrimage this season through Zakat House. He said the ministry is monitoring unofficial campaigns, and the hajj affairs office has been given judicial powers to refer unlicensed campaigns to concerned authorities. He said that 10 expats will be allowed in each Kuwaiti campaign, and they have been asked to stay away from any political gatherings in the holy lands.

Economic decisions

Commerce and Industry Minister and Acting State Minister for Youth Affairs Khalid Al-Roudhan said the current summer period is void of parliamentary sessions and is an opportunity to notch up several achievements. "We can go to the next term with several economic decisions and legislations that benefit the country," he said. He said that all employees are back at work following the Eid break.

In Brief

CONDOLENCES TO BOTSWANA

KUWAIT: Deputy Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah yesterday visited Botswana's embassy in Kuwait where he conveyed condolences of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah over the death of Botswana's former president Ketumile Masire. He also offered condolences on behalf of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, the government and the people of Kuwait. —KUNA



DEPUTY FM OFF TO SERBIA

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah yesterday left for Serbia where he is expected to hold meetings and political consultations with senior officials between. Jarallah will then travel on to Britain in order to lead Kuwait's delegation to the 10th meeting of the Joint Steering Group. The Group was set up in 2012 during His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's visit to the UK. —KUNA



DOLLAR STABLE AT KD 0.303

KUWAIT: The US Dollar's exchange rate was stable at KD 0.303, while the Euro went up to KD 0.346, said the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) yesterday. The CBK added that the Sterling Pound was up to KD 0.394, while the Swiss Franc settled at KD 0.316. The Japanese yen remained at KD 0.002. —KUNA



Photo

of the day



KUWAIT: A picture taken yesterday shows motorists driving past a billboard, from the American University of the Middle East, bearing the portrait of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Arabic text that reads 'God save our Gulf... God save our Amir' placed on a main road in Kuwait City. —Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

PUBLIC EDUCATION TOPS STATE PRIORITIES



Students attend the morning assembly.

KUWAIT: The State of Kuwait pays great attention to public education, considering it one of its top priorities in the (New Kuwait 2035) vision. Always a believer in the significance of this sector in raising generations and investing in humans, Kuwait's great interest in education is reflected in caring for public and private schools and facilities, Islamic institutes and elderly learning centers. There are more than 1,450 schools and learning centers in Kuwait, with more than 82,000 teachers in 24,000 classes. —KUNA



Students participate in national activities.



Students exit the school bus.



Elementary students eat their lunch at school.



Kindergarten students during class.



Fifth grade students take their finals' exams.

Letters to Muna

Dear Muna, Trump in the Classroom.

It was the Friday before Dr Martin Luther King Jr Day. Kathryn Frey had decided to read Carmen Agra Deedy's children's book, "The Yellow Star: The Legend of King Christian X of Denmark," to her fourth-grade, US, Greenwich, Conn, class. It tells a tale of how the king and his countrymen protected the nation's Jews from Nazi persecution during World War II.

Frey teaches at New Lebanon School, one of the town's three elementary schools that receive federal funds to aid disadvantaged students. Some know Greenwich as a tony New York suburb. But one corner of it is not. In her class of 18, there are 14 Latinos, two African Americans and two whites. Seventeen are either immigrants or the children of immigrants.

Frey was sick that day, so I was recruited to read to her students. The children, 9 and 10, gathered in front of me on the rug. They had barely heard of Nazi Germany or the war, and couldn't say when the events in question took place. But they did have a firm sense of right and wrong. They blanched when I told them of what the Nazis had done and how they had discriminated.

I opened the book and began to read, pausing after each page to show the children the illustrations that help illuminate the story. Deedy's picture book is myth inspired by fact. In her telling, the king encouraged all his people to wear on their outer clothing the yellow star meant by the Nazis to identify and isolate Jews, so the invaders wouldn't know who was Jewish and who was not. History teaches that the king protected Denmark's Jews by other means. But the students got the point: Jews, non-Jews, all were Danes.

Since President Donald J Trump issued his initial executive order, temporarily barring US entry to visa holders from seven predominantly Muslim nations, and banning refugees from all nations and those from Syria indefinitely, I've thought quite a bit about Deedy's book, and why Frey chose it for her students. I sought her out in her classroom.

Frey has taught for 30 years, the last four at New Lebanon. She invited me to sit at a small, round child-size worktable near the center of the room. We were alone; her students were in gym class. The wall in front of us was lined with baskets of books that made up the room's library. Above them was a partial timeline of US history, from the first British expedition to Roanoke Island, NC, in 1584, funded by Sir Walter Raleigh, to the civil-rights era, in 1960.

Frey said that the class had just begun a unit on historical fiction - a genre with which few of the students were familiar. She had selected "The Yellow Star" for its simple theme and its schoolchild accessibility. "This is the first time that most of them have been exposed to historical time periods," she said. "At this age, they know famous people, but they don't have a sense of what happened. They know Martin Luther King, and when I returned the day after his holiday, we talked about how a person's actions and words can cause change. They made the connection between Dr King and King Christian."

Change and action and the power of words have taken on particular meaning for her students.

"The day after the [presidential] election, several children told me they were very worried about what might happen to them," Frey said. "They talked about it that morning among themselves when they came into class. They were worried about their families. One boy came to me in tears and said he was leaving the country, that his family was going back to Portugal. He went around the room, saying goodbye to his friends. Later that day I called his dad. The boy was mistaken; the family was staying." But the damage was done.

It took 15 minutes to read "The Yellow Star" to the class. Upon finishing, I looked up at the students. From their expressions, I feared I had upset some of them all over again. When I asked their thoughts on those who had threatened Denmark's Jews, their response was heartfelt, uncomplicated. "That's wrong," blurted one boy, to general agreement. "It's not fair," seconded another.

The students never mentioned the president or his executive order. But they decided they liked King Christian X very much.

Ron Berler is the author of Raising the Curve: Teachers, Students - A True Portrayal of Classroom Life. This piece first appeared in the Miami Herald.

By Ron Berler

Dear Muna,

As a long-time former resident of Kuwait, I still read the Kuwait Times website daily to see what is happening in my old home. I currently live in Texas. As a former oil company engineer I am very interested in the price of oil and gas. Muna Al-Fuzai's column on "Oil and Gas" was interesting but missed an important point. As important as oil and gas are to the world economy, they are still a commodity and are subject to the economic Laws of Supply and Demand.

As the price of a product rises, more suppliers will enter the market forcing a downward pressure on prices. Also as the price rises demand will drop also forcing another downward pressure on price. The reverse is also true. An increase in supply forces a downward spiral on price but an increasing demand. Eventually price drops until supply and demand reach equilibrium at which point the prices, supplies and demands stabilize. Any time a non-market force restricts price, the supply drops and black market prices skyrocket. Look at Venezuela today. In oil's case, OPEC raised prices and other suppliers entered the market.

The high prices in the 2000s allowed a technological revolution to take place. The \$100+/bbl made it profitable for the American drilling companies to develop hydraulic fracturing of shale oil. As I said, more suppliers entered the market, but this time the suppliers were unconventional and shale oil which collapsed the oil price. Over time the shale oil drillers learned how to make a profit at \$40-50 per barrel. OPEC now faces the situation where the shale oil companies can rapidly increase production to match price rises caused by OPEC production cutbacks.

I cherish the time I spent in Kuwait (and Qatar before that). I'm afraid that the Kuwait economic plans are broken and all oil producers and companies are facing a new world that will require some difficult decisions and times. Shale oil is not going away.

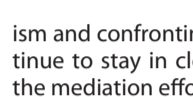
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David
San Antonio, Texas
Muna@kuwaittimes.net

US AMBASSADOR'S STATEMENT ON REGIONAL DISPUTE WITH QATAR

KUWAIT: The United States Ambassador to Kuwait Lawrence Silverman released the following statement yesterday, commenting on the current regional affairs:

"The United States supports and highly values Kuwait's efforts to mediate the dispute among Qatar and Saudi Arabia. We share the view that there is a strong need to resolve this dispute as soon as possible through diplomatic dialogue. As the United States continues to engage in the matter, we urge the countries involved to remain open to negotiation and called on all parties to exercise restraint to create space for a fair resolution of the dispute. The United States believes we and our allies and partners are strongest when we work together toward a single, common goal; and that goal is stopping terrorism and confronting extremism. The United States will continue to stay in close contact with all parties and support the mediation efforts of His Highness the Amir of Kuwait."

US Ambassador Lawrence Silverman



MGRP ENTRUSTS CONSULTANCY OFFICE WITH STUDIES OF 'BUSINESS CITY'

KUWAIT: The Manpower and Government Restructuring Program (MGRP) has tasked a consultancy office with preparing the preliminary, and the operational studies of setting up a 'business city'. The project will be established on an area of more than 33,000 square meters, and a three-

storey building of 8,125 square meters, the MGRP Secretary General Fawzi Al-Majdali said in a press release yesterday.

Majdali referred to the expected distinct role of the would-be city that will be the major incubator for small and medium sized enterprises

(SMEs) in Kuwait and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), with several halls for at least 10 various professions. The project will totally include 142 sub-incubators for business with different areas, in addition to 30 virtual ones, offering priority for the disabled, he said. —KUNA



MGRP Secretary General Fawzi Al-Majdali

KISR EAGER TO WORK WITH NEIGHBORS ON ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION

KUWAIT: Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) Director Dr Samira Omar said yesterday that KISR is interested in coordination with neighboring countries in the field of environment protection as per relevant international treaties and conventions. Omar said in a press statement

released that a KISR delegation had recently visited the Oceanology Center and College of Agronomy of Iraq's Basra University to discuss the implementation of a memo of understanding signed by both sides last year.

During the visit, the two sides addressed several subjects and

matters, primarily joint scientific studies bearing on sea environment in the Arabian Gulf, according to the statement. They also agreed to carry out a set of various environmental studies aiming at controlling the migration of fish and sea creatures, it added. —KUNA

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A Wonderful World

Crime

Report

ABSCONDERS FOUND

KUWAIT: An expat woman who was found in violation of the law told police she was staying in a place that absconding women seek for harbor. Police raided the place and discovered that it was divided into several rooms where 50 women, all in violation of residency law were staying. They said they worked as domestic helpers on a pay-by-day basis, which is a violation of labor regulations in Kuwait. Furthermore, some of the women also admitted practicing prostitution.

Drug possession

Farwaniya Security Director General Maj Gen Saleh Al-Enezi ordered an Egyptian man to be sent to Drugs Control General Department for possession of drugs for sale. The Egyptian who looked nervous was stopped and found with two bags of shabu (meth), and 17 illicit pills along with KD 250.

Freak accident

Three juveniles, who were playing with a hunting gun, wanted to scare an Indian man and pointed the weapon towards him and hit him in the eye. The boy's fun game turned into a tragedy, as a pellet was shot from the weapon and hit the man's eye, forcing the father of one of the boys to rush him to Al-Bahar Ophthalmology Hospital. The three told police they were playing and wanted to scare the Indian only when a pellet discharged and hit his eye. All three were sent to juveniles' prosecution.

Damage

A female citizen who went to a beauty salon in Hawally for a manicure, was approached by an Asian worker who offered to sell her a cream for body firming, as well as herbal pills, and the woman agreed. The Asian worker told the woman she will give her the products outside the salon for KD 46, and asked not to tell the manager as she was selling the products without her knowledge. The woman suffered lesions, boils and fungus on various parts of her body after using the cream and went back to the salon for a refund but the worker denied selling her anything. The woman went to the police station and lodged a complaint.

Wanted

A Syrian girl who was reported missing a week ago was found with a citizen in his car on Arabian Gulf Road. Policemen checked the IDs of the two and found out that the woman was wanted. The citizen bought a new telephone for the girl to keep her family out from reaching her. Both were taken to concerned authorities.

Drug abuse

Policemen responded to a call about a citizen who fell unconscious in a car after using drugs. The young man was revived and drugs were found on him, so he was arrested and sent to concerned authorities.

— Translated from the Arabic press



Al-Jarida

القلم

Al-Qabas

ENVIOUS

By Ahmad Al-Sarraf

I do not want to sound like a racist or prejudiced in this article against expats, as long as my writing will not go beyond the truth, while at the same time reflect the real situation on the ground, and what the police records say.

I asked a friend who has been employing and dealing with tens of thousands of laborers from south east Asia, about the best nationality of workers that work for him and he answered that the Bangladeshi laborers are the strongest and committed at work, which totally contradicts my thoughts about them. In fact, he was right, Bangladeshis work under the most difficult circumstances such as sheep herding in the desert during all seasons, running grocery stores on highways, guarding and caring for camps and working on construction sites in the desert.

As they are sincere in their work compared to others, we find them more creative in finding means of getting richer that normally do not attract the attention of others. Earlier they were artistic in removing manhole covers, but now they have left it for others and became more professional, as there isn't a single department that does not suffer from corruption and lacks their presence and influence in them.

You can find them selling stamps for a higher price than its value, or for the same price but with a tip, after emptying the machines, especially those stamps that are not used by the department. Others among them buy all the stamps from the machine and offer it to the public by convincing them to spare the efforts of walking towards the machines, and ladies are more demanding of such services.

There are many workers who leave their cleaning duty and stand in waiting lines in departments or hospitals, to select a suitable prey offering them to wait instead of them while they bring the file or do their work for KD 1 or more depending on the person's generosity. This is what happened to me twice, and each time I regretted being honest and rejecting the 'dishonest' offer. Some people may say that writing about such matters is not a priority, as there are more important issues that need attention, and that is true; but I am here not to hurt them. Despite of all their problems, they contribute whether they know it or not in increasing the corruption of the society's manners and make it something ordinary or accepted.

Out of my keenness towards the country's interest, I called the manager of a cleaning company and explained the situation to him, and he accused me of being envious, and that I wanted to deprive them of their livelihood, and the "reward" for those who are kind to them, and this is where the problem lies. So, I thanked him for his naivety and did not tell him that the keenness of some people to gain the "reward" for them, has compromised many of the society's values, and this is one of them.

Laborers' companies are concerned with asking their workers to stop performing jobs other than what they are asked to do. Also, concerned areas at the services ministries such as interior, health and social affairs are asked to warn the public against buying stamps from anyone and buy them from machines only.

— Translated by Kuwait Times

النهار

Al-Anbaa

THE SECURITY APPARATUS

By Dr Nermin Alhouti

The majority of my latest columns concentrated on the role of the Interior Ministry and the changes for reform in the security apparatus. And as my writings were not limited to praise, but also focused on mistakes and imperfections, today I will cover both good and bad. Before we start, we must thank the Interior Ministry headed by Minister Sheikh Khalid Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah for his men's outstanding and effective role during the Eid Al-Fitr holiday. These men left their families during this blessed occasion to perform their duty for Kuwait and its people, and despite their efforts, I will pause at some notes and hope that my words will be read as a constructive criticism and not out of a personal view.

To start with, we must congratulate Kuwait and its people and the Interior Ministry for the promotion of Sheikh Mohammad Al-Yousuf Al-Sabah to the rank of Lieutenant General, Assistant Undersecretary for Borders Security Affairs. He is a security beacon, who worked for more than 40 years to reach this security rank. He did not seek it; rather it sought him because he deserves it for his efforts leaving a great impression in all security areas that he served in.

This security monument is an example for all Interior Ministry men working effortlessly and performing their duties. His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah said about Lieutenant General Mohammad Al-Yousuf that "he remains in his uniform from morning to evening, performing his security duty at its best." Meanwhile,

the interior minister said after decorating Al-Yousuf with his new rank, "I hope that Lieutenant General Mohammad Al-Yousuf will be a guiding light for security men."

Since it was announced that Sunday was the first day of Eid, we noticed an increase in security on the streets of Kuwait, not only Interior Ministry vehicles, but we also saw officers and individuals distributed all over Kuwait on foot, highly vigilant, who could possibly be run over as they weren't wearing anything that indicated their presence between vehicles. In other words, your excellency the minister, we are supposed to care for our children and brothers while they are performing their duties and should not put them in harm's way. So this is a suggestion; why not use a vest with distinguished colors and reflectors so the motorists can see them and avoid running into policemen on duty? It is up to you to decide.

Many after Eid prayers go to visit graveyards, but this year was different. I do not deny that there were too many visitors in the past, but we want to know who on Sunday morning decided to close all gates and keep one for entry and another for exit only? Did this reduce the crowd? It rather made it worse, and we ask you for an explanation.

My message to the Interior Minister Sheikh Khalid Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah from the 'daughter of Kuwait', as I may belong to the family of the Interior Ministry due to stories I heard from my father's uncle the late Ahmad Abdellatif Al-Houti or my late sister Prosecutor General Nisrin Yousuf Al-Houti, is for the security facility to always be at its best. — Translated by Kuwait Times

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KUWAIT: Kuwait National Guard recently celebrated the graduation of a number of personnel from military education training courses that they have recently underwent. Undersecretary Lieutenant General Hashem Al-Refaei attended the ceremony.





Iraqi forces gain ground in Mosul



DAMASCUS: Syrians inspect the site of a suicide bomb attack in Damascus' eastern Tahrir Square district yesterday. — AFP

SUICIDE CAR BOMBERS HIT DAMASCUS; 18 KILLED

ISRAEL'S EX-PM OLMERT RELEASED FROM PRISON

RAMLA: Israeli ex-prime minister Ehud Olmert was freed from prison yesterday after being granted parole from a 27-month sentence for corruption scandals that brought down his promising political career. Olmert, the country's first former premier to serve jail time, did not speak to reporters when leaving the Maasiyahu prison in central Israel. Wearing a dark-colored T-shirt, he was seen exiting the jail shortly after dawn yesterday before being driven away to his home in Tel Aviv, accompanied by Israeli security agents.

The 71-year-old, premier between 2006 and 2009, was convicted of graft and entered prison in February 2016. He was granted early release by a parole board on Thursday, reducing his sentence by around a third. Prosecutors decided not to appeal the decision. The conditions of his parole were not made public, but Israeli media reported that they include reporting to police twice a month and a ban on leaving the country.

He must also volunteer at associations that help the poor, Haaretz newspaper reported. He can request a pardon from President Reuven Rivlin that would lift the restrictions. Justice Minister Ayelet Shaked told army radio she would favor such a request. In March, Rivlin rejected a request for clemency by Olmert, but said he could consider pardoning him if he were granted parole.

'Paid a heavy price'

Olmert, of the centre-right Kadima party when prime minister, resigned in September 2008 after police recommended he be indicted for graft. He however remained in office until March 2009, when right-wing Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu was sworn in to the post, which he has held ever since. Olmert won international acclaim for relaunching peace efforts with the Palestinians at the Annapolis conference in the United States in 2007, but they failed to bear fruit and the corruption charges against him have come to define his legacy.

The parole board said last week that while Olmert's crimes were "severe," he was "punished for his deeds and paid a heavy price." "The inmate underwent a significant rehabilitation process in prison and displays motivation to continue it," it said. The decision came after Olmert was recently rushed to hospital after experiencing chest pains in prison. — AFP



RAMLA: Former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert (left), 71, leaves the Maasiyahu prison yesterday. — AFP

DAMASCUS: A suicide car bomber pursued by security forces blew himself up in eastern Damascus yesterday, with a monitor reporting 18 killed in the deadliest attack to hit the Syrian capital in months. Syrian state media and the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights monitoring group said security forces intercepted three car bombers on their way into the city yesterday morning. State television said two of the vehicles were blown up on the outskirts of the city. A third managed to reach the eastern Tahrir Square district, where he was surrounded but able to detonate a bomb.

The Observatory, a Britain-based monitor, said 18 people were killed in the bombing, including at least seven members of pro-regime security forces and two civilians. It had not identified the

remaining victims. Syrian state news agency SANA quoted an interior ministry statement as saying two of the vehicles had been "destroyed" at a roundabout on the road to the city's airport. The driver of the third blew himself up while being pursued, it said, "killing a number of civilians, injuring others, and causing material damage to public and private properties."

Extensive damage

An AFP correspondent at Tahrir Square saw extensive damage to nearby buildings. Two bombed-out cars were visible to one side of the square, which was strewn with debris. A woman was crying in an apartment near the site of the attack. Her balcony had collapsed and the living room was a mess of broken glass and shattered masonry, with

pictures and curtains strewn across the floor. The woman said her daughter had been taken to hospital after being injured by flying glass.

Tahrir Square resident Mohammad Tinawi said that he had heard "gunfire at around 6:00 am (0300 GMT), then an explosion which smashed the glass of houses in the neighborhood." He said he had seen Red Crescent volunteers treating two wounded soldiers. A shopkeeper confirmed that the explosion had gone off at around 6:00 am. Damascus has been spared the large-scale battles that have devastated other major Syrian cities during the country's six-year civil war.

But dozens of people have been killed in bombings, particularly on the outskirts of the capital. In mid-March, bomb attacks on a courthouse and restaurant

in central Damascus killed 32 people. That rare assault in the heart of the city, which remains under government control, was claimed by the Islamic State group. That came days after two explosions that left 74 dead in the capital's Old City and were claimed by the Tahrir Al-Sham coalition led by the jihadist Fateh al-Sham Front.

Battlefronts around Damascus have calmed since a May deal that saw opposition fighters withdraw from several neighborhoods, along with a separate agreement on "de-escalation" zones including one in a rebel stronghold just outside the capital. Syria's conflict broke out with anti-government protests in 2011, but has since evolved into a multi-front war that has killed more than 320,000 people. — AFP

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ISRAEL'S OLMERT: FROM PROMISE TO PRISON

JERUSALEM: Ehud Olmert was once described as "probably the best" politician Israel ever produced, but the debonair ex-premier who was released from prison yesterday has seen a humiliating fall from grace. Olmert, 71, became Israel's first ex-prime minister to serve jail time when he walked into the Maasiyahu prison in the central city of Ramle in February 2016 for the 27-month term over corruption scandals.

He was granted early release by a parole board last week, shaving about a third off his sentence. He did not speak to reporters when leaving prison yesterday. Once known for relaunching peace efforts with the Palestinians while prime minister between 2006-2009, Olmert is now likely to be remembered for allegations that led one judge to speak of "corrupt and filthy practices." A balding father-of-four with a lean physique, roguish grin and a reputed taste for fine cigars, Olmert maintained his innocence in a video message before entering prison.

"You can imagine how painful and strange this change is to me, my family, loved ones and supporters," Olmert said in the video. He added that he



Former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert

A lawyer by trade, he surprised many right-wing friends in the early 1970s by marrying left-leaning artist Aliza Richter, who brought up their children with equally liberal views. He entered the cabinet in 1988 and five years later was elected mayor of

Jerusalem, a post he held for a decade but in which he rarely distinguished himself, before returning to the government under Ariel Sharon in 2003. With Sharon, he broke away from the right-wing Likud party in 2005 to form the centre-right Kadima and became premier the following year after Sharon suffered a massive stroke and slipped into a coma.

Unfulfilled promise

Before taking over as prime minister, Olmert was recognized as a key strategist behind many of Sharon's boldest moves, including Israel's 2005 withdrawal from Gaza as well as their split from the Likud. Time magazine was so impressed that it dubbed him "the 12th Israeli to serve as prime minister and probably the best politician of them all". After Sharon's collapse, Olmert led Kadima to victory in March 2006 on a platform of dismantling dozens of settlements and withdrawing troops from most of the West Bank. But things began to go downhill, with his West Bank plan shelved after a bloody 34-day war against Lebanon's Hezbollah

that summer which left more than 1,200 dead in Lebanon, mostly civilians, and 160 in Israel, mostly soldiers. Unlike many of his predecessors, Olmert lacked an illustrious military background and his handling of the conflict was harshly criticized. Although he rejected peace talks for decades, Olmert underwent a late-career conversion. Following the relaunch of negotiations in November 2007 ending a seven-year hiatus, Olmert met several times with Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas, reportedly making far-reaching concessions in a bid to reach an agreement.

But the talks were abruptly halted just over a year later when Israel embarked upon a devastating three-week offensive in Gaza. Olmert also entered into Turkish-mediated talks with long-time foe Syria in May 2008 over Israel's occupation of the Golan Heights. He resigned as premier in September 2008 after police recommended he be indicted for graft, but he remained in office until March 2009, when Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu was sworn in to the post, which he has held since. — AFP

HOSPITAL CUM FACTORY DELIVERS LIMBS, NEW LIFE IN SOUTH SUDAN

CIVIL WAR DEVASTATES WORLD'S YOUNGEST COUNTRY

JUBA: Solomon was just seven years old when he woke up missing a leg. And he was one of the lucky ones. For weeks later, Solomon was back on two feet with the aid of an artificial leg, fitted at a hectic hospital cum limb-making factory in the South Sudanese capital of Juba. The hospital is in horribly high demand in a country born of war that remains littered with mines and explosive devices, with civil war still raging all around. Most of South Sudan's approximately 60,000 amputees have suffered war-related injuries, be

Physical Rehabilitation Reference Centre. It is the country's biggest hospital for prosthetic orthotic treatment, treating about 30 patients a day. "Amputations have gone up since the beginning of the civil war in 2013, but even with increased need, access to some areas is impossible due to active fighting and many people who have lost limbs might never be able to get out and receive help," said Emmanuel Lobar, who as head of technicians oversees the production of all the prosthetic limbs. Both hospital and factory, the centre

and can all be done within a day. "It's the fitting and the patient's adaption that take up to ten days," said Lobar. Lobar is South Sudanese, like most of the hospital's 30 staff, all of whom received Red Cross training. The organization first started treating amputations in 1979 during Ethiopia's civil war, and developed the polypropylene technology that has since spread across all conflict zones.

Odhiambo has worked in many places, including Afghanistan, Yemen and Iraq. He recently took up his second mission in Juba. "Here in South Sudan, I mainly see war wounds and they are very different from civilian wounds," he explained. Nearly 250,000 mines and explosive devices were found and destroyed in South Sudan in 2017 alone, according to the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS). South Sudan slipped into civil war in 2013, just two years after becoming independent from Khartoum, and some 4 million people - one third of the population - have fled to neighboring countries in its wake.

For those left behind, risk is part of daily life. The worst case Odhiambo has seen is an 18-year-old boy, who was brought to the clinic with both legs blown off by a landmine, pieces of muscle hanging out of the wound and shrapnel fragments stuck deep in his flesh. "He was in consistent pain and it took months to build the right prosthesis, but I stayed with him through the whole process. I told him not to give up. He had his whole life ahead of him still."

A resilient nation

Simon has been coming to the hospital for several months and can still vividly recall the day he was attacked, when several bullets were shot through his leg. "I thought I was going to die, but my family took me to a small hospital where my leg was amputated," he said. Simon is from the north of the country then moved to Juba to get better care. Three in four patients at the centre are male. The women and children at the hospital underwent amputations after suffering a range of traumas, such as war injuries, crocodile bites, road accidents or infections.

It helps patients such as Solomon - just starting a new life with his first prosthesis - to meet older patients like Simon. "The boy is still young, but he can see that he's not alone with his injury," said Odhiambo. "The one difference I've noted working in South Sudan is that people here accept their fate easier than any others. They are resilient and want to go on with their lives. I even see it in Solomon," said Odhiambo. "People have suffered, but they don't lose their drive and motivation." — Reuters



ABUROC: Elizabeth Adwok (left) an ethnic Shilluk who arrived with her seven children in April after having been forcefully displaced from her home three times since South Sudan's conflict began, cooks sorghum in her small hut in the village of Aburoc, South Sudan where she lives with other displaced people. — AP

it gunshot or landmine wounds. As civil war devastates the world's youngest country - it celebrates its sixth anniversary next month - it has become increasingly difficult for amputees to gain good treatment.

Second chance

Solomon came to his first artificial limb after an open fracture turned into a life-threatening infection, which forced doctors to amputate. When he woke from surgery in a remote hospital in South Sudan's Bentiu, he was far away from the capital with little chance of rehabilitation or help adjusting to his new life. "I was put on a flight to Juba, where I am receiving a new, artificial leg," he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation from his current home at the

produces an average of 50 prostheses each month - all hand-made and custom fit.

Durable, affordable

"We use polypropylene to make the limbs, a material that has proved to be both durable and affordable," said physiotherapist Daniel Odhiambo. A Kenyan, he is one of a handful of expatriate staff at the hospital, employed by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). "The prostheses last for an average of two years and it's usually the foot, made out of a softer material, that wears out the fastest. The leg itself can last up to ten years."

Making a limb - from melting the plastic-like polypropylene to shaping it into a leg - is a quick process in the hospital's small, modern factory

ISRAEL RETALIATES AFTER STRAY SYRIAN FIRE IN GOLAN HEIGHTS

JERUSALEM: Israel returned fire at Syrian army forces late Saturday after two stray artillery rounds hit the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights, the Israeli army said. "In response to projectiles launched earlier today at Israel from Syria, Israeli forces targeted the Syrian military artillery position that was the source of the previous fire," a statement said.

Earlier the army warned Syria to expect retaliation after the rounds fell in the Israeli-controlled zone of the strategic plateau, the latest of a string of incidents across the armistice line. Both of Saturday's stray rounds were the "result of internal fighting in Syria," the army said, adding that there were no reports of casualties. "Israel holds the Syrian regime responsible for any breach of its borders and will act accordingly," chief military spokesman, Brigadier General Ronen Manelis said. "Israel maintains a policy of non-involvement in the Syrian civil war."

However, we will not tolerate any breach of Israel's sovereignty." There has been repeated stray fire across the armistice line for the past week as Syrian troops battle rebels, including hardline Islamists, on the other side. There have been no casualties on the Israeli side but the Jewish State has responded to every incident by striking Syrian army positions. Rebels recently launched an offensive against Syrian government forces in Quneitra on the Syrian side of the armistice line.

Israel has conducted several air strikes in Syria since that country's civil war erupted in 2011. Most of it has been against arms convoys or warehouses of its Lebanese arch-foe Hezbollah. The Iran-backed movement is a key supporter of the Syrian regime and is fighting alongside government forces. In April, Israel shot down what it identified only as "a target" over the Golan, hours after Syria accused it of hitting a military position near Damascus airport. Israel did not confirm or deny the reported Damascus attack.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Wednesday that he would not tolerate any spillover from the fighting in Syria.

"Our line is clear," Netanyahu said in a Hebrew-language speech during a visit to the Golan. "We shall not permit radical Islam, led by Iran or Daesh, to open a terrorist front against the state of Israel from the Syrian side of the Golan

Heights," he said using the Arabic acronym for the Islamic State Jihadist group. Israel seized 1,200 square kilometers (460 square miles) of the Golan Heights from Syria in the Six-Day War of 1967 and later annexed it in a move never recognised by the international community. Around 510 square kilometers are under Syrian control. — AFP



QATZRIN, Israel: A general view shows a car driving past a sign at the entrance of the Jewish settlement of Qatzrin in the Israeli occupied Golan Heights. — AFP



MOSUL: Smoke billows in the background behind the destroyed Al-Nuri Mosque in the Old City of Mosul, after the area was retaken from Islamic State (IS) group fighters yesterday. — AFP

IRAQI FORCES GAIN GROUND IN MOSUL

MOSUL: Special forces have recaptured more of Mosul's historic heart as they press the final stages of an assault to drive the Islamic State group from Iraq's second city, the military said yesterday. More than eight months since the country's forces launched a grueling operation to retake Mosul, IS has gone from fully controlling the city to holding a few neighborhoods on its western side. Counter-terrorism forces liberated the Makawi area of the Old City, the joint operations command announced yesterday, in a further blow at the heart of the jihadists' cross-border "caliphate".

Iraqi forces have been closing in on the Old City for months, but its narrow streets and closely spaced buildings combined with a large civilian population made for an extremely difficult fight. Security forces recaptured a series of nearby districts, cornering the jihadists, before launching an assault inside the Old City on June 18. They have since made significant progress. On Saturday, officers announced the recapture of a hospital and its surroundings north of the Old City, removing a nearby but unconnected pocket of IS resistance.

Interior ministry forces recaptured the Ibn Sina hospital along with other medical facilities including a blood bank and a clinic, Staff Lieutenant General Abdulmir Yarahall said in a statement. IS has occupied several of Mosul's hospitals during the battle for the city. Some security personnel have complained that restrictions on using heavy weapons against hospitals, intended to protect the facilities, have made operations riskier and more time-consuming.

'Advancing on 3 sides'

Federal police chief Lieutenant General Raed Shakir Jawdat said the area around the hospital, Al-Shifaa, had been completely retaken, limiting IS's presence in Mosul to

the Old City. "Our forces are advancing from three sides and are pursuing the terrorist groups in the few remaining areas of the Old City," Jawdat said in a statement. On Thursday, Iraqi forces retook the remains of the Grand Mosque of al-Nuri in their greatest symbolic victory since the battle began. IS chief Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi gave a triumphal sermon at the mosque after the jihadists captured Mosul in 2014, calling on Muslims to obey him. The mosque thus became a symbol of Baghdadi's rule and IS's self-declared cross-border "caliphate".

The jihadists made sure that the Nuri mosque was not captured intact, blowing it up along with its famed leaning minaret-known affectionately as "Al-Hadba" (The Hunchback) - as Iraqi forces closed in. IS claimed on its Amaq propaganda agency that the site was hit in a US air strike, but the US-led coalition said it was the jihadists who had "destroyed one of Mosul and Iraq's great treasures". Even though it lies in ruins, the mosque's recapture has provided a boost to Iraq's forces and its government. Prime Minister Haider Al-Abadi declared that the jihadists' "caliphate" was coming to an end.

The following day, a senior Iraqi commander said victory in Mosul would be declared within the "next few days." IS overran large areas north and west of Baghdad in 2014, but Iraqi forces backed by US-led coalition air strikes have since regained much of the territory they lost. The recapture of Mosul will not however mark the end of the war against IS. The jihadist group still holds territories in both Iraq and neighboring Syria, where it has been able to carry out attacks in government-held areas. IS militants and "lone wolf" attackers inspired by the group's ideology have also carried out multiple operations overseas. — AFP

ARAB-ISRAELI FORMER LAWMAKER JAILED OVER 'PHONE SMUGGLING'

JERUSALEM: An Arab-Israeli former lawmaker entered prison yesterday to begin a two-year sentence after he pleaded guilty to smuggling mobile phones to Palestinian detainees, a prisons spokeswoman said. Basel Ghattas of the Arab-dominated Joint List resigned his seat in the Israeli parliament as part of a plea bargain reached in March.

The 61-year-old admitted handing phones and SIM cards to Palestinian inmates. Prosecutors dropped charges of terrorism and endangering state security, for which he could have faced up to 10 years in prison. "I enter prison with my head held high and I will continue my battle for prisoners' rights," Ghattas said before entering Gilboa prison in northern Israel, in comments broadcast on army radio.

Israeli media have reported that 12 mobile phones were found on two prisoners in searches after Ghattas visited the high security Ketzioz prison in

December, using his parliamentary immunity to avoid being searched. One of the prisoners is serving time for kidnapping and murdering an Israeli soldier in 1984, the Ynet news website said. Ghattas has said his actions were motivated by "humanitarian and moral positions towards prisoners".

Lawmakers of the Joint List, the third largest bloc in parliament with 13 seats, frequently clash with Israeli authorities. Ghattas's party, Balad, is especially critical of Israeli policies.

Its three lawmakers triggered outrage among Jewish Israelis last year by meeting relatives of Palestinians authorities say were killed while carrying out attacks. Arab Israelis make up some 17.5 percent of the country's population and are descended from Palestinians who remained on their land after the creation of Israel in 1948. They hold Israeli citizenship but most see themselves as Palestinians. — AFP

CENTRAL AMERICA HIT BY MASSIVE POWER OUTAGES

HUGE POWER OUTAGE PLUNGED MILLIONS INTO DARKNESS

SAN JOSE: A huge power outage plunged millions of people across Central America into darkness Saturday, as authorities from Panama to Costa Rica to El Salvador scrambled to restore electrical service. The blackout affected some five million people in Costa Rica alone, where officials largely had managed to restore service after a nationwide power outage lasting about five hours. Authorities pinned blame for the power outages on a downed Panamanian transmission line that adversely affected the power supply for much of the region.

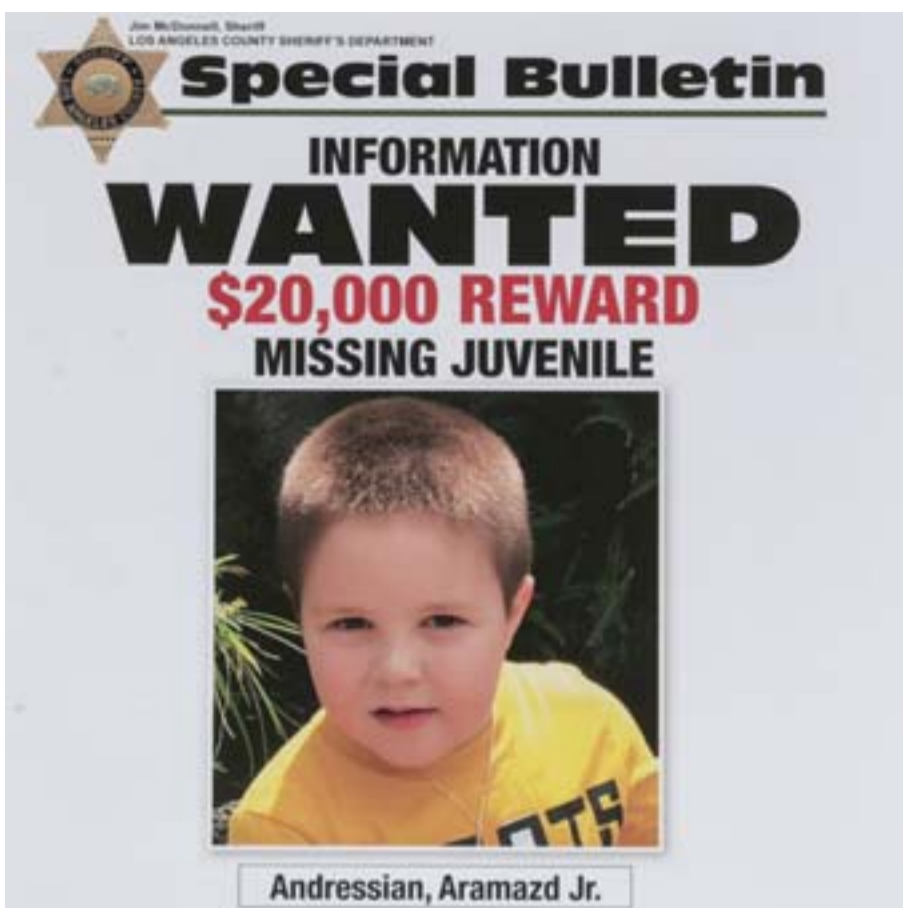
Countries in the region, from Guatemala to Panama, are connected by the same power grid, covering an expanse of some 1,800 kilometers (1,100 miles). But that interconnectedness means that the countries of Central America are vulnerable when there are power grid malfunctions in any one. Chaos reigned in the Costa

Rican capital after traffic lights ceased to function, while the main airport in San Jose had to run on backup power until the power system was up and running again.

The blackout was the first experienced in Costa Rica, among the most developed countries in Latin America, since 2001. Officials said as many as two million people were left in the dark in Panama, with an undetermined number affected in Nicaragua and El Salvador. Details were not immediately available about how many people were affected by the blackout elsewhere in Central America, or whether they had managed to get their power systems back up and running.

Officials at the Costa Rican Institute for Electricity said power was disrupted throughout the entire country, but was restored in most places by 6:00 pm. "ICE is trying to diagnose the

problem," Communications Minister Mauricio Herrera, said earlier Saturday referring to the office by its Spanish acronym. He said that workers succeeded in restoring power to some areas of Costa Rica. ICE said that the origins of the blackout were outside of the country and urged the public to remain indoors while they try to fix the problem. In Panama, the ETESA government power authority said via Twitter that the nation had experienced just a "partial blackout" and that workers were trying to restore power to the affected areas. Much of the power was restored about three hours after the blackout started, officials said. The blackout in Panama occurred about 15 minutes into a major speech delivered by President Juan Carlos Varela to the country's legislature. Nicaragua for a time had to tap the grid in neighboring Honduras to keep the lights on.—AFP



File photo shows a special bulletin 'wanted poster' of Aramazd Andressian Jr, a 5-year-old boy who had been missing for several weeks from South Pasadena, Calif. Homicide detectives have found the body of the 5-year-old boy whose father is charged with his murder.—AP

BODY OF MISSING 5-YEAR-OLD BOY FOUND IN CALIFORNIA

LOS ANGELES: Homicide detectives have found the body of a missing 5-year-old boy whose father is charged with his murder, authorities announced Saturday. Based on additional leads, detectives returned Friday to an area near Lake Cachuma in Santa Barbara County and found the remains of Aramazd Andressian Jr, according to a statement from the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. No other details were released.

The body was flown to the Los Angeles County coroner's office on Saturday. It will be examined to confirm the boy's identity, coroner's Assistant Chief Ed Winter said. Dental records and X-rays may be used because "the child was up there for the last two (months)," and an autopsy is planned to determine the cause of death, Winter said. KABC-TV contacted the boy's mother, and she responded "with three broken heart emojis," the station reported.

The boy was found on the same day that his father, Aramazd Andressian Sr., 35, of South Pasadena, was returned to Southern California from Las Vegas, where he was arrested last week. His new attorney, Ambrosio Rodriguez, said he met with Andressian for the first time on Saturday in jail. "My client is heartbroken, like anybody else," he said. Andressian has adamantly denied harming the boy. Rodriguez said his client intends to plead not guilty.

Containing there has been "a rush to judgment," the attorney said he will appear

in court today and ask to have the case continued for 30 days in order to prepare a defense. Andressian's former attorney, Daniel Nardoni, called the discovery of the boy heartbreaking news and expressed his condolences to the family. "I hope that your beautiful memories of little Ara bring you some comfort and peace," he said in a statement. Investigators have been searching for the boy since his father was found passed out in a large park in South Pasadena on April 22. Andressian had taken prescription pills and was found in a car doused in gasoline in an apparent suicide attempt, sheriff's officials said. Andressian told authorities that he drove that day about 145 miles (233 kilometers) to Lake Cachuma. Authorities had twice searched the lake unsuccessfully in the past few months, using dogs and a dive team.

Although initially arrested, Andressian was released but later charged with murder. Prosecutors contend that Andressian killed the boy to get back at his estranged wife. He and the boy's mother, Ana Estevez, were sharing custody as they went through a divorce. He was arrested in Las Vegas on June 23 because authorities believed he was at risk of fleeing the country. Andressian had shaved his beard, lightened his hair and had been socializing while living out of a Las Vegas hotel for 47 days - conduct characterized as inconsistent with that of a grieving parent, sheriff's officials said.—AP

DISGRACED DOCTOR THREATENED EX-COLLEAGUES BEFORE RAMPAGE

NEW YORK: A doctor angry that his career was derailed at a New York City hospital toted an assault rifle past security in search of a colleague he was going to hold responsible. When that person wasn't there, he opened fire anyway, killing a doctor who was only there covering a shift as a favor, authorities said Saturday. The new details of Dr Henry Bello's rampage emerged along with an email rant against colleagues he blamed for forcing him to resign from Bronx Lebanon Hospital amid sexual harassment allegations two years earlier.

The email was sent to the New York Daily News just two hours before the shooting Friday afternoon that left six other people wounded and Bello dead from a self-inflicted shot. "This hospital terminated my road to a licensure to practice medicine," the email said. "First, I was told it was because I always kept to myself. Then it was because of an altercation with a nurse." He also blamed a doctor for blocking his chances at practicing medicine. Bello had warned his former colleagues when he was forced out in 2015 that he would return someday to kill them.

A law enforcement official said that Bello arrived at the hospital with the assault rifle hidden under his lab coat and asked for a specific doctor whom he blamed for his having to resign, but the

physician wasn't there at the time. The official spoke on anonymity because the person was not authorized to discuss an ongoing investigation. It was not clear if Bello knew Dr Tracy Sin-Yee Tam, 32, who was killed in the shooting on the 16th and 17th floors of the hospital and was, like him, a family medicine doctor.

Hospital officials said that Tam normally worked in one of the hospital's satellite clinics and was covering a shift in the main hospital as a favor to someone else. "It makes you think that anything can happen to anybody," said Tam's neighbor, Alena Khaim, 23, who saw Tam's sister outside the home Friday night overcome with grief, shaking and unable to walk. "She was such a sweet girl. You would never think something like that would happen but it happened."

Judy Beckles-Ross, 46, said she's not surprised Tam volunteered to cover the shift. "She never said no," said Beckles-Ross, a friend from medical school who knew her for 11 years. "She had a good heart. Anybody that needed help, she would help them." The six others who were injured - a patient, two medical students and three physicians - largely suffered gunshot wounds to the head, chest and abdomen. One physician remained in critical condition and the rest were stable, officials said Saturday.—AP



NEW YORK: A team of NYPD and FDNY officers gather outside of Bronx-Lebanon Hospital Center in the Bronx borough of New York city.—AFP

PRESIDENT TRUMP VOWS TO SUPPORT AND DEFEND RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN US

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump vowed to support and defend religious liberty, telling a gathering of evangelical Christians that the threat of terrorism is "one of the most grave and dire threats to religious freedom in the world today." "We cannot allow this terrorism and extremism to spread in our country, or to find sanctuary on our shores or in our cities," Trump said Saturday night at a "Celebrate Freedom" concert honoring veterans. "We want to make sure that anyone who seeks to join our country shares our values and has the capacity to love our people." The evangelical megachurch First Baptist Dallas and Salem Media Group sponsored the event at the John F Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. First Baptist Pastor Robert Jeffress was a strong backer of Trump during the 2016 campaign. The event at times felt like one of Trump's signature campaign rallies, with the president promising an adoring crowd that America would "win again" and prompting cheers with attacks on the news media.

"The fake media tried to stop us from going to the White House, but I'm president and they're not," he said. Trump appeared on a stage decorated with a massive American flag. Choirs performed "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" and other hymns and debuted a song with the lyrics "make America great again" - Trump's campaign slogan. Besides speaking to the event's religious theme, Trump renewed his campaign promise to always take care of America's veterans. "Not only has God bestowed on us the gift of freedom, he's also given us the gift of heroes willing to give their lives to defend that freedom," he said. Overwhelming support from evangelical voters helped propel Trump to victory in 2016. Since he took office, Christian conservatives have been overjoyed by Trump's appointment of Justice Neil Gorsuch to the Supreme Court and his executive order ordering the IRS to ease up on a rarely enforced limit on partisan political activity by churches. Trump was spending the pre-Independence Day weekend at his golf club in Bedminster, New Jersey, but traveled back to Washington for the event.

Aggressive use of Twitter

In another development, Trump has defended his aggressive use of Twitter just hours after firing off his latest volley in his escalating feud with US media. Following an early morning Twitter tirade at CNN, NBC and a morning show host he taunted as "dumb as a rock," the president then went on the defensive, touting his electoral accomplishments as justification for his increasingly hostile rhetoric. "The FAKE & FRAUDULENT NEWS MEDIA is working hard to convince Republicans and others I should not use social media - but remember, I won the 2016 election with interviews, speeches and social media," Trump said on Twitter.

"I had to beat #FakeNews, and did. We will continue to WIN!" he posted, before ending the day at a rally in Washington that included a similar anti-media barrage. In recent days, the US leader has railed against major news organizations as "fake news," and launched a crude personal attack on Mika Brzezinski and Joe Scarborough, who headline the "Morning Joe" program on the left-leaning MSNBC cable network.

"Crazy Joe Scarborough and dumb as a rock Mika are not bad people, but their low rated show is dominated by their NBC bosses. Too bad!" he wrote Saturday, seemingly trying to get in the final word in his clash with the journalists. Apparently stung by critical coverage on the show, Trump on Thursday had tweeted: "I heard poorly rated @Morning_Joe speaks badly of me (don't watch anymore)." "Then how come low I.Q. Crazy Mika, along with Psycho Joe came to Mar-a-Lago 3 nights in a row around New Year's Eve, and insisted on joining me. She was bleeding badly from a face-lift. I said no!"

Backlash

The comments sparked a major backlash, as well as condemnation from within Trump's own Republican Party. The TV hosts responded on Friday with an opinion piece in The Washington Post titled "Donald Trump is not well," questioning his "unmoored behavior" and fitness to serve. Trump also targeted CNN, a frequent punching bag for the president. "I am extremely pleased to see that @CNN has finally been exposed as #FakeNews and garbage journalism. It's about time!" he tweeted, referring to an article that the cable news channel retracted, that claimed Congress was investigating links between Trump's administration and a Russian investment fund. Three CNN journalists resigned over the article, which was posted on the network's website on June 22 before being yanked the next day. "I am thinking about changing the name #FakeNews CNN to #FraudNewsCNN!"—Agencies



SINALOA STATE: Investigators take pictures at the crime scene next to bodies lying on a road in the town of Navolato, Sinaloa state, Mexico. 59 AK type and AR-15 bullet casings were found in the area.—AP

19 KILLED AS MEXICAN TROOPS BATTLE GANG

CULIACAN: Mexican authorities said yesterday that at least 19 people died in clashes involving armed men and security forces in the gang-plagued northwestern state of Sinaloa, where homicides have spiked dramatically following the capture and extradition of convicted drug lord Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman. The violence began with a shooting Friday that killed two men near a department store in the town of Villa Union, about 15 miles southeast of the beach resort of Mazatlan.

Officials attributed it to warring drug gang members responsible for recent violence in the state, which is home to Guzman's Sinaloa cartel. "We believe it has to do with the transport of drugs and the fight for terrain, for the areas that these groups are fighting over," Genaro Robles Casillas, the Sinaloa state public security secretary, said at a news conference. Police were alerted by emergency calls, and municipal officers encountered the suspected attackers as they were riding in several pickup trucks.

A fierce gunbattle broke out in which police killed 17 suspects, officials said. Five municipal police officers were

wounded, but reported in stable condition. Elements of the marines, the army and the federal police also responded to support the local forces. Sinaloa is the birthplace of a number of Mexico's drug gang leaders, and killings have risen there after Guzman was captured and then extradited to the United States earlier this year to face drug charges. Security experts say a power struggle has since broken out between opposing factions of the Sinaloa cartel, which also faces challenges from other gangs such as the Jalisco New Generation cartel.

During the first five months of the year, homicides jumped by 76 percent in Sinaloa state compared with the same period in 2016, according to government crime statistics. The killings include the May 15 slaying of Javier Valdez, an award-winning reporter who specialized in covering drug trafficking and organized crime, in the state capital, Culiacan. Homicides were also up about 30 percent nationwide in Mexico for the January-May period. Associated Press writer Maria Verza reported this story in Culiacan and AP writer Peter Orsi reported from Mexico City.—AP



MAZATLAN: Spent bullet casing litter a road after authorities reported a gun battle with armed men near the beach resort of Mazatlan, Mexico on Saturday, July 1, 2017.—AP

VENEZUELAN DEATH TOLL HITS 89; VIOLENCE RAGES

CARACAS: Four protesters were killed in the Venezuelan city of Barquisimeto according to officials yesterday, who said the number of people who have died in three months of anti-government demonstrations now has reached 89. No official details were provided as to what led to the latest deaths late Friday, although at least one opposition member of Venezuela's legislature said the victims, who ranged in age from 20 to 49, died by gunfire.

The city Barquisimeto is located some 350 kilometers west of Caracas. Saturday marks three months of opposition protests demanding the ouster of Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro whose term in office does not end until January 2019. Authorities said that in addition to the 89 dead, Venezuela over the past three months has seen about 1,000 people hurt in the worsening political and economic upheaval, and another 3,500 arrested. Meanwhile, Pope Francis yesterday called

for an end to violence in Venezuela and urged the country to find a "democratic solution" to its problems. "I assure my prayers for this beloved nation and express my closeness to the families who have lost their children in the streets," he said. "I call for an end to violence and a peaceful and democratic solution to the crisis," the Argentine said at the end of the Angelus prayer in Saint Peter's Square.

No official details were provided as to what led to the latest deaths late Friday, although at least one opposition member of Venezuela's legislature said the victims, who ranged in age from 20 to 49, died by gunfire. Saturday marks three months of opposition protests demanding the ouster of Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro whose term in office runs until January 2019. Maduro is blamed for a desperate economic crisis marked by shortages of food, medicine and other basics that has sparked hunger and deadly violence.—Agencies

BENIN, A PONZI SCHEME AND A LONG WAIT FOR ANSWERS

COTONOU: Sadiatou used to be a well-off trader of traditional cloth at the market in Benin's economic hub of Cotonou but now sells school equipment from the doorstep of her home. In 2010 she sank more than five million CFA francs (\$8,700, 7,600 euros) into an investment scheme that promised a quick profit. "It's a deposit I should never have made," she said. "My business took a hit and my health as well. I've been depressed for a long time. "I was counting on the savings I'd make to expand my business. But it was useless. All my money has gone."

Seven years after what was described as the biggest financial scandal in Benin's history was revealed, 20 people this week went on trial. Sadiatou is one of nearly 150,000 people that the International Monetary Fund estimates were defrauded of more than 150 billion CFA francs in the Investment Consultancy and Computing Services (ICC Services) case. Some estimates,

however, say as many as 300,000 people were lured into parting with their hard-earned or borrowed cash and life-savings on the promise of 150 to 200 percent per quarter returns.

Ponzi scheme

Despite repeated warnings about investing in so-called pyramid or Ponzi schemes, such scams are becoming commonplace throughout Africa. Frank Engelsman, who heads the Amsterdam- and Paris-based Ultrascam, which specializes in detecting international financial fraud, says such schemes are booming. "First, because the infrastructure in big cities of Africa is improving rapidly, both phone as well as internet infrastructure—and that's what these fraudsters need... "Second, because in those cities... police are not trained to handle internet international communication crimes that always cross a border between the fraudster and the victim." In Gabon, a business

run by a Pentecostal church pastor, Yves David Mapakou, allegedly swindled up to 30,000 French and Gabonese clients by promising profits on investments.

A complaint was lodged in Paris in August last year. Africa's most populous nation Nigeria remains the undisputed champion of fraud, having assiduously developed "419" scams over the years—a reference to the relevant section of the criminal code. Victims from around the world have been duped into handing over billions of dollars through a barrage of unsolicited email appeals and job offers as well as promises of marriage. Engelsman said this type of fraud has "spread from Nigeria to neighboring countries" in West Africa, taking advantage of the lack of capacity of law enforcement agencies to investigate.

"Like most bad things like crime, they tend to spread when not put to a halt, widen their scope to improve effect/income," he added. Development

can even play a part. "It's easier when the infrastructure is good, in countries where also the chamber of commerce is registering companies easily and bank accounts are opened, based on one or more registrations," he added. The Ponzi scheme in Benin-looked to the one run by Bernie Madoff in the United States that saw the financier jailed-involved paying initial investors with the money of new clients. Textile worker Aline Aklassato said she had "no reason at all not to believe" the scheme would not work. "Colleagues and friends had made deposits and received dividends," she added. "I got dividends myself for two months of 300,000 CFA francs before the difficulties started."

Criminal liability

As the case wound its way to trial, few of the alleged victims were able to attend court hearings. The current trial will only look at establishing criminal liability. But for salesman Leandros Koudenoukpo, "the

key question is reimbursement". Benin's government in 2010 launched a compensation scheme for victims through the sale of assets seized from ICC Services. But only a few benefited. The 20 defendants in the dock are facing charges of conspiracy, defrauding the public and practicing illegal banking and micro-finance.

Key questions that need answering are how were ICC Services and other firms involved are able to prosper over the years, despite having no authorization to run financial services. Did they have state backing? Benin's president at the time, former banker Thomas Boni Yayi, and several high-ranking officials were at the time accused of complicity but none is officially under investigation. Seven years may have passed and Benin's government has changed. But more time is still needed for a resolution. The trial opened on Thursday but on Friday it was adjourned to a date to be fixed because of a lack of an expert psychiatric witness and documents. —AFP

MACRON IN MALI FOR DIPLOMATIC PUSH ON SAHEL ANTI-JIHAD FORCE

'G5 SAHEL' COUNTRIES BATTLE ISLAMIST MILITANTS

BAMAKO: French President Emmanuel Macron made a lightning visit to Mali yesterday to throw his weight behind a planned Sahel force to fight jihadists but told countries their efforts had to bear fruit. The so-called "G5 Sahel" countries—Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger—have pledged to set up a joint force to combat the wave of Islamist bombings, shootings and kidnappings south of the Sahara. Macron, joining the heads of state in the Malian capital Bamako for a special summit, hailed the initiative as "a dynamic, a groundswell which France is proud to back". But, he said, "it will be up to you and your armed forces to demonstrate that the G5 can be effective, while respecting humanitarian conventions. The results have to be there to convince your partners."

Based in Sevare in central Mali, the 5,000-strong G5 Sahel force aims to bolster 12,000 UN peacekeepers and France's own 4,000-member Operation Barkhane, which is operating in the region. Macron is also looking to extra backing from Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium and the United States—which already has a drone base in Niger—beyond a pledge of 50 million euros (\$57 million) made by the European Union, a sum he described as "the start of a long-term commitment".

Serge Michailof, a researcher at the Paris-based IRIS institute, described the EU contribution as "a joke" given the EU's "very deep pockets" and the poverty of the Sahel countries. "This force is going to cost \$300-400 million (262-350 million euros) at the very least," he said. Malian Foreign Minister Abdoulaye Diop gave a figure of \$450 million. Chadian President Idriss Deby has said his country cannot afford to mobilise large numbers of troops simultaneously for the UN peacekeeping mission and also in the new force.

Deby and Macron are due to meet on the margins of the Bamako summit to discuss the financial issue, according to the French presidency. Chad's military is widely viewed as the strongest of the five Sahel nations. Al-Qaeda's Mali branch, meanwhile, offered a reminder of the jihadists' threat, with the release of a proof-of-life video of six foreign hostages. The clip posted Saturday by Nusrat Al-Islam wal Muslimeen, also known as the Group to Support Islam and Muslims, includes elderly Australian surgeon Arthur Kenneth Elliott and Frenchwoman Sophie Petronin.

Phased rollout

Macron visited Gao in northern Mali in May, his first foreign visit as president outside Europe, and promised that



BAMAKO: Chad's President Idriss Deby Itno (2nd left) speaks with French President Emanuel Macron (center) as they gather with President of Burkina Faso Roch Marc Christian Kabore (front left), Mali's President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita (rear left), Niger's President Mahamadou Issoufou (front right) and Mauritanian President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz (rear right) for a meeting during the G5 Sahel summit, in Bamako yesterday. — AFP

French troops would remain "until the day there is no more Islamic terrorism in the region". France intervened to chase out jihadists linked to Al-Qaeda who had overtaken key northern cities in Mali in 2013. That mission evolved into the current Barkhane deployment launched in 2014 with an expanded mandate for counter-terror operations across the Sahel. The new Sahel force will support national armies trying to catch jihadists across porous frontiers, and will work closely with Barkhane. Operations across Burkina Faso, Niger and Mali, all hit with frequent jihadist attacks, will be coordinated with French troops, a source in the French presidency told AFP earlier this week, while help would be given to set up command centers.

Multiple fronts

While weighing up the challenges of the G5 Sahel operation, analysts frequently compare it with the Multinational Joint Task Force battling Nigerian jihadist group Boko

Haram in the Lake Chad region, composed of troops from Benin, Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria. Despite heavy initial criticism, that force "has succeeded in a part of its mission, which is to reduce the territory controlled by Boko Haram and limit its actions," said Rinaldo Depagne from the International Crisis Group, a non-governmental organization that works on conflict resolution.

However, the G5 Sahel force has supplementary challenges in the weak armed forces of Burkina Faso and Mali, while Chad and Niger are already engaged on multiple fronts, he added. The three-nation border of Liptako-Gourma will become a "laboratory" for Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger where French forces will aim to work in tandem with these nations, before bringing Chad and Mauritania into the mix, Depagne predicted. The G5 Sahel force's top commander, Malian general Didier Dacko, has said that at first each country's contingent would operate on its own soil, gradually becoming more focused on their mutual borders. — AFP

QAEDA RELEASES A PROOF-OF-LIFE VIDEO OF SIX FOREIGN HOSTAGES

BAMAKO: Al-Qaeda's Mali branch has released a proof-of-life video of six foreign hostages, including elderly Australian surgeon Arthur Kenneth Elliott and Frenchwoman Sophie Petronin, US-based monitoring group SITE said. The 16 minute, 50 second video by Nusrat Al-Islam wal Muslimeen, also known as the Group to Support Islam and Muslims, was released on Telegram on Saturday, SITE said. The other four hostages shown are South African Stephen McGown, Romanian Iulian Ghergut, Swiss missionary Beatrix Stockly and Colombian nun Gloria Cecilia Narvaez Argoti.

No group had previously claimed responsibility for kidnapping Frenchwoman Petronin, who was abducted in late 2016 by armed men in the northern Malian town of Gao, where she ran an organisation for malnourished children. After a video clip showing Petronin, the narrator said she was hoping the French president would help return her to her family, according to SITE. The video was released just before President Emmanuel Macron arrived in Mali on Sunday to consolidate Western backing for a regional anti-jihadist force.

In the video, the hostages are separately introduced by a narrator, who says that so far there have been no negotiations for their release. The first shown is McGown, who was abducted in Timbuktu, northern Mali, in November 2011. "It's a long time to be away ... Until when do you think this will come to an end? Now we're making a new video, but I don't know what to say. It's all been said in the past. It's all been said in previous videos I've made," McGown says, according to a transcription by SITE.

He is followed by Australian Elliott, in his 80s, who, along with his wife Jocelyn, was abducted in January 2015 in Djibo, Burkina Faso, where the couple had run the sole medical clinic since 1972. Jocelyn was released in February 2016. Next in the video is Romanian mineworker Ghergut, who says he was captured in Burkina Faso on April 4, 2015. The women are then shown, including Swiss missionary Stockly, who was kidnapped in Mali in January 2016. Colombian nun Argoti was seized by armed men in the Mali village of Karangasso close to the Burkina Faso border in February 2017.

At the end of the undated video, while not spelling out any demands the narrator tells the hostages' families "no genuine negotiations have begun" for their release but then adds that negotiations are "still active". In 2012, Mali's north fell under the control of jihadist groups linked to Al-Qaeda who exploited an ethnic Tuareg-led rebel uprising, though the Islamists were largely ousted by a French-led military operation in January 2013. Since then, jihadists have continued to mount numerous attacks on civilians and the army, as well as on French and UN forces stationed there. —AFP



This image grab released by Al-Jazeera television shows part of a video broadcast by the pan-Arab channel, in which three Western hostages taken captive in northern Mali by the Al-Qaeda-linked Al-Din movement, appear in an undisclosed location in Mali. — AFP

EXPERTS ENCOURAGE MORE PUBLIC AWARENESS ON RUSSIAN MEDDLING

WASHINGTON: The United States will get hit again by Russian cyberattacks if the country doesn't pay closer attention and work more closely with European allies who are also victims, international elections experts warned. In testimony before the Senate Intelligence Committee, experts described extensive Russian interference in European elections and encouraged more awareness among the American of how Russians are trying to undermine US candidates and faith in government.

One witness, a former US ambassador to NATO, criticized both former President Barack Obama and current President Donald Trump for not doing more to publicize the problem and combat it. "I do think that it's time for Congress and not the president to lead the response to Russia's cyberattack on the United States," said Nicholas Burns, who worked as NATO ambassador and undersecretary at the State Department under President George W. Bush. Burns criticized Obama for not doing more as it became apparent during last year's election that Russia was trying to interfere.

But he had harsher words for Trump, saying he hadn't been skeptical enough of Russia's role in the election. "If he continues to refuse to act, it's a dereliction of his most basic duty to protect the country," Burns said. Russian officials have denied any meddling in the 2016 election. US intelligence officials have concluded that President Vladimir Putin was responsible. Burns recommended that the United States work more closely with Europe to identify Russia's cyber disinformation - fake news spread through social media, for example - and share information in real time. He also recommended that US print, radio and television networks find ways to quickly discredit

those Russian efforts as they happen. Janis Sarts, director of the NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence, said "society and its perceptions" are the main target of Russian influence operations, so popular awareness that they are happening is key. "We have seen resilience levels rise instantly as society recognizes being targeted," he said.

All four witnesses - Burns, Sarts, Ambassador Vesko Garcevic of Boston University and Dr Constanze Stelzenmueller of The Brookings Institution - said they believe Putin is directly responsible for the efforts to influence the election. Senators expressed concerns that there would be more efforts to undermine next year's congressional elections, and committee Chairman Richard Burr, R-NC, agreed the US must "lean on our allies" as those elections approach. "We must advance more quickly than our adversary and only together can we do so," Burr said.

After the hearing, Burr said he'd like to finish the investigation into Russian meddling by the end of this year, but acknowledged "that's aspirational right now." Burr said the panel has an aggressive schedule in July, and may go into the August recess having done as many as 80 interviews. He also said the Senate panel doesn't have plans at this point to bring in longtime Trump confidant Roger Stone for an interview. Stone is scheduled to appear before the House intelligence committee next month. "We still have a very difficult time understanding whether he has anything to contribute to our investigation," Burr said. Stone has said he communicated with Guccifer 2.0, an unnamed hacker who has taken credit for breaking into the servers at the Democratic National Committee. — AP



GELDROP, Netherlands: A laptop displays a message after being infected by a ransomware as part of a worldwide cyberattack. The unprecedented global ransomware cyberattack has hit more than 200,000 victims in more than 150 countries, Europol executive director Rob Wainwright said. Britain's state-run National Health Service was affected by the attack. — AFP

News

in brief

13 dead in bus crash

MOSCOW: Thirteen people died, two of them children, when a long-haul passenger bus collided with a truck in Russia yesterday, authorities said. The bus was travelling from Samara on the Volga river to Lzhevsk, around 900 kilometers east of Moscow, when the accident happened, the Investigative Committee, which probes accidents and disasters, said. It said it was possible the bus driver was blinded by headlights. The bus rolled over and caught on fire as a result of the collision, the regional interior ministry said, adding it would be arresting both drivers. Russia ranks among the world's worst countries for road deaths, mainly due to drink-driving, poor roads and traffic violations. Last year more than 20,000 people died in road accidents, a 12-percent drop compared to 2015.

Polio worker shot dead

PESHAWAR: A health worker who had been immunizing children against polio was shot dead in Pakistan's northwestern province Saturday, the provincial health department said. He was shot by two motorbike riders armed with assault rifles as he returned to his base from an outreach campaign. Nobody claimed responsibility for the attack but Taliban militants have attacked polio workers in the province in the past. More than 100 people have been killed in such attacks since December 2012. Islamist opposition to all forms of inoculation grew after the CIA organized a fake vaccination drive to help track down Al-Qaeda's former leader Osama Bin Laden in the Pakistani garrison town of Abbottabad. He was killed there by US forces in 2011. Despite the attacks, Pakistan hopes to be removed from the list of polio-endemic countries by 2018 by achieving its goal of no fresh cases for a year.



South African President Jacob Zuma

Zuma's no confidence vote

JOHANNESBURG: South African President Jacob Zuma, who has been weakened by growing criticism from within the ruling ANC party, will face a vote of no confidence in parliament on August 8, officials announced yesterday. Opposition parties have pushed for the vote to be held in secret, hoping to encourage ANC lawmakers to vote Zuma out of office after a series of corruption scandals. But the president retains strong support from many lawmakers in the African National Congress, which led the fight against apartheid. In the last two years, Zuma has easily survived three votes of no confidence and a separate parliament vote to remove him from office. Parliamentary Speaker Baleka Mbete yesterday issued a statement saying the date for the no-confidence vote had been changed from August 3 to August 8, due to a scheduled cabinet meeting. Mbete, a Zuma ally, will decide whether the vote is secret after a case brought to the Constitutional Court by opposition parties, who have called for ANC lawmakers to "vote with their conscience".

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TOKYO VOTES IN LOCAL ELECTIONS WITH NATIONAL CONSEQUENCES

EMBATTLED JAPAN PM SET FOR A MAJOR DEFEAT

TOKYO: Embattled Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's conservative party was set for a major defeat in the Tokyo assembly election yesterday, exit polls showed, as he struggles with a series of setbacks and scandals that have driven down his popularity at the national level. Former TV anchorwoman Yuriko Koike, who was elected the city's governor in a landslide last year, was expected to seize a comfortable majority of the 127-seat Tokyo assembly, which the ruling Liberal Democratic Party previously controlled but is now bracing for a historic defeat.

While the vote is local, it serves as an important indicator of national political sentiment. "Forces supporting Koike projected to take majority" of the chamber, national broadcaster NHK said immediately after voting ended at 8:00 pm (11:00 GMT). "The LDP set for serious defeat," and may reduce its seats to a historic low, NHK said. The broadcaster projected that a coalition under Koike would win 73 to 85 seats in the chamber. The LDP was projected to drop from 57 to less than 38 seats—the lowest number of seats the conservative party had held in the capital since 2009.

Koike, who has also served as defense and environment minister, has approval ratings topping 60 percent and is already being spoken of by analysts as a potential future prime minister, as Abe battles a

cronyism scandal. The energetic 64-year-old quit the LDP last month to lead the newly-formed Tomin First no Kai (Tokyo Residents First). Koike has pledged to rein in overspending on the Tokyo 2020 Olympics and has upended political convention by allowing television cameras into what were traditionally closed-door city government meetings. She managed to forge an alliance with the Komeito party, a Buddhist-backed moderate group that has long sided with Abe in national politics.

"I am grateful that people of Tokyo have affirmed our achievements so far," Koike said in televised remarks as media began forecasting her massive win. "This is the moment when we reinstate reasonable, common-sense politics in Tokyo," she said. A total of 259 candidates ran for seats in the male-dominated chamber that administers the city of nearly 14 million people. The vote came as Abe, who was elected prime minister in late 2012, suffers a series of setbacks and faces loud criticism for ramming controversial and unpopular legislation through parliament.

In the last week, his defense minister Tomomi Inada was in hot water over remarks she made at a local LDP rally. She asked for voters' support and said it was a request from her ministry and the Self-Defense Forces, Japan's military. The SDF is supposed to be politically neutral, and Inada retracted the remark. Abe, 62, is also

under fire over allegations he showed favoritism to a friend in a business deal. The claims come a few months after the conservative premier was forced to deny he had connections to the controversial director of a school which had purchased government land at a huge discount and counted Abe's wife as its honorary principal.

LDP's Tokyo chief Hakubun Shimomura, a national lawmaker, admitted "misspoken words" and other mistakes cost the party the election. "This is very tough. Beyond what we expected," Shimomura told NHK. "We will reflect on this and we will make efforts at national politics to regain trust of the Japanese public and Tokyo public," he said. It provided a sharp contrast with the last Tokyo election in 2013, when all of the LDP's 57 candidates won seats as Abe rode high in the polls and pushed a plan to kick-start Japan's long-slumbering economy.

A recent poll by public broadcaster NHK showed Abe's government had a 48 percent support rating, down three percentage points from a month earlier. His disapproval rating rose six percentage points to 36 percent, the survey showed. Many Tokyo residents have applauded her approach to shaking up the conservative local political establishment. "From what I see, the Tokyo assembly (dominated by the LDP) is seriously old fashioned and needs to change," said voter Yoshikazu Niwa, 67, who voiced his support for Koike. —AFP



TOKYO: Tokyo Gov Yuriko Koike waves to a crowd during her Tomin First no Kai, or Tokyoites First party's campaign rally for Tokyo Assembly election in Tokyo. —AP

DUTERTE THREATENS TO JAIL MARTIAL LAW CRITICS

MANILA: Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte has threatened to jail critics of his use of martial law in the violence-ravaged south, days before the Supreme Court is set to rule on its legality this week. Duterte declared military rule across the region of Mindanao, home to about 20 million people, in late May to quell what he said was a fast-growing threat from the Islamic State (IS) group there. The Philippine leader has insisted he would ignore the findings of the court, which has constitutional oversight, vowing only to listen to recommendations from the armed forces.

"It's not dependent on the whim of the Supreme Court. Should I believe them? When I see the situation is still chaotic and you ask me to lift it? I will arrest you and put you behind bars," Duterte said in a speech before local officials on Saturday. "We can talk of anything else and make compromises maybe but not when the interest of my

country is at stake." Government forces are continuing to battle militants occupying the city of Marawi, with aerial bombardment and ferocious street-to-street combat that has left some 400 people dead and forced nearly 400,000 people in the wider area to flee their homes.

Duterte has faced a backlash from opposition lawmakers, who last month asked the Supreme Court to reject the declaration of martial law, which they have slammed as unconstitutional. The 1987 constitution imposes limits on martial law to prevent a repeat of the abuses under dictator Ferdinand Marcos, who was deposed by a famous "People Power" revolution the previous year. The charter allows the Supreme Court to review the factual basis for proclaiming martial law, which is limited to an initial period of 60 days. If a president decides to extend martial law, congress can review and revoke it. —AFP



MANILA: An activist hold an anti martial law banner during a protest at Malacanang palace in Manila. —AFP

BANGLADESH ARRESTS 3 FEMALE MILITANTS

DHAKA: Bangladesh police have arrested three female members of an Islamist extremist group blamed for the deadly Dhaka cafe siege, officials said yesterday, as authorities continue to crack down on militant outfits a year after the attack. The three women were arrested late Saturday following a failed suicide bombing after their hide-out was raided in western Kushtia district's Bheramara town, 228 kilometers from the capital Dhaka.

Local police chief Nur Hossain

Khandker said that one of the suspects wearing a suicide bomb vest tried to blow herself up as she rushed towards authorities after being asked to surrender. "She failed and we arrested her without any harm. Later she said she couldn't find the trigger, or else, there would have been many casualties," Khandker said.

Kushtia police chief Mehedi Hasan said the women were members of Jamayetul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), a local group

blamed for the 2016 Holey bakery attack in Dhaka's diplomatic zone where militants killed 22 people. Police said one of the women, Tithi Khatun, 30, is the wife of acting JMB chief Ayyub Bacchu who is on the run and allegedly visited the hide-out frequently. "We conducted a clean sweep operation inside the den and found 10 kilos of gunpowder, two armed (suicide) vests and a loaded pistol," Khandker said. "Two minor children were also rescued from the hideout," he added. —AFP



MANILA: Police officers investigate a dead body of an alleged drug dealer (his face covered with packing tape) in Manila. —AFP

POLICE USE HOSPITALS TO HIDE DRUG KILLINGS IN PHILIPPINES

MANILA: The residents of Old Balara hid in their homes when gunfire erupted in their Manila district last September. They didn't see the police operation that killed seven drug suspects that night. But they witnessed the gory aftermath and it haunts them still. That night, Herlina Alim said she watched police haul away the men's bodies, leaving trails of blood. "They were dragged down the alley like pigs," she said. Her neighbor Lenlen Magano said she saw three bodies, face down and motionless, piled at the end of the alley while police stood calmly by.

It was at least an hour, according to residents, before the victims were thrown into a truck and taken to hospital in what a police report said was a bid to save their lives. Old Balara's chief, the elected head of the district, told Reuters he was perplexed. They were already dead, Allan Franza said, so why take them to hospital? An analysis of crime data from two of Metro Manila's five police districts and interviews with doctors, law enforcement officials and victims' families point to one answer: Police were sending corpses to hospitals to destroy evidence at crime scenes and hide the fact that they were executing drug suspects.

The drug menace

Thousands of people have been killed since President Rodrigo Duterte took office on June 30 last year and declared war on what he called "the drug menace." Among them were the seven victims from Old Balara who were declared dead on arrival at hospital. A Reuters analysis of police reports covering the first eight months of the drug war reveals hundreds of cases like those in Old Balara. In Quezon City Police District and neighboring Manila Police District, 301 victims were taken to hospital after police drug operations. Only two survived. The rest were dead on arrival.

The data also shows a sharp increase in the number of drug suspects declared dead on arrival in these two districts each month. There were 10 cases at the start of the drug war in July 2016, representing 13 percent of police drug shooting deaths. By January 2017, the tally had risen to 51 cases or 85 percent. The totals grew along with international and domestic condemnation of Duterte's campaign. This increase was no coincidence, said a police commander in Manila, who spoke to Reuters on condition of anonymity.

In late 2016, he said, police began sending victims to hospitals to avoid crime scene investigations and media attention that might show they were executing drug suspects. A Reuters investigation last year found that when police opened fire in drug operations, they killed 97 percent of people they shot. The Manila commander said police depended on emergency room doctors being too focused on the patients to care about why they were shot. The doctors "aren't asking any questions. They only record it: DOA," he said.

But five doctors told Reuters they were troubled by the rising number of police-related DOAs. Four said many drug suspects brought to hospital had been shot in the head and heart, sometimes at close range - precise and unsurvivable wounds that undermined police claims that suspects were injured during chaotic exchanges of gunfire. Oscar Albayalde, Metro Manila's police chief, said he had never heard of officers taking dead suspects to hospital to cover up crime scenes. "We will have that investigated," he told Reuters. If that investigation showed police were "intentionally moving these dead bodies and bringing them to the hospitals just to alter the evidence, then I think we have to make them explain."

Duterte's office declined to expand on Albayalde's response to Reuters' questions. According to police reports about the incidents, suspects shot during operations were "immediately rushed" to hospital. "The most important (thing) is the life of the person," said Randy Llanderal, a precinct commander in Quezon City. The police reports reviewed by Reuters showed Llanderal had led or joined operations in which 13 drug suspects ended up dead on arrival. Llanderal said all suspects were shot in self-defense during legitimate operations.

The Manila police commander, a retired senior officer and some doctors believe there is a cover up. Hospitalizing drug suspects who have been shot allows police to project a more caring image, said the Manila commander. The retired officer agreed. "It is basically a ploy to make the public believe that the police are mindful of the safety and survival of suspects," he said, speaking on condition of anonymity. The Manila commander said his officers were instructed to shoot at "sensitive areas." Suspects who survived were shot again to finish them off or smothered with their own clothing, he said.

A Reuters examination of the Old Balara incident and similar operations also suggests that the purpose of hospital runs was to destroy evidence rather than save lives. Police manhandled gunshot victims and showed no urgency in getting them medical treatment, said three sets of family members and other witnesses. Removing bodies makes it harder to work out what really happened. "You obliterate the crime scene - the evidence," said Rizaldy Rivera, an agent at the Philippines' National Bureau of Investigation who has investigated allegations of police brutality. Police forensic investigators at the scene, said Rivera, must carry out their work on what is effectively a "tampered crime scene."

Scene of Crime Operatives, or SOCO units as police forensic teams are called, process crime scenes and conduct autopsies. Aurelio Trampe, the police general who oversees SOCO, said police officers haven't been removing bodies to alter crime scenes. He said they have the discretion to disregard crime-scene investigative procedures "just as long as

they could save lives."

SOCO can still collect evidence from bodies once they reach the hospital, but doesn't always do so. Instead, said SOCO forensic chief Reynaldo Calaoa, that task falls to a police investigator assigned to the case. That investigator often hauls from the same station as the colleagues who killed the suspect. Such practices can leave the system open to abuse, said Raquel Del Rosario Fortun, an independent forensic scientist and chair of the University of the Philippines Manila pathology department. "They do the shooting, they do the killing - and they investigate themselves," she said. "Impunity, that's what's happening."

Cold to the touch

Old Balara is part of Quezon City, the largest of the 17 cities and municipalities that make up Metro Manila, and the most populous city in the Philippines. Old Balara district chief Franza said police insisted his staff of volunteer security guards bring drug-war casualties from operations to the hospital - even when it was clear they were dead. Because he has assisted the police by transporting casualties, the victims' families have accused him and his staff of complicity in the killings, he said.

In March, Franza decided he had had enough. Keep responding to police calls, he told his staff, but don't take a body to hospital without the go-ahead from SOCO crime scene investigators. "I decided not to take action which I think is not proper," said Franza. The seven victims from Old Balara arrived at East Avenue Medical Center stacked in a flatbed truck and another vehicle, said Jerome Paez, an attending physician at the emergency room that night. Most had been shot in the head and many also had multiple gunshot wounds in their chests, he said. None were breathing or had a pulse.

"All of them were cold to the touch," said Paez, who has dealt with 21 drug suspects pronounced dead on arrival. The victims had been refused admission earlier at Quezon City General Hospital's emergency room, a 15-minute drive away, because they were already dead, said district chief Franza. The hospital told Reuters it had no record of receiving patients from Old Balara that night. The Old Balara bodies were already in the morgue of East Avenue Medical Center by the time the mother of victim Elmer Gayoso arrived. She asked Reuters to withhold her name, saying she feared retribution from the police.

Gayoso had been shot through the head and the heart, she said, and the headshot had destroyed his face. She said her husband identified him by scouring his corpse for familiar childhood scars. The wounds were so grave that she didn't believe that the police took Gayoso to the hospital to save his life. "That was their pretense," she said, weeping. The killings also troubled Paez, the ER doctor. "We documented everything, just in case in the future it is needed for investigation," he said.

Even if doctors at East Avenue Medical Center suspect a new arrival is dead, hospital protocol requires them to try to resuscitate the patient, said Paez. This is costly and wastes time at a big public hospital teeming with patients. In a recent visit by Reuters, old people wearing oxygen masks lay unmoving on gurneys. New patients arrived every few minutes. Asked about the number of drug suspects arriving dead at hospital, the acting director of the East Avenue Medical Center, Victoria Abesamis, said: "I cannot categorically say that the police are bringing these dead bodies because they want to cover up. I think I will give them the benefit of the doubt."

Trained shooter

Lawrence Bello and three other doctors at East Avenue Medical Center interviewed by Reuters also expressed unease about handling dead-on-arrival cases from police operations. Bello said the police would sometimes deliver bodies that were already displaying rigor mortis, which sets in several hours after death. East Avenue would get two or three such bodies per month, he said. Bello has dealt with 20 cases where suspects were dead on arrival following a police operation, according to Quezon City Police District data. One of them, Bello said, had a single gunshot wound. The bullet had entered below the chin and exited through the top of the head. Bello said he found the injury "quite questionable."

Such an injury is usually associated with victims of suicide or execution, said Homer Venters of Physicians for Human Rights, a group based in New York that investigates mass atrocities. "It is very hard for that to happen when a person isn't fully compliant," he said. Venters didn't examine the body that Bello referred to. Patel Mayuga, another ER doctor at East Avenue Medical Center, has pronounced 10 victims of police shootings dead on arrival, according to Quezon City Police District data. Suspects who are dead on arrival usually have "clean shots" in the forehead or chest, suggesting the killings were intentional, said Mayuga. "If they are shot in the chest or head, there was time for the attacker to prepare," he said.

Many other drug suspects brought to hospitals in Quezon City by police were also shot in the head and heart, often from less than a meter away, four doctors said. One January evening, police delivered five bodies in a small jeepney bus to the state-run Novaliches District Hospital in Quezon City. The floor of the jeepney bus was puddled with the victims' blood and excrement, recalled Lawrence Laguno, the ER doctor on duty. According to police, the victims had all pulled guns and opened fire on undercover officers during an anti-drug operation. They missed, and the police returned fire. —Reuters

STIGMA KEEPING DRUG ADDICTS QUIET IN GAZA

Continued from Page 1

"It was easy to sell them - lots of people were using them because of unemployment and the bad situation in Gaza," he said in an interview monitored by prison guards. Egyptian forces have since destroyed hundreds of cross-border tunnels and Hamas has launched a crackdown against dealers, but drugs have continued to flow into the territory. In January Hamas authorities announced they had seized as many drugs in one month as in the whole of 2016, with a street value of around \$2 million. They seized 1,250 packets of cannabis and 400,000 Tramadol pills in January alone, the interior ministry said.

As a result of the crackdown, the price of a 10-pill pack of Tramadol is said to have doubled in two years to \$120. In a territory where more than two-thirds of the population rely on humanitarian aid, it is often the inability to pay that forces people to seek rehabilitation, said Sami Aweida from the Gaza Community Mental Health Program. Gaza has no center dedicated to treating drug addicts, making reliable figures on abuse all but impossible to obtain. Addicts who want to get clean often avoid specialists, Aweida said. "People prefer to do it discreetly through a liberal doctor." Umm Mazen did convince her husband to seek treatment, but mainly for economic reasons. "He could not afford (Tramadol) because of the high prices," she said. — AFP

ABU DHABI AIRPORT NOW EXEMPT FROM US BAN...

Continued from Page 1

The airline also has been trying to get the ban lifted for its direct flights to the US. It did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Dubai International

Airport, Emirates' home, is the world's busiest international air travel hub. Meanwhile, long-haul carrier Qatar Airways has been hurt amid a diplomatic dispute with Arab nations that has seen its own routes in the region cut off. — AP

ALL SIDES STANDING GROUND AS GULF.

Continued from Page 1

Gulf countries have insisted the demands were non-negotiable. The UAE ambassador to Russia has said Qatar could face fresh sanctions if it does not comply with the demands. Gulf states could ask their trading partners to choose between working with them or with Doha, he said in a newspaper interview last week. They have not specified what further sanctions they could impose on Doha but commercial bankers in the region believe that Saudi, Emirati and Bahraini banks might receive official guidance to pull deposits and interbank loans from Qatar.

Qataris appeared defiant yesterday, with newspapers decrying a "siege" and sharing on social media a cartoon of David and Goliath to illustrate Qatar's struggle with its larger neighbors. A Qatari artist whose portrait of Qatar's emir has been draped from skyscrapers and affixed to car windows across the capital signed t-shirts for Qataris at a museum on Saturday. "As you see the photo is now all over, it's a sign of loyalty to the emir and love for the country," he said.

A more serious sanction would be to ban investors from holding Qatari assets, but authorities have given no sign of doing this. Qatar's stock market fell sharply yesterday as the Qatari stock index sank as much as 3.1 percent in thin trade, bringing its losses to 11.9 percent since June 5, when Saudi and the other countries cut diplomatic and trade ties.

Newspapers in the UAE rounded on Qatar yesterday, with prominent daily The National saying in an editorial: "Qatar's wrong-headed behavior is depressingly predictable." "A conclusion to the crisis... can only arrive when Doha mends its ways and seeks to answer the Gulf's concerns. We doubt that day will come soon, even though Qatar must be aware that its actions will deliver profound consequences," it wrote.

UAE minister of state for foreign affairs Anwar Gargash played down the chances of an escalation, saying "the alternative is not escalation but parting ways", suggesting Qatar may be forced out of the six-member Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). The Western-backed body was formed in 1981 in the wake of Iran's Islamic Revolution and the outbreak of the Iran-Iraq war, by Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman and Bahrain. Speaking in Washington last week, the Qatari foreign minister said the GCC was set up to guard against external threats. "When the threat is coming from inside the GCC, there is a suspicion about the sustainability of the organization," Sheikh Mohammed told reporters.

Saudi Arabia's permanent representative to the United Nations, Abdullah bin Yahya Al-Moallemi, said on Twitter that Qatar had failed to take opportunities offered by its neighbors in the past to stop supporting terrorism. "Qatar had insisted on shaking the security of the kingdom of Saudi Arabia and interfering in the affairs of countries in the region," Moallemi said.

The crisis has hit travel, food imports and ratcheted up tensions in the Gulf and sown confusion among businesses, while pushing Qatar closer to Iran and Turkey. But it has not hit energy exports from Qatar, the world's biggest exporter of liquefied natural gas and home to the region's biggest US military base. The rift opened days after US President Donald Trump met Arab leaders in Riyadh and called for unity against regional threats such as Iran and hardline Islamist militant groups. — Agencies

EGYPT FUEL HIKE FANS INFLATION FEARS

Continued from Page 1

"Inflation over the next two months may rise to 34-36 percent but the rate of inflation in the last two months of this year will be less than the same period last year when the pound was floated," she said.

The pound has depreciated sharply from 8.8 per dollar to 18 - following its flotation, which came after the International Monetary Fund agreed a \$12 billion loan disbursed over three years. The move, in a country that relies on imports, drove inflation to a record high in April. "The exchange rate is key to price fluctuations in a country where food and medicine make up more than 40 percent of imports," said Adly.

The government has announced a raft of measures to protect low income Egyptians, saying it boosted social spending to 75 billion pounds (\$4.1 billion). About 28 percent of Egypt's 90 million people are poor, according to official figures from 2015. But government social spending will cover only between 40 percent and 50 percent of the recent price hikes, said Sweify. "The government doubled social spending, but prices have tripled," she said.

With the latest fuel increases that affect transport costs, the prices of vegetables and fruits may rise by between 20

and 25 percent, said Omar El-Shenety, the founder of Multiples Group, an investment firm. Prime Minister Sharif Ismail said the fuel subsidies were straining government financing. The projection for next year at the same levels "is 150 billion pounds. This is a big number that neither the oil sector nor the budget can handle," he said at a press conference.

But despite widespread consternation among Egyptians, it is unlikely that the soaring cost of living will lead to unrest, Shenety said. "The government's conviction that there will not be a backlash by people allowed it to make these reforms forcibly," he said. Economic grievances had fuelled the 2011 uprising that overthrew veteran strongman Hosni Mubarak, ushering in years of unrest that decimated tourism and investment.

Many Egyptians now are weary of further unrest, while the government shows little tolerance for dissent, having jailed thousands of Islamists and secular dissidents over the past few years. President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi, the former army chief who toppled his Islamist predecessor Mohamed Morsi in 2013, has said the country has no choice but to undertake the tough economic reforms his predecessors had put off, fearing unrest. — AFP

PACQUIAO LOSS STUNS WAR-WEARY FILIPINOS

Continued from Page 1

Some Filipinos found it difficult to accept the unanimous decision after they felt Pacquiao had dominated the fight. "It's a hometown decision," Jamael Panggaga, a Marawi resident displaced by six weeks of fighting, told Reuters. "It's very clear, Horn's face was battered, Manny only was bloodied because of head butts, how can he lose?" said Sergeant Badrodin Andak, who was among troops guarding the provincial capital. "It's a sad day for the Philippines," Divinagracia Matutina said in a Facebook post. "I was devastated, never expected Manny to lose." The unanimous decision was considered controversial in the Philippines because many believed Horn was a dirty fighter, who often used his head to injure Pacquiao.



MARAWI, Philippines: Displaced residents and soldiers watch the World Boxing Organization welterweight boxing match between Manny Pacquiao of the Philippines and challenger Jeff Horn of Australia at the Lanao Del Sur Capitol in this city on the southern Philippine island of Mindanao yesterday. — AFP

Pacquiao, a staunch ally of President Rodrigo Duterte, received praise from the presidential palace. "Nothing will change: Senator Manny Pacquiao will remain our people's champ, national fist, and treasure," said Duterte's spokesman Ernesto Abella. Pacquiao's rags-to-riches story, from high school dropout to millionaire world boxing champion in an unprecedented eight weight divisions, is a huge source of pride in the Philippines. In keeping with tradition, many Filipinos watched Pacquiao's

fight, which took place around midday yesterday in the Philippines time zone, in public places, including in restaurants and watering holes.

However crowds have gradually become thinner as Pacquiao hits the twilight of a glittering career. Pacquiao, who briefly retired last year before making a successful comeback against Jessie Vargas in November, had been expected to knock out Horn

in a "short and sweet" fight, according to his trainer. "I don't think he lost. He was cheated! He still came out a strong fighter," construction worker Rudy Merano, 30, told AFP in a public square of Manila's Marikina suburb. "But I think Pacquiao should retire and just focus on being senator." Boxing analysts said Pacquiao should think hard about a possible rematch with Horn. — Agencies

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LIBERATION OF MOSUL FROM DAESH IS 'IMMINENT'...



Washington Watch

SECURITY RIDDLE HOLDS ANSWER TO 40-YEAR CYPRUS CONUNDRUM

More than 40 years after Turkish troops invaded northern Cyprus, the presence of tens of thousands of soldiers on the Mediterranean island still looms large over make-or-break peace negotiations. Ankara maintains more than 35,000 troops in Cyprus, and analysts say that their fate will determine whether UN-mediated attempts to reunite Greek- and Turkish-Cypriot communities are successful. "The security issue is so important because it's linked to historic traumas," Hubert Faustmann, a political science professor at the University of Nicosia, told AFP.

The 1974 invasion of Cyprus, in response to an Athens-inspired putsch seeking union with Greece, was one of the bloodiest episodes in post-war Europe. It left hundreds dead and forced tens of thousands from their homes. More than 1,200 civilians are still missing today. Faustmann said that the Turkish soldiers - plus around 1,000 Greek troops - on Cyprus today offer some comfort to the two communities. "The Turkish-Cypriots feel they were deprived of their political rights in a violent attack from the Greek-Cypriots. The Greek-Cypriots were attacked by Turkish troops. (Both) need a safeguard against a repetition," he said. "It's a classic security dilemma."

It is one that has scuppered previous peace drives and the issue tops the billing at UN-brokered negotiations this week in the Swiss resort of Crans-Montana. A diplomatic source told AFP before the talks kicked off Wednesday that Turkey was willing to slash its troop presence by 80 percent in order to reach a deal. Foreign ministry spokesman Huseyin Muftuoglu however denied this, insisting that "the information according to which our country will withdraw troops from the island as part of a four stage plan and the percentages evoked are false."

But for Harry Tzimitras, director of the PRIO Cyprus Centre think tank, the actual number of troops that may end up leaving Cyprus was not a defining issue. "It's a matter of principle" for some Greek Cypriots, Tzimitras said. "If there's a reduction of 10 percent or 90 percent, there is still a presence of an invading power as they see it."

Solve security, solve Cyprus

Complicating matters are Cyprus' so-called guarantor powers - Greece, Turkey and Britain - who retain the right to intervene militarily and therefore must assent to any security resolution. Tzimitras said the Turkish troops controversy mattered "not only because of the physical presence of armies on the island but also because it's the one area where the international community comes in." Britain, which still operates two military base areas in Cyprus, has indicated willingness to cede some territory in order to expedite a deal.

Other areas of dispute - including the potential resettlement of and compensation for the thousands of families who fled their homes in 1974 - are also intrinsically linked to security. As UN envoy Espen Barth Eide put it as talks opened Wednesday: "Nothing is agreed until everything is agreed." The United Nations currently has around 950 peacekeepers monitoring a de facto ceasefire on the island, and could choose to wield the stick of paring back its personnel should the Crans-Montana talks fail.

"After decades of pouring resources into the Cyprus problem, the UN may signal that it wants to reduce its presence on the island and its meditation efforts, in part to push the Cypriot communities to take more initiative themselves," said James Sawyer, a Turkey and Cyprus researcher at the Eurasia Group. Any deal reached in the Swiss Alps would need to be put to twin referendums among Greek- and Turkish-Cypriot communities, and if a solution to the security question can be found, analysts believe efforts to end one of the world's longest-running conflicts might finally bear fruit. "A deal on security would mean the beginning of the final give and take," Faustmann said. "If you have a deal on security you likely get a solution to the Cyprus problem. If you don't the talks will fail." —AFP

ORBAN COURTS FAR-RIGHT VOTERS AHEAD OF VOTE

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban long proclaimed zero tolerance of anti-Semitism but has more recently risked angering Israel and Jewish people with remarks apparently courting radical right-wing voters ahead of 2018 elections. Orban's language, embracing notions of "ethnic homogeneity," appears fashioned to occupy territory on the far right abandoned by the radical nationalist opposition party Jobbik, which has moderated its message, analysts and critics said.

Orban has locked horns with European Union partners over respect for liberal democratic conventions and reluctance to take in refugees. In a speech last week Orban recalled the rule of interwar Governor Miklos Horthy, a divisive figure who led the country for 24 years until 1944, signing several landmark laws against Jews and eventually surrendering more than 500,000 to the Nazi Holocaust. "That history did not bury us (after World War One) is down to a few exceptional statesmen (like) Governor Miklos Horthy," he said. "That fact cannot be negated by Hungary's mournful role in World War Two."

The Federation of Jewish Communities in Hungary and the World Jewish Congress said in a joint statement they were "concerned" about the tone of such electioneering. Israel's ambassador to Budapest requested a clarification of Orban's words, which Jerusalem found "troubling". Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is due to pay a visit to Budapest in mid-July, the first by a sitting Israeli prime minister. Some analysts said Orban's new hardened tone signalled a change in his politics and could define his upcoming election campaign as he seeks reelection for a third consecutive term. Orban's Fidesz is a runaway favorite to win the 2018 elections, commanding about a third of the electorate with Jobbik and the

Socialists at about 10 percent each. Jobbik received about a million votes in 2014, but risks big chunks of that electorate with its new, more moderate line. "Jobbik's move towards the center has upended the power base in the center and created a vacuum on the far right," Zoltan Novak, analyst at the Centre for Fair Political Analysis said.

Harder Line Finds Followers

One indicator of that move is Orban's harder line on immigration. Hundreds of thousands of migrants have entered Hungary via its southern frontier since 2015, though most have moved on westward to more prosperous parts of the EU. Budapest has erected a border fence along its southern frontier. "It is very important to preserve our ethnic homogeneity," Orban told a business forum on Feb 28, repeating the phrase several times.

Political Capital analyst Peter Kreko sees Fidesz and Jobbik actually trading places, with Orban now on the far right. "For Orban to speak about 'ethnic homogeneity' in eastern Europe, less than 75 years after the Holocaust or 25 years after the Balkan wars, is a complete disregard of civilized norms," Kreko told Reuters. This week he used a national tour rallying against European Union plans for migrant resettlement quotas to criticize Muslim migrants. "They don't respect our culture," he said. "They seek space for their own (culture), then suppress ours, then replace it. This is a matter of identity."

Orban's "ethnic homogeneity" idea has struck a nerve with a new militant right-wing political alliance, which will launch at a rally next week and may also enter the 2018 election race. "Within decades the continent can implode demographically," alliance leader Balazs Laszlo told the pro-Orban daily Magyar Idok. "Our ethnic homogeneity can come wholly

undone... We recognize differences and defend our own race."

A leader of the movement, Mihaly Orosz denied any cooperation with Fidesz. "If they sense they can use our movement politically they might try but there is no intentional collusion on our part," he said, adding their goal was to pass the 5 percent vote threshold to get into Parliament in

2018. Kreko, the analyst, says the parallels clearly indicate a strategic squeeze: harvesting voters left behind by Jobbik from both the center of the political spectrum and the extreme right. Fidesz also denied any cooperation. "Fidesz rejects all kinds of anti-Semitism, and does not cooperate with these politicians," the party said in an emailed statement. — Reuters



Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban arrives for a memorial service for late former Chancellor Helmut Kohl on July 1, 2017 at the cathedral in Speyer. —AFP

'SCHOOLMASTER' XI LEAVES HONG KONG SMARTING

A landmark visit by Chinese President Xi Jinping to Hong Kong left little doubt that Beijing views the city as a destabilizing hotbed of unacceptable political dissent that must prove its loyalty, analysts said yesterday. His three-day trip to celebrate 20 years since Hong Kong was handed back to China by Britain, culminated Saturday in a 30-minute speech warning that any challenge to Beijing's control over the city crossed a "red line". That was seen as a salvo against a new wave of activists calling for self-determination or independence for semi-autonomous Hong Kong, concepts intolerable to Beijing.

Throughout the televised address, Xi played up Hong Kong's role in upholding China's national security and sovereignty, casting it as a potential breeding ground for instability that must be reined in. It comes after major political turbulence in recent years which saw mass rallies calling for democratic reform bring parts of the city to a standstill for months in 2014.

Since then, a "localist" movement has emerged promoting Hong Kong's own separate identity as fewer young people see themselves as "Chinese". Some in that camp want a complete split from the mainland. The address laid out a "very strong warning" against dissenters, said Jean-Pierre Cabestan, a political science professor at Hong Kong Baptist University.

"Xi's acting as a schoolmaster, warning there will be consequences if they misbehave," he added.

Xi also called on authorities to "enhance" education to raise awareness of China's national history and culture, alluding to the need to bring young people back into the fold. By putting national security and education front and center, Xi is pushing Hong Kong's new Beijing-friendly leader Carrie Lam to revisit two potentially explosive catalysts for social and political unrest.

The last attempt to implement a compulsory patriotic curriculum was shelved in 2012 after huge rallies by parents, teachers and students who feared it was Beijing brainwashing. Those protests were led by a then 15-year-old Joshua Wong, now an internationally known pro-democracy campaigner. A proposed anti-subversion national security law also triggered massive demonstrations in 2003 over concerns it would lead to suppression of rights and freedoms. It has never been implemented. "If Carrie Lam does what Xi Jinping said, which is to relaunch the national education campaign and to draft a national security law, she's going to antagonize a lot of Hong Kong people," said Cabestan.

Deepening divisions

Xi appeared relaxed, almost disinterested at times, during a visit which included presiding over Hong Kong's biggest military parade since the 1997 handover. But his demeanor did not reflect an absence of purpose. The South China Morning Post described his strategy as "speak softly but carry a big stick", a

proverb made famous by United States President Theodore Roosevelt to describe his approach to foreign policy.

Xi avowed his commitment to Hong Kong's semi-autonomous status as concerns deepen that China is increasingly interfering in the city's affairs. Yet Beijing's foreign ministry on Friday declared the document signed by Britain and China which initiated the handover was "no longer relevant". The Sino-British Joint Declaration gave Hong Kong rights unseen on the mainland through a "one country, two systems" agreement, lasting 50 years.

Xi said there must be a better understanding and implementation of the semi-autonomous set-up, which he likened to a tree with deep roots. Its raison d'etre was to "uphold national unity", he said. "The message is quite clear that one country towers over two systems," said Willy Lam, a politics expert at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. "He's asking Hong Kong people to obey instructions because the sovereign power overrides everything," Lam added.

Xi's visit laid bare again the divisions in Hong Kong society between those who are pro-China and those who fear its tightening grip. There were sporadic protests and arrests during an unprecedented security lockdown as well as confrontations between democracy activists and pro-Beijing protesters - accused by opponents of being hired thugs. Flag-waving fans filled public squares near where Xi was staying for three days of music, dance and celebrations.

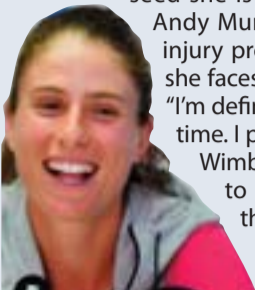
Those who welcomed the visit said the stark warnings Xi issued were to be expected. "There's definitely a bottom line for every country," said legislator Felix Chung, head of the pro-establishment Liberal Party. "I think Hong Kong people thought the visit was very positive." Others painted a different picture. Pro-democracy lawmaker Claudia Mo said the lavish official celebrations reminded her of North Korea or the Cultural Revolution - a time of mass political purges in China. "He wanted to instill fear and respect, or respect out of fear, from Hong Kong people," Mo told AFP. "But instead I think a larger portion felt resentment." — AFP



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BRITAIN'S KONTA FIT FOR WIMBLEDON

LONDON: British number one Johanna Konta has declared herself fit for Wimbledon after recovering from a spine injury. Konta withdrew from her Eastbourne semi-final against Karolina Pliskova on Friday due to a thoracic spine problem sustained in a nasty fall in her previous match. The 26-year-old needed lengthy treatment and was in tears on court after the tumble in her win over world number one Angelique Kerber. That sparked fears she might be ruled out of Wimbledon, where as sixth seed she is among the potential title contenders. But like Andy Murray earlier in the day, she vowed to ignore the injury problem and play at her home Grand Slam, where she faces a Monday opener against Taiwan's Hsieh Su-Wei. "I'm definitely recovering really well. I'm taking it a day at a time. I practised today. I felt good," Konta told reporters at Wimbledon on Sunday. "I'm definitely looking forward to playing my first round. Like Andy, I'd like to think that I'm fit enough to play seven matches, but I'm going to be taking it one at a time." — AFP



O'BRIEN ESCAPES BAN AHEAD OF FINAL TEST

WELLINGTON: British and Irish Lions flanker Sean O'Brien avoided a ban yesterday for an alleged strike during the second Test against New Zealand, meaning he is free to play next week's decisive third game. In a major boost for the Lions, a judicial panel cleared O'Brien over the alleged strike on Waisake Naholo, which the citing commissioner Scott Nowland had said "met the threshold for a red card". "Having conducted a detailed review of all the evidence available... (the panel) dismissed the citing complaint," a statement said. The decision comes after the panel issued a four-week ban for Sonny Bill Williams, who became the first All Black to be sent off on home soil during Saturday's 24-21 Lions victory. Williams, who was the first All Black to be sent off in a test for 50 years, is expected to miss the deciding third test at Auckland on Saturday. O'Brien will be a key man as the Lions bid to win their first series in New Zealand since 1971, as shown when he completed a brilliant running try in the tourists' first-Test defeat in Auckland. —AFP

MURRAY'S WIFE PREGNANT WITH SECOND CHILD

LONDON: Wimbledon champion Andy Murray has confirmed his wife Kim is pregnant with the couple's second child. Murray, who married Kim in 2015, became a father for the first time in February 2016 when his wife gave birth to their daughter Sophia. "We're both obviously very happy and looking forward to it," Murray told reporters at Wimbledon yesterday. News of the latest member of the Murray clan came just 24 hours before the world number one starts his Wimbledon campaign against Kazakhstan's Alexander Bublik on Centre Court. Murray said knowing he is due to become a father again wouldn't provide extra inspiration as he chases a third Wimbledon title and fourth Grand Slam crown. "No, I wouldn't have thought so," he said. Murray wouldn't be drawn on when the baby is due to be born, but he said Kim would be supporting him at Wimbledon over the next fortnight. "She'll be coming to Wimbledon." —AFP



FIRST PLACE CONFUSING FOR YELLOW-CLAD THOMAS

DUSSELDORF: Geraint Thomas admitted he won't know where to ride in the peloton yesterday as he wears the coveted Tour de France yellow jersey for the first time.

The 31-year-old Briton was a surprise winner of Saturday's first stage time-trial in Dusseldorf and will look to hold onto yellow during Sunday's 203.5km second stage that finishes in Liege, Belgium. But Thomas said he wasn't sure where to position himself along the route now that he is in yellow. The Welshman's role at this Tour is to help protect Sky team leader and reigning champion Chris Froome, which means he would usually have the three-time Tour winner sitting on his back wheel. Yet, as the yellow jersey wearer, it would normally be up to his team to protect him.

"I'm just going to enjoy tomorrow (Sunday) and any extra day in the jersey," said Thomas after his victory on Saturday. "It's a massive bonus but it doesn't change the goal, which is to ride for Froome. I'm just going to enjoy it."

He added: "I don't know where I'll ride - it's just crazy, an amazing feeling!" Sunday's stage is almost entirely flat despite passing through the Ardennes region of Belgium known for its hills.

Tour organisers ASO said they had deliberately avoided the hills to give sprinters

the chance "to come to the fore". It means that the day's breakaway will likely be doomed from the moment the riders get away as the sprinters' teams try to set up a bunch finish where they can manoeuvre their fast men into the ideal position to strike. The likes of German powerhouse Marcel Kittel and British speedster Mark Cavendish, who sits second on the all-time list of Tour stage wins, should be in the mix.

Kittel and world champion Peter Sagan may also have designs on claiming the yellow jersey. They finished 16 and 25 seconds respectively off Thomas's time on Saturday, and with time bonuses on the line for the top three finishers on every stage, either could conceivably wrench the yellow jersey from Thomas before Wednesday's fifth stage and the first mountain summit finish where the overall contenders should take over at the top of the standings. Kittel was certainly feeling bullish, saying on Twitter: "Now it's our turn!"

Yesterday's stage should feature a fast and frantic start with many riders battling to get into the breakaway, particularly with the first king of the mountains points available just six kilometres into the stage, meaning the polkadot jersey will be claimed by the first rider to crest that short, 1.4km long Grafenberg climb. —AFP



DUSSELDORF: Germany's Marcel Kittel celebrates his green jersey of best sprinter on the podium at the end of the 203.5 km second stage of the 104th edition of the Tour de France cycling race yesterday between Dusseldorf, Germany and Liege, Belgium. — AFP

CYCLING

GERMANY'S KITTEL WINS 10TH TOUR DE FRANCE STAGE

LIEGE: Germany's Marcel Kittel met expectations and won the second stage of the Tour de France with a commanding sprint finish yesterday while three-time champion Chris Froome didn't lose any time despite falling to the pavement amid a mass crash on a wet corner.

Froome's Sky teammate Geraint Thomas held on to the leader's yellow jersey. Froome was near the front of the peloton when a Katusha rider ahead of him lost control coming around a sharp turn with about 30 kilometers (20 miles) to go. The domino reaction also took down last year's runner-up, Romain Bardet.

Froome's shorts and several layers of skin were torn and he had to change bikes as three teammates paced him back to the peloton. "Obviously it was a stressful day in the rain and with that tumble," Thomas said. "We all knew (Froome) was OK. It was just a matter of getting him back on."

Having won the opening time trial Saturday, Thomas remained five seconds ahead of Swiss rider Stefan Kueng in the overall standings.

With a 10-second bonus, Kittel moved up to third overall, six seconds behind Thomas. Froome is sixth, 12 seconds behind. "It was stressful. You kind of forget what the Tour is like," Thomas said. "The weather didn't help things at all." For the race's first full road stage following Saturday's opening time trial, Kittel clocked slightly more than 4 1/2 hours over the mostly flat 203.5-kilometer (126-mile) leg from Dusseldorf, Germany to Liege.

It was Kittel's 10th career Tour stage win. As he often does after big wins, Kittel dropped to the ground and started crying after he crossed the line. "I'm super happy, super proud," Kittel said, dedicating the victory to the German fans who showed up at the start of the stage. "It was a very special win for me."

Arnaud Demare of France finished second, Andre Greipel of Germany crossed third and Mark Cavendish of Britain was fourth.

Cavendish has been the dominant sprinter of his generation but did not have ideal preparation for the Tour after coming down with mononucleosis caused by the Epstein-Barr virus in April. That makes Kittel, who now has 10 wins this season, the man to be beat. It was also an important win for Kittel's Quick-Step team, which is based in Belgium.

The route started with a short circuit, returning to Dusseldorf after passing through the Neander Valley. The peloton then veered south-west through Moenchengladbach and the border city of Aachen before crossing into Belgium's French-speaking Wallonia region.

With a history of battles and rebellions, Liege is nicknamed "la cite ardente" - the city of fire. An early four-man breakaway consisting of Thomas Boudat, Taylor Phinney, Yoann Offredo and Laurent Pichon - all Tour rookies - quickly gained more than a three-minute lead Phinney, an American with Cannondale, and Offredo, a Frenchman with Wanty, were caught by the main pack with exactly one kilometer to go.

The race lost Alejandro Valverde, who finished third in 2015, to a crash on a rain-slickened

bend Saturday. Valverde's Movistar team said he had successful surgery overnight for a broken left kneecap and an injured shinbone.

Also abandoning was Australian rider Luke Durbridge, who injured his ankle in the opening-day time trial.

The Tour remains in Belgium for the start of

Stage 3 on Monday, a 212.5-kilometer (132-mile) leg from Verviers to Longwy, France, that passes through Luxembourg. The rolling leg features three fourth-category climbs and two third-category climbs, including one at the finish. It should set up well for punchy riders like Verviers native Philippe Gilbert. — AP



DUSSELDORF: Great Britain's Geraint Thomas celebrates his overall leader yellow jersey on the podium at the end of the 203.5 km second stage of the 104th edition of the Tour de France cycling race yesterday between Dusseldorf, Germany and Liege, Belgium. — AFP

SWIMMING

DRESSEL TAKES THIRD US TITLE WITH 50 FREE WIN

CHICAGO: Caeleb Dressel captured his third title of the US Swim Championships by winning the 50-meter freestyle Saturday in the final race of the World Championships qualifying meet.

Dressel, who earlier captured the 50 and 100 butterfly titles, won the 50 free in 21.53 seconds, beating Nathan Adrian by .34 of a second. He will also swim in the worlds July 14-30 at Budapest in the 100 free after a runner-up effort in that event. "It feels good," Dressel said. "I just have to work on my last 25 meters in the next few weeks. If your focus is set on one race at a time, all of your energy is going to go into that one race—that's what really helps me."

Five-time Olympic champion Katie Ledecky withdrew from the 1,500 freestyle Saturday after winning the women's 200,

400 and 800 free titles. Because Ledecky is already on the team, she can be named to join US champion Leah Smith, who won in 16:01.02, in the event at worlds.

Since Ledecky set the world record of 15:25.48 at the 2015 worlds in Russia, it would be a stunner if she weren't chosen for the spot.

In Saturday's other men's races, Clark Smith won the men's 800 free in 7:50.43, edging Zane Grothe by .54 of a second, and Chase Kalisz won the 200 individual medley in 1:56.51, the fastest time in the world this year.

On the women's side, Simone Manuel won her fourth career national title and third in the 50 freestyle in 24.27 while the 200 individual medley went to Melanie Margalis in 2:09.57. — AFP



INDIANAPOLIS: Caeleb Dressel celebrates after winning the Men's 50 LC Meter Freestyle Final during the 2017 Phillips 66 National Championships & World Championship Trials at Indiana University Natatorium on Saturday in Indianapolis, Indiana. — AFP



DUSSELDORF: Britain's Chris Froome, his pants torn after crashing, right, follows teammates to catch up with the pack during the second stage of the Tour de France cycling race over 203.5 kilometers (126.5 miles) with start in Dusseldorf, Germany, and finish in Liege, Belgium, yesterday. — AP



SAN DIEGO: San Diego Padres catcher Austin Hedges, right, tags out Los Angeles Dodgers' Austin Barnes during the fourth inning of a baseball game in San Diego, Saturday. —AP

BASEBALL

SALE PITCHES 7 SO INNINGS, RED SOX BEAT BLUE JAYS

TORONTO: Chris Sale pitched seven shutout innings to win his third straight decision, Xander Bogaerts had three RBIs and the Boston Red Sox beat the Toronto Blue Jays 7-1 on Saturday. Sale (11-3) struck out 11, boosting his major league-leading total to 166. He's 2-0 with 24 strikeouts in 15 scoreless innings against the Blue Jays this season. Blaine Boyer pitched the eighth and Robby Scott gave up Steve Pearce's solo home run in the ninth. Jackie Bradley Jr. hit a two-out, two run double in the first and Dustin Pedroia did the same in the second. Bogaerts had a sacrifice fly in the fifth and added a two-run single off Lucas Harrell in the ninth. Mookie Betts walked three times and scored three runs for the AL East-leading Red Sox, who have won five of six. Hanley Ramirez had three hits. Blue Jays left-hander Francisco Liriano (4-4) allowed five runs in six innings.

DODGERS 8, PADRES 0

Chris Taylor hit a grand slam, Corey Seager and Justin Turner had consecutive homers and Rich Hill tied his career high with 11 strikeouts in Los Angeles' victory against San Diego. Bench coach Bob Geren managed the Dodgers in place of Dave Roberts, suspended one game by Major League Baseball for his role in an altercation with Padres manager Andy Green the night before. Roberts was also fined, as were Green and Dodgers pitcher Alex Wood. Taylor's slam came off Craig Stammen in the seventh inning. It was his third of the season and the fourth of his career. The Dodgers had 14 hits, and even Hill (5-4) got his share with two singles for his first career multi-hit game. Among them was a run-scoring base hit in the fourth. Logan Forsythe had four hits, including an RBI infield single in the first. Seager added three hits. The Dodgers have outscored the Padres 63-18 in eight games this season. Hill threw seven innings of four-hit ball while walking only one. Padres starter Dillon Overton (0-1) allowed four runs and nine hits in 4 2/3 innings.

**TIGERS 7, INDIANS 4, 1ST GAME
INDIANS 4, TIGERS 1, 2ND GAME**

Jose Ramirez hit a two-run homer to cap a four-run sixth inning, and Carlos Carrasco pitched Cleveland to a doubleheader split against Detroit. The Tigers won the opener

and led 1-0 in the second game before the Indians broke through against Jordan Zimmermann (5-6). The right-hander allowed one hit through five innings, but didn't make it through the sixth. Carrasco (9-3) yielded four hits in seven innings. He struck out seven and walked one. Andrew Miller worked a perfect ninth for his second save, aided by a spectacular catch from Bradley Zimmer. In the opener, Nicholas Castellanos hit a tiebreaking triple in the seventh off Bryan Shaw (2-3). J.D. Martinez and Miguel Cabrera hit back-to-back homers for the Tigers. Shane Greene (2-2) got the win, and Justin Wilson earned his eighth save.

METS 7, PHILLIES 6

Asdrubal Cabrera hit the winning homer as part of a four-run rally in the seventh inning that carried New York past Philadelphia. The resurgent Mets overcame three errors and a short start by Zack Wheeler in his return from the disabled list to win their fourth straight. They've won seven of eight since getting swept in four games at Dodger Stadium. Phillies starter Jeremy Hellickson left with a 6-4 lead in the seventh after giving up seven hits, including solo homers by Lucas Duda and T.J. Rivera. Pinch-hitter Wilmer Flores stroked an RBI single and Cabrera connected off Pat Neshek (2-2), who began the day with a 0.57 ERA. He had not permitted a run since May 14, making 19 straight scoreless appearances. After a 57-minute rain delay in the top of the eighth, Addison Reed came on and got four outs for his 14th save. Reed worked around a leadoff double by Aaron Altherr in the ninth that nearly cleared the right-field wall. Fernando Salas (1-2) got the win despite allowing a three-run homer to Tommy Joseph that gave Philadelphia a 6-3 lead in the seventh.

RANGERS 10, WHITE SOX 4

Cole Hamels overcame a shaky start to win for the first time since April, and Texas hit three home runs. Hamels (3-0) allowed two runs and two hits while striking out six in 6 2/3 innings for his first win since April 26. He retired 19 straight batters after giving up a double and a homer and hitting a batter with a pitch in the first inning of his second start since returning from a strained

right oblique. Elvis Andrus, Mike Napoli and Rougned Odor homered for the Rangers, who snapped a three-game losing streak. White Sox starter Derek Holland (5-8) didn't fare as well in his first game against his former team. Holland, who spent his first eight seasons with the Rangers and was on their 2010 and 2011 AL championship squads, allowed five runs in 5 1/3 innings. He is 1-5 in his last seven starts.

**ROYALS 11, TWINS 6, 1ST GAME
TWINS 10, ROYALS 5, 2ND GAME**

Miguel Sano belted a three-run homer, Felix Jorge pitched five-plus solid innings to win his major league debut and Minnesota beat Kansas City to split their doubleheader. Brandon Moss, Alcides Escobar and Alex Gordon, the Royals' 7-8-9 hitters, went a combined 6 for 12 with three home runs, seven RBIs and six runs as the Royals rallied from a four-run deficit to win the opener. Sano has five home runs and 24 RBIs in 11 games against the Royals this season. He went deep in both games. Eddie Rosario went 5 for 5 and scored three runs in the nightcap. Jorge (1-0) was charged with three runs and seven hits. Kansas City starter Jason Hammel (4-7) gave up seven runs and nine hits in 5 1/3 innings. Eric Hosmer hit a two-run homer. In the opener, Mike Moustakas hit his 22nd home run, tying his season high and matching Jermaine Dye in 2000 for the club record before the All-Star game. Moustakas bats sixth and for the first time in Royals history, their 6-7-8-9 batters all homered in the same game. Alex Gordon had a three-run shot. Alcides Escobar and Brandon Moss, with an estimated 474-foot drive to straightaway center, also homered for Kansas City. Moss had three hits. Salvador Perez hit a two-out, two-run single in a three-run seventh to snap a 6-all tie against Tyler Duffy (0-2). Mike Minor (4-1), the fourth of six Kansas City pitchers, struck out four in two innings.

REDS 5, CUBS 3

Jackson Stephens lasted five innings in his major league debut and drove in the go-ahead runs with a bases-loaded single to lead Cincinnati. The Cubs' fourth loss in five games dropped them to 40-41, well off their pace from a year ago (51-30) when they were on their way to an NL Central title and a World Series championship. Stephens (1-0) gave up a solo homer by Jon Jay and a two-run shot by Willson Contreras. He was called up to help the Reds fill an opening in the rotation created by Brandon Finnegan's arm injury. With two outs and the bases loaded in the fourth, Stephens singled up the middle off Eddie Butler (4-3) for two runs and a 4-3 lead, smacking his hands together as he reached base with his first major league hit. He gave up six hits and struck out eight in five innings.

BREWERS 8 MARLINS 4

Domingo Santana hit a two-run homer off Giancarlo Stanton's glove, sparking a seven-run second inning that lifted Milwaukee past Miami. Santana tied it with a home run to right off Tom Koehler (1-3), who walked Travis Shaw to start the second. Stanton jumped and got the tip of his mitt on the ball, but it bounced off and fell into the seats. Stanton put his hands on his head

as Santana circled the bases. Shaw had a two-run single later in the inning. Brewers starter Zach Davies drove in a run on a fielder's choice, Stephen Vogt drew a bases-load walk and Jonathan Villar added a run-scoring single as Milwaukee sent 13 batters to the plate in the inning. Davies (9-4) struggled a bit with his control early but retired his last 10 batters. He gave up four runs and five hits over six innings with two walks and five strikeouts.

BRAVES 4, ATHLETICS 3

Dansby Swanson hit a tiebreaking double off closer Santiago Casilla in the ninth inning to drive in Danny Santana - one of two unearned runs scored by Atlanta - and the Braves held on for the win. Santana had two hits and two runs and Matt Adams added a sacrifice fly in his return to the lineup as Atlanta won its second straight in this interleague series. The Braves have won 10 of 14 overall. Atlanta led 3-1 behind knuckleballer R.A. Dickey before Khris Davis hit a tying two-run home run off Aroldys Vizcaino in the eighth. After Johan Camargo struck out swinging against Casilla (1-3) to open the ninth, Santana reached base on Oakland shortstop Franklin Barreto's second error of the game. Santana stole second then scored when Swanson doubled down the left-field line, Swanson also had an RBI double in the seventh. Sam Freeman (1-0) retired two batters for the win. Jim Johnson pitched the ninth for his 18th save.

GIANTS 2, PIRATES 1, 11 innings

Denard Span scored on a wild pitch in the 11th inning to give San Francisco a win over Pittsburgh. Span walked against Daniel Hudson (1-4) and stole second. Joe Panik singled, and Buster Posey faced a full count when Hudson's pitch got past catcher Elias Diaz, allowing Span to score. Josh Osich (2-1) got the win. Sam Dyson pitched a scoreless 11th for his first save since being acquired from the Texas Rangers in early June. In the ninth, Giants reliever Hunter Strickland walked the bases loaded but got Diaz to strike out looking. Diaz finished 0 for 5 with two strikeouts and left eight men on base.

RAYS 10, ORIOLES 3

Logan Morrison homered twice, Wilson Ramos hit a three-run drive and Tampa Bay beat Dylan Bundy and Baltimore. Steven Souza had a solo shot for the Rays, who have 23 home runs in their last 12 games. Morrison, who connected in the first inning and again in the third, has 24 for the season - a career high. Jake Odorizzi (5-3) was the beneficiary of Tampa Bay's 14-hit attack, which included four doubles. The right-hander pitched five innings, allowing at least three earned runs for the sixth start in a row. He also yielded a home run in his 12th successive appearance, a club record. The Rays will seek to complete a three-game sweep on Sunday. They are already assured their first series win against Baltimore after going 0-5-1 since April 2016. Bundy (8-7) allowed five runs and seven hits in four innings. He struck out seven.

CARDINALS 2, NATIONALS 1

Alex Mejia's first two major league hits, including an eighth-inning home run, were the difference as St. Louis defeated

Washington. The Cardinals have won four straight and six of seven. Washington, the only team in the National League yet to be shut out this season, has lost three in a row and five of seven. Michael Wacha (5-3), celebrating his 26th birthday, tossed six scoreless innings. He allowed four hits and struck out a season-high nine. Gio Gonzalez (7-3) was nearly as good. He yielded one run and two hits over seven innings, striking out nine. With the bases loaded, Matt Bowman threw a called third strike past pinch-hitter Adrian Sanchez for his first major league save. Mejia, playing his third game since being called up, had an RBI single in the second.

ASTROS 7, YANKEES 6

Yuli Gurriel hit a two-run homer in the fifth and a two-run double off Aroldis Chapman that put Houston on top in a four-run eighth inning as the Astros rallied to beat New York. Houston trailed 6-3 in the eighth before Jose Altuve walked with one out before stealing second and third and scoring on a groundout by Carlos Correa. Evan Gattis hit a long home run off Dellin Betances (3-3) to make it 6-5. Gurriel, who finished with three hits, ended the game when he tagged out Brett Gardner at first after the Yankees outfielder tried to get back to first base after making too wide a turn on a single to left center with two outs. Dayan Diaz (1-1) worked a scoreless eighth and Ken Giles got his 19th save. Correa had a solo homer in the sixth. Didi Gregorius hit his first career grand slam to put the Yankees up 5-2 in the sixth. Clint Frazier became the first Yankees player since 1913 to hit a homer and a double in his major league debut.

DIAMONDBACKS 6, ROCKIES 2

Zack Greinke struck out eight in seven strong innings and Arizona topped Colorado to stop a three-game losing streak. Greinke (10-4) allowed three hits, one of those being Trevor Story's two-run homer in the seventh to make it a one-run game. But the Diamondbacks scored three times in the bottom half to take control. David Peralta doubled twice and drove in two runs for the Diamondbacks, who have not lost more than three consecutive games this season. Fernando Rodney got two outs for his 21st save and has a career-best 11 straight hitless outings. One night after ending an eight-game slide, the Rockies lost for the ninth time in their past 10. Tyler Chatwood (6-9) pitched into the seventh but allowed four earned runs and seven hits.

ANGELS 4, MARINERS 0

Ricky Nolasco pitched a three-hitter for his second straight scoreless outing as Los Angeles blanked Seattle. Nolasco (4-9) did not walk a batter and struck out seven in his first complete game of the season. He was coming off 6 1/3 sharp innings in a 4-0 win over the Dodgers, a stark turnaround from a disappointing stretch that left manager Mike Scioscia defending Nolasco's place in the rotation. Nolasco's sixth career shutout was the first by an Angels pitcher this season. Andrelton Simmons hit a solo homer off rookie Sam Gaviglio (3-3). Mariners slugger Nelson Cruz left after his first at-bat with right knee discomfort. It was his 37th birthday. —AP

MLB results/standings

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

American League Eastern Division				National League Eastern Division					
W	L	PCT	GB	Washington	Atlanta	NY Mets	Miami		
Boston	46	35	.568	-	39	41	.488	7.5	
NY Yankees	43	36	.544	2	38	42	.475	8.5	
Tampa Bay	43	40	.518	4	35	44	.443	11	
Baltimore	39	41	.488	6.5	26	53	.329	20	
Toronto	37	43	.463	8.5	Central Division				
Central Division				Milwaukee	44	39	.530	-	
Cleveland	43	37	.538	-	Chicago Cubs	40	41	.494	3
Minnesota	41	39	.513	2	St. Louis	39	41	.488	3.5
Kansas City	40	40	.500	3	Pittsburgh	37	44	.457	6
Detroit	36	44	.450	7	Cincinnati	35	45	.438	7.5
Chicago White Sox	35	45	.438	8	Western Division				
Western Division				LA Dodgers	55	28	.663	-	
Houston	55	27	.671	-	Arizona	51	31	.622	3.5
LA Angels	43	42	.506	13.5	Colorado	48	35	.578	7
Texas	40	41	.494	14.5	San Diego	33	48	.407	21
Seattle	40	42	.488	15	San Francisco	32	51	.386	23
Oakland	35	46	.432	19.5					



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AUSTRALIA A TO BOYCOTT SA TOUR IF NO PAY DEAL

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ST PETERSBURG: Germany's Julian Draxler holds up the trophy, at the end of the Confederations Cup final soccer match between Chile and Germany, at the St Petersburg Stadium, Russia, yesterday. Germany won 1-0. — AP

STINDL TAP-IN WINS GERMANY CONFEDERATIONS CUP

SAINT PETERSBURG: Lars Stindl's simple tap-in, following a costly first-half blunder by Marcelo Diaz, was enough to give Germany a 1-0 win over Chile in the Confederations Cup final yesterday.

Diaz's momentary lapse in concentration let Timo Werner rob him of possession, draw the goalkeeper and pass to Stindl, who scored into an empty net on 20 minutes in Saint Petersburg.

This is the first time Germany, the defending world champions, have won the Confederations Cup in the eighth edition of the pre-World Cup tournament.

The video assistant referee (VAR) again came into the spotlight as Chile's Gonzalo Jara was lucky not to be sent off in the second half. Despite his elbow in the face of Werner midway through the second half being reviewed by the VAR, the defender was only booked.

Werner, Stindl and Leon Goretzka all finished with three goals but RB Leipzig striker Werner took the top scorer's prize by virtue of also supplying two assists.

Despite dominating for long spells, Chile failed to turn 61 percent possession and 20 shots-compared to the Germans' eight-into goals.

The South Americans kept the same team which squeezed past Portugal 3-0 on a penalty shoot out after a goalless draw in the semi-finals.

Meanwhile, Germany's only change from the team which beat Mexico 4-1 in the last four saw defender Shkodran Mustafi replace Benjamin Henrichs.

Chilean fans turned the Saint Petersburg Stadium into a sea of red and merciless pressing by La Roja early on saw Charles Aranguiz and Arturo Vidal cause havoc in the Germany defence.

Eduardo Vargas had the first clear shot on 11 minutes which flew into the grateful arms of Germany goalkeeper Marc-Andre ter Stegen.

The South Americans then wasted a golden chance when Vidal's shot was blocked by Ter Stegen and Alexis Sanchez could not connect with the loose ball.

It proved costly as Diaz's calamitous mistake and Werner's quick thinking led to Stindl's match-winner.

Diaz dithered on the ball on the edge of his own box, allowing Werner to pounce. He then drew lunging Chile goalkeeper Claudio Bravo and squared to Stindl, who tapped home. Having fallen behind, Chile upped the pressure to force an equaliser which left space at the back for Germany to counter-attack.

Julian Draxler fired wide of the post, then Goretzka, who scored twice in the 4-1 semi-final win over Mexico,

wasted a great chance by firing straight at Bravo just before the break.

Chilean tempers started to fray, and approaching the hour mark Joshua Kimmich squared up to Vidal, who pushed the German away. The Bayern Munich teammates were both booked.

Then Werner was left clutching his jaw after an elbow in the face from Jara near the touchline, the Serbian referee deciding to award a yellow card to the defender after reviewing the incident.

The South Americans battered the German goal in the final 20 minutes but Sanchez's shot was blocked and Ter Stegen then saved from Eduardo Vargas.

With time running out, both Vidal and substitute Angelo Sagal fired over the bar, but the German defence held firm. — AFP

HORN STUNS PACQUIAO TO WIN WBO WELTERWEIGHT CROWN

BRISBANE: Former schoolteacher Jeff Horn stunned world champion Manny Pacquiao to win the World Boxing Organization welterweight crown with a controversial unanimous points decision in Brisbane yesterday. Given no chance by most observers, the 29-year-old Horn's ultra-aggressive style rocked Pacquiao, with the three judges scoring the fight 117-111, 115-113 and 115-113 to the Australian after 12 rounds.

Pacquiao's camp and observers including Lennox Lewis slammed the decision, as the eight-weight world champion said on Filipino TV: "We thought that we won this fight."

"There is no problem with me if there's a rematch," he added. "It would be better if the rematch would be held in the Philippines."

Pacquiao, 38, is considered one of the greatest fighters of his generation. His camp had predicted a "short and sweet" win over Horn, a 2012 Australian Olympian.

But Horn showed no signs of being overawed by the occasion, relentlessly taking the fight to the Filipino great and not allowing him to find any rhythm.

"I feel like he couldn't get a hold of my gap. I was feinting a lot, trying to upset his rhythm and I think that was working throughout the majority of that fight," said Horn, who stands three-and-a-half inches (nine cm) taller than Pacquiao.

'THE JUDGES WERE CRAZY'

Pacquiao did manage to land some left jabs in the opening rounds to take the early points, but Horn refused to back away and his brawling tactics paid dividends through the middle stages. "He was quick when he put combinations together but I felt controlling the gap made it easier to see the punches coming," Horn

said. "The size difference helped too."

Pacquiao, bleeding profusely from cuts high above both eyes caused by accidental head clashes, launched a savage counter-attack in the ninth round and appeared to have Horn in trouble with some massive blows that left the Australian staggering.

"The ref came over (at the end of the round) and said 'show me something or I'll stop the fight,'" Horn said.

"I thought, 'Hang on, hold your horses-I'm not that bad, I can keep going for sure.'"

Horn recovered and came out strongly in the 10th. "That was just my heart that kept me going," he said.

"He got me with a couple of good shots and I did go backwards more in that round than in any other round in the fight, but I still felt good.

"But I came back in the 10th, 11th and 12th." Both fighters began to tire in the final stages of a contest fought at a breakneck pace, but Horn's early lead proved too much to peg back as he claimed the biggest win of his career.

Pacquiao had been hoping to set up a second big-money showdown with Floyd Mayweather, but it was Horn who called for a fight with the unbeaten American immediately after his win.

Pacquiao's strength and conditioning coach Justin Fortune was left fuming by the result, claiming: "The referee was sketchy, the judges were crazy."

"Manny lost the fight, but Jeff Horn looks like a pumpkin," added Fortune, referring to the badly swollen face of Horn, who needed stitches over his right eye.

Lewis, the former undisputed world heavyweight champion, tweeted: "This is what's wrong with boxing. Horn was very game but I'm hard pressed to see how he could have won that fight by any stretch!" — AFP



BRISBANE: Jeff Horn of Australia strikes a pose following his win against Manny Pacquiao of the Philippines in the World Boxing Organization boat at Suncorp Stadium in Brisbane on Saturday. — AFP



EU: NEW HUNTING GROUND FOR US INVESTORS



DOHA: In this Thursday Jan 6, 2011 file photo, a traditional dhow floats in the Corniche Bay of Doha, Qatar, with tall buildings of the financial district in the background. — AP

QATAR COPIES SAUDI'S 'INVESTMENT DIPLOMACY'

NATION BUYING SUBSTANTIAL US SHARES AS POLITICAL BULWARK

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump may accuse Qatar of sponsoring terrorism, but that did not stop the wealthy emirate this week from lighting up the Empire State building in the national colors of his Middle Eastern nation. Trump—who himself once tried to acquire the Manhattan skyscraper—has sided with Saudi Arabia in its increasingly bitter dispute with Qatar, but Doha has adopted a tactic long used by its more powerful Saudi neighbor to get its own way, buying up substantial shares in the US economy as a bulwark against shifting political sands.

The iconic 102-story Empire State building was bathed in the burgundy and white of Qatar Airways, the state flag carrier of Qatar, ostensibly to celebrate 10 years of flights into the United States. Less obvious was the fact that almost a year ago, the oil and gas-rich emirate purchased a 10-percent, \$622 million stake in the all-American building.

Trump once tried unsuccessfully to seize control of the building during his heyday as a New York property mogul, when he still owned the land that the skyscraper stands on. Last month, Qatar stunned American Airlines with plans to acquire a 10 percent stake in the world's largest commercial air carrier. At the same time, it signed a \$12 billion contract to buy 36 F-15 fighter jets from Boeing: A fraction of the \$110-

billion arms deal inked when Mr Trump visited Riyadh in May, but still enough to make US business leaders sit up and listen. "They have tentacles everywhere, they are amazing," said Randa Slim, a scholar at the Middle East Institute.

'A listening ear'

Qatar's greatest international asset, of course, is hosting the forward headquarters of US Central Command on its soil, putting the country squarely at the heart of the global US military footprint. Doha is also home to shiny outposts of Georgetown University and the Brookings Institution, among Washington's most prestigious think tanks, which Qatar officials said should promote the "bright image" of Qatar to the international media, "especially the American ones." Like Trump, a property tycoon turned president, Qatari investors have dived into real estate on four continents, bankrolling and buying into major developments in Washington, Chicago and London, where they bought a stake in Heathrow Airport.

Slim said that US concern for Qatar's Al-Udeid Air Base—which the Americans use to stage operations in Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq and Yemen—guaranteed that Washington would give Qatar's position in the crisis considerable weight. While the president Tweeted about alleged Qatari backing for

Syrian jihadists, his own Defense Department assured Qatar of continuing US support, while the State Department rebuked the Saudi coalition for its treatment of the country, seen by other Gulf states as too close to Iran.

"Definitely, the White House does not seem to be on their side but you have other powerful agencies that are standing on their side, at least until now," Slim said. "Even if you have groups who are arguing for a balanced position in this administration, I don't see anyone siding with Qatar 100 percent," she added. "Qatar does not have 100 percent support. Qatar has a listening ear."

Saudi's heavyweight checkbook

Whatever inroads Doha may have made, Saudi Arabia, their larger and richer adversary in the crisis, retains a formidable position. That kingdom is the second-largest foreign supplier of crude oil to the United States, a long-standing linchpin of US foreign policy and a major backer of large US corporations.

As Trump prepared to tour the Middle East in May, Riyadh pledged to pour \$20 billion into an infrastructure fund managed by the investment firm Blackstone, whose billionaire chairman Stephen Schwarzman is a prominent Trump backer.

This came on the heels of \$110 billion in arms sales as well as billions more in deals for General Electric and Lockheed Martin.

On the campaign trail, Trump also praised Saudi investors for buying his apartments, and he has reportedly incorporated companies in the kingdom. Meanwhile, the Qataris have few established business links with the Trump clan if any—but not for want of effort by the real estate mogul.

"By virtue of their relative size (both geographic and financial), Qatar will always be weaker," said Robert Blecher, acting director of the Middle East program at the International Crisis Group. "But not weak enough to make finances and business deals the decisive factor in this contretemps." According to James Jeffrey of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, under normal circumstances investments would not factor into geopolitical considerations.

"When you have a huge strategic problem such as this, the American position is traditionally, 'We don't care who's bought shares,'" Jeffrey, a long serving US diplomat in the Middle East and a former deputy national security advisor to President George W Bush, told AFP. But he said this particular White House may be sending the signal that business ties do count for a great deal. "This administration has given plenty of indications that that's the way it works," he said. — AFP

ANTITRUST CRACKDOWN ON AMAZON? NOT SO FAR

NEW YORK: US antitrust regulators have shown little sympathy thus far for the plight of brick-and-mortar retailers attempting to merge as a way to survive, as Amazon and e-commerce roils the world of shopping. The Federal Trade Commission last year blocked Staples' attempt to buy rival Office Depot, rejecting the stationary chains' arguments that they were fighting for survival against a growing set of competitors, including Amazon. The FTC also balked at Walgreens Boots Alliance' attempted \$17.2 billion acquisition of rival Rite Aid, even after revisions. In the end, the companies on Thursday spiked the merger in favor of a pared-down transaction. But regulators have shown little appetite for taking on Amazon as it has expanded from an online bookseller into a marketplace for everything from household cleaners to fancy electronics, as well as a purveyor of critically-acclaimed and hit movies and television series.

Some are calling for tougher action from US President Donald Trump, who said during the presidential campaign that Amazon chief executive Jeff Bezos has a "huge antitrust problem." Last week, Trump issued a cryptic tweet that appeared to question whether Amazon was paying enough taxes. Trump has also taken issue with the Bezos-owned Washington Post, which has aggressively covered the White House. Estimates vary sharply as to Amazon's exact share on e-commerce. Some reports have said Amazon's share of the online market is as high as 50 percent, but others put the figures much lower. Critics say Amazon should be required to disclose more detail about its sales.

Dominant player online

Barry Lynn a leading authority on competition policy, at the Washington-based New American Foundation think tank, has called for an antitrust investigation into Amazon's \$13.7 billion Whole Foods takeover announced in June. "They dominate retail online," Lynn said. "That's huge power across the part of the economy where all the future growth will be." And longtime consumer advocate Ralph Nader said, "With every move of this Goliath, Amazon is inviting a thorough antitrust investigation." "This company is breaking

records for destroying Main Street and hollowing out communities through such mechanisms as predatory pricing, and for many years in the past, avoiding state sales taxes."

Yet some experts are skeptical of an antitrust case against Amazon. "It's not an antitrust violation just to be dominant. You have to perpetuate or attain your dominance through anticompetitive means," said Daniel Crane, a professor at the University of Michigan Law School specializing in antitrust. "Under current US antitrust principals it's hard to see how anything Amazon is doing really is a violation of antitrust law. It's not obvious to me."

Regulators thus far have focused on antitrust in terms of competition between goods, but whether that focus should shift to competition between "ecosystems" like Amazon's is a "really important unanswered question so far," Crane said. Attorneys representing Staples and Office

Depot said the plight of the companies resembled "penguins on a melting iceberg" as they faced the looming threat that "Amazon Business" poses as competitor in business-to-business office goods sales.

But US District Judge Emmet Sullivan sided with the FTC, ruling in May 2016 that there was not enough evidence that Amazon "is likely to restore lost competition in a timely and sufficient manner." While Amazon enjoyed "several undisputed strengths," including brand recognition, cutting edge innovation and global reach, it has "several weaknesses" in entering the market, including that it has not made many bids in the market and had yet to win a primary vendor contract. On Wednesday, Staples agreed to be bought by private equity firm Sycamore Partners for \$6.9 billion.—AFP



SEATTLE: In this Thursday, April 27, 2017, file photo, people walk past an Amazon Go store, currently open only to Amazon employees. — AP

LITTLE INDIA STRUGGLES WITH TAX REVOLUTION

NEW DELHI: India has vowed that a new nationwide tax will transform the economy by bringing more businesses into the digital system and filling state coffers, but for shopkeeper Sanjay Kumar Rai, who has never used a computer, the transition is terrifying. Rai is one of hundreds of thousands of small traders fearful of the goods and services tax (GST) launched Saturday that aims to create a single market in place of a labyrinthine system of more than a dozen national and state levies.

Under the new regime, businesses must register with the GST network and file invoices and tax returns online at least once a month. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has compared the changes to getting used to a new pair of eye glasses. Ministers say there will be teething troubles but India's army of small business owners like Rai are in a digital panic.

At his shoebox-sized stationery store in central Delhi, Rai carefully notes down all sales in a traditional thick ledger book in Hindi. He has no laptop and says he would not know how to use one if it was placed in front of him. "I'm uneducated," he told AFP. "I don't know English. I only know Hindi so how do I navigate this new system?" Till now he has made all tax returns on paper.

In theory, traders like Rai with annual revenues of less than two million rupees (\$31,000) do not need to register on the GST network. However, the bigger clients which buy paper and pens from him want suppliers to be in the GST system or they will go elsewhere. The government is pressing for proof of all sales, regardless of size, so that it can go after tax cheats. Analysts say the GST has been set up to force compliance in a country with a poor tax base and a reputation for avoidance. "It's a very clever system design," Credit Suisse managing director Neelkanth Mishra told AFP. "There will be an

automatic compliance upstream because it's up to the companies to ensure that all their suppliers are GST compliant."

Filing fever

In Rai's case, an accountant client came to his rescue and completed his online registration. But the shopkeeper is still not confident about filing monthly returns under the new system. "They take out a new law and then we small people have to find a way to fit in it," he said. He is not the only one worried about the massive changes rippling through India's economy.

Thousands of traders across the country closed their shutters on the day before the launch to protest against the tax. Vijay Prakash Jain, secretary general of the Bhartiya Udyog Vyapar Mandal, a national traders association, was among those supporting the strike. "The rules and regulations are complicated and hard-hitting and we, especially small businesses, can never comply," he told AFP. "Earlier we filed returns once a quarter but now we have to file three returns a month and that's 37 in a year," he said. "Plus the government wants everything done online. Less than two percent of the country's 60 million traders may have computers. Where is a small trader going to get a computer from?"

Bhartiya Udyog Vyapar Mandal has asked the government to reduce the filings to once a quarter and to let businesses file manually. Ruling BJP party chief Amit Shah said this weekend that changes could be made to the tax law. Ratings agency ICRA said the transition would reduce the competitiveness of the informal sector in favor of organized business. "Nevertheless, higher compliance is expected to boost the tax base and the revenues of the central and state governments over the medium term," it said. —AFP

BOURSA ENDS JUNE IN THE RED ZONE

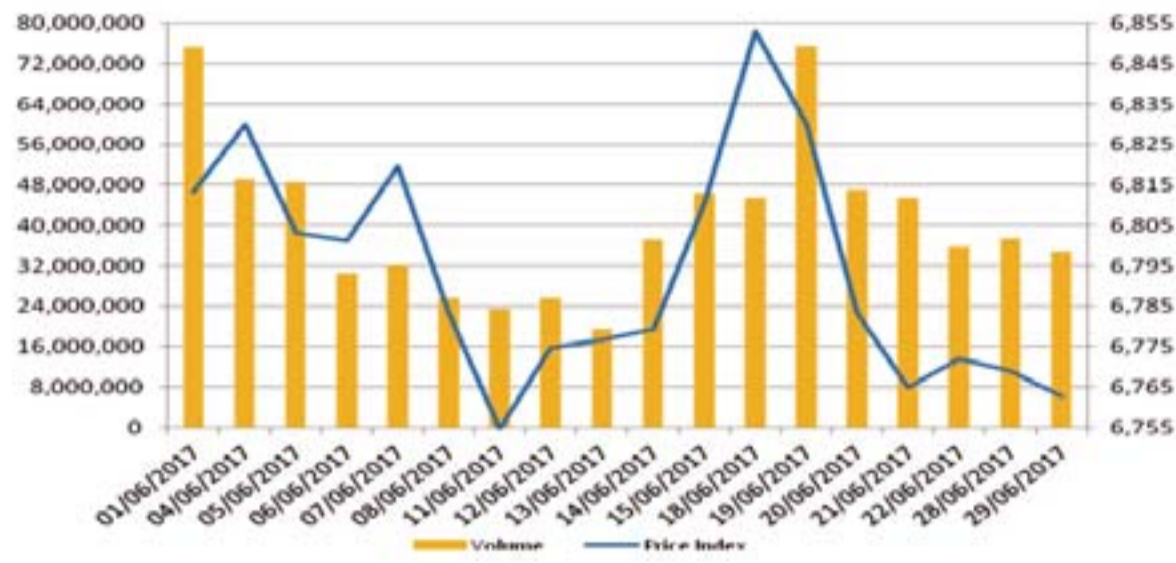
BOURSA KUWAIT MONTHLY REPORT

Bursa Kuwait ended June in the red zone. The Price Index closed at 6,762.82 points, down by 0.33% compared to the closings of the month before, the Weighted Index decreased by 1.27% after closing at 399.33 points, whereas the KSX-15 Index closed at 910.10 points decreasing by 0.62%. Furthermore, last month's average turnover decreased by 35.91%, compared to the preceding month, reaching K.D 8.38 million, whereas trading volume average was 40.81 million shares, recording a decrease of 65.65%.

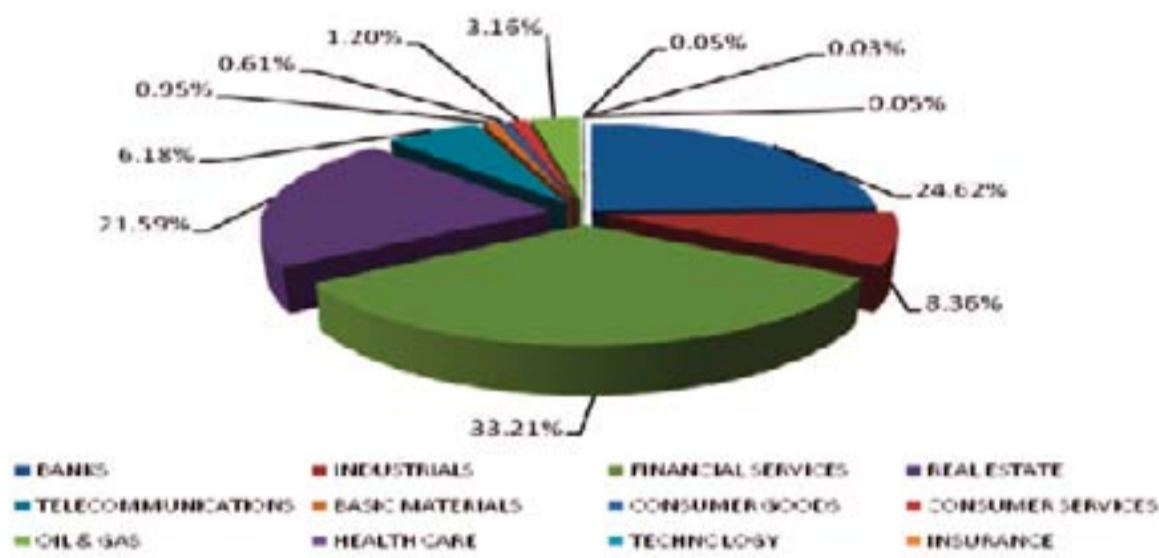
Bursa Kuwait ended last month's trading with various losses to its three indices, compared to May closings, amid the selling trend that the market witnessed during most of the daily sessions of the week, which included many listed stocks and headed by the leading and heavy stocks, which had a clear impact on the Weighted and KSX-15 indices in particular, the most declining indices by the end of the month.

The Bursa recorded its losses in parallel with the noticeable decrease in the trading activity, as the total cash liquidity during the month declined to reach KD 150.80 million only, while the volume dropped to reach 734.50 million stock. The market witnessed such performance in light of the traders' refrain from trading during this period, due to the absence of any positive motivator that can return the lost confidence in the market, which negatively affected the daily trading indicators, that in turn declined compared to May's trading.

Moreover, the selling operations witnessed by the market during the last month included many listed stocks of different sectors, especially in the Health Care and Consumer Services sectors, the most declining sectors during the month of June. On the contrary, the purchasing operations were not absent from influencing the trading behavior in the Bursa during the month, as it was present in few sessions and were able to push the indices to realize some daily gains, however it were not



Monthly Trading "Volume"



enough to push the market indices to close in the green zone on the monthly level.

In addition, the Bursa lost around KD 317 million last month, as the market capitalization reached KD 26.53 billion by the end of June, down by 1.18% compared to its level

in May, where it was KD 26.85 billion. On an annual level, the market cap for the listed companies in the market recorded a growth of 4.43% compared to its value at end of 2016, where it reached KD 25.41 billion.

On the other hand, the first half period of the current year had ended

by the end of June, as the Bursa ended this period with limited gains to its three indices, whereas the Price Index recorded an increase of 3.49% since the beginning of the current year, and the Weighted Index recorded a growth of 3.53%, while the increase in the KSX-15 Index since the

beginning of the year reached 3.49%. As by the end of the last month, the Bursa will enter a new phase of watch state waiting for the listed companies results to be disclosed for the first half of the current year, which will define to a great extent the investors' plans in the Bursa for the coming period, where it is expected to be announced during the few coming weeks. For the annual performance, the Price Index ended last month recording 17.65% annual gain compared to its closing in 2016, while the Weighted Index increased by 5.06%, and the KSX-15 recorded 2.83% growth.

Sectors' Indices

Eight of Bursa Kuwait sectors ended last month in the red zone, while the other four recorded increases. The Oil & Gas sector headed the losers list as its index declined by 8.07% to end the month's activity at 968.80 points. The Consumer Goods sector was second on the losers' list, which index declined by 5.60%, closing at 1,084.21 points, followed by the Financial Services sector, as its index closed at 675.99 points at a loss of 3.56%. The Telecommunications sector was the least declining as its index closed at

603.50 points with a 0.18% decrease. On the other hand, last month's highest gainer was the Health Care sector, achieving 15.31% growth rate as its index closed at 1,605.16 points. Whereas, in the second place, the Consumer Services sector's index closed at 1,055.63 points recording 10.26% increase. The Insurance sector was the least growing as its index closed at 1,071.21 points with a 0.36% increase.

Sectors' Activity

The Financial Services sector dominated a total trade volume during the last month of 243.92 million shares changing hands, representing 33.21% of the total market trading volume. The Banks sector was second in terms of trading volume as the sector's traded shares were 24.62% of last month's total trading volume, with a total of 180.87 million shares. On the other hand, the Banks sector's stocks were the highest traded in terms of value; with a turnover of KD 61.30 million or 40.65% of last month's total market trading value. The Industrial sector took the second place as the sector's last month turnover of KD 34.38 million representing 22.80% of the total market trading value.



HAMBURG: Protestors with masks of politicians (L-R) EU Foreign minister Frederica Mogherini, British Prime Minister Theresa May, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, US President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin drink cocktails in a boat on the Alster river during a demonstration called by several NGOs ahead of the G20 summit. —AFP

MERKEL BELIEVES GROWTH MUST BE INCLUSIVE, ANTI-G20 PROTESTS BEGIN

BERLIN: With an eye on anti-globalization protests brewing in Hamburg before this week's G20 summit, Chancellor Angela Merkel said yesterday leaders will have to focus on sustainable and inclusive economic growth rather than their own prosperity. In her weekly podcast, the German chancellor said this year's G20 summit will delve into issues championed by protesters such as distribution of wealth and consumption of resources - alongside related issues like climate change, free markets, consumer protection and upholding social standards. Tens of thousands of demonstrators marched against the meeting in the rain in Hamburg yesterday in a prelude to the July 7-8 gathering, where 21,000 police from across Germany will protect the meetings of the world's 20 largest economies. "It's not only going to be about (economic) growth but rather sustainable growth," Merkel said. "We've got to have a 'win-win' situation for everyone. The issues obviously revolve around: how do we achieve inclusive or sustainable growth?"

Merkel, seeking a fourth term in a Sept. 24 election, outlined the issues as: "What are

we doing with our resources? What are the rules for distribution of wealth? How many people are taking part? And how many countries are able to profit from that?" Without mentioning the protests that have German security officials worried about possible acts of sabotage this week in the country's second-largest city, Merkel noted that these non-traditional issues were forced onto the G20 agenda.

"If we simply try to carry on as we have in the past, the worldwide developments will definitely not be sustainable and inclusive," she said. "We need the climate protection agreement, open markets and improved trade agreements in which consumer protection, social and environmental standards are upheld." In a speech to parliament last week, Merkel promised to fight for free trade and press on with multilateral efforts to combat climate change at the summit, challenging the "America First" policies of US President Donald Trump.

Deep divisions

The G20 meeting follows a G7 summit in Sicily a month ago that exposed deep divi-

sions between other Western countries and Trump on climate change, trade and migration. Trump later announced he was pulling the United States out of a landmark agreement to combat climate change reached in 2015 in Paris. German authorities are bracing for trouble in Hamburg, worried that the protests could turn violent as they did outside a G8 summit in Genoa, Italy in 2001 when one person was shot dead and hundreds injured.

The German Federal Crime Office warned that violent G20 opponents could carry out arson and sabotage at infrastructure targets such as the Hamburg harbour and airport, newspaper Welt am Sonntag said yesterday. "New and creative forms of attack have to be watched out for," the report said. It added Hamburg police are bracing for attempts by activists to disrupt electrical power in Hamburg.

Yesterday's demonstration was organized by a group called "Protest Wave G20", with 50,000 to 100,000 protesters expected on an afternoon march through the city centre. Other demonstrations this week are called "Welcome to Hell" and "G20 Not Welcome".

UK FULFILLS KEY BREXIT PLEDGE

LONDON: Britain said yesterday it is to withdraw from a 50-year-old agreement allowing some foreign countries to fish close to the UK coastline, fulfilling a key Brexit pledge. The deal pre-dates Britain's EU membership and would therefore still have applied after the UK completes its divorce with the bloc, expected in March 2019. Britain will trigger today a two-year withdrawal period from the agreement, the London Fisheries Convention.

The convention allows vessels from five European countries—Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland and the Netherlands—to fish within an area that is six miles off the UK's coastline. "Leaving the London Fisheries Convention is an important moment as we take back control of our fishing policy," Environment Secretary Michael Gove said in a statement. The agreement is in force alongside the EU's Common Fisheries Policy-allowing vessels from EU member states to fish between 12 and 200 nautical miles off the UK-which Britain will be excluded from after its exit from the bloc.

"This is an historic first step towards

building a new domestic fishing policy as we leave the European Union," Gove said. "It means for the first time in more than 50 years we will be able to decide who can access our waters." According to government figures, British vessels caught 708,000 tons of fish in 2015, worth £775 million (\$1 billion, 894 million euros).

Other members of the convention landed an estimated 10,000 tons of fish in British waters. Ireland's Agriculture Minister Michael Creed blasted the UK's government decision as "unwelcome and unhelpful". "Brexit poses very serious challenges to the seafood sector and this announcement will form part of the negotiations," he added. Fishing rights became a hot topic during the campaign for the June 2016 Brexit referendum, with British fishermen voicing frustration over EU fishing quotas. Leading Brexit campaigner Nigel Farage even led a small flotilla of fishermen up the Thames a week before the referendum, arguing Britain's fishing industry was "literally being destroyed" as a result of EU membership. —AFP

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EU: NEW HUNTING GROUND FOR US INVESTORS

NEW YORK: After buying big American brands like Apple, Pepsi and Yahoo!, activist shareholders - investors in search of big dividends - now are setting their sights on European companies like Nestle. "No company is really immune from activism except perhaps for the very largest companies," says Gregory Taxin, managing director of Spotlight Advisory, a consulting firm for activists.

The favored targets of activists, said corporate attorney David Katz, at Wachtell, Lipton, Rosen & Katz, are "companies that have a lot of cash that haven't been returned to shareholders." In announcing plans last week to buy \$3.5 billion of Nestle shares, US billionaire Daniel

Loeb revealed the European ambitions of these investors with bulging wallets who say they want to restore power to shareholders.

In addition to cost-cutting, Loeb is asking Nestle to sell its historic stake in L'Oreal in order to boost the share price and dividends. "L'Oreal has been a fantastic investment," Loeb's spokeswoman Elissa Doyle told AFP. However, it is "a non-core investment for a primarily Food & Beverage and packaged goods business." In the wake of Loeb's move, Nestle announced the acquisition of \$21 billion of its own shares, which should boost the stock price. But Katz said, "I do not know if this will be enough to remove the pressure."

Saturated market

Loeb is not the first US activist to go after a foreign giant. His compatriot Nelson Peltz, through his investment fund Trian Partners, holds a stake in the French yogurt-maker Danone. And Paul Singer has invested, via his Elliott Management fund, in South Korea's Samsung, the Australian-British mining group BHP Billiton and the Bank of East Asia.

All want the same thing: quick returns on investment by requiring cost-cutting, asset sales or share buyback programs. And when they do not succeed, these activists usually engage in high profile media campaigns. And they often win. More than 2,900 activist campaigns have

been recorded in the United States since 2010, including 645 in 2016 alone, according to FTI Consulting. Most sectors of the economy are affected. But "the US market remains crowded and generally overvalued, (so) activist investors will continue to focus their sights on foreign jurisdictions, including not only Europe, but Australia and Asia as well," says Andrew Freedman, co-head of the Shareholder Activism group at the Olshan Frome Wolosky law firm.

"The type of corporate self-reflection occurring in the US is happening to a much lesser degree in Europe, leaving more opportunities at European companies for activist investors to catalyze value creation," Dan Zaccchi, one of the leaders of Sloane & Company, a firm advising activists, said Europe is attractive because of friendly laws and many companies do not have deterrent measures against potential predators.

"European companies have less stringent corporate defenses and may be more shareholder (or in this case activist shareholder) friendly," he said. The Continent also is in the midst of political stabilization with the start of negotiations on Brexit, while in the United States there remain questions about the major reforms-tax cuts

and infrastructure investment-promised by Donald Trump. To succeed in Europe, however, activists will have to deal with strong trade unions and government interventions, which is rarely the case in the United States.

"Activist investors do not invest in a company to immediately go hostile or start a proxy contest. Their hope is for a real, behind-the-scenes dialogue with receptive management and to only escalate the situation publicly if the company is unwilling to engage or consider recommended change," says Freedman, whose law firm has set up an action plan to help activists in their campaigns in Ireland, the United Kingdom and France in particular.

Zaccchi cautions that communicating their goals to pension funds can pose a real challenge for these investors, who need to understand what issues they care about most. "It's not dissimilar to a political candidate from the (US) northeast having to find a way to connect with voters in the heartland," he said. Even that may not be enough. The Elliott fund recently failed to convince the Dutch group Akzo Nobel, in which it has become a shareholder, to merge with the American PPG Industries, despite its pressure. — AFP

Daily Kuwait Stock Exchange Report

Summary statistics for the Kuwait Stock Exchange on Sunday 02 July 2017. Includes indices (Price index, Weighted index, KSX 15), volume (48,500,085), value (9,382,845 KWD), and number of trades (2,529).

Main table of stock market data including sectors like Oil & Gas, Basic Materials, Industrials, Consumer Goods, Health Care, and Banks, with columns for security, high, low, volume, and price changes.



BERLIN: The global headquarters of online food ordering and delivery giant Delivery Hero, in Berlin on June 27, 2017. Germany-based online food ordering service 'Delivery Hero' plans a Frankfurt stock market flotation on June 30, 2017 saying investors' cash will help it expand further around the world. —AFP

National Bank of Kuwait Financial Markets Daily Report

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



Saheb Saleh Khaj

MADA TELECOMMUNICATION LAUNCHES THE CLOUD NEXT-GENERATION SECURITY SERVICE

KUWAIT: As part of its mission to deliver the most distinctive technology in communications, and to ensure maximum protection for its clients, Mada Communications is announcing the completion of development and integration of the Cloud Next-Generation Security Service (CNSS), which secures safe and clean Internet access, CNSS has been developed

specifically for the Palo Alto Networks, which is the first in the field of protection systems and the winner of the new generation of protection systems. This achievement was done in association with Kuwait Canadian Company - a company specialized in providing information security systems. The advantages of this system, which benefits cor-

porate users, is assigning and controlling customized authentications for users, and give each one of them his/her own privileges that allows him/her to download and run certain applications only. This system also allows the network administrator to control the speed of Internet connection given to each user separately. It is all done easily and flexibly and without the need to

purchase and install any devices at the client's end that is because the system exists on Mada's cloud network. Saheb Saleh Khaja, Chairman and CEO of Mada, stated that this achievement comes in the context of ensuring the urgent need of corporate and ministries to protect and manage their networks and information systems, during the ongoing cyber war worldwide.

ENJOY MOMENTS BEYOND THE ORDINARY WITH NOJOOM REWARDS PROGRAM FROM OOREDOO



KUWAIT: Ooredoo, Kuwait's fastest network's newly revamped Nojoom rewards program offers its customers the best exclusive discounts. Accessible to all Ooredoo customers, the program offers members free upgrades, vouchers and discounts from a large variety of partners, ranging from service providers, retailers and hotels, and airline companies. In addition, customers use their Nojoom points to buy products from the Nojoom Online Rewards Store. Ooredoo is committed to providing customers with a comprehensive experience that enriches their life and meets their expectations. Ooredoo has carefully selected partners for our Nojoom program to ensure that all Ooredoo customers, no matter what their needs are, get a rewarding experience.

Award-winning program

Established in 2012, the Nojoom Rewards Program is now revamped to match the Kuwaiti lifestyle, which is modern and youthful and is on the same pace of the international trends. Nojoom has been awarded the best loyalty program in the Middle East and Africa for three consecutive years in 2012, 2013, and 2014.

Exclusive Partners

The Nojoom program has a wide array of partners which boasts Alshaya, X-Cite, Al Oula Gas Stations, IKEA and many other partners that will suit the lifestyle needs of Ooredoo customers. Ooredoo

intends to increase the number of partners in the future to ensure that all customers have a rewarding experience that matches their needs. The revamped Nojoom rewards program has many new benefits which include transferring Nojoom points to friends and family, donate Nojoom points for charitable causes, and redemption for partners' voucher which are readily accessible through nojoom.ooredoo.com.kw or the My Ooredoo app.

Nojoom for Nukhba

Members of Nukhba, Ooredoo's VIP plan, get enrolled automatically in the Nukhba tier of the Nojoom Rewards Program. Nukhba members get special rewards for all the points accrued for every KD spent on using Ooredoo's services. The points can then be redeemed with vouchers from any of Ooredoo's partners, which include prominent retailers, hotels, airline companies, spas, restaurants and many more premium service providers. It is worth mentioning that all of Ooredoo's Nukhba clients are taken care of with a designated account manager, a special hotline (110) to answer any of their queries around the clock, and are always kept up to date with future packages and products before they are released in the market. This is in addition to the customary Ooredoo benefits such as unlimited minutes, contract freeze, and easy transfer of contract ownership for customers' convenience.



X-CITE LAUNCHES 2017 TRAVEL SEASON OFFERS

KUWAIT: Ahead of the summer vacation, X-cite by Alghanim Electronics, Kuwait's largest electronic retailer launches its annual summer promotions on travel products that include a selection of cameras, mobile phones, chargers, tablets, drones and accessories, enabling travelers to pick up the ideal travel essentials to preserve great memories with families and friends.

The promotion, which runs from June 22 to August 5, comprises the latest electronics and gadgets in the market, including the latest and most advanced mobile phones in the market such as the LG G6, Samsung S8/S8+, HTC U11 and Lenovo P10/P10+ ensuring your mobile lasts the trip. Travel is never complete without great memories that you can preserve a lifetime with the Sony RX100V and the extreme-sports camera, the Go Pro Hero 5 Black.

Get ready to pack your bags with X-cite's travel products and amazing deals including the American Tourister travel bags, and all-in-one cases that will ensure your items are well preserved throughout your travels. Visit any of their 19 showrooms spread across Kuwait. You can also shop without leaving the comfort of your home with X-cite's free-to-download app as well as the store's official website.

Customers can also enjoy many of X-cite's convenient services including Easy Credit, shopping at any of X-cite's select stores that are open 24/7, extended and accidental warranty programs; in addition to the free delivery and installation services. X-cite also provides its customers with a full-fledged service center that operates six days a week, and a professional field technician team.

ETIHAD AIRWAYS' LUXURY DREAMLINER COMMENCES SERVICES INTO BEIJING

ABU DHABI: An Etihad Airways Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner touched down in Beijing yesterday after its inaugural flight from Abu Dhabi, capital of the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Flight EY888 departed Abu Dhabi at 09:30 pm local time yesterday and arrived in Beijing at 08:50 am yesterday. To celebrate the milestone event, a ribbon-cutting ceremony was held in Abu Dhabi, attended by senior executives from Etihad Airways, the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the UAE, and the Abu Dhabi Tourism & Culture Authority. The new 787-9 Dreamliner features Etihad Airways' next-generation Business and Economy Class seats. It will operate with 299 seats - 28 in Business Class and 271 in Economy Class, representing a 14 percent capacity increase.

Peter Baumgartner, Chief Executive Officer of Etihad Airways, said: "Since launching flights between our two capitals of Abu Dhabi and Beijing nine years ago, we have experienced the huge growth of China's outbound tourism market and enjoyed strong demand from business and leisure travelers." "The decision to upgrade our operations to the Dreamliner reflects the importance of Beijing and the Chinese market to the airline, and the sustained development of economic relations between the two countries. Beijing is the nation's economic, political, cultural and international exchange centre, which underlines its importance within Etihad Airways' global network."

HE Mr Ni Jian, Chinese Ambassador to the UAE, complimented Etihad Airways' contributions in the effort of enhancing the capacity of air connectivity between China and the



UAE. He said, "For many years, the UAE has been the second largest trading partner and the largest export market of China in the West Asia and North Africa Region. The UAE is a founding member of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and committed to its central mission of bringing the Belt and Road vision to life. As a key aviation hub in the Gulf region, the UAE and Abu Dhabi will continue to play a positive role in the development of the 'Belt and Road' framework, using the strong global network of Etihad Airways."

HE Saif Saeed Ghobash, Director General of Abu Dhabi Tourism & Culture Authority, added: "China has grown to become the largest overseas source market for Abu Dhabi hotel guest arrivals, and through our pro-active in-territory promotional efforts supported by further expansion in capaci-

ty, we are looking forward to welcoming 600,000 Chinese visitors to the emirate by 2021. Recent developments such as visas on arrival will help promote the UAE and Abu Dhabi as a unique business and leisure destination. It will also encourage Chinese travelers to take advantage of the excellent stopover packages on offer year round while en route to over 40 destinations across the Gulf region, Europe, Africa and America."

The Business Studios in Business Class offer direct aisle access, a fully-flat bed of up to 80.5 inches in length, and an increase of 20 percent in personal space. Upholstered in fine Poltrona Frau Leather, the Business Studio is equipped with an in-seat massage and pneumatic cushion control system which enables guests to adjust the firmness and comfort of their seat.

The airline's Boeing 787 fleet is equipped with the latest in-flight entertainment system featuring over 750 hours of movies and programs, as well as hundreds of music choices and a selection of games for both adults and children. Each Business Studio has an 18-inch personal touch-screen TV with noise-cancelling headphones. Guests can also enjoy mobile connectivity, onboard Wi-Fi and seven satellite channels of live TV. Economy Smart Seats provide enhanced comfort with a unique 'fixed wing' headrest, adjustable lumbar support, a seat width of approximately 19 inches and an 11.1" personal TV monitor on each seat. The aircraft has been designed with enhancements including humidity controls while air pressure levels are set to ensure a smoother flight, allowing guests to arrive feeling fresher.



TIJARI ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF AL NAJMA MEGA DRAW

KUWAIT: Commercial Bank of Kuwait held the Mega Draw for the 2nd Quarter and the Daily Draw yesterday. The draws were held under the supervision of the Ministry of Commerce & Industry represented by Mr. Abdulaziz Ashkanani. The winner of the Mega Draw of KD 150,000 is Shaikh Ghousia Begum. The winners of the Al Najma Daily Draw are :-

Naseeb Mohammad Naseeb Taleb KD 7000/-
Mansour Ahmed Abdulla Bourkhan KD 7000/-

Al Najma awards are now brighter and bigger than ever! With the revamped Al Najma account, all your dreams will be turned to reality. On top of offering the highest daily prize in Kuwait for KD 7,000, now our Mega prize draws got bigger to reach KD 250,000.

BB ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF YAWMI ACCOUNT DRAW

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

Abdulla Hassan Al Abad
Zafar Iqbal Mirza

In addition to the daily draw, Burgan Bank also offers a Quarterly Draw with more chances to win higher rewards, offering the chance to one lucky customer to win KD 125,000 every three months. The Yawmi Account offers Daily and Quarterly Draws,

wherein the Quarterly Draw requires customers to maintain a minimum amount of KD 500 in their account for two months prior to the draw date. Additionally, every KD 10 in the account will entitle customers to one chance of winning. If the account balance is KD 500 and above, the account holder will be qualified for both the quarterly and daily draws. Burgan Bank encourages everyone to open a Yawmi account and/or increase their deposit to maximize their chances of becoming a winner. The higher the level of the deposit, the higher the likelihood to win.

ABK GETS EXCLUSIVE OFFER FROM PLATINUM MEN'S HEALTH CLUB

KUWAIT: As part of ABK's Advantage Discount program, Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) is presenting its ABK Premium cardholders with two exciting offers from Platinum Health Club, which is valid until December, 2017. The offer presented to ABK's Premium cardholders entails a 20% discount when signing up for a 3 month, 6 month and annual membership at Platinum Health Club, in addition to a free massage session when signing up

for the Platinum subscription at select locations. In order to benefit from this offer, ABK Cardholders are required to make their payments using their ABK cards, namely Visa Infinite, Visa Signature or Prestige Salary Account cards. ABK's Advantage Discount Program aims to offer its customers unique and exclusive offers through various partnerships, which offer value added services and enrich the overall banking experience with ABK.



AUB ANNOUNCES KD 250,000 HASSAD ISLAMIC ACCOUNT GRAND PRIZE WINNER

KUWAIT: On 28th June Ahli United Bank held its Lifetime Salary annual grand prize draw as part of the Al Hassad Islamic Savings Account program, which is the largest prize draw in Kuwait. It was a momentous occasion for Mrs Afeefah Ali Bin Nekhi who won KD 250,000 as a lifetime salary over 250 months.

Ahli United Bank congratulates Mrs. Afeefah Ali Bin Nekhi who is now able to achieve her dream of acquiring a house or her favorite car, to travel abroad, establish a new business or any dream she might have along with her aspirations - and all this, simply by having an account with AUB in Kuwait. The Al Hassad Islamic Savings Account program is the largest in Kuwait with a total annual prize draw of KD 3,400,000 aimed at realizing the dreams and ambitions of customers since inception. The program also provides 26 weekly prizes, which represents the biggest number of weekly winners.

To qualify for the Al Hassad Islamic Savings Account prizes, customers only need to open a saving account with a minimum of KD 100. For every KD 50 of quarterly balance in the account, customers earn one chance to enter the quarterly draw. Moreover, customers earn one chance to enter the weekly draws for every KD 50 of balance. This means the more deposits made, the higher the chances of winning. The Al Hassad Islamic Savings Account's customers in Kuwait and Bahrain are eligible to participate in the draw in line with the account's terms and conditions.

CENTRA HUB WINS 'EMERGING VENDOR OF THE YEAR' AT ICT CHAMPION AWARDS

DUBAI: Centra Hub, a specialist fast growing vendor for CRM, HCM and retail solutions and part of the Focus Softnet group of companies, announced that it has won the 'Emerging Vendor of the Year' at the 2017 edition of the Integrator ICT Champion Awards in Dubai. Centra was recognized for the deep inroads it has made by meeting the growing demands of regional organizations for next generation CRM and HCM (human capital management) solutions with a high number of customer deployments in its first year of operations.

"Since Centra Hub's inception as a separate entity in 2016, the company has been able to execute significant product enhancements and tremendous traction in market penetration. We are quite pleased that this award comes as a recognition of the extraordinary work our team is investing behind bringing customer friendly latest generation HCM and CRM solutions to market through our efficient partner network. We would like to dedicate this award to our hard-working team, our channel partners and our customers, who have supported us in every step of our successful jour-

ney so far," says Nisith Naik, CEO, Centra Hub.

The 5th Integrator ICT Champion Awards, hosted by JNS Media International, was based on an online industry survey that was conducted for over a month and included shortlisted nominees in various categories. Centra Hub won the 'Emerging Vendor of the Year' for its performance in winning significant market share in its first year of operations and its best-of-breed solutions portfolio with highly scalable capabilities to suit organizations of varying scale and size across industries.

Centra Hub, a spin off from Focus Softnet, started out its journey as a separate entity in 2016 but has strong product legacy that goes back to 2003 in both CRM and HCM. Centra's CRM and HCM platforms have been further enhanced to bring the latest technologies into the current era through cloud, SaaS and integration-friendly solutions. Today, in addition to their office in UAE, Centra Hub has offices in India and the Far East and work across 14 countries with their partners. The Centra CRM solution is a feature-rich complete sales automation solution and offers real time

analysis of sales activities, leads and opportunity tracking.

The product offers outstanding flexibility in customization and therefore can easily be integrated with any backend ERP systems deployed by customers. "Our CRM implementations have helped customers boost their sales process and revenue generation. It helps monitor prospective customers, manage business performance, quickly create reports, predict revenue more accurately and proactively manage service issues. The integrated solution also provides a complete 360 degree view of accounts, contacts, leads and opportunities, proving sales funnel visibility across the various businesses," Naik added.

Centra HCM is a sturdy, scalable, reliable, modular, flexible and easy-to-use solution. The software is highly interactive, adaptable, multi-functional, user-friendly and cost-effective with very strong security features. Featuring interactive dashboards, the solution can be easily installed and seamlessly integrated with other enterprise solutions. "Our best-of-breed HCM solution helps businesses align their efforts in human capital management with their company's



initiatives, mission, vision, and values. Centra HCM goes beyond designing HCM practices and encourages HCM collaboration with accountability," Naik explained. Centra's regional office, which was opened in Jumeirah

Lake Towers - Dubai last year, has helped it scale up its regional operations and strengthen its ties with its local customers by offering them high-quality technical support and consulting services closer to home.



CANON LAUNCHES MACRO IS STM

DUBAI: Canon Middle East, world leader in imaging solutions, yesterday launched a new innovative lens: The EF-S 35mm f/2.8 Macro IS STM. Designed to capture stunning Macro and close-up photography, the EF-S 35mm f/2.8 Macro IS STM features Canon's unique built-in Macro Lite technology and is the first lens of its kind in the EF-S range. Forming part of Canon's extensive EF range of lenses and compatible with all APS-C DSLR cameras, the EF-S 35mm f/2.8 Macro IS STM facilitates photographers with the capability to capture delicate details and get closer to their subject.

It illuminates small objects and close-up detail, whilst minimizing the shadows it casts onto subjects with a tapered edge design. Combined with an Image Stabilizer with Hybrid IS, the lens is designed to counteract unwanted shake and blur to enhance macro shots. This powerful macro lens, with life-size 1:1 magnification, has the ability to beautifully capture subjects as close as 30mm from the front of the lens.

This close working distance and magnification level means it is ideal for revealing the tiny and intricate details of subjects such as jewelry, food or crafts. Ideal for users seeking to produce distinctive, stand out imagery for their Instagram feed or to produce a portfolio of stunning product imagery for a small business, the EF-S 35mm f/2.8 Macro IS STM gives users the

power to see a new world of detail. Featuring an Optical Image Stabilizer with Hybrid IS, the lens gives photographers the freedom to shoot handheld allowing for new, closer perspectives uncovering detail finer than the human eye can see.

The sophisticated Hybrid IS compensates for angular and linear movement with built-in technology in the lens; especially useful for macro shooting that is prone to exaggerated camera shake often causing unwanted blur. The built-in Macro Lite ensures flexible lighting options and ease for users by allowing photographers to alternate between two lights located on each side of the lens, or both at the same time. At the press of a button the strength of the lighting can be adjusted to amplify the intricate details of the subject so users can creatively add shadows with depth and texture whilst emphasizing the color and details.

For movie-makers, the quiet focusing of the STM focus motor is advantageous for capturing movies without distracting noise, whilst its smooth shifts in focus create cinematic effects. Designed for impactful macro photography, the EF-S 35mm f/2.8 Macro IS STM is a versatile, compact and lightweight lens. It has the capability to be used for a range of applications such as portrait, street and general everyday photography by all budding photographers wanting to tell their story.



SAMSUNG TO SELL RECYCLED NOTE 7 PHONE IN S KOREA

SAMSUNG TO MINIMIZE WASTE THROUGH NOTE FE

SEOUL: Samsung Electronics said yesterday it's recalled Galaxy Note 7 phones will be recycled and sold starting this week in South Korea. The Galaxy Note FE phone, using unused parts in the recalled Note 7 smartphones, will go on sale in South Korea on Friday at 700,000 won, about three quarters of its original price. The company said the supply will be limited to 400,000 units. Overseas sales plans will be determined later, it said in a statement. Samsung said the Note FE has "perfect safety."

The original Note 7 was one of the biggest black eyes in Samsung's history. When it was launched in August 2016, the Note 7 was Samsung's answer to Apple's upcoming iPhone. It was also one of the most expensive Samsung phones with the price starting at \$850. But after reports emerged that its batteries were prone to overheat and catch fire, Samsung recalled the phone in less than a month of its launch and released another one with replaced batteries.

But the second batch also tended to overheat, prompting Samsung to discontinue the Note 7. The debacle dealt a blow to Samsung's corporate image. Aviation authorities around the world banned the pricy phone on flight and



photos of scorched Note 7 circulated on social media. Samsung spent billions of dollars to recall the Note 7 and fix its damaged brand. Earlier this year, the company released the investigation results and blamed flaws in design and production of batteries supplied by two battery makers.

After Samsung recalled millions of Note 7

phones, environmental activists have pressured the South Korean tech giant to reuse the electronics parts to reduce waste. Samsung said the Note FE is part of its efforts to minimize waste. Like the previous Note series, the Note FE, short for "Fan Edition," features the jumbo screen measuring 5.7 inches diagonally and the stylus pen. —AP

BUSINESSES IN KUWAIT USE CONVERGED INFRASTRUCTURE

KUWAIT: According to a recent regional study by Dell EMC that included Kuwait, 98 percent of respondents currently leverage convergence to ensure digital readiness. In addition, 60 percent of respondents show a highly positive sentiment towards the adoption of these advanced systems and state strong understanding of the benefits offered by converged and hyper converged infrastructure. These findings result from a survey conducted by IDG Connect, commissioned by Dell EMC, of 50 IT data-center and storage decision makers, across the region.

As organizations aggressively adopt new technologies and approaches to accelerate their digital maturity, this study outlines the rapid growth of converged and hyper converged infrastructure as means to streamline IT transformation. In response to achieving IT agility, which is central to meeting the demands of digital business, 70 percent of respondents feel that converged and hyper converged infrastructure supports their overall IT transformation strategy.

In view of this, nearly two-thirds of the respondents state convergence to be an important, long-term aspect of their overall IT approach. On the same note, with 74 percent and 80 percent of respondents likely to invest in converged and hyper converged infrastructure respectively this year, makes it evident that there is



Said Akar

heightened demand for convergence amongst regional businesses. However, most respondents surveyed also cite concerns over adoption of converged and hyper converged infrastructure:

66 percent of respondents state data protection and privacy to be their greatest concern.

56 percent of respondents feel investment cost for convergence act as a major barrier.

In order to address these concerns, it is crucial for vendors to empower customers with collaborative technologies that help meet their demands as 68 percent of respondents expect vendors to improve service level availability terms. In this scenario, it is clear that converged and hyper converged infrastructure represent the most prominent trends in datacenter technology, with organizations

embracing adoption of converged and hyper converged platforms and solutions to enable delivery of faster business outcomes.

With a 45 percent market share among IT providers and offering the most comprehensive and industry-leading converged and hyper converged infrastructure portfolio, Dell EMC aims to help organizations simplify all aspects of IT by seamlessly integrating compute, network, storage, and virtualization technologies into one system to drive performance, efficiency and cost savings.

Habib Mahakian, Vice President, Gulf at Dell EMC said, "With Middle East standing at the forefront of digital revolution, organizations in the region need to invest in a strong ICT backbone, which is essential to realize their digital vision. To this end, converged and hyper converged infrastructure is viewed as a key enabler of digital transformation. Converged and hyper converged infrastructure technology is specifically designed to drive digital initiatives by optimizing and simplifying IT environments and operations. In line with this, at Dell EMC, we help our customers ensure their business moves to the next phase of innovation and keeps pace with today's on-demand market with our industry-leading and the most comprehensive converged infrastructure portfolio."

Said Akar, Vice President, EMEA - Converged Platforms and Solutions Division (CPSD), Dell EMC said, "In



Habib Mahakian

this dynamic digital economy, a strong IT backbone is key not only to ensure business sustainability but digital readiness as well. However, this paradigm shift dictates that organizations adopt technology that increases business agility and responsiveness to deliver faster outcomes and allow IT teams to enable innovation."

"Converged and hyper converged infrastructure platforms and solutions provide a clear path to achieve these transformation goals. Hence, Dell EMC with its broad-ranging and best-in-class converged infrastructure portfolio aims to enable organizations to help keep IT teams focused on innovation, deliver maximum performance, lower costs and streamline business operations to keep pace with today's on-demand business environment," he added.

TOP COURT ORDERS GOOGLE TO BLOCK WEBSITE SEARCH RESULTS

OTTAWA: Canada's top court on Wednesday ordered Google to remove a website from its worldwide search results, in what some experts are calling a landmark international copyright protection case. The original injunction, which the Supreme Court upheld, had been requested by Canadian telecommunications equipment manufacturer Equustek Solutions, which successfully sued another company for relabeling its products

and passing them off as their own.

Following that lower court ruling, Google de-indexed 345 webpages associated with the offending firm in Canada. But the company fled the country and continued to market the counterfeit products from an unknown location. Google balked when Equustek asked it to go further and de-index all mentions of the offending company worldwide.

The US-based tech giant argued in court that it was not a party to the dispute, that such a measure was overreach, and "that there is freedom of expression concerns that should have tipped the balance against granting the order." The Supreme Court, however, concluded: "Without the injunctive relief, it was clear that Google would continue to facilitate that ongoing harm" to Equustek.

"The Internet has no borders-its natural habitat is global," said the seven-to-two ruling. "The only way to ensure that the interlocutory injunction attained its objective was to have it apply where Google operates-globally." Some media groups, publishers, copyright organizations and civil liberties groups worried about the precedent it sets.

"The Internet is a global phenomenon, and there is great risk that govern-

ments and commercial entities will see this ruling as justifying censorship requests that could result in perfectly legal and legitimate content disappearing off the web because of a court order in the opposite corner of the globe," commented David Christopher of Open Media. "That would be a major setback to citizens' rights to access information and express ourselves freely." —AFP

SRI LANKA DEPLOYS TROOPS TO TACKLE DENGUE CRISIS

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka deployed hundreds of soldiers to destroy mosquito breeding grounds as the country battles the spread of deadly dengue fever that has killed a record 215 people this year, officials said yesterday. Humid monsoon weather, stagnant water from recent flooding, as well as mounting piles of rotting garbage accumulating in the

capital, have combined to create abundant areas for mosquitoes to multiply.

This has caused rates of dengue, a tropical disease that is spread by mosquitoes, to surge to over 71,000 people infected in the first six months of this year, a record figure that far surpasses last year's total of 55,000. Troops, backed by police and health officials,

have launched an intensive campaign to identify dengue hotspots to be sprayed with insecticides, the military said in a statement.

"Twenty five teams will separately move into the worst-affected areas in and around Colombo and search for dengue breeding spots and other vulnerable areas," the statement said. The scale

of the spread of the disease has been unprecedented and caught Sri Lankan authorities off guard. Health ministry officials said the 215 deaths in the first six months of this year compared with 78 reported during the whole of 2016.

Authorities have blamed a garbage disposal crisis in Colombo for the spread of dengue. The country's main rubbish tip

collapsed in April, crushing dozens of homes and killing 32 people. With nowhere to take the trash, municipal collection has drastically slowed and led to huge piles on the streets which authorities say help mosquito-breeding. Stagnant water left behind after last month's flooding was also seen as contributing to the spread of dengue.—AFP

CHINA TAPS COMBUSTIBLE ICE FOR GROWING ENERGY NEEDS

SUBSTANTIAL RESOURCE COULD BE GAME CHANGER

BEIJING: China is drilling deep into the ocean floor in the hope of tapping vast deposits of a frozen fossil fuel known as "combustible ice" but it will be years before it is part of the global energy mix. Gas hydrates are found in the seabed as well as beneath permafrost but experts say extracting methane from the ice crystals is technologically challenging and expensive. Energy-guzzling China, one of several countries hoping to exploit the hard-to-reach resource to meet growing demand, recently announced a "historic breakthrough" in drilling tests in the South China Sea. In six weeks China extracted more than 235,000 cubic meters of gas hydrate off the coast of Guangdong province, according to a statement on the China Geological Survey's website. "China has beaten expectations in completing the trial explorations of combustible ice

using local innovations in technology and engineering," said Ye Jianliang, head of the Guangzhou Marine Geology Survey. "It marks a historic breakthrough," he added.

Substantial deposits

One cubic meter of gas hydrate, which is also known as "flammable ice" because methane can ignite, releases 164 cubic meters of conventional natural gas once extracted, the US Department of Energy says. Methane is extracted by heating or reducing the pressure inside the well to break down the hydrates. Estimates for the size of the planet's gas hydrate deposits vary widely but the US department says it could exceed "the combined energy content of all other known fossil fuels". Analysts say the substantial resource could be a "game changer" for countries that

have limited access to conventional natural gas. "The perfect example is Japan because they don't have much conventional gas and for them it could be an important reserve," said Ingo Pecher, a senior lecturer in the science faculty at New Zealand's University of Auckland.

Japan is heavily reliant on liquefied natural gas imports, with most of the country's fleet of nuclear reactors still offline more than six years after the 2011 tsunami disaster at Fukushima. But Pecher said: "It boils down to economics." While known and presumed gas hydrate deposits have been identified from New Zealand to Alaska, the challenge is to find ones that are highly concentrated and accessible.

Huge potential

Several countries are hoping to turn gas hydrate into a viable source of energy, including Japan which has reported drilling success off its Pacific coast. The United States, which is also looking into the potential of gas hydrate, has obtained positive results from exploratory drilling in the Gulf of Mexico. But commercially viable production is "another 10 years" away, said Paul Duerloo, partner and managing director at Boston Consulting Group in Tokyo. "We know where the resource is, the technology we need to apply but the production rates out of the wells are not commercially sustainable at the current prices," said Duerloo, noting that shale gas, another unconventional energy source that faced similar challenges, took a long time to "take off".

China expects to start commercial production of gas hydrate "around 2030", according to the Ministry of Land and Resources. Another concern surrounding gas hydrate extraction is the potential for methane-a greenhouse gas-to leak into the atmosphere and fuel global warming, said Xu Yuan, associate professor at the Chinese University of Hong Kong's geography and resource management department. Nevertheless, gas hydrates have "huge potential" if the cost and technological hurdles can be overcome, he added.—AFP



BEIJING: This photo shows a semi-submersible drilling platform in the waters off Yantai, in China's Shandong province.—AFP



AT SEA: This illustration of a Vaquita Marina, provided by Greenpeace, shows an image of the highly endangered sea mammal swimming in the sea.—AP

MEXICO BANS GILLNET FISHING IN ENDANGERED PORPOISE'S HABITAT

MEXICO CITY: Mexico enacted a permanent ban on gillnet fishing in the northern Gulf of California on Friday in a bid to protect the critically endangered porpoise known as the vaquita marina. The measure, which makes permanent a temporary ban in place since April 2015, is the first step toward fulfilling an agreement reached this month by President Enrique Peña Nieto and the foundations of actor Leonardo DiCaprio and telecom billionaire Carlos Slim to try to save the vaquita.

The diminutive vaquita is the world's smallest and most endangered marine mammal, with only about two-dozen remaining in their habitat in the upper Gulf. Their numbers have been greatly reduced in recent decades by the illegal use of gillnets, which are primarily used to catch the totoaba fish but can ensnare and kill vaquitas as well. The World Wildlife Fund issued a statement supporting the ban.

"This is a fantastic and encouraging step forward in the path to saving the vaquita,

provided the ban is fully enforced and accompanied by fishing alternatives for local communities," acting CEO Jorge Rickards was quoted as saying. Despite authorities' oft-expressed commitment to saving the vaquita, enforcement has not been entirely effective. The swim bladder of the totoaba is prized in China and can sell for huge sums, offering a powerful financial incentive for fishermen to pursue that catch at the vaquita's expense.

The newly permanent measure provides for monitoring in the region especially for fishing vessels and landing sites. It will be illegal to transport gillnets into the area, and fishermen will be required to report any lost gear to avoid harming the delicate ecosystem. Mexico is the first country to enact such a ban on gillnets, also known as ghost nets due to their invisibility to marine mammals. "Great news as the permanent ban on gillnets has been made official," DiCaprio said in a Twitter message that was retweeted by Peña Nieto.—AP



MONTANA: This file photo shows dehydrated placenta capsules in Columbia, Montana.—AP

OREGON INFANT'S ILLNESS PROMPTS WARNING ABOUT PLACENTA PILLS

NEW YORK: Health officials are warning new moms about the potential dangers of taking pills made from their placenta, after an Oregon infant's infection was tied to the practice. Trendy among some mothers, the practice of eating the placenta after giving birth is believed by some to help with postpartum depression, breast milk production and energy levels. It's taken off in the last decade, touted by some celebrity moms and promoted on the internet. Now tens of thousands of US moms do it, according to a rough estimate by researchers at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

But in an unusual report published Thursday, a group of doctors and health officials say the capsules appear to have caused an infant's illness in Portland, Oregon, last fall. The authors said moms should avoid taking them, noting that the making of placenta capsules is not regulated and there's no guarantee they are free of harmful germs. The researchers include some lab scientists at the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. A CDC spokeswoman said the agency hasn't taken a formal position on placenta pills, and that the warning was the authors' conclusion.

Still, it's perhaps the strongest statement to date by any medical authorities against the practice, said Sharon Young, a UNLV researcher who has studied the practice. She said there isn't good medical evidence yet that it is beneficial. One UNLV study found placenta pills were a no better

source of iron than dummy pills. "I've heard physicians say there's no benefit to doing it, that it's pointless. But I can't remember a statement so strongly advising against it, from a physician or anyone," she said. Last fall, the Oregon baby fell ill twice with a strep infection.

The first time, investigators believe the mom passed an infection to her child during birth. Later, the mom started taking placenta capsules. The child got sick again weeks later, and health officials think the pills played a role. Tests found the bacteria in the placenta pills. The mother had sent her placenta to a company that offers to clean, slice and dehydrate it, then grind it and put it into gelatin capsules, according to the report. It's possible the company - which was not identified - failed to heat the placenta enough to kill germs, the authors said.

The placenta grows in the uterus during pregnancy and provides oxygen and nutrients to the fetus. Most mammal mothers eat placentas after giving birth - camels and humans traditionally were the exceptions. Ground placenta was a treatment in ancient Chinese medicine, though it wasn't standard practice for new mothers, Young said. Moms didn't really start doing it until it popped up as part of a natural birth movement in the late 1960s and 1970s, she said. The most common method is capsules prepared by doulas or midwives, according to Young.—AP

WAR VETS, INNER CITY YOUTH JOIN TO TRAP FLORIDA PYTHONS

BOYNTON BEACH: US war veteran Chad Brown suffers from PTSD after serving in Iraq and Somalia, has been homeless and classified as mentally disabled, sold his blood for \$20 a pop and tried to kill himself. Now he has found some semblance of redemption in the swamps of Florida, mucking around with disadvantaged inner city youths to catch snakes and get a taste of nature as he works to connect with other people.

The project is the brain child of a Portland-based NGO called Soul River. The kids find adult mentors while the vets gain some perspective on life, says Brown, a decorated Navy veteran who founded the organization. On this particular day Brown is with another vet and five youths in the Loxahatchee nature reserve, on Florida's east coast, when a Burmese python slithers out of a sack that a forestry official had been holding it in.

One of the kids, 14-year-old Gabriel Bliss, tries

to trap the snake as he has been taught. But he messes up-and it bites him. "That's the coolest thing," said Bliss, showing off his bleeding hand. Later, the group troops off into a swamp with muck up to their hips infested with mosquitoes and alligators. But a Florida Everglades guide assures them that the big-toothed critters do not like human flesh. All the humans get are bug bites. Brown founded Soul River in 2011 after concluding that a simple sport-fly fishing-was the only thing that helped him battle his PTSD.

Natural medicine

Brown left the Navy in 1994 and bottomed out in 2000 when he was admitted to a psychiatric ward and thought he had lost everything. But life changed when he ventured out into nature. He went fishing. "When I was hooking in on my first fish, I was laughing and I was proud and I felt all this medication that I was taking

was coming out of my system, basically," Brown said. He went to tell his doctors how much it helped. Their answer: keep doing it.

"I started to fish more, and fly fishing became a very, very critical lifestyle pivot piece of my life. It was like a medicine for me," the 45-year-old Texan said. In 2011, Brown decided to share this unexpected kind of therapy with underprivileged youths in Portland, where he lives now, and with fellow war vets. "We give them an opportunity to find themselves as I found myself on the river," he said.

Such is the case of young Bliss, who decided to take on herpetology-the study of reptiles and amphibians-after his snake bite. And then there is Tyrell Hall, 16, who used to dream of being a football player but now wants to study birds and become an ornithologist. But these kids find mentors in other ways, too.

Eighteen year-old Citlalli Briseno said that she has never met her father. "There was a lot of anger and resentment towards him and just being in this organization, seeing men that actually have families, that actually care for their families and being exposed to different things that I can do that are productive in my community, it's really eye-opening and it helps out a lot," said Briseno. In 2013 the US Fish and Wildlife Service began providing subsidies for Soul River, which has altogether taken some 300 young people and vets on expeditions in Oregon, Alaska and now Florida. Brown worries about the effect President Donald Trump's proposed deep budget cuts would have on his program.

Money is tight

Trump's proposed 2018 budget for the Fish and Wildlife Service calls for \$1.3 billion in funding-a 13 percent cut compared to the previous year. The programs that would be eliminated include Soul River. Trump's budget proposal still needs to undergo congressional review and debate, but budget cuts even this year are hurting Soul River. The Fish and Wildlife Service in Alaska promised half of what it gave in 2016, said Brown.

"That hurt me. It hurt me a lot," said Brown. He starts crying and fails to finish his sentence. Kristen Gilbert, a Fish and Wildlife official involved in the Alaska trips, said she is sorry about the funding cuts. "I think what Chad does, particularly with veterans and youth, is really interesting because he comes at a different angle than just the recreation aspect," Gilbert said. She especially praised the "healing and nature aspect" of Soul River.

To compensate, Brown is seeking private donations and corporate sponsorships. Brown made the Everglades trip with financing from a fishing tackle company, and plans to take another group to the Arctic this year. But the overall number of trips is down to half of what it was in 2016. Brown said this is a personal beef because Trump made better treatment of war vets one of his main campaign promises. "It's very disappointing," he said.—AFP



BOYNTON BEACH: War veteran Chad Brown, left, and Riley Brooks ride through the Everglades during an airboat tour at the Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge in Boynton Beach, Florida.—AFP photos



BOYNTON BEACH: A youth group makes their way during a canoe trial into the Everglades.



ATHENS: Bunches of mountain tea are on sale in a shop in Athens.—AP

LOOTERS STRIP MOUNTAINS OF WILD TEA, RARE PLANTS IN GREECE

THESSALONIKI, Greece: In the rugged, herb-scented mountains of northwestern Greece, where the border with Albania is a snaking invisible line, trouble is brewing over tea - the wild herbal variety. Greek authorities and conservationists say bands of impoverished Albanians are making regular cross-border forays, illegally harvesting donkey-loads of herbs and medicinal plants. They mostly pick mountain tea - also called ironwort - hawthorn and even primrose, but they are also destroying rare and endangered species in the process.

The looters then sell the herbs for export to pharmaceutical or cosmetics companies, a business that nets Albanian wholesalers tens of millions annually. It's illegal in Greece to pick more than a tiny quantity of wild herbs for personal use in traditional infusions. That ban doesn't exist in Albania, one of Europe's poorest nations. But, more significantly, the plants are usually uprooted in the looters' haste to pick as much as possible and be off undetected. This stops natural regeneration, threatens delicate ecosystems and leaves entire mountainsides denuded.

Albanians contend the herbs are there and the Greeks don't pick them, so why shouldn't somebody profit? Christos Toskos, an environmentalist in Greece's Kastoria border area, says the depredations have increased over the past five years, with incursions now coming on a daily basis. "There is very large destruction in areas covering thousands of acres," he said. Vassilis Filiadis, who grows his own herbs in Kastoria, lamented the fate of an old wild ironwort patch in the Grammos mountains.

"It covers about 3 square kilometers. In past years, the mountain tea grew there like a sea. The plants formed waves," he told The Associated Press. "I went this year and was shocked, it's all been uprooted." Greece's flora is among the richest in Europe, with about 6,500 native plant species. In target-

ed operations over the last few months, Greek police have arrested at least ten Albanians and seized dozens of kilograms of herbs. In one case in late June, three people were caught with 136 kilograms of ironwort loaded on two horses and a donkey.

Illegal harvesters

Albanian exporters pay illegal gatherers up to 6 euros a kilogram for ironwort and 7 euros a kilogram for hawthorn, Greek officials say. "They illegally enter Greece and quickly gather the plants to avoid being seen," said Brigadier-General Panagiotis Ntziovaras, head of police for the border region of western Macedonia. Those caught have been given suspended prison sentences of one or two months and been deported. Many poor Albanians are crossing the mountains into Greece this year because of an herb shortage in Albania due to freezing temperatures last winter, said Filip Gjoka, president of Albania's Association of Medicinal & Aromatic Plants and owner of an herb and spice trading company.

He said they sometimes take whole families and camp in the mountains with their horses or mules. "There are a lot of herbs in Greece, where they are not collected due to labor force shortages or lack of interest," Gjoka said. "We here collect those herbs, and these people take the risks to support their families. They can bear a few months of jail since there are no other jobs." In 2016, 24 Albanian companies exported some 17,000 tons of medicinal and aromatic plants and herbs - 186 varieties - worth a total of \$40 million. They process only about 30 percent of that amount in five factories and export the rest raw. The US is a main importer, while others include France, Germany, Spain and even Australia. Kastoria agriculturalist Dimitris Natos said the international market for herbs, particularly for use in cosmetics and foods, is expanding rapidly. — AP

CALIFORNIANS TAKE A SHINE TO SOLAR POWER

LOS ANGELES: Jacquie Barnbrook had grown tired of the high electricity bills and her gas-guzzling luxury car when she finally decided to take the plunge last year. The 52-year-old Los Angeles resident joined an ever-growing number of Californians who are switching to solar power for their energy needs in a bid to not only save money but to also do their part for the environment in a state setting the pace for the rest of the country in that sector.

"At this time of year, my power and water bills usually were around \$400 a month," Barnbrook said. "Right now, it's \$150 a month." As for her vehicle, Barnbrook said she ditched it in favor of a hybrid one that she now plugs in and charges at her house. "I was previously spending \$80 dollars on gas every three or four days and now I haven't put gas in my new car since the beginning of March," she noted. "That's four months ago!"

Nearly 4.9 million homes are powered by solar energy in California—the nation's green trailblazer and the most populous state—and that number is expected to continue to grow, according to the Solar Energy Industries Association, a non-profit trade association. Even President Donald Trump, an avowed sceptic on climate change, is considering putting solar panels on the wall he plans to build on the Mexican border.

Snake oil

Although solar installations have slowed this year due, in part, to a record number of people rushing to sign up in 2016 for fear of losing a tax incentive, the market is expected to continue to grow, especially in places like California which has a plethora of sunny days, experts say. Driving this expansion is the plummeting cost of solar panels—which were traditionally limited to relatively affluent homeowners—and improving technology on batteries to store energy, they add. "Right now, we're in throes of rapid change in the solar industry," said Rajit Gadhi, director of the UCLA Smart Grid Energy Research Center.

"As people process all the information out there and report their success stories and it starts to become mainstream ... the momentum will grow." He said apart from cost, another reason average consumers have gingerly adopted



solar power in recent years was the dizzying number of regulatory hoops they had to go through to get approval from utility companies and a lot of complicated information to process. Moreover, as demand for the product has surged in the last decade, so have the number of companies—both serious and shady—jostling for a piece of the pie.

"Solar power is confusing and for a long time it really didn't make a lot of economic sense," said Ryan Willemsen, CEO and founder of the San Diego-based start-up Solar to the People. "In California, solar is really getting a snake oil reputation because of some of the unscrupulous folks involved who are pushing solar super hard," he added. "In San Diego alone, for example, there are over 200 solar operations." Ara Petrosyan, CEO and founder of LA Solar Group, a consulting firm, said he believes that once the dust settles and shady companies inevitably go out of business, consumers will be able to make more informed and affordable choices and the sector will take off like "a rocket ship."

"In five years, so many rules and regulations have been added that you have to be a really good expert to stay in the business," he said. He added that a clear sign of where the industry is going is the number of installations—which cost between \$15,000 and \$20,000 for an average size house—his company is handling. "When we started in 2012, we did about 10 installations a month," Petrosyan said. "Today, we do about 120 a month ... and it will definitely keep increasing."

Such projections are good news for a state that has mandated that 50 percent of its electricity come from renewable energy sources, including solar, by 2030. Solar power is also growing fast in other states, including New York, which look to California as an example. "The overall industry trend is that the cost of solar panels and other components is going down," said Willemsen. "And more and more standard folks are hearing it's a good idea and once one person in the neighborhood goes solar, more and more follow." —AFP

PREGNANT OR TRYING? DON'T LET ZIKA VIRUS GUARD DOWN

WASHINGTON: The Zika virus may not seem as big a threat as last summer but don't let your guard down - especially if you're pregnant or trying to be. While cases of the birth defect-causing virus have dropped sharply from last year's peak in parts of Latin

America and the Caribbean, Zika hasn't disappeared from the region and remains a potential threat. It's hard to predict how much risk people face in locales with smoldering infection, or if cases might spike again. For now, pregnant women still are being

urged not to travel to a country or area with even a few reported cases of Zika, because the consequences can be disastrous for a fetus' brain. "It's part of the new reality," said Dr. Martin Cetron of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Those trying to conceive, and their partners, are advised to check with their doctor on how long to wait after visiting a location with active Zika infection.

There are lingering questions, too, about Zika's risk beyond pregnancy, enough that US scientists just began studying babies in Guatemala to learn if infection after birth also might damage the brain. The challenge is getting those messages to the people who most need it when Zika is fast receding from the public's radar - even as money may be drying up to track the virus and the babies it injures.

Mosquito season in full swing

In the past month, Puerto Rico and Brazil, hard hit by Zika last year,

declared their epidemics over. But smaller numbers of infections continue around the region, according to the CDC and the Pan American Health Organization. "Zika hasn't gone away," said CDC acting director Dr. Anne Schuchat. "We can't afford to be complacent." The US Zika Pregnancy Registry counts 1,963 pregnant women in US states who had lab tests showing Zika infection since officials began counting in 2016, and another 4,107 in US territories.

Since the beginning of June, 271 pregnant women were added to the registry's Zika count, 80 of them in US states and the rest residents of US territories, although it's not clear when they became infected. What about non-pregnant travelers? CDC has counted 140 cases so far this year in US states, all of them who had symptoms. The vast majority of people who get Zika don't notice symptoms, yet still are potential spreaders of infection if mosquitoes back home bite them and then someone else. —AP



BRAZIL: In this file photo, Aedes aegypti mosquitoes, responsible for transmitting Zika, sit in a petri dish at the Fiocruz Institute in Recife, Brazil.—AP

HEALTH AGENCY PROBES E COLI OUTBREAK IN POLYGAMIST UTAH

HILDALE, Utah: Utah health authorities said they are investigating an outbreak of E coli after two children died in a city on the Arizona border that's home to a polygamist Mormon sect. The investigation in Hildale, Utah, comes after the deaths in recent weeks, the Southwest Utah Public Health Department told the Salt Lake Tribune. The cause and number of E coli cases was not available, said David Heaton, an official at the department.

The agency does not consider the town at large to be at risk, the Tribune reported. "All the water testing we've done in Hildale has been clean," Heaton

said, "so we're focusing all our efforts on contaminated food or exposure to animals." The department is looking at one location, he said, declining to identify it because of the ongoing investigation.

E coli can cause diarrhea, cramps, nausea, headaches or other symptoms. It has been a while since there's been an outbreak of E coli in southern Utah, Heaton said, adding that there have been individual cases. Hildale and adjacent Colorado City, Arizona, have been dominated for decades by members of the polygamist Fundamentalist Church of Latter-Day Saints.—AP

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Dr. Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem
مؤيد علي المخيزيم

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



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



CIK HOLD ANNUAL GATHERING

CIK, a social, membership-based organization of Canadian identity is composed of and supported by Canadians in Kuwait. CIK strives to showcase the Culture and values of Canadian Societies in Kuwait combining the talents and contributions of Canadians who live across Kuwait. In line with its objectives of promoting friendship and bonds among Canadians the CIK this year too held their grandeur annual gathering. CIK's active role in portraying varieties of Canadian culture in the past has earned the respect of wide spectrum of Kuwaiti society and other expatriate communities in Kuwait.

The President of CIK Ishtiaq Malik, in his opening remarks welcomed the members and the guests and thanked all the members for continued support and contributions that nurture and strengthen CIK. Annual get together - 2017 was held at the residence of Sri Lanka Ambassador who is an active member of CIK with his deep rooted bonds in Canada. The gala evening also witnessed celebrations of the wedding anniversary of Reza and Ariata the two long serving members of the



CIK governing board. Anniversary cake-cutting was followed by presentation of a plaqueto the couple by CIK, in recognition of their untint support and commitment.

The CIK also honored Moly Hinh, one of the Board Members of the CIK. The President appreciated Moly's immense contributions to the membership drive undertook by CIK that substantially expanded CIK membership. Ambassador Candie presented a "Portrait" of Moly Hinh in appreciation of her dedicated service to the CIK, on behalf of the members. The gathering also discussed CIK's agenda in an informal setting for the upcoming year. The well attended CIK gathering that lasted until the wee hours was filled with indelible memories of joy and enertainment.





CHEVROLET ALGHANIM HOSTS 'KUWAIT CAMARO CLUB'

Creating memorable experiences in every level of service provided and always sharing the passion of sports cars with Camaro enthusiasts, Chevrolet Alghanim invited "Kuwait Camaro Club" to VIP experience at the exclusive movie premier of the highly anticipated Transformers 5: The Last Knight, in which one of the main characters, the Bumblebee, has always been a Chevrolet Camaro in all its previous titles. The screening took place in the VIP area of Grand Cinemas at Hamra Tower.

The event comes as part of the ongoing commitment of Chevrolet Alghanim to the sports cars community and in specific the Kuwait Camaro Club, sponsoring its events and gathering, initiating exclusive events for its members to reward them and enable them to be the first to explore new Camaro cars launched in the Kuwait. Chevrolet Alghanim aims through its support to add value and enrich the passion for its sports cars and attracts youth.

Speed, performance and design

The Camaro SS 2017 is not only the best Camaro SS ever, but also one of the best performance cars available, designed by Chevrolet to be lighter, more powerful, refined, with more advanced technology. Described as the most powerful yet, the Camaro SS set to prove its per-

formance capabilities with an extreme 0-100 mph-0 test, thereby establishing a new performance benchmark in the sport car segment for Middle East customers.

The most powerful Camaro SS ever built, the car provides a faster, more nimble driving experience with a new 6.2L direct-injected Small Block V-8 rated at 455 horsepower and 455 lb-ft of torque. Lightweight architecture and optimized systems. Significant weight savings came from using an aluminum instrument panel frame instead of steel, has contributed in the reduction of the overall suspension weight. With the lighter, stiffer architecture and more powerful engines, the Camaro SS delivers better lap times than the fifth-generation's track-focused Camaro 1LE package. The Camaro features a new, multi-link MacPherson strut front suspension with Camaro-specific geometry. The double-pivot design provides a more precise feeling of control, including more linear and communicative feel from the quick-ratio electric power steering system. At the rear, a new five-link independent suspension yields outstanding wheel control and reduces "squat" during acceleration.

Other features

Aerodynamically optimized design that is the result of 350 hours



of wind tunnel testing, reducing drag on LT models and improving down force on SS. More athletic-looking, sculptured exterior that complements the tighter, leaner architecture - and offers all-new, modern lighting signatures, including light-emitting diode (LED) technology. All-new, interior with shifter-focused center console, intuitive

controls, flat-bottom steering wheel, and higher quality materials throughout. Unique control rings around the air vents used for temperature and fan speed adjustments, eliminating the need for conventional buttons.

Superior Technology

With performance and advanced

design comes a superior technology to complement the overall unique experience that every sports car enthusiasts looks forward to. The technology features include: All-new Drive Mode Selector, which tailors up to eight vehicle attributes for four modes: Snow/Ice, Tour, Sport and - on SS models - Track settings. Segment-exclusive, Interior

Spectrum Lighting that offers 24 different ambient lighting effects on the dash, door panels, and center console. High-definition, configurable color displays - including available dual, 8-inch-diagonal screens. Driver-centric technology including Head-Up Display, wireless smartphone charger and Apple CarPlay.



KUWAIT NATIONAL ENGLISH SCHOOL'S SEN DEPARTMENT HOLDS CONCERT

"What a Wonderful World" was the theme of the SEN closing ceremony for the Sen Department from Kuwait National English School. The staff from the SEN Department of Kuwait National English School showed their dedication and commitment for the benefit of their children in a cheerful and lovely atmosphere. Congratulations to the children who performed with enthusiasm and joy on this occasion.



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KNCC PROGRAMME FROM THURSDAY TO WEDNESDAY (29/06/2017 TO 05/07/2017)

Movie	Time	Movie	Time	Movie	Time
SHARQIA-1 THE MUMMY	11:45 AM	TISBAH ALA KHAIR	4:30 PM	TUBELIGHT (Hindi)	12:05 AM
TUBELIGHT (Hindi)	2:00 PM	TISBAH ALA KHAIR	6:30 PM		
TRANSFORMERS: The Last Knight	4:45 PM	TISBAH ALA KHAIR	8:30 PM		
TUBELIGHT (Hindi)	7:45 PM	TISBAH ALA KHAIR	10:30 PM		
THE MUMMY	10:30 PM	TISBAH ALA KHAIR	12:45 AM		
THE MUMMY	12:45 AM				
SHARQIA-2 DESPICABLE ME 3	12:00 PM	FANAR-3 Mr. FROG	11:30 AM	AVENUES-2 DESPICABLE ME 3 -3D-ADX	11:30 AM
DESPICABLE ME 3	2:00 PM	PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: Dead Men Tell No Tales	1:30 PM	DESPICABLE ME 3 -3D-ADX	1:30 PM
DESPICABLE ME 3	4:00 PM	PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: Dead Men Tell No Tales	4:15 PM	DESPICABLE ME 3 -3D-ADX	3:30 PM
DESPICABLE ME 3	6:00 PM	TUBELIGHT (Hindi)	6:45 PM	DESPICABLE ME 3 -3D-ADX	5:30 PM
DESPICABLE ME 3	8:00 PM	TUBELIGHT (Hindi)	9:30 PM	PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: Dead Men Tell No Tales	7:30 PM
PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: Dead Men Tell No Tales	10:00 PM	FANAR-4 DESPICABLE ME 3	11:30 AM	PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: Dead Men Tell No Tales	10:15 PM
PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: Dead Men Tell No Tales	12:45 AM	DESPICABLE ME 3	1:30 PM	PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: Dead Men Tell No Tales	12:30 AM
		DESPICABLE ME 3	2:00 PM		
SHARQIA-3 TISBAH ALA KHAIR	12:30 PM	DESPICABLE ME 3	4:00 PM	AVENUES-3 TISBAH ALA KHAIR	12:00 PM
TISBAH ALA KHAIR	3:00 PM	DESPICABLE ME 3	6:00 PM	TISBAH ALA KHAIR	2:00 PM
PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: Dead Men Tell No Tales	5:00 PM	DESPICABLE ME 3	8:00 PM	TISBAH ALA KHAIR	4:00 PM
TISBAH ALA KHAIR	7:45 PM	PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: Dead Men Tell No Tales	10:00 PM	TISBAH ALA KHAIR	6:00 PM
KHAMMIS & JUMMA (Horroob Ejbar)	9:45 PM	PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: Dead Men Tell No Tales	12:45 AM	TISBAH ALA KHAIR	10:00 PM
TISBAH ALA KHAIR	12:30 AM			TISBAH ALA KHAIR	12:05 AM
MUHALAB-1 TISBAH ALA KHAIR	11:45 AM	FANAR-5 THE MUMMY	12:30 PM	AVENUES-4 DESPICABLE ME 3	2:45 PM
TUBELIGHT (Hindi)	1:45 PM	THE MUMMY	2:45 PM	KHAMMIS & JUMMA (Horroob Ejbar)	2:45 PM
THE MUMMY	4:30 PM	Mr. FROG	5:00 PM	TISBAH ALA KHAIR	5:30 PM
TUBELIGHT (Hindi)	6:45 PM	KHAMMIS & JUMMA (Horroob Ejbar)	7:00 PM	DESPICABLE ME 3	7:30 PM
THE MUMMY	9:30 PM	KHAMMIS & JUMMA (Horroob Ejbar)	9:45 PM	DESPICABLE ME 3	9:30 PM
TRANSFORMERS: The Last Knight	11:45 PM	THE MUMMY	12:30 AM	DESPICABLE ME 3	12:15 AM
MUHALAB-2 TISBAH ALA KHAIR	12:30 PM	MARINA-1 TISBAH ALA KHAIR	2:15 PM	360- 1 DESPICABLE ME 3	11:30 AM
KHAMMIS & JUMMA (Horroob Ejbar)	2:30 PM	KHAMMIS & JUMMA (Horroob Ejbar)	2:15 PM	DESPICABLE ME 3 (3D)	1:30 PM
TISBAH ALA KHAIR	5:15 PM	TISBAH ALA KHAIR	5:00 PM	DESPICABLE ME 3 (3D)	3:30 PM
KHAMMIS & JUMMA (Horroob Ejbar)	7:15 PM	KHAMMIS & JUMMA (Horroob Ejbar)	7:00 PM	DESPICABLE ME 3 (3D)	5:30 PM
TISBAH ALA KHAIR	10:00 PM	TRANSFORMERS: The Last Knight	9:45 PM	DESPICABLE ME 3	7:30 PM
KHAMMIS & JUMMA (Horroob Ejbar)	12:05 AM	MARINA-2 THE MUMMY	11:30 AM	DESPICABLE ME 3	9:30 PM
MUHALAB-3 DESPICABLE ME 3	11:30 AM	PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: Dead Men Tell No Tales	1:45 PM	360- 2 KHAMMIS & JUMMA (Horroob Ejbar)	1:00 PM
DESPICABLE ME 3	1:30 PM	THE MUMMY	4:15 PM	KHAMMIS & JUMMA (Horroob Ejbar)	3:45 PM
DESPICABLE ME 3	3:30 PM	PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: Dead Men Tell No Tales	6:30 PM	Mr. FROG	0:02
DESPICABLE ME 3	5:30 PM	TRANSFORMERS: The Last Knight	9:15 PM	Mr. FROG	8:30 PM
DESPICABLE ME 3	7:30 PM	PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: Dead Men Tell No Tales	12:15 AM	TUBELIGHT (Hindi)	10:30 PM
PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: Dead Men Tell No Tales	9:30 PM	MARINA-3 DESPICABLE ME 3	12:45 PM	THE MUMMY	1:15 AM
PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: Dead Men Tell No Tales	12:15 AM	DESPICABLE ME 3	2:45 PM	360- 3 TUBELIGHT (Hindi)	12:00 PM
FANAR-1 DESPICABLE ME 3	11:30 AM	DESPICABLE ME 3	4:45 PM	TUBELIGHT (Hindi)	2:45 PM
TRANSFORMERS: The Last Knight	1:30 PM	DESPICABLE ME 3	6:45 PM	TUBELIGHT (Hindi)	5:45 PM
THE MUMMY	4:30 PM	DESPICABLE ME 3	8:45 PM	TUBELIGHT (Hindi)	8:45 PM
TRANSFORMERS: The Last Knight	6:45 PM	THE MUMMY	10:45 PM	TUBELIGHT (Hindi)	11:45 PM
THE MUMMY	9:45 PM		1:00 AM	AL-KOUT.1 DESPICABLE ME 3	11:45 AM
TRANSFORMERS: The Last Knight	12:05 AM	AVENUES-1 TUBELIGHT (Hindi)	1:00 PM	DESPICABLE ME 3	1:45 PM
FANAR-2 TISBAH ALA KHAIR	11:45 AM	TUBELIGHT (Hindi)	3:45 PM	DESPICABLE ME 3	3:45 PM
TUBELIGHT (Hindi)	1:45 PM	TUBELIGHT (Hindi)	6:30 PM	DESPICABLE ME 3	5:45 PM
		TUBELIGHT (Hindi)	9:15 PM	PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: Dead Men Tell No Tales	7:45 PM
				PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: Dead Men Tell No Tales	9:45 PM
				PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: Dead Men Tell No Tales	12:30 AM

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Asr: 15:26
Maghrib: 18:51
Isha: 20:23

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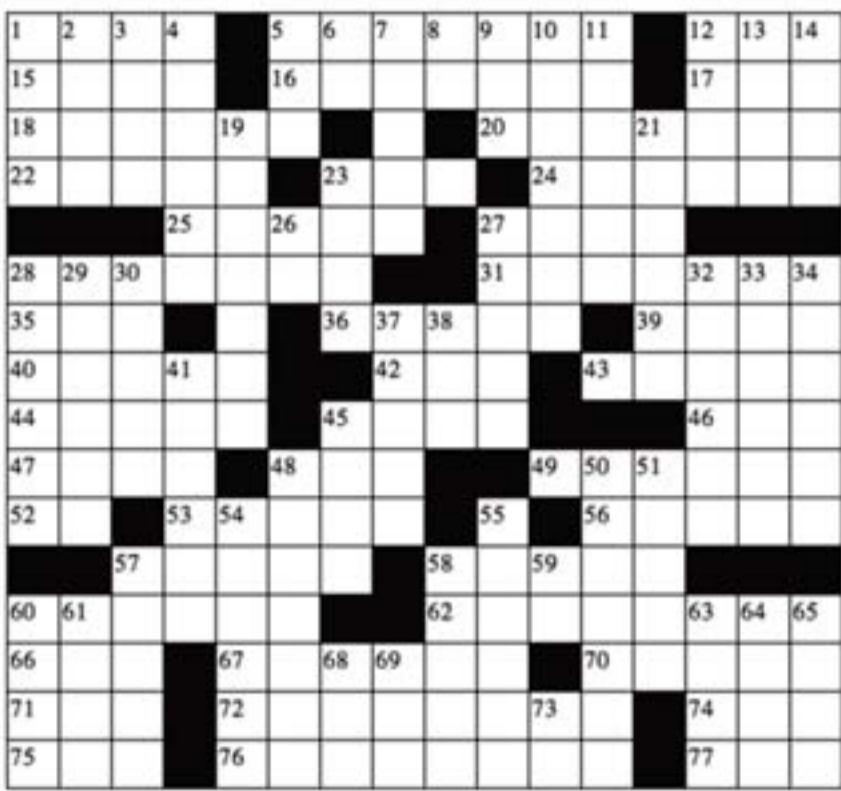
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Flight Schedule

DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Monday 3/7/2017				Departure Flights on Monday 3/7/2017			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
MSC	501	Alexandria	00:05	KAC	672	Dubai	13:55
THY	772	Istanbul	00:10	KNE	1078	Doha	14:10
SYR	341	Damascus	00:15	GFA	231	Riyadh	14:10
KAC	786	Jeddah	00:30	KAC	364	Bahrain	14:15
JZR	267	Beirut	00:35	KAC	618	Colombo	14:15
KAC	504	Beirut	00:45	FDB	059	Doha	14:20
KAC	102	London	00:55	KAC	352	Dubai	14:20
DLH	635	Doha	01:00	PIA	903	Kochi	14:20
PGT	858	Istanbul	01:15	KAC	512	Mashhad	14:25
JZR	539	Cairo	01:20	JZR	903	Jeddah	14:25
UAE	853	Dubai	01:40	KAC	304	Mumbai	14:45
RJA	642	Amman	01:45	KAC	692	Muscat	14:55
THY	1464	Istanbul	01:50	ETD	788	Jeddah	14:55
KKK	6506	Istanbul	01:55	OMA	303	Abu Dhabi	15:05
MEA	410	Beirut	02:00	KAC	645	Muscat	15:10
JZR	553	Alexandria	02:10	KAC	562	Amman	15:25
QTR	1086	Doha	02:10	KAC	502	Beirut	15:25
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	ABY	127	Sharjah	15:35
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:15	UAE	857	Dubai	15:45
THY	1404	AYT	02:30	SAW	705	Damascus	15:50
THY	768	Istanbul	02:35	RJA	640	Amman	16:00
KAC	418	Manila	02:50	FDB	051	Dubai	16:15
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05	QTR	1072	Doha	16:15
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:10	JZR	535	Cairo	16:20
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	JZR	125	Bahrain	16:25
FDB	069	Dubai	03:15	KAC	118	New York	16:25
KAC	382	Delhi	03:15	NIA	361	Alexandria	16:50
PGT	860	Istanbul	03:25	KAC	542	Cairo	17:05
QTR	1076	Doha	03:45	SAV	510	Riyadh	17:15
CEB	018	Manila	04:00	GFA	215	Bahrain	17:30
QTR	1090	Doha	04:05	JZR	777	Jeddah	17:35
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	04:15	QTR	177	Dubai	17:45
UAE	873	Dubai	04:15	JZR	1080	Doha	18:10
KAC	1544	Cairo	04:20	JZR	483	Istanbul	18:30
KAC	414	Bangkok	04:50	MSR	620	Cairo	18:30
KAC	358	Kochi	04:50	GFA	217	Bahrain	19:05
FEG	933	Sohag	05:00	UAE	875	Dubai	19:05
KAC	784	Jeddah	05:00	KAC	744	Dammam	19:05
THY	770	Istanbul	05:05	FDB	063	Dubai	19:10
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:10	ABY	123	Dubai	19:20
KAC	344	Chennai	05:30	KAC	174	Munich	19:25
JZR	529	Asyut	05:30	KAC	154	Istanbul	19:30
KAC	362	Colombo	05:35	KAC	616	Bahrain	19:40
BAW	157	London	05:50	KAC	674	Dubai	19:40
KAC	204	Lahore	06:05	KAC	776	Riyadh	19:45
KAC	678	Dubai	06:25	FDB	057	Dubai	19:50
KAC	206	Islamabad	06:40	KAC	620	Doha	19:50
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:50	OMA	647	Muscat	20:05
KAC	302	Mumbai	06:55	KNE	381	Taif	20:10
KAC	156	Istanbul	07:05	DLH	634	Frankfurt	20:15
JZR	1541	Cairo	07:10	MEA	402	Beirut	20:15
KAC	354	Bangalore	07:50	KAC	662	Abu Dhabi	20:20
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	QTR	1088	Doha	20:40
KAC	384	Delhi	08:00	ETD	910	Abu Dhabi	20:40
KAC	332	Trivandrum	08:05	KAC	166	Rome	20:55
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25	KAC	564	Amman	21:00
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:55	KAC	168	Paris	21:05
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	ETD	307	Abu Dhabi	21:10
IRA	667	Esfahan	09:15	ALK	229	Colombo	21:15
QTR	1070	Doha	09:25	KLM	445	Amsterdam	21:15
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	UAE	859	Dubai	21:15
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	THY	764	Istanbul	21:30
MEA	404	Beirut	10:55	GFA	219	Bahrain	21:50
QTR	1074	Doha	11:00	QTR	1082	Doha	22:05
AXB	889	Mangalore/Bahrain	11:05	ETD	309	Abu Dhabi	22:10
JZR	561	Sohag	11:10	AIC	975	Chennai/Goa	22:25
KAC	614	Bahrain	11:15	KAC	162	Geneva	22:25
JZR	165	Dubai	11:50	BBK	143	Dhaka	22:30
JZR	239	Amman	12:25	JZR	241	Amman	22:55
MSC	401	Alexandria	12:30	JZR	185	Dubai	23:00
UAE	871	Dubai	12:45	RBG	551	Alexandria	23:00
KAC	774	Riyadh	12:45	RBG	555	Alexandria	23:25
THY	766	Istanbul	12:50	MSC	405	Sohag	23:30
FEG	953	Asyut	12:55	MSR	2614	Cairo	23:30
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00	FDB	071	Dubai	23:35

CROSSWORD 1649



ACROSS

- 1. A three-tone Chadic language.
5. New information about specific and timely events.
12. Come into the possession of something concrete or abstract.
15. Highly excited.
16. French mime famous for his sad-faced clown (born in 1923).
17. A nucleic acid that transmits genetic information from DNA to the cytoplasm.
18. The third month of the civil year.
20. Small cake baked in a muffin tin.
22. A useful or valuable quality.
24. Small Old World burrowing desert rodent with long soft pale fur and hind legs adapted for leaping.
25. Having the leading position or higher score in a contest.
28. Not capable of being swayed or diverted from a course.
31. A portable brazier that burns charcoal and has a grill for cooking.
35. The act of slowing down or falling behind.
36. Of or relating to or characteristic of Asia or the peoples of Asia or their languages or culture.
39. Being precisely fitting and right.
40. French anthropologist who studied the craniums and brains of different races of people.
42. Imperial dynasty that ruled China (most of the time) from 206 BC to 221 and expanded its boundaries and developed its bureaucracy.
43. Aromatic resin used in perfume and incense.
44. Register formally.
46. (Babylonian) The sky god.
47. Lacking or deprive of the sense of hearing wholly or in part.
49. A cephalosporin that can be given parenterally (trade name Zinacef) or orally by tablets (trade name Cefitin).
52. A doctor's degree in optometry.
53. A piece of land held under the feudal system.
56. A formal expression of praise.
60. West Indian tree having racemes of fragrant white flowers and yielding a durable timber and resinous juice.
62. Relatively large rodents with sharp erectile bristles mingled with the fur.
66. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
67. Small depression under the shoulder joint where the arm joins the shoulder.
70. A city in southern Turkey on the Seyhan River.
71. A spacecraft that carries astronauts from the command module to the surface of the moon and back.
72. Red breed of domestic rabbits.
74. Hormone produced early in pregnancy by the placenta.
75. A federal agency established to regulate the release of new foods and health-related products.
76. A great raja.
77. (meaning literally 'born') Used to indicate the maiden or family name of a married woman.

DOWN

- 1. The basic unit of money in Bangladesh.
2. Armor plate that protects the chest.
3. Scottish explorer who led Arctic expeditions that yielded geographic discoveries while searching for the Northwest Passage (1777-1856).
4. Bright with a steady but subdued shining.
5. The widely studied plant virus that causes tobacco mosaic.
6. A state in midwestern United States.
7. Causing fear or dread or terror.
8. Being nine more than ninety.
9. An acute inflammatory disease occurring in the intestines of premature infants.
10. French post-impressionist painter who worked in the South Pacific (1848-1903).
11. Of surpassing excellence.
12. Taken or to be taken at random.
13. (Sumerian) Water god and god of wisdom.
14. A unit of weight used in east Asia approximately equal to 1.3 ounces.
19. A colorless volatile water-soluble liquid aldehyde used chiefly in manufacture of acetic acid and perfumes and drugs.
21. Of the color of cream.
23. A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
26. Half the width of an em.
27. A repetitive song in which as many syllables as necessary are assigned to a single tone v 1.
29. Expletives used informally as intensifiers.
30. 100 agorot equal 1 shekel.
32. A hard medicated paste made of lard or oil mixed with wax or resin.
33. Rupture in smooth muscle tissue through which a bodily structure protrudes.
34. Goddess of spring and wife of Bragi.
37. A package of several things tied together for carrying or storing.
38. A plant hormone promoting elongation of stems and roots.
41. Coffee trees.
45. A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
48. Large genus of tropical American vines having showy often spotted umbellate flowers.
50. Small creeping evergreen shrubs.
51. Widely known and esteemed.
54. Preserve a dead body.
55. Any of various orchids of the genus Bletia having pseudo-bulbs and erect leafless racemes of large purple or pink flowers.
57. Wild or domesticated South American cud-chewing animal related to camels but smaller and lacking a hump.
58. Make a vibrant noise, of grasshoppers or cicadas.
59. A public promotion of some product or service.
61. In bed.
63. German chemist who was co-discoverer with Lise Meitner of nuclear fission (1879-1968).
64. Belonging to some prior time.
65. A measuring instrument for measuring and indicating a quantity or for testing conformity with a standard.
68. The ratio of the distance traveled (in miles) to the time spent traveling (in hours).
69. Chiefly perennial grasses of cool temperate regions.
73. A person who announces and plays popular recorded music.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You may find yourself having fun with some of your co-worker friends today. Interactions at a park or a friendly ball game may create just what is needed to get to know your working teammates better. A barbecue after the games may put a pleasant ending to a pleasant day. It is easy to sit and talk with a few of your co-worker friends, and everyone feels relaxed and comfortable in expressing opinions. You always come up with new ideas to organize things better, make things work: practical thoughts. You may be quite pleased at the result of the gathering. People are kind and stay away from the gossip arena. Animals are the topic of conversation in your family tonight; someone saw an animal that person had never seen before.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You could be very much in demand as a counselor this day. Solving problems in a volunteer position becomes second nature and around your home the problems could be about which plants to grow or where the patio may be located. Perhaps you are a volunteer fireman on certain weekends... Whatever the case, people love your company and you enjoy adding to your relationships. This is a good day to get things done. There is good eye-hand coordination and a sustained effort that will make most any task run well. You may feel like exercising or getting out and about this evening. Bicycling with young people, visiting friends or dinner out with a loved one is in order. Positive communications can be enjoyed, right up until bedtime.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You appreciate a caring attitude and this creates that service-oriented mind-set that others often enjoy from you. You just naturally look for ways to be helpful. The people that are your friends will enjoy a little time to laugh and share your time away from your work. Those that refresh others will be refreshed. This afternoon budget subjects come to the surface. If you have teenagers, this is a good time to include them in ways to make their money count. You might want to ask how they would change and improve their money habits. They may have understood budgeting better than you thought. Now however, it is time to dive deeper. Tonight your energies seem to be just right for ordering clothes over the internet-check out the new styles.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

This is a great time to work with others in any sort of group situation. There is a chance to be chosen or to choose a team and compete with whatever project is urgent and on the agenda for today. This day should move along very well. Your intuitive side kicks in this afternoon and you find an interest in some subject that is psychological. You may find yourself, not necessarily an advisor, but a gatherer of people's experiences. You will be listening, as usual, to all sorts of information regarding relationships, progress and positive outcomes. Since you are artistic, you might consider the study of different artists. You may become interested in writing a bit of poetry and reflecting on your day as you write. Be careful of quick responses later tonight.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

You feel understanding and accepting and are easily moved by the problems of others. Psychology in all of its forms is a driving force in your life. There is a goal to expand your knowledge and experiences and your focus is on your special goals. You are connected to farseeing visions, worldviews and group work of all kinds. You may tend to be a bit independent when it comes to working with standard policies. Travel may soon be called for in your workplace, and you could be one of the first representatives for your company. Your sense of discrimination when it comes to practical issues is excellent-be quick to compliment the clearheaded thinking of others. Everything takes on an added value. Do not overspend today.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Discovering what you truly believe in-fighting for it, even-is a high personal priority. Religion, law, politics, travel and higher education are some of the arenas where this may take place. This is a time of testing your limits to see how far you can go. Communicating well is important to you. You make every effort to be patient and make sure you are understood. Your timing should be perfect and those around you should find you most natural and enthusiastic. You would do well in a career in music, poetry, psychology, social work, philosophy-and other realms of the imagination. You can help or teach others by sharing your understanding. Spiritual problems and questions are easy because you always seem to understand.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Things are happening, and your career depends upon your own ambition and drive, which are strong at this time. You are able to take some time this morning for the family and then you might think of some ideas for the workplace. Your suggestions for next week could be written down and presented at an appropriate time later. You could make some monetary rewards for the company in which you work. Give this presentation some careful thought. Your own concentration with this project may appear to separate you from where the rest of the gang is headed. Science projects seem to hold your attention later and you enjoy teaching or experimenting on some projects this evening.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Your thoughts and ideas may not mesh with the plans and methods of someone you meet with this day. You have chores to run and projects ongoing-keep moving forward. Soon, you will see the energies calm and a new understanding. You have a fundamental approach to group involvement. Progressive, with insights into uniting humanity, you understand the true meaning of democracy. Things will work out in your favor if you maintain low tones for now. You are always working for the benefit of all. You are very independent when it comes to your own security and family. That could mean an unconventional-style home or furnishings, or a different approach to sentiment, nostalgia and history. You may decide to invest in an art piece today.



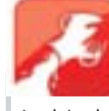
Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Obtaining and exchanging information with neighbors is fun this day as you may find some common interest. Some performance skill that you are familiar with may become the biggest topic of conversation. A few of your friends may want to get together and create some fun entertainment for each other. One familiar treat would be to take turns in performing skits. Some form of competition is enjoyed and a bit of wit is part of the fun. This time every year is usually reserved for deep consideration regarding vacation time. Perhaps a stay at home time this year will afford you the opportunity to catch up on upkeep of your property or a chance to enhance your home in some way. One item of interest is in preserving rain water.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You are determined to see above this day, despite rain, a mind-numbing phone call, work issues, a new family member, neighbor problems, a marriage connection or your first home. This is life and you feel invigorated and ready to take on whatever is before you. Your attitude is upbeat and positive and anyone around you will probably take on the same attitude. It seems you are scheduled for a raise or some other boost in your workplace and this has you feeling very full of self-esteem. You, however, have worked hard to get into a new place and a new status. This evening after all the celebration, you don't stop... You still move into the thinking of what it takes to move forward and continue to grow. You like the upward movement.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Your presence and importance in any group, while perhaps not verbalized, is always acknowledged. You can cause others to act, change or react just by being in their presence-nothing need be said. Yours is the mastery of the physical and the practical. Your energies run effectively toward making yourself felt in the material, tangible outer world. You are an action person who gains the attention of others and seems to get people and things moving. The circumstances of your life suggest extraversion. You may complain of never having any privacy or time to think-your pattern seems to throw you in contact with people and the outer world. If you need to put the romance back into your marriage, now is the perfect time.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

There is an ease with your personal project at this time that you may have never known before. Everything is running so smoothly that you may decide to take on another project or adventure. Being a Monday, you might also want to just walk at a slow pace. The events of the morning have the makings for a bright and witty day. Your communication skills are at a high energy level. This afternoon you are very out-front and candid with family. You should be able to share your thoughts and ideas with each other and make great headway in deepening your relationships. You enjoy doing research and may involve the whole family in learning about your ancestors. You enjoy discovering your background. Your passionate approach to life is obvious to all.

WORD SEARCH

Golf

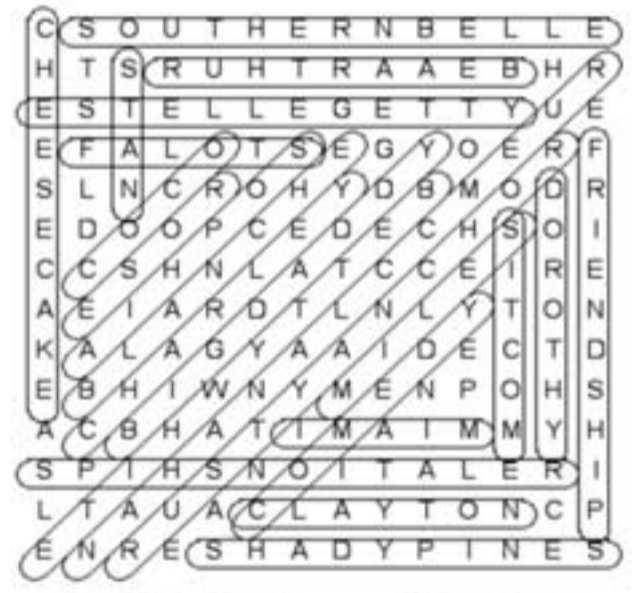
Find and circle all of the golf words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a Mark Twain quotation.



- ALBATROSS, APPROACH, BACK NINE, BACKSPIN, BALL, BIRDIE, BOGEY, BUNKER, CADDIE, CART, CHIP, CLUBHOUSE, CLUBS, CONDOR, COURSE, DIVOT, DRIVER, DRIVING RANGE, EAGLE, FAIRWAY, FLAGSTICK, FORE, GREEN, GRIP, GROSS SCORE, HANDICAP, HOLE IN ONE, HOLES, HOOK, IRON, NET SCORE, Putter, ROUGH, RULES, SHOT, SLICE, STROKE, SWING, TEE OFF, TREES, WATER HAZARD, WEDGE, WOOD

Yesterday's Solution

The Golden Girls



- BEA ARTHUR, BETTY WHITE, BIG DADDY, BLANCHE, CHARLEY, CHEESECAKE, CLAYTON, COCO, COMEDY, DOROTHY, ESTELLE GETTY, FRIENDSHIP, MIAMI, MILES, RELATIONSHIPS, ROSE, RUE MCCLANAHAN, RUSTY ANCHOR, SHADY PINES, SITCOM, SOPHIA, SOUTHERN BELLE, ST OLAF, STAN

The hidden phrase is: THE GOLDEN PALACE

Daily SuDoku



Friday's Solution



For labor-related inquiries and complaints:
Call MSAL hotline 128



PHARMACIES ON 24 HRS DUTY

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

INTERNATIONAL CALLS



Afghanistan	0093	Lithuania	00370
Albania	00355	Luxembourg	00352
Algeria	00213	Macau	00853
Andorra	00376	Macedonia	00389
Angola	00244	Madagascar	00261
Anguilla	001264	Majorca	0034
Antigua	001268	Malawi	00265
Argentina	0054	Malaysia	0060
Armenia	00374	Maldives	00960
Australia	0061	Mali	00223
Austria	0043	Malta	00356
Azerbaijan	00994	Marshall Islands	00692
Bahamas	001242	Martinique	00596
Bahrain	00973	Mauritania	00222
Bangladesh	00880	Mauritius	00230
Barbados	001246	Mayotte	00269
Belarus	00375	Mexico	0052
Belgium	0032	Micronesia	00691
Belize	00501	Moldova	00373
Benin	00229	Monaco	00377
Bermuda	001441	Mongolia	00976
Bhutan	00975	Montserrat	001664
Bolivia	00591	Morocco	00212
Bosnia	00387	Mozambique	00258
Botswana	00267	Myanmar (Burma)	0095
Brazil	0055	Namibia	00264
Brunei	00673	Nepal	00977
Bulgaria	00359	Netherlands	0031
Burkina Faso	00226	Netherlands Antilles	00599
Burundi	00257	New Caledonia	00687
Cambodia	00855	New Zealand	0064
Cameroon	00237	Nicaragua	00505
Canada	001	Niger	00227
Cape Verde	00238	Nigeria	00234
Cayman Islands	001345	Niue	00683
Central African	00236	Norfolk Island	00672
Chad	00235	N. Ireland (UK)	0044
Chile	0056	North Korea	00850
China	0086	Norway	0047
Colombia	0057	Oman	00968
Comoros	00269	Pakistan	0092
Congo	00242	Palau	00680
Cook Islands	00682	Panama	00507
Costa Rica	00506	Papua New Guinea	00675
Croatia	00385	Paraguay	00595
Cuba	0053	Peru	0051
Cyprus	00357	Philippines	0063
Cyprus (Northern)	0090392	Poland	0048
Czech Republic	00420	Portugal	00351
Denmark	0045	Puerto Rico	001787
Diego Garcia	00246	Qatar	00974
Djibouti	00253	Romania	0040
Dominica	001767	Russian Federation	007
Dominican Republic	001809	Rwanda	00250
Ecuador	00593	Saint Helena	00290
Egypt	0020	Saint Kitts	001869
El Salvador	00503	Saint Lucia	001758
England (UK)	0044	Saint Pierre	00508
Equatorial Guinea	00240	Saint Vincent	001784
Eritrea	00291	Samoa US	00684
Estonia	00372	Samoa West	00685
Ethiopia	00251	San Marino	00378
Falkland Islands	00500	Sao Tome	00239
Faroe Islands	00298	Saudi Arabia	00966
Fiji	00679	Scotland (UK)	0044
Finland	00358	Senegal	00221
France	0033	Seychelles	00284
French Guiana	00594	Sierra Leone	00232
French Polynesia	00689	Singapore	0065
Gabon	00241	Slovakia	00421
Gambia	00220	Slovenia	00386
Georgia	00995	Solomon Islands	00677
Germany	0049	Somalia	00252
Ghana	00233	South Africa	0027
Gibraltar	00350	South Korea	0082
Greece	0030	Spain	0034
Greenland	00299	Sri Lanka	0094
Grenada	001473	Sudan	00249
Guadeloupe	00590	Suriname	00597
Guam	001671	Swaziland	00268
Guatemala	00502	Sweden	0046
Guinea	00224	Switzerland	0041
Guyana	00592	Syria	00963
Haiti	00509	Serbia	00381
Holland (Netherlands)	0031	Taiwan	00886
Honduras	00504	Tanzania	00255
Hong Kong	00852	Thailand	0066
Hungary	0036	Togo	00228
Ibiza (Spain)	0034	Tonga	00676
Iceland	00354	Tokelau	00690
India	0091	Trinidad	001868
Indian Ocean	00873	Tunisia	00216
Indonesia	0062	Turkey	0090
Iran	0098	Tuvalu	00688
Iraq	00964	Uganda	00256
Ireland	00353	Ukraine	00380
Italy	0039	United Arab Emirates	00976
Ivory Coast	00225	United Kingdom	0044
Jamaica	001876	Uruguay	00598
Japan	0081	USA	001
Jordan	00962	Uzbekistan	00998
Kazakhstan	007	Vanuatu	00678
Kenya	00254	Venezuela	00582
Kiribati	00686	Vietnam	0084
Kuwait	00965	Virgin Islands UK	001284
Kyrgyzstan	00996	Virgin Islands US	001340
Laos	00856	Wales (UK)	0044
Latvia	00371	Yemen	00967
Lebanon	00961	Yugoslavia	00381
Liberia	00231	Zambia	00260
Libya	00218	Zimbabwe	00263
Lesotho	00266		

STATE OF KUWAIT DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



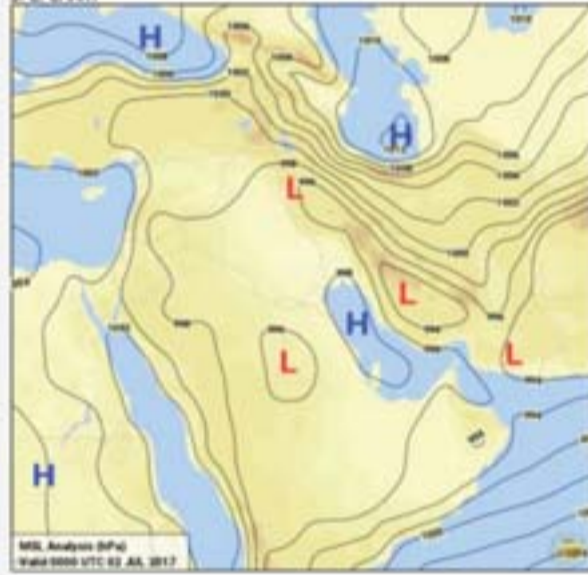
Tel: (+965) 161 Ext: 2627 - 2630 Fax: (+965) 24348714 www.met.gov.kw

Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours
Issued 02/07/2017-07:00 LT UTC +3hr

Max Temperature 48 °C

By Day : Very hot and Relatively humid over coastal areas with light to moderate south westerly wind changing to south easterly wind, with speed of 12 - 32 km/h.
By Night : Relatively hot with light to moderate south easterly wind changing to south westerly wind, with speed of 10 - 28 km/h.

SFC. CHART



Four-Day Forecast

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
Expected Weather	Very hot	Very hot	Very hot	Very hot + with a chance for carried dust over open areas later on
Min Temp °C	29	30	31	33
Max Temp °C	49	49	49	50
Wind Direction	south westerly changing to variable	south westerly to south easterly	south westerly to south easterly	northerly westerly
Wind Speed km/h	06 - 26	12 - 32	10 - 28	08 - 32

All times are local time (GMT +3) unless otherwise stated.

Warnings & Weather Watches

no warnings or weather watches

Kuwait Forecast

Station	MIN °C	REC	Max °C	EXP
KUWAIT CITY	34		48	
KUWAIT AIRPORT	27		48	
ABDAILY	28		48	
BUBYAN	28		41	
JAHRA	30		49	
FALAKA ISLAND	29		45	
SALMIYAH	31		39	
AHMADI	32		42	
JAL ALYAH	30		48	
QARH ISLAND	30		41	
UMH AL-MARADEM	31		40	
NUWAISEB	29		47	
WAFRA	27		48	
SALMIY	31		46	
MUTRIBA	29		49	

Recorded Yesterday at Kuwait Airport

Max Temp (°C)	48
Min Temp (°C)	29
Max Rel Hum (%)	30
Min Rel Hum (%)	06
Max Wind Speed (km/h) and Direction	39 S
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR	0 mm

Sunrise	04:52
Sunset	18:52

Prayer Times

Fajr	03:17
Sunrise	04:52
Zuhr	11:52
Ahr	15:26
Sunset	18:52
Isha	20:23



PRIVATE CLINICS

Ophthalmologists	
Dr. Abdallah Al-Mansoor	25622444
Dr. Samy Al-Rabeea	25752222
Dr. Masoma Habeeb	25321171
Dr. Mubarak Al-Ajmy	25739999
Dr. Mohsen Abel	25757700
Dr. Adnan Hasan Alwayl	25732223
Dr. Abdallah Al-Baghly	25732223
Ear, Nose & Throat (ENT)	
Dr. Ahmed Fouad Mouner	24555050 Ext 510
Dr. Abdallah Al-Ali	25644660
Dr. Abd Al-Hameed Al-Taweel	25646478
Dr. Sanad Al-Fathalah	25311996
Dr. Mohammad Al-Daary	25731988
Dr. Ismail Al-Fodary	22620166
Dr. Mahmoud Al-Booz	25651426
General Practitioners	
Dr. Mohammed Y Majidi	24555050 Ext 123
Dr. Yousef Al-Omar	24719312
Dr. Tarek Al-Mikhaazem	22636920
Dr. Kathem Maarafi	25730465
Dr. Abdallah Ahmad Eyadah	25655528
Dr. Nabeel Al-Ayoobi	24577781
Dr. Dina Abdallah Al-Rafea	25333501
Urologists	
Dr. Ali Naser Al-Serfy	22641534
Dr. Fawzi Taher Abul	22639955
Dr. Khaleel Abidallah Al-Awadi	22616660
Dr. Adel Al-Hunayan FRCS (C)	25313120
Dr. Leons Joseph	66703427

Plastic Surgeons	
Dr. Mohammad Al-Khalaf	22547272
Dr. Abdal-Redha Lari	22617700
Dr. Abdel Quttainah	25625030/60
Family Doctor	
Dr Divya Damodar	23729596/23729581
Psychiatrists	
Dr. Esam Al-Ansari	22635047
Dr Eisa M. Al-Balhan	22613623/0
Gynaecologists & Obstetricians	
Dr Adrian arbe	23729596/23729581
Dr. Verginia s. Marin	2572-6666 ext 8321
Dr. Fozeya Ali Al-Qatan	22655539
Dr. Majeda Khalefa Aliyami	25343406
Dr. Ahmad Al-Khooly	25739272
Dr. Salem soso	22618787
General Surgeons	
Dr. Amer Zawaz Al-Amer	22610044
Dr. Mohammad Yousef Basher	25327148
Internists, Chest & Heart	
Dr. Adnan Ebil	22639939
Dr. Mousa Khadada	22666300
Dr. Latefa Al-Duweisani	25728004
Dr. Nadem Al-Ghabra	25355515
Dr. Mobarak Aldoub	24726446
Dr Nasser Behbehani	25654300/3

Paediatricians	
Dr. Khaled Hamadi	25665898
Dr. Abd Al-Aziz Al-Rashed	25340300
Dr. Zahra Qabazard	25710444
Dr. Sohail Qamar	22621099
Dr. Snaa Maarooof	25713514
Dr. Pradip Gajare	23713100
Dr. Zacharias Mathew	24334282
Dermatology	
Dr. Mohammed Salam Bern University	23845955
Dentists	
Dr Anil Thomas	3729596/3729581
Dr. Shamah Al-Matar	22641071/2
Dr. Anesah Al-Rasheed	22562226
Dr. Abdallah Al-Amer	22561444
Dr. Faysal Al-Fozan	22619557
Dr. Abdalateef Al-Katrash	22525888
Dr. Abdallah Al-Duweisan	25653755
Dr. Bader Al-Ansari	25620111
Neurologists	
Dr. Sohal Najem Al-Shemeri	25633324
Dr. Jasem Mola Hassan	25345875
Gastrologists	
Dr. Sami Aman	22636464
Dr. Mohammad Al-Shamaly	25322030
Dr. Foad Abdallah Al-Ali	22633135

Endocrinologist	
Dr. Abd Al-Naser Al-Othman	25339330
Dr. Ahmad Al-Ansari	25658888
Dr. Kamal Al-Shomr	25329924
Physiotherapists & VD	
Dr. Deyaa Shehab	25722291
Dr. Mused Faraj Khamees	22666288
Rheumatologists:	
Dr. Adel Al-Awadi	25330060
Dr. Khaled Al-Jarallah	25722290
Internist, Chest & Heart	
DR.Mohammes Akkad	24555050 Ext 210
Dr. Mohammad Zubaid MB, ChB, FRCP, PACC	
Assistant Professor Of Medicine Head, Division of Cardiology Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital	25339667
Consultant Cardiologist	
Dr. Farida Al-Habib MD, PH.D, FACC	2611555-2622555
Inaya German Medical Center	
Te: 2575077	
Fax: 25723123	

Psychologists / Psychotherapists

Soor Center Tel: 2290-1677 Fax: 2290 1688

info@soorcenter.com www.soorcenter.com

Kaizen center 25716707

Noor Clinic 23845955

William Schuilenberg, RPC 2290-1677 Zaina Al Zabin, M.Sc. 2290-1677

GOSSIP

Shaun Ryder: 'Cycling helped me kick drug habit'

Shaun Ryder says cycling got him off drugs. The Black Grape frontman - who previously admitted his heroin habit was out of control by 1992 - has been clean for over 15 years and credits cycling with helping him to kick drugs completely. He told The Guardian newspaper: "It was cycling that got me off drugs. I'd get on my bike very early in the morning and keep cycling until very late at night, day after day, until it was out of the system. I was pedalling from 8am until 11pm. But once that's done, you still have to deal with the mental stuff." Shaun, 54, had previously tried to quit heroin by using a stomach implant but it was an utter disaster. He said: "Trying to quit heroin using a stomach implant was disastrous. I tried it in 1995 when it was still a new thing. The problem was that they with-

draw you while you're out unconscious, and I expected to wake up feeling fine. But I didn't. I woke up and it was murderous." Shaun also revealed that he and his daughters had tickets for Ariana Grande's concert at the Manchester Arena last month, where 22 people died in a terrorist bombing, but they decided not to go at the last minute. He explained: "We were supposed to be at the Ariana Grande show the night of the attack. We had tickets. We'd done Little Mix there a couple of months before and my girls were hoping to meet her. But it was a sunny night, we'd been out for ice cream and they didn't mention it, so we didn't go."



Anne-Marie's tattoos are the story of her life

Anne-Marie's tattoos are the story of her life. The 'Alarm' hitmaker has revealed that she has several inkings on her body which are handwritten by the people who have taught her a lesson in life. One of them is the word forgiveness, as the 26-year-old singer admits she sometimes finds it too hard to forgive people. Speaking to BANG Showbiz, she said: "All of my tattoos are written by the people who have taught me what the thing is. My best friend taught me a lot about forgiveness so this is his handwriting. I do forget to forgive sometimes so its good to have it on my shoulder to remind me. The tattoos will go on and on. I've got 'trust' tattooed on me and I have a tattoo on my finger that's for my parents. I just love to get stuff that's really meaningful. I want my tattoos to be a story of my life." The blonde beauty performed at Barclaycard presents British Summer Time Hyde Park last night in support of Justin Bieber. Asked what else makes her feel confident in front of a big festival crowd, she said recently: "My band make me feel really happy and comfortable. Trying to keep real. I love touring and I love singing love. I feel at home wherever I am to be honest." Joining Anne-Marie and the 'Sorry' hitmaker on the bill are rising stars Jain, Mabel Nita Nesbitt, Will Heard, James Hersey, Louis The Child, Shepherd, Anna Of The North, Skinny Living and Dagny. Martin Garrix and Tove Lo were previously confirmed too. Also performing at BST this July are Green Day (July 1), Kings Of Leon (July 6) and The Killers (July 8).

Gibb wants to pen a track for Gallagher

Barry Gibb wants to write a song for Liam Gallagher. The 70-year-old Bee Gees legend has a lot of respect for the former Oasis frontman and despite being close pals with his bitter rival and sibling Noel Gallagher, 50, the 'Stayin' Alive' hitmaker wouldn't rule out getting into the studio with the 'Wall of Glass' singer. Speaking exclusively to BANG Showbiz at the O2 Silver Clef Awards at London's Grosvenor House Hotel on Friday Gibb said: "Of course I would [write a song for Liam Gallagher] but you have to be asked. You really can't just say, 'I'm going to write a song for so and so'. Usually so and so has to ask you but I recognize great opportunities when they come by and if that's the case I'll do it." And should Gibb and Liam, or indeed Liam's brother, ever collaborate in the near future, get-

ting in a recording studio together shouldn't be an issue as Noel is believed to live close by. Gibb continued: "I would love it (to work with Noel). I would love it because I love him and love them (Noel and Liam) together. I love Oasis. He's only down the street from me out there in Beaconsfield. I don't think it's Beaconsfield but it's very close by." Gibb is used to being in a band with siblings - Maurice and Robin who sadly passed away - and can empathize with any brotherly fall-outs, so he doesn't think an Oasis reunion is on the cards despite the constant rumors. Asked what he thinks the chances are, Gibb said: "No. I know about brothers. Nobody can bring people back together again, certainly not me."



Rolling Stones to release new album

The Rolling Stones will reportedly earn £2 million from a new album. The veteran rockers have reportedly had their contract renewed by their label Universal, and frontman Sir Mick Jagger and guitarist Keith Richards, both 73, have recently been in recording studios in London and New York working on new material. According to the Daily Mail newspaper, the group - which also includes Charlie Watts, 76, and 70-year-old Ronnie Wood - plan to release a live compilation album in time for this Christmas, and then a new studio LP will follow to coincide with the end of their upcoming European tour. A source said: "Both Mick and Keith would rather be carried off stage in a coffin than give up their great love - writing and making music." "They were experimenting in the studio earlier this year, and everything just gelled. They ended up with around 15

tracks which they have cut down to album-length, and when the label execs heard it they were thrilled. "Age is no barrier to brilliant music, and there is no doubt the new stuff will sell." The 'Sympathy for the Devil' hitmakers released a new album last year, 'Blue and Lonesome' - a collection of blues covers - and it went straight to the top of the charts. Meanwhile, the band recently apologized for the lack of UK dates on their 13-date European tour - which will see them kick off their brand new set, at Hamburg's Stadtpark on September 8 before wrapping up at the U Arena in Paris on October 22 - and promised to return in 2018. They tweeted: "Sorry to our UK fans there are no UK dates on this, due to lack of available venues because of sporting fixtures. Hope to be here in 2018. (sic)"

Phil Collins headlines BST Hyde Park

Phil Collins kicked off Barclaycard presents British Summer Time Hyde Park on Friday night with a greatest hits set which covered his entire five-decade spanning career. The music legend opened with 'Another Day In Paradise', followed by 'Something Happened On The Way To Heaven' and Genesis classic 'Follow You Follow Me'. Speaking to the sell-out crowd, Phil, 66, thanked everyone for coming and admitted he had missed playing during his hiatus from the music business. He said: "Good evening Hyde Park, good evening London. I do understand that I said I wasn't going to do this anymore. The truth is that I missed you ... so let's have some fun." After singing 'Wake Up Call' from his album 'Testify', Phil then introduced his entire band, which included his 16-year-old son Nicholas on drums. Nicholas took his dad's place on the iconic drum solo from 'In The Air Tonight' and Phil couldn't stop himself from smiling as he proudly looked on. Phil had to perform sitting in a chair for the duration of the concert due to his back problems but he health issues didn't dampen his performance or the atmosphere. After playing 'Easy Lover' and 'Sussudio' Phil returned for an encore of 'Take Me Home' and he got off his seat and abandoned his walking stick for the final track. Phil's former Genesis bandmate Mike Rutherford performed earlier in the evening with his band Mike + The Mechanics and concert goers were also treated to sets by Blondie, The New Power Generation - made up of Prince's former bandmates - and Starsailor. BST Hyde Park continues with Green Day headlining the festival on Saturday night and fans can go to bsthydepark.com to purchase tickets.



ANNE-MARIE DENIES SHE IS JOINING CLEAN BANDIT FULL-TIME



Anne-Marie has laughed off rumors she is set to join Clean Bandit full-time. The 'Alarm' hitmaker poured cold water on gossip that after featuring on their hit single 'Rockabye' and the departure of violinist Neil Milan she is to join the pop group. Speaking exclusively to BANG Showbiz, she said: "No. That is wrong. It's just rumors. I am not going to do that. They are amazing and I love 'Rockabye' and singing with them." The 26-year-old pop star feels like she has come a long way since featuring on the number one song and from her collaboration with drum and bass trio Rudimental, 'Rumor Mill', but she looks back on her time working with her peers fondly and has learnt so much from them. She said: "I have definitely moved on from that now. I think Rudimental was a massive part of my life and such a great place and people and learning curve to be a part of. There is no going back now." When the 'Ciaos Adios' singer found out that 'Rockabye' had gone to number one she partied a little too hard on a plane and after being plied with champagne she almost got kicked off the flight. She previously revealed: "I ended up so drunk on this plane and I was running up and down the aisles singing! I was making everyone else hate me and being so annoying. "It was just like that scene in 'Bridesmaids' when she goes into first class drunk! It was so fun though."

TLC won't make another album



TLC won't make another album. The 'Waterfalls' hitmakers recently made their comeback with their crowd-funded self-titled LP, but have no desire to put out another full-length release because of how hard the record industry has become. However, Rozonda 'Chilli' Thomas - who is joined by Tionne 'T-Boz' Watkins as the remaining members of the 90s girl group after third member Lisa 'Left Eye' Lopes died in a car crash in 2002 - has vowed to keep on touring with her bandmate. Speaking to The Sun newspaper about going bankrupt despite selling 70 million records, Chilli said: "You are just out there working hard, not making anything, but they are making all the money. It was because of our contracts and when people aren't advising you the proper way. After our first album there was no renegotiation when your contract is jacked up. "That's why we said, shall we do this just one more time? It is definitely not the end of TLC as far as touring but making an album is difficult. The business has changed a lot." On the new TLC record the girls teamed up with Ron Fair as executive producer, who has worked with Christina Aguilera, Mary J. Blige and The Black Eyed Peas. The first single to be taken from the album, 'Way Back', features Snoop Dogg - something which has been a lifelong ambition. The girls even had Michael Jackson's musicians on the album. Rozonda said: "Working with Snoop has been a dream come true while Ron added the horns and put his magic on the record. All of the horns you hear on tracks like Joy Ride, Way Back and Sunny are played by the same guys that played on Michael Jackson's Bad and Thriller. That was surreal and epic." The 'No Scrubs' hitmakers used a Kickstarter campaign to make their first studio album in 15 years, and were able to raise over \$430,000 for the record thanks to donations from fans, including Katy Perry, Bette Midler, and New Kids on the Block. 'TLC' is out now.

GOSSIP

Dame Joan Collins: 'I only get offered roles after Dench and Smith reject them'



Dame Joan Collins says she only gets offered moving roles after Dames Judi Dench and Maggie Smith turn them down. The 84-year-old actress believes she is low down on the list of older actresses that producers turn to and acknowledges that maintaining an acting career in her 80s is tough. She told Fabulous magazine: "There are older-women parts, but quite frankly they're going to go first of all to Judi Dench, Maggie Smith, Helen Mirren, Meryl Streep or Susan Sarandon. There are 20 women they're going to go through before they get to me." Joan also believes that parts for older actresses are few and far between, as movie studios continue to cater to a younger audience. She explained: "Today, big-budget films are made by big businesses, and all of the com-

panies have one motive in mind - to make money. "Their audience is mostly young men between the ages of 12 and 28 and they want to see young, nubile girls." However, Joan's latest role in 'The Time of Their Lives' was written specifically for her by director Roger Goldby. She said: "It's got a great honesty about it. Fame is totally fleeting, and that's one of the things I learned very early on. It casts a light on the misery of celebs as they get older. At fan conventions you see people you haven't heard of for 30 or 40 years selling their photographs. You're like: 'That's so and so, they were so beautiful,' and now they're absolutely unknown. They love the fame, and unfortunately it's gone."

RIHANNA'S OSCAR DREAMS

Rihanna wants to win an Oscar. The singer has a role in new movie 'Valerian' and will star in the upcoming 'Ocean's Eight' alongside Sandra Bullock and although Rihanna is not making movies specifically to win awards, she admitted it would be nice to get some "validation". She said: "I'd love to get there one day. Who doesn't want to be told they are doing a great job? "Any validation that your work is impacting is rewarding. I work hard and put my all into everything I do but the rest isn't up to me. "I don't think anyone makes an album thinking about winning a Grammy, or makes a movie thinking about winning an Oscar. What you do is work as hard as you can and if awards follow, then that's great." Rihanna plays shape shifting entertainer Bubble in 'Valerian' and although she didn't need to method act for the role, she hasn't ruled it out in the future. She told the Sun yesterday: "It's pretty difficult to method act when it comes to playing a shape-shifting entertainer but, seriously, I have nothing but respect for the actors that do. "If you look at the well-known method actors of the generation, they put in incredible performance after incredible performance. It's no coincidence. "I just do what's best for the role, what's best for me, I'd love to do something dark and different and challenge myself." And while she may be a hugely successful singer, Rihanna, 28, insisted she will never act like a diva on a movie set. She said: "I offer myself like clay to directors. You don't do diva on film sets."



Holland's frank chat with Downey Jr sorted Spider-Man nerves

Tom Holland got over his 'Spider-Man' "doubts" following a frank chat with Robert Downey Jr. The 21-year-old actor admitted he had moments of anxiety as to whether he was cut out for the iconic role, but his 'Avengers: Infinity War' co-star helped ease his fears when he admitted to questioning himself in a similar way when he was first cast as Iron Man in the Marvel Universe. Tom said: "Robert Downey Jr has been really great, he's been



there during a lot of this. "There have been moments, particularly during 'Spider-Man: Homecoming' where I've doubted my capabilities. We all have doubts. "And he pulled me aside one day and said, 'You know, you got this, this was meant to be. I had the same feelings doing 'Iron Man', the same anxieties, but know that they picked you for a reason - because it feels right, it works. It's not about how good you can do the web-slinging or the stunts, it's about the personality you bring to the character.' "That eased by fears and wise words like that from Iron Man, you don't forget. They are there stored in the vault for repeat use." Tom chose not to speak to past Spider-Man actors Tobey Maguire and Andrew Garfield about their takes on the role because he worried they would only make him feel more nervous. He told heat magazine: "I didn't [get tips from them], because ours was a different take to theirs and it probably would have filled me with more anxiety than I was already experiencing, attempting to emulate what they did with 'Spider-Man'. "I needed to focus purely on what I could bring and not compare myself to them. "But they have been very cool with what they said about me. I've met Andrew, who is a really kind, generous guy. We didn't talk about 'Spider-Man' much - I mean, he obviously asked how it was going and said he was excited for me and understood what I was going through. "To get his approval was hugely important because as my predecessor, I look up to him."



Jason Mantzoukas loves Jeremy Renner as a villain

Jason Mantzoukas loved seeing Jeremy Renner playing the gangster villain in 'The House'. The 44-year-old actor currently stars alongside Will Ferrell and Amy Poehler in the new Andrew Jay Cohen gangster-comedy as the loveable gambling and sex addict Frank and said Renner is a "charming villain". Speaking exclusively to BANG Showbiz, the actor said: "I love it. I thought it was great. I have seen Renner in 'Hurt Locker' and the 'Bourne' movie he did. He's done a great range of movies and he came really ready to go and bounced off everyone. "He came in really just for those scenes. We had already done tremendous amounts of filming and he turned up and immediately was amazing. We were like, 'Holy cow this is great. What a great charming villain he is.'" The film follows Ferrell and Poehler as Scott and Kate, who struggle to find the money to pay for their daughter's tuition fees. But with the help from their friend Frank, the three start their own casino to try and get the money they need. Although a comedy, the film takes an unexpected turn and can be seen to be reminiscent of a Martin Scorsese gangster movie when the three protagonists fall into the realm of mobster leaders as their casino gets bigger and bigger. Mantzoukas said: "It was so fun. All those kind of stylistic choices make it feel like a big Scorsese movie. It goes from rinky dink to these much bigger camera moves. It does feel like a gangster movie. "To have scenes with the finger chopping off and the Renner stuff, it really does raise the stakes and just visually gives different levels of what this film could do."



Sam and Aaron Taylor-Johnson to work together again

Sam and Aaron Taylor-Johnson are planning to make another movie together. The couple - who met when the 50-year-old filmmaker directed the 27-year-old actor in John Lennon biopic 'Nowhere Boy' in 2009 - are "passionate" about their upcoming project and have juggled all their commitments to set aside the time to shoot the film next year. Asked if they'll work together again, Sam said: "Yeah, I actually can't wait. It's a crazy thing. I'm going to work every day and thinking I'm leaving the best actor at home." Aaron added to Us Weekly magazine: "Yeah absolutely! There's something we've been putting together this year and hopefully we'll shoot it next year. And we've pushed everything aside in order to do it cause we care about it and we're passionate about it. We absolutely want to work together." Aaron is very proud of his wife - who has kids Angelica, 20, and Jessie, 12, from a previous marriage, and Wylda, six, and five-year-old Romy with her actor husband - and her creative vision and is a huge fan of the 'Gypsy' director's work. He gushed: "She's a visionary and an artist, and so she can have such high concepts and ideas and naturally as an optimistic person. There's very cynical people in the world, and it's easy to be in that position and Sam can overcome the rise to that and overcome that "There are ideas where people think, 'Oh, that's not possible,' and in her mind, it's just like, 'Oh, that's the way you feel about it but I'll still somehow figure out a way and that's why she is who she is and that's why she's very good at it."

Andrew Jay Cohen had Ferrell's voice in his mind for The House

Andrew Kay Cohen had Will Ferrell's voice in his mind when he wrote 'The House'. The 'Neighbors' screenwriter knew he wanted the 'Anchorman: The Legend of Ron Burgundy' star before he even started filming his latest comedy-gangster movie as Ferrell has the "kind of delivery" to make words and phrases memorable. Speaking exclusively to BANG Showbiz, the writer/director said: "I had Will's voice in my head when I was writing the script. He's got that kind of delivery. "I worked on 'Anchorman' with him and at the end of the shoot he came up to me and told me the camera I was using didn't have any film but was instead filled with coffee. "I was like, 'He made fun of me. I know I made it. To have a solid script is



important. We were quoting 'Anchorman' lines before it even came out. "I like those movies where the words, phrases and characters resonate in your head and you can't help talking like them. Had to feel loose like anything can happen." The film stars Ferrell, 49, Amy Poehler, 45, as Scott and Kate, who struggle to find the money to pay for their daughter's tuition fees. But with the help from their gambling, sex-addicted but lovable friend Frank (Jason Mantzoukas) the three start their own casino to try and get the money they desperately need. Although a comedy, the film touches upon some serious cultural topics including the price of tuition and Cohen believes all movies should "come from reality". He said: "I think all movies should come from reality or use it as a jumping off point. The price of education is very relatable. "I set up a 529 [plan] for my kid and while doing research for this movie, I was comparing what I had in there with the cost of a semester and it just made me anxious. "So I used that anxiousness and put it into the most stupid thing. I always use reality as my starting point." The filmmaker also revealed the film was initially meant to be about the children at college setting up their own casino but after co-writing 'Neighbors', he found writing about the adult's struggles funnier. He said: "It just busted wide open. I started thinking about being a dad. It just became absurd. I put Will and Amy in the worst financially situation - not being able to afford college - and it was just great."

Top Gun sequel gets release date

Top Gun: Maverick will be released in July 2019. The highly-anticipated sequel - which will see Tom Cruise reprise his role as fighter pilot Pete 'Maverick' Mitchell - has signed Joseph Kosinski up as director and will be hitting cinemas 33 years after the original movie was released. Producer Jerry Bruckheimer revealed on Twitter: "Excited to make it official. Joe Kosinski is on board to direct. And Top Gun is coming to theaters July 12, 2019. #TopGun #Maverick (sic)" Tom previously explained the movie will be similar in tone to the first 'Top Gun' film. He said: "Aviators are back, the need for speed. We're going to have big, fast machines. It's going to be a competition film, like the first one ... but a progression for Maverick." The original 'Top Gun' movie was directed by

the late Tony Scott - who died in 2012 - and also starred Kelly McGillis, Val Kilmer, Anthony Edwards, and Tom Skerritt. In the movie, Tom played a cocky aspiring pilot who falls in love with the beautiful instructor Charlie Blackwood, played by McGillis. Joseph - who previously worked with Tom on 'Oblivion' - was favorite to take the director's job after he recently met with the actor and impressed him with his vision for the film. Speculation about a follow-up to the classic movie have been circulating since 2008, when it was reported Hollywood bosses were keen to resurrect the feature. A source said at the time: "The idea is Maverick is at the 'Top Gun' school as an instructor - and this time it is he who has to deal with a cocky new female pilot."



Dave Grohl keeps tight-lipped over Adele collaboration rumors

Dave Grohl hasn't denied that Adele could be the "biggest pop star in the world" featured on a song on Foo Fighters' new LP 'Concrete and Gold'. The stadium rock group's frontman previously teased a "surprising" collaboration with a mystery pop singer who lends their vocals to one of the album's "heaviest songs", but is not prepared to give away the surprise. The 'All My Life' hitmaker has hinted that it could be any number of stars who were recording at the famous EastWest studios in Los Angeles while they were making their album, from Lady Gaga to Deep Purple. Speaking to the latest issue of NME magazine, Dave said of the rumors: "You might have Shania Twain having a record-release party, or the guy from Deep Purple hanging out with Jason Bonham, or Justin Timberlake would be in for a couple of weeks, or Lady Gaga working with these other cats from Nashville. And every so often we'd be like, 'Hey, wanna come sing some backing vocals?' and they'd just do it. It was loose and random: everyone was hanging out, drinking whiskey, having a good time. I never went to college, but it's what I imagine a dormitory's like." The rumors circulated after it was revealed that the band have worked with Adele's producer Greg Kurstin, who did 'Hello' with the pop megastar. Dave, 48, was amazed by how laid back and "humble" Greg was despite the amount

of "gigantic" records he has worked on. He said: "Every time I'd bump into him he'd have another gigantic record out, and he's the most unassuming, reserved guy you've ever met. "You'd be like, wow, you wrote that Adele song? You played all the instruments on that? Get the hell outta here!" 'Concrete and Gold' is released on September 15 via RCA Records.



BROOKE SHIELDS FLAUNTS SEXY BODY IN CALVIN KLEIN AD

Brooke Shields flaunted her sexy body as she stripped down to her Calvin Klein underwear. The 52-year-old actress blew the fashion world away when she donned the famous brand back in 1980 at the age of 14. Now 37 years later, 'The Blue Lagoon' star looked as sexy as ever as she paid homage to the photoshoot which shot her to fame whilst doing a shoot for Social Life Magazine.



Brooke Shields

In the photoshoot, the mother-of-two flaunted her 6'0" toned body while donning white lingerie from the iconic American brand. The model and actress said after the shoot: "After the Calvin Klein show I went back to my house and looked through all my jeans and I realized I that I don't own one pair of Calvins. I sat on the floor going through the jeans and yes, it was an emotional moment for me and I didn't want anyone else to be in the room. I wanted to have my own experience. "Don't worry, I didn't get on the floor and do the pose."

If I had done that, I would have had to be sent away. But I did look at myself in the mirror and I thought 'okay, okay, this is good ... You look good. And then a really cool thing happened. I got to give two pairs of the jeans to my daughter Rowan. She is 14 years old. "That's close to the age I was when I shot the ad. I didn't say anything when I gave her the jeans and we didn't talk about it, but it was definitely a full-circle moment." Although the model started her career when she was a teenager, she has banned her two daughters - Rowan, 14, and Grier, 11 - from modeling until they finish college. — Bang Showbiz

Bella Hadid's mother never let her wear high heels

Bella Hadid's mother only let her have a "custom pair" of horse riding boots when she was younger. The 20-year-old model has admitted Yolanda, 53, had very strict rules when she was growing up, and her parent was adamant the youngster was going to complete her education, assist in the barn, and could only treat herself to footwear suitable for horse riding and mucking out instead of high heel shoes she couldn't walk in. Speaking about her upbringing to InStyle magazine, the brunette beauty said: "My mom was like, 'Hell no, you're not doing that. You are going to go to school and the barn, and if you want a custom pair of riding boots, then you can have that. But you don't need 10 pairs of high heels because you don't even wear high heels.'"

But by the time the fashion muse hit 18 years old she was "100 per cent independent", as she owned designer garments, platform shoes and had bought her own apartment. She explained: "I'm not saying I don't love my job, but people think modelling is a bulls**t thing to become more famous. "I was 100 percent independent by the time I was 18, and I paid for my own apartment." But Bella doesn't credit her 'The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills' mother or her 68-year-old father, Mohamed Hadid, for her success and has claimed her strong work ethic helped her to achieve great things. She said: "That wasn't because of my parents. I worked my ass off for two years."



While Bella boasts a successful career at the helm of the fashion business, which has seen her front campaigns for designer brands including Fendi and Balmain, she can't help but feel like "a piece of s**t" because trolls on social media make

her feel that way. Speaking about the struggles she faces, she said: "Imagine that somebody is telling you that you're a piece of s**t every day on social media. You kind of feel like, 'Well, am I a piece of s**t?' You don't really know." — Bang Showbiz

DSquared2 custom-made Luis Fonsi's world tour outfits

DSquared2 designers have custom-made Luis Fonsi's 'Love and Dance' World tour wardrobe. The 52-year-old twin brothers - who founded the fashion house just over 10 years ago in 1996 - have teamed up with the 39-year-old Puerto Rican singer and have designed exclusive garments for the musician to wear when he takes to the stage during his string of concerts, which will start on Saturday. And the duo are honoured to work with the 'Despacito' hitmaker because they "love" his energy and find the vocalist "totally engaging".

Speaking to WWD.com about their collaboration with

the star, Dean said: "We love his energy. His music and charisma are totally engaging." The pair are desperate to see the vocalist perform his recent release, which features Daddy Yankee, because they "cannot stop" dancing when they hear the song. Dan said: "The 'Despacito' song is a true phenomenon and when we listen to it, we cannot stop [dancing]. Positive Vibes, hot rhythm." Not only are Dean and Dan eager to watch Luis sing their favorite hit, but they are also desperate to see him adorn their customized creations. He added: "We can't wait to see him in Dsquared2 performing on the stage." Dean and Dan are

not the only ones who are a huge supporter of Luis, as he too is a "longtime fan" of the brother's, as well as their designs, and he is "extremely happy" he will be wearing their masterpieces on tour. He said: "I've been a longtime fan of Dean and Dan's designs. To have the opportunity to collaborate with Dsquared2 for my 'Love + Dance World Tour,' it's exciting! I'm extremely happy and officially ready to get on the road to perform my brand new show."

—Bang Showbiz



Dean and Dan Caten

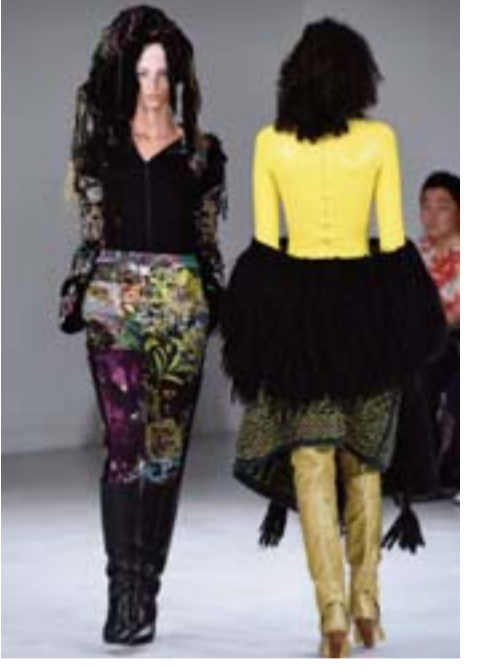
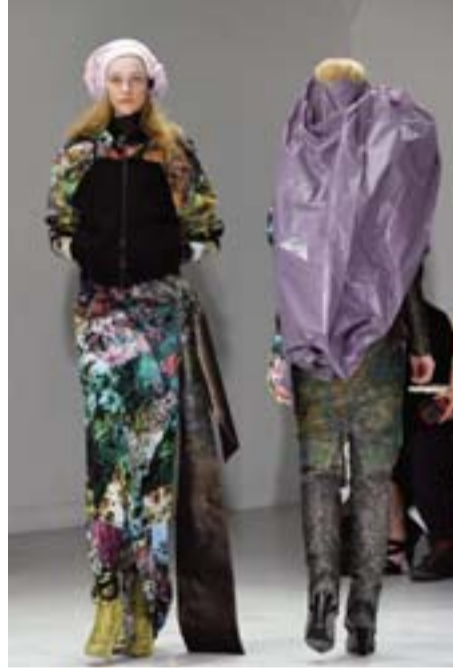
THE 2017-2018 FALL/WINTER HAUTE COUTURE COLLECTION IN PARIS



Models present creations for A.F. Vandevorst during the 2017-2018 fall/winter collection show in Paris.



Belgian fashion designers Filip Arickx (right) and An Vandevorst for A.F. Vandevorst acknowledge the audience at the end of the 2017-2018 fall/winter collection show in Paris yesterday. — AFP photos



Teen musicians to take soulful Memphis Sound anew to Europe

The roster of American musicians was impressive: Otis Redding, Sam & Dave, Eddie Floyd, Booker T. and the MGs. They arrived in Europe in 1967, bringing with them the powerful, soulful Memphis Sound. Ahead was a tour with stops in London, Paris and elsewhere. These artists from the Stax Records music studio captivated audiences with their music born from blues and gospel - a mesmerizing sound created from the black experience in the US last century.

Fifty years later, a group of young musicians educated at Stax Music Academy are newly bringing the music of Memphis back to Europe. They are set to perform at festivals and music halls in England, France and Ireland from July 9 until July 22, joining Stax legends Mavis Staples and William Bell for a couple of shows. The teenage musicians are eager to follow in the footsteps of their influential predecessors. Created in 2000, their academy is an after-school program for youngsters from some of Memphis' poorest neighborhoods who learn how to dance, sing and play instruments. They pay nothing to attend.

"Just to be able to say that I was part of this upcoming overseas tour, being able to sing songs by Otis Redding and William Bell, it's monumental not only for Memphis, but for Stax," said Johnathon Lee, a 17-year-old academy vocalist. "To know that Stax music is still relevant today, and to know that was done in 1967, that's monumental as well." Before it went bankrupt, Stax Records in Memphis generated some of America's most memorable soul music of the 1960s and 1970s, including songs like Redding's "Dock of the Bay," Sam & Dave's "Soul Man," Floyd's "Knock on Wood," and Booker T. and the MGs' "Green Onions." Driven by tight horn and rhythm sections and strong-voiced singers, the Memphis Sound had a raw, emotional quality to it. Some Stax songs were energetic and raucous, others smooth and sexy.

African-American culture

Stax had a sister record label called Volt, so when they put together the 1967 trip, it was called the Stax/Volt European Tour. The tour came at a time when Stax was having trouble

getting its music aired on larger US radio stations because of racial issues during the civil rights era, said Al Bell, who at the time was the music label's national promotions director. So, when the Stax musicians hopped off a plane in London, they were surprised by the welcome they received.

"It stunned us. We didn't know how to act," Bell said. "All these white people in the airport and everywhere, hollering about Stax, calling the artists' names." In Paris, fans "were going crazy" over the Stax musicians, especially Redding, Bell said. "If there was ever a question in my mind about our music being acceptable to the masses and to whites, Paris, France, removed that completely from my mind," he said. Bell said Europeans told him that they viewed the music as an art form that comes from the African-American culture.

"And I'm saying, what?" Bell said, laughing. "We hadn't even thought about having a 'culture,' let alone our music being considered an art form because it came out of slavery." When they returned to Memphis, the Stax artists used the momentum from the successful tour to churn out hits. "When

we came out of Europe, you couldn't tell us nothing," Bell said. "Writers got to writing, producers got to producing. You couldn't get the musicians out of the studio."

Some of the momentum stalled when Redding was killed in a plane crash in December 1967. Bell later ran Stax before the company went bankrupt in 1975. Bell was indicted on bank fraud charges related to the company's demise, but was acquitted. The glory days of Stax Records are gone, but the Stax Music Academy is going strong. About a dozen teenagers ranging in age from 15 to 18 will be on the Europe tour, and they've spent hours rehearsing in the academy's studios. It will be the first time Lee will travel out of the country, and he's looking forward to staying in new places and eating foreign foods. He called the trip "a big deal." "I'm a little nervous, but I'm excited," Lee said. "I'm ready to venture out." — AP



A group of Stax Music Academy musicians rehearse for their upcoming tour of Europe in Memphis, Tenn. — AP photos



This 1967 photo provided by the Stax Museum of American Soul Music shows Stax Records musicians at an airport during their tour of Europe. From left are Eddie Floyd, Sam Moore, Steve Cropper, Otis Redding, Wayne Jackson and Arthur Conley. Artists from the studio captivated audiences with their music born from blues and gospel - a mesmerizing sound created from the black experience in the US last century.



Palestinian singer Omar Kamal performs on stage at the Beiteddine Palace in Lebanon's Chouf mountains, south of the capital Beirut, during the Beiteddine International Art Festival, on July 1, 2017. — AFP

Jay-Z gets personal and deep on new album '4:44'

Jay-Z gets personal and deep on his new album, opening up about his relationship with Beyonce, the elevator fight with Solange and his children. The icon released "4:44" on Friday, and it quickly became a trending topic online and on social media. On the title track, he apologizes to Beyonce for some of his past decisions. "You matured faster than me, I wasn't ready, so I apologize, I see the innocence leave your eyes, I still mourn this death, I apologize for all the still-borns 'cause I wasn't present your body wouldn't accept it," he said.

On "Kill Jay Z," the album's opening track, the rapper addresses the elevator fight from 2014, where Beyonce's sister was caught attacking the rapper. "You egged Solange on, knowing all along, all you had to say you was wrong," Jay-Z raps. He also muses on the track that he almost "went Eric Benet" by letting "the baddest girl in the world get away." The line is a reference to R&B singer Eric Benet, who was divorced from actress Halle Berry after he acknowledged cheating on her. Benet responded on Twitter on Friday, writing that his current wife is "the baddest girl in the world."

Blue Ivy's voice is heard on the final track, "Legacy," and Jay-Z discusses his mother, who he says is a lesbian, on the song "Smile." She closes the track with raw and real words, ending with: "Love who you love, because life isn't guaranteed, smile." "4:44" is Jay-Z's first since 2013's "Magna Carta... Holy Grail." The 47-year-old references his twins on several tracks, though neither he nor Beyonce have

officially commented on the births. Beyonce sings and has writing credit on the song "Family Feud" where Jay-Z raps: "Yeah, I'll (mess) up a good thing if you let me, let me alone, Becky." It's a playoff of "Becky with the good hair" from Beyonce's hit "Sorry," from her infamous "Lemonade" album.

Jay-Z also addresses Kanye West on "Kill Jay Z," saying: "But you ain't the same, this ain't kumbaya, but you got hurt because you did cool by 'Ye, you gave him 20 million without blinking, he gave you 20 minutes onstage, (what) was he thinking?" At concerts on his tour last year, West said his kids and

Blue Ivy "ain't never even played together." West also said he wanted Jay-Z to call him and "talk to me like a man." "4:44" was produced by No I.D., who has worked with Jay-Z, Kanye West, Common and others. Jay-Z raps about his entrepreneurship and "financial freedom" on "The Story of O.J." He said he purchased artwork for \$1 million that's now worth \$8 million.

Criticism online

"You wanna know what's more important than throwing away money at a strip club? Credit," he raps. "You ever wonder why Jewish

people own all the property in America? This how they did it." The lyrics quickly drew criticism online, including from Rolling Stone writer Brian Hiatt who called it "unfortunate" and many others on Twitter calling the line anti-Semitic. On "Caught Their Eyes," Jay-Z raps about Prince and said he spoke to The Purple One before he died. The track also features Frank Ocean and was co-written by the R&B singer, while Damian Marley is appears on the song, "Bam."

Singer-songwriter The-Dream, who co-wrote Beyonce's "Single Ladies," Rihanna's "Umbrella" and other hits, co-wrote "Marcy Me" and has additional vocals on the song. Gospel singer Kim Burrell, who was criticized last year for a sermon in which she referred to gays and lesbians as perverted, sings on the title track.

"4:44" is available on the streaming service Tidal, which the rapper co-owns with Beyonce, Rihanna, Madonna and other stars. The album is also available to Sprint customers who sign up for Tidal (Sprint bought a 33 percent stake in the service earlier this year). The 35-minute album, which has 10 tracks, is also available on 160 iHeartMedia radio stations. — AP



This file photo shows Beyonce (left) and Jay Z perform during a Get Out the Vote (GOTV) performance in Cleveland, Ohio. — AFP



An albino model wearing a creation waits to access a private lounge during the fashion show at the 2017 Durban July horse race in Durban, on July 1, 2017. — AFP

Paintwork: Young Liberians slap on any message you want

Standing in sweltering heat for hours at a time, painted head-to-toe in the colors of the tax authority, Emmanuel Howard has become a fixture at traffic junctions in Liberia's capital Monrovia. He and dozens of other young men are deployed by advertising firms as colorful human billboards for client ranging from government agencies to brides-to-be. Standing stock still on the bustling roadsides, they have become street sensations. "I feel good being painted because this is what gives me my daily bread. Some of my friends are in the streets stealing from others," says Howard, a 25-year-old "statue".

"I take care of my child with it. I feed and clothe myself, and I pay my rent," adds fellow body painter Joseph Yarpkawolo, 27. Body painting as a means of attracting attention in the streets began in the early 1990s with youngsters done up as mascots for the national football team, daubed in the red, white and blue of the Liberian flag. Standing still for extended periods, or walking like robots around the outer edge of the pitch, they galvanized both players and fans. Entrepreneurs like Emmanuel Ben, 26, founder of the Emmanuel Creation bodypaint publicity firm, were barely born at the time, but would grow up seeing a niche in the market for a highly-mobile way of attracting customers.

"DHL, Total and the Liberia Revenue Agency are among my clients," he told AFP, referring to the German logistics firm and the French oil company. Almost anyone can rent one of these bodypaint models, who strike a pose and hold it for long periods on streets still largely free of the commercial advertising that has bloomed in other African capitals. "Some schools, private individuals and small businesses also contact us for advertisements. I go for weddings also," Ben told AFP.

The stare factor

One fan of their work is Fatumata Sanoe, an 18-year-old student who admits finding it difficult to keep from staring at these curious human billboards. "I look at them every

time they come out. It is really attractive, and you sometimes want to know if they are really human because you don't see any part of them shaking," she exclaimed. "No one can just pass without giving them some attention," she added, before hurrying off to class. Liberia has a long history of using body paint for religious and community rituals, but this is usually done in a more private setting.

More recently, the image of a man painted white with the words "Kick Ebola out of Liberia" in orange and black emblazoned on his back was widely shared in 2015 as the country celebrated what was then believed to be the end of a deadly epidemic. Since launching his business in 2013, Ben has built it up to 35 employees and can now charge clients \$10 (nine euros) an hour for a five-hour stretch. His workers earn \$10 a shift.

'My statues'

The body painters tend to be young men under 30 with few other options and using their body as a canvas has become a popular earner. Legions of street children left behind by the horrific 1989-2003 war have grown into young adults in Liberia, often with large gaps in their schooling that lead many to a life of crime in an economy with stubbornly high unemployment. "The economic situation in the country is a difficult one. There are no job opportunities for us," says Yarpkawolo.

"The only problem we face sometimes is that standing for hours under the sun can give us fever. That's the only risk we have," adds Emmanuel Howard. Their boss at Emmanuel Creation is proud of their work. "You can be in a taxi or walking in the street, you come across my boys and the message is given. When you see one of my statues you can't just pass, you have to stop a bit and look," Ben told AFP. "When people come across my statues, they take a photo, what they do next is to post it on the internet," he said, lauding the viral potential of his technique. — AFP



Joseph Yarpkawolo stands in the sweltering heat for hours, painted head to toe in the colors of the national tax authority, at a traffic junctions in the Liberian capital of Monrovia. — AFP photos



A man stands in the sweltering heat for hours, painted head to toe in the colors of a fashion house, at a traffic junctions in the Liberian capital of Monrovia.

Bizarre News

Dog gatecrashes classical orchestra

A dog has gatecrashed an open-air orchestra concert. During the International Izmir Festival in the Turkish city of Ephesus, the curious pooch was spotted wandering onto the stage and looking around while the band continued to play, unfazed by the addition to their group. Many of the members of the Vienna Chamber Orchestra - who were in the middle of performing Mendelssohn's Italian Symphony No.4 when they were interrupted by the surprise arrival - saw the dog but were determined to finish their performance and as they built up to their crescendo the dog settled down next to a violinist. An audience member filmed the dog's adventure on stage and some of the fans could be heard laughing at the unimpressed pup. Just before the end of the performance the dog opened its mouth and yawned, which garnered claps and cheers from the audience. In just a few hours, the clip which was shared on social media by ABC.com received more than 5,000 likes.



Island emerges in Bermuda Triangle

An island has emerged from the sea in the Bermuda Triangle. The mile-long sand bank has appeared in the North Atlantic Ocean over the last couple of months, but people are being told to stay away from the new land because of strong currents in the gap separating the sand-bank from the mainland. The island - which can be found just off Cape Point in North Carolina - has been nicknamed Shelly Island by locals due to the large number of shells found upon it. Janice Regan told PilotOnline of the sand bank: "Yeah, isn't it crazy? It was just a little bump in April!" Despite rapidly becoming a tourist attraction, people are being told to keep clear of the island as although the distance between the two is just 50 yards, the riptides are said to be incredibly strong. And as Bill Smith, president of the North Carolina Beach Buggy Association admits, there's also a concern surrounding sharks in the waters. He said: "We're worried about shark bites, but we're more worried about drownings." The future of the island is not clear as the sand bank could continue to grow or could vanish.

Study finds people hate seeing holiday pics

People hate seeing holiday pictures on social media, according to a new study. Aviva, who carried out the research, found that 73 percent of people who took part in the research got wound up when they came across photos of their pals enjoying themselves during their time off. The study also found that the most unpopular pose of all holiday pictures is the 'hot dogs or legs?' Adam Beckett, propositions director at Aviva, told the Metro: "A holiday is, for many, a time to switch-off and have a rest but it would seem that taking a break doesn't apply to social media. "Long gone are the days when the first time British holidaymakers would see their snaps was in the chemist after

they got home. "Now, we're sharing our holiday memories as soon as they happen, and with a much wider circle of friends and family."



Man gets dumped by girlfriend after rat prank

A man was dumped after playing a prank on his girlfriend. A social media user, named Derek Deso, recorded the moment he threw five rats onto his girlfriend as she slept. And in the clip, which has been obtained by The Daily Star Online, the YouTuber's partner can be seen leaping up screaming before she stormed out of the room. The lover was so mortified by the practical joke she has vowed not to return to her boyfriend's house and has moved back in with her parents until her beau stops with the tricks. She said: "You need to be done with these jokes dude and until then I'm sleeping at my mum's house. I don't feel comfortable here anymore." But Derek couldn't believe his prank was the reason the couple split up. He replied: "Are we really going to break up over rats?"



Woman performs dangerous bike stunt

A woman has been seen balancing on top of an assortment of boxes while riding her motorcycle. Video footage of the woman, who is unnamed and hails from China, has shown her performing the dangerous stunt in which she can be seen balancing on top of an array of boxes with her legs dangling treacherously off the back of her motorcycle. In the clip, the woman is seen driving down what appears to be a fast road as another motorbike rider drives on the lane adjacent to hers, making the contrast in their driving preferences quite scary to watch. The footage was captured in the Changsha, Hunan Province in China earlier this month on June 11 when a passing motorist spotted the bizarre sight and decided to grab his phone to capture it. The video was uploaded on YouTube and other social media sites and has since gone viral. — Bang Showbiz