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Kuwait Times



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THURSDAY, JULY 13, 2017

SHAWWAL 19, 1438 AH

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FINANCE MINISTER DENIES SPENDING WITHOUT RECORDS

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Finance Minister Anas Al-Saleh denied yesterday accusations that as much as KD 3.8 billion in public funds had been spent illegally by the government without showing any records for the money spent. He said reports about the funds are false and incorrect. Saleh's statements came days after several lawmakers charged that the government had spent that amount of money without showing any records. The lawmakers also threatened to grill the prime minister at the start of the next Assembly term in October if the government does not provide convincing clarification over the issue.

The allegations revolve around an important item in the state budget on government inventories. The minister said the finance ministry has submitted proposals to the concerned authorities to upgrade the efficiency of accounting to be able to control inventories more effectively. The minister made the statements during a meeting at the National Assembly office. MP Awdah Al-Awdah said that the inventory accounts must be subjected to gradual settlement after the approval of the finance ministry.

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JEDDAH: Saudi King Salman receives US Foreign Secretary Rex Tillerson yesterday. — AP

DUBAI: US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson wrapped up talks with the king of Saudi Arabia and other officials from Arab countries lined up against Qatar yesterday with no sign of a breakthrough in an increasingly entrenched dispute that has divided some of America's most important Mideast allies. The secretary of state's trip from Kuwait to the western Saudi city of Jeddah followed discussions the previous day with the Emir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani that ended with the signing of a counterterrorism pact.

Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt and Bahrain severed relations with Qatar and cut air, sea and land routes with it over a month ago, accusing Doha of supporting extremist groups. Qatar denies the allegations. The quartet has given no indication it would be willing to back off from its hard-nosed stance. Just hours before Tillerson's arrival in Jeddah, the four Arab states said the counterterrorism deal that Qatar signed with him on Tuesday was "not enough" to ease their concerns.

Tillerson's visit to Saudi Arabia included talks with King Salman and his son Mohammed bin Salman, who was recently elevated to the role of crown prince. He also met with the foreign ministers of the four countries in the anti-Qatar bloc. Officials gave little indication of what was discussed, but Tillerson was likely to press the bloc to ease up on some of its demands after he secured the deal for Qatar to intensify its fight against terrorism and address shortfalls in policing terrorism funding.

The four anti-Qatar countries last month issued a tough 13-point list of demands that included shutting down Qatar's flagship Al-Jazeera network and other news outlets, cutting ties with Islamist groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood, limiting Qatar's ties with Iran

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KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with the UK Ambassador to Kuwait Matthew Lodge. —Amiri Diwan and KUNA photos



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives a report by the ad hoc parliamentary committee formed to respond to his speech.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Social and Economic Affairs Minister Hind Al-Sabeeh, as well as members of a visiting Chinese delegation.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Acting Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, as well as State Minister for Cabinet Affairs and Acting Minister of Information Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak A-Sabah.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with UK Ambassador Matthew Lodge.



Acting Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with UK Ambassador to Kuwait Matthew Lodge.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem, as well as MPs Khalil Abul and Osama Al-Shaheen.

AMIR RECEIVES OUTGOING UK AMBASSADOR

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday at Bayan Palace the outgoing UK Ambassador to Kuwait Matthew Lodge on the occasion of his tenure's ending. The reception was attended by Amiri Diwan Adviser Mohammad Dhaifallah Sharar. Lodge also met with His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Acting Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir received Minister of Social Affairs and Labor and Minister

of State for Economic Affairs Hind Al-Sabeeh, who was accompanied by a visiting Chinese delegation led by China Development Bank Director General. Furthermore, His Highness the Amir received National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem accompanied by MPs Khalil Abul and Osama Al-Shaheen, who handed him a report by the ad hoc parliamentary committee formed to respond to his speech during the parliament's 15th legislative term. Ghanem, Abul and Shaheen later presented a copy of the report to His Highness the Crown Prince as well. Earlier yesterday, Highness the Amir received His Highness Sheikh Nawaf,

Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled as well as State Minister for Cabinet Affairs and Acting Minister of Information Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak A-Sabah.

In the meantime, His Highness the Crown Prince received Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled, along with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Mohammad Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah. Also, His Highness the Crown Prince received Kuwait Oil Tanker Company's (KOTC) CEO Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. —KUNA



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Kuwait Oil Tanker Company's (KOTC) CEO Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.



WASHINGTON: Assistant Minister for Development and International Cooperation at the Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs Nasser Al-Subieh attends the meeting. —KUNA

WASHINGTON'S GLOBAL ANTI-IS COALITION MEETINGS IMPORTANT: KUWAITI DIPLOMAT

WASHINGTON: The meetings for the Global Coalition to Counter the so-called Islamic State (IS) are very important for efforts to combat terrorism globally and also are very vital for the current task in supporting Iraq post IS, said a Kuwaiti diplomat late Tuesday.

Delivering his inputs to the meetings, which discussed means to block all kinds of logistic, financial, and cyber support to the terror organization, Assistant Minister for Development and International Cooperation at the Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs Nasser Al-Subieh said that his country was abiding by UNSC resolutions 2178 and 2253 focusing on preventing foreign fighters from reaching conflict zones and participating in acts of terror.

Kuwaiti legislations and laws were amended to incriminate any act related

to the support of terror organizations such as IS and others, said the diplomat, adding that Kuwait was coordinating with other countries and global entities in the efforts against terrorism.

Meanwhile, he thanked the US and other countries for their supportive and kind words towards His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for his efforts to reach stability regionally and internationally. Subieh took the chance to congratulate Iraq on its recent victory against IS in Mosul, saying that this event reflected the strong global commitment to fight terrorism. The Global anti-IS Coalition was formed in 2015 after IS controlled large areas in Iraq and Syria, prompting some 70 countries to take action against the terror organization. There are 12 Arab states in the coalition. —KUNA

IRAQ REBUILDING CONFERENCE SOLIDIFIES LEADERSHIP'S HUMANITARIAN COMMITMENT

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's initiative to host the Iraq rebuilding conference have solidified Kuwait's status as a global humanitarian center and also highlighted His Highness Sheikh Sabah's role as a world humanitarian leader.

The announcement, which came during a His Highness the Amir phone call with Iraqi Prime Minister Haidar Al-Abadi, was considered as a gesture to showcase Kuwait's solidarity after the "historic victory" on so-called Islamic State (IS) in Mosul. His Highness the Amir congratulated Al-Abadi on the victory and hoped it would boost unity in Iraq.

His Highness the Amir said that Kuwait was ready to host, before end of this year, an international conference for the reconstruction of areas liberated in Iraq. Since independence, the State of Kuwait has offered robust support to the relief effort for the refugees and the internally-displaced people around the globe, a step earning global praise.

Kuwait's humanitarian policy is distinguished for its non-discrimination among aid recipients because of their race, nationality, faith or political affiliations. The country has been known for its relief effort and this role became more crystal clear in the recent year which encouraged the United Nations in 2014 to honor His Highness the Amir as Humanitarian Leader and Kuwait as center of humanitarian action.

Impressive presence

Kuwait maintained its impressive presence at all regional and international activities and forums relating to humanitarian action and alleviation of the suffering of conflict-hit people. In May of 2016, His Highness the Amir

took part and delivered a speech to the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul, Turkey.

In his speech, His Highness the Amir said: "Kuwait has long been acclaimed for its deep belief in humanitarian values and helping hand for the needy people." The total value of Kuwait's contributions to the relief effort in the last five years exceeded \$2 billion, which made the country the world's biggest aid donor in terms of the ratio of aid to the country's GDP," he pointed out. Kuwait's humanitarian role is shared by the government and civil society institutions such as Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) and the International Islamic Charitable Organization (IICO).

The Kuwaiti fund-raising agencies responded promptly to the needs of refugees and displaced people in countries that were hit by armed conflicts or natural disasters. Their aid campaigns ranged between famine relief, medical supplies, and educational, health and housing services inside the refugee camps. Following are examples, in part and in effect, of Kuwait's contributions to the relief efforts.

For Palestine, His Highness the Amir announced in January, 2009, a Kuwaiti donation of \$34 million to the humanitarian activities for the Palestinian people in response to an appeal by the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

Besides, Kuwait contributed \$15 million to the Agency in 2013 and launched an aid campaign for Gaza Strip in 2014 in the wake of the Israeli aggression in July. In the aftermath of Iraq war in 2003, Kuwait offered emergency relief for the internally-displaced people; the aid continued to increase until it hit \$200 million in 2015

which made Kuwait the biggest aid donor for Iraq. Kuwait pledged \$176 million during an Iraqi aid conference held in Washington.

Syria

As for Syria, Kuwait hosted three international humanitarian pledging conferences, the first of which took place in January, 2013, when His Highness the Amir donated \$300 million. The second conference in the following saw the Kuwaiti aid pledges rising to \$500 million and in the third, held in March, 2015, Kuwait contributed additional \$500 million.

The State of Kuwait was also present in fourth similar gathering titled "Supporting Syria and the Region Conference," in London, last February. His Highness the Amir announced additional aid of \$300 million for the Syrian refugees over the coming three years. Regarding Yemen, Kuwait contributed \$100 million to the humanitarian action in response to the raging conflict last year.

As for response to natural disasters, Kuwaiti fund-raising agencies, notably the Direct Aid and the Zakat House, scaled up their efforts to alleviate the suffering of the drought-hit Somalis in 2012. The aid they offered amounted to KD 508,600 (nearly \$1.69 million).

In November of 2007, when the tropical Cyclone Sidr hit Bangladesh and left nearly 3,447 deaths, Kuwait donated \$10 million to the emergency aid campaign for the country. It is self-evident that Kuwait provides a good example for other rich countries to follow. While the World Refugee Day is being celebrated this year, the UN aid agencies estimate the number of refugees and internally-displaced persons at 60 million worldwide. —KUNA



SEVEN PEOPLE INJURED IN MISHREF SHOP BLAST

KUWAIT: Seven people were injured, four critically, in an explosion that took place in a confectionery shop in Mishref Co-operative Society on Tuesday night, the fire department said. Firefighters rushed to the shop, located in Branch II of the co-op that is located in block four in Mishref, at 8:20 pm, Kuwait Fire Service Directorate's (KFSD) said in a statement. Initial investigations showed that the blast was owing to LPG gas leakage, KFSD said in a follow-up statement. Three of the injured received intensive care while the remaining four suffered from simple wounds, it said in a press statement. The pastry shop was partially damaged in the incident, it pointed out. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Flames coming out of an air conditioner outside a Khaitan building.



Fire engines are seen outside the Gate Mall where a fire was reported.



A fireman puts out a fire in a yacht at Sharq Marina.

STRING OF FIRES REPORTED AROUND KUWAIT

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Residents of a Khaitan building were rescued Tuesday night after a fire broke out. Farwaniya, Subhan, and Salmiya fire stations responded, evacuated the building and fought the blaze, Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFSD) said in a statement. No injuries were

reported. Separately, firemen put out a fire in a yacht at Sharq Marina. The fire was contained before flames could reach other yachts and boats. In the meantime, a fire broke out at Gate Mall in Egaila, prompting Mangaf and Qurain fire stations to respond. The entire mall was evacuated. Firemen found the fire was in the chimney of a restaurant. The fire was put out without injuries.

MINISTRY DENIES EVICTING WOMAN FROM ORPHANAGE

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Social Affairs denied claims on social media that a woman living in an orphanage that it manages was kicked out. Ministry official Yahya Al-Dakheel said the ministry is keen on presenting all types of care to orphan boys and girls from birth until they reach 40 years of age, although the family nursing care law allows the ministry to end housing care by the age of 25. On claims about kicking a woman out of the orphanage, Dakheel said "we confirm that the girl is still at the home and was not evicted; rather she was given a month to be independent, while a financial assistance will be provided to her to help prepare a residence, in addition to KD 200 from the date she leaves the home."

About the reason why the administration took this decision, he said the woman is already 37 years of age and has been working for a government department since four years, which means she is above the legal age limit.

Dakheel said "the woman negotiated her exit in exchange of KD 7,000, and if she does not get this amount, she will remain in the home." He added that she was inciting other girls to do the same, so the administration decided to make her leave the home and will be assisted, to safeguard the behavior of other girls. He said the woman received up to KD 17,000 to help her complete her postgraduate studies.

Plots
State Minister for Housing Affairs and Services Yasser Abul said the Public Authority for Housing Welfare will hand over 1,649 plots in West Abdullah Al-Mubarak in September, before the deadline to complete the handover of 5,201 plots that was set for Nov 2017. Abul said the contractor promised to hand over 1,600 additional plots before the deadline so that the total reaches nearly 3,700.

Electronic system
Aqaf and Islamic Affairs Minister and State Minister for Municipal

Affairs Mohammad Al-Jabri said the electronic system to issue construction licenses is an achievement that reflects the true image of development at Kuwait Municipality. Jabri was speaking during the launch of issuing construction licenses electronically at the Capital municipality branch in the presence of Municipality Director Ahmad Al-Manfouhi. Jabri said licensing consumed a long time and much effort in the past, while it now takes only two days to process transactions, while some transactions need only one hour.

Hawally courts
Ministry of Public Works (MPW) Assistant Undersecretary for Construction Projects Ghalib Shlash inspected the Hawally courts project, as 48 percent of it has been completed. He said the building is of 25 floors including a car park with a capacity of 1,200 cars and an office area of 39,000 sq m to accommodate 1,300 employees and 52 'smart' courtrooms with audiovisual communication systems.

NATIONALITY FORGERY CASE ADJOURNED

KUWAIT: The criminal court adjourned a nationality forgery case until next Tuesday for preparations and arguments. The defendant appeared in court and denied the charges. He said his picture in the nationality certificate looks different than what he looks now because he went through a gastric procedure, after which his features changed including his face, which made people think the passport is forged.

Murder threat
A woman told her husband to divorce his second wife or she would hurt her. The husband told a Farwaniya governorate police station that he married another woman, but when his first wife discovered the matter a year and a half later, she demanded that he divorce the new wife, otherwise she would kill her. Police are investigating.

Fatal crash
The bodies of two citizens were sent to the coroner, and two of their friends were admitted to Adan Hospital's ICU after their vehicle collided with a truck

parked in the emergency lane on Mina Abdullah Road. The four were in a sports utility vehicle (SUV) when the driver was surprised by a truck parked in the emergency lane and rammed into it. The SUV was totally damaged. Mina Abdullah police and paramedics rushed to the accident scene and found two people were dead and two others were badly injured.

Car on fire
A police car burst into flames when it was on its way to deal with a traffic accident resulting in a death. The temperature of the patrol car rose, then it caught fire. Another patrol car was dispatched, while a fire engine was sent to put out the blaze.

Assault
Three citizens beat an Egyptian man behind a restaurant after he borrowed money from one of them and did not pay back. The Egyptian man went to Maidan Hawally police station and told them what happened, and that the beating caused injuries that were mentioned in a medical report. A complaint was lodged and the case was sent to

88 RESIDENCY VIOLATORS ARRESTED

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Residency affairs detectives carried out a surprise campaign in Ahmadi governorate targeting law

violators and loose laborers, resulting in the arrest of 88 residency violators. They confessed to working for people other than their sponsors. Some were found to be reported absconding.

They were all sent to concerned authorities and will be immediately deported, while their sponsors will be blacklisted and will not be allowed to sponsor anyone.



RIGHTS SOCIETY LAUNCHES HOTLINE FOR LABOR INQUIRIES

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Kuwait Society for Human Rights launched the hotline 22215150 to explain to expat workers in Kuwait their legal rights and various duties. Chairman of the society Khalid Al-Humaidi said the hotline operates in five languages - Arabic, English, Filipino, Hindi and Urdu - to receive questions from the largest possible number of workers about the labor law, ministerial decisions and legal procedures that must be followed.

New record
The Ministry of Electricity and Water's (MEW) Undersecretary Mohammad Bushehri expected the new tariffs applied to the commercial sector will have a positive effect within the next three months. He said the ministry will announce the results of the implementation in

September, when it announces the end of the peak consumption period as temperatures start to drop. He said MEW expected the load to reach a new record, as it reached 13,570 megawatts while temperatures reached 51 degree Celsius, whereas production exceeds 16,000 megawatts.

No shortage
Assistant Undersecretary for General Education Fatima Al-Kandari said there is no shortage in teachers for any specialties in the coming school year (2017/2018). She added that the coordination and general education follow up has enough number of teachers to cover schools in all stages including the new schools that will come into service at the start of the new year.

Financial commitments
The Finance Ministry refused to provide

financial commitments for 10 major projects to be executed by the Ministry of Public Works (MPW), despite its approval last year of demands to provide budgets for its stalled projects. MPW put forth 15 projects to develop roads, while the finance ministry refused to provide financial commitment for 10 of them. The Finance Ministry meanwhile asked the Ministry of Electricity and Water (MEW) to set its priorities for the next stage and decide the projects to be executed, so budgets can be prepared.

Housing
Statistics of the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) show a drop in the number of people on waiting lists by 584, and these are the same numbers that were struck out by the inspection and examination committee.

KUWAIT SOCIETY FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
In cooperation with The Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in the State of Kuwait

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In Brief

FORMER UN CHIEF PRAISES AMIR

KUWAIT: Acting Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received a phone call yesterday from former UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, who expressed his concern over the ongoing Gulf row. The former UN chief heaped praise on His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for his efforts as the main mediator in crisis. — KUNA



OIL PRICE UP

KUWAIT: The price of Kuwaiti oil was up by two cents Tuesday to \$43.70 per barrel after it was \$43.68 pb the day before, said Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) yesterday. At the global level, the price was up due to a decrease in US crude reserves last week by 8.1 million barrels to reach \$495.6 million barrels. The future contract for the Brent crude was up by \$1.25 to \$48.12 per barrel, the same case with the West Texas Intermediate, which was up by \$1.31 to \$45.71 pb. — KUNA



US DOLLAR STABLE AT KD 0.303

KUWAIT: The US Dollar exchange rate was stable at KD 0.303 while the Euro went up to KD 0.347, said the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) yesterday. Meanwhile, the Sterling Pound was down to KD 0.389. The Swiss Franc was up to KD 0.314 while the Japanese Yen was still at KD 0.002. — KUNA



Photo

of the day



KUWAIT: Spectacular light show and water fountain action at Al-Shaheed Park. — KUNA photo



NEW VISION TO PROMOTE MUBARAKIYAH MARKET'S ACTIVITIES

KUWAIT: The Real Estate House, represented by its Chairman Abdulrahman Al-Khanna, and Leaders Group Consulting and Development, represented by its General Manager Nabila Al-Anjari, have recently signed an agreement to promote Mubarakiyah market's activities. The agreement, which was signed the presence of Real Estate House CEO Ali Al-Kulaib, aims to enhance marketing activities of market as part of its comprehensive strategy to benefit from

the long experience of Leaders Group in the field of tourism consultancy and marketing. It is worth mentioning that Real Estate House, which currently manages and develops Mubarakiyah market, is a subsidiary of 'Houses Investment Group' and has a long standing track record in the development and management of real estate at the local and regional levels that fulfill customers' requirements and the local, cultural and social values.

On this occasion, Khanna expressed his confidence that cooperation with Leader's Group will contribute to utilize our futuristic vision of the market in terms of marketing, entertainment and tourism perspectives that can hardly be found in Kuwait and other Gulf countries.

Khanna has also pointed out that the real estate market status urges us to use our expertise, qualified human resources and our comprehensive strong strategies with various economic sectors of the state of Kuwait to present a distinguished real estate services.

Meanwhile, Anjari said, "Our cooperation as Leaders Group in the field of providing touristic advisory services, as well as promoting and marketing the activities and events of Mubarakiyah market according to the vision that has been designed and agreed with Real Estate House is a great opportunity for us because it is in the core of our specialties and interests. Especially as it contains specific ideas for this development project, which is very important and vital because of the fact that 'Mubarakiyah' represents for Kuwaitis, residents and visitors a unique atmosphere combining the past and present and various activities.

Anjari pointed out that Mubarakiyah Market is considered as the first of its kind as a popular tourist destination in Kuwait and one of the best destinations for visitors from the GCC countries. She urged ministries and other concerned authorities to help and facilitate Real Estate efforts at running and developing the market.



OOREDOO SPONSORS 7TH GENERATION OF PROTEGES UNDERSCORING ITS COMMITMENT TO CREATING YOUTH LEADERS

KUWAIT: Ooredoo Kuwait, a member of international Ooredoo Group, has recently announced renewing its sponsorship of the Proteges youth development program in its seventh season. The unique program, which focuses on developing and training a cohort of 25 students between the ages of 16 - 24, will include a trip to the European cities of Prague and Berlin.

Commenting on the sponsorship, Ooredoo Kuwait's Corporate Communications Senior Director Mijbil Al-Ayoub said: "We are proud of our partnership with the Proteges for a second consecutive year. The program focuses on a number of core values and skills such as tolerance, critical thinking, and creativity, which are important assets in creating future leaders. It has achieved unparalleled success throughout the years, and we look forward to meeting the graduates of 7th generation of the Proteges."

Ayoub also reiterated that Ooredoo is keen on supporting initiatives aimed at youth development, and emphasized on



Mijbil Al-Ayoub

the importance of the partnership with various state sectors to accomplish this target. Eman Al-Rasheed, Executive Manager of the Proteges expressed her pride in partnering with Ooredoo for a second consecutive year, which only underscored the values of Ooredoo Kuwait that are in alignment with the program's aim - supporting youth and providing them with skills that create unique leaders. "We look forward for more partnerships and support in creating a more aware generation of young innovative and creative thinkers," she added.

The Proteges program was launched in 2010 to mentor youth between the age of 16 and 24 by local iconic figures in different fields.



KUWAIT: Commercial Bank of Kuwait's (CBK) Chairman Ali Al-Mousa welcomed a delegation from the Kuwaiti Society for the Blind, and gave them a cheque for the total donations collected during the bank's Ramadan campaign to print copies of the Holy Quran in Braille.

KUWAIT URGES STUDENTS TO BE 'GOOD AMBASSADORS' ABROAD

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Minister of Higher Education Dr Mohammad Al-Fares urged Kuwaitis who would be studying abroad to be "good ambassadors" of their country, and to represent the humanitarian side of Kuwait. Fares, also Minister of Education, made the remarks during an orientation with Kuwaitis with scholarships for the year 2017-18.

Scholarship is the "beginning of the path of building your personal future and development of your country which has given you a lot," he said. Education, he added, was the tool for the development

and prosperity of nations and their youth. Fatma Al-Senan, Assistant Undersecretary for Scholarships and Cultural Relations at Ministry of Higher Education, said the ministry has an ambitious strategy to develop education. She said Kuwait sought sustainable development through providing top-quality education for the nationals. Cultural attaches of countries in which scholarships were offered attended the orientation to explain to the students rules and regulations related to their studies, as well as social conditions in their countries. — KUNA

KUWAIT AIRWAYS SIGNS AGREEMENT WITH MINISTRIES TO SPONSOR PILOT AND ENGINEERING STUDENTS

KUWAIT: Kuwait Airways, the official national airline of the State of Kuwait, signed yesterday a protocol agreement with the Ministry of Higher Education,

the Ministry of Economy, and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor, that will see the airline sponsor the training of 180 student pilots and aviation engi-

neers, over the next three years.

The signing event, which took place at Kuwait Airways' head office, was attended by Dr Mohammad Al-Fares, Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education, Hind Al-Sabeeh, Minister of Economic Affairs and Minister of Social Affairs and Labor, and Ebrahim Al-Khuzam, CEO of Kuwait Airways, and Dr Hamed Al-Azemi, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Higher Education along with the senior management from both ministries and Kuwait Airways. The outcome of this initiative will see Kuwait Airways sponsor a total of 60 Kuwaiti national students, per year, over a three year period, in areas of pilot training and aviation engineering studies.

"(Yesterday's) agreement signals another significant step in Kuwait Airways' long history of supporting the development of Kuwaiti national talent. Kuwait Airways is a committed partner in the development of Kuwait's aviation industry and overall economic development and is proud to continue its support of the country's pioneering status in the regional airline business," said Khuzam.

"The terms of the protocol agreement will see the Ministry of Higher Education select 60 students, per year, to be sent to some of the most recognized training and educational institutes in the world. On the successful completion of their studies, Kuwait Airways will then offer the graduates a job at the airline - within their specialist areas," Khuzam added.

While the aviation industry has undoubtedly faced a number of challenges over the last few years, the International Air Transport Association (IATA) has forecast that the aviation market, in the Middle East, will continue to grow at a steady five per cent, through to 2035. According to IATA, regional passenger numbers are also set to double within that time, to 414 million per year.

With Kuwait Airways noting a significantly higher passenger growth rate, over the regional average, with an increase of over 20 per cent recorded in 2016, the official national airline of Kuwait is certainly making strides to regain a significant foothold within the regional aviation market. Its aircraft acquisition policy - a total of 35 new aircraft that started arriving in 2016 and to be delivered by 2022 - being a significant part of that transformation and progress.



KUWAIT: The officials pose for a group photo during the signing ceremony.



Ministers Hind Al-Sabeeh and Mohammad Al-Fares pose after signing the protocol agreement.



Economic and Social Affairs Minister Hind Al-Sabeeh



Education and Higher Education Minister Dr Mohammad Al-Fares



Sabiya CCGT Power Station

GE LEADS DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION OF SABIYA CCGT POWER STATION

KUWAIT: GE Power has completed, ahead of schedule, the digital transformation of Kuwait Ministry of Electricity and Water's Sabiya Combined Cycle Gas Turbine (CCGT) Power Station. This will help to make the site's operations more reliable, while contributing to its enhanced performance at lower, more sustainable costs. The project marks the first time that GE's Predix-based software applications for industry are being used in Kuwait.

Engineer Mohammed Boshehri, Undersecretary of Kuwait's Ministry of Electricity and Water, said, "Our goal is to support the nation's focus on strengthening the energy infrastructure and helping achieve Vision 2035 to transform Kuwait into a regional leader in all sectors. Delivering reliable power and ensuring that we have highly productive power assets is key in accomplishing our goals. The digital transformation of Sabiya CCGT, using GE's advanced digital technologies, aims to further strengthen resource utilization and productivity."

Several plant assets at Sabiya CCGT, including combustion tur-

bines, hydrogen-cooled generators, heat recovery steam generators, steam turbines and condensers, among others, were brought onto GE's Asset Performance Management (APM) software application. The software leverages advanced data analytics to predict and reduce unplanned downtime, improving power plant availability and output. As part of the digital migration, GE installed APM's Machine and Equipment Health Module, Reliability Management Module and Monitoring and Diagnostics Services.

"The digital transformation of Sabiya CCGT Power Station highlights our commitment to help unlock the true potential of Kuwait's power infrastructure," said Joseph Anis, President and CEO of GE's Power Services business in the Middle East and Africa. "Digitizing power plants presents an opportunity for both growth and cost savings and we are proud to have completed this landmark project ahead of schedule to increase the plant's uptime and enhance its performance."

APM is built on GE's Predix, a data

platform purpose-designed for the scale and complexity of industrial data. The APM solution enables the Kuwaiti Ministry of Electricity and Water to boost asset reliability and availability at Sabiya CCGT by leveraging the power of the Industrial Internet - the integration of big data analytics with heavy machinery. The connected machines, equipped with data sensors, collect vast amounts of information into a centralized and secured data platform. The analysis of this data provides insights to predict and diagnose equipment problems before they happen, thus reducing unplanned downtime.

The project builds on GE's strong legacy of contributions towards the development of Kuwait's power generation sector. GE's investments in Kuwait include the GE Kuwait Technology Center, that serves three core areas for energy sector customers across the Middle East and Africa: training, tooling and engineering. GE technologies deliver over a third of Kuwait's power today and the company creates employment for more than 250 people in the country.

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Turkey's tragedy of murdered women

WASHINGTON EXTENDS REVIEW PERIOD FOR SUDAN SANCTIONS



TEHRAN: In this photo released by official website of the office of the Iranian Presidency, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, right, speaks with Omani Foreign Minister Yousuf bin Alawi, left, with an unidentified translator, center, during their meeting in Tehran, Iran, yesterday. — AP

IRAN, OMAN TO STRENGTHEN TIES AMID GULF CRISIS
PRESIDENT ROUHANI SLAMS BLOCKADE AGAINST QATAR

TEHRAN: Iran and Oman will work to boost their ties, the Islamic republic's President Hassan Rouhani said yesterday, as a diplomatic crisis persists in the Gulf. "Iran and Oman have for years had fraternal relations and the best must be made of these good relations to reinforce them," Rouhani said as he met Oman's foreign minister. The Iranian government's website reported Foreign Minister Yusef Bin Alawi as replying: "Omani leaders believe our ties should be developed." The remarks come after Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt last month severed

ties with Qatar, accusing it of backing extremism and being too close to Riyadh's arch-rival Tehran. They imposed a series of isolation measures on Qatar including cutting air, land and maritime links to the small gas-rich emirate. Oman, which has maintained ties with Qatar, took part this week in a string of Kuwaiti and US-led talks towards resolving the crisis. Rouhani slammed the sanctions imposed by the Riyadh-led group on Doha, which Qatar has called a "blockade." "Threatening, pressuring and imposing a blockade against neighbors, including Qatar, is an erroneous method

and everyone must try to reduce the tensions in the region," he said. He also criticized "the policies of certain countries in the region against Syria, Yemen and Bahrain", in what appeared to be a reference to Saudi Arabia. Iran regularly denounces bombings of Iran-backed Huthi rebels by a Saudi-led coalition in Yemen, where it has accused the coalition of blockading ports. Tehran also accuses Riyadh and its allies of supporting rebels and jihadists in Syria and Iraq, where it backs Damascus and Baghdad. Iran increased its food imports to Qatar after its Gulf neighbors cut transport links to the emirate.—AFP

AS RUSSIA SCANDAL TOUCHES HIS SON, TRUMP PRIVATELY RAGES

WASHINGTON: The snowballing revelations about Donald Trump Jr.'s meeting with a Russian lawyer during last year's presidential campaign have broadsided the White House, distracting from its agenda as aides grapple with a crisis involving the president's family. The public has not laid eyes on the president since his return from Europe Saturday. But in private, Trump has raged against the latest Russia development, with most of his ire directed at the media, not his son, according to people who have spoken to him in recent days.



NEW YORK: In this photo, Donald Trump Jr. is interviewed by host Sean Hannity on the Fox News Channel television program, in New York. — AP

Yesterday morning, Trump tweeted that his son was "open, transparent and innocent," again referring to the investigation as "the greatest Witch Hunt in political history." The president also questioned the sources of the media reporting on the story, despite the fact that his son personally released four pages of emails in which he communicates with an associate claiming to be arranging a meeting with a Russian government lawyer.

The bombshell revelation that Trump Jr. was eager to accept information from Moscow landed hard on weary White House aides. While staffers have grown accustomed to a good news cycle being overshadowed by the Russia investigations, Trump aides and outside advisers privately acknowledged that this week's developments felt more serious. In the emails, the intermediary says the attorney has negative information about Democrat Hillary Clinton that is part of the Russian government's efforts to help Trump in the campaign. The then candidate's son responds: "I love it."

This new setback raises new questions about whether the Trump campaign coordinated with Moscow during the election, a charge the president has denied for months. And it points those questions more directly at the inner circle of Trump's own family. As has been the pattern for Trump's White House, the controversy has sparked a new round of recriminations among the president's team. Nearly a dozen White House officials and outside advisers spoke on the condition of anonymity in order to discuss the mood in the West Wing.

Russia controversy, a distraction?
 The president, in conversations with confidants, has questioned the quality of advice he has received from senior staff, including chief of staff Reince Priebus. However, Priebus has been a frequent target of criticism for months and even those taking aim at him now said it did not appear as though a shakeup was on the horizon. There has also been a difference of opinion within the West Wing as to how to handle the crisis, with some aides favoring more transparency than others. Some of the unhappiness centers on Trump's legal team, which is led by New York attorney Marc Kasowitz.

An unusual statement Saturday night from the legal team's spokesman Mark Corallo appeared to claim Trump Jr., Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner and then-campaign chairman Paul Manafort were duped into meeting with the Russian lawyer, and was viewed as particularly unhelpful by senior White House officials. The president, again on Twitter, pushed back Wednesday on the narrative of a dysfunctional administration, writing that the White House "is functioning per-

CHINESE NOBEL LAUREATE XIAOBO'S BREATHING FAILS

BEIJING: China's cancer-stricken Nobel laureate Liu Xiaobo suffered respiratory failure as his condition worsened yesterday, his hospital said, as Germany offered to host him and rights groups decried the lack of independent information. The First Hospital of China Medical University in the northeastern city of Shenyang said Liu's family declined to have him put on artificial ventilation, which was necessary "to maintain life." "The hospital has explained the necessity of tracheal intubation to the patient's family, the family refused the tracheal intubation," the hospital said on its website.

The hospital, which earlier reported that he had suffered organ failure, said the 61-year-old democracy advocate's liver function had deteriorated despite three days of anti-infection and blood treatment. Liu, who has been held since 2008 for "subversion", risks becoming the first Nobel Peace Prize laureate to die in custody since German pacifist Carl von Ossietzky, who passed away in a hospital under the Nazis in 1938. German government spokesman Steffen Seibert called on China to free Liu and his wife, Liu Xia, saying Berlin "stands ready to host and medically" treat him.

The latest reports "raise the question of whether Mr Liu's cancer should have been diagnosed and treated far earlier," Seibert said. The Chinese government has rebuffed international appeals to let Liu seek treatment abroad, saying he is getting the best possible care from top domestic doctors. Foreign ministry spokesman Geng Shuang repeated his standard answer earlier yesterday that other countries should respect the country's judicial sovereignty and "not interfere in China's internal affairs under the pretext of an individual case."

A German and a US doctor visited Liu last weekend and said he was still strong enough to fulfill his wish to go abroad, but the hospital has issued increasingly pessimistic reports every day since then. Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen took to Twitter to call on Beijing to free Liu and "allow him to seek treatment wherever he wishes". She reiterated her offer to have Liu treated in Taiwan, which China considers a rebel province. The United States repeated calls on Tuesday for Liu to be released and said it was ready to welcome him if he chose to be treated there.

Manipulation of information

Liu, who was sentenced to 11 years in prison in 2009, was admitted to the hospital early last month after he was transferred from prison due to late-stage liver cancer. Human rights groups said it was nearly impossible to obtain independent information about Liu's health given that he is in a heavily guarded hospital and his wife, who is with him, is also not free. "What is on display is still the manipulation and control of information and dishonesty of the Chinese government," Human Rights Watch's Asia researcher Maya Wang said.

"The couple has not been allowed to speak freely to anyone," Wang said. "There are some reasons to continue to cast doubt on the assessment of the hospital." Amnesty International's China researcher Patrick Poon said the information is hard to verify but if it is true, "Liu Xiaobo is in his last hours of life." "Even in his last moments, the Chinese government doesn't seem to loosen their grip of control of Liu Xiaobo and his family," he said.

Leaked video

A video leaked earlier this week showed the Western doctors praising their Chinese counterparts as they stood by Liu's bedside. The video was denounced as propaganda by rights groups while the German embassy said Monday it "seems that security organs are steering the process, not medical experts". But in an editorial, the state-run Global Times newspaper said the video aimed to show the Chinese doctors' efforts to help him and said "Western forces are politicizing Liu's cancer treatment."

Liu was arrested in 2008 after co-writing Charter 08, a bold petition that called for the protection of basic human rights and reform of China's one-party Communist system. At the Nobel Peace Prize ceremony in Oslo in 2010, he was represented by an empty chair. Hu Jia, a Beijing-based activist and family friend, sobbed at the latest update, but he said the family may have declined the ventilator out of hope he could survive.

"Perhaps Liu Xiaobo's family still hopes that there can be a ray of light hopes that there can be a turnaround," Hu said. "This is what we hope too. As long as he still has a breath left, then those planes should be ready to take him away at any moment. Xiaobo, hold on."—AFP

TURKEY'S COUP: QUESTIONS LINGER ONE YEAR ON

ISTANBUL: Just before midnight on July 15, 2016, a tear-stained anchorwoman, clearly under duress, appeared on Turkish state television to announce the purported seizure of power by the army. Shortly after she read the statement—said to be in the name of the armed forces—war planes bombed Ankara and tanks surged into the streets of Istanbul in a night of violence that left 249 people dead. But 12 hours later, Prime Minister Binali Yildirim was able to appear outside his offices to declare that this “ignominious bid” to seize power “has been defeated.”

The coup's defeat was rapid and the consequences merciless, as the biggest crackdown in Turkish history targeted supporters of the US-based preacher Fethullah Gulen, who was blamed for the coup but denies the charges. Yet questions remain over the timeline of the events on July 15, with Turkey's opposition looking for answers with increased stridency. How come the coup erupted undetected by Turkey's vast intelligence service and was then put down so quickly?

Why was information garnered on the afternoon of July 15 that something serious was afoot not shared with President Recep Tayyip Erdogan? And why have key figures failed to give personal testimony to a parliamentary commission supposed to investigate the failed coup bid? “We are not seeing an open investigation. It's been very, very disappointing and in fact very frightening,” Gareth Jenkins, Istanbul-based non-resident senior research fellow



NETHERLANDS: People wave Turkish flags during a ceremony marking the anniversary of last year's failed coup attempt in Turkey, and organized by the Union of European Turkish Democrats (UETD), at the Orpheus theatre in Apeldoorn.—AFP

at the Silk Road Studies Program said. The government insists that it is not hiding anything and has decried claims of a cover-up as an insult to those who lost their lives defeating the coup.

Massive action

Witness testimonies published in Turkish media from a parliamentary commission and trials of suspects showed intelligence chief Hakan Fidan and the head of the military, General Hulusi Akar,

were aware of a plot as early as the afternoon of July 15. An army helicopter pilot, identified only as Major OK went to the headquarters of the spy agency in Ankara at 2:20 pm on the afternoon of July 15 and warned officials that some action—at least against the National Intelligence Service (MIT) — was afoot.

“I said there could be a massive action and even a coup,” the witness reportedly said. “I remember very well that I used the word ‘coup.’ The warning was passed

by the MIT to the army at around 4:30 pm. Fidan then met with Akar. Yet Erdogan said he found out about the failed putsch from his brother-in-law late in the evening of July 15, not from the secret service.

Akar was held by the coup plotters throughout the night. He returned to central Ankara by helicopter in the morning, accompanied by General Mehmet Disli, who was later arrested on charges of being one of the key plotters. Special forces commander Zekai Aksakalli reportedly criticized the top military commander for his failure to shut Turkish airspace to all flights while he has also been criticized for not confining soldiers to barracks that night.

Question marks

In October, a parliamentary committee made up of lawmakers from political parties represented in the parliament started investigating the failed coup. The opposition demanded both Fidan and Akar be called to appear. But the calls were rejected by the ruling party. “We are not prosecutors, nor judges. We will not convict anyone. We only wanted to receive a response to our questions,” Sezgin Tanrikulu, MP from the main opposition Republican People's Party (CHP), said. “Unfortunately, they kick this opportunity away... and the question marks will continue to hang,” Tanrikulu, who is a member of the committee, said. After listening to former army chiefs, a

former spy chief as well as bureaucrats and witnesses, the committee was ordered to wrap up its work in December, one month earlier than scheduled. “It may be that the government has something sinister to hide. Maybe it is just hiding its own incompetence because of the response to the coup. It was very, very chaotic, it was not well organized,” said Jenkins. “We hope eventually that the truth will come out,” he added.

The CHP's leader, Kemal Kilicdaroglu, had infuriated the government by using the term “controlled coup”—claiming the authorities knew in advance about the plot, allowed the coup to play out in order to profit from it later. Testimony has suggested that in fact the plotters wanted to launch the coup at 3:00 am on the morning of July 16 but brought forward the plan to around 10:00 pm on July 15 after authorities got wind of it. Questions also linger over who was behind the coup and which political leaders the plotters wanted to take over should it have been successful.

The government says that the plot was a straightforward attempt to take over power by Gulen's group, which it calls the “Fethullah Terror Group (FETO)”. But some observers see the reality as more nuanced. “It was probably an alliance of circumstance between Gulenist, Kemalist (secular) officers and opportunists,” said a European diplomatic source. “It was badly prepared and badly executed.”—AFP



WASHINGTON: Senate confirmation hearing for FBI director nominee Christopher Wray is sworn in for his testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee on his nomination to be the director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation in the Dirksen Senate Office Building on Capitol Hill yesterday in Washington, DC.—AFP

TRUMP'S FBI PICK WRAY PLEDGES IMPARTIAL PURSUIT OF JUSTICE

WASHINGTON: Donald Trump's nominee to lead the FBI pledged yesterday to insulate the agency from outside interference, amid a probe into Russian election interference that could threaten the president and his inner circle. “If I am given the honor of leading this agency, I will never allow the FBI's work to be driven by anything other than the facts, the law, and the impartial pursuit of justice. Period,” Christopher Wray told a Senate Judiciary Committee hearing on his nomination.

“There is only one right way to do this job, and that is with strict independence, by the book, playing it straight, faithful to the constitution, faithful to our laws, faithful to the best practices of the institution, without fear, without favoritism, and certainly without regard to any partisan political influence,” he said. Trump fired the respected director of the Federal Bureau of

Investigation James Comey in May, expressing frustration about the ongoing investigation into whether his presidential campaign colluded with an alleged Russian effort to tilt the election in his favor.

That raised allegations of obstruction of justice against the president and led to the appointment of an independent prosecutor, Robert Mueller, another former FBI chief, to oversee the Russia probe. Senator Dianne Feinstein, the top Democrat on the judiciary panel, told Wray he must be committed to pursuing any investigation to the end no matter who is implicated. “The FBI director does not serve the president,” Feinstein told the hearing. “He serves the constitution, the law and the American people. As such, the director of the FBI must be a leader who has the integrity and strength that will enable him to withstand any attempts at political interference.”—AFP

19 KILLED IN BOKO HARAM ATTACKS IN N NIGERIA CITY

MAIDUGURI, Nigeria: Four Boko Haram suicide bombers killed 19 people in a series of attacks that targeted a civilian self-defense force and the people who gathered to mourn their deaths, police in Nigeria said yesterday. It was the deadliest attack in months in the northeastern city of Maiduguri, the birthplace of Boko Haram's eight-year insurgency. Borno state police commissioner Damian Chukwu said 23 others were wounded in Tuesday night's attacks. The police commissioner said 12 of the dead were members of a civilian self-defense force and the other seven people had been mourning them.

At least one of the suicide bombers was female, said a spokesman for the self-defense force, Danbatta Bello. The bombers specifically targeted his colleagues while they were on duty, he said. “A teenage female suicide bomber actually crept to the sandbag post of our boys at Molai and before they could realize what was happening she detonated herself and killed three of our boys,” Bello said.

“That happened simultaneously

with the one that occurred at the tea vendor's, where seven of our members who took their time off to eat their dinner were killed,” he said.

Boko Haram has increasingly used girls and young women to carry out attacks on marketplaces, checkpoints and other targets. Some young women who escaped extremist group have said girls are drugged and forced to carry out suicide missions. An Associated Press reporter at the scene saw mourning residents preparing the bodies of the victims for burial.

Nigeria's government late last year declared that Boko Haram had been “crushed” but deadly attacks continue. The Islamic extremist group's insurgency has killed more than 20,000 people, abducted thousands of others and spilled over into neighboring countries. Northeastern Nigeria is part of what the United Nations has called the world's largest humanitarian crisis in more than 70 years, with the World Food Program estimating that more than 4.5 million people in the region need emergency food assistance.—AP

TURKEY'S TRAGEDY OF MURDERED WOMEN

2017 SHOWS CHILLING INCREASE IN FEMICIDE

IZMIR, Turkey: As she did most afternoons, Pinar Unluer was waiting to collect her six-year-old son from his school in Turkey's Aegean city of Izmir. She was then shot dead in broad daylight only meters away from the school, by a man whose marriage proposal she had rejected. The 29-year-old was among 210 Turkish women killed or forced to commit suicide in 2012 in misogynist attacks by men, according to the women's rights group We Will Stop Femicide.

Since then there has been a chilling increase in the number of women killed, often at the hands of men they know. Newspapers report almost daily on murders of women by men they knew, and the rights group says 328 women were killed last year. In the first five months of 2017, 173 women were killed across Turkey compared with 137 in the same period of 2016, the group said in its monthly report in May. “When a woman is killed, I feel the same pain. I see them as my daughters,” Pinar's father, Zeki Unluer, said. “When my daughter was laid to rest, my wife and I died.”

Crisis

Since 2010, 118 women have been killed in Izmir alone, even though the city, Turkey's third-largest, is considered its most progressive and a bastion of secular society. Women's activists said that the rise in killings had come as more women sought to exercise their rights, including divorcing abusive partners. “Women are changing but men are not. Men cannot keep up and there is a crisis,” said Gulsum Kav, a founding member of We Will Stop Femicide. The Turkish government has said that the number of women killed every year is unacceptable, but activists warn that the problem is getting worse.

Our women are dying

The notorious attempted rape and murder of a 20-year-old student, Ozgecan Aslan, by a minibus driver in southern Turkey in 2015 sparked nationwide protests and hopes that action would finally be taken to reduce the killings. But even though Pinar Unluer's killer is now serving a life sentence in prison, her father said he had seen no change, and denounced what he called legal loopholes that let perpetrators escape long sentences.

“I would ask (to a minister): ‘If it were your children, your daughters, your mothers, what would you think? Our women are dying, you are doing nothing.’ He said that Pinar's killer had sought a reduced sentence by claiming he had been provoked, a tactic often used in such cases. Activists also say the killers try to get reduced sentences by claiming insanity, alleging that a woman had insulted them or that they had been



IZMIR, Turkey: Women hold a portrait of a victim, during a demonstration in front of the courthouse in Izmir.—AFP

cheated on. Eda Okutgen, described by her sister Nazi Okutgen as having “a heart of gold”, was stabbed multiple times in November 2014 by her ex-husband in Izmir. He was initially given life in prison for her murder, but a higher court annulled the sentence, and he is now claiming insanity in a retrial, Nazi Okutgen said.

Can be stopped

Over 37 percent of Turkish women said they had experienced physical or sexual violence—or both—according to an exhaustive 2014 survey of 15,000 households by the country's family ministry. And according to the Ankara-based Foundation for Women's Solidarity, the state of emergency imposed after last July's attempted coup has worsened the situation. In a report, the group says that many women's complaints are treated dismissively by police officers, who claim they are too busy or handling “more important” affairs.

In one example in the report, an officer tells a victim: “There has been a coup, the police have other business.” Turkey has ratified the Council of Europe's 2011 Istanbul Convention, the world's first binding instrument to prevent and combat violence against women. There are also Turkish laws to protect women and punish perpetrators of assault, including law 6284 — passed in 2012 to protect families and prevent violence against women.

But according to Kav, of We Will Stop

Femicide, officials were not putting the law into practice. “These murders are something that can be stopped. There are solutions,” she said, pointing to the drop in women's murders from 180 in 2010 to 121 the following year, a decline she attributed to the law's debate which shone a spotlight on the problem. “The law is there giving women the right to be protected,” she said, “but when women go to police or the prosecutor for protection, they are either sent back home, they try to reconcile (couples) or they receive a protection order only on paper.”

Conservative mentality

Activists also say government officials have, on occasion, failed to help by making inflammatory remarks on how women should behave: Last year, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan infuriated many by saying a woman was “incomplete” if she failed to reproduce. And while gender equality should be a pillar of the secular republic, as set up by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk in 1923, the only female cabinet member is Family Minister Fatma Betul Sayan Kaya, and women make up just 79 of the 548 lawmakers in parliament. Reyhan Kaplan, of the Izmir Women's Solidarity Association, criticized the government for a “conservative mentality which intervenes in a woman's life”. But the main reason for violence is “men not seeing women as equal, seeing themselves better than women”, she said.—AFP

BLOODTHIRSTY NIGERIA CULT KILLINGS SPARK FEAR

IKORODU, Nigeria: People cover their noses at the stench of death in the Crystal Church of God in Owode Onirin, just outside Lagos, where bloody clothes, drums, bibles and hymn books still litter the bare floor. Three days earlier, four worshippers were killed as they prayed, in the latest murders blamed on a shadowy gang dubbed the Badoo, believed to have killed 30 people since June last year. So-called “cult killings”—gang violence often fuelled by drugs and belief in black magic—are not a new phenomenon in Nigeria, which is nearly evenly split between a Muslim north and Christian south.

Crime often spikes during times of economic hardship. But the murders by the Badoo are making headlines because of their increasing frequency and the manner in which victims are dispatched. “They must have scaled the fence and hypnotized the victims before carrying out



LAGOS: Head of Celestrail Church of Christ at the neighborhood Prophet Taiwo Adesanya stands in front of a church in Lagos.—AFP

their deadly act,” Israel Ojobaro, an engineer who lives on the church premises, said.

“Two women and two children, including a nine-month-old baby, had their heads smashed with a grinding stone.” The gang then moved to another church on the

same street to steal money and mobile phones. “They must have used (magic) charms as no one noticed when they entered the church. By the time the worshippers were awake, their phones and money had been taken away,” said church head Taiwo Adesanya.

Drain victims' blood

Fear and a lack of faith in the police to protect them has prompted residents to watch over their communities. Every night, bonfires are lit on the streets between 10:00 pm and 6:00 am. Anyone caught on suspicion of being a member of the gang is immediately lynched, locals said. Police say vigilantes have killed at least 10 suspects in the last month. Innocent people have been targeted. The Badoo saga started last year when a female schoolteacher was raped and

killed in the Ibeshe area of Ikorodu, which lies 10 kilometers from Lagos across the lagoon as the crow flies. The woman's skull was smashed with a stone. Before leaving, the gang wrote “Badoo” on the wall. Since then, there have been similar killings across the town. Members of the gang are believed to have magical powers which they use to mysteriously appear and disappear during attacks.—AFP

OFFICIALS COMB FIELDS FOR CLUES AFTER MILITARY PLANE CRASH

ITTA BENA, Mississippi: With debris scattered for miles across the flat countryside of the Mississippi Delta, federal and local officials combed soybean fields for clues in a military plane crash that killed 15 Marines and a Navy sailor. Six of the Marines and the sailor were from an elite Marine Raider battalion at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, and were headed for pre-deployment training in Yuma, Arizona, the Marine Corps said Tuesday. Several bouquets were left at the main gate of Stewart Air National Guard Base in Newburgh, New York, where the plane was based.

Officials said some of those killed were from the base, but Stewart was closed to reporters and did not issue a statement. "We're feeling the pain that everybody else is," Robert Brush said after dropping off three pots of red, white and blue petunias. He works for a landscaping company that serves the base. Military officials continued to with-

hold the names of the dead, saying they were notifying family members. Witnesses said they heard low, rumbling explosions when the plane was still high in the sky Monday, saw the aircraft spiraling toward the flat, green landscape and spotted an apparently empty parachute floating toward the earth.

It was the deadliest Marine Corps air disaster since 2005, when a transport helicopter went down during a sandstorm in Iraq, killing 30 Marines and a sailor. The crash happened outside the small town of Itta Bena about 85 miles north of the state capital of Jackson. Bodies were found more than a mile from the plane. The Marine Corps said the cause was under investigation and offered no information on whether the plane issued a distress call. With the investigation underway, Mississippi Gov. Phil Bryant warned people not to remove debris from the area and said

that anyone taking something could be prosecuted.

Bryant, in statements Tuesday on Twitter, said law enforcement authorities have received reports that items are being taken from the crash site. Debris from the KC-130 is scattered for miles. Sheriff's deputies and state troopers have been trying to control access to sites, but the broad area and number of roads makes that difficult. Bryant asked people to stay away and turn debris over to authorities. FBI agents joined military investigators, though Marine Maj. Andrew Aranda told reporters no foul play was suspected.

Gray streak

"They are looking at the debris and will be collecting information off of that to figure out what happened," Aranda said. The county coroner, meanwhile, ferried more body bags into fields to

remove remains. The KC-130 is used to refuel aircraft in flight and transport cargo and troops. Will Nobile, a catfish farmer, was inside his office Monday afternoon when he heard an unusually loud rumble in the sky. "It sounded like a big thunderstorm," Nobile said. "Not one big explosion, but a couple of second-long explosions. ... A long, steady rumble is what it was."

He walked outside to see what was making the noise in the cloudless afternoon and saw a "gray streak" disappear behind trees, and then black smoke rising. Andy Jones said he was working on his family's catfish farm just before 4 pm when he heard a boom and looked up to see the plane spiraling downward with one engine smoking. "You looked up and you saw the plane twirling around," he said. "It was spinning down." Jones said that by the time he and others reached the crash site, fires were burning too

intensely to approach the wreckage. The force of the crash nearly flattened the plane, Jones said. "Beans are about waist-high, and there wasn't much sticking out above the beans," he said.

Jones said a man borrowed his cell phone to report to authorities that there were bodies across a highway, more than a mile away. Nobile said he drove to the site and as he and others stood by a highway, they saw an open parachute wafting down from the sky. "It didn't look like anybody was in it." Another catfish farmer found an empty, open parachute later near a fish pond, Nobile said. Jones said firefighters tried to put out the blaze but were forced back by an explosion. The Marines said the plane was carrying personal weapons and small-arms ammunition - equipment that may have contributed to the explosion and the popping that could be heard as the wreckage burned.—AP

WASHINGTON EXTENDS REVIEW PERIOD FOR SUDAN SANCTIONS

UN HOPES FOR POSITIVE DECISION AGAINST SUDAN

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump on Tuesday opted to extend by three months the deadline on whether to lift decades-old sanctions against Sudan, saying "more time is needed" for review. Trump was to decide yesterday whether to permanently lift Washington's sanctions on Sudan after his predecessor Barack Obama eased the embargo in January but kept Khartoum on a six-month review period. In his executive order Trump amended the deadline to October 12, 2017. Obama made the permanent lifting of sanctions dependent on Khartoum's progress on five areas of concern at the end of the review period.

"I have decided more time is needed for this review to establish that the Government of Sudan has demonstrated sufficient positive action across all of those areas," Trump's order said, adding that "the Government of Sudan has made some progress". Washington imposed a complex set of economic sanctions on Sudan in 1997 for its alleged backing of Islamist militant groups. Al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden, who was killed in a US commando raid in Pakistan in 2011, was based in Khartoum from 1992 to 1996.



JUBA: In this file photo, Sudanese President Omar Al-Bashir speaks after meeting with South Sudan's President Salva Kiir, in the capital Juba, South Sudan.—AP

Washington also justified the embargo with accusations of scorched-earth tactics by Khartoum against ethnic minority rebels in war-torn Darfur.

At least 300,000 people have been killed and 2.5 million displaced since a brutal conflict erupted in Darfur in 2003, the United Nations says. Sudanese President

Omar Al-Bashir is wanted by the International Criminal Court for genocide and war crimes related to the conflict in Darfur, charges he steadfastly denies. Prior to Trump's measure, the United Nations said it hoped the United States would make a "positive decision" on sanctions against Sudan for allowing more humanitarian aid access

across war zones as sought. Giving more access to humanitarian workers was one of the five conditions Obama insisted Sudan must meet before the sanctions can be lifted permanently. Obama's other conditions included counterterrorism cooperation with the United States, an end to hostilities against armed groups in Sudan and halting support for insurgents in neighboring South Sudan. Several think tanks had called for extending the review period, saying Khartoum needed to do more for the embargo to be lifted.

After Trump delayed the decision, Washington-based think tank Enough Project said the Trump administration should now devise a new set of "smart and modernized" sanctions that would spare the Sudanese people.

The new sanctions should "target those who are most responsible for grand corruption and atrocities, including air strikes on villages, attacks on churches, obstruction of humanitarian aid, jailing and torturing opposition figures and civil society leaders, stealing elections, and undermining peace efforts", John Prendergast, founding director of Enough Project, said in a statement.—AFP



BERLIN: This file photo shows the gold coin 'Big Maple Leaf' on display at Berlin's Bode Museum.—AFP

TWO SUSPECTS HELD OVER 100 KG GOLD COIN HEIST IN GERMANY

BERLIN: German police commandos yesterday detained two suspects in the spectacular theft of a 100-kilogramme gold coin from a Berlin museum this year. Around 300 police took part in dawn raids on two apartments and a jeweler's shop in Berlin's Neukoelln district and locations in surrounding Brandenburg state. The Canadian "Big Maple Leaf" stolen in late March has a face value of \$1 million, but the market price of 100 kilos of gold is almost \$4 million. The commemorative coin issued by the Royal Canadian Mint in 2007 measures 53 cm across and features a portrait of Queen Elizabeth II.

Thieves in late March stole the megacoin from the Bode Museum on the capital's so-called Museum Island, close to Chancellor Angela Merkel's apartment. Police in early July published video surveillance footage of the suspected thieves that showed three men wearing dark clothes, their faces obscured by hoods, high collars and their hands.

Authorities said yesterday that two of the men detained were believed to be the suspects in the footage, and that the other raids aimed mainly at securing evidence. There was no indication that the massive gold coin had been recovered.—AFP

HOPE SPRINGS ETERNAL IN US NEWARK, 50 YEARS AFTER RIOTS

NEWARK: For years, Liz Del Tufo refused to follow white friends and neighbors who fled New Jersey in droves after deadly July 1967 riots that left the city of Newark in ruins. Half a century later, her stubborn streak is paying off. Del Tufo, 83, has forged a friendship with Junius Williams, an African American activist who documented police violence during the uprising, which saw young blacks torch and loot dozens of shops along Newark's Springfield Avenue from July 12-17, 1967.

It took the National Guard five days to quell the mayhem-an outpouring of pent-up rage against daily discrimination against a growing African American community after police beat up a taxi driver. "All that was left was confrontation," recalls the 73-year-old Williams. In the end, 26 people were killed, and more than 1,000 others were injured. Williams and Del Tufo are now both working to improve Newark, New Jersey's most populous city, which is best known for its crime rate and international airport 15 kilometers from Manhattan.

She is the president of the Newark Preservation and Landmarks Committee. He works to improve city schools. "Ebony and ivory" says Williams with a smile. "Salt and pepper," interjects 83-year-old Del Tufo. Their friendship attests to ongoing efforts break the vicious cycle of poverty and violence in the city. If signs of poverty are numerous-dirty streets, boarded-up homes and idle residents loitering on street corners-there are also growing signs of regeneration in the place where novelist Philip Roth grew up before white flight.



NEWARK: This file photo shows riot police guards dragging a rioter away from the scene of violence in Newark after New Jersey's largest city witnessed a second night of racial disorder.—AFP

Millennial march

Newark's population, which fell from 405,000 in 1960 to 272,000 in 2000, has started to rise again and today has more than 280,000 residents. Though gang violence and drugs remain endemic, Anthony Ambrose-Newark's public safety director-says crime in 2016 fell to its lowest level since 1967. Upscale new buildings are being built in the center of Newark or along the Passaic River. Millennials priced out of New York are moving in, as are service industries-both unimaginable a few years ago.

"The city did not get better for a long time," says Del Tufo. Convinced she would have to move after her husband died in 1970, she's now "really glad" she stayed. "Things have started to change," she says. If Williams remains an activist at heart and now worries about the negative side-effects of gentrification, he also admits discrimination has waned. "Is it as egregious as it was in 1967? No," he says.

Long road ahead

Three years after the riots, the city elected its first black mayor, Kenneth Gibson. All subsequent mayors have been African American, reflecting a population that is now 52 percent black and 33 percent Hispanic. The make-up of Newark's police force has also changed dramatically with 78 percent of officers now black or Hispanic. The crime-ridden housing projects-which were the nerve center of the riots-have been torn down, replaced by entire streets of houses reserved for low-income residents.— AFP



PARIS: Members of the US Armed Forces stand in attention during a rehearsal for the French Bastille Day parade on Champs-Elysees avenue in Paris.—AP

US PRESIDENT HEADS TO PARIS FOR BASTILLE DAY

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump and France's Emmanuel Macron may be the world's oddest of political odd couples. Far apart on climate change and immigration, the two leaders will look for common ground on terrorism and defense policy when they meet this week in Paris. The president will be the guest of honor at this year's Bastille Day events - a celebration of French national pride at a time when, according to Macron, "our world has never been so divided."

The overseas trip comes as Trump is dogged by fresh controversy over his campaign's potential connections to Russia. Donald Trump Jr. on Tuesday disclosed 2016 emails about his meeting with a Russian lawyer described to him as someone who was "part of Russia and its government's support for Mr Trump" in the campaign against Hillary Clinton. The president has maintained that neither he nor members of his campaign colluded with the Russian government ahead of the 2016 election.

Macron, for his part, has come out strongly against Russia's purported efforts to interfere in elections in the US and across Europe. He has accused Moscow of working against his own campaign in support of his opponent, far-right leader Marine Le Pen.

The visit will gauge whether Trump and France's new leader can find consensus on any of the critical issues on which they find themselves deeply at odds. After Trump withdrew the US from the Paris climate accord agreement last month, Macron, a staunch advocate of research to combat global warming, beckoned "all responsible citizens," including American scientists and researchers, to bring their fight

against climate change to France. The president will mark the 100th anniversary of America's entry into World War I by visiting US troops. White House officials are casting it as a celebration of the US-French military alliance - both then and now. Trump and Macron are scheduled to hold a joint news conference, during which Trump may face tough questions on the latest revelations about his son's contacts with a Russian lawyer. The two leaders and their wives will end a busy day of meetings today with a lavish dinner at Jules Verne, at the top of the Eiffel Tower.

In the leadup to what will be Trump's first official visit to France, the White House chose to highlight areas where the two leaders can collaborate, and said their differences could foster more constructive dialogue. "Macron and the president have somewhat different views on how to achieve the end goal, but I think the end goal is the same," Trump's top economic adviser Gary Cohn said last week. Macron's path to the presidency was nearly as unlikely as Trump's.

Rejecting ties with the French mainstream parties that had controlled the government since modern France began, he launched his own political movement just over a year ago and campaigned on pro-business and pro European policies in direct counter to Le Pen. "Both of these men were elected as outsiders and neither of them is really tied to their own national political establishments," said Benjamin Haddad, a Washington-based French political analyst with the Hudson Institute. "That may actually work to their advantage."

And Macron's national security pitch hasn't

differed drastically from Trump's. On Syria, he argues for intervention, saying that Syrian President Bashar Assad is a threat to Syria and the Islamic State group is a threat to France. France has been plagued in recent years by a series of extremist attacks, including one of the deadliest attacks during Bastille Day celebrations last year, when a 19-ton cargo truck deliberately plowed into crowds in Nice, killing more than 80 people.

Macron supports intervention against Syria's government in response to its use of chemical weapons and could prove an important ally as the Trump administration seeks to increase pressure against Damascus. But in doing so, they'll need to tackle the issue of Russia's support for Assad, something Trump has only passively acknowledged. At age 39, Macron became France's youngest president when he won a runoff against Le Pen in April. Despite no political experience, he pulled together an overwhelming legislative majority in France's parliament and recent polls show him with strong public popularity.

For Trump, whose approval ratings at home and abroad have sunk since he took office, experts say leveraging Macron's popularity could be the president's best bet to thaw his administration's image among European allies. "Macron doesn't have the same constraints as (Germany's) Angela Merkel, who is entering an election campaign in which her opponents would love to make it a campaign about Donald Trump," said Jeffrey Rathke, deputy director of the Europe Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.—AP

MYANMAR FARMERS STAGE WEEK-LONG PROTEST OVER LAND GRABS

MANDALAY, Myanmar: Hundreds of Myanmar farmers entered a seventh day of protest over land grabs yesterday, demanding the government return seized fields and protect them from a surge in prosecutions over property disputes. Land ownership is one of the most contentious issues in formerly junta-run Myanmar, where the army is accused of rampantly confiscating land during its

50-year rule. Anger over land-grabs was a key factor that helped Aung San Suu Kyi's pro-democracy party sweep the first free elections in generations in 2015.

But little has been done to address farmers' grievances since they took office last year, while nearly 500 villagers in central Mandalay region alone are being prosecuted in cases related to land-grabbing. For the past week hundreds of

farmers have been gathered in Mandalay city to protest the lawsuits. At the foot of Mandalay hill yesterday, some 300 farmers chanted and waved signs next to a ramshackle makeshift camp where they have been living for the past seven days.

"We chose the new government but they don't do anything to defend the farmers," protest leader Mg Soe said. "We know it's hard for the government to

solve all the land problems which festered for years when the junta was in power. But now, even more farmers are facing lawsuits under the new government." Most land seizures date from the 1990s and early 2000s, when activists say military men and their cronies displaced thousands of villagers and small-holder farmers.

Few villagers have documents to

prove they have any rights to the land they farm, even if they have been tilling the soil for generations. "Currently over 400 farmers in the region are being sued," said Ko Lin, the chair of the Mandalay regional farmers association. "The regional government should make this a priority." A Mandalay official declined to comment when contacted by AFP.—AFP



SRINAGAR: Kashmiri people carry the body of a local rebel Aqib Ahmad during his funeral procession in Srinagar, Kashmir. —AP

CURFEW IMPOSED AFTER REBELS KILLED IN KASHMIR

SRINAGAR: Authorities imposed a curfew yesterday in parts of Indian-administered Kashmir after three rebels were killed in a firefight with government forces, police said. The shootout overnight, west of the main city of Srinagar, comes amid high tension after suspected militants shot dead seven Hindu pilgrims and injured 19 others in the disputed Himalayan territory. Soldiers and counterinsurgency police cordoned off a neighborhood in Redbugh village late Tuesday after learning about the presence of armed rebels in a house, a police officer said.

"After the night-long standoff, all three militants were killed when they tried to break the cordon," the officer said on condition of anonymity. "Their weapons and bodies have been recovered and identified as locals." Fearing residents could pour onto the streets for the funerals of the slain rebels, authorities imposed a curfew in parts of Srinagar and erected checkpoints and blockades along main roads. Shopkeepers in Srinagar's main commercial centre Lal Chowk shuttered their businesses for the day.

There is no suggestion the shootout was linked to the attack on a bus shuttling

Hindus on an annual pilgrimage to a Himalayan cave revered as the abode of the god Shiva. Some officials have blamed Lashkar-e-Taiba, a pro-Pakistan militant group, for that attack but it has denied any role. Jitendra Singh, minister of state in the Prime Minister's Office, said police and security forces were still carrying out investigations. "No one should jump to any conclusion on the attack. Let us wait for the definite inferences and inputs," he told reporters in Srinagar.

Kashmir has been divided between India and Pakistan since their independence from British colonial rule in 1947 but both claim the former kingdom in its entirety. Rebel groups, including Lashkar-e-Taiba, have fought for decades roughly 500,000 soldiers deployed in the Indian-controlled part of the disputed region, demanding independence or a merger with Pakistan. The fighting has left tens of thousands, mostly civilians, dead. Armed encounters between rebels and government forces have become more frequent since the killing of a hugely popular militant leader last July, which prompted dozens of local youth to join the rebel ranks. —AFP

INDONESIAN PRESIDENT INKS DECREE TO BAN RADICAL GROUPS

GOVT TO DISBAND ANY GROUP CHALLENGING PANCASILA

JAKARTA: Indonesia has issued a decree allowing it to ban groups that oppose its official state ideology, in a move seen to target radical Islamists in the world's most populous Muslim-majority country. The law, signed by President Joko Widodo on Monday, comes as concerns grow about the influence of hardliners in Indonesia, where a majority of the population practice a moderate form of Islam. It empowers the government to disband without trial any group that challenges Pancasila, a set of founding national principles which promote pluralism and tolerance.

Pancasila is considered the unifying factor for a country home to significant Christian, Hindu and Buddhist minorities. Security minister Wiranto, who goes by one name, said yesterday the move was taken because some groups were "threatening the nation's existence and creating conflict in



MANILA: In this file photo, Indonesia's President Joko Widodo addresses the media during a visit to the Malacanang Palace in Manila, Philippines. —AP

the society". Neither Wiranto nor the decree name specific organizations. But activists said the move is aimed to disband Hizb ut-

Tahrir Indonesia (HTI), the local branch of a radical Islamist group that seeks to unify all Muslims into a caliphate.

The government said in May it wanted to take legal steps to dissolve the group. "This decree is merely a shortcut to disband HTI because if they use the old NGO law, it's going to take a long time," legal expert Bivriti Susanti said. Mass organizations spreading ideologies such as atheism and communism are also banned under the decree. Rights activists warned that the decree could stifle a broad range of democratic institutions.

"Banning any organization strictly on ideological grounds, including Pancasila, is a draconian action that undermines rights of freedom of association and expression," Andreas Harsono, a Human Rights Watch researcher in Jakarta, said. Asfinawati, the head of Indonesia Legal Aid Foundation, said the move is "a setback of Indonesia's democracy". Wiranto denied that the decree aims to muffle NGOs. —AFP

CHINA SHIPS TROOPS TO ITS 1ST OVERSEAS BASE IN AFRICA

BEIJING: China has deployed troops to its first overseas naval base in Djibouti, a major step forward for the country's expansion of its military presence abroad. Chinese sailors sailed out of a naval base in Zhanjiang in the southern province of Guangdong on Tuesday and towards the Horn of Africa nation, according to a statement posted on the defense ministry's website. The logistics base is the first of its kind for China, which will use it to support "naval escorts in Africa and southwest Asia, (UN) peacekeeping and for humanitarian support," the statement said.

It will also allow China to evacuate its nationals in a crisis, support anti-piracy activities off Somalia and work with other nations to "jointly defend the security of strategic passages." The Chinese navy has long assisted in anti-piracy missions in the Gulf of Aden, as well as UN peacekeeping efforts throughout Africa, but the base will be the country's first naval base abroad. China started building the base in February 2016 in the entrenchment on the Horn of Africa, where it will be stationed just a few miles from Camp Lemonnier, the United States' only permanent base in Africa.

Home to only around 800,000 people, Djibouti also hosts troops from France and Japan. Foreign ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said yesterday that the base is "primarily used for the better fulfillment of international obligations." "China is committed to peaceful develop-

ment. China's defence policy is defensive in nature. This has not changed." In a June report, the US Department of Defense said the strategically-situated camp, "along with regular naval vessel visits to foreign ports, both reflects and amplifies China's growing influence, extending the reach of its armed forces".

In response, the Chinese defense ministry rejected the assessment, saying "China is not doing any military expansion and does not seek a sphere of influence." Beijing has made extensive infrastructure investments throughout the African continent as it seeks to gain access to natural resources and open new markets. Chinese banks have been major funders of at least 14 such projects in Djibouti, valued at 14.4 billion dollars in total, including a railway line that will halve transit times from Djibouti to Ethiopia's Addis Ababa.

As part of its investment strategy, it has also pursued civilian port projects in countries like Pakistan and Sri Lanka that can accommodate Chinese naval vessels, projects some analysts believe is intended to strengthen China's strategic presence in the region. Beijing has rejected those concerns. In a Wednesday editorial welcoming the PLA's announcement, China's state-controlled tabloid the Global Times made no bones about the base's purpose. "It is certainly the PLA's first foreign naval base," it said. "It is not a supply point for commercial use." —AFP



NORTH KOREA: This file photo, distributed by the North Korean government shows what was said to be the launch of a Hwasong-14 intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) in North Korea's northwest. —AP

MISSILE WARS: WHERE NK STANDS AFTER ICBM LAUNCH

TOKYO: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un is on the cusp of having something his father and grandfather could only dream of - the ability to unleash a nuclear attack on the United States. For anyone paying attention, the test launch of his country's first intercontinental ballistic missile on the Fourth of July came as little surprise. He has been racing to develop better and longer-range missiles and vowed this would be the year of the ICBM in his annual New Year's address. He made good on that vow with the launch of the "Hwasong-14." But that isn't all he's been doing. Here's a quick primer.

Closing the gap

North Korea's newest missile is called the Hwasong-14. Hwasong means "Mars." Experts believe the two-stage, liquid-fuel missile gives Kim the capability of reaching most of Alaska and possibly Hawaii. Some experts add Seattle and San Francisco. North Korea's missiles aren't very accurate, so big, soft targets like cities are what they would be aimed at. Big caveat: Kim's technicians still have a lot of work to do. It's not clear if this missile could be scaled up to reach targets beyond Alaska, like New York or Washington. Reliability is also a big issue that requires years of testing to resolve. And that liquid fuel makes the missile a sitting duck while it's being readied for launch.

Diversifying the arsenal

Along with a record number of tests, 17 this year alone, Kim has revealed a surpris-

ing array of missiles - Harpoon-style anti-ship missiles, beefed up Scuds, submarine-launched ballistic missiles and missiles that use solid fuel, which makes them easier to hide and harder to destroy. David Wright, with the Union of Concerned Scientists, said heightened activity over the past 18 months suggests Kim decided a couple of years ago to speed up and diversify. The takeaway: North Korea is well on its way toward a fine-tuned arsenal of missiles that can strike South Korea, Japan and the United States.

Pushing the envelope:

What's next? More sanctions, almost certainly. US President Donald Trump claimed "severe things" could be in the offing. The US has circulated a new list of sanctions in the UN Security Council and UN Ambassador Nikki Haley put the world, and especially China, "on notice" if it doesn't toe Washington's line. China, North Korea's economic lifeline, has reduced its imports from the North, including a cutoff of coal purchases.

It appears to still be selling lots of goods to North Korea, which may anger some sanctions advocates but generates a huge trade deficit that could spell destabilizing inflation for the North if left unchecked. North Korea, meanwhile, needs to improve its nuclear warhead technology. Its Punggye-ri underground nuclear test site has been on standby for months. So a test is fairly likely. And there will be more launches. As Kim put it, expect lots more "gift packages, big and small" for Washington.—AP

JAPAN ABE VISITS FLOOD-HIT AREA

TOKYO: Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe yesterday visited southern regions devastated by torrential rains and flooding that killed two dozen people as the toll was likely to rise. Heavy seasonal rains last week caused severe flooding that tore up roads and destroyed houses on Japan's southernmost island of Kyushu, with hundreds of thousands of people forced to flee their homes. At least 25 people have been confirmed dead while more than 20 were still missing yesterday.

A week after the disaster began, hundreds of people were still staying in school gymnasiums and public buildings used as makeshift shelters. More than 10,000 rescuers, including soldiers, battled through thick mud with little hope of finding survivors. Public broadcaster NHK showed footage of rescuers shoveling mud and removing washed up driftwood from what seemed to be roads and farm fields. Abe, who cancelled a visit to Estonia that was originally planned as the last leg of a European tour, flew to the region to view the damage and console residents.

He was shown on television walking along a river bank near a broken bridge and visiting a shelter in Oita prefecture. Clad in blue work clothing, Abe told evacuees in a shelter that the government was working to restore the region. Abe later met with Oita prefecture governor Katsusada Hirose, Kyodo News reported. "I was once again reminded of the severe level of damage after seeing with my own eyes the sites hit by torrential rain and mudslides," Abe told Hirose, pledging that the central government will work "to improve conditions at evacuation centers and secure housing".—AFP

GUNMEN KIDNAP AFGHAN BUS PASSENGERS, KILL SEVEN

HERAT, Afghanistan: Afghan authorities yesterday recovered the bullet-riddled bodies of seven passengers kidnapped by gunmen in the western province of Farah a day earlier, in an attack blamed on Taliban insurgents, police said. The violence, which underscores the fragile security situation in Afghanistan, came after Taliban fighters closed a highway connecting provincial capital Farah to Herat city late Tuesday, stopping a bus and forcing 16 passengers to dismount, Farah police spokesman Iqbal Baher said.

They shot at least seven of them, while the remaining nine were taken hostage, he said. Government forces launched an operation early Wednesday to free the hostages and open the highway, clearing

roadblocks set up by the militants, Baher said. They recovered the bodies of seven passengers, he continued, adding that six were civilians and one a police officer.

"It is not clear why the Taliban kidnapped and killed them, and we are still unsure about the fate of the remaining kidnapped passengers," he stated. The Taliban have so far not commented on the incident in Farah province, which has witnessed an increase in the militant group's activities recently, according to provincial officials. Highways around Afghanistan passing through insurgency-prone areas have become exceedingly dangerous, with the Taliban and other armed groups frequently kidnapping or killing travelers. —AFP

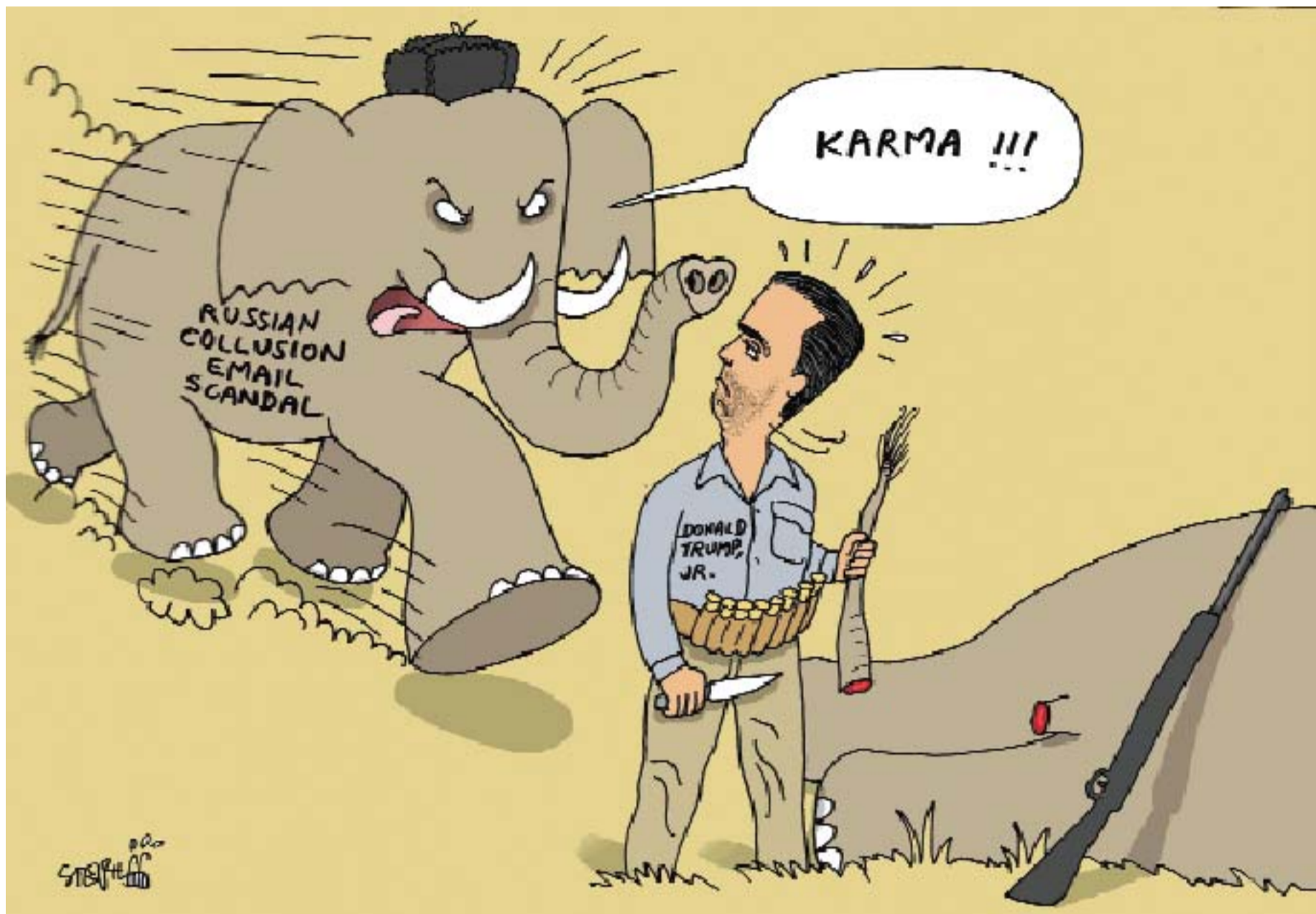
Kuwait Times

THE LEADING INDEPENDENT
DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF
ESTABLISHED 1961

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EDITORIAL : 24833199-24833358-24833432
ADVERTISING : 24835616/7
FAX : 24835620/1
CIRCULATION : 24833199 Extn. 163
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Focus

WHITE HOUSE'S ILL-TIMED KNOCK ON RUSSIA SANCTIONS

The Trump White House picked the worst possible time to criticize a package of new Russia sanctions that is heading toward almost certain and overwhelming approval by Congress. The administration stayed on the sidelines as lawmakers crafted the legislation popular with Republicans and Democrats alike. And now its complaints over a key section of the bill are drowned out amid Tuesday's stunning revelations that President Donald Trump's eldest son met with a Russian lawyer after being promised damaging information on Hillary Clinton supplied by the Kremlin.

"Really none," Sen Bob Corker, chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, answered when asked what role the White House played in developing the legislation. He said Secretary of State Rex Tillerson knew the bill was being drafted, but the State Department didn't offer any substantive advice before it passed the Senate last month with 98 votes. "This was not done in the dark," Corker said.

Many lawmakers viewed the president's desire for warmer relations with Moscow warily long before Trump's son released emails that showed him searching disparaging information on Clinton thought to possibly be available through sources connected to the Russian government. They've supported inquiries by the House and Senate intelligence committees into Russia's meddling in the presidential election and praised the Justice Department's choice of former FBI Director Robert Mueller to lead a separate investigation into whether the Trump campaign colluded with Moscow. Trump didn't help matters when he refused to publicly denounce Vladimir Putin the same way his staff insisted he did in private during a meeting last week with the Russian leader. The upshot is that Trump, still eager for a big win on Capitol Hill, may face a difficult choice instead: Sign the sanctions bill into law and possibly scuttle his bid for a new partnership with Russia - or veto the legislation, set off an outcry and risk having that decision overturned by Congress.

Sen Ben Cardin of Maryland, the top Democrat on the Foreign Relations Committee, called for Congress to "act definitively and immediately" on the sanctions legislation following Tuesday's disclosures by Donald Trump Jr. The dearth of constructive input for an important piece of legislation may stem from the failure to properly staff the State and Treasury departments, the federal agencies primarily responsible for administering sanctions programs. The White House has blamed Democrats for obstructing Trump's qualified nominees. But Democrats fired back, saying it's the administration's fault for moving at a glacial pace to fill key vacancies.

Bipartisan Backing

Either way, White House objections over the bill come too late to matter. The section of the bill the administration dislikes has strong bipartisan backing. The provisions would require a congressional review if Trump seeks to ease or end the sanctions against Moscow. The provisions are styled after 2015 legislation pushed by Republicans and approved in the Senate that gave Congress a vote on whether then President Barack Obama could lift sanctions against Iran.

Marc Short, the White House legislative director, said Monday that the sanctions review section "sets an unusual precedent of delegating foreign policy to 535 members of Congress." Officials from the Treasury and State departments met last week with House congressional staff in a belated attempt to voice their concerns over the congressional review. They said the section would infringe on the president's executive authority.

But Corker predicted the House would soon pass a sanctions bill "almost identical" to the legislation that cleared the Senate easily in mid-June. Only one Republican, Sen Rand Paul of Kentucky, opposed the bill, which also slaps Tehran with new sanctions. The administration had its chance. Tillerson had the ideal forum to voice concerns and objections when he testified before the Foreign Relations Committee on June 13, the morning after Senate Republicans and Democrats agreed on the Russia sanctions legislation.

But Tillerson was ambiguous when Sen Bob Menendez asked him about the Russia sanctions bill. He told the committee he was still reviewing the proposal, but cautioned lawmakers against legislation that would tie the president's hands during negotiations with Putin. Two days later, the Senate approved the bill slapping sanctions on Russia and Iran. White House spokesman Sean Spicer declined nearly two weeks later to comment on the legislation, calling the measure "hypothetical". — AP

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TRUMP, MACRON MAY NOT BE ODD COUPLE

US President Donald Trump's relationship with Emmanuel Macron got off to an awkward start, with a jaw-clenching handshake at a summit in Brussels before the French president rebuked the US leader for his stance on climate change. The two men would appear to have little in common. Trump, 71, is an anti-globalist elected on a pledge to "make America great again" who is unpredictable on foreign policy. Macron, 39, is an ardent European integrationist more than three decades younger who sees himself as an honest broker of international relations.

Trump's visit to Paris this week, to celebrate 100 years since US troops entered World War One on the side of France and Britain, follows bruising talks on trade and climate policy that pitted him against leaders from the world's major economies at a G20 summit last weekend. In Paris, Trump will seek common ground on diplomatic and military endeavours. Both he and Macron have a political interest in building rapport, and both have a corporate background that may help underpin their relationship.

Trump could use a friend overseas. His preference for a more unilateral, transactional diplomacy has unsettled traditional allies in Europe and left the US president appearing isolated among world leaders. "Sometimes Trump makes decisions we don't like, such as on climate, but we can deal with it in two ways: we can say, 'We are not going to talk to you,' or we can offer you our hand to bring you back into the circle," govern-

ment spokesman Christophe Castaner told French news channel LCI. "Macron is symbolically offering Trump his hand."

Political Outsiders

Trump and Macron are political outsiders, the American a real estate mogul, his French counterpart a former investment banker. Both love a good deal, demand tangible results rather than lofty ambitions, and have a penchant for showmanship. Like Macron, Trump will be looking for common ground. Speaking to reporters on Air Force One returning from the G20 meeting in the German city of Hamburg, Gary Cohn, director of the White House National Economic Council, said Trump and Macron enjoyed a "great" relationship.

"You know, Macron and the president have somewhat different views on how to achieve the end goal, but I think the end goal is the same," Cohn said. Trump announced in June that the United States would pull out of a landmark international accord reached in Paris in 2015 to fight climate change.

In hard-fought negotiations in Germany, Macron tried to soften US language on climate policy. Cohn played down talk of tensions with Macron over climate policy. He said he expected meetings in Paris on military and security matters as well as "a long bilateral meeting between the two men".

Having reshaped their countries' political landscapes, both now have certain shared objectives, making crushing Islamic State and countering global ter-

rism a leading priority. It is unclear whether the leaders will address thornier issues such as policy toward Iran, possible American tariffs on steel and Russia sanctions legislation in the US Congress that might derail a €9.5 billion (\$10.9 billion) gas pipe project in which France's Engie SA has a stake.

The United States and France hold differing views on Iran. On a visit to Saudi Arabia in May, Trump singled out Iran as a key source of funding and support for militant groups. During the US presidential race, he threatened to tear up an international agreement on Iran's nuclear program, branding it "the worst deal ever negotiated". So far Trump has stopped short of killing an accord that has allowed French companies including planemaker Airbus SE, oil major Total SA and automobile manufacturers Peugeot SA and Renault SA to sign initial deals.

'A Win-Win for Both'

Just as Macron flattered Russian President Vladimir Putin with a meeting at the gilded Versailles palace of France's former monarchy, Trump will bask in a Bastille Day ceremony on Friday laden with pageantry and military pomp, with US soldiers parading down the Champs Elysees. For Macron, France's youngest leader since Napoleon two centuries ago, it is an opportunity to use soft diplomacy to win Trump's confidence and set about influencing US foreign policy at a time European diplomats say Washington lacks direction.

"The visit is a win-win for both," said

one French diplomat. "Trump remains unchallenged and gets the grandeur that he enjoys. Macron remains unchallenged and gets a no-fuss picture with the leader of the 'free world'". Macron is concerned about Trump feeling backed into a corner, French diplomats said. Moreover, he senses an opportunity to sway US thinking and elevate the role of France, a nuclear power and permanent member of the UN Security Council, in global affairs, in particular on Syria and the Middle East, they added.

France is the second-biggest contributor to the US-led coalition in Syria, and French officials have expressed fears that the United States has no clear vision beyond taking the military fight to Islamic State.

It is one reason, the diplomats say, that in his first two months as president, Macron has sought warmer ties with the Kremlin, just as Trump is left hamstrung in his relations with Moscow by allegations of Russian interference in the 2016 US election to help Trump win and possible collusion with Russia by people close to him. "The Russians are pleased to have a grown-up to talk to in Europe," a second French diplomat said.

Daniel Fried, an expert on US-European relations who served under presidents Bill Clinton, George W Bush and Barack Obama, said Trump had nothing to gain politically at home or abroad by isolating himself. "By reaching out to the French I suspect he hopes to show he can be a viable actor on the world stage." — Reuters

HOW TWO CAR DEALERS SEIZED AN AUTO FACTORY

Venezuela's government has seized assets from dozens of foreign corporations in nationalizations by the late President Hugo Chavez and the embattled current government of Nicolas Maduro. The man behind the confiscation of General Motors Co's \$100 million assembly plant in April is a much more obscure figure: Kaled Kansao, the owner of two long-defunct GM dealerships. Kansao convinced a court to seize the plant as the remedy for a relatively small-time business dispute - over GM's termination of his franchises - that mushroomed into a 17-year court battle.

The legal fight that pushed GM out of Venezuela offers a unique case study in the struggles of foreign corporations to keep operations afloat - much less turn a profit - amid the OPEC nation's economic and political chaos. The seizure stands out because it stems from a dispute with private citizens rather than the government, highlighting yet another risk of doing business in Venezuela - the specter of debilitating legal judgments, said Francisco Martinez, president of Venezuela's main business organization, Fedecamaras.

"It would be impossible to say that the legal proceedings against General Motors had any legal logic," Martinez said. "Venezuela does not provide even the most minimal guarantees with respect to investment or private property." Venezuela ranked 187 out of 190 countries in the World Bank's 2017 Ease of Doing Business report, which evaluates countries' regulatory systems. Only Eritrea, Libya and Somalia scored worse.

Under Chavez, the socialist firebrand who died in 2013, some asset seizures featured gun-wielding soldiers and live television broadcasts. The GM case had its own less publicized drama, including dueling allegations of courthouse misdeeds; recusals by judges citing security concerns; a dispute over 158 vehicles that GM says "vanished"; and mysterious damage calculations awarding the dealers thousands of cars.

GM stopped producing vehicles here in 2015 amid a lack of access to supplies. But the judgment appears to have doused any remaining hopes that it will produce cars again in Venezuela anytime soon. The company terminated the plant's 2,700 workers after the decision. In its initial announcement in April, GM did not connect the plant seizure to the dealers' lawsuit, saying only that the facility was "unexpectedly" seized by "public authorities". In response to inquiries from Reuters, the company provided a detailed history of its frustrations with the proceedings,

which it called "absurd" and rife with "irregularities". In the end, a civil court in the western state of Zulia granted the dealers' request to attach GM assets worth up to about \$115 million. Venezuelan law requires the court to auction off the factory to satisfy the judgment. In the meantime, it ordered GM to pay the dealers to pay an "occupation fee" that at the time equated to about \$36,000 a month - in effect, rent on its own plant. "The illegal and outrageous seizure was the final act of a series of unfortunate events beyond GMV's control," GM told Reuters, referring to its Venezuela subsidiary.

GM did not respond to questions about whether it had any intention of paying the court judgments or trying to regain control of the factory. In a May press statement, Kansao and his business partner, Elena Rodriguez, accused GM of perjury, influence trafficking, and violation of the United States Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, without offering evidence. GM has ignored court rulings because it believes "might is right as a law", Kansao told Reuters.

Idled Workers Collect Salaries

Back in 2000, Kansao and Rodriguez operated two GM dealerships that had originally been founded by Kansao's father. In an interview, Kansao said GM arbitrarily stripped him of his franchise, which he said brought "tragedy and calamity" on his family. GM said it terminated the agreement for a range of reasons, including the dealers' failure to meet a minimum monthly sales average of 25 vehicles.

Nearly two decades later, the dealers' hopes of collecting on the judgment now hinge on whether a court-ordered auction attracts a buyer - an unlikely prospect in a nation where the auto industry has all but collapsed. Chronic shortages of hard currency have left automakers unable to import parts, while triple digit inflation has left would-be customers struggling to buy basics like food and medicine.

In 2016, output at Venezuela's seven biggest auto plants had dropped below 3,000 cars, down from a peak of 172,000 vehicles in 2007 - 79,000 of those from GM, according to auto industry group Cavenez. Labor laws dictate that the dealers would also have to wait behind GM workers - who contend they are owed severance payments - to collect any proceeds from a factory auction. GM did not respond to questions about workers' severance. The automaker had agreed with union leaders to

continue paying workers after the plant stopped making cars, said Adan Tortolero, one of several union leaders at the defunct plant. GM tried to shed that obligation last year by offering buyouts of about \$3,500 per worker, Tortolero said, but workers spurned the offer because it seemed small in comparison to the pay and benefits the workers had previously enjoyed.

One lucrative perk was the right to buy two factory cars every year at government-regulated prices that were well below their actual market value. The regulated prices were theoretically available to anyone, but because demand for cars far outstripped supply, most buyers had to get waiting lists - which usually required large under-the-table payments. GM employees had been among the first in line to buy the cars at regulated prices, which allowed them to sell the vehicles at a steep premium.

9,725 Cars

In 2007, the Zulia court ordered the automaker to compensate the plaintiffs with 9,725 vehicles, according to the decision, which offered no explanation for that number of cars. It did require the plaintiffs to pay GM for the vehicles, but only after they were sold. Asked to provide evidence that the proceedings had been corrupted, GM pointed out that six judges and two court employees had recused themselves, with most citing "threats and personal security concerns".

It also said that the court failed to enforce an order preventing the dealers from selling 158 cars that they seized during the dispute. GM said those vehicles later "vanished", and the dealers never paid for them. Kansao and Rodriguez did not respond to questions about the 158 cars. The case bounced through different courts for the next decade until April 4 of this year, when the Zulia court authorized the plaintiffs to encumber GM assets worth up to 477 billion bolivars - at the time worth about \$115 million - as leverage to collect a cash judgment of half that amount.

The court based the compensation on the full value of the 9,725 cars - rather than the much smaller profit the dealers would have made selling them, GM said. But the legal victory may have little payoff in reality, just as GM's losses may be largely symbolic - given that it hasn't produced or sold cars in Venezuela since 2015. Asked what sort of buyer the factory might attract in a government auction, Kansao responded: "Only God knows that." — Reuters



A Bulgarian family collects tobacco using flashlights in the early morning to escape the summer heat near the village of Karchovsko in southern Bulgaria yesterday. — AFP

US ENVOY MEETS QUARTET, NO BREAKTHROUGH...

Continued from Page 1

and expelling Turkish troops stationed in the tiny Gulf country. Qatar has rejected the demands, saying that agreeing to them wholesale would undermine its sovereignty. The head of Qatar's government communication office, Sheikh Saif bin Ahmed Al-Thani, has accused the quartet of organizing "a smear campaign in the international media to damage Qatar's reputation" and said they are "not interested in engaging in honest negotiations to resolve our differences". The anti-Qatar bloc took partial credit for the US counterterrorism deal Qatar signed Tuesday, saying it was the result of "repeated pressures and demands" by the four countries and others, but that it failed to go far enough.

While welcoming US-led efforts to dry up terrorist funding, the four maintained a hard line that Qatar must meet their list of what they said were "fair and legitimate demands". "The quartet affirms that the measures they have taken were motivated by the continuous and diversified activities of the Qatari authorities in supporting, funding and harboring terrorism and terrorists, as well as promoting hateful and extremist rhetoric and interfering in the internal affairs of states," they said in a joint statement.

The deal struck between Washington and Doha falls far short of the sweeping demands made by the Arab quartet for Qatar to change its policy of supporting opposition Islamists in the region. The group has mixed its accusations that Qatar supports extremists with demands that it end support for political dissidents that they have branded as terrorists. That broad definition of terrorism is seen as an overreach by many Western allies, which do not view groups like the Muslim Brotherhood as terrorist organizations.

But yesterday Tillerson underscored the shared mutual interests between the United States and Saudi Arabia notably in the areas of "security, stability... and economic prosperity". Speaking after meeting with the

Saudi crown prince, Tillerson stressed the two countries shared a "strong partnership".

UN rights chief Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein on June 30 said the demand to close Al-Jazeera represented "an unacceptable attack on the right to freedom of expression and opinion," prompting a harsh response from the United Arab Emirates. In a letter to the rights chief, UAE state minister for foreign affairs Anwar Gargash accused Al-Jazeera of anti-Semitism and inciting viewers to discrimination and violence. The letter lists the broadcasting of "sermons by the spiritual leader of the Muslim Brotherhood, Yusuf Al-Qaradawi, in which he praised Hitler, described the Holocaust as 'divine punishment'" and the regular airing of the speeches of slain Al-Qaeda chief Osama bin Laden and others as examples of hatred.

Saudi commentators were quick to criticize the result of Tillerson's visit to Qatar. "What makes Wednesday's meeting in Jeddah difficult is that Tillerson has, since the beginning of the crisis, appeared to be taking the Qatari side," Abdulrahman Al-Rashed, the general manager of the Saudi-owned Al Arabiya satellite news channel, wrote in a column published in the pan-Arab Asharq al-Awsat newspaper. "He has to realize that he will be further complicating an already complex matter and prolonging the crisis," he added, emphasizing that the goal of the four Arab countries is to change Qatar's "agenda". Faisal Abbas, editor-in-chief of the Saudi daily Arab News, framed the security agreement signed between the US and Qatar as a win for the quartet, but added that "it is not time to party just yet".

The squabble among five of its Mideast allies has put the United States in an uncomfortable position and risks complicating the Pentagon's operations in the region. Qatar hosts Al-Udeid Air Base, the largest US military installation in the Middle East and hub for US-led operations against the Islamic State group in Iraq and Syria. Bahrain is home to the US Navy's 5th Fleet, while American surveillance planes and other aircraft fly from the UAE. — Agencies

11 MIGRANT WORKERS KILLED IN SAUDI FIRE

RIYADH: Eleven migrant laborers died of asphyxiation in Saudi Arabia yesterday in a fire that engulfed the windowless house they shared, Saudi authorities said. "Firefighters put out a blaze in an old house lacking windows for ventilation. Eleven people died of asphyxiation, and six others were injured" in the southern province of Najran, the civil defense said in a tweet. The casualties all hailed from India and Bangladesh, it said.

Nine million foreigners work in the kingdom, many of them from South Asia, according to the last official figures released in 2015. Rights groups have called on Saudi Arabia and other Arab states to end the widespread kafala - or sponsorship - system, which severely restricts the rights of migrant laborers. These workers cannot leave the country or switch jobs without written permission from their current employer under kafala, and employers often confiscate their passports and travel documents. — AFP

US LAPTOP BAN LIFTED IN EGYPT, MOROCCO

CAIRO: Egypt and Morocco's airlines have said a ban against carry-on laptops on US-bound flights has been lifted, leaving only two Saudi airports under the restrictions put in place in March. Morocco's Royal Air Maroc said in a statement yesterday that the ban, imposed amid fears the Islamic State group was developing a bomb concealed in electronics, would be lifted as of today. EgyptAir said late that the United States had also lifted the ban for the carrier's flights to New York from yesterday.

The ban remains in place for Saudi Arabia's two main international airports in Riyadh and Jeddah. The original ban affected airports in Morocco, Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates, as well as Turkey. But last month, the US Department of Homeland Security issued directives to 180 carriers around the world flying into the United States to improve security procedures, especially in screening baggage and electronics. — AFP

FINANCE MINISTER DENIES SPENDING WITHOUT.

Continued from Page 1

Meanwhile, MP Khaled Al-Shatti yesterday asked Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah about ministry programs to rehabilitate Kuwaitis who return to the country after joining terrorist organizations abroad. The lawmaker asked the minister if the government has a list of names of Kuwaitis and bedoons (stateless people) who belong to terrorist organizations and demanded their names and addresses. He also requested a copy of the rehabilitation program that will be provided to the returnees.

Separately, MP Khalil Al-Saleh yesterday warned the

finance minister about awarding the contract for the second phase of the North Al-Zour Power Plant project because the procedure involves suspected irregularities. He said that although the tender has several technical problems, the ministry appears to be headed to award the project. The lawmaker vowed that MPs will not allow the awarding of the faulty contract.

The National Democratic Alliance meanwhile criticized yesterday reported plans by a number of MPs to propose laws that would incriminate joining political groups, and stressed that such a plan violates the constitution. The alliance called on lawmakers to regulate the work of political groups and approve a law that recognizes political parties.



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ATLETICO SECURE VITOLO DEAL DESPITE FIFA BAN

MADRID: Atletico Madrid said yesterday they had signed Spanish international Victor Machin Perez, known as 'Vitolo', from Sevilla but immediately loaned him to Las Palmas to comply with a FIFA recruitment ban. "Atletico de Madrid has reached an agreement with Victor Machin Perez, Vitolo, for the next five years after the football player rescinded his contract with Sevilla," Atletico said on their website. The 27-year-old winner of three Europa Leagues and 11 international caps will initially join Las Palmas on loan until January 1, 2018, when Atletico's recruitment ban expires. The ban was imposed after the club had broken strict rules on the recruitment of youth players. Sevilla president Jose Castro had said on Monday he had offered the player a new five-year deal at the club as the struggle for the gifted midfielder's services heated up. But Spanish sports daily Marca reported that Atletico has now met the Sevilla release clause for Vitolo of 37.5 million euros (\$43 million) and that the player passed his medical yesterday. — AFP

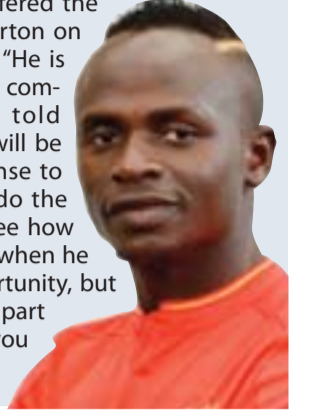


RIDER QUILTS TOUR, TEAM MAKES HIM RACE

EYMET: Costa Rican Andrey Amador decided to quit the Tour de France in the early hours of yesterday morning, only to be "convinced" hours later by his Movistar team to continue. The 30-year-old team-mate of Tour contender Nairo Quintana took to social media in the night to announce he would be pulling out of the race, but it seems his team hadn't been consulted. "Tomorrow I'm putting an end to bearing this pain. Go on lads," he wrote on Twitter, referring to the pain he's been suffering in his knee since crashing on the second stage more than a week ago. "It's difficult but we're leaving the Tour with a knee problem," he'd added on Instagram. But he hadn't told his team, who were stunned to discover the news, yet little willing to accept it. "I was also surprised to learn he was quitting," Movistar's sports director Jose Luis Arrieta told AFP. "Andrey had said he was overcoming the pain, but he couldn't and that he'd woken up due to the fierce pain in his knee. "It might have been bad posture, but then with treatment from the physios and the osteopath, he's feeling better and is going to see if things return to normal during the stage." Arrieta insisted that "it wasn't difficult to convince him" to carry on. —AFP

SADIO MANE TO MISS LIVERPOOL'S HK TRIP

LONDON: Senegalese star Sadio Mane will miss Liverpool's pre-season tournament in Hong Kong as he continues his recovery from a knee injury, Reds manager Jurgen Klopp said yesterday. The 25-year-old forward, who scored 13 Premier League goals for Liverpool last season after joining from Southampton, is making good progress but has yet to resume full training. Mane suffered the knee injury in the Merseyside derby with Everton on April 1 and subsequently underwent surgery. "He is really, really good. He is close; he is closing on coming back to team training," Klopp told liverpoolfc.com. "In this moment we think it will be when we are in Asia, so then it makes no sense to take him to Asia because he needs to then do the first steps in kind of team training. "We will see how we can do it; maybe the U23s will be here, so when he can start (training) then we can use this opportunity, but we have to wait. "On Tuesday morning he was part of the running, so he is first-team training if you want and that looked really good. —AFP



RUGBY

RECORD-BREAKER MCGUIRE BIDS TO LEAVE LEEDS ON A HIGH

LEEDS: Danny McGuire is determined to leave Leeds Rhinos on a high after the Super League all-time leading try-scorer announced he would be moving at the end of the season. The 34-year-old, who has scored 233 tries in Super League, has been at Leeds since 2002 and was contracted through to the 2018 season, but instead will call time on his association with the club a year early. McGuire will not retire however, although his next destination is not yet known. For now his focus is on helping Leeds to silverware in both Super League and the Challenge Cup, with the Rhinos taking on Hull tomorrow in the former. "I am pleased to have made the decision now so I can focus on the remainder of this season and finishing my time at the Rhinos in the best possible way," said McGuire. "I will take time now to look at my options moving forward. I am in no rush to make definite plans about next season and beyond. "I am not ready to say my good-byes just yet, we are currently second in the league and in the Challenge Cup semi-final and that is where my attention is focused now." The top four teams in Super League face off this weekend, with leaders Castleford hosting Salford Red Devils-who confirmed the signing of Manu Vatuvei on

Monday, but the biggest games are further down the table as Warrington look to stay in the race for the Super 8s. They travel to Wigan on Thursday knowing only a win will keep them in the hunt, but even that will likely not be enough as Huddersfield can book their place in the top eight with a win over bottom side Leigh tomorrow. The Wolves, who should have Ben Currie back for the first time in ten months after he tore his ACL, will bid farewell to forward Andre Savelio at the end of the season. Savelio is heading to the NRL to play for the Brisbane Broncos next season under England coach Wayne Bennett. "I have spoken to Brisbane a few times and thought now was the time as I feel ready to do it," Savelio said. "A lot of English forwards have done well in the NRL, so it was always something I had thought about." Widnes, who host Wakefield on Friday, have also enjoyed a good week, signing Rangji Chase on a permanent deal while also extending Chris Houston's contract for a further season. "I am pleased to have renewed my contract with the Vikings for the third season," said Houston. "Although we have had a tough year, I am confident that we will be able to perform at a high standard for the remainder of season and finish the year well. — AFP



LAS VEGAS: Floyd Mayweather Jr (L) faces off for the first time with UFC fighter Conor McGregor during a press call at the Staples Center in Los Angeles, California on Tuesday. The two will fight August 26th in Las Vegas, Nevada. — AFP

BOXING

MAYWEATHER TO QUIT FOR GOOD AFTER MCGREGOR BOUT

LOS ANGELES: Floyd Mayweather has vowed to quit boxing once and for all after he emerges from retirement for next month's cross-combat showdown with Conor McGregor. The 40-year-old former welterweight king, who retired with a perfect 49-0 record in 2015, said Tuesday there was no chance of him fighting again after he climbs into the ring with mixed martial arts star McGregor. The two men are to face each other at Las Vegas's T-Mobile Arena on August 26 in what could become the richest bout in boxing history. Mayweather, who has already made an estimated \$700 million during his two-decade career, is set for another eye-watering payday against brush UFC star McGregor. But irrespective of the result next month, Mayweather says he has already decided it will be his last fight. "I'm not the same fighter I was 21 years ago. I'm not the same fighter I was 10 years ago. I'm not even the same fighter I was two years ago," Mayweather told reporters at the Staples Center. Mayweather said he had discussed his plans to quit for good at a meeting with advisor Al Haymon earlier Tuesday.

"I spoke to Al and told him. Today we had a meeting," Mayweather said. "I can't push my body, it's gruelling. Training camp is gruelling. I can't do it any more. Training camp is rough. It has to be my last one. "After taking a couple of years off I was okay. But then we ended up somehow making this fight happen. "Now I really know that this is it. Deep in my heart I know this is it."

'TOUGH COMPETITOR'

The build-up to Tuesday's event saw Mayweather face headlines that he has filed for an extension to pay his 2015 tax bill. However he brushed off questions about his finances when asked. "We ain't trippin' on that," he responded. For boxing purists, Mayweather risks blemishing an otherwise perfect record with a tawdry final episode that has been disparaged as a cynical circus-like stunt. Mayweather however waved away suggestions that if he was to win, and retire with a 50-0 record, there would be an asterisk against his last fight. "The last time I checked he's still a

professional fighter," Mayweather said of his lightly-regarded opponent. "He's a stand-up fighter. He never took a loss fighting straight up. I can't overlook that, because one shot can end your whole career. He's a tough competitor but it is what it is." Mayweather forged his 49-0 record on the back of phenomenal speed and defensive reflexes, often being criticised for his unwillingness to go to toe-to-toe with opponents. Another boxing masterclass could well be in store for McGregor, but Mayweather is unfazed by the possibility that the Irish brawler may deploy mixed martial arts tactics if he struggles to lay a glove on the American. "That's the referee's job," Mayweather said. "My job is to go out there and be a boxer, be a fighter. I'm pretty sure the referee's going to be fair and fun. "I'll leave all that up to the referee. My job is to go out there and fight against the guy that's across from me. "The fans demanded the fight. McGregor wanted this fight, I wanted this fight. August 26, it's going to be blood sweat and tears from the opening bell." — AFP

PACQUIAO 'NOT SURPRISED' BY FIGHT REVIEW RESULT

MANILA: Manny Pacquiao is "not surprised" the World Boxing Organization affirmed the loss of his welterweight title to Australian Jeff Horn, but the Philippine ring legend railed at large at judges who "manipulated results". The WBO ordered a review of the scoring of the July 2 Brisbane bout at the request of the Philippines' Games and Amusements Board, which criticised the judges and the referee. The WBO set up a panel of independent and anonymous judges to watch and score a recording of the bout without sound. On Tuesday it said the judges found Horn won seven rounds to Pacquiao's five. "We have seen worse judgments in the past where judges manipulated results. Nothing surprises me now," Pacquiao said in a statement late Tuesday. He did not name the judges nor mention the specific fights in his allegations. "Let the people judge for themselves. People saw what happened," said the 38-year-old, who had won world titles in an unprecedented eight weight divisions. The undefeated but unheralded Horn, 29, had stunned the Filipino legend with his ultra-aggressiveness to earn a unanimous decision. But the Filipino's camp alleged the referee let the Australian get away with illegal tactics. The WBO ordered the review while stressing it did not have the power to reverse a decision unless fraud or legal violations were proven. Pacquiao had endorsed the call for a review issued by the Filipino sports regulator, which lashed out at the "unfair decision and officiating" of the fight. In a statement sent to AFP yesterday, the Filipino regulator thanked the WBO for looking into the fight but blamed American referee Mark Nelson for the results. "No matter what review they do, it will be hard to change the result as the referee didn't call it close," said board chair-

man Abraham Kahlil Mitra. "The judges' scores would have greatly changed if the referee did his job properly," Mitra alleged. "He (referee) didn't give Senator Manny Pacquiao the respect and fair protection that is due to a people's champ," Mitra said, referring to Pacquiao's elected post as a Philippine senator. Horn, a former schoolteacher written off before the bout by most observers, welcomed on Tuesday the ruling as "evidence" of his victory. "It's definitely nice to have it finally put on paper," said Horn, who had been keen for a rematch. In the twilight of a 22-year pro career, Pacquiao had initially called for a Horn rematch, but later said he would also "think hard" about retiring. Pacquiao briefly quit boxing last year to pursue his long-held political ambitions and was elected senator. But he quickly made a successful comeback against Jessie Vargas in November, saying he still felt like a youngster. Pacquiao's loss to Horn had prompted calls urging him to retire for good. Pacquiao also issued a separate statement yesterday denying news reports that he had failed to pay his US trainer Freddie Roach. "I have no problem with coach Freddie Roach. I'm not the one paying him, it's Bob Arum," Pacquiao said, adding that he was also waiting to be paid by the owner of US fight promotions firm Top Rank. "The trainer's fee is automatically deducted by the Top Rank from my purse. So if coach Freddie has not yet received his payment, we are on the same boat," Pacquiao said. Press reports on Tuesday quoted Roach as saying that he had not spoken to his boxer since the Horn defeat, and that he had not been paid for the fight. "Not true," a member of Pacquiao's team told AFP yesterday when asked if the boxer was avoiding Roach, adding Pacquiao was "surprised why such kind of news came out." —AFP



BRISBANE: This file photo taken on July 2, 2017 shows Manny Pacquiao of the Philippines (R) fighting Jeff Horn of Australia during their World Boxing Organization boxing bout at SunCorp Stadium in Brisbane. Manny Pacquiao is "not surprised" the World Boxing Organization affirmed the loss of his welterweight title to Australian Jeff Horn, but the Philippine ring legend railed at large at judges who "manipulated results". — AFP

QUEENSLAND MASTER NSW TO RETAIN ORIGIN SERIES

BRISBANE: Winger Valentine Holmes scored a hat-trick of tries as Queensland dominated New South Wales to win Australia's State of Origin rugby league series despite 22-6 in Brisbane yesterday. The Maroons fought back from losing the opening game of the series 28-4 to master the Blues four tries to one for their 11th win in the last 12 interstate series. It was a spirited performance from Queensland, who once again proved superior over NSW despite missing injured Test stars Greg Inglis, Johnathan Thurston, Matt Scott and Darius Boyd. But in their absence a new breed stepped up with winger Dane Gagai named man of the series and debutant Cameron Munster ably deputising for Thurston at stand-off in the final game. In an emotional aftermath to the victory Thurston, who injured his shoulder in the second game and kicked the winning goal in the final minute, lifted the Origin shield with skipper Cameron Smith on the winners' dias. "That's a pretty big win for Queensland, we've had so many injuries, not just coming into the series but during it... gee, that was one helluva game," Queensland fullback Billy Slater said. The Maroons were carried to victory by the Melbourne Storm club 'spine' of Smith at hooker along with his fellow Storm teammates Cooper Cronk at scrum-half, Munster at stand-off and Slater at fullback along with Will Chambers in the centres. Queensland took charge in the first half and could have been more than 12-0 ahead at half-time. Winger Holmes scored both of the Maroons tries, going over for his first in the 15th minute after strong work from Slater and

Michael Morgan. Cronk had a try disallowed when Brett Morris dislodged the ball from his grasp as he dived for the try-line. Cronk set up Holmes's second try with a pinpoint flat kick to the left wing and an unguarded Holmes to score after 26 minutes. The Maroons should have scored again nearing half-time after replacement forward Tim Glasby took play inside the Blues quarter with the defence back-peddalling. But Smith missed a try-scoring opportunity

when he took the wrong option and Holmes was denied a first-half hat-trick of tries. The Blues pulled back to trail by six points when Josh Dugan plucked a high kick out of the air early in the second half. But it proved a false dawn with the Maroons wrapping it up with two more tries to Holmes and prop Jarrod Wallace, with Munster having a hand in both tries. Man of the match Smith led the Maroons magnificently and was a danger with his darts from dummy half. —AFP



Valentine Holmes

SILVERSTONE TELLS F1 TO CUT FEES OR LOSE BRITISH GP AFTER 2019

SILVERSTONE: The heartland of Formula One will lose its home race from 2020 unless Silverstone is handed a cheaper deal to stage the British Grand Prix. Despite seven of the 10 teams being based in Britain and Silverstone attracting the biggest crowds in the sport, the circuit has told F1 owner Liberty Media that escalating race fees have made the historic race unsustainable.

Silverstone on Tuesday activated a break clause in the contract that was signed in 2009 when the British GP was last under threat, providing two years' notice of its intention to walk away from F1. Losing

Silverstone would deprive the series of a huge dose of its heritage, given that the former airfield first staged an F1 race in 1948 and opened the inaugural world championship season two years later.

"We don't have infinite resources to keep on subsidizing the Grand Prix and it's wrong to do that," British Racing Drivers' Club chairman John Grant told The Associated Press as the circuit was being prepared for Sunday's race. "We only have one opportunity to bring it to a stop, legally. We have this one opportunity to exercise the break clause and we have to do it today." The BRDC reported losses in 2015 of

2.8 million pounds (now about \$3.5 million) and 4.8 million pounds in 2016. Race fees rise 5 percent annually and will hit 16.2 million pounds for this weekend's race. The race organizers said the fee will have leapt to 25 million pounds by 2026 - the last year of the current contract.

F1 came under new ownership earlier this year when US sports and entertainment firm Liberty bought out investment fund CVC Capital Partners. Liberty said Tuesday it is focused on preserving the race and promised to "carry on negotiating with the promoter in good faith and in private to reach a fair and equitable solution."

Red Bull team principal Christian Horner was less diplomatic, saying he was "amazed" the break clause had been triggered and questioning the circuit's leadership. "They have now realized that they can't afford it despite having a full house every year," said Horner, whose team is based nearby in Milton Keynes. "They either should not have signed it in the first place or they got their maths wrong. Silverstone gets favorable rates anyway." Horner seized on the uncertainty over the future of Silverstone as a chance to criticize the layout of the central England circuit. "They spent a fortune on the pits and

they put them in the wrong place," Horner said. "They have created a paddock with zero atmosphere at one of the most historic race tracks in the UK, so there has been some serious misjudgment and mismanagement." The BRDC claims that Silverstone is the most popular stop on the F1 calendar, with 350,000 attending a race weekend. Grant hopes that Liberty recognizes that the F1 brand is underpinned by the traditional races.

"You can't just go to a bunch of new video game circuits and pretend the fans are going to remain interested and pay," Grant said.—AP

MOTOR RACING

RED BULL'S HORNER SLAMS SILVERSTONE DECISION

LONDON: Christian Horner, head of Formula One outfit Red Bull, has slammed the owners of Silverstone, saying they created the financial trouble that threatens the future of the British Grand Prix. Horner—a member of the track's owners British Racing Drivers Club (BRDC) was scathing about the club's announcement on Tuesday they were exercising a break clause in the 17-year contract to host the Grand Prix, meaning the 2019 race could be the last staged there.



Bernie Ecclestone

The owners blamed escalating costs under the original agreement signed with former F1 supremo Bernie Ecclestone which came into force in 2010. They are looking for a revised deal with Liberty, the new Formula One owners, who are highly critical of the BRDC's announcement.

The row has blown up in the days leading up to this weekend's Grand Prix at Silverstone which will see home favourite Lewis Hamilton endeavour to hit back in the race for the title which sees German Sebastian Vettel leading by 20 points.

Horner, in charge of Red Bull since 2005, told journalists that BRDC entered into the agreement in 2010 fully conscious of the terms. "I am amazed that they have triggered their break clause," said Horner, who oversaw Red Bull's four successive constructors championships from 2010 to

2013. "Silverstone signed a contract in 2010, and they knew what they were entering into at the time. They have now realised that they can't afford it despite having a full house every year." "They either should not have signed it in the first place or they got their maths wrong." BRDC say it is financially crippling to host the race—while others on the circuit does not receive government support.

TIPPING POINT

The BRDC have been hit financially by the hosting fee which goes up by five percent every year—from £12 million in 2010 to £17 million this season and £26 million in 2026. "This decision has been taken because it is not financially viable for us to deliver the British grand prix under the terms of our current contract," BRDC chairman John Grant said.

"We sustained losses of £2.8m (3.1m, \$3.6m) in 2015 and £4.8m in 2016, and we expect to lose a similar amount this year."

"We have reached the tipping point where we can no longer let our passion for the sport rule our heads." Their announcement prompted a sharp riposte from Formula One. "The week leading up to the British Grand Prix should be a week of great celebration for F1 and Silverstone," a Formula One spokesperson said. "We deeply regret that Silverstone has chosen instead to use this week to posture and position themselves and invoke a break clause that will take effect in three years' time." "We offered to extend the current deadlines in order to focus on everything that is great about Silverstone and Formula One." Silverstone's strategy may yet fail as Liberty chairman Chase Carey told the BBC earlier this week there were other parties interested in hosting the race.

The Times' claimed one of the possibilities is it being raced in the Docklands area in east London. However, London Mayor Sadiq Khan it is said would consider the pollution ramifications if approached formally about such a possibility.—AFP



EYMET: Germany's Marcel Kittel, wearing the best sprinter's green jersey, celebrates as he crosses the finish line during the 203.5km eleventh stage of the 104th edition of the Tour de France cycling race yesterday between Eymet and Pau. — AFP

CYCLING

FIVE-STAR KITTEL WINS TOUR DE FRANCE 11TH STAGE

PAU: Marcel Kittel continued to dominate the Tour de France sprint finishes, taking his fifth stage victory in Pau yesterday. Dutchman Dylan Groenewegen took second with Edvald Boasson Hagen of Norway third as Chris Froome retained the leader's yellow jersey. But there was agony for Poland's Maciej Bodnar who spent more than 200km in a breakaway, only to be caught with 300-metres to ride. Once he was caught, though, there was a certain inevitability about Kittel's victory, his 14th overall at the Tour.

The Quick-Step rider positioned himself around the top dozen riders into the final kilometre and then started to move up in the last few hundred metres, saving his last acceleration for the moment he needed to burn off the last two riders in front of him, Boasson Hagen

and Australian Michael Matthews. Groenewegen tried to stick to Kittel's rear wheel throughout the sprint in the hope of getting a tow to the line, but he didn't have the power to overhaul the burly German.

In each of the last five years one rider has been dominant in sprint finishes, with Briton Mark Cavendish taking four stage wins last year and German Andre Greipel matching that the year before. The two years previous to that, Kittel had been the top fast man, winning four stages in each of 2013 and 2014.

But he seems to be better than ever this year, and with Cavendish, world champion Peter Sagan and French winner of the fourth stage Arnaud Demare all out of the race, Kittel seems to have no competition left. With at least three more possible sprint finishes to

come in the race, Kittel could yet match the record of eight stage wins from a single Tour. The 203.5km stage from Eymet, a little town in the Dordogne known for its large British population, to Pau saw three riders take off from the gun, with Marco Marcato and Frederik Backaert joining Bodnar. They had a maximum lead of four and a half minutes but that was down to 30 seconds when Bodnar set off alone with 28km left. He stretched out his lead to 50 seconds but the peloton always had him under control and even though he made it into the final kilometre, he never genuinely looked likely to succeed.

For the overall contenders it was a second successive day of tranquility in the peloton ahead of the next two Pyrenean stages where the yellow jersey battle will surely rage.—AFP

GOLF

'BROKEN RECORD' MCILROY CONFIDENT OF FINDING FORM

IRVINE: Rory McIlroy joked he is beginning to sound like a "broken record" as he strives to regain his best form ahead of today's Scottish Open and next week's Open Championship. As world number four he tees up on the Dundonald Links course, on the Scottish west coast and just to the south of Glasgow, as the highest ranked player in the field.

However, four-time major champion McIlroy is coming off the embarrassment of missing the halfway cut by four shots while hosting last week's Irish Open. He and his wife Erica took the two-hour ferry from Belfast to Cairnryan in Scotland on Monday, with McIlroy heading straight to the practice putting green upon his arrival.

"After catching the ferry, I got to the course here late Monday afternoon and did some putting on my own," said McIlroy, who recorded 33 putts for each of his two rounds in Northern Ireland last week.

"I just was trying to figure out a couple things on my own and try to take ownership of what I'm really working on. I worked a lot on routine. I feel like I've become quite bogged down in technical thoughts a little bit. So, I need to focus more on my routine and how I approach a putt." McIlroy got his first look at Dundonald Links, which is hosting the event for the first time, on Tuesday morn-

ing for a full 18-hole practice round before contesting Wednesday's Pro-Am.

It is the first time McIlroy is playing the event since 2014 when he shot a new course record 64 at Royal Aberdeen en route to sharing 14th place before then heading to Royal Liverpool and brilliantly claiming the Open Championship. However, after a stop-start 2017 season beset by injuries and indifferent form, McIlroy is far from a favourite to win golf's oldest major for a second occasion in four years. He did finish in a share of seventh at The Masters but then horribly missed the cut in the US Open.

"My game is close but then it's hard to sit up here and stand in front of a camera every single time and say to you guys it's close, because I sound a bit of a broken record after a few weeks," said a smiling McIlroy. "But really, it's not far away. I'm positive about it. I'm excited about my game. I feel like I'm doing a lot of good things."

"And again, it's just putting it all together. Putting it all together, not just for one day but for four days; and not just for four days, to do it week-in and week-out. Look, I've got a busy summer coming up. I'm potentially playing seven weeks out of eight or seven weeks out of nine. I've got a busy stretch coming up and I'm excited to play." — AFP



TROON: This is a Sunday, July 17, 2016 file photo of Henrik Stenson of Sweden holds up the trophy to the crowd after winning the British Open Golf Championships at the Royal Troon Golf Club in Troon, Scotland. — AP

SLOW-BURNER BENNETT AIMS TO CATCH BARDET

BERGERAC: George Bennett admits he's been left behind a bit recently but the 27-year-old New Zealander is determined to catch up. Bennett used to rub shoulders with the likes of two-time Grand Tour winner Nairo Quintana and last year's Tour runner-up from France, Romain Bardet in the junior sections.

But while his two peers have gone on to become two of the best riders in the world, Bennett's progress was slow and steady in comparison. However, following a great ride on the brutal ninth stage of the Tour de France on Sunday, he climbed up to 10th in the standings. And that comes in a year in which he became the first New Zealander to win a World Tour event, May's Tour of California.

Bennett knows he's not at the level of Quintana and Bardet now, but he believes he has the ability to get there, as he demonstrated on Sunday. "I didn't think I'd be able to go with those guys (the favourites) on Sunday, so that was pretty cool," said the Lotto-Jumbo rider. "They attacked and I followed them, and then I was with a couple of guys, maybe five guys or something, and I regretted it instantly and went out the back, and then waited for Yates (Simon Yates) a little bit at the top of the hill. We went down there and caught up Nairo (Quintana) and Dan (Martin) and ripped it home."

'VERY GOOD CLIMBER'

Although he admitted to being surprised to find himself in the top 10, Bennett insists he's not a fish out of water in such company, particularly when it comes to climbing mountains. "I've always been a very good climber, I've always had the numbers," he said.

"Even as an amateur when I did a 20-minute test, I always had super watts per kilo (kg) but struggled with doing super watts per kilo after doing 100km or up to 200km." But a change in training methods has reaped dividends. "I think just doing more Grand Tours, doing altitude training, I've changed the way I train—I do hard stuff at the end of long six-hour rides now and that builds up."

Bennett's not having delusions of grandeur, though, despite a seventh-placed finish at last year's Vuelta a Espana. "Tenth would be probably the limit of my abilities, I'd say. I'm hoping for a good time-trial and I'm hoping for no mishaps."

"I think that's the key—just don't do stupid shit and don't crash and don't get caught out behind splits in the crosswinds. That's the goal, but it's difficult."

Looking back to his younger days, Bennett admits he got left behind when turning professional. "I did start quite late, I was a mountain biker for a little bit and then started late on the road," he said. "It was weird, when I raced in France (as a junior) we (he and Bardet) would go head-to-head and at the Ronde de l'Isard (a top under-23s race) I had the better of him and

things like that.

"Then the next weekend, he would have the better of me. But then we would go to the pros and he just blossomed and I didn't, and I'm slowly starting to find my feet now."

"It was weird, the guys I was with, my generation, the under 23s—a lot of them came to the pros and were suddenly really good, and I wasn't. Even though I was probably as good, and on my days even better than them as an amateur. Maybe it's the distance or it was the positioning or the mindset, I don't know." — AFP



EYMET: Riders of the France's AG2R La Mondiale cycling team (from left) France's Romain Bardet, Belgium's Oliver Naesen, and Luxemburg's Ben Gastauer ride behind their team car during the 203.5km eleventh stage of the 104th edition of the Tour de France cycling race yesterday between Eymet and Pau. — AFP

OLYMPICS

SEA MONSTERS NO SWEAT FOR JAPAN'S TEEN SURF QUEEN

ICHINOMIYA: Just 16 and still afraid of the water, hot-shot Japanese surfer Minori Kawai has set her sights on Olympic gold after a stunning victory at the venue for the 2020 Tokyo Games. Kawai won last month's Chiba Open in her own backyard and feels she will have a psychological edge when the sun-swept sport makes its Olympic debut three years from now.

"It's given me a huge lift in confidence," the schoolgirl star told AFP in an interview before surfing next to the Olympic venue at Tsurigasaki beach, an hour outside of Tokyo. "I never imagined I could win such a big competition," added Kawai after becoming the first Japanese woman to win a World Surf

League 3,000 qualifying series event despite her tender years.

"It was like a dream and it took a while to sink in. But to win at Tsurigasaki, where I surf every day, was amazing. I got a taste for how the Olympics will feel and I'm sure it will give me an advantage."

Kawai, who began surfing at just seven in her native Tokushima, western Japan, admits she still has to battle her phobias in the water after fearing she might become shark bait on more than one occasion.

"When I was surfing in Australia once, I saw a flash of a dorsal fin and thought: 'Uh-oh, I'm going to get eaten,'" said Japan's top female surfer, whose

style combines lightning speed and seemingly effortless grace. "They told me it was only a dolphin that time, but then in Gold Coast I got stung by a nasty jellyfish and couldn't breathe so they rushed me to hospital."

Just when she thought it was safe to go back in the water, Kawai had another brush with disaster at a competition in Indonesia.

SHARK ALERT

"In Bali, I saw this big shark fin when I was paddling and carried on surfing in a bit of a fluster. I was petrified. The sea can be scary," added Kawai, who signed autographs for adoring young fans after finishing practice.

"When you go out alone and the waves are massive, sometimes you think you could die out there. But you can't become a better surfer if you don't get in the water." Her recent victory was all the more remarkable given that she surfed on a sprained ankle and took painkillers before beating fellow Japanese Hinako Kurokawa in the final. "To win at Tsurigasaki has given me extra incentive for 2020," said Kawai, whose 3,000 qualifying points lifted her 95 places to 23rd in the series rankings.

"The waves in Japan are pretty small, which will be a big help to Japanese surfers. But I don't really feel any pressure. Being able to travel the world at this age is a privilege so I take every

competition very seriously."

Kawai, whose next goal is to compete on the elite championship tour and win a world title, only caught the surfing bug after getting fed up of watching her father surf from the beach.

But she quickly became "hopelessly hooked" and the omens look good for Tokyo 2020. "It's incredible the Olympics are coming to Japan, and that surfing was included as an Olympic sport," said Kawai, set to compete in Los Angeles later this month.

"Plus I'll almost be the perfect age so I really got lucky. Already when I'm surfing in Tsurigasaki, I sometimes catch myself thinking about winning an Olympic medal-obviously gold." —AFP

TRIO OF NEW COACHES FOR INDIA RAISES EYEBROWS

NEW DELHI: A surprise decision by India's cricket board to appoint two high-profile stars to assist new coach Ravi Shastri has some experts wondering how much autonomy the former all-rounder will wield at the helm.

The cricket board ended months of speculation Tuesday in naming Shastri to replace Anil Kumble, who resigned as head of the world's top Test side following a bitter fallout with skipper Virat Kohli. Shastri's appointment was widely expected but the board's decision to name ex-players Zaheer Khan and Rahul Dravid as bowling and batting consultants raised eyebrows.

Traditionally, the Board of Control for Cricket in India allows the head coach to pick support staff and the break with convention did not go unnoticed. "The coach has now got appendages. The BCCI has added more arsenal to the support staff," prominent cricket commentator and columnist Ayaz Memon told AFP. "The problem could be of too many people." Shastri, 55, edged out a host of high-profile contenders for the top job, including Virender Sehwag, Australia's Tom Moody, Englishman Richard Pybus and former India manager Lalchand Rajput.

Speculation had been rife that Shastri, who served as India's team director between 2014 and 2016, would get the nod, especially given his friendly ties with Kohli.

"If Dravid batting consultant and Zaheer bowling coach, is Shastri more 'team director' again?" wrote leading Indian commentator Harsha Bhogle on Twitter.

Cricketer-turned commentator Aakash Chopra suggested Shastri's new role differed little from his old one, saying: "only the designation changes!" A panel tasked by the Supreme Court with overseeing the affairs of India's scandal-ridden cricket board appeared pleased with the selection. "It is a comprehensive recommendation covering all aspects of the coaching requirement of any team," it said in a statement yesterday. "Now that they have made the choice, we sincerely feel that the new combination will steward the team to number one position in the World Cup." Shastri's first assignment starts later this month when India tours Sri Lanka for three Tests starting July 26.

The duration of his post, and that of Khan and Dravid, is two years until the World Cup in 2019. — AFP



COLOMBO: Sri Lanka's new Test cricket captain Dinesh Chandimal (C) chats with cricketers during a practice session at the R Premadasa Cricket Stadium in Colombo yesterday. Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe will play a one-off Test match starting tomorrow at the R Premadasa Cricket Stadium in Colombo. — AFP

CRICKET

CHANDIMAL, THARANGA TO CAPTAIN SRI LANKA

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka appointed two new captains yesterday to replace Angelo Mathews, who resigned after his side's humiliating home series defeat to bottom-ranked Zimbabwe. Dinesh Chandimal will lead the Test side while Uthup Tharanga will captain in limited-overs matches, Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) said.

The reshuffle caps a turbulent period for the beleaguered Sri Lankan side, whose loss to Zimbabwe followed a fitness and coaching crisis and an early departure from the Champions Trophy.

"Mathews tendered his resignation a short while ago this morning," said SLC chief Thilanga Sumathipala said. "We want to regroup and restructure and move forward."

Mathews said he took the blame for Sri Lanka's recent woes, and was making room so his successor could prepare the side for the World Cup in 2019. "There were times when I wanted to step down, but I did not want to let the team down at that time because there were no replacements as such," he told reporters.

"But I feel this is the right time. The team's interests supercede my interests. My honest opinion is that there are candidates who can take over the reins." Mathews bore the brunt of the criticism levelled at Sri Lanka's cricketers in the aftermath of their 3-2 series loss at home to minnows Zimbabwe on Monday.

Mathews described the shock defeat as lowest point in his career and a "hard pill to swallow". The struggling side entered the series without a coach after Graham Ford's sudden exit following their poor showing in the Champions Trophy last month.

Sri Lanka's sports minister delivered the squad an ultimatum after that performance, ordering players get in shape or face the boot after declaring them unfit to compete on the world stage.

Rock bottom

Sri Lanka Cricket manager Asanka Gurusinge said the team had hit rock bottom but would bounce back. "After losing to Zimbabwe, we have to go up. This side is too good to keep going down," Gurusinge said.

Their first challenge starts Friday, when Chandimal will lead the side in Colombo for the one-off Test against Zimbabwe. "I am going to put my heart and soul into the team," Chandimal said. Tharanga, who will take over in Twenty20s and ODIs, said there was much room for improvement following the embarrassment against Zimbabwe. "As a team we did not perform well," he said.

The team remains plagued by fitness problems, with up to 20 players battling injuries in the past year, said chief selector Sanath Jayasuriya. Mathews had to return home halfway through Sri Lanka's tour of South Africa earlier this year and missed Bangladesh's tour of Sri Lanka due to a hamstring injury. — AFP

ROOT'S 'GREAT START' ENCOURAGES COOK

NOTTINGHAM: Former England captain Alastair Cook hailed the "outstanding" start made by new Test skipper Joe Root ahead of his second outing in charge. Yorkshire batsman Root will look to guide England to a win that puts them 2-0 up in the four-match series when the second Test gets underway at Trent Bridge on Friday after his first match as captain ended in a dominant 211-run win over the Proteas at Lord's last week. That was the 26-year-old Root's first match as Test captain since Cook stepped down from the post in February and saw the new skipper star with the bat as well in making a first-innings 190.

"It was a great week for English cricket," Cook told Sky Sports yesterday. "For Joe Root to get off and win a game by 200 runs and get 190, it doesn't get much better than that," added the 32-year-old Cook, still in the England side as an opening batsman.

'BUSINESS AS USUAL'

"I am really pleased for him. He had a horrible cold all week, but I thought he was outstanding. When he did speak in the dressing room his messages were very clear. The confidence he will have got from last week, it is always important to start well. He got the monkey off his back in terms of getting a big score early on in your captaincy career, which stops everyone talking about captaincy affecting your batting. I think all in all he will have gone to bed Sunday night a very happy man." No one knows more about the pressures of leading the team than Cook, who captained England in a record 59 Tests before standing down following a 4-0 series loss in India late last year.

"Nothing can prepare you for it," Cook said of being England captain. "Sometimes the peace and quiet is on the field and when you are batting. It is a big role, but it's great that he had a really good start and I am always there if he needs some support."

"Personalities will be different. His will evolve over a period of time. He is still new to captaincy, in terms of any kind of cricket, so he will get better and better. He could not have done more in that first game." Meanwhile Cook marked his return to the ranks after five years as captain with a valuable 69 in the second innings at Lord's. "It was business as usual for me," said the Essex left-hander, England's all-time leading Test run-scorer.

"It was a little bit strange, especially when Joe came out to toss and knowing I will never do that again."

"But then you see all the interviews after and think 'it's alright, I can go and get my pads on!' 'I have done my stint, proud of what I achieved and hopefully we can build forward with Rooty.'"

Cook added: "The target hasn't really changed for me. It is just to score runs to help set up England victories... Scoring big hundreds is the dream for any batter."

South Africa have lost just one away Test series in the last 10 years and Cook expected the Proteas to bounce back strongly at Trent Bridge. "You watch a lot of their cricket and they are one of the sides that travel very well," he said. "They have a very good record away from home. They will be hurting."

"We need to be right on it. In Test-match cricket if you are not on it for the full five days you can lose it very quickly." — AFP



Joe Root

AMIR PROMOTED AFTER BAN LIFTED

KARACHI: Pakistan's star fast bowler Mohammad Amir was promoted into the country's top category yesterday following his brilliant Champions Trophy performance, just 19 months since returning to international cricket after a five-year spot-fixing ban. The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) shuffled several players while issuing new lists of contracts for national duty, given on the basis of performances in international and domestic matches.

"A number of young players have been awarded contracts this year keeping in mind that the national team's performances in all formats," said a PCB release.

Amir, who was earlier listed in the 'B' category after his return to the game, was elevated to 'A' class in the reshuffle, joining the ranks of captain Sarfraz Ahmed, Azhar Ali, Mohammad Hafeez, Shoaib Malik and Yasir Shah. The 25-year-old, along with then captain Salman Butt and pace partner Mohammad Asif, was banned in 2010 for arranging deliberate no-balls in return for money during the Lord's Test in England.

All three players were also jailed by a UK court in 2011. Since his return in January last year, Amir has taken 43 wickets in 14 Tests, 30 in 21 one-day internationals and 11 in 13 Twenty20s.

He took three crucial wickets in Pakistan's improbable Champions Trophy victory over arch-rivals India in London last month. — AFP



DERBY: New Zealand's Amy Satterthwaite bats during the Women's World Cup cricket match against England at the The County Ground, Derby, England yesterday. — AP

AUSTRALIA LOOKS TO REAP BENEFITS OF EUROPEAN TOURISTS

SYDNEY: Arsenal play a double-header of friendly matches in Sydney this week and the arrival of the English Premier League giants is seen as a golden opportunity for football in Australia. The Gunners' new £52.5 million (\$68 million) record signing Alexandre Lacazette could make his debut in today's meeting with the reigning A-League champions Sydney FC.

And Western Sydney Wanderers will then get the chance to measure themselves against Arsene Wenger's men on Saturday at the ANZ Stadium. The matches provide greater visibility to these clubs and can help the sport con-

tinue to grow in Australia, according to Damien De Bohun, the former A-League head. "The tours by European clubs reinforce the popularity of football globally. It also gives fans a tangible way to connect with the players-after seeing them on their television screens, they can literally touch and feel them when they're out here," De Bohun, who is now in charge of major events in the state of Victoria, told AFP.

"Technically, it also gives people the opportunity to see close up the professionalism of the overseas clubs and those clubs can also share some of their insights and playing and training tech-

niques with local clubs and their players." Tottenham Hotspur played in Australia last year as part of the International Champions Cup, while Liverpool played a post-season game against Sydney FC in May. "It's great for the clubs to play football against bigger and better opposition," added De Bohun. "It gives those clubs an exposure to the world football scene, a case in point are the Western Sydney Wanderers who won the Asian Champions League in 2014. "The tours help local clubs aspire and play at a higher level in Australia." De Bohun also said that such matches have helped showcase the talents of individuals who

have since gone on to earn moves to Europe.

One, ex-Wanderers midfielder Aaron Mooy, was picked up by Manchester City and has since joined Premier League newcomers Huddersfield Town.

Goalkeeper Mathew Ryan, once of Central Coast Mariners, has just signed for Brighton and Hove Albion from Valencia while his former club colleague Tom Rogic is now starring for Celtic. "The European clubs can grow their global footprint. The big sponsors of the clubs who have offices in this part of the world also want to see the benefit of playing in Australia and its proximity to the big

markets in Asia," added De Bohun, who helped organise the recent international friendly played in Melbourne between Argentina and Brazil. One of the objectives of hosting such matches is to convince other leading clubs that the facilities on offer are worth travelling the long distance to visit. "Having Brazil and Argentina come to play in Melbourne opens the eyes and ears of other clubs and countries to play here," he said.

"Some countries who will play at the World Cup in Russia next year have expressed an interest in coming to play in our city. There is a clear plan going forward." — AFP

BASEBALL

CANO LIFTS AL TO VICTORY IN MLB ALL-STAR GAME

MIAMI: Robinson Cano hugged Francisco Lindor after the final out, exchanged high-fives with his American League teammates and put an arm around the shoulder of designated hitter/photographer Nelson Cruz. Winning the All-Star Game still seemed to matter, even if it didn't mean World Series home field.

Cano homered off Cubs closer Wade Davis leading off the 10th inning and the AL beat the National League 2-1 Tuesday night for its fifth straight victory in a game dominated by this era's flame-throwers, rather than its standout sluggers.

At 34, the Seattle second baseman was among the oldest players in an event built around so many of the sport's new, young stars, and he was added to the roster only Friday as an injury replacement. At that time, he didn't realize baseball players and owners had scrapped the rule giving home-field advantage in the Fall Classic to the league that wins the Midsummer Classic.

"When I found out, I said, I might get an at-bat," Cano recalled. Cano earned the MVP honor with his one clutch swing. He sent a hanging curve off the back wall of the right-field bullpen, then blew a bubble with his gum when rounding the bases.

He remembered telling his dad: "I'm not picked - like the last one. If I play, it's great," he said. Cano hip-bumped Cruz on the way back the dugout, then was joined by jumping, hopping and high-fiving teammates on the bench. For good measure, they doused Cano with sunflower seeds and fanned him with towels.

Craig Kimbrel wiggled out of a jam in the ninth and right fielder Justin Upton made a lunging catch in the 10th to help the AL. And for the first time since 1964, the rivalry is back to all even - 43 wins apiece with two ties, and each side has scored exactly 361 runs.

Cleveland closer Andrew Miller finished off the win. Manager Brad Mills, taking over the AL squad because Indians skipper Terry Francona was recovering from a heart procedure last week, was thrilled.

"The last thing we wanted to do was get pitchers in that shouldn't probably be in the game, and risk an injury or something," Mills said. Cano's homer came exactly 50 years after the previous All-Star extra-inning homer, when Tony Perez hit a tiebreaking 15th-inning shot off Catfish Hunter in the NL's 2-1 win at Anaheim, California. Perez, now a Marlins executive, was among eight Latin-born Hall of Famers who threw out ceremonial first pitches. Miguel Sano put the AL ahead in the fifth with a bloop RBI single down the right-field line against Alex Wood. Yadier Molina tied it in the sixth with a home run off Ervin Santana and two days before his 35th birthday became the oldest catcher with an All-Star long ball.

Molina, wearing a shiny gold helmet and chest protector, had just entered behind the plate in the top half and snapped off an All-Star first - Cruz pulled a phone out of his uniform pants and asked the catcher to shoot photos of him with umpire Joe West, who last month became just the third ump to work 5,000 big league games. "I would bet if the game had counted, he would not have done that," NL manager Joe Maddon said. Molina took the request in stride. "It was weird, huh? It was funny, too," he said. "I said: Are you serious? He was. So I did it."

Cruz had planned a similar stunt for the 2013 but said he couldn't do it. "This time, if I had to take a picture with someone it was Joe West. He's the legend," Cruz explained. "He said, 'Come on get out of here, what are you doing?' Then he said, 'Yeah, yeah. Let's do it.'" West couldn't believe what was happening.

"I've never seen that before - ever," he said. "That's the first time I ever think I've been speechless on a field." Davis wasn't with the Cubs last fall when they won the World Series for the first time in 108 years. He was acquired in a trade from Kansas City to fortify the bullpen, and was the only Cubs player in this showcase. Chicago has struggled this season, going into the break at 43-45.—AP



MUNICH: Colombian midfielder James Rodriguez (C), new recruit of German first division Bundesliga football club Bayern Munich, holds his new jersey as he poses with Bayern Munich's Italian head coach Carlo Ancelotti (L) and the club's CEO Karl-Heinz Rummenigge (R) during an official presentation in Munich, southern Germany, yesterday. — AFP

SOCCER

JAMES TO REKINDLE CAREER UNDER ANCELOTTI AT BAYERN

BERLIN: After a frustrating spell at Real Madrid, James Rodriguez will attempt to kick-start his career at Bayern Munich next season, back under the stewardship of Carlo Ancelotti. Colombian hot-shot James on Tuesday joined his former Real boss at the German champions on a two-year loan.

Bayern have the option to buy the 2014 World Cup top-scorer at the end of the deal. "Signing James Rodriguez was our coach Carlo Ancelotti's biggest wish, following their successful spell working together in Madrid," said Bayern's chairman Karl-Heinz Rummenigge. "There's no question that this transfer further increases the quality in our team." Instead of flying west to Los Angeles for Real's tour of the USA, James, 25, will be jetting east with Bayern on Sunday when the Germans visit China and Singapore. Bayern's Germany defender Mats Hummels wasted no time in welcoming the Colombian, who scored six goals at the World Cup, by writing "Bienvenido @jamesrodriguez" on Twitter.

James will boost Bayern's star-studded attack along with fellow new signing Corentin Tolisso,

22, who has joined from French side Lyon for 41.5 million euros (\$47.3m). James' loan deal suits all parties.

PROSPER

Ancelotti has persuaded Bayern of the player's undeniable talent with the German club having the chance to try before they buy while Real have found a way to off-load the talent they signed for 75 million euros from Monaco in July 2014.

According to German daily Bild, Bayern will pay 10 million euros per year for James and will have the option to buy him for 35 million. James has the chance to again prosper under Ancelotti. He is a big-name summer signing which Bayern need with Brazil's Douglas Costa negotiating a transfer with Juventus.

It's unfair to assume James was a failure at Real as the attacking midfielder scored 36 goals with 38 assists in 110 games for the Spanish giants. The Colombian, who has a contract at Real until 2020, arrived at the Bernabeu three years ago to much pomp and fanfare. His best season at Real was in 2014/15, when he scored

17 goals, with 18 assists, in 46 matches under Ancelotti, who played him in his favourite position of attacking midfielder. He was deployed on the right side of the attacking midfield, just behind Karim Benzema and winger Gareth Bale.

But Rodriguez struggled for a place in Real's star-studded first team under Ancelotti's successor Rafael Benitez, then Zinedine Zidane, who had no room for him behind the three-man attack of Bale, Benzema and Cristiano Ronaldo. James made just 13 starting appearances last season under Zidane in the Spanish league with a further nine off the bench. It is not obvious where he will play as Thiago Alcantara and Thomas Muller both want to play James' preferred number ten role. Likewise both Arjen Robben and Kingsley Coman like to come in off the right wing onto their left foot, just like Rodriguez.

Ancelotti could well use James alongside Thiago in the attacking midfield behind striker Robert Lewandowski. Both Real and Bayern will hope Ancelotti can bring James back to his very best so that he heads off to next year's World Cup somewhere near his dazzling 2014 form.—AFP



MIAMI: Robinson Cano #22 of the Seattle Mariners and the American League celebrates with the Major League Baseball All-Star Game Most Valuable Player Award after they defeated the National League 2 to 1 during the 88th MLB All-Star Game at Marlins Park on Tuesday in Miami, Florida. — AFP

MAN CITY LOOK TO REACH OUT TO OVERSEAS FANS ON SUMMER TOUR

LONDON: Manchester City are one of five English Premier League clubs travelling to compete in the International Champions Cup as part of their pre-season preparations. Here, AFP Sports talks to Tom Glick, Chief Commercial Officer at City Football Group, which runs Manchester City, about the merits of overseas pre-season tours.

Q - What is the specific appeal of countries like China and the United States to Manchester City?

A - "The US, which we're visiting this year, and China, which we toured last summer, are two of the biggest and fastest growing football markets in the world. They are home to millions of Manchester City fans and we have particular links to both, with our sister club, New York City FC, in the US and our minority investors, China Media Capital, in China. We always welcome the opportunity to connect directly with our fans in both countries-as well as a number of other parts of the world which are close to our heart."

Q - How do trips to these countries help City leverage its brand?

A - "Giving the millions of City fans around the world who can't make a trip to the Etihad, the ability to watch their team in person is the ideal way for them to get closer to their club. It also enables us to introduce City and our players to new audiences who might be watching and discov-

ering us for the first time, which helps us to cast our net as far as possible. We have a number of global and regional commercial partners who operate all over the world and welcome the chance to activate our partnership in particular territories, which tours help us to do."

Q - From a marketing perspective, how do you measure the success of these trips?

A - "The important thing for us is to make sure we are building lasting relationships with the cities and countries we visit on tour and contribute something to the football community there. This might be through community programmes, commercial partnerships or having a permanent presence or sister club in market, but it's the best way of ensuring we have an ongoing and successful relationship with the destinations we select for tours."

Q - What are the non-business benefits?

A - "There are few better ways to enhance awareness and exposure of our club in particular markets than having our players on the ground, training, playing and meeting fans. In the annual football cycle, we don't get many opportunities to do this, which is why we invest so much time and effort to ensuring that we choose the right places to go and maximise our time there so that we can spend as much meaningful time with our fans as possible." — AFP

EUROPEAN FOOTBALL ON DISPLAY IN UNITED STATES

LOS ANGELES: The cream of European football will be on display in the United States this month as the International Champions Cup aims to cash in on the growing popularity of the world's most popular sport amongst American fans. In the space of little more than a decade, the event has evolved from a haphazard collection of meaningless friendlies to becoming the most prominent pre-season tournament in the world, what organiser Charlie Stillitano describes as the "perfect marriage of football and commerce."

Manchester United, Juventus, Paris Saint-Germain, Roma and Tottenham Hotspur are all competing in the tournament which comprises 12 matches across 11 US cities. The biggest coup for organisers has been securing a rare edition of the "Clasico" between Real Madrid and Barcelona in Miami on July 29, where tickets are on sale for between \$250 and \$4,500.

It is the first meeting of the two giants of La Liga outside of Spain since 1982, when they played a largely forgotten fixture in Venezuela. Stillitano told AFP the stateside "Clasico", which will take place at the home of the Miami Dolphins, is being marketed with the same kind of razzmatazz surrounding the NFL's annual Super Bowl party.

"It is very unique, we are creating a village, we are having concerts, parties, legends games, sponsors activation," Stillitano said. "It will be much more like the Super Bowl. We are spending two million dollars just making the event, to enjoy a whole week of football."

Stillitano declined to go into the details of the sums necessary to attract such high-profile participants to the tournament, which also includes fixtures in Asia and Australia.

"It varies from team to team," he said. "The teams are paid very well, I can't say how much ... in some cases, we are sharing some revenues with the teams, I can't go into details."

Financing for the tournament is generated through ticketing and a network of commercial

partners, notably Dutch brewer Heineken, which also sponsors the UEFA Champions League.

'MR ZERO MISTAKES'

The tournament begins on July 19, when Paris Saint-Germain take on Roma in Detroit with the final US fixture playing out on July 30 with an all-Italian derby between Roma and Juventus in Foxborough, outside of Boston.

"Soccer as a business has really grown, these teams are able to exploit their brand here in the US, which maybe 20 years ago they couldn't do," Stillitano said. "They all have robust marketing departments. Soccer is actually now very popular here." Since the first friendly match he organised in 2002 — a meeting between Real Madrid and Roma-Stillitano says he has seen a definite shift in the way the event is perceived.

He cites the support of Manchester United

boss Jose Mourinho and Real Madrid president Florentino Perez as being instrumental in the event's maturing.

Mourinho, who has brought Chelsea, Real Madrid and now United to the US for pre-season training camps, calls Stillitano "Mr Zero Mistakes". "Because everything he did for me: Zero mistakes," Mourinho told Sports Illustrated. "The clubs I bring to the US with Charlie, when I leave, the clubs keep the relation."

Stillitano added: "In 2003 and 2004, teams really didn't want to do it. In their minds it was not a tournament, just a series of games to show off the team. It's very, very different with what is now." "Now everything has changed: now the players are serious, the commercial departments are serious and even just importantly, the owners, presidents and managers take it very seriously. That's the real difference since 2002." —AFP



PARIS: Paris Saint-Germain's (PSG) new Brazilian defender Dani Alves (R) and PSG's Qatari president Nasser Al-Khelaifi (L) pose with Alves' jersey during a press conference yesterday, in Paris. Alves has signed a two-year deal with Paris Saint-Germain, the French club confirmed yesterday. — AFP

Sports

Five-star Kittel wins Tour de France 11th stage



Cano lifts AL to victory in MLB All-Star Game



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LONDON: Sam Querrey of the United States races to volley to Britain's Andy Murray during their Men's Singles Quarterfinal Match on day nine at the Wimbledon Tennis Championships in London yesterday. — AP

QUERREY STUNS MURRAY, DJOKOVIC OUT WITH INJURY

LONDON: Limping between points and fading down the stretch, defending champion Andy Murray was stunned by 24th-seeded Sam Querrey of the US 3-6, 6-4, 6-7 (4), 6-1, 6-1 in the Wimbledon quarterfinals yesterday.

The No. 1-seeded Murray came into the tournament dealing with a sore left hip and it clearly impeded him at Centre Court. He grimaced as he stumbled or landed awkwardly while attempting shots. Querrey took full advantage to reach the first Grand Slam semifinal of his career - and the first for any American man anywhere since Andy Roddick was the runner-up at Wimbledon in 2009. "I am still in a little bit of shock myself," Querrey said. There was another quarterfinal surprise, when three-time Wimbledon champion Novak Djokovic stopped playing because of a right arm injury while trailing 2010 runner-up Tomas Berdych of the Czech Republic 7-6 (2), 2-0. After dropping the opening set, Djokovic took a

medical timeout while a trainer massaged his arm. A day earlier, during his fourth-round match, Djokovic had his right shoulder worked on by a trainer. In Friday's semifinals, Querrey will face 2014 US Open champion Marin Cilic of Croatia, who also won a five-setter yesterday, getting past 16th-seeded Gilles Muller 3-6, 7-6 (6), 7-5, 5-7, 6-1 with the help of 33 aces. On the other half of the draw, Berdych will face Roger Federer or Milos Raonic next.

Murray is normally a terrific returner, but Querrey hit 27 aces, including on six of the last nine points he served to finish with a flourish. Querrey was impeccable for portions of the match, finishing with 70 winners and only 30 unforced errors. "He was dictating all of the points," Murray said. From 1-all in the fourth, Querrey grabbed eight games in a row to take that set and lead 3-0 in the last. "I didn't start my best, but I just kept with it. Kept swinging away

and then really found a groove in the fourth and fifth set," Querrey said. "And everything kind of seemed to be falling my way then."

It is the second year in a row that the 29-year-old Californian upset the defending champion and top-seeded man at the All England Club. In 2016, he beat Djokovic in the third round en route to the only major quarterfinal of Querrey's career before yesterday.

DOMINANCE

That snapped Djokovic's 30-match winning streak at the majors. Murray didn't have that sort of recent dominance, but he is a three-time major champion and had been to at least the semifinals at the All England Club in seven of the past eight years. The hip, though, was a problem. Murray had to skip some practice sessions and pull out of a couple of planned exhibition matches in the leadup to Wimbledon. Even though he

kept insisting once the tournament began that he was OK, he was not nearly capable of his best on this afternoon.

Murray's serve speeds slowed, and his backhand, in particular, didn't have its usual verve, either. One key to his success is his court coverage, which allows him to play defense as well as anyone. That was not the case in the latter stages against Querrey. "I was pretty close today. It wasn't like I was, like, a million miles away from winning the match," Murray said. "Obviously the end was a bit of a struggle."

Querrey is the lowest-ranked player to ever beat two-time Wimbledon champion Murray in his 12 appearances at the grass-court Grand Slam tournament. For Murray, this was the fourth five-set match he's lost in a row. Querrey is headed in the opposite direction: Merely 4-10 in fifth sets for his career until last week, he has won each of his last three matches by going the dis-

tance: against 12th-seeded Jo-Wilfried Tsonga in the third round, Kevin Anderson in the fourth, and now Murray.

Querrey always has had an intimidating serve, but he's never managed to put together his overall game for enough matches to play on the final weekend at a major. Indeed, until last year's win over Djokovic, he might have been best known for some of his unusual off-court episodes. In Thailand for a 2009 tournament, he cut two muscles in his right arm when he sat on a glass table that shattered. Two years ago, he appeared on the reality TV show "The Millionaire Matchmaker." There's a popular video clip on social media of Querrey - sunglasses and hat on, shirt unbuttoned - dancing with friends wearing horse-head masks. Now Querrey's on-court accomplishment yesterday will make headlines. Win two more matches, and he'll be the Wimbledon champion. — AP

ATHLETICS

UAE PARA-ATHLETE DEAD WHILE TRAINING

LONDON: United Arab Emirates para-athlete Abdullah Hayayei has died following a training incident casting a pall over the World Para-athletics championships which begin in London on Friday. He was 36. Hayayei, who was set to compete in the shot put, discus and javelin F34 events, suffered the fatal injury while training in London on Tuesday. Although the emergency services were called, he was pronounced dead at the scene - those that witnessed the tragedy have been offered counselling. "Police, London Ambulance Service and London's Air Ambulance were called shortly after 17:00hrs (1600 GMT) on Tuesday, 11 July, to reports of a seriously injured man at Newham Leisure Centre," London's Metropolitan Police said in a statement sent to AFP. "The man was pronounced dead at the scene at 17:20hrs. At this early stage, it is believed the man was struck by a metal pole which formed part of training facilities at the centre.

"The man was a competitor at the World Para Athletic Championships being held in London. His next of kin have been informed." The training venue - one of two allocated to the athletes - has been closed while police pursue their investigation.

According to Majid Rashed, president of the Asian Paralympic Committee, the father of five died as a result of the throwing cage collapsing onto him. "I can say the throwing cage collapsed on

the athlete's head," he said. "We don't have any more information about how that happened, what was the reason, or what the details are."

Philip Craven, long-time chairman of the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) but who is stepping down later this year, said it was devastating news. There were discussions as to whether to postpone the opening of the championships but it was decided to go ahead as planned and the UAE team are also willing to compete.

"We are all truly devastated by this tragic news and the passing of Abdullah," he said. "The thoughts,

prayers and condolences of the whole Paralympic Movement are with Abdullah's family, friends and teammates as well as the whole of the National Paralympic Committee of the UAE. "We are all in a state of shock at this terrible tragedy." Hayayei competed at the 2015 world championships in Doha, finishing fifth in the discus F34 and eighth in shot put F34, as well as in last year's Paralympics, finishing sixth in the javelin F34 and seventh in shot put F34. A moment of silence will be held in honour of Hayayei during Friday's opening ceremony at London Stadium. — AFP



Abdullah Hayayei

SOCCER

CANADA TIES WITH COSTA RICA

HOUSTON: Alphonso Davies scored in the first half and Milan Borjan made several brilliant saves as Canada held on for a 1-1 tie with Costa Rica on Tuesday to remain undefeated at the 2017 CONCACAF Gold Cup.

Teenage phenom Davies opened the scoring with his third goal of the tournament in the 26th minute for Canada who are the surprise co-leaders atop Group A after beating French Guiana 4-2 in their opener. The 16-year-old Davies used his blazing speed to race past the Costa Rica defence and hammer a cross from Scott Arfield to the near post past goalkeeper Patrick Pemberton. Davies scored two goals against French Guiana in his Gold Cup debut on Friday.

Davies almost scored again in the 36th minute as he slipped around a defender and picked up the ball but fell before he could get a shot off at the BBVA Compass Stadium in Houston, Texas. Davies left the game after rolling his right ankle early in the second half. At that point the complexion of Canada's attack changed. Without their main offensive threat, Canada had to sit back and rely on their defence to preserve the tie.

Goalkeeper Borjan did his part, coming up with several diving saves to keep the score level with Costa Rica threatening on almost every corner kick. Francisco Calvo tied it off a corner in the 42nd minute, outleaping a Canadian defender and redirecting the ball past Borjan, who had suffered a nasty black eye in the match against French Guiana. The majority of Costa Rica's scoring chances in the second half came off corners as the Canadians were guilty of mental lapses on defence and had to be rescued time and time again by Borjan.

The draw means Canada has a share of first place in Group A along with Costa Rica who recorded their first ever win over Honduras in their tournament opening game. Both teams play their final group game on Friday in Texas with Costa Rica facing French Guiana, and Canada meeting Honduras. In the night match, French Guiana and Honduras played to a scoreless draw. Honduras had a 7-6 edge in shots. The top two teams

from each of the Gold Cup groups advance to the quarter-finals along with the two best third-place teams. The tournament concludes with the final on July 26 at Levi's Stadium in Santa Clara, California. — AFP



HOUSTON: Scott Arfield #8 of Canada shoots on goal against Costa Rica in the second half at BBVA Compass Stadium on Tuesday in Houston, Texas. — AFP

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ASIAN MARKETS DOWN ON TRUMP WOES



DOHA: In this Sunday, July 9, 2017 file photo, men wait for a bus in front of a building with the poster of Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani. — AP

TINY QATAR IS LIVING LARGE DESPITE SIEGE

BOYCOTT-BUSTING BOVINES BEGIN ARRIVING

DOHA: It's been more than a month since four Arab nations cut land, sea and air routes to Qatar, but in the gas-rich Gulf nation's glimmering malls and luxury hotels there is little sign of hardship. High-end clothing stores hawk the latest summer trends. Grocery stores are brimming with meats and cheeses from Europe and Turkey, and just last month the country's main port received 4,300 cars and sheep from Australia.

Luxury hotels like the W and St. Regis serve lavish meals around the clock and alcohol flows for visitors. Famous Barcelona soccer players Gerard Pique, Sergio Busquets and Jordi Alba met with fans last week at a mall in the capital, Doha, which will host the 2022 World Cup tournament. "We don't feel any difference. It's a celebration everywhere," Qatari Badr Jeran said as he shopped at the mall.

Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates and Egypt moved to isolate Qatar in early June, severing diplomatic ties and closing off their air space and shipping lanes over Doha's support for Islamist groups across the region, many of which are viewed as terror groups by its rivals. Qatar denies supporting extremism and has condemned the closures as an attack on its sovereignty.

Worried residents rushed to grocery stores, emptying shelves of dairy products and other food imports after Saudi Arabia sealed Qatar's only land border, but they were quickly restocked. If the Arab nations intended to bring about a change in government, those hopes appear to have been dashed by an outpouring of popular support for Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al

Thani, the 37-year-old emir. Signs on cars and billboards read "We are all Tamim. We are all Qatar". Here's a look at how Qatar has weathered the crisis:

Money - lots of it

Shortly after the crisis began, a Twitter account called DohaUnderSiege began documenting life under the blockade. One post showed a fully stocked hotel buffet and said: "Breadlines have begun. Personally saw several middle-aged men at breakfast scuffling over the last baguette." The tongue-in-cheek posts point to the fact that Qatar is fantastically wealthy. It is one of the world's richest nations per capita, making its citizens on average wealthier than even those in neighboring Gulf states. Qatar has a population of around 2 million, but only a little more than a quarter-million are citizens, meaning the government has a lot of wealth it can spread around. Qatar has some \$340 billion in reserves.

Energy

Qatar's main source of revenue is its natural gas, which continues to flow uninterrupted. It is the world's largest liquefied natural gas producer, which it ships on tankers around the world. An undersea pipeline provides gas to Oman and the UAE, which heavily relies on Qatar's gas despite severing diplomatic ties.

The crisis has actually served as a "a good sort of trial run" for the Qataris to determine how to manage their economy in the face of such an event, said Noha Aboueldahab, a visiting fellow at the Brookings Doha Center think tank.

Help from friends

Qatar's ally Turkey and its neighbor Iran have quickly stepped in to fill any gaps, as has Morocco. Instead of carrying the Saudi Almarai dairy brand, the shelves are now stocked with milk and produce from Turkey. One of the reasons cited for the Arab nations' decision to cut ties was Qatar's relations with Iran, with which it shares a massive undersea natural gas field. But here too, the blockade seems to have had the opposite effect. Iran's kept its airspace open, allowing Qatar Airways and other airlines to circumvent the closures. Past investments in desert agriculture have also helped head off any food crisis.

New routes

Since the Arab quartet's June 5 blockade was announced, Qatar has launched five new shipping routes - two to Oman, two to India and one to Turkey. Doha's brand-new Hamad Port, south of the Qatari capital, is operating at "full capacity," says the port's director, Abdelaziz Nasser Al-Yafei. The facility, part of a \$7.4 billion port infrastructure project, only began general cargo operations in October, and was fully up and running in early December.

Bovines arrive in Qatar

Meanwhile, a first herd of boycott-busting cows has been airlifted to Qatar to boost milk supplies five weeks after neighboring Gulf states cut links with the emirate. The several dozen Holsteins were flown in from Budapest, the first of 4,000 cattle to be imported by August. The bemused bovines took to their new surround-



AL KHOR: A handout photo made available by the Qatar News Agency (QNA) yesterday shows a herd of cows arriving from Budapest at the Baladna livestock production farm in the city of Al-Khor, northeast of Qatar. — AFP

ings at a farm 80 kilometers north of Doha, despite being the centre of attention for journalists and the pride of Qatar, which sees their arrival as a sign of its defiance in the Gulf crisis. "We brought in 165 Holsteins, all highly bred Holsteins, especially for dairy," said John Dore, a senior manager at Baladna Livestock Production. "There are 35 milking cows, that are in milk at present and there's 130 that will calve in the next two-to-three weeks."

Prior to the current crisis, Qatar largely relied on dairy imports from Saudi Arabia, especially of milk. The cattle will be farmed for both milk and meat. "Local supply covers between 10 and 15

per cent at present" of Qatar's needs, added Dore, speaking to reporters at the farm. "Before, most of the milk in Qatar was imported from Saudi Arabia and the UAE. "At the moment the gap is being filled by Turkish imports, which are welcome for the present but the quality won't compare with local produce." The cows were brought in by a Qatar Airways cargo plane on Tuesday. Moutaz Al-Khayyat, the chairman of Qatari firm Power International which bought and imported the cows, told Bloomberg News that once all the 4,000 cows arrive in Qatar, they will meet around 30 percent of the country's dairy needs. — Agencies



MALAYSIA: Foreign workers wait for their work documents to be checked by Malaysian immigration officer during an operation to crackdown on illegal immigration on the outskirts of Port Dickson. — AP

MALAYSIA PROMPTS ALARM IN MIGRANT WORKER CRACKDOWN

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia has rounded up over 3,000 undocumented migrant workers this month in a major crackdown, prompting alarm yesterday from lawmakers across the region who said the campaign was "victimizing the vulnerable". The relatively developed country is a magnet for migrant workers from across Asia, but several million are believed to be undocumented.

Authorities started rounding up illegal workers after an official program to register undocumented foreigners ended on June 30, and more than 3,100 had been detained as of July 11, according to the immigration department. Bangladeshis represent the largest group among those detained, with substantial

numbers also from Indonesia and Myanmar. In the latest raid late Tuesday, scores of foreign workers at a construction site in the coastal town of Port Dickson were rounded up.

The clampdown has caused alarm among activists and in neighboring countries, and a group representing current and former lawmakers from across Southeast Asia added their voice to the concern. "A desire to decrease the number of undocumented workers in the country can never be an excuse to further victimize the vulnerable," said Cambodian lawmaker Mu Sochua, a board member of the ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights.

"While Malaysia has a legitimate need to address the fact that so many migrants find

themselves without proper paperwork, it must ensure that basic human rights are respected for all people at all times," Aegile Fernandez, director of prominent Malaysian migrant rights group Tenaganita, said the real culprits were unscrupulous agents who extorted money from foreign workers in exchange for bringing them to the country, leaving them saddled with huge debts. "Malaysia would not have developed so much if not for migrant workers. We should thank them and not handcuff them," she told AFP. More than 60 employers who allegedly hired illegal foreign workers have also been arrested. Migrant workers typically do jobs spurned by locals, such as on construction sites and palm oil plantations. — AFP

FED'S YELLEN STILL FORESEES ONLY 'GRADUAL' RATE HIKES

WASHINGTON: Federal Reserve Chair Janet Yellen said yesterday she still foresees only "gradual" interest rate increases in the few years ahead, as the US economy grows stronger and employment expands. Key question marks remain however about how the economic outlook will play out, and possible shifts in policy and spending by President Donald Trump's administration are one "source of uncertainty," Yellen said in her semi-annual testimony to Congress.

Another big unknown is whether stubbornly low inflation will finally move closer to the Fed's two percent target rate, from the current 1.4 percent. Sluggish US inflation is something that has baffled and worried economists given the very low unemployment rate which would normally drive prices higher.

But Yellen once again expressed the view held by many US central bankers that the low pace of price increases "are partly the result of a few unusual reductions in certain categories of prices" which will eventually drop out of the calculations. These include costs for cell phone services and medications, economists say. While such low inflation normally would be likely to keep the Fed from raising interest rates, it has instead hiked rates twice this year, and expects to do so once more. But Yellen pledged to "carefully monitor" the situation.

'Gradual rate hikes'

After tepid annual growth in the first quarter of 1.4 percent, Yellen said "indicators suggest growth rebounded in the second quarter," including rising household spending and business investment, and an improving housing market. Meanwhile, confidence is rising and growth overseas bodes well for US exports and manufacturing, she said.

As a result, "additional gradual rate hikes are likely to be appropriate over the next few years to sustain the economic expansion and return inflation to our two percent goal," Yellen told the House Financial Services Committee in the first day of her two-part testimony. She appears before the Senate Banking Committee today.

However, Yellen said, the benchmark interest rate "would not have to rise all that much further to get to a neutral policy stance," one where it is neither stimulating nor restraining the economy. She stressed that "monetary policy is not on a preset course," and central bankers will adjust their views as more data becomes available.

Among the data policymakers will be watching are wages and inflation which have remained surprisingly low, despite an average increase in employment of 180,000 a month this year and an unemployment rate of 4.4 percent in June. But Yellen said the positive signs

in the economy should spur continued consumer spending and business investment, which in turn should foster "a stronger pace of wage and price increases."

'Source of uncertainty'

Yellen cautioned however that "possible changes in fiscal and other government policies here in the United States represent another source of uncertainty." While she did not address the specifics in her prepared statement, economists have noted that a large infrastructure spending program Trump has promised could spur growth, but restrictive trade policies or a rising deficit could have the opposite effect.

Together with other uncertainties, including prospects for the global economy, Yellen said there are "roughly equal odds" the US economy will be stronger or weaker than currently forecast. Anticipating likely questions from Republican legislators, many of whom have been pushing for the Fed to be required to use a strict formula to set interest rates, Yellen again explained why rigid rules could be harmful.

While the Fed always consults such monetary policy rules to compare to their own assessments, "such prescriptions cannot be applied in a mechanical way," she warned. And "there are

many considerations these rules do not take into account," she said. The Fed's semi-annual monetary policy report to Congress, released last week, went into detail about the limitations of various monetary policy formulas which "fre-

quently disagree about the appropriate level" for the key interest rate. The report concluded that "the US economy is highly complex, and these rules, by their very nature, do not capture that complexity." —AFP



WASHINGTON: In this Thursday, March 23, 2017, file photo, Federal Reserve chair Janet Yellen looks at documents while waiting to speak at the Federal Reserve System community development research conference. —AP

BREXIT MAY THREATEN GIBRALTAR'S BUSTLING ONLINE GAMING SECTOR

GIBRALTAR: Deep inside the Rock of Gibraltar are vaults harboring a prized treasure: the servers that power the websites of online gaming companies, the territory's biggest source of income. And their future could be under threat from Brexit.

Over the past 20 years, the limestone outcrop on Spain's southern tip has become the unofficial capital of the global online gaming industry, home to major betting firms such as William Hill. Their servers are housed in three data centers, one of which is known as Continent8 which is hosted in the Admiralty Tunnel where Dwight Eisenhower directed the Allied landings in North Africa in 1942.

The online gaming sector accounts for around a quarter of Gibraltar's gross domestic product, according to the territory's commerce minister, Albert Isola. And around 30 percent of the global online gaming sector-worth an estimated \$39.3 billion (44.6 billion euros) in 2016 — was generated in Gibraltar, according to Simon Holliday, founder of consultants H2 Gambling Capital.

Border worries

Back in the 1990s, before the dawn of the internet, when bets were made by phone, gaming operators began arriving in the territory attracted by low taxes and access to the European market. Isola said Gibraltar only accepted top-notch, or triple-A operators, who must have a physical presence in the territory and are bound by strict rules governing money laundering, under-age gambling and addiction.

"Because we were very careful whom we allowed in, we began to create a brand reputation," Isola told

AFP. While hundreds of firms are licensed in Malta, another major player, only 30 companies have an online gaming permit in Gibraltar. The companies employ more than 3,000 people from all across Europe, and most live in Spain where housing is more affordable and the cost of living lower.

"We probably wouldn't have grown the way we did if we didn't have the hinterland," said Peter

wanted it back. Madrid has renewed its claims since the Brexit referendum last year, fuelling fears it could step up border checks, causing lengthy delays to enter the enclave. This has been the case in previous periods of tension between Madrid and London.

Spanish dictator Francisco Franco closed the border completely in 1969 and free travel between the two sides was only fully restored in 1985,

unity is paramount," said Lottoland's recruitment chief Andrea Lazenby, speaking in the company's offices overlooking Gibraltar's marina. The Brexit negotiations between London and Brussels have started and whatever terms are eventually agreed will also have an impact on the sector. Britain is Europe's biggest and most mature gaming market. But "more and more firms ... have used their base in Gibraltar to be licensed on other European countries" such as Spain, France or Italy, said Isola.

'Our home'

One of the world's biggest online casinos, 888, warned in its 2016 annual report that it would consider moving from Gibraltar to Malta if Brexit cuts off its access to the European market. Britain has bargaining chips should Brussels decide operators must have their servers in the EU in order to retain their gaming licenses in member states, said Montegriffo.

London could retaliate and, for example, block an operator based in Malta from having access to Britain, he said. But Lottoland director Nigel Birrell is upbeat. "In terms of being able to offer your services in the EU, I don't think Brexit will have any untoward impact, apart from moving a server there or maybe a handful of staff," he said.

"We will stay in Gibraltar for sure. We want to be in good company with all the big guys. That's our home." Continent8 also plans to stay, according to its manager in Gibraltar, Luis Garcia, as he sits in Eisenhower's former command post. "Continent8 will be here as long as the customers are here. And they have said they don't have any intention of leaving Gibraltar," he added. —AFP



GIBRALTAR: Employees of online lottery company "Lottoland" work at their headquarters. —AFP

Montegriffo, a lawyer who helps online gaming companies set up shop in Gibraltar. But Britain's EU departure could pose a major headache for the industry. "The major concern is the impact of how the border will work for industries like the gaming sector," said Montegriffo.

'Hugely significant'

Spain ceded Gibraltar in perpetuity to Britain in 1713, but has long

just before Spain joined the EU. "The Brexit challenge is hugely significant for Gibraltar," said Montegriffo. "We don't think that democratic Spain will use the frontier as a sort of weapon as it did 45 years ago (but) it is uncharted territory." Lottoland, one of the world's leading online lottery companies, has taken steps to ensure its 200 employees in Gibraltar can work from home if needed.

"It's a way to hedge our bets and cover all eventualities. Business conti-

GERMANY TIGHTENS RULES TO SHIELD BUSINESSES FROM FOREIGN TAKEOVERS

BERLIN: Germany has approved rules to make it easier to block the sale of strategically important companies to investors from outside the European Union, prompted by concerns about China acquiring German expertise by that route. The new regulations, which come amid fears of rising protectionism hurting world trade, allow the government to block takeovers if there is a risk of important know-how being lost abroad. The rules do not need parliamentary approval.

"We remain one of the most open economies in the world, but we also need to take fair competitive conditions into consideration," Economy Minister Brigitte Zypries said in a statement on Wednesday. "We owe that to our companies. They often compete with countries whose economies are not as open as ours," she added. The purchase of German robotics maker Kuka by Chinese company Midea last year fuelled concerns that China was gaining access to key technologies while shielding its own companies from foreign takeovers. The new rules set out for the first time the criteria for blocking a deal, specifically jeopardizing critical infrastructure, such as hospitals and power grids.

Earlier this year, the German economics ministry withdrew approval for Fujian Grand Chip Investment Fund (FGC) to buy chip equipment maker Aixtron, citing security concerns. Last month, European Union leaders agreed to consider screening investments by state-owned Chinese firms. France, Germany and Italy have backed the idea of allowing the EU to block Chinese investments, partly because European companies are denied similar access in China.

However, some other EU countries, such as



BERLIN: United Arab Emirates' Minister for Education, Ahmad Belhou, center, visits the apprenticeship training at German Siemens company and holds a turbine in his hands. —AP

Sweden, have said this is heading in the direction of protectionism. Under the new German rules, operators of infrastructure companies should be better protected from investors from outside the EU, if needed. In addition, the government will be able to take twice as long - four months - in reviewing deals.

The new rules will take effect once they are published in the Federal Gazette which includes all laws and decrees. The move comes

just days after G20 world leaders agreed to fight protectionism including unfair trade practices at a summit hosted by Chancellor Angela Merkel. The agreement also, however, recognized the role of legitimate trade defense instruments. British Prime Minister Theresa May has also said she plans to give government power to intervene in the takeover of critical infrastructure by a foreign buyer to enable it to protect national security.



BRUSSELS: This is a Monday, May 22, 2017 file photo of EU chief Brexit negotiator Michel Barnier speaks during a media conference after a meeting of EU general affairs minister. —AP

EU'S BREXIT NEGOTIATOR SETTING OUT TOUGH CONDITIONS FOR UK

BRUSSELS: The European Union's chief Brexit negotiator said yesterday that Britain must meet tough conditions in divorce talks - and doesn't have long to do it - before the two sides can start looking at a future relationship. Showing frustration with what Europeans consider British grandstanding and impatience with a dearth of clear proposals, the EU's Michel Barnier said Britain needs to make "sufficient progress" on all the initial issues - citizens' rights, the bill that Britain must pay to the EU and the Irish border - before talks can move to a future trade deal.

Barnier said the three areas "are indivisible and intertwined," making clear that progress in two of the three would be insufficient to advance to the next stage. And he insisted that Britain recognize it faces a bill of many tens of billions of euros to meet previous commitments it made as an EU member. Otherwise, he says, there's no point in discussing anything else.

"It's not an exit bill. It's not a punishment. It's not revenge - at no time has it been those things. It's simply a settling of accounts," he said. Barnier dismissed British Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson's comment that the EU can "go whistle" if it will insist on Britain paying any excessive bill. "I am not hearing any whistling, just the clock ticking," Barnier said, with the March 2019 deadline for Britain to leave the bloc drawing ever closer.

Pension liabilities

Estimates of the amount Britain that must pay to cover pension liabilities for EU

staff and other commitments such as farming subsidies to humanitarian aid have ranged upward to 100 billion euros (\$114 billion). He said questioning such issues as financial obligations cuts to the heart of any future relationship. "How do you build a relationship which is going to last with a country where you don't have trust?" Barnier asked. Trust, he said "means settling accounts."

Barnier said he "could not imagine that a very great country like the UK" would not also "be a responsible country and respect its commitments." After Barnier briefed the EU Commission on the negotiations, he spoke to reporters, and exuded some impatience with the British government for letting valuable time in the two-year negotiating slot go to waste.

After triggering the two-year divorce negotiations in March, British Prime Minister Theresa May decided to call an early election to strengthen her hand - only to lose her Conservative majority and add to the political chaos in a country deeply divided over Brexit. "We are ready. My team is ready," said Barnier, adding he was even "ready to work through the 14th of July" - France's Bastille Day holiday.

The first issue being addressed by the two sides - citizens' rights for people living in each other's nations - is already posing serious problems.

The European Parliament has dismissed the proposals made by May, calling them insufficient and burdensome. The European Parliament's input is important since it could veto any deal. —AP

ACCIDENTAL INTERNET CUT-OFF HITS SOMALIA ECONOMY HARD

MOGADISHU: Last month, a baby was born in the Somali capital Mogadishu with a terrible eye defect that requires treatment abroad. The infant was cleared for treatment in Turkey but before the paperwork was complete a container ship, believed to be the Panama-flagged MSC Alice, docked outside Mogadishu port, accidentally dragging its anchor through the main fiber optic cable connecting Somalia with the rest of the world.

Since that evening of June 24 most of the Horn of Africa nation has been cut off from the web, costing it an estimated \$10 million (nine million euros) a day in lost business according to the government, and freezing the lives of those, like the sick child, whose hopes depend on international connections.

Internet-enabled diaspora

There are a wealthy, fortunate few with the wherewithal to get online via satellite link-ups, but the vast majority of the 6.5 million people in Somalia's south-central region are in the dark, said Mohamed Ahmed Jama,

chief executive of Dalkom, a Somali telecommunications company that is part of the consortium providing the Eastern Africa Submarine Cable System.

The blackout has wreaked havoc in Somalia, where decades of conflict have combined with irrepressible entrepreneurialism to create a far-flung diaspora of almost two million people who earn money abroad and send it home to their relatives. The internet is what connects these Somalis with Somalia.

"In Somalia the telecommunications sector has thrived, even during some of the worst years of conflict," said Ahmed Soliman, Somalia researcher at the Chatham House think tank in London. "Urban Somalis have become increasingly connected online since fibre-optic was rolled out in 2014." The World Bank estimates that at \$1.4 billion annually, international remittances make up a quarter of national GDP. Habiba Mohamud, a customer relations officer at Mogadishu's International Bank of Somalia, said the international transfers department has been cut off since last month's anchor incident. —AFP

ASIAN MARKETS DOWN ON TRUMP WOES

HONG KONG: Most Asian markets retreated yesterday after two days of gains with confidence hit by fresh revelations regarding Donald Trump's Russia links.

Comments from the OPEC cartel that its output cuts with Russia were bearing fruit were also welcomed and on Wednesday Asian traders extended the oil rally, boosting energy companies in Hong Kong, Tokyo and Sydney.

his son Donald Jr released emails showing he had embraced Russia's efforts to support the tycoon's presidential campaign against Hillary Clinton.

"Today's revelation ... has sent US political risk to another level," said Stephen Innes, a senior trader at OANDA. "Investors are once again questioning President's Trump's administration ability to pass through a pro-business agenda/attitude/stance to further stimulate the US economy."

assets and opt for safer bets such as the yen, which hurts Japanese exporters.

Dollar retreats

Shanghai shed 0.2 percent, Sydney tumbled one percent and Singapore was down 0.4 percent. Seoul was 0.2 percent lower and Wellington gave up 0.6 percent.

Her remarks came ahead of Fed boss Janet Yellen's two-day congressional testimony, which

will be pored over for clues about its monetary policy. The dollar, which has for years been supported by a move towards US tightening as the economy picks up, has begun to falter of late as other global central banks prepare to shift away from the easy money policies put in place after the financial crisis.

The greenback was down against both the yen and euro, although it was up against the pound. "A unified eurozone versus a US administration looking a little pained and discombobulated after yet another vexing Russia headline was the catalyst to send the euro soaring," OANDA's Innes added.

European stocks markets upbeat

Elsewhere, Europe's main stock markets rose solidly yesterday, with London's commodities-heavy FTSE index boosted by firmer oil prices. On currency markets, the dollar stepped back from recent gains after Federal Reserve governor Lael Brainard indicated the central bank should take it easy on future interest rate hikes.

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"It's not just the US central bank that is

looking for rate hikes in the future. There is a solid chance that the Bank of Canada will increase rates tomorrow, and the Bank of England might follow in August," said AxiTrader market analyst, Milan Cutkovic. In London, the benchmark FTSE 100 index of major blue-chip companies was up 1.0 percent nearing midday, as traders reacted also to a dip in British unemployment to 4.5 percent, a 42-year low.

"A weaker US dollar helped commodity prices to rally, putting miners at the top of the FTSE 100, while a resurgence in oil prices meant that BP and Shell were not far behind," noted Chris Beauchamp, market analyst at traders IG. Crude, which has seen wild swings in recent months, has bounced back from losses last week with gains of more than one percent Tuesday on bets that US stockpiles had fallen last week.

Comments from the OPEC cartel that its output cuts with Russia were bearing fruit were also welcomed. However, the ongoing crisis surrounding Trump stepped up on Tuesday when his son Donald Jr released emails showing he had embraced Russia's efforts to support the tycoon's presidential campaign against Hillary Clinton.

The news is the latest blow to the White House, which has been battered by accusations over Russian collusion and accusations of cover-ups-fuelling worries about the president's ability to push through his market-friendly economic agenda. The "revelation... has sent US political risk to another level," said Stephen Innes, trader at Oanda trading group. "Investors are once again questioning the ability of President Trump's administration to pass through a pro-business (agenda) to further stimulate the US economy." —Agencies

Daily Kuwait Stock Exchange Report header with logo and date Wednesday 12 July 2017.

Summary table showing Index, Change, Closing, Last Closing, Volume, Value (KWD), Trades, Last, Change.

Table of Trades for various sectors including Energy, Oil & Gas, and Metals.

Table of Trades for various sectors including Chemicals, Telecom, and Consumer Goods.

Table of Trades for various sectors including Health Care, Education, and Technology.

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National Bank of Kuwait Financial Markets Daily Report header with logo and date At 02:00 PM Previous Day.

Global Stock Indices table showing Index, Previous Close, Last Price, Change, Daily Performance %, Yearly Performance %.

MENA Stock Indices table showing Index, Previous Close, Last Price, Change, Daily Performance %, Yearly Performance %.

Global Currencies Exchange Rate table showing Currency, Kuwait Dinar, Saudi Riyal, US Dollar, Euro, Sterling Pound, Swiss Franc, Japanese Yen, Australian Dollar.

MENA Currencies Exchange Rate table showing Currency, US Dollar, Kuwait Dinar, Saudi Riyal, Bahraini Dinar, Qatari Riyal, Omani Riyal, Emiratis Dirham, Egyptian Pound.

Global Interest Rates table showing Currency, 1 Week, 1 Month, 3 Month, 6 Month, 1 Year.

Global Bond Yields table showing Country, 2 Year, 5 Year, 10 Year, 30 Year.

Commodities table showing Index, Previous Close, Last Price, Change, Daily Performance %, Yearly Performance %.



ALCATEL LAUNCHES A5-LED IN DUBAI, AVAILABLE IN KUWAIT ON MID-JULY

By Ben Garcia

DUBAI/KUWAIT: TCL Communication Technology Holdings Limited (Alcatel) recently launched newest A5 LED-covered Smartphone in Dubai. The world's first interactive LED-covered Smartphone, A5 LED delivers on Alcatel's 'enjoy.now' promise with innovations for energetic young consumers. The event was held inside restaurant and bar at Grand Millennium Hotel, frequented by young customers.

"With the A5 LED, Alcatel is delivering new fun features, like light-up notifications and unique LED cover patterns and themes you create yourself, as well as an enhanced multimedia experience and more ways to take and share selfies, ideal for people who value having fun and letting their personality shine," said Ruediger Odenbach, Vice President at Alcatel Middle East & Africa. The new Alcatel Smartphone offers the most unique and

interactive experience found only in the A5 LED, Alcatel puts you in charge of how you want to show off your smartphone personality with a dazzling array of LED light shows.

'Read to go higher'

In case you do not know about Alcatel, it is a mobile handset brand started many years ago, in fact, way before the rise of other familiar brands who succeeded in a mobile handset. Now, TCL-Alcatel claimed to have ranked seventh biggest mobile phone vendor in the Middle East and Africa today. "Alcatel is ranked number 4 in Europe, in Latin America, we are number 5. We are ready to go higher. We are doing well in the most competitive market. We want to be recognized and return the glory of yesteryears. We will and that's our objective," he said.

A5 LED-covered Smartphone light up notifications with a different light show

for important incoming calls, messages, alarms, and social media alerts. "This is unique and first in mobile Smartphone. I am sure everyone will like it but more importantly after having been selected the youth sector, I am sure it will play fair in the market. This segment of consumers is not tapped specifically. The number from this segment could be up to 1.8 billion all over the world so the market is huge," he said.

"This product was created for the young people to enjoy while they are using their Smartphone right now. We want our clients to enjoy now, they won't wait, they want it now, this is where we get the concept of 'enjoy.now', the age group of people that would really enjoy this brand is people below 30 years old or the millennials, we want them to enjoy the Smartphone," he said. He said the price is absolutely competitive if not very cheap for the young users. "Since they

have not enough income as yet, we want them to afford the price," he added. Kuwait will launch the product this week and will be available at KD 74.5 "The price is way below the Smartphone of other brands," he said.

Different look every day

LED-covered Smartphone light up life using color catcher 2.0 by creating unique LED cover patterns and themes for a different look every day. It can light up imagination with an eye-catching personalized light show and can light up your music, with light shows that move with your tunes, switching with a simple shake," he said. The A5 LED also gives you a great multimedia experience. It has fast 4G LTE connectivity and an octa-core processor that ensures photos, games, and movies load smoothly to the large 5.2-inch HD display.

Alcatel A5 LED has a 5 MP front cam-

era with selfie flash for brighter selfies even in low light. It comes with Face Beauty software for flawless images and Face Show, which lets you turn your selfies into personalized video clips for extra fun. There is also a 13 MP rear camera with dual-tone flash. Plus, you can enjoy Private Mode, with a different sign-in to protect your hidden photos and apps. The Alcatel A5 LED fits comfortably into the hand, with an ergonomic design that boasts a slim profile and rounded edges.

Product Specifications

Display: 5.2" HD IPS display
Data: LTE CAT4
Performance: Octa Core x 1.5GHz
Rear camera: 13MP, f/2.0
Front camera: 5MP
ROM: 16
RAM: 3 GB
Battery (typical) 2800mAh
Dual SIM Dual Standby: Yes

SAMSUNG INTRODUCES THE NEW GALAXY J PRO SERIES



KUWAIT CITY: Samsung Gulf Electronics announced the availability of the new Galaxy J Pro series in Kuwait. The Galaxy J5 Pro and Galaxy J7 Pro are currently available in the market. The new line up of Galaxy J Series offers high performance in a stunning metal body design with enhanced camera technology, all at an ultra-accessible price point.

The Galaxy J7 Pro features a premium metal body and full HD super AMOLED screen, a longer lasting battery life and 3GB RAM. As with the Galaxy J5 Pro, the Galaxy J7 Pro offers a simplified camera user experience. Both the Galaxy J7 Pro and Galaxy J5 Pro are also equipped with an advanced, higher resolution 13-megapixel front camera and 13-megapixel rear camera with LED flash, which help users to capture clear and crisp images, even in low-light conditions. In a further enhancement from the previous range, the Galaxy J7 Pro and Galaxy J5 Pro also both feature a fingerprint scanner.

The more compact Galaxy J5 Pro features a super-stylish full metal body and full HD super AMOLED screen for a fantastic viewing experience. With the

enhanced front and rear 13-megapixel camera and expandable memory with microSD to support up to 256GB, users can easily capture and store the content that is important to them. The faster 1.6GHz processor also makes the Galaxy J5 Pro more powerful than ever.

"We are thrilled to bring the new Samsung Galaxy J Pro series to the Gulf. The enhanced design, improved camera technology and high-performance features are all the new innovation that has been put into this new line up," said Tarek Sabbagh, Head of IT and Mobile division at Samsung Gulf Electronics. "We wanted to bring our customers a new and exciting smartphone that meets their lifestyles, tastes and budgets. We are confident that the new Galaxy J series Pro will appeal to existing and new customers seeking a beautifully designed, powerful smartphone from a premium brand, all at an affordable price point." Both the Galaxy J5 Pro and Galaxy J7 Pro are currently available across major retailers in Kuwait, priced at KWD75 and KWD 88 respectively.



DELL EMC LAUNCHES NEXT GENERATION OF WORLD'S BEST-SELLING SERVER PORTFOLIO

DUBAI: Dell EMC is announcing worldwide availability for its next generation of the world's bestselling server to help customers of all sizes fuel their IT transformation initiatives. Recently previewed at Dell EMC World 2017, the award-winning design of the new 14th generation Dell EMC PowerEdge server portfolio forms a scalable, automated and secure compute platform for traditional and cloud-native applications, designed for new Intel(r) Xeon(r) Scalable processors.

"The Dell EMC PowerEdge 14th generation servers improve upon the world's best-selling server portfolio, designed to drive our customers' IT transformations," said Ashley Gorakhpurwalla, president, Server Solutions Division at Dell EMC. "Our modern infrastructure solutions are a game changer in today's digital economy. With our cyber-resilient architecture and performance innovations, we will enable our customers to unleash their business potential."

In a recent ESG 2017 IT Transformation Maturity Curve study commissioned by Dell EMC, organizations furthest along in their IT transformation initiatives are seven times more likely to view IT as a competitive differentiator. To achieve this, the priority for many IT transformation initiatives is a modern infrastructure that can securely deliver improved efficiencies while driving innovation that enables new business models. With its scalable business architecture, intelligent automation and integrated security, the new Dell EMC PowerEdge 14th generation server portfolio delivers on these desired benefits. PowerEdge servers, the bedrock of the modern data center, enable customers to push innovation further and faster to achieve their IT transformation goals.

The scalable business architecture of Dell EMC PowerEdge servers helps customers efficiently meet their changing business needs with enhanced performance capabilities for traditional, virtualized and cloud-native workloads in a software-defined data center. The new Dell EMC PowerEdge server portfolio, highly optimized for non-volatile memory express (NVMe), helps customers accelerate deployment of software-defined data storage and hyper-converged infrastructure stacks with:

- Accelerated database perform-

ance and lower latency with up to 12 times more database IOPS and up to 98 percent less database latency in a VMware vSAN cluster.

- Faster and seamless live migration of virtual machines now up to 58 percent faster with up to 75 percent less CPU usage when using 25GbE with Remote Direct Memory Access (RDMA).

- Faster storage performance in compute to maximize application performance with up to six times more NVMe drives, up to five times total flash storage, 30 percent more input/output slots and 25 percent density improvement.

Intelligent automation in Dell EMC PowerEdge servers enable IT professionals to focus on mission-critical tasks that drive greater customer and business value. Dell EMC believes that integrated security is integral to compute and should not require extra licensing fees. Dell EMC pioneered root of trust within its PowerEdge servers for the past two generations.

In collaboration with Intel, Dell EMC is bringing Intel(r) Xeon(r) Scalable processors to Dell EMC PowerEdge 14th generation servers. With 27 percent more CPU cores and 50 percent more memory bandwidth, Dell EMC PowerEdge 14th generation server customers can accelerate performance of business critical applications and workloads. Dell EMC's industry-leading solutions and platforms also will benefit from the power and security of this new generation of PowerEdge servers. The servers will be embedded in storage and data center appliances, hyper-converged appliances and racks, hybrid cloud platforms, ready nodes, bundles and other Dell EMC solutions.

The new servers will be the foundation of Dell EMC solutions that used the previous generation of PowerEdge such as VxRail Appliances, VxRack Systems, XC Series, vSANReadyNodes, ScaleIO Ready Nodes, IsilonSD Edge and ECS (Elastic Cloud Storage). Additionally, it will be available in many new Dell EMC solutions and platforms, including Data Domain Appliance, CloudArray, Ready Bundles, Ready Systems, Dell EMC Enterprise Hybrid Cloud, Dell EMC Native Hybrid Cloud and Dell EMC Cloud for Microsoft Azure Stack.

CANON LAUNCHES NEW OFFICE TECH TO HELP SMALL BUSINESSES

DUBAI: Canon Middle East, world leader in imaging solutions, has yesterday announced the latest device that extends its wide-ranging office technology portfolio even further. The image RUNNER C3025i utilises Canon's award-winning technology to ensure that users' master their document workflows from start to finish. Designed to improve efficiency and productivity at every stage of the print process, the device is packed full of new features to help optimize small office environments.

Intuitive user experience

The easy-to-use and intuitive 5-inch touchscreen enhances office efficiency, allowing users to start operating instantly. The compact device combines fast mono and color print speeds of 25 pages per minute with striking V2 color imaging technology and the option of a 3-in-1 finisher that offers staple, staple-on-demand and ECO staple functionality, to deliver high quality outputs time and time again. For more scan-intensive environments, the imageRUNNER C3025i is equipped with a reversing automatic document feeder (RADF) as standard.

Effortless flexible working

However users are creating, sharing and managing their documents, the imageRUNNER C3025i facilitates

new ways of working and is compatible with a host of personal devices including tablets, laptops and smartphones. Once connected, users will then be able to execute their mobile workflows using technologies such as the Canon's PRINT Business App, AirPrint, Mopria and Google Cloud Printing platform. Users can also choose to transfer their data through a wired or wireless network connection or, to help keep up with the demands of modern working environments without compromising on security, IT administrators can help them connect through a direct WiFi connection, without them having to connect a personal device to the company network.

Providing a time effective approach to digital document sharing, the imageRUNNER device also comes with the MF Scan Utility that improves scanning workflows and allows users to take advantage of the machine's capability to create files such as searchable PDF documents, attach them to an e-mail and scan directly to assigned destinations.

The imageRUNNER C3025i supports remote service capabilities for toner management and diagnostics to keep the device up and running. Thanks to GDLS functionality, users can easily update their device to the latest available firmware ensuring a strong return on investment of their asset. They also have maintenance videos to help simplify the management of the



machine so that employees can perform routine troubleshooting at no additional cost, without needing a service call out.

Maximize your security

As security remains a priority for most modern businesses, the imageRUNNER C3025i simplifies the management and application of Canon's impressive security offering. While the device comes with native secure printing, IPsec and the option of encrypted PDF functionality, IT administrators can take advantage of seamless integration with Canon's uniFLOW management software, allowing them to manage and control user access across a centralized fleet of devices.

Shadi Bakhour, B2B Business Unit Director, Canon Middle East: "At Canon we understand the needs and concerns of small businesses and have developed our offering to help them reach their objectives. With digital working becoming increasingly commonplace in small office environments, the new image RUNNER device combine enterprise print and scan functionality with a compact design so that users can work securely and efficiently, anytime anywhere."





SYDNEY: This photo shows people walking past a display of low tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) cannabis plants at the Hemp, Health and Innovation Expo in Sydney. —AFP photos

AUSTRALIA CAUTIOUSLY ENTERS MEDICAL MARIJUANA MARKET

MELBOURNE: At a secret location in Australia's southeast, Peter Crook delicately tends to a two-month-old cannabis cutting. Barely knee high, it is one of about 50 government-sanctioned "mother plants" to be cloned for future generations of crops for the country's fledgling medicinal marijuana industry. "I think we'll see Australia punch above its weight, both in agriculture research as well as medical technology," says Crook, the chief executive of Cann Group Limited, the firm granted Australia's first commercial grower's license. "As different conditions come online we are going to see the market grow rapidly."



SYDNEY: This photo shows Andrew Kavasilas of Medical Cannabis Limited looking at a display of low tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) cannabis plants at the Hemp, Health and Innovation Expo in Sydney.

Following Canada, Israel, and more than half the US states, who through varying approaches have legalized medicinal marijuana, Australia has signaled its intention for a homegrown industry. But a patchwork of regulations that guard access for many desperate patients, and a lack of confidence among doctors in prescribing the drug, are acting as impediments. While recreational marijuana use remains illegal in Australia laws passed last year permit medical use, with a dozen licenses since issued, ranging from cultivation and research to manufacturing.

At least 10 sector-related firms have listed on Australia's stock exchange, while tens of millions of dollars has been pledged for clinical trials investigating treatment for conditions including epilepsy and relief for the terminally ill. Driven by a growing recognition of treatment for chronic pain, arthritis and migraines, the global market is estimated to reach US\$55.8 billion by 2025 with the US, Canada and Israel leading the way, US-based analyst Grand View Research says.

'Conservative government'

But unlike those markets, which have liberal patient-access, Australia has a "very conservative government" that wants a regulatory framework in place up front, says Adam Miller, founder of medical cannabis start-up BuddingTech. "They're doing things by the book so that when they have the evidence required to satisfy not only Australia's but other countries' governments, and medical bodies, they will be able to export those products to those countries," he added.

Last year, researchers at the University of Sydney estimated a legal domestic medical market would initially be worth more than Aus\$100 million (US\$75 million) a year. Miller, who was drawn to the industry after researching alternatives for his seriously-ill mother, says unlocking the local market requires easing patient access and educating doctors. But not at the expense of the pharmaceutical industry's integrity.

"Any new products that are going to be distributed to a large number of patients

need to go through the same mechanism that any other drug would go through, and cannabis is no different," he says. Doctors acknowledge the plant's potential in palliative care, epilepsy and spasticity but remain guarded in its broader use, citing limited scientific proof. "It's been around since pre-history and if it was the panacea for a whole range of medical conditions it was claimed to be by some advocates, then we would have been using it for a long period of time," says Australian Medical Association president Michael Gannon.

'Pretty angry pretty quickly'

But for many, change is too slow. Arielle Harding had her first epileptic seizure at 15-months-old. Suffering from about 100 a day, treatment with traditional drugs made things worse. Her desperate parents recently tried small doses of Cannabidiol, or CBD, a non-psychoactive marijuana derivative in liquid form and Arielle, now five, shows few signs of her condition. "At first we were just overjoyed that that had happened but you also find that you get pretty angry pretty quickly, when you realize that we could have had this three years ago and what a difference that would that have made," her father Tim recalls.

The legal CBD oil he purchases is not an elixir, but like thousands seeking cannabis treatment in Australia, Harding says he is unable to explore the drug further for fear of breaking complicated laws. — AFP

TRILLION-TON ICEBERG BREAKS OFF ANTARCTICA

'WE'RE NOT AWARE OF ANY LINK TO HUMAN-INDUCED CLIMATE CHANGE'

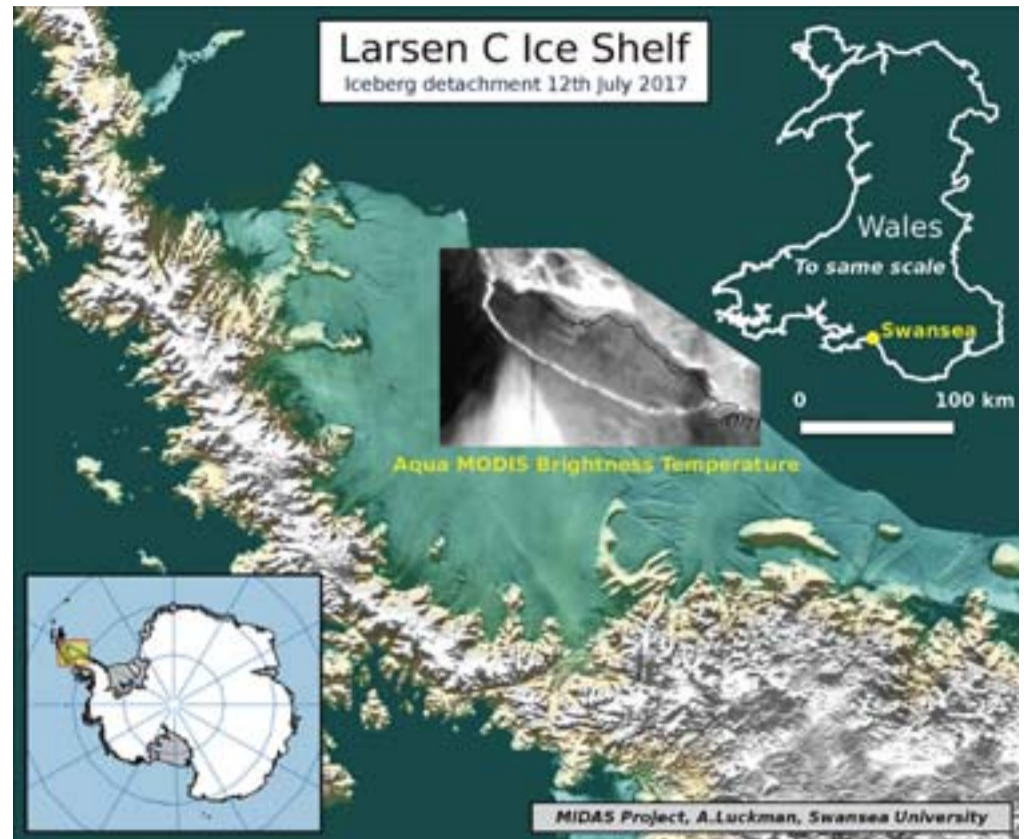
PARIS: An iceberg the size of Delaware, one of the largest on record, was set adrift after snapping off a West Antarctic ice shelf that is now at increased risk of collapse, scientists said yesterday. A crack in the Larsen C ice shelf, a drifting extension of the land-based ice sheet, finally broke through after inching its way across the ice formation for years. The calving of ice shelves occurs naturally, though global warming is believed to have accelerated the process. Warmer ocean water erodes the underbelly of the ice shelves, while rising air temperatures weaken them from above. The calving created an iceberg about 5,800 square kilometers (2,200 square miles) big, with a volume twice that of Lake Erie, one of the North American Great Lakes. It is about 350 meters (1,100 feet) thick.

"The iceberg weighs more than a trillion tons, but it was already floating before it calved away so has no immediate impact on sea level," said a team of researchers from the MIDAS Antarctic research project. It will likely be named A68. "The calving of this iceberg leaves the Larsen C Ice Shelf reduced in area by more than twelve percent, and the landscape of the Antarctic Peninsula changed forever," the team added. Separation occurred somewhere between Monday and yesterday, and was recorded by a NASA satellite.

Icebergs calving from Antarctica are a regular occurrence. But given its size, this behemoth will be closely watched for any potential risk to shipping traffic. The fate of the berg is hard to predict. It may stay in one piece, or break up. "Some of the ice may remain in the area for decades, while parts of the iceberg may drift north into warmer waters," said lead investigator Adrian Luckman. According to the European Space Agency, ocean currents could drag the berg, or pieces of it, as far as the Falkland Islands, posing a threat for ships in the Drake Passage. Records show that large icebergs from the western Weddell Sea, where Larsen C is, tend to make their way into the Antarctic Circumpolar Current, which flows clockwise from west to east around the southernmost continent, or into the South Atlantic.

Will it collapse?

This may heighten the risk of the remaining shelf disintegrating. Floating ice shelves are fed by slow-flowing glaciers from land. Without



SWANSEA, WALES, United Kingdom: This handout image received from Swansea University shows an illustration depicting an iceberg detachment from the Larsen C Ice Shelf. —AFP

them, the glaciers would flow directly into the ocean. With its new shape and size, Larsen C may be less stable than before, the team warned. "There is a risk that Larsen C may eventually follow the example of its neighbor, Larsen B, which disintegrated in 2002 following a similar rift-induced calving event in 1995," they said. Larsen A collapsed in 1995. If the glaciers held in check by Larsen C were to spill into the Antarctic Ocean, it would lift the global water mark by about 10 centimeters (four inches), other researchers have said.

Swansea University glaciologist Martin O'Leary, another MIDAS project member, said this is the furthest back Larsen C's ice front has been in recorded history. "We're going to be

watching very carefully for signs that the rest of the shelf is becoming unstable," he said in a statement. "In the ensuing months and years, the ice shelf could either gradually regrow, or may suffer further calving events which may eventually lead to collapse-opinions in the scientific community are divided," added Luckman.

"Our models say it will be less stable, but any future collapse remains years or decades away." Human actions have lifted average global air temperatures by about one degree Celsius (1.8 degrees Fahrenheit) since pre-industrial levels, according to scientists. Antarctica is one of the world's fastest-warming regions. O'Leary said "we're not aware of any link to human-induced climate change" for the latest calving. —AFP

JAPAN BABY PANDA HEALTHY AFTER 30 DAYS

TOKYO: A baby panda in Japan has survived its crucial first 30 days, zoo officials said yesterday, as fresh video showed the cub at one month old. The female panda was the first to be born at Tokyo's Ueno Zoo in five years. The rare birth delighted animal lovers and businesses keen to cash in on the excitement that the panda generated. Footage released by the zoo shows the cub being weighed and measured by zoo keepers. She is visibly bigger and has clearer black-and-white coloring compared to an earlier release.

But the panda barely moved, except when yawning and falling asleep. At 30 days, she tipped the scales at 1,147.8 grams (2 pounds, 8 ounces) and measured 29.5 centimeters (11.6 inches) in length. "She's steadily growing," zoo director Yutaka Fukuda told reporters. "The first month since birth is an unstable period. I think we were able to get through this difficult phase." The baby panda's mother, 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.

"We'll remain vigilant and keep an eye on the baby panda," Fukuda said. The zoo is monitoring her and mother Shin Shin 24 hours a day with



TOKYO: This handout photo taken and released yesterday by the Tokyo Zoological Park Society shows the 30-day-old female panda cub of giant panda Shin Shin at Tokyo's Ueno Zoo. —AFP

an expert visiting from China, officials said. The Tokyo government will on July 28 begin soliciting ideas from the public to name the panda,

the zoo said. It is estimated that fewer than 2,000 giant pandas remain in the wild, in three provinces in south-central China. —AFP

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Dr. Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem
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GIG SUPPORTS KACCH, BAYT ABDULLAH CHILDREN'S HOSPICE

Gulf Insurance Group (GIG), one of the leading insurance service providers in Middle East and North Africa, announced its support to Kuwait Association for the Care of Children in Hospital (KACCH) and Bayt Abdullah Children's Hospice (BACCH), through its contribution of supporting the insurance needs of both organizations.

Bayt Abdullah Children's Hospice provides multi-professional, specialist, pediatric palliative care and support to children with life limiting or life threatening illnesses who are resident in Kuwait, and their families. Dr Hilal Al-Sayer, President of KACCH said, "Kuwait Association for the Care of Children in Hospital and Bayt Abdullah Children's Hospice are committed to fulfilling its mission by providing high quality services and care for children and their families in our community. These services depend on the generosity and support of organizations like GIG. I deeply appreciate GIG's insurance service contributions to KACCH and Bayt Abdullah as part of their corporate social responsibility."

Gulf Insurance Group Senior Manager, Corporate Communications and Investor Relations, Khaled Mashary Al-Sanousi, said that the company gives a high importance to its

role in corporate social responsibility. By supporting KACCH and BACCH, GIG assures it's keenness and commitment to coordinating and supporting initiatives that benefit the society and functions as a dynamic member of the community. Sanousi confirmed that Gulf Insurance will continue in its societal efforts that pay close attention to children and youth, and healthcare in the community. He noted that the Group's contributions supported insurance services to BACCH, in the areas of fire, theft, accident, health and life insurance for personnel, and building maintenance.

Sanousi concluded that the Group is proud of this collaboration that promotes the organization's principles, and reflects its active commitment in supporting social causes. KACCH is a nongovernmental and nonprofit organization registered with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor since 2003. From 1989, KACCH has been committed to supporting and meeting the psychosocial needs of children and their families in the hospital. Nearly 50,000 children and their families benefit from the services of KACCH annually, and over half a million children since the service began over 27 years ago. Today KACCH operates six Child Life Programs across six

government hospitals-Jahra Hospital, Amiri Hospital, Farwaniya Hospital, NBK Children's Hospital, Ibn Sina Hospital, and Razi Hospital-in Kuwait. The six Child Life Programs are led by Child Life Specialists, who are supported by professionally trained Play Leaders. Child life specialists use play, which is the universal language of children, to support with the psychosocial needs of patients and their families.

Bayt Abdullah Children's Hospice provides multi-professional, specialist, pediatric palliative care and support to children with life limiting or life threatening illnesses who are resident in Kuwait, and their families. We aim to improve the quality of life for children and their families from diagnosis and beyond by offering these services, tailored to the individual family's needs, in the location of their choice, whether at home, in Bayt Abdullah through our outreach program in their local hospital. Bayt Abdullah offers specialist symptom management, medically supported 'respite' care, home care, rehabilitation services and play activities as well as psychological and practical support for the whole family. Bayt Abdullah services include day care, inpatient, respite chalets, homecare, and hospital outreach.

TSC BOULEVARD ORGANIZES CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES IN JULY

Aiming to entertain children during summer holiday and provide parents with great shopping experience; The Sultan Center Boulevard store has organized weekend events and activities for children during the month of July.

The events will be held every Thursday and Friday from 5pm-9pm and will include a variety of activities; face painting, puppet show, clowns, arts and crafts, children contests and much more. Parents can also enjoy their shopping experience

from the vast range of products Boulevard branch features while their children are entertained.

TSC Boulevard was officially opened in May 2017; and features a vast variety of groceries, consumer goods, fresh fruits and vegetables full-service meat seafood and deli counter along with a hot food section of local and international favorite's. The store show cases a sushi bar and bakery complete with freshly baked artesian breads, pastries and cakes. Customers will also find a range of home center items

on the upper level including: housewares, linen, outdoor, stationery, health and beauty and cleaning products.

The store is open 24 hours a day and is easily accessible from Fifth Ring Road and the Arabian Gulf street, with ample parking and carry out service. TSC would like to invite all of its customers to a fun shopping atmosphere at TSC Boulevard store where they will find low prices and shocking promotions across the store and so much more.



AHMADI GOVERNOR HONORS QURAN CONTEST WINNERS

Ahmadi Governorate hosted a ceremony to honor winners of its first annual Ramadan Holy Quran Memorization and Recitation Contest. Ahmadi Governor Sheikh Fawaz Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah attended the event and honored 45 winners out of 500 children who participated in the competition. Sheikh Fawaz also honored the competition's sponsors.



Greetings



Happy 12th birthday to our sweet daughter Yasmin Syed today. Best wishes from mom, dad, brother Syed Danial and Sister Aisha Syed. We wish you all happiness and success in your life.



00:45 Animal Cops Philadelphia
01:40 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
02:35 Tanked
03:25 Wildest Latin America
04:15 Dr. Dee: Alaska Vet
05:02 River Monsters: Lair Of Giants
05:49 Insane Pools: Off The Deep
06:36 Meet The Orangutans
07:25 Dr. Dee: Alaska Vet
08:15 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
09:10 Wildest Latin America
10:05 Tanked
11:00 Dr. Dee: Alaska Vet
11:55 Animal Cops Philadelphia
12:50 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
13:45 River Monsters: Lair Of Giants
14:40 Wildest Latin America
15:35 Tanked
16:30 Big Fish Man
17:25 The Lion Queen
18:20 After The Attack
19:15 Tanked
20:10 Dogs/Cats/Pets 101
21:05 The Lion Queen
22:00 After The Attack
22:55 Wildest Latin America
23:50 Big Fish Man

21:10 Killer Confessions
22:00 Murder Comes To Town
22:50 The Detectives Club: New Orleans
23:40 Murder Calls



00:00 Hank Zipzer
00:25 Alex & Co.
00:45 The Hive
00:50 Evermoor Chronicles
01:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
02:05 Binny And The Ghost
02:55 Hank Zipzer
03:15 The Hive
03:20 Hank Zipzer
03:45 Alex & Co.
04:35 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
05:25 Binny And The Ghost
05:45 The Hive
05:50 The 7D
06:00 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
08:10 Bizaardvark
08:35 Bunk'd
09:00 Stuck In The Middle
09:25 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
09:50 Best Friends Whenever
10:15 Liv And Maddie
10:40 Cloud 9
12:15 Tangled Before Ever After Sneak Peek
12:20 Jessie
12:45 Jessie
13:10 Girl Meets World
13:35 Austin & Ally
14:25 Lolo Rock
14:50 The Zhuzhus
15:15 Tangled Before Ever After Sneak Peek
15:20 Bizaardvark
15:45 Elena Of Avalor
16:10 Liv And Maddie
16:35 Descendants Wicked World
16:40 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
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 Tangled Before Ever After Sneak Peek
20:40 Bizaardvark
21:05 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
21:30 Stuck In The Middle
21:55 Tsum Tsum Shorts
22:00 Bunk'd
22:25 Bunk'd
22:50 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
23:10 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir

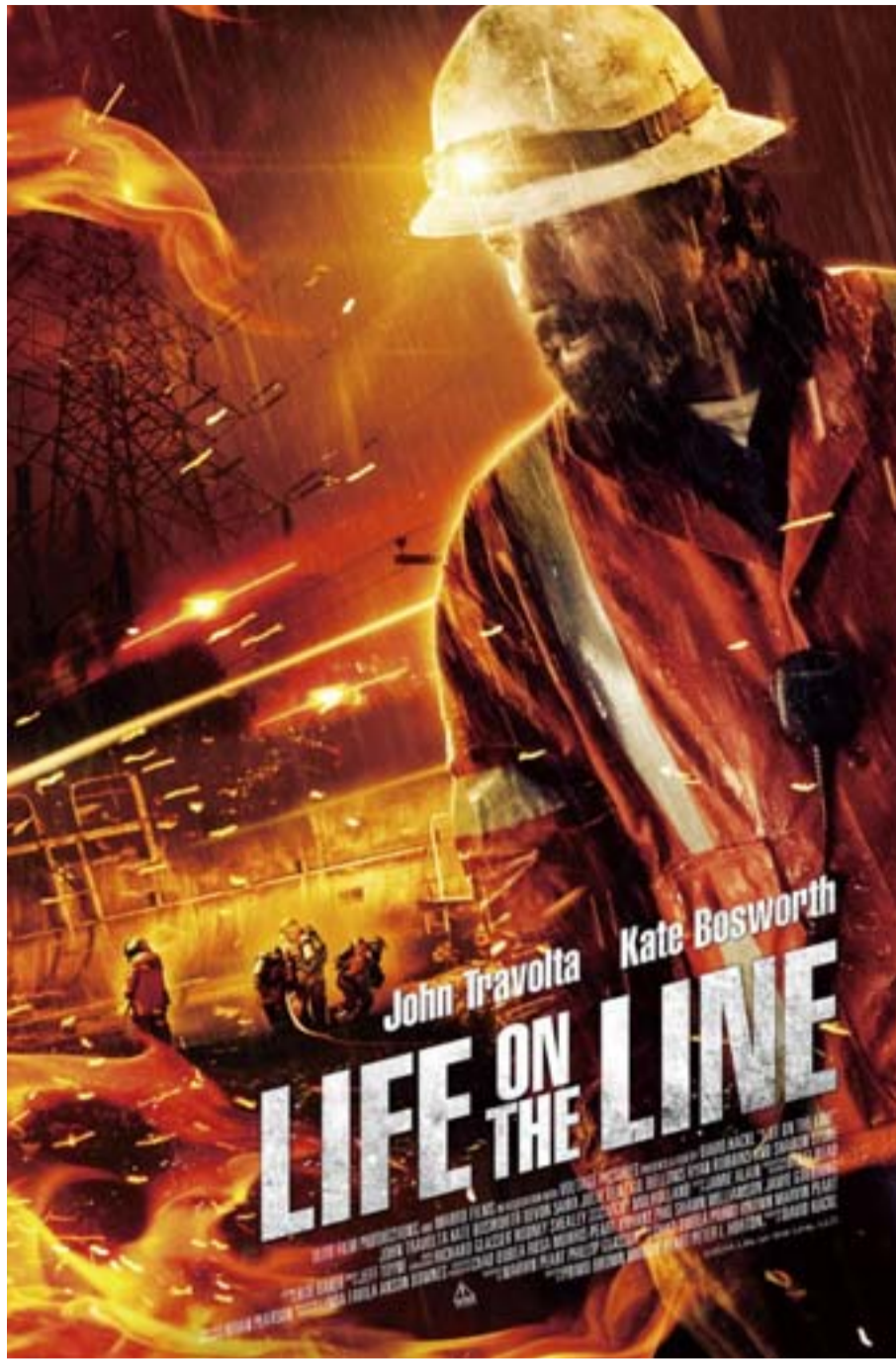
16:00 Disney Lights, Camera, Lexi!
16:05 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
16:30 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
16:50 PJ Masks
17:05 Doc McStuffins
17:35 The Lion Guard
18:05 PJ Masks
18:35 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
19:05 Sofia The First
19:35 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
20:05 The Lion Guard
20:35 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
21:00 Goldie & Bear
21:25 Doc McStuffins
21:50 Minnie's Bow-Toons
22:00 Sofia The First



00:20 Wheeler Dealers
01:05 Blowing Up History
01:50 Strip The City
02:35 Made By Destruction
03:20 Fast N' Loud
04:05 Deadliest Job Interview
04:50 Gold Rush
05:35 How Do They Do It? Gold Divers
06:00 Gold Divers
06:45 Wheeler Dealers
07:30 Fast N' Loud
08:15 Deadliest Job Interview
09:00 Storage Hunters
08:35 Bunk'd
10:10 Blowing Up History
10:55 Strip The City
11:40 Made By Destruction
12:25 How Do They Do It?
12:47 Baggage Battles
13:10 Gold Rush
13:55 Deadliest Job Interview
14:40 Gold Divers
15:25 Fast N' Loud
16:10 Wheeler Dealers
17:00 How Do They Do It?
17:50 Storage Hunters
18:20 Storage Hunters
18:50 Deadliest Job Interview
19:40 How Do They Do It?
20:00 Ocean Warriors
21:50 How Do They Do It?
22:15 How Do They Do It?
22:40 Storage Hunters UK
23:05 Storage Hunters UK
23:30 Fast N' Loud



06:00 Gravity Falls
06:25 Disney11
06:50 Supa Strikas
07:15 Right Now Kapow
07:40 Future-Worm!
08:05 Marvel's Rocket And Groot
08:10 K.C. Undercover
08:35 Milo Murphy's Law
09:00 Walk The Prank
09:25 Supa Strikas
09:50 Gravity Falls
10:15 Marvel's Rocket And Groot
10:20 K.C. Undercover
10:45 Right Now Kapow
11:10 Lab Rats
11:35 Mech-X4
12:00 Dadnapped
13:30 Access All Areas: Spider-Man: Homecoming
13:45 Gamer's Guide To Pretty



LIFE ON THE LINE ON OSN MOVIES ACTION HD

18:05 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
19:00 El News
20:00 WAGs Miami
21:00 WAGs Miami
22:00 WAGs Miami
23:00 El News
23:15 Famously Single



00:00 Chopped
01:00 The Great Food Truck Race
02:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives

13:15 Coronation Street
14:15 Pick Me!
15:10 Royal Recipes
16:00 The Royal Good Guys
16:55 Royal Stories
17:25 Paul O'Grady: For The Love Of Dogs
17:50 Blue Go Mad In Ibiza
18:45 Emmerdale
19:15 Coronation Street
20:10 Royal Recipes
21:00 The Royal Good Guys
21:55 Royal Stories
22:25 Paul O'Grady: For The Love Of Dogs



00:30 The Canal
02:10 Escape
03:35 Hitting The Apex
06:00 Mission: Impossible - Rogue Nation
08:15 Licence To Kill
10:30 Escape
11:55 Hard Target 2
13:45 Mission: Impossible - Rogue Nation
16:00 Golden Eye
18:10 Life On The Line
19:50 The Man From U.N.C.L.E.
21:50 The Transporter: Refueled
23:30 Green Street 3: Never Back Down



01:30 Beverly Hills Chihuahua
03:05 Pan
05:00 Home On The Range
06:20 Eight Below
08:20 Beverly Hills Chihuahua
09:55 Mars Needs Moms
11:30 Pan
13:30 The Rescuers
15:00 Frozen
16:45 Max Keeble's Big Move
18:15 Alice In Wonderland
20:05 Race To Witch Mountain
21:45 The Rescuers
23:05 Frozen



00:20 Detroit Steel
01:10 Forged In Fire
02:00 Outlaw Chronicles: Hells Angels
02:50 Storage Wars
03:15 American Pickers
04:05 Pawn Stars
05:00 Mountain Men
06:00 Fifth Gear
06:50 Duck Dynasty
07:40 Counting Cars
08:30 Pawn Stars
09:20 Storage Wars
10:10 American Pickers
11:00 Alone
11:50 Duck Dynasty
12:40 Counting Cars
13:30 Ice Road Truckers
14:20 Mountain Men
15:10 Fifth Gear
16:00 Storage Wars
16:50 Pawn Stars
17:40 Detroit Steel
18:30 Forged In Fire
19:20 Mountain Men
20:10 American Pickers
21:00 Pirate Treasure Of The Knights Templar
21:50 Lost Worlds
22:40 Time Team
23:30 American Pickers



00:10 Surgery Ship
01:00 Invasion Earth
02:00 Search For The Living Cannibals
03:00 Nazi Megastructures
04:00 Surgery Ship
05:00 Dooomsday Preppers
06:00 Science Of Stupid
07:00 Science Of Stupid
08:00 World's Most Extreme
09:00 King Fishers
10:00 Dooomsday Preppers
11:00 Breakthrough
12:00 Frontline Diaries: Into The Forbidden Zone
13:00 Nazi Megastructures
13:00 Science Of Stupid



00:15 Maximum Foodie
00:45 Rustic Adventure Argentina
01:10 Eat Street
01:40 A Is For Apple
02:05 What's For Sale?
02:35 What's For Sale?
03:00 Sara's Australia Unveiled
03:30 The Great Food Revolution
04:25 Route Awakening
04:50 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
05:20 Poh & Co
06:15 Eat Street
07:10 A Is For Apple
07:35 What's For Sale?
08:05 What's For Sale?
08:30 Sara's Australia Unveiled
09:00 The Great Food Revolution
09:55 Route Awakening
10:20 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
10:50 Poh & Co
11:45 Eat Street
12:40 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces
13:35 What's For Sale?
14:00 What's For Sale?
14:30 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
14:55 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
15:25 The Great Food Revolution
16:20 Poh & Co
16:45 Poh & Co
17:15 Eat Street
17:40 Eat Street
18:10 This Is Brazil
19:05 The Great Food Revolution



00:10 Ouija
01:45 Rocky IV
03:20 How Do You Know
05:35 The Invention Of Lying
07:35 Rocky IV
09:10 Beaches
11:15 Concussion
13:20 A.I. Artificial Intelligence
15:55 The Chronicles Of Narnia: Voyage Of The Dawn...
17:50 Everest
19:55 When A Man Loves A Woman
22:00 Wanted
23:50 Fear And Loathing In Las Vegas



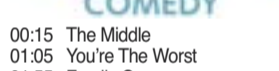
01:15 Deuce Bigalow: Male Gigolo
02:45 Babe: Pig In The City
04:25 Overboard
06:20 Liberal Arts
08:00 Babe: Pig In The City
09:45 Overboard
11:45 Liberal Arts
13:30 Three Men And A Little Lady
15:15 With This Ring
16:55 Ride
18:35 A Thousand Words
20:15 Awful Nice
22:00 Don Peyote
23:45 Ted 2



00:00 Guernica
01:55 Fast Girls
03:30 Brooklyn
05:25 Before I Disappear
07:15 Fast Girls
08:55 The Great Gatsby
11:20 My Old Lady
13:10 Brooklyn
15:00 Grand Central
16:40 Olenna
18:15 Spotlight
20:25 The Girl In The Book
22:00 Clouds Of Sils Maria



00:15 Bunny Tales
01:30 Marco Macaco
02:55 Mickey's Twice Upon A Christmas
04:15 Blue Elephant 2
06:00 Yugo & Lala
07:20 The Adventures Of Don Quixote
08:45 Memory Loss
10:10 Last Wizard
11:25 The Swan Princess: Pirate Today, Princess Tomorrow
12:50 Marco Macaco
14:15 Pooch's Heffalump Halloween Movie
15:30 Memory Loss
16:55 Cher Ami
18:30 The Heart Of The Oak
20:50 Pooch's Heffalump Halloween Movie
21:05 The Adventures Of Don Quixote
22:30 Last Wizard



00:15 The Middle
01:05 You're The Worst
01:55 Family Guy
02:20 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
03:10 Late Night With Seth Meyers
04:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
04:50 The Bill Engvall Show
05:15 Two And A Half Men
05:40 The Last Man On Earth
06:30 The Bernie Mac Show
06:55 Men At Work
07:20 Late Night With Seth Meyers
08:10 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
09:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
09:50 The Bill Engvall Show
10:15 Two And A Half Men
10:40 The Bernie Mac Show
11:05 Men At Work
11:30 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
12:20 Seinfeld
13:10 The Middle
14:00 The Bill Engvall Show
14:25 Two And A Half Men
14:50 The Bernie Mac Show

15:15 The Last Man On Earth
16:05 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
17:00 Seinfeld
18:00 The Middle
19:00 American Housewife
19:30 The Mick
20:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
21:00 Seinfeld
21:30 Seinfeld
22:00 You're The Worst



00:30 Mosquito
01:45 How Do They Do It?
02:10 Invent It Rich
03:00 Weird Or What?
03:48 Mythbusters
04:36 How Do They Do It?
05:00 Food Factory
05:24 Invent It Rich
06:12 Extreme Engineering
07:00 Food Factory
07:26 Weird Or What?
08:14 Mythbusters
09:02 Extreme Engineering
09:50 How Do They Do It?
10:14 Food Factory
10:38 Invent It Rich
11:26 Weird Or What?
12:14 Mythbusters
13:02 How Do They Do It?
13:26 Food Factory
13:50 Extreme Engineering
14:38 Weird Or What?
15:26 Invent It Rich
16:14 Mythbusters
17:02 Extreme Engineering
17:50 Weird Or What?
18:40 Mythbusters
19:30 The Quick And The Curious
19:55 The Quick And The Curious
20:20 How Do They Do It?
20:45 Food Factory
21:10 Extreme Engineering
22:00 The Quick And The Curious
22:25 The Quick And The Curious

00:12 Henry Danger
00:36 Get Blake
01:00 Sanjay And Craig
01:24 Rabbids Invasion
01:48 Breadwinners
02:12 SpongeBob SquarePants
02:36 SpongeBob SquarePants
03:00 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
03:24 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
03:48 Henry Danger
04:12 Nicky, Ricky, Dicky & Dawn
04:36 Breadwinners
05:00 Game Shakers
05:24 Game Shakers
05:48 100 Things To Do Before High School
06:12 SpongeBob SquarePants
06:36 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
07:00 The Loud House
07:24 Rabbids Invasion
07:48 Get Blake
08:12 Harvey Beaks
08:36 Sanjay And Craig
09:00 Frank The Frank
09:24 Henry Danger
09:48 100 Things To Do Before High School
10:12 Game Shakers
10:36 Regal Academy
11:00 Winx Club
11:24 SpongeBob SquarePants
11:48 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
12:12 The Loud House
12:36 Breadwinners
13:00 School Of Rock
13:24 Hunter Street
13:48 Nicky, Ricky, Dicky & Dawn
14:12 The Thundermans
14:36 Henry Danger
15:00 Rags
16:36 The Loud House
17:00 Regal Academy
17:24 Harvey Beaks
17:48 Hunter Street
18:12 Henry Danger
18:36 Nicky, Ricky, Dicky & Dawn
19:00 School Of Rock
19:24 Game Shakers
19:48 The Thundermans
20:12 SpongeBob SquarePants
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23:00 100 Things To Do Before High School
23:24 Game Shakers
23:48 Nicky, Ricky, Dicky & Dawn



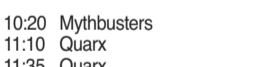
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18:12 Henry Danger
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19:48 The Thundermans
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20:36 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
21:00 The Loud House
21:24 Sanjay And Craig
21:48 Rabbids Invasion
22:12 Breadwinners
22:36 Harvey Beaks
23:00 100 Things To Do Before High School
23:24 Game Shakers
23:48 Nicky, Ricky, Dicky & Dawn



00:30 Unchained Reaction
01:20 Bondi Vet
02:10 Kings Of The Wild
03:00 Destroyed In Seconds
03:50 Destroyed In Seconds
04:40 Ultimate Survival
05:30 How It's Made
06:20 Dirty Jobs
07:00 Mythbusters
07:50 Kids vs Film
08:40 Bad Dog
09:30 How It's Made
09:50 How It's Made
10:20 Unchained Reaction



THE INVENTION OF LYING ON OSN MOVIES HD



10:20 Mythbusters
11:10 Quax
11:35 Quax
12:00 Quax
12:25 Quax
12:50 Quax
13:15 Quax
14:30 Doki
14:55 Kids vs Film
15:20 Bad Dog
16:10 Unchained Reaction
17:00 Weather Top Tens
17:50 Storm Chasers
18:40 Breaking Magic
19:05 Breaking Magic
19:30 How It's Made
19:55 How It's Made
20:20 Mythbusters
21:10 Weather Top Tens
22:00 Storm Chasers
22:50 Destroyed In Seconds
23:15 Destroyed In Seconds



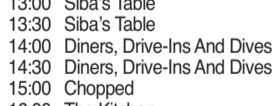
00:00 Henry Hugglemonster
00:15 Callimero
00:30 Art Attack
00:55 Zou
01:05 Loopdidoo
01:20 Henry Hugglemonster
01:35 Callimero
01:50 Zou
02:05 Art Attack
02:30 The Hive
02:40 Loopdidoo
02:55 Henry Hugglemonster
03:10 Art Attack
03:35 Loopdidoo
03:50 Callimero
04:00 Art Attack
04:45 Henry Hugglemonster
05:00 Art Attack
05:30 Henry Hugglemonster
05:45 Loopdidoo
06:00 Zou
06:15 Callimero
06:30 Loopdidoo
06:45 Henry Hugglemonster
07:00 Sofia The First
07:25 PJ Masks
07:50 The Lion Guard
08:15 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
08:40 Doc McStuffins
09:05 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
09:35 Disney Lights, Camera, Lexi!
09:40 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
10:30 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
11:00 PJ Masks
11:00 Just Jillian
11:00 PJ Masks
11:25 Goldie & Bear
11:50 Mickey 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 & Pooch
14:30 The Lion Guard
14:55 Unbungalievable
15:00 Goldie & Bear
15:30 Mickey And The Roadster Racers

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
22:35 Phineas And Ferb
23:00 Programmes Start At 6:00am KSA

00:00 Henry Hugglemonster
00:15 Callimero
00:30 Art Attack
00:55 Zou
01:05 Loopdidoo
01:20 Henry Hugglemonster
01:35 Callimero
01:50 Zou
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14:00 My Friends Tigger & Pooch
14:30 The Lion Guard
14:55 Unbungalievable
15:00 Goldie & Bear
15:30 Mickey And The Roadster Racers

02:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
03:00 Man Fire Food
03:30 Man Fire Food
04:00 Chopped
05:00 Guy's Grocery Games
06:00 Barefoot Contessa
06:30 Barefoot Contessa
07:00 The Kitchen
08:00 The Pioneer Woman
08:30 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 Chopped Junior
20:00 Rev Run's Sunday Suppers
20:30 Rev Run's Sunday Suppers
21:00 Private Chef
21:30 Private Chef
22:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
22:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives

00:05 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
01:50 El News
02:50 Celebrity Style Story
03:20 Celebrity Style Story
03:50 WAGs
04:40 WAGs
05:30 Celebrity Style Story
06:00 Just Jillian
06:55 El News
07:10 Just Jillian
08:10 El News: Daily Pop
09:10 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
10:05 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
12:00 El News
12:15 Botched
15:00 El News
15:15 El News: Daily Pop
16:15 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
17:10 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry



00:05 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
01:50 El News
02:50 Celebrity Style Story
03:20 Celebrity Style Story
03:50 WAGs
04:40 WAGs
05:30 Celebrity Style Story
06:00 Just Jillian
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12:00 El News
12:15 Botched
15:00 El News
15:15 El News: Daily Pop
16:15 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
17:10 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry

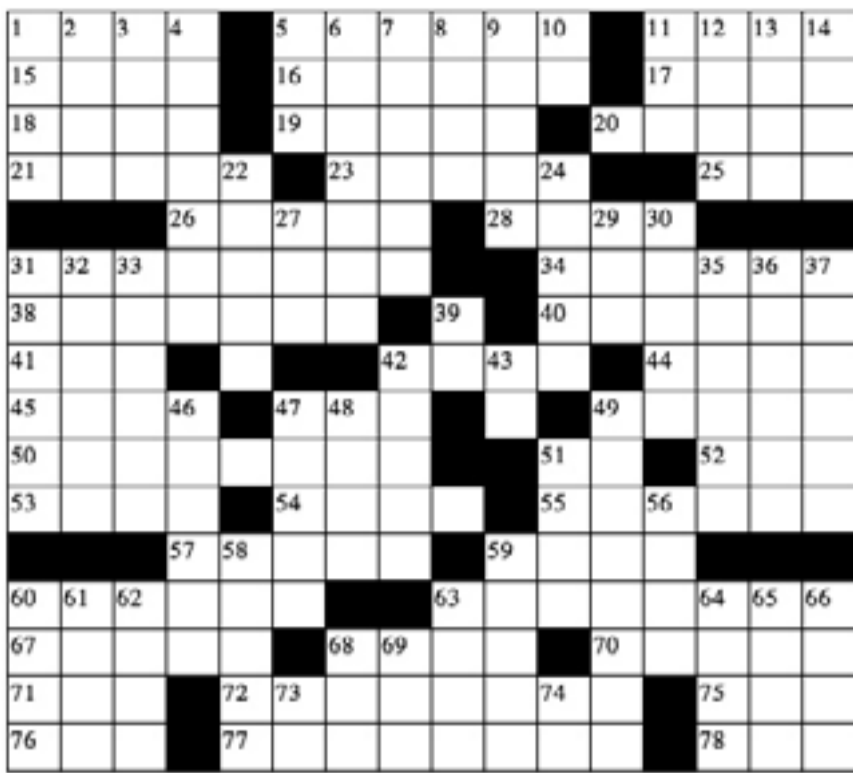


00:10 Pick Me!
01:00 Emmerdale
01:30 Emmerdale
02:00 Coronation Street
02:30 Chopping Block
03:25 This Is England '88
04:20 Lewis
05:15 Tonight At The London Palladium
06:10 Pick Me!
07:05 Chopping Block
08:00 This Is England '88
09:00 Lewis
10:00 Tonight At The London Palladium
10:55 Pick Me!
11:50 Chopping Block
12:45 Emmerdale



BEFORE I DISAPPEAR ON OSN MOVIES FESTIVAL HD

CROSSWORD 1658



ACROSS

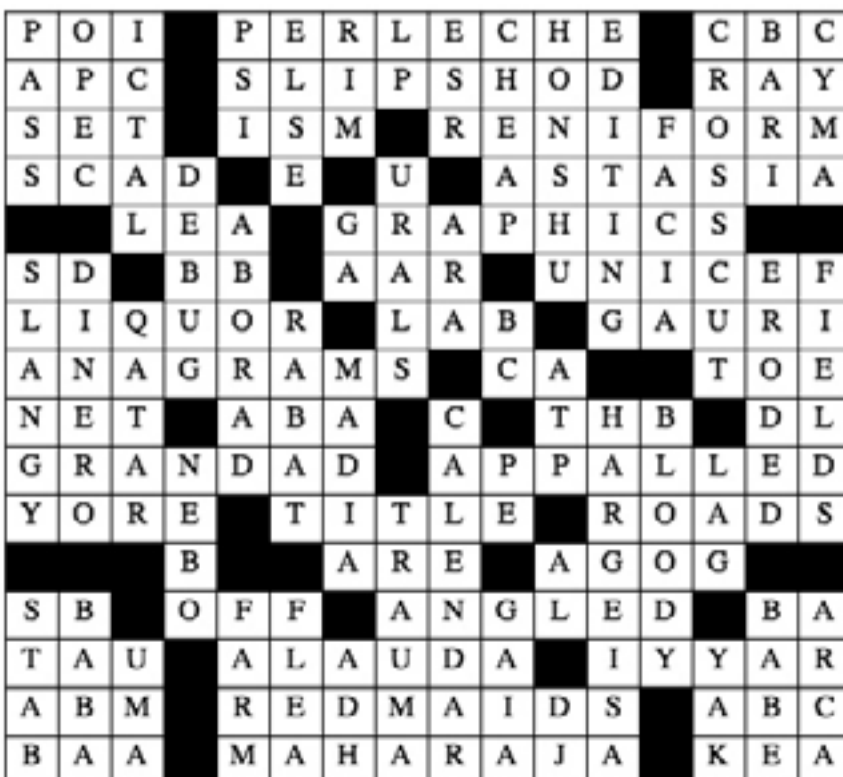
- (British) Traditional jazz as revived in the 1950s.
- A colorless liquid hydrocarbon extracted from petroleum or coal tar and used in making synthetic resins.
- An informal term for a father.
- A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
- Conqueror of Gaul and master of Italy (100-44 BC).
- Toward the mouth or oral region.
- A male monarch or emperor (especially of Russia prior to 1917).
- Remove a bar from (a door, for example).
- The capital and largest city of Bangladesh.
- A member of a Turkic people of Uzbekistan and neighboring areas.
- Any taillike structure.
- A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
- Not ever.
- A city in the Asian part of Russia.
- North American hickory having loose gray shaggy bark and edible nuts.
- Of or relating to abasia (inability to walk).
- Merchandise issued for sale or public showing (especially a record or film).
- A Portuguese title of respect.
- Having undesirable or negative qualities.
- Large genus of tropical shrubs or herbs some of which yield fibers of mucilaginous substances.
- A material effigy that is worshipped as a god.
- Having qualities characteristic of Jesuits or Jesuitism.
- The sign language used in the United States.
- Chief port of Yemen.
- German chemist who was co-discoverer with Lise Meitner of nuclear fission (1879-1968).
- Club consisting of a heavy stick (often bamboo) bound with iron.
- At or near or toward the stern of a ship or tail of an airplane.
- (Sumerian and Akkadian) A demon personifying death.
- A unit of dry measure used in Egypt.
- A member of the Mongolian people of central Asia who invaded Russia in the 13th century.
- A woolen cap of Scottish origin.
- A desert in southwestern Africa - largely Botswana.
- A constellation in the southern hemisphere near Telescopium and Norma.
- A Turkish unit of weight equal to about 2.75 pounds.
- Pertaining to or containing or similar to ammonia.
- The most common computer memory which can be used by programs to perform necessary tasks while the computer is on.

DOWN

- About three feet long exclusive of tail.
- Harass with persistent criticism or carping.

- An Arabic speaking person who lives in Arabia or North Africa.
- Derange mentally, throw out of mental balance.
- A hospital unit staffed and equipped to provide intensive care.
- Go ashore.
- (Old Testament) The eldest son of Isaac who would have inherited the Covenant that God made with Abraham and that Abraham passed on to Isaac.
- Australian clover fern.
- A trivalent metallic element of the rare earth group.
- Chiefly perennial grasses of cool temperate regions.
- Type genus of the family Arcidae.
- Large burrowing rodent of South and Central America.
- The sixth month of the civil year.
- Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
- Collect or gather.
- A tube in which a body fluid circulates.
- The compass point that is one point east of due south.
- A member of the Siouan people of the Kansas river valley in Kansas.
- Having a heading or course in a certain direction.
- A monosaccharide sugar that contains the aldehyde group or is hemiacetal.
- (Judaism) A period of seven days of mourning after the death of close relative.
- Treat with iodine.
- A baby bed with sides and rockers.
- A white metallic element that burns with a brilliant light.
- United States writer of stories and plays (1894-1946).
- A period of time containing 365 (or 366) days.
- Resembling the new moon in shape.
- Essential oil or perfume obtained from flowers.
- French cabaret singer (1915-1963).
- Suitable to or characteristic of drama.
- Speaking a Slavic language.
- The basic unit of money in Bangladesh.
- A coffee cake flavored with orange rind and raisins and almonds.
- A family of Sino-Tibetan languages spoken in southeastern Asia.
- Any of various strong liquors distilled from the fermented sap of toddy palms or from fermented molasses.
- Designer drug designed to have the effects of amphetamines (it floods the brain with serotonin) but to avoid the drug laws.
- Austrian chemist who did research on carotenoids and vitamins (1900-1967).
- Essential oil or perfume obtained from flowers.
- A Spanish unit of length (about a yard) having different values in different localities.
- The biblical name for ancient Syria.
- An advanced law degree.
- Of or relating to a member of the Buddhist people inhabiting the Mekong river in Laos and Thailand.
- Before noon.
- An intensely radioactive metallic element that occurs in minute amounts in uranium ores.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You have great internal strength and tend to be independent, preferring to lean on yourself more than on others. You may find opportunities to be self-motivating certainly no dependency here. This afternoon you may decide to sign up to work in a trade-day activity or a festival of sorts for this next weekend. You look forward to earning a little extra money. Any activity that pulls in a little extra cash will also create an opportunity for you to show off your talents so also consider displaying your own talents. Family matters are enjoyed most of the late afternoon. Being more involved with family now may involve some picture taking, social get-togethers, etc. Communicating ideas, experiences and current affairs with loved ones is most important today.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You are very communicative-not just a little curious. You enjoy talking and writing skills. If you are in a job that calls for a creative expression, you can excel in your presentation. Working with another person speeds the work along to a completion this afternoon. At home you may become involved in much letter-writing or phone conversations with family members you do not get to see very often. You could be most persuasive with others and moving in speech and communication. Study, research and investigations of all kinds appeal to you as well. If you are not traveling now, you will be thinking about it soon. The best places to visit, names of bed and breakfast places and the popular restaurants are topics of conversation this evening.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You can be peaceful, calm and undisturbed regardless of what is going on around you. You are a genius at bringing out the best in others and this is something you take great pride in for today. Teaching, translating and conducting a tour or an orchestra are just a few of the things you could excel in today. An elderly couple or other people show their gratefulness to you for some help or advice you shared recently. Ideas-philosophy and religion-are what make your life stimulating. Travel opportunities may come to your attention this afternoon and you can make future plans with your mate or loved ones. Before you relax this evening, you spend some time caring for animals or children. Tonight is for relaxing with bubbles, music and your heart's desire.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

A talent of yours is required in the business place. There might be a convention in which your company is preparing to be represented or perhaps there is a new opening of a branch company. Whatever the case, it could be that you will play the piano or greet people or help in some other way. You might set aside some time to visit with a past friend that appears on the scene. The prospects for a spectacular day are promising. You help make the day a positive one for others. You manage to spend a lot of time in the spotlight. With family or friends this evening, there is talk of a vacation. There is a love of the sea and a great desire to take some time off for a while. Travel may be possible before the middle of next month. There is talk about the types of travel.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

You could find yourself feeling rebellious and independent regarding your current situation. Some difficult employee may bring opposition to a group, or just strain relationships. There is the possibility of new visions or sudden insights into your ability to solve problems and others take your lead. Progress in the workplace is a miraculous thing this day as there are unusual circumstances. You naturally gravitate toward positions of power. Others see in you a great practical ability and will easily accept you as a leader. This could be a very political time for you. It certainly is a time in which you can accomplish much for the workplace or your community. A short story has a beginning this evening and you will be pleased with the ending.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

It's important to keep your perspective with a close relationship. Something you thought was resolved may, once again, come to your attention. Cool logic will help you communicate. Learn from past experiences and agree to disagree. This way, there is forward movement. You have the mental drive that is necessary for political assignments and may find yourself enjoying the tasks. Put your artistic talents to work improving your home this afternoon. Colorful accents will brighten the scene and the psyche. Consider an herb garden in a bright and sunny corner of a room. Consult those that share your space so that everyone is able to give some input. New ways of appreciating and loving may be possible now. A loved one shows off a new talent tonight.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Fate sends opportunity your way if you listen to your instincts and give your natural sense of curiosity a free rein. Travel and education can help uncover some of the answers that will give you the power or advantage you seek. Allow yourself these experiences. Mass communications can be financially rewarding in some way-think about advertising, broadcasting, publishing, etc. Something as simple as owning a computer and belonging to a network would be what puts you into a new and rewarding business. The way in which you respond to change and maintain your independence is a major focus now. A young person in your family wants more independence-give this person responsibilities and independence will come.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Mysterious or mystical information fires your imagination and you may find there could be more imagination than knowledge for now. Keep an open mind and learn all you can, but do not take everything you hear for gospel. You may take action today, when an issue dear to your heart comes to your attention. Your theories are good but facts will get you support for what you want to accomplish. Work on research and creating a plan that will develop some positive outcomes. Patience is a key word when it comes to dealing with people-timing is essential. You may be pleasantly surprised with a call or letter you receive this afternoon. Contacts with an old neighbor or friend bring about good memories from the past.



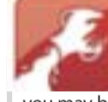
Sagittarius (November 22-December 19)

Situations and people you thought you could rely on might not be so solid today. These are the ways we learn about people. It is very important that you do not hold grudges and you learn from your experience with others. Look for the truth in all of your affairs. There is a feeling that things will work out in positive ways. You should be able to improve your security now. This is a time of independence when you may try new and different things. This is also a time during which you may be able to speed up your pace to reach your goals and acknowledge your life's purpose. You could receive unexpected help from someone older or from authority figures. Accept the good advice that somebody older gives you today-you won't go wrong.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Your physical vitality, psychological or spiritual goals are highly emphasized now. If there is something in your life that works against your progress-now is the time to weed through and eliminate or in some way divert or control the problem. This means an abundance of old clothes or too many animals or not enough time for a good night's rest, etc. This is not a favorable time for establishing new life directions, but is a good time for creating a healthy balance. Stay away from arguments and possible hard feelings at this time. After the workday is over consider inviting a friend or loved one to enjoy a movie with you. You are a master of applied psychology and will be able to apply a subtle influence on a young person in your family tonight.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

The idea of how you want your day to go and the plans of those around you may be in conflict with others today. With communication, compromise and the willingness to share, today can turn out to be one of your best family or friendship days. The people or person you live with may agree to share or trade some book, equipment or chore with you today. Your eagerness to work or play with others and to be helpful will create some bonds that will last forever. This is an important time to be patient and tread lightly when it comes to indulgence and overextending yourself. Whether your relationships at this time are partnerships, work and social or personal, they are very important and can have a very strong influence on your career and private life.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Although work is accomplished with little or no problems, there is a feeling of low energy. This will pass but you can use the afternoon as an opportunity to clear away some unfinished business. Those old books you would like to read again may better serve you as a gift to the library. Keep your favorites, but make room for the new books that will be coming into your life. You may want to dedicate one room of your living quarters as a library or hobby room. Now is the time to be creative-perhaps after you remove the old newspapers or magazines and as your energy returns you could create an indoor herb garden that will be relaxing as you read. Education in law and philosophy impacts your lifestyle now. You may find a way to work for the school.

Wordsearch Puzzle

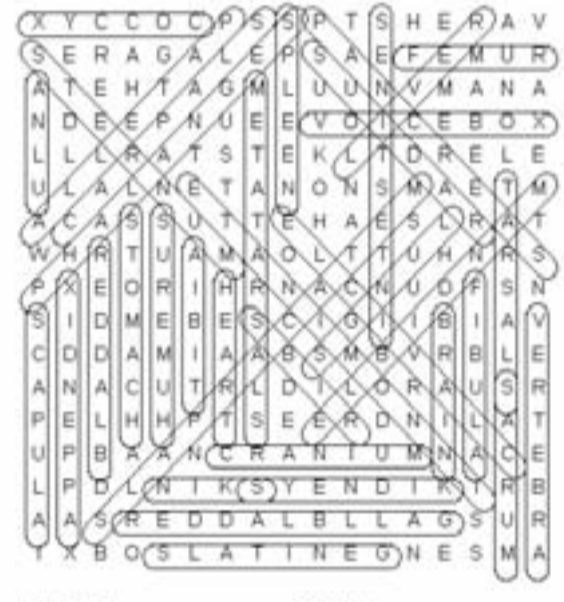
John Wayne Movies

Find and circle all of the John Wayne movies that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a John Wayne quotation.



- | | | | |
|------------------|-------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| ALAMO, The | COWBOYS, The | JET PILOT | RIO LOBO |
| ARIZONA | DAKOTA | LONGEST TRAIL, The | SEA CHASE, The |
| BABY FACE | DAWN RIDER, The | MCLINTOCK, The | SEARCHERS, The |
| BIG JAKE | DECEIVER, The | MOQ | SHOOTIST, The |
| BIG TRAIL, The | DESERT TRAIL, The | NEW FRONTIER | SPOILERS, The |
| BLOOD ALLEY | EL DORADO | NIGHT RIDERS, The | STAGECOACH |
| BLUE STEEL | FLYING TIGERS | PIZZBURGH | STAR PACKER, The |
| BRANNIGAN | FORT APACHE | QUIET MAN, The | TRUE GRIT |
| CHISUM | GREEN BERETS, The | HATARI | TYCOON |
| CIRCUS WORLD | HATARI | HELL FIGHTERS | RANGE FEUD |
| COMANCHEROS, The | HELL FIGHTERS | HONDO | RED RIVER |
| CONFLICT | HONDO | IN HARMS WAY | RIO BRAVO |
| CONQUEROR, The | IN HARMS WAY | | RIO GRANDE |
| | | | UNDEFEATED, The |
| | | | WAR WAGON, The |
| | | | WESTWARD HO |

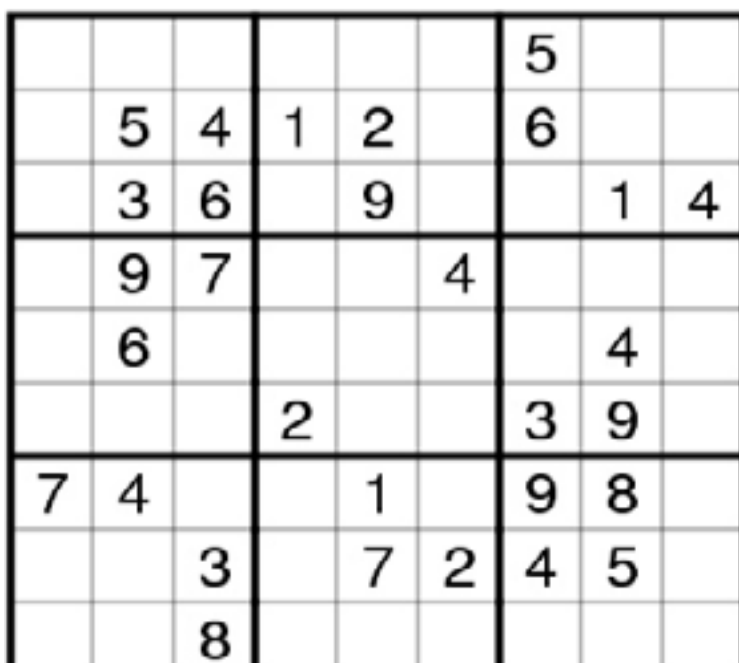
Human Skeleton & Organs



- | | | | |
|------------------|-------------|---------------|----------------|
| Skeleton: | - CARPALS | - PATELLA | Organs: |
| - CLAVICLE | - PHALANGES | - BLADDER | - LIVER |
| - COCCYX | - RADIUS | - BRAIN | - LUNGS |
| - CRANIUM | - RIBS | - GALLBLADDER | - PANCREAS |
| - FEMUR | - SACRUM | - GENTALS | - SKIN |
| - FIBULA | - SCAPULA | - HEART | - SPLEEN |
| - HUMERUS | - STERNUM | - INTISTINES | - STOMACH |
| - INNOMINATE | - TARSALS | - KIDNEYS | - VOICE BOX |
| - MANDIBLE | - TIBIA | | |
| - METACARPALS | - ULNA | | |
| - METATARSALS | - VERTEBRA | | |

Hidden sentence: THE AVERAGE HUMAN ADULT SKELETON HAS TWO HUNDRED AND SIX BONES

Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution





JLO BACK WITH MARC ANTHONY FOR VIDEO

Their marriage didn't work out, but Jennifer Lopez is back with Marc Anthony, if only for her steamy latest video. Lopez on Tuesday released a video for her single "Ni Tu Ni Yo" ("Neither You Nor Me"), which opens with her sitting at a table as Marc Anthony enters to welcome her. The fellow singer embraces his ex-wife and compliments her on her watch before introducing her to a photographer who, throughout the video, takes glamour shots as Lopez poses before various backdrops. The track, driven by a reggaeton beat and horn section, also credits Marc Anthony—a frequent artistic collaborator of Lopez before and during their marriage—as a songwriter. Lopez premiered "Ni Tu Ni Yo" last week during the annual Macy's fireworks show for the July 4 holiday in her native New York. The song is her first track off "Por Primera Vez" ("For



the First Time"), which will come out on September 29 and mark the bilingual star's second album mostly in Spanish following 2007's "Como Ama una Mujer" ("The Way a Woman Loves.") Lopez became an international superstar starting in the late 1990s with R&B-touched dance hits such as "If You Had My Love," "Waiting for Tonight" and "I'm Real." While she has maintained a loyal fan base, her last album, 2014's "A.K.A.," fared worse commercially than her earlier albums. Lopez, 47, was married to salsa megastar and fellow New Yorker of Puerto Rican descent Anthony, 48, for a decade starting in 2004, with Lopez giving birth to twins in 2008. Lopez's personal life has frequently featured in the tabloids. She most recently has been dating baseball great Alex Rodriguez, a Dominican-American New Yorker.

Harrelson's War for the Planet of the Apes 'concerns'



Woody Harrelson was "concerned" about portraying a stereotypical villain in 'War for the Planet of the Apes'. The 55-year-old actor had long discussions with director Matt Reeves about how to ensure his portrayal of The Colonel in the rebooted sci-fi franchise was "more human" than how evil characters tend to come across on big-screen productions. He said: "That was a big concern of mine. Because when I read it I thought it was a little more black and white. I talked to Matt about ways to make the character a little more human. I think The Colonel thinks that what he's doing is what needs to be done to save humanity so from his perspective what he's doing is right and just. It's good to have it not be so black and white." Harrelson was "staggered" to see how well the movie, which uses motion capture technology to bring the ape characters to life, looked when it was completed, and praised Andy Serkis for his "phenomenal" performance as chimpanzee Caesar. Speaking to Collider, he added: "I was pleasantly surprised when I saw the finished product. It's so different from what's happening. Andy is a phenomenal actor and he's got all these dots on his face, and he's got the camera, the grey suit, you believe he's an ape. It's his eyes, his voice, his mannerisms, his movement, he's doing the performance. But when it all comes together it's pretty staggering. The level of what goes into that CG. It was so realistic and so well done. These guys are the best in the business." The motion picture also features Karin Konoval as Maurice, Caesar's advisor, and Steve Zahn as Bad Ape.

Jury sees video of film crew fleeing train before crash

The civil trial of a railroad company accused of negligence in the 2014 death of a movie worker opened Tuesday with jurors watching video of the film crew fleeing a freight train moments before the fatal crash on a Georgia railroad bridge. Sarah Jones, a 27-year-old camera assistant, was killed on the first day of shooting "Midnight Rider," a movie based on the life of Allman Brothers Band singer Gregg Allman. Jones' parents are suing CSX Transportation, saying the train's engineer should have braked and two other trains that passed the film crew alongside the tracks in the hour before the crash should have called in a warning. Six other film workers were injured in the collision on Feb. 20, 2014. Actor William Hurt, who was on the bridge in the role of Allman, escaped uninjured. Hurt sat outside the courtroom for a time Tuesday but was not called to testify. It was unknown when or if he would take the witness stand. The freight train was traveling 56 mph when it struck a hospital bed the movie crew had placed across the tracks, spraying crew members with shrapnel. The video, taken by a crew member, did not show the fatal collision but ended with a loud crunch as the screen went dark. "People are literally running for their lives and instead of hitting the brakes, they decided to plow on through," Jeffrey Harris, an attorney for Jones' parents, told the jury in his opening statement Tuesday. CSX attorney Jay Traynham told jurors the engineer, Michael Ryan, was afraid to apply the train's emergency brakes for fear of causing a derailment that could have toppled its payload of shipping containers onto the crew. He



blamed the crash on "Midnight Rider" production managers, who had been denied permission to film on the train tracks twice - each time in writing. Randall Miller, the film's director, spent a year in jail after pleading guilty to charges of involuntary manslaughter and criminal trespassing. "CSX was placed in a situation," Traynham said. "Michael Ryan did the best he could do ... in a split second because somebody stuck a bed on the railroad track." Two crew members testified they assumed filmmakers had CSX's permission to film on the tracks. Izabeau Giannakopoulos, who shot behind-the-scenes photos and video for the production and made the video of the fleeing crew, said she never felt she was trespassing or in any danger until a co-worker started

yelling for the group to get off the tracks as the train approached. "You're asking if I feel deceived by my superiors?" Giannakopoulos replied to a CSX attorney's question. "Yes, I do." The jury also saw videotaped testimony of operators of the two CSX trains that passed the film crew safely before the group ventured onto the train trestle spanning the Altamaha River near the town of Jesup. The train operators said it's common to see people alongside railroad tracks taking photos and video and they didn't see the crew members posing any immediate danger. "We didn't know they were trespassing," said CSX engineer Stanley Craig. "We just thought they were taking pictures." The crash left the "Midnight Rider" movie in limbo. Allman died in May.

Ritchie struggling to find actor for Aladdin

Guy Ritchie has still not found an actor to lead his live action reboot of 'Aladdin'. The British director is working on bringing Disney's classic 1992 animation back to the big screen along with Sean Bailey - head of motion picture production at Disney - and shooting was due to commence on the project in July. According to The Hollywood Reporter, even though they have auditioned around 2,000 actors for the titular role they have not found anyone they think is suitable to portray the lovable street urchin. In March, an open casting call was held to find Aladdin and Jasmine and it was reported the studio had an interest in 'Skins' star Dev Patel, 27, and 'Rogue One: A Star Wars Story' actor Riz Ahmed, 34. 'Power Rangers' actress Naomi Scott, 24, and Indian actress Tara Sutaria, 21, are being eyed to play Princess Jasmine as well as Little Mix singer Jade Thirlwall, but Disney won't make a decision on Jasmine until Aladdin has been found. Will Smith was also in talks to play The Genie in the reboot - a voice role originally taken on by the late great Robin Williams - and Tom Hardy is in line to portray villainous Jafar. 'Charlie and the Chocolate Factory' writer John August has penned the script for the musical movie, which is believed to be non-linear in its structure, something that is a hallmark of Ritchie's early work such as cult British crime romp 'Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels'. Following the adventures of the street rat, the story is based on a Middle Eastern folk tale of Aladdin who is granted three wishes by a genie who is captive inside a magic lamp. The originally 1992 animation won two Oscars for the music including Best Music and Original Song for 'A Whole New World'. 'Aladdin' is one of Disney's most beloved and successful classics earning more than \$504 million worldwide and the characters are prominent at the company's theme parks. It has also been turned into a hit stage show playing at theatres all over the world. 'Aladdin' is now set to start shooting in August. — Agencies

Men who stopped train attack to star in Clint Eastwood film



The three California men who thwarted a terror attack on a French train in 2015 will make the rare move of playing themselves in a Clint Eastwood-directed film about their heroics, a studio announced Tuesday. Airman 1st Class Spencer Stone, Oregon National Guardsman Alek Skarlatos and civilian Anthony Sadler, all childhood friends from California, will star in "The 15:17 to Paris," a film based on the book they co-wrote about taking down a terrorist, Warner Bros. said in a statement. The film, which began production this week, follows the lives of the three friends from childhood to the evening when they helped subdue the man who opened fire inside a train traveling from Amsterdam to Paris. The Sacramento-area men were vacationing in Europe when they tackled Ayoub El-Khazzani, a man who authorities said has ties to radical Islam. El-Khazzani had boarded the Paris-bound train with a

Kalashnikov rifle, pistol and box cutter. The film will be the latest of several about real-life heroes that Eastwood has taken on, including 2014's "American Sniper," and 2016's "Sully." But the leads in those films were played by Oscar-nominee Bradley Cooper and Oscar-winner Tom Hanks, respectively, not their actual subjects. It's common to give cameo roles to the subjects of films that don't require more than a line or two, but this case is nearly unprecedented in recent Hollywood history. There are no reports of the men having any acting experience, though Skarlatos appeared on "Dancing With the Stars" soon after the Paris incident. Nearly all who have played themselves on screen were actors to begin with, such as Kumail Nanjiani in the current release "The Big Sick" or John Malkovich in 1999's "Being John Malkovich." The studio's statement did not elaborate on what prompted Eastwood and Warner Bros. to cast the men.

Josh Homme: Mark Ronson is a music fan

Josh Homme asked Mark Ronson to produce Queens of the Stone Ages' new record because he cares about fans. The American rockers are gearing up to release 'Villains' on August 25, and the 44-year-old frontman says he knew straight away that the 'Uptown Funk' hitmaker should help them after he shared a story about meeting a fan who was excited to hear the 'No One Knows' groups' new music. Asked by BBC 6 Music why he picked Ronson - who has worked with the likes of Amy Winehouse, Lily Allen and Bruno Mars - he explained: "The reason I asked Mark Ronson to do this is because he called me the other night and said ... I was at a restaurant, he was a little bit tipsy, he was here in London and I was in the States and he goes I was just at this restaurant and this 19-year-old blonde kid was a bus boy and said I don't want to get in trouble, but I am so excited to hear the Queens of Stone Age record, I loved the first song and then Ronson said come back here at the end of your meal and I will let you listen to something on my phone that no one has heard. "He calls me and he goes and: 'I did and he was so excited.' I just thought that is exactly why I asked you



to do this because you are a music fan..." Homme admires the 41-year-old songwriter for not limiting himself to working with one kind of artist or band. He continued: "... And my whole career something has come up, whether it is to do a soundtrack or someone says, 'OK you should do this thing because it's rock,' insinuating that you can't do anything else so don't give him that. Here, why don't you just sweep over here and keep

yourself busy. "I think everybody that likes music listens to whatever they think is good. "They know when the time is right to hear something and I would love to be in a band that has music for all those moments for me as a fan. I felt like I made something for all those moments for me too. "Mark has worked on all kinds of different stuff, buy you should. "And if you do one thing, it doesn't mean it is prohibitive to doing something else."



Maia Campbell rejects LL Cool J's offer of help

Former actress Maia Campbell has rejected an offer of help from her one-time sitcom co-star LL Cool J. The actor and rapper asked his social media followers for help finding Campbell after a disturbing video surfaced that appears to show Campbell asking a man at an Atlanta gas station for drugs. It's not clear if LL Cool J got in touch with Campbell, but she declined his offer in a new video , saying, "I don't need

help, I just need a benefit concert for mental health." Campbell says she's doing "good" and describes herself as a "real serious person." LL Cool J responded on Twitter , "You can't help someone who doesn't want your help." LL Cool J starred alongside Campbell in the 1990s sitcom "In the House." In 2012, Campbell discussed her battles with substance abuse and bipolar disorder on the OWN series "Iyanla: Fix My Life."



**RAF SIMONS
SPRING/SUMMER
2018 SHOW**



Models walk at the Raf Simons Spring/Summer 2018 show on July 11, 2017 in New York City. — AFP photos

**Cult Paris
fashion store
Colette to close**

The cult Paris concept store Colette—a regular haunt of Hollywood stars as well as fashionistas—will close its doors in December, its owners said yesterday. “All good things come to an end. After 20 exceptional years Colette is closing its doors,” the boutique’s founders mother and daughter Colette Roussaux and Sarah Andelman said in a statement. “Colette Roussaux has reached an age when it’s time for her to take her time, and Colette cannot exist without Colette,” they added.

The three-storey shop on the fashionable Rue Saint Honore that sells an eclectic mix of luxury lifestyle products and cutting-edge fashion was declared “the coolest shop in town” by fashion critic Suzy Menkes. It is a regular haunt of legendary designer Karl Lagerfeld. “It’s the only shop where I go because they have things no one else has,” he said last year. The shop promised that it would remain true to its spirit until the day it closes “changing every week with numerous new collaborations”.

Its premises will be taken over by Saint Laurent, who famously threatened to sue Colette four years ago when they ran a line of parody T-shirts bearing the legend “Ain’t Laurent Without Yves” after the death of the label’s founder, Yves Saint Laurent. — AFP

**BURBERRY SALES
UP FOLLOWING
DEMAND
BOOST IN CHINA**

British luxury fashion brand Burberry saw a surprising 4 percent rise in sales in the second quarter, thanks largely to demand in mainland China. The company said yesterday that sales growth in China was in the mid-single digits after its campaign for new DK88 bag tripled its reach on WeChat, China’s popular social media app. Steve Clayton, fund manager at HL Select UK Growth Shares, noted that “The company says they are seeing ‘top customers returning’ to their stores. In other words, the Chinese are spending again.”

Clayton said the 4 percent increase is higher than analysts had expected. Investors welcomed the report, sending the company’s share price up 3.4 percent to 16.33 pounds. In Europe, Britain led the trend of steady sales growth while demand in the Americas declined. — AP



In this file photo, models display creations by Burberry during their Autumn/Winter 2017 show as part of London Fashion Week in London. — AP

Art lovers' Providence

From WaterFire to street murals



A mural by the artist Bezt rises above a parking lot in downtown Providence, RI. — AP photos



Murals by the artist Shepard Fairey, left, and Guillermo Gomez Pena, right, loom above a parking lot in downtown Providence, RI.

With a plethora of street art and a world-famous design school, Providence provides plenty to do for art-loving travelers. The capital city of the smallest state in the US is compact, and many of its most appealing artistic attractions are within a short walk of each other amid the restored architecture of the city's downtown and College Hill neighborhoods, which are straddled by the Rhode Island School of Design, known as RISD (pronounced RIZ'-dee). Travelers can take in much of the art without spending a dime.

Public art

There has been an explosion in high-quality street murals in the city's downtown in the last several years. One, by Shepard Fairey, pays homage to Providence, where Fairey, a 1992 RISD graduate, first got noticed with his "Andre the Giant Has a Posse" and "Obey Giant" street art campaigns. Murals by artists, including Polish artists Natalia Rak and Bezt, dot the landscape downtown. The latest, Andrew Hem's "Misty Blue," depicting a girl amid fire-fires in a forest, was completed just last month. Elsewhere, photographer Mary Beth Meehan's giant portraits of city residents look down over downtown streets, part of her installation entitled "SeenUnseen."

A few blocks from downtown, walk up the steep College Hill to Brown University,

and there are several sculptures on display, including "Untitled (Lamp/Bear)," a 23-foot (7-meter) baby-blue bear combined with a giant desk lamp, by Swiss artist Urs Fischer, and "Idee di pietra (Ideas of Stone)," by Italian artist Giuseppe Penone, a sculpture of a life-size tree, the branches of which hold a giant boulder.

Waterfire

WaterFire, the city's most famous public art event, happens more than a dozen times a year, and it's free. Dozens of braziers installed in the city's three downtown rivers are filled with cedar, which is then lit on fire. The fires are kept alive throughout the night by black-clad fire-tenders moving silently on boats. Fire eaters and other performers, along with music, add to the atmosphere. The piece, created by artist Barnaby Evans, has been going for more than 20 years.

It's scheduled to coincide with the tides. Last month, the group behind the event opened the new WaterFire Arts Center, which is meant to eventually serve as a hub for the creative community, Evans said. He said it's hosting more than 100 performances during Fringe PVD July 24-29.

Risd Museum

This gem of a museum at RISD punches far above its weight, with a permanent collection of around 100,000 objects, including notable pieces of Ancient Egyptian art, Asian art, textiles, 20th century design and American decorative arts. Among its current and upcoming exhibits are etchings from late 19th-century Paris, including work by artists including Edgar Degas and Mary Cassatt, and "Stranger than Paradise," which includes works of different styles and eras on the natural world.

The museum is free on Sundays and the

third Thursday evening of each month. Part of its fifth floor is currently closed for renovations, but the work is expected to wrap up at the end of next month.

Eating, sleeping and shopping

Providence is populated with small shops selling art and crafts made by local artists. Downtown's Craftland is filled with prints, jewelry, felt creations and other works by local artists including Rachel Blumberg and Meredith Stern, as well as artists from a bit farther afield. Stock, on the city's East Side, focuses on housewares, with a wide selection of functional and decorative pieces, many handmade in Rhode Island and elsewhere in New England. Filmmaker John Waters is among the celebrities who has been spotted at the minimalist Dean Hotel, which also features a cafe, cocktail lounge, beer hall, and karaoke bar. — AP



Pedestrians walk beneath a photograph from Mary Beth Meehan's "SeenUnseen" installation on a street in downtown Providence, RI.



A photograph from Mary Beth Meehan's "SeenUnseen" installation looks out over a parking lot in downtown Providence, RI.



A mural by the artist Andrew Hem, completed in June, covers a wall in downtown Providence, RI.

VISITING NYC THIS SUMMER? DO LIKE THE LOCALS: HIT THE BEACH



Photo shows the beach at Coney Island in the Brooklyn borough of New York, with visitors wading in the Atlantic and the sand lined with sunbathers and colorful umbrellas.



In this file photo, visitors to Coney Island use a selfie stick to take a photo with the Wonder Wheel in the background in the Brooklyn borough of New York. — AP photos



Photo shows a view of One World Trade and other skyscrapers as seen from a ferry boat leaving Lower Manhattan and heading to Rockaway Beach in the Queens borough of New York.

Visiting New York City this summer? Take a break from Times Square, shopping and museums and do like the locals: Hop a train or ferry to the beach. The beach at Coney Island, at the tip of Brooklyn and reachable by four subway lines from Manhattan, is bordered by a famous strip of amusement park rides.

You can also go by subway to Rockaway Beach, Queens, but a new ferry service now departs from the Rockaways from Wall Street's Pier 11 on the East River in Lower Manhattan, with one stop in Sunset Park, Brooklyn. Here are some tips for a beach day in the Big Apple.

Coney Island

Take the D, F, N or Q subway train to the end of the line in Brooklyn (\$2.75 each way). Several small amusement parks sit side by side

across from the station, and the boardwalk and the Atlantic Ocean just beyond. The famous Cyclone ride is to your left when you get off the train. It's a wooden roller coaster that will rattle your bones. And it's easy to spot Deno's Wonder Wheel amid the colorful jumble of attractions. It's a towering Ferris wheel with two types of cars. One car slides out to the edge and back in as the wheel turns; the other car is stationary. You'll be asked which car you prefer when you board.

Have a hot dog from Nathan's and wander down to the water to dip your toes or take a swim. To your right as you face the ocean, there's a pier where you'll find fishermen chatting in various languages - Russian, Spanish, Chinese - while tending to their catch.

Just remember: This isn't Disney World. It's a place with old-fashioned charm - the seaside

park dates to the 19th century - as well as a big dose of urban grit. You may see litter on the beach and on a hot day, smell garbage in the alleys between the rides. Welcome to New York, folks!

Don't worry about water safety, though: Water quality is monitored by city health officials and lifeguards watch the swimmers. But don't leave your belongings unattended. Have one person in your group stay with them on the sand while others get wet.

Daniela Prankl, visiting with her sister from Austria, said the long subway ride from Manhattan to Coney Island "was absolutely worth it." She enjoyed seeing New Yorkers relaxing at the beach, in contrast to "busy Manhattan."

"Tourists should know that they can spend a great time there, with having fun in the

amusement park, watching fisherman, having a walk at the beach and enjoying nice food," she said.

Rockaway

The trip by ferry from Wall Street in Manhattan to Beach 108th Street in the Rockaways is only an hour on the water. But hundreds of people have been lining up for the boat at times, so the wait to board can be long, though extra departures have been added to the one-boat-per-hour schedule (\$2.75 each way, tickets sold onsite or online). The ferry offers spectacular views of One World Trade and the skyscrapers of Lower Manhattan.

Rockaway is famous for big waves and even has designated surfing areas. Elsewhere bodyboarding and body-surfing rule. Just watch

out for strong currents and churning water that can dislodge sand beneath your feet as you wade in.

After the ferry arrives, you can hop a free shuttle bus to various beaches, or walk the few blocks from the bay side of the Rockaway peninsula where the boat drops you off, to the ocean side where the beaches are. You'll pass shops and eateries along 108th Street as you walk from the ferry to the ocean side, or look for concession stands at Beach 106th Street, Beach 97th Street and Beach 86th Street.

Favorite local foodie spots include Tacoway Beach, at 302 Beach 87th St., and Caracas Arepa Bar, 106-01 Shore Front Parkway. Rockaway was hit hard by flooding from Superstorm Sandy in 2012. Restoration included beach grass plantings and a new concrete boardwalk. — AP



Photo shows boats for rent near the L'Hemisfèric in the City of Arts and Sciences in Valencia, Spain.



Photo taken from The Alhambra shows views of Granada, Spain.

RV-tripping Spain

Coastal campgrounds, classy caravans

Vacationing during Spain's touristy summer season doesn't have to mean overcrowded attractions or pricey hotels. Keep the crowds and high prices in the rearview mirror by renting a motorhome or RV (usually called camper vans or caravans in Europe) and experience Spain's scenic Mediterranean coast through seaside towns, ancient ruins, bucolic orchards and sprawling badlands.

Camper van 101

Before embracing your inner Kerouac, if you're American you'll need to get an International Driving Permit from AAA or the American Automobile Touring Alliance (AATA). It's issued in person or by mail and is valid for a year. For coastal routes, you can choose autopistas, toll roads denoted with the letters AP, or free motorways, generally called autovías, marked with the letter A. You can pay tolls by credit card or cash, but be warned that they add up.

Not your parents' recreational vehicle

You may have memories of the family's vintage behemoth van, but today's savvy road trippers know that modern motorhomes come in smaller, sleeker packages with nearly every amenity imaginable. Using the van's various features is surprisingly uncomplicated, but you do need to know how to drive with a manual transmission. Do not drive into city centers, which typically have narrow, winding streets, or you could get stuck. Park farther out and take metros in.

Barcelona's Orson Rent offers airport pick-up and drop-off, plus campers that sleep two to five people, with bathrooms, showers, refrigerators, freezers, stove tops, two double beds and optional add-ons like bikes or barbecue grills. Rentals run 175 euros daily for summer high season, 130 for September and 110 other times. Budget another 35-50 euros nightly for campsites in peak season. Amenities like Wi-Fi and electricity are extra. In some places, vans may park overnight in public spots, but towns are less tolerant of this during crowded summer months.

Know the difference between a caravan - with the living unit trailer towed behind the car - and an autocaravan, where the living unit is attached to the driver's cab.



This photo taken from The Alhambra shows views of Granada, Spain. — AP photos

Plan your pit stops

Barcelona

What to do: Head to the rooftop terrace at the Hotel Barcelo Raval for stunning (and free!) 360-degree views.

Sample local cuisine and cava (Catalonia's sparkling wine) while exploring Barcelona on a sidecar tapas tour.

Don't miss Antoni Gaudí's iconic works, including Casa Batlló, Park Güell and La Sagrada Família. Beat the lines at the breathtaking basilica by purchasing tickets in advance.

Where to camp: CityStop. It's all about location at this bare-bones parking lot squeezed between high-rise buildings. The overnight campsite is a quick walk to the L2 and L4 metro lines and offers bathrooms, showers and Wi-Fi.

Another option, about 135 kilometers (83 miles) south, is the family-run Camping Cala d'Oques. Fall asleep to the sounds of waves crashing at this small campsite on the beach in

Tarragona.

Peníscola

What to do: Skip the busy beach in this tourist hot spot and head to the impressive Knights Templar castle and former papal residence, which juts into the clear blue waters.

Where to stay: The oceanfront Camping Playa Tropicana in the village of Alcossebre. This upscale campsite offers indoor and outdoor pools and Jacuzzis, laundry room, supermarket, restaurant, beauty salon, car wash and playground. It's also steps from a quiet beach and the Michelin-starred restaurant Can Roig.

Valencia

What to do: Chow down on meat-based Valencian paella in the birthplace of the classic rice dish.

Learn about Valencian history and culture through its thriving street art scene on a graffiti tour of old town.

Snack like a local at Horchateria El Collado

with sweet pastries called fartons dunked in horchata de chufa, a sugary drink.

Wander the futuristic glass and concrete complex known as The City of Arts and Sciences, home to Valencia's impressive Principe Felipe Science Museum and Spain's largest aquarium.

Cartagena

What to do: This picturesque port city is home to historic sites including a Roman theater and military fortress, Bateria de Castillitos, which offers panoramic views of Cartagena Bay.

Where to stay: Camping Lo Monte north of Cartagena, near the beach in Alicante. Its well-manicured grounds offer swimming pools, a gym, restaurant, spa and group activities.

Mojacar

What to do: Explore shops and cafes in the winding streets of charming old town Mojacar, a hillside village dotted with white buildings. Or grab a drink and watch the sunset over the

Mediterranean in Mojacar Playa, the trendy beachfront part of town.

Granada

What to do: It's all about the Alhambra. The immaculately restored ninth century complex is a UNESCO World Heritage site and one of Spain's most-visited attractions.

You could lose an entire day exploring the ornate, tiled palaces, gorgeous gardens and military fortresses with sweeping city views. Buy tickets online as they can sell out weeks in advance. Regroup after a long day with a massage and Arabian bath experience at the tranquil Hammam Al Andalus.

Where to stay: Camping Las Lomas a wooded mountain retreat east of Granada. Campers will find breathtaking views of the valley and Canales Reservoir, as well as mini golf, table tennis, a swimming pool, sauna, restaurant and supermarket. — AP



Photo was taken outside Casa Mila, one of the buildings by Antoni Gaudí, in Barcelona, Spain.



Photo shows CityStop, a centrally located truck and motorhome campsite, in Barcelona, Spain.



Photo shows tourists in a courtyard at The Alhambra in Granada, Spain.



Aerial photo shows Mojacar Playa on the Andalusian coast in southern Spain.



Photo shows Camping Playa Tropicana and the beach in Alcossebre, Spain.

Lifestyle

THURSDAY, JULY 13, 2017

**RV-tripping Spain:
Coastal
campgrounds,
classy caravans**

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People cool off in a swimming pool in Yangzhou, Jiangsu province. The summer heat wave is forecast to continue and expand over more of the country, with people being warned to protect themselves from the sun. — AFP

Boogie Woogie, Baby!: Dutch infants take a shine to Mondrian

Ever wondered which artist is most preferred by babies? If it's up to the organizers of a tour for parents with small children in the Netherlands on Tuesday, the works of abstract artist Piet Mondrian win hands down. Eight babies and their parents were chosen from a group of 400 hopefuls to exclusively view Mondrian's paintings at the Gemeentemuseum in The Hague, which houses the world's largest Mondrian collection. The babies, ranging from four months to one-and-a-half-years-old, and their parents were allowed an early morning stroll through the museum unhindered by the usual crowds, the organizer said.

"From four months onwards, babies can see colors and contrast and for this purpose, Mondrian's works are the most ideal," said Brigitte Timmermans of Kunstfanaatjes ("Little Art Fanatics").

Mondrian, who shortened his name from Mondriaan in later years, is best known for his canvas "Victory Boogie Woogie," considered one of the most important works of the 20th century. The babies also showed a particular preference for the 1944 painting, because of its bright and contrasting colours



A woman carries a baby though the first Baby Museum Tour at the Gemeentemuseum in The Hague. — AFP photos

of mainly blue, red and yellow, Timmermans said. "We find that the babies are able to focus really well on the 'Victory'. They were fascinated by it and to see this was something quite special."

Even without being able to talk, it was clear

from their responses that they also appreciated Mondrian's other works, she said. "The parents—who are often a bit hamstrung having to look after a small baby—also enjoyed the day out," Timmermans added.

Although the pilot project, called "Boogie



A man carries a baby though the first Baby Museum Tour.

Woogie, Baby!", is believed to be a first for the Netherlands, the idea of taking infants to view art has already been implemented in Belgium, Germany and the United States, she said.

A second excursion is planned to a museum in the southern city of Dordrecht in a

few months, she said. This year marks the centenary of the founding of De Stijl ("The Style"), the Dutch art movement of which Mondrian was a part, known for its bold horizontal and vertical lines encasing blocks of primary colors. — AFP

COOL, CREATIVE AND EASY-TO-CARE-FOR LUNCHBOXES

A fun part of back-to-school shopping is the search for the perfect lunch container. Should it be square with a zip, with space for lots of tasty items? A smart little purse-like affair? A sack? And what about the pattern? When you're going to be spending every lunch hour with it, it's important to get it right. This fall, there are lots of new designs for students old and young, with thoughtful details and add-ons meant to make lunchtime pleasant and palatable.

Form and function

Karen Cicero, contributing editor at Parents magazine, reminds parents and caregivers to keep kids' ages and grade levels in mind when shopping for lunchboxes. "If you have a preschooler or kindergartener, you'll want a box that's easy to open and close," she says. "For middle schoolers, you want to make sure it's large enough to hold their lunch, an ice pack, and snacks they'll need for after-school practices."

Also consider how easy the box is to clean, and whether it hooks on your child's backpack, "which is a good feature so it doesn't get lost or separated," Cicero said. Many lunch-kit collections can be coordinated with backpacks, water bottles, and hot or cold insulated containers.



This photo shows glow-in-the-dark dinos that make for a fun lunch box from Pottery Barn Kids.

Bento boxes

Bento boxes are big among elementary and middle school kids, says Cicero. Popular for years in Asia, bento boxes are made of plastic or steel fitted with various-size compartments. That separation keeps foods from becoming a pile of crumbs or mush. And with just one container to wash and re-use, there's often less waste.

No more zippered baggies, plastic wrap or foil to pollute the environment. There are built-in bento containers in many of this season's lunchboxes. Or Bento's colorful, leak-proof bento containers come in several varieties, including an insulated bowl with a silicone-lined snap lid and its own fork and spoon.

Ditch the disposables

Other environmentally friendly options include Russbe's sturdy, gusseted reusable bags, which come in a bunch of designs and sizes. All have leak-resistant double-lock closures; they're alternatives to plastic bags. Cicero also likes Packit: The whole bag is lined with a gel material, so you can freeze it the night before and food stays chilled all day. There's a peppy buffalo check, and a tie-dye pattern in the collection. "Our school has a zero-waste policy, so

we try to pack most food in a thermos or containers. Snap lids are easiest for the kids to open," says Toronto mom Amy Tse.

Kristy Lucenti of Brooklyn, Ontario, says her young son picked out a PBKids' car-themed lunchbox that matches his backpack. "I found a set of Rubbermaid containers that fit nicely in his lunch bag," she says. "His school is strict on zero waste, so the containers are very convenient." She puts morning and afternoon snacks in the smaller containers and his lunch in the big one.

Trending topics

"What's new is that you'll see a lot of girls with traditional boy designs," says Cicero. "Gender-neutral options include geometric patterns, stars and animals." Unicorns are trending strongly with girls, she says. Zazzle.com has a nice variety; a lot feature rainbows, too. Target has the Skip Hop Zoo unicorn-shaped bag, and Gymboree offers a unicorn-printed box that clips to a matching backpack.

Other popular patterns?

Cute cats and fun food

Pottery Barn Kids has a lunch sack shaped like a kitten's face; it wouldn't look out of place on a 20-something's office desk. Photo-printed lunch boxes and bags stand out from the crowd; some are even 3-D. For younger kids, dinosaur, galaxy, mermaid and camouflage patterns in glow-in-the-dark inks

This photo shows bows and polka dots that jazz up a pretty Emily & Meritt lunch bag from Pottery Barn Kids. — AP photos



This photo shows a Emily & Meritt Neon Roses lunch sack from Pottery Barn Teen that combines fashion forward trends in a stylish lunch tote that would appeal to any age.



are popular. Cicero also mentions quintessential favorites like superheroes and sports themes. Nike has lunch-size versions of its classic duffel bag.

Crocodile Creek has designs with jungle, robot and backyard animal themes. And Hanna Andersson offers soft lunchboxes in whimsical designs including a galaxy and spaceship, fluttery butterflies, race cars, and smiling suns with



This photo shows steel bento boxes.

rainbows. For older boys, consider video-game references like Minecraft or Halo 5 lunchboxes. Licensed characters are perennial lunchbox favorites. This year, a Wonder Woman lunchbox picks up on the movie's popularity. And the front of a Star Wars Chewbacca lunchbox is covered in washable fake fur.

Fashion forward

Allison Spanpanato, senior vice president for product development at Pottery Barn Kids and PBTeen, is betting on a few stylish designs: "Our Emily & Meritt gear features neon pink and oversize florals, bringing two trends together," she says. Other graphic standouts in that collection: a chic, black-zipped lunch sack with the word MEOW in white type, and a bold, black-and-white-banded sack. There's also a shibori motif. Larger-scale gingham and polka dots, and icons like sailboats, bows and hearts are a fresh take on preppy. — AP