

Govt, MPs to meet to discuss new fees on expatriates



Shell removes Malaysian cutouts over groping pics



Afghanistan's Sesame Street gets proud brother Muppet



Federer, Djokovic get free passes at Wimbledon



AMIR SENDS LETTER TO QATAR LEADER, RECEIVES OMAN FM

QATAR CALLS FOR DIALOGUE, TO BOOST GAS PRODUCTION



Min 30°
Max 48°
High Tide 08:55 & 22:37
Low Tide 02:37 & 15:20



(Left) HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah (right) meets Omani Foreign Affairs Minister Yusuf bin Alawi bin Abdullah at Bayan Palace in Kuwait yesterday. (Right) HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah's envoy, advisor at the Amiri Diwan Khaled Yousef Al-Fulaij, delivers a letter from HH the Amir to Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani (right) yesterday in Doha. — KUNA



KUWAIT/DOHA: HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's envoy, advisor at the Amiri Diwan Khaled Yousef Al-Fulaij yesterday delivered a letter from the Amir to Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani. Separately, HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah met Omani Affairs Minister Foreign Yusuf bin Alawi bin Abdullah at Bayan Palace yesterday.

Meanwhile, Qatar said yesterday that the demands made by nations in the Gulf diplomatic crisis were impossible to meet, as a deadline was fast approaching for the emirate to respond. Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani told a press conference in Doha that the list of demands from countries isolating Qatar "is unrealistic and is not actionable". "It's not about terrorism, it's talking about shutting down the freedom of speech," he said at a joint press conference after talks with German counterpart Sigmar Gabriel.

Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt - who accuse Qatar of supporting extremism - gave Doha an extra 48 hours to meet their demands after an initial 10-day deadline expired on Sunday. The demands included Doha ending support for the Muslim Brotherhood, closing broadcaster Al-Jazeera, downgrading diplomatic ties with Iran and shutting down a Turkish military base in the emirate.

Sheikh Mohammed handed an official response on Monday to Kuwait, which is mediating in the dispute, but its contents have not been disclosed.

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ABU DHABI: Ahmed Al-Shamsi, the acting chief operations officer at Abu Dhabi International Airport, speaks to AP yesterday. — AP

EMIRATES, TURKISH TRYING TO JOIN ETIHAD OFF LAPTOP BAN

ABU DHABI: At Abu Dhabi International Airport, travelers bound for the United States yesterday enjoyed something many others flying out of the Middle East can't - walking onto an airplane with their laptop. But what has changed in Abu Dhabi remains unclear as the laptop ban still affects nine other regional airports, including the world's busiest for international travel in nearby Dubai. That may change today. Both Dubai-based Emirates and Turkish Airlines in Istanbul will host American officials to show they have complied with measures to be exempted from the ban as well, said David Lapan, a spokesman for the Department of Homeland Security.

At the Abu Dhabi airport, the home of the UAE's state carrier Etihad, officials believe they'll see even more customers in the coming weeks as people learn they can keep their laptops and tablets on US-bound flights. Etihad operates 45 flights a week between the UAE's capital and six cities in the US. Asked about what changed, the airport's acting chief operations officer Ahmed Al-Shamsi gave no details when he spoke with AP. Lapan previously said the airport had new procedures, "both seen and unseen," to protect flights.

through when landing in America. That means passengers can walk right out of the airport on arrival.

The US laptop ban, first announced in March as a security measure, now applies to nonstop US-bound flights from nine international airports in Amman, Jordan; Kuwait City; Cairo; Istanbul; Jeddah and Riyadh, Saudi Arabia; Casablanca, Morocco; Doha, Qatar; and Dubai. In May, 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.

In Istanbul, Turkish Airlines CEO Bilal Eksi wrote on Twitter that he believed the laptop ban there would end as soon as today. For Emirates, its Dubai hub has grown into the world's busiest airport for international traffic, in large part thanks to the long-haul carrier's expansion. Since the laptop ban, Emirates had been offering some passengers laptops they can use in flight. Emirates said in a statement on Tuesday it is "working hard in coordination with various aviation stakeholders and the local authorities" to put the heightened security measures and protocols in place. It offered no specifics on what American authorities wanted.

"We hope that we will receive validation that all measures have been successfully implemented so that the electronics ban can be lifted as soon as possible for our US flights," the airline said. The laptop ban, as well as a Trump administration travel ban on six predominantly Muslim nations, has hurt Gulf carriers. Emirates has slashed 20 percent of its flights to America in the wake of those decisions. — AP

NORTH KOREA TESTS FIRST ICBM

TRUMP FUMES • RUSSIA, CHINA URGE MILITARY FREEZE

News

in brief

Saudi policeman killed by explosive device

RIYADH: A Saudi policeman was killed yesterday and three others injured by an explosive device in a flash-point Shiite-dominated city, the interior ministry said. The policemen were on patrol in the early morning in the Qatif area in Saudi Arabia's Eastern Province when the device blew up, the ministry said, calling the incident a "terrorist" attack. HH the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of condolences to Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud over the "martyrdom" of the policeman and injury of three others. The Amir voiced Kuwait's sharp condemnation of this heinous terrorist attack that targeted innocents and aimed at disrupting security and stability in Saudi Arabia. He expressed sympathy with the kingdom, and supported all measures taken by Saudi authorities to fight terrorism and safeguard security and stability.

Riyadh agrees to Iran consulates during hajj

TEHRAN: Iran will be allowed to set up temporary consulates in Saudi Arabia during the hajj pilgrimage despite the absence of diplomatic ties between the two rivals, the foreign ministry in Tehran said yesterday. "Some officials from the foreign ministry's consular section will be deployed to Jeddah, Makkah and Madinah to provide consular services to Iranian pilgrims during the hajj," spokesman Bahram Ghasemi was quoted as saying by the ISNA news agency. Iranians were unable to attend the hajj last year after talks on security and logistics fell apart. But an agreement was reached earlier this year to allow Iranians to take part in this September's hajj.

MOSCOW: North Korea's declaration that it had successfully tested its first intercontinental ballistic missile able to reach the US mainland triggered a joint Chinese-Russian appeal for a military freeze to lower the tension between Pyongyang and Washington. Experts said the device could reach Alaska. The launch came as Americans prepared to mark Independence Day and sparked a Twitter outburst from US President Donald Trump who urged China to act to "end this nonsense once and for all".

The North's possession of a working ICBM - something that Trump has vowed "won't happen" - could be a game-changer for countries seeking to thwart the military goals of the isolated state. China and Russia called for a moratorium on further missile and nuclear tests by

Pyongyang after a meeting between leaders Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping in Moscow. They also called for a simultaneous suspension of large-scale US-South Korea military exercises. "The opposing sides should start negotiations and affirm general principles of their relations including the non-use of force, rejection of aggression and peaceful coexistence," the joint statement said.

British foreign minister Boris Johnson asked the international community to "redouble its efforts to impose a price on this regime, which strains every nerve and sinew to build nuclear weapons and launch illegal missiles". The "landmark" test of a Hwasong-14 missile was overseen by leader Kim Jong-Un, an emotional female announcer said on state Korean Central Television.

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This picture taken and released yesterday shows the test-fire of the intercontinental ballistic missile Hwasong-14 at an undisclosed location in North Korea. — AFP

FIRST ISRAEL VISIT BY INDIAN PM



TEL AVIV: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (right) greets his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi during an official ceremony at Ben-Gurion International airport yesterday. — AFP

JERUSALEM: Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrived in Israel yesterday for what he called a "groundbreaking" first ever visit by an Indian premier, with growing ties between the two countries including billions of dollars in defense deals. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and other officials gave Modi a red carpet welcome at Ben Gurion airport near Tel Aviv as he began his three-day visit. The two leaders embraced heartily and gave brief speeches, pledging to work together on issues including security, agriculture and energy.

"It is my singular honor to be the first ever prime minister of India to undertake this groundbreaking visit to Israel," Modi said. Netanyahu said "we've been waiting for you a long time. We've been waiting almost 70 years in fact, because yours is truly a historic visit". Modi later visited the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial in Jerusalem and was to have dinner with Netanyahu. The two leaders are to hold talks today.

Israel, constantly searching for allies at the United Nations and for new business partners, has portrayed

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KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with presidents and members of the National Union of Kuwaiti Students (NUKS) branches in UK, Ireland, Egypt, Canada and Australia. — KUNA



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Chairman of the Supreme Advisory Committee to work on completing the application of Sharia law Dr Mohammad Al-Tabtabaie.

CROWN PRINCE RECEIVES STUDENTS UNION OFFICIALS

PREMIER MEETS TRADE UNION MEMBERS

KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday at Bayan Palace presidents and members of the National Union of Kuwaiti Students (NUKS) branches in UK, Ireland, Egypt, Canada and Australia. His Highness the Crown Prince urged the students to exert further educational effort to better serve their nation and contribute to its progress and prosperity.

The political leadership offers great care to the Kuwaiti students and always provide them with all the facilities they need, His Highness the Crown Prince said. They offered His Highness the Crown Prince memorial gifts. The meeting was attended by Undersecretary of His Highness the Crown Prince's Diwan for Local Affairs Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince received Governor of Hawally General Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, and Governor of Al-Asima (Capital) General Thabet Mohammad Al-Muhanna.

His Highness the Crown Prince also received Chairman of the Supreme Advisory Committee to work on completing the application of Sharia law Dr Mohammad Al-Tabtabaie as he offered His Highness a collection of the committee's special Islamic publications and achievements.

In other news, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace yesterday members of the Kuwait Trade Union Federation (KTUF). The meeting was attended by head of His Highness the Prime Minister's Diwan Sheikhha Etimad Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. — KUNA



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with members of the Kuwait Trade Union Federation (KTUF).



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Governor of Hawally General Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, and Governor of Al-Asima General Thabet Mohammad Al-Muhanna.



Members of the Kuwait Trade Union Federation (KTUF) present a memento to His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.



KUWAIT: First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah bids farewell to Omani Minister Responsible for Foreign Affairs Yusuf bin Alawi bin Abdullah. — KUNA

OMANI FM LEAVES KUWAIT

KUWAIT: Omani Minister Responsible for Foreign Affairs Yusuf bin Alawi bin Abdullah and his accompanying delegation departed Kuwait yesterday following a short visit. The Omani minister was seen off at Kuwait airport by First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and Acting Minister of

Information Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, and several other senior officials of the Foreign Ministry. Earlier yesterday at Bayan Palace, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, met with the Omani Minister and his accompanying delegation, in presence of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. — KUNA

KFH RECOGNIZES CIBFS HOLDERS

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) held a ceremony to honor a batch of its employees who successfully completed Certified Islamic Banking and Financial Services program CIBFS. This emanates from KFH endeavors to recognize its human resources while continually training them and providing them with the necessary skills.

Present at the ceremony were several high-ranking officials from the bank led by Group Chief Retail and Private Banking Officer Waleed Mandani, Group General Manager Retail Banking Fadi Chalouhi, Executive Manager Talent Management, Imad Mirza along with a number of executives.

Mirza said that the CIBFS certificates obtained by 10 KFH employees are approved internally from the Institute of Banking Studies (IBS) and externally from the General Council for Islamic Banks and Financial Institutions (CIBAFI) based in Bahrain.

He added that this program is tailored and developed to provide good knowledge on Islamic banking and its scientific applications as per the requirements of the advanced Islamic finance industry, indicating this contributes to raise the bar of the employees, hone their skills and qualify them to come up with innovative solutions to optimally perform all banking transactions, while overcoming the workplace

hurdles and challenges.

He explained that the program conducted for a period of three months; 186 hours. It ran in two phases. The first phase is the training program with different subjects and topics tackled. The second phase is 12 hours for a case study.

The program encompassed several axes including international sharia standards, sharia supervisory mechanisms, economic fundamentals of Islamic financial services, basics of accounting and financial analysis, basics of risk management, banking credit basics, financial institutions organizational structure and basics of Islamic economy.



KUWAIT: The honorees pose for a group photo with KFH executives.

KUWAIT ADHERES TO HUMAN RIGHTS STANDARDS: INTERIOR MINISTER

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah underlined yesterday Kuwait's firm commitment to human rights principles and laws, saying that discrimination has no place in the country. As he received the Chief of the International Organization for Migration's (IOM) mission in Kuwait Iman Eriqat, Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah said that the Ministry of Interior (MoI) enjoys a close rapport with the UN and other global human rights organizations, MoI said in a statement released to the press yesterday.

Meanwhile, Eriqat noted that Kuwait's support of the IOM and the country's humanitarian deeds were appreciated, the statement added. Elsewhere, Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah met with Tunisia's Ambassador to Kuwait Ahmad bin Saghir, as talks centered on Kuwait's "special ties" with the North African nation. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah receives a present from Chief of the International Organization for Migration's (IOM) mission in Kuwait Iman Eriqat.

QATARI EMIR, FRENCH PRESIDENT SUPPORT KUWAITI MEDIATION TO RESOLVE GULF CRISIS

DOHA: Emir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hammad Al Thani and French President Emmanuel Macron emphasized the need to resolve the Gulf crisis through dialogue and diplomatic means. They have also expressed full support to the Kuwaiti mediation led by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. These remarks were made by the two leaders during a phone conversation received by the Emir of Qatar from the French President on Monday, the Qatari News Agency (QNA) reported.

They have also discussed bilateral relations and joint efforts to combat terrorism and dry up its financial resources.

Earlier in the day, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace Qatar's Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammad Bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani who handed His Highness a message from Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, UAE, Bahrain and Egypt on Sunday accepted His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's request to extend the deadline given to Qatar to respond to the list of demands by 48 hours. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Could expatriates soon face the reality of paying more for public services?

GOVT MPs MEET TO DISCUSS NEW FEES ON EXPATRIATES

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: A government-parliamentary meeting will be held in September to prepare new financial fees on services and review subsidies and rations, informed sources said. The government is in communication with MPs to adopt a method to achieve economic reforms including imposing new fees on expatriates and services presented to them as other Gulf countries have done, the sources explained. The start will be by imposing health insurance on visi-

tors, they said, adding that the parliamentary-government agreement is very clear and it is certain that fees will be imposed on health services for expats residing in Kuwait, and not only visitors.

Meanwhile, the sources said that the executive and legislative authorities are not in agreement on implementing health fees and banning expats from treatment at public hospitals, because the health insurance hospitals are not ready yet; and those hospitals will not be able to treat expats without the participation of public hospi-

tals. Kuwait has plans to build up to three hospitals in the future to treat expatriates insured by a new insurance policy that would replace the current KD50-a-year insurance plan that entitles foreigners for treatment at public hospitals. Political discussions have intensified in recent years to impose new fees on public services enjoyed by expats in Kuwait, and increase current charges as government officials and lawmakers scramble to mitigate the effect of the state budget deficit caused by the drop in oil prices.

'OIL TANKERS' UNION SUPPORTS 'GULF OIL' STAFF DEMANDS

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Head of the workers union at Kuwait Oil Tankers Company (KOTC) announced the union's support and participation with workers of Kuwait Gulf Oil Company (KGO) in all measures the union is taking. Mutairi expressed regret over the latest developments with KOGC workers and the deadlock in negotiations, which may lead to uncertain results. He said KGO gave official undertakings not to apply the biometric based employee time clocks for workers at the joint Khafji operations in the divided zone, until the system is implemented for all workers of other oil companies.

Mutairi said that among the aims of labor unions is to care for the workers' interests and improve their financial and social conditions. He said we are keen on seeing our national economy improve as well as our oil production but within the laws and international treaties.

Mutairi found it strange for the company not to negotiate with the union to resolve the workers' issues, and wondered when employers will understand the role unions play.

He said that workers' demands must be considered seriously and KGO must respect the rules that regulate the relationship between it and the union, as well as signed agreements, and stay away from abusing the rights of workers and contain the crisis that is growing daily. There must be a solution, he added.

Mullet fishing

President of Kuwait Fishermen's Union Thamer Al-Suwayan said there is a rise in the numbers of blue-spot mullet fish, along with an increase in demand. He said customers come to the market early to buy fresh mullet, but some government authorities forbid its sale until the auction, which takes place after Asr prayers. Mullet used to be sold all

day long without any auction, but a new system banned that. He said some consumers wonder why the sale is delayed until after Asr, although the fish is available in the market. Suwayan said areas where fishing mullet is allowed are east of Ouha, Miskan, Failaka and Boubyan islands, where the fish is rare, while it is abundant in Kuwait Bay, where fishing is banned.

Health licenses

Municipal Council member and president of the technical committee Fahd Al-Sane said the committee recommended the approval of his proposal to add new activities to the commercial activities that receive health licenses from the municipality. Sane said the committee approved the first southern zone and the fifth regional zone as mentioned in the studies of the executive department which allocated the locations of land in both areas.

TRIO ARRESTED WITH MIXTURE OF DRUGS

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Coast Guard officers foiled an attempt to smuggle drugs by sea. A group of people agreed with an Egyptian man outside Kuwait to smuggle drugs into the country, so police followed this lead and eventually arrested three people; two Egyptians and one Kuwaiti. They found on them 47 kilograms of a substance suspected to be hashish, as well as one kilogram of heroin and 9,000 captagon tablets. The suspects were sent to concerned authorities.

Hawally fire

A sixth floor apartment in a Hawally building caught fire yesterday. Firemen from the Hawally and Salmiya fire stations were dispatched, and were able to extinguish the fire before it could spread. No injuries were reported in the incident as police launched an investigation to determine the cause of the blaze.

Inspection tour

The emergency team of Ahmadi



KUWAIT: Drugs found with three people arrested for smuggling.

municipality held an inspection tour of all foodstuff shops and stores in Fahaheel. A store was closed and 18 violations were issued, including for storing materials in an unhealthy environment, non-compliance with hygiene regulations, working with-

out medical certificates and running shops without a license from the municipality. The emergency team said its campaign aims to protect the health and safety of Kuwaitis and residents, and end the sale of foul products.



Kuwait Municipality inspectors write tickets during a recent crackdown in Fahaheel.



MP TABTABAE URGES CONCERTED EFFORTS TO COUNTER ISLAMOPHOBIA

CAIRO: Kuwaiti lawmaker Waleed Al-Tabtabaie yesterday called for concerted efforts in order to combat the phenomenon of "Islamophobia." Speaking after a meeting of the Arab Parliament's Economic and Financial Committee, Tabtabaie said the lawmakers discussed several steps and issued some recommendations to combat ideas of those who connect terrorism with Islam, mainly in Europe.

The recommendations include holding dialogue with the

European Parliament to show tolerance values, rights of minorities and other provisions stipulated in the Arab legislations based on Islam, he said.

Tabtabaie, also a member of AP, affirmed that terrorist operations committed by the so-called Islamic State and other terrorist groups contribute to distorting the tolerant image of Islam. Some topics were tackled during the meeting of human rights, and legal and legislative affairs committee, he noted. — KUNA



Waleed Al-Tabtabaie

WATANIYA AIRWAYS LAUNCHES 1ST FLIGHT TO GEORGIA JULY 11TH

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Wataniya Airways will run its first flight to the Georgian capital Tbilisi on July 11th, with an average of three trips per week. Wataniya Airways will also operate flights to the Azeri capital Baku and Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina, starting July 12th and 13th, respectively, head of Wataniya's public relations department Lana Al-Rashaid said.

She revealed that 10 new destinations will be added to Wataniya's itinerary after proper procedures are completed, encouraging travelers to book their tickets through travel agencies or online. The Wataniya Airways official added that the airline has set out a plan of providing 'top notch' service to all travelers, who will be well looked after onboard their flights. — KUNA



Lana Al-Rashaid



KUWAIT: Health Minister Dr. Jamal Al-Harbi held a press conference recently to announce that the Kuwait Institute for Medical Specializations (KIMS) has earned recognition from the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada. —Photo by Joseph Shagra

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KUWAIT SUPPORTS FAO EFFORTS TO ELIMINATE HUNGER, POVERTY: JABRI ACTIVATING GLOBAL COMMITMENT TO ERADICATING HUNGER

ROME: Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs and Minister of Municipal Affairs Mohammad Al-Jabri stressed yesterday Kuwait's firm support to the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and its efforts to eliminate hunger and poverty in the world.

Jabri said, during the 40th Session of the 40th FAO Conference in Rome, that Kuwait renewed its confidence

Representative of Kuwait announced at this conference Kuwait's "preliminary approval" of two projects of the partnership program between Kuwait and the organization, mainly DNA project for agriculture and the project of agricultural waste recycling. "Climate change, agriculture and food security" conference theme getting great interest from Kuwait, which is seriously affected by climate change, especially fisheries, due to the high temperature of our regional waters and environmental pollution, he said.

Despite the progress made in the food and agricultural sectors, the sector still need modern technical support from FAO and member countries with expertise, especially in the development of Kuwait water and fisheries resources and water treatment for agricultural and human purposes," he said.

The Kuwaiti delegation, headed by Minister Jabri, will participate in the Ministerial Conference on scarcity of water in the near East and North Africa region, in the presence of Ambassador Sheikh Ali Al-Khalid Al-Sabah, the General Director of the General Authority for Agriculture and Fisheries Affairs Faisal Al-Hasawi, and Permanent Representative to FAO Youssef Juhail.

Global commitment

The 40th Session of the FAO Conference on Monday called for the activation of global commitments to eradicating hunger, one of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In an inaugural speech, Italy's Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni said that reaching "zero hunger" determined by the international community as a new ambitious goal for the 2030 agenda of

the sustainable development is considered a main condition for equality and justice.

He called for "renewed and extraordinary efforts" particularly pointing to the influx of migrants into the European Union (EU) country's shores. Gentiloni affirmed that peace is also a goal and a condition to achieve the 17 SDGs to eradicate hunger in the world as there is a close relationship between conflicts and the growing malnutrition across the globe. He stated that conflict has caused 10 food crises out of 13 in different regions. He emphasized Italy's support for FAO's efforts alongside the World Food Program (WFP) and the Rome-based International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), appealing to the rest of Europe to share Italy's burdens because of mass immigration. In a letter by Pope Francis read by Vatican Secretary of State Cardinal Pietro Parolin, the Pope said he was following international activity and wanted to cooperate to direct it towards a real eradication of hunger and malnutrition, not just simple development or theoretical goals. The Pope stressed the importance of recognition that all people have the right to get enough food.

Pope Francis told FAO conference that the international community should acknowledge hunger and malnutrition are not "natural or structural phenomena." He said "we are dealing with a complex mechanism that mainly burdens the most vulnerable, who are not only excluded from the processes of production, but frequently obliged to leave their lands in search of refuge and hope." He noted that wars, acts of terrorism and forced displacement are not the result of determinism.

Peace is key

Meanwhile, FAO's Director-General Jose Graziano da Silva said "I wish I could announce here today some good news regarding the global fight against hunger but, unfortunately, it is not the case. "To save lives, we have to save their livelihoods. We cannot save people and put them in camps," he added.

He pointed out that "peace is of course the key to ending these crises. But we cannot wait for peace to take action. There is much we can do to fight hunger during conflicts and protracted crises." He said that FAO has identified 19 countries facing severe food crises due to a combination of conflict and climate change including South Sudan, Northeast Nigeria, Somalia, and Yemen where nearly 20 million are affected.

He added this year's setback in the fight against hunger hardly came as a surprise, with almost 20 million people facing starvation because of fighting and drought in South Sudan, Nigeria, Somalia and Yemen. He said strong political commitments to eradicating hunger are essential but not sufficient, adding that hunger could only be defeated if states fulfill their commitments on both national and local levels.

He specified FAO's top priorities for the next two years in promoting sustainable agriculture, reducing the impacts of climate change, keeping pace with these changes, reducing poverty, addressing water scarcity and migration and supporting rural livelihoods affected by conflict as well as working constantly on food and fisheries. The event, which is held every two years, runs until July 8. Up to 1100 representatives from member states are taking part in the conference. —KUNA



Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs and Minister of Municipal Affairs Mohammad Al-Jabri

in the international organization and its goals in fighting poverty and hunger. Kuwait also supported the organization's policies towards achieving the goals of the 2030 Global Agenda for Sustainable Development. Jabri also expressed hope to develop Kuwait's cooperation with FAO, through signing an imminent partnership agreement for agricultural development, which will contribute to enhancing Kuwait's food and nutrition security and develop the technical capabilities of human and natural resources.



CAIRO: Kuwaiti lawmaker Khaled Al-Otaibi (center) attends the Arab Parliament's financial and economic committee meeting. —KUNA



Member of Kuwait's National Assembly and Arab Parliament Ali Al-Deqbasi (center) attends the meeting of the Arab Parliament's Foreign Affairs, Political and National Security Committee.

MP SAYS HURDLES IN GREATER ARAB FREE TRADE AREA NEED TO CLEAR CALLS FOR BEEFING UP JOINT ARAB ACTION

CAIRO: It is imperative to eliminate all obstacles that could encumber business in the 'Greater Arab Free Trade Area' (GAFTA), a Kuwaiti MP said yesterday. MP Khaled Al-Otaibi, a member of the Arab Parliament's Economic and Financial Committee, said that decisions made during previous Arab development summits have yet to come to fruition, which represents a shortcoming. He pointed out that structural flaws in Arab production has stalled trade development, adding that the just-concluded meeting of the committee yielded its agenda for the upcoming term.

Otaibi also added that the meeting tackled various issues to be referred to the Arab Parliament's forthcoming session today. The Arab Parliament has formed various ad hoc committees dealing with foreign, political, economic and legal affairs, in addition to other issues.

Arab aspirations

On Monday, Otaibi affirmed the necessity of unifying Arab visions to remove obstacles in order to meet aspirations of Arab nations. Speaking on the sidelines of the Arab Parliament's financial and economic committee meeting, Otaibi said there are some economic, legal and legislative obstacles that should be removed.

Such topics were discussed by the conferees during the meeting, he added. The

meeting touched upon the proposals of the Arab investment projects as well as reviewed a report on the latest developments pertaining to GAFTA and ways to accelerate the implementation of its executive program, he noted.

Joint action

Meanwhile, Kuwaiti MP and Arab Parliament member Ali Al-Deqbasi called for stepping up Arab joint action to counter challenges and threats to Arab security. In a statement on the sidelines of a meeting of the Arab Parliament's Foreign Affairs, Political and National Security Committee, Deqbasi noted that the committee has discussed boosting Arab cooperation to live up to Arab people's expectations and to overcome the impending threats to the region as well as to fight poverty, hungry and diseases. He pointed out that the members have also tackled efforts to close Arab ranks and to iron out differences.

Deqbasi voiced concerns about the current situation in the Arab region, stressing the need for doubling efforts to ease tension and unite Arab countries. In the meantime, he also lauded Kuwait activism and cooperation with the international parliamentary organizations to stand up to the Israeli violations of international law and illegal practices against Palestinian people and territories. —KUNA



ANKARA: The Kuwaiti parliamentary delegation meets with chairman of the Turkish-Kuwaiti parliamentary friendship committee Mekaël Arsalan. —KUNA Photos



Members of the Kuwaiti parliamentary delegation visit the main chamber of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey.



Members of the Kuwaiti parliamentary delegation pose for a group photo with chairman of the Turkish-Kuwaiti parliamentary friendship committee Mekaël Arsalan and Turkish officials.

KUWAITI MP COMMENDS DEEP TIES WITH TURKEY

ANKARA: Chairman of Kuwait-Turkey Parliamentary Friendship committee, MP Jamaan Al-Harbash underlined Monday the deep relations between Turkey and Kuwait and their people. Harbash, in a meeting with chairman of the Turkish-Kuwaiti parliamentary friendship committee Mekaël Arsalan, recalled Turkey's support for Kuwait's just causes during the 1990 Iraqi invasion and occupation of Kuwait. He also noted Kuwait's support for the democratically-elected government of Turkey during last July's failed coup attempt.

Arsalan said Kuwait was playing 'strategic' roles in the region, and contributed to security and stability of the area. He called on parliamentarians in the two countries to confront common threats, as well as promote the bilateral relations and cooperation. Arsalan said exchange of visits by leaders of Turkey and Kuwait would boost investment and economic cooperation. Harbash is leading a delegation that includes MPs Adel Al-Damkhi, Abdullah Al-Enezi and Nayef Al-Ajmi. —KUNA

KUNA'S SENIOR OFFICIAL VISITS PARIS OFFICE

PARIS: Kuwait News Agency's (KUNA) Deputy Director General for Administrative and Financial Affairs and Communications Abdulhamid Malak yesterday visited the agency's office in Paris. KUNA's senior official and his accompanying delegation inspected the workflow in the office in order to increase its efficiency and speed in covering news and events. Malak stressed the important role made by the office in Paris in covering daily events in

France, calling for commitment to criteria of professionalism, transparency and credibility. Malak's accompanying delegation includes Deputy Chief-Editor for Arabic News Bulletin Essam Al-Ghanim, Deputy Chief-Editor for Local News Bulletin Talal Al-Kandari, Deputy Chief-Editor for Communications and Information Technology Adel Al-Sammak and Head of the Information and Research Department Khalda Al-Nofal. —KUNA



PARIS: KUNA's Deputy Director General for Administrative and Financial Affairs and Communications Abdulhamid Malak and his accompanying delegation visit the agency's office in Paris. —KUNA



In Brief

AMIR CONGRATULATES TRUMP

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a congratulatory cable yesterday to American President Donald Trump on his country's 241st independence anniversary. His Highness the Amir praised the distinguished historical and strategic ties between the two countries and lauded efforts to extend bilateral cooperation. His Highness the Amir wished Trump and his country all progress and prosperities during the 'Fourth of July' celebrations. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah also sent similar cables. —KUNA



KUWAIT OIL PRICE UP BY \$1.83 TO \$46.10 PB

KUWAIT: The price of Kuwaiti oil went up by \$1.83 to \$46.10 per barrel Monday compared to \$44.27 pb last Friday, said Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) yesterday. At the global scale, the price went up due to indications regarding the decrease in US oil production. However, gains might be restricted due to news on OPEC intentions to increase production.



DOLLAR STABLE AT KD 0.303

KUWAIT: The exchange rate of the US Dollar was stable at KD 0.303 while the euro went down to KD 0.344, said the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) yesterday. The CBK noted that the Sterling Pound was stable at KD 0.393, so as the Swiss Franc at KD 0.315. The Japanese yen remained at KD 0.002. —KUNA



Photo

of the day



KUWAIT: A photo showing sunset taken from Al-Subbiya beach north of Kuwait City. —KUNA photo

KIB SUPPORTS STUDENTS AT COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING AND PETROLEUM

KUWAIT: In line with its efforts to offer moral and financial support to youth and their initiatives, Kuwait International Bank (KIB) took part in the 32nd Engineering Projects Exhibition organized by the College of Engineering and Petroleum at Kuwait University, which was held under the patronage of Minister of Commerce and Industry and Acting Minister of State for Youth Affairs, Khaled Al-Rodhan. Under the umbrella of its participation, the Bank had sponsored a number of graduation projects spearheaded by students taking part in the exhibition, which took place over the course of two days at Al Baraka Ballroom at the Crowne Plaza Hotel.

Nawaf Najia, Manager of the Corporate Communications Unit at KIB, said: 'Supporting engineering students by sponsoring their graduation projects every year comes in line with our encompassing program of initiatives specifically targeting youth. We are also committed to sponsoring their projects and adopting their ideas and innovations whenever possible. This stems from our belief that youth are the most vital resource this country has, and that is why youth empowerment continues to be one of the pillars of our social responsibility program.'

This year, KIB selected a number of graduation projects from the College of Engineering and Petroleum. One of these projects was spearheaded by engineering students Fajr Jamal Jaseem, Amina Naser Alqonor, Fatima Fadel Akbar and Tasneem Ali Ardah, and focuses on digital farming. The project worked on creating a solar-powered control system for large-scale farms, allow-



ing anyone to control irrigation from a smartphone. The second project was developed by engineering students Duha Sabah Al-Masoud, Altaf Ghirir Al-Adwani, Heba Fouad Akbar and Mona Ghazi Al-Enezi. The project aims to create a system that allows people to find parking spaces through an online reservation service.

KIB's sponsorship also included a project developed by engineering students Maryam Mustafa Al-Qallaf, Shahad Khalid Al Otaibi, Mariam Jassim Al Muhaini and Fatima Saud Abdulaziz. The project focuses on creating solar powered navigational

devices that don't require internet. Additionally, the Bank sponsored a project that uses 3D printing technology in construction, developed by engineering students Dana Abdul Latif Al Saie, Asmaa Mohammed Al Ajmi, Najud Abdulaziz Al Kandari, Ghadeer Sarhan Al Enezi and Nora Saleh Al Muwaisri. The project focuses on creating a device that converts conceptual designs into real buildings through 3D printing technology, regardless of design complexity.

One of the projects that KIB also supported was spearheaded by engineering students Asma Ali Al-

Hamdan, Bashayer Bader Al-Mutawa, Munira Ahmed Al-Rabah and Sarah Jassim Ali. The project focuses on a device that can detect the early presence of diabetes, and while also reducing a patient's exposure to needles. Another project was developed by engineering students Rawan Waleed Al-mohammed Ali, Amina Khalid Al-Muhanna, Zahra Abdul Ridha Al-Qattan and Fatma Yousef Al-Khabaz. The project aims to create two devices, one stationary and one mobile, working together using GPS to locate the holder of the mobile device. KIB's sponsorship also included a project

which focuses on innovative methods to measure blood sugar without requiring a blood sample, developed by engineering students Nada Khalid Al-Rashidi, Reem Talal Al-Enezi and Shahad Asaad Al-Khattlan.

One of the projects selected by KIB was also the 'Hot Dry Air Diffusion (HDAD) for heavy oil recovery', spearheaded by engineering students Laila Adnan Abdullah, Anfal Nasser Qurban and Sharifa Abdulsamad Alshatti. The project focuses on developing a new method for quantifying extracted oil through less expensive and safer means by injecting hot dry air into the ground. Yet another project was the 'Effect of nanoparticles on heat loss during steam injection', a project developed by engineering students Amal Mahdi Al-Enezi, Shahad Mahmoud Al-Kandari and Mariam Ibrahim Al-Bati Botiban. The project aims to reduce costs and solve the issue of heat loss during the process of oil extraction.

KIB's sponsorship also included the 'Water knockout vessel' project, which was developed by engineering students Jarrah Adib Al-Ali, Abdulaziz Ahmed Al-Qaoud and Mohammed Khalid Al-Mekhaiter. The project focuses on increasing capacity for the oil separator system, mainly used to separate the water produced from the oil wells before it enters the main separator in the assembly center. Additionally, the Bank sponsored the Hot Dry Air (HDAF) project, developed by engineering students Laila Abdullah, Shereefa Alshatti, and Anqal Qereyan, and focuses on achieving a more environmentally friendly method of oil extraction through pumping hot dry air into the ground.



Crime

Report

CHILD MOLESTER DEPORTED

KUWAIT: An Egyptian man in his 60s was deported after he was caught molesting children in a Farwaniya mall. Security guards at the mall suspected the man who used to lure children who were away from their parents, and took them to corners and toilets. When they reviewed CCTV tapes, they found out that he sexually molested them. Security men handed a CD containing the footage to police who arrested the suspect and he later confessed to committing the crimes. Authorities decided to deport him as the victims' families chose against lodging complaints.

Theft

An Iranian man who works at the scrap yard told Sulaibiya police that he was stopped by a man wearing a dishdasha who introduced himself as a detective, then robbed him. The suspect reportedly got out of his car and accused the Iranian of being on drugs, then asked him to empty his pockets. The Iranian, who had around KD 1,000 in cash with him, was then robbed and the suspect escaped. The victim gave police the license plate number of the suspect's car, which was found out to be reported stolen.

Mugging

A Kuwaiti minor was beaten by an unknown person in Al-Qusoor. The suspect took the minor's mobile phone, as the victim's father lodged a complaint at Adan police station. He said that he dialed his son's number which was answered by a man working in a mobile phone shop, who told him he bought the phone from a person, and gave him his details and phone number. Police will summon the suspect as investigations are underway.

Domestic violence

A Lebanese woman was beaten by her husband, and she lodged a complaint at the police station. The husband is being summoned for questioning.

Scam

A con artist stole KD 40,000 from several people after getting to know them through social media, then he threatened to expose them if they demanded their money back. The Gulf national lured women into believing that he loved them, and later claimed that his elderly father was in need of financial help. One woman gave him KD 20,000 she got through a loan, while another paid him KD 15,000 and a third KD 5,000. The man then ignored the three women and then threatened to expose them if they called him again. The women lodged complaints against him and he was arrested.

Arrests

A drunk citizen got out of his car and removed the license plates of an Asian man's vehicle. The incident took place at a traffic signal between Qurain and Mubarak Al-Kabeer. The Asian called police, who came and took the suspect to the police station. The car he was driving was found to be reported missing by a car rental agency. Separately, Hawally police arrested a drug addict who used to rob pedestrians, and was also discovered to be wanted on civil cases. Police also found drugs on him. He was sent to concerned authorities. — *Translated from the Arabic press*



ماهر شوان

Al-Jarida

القلم

Al-Qabas

JOB SURPLUS

By Dr Ibrahim Behbehani

I was not surprised by the numbers that were published in some local newspapers about the availability of more than 19,000 jobs for Kuwaitis, compared to the number of people wishing to work in government and private sectors which is estimated at around 18,000. The truth is, to the contrary of what is being published, it is true that there is a surplus, but it is only on paper because the mood of the job applicant is a decisive factor. The 'mood' of some people who choose to wait until their preferred job opportunities become available is what controls the number of job applications, and not the official numbers that are announced by the Civil Service Commission.

So, the Management and Government Restructuring Program; the state department that oversees the state's labor support program, still has a mission and a role to play towards securing jobs for the government employee, as through it the citizen can secure the accepted limit for his living. Here, we must differentiate cases of employment between those working in the public sector and those who work in the private sector. The salary the public sector employee receives will differ from what he will receive in the private sector. For example, if a private company pays him KD 500 for a job based on his academic qualification, the same employee will be entitled to a KD 700 allowance paid by the government as labor support. This means that his academic qualification entitles him to an allowance that exceeds his basic salary.

Everyone knows that the law forces private companies and establishments to designate certain percentage of its labor for Kuwaitis, so we see a large number of them receiving salaries without working, and this phenomena produces two problems: First is that among Kuwaitis who work in the private sector, there are some who do not report to work, and the second is that some employers encourage employees to be non-productive members. This happens when you hear the employer saying, "come sign in then go home, and you will receive your salary at the end of month," because, at the end, he does not want his services. The private sector establishment needs non-Kuwaiti productive employees, and whoever says otherwise, we tell him this is the market and these are its conditions.

My point being, the labor support program contributes to securing a guaranteed future for our children and provides them with a salary that gives the guaranteed family stability. Maybe, as the case is, what is required is a review of employment management and method, and what should be taken into consideration is the proportionality between the market place and educational graduates, so that we do not have employment accumulation in unwanted specialties.

We have disguised unemployment, sure, and we must admit that and attempt to reform the base, and fill true jobs with required specialties, provided that it is met with productivity that fits the job and fulfill the correct formula that is built on the market needs, with national labor that carries out its duties according to the rules. — *Translated by Kuwait Times*

القلم

Al-Qabas

ABU NICOLAS' MEMORIES

By Ahmad Al-Sarraf

Our Lebanese friend Abu Nicolas, who worked in Kuwait for many years, recently retired and returned to his homeland. He provided education and medical care for his children in Kuwait and was forced to leave the country during the Iraqi Invasion. Commenting on the last attack on expatriates in Kuwait, Abu Nicolas said that each time he picks up a newspaper or a magazine and finds any news item about Kuwait, he leaves everything aside and reads it first.

Kuwait has been imprinted on his mind for 35 years. He started his family here and named his daughter 'Dana' after Kuwait's pearls. They had a very friendly relationship with Kuwaitis as well as people from other nationalities. He said he remembers about all his good times and memories in Kuwait. Especially that one time when his daughter had a severe pain in her ear and he wasn't at home and since it was a Friday, their doctor was not working. His wife asked their Kuwaiti neighbor Maasouma for help and she responded positively.

Maasouma accompanied them to Daeya polyclinic where Maasouma registered Dana in her name and gave her father's name Abdelrahman to over-

come admission problems. The Iraqi doctor on duty treated the girl as she spoke to the doctor about "Father Christmas" as Christmas was approaching. Her talks surprised the doctor who asked Maasouma, who is a Muslim, about teaching her children such things that are alien to the society and its traditions.

Maasouma told the doctor what he heard from the young girl was influenced by her foreign school and promised to correct the matter. All this took place while the real mother kept silent, as she did not want to get into an argument. When they left the center, Maasouma told Dana: "What do you want from Father Christmas? Then looked at her mother and said: "Is he a doctor or a clergyman?"

I am writing to say that many have left Kuwait for good and they are sad for leaving a place they loved and that was good to them, or about feeling that they wasted their time in a place that did not respect their humanity. So, it is our responsibility both humanly and patriotically to make the stay of the expat among us more comfortable, so that they can remember us in their good memories always. — *Translated by Kuwait Times*

AUB SPONSORS KUWAITI STUDENTS' GRADUATION CEREMONIES ACROSS EGYPTIAN UNIVERSITIES

KUWAIT: Ahli United Bank (AUB) has sponsored the graduation ceremony for Kuwaiti undergraduate, postgraduate and PhD students who completed their studies in Egyptian Universities for the academic year 2016-2017.

Held in Cairo, under the patronage of Dr Mohammad Al-Fares, Minister of Education and Higher Education, MP Mohammed Al-Howeily, Head of Education Committee at the Kuwaiti National Assembly, Mohammed Al-Doweikh, Kuwait's Ambassador in Cairo, Dr Ahmad Al-Mutairi, Head of Cultural Office in the Kuwaiti Embassy in Cairo, Dr Mariam Al-Mathkour, Cultural Attache in the Kuwaiti Embassy in Cairo and representing AUB Ahmed Ramzi, Relationship Manager - Private Banking and Wealth Management. On this occasion, Dr Fares honored AUB in recognition of the bank's efforts in supporting Kuwaiti students. Moreover, Dr Mutairi praised the bank's management for its underlying commitment towards sharing Kuwait's joy in the future of their students.

To mark this occasion, the bank declared in a press release: "AUB con-



KUWAIT: Education Minister Dr Mohammad Al-Fares honors AUB.

gratulates those Kuwaiti students who have graduated from Egyptian universities, and wishes them the very best of luck in their future working lives. The bank is proud to sponsor such a momentous occasion in students' lives, and reassures them of its continued support wherever they are - in

Kuwait or abroad." The bank added: "this sponsorship is in line with the bank's overall approach towards social responsibility, namely encouraging the potential of national students by supporting their education process as they represent the foundation of the country's future success."



KUWAIT: ABK Corporate Communications team with KU's College of Engineering students at the exhibition.

ABK PARTICIPATES IN COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING'S EXHIBITION

KUWAIT: Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) recently participated in the 32nd College of Engineering's Exhibition at Kuwait University (KU), which was held on 3rd and 4th of July, 2017 at the Crown Plaza Hotel. ABK reinforced its active role in supporting Kuwait's youth and the education sector by sponsoring three different projects exhibited by graduating students. The

bank's Corporate Communications team attended the exhibition and viewed the different projects as the students presented their work.

ABK is committed to supporting students and encouraging them to maximize their potential. The Bank strongly believes that the role these students will play in the future of Kuwait is invaluable and it is a duty to

support them through the most critical phases of their education and to show them the options they have, in terms of career choice. The bank continuously supports students through the 'ABK Academy', which focuses on developing students banking skills and equips them with the necessary training to prepare them for the work place.

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**Jihadists in Niger
kidnap 37 women**



MORIGOAN: Indian villagers travel by boat through floodwaters in Balimukh Ashigarh village in Morigoan district, in India northeastern state of Assam yesterday. Floods have affected 350,000 people living across 13 districts in Assam as the annual monsoon rains continue to cross the Indian sub-continent. —AFP

INDIAN TRAFFICKERS FIND NEW WAYS TO SMUGGLE GIRLS

MUMBAI: Young girls from India's remote northeast are lured with promises of good jobs and trafficked to Southeast Asia and the Middle East on Nepalese passports, campaigners say, amid fears traffickers are finding new ways to escape checks. "Over a 100 girls from the northeast and northern part of West Bengal state were trafficked in the last two years, nearly 50 to 60 percent of them on passports issued by Nepal," said Hasina Kharbhih, founder of anti-trafficking charity Impulse NGO Network.

"Obtaining visas for Middle East countries is difficult on Indian passports, so recruitment agents are getting them from Nepal. They are doing the paperwork for both passports and visas in Kathmandu," Kharbhih told the Thomson Reuters Foundation by phone from Shillong, capi-

tal of northeastern state of Meghalaya. Traffickers have been trying new ways, including transporting women on tourist visas to Gulf nations to get round Indian emigration checks. They are also trying routes through neighboring countries including Nepal where collusion of officials with traffickers is suspected.

Campaigners said traffickers are flying the girls from Kathmandu airport and in some cases crisscrossing through Indian airports with them before flying to a Gulf nation such as Kuwait or Oman. For destinations in Southeast Asia, such as Singapore and Malaysia, the girls are trafficked through Myanmar. India's underdeveloped northeast, a region marred by ethnic violence and armed conflicts, is bordered by China, Nepal, Bangladesh, Myanmar and Bhutan and is a hub for sex

traffickers to source girls for brothels in Mumbai and Delhi. But cases of trafficking for labor to other countries are being increasingly reported.

Alerts and checks

Recruitment agents peddle dreams to college graduates of well-paid jobs in hotels and spas in Gulf nations or the frozen fish packaging industry of Malaysia. They target illiterate girls for jobs as domestic helps. "The agencies are focusing on these areas because they find many girls are happy to go to Middle East countries as they find they can earn more there," Kharbhih said. But when they arrive they often find themselves trapped in bonded labour, having to pay off debts to traffickers. "Their passports are taken by the employers. They are not paid, as prom-

ised," she said. The police in Sikkim - considered prosperous among northeastern states - is currently investigating the case of a 25-year-old who flew to Kuwait to work as a housemaid in 2010 and went missing after that. Her family lodged a complaint with police last year. "She had flown on a passport issued by Nepal. This is our first such case," an official with the Sikkim anti-human trafficking unit said.

A similar case three years ago put campaigners on the Nepal passport trail when a woman trafficked to Lebanon committed suicide. "We found during the investigation that she was among a bunch of others who was taken there on Nepalese passports for housemaid jobs. That one case was our entry point into the issue," Kharbhih said. Cases have been trickling in since then - a recent one of a girl taken

through Chennai on her Indian passport to Malaysia to work in a beauty parlor. Her passport was seized by her employer and she couldn't renew her visa when it expired.

"It was a complex case as she was legally detained for overstaying in Malaysia. It was very difficult to get her back," Kharbhih said. Impulse NGO has police from India's northeastern states and campaigners logged on to its trafficking alert software. It is now training border forces on how to send alerts on the system in an effort to curb the numbers of trafficked girls and women. "These girls want a good job, and some mortgage assets and take loans with the hope of returning home with money. In some cases, they do send money back home, but these happy stories are short-lived," Kharbhih said. — Reuters

HEAVY RAIN LEAVES 56 DEAD IN SOUTH CHINA; 22 MISSING

BEIJING: At least 56 people have been killed and another 22 reported missing as heavy rains continue to pummel southern China, flooding towns, cutting off power and halting traffic, China's Ministry of Civil Affairs said yesterday. As much as 48.6 centimeters of rain has been dumped on several cities since Thursday, including the scenic resort city of Guilin in the Guangxi region, the ministry said.

More than 11 million people in 11 southern provinces were affected by floods, landslides and hailstorms, the ministry said. Rivers have broken their banks, inundating surrounding communities. The ministry said water levels in major rivers and lakes in the southern province of Hunan have surged to alarming levels, and that the collapse of levees forced large-scale evacuations. Dozens of flights at several airports serving major cities in the region including Chengdu, Changsha, Guangzhou, and Shenzhen were canceled or delayed, stranding thousands of travelers.

Chengdu's airport was shut down for more than an hour Monday because of rain, forcing 13 incoming flights to land elsewhere, according to state media reports. Trains also were halted, and roads were cut off to many towns and villages in the region. Television footage showed major flooding in cities, where the lower floors of homes and shops have been submerged. The national meteorological center forecast more rain to come this week in southern China. — AP

MODI'S TRIP HOLDS SPECIAL MEANING FOR INDIAN JEWS

RAMLA: At a curry house in central Israel, a poster welcoming Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi greets patrons even before they encounter the rich scent of spices wafting from the kitchen. Modi's three-day visit began yesterday-the first ever of an Indian premier to Israel-is a landmark moment for the Jewish state, a country seeking the friendship of powerful allies and customers for its advanced military equipment.

But for members of the small Jewish

Indian community in Israel, the trip is a cause of genuine excitement and a unique opportunity to increase their visibility. "There's not a single (Indian) household that's not talking about it. This is all people are talking about," said Elazar Ashtivker, owner of the Maharaja restaurant in the city of Ramla, south of Tel Aviv. "It's historic," he said. The fast-talking 33-year-old's parents, who were born in India, opened the restaurant in its first incarnation in the 1980s

because they felt "the community was in decline". Initially, the restaurant served the Indian community nearly exclusively.

But in the 1990s the trend of Israelis travelling to Asia after completing their military service became wildly popular, and many returned home with a taste for the Maharaja's spicy delicacies. The restaurant serves what Ashtivker calls "mainstream Indian food" but also sells peppers, vegetables and imported spices. The wording on the poster is in the colors of the Indian flag and invites members of the Indian community, in Hebrew and English, to a July 5 meeting with Modi in Tel Aviv. "There's a lot of excitement," Ashtivker said. "Everyone has signed up and everyone is going." "If you looked for Indians in Israel on the 5th you won't find any. They'll all be at the convention centre," he said with a laugh.

'Invisible Jews'

Estimates put the number of Jews of Indian origin in Israel at about 100,000, according to Eliaz Dandeker, a historian and author documenting the community. Even those of Indian origin born in Israel maintain a "deep connection" to their ancestral homeland, said Dandeker, including through music, cinema, food and cultural events. Events in Israel have featured appearances by Indian actors. Jews made their way to India over the course of the last 3,000 years, and by and large have not suffered religious and racist persecution in the country. They began coming to Israel en masse in the late 1940s and early 1950s for religious and other reasons.

Many of them settled in rural communities to become farmers, while others moved to peripheral towns throughout the country. In the first years following the creation of the state of Israel in 1948, many Indian immi-

grants abandoned their names and traditions as part of the era's "melting pot" ideal. "There's more openness today" to Indian culture, the 34-year-old Dandeker said. "The younger generations want to know more."

'He's special'

In his spice shop near the Maharaja, Shaul Divekar, who emigrated from India as a child, scoops red lentils from a sack into a plastic bag, chatting from behind his counter with two customers. The conversation fluctuates between the goods that arrived from India and the prime minister who is about to. Divekar proudly notes he is in charge of one of the seven buses taking Indian Israelis from Ramla to Wednesday's meeting with Modi. "He's special," Divekar said of Hindu nationalist Modi, a Bollywood music video playing on a laptop behind the cash register.

"He likes Jews," proudly offers a tall bearded man in his 30s standing nearby in the Indian DVD collection in Divekar's store, his Hebrew heavy with an Indian accent. Dandeker, the historian, notes that Jewish Indians in Israel have been called the "invisible Jews" since they are neither Ashkenazim from Europe nor Sephardim from Africa and the Middle East.

While members of the community have reached prominence in Israel in fields including medicine and the military, "a lot of them don't stress their origins". And with many of them having changed their last names to sound more Israeli, "it's hard to spot them," said Dandeker. Modi's visit and its potential to generate interest among Israelis in Indian culture could help raise the profile of the Indian community. "We expect it to help advance our community," said Ashtivker, the restaurateur. "We're a small community here and don't really stand out." — AFP



RAMLA: Elazar Ashtivker, owner of the Maharaja Indian restaurant in the small city of Ramla, south of Tel Aviv, cooks at his restaurant as the Jewish Indian community prepare for the visit of the Indian prime minister. — AFP

IRANIANS HOLD 'TRUMPISM' CARTOON CONTEST

TEHRAN: Iranians have organized a "Trumpism" cartoon contest in which hundreds of participants were invited to submit artwork mocking the US leader. The same organizers held a Holocaust cartoon contest last year, which they said was meant to highlight Western double standards on free speech and not to cast doubt on the Nazi genocide. The logo for the contest is based on the Nazi emblem, with a diagonal "T" in a white circle against a red background. One cartoon shows President Donald Trump painting a Hitler-like mustache on the face of the Statue of Liberty.

Hadi Asadi of Iran, who won first prize and a \$1,500 award, said he wanted to highlight the "money-mindedness and war monger nature" of Trump. His cartoon shows Trump wearing a jacket made of dollar notes while drooling on books, a reference to cultural material. "I wanted to show Trump while trampling symbols of culture," said Asadi, who produced the cartoon in two weeks using a stylus pen digital printing method.

Contest organizer Masoud Shojai Tabatabaei said the aim of the contest and exhibition is to show wrong behaviors by Trump in the framework of satirical portraits. Trump and violence against women, media as well as building walls were among themes of the contest. "The ism in Trumpism is a reference to racism and Nazism," said Tabatabaei. "Many believe his remarks are similar to Hitler. He has had a bad attitude toward media and refugees."



TEHRAN: Iranian cartoonist Hadi Asadi poses for a picture with a trophy and an award next to cartoons of US President Donald Trump at an exhibition of the Islamic Republic's 2017 International Trumpism cartoon and caricature contest yesterday. —AFP

The exhibition, which opened yesterday and will last one week, includes the works of some 1,614 Iranian and foreign participants from 74 countries, including four works from American cartoonists, of which two were awarded citations. American Robert Jones Clayton's cartoon shows the cover photo of two copies of Time magazine, one with Trump's picture and the other with Adolf Hitler. Both men are portrayed as Time's Person of the Year and Trump tells Hitler: "It is a great honor" and in return Hitler replies "Ja". American Ed Wexler's work shows Trump saying "Fake news" while running away from a snowball, on which a red star with a hammer and sickle emblem is seen, a reference to Russian connections to Trump. — AP

JIHADISTS IN NIGER KIDNAP 37 WOMEN

MILITANTS SLIT THE THROATS OF 9 OTHER PEOPLE

NIAMEY: Boko Haram jihadists have kidnapped 37 women and slit the throats of nine other people at a village in southeastern Niger, the regional governor said yesterday. The attack happened on Sunday at the village of Ngalewa, near the border with Nigeria, the governor of Diffa region, Laouali Mahamane Dan Dano, told state TV. "Boko Haram elements... slit the throats of nine people... they took women, 37 women, and departed with them," he said. "The defense and security forces are already in pursuit, and we hope that in the coming days these women will be found and freed," he said. The governor, who went to Ngalewa on Monday, said the village had been singled out because it was known for

its resistance to the jihadists. The assailants came by foot for greater stealth, he said. The village's mayor, Abari El Hadj Daouda said by phone that the attack happened on Sunday evening, "between 10 and 11pm." "About 30 or 40 women and children were kidnapped... (and) nine people killed," he said.

The village lies a few kilometers (miles) north of the town of Kabalewa, where there was a suicide attack last Wednesday. Diffa, which has a population of around 600,000 people, has suffered a string of attacks by the Nigeria-based Boko Haram since 2015. Around 300,000 people displaced by jihadist attacks have taken refuge in the region, which already grapples with grind-

ing poverty. In April 2014, Islamist militants seized 276 schoolgirls from the remote northeast Nigerian town of Chibok, triggering global condemnation and drawing attention to the bloody Boko Haram insurgency. Fifty-seven escaped in the immediate aftermath. Of the 219 who did not manage to flee, 106 have either been released or found, leaving 113 still missing. The attack on Sunday coincided with a visit to Niger's western neighbor Mali by French President Emmanuel Macron, aimed at boosting multinational efforts to fight jihadism in countries south of the Sahara. The so-called G5 Sahel nations-Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger-plan to set up a regional force. — AFP

US-BACKED FORCES PENETRATE HEART OF 'JIHADIST BASTION'

BEIRUT: US-backed forces have penetrated the heavily fortified heart of jihadist bastion Raqa for the first time, in a key milestone in the war against the Islamic State group in Syria. Air strikes by the US-led coalition battling IS punched two holes in the mediaeval wall surrounding the Old City of Raqa, allowing fighters of the Syrian Democratic Forces to breach the jihadists' defenses, Washington and the SDF said yesterday. The landmark advance in IS's notorious Syria bastion—the culmination of a seven-month campaign—comes as the jihadists face an expected defeat within days in Iraq's second city Mosul, the other pivot of the cross-border "caliphate" they declared in 2014.

Coalition officials said a few hundred diehard jihadists were making a desperate last stand in just one square kilometer of Mosul's Old City. The SDF—an alliance of Kurdish and Arab forces that has spearheaded the coalition's fightback against IS in Syria—said its fighters had thrust into the Old City. It said the two breaches opened by coalition warplanes in the 2.5 kilometer wall around the Old City had enabled its fighters to evade the extensive defenses the jihadists have put up over the past three years.

"Daesh (IS) have used this archaeological wall to launch attacks, and planted bombs and mines in its gates to hinder the advance of SDF forces," it said on its official Twitter account. "The precise air strike allowed the opening of two small 25-metre (80-foot) gaps in the wall, allowing the entry of SDF forces avoiding Daesh explosives." Raqa became infamous as the scene of some of the group's worst atrocities, including public beheadings, and is thought to have been a hub for planning attacks overseas. The US envoy to the coalition, Brett McGurk, said on Twitter that breaching the wall of the Old City marked a "key milestone in campaign to liberate the city."

'Protected SDF, civilian lives'

US Central Command, which oversees military operations across the Middle East, said the coalition air strike had not only spared lives among the advancing SDF fighters but also reduced civilian casualties and damage to Raqa's architectural heritage. "Conducting targeted strikes on two small portions of the wall allowed coalition and partner forces to breach the Old City at locations of their choosing," the statement read. This prevented IS from using booby-traps, landmines and suicide car bombs, while it

also "protected SDF and civilian lives, and preserved the integrity of the greatest portion of the wall," it said.

The United Nations has raised concerns for tens of thousands of civilians trapped in Raqa, where it says the jihadists are using many as human shields. The so-called Rafiqah Wall that surrounds the city's historic heart originally dates back to the late 8th Century, when as capital of the Abbasid caliphate, Raqa was briefly the centre of the Islamic world. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a Britain-based monitoring group with a wide network of sources on the ground, said the SDF advance had been supported by US special forces.

"This is the most important progress for the SDF since the start of the assault on June 6," Observatory chief Rami Abdel Rahman said. The US-backed fighters already inflicted a major blow to the jihadists in Raqa on Sunday, crossing the south bank of the Euphrates River that flows through the city to establish a bridgehead on the north bank. The coalition estimates that some 2,500 IS jihadists are defending Raqa. That is far more than the 200 or so diehard IS fighters, most of them foreign, that Iraqi commanders believe are holed up in the Old City of Mosul.

Mosul victory 'in 2 days'

Iraqi forces were moving in on the last IS-controlled neighborhoods of the Old City from all sides yesterday, commanders said, adding that they expected to announce victory in as few as two days. "From the early morning, we were able to gain an important foothold in these neighborhoods," Staff Brigadier General Haidar Al-Obeidi, a commander in the elite Counter-Terrorism Service said. "In the next two days, we will announce the complete liberation of the Old City, and therefore... the city of Mosul."

Iraqi forces have been closing in on Mosul's Old City for months, but its maze of narrow alleyways combined with a large civilian population has made for an extremely difficult fight. Iraqi forces are facing a rising number of suicide attacks, including some by female bombers, in the final stages of the more than eight-month-long campaign, commanders said. But coalition officials said the jihadists were now on their last legs in their two most emblematic strongholds. "#ISIS terrorists down to less than one square kilometer in #Mosul and totally surrounded in #Raqa," tweeted US envoy McGurk. —AFP



GAMBELA, Ethiopia: Unaccompanied children who travelled alone from South Sudan to the Ethiopian border, play on swings at the children friendly space of Plan International Nguenyiel refugee camp in Gambela, Ethiopia. —AFP

BAREFOOT AND ALONE, CHILDREN FLEE BRUTAL SOUTH SUDAN WAR

NGUENYIEL REFUGEE CAMP: Her feet bare and her hometown in flames, Nyadet walked east alone, eating food given to her by strangers and following trails left by others escaping war in South Sudan. She is 12 years old. Nine days after she fled bloodshed in the flashpoint town of Malakal last November, Nyadet reached the country's border with Ethiopia, and crossed over to safety.

"Maybe they are safe," is all she can say of her mother, father, sister and two brothers, whom she lost track of when the streets of her hometown transformed into a war zone. South Sudan's civil war has raged on for the past three years with such viciousness that parts of the country are bereft of food and a third of the population has fled their homes, but few refugees present as vexing a problem as children like Nyadet who escape the conflict alone. "They are fleeing definitely life-threatening situations," said Daniel Abate of aid group Save the Children, which helps reunite lost children with their families.

At the Nguenyiel refugee camp near Ethiopia's lush western frontier, boys and girls who crossed the border unaccompanied tell tales of murdered families and childhoods shattered by the unremitting violence in South Sudan. "War happened," is the description Nyakung, 11, gives for the atrocities she witnessed in the capital Juba, where her mother was left to die inside a blazing hut and three of her brothers were gunned down on a road while running for the safety of a UN base. Aid agencies are trying to get children like Nyakung back with their families, but humanitarians admit that with the conflict still raging in South Sudan, the odds of these children seeing their loved ones again are slim.

Tired and destitute

South Sudan's war, sparked when President Salva Kiir accused his former deputy Riek Machar of plotting a coup in 2013, has been marked by numerous atrocities against civil-

ians despite the presence of thousands of UN peacekeeping troops. Around 1.8 million South Sudanese have fled the country, making it the fastest growing refugee crisis in the world. One million of those refugees are children, the UN says, and of that number about 75,000 were either separated from their parents or without any family at all.

Aid workers say they regularly see South Sudanese children straggling across the border, often with an adult stranger, but sometimes by themselves. "You can tell they are very tired, their clothes (are) worn-out on them, they have not been showered for some time. So, you can see that they're destitute," Daniel said. Nguenyiel is home to nearly 2,900 children that arrived without any family, who pass their days attending school and playing in a tree-shaded jungle gym. Chan, 13, escaped Malakal late last year when fighting erupted and the grass hut he lived in was torched. He then walked for a month until he crossed into Ethiopia. "I just go the direction where I see a safe place," he said. Some, like Nyadet, hope to one day reunite with their families. Others hold no such hope. Chan says he doesn't know where his parents are but believes they must be dead.

Slim odds

With neither the government nor the rebels honoring a peace deal made two years ago, locating family members of lost children in the chaos of South Sudan is difficult, says Hiwotie Simachew, emergency response manager for aid group Plan International. Some parents have also likely joined the exodus that has distributed hundreds of thousands of South Sudanese refugees to Uganda, Kenya, Sudan and beyond. Parents, if they are still alive, could be in refugee camps in any of these countries, or in other settlements in Ethiopia, Hiwotie said. Plan International and Save the Children have managed to reunite hundreds of youths with their families, but

that's just a fraction of the around 31,500 children Ethiopia's Administration for Refugee and Returnee Affairs says have arrived without their parents.

Even when family members are located, some don't want to take custody of the children. In one case, aid workers found the uncle of three unaccompanied minors in Australia, but he declined to adopt them, Hiwotie said. In other instances, it's the children themselves who resist reunion, because they believe that would mean a return to the violence from which they escaped. "They are refusing to reunify with their family and thinking that, if they show their interest, they will return back to South Sudan," Hiwotie said. — AFP



DAMASCUS: Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad (center right) meets the new Melkite Greek Catholic Patriarch Youssef Absi (center left) in Damascus. — AFP

S AFRICA FACES ICC RULING OVER SUDAN'S PRESIDENT

THE HAGUE: War crimes judges will tomorrow hand down an eagerly anticipated ruling on whether South Africa flouted international law by failing to arrest Sudanese President Omar Al-Bashir in 2015, wanted for genocide in Darfur. The landmark decision will serve as a blueprint for future cooperation between countries and the International Criminal Court, experts say. It will also highlight that the tribunal based in The Hague can only function with the support of its member states and the backing of the UN Security Council. "The ruling is... fundamental for future compliance," said Carsten Stahn, international criminal law professor at Leiden University. A decision against South Africa "would send an important message that states cannot negotiate (their) legal obligations with the court," he said.

Bitter dispute

Despite two international arrest warrants issued in 2009 and 2010, Bashir remains at large and in office amid a raging conflict in the western Sudanese region of Darfur. The long-time ruler has denied the ICC's charges, including three accusations of genocide as

well as war crimes and crimes against humanity. The deadly conflict erupted in 2003 when ethnic minority groups took up arms against Bashir's Arab-dominated government, which launched a brutal counter-insurgency.

The UN Security Council asked the ICC in 2005 to probe the crimes in Darfur, where at least 300,000 people have been killed and 2.5 million displaced, according to UN figures. Bashir continues to travel and Khartoum announced Monday he will visit Moscow for the first time in August following an invitation by Russian President Vladimir Putin. Russia formally withdrew its signature in November from the ICC's founding Rome Statute, a treaty Moscow has never ratified. Pretoria and the ICC became embroiled in a bitter tangle in 2015 when Bashir attended an African Union summit in Johannesburg.

Despite the arrest warrants, Bashir then flew home unhindered. It remains unclear whether he did so with the tacit approval of South African President Jacob Zuma's government. At a landmark hearing in April, Pretoria disputed accusations by the ICC's prosecutors that it had broken its obligations to the very

same tribunal it helped found in 2002. Angry prosecutors stated Pretoria "had the ability to arrest and surrender Mr Al-Bashir and it chose not to do so." Pretoria's lawyers argued there "was no duty under international law on South Africa to arrest" Bashir, saying he enjoyed diplomatic immunity.

'Complicated matter'

International law experts agree the ICC's judges are likely to find South Africa failed in its obligations to arrest and surrender Bashir. But they added it was not a simple matter of rapping Pretoria over the knuckles. "The manner and tone in which the decision is meted out will be of utmost importance," said international law expert Mark Kersten of the University of Toronto. "It is possible, and what many hope, is that the decision will show some degree of understanding, and perhaps lenience towards South Africa and suggest that the matter continues to be debated at the appeals level," Kersten said. The ICC's judges could also refer the case to the court's Assembly of States Parties or the UN Security Council for further action. — AFP

HUSBAND SHOTS WIFE WHILE IN UBER VEHICLE

SEATTLE: A woman killed early Sunday in Seattle's Queen Anne neighborhood was shot by her husband during an argument in a ride-hailing vehicle, police said. Cameron Espitia, 31, is being held on \$3 million bail for investigation of homicide in the death of 29-year-old Jennifer Espitia, KCQV-TV reported Monday. An Uber driver told police that Jennifer Espitia was sitting in the front and Cameron Espitia was in the back seat shortly after midnight when they began arguing, according to probable cause documents.

The driver told police Cameron Espitia cursed repeatedly at his wife before the driver heard a boom and thought a tire had burst. The driver said he quickly realized Jennifer Espitia had been shot, documents said. The driver feared for his life and kept driving on Cameron Espitia's orders, police said. Eventually, he told the driver to pull over. After the man left the vehicle, the driver called police. The

woman was shot in the head and died at a Seattle hospital, police said. Police arrested Espitia nearby. He told them he was not having a good night with his wife and had been drinking, documents said. Officers found a small pistol on Espitia in an ankle holster, police said.

Espitia told police he didn't remember what happened, that he woke up in the bushes and didn't know where he was, documents said. He later said he had a faint recollection of being in the vehicle. Jennifer Espitia graduated from Mercer Island High School in Washington and was on the rowing team at Saint Mary's College in California, according to a college-athletics biography, The Seattle Times reported. She had won a community-service award for work as a peer educator at Planned Parenthood, working at a day care center and building homes in Mexico. Cameron Espitia worked for the US Coast Guard, court documents said.—AP



CARACAS: Anti-government demonstrators protest in Caracas, Venezuela. Demonstrators are taking the streets after three months of continuing protests that has left dozens dead and seen the country's chief prosecutor Luisa Ortega barred from leaving the country and her bank accounts frozen. — AP

US MARKS INDEPENDENCE DAY WITH POMP, DAZZLE, HOT DOG CONTEST

NEW YORK: Americans are celebrating their country's birthday yesterday with big-time fireworks, small-town parades and the quirky spectacle of competitive hot dog eating, marking a day of shared traditions in a nation that has grappled with divides this past year. In New York, throngs are expected to watch the annual Macy's fireworks blowout and the Nathan's Famous frankfurter-chomping contest on Coney Island on July Fourth.

In Washington, President Donald Trump is observing his first Independence Day in office by hosting a White House picnic for military families, followed by a fireworks viewing event for military families and staffers. In Boston, one of 14 original copies of the Declaration of Independence will be displayed at a museum, and hundreds of thousands of people are expected at the city's fireworks show.

Organizers of Chicago's Independence Day celebration are expecting such large crowds that the city's Navy Pier is opening at 10 am, nearly 12 hours before fireworks begin. Meanwhile, more than 15,000 new citizens will be sworn in during more than 65 Independence Day-themed naturalization ceremonies across the country. For all the pomp and celebration, July 4 arrives with Americans deeply split over the nation's direction, after last year's presiden-

tial election and political clashes over immigration, health care and other issues in the early months of Trump's Republican administration.

And in an era of concerns about security, the Independence Day celebrations are mixed with precautions. The New York Police Department planned to station 100 vehicles to block intersections and 20 sand-filled sanitation trucks to fortify viewing areas for the Macy's fireworks show. Heavily armed counterterrorism units will mingle among spectators, officers will have portable radiation detection devices and bomb-sniffing dogs, and officers will be stationed on rooftops to look out for any sign of trouble.

Boston police also plan to put trucks and other heavy equipment near the celebration there. Police in both cities say there are no confirmed threats. In a somber observance of the toll of terror, small American flags will be placed by all the nearly 3,000 names on the National Sept 11 Memorial in New York. Meanwhile, residents of Laconia, New Hampshire, might not have had a Fourth of July parade if a resident hadn't stepped in to organize it after learning it was facing cancellation for lack of interest. Some 25 organizations have since signed up to provide floats or marchers. — AP



WASHINGTON: Molly Schuyler (right), who is #1 ranked competitive eater in the world, eats a hamburger's during Z Burger's eighth annual Independence Burger Eating Championship in Washington, DC. Molly beat her competition by eating 21 hamburgers. —AFP

CHRISTIE ENDS SHUTDOWN, BUT BEACH PICTURES LEFT AN IMPRINT

TRENTON: Gov Chris Christie, by his own admission, entered lame-duck territory yesterday, signing his final budget after a bruising three-day state government shutdown that included a viral photo of him lounging on a state beach that was closed to the public because of a budget impasse. The two-term Republican governor signed the \$34.7 billion budget yesterday and sounded an unapologetic tone over the aerial photos snapped by NJ.com that showed him at the state governor's residence at Island Beach State Park.

The pictures sparked a global reaction: countless memes featuring a Photoshopped cutout of Christie in a beach chair, headlines on international news sites and a full-scale media blitz from Christie's spokesman. "If they had flown that plane over that beach and I was sitting next to a 25-year-old blonde in that beach chair next to me that's a story," he said. "I wasn't sitting next to a 25-year-old blonde. I was sitting next to my wife of 31 years." The photos are part of a bruising finale for the term-limited governor, who had been a regular on late-night TV and a Republican superstar after Superstorm Sandy hammered his state in 2012.

Christie's job approval in New Jersey has sunk to 15 percent, tumbling after the convictions of three former aides in a scheme to deliberately cause traffic jams at the George Washington Bridge, his failed presidential run and his backing of President Donald Trump. He's become such a political liability in New Jersey that his top deputy, Lt Gov Kim Guadagno, running to succeed him, hammered him over the beach photos: "Beyond words," she said. People in New Jersey and beyond seized on what many saw as a let-them-eat-cake gesture by the state's chief executive.

"Taxpayers can't use the parks and other public sites they pay for, but he and his family can hang out at a beach that no one else can use?" asked Mary Jackson, a Freehold resident. "Doesn't he realize how that looks, how people will see it as a slap in the face?" Christie acknowledged his lame-duck status

yesterday after the budget signing but predicted that if Guadagno wins he still might have some influence with lawmakers - but less if Democrat Phil Murphy wins. The Legislature is expected to leave Trenton to campaign since all 120 seats are up this year.

Christie denied the beach photos played a role in how he negotiated with lawmakers and said it was "the pressure of a shutdown" that contributed to the budget resolution. He also has said he only worries about polls when he's running for office - and he's not. But experts said they think the pictures all but did him in. "The photos are likely the nails in Christie's political coffin that drive his approval ratings into the single digits," Montclair State University political science professor Brigid Harrison said.

The deal Christie struck late Monday with Democratic Senate President Steve Sweeney and Democratic Assembly Speaker Vincent Prieto calls for a \$34.7 billion budget that includes more than \$300 million in Democratic spending priorities and is part of an agreement to overhaul the state's largest health insurer, Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield.— AP



TRENTON: New Jersey Gov Chris Christie addresses a joint session of the Democrat-led Legislature at the statehouse in Trenton, NJ. —AP

VENEZUELA PROSECUTOR FACES COURT, BATTLES GOVERNMENT

ORTEGA 'PUNISHED' FOR CHALLENGING MADURO

CARACAS: Venezuela's chief prosecutor faced a court hearing yesterday over alleged misconduct in what her allies say is punishment for challenging the government over the country's deadly political crisis. Luisa Ortega, 59, is the most senior figure to defy President Nicolas Maduro as he fends off opposition efforts to remove him from power in the volatile oil-exporting nation. Her stand has raised the prospect of a split in the government camp that could tip the balance in a power struggle. Maduro is under mounting pressure after three months of unrest that prosecutors say have left 89 people dead.

A little respect

Ortega launched a legal challenge against the government on human rights grounds and a case against Supreme Court judges. Pro-government lawmaker Pedro Carreno responded by filing charges against Ortega alleging "serious errors in the carrying-out of her functions." He also alleged she was suffering from "insanity" and should be fired. The Supreme Court last week ordered her assets to be frozen and banned her from leaving the country. Yesterday it examined Carreno's charges to decide whether Ortega should face trial. Authorities searched Ortega's offices on Monday in what state comptroller Manuel Galindo called a "fiscal

audit." Ortega complained that officials had burst into her offices like a "riot." She insisted she would cooperate with an audit as long as they showed "respect."

Darkness and anarchy

Ortega was a traditional supporter of the "chavista" socialist movement launched by Maduro's late predecessor Hugo Chavez, but broke ranks with the current president in March. She accused the Supreme Court of undermining democracy through a short-lived ruling that seized power from the opposition-led legislature. The opposition says the court is packed with Maduro's allies. That court ruling was one of the moves that sparked the current wave of protests.

While demonstrators have clashed with riot police in the streets, Ortega's battle against the authorities has been waged in the courts. As violence swelled over recent weeks, Ortega renewed her criticism of them, accusing police of killing protesters. "We must fight for democracy... We must condemn violence wherever it comes from," she said on Monday in an address to lawmakers. "Darkness does not last forever. It is up to us to see that sanity and unity prevail," she said. "Otherwise, anarchy will devour us." Analysts say that Ortega's stand against Maduro could signal a split in the gov-

ernment camp.

'Tipping point?'

The government has accused former interior minister and ex-intelligence chief Miguel Rodriguez Torres, a retired military commander, of plotting against it with US backing. Maduro retains the public support of the head of the army, Vladimir Padrino Lopez—a key factor for him to stay in power. But the president last month said he was replacing four other senior commanders of the armed forces. "Maduro's persecution of dissident chavistas will embolden the opposition to continue protesting, with increased repression stoking public outrage," said analysts from the Eurasia Group consultancy last week in a note.

Maduro has enraged his opponents meanwhile by launching a plan to form an assembly to rewrite the constitution. Opponents say he will pack the "constituent assembly" with his allies to cling to power. Voting for members of the assembly is scheduled for July 30. The opposition on Monday said it would hold a popular vote against that on July 16. "The next major flashpoint will be the election on 30 July of delegates to the Constituent Assembly," Eurasia wrote. "However, the political crisis is so fluid that the country could reach a tipping point before then." —AFP

IN EUROPE, TRUMP GETS A SOUND CHANCE TO MAKE 1ST IMPRESSION

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump will learn this week whether he gets a second chance to make a first impression as he returns to Europe and has his first encounter with Russia's Vladimir Putin. Trump's first visit to the continent in May stirred anxieties among European allies when he declined to endorse NATO's common defense treaty explicitly and scolded world leaders for not spending more on their armed forces. This time, Trump will use stops in Poland and Germany to try to pull off the tricky balancing act of improving ties with Moscow at a time of particularly fraught relations while also presenting the US as a check against Russian aggression.

Trump is leaving Washington for Europe today. In what may be the most-watched event of the four-day trip, the president will meet Putin on the sidelines of an international summit meeting in Hamburg, Germany. Every aspect of the meeting between the two unpredictable leaders is sure to be closely scrutinized as investigations press on into alleged Moscow meddling in the 2016 election and potential Trump campaign collusion.

With those investigations hanging heavy in the air, there is little expectation the meeting will produce significant progress on difficult issues such as the crisis in Ukraine or the conflict in Syria. "I can't imagine any issue they can actually make major headway on, given the poison that surrounds the relationship," said Michael O'Hanlon, a senior fellow in foreign policy at the Brookings Institution, who suggested it might lay the groundwork for future cooperation. The Trump-Putin encounter will be one of at least nine meetings the US president will have with foreign leaders while in Hamburg for a Group of 20 summit of developed and developing nations, beginning Friday.

But first Trump will stop in Poland, where leaders are looking for reassurance that the presence of US and NATO troops there will continue as long as the region's security is threatened by a resurgent Russia. In return, Trump will be expecting a warm reception as he pays homage to Polish resolve with a speech Thursday in Krasinski Square, his first major outdoor address in a foreign country. Poland's leaders are closely aligned with Trump's worldview, and ruling party lawmakers and pro-government activists plan to bus in groups to help ensure an enthusiastic crowd for Trump after his rather awkward European debut in May.

Previewing the trip, White House officials said Trump would reiterate the US commitment to NATO's Article 5, which says an attack on one

member is an attack on all - something he didn't do at NATO headquarters in Brussels during his first overseas trip but eventually endorsed last month. The president is also expected to cite the need to develop "a common approach to Russia," his advisers said. "He'd like the United States and the entire West to develop a more constructive relationship with Russia," said the White House national security adviser, HR McMaster.

"But he's also made clear that we will do what is necessary to confront Russia's destabilizing behavior." Preparing for the trip, Trump spoke Monday with German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Italian Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni. Earlier in the holiday weekend, he had conversations with Chinese President Xi Jinping, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and the leaders of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar. After this trip, the president will be back in Europe soon for a mid-July visit to France to celebrate Bastille Day alongside new French President Emmanuel Macron. And in late July, he'll send Vice President Mike Pence to Estonia and Georgia - two former Soviet satellites straddling the Russian border - and new NATO member Montenegro.

Poland has been a staunch US ally in Iraq and Afghanistan and is home to about 5,000 US troops serving in separate American and NATO missions. "They're betting that this relationship with the United States on defense will balance

their concerns about the possible directions of US-Russia policy," said Jeff Rathke, a senior fellow and deputy director of the Europe Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. Sharing a border with Russia "is of the highest concern for Poland."

US-Russian relations remain tense - Trump said in April they may be at an "all-time low" - and Moscow has denounced the recent decision by the US to impose sanctions on more than three dozen Russian people and firms over Russian activities in Ukraine. But Trump has expressed hopes of improved relations with the global power. White House aides said Trump did not have a specific agenda for the meeting with the Russian president and they have yet to provide details on the staging for the encounter.

Trump has had three phone calls with Putin since taking office. In the past, he's offered contradictory descriptions of his connections with Putin, insisting during the campaign he had no recollection of meeting him but earlier stating that they spoke around the 2013 Miss Universe pageant in Moscow. Trump's overseas trip will be his first since he announced that he was withdrawing the US from the landmark Paris climate agreement, to the regret of a number of world leaders who had lobbied Trump to remain in the 2015 pact. The White House said Trump and Merkel discussed the climate issues in their conversation Monday.— AP



BEDMINSTER: US President Donald Trump waves as he arrives on Air Force One at Andrews Air Force Base, Md en route to Washington. —AP

JUNCKER SLAMS 'RIDICULOUS' EU PARLIAMENT



STRASBOURG: EU Commission president Jean-Claude Juncker gesturing as he speaks during a debate at the European Parliament in Strasbourg, eastern France. — AFP

STRASBOURG: European Commission chief Jean-Claude Juncker launched a blistering attack yesterday on a nearly empty European Parliament, sparking bitter exchanges with the head of the EU's only directly elected institution. Juncker, known for his sharp wit, was angry to find only a handful of MEPs present at the assembly in Strasbourg to hear a report on Malta's just-completed EU presidency.

But his remarks drew a sharp response from parliament head Antonio Tajani, who said his colleague was out of order and should mind his tongue. "The European Parliament is ridiculous, totally ridiculous," Juncker told the chamber,

which seats 751 deputies. "I salute those who made the effort to turn up but the fact that only about 30 deputies are here for this debate clearly shows that parliament is not serious!" he said.

Tajani interrupted from the podium: "You can criticize the parliament but it is not the Commission which controls parliament." "It is parliament which controls the Commission!" Juncker retorted: "There are only a few members in the plenary to control the Commission. You are ridiculous!" "Mr President, I ask you, please use different language. We are not ridiculous," Tajani said. Juncker begged to differ and signed off with a blunt admonition: "I will never again

attend a meeting of this kind." It is a courtesy for the head of the country holding the EU's rotating presidency, in this case Maltese Prime Minister Joseph Muscat, to present parliament with a report on their work during the country's six-month leadership.

Juncker, a former long-serving Luxembourg premier, became head of the Commission in 2014 promising a more political approach. He also has a reputation for sometimes undiplomatic language which tends to amuse and infuriate in equal measure. Italy's Tajani became president of the parliament in January and served as EU transport commissioner from 2010 to 2014. —AFP

MIGRANT INFLUX TO EUROPE EXCEEDS 100,000 THIS YEAR

NEARLY 2,250 DIED ATTEMPTING THE SEA CROSSING

GENEVA: More than 100,000 migrants have made the perilous Mediterranean crossing to Europe this year, the UN said yesterday, amid mounting tensions among EU nations on how to tackle the crisis. Nearly 2,250 people have died in 2017 attempting the sea crossing from North Africa, the UN's International Organization for Migration (IOM) added. Italy has taken in nearly 85 percent of the arrivals—most of them sub-Saharan Africans crossing from Libya—and has pleaded for help from other European Union nations, saying it is struggling to cope.

"The reception of rescued migrants cannot be seen as an issue only for Italy, but a matter for Europe as a whole," IOM chief William Lacy Swing said, appealing for the rest of the EU to show more solidarity. On Sunday, Italian Interior Minister Marco Minniti called on EU neighbors to open their ports to rescue ships picking up migrants in the Mediterranean, after issuing a drastic threat to close its own ports to the boats.

But France rejected that idea, with an aide to Minniti's counterpart Gerard Collomb telling AFP this would only encourage more migrants to set sail. EU interior ministers are due to meet in Estonia's capital Tallinn on Thursday to discuss the migrant crisis—the continent's worst since World War II—in a bid to defuse a long-running row over spreading asylum seekers across the bloc. The EU put in place a policy in 2015 to distribute around 160,000 asylum-seekers across different countries. But only about 20,000 have been relocated from Italy and Greece under the scheme, while Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic have flatly refused to take part.

Ministers meeting in Tallinn will also discuss proposals for a "code of conduct" for charities operating rescue boats in the Mediterranean, a plan announced by France, Germany and Italy on Monday. Separately, foreign ministers from European and African countries affected by the crisis will meet in Rome tomorrow with representatives of the EU and UN as part of a diplomatic push to stem the influx. In an interview with France's Figaro newspaper, European migration commissioner Dimitris Avramopoulos called on Tuesday for EU countries to speed up deportations of failed asylum seekers to ease the pressure, but warned this needed cooperation from their home countries.



SALERNO: Migrants wait to disembark from the Spanish ship 'Rio Segura' in the harbor of Salerno, Italy. — AP

'Enormous pressure'

The UN figures released yesterday showed that between January 1 and July 3, more than 85,000 migrants landed in Italy, nearly 9,300 arrived in Greece, nearly 6,500 in Spain and over 270 in Cyprus. "We are under enormous pressure," Italy's Minniti said in an interview with Il Messaggero over the weekend, while the country's Red Cross warned that the situation in overcrowded reception centers was becoming critical. The UN's refugee agency also weighed in, warning that Italy cannot continue absorbing tens of thousands of migrants on its own. "This is not sustainable. We need to have other countries joining Italy and sharing that responsibility," said Vincent Cochetel, UNHCR special envoy for the central Mediterranean.

Austrian Defense Minister Hans Peter Doskozil warned Monday that Vienna is set to impose border checks and deploy soldiers on its frontier with Italy if the Mediterranean influx does not slow. While the numbers arriving in 2017 are staggering, they remain far below last year's figures. During the same period in 2016, 231,503 people made the crossing to Europe, with the 100,000-mark passed already in February that year. But at that time most of the migrants were crossing from Turkey to Greece, and an EU deal with Ankara in March last year effectively hit the brakes on that movement. —AFP

MACRON GOVERNMENT LAUNCHES REFORM PLAN

PARIS: French Prime Minister Edouard Philippe unveiled an ambitious program of tax cuts and reduced public spending on Tuesday designed to boost corporate investment and end the country's reliance on state borrowing. Philippe put spurring entrepreneurship at the heart of his first policy speech to the National Assembly after presidential and parliamentary elections in May and June. "Businesses must want to set up and develop on our territory rather than elsewhere," Philippe told lawmakers, announcing that corporate tax would be cut from 33 percent to 25 percent in the next five years.

Tackling France's chronic overspending was a priority, he said, warning that the public debt now totalled 2.1 trillion euros, nearly the equivalent of an entire year's economic output. "We are dancing on a volcano that is rumbling ever louder," Philippe told the newly elected National Assembly, saying that public spending would be cut and the public deficit would be brought below 3.0 of GDP this year. "France cannot remain the champion both of public spending and taxes," he said. Almost all of the measures confirmed election promises from 39-year-old centrist President Emmanuel Macron who was elected France's youngest ever president in May after promising to modernise the country.

Election pledges

Philippe has already outlined one of the government's biggest economic reforms: An overhaul of France's rigid labor law which will enable companies to negotiate working terms and conditions with their employees. The measure faces resistance from leftist opponents. The powerful CGT trade union has already called for street protests and strikes in September. The government will face little difficulty in passing legislation in the lower house of parliament where candidates from Macron's new Republic on the Move (REM) party won more than 300 out of 577 seats in last month's election.

The upper-house Senate, where rightwing Republicans hold a majority, will be trickier. Philippe said yesterday that the government would also honour other campaign pledges including introducing a new national service for young people and making dental and eye care free on the health system. Other measures including raising the price of cigarettes progressively to €10 from their current level of €7 to fight smoking-related diseases, the biggest cause of preventable deaths in France.

Macron reviews

Macron, France's youngest president at just 39, gave a state of the union address to both houses of parliament on Monday, a novelty which he intends to turn into an annual event to present his vision for the country. He said he was not aiming for mere reforms but a "transformation" of the political system and the economy. He faced mixed reviews for his inaugural address. The French press noted his determination to restore the prestige of the office of the all-powerful presidency and said he appeared keen to stay above the political fray.

"Macron is leaving the difficult work to Philippe," wrote commentator Paul-Henri du Limbert in the right-leaning Le Figaro newspaper. But Macron's style - he has used the former royal palace in Versailles twice since taking office and has given only one media interview - has also seen him criticized by some for being aloof, monarchical or even "pharaonic". Yesterday, he visited a military base in the northwest of the country, where he embarked for a four-hour trip on the nuclear submarine "The Terrible".

Macron also promised in his speech on Monday to slash by a third the number of MPs in the lower and upper houses, telling lawmakers he would call a referendum if they do not agree to the measure. The new head of state has broadly positive approval ratings with slightly more than half of respondents in recent polls expressing a positive view of him - around the same level as Hollande enjoyed at the start of his term. — AFP



PARIS: French Prime Minister Edouard Philippe makes his general policy speech before the National Assembly yesterday. — AFP



SINGAPORE: Interpol President, Meng Hongwei, delivers his opening address at the Interpol World congress yesterday in Singapore. — AP

INTERPOL PRESIDENT CALLS FOR UNITY IN FACING CYBERATTACKS

SINGAPORE: Countries and law enforcement agencies must work together to counter rising threats, especially those in cyberspace, the president of Interpol told a security congress yesterday. In a wide-ranging speech, Meng Hongwei cited the recent outbreak of ransomware WannaCry, which has scrambled data at hospitals, factories, banks, government agencies and other businesses in Asia and beyond. "Criminals will continue to exploit the exponential growth of the internet and social communication platforms," said Meng, a top Chinese police official.

"However, no single country or profession can rely solely upon its own capability to address the problem of transnational and organized crimes. We are all part of the world. We are all facing the same threats in (the) international arena," Meng said. Meng's election to lead Interpol set

off alarm bells among rights advocates over abuses and a lack of transparency within China's legal system. His speech yesterday was one of his first public appearances. Lyon, France-based Interpol has 190 member nations and has the power to issue "red notices," the closest instrument to an international arrest warrant in use today.

Interpol's president is a largely symbolic but still influential figure who heads its executive committee, which is responsible for providing guidance and direction and implementing decisions made by its general assembly. Interpol Secretary-General Jurgen Stock is the organization's chief full-time official and heads the executive committee. Meng took over in November from Mireille Ballestrazzi of France for a four-year term. He was nominated by Interpol member countries. — AP

BURUNDI BECOMING A 'VIOLENT DICTATORSHIP'

NAIROBI: Burundi's President Pierre Nkurunziza and his ruling party have moved the country toward violent dictatorship, rights groups said yesterday in a report that slams the international community for inaction. A "purge" of ethnic Tutsis from the army, a crackdown on opposition and media and a bid to change the constitution to allow unlimited presidential terms are signs of an "increasingly violent dictatorial regime," it said.

The tiny central African state was plunged into political crisis in April 2015 when Nkurunziza announced his intention to run for a third term which he went on to win. At least 500 people have been killed in ensuing violence, according to the UN—although rights groups put the figure at over 1,000 - and more than 400,000 have fled the country since the crisis began. In their report the International Federation for Human Rights (known by its French acronym, FIDH) and partner groups describe how the ruling party has tightened its stranglehold during a two-year conflict.

It said the ruling CNDD-FDD has become the sole state party, with monuments glorifying it erected, party flags placed at entrances to public schools and violent propaganda broadcast urging Burundians to be ready to fight and eliminate opponents. "In a matter of two years, almost all the heads and activists of the political opposition have been silenced and hunted down by the Burundian authorities," it said. The report details accounts of Tutsi soldiers who

have disappeared, been arrested or brutally tortured or found dead.

It warns that without international intervention Nkurunziza could succeed in reversing history and establishing a Hutu-controlled regime based on a mono-ethnic army under the control of the authorities. In Burundi, which has a long history of violence between Hutu and Tutsi communities, "this would represent a major risk for peace in the country, as in the region." The report singles out the ruling party youth wing, the Imbonerakure, which it describes as a militia characterized by "ideological radicalization" that has been recorded singing songs encouraging the rape of opposition women and is widely accused of human rights violations, including murder, rape and torture.

The FIDH urges "the international community to recognize the gravity of the situation in Burundi" and for the International Criminal Court (ICC) to quickly open an investigation. It also says the African Union and UN should ensure political dialogue, impose an arms embargo and apply sanctions against Burundi officials. "The international community's lack of determination and its incapacity to implement its own decisions" allow Nkurunziza to shore up his position ahead of a possible attempt to change the constitution to allow him to run again in 2020. Burundi has repeatedly denied a campaign of repression and has harshly criticised UN warnings of a genocide risk. — AFP

CANADA TO PAY EX-GUANTANAMO INMATE

TORONTO: The Canadian government is going to apologize and give millions to a former Guantanamo Bay prisoner who pleaded guilty to killing a US soldier in Afghanistan when he was 15, with Canada's Supreme Court later ruling that officials had interrogated him under "oppressive circumstances." An official familiar with the deal said yesterday that Omar Khadr will receive 10.5 million Canadian dollars (US\$8 million). The official was not authorized to discuss the deal publicly before the announcement and spoke on condition of anonymity. The government and Khadr's lawyers negotiated the deal last month.

The Canadian-born Khadr was 15 when he was captured by US troops following a firefight

at a suspected Al-Qaeda compound in Afghanistan that resulted in the death of an American special forces medic, US Army Sgt First Class Christopher Speer.

Khadr, who was suspected of throwing the grenade that killed Speer, was taken to Guantanamo and ultimately charged with war crimes by a military commission. He pleaded guilty in 2010 to charges that included murder and was sentenced to eight years plus the time he had already spent in custody. He returned to Canada two years later to serve the remainder of his sentence and was released in May 2015 pending an appeal of his guilty plea, which he said was made under duress. Omar Khadr spent 10 years in Guantanamo Bay. His case received

international attention after some dubbed him a child soldier.

The Supreme Court of Canada ruled in 2010 that Canadian intelligence officials obtained evidence from Khadr under "oppressive circumstances," such as sleep deprivation, during interrogations at Guantanamo Bay in 2003, and then shared that evidence with US officials. Khadr was the youngest and last Western detainee held at the US military prison in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. His lawyers filed a \$20 million wrongful imprisonment lawsuit against the Canadian government, arguing the government violated international law by not protecting its own citizen and conspired with the US in its abuse of Khadr. — AP

AFGHAN-AMERICAN BRINGS IMMIGRANT TALES TO TIMES SQUARE

NEW YORK: They may be fast disappearing from the streets of New York, but an Afghan-American artist has installed public telephone booths in Times Square to spotlight the immigrant experience in Donald Trump's America. New York today boasts no more than four public phone booths, the last vestiges of a pre cell-phone era. The arrival of three in Times Square as part of Aman Mojadidi's "Once Upon a Place" installation has nearly doubled that number.

Passers by can pick up the handset, but cannot talk. Instead they listen. At the end of the line are the voices of New Yorkers telling their personal stories of immigration—legal or illegal—from around the world. Mojadidi asked each to narrate their experiences in

their own language for a maximum of 15 minutes, without interrupting with any questions. Nor has their testimony been translated into English. "Even if you don't understand the language, you can feel the emotion as if it is a song maybe," he explained to AFP.

The art project boasts more than five hours of recordings from 70 different New Yorkers and will remain in Times Square until September 5. Mojadidi first started working on the project in 2014, well before Trump ran for president and unleashed vehement rhetoric against unauthorized immigrants and took office attempting to restrict immigration from certain Muslim countries. The shifting political environment saw Mojadidi scrap initial plans to dot the project around the city

and hold formal workshops in different communities. He said his subjects became "very nervous" about the idea.

"Why do we need to come there? Who else is going to be there?" he quoted them as saying. "In the end, it was all very one on one. So the way I implemented the project changed a lot." Nor is the choice of telephone booths insignificant. "When I learned how phone booths were starting to be removed from the streets, not just in New York but in other cities around the world, I immediately thought about all of the stories that are trapped inside of these phones," he said. "I thought of a natural way to bring stories back to the streets by using the phone booths, bring back the spirit of the phone booths." — AFP



NEW YORK: People listen in a phone booth, part of the 'Once Upon a Place' art installation by Afghan-American artist Aman Mojadidi in New York's Times Square. The interactive public art installation allows audiences to step into authentic repurposed New York City telephone booths, pick up the receiver and listen to personal stories of immigration straight from the New Yorkers who lived them. —AFP



SINGAPORE: Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong delivers a speech in Parliament in Singapore. — AP

SINGAPORE PM ACCUSED OF LYING IN PARLIAMENT

THE LATEST INSTALLMENT OF AN EXPLOSIVE FAMILY FEUD

SINGAPORE: The brother of Singapore's prime minister yesterday accused him of lying in parliament about the final wishes of their father, revered founding leader Lee Kuan Yew, the latest installment of an explosive family feud. Lee Hsien Yang accused Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, 65, of falsely telling parliament Monday that their father had been open to reconsidering plans to demolish a century-old family bungalow.

The house is at the centre of a political drama that has simmered since the 2015 death of the elder Lee, and which has played out in public with the PM and his siblings exchanging barbs on social media, shocking a tightly controlled nation unused to divisions among the elite. The patriarch had wanted the bungalow destroyed

after he passed away to prevent the creation of a personality cult. But the prime minister's siblings say their brother is attempting to block the house's demolition to capitalize on their father's legacy for his own political agenda, including grooming his own son as a future leader.

"(Lee Hsien Loong) has made convoluted, but ultimately false, claims about Lee Kuan Yew's wishes," the 60-year-old said in a Facebook post Tuesday, which was shared by his sister Wei Ling, 62. The dispute burst into the open last month when the PM's brother and sister launched attacks on Facebook, which quickly went viral. In Monday's speech, the PM said that despite a "demolition clause" governing the house in his final will, his father was "prepared to consider alternatives", and had even approved renovation

plans should the government decide against tearing down the building.

However Hsien Yang said that his father had been misled by the prime minister into agreeing to the renovation, with the elder Lee made to believe the house had been listed as a national monument so could not be torn down—a claim of which the founding leader's lawyer had found no evidence. Lee Kuan Yew, the country's authoritarian first prime minister, ruled Singapore from 1959 to 1990. His death at age 91 sparked a massive outpouring of grief among Singaporeans, many of whom credit the family patriarch with turning Singapore from a poor former British colony into one of the world's wealthiest and most stable societies. The debate in parliament continued for a second day yesterday. —AFP

INDIAN WOMEN DON COW MASKS TO SHOW THEY ARE LESS SAFE THAN CATTLE

MUMBAI: They are all pictures of women doing everyday activities: A woman on a street, a woman playing the piano in her home, a woman lounging in a boat, a woman at a table in a restaurant. All unremarkable, except that they are wearing a cow mask. The photographs aim to highlight the growing violence against women in India, while also drawing attention to a wave of attacks on religious minorities accused of eating beef or slaughtering cows - considered sacred by many Hindus.

"People are getting lynched in this country to protect cows. But women's safety is neglected and violence against women is rising," photographer Sujatro Ghosh said of his project. "If we can protect cows, then why not women?" Violence against women has been under the spotlight since a fatal gang-rape of a student on a bus in New Delhi in 2012 sparked nationwide protests about entrenched violence against women and the failure of authorities to protect them.

India has enacted tougher jail sentences for rapists and promised to try those accused through "fast-track" courts but rape, acid attacks and domestic violence remain common. More than 327,390 crimes against women were registered in India in 2015, an increase of more than half since 2010. But activists

say many crimes go unreported because women are afraid of reprisals from their attackers, or because they are ashamed to report them.

There has also been a surge in violence against people accused of harming cows. Earlier this month, a 16-year-old Muslim boy was stabbed to death on a train on suspicion of carrying beef, the latest victim of an estimated 28 people killed in cow-related violence since 2010. Most were killed after Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Hindu nationalist party won elections three years ago. Modi last week broke his silence and condemned the violence by so-called cow protection groups, some of which have links to his party.

Ghosh, who began by photographing his friends and family in Delhi and Kolkata wearing the cow mask, said he has been flooded with offers from women to pose for his project since he began posting the pictures on social media. He has taken about 30 photographs so far, and is raising money via crowdfunding to take the project across the country. But he has also been attacked on social media for the project, which some people see as belittling the cow. "I hope people get the message and realize we need to protect women with at least as much zeal as we protect cows," Ghosh said. — Reuters

ARMY ENDS DECADES-LONG OCCUPATION OF TAMIL PORT

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka's military said yesterday it has ended its occupation of a major fishing harbor after 27 years and allowed Tamil civilians in the former war zone to take back their land. Security forces withdrew from the Mayiliddy harbor in the Jaffna peninsula on Monday, bowing to the long-standing demands of fishermen and their families from the minority Tamil community who have been living in camps for displaced people since June 1990. "Accordingly, 187 families... are able to return to their original lands and resume their fishing livelihood after an absence of nearly 30 years," the army said in a statement.

Sri Lanka's 37-year-long Tamil separatist war ended in 2009, but government forces still maintain a large presence in the former conflict zones and keep a close watch on the local Tamil population. The military, which is domi-

nated by the island's Sinhalese majority, also runs hotels, transport services and other enterprises in competition with local Tamil businesses. The UN has been pressing Colombo to step up reconciliation efforts and reduce the military's presence in former war zones, including the Jaffna peninsula, the heartland of minority Tamils.

Tamil rebels fighting for a separate homeland for the ethnic minority were defeated in a final military push after decades of conflict. Sri Lanka faced international censure during the regime of former president Mahinda Rajapakse, who refused to investigate allegations that up to 40,000 minority Tamil civilians perished in the final stages of the war. His successor, Maithripala Sirisena, came to power after promising reconciliation and accountability for war-time atrocities, but rights groups say progress on both fronts has been slow. — AFP

NEWBORN LATEST VICTIM OF RIO DE JANEIRO'S SURGING VIOLENCE

RIO DE JANEIRO: Arthur was still inside his mother's womb when he became Rio de Janeiro's latest victim of gun violence. His mother, Claudineia dos Santos Melo, was almost nine months pregnant when she was hit by a stray bullet from a shootout in a Rio slum on June 30. During an emergency cesarean section doctors discovered that a bullet had also hit Arthur, damaging his lungs and spine.

Doctors say the mother is in stable, non-life threatening condition while her newborn is clinging to life in a case that has shocked Brazilians and underscored surging gun violence in Rio. "We had never seen this before," Rafael Lopes, the head surgeon at the Moacyr Rodrigues de Carmo hospital where Arthur was delivered, said during a press conference Monday. Doctors said it was a miracle Arthur was still alive, breathing with the help of machines and currently paraplegic, though they added it was too soon to say if he would remain so forever.

According to Fogo Cruzado, or "Crossfire," a free app created by Amnesty International Brazil, there have been an average of 13 shootings a day in the Rio metropolitan area over the past 11 months. Most of the shootings occur in hillside slums controlled by drug gangs. On the same day Melo was shot, a mother and daughter were killed in the Mangueira favela near the iconic Maracana stadium as police and criminals exchanged fire for over three hours.

Marlene Maria da Conceicao, 76, was shot in the doorway of her home. Her 42-year-old daughter, Ana Cristina da Conceicao, was also hit when she tried to help her mother. "The state government has abandoned the communities," said Mangueira community leader Washington Fortunato at the women's funeral. Last year, 920 people died during police raids or patrols in Rio state

according to its Public Security Institute. This year's figure is up by almost 60 percent over 2016. "I hope no family has to go through what we are going through because it is too painful," said Arthur's uncle, Walter de Melo, as he accompanied the speechless father to register the child. — AP



RIO DE JANEIRO: Claudineia Dos Santos Melo takes a selfie in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Claudineia dos Santos Melo was 35 weeks into her pregnancy when she was caught in a crossfire in the Duque de Caxias slum, of the metropolitan Rio de Janeiro area. According to doctors, a bullet entered the side of her hip perforating her uterus and critically injuring the baby inside her womb. —AP



AHMEDABAD: Indian pedestrians walk past the former tea stall of Damodardas Mulchand Modi, father of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and where Modi assisted his father in his spare time. — AFP

INDIAN PM'S TEA STALL TO BECOME TOURIST SHRINE

AHMEDABAD: Now it is rusting hulk in a small town railway station, but Indian authorities want the stall where Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi sold tea with his father to become a global tourist magnet. The nationalist leader spoke often during his election campaign of his humble roots as a "chai wallah's son" and the authorities plan a \$15 million project to spruce up those roots in his hometown of Vadnagar. "Looking into the historic importance of the stall, we have decided to modernize it," Culture Minister Mahesh Sharma said as he announced the project in the town in the western state of Gujarat.

"We want to restore the tea stall and develop

it as a tourist spot. This is being done to put Vadnagar on the world tourism map," Sharma said in comments reported yesterday. The tin sheet stall is currently unused and unloved on a Vadnagar railway station platform. Most of it is covered with rust. One of six children, Modi, now 66, is said to have spent much of his childhood helping his father Damodardas Mulchand Modi who died in 1989.

As well as using his "chai wallah's son" roots during the 2014 election campaign, Modi also held "discussions over tea" at campaign stops to take questions from the public. District collector Alok Pandey said there are seven or eight sites in Vadnagar, a town of 25,000 people, which will be

developed under the tourism plan. He said the culture and tourism ministry had given one billion rupees (\$15 million) "to develop Vadnagar as a tourist attraction".

"The work has already begun and most of it will be over by the end of September," Pandey said without saying what would happen to the stall. He conceded that the railway station was in a "very dilapidated condition." Vadnagar's Sarmishta Lake, a clock tower, Buddhist excavation sites and the railway station will be renovated to keep tourists interested, he said. A makeshift tea stall on another platform will also get a painting and cleaning, the official proudly said. —AFP

CHINA DEFENDS N KOREA EFFORTS, AFTER TRUMP OUTBURST

BEIJING: China defended its "relentless efforts" to resolve the North Korea nuclear issue yesterday following a Twitter outburst from US President Donald Trump, as Pyongyang claimed to have tested an intercontinental ballistic missile. The US president has piled pressure on China to use its diplomatic and economic clout over North Korea, its Communist ally, to persuade Pyongyang to stop its nuclear and missile activities. China's foreign ministry spokesman Geng Shuang told a press briefing that its contribution was well recognized-describing its role as "indispensable" after Trump called on China to take more action on North Korea.

"Perhaps China will put a heavy move on North Korea and end this nonsense

once and for all!" tweeted Trump, who will meet with Chinese President Xi Jinping at the G20 summit in Germany later this week. "China has made relentless efforts for the settlement of the Korean peninsula nuclear issue. China's contribution in this regard is well recognized, and its role is indispensable," Geng said. Geng said China was following developments closely after North Korean television announced that leader Kim Jong-Un had overseen the "landmark" test of a Hwasong-14 missile, which reached an altitude of 2,802 kilometers and flew 933 kilometers.

"China opposes the DPRK breaching UN Security Council resolutions to conduct launch activities," the spokesman said, using the initials of North Korea's offi-

cial name. "We hope all relevant parties can exercise restraint, avoid taking actions that may escalate tensions, and make efforts to bring the issue back to peaceful settlement through dialogue and consultation," Geng said. On a trip to Moscow, Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin agreed on Monday to "jointly push for a proper settlement of the (Korean) peninsula issue via dialogue and negotiation", according to the official Xinhua news agency.

'Negative factors'

China's response to Trump's tweet comes as tensions between the superpowers have resurfaced in recent days, breaking from a friendlier atmosphere that

emerged after Trump met Xi at the US leader's Florida resort in April. Trump warned about "the growing threat" posed by North Korea during a phone call with Xi on Monday, while the Chinese leader said Sino-US relations were hit by "negative factors".

China announced in February the suspension of coal imports from North Korea for the rest of the year, a crucial currency earner for Pyongyang. The total value of all imports from North Korea fell to \$721.5 million between January and May from \$773.6 million over the same period last year, according to Chinese official figures. But Trump has urged Beijing to do more and last week his administration took steps that infuriated the Asian superpower.

The US Treasury Department slapped sanctions on China's Bank of Dandong for allegedly laundering North Korean cash and it accused a Chinese shipping company of smuggling banned luxury goods into the country. The Trump administration also authorized a \$1.3 billion arms sales to Taiwan and placed China on a list of the world's worst human trafficking offenders. China has pressed for the resumption of six-party negotiations with North Korea that have been dormant since 2009. Beijing proposes a "dual-track approach" in which Pyongyang would suspend its nuclear and missile activities while the United States and South Korea would halt large-scale military exercises. —AFP

SUPREME COURT BACKS MARTIAL LAW IN SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES

DUTERTE WARNS OF A POTENTIAL 'SPILLOVER'

MANILA: The Philippines' Supreme Court yesterday endorsed President Rodrigo Duterte's enforcement of martial law across the southern third of the country, which he said was necessary to defeat Islamic State group-backed militants. Duterte imposed military rule across the insurgency-wracked region of Mindanao on May 23, hours after hundreds of gunmen waving black IS flags occupied parts of Marawi city and triggered

reporters, but he did not give reasons for their decision. Duterte stressed yesterday he had made the right decision, saying "martial law should have been declared a long time ago" when militants began bombings, kidnappings and beheadings across Mindanao. "For as long as there is one terrorist there in Marawi, this (threat) will not stop," he told reporters, warning of a potential "spillover" to other areas.

which has endured decades of deadly conflict involving communist and Muslim separatist rebels.

In their court petition, opposition lawmakers warned martial law would open the door to repression and atrocities seen during the 20-year rule of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos that ended with a "People Power" revolution in 1986.

During the Marcos dictatorship, thousands of suspected commu-

essary. "I urge you to remain steadfast and alert as martial law in Mindanao will remain in effect to counter the persistent threat of terrorism and insurgency," he told troops. As part of his martial law measures, Duterte allowed security forces to detain suspects for up to three days without prior court orders. The government has detained 66 people using these powers for their links to the Marawi conflict, including the parents of brothers who are key militant leaders. Duterte had repeatedly threatened to ignore the findings of the court if it ruled against him, vowing only to listen to the recommendations of the military.

"They are not soldiers. They do not know what is happening on the ground," Duterte said of the Supreme Court justices, as he also threatened to put martial law critics in jail. Renato Reyes, leader of the leftist Bayan party, issued a warning about the court ruling. "We feel that the court has now made it easier to declare martial law nationwide, it has provided the legal basis for extending martial law beyond 60 days," Reyes added. Under the constitution drawn up to prevent a repeat of Marcos-era abuses, the president is allowed to declare martial law only to prevent "invasion or rebellion".

It is limited initially to 60 days, and Duterte must get congressional approval to extend it. Philippine military chief General Eduardo Ano welcomed the court ruling while warning in a statement that "the mission is not yet done". "The (military) takes this as a vote of confidence that we are doing what is right and what is necessary for the restoration of the rule of law, peace and order in the whole island," he added. Maria Christina Yambot, counsel for one of the lawmakers who petitioned the court said they would file an appeal asking the tribunal to overturn its ruling, which she described as a "dangerous precedent". —AFP



PAMPANGA: Philippine troops stand at attention as Presidential choppers bearing Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte prepare to land for the 70th anniversary celebration of the Philippine Air Force at Clark Freeport Zone yesterday in Pampanga province, north of Manila. —AP

deadly clashes that are yet to end. Opposition lawmakers questioned why a region of 20 million people had to go under military rule when fighters just struck Marawi, urging the Supreme Court to strike it down for its "utter lack of sufficient factual basis". An overwhelming majority of the justices dismissed that petition, Supreme Court spokesman Theodore Te told

Militants continue to occupy parts of Marawi, the Islamic heartland of the mainly Catholic country, despite a US-backed military offensive there that has claimed more than 460 lives and displaced nearly 400,000 people. Duterte said when he declared martial law the militants had attacked Marawi as part of a plan to establish a province for IS in the southern Philippines,

nist and Muslim insurgents, as well as his critics, were jailed, tortured or killed, according to historians.

"Invasion or rebellion" When Duterte announced martial law, he praised Marcos's version while vowing his own would be "harsh". Duterte also warned martial law could be extended beyond 60 days and expanded across the country if he felt it nec-



BEIJING: Gay rights campaigners act out electric shock treatment to protest outside a court when the first court case in China involving so-called conversion therapy is held in Beijing, China. A gay man in central China has successfully sued a mental hospital over forced conversion therapy on June 26, 2017, in what activists are hailing as the first such victory in the country where the LGBT rights movement is gradually emerging from the fringes. —AP

MAN WINS LAWSUIT IN CHINA OVER FORCED GAY CONVERSION THERAPY

BEIJING: A gay man in central China has successfully sued a mental hospital over forced conversion therapy, in what activists are hailing as the first such victory in a country where the LGBT rights movement is gradually emerging from the fringes. A court in Zhumadian in Henan province ordered a city mental hospital to publish a public apology in local newspapers and pay the 38-year-old man 5,000 yuan (\$735) in compensation, according to a copy of the June 26 judgment seen by The Associated Press.

The man, surnamed Yu, had been forcibly admitted to the institution in 2015 by his wife and relatives and diagnosed with "sexual preference disorder," court documents show. He was forced to take medicine and receive injections before finally walking free after 19 days. In its relatively narrow ruling, the court did not weigh in on the practice of gay conversion therapy or account for Yu's sexual orientation.

The court said forcing Yu into a mental institution if he did not pose a danger to himself or others amounted to "infringing on the plaintiff's right to individual freedom." China removed homosexuality from its list of recognized mental illnesses more than 15 years ago but stories are rife of

families admitting their relatives for conversion therapy. Gay rights activists say the case marks the first victory against a public mental institution for compulsory therapy against a patient's will.

In 2014, a Beijing man named Peng Yanhui checked himself into a private conversion clinic to investigate its advertised electroshock treatments. Peng, a gay rights activist who goes by Yanzi, then sued the clinic and won a \$500 decision from a Beijing court for the suffering he endured in treatment. The recent ruling in Zhumadian "confirmed the illegality of forced treatments," Peng told the AP. "It's time for China to enact laws to prohibit forced gay conversion therapy."

The Zhumadian mental hospital did not immediately provide comment when reached by phone. While few Chinese have religious objections to homosexuality and homophobic violence is very rare, the country's authoritarian politics and conservative society's preference for marriage and childbearing create subtle barriers that keep most gays in the closet. Vibrant gay scenes do exist in large cities including Shanghai, which has an annual gay pride parade, and depictions of same-sex relationships are increasingly seen in Chinese films and television. —AP

N KOREA'S BALLISTIC MISSILE CAPABILITY

SEOUL: North Korea declared yesterday that the country had finally achieved its dream of building an intercontinental ballistic missile, saying it would "fundamentally put an end to the US nuclear war threat and blackmail". The Hwasong-14 ICBM reached an altitude of about 2,802 kilometers (1,741 miles) and flew 933 kilometers for 39 minutes before hitting a target area on the sea off the east coast, the North said. Washington, Japan and South Korea gave similar figures, and US experts said the trajectory implied the device could reach Alaska.

Pyongyang is subject to multiple sets of United Nations sanctions over its atomic and missile programs, which it says it needs to protect itself against a possible invasion. It regularly issues bloodcurdling threats against its "imperialist enemy" Washington, and has long sought a rocket capable of delivering a warhead to the continental United States. The progress has accelerated especially after young leader Kim Jong-Un took power following the death of his father, longtime ruler Kim Jong-Il, in 2011. The latest launch potentially

forces a recalculation of the threat it poses. Here are five key questions on the issue.

Is this really an ICBM?

While South Korean and US armies confirmed some details of yesterday's launch, they did not immediately describe it as an ICBM. The US Pacific Command called it a "land-based, intermediate range" missile, Moscow described it as "medium range" Russian news agencies reported. But South Korean President Moon Jae-In said Seoul was analyzing the result of the test "with a possibility of an ICBM in mind". David Wright, of the Union of Concerned Scientists, wrote on the organization's blog that the available details suggested a range of 6,700 kilometers, which would allow it to "reach all of Alaska".

What is difference?

The mere fact that the North has developed this sort of weapon would mark a significant milestone. Pyongyang has staged five atomic tests-including two

last year-with the regime stepping up efforts to produce a nuclear warhead small enough to fit into a missile. With the North's threat growing significantly, possession of an ICBM would give Pyongyang key leverage to seek to squeeze more concessions from the US in potential future negotiations. However it may still take some time before the North could reliably deploy multiple units of the missile, said Lee Chun-Keun, a researcher at Science and Technology Policy Institute in Seoul.

The international community

The North is already under a thick layer of United Nations and bilateral sanctions over its past missile and nuclear tests conducted in violation of UN resolutions. So the option for the UN to take further action may be limited-a point echoed by former US President Barack Obama on Monday. Obama, speaking in a Seoul political forum, said the North was "already so isolated" from global commerce and finance that it was difficult for outside sanctions to have a real impact.

"In terms of economic pressure... you squeeze and squeeze and squeeze, but they are not as dependent on global interactions and the government is not accountable to its people in any way," he said. As such, many of the strategies the US used to bring other nations, most prominently Iran, to negotiating tables to dismantle nuclear weapons "are less available" on the North, he said. One potential option would be punishing not only the North but also firms dealing with the country-so-called "secondary sanctions" that could hit firms in China, the North's top trading partner.

The Trump factor

US President Donald Trump earlier dismissed the prospect of an ICBM from the North reaching the US mainland, tweeting "It won't happen!" He took to Twitter to slam Kim Jong-Un over the latest missile launch. "Does this guy have anything better to do with his life?" he tweeted yesterday. Tension has been high since Trump took power, especially after he suggested possible military option against the North. But recently US officials have suggested such actions-which could see Seoul devastated by a Northern response-remain a last resort. Could China save the day? Talks of punishing Pyongyang over its provocations often boil down to what China can do as the North's economic lifeline-a point repeated by Trump yesterday. "Perhaps China will put a heavy move on North Korea and end this nonsense once and for all!" he tweeted. —AFP



This image shows North Korea leader Kim Jung Un (center) watching the launch of a Hwasong-14 intercontinental ballistic missile, ICBM, in North Korea's northwest. —AP



MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin (left) shakes hands with Chinese President Xi Jinping during a meeting in the Kremlin, in Moscow yesterday. Chinese President is on a two-day official visit in Moscow. —AP

PUTIN, XI TALKING NORTH KOREA, TRADE AT KREMLIN

MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese leader Xi Jinping held formal talks yesterday against a backdrop of mounting tensions over North Korea ahead of G20 summit talks with Donald Trump. The meeting in Moscow came as North Korea claimed the launch of its first inter-continental ballistic missile, and US President Trump urged China to "end this nonsense once and for all".

Chinese state news agency Xinhua reported Putin and Xi "agreed to jointly push for a proper settlement of the peninsula issue via dialogue and negotiation" at a closed Kremlin meeting Monday evening on the eve of the official talks. Beijing-North Korea's closest diplomatic ally-and Moscow have called repeatedly for calm on all sides, but Trump has warned Washington's patience with Pyongyang is nearing an end.

Xi and Putin once again slammed the US THAAD missile system installed in South Korea to protect against the North, Xinhua said. Both leaders argue that it

threatens the strategic balance in the region. The Kremlin gave no details on what was discussed at the "informal" tete-a-tete Monday. While the latest tensions over North Korea figured high on the agenda the main focus of the Putin-Xi meeting was set to remain boosting growing trade and political ties between the two increasingly close partners.

The giant neighbors are expected to oversee the inking of a raft of deals worth billions of dollars as Moscow continues a pivot towards China it has ramped up since ties with the West slumped over Ukraine. Ahead of his arrival in Moscow Xi said that relations with Russia were currently enjoying their "best time in history" as he and Putin have struck up a close relationship. The Kremlin strongman is set to present Xi with a prestigious Russian state award at the Kremlin. After their meeting in Moscow the two leaders are set to head to the G20 summit in Hamburg where they will come face-to-face with Trump, a first meeting for Putin with the US president. —AFP

AMIR SENDS LETTER TO QATAR LEADER...

Continued from Page 1

He refused to give any further details yesterday, but said Doha was looking for a solution to the month-long crisis based on dialogue. "The state of Qatar has adopted a very constructive attitude since the beginning of the crisis. We are trying to act mature and discuss the matter."

The four countries cut diplomatic and transport links with Qatar a month ago and have suggested further sanctions could be imposed if Doha does not comply. Foreign ministers from the four countries are to meet in Egypt today to discuss the diplomatic crisis, the worst to hit the region in years. Qatar, which denies any support for extremists, has said it will not bow to pressure and that the demands seem designed to be rejected.

The country is the world's leading producer of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) and yesterday the head of state-owned Qatar Petroleum said it was planning a significant production increase over the next several years. Saad Sherida Al-Kaabi told a press conference that the emirate intends to be producing 100 million tonnes of natural gas a year by 2024, up 30 percent from current levels. "This new project will strengthen Qatar's leading position," Kaabi said. "We will remain the leader of LNG for a very long time."

Some officials have suggested if Qatar does not cooperate Riyadh and its allies could tell foreign companies to choose between doing business with them or with Doha. Kaabi said Qatar wanted the production increase to be carried out through a joint venture with international companies but that Doha could go it alone if necessary. "We have absolutely no fear of having the embargo in place," he said. "If there are no companies willing to work with us we will go to 100 million (tonnes), 100 percent."

Riyadh and its allies have also accused Doha of being too close to their regional arch-rival Iran, which shares an enormous gas field with Qatar in the Gulf. The crisis has raised concerns of growing instability in the region, home to some of the world's largest energy exporters and key Western allies who host US military bases. Qatar's gas riches have transformed it in recent years into one of the world's wealthiest countries, a major international investor and a regional player that will host the 2022 football World Cup. In 1997, when its

first shipment of LNG sailed to Japan, Qatar's exports were valued at around \$5 billion. That figure had reached \$125 billion by 2014, according to trade data site the Observatory of Economic Complexity.

Qatar also does not have any current plans to stop exporting gas to the UAE, Kaabi added, but he said he would not rule it out if the crisis continued. "Of course if there were to be an additional escalation, I cannot say that we will never stop the gas," he said. "This is a decision which would not only be made by Qatar Petroleum but also for the government, and of course depends on the situation in the country." Qatar currently sends about 2 billion cu ft (56 million cu m) of natural gas a day to the UAE through the undersea Dolphin Energy pipeline, providing about a third of that country's needs. About 200 million cu ft of that goes onto Oman.

With low production costs and LNG facilities closer to buyers in Europe and Asia, the Qatari move means US producers could struggle to sell their LNG competitively and projects still needing finance could struggle to find investors. The glut has already driven down prices. Asian spot LNG prices LNG-AS have fallen more than 40 percent this year to \$5.50 per mmbtu and by 70 percent from peaks in 2014. So far, the majority of LNG is supplied via long-term contracts between producers and users which allow little flexibility and in many cases also prevent importers from reselling cargoes. With supplies far outpacing demand, analysts expect more and more LNG to be freely traded. Many producers have already started to offer contracts without resale or destination restrictions.

Qatar has pursued a more independent foreign policy than many of its neighbors, who tend to follow the lead of regional powerhouse Saudi Arabia. UAE Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al-Nahyan said yesterday it was "premature" to discuss what further action might be taken against Qatar. Any measures that are taken will be "within the framework of international law", Sheikh Abdullah said at a press conference in Abu Dhabi with Gabriel, who was on a regional tour. "Any independent state has the right to take measures against any party," Sheikh Abdullah said, urging Doha to listen to "the voice of reason and wisdom". — Agencies



People ride a rollercoaster at dusk at Worlds of Fun amusement park on Monday in Kansas City, Montana. — AP

FIRST ISRAEL VISIT BY INDIAN PM

Continued from Page 1

the visit as a major diplomatic victory. Israeli analysts have noted that Modi is not scheduled to travel to Ramallah to meet Palestinian leaders during his three-day stay, as is common for visiting dignitaries. Modi did however meet Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas in New Delhi in May. India is the world's biggest importer of defense equipment, and Israel has become one of its major suppliers.

Israeli media have reported that the two countries sign defense deals averaging more than \$1 billion a year. In April, state-owned Israel Aerospace Industries said India would buy nearly \$2 billion worth of weapons technology, making it the military exporting giant's largest ever defense contract. The deal will see IAI provide India with an

advanced defense system of medium-range surface-to-air missiles, launchers and communications technology.

Modi and Netanyahu also hope to build on cooperation in areas including water and agriculture technology, sectors where Israel has excelled. India has traditionally voiced its support for Palestinian statehood, long shunning ties with Israel. But the frost has thawed in recent years, with India seeking closer defense ties - particularly as it moves away from relying on traditional ally Russia for its military hardware. Modi's visit marks 25 years since the two countries established diplomatic relations.

The Hindu nationalist makes the trip after his visit last week to Washington, where he and US President Donald Trump embraced each other as friends, vowing to work more closely on combat-

ting terrorism, the war in Afghanistan and defense cooperation. While ties with some US allies have been strained by Trump's complaints that Washington has been the loser in trade agreements, Modi appeared sensitive to his host's emphasis on transactional diplomacy.

Modi may find similar common ground with Netanyahu, Israel's longtime right-wing prime minister who hosted Trump in May. India is currently the world's fastest growing major economy, a status that Modi is hoping to cement by drawing in more foreign investment. He has sought to do that in part by encouraging manufacturers to do business in Asia's third-largest economy. Israel's defense deals have included components that will be assembled in India. "On this visit, your 'make in India' initiative meets my 'make with India' policy," Netanyahu said at the airport ceremony. — AFP

NORTH KOREA TESTS FIRST ICBM

Continued from Page 1

The broadcaster showed his handwritten order to carry out the launch, and pictures of him grinning in celebration, clenching his fist. The rocket was "a very powerful ICBM that can strike any place in the world", the announcer said, and "a major breakthrough in the history of our republic". The North's Academy of Defense Science, which developed the missile, said it reached an altitude of 2,802 km and flew 933 km, calling it the "final gate to rounding off the state nuclear force".

There are still doubts whether the North can miniaturize a nuclear weapon sufficiently to fit it onto a missile nose cone, or if it has mastered the technology needed for it to survive the difficult re-entry into the Earth's atmosphere. But it has made great progress in its missile capabilities since Kim came to power. He has overseen three nuclear tests and multiple rocket launches. In response to the launch but before the announcement, Trump asked on Twitter: "Does this guy have anything better to do with his life?" The United Nations has imposed multiple sets of

sanctions on Pyongyang, which retorts that it needs nuclear arms to defend itself against the threat of invasion.

US Pacific Command confirmed the test and said it was a land-based, intermediate range missile that flew for 37 minutes before splashing down in the Sea of Japan, adding the launch did not pose a threat to North America. Moscow's defense ministry called it medium-range. But Tokyo - in whose exclusive economic zone it came down - estimated the maximum altitude to have "greatly exceeded" 2,500 kilometres, prompting arms control specialist Jeffrey Lewis to respond on Twitter: "That's it. It's an ICBM. An ICBM that can hit Anchorage not San Francisco, but still."

David Wright, of the Union of Concerned Scientists, wrote on the organization's all-things-nuclear blog that the available figures implied the missile had "a maximum range of roughly 6,700 km on a standard trajectory". "That range would not be enough to reach the lower 48 states or the large islands of Hawaii, but would allow it to reach all of Alaska." Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe told reporters: "This

launch clearly shows that the threat has grown." The US, Japan and South Korea will hold a summit on the issue on the sidelines of this week's G20 meeting, he added. "Also I will encourage President Xi Jinping and President Putin to take more constructive measures." South Korea's President Moon Jae-In warned the North against crossing "the bridge of no return".

Washington, South Korea's security guarantor, has more than 28,000 troops in the country to defend it from its communist neighbor. Fears of conflict reached a peak earlier this year as the Trump administration suggested military action was an option under consideration. There has also been anger in the United States over the death of Otto Warmbier, an American student detained in North Korea for around 18 months before he was returned home in a coma in June. Trump has been pinning his hopes on China - North Korea's main diplomatic ally - to pressure Pyongyang. Last week he declared that Beijing's efforts had failed, but returned to the idea on Twitter following the launch: "Perhaps China will put a heavy move on North Korea and end this nonsense once and for all!" — AFP

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Focus

QATAR FINDS WAY ROUND EMBARGO

Nearly a month since Qatar was isolated by its Gulf neighbors, residents of the emirate have learned to adapt to the daily realities of living with the embargo. They buy vegetables and milk that come from Iran and Turkey, complain about price increases for staples while those travelling abroad face longer-than-usual flights as most neighboring countries have closed their airspace to Qatar Airways. "The government has found alternatives and there is no problem (of shortages)... despite a slight price increase we can cope," says Mohammed Al-Chib, shopping at a Doha supermarket.

But he admits he and his family have had to make cutbacks. "We've learned a lesson and we consume less." On June 5, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt cut diplomatic ties with Qatar and moved swiftly to isolate Doha, accusing Doha of supporting extremism. Riyadh and its supporters severed air and sea links with Qatar - which denied the allegations against it - and closed its only land border, cutting off vital routes for imports including food.

In the shock of the first days of the crisis, there was panic-buying and a very real fear of food shortages. These were disproved and Qatar has far proved more than able to cope with the crisis, the worst to hit the region in decades. Supermarket shelves are full again and no one is going hungry just yet. "The shops are well-supplied but prices have increased a bit," says Maya, a Lebanese expat shopping in Doha.

Perhaps that is not surprising. Qatar is after all one of the world's wealthiest countries, transformed in recent years thanks to its much sought after energy riches, especially gas. Doha's defiance - and its ability to adapt - has no doubt annoyed some of its rivals. Though it may be largely a diplomatic crisis, some impacts are filtering their way through to life on the ground.

Some residents have grumbled about shortages, not only of their favorite foods, but also less predictable items such as replacement car windscreens. Prices are definitely a problem. "The market is well-supplied but prices have increased a bit," added Maya. One Indian resident who runs a small stall, said: "After the border closures, prices have jumped especially for rocket, parsley and chives." Migrant laborers have told of their fears about food price increases and how it will affect how much money they can send home.

'Nightmare'

Although it can seem like a distant crisis, the embargo does weigh on the daily lives of the country's 2.7 million, almost 90 percent of them foreigners. "The blockade is a nightmare and we hope there will be a quick end," added Maya. One very real consequence, especially during the summer, has been the impact on those trying to fly out of the country for holidays. With the abolition of some routes by the Gulf countries, travelling has become a headache. One Jordanian national complained he had "spent six hours in transit" at Muscat airport for a flight from Amman to Doha, via Oman, because of the flight restrictions imposed by the embargo.

And there has also been the human cost. The decision of other Gulf countries to force home Qataris living on their territory and recalling their own nationals from Qatar has had a real impact. More than 13,300 people were "directly affected," says the Qatari National Human Rights Committee. In one reported case, a Qatari woman was forced to leave the United Arab Emirates where she lived with her husband and child. When she arrived at the airport with her baby, she was told that he could not fly with her because he is an Emirati national.

And then there is the case of Zayed Al-Marri. Human Rights Watch says he has been blocked on the Saudi side of the land border it shares with Qatar since June 17, where temperatures reach daily 45 degrees Celsius. Saudi Arabia claims he is a Qatari, but Doha insists Marri was stripped of his citizenship in the 1990s. HRW has urged Qatar to let him in to the country. — AFP



LAWYERS RISK DANGER TO HELP WOMEN

Three years ago Maliha, 24, was sitting in a park in western Afghanistan with the man she thought was the love of her life. The pair were planning a future together, but that future was cut short in a brutal instant. Suddenly, police officers barged into the park in the city of Herat and arrested the couple. Maliha was accused of maintaining an illicit relationship, which in the eyes of Islamic law is a criminal act. At the police station, her companion called his family, bribed the police and disassociated himself from her.

"He deserted me like he never knew me," said Maliha said. "They informed my family about the incident and my involvement with a man. My father disowned me immediately and threatened to kill me if I ever approached him." Maliha was convicted of being a prostitute and spent more than three years in a women's prison, sharing a cell with women convicted on similar charges. Wardens at the prison came to the cell and harassed, beat and sexually assaulted the women, she said.

"We were branded as cheap and filthy women. Some nights I heard girls shouting...the prison officers were taking them out and sexually abusing them," she said. "I was so scared that I hardly ever bathed as it could attract attention towards me." Maliha herself was abused one day when a man arrived claiming to be a lawyer. She was shown into a room with him where he tried to rape her. She was badly

beaten when she resisted. Her suffering continued until a woman lawyer and women's rights activist, Mahdis Doost, stepped into help her. Afghanistan is one of the most dangerous countries to be a woman or girl in, and a shortage of female police officers and lawyers means women rarely report abuse, rights groups say. Research indicates that more than eight in 10 women in Afghanistan have been sexually, physically or psychologically abused, but only a few thousand cases are reported each year.

If an unmarried woman is caught alone with a man who is not her relative, she can be accused, like Maliha, of being a prostitute. A man and woman in Herat province, accused of being in an illicit relationship, were captured by a mob and shot in an extra-judicial killing, Herat's police spokesman said on Monday.

Patriarchal

When women do report abuse or are arrested themselves, they find themselves at the mercy of Afghanistan's patriarchal judicial system, shaped by sharia law, women's rights campaigners say. "In many court meetings, I could easily defend my client but the judge didn't let the proceedings be completed. The atmosphere was heavily antagonistic and many times I was called a whore or abused - just because of my choice of clients," Doost, 26, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

Afghanistan's roughly 500 registered

women lawyers - mostly confined to the big cities of Kabul, Mazar-i-Sharif and Herat, undertake some of the most dangerous jobs in Afghan society. They help women fleeing domestic violence and forced marriage. Divorce still remains taboo in Afghan society and if a woman wants to get a divorce lawfully, she has to navigate the male-dominated judicial system. There is a common phrase in Afghanistan which says "a girl should come to her in-laws in a white dress and leave them in a white shroud," said Fereshta Karimi, another women lawyer working in Herat.

Among Afghanistan's women lawyers, only a few actually dare to practice in court. Doost, who represented Maliha, is one of them. "When I took Maliha's case, she had been held in prison for nearly three years without a single appearance in court and no lawyer. I provided evidence that she was arrested in a public place and the crime (sex with a man) didn't happen and there were no witnesses for that," Doost said by phone. "She had already spent more time than she should in prison for a crime she did not commit. The judge would not cooperate. That is why it took eight months for me to release Maliha."

Danger

Abdul Qadir Rahimi, head of the Human Rights Commission of Afghanistan, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation they were aware of abuse of women by the police and judicial authorities. "No specific report about

rape or sexual exploitation (of women in detention) has surfaced yet, but we cannot deny such incidents occur as the system and police are corrupt in this country," he said.

There are around 100 women lawyers in Herat working under the Afghanistan Independent Bar Association (AIBA), Aziz Rafi, the head of the AIBA told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. But most of them are working as advisors and do not appear in court because of the dangers. Fereshta Karimi has worked on more than 30 women's cases over the last six years. "As a married woman, every day I invite unwanted danger to my family with the nature of my job," she said. "Sometimes clients' associates come to my door to discuss the intricacy of a case, which makes my family worried and upset. Many times my husband has tried to stop me from working and I have to struggle every day to continue my job as a lawyer," she said.

For women like Maliha, rejected by their own families, women lawyers have been their only hope. Maliha is now living secretly with her widowed aunt. Because of her conviction, she can't resume her studies, get a job or move freely in society. Her male relatives have threatened to kill her. Doost has promised to send her to the capital Kabul and find her a job there. "It may be a place where I can resume my life among unknown people," Maliha said. "My aunt keeps saying me she can't hide me for long and I am scared for my life if my brother finds me." — Reuters

ABE VULNERABLE AFTER DISMAL POLL SHOWING

A stunning defeat for Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's ruling party at the hands of a novice political group in the capital has revealed the fragility of his support and shown that voters can desert him - if there is a credible alternative. Abe surged back to power in 2012, pledging to revive the stale economy and bolster defense. He has led his ruling bloc to three more landslide victories in national polls since then.

But those victories were less robust than met the eye, since record or near-record low voter turnout allowed Abe's Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) to rack up seats with support from a quarter or less of eligible voters. On Sunday, the party got a chilling glimpse of just how vulnerable it could be if a viable opposition force emerges to attract unhappy voters. That reminder could encourage rivals in Abe's own party to challenge him in a leadership race next year if his slumping poll ratings fail to recover.

Popular Governor Yuriko Koike's novice Tokyo Citizens First party and its allies - including the LDP's national-level coalition partner - won a landslide victory, taking 79 seats in Sunday's election for the 127-member Tokyo Metropolitan assembly. The LDP got 23 seats, its worst ever result in the capital and less than half its pre-vote presence.

The vote was a referendum on the first year in office of Koike, a media-savvy former LDP lawmaker and defense minister who defied the party's old boy network to run on a reformist platform and become the first female governor of the metropolis. But it was also a stinging rebuke to Abe's administration, battered by suspicions of scandal over favoritism for a friend's business and verbal gaffes by his cabinet ministers. Worse than the scandals and missteps, however, was the perception among many voters that Abe and his

powerful Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga have grown haughty and dismissive of criticism given the ruling bloc's super-majorities in both houses of parliament, a weak and fragmented opposition and no serious challengers in his party.

"Arrogance, complacency, fragility" summed up a headline in the Nikkei business daily on Tuesday, ingredients politicians and pundits agreed were key causes of the LDP defeat. "It doesn't have anything to do with policy," said Gerry Curtis, professor emeritus at New York's Columbia University. "It's all about the arrogance of Abe and Suga and the sense that they are riding roughshod ... to break unstated rules of the game."

'Reflecting Deeply'

Abe heads to Hamburg on Wednesday for a Group of 20 summit where leaders are likely to discuss North Korea's nuclear and missile programs - a topic that could play to Abe's strengths at home, where he is known for his tough line towards Pyongyang. North Korea said yesterday it had successfully test-launched an intercontinental ballistic missile that could strike anywhere in the world. In an interview with the Mainichi newspaper published on Tuesday,

Abe said he would "reflect deeply" on the Tokyo poll results.

But he also said there would be no change to his plan to have the LDP present a proposal to revise the post-war, pacifist constitution to an extra session of parliament in the autumn to meet his target of amending the US-drafted charter by 2020. Trying to stick to that timetable for what would be a deeply divisive amendment, however, could be risky, since even many who support the change don't see it as an urgent priority. Abe's conservative agenda of restoring traditional values and loosening constraints on the military centers on revising the constitution. But the public are deeply split on the proposal, which would antagonize China and South Korea.

New Party?

The huge win for Koike's novice party has fanned speculation that her group will go national in a general election that must be held by late 2018, perhaps joining with disaffected lawmakers from the struggling opposition Democratic Party. The Democrats, who have had little success in repairing their image after a rocky three-year reign ended in 2012, also fared badly in the Tokyo poll, taking only five seats.

A new party could set up Koike for a run at the nation's top job, but her allies have said she's unlikely to quit as governor to return to parliament before the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. In the meantime, with much of Abe's previous clout over his party based on his record of leading it to election wins, the dismal Tokyo showing could well encourage rivals to challenge his bid for a third term as LDP leader from Sept 2018.

Victory in that party poll would put Abe on track to become Japan's longest-serving leader, eclipsing early 20th Century premier Taro Katsura who logged nearly eight years in power. Among those floated as possible challengers are former Defence Minister Shigeru Ishida, who has been focusing on ways to revitalize Japan's depopulated rural regions, and Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida, considered more dovish than Abe. "As politicians realize that Abe is vulnerable, that will inspire them to do something," Curtis said. "He'll probably survive, but even so, I don't think he will get much done in terms of policy." — Reuters

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SHIN GETS NOD AS NEW SOUTH KOREA COACH

SEOUL: Former under-20 boss Shin Tae-Yong was given the task of rescuing South Korea's teetering World Cup qualifying campaign when he was named as the country's new national team boss yesterday. Shin replaces Uli Stielike, 62, South Korea's longest-serving coach, who was axed last month after a shock defeat to Qatar left them in danger of missing direct qualification to Russia 2018. South Korea are seeking to reach their ninth consecutive World Cup, a run which includes making the semi-finals on home soil in 2002. The Taeguk Warriors' 3-2 defeat to Qatar—the first in 32 years against that country—followed earlier losses to China and Iran and left them clinging to the last direct qualifying spot in Group A with two games to go. Shin, 46, is a former midfielder for Seongnam Ilhwa Chunma and Brisbane Roar, where he had a brief stint as assistant coach before graduating to become manager of the K-League Classic club in 2010. He has a reputation as a troubleshooter and led the national U23s ahead of the 2016 Rio Olympics, after his predecessor left in 2015 with cancer. —AFP



KENYA IN FRANTIC PREP FOR WORLD U-18 CHAMPS

NAIROBI: Kenya is in the midst of a frantic eleventh hour effort to be ready to stage the IAAF World under-18 athletics championship next week. No less than 1,400 athletes from 130 countries are expected to arrive in Nairobi for the four-day competition, which is the final meet of the World U18 competition. Yesterday the athletes' village at Kenyatta University was declared ready, but the organising committee acknowledged a lot of work still needed to be done to complete the main competition venue, the Moi International Sports Centre in Kasarani, Nairobi. "We are undergoing a big test as the organising committee, and as the people of Kenya, to make sure we stage the best athletics championships ever," the World U18 Championship chief executive officer Mwangi Muthee said. "There is a lot of clean-up work to be done to the running track, which needs to be lane-marked, and the workers are busy laying on the tartan [all weather surface] on the warm-up track. But we hope to be ready when the athletes begin to have the feel of the stadium on Saturday." —AFP

LEJEUNE SIGNS FOR NEWCASTLE

LONDON: French defender Florian Lejeune has signed a five-year deal to join Newcastle United, the Premier League club said yesterday. The 26-year-old central defender from La Liga club Eibar is Magpies manager Rafael Benitez's second summer signing, for a reported 8.7 million pounds (9.9 million euros). Earlier in the summer Benitez signed Chelsea winger Christian Atsu, who helped Newcastle win promotion back to the Premier League during a loan spell last season. Lejeune moves to Newcastle after a long spell in Spain that started with Villarreal in 2011. He was signed by Manchester City during the summer of 2015 but was immediately loaned out to Girona, before making a permanent switch to Eibar 12 months later. Said Benitez: "He has progressed a lot as a player in the last few years and I know he will give us something different at the back—he is good with both feet, he's big and he's good in the air also." —AFP



MCILROY STROKES MATSUYAMA AHEAD OF IRISH OPEN

PORTSTEWART: Rory McIlroy has singled out world number two Hideki Matsuyama for special praise ahead of this week's Irish Open at Portstewart.

Matsuyama is the highest ranked player in this Irish field and two spots higher than McIlroy, who was bumped back to number three by the Japanese star after the US Open and then to number four by Jordan Spieth, who climbed to number three on the back of his dramatic play-off victory in last month's Travelers Championship.

Matsuyama, the highest-placed Japanese golfer in the history of the world rankings, is making his debut in the \$7 million event as well as his first ever journey to Ireland. Strangely, his image is missing from any of the promotional banners and posters lining the streets of the virtual twin towns of Portstewart and Portrush.

However, that has not diminished McIlroy's glowing respect for Matsuyama.

"When you look at what he has achieved, not just last year and already this year, but over the past few years it is impressive how he goes about his business," said McIlroy. "He is a very hard worker and anytime you are on the practice range he always seems to always be there and it is the same scenario when you are on the practice putting green."

VERY IMPRESSIVE

"He is very diligent around his practice as he works very hard at it. The thing I also like about Hideki is that he is aggressive as you only have to look at some of the shots he hits and the pins he will take in during competition."

"So, all aspects of his game are very strong and he is very impressive." As tour-

nament host, Northern Ireland's McIlroy has worked hard behind the scenes for three years now twisting the arm of his fellow PGA Tour colleagues in seeking their attendance at the Irish Open but he seemed to have little trouble encouraging the recent runner-up in the US Open.

"I do not speak Japanese all that well but then I heard he was interested in playing some links golf ahead of The Open, so when I heard that we got in touch with his management team saying that would love to have him compete at Portstewart and we would do anything to help in getting him to the tournament," said McIlroy.

"He is the second-best player in the world right now and went so close a few weeks back to winning the US Open. "When he got himself into contention at Erin Hills I was sort of pulling for him as it would have been great to have a reigning Major champion in the Irish Open field."

Matsuyama has won four times on the PGA Tour including this year's successful defence of the Phoenix Open.

It was the end of last year Matsuyama stamped his enormous potential winning four of five events on his home Japan Tour starting with a first Japan Open title.

A week after capturing the Japan Open he won the WGC HSBC Champions in Shanghai to move to number six in the world. Matsuyama then stormed to a seven stroke success in the Taiheiyo Masters.

In early December he went on to claim the Tiger Woods hosted Hero World Challenge in the Bahamas for a fourth victory in five starts. Matsuyama will contest the opening two rounds of the Irish Open in the company of McIlroy and Spain world number 11 Jon Rahm. —AFP

SPIETH WANTS REPUTATION AS BEING A GOOD CLOSER

CROMWELL: The club throw. The body bump.

Those are the indelible images from Jordan Spieth's victory in the Traveler's Championship, where he holed a 60-foot bunker shot in a playoff to defeat Daniel Berger and capture his 10th title on the PGA Tour a month before his 24th birthday.

Not to be overlooked was a more serene snapshot - Spieth posing with the trophy.

It was the most comfortable he looked all day, even though he never trailed. This did not appear to be a case of enjoying the journey. "I wanted the holes to go by quickly," Spieth said. "That's the only time I could say that about my wins."

At the heart of such uneasiness was the uncertainty with his putting stroke on the greens of the TPC River Highlands. A normal putting round, at least by his standards, and there would have been no drama, no playoff and no celebration that ended with Spieth slinging his sand wedge with his left hand (he's a natural southpaw), running out of the bunker and colliding with caddie Michael Greller.

The fact that Spieth had the 54-hole lead by one shot only exacerbated the tension he felt on the back nine. At stake was more than just a victory, but the chance to build on his reputation as a closer. That's what Tiger Woods did better than anyone else. Winning is winning. Comebacks are cool. But great players take pride in closing.

"I take more pride in it because I feel totally different," Spieth said. "I'm a lot more uncomfortable in the closing scenario, playing with the lead. It's more uncomfortable and makes it more challenging. The expectation is as long as I play the same as these guys, I win. If I'm not leading and I don't win, then it wasn't my day."

Don't get the idea Spieth is a nervous

wreck when leading a tournament. He talks about chasing a ghost when he has the lead, which is a target score, and that can be more difficult than having to make up a deficit. "By uncomfortable, I don't mean that in a negative way," he said. "I mean that in an added, rapid heart rate from when you wake up, which is uncomfortable. But I don't want that to seem negative, because that's the position to be in." He already has been there 13 times.

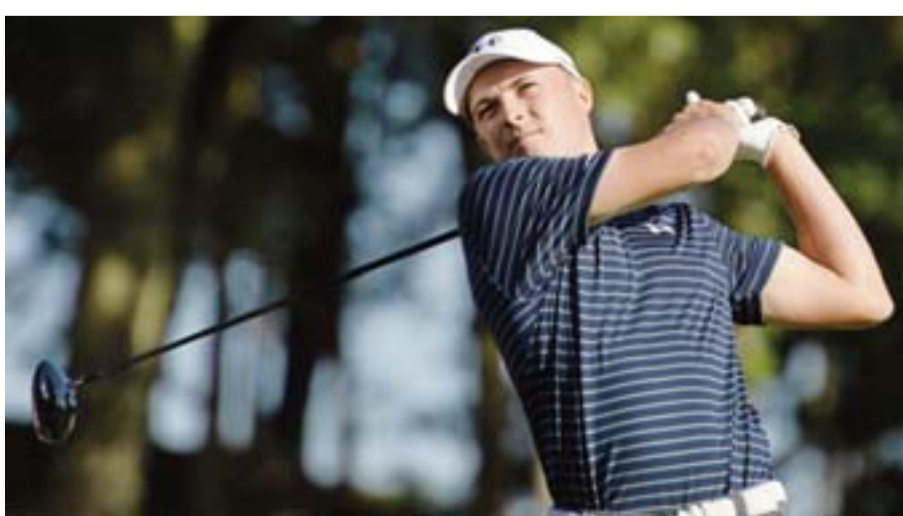
Spieth isn't big on comparisons with anybody, least of all Woods. That's a good thing when it comes to closing, because there is no comparison.

Woods won at a 92 percent clip (57-5) when he had at least a share of the lead going into the final round on the PGA Tour. That includes a 3-1 mark for Match Play, which effectively is the same as being tied for the lead with one round to play.

With his victory at Hartford, Spieth improved to 8-5. And what would he call that? "A phenomenal rate," he said. "I think 50 percent is an awesome rate - 50 percent is fantastic."

Spieth knows all about Woods and his records, and many of them would seem to be out of reach. What made him curious were the closing marks of other Hall of Fame players, such as Phil Mickelson, Ernie Els and Vijay Singh.

It would make him feel better about his own mark. Mickelson was 24-14 when he had at least a share of the lead going into the final round, a rate of 63 percent. Singh was 18-14 (56 percent), which included a streak of converting 11 straight times over three years (2002-04) when the big Fijian was at the top of his game. Els had the best rate (75 percent) with the fewest opportunities of those three. His record is 12-4, though that's only on the PGA Tour. —AP



CROMWELL: In a Sunday, June 25, 2017 file photo, Jordan Spieth hits off the 18th tee during a playoff in the final round of the Travelers Championship golf tournament, in Cromwell, Conn. —AP



Jason Kokrak

GOLF

KOKRAK SEIZES FIVE-SHOT LEAD, JOHNSON LURKING

TEXAS: American Jason Kokrak fired a flawless eight-under-par 62 to seize a commanding five-stroke lead midway through the AT&T Byron Nelson in Irving, Texas on Friday.

The 31-year-old Kokrak, who missed the cut at last week's Players Championship, equalled the 36-hole tournament record at 12-under par and put himself in position for his first PGA Tour with four birdies on each nine in following up his opening 66.

The stocky Kokrak may need the added cushion as the chasing pack includes world number one Dustin Johnson, who shot his second 67 to be six-under on 134.

"All week I've been feeling better and better with the putter," said Kokrak. "Dave Stockton, Jr. and his dad have helped me out the last few

weeks and things are starting to kind of go in an upturn." Billy Horschel, the 2014 FedExCup champion, was alone in second on seven-under 133 after a 65, with Johnson joined at 134 by South Korean An Byeong-hun (66), Jhonattan Vegas of Venezuela (68) and Americans Cameron Tringale (68), Bud Cauley (67) and James Hahn (70). Johnson, who won three tournaments in a row before withdrawing from last month's Masters after injuring his back in a fall before the opening round, said he is still working on regaining top form.

"Played a solid round," said Johnson, who gave a shot back with a bogey at his last hole. "I made a lot of good shots and rolled the putter pretty nicely."

Johnson said the back was no longer a con-

cern. "There's no issues there," he said. "Just need to keep practicing to get back. I had to take almost four weeks off, really didn't practice. It takes a little time to get back in the form I was in leading into the Masters. It's getting there."

The cut was set at two over par, with 76 players advancing to weekend play. One notable absentee will be local favourite Jordan Spieth, who shot 75 for three-over 143, missing his second successive cut.

"Just disappointed," said Spieth. "I've got to figure out what I'm doing on the greens, first and foremost. I've got to get back into rhythm there. Short game is just off (but) it's close."

The world number six will be defending his title at Colonial next week. —Reuters

TIGER WOODS RELEASED FROM PROGRAM, CONTINUES TREATMENT

LOS ANGELES: Former world number one Tiger Woods says he has finished a program to help him manage his medications, following his arrest in May for impaired driving.

Woods said he would move forward with his next round of treatment to ease back pain and sleep issues with the help of his physician and relatives. "I recently completed an out of state private intensive program," the golfing icon wrote Monday on his Twitter account. "I will continue to tackle this going forward with my doctors, family and friends. I am so very thankful for all of the support I've received." Woods did not provide any details of the treatment or type of program and did not say when he expected to return to golf.

Woods was arrested May 29 near his Florida home for impaired driving. A breathalyzer test showed no sign of alcohol but a police video showed Woods struggling to answer questions and he said later he did not realize how prescription drugs he was taking might interact.

Woods made a comeback from back surgery in December in the Bahamas but has played only twice this year, missing the cut at Torrey Pines and withdrawing from the European Tour's Dubai Desert Classic in February. In April, Woods announced he had undergone his fourth back operation since 2014 to ease back and leg pain and would miss the remainder of the season. Woods, whose 79 career PGA Tour wins are three shy of Sam Snead's all-time record, has not won a major title since the 2008 US Open and has not won any event since the 2013 World Golf Championships Bridgestone Invitational. —AFP



Tiger Woods

PARALYMPICS LEADERSHIP DENIED VOTE BY IOC ON 2024 HOST CITY

LOS ANGELES: The host city for the 2024 Paralympics will be selected without the Paralympic leadership having a say in whether Los Angeles or Paris is chosen.

It's the consequence of the International Paralympic Committee electing a new president in early September - and the winner not immediately and automatically replacing outgoing leader Philip Craven as an International Olympic Committee member. In an agreement that was

extended last year, the city selected by the IOC to host the Olympics is also obliged to stage the Paralympics shortly afterward. A decision will be made next week on whether the 2028 host is also selected at the September meeting in Peru, with the IOC keen to avoid making a loser of either Paris or LA given the strength of the bids.

The IOC confirmed to The Associated Press "there will be no representative from the IPC voting in Lima" on Sept. 13. Four candidates are in the running

to replace Craven as IPC president at a vote on Sept. 8 in Abu Dhabi: Patrick Jarvis, Andrew Parsons, John Pettersson and Haidi Zhang.

"Sir Phil Craven will no longer be an IOC member once his mandate within the IPC ends," the IOC said. "It does not mean however that his successor will automatically become an IOC member. His potential candidature will have to be proposed to the IOC members election commission which is charged with preparing profiles and proposing candi-

dates in order to achieve a diverse and balanced membership of the IOC.

"The commission submits a report to the IOC executive board which is the competent body to propose a candidature to the session. The session alone is competent to elect any IOC member." The IPC has been pushing to retain its vote, with Craven telling the AP that "something has to be worked out."

Parsons, the IPC vice president vying for the top job, called it "unfortunate." "It is purely a timing issue," the Brazilian

added. "This is understood and cannot be avoided."

The Paris and LA bids declined to comment on the Paralympic leadership not participating in the vote. Both cities will present their projects to IOC members next Tuesday in Lausanne, Switzerland.

The full IOC membership, still including Craven, will then decide whether to ratify the board's request to award the 2024 and 2028 Summer Games at the September meeting. — AP

STARS SIGN RADULOV TO \$31.25M, FIVE-YEAR DEAL

DALLAS: Right winger Alexander Radulov got the richest contract given to an unrestricted free agent this offseason when he signed a \$31.25 million, five-year deal with the Dallas Stars.

Only after agreeing on terms with the Stars did Radulov get an offer from the Canadiens to stay in Montreal for that long. "The money was basically the same level. For me it was more the term," Radulov said Monday. "Because I really (wanted), five years at least on my deal, and I want to play and not worry about it. Just play hard and try to win."

The Stars obtained the top player available on the market on Day 3 of free agency. Radulov will count \$6.25 million against the salary cap through 2021-22. "Alexander is a dynamic playmaker with top-end speed and skill," General manager Jim Nill said. "To add a forward of this stature to our lineup makes our top six as deep and talented as any group in this league."

The 30-year-old Russian had 18 goals and 36 assists for 54 points last season with the Montreal Canadiens after returning to the NHL following four seasons in the Kontinental Hockey League. He played on a \$5.75 million, one-year deal and was looking for a long-term agreement this time around. "When I put everything on the table and I saw what I have, it was an easy decision to go to Dallas," Radulov said.

"With Montreal, I don't think we even get that close, you know. In my opinion."

Nill said he couldn't say what happened with Montreal's negotiations with Radulov, but added that his conversations with the player showed he was very committed to joining the Stars. Dallas also has signed center Martin Hanzal for \$14.25 million over three years, acquired defenseman Marc Methot from expansion Vegas and traded for and signed goaltender Ben Bishop.

"We're excited about these moves, but we've got to go to work now. It doesn't guarantee anything," Nill said. "We like what we have on paper, but in the end the goal for us is to be a contender every year, to get in the playoffs every year. We didn't do that last year for different reasons, injuries and everything else."

Before missing the playoffs this past season, the Stars had been the top seed in the Western Conference in 2015-16. Radulov spoke by phone a few days ago with Stars captain Jamie Benn, who with Tyler Seguin make up one of the NHL's top scoring duos. Radulov said Dallas was an "easy choice" for him because of the players already there.

"(Benn) told me about the team, about the guys, about the city," Radulov said. "And I really liked it and I'm really thankful for the Dallas organization to give me a chance to play with a great player." — AP

NHL

NHL FREE AGENTS FOLLOWING NBA PATH IN PICKING DESTINATIONS

NEW YORK: Kevin Shattenkirk could've gotten more money but took less to join the New York Rangers. Joe Thornton could've gotten a multiyear deal from someone but wanted to stay with the San Jose Sharks. Brian Campbell and Patrick Sharp could've gotten more money the past two summers but took the Chicago discount to return to the Blackhawks.

The NHL is becoming more like the NBA with top players forgoing longer, big-money contracts to pick their preferred destination, a trend that has added a new wrinkle to free agency.

"It's their opportunity to go to where they want to go and sometimes you might have to take a little bit less money to go there," Dallas Stars general manager Jim Nill said. "Do you want to go to a good team? Is it a city you want to go to? Is it where your family wants to be? ... It's players finding the right fit for where they want to be and having the money that they can live with."

Shattenkirk is not exactly LeBron James, but the New Rochelle, New York, native filled that role on Saturday when he turned down offers of seven years and more than \$30 million to sign with the Rangers for \$26.6 million over four years. The 28-year-old defenseman felt like it may be his only opportunity to "fulfill a lifelong dream" and wants to help pull off what LeBron did in Cleveland.

"No matter where you go you're trying to win your team a Stanley Cup," Shattenkirk said. "There's no better place to try to do it for me than in New York." Rangers GM Jeff Gorton praised Shattenkirk for leaving money and years on the table, and even New Jersey Devils GM Ray Shero - who made a strong push to sign the top free agent available - gave him credit for signing in New York because it was "where he wanted to be."

The NHL's hard salary cap and players resigning to so many long-term deals means superteams like in the NBA won't happen. But where and who matters more and more to hockey players than simply how much and for how long. Thornton had more than half the 31-team league reach out to sign him at age 38 and signed for \$8 million for one year because he simply

wanted to stay in San Jose. "It was nice getting courted by all these teams, and I felt bad saying, 'Hey I'm going back to San Jose,' but that's where my heart is and that's where I'm happy," Thornton said. Likewise, Sharp couldn't pass up returning to Chicago where he was part of three Stanley Cup teams, even if his contract is worth just \$850,000 with performance bonuses. Sharp said he was "coming back to make some more great memories and try to help this team win another Stanley Cup," which Campbell tried last offseason, too.

Justin Williams and his wife bought a house near Raleigh, North Carolina, before signing a \$9 million, two-year deal to go back to the Hurricanes. Ryan Miller called it "pretty ideal" to sign a \$4 million, two-year contract in Anaheim, close to Hollywood where actress wife Noureen DeWulf needs to be often for her work.

Familiarity with Nashville and coach Peter Laviolette led Scott Hartnell to return to the Predators on a \$1 million, one-year deal, after playing his first six NHL seasons with them. "Absolutely love coming back to Nashville," Hartnell said. "I wish it was October already."

That kind of natural excitement doesn't happen everywhere. Executives around the league don't begrudge players for making personal choices.

"Players have priorities on where they want to play: family reasons, where teams are, whether they're on the verge of winning a Stanley Cup or a rebuilding situation," Buffalo Sabres GM Jason Botterill said. "I think that happens every year."

Some money factors could play a role, such as Alexander Radulov making more in Dallas than he would have earned on the same contract in Montreal or Vegas, with Tampa Bay and Florida having a leg up in states with no income tax. But the Stars wouldn't have attracted Radulov if they weren't contenders. "Trying to win is a huge component to players picking places," said veteran winger Chris Kunitz, who won the Cup three times with the Penguins and signed with the Lightning. "I think we're all pretty fortunate in what we do, but we also want to go out there and compete and have a chance to win." — AP



TURIN: In this Feb. 10, 2006 file photo, Korea flag-bearers Bora Lee and Jong-In Lee, carrying a unification flag, lead their teams into the stadium during the 2006 Winter Olympics opening ceremony in Turin, Italy. The two Koreas continued their joint march tradition at the Turin Winter Olympics. Sports ties between the rival Koreas often mirror their rocky political ties. — AP

OLYMPICS

PYEONGCHANG OLYMPICS ARE ICY PATH TO WARMER KOREA RELATIONS

SEOUL: Tears and hugs after North and South Korean women won the 1991 team table tennis world championships. A standing ovation when athletes from the two Koreas marched together to open the 2000 Sydney Olympics. A selfie taken by a South Korean gymnast with her North Korean opponent that went viral at last year's Rio de Janeiro Games.

Seven months ahead of the Pyeongchang Olympics, South Korea's new liberal President Moon Jae-in hopes the first Winter Games on Korean soil could produce more of these feel-good sparks of seeming reconciliation and pave the way for deep engagement to ease the rivals' 72-year standoff.

In a good development for Moon, IOC President Thomas Bach on Monday expressed his support for Moon's overture while North Korea recently allowed its taekwondo demonstration team to perform in the South in the Korea's first sports exchanges since Moon's May 10 inauguration.

But there is also plenty of skepticism about Moon's efforts because of a serious escalation in North Korean nuclear and missile arsenals - North Korea yesterday test-fired an intermediate-range missile likely capable of striking Alaska - and a weak North Korean winter sports program that sent only two athletes to the 2010 Vancouver Games and none to the 2014 Sochi Games. Sydney and Rio were both Summer Olympics. North Korea's only IOC member, Chang Ung, said last week that cooperation on the Pyeongchang Games could prove hard considering the shortage of time and difficult politics. What follows is an examination of South Korea's attempt to make North Korea a key part of the Olympics set for Feb. 9-25.

MOON'S PLAN

During a speech at the world taekwondo championship in the South that drew Chang and North Korean athletes, Moon appealed for North Korea's Olympic participation while talking about the power of sports and citing the historic "pingpong diplomacy" between the United States and China in the 1970s.

"I think (North Korea's Olympic attendance) would greatly contribute in realizing Olympic values, which are about bringing humanity together and promoting world peace," Moon said during the event's opening ceremony on June 24.

Moon has previously said he wants North Korean athletes to visit the South by crossing over the heavily fortified land border between the Koreas - a deeply symbolic event that would excite frenzied media coverage. He has also proposed holding a pre-Olympic celebratory event at the North's scenic Diamond Mountain, where the two Koreas once ran a tourism program.

Moon's sports minister, Do Jong-hwan, told lawmakers recently that South Korea was also studying a joint women's ice hockey team with North Korea for the Pyeongchang Games. Other ideas: using a recently built North Korean ski resort as a training site and adding North Korea to the Olympic torch relay route.

During their meeting at Moon's presidential palace in Seoul on Monday, Bach said he actively supports Moon's push for Korean peace and said it's in accordance with the Olympic spirit, according to Moon's office. But some of the measures floated by the Moon government require formal IOC approvals, and Pyeongchang organizers say nothing has been officially determined yet.

Chang suggested it may be too late to try to field a single Olympic team, saying it took five to

six months or 22 rounds of inter-Korean talks before fielding a single women's table tennis team in 1991. He also questioned how much sports could impact relations between the Koreas. "Did table tennis improve relations between the United States and China? Pingpong was able to work as a catalyst because a political foundation had already been created. The world was saying pingpong made things work, but that wasn't the case," Chang told South Korean reporters last week. "Politics are always above sports."

THE SPORTS OBSTACLES

North Korea is not strong in winter sports. The only North Korean athletes who are thought to have a realistic shot at making the 2018 Olympics are a North Korean pairs figure skating team. Even if they qualify, it will mean less than 10 North Koreans - two athletes plus coaches and officials - would come to Pyeongchang. This small squad - or no athletes at all - could make it difficult to create a mood of reconciliation. Still, South Korean officials are looking at other ways to get North Korea involved.

Pyeongchang's organizing committee said it's discussing with South Korean government officials whether to ask the IOC and other international sports bodies to give North Korea special entries if no North Korean athletes qualify for the Olympics.

South Korea is also reviewing whether to hold out-of-competition matches during the Olympics that would allow North Korean athletes to compete, according to Moon's Unification Ministry. The South's organizing committee said special entries and extra games have not been allowed at past Winter Games.

THE NUCLEAR OBSTACLES

Relations between the Koreas are dismal as the North pursues its nuclear ambitions. Since taking power in late 2011, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has conducted three atomic test explosions and ordered a raft of ballistic-missile launches as part of his stated goal of building nuclear missiles capable of reaching the continental United States. Moon's conservative predecessors responded by suspending major aid shipments and cross-border cooperation projects. Moon has pledged to improve ties and promised to use the Pyeongchang Games to ease cross-border animosities. But any big North

Korean weapon test close to the Pyeongchang Games could trigger strong anti-North sentiments both at home and abroad and make it hard for Moon to press ahead with his overtures. "What's most important is that North Korea not act in a way that earns President Moon criticism when he makes a gesture of reconciliation," said Jung Moon-hyun, a sports science professor at Chungnam National University in South Korea.

SPORTS DIPLOMACY

At the height of the Cold War, sports were another battlefield between the Koreas. North Korea boycotted the 1986 Asian Games and the 1988 Olympics, both held in Seoul.

But sports exchanges briefly flourished in the early 1990s before a nuclear crisis erupted. This cooperation included the North-South women's table tennis team championship over China in 1991, and a unified world youth boys' soccer team that reached the quarterfinals later that year. These were the last unified Korean sports teams, but the rivals found other ways to cooperate. After the leaders of North and South Korea met for landmark summit talks in Pyongyang in June 2000, athletes from the Koreas walked behind a blue-and-white "unification" flag for the first time at the opening ceremony of the Sydney Summer Games. This happened at other major international sports events, but the practice stopped after the 2007 Asian Winter Games in Chungchun, China.

Despite terrible political ties amid the nuclear standoff, cross-border sports exchanges between the Koreas did not disappear entirely.

North Korea attended the 2014 Asian Games held in Incheon, South Korea. At the close of the games, three top Pyongyang officials made a surprise visit and held the Koreas' highest-level face-to-face talks in five years.

This spring, North Korea's women's ice hockey team came to the South to take part in the group rounds of the world championships, while the South's national women's soccer team traveled to the North for an Asian Cup qualifying match. One of the feel-good highlights of the Rio Games last year came when a 17-year-old South Korean gymnast named Lee Eun-ju took a selfie with North Korea's Hong Un Jong as they trained for competition. The photo captured global headlines, and Bach described it as a "great gesture." It's far from certain whether Pyeongchang will have any similar gestures. — AP



PITTSBURGH: In this Dec 20, 2015, file photo, Toronto Maple Leafs' Matt Hunwick (2) plays during an NHL hockey game against the Pittsburgh Penguins in Pittsburgh. The Stanley Cup champion Penguins will look a lot different as they go for a three-peat. The Penguins signed defenseman Matt Hunwick and goaltender Antti Niemi and lost defensemen Trevor Daley and Ron Hainsey and center Nick Bonino during free agency. — AP



DAEGU: In this Aug 28, 2003 file photo, North Korean women hold national flags to cheer at the Daegu Universiade Games in Daegu, South Korea. Sports ties between the rival Koreas often mirror their rocky political ties. North Korea participated in the University Games in Daegu, South Korea in 2003, and its athletes walked again with South Korean counterparts at the opening and closing ceremonies. — AP



WASHINGTON: Brandon Nimmo #9 of the New York Mets beats the throw to Ryan Zimmerman #11 of the Washington Nationals for an infield single in the eighth inning during a baseball game at Nationals Park on Monday in Washington. — AFP

BASEBALL

RABURN HITS WINNING RUN AS NATIONALS EDGE METS

WASHINGTON: Ryan Raburn drove in the game-winning run with two outs in the bottom of the ninth as the Washington Nationals survived another bullpen collapse for a 3-2 victory over the New York Mets on Monday night. Curtis Granderson tied the game with a two-out, two-run homer off Nationals reliever Matt Albers (4-1). Granderson's heroics came after Michael Taylor's two-run homer in the bottom of the eighth broke a scoreless tie. Matt Wieters opened the ninth with a walk against Paul Sewald (0-3), moved to second following a sacrifice bunt and took third on Adam Lind's deep fly ball. Following Stephen Drew's walk, Raburn's slow, looping liner to left field off Fernando Salas fell in front of a diving Yoenis Cespedes, scoring Wieters. Nationals left fielder Brian Goodwin kept the game scoreless in the top of the eighth by throwing out Brandon Nimmo trying to score from second on Jose Reyes' base hit.

ROCKIES 5, REDS 3

Rookie Raimel Tapia finished a single shy of the cycle, Charlie Blackmon lined a solo shot after it was announced he would participate in the All-Star Home Run Derby. Tapia's homer in the sixth broke a tie game as the Rockies returned home following a forgetful 1-8 trip. Right-hander Jeff Hoffman (5-1) nearly collected as many hits at the plate (two) as he surrendered on the mound (four). He went seven effective innings, with his only hiccup back-to-back homers to Scooter Gennett and Joey Votto in the sixth. Hoffman's run-scoring double in the second was his first major league RBI. Hoffman turned the ball over to the bullpen, where Jake McGee pitched the eighth and recently named All-Star Greg Holland threw a perfect ninth for his 27th save in 28 chances. Luis Castillo (0-1) went 5 2-3 innings and allowed four runs. He also struck out eight.

BREWERS 8, ORIOLES 1

Travis Shaw started the rout with a go-ahead single in a four-run first inning, then left after he was hit on a hand by a pitch during the Brewers' win over the Orioles. Backed by 7-0 lead in the second, Brent

Suter (1-1) struck out eight over six innings, allowing an unearned run and four hits - all singles. The 27-year-old left hander made his second big league start, pitching in place of Chase Anderson, on the disabled list because of a left oblique strain. Wade Miley (3-7) gave up seven runs, seven hits and two walks in 1 2/3 innings, raising his ERA to 5.20 from 4.54. He is 1-4 with an 11.69 ERA in his last six starts.

PHILLIES 4, PIRATES 0

Aaron Nola struck out eight in seven splendid innings, Freddy Galvis and Maikel Franco hit two-run homers and the Phillies beat the Pirates. Nola (6-5) allowed four hits and none until Jordy Mercer lined a double down the left-field line with two outs in the fifth. Joaquin Benoit and Hector Neris completed the four-hitter. Galvis hit a shot estimated at 417 feet into the second deck in right field to give the Phillies a 2-0 lead in the first off Ivan Nova (8-6). After Galvis reached on a bunt single his next time up, Franco ripped a liner out to left to make it 4-0 in the third. Nova gave up four runs and seven hits in six innings. He allowed more than three earned runs for only the fourth time in 17 starts.

YANKEES 6, BLUE JAYS 3

Masahiro Tanaka pitched seven sharp innings for his second straight win following a long slump, helping the Yankees beat the skidding Blue Jays. Hours after announcing they'll both compete in the Home Run Derby next week, All-Star sluggers Aaron Judge and Gary Sanchez sparked New York's offense. Consecutive singles by those Baby Bombers in the first helped the Yankees scratch out two runs against Marcus Stroman. Judge's leadoff single and Sanchez's double set up a four-run eighth that included Chase Headley's two-run double off Ryan Tepera. Headley was hit by a pitch to force home a run in the first and finished with three RBIs. Jacoby Ellsbury drew a bases-loaded walk from Stroman (8-5), who grew up on Long Island about 55 miles from Yankee Stadium. Last-place Toronto has dropped five straight and nine of 11.

Tanaka (7-7) turned in his third consecutive strong outing, a big positive for the banged-up Yankees as they chase AL East-leading Boston. Second-place New York won for only the sixth time in 20 games.

CARDINALS 14, MARLINS 6

Rookie Luke Voit hit his first major league homer and drove in four runs, Tommy Pham reached base five times and the Cardinals beat the Marlins. St. Louis scored four runs in the first inning and seven in the third on the way to an 11-0 lead. Voit added a two-run homer in the eighth in the Cardinals' fifth win in six games. Adam Wainwright (9-5) picked up his second successive win and also drove in two runs with a bases-loaded single. The Marlins have lost five of six. Miami starter Jeff Locke (0-5) gave up 11 hits and 11 earned runs in 2 2/3 innings. Pham had three hits and two walks. He drove in a pair of runs.

RED SOX 7, RANGERS 5

Andrew Benintendi blooped a two-run single over a drawn-in infield in the 11th inning and the Red Sox beat the Rangers for their AL-best fifth straight victory. Boston needed extra innings after Mike Napoli led off the Rangers ninth with a homer off All-Star closer Craig Kimbrel, who had blown only one of his previous 24 save opportunities. With runners at second and third with one out in the 11th against Ernesto Frieri (0-1), the Rangers intentionally walked Dustin

Pedroia, who already had three hits and four RBIs. Benintendi, who had entered the game as a pinch hitter in the ninth, then hit a ball that landed just beyond the infield dirt in short left. Heath Hembree (1-2), the sixth Boston pitcher, retired all six batters he faced over the last two innings.

TWINS 9, ANGELS 5

Max Kepler tied a career high with four hits, including a home run, Adalberto Mejia earned his third straight win and the Twins beat the Angels. Joe Mauer also homered and Miguel Sano had three hits for Minnesota, which won for just the third time in nine games. Mejia (4-3) allowed nine hits and three earned runs in seven innings. He's given up five earned runs in 22 1/3 innings over his past four starts after allowing eight in a June 12 start. His ERA has dropped from 5.53 to 4.32 in that span. Luis Valbuena and Martin Maldonado homered and Andrelton Simmons had three hits for Los Angeles, which has lost four of five.

ROYALS 3, MARINERS 1

Ian Kennedy allowed one run pitching into the seventh inning, Mike Moustakas and Alex Gordon both hit solo home runs, and the Royals beat the Mariners. Kennedy (3-6) won his third straight decision with one of his best performances of the season. The lone run scored on a wild pitch as Kansas City handed Seattle its fifth straight loss at home. Moustakas led off the second

inning with his 23rd home run of the season and gave the Royals a 2-0 lead against Seattle starter Andrew Moore. Gordon's home run came with two outs in the fifth, a pitch he broke his bat on but was still able to get it over the wall in right just beyond the leap of Mitch Haniger. It was Gordon's fifth homer and second in the past three games.

WHITE SOX 7, ATHLETICS 2

Todd Frazier doubled twice and drove in two runs to back Carlos Rodon's first win of the season, and the White Sox beat the slumping Athletics. Melky Cabrera added three hits and an RBI, Willy Garcia doubled twice while Matt Davidson had an RBI double to break out of a personal slump and help Chicago to its fifth win in seven games. One week after getting swept by the A's at home, the White Sox jumped on Oakland starter Jharel Cotton early and got strong pitching from Rodon and two relievers to make it hold up before a crowd of 40,019 - the largest to watch a baseball game at the Coliseum in nearly 12 years. Rodon (1-1) allowed two runs over 6 1/3 innings and came within one shy of his career high with 10 strikeouts in his second start after missing nearly the first three months of the season on the disabled list with bursitis in his left bicep. Rodon gave up a two-run double to Adam Rosales in the second the retired 14 of 16 on his way to winning for the first time since Sep. 30. — AP



OAKLAND: Adam Rosales #16 of the Oakland Athletics completes a double play over Todd Frazier #21 of the Chicago White Sox during the seventh inning at the Oakland Coliseum on Monday in Oakland, California. The Chicago White Sox defeated the Oakland Athletics 7-2. — AFP

MLB results/standings

Colorado 5; Cincinnati 3, Minnesota 9; LA Angels 5, St. Louis 14; Miami 6, Philadelphia 4; Pittsburgh 0, NY Yankees 6; Toronto 3, Washington 3; NY Mets 2, Milwaukee 8; Baltimore 1.

American League					National League				
Eastern Division					Eastern Division				
	W	L	PCT	GB		W	L	PCT	GB
Boston	48	35	.578	-	Washington	49	34	.590	-
NY Yankees	44	37	.543	3	Atlanta	40	41	.494	8
Tampa Bay	43	41	.512	5.5	NY Mets	38	44	.463	10.5
Baltimore	40	42	.488	7.5	Miami	36	45	.444	12
Toronto	37	45	.451	10.5	Philadelphia	28	53	.346	20
Central Division					Central Division				
Cleveland	44	37	.543	-	Milwaukee	45	40	.529	-
Kansas City	42	40	.512	2.5	Chicago Cubs	41	41	.500	2.5
Minnesota	42	40	.512	2.5	St. Louis	40	42	.488	3.5
Chicago White Sox	37	45	.451	7.5	Pittsburgh	37	46	.446	7
Detroit	36	45	.444	8	Cincinnati	35	47	.427	8.5
Western Division					Western Division				
Houston	56	27	.675	-	LA Dodgers	55	29	.655	-
LA Angels	43	44	.494	15	Arizona	52	31	.627	2.5
Seattle	41	43	.488	15.5	Colorado	49	36	.576	6.5
Texas	40	43	.482	16	San Diego	34	48	.415	20
Oakland	35	48	.422	21	San Francisco	33	51	.393	22

RUGBY

'EXPRESS YOURSELF', COACH FOSTER TELLS ALL BLACKS

AUCKLAND: Assistant coach Ian Foster has urged the All Blacks to express themselves and use their brains in this weekend's Test series decider against the British and Irish Lions. While stung by a 24-21 loss to the Lions in Wellington, Foster said "it's not all doom and gloom for us" as the third Test looms in Auckland on Saturday.

"We've done some really good stuff in the last two weeks but it's pretty clear that there's more in us," he said. "We've got to focus on that and make sure that in all circumstances—whether it's wet and cold or windy or whatever—we're still able to express ourselves when we want to."

"We've proven we can get parity (in

the forwards) and front-foot ball and we've got to make sure we're smart in using that." The reigning world champions were convincing 30-15 winners in the first Test at Eden Park, where they out-muscled the Lions forwards.

The Lions then hit back a week later after Sonny Bill Williams' sending off for a shoulder charge reduced the hosts to 14 men for much of the match.

Neither encounter featured the All Blacks' trademark expansive game, with Lions coach Warren Gatland saying he was yet to see them play "champagne rugby". Foster said the Wellington defeat hinged on the red card, a situation the All Blacks had not faced for 50 years and

was difficult to plan for. He conceded the All Blacks, while still controlling the game for long periods, went into their shell slightly after losing a man and did not pursue attacking opportunities with their usual vigour.

"Probably our vision was a bit narrow," he said. "That's a work-on for us, because it's not something that's natural to us, but we allowed ourselves to get into that mode."

CUP FEVER

Flanker Jerome Kaino said returning to Eden Park for the winner-takes-all third Test felt like the final of a World Cup—a tournament he has won twice. "It

definitely has that feel. The excitement we had at training today backs that up," he said.

"The Lions are a great side and there's a lot of history between these two teams, so being 1-1 it does have that feeling about it."

Kaino said there was "an edge" to the New Zealanders ahead of the game and they wanted to impose themselves while also maintaining discipline.

He was not concerned about a northern hemisphere referee—France's Romain Poite—being in charge of the match. "We know how we can play physical and within the laws, so we'll just let the referee interpret how he wants to interpret and

make sure we do our basics really well," he said.

The 80-Test veteran said a row between Lions prop Kyle Sinckler and some All Blacks after the siren in Wellington would not affect the hosts' attitude toward the match.

"I don't think it's our style to drag things off the field and carry it on. It just hinders what you want to do and how you want to improve," he said. "There's always going to be feeling between these two teams and when we cross those white lines we throw it out there, but once we leave I think we should dump it and not bring it into our preparation." —AFP

CRICKET

T20 AND ODI CAPTAIN SARFRAZ TO LEAD PAKISTAN IN TESTS

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Cricket Board has appointed Sarfraz Ahmed as Test captain after the wicketkeeper-batsman led the national team to a surprise triumph at the Champions Trophy tournament in England last month.

PCB chairman Shaharyar Khan announced the decision yesterday during a ceremony to honor the winning team at the prime minister's residence in Islamabad. Ahmed already leads Pakistan in Twenty20s and ODIs. He has played 36 test matches since making his debut in 2010, scoring 2,089 runs at an average of 40.96 with three centuries and 13 half centuries.

Khan said he informed Ahmed about the PCB's decision just before yesterday's ceremony. "I talked to him when we were coming here and he said 'I am ready to serve Pakistan,'" Khan said.

Pakistan, ranked No. 8 in the eight-team Champions Trophy, routed archrival and defending champion India by 180 runs in

the final.

Pakistan easily lost its opening group game against India but made a strong comeback with fast bowler Hasan Ali and opening batsman Fakhar Zaman playing pivotal roles.

Ali took 13 wickets in the tournament and Zaman scored two half centuries and a century in the final. Pakistan went on to beat South Africa and Sri Lanka in the remaining two group matches before humiliating title favorite England in the semifinals.

"I watched the whole match (final)," Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif told players and officials at the reception. Khan said he would like to see India playing against Pakistan in a bilateral series.

"We challenge you to come and play (but) they don't play against us because they are afraid of us," Khan claimed. "I think bilateral cricket will be good for us and will benefit cricket." — AP



From left Ma Long Weibo, Fan Zhendong Weibo, Xu Xin Weibo

TABLE TENNIS

'CHENGDU THREE' MOUNT RARE CHINESE REVOLT

SHANGHAI: China's table tennis stars usually demolish their rivals but they may be fighting a losing battle after mounting a rare challenge against more formidable opposition—their own sports system.

In a rare show of dissent, Ma Long, Fan Zhendong and Xu Xin—the world's top three men's players—downed paddles at last month's China Open in Chengdu, saying they were too heartbroken to play after the removal of head coach Liu Guoliang.

It is highly unusual for Chinese athletes to publicly break ranks with the state sports system, and follows apparent attempts to censor online comment, according to a website which monitors social media in China.

China's athletes are often groomed from childhood in an intense training environment, bringing success particularly in medal-heavy Olympic sports like badminton, diving and gymnastics—and especially table tennis, where China has won all but four gold medals since it joined the Games programme in 1988.

After failing to appear for their second-round singles matches at the China Open, the "Chengdu Three" posted messages on social media saying they were too saddened by Liu's axing to play on. They quickly apologised, along with Liu—but the all-conquering men's team was then pulled from this week's Australian Open because of "tiredness". Nothing more has been heard since.

The row has its roots in the suspension of women's head coach Kong Linghui, the former Olympic champion known as the "Ping Pong Prince" who is being sued over a gambling debt to a Singapore casino, according to reports.

After an internal investigation found "several deep-seated problems in the (team's) manage-

ment", Liu was removed as overall head coach and named as a vice-president of the Chinese Table Tennis Association, the body said.

'COUNTRY-FIRST' CULTURE

The problems affecting Chinese table tennis come after a shake-up in badminton, where Li Yongbo quit after 24 years as head coach in April, following a prolonged slump in form.

But public revolts are rare, mainly because of the strength of China's sports system and the culture of putting the country before the individual, experts say.

"It's so institutionalised and it's 'country-first' and all about China and not the individual," said Mark Dreyer, founder of China Sports Insider, which analyses the country's sports business.

"At the Olympic level people have been criticised for thanking their parents before they thank their country," he said, adding that Chinese officials often want to "piggy-back" on an outstanding sportsman's success.

"Individualism, putting yourself above the country and the team is frowned upon, so when people become big stars and start getting individual endorsements for example—rather than team endorsements—that causes a lot of problems with the old style of thinking."

While open rebellion by sports stars is seldom seen, one of the best known cases also came in table tennis—He Zhili, who later became the Japanese national champion Chire Koyama.

She was a star in China but did the unthinkable and defected to arch-rival Japan, claiming that she had resisted an order to lose a 1987 world title clash to a Chinese team-mate.

Swimmer Sun Yang fell out with authorities over his relationship with an air hostess, and he was also banned after his involvement in a car

accident while driving without a licence.

Ning Zetao, another of China's top swimmers, was kicked off the national team in February for signing sponsorship deals without official consent. Badminton great Lin Dan risked the wrath of his handlers by dating team-mate Xie Xingfang—now his wife—despite such relationships being forbidden.

GRAND SLAM WINS

The biggest name to break free of the system is Li Na, who won Asia's first two Grand Slam tennis singles titles before she retired in 2014.

The outspoken Li hit success late in her career after she made the tough decision to go it alone with her own coaching set-up and organising her own sponsorship. "It still staggers me, given how successful she was, why they have not allowed it more and why they persist with the fear of losing control and earnings," said Dreyer.

Given China's success in table tennis, top players are household names and the "Chengdu Three" have sparked much debate and speculation, trending on social media for several days. "Only China's sports administration can beat the Chinese table tennis team," quipped one user on China's Twitter-style Weibo, in a comment that was later deleted.

Reflecting the level of interest, the state-aligned Global Times newspaper published a lengthy analysis of the table tennis row. "While the recent protest exposed discontent with the nationalised sports system, there is no denying that in ping pong at least, that system has an undeniable record of success," said the article, praising it as "a well-oiled machine". But it also conceded there was "unprecedented outcry and anger towards the nationalised sports system that places collectivism first." — AFP



Sarfraz Ahmed

BROAD BACKS NEW SKIPPER ROOT TO GO TO 'NEXT LEVEL'

LONDON: England fast bowler Stuart Broad believes captaincy will take star batsman Joe Root's game to the "next level". Root was named as the successor to Alastair Cook as long ago as February, but Thursday's series opener against South Africa at Lord's will be the Yorkshireman's first match as England Test captain.

Test captaincy appears to have boosted the performances of such leading current batsmen as India's Virat Kohli, Australia's Steve Smith and New Zealand's Kane Williamson, with Broad confident it will inspire Root to greater heights rather than too heavy a burden for the 26-year-old.

"Joe's not had a huge amount of captaincy experience because he played for England from a young age but he's learned the game at the top level," Broad told Sky Sports News at Lord's yesterday.

"I think it will take his game to the next level, if he can go any higher. He'll really thrive off the extra responsibility. He's an attacking cricketer, quite aggressive in the

way he plays, so I think the team will take that sort of shape," added Broad. "He was announced a long time ago and now he has the chance to put things into place."

Meanwhile Broad, a veteran of 102 Tests, insisted he was fully fit for the first of a four-match series against South Africa after his participation was called into question by a foot injury. However, he played in Nottinghamshire's One-Day Cup final win over Surrey at Lord's last Saturday, bowling none overs with no adverse reaction.

"I got through the Lord's final with no problems and bowled Wednesday and Friday before that with no pain," said Broad.

"I pulled up really well and I'll train again this afternoon and tomorrow, but I feel confident," the 31-year-old son of former England batsman turned match referee Chris Broad, added. "I've been playing county cricket since early April, so I've got quite a lot of red ball and white ball cricket in. It was great to have the intensity of a Lord's final, to play in it but also to put my body to the test." — AFP



Joe Root

AUSTRALIA TRAIN DESPITE TOUR BOYCOTT THREAT

BRISBANE: Players turned up for training yesterday ahead of the Australia A tour of South Africa, despite the threat to boycott the trip because of a bitter pay dispute. After months of negotiations the players and Cricket Australia (CA) have failed to reach agreement on a new pay deal, leaving 230 players unemployed since the end of June when their contracts expired.

The Australian Cricketers' Association (ACA) executive Alistair Nicholson said a "significant breakthrough" in the stand-off was needed by Friday for the South Africa tour to proceed.

Nevertheless, players were sticking to their schedule and reported for training with coach Jason Gillespie in Brisbane for the tour which is due to start on July 12.

"As a coach, I'll help the players prepare as well as we can," Australia A coach Gillespie told reporters.

"We have to have the attitude as if we are going to be travelling." The pay row also threatens to derail upcoming Australia tours to Bangladesh and India as well as this year's prestige home Ashes series against England. Cricket Australia's national talent manager Greg Chappell told reporters that he remained optimistic that a swift solution could be found. "I'm expecting that we will see a positive resolution in the not too distant future and we will get back to focusing on the cricket," he said yesterday.

CA and the players' union hit an impasse after the board attempted to scrap a 20-year-old

arrangement of giving cricketers a fixed share of revenues, in favour of dividing surpluses among elite players and offering a pay rise. Former Australian captain Michael Clarke urged the parties to extend the existing deal for 12 months to allow for more negotiations. "Just keep the same

MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) for the next 12 months to allow negotiations to, let's say the word continue, but sort negotiations out," he said in Sydney. "The players want to play, they want to play for their country, there's no doubt about it." — AFP



BRISBANE: Australia 'A' tour squad captain Usman Khawaja takes part in a cricket training session at Allan Border Field in Brisbane yesterday. — AFP

YELLOW JERSEY THOMAS KEEN TO STAY SAFE IN BUNCH SPRINT

LONGWY: Yellow jersey wearer Geraint Thomas will be looking to stay out of trouble as a bunch sprint finish is expected at the Tour de France. Thomas and his Sky team leader Chris Froome, the reigning champion, were both taken down in a crash on a wet and slippery bend 30km from the end of Sunday's second stage, which ended in a bunch sprint. On flat stages which favour the sprinters, the run-in to the finish is usually very fast, and when it's wet like on

Sunday, that increases the perils for riders.

"It looks like another bunch sprint, we'll try to stay up front and out of trouble, but saying that a crash happened (on Sunday) — there's not a lot you can do about that," said Thomas. He took the race leader's yellow jersey in Saturday's opening stage time-trial but his main job is to help Froome in his bid for a fourth Tour victory.

Froome is currently second behind

Thomas overall with another Sky teammate, Michal Kwiatkowski eighth, making it a great start to the Tour for the British team.

"Touch wood, we've all been riding really well together," said Thomas. "We still have the (yellow) jersey, it's been a great start but there are still 18 days to go and a lot of bike racing to come." The peloton's fast men will feel refreshed by Tuesday's fourth stage finish following Monday's tough, short climb.

It's an almost pan flat stage of 207.5km that starts in Luxembourg and finishes in the town of Vittel, known mostly for its bottled water and thermal baths. It's also the site of one of the top spa resorts in France and has a no pesticide policy around its water resources, making it an ideal place to relax after a tough stage of racing, even if the riders decline to try the local speciality: frog tart. As well as the battle for the stage win that should see Mark Cavendish,

Andre Greipel and world champion Peter Sagan rub shoulders with German powerhouse Marcel Kittel, the green jersey will be in play too. Kittel holds it but with 50 points on offer to the stage winner, others including Frenchman Arnaud Demarre and Sagan will have designs of ridding the Quick-Step rider of his prize.

With the sun out and only a small amount of cloud cover, temperatures of just over 20 degrees Celsius, it made for ideal racing weather. — AFP

BASKETBALL

TATUM HITS GO-AHEAD SHOT AS CELTICS EDGE FULTZ, 76ERS

ORLANDO: Boston's Jayson Tatum opened the Utah Summer League and his pro career with a go-ahead basket to beat No. 1 pick Markelle Fultz and Philadelphia.

The game in Salt Lake City was the most anticipated contest thus far, as summer play heated up Monday with the Orlando Pro Summer League entering its third day and the Utah Summer League tipping getting started. The 24-team NBA Summer League in Las Vegas starts on Friday. New York, Oklahoma City, Orlando, Dallas, Indiana and Miami were in action in Orlando on Monday. Boston, Philadelphia, Utah and San Antonio got going in Salt Lake City later on Monday.

A look at some of the notable action.

DAZZLING DEBUT

Tatum's jumper and the Celtics' ensuing stop of Fultz gave Boston an 89-88 victory. Fultz played well on both ends of the floor and showed why the 76ers took him with the top pick they acquired from Boston. Fultz finished with three blocks, including a weakside swat of Kadeem Allen that had the crowd gasping. He had 17 points on 6-for-16 shooting, including two 3-pointers. "People have big expectations but, to me, it was just another day to play basketball and do what I love," Fultz said. "I love chasing down blocks and blocking shots. On defense I'm always going to give effort on both ends of the floor. That's one thing that goes unnoticed is just how hard I play on both ends. I'm a great shot-blocking point guard."

Tatum was not overshadowed as the 6-foot-8, 208-pounder showed the versatility he's known for and knocked down a pull-up jumper with 5.7 seconds left. Fultz's shot was blocked on the other end to end the game. Tatum, the No. 3 pick, may have had the most awe-inspiring play of the night with a thundering, one-hand tomahawk dunk on Kaleb Tarczewski. He posted 21 points, seven rebounds, three assists and five steals.

"He kind of has this old soul," Celtics coach Jerome Allen said. "This pro-like approach, doesn't get rattled, doesn't show a lot of emotions. Just kind of plays at his pace like he's been here before."

"We can say it's only Summer League, but he just made plays." While all eyes were on the two rookies, 2016 No. 3 overall pick Jaylen Brown was hands down the best player on the floor and looked like he had no business playing Summer League games. He finished with 29 points. Brown has taken Tatum under his wing since he joined the team. "Jaylen can help him with a lot of things," Celtics coach Brad Stevens said. "They've been in the gym a lot together. They've been working out together. I know Jaylen's picked him up and taken him to the practice facility a few times."

LEAF EXCELS

Indiana Pacers first-round draft pick T. J. Leaf showed that his impressive debut wasn't a fluke by following that perform-

ance up with an even better second game in Orlando. Leaf improved on Sunday's 12-point debut by scoring 19 points and grabbing 10 rebounds to help lead the Pacers to an 86-83 win over Miami to move them to 3-0. The 6-foot-10 forward from UCLA, who missed the Summer League opener on Saturday to attend a family wedding, showed some versatility with scoring on the perimeter and in the paint while converting 9 of 17 from the field in 28 minutes.

Joe Young finished with 17 points and six assists, while Jarnell Stokes added 14 points and Chris Johnson contributed 12. Miami's first-round pick Bam Adebayo led all scorers with 29 points and grabbed 11 rebounds in nearly 32 minutes.

COMEBACK MAVS

The Dallas Mavericks found themselves quickly in a 17-point hole against Orlando during Monday's game. They recovered in the second quarter and then separated in the third on the way to an 86-76 win. Dallas improved to 2-0. Guard Dwight Buycks led the Mavericks with 20 points, while forward Brandon Paul added 18.

No. 6 overall pick Jonathan Isaac had eight points in the first quarter but hurt his hip on a collision in the second and didn't return in the second half. Point guard Marcus Georges-Hunt, who was called up from the D-League by the Magic in April, contributed 20 points but he had little help.

NTILIKINA UPDATE

Knicks rookie Frank Ntilikina has missed the first three games with a knee injury. It's unclear whether the No. 8 overall pick will participate in Summer League play. Knicks coach Jeff Hornacek did not talk to reporters following the game. New York dropped to 0-3 after Monday's 99-87 loss to Oklahoma City.

HAYWARD CHANTS

Chants of "Gordon Hayward!" broke out in the stands early in Salt Lake City, confirming that minds are on the Jazz All-Star. Hayward, an unrestricted free agent, met with the Jazz in San Diego on Monday, the Celtics on Sunday and the Heat on Saturday. Celtics president Danny Angie and Stevens were both in Salt Lake City to watch Summer League.

Hayward is one of the marquee names in free agency this year and is expected to command a maximum contract.

EX(UM) GONNA GIVE IT TO YA

Jazz Summer League coach Alex Jensen said Dante Exum needs to be heads and shoulders above the competition during the session as he enters his fourth year in the league. The 2014 No. 5 overall pick has yet to find his groove in the NBA, partially due to a torn ACL that cost him all of 2015-16. No other lottery pick from the 2014 or 2015 is playing in Orlando or Salt Lake City.—AP



MONDORF-LES-BAINS: Peter Sagan of Slovakia, left, sprints as Britain's Mark Cavendish, center, and Britain's Ben Swift crash, during the sprint of the fourth stage of the Tour de France cycling race over 207.5 kilometers (129 miles) with start in Mondorf-les-Bains, Luxembourg, and finish in Vittel, France, yesterday. World champion Peter Sagan has been disqualified from the Tour de France for causing a crash in a chaotic sprint finish that left Mark Cavendish needing treatment for his injuries and further examinations in a hospital. — AP

CYCLING

SAGAN DISQUALIFIED FROM TOUR FOR CAVENDISH 'ELBOW'

VITTEL: World champion Peter Sagan was sensationally kicked off the Tour de France for elbowing Mark Cavendish in a hectic sprint finish to yesterday's fourth stage.

British sprint great Cavendish was taken to hospital by ambulance with shoulder and finger injuries after crashing to the ground when Sagan shoved him into the metal safety barriers 100 metres from the finish of the 207.5km stage from Mondorf-les-Bains to Vittel.

"We've decided to disqualify Peter Sagan from the Tour de France 2017 as he endangered some of his colleagues seriously in the final metres of the sprint which happened in Vittel," said the president of the race commission, Philippe Marien.

"We will apply article 12.104 of the rules of the UCI... in which case commissaires (the race jury) can decide to enforce a judgement to disqualify a rider." Cavendish had earlier demanded an explanation from Sagan for the elbow that could end the Briton's Tour, if like in 2014 he has suffered a broken collarbone.

Cavendish, 31, was following the wheel of eventual stage winner Arnaud Demare of France when Sagan jutted out an elbow, knocking the Briton into the barriers where he came crashing down to the ground. The 30-time Tour stage winner was treated by medical staff before crossing the finish line with a bloodied and bandaged hand. When he left for hospital,

he was also wearing a sling. "Injury-wise I'm going to go and get it checked out," he told a scrum of reporters outside his Dimension Data team bus. "I will definitely need stitches in this finger, it's bleeding a lot. "With the shoulder, it might be something to do with a previous injury, it's sat backwards so I'm not sure if I've done something to the ligament. "I'm not a doctor but from the feelings I'm not optimistic."

'NOT A FAN'

But Cavendish said Sagan had to explain his actions. "I was just following Demare round, and then Sagan just came over," he added.

"I get on with Peter well but I don't get it. If he came across it's one thing, but the elbow?"

"I'm not a fan of him putting his elbow in like that. I get on with Peter, a crash is a crash, but I'd just like to know about the elbow." Cavendish's sports director at Dimension Data Roger Hammond told journalists: "If I was Sagan, I'd apologise for that." Fellow sprinter Andre Greipel of Germany accused Sagan of doing the same thing to him the previous day.

'NOWHERE TO GO'

"Yesterday it was the same thing in the intermediate sprint, he (Sagan) gave an elbow to Andre," Greipel's Lotto-Soudal team manager Marc Sergeant told Eurosport.

Cavendish's was the second of two crashes in

the final kilometre as riders jostled for position to contest the sprint finish. Race leader Geraint Thomas was taken down in the first crash, along with around a dozen riders, but he emerged unhurt. "The crash happened right in front of me, I had nowhere to go really," said Thomas. "I managed to take off quite a bit of speed, I hit the deck but I'm fine." It was the second time in three stages that Thomas had been caught up in a crash. "It's ok, both times I managed to take off quite a bit of speed," he added. "I'm used to crashing, so it's fine, I'm all ok." In all the furor of another bunch pile-up, French champion Demare's achievement of becoming the first Frenchman to win a Tour stage in a sprint finish since 2006 was almost lost.

"It's amazing, beating all the best sprinters like that at the Tour de France is something I'd hoped for, for a long time," said Demare. "Now I've managed it once, I think I can do it again." His win allowed him to claim the sprinters' green jersey from German Marcel Kittel, winner of Sunday's second stage but who was held up by the first crash and unable to contest the sprint. With Slovak Sagan disqualified, Norway's Alexander Kristoff came second and Greipel third. Reigning champion Chris Froome retained second place, 12 seconds behind his Sky team-mate Thomas, with Australian Michael Matthews third on the same time as Froome. — AFP

SOCCER

DOM DWYER, SYDNEY LEROUX LIVE OUT SOCCER'S AMERICAN DREAM

LOS ANGELES: Dom Dwyer and Sydney Leroux are the quintessential American success story. Born abroad, each came to the United States and dreamed of playing for the national soccer team. Along the way they also found each other. This weekend, Dwyer scored in his international debut, a 2-1 exhibition victory over Ghana, just 31/2 months after he became a US citizen. Leroux, who holds dual citizenship, made her national team debut in 2011 and earned winner's medals at the 2012 Olympics and 2015 Women's World Cup.

Dwyer and Leroux are the first husband-and-wife duo to each score for the US national soccer team. "I think it's the coolest thing. The fact is that both of us weren't born here: We followed the American Dream," Leroux said.

The couple has a nine-month old son, Cassius, who was decked out in his own U.S. jersey to watch daddy's debut from the family's home in the Kansas City area. Leroux also plays for FC Kansas City of the National Women's Soccer League, while her husband plays for Major League Soccer's Sporting Kansas City.

"I'm very proud of Sydney and what she's achieved and still achieving in the national team, and I've got quite a few caps to catch up to her and a few goals, too, but hopefully I can live up to it," Dwyer said.

Born in England, Dwyer came to America as a college student, playing at Tyler Junior College in Texas before transferring to South Florida for the 2011 season. He was the 16th overall pick for Sporting Kansas City in the 2012 MLS draft. He has 60 goals in 133 competitive matches for Sporting KC. Dwyer met Leroux in 2013 and they were married in early 2015. The two cleverly announced they'd tied the knot on

Valentine's Day that year, holding hands and wearing their jerseys: No. 2 for her and No. 14 for him under the name Dwyer.

While the couple was starting a family, Dwyer was also working toward a personal goal: In March he became a US citizen. It was the first step toward playing for the national team, a dream that came true in East Hartford, Connecticut, on Saturday when the 26-year-old striker scored in the 19th minute and celebrated with a double back flip.

"It's been a long road to get here, and I really wanted to show the fans and show the country I'm very passionate about this country, and I'm very honored to play for this team, and hopefully it's something we can build on," he said.

He'll have more chances to prove himself in the CONCACAF Gold Cup, the biennial championship for the North America, Central America and Caribbean region. The United States opens Saturday against Panama in Nashville.

"I know that it's a fabulous story that a family has both parents playing for their respective national teams," men's national team coach Bruce Arena said. "That's a pretty incredible story, so I'm real pleased for the Dwyers."

Retired NBA star Kobe Bryant is a good friend of the couple's. "She's like my little sister. I would send her books that I'd read that had helped me, or talk to her every now and then about focus and training. I remember getting the call that she was having a baby and how excited we all were," Bryant said. "And Dom, Dom's just taken his game to another level. And now getting a call to the national team. They're like family." Dwyer and Leroux, a 27-year-old forward, are just the fourth married couple to play for the United States, joining Jim Gabarra and

Carin Jennings, Claudio Reyna and Danielle Egan and Zach Loyd and Casey Nogueira. Egan's only goal was in 1993, four years before she married Reyna.

JUST THE BEGINNING

When Dwyer was named to the national team Leroux posted a loving tribute to social media. "Two kids from two different countries from two completely different walks of life that found their way to America and to each other because of our love for the beautiful game. I can't write a better story but I know this is just the beginning. Welcome to the club. You have some catching up to do though," she wrote.

Leroux was born in Surrey, British Columbia. At 15, and holding dual citizenship, she moved to Arizona in hopes of grabbing the attention of the US Soccer Federation. She played for UCLA and the US Under-20 team before making a single appearance for the senior team in 2011 and scoring five goals in her second appearance, a 13-0 rout of Guatemala in an Olympic qualifier in January 2012.

Leroux has 35 goals in 75 international appearances. She took last year off - missing the 2016 Rio Games and the FCKC season - because of her pregnancy. The couple welcomed Cassius Cruz Dwyer in September.

Cassius has become something of a celebrity on his own, with 62,000 Instagram followers. Leroux returned to the NWSL this season, starting at forward and working hard to regain her pre-pregnancy form. This season she has three goals and an assist. The couple's shared careers bring added challenges to parenthood. "It's not even the balance of being a mom and playing soccer. It's the balance of having your husband

doing the exact same thing that I do," she said following a recent FC Kansas City match. "We don't have family here. It's usually just us, and I think there's just two weekends in the entire season where we're in Kansas City at the same

time. Either I'm home and he's away or he's home and I'm away. So that balance is hard." But she quickly added that it's worth it. "We're both chasing our dreams and I wouldn't have it any other way," she said. — AP



KANSAS CITY: In this photo provided by Sporting Kansas City and taken March 16, 2017, from left to right, Dom Dwyer, infant son Cassius and wife Sydney Leroux gather for Dwyers naturalization ceremony at Charles Evans Whittaker Courthouse in Kansas City, Mo. Dwyer and Leroux are the first husband and wife duo to each score for the US national soccer team. — AP

Sports

Woods released
from program,
continue treatmentSagan disqualified
from Tour for
Cavendish 'elbow'

WEDNESDAY, JULY 5, 2017

PYEONGCHANG OLYMPICS ARE ICY PATH TO WARMER KOREA RELATIONS Page 16



WIMBLEDON: Serbia's Novak Djokovic returns against Slovakia's Martin Klizan during their men's singles first round match on the second day of the 2017 Wimbledon Championships at The All England Lawn Tennis Club in Wimbledon, southwest London, yesterday. — AFP

FEDERER, DJOKOVIC GET FREE PASSES AT WIMBLEDON

LONDON: Roger Federer and Novak Djokovic barely had to break sweat to make winning starts at Wimbledon as their injury-hit opponents retired hurt from their first round matches yesterday. Federer is chasing a record eighth Wimbledon title and he was already well on top at the start of his 19th All England Club campaign when Alexandr Dolgoplov was forced to quit with an ankle injury.

The world number three raced into a 6-3, 3-0 in 43 minutes on Centre Court before the Ukrainian limped off. Federer, who hit his 10,000th career ace in the eighth game of the first set, will face either Dusan Lajovic of Serbia or Greek qualifier Stefanos Tsitsipas for a place in the last 32.

"It feels great to be back on Centre Court," said Federer, who recorded his 85th match win at Wimbledon, passing the mark he shared with Jimmy Connors. Having unexpectedly won the Australian Open in January before taking the clay-court season off to rest, Federer, making a record-equalling 70th Grand Slam appearance, is the favourite to take the Wimbledon crown for the first time since 2012.

"Everybody's got a chance to win Wimbledon and for me it's no different. I already achieved my dream to be back here healthy. Now we'll see how far I can go," Federer said. Djokovic, a three-time Wimbledon champion, was leading 6-3, 2-0 when Slovakian world number 47 Martin Klizan retired after just 40 minutes on Centre Court due to a calf problem.

The 30-year-old Serb will face Adam Pavlasek of the Czech Republic for a place in the last 32. It was the kind of trouble-free first round Djokovic would have been hoping for after the most turbulent period of his career, the 12-time major winner losing in the Australian Open second round and the French Open quarter-finals.

"He had issues walking on to court. I tried to focus on my game plan, I was serving well and when it mattered I made a break," said Djokovic, who is aiming to win a first Grand Slam title since last year's French Open. "It was great to be back on Centre Court. It's the cradle of tennis history, but you never like to end a match this way."

With defending champion Serena Williams sidelined while she prepares to give birth to her first child, the race

to win the women's title is the most wide open in a generation. World number one Angelique Kerber, the 2016 Australian and US Open winner, is among the favourites after reaching last year's final, which she lost to Serena.

The German has failed to maintain that form this season and her poor run culminated in an embarrassing French Open first round loss to Ekaterina Makarova last month.

POTENTIAL STAR

But the top seed showed glimpses of her best form as she saw off American qualifier Irina Falconi 6-4, 6-4 in 87 minutes on Centre Court. "I'm happy to be back, but this year is completely different for me. I'm just happy I'm through the first round," Kerber said. Milos Raonic advanced to the second round with a 7-6 (7/5), 6-2, 7-6 (7/4) win against Jan-Lennard Struff. Big-serving Raonic became the first Canadian man to make a Grand Slam final with his impressive Wimbledon run 12 months ago before losing the title match to Andy Murray.

Argentina's Juan Martin Del Potro, a semi-finalist in 2013, defeated Australian Thanasi Kokkinakis 6-3, 3-6, 7-

6 (7/2), 6-4 as the 29th seed moved towards a potential third round classic against Djokovic.

Australia's Bernard Tomic said he had lost his "respect" for tennis following his lacklustre 6-4, 6-3, 6-4 loss to Mischa Zverev. "I don't know why but I felt a little bit bored out there, to be completely honest," Tomic said.

French 22nd seed Richard Gasquet slumped to a 6-3, 6-4, 5-7, 6-2 loss against Spain's David Ferrer. In the women's draw, Karolina Pliskova underlined why she is the bookmakers' favourite to win Wimbledon as the world number three crushed Evgeniya Rodina 6-1, 6-4.

The 25-year-old Czech emerged as a potential star when she reached the US Open final last year and she has followed up on that breakthrough by making the French Open semi-finals last month.

Former French Open champion Garbine Muguruza, the 14th seed, defeated Russia's Ekaterina Alexandrova 6-2, 6-4. Australian qualifier Arina Rodionova, ranked 166th, saved seven match points before defeating Russian 16th seed Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova 3-6, 7-6 (8/6), 9-7. — AFP

CHINESE REFEREE 'BEATEN' AS DRAW SPARKS MATCH-FIX CLAIM

SHANGHAI: The Chinese FA launched an investigation into a match where a fourth official was reportedly attacked following a controversial draw that triggered claims of match-fixing.

Baoding Rongda were leading 2-1 when the referee awarded visitors Wuhan Zall a penalty during seven minutes of stoppage time at the end of Saturday's fixture in China's second division. The spot-kick was converted and the match ended 2-2.

Angry fans pelted the match officials with debris as they were escorted by security personnel from the pitch at the end, reported state-run newspaper the Beijing News. Baoding chairman Meng Yongli burst into tears at a chaotic post-match press conference, alleging his side had been cheated out of the win.

The Beijing News reported that fourth official Yang Kaizi was beaten up in his dressing room, but the newspaper did not say who was responsible for the attack. Meng gathered reporters on the pitch to announce he was pulling the team out of the league, before quitting as chairman hours later citing "personal reasons".

Baoding, from near Beijing, subsequently apologised and said the club had no intention of leaving the competi-

tion. The Chinese Football Association (CFA) announced an investigation into the controversy.

"CFA is taking this seriously and will treat everyone involved sternly based on facts and regulations," it said in a statement. "We would like the club to express its opinion in a calm manner. In the meantime we call on the fans to remain rational and restrained."

The state People's Daily newspaper yesterday hit out at Meng and Baoding, accusing them of damaging the reputation of Chinese football. "In the history of football there hasn't been any precedent where one could use beating and scolding, as well as quitting the league, to get what one wanted," it said in a strongly worded comment piece.

"For football, when the club boss is crying and shouting to quit the league, when the perpetrators are attacking referees at the door, they have probably forgotten about what they first really wanted in their heart (which is to win the game)."

Chinese football has a history of controversy involving referees and officials and in 2009 launched a high-profile crackdown on corruption dogging the sport, leading to dozens of arrests and prison sentences — AFP



SHANGHAI: Baoding Rongda led 2-1 against Wuhan Zall at home before the visitors were given a penalty that helped them to a 2-2 draw.



MARKAZ: S&P PAN ARAB INDEX ENDED AT 0.6%



GAZIPUR: Bangladeshi rescuers stand on the debris after a Monday evening boiler explosion at a garment factory owned by export-oriented Multifabs Ltd. at Kashimpur area. — AP

BLAST IN BANGLADESH GARMENT FACTORY KILLS 10 MULTIFABS FACTORY WAS BEING RESTARTED AFTER EID HOLIDAYS

KONABARI: A boiler explosion at a Bangladeshi garment plant near the city of Dhaka killed 10 people and injured dozens, emergency workers said yesterday, the latest industrial tragedy to hit one of the world's biggest garment producers. The blast, late on Monday, occurred at a plant operated by local Bangladeshi firm Multifabs while maintenance work was going on, company and fire brigade officials said. The explosion at the boiler, located in a tin-roofed shed, partially damaged a nearby three-storey factory building.

"I heard a big bang when I was having tea outside," factory driver Hafiz Mostafa said, as dozens thronged the factory site and firefighters moved rubble in search of missing persons. "I saw windows, doors, glasses, machinery and a section of the wall of the building go flying." Families scoured the scene for missing people. The plant had been shut for 10 days for Eid holidays at the end of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan and was being readied to resume operations yesterday, when the accident occurred.

"We're looking for my brother. We checked all the hospitals, but have not found him," said Nazim Uddin, whose brother Ershad Ullah worked as an electrician at the plant

for the last decade. Multifabs has many clients in Europe, its website says. The company started operating in 1992 and reached \$70 million in exports in 2016. Its top buyers include fashion chain Linde, which is part of Finland's Stockmann, German supermarket chain Aldi, and Rexholm of Denmark, Faruqi said.

The company said the plant was functioning well and the six-year-old boiler, procured from Germany, had just been serviced. "The boiler was running well," Mahiuddin Faruqi, Multifabs' chairman told Reuters. "After servicing when workers were trying to restart it, it went off." Firefighter Faruk Hussain said a body had been retrieved from the rubble in the morning and that the search was still on for more victims.

Investigation underway

Bangladesh's roughly \$28 billion garment sector, the biggest in the world after China, employs 4 million people and generates about 80 percent of the country's export earnings. It came under scrutiny after the collapse of the Rana Plaza factory complex in 2013 that killed more than 1,100 people, and a fire at a garment factory in 2012 that

killed 112 workers. The Rana Plaza disaster sparked demands for greater safety and put the onus to act on foreign companies sourcing clothing from Bangladesh. A spokeswoman for Stockmann said it was investigating the disaster, but was still seeking more information. She said Stockmann is a member of the industry body Business Social Compliance Initiative (BSCI), and that said Multifabs had cleared a BSCI audit in May 2016 that was valid for two years.

Linde said Multifabs was one of its main suppliers and said it was monitoring the situation. The Multifabs site hurt by the blast made 100,000 garments a day, generated around \$6 million of revenue a month and employed about 6,000 workers, said Mesba Faruqi, factory and operations director in the family-run business.

Numerous concerns

Two international coalitions were formed after Rana Plaza to help fund improvements to building and fire safety at thousands of garment factories across Bangladesh. One of the coalitions, signatories to the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh, inspected the Multifabs site in 2015

and noted among numerous concerns that Multifabs' boiler was not separated by fire-rated construction.

As of last week, however, the Accord's updated corrective plan on the facility listed that issue as having been corrected. But the coalition itself does not inspect boilers, which are monitored by the Bangladesh government. Bangladesh's chief boiler inspector Mohammad Abdul Mannan said his department had inspected the Multifabs' boiler a year ago and that the next inspection had been due this month. Sulav Chowdhury, chief executive of the Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association, of which Multifabs is a member, said the industry had gone through a "huge shift" since the Rana Plaza disaster. "There has been structural change, and we've worked hard for it," he said. "So I'd say this is a stray incident." Still, critics say more work needs to be done. "There is still an enormous amount to be done to improve safety in the Bangladeshi garment industry" said the IndustriALL Global Union, a signatory to the Bangladesh Accord and a member of the Steering Committee. It added that union signatories to the Accord would demand that it be expanded swiftly to include boiler safety. — Reuters

MALAYSIA MUSLIMS BOYCOTT STARBUCKS OVER LGBT STANCE

JAKARTA: Muslims in Indonesia and Malaysia were urged to boycott Starbucks yesterday by major Islamic groups accusing the coffee chain of being pro-gay rights, as concerns grow over rising religious conservatism in both nations. Leaders from Muhammadiyah, Indonesia's second biggest mass Muslim organization, also urged the government to revoke the company's business licence for its stance on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) issues. "The ideology, business and view that they support are against our ideology," Anwar Abbas, Muhammadiyah's head of economic affairs, told AFP.

Another Muhammadiyah leader, Yunahar Ilyas, said the group was calling on "Muslims to not drink in Starbucks so that the income is not used to strengthen LGBT campaigns". Starbucks Indonesia did not immediately respond to AFP requests for comment. The firm is among a slew of US companies to have spoken up against discrimination in the US, with representatives signing a letter to North Carolina's Republican governor protesting legislation targeting transgender people last year.

Hardliners and Islamic groups have led a growing backlash against Indonesia's LGBT community over the past year, which activists believe was triggered by widespread media coverage of a decision in the United States to legalize same-sex marriage. The group Pribumi Perkasa Malaysia this week also called on the government to "re-evaluate the trading license given to companies that support same-sex marriages and LGBT", spokesman Amini Amir Abdullah said in a statement.

The Muslim leaders said concerns about Starbucks arose after reading Starbucks chairman's comment when tackling a shareholder's complaint in 2013 that the company were losing customers due to the firm's stance on LGBT. At the time, Chairman Howard Schultzman, then the chief executive, responded by asking the shareholder to sell the shares. Homosexuality has long been taboo in Malaysia, where 60 percent of the population is Muslim, and where sodomy is a crime punishable by up to 20 years in prison. — AFP

SAMSUNG TO INVEST \$18 BN IN MEMORY CHIP BUSINESS

SEOUL: Samsung Electronics will invest nearly \$18 billion in its chip business, the South Korean firm said yesterday, as it seeks to expand its lead in the global memory chip and smartphone markets. The world's top maker of smartphones and memory chips will invest 20.4 trillion won (\$17.7 billion) by 2021 to expand and upgrade its chip plants in the South Korean cities of Pyeongtaek and Hwaseong, it said in a statement.

The factory in Pyeongtaek, 70 kilometers south of Seoul, is the world's biggest and has recently started production after Samsung Electronics spent 15.6 trillion won over the past two years to build it. The company also plans to expand its NAND chip plant in the Chinese city of Xian to meet booming demand for the chips used in high-end storage products, it said. It did not elaborate on when and how much money it plans to invest there. In

smartphones, Samsung has been increasingly sandwiched by smaller Chinese rivals in the low and mid-end markets, and by Apple's iPhone in the high-end segment.

Samsung—which accounted for more than 40 percent of global memory chip sales in the first quarter of this year—posted in April its biggest quarterly net profit in more than three years. "Our clients are having difficulty securing enough semiconductor chips due to growing global demand for high-tech gadgets," it said. "We plan to actively respond to those demands by making aggressive investments on our production lines at home and abroad," it said.

Analysts say a global shortage of chips may persist throughout 2017, driving prices higher and benefiting major suppliers such as Samsung and another South Korean chipmaker, SK Hynix. Average prices for DRAM chips used in PCs and servers, and

NAND flash chips used in handsets are expected to jump 53 percent and 28 percent respectively this year, according to market researcher IC Insights. The announcement also came after newly elected South Korean President Moon Jae-In set tackling rising unemployment as his top priority. Samsung said its investment would eventually help create as many as 440,000 jobs through 2021, including indirectly, and help bolster Asia's fourth-largest economy.

Samsung to sell recycled Note 7

Elsewhere Samsung Electronics plans to recycle and sell its recalled Galaxy Note 7 phones starting this week in South Korea, salvaging their unused parts. The Galaxy Note FE phone will go on sale in South Korea on Friday at 700,000 won (\$611), about three quarters of its original price, the company said late Sunday.

Samsung said the Note FE has "perfect safety" — unlike the recalled versions that were found to be prone to overheating and catching fire. The supply will be limited to 400,000 units. Overseas sales plans will be determined later, the company said in a statement. 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. 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. The second batch also tended to overheat, prompting Samsung to discontinue the Note 7.

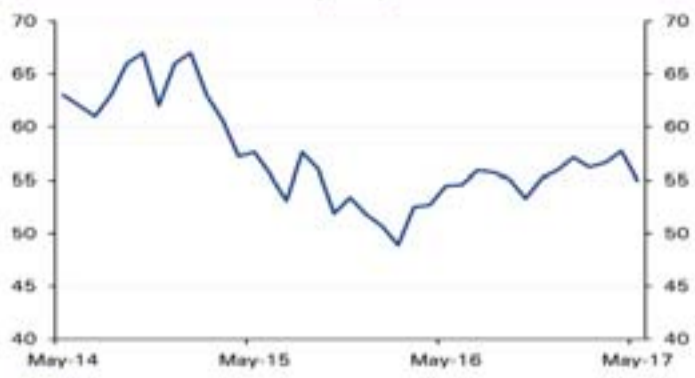
The debacle dealt a blow to Samsung's corporate image. Aviation authorities around the world banned the pricy phone on flight and photos of scorched Note 7 circulated on social media. Samsung spent billions of dollars to recall the Note 7 and fix its damaged brand. The company released investigation results that blamed flaws in design and production of batteries supplied by two battery makers.

After the recall of 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 effort to minimize waste. Like the previous Note series, the Note FE, short for "Fan Edition," features a jumbo screen measuring 5.7 inches (14.48 centimeters) diagonally and a stylus. — Agencies



PYEONGTAEK, South Korea: This undated handout aerial photo provided by Samsung Electronics yesterday shows its new semiconductor plant. — AFP

Chart 4: Dubai economy tracker (index)



Source: Emirates NBD

Chart 7: Consumer price inflation by sector (% y/y, weights in brackets)



Source: Thomson Reuters Datastream

UAE: GROWTH TO MODERATE SLIGHTLY IN 2017 AMID CRUDE OIL REDUCTIONS

NBK ECONOMIC UPDATE

KUWAIT: Real GDP in the UAE is expected to moderate in 2017 as crude production is lowered, in compliance with the agreement among OPEC members to cut crude supply. Whilst the oil sector is projected to act as a laggard on overall growth, the non-oil sector is set to continue to propel forward and offset a contracting oil sector. Subsequently, we foresee real GDP moderating from an estimated 2.4% in 2016 to 2.2% in 2017.

Growth in the oil economy is expected to be limited in the medium-to-long term on the back of planned production cuts. In May, OPEC and a group of non-OPEC nations agreed to extend a six-month output cut that was scheduled to end in June, to at least the end of the first quarter of 2018, in a bid to prop up oil prices. As a result, real oil GDP is expected to decline by around 1% in 2017, before rising by 2.6% in 2018 as production is gradually restored to its pre-production cut levels.

The non-oil economy is forecast to gain some ground in 2017 and maintain that strong momentum in 2018, as the construction and tourism sectors (some of the biggest contributors to non-oil GDP growth) remain buoyant. The construction sector will be supported by easing fiscal consolidation as well as higher Dubai Expo 2020 related infrastructure investments. The non-oil economy is also set to be supported by the residential real estate sector, which after witnessing almost two years of slowing growth is showing signs of stabilization. We anticipate a jump in real non-oil growth from around 2.6% in 2016 to 3.6% and 4.5% in 2017 and 2018, respectively.

The latest data on the UAE's Market Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI), a good gauge of non-oil sector growth, also show that non-oil sector activity is set to remain solid in the near-to-medium term (Chart 3). The headline PMI slipped in May, but still remained fairly solid at 54.3, as stable local economic conditions helped offset some of the softness in global demand.

Overall non-oil economy propped up

Much of the non-oil economy's momentum continued to be fuelled by Dubai's hospitality and construction sectors. The number of passengers passing through Dubai International Airport remains near record highs. In April, this number stood at 7.6 million passengers, up a healthy 9.2% year-on-year (y/y). Despite an ongoing decline in average daily room rates at hotels in Dubai over the past year, demand for hotel rooms remains solid as reflected in the average occupancy rate. According to Ernst & Young's latest MENA Hotel Benchmark Survey, occupancy rates among hotels in Dubai averaged 88% in April (the highest in the MENA region).

Dubai's construction sector is also a major contributor to non-oil growth. Construction activity is expected to hold strong, especially as Dubai prepares for the Expo 2020 event. Projects include the construction of buildings, metro expansions, roads and bridges. The construction sector is also set to benefit from plans to foster the UAE's Vision 2021 and long-term strategy to establish a post-oil "knowledge economy" via the "UAE Strategy for the Future" blueprint. The strategy aims to bolster the nation's non-oil economy and enhance its economic diversification. The resilience in Dubai's non-oil economy is reflected in the Emirates NBD Dubai Economy Tracker Index (DET) (Chart 4). The DET is a forward-looking index similar to the PMI which tracks non-oil activity in Dubai. It has gradually been regaining its momentum amid improvements in the travel & tourism and wholesale & retail trade segments.

Table 1: Key economic indicators

		2015	2016e	2017f	2018f
Nominal GDP	USD bn	370	360	391	425
Real GDP	% y/y	3.8	2.4	2.2	3.9
- Oil	% y/y	5.0	1.9	-1.0	2.6
- Non-oil	% y/y	3.2	2.6	3.6	4.5
Inflation	% y/y	4.1	1.6	2.5	3.0
Budget balance	% of GDP	-2.3	-3.6	-1.8	0.6

Source: Official sources, NBK estimates

Dubai residential property price growth stabilizing

Dubai's residential property prices continued to stabilize, following almost two years of decline amid tighter regulations, higher housing supply and risk aversion. According to Astec's quarterly indexes, prices of apartments and villas in 1Q17 appeared steady, though they are down by 3.0% y/y and 1.3% y/y, respectively. We expect the stabilization period to continue at least until the end of 2017, after which we may see residential price growth pick up on the back of stronger demand. The value of real estate transactions continues to trend lower (Chart 6), while growth in the number of transactions accelerated somewhat recently, which may be indicative of signs of strength in the "more affordable" housing segment.

Inflation face some upward pressure

Inflation in the consumer price index (CPI) softened recently, after retreating from 3.0% y/y in March to 2.2% y/y in April, as housing inflation (which weighs more heavily in the index) continued to trend lower and as food costs declined. We expect CPI inflation to gradually edge higher in the second half of 2017 and average around 2.5% for the year, as a recovery in oil prices pushes inflation in the transport segment up, as housing inflation gathers pace and amid tax hikes planned for selected consumer goods in 4Q17.

Fiscal deficit forecast to narrow in 2017

We expect the fiscal deficit to narrow in 2017 thanks to more prudent public spending and higher revenues. We estimate the fiscal deficit widened to 3.6% of GDP in 2016 after having slipped into a deficit for the first time in six years in 2015 on the drop in oil prices. But with global oil markets recovering and a more prudent fiscal policy in place, the deficit is seen narrowing to 1.8% in 2017 and returning to a slight surplus of 0.6% in 2018.

Thanks to the UAE government's abundant financial reserves that hover above 200% of GDP, fiscal deficits have been manageable. In effect, this has helped both Dubai and Abu Dhabi maintain high levels of public spending, particularly on infrastructure projects. In Dubai, infrastructure spending is set to accelerate in the run-up to the Expo 2020 event. Nonetheless, the major emirates have embarked on some fiscal adjustment and reform, including the establishment of the Federal Tax Authority (FTA), subsidy cuts and the introduction of fees and taxes on selected goods and services. According to official reports, Abu Dhabi has cut back or delayed spending on a number of projects designated as low-priority. Efforts have also been made to rely more heavily on the private sector for implementation of some projects.

The newly established FTA recently announced that it would impose a 100% tax on tobacco and energy drinks and a 50% levy on carbonated drinks from 4Q17. Furthermore, it increasingly looks like the UAE will be one of the first GCC nations to implement a value-added tax

(VAT). The first phase of implementation, scheduled for the beginning of 2018, will include UAE companies with annual revenues greater than \$1 million (Dh3.75 million). At 5%, the VAT is expected to generate around \$3.3 billion (Dh12 billion) in tax revenues or around 1% of GDP.

In an attempt to preserve foreign assets, the UAE has also tapped into international debt markets to plug its budget gap. In April 2016, Abu Dhabi issued \$5 billion in sovereign bonds, the first issuance since 2009. Moody's recently affirmed the UAE's Aa2 credit rating and upgraded its outlook from negative to stable, citing an effective public policy response to the lower oil price environment and improved economic growth prospects. The main credit default swaps (CDS), which are deemed to be good bellwethers of a sovereign's level of risk, fell to new lows following Moody's announcement. As of mid-June, the CDS on five-year Dubai and Abu Dhabi government debt stood at 130 and 52 basis points, respectively. With investors globally in search for yield amid a low global rate environment, the recent credit affirmation and outlook upgrade should be a further boon to the UAE bond market.

Current account surplus to expand

The surplus in the current account balance is projected to expand for the first time in four years in 2017, as oil export earnings recover and non-oil export growth gathers pace. We foresee the current account surplus rising from a six-year low of around 4.8% of GDP in 2016 to a projected 5.1% in 2017.

Non-oil export growth may continue to be affected by a stronger dirham. The stronger dollar has led to an appreciation in the dirham's trade-weighted index, increasing the cost of exports and making it a more expensive place to visit and invest in. Trade with Asian markets has been most affected by the stronger dirham, as their currencies weakened against a stronger US dollar. Tourism, however, has been less affected, given that a majority of tourists are from the GCC, and so has investment in real estate, which depends far more on UAE nationals. As a result, the gains in the tourism and real estate sectors are expected to more than offset the costs of a stronger dollar. This should help keep non-oil export growth ebullient.

Banking liquidity recovers on stronger oil revenues

Following almost two years of moderation, lending activity appears to have plateaued in early 2017 on the back of improvements in the real estate and construction sectors. In April, lending growth came in at a modest 5.3% y/y. Growth in bank deposits continues to trend upward. At the end of 2016, it surpassed lending growth for the first time in almost two years, thanks to higher oil export receipts, which have helped replenish government deposits. After deposit growth logged in a healthy pace of 7.1% y/y in April, the loan-to-deposit ratio subsequently eased further to 99.4% during the same period.

SILICON VALLEY TAKING HEAT OVER SEXUAL HARASSMENT

NEW YORK: Sexism in Silicon Valley may be coming in for a reckoning, prompted by women coming forward with stories of sexual harassment by industry big shots. Apologies, resignations and self-reflection have followed, although it's too soon to tell if they will produce meaningful change.

Dave McClure, a prominent venture investor, said on Saturday that he is sorry for making "inappropriate advances" toward several women in workplace situations, and is no longer leading the venture capital fund he co-founded, 500 Startups. He remains a general partner at the firm. McClure's apology - titled "I'm a Creep. I'm Sorry" - follows a New York Times report on sexual harassment in the tech industry that described offensive behavior by McClure and other prominent venture investors, as related by female entrepreneurs.

Reports of sexism in the industry are not new, but more women are speaking out on the record and naming their harassers. That's even though women have faced ostracism for calling out such behavior, with companies playing down or outright ignoring complaints. Those issues can be particularly acute for women leading startups, as their companies are dependent on clubby venture capitalists for funding. There are signs that this might be changing as more women come forward.

In June, several female entrepreneurs told the trade publication The Information of harassment by a partner at the VC firm Binary Capital; he and another partner resigned a week ago. The accused partner, Justin Caldbeck, issued an apology,

but that itself drew criticism from others in the tech industry, including Google product manager Brenden Mulligan.

"It feels like you're trying to nudge us to feel sorry for you that you need to leave your precious firm behind. YOU CAUSED THIS," Mulligan wrote in a post on Medium. One of Caldbeck's accusers, Niniane Wang, wrote that she "laughed out loud" reading the apology post.

What is sparking the shift? It might be a woman named Susan Fowler. Earlier this year, the former Uber engineer also outlined a culture of harassment at the company. Uber's CEO has since resigned and the company has promised to institute broad changes to prevent such things from happening again. Still, it's too soon to tell whether the incidents will lead to meaningful change. LinkedIn co-founder and former CEO Reid Hoffman lamented a "lack of outrage and commentary" following the revelations.

"This is important, because the question for women entrepreneurs is whether people just don't care," Hoffman wrote in a post on LinkedIn. "Here's why writing quickly is important: YES, MANY OF US DO CARE. This is entirely immoral and outrageous behavior." He called the attention on Silicon Valley's gender problems this year "very good criticism." He urged venture capitalists to establish human resources policies - just as companies and other institutions do - "so that venture capitalists who engage in such behavior face the same sort of consequences that they would if their overtures were directed at an employee." — AP

EU STATES HAVE RIGHT TO BAN UBER: TOP LAWYER

LUXEMBOURG: EU member states can ban ride-hailing pioneer Uber without informing the European Commission because at heart it is an ordinary transport company under their jurisdiction, a top EU lawyer said yesterday. San Francisco-based Uber insists it is a service, not a transport provider, connecting riders with freelance drivers directly and much more cheaply than traditional cab companies. But critics and competitors say this allows it to dodge costly regulation and several countries, led by France, have banned its low-cost UberPop service as a result. Uber France challenged the ban, saying it amounted to regulation of an information company which Paris should have first lodged with the Commission, the European Union's administrative arm.

However, Maciej Szpunar, an advocate general with the Luxembourg-based European Court of Justice, said Uber was in fact an ordinary transport company and so member states could go ahead and regulate its activities without notifying the Commission in advance. He recalled that in a May 11 opinion on a related case concerning Uber Spain, he had concluded that UberPop "does not constitute an information society service."

Szpunar also argued that even if the ECJ,

the EU's highest court, should at some stage determine UberPop was indeed an information service provider, a ban in response to "the illegal exercise of a transport activity does not constitute a technical regulation within the meaning of the directive." "Notification of the draft law to the Commission would not be necessary in that situation either," he said. He argued that member states only had a duty to notify the Commission if they took a specific, targeted action against information service providers.

"Rules which affect those services only in an implicit or incidental manner are excluded from the notification obligation," he said. Uber said in response that it believed Szpunar's opinion was moot because it had changed its business model in France. "We have seen today's statement and await the final ruling later this year," an Uber spokesperson said. The ECJ's advocate general's top lawyers are regularly called on to provide initial guidance to the court which in most instances follows their advice in its final rulings. The French authorities banned Uber after violent protests by traditional taxi drivers. Uber in turn filed complaint with the EU against France and other states, arguing that national policies hostile to its operations violate European law. — AFP



SAN FRANCISCO: People make their way into the building that houses the headquarters of Uber. — AP

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

ASIAN COUNTRIES	
Japanese Yen	2.727
Indian Rupees	4.729
Pakistani Rupees	2.900
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.985
Nepali Rupees	2.955
Singapore Dollar	220.650
Hongkong Dollar	39.043
Bangladesh Taka	3.765
Philippine Peso	6.084
Thai Baht	8.990
GCC COUNTRIES	
Saudi Riyal	81.254
Qatari Riyal	83.688
Omani Riyal	791.320
Bahraini Dinar	809.090
UAE Dirham	82.959
ARAB COUNTRIES	
Egyptian Pound - Cash	20.350
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	16.760
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.223
Tunisian Dinar	125.050
Jordanian Dinar	429.540
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	2.030
Syrian Lira	2.171
Morocco Dirham	31.719
EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES	
US Dollar Transfer	304.500
Euro	341.340
Sterling Pound	389.760
Canadian dollar	231.210
Turkish lira	87.250

Swiss Franc	313.920
Australian Dollar	233.090
US Dollar Buying	303.300

GOLD

20 Gram	254.110
10 Gram	129.970
5 Gram	65.830

DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

Rate for Transfr	Selling Rate
US Dollar	304.150
Canadian Dolla	230.815
Sterling Pound	389.365
Euro	340.715
Swiss Frank	298.260
Bahrain Dinar	806.705
UAE Dirhams	83.205
Qatari Riyals	84.425
Saudi Riyals	82.000
Jordanian Dinar	428.895
Egyptian Pound	16.937
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.986
Indian Rupees	4.720
Pakistani Rupees	2.900
Bangladesh Taka	3.771
Philippines Peso	6.077
Cyprus pound	167.850
Japanese Yen	3.720
Syrian Pound	2.420
Nepalese Rupees	3.953
Malaysian Ringgit	71.970

Chinese Yuan Renminbi	44.975
Thai Baht	9.945
Turkish Lira	86.795

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
Europe		
British Pound	0.389793	0.399793
Czech Korune	0.005277	0.017277
Danish Krone	0.042663	0.047663
Euro	0.342319	0.351319
Norwegian Krone	0.032365	0.037585
Romanian Leu	0.084208	0.084208
Slovakia	0.009074	0.019074
Swedish Krona	0.032023	0.037023
Swiss Franc	0.311103	0.322103
Turkish Lira	0.081312	0.091612
Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.228305	0.240305
New Zealand Dollar	0.216967	0.226467
America		
Canadian Dollar	0.229183	0.238183
Georgina Lari	0.137234	0.137234
US Dollars	0.299750	0.304170
US Dollars Mint	0.300250	0.304170
Asia		
Bangladesh Taka	0.003426	0.004010
Chinese Yuan	0.043378	0.046878
Hong Kong Dollar	0.037066	0.039816

Indian Rupee	0.004208	0.004896
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018	0.000024
Japanese Yen	0.002634	0.002814
Kenyan Shilling	0.002988	0.002988
Korean Won	0.000256	0.000271
Malaysian Ringgit	0.067329	0.073329
Nepalese Rupee	0.002972	0.003142
Pakistan Rupee	0.002711	0.003001
Philippine Peso	0.005984	0.006284
Sierra Leone	0.000067	0.000073
Singapore Dollar	0.215633	0.225633
South African Rand	0.017391	0.025891
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001605	0.002185
Taiwan	0.009727	0.009907
Thai Baht	0.008634	0.009184
Arab		
Bahraini Dinar	0.798548	0.807046
Egyptian Pound	0.015184	0.021092
Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000085
Iraqi Dinar	0.000189	0.000249
Jordanian Dinar	0.423957	0.432957
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000156	0.000256
Moroccan Dirhams	0.019743	0.043743
Nigerian Naira	0.001255	0.001890
Omani Riyal	0.782800	0.788480
Qatar Riyal	0.079170	0.084110
Saudi Riyal	0.079940	0.081240
Syrian Pound	0.001288	0.001508
Tunisian Dinar	0.122374	0.130374
Turkish Lira	0.081312	0.091612
UAE Dirhams	0.081302	0.083002
Yemeni Riyal	0.000988	0.001068

SHADY SLAUGHTERHOUSES, 'COW LAUNDERING' DRIVE SPIKE IN AMAZON

BOCA DO ACRE, Brazil: At the Frigo Amazonas slaughterhouse inside the world's largest rainforest, the owner doesn't mince his words - much of the cattle processed here comes from illegally deforested land. "It's impossible to buy cows from land that isn't deforested," Felipe Oliveira told the Thomson Reuters Foundation in his tatty office at the abattoir in Brazil's Amazonas State.

"Everyone here deforests... if they don't, it's impossible for a family to live," the slaughterhouse boss said, sitting beneath exposed electrical wires hanging from the ceiling. If the Amazon forest, described as the lungs of the planet for its role sucking climate-changing carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere, is to be saved, then addressing the impact of livestock is the most pressing priority, environmentalists say.

Deforestation rises

The clearance of land for cattle pasture is responsible for 80 percent of the forest destruction in the Amazon, according to data from Yale University. The rate of deforestation in the Amazon increased by 29 percent last year, according to government figures. Larger ranchers, truckers and traders have set up elaborate schemes to "launder" cattle raised on illegally deforested land on the legitimate market, said analysts and officials.

Brazilian authorities also link illegal deforestation to other crimes in the Amazon, such as forced labour on farms or "grilagem"

- land grabs - by ranchers who fraudulently register properties occupied by small farmers to produce cattle. Powerful rural businessmen often bribe government officials or land registry agents known as "cartorios" to obtain property title deeds, according to Brazilian prosecutors. These illegally registered plots are often hotbeds of deforestation. As the world's largest exporter of beef and chicken, the importance of Brazil's struggle to contain illegal deforestation for livestock extends far beyond rural Amazonian settlements.

Bovine battles

In Boca do Acre, a poor municipality of wooden stilted homes with 28,000 residents, the cattle industry accounts for more than 70 percent of the economy, officials said. It's a reality replicated in towns throughout the Amazon rainforest, often making it difficult for officials to take a hard line enforcing laws on deforestation. "It's impossible for this city to live without cattle," Josimar Fidelquino, a local government official responsible for environmental monitoring told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. The municipality is the largest cattle producer in Amazonas, Brazil's biggest state, officials said.

The Frigo Amazonas slaughterhouse employs more than 100 staff. In muddy rubber boots, ripped jeans and cowboy hats, they arrive at the plant in open-air trucks to process 1,200 head of cattle per month. The slaughterhouse produces meat exclusively

for the local market in Amazonas State.

"We know illegal cows are being killed by people in town," said Fidelquino, adding that authorities are working on schemes to allow more cattle to be raised on smaller chunks of land. Typically, farmers simply cut down trees on a plot and allow cattle to graze freely, eating plants growing on the scrub land. The same number of cows could be produced on far smaller plots with supplies of hay or other feed, officials said.

The president of the Boca do Acre Ranchers Union, Paulo Castillo, refused interview requests about slaughterhouses and their adherence to deforestation or land registration rules. Under Brazilian law, Amazon land owners must maintain 80 percent of the forest cover on their properties. Some local farmers and slaughterhouse owners say that expectation is unrealistic; environmentalists say it's essential.

Regardless, laws on forest preservation and land governance are not well enforced in remote jungle regions, analysts said. "The Amazon is like the 'Wild West' was in America," said Jose Puppim de Oliveira, a professor at Brazil's Getulio Vargas Foundation university, who studies land politics. "Forest land is considered unproductive, as are the people living there," he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

'Constant problem'

While small slaughterhouses like Frigo Amazonas producing for the local market are known to flout environmental laws, they

account for a comparatively small part of Amazon deforestation, said University of Wisconsin professor Holly Gibbs. About 90 percent of Brazil's cattle is processed in slaughterhouses that can export nationally or internationally, Gibbs said, and they are a driver of deforestation.

Large cattle companies say they are taking the problem seriously by improving their monitoring of suppliers and working with the government and environmentalists to try to keep cattle produced on illegally cleared land out of their supply chains. Brazil-based JBS (JBSS3.SA), the world's largest meatpacker, has pledged not to buy cattle from deforested land in the Amazon, said an official at the company which is in the midst of a separate political corruption scandal. "Building a supply chain free from deforestation is a constant challenge for the entire industry," a JBS official told the Thomson Reuters Foundation in an email. The company has been successful in stopping its direct suppliers from deforesting land, the official said, but monitoring indirect suppliers remains a "major challenge".

Following the cows

Brazilian cows are supposed to have two tracking numbers so their origins can be traced by authorities. The first is a health registration document known as a GTA - which shows cattle have received the right vaccinations along with information about the animal's transportation history. The second is certification from Brazil's environment

ministry known as a CAR showing that they were raised on legally registered land adhering to forest protection rules.

GTA documents could be the "holy grail for ending deforestation", said Gibbs, by acting as a passport for cattle. They could allow cattle to be tracked from birth until death and as they move between farms to trace legality. But the information is not publicly available.

Companies agree. JBS wants authorities to launch a new "Green GTA" to allow for better tracking of the origins of cattle. Government officials in Boca do Acre said they had no information about possible improvements to the GTA system. Without clear tracking data, ranchers can move cattle from illegal land to legally registered properties just before selling them to slaughterhouses, Gibbs said.

The border post in Amazonas State, where cattle documents are supposed to be inspected before bovines travel into neighboring Rondonia State, has been shuttered for months, said a cook who works at locked, dusty building. The lack of checks makes it harder for companies to monitor their supply chains. Back at Frigo Amazonas, slaughterhouse boss Oliveira says more paperwork under an expanded GTA system would make life even more difficult for small farmers. "Most of the small farmers here don't have titles or land registration," Oliveira said. "How could they get these papers? Some can't even sign their names." —Reuters



DUBLIN: Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, left, and Irish Taoiseach Leo Varadkar exchange gifts during their meeting at Farmleigh House. —AP

BRITAIN, US 'TURNING INWARD', CANADIAN PM SAYS IN IRELAND

DUBLIN: Britain and the United States are "turning inward," Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said at a press conference with his Irish counterpart yesterday in which both leaders took swipes at their heavyweight neighbors. Trudeau also said during a visit to Dublin that there were "clear disagreements" with the United States ahead of the G20 summit this week, where US President Donald Trump is expected to attend.

"The choices made by the United States on trade and climate change are at odds with the majority of G20 countries, or even all the other G20 countries," he said after talks with Ireland's Leo Varadkar. Trudeau predicted that there would be "robust and honest exchanges about how to serve not only our citizens but the whole planet" at the summit, while adding that such meetings were also a chance to try to find "common ground".

The United States and Canada are locked in a trade dispute, with the US accusing Canada of exporting its products at unfairly low "dumping" prices. Canada is also a major supporter of the Paris Agreement to combat global warming, which Trump has said he wants to pull out of.

Both leaders issued thinly veiled criticism of their neighbors' politics. "There are

tremendous opportunities for countries like Canada and Ireland, at a time where perhaps our significant allies and trading partners in the case of both the US and the UK are turning inward or at least turning into a different direction," Trudeau said.

The sentiment was echoed by Varadkar, who reiterated his country's commitment to the European Union as it prepares for Britain's exit from the bloc. "We each share a relationship with a very big neighbor, a neighbor that has to a certain extent decided to go in a different direction at least for the time being," he said. Varadkar said that "unfortunately" Britain had chosen to leave the European Union and would not be able to negotiate free-trade agreements like the one between Canada and the EU until it has officially left.

"I can't see a scenario where Britain could remain a member of the EU, even in transitional period, and then negotiate other trade deals on their own". Varadkar, the son of an Indian migrant and Ireland's first openly gay prime minister, said he and Trudeau had discussed a wide range of issues, including the benefits of immigration and diversity. "Both countries and both governments are committed to multilateralism as the best means by which we can solve the world's problems," Varadkar said. —AFP

MARIJUANA SALES IN NEVADA EXCEED STORES' EXPECTATIONS

GETTING HIGH ON THE MASSIVE MONETARY SUPPLY

LAS VEGAS: Recreational marijuana sales have exceeded the expectations of Las Vegas area store owners, who have seen long lines outside their dispensaries since Saturday, when Nevada became the fifth state with shops selling pot to the public. That move jump-started a market projected to be fueled by the tens of millions of visitors that Sin City welcomes each year.

Eager pot customers on Monday again lined up before dispensaries opened their doors. Some were looking to make their first purchase since Saturday, and others were shopping for seconds. Tourists and locals alike have taken advantage of the change in state law. "I'm a very happy with the way sales have gone and continue to go, especially when you consider that the word didn't really get out ahead of time," said Andrew Jolley, president of the Nevada Dispensary Association and a store owner. "The public really only had a couple of weeks' notice, whereas Colorado had a full year to prepare."

Nevada voters approved legalizing recreational pot in November, but regulations needed before the sales could start weren't approved until the past two weeks. The state later this week will release a report regarding the unannounced enforcement inspections that were conducted Saturday at dispensaries across the state.

Edibles and concentrates

The demand for recreational marijuana has been such that dispensaries had to turn away customers in line over the weekend, and at least one extended its hours of operation. Dispensaries reported wait times of 45 minutes to an hour Saturday afternoon and up to 20 minutes Sunday. The Euphoria Wellness dispensary had 50 people waiting to make purchases midmorning Monday. Its marketing coordinator,

Jim Ferrence, said budtenders helped at least 1,000 customers during the first two days of legal recreational pot sales.

Customers on average bought a quarter of an ounce of marijuana flowers and a sampling of various edibles and concentrates, Ferrence said. "Everyone was calm, cool and collected. No unruly crowds at all," he said. Those 21 and older with a valid ID can buy up to an ounce of pot. As of Friday, the state had licensed 44 dispensaries to sell recreational marijuana. Thirty-nine of those shops are in the Las Vegas area. More than 42 million tourists flock for business and pleasure to Las Vegas every year. They along with visitors to the rest of Nevada are expected to make nearly

two of every three recreational pot purchases in the state.

But people can only use the drug in a private home as it remains illegal to consume it in public, including the Strip, hotels and casinos. Violators face a misdemeanor citation and a \$600 fine. Fifteen tourists on Monday hopped on a bus for a three-hour tour of dispensaries in the Las Vegas area. The "Cannabus" took the visitors to two stores with whom they have an agreement to allow riders to skip the lines.

The recreational marijuana sales did not cause Las Vegas police a headache over the weekend. The department did not deploy additional officers and does not track misdemeanor citations, Officer Larry Hadfield on Monday said.

"It was business as usual," he said. "Everything went smooth as far as we can tell." The state stands to earn millions from the sales of recreational marijuana, but the tax collection data won't be available for several weeks.

Nevada joins Colorado, Oregon, Washington and Alaska in allowing adults to buy the drug that's still banned by the federal government. The market in the Silver State is expected to outpace all others in the US, at least until California starts its sales. "With all due respect to Denver, Seattle, and Portland, Las Vegas is already the party capital of the world, and this is just an extension of that," Ferrence said. "There's no question that the demand is ever going to relent." —AP



LAS VEGAS: A person buys marijuana at the Essence cannabis dispensary. —AP

INDIAN CINEMAS SHUT DOWN IN TAX PROTEST

NEW DELHI: More than 1,000 cinemas in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu have closed in protest at a hike in taxes after the government introduced a nationwide levy. Movie theatres in the southern state darkened their screens from Monday, saying a state tax of 30 percent on tickets on top of the new national tax of 28 percent will deter cinema-goers and encourage piracy. The government introduced a new goods and service tax (GST) on Saturday in India's biggest-ever fiscal reform. It intends to replace more than a dozen national and state levies with a single unified tax code. But as part of negotiations to get states to accept the GST, the government agreed some could impose additional local levies. Tamil Nadu has targeted cinema tickets. "The

tax rate on tickets is 58 percent, the highest in the country," Tamil Nadu Theatre Owners and Distributors Association President Abhirami Ramanathan told AFP. "It is a burden on movie-goers and defeats the objective of the new tax regime," he said. Ramanathan added that the taxes would encourage people to illegally download films.

The association accepts the new GST but says cinemas cannot afford the state duty as well. The Tamil film industry is India's second biggest after Mumbai-based Bollywood, and the state accounts for a huge chunk of the \$2.1 billion annual box office earnings across the country. Tamil film industry representatives say the taxes could affect the livelihoods of nearly one million people. —AFP



CHENNAI: In this photograph take on July 3, 2017, Indian residents sit in front of a closed cinema amid a shutdown called to protest the implementation of the Goods and Services Tax (GST). —AFP

POLAND HOPING TO EMULATE TRUMP'S BUSINESS ACUMEN

WARSAW: Poland hopes to woo Donald Trump the businessman with new investment opportunities in eastern Europe when the US president pays a whistle-stop trip to Warsaw on Thursday en route for a G20 summit in neighboring Germany. Amid transatlantic tensions over trade, security and climate change, Poland's right-wing, eurosceptic government wants to put the focus firmly on improving business ties between the United States and ex-communist central and eastern Europe.

Trump, a wealthy businessman, will attend a gathering of the "Three Seas" initiative, launched jointly by Poland and Croatia last year, which aims to bolster trade, energy ties and infrastructure along a north-south axis stretching from the Baltic states down to the Balkans. The three seas are the Baltic, the Adriatic and Black Sea.

Some European Union officials are skeptical about the project, which they see as an attempt by Poland - at loggerheads with Brussels on a range of issues - to build a leadership role in a region that includes the EU's poorest member states. Trump, who has also clashed with the EU on a range of issues, is expected to promote US natural gas exports in his address to about 10 leaders attending from across a region that is

keen to reduce its heavy reliance on Russian energy. Poland, the largest economy in the ex-communist region, received its first shipment of US liquefied natural gas (LNG) last month at its Baltic port of Swinoujscie.

Gas Corridor project

The chief executive officer of Poland's state pipeline operator GAZ-System said the Three Seas summit could give a boost to its North-South Gas Corridor project, which aims to diversify gas supplies away from Moscow. "Political support is extremely important for such projects, it helps with their timely delivery," Tomasz Stepien told Reuters, adding that this could also help Poland tap EU funds if Brussels deems the corridor a priority.

The North-South Gas Corridor, expected to be completed in the next two-three years, will help send gas supplied from the LNG terminal in Swinoujscie and also from a planned Baltic pipeline through Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary to a new LNG terminal in Croatia. Until now the region's main trade routes have tended to run from east to west rather than north to south, partly reflecting Germany's economic dominance - but that is starting to change. —Reuters

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<p>Duplex & Triplex Villas</p>	<p>3/4 Bedrooms + 3/4 Bathrooms +Big Salon + Separate pool All Master Bathrooms is Marble</p>
<p>Volleyball Court / Basketball Court / Hotel Lobby Pools + Jacuzzi / Billiard / 213 Car Parking Areas</p>	

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SHARES, OIL STUMBLE AFTER FLYING START

LONDON: World shares and oil pulled back and bonds and gold were back in favor yesterday, as a long-range ballistic missile test by North Korea and July 4 holidays for US markets restricted risk appetite. Asian shares were pushed lower and South Korea's won slid to a 16-week low after the North's missile landed in Japanese waters amid claims from Pyongyang that it could now strike "anywhere in the world". Europe dropped too as the first fall in oil prices in nine days pushed down commodity stocks and traders also cashed in some of gains made by the STOXX 600 on Monday which had been the biggest in over two months.

Traditional safety plays fared well. The Japanese yen and gold were both higher, as were

European bonds and Treasuries, which have been clobbered by recent signs that the era of emergency stimulus and ultra low interest rates might be coming to an end. Sweden's central bank sounded reassuringly cautious yesterday even as it hinted at tighter policy going forward.

That took the wind out of the Swedish crown that had been the best performing global currency over the last week. The Australian dollar also took a tumble as its central bank steered clear of rate hike talk at its latest meeting. Credit Agricole FX strategist Manuel Oliveri said the Swedish Riksbank's move showed how wary central banks remained about their currencies, while the day's other main focus was North

Korea's posturing. "North Korea is continuing to provoke," he said. Although markets were now used to these kind of events he added: "It is a bit more important as it came ahead of the G20 meeting this week." Leaders from the Group of 20 nations are due to discuss steps to rein in Pyongyang's weapons programmes when they meet in Germany. US President Donald Trump wrote on Twitter: "North Korea has just launched another missile. Does this guy have anything better to do with his life?" in an apparent reference to North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.

The dollar lost 0.2 percent on the yen to leave it buying 113.19 yen. It made almost as much back against the high flying euro however, leav-

ing the six currency dollar index steady at 96.259. It had seen its biggest jump since the start of March overnight, as a stronger-than-expected rise in the June Institute of Supply Management (ISM) national factory activity index also propelled the 10-year Treasury yield to its highest since mid May.

Emerging strains

There were increasing signs that alongside the geopolitical jitters, higher global borrowing rates and the dollar were starting to pressure emerging markets after their stellar start to the year. MSCI's widely-tracked emerging equity index saw its sharpest one-day drop in nearly three weeks and most Asian currencies were weaker. The won is now down 3 percent over the last two weeks, the Indonesian rupiah has erased weeks of gains in the last two days and the Philippine peso is stuck near multi-year lows.

"The bigger-picture driver for these movements you are seeing in emerging market currencies at least over the past two weeks, are signs of a more hawkish turn from central banks - including the ECB, Fed and the Bank of England," UniCredit EM FX analyst Kiran Kowshik said. The next major data point is likely to be Friday's monthly US jobs report. China's central bank meanwhile warned yesterday that its economy still faces "relatively big" downward pressure and that parts of its financial system

lacked sufficient regulation.

MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan ended down 0.6 percent. Japan's Nikkei surrendered gains to end 0.1 percent down, South Korea's KOSPI closed 0.6 percent lower, though Hong Kong was hardest hit by the regional jitters as it slumped as much as 2 percent at one point. Tokyo, reacting to the North's missile test, strongly protested what it called Pyongyang's clear violation of UN resolutions, and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said he would ask the presidents of China and Russia to play more constructive roles in efforts to stop Pyongyang's arms program. Commodity markets also saw a shift. Gold was shining at \$1,224 an ounce while oil posted its first session of losses in nine, ending their longest run of gains since February 2012, as traders closed positions ahead of the July 4 US holiday. US crude slipped 0.5 percent to \$46.90 a barrel while global benchmark Brent dropped to \$49.50 as traders cashed in some of gains from a 3.7 percent leap — its biggest one-day gain since December 2016 — on Monday.

"We see a recovery for oil prices in H2 2017 from current levels, with OPEC production cuts, a slowdown in global supply growth and seasonally firming demand driving up prices," BMI Research said, although it added that "large-volume supply additions will keep price growth flat year-on-year in 2018". — Reuters

Daily Kuwait Stock Exchange Report				Global			
Tuesday 04 July 2017							
Index	Change	Closing	Last Closing				
Price Index	▲ 73.55	6,638.77	6,565.22				
Weighted Index	▲ 1.85	397.66	395.81				
KSX 15	▲ 6.77	908.79	902.02				
Trades							
Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last	Change
MARIN	76	71	181550	13,533	9	76	▲ 12.6
IPG	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	330	— 0.0
NAPESCO	1.450	1.450	1	1	1	1.450	▲ 63.0
ENERGYH	41.0	33.0	68,258	2,419	26	35.0	▲ 0.5
GPI	38.2	37.0	133,100	4,998	11	38.0	— 0.0
ASAR	72	70	25,442	1,817	25	72	▲ 12.0
Oil & Gas			486,351	22,768	72	992.09	▲ 42.40
KFOUC	270	270	50	14	1	270	▲ 16.0
BPOC	579	570	157,500	90,741	15	574	▲ 4.0
ALKOUT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	590	— 0.0
ALQURAN	336	335	187,375	62,806	22	335	▲ 1.0
Basic Materials			344,925	153,560	38	1230.43	▲ 17.30
KCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	460	— 0.0
CABLE	425	407	312	127	2	407	▼ -8.0
SHP	201	200	2,000	401	2	201	▼ -5.0
PCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	520	— 0.0
PAPER	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	300	— 0.0
MRC	88	75	830	71	6	88	— 0.0
ACICO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	262	— 0.0
HCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	208	— 0.0
KBMAC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	136	— 0.0
NICBM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	198	— 0.0
EQUIPMENT	49.0	46.4	30,100	1,397	2	49.0	▲ 1.0
NCCI	119	119	50	6	1	119	— 0.0
GYPSSUM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	95	— 0.0
SALBOOKH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	59	— 0.0
AQTY	827	804	1,803,913	1,408,262	135	804	▼ -14.0
EDU	370	365	107,030	39,461	21	370	— 0.0
CLEANING	45.0	38.0	113,900	4,348	10	38.4	▼ -6.6
KGL	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	80	— 0.0
KPCP	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	165	— 0.0
HUMANISOFT	4,200	4,194	114,948	482,454	31	4,200	▲ 260.0
NAFAIS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	150	— 0.0
GFC	69	67	30,000	2,058	3	69	▲ 3.5
MAFADIBEN	27.1	26.9	33,000	892	4	26.9	▼ -0.2
CGC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	619	— 0.0
MTCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	56	— 0.0
UPAC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	851	— 0.0
ALAFCO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	315	— 0.0
MUBARRAD	73	72	93,300	6,756	11	73	▼ -1.0
LOGISTICS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	51	— 0.0
SCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	78	— 0.0
GCIM	76	76	10,000	760	1	76	▲ 2.0
QIC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	78	— 0.0
FCEM	83	79	2,414	198	3	83	▼ -0.1
RKWC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	90	— 0.0
SPEC	89	86	410,995	36,196	14	88	— 0.0
Industrials			2,752,792	2,043,397	246	1890.90	▲ 38.40
PAPCO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	190	— 0.0
CATTL	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	221	— 0.0
DANAH	72	71	121,918	8,670	7	71	— 0.0
FOOD	2,399	2,180	101	221	3	2,399	▲ 99.0
Consumer Goods			122,019	8,892	10	1065.79	▲ 13.30
MHC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	453	— 0.0
ATC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	1,190	— 0.0
YACCO	184	182	100	18	2	184	▲ 24
Health Care			100	18	2	1634.49	▲ 24.30
KCIN	1,392	1,275	2,146	2,979	4	1,392	▲ 232
KHOT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	250	— 0.0
SULTAN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	67	— 0.0
CABLETV	30.0	25.0	3,728	107	5	30.0	▲ 1
EYAS	700	621	8,620	6,018	13	700	▼ -66
IFAHR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	300	— 0.0
OULAFUEL	119	118	126,408	15,032	22	118	— 0.0
MUNTAZAHAT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	82	— 0.0
JAZEERA	465	465	19,154	8,907	3	465	▼ -7
SOOR	119	119	20,111	2,393	13	119	— 0.0
FUTUREXID	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	107	— 0.0
ALRAI	120	120	148	18	1	120	▼ -1
ZMAH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	51	— 0.0
Mazzan	925	911	129,020	117,705	16	911	▼ -14
Consumer Services			309,335	153,159	77	987.77	▼ -1.90
ZAIN	417	407	2,410,589	991,377	247	409	▼ -2
OOREDOO	1,100	1,052	4,127	4,454	9	1,062	▼ -18
HITSTELEC	39.8	38.5	100,185	3,883	15	38.9	▼ 0
VIVA	820	785	46,621	36,660	54	804	▲ 19
Telecommunications			2,561,522	1,036,605	325	577.11	▲ 3.80
NBK	668	665	1,274,672	875,479	84	668	▲ 2
CBK	244	240	571,000	137,760	18	241	▲ 1
CBK	306	300	175,132	82,783	22	306	▲ 2
ABK	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	327	— 0.0
ALMUTAHED	398	390	306,100	120,755	22	390	▼ -10
KIB	247	245	29,095	7,128	7	245	— 0.0
BURG	334	330	149,020	49,359	19	334	▲ 3
KFIN	485	479	2,238,842	1,079,257	124	482	▲ 4
BOUBAYAN	406	405	319,190	129,441	28	405	— 0.0
AUB	210	205	4,875,100	1,015,517	118	208	▲ 2
ITHAR	44.9	43.4	2,574,440	113,595	77	44.1	▲ 1
WARRASBANK	256	252	235,074	59,731	99	253	▲ 1
Banks			12,747,865	3,640,805	618	911.60	▲ 3.90
KINS	260	260	10	3	1	260	▲ 10
GINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	530	— 0.0
AINS	430	430	17,782	7,846	1	430	▼ -0.0
WINS	97	80	2,481	198	3	97	▲ 15.4
KUWAITRE	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	188	— 0.0
FTI	50	47.5	87,771	4,197	26	48.0	▼ -1.0
WETHAQ	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	55	— 0.0
BKQWT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	355	— 0.0
Insurance			168,044	12,044	31	1035.41	▲ 3.20
SOKOOL	46.0	43.0	45210	1,980	5	45.5	▲ 0.5
KRE	55	54	703,600	38,195	15	54	▼ -0.5
URC	85	85	7,850	666	1	85	— 0.0
NRE	113	109	846,051	93,195	34	109	▼ -5.0
SRE	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	390	— 0.0
TAM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	400	— 0.0
AREEC	138	124	2,100	262	2	138	— 0.0
MASSALEH	44.9	38.3	625,167	24,811	15	44.9	▲ 5.0
ARABREIC	33.9	33.7	460	15	2	33.7	▲ 0.4
ERESCO	40.0	38.0	843,170	32,851	34	38.1	▲ 0.1
MBANEE	700	750	442,438	333,623	35	750	▼ -1.0
INJAZZAT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	90	— 0.0
INVESTORS	23.5	22.4	134,058	3,041	10	22.4	▼ -1.1
IRC	31.5	30.0	30,000	910	4	31.5	▲ 1.7
ALTUJARIA	73	73	89,500	6,534	3	73	▲ 0.2
SANAM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	90	— 0.0
AAYANRE	85	84	180,000	15,040	7	84	▼ -0.6
AQAR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	66	— 0.0
ALAGARIA	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	35.0	— 0.0
MAZAYA	115	110	1,890,290	212,109	42	111	▲ 2.0
THEMAR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	70	— 0.0
TUJARA	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	58	— 0.0
TAMEER	31.3	29.1	32,100	938	4	31.3	▲ 0.5
ARKAN	85	84	84,000	7,130	6	84	▲ 0.4
ARGAN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	160	— 0.0
ABYAR	22.8	22.5	847,900	19,211	18	22.7	▲ 0.2
MUNSHAAT	53	51					

AIRASIA JET FORCED TO RETURN AFTER SUSPECTED BIRD STRIKE

SYDNEY: An AirAsia flight to Malaysia was forced to return to Australia shortly after take-off following a suspected bird strike, the carrier said yesterday, the second incident involving the airline in the country in two weeks. Passengers said the plane shook and bangs came from the right engine of AirAsia X flight D7 207 following its departure from Australia's Gold Coast to Kuala Lumpur late Monday.

The flight carrying 345 passengers and 14 crew was diverted to Brisbane airport just north of the eastern city and landed safely, the Malaysian carrier said. "Two birds remains were found on the runway," the low-cost carrier said in a statement, adding that the starboard engine had experienced a "suspected bird strike." "We are following all regulatory guidelines to ensure the safety and well-being of our guests, who are currently being attended to by our ground staff," AirAsia X chief Benyamin Ismail added.

"We would like to commend our pilot and crew members for their professionalism and swift action to reassure passengers who were on board flight D7 207 and to land the aircraft safely in Brisbane airport." The Malaysian airline said it was arranging a special flight to

take the passengers to Kuala Lumpur. Passenger Calvin Boon said he saw flames going through the engine.

"The whole engine blown and flame went through it all like (video game) Resident Evil man really, Resident Evil," the Australian Broadcasting Corporation quoted him as saying. Another passenger, Tim Joga, told The Sydney Morning Herald the plane started to vibrate minutes after take-off. "The plane started shuddering then there were a couple of loud bangs and a lot of light," Joga said. "I could see an orange light coming from the windows." Another AirAsia flight from Perth to Kuala Lumpur experienced technical issues about 90 minutes into the journey on Sunday and was forced back to Australia, with one passenger saying the plane was "shaking like a washing machine."

The airline suffered its first fatal incident in December 2014, when AirAsia Flight QZ8501 crashed in stormy weather off Indonesia killing all 162 people on board. That followed two Malaysia Airlines tragedies in the same year which left hundreds dead, raising concerns among some travelers about the safety of the country's carriers. —AFP



BRISBANE: This picture taken by Calvin Boon yesterday shows fire rescue personnel beside the starboard engine of an AirAsia Airbus A330, after the aircraft on flight D7207 made an emergency landing at the Brisbane International Airport. —AFP



BENTONG, Malaysia: A Shell petrol station employee holds up life-sized cutouts depicting a female staff member, pictured in uniform with a black Muslim headscarf and placed beside individual self-serve petrol pumps as part of a promotional campaign, as they were pulled from display at a Shell station. —AFP

SHELL REMOVES WOMAN CUTOUTS OVER GROPPING

KUALA LUMPUR: Energy giant Shell said it is removing life-sized cutouts of a Malaysian woman in a headscarf from its petrol stations in the Muslim-majority country after photos of men groping the figure started circulating online. The adverts featuring a female employee, wearing a red T-shirt with a Shell logo, black trousers and a black headscarf, smiling and with her thumb raised in the air, had been placed at Royal Dutch Shell's stations in Malaysia.

Images of men kissing the cardboard cutouts, holding her hand and grabbing her chest and crotch started circulating on Facebook in recent days, in what Shell blasted as "distasteful and suggestive acts". The woman, named in local reports as 25-year-old Nor Shafila Khairussalleh, who worked at a Shell station, criticized the "extreme behavior" of the men in the images. "They may just be joking, but I feel humiliated because that is still me although it is just an image," she told news portal mStar.

The Anglo-Dutch group said in a statement that "we do not condone this disre-

spectful act, which is completely against the culture of Malaysians and Shell's core values. We urge our netizens and members of the public to refrain from sharing these images further." The standee (cutout) will be removed from all our sites with immediate effect."

An AFP journalist at a Shell station in Bentong, just outside the capital Kuala Lumpur, said two of the cutouts had been removed from the forecourt and placed inside the site's shop. A staff member said the cutouts were removed Monday and were going to be placed in storage. Shell did not say how many cutouts were removed and which stations were affected. The oil giant has a network of over 950 stations across Malaysia and serves nearly one million customers a day, according to its website. More than 60 percent of Malaysia's population of over 30 million people are Muslim and social attitudes—particularly outside cities—can be conservative. Religious conservatism has also been rising in Malaysia in recent years, chipping away at a one-time reputation for moderation and tolerance. —AFP

AUSTRALIA HOLDS INTEREST RATES ECONOMY ENDURES SOFT PATCH

SYDNEY: Australia's central bank held interest rates at a record low yesterday as the economy endures a soft patch while wage growth stutters, shunning indications of a move to tighter monetary policy elsewhere. The Reserve Bank of Australia has sat on the sidelines since August, having cut borrowing costs 300 basis points since November 2011 to support the economy as an unprecedented mining investment boom ends.

"The board judged that holding the stance of monetary policy unchanged at this meeting would be consistent with sustainable growth in the economy and achieving the inflation target over time," RBA governor Philip Lowe said in a statement. The RBA's neutral stance disappointed analysts, who had tipped a more hawkish outlook in line with other recent statements from central banks in Canada and Britain. The Australian dollar slipped almost half a US cent to US\$0.7638.

"I think they are just acknowledging that they see the risks as balanced," JP Morgan economist Henry St John said, citing an improving labor market and varied housing market conditions across the country. "Our view is that (going forward) we might see some further deterioration in the activity data, and that would cause them to shift to a more dovish stance."

While Australia marked 26 years without a recession after the economy grew 0.3 percent on-quarter in January-March, the 1.7 percent annual rate of expansion was the weakest since 2009. The country

is also experiencing slow growth in wages and household income, underemployment and high levels of household debt, fuelling speculation that rates will remain unchanged for some months.

Lowe acknowledged the slowdown in economic growth but said it was "partly reflecting temporary factors." "The Australian economy is expected to strengthen gradually, with the transition to lower levels of mining investment following the mining investment boom almost complete," he said. A booming housing market, particularly in Sydney and Melbourne, has also made a further cut in rates appear less likely, economists said, while macro-prudential tools have been used to tighten lending, particularly to investors.

"There was nothing in today's statement to shift our view that rates will stay on hold for some time," Commonwealth Bank of Australia economist Kristina Clifton said in a note. She added that while economic growth was expected to lift by 2018, a sizable part of it would come from higher liquefied natural gas (LNG) production, which is not expected to generate much employment or inflation. The RBA also said in May that increases in underlying inflation—which strips out volatile items—over the next year or two would be "quite gradual" because of low wages growth. "We need to see the RBA lift these inflation forecasts materially before rate rises are back on the table anytime soon," Clifton added. —AFP

CREDIT HOUSES SEND ILLINOIS POSITIVE FINANCIAL SIGNALS

SPRINGFIELD: Two of the nation's top credit-ratings agencies signaled Monday that it would be a good idea for Gov. Bruce Rauner to accept the results of climactic weekend action to resolve the nation's longest budget stalemate since the Great Depression, but with Democrats trumpeting progress, there was only silence from minority Republicans who fear their governor's agenda will be steamrolled.

Fitch Ratings and S&P Global Ratings, having earlier threatened to toss Illinois' creditworthiness into "junk" status without swift action to approve a budget, smiled favorably Monday on the financial outlook. Fitch described as "concrete progress" Sunday's 72-45 vote in the House of Representatives for a 32 percent increase in the income tax rate to bump up state revenue by \$5 billion a year, along with a \$36 billion spending outline.

Minutes after Sunday's House vote, Rauner promised a veto. On Monday, Chicago Democratic House Speaker Michael Madigan pledged an override. The fireworks could begin soon. Senate President John Cullerton of Chicago scheduled Tuesday morning votes on whether to accept House changes to the budget legislation, concurrence action necessary to send them to Rauner's desk.

Illinois has entered its third consecutive fiscal year without a budget plan because Rauner has resisted inking a deal without business- and political-climate changes to boost commerce, restore political faith and relieve local property-tax owners.

Ratings agencies, having had particular interest in Illinois even prior to the current mess, are monitoring the potentially disastrous side effects: A \$6.2 billion annual deficit, \$14.7 billion in past-due bills, and the parceling out of payments to service providers that prompted a federal judge on Friday to order the state to pay nearly \$300 million more per month owed to managed-care Medicaid providers.

Fitch and S&P put Illinois' bond

rating at "BBB-minus," or one step above "junk," a designation that would signal to investors that buying Illinois debt is a speculative venture. Moody's Investors Service was closed Monday for the holiday.

The favorable announcements provided a momentary respite from the brinkmanship.

Madigan said he was pleased with the credit-rating news. But the agencies expressed caution.

six months of 2016. "Temporary or partial measures, or a failure to enact a budget within the context of this session, would result in a downgrade," it said.

But Republicans were missing from view in the Capitol Monday after accusing the Democrats of shoving the tax increase down their throats without any action on Rauner's structural changes such as cost-cutting to the compensation

to work with the Republicans on those issue until they're resolved," Madigan said. Republicans appear unconvinced. Rauner spokeswoman Catherine Kelly said the speaker is "clearly trying to distract from his 32 percent permanent tax hike." Spokeswomen for Senate Minority Leader Bill Brady and House Minority Leader Jim Durkin would not say why the two men didn't attend today's meeting, but Durkin's



SPRINGFIELD: Illinois House Speaker Michael Madigan, D-Chicago, speaks with reporters after a leaders meeting at the Capitol. —AP

"If a budget is enacted, the degree to which it closes the state's structural deficit, provides a pathway for addressing the backlog of unpaid bills, and its impact on cash flows, will be important factors in our review of its effect on Illinois' credit quality," the S&P analysis read.

Fitch wants to see a full-year spending plan, not a stop-gap measure like the one that financed Illinois government for just the last

program for injured workers and a statewide property tax freeze.

In what's been a 13-day special session that began in late June, Democrats and Republicans have negotiated those issues, but the GOP claims talks broke down over the weekend in advance of Madigan calling the budget votes. Madigan said Monday they're ongoing.

"We worked with Republicans today on those issues; we'll continue

office said he would not attend yesterday. Brady's spokeswoman indicated without all leaders attending, Brady won't either.

The absences raised questions in Cullerton's mind about where negotiations, particularly on the tangential Rauner demands, stand.

"We have to do something," Cullerton said. "The House has acted but we'd prefer to do it in agreement with Republicans." —AP

TECHNOLOGY SELL-OFFS SEND ASIA MARKETS INTO REVERSE

HONG KONG: Asian markets reversed early gains yesterday to sit mostly down in the afternoon as a sell-off in technology shares overshadowed a record close on Wall Street and a rally in energy firms. After surging on years of low borrowing costs, the tech sector is suffering selling pressure from profit-taking around the world and increasing talk among central banks that the age of cheap money is coming to an end.

With big-name firms such as Apple and Google parent Alphabet suffering in recent weeks, their Asian counterparts are also feeling the pinch. In Hong Kong internet giant Tencent sank more than four and speaker-maker AAC Technologies dived 2.4 percent, while Tokyo-listed Sony lost 1.7 percent and Sharp dived 1.9 percent. Samsung Electronics retreated 0.5 percent in Seoul.

And those fed through to broader markets, while traders have also been spooked by news that North Korea had tested its first missile that could reach the United States. Tokyo ended down 0.1 percent, Seoul slipped 0.6 percent and Singapore gave back 0.5 percent and Taipei 0.6 percent. Shanghai was off 0.4 percent. Hong Kong plunged 1.5 percent, with Kenny Wen, a strategist at Sun Hung Kai Financial in Hong Kong, telling Bloomberg News: "Many investors were betting 25,500

was the supporting level for the Hang Seng Index and have bought lots of futures on it.

"As the index fell below that level this morning, some people got panicked and chose to sell their holdings." However, Sydney ended 1.8 percent higher after a more than two percent dive in the previous two days and as Australia's central bank held off raising interest rates. The losses came despite a positive lead from Wall Street where the Dow chalked up another record high ahead of Independence Day celebrations.

Energy rally

Markets reversed early gains that were led by energy firms as oil prices bounced. Crude lost around a fifth of its value between mid-May and mid-June, hitting 10-month lows, as traders fretted that a pick-up in US output was offsetting cuts by OPEC and Russia. But it has recovered around half of those losses in recent weeks as US firms have cut the number of rigs pumping, easing supply glut worries. While both main contracts dipped on Tuesday, regional energy firms tracked the previous day's gains of around two percent on the oil market.

PetroChina and CNOOC surged in Hong Kong, while Tokyo-listed Inpex was more than one percent up. However, refiner Idemitsu

Kosan plunged more than 11 percent in Japan after saying it plans to raise up to \$1.2 billion in a share sale despite opposition from its founding family to a merger with rival Showa Shell Sekiyu KK Showa Shell soared more than seven percent. In Sydney, Woodside Petroleum and Rio Tinto jumped.

The dollar held up after bouncing Monday from last week's sharp losses thanks to upbeat factory figures. Analysts also suggested central banks were stepping back from hawkish comments indicating monetary tightening. The pound was weighed by below-forecast manufacturing data while European Central Bank officials looked to temper boss Mario Draghi's suggestion of higher interest rates. "We've seen an aggressive pullback from last week's speculative bets fuelled by the hawkish chorus of central bankers," said Stephen Innes, senior trader at OANDA.

However, the greenback fell against the yen following North Korea's missile test, the latest provocation to ratchet up tensions over its nuclear weapons ambitions. Investors are awaiting the release Wednesday of minutes from the Federal Reserve's June policy meeting and key US jobs data Friday. In early European trade London fell 0.4 percent while Paris and Frankfurt each shed 0.3 percent. —AFP



FORD BECOMES NO 2 NON-PREMIUM BRAND IN JD POWER'S 2017 INITIAL QUALITY STUDY

KUWAIT: Ford has jumped to No 2 of all non-premium brands in JD Power's 2017 Initial Quality Study - the brand's best-ever ranking in the annual study now in its 31st year. The Ford brand improved to 86 problems per 100 vehicles from 102 in 2016. This improvement helped Ford tie for fourth among all brands from 11th in 2016.

"As Ford accelerates the pace of innovation, we believe this best-ever quality ranking demonstrates our new technologies are reliable and easy to use," said Bennie Fowler, group vice president, Quality. "The rapid improvements rated by third-party quality experts such as JD Power motivate us to improve our fitness even more as quality is a race that's never finished."

Seven Ford and Lincoln vehicles are in the top three in their respective segments. Ford Expedition and Mustang took top quality honors in their segments. Ford is delivering new innovations with better quality than average as the industry has faced challenges rolling out new advancements such as connectivity and driver-assist features. Specifically, Ford is:

- Equipping approximately 70 percent of vehicles with advanced SYNC 3 technology with significant quality improvements.
- Offering more models in the United States with popular driver-assist features such as adaptive cruise control and forward collision warning than

any other full-line manufacturer.

- Continuing the rapid rollout of advanced EcoBoost engine technology and light weighting innovations such as aluminum-bodied F-Series trucks - combining to deliver improved performance, capability and efficiency.

"We are moving into an exciting new period of innovation in transportation, so it is very important to keep the human experience at the center of all we do, including delivering any new technology with quality," said Fowler. To explore the 2017 Ford line-up, please visit the Alghanim Auto New Vehicle Showroom in the Shuwaikh Industrial Area, opposite from the Classical Car Museum and Sirbb Circuit.



GBK AJYAL TRAINEES COMPLETE INTERNATIONAL ASSIGNMENT

KUWAIT: As part of its Ajyal Graduate Development Program, Gulf Bank recently selected its top three participants to complete a four-week internship and field training program at several leading financial institutions in Frankfurt, Germany. The Ajyal Graduate Development Program was developed by Gulf Bank, in cooperation with Institute of Banking Studies (IBS), to nurture young Kuwaiti talent early in their career to develop them into 'holistic bankers' and prepare them for future leadership positions at the Bank. This is the third class to graduate from the Ajyal Program.

The Ajyal training took place at the following financial institutions: MISR Bank-Europe, KT Bank AG, and ICF Bank AG. The topics covered throughout the four-week program included Trading Global Markets, Frankfurt Stock Exchange and Financial Management. One of the highlights of the trip was a visit to the Kuwaiti Consulate in Frankfurt.

Commenting on this achievement, Mrs Salma Al-Hajjaj, General Manager of Human Resources at Gulf Bank said: "The Gulf Bank Ajyal program is a world-class program that works to develop the skills of young Kuwaitis. Through Ajyal we are helping to shape the future of Banking in Kuwait by building a cadre of well-rounded, highly trained, and motivated banking professionals."

Mrs Al-Hajjaj added: "The aim of this internship abroad was to provide our three top Ajyal students with an international banking experience to enrich their knowledge and understanding of global financial markets and the banking industry. This type of exposure provides a different perspective and a unique learning opportunity. We strongly believe that these types of opportunities contribute to professional and personal development. We thank our banking partners in Germany for providing such a rich experience for our top Ajyal students."

The selection process for the Ajyal participants is based on specific criteria. The criteria is Kuwaiti employees who have worked at the Bank for no less than one year, but no more than three years can apply online. After the initial screening, the candidates must successfully complete a series of assessment tests, starting with language proficiency tests, followed by numerical and analytical ability, psychometrics, and group discussions. Each stage of selection is based on elimination and only those who successfully complete each stage advance onwards. The final step is an interview with a panel of Gulf Bank executives who select a group of 20 candidates.

QATAR AIRWAYS ACCELERATES GLOBAL EXPANSION WITH PRAGUE AND SOHAR

KUWAIT: Qatar Airways, the 2017 Airline of the Year as awarded by Skytrax, yesterday confirmed the expedited launch of two new destinations by the end of August 2017, with several more announcements to follow shortly. Joining Qatar Airways' global network, which spans six continents, are: Sohar, Sultanate of Oman, which will launch on 8 August; and Prague, Czech Republic, which will launch on 21 August.

The airline has confirmed the start of its new service between Doha and Sohar with three-weekly flights beginning 8 August, while the service between Doha and Prague will operate on a daily basis from 21 August. Both destinations will be operated by Qatar Airways' Airbus A320 aircraft. Qatar Airways recently launched a direct daily service to Dublin, Republic of Ireland, as part of its rapid global expansion strategy, with service to Nice, France, commencing 4 July, and flights to Skopje, Republic of Macedonia, on 17 July.

Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive, His Excellency Mr. Akbar Al Baker said: "Having recently been named Airline of the Year at the prestigious 2017 Skytrax World Airline Awards, it is now our turn as an airline to give back to all of our passengers and supporters around the world. Qatar Airways' announcement today comes at a time when we are accelerating our global expansion plans by expediting the launch of these two new destinations. Qatar Airways is committed to connecting more people to more places, through our five-star hub, Hamad International Airport, while supporting our global message of 'Going Places Together.'"

Other new destinations planned for the remainder of this year and

2018 include Canberra, Australia; Chiang Mai, Thailand; Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; San Francisco, US; and Santiago, Chile. A total of 25 new destination launches will take place throughout 2017-2018. The new Prague and Sohar routes will be served by an Airbus A320 aircraft featuring 12 seats in Business Class and 132 seats in Economy Class.

Passengers can use any transfer time to take advantage of the many activities and services available at Hamad International Airport, from the free Wi-Fi, airside swimming pool and play areas for children, through to the multiple quiet areas in which passengers can relax, as well as the amazing array of duty free shopping and dining options.

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

The award-winning airline also recently revealed the first Boeing 777 equipped with the airline's new and unique seat design, Qsuite, at Le Bourget Airport, during the Paris Air Show 2017. Since its official debut, Qsuite has already been featured on the Doha-London Heathrow route, and will be followed by service to Paris and New York, with the airline's fleet retrofitted at the rate of one plane per month.



BB NAMES WINNER OF AL THURAYA SALARY ACCOUNT MONTHLY DRAW

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank, the second largest in terms of assets, announced today Sheikh Duajj Al Sabah as the lucky winner of the Al Thuraya Salary Account monthly draw. The winner was presented with a Nissan Patrol SUV. The draw rewards new and existing customers who transfer their salary to Burgan Bank by offering them a chance to win a

Nissan Patrol SUV every month. With every KD 10 available in the account, the customer receives one chance to enter the draw. The Al Thuraya account holders have the option to hold money in Kuwaiti Dinar and any other major currencies and can access other account-related services such as standing orders, loans and credit cards and much more.



GAZPROM TO START NEW GAS DELIVERIES TO CHINA

MOSCOW: Russia will start supplying gas to China through a new pipeline by the end of 2019, state gas giant Gazprom said yesterday, as part of a mammoth \$400-billion deal. "Today a deal was signed...about the date of the start of gas deliveries through the 'Power of Siberia' pipeline. It is December 20, 2019," Gazprom boss Alexei Miller told journalists. After a decade of negotiations, Russia inked a mammoth 30-year deal in May 2014 to supply its key eastern neighbor with natural gas through a pipeline for the first time.

Construction began in September 2014 on the 4,000-kilometre "Power of Siberia" pipeline to

connect Yakutia's gas fields with the Sea of Japan (East Sea) and also with the Chinese border. Miller said that the project was now moving into a "key phase" and was being carried out "strictly on schedule", adding that he had "no doubts" the 2019 delivery deadline would be met. The agreement Tuesday between Gazprom and the China National Petroleum Corporation came as part of a visit to Moscow by Chinese leader Xi Jinping. Moscow and Beijing have ratcheted up trade and cooperation in recent years as the Kremlin has increasingly looked east after its ties with the West collapsed over the Ukraine crisis. — AFP

REWARDS AWAIT TIJARI CARDHOLDERS VIA AL-TIJARI SUMMER CAMPAIGN

KUWAIT: Within its ongoing endeavors to reward its customers by launching innovative campaigns & programs that offer them chances to win distinctive prizes throughout the year, particularly during the holiday's season, the Bank announced the launch of its summer promotional campaign under the caption "Your Dream Trip with Al-Tijari".



the draw to announce 6 winners during the period from July to September 2017 i.e. two winners a month. As for the cruise which the lucky winners will win, it includes business class airline tickets to Barcelona in Spain or Florida in USA along with accommodation in a 5 star hotel before starting the cruise. Ms Al Rumaih added that the winners will enjoy an all-expenses paid cruise and each winner may have one companion during the cruise trip.

As for the draw eligibility, she explained that every KD 10 spent for paying the value of purchases by using the credit or prepaid cards in Kuwait will give the customer one chance to enter the draw and 3 chances when spending the same amount by using the credit or prepaid cards or even debit cards to pay for purchases and shopping outside Kuwait. Further, the campaign will start in the beginning of July 2017 and last till the end of September 2017 where the first draw will be held in August 2017, added Al Rumaih.

Speaking on the details of this campaign, Ms Sahar Al Rumaih GM - Corporate Credit Division & Acting GM - Retail Banking Division said that this campaign comes within the Bank's efforts to reward its cardholders and was organized in cooperation with Royal Caribbean International, one of the best cruise planners to Europe and Caribbean on the largest cruise ship in the world.

Ms Sahar Al Rumaih went on explaining that the Bank will hold

Al-Tijari cards offer their holders a number of privileges & benefits and are the best travel companion as credit cardholders enjoy free travel insurance apart from the concierge service in and outside Kuwait in addition to Al Tijari Offers program that provides discounts with renowned restaurants and retailers & stores in Kuwait. Commercial Bank of Kuwait always endeavors to cater for its customers' needs as a token of appreciation of their constant trust and loyalty.

SAINSBURY'S SALES GROWTH PICKS UP ON REVAMPED RANGES, PRICE FOCUS

LONDON: Sainsbury's, Britain's second biggest supermarket group, saw sales growth accelerate in its latest quarter, as it benefited from revamped food ranges and held down prices of staple goods despite rising inflation. The group, which purchased Argos-owner Home Retail last year, cautioned trading conditions remained tough, however.

Sainsbury's and major rivals - market leader Tesco, Asda and Morrisons - are grappling with the rapid growth of discounters Aldi and Lidl and having to cope with more expensive food imports due to a fall in the value of sterling since Britain voted to leave the European Union. "The market is competitive and we continue to manage cost price pressures closely," CEO Mike Coupe said yesterday.

But he said Sainsbury's strategy of building a distinctive food offer ranging from own-brand "basics" to specialist "free from" and organic lines; growing its general merchandise and clothing businesses; and bearing down on costs, was working. "Our strategy is delivering and we are well placed to navigate the external environment." Shares in Sainsbury's rose up to 3 percent. "Sainsbury's has improved volume growth while improving their price position in the quarter," said Bernstein analyst Bruno Monteyne, who has an "outperform" rating on the stock.

The group's retail like-for-like sales rose 2.3 percent, excluding fuel, in the 16 weeks to July 1, its fiscal first quarter - ahead of analysts' average forecast for a rise of 2 percent, and growth of 0.3 percent in the previous quarter. This was the first quarter following the Home Retail purchase for which the group did not issue separate like-for-like sales data for Sainsbury's and Argos.

Inflation, savings
"Our performance is really driven by

own label (food) products and the fact that we've invested a lot over the last few years," Coupe told reporters, highlighting 430 new and improved products in the quarter, including over 250 new Summer eating lines. He said that while overall grocery inflation had trended upwards in the quarter, Sainsbury's prices versus competitors were better.

"We've done a great job with our suppliers within our own (label) business to hold our costs down which means our price position has improved in the quarter," said Coupe. He noted that prices of staples, such as broccoli, milk, apples, chicken breasts and eggs were cheaper than they were three years ago.

Sainsbury's said total grocery sales rose 3.0 percent, while transactions at supermarkets were up 1.9 percent. General merchandise sales increased 1.0 percent. Online grocery sales increased 8 percent, while sales at convenience stores were up 10 percent.

Finance chief Kevin O'Byrne said he was comfortable with analysts' average profit forecast of 572 million pounds for 2017-18, down from 581 million in 2016-17. Such an outcome would represent a fourth straight year of profit decline.

Sainsbury's has held takeover talks with franchised convenience chain Nisa, according to two industry sources, and is also reportedly considering a move for wholesaler Palmer & Harvey. Coupe, however, wouldn't be drawn on possible deals. "A business like Sainsbury's is always looking at potential opportunities. We talk to lots of people," he said. "Most of these conversations come to nothing," added O'Byrne. Sainsbury's said it remained confident of delivering 160 million pounds of earnings synergies from the Argos purchase by 2019 and was on track to achieve 145 million pounds of other cost savings this year. — Reuters

NEXANS WINS DATA CENTRE SOLUTION VENDOR AWARD

DUBAI: Nexans, the worldwide leader in cables and cabling systems, announced that it has won the 'Data Centre Solutions Vendor of the Year' award at the 5th Integrator ICT Champion Awards held recently in Dubai. Nexans was recognized for the inroads it has made in the Data Centre market with its product innovations that meet key operational, economic, energy saving and future growth requirements.

"Nexans has been at the forefront in bringing in innovative Data Centre solutions that help reduce costs of operations and provide scalability options for future expansions. Along with our 'Smart Choices for Digital Infrastructure', our cabling solutions have become preferred choices for Data Centre upgrades in the region and receiving this accolade is a proof of the popularity of our solutions," said Tarek Helmy, Regional Director Gulf and Middle East, South & East Africa at Nexans Cabling Solutions. "This award is very special to us as it is recognition of our efforts in providing continuous innovation in the Data Centre cabling space and a testimony of our team's commitment to providing the highest-level expertise, excellence, customer service and support to our customers and partners," Helmy added.

Nexans' Data Centre solutions include LANmark copper and fibre cabling that provide a migration path to 10/25/100 Gigabit/s transmission speeds as well as optimize often limited space usage. The company's latest Data Centre innovations under the name of 'Smart Choices for Digital Infrastructure' includes different Data Centre infrastructure technologies that help managers to support flexible, cost effective bandwidth architectures, optimized space usage and faster modular deployment. The company's LANmark cabling helps minimize Data Centre disruptions, reduces recurring costs and ensures greater continuity for better business vitality.

Nexans LANmark-7A and LANmark-8 are designed for scalable and cost-effective high-speed DataCentre applications and helps customers scale up to 25G and 40G Ethernet over copper cabling. Nexans was the first global vendor to offer commercially available Cat8 cabling solutions in this region. Nexans' LANmark ENSPACE solutions for Data Centers include patch panels, cables and connectors which will help Data Centers meet the growing data demands. ENSPACE brings a number of benefits to the end-user by optimizing space usage and cable management. With ENSPACE

the company can offer end-users a fiber cabling solution that is able to reduce rack space by 50 percent compared to conventional fiber systems.

"Nexans offers solutions that enable enterprise customers to build and operate an efficient and cost-effective digital infrastructure that will support their growth objectives. Our cabling solutions enable high bandwidth to manage any unprecedented increase in data transmission and at the same time maximizes the up-time for Data Centers. Being recognized for our efforts in the Data Centre space is definitely a huge achievement. We look forward to surpassing our clients' expectations with continuous innovation, service and support," Helmy concluded.

The 5th Integrator ICT Champion Awards selected winners based on an online industry survey that was conducted for over month and included shortlisted nominees in various categories. The awards were hosted by JNS Media International, the publishers of VAR Magazine and The Integrator. Nexans was selected for the 'Data Centre Solutions Vendor of the Year' category for its attractive offerings and deployments for the growing Data Centre market.



Tarek Helmy, left, receives 'Data Centre Solutions Vendor of the Year' award.



KOUROU: This file photo shows the Ariane 5 rocket with a payload of four Galileo satellites lifting off from ESA's European Spaceport in Kourou, French Guiana. —AFP

EUROPE'S GALILEO SATNAV IDENTIFIES PROBLEMS BEHIND FAILING CLOCKS

PARIS: Investigators have uncovered the problems behind the failure of atomic clocks onboard satellites belonging to the beleaguered Galileo satnav system, the European Commission said Monday. For months, the European Space Agency—which runs the program—has been investigating the reasons behind failing clocks onboard some of the 18 navigation satellites it has launched for Galileo, Europe's alternative to America's GPS system.

Each Galileo satellite has four ultra-accurate atomic timekeepers, two that use rubidium and two hydrogen maser. But a satellite needs just one working clock for the satnav to work—the rest are spares. Three rubidium and six hydrogen maser clocks were not working, with one satellite sporting two failed timekeepers. "The main causes of the malfunctions have been identified and measures have been put in place to reduce the possibility of further malfunctions of the satellites already in space," commission spokeswoman Lucia Caudet said.

ESA found after an investigation that its rubidium clocks had a faulty component that could cause a short circuit, according to European sources. The investigation also found that operations involving hydrogen maser clocks need to be controlled and closely monitored, the same sources said. The agency has taken measures to correct both sets of problems, the sources added, with the agency set to replace the faulty component in rubidium clocks on satellites not yet in orbit and improve hydrogen maser clocks as well.

"The supply of the first Galileo services has not and will not be affected by the malfunctioning of the atomic clocks or by other corrective measures," Caudet said, and that the malfunctions have not affected service performance.

Most accurate clocks ever

The Galileo system went live in December last year, providing initial services with a weak signal, having taken 17 years at more than triple the original budget. The civilian-controlled service is seen as strategically important for Europe, which relies on two military-run rivals—GPS and Russia's GLONASS. ESA boasts that Galileo has the most accurate atomic clocks ever used for geolocalisation. Similar to traditional clocks relying on the tick of a pendulum, atomic timekeepers also count regular oscillations, in this case switches between energy states of atoms stimulated by heat or light.

But Galileo has experienced many setbacks, including the placement of two satellites in the wrong orbit. In January, ESA director general Jan Woerner announced that the system had suffered a setback with its atomic clocks. The EU Commission expects Galileo to be fully operational by 2020. ESA signed a contract in late June with a German-British consortium to build eight more satellites for Galileo, which will eventually comprise 30 orbiters. Twenty-four will be operational, in three orbital planes, with the rest standing by as spares, in orbit and on the ground.

Once fully deployed, Galileo aims to pinpoint a location on Earth to within a meter—compared to several meters for GPS and GLONASS. Clients of a paying service will be able to receive even more accurate readings—down to centimeters. Such accuracy will be very useful in search-and-rescue operations. All new cars sold in Europe by 2018 will be fitted with Galileo for navigation and emergency calls. Its high-precision clocks will also boost synchronization of banking and financial transaction, telecommunications and energy smart-grids, making them more efficient. It should also boost the safety of driverless cars. —AFP

ROBOTS TO AID TOURISTS, CLEAN FLOORS AT SK AIRPORT

ROBOT ESCORTS TRAVELERS TO THEIR GATES

INCHEON: Robots will start roaming South Korea's largest airport this summer, helping travelers find their boarding gates and keep its floors clean as the country prepares for its first Winter Olympics game. Starting this month, Troika, a self-driving robot made by LG Electronics, will rove the Incheon International Airport, telling travelers how long it takes to get to boarding gates and escorting them to their flights. A jumbo cleaning robot will help cleaning staff swab the wide expanses of floors in the airport west of Seoul.

Troika, about the size of a young teen, is equipped with a rectangular display on its front that looks like a giant smart phone screen and can show flight information, an airport map and weather data. Its partly rounded head has a flat touch screen face that displays blinking or smiling eyes or information. The guiding bot responds to its name. Travelers can insert their tickets into its scanner to get flight information, and Troika will then ask if they want to be escorted to their gates, warning laggards to "Please stay closer so I can see you." Troika's debut piqued the interest of many in the airport. Heads swiveled and children approached with curiosity as the 140-centimeter robot with its white body and black screens glided through the terminal. Robotics is gaining ground in South Korea, where many big businesses are automating factory production lines. South Korean researchers have won awards in international robot competitions. In 2015, South Korea's Team KAIST beat the US and Japan to win the DARPA Robotics Challenge with a humanoid that completed tasks without losing balance.

Service-oriented

But South Korea has been slow to introduce human-like robots or interactive robots in public places like hotels or stores, unlike its neighboring Japan where Softbank's humanoid Pepper is no stranger. Incheon International Airport Corp. believes it is the first to introduce such service-oriented robots in a South Korean public space. Another state-owned airport operator, Korea Airports Corp., which operates 15 international airports in South Korea but not Incheon airport, also has teamed up with local companies to introduce air-purifying robots to measure air quality and clean terminals.

Incheon International Airport Corp. said in a statement that it does not expect the robots to replace human workers, but just to help, especially with overnight shifts and physically demanding tasks. Future plans include deploying robots to advise travelers about items that are banned on flights, serve food in airport lounges and carry cargo. South Korea expects the robots to bums its reputation as a technology leader when the country hosts the 2018 Winter Olympics



INCHEON: In this photo, Troika, a self-driving robot made by LG Electronics, moves around for visitors at the Incheon International Airport in Incheon, South Korea. —AP photos



INCHEON: In this photo, LG Electronics cleaning robot moves to clean the floor at the Incheon International Airport in Incheon, South Korea.

in Pyeong Chang. But its maker LG is still working out the kinks.

Troika can recognize its location inside the airport terminal and navigate around passers-by and obstacles, said Kim Hyoungrook, the chief research engineer at LG Electronics who oversaw the robot's development. It's meant to be a fast learner.

By July, Troika will be speaking English, Korean, Chinese and Japanese, Kim said. However the robot can only perform a few simple tasks it has been programmed to carry out. During a recent test run it failed to recognize some voice commands, such as when Amethyst Ma of San Jose, California, asked how she and

her kids could catch a bus to the city. Still, such machines could be quite useful for overseas travelers, Ma said. "It's becoming common in a lot of public places so that's why I came to it right away," she said. "It's a source of information, especially if you don't speak the local language." —AP

AMOUNT OF MALWARE TARGETING SMART DEVICES DOUBLE IN 2017

DUBAI: The total number of malware samples targeting smart devices has reached more than 7,000, with over half of these emerging in 2017, according to Kaspersky Lab's researchers. With over 6 billion smart devices being used across the globe, people are increasingly being put at risk from malware targeting their connected lives. Smart devices—such as smartwatches, smart TVs, routers, and cameras—are connecting to each other and building the growing Internet of Things (IoT) phenomenon, a network of devices equipped with embedded technology that allows them to interact with each other or the external environment.

Because of the large number and variety of devices, the IoT has become an attractive target for cybercriminals. By successfully hacking IoT devices criminals are able to spy on people, blackmail them, and even discreetly make them their partners in crime. What's worse, botnets such as Mirai and Hajime have indicated that the threat is on the rise. Kaspersky Lab's experts have conducted research into IoT malware to examine how serious the risk is.

They have set up honeypots—artificial networks, which simulate the networks of different IoT devices (routers, connected cameras etc.) to observe malware attempting to attack their virtual devices. They did not have to wait long—attacks using known and previously unknown malicious samples started almost immediately after the honey pot was set up. Most of the attacks registered by the company's experts targeted digital video recorders or IP cameras (63 percent), and 20 percent of hits were against network devices, including routers, and DSL modems, etc.

About 1 percent of targets were people's most common devices, like printers and smart home devices. China (17 percent), Vietnam (15 percent), and Russia (8 percent) emerged as the top-3 countries with attacked IoT devices, each presenting a large number of the infected machines. Brazil, Turkey and Taiwan—all at 7 percent, follow. To date during this ongoing experiment, researchers have been able to collect information about more than seven thousand malware samples designed specifically to hack connected devices. According to experts, the reason behind the

rise is simple: The IoT is fragile and exposed in the face of cybercriminals. The vast majority of smart devices are running operating systems based on Linux, making attacks on them easier because criminals can write generic malicious code that targets a huge number of devices simultaneously. What makes the issue dangerous is its potential reach. According to industry experts, there are already more than 6 billion smart devices across the globe.

Most of them do not even have a security solution and their manufacturers usually do not produce any security updates or new firmware. This means there are millions and millions of potentially vulnerable devices—or maybe even devices that have been already compromised. "The issue of smart device security is serious, and one that we should all be aware of. Last year showed that it is not just possible to target connected devices, but that this is a very real threat. We have seen a huge increase in IoT malware samples, but the potential is even greater," said Vladimir Kuskov, security expert, Kaspersky Lab.

"Apparently, high competition in the market of DDoS attacks is

pushing attackers to search for new resources that will help them make increasingly powerful attacks. Botnet Mirai demonstrated that smart devices can give cybercriminals what they need, with the number of devices they can target now reaching billions. Various analysts have predicted that by 2020, this could grow to 20-50 billion devices," he added. In order to protect your devices, Kaspersky Lab security experts advise the following:

- If you don't need to, do not access your device from an external network.
- Disable all network services you don't need to use the device.
- If there is a standard or universal password that cannot be changed, or the preset account cannot be deactivated, disable the network services in which they are used, or close access to external networks.
- Before using the device, change the default password, and set a new one.
- Regularly update the device's firmware to the latest version—if possible.

STUDY REVEALS FROGS FLOURISHED AFTER DINOSAURS CROAKED

MIAMI: A massive asteroid strike that wiped out the dinosaurs millions of years ago created room for frogs to colonize the Earth, said a study Monday that shows how frogs became among the most diverse vertebrates in the world. As many as 10 types of frogs are believed to have survived the mass extinction some 66 million years ago, which erased three-quarters of life on Earth, said the report in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

Of these survivors, just three major kinds of frogs went on to diversify and populate the planet. Some 6,700 known frog species exist today. Nearly nine in 10 — 88 percent — of modern frogs can trace their roots back to these three lineages of hardy ancestors. "Frogs have been around for well over 200 million years, but this study shows it wasn't until the extinction of the dinosaurs that we had this burst of frog diversity that resulted

in the vast majority of frogs we see today," said study co-author David Blackburn, associate curator of amphibians and reptiles at the Florida Museum of Natural History.

"This finding was totally unexpected." Until now, scientists believed that most modern frog species emerged at a steady pace between 66 million and 150 million years ago. But the latest research shows frogs burst onto the scene more like an "explosion," as the tiny amphibians swept into habitats left vacant by other creatures.

Largest genetic study to date

For the study, researchers in China and the United States compiled the largest set of frog genetic data ever evaluated. Genetic samples were taken from 156 frog species and combined with previously published data on 145 more species. Past studies looked at five to 12

genes, while the current one examined variations in 95 genes, offering a much more detailed look at how individual species relate to one another.

Researchers also studied fossil records to determine when different kinds of frogs likely diverged from one another. Researchers found "evidence of not one but three explosions of new frog species, on different continents, and all concentrated in the aftermath of the mass die-off of most dinosaurs and many other species about 66 million years ago," said the report. Two of the three surviving lineages—Microhylidae and Natanuracame out of Africa. The third, Hyloidea, spread throughout what became South America. "These frogs made it through on luck, perhaps because they were either underground or could stay underground for long periods of time," said co-author David Wake of the University of California. "This certainly draws renewed

attention to the positive aspects of mass extinctions: They provide ecological opportunity for new things." Similar evolutionary events happened with birds, said co-author David Hillis, professor of integrative biology at University of Texas, Austin. "We know that the mass extinction event wiped out most of the dinosaurs, except for a few bird species, which then exploded in diversity and became one of the dominant groups of land animals," he said. "As we look at more and more groups of life, we see the same pattern, and that turns out to be the case for frogs as well."

Finding new habitats

In particular, the demise of dinosaurs and most birds created new niches for frogs in the late Cretaceous Period. Some climbed into trees for shelter, leading to the evolution of the now ubiquitous tree frogs. "We think there were massive alter-

tations of ecosystems at that time, including widespread destruction of forests," said Blackburn. "But frogs are pretty good at eking out a living in microhabitats, and as forests and tropical ecosystems rebounded, they quickly took advantage of those new ecological opportunities."

Some frogs also adapted by producing young without a tadpole stage—today the standard for about half of all frog species. Modern frogs face a host of threats to their survival, including habitat destruction, human encroachment and climate change. "I think the most exciting thing about our study is that we show that frogs are such a strong animal group," said lead author Peng Zhang, a researcher at Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou, China. "They survived from the mass extinction that completely erased dinosaurs and boomed back quickly."—AFP

HANOI TO BAN MOTORBIKES BY 2030 CRITICS BLAME MOTORBIKES FOR AIR POLLUTION

HANOI: Officials in Vietnam's traffic-choked capital Hanoi vowed yesterday to banish motorbikes by 2030 to ease environment and congestion woes, a decision that swiftly divided a city where two-wheelers are the main means of transportation. Hanoi is famed for legions of motorbikes—sometimes stacked with entire families or overloaded with deliveries that clog roads in a fast-growing city with limited public transportation.

There are five million motorbikes among a population of about seven million, compared to half a million cars on

the road. In a country where the average annual wage is still around \$2,200, the affordability of motorbikes makes them ubiquitous. Yet critics have blamed the emissions-heavy motorbikes for Hanoi's deteriorating air quality and worsening traffic congestion. The decision to ban motorbikes by 2030 was approved by 95 out of 96 city councilors at a meeting yesterday.

Officials said the number of vehicles was growing at an "alarming" rate, according to a report on the city government's website. "Traffic jams and air pollution will become

serious in the future if no immediate management measures are in place," the report said. The ban will be implemented in metropolitan districts and public transport options would be increased to wean people off their scooters, the report added.

The number of registered motorbikes in Vietnam is among the highest in Southeast Asia, and officials in Hanoi have long-mulled banning the bikes in an effort to modernize the city along the lines of Seoul or Tokyo. Some welcomed the move, saying the ban is crucial to cleaning up Hanoi's air, which is notoriously smoggy in the winter months. "Too many private cars, too many motorbikes... the quality of air is really bad and the decision made today will improve that," economist and transport expert Luong Hoai Nam said.

Totally insane

The city clocked 282 days of "excessive" levels of PM2.5 — fine particulate matter harmful to human health — last year, according to non-governmental group GreenID, citing World Health Organization guidelines. The Hanoi government is rolling out an air monitoring system in an effort to make Hanoi "green and clean and civilised so that people living and working here have a high quality of life," Nguyen Trong Dong, the head of the city's environment department said last month.

On social media, some people decried the motorbike ban announcement—questioning whether the government will really offer viable public transport alternatives as promised. "This idea is totally insane," said office worker Hoang Thuy Duong, who rides a motorbike to work daily. "Motorbikes are the best means of transportation in Hanoi. I doubt authorities can replace them with public vehicles," she said.

Hanoi does not have a metro system, only public buses which account for 12 percent of travel demand in the city. Officials said yesterday they plan to boost that share to around 50 percent by 2030. Construction of a sky train in the city has been repeatedly delayed but is slated to open next year. Some said limiting individual vehicle use is not effective without efficient public transport in place. "When you just employ banning as one measure they never succeed," said Jung Eun Oh, senior transport specialist at the World Bank in Vietnam.—AFP



HANOI: Motorcyclists ride alongside cars and buses at rush hour on a street in downtown Hanoi yesterday.—AFP

THOUSANDS OF CHICKENS BLOCK AUSTRIAN MOTORWAY

VIENNA: Emergency workers in Austria had an egg-stremlly unusual operation yesterday removing an estimated 7,000 chickens which were blocking a busy motorway.

The birds' unexpected break for free-

dom came after the lorry transporting them lost its load on the A1 autobahn near Linz in the north of the country. "Boxes containing dead and injured animals were strewn over a 160-metre stretch (of road) while thousands of chickens ran onto the

motorway on both sides," police said. The incident closed the motorway towards the capital Vienna during the busy morning rush hour and caused long traffic jams in the other direction as drivers slowed down to look.—AFP



AUSTRIA: Firemen remove chicken and transport boxes from the A1 highway in Asten near Linz, upper Austria, where a poultry truck caused traffic chaos after losing its freight yesterday.—AFP



TOKYO: This handout photo shows the 19-day-old female panda cub of giant panda Shin Shin at Tokyo's Ueno Zoo.—AFP

JAPAN PANDA FANS GET LATEST FIX OF CUTE WITH NEW FOOTAGE

TOKYO: Japan's panda-obsessed public got their latest fix of cute yesterday as a Tokyo zoo released footage of its 20-day-old helpless cub, who has ballooned in size since its birth last month. The tiny panda, still without a name, was the first to be born at Tokyo's Ueno Zoo in five years to the delight of animal lovers and local businesses, sparking "panda fever" in the capital. Distinctively pink and hairless, the animals typically weigh around 100 grams at birth—small enough to fit in the palm of a human hand.

It can be difficult to determine their sex but the zoo confirmed last month that the newborn was a girl based on pictures sent to a research centre in the shy animal's native China. At two days old, she weighed just 147 grams and measured 14.3 centimeters in length, but zoo officials have since said she is growing well. Footage shows the cub resting comfortably on a blanket Sunday as caretakers conducted a regular health check, with the cub now weighing in at 607.9 grams and measuring 23.4 centimeters.

The tiny baby also looks increasingly more panda-like, with the trademark black color around her eyes, ears and feet becoming clearer. Her eyes remain closed as it usually takes about 40 days before panda cubs start seeing things, the zoo said. In another shot, mum Shin Shin, who just turned 12 on Monday, is seen tenderly holding the baby in her right arm. Considered an endangered species, it is estimated that fewer than 2,000 giant pandas remain in the wild, in three provinces in south-central China. Shin Shin, who mated with male Ri Ri in February, had given birth to another cub in 2012 — the first time at the zoo in 24 years—but the baby died from pneumonia just six days later.—AFP



COLOMBO: A Sri Lankan public health official stands with police officers before leaving for Dengue fever irradiation work in Colombo, Sri Lanka yesterday.—AP

SRI LANKA'S DENGUE OUTBREAK KILLS 225

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka is suffering its worst-ever dengue outbreak, with the mosquito-borne virus killing 225 people and infecting more than 76,000 this year. Alarmed by the magnitude of the crisis, the government deployed 400 soldiers and police officers yesterday to clear away rotting garbage, stagnant water pools and other potential mosquito-breeding grounds. Dr. Ruwan Wijayamuni, Colombo's chief medical officer, said people's failure to clear puddles and piles of trash after last month's heavy monsoon rains had compounded the problem.

"It's pathetic that they don't keep clean their environment," Wijayamuni said. "Some residents do not allow officials to inspect the houses and clean them. This is really unacceptable." The number of infections nationwide is already 38 percent higher than last year, when 55,150 people were diagnosed with dengue and 97 died, according to the Health Ministry. The highest number of cases is in the region around the main city of Colombo, though cases were being reported across the tropical island nation.

"This is mostly an urban disease" said Dr. Priscilla Samaraweera of the National Dengue Eradication Unit. Last month's heavy rains left the cities waterlogged, with puddles and rain-soaked garbage providing ideal spots for mosquitoes to breed and multiply. In Colombo alone, 25 teams of soldiers, police officers and public health inspectors were knocking on doors at people's homes, advising them to clear clogged drains and empty outdoor pots that might have filled with rainwater. Health officials were also fumigating public spaces. This year's strain is particularly dangerous, Samaraweera said. There is no cure for any of the four strains of the virus, which causes a high fever, weeks of exhaustion and in some cases a vicious skin rash. Patients most at risk of dying are the elderly, children or those with other medical complications. Hospitals were so crowded with dengue patients, the army was building two temporary wards at Negombo Base Hospital, about 38 kilometers north of Colombo, military spokesman Brig. —AP

SHINGLES BOOSTS RISK OF HEART ATTACK, STROKE

MIAMI: People who develop shingles—a re-activation of the chicken pox virus which commonly affects older people—may face a ballooning risk of heart attack or stroke, South Korean researchers said Monday. Their study found that people with shingles saw an overall 41 percent higher risk of cardiovascular events, such as heart attack or stroke, when compared to an age-matched control group that did not develop shingles.

The risk of stroke was 35 percent higher and heart attack 59 percent higher, said the report published in the Journal of the American College of Cardiology. The riskiest period was the first year after infection, and the dangers appeared to decline after that. Researchers also found the risk for stroke was highest in those under 40 years old. The study was based on a medical database of 519,880 patients whose records were tracked from 2003-2013.

Researchers are unclear why shingles would boost the risk of cardiovascular problems, and said more study is needed. "While these findings require further study into the mechanism that causes shingles patients to have an increased risk of heart attack and stroke, it is important that physicians treating these patients make them aware of their increased risk," said study author Sung-Han Kim, a physician in the department of infectious diseases at Asan Medical Center in Seoul.

Nearly one in three people in the United States will develop shingles in their lifetime, according to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The infection, which may cause blisters, rash and shooting pain, can affect anyone who has had chicken pox.

Shingles is a disease caused by the varicella-zoster virus. It can be spread through direct contact with the rash, but not by air. A vaccine against shingles is available and is recommended for people 60 and older, according to the US National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases.—AFP

TESTOSTERONE A SIGNIFICANT BOOST FOR WOMEN ATHLETES

PARIS: Women runners born with high testosterone levels enjoy a "significant competitive advantage", said a study yesterday that could reignite debate on the future participation of athletes whose gender was questioned. The study, jointly sponsored by the sporting agency seeking to ban athletes with hyperandrogenism, comes three weeks before the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) must present expert evidence on "the actual degree" of advantage women could gain.

Hyperandrogenism is a condition that causes high natural levels of the male hormone, testosterone, in women. Without proof, IAAF regulations excluding women with hyperandrogenism from competition are set to lapse. Track stars such as South Africa's Caster Semenya and India's Dutee Chand both endured banishment for failing so-called "gender tests". The new study, published in the British Journal of Sports Medicine, was funded by the IAAF and the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA).

One of the authors, Stephane Bermon, is an IAAF consultant and a member of its working group on hyperandrogenic athletes. The other, Pierre-Yves Garnier, is director of the IAAF's health and science department. He returned to work in January after a three-month suspension in a probe linked to Russian athletics doping. Their research relied on blood data from male and female athletes who competed in the World Championships in 2011 and 2013 — more than 2,100 samples in all.

It found that women with high natural testosterone levels performed better in the 400-metre sprint, 400 m hurdles, and 800 m middle-distance events than women with low levels. They also outperformed them at pole-vaulting and hammer throw. Depending on the event, performance improved by between 1.8 and 4.5 percent, the paper said.

This link, concluded the authors, "should be taken into account when the eligibility of women with hyperandrogenism to compete in the female category of competition is discussed." The study is an observational study that cannot determine conclusively that higher testosterone is what causes the performance boost, merely that an increase in one is associated with an increase in the other.

Unfair or discriminatory?

Testosterone, which can also be injected as a performance-enhancer, increases muscle mass and boosts physical strength. The issue of hyperandrogenism is controversial because it has pitted principles of fair competition against the rights of women born with a condition they have no control over. In 2011, the

IAAF introduced so-called "hyperandrogenism regulations" after a highly-emotive and public battle with South Africa's Semenya.

The regulations allowed hyperandrogenic athletes to take medication to lower their testosterone levels to below 10 nanomoles per liter—considered a low level in men. The natural range for women is about 10 times lower. Semenya won gold in the 800 m at the 2009 World Championships in Berlin, but was subsequently barred from competing for nearly a year while undergoing gender tests. Competitors say hyperandrogenic athletes enjoy an unfair physical advantage, but critics say gender testing is arbitrary, discriminatory and psychologically harmful.

In 2015, the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) suspended the IAAF regulations in a challenge brought on behalf of India's Chand, a sprinter. It said there was not sufficient scientific evidence that natural testosterone boosts performance in hyperandrogenic women, and gave the agency two years to submit expert reports to the contrary.

The deadline of July 27 is fast approaching. "Our starting position is to defend, protect and promote fair female competition," an IAAF statement quoted Bermon as saying yesterday. "This study is one part of the evidence the IAAF will be submitting to the CAS," he added. There would be no impact on the World Championships in London in August, as the regulations remain suspended "pending the resolution of the CAS proceeding", the association said.—AFP



NEW DELHI: This file photo shows Dutee Chand of Odisha taking part in the 100 meter race during 20th Federation Cup National Senior Athletics Championship in New Delhi. —AFP

CHINA ROCKET FAILURE LIKELY TO SET BACK NEXT SPACE MISSIONS

BEIJING: The failure of China's Long March 5 rocket deals a rare setback to China's highly successful space program that could delay plans to bring back moon samples and offer rival India a chance to move ahead in the space rankings. Experts say the still unexplained mishap shows that for all its triumphs, China's space program is not immune to the tremendous difficulties and risks involved in working with such cutting-edge technology.

"China's approach has been slow and prudent, trying to avoid this kind of 'failure,' even though they knew it was going to occur sooner or later," Joan Johnson-Freese, an expert on China's space program at the US Naval War College, wrote in an email. Authorities say the Long March 5 Y2 that took off Sunday in the second launch of a Long March 5 rocket, suffered an abnormality during the flight after what appeared to be a successful liftoff from the Wenchang Space Launch Center in the southern island province of Hainan.

The incident is under investigation and the authorities have yet to comment on possible causes, or any knock-on effects on the program as a whole. In a testimony to the high respect China's program now commands, the failure drew widespread commentary in the space community, including from SpaceX founder and chief executive Elon Musk, who tweeted Sunday: "Sorry to hear about China launch failure today. I know how painful that is to the people who designed & built it."

Nicknamed "Chubby 5" for its massive, 5-meter girth, the Long March-5 is China's largest and most brawny launch vehicle, capable of carrying 25 tons of payload into low-earth orbit and 14 tons to the more distant geostationary transfer orbit in which a satellite orbits constantly above a fixed position on the earth's surface. That's more than double that of the Long March 7, the backbone of the Chinese launching fleet, making it the linchpin for launch duties requiring such massive heft such as interplanetary travel.

First among those is the mission slated for November by the Chang'e 5 probe to land a rover on the moon before returning to Earth with samples — the first time that has been done since 1976. China's most technically demanding mission to date, it had been put off before because of funding and then technology, Johnson-Freese said. While the Long March 5 has suffered other setbacks, the lunar mission is "certainly the most visible one," she said.

Finding a fix

Other upcoming Chinese missions include the launch next year of the 20-ton core module for China's orbiting Tiangong 2 space station, along with specialized components for the 60-ton station that is due to come on-line in 2022 and other massive payloads in future. The Long March 5 was also due to be the launch vehicle for a Mars rover planned for the mid 2020s. Problems with the Long March 5 may stem from



BEIJING: In this photo, a girl stands in front of models of Chinese space rockets, including the Long March 5, second from left, at the China Beijing International High-Tech Expo in Beijing. —AP

its use of liquefied gases that are less stable than the solid propellants used in other rockets, said Morris Jones, an Australian space analyst and regular contributor to SpaceDaily.com.

Unlike earlier rockets that used highly toxic fuels, the Long March 5 burns a more environmentally friendly and less expensive kerosene-liquid oxygen-liquid hydrogen mix — which is more complex and harder to regulate. Jones called such setbacks typical of the development phase of a new rocket and said additional launches may be required to work out the kinks. Sunday's launch failure will delay the Chang'e 5 mission at least until next year, while there may also be a small delay in launching the space station components, Jones said.

Finding a fix "takes a lot of time and effort but there is no other way to produce a reliable rocket," Jones said. Test launched for the first time last year in what had been a towering success, the 57-meter two-stage rocket is just slightly less powerful than the most powerful rocket in service, the US' United Launch Alliance's Delta IV, although SpaceX's Falcon Heavy is designed to carry a payload into low-earth orbit of more than 50 tons. Since the first launch in 1970, China's Long March series of rockets have been a remarkably solid bet, achieving a success rate of around 95 percent.

That's helped facilitate a program that conducted its first crewed space mission in 2003, making China only the third country after Russia and the US to do so, put a pair of space stations into orbit, and landed its Yutu, or "Jade Rabbit"

rover on the moon. Administrators suggest a manned landing on the moon may also be in the program's future. Not all has been smooth sailing, however. A Long March 3B rocket launched June 18 launch placed its communications satellite in a lower-than-planned orbit. Though the satellite is climbing into its proper altitude on its own, the effort will reduce its useful lifespan in space.

A least two similar incidents reportedly occurred last year. With two mishaps coming so close together, Chinese space officials may decide to take a pause to re-evaluate manufacturing quality or other aspects of the program, said Stephen Clark of Spaceflight Now. That may include launching another Long March 5 test flight before attempting the Chang'e 5 mission, Clark said. Both Clark and Johnson-Freese said they hope the failure doesn't deter Chinese officials in their pursuit of greater transparency and international participation in the country's space program.

Yet, rivals, primarily India, may see the setback as an opportunity to steal a march on China, whose geostrategic influence has benefited significantly from its role as a technology leader in space, said Johnson-Freese. India's Mars Orbiter Mission, called Mangalyaan, is already orbiting the red planet, years before China is ready to launch such a mission, and it won acclaim and a place in the record books earlier this year by placing 104 nano satellites in orbit from a single rocket. "The failure of the Long March 5 may provide a window of opportunity for India," said Johnson-Freese.—AP

LUNAR ROBOTS PUT TO THE TEST ON SICILY'S MOUNT ETNA

MOUNT ETNA, Italy: A robot wheels across a rocky, windswept landscape that looks like the surface of some distant planet from a science fiction film. But it is not in outer space, it's on the slopes of Europe's most active volcano. Mount Etna, in Sicily, is a test bed for the approximately three-foot high, four-wheeled machine ahead of a future mission to the moon. It is being conducted by the German Aerospace Centre, the agency which runs Germany's space program.

The program has enlisted experts from Germany, Britain, the United States

and Italy to research ROBEX (Robotic Exploration of Extreme Environments) with the aim of improving robotic equipment that will be used in space. "This is aimed at stimulating a future, hypothetical landing mission on the moon or Mars and they use a lot of robots which are there to transport and install different instruments", said Boris Behncke, a volcanologist from the National Vulcanology Institute in Catania, near Mount Etna. Scientists also hope to use the robots to explore the depths of Mount Etna and relay back useful technical data on seismic movement.—Reuters

TSUNAMI OF TOXIC WASTEWATER KILLS PLANTS, ANIMALS IN ISRAEL'S DESERT

MISHOR ROTEM, Israel: Toxic wastewater that surged through a dry riverbed in southern Israel at the weekend left a wake of ecological destruction more than 20 km long. The flood began last Friday when the 60 meter high wall of a reservoir at a phosphate factory partially collapsed, letting loose 100,000 cubic meters of highly acidic wastewater in the Ashalim riverbed. That was enough fluid to fill 40 Olympic-sized pools.

The toxic torrent snaked through the desert, singeing anything in its path, before collecting

again hours later in a pool several kilometers from the Dead Sea, the lowest point on earth. Days later, the ground is still stained a dark brown and giving off a nauseating acidic stench, more potent than a highly chlorinated swimming pool. One section of the Ashalim riverbed is made up of narrow canyons, popular for hiking, but no one was around when the wastewater first gushed through.

Israel's Ministry of Environment has opened a criminal investigation into the plant's owner, Rotem Amfert, and its parent company Israel Chemicals (ICL), a leading

potash and fertilizer producer with exclusive rights in Israel to mine the Dead Sea. "All the plants and animals in the valley during the tsunami of acid were probably highly damaged, probably dead," said Oded Netzer, an ecologist for the ministry. "In the long term, there will be soil damage and large functional ecological problems."

He said weeks of intense clean-up work, including pumping out small pools of the wastewater that remain along the path, lay ahead, and complete rehabilitation would likely take years. ICL has stopped using the series of

reservoirs where the breach occurred. They contained a production by-product called phosphogypsum water.

The company declined to answer questions on the criminal investigation or about the impact the incident will have on its operations. Shares in ICL fell almost 4 percent after the spill but partially recovered to trade 1.3 percent higher on Tuesday. In a statement, Rotem Amfert said it was working "around the clock" in full coordination with authorities, and it would spare no resources to clean up the riverbed.—Reuters

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JUMEIRAH CELEBRATES WORLD SEA TURTLE DAY

The Dubai Turtle Rehabilitation Project (DTRP) has collaborated with the Dubai Aquarium and Underwater Zoo in Dubai Mall and released 40 endangered sea turtles into the Arabian Gulf next to Jumeirah Al-Naseem to celebrate World Sea Turtle Day. For the past three years, the Dubai Aquarium and Underwater Zoo in Dubai Mall has supported the DTRP and this year raised awareness of the project by hosting five of the turtles as part of their rehabilitation process.

The four juvenile hawksbills and one amputee juvenile green turtle named Jane were displayed in a large exhibit to raise awareness about the plight of the sea turtles in the region and also to promote the project via literature around the exhibit. In support of the project and research, Dubai Mall Aquarium then purchased five satellite tags for the turtles to enable the team to track their progress in the wild.

Warren Baverstock, Burj Al-Arab Jumeirah's Aquarium Operations Manager, said, "The

exhibit at Dubai Mall, which highlights DTRP's rehabilitation efforts, is designed to educate the many visitors to Dubai Mall on the plight of these turtles. After a month rehabilitation period, the turtles were returned to the Burj Al-Arab Jumeirah aquarium, fitted with a satellite tag and then released back into the Arabian Gulf. Their movements can now be monitored and followed on Facebook."

All sea turtles displayed were rescued by the DTRP based at Burj Al-Arab Jumeirah and Madinat Jumeirah. The project is run in conjunction with the Wildlife Protection Office and is the only one of its kind in the Middle East and Red Sea region. Essential veterinary services are provided by Dubai Falcon Clinic and Central Veterinary Research Laboratory. The aim of the exhibition is to educate visitors about turtles, their habitats and global conservation efforts in the fight against extinction.

The day-to-day running of the DTRP and the animal husbandry is managed by Burj Al-Arab's dedicated aquarium team. A rare olive

ridley sea turtle called Barnacle recently checked out of Jumeirah Al-Naseem's turtle rehabilitation lagoon with more than 70 critically endangered hawksbill turtles who headed back home into the waters of the Arabian Gulf.

Children from the Dubai British School purchased a special satellite tag for Barnacle which will enable them to track her progress online. The kids were invited to the release learn more about the Dubai Turtle Rehabilitation Project (DTRP) and wave the turtles off from the beach by Jumeirah Al-Naseem.

More than 1,300 sea turtles have been successfully returned to the sea over the past ten years since the project's inception. The turtles have all been rescued from the shores of the UAE and nursed back to health by the DTRP one of the longest standing corporate social responsibility initiatives in the region and the only project of its kind in the Middle East and Red Sea region.



JOYALUKKAS ANNOUNCES 1/4 KILO GOLD WINNER

The mega winning opportunity at 'Joyalukkas Shop & Win Upto 60 Kg Gold' has received an overwhelming response from customers. The three winners of the 60 day campaign were announced on 2nd July 2017, who gets a 1/4 Kilo Gold. The 'Joyalukkas Shop & Win Upto 60 Kg Gold' promotion is offering every customer shopping for KD 40 worth of Jewellery, the opportunity to win upto 60 Kgs of Gold.

The winner was thrilled with the win and

exclaimed "Wow, I am starting a good festive season thanks to the winning opportunity at our favorite jeweler, Joyalukkas!" "It's a pleasure to see such an overwhelming response for 'Joyalukkas Shop & Win Upto 60 Kg Gold'. This mega winning opportunity will make many dreams come true and we feel happy to be able to enable this," said John Paul Alukkas, Executive Director, Joyalukkas Group.

The three winner was picked on July 2, 2017 by Ahmed Al-Mohammed, representative of

Ministry of Commerce, Kuwait in the presence of top Joyalukkas Group executives and various customers at Joyalukkas showroom in Panasonic Tower Kuwait City. Joyalukkas, Chairman and MD, Joyalukkas Group congratulating the winner on this occasion said, "During the 60 day duration of the 'Joyalukkas Shop & Win Upto 60 Kg Gold' promotion shoppers in addition to getting the big win opportunity can also avail attractive other offers during the festive period."

WRITERS' FORUM KUWAIT CONDUCTS MONTHLY MEETING

At the monthly meeting of the Writers' Forum, Kuwait (WFK) held at the residence of Ali Chougale and Maimuna Chougale on the May 26, 2017, some very insightful and beautiful words-in poetry and prose, were presented by its members. The beauty not only lay in the content which had depth and provoked the listeners to think, but it also lay in the linguistic variety thereof.

The meeting started with a note of thanks by Maimuna Chougale, the newly elected President of the forum. She, on behalf of the newly elected Executive Committee of the forum, conveyed heartfelt thanks to all the members of the forum for showing their confidence in them and also assured to put all the efforts to come up to their expectations. All the members, in turns, welcomed the new Executive Committee and communicated their wholehearted support.

While the evening was presided over by Umesh Sharma; the former President and one of the founder members of the forum, the Chief Guest on the occasion was Dr Navnit Gandhi. The meeting was steered by Rajesh Verlekar; General Secretary of the Forum. In the first session, Rajesh Verlekar presented his short story

'A Memorable Chilled Evening' and Tushar Mishra presented 'Aap Beeti Kahani' wherein both of them re-lived their old memories.

The second session comprised the recitation of poetry by Dr Arvind Raina, Umesh Sharma, Chhaya Athavle and Sunil Soni (Hindi), Sayeed Nazar Kadapavi, Afroz Alam, Ameeruddin Ameer, Ibrahim Sangeraja, Maimuna Ali Chougale, Nazneen Ali and Sabir Omer Galsulkar (Urdu) and Satya Narayan (Tamil). Another former member-Parminder Kaur's poem in English was recited by her father-Mohan Singh. Others who were present included Ravin Singh, Rajeev Athavale and Ali Chougale

The Chief Guest Dr Navnit Gandhi weaved her sentiments beautifully into words and expressed her happiness at the WFK's success in bringing and keeping together the languages and poets of all seasons. She, then, recited a beautiful poetry in Hindi. Umesh Sharma who was presiding over the evening, also expressed his elation and contentment, while listening to all the members. He too recited a gripping poem in Hindi. The host -Ali Chougale and Maimuna Chougale were thanked for the gracious hospitality.



DPRK MARKS 23RD DEATH ANNIVERSARY OF PRESIDENT KIM II SUNG

July 8, 2017 marks the 23rd anniversary of the death of Kim Il Sung (1912-1994), eternal President of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. On the occasion of the day the Korean and other progressive peoples of the world are looking back upon the life of President Kim Il Sung who accomplished the undying exploits for the history and humankind with his outstanding ideology and theory and revolutionary practice.

Kim Il Sung was born into a poor farmer's family in Korea. He embarked on the road of revolutionary struggle in his early teens, determined to save the destiny of the country and people. In the course of blazing the trail of the revolution he created the Juche idea and Songun idea, which he brilliantly implemented in the whole period of his revolutionary career spanning 70 years. The Juche idea and Songun idea proved their truthfulness and vitality to the full, thus becoming the great guiding ideas in realizing independence of the masses and the valuable spiritual wealth common to mankind.

President Kim Il Sung was an outstanding leader who

established the social system centered on the masses of the people in the DPRK and set an example in accomplishing the cause of mankind for independence. The President performed great exploits in realizing the cause of reunifying the divided Korea. He put forward fair and reasonable proposals for the country's reunification, such as the three principles of national reunification, the proposal for founding a Democratic Federal Republic of Koryo, and the 10-point program for the great unity of the whole nation. He also wisely led the reunification movement, thus ushering in a bright prospect for the Korean reunification.

The President made great contribution to the cause of making the world independent.

By advancing the slogan, "Peoples of the world who advocate independence, unite!" he rendered sincere assistance to the national liberation and independent development of many countries of the world and energetically led that such progressive movements of the world as socialist movement and non-aligned movement should hold fast to their ideals and principles. Kim Il Sung was the incarnation

of benevolence. No one in the world valued people and loved them like him.

Kim Il Sung was, indeed, the most outstanding leader, peerlessly great person, and great saint of mankind, representative of the 20th century. Though he passed away, his ideology and cause are being carried forward brilliantly. The Korean people preserve him in his lifetime appearance and hold him in high esteem as the eternal President of the DPRK. They keep the Juche idea and Songun idea he authored as their unchanging guiding ideas, and cherish it as their unshakable faith and will to follow the road of independence, road of Songun and road of socialism he pioneered.

In the course of implementing the lines and proposals of independent reunification he had advanced the June 15 reunification era under the banner of By Our Nation Itself was brought about in the Korean peninsula, thus opening a radical phase in the Korean reunification movement. The DPRK, in its efforts to realize the cause of global independence clarified by him, has greatly contributed to

the worldwide socialist reconstruction movement and its new upsurge, and accomplishment of the anti-imperialist independent cause of the world.

Praise and admiration for the immortal exploits of the President and his noble personality are still ringing out among many people of the world.

The April Spring Friendship Art Festival that had been held in grandeur in Pyongyang in celebration of his birth anniversary has continued even after his death. Recollection and commemorative meetings, seminars, book and photo shows and other events are held in many countries as an annual event on the occasion of his birth and death anniversaries. In April 2012 in celebration of the centenary of his birth the World Congress of the Juche Idea took place in Pyongyang with the participation of advocates of the Juche idea from many countries. Even now leaders and personages of foreign countries award the President honorary titles, orders and medals, and gifts. Immortal are the ideology and cause of President Kim Il Sung.



ZAIN CONCLUDES ITS CSSR CAMPAIGN WITH NUMEROUS SOCIAL INITIATIVES

Zain, the leading telecommunications company in Kuwait, concluded its annual CSSR campaign during the Holy month of Ramadan, carrying along with it the message of peace, happiness, and closeness. The company successfully held numerous social and humanitarian initiatives as part of its continuous commitment to add a positive value within the community. Zain's annual Corporate Sustainability and Social Responsibility (CSSR) campaign during the Holy Month of Ramadan stems from a number of values that convey a positive impact within several fields, including social, charitable, humanitarian, spiritual, sporting, recreational, and other fields that are of importance to the many segments of the Kuwaiti society.

Through its Ramadan CSSR campaign, Zain strengthened its strategic partnerships with various leading Kuwaiti organizations from both the public and private sectors, including Zakat House, Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS), the Ministry of Interior (MOI), the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor, hospitals of Al-Sabah Medical Area, the Women's Cultural and Social Society, Al-Najat Charitable Society, the Kuwait Food Bank, as well as other leading entities.

Machla Boxes, Iftar Halls

Every year, Zain launches its Ramadan CSSR campaign with the Machla Boxes initiative, where the company's volunteers deliver essential food supplies (Machla Boxes) to underprivileged families in Kuwait. Zain's own team of volunteers packed the boxes - containing essential food supplies - at the company's main headquarters and delivered them to needy families who are in need of support during the month of fasting. The distribution covered multiple areas of Al-Jahra governorate, as well as Zakat House and Kuwait Red Crescent Society.

As soon as the Holy Month started, Zain launched its annual 'Iftar Al-Saem' initiative to provide fasting individuals with Iftar meals. The company distributed daily meals throughout the Holy Month in two different halls in Jileeb Al-Shuyoukh and Khaitan. The Iftar meal banquets were supervised by Zain's volunteers, and were spread in two main halls in Kuwait as part of a strategy to cover the most populated areas of Kuwait in order to assure the maximum amount of individuals' Iftar needs are covered.

Ramadan Iftar gatherings

Zain hosted an Iftar gathering for the Department of Airport security to share the blessings of Ramadan with them in recognition of the efforts they exert during the Holy Month. Zain's team visited Kuwait International Airport to share the Iftar meal it hosted with the personnel on duty in their place of operation as a gesture of gratitude and appreciation to those men who dedicate their time and efforts to the safety and protection of Kuwait. Zain also shared the Ramadan Iftar meal with its Contact Center (107) agents to recognize the efforts they exerted during the Holy Month of Ramadan. The event witnessed the attendance of Zain Kuwait's Chief Executive Officer Eaman Al-Roudhan along with Chiefs and Directors from across the company's divisions, who were keen on recognizing and highlighting the tireless efforts and hard work of contact center agents, especially those who work around the clock all week long to provide the highest standards of customer service to Kuwait's largest family of subscribers.

Visiting care centers, hospitals

Zain shared the joys and the blessings of the Holy Month and the tradition of girgian with orphans, the elderly, and people with special needs, by visiting the Ministry of Social Affairs



and Labor's Care Centers. Zain's team, consisting of staff and volunteers, participated in distributing gifts and girgian candy to orphaned children, the elderly, and people with special needs in an atmosphere filled with joy and happiness. The company believes the Holy month of Ramadan is a special time of the year, and it is always keen on sharing the blessings of this time with those who are less fortunate in the community.

Zain also shared the joys of the tradition of girgian with children and patients in a number of the biggest hospitals in Kuwait. The company's team visited the hospitals during this blessed time of year to distribute gifts and girgian to children, their parents, as well as the medical staff who take care of them to celebrate the occasion in a family atmosphere full of joy and happiness. Zain's team, including staff and volunteers, distributed gifts and girgian candy to children in a number of Kuwait's biggest and most prominent hospitals including Zain Hospital, Al-Amiri Hospital, Al-Razi Hospital, Ibn Sina Hospital, and NBK Hospital.

'Ya Baghi Al-Khair Aqbel' charitable initiative

Zain launched its charitable initiative 'Ya Baghi Al-Khair Aqbel' for the second year running, where the company will donate 500 fils to a charitable organization for every paid bill during the month of Ramadan. During Ramadan of last year, Zain donated over KD 45,000 on behalf of its customers for humanitarian causes. The donation came as part of its charitable initiative 'Ya Baghi Al-Khair Aqbel', and came in collaboration with Sheikh Abdullah Al-Nouri Charity Association, where the donations were utilized to build a number of water wells at distant locations in Somalia and Kyrgyzstan with the aim of providing clean and safe drinking water to underprivileged families.

This year, Zain will also donate 500 fils for every bill paid by customers anytime during the Holy Month of Ramadan through one of Zain's electronic or direct channels, including Zain's website, Zain's smartphone app, any of Zain's quickpay machines, and the company's main branches available throughout the country. The collected donations will be delivered to a charitable organization in Kuwait to support philanthropic projects as well as improve the living conditions of needy families.

Al Amal club girgian celebration

Zain shared the joys of Gergiaan in collaboration with Al-Amal club for children with cancer and blood disorders. The event, hosted at the Women's Cultural and Social Society headquarters at Khalidiya, witnessed the attendance of a large number of Zain volunteers, members of the Women's Cultural Society, as well as artist Homoud Al-Khudur and actor Shabaan Abbas. Zain's volunteers delighted the children and their families by distributing girgian and gifts while also organizing many other fun activities including a magic show, traditional dancing, and a face painting session.

'Abshiro Bil Khair' campaign

During Ramadan, Zain was a humanitarian partner of the 'Abshiro Bil Khair' campaign launched by Al-Najat Charitable Society. The campaign, aimed at supporting underprivileged families and students in Kuwait, received overwhelming success of over KD 4 million of donations collected in just 12 hours. Through its humanitarian partnership, Zain invited its customers to contribute and donate to the campaign by sending over a million SMS messages containing a link to the official donation portal to its customer base, considered the largest in Kuwait. The company also communicated the campaign to over 670K followers on its official social media channels.

Al-Najat Charitable Society launched its charitable campaign entitled 'Abshiro Bil Khair' in 360 mall, where a large projection screen displayed the online donations progress in real time. The campaign lasted for 12 straight hours, and resulted in an overwhelming amount of KD 4 million of donations collected in such a short period of time. A part of the donations will be utilized to support the essential needs of underprivileged families in Kuwait on a monthly basis throughout a full year, while the other part will be utilized to pay the tuition fees of underprivileged students in Kuwait on a monthly basis throughout a full year.

Prayer essentials

Zain shared the spiritual blessings of the Last 10 Days of the Holy Month of Ramadan by providing prayer essentials



at a number of Kuwait's biggest mosques to foster an even more spiritual environment during the Holy Month. The company was keen to provide comfort to worshippers performing their Qiyam prayers during the last 10 days of Ramadan at a number of Kuwait's biggest mosques, most notably Jaber Al-Ali Mosque in Shuhada Area. Zain's volunteers distributed the prayer essentials, mainly prayer chairs, as well as cold beverages and snacks to provide worshippers with more comfortable circumstances during the hot weather conditions.

Eid breakfast meals

Zain shared the joys of Eid with needy laborers and underprivileged individuals by distributing Eid breakfast meals as part of the company's strategic partnership with the Kuwait Food Bank. Zain distributed 2000 breakfast meals after Eid prayers to needy laborers and underprivileged individuals in a number of Kuwait's largest mosques. The initiative was supervised by the Kuwait Food Bank who assured the quality of the meals and distributed enough quantities to those who are less fortunate during Eid.

Al-Roudhan football tournament

Before the arrival of the Holy Month, Zain announced its Diamond Sponsorship of the 38th edition of Al-Roudhan Ramadan Football Tournament for the second year running. The event came under the patronage of HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

Zain's support of Al-Roudhan tournament is linked to it being the most prominent sports and youth event in Kuwait and the region during the Holy Month of Ramadan.

Every year, Kuwaiti audiences look forward to the tournament, with Zain representatives being present at the event throughout, where they interacted with the attending audiences through various competitions, activities, and entertainment programs. The company also distributed valuable prizes and held daily challenges and competitions on its official social media channels. In addition, Zain organized a Gergiaan activity where it distributed gifts and candy while hosting a traditional performance.



OSN MOVIES ACTION

- 01:45 Mercenaries
- 03:15 The Gallows
- 04:40 6 Ways To Sundown
- 06:25 Insurgent
- 08:25 Tracers
- 10:05 The Gallows
- 11:30 Beverly Hills Cop 3
- 13:15 Rivers Nine
- 14:50 Insurgent
- 16:50 The Call Up
- 18:25 Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon
- 20:25 Savage Dog
- 22:00 No Way Out
- 23:20 As Above, So Below

ANIMAL PLANET HD

- 00:45 Cats 101
- 01:40 Wild Animal Repo
- 02:35 Tanked
- 03:25 Wildest Indochina
- 04:15 Dr. Dee: Alaska Vet
- 05:02 Catching Monsters
- 05:49 Wild Animal Repo
- 06:36 Night
- 07:00 Night
- 07:25 Dr. Dee: Alaska Vet
- 08:15 Wild Animal Repo
- 09:10 Wildest Indochina
- 10:05 Tanked
- 11:00 Dr. Dee: Alaska Vet
- 11:55 Cats 101
- 12:50 Wild Animal Repo
- 13:45 Catching Monsters
- 14:40 Wildest Indochina
- 15:35 Tanked
- 16:30 Catching Monsters
- 17:25 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
- 18:20 Insane Pools: Off The Deep End
- 19:15 Tanked
- 20:10 Dr. Dee: Alaska Vet
- 21:05 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
- 22:00 Insane Pools: Off The Deep End
- 22:55 Wildest Indochina
- 23:50 Catching Monsters

BBC FIRST

- 00:45 Prime Suspect: Tension
- 01:40 Silent Witness
- 02:35 Silent Witness
- 03:30 Holly City
- 04:35 Prime Suspect: Tension

- 09:05 How It's Made
- 09:30 Man v Expert
- 10:20 Mythbusters
- 11:10 Incredible Food Race
- 12:00 Incredible Food Race
- 12:50 Incredible Food Race
- 13:40 Incredible Food Race
- 14:30 Adventure 8: Zoo Games
- 14:55 Kids vs Film
- 15:20 Must Love Cats
- 16:10 Man v Expert
- 17:00 Bondi Vet
- 17:50 Kings Of The Wild
- 18:40 Don't Blink
- 19:05 Don't Blink
- 19:30 How It's Made
- 19:55 How It's Made
- 20:20 Mythbusters
- 21:10 Bondi Vet
- 22:00 Kings Of The Wild
- 22:50 Destroyed In Seconds
- 23:15 Destroyed In Seconds
- 23:40 Ultimate Survival



- 00:30 American Monster
- 01:20 Is O.J. Innocent? The Missing Evidence
- 02:10 Grave Secrets
- 03:00 Who Killed Jane Doe?
- 03:48 Obsession: Dark Desires
- 04:36 Obsession: Dark Desires
- 05:24 Obsession: Dark Desires
- 06:12 Obsession: Dark Desires
- 07:00 I Am Homicide
- 07:50 I Am Homicide
- 08:40 I Am Homicide
- 09:30 I Am Homicide
- 10:20 Last Hope With Troy Dunn
- 10:45 Last Hope With Troy Dunn
- 11:10 Betrayed
- 12:00 Obsession: Dark Desires
- 12:50 Obsession: Dark Desires
- 13:40 Obsession: Dark Desires
- 14:30 Obsession: Dark Desires
- 15:20 Last Hope With Troy Dunn
- 15:45 Last Hope With Troy Dunn
- 16:10 I'd Kill For You
- 17:00 A Crime To Remember
- 17:50 A Crime To Remember
- 18:40 A Crime To Remember
- 19:30 A Crime To Remember
- 20:20 Last Hope With Troy Dunn
- 20:45 Last Hope With Troy Dunn
- 21:10 Love The Way You Lie
- 22:00 Murder Calls
- 22:50 Murder Chose Me
- 23:40 Grave Secrets

- 22:50 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug...
- 23:10 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug...
- 23:35 Lolo



- 00:00 Henry Hugglemonster
- 00:15 Calimero
- 00:30 Art Attack
- 00:55 Zou
- 01:05 Loopdidoo
- 01:20 Henry Hugglemonster
- 01:35 Calimero
- 01:50 Zou
- 02:05 Art Attack
- 02:30 The Hive
- 02:40 Loopdidoo
- 02:55 Henry Hugglemonster
- 03:10 Art Attack
- 03:35 Loopdidoo
- 03:50 Calimero
- 04:05 Art Attack
- 04:30 Henry Hugglemonster
- 04:45 Zou
- 05:00 Art Attack
- 05:30 Henry Hugglemonster
- 05:45 Loopdidoo
- 06:00 Zou
- 06:15 Calimero
- 06:30 Loopdidoo
- 06:45 Henry Hugglemonster
- 07:00 Sofia The First
- 07:25 PJ Masks
- 07:50 The Lion Guard
- 08:15 Micky And The Roadster Racers
- 08:40 Doc McStuffins
- 09:05 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 09:35 The Lion Guard
- 10:00 Sofia The First
- 10:30 Micky And The Roadster Racers
- 11:00 PJ Masks
- 11:25 Goldie & Bear
- 11:50 Micky And The Roadster Racers
- 12:15 Sofia The First
- 12:40 The Lion Guard
- 13:10 Doc McStuffins
- 13:35 PJ Masks
- 14:00 My Friends Tigger & Pooh
- 14:30 The Lion Guard
- 14:55 Unbungalivable
- 15:00 Goldie & Bear
- 15:30 Micky And The Roadster Racers
- 16:00 Sofia The First
- 16:30 My Friends Tigger & Pooh
- 16:55 Minnie's Bow-Toons
- 17:05 Doc McStuffins Toy Hospital
- 17:35 The Lion Guard
- 18:05 PJ Masks
- 18:35 Micky And The Roadster Racers
- 19:05 Sofia The First
- 19:35 Jake And The Never Land Pirates

- 11:10 Lab Rats
- 11:35 Mech-X4
- 12:00 Skyrunners
- 13:30 Access All Areas: Spider-Man: Homecoming
- 13:45 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
- 14:10 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 14:15 Future-Worm!
- 14:40 Kirby Buckets
- 15:05 Lab Rats
- 15:30 Walk The Prank
- 15:55 Right Now Kapow
- 16:25 K.C. Undercover
- 16:50 Disney11
- 17:15 Mech-X4
- 17:40 Milo Murphy's Law
- 18:05 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 18:10 Gravity Falls
- 18:35 Lab Rats
- 19:00 Supa Strikas
- 19:25 Milo Murphy's Law
- 19:50 Marvel's Rocket And Groot
- 19:55 K.C. Undercover
- 20:20 Mech-X4
- 20:45 Disney11
- 21:10 Walk The Prank
- 21:35 Marvel's Rocket And Groot
- 21:40 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 21:45 Lab Rats
- 22:10 Lab Rats
- 22:35 Phineas And Ferb
- 23:00 Programmes Start At 6:00am KSA



- 00:05 WAGs Miami
- 00:55 WAGs Miami
- 01:50 WAGs Miami
- 02:50 Celebrity Style Story
- 03:20 Celebrity Style Story
- 03:50 So Cosmo
- 04:40 So Cosmo
- 05:30 Celebrity Style Story
- 06:00 E! NYC
- 06:55 E! News
- 07:10 E! NYC
- 08:10 WAGs
- 09:10 WAGs
- 10:05 WAGs
- 11:00 WAGs
- 12:00 E! News
- 12:15 Second Wives Club
- 13:10 Second Wives Club
- 14:05 Second Wives Club
- 15:00 E! News
- 15:15 WAGs Miami
- 16:15 WAGs Miami
- 17:10 WAGs Miami
- 18:05 WAGs Miami
- 19:00 Botched
- 20:00 Botched
- 21:00 Botched
- 22:00 Botched
- 23:00 E! News
- 23:15 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry



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



- 00:10 Pick Me!
- 01:00 Emmerdale
- 01:30 Coronation Street
- 02:00 Coronation Street

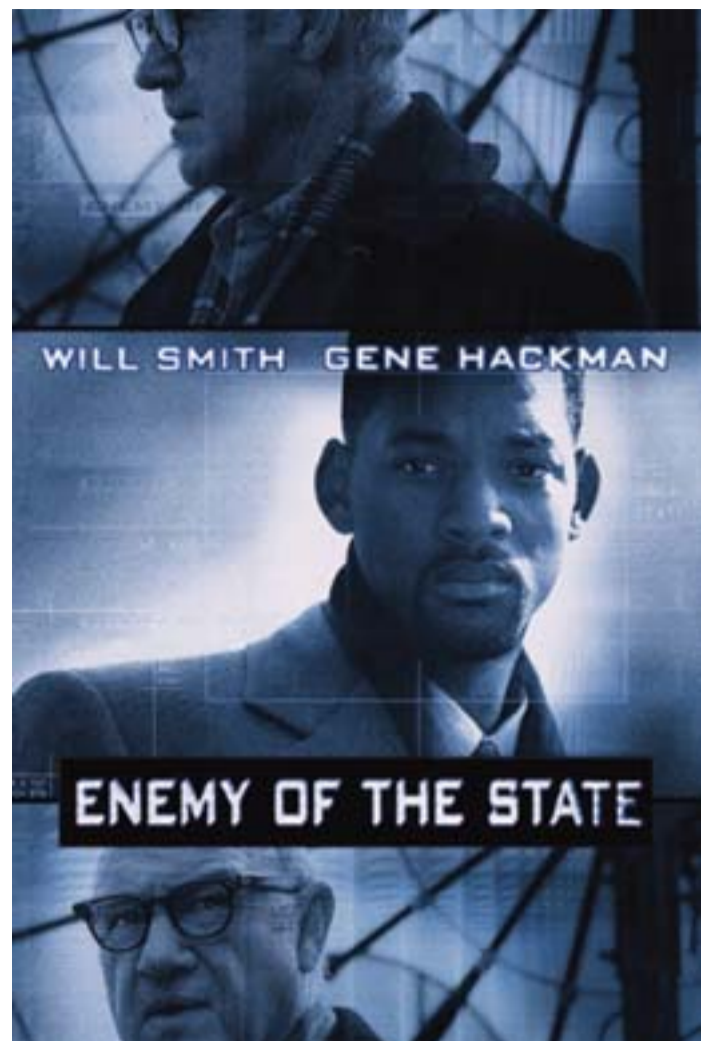
- 02:30 Chopping Block
- 03:25 Grantchester
- 04:20 Doc Martin
- 05:15 Tonight At The London Palladium
- 06:10 Pick Me!
- 07:05 Chopping Block
- 08:00 Grantchester
- 09:00 Doc Martin
- 10:00 Tonight At The London Palladium
- 10:55 Pick Me!
- 11:50 Chopping Block
- 12:45 Emmerdale
- 13:15 Emmerdale
- 13:45 Coronation Street
- 14:15 Pick Me!
- 15:10 Chopping Block
- 16:00 This Is England '88
- 16:55 Lewis
- 17:50 Tonight At The London Palladium
- 18:45 Emmerdale
- 19:15 Emmerdale
- 19:45 Coronation Street
- 20:10 Chopping Block
- 21:00 This Is England '88
- 21:55 Lewis
- 22:50 Emmerdale
- 23:15 Emmerdale
- 23:40 Coronation Street



- 00:20 Ultimate Soldier Challenge
- 01:10 Alone
- 02:00 Swamp People
- 02:50 Storage Wars
- 03:15 American Pickers
- 04:05 Pawn Stars
- 04:30 Pawn Stars
- 05:00 Mountain Men
- 06:00 Lost In Transmission
- 06:50 Duck Dynasty
- 07:15 Duck Dynasty
- 07:40 Counting Cars
- 08:05 Counting Cars
- 08:30 Pawn Stars
- 08:55 Pawn Stars
- 09:20 Storage Wars
- 09:45 Storage Wars
- 10:10 American Pickers
- 11:00 Pirate Treasure Of The Knights Templar
- 11:50 Duck Dynasty
- 12:15 Duck Dynasty
- 12:40 Counting Cars
- 13:05 Counting Cars
- 13:30 Ax Men
- 14:20 Mountain Men
- 15:10 Lost In Transmission
- 16:00 Storage Wars
- 16:25 Storage Wars
- 16:50 Pawn Stars
- 17:15 Pawn Stars
- 17:40 Alone
- 18:30 Swamp People
- 19:20 Mountain Men
- 20:10 American Pickers
- 21:00 Detroit Steel
- 21:50 Forged In Fire
- 22:40 Forged In Fire
- 23:30 American Pickers



- 00:15 Places We Go
- 00:45 Places We Go
- 01:10 What's For Sale?
- 01:40 A Is For Apple
- 02:05 Ariana's Persian Kitchen
- 02:35 Ariana's Persian Kitchen
- 03:00 Rustic Adventure Argentina
- 03:30 Korean Soul Food
- 04:25 A Is For Apple
- 04:50 Great Escapes
- 05:20 Island Hunter
- 06:15 What's For Sale?
- 06:40 What's For Sale?
- 07:10 A Is For Apple
- 07:35 Ariana's Persian Kitchen
- 08:05 Ariana's Persian Kitchen
- 08:30 Rustic Adventure Argentina
- 09:00 Korean Soul Food
- 09:55 A Is For Apple
- 10:20 Great Escapes
- 10:50 Island Hunter
- 11:45 What's For Sale?
- 12:10 What's For Sale?
- 12:40 A Is For Apple
- 13:05 Ariana's Persian Kitchen
- 13:35 Ariana's Persian Kitchen
- 14:00 Rustic Adventure Argentina
- 14:30 Health Secrets Behind Korean Cuisine
- 15:25 A Is For Apple
- 15:50 Great Escapes
- 16:20 Island Hunter
- 17:15 What's For Sale?
- 17:40 What's For Sale?
- 18:10 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea
- 19:05 A Is For Apple
- 19:30 Great Escapes
- 20:00 Island Hunter
- 21:00 What's For Sale?
- 21:30 What's For Sale?
- 22:00 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea



ENEMY OF THE STATE ON OSN MOVIES HD

- 22:55 A Is For Apple
- 23:20 Ariana's Persian Kitchen
- 23:50 Ariana's Persian Kitchen



- 00:10 Continent 7: Antarctica
- 01:00 Wicked Tuna: North vs South
- 02:00 Air Crash Investigation
- 03:00 Explorer
- 04:00 Continent 7: Antarctica
- 05:00 Showdown Of The Unbeatables
- 06:00 Science Of Stupid
- 06:30 Science Of Stupid
- 07:00 Dog Whisperer
- 08:00 Evacuate Earth
- 09:00 Showdown Of The Unbeatables
- 10:00 Cesar Millan's Dog Nation
- 11:00 Invasion Earth
- 12:00 I Wouldn't Go In There
- 13:00 Science Of Stupid
- 13:30 Science Of Stupid
- 14:00 Evacuate Earth
- 15:00 Cesar To The Rescue Compilation
- 16:00 Cesar Millan's Dog Nation
- 17:00 Invasion Earth
- 18:00 The Truth Behind Zombies
- 19:00 Nazi Megastructures
- 20:00 Cesar Millan's Dog Nation
- 20:50 Invasion Earth
- 21:40 The Truth Behind Zombies
- 22:30 Nazi Megastructures
- 23:20 Science Of Stupid
- 23:45 Science Of Stupid



- 00:20 World's Deadliest Snakes
- 01:10 Dr. K's Exotic Animal ER
- 02:00 Valley Of The Wolves
- 02:50 Monster Fish
- 03:45 Monster Fish
- 04:40 Deadly Instincts
- 05:35 Valley Of The Wolves
- 06:30 Monster Fish
- 07:25 Monster Fish
- 08:20 Deadly Instincts
- 09:15 Intimate Enemies
- 10:10 Wild 24
- 11:05 Animal Fight Club 4.5
- 12:00 Cuba's Secret Reef
- 12:55 Storm Cats
- 13:50 Monster Fish
- 14:45 Monster Fish
- 15:40 Deadly Instincts
- 16:35 Little Killers
- 17:30 Wild 24
- 18:25 Ultimate Animal Countdown
- 19:20 Monster Fish
- 20:10 Deadly Instincts
- 21:00 Little Killers
- 21:50 Wild 24
- 22:40 Ultimate Animal Countdown
- 23:30 Cuba's Secret Reef



- 00:15 Black Beauty
- 01:45 The Land Before Time: Journey Of The Brave
- 03:15 The Incredible Adventures Of Professor Branestawm
- 04:15 Further Adventures Of Professor Branestawm
- 05:20 Mary Poppins
- 07:40 The Land Before Time: Journey Of The Brave
- 09:10 Turbo: A Power Rangers Movie
- 10:55 Mary Poppins
- 13:15 The Unbeatables
- 15:00 Looney Tunes: Rabbit's Run
- 16:20 Step Dogs
- 17:50 D3: The Mighty Ducks
- 19:35 Ghost Squad
- 21:05 Looney Tunes: Rabbit's Run
- 22:25 D3: The Mighty Ducks



- 00:00 Unfinished Business
- 01:45 The Longest Yard
- 03:45 The Grand Seduction
- 05:45 Father Of The Bride
- 07:40 Don Verdan
- 09:25 The Grand Seduction
- 11:25 Father Of The Bride
- 13:15 Don Verdan
- 15:00 Stop! Or My Mom Will Shoot
- 16:35 Father Of The Bride Part II
- 18:30 Under The Tuscan Sun
- 20:30 Break Point
- 22:00 Bananas
- 23:35 Adventures Of A Pizza Guy



- 01:55 5 Flights Up
- 03:55 Another Earth
- 05:35 Neil Young: Heart Of Gold

- 01:30 Land Of Mine
- 09:25 The Girl
- 11:05 East Side Sushi
- 13:00 5 Flights Up
- 14:35 La Bamba
- 16:25 Fort McCoy
- 18:10 The Inevitable Defeat Of Mister & Pete
- 20:00 Freedom Writers
- 22:00 Barry Lyndon



- 00:35 Capture The Flag
- 02:10 We're Back! A Dinosaur's Story
- 03:30 Mickey's Twice Upon A Christmas
- 04:40 Legend Of The Sea
- 06:00 Winnie The Pooh
- 07:10 Robosapien: Rebooted
- 08:40 Mickey, Donald, Goofy: The 3 Musketeers
- 09:55 The Secret Of Kells
- 11:15 Oops Noah Is Gone
- 12:45 Capture The Flag
- 14:20 Two Buddies And A Badger
- 15:40 Mickey, Donald, Goofy: The 3 Musketeers
- 16:55 Bamse And The City Of Thieves
- 18:10 Space Dogs 2: Adventure To The Moon
- 19:30 Two Buddies And A Badger
- 20:50 Robosapien: Rebooted
- 22:30 Bamse And The City Of Thieves
- 23:50 The Secret Of Kells



- 02:00 Rocky
- 04:00 Ghostbusters
- 05:55 People Like Us
- 08:00 Blind Perfect 2
- 10:00 The Pitch
- 12:10 Twister
- 14:10 Goosebumps
- 16:00 Rocky II
- 18:00 Enemy Of The State
- 20:15 Down And Out In Beverly Hills
- 22:00 There's Something About Mary



- 00:30 How Do They Do It?
- 00:55 Food Factory
- 01:20 Strangest Weather On Earth
- 02:10 Mega Engineering
- 03:00 Da Vinci's Machines
- 03:48 Mythbusters
- 04:36 How Do They Do It?
- 05:00 Food Factory
- 05:24 Strangest Weather On Earth
- 06:12 Mega Engineering
- 07:00 How Do They Do It?
- 07:26 Da Vinci's Machines
- 08:14 Mythbusters
- 09:02 Mega Engineering
- 09:50 How Do They Do It?
- 10:14 Food Factory
- 10:38 Strangest Weather On Earth
- 11:26 Da Vinci's Machines
- 12:14 Mythbusters
- 13:02 How Do They Do It?
- 13:26 Food Factory
- 13:50 Mega Engineering
- 14:38 Da Vinci's Machines
- 15:26 Strangest Weather On Earth
- 16:14 Mythbusters
- 17:02 Mega Engineering
- 17:50 Da Vinci's Machines
- 18:40 Mythbusters
- 19:30 Invent It Rich
- 20:20 How Do They Do It?
- 20:45 Food Factory
- 21:10 Mega Engineering
- 22:00 Invent It Rich
- 22:50 Da Vinci's Machines
- 23:40 Mythbusters



- 00:20 My Extreme Excess Skin
- 01:05 My Baby Has Two Heads: Body Bizarre
- 01:50 Monsters Inside Me
- 02:35 Cake Boss
- 02:57 Cake Boss
- 03:20 Little People, Big World
- 03:42 Little People, Big World
- 04:05 Toddlers & Tiaras: Coach Wars
- 04:50 Ultimate Shopper
- 05:35 Say Yes To The Dress
- 06:00 Obsessive Compulsive Cleaners
- 06:45 Oprah: Where Are They Now?
- 07:30 Oprah's Master Class
- 08:15 Little People, Big World
- 08:37 Little People, Big World
- 09:00 Cake Boss
- 09:25 Toddlers & Tiaras: Coach Wars
- 10:10 Obsessive Compulsive Cleaners
- 10:55 Two In A Million: Boys Of Steel
- 11:40 Kate Plus 8
- 12:25 Cake Boss
- 12:47 Cake Boss
- 13:10 Say Yes To The Dress: The Big Day



TRACERS ON OSN MOVIES ACTION

- 05:30 Doctors
- 06:00 Father Brown
- 06:50 Holly City
- 07:50 New Tricks
- 08:45 Call The Midwife
- 09:40 Father Brown
- 10:30 Holly City
- 11:35 New Tricks
- 12:30 Call The Midwife
- 13:25 Father Brown
- 14:15 Holly City
- 15:15 New Tricks
- 16:10 Call The Midwife
- 17:10 Father Brown
- 18:00 Doctors
- 18:30 EastEnders
- 19:05 New Tricks
- 20:00 Poldark
- 21:00 Sherlock
- 22:35 Thirteen
- 23:30 Doctors

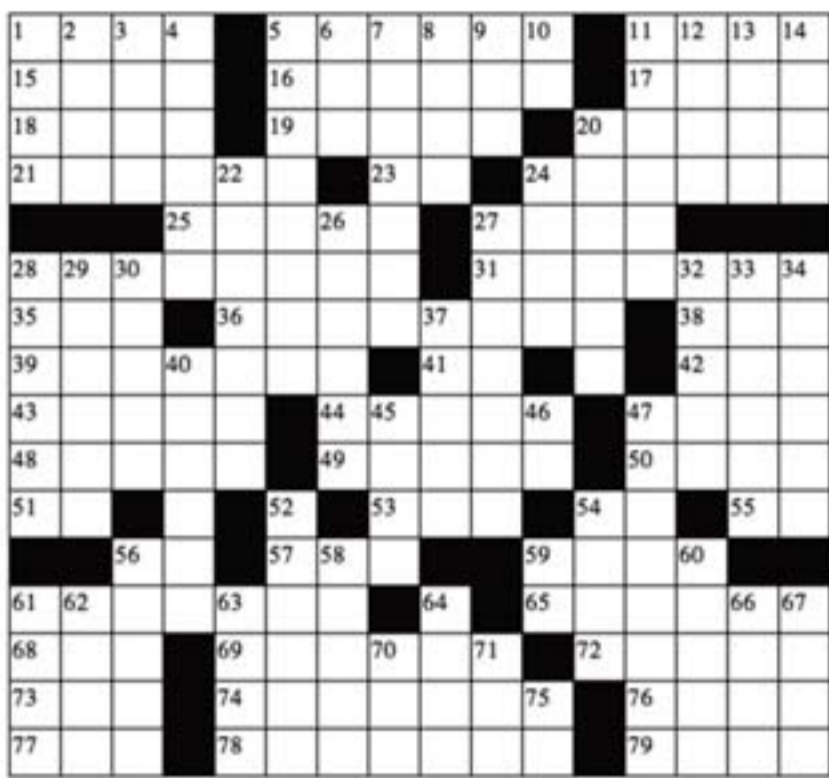


- 00:00 Hank Zipzer
- 00:25 Alex & Co.
- 00:45 The Hive
- 00:50 Evermoor Chronicles
- 01:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 01:40 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 02:05 Binny And The Ghost
- 02:30 Binny And The Ghost
- 02:55 Hank Zipzer
- 03:15 The Hive
- 03:20 Hank Zipzer
- 03:45 Alex & Co.
- 04:10 Alex & Co.
- 04:35 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 05:00 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 05:45 The Hive
- 05:50 The 7D
- 06:00 Jessie
- 06:25 Jessie
- 06:50 The Adventures Of Disney Fairies
- 07:15 Tangled Before Ever After Sneak Peek
- 07:20 Elena Of Avalor
- 07:45 The Zhuzhus S1
- 08:10 Bizaardvark
- 08:35 Bunk'd
- 09:00 Stuck In The Middle
- 09:25 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug...
- 09:50 Best Friends Whenever
- 10:15 Liv And Maddie
- 10:40 Bad Hair Day
- 12:15 Tangled Before Ever After Sneak Peek
- 12:20 Jessie
- 12:45 Jessie
- 13:10 Girl Meets World
- 13:35 Austin & Ally
- 14:00 Austin & Ally
- 14:25 Rolling With The Ronks
- 14:50 The Zhuzhus S1
- 15:15 Whisker Haven Tales...
- 15:20 Bizaardvark
- 15:45 Elena Of Avalor
- 16:10 Liv And Maddie
- 16:35 Tangled Before Ever After Sneak Peek
- 16:40 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug...
- 17:05 Stuck In The Middle
- 17:30 Bunk'd
- 17:55 Girl Meets World
- 18:20 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 18:25 Alex & Co.
- 18:50 Best Friends Whenever
- 19:15 Star Darlings
- 19:20 Liv And Maddie
- 19:45 Mako Mermaids
- 20:10 The Adventures Of Disney Fairies
- 20:35 Cracked
- 20:40 Bizaardvark
- 20:45 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug...
- 21:00 Stuck In The Middle
- 21:30 Tsum Tsum Shorts
- 21:55 Tsum Tsum Shorts
- 22:00 Bunk'd
- 22:25 Bunk'd

- 20:05 The Lion Guard
- 20:35 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
- 21:00 Goldie & Bear
- 21:25 Doc McStuffins
- 21:50 Minnie's Bow-Toons
- 22:00 Sofia The First
- 22:30 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
- 22:55 PJ Masks
- 23:20 Henry Hugglemonster
- 23:35 The Hive
- 23:45 Loopdidoo



CROSSWORD 1651



ACROSS

1. Being three more than fifty.
5. A steep artificial slope in front of a fortification.
11. A closed sac that develops abnormally in some body structure.
15. Dutch astronomer who proved that the galaxy is rotating and proposed the existence of the Oort cloud (1900-1992).
16. Somewhat ill or prone to illness.
17. A member of the Shoshonean people of northeastern Arizona.
18. A state in the western United States.
19. Treated with contempt.
21. Flightless New Zealand birds similar to gallinules.
23. A ductile gray metallic element of the lanthanide series.
25. A Bantu language spoken by the Kamba people in Kenya.
28. Of or relating to the perineum.
31. Submersible vessel for one or two persons.
35. A rapid bustling commotion.
36. A comic incident or series of incidents.
38. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
39. A tricycle (usually propelled by pedalling).
41. A trivalent metallic element of the rare earth group.
42. The act of slowing down or falling behind.
43. Indicating the most important performer or role.
44. At full speed.
48. Relating to or near the ulna.
49. An indehiscent fruit derived from a single ovary having one or many seeds within a fleshy wall or pericarp.
50. Tropical starchy tuberous root.
51. A toxic nonmetallic element related to sulfur and tellurium.
53. The federal agency that insures residential mortgages.
55. A public promotion of some product or service.
57. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
61. A defeat of the Persian army by the Greeks in 479 BC.
65. Type genus of the Anhimidae.
68. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
69. Lacking or indicating lack of confidence or assurance.
72. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
73. Being two more than fifty.
74. Falling in drops or as if falling like rain.
76. The basic unit of money in Iran.
77. (computer science) A coding system that incorporates extra parity bits in order to detect errors.
78. Changed in order to improve or made more fit for a particular purpose.
79. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.

DOWN

1. An awkward stupid person.
2. A tiny or scarcely detectable amount.
3. A republic in the Middle East in western Asia.
4. A Greek island west of Greece.
5. Something transitory.
6. Relating to or characteristic of or occurring on the sea or ships.
7. A cry expressing disapproval.
8. Widely cultivated in tropical and subtropical regions for its fragrant flowers and colorful fruits.
9. Having any of numerous bright or strong colors reminiscent of the color of blood or cherries or tomatoes or rubies.
10. A silvery-white metallic element of the platinum group that resembles platinum.
11. Affectedly trendy.
12. A Hindu theistic philosophy.
13. An edible tuber native to South America.
14. Hoop that covers a wheel.
20. The bivalent radical UO₂ which forms salts with acids.
22. A small railroad car propelled by hand or by a small motor.
24. An independent ruler or chieftain (especially in Africa or Arabia).
26. African tree having an exceedingly thick trunk and fruit that resembles a gourd and has an edible pulp called monkey bread.
27. North American republic containing 50 states - 48 conterminous states in North America plus Alaska in northwest North America and the Hawaiian Islands in the Pacific Ocean.
29. United States swimmer who in 1926 became the first woman to swim the English Channel (1903-).
30. French sculptor noted for his renderings of the human form (1840-1917).
32. Food mixtures either arranged on a plate or tossed and served with a moist dressing.
33. A landlocked republic in eastern Africa.
34. Capital and largest city of Iraq.
37. The process of leaching.
40. A hostel for pilgrims in Turkey.
45. A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
46. A silvery soft waxy metallic element of the alkali metal group.
47. Genus of North American herbs with basal cordate or orbicular leaves and small panicle flowers.
52. An unnaturally frenzied or distraught woman.
54. Long and thin and often limp.
56. Of or relating to or containing barium.
58. An oil port in southern Iraq.
59. The syllable forming the fourth (subdominant) note of the diatonic scale in solmization.
60. The inner and thicker of the two bones of the human leg between the knee and ankle.
62. Concerning those not members of the clergy.
63. A sensation (as of a cold breeze or bright light) that precedes the onset of certain disorders such as a migraine attack or epileptic seizure.
64. A native or inhabitant of Great Britain.
66. A flat-bottomed volcanic crater that was formed by an explosion.
67. (usually followed by 'to') Having the necessary means or skill or know-how or authority to do something.
70. A transuranic element that has not been found in nature.
71. The compass point midway between north-east and east.
75. A ductile silvery-white ductile ferromagnetic trivalent metallic element of the rare earth group.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

There is news of a part-time job, if you want it. This part-time job may remind you of the job you had as a youth. You know you will be able to handle it easily. Family, home, relatives and real estate play a bigger part in your life and it may be time to think about investing in a home. You want to belong on a private, intimate, personal level and to have the security of a home and a place to call your own. Your work moves as it should... Smoothly. You are in a mood of self-enjoyment and can appreciate your own better qualities. You may see value in or feel love for an older person or someone in authority. You are very animated and it is fun for you to convey your ideas. After work you might drive around to see some of the homes that are for sale.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You could be in the limelight today, especially in relation to your work. You may find that you enjoy your job or the responsibility it entails more than usual. Financial security and enjoying the finer things in life, appreciating and creating things others long to have are experiences that assume a high priority. You are valued in the workplace but it is important to keep up appearances and show that you value yourself and others in the way you present yourself. You may be planning a shopping trip this afternoon. While it is good to have money in the bank, it is also good to go shopping for clothes that fit. You enjoy a big chuckle with a friend this evening when you see the new magic trick he or she has finally achieved.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Today brings you a kind of recognition of who you really are with regard to how you appear to others, in the business as well as the social world. You have a strong need for this recognition and you are appreciative. You will be wise to make plans toward securing your professional and financial life instead of spending time in worry. Write out a plan that will include these goals. More demanding years could be in the forecast. Now is the time to build on all of your relationships. A lover or child becomes a focal point in your life. Laughter and fun communications come easily this afternoon. There is fun competition with a hobby this evening. You won't be up late tonight but you will be distracted from the everyday stress.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You have a great love of the written and spoken word; ideas are what you like to work with best. Your enthusiasm for mental stimulation and the world of ideas makes it easy for you to communicate to others. You may find yourself teaching spiritual lessons today. You have no trouble putting feelings into the way you express your words; this carries a lot of meaning. A choice of entertaining, teaching, speaking or singing comes about in order to communicate hope, realities and possibilities. Your expression of this hope, acceptance and good insights shows off the magnitude of your perspective. You will always find new ways to relate in a love relationship and this evening is a good time to do just that.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

When it comes to taking care of business you are relentless in getting down to the nitty-gritty. Others sense this about you. When asked for your services, perhaps a favor or some volunteer situation, you see the best in a situation-making it hard to say no or cut yourself the best deal. Think your answer through before obligating time and energy that you do not have. You look to home and family for support and encouragement. You trust a more experienced person today when you seek guidance. There could be opportunities to discuss or hear past experiences-amusing stories-perhaps your own childhood events. Security is very important and you need to have stable roots in order to be productive. The social scene grabs your attention this evening.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You could find that you are appreciated or valued for your feelings or your ability to act and get things done. Everything may be pouring in at once and it's all good news. Your career direction gets some encouragement and life's problems seem to have easy solutions. You benefit from an older person or one in authority. Life could assume a dreamlike stance. You may find yourself more than a little greedy and your current appreciation for just about everything may lead you to overspend. Something you really want to purchase may not be as desirable after a few days of delay-compare prices. You will make career gains by your ability to sense quality and choose accordingly. Someone understands your complaints.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

This is a period emphasizing an enhanced sense of personal possibility and potential. There is tremendous psychological growth and it will lead to great personal success, if you follow through with it. You might also find that you will put on the pounds if you are not careful. Respect, status and achievement are central goals for you as a new phase begins in your life. Ambition unlimited always ends in defeat. In-depth discussions and probing conversations find you at your mental best. Your analytical abilities are at a high point. Good practical job-related thoughts and ideas are available to you. The ability to communicate with superiors or describe what you see is a talent others may wish they had. Take some time to relax and enjoy some quiet time tonight.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Your insight and vision into what unites people and into the dreams and mystical regions of our minds are profound. You may be working and communicating with others in these matters and with music and the arts. New paths to world or personal unity are a major interest, and you have a very practical sense of how to make your dreams real. You think of life as a grand experience and will do whatever it takes to find where the best opportunities are developing. Concentrate on developing your special talent or on helping a loved one develop his or her special talent. This is an excellent time to seek out an inspiring teacher or mentor. You are generous to the extreme with others. You are good at sensing the unity in life. Relax with your loved one this evening.



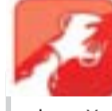
Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Everything points to your taking the initiative. You could feel great support from those around you. You feel healthy and natural with a sharp, nimble mind and ready wit. You are quick to achieve and gain insights to new solutions. Your response to stress makes the difference between success and failure. Your ability to converse with most any individual in any sector of life puts you in the genius arena when it comes to communication skills. Others will find that you have a natural physical dexterity-good hands too. Your enchanting manner transports all who meet you beyond the mundane and into the extraordinary regions where you spend a lot of your time. You may find yourself being put to good use by your friends this afternoon.



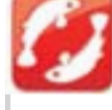
Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You have a natural appreciation for the past-personal or worldly-all that is traditional. There is an opportunity to lead a club or group organization today. This could mean a location away from your place of work. You will find that you enjoy decorating homes or advising medical groups on how to use color and floral setting as well as pictures and furniture settings. Part of this decorator job entails the confirmation of times, products and people. You enjoy moods and emotions, especially in social surroundings. You find it easy to work with other people and you tend to pour a lot of energy into those around you. Perhaps stage-managing would also be a good way to express your many talents. Your dreams are memorable-keep your diary current.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Your mind is full of practical ideas, especially related to your particular talents. You may come up with new ideas to manage things better. You sense things with the mind and understand that feelings are thoughts first. What does this or that thought meanwhile is it pointing these are questions you may ask. You use subjective rather than objective logic-intuition and gut instinct. Your image and ideals could be challenged by another who sees you as too probing. You understand that thoughts must be productive. Poetry, music and the arts interest you, as do psychology and the psyche. A classic movie or a book about new discoveries is enjoyed this evening. You will want to record the antics of an animal this evening.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

In-depth discussions and probing conversations find you at your mental best this day. Your analytical abilities are well tuned. Others will find a good understanding of your thoughts and ideas. This afternoon is a good time to study-you have a real appreciation for innovative thinking and new discoveries are escalating all around you. This may mean medical discoveries, weather discoveries or trends that have escalated into everyday uses. You may find yourself needing to set an alarm when you visit the library or bookstore, use your computer or chat with a buddy or just generally involve yourself somehow with learning about the latest discoveries. It is awesome to learn about the latest happenings and you could be quite hungry

WORD SEARCH

Hanukkah

Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining 42 letters spell a secret message.

Y	A	D	I	L	O	H	P	O	N	T	S	H	K	E	S	T	H	
A	M	V	E	L	S	I	K	O	L	I	V	E	O	I	L	H	F	O
T	A	L	M	U	D	N	C	H	A	R	I	T	Y	E	A	E	E	V
U	O	K	T	O	Y	I	N	A	G	F	U	S	G	N	A	L	L	I
M	Z	Y	G	A	M	E	S	K	J	D	A	H	E	S	H	C	P	V
A	T	I	E	S	U	M	A	E	T	P	R	T	E	J	A	M	E	
C	Z	R	E	A	L	H	R	W	R	O	E	B	I	S	R	E	S	
C	U	S	A	A	R	U	A	A	S	T	V	R	I	Y	H	I	T	G
A	R	H	S	D	S	L	Y	H	D	E	I	A	D	S	M	Y	N	
B	Y	P	S	A	I	E	Y	A	S	W	O	D	V	O	E	C	L	I
E	L	Y	L	A	R	T	L	F	S	I	T	O	L	E	A	L	O	S
E	I	E	S	S	M	A	I	M	E	H	T	E	F	N	L	H	S	
S	M	H	O	T	L	A	O	O	G	S	U	A	D	Y	A	H	O	E
T	A	U	N	U	F	T	H	I	N	M	T	L	M	R	R	L	I	L
H	F	D	G	S	I	E	S	I	A	E	I	O	Y	T	I	A	B	
G	H	I	S	A	T	G	B	L	S	A	T	V	T	T	A	S		
I	E	T	C	I	G	H	A	R	O	N	E	M	A	K	T	D	D	
L	A	Y	H	A	I	K	U	N	A	H	C	S	L	E	L	L	A	H

BIMUELOS FESTIVAL LATKE PSALMS
BLESSINGS GAMES LEVIVOT SEVIVON
CANDLES GELT LIGHTS SHAMASH
CHANUKIAH GIFTS MA'OZ TZUR SONGS
CHARITY HALLEL HANEROT HALALU MACCABEES SUFGANYOT
CUSTOMS HANEROT HALALU MATSIYAHU TALMUD
DAIRY FOODS HEBREW MENORAH TORAH
DREIDEL HOLIDAY MIRACLE OLIVE OIL YEARLY
EIGHT DAYS HOLY TEMPLE JERUSALEM PONTSHKES YEHUDIT
FAMILY FEAST KISLEV PRAYERS

Yesterday's Solution

Halloween

S	V	A	M	P	I	R	E	Z	O	M	B	I	E	B				
L	N	R	E	T	N	A	L	O	K	C	A	J	Y	O				
U	B	C	A	R	C	O	F	F	I	N	D	A	W	N				
O	G	B	K	B	C	O	F	F	I	N	D	A	W	N				
H	O	N	C	T	I	T	N	K	R	C	F	E	A	U				
G	B	D	I	N	O	I	E	A	S	U	G	R	C	T				
W	L	L	T	N	K	M	C	L	L	A	W	E	Y	S				
I	I	E	S	P	E	U	B	L	E	O	M	W	R	O				
T	N	M	M	K	L	T	M	S	R	K	B	O	E	C				
C	S	U	O	A	U	O	H	C	T	A	S	L	T	S				
H	F	M	O	F	O	L	E	G	T	O	O	F	E	E				
E	R	M	R	N	A	R	L	S	I	H	N	P	M	L				
S	P	Y	B	M	A	E	R	C	S	R	G	E	E	P				
L	E	T	A	C	K	C	A	L	B	S	F	I	C	P				
G	H	O	S	T	S	S	R	E	D	I	P	S	N	A				

APPLES BATS BROOMSTICK CANDY CEMETERY COFFIN COSTUME DRACULA FRIGHTENING FULL MOON GHOSTS GOULDS GOBLINS GRAVEYARD JACK O LANTERN MASK MUMMY NIGHT PUMPKIN SCARECROW SCARY SCREAM SKELETON SKULL SPIDERS TOMSTONE VAMPIRE WEREWOLF WITCHES ZOMBIE

The hidden message is: BOBBING FOR APPLES

Daily SuDoku

		5		2				6
	3		8					7
9	8	6						
			6				4	
	9		4	8	3			6
		4			9			
						3	4	5
7					2			8
3				9		2		

Yesterday's Solution

5	1	6	3	4	7	2	9	8
7	9	3	2	8	5	1	4	6
8	2	4	6	1	9	7	3	5
2	5	1	8	9	6	4	7	3
6	8	7	1	3	4	9	5	2
4	3	9	5	7	2	8	6	1
3	7	5	9	2	1	6	8	4
9	6	2	4	5	8	3	1	7
1	4	8	7	6	3	5	2	9



STARS HIT DIOR'S ENCYCLOPEDIA 70TH BIRTHDAY SHOW IN PARIS



Christian Dior feted its 70th birthday at Paris' Couture Week Monday in style with an accomplished, star-filled show that mapped the iconic house's journey across the world. It was an unabashed, encyclopedic celebration of femininity in all its guises for Maria Grazia Chiuri - the house's first female designer. Here are some highlights of Monday's fall-winter 2017 collections.

Dior front row

Dior breathed a sigh of relief that it didn't rain on Chiuri's first outdoor presentation - and her best show to date. But the unexpected rays of sun caused their own set of problems for the myriad VIP guests that included singer Celine Dion and actresses Jennifer Lawrence, Natalie Portman and Kirsten Dunst. They sweltered alongside the forest-like show decor of verdant grass, exotic trees, huge wooden elephants, crocodiles and eagles at the Invalides venue.

"I'm going to stand in the shade as it's just too hot," model Karlie Kloss explained as she raced away momentarily for the refuge of a tree from her front row seat. Meanwhile, actor Robert Pattinson - a Dior brand ambassador - mingled with guests in the cool of the shade cast surreally by a gargantuan atlas, hoisted up above the show foliage.

Dior's female empowerment

The starting point of Chiuri's empowering, feminist display was a 1953 Atlas etching of five continents discovered in the Dior archives, which mapped the house's global expansion. Chiuri took Monsieur Dior's own words - that a collection should represent "all types of women in all countries" - and gave them renewed legitimacy - as the house's first female head.

The ankle-length silhouettes, which riffed on the 1950s, celebrated powerful female trailblazers of history - and the bold styles worn by women thousands of miles apart. A loose, pleated gray wool menswear aviator outfit was called "Amelia Earhart," in celebration of the American aviation pioneer who succeeded in a man's world. An anthracite jumpsuit with a chic, Asian-style crossover and large turned-up sleeves was named "Siam" in celebration of Thai women's style. And a deli-

cate, sexy tulle dress with peek-a-boo sheer sections - called "Andalusia" - evoked iconic black Spanish lace. But this wasn't just an encyclopedic check list - and the 66 varied looks packed some true style. Gently cinch-waisted silhouettes billowed out into beautiful culottes, alongside voluminous full skirts in organza, or vintage pleated evening dresses. This couture season, Chiuri really found her voice.

Ralph & Russo's plumage

In a white shoulderless halterneck, actress Zendaya joined "Fast and Furious" star Michelle Rodriguez in a silken teal coat dress to add star power to the Ralph & Russo front row. It was perhaps a welcome boost to a collection that was hard to pin down. Tamara Ralph's designs are a red carpet favorite - and no doubt some looks, like an asymmetrical pastel plum satin gown that unfurled around the bust, will be a big hit. But the collection - which moved between varying pastel shades - seemed to lack focus at times.

Big Ottoman-style cone hats, strapped under the chin, defined many of the shimmering gowns doused with lashings of embroideries and sequins. Then, there were the feathers. Plumes shot out from large shoulder sections, down a cinched 60s skirt, across the arm like a bird's wing, and then down the chest on one black-and-silver, traffic-stopping gown that evoked a peacock with its tail feathers down. There were plenty of great dramatic moments - including an off-white feather hat that might have been the pick of the late Elizabeth Taylor. — AP





Models present creations by Georges Hobeika during the 2017 fall/winter Haute Couture collection in Paris. — AFP photos



Fashion designer Georges Hobeika acknowledges the audience at the end of the 2017 fall/winter Haute Couture collection in Paris.



Models present creations for Christian Dior during the 2017 fall/winter Haute Couture collection in Paris.



Models present creations by Ralph and Russo during the 2017 fall/winter Haute Couture collection in Paris.



A band performs in Military Park in Newark, NJ. — AP photos



The lobby of Hotel Indigo, a boutique hotel in downtown Newark, NJ.



Photo shows a jazz exhibition in Newark, NJ, with Ella Fitzgerald performing on video next to the gown she was wearing.



Photo shows Lauren Craig, who calls herself the 'glambassador' of Newark, NJ, pointing to a 'Newark Vs Everybody' T-shirt on display at the Off the Hanger and ANE boutique on Linden Street in Newark.



Photo show cigars being hand-rolled at Jimenez Tobacco, which operates a cigar lounge and bar in Newark, NJ.



Photo shows 'The Iron Man' sculpture of a hockey player next to the Prudential Center where the New Jersey Devils hockey team plays in Newark.



Photo shows a display of bags and shoes made from cork in the window of CS Cork, a shop in the Ironbound district of Newark, NJ.

Tourism in Newark? 50 years after riots, city says it's time

Tourism in Newark? You might not think of it as a destination, but boosters say Newark is ready for visitors as part of a comeback. A company called Have You Met Newark? has taken more than 2,000 visitors on walking tours and bar crawls. Tour company founder Emily Manz points out everything from Nasto's ice cream parlor, made famous in an episode of "The Sopranos," to a church, St. Stephan's, that appeared in the movie "War of the Worlds."

The Greater Newark Convention and Visitors Bureau has started taking travel writers to see attractions like the Newark Museum and the Ironbound, a neighborhood known for Portuguese and Spanish restaurants and shops. And in August, the "100 Things to Do Before You Die" series will publish a Newark guidebook written by Lauren Craig, who fell in love with Newark while attending Rutgers Law School and calls herself the city's "glambassador." But this summer also marks 50 years since riots scarred the city. "The perception of Newark being unfriendly, dangerous, dirty is something that has been ingrained in people for many, many years," Craig said. "I fight against that every day."

Hahne & co, a symbol of rebirth

Officials point to a massive brick building, vacant since the Hahne department store closed in 1987, as a symbol of Newark's rebirth. The Hahne building reopened this year with apartments (one-bedrooms rent for \$2,000 monthly) and businesses, including a Whole Foods. Celebrity chef Marcus Samuelsson plans a restaurant there. An arts incubator, Express Newark, hosts workshops and exhibits onsite, including a jazz history show organized by Rutgers University's Institute of Jazz Studies.

On a recent day, another downtown gem, Military Park, was busy with kids riding a carousel, a jazz band playing and the after-work crowd mingling at a trendy park eatery, BURG. "I've been waiting for this," said Jeremy Johnson, executive director of Newark Arts, as he surveyed the scene in the park. "No one is asking me if the National Guard is going to protect them when they come to Newark. They asked me that 20 years ago. So this is the dream."

Attractions and hotels

Destination Newark has a lot to offer: New Jersey Devils hockey games and more at the Prudential Center, concerts and shows at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center and Newark International Airport, among America's 20 busiest airports.

Newark Penn Station is also just 20 minutes from

Manhattan via PATH, NJ Transit or Amtrak trains. That makes Newark a viable lodging option for visitors to New York City. Downtown Newark hotels include the historic Robert Treat, which has hosted four U.S. presidents; the Hilton at Newark Penn Station, popular with airline crews; and the Indigo boutique hotel. Rates for a July Sunday night at the Newark Indigo were \$136 compared with \$209 at the Indigo in Manhattan.

Treasures at the Newark Museum, a 10-minute walk from Newark Penn Station, include an 1885 mansion called the Ballantine House, a room of paintings by Joseph Stella, a Tibetan altar visited by the Dalai Lama and impressive collections of Native American and African-American art. "I go there as much as I can," said Hrag Vartanian of Brooklyn, New York, editor-in-chief of online arts publication Hyperallergic.com. "But it's amazing to me how many people have never heard of the Newark

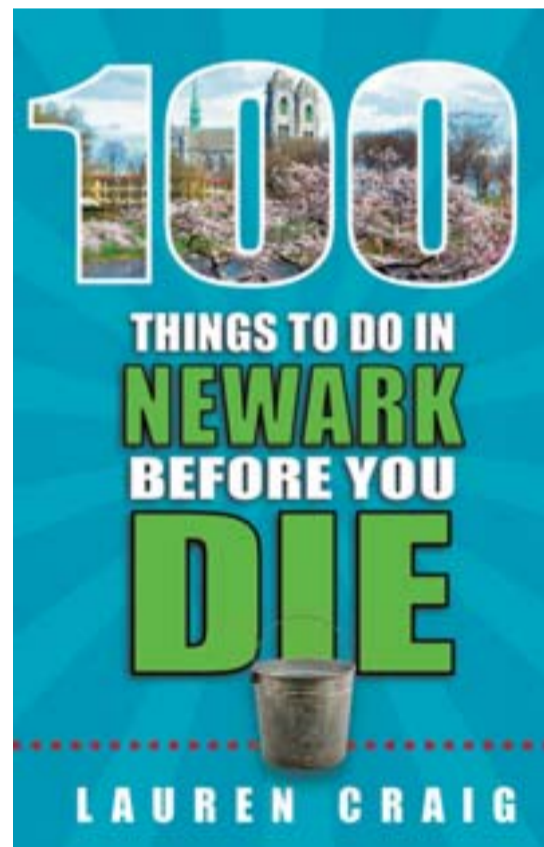
Museum." Before hopping the train back to New York, Vartanian heads to the Ironbound, where dining options range from old-school bacalhau at Seabra's Marisqueira to tapas with a hipster vibe at Mompou.

The Ballantine House and the Ironbound are featured in Craig's "100 Things to Do in Newark Before You Die" book, too. On a recent day, she also took a visitor to the Off the Hanger boutique, where "Newark Vs Everybody" T-shirts are prominently displayed; the Jimenez Tobacco cigar lounge and bar; Casa D'Paco, an Ironbound restaurant; and Gateway Project Spaces, an art gallery adjacent to Newark Penn Station. At one point on Craig's whirlwind tour, a taxi driver disputed the idea that Newark was ready for tourists. "I beg to differ," Craig said politely, then said to a guest, "You see what I'm fighting against?"

The city past and present

Of course, problems persist. Newark's population declined from 400,000 in the 1960s to 280,000 today. Thirty percent of residents live in poverty. Crime remains a top concern, though it's decreasing: Newark is statistically safer than Washington, DC, Atlanta and Memphis, Tennessee. But Newark's decline in the last half of the 20th century wasn't isolated. Many urban areas lost population as factories closed and white middle-class Americans fled to the suburbs. Even Newark's riots were part of a larger pattern: Riots rocked more than 100 cities in 1967, and many - including Newark's, which erupted after the arrest of a black cabdriver - were sparked by allegations of police brutality amid racial inequality and lack of opportunity in African-American communities. More than 20 people died in Newark's riots; millions of dollars in property damage was sustained.

Karin Aaron, CEO of the Greater Newark Convention and Visitors Bureau, left the city in the early '90s because she "didn't see any progress," even though her mother often spoke about "how great Newark used to be." Aaron moved back in 2016 and believes a renaissance is underway, saying: "Everybody loves a comeback story." — AP



This image provided by Reedy Press shows the cover of 100 Things to Do in Newark Before You Die by Lauren Craig, who describes herself as the iglambassador of Newark.



Photo shows Lauren Craig, who calls herself the 'glambassador' of Newark, NJ, watching as sangria is poured into a glass at Casa d'Paco, a Spanish restaurant in the Ironbound section of Newark.



Photo shows Ferry Street in the Ironbound district of Newark, NJ, a Portuguese neighborhood.

'Star Wars' droids join lineup for July 4 concert in DC

The annual July Fourth concert near the US Capitol will include an appearance by two droids who fought for independence in a galaxy far, far away. The two "Star Wars" characters will be on stage yesterday evening while the National Symphony Orchestra plays John Williams' music from the beloved sci-fi movie. The performance will celebrate the 40th anniversary of "Star Wars," which was released in 1977.

R2-D2 and C-3PO are veterans of the Washington stage, having participated in the Kennedy Center Honors when "Star Wars" creator George Lucas received the award. The

July Fourth concert, known as "A Capitol Fourth," will also feature performances by the Beach Boys, the Four Tops and Trace Adkins, among others. John Stamos will host the show. — AP

In this file photo, Droid characters from "Star Wars", BB-8, from left, R2-D2, and C-3PO speak at the Oscars at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles. — AP





This photo shows retired Japanese police officer Masao Gunji posing with his Hello Kitty collection at his pink-painted Hello Kitty house in Yotsukaido, Chiba prefecture. — AFP photos



Masao Gunji, a retired police officer, standing at an entrance to his pink-painted Hello Kitty house with his wife Yoshiko Gunji (left) in Yotsukaido.



Masao Gunji showing his Hello Kitty collection to a neighbor at his pink-painted Hello Kitty house.



Masao Gunji (right) posing next to his Hello Kitty collection as his wife Yoshiko Gunji (left) looks on, at their pink-painted Hello Kitty house.

Ex-Japan policeman breaks records with Hello Kitty collection

'This is his dream'

A 67-year-old former policeman with the world's biggest Hello Kitty collection has become the envy of little girls everywhere with a quarter of a million dollars' worth of moon-faced memorabilia. Masao Gunji, who spent his working life on the trail of hardened criminals, now spends his retirement tracking down pink and white soft toys to keep in a Hello Kitty-

themed house, which he built specially and has become a magnet for tourists. "Kitty has been like the love of my life. Though he doesn't live in the property, Gunji was recognized last November by Guinness World Records for his collection, having spent around 30 million yen (\$267,000) on thousands of items, including the house. More than 5,000 items he owns bear Kitty's iconic

red bow, propelling Gunji past the previous record holder, also Japanese. Gunji's wife Yoshiko says she fully supports her husband's passion. "I don't care how much he spends on Hello Kitty," she said. "People need to make a mark on the world, and Hello Kitty is the one he lives for," she added. "This is his dream." — AFP

Afghanistan's Sesame Street gets proud brother muppet

Zeeraak the bespectacled orange muppet is the latest innovation from Sesame Street in Afghanistan: a children's TV character who reveres his educated older sister, brought on to screens to show a new generation that a woman's place is beyond the home. Producers are betting the new character—a four-year-old boy dressed in a traditional shalwar kameez and a waist-coast embroidered in Afghan national colors will inspire millions of children—and their parents—to see the value in education. Zeeraak's big sister Zari, introduced last year with great fanfare as the first Afghan muppet to join internationally cherished characters such as Big Bird and Elmo, has already proved a success on the local version of Sesame Street, known as 'Baghch-e-Simsim'.

Massood Sanjer, head of Tolo TV which airs the show, believes introducing a boy, who adores and wants to emulate his school-going, older sibling, will "indirectly teach the kids to love their sisters" in a conservative, gender-segregated nation which traditionally has invested more in its sons. Baghch-e-Simsim is the only program on Afghan television dedicated to children and has a remarkable reach—a recent survey showed some 80 percent of children and parents with access to television watch the show.

Sanjer believes the show can, from an early age, underline the importance of educated women in Afghan society, but also show boys that a good education benefits everyone. "People—kids and parents, who have access to TV are watching and know the brand of the character. So it is a very good sign that people love to learn and it is great to use media as an education tool for kids," he told AFP. That message still needs to be hammered home in many parts of Afghanistan nearly 16 years after the end of the Taliban's repressive regime. A report published last year by the National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment Center showed that just 66 percent of boys and 37 percent of girls aged 15-24 can read and write, while barely 45.5 percent of Afghans attend primary school, and 27 percent secondary school.

Driving social change

The broadcaster is utilizing everything it can to help



Afghan puppeteers Seema Sultani (left) and Mansoor Shirzad hold Sesame Street Muppets 'Zeeraak' and 'Zari' as they meet children after a recording at a television studio in Kabul. — AFP photos

change attitudes -- the new muppet Zeeraak's name means 'smart' in Dari and Pashto, Afghanistan's two official languages. And even his trendy, black-rimmed glasses were chosen for a reason.

Producer Wajih Saïd explains that wearing spectacles is seen as shameful for Afghan youngsters, so they wanted to address the issue and show it to be normal. Across its global iterations, Sesame Street has made a point of inclusivity with its cast. Earlier this year the American version debuted a character with autism, while in South Africa the program features a HIV-positive muppet.

Last week it courted controversy in the US after tweeting a group image of some of its stars to reflect a rainbow in support of 'LGBT Pride Month'. "Sesame Street is proud to support families of all shapes, sizes, and colors," the official account said.

In Afghanistan, the show's attention to equality extends to its casting, with two talented female puppeteers, Sima and Mansour, lending their voices to Zari and Zeeraak. Zari is by far the favorite character on the show in Afghanistan, according to the study commissioned by Tolo which surveyed some 1,500 children and their parents. Just 60 percent of Afghanistan has access



Afghan puppeteers Seema Sultani (right) holds new Sesame Street Muppet 'Zeeraak' as she performs with colleague Mansoor Shirzad, holding Muppet 'Zari', during a recording at a television studio in Kabul.

to television, but Baghch-e-Simsim is also broadcast on the radio across 44 FM stations, says Anwar Jamilli, who runs the audio programs. The producers also organize small mobile theatres that travel to kindergartens in rural areas, with Jamilli estimating that they reached nearly 20,000 children last year. He says the show's focus on friendship and sharing brings a dose of happiness to children living with the ever-present threat of violence. "This is very new for Afghan children," he says. — AFP



Afghan puppeteers Raziya Nazaria (left) and Mansoor Shirzad dress Sesame Street Muppets 'Zeeraak' (second left) and 'Zari' ahead of recording at a television studio in Kabul.



Afghan children meet Sesame Street Muppet 'Zari' after a recording at a television studio in Kabul.

Lifestyle

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Afghanistan's Sesame Street gets proud brother muppet

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In this photo tourists look on from a glass-bottomed skywalk, certified as the world's longest, at the Ordovician park in Wansheng. — AFP photos

Don't look down: Glass bottom skywalk thrills in China



A couple walks on a glass-bottomed skywalk.

Suspended more than 120 meters (400 feet) above a gaping chasm, the world's longest cantilevered glass skywalk is delighting and terrifying visitors in China. The v-shaped walkway stretches almost 70 meters from a sheer cliff face in southwest Chongqing, offering intrepid tourists a vertigo-inducing view of the ground some 123 meters below.

No more than 30 people are allowed on the skywalk at any one time. While some pause to pose for photos, others find it all a little too much to cope with, and grip the

handrail with both hands as they inch along the walkway. The structure at the Ordovician park in Wansheng, which is held up by thick cables, was certified earlier this year by Guinness World Records as being the longest of its type anywhere on the planet. Similar glass-bottomed constructions have become popular attractions at scenic parks in China. Last year, a 430-metre-long, 300-metre-high glass bridge opened in central Hunan province. It temporarily closed after being overwhelmed by crowds. — AFP



Tourists look on and take photos while standing on a glass-bottomed skywalk, certified as the world's longest.



A tourist walks on a glass-bottomed skywalk.



Tourists look on from a glass-bottomed skywalk.



A view of the Ordovician park is seen from a glass-bottomed skywalk.



Tourists walk across a glass-bottomed skywalk.



A tourist poses with standing on a glass-bottomed skywalk.